THE DRAGOOII

THE NATIONAL VOICE OF THE OLD COMPADES

THE ROYAL CANADIAN DRAGOONS ASSOCIATION

2017





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General Rick Hillier (retired) OC, CMM, ONL, MSC, CD Patron of the RCD Association

THE COVER



British Tank in Action a painting by Daniel Sherrin *See page 13 for more detail*

BACKGROUND IMAGE

Canadian Cavalry Ready in a Wood [Date: nd]

Artist: Alfred Bastien

Business

Held by: Beaverbrook Collection of War Art Candian War Museum

From the Editor

Bann Price

Greetings and welcome to the 2017 edition of The Dragoon – the one on the other side of The Springbok. We have the usual fare for you again, historical articles and some personal reminiscences of times at the Regiment. We are short a couple of Chapter articles, due to leadership transition but we bring you up to date next time round. New this year are Chapter article logos – hope you like them.

David Sproule, who has an article about fighting fires in Newfoundland, sent me this short reminiscence and it struck a chord. Given all of the "cross training" we have done with the British/French/German/Australian and US armies over the years, it is interesting to see that we also worked with the Indian Army. A little piece of Regimental history which does not appear in the official works.



(David Sproule) I read an online article about tensions building in Bhutan between China and India as there were in 1962 (Sino/Indian War). It reminded me that regarding the '62 conflict there was an RCD connection. I was with Spike Malone's Recce Sqn serving with UNEF in 1962 as was the 2Bn The Sikh Regt. They were rotating back to India in October and were being re-equipped with FN rifles and Sterling SMGs which were to replace their Enfields and Sten guns. MGen Gyani, the Indian UNEF commander asked the Recce Sqn to covertly train the Sikh soldiers on their new weapons. SSM Harold Wright got right on it with our best small arms instructors and every soldier in the Sikh Bn was trained on the weapons and was able to fire a few rounds that were taken from our 2nd line ammo stores. The CO, LCol Kamran presented the Squadron with a small silver trophy as a token of the battalion's appreciation. The secret training remained so. The Regiment's 1st Bn had suffered a number of casualties and so the 2nd Bn was being immediately re-equipped and going right into the line. I'm unsure where the little silver trophy is.

So, enjoy The Dragoon and The Springbok and let me know if there is anything you would like to see in the publications.

Cheers,

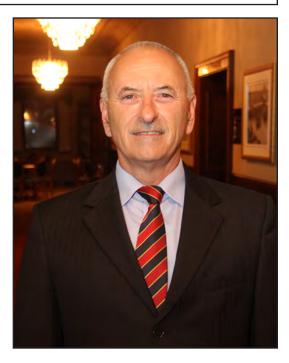
Bann

From the President

Denis Levesque

Dragoons, Ladies and Gents

I am writing this article as your president from Kingston Ontario just off the beautiful banks of Lake Ontario. We are the Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCD) Association. Many of us are aging but still fascinated by what we have accomplished over the years and take pride in being a Dragoon. As a former Regimental Sergeant Major 2003-2006, I have lived many joyful memories of this fine Regiment. We continue to enjoy the spirit of fun, laughter and cohesion, felt by many since 1883. There are many of us that still take pride in visiting our fine Regiment during special occasions. Are so proud of our currently serving members and their accomplishment. This edition of the Dragoon has been again combined with the springbok, we have elected over the last few years that this is the way to go, not only do we get a caption of what the soldiers are currently doing, but the soldiers of the Regiment also



have a snap shot of what our chapters are doing across our fine country. Please read on and enjoy the full spectrum of our serving and retired combined Springbok and Dragoon. We as an association hope you will join us at some point, regardless of rank, amount of service served, or even trade. We have many members and fostered many relationships with our combat supporting and combat service supporting arms. We still have a ton of memories to share. Regardless of positions held. I believe we could push the assn further. We have so many soldiers who have retired from the Bosnia and Afghanistan campaign. I think our readers would love to have articles from those historical events in our history. Please if you would like to contribute an article, please contact Bann Price our editor or drop me a line and I will put you in touch with Bann. We as an assn would love to read factual articles of our recent history. Articles can be of anything. A good old story of humour, or even an adventurous event. We are all interested in events that show our pride in our Regiment.

Oh yes! I would like to announce that the Ottawa Chapter of the RCD Association is in the planning stages of the assn by annual Gathering of the Dragoons, to be held in Ottawa June 2018. The committee are well into developing strategies to make this event a memorable one. I'm not one to let the cat out of the bag but I'm told that the dinner will be on board a boat on the Ottawa River. There will be more information deeper in this edition, possibly even a registration sheet for you to send in. This will truly be a special event for all.

I would like to take the opportunity to address those people who just happened to pick up this edition of the Springbok and Dragoon. You might be just asking yourself who are these Dragoons anyway. Well we are an association of retired and serving members of Canada's Senior Armoured Regiment and we can be found in regional Chapters across the country. We are a friendly bunch, always willing to welcome new faces to our humble group, always willing

to lend a hand and always willing to talk about the Regiment and it's service to our country. The Association exists to foster, maintain and promote the traditions, the wellbeing and the esprit de corps of the Regiment. However, the individual Chapters hold many welcoming events throughout the year. Summer BBQs, lunches and dinners corresponding with major Regimental celebrations such as the Leliefontein weekend, the Regimental Birthday, Leeuwarden, Remembrance Day or whatever reason comes to mind at the time are the real reasons the Association exists keeping people in touch. The Association was formed in 1974 with Brigadier EAC (Ned) Amy, acting in his capacity as Colonel of the Regiment, serving as the first President and convening the first meeting of the Association in the Armouries of the Royal Canadian Hussars in Montreal on the 26th of October of that year. The Royal Canadian Dragoons Association was granted Letters Patent effective 15 June, 1976, and the Chapters began forming in their regions shortly afterwards. Membership in the Association is through the individual Chapters and for a minimal price, brings with it subscriptions to the Association's annual newsletter "The Dragoon", and as an added bonus we are now combined with the "Springbok" the serving member's annual newsletter. Individual Chapters also produce annual newsletters so there are many opportunities to keep in touch. As a result, the Association is doing well but it is always ready to welcome new members and I urge you to contact the Chapter representative found below and talk to them about becoming a member. There are lots of opportunities to keep up with the Regiment and with the Old Comrades and Lurge you become a member and keep in touch with all of your old friends.

Denis

Memories of the OLD COMRADES



Andre Gautien 1943

The Last

Trumpet Call

"They shall grow not old, as we who are left grow old.

Age shall not weary them, not the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,

We will remember them."

