

# Seaforth Highlanders of Canada Regimental Family Newsletter

## The Cabar Feidh

September 2013 - September 2014



RSM's Change of Appointment – 2014

Vol. 2 September 2013 - September 2014



## **The Regimental Journal of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada**

**Vol 2 – September 2013 - 2014**

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Regimental Family and Friends,

We are pleased to send you the rebirth of a newsletter, The Cabar Feidh. The history of this newsletter and magazine was that it was originally the Imperial Seaforth's in Scotland. As we are the last of the Seaforth's it seemed appropriate to resurrect the original newsletter and possibly in the future a magazine.

The first edition was mainly an introduction and background of the members that are unfamiliar to many of the Family. Included also are articles regarding the Battalion, Patrons, Cadets, Association, and other areas of the Regimental family.

We hope you found the first edition interesting and informative as with our second edition.

We would also like to receive any articles, comments, or suggestions for improvement in the future.

To access this newsletter please click on the following link.

<http://seaforthhighlanders.ca/cabar-feidh/>

Finally it is also hoped that you will continually go to the web address of [www.seaforthhighlanders.ca](http://www.seaforthhighlanders.ca) for the current happenings of the Regiment.

***Cabar Feidh Gu Brath***

***Shannon Johnson - Editor***

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**Field Marshal, HRH Prince Philip,  
The Duke of Edinburgh, KG, KT, OM, GBE  
Colonel-in-Chief  
The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada**

**In 1962 on the campus of the University of British Columbia, The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada were presented with their new Colours by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.**

**Several years later on April 7, 1967 the Regimental Committee requested permission of HRH to become the Seaforth's Colonel-in-Chief. It was a proud day for our Regiment when a message came through that he would accept the invitation to become our Colonel-in-Chief.**

**Since that time we have had several visits producing many stories from the various messes. He was initiated into Hogan's Alley, in the Officers Mess, by the Jr. Officers of the time. This can be witnessed by his signature on the Jr. Officers two battle flags that reside in Hogan's Alley. His last visit again proved to be a wonderful day for all, with more than one story being produced.**



One of which was to do with our former Commanding Officer, LCol Paul Ursich who at that time was a Jr. Officer. It was quite amusing. However, for the details you will have to ask the Col. himself as this author is sworn to almost secrecy.

Another story that can be told was about our Regimental Secretary who was his Aide-de-Camp. Capt. McLeod had no problem with the visit until HRH reached the Jr. Ranks Mess. There it became apparent that HRH was having such a good time that the timings were quickly going out the window.

After several reminders from Capt. McLeod, and being rebuffed each time, panic was setting in for the future Regt. Secretary. Eventually HRH allowed the event to proceed, but it was quite apparent he had enjoyed himself immensely in the OR's Mess as had the members and their lady friends. The day ended as we expected, a great success.

Unfortunately that was the last visit to our Regt. Since that time there has also been a lack of contact with HRH. It is therefore pleasing to note that our HCol, CO, and RHQ have been working hard to open communications for ourselves and the Palace. It is hoped that we will again have the open communication with HRH as was achieved in the past.



## **Regimental Honorary Colonel HCol Michael Shields, CD**

This is being written just before the centenary of WWI begins. In the fall of 1914 the first group of Seaforth's left for that war to become the largest group making up the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, some 25 officers and 514 men. For them the fighting began in 1915. The Regiment, the 72<sup>nd</sup> Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, followed them in 1916. We are also commemorating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Seaforth action in 1944, where in Italy, the battalion fought the major battles of the Hitler Line, the Gothic Line, the Rimini Line, and the crossing of the Savio River. The latter is where Pte Smoky Smith was awarded the Victoria Cross for his work during that action. There will be a lot of remembrances and celebrations to come during the next three years. We made a name for ourselves as a Regiment that always does well, from the start, confirmed in two world wars, and which continues to this day. Our members, who have recently, so ably served in Afghanistan, for which we have been awarded a theater Battle Honour, "Afghanistan", and before that in the Balkans, have performed every bit as well as their Regimental forefathers continuing what we expect of ourselves. As the Honorary Colonel it is with great honour to be amongst these friends.



Commanding Officer  
LCol Scott Raesler, CD

A few short months ago, Canada paused as a nation to observe the national Day of Honour to commemorate the accomplishments, strengths and the sacrifices made by members of the Canadian Armed Forces during nearly 13 years of continuous operations in Afghanistan, which came to an end with the return of the last Canadian soldiers from that country on 18 March 2014.

