



The Duke

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA REGIMENT (DUKE OF CONNAUGHT'S OWN) ASSOCIATION TOUR COMMEMORATING THE 110th ANNIVERSARY OF THE REGIMENT'S SOLDIERS WHO FOUGHT AND DIED DURING THE ANGLO-BOER WAR 1899 - 1902

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LCol(R) Archie M. Steacy, CD and HMaj Ted Hawthorne display the Regiment's Camp Flag during the remembrance service conducted on 27 February 2010 at Wolwerkraal (Vendusie) Cemetery, at Paardeberg, South Africa.

BACKGROUND

It was rooted in over sixty years of tension and resentment involving the British located in Cape Colony and Natal, South Africa and the descendants of the regions original Dutch settlers known as Boers (farmers) who were located in the northerly independent republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State. In 1886 the discovery of gold drew substantial numbers of fortune-hunting-individuals termed "uitlanders" mainly of British ancestry. The Transvaal government doubtful of their loyalty, refused to grant them political rights. Britain regarded the dilemma of this group as a major cause for the war.

The Boer War of 1899-1902 gave rise to Canada's first major military expedition overseas.

Sergeants of The British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own) have celebrated the Battle of Paardeberg with an annual dinner, on the day closest to the surrender of General Piet A. Cronje (27 February 1900) since 1905 when Sir Frederick Borden, K.C.M.G., Minister of the Militia and Defence unveiled the South African Boer War Memorial plaque on the east wall of the Drill Hall. The plaque erected by the Regiment and citizens of Vancouver, commemorates the Regiment's first participation and battle fatalities on active service.

Major Douglas E. Harker wrote the following extract in his book, *The Dukes*, "*The Regiment would never be the same again. Once its members have died on service, that unit has reached a new maturity and one can attain it in no other way. What Privates Jackson, Whitley and Trooper Mackintosh bequeathed to the 6th D.C.O.R. was of immeasurable value. For all their anonymity they rank among the most important men who ever served with it. The war in which they died was condemned at that time and has been condemned since for reasons which go beyond the scope of this history. Yet that war strengthened Canada's bonds with Great Britain. It tested Canadians as they had not been tested before and found them capable of sacrifice and endurance in a high degree. Though imperialism may be an ugly word today, there was a time when it embraced within its concept loyalty, honour, patriotism and other ennobling qualities*".

In February 2008, looking ahead to the 110th Anniversary of the Battle of Paardeberg, Archie Steacy and Ted Hawthorne decided to visit South Africa to explore the Anglo-Zulu Natal battlefields and Canadian Battlefields from Belmont to Paardeberg, conduct a remembrance service for the Regiment's Fallen at Paardeberg's Vendusie Cemetery, and relay the service to the Sergeants during their 2010 Paardeberg dinner.

Our party of five, Archie & Lynda Steacy, Ted & Gayle Hawthorne and Bob Remple agreed to carry out Zulu and Boer War battlefield tours, intermingled with things non-military. We organized the journey to achieve five objectives:

- participate in a safari in Kruger National Park;
- tour Anglo – Zulu Natal battlefields,
- tour 2nd Anglo Boer War battlefields in KwaZulu Natal,
- explore 2nd Anglo Boer War battlefields, Belmont, Graspan, Modder River, Magersfontein, Kimberley and Paardeberg in the Orange Free State;
- pay our respects to 7059 Private William E. Jackson buried in Vendusie Cemetery at Paardeberg, 7118 Private William F. Whitley, buried in Braamafontein Cemetery in Johannesburg and Trooper E. MacKintosh buried in Presidents (Brand) Cemetery in Bloemfontein, and
- spend some leisure time in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town.

We achieved all five objectives, but unfortunately, the 2010 Olympic Winter Games necessitated moving the Sergeants' dinner to 6 March 2010 denying us the opportunity to transmit our tour and remembrance service of the Paardeberg battle field on 27 February 2010. However, we selected a number of pertinent still photos, e-mailed them to RSM Mark Arden for presentation at the dinner by Ted Hawthorne who returned to Vancouver on 5 March 2010.

Johannesburg, 15 February 2010. Our first stop to pay our respects to Private William F. Whitley buried in Braamafontein Cemetery which is very old and generally unkempt. However, the British and Canadian area was neat and tidy, and more respectful of our Fallen. A relatively new memorial monument, situated in the centre of the area lists the Regiments and names of all Canadians and British fatalities.

Next stop was a three day safari at the Lukimbi Safari Lodge located north of the Crocodile River in the southern part of Kruger National Park. Our safari drives and bush walk, conducted by Guide, Dani and Tracker, Stranger, afforded spectacular sightings and detailed information regarding elephants, lions, giraffe, zebra, rhinos, hippos, impala, springbok, kudu, buffalo, wildebeest, spotted hyenas, crocodile, hundreds of bird species and a myriad of insects. The "dung beetle", rolling a ball of elephant poop

across a road was the hardest working insect endeavouring to impress and lure a female counterpart. Lukimbi Safari Lodge is truly outstanding in every way. The location and accommodations were 5 star plus, and the guides and trackers were friendly, exceptionally knowledgeable and the lodge staff were spectacular hosts.

Some of the most important battles in South African history were fought on KwaZulu Natal's battlefields: Zulu vs Boer, Zulu vs British and Boer vs British. We engaged the services of Mr. Ken Gillings, a retired military man and military historian extraordinaire who conducts tours around the battlefields of KwaZulu Natal and South Africa. Ken provided us with an outstanding tour of the Anglo – Zulu battlefields of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift unfolding incredible tales of courage, defeat and victory. He took us back in time, making the surrounding hills, plains and rocky outcrops spring to life with spine chilling sights and sounds of some of the bloodiest battles in history. Isandlwana, the site is overwhelming; a massive column of rock stands tall amongst the vast rolling plains and ridges. 22,000 Zulu warriors engulfed the British Camp killing all except a few who were able to escape. The fields surrounding the massive rock hold many commemorative monuments and are littered with white-washed piles of rocks marking mass graves. It is hard to picture these empty windy grasslands and silent knolls with sounds of battle...the thunder of artillery, rifle fire and the roar of fighting men.... Isandlwana, like a ghost, holds some 1,300 British and African Regulars and 2,000 Zulu warriors.

The Zulu then marched on Rorke's Drift where 139 British soldiers successfully defended their garrison against a massive attack by 4,000 to 5,000 Zulu warriors. The overwhelming Zulu attack came close to defeating the small British Garrison, but British determination ended with a successful defense of the mission station. The British Garrison losses were 17 killed, 14 wounded while the Zulu lost 351 killed. Eleven Victoria Crosses were awarded to the defenders as well as other decorations and honours.

The 2nd Anglo-Boer War battlefields of Frere, Chiveley, Colenso, Spioenkop and the Siege of Ladysmith. These battles were fought in the relief of the 118 day siege of Ladysmith. Winston Churchill was captured by Boer forces when his armoured reconnaissance train was derailed at Chiveley. General Redvers Buller, VC was repulsed with heavy losses during his attempt to force a crossing of the Tugela River at Colenso and his disastrous attack on Spioenkop summit. In each of these battle sites, Ken brilliantly presented us with a wealth of information about the Zulu, British and Boer combatants, their leaders, battle procedures, achievements, disasters, battle lessons disregarded and the senseless loss of life, by play acting particular incidents in an informative lively manner.

The highlight of the KwaZulu-Natal battlefields tour was Isandlwana, Rorkes Drift and Spioenkop battlefields.

The next leg of the journey took us to Kimberley where we acquired the services of Mr. Steve Lunderstedt, also an exceptional military historian, to guide us on our tour of the Canadian involvement from Belmont, Graspan, Ramdam to Paardeberg. Bright and early on 27 February, we drove the thirty miles to the Paardeberg battlefield located on the north bank of the Modder River. The temperature was hovering around 35 to 40 centigrade. Our first stop was the Paardeberg Museum, displaying excellent explanations, portrayals of the players, maps and three very accurate dioramas of the Paardeberg battlefield from 18 – 27 February 1900.