2017

JANUARY

Ruta Kisielius, wife of Justin Kisielius Blackburn, Terry (25 January) Baldwin, Joseph Jake (27 January)

MARCH

Robert Hourihan (28 March)

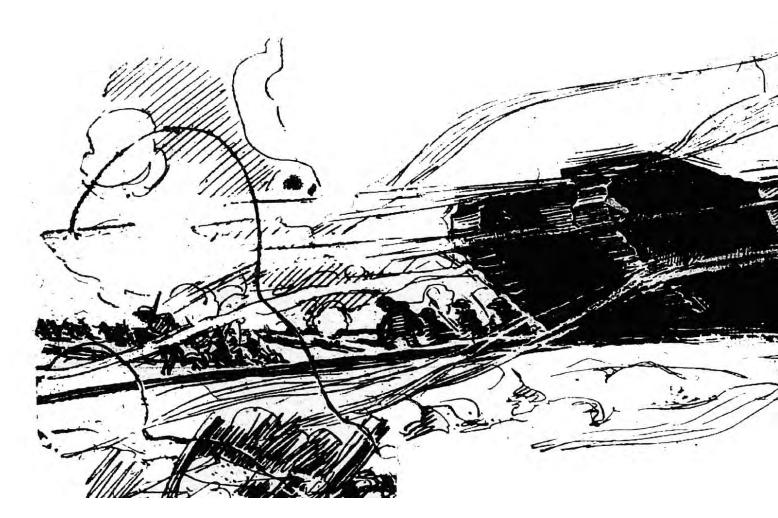
MAY

Maj (Ret'd) Bill Smith (4 May)
John Sparling (12 May)
Harold Hogan
Mike Andrews (25 May)
WO(Ret'd) George Martin(Jr) (28 May)

JULY

CWO (ret'd) Royden Messer (10 July)





The year 1917, the fourth year of the Great War, was a momentous one for the world and for Canada. Globally, the commencement of the Russian Revolution had the immediate effect of Russia making peace with Germany and the entry of the United States of America, while not providing troops immediately, contributed greatly to the morale of the Allied Forces. On the battlefield, the Germans had been preparing the Hindenburg Line and the Allies were preparing a major spring offensive. For Canadians, that spring offensive included the major Canadian victories at Vimy Ridge and Hill 70 but it also included Passchendaele, one of the low points of the war. And, as a foreshadowing for the Dragoons, 1917 included the Battle of Cambrai.

The Regiment began the year in the trenches but were soon remounted and rejoined the Calvary Brigade engaged in the advance to the Hindenburg Line. That advance was ideal for cavalry and the Brigade penetrated to the fringes of the Hindenburg Line, overrunning many German positions and taking many prisoners. For his leadership of the Dragoons during this four day advance, Col van Straubenzsee earned commendations from both the Brigade and Army commanders.

The Cavalry Brigade was withdrawn soon after for some rest and training and did not take part in either the Vimy or Hill 70 battles. The Dragoons did another spell in the trenches during the late spring and early summer, amusing themselves with raids into the German



trenches but they were once again pulled out in preparation for the Cavalry role in the upcoming 3rd Battle of Ypres. That role never materialized as the Ypres Salient, after being shelled, mined and dug up for four years, was little more than a glutinous mass of clay and mud so it was back to the trenches for the Regiment, sending work parties to help repair roads and gun positions in preparation for the Canadian Corps attack on Passchendaele village and ridge. But, yet again the Canadian Cavalry Brigade was pulled out of the line to prepare for another major battle, this time Cambrai.

The tank had been used in combat previously but usually in small numbers and over unsuitable ground. At Cambrai, the plan was to use upwards of 400 tanks, on solid ground, in a surprize attack intended to break through enemy wires and trench defenses, allowing the cavalry and infantry to break into the rear areas. The plan worked very well initially with the tanks making the breakthrough and the cavalry and infantry taking thousands of prisoners and capturing the strongly held villages protecting the St Quentin Canal. The Dragoons took part in the advance up to the Canal as part of 5th Cavalry Division It was the canal which stopped the tanks and the cavalry and the ensuing breakdown of communications effectively ended the offensive. The German counter attack was also effective and the Regiment, as the year ended, found itself once again dismounted and in the trenches.



Norm Wood Remembrance Day

Norm Wood sits in his Judson Street living room surrounded by memorabilia from his 30-year military career and pulls a small, paperbacksized banner out of a well-worn envelope.

More than 70 years ago, his mother had hung that same delicate silk banner in the front window of the Wood family home at 16 Wesley St. in Mimico – the five maple leaves adorned upon its front representative of the husband, three sons and one daughter she'd kissed goodbye as each, in turn, enlisted to serve in the military during the Second World War.

"My mother was just distraught all the time back then," Wood, now 90, recalled. "Every time the mailman came to the door, mum would run and hide because she didn't want to get a card saying one of her sons had been killed overseas."

Wood's father, Douglas, "got the ball rolling" in 1940 with his enlistment, followed by older brothers Len and Frank in 1941 and 1942, respectively, sister Evelyn in 1943, and finally Wood himself, just three days after his 18th birthday in 1944.

While Wood's father and sister remained in Canada during the war – Douglas at the air force base in Dunnville and Evelyn at Rideau Military Hospital in Ottawa – his brother Len served his time in the Hebrides and down around Burma with the Air Force, and Frank fought overseas with the Armoured Corps in France, Italy and Germany.

MIMICO'S NORM WOOD RECALLS ACTION WITH DRAGOONS IN KOREAN WAR

Cynthia Reason | Etobicoke Guardian Wed., Nov 09, 2016

Wood, meanwhile, was set to join Frank with the Calgary Regiment in Italy shortly after completing his training at Camp Borden in 1944, but was pulled off his train to Montreal before he could embark.

"It was quite a disappointment. I wanted to be over with Frank, who was going to claim me, but that was killed because they said they didn't want two brothers killed at the same time, which could have possibly happened, because Frank had it pretty rough over there in Italy."

Instead, Wood was sent back to Camp Borden, where, much to his chagrin, he recalls being assigned the menial tasks of whitewashing rocks and scrubbing pots and pans – not exactly what the eager young soldier had in mind when he enlisted.

However, a chance encounter with General Frank Worthington (aka "the father of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps") in the kitchens one day got Wood's military career back on track.

"He looked at me and he says 'Aren't you trained in Armoured Corps? What the hell are you doing washing pots? You should be back in the Armoured Corps school,'" Wood laughed.

While Wood never succeeded in joining his brothers overseas during the war (both returned safely and retired from the service shortly thereafter), he quickly came to find that the military life suited him, so he stayed on in the service.

