

Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Mar 3, 2020

Newsletters normally are emailed on Monday evenings. If you don't get a future newsletter on time, check the websites below to see if there is a notice about the current newsletter or to see if the current edition is posted there. If the newsletter is posted, please contact me at bob.mugford@gmail.com to let me know you didn't get your copy.

Newsletter on line. This newsletter and previous editions are available on the Vancouver Artillery Association website at: www.vancouvergunners.ca and the RUSI Vancouver website at: <http://www.rusivancouver.ca/newsletter.html> . Both groups are also on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=vancouver%20artillery%20association> and <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=rusi%20vancouver>

Wednesday Lunches - We need your support to keep the lunches going. Hope all you regular attendees can keep coming. The Mess serves a great 5 course buffet meal for only \$20. Guests are always welcome, and we encourage members to bring their significant others and friends. Dress - Jacket and tie, equivalent for Ladies. For serving personnel, uniform of the day is always acceptable at lunch.

Upcoming events – Mark your calendars See attached posters for details.

Mar 06 78FH & 15 Fd Whiskey Tasting

Mar 26 RCAC Black Hat Luncheon

Apr 05 Vimy Day Commemoration & Army Cadet Parade

World War 2 – 1945

John Thompson Strategic analyst - quotes from his book "Spirit Over Steel"

Mar 4th: Geldern is taken by XXX UK Corps of 1st Canadian Army. VII Corps of 1st Army reaches the Rhine north of Cologne. The Soviets continue to close in on Stettin in Pomerania.

Mar 5th: Elements of US VII Corps enter Cologne. Germany calls up 15 and 16-year-old boys (those who haven't volunteered already) for the Army. 17th Division is cut off in Meiktila – as expected – and uses the opportunity to full advantage to break up Japanese elements in detail as they try to assemble near the city. In the defence, Japanese soldiers are usually are well dug in and well camouflaged, but one group of them near Tamandu in Burma hadn't reckoned on Rifleman Bhanbhagta Gurung of the 2nd Gurkhas. Ignoring their fire, he dispatches a sniper with his rifle, cleans out four rifle pits with grenades, and then goes after the machinegun that had shot at him continuously, slashing its crew to death with his Kukri. His continued heroism made the inevitable Japanese counterattack seem anti-climactic, and he was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross.

Mar 6th: A new Pro-Soviet government comes to power in Romania. 2nd Belorussian Front finishes its siege of Grudiaz in Poland. The last German offensive of the war – Elements of 6th SS Panzer Army and Army Group South embark on an ambitious counteroffensive north of Lake Balaton in Hungary. US 9th Army has reached the Rhine all along its front, while 1st Canadian Army is dealing with cornered Germans in Xanten. 1st Army is still clearing Cologne, but US 9th Armoured Division is driving on Remagen to the south. In their leisurely offensive down the Ledo Road in Burma, 1st Chinese Army reaches Lashio.

Mar 7th: Evacuations of Germans begin from Danzig. Elements of 2nd Panzer Army and Army Group E join in the Hungarian offensive by attacking from the south. 9th US Armored Division captures the intact Ludendorff Bridge over the Rhine in Remagen and rushes elements over the river, a furious Hitler sacks Rundstedt. German troops start pulling out of the shrinking pocket in the Rhineland at Wesel. US Troops on Luzon move into southern Luzon. Yugoslavia's royalist and communist governments merge into one, dominated by Tito. On Iwo Jima, Japanese resistance is thinning out, but so are the ranks of the Marine companies still engaged in clearing their defences. 2Lt John H Leims is leading an understrength company in the 9th Marines and works them skillfully in another assault on interlaced caves and pillboxes. However, his men end up 400 yards ahead of their flanking units. 2Lt Leims personally heads back to his Battalion CP over this fire swept distance and returned, laying field phone cable as he did so. When ordered to withdraw, he conducts his men's pull-back without further loss, but then went forward twice more to retrieve wounded men. His leadership and valiant conduct resulted in the award of the Medal of Honor.

