



The Duke

Inside this issue:

St. Julien Square	1
Dedication	2
Passchendaele	3
Reunion Dinner	6
Remembrance Day	6
Bold Eagle	8
Reservation Soldiers	8
Museum.....	9
On Remembrance Day...	9
BCR Cadets	11
BCVCA	12
"The Diefenbunker"	13
Shooting Competition	14
Association (Directors) ...	14
Website	14
Asleep	14

ST. JULIEN SQUARE



ST. JULIEN SQUARE DEDICATED ON 11 NOVEMBER 2007

ST. JULIEN SQUARE DEDICATION – 11 NOVEMBER 2007

After returning to the Drill Hall, the Regiment and Association attended the dedication of "St. Julien Square", a new park situated adjacent to the south side of the Drill Hall. St. Julien Square, named after the Battle of St. Julien during the 2nd Battle of Ypres, Apr/ May 1915 (WW I) is a small pedestrian mews featuring "Writing to You". Eight wooden park style benches containing bronze plaques recognizing the Regiment's five Victoria Cross Winners are placed along each side of the mews under deciduous trees. A bronze kitchen table and a bronze steamer trunk, placed in the central grassed area between the pedestrian walkways, each hold a Veteran's personal letter from overseas and a letter from his wife in Canada. The words are cut in stainless steel and are perpetually lighted from underneath. The letters, written during World War II, are from Major Lloyd and Mary Augustus. It is a very moving art work allowing all to have the privilege of sharing their love and devotion to each other in a time of world conflict.



L to R – Alison Hubbard (Augustus); Mary & Lloyd Augustus; Rosemary Hartley (Augustus)



L to R – Major (Ret'd) Lloyd Augustus and Mary Augustus

The dedication ceremony was MC'd by, Mr. Eric Hughes, Development Manager, Concord Pacific Group Inc. The dignitary party was made up of Mayor Sam Sullivan, City of Vancouver; Mr. Terry Hui, President and CEO, Concord Pacific Group Inc.; Mr. David Negrin, Senior Vice President Development, Concord Pacific Group Inc.; LCol Peter Bell, Commanding Officer, BC Regiment(DCO); Col Glenn Richmond, Commander, 39 Brigade Group; Hon Col Darrel Dean and Hon LCol William Ireland, BC Regiment (DCO); Yvonne Lammerich and Ian Carr-Harris, Artists; Major Lloyd and Mary Augustus, 28th Canadian Armoured Regiment (BCR), World War II, and daughters Alison and husband Wayne Hubbard, Rosemary Hartley and two grandchildren, Todd and Ashley and LCol (Ret'd) Archie M. Steacy, President, BC Regiment (DCO) Association.

Speakers included Mayor Sam Sullivan, LCol Peter Bell, Mr Terry Hui, Yvonne Lammerich and Ian Carr-Harris and Major Lloyd and Mary Augustus. At the conclusion of the speeches, LCol Steacy, on behalf of the BC Regiment (DCO) Association, presented Lloyd and Mary with a framed collage of St. Julien Square.

I was privileged to be asked by Colonel Patrick Reid to work with Mr. Eric Hughes, Development Manage, Concord Pacific Group Inc., and Consultant Ms. Maureen Smith to assist in the naming of the park, development of the dedication ceremony and designing and ordering the bronze Victoria Crosses and St. Julien Square plaques.



L to R – Rosemary Hartley (Augustus), Alison Hubbard (Augustus), Mr. Terry Hui, Major (Ret'd) Lloyd Augustus, Mary Augustus, LCol Peter Bell, Mayor Sam Sullivan.



L to R – Ian Carr-Harris, Artist; Yvonne Lammerick, Artist; Mary Augustus; Major (Ret'd) Lloyd Augustus; Mr. Terry Hui and Mrs. Hui.

I wish acknowledge and extend our most sincere gratitude to Colonel Patrick Reid for his commitment and involvement, over the past years, ensuring the Regiment remains in its 124 year old Citadel, The Drill Hall. The respect he has achieved undoubtedly developed an enduring relationship with Concord Pacific Group Inc., and the City of Vancouver. He is also to be congratulated for his wisdom and sense of value while participating as a member of the Art Work Selection Consultants Panel for the "Writing to You" art work design for **St. Julien Square, truly a magnificent meaningful tribute to the "Citizen Soldier"**.

Thank you Patrick.

Best wishes to you and your family during the Christmas Season and prosperous 2008.

Archie M. Steacy
President, BCRA

PASSCHENDAELE – 90TH ANNIVERSARY

The word "Passchendaele" has a special connotation for Canadian soldiers and those with a connection to the Canadian military. It also has that connotation for Canadians that have taken the time to study their history. The word brings to mind ideas of sacrifice, loss, pride, mud, blood and the accomplishment of a near-impossible mission. All of these associations and more are appropriate when thinking of the Battle of Passchendaele, which ended on 10 November 1917.

