



Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians)

REGIMENTAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015

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

Colonel of the Regiment

MGen (ret'd) Cam Ross, CMM, CD

On April 1st, an extraordinary ceremony was held at Spruce Meadows. It marked the 40th anniversary of the opening of Spruce Meadows which has for many years earned the reputation of being the world's #1 equestrian facility. Attending the ceremony was the CO, **LCol Josh Major**, 2ic, **Major Mike Onieu**, **RSM Batty**, the Mounted Troop Leader, **Capt Andrew Tardif**, Troop Sergeant, **Sgt Paul Kruhlak**, and the Mounted Troop.

Forty years ago, a lasting relationship was initiated between Spruce Meadows and the Strathcona's. To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Regiment's birthday and Calgary's 100th birthday, the Mounted Troop was formed. The CO of the day was **LCol Mark Egner** who, to my utter amazement, picked me as the Troop Leader. I say amazement as I knew nothing about horses ... still don't! But what an incredible 'ride' it was.

While I had the great privilege of being called Troop 'Leader', everyone knew that the real boss was **Sergeant Major Bob Wallace** who I am convinced to this day was born on a horse. The troop rummaged around the ranches of southern Alberta for twenty horses and we prepared for our first public appearance, Rodeo Royal in the Stampede Corral during the 3rd week of March 1975.

Continued on page 2

Contents

1	Colonel of the Regiment
2	Commanding Officer
3	"Tales from the Big Chair"
3	Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) Regimental Association
5	Vancouver Island Branch Moreuil Wood Luncheon
6	Regimental 2ICs, One in Particular
7	Lost Trails
8	A Roll Past to Remember
8	Fall 2015 Edition Deadline
9	Just a Bit of Trivia
10	Italy Revisited
11	Remember and Celebrate
12	Loops for the Troops 2015
13	Push On
15	The Eight Tank Troop and the First "Leopard" Strathcona
19	A Call for Afghanistan Stories and Anecdotes
24	Diaries of a UN Soldier
28	Last Trumpet Call

L to R: Sgt Kruhlak, RSM Batty, Nancy Southern, Ron Southern, LCol Major, Linda Southern, Marg Southern, Maj Onieu



Continued from page 1

Initially called the Ceremonial Mounted Troop, we were stabled in the then Sarcee Barracks. With an indoor riding arena that was half the size of a hockey rink, we clearly needed a bigger venue in which to prepare for our big debut in the Stampede Grounds. Spruce Meadows was in its very early days. Construction started in 1973 in preparation for its own public debut in 1975. Hearing of our need, the Southern family very graciously offered the Strathconas the use of their brand new stables and indoor arena.

On a cold and frosty winter morning, we rode across the Weasel Head and over the rickety, old, single-lane Fish Creek Bridge. You'd think we were a bunch of 1860 Mounties in search of outlaws. Once we got to Spruce Meadows, we trained in earnest for our Rodeo Royal musical ride, tent pegging, and jumping. The horses thought they had reached paradise. Their rustic homes became a five-star holiday house. It was the equivalent of moving from a Motel 6 to the Fairmount.

Since that day in 1975, the Strathconas and Spruce Meadows have had an active and vibrant partnership, underscored by our mutual respect for one another and our fondness for horses. This was all the result of **Mark Egner's** desire to perpetuate the Regiment's history and **Ron Southern's** vision of an equestrian venue that would eventually become 'best of class' in the world. Happy 40th Spruce Meadows and happy 40th (sort of) Mounted Troop.



Commanding Officer

LCol Josh Major, MSM, CD

How time flies. My last newsletter article came during a field deployment to Wainwright and this one comes just as the Regiment is once again in the midst of another training exercise. Although I had promised **Kathy** to have my article not only on time, but early, I inevitably ended up submitting it late.

Since the last Newsletter the Regiment has continued upon its path of excellence. Exercise STEELE SABRE was a resounding success with all soldiers returning with a well-deserved sense of pride and accomplishment. Although there were several great stories resulting from the exercise, one of the best was from the A Sqn/ Recce Sqn force on force during a blinding snowstorm described by the Chileans as "difficult." The Regiment also conducted Exercise STEELE BEASTS in Fort Hood, Texas this past March. A Sqn, B Sqn, and elements of Recce participated in a very valuable training event that leveraged the U.S. Army's impressive simulation equipment. This training reinforced the importance of basic crew skills such as fire and movement and adopting proper positions. There may have also been a bit of time to enjoy some BBQ from a few local establishments. The Regiment impressed our American brothers in arms with our high level of skill and professionalism.

In addition to honing our collective warfighting skills, the Regiment also capitalized upon opportunities for professional development. Exercise STEELE BLACKHAT, organized by **Maj Gardner**, was a tremendous success. The week began with a

viewing of a short 3D film of the invasion of Normandy. Thanks to Telus World of Science, the entire Regiment was able to participate in this event and it certainly set the stage for the rest of the week. All members of the Regiment also had the opportunity to go to Calgary to visit the museum and view the great renovations that have been completed making our museum a second to none attraction. We also took the opportunity to formally recognize the improvements to the museum with a rededication ceremony presided over by the Colonel of the Regiment (CotR). Everyone came out of this week with a deeper appreciation for the accomplishments of all our veterans and the rich traditions we possess.

The Regiment also continued to impress within the Army and the community. Our Canadian Patrol Concentration team earned a bronze medal and finished as the top team in 3 Cdn Div (beating all the PPCLI Battalions). This impressive accomplishment earned the Regiment the privilege to represent the Bde during the next Cambrian Patrol Competition in the UK. It speaks volumes to the professionalism and dedication of all our soldiers. Within the community, the Regiment was the main military component for "No Stone Left Alone," a ceremony that seeks to educate our youth on the sacrifices of those who serve. From humble beginnings, this ceremony now encompasses all of Edmonton, several cities in Alberta, as well as locations in Manitoba and BC.

As you can all see, the Regiment continues to build upon the tradition of excellence that has been developed over the years. This really hit home when we received an email from Nunspeet, the Netherlands, sending

us warm regards and pictures of their celebration commemorating the liberation of their town on 19 April, 1945 by the Regiment.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the changing of the CotR celebration that will occur on 20 June 2015.



"Tales from the Big Chair"

CWO Tony Batty, MMM, CD

Finally the Base in Edmonton is in the throes of Spring, I do understand those of you who are not quite so close to the Arctic Circle may have been hard at the lawn mowers already.....

The Regiment has had a busy but steady time through the bleak winter conditions found this close to the "great white north". The month of November found the SNCOs well entrenched in Black Hat Professional Development. Having totally worn out a few pointed dunce caps (you know who you are) it was into the fun week leading up to Christmas break. Sports were played. The Mariner Room has turned any sporting event into something that resembles Meerkats at the Zoo, an incredible amount of hustle and movement with the odd subaltern keeping lookout for a predatory member of the Sarcee Room. You gentlemen are welcome to keep the trophy as is the norm.....

Next it was block leave and all the turkey/chocolate goodness that December can bring. All too soon it was January and we all trudged

uphill both ways back to the Harvey building to commence the winter training cycle.

Toboggans were packed, unpacked, and repacked. They really should put instructions with them. They resemble flat packed furniture..... there is always stuff left over.

February loomed out of the blizzard and suddenly I found myself and the CO on the plane to Texas. We were going to Fort Hood to use the simulators there. Both A and B Sqn deployed down on separate weeks along with an attached troop form Recce Squadron. The Ex Steele Beasts was an all-round success. The soldiers continually proved to the Simulator staff that we were made of sterner stuff than our southern cousins, although there were some complaints due to the challenges of early morning PT. The deployed soldiers were treated to first class experiences by the host unit, 3rd Armoured Cavalry Brigade, enjoying museum tours and the odd libation when time and training permitted, of course.

March historically is the time for Moreuil Wood. The sports this year were changed. (I personally think it was to allow the Mariner Meerkats an advantage) Once again the soldiers in our Regiment carried off the parade with panache and swagger. The Old Guard were recognised during the ceremony. By the way gentlemen, it is no good trying to hide. You will and should be on parade even if I have to round you up myself. After the parade it was off to the respective Mess Dinners with a very respectable turn out for the Sarcee Room - at least at the start of the evening.

The CO and I are about to head off to the four star campgrounds of

Wainwright for Ex Maple Resolve 15. B Squadron will be facing the Opposing Force Battlegroup (OPFOR) commanded by the CO (better 12 BG than 9 BG I always say) which will be comprised of HQ, A and Recce Sqns with attachments of Infantry, Engineers and Artillery.

I hope you all had a great Easter and are beginning to enjoy the springtime outside. Best wishes to all. See you in the summer.



Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) Regimental Association

*Peter Wonderham President,
Regimental Association*

Your Fall Newsletter, understandably, contains news of the Association Branches' summer adventures, social gatherings, and golf BBQs. Although this spring Newsletter article will be lacking in social stories and photos, I will give you an update as to Association happenings during the winter months while many of you were in the south. Oh yes, we know who you are!