Mar 8th: The approaches to the Remagen Bridge are heavily congested as US troops are funneled across. Xanten falls to 1st Canadian Army, while 29th US Armor brushes up against the south edge of the German pocket in the Rhineland to lose 91 tanks in a few minutes. 2nd British and 20th Indian Divisions start churning their way to Mandalay down the east bank of the Irrawaddy. Marines engage the last main pocket of intact Japanese resistance on Iwo Jima. The German garrison on the Channel Islands stages a raid on a minor port on the Cotentin Peninsula, sinking four merchant ships and a small US warship.

Essential Reading: Arguably the best Allied Army commander of the Second World War and certainly one of the most popular with his troops, the Liberation of Burma was probably William Slim's finest achievement. In his memoir of his time in the Indo-Burma theatre as a corps and army commander, Slim reveals much of his own thoughts of those days but he is certainly not writing an apologia or 'spinning' events in his own interests. 'Defeat into Victory' is probably one of the most interesting recollections of a campaign written by a senior general and certainly the most intimate since Ulysses S Grant's own memoirs from the American Civil War.

Mar 9th: Bonn falls into the hands of 1st US Army, as does Godesburg. There is fierce fighting around Meiktila and Mandalay. The usual ferocious fighting on Iwo Jima is marked by a Kamikaze charge. The most lethal air-raid of the war: 279 B-29s drop 1,650 tons of incendiaries on Tokyo and the resulting firestorm kills between 80,000 and 120,000 Japanese.

Mar 10th: The Rhineland offensive is over; the Germans have lost 38,000 dead and wounded and 51,000 prisoners; 1st Canadian Army has suffered over 15,600 casualties and 9th US Army sustained some 7,300 – but the prime sites to stage an assault river crossing over the Rhine have been secured. 1st, 3rd and 7th US Armies have secured the rest of the west bank of the Rhine to the north of Koblenz. The German offensive around Lake Balaton is slowed down by mud, fuel shortages and ferocious Soviet resistance. In the Philippines, Palawan is secure; 41st US Infantry lands in southwestern Mindanao; and the Japanese seem determined to hang on to the rest of the Luzon. Normally, soldiers who are being carried out of the fight because of their wounds are glad to be out of it, but PFC Thomas E Atkins of the 32nd Infantry Division knows full well about Japanese determination – and his own. For four hours, he has defended his foxhole against two companies of Japanese troops despite his own severe wounds and the deaths of his two comrades. During a lull as his wounds were being dressed, he killed yet another Japanese infiltrator and fired on another group of them with his rifle when being borne away on a stretcher. He is awarded the Medal of Honor.

Mar 11th: Kamikazes make it to the American fleet sanctuary at Ulithi Atoll and damage the Escort Carrier Randolph. Mongmit in Burma is liberated by British 36th Division.

Upgraded RCAF Aurora Aircraft Conducts Initial Flight Test

David Pugliese, Ottawa Citizen February 24, 2020



Canadian Forces photo.

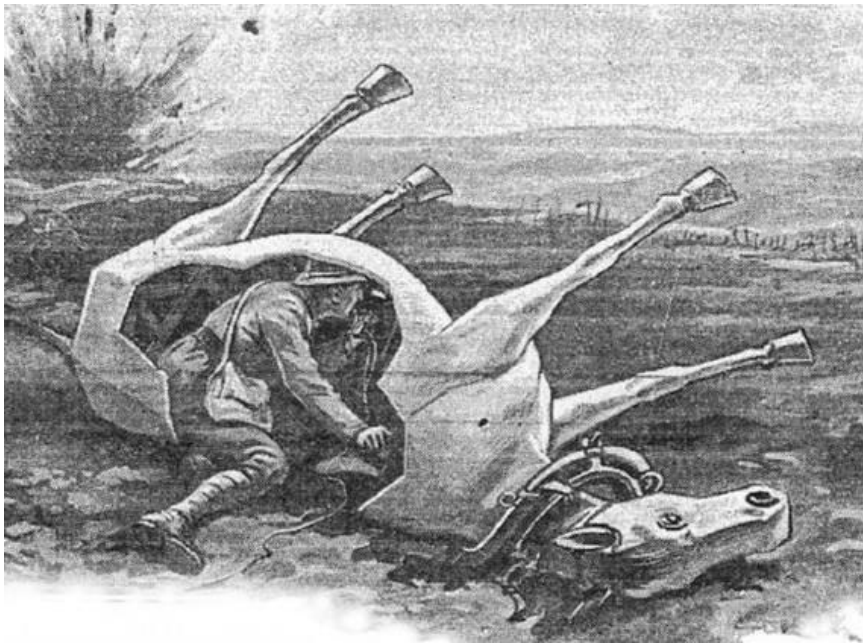
The Canadian Forces says an upgraded CP-140 recently flew for the first time as part of an initial flight test assessment. The Block IV-modified CP-140 Aurora flew from Halifax to Greenwood, NS as part of test assessment under the Aerospace Engineering Test Establishment (AETE), according to military. Block IV modifications include beyond-