Throughout the summer and autumn this year there have been a series of events in the area of Ypres and Passchendaele to mark the 90th anniversary of the battle. The events started with a special service at the Menin Gate on 31 July to mark the anniversary of the start of the battle, running through to the weekend of 3 - 10 November, which was designated "Canada Week". In between were special events marking the successive phase of the battle, including those fought by Australian, New Zealand, Scottish and British troops.

For Canada Week a number of special events took place to mark the Canadian (and final) phase of the battle. A special commemorative display was set up by the Canadian War Museum at a farm on the original battlefield, and several events were held to remember the Canadian participation in the battle. The week culminated with a formal torch-lit ceremony at the Canadian Passchendaele War Memorial on the evening of 10 November. This was exactly 90 years to the day after the 7th Battalion (1st British Columbia Regiment), 8th Battalion (Royal Winnipeg Rifles) and the 20th Battalion (Queen's York Rangers) attacked, seized and held the highest point on the Passchendaele ridge line in the vicinity of Vindictive Crossroads. That action took the lives of 70 BCR soldiers, with another 160 wounded – almost 25% casualties.

The British Columbia Regiment was represented by myself and Gauthier Hebbelynck. We attended a seminar on the relations between Flanders and Canada. As a part of that seminar, I presented a briefing on the Canadian Corps in the First World War, with an emphasis on operations in Belgium and a special focus on Passchendaele. In addition to discussing the friendships and common purpose that Canadians and Belgians fostered during the war, it was pointed out how important the actions in Belgium are in Canadian history. Canadians lost a third of their casualties in the war on Belgian battle fields, and the war moved Canadian historical development forward at a rapid pace. Canada entered the War automatically when Britain declared war on 4 August 1914 as a self-governing colony of the British Empire. By the end of the war the foundation had been established for to put forth Canada's international interests independently, leading to her independent signature on the Peace Treaty in 1919, and, eventually, to the Statutes of Westminster in 1931, which transferred responsibility for Canada's foreign policy to Canada.

In the course of the presentation, I discussed several soldiers of Belgian origin who had immigrated to Canada, joined the Canadian Corps, and returned to Belgium to fight as Canadians. One of those soldiers, who came from Aalst, Belgium, was killed during the battle of Passchendaele. He had lived in the town of Chase and had worked as a labourer prior to enlisting in Kamloops in January 1916. He was a member of 102nd Battalion in 4th Division, and the BCR perpetuates that Battalion through its inheritance of the lineage of the Irish Fusiliers (Vancouver Regiment). Private Theophilus Van Vaerenbergh, who has no known grave and lies somewhere beneath the earth of his native land, was from our Regiment and is one of us. His name is carved on the Menin Gate.

Overall, my presentation was well received by the audience, most of whom were Flemish speakers and had to listen in a second language. The seminar helped to advance the understanding of the relationship between Canada and Belgium, and was an act of remembrance for those who fought to free Belgium from occupation and oppression.

The ceremony at the Passchendaele Memorial was heart rending and solemn – the spirit of the Canadian Corps could be felt. Attendance was truly impressive – several hundred people, ranging from the Canadian ambassador to Belgium to a large contingent from the town of Passchendaele and its surrounding area braved cold and rain to remember the 16,000 Canadian soldiers who fell on that most horrifying of battlefields. It was a fine day to be a Duke!

Keith Maxwell, OMM, CD
Colonel (retired)
HQ NATO

BATTLE OF PASSCHENDAELE OVERVIEW OF CANADIAN CORP OPERATIONS

The Canadian Corps action at Passchendaele followed the successful Corp-level offensive operations at Vimy Ridge and Hill 70 earlier in that year. Those actions had built on the enviable reputation that Canadian soldiers had built at St Julien, Mount Sorrell and the Somme. Over the objections of the Canadian Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Currie, the Corps arrived in the Passchendaele area and relieved II ANZAC Corps on 17 October.

