



# Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) REGIMENTAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) Regimental Society, PO Box 10500 Station Forces Edmonton, AB T5J 4J5

## Message from the Colonel of the Regiment

By Colonel J.E.N. Roderick

It seems that only a short time ago that Kathy Batty was hounding me to send her my *Newsletter* article and now she is on my back again. I have now found out why she is being so pushy – Kathy is off to Australia to the World Master's



Games to play soccer in October and she wants to make sure the *Newsletter* is well launched before she leaves. We wish her good luck at the tournament and I won't even be so crass as to mention it is a tournament for "senior" ladies.

As you read the articles covering Regimental life of late you will realize that there has been no letup in the commitments. In early October, C Squadron will be replaced by B Squadron in our seventh consecutive squadron deployment to Afghanistan. This will be B Squadron's third tour although it will be a first tour for the majority of the squadron personnel. Nevertheless, as successful as each squadron has been in theatre, there is a heavy price being paid by the soldiers and their families because of the extended periods of separation, not only

during these repeated tours but also during the extensive periods of pre-deployment training they undergo in Wainwright, various US Army bases and in Germany. Because we have yet to field any Leopard 2's in Canada, all of the trades training on that tank must be completed at the German "Panzer Schule" in Munsterlager, an area many of you will remember.

As if providing consecutive squadrons to Afghanistan is not enough, you will also read that the Regiment is heavily committed to Olympics 2010 as well. Those who were involved in the 1988 Calgary Olympics will quickly see how the bill has multiplied because of the world's current security situation. Fortunately for Canada, the Strathcona's, as always, will be up to the task.

All this is to say that our Regiment daily demonstrates that it is living up to our motto "Perseverance". Senior members of the Canadian Forces have remarked to me many times how impressed they are that we have managed to be the busiest unit in Canada operationally and yet maintain the highest standards in our family support and Regimental heritage activities.

Since my last Newsletter article, I've been fortunate enough to spend time with our soldiers during their training in Edmonton, Wainwright, Suffield, and Shilo. These trips are the highlights of my tour as Colonel of the Regiment as I get

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## Commanding Officer

*By Lieutenant-Colonel D.A. Macaulay*

As I sit to pen this article, I can hardly believe it has been 14 months “in the saddle.” Since I last wrote, the Regiment has become completely engaged on two thrust lines: internationally in preparing its tank squadrons for combat as part of Joint Task Force Afghanistan (Operation Athena); and domestically as Task Force Vancouver (Operation Podium) stood up (1 September 2009) in support of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to secure the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic games.

Internationally, C Squadron, under the command team of **Major John Cochrane** and **SSM Richard Stacey**, deployed (since March 2009) to conduct operations in southern Afghanistan. B Squadron under **Major Rob Hume** and **SSM Tom Holland**, have just completed a successful “Road to War” training program and are about to send their Squadron on some well deserved predeployment leave prior to a relief in place which will occur over the next few months. A Squadron, under command of **Major Ian McDonnell** and **SSM Dave Hall**, had a successful tour in Afghanistan. It returned in April 2009, and has been reformed, under the command of **Major Rob MacKenzie** and **SSM Dave Jones**. They have initiated it’s “Road to War” training with the intent of returning to Afghanistan to replace B Squadron in the spring of 2010.

Domestically, Recce Squadron under the command team of, **Major Kevin Mead** and **SSM Dave Hall**, has initiated it’s “Road to Podium” training and is focussed on deploying its surveillance and reconnaissance skills in support

of Task Force Vancouver and Task Force Whistler (2 PPCLI). Also, our newly formed Composite Primary Reserve Company, F Company, from 39 Canadian Brigade Group (CBG) (British Columbia) under the command team of **Major Chris Quinlan** (BCR) and **CSM Ron Silva** (R West R) has stood up in Vancouver and will provide a dismounted infantry company capability to Task Force Vancouver.

Coordinating these two thrust lines is a newly reinvigorated RHQ (Ops O- **Capt Dave MacIntyre** and Ops WO- **WO Darrell Peters**) that is being augmented by a number of Regular Force and Primary Reserve soldiers in order for it to grow from its current manning of 50 percent.

Lastly but certainly not least, is HQ Squadron (Prince of Wales Sqn), under **Major Chris Bradley** and **SSM Tony Batty**, which continues to provide unwavering support to all squadrons. Moreover, they will take on the added responsibility of Task Force Vancouver infrastructure security and control with the assistance of two Primary Reserve Force Protection Platoons from 38 CBG (Manitoba and Saskatchewan) and 41 CBG (Alberta).

So, our Regiment remains at “full gallop”; however I can assure you that the soldiers continue to display superb tank skills as they close with and destroy the Taliban, remain highly motivated in the pursuit of security tasks for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic games and continue to exhibit the positive attitude which they have seen in those Strathconas that have gone before them. It is my honour to serve with them every day!

## Regimental Sergeant-Major

*By Chief Warrant Officer J. Ramsay*

The Regiment, having returned from some well deserved summer leave, started the second half of 2009 at a brisk pace. Firstly, the in-house run MOD’s 1 to 5 (CLC of old) with over 20 soldiers from the Regiment on it. We even managed to get some engineers on the course. Knowing the tempo for the Regiment it was decided to run the course in-house to enable a larger number of soldiers to receive the qualification rather than deferring the course due to operations. As it stands now, these same soldier’s will be attending the MOD 6 (field portion) only a couple of weeks after completing MOD’s 1 to 5.

RHQ is now manned to reflect the needs for Task Force Vancouver. It has been extremely busy with the planning stages of the operation. In the coming months, the execution begins. With all the effort put forth by RHQ, the Regiment will be set for a successful mission in support of the RCMP in ensuring a safe and successful Olympics.

HQ Squadron has been yet again making sure everything works no small feat considering their reduced manning levels. The maintainers, who aren’t in Afghanistan, are on course preparing to go. This leaves a very small cadre of maintainers who constantly surprise us with what they accomplish. It seems transport soldiers spend more time in the field in support of the squadrons on training for deployment than they do as a troop. QM troop has never let up. Adding OP Podium to the mix has been a challenge but one that it rose to with outstanding results.

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*Regimental Sergeant-Major*

A Squadron just returned from training in Wainwright. The Squadron's tanks were fired from static to troop night shoot battle runs, with a mix of basic gunner qualification shoots to boot. As the OC mentioned it is surprising what can break on a 30 year old tank. The Squadron now prepares for training in Germany and support to the Combat Team Commander's course in Gagetown. As always, the soldier's are keen to get the training done and be on their way.

B Squadron, speaking of being on their way, starts it's pre-deployment leave in the coming month. To say they are ready to go would be an understatement as they want to get over there and get the job done. The Squadron trained hard and understands the focus now turns to real operations. The Squadron members know we wish them a safe and speedy return.

Having just spoken to **SSM Stacey**, I know that, as much as B Squadron is biting at the bit to get over and begin the mission, C Squadron members are starting to see the end to theirs. Although they keep vigilant and carry out operations daily, they are turning some thoughts to the return to their families. As they begin to prepare for the handover to B Squadron, they stay focused on the mission. We all look forward to their return home.

Recce Squadron, now manned for OP Podium, has been busy sorting out vehicles with crews and conducting recces for those who will be joining Task Force Whistler. Not only will the squadron be working with two task forces (Whistler and Vancouver), they will be supporting C/S 60 in its training for Operation

Podium.

The Regiment has a very strong Mountain Man team this year with 18 soldiers participating in the competition. As busy as the Regiment is, they are able to conduct very strenuous training. We wish them well.

Finally, I know that it will be a very busy fall; however, everyone in the Regiment is focused on what has to be done. I am sure that by the time the Christmas break rolls around, we are going to wonder where the time went. Our families are being supportive as ever. Without that support, we could never do the job we do. Again, thanks very much for that incredible support.

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*Colonel of the Regiment*

to meet one-on-one with so many of our absolutely professional men and women at all rank levels. They are keen on their missions, highly knowledgeable about their jobs, proud to be members of the Strathcona's no matter what hat badge they are wearing, extremely physically fit, and, most importantly, they have retained the soldiers' sense of humour and high morale that have carried the day for Canadian soldiers in every operation and deployment since Canada became a nation. Lest anyone think that soldiers have changed over the years because society seems to have drifted away from self discipline, personal sacrifice and commitment, let me assure you our Strathcona's today are as professional and capable as their predecessors and in many cases better because of our excellent operational training system.

That said, I must add a comment that I have heard from a number of members of the Regiment, especially

senior NCO's, and that is the success of the Regiment today lies in a large part in the fact that those who went before were excellent in passing on their skills and managed to fight to keep training oriented on the all-arms battle. So, fellow "grey beards", we did do some things right.

Now as I sign off I must put in a reminder to everyone that now is the time to get serious about registering for Reunion 2010. (Bob Lett and Dave Biener have threatened me with serious bodily harm if I didn't make this plug!). It is going to be a great time in Edmonton and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible joining up with us. Send in your form today!

Finally, thank you all for your support to the Regiment, the *Newsletter* and most importantly my thanks to the families of our serving soldiers for their strength, compassion, and morale support to all members of the Regiment.

## **MOREUIL WOOD 2010**

**Due to operational commitments both overseas in Afghanistan and domestically for the 2010 Olympics, the Regiment will be unable to hold the usual MOREUIL WOOD Celebration week during March next year. Smaller parades in Vancouver and Edmonton will commemorate the Battle and more information will be sent out as it becomes available.**

**The Regiment will focus its efforts on the 2010 Reunion during the last week of June in which we hope to see you there.**

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# Regimental Association Alberta Branch

By Bob Lett

Hello, it's that time again to put pen to paper to bring you up to date on the happenings around the Association. In a nutshell, we have been very busy.