Our first task was to locate Paardeberg Drift where the 6th Division, XIX Brigade, including the RCR of Infantry, crossed to the north side of the Modder River of 18 February 1900. Today, the Paardeberg battlefields are mostly cultivated farmland, but large tracts remain rough terrain covered with high grass, thorn bushes and is sparsely treed. However, the tree growth along the Modder River banks is very dense. We approached the farm owners for permission to enter their property to explore the battlefields. Permission was granted and the farmers were impressed finding us to be Canadians. Our first farm exploration was a search for Paardeberg Drift. Our search commenced from the group of farm buildings, one being there during the battle, in a westerly direction through long grass, thorn bushes and other

scrub brush for approximately 2,000 meters. We finally located the drift. We had hoped to cross the drift, but due to dense tree, bush growth and high water it was not a prudent endeavour.

The easterly end of this farm property, approximately 2,000 meters, is the site of the first charge of the RCR of Infantry and the Gordon Highlanders to the initial Boer position that the British Columbia Regiment suffered its first fatal battle casualty... **Private William E. Jackson**, of Vancouver, B.C.

The next farmland, fully cultivated in corn, butternut squash and grapes covers the battlefield that was fought over for the next 10 days (19 to 27 February 1900). We drove to the location of Boer General Piet Cronje's laager, at Vendusie Drift on the Modder River to view the Boer trench lines along the 30 foot river banks. We also walked through the laager area finding numerous battle artifacts still lying about and a number of cobra holes.

Our next stop was Vendusie Cemetery where Private Jackson, six other Canadians and many British soldiers are buried. We conducted a remembrance service, laid a wreath at the main memorial monument and placed Canadian flags at each headstone. We are the first members of the British Columbia Regiment to visit in 110 years and pay respects to our Fallen Soldiers. It was indeed a very moving and heart warming experience.

Off to Bloemfontein approximately 70 miles east to pay our respects to Trooper E. MacKintosh, Strathconna Horse who succumbed to enteric fever, and is buried in President (Brand Cemetery) in Bloemfontein. We then returned to Kimberley spending the night in the Kimberley Club, a very old and prestigious organization whose members and visitors were Smutz, Rhodes, Baden-Powell, Field Marshal Lord Roberts, Winston Churchill, King George, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip to mention a few.

Once again, bright and early on 28 February, Steve Lunderstedt picked us up to drive south to Belmont, Graspan, Modder River and Magersfontein battlefields. Belmont is approximately 80 miles south of Kimberley. Belmont was a station stop along the railway that passed troops to General Lord Methuen's front line battles further north at Graspan, Modder River, and Magersfontein during October, November and December 1899 and January 1900. The Canadian first contingent, newly arrived from Canada, were sent here to guard the railway line and station. They watched with dismay the passing of thousands of troops on their way north to fight the Boer, while they were stuck, month after month, completely bored in Belmont. However, they were engaged in training to up-grade their military skills, and spent many guard and leisure hours on the summit of the kopje (Gun Hill) immediately east of Belmont. To-day, you are able to clearly read their names and other graffiti they engraved on many of the iron stone boulders scattered over the kopjes. We were very fortunate to find a number of battlefield artefacts on Gun Hill.

The Belmont railway station, termed "Canadian Guardroom and Mortuary, Belmont" and the "Canadian Hospital, Belmont" further along the tracks from the station, although both presently unused, remain in excellent condition. It was a strange but emotional feeling to stand adjacent to the railway station doorway where Canadian soldiers stood and guarded prisoners and the hospital where the Medical Officer, Captain Eugene Fiset tended the wounded 110 years ago.

The last leg of this battlefield excursion took us through Graspan, Modder River battle sites to Magersfontein Kopjes where the Boers changed their defensive tactics by constructing and manning a 14 kilometre line of trenches situated at the bottom of the kopjes rather than taking positions on the slopes and tops which would be subject to British shelling. The unsuspecting British troops were badly mauled in the ensuing battle, and were held at bay until General French's Cavalry Division made a large right flanking manoeuvre to by-pass the Boer positions and to move on in the relief of Kimberley. This outflanking manoeuvre threatened the encirclement of General Piet Cronje's Boer forces, causing him to escape eastwards where he laagered at Paardeberg on the Modder River.

It was important to mark our 110th Anniversary visit to the Battle of Paardeberg by presenting a Regimental commemorative plaque that would be displayed and safe from destruction or theft. I made

contact with Ms. Sunet Swanepoel, at the History Department of the McGregor Museum in Kimberley, requesting her assistance in placing the plaque. She was delighted to assist, and liaise with Steve Lunderstedt. Arrangements were made to make the presentation at the restaurant facility located on Magersfontein Kopje. Mr. Colin Fortune and Ms. Sunet Swanepoel met our group to receive the commemorative plaque and a photograph displaying the first group of BCR soldiers assigned to "A" Company, 2nd (Special Service) Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry.

Our BCR party was extremely pleased with the manner in which Steve Lunderstedt organized and conducted this personalized tour of Paardeberg, Belmont and Magersfontein. His professional approach, wealth of knowledge of the battlefields and ensuing actions, his friendship and subtle sense of humour made the day, providing us with an excellent perspective of these Anglo – Boer War battles.

The battlefield tour was successfully completed, so we flew to the tip of South Africa. Cape Town is truly a magnificent and friendly city....most certainly a place to spend some leisure time. We did just that for eight days before boarding our KLM flight for home. Twenty seven hours later, we arrived in Vancouver very tired but overwhelmed with our fulfilling experiences, the friendliness and magnificence of South Africa.

Archie Steacy
President Emeritus

CO'S PARADE - BURSARY PRESENTATION - 6 JANUARY 2010



Left to right: Ted Hawthorne, Pte. Scott McLean, Cpl. Andrew Quong, Cpl. Kameliya Zarkova, MCpl. Jessica Schultz, MCpl. Jeff Pesklevits, Cpl. James Alexander and Ray Glover.

The Regimental Association is pleased to announce that the following members of the Regiment have been awarded bursaries in the amount of \$500.00 each:

Cpl. James A. Alexander
MCpl. Jessica Anne Schultz
Pte. Scott Kristen McLean
Cpl. Andrew Quong
Pte. Karen C. P. Castro
MCpl. Jeff Pesklevits
Cpl. Kameliya Zarkova
Capt. Paul M. Beckingham

The Regimental Association was privileged to present six of the bursaries at the CO's Parade held on Wednesday, 6 January 2010 at the Drill Hall. It was a very happy event with ten members of the Regimental Association in attendance. Regrettably, Capt Paul Beckingham and Pte. Karen Castro were unable to attend due to prior commitments.

The 2009 Bursary Program of the Regimental Association's Charitable Trust has been a great success with a record number of awards being given. We are hopeful that our program will continue to expand over the years with the increasing support of our members.

Our members were also pleased to be present and observe the swearing in ceremony of four new members (in the presence of their family and friends). HCol Ireland administered the oath and LCol Kadonoff signed off on each candidate and congratulated each new member of the Regiment. It was a pleasure to be in attendance!

Many thanks to the LCol Kadonoff and CWO Arden, RSM, for their hospitality. The photograph of the Bursary recipients says it all. Thank you to Cpl Zarkova for the photo.

All the best and Up the Dukes!

THE VIEW FROM THE BUTTE

by: Jack Drake

Apparently there is no view from the butte this edition! Accordingly, there will be nothing to sensor!

THE START LINE

by: David Sproule

LEST I FORGET

Over the years I have written many articles for "The Duke" as well as the RCD Association newsletter "The Dragoon" about my remembrances from my years of service. A military career exposes one to a host experiences and the influences of many individuals. I got to thinking about those years and experiences and the debt that I owe to the many soldiers, NCOs and officers with whom I soldiered and associated and so I have entitled this "start line" article "Lest I Forget". Regrettably, many of the men in the following paragraphs have joined their fallen comrades and now exist only in my memory.