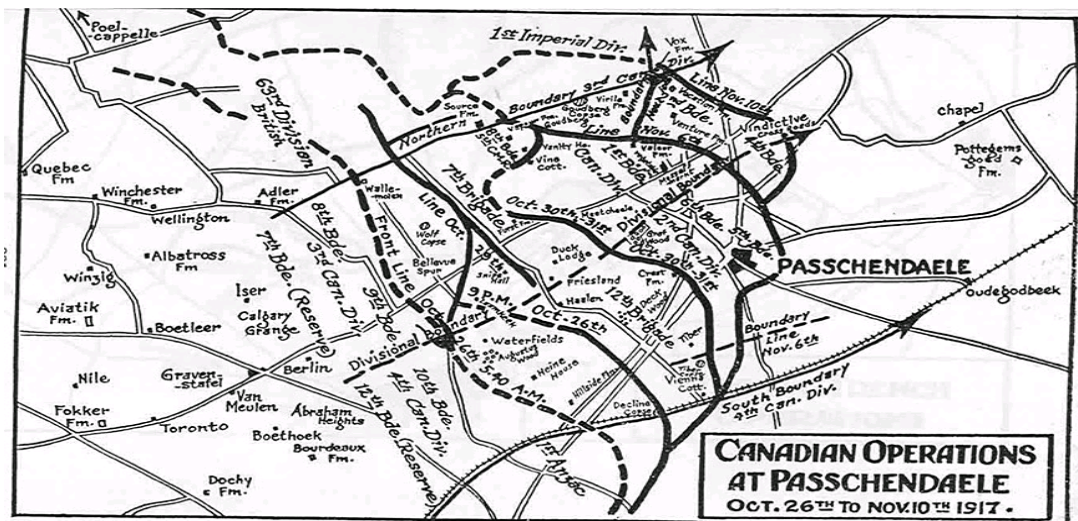
Currie ordered a pause in the operations tempo to prepare the battle. Almost half of the artillery, which was to be relieved in place, was missing or non-operational and movement channels had been totally destroyed. 12,000 men were put to work for nine days to re-establish the battle zone lines of communications, re-lay miles of duck-board paths and mule trails. They moved up the replacement artillery and huge reserves of ammunition for the first phases of the battle and the two lead Divisions moved into place. Because the entire area was flooded by the record rainfall in the autumn of 1917, which was made worse by the wholesale disruption of the drainage system, it was only possible to carry out offensive operations on the exposed ridge lines and crests. Two ridges led to Passchendaele and the highest crests on the ridge – Passchendaele ridge itself and a parallel ridge about a kilometre to the north known as Bellevue ridge. The two ridges come together just north of the town and the crest of the combined ridge reaches its highest point just north of the juncture.

Currie ordered Third Division to the Bellevue Ridge and Fourth Division up to the Passchendaele ridge about three kilometres southwest of the town. On 26 October the two Divisions attacked, each confined to a three battalion front due to the terrain restrictions. The Corps lost 2500 men and gained a kilometre, with most objectives being taken. On 30 October the two Divisions attacked again, gaining another 1100 metres at a cost of 2300 casualties. On that day the two Divisions moved up onto the higher ground of the ridge lines and soldiers of Third Division won four Victoria Crosses.

The Divisions then rotated and, on 6 November, First and Second Divisions attacked, taking the town of Passchendaele and the juncture of the ridges north of town, combining into a two Division front. This action resulted in another 2250 men lost. Finally, on 10 November, at a cost of 1100 soldiers, three battalions from First and Second Divisions, including the BCR, took the highest part of the ridge and established a favourable defensive line that took the Ypres lowlands out of observation by the enemy.

This series of Canadian attacks used "bite and hold" tactics at their best. A heavy counter-battery barrage to suppress enemy artillery was followed by a rolling barrage. The infantry followed very closely behind that barrage to take out the first line of machine gun outposts and lightly held trenches. Those lead assault battalions were then very quickly by follow-on units who reinforced the new defences to the front of the ground taken. Those reinforcements were moved in quickly enough to neutralize the skilled German counter attacks, which were the hallmark of their defensive tactics.

In the end, the Canadian Corps took Passchendaele ridge and the town – an accomplishment many had predicted unattainable. The Canadian Corps again proved itself the premier formation of the British Empire's forces on the western front.



Keith Maxwell is a 1960s Duke who joined the Regular Force serving in both the Army (PPCLI), the RCAF(until retirement) and then NATO. Gauthier Hybebbelyk a Belgian gentleman, residing near Paris, France is the Association's European Field Officer.

Keith and Gauthier, on behalf of all ranks thank you so much for making a BCR presence during the 90th Passchendaele Commemoration events. Keith, I have been advised that your briefing of the Canadian Corps in the First World War and the relationships between Belgians and Canadians was outstanding. It was a fine day to be a Duke.

Archie Steacy, President, BCRA



Canadian Soldiers take rest during the attack.



A Canadian Machine Gunner, 16th CMG Coy, 4th Canadian Division at the Battle of Passchendaele, October to November 1917



Torch light parade, Passchendaele, 10 November 2007



L to R – Hon Major Luke Vandenbussche, Col (Ret'd) Keith Maxwell and MCpl Gates (former Duke in the 1980's) waiting to lay the Association's wreath at the Canadian Passchendaele Monument, The BCR Association Floral Wreath.