We've had many occasions to show the Regimental colours here as well across the country. In Calgary, we took part in and supported the LOOPS for TROOPS Charity Run. This charity is in support of the Military Family Support Organization. We have excellent representation for the Peace Keepers and Korean Veterans groups. Some members represented the Association at many other special dedications/celebrations.



*HRH The Countess of Wessex speaking with Earl and Lois Cady*

We, along with the Regiment, represented the Strathcona's at the official opening of the new wing at the Calgary Military Museum. **The Countess of Wessex** attended this event.

The annual Family Golf Tournament in Calgary was another great success. Thanks to **Howie Owen** and family. The Okanagan Group had a visit from the CO while he was en route to Vancouver. I'm told they all had a good time. I believe they did, knowing the people involved.

Our BC chapter at the time of writing this piece is hard at work getting its reunion in Chilliwack organized for early Sept. The Edmonton chapter have been very busy with the work for Reunion 2010. **Dave Biener** is doing a bang-up job. As the chair of the reunion, he must beg, borrow, and steal to get this off the ground. I'm scared to open emails from Dave wondering, "now what does he want" or "how much is this going to cost us". Just kidding, Dave, You and your team are doing super work.

In each of the past articles I've tried to focus on one or two of our own members who are doing some extraordinary work with us and in the military community.

This time, I'll attempt to describe some of work being done by **Keith Welch (Slider)** and **Dave Cathcart**. Those who know Slider, it is a challenge to keep things quiet or low-key. Slider, with the help from his wife **Mary**, has looked after our membership portfolio for many years by keeping track of all the address changes, deaths and lost trails, etc. It's a big job. Together, they do all the ordering and buying of the stationary needs for us, plus ensuring that the letters are edited and mailed out on time. Some might not be aware of the work Slider does with the Strathcona's Cadet Corps in Calgary. His involvement and hard work are amazing. During his time with cadets, enrolment numbers have increased significantly. The photo is of Slider standing beside a sign on his personal property (given to him by the troops). The 2nd photo is the "TROOP" while

they were on a training weekend. Well done **Keith** and **Mary** and thank you!

I would like to thank one more of our own that is **Dave Cathcart**. Dave is our hospital representative and visits all our members who are in the hospital. He visits faithfully each and every week. Members recently visited were **Padre Green**, **Val Rimer** and **Billy May**. All three are on the mend. Plus, Dave goes around seeing many members who must remain within the hospital setting. Great job Dave!

We expect that our fall season to be very busy. We have just two general meetings remaining for the year. They will be held on

Sept. 8th and Nov. 4th. Remembrance Day and the weeks prior to are always busy with different outings where the Myrtle green blazer will make an appearance. We have our normal membership drive starting in Oct./Nov, plus I'm sure **ID MacKay** will be having a few of his famous luncheons. The Edmonton chapter also has their own version of these luncheons. I highly recommend that everyone try to come out and enjoy these get togethers.



*CWO Welch (Slider) proudly displays the sign on the fence at Water Valley*



*FTC Cold Steel - Aren't we a happy bunch (Kacz's Kids)*

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I'll leave the Reunion 2010 report to **Dave Biener**. What I can tell you is, if we can gauge the interest for this reunion by the inquiries we've received, IT WILL BE A DANDY.

In closing I wish you all well and I look forward to seeing everyone at R2010.

Perseverance

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## Okanagan Visitors

*By Bill Wood*

The BC group of the Regimental Association is happy to report that although our membership is small, we can still muster up a few proud Strathcona's to host a get-together in the Okanagan.

On or about May 20/09, **Al Kaatz** and I received an email from **Bob Lett** and **Dave Biener** telling us that **LCol Macaulay** and a group of soldiers were going to be in the Okanagan area conducting a "recce" and would like to meet with some of the members of the BC Association to get acquainted or reacquainted.

Al and I got a nominal roll and made some calls. We managed to get 10 people from the Okanagan and 2 people from Chilliwack. The boys from Chilliwack brought the group's chequebook and we hosted an evening of drinks, wings, and veggies prepared by Penticton Branch 40 Royal Canadian Legion.

The CO and RSM gave an update on the Regiment's activities and training schedules. A few questions were asked, stories exchanged, and 3 hours later, we shook hands and departed.

I understand that most of the Recce Party was golfing the following morning and others were touring

wineries on the Naramata Bench ( 17 of them) so I'm sure they all had a great day! It was a privilege to have them here. We welcome the opportunity to host any serving and/or retired members who visit our area.

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## Strathcona Family Golf Tournament

*By Howie Ownn*

On Saturday 08 Aug 09 the sun came out for the first time all week. That morning, at 0900hrs, the first of 11 flights hit the tee box at Buffalo Run Golf Course in Calgary. The last flight hit the fairway at 1007hrs and it was "Game On". It was great to see some new faces this year like **Ian and Bev Barnes** from St Albert. The Edmonton Chapter sent down a team that was made up of **Capt Dave Beiner** and **James Strayer**... the other two will be charged with AWOL according to Dave!! Another team from the Regiment included **WO Tony Mayfield**, **Cpl Serge Paradis** and another two could not make it because of a Wainwright commitment. The normal comments could be heard echoing down the fairways like "Grampa, you suck" and "Have a miserable game Howie"!

After the Golfing was completed we met at 285 Legion for the post mortems, lunch and the presentation of the trophies and prizes. The overall winner of the day was the Owen Team, however, there was a tie at 2 Under Par between the Owen and the Regimental team. A coin was tossed and the Owen Team won the toss. The Regimental team received the runner-up trophy. Some other winners were **Jennifer Francis** for the ladies longest drive, **Dallas Owen** for the longest drive men,

closest to the pin was **Grady Owen** (there is that name again), and **Marg Marriot** from the Barnes team won the longest putt. Congratulations to all the winners.

In conclusion, I want to thank everyone who came out this year and in years past to support this event. I have had the pleasure to be a part of the organizing committee for the past six years - but I will now turn over the job to two gentlemen who have agreed to take over. I know that **Peter Wonderham** and **Brad Norman** will keep this event going for years to come.

Thank You All Again.

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## Regimental Association Edmonton Chapter

*By Dave Biener*

The Edmonton Chapter has been in a bit of a "Stand Down Mode" since our last meeting, which was the 26th of June. It was a wind-up BBQ event with wives at the Norwood Legion that went well, although we had a small group. Not a lot of business transpired other than Reunion updates, so the focus was on relaxing and having fun together.

Going back in time a bit to May 23rd, we held what was hopefully our first annual "Melfa River Dinner." I have to say that this event really went over well! I'm not sure if it was a full moon that night or maybe it was the fact that **Keith** and **Mary Welch** came up from Calgary, but I can say that all had a good time. We only had about 35 people in attendance but within minutes of arriving at Sorrentino's, the noise in the dining area was outrageous! I thought

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*Edmonton Chapter*

for sure they were going to ask us to quiet down, but they never did! The dinner started with cocktails at 1830 hours and some folks stayed until midnight! We almost had **Bud Maclean** (who was at Melfa) join us, but he had already committed to a family event. Oh well, maybe next year Bud!

Not much else to report Chapter-wise. We had some great weather in Edmonton over the summer (oh yes, I forgot, we were in BC!). The Chapter starts up again on the 24th of September at the Norwood Legion supper at 6pm and the meeting starts at 7pm. Come on out and bring a new member with you! Don't forget to visit the Chapter web site at [www.ldshrc.ca](http://www.ldshrc.ca).

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## Reunion 2010 Update

*By Dave Biener*

Bottom line up front--your Reunion Committee is working hard to ensure that Reunion 2010 will meet all of your expectations. The planning continues and we have crossed the Line of Departure. The word is starting to get out, so make sure you tell all your Strathcona friends that they should join you there. Registration forms are starting to come in and thanks to a few generous individuals, we even have a head start on our fundraising plan.

The majority of Strathcona's will be taking advantage of the early bird fees and the draw that goes with it, so, as a reminder, if you get your registration and monies in before 10 Dec, you not only save a few dollars but you also get your name entered in the Early Bird Draw.

After a bit of a slow start, the hotel is finally taking reservations. If you mention that you are a Strathcona you will get the group rate for rooms (\$145 per night plus applicable taxes). There are also some suites available and they are now posted to our block booking. Reunion registration forms and details have been mailed out to the 900 plus Strathcona's who are on the family nominal role (thanks Kathy). They are also available on the Edmonton Association web page at [www.ldshrc.ca](http://www.ldshrc.ca). (check the nominal role to see who has already registered)

As a reminder, the cost per person before 10 Dec is \$150. After Dec 10 it jumps to \$180. So in the words of a famous former RSM, it behoves you to get your money in early. By the way, the above mentioned amount does not include the golf event (which has now been determined to be \$90, including cart, or the Advance party reception (\$30).

I mentioned fundraising earlier on. In an effort to keep registration prices down, we have embarked upon a fairly ambitious fundraising campaign. Donations collected will go into paying for myriad extra items, including, music, transport, merchandising, etc. Any leftover funds will be redirected towards the next reunion. With that, I want to send a challenge out to all Association chapters to see if they can help out. Names of those donating, including organizations will be posted on the Association web page. In Edmonton we hope to do at least two fundraising events prior to June of next year.