Before I lose track, I want to thank our Association executive and the committee members for what they have done for all of us. Your Association meetings held in January and March produced a great turnout and accomplished a great deal. In January the interim executive was once again voted in with **Howie Owen**

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

(VP), **Clair Lane** (Treasurer), and **Keith (Slider) Welch** (Membership Committee Chairman). These fine Strathconas have stepped forward to manage our affairs. We are pleased to announce, also, that **Mr Brad Norman** was elected as your new Executive Board Secretary. On your behalf, I thank all of them.

While on the subject of appreciation, this year's membership drive was awesome. Thank you all. Our newest nominal roll is less than a troop's strength away from 300 members. As a side note, these members touch every province less Newfoundland (we will work on those folks), from Vancouver Island to Free Port NS, and to the USA, Germany, New Zealand, Australia, and Scotland. Our contact list reaches everyone with an email address. Moreover, Calgary folks without email get a phone call from **Slider** and his membership committee (that should prompt some of them to buy a computer). This contact/communication network coupled with the Regimental e-news, I have been told, is now the most far reaching of any military association in Canada. By the way, of the 286 members, some 194 have an e-mail address.

I think you will all be pleased to know that this year our budget allowed us to donate to two great causes. One was a thousand dollars to the Newsletter. It is an expensive undertaking with many of us still receiving the Newsletter in hardcopy) and I am sure we all enjoy it. The other donation was to support our six Cadet corps. They will each see a hundred dollars from your Association and through letters from their CO's, we know these donations are well received and well spent on the youngest generation to put on a uniform.

Along with the Regimental 2IC on 6 Feb 2015, I was pleased to attend a dinner sponsored by the Calgary Branch of the Monarchist League. At this dinner, they honoured **Father Bob Greene**, ever the humble ambassador of the cloth and the Regiment, with the Silver Badge of Service. It was presented by the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, **Col (Ret'd) Don Ethell**, a former Patricia. Well done, padre.

While speaking about **Father Greene**, on your behalf the executive nominated him and **Mr Fred (Bud) McLean** to participate in the 70th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands activities sponsored

by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Their nominations were accepted and with good "travelling" health expected, they will leave for Appledorn, The Netherlands on 1 May 2015. Their program will last from 1 to 10 May. We hope that they will take notes and keep out of trouble. Congratulations to both and we thank them.

I am confident that those in populated Branch areas are kept abreast of upcoming events in their respective locations. I do know that our Regiment is planning a great event the weekend of 19-21 June, highlighted by a parade marking the change of Colonel of our Regiment. We have been given a warning order to mark this weekend on our calendar. I am not presuming that this event will take the place of your postponed reunion but it will give anyone interested an excellent venue to rub shoulders with members of our Regiment.

Since the recent election of our executive I have (of course with **Kathy's** help) updated the Association website. This will better illustrate our current leadership and branch governance as well as give anyone who is interested a look at our posted minutes of the winter

meetings.

In concluding this update, I am comfortable that your Association is doing very well. Our goal of increasing membership was well met and is a super start to an even brighter future of younger association members. Our communication link is established to the point that if you want to know anything, it is available to you. Our Branches have social events well in hand and this is, in part, what the Association is all about.

Thank you for your continued support of the Old Guard. Let us keep in touch and stay healthy.



Vancouver Island Branch Moreuil Wood Luncheon

*Maj Don Senft – President
Vancouver Island Branch*

On a typical winter day here, a balmy 14 degrees with sunny skies and a warm breeze off the ocean, the west coast lotus land lancers gathered at the Sidney and North Saanich Yacht Club for the annual gathering to commemorate the 97th Anniversary of the Battle of Moreuil Wood and to renew old acquaintances once again. The event this year was doubly poignant, as it gave the assembled group a chance to also raise a glass and toast the 75th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps.

The event was once again well attended, with 31 members of the Corps family coming together,

including a hearty group of 6 mainlanders who made the trip over on the ferry in the morning, including **Dave Scandrett, Rollic Keith, Bob Mackay, Bernie** and **Pat McNichol**, and our Colonel Commandant of the RCAC, **Darrell Dean**, who arrived with a 75th RCAC pin for all those in attendance. We also had a number of folks that made the drive over the Malahat to join us, including **Peter Funnell** and **Pat and Gwen Patterson**.

The group headed outside for the mandatory photo, employing this year the services of our own professional **Paul Ellard**, who organized the motley crew into some semblance of order and took a number of great shots of the group for posterity's sake. We were then treated to an excellent buffet meal, and had the chance to sit and reminisce as many an old war story surface. Like a good fish tale, they always seem to get better each time they are retold. It was quite a diverse group as always, ranging in age

from the 40s to just shy of 90, and we even had one crew commander from each of the three squadrons the Regiment had sent to Korea with us for lunch as well.

We ended the gathering with an update on the Corps and specifically the events planned for the 75th anniversary of the Corps from our Colonel Commandant, **BGen (Ret'd) Darrell Dean**, and an address from our Colonel of the Regiment, **MGen (Ret'd) Cam Ross**, who brought us up to speed on the status of the Regiment, speaking to the training they were conducting, the status of our manning, and the state of our tanks and vehicles.

Overall, a very successful event and a great chance to assemble the Corps family here on the West Coast. Next year's event will take place once again at the end of March, with **Dave Letson** at the helm of organizing the luncheon once again on behalf of our members here in the region.

Darrell Dean and Cam Ross imparting some wisdom at lunch



Regimental 2ICs, One in Particular

MGen Phil Neatby (ret'd), former CO and Col of the Regt

During the existence of the Regiment, so much of what is valuable in the spirit of Regimental life, in its many accomplishments has been due to the behind-the scenes work of a succession of 2ICs. In one particular, for example, the state of the Regimental Society can be attributed to the management of its administration by these men – how they found the time considering the constant pressures of their military duties has always been a marvel to me.

I arrived to assume command in the summer of 1966. The Regiment having arrived the previous Nov or so, was in the process of adapting to the new arena and its challenges. It had not yet participated in the very demanding annual Division exercises, nor the annual gunnery competitions.

The pre-Division exercise Bde Command Post Exercise revealed the need for some quick changes. The size of RHQ and its operation needed to be changed, and we would have to run a CPX of our own to sort out the changes. **Bob** and **Maj Bob Conover** put together a CPX in a matter of days, staffed it and conducted it. At the same time, we realized that the echelon operations in the field needed quick and drastic reform. The replenishment practice in a nuclear environment called for the resupply groups to move into the forward area in early evening, and be called forward to replenishment RVs from their dispersed locations. The required level of radio control and command of these groups demanded more than ours were ready for. Again, **Bob** and **Bob Conover** imposed the standing orders, rehearsed the echelons, and finally, put them through a CPX of their own. All this was squeezed into the very limited time, time already busy with battalion and regimental field exercises.

a. The battalions in the Bde had just recently been issued the M113 APCs, and during the exercise, many ended up in quite bizarre situations. The most effective recovery equipment and expertise available were the ARVs and crews, so the Brigade EME Officer and staff grabbed control of the ARVs on too many occasions to drag APCs out of coulees and creeks. Thus, our recovery operations suffered critical delays on a number of occasions, prejudicing the rail loading schedule, and seriously over-taxing the crews. The conduct of forward area repair and recovery needed to be redrawn, the Bde staff educated in the demands and options, and the infantry educated on recovery.

c. Our own crew maintenance was not good enough. **Bob** and I knew that the knowledge of crews, and more dangerous, the Battle Captains, was haphazard and lacked a sense of urgency. We had too many tanks down by the end of the exercise.

Bob had the talent to enlist cooperation in a common cause, and although correcting these three areas were bound to generate injured egos, correction meant that all had to work together willingly. Without appearing to tell others how to do their jobs, he did, and the participants accepted the changes with enthusiasm! The supply chain and the Bde staff reacted most positively, even gratefully. Bluntly, no one else saw the need nor solutions.

Bob's energy and direction, and the efforts of **Capt Clay Samis** and his signalers, of **Lt Darrel Dean** and his crew in what the troops proudly referred to as "Gross's Enterprises" were a resounding success. The primary source of money was the operation of the stereo and sound equipment shop, selling high-end equipment. We exceeded the \$50,000 nest egg, and in the process were able to up-grade and support all manner of activities in the Fort. The Guidon Presentation was conducted with style and cash. The Regimental party was organized so that everyone could attend – any work was hired out.

You can see why I had such a profound respect and admiration for this talented colleague. The initiatives noted required vision, endless patience, and a unique talent with people. He did so much in a polished and professional way to better our Regiment, the Community, Bde operations.

Fall 2014 Newsletters which have been returned. If you have updated contact information on these individuals, please let us know.

.....