During our engagement in Afghanistan, a period of time almost as long as both World Wars and the Korean Conflict combined, the CAF conducted operations in a number of uniquely different roles, such as counter-terrorism, Stability Operations, Counter Insurgency Operations, Development and Reconstruction initiatives and finally our significant Mentoring and Training efforts for the Afghan National Army and Police. All of these roles involved every element of the CAF operating within the framework of a challenging multi-national coalition.

Since the beginning of our service in Afghanistan, more than 40,000 member of the CAF have deployed to Afghanistan, a significant number on multiple occasions, making the military engagement the largest deployment of CAF personnel since the Second World War, eclipsing

even our contribution to Korea. It is significant to remember that over 4,200 of those deployed were Reservists who volunteered to put their civilian careers or studies on hold for periods up to two years in order to augment Canada's ever increasing operations in that country. Of this number, 437 soldiers deployed from 39 CBG and of these, 53 were Seaforths (5 Officers, 6 Snr NCOs and 35 Jr NCOs). Considering the size of our Army, these figures mean that well over 100% of the established strength of the Regular and Reserve served in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2014. To put this contribution into local context, for our Brigade of approximately 1,500 soldiers, 1 in 3 British Columbia Army Reservists served in Afghanistan. For the Seaforths, with an effective strength of 158 soldiers, similarly, 1 in 3 of our regiment deployed to Afghanistan during the height of the combat mission between 2006 and 2010. These numbers speak to the sense of service, dedication and tenacity that Canadian soldiers are known for the world over....and it speaks highly of us as an army and nation.

Unfortunately, accomplishments such as the ones I mention, also come at a cost when you consider the nature of the combat operations the CAF were involved in between 2001 and 2014. Between these years, 201 personnel were killed and a further 2,071 became casualties during their service in Afghanistan. The Seaforths were not untouched by these statistics as 2 of our own members, Captain Trevor Greene and MCpl Mark Lee, were wounded as a direct result of enemy action. Capt Greene's miraculous ongoing recovery from his massive injuries continues to be an inspiration to every member of the regiment and speaks to his incredible strength of character as well as that of his wife Debbie.

As we pay homage to most recent chapter of Canadian military history, as well as those veterans who were a part of it, I must also highlight to those of us still serving, the need to also be looking to the future and continuing to prepare for the unknown challenges and tasks that possibly lay ahead for the Canadian Army. Ultimately, the world continues to suffer from conflict and instability in such places as Syria, Ukraine, South Sudan, Iraq and a host of other places. We ultimately don't know where the Canadian army will be called upon to serve next, or what our mission might be, but we, as Seaforths, need to be prepared for that call when, not if, it comes.

Cabar feidh

W. Scott Raesler  
Lieutenant-Colonel  
Commanding Officer



## Regimental Headquarters

The explanation below was included in our first edition. Unfortunately a number of the Regt. Family did not receive the edition or what the RHQ represents. Therefore we are including it again.

For many of the Regimental Family the concept of a Regimental Headquarters (RHQ) is new. This is not to be confused with Battalion Head Quarters in which most are acquainted. The RHQ is a working committee which represents all facets of the Family other than the serving Battalion. This includes the Patrons, Cadets, Association, friends of the Regt, and those areas of the Battalion Messes that the serving members have limited time for. The RHQ answers to the Regt. Committee which is headed by the Commanding Officer, Hon. Col, and Hon. LCol. Chairing the RHQ is the Regt. Secretary who is a member of all the messes and functional areas of the Family outside of the serving Battalion. RHQ's main purpose is to coordinate and or help all areas of the Regt. Family other than the Battalion. To accomplish this, the members of RHQ are usually serving or retired personnel from those areas of the Family.

At times RHQ has been confused with being the Association, which we are not. As with all other areas of the Family, the Assoc. is but one part of the RHQ and is represented by a member of the Assoc.

I hope this explains the new concept of RHQ and some of the work that is being done on behalf of the Family.

