Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Rangers Associations

The Ranger

January 2014

Kloshe Nanitch

COs Report on the Unit



Fall 2013 went well for the Unit. September saw the return to parading after the summer starting with the official opening of Meadow Armoury in Prince George. Weekend exercises in September, October and November involved advance to contact, as well as some mountain skills refresher and urban operations (house clearing drills). Additionally the November exercise in the Chilcotin included a Tactical Exercise Without Troops (TEWT) for the NCOs and officers, on the advance and attack.

The Unit was the brigade lead for two courses this Fall – machine gunner in October/November and LOSV (light over snow vehicle) operator in December. A section of candidates in each of Kamloops and Prince George was trained on each of these courses, in addition to sections in other units of 39 Brigade. Fall 2013 included additional 39 Brigade preparation and training for domestic operations with the Exercise Cougar Ready weekend in November.

Of note regarding honours and awards Sgt Collins was recently awarded the Sacrifice Medal. The year closed with Kiska Day in Kamloops on 14 December, including a large contingent of B Company that traveled down from Prince George. For 2014 we are off to a good start with winter mobility and winter warfare skills refresher exercises at the company level. A BMQ started 10 January with a full section of candidates in each of Kamloops and Prince George. The 21-23 February Chilcotin exercise is planned to again involve a parallel cadet exercise and the March exercise will be at Joint Base Lewis-McCord in Washington State..

Finally, with the return of Capt Galt on 24 Jan from Kabul, the last of the Regt's Afghan vets is back home.

RMRANG ASSOCIATION KAMLOOPS BRANCH

From the President

Hello to all. We had great association reunion the last weekend of September. By all accounts everyone who attended had enjoyed themselves. A big thank you goes out to LtCol Kevin Tyler and his staff for all the help they provided with the meet and greet and AGM. There were quite a few members of the regiment who joined the association members on the night of the meet and greet in the mess and managed to turn it into a great evening. We also saw a successful AGM. Most of the executive was acclaimed but we do have several new faces and I would like to thank them for their commitment.

The Association now has a website up and running at www.rmrangassociation.ca. This newsletter will be posted there as well as any pertinent information regarding the Association so I encourage everyone to check it out. You will notice that some pages are still under construction and a goal in this new year will be to have all pages done. Also in the new year we will be looking forward to working closely with the Regiment on any items we can help with especially the Regimental birthday dinner. I would also like to take this time to wish all a very happy 2014.

Mike Young
President
RM Rang Association

Pictures of the AGM Dinner (with thanks to Ieuan Gilmour)

Gillian & Ieuan Gilmour



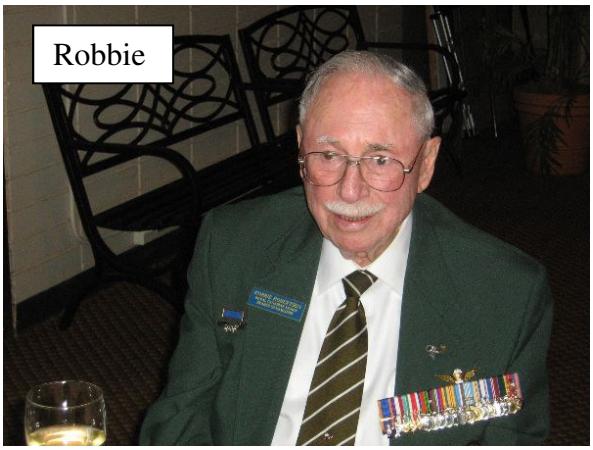
Gerry & Sharon Jones



Dave Hanna & Darlene



Robbie



RM RANG ASSOCIATION PRINCE GEORGE BRANCH

The official opening of the Meadows Armouries on September 3, 2013.