First of all, why did I join the Army? In part the answer lies within my family, my Father and brothers, all served Canada in peace and war and it seemed fitting to follow in their footsteps and so I owe all of them gratitude for their example, service and hopes for my success. Although the UBC COTC contingent was my first contact with a formed military unit, my first memory of a man that influenced my future was my

troop sergeant in basic training at the RCAC School during the summer of 1956. Sergeant “Bud” Wheat, a Strathcona, encouraged and kidded us but also kicked our collective butts when necessary. After 12 weeks of training we emerged different men from the green recruits that started. At our passing out parade, I know he felt pride in the cohesiveness and smartness of our troop because our success was his success. Bud became RSM of the Strathcona’s but passed away a few years ago. Thanks Bud for nudging me along.

Two summers later, I had the privilege of being a tank troop leader in “A” Squadron, Strathcona’s thereby completing my COTC service. Two months in the field in Wainwright was a great introduction to the RCAC and regimental life and again, the Squadron Commander, Major Danny McLeod saw it as his responsibility to nurture, set an example and let me and my COTC colleague Brian Harvey, make mistakes as we learned our drills. It was Danny that suggested I join the regular force and so thanks Danny. Danny lives in Kingston and has had a full and busy life since retiring from the Army. I also remember Sergeant Roland, always patient and helpful to this young second lieutenant. Rolly is also gone now.

I joined the RCD in the fall of 1960 in Gaagetown and once again found myself as a tank troop leader. Armoured regiments abound with role models and mentors. It is not always an easy transition from being a young university student to becoming a functioning officer. It is the immediate responsibilities that you become immersed in – troop leading for sure but also, investigations, board of inquiry, audits and stocktaking, representing soldiers in court and preparing for deployment and lest I forget the dubious tasks of being the Regimental Orderly Officer. They say “it takes a village to raise a child” while it also “takes a Regiment to make an officer”. Thanks also to the squadron commanders, adjutants, NCOs, COs and RSMs – all fulfilling their part in launching my career and to my fellow subalterns with whom I shared these experiences.

A UN deployment offered adventure, tested our mettle and our confidence but once again thanks to our CO Major “Spike” Malone for his reminders that “soldiering can be fun” and regaled us with stories of the RCD during WW2 and as a pony soldier growing up in the pre-war RCD. He made sure that we all knew our job and of our greatest responsibility-representing our soldiers. Spike was a fine field soldier and loved the Army and being our squadron commander. Spike is also gone but always remembered – thanks “niner”

I realized during this time that being a recce troop leader was just about the best job in the world and that my time at the task was fleeting. I had a great troop and still keep in touch with members of our little band – Troopers Roy Payne, Stan Michelin and Red Hayes, Corporal Ron Bancroft and Troop Sergeant Jack Binns. We are all now well into our senior years and Jack is battling the debilitating effects of Parkinson’s disease. Two years with these guys has given me much “grist for the mill” and the joy of lasting comradeship.

I worked as a staff officer at two different headquarters – Training Command and Northern Region gaining experience among army, air force and navy members. At both these locations I worked for air force officers – one a navigator and the other a fighter pilot. Cam Whittington, the navigator, was our division senior staff officer at Training Command. Integrating the Canadian Forces was not an easy job and required commitment to the task and creative problem solving. It was Cam, transformed from a Wing Commander to a Lieutenant Colonel by an Act of Parliament, was a constant presence and stable influence as we pulled together three training systems into one.

From 1974 – ’77 it was my turn to be a senior staff officer working for a fighter pilot. Our Commander BGen Ken Thorneycroft was a thoughtful, humble and self-effacing man – not like most Army generals I had come across. Several times I had the pleasure of travelling across Canada’s Arctic and Alaska with him in CF Twin Otter 802 and it was he that always made the sandwiches for the crew and passengers and in 1979 on a canoe trip from Whitehorse to Dawson it was Ken that cooked our breakfast. After the North he became Deputy-Commander of Air Command and later was the senior Canadian at NORAD

HQ in Colorado Springs as an LGen. I remember him for his equanimity and quiet leadership and he and his wife were always gracious hosts. Today they live in Stittsville, Ontario close to their cottage and Air force friends.

Rejoining the Dukes in 1987 was a revelation. I had been away from the military for several years and from the Dukes for 27 years. What a surprise it was at a Thursday lunch to be reintroduced to Johnny Toogood and Arthur Lungley, holding down the fort just as I remember them in 1960. Their presence was a testament to me of the strength and enduring legacy that exists within our Regiment. They were both generous of spirit and time and interested in all aspects of the Regiment from cadets to the Association. As most former COs will attest, always interested in the state of the Regiment, always supportive and never interfering in anyway. The two of them set a tough example for those of us that follow. They picked up the pieces after the debacle at the "Hill", fought the Regiment from France to Germany and brought it home. Not many men that I have known, could have done that.

And so we are the sum of our parts, influenced by those we have soldiered with and in turn we ourselves developing and influencing our colleagues and associates. A final salute to those that helped along the way I'm glad our paths crossed even for a brief moment.

David Sproule, April 2010

THE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION HELPS THE CANUCKS WIN!

The Association hosted another night out on Jan 21 2010 to watch the Vancouver Canucks defeat the Dallas Stars. We started the evening in the mess where we enjoyed hors-d-oeuvres and christened a new mess bartender. At 7 PM we headed over to GM place to watch the game. We were seated in the upper rows at the west end behind the Canucks goal. At the end of two periods the game was tied at two apiece. The Association, with the help of a well lubricated fan in front of us, spurred the Canucks on to score two goals in the third period. The final score was 4-3 for the Canucks with Dallas scoring in the last minute. We then retired back to the mess where were we just about drank the mess dry. The RSM said he was confused by our thirst. What can I say hockey makes you very thirsty?

REGIMENTAL TRIVIA

Look for this new item in the September 2010 edition of "The Duke"!

VIMY RIDGE

Last Friday was a gorgeous day, no clouds, a beautiful sky and for the first times in weeks the sun was shining again. This was a day I didn't want to miss as I had taken a day off to drive to Vimy and represent the Association at the annual ceremony. As the weather conditions were excellent and due to the fact that the ceremony would not start until 6, I decided to leave early in the morning and to take the opportunity to visit some other interesting areas nearby or around Vimy.

I decided to start with a visit to Beaumont-Hamel (Newfoundland memorial), drive on to Thiepval (British memorial to the missing), visit the truly impressive Lochnagan Crater at La Boisselle, and end with The Ulster Tower (memorial to the 36th Ulster Division). This was really the first time I could visit the Somme in such perfect weather conditions. What a huge contrast between the peaceful landscapes today and the real nightmare people went through here almost a century ago. As silent witnesses, deep scarves in the surrounding fields are there to remind us about the slaughter, and so are the various signs alongside the roads, with inscriptions such as "dangereux - ne pas pénétrer - no trespassing - danger". And looking at the wilderness behind those signs you really don't feel like doing so...

After having checked that the plaque inaugurated at Bourlon Wood by the Association was still in good shape, I finally headed to Vimy, with in the back of my car the wreath I ordered for the ceremony. Though I reached Vimy well before 5.30, a traffic jam made me fear the worst as I still had to hand over the wreath before the start of the ceremony, but eventually everything turned out to be all right.



Regimental Association European Field Officer, Gauthier Hebbelynck, about to lay our wreath at the official ceremony.

The ceremony started exactly at 6, with the introduction of, and a warm welcome to all guests.

Here's a non exhaustive overview of some of the French and Canadian officials present that day:

- His Excellency Marc Lortie, Ambassador of Canada to France
- Mr. Raymond Le Deun, Sous-Préfet, Préfecture du Pas-de-Calais
- Mme. Sandelle Scrimshaw, Plenipotentiary Minister, Embassy of Canada, Paris
- Lt.Gen. Christopher Davis, CMM, CD, Canadian Military Representative to NATO
- B.Gen. Pierre St. Amand, Director, Strategic Plans, SHAPE
- Mme. Génisson, Députée - Pas-de-Calais
- Lt.Col Daniel Cian, Departmental Military Delegate, Pas-de-Calais

After the speeches of His Excellency, Mrs Scrimshaw and various other officials, the Last Post and of course the Réveille were performed by the Belgian Last Post association from Ypres - they were invited as special guests, just as the students from St Mary's high school from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

Evidently, two minutes of silence were requested to commemorate all past and present Canadian war casualties, including John Babcock, believed to be the last Canadian WW1 veteran, who passed away; the end of a generation, the end of an era!

