



# The Duke

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## CANADA'S VIMY RIDGE MEMORIAL MONUMENT



The Vimy Ridge Memorial Rededication Ceremony on 09 April 2007

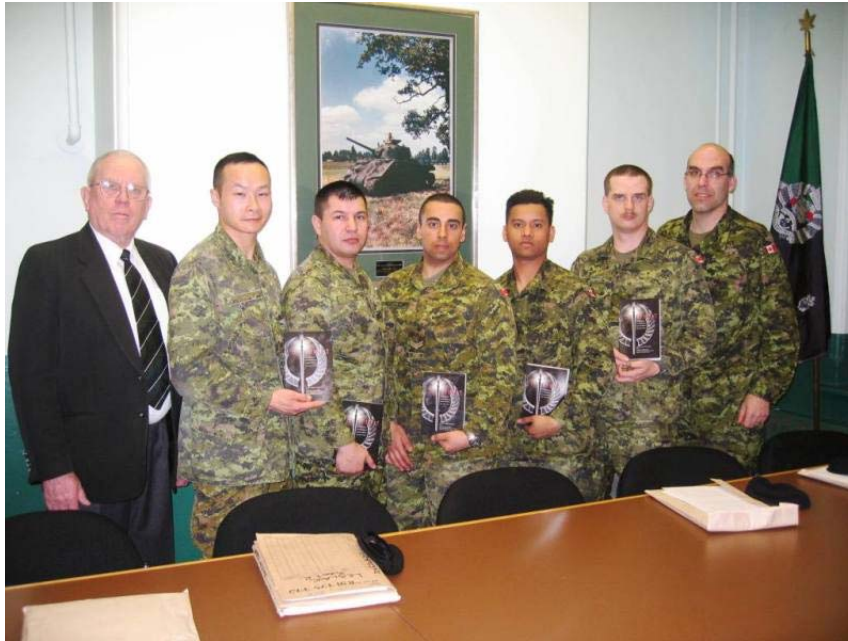
# BRITISH COLUMBIA (DCO) RCAC ASSOCIATION

## President's Report

Fellow Dukes,

It seems that new ideas and activities are never ending. We have been very busy and I'm pleased to advise you of the Association's initiatives since 01 January 2007.

- The Association supported LCol Bell's pro-active program regarding the psychology and physiology of deadly conflict in war and peace. We recently purchased 16 copies of the text "ON COMBAT", by Lt Col Dave Crossman, US Army, providing a copy to each BCR Soldier deploying to Afghanistan. Congratulations to Col Bell for his pro-active initiative that will help to 'prepare their minds...for where their bodies may have to go'. Well done Colonel.



Presentation of the book "ON COMBAT" to Regimental Members deploying to Afghanistan  
Left to Right – Archie Steacy; Sgt Anthony C. Harris; Sgt Ronald R. Leblanc; Cpl Jesse Callejo; Cpl Carlo G. Galang; Cpl Kerry L. Booth; LCol Peter W. Bell.

- **Vimy Ridge Memorial Monument:** Hon Major Ted Hawthorne, wearing a BCR and a 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion cap badge, Col (Ret'd) Keith Maxwell, wearing a 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion cap badge, Captain (Ret'd) Robert Hall, Sgt (Ret'd) Robert Remple and Hon Major Cameron Cathcart represented the Regimental Association at the Vimy Ridge Monument Rededication, 09 April 2007 (90<sup>th</sup> anniversary). Initially the group visited the Hill 111 Monument and battlefield, participated in a "Candlelight Ceremony at the Beny-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery (in Normandy), participated in the various ceremonial activities in Arras (Freedom of the City) and at the Vimy Ridge Monument Rededication Ceremony.



Rear rank, L to R - Bob Remple; Keith Maxwell; Bob Hall; Front rank, L to R - Cam Cathcart and Ted Hawthorne.

Sergeant Pierangelo D. Dalmagro, CD represented the Regiment as a member of the Canadian Forces Guard of Honour.



BCR Sgt Pierangelo D. Dalmagro, CD (smiling) marching in the Vimy Guard of Honour

Special thanks to you all for being there for the Regiment and especially to honour our Vimy Ridge Fallen.

- The Association assisted Ms. Karin Dhar and 28 students from York House School for Girls with research for 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion Members who fell during the Vimy Ridge Battle. The girls were required to obtain service particulars, personal information, photos, and family connections. Each girl wore a green shirt adorned with the soldiers name tag and Canadian general service buttons. The Association provided small Canadian Flags and poppies for the girls to place on the Duke's graves in Arras Road and Nine Elms Canadian War Cemeteries. A "Thank You Reception" and Museum Visit for the girls will be held at the Drill Hall.



Girls from York House School in Paris, April 2007



Girls from York House School in Vimy Ridge Trench, 9 April 2007



Upon the girls return to Vancouver, I received the following e-mail.