Following postings in Fort Churchill, Manitoba and Whitehorse, Yukon, among others, Wood was sent to fight in the Korean War in 1954, just months after marrying his first wife, Dorothea. "It was not very nice over there, that's for sure. We were at what they called the sharp end, going through the Imjin River in North

Korea," Wood remembered. "Our tanks were supposed to wield off any attack from the Chinese...so we'd sit in the mountains and fire away."

Wood, who sustained a shoulder injury in Korea, received an Ambassador of Peace medal from the Korean government in honour of his service. But when asked if he wanted to participate in a revisit program for vets to return to Korea, he politely declined.

"I hear it's pretty nice over there right now, but I didn't want to go back," he said, noting that he lost friends in the fighting. "I had enough the first time."

Still, Wood's military career continued as his family grew – son Douglas was born in 1955, daughter Patricia in 1957 and son Donald in 1961. The children were just 12, 10 and six when their mother died.

Wood retired from the Canadian Forces in 1974 after 30 years of service.

Every Remembrance Day, he tries to get down to the Legion on Eighth Street with his wife Mildred to pay his last respects to fallen soldiers – especially those from his Royal Canadian Dragoons.

"I feel it's my duty to do it. It's all we can do, but it means a lot. Every year around Nov. 11, I get feeling sad about it. You feel bad because you're the only one still around. I have them dying off on me weekly these days," he lamented.

"To me, Remembrance Day is a day when you get thinking about your fallen comrades – and I got all kinds of them."

At 90, Wood is the sole surviving maple leaf from that family banner his mother hung proudly in their window what feels like, to him, a lifetime ago.

Dear Rupert

The following is a chain of letters between a retired Dragoon and his nephew who has just enlisted as an officer cadet. The nephew has visions of Wellington and Waterloo dancing in his head. He has been invited to attend a Waterloo anniversary dinner. His uncle tries to provide a more sobering guidance.

His First Mess Kit from Officers' Mess by Lt Col R.J. Dickinson, Midas Books, 1973

16 July 2015

Dear Uncle.

I've been accepted! I'm an ensign now!
What should I wear to the dinner? I have
an Officers' Mess Kit circa 1960's with
sword - could I wear that?

Sincerely, your nephew David

20 July 2015

Dear David, Sword with mess dress is a no, no. Fondly,

Uncle Christopher Late of the Royal Canadian Dragoons The Queen's Parrot Keeper

21 July 2015

David.

Kindly allow me some further, fatherly advice. Keep the ensign thing quiet. It opens you up to buggery and all sorts of other abuse. You might want to style yourself as a coronet (same pay not that coronets worry about that) but you will have to get some sort of household cavalry tie and boots, spurs, and a riding crop which have a certain cachet.

Uncle Christopher etc

30 July 2015

Dear Uncle.

Ah! Even more deception, you are a cunning sort- I will be indebted if you continue to advise. The sword incidentally was to always be able to open a bottle of Champagne when needed. I wear it out of necessity. Even without mess kit. Where does one obtain boots spurs and tie except at estate sales?

How is the Queens Parrot? Are you attending? We stopped in at Waterloo in April. Very worthwhile!

Best regards, David

5 August 2015

David.

You will need a nickname. As a cavalry subaltern, coronet, it will be Rupert. There could be several brace of Ruperts in the regiment at any one time. With regards to boots (1/4 Wellingtons) and (goose neck) spurs, please no estate sales. Only a bespoke uniform accoutrier will do. Get someone younger to show you how to use this link, Boots and Spurs, Do not even trust Canadian regimental kit shops as they are stocking those dastardly US Cavalry strap on spurs, dress regulations obviously notwithstanding. Do not take wearing spurs lightly! Unfortunately from experience I have learned to avoid: driving, dancing, drum kits at dances, and stair cases whilst wearing spurs.

The Queen's Parrot is in fine feather thank you though his cage is littered occasionally with Pusser Rum bottles.

Uncle Christopher etc

9 August 2015

Dear Uncle.
Rupert it is henceforth.

Your admiring nephew,

13 August 2015 Dear Rupert.

I did not want to swamp you with what lays ahead but since messing has come up, I have some more advice. You must be prepared to arrive with your messing kit in a box or ascertain if the squadron has one for a squadron mess.

Some miscellaneous points we can discuss in detail if you wish (cousin Doug reminded me):

1. You must get a dog. Golden Labrador will do nicely (black Labradors are for tankers). An Irish Wolfhound will seem quite ostentatious for a coronet unless you are rich enough not to care. Beware, older majors will incite their dogs to bother yours; blame you for not being able to control your dog; and send you and dog from the mess.

The dog must be able to handle a diet of pastries at every morning coffee.

The dog must never, never go into the dining room but wait for you at the door with the rest of the regimental pack.

- 2. When you arrive at the regiment learn the names of the horses and dogs quickly... even before you learn some of your duties.
- 3. Learn to play backgammon. When you are duty officer you will be expected to play

with the regimental second in command after dinner.

4. In garrison do not let your automobile remain dirty overnight... and NEVER, NEVER wash it yourself. Both offenses will result in extra orderly officer duties; the latter being the more serious offence.

5. Your mess dress must be made for you but your formal civilian attire, both white and black tie, is most often handed down. There is a certain cachet about heirlooms and the odd thread bare patch.

Fondly,

Uncle Christopher etc

18 August 2015

Dear Uncle,

I trust the fever has subsided and that you are not suffering fits of delusions any longer. It must have been quite shocking to have to be wrestled to the ground whilst singing Molly Malone in the Park outside the Courthouse in the wee hours of the morn with hardly a stitch of clothing and awakening in the fever sheds. We are all praying for a quick recovery with every glass we raise. With regard to your guidance, I have a dog, more or less and depending- a Dachshund who only understands German and Korean which I know little. Lovely thing very protective and will get along with all who she deems acceptable. As she is Kosher some dietary restrictions apply. Hopefully Rabbi is on hand at Mess to deal with issues.

I have a nice basket (picnic type, I

believe)which I travel with. It's outfitted with fine bone China and Irish finely cut crystal. I paid many sovereigns for my mess kit but suspect I procured from a dishonorable merchant so I am at a loss as to its eligible status. My concerned stemmed from first of all the smell of whisky which I mentioned to the merchant and which he subsequently dismissed stating that it was his family's tradition, for the most recent 200 years, to drink all day long to keep his mind focused on the job and the detailed sewing at hand. Obviously this should not be of concern. In addition to this peculiarity I found cigar butts and several playing cards in the pockets.

Uncle, with your sage advice I feel very confident all will be resolved, I'm a competent bridge player, and if not backgammon has no secrets I haven't discovered.

I remain your faithful, Rupert

Rupert is indeed David Parker, Kingston. David is a friend of the author and the military. He is charming, clever and witty. We cannot identify him further for fear of his gambling creditors.