A Roll Past to Remember

David Sproule

All of us have been on roll pasts and are aware of the high jinks that sometime occur such as tennis balls rolling out of the barrel of the master weapon onto the ground in front of the senior officer taking the salute. Although I remember such occasions, I have vivid memories from my summer at the Regiment in 1958. I guess my memories remain strong because I was a young and impressionable second lieutenant and it as my first time serving with the Strathconas.

In the early summer of 1958, the Regiment was still in Currie Barracks and would move to the brand spanking new Sarcee Barracks in August. I believe it was before we deployed to Wainwright but there was a celebration and I seem to remember it was Army Day. The Currie Garrison was to have a mounted parade through downtown Calgary and would involve the Strathconas and the 2nd Battalion Queens Own Rifles. I remember our FUP (Forming Up Place) was at the bottom of the 24th Street hill and we were to roll down 9th Avenue heading towards downtown two abreast. I was at this time a CC (Crew Commander) in 4 troop A Squadron. I was on the right and I remember our tracks being inches away from new Fords and Chevies that seemed to be daring us to go crunch. It was an odd parade because we were all mounted. Being in tanks was easy. The QOR of C (Queen’s Own Rifles of Canada) were mounted in deuces and ¾ tons with the superstructure removed and with the riflemen sitting staring at each other with rifles between their legs. One of the most amusing elements was the Strathcona Band, all mounted in 16 jeeps in a 4x4 configuration bulging with musicians attempting to play over the sound of the Centurions. I remember the bandsmen playing the trombones facing the rear of the jeeps (for obvious reasons) as if they were playing at a funeral procession in New Orleans. They were all in Tropical Worsteds whereas we were in brand spanking new coveralls.

We rolled along 9th Avenue and were to wheel left on 2nd Avenue, I believe, and form a single column as we approached the saluting base in front of Calgary City Hall. The lance bearers were at their appointed places on either side of the saluting base and as I remember, the salute was taken by that famous mayor of Calgary, **Don MacKay**, respectfully holding his Stetson across his chest. I can’t remember much else except: “Traverse left, steady on.” Obviously we wheeled left onto 6th Ave. and headed west although I don’t believe we drove the tanks all the way back to Currie.

Previously as an Officer Cadet I had participated in roll pasts at two cadet weekends at the RCAC School in Camp Borden. Since then I have participated in roll pasts in tanks, Ferrets, Lynx, Jeeps and Iltis vehicles but never through the downtown of a major Canadian city in tanks. I’m not sure if this ever happened again and perhaps not as I remember the tanks doing a number on a few concrete curbs especially at the bottom of the 24th Street hill.

Fall 2015 Edition Deadline

The deadline for submissions for the Fall 2015
Strathcona Regimental Society Newsletter is

1 November 2015.

Submissions should be forwarded to newsletter@strathconas.ca

Or mailed to:
**Lord Strathcona’s Horse (Royal Canadians)
Regimental Society Newsletter
PO Box 10500 Station Forces
Edmonton, AB T5J 4J5**

Attention: Kathy Batty

Just a Bit of Trivia

George W Barr

Many questions have been asked of me over the past several years in respect to the enclosed pictures. “If the tanks of the Strathconas are “B” Squadron tanks, why are the names on them starting with the letter “C” as shown on the foreground tank”? The answer is very simple if one is aware of the naming of tanks.

When the special force squadron was formed in Camp Borden in 1950, we were known as “A” Squadron, 1-2 Armoured Regiment and badged with the Armoured Corps mailed fist cap badge. During our posting and training in Fort Lewis Washington, we were training on M 10 tanks and in early January we were rebadged as Strathconas and became “C” Squadron. In April of 1951 we proceeded to Pusan Korea where we picked up our Sherman tanks. Naming them for easy identification was a bit of a challenge and ended up with the four troops and HQ choosing names from WW1, WW2 battles, liquor and ladies. My troop ended up with the ladies, hence the name Catherine after my wife.

After some 7-10 days, familiarization in Pusan we ammo’d and stocked up, loaded the Squadron on flatcars and chugged our way some forty miles to the north where we offloaded behind the then front lines. Two days later we sort of broke in our tanks (and ourselves) and our guns in support of the RCR on an excursion into the city of Chailee on the eastern front. Many moves and weeks later, we moved to the central front where it was a case of find good static firing positions, move out to support infantry patrols, take ground, find new positions and support infantry patrols. Sighting a tank where you could do the job properly with plenty of room for observation and a good field of fire was not an easy task, but it was normally accomplished.

We were in just such a position in June 1952 when B Squadron replaced C Squadron on the front lines. Crew commanders were the first to arrive, followed the next day by gunners and drivers with the rest of the crew the following day. This meant that, in my case, my old friend, Sgt Gerry Harnois (who took over my tank) and I had basically a day and a half for briefing and familiarization prior to my departure. The second tank on our hill was taken over by Sgt Pete Elwood. The troop leader of the first troop and our fourth tank was located some 900 yards to our north east. Farewells were made and after 15 months in the hills, we were on our way to the rear and hopefully home. We arrived in Hiro Japan, some seven days later where I was informed that Gerry and Pete were in the hospital in Hiro. Very obviously the North Koreans saw fit to welcome the new replacements to Korea.

The picture of the tanks crossing the Imjin river are, yes, B Squadron coming out of the front lines for the first time, hence they still have the C Squadron names. There is no doubt that the names were changed at the earliest opportunity as they were probably done again when A Squadron took over in 1953.

I joined the Regiment in January 1946, and still wear the regimental badge on my blazer. I am most pleased to see the name Catherine on the Sherman in Edmonton. I named it, I fought in it for 15 months. It was like an old friend.



Italy Revisited

Father RSH Greene

On November 21, 2014 the Department of Veterans Affairs sponsored twenty-eight Canadian Veterans of the Italian Campaign for a ten day visit to Italy. Everything was found - hotels, transit and food. This also applied to twenty-eight caregivers receiving the same treatment.

On Christmas 1943, the Regiment was stationed in Matera deep down in the Italian boot. People were starving and on Christmas Day the Regiment prepared a turkey dinner for some 300 boys and girls aged five, six and seven. Through the efforts of my caregiver, **Donna Maxwell**, RN, one of the 300 children was contacted. His name is **Samuele Vitullo** who I also befriended in war time, giving him chocolates and other goodies received in parcels from Canada. Thanks to **Donna**, **Samuele**, his son, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren travelled all the way north to Casino for our opening night banquet. I had not seen **Samuele**, now 75, for over seventy years. We greeted each other with great joy. This was indeed the highlight of the Italian visit. Another bonus was to meet **Malcom (Lucky) Wilson** who had served with me during the war and was the only other Strathcona present.

Wherever we went our two busloads had a police escort so that we were whisked through traffic jams and other road blocks. Visits to the Canadian cemeteries in Casino, Ortona, Rimini (Villanova) included graves of close Strathcona friends who had died in the conflict.

Accompanying the Veterans for most of the ten days was the Minister of Veterans Affairs, **Mr. Julian Fantino**, who was more than gracious in having time to talk to each one of the twenty-eight Veterans. When he arrived back in the House of Commons, opposition members accused him of visiting the dead. Although I am ninety-one years of age, I am far from being dead and I have never received such good treatment as I have received from the Department of Veterans Affairs. DVA also supplied two doctors, nurses and other support workers so that we were treated like kings-indeed it was hard to go back to the farm! On the forces airbus which transported us to and from Italy, we even received Filet Mignon dinner.

Thus, in closing, as one of the Veterans, I would like to express my great thanks to DVA for this wonderful venture and the superb treatment I have received from DVA during the past three years. At the moment I understand DVA is planning to grant similar kindnesses to veterans of the Holland Campaign in which operation I also took part as **Major (later Lieutenant General) Milroy's** bow gunner and intelligence Corporal.



Nunspeet Remembers

The Commanding Officer wishes to share with all members of the Regimental family the following message and photographs that he has received from Nunspeet, Holland.

Nunspeet was liberated on April 19, 1945 by the Lord Strathcona's Horse.

Every year we commemorate and celebrate at the monument on the avenue to Nunspeet.

This year, the organization was in the hands of the Association of Former Soldiers and Veterans. The mayor made a speech and children's Montessori School Discovery have distributed program booklets and indicated the wreaths.

We inhabitants of Nunspeet are still thankful and happy that the Lord Strathcona's Horse liberated Nunspeet.

With kind regards

Gerrit Storteboom
Secretary VOMEV



Loops for the Troops 2015

*Lieutenant Colonel (Ret'd) Bill Schultz
RAUSI LFTT Race Director.*

LOOPS FOR THE TROOPS (LFTT) was founded by **Micheal Hornburg** in memory of his son **Corporal Nathan Hornburg**, Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) and King's Own Calgary Regiment, who was killed in action on 24 September 2007, while serving with the Strathconas in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Since the first run in June 2008, LFTT has grown to honour the sacrifices of all the men and women who have served, and continue to serve, at home and abroad, in the name of freedom. This includes past and present members of the Canadian Forces, as well as First Responders from Calgary Police Service (CPS), RCMP, Firefighters, EMS and Peace Officers across the nation.