*Hi Archie,  
We are back from Vimy and we had an amazing trip. We went to many military cemeteries and were careful to place a flag or poppy at every 7th grave we found. The ceremony at the monument was very touching and made one very proud to be a Canadian. The girls are looking forward to speaking with your members about their experiences.  
Hope you are well, Karin*



463358 Private Roland Restarick, 7th Battalion, Canadian Infantry (1st British Columbia Regiment) KIA 9 April 1917, buried in Ecoivres Military Cemetery, France

It's most gratifying to see teachers and school children becoming involved in commemoration activities and events recognizing Canada's citizen soldier's commitment and sacrifices during Canada's past conflicts. It is termed "**Passing the Torch of Remembrance**".

- The Association awarded seven \$500.00 bursaries for academic achievement and loyalty to the Regiment to the following serving Dukes:  
The Major Henry R. Howitt, MC Bursary to Corporal Timothy D. Laidler; The Lieutenant Willam Bicknel Memorial Bursary to Sergeant Pierangelo Dalmagro, CD; The Captain Edward D. Bellew, VC Memorial Bursary to Private Samuel W.G. Crothers; The Private Michael J. O'Rourke, VC Memorial Bursary to Trooper Ravinder S. Dhami; The Corporal Walter L. Rayfield, VC Memorial Bursary to Corporal Wei Kang Teng; The WO II Robert H. Hanna, VC to Master Corporal Jasynt Iverson, CD and The Lieutenant Graham T. Lyall, VC to 2/Lieutenant Kenric G. Yeun. The CBC Pensioners Association awarded a \$250.00 Bursary to the following serving Duke: F63408 Cpl Peter J. Colenutt.

- The Association manufactured a 6 inch bronze BCR Cap Badge, handed it over to Hon Major Le Docteur Jean-Pierre Benamou, OBE, MSM for mounting on the M4A2 Sherman Tank at Courseulles-sur-Mer, Normandy. The badge to be mounted at the forward edge of the right side sponson recognizes the 28<sup>th</sup> Armoured Regiment (British Columbia Regiment's) participation in the Battle of Normandy Campaign in 1944.



Bronze BCR Cap Badge to be affixed to the Memorial M4A2 Sherman Tank at Courseulles-sur-Mer, Normandy



BCR Association Members at the Memorial M4A2 Sherman Tank at Courseulles-sur-Mer, Normandy. L to R – Bob Remple, Bob Hall, Ted Hawthorne, Keith Maxwell & Cam Cathcart.

- The merger of the Regiment with the Irish Fusiliers of Canada (The Vancouver Regiment) included some changes to Regimental Dress to establish the connection with the Irish Regiment. The recognition includes the changing of the rifle bugle collar badges to the Maid of Erin Harp with Maple Leaf and the addition of a red stripe in the Regimental tie. The Association accepted the responsibility to produce and place an order for the new tie. We encountered a number of difficulties during the production stage, however we just recently received the cut for the new silk Regimental Tie.

Approval of the Commanding Officer will be obtained prior to placing an order. The purchase price of a tie will be determined based on the manufacturing cost, duties, GST and PST and will likely be in the \$30.00 to \$35.00 range. To enable us to determine a purchase quantity, it would be appreciated if you would advise Ray Glover of your desire. To order a tie, please advise Ray Glover at either 604-930-3773 or by e-mail at [rglover@telus.net](mailto:rglover@telus.net)

Best wishes to you and yours....have a great summer!  
Up the Dukes.

Archie M. Steacy  
President



New Regimental Tie – Archie Steacy

## Vimy Ridge – 9 April 1917

*“Gee but it was a fine scrap and it seems funny walking on the ground that was German ground a short time ago and looking over the ridge and seeing for the first time miles back over the captured ground. I am thinking the war will be over soon.” #157114, Pte JG Sproule, 8<sup>th</sup> Bde MG Coy, 3<sup>rd</sup> Div in a letter to his cousin Marie Golay.*

It is almost ninety years since my Father penned these words in a letter home to his cousin in Toronto a few days after the Canadian victory at Vimy Ridge. I have read most of his letters home and there is little reference to confusion and horror that was apart of their lives. His letters, always unassuming, were typical of those written by those soldiers, to their loved ones at home. They were such a magnificent generation. The war would rage on for another 1½ years and the Canadians would continue to be tested.

Canadians know that our victory at Vimy Ridge was a pivotal point in our history where the Canadian Corps fought as an entity for the first time and that they succeeded where others had failed. The men who stood on the ridge on April 17<sup>th</sup> were the best that our country could send and by 1917 they were a very tough team to take on. There were four divisions in the Canadian Corps and the 1<sup>st</sup> Division was naturally on the right of the line and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade was the right hand Bde with the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the centre of the line with the 5<sup>th</sup> (Saskatchewan) on the right and the 10<sup>th</sup> (Calgary) on the left and the 8<sup>th</sup> (Winnipeg) in reserve. The British 56<sup>th</sup> Highland Bde was the adjacent formation. Major General Arthur Currie commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> Division.

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, the NCOs of the 7th Battalion were assembled at the training ground for the final rehearsal. On April 6<sup>th</sup> the orders came: “the Canadian Corps has been ordered to take Vimy Ridge in conjunction with operations on the front of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army... The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion in conjunction with the remainder of the Canadian Corps will attack and carry enemy positions to a depth of 1500 yards... The assault will be delivered in a formation of four waves...”