line-of-sight satellite communication, Link 16 Tactical Data Link (a military tactical data exchange network used by NATO countries), and a self-defence system, the Canadian Forces noted. The initial operational capability for the Block IV-modified CP-140 Auroras is expected in June. Full operational capability will be achieved in September 2022, according to the Canadian Forces. Block IV is the last of the modernization phases for the Aurora aircraft. The Aurora Incremental Modernization Project (AIMP) involved 23 individual projects to acquire, integrate and install new mission systems and sensors onto the aircraft for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

A WW1 Sniper Hid Inside a Papier-Mâché Horse in No-Mans Land

George Winston Feb 27, 2020

The horse was the mainstay of battle logistics in World War One, pulling munitions and armaments, transporting the sick and wounded. But they were also casualties in the war that saw the end of their extensive use in modern warfare. The rotting corpses of fallen horses were a common sight on the battlefields of the Somme. The area that became no-mans-land between the trenches became a hellish region, blasted by shelling, strewn with barbed wire and booby traps, the final resting place of thousands of infantrymen from both sides. It was impossible to cross, and trench warfare later became synonymous with stalemate. During this period, finding out what your enemy was doing became a key activity as both sides tried to push forward and take ground by any means. The Allies and the Germans both needed intelligence in order to gain any sort of advantage and reverted to very creative means in order to get it.

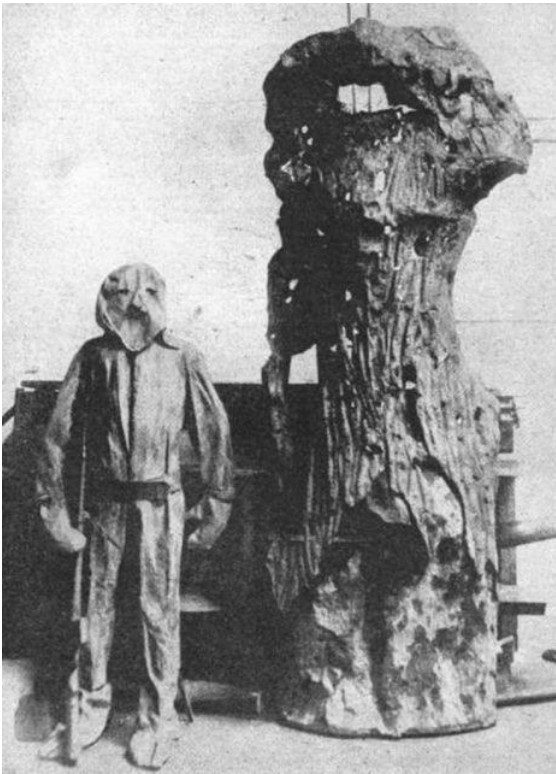


Concealed within the papier-mâché horse, observers watched the enemy at close range.