Cabar Feidh Gu Brath

A. McLeod, CD  
Captain (ret.)  
Regimental Secretary



## Battalion

Commanding Officer – LCol Scott Raesler, CD  
Deputy Commanding Officer – Maj Tyrone Green, CD  
Adjutant – Capt Bill Annan, CD  
Regimental Sergeant Major – CWO John O'Connor, CD

## RSM's Change of Appointment

"On 2 October 2013, the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada conducted a Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) Change of Appointment ceremony between Chief Warrant Officer Pat Gormley and Chief Warrant Officer John O'Connor. The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada are 103 years old, and in that time have had 33 RSM's serve the Regiment, with CWO O'Connor becoming the 34th. The RSM is the Senior Non-Commissioned member in the unit, and serves as the principle advisor to the Commanding Officer in all issues related to the soldiers of the Battalion, and has a voice in most other matters. The RSM also forms a key part of the Unit Command Team.

The outgoing RSM, Chief Warrant Officer Pat Gormley has served the Seaforth Highlanders for twenty six years, joining the Battalion in 1987 as a Private following a number of years as an Army Cadet. During his busy tenure as RSM, he oversaw the preparation and execution of the Regimental 100th Anniversary and change of colours, the layup of the old Regimental Colours, a change of command from LCol Ursich to LCol Raesler and finally, the march of the Regiment to their temporary lines at the Jericho Garrison. Following the Change of Appointment, CWO Gormley will be applying for a commission as an officer in the Regiment in order to continue his valued service to Canada.

The incoming RSM, CWO John O'Connor, joined the Queen's Own Rifles as an infantryman in 1975. He has served as an infantryman in and with a number of units before coming to the Seaforth Highlanders as a Warrant Officer in 1996. Since joining the Seaforths, CWO O'Connor has had the privilege of participating in several key Regimental and Brigade events. These include: acting as NCO IC of the Lying In State of Sgt Smokey Smith, VC, in Ottawa in 2005; acting as the Team Manager for the 39 Brigade Bronze Medal winning Cambrian Patrol Team in 2007; and acting as the Colour Party Sergeant Major for the Change of Colours at the Seaforth 100th Anniversary celebration in 2010. Since 2012 he has served as the Quarter Master Senior Instructor of the Regiment.

The Soldiers of the Regiment have been extremely fortunate to have had an RSM of CWO Gormley's caliber, dedication and ability for the last four years and all ranks of the Regiment know that they will be equally well served by their new RSM, CWO O'Connor.

**pic 1 - No1 and No2 Guards awaiting the arrival of the Reviewing Officer**

**pic 2 - The Regimental Colour Party about to march on parade**

**pic 3 - CWO Gormley signing the Change of Appointment scroll**

**pic 4 - During the Honourary Colonel's address, CWO O'Connor reflects on the position he is about to assume**

**Pic 5 - CWO Gormley to CWO O'Connor shake hands after the formal handing over of the RSMs pace stick. The pace stick has been both a tool used in drill, and a badge of office of Regimental and Company Sergeants Major. Originating in the Artillery, it was used to align and space out artillery pieces in a gun line, but was soon taken by the Infantry for similar purposes, but with formed bodies of soldiers as opposed to guns. It is also a handy tool for emphasizing a point. The RSM is rarely without his pace stick, and is easily recognizable from a distance because of it.**



The former Adjutant, Capt. Annand doing what he likes best.



RSM's last signing



You would think one of us should be happy!



## Seaforth Hockey Team



## Ready to take on the world

### The Rebirth of a Team: Seaforth Highlanders Hockey

Many months have now passed since the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada were moved out of their regimental home at Seaforth Armouries to allow for upgrades to take place. There have been ups and downs, growing pains, and some difficulties learning new ways of doing simple things that we have done for years. Faces have changed in various roles within the regiment, including that of our Regimental Sergeant Major, and handfuls of new recruits. Through these trying times, the spirit of the Regiment has not broken.

This past year, through the struggles of our temporary home, we have found a way to bring our members together outside of the time we spend in uniform. We have done this by bringing back the Seaforth Highlanders Ice Hockey team.

The previous incarnation of the hockey team existed for several years and unfortunately died out in 2005. At the beginning of the hockey season in September 2013,

we had 11 members on the newly recreated team. Since then, our team numbers have doubled, including players from all three of the messes.

Although we began our hockey season playing in a higher skill division than we would have liked, we were persistent in our efforts and saw through to our first win early in the new year. Having now been tiered down to a division more appropriate to our skill level, we have earned our second win as a team. We hope to continue playing successfully through to the playoffs in late March 2014.