Lt. Col Andrew MacNaughton's artillery commenced on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and rained down shells for a week but then it was the infantry's time. The attack was planned for 0530 hrs on Easter Monday, April 9<sup>th</sup> and it dawned with sleet and snow that was so heavy that the RFC had to abandon its bombing missions. Rum was issued at 0400 hrs., and at zero hour, 0530 hrs., when the men emerged from the trenches they were caught in an enemy barrage on the way to their first objective and suffered heavy losses. Soon however the men made good progress as the shelling had cut the wire. This was the first time that the new instantaneous fuse was used and it did a great job on the German wire. Even though the ground had been churned inside out and it must have been very hard going but even so they reached the enemy trenches while the enemy was still in their dugouts. Fierce hand-to-hand fighting ensued but the first objective was taken at zero+45 minutes and the second objective by 0800 hrs. Many of the enemy surrendered and were sent to the rear and even though a German MG laid down threatening fire it was soon taken out and turned on its own kind. The Battalion lost several of its Lewis guns and only two were being manned when at noon the entire Ridge was in Canadian hands.

The new positions were consolidated and the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion went into reserve to refit and replenish in what had been the old German front line. The major success of the battle was on the right flank where the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion was located and fought with great valour. Although a great moment for Canada, it was also really the first major victory by the British forces on the Western Front. That the Battle Honour “Vimy” appears on almost all Canadian regiments' colours is a testament to the victory won on that April morning.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion captured 250 prisoners, 15 machine guns, 11 bomb throwers, 6 trench mortars, 1 naval gun, 1 howitzer and a quantity of rifles, ammunition and stores. It lost 11 officers and 448 NCOs and men. The cost to the Canadian Corps was 10,601 casualties almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> were fatalities. The gain was 4500 yards, which represented more ground gained than any previous British offensive.

The Vimy Memorial is the most famous of Canadian war memorials and was built on land given to Canada by France in 1922. It was designed and built by the Canadian sculptor Walter Allward and unveiled in July 1936 at the peak of the Depression. 6,400 Canadians paid their way across the Atlantic for what must have been a remarkable moment. The Memorial is built on Hill 145, the very crest of the ridge, and is made from marble quarried on the Adriatic coast and shipped by boat to Marseille and by train to the site. It consists of twin towers, built on an expansive marble plinth, soaring 226 feet high and symbolic of Canada's founding races and built to last an eternity. On its surface are inscribed the names of Canadians who died in WW I and who have no known graves. The main inscription reads: “To the valour of our countrymen in the Great War and in memory of their sixty thousand dead this monument is raised by the people of Canada.”

In April 1992 I was attending a conference at NDHQ and was invited to attend the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge ceremonies at the National War Memorial and it was a cold and blustery day not unlike the weather in 1917. I believe there were 12 or 13 Vimy veterans in attendance that day and it was a proud moment for all of us attending....they are all gone today. The men who fought that day were our fathers, grandfathers, great grandfathers and uncles or with the same relationship to our neighbours and friends. Although ninety years is a long time ago the Battle of Vimy Ridge will remain a proud National symbol as long as there is a Canada. It serves to remind us that we have paid and continue to pay, a heavy price for our freedom.

David Sproule  
March 2007

References: "The Dukes" by Douglas Harker and "Vimy" by Pierre Berton

## **CANADA'S NEW GOVERNMENT DELIVERS FOR VETERANS VETERANS BILL OF RIGHTS**

April 3, 2007, Kitchener, Ontario

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced that Canada's New Government is following through on its commitment to create a Veterans' Bill of Rights and a Veterans' Ombudsman.

"The brave men and women of the Canadian Forces and RCMP have always acted courageously when called upon; and it's because Veterans have always been willing to stand up for our country and its interests, Canada's New Government is standing by them now," said the Prime Minister.

The Bill of Rights, which will take effect immediately, will strengthen the government's ability to respond quickly and fairly, to the concerns of Canada's Veterans. It is a clear and concise statement that will allow Veterans Affairs to continue to ensure every Canadian Veteran is treated with respect, with dignity and with fairness.

The Ombudsman will operate at arms-length from government, and will play an important role in raising the awareness of the needs and concerns of Veterans. The Ombudsman will submit a report to the Minister on an annual basis, which will be tabled in Parliament.

"Our Veterans have given their very best to Canada," said Prime Minister Harper. "Through the Veterans' Bill of Rights and Veterans' Ombudsman, our government is taking yet another step to ensure that Canada does its very best for them."

The Prime Minister's Office – Communications

**The following article, written by Keith Maxwell, a Duke from the 1960s has provided the Association with a two phase article regarding attendance at the Vimy Ridge Memorial Rededication Ceremony on 09 April 2007 and the tour visiting Normandy (WW II) and northern France (WW I) battlefields. Due to space in the Duke, only the Vimy Ridge Ceremony has been included in this edition of the Duke. The entire tour article will be placed on the BCR Web site.**

## **British Columbia Regiment Association Tour – Vimy Ridge & Normandy (April 2007)**

### **Vimy Ridge Memorial Rededication Ceremony**

Vimy Ridge was attacked, captured and held by the Canadian Corps on 9 April 1917 in one of the most successful Corps-level actions of the First World War - an action that is at the core of our idea of being Canadian. Suitably, The Dukes were represented at the 90th anniversary of the battle by one member of the Regiment, Sergeant Pierangelo Dalmagro, CD marching in the guard as well as Ted Hawthorne, Bob Remple, Keith Maxwell, Bob Hall and Cam Cathcart of the BCR Association.