It was a special moment for me when I heard the name of the Association and had to step forward with the wreath, carried by one of the Vimy guides. What a special moment and what a highly symbolic place for Canada and for the Association, past and present Dukes...so far away but really close at the same time...

After the ceremony I had the pleasure being invited for a drink by His Excellency M. LORTIE, who was very excited as I was the only representative of a Canadian Regimental Association, present that day. In addition, Lt Gen Davis remembered me very well as we met at the Adegem cemetery in September and in Ypres on Nov, 11th.

I guess the BCRA is getting well identified as a "regular" participant everywhere the Duty of Remembrance calls upon us in Europe!

It has been a wonderful ceremony as it always is on Vimy Ridge. Less people (estimation of 300) attended the ceremony compared to Adegem (800) and Ypres (3000), but the crowd here carried the same message as everywhere: we will remember them!

Gauthier Hebbelynck



Vimy Ridge Ceremony, 9 April 2010

Thank you so very much, Gauthier, for your excellent service and dedication!

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

By: Malin Jordan

This wasn't your typical meal for the homeless, who instead received 5-star treatment



Christopher Radziminski clears tables at the restaurant-style homeless dinner.

Most homeless meals at Christmas time are served in the conventional "soup kitchen" style where the needy line up single file and wait for a volunteer to drop some food on their plate. That wasn't the case at the Beatty Street Armoury on Dec. 19.

The British Columbia Regiment Association (BCRA), also known as the Duke of Connaught's Own, hosted a Christmas dinner for the homeless that was full, sit-down, and full-service. No one had to stand in line, either.

One hundred volunteers, the youngest aged 5, gave their time to help make the event a success. From cooking to ushering to food service to dishwashing to waiting on tables - there was even a brass band - volunteers covered every facet of service required.

HMajors (Honorary Major) Ray Glover, president of the BCRA, said he was happy his association could help, adding that plated service isn't new to the "Duke's."

"It's always been plated. It makes us a little more unique than the cafeteria style," he said. Glover noted the association finds it important to have this type of service.

"Our point of view is that it's more like us inviting them into our living rooms. We try to make it as homey as it is in our front rooms."

Glover served in the Duke's Own in the 1950s, and only recently took over the presidency of the BCRA. He loves the Christmas meal and remembers helping out at the regiment when he was a sergeant here from '57 to '59.

"The regiment did it in my day," he said. "When I was a sergeant, sergeants and officers would serve the homeless here in the drill hall, but as roles changed for the military it was discontinued."

Glover thinks the annual dinner was discontinued around 1966. It only started up again 14 or 15 years ago. "We had a committee meeting and decided to bring it back." Glover noted the regiment wouldn't be able to handle it now as it did 40 years ago, citing changing roles for the military.

"The regiment couldn't do it, but the association, which is all ex-Duke's like myself, could handle it, so about 14 or 15 years ago we started it up again."

The BCRA gives tickets to about five homeless care groups around town, and they hand the tickets out to homeless people wanting to attend the Christmas feast. Glover said this ensures there is no line up, as people can just walk in off the street and hand their ticket in, though, he added, one doesn't need a ticket to eat.

Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, was on hand to lend his support. "It's quite an honour for the regiment to have the archbishop here," added Glover.

HMajor Ted Hawthorne, vice president of the BCRA, said any leftover turkey is used up in sandwiches delivered to the needy. "A few soldiers bring about 300-400 sandwiches to the Downtown Eastside in an army panel (truck) after the meal," Hawthorne said.

Hawthorne described the meal at the armoury as "full treatment," noting that without the volunteer support it wouldn't be a success. The bulk of the volunteer force comes from the ranks of the BCRA and their wives (about 40), then the active regiment, cadets, students from St. Patrick's Regional Secondary, students from Archbishop Carney Regional Secondary, and others.



Lt. Jennifer Matheson (left to right) Sgt. Monica Oudomsouk, Jessica Miller and Rene Williamson serve some of the almost 500 meals.

"We all come back to help our own regiment," Hawthorne said.

Volunteer Private Scott McLean, an active member of the Duke of Connaught's Own, thought a full-service meal was a great idea. "It gives people a chance to be served and to be taken care of," he said.

"It's like sitting down in a restaurant or someone's home. There is a hospitality there because it's not the type of meal that pushes people through as quickly as possible. I think having servers is fantastic."

McLean said anytime he can give back to the community, helping to show the regiment cares about its neighbours, is a great opportunity. "I don't think I could've said no."

Christopher Radziminski, a former employee of the Archdiocese of Vancouver, was on hand to volunteer. The former co-ordinator of the Office of Service and Justice was all smiles as he waited on people sitting at the regiment's big round tables, cleared empty plates, and delivered full ones to new guests.

He said the service-style meal is important because it reinforces human dignity. "It's the way that people in a restaurant type of setting would want to be served. Why not offer that to others as well?"

Lynda Steacy, wife of Archie Steacy, President Emeritus of the BCRA, was in charge of the kitchen. "I have lots of help. We've been here long enough and quite a few of us know the routine."

Steacy arrived at 7 a.m. and began helping to put up tables. She said she always stays until the food runs out. "Last year we ran out of food and there were still people outside. This year we're hoping to have enough to feed 1,000."

Though things were running smoothly, Steacy was a little concerned about next year. "BCIT has been cooking the turkeys and making the stuffing and the gravy for us every year, but they've said they can't do it next year," she remarked. "There aren't many places that can cook 40 turkeys all at once."

Among the volunteers were 6-year-old twins Anastasia and Maya Bell from Gibsons. They came down for the event with their father, Lt.-Col. Peter Bell, the former commanding officer of the B.C. Regiment, and their mother Lindsay.

"We want the girls to understand the importance of service," said Lindsay.

While the girls helped deliver food and smiles inside, Steve McGinley and his Grade 8 boys' basketball team from Archbishop Carney Regional Secondary served coffee and hot chocolate outside.

One homeless man who didn't want to give his name was happy with the meal. "It looks like everything is running well. I think the food is great," he said. "I walked here when I saw it advertised in a pamphlet, so I got in without a ticket."

Another man, Wally, also thought the meal was good. "I came from downtown and I just walked right in and sat right down. There was no line; it was great."

Wally said it was his first time at the dinner, but added he'd be back next year. "It's a time of merriment. I like this time of year because everyone is in a better mood than normal."

One patron who called calling himself Full-Dot-Monte (as in full.monte, his online name) said he came every year because the meal was one of the best around. "It's always been good," he said. "I like to make an appearance here. There is not a lot that tears me away from the Internet, but this does."



Another man who called himself Tumbleweed agreed with Full-Dot-Monte, adding the food was incredible.

Shaine Arandia, a student from St. Patrick's, said volunteering was a great experience. "Getting to see all the smiles and thankful faces made me feel blessed. I also got to meet the archbishop, which was a bonus."

Loureal Agustin, also from St. Patrick's, said being chosen to volunteer was an enriching and enjoyable experience. "They do appreciate what you are doing."

Archbishop Michael Miller stands with past and present members of the Regiment.

This article has been published with the kind permission of "The B.C. Catholic". Thank you so much for this excellent coverage. We also wish to acknowledge the support of Ciara Martin and the 1st Vancouver Rangers Group.

HOCKEY NIGHT AT THE DRILL HALL

Hockey Night at the Drill Hall, with the Association was a good time. Archie was there and had opened the Museum for us. That worked out well as I had a friend with me. He enjoyed the Museum, Messes and also the people there. Snacks were good. From the volume of the conversations, everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves. RSM Arden was his usual jovial self. At the end of the evening he challenged Sandra to a game of golf. She was leading, but he managed to catch up and win by 1 stroke. I wonder if maybe RSM Arden was being polite in letting Sandra lead? The hockey game was good, would have been nice to win though. It was a fun time; hopefully we can do it again next season. Thanks to all who contributed their time and effort to put it on.