ANNUAL REUNION DINNER, 10 NOV 2007

The annual reunion dinner was once again held at the Delta Suites Hotel located in downtown Vancouver. Seventy-two Dukes, spouses and friends sat down to a most scrumptious dinner and an evening of good fellowship and many war stories.

We were privileged to have the company of four of the Regiment's World War II Veterans; **Major Lloyd Augustus**, his wife Mary, daughters Rosemary Heartly and Alison and Wayne Hubbard; **Sergeant Joe Bernard**, his care giver Jessie Weisse; Trooper **Pat Nairne**, his wife Wilma and **Trooper Albert Walsh**, his friend Betty. We were also honoured to have BC Regiment Major Harj Sajjan and Captain Paul Lindsay, both recent Afghanistan Veterans, as our guests.

We were very pleased to have as our guests, the Regiment's Commanding Officer, LCol Peter Bell, Hon Col Darrell Dean and Mrs. Heather Dean and Hon LCol William Ireland and Mrs. Heather Ireland.

Each person received a small metal tin containing a quantity of Flanders Poppy Seeds with planting instructions. They were requested to plant the seeds in their gardens to commemorate the Regiment's Fallen Soldiers.

The door prizes ticket draw was a success with a number of really nice gifts being won. Thanks to Ron Banks, Ozzie Hyland and Ted Hawthorne for doing the footwork for the draw.

Special thanks to Gayle Hawthorne, Carol Glover, Lynda Steacy and Sandra Young for the door prize gifts and procuring and packaging the poppy seeds.

President Archie Steacy concluded the evening with an Association annual activities report. He outlined the Regiment's centre line of advance through France, Belgium, Holland and Germany with a series of cartoon maps drawn by 28th Armoured Regiment (BCR) Members, Sergeant Neilson and Trooper Bill Burns. He also reviewed the Regiment's first major action in Normandy, using a photo image of a 1943 contour map confirming that the battle took place on **Hill 111**. Proof was determined by map references stated in the Regiment's War Diary and Officer's after action reports.

Thanks to you all for a wonderful family evening.

REMEMBRANCE DAY - 11 NOV 2007

The weather reports indicated an unstable situation for the day. We all felt we would get doused with rain as we did in 2006. Fortunately, even though it was quite cold, the rain held off until the Last Post, at which time we were blessed with a very light sprinkling.

Four 28th Canadian Armoured Regiment (BCR) Veterans braved the weather while parading with their Association to the Cenotaph at Victory Square and the march past parade west on Hastings Street. This year, the Association was led by the Regiment's Brass Band and even though the band strength was down to approximately 12 members, their playing provided the motivation for sixty Dukes to march with pride and Armoured Corps élan.



BCR Association marching in the Vancouver Veterans Parade, Remembrance Day, 11 November 2007.



Sergeant Duncan Maillie, BCR, Cenotaph Vigil Guard Commander, marching on the Vigil Guard during the Remembrance Day Service, 11 November 2007 at Vancouver's Victory Square Cenotaph.



"Leading the Way" – BCR, CWO Mark Arden, Parade Marshal, Vancouver Remembrance Day Veterans Parade



Cenotaph Vigil Guard from BC Regiment



"On-parade with the Regiment" – Captain Michael Mallette, Lord Strathcona Horse (RC), BCR Operations Officer.



BC Regiment (DCO) marching in the Veterans Parade following the Remembrance Day Service in Vancouver's Cenotaph on 11 November 2007

YOUTH FIND WINGS WITH BOLD EAGLE

PUBLISHED IN THE METRONEWS NOVEMBER 29, 2007
JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER



Sgt. Ron Leblanc, in front of the B.C. Regiment Drill Hall on Beatty Street, is featured in the upcoming documentary Reservation Soldiers.

As a young man who was wavering on a precipice of drugs and crime, a brief stint at a youth detention centre in Burnaby changed Ron Leblanc's life forever.

The arrest introduced the teen to the army cadets and led to Leblanc's 16-year career as an army reservist with the B.C. Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own).

For three years, Leblanc worked as a recruiter, travelling to remote communities, talking to aboriginal youth about Bold Eagle, a six-week boot camp that combines First Nations teachings and army life.

Leblanc calls it the best program for aboriginal youth that he's ever seen.

"I understand where a lot of these kids are coming from, because I was there myself," said Sgt. Leblanc, 34. "Getting into trouble, using drugs and smoking ... the military really straightened me out and fairly quickly."

Reservation Soldiers, a documentary on Bold Eagle, premieres tomorrow at the Whistler Film Festival.

It runs nationwide on CTV Saturday.

"What I'm most proud of," said the film's director Lisa Jackson, "is that when we look at the young people in the documentary we see them as real people first and not as an aboriginal stereotype."