On 08 April, the BCR Party attended the Freedom of the City Parade in Arras, France. A successful rendezvous in the Place des Heroes in Arras claimed a ringside seat for the ceremony at a table at an outdoor café overlooking the square. The ceremony was wonderful, with four, one hundred man Guards representing the four



Canadian Divisions that fought at Vimy, an inspiring speech by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and the Canadians marching through the streets with bayonets fixed, Colours flying and drums beating.

The BCR Association then established "Corps Headquarters" at their table and entertained dozens of soldiers from across Canada. Things were not entirely serious....there was a great deal of fun, laughter and camaraderie that always marks the gathering of Dukes anywhere. 'Recce' Bob, acting as Orderly Sergeant, lived up to his name when he spotted a rare decoration on one of the fine looking members assembled for the parade - a Companion of the Order of the Red Tab.

The next day was spent at the Vimy Memorial site, where the Tour added a member when Gauthier Hebbelynck joined the Association and the Tour at the same time. Gauthier is a welcome new member of the BCR Association, and an old friend of Sergeant Tony Harris (presently serving in the Regiment). Gauthier is from Ghent, Belgium and has been a keen student of Canadian military history for most of his life. We were delighted to have him join the group.



The Canadian Corps Table, (BCR) in Arras, France. As always, the Dukes are action oriented and pay respects to fellow Canadian soldiers...with a many cool ones

The official ceremony of dedication was held to reopen the magnificent memorial after three years of restoration to bring the structure back to its initial pristine state. Time, weather and pollution had taken its toll since the memorial was initially opened in 1936 by King Edward VIII, and much of the beautiful limestone architecture was streaked with black soot, worn by erosion or deposited with lime, to the point where many of the 12,000 names etched on the memorial were obscured. Those names represented the brave Canadian soldiers killed in France in WWI and who have no known grave; the restoration will ensure that they will not be forgotten.

The Memorial Rededication Ceremony, with the Prime Ministers of France and Canada, as well as Queen Elizabeth II in attendance, was an historic occasion that will be remember by all who were there for a long time to come. There were 35,000 people in attendance, a 21-gun salute, four hundred-man guards representing the four Divisions of Canadians that attacked on that special day, and a fly past of Mirage III fighters by the French Air Force. This backdrop provided the appropriate solemnity, pomp and ceremony suitable for the occasion. Canadians can be proud that our memorial, the most beautiful on the Western Front, again graces with its pristine white brilliance that sacred battlefield which gave birth to Canada.

In the course of the day, in a farmer's field not far from the Vimy Memorial Park, the group found a WWI armoured trench shield, believed to be of German origin. Both sides in WWI used shields of this nature. The shields were embedded and camouflaged into the parapet and the firing slit used for sniping. With all members of the group playing a role in the recovery party, the trench shield is on its way to Vancouver for display in the BCR Museum.

All in all, it was a fine trip, with minimum casualties, a wonderful sense of our Regiment's history and a great deal of fun. The solemn ceremony ending the tour was a wonderful tribute to fallen comrades and the soldiers represented by the names etched on the Memorial. They stand for the 110,000 Canadian troops who still represent their country in Cemeteries and on Memorials in six countries in Europe.

***At the going down of the sun,  
and in the morning,  
We will remember them.***

*Col (Ret'd) Keith Maxwell  
Brussels, Belgium*

On behalf of all Dukes, sincere thanks to Ted Hawthorne, Bob Remple, Keith Maxwell, Bob Hall, Cam Cathcart and Sgt. Pierangelo Dalmagro for representing the Regiment at the Vimy Memorial Rededication Ceremony and conveying our feelings and admiration for those Dukes who fell during the Vimy Ridge Battle, 09 April 1917.

Up the Dukes.  
Archie Steacy, President



## "A British Columbia Regiment (DCO) Officer in Afghanistan: Major Harjit S. Sajjan"



Major Harjit Sajjan, CD – Front Row Right

At the Annual Chaplains' Conference and Training event in Calgary (12-15 Feb 2007), attended by LFWA Regular and Reserve Force Chaplains, the Chaplain General (BGen Stan Johnstone) and his team from Ottawa, we received an opening presentation from BGen David Fraser, Commander of the Multi-national Task Force in Afghanistan up to November 2006.

In the question period that followed I noted that, through debriefings with Maj Harjit Sajjan, the role of intelligence gathering has now become critical to the mission, especially in the battle for hearts and minds. I asked if there was a role for Padres in this regard.

The General briefly confirmed that there is such a role and that our Canadian Muslim Padre, Capt Suleyman Demiray, had joined the local people at Friday prayers and through that personal contact he had established new and critical information on the Taliban's recruitment methods among the local people.

The General then turned to address the issue of the Maj Sajjan's particular and significant contribution to the successful outcome of the mission, and on this he spoke for the longest time.