Pictured L to R: Mayor of PG Shari Green, Adjt Capt Conor Molloy, OC B Capt Seth Hunter, CSM B WO Daryll Mellquist, Col Terry Shupe, LCol Kevin Tyler, 2Lt Patrick Hickey B Coy, Comd 39 CBG BGen RobRoy MacKenzie, BSM 39 CBG CWO Mark Arden.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RANGERS ASSOCIATIONS & FUNDING

By Major Gerry Jones (Ret'd)

From time to time, I have been asked to explain who The Rocky Mountain Rangers are and/or why do we do what we do and the way we do it. It's called Regimental Traditions, or Regimental Quiffs. Sadly, as my Military Career moves into the membership of the OLD Guard of the Regiment (I hope the name Old Guard is self-explanatory), I have discovered that there are not very many of my vintage left who hold the Regimental Corporate Knowledge AS I DO. Through a series of short articles, it is my aim to reintroduce this knowledge with the view to reinvigorating PRIDE IN THE REGIMENT.

The Regimental Association

To keep things simple, the purpose of the Regimental Association(Assn) is to assist the Commanding Officer(CO) with Regimental Projects that fall outside the normal DND (Army) financial protocols. Bottom Line up front, the Assn is able to help the CO with providing assistance to the soldiers when the Army protocols will not allow the Regiment to do so. There are, of course, other benefits derived from the Assn such as annual social gatherings for former members of the Rangers to renew old acquaintances (to tell war stories!) and, to hopefully, meet current serving members of the Rangers to learn how the Rangers do business today. There are, of course, other ways that the Assn may become involved in support to the soldiers of the Regiment.

Currently, there is discussion centered around the Assn taking on some of the responsibilities of running a KIT Shop for the Rangers where things such as Regimental Ties, Blazers, Crests, etc may be ordered. More on this soon! The Assn is also involved with raising money to provide scholarship benefits to soldiers who qualify, dependent on the soldier's field of study. This may be either as a trades or academic student. Again, more on this benefit soon. As an Assn, we

continue to seek out new ways that we may be able to serve not only the current members of the Assn. but also the serving members of the Regiment.

As we like to say in the Army, Sum Up! The Regimental Association belongs to the Regiment, both serving and retired/released members and to those who wish to become involved with their local Army Reserve Unit. Its primary goal is to assist the Regiment's soldiers as is practicable. When you join the Regiment as a soldier, you join the Regimental Association as a full member.

(WAR STORY: I recall one weekend during the command of LCol Ken Netty when a large contingent of Officers and Senior Non-Commissioned (Senior NCOs) Officers were attending a Professional Development Exercise at Brigade HQ. The group, complete, had flown with PWA to Vancouver and, believe it or not, our baggage was missed placed (****** LOST!). So, no uniform s for the start of the exercise. HAH! Fooled the buggers. It just so happened that LCol Netty, with the assistance from the Association, had insisted that all the Officers and Senior NCOs will purchase Regimental Blazers with Crests and grey flannel slacks and black shoes. The Assn at that time was fairly wealthy and so they helped to underwrite the cost of these items! So there we were Saturday morning, turned out in exacting matching outfits (someone called it a uniform!) So, the Rangers were saved from THE SHAME of being OUT OF UNIFORM and, as I recall, the Brigade RSM was heard to comment that, "Even when the bloody Rangers are out-of-uniform; they're still all bloody in uniform!" What could have been an expensive evening in the Mess was averted!

Faces on the Wall – Col William Cryle Robertson MC, OMM, CD ("Robbie")

This is the continuation of a series featuring the history of past "Faces on the Wall". The reader will notice in this newsletter and in person LCol Robertson is simply, affectionately and respectfully known as "Robbie".



Col. Robertson was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and first joined the army as a boy soldier in the Saskatoon Light Infantry in 1937. In 1940 he transferred to the active force and served with his regiment in Great Britain, Sicily, Italy, and North West Europe during the Second World War.

In 1945 he transferred to the regular army and joined the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Commissioned in 1951, he proceeded to Korea with the First Battalion PPCLI where he was decorated with the Military Cross. For his services while seconded to the US Air Force, Robbie was awarded the United States Air Medal.

Returning home, Robbie served in various stations throughout western Canada and while serving as a

parachute instructor was awarded the Queen's Commendation for brave conduct.

Promoted Captain in 1960, he served a tour of duty in the Middle East with Canada's peacekeeping forces, and returned to Canada to command 11 Personnel depot in Vancouver where he remained until his retirement from the regular force in 1968.