We have been receiving phone calls and emails from all parts of Canada and as far away as Cyprus regarding this event. (hope you can attend **Rick B**)

As a reminder the schedule of events is as follows: (keeping in mind that there may be adjustments and or alterations to certain events and timings):

### Wed -23 June

Snr NCO Mess Dinner  
*(by invite only)*

### Thurs -24 June

Registration/Reception office opens  
Reunion Golf Event (\$65)  
Advance Party and Post Golf Reception (\$30)  
Change of Command Mess Dinner  
*(by invite only)*

### Friday 25 June

Regimental Change of Command Parade  
Post Parade Reception  
Ladies Tea  
Reunion Meet and Greet

### Saturday 26 June

Regimental Open House  
Reunion Dinner and Dance

### Sunday 27 June

Early Riser Coffee  
Departure Brunch  
Tribute to Fallen Comrades  
Closing Ceremony

As you well know, our Regimental Reunions only happen every 5 years, so make sure you get to Edmonton in June of 2010. Get your registrations in as soon as possible and let's make this a Reunion to remember!

Lord Strathcona's Horse  
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Regimental Society Newsletter

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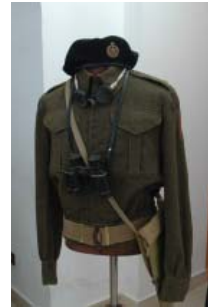
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## A River (Almost) Too Far

By Lt Justin Salter (with contributions by Sgt Tom Bowden)

It was a dreary, rainy day when **Lieutenant E.J. Perkins** led his recce troop across the Melfa River and into the history books. So it came as a surprise to the members of Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) that their trip to Italy to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the crossing of Melfa River took place under beautiful, sunny skies. What began as a ten day excursion under the fearless leadership of **Maj Kelly Callens** soon turned into a 3 week tour on distant shores for the purposes of 'historical appreciation'. Accompanied by numerous veterans of all stripes, and regaled often by the incredible stories of their experiences, the Strathcona visit party found itself treated to great scenery, great food, and great wine, as well as an overwhelming sense of legacy.

In order to get the most out of their trip, the visitors from the Strathcona's tried their best to put themselves into the shoes of their predecessors on that fateful summer of 1944. In the spirit of **Perkins'** arrival at Melfa one kilometre north of where the enemy was expecting him, the Strathcona visitors found themselves halfway to Ortona just as they received an invite to a surprise ceremony being held at Melfa River. **Padre Bob Green** promptly followed through on his earlier threats to turn the bus around and go home, but stopped instead in Pompeii for some, as those who have been to the city will know, extremely unique scenery.



*The visitors are given an exclusive sneak peek at the latest trends in Italian fashion.*



*Padre Green tries to teach himself to speak Italian: "Puoi parlare lentamente?"*

Later in the trip, **Sgt Tom Bowden** tried his best to relive the fear and uncertainty a young soldier must have felt during the assault on Melfa River by driving through Rome with **Maj Callens** as his navigator. No doubt he was extremely glad of the helmets he had received earlier as gifts: one German and one from a Strathcona, both dating back to WWII.

The trip concluded with a somber visit to the Rome War Cemetery, where **Padre Green** took the time to say a prayer for each of our fallen. Even though it was a long visit, the trip home came all too soon. The gravity of being on the ground in the very place where our Strathcona predecessors made history will never leave the memories of the visitors, just as the accomplishments of the Canadians will never leave the memories of the Italian survivors from those trying times.

### *Association Newsletter, Summer of 1975*

This is a little family story about the original Lord Strathcona, when as an old man, was living in London. He was riding along in his chauffeured car, exhorting to the driver to greater speed, until they were doing more than 12 miles per hour. They were waved over by one of "London's finest" and presented a ticket for speeding. His Lordship appeared in Court, told his story, and the case was dismissed. He arrived home in great spirits, telling the family how he had got off by telling the judge that "other cars were passing him all the time." He didn't ask me which way they were going."

That was the humorous side of the stern, tough old fur trader, railroad builder and business man Donald Smith - Lord Strathcona.

*Editors' Note. You will note that this item is a quote from a 1975 edition of the Newsletter. Many may think that the Newsletter originated in the 80s but the history is longer than that. The problem is we don't know when it started. If anyone has a copy or copies of earlier editions we'd love to have a copy, or the original if you will part with it. We are also looking for a copy of the first edition put out by Nic Nicolay and Al "Mucker" Langan when the Newsletter was re-established in the 80s.*

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## Contemporary Operating Environment Force

By Lieutenant Stephen MacKillop



*Mechanized insurgent section with  
Improvised Explosive Devices*

The next time you are on exercise and hear ear-piercing screams with AK-47s firing in the distance, you may be in the sights of the Contemporary Operating Environment Forces (COEFOR). Committed to training personnel for deployments to Afghanistan, the LdSH(RC) Commanding Officer, **Lieutenant-Colonel Derek Macaulay**, is sending junior officers on a six month “attachment” to trade in the usual CADPAT and C7 for a pair of man-jams (the traditional Afghan form of dress) and an AK-47. Previously named OPFOR (Opposing Forces), COEFOR provides a wide variety of support to doctrinal and pre-deployment exercises.

With Wainwright as its home base, COEFOR has taken an active role in the pre-deployment training of personnel for Afghanistan.

Since the beginning of 2009, COEFOR has been employed in a variety of exercises from Camp Shelby, Mississippi, Fort Bliss, Texas, CFB Suffield for Exercise DESERT RAM, and COEFOR’s main effort this year of Exercise MAPLE GUARDIAN 0901 conducted in CFB Wainwright. From swamps to desert, COEFOR has been there to provide improvised explosive device (IED) explosions and RPG fire all over North America. It is on Exercise MAPLE GUARDIAN where COEFOR pulls out all the stops and expands from its small cadre size to three hundred strong. This allows for a force-on-force exercise and brings the training levels



*Insurgent O Group on Ex DESERT RAM*

to a new high, one not seen in previous years.



*Lt. Stephen MacKillop showing off his fall  
collection of man-jammies with vest.*

**Major Chris Bradley**, a fellow Strathcona, was the man in-charge and was the Officer Commanding COEFOR Company. He has been replaced by another Strathcona, **Major Mark Lubiniecki**. The company’s three platoons of insurgents are commanded by armour officers. Despite popular belief, the uniformed men with beards and long hair are not JTF 2 PT instructors but rather the courageous soldiers of COEFOR. 1 and 2 Platoons are currently commanded by Royal Canadian Dragoons’ officers **Lieutenant Joey Bissonnette** and **Lieutenant Joey Ring**, and 3 Platoon is commanded by Strathcona Officer, **Lieutenant Stephen MacKillop**.

Welcome to  
**Strathconas.Ca**

The Official Website of the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians)



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## Fit for a Prince

By John Boileau

In the summer of 1978, with the “Best Year of My Life” at Staff College in Toronto behind me, I was on the road, moving to a new town and a new job. As always, my expectations were high. Here I was, a newly-promoted, staff-qualified major, off to join my Regiment as a squadron commander. If, as a young lieutenant, I believed that being a troop leader was the epitome of being an armoured officer, my sights were set considerably higher now that I had achieved the lofty rank of major. Commanding a squadron was definitely where it was at.

The long drive from Toronto to Calgary gave me plenty of opportunity to think about the posting ahead and what it would bring. Although I had served as a Strathcona in Germany, I had never been to the Regiment’s home station, Calgary, a somewhat unique situation for a squadron commander. But I had certainly been told many stories about the city and the Regiment’s way of doing things as a part of “The Army of the West.” I was definitely looking forward to the experience.

I was going to a great job: a squadron commander in charge of an armoured squadron. Visions of me as a dashing tank commander, leading vast, sweeping flank attacks and deep, powerful armoured thrusts drifted in and out of mind as the brooding forests of the Precambrian Shield north of Lake Superior gave way to the sprawling flatness of the Prairies great tank country!

At last; a semi-independent command with a fair degree of training and administrative and if war should ever break

out tactical autonomy. Here was my chance to show my stuff as a modern day tactical genius, a budding Patton. Given half the chance I would charge across the battlefield and assault the enemy, my skilful attack taking him completely by surprise as it decimated his defences. Through the haze of battle, defeated and demoralized enemy soldiers stumbled out of their holes in the ground and from the burning wreckage of their tanks, hands in the air, surrendering to my squadron. Appropriate honours would quickly follow such a decisive victory and the battle would be studied at staff colleges around the globe for years to come.



Many of my thoughts dwelt on which squadron the CO would give me. There were essentially three possibilities: one of the armoured squadrons, Recce Sqn or HQ Sqn. As

the latter was usually given to a major after first commanding a sabre squadron, I didn’t feel I was likely to get it. As all my time as a lieutenant and captain had been spent on tanks, I reasoned that I probably wouldn’t get Recce either.

In my second-guessing of the situation, that left me exactly where I wanted to be: commanding an armoured squadron. All would be revealed in a few short days.

On arrival, I reported to **LCol Bill Megill** in his office on the second floor of RHQ. After appropriate welcoming noises, he proceeded to tell me about my new job. I was to be given command of A Sqn my heart skipped a beat A Sqn, the senior squadron in the Regiment! My elation was somewhat dimmed when the CO explained that A Sqn was the training squadron. I would be responsible for running all TQ3 recruit courses, the combat leaders’ course, Militia courses and others. Most of the instructors and staff for courses would be attached in from other squadrons; A Sqn by itself consisted of me, a 2 i/c, an SSM, an SQMS and a storeman, an administrative/transport sgt, a clerk and a handful of troopers. So much for my first real command! Then, the CO went on to explain a high priority job that he was giving me.