"There were three members of my team who were key to the success of my mission," he said, "and each of them was worth two hundred men to me." General Fraser noted, "One was the Muslim Padre Demiray," then he stressed "another was Major Sajjan of the BCR. Harj went outside the box as well as outside the wire. His information gathering caused me to change the strategic direction in which we were moving. Today, we number our dead at forty-four. If it were not for Harj's work, that number might well be measured in the four hundreds."

The General confirmed that Maj Sajjan brought some singular gifts to Afghanistan: "First, his skin tone does not single him out as a foreigner, and that wins points with the people. Second, he intuitively understands the local culture and accurately reads the situation. Thirdly, his policing skills are invaluable for effective information gathering. And we benefited greatly from each of those gifts."

In a personal comment to me, the General confirmed how much he is looking forward to joining the BC Regiment as our guest in April for the annual St. Julien's Mess Dinner.

Captain Paul Beckingham  
BCR Chaplain

## BC REGIMENT CADET GOVERNORS REPORT

Our four affiliated Cadet Corps continue to flourish with over 230 Cadets currently enrolled in the Army Cadet Programme. The 2381 BCR Irish Fusiliers continues to be our strongest Corps with over 120 Cadets in their programme. The good news is, that all Corps are experiencing good retention and as a result, there are more senior Cadets capable of taking on more of the leadership. We are also very fortunate to have a very dedicated cadre of CIC officers, Civilian Instructors (CI's) and volunteers working with our Cadets. The Staff ensures that the Cadets, under their leadership, are well prepared to meet the challenges of the Cadet Programme and ready for the next level of training.

### 2290 BCR (101 DCOR) RCACC

- The Corps has an enrolled strength of 50 Cadets. The enrolment has remained fairly steady over the last few years. While every Corps would like to have more Cadets, this is good number to maintain as it makes it much easier to provide good instruction and enables the CO to get many of his Cadets to the various Cadet Summer Training Centres (CSTC) for training.
- The marksmanship and band programmes are conducted on alternate Monday nights.

- Two senior Cadets advanced to Phase 2 of the National Star Certification Exam (NSCE) in late Feb. These exams are open to all 16 year old Cadets who have completed their Gold star level of training. The NSCE is very important in the short career of a Cadet. Successful completion of these exams opens the doors to staff Cadet Positions at the CSTCs, overseas exchanges, high end expeditions, senior appointments and promotions at their local Cadet Corps.
- The Commanding Officer, Capt Ken Prince has 3 CIC Officers, 4 Civilian Instructors (CI) and one Regular Force Non Commissioned Member(NCM) helping him conduct the Army Cadet Programme.

#### 2381 BCR (IRISH FUSILIERS) RCACC

- Major Gary Law and his staff of 6 CIC Officers and 1 PRes NCM continue to operate one the most successful Corps in the province. They currently have 130 Cadets enrolled and continue to do all they can to attract more youth into the Army Cadet programme at the 2381.
- 8 senior Cadets qualified in Phase 1 of NSCE. This achievement bodes very well for the future Cadet leadership of this Corps.
- The ability of this Corps to fund raise is truly remarkable. In cooperation with the Vancouver Film and Television Artists they held a fund raising dinner at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Saturday January 27. They raised just under \$10,000.00.
- The Drill Team has practiced every Tuesday night in preparation for the Annual Drill Team Competition in spring 2007.
- This Corps is sponsored by Branch 44, Royal Canadian Legion.

#### 2781 BCR (POWELL RIVER) RCACC

- The Corps has 30 cadets enrolled in the Army Cadet programme. Considering that Powell River is a small town with an aging population, and face recruiting competition from the Navy and Air Force for "Cadet age" youth, they have done very well to maintain their current strength. This Corps remains viable as a result of the commitment of Capt Jolie and her staff of 3 CIC officers and 2 Civilian Instructors.
- They have an active shooting programme and do very well against local competition. Six Cadets from this Corps are members of the tri service band. The Royal Canadian Legion is their official sponsor.

#### 2827 BCR (PORT MOODY) RCACC

- For a small Corps this Corps continues to produce some amazing results. Five senior Cadets (from a Corps of 30) qualified in Phase 1 of NSCE. Their shooting programme has produced a top shot on the Cadet Bisley Team in C/MWO Congram He will also be competing in the BC 2007 Summer Games. Three Cadets from this Corps have applied for Spring Rifle Training in Vernon BC and if they do well, will have an opportunity to train at the Connaught Ranges in Ottawa in summer. 2007.
- Lieutenant Rothwell has 4 CIC Officers helping her conduct the Army Cadet programme.
- This Corps has a very active and supportive Sponsoring Committee, and is financially Sponsored by Branches 119 and 263 Royal Canadian Legion.

Major (Ret'd) Roger W. Prouse  
 Cadet Governor  
 Faugh-a-Ballagh.....Up the Dukes

## ON BEING A TROOP LEADER

I don't think there has been enough written or said about being a troop leader in an armoured regiment. Certainly those of us that have had this privilege can reflect on importance of that position and its influence on our military and civilian lives. I have often heard officers say that being a tank or reconnaissance (recce) troop officer was the best job in the army and I would heartily agree. In fairness though I have enjoyed every job I had in the army from troop leader to commanding officer but one cannot be the latter without all of the wisdom gained early as a troop leader.