Since receiving our new Seaforth Highlanders hockey jerseys, we have received questions from other players, referees, and spectators about what our jerseys mean. People are interested to learn about Vancouver's infantry regiment and the Stag's head. We have had players come up to us on the ice after recognizing our jerseys to share with us stories of their past interactions with the regiment. The historical Battle Honours on the back of our jerseys have also generated positive interactions with fellow hockey players. We have enjoyed talking to new people and sharing the meaning of our jerseys with them.

It has been a tough season this year with a lot of emotional ups and downs. Our team has persevered through the difficulties of being placed in an outranked skill division, to where we are now, appropriately tiered and content with our division. The growing support for our team from members of the regiment, players and spectators alike, is a strong indicator that this team offers a heightened sense of morale, and has a future in sight.

Kyle Zimmerman  
Master Corporal  
Seaforth Highlanders of Canada



## September, 2013 Badging

"On 25 September 2013, the Regiment continued a long standing tradition of 'badging' new Officers and Soldiers in front of the Battalion following the completion of their Infantry Training. This is a significant event for the young Officers and Soldiers on parade as this is where they are presented the unique head dress of the regiment and are entitled to wear the cap badge that marks them as members of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada. On this particular parade, the Commanding Officer, LCol Scott Raesler, had the pleasure of badging 2 new officers and 10 soldiers, all of whom had completed their Infantry training last summer. In an upcoming ceremony, the CO will also have the pleasure of badging a further six soldiers who weren't on parade this evening. As trained Officers and Soldiers, these young men will now take up positions in A Company where they will be given the opportunity to hone their newly acquired skills through further training and demanding exercises in preparation for future tasks in support of Domestic or Expeditionary operations in the service of Canada."

Pic 1 - LCol Raesler congratulates 2Lt Calvert after presenting him his head dress and badging him. 2Lt Calvert's first assignment will be as a Course Officer for an ongoing Basic Military Qualification course for recruits.

Pic 2 - LCol Raesler congratulates 2Lt Outhwaite after presenting him his head dress and badging him. 2Lt Outhwaite's first assignment will be as a Platoon Commander in A Coy.

Pic 3 - LCol Raesler congratulates one of the 10 new soldiers to the Regiment after presenting them with their head dress and badging them. All of these soldiers will go on to serve in A Coy.





## Exercise Highland Pathfinder

Ex Highland Pathfinder was a significant success in Nov 2013. The overall scope of the exercise involved patrolling against an OPFOR element. All tasks were completed without issue or injury and the cooperation offered by 39 CBG attached arms as well as the RCN.





## Medak Pocket Article

WO R. Deans, CD

The narrow, over-grown, half paved road was quiet and serene as we made our way north. We weren't really talking much as we had in days past when we had seen something that jogged our memories. We were just quiet. "It should be up here about 300m" I said. Suddenly things became very familiar. The trees, the road, the mountains were all familiar. As we rounded a small bend and came to the edge of an open field, I stopped the car. "Tony," I said, "we're here."

Personally, I had never yearned to come back to Croatia. It was always something that, having been there and gone through what we did, I was happy to just leave in my memory. Tony had talked about coming for years previously, off and on, and when 2013 came around it became a case of "shit or get off the pot". My trip got planned rather quickly, thanks to my wife Chantale, and we had arranged an RV in Zagreb with Tony and Christine after we each had completed our own "mini trips" previously. From the minute that we picked up Tony at the airport, the trip began to mean more and more.

The call had gone out in the summer of 1992. A large group of us were, for the most part, working in Vernon at the Militia Camp teaching recruits. The Third Battalion, PPCLI was going overseas on a new mission and as you might expect, we were all raring to go. True to form, the Army intervened and only those who were not otherwise tasked and those from Alberta (it was a camp staffed from the West) were permitted to go. To say that there was massive disappointment was an understatement. The summer ended and we all went home to what ever we had left in the Spring before going to Vernon. I went to Calgary to take a mortar course with the First Battalion PPCLI and it was there that Tony had phoned me. "Rob, there is another tour coming up and everyone is going, I mean, *everybody*...." "Sign me up, I'll be home in December..." That is how our tour began.