Up The Dukes,
Tom Lyth

VIMY DAY COMMEMORATION CEREMONY (VANCOUVER)

You will be pleased to know that the Vimy Day Commemoration ceremony held at Victory Square at 1100 hrs. on 9 April 2010 was a memorable time for us all. The event was well attended by about 20 members of the Regimental Association and a wreath was placed at the Cenotaph in memory of the Fallen. Many thanks to all who attended on such a fine day!



Regimental Association members in attendance at Vancouver First Vimy Day Commemoration Ceremony.

Special thanks to Cam Cathcart, Chairman of Vancouver Remembrance Day Committee, and his team who made this ceremony possible.

Again, many thanks for your support in commemorating such an important event in the history of the Regiment and our Country.

Very best wishes and Up the Dukes!!

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA REGIMENT IRISH PIPES AND DRUMS WHISKEY TASTING FUNDRAISER

With 320 people in attendance, we must be on the right track. At least that is what The BC Regiment Irish Pipes and Drums were saying during their annual fundraising whisky tasting event. This is an event that continues to grow and grow.

Many years ago the annual whisky tasting event would attract 30 people and we would be pleased with the turn out. Numbers grew and then when we had 70 people we felt that magic number was achieved. While we have given up on figuring out the magic number, we are continuing to enjoy a great evening that supports the band.



Certificate of Appreciation presented to Terry Lee, Pipe Major, SFU Pipe Band.

We were pleased to see attendance from all the Messes, Honoraries, the CO, RSM and the Association as well as the many other friends of the band. Due to the increased numbers the format was changed to have the entire event on the parade square. The new "Olympic Bar" was a hit and ensured we had a place to serve the whisky while providing those that wanted "something other" than what we had to offer. A special thank you to the builders of the bar and the Officers' Mess for providing the product and staff.

When the band returns from Ireland we will start the planning for the 2011 event – when the date is set, make sure you mark your calendar for a “do not miss event”.



In preparation for the trip the band approached The BC Regiment (DCO) Association to request assistance to ensure all knew that the band had new Regimental identity. The photo with Pipe Major Jordan Seguin, Association President Ray Glover and VP Ted Hawthorne shows the banner that the Association had made for the band's trip. There should be no doubt that the band is from Canada!! To make sure, the Association also purchased Canadian flags that will be shown on each of the band members' tunic.

B.C. REGIMENT (DCO) *IRISH PIPES & DRUMS*

REPORT ON VISIT to N. IRELAND – MARCH 10 – 20, 2010

The Irish Pipes & Drums participated in a long planned trip to Northern Ireland during the period March 10 – 20, 2010, under the direction of Pipe Major Jordan Seguin, and by permission of our CO, Lt. Colonel Bruce Kadonoff, CD.



Tour day in County Antrim – visiting the Giant's Causeway.

The idea and planning for the trip slowly developed over the years 2007, 2008 & 2009, as a result of the visit to our city by Piper – Rgr. Andrew Carlisle of the 2nd Battalion – Royal Irish Regiment Bugles Pipes & Drums. On his second visit in 2008, he brought his Pipe Major – WO James Knox, MBE, to join in and meet our band and from that point on the plan of either their band coming to meet us or our band going over there developed.

Lt. Colonel Kadonoff wrote the CO of 2 R Irish in February 2009, and received a positive response in early July 2009, inviting our band in the period of March 2010. This then set the stage for Pipe Major Seguin, Drum Sgt. Greenslade and myself to visit N. Ireland in August 2009, to lay the groundwork for the visit with the support of Lt. Colonel Kadonoff and H/ Colonel William Ireland. The visit was a big success with positive meetings held with the Adjutant of 2 R Irish – Capt. Jonathon Huxley which set the stage for our Pipe Band to visit Northern Ireland March 10 to 20, 2010.

Financially the band had been saving for several years in anticipation of some kind of major event and this proved to be it. Fundraising through 2008, 2009, and early 2010, was ramped up to meet the proposed budget and costs for this trip. Planning in the fall of 2009, led us to decide on KLM Royal Dutch Airlines as our carrier from Vancouver to Amsterdam and return along with Easy Jet for the short hop from Amsterdam to Belfast and return. The bulk of our costs was the airfare. The 2 R Irish provided accommodation and feeding along with transport by billeting us at Palace Barracks in Hollywood a short distance outside Belfast. As an active Army Base it proved to be ideal and coincided with the yearly one week camp for the 2 R Irish Pipes & Drums thus putting both bands together in the same barrack block. This immediately made the trip completely viable financially by taking care of most of our accommodation and transport costs which were wholly looked after by the British Army.

The band left on March 10, with a send off by H/Colonel William Ireland and arrived in Belfast March 11th at 7:00 PM. The R Irish bussed us to Palace Barracks where we settled in after a security briefing. Our itinerary was developed with the help of 2 R Irish and particularly Pipe Major Knox which would see us attending St. Patrick's Functions for the 2 R Irish on Sunday March 14th, at their various bases in Northern Ireland. Our Pipe Major, Jordan Seguin, was requested to split our band in two sending half to the 2nd Battalion Headquarters at Portadown and the other half to their base at Inniskilling which was another Honour for the Pipe Band to be asked to be the band at parades for the 2 R Irish. The 2 R Irish Pipe Band was detailed to parade at Ballymena, hence we were on our own both at their Headquarters in Portadown and Inniskilling. At Portadown the Honorary Colonel of the Royal Irish Regiment - The Lord Ballyedmond, OBE, was present to give the soldiers and our band the shamrocks which then afforded us the opportunity after the formal parade to gather with him in the Headquarters Mess where he was presented with a plaque from B.C. Regiment by Pipe Major Jordan Seguin.

A day of touring for both Pipe Bands together was developed for March 15th, to include Bushmill's Distillery and the Giants Causeway as well as Dunluce Castle. A community outreach visit to play at Dunluce High School was part of the package to enable military transport with each Pipe Band putting on a performance and finale at the school.

Tuesday evening, March 16th we participated in a concert in support of the Royal Irish Fusiliers Regimental Chapel in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh. Both bands were transported for afternoon sightseeing, visiting the Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum, and then the concert with both the Military Band and Pipes & Drums of 2 R Irish.

The St. Patrick's Day parade on March 17th, in Belfast went exactly as planned leaving Belfast City Hall at noon and proceeding ten blocks to Custom House Square. Our Pipe Band alone led the parade. We had the Canadian Flag out front carried by one of our band members as well as our Canadian Flag Pipe Banner on the Pipe Majors Base drone. All members had Canadian Flags sewn on their left arm and pipe bag covers. The weather was perfect – in fact it was perfect throughout our trip with no rain to speak of. It was an honour to lead the parade after which the City of Belfast hosted us to a lunch at

Waterfront Centre before returning to Palace Barracks. A change into civilian clothes and the band was off for the night to enjoy St. Patrick's Day in Belfast.



Waterfront Centre, Belfast (after St. Patrick's Day Parade)

We had planned to take the band to Dublin, Republic of Ireland and so March 18 & 19th, where set aside for this overnight visit which was a great success. Visits to the Guinness Brewery and the Temple Bar area where highlights. We returned Friday to participate in a concert at the Spires Music Hall in Belfast involving the Military Band of 2 R Irish as well as our band and the Pipe Band of the 2 R Irish for the evening of March 19th, to support the British Soldiers Fund. This concert allowed us to make presentations to their Colonel, Pipe Band and the Warrant Officer who was managing our visit in Northern Ireland by our Pipe Major. It also afforded them an opportunity to make presentations to us for our Colonel, H/Colonel and our Pipe Band which were accepted by Pipe Major Jordan Seguin, on behalf of our Regiment, before a large crowd.

We arrived home March 20th, after a day visiting Amsterdam thanks to time differences to be met by Lt. Colonel Bruce Kadonoff at the airport upon our arrival.