Parrot lives. As seen assisting the author to navigate The Grenadine Islands in November 2016



BRITISH TANK IN ACTION

A PAINTING BY DANIEL SHERRIN

The British used tanks for the first time during the Battle of the Somme on 15 September 1916. Although they did not prove to be war-winning weapons, as some of their advocates had promised, tanks supported the infantry by clearing barbed wire and overcoming fixed defences. The tank and accompanying infantry, who are not presented to scale, have crashed through a German artillery position. Tanks in 1916 rarely penetrated this deeply into German lines, although this was more common in the final year of the war.

While in hospital in London, England, in December 1917, English landscape artist Daniel Sherrin painted this British tank in action. Sherrin had fought in the September 1916 Battle of Flers-Courcelette, France, where tanks were used for the first time. His tank is presented as almost animal-like in its ferocity, emphasizing the power of this new, terrifying weapon.

Beaverbrook Collection of War Art Canadian War Museum



In Retrospect



Div Parade 1956. Gagetown NB

The year of 1956 commenced with the usual training cycle of trade and career courses. Tpr's Doug Seed and I were selected to attend the Gnr/Op course commencing 9 January on the Centurion Mk.3 20 Pdr Gun system. The course was both interesting and challenging and a bit perplexing as in the biggest part of the gun system seemed to have the smallest part with the longest name; Screw Retaining Intermediate Firing Pin Withdrawal Lever, which was guaranteed to be on numerous test papers and as such you better remember it. With the gunnery theoretical portion over, we commenced the Communication-19 Set Radio part on the 5th of March with the completion date on 27th of April. The practical portion of the Gunnery took part at Firing Point "H" Petawawa Ranges, engaging multitude of targets with AP-HE-Smk and MG fire over a period of a week in combination with the Squadron's annual qualifications. With the Gnr/Op Gpll qualification came a small raise in pay, always most welcome, as things were improving both socially and employment wise.

Within the Regiment D Sqn was dissolved and it's personnel redistributed within the Regiment and elsewhere, all of this activity was in concert with A Sqn being posted to Germany in 1955 to replace C Sqn, and now there was a slight mumbling "Rumor" that the Regiment might also go to Germany very soon as part of a larger NATO build up, as well we are also to have a new Commanding Officer this coming Fall. Things were looking up.

Early morning Squadron parade, standing outside the Bessbarough Hall Quarters, the usual Troop Sgts request for "Volunteers" for varied sports, team events, only to be "selected" into work-details for a myriad of tasks-jobs to be performed, and this mornings "Entertainment" event happened to be the RSM's Batman, Tpr "Champ-Shiers", striding briskly past the Sqn, dressed in grey coveralls, beret, spit-polished boots and "Chomping" on an unlit cigar, does a complete "Summer-Sault" in front of the Squadron with a statement of "EH-ALICE" to the Squadron Troops and

disappears into the Sgt's Mess at roads end. The Squadron's Sergeant-Major, shakes his head, chews on his glasses and proceeds to give the required details for the days events, Troop Sergeants, carry on.

The Squadron and Troop personnel were posted-readjusted and our Troop received a new Troop Officer, Lt. Bob Coll, with me being appointed as the troop leaders Operator. Post re-org the Troop's and Sqn began their training cycle for the upcoming Summer concentration and Divisional Exercise's in Camp Gagetown N.B.

The move to Gagetown now took on the usual "Routine", Advance Party, Tank Train, Road Party and Rear Party. Arrival was well received. Shake out of Troop's and Sqn's, lots of troops and much movement. At mid-point we held a Divisional Parade at the Blissville Air Strip, very well executed, good job, now back to training.

Within our Sqn, we have a surprise, we are allocated a few Officer Cadets from The Armour School. 3 Troop is given Offr.Cdt. Mr. L_. to understudy our troop leader and be placed into our crew, not a problem, as long as we are all in one location and not moving. However, as the Regiment went into the major part of the Divisional Exercise, things went awry.

The Regiment and Squadrons moving rapidly for 72 hours non-stop, the "EX" is halted for re-org. Sqn orders; go-to-ground, one radio watch per troop until 1600 hours, crews are very tired, I initiate radio watch; 0800-1000 hrs, (Mr. L_. Still fresh from sleeping in the gun basket), would you take the first watch, Sir, yes, good; 1000-1200 hrs will be Alpha call sign, OK. We all go to ground. The morning sun is very warm, someone is shaking me relentlessly, I am on the back deck of the tank, I sit up, yes? Mr. L_, is staring me in the face, yes Sir? I am hungry says he, what? I am hungry. I do not fully comprehend his request but manage to

say, in the long bin there are 2 ration boxes, take a ration pack out, but avoid the packs with labels "Not Fit for Human Consumption", as cookies, crackers and cheese. I fall asleep.

My gallant Troop Leader, Lt. Bob Coll awakes me, yes Sir? Who is on radio watch? Mr.L__, what time is it? It's 1330 hrs. well it should be Alpha call sign, OK, where is Mr.L__? He seems to be missing, and the ration boxes are all open. Oh shit, did he eat the contaminated packs. We find him behind our tank, cookie and cracker wrappers all around him. Is he dead? No still breathing, well it may be a good sign that he may well become a good Armour Officer yet.

1700 hrs, Orders given, move into Hides, Zero Dark Thirty, Stand-To, moving to Start-Line. The battel rages, we confront the enemy on a high wet ridge line, it's 0630 hrs, raining and foggy, "Exercise-Cease-Fire" given. The Officer Commanding B San calls for his Troop Leaders to meet him at the top of the ridge line. My Troop Leader is somewhat miffed with me, it seems that he did not quiet appreciate his Map Board with its main battel trace to be used as a "Sandwich-Making" board, and somehow the "Objective" was smudged and obscured with jam and peanut butter....Hey, the sandwiches and hot coffee at 0300 hrs were good, yes?...Troop Leader departs, Mr.L is in the gunners seat resting, its wet, there is banging on the side of the tank, I open up my loaders hatch, yes? Get Mr.L__, to join me, now, yes Sir.

Mr.L__, Mr.Coll wants you top side now. He stirs and tries to extract himself from the gunners seat to the crew commanders seat, and is trying to open the C.C hatch, it won't open. I am outside, opening the C.C. hatch, its wet and slippery, Mr.L__, hand is groping the X10 Binos casing, my hand slips the C.C. hatch falls and strikes his thumb, there is bleeding, he complains, I say get the First-Aid Kit and bandage your thumb. Mr. Coll is now shouting to get Mr.L__, up there now. In desperation I

hand Mr.L__, the nearest thing I could reach. A roll of toilet paper, wrap this around your thumb.