First up, it was Chilliwack for Brigade selection and then Winnipeg with the Second Battalion PPCLI for work up. We were over seas by early April. Our tour was broken into two distinct parts. First, we were deployed to the north of Croatia in and around the town Daruvar and the towns of Packrac and Lipic on the front line between Serbs and Croats. Our role in Charlie Company was to provide the battalion reserve in the AO and as such we found ourselves not only patrolling our AO but also reinforcing those of A, B and D companies. Tony and I were in 8 Platoon and were billeted in a farm complex known as "the Ranch". Our days were spent guarding the gate and other "garrison" functions, patrolling by day or patrolling by night. These patrols would se us range all over the AO conducting Vehicle Check Points to search for weapons and other contraband. Things were commonly very quiet though there were weapons found and sometimes shots fired indiscriminately by some local shit-disturber. Apart from a re-organization at the two month mark when we took over some Argentinian check points, things carried on in a similar fashion until August. It was at this time that second part of our tour began with the battalion being tasked by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) HQ to move to the south of the country, in and around the Serb

enclave centred on the town of Knin. We moved the 300 kms within a week or so complete with everything that we thought we might need and could take with us and Charlie Company found itself in the southern village of Kijevo. We didn't know specifically at the time, but the reason that we had to shovel yards of debris, dead things and God-knows-what out of the burnt out and half destroyed houses in order to have a place to live was because this village had been the first example of ethnic cleansing in the Yugoslav war and this had been the result. It was very clear that things were different here than in the north. Small arms fire and artillery were commonly heard echoing off the mountains and the destruction here was total. We in 8 Platoon settled down to a routine of local security and some OP tasks around the nearby, destroyed Peruca hydro-electric dam. Once stable in Kijevo (we called it "Bedrock" for it's perceived similarity to the town of Fred Flinstone) Tony and I went on leave to Scotland.

Our return from leave was marked by a move made in our absence to an old Yugoslavian National Army (JNA) camp near the village of Sveti Rok. We in 8 Platoon were given the task of "home platoon" because we had the "jammy" billet of "The Ranch" up north. We guarded the camp and Company HQ as well as establishing an OP up on a nearby mountaintop. We were deep into this routine when the Croat offensive began. Within a few days we were off



the mountain and in camp preparing for battle. Out came the grenades and the 84. The ammo was broken open and positioned for ready use in the track (Armoured Personnel Carrier). We even had to find our helmets, which had been stored communally in a duffel bag and hidden deep in our section stores. Soon we moved from our comfy billet in the warehouse at Sveti-Rok and were on the way to the front. From the camp, our route took us up Highway 50 and after what was probably about an hour (it seemed much longer) we stopped in a farm yard and adopted all-round defence while the Platoon commander went forward on his recce. After some time waiting we carried on towards a town called Medak where 9 platoon, including four of our Seaforth brothers, had been holed up in the basement of a house they had fortified, under heavy shell fire, for days. 8 pl picked up a Serb guide there and after some follow-up instructions from LCol Calvin, began to wind it's way down a narrow country road that branched off to the South East. We passed dug-in tanks and other signs of front line proximity as we crawled along in search of our position. The road was narrow and winding with what little sign there was of human habitation, destroyed or abandoned. After about 30 minutes we paused amid the ambient sounds and sights of battle. We were there. Although I didn't know at the time, we were at the edge of a little village called Sitnik and life was about to change.



The platoon deployed along the village edge, with the sections occupying positions interspersed between the houses and Serb positions. We dug. We dug by hand just as infantrymen had dug for generations, guarding each other with the machine guns until the section positions were finished. Later in the afternoon, the Engineers showed up and dug run-up positions for the tracks. Though we didn't know it yet, these fortifications would save our lives. My section (2

Section) was dug in, inside a farmyard, with a few shell scrapes and a bigger trench on either side of the track, which was front and centre. Tony's section (1 Section) had a single entrenchment for the

track in a field next to the last of a line of houses and relied on the natural cover afforded by the surrounding ground for other positions. By the late afternoon, our platoon was firm and dug in. No of us knew what the future held. As it turned out, we weren't to wait very long.

The first contact came all along our front simultaneously. Tony had been on the top deck of his track and had seen a section-mate aiming his rifle toward the Croat lines.

"Stop pointing your rifle at them, you'll draw fire", Tony said. "Tony," he said, "we *are* under fire". Tony jumped down into the cupola of the track where the 50cal machine gun was and cocked the weapon then freeing up its mechanism to be able to freely traverse. The Platoon Warrant had come up behind them and amid the cracking and zip of bullets gave Tony the order to fire. Tony opened up with his machine gun at what now had become the enemy and kept firing until he could see no others. Others in the section laid down fire with their personal weapons as the section fought for its lives.