In conclusion it was a great experience for all with wonderful hospitality extended to us by the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment TA, as well as the British Army.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Pipe Band would like to acknowledge the incredible generosity of Mr. William E. Schmidt which literally put the Pipe Band in a position of being able to manage the trip to Northern Ireland financially and ensured the Pipe Band was able to meet its obligations during the visit and fully represent The B.C. Regiment (DCO) during our many engagements with and for the 2nd Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment and the City of Belfast. His assistance further allowed the Pipe Band to complete an exceptional arrangement in Northern Ireland whereby we obtained a set of state of the art Andante Drums for the Band.

THE IRISH FUSILIERS OF CANADA (THE VANCOUVER REGIMENT) A Short History

In the last article of "The Duke" the history article focused on the development of the British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own) in its various guises through to the turn of the 20th Century. This edition we will look at the Irish Fusiliers of Canada (The Vancouver Regiment), which amalgamated with the BCR in 2002. The BCR Irish Pipe Band recently returned from a tour of Northern Ireland where they performed to great praise to a variety of audiences and participated in a number of ceremonies and parades. Their tour was great publicity for themselves and for the BCR. The Pipe Band is a link between the Irish Fusiliers and the BCR - to note the occasion of their overseas tour, this short history of the Irish Fusiliers seems appropriate.

The Establishment of the 11th Irish Fusiliers of Canada

British Columbia in general, and Vancouver in particular, underwent a rapid increase in population in the first decade of the 20th Century. That increase in population brought with it a general demand for additional Militia units. In 1913 another infantry regiment was authorized for Vancouver and on 15 August of that year Lieutenant-Colonel George McSpadden raised the 11th Irish Fusiliers of Canada.

As the Drill Hall was simply too crowded for another unit the Irish found their first home at Britannia High School while they waited for their own purpose-built armoury. The Irish successfully conducted their first large scale training camp at Vernon in the early summer of 1914, and upon their return served alongside the DCORs during the Komagata Maru incident, where a ship with 376 Sikh passengers attempting to immigrate to Canada were forced to return to their homeland against their wishes.

At the outbreak of the First World War the Canadian Minister of Militia decided to mobilize Canada's main war effort by raising numbered battalions rather than employ the existing Militia Regiments intact. According the 11th Irish Fusiliers turned its efforts toward the recruitment and training of mobilized battalions for the Canadian overseas contingents. The 11th Irish Fusiliers provided major contingents to the 7th (1st British Columbia) Battalion, the 29th (Vancouver) Battalion, the 47th Battalion, the 54th Battalion, and the 102nd (North British Columbia) Battalion. All of these battalions fought as infantry units in the Canadian Corps of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

The 11th Irish Fusiliers of Canada formed the 121st (Western Irish) Battalion in the spring of 1915 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel McLellan. The 121st mustered 1065 officers and men, and sailed for England on 14 August 1916. Upon their arrival the 121st (Western Irish) Battalion was absorbed by the 16th Reserve Battalion and its soldiers were sent as reinforcements to the various British Columbian battalions on active service with the Canadian Corps in France. A large contingent of the Western Irish Battalion reinforced the 7th Battalion, with the 47th and 102nd also receiving drafts of Irishmen.

Three Lieutenants of the Western Irish: Brown, Lett, and Ryan, would later serve as COs of the post-war Irish Fusiliers. Of these perhaps the best known is Sherwood Lett – he would command the 4th Infantry Brigade at Dieppe in 1942 and in the opening actions of the Northwest Europe campaign in 1944. Wounded twice during the 2nd World War Brigadier Lett, CBE, DSO, MC, ED, KC, would later become a diplomat, serving in Japan and Vietnam. He was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of BC in 1955.

Between the Wars

The Irish Fusiliers were little affected by the major reorganizations that took as the Militia adjusted to a peace time footing in the early 1920s. The Regiment's name was changed to "The Irish Fusiliers of Canada" and they became the perpetuating Regiment for the 121st (Western Irish) Battalion from the Great War. Many of the officers and NCOs were veterans of the Great War and the quality of training was quite good; however a lack of funding and a scarcity of modern equipment were continuing problems. As the veterans left the Regiment for reasons of age, medical condition or family and career considerations the strength of the Regiment declined. By 1924 Irish Fusiliers were down to 245 all ranks. Shooting and sports were major activities in the Militia between the wars and the Irish Fusiliers were well known for the quality of their marksmanship.

In 1923 the Irish Fusiliers moved to a new armoury at the corner of Pender and Howe. In July of that year the Regiment was chosen to furnish the Honour Guard for the visit of American President Warren Harding during his visit to Vancouver. In the same year the Regiment was allied to the Royal Irish Fusiliers (Princess Victoria's) in the United Kingdom. In 1928 the Irish were again called upon to furnish a guard, this time for the visit of the Prince of Wales.

In 1936 the Militia in British Columbia was again subjected to a major reorganization. The world wide depression had a particularly acute affect on western Canada and manpower and funding was cut back even further; the only rational choice was to reduce the number of battalions. The Irish Fusiliers were amalgamated with the Vancouver Regiment to form a new Regiment under the name "The Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment)." This new Regiment maintained many of the traditions and accoutrements of the Irish Fusiliers of Canada, including its alliance to the Royal Irish Fusiliers. The amalgamation was particularly well managed by the leaders of both contribution Regiments. The new Regiment settled in at its new quarters at the Stanley Park Armouries, a converted horse show facility. The Regiment returned to a strength it had not seen since immediately after the Great War – the Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment) paraded 237 all ranks for its summer concentration in 1937. War clouds were looming once again in Europe, budgets were increased and new equipment began to arrive. The Vancouver militia held a major concentration in Vernon during the summer of 1939; the last time such a concentration had been held was in the summer of 1914. Upon their return the Regiments of Vancouver were placed on Active Service on 26 August 1939. War was declared two weeks later. A new era had arrived.

The Second World War

The Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment) received their initial mobilization orders in advance of the declaration of war. Shortly thereafter the Regiment adopted a multiple battalion organization with the 2nd Battalion forming a depot for training and recruitment while the 1st Battalion took over the initial detachment deployed to Prince Rupert to protect this important and remote port facility.

In the first months of the war the Prince Rupert defence force was gradually increased as men were recruited and trained. In early spring of 1941 the 1st Battalion turned over their duties protecting Prince Rupert to another unit and moved to Vancouver Island for garrison duties and training. In early 1943 the Battalion received orders to proceed to Jamaica, where it formed part of the garrison of the British West Indies for the next 16 months. In August 1944 the 1st Battalion was brought back to Canada and stationed at Camp Dundurn, Saskatchewan in preparation for deployment to England. Upon arrival in England the Battalion was informed that it would be broken up and that its personnel would be sent forward as infantry reinforcements to 2nd Canadian Corps, whose units had suffered heavy infantry casualties in the fighting in northwest Europe. The diaspora of Irish Fusiliers from Vancouver served well as fighting soldiers in most of the infantry regiments involved in overseas combat.

The Regiment was authorized to raise a 3rd Battalion at Vernon, BC in 1942, as a part of the west coast defence structure to guard against potential Japanese attacks or incursions. As the threat of Japanese operations off the west coast of Canada diminished, many of the units of the home defence forces for the Pacific Area were disestablished. The 3rd Battalion, the Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment) was disbanded in 1943 and the personnel from the Battalion were made available for employment overseas or other operational duties.

The only element of the Regiment to serve intact in the European Theatre of Operations was the Band of the Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment). That superb collection of musicians was adopted by General Crerar as the First Canadian Army Headquarters Band. General Crerar took a great personal interest in the Band and they served on strength of the Headquarters until the end of the war.

The Regiment also contributed to the "Canloan" scheme, where Canadian junior infantry officers surplus to the numbers needed were loaned to British units to make up for shortfalls. Four officers from the Regiment were posted to the 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers of the British Army. One of them was Lieutenant Colonel MJ Crehan, who reverted to the rank of Captain for the opportunity to serve on operational duties. Shortly after arriving at his unit he was promoted to Major; he was killed in Italy while serving as a company commander. The other three officers survived the war.