Loops for the Troops (LFTT) 2015 is sponsored by the R.A.U.S.I. Foundation and will be held on Fathers' Day 21 June 2015 at 09:00 at parking lots E and F in North Glenmore Park. **Nathan** was born on Father's Day. LFTT 2015 will be a 10K run/walk, a 5K run/walk and a 2km walk either individually or as a team (minimum 4 members). Opening ceremonies will begin at 9 a.m., followed by the singing of our national anthem and the recitation of the "Loops for the Troops Runners Prayer" by the Royal Alberta United Services Institute Chaplain (**Major (Ret'd) Lloyd Northcott**). Various dignities will be in attendance from the National, Provincial and Municipal levels. There will also be a static military display provided by the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) and 41 CBG as well as Calgary Police Service, Calgary Fire Department, other First Responders and charitable associations who support the fallen, injured, veterans and their families. You can register to participate in the event or exercise the options to make a donation to the event or to sponsor a participant. For more information on the event we invite you to visit our web site at www.rausi.com, www.events.runningromm.com or at www.loopsforthetroops.ca.

The R.A.U.S.I. Foundation is operated by a Board of Directors which raises funds through activities such as the 'Loops for the Troops Run', bequests, donations in lieu of flowers, and gifts from organizations. Each year we plan to raise \$60,000.00 to support our various requests, and to develop an Endowment Fund to ensure the long term viability of our aims.

Funds raised will be disbursed by The R.A.U.S.I Foundation, a registered charity, to the local community and may include the following:

- The Military Family Resource Centre
- The Royal Canadian Legion Poppy Fund and Veterans' Food Bank
- The Peacekeeper Park Wall of Honour
- The Calgary Police Service Benevolent Fund
- Friends of the Colonel Belcher Veterans Hospital Society
- The Military Museums to support education programs for students
- Army, Navy and Air Force Cadet Organizations.
- Post-Secondary Scholarship Bursaries for Cadets
- Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital to support the rehabilitation of wounded soldiers
- The Juno Beach Academy For more information on the event we invite you to visit our web site at www.rausi.com, www.events.runningroom.com or at www.loopsforthetroops.ca.
- University of Calgary Strategic Studies Department

Please mark 21 June 2015 on your calendar's so you can attend the next Loops for the Troops walk/run in support of past and present members of the Canadian Forces, as well as First Responders from Calgary Police Service (CPS), RCMP, Firefighters, EMS and Peace Officers across the nation. Remember you do not have to run but you may wish to make a donation or sponsor a runner in support of this very significant charitable event.

Push On

***Editor's Comment:** The history 'Push On' is not an official publication of the Regimental Society. Rather it has been produced independently by the author. The Society will be reviewing 'Push On' to determine if it may in any way support the author.*

The following is an excerpt taken from a soon to be published photographic history of the Strathconas due out in 2015. Entitled "Push On, a photographic history of the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), 1936-46" by Patrick Johnson, this 440 page book covers the Regiment from its pre-war permanent force cavalry establishment to an armoured regiment with the 5th Canadian Armoured Division in Italy and northwest Europe. Containing over 1400 photographs, wartime maps, and original uniforms, the book features numerous wartime letters, diary entries, and a selection of veteran's personal stories and remembrances related to the author over the course of fourteen years. Numerous archives in Canada and abroad contributed many of the photographs, including the LdSH (RC) Regimental Archives in Calgary, but the majority of these photos are from the private photo albums shared with the author and have never been published. The following is an account of a Strathcona tank action in Italy on 26 September 1944 by L/Cpl. Cecil Hayward MM, "C" Squadron 3rd Troop. Excerpts from "A Time to Remember W.W.II." The accompanying photographs are from the wartime photo album of Lt. A.S. Hutchings, troop commander of 1st troop "C" Squadron during the fall of 1944:

ACROSS THE USO RIVER

The next morning, September 26th, "C" Squadron found the shallow water crossing but the climbing the opposite riverbank was difficult as it had rained during all night and was very muddy. All three tanks made it back onto the road, which we used due to the soft ground in the fields. We took a few prisoners going up the river valley hill. We were now out in the open advancing up a narrow road ahead of the infantry. Lt. Hutchings's tank was leading with Cpl. Thiessen next and Sgt. Armstrong bringing up the rear. I was driving with my head out of the hatch for better vision. I spotted movement by a barn with a manure pile that had tall grass growing from it. I immediately informed Lt. Hutchings on my intercom and gave him my location. At the same time an armoured piercing shell hit Corporal Thiessen's tank in the turret. The shell went through the side of the turret and then around the inside. The shell cut the wireless operator, Trooper S. Lavigne almost in half. The tank caught fire but the rest of the crew got out and pulled Trooper Lavigne out and laid him on the ground. They could not save him as his insides were torn out. This boy was a courageous young lad and held on right to the last as he talked to the boys. Three days previous we had pulled back to the harbor to refuel and reorganize. We were being shelled heavily and we were in

Continued on page 14

Lt. Stu Hutchings and his crew of tank "Chicoutimi" in front of their "bagged prize", a German Mk. IV destroyed near the River Uso on 26 September 1944. Pictured a day later, this is the tank that knocked out Cpl. Thiessen's tank "Chilliwack II."

L-R: Tpr. C.C. Hayward, Tpr. W.J. Neville, Lt. A.S. Hutchings, Tpr. A.M. Corbett, and Cpl. M.H. Koffman.





A photograph of **Cpl. Thiessen's** tank "Chilliwack II" the morning after she was holed twice by a 75mm. One round hit the Sherman's gun mantlet while a second round deflected off the bottom edge of the mantlet into the turret. **Trooper Lavigne**, the loader/operator, was the only casualty. The German Mk. IV tank was quickly knocked out by **Lt. Hutching's** crew in "Chicoutimi".

slit trenches located beside our tanks. I looked out and there was Trooper Lavigne standing up in his slit trench – shaving! I yelled at him to get down but he could not hear on account of shelling and mortar bombs. I had to run over to him to get him down in the trench. This brave young lad just came to us as a replacement on September 15th, 1944. He went into action on the 22nd and was killed just four days later on the 26th.

This was a sad day for us, but we had to keep going. The boys pulled their fire extinguishers and put the fire out, which saved their tank. We were in front so did not know this until the Sergeant's tank in the rear informed us. Lt. Hutchings sighted in on the enemy tank as soon as I informed him and Corbett, the gunner, fired off the HE (high explosive) shell that is always carried in the breech. This is where luck played in our favour. A HE shell is usually no good against a steel tank but the shell hit where the turret joins the main body of the tank, when it hit, it exploded with a lot of flames and the German crew thinking their tank was on fire, all jumped out running. They left their tank in gear and it kept coming towards us and then turned down the road, went into a ditch and turned over. There was hardly a scratch on this Mark 4 tank but we threw a grenade into it to make sure it could not be recovered in a counter attack. We tried to machine gun the crew but they were a little out of range and in the shelter of scrub around the farm buildings. The German tank

had planned on getting all three of our tanks. They thought that if they got the middle one it would block the road and then with no place to go they could pick us off.

The fields were soft but when the Corporal's tank was hit Sgt. Armstrong took off through fields to our right to try to get at the German tank from the side. We owe our lives to Corbett the gunner for getting that quick and accurate shot away. The infantry came up then and went ahead while we stayed on the road and followed them until they consolidated and dug in. We loaned one of the infantry boys a shovel to dig in with. He had just dug down about a foot when a shell hit the shovel that was covering his face. The shovel blew to pieces but it saved the boy but he was left with a slight concussion. We were still being fired on, but from long range and not too accurate.

By this time we are getting low on gas and ammunition. With the wireless set going and the Homelite not working, our batteries were getting low. We had to move back one troop at a time to refuel and by the time our turn came, I had to get towed to get started after working on the engine for some time in the open field.

We stayed in a nearby house and the next day we were clowning around, dressing up in clothes we found in the house. We were relieved by the 8th N.B.H. (New Brunswick Hussars) and during a heavy rain storm, our regiment went into brigade reserve in a mud soaked harbour at San Giustina.

The Eight Tank Troop and the First "Leopard" Strathcona

Major (ret) David Scandrett

In January of 1977 I was sent to the RCD in 4CMBG as a "fly over" troop leader, replacing **Peter Furnell**. We were sent from the "domestic" cavalry to get tank time. This was good stuff; you can only have so much recce: sooner or later you have to kill targets by direct fire.

The Service Air flight was the usual delight (CF 707) and I was met at Lahr International, transported to the "North Marg" and issued a note book with the admonishment that I might need that to write things down as I was on a MG3 machine gun course starting now, then on to 105 Main Gun drills. There were no "pams" or "pubs" as all the material was in German. The MG3 was the Coax and the Loaders roof mounted weapon on the Leopard. It was a product improvement from that infamous German WW2 weapon, the MG 42. The rate of fire was stunning as was its accuracy.