Robbie moved to Kamloops in 1969 and began a successful second career as a local Realtor. In 1972 he returned to military duty, in the rank of Major, serving as Deputy Commanding Officer of The Rocky Mountain Rangers. In 1975 Robbie was promoted to LCol rank and appointed Commanding Officer of The Rangers, a position he filled until his retirement from the Reserve Army in 1981. Robbie was made an Officer of the Order of Military Merit in 1980.

Robbie donned uniform again in 1989 when he honoured our unit by becoming our Honourary Lieutenant Colonel. He continued his service until 1990 when he retired as our Honourary Colonel.

Awards and Decorations (check out Robbie's row of medals on the AGM Dinner photo)

Military Cross
Officer of The Order of Military Merit
1939-45 Star
Italy Star
France and Germany Star
Defense Medal
Canadian Volunteer
Service Medal and Clasp
War Medal 1939-45
Korea Medal
United Nations Service Medal (Korea)
United Nations Emergency Medal (ME)
Queen's Jubilee Medal
Efficiency Medal
Canadian Forces Decoration and 2 Clasps
Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct
United States Air Force Medal

Citation to Robbie's Military Cross

ZL9929 2nd Lieutenant William Cryle Robertson

2nd Lieutenant Robertson has served as the pioneer officer of 1st Battalion. Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry since April 1952. During his employment as Pioneer Officer he has displayed outstanding qualities as a leader of men. His duties have constantly demanded that he move well in front of our forward defended localities in order to check minefields and to keep intact minefield fences to ensure the safe passage of our patrols through the minefields. This has necessitated work by day in full view of the enemy as well as work by night.

Although frequently sniped at by enemy small arms and occasionally mortared, this officer persisted in his tasks at all times. His cheerful courage and devotion to duty have been an inspiration to the men under his command. The following two incidents serve to illustrate the gallantry of this officer in action.

In early summer three linemen from another regiment were caught in a minefield. One of the linemen managed to come through the minefield, but was wounded so seriously that he could give no direction as to where his two comrades were. Without hesitation, 2nd Lieutenant Robertson organized the search, went personally into the minefield in the pitch darkness and amidst spasmodic shellfire searched through the minefield. Finally after more than two hours of searching, he located the bodies of the two solders, both of whom had been fatally wounded.

Again during the heavy rains in late August one of the battalion standing patrols, numbering one officer and nine men, were stranded outside our forward defended localities by the rapidly rising waters of a stream. This officer was called upon, and by his daring ingenuity, this time in full light of day, and under enemy observation, managed to rig ropes above and across the river thereby permitting the whole of the patrol to reach safety within our own forward defended localities.

This officer, by his bravery and devotion to duty, has maintained the highest traditions of the Canadian Army.

Award of Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct.

On the afternoon of 2 July, 1954, Lieutenant Robertson, a parachutist instructor at the Canadian Joint Air Training School made a parachute dissent with a class of men under training. After leaving the aircraft and having his parachute open normally, he was struck by Private Couture who passed through his rigging lines and started to fall away from him. Lieutenant Robertson noticed Private Couture's tangled rigging lines and canopy collapsing over his own line. He appreciated that private Couture would suffer severe, if not fatal injury, if he continued his descent with his parachute in a deflated condition. Lieutenant Robertson grasped the deflated canopy, wound his legs around it and held on. In this position the landing was made without injury to either Lieutenant Robertson or Private Couture. This officer's prompt action and disregard for any injuries that he himself might have suffered with an additional load on his parachute saved Private Couture from death or, at any rate, severe injury.

Award of US Air Medal

By direction of the president of the United States of America ZL 9929 Second Lieutenant William C Robertson has been awarded the air medal

Second Lieutenant William C Robertson distinguished them himself by participating in 20 aerial flights in support of the Republic of Korea and United Nations forces from an airstrip in Korea to target areas behind enemy lines during the period 4 December 1951 to 9 January 1952. Willingly and with full knowledge of the hazards involved, Lieut. Robertson flew as observer in an unarmed T-6 type aircraft which penetrated areas of ground activity to locate enemy targets and direct close support aircraft. By his courage, ability and devotion to duty, Lieutenant Robertson has brought great credit upon himself and the United Nations forces in Korea.