It was the fate of the Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment) not to be chosen for employment as a fighting unit in the Second World War. However, many of its officers, NCOs and serving soldiers performed very

satisfactory service in other combat units, and in the roles assigned to the Regiment in Canada and abroad. Members of the Regiment could be proud of its war record.

The Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment) after 1945

In March 1946, the unit was converted to anti-aircraft artillery and henceforth known as the 65th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment (Irish Fusiliers), Royal Canadian Artillery. This was a major change and most personnel were very disappointed to leave their traditional infantry role. To soften the blow, the unit was permitted to retain those articles of dress peculiar to Irish regiments, as well as its affiliation with the Royal Irish Fusiliers in the United Kingdom.

In 1948 the unit, along with other units in British Columbia, was called out to help combat the serious flooding in the Fraser Valley. The unit was on duty for approximately three weeks and performed admirably.

For a period of twelve years the Regiment served with distinction as an anti-aircraft artillery unit. However, this phase of the Regiment's history ended abruptly. Without warning, word came down that effective 1 September 1958 the Irish Fusiliers would be reorganized as an Infantry unit under their old name. This order was received with a welcoming cheer by members of the Regiment. The conversion to Infantry also brought amalgamation with the 120th Independent Field Battery, an artillery unit located in Prince Rupert, who became D Company of the Regiment. With that amalgamation, the Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment) took on perpetuation of the 30th (British Columbia) Battalion CEF and the 102nd (Northern British Columbia) Battalion CEF from the First World War.

Unfortunately, tragedy would soon hit the Irish. During the early hours of March 18, 1960, the Stanley Park Armoury was completely destroyed by fire. It was a total loss of treasured trophies, regimental property, records and equipment. Temporary accommodation was provided at the Jericho Beach Army Base and subsequently in the Shaughnessy Barracks, a collection of temporary buildings erected during the Second World War.

In spite of these difficulties, the Regiment carried on and, in 1962, won the coveted Wallace Trophy, awarded to the best Militia Regiment in British Columbia. Early in 1964 however, the Canadian Government issued a white paper on Defence. The Irish Fusiliers were reduced to nil strength effective 31 December 1964, and placed on the Supplementary Order of Battle. The sole saving grace was the technicality that a regiment placed on the Supplementary Order could, if necessary, be reactivated. In effect, the Regiment had ceased to exist. This was a sad blow to a unit with such a rich and proud history. The opportunity was afforded to all ranks to transfer to other Militia units. Many did, including the forty that joined the British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own).

Amalgamation

The amalgamation of the British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own) and the Irish Fusiliers of Canada (The Vancouver Regiment) on June 25, 2002 was to the significant benefit of both contributing Regiments. The history and traditions of one proud regiment, the Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment), were preserved, while the history, honour and traditions of the British Columbia Regiment (DCO) were significantly enhanced. The Regiment lives on!

Faugh-a-ballagh!

THE BCR (DCO) MUSEUM SOCIETY ARCHIVES UPDATE

Those of you who have been at the Drill Hall on Wednesdays and Thursdays may have noticed a fair bit of activity in the downstairs Archives room over the past year. A number of members of the Regiment and the Association have been working there to set up the archives properly and develop an index and inventory for the material being held. When the archives moved to their present location last winter, no organizational effort had been put toward the collection in some time. There was a general idea that the archives contained valuable historical material but much of it was difficult to find and access, based on the general volume of material that had to be searched to find things.

In April last year we began a process to bring order to chaos. First we separated the material into four categories – documents, printed volumes (published or not), pictures, and artefacts. For the artefacts, we indexed the material, placed them in numbered boxes and filed them onto shelves in specified locations. Given the close relationship between the Archives and the Museum, control of the artefacts was passed on to the Museum Curator.

We then tackled the loose documents. First we sorted out the material by era – pre-1914, First World War, 1919-1939, Second World War, and 1946 to present. Once we had a chronological sorting, we proceeded through the documents of each era by category and subject. As an example, we set up a category of “Personnel” in each era, then filed the documents by specific subject such as “nominal rolls – 1939 – 1941”, or “Ram tank training 1942”. Another example would be WWII – Operations, with a specific file on “Operation Totalize”.

We also catalogued the bound volumes and have now made a very early start on the pictures.

So far we have a very good index of the artefacts, documents and bound volumes; it is quite thorough and extends to forty typed pages. The next area of focus will be the pictures, where we will finish a chronological sort, then a subject sort, then try to put as many names to pictures as possible. We will need a great deal of help to identify the people in the pictures; the appeal for that assistance will come through “The Duke” when we are ready.

We have come up with some real gems as we went through the material. We have the original hand written after-action reports from many of the participants in Phase 2 of Operation Totalize in August 1944. These were not accessible for many years, so most of the historical writings about Worthington Force have focused on the Algonquin Regiment material. One prominent Canadian military historian has already been in touch to access this material for an academic article on the subject, which he wants to publish this autumn.

It is great to have the archives filed, indexed and accessible – archives are the heart and soul of history and we can now make our full contribution. As a long term goal, we would like to scan in the most important historical documents and pictures so they can be access over the internet.

A number of people have worked diligently in this effort. I would specifically like to recognize WO Ron Leblanc, Sergeant Dwayne Snow, Mr Bob Hall and Mr Cam Cathcart for their efforts. Lieutenant-Colonel (retired) Andy Conradi is helping with the names of people in the pictures and with the custody and indexing of the artefacts. Thanks to you all.

Keith D. Maxwell,
Chairman, Archive Committee

ST. JULIEN MESS DINNER (17 APRIL 2010)



Keith Maxwell, the 2010 recipient of the Honorary Colonel's Cup. Introduction by HCol(R) Patrick Reid and presentation by LCol Bruce Kadonoff at the St. Julien Mess Dinner on 17 April, 2010. Congratulations Keith!

THREE TIMES LUCKY ...

At a Board meeting in the fall of 2009 the topic of arranging a group of 20 tickets for Association members and friends to purchase was discussed. The idea presented was to gather in the Sgts' Mess before the game, have a snack (which has turned into a light dinner) and reasonably priced drinks (for those that have been to GM Place – you understand) before the game. Then head to the game as a group and return to the Mess after the game.

The first event in November was a success – the feedback was great, so we tried another game in early 2010. Sold out again and the feedback was still positive. So, we did another game in April with similar results and feedback.

With the season almost over we are looking to next season. If you are interested in hearing about future opportunities to purchase Canuck tickets, please send me a note at wrdiamond@gmail.com and I will add you to my list to notify for next year. I will also be asking those interested if they want to sit as a group of 20 in the Upper Bowl, Lower Bowl or even a suite. The other question will be which night(s) works best – a week night or weekend game? When I have an idea of the different prices I will let those that have expressed interest know and a decision can be made.

If there are other group activities you are interested in – let me know.

VANCOUVER 2010 WINTER OLYMPICS & THE REGIMENT

As we all know now the Vancouver 2010 Olympics were a complete success! What we didn't know going into them was how the Regiment would be affected. Several other units (12 SVC, 6th Fld, HMCS Discovery, Seaforth) had to lose their armouries or work around the CF provisions for Operation Podium. Back at the Drill Hall we maintained our own 24/7 security due to concerns over threats from protest groups but in the end the Drill Hall's proximity to 'everything' kept it free from any restrictive commitments and we were never lost use of our facilities.

The Regiment itself supplied a small troop to Op Podium and these troops worked on a full 6 month call out to fulfill their role. This meant that for most of the weekday Olympic hockey games the WO's & Sgt's Mess was open for members of the Regiment and their guests & for weekends (gold medal game) we built a 30' x 30' screen on the parade square to accommodate more people.

As the Olympic fever swept over the city we even held a Regimental Ball Hockey Olympics on the parade square and with the big main doors open several hundred visitors got to watch and check out the Drill Hall. For the gold medal game we had approximately 300 members and their guests watching and cheering on Canada!