RESERVATION SOLDIERS



FORMAT:Digital Video, Colour, English

RUNNING TIME:One Broadcast Hour

DIRECTOR:Lisa Jackson

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:Trish Dolman

PRODUCERS:Trish Dolman, Trish Williams

WRITERS:Brad Quenville, Lisa Jackson

PRODUCTION FINANCING:CTF, CTV, APTN, SCN, Knowledge Network, CIFVF, Rogers Telefund

Filmed over the course of several years, **Reservation Soldiers** focuses on the relationship between the Canadian military and aboriginal youth. For Blair, Mahekan and Noel, three teenage boys from remote Western Canadian reservations, the military represents an opportunity they don't often see at home - adventure, discipline and cold hard cash. When they attend Bold Eagle, a six-week military boot camp, they face the reality of military life and ponder a possible future in the Canadian Army. Aboriginal recruiter Sergeant Ron Leblanc knows exactly where they're coming from. After 16 years in the military he is facing a difficult decision; pursuing a career with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or "paying back" the military for helping him escape his troubled youth by shipping out to Afghanistan, Canada's most dangerous mission since the Korean War. For these young men, the Canadian military seems like the best option, but is it the only option for their future?

A Screen Siren Pictures Production. Produced in association with CTV Television with the participation of the Canadian Television Fund. Produced in association with Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, with the assistance of the Canadian Independent Film & Video Fund. Produced in association with Knowledge Network and SCN with the Participation of the Province of British Columbia Film Incentive BC and the Canadian Film or Video Production Tax credit. Produced with the participation of Rogers Telefund. Developed in association with CTV Television with the participation of British Columbia Film and the assistance of the Canadian Independent Film & Video Fund.

MUSEUM UPDATE

By Jerry Couling

Thanks:

In my last article I requested financial assistance from fellow Dukes to help build up our depleted bank account. In that regard I would like to thank Max Carne, Terry Drinkwater, Ron Leblanc, and C. Murch for responding with donations. I would also like to thank Ted Hawthorne, Jim Tedlie, Darrell Dean, Ian White, R. Greenslade, Ray Glover, Jim Barrett, Pat Connell, Fuchun Xiao, Padre Bayley, Diane Wort, Joyce Child, Archie Steacy, and others, for your donations to fund the recently acquired Sommerville medals (noted below). Many of the above individuals, along with Dave Sproule and Denis Erickson have made regular (and significant) donations to the Museum Society over the years. Thank you all for your support.

Acquisition:

Because of the support noted above, the Museum was able to purchase a 1914-15 Star, British War Medal 1914 – 20, and Victory Medal awarded to Pte. A. Somerville 29 CAN INF C.E.F. The medals are mounted on a card on original ribbons and are accompanied by a CANADA shoulder title and a General Service CANADA cap and collar badge. This acquisition is a worthwhile addition to our collection.

We also wish to acknowledge the excellent donation of militaria to the Museum by Maj(R) William MacDonald. Further details of the collection will be published in due course.

Museum Restoration:

As you know from my last article, the Museum, adjacent hallway, and other parts of the Drill Hall sustained significant water damage at the beginning of last summer. The restoration work was recently completed but not in time for us to have the museum open for Remembrance Day. In preparing the South Room (formerly called the Brass Room) for restoration, most of the display cabinets had to be dismantled and moved into the North Room. As the South Room is now bare, we have an opportunity to re-plan our display space to make it more attractive and functional. Undoubtedly, this will involve spending money and time in designing and building better cabinets. We are hoping to have this done early in the New Year, at which time the Museum will, once again, be available to you.

Membership and Work Parties:

Presently, we have only a handful of paid up members and could use more. Membership is only \$10.00 a year and is open to anyone in the Regimental Family. Being a member gives you a say in how the Museum is run. If you are interested, please issue a \$10.00 cheque payable to the BC Regiment Museum Society and drop it off at, or mail it to, the Drill Hall. Dues received this month will cover the balance of this year as well as 2008. We intend to recommence our Work Parties early in January, meeting every 2nd Monday between 1900 and 2100 hrs. The work is beneficial and the fellowship, great. If any of you are interested please contact the writer (604-222-1962) or Archie Steacy for the next date.

ON REMEMBRANCE DAY, 2007

For over 100 years it has been Canadian Military practice to appoint both an Honorary Colonel and an Honorary Lieutenant Colonel to each of the reserve or militia regiments. The appointment is made by the Gov. General upon the nomination of the regiment itself, as approved by the higher levels of the army command. The Honorary officer is intended to be the guardian of regimental traditions and history, promoting its identity and ethos while acting as an advisor to the commanding officer on virtually all issues excluding operations. The Honorary is the voice to the community, both of the Regiment and the larger army. I am therefore grateful to our esteemed rector for his invitation to share with you some of my thoughts on this solemn day.

