



Mess and RUSI Vancouver Members News , 2011

Wednesday Lunches – Vacation Shut down

Mrs Lum is enjoying a great visit with her family. She will be back to serve up another delicious lunch on June 8th and we will continue lunches through the summer. Hope to see all our regulars back.

Change of Command

*15th Field Artillery Regiment
The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery
invites you to attend*

the ceremony for
The Regimental Change of Command,
Demonstrations, and Open House
to be held in
Bessborough Armoury,
2025 West 11th Avenue on
June 12th, 2011
Commencing at 1:15 PM

Happy Artillery Day

Artillery day is celebrated annually on the 26th of May.

We commemorate it with special events.

Please take a moment to reflect on how great our Royal Regiment is and what a key role each member plays. My thoughts are with gunners everywhere, especially those in Afghanistan, and with their families.

Special greetings on the occasion of artillery day, 2011.

Good shooting! Ubique !

Ernest Beno, OMM, CD,
Colonel Commandant

Report from Afghanistan

By Col Acton Kilby

The last edition of this newsletter included a picture of Col Kilby, son of BGen Peter Kilby, currently attached to the US 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan. He has passed another message to us from the front.

Generally, things here are improving. We are seeing some changes in behaviour and attitude which are indicative of a general swing toward not supporting the insurgency. I would say that the balance of the population is on the fence now and leaning toward the Government of Afghanistan (GIROA) and if not the National level, at least at District. This is a positive sign. The change in behaviour of the enemy is an indication that our efforts (Strengthen Afghan Forces, Build Afghan Capacity and Extend Governance and Development - and a bit of kinetic action...) are working and cutting both their support base and strength. Time will tell and the next few months will be our indication if the transition away from an insurgency is materializing. If correct, speculation is that the momentum will be irreversible and then the real work will start. The extension of essential services, access to judicial systems and human/food security assurance remain fragile and these are the hardest nuts to crack.

Thankfully, I am blessed with an exceptional gang and we are supporting a force which is intent on winning - so if it gets screwed up you know where to point the finger.

There are still a great number of challenges. I have attached a short paper(see below) I did for COMISAF (it's unclassified) on a view from the South.

We all remain hopeful. This does not mean it will be any less violent.

The insurgency is transforming and adapting to less firmly based in the population to almost a proxy-war by foreigners living in the countries next door. The neighbours really don't like an organized Afghanistan and my speculation is that more and more of our problems will become linked to either external agents trying to sustain a level of instability in Afghanistan, or the drug traders who see no gain from better security and representation for the population. Despite

many things, the Taliban, like the drug lords, thrive on repression and control, a liberated population that subscribes to a notion of unconscious governance guided by an appropriate governing framework, is less likely to accept them back. That is the trick, we could kill all the Taliban, but we need to ensure the people have a sense of unity (not full understanding) and can measure gain through supporting a National structure and using their GIRoA leadership. We shall see.

Other than that, all is well. I am into another series of out-and-about along with increased work tempo as my boss goes on leave. Get to step-up into the Deputy Commanding General slot for three weeks - yahoo. Sleep is for wimps. I shall undoubtedly be ready for leave in July. Still no news on my next immediate job. I will get home and once leave is done it will almost be 2012. No rush to know at the moment, other things to do.

FACING THE PROBLEM

There is a commonly held misconception that the people of Afghanistan are at the heart of the problem and the cause of the International intervention into their country. In watching it all from here, my assessment is that this is a faulty view and one that needs correction.

First, the Afghans are not corrupt peoples. There are corrupt Afghans, and the majority of Afghans know this, accept it and are aware of whom the corrupt people are. In fact, we (the international community) have created this environment where corruption thrives, and set the conditions for a great number of opportunists to exploit the situation.

In response to the Insurgency, organized crime running the world's largest drug cartel and rampant corruption (all three of which are intertwined), many Afghans simply want to be left alone to try and define themselves in a complex state of affairs. They are trying to make-do in a tough situation, in a very tough place. Most of them are seeking to define *their* nation, in *their* way in a non-society which rests somewhere between modern and medieval times. We are adding to the complexity by imposing ourselves and our rule-sets, we have been generally unhelpful.

There are some good political figures trying to do well. They in no way fit our models; some are good loyal people trying to make a true difference, while others are motivated to take advantage of the moment while seeking ways to protect their constituents (Family, Tribe, Village Cluster) – both are appropriate. The communities know who is best to lead them within their relevant sphere of interest. I would offer that 80% of Afghans only care about an area that could be defined by about a 150km radius, at best. Most do not even know who the Provincial Governors are, and many District Governors are almost as abstract – unless they come from the tribe/family cluster of the person. Collective decision making and compromise characterize their method, and when left to function, it works. I have observed more inclusive, representative and functioning governance here in Afghanistan than in Canada. We have convinced ourselves that our system is best, Nationally/Provincially perhaps, but at the Local, District, Municipal levels we could take notes from them. Leaders lead, administrators administer while knowledge

and experience tempers decision making and ensures the community is both represented in discussion and makes choices that apply to the long-term needs of the community.

The Afghan's strength rests in their traditions and traditional mechanisms of governance and community. Our success should therefore be measured by how we assist them in self-definition and developing the "Afghan Way". We need to enable, vice lead, and step back to observe and assist as needed, not as we see the need. In our rule-set, we are driven by National security needs and a complex array of conflicting imperatives which we can not resolve within our own countries. We are acutely aware of our weaknesses and failures, so instead of us enabling them to make these same errors (often at an accelerated pace), we need to find and strengthen their capacity within a model *they* define. This will be painful, upsetting and in no way match the models we desire.