Up-Date One - Letter from a Former Ranger

The following letter was received from Keith Freer former RSM, CO and Hon Col of 74 Sig Regt. Keith also served in the Rangers Prince George Company in the late 60s.

Jerry:

This is an expanded version of my comments sent earlier, with some more info covering events at A Coy between Fall 1966 and until the same period in 1969.

I have not provided much more in the way of names other than the Regular staff initially Sgt Day, former QOR, followed by Cpl Dillon, PPCLI, at sub-unit level and Sgt Ken Hanson, also PPCLI, from the I-Staff, CF Det, at Vernon.

Not sure if you knew him, the CO then was LCol Foxcroft, since deceased. .' You will recall that CF Unification came about in 1968, but had little impact locally, at that time. RCACC #2618 were co-located in the Armoury, and still exist, but I do not know where in Prince George recently.

My civilian employer transferred me from Stewart, BC to Prince George as the Assistant Manager, C IBC, and accordingly I applied for transferred from SUPPROO back to Primary Reserve. This involved re-muster from RC Sigs to Infantry, and I retained my rank and trained soldier status. Shortly after I was able to attend a course at Wainwright, qualified as a Senior NCO and was promoted Sgt.

Following in 1968, Keith Marcellais was promoted to WO as CSM, and Sgt Glen Holling arrived from Kamloops. Sub-unit strength had grown to 30/40 total, and training focussed on Infantry skills, including local field exercises and range practices at the Hwy 16 range site.

There were various combined training events organized by RHQ at Kamloops, and the se included representation from C & D Coys (Salmon Arm and Revelstoke). In addition, a District level concentration was conducted at Chilcotin in1967 (and perhaps again in 1968). One memorable event was the arrival of one of the 1967 Centennial Military Display Trains, and A Coy were quite involved in supporting this activity in Prince George.

Combined training camps were run at Albert Head in both 1968 and 1969. During this period Bush Dress was being withdrawn, most field training was carried out wearing Black Coveralls, with '37 pattern webbing. Range practices were involved for FN Rifle, 36 Grenade and 3.5 RL.

Sometime in late summer 1969, the announcement of sub-unit disbandment (A Coy) came about, and this coincided with my own civilian work transfer back to Vancouver. There was a very successful "Mark the Occasion" wind-up party, & I happily travelled up to attend that event. This concludes my recollections. I again transferred, as a WO to 3ASS, which later became 744 CR/CFCC.

Editors Note:
It should not come as a surprise that former Rangers have served in many places. I'm sure the Sgt Glen Holling mentioned in the article is the same Maj Holling who much later was the DCO of the Royal Westminster Regiment who slated to assume command of that unit. But before he assumed command he was moved by his employer back to Prince George.

Up-Date Two - from a Former Ranger

This story comes from Gil Gilmour who started as a Ranger and moved on during WW2 to Signals. However, "once a Ranger, always a Ranger", Gill continues to this day attending Ranger AGMS and reunions.

BELL TENTS AND HONEY BUCKETS

Army life for most teen-agers in war- time Canada was safe, secure and fun. We moved from just another kid on the block to somebody. We enjoyed some status, recognition and we mattered. The red "GS" on our lower left sleeve announced to all, we'd volunteered to serve Canada anywhere.

1942 was vintage living except at bed time. I'd been bugler, Regimental Signaler and transferred to the Royal Canadian Corps Of Signals. "Bell Tent, Troops, for the use of' was home where-ever posted. Bell tents always had a "honey bucket", officially known as "Urinal, night soil, Troops, for the use of, They arrived in various styles and sizes from 45 gallon drums to a 2 pound lard pail - whatever the Quartermaster's mood and energy found convenient.

"Bell Tents" had been an army barracks stand-by since Roman times. It survived Afghan snipers in the Khyber, shaded Canadian troopers in the Boer War, sheltered Canucks on wet Salisbury Plains in WWI and sprinkled our Dominion coast to coast in WWII.