I was indeed fortunate in having both tank and recce troop experience but in a regular force regiment as a general rule, you had to be a tank troop leader before embarking on recce. In the summer of 1958 I was posted to the Strathcona's in Calgary as a third phase COTC (Canadian Officers Training Corps) 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. I was aware of all of the implications of that lonely pip on my shoulders and so at age 20 I wasn't exactly bursting with confidence when shortly after arrival in Calgary, I found myself in the turret of a "Charlie" call sign in 4 troop, "A" Squadron. We were practicing harbour and leaguer drills across Sarcee training area until the entire squadron could move as one across those low hills and then halt and switch off on a hand signal from "two-niner." To be a part of something like a squadron of tanks is a beautiful thing and so my education in an armoured regiment had started.



Lieutenant David A. Sproule in Egypt

I, and my COTC colleagues, had good teachers. Our OC was a wartime officer as were the Battle Captain (BC) and 2i/c. One of the troop leaders had been in Korea and the SSM and most of the troop sergeants were also veterans. I realized that I was in good hands for it seemed like these men were almost doing this for fun. By the time we got to the field in Wainwright I was the troop leader of two troop and there I remained for two months. We went immediately to the field and into harbour complete with track plan, sentries, camo etc. What happened next is the armoured Corps' greatest secret – we lived in "hoochies" beside our tanks. We dug trenches together, put clods of sod to cover the track ruts, we shared radio watch and crew cooking duties. We tightened track and cleaned air filters and hauled hundreds of gerry cans of gas onto the back deck. I was an integral part of the crew for there was no way of getting away from it and why would you want to. I had to go off to "O" groups, mark my map and prepare orders and so I learned by doing and day by day I gained confidence and got to know my men and they me. By summer's end I was an accepted member of the crew, the troop and the squadron. No one cared that I was but a COTC one-pipper. In truth I had a troop sergeant that guided me along and showed me the ropes as troop sergeants have done since the days of the cavalry.

After university graduation I was posted to the RCD and soon was a tank troop leader again and stepping into the turret of a Centurion, map in hand, bino's stuffed inside my coveralls. Nothing could be better than this. I guess that I was lucky to have a year in the turret because the RCD had been tasked to provide a recce squadron for UNEF and I was fortunate to be selected from among the aspirants. Back in the early 60's there were no formal recce training programs, there was no doctrine as such but we learned from the experience of those that had gone before us. I had 1<sup>st</sup> Troop and was fortunate to be the troop leader for just over two years with very few changes in personnel. How lucky is that? I still have my troop leaders handbook with the names, personal details and qualifications of the men in the troop. In Canada we used the Ferret Scout car as our recce vehicle and in the desert, because of their weight, narrow wheelbase and high C of G, Ferrets proved to be too dangerous and so we used jeeps. Towards the end of our tour in Egypt, I remember thinking that this was the most natural thing in the world and I could be a troop leader for the rest of my life. As we know, all good things come to an end and when we returned to Canada someone else took over and I was appointed the squadron BC. Sitting in the CP while other guys were "swanning" around the training area.



"4 this is 42 – Route report, over."

"4 send over."

And so stifling a yawn, I wrote down the info in the log, picked up the china graph pencil and marked the map and listened while the Ops NCO passed the info on to brigade. So this is what experience provides even though I realized that I couldn't be an efficient BC without having been a troop officer.

After having good squadron OCs as mentors, in 1972 I suddenly became the mentor as OC of "B" Squadron, LdSH (RC) with a mess of M113s and Lynx and a bunch of young keeners eager to get on with it. Eventually I was posted away and was thankful for the opportunity. A few years later I became a civilian and found myself a senior manager in a government department. You always fall back on what you know and so my employees were sort of like my troop. Treat them well, show them respect and ensure they get the training that they need to advance their careers and remember to ask about their families. Don't ask them to do anything that you wouldn't do yourself.

Although I received many management courses while in the army and as a civilian and heard many a management guru spout forth the latest in theory, I still was a troop leader when in my office. Now I admit that I did learn a lot from those management courses including; management by objectives or MBO, how to flow chart, interpret financial statements and budget processes, project management and the BC Labour Code but this stuff was simply the map and SOPs that helped you get on with the job.

When I moved back to Vancouver in 1986 suddenly I had the best of both worlds as I was a manager at SkyTrain with a wonderful staff and I was back in the militia. Once again I was a recce squadron OC and at age 50, having a whale of a time and then I got to be CO. I was indeed privileged in my army career to have the opportunities that I was given. I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. Back in the 90's there was a new age, self-help prophet whose name escapes me, but he wrote a book entitled, "Everything I ever learned I learned in Kindergarten." I would change that to read "...as a Troop Leader." The experience I gained then became the concrete foundation on which the bricks and mortar of my working life rest. I owe a big thank you to the COs, OCs, troop sergeants, soldiers and colleagues that helped along the way.