During any gold medal ceremony for Canada we played the presentation music from BC Place onto Beatty St.! It was quite moving to see the street full of people stop, face the Drill Hall and sing O' Canada! It was truly an amazing feeling! Besides the photos of the Olympic Cauldron I think every visitor also had at least one photo of their kids on our Ram Tank out front!

On the practical side we were very pleased to be able to support the police and ambulance folks whenever they needed a private place to rest!

Go Canada!

RSM Mark Arden

ANNUAL PAARDEBERG DINNER



RSM Mark Arden and Hon Sgt Ted Hawthorne

Once again the WOs & Sgts of the Regiment celebrated their Annual Paardeberg dinner on Saturday March 6th. This is the most formal event for their membership where every loyal retired WO & Sgt that can get away from their wives or husbands attends every year!

To remember and respect this incredible piece of our Regiment's history (where the senior member from the Regiment was a Sgt), the serving members put their greatest efforts into making this dinner memorable. This year we were very fortunate to have Hon Sgt Ted Hawthorne present photos of his pilgrimage to the actual battle sites of Paardeberg from which he had just returned. Both he and Hon Sgt Steacy had travelled there in February and presented a plaque to the local museum on the Regiment's behalf. Hon Sgt Hawthorne also presented the Mess with some soil taken from the actual spot where our Regiment's first battle honour was won! This will now reside in our locked case beside Samson! As most of us will never be able to visit Paardeberg we greatly appreciated their photos, stories and small piece of ground they brought home to us! Thank you Ted and Archie!

RSM Mark Arden

VERNON ARMY CADET CAMP (VACC)
Major Roy J. Rigby-Jones, CD. 21 June 1921 – 27 June 2009



Archie Steacy, Graydon Young and Ted Hawthorne

Archie Steacy, Graydon Young and Ted Hawthorne attended Vernon Army Cadet Camp on 25 April 2010 for the dedication of a bench, in Coutts-Common, VACC, in memory of Major Roy J. Rigby-Jones, CD. Major Rigby-Jones joined the Irish Fusilier Cadets in 1938, the Irish Fusiliers of Canada (The Vancouver Regiment) during World War II and the New Westminster Regiment post war. Roy was a firm believer in youth programs, spending 38 years of devoted service as the Executive Director, President and Advisor of the British Columbia Army Cadet League of Canada. His ashes were spread in the Camp's Maple Grove adjacent to Coutts-Common.

64TH ANNUAL VETERAN “APPLEKNOCKERS” LUNCH, 24 APRIL 2010, VERNON , B.C.



Front Row (Seated): L to R . Carroll Willems; Don Cameron; Keith Moore holding BCR Mascot, Duke A. Bear; Henry Kriwoken; Mal Land; Ted Weddell & Harry Quarton (South Alberta Regiment). Rear row: L to R. Bob Remple; Ted Hawthorne; Tom Lyth; Ron Gilbert; Archie Steacy; Jerry Couling; Keith Maxwell; Kim Bekesinski; Jack Drake & Graydon Young. Not available - Ray Glover. Absent due to health concerns: Norman Kipnis and Herbert Whitehead.

The 64th Annual Veteran “Appleknockers” Lunch, held on 24 April 2010 at the Blue Heron Pub in Vernon, B.C. was attended by 32 Dukes, their spouses and guests. It was great to have Harry and May Quarton (South Alberta Regiment), Dorothy Harrop and guests Glen Land, Don Trudeau and Wolf Roesler join us for the luncheon. A sumptuous buffet was enjoyed by all.

The toasts were proposed as follows: The Queen – Harry Quarton, The Fallen – Carroll Willems, The Regiment – Ted Weddell. Ted also commented on how much he and other WW II Veterans appreciated the activities of the Association in keeping them informed and ensuring the life of the Regiment is not forgotten, and Lt Col Arthur Lungley – Ray Glover.

Ted Hawthorne was asked to read a report from RSM Mark Arden regarding the “State of the Regiment” on behalf of LCol Bruce Kadonoff, Commanding Officer and himself. The details provided a very thorough and stirring synopsis of the Regiment, its soldiers, activities and successes, standing the Regiment very tall in relation to other units throughout Canada. The RSM’s statements, compliments and sincere thanks to the Association and his soldiers, made WW II and post war Dukes and our spouses feel extremely proud of their loyalty to our great Regiment.

On behalf of the Association, MC Archie Steacy spoke of the following activities conducted by the Association during the past year:

- Seven bursaries presented to serving members,
- Association members will be attending our four Cadet Corps Annual Reviews.
- Association's 110th Anniversary Tour of Boer War Battlefields (Paardeberg)
- The installation of the 4 foot cap badge, the Regiments battle honors, celtic crosses, cap badges of our perpetuated battalions, soldier figures, Regiment's name (giant shoulder title) and re-painting of the Drill Hall's interior walls.
- Former Commanding Officer, LCol Bryan Gagne to be Commander and LCol Romano Acconci to be 2-i/c, 39 Brigade.
- Association members visit the Regiment on the first parade of each month.

Many thanks to Sergeant (Ret'd) Bob Remple who very kindly volunteered to pick-up and return WW II Veterans Don Cameron and Ted Weddell to Kamloops, B.C.

A great time was had by all.

We will be holding the Veteran Appleknockers lunch in April 2011. Date to be announced.

ASSOCIATION DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

Kim Bekesinski
 Jerry Couling - Treasurer
 Andrew Conradi
 Bill Diamond - Secretary
 Raymond Glover – President
 Ted Hawthorne – Vice-President
 Keith Maxwell
 Archie Steacy – President Emeritus
 Graydon Young

ASSOCIATION SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Association continues to support, through its Charitable Trust, various annual initiatives such as our Bursary Program for serving members of the Regiment and our dinner for the homeless in the month of December. In addition, the Charitable Trust supports various projects which assist in maintaining our link with the history of the Regiment (i.e. commemorative ceremonies, dedication of memorial plaques and support of our four Cadet Corps).

A special thank you to all of those members who support the Charitable Trust! Your generosity has made it possible to accomplish many of the commemorative projects your Association has undertaken.

We also wish to thank our supporters for their "In Memoriam" donations. This is a very effective way to remember our loved ones.

DUKE'S DEN

Our readers will be pleased to know that our Regimental Mascot, Duke A. Bear, was “officially” promoted to the rank of MCpl by LCol Kadonoff at the CO's Parade on 3 February 2010. Duke had just returned from Afghanistan on leave with Cpl. Terry Haigh. The official turnover ceremony (Haigh to Hawthorne) took place at the Whiskey Tasting Fundraiser on 30 January 2010. Duke bought a round in the Junior Ranks Mess on the occasion of his promotion. His next tour was Paardeberg, South Africa to observe the 110th anniversary of the battle. Have a look at Duke's Facebook in order to keep up with his “Regimental” activities.

Duke will now join a European Battlefield Tour lead by Keith Maxwell (May 1-11, 2010).



Official transfer – Terry Haigh to Ted Hawthorne!

Duke at the Junior Ranks Club!



Duke being promoted by LCol Kadonoff!

IN THE HOSPITAL/ON THE MEND

Norm Kipnis, recently hospitalized, is on the mend and is now at home.

Herb Whitehead is at home, ill and on the mend.

Very best wishes from all of us!

ASLEEP



K2254 Trooper Gerald E. Green served with the 28th Canadian Armoured Regiment (British Columbia Regiment during World War II. He passed away on 19 November 2009. Gerald, Olive and family, resided in Vernon, B.C.

Captain Christopher (Kit) Gibson served with the 28th Canadian Armoured Regiment (British Columbia Regiment) during World War II. He came to Canada from Argentina to join the Canadian Army in 1939. Kit passed away in 1994 in Princeton, B.C.

Tk10450 Lieutenant James F. Munro served with the 1st Battalion Irish Fusiliers of Canada (The Vancouver Regiment) during and post World War II. He was a piper in the 1st Canadian Army Pipe Band. Jim, Pat & family resided in Langley, B.C.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR MILITARY SERVICE
TO THE REGIMENT AND CANADA**

**At the going down of the sun, and
In the Morning, we shall remember them.**