I was attached to A Squadron of the RCD to command 4 Troop. Later, I discovered that I was the first badged Strathcona to command Leopard tanks. There was great abuse (of course) heaped on me by the RCD and the Adjutant in particular, an evil beast, who took exception to my riding crop (which I carried for the duration) and Strathcona buttons. He was later to become OC A Sqn in Calgary, **Wade Cuthbertson**. We did a lot of hunting and shooting together and became friends. I was his BC and 2IC when we stood up the first operational Canadian Cougar Sqn in late 1980.

Once the MG course was concluded by the RCD Gunnery Gods, we started in earnest on the conversion from the mighty, tired Centurion to the Leopard 1A2 rental tanks. It was a system change of significance and the need to incorporate German thinking as opposed to British concepts of tank design and procedures. I had eight tanks, 4 x Centurions and 4 x Leopards and we had to maintain proficiency on both. After CAT 77 we were operational on the new tanks and Canada possessed a state of the art capability as we slowly pushed the Centurions up against the fence.

The CO of the Dragoons, **LCol Clive Milner** awarded me the dubious honour of conducting the first Leopard Tank Train from Lahr to Bergen-Hohne I think this was due to the belief that if one of the shiny new cats fell off a flat car, they could blame it all on the Strathcona and wash their collective hands. The loading of the regiment was a spectator sport but it went well: Teutonic detail is a marvel. The subsequent train ride was legendary as the RCD had just discovered the magic of that vile concoction, duty free Irish Cream.

Once in for Gun Camp we started shooting Main Gun and Coax on static pads and battle runs. In the process we experienced the joys of miss-matched Canadian 7.62 ammunition being put thorough the MG3's resulting in shattered firing pins. My Troop provided night illumination for Recce Sqn and that turned into a great shoot with more Coax ammunition to expend then we know what to do with.

Continued on page 16



Continued from page 15

One morning my Sqn Commander, **Major Roger Ackerman** let me take my “Strathcona” Troop up to see a 17/21st Lancers Squadron who were shooting Chieftains on a flanking range. We were treated to British Army food (?) and the awe of their troopers as we rolled up the Ring Road at speed, in box formation, guns turning, black maple leafs lustrous.

The RCD fitters, “RCEME Rats”, were in learning mode and when needed, hushed white Mercedes vans arrived, surgical dressed technicians dismounted and Zeiss optical sights where fussed over and adjusted as only the Germans can do. Stoic men from MAN Diesel and tight lipped boffins from Krauss-Maffei descended on the Hohne Pads to tweak and adjust. Kanada was the hot new customer.

On return to Lahr the RCD turned to working up for the Canadian Army Trophy Competition (CAT 77) set for late April, again in Hohne. The Americans were going to shoot for the first time, using the bulky M60 with the 105 gun. The RCD Team won, the competition being fierce and fascinating. At the conclusion of the event an American helicopter landed and out came the American Brigade Commander who stood on a rock, gathered his CAT team around him and in a scathing attack, fired them all, publically humiliating his soldiers. This cigar chomping, pistol packing display was in earshot of the viewing stands and all of NATO was there to watch this bit of drama. Intervention by the CO of the RCD reprieved the US Tank crews and the “Bird Colonel” was discreetly sorted out before boarding his aircraft and flying away.

The Leopard 1A2 tank was amazing in its modernity and function. Greatly lamented amongst the RCD Gunnery Deities was the lack of RCP and Blade Vane Sights on the turret roof for the Crew Commander. This was addressed by hose clamps and the welders cutting the prescribed lengths of aluminum stock so an improvised sight could be affixed. I rejected this for my troop based on the presence of the Crew Commanders Zeiss Optical Periscope which the Germans had gone to some considerable effort in developing. Granted they did place second in the “Great 1939-45 Unpleasantness”; but in the process they learned a few things. One of those was shooting with the hatches closed and not sticking your bloody head out.

The automotive side of the 1A2 was impressive for speed and agility. The change from an electric drive turret to

hydraulic and the absence of an “aux-jenny” altered thinking and procedures. One adjustment was the piercing scream of the turret hydraulic pump kicking in and scaring the crap out of the crew. Regretted to, was the absence of the armour that the Centurion afforded. But the Leopard was a huge improvement over the aged Centurions which were clearly out-dated and expensive to maintain and operate. The Merlin 12 cylinder WW2 gasoline aircraft engines where drying up and at that time we were one of the last operators of the vehicle in NATO. The on-board systems of the 1A2 where very well thought out, but the rental tanks where labeled in German which proved annoying and on occasion confusing.

One of the more interesting events for me other than gasthofs, beer and rubbish cars was my visit to Moreuil Wood in March. I organised adventure training and did the recce. The Troop drove in jeeps via the 17/21st Lancers (Harv White was the LdSH Exchange Officer) and then on to Moreuil where a tour was conducted. Moreuil put on a very lavish luncheon and dinner for all ranks, had a French Army band and Guard. A TEWT was conducted where the battle was studied and walked, first from the Cavalry perspective. Then repeated but using the idea of Leopard tanks to put the engagement into a modern viewpoint for the RCD troopers. The latter resulted in stunned silence followed by expletives and the realisation of the magnitude of what had been done on that last day of March by Flowerdew and the lads. We left a very nice brass plaque with the Prefect and His Worship, The Mayor of Moreuil.

In late May of 1977 a formal parade was called for the official change-over from Centurion to Leopard. The CDS attended along with other worthies from Ottawa and beyond. There was dismounted nonsense followed by a roll past in the Centurions and then in the new Leopards. This was concluded by the tanks forming column and halting on the runway flanking the reviewing stand. There was a Feu de Jois. This did not go well. So I am told, as my tank received the full blast from a 105 blank in the back of the turret at a range of three feet. I was standing in the Crew Commanders hatch at the time. After a ten day stay in the Lahr Hospital I was sent back to Calgary for further repair.

This was an interesting time. 4 CMBG was a very strong, well equipped modern force which has sadly not been replaced. To have a brand new set of tanks, the chance to learn a new system and to be part of a significant change in concept was exciting. But Troop Leading is Troop Leading and a good, capable platform can only make that better. One has to have confidence in the kit, connect with the crew, fight the vehicle and command the other tanks in the troop. Therein lies the challenge and the reward.



Your Dispatches

Thank you for sending the Newsletter via snail mail. I very much enjoyed the fall 2014 issue. The article reference **Danny McLeod** was of interest as I also served with him. As he was a home town boy, the Medicine Hat News published a full page tribute to him when he passed away.

When I retired I was wearing the cap badge of another regiment. Outside my apartment door I have our regimental insignia proudly on display, Once a Strathcona always a Strathcona.

I am enclosing a small donation, Keep up the good work.

Bill Prouse

Good to hear from you, Bill, and thanks for the donation. We hope to see you in Edmonton soon. **Ed**

Since 2000/2001 I have been working on a photographic history of the Regiment from 1936-46 and it is nearing completion. There has already been an initial print run of 5 books to get the book out to a few key wartime Strathconas which have been instrumental in assisting with this book. The book is 440 pages long, in colour and black & white, and has 1386 photos, 5 maps, a Ram tank graphic, and over 55 uniform shots making up its pages. Along with the photos are excerpts from over 100 interviews with pre-war and wartime Strathconas, along with diary entries and biographies of all the four key commanding officers. Lastly it features the most accurate award listings compiled to date and includes the award citations for all the key medal winners of the Regiment. It will serve as a perfect companion to **Colonel McAvity's** written Regimental history and

actually for most of the training in Canada and England, will fill in many gaps not adequately covered in "A Record of Achievement."

This book will be the definitive photographic history of the Regiment with over 75% of the photos not held by the Archives or seen outside of individual veterans photo albums.

As an FYI, I have kept under the radar with this project as it has not been funded by the Regiment and is work that has been completed on my own time and with my own funds. I felt there was no point in getting people excited about the book until it was near completion, something I thought would be completed by 2005 and got stretched out another 9 years. Every time I thought I couldn't source more photos, along came another veteran's photo album which spurred on another round of research.

P.S. My interest in the Regiment stems from my uncle's wartime service with the LdSH during the Second World War. His name was **Sgt. Gordon Fraser Johnson** and he won both an MID and the U.S. Bronze Star for Gallantry. He was killed in Holland in the last major combat engagement of the Regiment on 16 April 1945. I started to research his history with the Strathconas as early as 1980 when, wanting answers to my numerous questions, I contacted the Regimental Association for help. From that point on, I began researching not only his history but the history of the Regiment, and the result is what you see today.

Patrick Johnson

Great work, Patrick, and thank you for allowing us to print an extract of your book in this Newsletter. **Ed**

I refer to the Fall 2014 article (Remembering **Danny McLeod MC, CD**), by **David Sproule**. I am the **Ian Galbraith** mentioned in his article. Thank you for your efforts in connecting us, we have already exchanged greetings.