My vision of Valhalla is that of a large theme park where old tankers can sign out a troop for the day, mount up, (*yeah it's long way up now*), put on their head set and take their troop into the field, practice drills, blow-off a few rounds of 105 and a belt or two of coax, take a halt break, check the levels, have a brew and a peanut butter sandwich. It just couldn't get any better than that.

David Sproule  
June 22, 2006 - Vancouver, BC

## **REGIMENTAL MUSEUM SOCIETY UPDATE**

**By Jerry Couling**

### **Additions to the Collection:**

Since the last issue of *The Duke* we received the following material donations for our museum.

### **The Lamond Collection**

Early in December Joanne McInnes sent the following email to the regimental website with a copy to Dwayne Snow. The email summarizes the type of artefacts donated:

*Hello,*

*My name is Joanne McInnes and my great uncle was in your regiment and served in WW I (John M. Lamond regiment # 16387).*

*I had written before (2002) to a Sergeant Dwayne Snow, who I believe managed the archives. For personal reasons I was unable to follow through at that time to donate the items.*

*I have some 7th Battalion. Insignia and WW I medals and other memorabilia that I would like to donate to the museum.*

*I am moving to Australia at the end of the month, and wonder if there would be anyone at the Drill hall to accept this donation either on Dec 7th or Dec 14th.?*

*I look forward to hearing from you re this donation. Thank you,  
Joanne McInnes*

Dwayne met with Joanne on December 14<sup>th</sup> to accept the donation on behalf of the Museum. Included in this unique gift not mentioned in Joanne's email were pieces of shrapnel removed from Cpl Lamond's arm and shoulder. The Museum wishes to acknowledge the work done by Sgt. Ron Leblanc in organizing key parts of the collection in a dedicated display case now on view in the Museum and the assistance he gave in recording and documenting the collection.

### **Erickson Donation**

Denis Erickson kindly donated: (1) a 1909 .22 calibre rifle manufactured by Birmingham Small Arms Co. Ltd. And (2) a BCRA Medallion won by E. Erickson in 1913.

### **Smith Donation**

Richard Milton Smith generously donated a MK 6 Webley six shot .455 double action revolver, **a .303" Cartridge display, a photo and copies of the MM and MC Awards.** This revolver was the personal weapon of Mr. Smith's father, Lt. Charles Ernest, MC, MM, who served with the 29 CAN INF C.E.F. during WW1 and fought in France and Belgium. He was awarded the MM on 16 Sep 1916 and the MC on 8 Aug 1918.

### **Hutchison Donation**

Keith Hutchison recently donated a significant personal collection of military medals, artefacts and memorabilia. As we are still in the process of reviewing and recording the gifted items, we will withhold providing further details until the next issue of *The Duke*.

### **Ackrigg Acquisition**

Col(Ret'd) John L. Fraser, OMM, CD donated his Step father, Stanley Edward Ackrigg and Step Uncle John Ackrigg, KIA 1 October 1918, WW I Medals including a photo of each gentlemen and their cap badges all framed. Stanley and John served in the 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion Canadian Infantry, CEF.

### **Anticipated Acquisition**

Through the efforts of Archie Steacy we have reserved the purchase of a 1914-15 Star, British War Medal 1914 – 20, and Victory Medal. The medals are mounted on a card on original ribbons and are accompanied by a CANADA shoulder title and a General Service CANADA cap and collar badge. The medals were awarded to Pte. A. Somerville 29 CAN INF C.E.F. To date we have received pledges of \$200 towards the \$450 purchase price. To secure this worthwhile ensemble awarded to a soldier of one of Vancouver's best known WW1 battalions, we need a further \$250. Please send your cheques today to the BC Regiment Museum Society care of the Drill Hall.

### **Work Parties**

To create new displays and refresh existing ones, a few dedicated members of the Museum Society meet every second Monday evening in the Museum between 1900 and 2100 hrs. The fruit of this labour is evident through Tim Monchamp's new tank display located near the Drill Hall's main entrance. Thanks Tim for your excellent work! Any Duke interested in dropping by during one of our work sessions to give a helping hand or just words of encouragement, would be greatly appreciated. Our next three sessions are scheduled for 30 April, 14 May, and 28 May.

## **SUNDAY TELEGRAPH ARTICLE**

From today's UK wires: Salute to a brave and modest nation - Kevin Myers, an Irish journalist.

LONDON - Until the deaths of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan, probably almost no one outside their home country had been aware that Canadian troops are deployed in the region. And as always, Canada will bury its dead, just as the rest of the world, as always will forget its sacrifice, just as it always forgets nearly everything Canada ever does.

It seems that Canada's historic mission is to come to the selfless aid both of its friends and of complete strangers, and then, once the crisis is over, to be well and truly ignored. Canada is the perpetual wallflower that stands on the edge of the hall, waiting for someone to come and ask her for a dance. A fire breaks out, she risks life and limb to rescue her fellow dance-goers, and suffers serious injuries. But when the hall is repaired and the dancing resumes, there is Canada, the wallflower still, while those she once helped glamorously cavort across the floor, blithely neglecting her yet again.

That is the price Canada pays for sharing the North American continent with the United States, and for being a selfless friend of Britain in two global conflicts. For much of the 20th century, Canada was torn in two different directions: It seemed to be a part of the old world, yet had an address in the new one, and that divided identity ensured that it never fully got the gratitude it deserved.