Remembrance Day is uniquely a Canadian institution. Until 1931 it was called Armistice Day, to commemorate the moment at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918 when fighting ceased after more than 4 long years of warfare on a scale unprecedented in human history.

The Great War or “the war to end all wars”, as it came to be called at the time, began in early August 1914. Although enjoying a kind of Golden Age of scientific, technological and cultural achievement, Europe had been overcome by a neurotic climate of mutual suspicion and insecurity. A crisscross pattern of mutual defence agreements among nations only ensured that once started, any fire would spread quickly.

Violating Belgian neutrality, the advancing German army swept through and into France, expecting to be victorious in Paris within 40 days. Instead, the advance was stopped at the Marne River and the opposing armies dug in to endure over 4 years of a grinding & savage war of attrition.

In 1914, Canada was only 47 years old, with a population of between 7 and 8 million people. Many of them were recent immigrants from Britain who rallied quickly to the call to serve Mother Empire. It was still a naïve world of Kipling and Henty.

Canadian soldiers were integrated as units of the British Army and it was not until the assault on Vimy Ridge in the spring of 1917 that the Canadian Corps fought as a unit under Canadian command. The Germans had held and strengthened this fortress and believed it to be impregnable. Successive French and British attacks between 1914 & 1916 had failed. Now it was the Canadians' turn. The elite Prussian guard troops they faced dismissed them as "untrained Colonial levies".

In 4 days of vicious battle, the Canadians drove the defenders from their entrenched positions and stood on the peak of the ridge, overlooking an enemy fleeing across fields still green and under cultivation behind the snaking line of opposing trenches.

The Canadian victory came at a terrible cost: 3600 killed and another 7000 wounded. The war would continue for another 18 months but Vimy came to be seen as a coming of age of Canada as a Nation. Almost 10% of its entire population had served in the armed forces and nearly 60,000 had died.

On land consecrated by the French government, Canada spent 10 years building a towering white marble monument to its dead. In 1936, at the height of the Depression, more than 6400 Canadians paid their own way to stand on Vimy Ridge to witness the unveiling. Four years later, the monument was behind enemy lines as another war engulfed Europe and the world beyond.

Once again, Canadians put aside their private lives to take up arms, this time without the glorious illusions of 1914. Canada was ill prepared for war and yet the people mobilized into a unified effort that produced, by war's end, the world's third largest navy and its fourth largest airforce. The navy played a major role in the Battle of the Atlantic against German U-boats that were threatening the vital supply of war materials. The Air force was a significant component of the bomber fleet attacking the enemy's war production. In 1942, Canadian soldiers were chosen to make the ill fated raid on Dieppe as a probe of the defences of Hitler's Atlantic Wall. In 1943, the Canadian military participated in the landings on Sicily and in the subsequent Italian campaign that continued until the war's end. In 1944, more than 120 Canadian war ships participated in the Normandy landings, during which 15,000 Canadian soldiers went ashore on D-Day alone. Last June 6, I was privileged to attend a gathering to mark that anniversary of the pivotal moment of the war in western Europe. About 10 veterans spoke of their personal experiences of that day, among them our own Cully Lancaster. I felt I was in the presence of heroes though I expect that, at the time, these men saw themselves as simply performing a grim duty and not as being engaged in a glorious adventure.

The second War ended in 1945, by which time, Canada's casualties totalled almost 40,000 men and women. By 1951, Canadian soldiers were deployed as part of the United Nations force in Korea. During the half century since, they have been the greatest Peace keepers on earth in 39 missions on UN mandates and on 6 non-UN peace keeping duties, from Cyprus and Vietnam to East Timor, from Sinai to Bosnia and now Afghanistan, where we are engaged on behalf of the United Nations in what has been described as armed social work.

Sadly, there has been no war to end all wars. The "March of Folly" continues. The force of evil is real and must periodically be confronted if civilization is to endure as we know it.

All of our overseas military service has been voluntary. No Canadian has been drafted or conscripted for that purpose. Canadians have never fought to gain colonies or resources. We are reluctant warriors, but once aroused, we have demonstrated time and again our courage, our tenacity and our commitment. Of these things, we can be justly proud. And yet, as a community of Christian people advocating universal peace, love and brotherhood, gathered here today in this quiet place, we may feel some ambivalence. This day is not about glory, but rather solemn thanksgiving and remembrance of those who have been ready, able and willing to preserve the freedoms and values we espouse.

Plato said: "Only the dead have seen the last of war". We will be challenged and called again to sacrifice. And again, Canada's military will respond as our Government may deem appropriate. Sometimes, the mission will be domestic, be it a Quebec ice storm a Manitoba flood or a British Columbia fire season. For some, the mission

committed may sometimes be controversial, as indeed some find them today. That is the stuff of political debate, a right enjoyed as part of our purchased liberties. The Military stands apart as an instrument of Foreign Policy determined by others. In return for their unwavering commitment and sacrifice, we owe the men and women of our Military the training, equipment and moral support they will need to answer the call, from wherever it may come.