*Continued On Page 10*

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*Continued from Page 9*  
*Fit for a Prince*

The XI Commonwealth Games were being held in Edmonton that summer, but some of the long-distance full-bore shooting events would be taking place at the Sarcee Ranges, which possessed the only suitable range in Alberta for the long-distance shooting (up to 1,000 yards). **His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh**, would be coming to Calgary to open the full bore shooting competition, and the Regiment would be hosting him to lunch in the Officers' Mess.

Fine, I thought, but how does this involve me—other than perhaps having lunch with HRH? Obviously, this was the PMC's bailiwick. Therein lay the rub. The PMC, **Major Doug Green**, was involved in officiating at the shooting competition and consequently was unavailable to make the arrangements for the Royal lunch. That would be my task.

In a few sentences the CO outlined what he wanted: a completely Canadian lunch—British Columbia salmon, New Brunswick fiddleheads, Manitoba wild rice, wild Nova Scotia blueberries for dessert. To make sure everything came off OK on the actual day, the day before would be a full-dress rehearsal with the complete menu and all those who would be there in attendance, with stand-ins representing the Royal party: the Prince, his Scotland Yard bodyguard, his RCMP bodyguard and various other hangers-on. "Oh, and by the way," he said as I prepared to leave. "I want only Canadian wines. There are two outstanding British Columbia wines from the interior; Similkameen Red and Similkameen White. Make sure those are the wines you get."

"Certainly, sir," I replied, saluted, turned and left his office. As I walked away I thought, "This shouldn't be too hard. All I have to do is sort the Mess out with the Mess Sgt and the menu with the Chief Cook, two very capable individuals." Besides, organizing dinners wasn't that hard. I'd had lots of experience, having spent a year as Mess Sec in our mess in Iserlohn.

After I briefed **Sgt Barton**, the Mess Sgt, and **Sgt Rasmussen**, the Chief Cook, on what the CO wanted, they proceeded to organize the two lunches, still two weeks away. The only minor glitch at the time was that the Mess had no Similkameen wine in stock, but **Sgt Barton** assured me that was not a problem as he would order some right away. "Too easy," I thought. "This job's as good as done."

A couple of days later, as I was discussing preparations with **Sgt Barton**, he informed me that he was having a bit of a problem obtaining the wine, as the liquor store didn't stock it any more. But that wasn't a problem; he would get it direct from the Alberta Liquor Control Commission (ALCB) warehouse. "Fine," I said, "just keep me informed."

The next day, I got a phone call from **Sgt Barton** informing me that the ALCB no longer stocked Similkameen wines and he wanted to know what I would like to serve instead. "Let me do some checking," I replied, "and I'll get back to you."

My easy task had now taken on a definite degree of difficulty. One thing was certain; there was no way I was going to tell the CO that he couldn't have his beloved Similkameen wines to serve to the Prince. If this wine was still being produced, then I would find a way to get it.

I called the ALCB HQ to find out how I could get the wine. The answer--perhaps as expected from a bureaucrat--was short and to the point: "Impossible," Andrés doesn't sell it in Alberta anymore." And nothing could be done about it. "Ho-ho," I thought to myself, "these people don't realize that they're dealing with a Strathcona squadron commander, to whom nothing is impossible.

At least I had picked up some valuable information that I hadn't known before—Andrés sold the wine. Obviously, I should be dealing with them, and not the imbeciles at the ALCB.

After a few phone inquiries, I eventually got hold of a delightful lady at Andrés Alberta HQ and explained my problem to her. "I'd be happy to help out and sell you Similkameen wines," she replied ("Yes," I thought, "success."), but

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there's a slight problem ("Oh no, what now"). Despite the fact that it was for our Royal visitor, if she sold us the wine, Andrés would lose its right to sell wines in the province. The ALCB had limited Andrés to selling 25 different types of red and white wine, and the company simply carried its top 25 sellers of each. Andres couldn't even bring Similkameen wine into the province. About the only thought I took away from the conversation was wondering just how good this wine could be if neither the red nor white were among the company's top 25 sellers.

With my options rapidly dwindling, I wandered over the Officers' Mess; perhaps **Sgt Barton** had come up with some new ideas. He hadn't. Then I had a brainstorm: "What's the closest Militia unit to us in BC?" I asked. **Sgt Barton** thought for a minute and replied, "It's the Rocky Mountain Rangers."

I got on the phone, found their number, called through to the RMR in Kamloops and asked to speak to their RSS Officer. When he came on the line, I explained my predicament; could the RMR perhaps help out in some way?

There are times when the stars are in exactly their right place in the firmament—this was one of them. The RMR Regular Support Staff captain was only too happy to help out, if a small exchange could be arranged. A summer-long beer strike in BC had depleted the RMR messes of suds a long time ago. He was prepared to send me a ¾ ton with Similkameen Red and White, if I could provide some beer in exchange. I certainly could.

A deal was struck. He would send an RMR ¾ ton with a case of Similkameen White and a case of Similkameen Red to Calgary, and in return he could fill the truck up with beer from the mess. The only costs would be for the booze.

"Great," I said. "There's only one more thing. What we're doing is probably illegal as hell. Not only are we crossing interprovincial boundaries, the truck will also be carrying a vast amount of booze through a couple of national parks. If the truck is stopped by the RCMP or park rangers, as far as anyone is concerned, it's taking RMR regimental canteen supplies to Wainwright or returning from Wainwright with leftovers."

The exchange came off flawlessly. The RMR was delighted to get restocked with beer, and I was happy that I still had a career. Then the great day came.



But first we had a dry run. It was perfect. The table was impeccably set, the food was superb, the waitresses under **Mrs. Pam Frost** did an outstanding serving job and the wine stewards poured the British Columbia Similkameen White and Red flawlessly.

The next day, **LCol Megill** and I stood at the entrance to the Mess, welcomed HRH and escorted him into the barroom. After introductions, drinks and small talk, it was time to go into the dining room. With a flourish, **Sgt Barton** and a steward opened the doors and the CO led the Royal party inside. The tables gleamed to a high gloss and the impressive collection of Regimental silver shone. It was truly a regal setting.

Right on cue, as soon as we were seated, the wine stewards appeared and began offering wine. First, of course, was to **Prince Philip**. "Red or white wine, Your Royal Highness?" the steward inquired.

"No thank you," came the instant reply. "Tomato juice, please."

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## LCol Ian MacD Grant Remembered

*By Ian Barnes*

The passing of **LCol (Retired) Ian MacD Grant** on March 17, 2009 was a sad loss to the Strathcona's Family. Many of those serving today likely will not have met the former Commanding Officer (CO), who served at the end of the era of the Canadian Army. Prior to joining the Regiment as Commanding Officer in 1961 he had served with the Three Rivers Regiment during World War II in Italy and North West Europe (NWE), where he was awarded the DSO and commanded "D" Squadron (the independent Reconnaissance Squadron) in NWE in 1959-61. He was one of the last of the Second World War officers to command the Regiment.

Col Grant was a strong disciplinarian who instilled a keen sense of loyalty and tradition in the officers and men. Like all commanding officers Col Grant had a major influence on the Regiment and its members. During his tenure of command (1961-1963) at Sarcee Barracks, Calgary the Regiment operated three tank squadrons as well as Headquarters Squadron and formed and dispatched two reconnaissance squadrons to serve one-year tours in the Middle East as part of the United Nations Emergency Force in the Sinai (Gaza). On the ceremonial side, sixteen horses were on strength and used to escort the guidon as well as VIP's on formal parades. Sports were an important

part of squadron life and, at the Regimental level, our boxing and rifle teams qualified for the command and army level competitions. All ranks enjoyed the exploits of **Trooper Stratulat** whose wicked punch and winning ways elevated him to the Area Finals in the spring of 1963. Fight Nights were a formal affair such that uniform was the required dress (officers and non-commissioned officers wore Number Ones (Patrols). The Regimental Museum, which was one of Col Grant's pride and joys, was located in the Regimental lines. A picture in the 1964 *Strathconian* shows Col Grant showing an early cavalry saddle to two impressionable young boys. The Officers' Mess at Sarcee Barracks, with its magnificent view of the Rocky Mountains, was not only the centre of social activity and life for the officers and their wives or lady friends, but also many of Calgary's social elite. Business Men's Luncheons, mess sinners, TGIF's and ladies teas (Col Grant, who was single, often made an appearance at the teas) were always well attended. The social highlight of the year was Western Night held in early May when the Mess was turned into a western town. While the social life was important to the Regiment, Col Grant made sure that training was paramount to all activities. In those days, the Regiment was equipped with the Centurion tank (Mark V). A few tanks were kept in Calgary for training in the Sarcee training area and, with the addition of some of the Sarcee tanks, three squadrons (three troops of four tanks each) were available in Wainwright for use during the Western Command summer concentration. Proficiency in gunnery was one of Col Grant's main emphases. He would sit for hours in the control tower in Wainwright and watch and judge every round that went down range. A picture of Col Grant observing the tank firing during the summer concentration in 1963 is featured in *Volume VI – A Pictorial History of the Regiment*. In the latter part of Col Grant's tenure as CO, the Regiment was warned to be prepared to deploy to NWE in 1965, as part of Canada's forward brigade to join the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR). Col Grant was determined to ensure that the Regiment was ready for that mission, thus regimental training took on a whole new sense of purpose. Prior to the deployment to Wainwright the squadrons would carry out crew and troop level training for six weeks in the Sarcee training area. Then, it was off to Wainwright for the summer concentration (Waincon) for eight weeks of intensive training, gunnery and tank manoeuvres culminating with a division level exercise that included the firing of the 'Honest John' Surface to Surface Missile. The Regiment would then dash (in true cavalry fashion) across



*Col Ian Barnes visiting with LCol IDM Grant  
Broadmead Lodge 2006*

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the prairies to exploit the simulated atomic blast. This was the main tactic that would have been used by NATO including the BAOR and the Regiment to stop the hordes of Russian tanks had they attempted to cross the inter-German border and head for the English Channel.