Thank you,

Ian Galbraith

Glad we could help, Ian. Were you in the roll-by that Dave has reported on in this issue? **Ed**

Philip Daniel, I first met this guy when I was a young RCD at Fort Churchill in 1946,. We were young and adventurous young soldiers. We were known as GD wildcats doing general duties for **Paddy Fallon** of FGH and **Col Jim Tedlie** of the windswept shack town known as Fort Churchill...

We were mixture of characters from various units, and did good on general duties. There was old friends such as **Tiny Dickson**, **Len Goebels** and "the senator" from PPCLI. We ran the Men's canteen, commissary, laundry, theatre, garbage pickup, and working with drunken old Percy pumping out sewage. We had cooks like **McGimpsey** who made wine in his PMQ and you could smell it when in proximity. Fort Churchill for a short period was called Tedlies Fruit Farm....

We did some time in testing environmental clothing, and over snow vehicles try-outs. A R22eR soldier named **Joe Tashereau** owned a dog team with a big huskie lead dog named Kazan, **Joe**, who occasionally when he was under the influence of rum purchased off the ships that came into the Harbor at Churchill, would bring his dog team into the quarters and chain

the dogs to the bunk beds....while he visited Aunt Jemina in the Flats of Churchill.

Well enough of the crap, I was writing to let you know that I still appreciate this guy's friendship, We are over ninety now and still a "zipperhead" after over 65 years, he is still, going.....busy helping the Ontario Regt with their Armoured museum and providing me with pens and annual calendars.

Norm Wood RCD, FGH, 8CH LdSH

Great to hear from you, Norm. These are the kind of stories we love to get. **Ed**. (AKA the dumb 2Lt Tp Ldr you so patiently trained in Petawawa.)

And now a bit of fan mail –

Wish to thank your team for a splendid effort with the Newsletter. The options for layout and viewing are very appropriate for all means of reading devices, either Computer, Tablet or Smart phones.

Ken Jacobs

Kudos on job well done love the new format keep up the good work.

Gerry Hannigan

My congratulations, the email style copy is ideal and was greatly enjoyed. As an earlier generation editor I know all too well the work you must have put into this issue.

As an ex OC A Sqn and an Islander, I was pleased to read the article concerning **Danny MacLeod**. He was been an inspiration to many and his "cokes" and stories are fondly recalled.

Keep up the first class work, it really does a lot to bind us all together,, "once a Strathcona, always a Strathcona"

Bill Henry

Thank you for sending the Newsletter, I truly appreciate receiving it. I commend everyone responsible for putting it together - it is great, ``well done``!!

Cheers, Tim Smith

Just received my first newsletter in the mail today, what a pleasant surprise. Thanks so much for providing us with the opportunity to keep abreast of the goings on in the Regiment.

Doug Hands

Many thanks **Ken**, **Gerry**, **Bill** and **Tim**. We need that feedback so we can keep moving forward in making sure the Newsletter is meeting the needs of the Regimental family. All articles, notices and any other type of feedback are always welcome, otherwise there wouldn't be a Newsletter – so keep them coming.

Ken Jacobs mentioned that the Newsletter can be read on computers, tablets and Smart Phones and that gives us a good opening to encourage everyone to subscribe to the Newsletter electronically if at all possible. The funding for the Newsletter is provided by the Regimental Society, the Regimental Association and our generous subscribers however the costs for printing and mailing “hard copies” seem to increase with every edition. Therefore we are asking everyone to help us reduce these costs by switching to the electronic edition if at all possible and thereby free up some of the Association, Society and donated money for other Regimental activities. **Ed**.

A Call for Afghanistan Stories and Anecdotes

With the completion of our country's long-standing mission in Afghanistan, the Regiment is looking forward to new encounters that may challenge us in the years to come. As we turn the page in this chapter of our Regimental History, it is critical that we harvest and preserve the trials, tribulations, and success of the numerous Strathconas who served in Afghanistan in various capacities.

Depending on responses received, the Regiment will consider commissioning a book that will encapsulate the stories and anecdotes of Strathconas, serving or retired, who served in Afghanistan over the past decade. This e-news is a call out to all Strathconas who wish to etch their name and story in the annals of Regimental History. Anecdotes of your most memorable experiences, good and bad, will provide the reader a rare glimpse of our Afghanistan operations as you experienced it. In your own words and writing style, your story, however short or long, will be openly accepted into the collection that will comprise this book.

If interested in being part of our recorded history, we ask that you submit your stories and photos NLT 1 June 2015 to

afghanstories@strathconas.ca

Any physical CDs or photos can be mailed to:
LdSH(RC) Adjutant
PO Box 10500 Station Forces
Edmonton, AB T5J 4J5 Canada



2D Position
Photo Supplied by **Stan Cote**



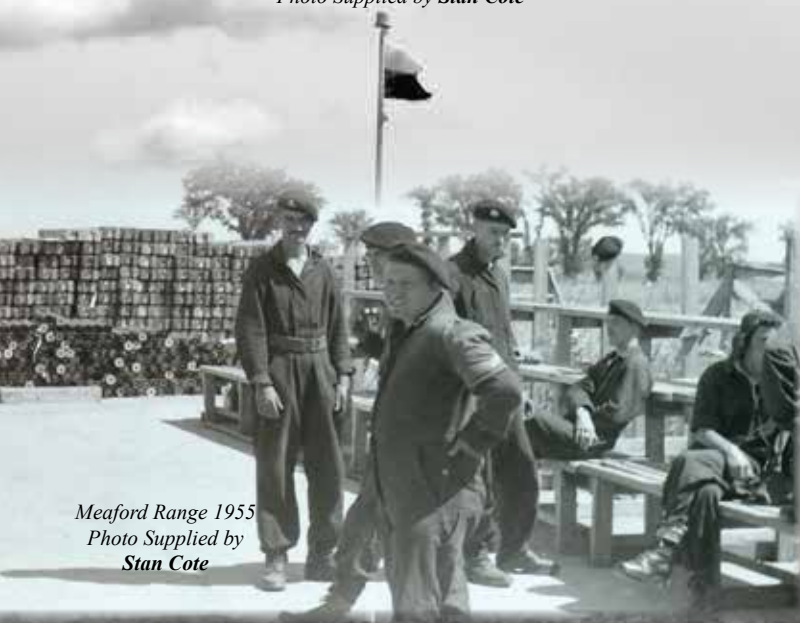
Photo Supplied by **Rick DeBruyn**



Wainwright 1951
Photo Supplied by **Stan Cote**



Heading Home
Photo Supplied by **Stan Cote**



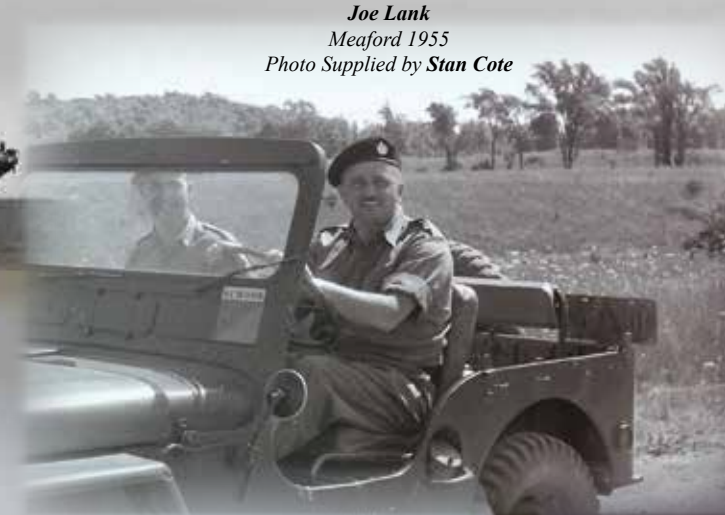
Meaford Range 1955
Photo Supplied by **Stan Cote**

Your

Photos



The Regiment
Photo Supplied by **Rick DeBruyn**



Joe Lank
Meaford 1955
Photo Supplied by **Stan Cote**



Spruce Meadows
40th Anniversary AGM
Photo Supplied by **Spruce Meadows**



Troop Ship
Photo supplied by **Stan Cote**



Wainwright 1949
Photo supplied by **Stan Cote**



The Regiment
Photo Supplied by **Rick DeBruyn**

Diaries of a UN Soldier

WO Marvin MacNeill, CD served with the Regiment during deployments to Bosnia-Herzegovina with UNPROFOR in 1994 and in 1999 with Recce Squadron while in Kosovo with KFOR. He maintained a diary while so deployed which he has shared with others on Facebook. With his permission, excerpts from his diary are being shared with our readers. Installment One was printed in the Fall 2014 edition of the Newsletter (Ed.)