Facing the platoon was a large open field bounded by a thick hedgerow about 100m away. This extended all across our front and was marked near the right flank by three tall poplar-like trees. It was nearer this location that the contact would come for 2 Section.

Once, the Engineers had dug our track in, we began our "routine-in-defence". We began settling in to our new position. We had selected the basement of the house at the back of the farmyard as our "bunker", to shelter from any artillery and some of the section were getting food ready to eat. The Section Commander (Sgt Rod Dearing) was back at the Platoon HQ getting the rest of his orders from the Platoon Commander and I was relaxing with two others behind the barn, out of the way from



any danger. Then they opened up. The farmyard erupted in the unmistakable din of heavy, incoming fire. So loud I couldn't think or hear. The ground began to dance as rounds kicked up clods of earth and tracer tore through the buildings of the farm. After looking at each other, stunned and surprised, for a moment, we all realized what we needed to do and raced up the yard to the back of the track. Under the oppressive weight of enemy fire, we began crawling to our positions. The two I was with made their moves to the shell scrapes that were about 10 m away and I made my way up beside the track to see if I could locate where the fire was coming from. As I got to the front of the track the Rod, who had come running up through the middle of the yard, arrived and pushed past me, lying down in front of the track on the large berm of the run-up. I was about to tell him where everybody was when he opened up with his rifle. I thought to myself "I guess we are getting stuck in then...." and I immediately thought of the machine gun. We had put the platoon's GPMG in the loft of the barn for a good field of fire and it was manned by two of the guys. With the boss on the ground I, as the second in command, should control the supporting fire. It was this thought that I had when I picked up and moved, after considerable difficulty communicating my intention to Rod due to the noise and his attention being focused on shooting the enemy. In order to get to the gun position, one had to climb a ladder that was propped up against a woodpile that was along the side of the barn. After scaling the ladder, one had to crawl along the top of the woodpile, under the lean-to shelter that protected it from the rain and then in, through a hole in the wall of the barn into the

loft. The loft was filled with what I seem to recall being furniture and other clutter and formed somewhat of a maze that only stacked and piled furniture can create. After navigating this obstacle you would arrive at the front of the loft to be greeted by what seemed at the time to be an enormous hole in the wall, through which we had eyes on the ground to our front and the machine gun pointed. I remember taking two or three deep breaths and encouraging to myself to move fast, then pushing off and sprinting for the ladder. The time it took to get to the ladder, up the ladder, along the woodpile and through the hole seemed to be an eternity. I don't recall seeing the effects of any fire during this time (I would later find out about the severity of it from my section mates) but I do remember hearing it all around me as I fumbled like a teenager with a bra strap up that ladder and along that woodpile with my ass pointing straight towards the enemy. Once at the hole, I threw my rifle through it and dove in behind. It was dark inside and it took a second to find my rifle. After doing this I picked myself up and began to get around the maze of furniture. I took only one step before my foot broke the floorboard and I went into the floor up to my crotch. I was taken completely off guard by this and struggled to get up. I did eventually, after a bit of a struggle, only to ram my head, helmeted though it was, into one of the rafters. The helmet was jammed down hard and it felt as though it must have touched my shoulders. Disbelieving my bad luck, I pushed down the loft past the all the junk. I finally arrived at the gun position, falling to the floor right on top of the knob of a door that we had used to reinforce the floor. Yes it hit me there, right *there*, where it counts. It took my breath away and I found it difficult to scramble and look for the binos so I could begin locating the enemy. As I tried to get settled in the loft, Rod called for fire at the three trees at the right flank. I frantically searched for a target for the gun and I looked across our front, back and forth. I couldn't see any. He called again and I had no other answer than to yell back "No target!" After this initial contact I would experience massive guilt for what I perceived to have been the wrong thing to do. We should have opened up with the gun. We should have done something. It was only after during a lull, when we were telling each other what we had seen that Rod had said that as he had called out, 20mm cannon fire from a Croat anti-aircraft gun ripped through the barn wall. It had not hit any of us but it was the feeling of everybody that had we fired, we would have given our exact position away and we would not have survived the afternoon. As quickly as it had begun it was over. It went quiet and we all looked at each other wondering what had just happened. I remember being startled back to reality with a yell of "Ammo-Cas!" and I then setting about my 2ic duties checking for casualties and ammunition status. After that was done. We had a section meeting. The gun needed to come down out of the barn, as it was too vulnerable up there. The barn was now only an OP to be abandoned in a future fight as anybody up there was effectively out of the battle once shooting started. Later into the night we would use a thermal imager up there. Once the admin was done I had only one thought, "Got to find Tony." I cautiously made my way up the track about 100m dashing between the houses and trees towards where his section was. I found him with his section and the relief in each other's eyes that we were still around was obvious. There was only time for the briefest of chinwags before having to head back to my section. He was alive and OK. All good. Unknown to me at the time, Tony had his own version of events,.....