I hold fond memories of Col Grant. He was one of my early mentors for whom I had great admiration and respect. He was the epitome of the officer and gentleman. Some would refer to him as being of the 'old school'. He had many of the traits and idiosyncrasies of a British gentleman including long hair (which most of the young officers' mimicked) and a polka-dotted handkerchief tucked in his Serge uniform sleeve.

I first met Col Grant when I was posted to the Regiment in January 1963. Like most young subalterns of that era, I avoided the Commanding Officer as much as I possibly could during my early years with the Regiment. He had quite a reputation for eating subalterns for breakfast and I didn't want to test the theory. (up to the last year of his command he lived and ate his meals in the Officers' Mess). When I did find myself in his presence, I quickly found a reason to be somewhere else. My first interview with Col Grant was not what you might call pleasant. I had arrived at the Regiment out of season (not with the new influx of subalterns in the fall of '62) and at a time when the Regiment had too many lieutenants. To add to this, I was not properly dressed. Col Grant was terse as he told me to get a proper officer's uniform (I was wearing battle dress but Regimental officers in garrison were required to wear the serge uniform). Upon reviewing my records, he looked up in a manner that I interpreted as disgust and muttered that I would have to return to Camp Borden (the Armoured School) and complete the young officers' tactics course in the summer. He then said, that as I had not completed all of the armoured training, I was not much value to the Regiment at that point in time. I squirmed and the Adjutant, **Capt Basil Collett**, abruptly told me to keep still. He then told the Adjutant to find some useful place for me. I was given the extremely important task of putting the *Strathconian* together (all of the other subalterns were relieved, as no one wanted the job). Col Grant's opinion rose slightly when I completed the task on time but especially when I brought my new bride (**Beverley**) to the Regiment in the fall. Shortly following her arrival Col Grant informed me that my marriage to her was one of the better decisions that I had made to date. Beverley, of course, thought he was charming (which he was to the ladies). When Col Grant was posted to Washington in 1964, I was secretly relieved and hoped that my fortunes would improve with the next CO. I had no idea at that time that commanding officers knew and cared a lot about all soldiers in the Regiment as well as young subalterns and carefully followed their career development.

The next time I met Col Grant was in 1975. He had returned to Calgary to attend the reunion, the first one to be held in that locale. I was officer commanding "C" Squadron (Recce) at that time. Colonel Grant joined Beverley and me at many of the Officers' Mess functions during the reunion. It was the first time that I had spoken to him on more or less equal terms and we had a wonderful time. He laughed when I reminded him of our first meeting. From that time until last year we maintained contact and twice Beverley and I visited him on Vancouver Island. Our first visit was in 1996 at Shawnigan Lake. It was early in the morning when we arrived. Colonel Grant brought out a bottle of Glenfiddich. When we left, Beverley had to drive, as the portions of scotch were very generous. In 2006 we visited Colonel Grant at Broadmead Lodge in Victoria. It was there that I had the pleasure of giving him a signed copy of the Strathcona's book, "*A Pictorial History*". He enjoyed our visit so much he didn't want us to leave.

## Strathcona Message Board

[www.strathconas.ca/board](http://www.strathconas.ca/board)

Someone is interested in how you are doing. Have you checked out the Strathcona Message Board lately? Some of the Old Guard and not so Old Guard are invoking some interesting reading, while others are looking to connect with old friends. With over 10000 posts and 750 members, you are sure to come across a familiar name.

**Check it out today.**

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## Your Dispatches

Re: Exercise Adios, Wainwright  
1947

*It has been almost fifty years since I was released from active duty with the regiment. Since that time, I have spent some years in the militia and am now retired from the Ontario Provincial Police. During all these years I have kept in contact with Phil Daniels, as it would appear that we are the only survivors of the tank crew that General Worthington drove on that exercise. It would be interesting to know how many of the old guard remember that exercise. It is true, that once a Strathcona always a Strathcona. Best regards to all. Enclosed find a small donation to be used where it is most needed.*

Wally Heinrich

*Many thanks for your donation Wally. Stay in touch and we look forward to seeing you at Reunion 2010. Ed*



Dear Sir or Madam,

*Thank you for sending me the Regimental Society Newsletter after the death of my husband, Philip Childs, I do appreciate it.*

*On reading the Last Trumpet Call, I recognize the names of two friends from Strathcona days - Jack Fallis and Eleanor Ward.*

Yours Truly

Eileen Childs

*Eileen, Phil is missed by his many Strathcona friends. Those of us who attended his memorial service by the lake at your cottage were amazed by the fly past by the osprey and the four Canada Geese in "missing man" formation". We are convinced Phil arranged it from above. Ed.*

Dear Editor

*Thanks for printing the story of the pair of trousers. Phil Daniel Bert DeVeto send in by Norm Wood. I will return Norms Mess tins at the Black Hatter reunion in May.*

*Keep up the good work on the magazine. Enclosed a few tales from Korea:*

### **Pay Sergeant's Visit**

*I was with B Squadron of the Lord Strathcona's Armoured Squadron in Korea in support of the R.C.Rs and the P.P.C.L's. Our tank was on the saddle between both units so we could support them. Every day about noon hour the enemy would shell us as they thought we were going to lunch.*

*One day around the noon hour shelling was very heavy. We were all in the bunker when one of the lads looked out and said...there is someone laying in the ditch! We yelled at him to get in here fast. He came into the bunker and was shaking like a leaf. I asked him what are you doing here? He replied, I am the Pay Sergeant and had been sent to see if anyone wanted pay. Some of the crew members received a small amount of money. After all were paid he said how do I get out of here! We said wait until the next shell explodes then "RUN LIKE HELL". A little while later the land line phone rang, it was the troop officer **Lieutenant John Bell**, he said you will have to be honest with me...how much money did your crew get as no one signed the pay sheet. That was the last time any Paymaster or Sergeant came near the front lines to see or pay the tank crews!*

### **The Sergeant Major's Visit**

*In May 1953 our tank troop was on hill #187 in support of the 3rd battalion R.C.R.s. It was a forward position and was shelled daily. On this afternoon our Sergeant Major arrived, he had walked up the hill and came into the bunker. After small talk he said "very quiet up here, as I came up I saw three men asleep under a tarp on the road!" We replied "they were killed a short time ago". He in turn replied "Its no place for me then." and left the hill.*

### **Pancakes for Breakfast this Morning!**

*On hill #187 the cook shack was hit by a mortar bomb and several cooks were injured. The Sergeant Major of the company asked for volunteers for cooking. A rifleman said he could cook so...the CSM said you have the job! In the morning the new cook went to the cook house which was just a lean-to tent and wondered what he would make for breakfast...pancakes he thought. He mixed up this batch of (who knows what) and served it for breakfast. When the Sergeant Major arrived he asked "what is this mess?"...Pancakes replied the cook. The Sergeant Major said to "Dump it, field-rations for breakfast today!" With this the Sergeant Major sent the cook to Japan to take a course in cooking. Years later in Germany the same cook was attached to our Squadron and was the best cook we ever had!*

Stories from an Old Vet

PA Daniel

*Many thanks for the great stories. We hope you have inspired others to send in their favourite recollections. Ed.*

## Your Dispatches...continued

Enclosed in an obit of a Mrs Olive Spring. She was the wife of a 3rd generation Strathcona - Maurice Spring. Maurice's Grandfather was a pre-WWI Strath and his father Victor was a WW1 veteran. Victor was the Regt Tailor in the 30s in Calgary and during WW1. While in France he met and married Maurice's mother Germaine. Shortly after WW2 Maurice enlisted as a Sgt with the Regt in Wpg on transfer from the 15th Alta Light Horse (Militia) in Calgary. There he joined his father Victor and both father and son were to proceed overseas with the Regt (allied as members of that glorious institution - the "Sgts' Mess") or today as they refer to it as the WO's and Snr NCOs'?) Maurice went on to serve as a Trp Sgt in Italy and NW Europe while his father had rec'd his Captaincy on posting from England back to Canada to the POW camp in Seebee AB as the camp Quartermaster. Meanwhile Maurice met, over time, a young English lady (Olice) who he eventually married and settled down in the Calgary area. Maurice went on to be a professor at Mount Royal College. I might add that my family and Maurices' were quite close in the '30s as both our fathers were serving with the Regt in Calgary.

Yours respectfully  
Bob Bartlett

Thanks, Bob. Once again you have proven to be a font of Regimental knowledge. Keep sending us these notes on the 'family". Ed.



Vic Binnie and Al Kaatz  
June 2007

Vic and I served in the same regiment (1st Hussars') during World War 2, he was a lieutenant and I was a poor little trooper.

This picture was taken in June 2007 in Vic's apartment in Vernon when Marion and I visited him with a bottle of wine. I found this picture in one of my Strathcona History Books.

Vic was almost blind at this time, so he had things arranged so they were accessible. The television, computer and telephone were at arm's reach making it easier to operate up to a certain extent.

Vic attended all Strathcona reunions local and regimental (every five years). He was a kind and generous person with his donations to all the reunions which he thoroughly enjoyed.

Our by-yearly telephone calls to Vic have been greatly missed along with his humour.