The French had already been experimenting with papier mâché making realistic heads which they propped above the edge of the trenches in the winter of 1915, in order to draw out sniper fire. Letting the sniper hit these fake infantrymen meant that the location of the shooter could be established and then accurately targeted. But their use of papier mâché did not

end there. Emboldened by their success with mannequins the French changed up a gear and created an entire phoney horse carcass. The idea was inspired by observing that the carcasses of horses, some quite close to enemy trenches, went largely ignored by the Germans. One night a group of French soldiers snuck up close to the enemy line and dragged away the dead horse and replaced it with the papier mâché replica. A sniper crawled inside while his comrades reeled out a telephone wire from the horse to the trenches so the sniper could report any observations of enemy troop movements. The French got away with this subterfuge for three days before the Germans spotted the sniper climbing out of the phoney pony. They wasted no time in obliterating the decoy, but the first attempt was considered such a success it went on to be used again on a number of occasions. Such cunning with regard to camouflage was not the sole preserve of the French military, the German army for their part were also able to come up with remarkably durable spyware.

In Belgium there was an array of blackened and burned out stumps called Oosttaverne wood smack in the middle of no-man's land, near Messines. In 1917 the German military built a



twenty-five-foot-tall tree stump out of steel pipe, painting it to resemble burned bark to merge with the remaining tree trunks. It was a tight space but had just enough room to conceal a sniper, who would also be able to report back troop movements he had seen from his forward position. Using diversionary fire to distract the allies the Germans cut down an existing tree and replaced it with the steel replica. The fake tree was brazenly set up overnight in a huge logistic effort amongst the remains of the wood. It stayed in operation until the Germans had to retreat following the Battle of Messines, when the British tunnelled under the German lines and destroyed their trenches from below.

Sniper 'tree'

The "OP Tree" was an Observation Post Tree deployed during World War I.



However, the tree was so successful that the Allies had no idea for months that their movements were being spied on from such close quarters. Indeed, the British had been established in their forward positions, alongside the fake tree for several months before it was finally discovered. After the war, the tree was put on display at the Australian War Memorial

StuG III Recovered from the Seabed

Feb 29, 2020 [George Winston](#)

There are more StuG IIIs down there. A dangerous underwater mission to clear unexploded ordnance from the seabed and preserve an historical military heritage site has made it possible for a German 'tank-buster' StuG III to be brought up from the seabed 77 years after being lost to the waves. In October 1939 the Santa Fe was captured by the French Navy, renamed the St Andre and sailed under the French flag until 1942 when the Nazis brought her back under German control. She was repurposed and given back her original name and flag then dispatched to the Black Sea by the German Navy. On November 25th the Santa Fe was travelling in convoy from the port of Constantza, Romania heading for the port of Sevastopol in the Crimea. She was being escorted by the Q-ship Lola, the minelayer Admiral Murgescu and minesweepers R-165, R-197 and R-209. Early that morning an explosion was heard near the



front of the ship and cargo in the fore-hold caught fire. The fire quickly spread and shortly a second explosion occurred which split the vessel in two. Minutes later the Santa Fe and her cargo

were on the bottom of the Black Sea. Twenty-eight crew members were killed and sixteen reported missing.

*StuG III Ausf G in the Serbian military museum of Belgrade, 2008
Credits: Slaven Radovic.*



Surviving contemporary reports remain unclear about the cause of the original explosion with historians divided as to whether a mine could have been the cause, or if there was an accident below decks caused perhaps by poor storage conditions. On board she was carrying twelve StuG III assault guns, two Jagdpanzer tank destroyers and more than twelve-hundred tonnes of ammunition, including shells, air bombs and barrels of fuel. The remaining munitions have laid undisturbed in the Kalamitsky Bay off the coast of Crimea for 76 years and have recently been surveyed by the Russian Black Sea Fleet. Chief of the Russian Ministry of Defence's Expedition Centre, Evgeny Binyukov, signed an agreement in 2017 with the underwater research centre of the Russian Geographic Society and Central Naval Museum. They agreed to the preserve military-historical heritage and to work together on joint projects such as the Santa Fe. Regarding the raising of the StuG III he said that, 'it turned out to be unexpectedly difficult.' The operation took three months to plan and recently came to fruition when the remains were raised above the waves using steel cables and buoyancy aids. The ship is now undergoing further exploration by Navy divers who are primarily engaged in detonating the large amount of unexploded ordnance still remaining in, on and around the wreck.