It came in 3 canvas bags complete with mallet, tent pegs and centre pole. The tent pole had special leather loops to hold the muskets in place. Designed {I think} for six men, sometimes seven and all their kit, the sides could be tied up in summer and staked down in winter. If we

were lucky, they had a collection of pie shaped wooden duck boards for a floor. If really lucky, there was a pie-shaped , straw filled "paliasse" at least that's what we called it. Originally the straw had some substance, but years of indifferent storage and service in three previous wars, rendered it to the fineness of talcum powder. Our two grey issue blankets were softer.

My first experience with them was on a very wet hill in Vernon. The mud didn't help. When they gave me a ticket, food vouchers and orders to report to Military District 10 H.Q. ensconced in the Old Hotel Vancouver, on Granville St. across the road from the Castle Hotel, my delight knew no borders. The Castle was Canadian Army after-hours starting point for fun and two of the most hospitable boot-leggers in the business, Henry's and Bill Peacocks were just around the corner. At that time the legal age for imbibing was 21. Kids in Khaki at any age were welcome at all three and every other hotel or "boot-legger"

Joy was short lived. After standing around, saluting a sundry collection of officers, they gave me a street car ticket and orders to report to the Little Mountain Army Camp at 41st and Oak St This was still Vancouver but a long way from the Castle. I was issued a pillow, paliasse and assigned space in a Bell Tent to await re-muster to Signals. I remember it was raining.

Life was kind. We were free to come and go but directed to read "Orders" posted in the Orderly Room each day, I don't remember how many times I checked in but it was at least two pay-days. We measured time in "pay-days.

Late spring moved to summer when I read it was time to return the pillow and paliasse and move my ass with kit to a larger tent Perhaps it had beds. No, it had rented trucks which took us to Chilliwack. It seemed they decided every-one should have 6 weeks Basic Training. There was about 150 of us, mostly new recruits and a few of us who'd been there, done that! We were the first troops to occupy the Camp which was to be the permanent barracks of the Royal Canadian Engineers. There were no buildings then, just some lines of binder- twine the Sgt. Major had laid out in the meadow. With three bags of bell-tent and pole every twenty paces. I remember it was raining-there was no mess tent --it did not look good.

90% of the guys wore uniforms that still had a garment factory smell, the rest of us were assigned to show leadership in erecting Bell tents and digging latrines The farm kids were good at both but most tried. The first week we had a Mess tent with dirt floor, duck boards, and paliasses with bales of straw to fill them, and sunshine. As the cooks emptied lard pails and various other tins "honey buckets" began appearing to be emptied each morning by a "civy". I don't know where he emptied them.

The summer of '42 was memorable. 5 miles west was Chilliwack and a Government Liquor store- 5 miles east Cultus Lake, ringed with summer cottages and holidaying city girls and a roller-rink. Weekdays, after bashing a parade square and route marching all day we walked to the Lake for 2 hours of roller skating, walked back, and collapsed till Reveille. Saturdays we went to Chilliwack for refreshments then went roller skating.

Summer moved to September and a train ride to Kingston and Vimy Barracks, permanent home of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. There were several substantial buildings facing the Parade Square and signs of rising "H" huts everywhere.

Arriving and rushing around to wait, we were issued a clean pillow case with pillow and paliasse. Behind the substantial buildings were rows of Bell tents. It would be home until early January. They had duck-board floors, kerosene hurricane lamp for heat and light and outdoor plumbing for cold-water shaving.

They decided I was too young to train and sent me to the Officers' Mess as a bar-tender. Disappointment moved to pleasure when I realized its potential. First, I got to eat Officers' food, mostly same rations but prepared with due care and attention. Second, I enjoyed a level of freedom from routine army B.S. that made my off-duty hours a delight- like sleeping, roll calls and church parades. Third, if one was cautious, careful and discreet there was access to McCallum's Scotch, assorted single malts and other luxuries unavailable to us ordinary unwashed.

It was during this period I had a life altering experience. I was skinny with skimpy facial hair, sprinkled with a few blonde bristles. People would say" How old are you anyway". They never said good morning or hello, always "How you do'in kid". Fathers of daughters my age didn't want them going out with soldiers. Older woman seemed to think they may be charged with "contributing".