If one was to observe this episode, you would have seen a group of men standing on a foggy wet ridge line, and one individual struggling up the hill with his Right Hand Up in the air with a roll of white paper wrapped around his thumb. In the end all was patched up with no great loss of dignity. END-EX. Pack up, clean up and roll home.

Back in Petawawa, my Troop Officer expresses his confidence in me. Take my Troop Pennant and secure it. After a short leave period it's back to the grind. B Sqn, Duty Sqn, guards, mess hall, work parties. Trooper Ed Shut and I are in high demand, the Men's Mess, walloping pots and pans. Post 2 PM, we have 2 hours off. I remember that the Troop Pennant had to be back in the Troop Officers Office. we drive down to the tank hangers. I retrieve the Pennant from the storage bin, and as a "Lark" tie it to the car's antenna and drive back to Bessbarough Hall. As we pass the Parade Square, there are the 3 SSM's marking off the square for the upcoming Regimental Parade. A short squat SSM, looks up and see's the car and the "Pennant" flying, comes to Attention and salutes. As we drive by, the SSM realizes his mistake and throws his Pace-Stick up in the air. My buddy Tpr Shut says to me, drive behind the Camp Theater, and take the Pennant down. As we work our way back to the Mess Hall the Parade Square activity look's normal. All ends well as we keep a low profile for the rest of the week.

The Regiment had its Change of Command between outgoing LCol A.E.C Amy and the Incoming LCol A.L. Brady. Things were fast changing.

In October the Mid-East crisis erupted, and the Regiment with the support from LdSH (RC) were to form the 56th Recce Sqn for deployment to Egypt in January 1957. And thus the full scale of support to man and train the Recce Sqn personnel was in effect.

A hard year, 1956, but all went well and the future for 1957 was looking better than ever.



Tk. Inf. Trg. 1956 Gagetown NB

Memories of the OLD COMRADES



Sports Day (Germany) 1965



CANADIAN HEADQUARTERS STAFF

A PAINTING BY SIR WILLIAM NEWZAM PRIOR NICHOLSON

This painting by British artist Sir William Nicholson depicts five Canadian generals and one major of the First World War standing unposed in front of a mural of the bombed Ypres Cathedral and Cloth Hall. This unfinished painting originally commissioned by Lord Beaverbrook was quickly forgotten, only to be rediscovered in the vaults of the Canadian War Museum and later hailed as Nicholson's finest work. Nicholson captured the officers in the moments before they sat for an official portrait. Unconventional for the officers' less than heroic stance, it has been argued that Nicholson may have viewed his subjects with a measure of cynicism, possibly influenced by the death of his own son in the First World War.

Personnel depicted: Generals Richard Turner, Alexander McRae, Harold McDonald, Gilbert Foster, Percival Thacker and Major Furry Montague.

Beaverbrook Collection of War Art Canadian War Museum





The Road To

GANDER

and Return

by David Sproule

I had just returned from leave in early August 1961 and I was called into the Adjutant's office and he said that I was going to take a convoy of trucks to Newfoundland the next day. Many of our troops were already there as the provincial government had requested the army's assistance in fighting the forest fires that had broken out all over the island. Troops from the Black Watch and Van Doos were also there and equipment was being assembled for the task. Most of the initial group had flown to Gander courtesy of the RCAF in C-119 "Boxcars". I was to be in charge of the second vehicle convoy heading to Gander. Later that day I met my crew of drivers, some dragoons, some RCEME craftsmen from the Workshops and some RCASC drivers from the Transport Company. We had 10 deuces full of a wide variety of stores and an M62 "wrecker" which

I would soon learn, would provided me with a measure of comfort. I was given a booklet of gas and meal vouchers, a sheaf of vehicle paperwork and a road map. I asked questions like: "how long will the trip take" and "where shall we stay en route? " good questions I thought. Militia armouries was the reply and so the following morning, I said goodbye to my very pregnant wife, and we set off.

Shortly after crossing the Saint John River on the Burton ferry, the first calamity happened when a civilian car had a slight collision with one of the trucks – minor delay. Our destination for that first night was New Glasgow, Nova Scotia and we arrived late afternoon and we "tarped-down" for the night within the armoury. Day 1 finished without calamity. A few hours into Day 2 while conducting a halt

parade on the vehicles it was discovered that one of the deuces had sheared 3 wheel nuts on the right front wheel. I could see in my minds-eye me arriving in Gander with nine vehicles and when asked about the 10th, I would be stammering that I left it in Canso at the side of the road. This wouldn't work so we up and towed the sucker all the way to the Armoury in Sidney. I think my only road trip along the Cabot Trail and I had "deuce and a half" anxiety the whole way. Magic happened in Sidney. Some "I" Staff NCO's swapped the defective wheel assembly with one from a militia vehicle and my problem was solved. Day 2 ended with us driving to North Sidney to board the CN ferry the "William Carson" bound for Port aux Basques. Last problem of the day - the superstructure on the deuces was too high for the ferry so they lifted the trucks onto the deck and turnbuckled them down for the crossing. We all slept well aboard for it was a smooth sail across the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Some years latter during a similar crossing the William Carson foundered and now is at the bottom of the Gulf.

We arrived to a sunny morning as the ferry docked in Port aux Basques and we watched idly as the vehicles were unloaded from the deck. Next stop - Gander(?) - wrong. In 1961 the Trans-Canada Highway had just been scrapped across the province and as we soon discovered the pavement ran out about 8 miles out of the Port. The road was in very poor shape and we rattled and rolled along with all of our cargo and our bodies shaking away. I think the maximum speed we could make was about 15MPH. Regrouping, our destination for Day3 would be the Royal Newfoundland Regiment armoury in Cornerbrook or Carnerbrook as I soon learned to mimic. Another revelation was about to unfold for unlike most place in Canada, we discovered, at the Legion in that fair city, that one could have a beer with a meal and be entertained at the same time - civilized drinking laws and very different from the New Brunswick that we knew.

A very interesting event occurred that night in Cornerbook that needs to be related. It is always best to treat soldiers like adults so I said to them – "go have good time but remember we have a job to do and we hit the road at 0630 hrs tomorrow." Early in the wee hours of the morning, I was awoken by the sounds of female laughter. I pulled on my pants and snooped around the armouries - everyone seemed to be accounted for and thankfully asleep. Down at the end of the drill hall floor though I could see a light coming from the furnace room so off I crept not knowing what to expect. This feminine voice was getting louder so I was concerned that it might wake up the others. I poked my head in the door and peered around the boiler and low and behold, one of the RCEME Craftsmen was about to do the dirty deed. In a voice not so loud as to be to intrusive on the scene but strong enough to assert my authority, I said, "I want her out of here now, understood." "Yes sir, right away sir," came the reply and the rest of the night passed quietly away. We were away at 0630 hrs but a few miles down the road, there she was all smiles and waving and all of the vehicles honked in chorus as we passed her.