Vic you are missed by all of us who knew you.

Marion and Al Kaatz

Thanks, Al. Vic Binnie was "Always a Strathcona" in every sense and is missed by all of us who knew him. Ed.



Jim Kelso formerly Trooper Kelso, J.C. is looking for members of the Strathcona RECCE Squadron who were stationed at Camp Rafah, from 1961 - 1962, that was 47 years ago (picture on page 16). The CO was **Major J. F. Burton, Captain D. J. Dunn, Lt. J. L. Ellard, S.S.M. Doug Eveleigh, Sgt. Prouse, Bill Anderson, Fred Dannais (nickname Tank), Bob Davies.** I know some members have passed on I have a photo taken before we left Sarcee Barricks in 1961. Time has moved on and I cannot remember all the names. So if you were a member of the RECCE Squadron 61-62 I would like to hear from you.

My Email is

strathconakelso@rogers.com.

It would great to hear what you have been up to and maybe we could get together.

Perseverance.

Jim Kelso an oldie.

Jim, fortunately there are still a lot of the members of that Squadron around. Hopefully a number of you will make it to Reunion 2010 where you can gather and have a drink to the memory of those who have passed on. Ed.



Dear Sirs:

The purpose of this email is to request your assistance in locating some information. I recently heard that there is a movement afoot to compensate veterans or their surviving widows for participation in the Atomic testing that was done in Nevada from June to November in 1957. My late father, Cpl. Arthur Lundquist was attached to 1

## Your Dispatches...continued

RDU and took part in these tests. He passed away at age 57 from diseases that could possibly be linked to effects of radiation. My mother is 84 years old and I am making this request on her behalf. Any contacts or information that you could possibly provide would be greatly appreciated. Both my late father and my late husband, M/Cpl. Robert Smith were long time serving members of the Strathconas. My mother and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the privilege of receiving the Regimental Society Newsletter. It is always a pleasure to read news of past friends and to be kept apprised of the endeavour of the current members of the LdSH. Once again, thank you for any information you can provide and it can be emailed to me at [bsmudge@shaw.ca](mailto:bsmudge@shaw.ca)

Beverley Smith (Mrs.)

Beverly

The Government of Canada announced the Atomic Veterans Recognition Program on September 2, 2008.

An ex gratia payment of \$24,000 will recognize the exceptional service of Canadian military Veterans and civilian science and technology workers who participated in nuclear weapons testing in the United States, Australia or the



Fort Osborne Barracks, Winnipeg 1938  
Front row, L-R: Sgt. Jack Smith, Major F.M.W. Harvey VC, Sgt. Ike J. Penny, unknown.

Back row, L-R: unknown, L/Cpl. Tommy Johnson, unknown, Tpr. G.C.H. (Gus) Keeler.

South Pacific from the end of the Second World War to 1963, or who assisted in decontamination work at the nuclear reactor in Chalk River, Ontario in 1952-53 or 1958.

Unfortunately it would appear that only surviving service members and veterans are eligible for this payment; however, you may be able to clarify this by calling the Department of National Defence toll free at 1-800-883-6094, or e-mail [Atomic@forces.gc.ca](mailto:Atomic@forces.gc.ca), or visiting:

[www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/cen/ps/avr-pra/index-eng.asp](http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/cen/ps/avr-pra/index-eng.asp)

Perhaps this information will be of use to other readers. Ed.



The Dominion of Canada Rifle Association was founded in 1868 and incorporated by an Act of Parliament 63-64 Victoria Chapter 99, assented to July 7, 1890, to promote and encourage the training of marksmanship throughout Canada. The passage of this Act was prompted by the imminent departure of the British Garrisons, who had all left by 1871, and by the then recent experience of the Fenian Raids which had occurred in 1866 against Canadian territory.

So I'm basically looking for reader input to identify the unknown individuals. People can contact me direct with additional photos or information at:

[patrick.johnson@sympatico.ca](mailto:patrick.johnson@sympatico.ca)

Can anyone help? Ed



I note with interest **John Boileau's** informative article on Regimental Connections.

I was particularly taken by the reference to **Brig. Harvey's** great nephew.

I recall the Brig and his frequent



RECCE Squadron  
1961 - 1962



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## Your Dispatches...continued

visits to the Mess in the early post-WW II days in Calgary. His magnificent "gallop" around the dance floor left many young ladies gasping for breath.

I think of him often as I look at the wall in my study where my father's WW I discharge certificate is signed "FM Harvey, Lt."

Perseverance

E.R.M.(Tojo) Griffiths (long Retired)

I thought I would send to you a photograph and a clipping from the Calgary newspaper that gives the story of a night firing exercise in 1946 that caused some concern among local citizens.

The CO (Lt Col Jerry Chubb) gave me the chore of setting up a tank range at Sarcee. Our initial firing took place from a site near the water tower behind Currie Barracks, and the target area was across the Bow River on the reservation. There was great local concern by one resident in immediate area of water tower. A Board of Inquiry determined he had a triple complaint - concussion from the guns broke his window - 2nd the noise caused his wife to miscarry - 3rd the noise scared his dog.

If memory serves me right, I think the Board found that he was more concerned about scaring the dog than he was about his wife or the window.

Perseverance Tojo Griffiths

Thanks for these, Tojo. Keep in touch because we know you are a great store of Strathcona stories. Hope you make it out to the Reunion. Ed.



**Tank Exercise Startles City** (typed text from newsclipping below)

As shell-fire lit the evening sky and the roar of big guns rattled windows and dishes in their homes Thursday night, residents of South Calgary experienced some of the excitement which Orson Wells instilled in American radio listeners some years ago with his mock radio broadcast of "The Invasion from Mars."

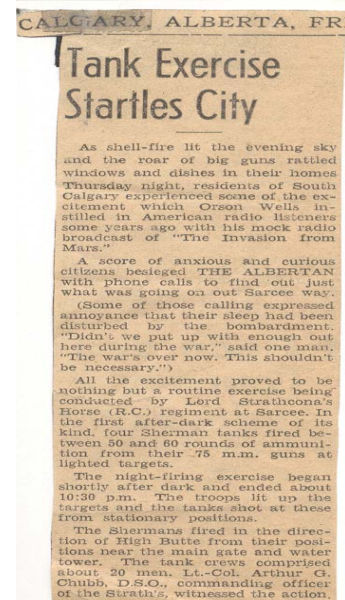
A score of anxious and curious citizens besieged THE ALBERTAN with phone calls to find out just what was going on out Sarcee way.

(Some of those calling expressed annoyance that their sleep had been disturbed by the bombardment. "Didn't we put up with enough out here during the war," said one man. "The war's over now. This shouldn't be necessary.")

All the excitement proved to be nothing but routine exercise being conducted by Lord Strathcona's Horse (R.C.) regiment at Sarcee. In the first after-dark scheme of its kind, four Sherman tanks fired between 50 and 60 rounds of ammunition from their 75 M.M. guns at lighted targets.

The night-firing exercise began shortly after dark and ended about 10:30 p.m. The troops lit up the targets and the tanks shot at these from stationary positions.

The shermans fired in the direction of Hugh Butte from their positions near the main gate and water tower. The tank crews comprised about 20 men, Lt-Col Arthur G. Chubb, D.S.O., commanding officer of the Strath's, witnessed the action.



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## Your Dispatches...continued

*I will try explain an experience I had way back in 1949 I believe.*

*Was like most of the guys back then who just finished Camp Borden and went to the regiment in Calgary and got settled in. Must say at this time our bony chests expanded as far as the ribs would allow. My goodness what a feeling of manhood we experienced at that time.*

*The courses we had then are probably somewhat as now but believe me a lot less technical and electronic. I have never been in a tank since back in 1951 when I left the Strath's.*

*Now on with my most memorable experience*

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*Was on a driver mech course on the Sherman, I believe it was an M4. Anyways we were out on our first driving lesson in the Sarcee area. My job was to go down what seemed like a mountain to me at that time. And actually it was some hill for sure. Coming towards a large hedge and was to turn right. Well didn't make it as I can remember seeing that 76 cannon going thru the bushes. My instructor was and I may be mistaken a **Cpl McMullen**. Anyhow he told me to back up as the brakes*

*were frozen and that would free them. So that's what I did and that's what backing up did. Nor I was driving parallel to that hedge row and came to the crest of the hill we were to go down. Now I have to tell you it was the highest hill I was ever on. And to make matters worse our way down was to be on a horse trail and that meant only one track was able to grip on that area. I will say as an 18 year old kid and a 35 ton Sherman and one hell of a high hill, the intestinal fortitude was not to be my strongest point. I was unable to be brave enough to take that monster down. **Cpl McMullen** relayed to me a few adjectives I am not at liberty to quote, and I felt lower than a wet cigarette paper at that time. You see I truly was afraid of my high track slipping off the horse path and sidling down the hill. And there was a river down the bottom also. Anyways **Cpl McMullen** successfully took the M4 down with no problems. Guess what? He had the audacity to ask me to take it up the hill. For some reason or other that dang hill looked an awful lot higher from the bottom. Once again I hit the status of a wet cigarette paper and **Cpl McMullen** got at the levers and pedals and away we go uphill. About half way up he lost it, and the Sherman was on it's*

*way downhill (with no help I might add) and we stopped really not too far from that river. But that was my saving grace and a memory after these long 60 years I can never forget.*

*I was the CO's batman in Wainwright for a summer and perhaps later I will write an experience I had with that gentleman. If you would care to hear from me.*

*But one thing is certain....even though I was a Strath not all that long it is this*

**ONCE A STRATH ALWAYS A STRATH**

*Thank You*

*Ex Trooper  
Charles Corby*

*And thank you to the folks in the orderly room who made me feel back home again.*

*And thank you for a great story, Charles. We are anxiously waiting to hear about your life as a batman. Ed.*



*Wainwright Alberta 1949  
Tpr Charles Corby  
Also Batman for L/Col Chubb. CO*

### Winter/Spring 2010 Edition

The deadline for submissions for the  
Winter/Spring 2010 Strathcona Newsletter is  
**15 January 2009.**

Submissions should be forwarded to  
**newsletter@strathconas.ca**

or mailed to:  
Lord Strathcona's Horse  
(Royal Canadians)  
PO Box 10500 Station Forces  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4J5  
Attention: Kathy Batty

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# Extracts From and Reflections on Anglo Boer War 1899 – 1902, Lord Strathcona's Horse Capt RBE Clark, MMM, CD (Ret)

*Submitted By Murray Cayley*

In this installment, I have taken the liberty of introducing to Nobby's work other materials that I found in further research. This may be helpful in understanding what took place in South Africa on 1 July, 1900 and how the event has been perceived over the years.