Governance is a less tangible or measurable term, it is more organic, and has more to do with the political affairs and conditions of a given area. Most rural Afghans in the South seems less concerned about Tashkeels and social services than they are about practices like inclusivity and access to community decision making in an environment of acceptable safety. For most villages, governance is less about the state, and more about a state of affairs; a set of conditions involving tribal balance, security, and having the sense that decisions which affect them are made with their interests in mind. The definition, in other words, has less to do with the capabilities of the state than it has to do with the qualitative aspects of good political governance and stewardship over an area. In most districts that are experiencing progress, it is the quality of this type of governance, not our investment in professional social service delivery that accounts for it. Our intervention strategies work best when their focus is less on the immediate impact and more on building lasting community cohesion. The growing success of the Village Stability Platforms and Afghan Local Police are attributable to this basic formula.

Tribal and geographic affiliations in the South will compel the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) to adjust its methods to accommodate the needs of its constituents. As Kandahar City and other population centers experience security improvement, preventing villages from becoming Taliban sanctuaries will become a high priority. Governance techniques that work in large cities may prove ineffective in thousands of small villages, where GIROA is viewed with suspicion and informal dispute-resolution methods and non-state, traditional systems meet the community's needs. Proposed Coalition Force (CF) metrics assessing the effectiveness of GIROA's governance may miss the reality of how people live their lives and measure their relations to the government. We would do better to focus our resources on working with Afghan partners to create the conditions that enable Afghans to participate in community-based decision-making in a secure environment and begin to establish ties to the District government.

YOU ARE INVITED
61st ANNIVERSARY VETERANS
INTERNATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY

COMMEMORATION OF “WOMEN OF THE MILITARY”

May 29, 2011

Field of Honour

Mountain View Cemetery (33rd & Fraser)

Vancouver BC Canada

Form up at 2:00 and March off at 2:20

Flags and Marchers are welcome

Seating for those unable to March will be available



Come out and lay a candle in Memory of our Heroes

Seats for Soldiers

Salmonbellies vs Shamrocks in “Seats for Soldiers” Appreciation Night

The New Westminster Senior Salmonbellies Lacrosse Club and The Royal Westminster Regiment announce the third annual “**Seats for Soldiers**” Military Appreciation Night at Queen’s Park Arena, New Westminster on Thursday, June 9, 2011. Once again, the Salmonbellies will take on arch rivals, the Victoria Shamrocks, in a unique evening to salute the Canadian Forces. 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 dress in uniforms, legion or regimental blazers complete with medals and bring along families and friends. Civilians are encouraged to wear **RED** for Canada! Join 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 oldest wooden lacrosse floor in North America.

“Building on the success of the past two years, our third annual Seats for Soldiers event will be a big evening for everyone! In addition to new activities at the game, we are extremely pleased to announce live webcast coverage, giving all those unable to join us the opportunity to be part of one of the highlight games of the season,” stated David MacGrotty, Chair, Seats for Soldiers. “With the addition of the live web feed, our troops in Afghanistan and on military bases around the world, along with all our many lacrosse fans nationwide can now enjoy the thrill of the evening. It’s fantastic! What a better way to show our Canadian patriotism while at the same time thank our present and past serving military,” added Lt Col Karen Baker-MacGrotty, Honorary Lieutenant Colonel, The Royal Westminster Regiment and Co-Chair of the event. Pre-game activities begin at 6:00 pm with a military display expo featuring current vehicles, equipment and weapons, Tim Horton’s samples, a BBQ and a beverage garden. Colonel Brian Gagne, Commander 39 Canadian Brigade Group, will perform the ceremonial face off. He will be joined by senior military representatives from Land Force Western Area HQ in Edmonton. Intermissions will feature military band entertainment, giveaways and activities to support the Military Family Resource Centre. Arrive early for best seating. Doors open at 6:45 pm for pre-game entertainment. Face off at 7:30.

“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 Lt Col Doug Poitras, Commanding Officer of The Royal Westminster Regiment.

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

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 122 year history. In 1928, although Lacrosse was considered a demonstration sport, the Salmonbellies won the Olympic Gold Medal. In 2008, the Club shipped lacrosse equipment and shirts to our serving troops in Afghanistan. “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 „08, 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 Senior Salmonbellies.

The Royal Westminster Regiment is the oldest active unit in British Columbia with a 148 year history in New Westminster. The Primary Reserve 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, aided with the Okanagan Wild Fires of 2003 and provided support to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Westies have been deployed annually from 2007 -2011 to serve in the Afghan Conflict and several, currently serving overseas, will return in late 2011.

From the ‘Punitary’

The friars were behind on their belfry payments, so they opened up a small florist shop to raise funds. Since everyone liked to buy flowers from the men of God, a rival florist across town thought this was unfair. He asked the good fathers to close down, but they would not.

He went back and begged the friars to close. They ignored him.

So the rival florist hired Hugh MacTaggart, the roughest and most vicious thug in town to "persuade" them to close. Hugh beat up the friars and trashed their store, saying he'd be back if they didn't close up shop. Terrified, they did so, thereby proving that:

Hugh, and only Hugh, can prevent florist friars.

Murphy’s Rules of Combat Operations.

Incoming fire has the right of way.