Yet its purely voluntary contribution to the cause of freedom in two world wars was perhaps the greatest of any democracy. Almost 10% of Canada's entire population of seven million people served in the armed forces during the First World War, and nearly 60,000 died. The great Allied victories of 1918 were spearheaded by Canadian troops, perhaps the most capable soldiers in the entire British order of battle.

Canada was repaid for its enormous sacrifice by downright neglect, its unique contribution to victory being absorbed into the popular Memory as somehow or other the work of the "British." The Second World War provided a re-run. The Canadian navy began the war with a half dozen vessels, and ended up policing nearly half of the Atlantic against U-boat attack. More than 120 Canadian warships participated in the Normandy landings, during which 15,000 Canadian soldiers went ashore on D-Day alone. Canada finished the war with the third-largest navy and the fourth-largest air force in the world.

The world thanked Canada with the same sublime indifference as it had the previous time. Canadian participation in the war was acknowledged in film only if it was necessary to give an American actor a part in a campaign in which the United States had clearly not participated – a touching scrupulousness which, of course, Hollywood has since abandoned, as it has any notion of a separate Canadian identity.

So it is a general rule that actors and filmmakers arriving in Hollywood keep their nationality - unless, that is, they are Canadian. Thus Mary Pickford, Walter Huston, Donald Sutherland, Michael J. Fox, William Shatner, Norman Jewison, David Cronenberg, Alex Trebek, Art Linkletter and Dan Aykroyd have in the popular perception become American, and Christopher Plummer, British. It is as if, in the very act of becoming famous, a Canadian ceases to be Canadian, unless she is Margaret Atwood, who is as unshakably Canadian as a moose, or Celine Dion, for whom Canada has proved quite unable to find any takers.

Moreover, Canada is every bit as querulously alert to the achievements of its sons and daughters as the rest of the world is completely unaware of them. The Canadians proudly say of themselves - and are unheard by anyone else - that 1% of the world's population has provided 10% of the world's peacekeeping forces. Canadian soldiers in the past half century have been the greatest peacekeepers on Earth - in 39 missions on UN mandates, and six on non-UN peacekeeping duties, from Vietnam to East Timor, from Sinai to Bosnia.

Yet the only foreign engagement that has entered the popular on-Canadian imagination was the sorry affair in Somalia, in which out-of-control paratroopers murdered two Somali infiltrators. Their regiment was then disbanded in disgrace - a uniquely Canadian act of self-abasement for which, naturally, the Canadians received no international credit.

So who today in the United States knows about the stoic and selfless friendship its northern neighbour has given it in Afghanistan? Rather like Cyrano de Bergerac, Canada repeatedly does honourable things for honourable motives, but instead of being thanked for it, it remains something of a figure of fun.

It is the Canadian way, for which Canadians should be proud, yet such honour comes at a high cost. This past year more grieving Canadian families knew that cost all too tragically well.

Thank you Kevin, we sincerely appreciate your message.

Archie Steacy

## **ASSOCIATION "KIT SHOP"**

We have received a limited supply of blazer crests which are being sold for \$30.00, plus postage of \$1.10 if applicable. Order may be directed to us at 208 – 1899 Willingdon Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5C 5T1 (604-299-8371).

If you wish to purchase a rifle green Regimental Blazer, please advise us and we will make the necessary arrangements with the supplier. The cost of a blazer is approximately \$375.00 plus taxes and \$15.00 for Regimental buttons.



## ASSOCIATION DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

Achim Lorenz H. Bekesinski  
Raymond Robert Brickell - Treasurer  
Andrew Paul Conradi  
Raymond Ernest Glover – Vice-President  
Edwin Arthur Hawthorne - Secretary  
Archie Martin Steacy - President  
Graydon Young

## REGIMENTAL WEBSITE

Please check out the Regimental website at [www.bcregiment.com](http://www.bcregiment.com) and click on "Association." You will be pleased to find current and past issues of "The Duke", general information, Membership Applications and Regimental Challenge Medallion Applications.

## ASLEEP

**K804145 Sergeant Matt Rumberg**, British Columbia Regiment (DCO) RCAC passed away on 8 April 2007. He was a member of the BCR, 2290 Cadet Corps achieving the rank of Cadet RSM. Matt, Norma and daughters reside in Burnaby, B.C.

**K68519 Trooper Graham Tench** served with 28th Armoured Regiment (British Columbia Regiment) during WW II. He passed away this spring (2007). Graham and Edith resided in Kelowna, B.C

**WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM**

## UNDER THE WEATHER

No one has reported on sick parade. However, we sincerely hope that you are all in good health and looking forward to a great summer.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

4 May 2007 – 2381 BCR (Irish Fusiliers) RCACC – Annual Ceremonial Review  
26 May 2007 – 2781 BCR (Powell River) RCACC – Annual Ceremonial Review  
2 June 2007 – 2290 BCR (101 DCOR) RCACC – Annual Ceremonial Review  
9 June 2007 – 2827 BCR (Port Moody) RCACC – Annual Ceremonial Review



Mother Canada, Mourning Her Losses at Vimy Ridge