I decided to grow a moustache. I could be real charming rake like Errol Flynn. It didn't show - just a gold transparent fuzz. At the time, plucked eyebrows and penciled replicas were all the rage. Perhaps, if it was darker would they see it?

Summoning courage, I approached a fatherly looking pharmacist for some hair paint for my moustache. He really understood--without other comment said "This works for the ladies"

Evenings when I was off duty I went skating. It was a public rink with various segments - ladies only - couples only - everyone - men only - etc. During the "men only", we all showed off our speed, twirls, twists at break-neck pace.

So it was that night, I'd bought a whiter than white sweat- shirt with our Signals crest proudly donned it and when my mates weren't noticing, applied the gooey black stuff. I didn't look like Errol Flynn but I think I felt a little rakish.

During the evening, I made several trips to the concession to check my make-over in the COCA-COLA mirror. The "men only" skate arrived. I excelled--passing- twirling-leaping over all and sundry. The music ended and I returned to the concession. Feeling great I made eye contact with a ravishing red head I'd noticed on several occasions--Reba McEntire is a later day look-alike.

Her face was a mixture of surprise and concern- expressed "Good God, what's happened to your face". I turned to the COCA-COLA mirror---it had a good looking girl next door

picture and proclaimed -"The pause that refreshes" I saw a sweaty faced, skinny kid--vestiges of a rakish moustache dribbling over cheek, chin -- whiter than white sweat shirt and Signals crest

A year later in Italy the shirt still wasn't clean, but I wore it every day trying to keep warm. There wasn't a Bell tent or honey-bucket in sight

The Meaning of Kiska

Last month the unit celebrated the Kiska Dinner at Kamloops. The newsletter will provide some background on Kiska.

Report of the Kiska Dinner 2013

By Major Jones (Ret'd)

The annual Soldier's Dinner, dubbed, The Kiska Dinner, was again a great success thanks to the hard work of the organizing party. The traditional consume soup with Regimental Rams Piss started off the dinner. The CO handed his rank badge over to the youngest private, Private Powley and the RSM did the same with the oldest Jr NCO, MCpl Carter. The Padre once again provided some Christmas cheer as back ground music for the diners.

It didn't take long for the soldiers to consume their ration of two drinks per soldier and the mood became quite jovial. Former COs Robertson, Jyrkkanen and Jones attended the dinner and enjoyed rubbing elbows with the troops. After dinner the fun began when Santa Clause arrived bearing gifts for several members of the Unit. Not to be out done, HCol Shupe provided a plethora of hand-made wooded gifts that were distributed among the soldiers via a random draw.

The Officers and Sr NCOs seemed to enjoy their opportunity to serve dinner to the Regiment's troops and did a great job of cleaning the dining hall after dinner. It was then to the messes, where the Officer's and Sr NCO's mess provided a traditional MOOSE MILK punch to the visiting soldiers. Retired Col ROBBIE Robertson was seen to be laying $200 on the Jr. Rank's bar later in the evening. I am certain the annual Kiska Dinner was successful in producing some great camaraderie amongst all Ranks of The Rocky Mountain Rangers.

Awards at the Kiska Dinner



RSM Hettrick presents NCO of the year to Sgt Clancy Newton



Cpl Charles McGrath and Cpl Reid Lyons winners of the Machine Gun Trophy

(You don't need new glasses; sorry the pictures actually are blurry!)