## **The "White Flag" Incident, July 1, 1900**

**Nobby, P.51** "It was on the 1st of July, 1900, the second day out, that Lieutenant Kirkpatrick's troops came under fire from Kopje and a farm house flying a white flag. I must say here that it had become a routine practice for the woman of the house to fly a white flag on their farm house to indicate that the man of the house was not on the premises. The Boer Commando, however, was quick to take advantage of the situation and often took up fire positions in and around the kraals and out buildings and sheds, often unbeknownst to the farmer's wife. It was in this situation that Sergeant Nicholl and Trooper Jenkins moved forward to investigate when they came under ambush fire from the farmhouse. Sergeant Nicholl's horse caught a bullet but Jenkins, not so lucky, was killed and became the first Strathcona battle casualty of the war. Jenkins' final resting place is in the Standerton Cemetery as one of the unknown graves."

The Strathcona War Diary reads:

## **Wachout Spruit, Sunday, 1st July 1900**

"Fine, Marched at 7:30. Strathcona's Horse protecting front and right flank of the advance. Crossed the spruit at Smith's Store, 1½ miles north of the Vaal Station and came in contact with the enemy a mile further on. The troops under Tobin and Kirkpatrick came under fire directed from a rocky Kopje and farm flying a white flag, on the right front. They retired a short distance under cover, and the reserve moved up in support. In the meantime "A" Battery Royal Horse Artillery shelled the position and the enemy retired. Casualties:-

No. 509 Pte. Jenkins, Killed  
Captain Howard and No. 456  
Pte. Hobson, Missing.

In the evening "A" Squadron, while on outpost duty, was under sharp fire, but held the ground until relieved by the infantry. Bivouaced (sic) at Vitnek Farm near Wachout Spruit. Buried Jenkins in the garden of the farm. Lord Dundonald and Staff attended the funeral. They always do the right thing."

It appears that there might have been quite a lot of what has become to be known as "White Flagging" by Boers throughout the war. In *Canada's Sons on Kopje and Veldt*; T.G. Marquis, 1900; at least three "White Flag" incidents are recorded. On p. 466, referring to the July 1st incident:

"Fighting for the Strathcona's began on July 1. Their work was to scout in advance of General Buller's army, and for four months their duty led them into many warm corners. On Dominion Day a small party of them, deceived by a white flag, fell into a Boer trap, and the first man in the regiment to fall was Private Jenkins, of Red Deer, who was shot through the heart. *A brisk running fight followed in which the remainder of the party, with the exception of Captain Howard and Private Hobson who were taken prisoners, escaped.*" (My italic)

**Nobby** continues: "It has been said, it has been written and it has been insinuated . . . that the Strathcona's had

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*Continued from Page 19*

captured, court-martialed and lynched six Boers from trees surrounding the farm house.” Nobby notes elsewhere that it is also alleged that an officer witnessed the incident, threatened to arrest the men who then threatened him with lynching as well. He is supposed to have fled without mentioning the incident to anyone afterwards!

From numerous sources it is quite clear that the Strathcona’s were led into a “White Flag” trap on July 1, 1900 and lost a man killed, and two taken prisoner which sounds like a pretty brisk encounter. What happened next? Was there a “trial” and a “hanging” or, as described in various other sources: a running firefight, a bombardment, the Strathcona’s rushing to “escape”, or retiring to avoid contact with the large bodies of Boers then operating in the area? Perhaps they held a position under fire or withdrew to cover to wait for the reserves to move up? Perhaps they got away and returned the next day to burn the house? Nobody seems to be quite clear on just what did happen although there does appear to be solid ground to believe that the Strathcona’s were running for their lives and not hanging around lynching people!

**Nobby** says: “In all my research in Standerton, in Lydenburg, and at the Boer War Museum in Bloemfontein, I was not able to come up with one single strand of proof (of a hanging). Steele dismissed the incident as sheer nonsense.”

A good example of the confusion about these events is found in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography On Line: Sam Steele* that states:

*In August 1900* a party of the Strathconas witnessed an incident, typical of this period of the war, in which a detachment of the South African Light Horse approached a Boer farm displaying a flag of truce, were fired upon, and had some men killed or wounded. The Strathconas allegedly responded by capturing those responsible, helping the Light Horse hold a “court martial,” and hanging six of the Boers on the spot. Reports of the incident in the press were denied by Steele and his superiors, but Carman Miller’s careful study of the episode, in his work on the Canadians in South Africa, leaves little doubt that the hangings occurred and were covered up by Steele and others.”

**Nobby** notes, however, that: “Professor Carman Miller, Department of History, McGill University is non committal but says there is no evidence that the deed did in fact take place.” Further, among many differing reports and interpretations of the incident, Nobby adds: “A good deal of research has been done within the Boer Commando records in recent years. No evidence regarding the lynching of six Boers by Strathcona’s Horse has ever been found. Not even a rumor.”

Christian R. de Wet, one of the more capable Boer leaders, campaigning throughout the same general area at the time, in his memoirs: *Three Years’ War* published in 1903 records his experience with a great deal of incidental detail, including a successful ambush of British troops that is confirmed elsewhere in the literature. It is not surprising he does not record a rather shameful ambush of Strathcona’s under a white flag but it is surprising he does not record the atrocity of “lynching” six Boers if it actually did occur.

The following rather fanciful letter, one of several written nearly six months later by a hard to identify writer received wide circulation in England and may have become the basis for the persistent canard that the Strathcona’s were an excessively rough troupe, spreading the rumour of covered up hangings. In *A letter to a friend in England, dated Lydenburg, Friday November 2, 1900*:

My dear Guy

I promised to drop you a line when I had got settled down again in this horrible country. I will begin at the beginning and tell you what has occurred since leaving Southampton.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are some very good stories afloat about Strathcona’s Horse. They are a long way superior to all the other

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mounted corps. One report is that they lynched six Boers near Standerton, hanging them for the usual white-flag -farmhouse game. Just as they had finished, a staff officer came up in a towering rage and called them murderers, etc. One of the Yanks looked him up and down for some time and then said, "I guess, Stranger, there, is room for another one up there". The staff officer quickly departed. They will go anywhere. If a patrol is sniped at, they don't stop but go for the sniper. The Boers really fear them. We are very sorry we haven't got them with us here now. They are very good at looting. I am keeping fairly fit; I have got over one touch of dysentery. Wishing you all a happy Christmas and New Year.

Yours ever, Alfred Markham

"Looting" is mentioned frequently in the various sources and seems to have been an effort to deny resources and supplies to the Boers in the field rather than a personal quest for "booty".

The letter almost sounds like it was scripted for Jimmy Stewart or, perhaps, for the British public which was beginning to shift its opinion to one more sympathetic to the Boers. The spectacular trial of the Australian "Breaker" Morant the following year would help confirm the impressions of widespread abuse by troops in South Africa. More recent findings show that Kitchener had actually ordered summary shooting of Boers even as a means to avoid taking prisoners. While many resisted these orders, Morant may have been a little too zealous. The Markham letter, resurfacing in recent years, led to some rather hysterical accusations about troop actions during the war without much examination of the historical facts.

Another version of the events of the July 1st incident comes from the same time period by a veteran in local magazine:

#### **In Reminiscences Of The Boer War; Manx Quarterly, #2 June 1907**

A Manxman writes:

"During a stay at Greylingstad, we were for several days reduced to quarter rations owing to the Boers blowing up a large iron bridge crossing Groot Spruit, near Greylingstad, which had been left unguarded in the night time. An incident occurred there in which Strathcona's Horse had the sympathy of the whole force. It appeared that while a squadron of the horse were out patrolling, they approached a Boer house, from the gable of which was displayed a huge white flag. Suddenly and without the slightest warning, two shots were fired from the window by some person inside the house, with the result of killing one and wounding another of Strathcona's men. When the assault became known in camp, indignation ran high at the treachery, and Strathcona's Horse vowed to have vengeance on the morrow by going out and burning the house. General Clery, who was in temporary command of the forces at the time, would not grant permission for them to do so, and matters became strained; nevertheless, Strathcona's were resolutely determined to carry their project of revenge, and in a body rode and leveled the house to the ground".