"Myection had done pretty much the same thing that Rob's did... We had our track dug in by the Engineers and we were in the initial stages of our own "routine in defence". I was up on top of the APC when I noticed that a mate of mine, Luc Oulette from The Royal New Brunswick Rerough his

As night fell, we nervously awaited what might happen and we used a 50% stand to policy all night. Half of us could try to sleep and half would be on watch, ready to fight. We were all in our positions should we need to. For the rest of the night, the Croats would engage our position and we stand to and fight back. We got very good at covering our arcs, locating the enemy and shooting fast. It got to a point where we could feel the fight go our way, we could feel our fire winning, beating them down. Faster, heavier, longer, we would beat them back. By the morning we were exhausted. No sleep and fighting all night. The last contact came just after dawn and I remember it as slick as I have ever seen men react. As I traversed back and forth across the hedgerow within my assigned arcs, I could see my tracers ricochet up into the sky as I looked through my rifle sight. The Croats were well hidden in the bush and we searched them out with our fire. We would key in on a muzzleblast or flash and hammer fire into that location until they stopped shooting, then onto the next location, faster, heavier, more. The Croats withdrew that morning, finally, in accordance with a peace plan brokered over the previous day and night and began their well documented ethnic cleansing of the countryside as they did.

Looking back, it is hard to put everything together without the help of others who were nearby. Tony and I are no exception. We have often talked about our experiences and even today after all this time details come out that each other hadn't been aware of. Such is the nature of the experience, I guess.

As we got out of the car and surveyed the ground the pieces started to come together again. The girls stayed in the car for a time to let us explore. We consulted the map and diagrams that we had assembled to guide us, hopefully back to this location. As we punched in off the road and down a track it all came back to me. Ours was the first yard off the road and I nervously stepped forward. It was overgrown but unmistakable. There was the house, the burning garage, the RPG hit on the wall, our bunker, the barn and the lean-to roof there on the ground, the firewood it sheltered long gone.



Pushing forward towards the front of the yard we found the hole where the track was and after further exploration, the trench where we had positioned the GPMG after the first scrap. We found the shell scrapes still in the ground after all these years. I would come back later in the afternoon and search for some other clues to our presence there. After spending some time in our yard we struck out to find Tony's position. The track was quite overgrown and as we stepped through the bush and into the field that same feeling of familiarity came back. Tony pushed off to the west and I

focused on an area closer to the remnants of the house I remembered being there. It was one of the best memories of our trip, being able to call for Tony as he was looking for his former position. The look on his face as he moved with a purpose, back to my location, was subtle but so telling. As he came up close, his eyes were wide and the smile on his face, unbeatable. "Is it here? Did you find it?". "You tell me if you could drive a track in here...." was my answer. I pointed to the huge hole in the ground. It was Tony's run-up and I got the whole thing on video. We went on to explore and tell stories about each other's battles as we picked our way through the bush and abandoned buildings. After we had taken the time to relive this just the two of us we went back and got the girls. We walked them through everything. We pointed out the details that they had heard about in a hundred late night ramblings and drunken slurs. We spent all afternoon there, in that little abandoned village, remembering in story, sight and sometimes just in silence. It was the pinnacle of the trip.

We had started our visit following our tour chronologically starting up north with the long boring days spent patrolling around the countryside. We followed our route to the south and visited all the



areas and villages that figured so prominently in our experiences there. Then at the end, we were there, at the most important location of our tour, that little village. As we got ready to go Tony said to me, "Hey, look what time it is." I must admit that my first thought was that he was making reference to the fact that we had to get going to get back to the hotel in good time but then I realized what he really meant. I hadn't realized but he had. It was twenty years ago *to the hour* that

we had fired the first shots of our battle in the Medak Pocket, to the hour.