Mercifully this would be our last day on the road. We were all getting tired of seeing the scenery at 15 mph and being shaken to bits by the washboard state of the road. I do remember one brief encounter with one of the locals on that day. Somewhere along that highway (?), as we passed through a small town a young girl looked up at me and asked, "Be ye all Newfoundlanders?" I remember this because no one had ever said "be ye" to me before in everyday speech. Newfoundland had only been in Confederation 11 years and this new Trans- Canada Highway was linking communities together that had previously been very isolated so their speech was remained quaint and distinctive. We arrived in Gander about 1530 hrs that afternoon noticina first hand around Gander the devastation that the forest fires had caused.

Up until this time, I had no idea what I would be doing during this assignment to Army Task Force Gander. I thought that I would be joining some of my Recce Squadron colleagues on the fire line but this was not to be. I reported to Captain George MacRae at Army Task Force Gander HQ in the Gander Hotel. George and I were good friends as he was our Squadron 2i/c and I was glad to see a friendly face. "Dave, lucky you". "Goose" Gosselin was the only other duty officer, so I knew immediately that I would be very busy. I was one of four RCD officers making up the HQ, the other being the Force Commander, LCol Bomber Bateman. I also found out that none of us in the HQ had been authorized temporary duty status and we had to purchase our meals in the Gander Hotel. Because I thought that I would be on the fire line I also took only two sets of bush clothing with me and this proved to be pretty inadequate for hotel living. As a duty officer the job was to maintain the maps, brief visitors, prepare SITREPS to the Army world and

stay awake for long periods of time. Goose and I worked 6 hours on and 6 off seven days a week for 30 days straight. In the meantime my wife was about to deliver and I couldn't provide her with any indication of when I would return – oh well army life, you've got to love it.

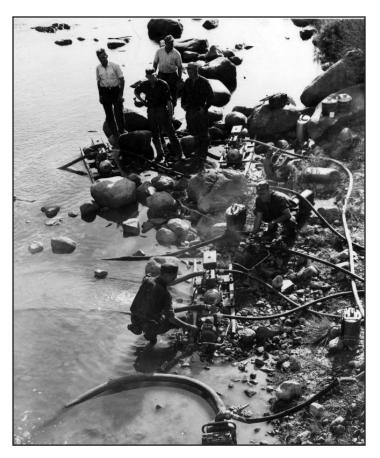
I did manage to get one trip out of Gander, I accompanied Bomber on a visit to one of our RCD Squadron camps commanded by Captain Howie Langan (Langan Force). The men had made themselves pretty comfortable in the Field in only the way that soldiers can and it was good to see a few of my troop leader colleagues. I felt a sense of guilt living in the hotel between clean sheets while they sweated it out day after day on the fire line with hand pumps, fire axes and shovels. To turn a phrase, "it was a clean job, but somebody had to do it." Communications from our HQ in Gander to the camps was a challenge and I remember at Langan camp, a soldier was posted at a pay phone booth somewhere at



the side of the road and he talked to his HQ via a 510 and we all remember what a great and reliable means of communicating that set was.

I remember passing through one of the outports on our way to Langan camp and it was a Sunday, everyone in town was dressed in their Sunday finery and after church were out walking in groups up and down the main street promenading back and forth. There were very few automobiles in the outports in 1961 as the road connecting them was new but soon these roads would change their lives forever. Most Newfoundlanders were very devout church going folks either Catholic, Salvation Army or Pentecostal and although they made our soldiers welcome they frowned on many things and as an example, there wasn't a deck of cards to be found in any of the stores.

Soon it was late September and things were starting to wind down. I thought - "I brought a convoy over so I'll get to fly back." Wrong. As it turned out I knew the road, so another group of drivers and another ten 21/2 ton trucks to return to Gagetown. I was quite anxious to get back to Fredericton and don't remember much of the trip back and considering that the vehicles had been pounding over those wretched Newfie roads for 30 days with minimum maintenance, they performed very well. It wasn't until Antiganish, Nova Scotia that we started to have a problem with one of the deuces. It had developed some transmission problems and we ended up towing it to Moncton where we left it in the RCAF Supply Depot, Transport Section parking lot. We made it back to Gagetown without any further problems and I reported into the Adjutant and I advised him that I had to leave one of the Vehicles in Moncton and I soon discovered a lesson in Army bureaucracy. It seems that all of the Gagetown vehicles that had been in service in Newfoundland had been transferred to Army Task Force Gander which was an entity of Newfoundland Area HQ and it wasn't a simple matter of us recovering the deuce from Moncton. Authority had to



be obtained from St. John's to recover the vehicle to Gagetown, with paper work going back and forth between us and them. I was glad to be a member of this Force because in 1960, I joined the Regiment just after it returned from the Tyne Valley fires in PEI and as a result I found myself as a member of the Board of Inquiry examining the costs of that operation. Some other new subbie would have the privilege this time. I got back just in time to be Orderly Officer on the weekend and that was the weekend that my wife went into labour and our first born came into this world.

Over the last few years I have watched our troops on TV fighting fires, filling sand bags in assistance to the civil authority. I'm sure that these activities continue to offer challenges similar to those that we experienced in Newfoundland. Soldiers still sleep in sleeping bags, line up with mess tins in hand and recover clapped out vehicles. Its pretty hard for technology to improve on a shovel or a sandbag and that is how these operations continue to be fought. An army life is rarely dull.



It is not always easy to write a newsletter when there isn't much going on in the Chapter, but I will attempt to entertain you with a few stories from the Atlantic Chapter. First off let me tell you that our monthly luncheons which are held every last Thursday of the month at Minglers Pub in Oromocto are always well attended. It is nice to see all of the happy faces like Ralph McAvity, Ed Moore and Ray Ward. Always entertaining to listen to the stories. The next one is this Thursday 31 Aug 17 at 1130 for 1200hrs. Pictures will be posted on Face Book in the Chapters page. If you are ever in the area please drop in.

As you know the 1st Annual Bennett Memorial Golf Tournament was held on 12 August 17 and it was a great success. The turn out was great. The Co, RSM and CoTR were here to support this excellent event. A big thank you goes out to Kenny Bradley and his crew who organized the tournament.

We also had our Chapters Annual Dinner/Dance on 12 August 17. Again this year we considered cancelling because of low numbers but in the end decided to take the financial loss which was not so bad due to the generous donations made by some of the members. We had approx 50 attending the function. Everyone who attended were very happy with the food and entertainment. I am sure that Denis Arsenault had more than one steak. Ralph and Elsie McAvity showed off some great dance moves. The CO, RSM and CoTR also attended the dinner and passed on

some info on how the Regiment and Soldiers are doing.