Across the years, from the bloody tumult of the trenches still comes the challenge put by the final lines of John McCrae's poem:

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch: be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep,
Though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.

W.E. Ireland, HL/COL, BCR

BCR CADETS

It's hard to believe that the holiday season is upon us and the fall training activities are concluded. All four Cadets Corps have completed the mandatory one week end field training exercise as well as several optional programmes and are preparing to stand down until the New Year. The Corps strengths are holding steady with a total of 225 BCR Cadets from the four Corps participating in the Army Cadet Programme. The 2381 BCR Irish Fusilier Corps in Richmond is our largest Corps with over 120 cadets enrolled.

All our Corps participated in their communities Remembrance Day Ceremonies on 11 November. The Cadets from the 2290 paraded at the Vancouver Cenotaph and were part of a 200 strong marching contingent of Vancouver Cadets representing all three elements. The Cadets were well turned out and added a great deal the parade and ceremony.

Each year, DND and the Army Cadet League of Canada select top Cadets in Canada to attend a Domestic and International Expedition. In Sept this year, C/CWO Chris Congram from our 2827 BCR Cadet Corps in Port Moody, was one of 16 Cadets in Canada selected to attend the Domestic Expedition in Cathedral Provincial Park. Chris along with his 15 hiking companions hiked 7 summits to heights of 8500 ft. over a 12 day period. C/CWO Louise Poon from our Irish Corps in Richmond was selected, along with 15 other top Cadets in Canada, to attend the International Expedition to Italy. They spent 16 days in September touring and trekking in Northern Italy. The main activity was the use of the Via Ferrata. These exposed trails, secured with cables, were originally put there during World War 1. The expedition also included frequent scrambling on the Via Ferrata for up to eight hours.



Presentation of BC Regiment Shoulder Titles to 2290 (BCR) Cadet Corps. - L to R Ted Hawthorne, Association Secretary, Ray Glover, Association Vice-President, Capt Ken Prince, Cadet Corps CO, Cadet MWO McCallum

These annual Expeditions are the culmination of at least four years of training for the Cadets. These Expeditions are mentally and physically demanding in nature, requiring a high level of fitness and maturity. Congratulations to Chris Congram and Louise Poon.

For more information on these expeditions and other Cadet activities log on to: www.armycadetleague.ca

On Behalf of the BCR Cadet family, I wish to take this opportunity to wish you and your families all the very best for a safe and joyous holiday season.

Major (Ret'd) Roger W Prouse
BC Regiment (DCO) – Cadet Governor

The British Columbia Veterans Commemorative Association

Update by Jerry Couling

There is not much new to report since my last update, so... with your indulgence, I'll rehash some material covered in previous dispatches. As mentioned in the last issue I invite you to visit our relatively new website. It will give you a comprehensive overview on what BCVCA is all about and save me the trouble of reprinting it here. The site is www.bcveterans.org. As mentioned before, any *Duke* interested in joining this worthwhile organization is certainly welcome. Our membership is broad based and includes veterans from all services as well as civilians sharing our interest in commemorating the contributions Canadians in uniform have made and are making in protecting our country and its allies. The annual cost of membership is only \$10.00. An application form can be downloaded from our website.

Annual General Meeting:

During the Annual General Meeting held in October the following Dukes were re-elected as directors: Archie Steacy, Ted Hawthorne, and me. Other board members are: Bill Newton, ex-army; John Appleby, a former CO of the local Service Corps unit; Byrne Turner, President of ANAVETs BC Command; and Ben Nizio, a WW2 Polish freedom fighter. Each of these gentlemen is committed to Commemoration.

Replica of Canada's War Memorial:

In the past we have described the Candlelight Tributes and Veterans' Licence Plate programs, which are both major commemorative activities initiated and perpetuated by BCVCA, but there is another. The other, the first major project initiated by BCVCA, was the creation of a Replica of Canada's War Memorial (see below) to be available for display by veteran and civilian groups as part of their commemoration events. Although the talent and materials were paid for by BCVCA a good portion of the funding for the replica was provided by a federal grant arranged through Veterans Affairs. During the 2006 Remembrance Day, many of you would have seen the replica as it was on display at the Drill Hall for the presentation of the 30,000th Veteran's Plate, an event also honouring the Premier for his steady support of the Licence Plate Program. If any of you would like to use the replica for your own commemorative events, please get in touch with me or Ted Hawthorne or Archie Steacy. In exchange for a small rental fee and transportation costs to and from your event we will try to make it available to you.