Installment Two

*****SUNDAY 15 MAY 1994***** The 0000-0300 shift was very quiet with only some small arms fire around Sarajevo. I was up again at 0800 and did the morning camp routine. Filled the emersion heaters, did a garbage sweep then got myself cleaned up and had some breakfast. The remainder of the day was very quiet with only the odd shot being fired from small arms. We figured since it was Sunday most of the Croats and Serbs went to church. Most of the morning was spent filling more sandbags to keep adding to the perimeter of our tent for a little more protection. Shortly after lunch, 4 Croatian Soldiers (whom appeared to be district Commanders) came up to the OP to check us out. They asked if we spoke any German so **Sgt Hoppe** and I went over and chatted them up. They did not say anything important just small talk. We don't have an interpreter up here so that is the best we can do. After about 20 minutes they left and went back to their bunker that is over the crest and out of site from our OP. I was on shift again from 1600-1830. The whole time I never heard one shot so I never reported a Shot Report (SHOTREP) over the radio. This will be the first night I get a full night's sleep since I've been to Bosnia! I am not on shift again until 0600 tomorrow!

Sgt Tom Hoppe with local BiH soldiers.



*****THURSDAY 19 MAY 1994***** I woke up around 0630 this morning and did my morning routine. I went for breakfast then we went headed down to do some maintenance on our own vehicles. This will be the first time we have got to see our vehicles as a patrol. The vehicles were being maintained by the rest of the troop while we were at the RRB OP so they were not in that bad condition. We still had to do a lot of sorting out and cleaning up. After **Cpl Daniel Gunther** (Royal 22 Regiment) was targeted and murdered (shot by a RPG round) only months before, the Battle Group or the warring factions before us did not allow the TOW Under Armour (TUA) vehicles out of camp or they will be targeted. Most of the ammunition was rusted, the tracks needed to be replaced and

some serious engine maintenance had to be done as well. My vehicle had to have some extra cleaning done as there was still some dried blood on the front engine panels and under the floor boards. After lunch the Sergeant called it a day which was great because it gets pretty warm in the afternoon! We were told our routine for the next while would see the majority of our troop on camp guard. I laid down for a bit in my bunk space then at 1530 I had to go for a camp guard brief upstairs at the CSS CP. At 1600 I started camp guard at OP Delta. The shift ran from 1600 until midnight. I was on with some guy from the Artillery that barley spoke during the whole shift. The shift was reasonably quiet except for around 2000 a couple of mortar rounds had landed in the town of Visoko followed by a bit of a firefight in the surrounding hill. This only lasted about an hour. I was glad to get this shift over as OP Delta is near the kitchen but all you really get to look at is a factory wall!

*****SATURDAY 21 MAY 1994***** We got to sleep in today due to the late night shifts but we still had to be up and do maintenance on the vehicles at 1030. We went out to the vehicles and practiced some missile tests with the TOW system. The good thing is all the components seem to be in good working order. The thermal for my TUA works really great! It took a while for the Missile Guidance System (MGS) to culminate but it seems to be in good working order. A lot of the desiccators for the missiles in the vehicles are changing colour but there is talk of us getting new

missiles (BGM71F). We closed up the vehicles and shut everything down at noon and went for lunch. Today there is a convoy of UN Dutch Army vehicles in so the lunch line was a 45 minute wait! We had the rest of the afternoon off again as we had another night of camp guard. I went back to my bunk, cleaned up my room a little then laid down to read for a while. I was on shift again tonight from midnight to 0800 tomorrow. I am really not looking forward to this shift. 8 hours in the evening is bad enough but through the night really sucks! I went for dinner and came back and tried to sleep. It was no use. I went to the Junior Ranks for a while (which is right next to my tent) and watched some satellite TV. At least we have English TV from Britain but their programs are really terrible and I can't even have a beer because I am on duty tonight. At 2300 I went and changed and got ready for my shift and headed to Call sign 2 (B Squadron) CP for the briefing and found out I was on OP Hotel.

*****SUNDAY 22 MAY 1994***** OP Hotel was at back of the camp in the North West corner and overlooks a field and a few houses. The early morning hours were really quiet and it was tough staying awake for the entire 8 hours. The only shot I heard all night was from OP Delta because they have a shot gun and are allowed to kill stray animals that would go through the kitchen garbage. The shift ended at 0800 went to our vehicles where we proceeded to do some weapons training. Not only did our vehicles have the TOW missiles but we also had one Carl Gustav with each patrol. We seem to have more weapons than people to use them! We each have our own rifles and the loaders have a C9 LMG. The vehicle has a C6 coax, 14 missiles, the Carl G, M72's, 76mm Smoke and High Explosive Grenades for the MBSGDs, Claymores, Frag Grenades and all the extra ammo all for 4 guys! We cleaned and stowed everything away and finished up before lunch and went and ate. We were stood down the rest of the day as most of us were on the shitty late shift and pretty drained! **Cpl Steve Connauton** and I went for a walk around the camp and I filmed the area around the camp. I went back to the tent, had a shower and tried to stay up as long as I could. This only lasted until I started to read then I passed out. I awoke 10 minutes before the end of dinner and raced downstairs to get something to eat before the kitchen closed. I then headed to the ranks for a few beers because I was not on shift at all tonight! We hire locals to run the bar and they make us sign for beer! I did not know that so many famous people were in camp. People have signed Jean Chrétien, Mickey Mouse and Adolf Hitler! Good thing they don't check ID!

*****MONDAY 23 MAY 1994***** I woke up at 0700 this morning did the morning routine and went to breakfast. At 0800 I was on our vehicle today and had to take it down to the vehicle maintenance area. Today **MCpl Yawl Dankawa** (FCS) was going to be installing the CTAS in the vehicle. I worked all day with the vehicle technicians installing the commanders sighting system. The sight itself was pretty easy to install. It fitted in the episcopes ring of the commander's hatch of the APC. The sight allows the commander to independently find targets and with a push of a button, the turret of the vehicle will go to where the commander is looking. The hardest part of the installation was having to take everything apart to put in all the wiring for the system. We finished this up around 1700 and then I went for dinner. I went back to my tent and tried to lie down again before my shift as I was on again from midnight until 0800. After a good night's sleep the night before I found this was impossible to sleep. I went and visited with **Cpl Andy McLean** (B-Sqn) in their lines. They have it pretty good in their tents and even have real beds. Some of them have desks closets and bookshelves! The only thing in our bunk space was a cot and I use my barrack box for a table! I have to start looking for stuff for my room to make it a little more bearable! I went back to the ranks for a while and sat down and watched a movie. I got my kit together around 2330 and headed to the B Sqn CP for the nightly CP brief. Tonight I would be spending the night in OP Kilo Echo.

*****TUESDAY 24 MAY 1994***** This morning's shift seemed even longer than normal. Around 0300 I started to feel real tired and it was really hard to keep awake. There was no shooting tonight and even the whole area was very quiet and that makes the shift even more boring. The shift ended at 0800 so I staggered to my bed and went to sleep. I woke up around 1400 went for a shower and got cleaned up because I was on shift again this afternoon from 1600 until midnight. Today I was on at OP Kilo Hotel and the good part was I was on with **Gord Stringer**. It is great when you are on shift with someone you know instead of trying to make small talk with someone from a different unit. The shift was pretty quiet one again tonight. I am starting to get a little curious about why it has been so quiet. It has been nice and sunny for about a week so maybe they took some time off! When the shift was over I went back to the tent. I was supposed to get my first phone call home this morning at 0300 but we were told the phone line to Canada was down. This bummed everyone out that was waiting in line for their times.

Continued on page 26

Continued from page 25

*****WEDNESDAY 25 MAY 1994***** When I finished my shift just after midnight, I went back to my tent and went down for a shower. After I was finished I was told that he phone lines were back up and working. My time was not until 0300 this morning so I decided to just stay up and talk with the guys waiting (they were all from my troop) as I did not want to miss my first phone call back home. I was good to call home and let people know I was still alive. We are only given 15 minutes to talk and when the 15 minutes is up you are automatically disconnected. After the call home I just went back to my tent and sleep until noon. I went for lunch, came back to the tent and read for a while. I was on camp guard again from 1600 until midnight. The fighting started to pick up a little more this evening on the outskirts of Visoko but it only lasted until the sun went down. I was again on OP Delta which was right next to the kitchen. The shift was quiet until just before midnight when a couple of factory guards (from the factory located right next to our camp) came over to our OP and wanted to buy a flashlight from us. We told them no even though they offer me 100DM for my MAG light but it was a good flashlight and I did not know where to get another one over here! The roving patrol also found a family in our kitchen dumpster tonight looking for food. I guess the day shift will be walking the perimeter to find out how these people got into the camp!