A big thank you to our Treasurer Lance Wiebe and Secretary John Bouwmeister for all the hard work they do to help me keep the Chapter alive.

Well that is it for now. Hopefully I will have more to talk about in our next newsletter.











Bonjour a tous, Greetings from our small group of loyal Dragoon's scattered all over the Province. Not very much to report this year, all is quiet at the front. We continue with our monthly breakfast every last Thursday of the month at Pub PJ at.....with our brothers of the Royal Canadian Hussars Association. Everyone is welcome to join us and enjoy the camaraderie over a coffee and breakfast. We hear many War stories, mainly from our new generation of soldiers that served in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Haiti and cold war veterans.

After having served as your chairman of the Quebec Chapter since 2002 I must now resign due to my circumstances at home. Being the sole care taker of my 100 plus year old

mother keeps me occupied nearly 24 hours per day plus other activities that I'm involved in. One of my daily task at 4 pm is to wheel my mother in her wheelchair to the Legion across the street for a glass of wine. I enjoyed my tenour in keeping our members informed of association activities and chatting with each one on a yearly basis which I missed this year.

Michel Vezina has gracefully accepted to take the position temporarily till we find a new volunteer. Is there anyone in this province wishing to take this task on?? Pay is good and so is the pension plan, ha, ha.

Au revoir a vous tous







To use Karl opening words I say Bonjour a tous from Quebec. After serving the association for so many years, time for retiring has come.

Karl was always there to visit our sick members and he made it a must to be in contact with all at all times. Putting together our RV 2016 in Fort St-Jean was quite a challenge but with Karl initiative and leadership, all was well done. The event was a success. So again thank you Karl for all that work over the years.

Karl requested that I take over from him, which I gladly accepted temporarily. This is going to be a very short article, because free time comes at a premium.

In July Ginette and I went to Paris for 3 days to complete a 20 days vacation with our friends and family in Britanny. Upon our return she complained about chest pains. After exams at the emergency, they discovered an aggressive cancer. Since then it is a 24 hours battle, going from hospital to doing different chores at the house. 24 hours a day is not enough.

Hope to make it for Liliefonten to see you all.

What a fine day to be a Dragoon.

Michel Vezina



The National Capital chapter continued with the traditional gatherings at Leliefontein, the Regimental birthday, and Leeuwarden Day, but this was also a year of change. Our Leliefontein gathering took place on the 28th of October at the Army Officers' Mess. Two of our long-serving chapter executives, Bill Smith and Terry Seeley, were stepping down and were presented with Regimental plaques as a much-deserved thank you for their dedication and service to the Regimental Association.

On the 16th of December we met again at the Stables to mark the Regimental birthday. We've had to modify our format because Mess policy has changed in that, except for special occasions, we can no longer reserve the Stables for our exclusive use, and the customary luncheon in the Stables is no longer provided.

However, we adjusted accordingly. The luncheon was followed by a meeting of the organizing committee for Gathering of Dragoons 2018. This event will take place in Ottawa / Gatineau 15 to 17 June 2018 and our chapter is hosting it. It is tentatively planned to have the usual meet and greet, a general Meeting of the Association, and a dinner cruise on the Ottawa River. The organizing committee is headed up by Peter Atkinson, ably assisted by Chris Chance.

Leeuwarden Day was observed on April 21st. We were very pleased that after an absence of several years, the Ambassador

of The Kingdom of The Netherlands, His Excellency Henk van der Zwan, was able to attend. The Ambassador himself is a native of Leeuwarden, so his toast to the Regiment was particularly meaningful.

Finally, some sad news; as noted earlier, Bill Smith was Chapter Secretary longer than anyone can remember. Bill passed away on May 5th, with interment at Beechwood on May 16th. The Dragoons were well represented.









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GREETINGS FROM THE OTTAWA VALLEY CHAPTER (OVC) on behalf of all members we wish you and your family happiness, good health and prosperity in the upcoming year.

In writing this article for the Dragoon, the winter months is always a good time to reflect on the past years events and activities. This past year has been marked with the traditional celebrations and parades. As an Association we have been invited to all events and Regimental activities by the CO and RSM. Thank you.

Our own agenda was business as usual, conducting our general meetings and annual Oktoberfest.

Leewarden was celebrated in the traditional manner and it was great to see Don White and so many distinguished guests turn out for the event. Don gave a tremendous speech, summarizing the lead up to the Liberation of Leewarden. This was a very informative account of the overall operation! Very well done Don your recollection and presentation was well received.

This year the 72nd anniversary was celebrated on the 13 April 2017. With the Regiment being deployed The Regimental 2ic, Maj Cameron and the DSM MWO commemorated the occasion in fine form. Don was once again asked to speak of the actions that day.

In the spring was the appointment of the 55th

RSM, CWO Shawn Mercer as the Brigade Sergeant Major, with CWO Jim Hebert taking the reins. RSM Hebert you have a big pair of shoes to fill, but we in the Association are confident you're up for the challenge. Congratulations.

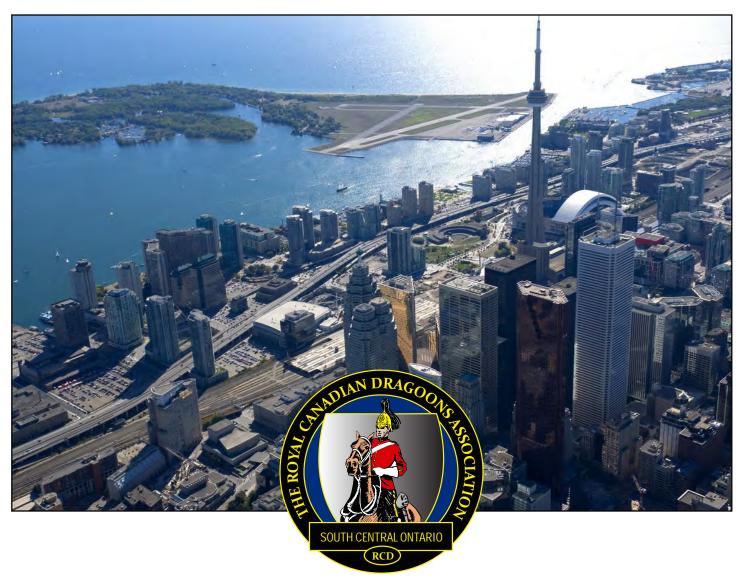








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Greetings fellow Dragoons!

It's been a relatively quiet year here at the South Central Ontario Chapter. And all things considered, that's probably a good thing!

Aside from the usually trips to Petawawa by various members of the Chapter for Leliefontein and Leeuwarden Day, We had another memorable BBQ at Don White's house in July and a great showing at the annual Warriors Day Parade at the CNE.