Where does all this leave us? The "incident" changes with each report. Nevertheless, whatever happened on 1 July, resulted in tactical improvements that subsequently eliminated the white flagging problem:

**Nobby:** "I must point out that after the *Standerton white flag incident* involving Sgt. Parker; the Third Brigade developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for dealing with farm houses flying white flags. In Steele's words, the SOP ran as follows: "When searching a house that displayed a white flag the system in the Third Mounted Brigade would ... make good the ground on all sides with . . . flankers and advance, so that no enemy could escape. The support unit will then search the house." Steele goes on to say that by taking this precaution, "there were no white flag incidents."

Overlooked in all the controversy is the general behaviour of the troops in the field. From *Canada's Sons in Kopje and Veldt*, p. 430:

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*Continued from Page 21*

“Some of the soldiers were approaching a farmhouse with a white flag floating over it, when from a concealed position near by, the sharp crackling of a number of Mausers was heard, followed by the singing of the bullets among them. They retreated and then a body of soldiers went forward to loot and destroy the place, but found only women and children in possession. These claimed that they had nothing to do with the treachery, and as the Canadian soldiers were not making war against women they were allowed to remain in possession of their farmhouse – no doubt very much to their surprise . . .”

But what were the rules of war? “Major Charles Bolton, the prosecuting attorney at the Morant trial the next year read the rules of war from the printed page which stated that “prisoners of war were to be detained and sent to secure areas for imprisonment, that enemies surrendering under white flags were prisoners of war, and that the lives and property of civilian populations were to be safeguarded.” Morant and others on trial for murder had been part of a special unit of the British Army, the Bushveldt Carabineers, created by Lord Kitchner to use commando tactics against Boer guerillas.

Author Nick Bleszynski: “*Shoot Straight, You Bastards!*” contradicts Bolton’s reading of the rules of engagement:

“Contrary to the courts view, the Manual of Military Law did sanction summary execution of prisoners. The verdicts in the trials are no longer “beyond reasonable doubt” because of the withheld evidence such as removal of at least one vital witness, non disclosure of Kitchener’s telegram admitting he had prisoners summarily executed and his order to ignore the display of the “white flag” and shoot any Boers attempting to surrender making a mockery of the prosecutions denial that any order existed that: “no prisoners were to be taken alive . . .”

Witton commented in his book “*Scapegoats of the Empire*” :

“... “The order to shoot Boers clearly existed and was sanctioned at the highest level. It would appear that Morant and Hancock’s real crime was to shoot Boers already taken prisoner, rather than shooting them before they had surrendered.” This I later discovered was the correct interpretation of the order to take no prisoners”.

Poore’s diary also revealed that orders did exist to shoot Boers wearing khaki, which was denied by the prosecution . . .”

In *Hellenic Genocide, The Independent, 27 June 1999* , “Phillip Knightly, author of “*The First Casualty*” writes:

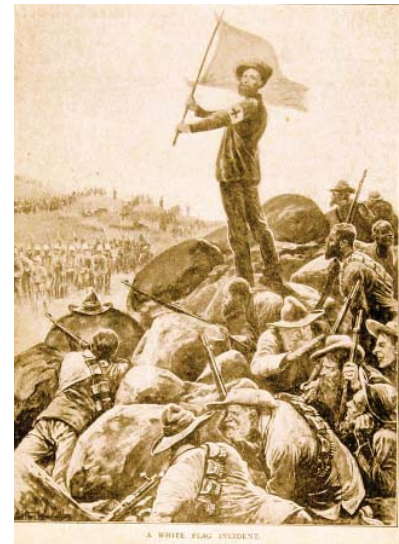


“even in the In the Boer War . . . the British press invented hundreds of atrocity stories - Boer civilians murdered wounded British soldiers; Boer soldiers massacred pro-British civilians; Boers executed other Boers who wanted to surrender; Boers attacked British Red Cross tents while brave British doctors and nurses were treating the wounded. They were all made up, spun out of the imagination of the journalists, rendered more believable by artists back home who specialized in atrocity drawings. The attack on the Red Cross tent was even deemed worth filming, and when presented as genuine documentary footage caused great outrage against the beastly Boers. It was actually shot with actors on Hampstead Heath.”

The illustrations are instructive. One is from a contemporary history of the Boer War, the other from a French history of the First World War . The “enemy” is portrayed as deceitful and murderous and, I note, profoundly stupid. Note the sly looks and smiles as they wait to spring their trap – on a passing army! After a shot or two, they will surely be wiped out having accomplished very little. Suicide was not normally a meaningful battlefield tactic. The Boers were

often accused, even by their own leaders such as de Wet, of being too willing to run away to fight another day. These illustrations serve to belittle the opponent or, worse, incite hate and justify reprisals.

What actually happened on the 1st of July, 1900 in South Africa? We will probably never know. Clearly, the Strathcona's were lured into a "White Flag" trap and took casualties. What happened next is, however, uncertain. The Strathcona's were operating in an environment that encouraged little mercy for their opponents. On the other hand, there is evidence that Canadian troops showed real constraint toward the local population. From all reports, it seems most likely they were fighting for their lives that day and trying to avoid enemy fire or capture rather than setting up bush courts. Perhaps the whole incident was elaborated for the British public as an example of Boer perfidy and an appropriate style of response at a time when public opinion was becoming more sympathetic towards the Boers. The preponderance of evidence in the literature suggests, however, that the Strathcona's response was likely something other than "lynching". They just didn't have the opportunity to do that while running to save themselves! The problem for historians is they are not legal experts; even supposed eyewitnesses offer unreliable testimony and other agendas distort perception and the record. The problem for understanding history is that some historians may have their own agendas or be quick to pass judgment. I have struggled to remain the neutral observer through this chapter. It has been difficult!



*Marquis, T.G., B.A., Canada's Sons on Kopje and Veldt; The Canada's Sons Publishing Co., Toronto, 1900, p. 466*

*de Wet, Christiaan Rudolf, Three Year's War; New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903*

*Clark, RSM (Ret) Nobby, LdSH(RC), Anglo Boer War 1899-1902, Lord Strathcona's Horse (DRAFT), Regimental Museum, LdSH(RC), Museum of the Regiments, Calgary, Alberta, pp. 261-*

*See: Oklahoma City University Law Review, Vol 22, Number 1, (1997): Breaker Morant, Drew L. Kershen for an analysis of the film "Breaker Morant" and the true events with references cited, posted on the internet by the Tarleton Law Library, Jamal Center for Legal Research, The University of Texas School of Law.*

*(Pen-L:8403" "The First Casualty". Louis Proyect in the Independent; 28 June 1999, Internet: The Mail Archive.*

**Lost Trails**

*Winter/Spring 2009 Newsletters and Reunion Information which have been returned*

- |                                 |                                   |                             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Armstrong TG - New Maryland NB  | Fry CJ - Winnipeg MB              | Neale E - Delta BC          |
| Bedford A - Brandon MB          | Hall F - Lake Cowichan BC         | Noftall AW - Morinville AB  |
| Benoit R - Barrie ON            | Hobson DB - St. Albert AB         | Olsen FW - Edson AB         |
| Bourne JDA - Stittsville ON     | Huff K - Calgary AB               | Rousseaux R - Redwater AB   |
| Brotzell AL - Redcliff AB       | Jensen J - Windsor ON             | Schooley SA - Lumsden SK    |
| Clark GD - St. Thomas ON        | King DG - Calgary AB              | Siermachesky G - Calgary AB |
| Croteau JRS - Thetford Mines QC | Land EV - Trail BC                | Taylor P - Scarborough ON   |
| Cunningham RHG - London ON      | Laxton LD - Whitehorse YT         | Walsh HR - Ottawa ON        |
| Eyres E - Winnipeg MB           | MacFarlane RB - Carrying Place ON | Webb DG - Yellowknife NT    |

# LAST TRUMPET CALL

**BEATTIE Gord**, Creston, BC

**BECKETT Marvin** 25 May 2009, Kitchener, ON

**BOISMENU Maurice** 22 March 2009, Toronto, ON

**CASTLE James (Jim)** Age 74, 1 September 2009, Calgary, AB

**CHABOT Maurice** Age 68, 20 March 2009, Edmonton, AB

**GIBSON Brenton** 18 August 2009, Calgary, AB

**GOOD Jim** Age 68, 17 June 2009, Fredericton, NB

**GRANT Ian MacD** Age 89, 17 March 2009, Saanich, BC

**HUDSON Russell (Dick)** Age 89, 31 March 2009, Orillia, ON

**LEVESQUE George** 9 May 2009, Victoria, BC

**LUTTYCK Alexander (Sandy)** Age 86, 26 October 2007, Calgary, AB

**MACKIE Hugh** London, ON

**MCBRIDE Charles** Age 78, 13 February 2009, Surrey, BC

**MORRISON Gord** Age 42, 4 February 2009, Sherwood Park, AB

**PRETZER Lorne** 8 May 2009, Moose Jaw, SK

**SCOTT Ralph** Age 93, 5 August 2009, Elmvale, ON

**SMITH John** Age 70, 24 May 2009, Calgary, AB

**TALL Stanley** Age 88, 28 November 2008, Calgary, AB

**ULMER James** Age 91, 2 February 2009, Calgary, AB

**WALL Jacob (Jack)**, 27 May 2008, Lethbridge, AB

**WHEAT Bud** 2 March 2009, Calgary, AB

**WODHAM James** Age 84, 9 May 2009, Dryden, ON

## In Loving Memory of Wives

**DOMMER, Joan** (*Robbie Robson*) 4 February 2009, Owen Sound, ON

**MCGOWAN, Leslie** (*Bud*) 22 November 2008, Evansburg, AB

**SPRING, Millicent (Olive)** (*Maurice*) 13 December 2008, Calgary, AB

*Our apologies for lack of details in some cases*