*****THURSDAY 26 MAY 1994***** After my camp guard shift ended, I went back to my tent and found someone from the troop had dropped off my unaccompanied barrack boxes that had been shipped about a month before we deployed. I was surprised to find that I had received my first letter from home as well. I had heard that a CLP (Combat Logistics Patrol) had arrived from Croatia earlier but didn't really think about getting anything from it. I quickly sorted out my stuff read my letter and went to bed. I woke just before lunch today to I got up and ate. I came back to my tent and unpacked by barrack boxes. I'm glad they came when they did because I was running short of personal supplies like shampoo and Q-tips and I really did not want to buy stuff because I knew I had enough in those boxes to last me for a few years! When I was done puttering around and getting things in order it was almost time for dinner. After I ate, I went to the TV room because a lot of the other guys from the troop received mail as well and some of them got tapes of TV shows from Canada. There were even tapes of the Stanley Cup Playoffs! Right now Vancouver is beating Toronto in the series. I did try and lay down for a bit before my next shift (the last one...thank god!) from midnight until 0800. Tomorrow morning we are done our shift at 0600 (thank you **WO Labreque**!) to help 71 get their vehicles ready because they were heading out on patrol. I am so tired and bored of the camp guard crap and can wait to start rolling as a patrol!

*****FRIDAY 27 MAY 1994***** **Cpl Rob Gould** and I were in OP Echo this morning. He managed to keep me awake all night laughing for the most part. I don't know where he gets some of these stories but they are priceless! We closed down the OP at 0600 and went to work on Patrol (71) vehicles for a couple of hours until they were ready to roll. When we were finished I went back into my tent and slept for the rest of the day. I woke up at about 1645 and went to dinner. At 1900 we had a mine awareness lecture given by the Engineers. It was probably the best lecture I had received thus far about the mine threat in Bosnia and the amount of mines that are located in the country is insane! We were given briefings before, but this lecture focused on what the locals use to identify mines when they mark minefields. The lecture lasted about an hour and then we went to our Troop O Group. We found out that our patrol was taking out the vehicles tomorrow and **Sgt Hoppe** was going on R&R today and **Sgt Brian Semenko** (PPCLI) would be taking his place. Today was the start of the guys rotating on their leave and R&R from the tour. I can't believe that troops were going home already! Some of them have only been here a few weeks! Our task for tomorrow was to go to an abandoned OP location known as OP Kilo Echo. We are just supposed to do a presence patrol and report on any activity in the area. After the O Group I went and packed my kit and got ready for the patrol. Today was also the change around day for the troop. 71 came back from OP Kilo Foxtrot and were replaced by 72. Our patrol went from camp guard and became the Battle Group Quick Reaction Force (QRF).

*****SATURDAY 28 MAY 1994***** I was woken up just after midnight by the sound of gunfire! A small fire fight had just taken place outside the back of the main camp. One of our OP's that was located on the top floor had engaged with the C6 Machine Gun from inside the building. Being a concrete structure, it sounded like it was firing only a few feet away. This happened only about 400 meters from the camp so it was self-defence. It seemed to be all over as quickly as it began but it still took some time for me to get back to sleep. I woke up this morning at 0630

went for breakfast then went and prepped the vehicles. Nothing had changed from last night so we were still on our way to OP Kilo Echo for a presence patrol. Today was a beautiful day (about 25 degrees). Getting out of camp and rolling in our own vehicles was something I have waited for since I got here. The countryside really reminds me of going for a drive through the hills of the Black Forest in Germany. Lots of green forested rolling hills but the only difference was the bombed out villages along the way. We even had to drive over a bridge that had a huge hole in the center from what I am guessing was from artillery round. It took us about two hours to get to the location which once again was on the side of a mountain. We stopped the vehicles and had some lunch. We could see some trench lines in the valley below but there was not much activity in this area. We were briefed that this area was being held by the Croats and had not seen any major fighting in a while. While we were having lunch, some local children just appeared from nowhere! We tried to talk to them but it was no use. We gave them what we did not want from our bag lunches and they left us alone after that. We stayed for about an hour, packed up, then started on our way back. I took some video today of the drive. We arrived back in camp just after 1500. Did our halt parades and went and washed up for dinner. This evening at 2000 he had to go down to the maintenance area and go and zero our pers weapons at the indoor miniature range that had been constructed on the ground floor. This took about an hour. Then I was off to bed.

*****SUNDAY 29 MAY 1994***** We were told before we went to bed last night today we were going to have a "Sunday Routine". This meant that we could sleep in or do whatever we liked and were not expected to be at work until 1300. I was trying to sleep in this morning but at 1000 the entire troop was woken up to go and crate up the old missiles that were in all of our vehicles. We were told that not only had a lot of them expired from the heat and moisture but the missiles had a faulty batch with this lot number. We were glad to be rid of these ones anyway because we had received a shipment of the new BGM71F top attack missiles that were worth \$60,000 a piece! We crated up the old missiles and loaded them on to the transport trucks that were heading back to Croatia. This only took us up until lunch so we went and ate. After lunch we went for our O Group and were told we would be heading out tomorrow to go for a drive to the range. When we were finished I got my kit together and cleaned my weapon for the rest of the afternoon. We had the rest of the time off so a bunch of us got together and played a few board games and went and hung out in the Jr Ranks and had my beer. Today I signed for my extra beer as Fidel Castro!

*****MONDAY 30 MAY 1994***** I was up at 0600 went for a shower, ate breakfast and were mounted on the vehicles at 0800. This morning we were heading to a small arms range outside of the town of Kisleiak which was about an hour's drive from our main camp to the Croatian held side. We were going to test fire our C6 and C9 Machine Guns and make sure they were in working order. We headed out with all of the patrols from our troop that were in camp as well as a few vehicles from the Regimental Recce Troop (60) and some maintenance personnel from HQ Sqn. The range was just off the main road in a clearing in the forest. We parked and lined up our vehicles to leave room for the dismounted troops to shoot their pers weapons. The range was only 500 meters long and we used an old road sign hung in a tree to shoot at. When it was my turn to fire the FCS Tech came by and adjusted my gun to shoot onto the target. It was amazing to see how accurate this system is to fire unlike the Cougar and even the Croatian soldiers who were observing our shoot were extremely impressed to see the accuracy of the guns! Every round I fired in controlled bursts hit the target! The shoot only lasted about an hour then we headed back to the main camp in Visoko. We parked the vehicles and went to the kitchen for lunch. In the afternoon we did vehicle maintenance and cleaned the weapons that had been fired. We were told that we would be heading out this evening as well. We were going to an overwatch position to help support two OP's that were located on a bridge that ran on the main highway from the Northwest to Sarajevo. The OP's were called OP Mike and OP Papa. On the west side of the bride was the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) and on the east side was the Bosnian Army BiH (Muslims). Our task was to make sure our forces were not taken over and to watch the area for anything suspicious. We departed around 1700 and took what was like a bunch of goat tracks to get to our position on the north side of a large hill. We tucked the vehicles in the tree line behind the Recce Sqn Cougar patrol that was already in position. We just stayed in position for overwatch the rest of the evening. We packed everything up and headed back to the main camp at 2100. Our TOW vehicles were not allowed to be out of camp on any overnight tasks. We got in at 2200, parked the vehicles and went to ground.

LAST TRUMPET CALL

BENNETT, Tim 12 March, 2015, Gagetown, NB

CLARKE, Robert Age 82, 27 February, 2015, Halifax, NS

CUSSON, Donnie 24 June 2014, Comox, BC

DAVID, Albert Age 85, 22 January 2015, Medicine Hat, AB

DERKSEN, Philip 17 April 2014, Winnipeg, MB

DRUMMOND, Chris Age 59, 31 March 2015, Winfield, BC

DUFRESNE, Lionel Age 91, 24 February, 2015, Deep River, ON

DYCK, Harry Clovis USA

EGAN, Joe Age 68, 16 February, 2015, Texas

FRANCIS, Ron Age 83, 30 January 2015, Nepean, ON

HEBERT, Ernest Age 67, 22 April 2013

KAATZ, Bill Age 89, 10 December, 2014, Revelstoke, BC

KRAMCHYNSKY, Terence Age 50, 29 November, 2014, Winnipeg, MB

LEY, Gordie 27 March, 2013

PROKOPETZ, George Age 92, April, 2015, Chilliwack, BC

PTOSNICK, Roger Age 92, 12 October 2013, Winnipeg MB

PUSHKARENKO, John Age 82, April, 2015, Maillag, AB

PURDY, Roland Age 81, 21 December 2014, Strathmore, AB

RADLEY-WALTERS, Sydney Age 95, 31 April, 2015, Kingston, ON

ROCHEFORT, Mike Age 57, 19 December, 2014, Timmins, ON

SUTHERLAND, Bob Age 87, 25 December 2014, Medicine Hat AB

In Loving Memory of Wives

ROTHERY, Alison (Ray), Nepean, ON

SARTOR, Elaine (Mike), 4 January, 2015, Penticton, BC

WILSON, Nanci (Tony), 28 February, 2015, Sun Peaks, BC

Our apologies for lack of details in some cases