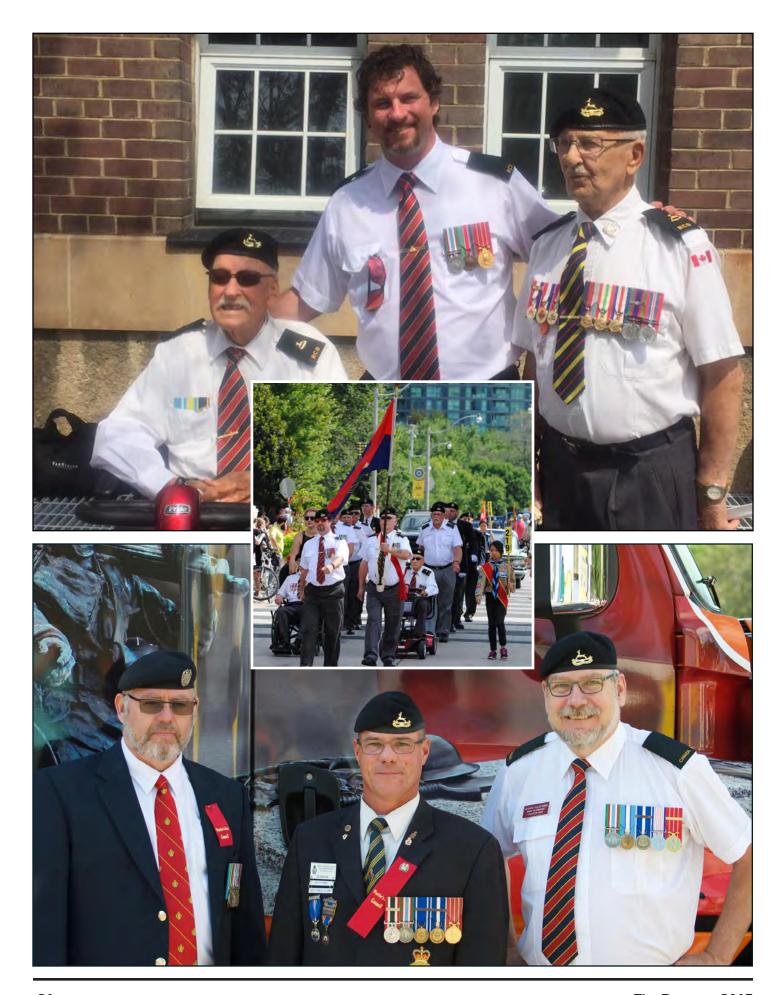
The Annual General Meeting was help this year on Sept 23rd with a new Vice Chairman being elected. Thanks to Terry Shaw for his many years of holding this chapter together and thanks to Dave Walker for stepping up

and become the new Vice Chairman.

On a side note, the next Annual General Meeting for our Chapter will be held at Don White's next BBQ in July 2018.

And don't forget the Gathering of Dragoons next spring in Ottawa!

I sincerely hope you all have a great and happy year ahead!





Greeting from the Kingston and Region Chapter. It has been a quiet year here for our little gang.

After a wonderful summer we began our year with what has become our annual End of Summer BBQ. For a change of pace we held it at the Base Kingston Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess. A fine meal of burgers and sausages which were expertly cooked by Doug Elliot. The weather was fantastic, luckily the rain held off, all in attendance had a good time despite the wasps.

In early November we gathered for our Leliefontein Social. A good crowd at the local ANAF club toasted the regiment and swapped stories. The mood was a little somber as we said good bye to a dear friend Michelle Levesque later that day. We miss her.

December brought the first chill of winter in Kingston as we held our mutual birthday celebration with our brothers in the local chapter of the RCR association. This event was hosted by us with Jeff Barr and Doug Elliot stepped up to host as I was away.

In May we held our AGM. Budgets were passed, the latest news from the Regiment was given. We were especially pleased to welcome a new member, James Ostler.

That concluded our events for the year; however, several of our members ventured north to Perth for the annual Henry Sampson

Memorial Golf tournament followed by the Corps BBQ hosted by Clive Addy and friends.

Our chapter though small is a healthy, with good consistent attendance at our events. We are looking forward to another good year and attending the Regimental gathering in Ottawa next June.

Memories of the OLD COMRADES



Hanging out on a Cougar - 1988-89



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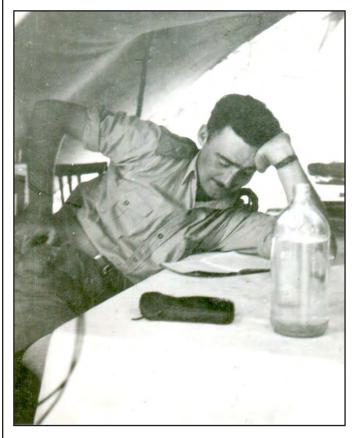


Since the issue of the 2015/16 Springbok/ Dragoon a number of significant events have taken place at and within the BC Chapter. I will cover these in following paragraphs. Firstly, your scribe was able to attend the Gathering of Dragoons in St. Jean and as a consequence be brought up to speed on all the activities of the other Chapters and the diligent work of the executive. Next, in November of 2016 the BC Chapter celebrated the action at Leliefontein at our biannual Cavalry Lunch in the beautiful seaside setting at the North Sannich Yacht Club. Our membership resides generally in three locations, the BC interior, the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. The majority, including the other Corps regiments and support arms and services reside in the latter, therefore our choice of venue.

As I am sure most of you appreciate, unless you are living close to Petawawa, Ottawa, Kingston or Gagetown, due to small numbers our chapter activities are in reality an amalgam of the other regimental attendees and our supporting arms and services friends of the Corps. This is particularly so on the west coast. The weather may be much more agreeable in the winter months but this phenomenon seems to be matched by the exorbitant living costs and in particular housing prices. If you didn't purchase a home in the 60's or 70's today's cost for the average service person retiring the cost of a home is beyond comprehension and more so affordability. Therefore our recruiting of new members is focused on those that have been living here but have drifted into the forest haze and have gone on radio

silence. I am happy to report we enrolled a new member in 2017, Mr. Dennis Jackson who served with the regiment in the 50's as an attachment from the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps. Our thanks to Peter Jarvis for locating Dennis and encouraging contact with our association chapter.

Memories of the OLD COMRADES



Capt Dan Wilkin (Germany, date not listed)



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GUILD DONORS 2017

Guild activities depend upon donors from all parts of the Regimental family and friends both individuals and corporations. Unfortunately, space in this magazine does not permit us to thank all who gave, so we have published the names of those who donated \$100 or more. Many others have generously given and we certainly thank all donors.

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