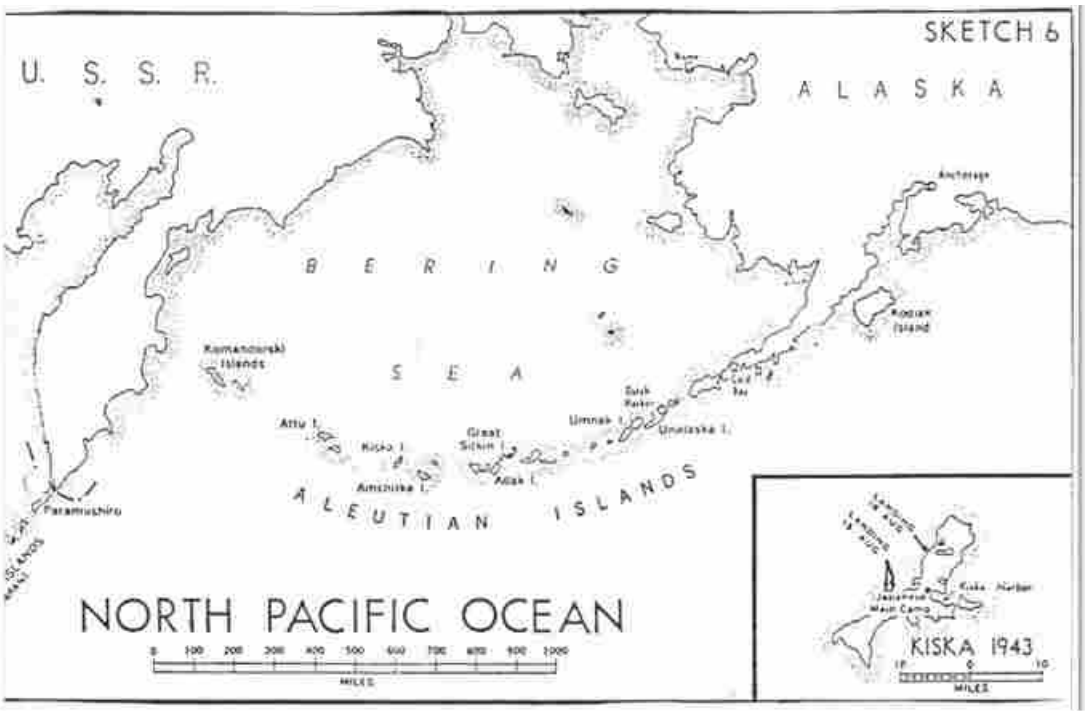
The Kiska Operation

This is a much abbreviated description of the Kiska Operation. Much more detail can be found in Chapter 8 of the RM Rang History "The First Hundred Years".

The Japanese invaded the Aleutian Islands in June 1942. These islands were considered a strategic offensive base with Kiska Island being 3000 miles from Vancouver – Alaska and B.C. feared Japan's motives.

The Americans had trouble evicting the Japanese from the islands of Attu and Kiska. Since bombing and blockades had failed to be effective, they set about recovering the islands by ground assault. The Canadian Army joined the Americans to help in the Aleutian Campaign. The Canadian Force was composed of the Canadian Fusiliers, Winnipeg Grenadiers, Rocky Mountain Rangers, and the Regiment de Hull, four infantry Battalions of the 13th Infantry Brigade.

The Canadian Force, 4800 officers and men, sailed from Vancouver Island ports on July 12 in (4) four U.S. transports. D-day for the Kiska assault was August 15, 1943. When they landed, there was no resistance. The Japanese had withdrawn under a cover of fog. The task force spent Christmas on the Island and returned home January 24, 1944. The Rocky Mountain Rangers remember their comrades in action with an annual Christmas Dinner.



THE KISKA PRAYER

From the time they landed at Kiska to the time they departed for home, the Rangers had been on Kiska for six months. To say this time was spent in a very inhospitable place would be an understatement as the following laments.

Maybe God was tired when he made his little isle,
So he grabbed the things left over and put them in a pile,
He dripped them in the ocean and paused there for a spell
Then he said "I'll call it Kiska", the earth shall have a hell,

And what a hell this Kiska is, so misty, damp and drear,
Where nothing grows upon the soil, for there is no sunshine here.
Where the fog rolls up the valley, and the clouds drop over the hill,
Where the rain comes down in torrents, and the wind is never still,

Where in your daily duties, you flounder in the bud,
Where the whirling, sweeping will was coagulates your blood,
Where the dampness penetrates you, to the marrow of your bones,
Where you wake up in the morning, which aches and pains and groans.
Where in the dead of summer, you shiver in the cold
And the hardships that you suffer, turn young men into old,
Where there's no entertainment, no music, joy or mirth,
Oh, what a place this Kiska is, it's really hell on earth.