Credit: CEN

The StuG's armour appears to have been well preserved despite being submerged under the Kalamitsky bay for 77 years. Even dashboard fragments remain. The Russian

Geographical Society are set to clean and restore it before it is put on public display in the Central Naval Museum. Wreckage, with pieces of the hull torn apart by the force of the explosion, covers more than three-hundred square metres of seabed. A second gun is buried under tons of coal which the Russian dive team are preparing to clear. This second StuG III is expected to be brought to the surface this year. More than ten thousand StuG IIIs, based on the Panzer III tank, were produced by Nazi Germany throughout World War II to be used as assault and anti tank guns. It carried a crew of four. Early models were open topped but quickly became fully enclosed as the design progressed. The Jagdpanzer, (hunting tank) was used extensively throughout North Africa, the Russian Front and at Normandy during the Allied D-Day assault. At the end of the war abandoned vehicles captured by the Russians were eventually donated to Syria where the regime used them in conflicts up until the 1967 Six-Day-War with Israel.

Vancouver Artillery Association Yearbook Updates

It's off to Ottawa as the President of the Royal Canadian Artillery Association for the annual Canadian Defence Associations meeting. But I did manage to fit in a few uploads before the flight left.

Officers' Mess Pizza night in 2000. <https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/2000.html>

Chilliwack Range Exercises. One in the sun and one in the snow!

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/chilliwack-spring-1996.html>

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/chilliwack-winter-1996.html>

Yakima 1993. Were you there? We could use some more photos

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/cougar-salvo-1993.html>

How about Western Challenge in 1992?

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/western-challenge-1992.html>

We've got Sergeant Clay Harmon and Gunner Darwin Harmon looking sharp in their Battle Dress. <https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/1965.html>

Further back in 1964 we've got 85 Battery on parade in Ladner and one of our two 155mm Howitzer M1A1. <https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/1964.html>

Another Military Cross winner has been found. Lieutenant Robert Lindsay Challoner. <https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/military-cross.html>

Don't forget our Regimental Dogs' Page. <https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/pets.html>

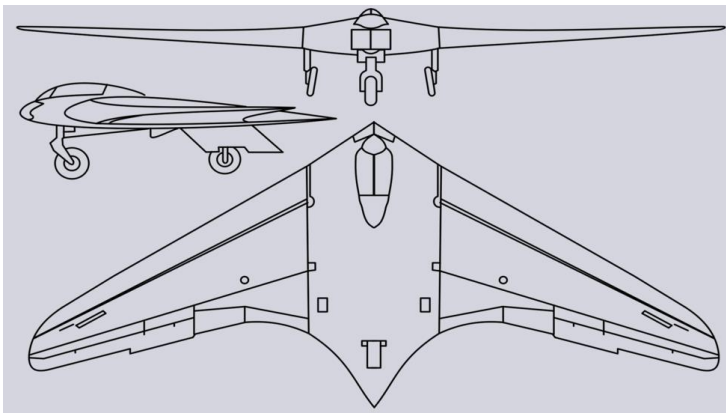
And finally, an update on our on-line nominal roll. Progress is slow, but I've just completed the J's. is your information correct? Would you like to send me some corrections? A better photo perhaps?

Keep those stories, names, calendar events and pictures coming!
president.vcrgunners@gmail.com

Who (or What) Is It?

Last Week: Nazi Germany's 'Stealth' Fighter:

The Story of the Ho 229 Sebastien Roblin September 9, 2018



The Ho 229 might have been a formidable adversary over the skies of World War II, but in truth the plane was far from ready for mass production by the war's end. Flying wing designs were not an entirely new idea and had been used before in both gliders and powered aircraft. During World War II, Northrop developed its own high-performing XB-35 flying wing bomber for the US military, though it failed to enter mass

production. Despite the aerodynamic advantages, the lack of a tail tended to make fly wing aircraft prone to uncontrolled yaws and stalls. It was a pair of German brothers in the service of Nazi Germany that developed the first jet-powered flying wing—which has been dubbed, debatably, “Hitler’s stealth fighter.” But maximizing speed and range, not stealth, was the primary motivation behind the bat-shaped jet plane. The Horten brothers were given the go-ahead to pursue the concept in August 1943. They first built an unpowered glider known as the H.IX V1. The V1 had long, thin swept wings made of plywood in order to save weight. These “bell-shaped” wings compensated for yawing problem. Lacking a rudder or ailerons, the H.IX relied upon “elevons” (combinations of ailerons and elevators) and two sets of spoilers for control. The elevons could be moved differentially to induce roll, or together in the same direction to change pitch, while the spoilers were used to induce yaw.