“THE DIEFENBUNKER”

There were several peculiar things that happened during the Diefenbaker era including “Diefenbucks” and for us in the army, Gasless Tuesdays when not a track or a wheel could turn but for most cold war soldiers, the thing that is best remembered are the Provincial Warning Centres (PWC), aka “The Diefenbunkers” built in every province when John Diefenbaker and his Tory government were in power from 1957 – 65. They were constructed as a cold war measure to provide shelter and a safe haven for our political leaders if and when the “nukes” ever rained down on our country. Our premiers and their cabinet ministers were to hole-up in these concrete bunkers for maybe 30 days or until it was safe to go out again, whichever came first. Of course the leaders of Her Majesty’s Loyal Opposition were probably excluded as were most of us odds ‘n sods. Senior commanders and their immediate staff were included but probably not the lesser folks. What surprised me then as now was just how rational all of this was supposed to be. They were supposed to be self-contained but I can just imagine on day two when the photocopier packed it up, the chaos that might ensue.

“OK Sergeant, I want you to go back to Halifax and shanghai the photocopy technician and bring him back here. Go to the orderly room and pick up your travel warrant and see Pay about an advance. Any questions?”

“Oh and Sergeant, pick me up a bag of chips a couple of Mars Bars, two or three Coca Cola and a mickey of rye. Just get a receipt and I’ll reimburse you when you get back. On your way then.”

The whole concept of the Diefenbunker is pretty chilling but thankfully we can laugh about these things now. Although I’m unsure, I expect they have all been decommissioned and demolished or sealed up forever. Maybe one or two should be saved and used as a cold war museum. I don’t think I would pay money to go inside though. Looking at glass cases of gas masks and dosimeters just doesn’t excite me much.

Over my career I had the privilege of being in three of these sarcophagi; one in Nanaimo, one in Penhold and one in Debert. It is about the latter that I have the most vivid memories.

Once again back in our dear old Recce Squadron, in the summer of 1961 we were tasked to proceed to Camp Debert to assist in the testing and commissioning of the Nova Scotia PWC. We rolled out of Gagetown bound for Debert. We took a couple of extra days to get there and conducted a long-range communications exercise along the way and on arriving at Debert were immediately taken inside.

“OK fellas,” said the engineering officer, “you’re gonna be in here for 72 hours while we test all of the heating and ventilation systems as well as damage control measures. You won’t have a lot to do while you are in here just move around in response to our request. Any questions? No? Good.”

We put our sleeping bags on bunks, pulled out our skin books and settled in for the long haul. Soon it was time for dinner and off we went to the cafeteria. We then moved to another area while various engineers and contractors measured temperature and humidity, air- flow and all manner of things. And so it went for three days. I think we shared the chore, under the fluorescent glow, with a bunch of Black Watch recruits. Thankfully, no one went “squirrely” and eventually the doors were opened and out we went squinting into the daylight. I remember being very glad to be out of there. I had a similar sensation during an MRI a few years ago – fighting back the terror of confinement. All in all it was a pretty boring three days and we were glad to get back on the road.

Maybe instead of soldiers being used as guinea pigs, they should have insisted that all of the Nova Scotia MLAs and their bureaucrats fill the place and then start to test their decision-making skills after a few days of confinement.

I’m aware that in response to the threats of terrorism to our country, that Militia units will once again being tasked with responding to chemical, biological and nuclear threats. Maybe they had better get their wheelbarrows and shovels out and start digging out those old Diefenbunkers. Better still let the soldiers supervise and the politicians can dig them out. They’re good at getting us into things but not so good at getting us out.

David Sproule
September 2006

SHOOTING COMPETITION



Congratulations to Cpl D. Ryan Steacy for his achievement in the Canadian Forces Small Arms Competition held in Ottawa September 2007. He ranked second in the Canadian Sniper Competition and second in the top fifty shooters competing for the Queen's Medal earning him a place at the Bisley Competition in England in July 2008. Corporal Steacy will be the first Duke to compete at Bisley since 6th DCOR, Corporal Paul M. Gibault attended in June 1938.

Corporal Steacy has been awarded the RSM Sam Perry Trophy for his shooting prowess on winning the 2007 BC Service Rifle Shooting Competition for the ninth consecutive year.



ASSOCIATION DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

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

REGIMENTAL WEBSITE

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

ASLEEP

43117337 Chief Warrant Officer John Patrick Gilmartin, CD served with the Fort Gary Horse, Lord Strathcona (LdSH), Royal Canadian Dragoons concluding his military career as Regimental Sergeant Major of the British Columbia Regiment (DCO). He passed away on 14 December 2007. John and Gerda resided in Duncan, B.C.

In the morning and the going down of the Sun,
We shall remember him.
Up the Dukes John.

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!