The Kiska Gun

Editor's Note One

People who have visited Vernon Cadet Camp may have noticed an artillery piece located in front of the HQ building. Upon examination one will find plaques identify the gun as the "Kiska Gun". Information at the site will further describe that the gun was brought to Vernon by the troops participating in the Kiska Operation during WW2.



During my time as HCol I researched the background of the Kiska Gun. One of my objectives was to have an exchange of guns by trading our 155mm artillery piece for the Kiska Gun. However, I learned that the Kiska Gun has significant and long-standing meaning to the many cadets who have, and continue, to populate Vernon Camp. Accordingly I ceased my efforts to move the gun but I did state the RM Ranger's wish to have the gun if there is any future de-mob of the Vernon Camp.

In researching the gun I found that its design and manufacture date back as far as the late 1800s. In fact the first of these guns was a British Admiralty naval gun. Some of the original British guns were sold to Japan at the beginning of the 20th Century. Later Japan manufactured the gun for its own use.

Editor's Note Two

While I was attending an event in Vancouver recently MGen (Retd) Stu MacDonald, the HCol of 5 Regt, RCA told me that the Artillery Association is presently working on updates to the information plaques at Vernon and provided me with the following information.

> *Jerry,*
>
> *The aim of the project is to re-install a plaque at the VACC "Kiska Gun". There were a few errors in the original plaque and a group of retired soldiers have agreed to fund a replacement plaque. The main errors were the calibre of the gun, the order of precedence of the units and the identification of the unit that captured the gun on Kiska.*
>
> *When the plaque has been acquired and installed, we will organize a small ceremony and will invite the members of units that perpetuate the units at Kiska, the Cadets, Legion, public, etc. Our aim is to have the ceremony during the summer at a date when VACC is being utilized by Cadets.*
>
> *I have attached a draft of the plaque wording.*
>
> *I would be happy to provide additional details and respond to any questions and suggestions.*

New Plaque to be dedicated in 2014

76mm Japanese Naval Gun

On August 15, 1943, OPERATION COTTAGE liberated the Island of Kiska in the Aleutian Chain. The joint US-Canadian force of 35,000 Allied troops was comprised of the 7th (US) Infantry Division and the 13th (Canadian) Infantry Brigade Group, which included the following Canadian units:

24th Field Regiment Royal Canadian Artillery
46th Light Anti-Aircraft Battery Royal Canadian Artillery
24th Field Company Royal Canadian Engineers
The Canadian Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)
The Rocky Mountain Rangers
The Winnipeg Grenadiers
Le Regiment de Hull
One company of The Saint John Fusiliers (M.G.)
25th Field Ambulance Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps

As well, the famed Canadian-American commando unit, the First Special Service Force, later known as the "Devil's Brigade", participated in the assault.

The 5,200 Japanese troops had evacuated Kiska Island two weeks before the invasion, leaving behind their dead, most of their weapons and equipment and a landscape littered with booby traps and mines.

This 77mm gun was captured on the beach at Kiska and, on the orders of the Commanding Officer of the 24th Field Artillery Regiment RCA, was brought back by the regiment to the Vernon Military Camp in early 1944. From 1944 until the regiment was disbanded this gun remained as a monument in front of the Officers' Mess of the 24th Field Regiment RCA.

On the initiative of 1705 (BCD) Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps of Vernon, this gun was dedicated as a monument to the Canadian and United States soldiers of OPERATION COTTAGE.g



Ropework on ex Horsefly conducted over the weekend of January 18/19, 2014

WARNING ORDER

To celebrate our Regimental birthday there will be a formal Dining-In at Kamloops on <u>Saturday, April 5</u>.

Location and further details are to follow.

Mark your calendars.

Submissions Requested

This is your newsletter. It can only be as good as the support you give it. Please, I seek your submissions, questions or comments.

I may not be able to publish all material, I may have to do some editing to fit the space and I may not use it immediately but I'll try very hard to use everything received.

Jerry Silva
Editor
Send to: jsilva@safety.bc.ca