Following successful tests of the prototype glider (V1) at Oranienberg on March 1944, the subsequent prototype (V2) was mounted with two Jumo 004B turbojet engines nestled to either side of a cockpit pod made of welded steel tubing. It also featured a primitive ejection seat and a drogue chute deployed while landing, while redesigned tricycle landing gear was installed to enable the plane to carry heavier loads. The first test flight occurred on February 2, 1945. The manta-shaped jet exhibited smooth handling and good stall resistance. The prototype even reportedly beat an Me 262 jet fighter, equipped with the same Jumo 004 engines, in a mock dogfight. But the testing process was cut short on February 18 when one of the V2's jet engines caught fire and stopped mid-flight. Test pilot Erwin Ziller performed a number of turns and dives in an effort to restart the engine, before apparently passing out from the fumes and spiraling his plane into the ground, mortally wounding him. Regardless, Goering had already approved the production of forty flying wings, to be undertaken by the Gotha company, which mostly produced trainers and military gliders during World War II. The production planes were designated Ho 229s or Go 229s.

Because of the Ho 229's great speed—it was believed the production version would be able to attain 975 kilometer per hours—it was repurposed to serve as a fighter with a planned armament of two heavy Mark 103 thirty-millimeter cannons. Construction of four new prototypes—numbered V3 through V6—was initiated, two of which would have been two-seat night fighters. However, the Ho 229 never made it off the ground. When American troops of VIII Corps rolled into the factory at Friedrichroda, Germany in April 1945, they found just the cockpit sections of the prototypes in various stages of development. A single pair of corresponding wings was found 75 miles away. The most complete of the four, the V3 prototype, was shipped back to the United States for study along with the wings and can today be seen under restoration at the Udvar-Hazy Center of the United States Air and Space Museum in Chantilly, Virginia. The Hortens were also assigned to draft specifications for a flying wing jet bomber with range enough to deliver an atom bomb to the east coast of the United States. Their resulting schematics for the Horten H.XVIII “Amerika Bomber” flying wing, an upscaled Ho 229 with 6 engines instead of two, were never realized, except arguably in the film *Captain America*. Estimated performance figures included a maximum speed of 560 miles per hour with a range of 7,460 miles - though none of these values were ever proven before the end. The shortest distance between Europe and the US is 4,775 miles so the bomber wasn't capable of making a round trip.

One word you haven't seen in this story so far is “stealth”—and that's because there isn't any documentation from the 1940s supporting the notion that the flying wing was *intended* to be a stealth aircraft. And yet, the Hortens claimed, years later, that they had stumbled upon the fact that a flying wing design lends itself to the sort of reduced radar cross-section ideal for a stealth plane. Reimer Horten moved to Argentina after the war, and in 1950 wrote an article for the *Revista Nacional de Aeronautica* arguing that wooden aircraft would absorb radar waves. Thirty years later, as the theory behind stealth aircraft became more widely known, Reimer wrote that he had intentionally sought to make the Horten flying wing into a stealth plane, claiming that he had even constructed the airframe using a special radar absorbent mixture of carbon, sawdust and wood glue without notifying his superiors. Two tests were undertaken to

determine the presence of the carbon dust, one of which supported his claim and the other that didn't. In general, historians are skeptical that stealth was a design goal from the outset.

This Week: Many years ago, when the world was new to me, and I was living an adventurous life (for me, some of you have had far more adventure in a week than I in a lifetime), I worked with an older American man, a veteran of the Pacific Theatre of the Second World War. (actually, ancient...around 50!) He had been the pilot of Mitchell bombers, and had, for a brief period, flown the model with the 75mm gun in the nose. His career during the war centred around Papua New Guinea, and the destruction of Japanese shipping. He told me that, although it seemed a good idea, putting that much ordnance into a medium bomber wasn't terribly successful. The first time he fired the gun, he thought he had put his Mitchell into reverse! He



preferred an array of .50 cal guns, as they were more guaranteed to hit something. Interestingly, this man, now 101, has lived in the land of his former enemy for the past 60 years.

So, that said, we now come to this week's photo. It is not of a Mitchell, nor of any American aircraft. The cognoscenti out there will know the kite, but do you know the gun? What connection does it have to our famous 15th Field

Regiment (RCA) Museum? If you know, let the editor in on the secret, or even the author.

They can be reached by electronic mail as follows: bob.mugford@gmail.com, johnd.redmond@telus.net

Thanks for your ideas.

From the 'Punitary'

What do you call a priest that becomes a lawyer? A father in law.

Murphy's Other Laws

The more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war.

Quotable Quotes

Curiosity will conquer fear even more than bravery will. - *James Stephens*

**15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA
&
The 78th Fraser's Highlanders**

Annual 2020 Fund Raiser and Whisky Tasting Night

The 15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA and the 78th Fraser's Highlanders invite you, and any like-minded guests of your acquaintance, to attend our annual fund raising and whisky tasting event at the historic Bessborough Armoury. There will be food, draw prizes, music, and there will be whisky!

For the Full 'Whisky Fleet', Tickets are **\$55.00** per person by Credit Card, Cheque, or by exact change, otherwise your \$60 in bills will be gratefully accepted towards our good cause. Bernard who will be relieving you of your burden of carrying cash will meet you at the front door and will be most appreciative. For those who are driving or prefer the options from the No-Host bar, you pay a meager **\$25.00**.

Only 50 tickets will be sold for the full whisky fleet! Bring guests!

Dress is business casual. Kilts and highland dress, of course, are most welcome.

DATE: Friday – March 6th, 2020

TIME: 1800 hrs – 2300 hrs

LOCATION: 15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA
2025 West 11th Ave Vancouver, BC V6J 2C7

**DO NOT MISS OUT!
TO RESERVE YOUR TICKET CONTACT:**

Major James Barrett
Cell: (604) 916-1766
E-Mail: barrettjd007@gmail.com

All profits raised by the event will be equally shared between the 15th Field Regimental Society and the 78th Fraser Highlanders Fort Fraser Garrison in support of their activities.

Tax receipts will be issued for all donations upon request.



RCAC Black Hat Luncheon

26 March 2020

1130-1430hrs

At

**Sidney North Saanich Yacht Club
Swartz Bay, British Columbia, Canada**

You and your guests are most cordially invited to attend the 102nd commemoration of the Battle of Moreuil Wood and a gathering of Royal Canadian Armoured Corps personnel, serving and retired, attached and those who are friends of all things Armoured.

***The Battle of Moreuil Wood
30 March 1918***

On that auspicious Saturday, 30 March 1918
the Royal Canadian Dragoons, Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians)
and the Fort Garry Horse supported by the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery
conducted the last great cavalry charge of World War One

Dress

Regimental Blazer and tie
Recommended

Tariff

\$35.00 pay at the Bar

RSVP

**DAVID SCANDRETT -
tango14@outlook.com**

Vimy Day Commemoration & Army Cadet Parade



You are invited to attend

The Vimy Day Commemoration & Army Cadet Parade

at

Mountain View Cemetery

5455 Fraser Street, Vancouver, BC

Commonwealth War Graves Section

on

Sunday - April 5, 2020 – 10:15 am

*The Vimy Day Commemoration is sponsored by
RUSI Vancouver Society with generous support from
Mountain View Cemetery and Veterans Affairs Canada.*

A special offer for **CFOne Card Members.**

CFOne Card Members save 20% on tax preparation at H&R Block!

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Website: <https://www.hrblock.ca/>