When we returned from our trip to Croatia and the battlefield we held a twenty year reunion at the Eagles Club in North Vancouver. It was fantastic to see so many of the Medak Boys in attendance,



When we returned from our trip to Croatia and the battlefield we held a twenty year reunion at the Eagles Club in North Vancouver. It was fantastic to see so many of the Medak Boys in attendance, many who paid their own way from parts of BC and Alberta. We were honoured with the presence of the Regimental Association who presented MCpl Bill Harrington with the title of "Honourary Seaforth". Bill, a Westie, was attached to us Seaforths for the tour. There were a few surprises we had in store for the men at the reunion. Each man was presented with a commemorative Medak patch and a certificate of appreciation from representatives from the Royal United Services Institute. Some key artifacts from Medak were presented and signed by all those in attendance to be displayed in the Regimental Museum. Each member of 8 Platoon that was in attendance received one 7.62 GPMG casing that was fired from our guns during the battle. We had found them still in our trenches 20 years to the day. It was a fantastic night to be in a room of so many great soldiers. It was the culmination of a true experience of a lifetime.

A Medak road sign that just appeared in our flight bag. Now signed and in the museum.



The Regimental Family Salutes these veterans as we also do the same for the members that have come back from Afghanistan. But this firefight in particular because of the lack of recognition for these so called Peace Keepers. To all the members of that action, Seaforth and others, we say thank you.





HCol (retd) John Fraser, CD  
Dining Out



Brig. General Rob Roy MacKenzie inspecting the HCol

**HCol (retd), Hon. John A. Fraser, P.C., O.C., O.B.C., C.D., Q.C., LL.D.**

**On May 31, 2013 the Regt. celebrated the retirement of HCol John Fraser. The night was a tremendous affair that was sponsored by our Patrons and held at the Vancouver Club. As seen by the following pictures, all who attended had a fun night. Col Frasers tenure lasted 14 yrs. and his influence and presence shall be missed.**



The CO trying to explain to his good lady why they are not at Joe Fortes Restaurant





WO Deans trying to explain that this is what  
we do on exercise all the time.

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**His Bio has been included below.**

The Honourable John A. Fraser – John Fraser was born in Yokohama, Japan and raised in Vancouver. He graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1954 and practised law until his election to the House of Commons in 1972. During his 21 years in Parliament, John Fraser served in key positions, including Minister for the Environment and Minister of Fisheries. He was the first person to have been elected Speaker of the House of Commons by his peers, a practice instituted in 1986. In 1994, John Fraser was selected to head the Fraser River Sockeye Public Review Board investigating the salmon fishery. He was subsequently Canada's Ambassador for the Environment, responsible for Canadian follow-up to commitments made at the United Nations Rio Conference on Environment and Development. He has chaired the Minister's Monitoring Committee on Change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces, and currently chairs the Parliamentary Precinct Oversight Advisory Committee. From September 1998, John Fraser chaired the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council, until his appointment in April 2005 to chair the BC Pacific Salmon Forum throughout its mandate which concluded in March 2009. He is a past member of the Advisory Council for the faculty of Graduate Studies at UBC. He is currently a Director of Oceans Network Canada under the aegis of the University of Victoria. He is a Queen's Council, and in 1995 was made an Officer of the Order of Canada and member of the Order of BC. In 1994 he was appointed an honorary Lieutenant Colonel in the Seaforth Highlanders and in 1997 was made an Honorary Colonel. He has also received the Canadian Forces Decoration. In 2002, he received the Vimy Award from the Conference of Defence Associations Institute in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the defence and security of Canada and to the preservation of our democratic values. He was awarded honorary Doctor of Laws degrees for his contributions to environmental causes by Simon Fraser University and St. Lawrence University in 1999 and by the University of British Columbia in 2004.

The Regiment Committee looks forward to his future advice and input.

The Regt wishes HCol Fraser the very best and a long retirement.



## SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS OF CANADA PATRONS CORPS

Since the last issue of Cabar Feigh, the Patrons have attended the annual Officers Mess Christmas dinner and the Ortona dinner convened by the Junior Ranks. In early February, on a snowy Saturday morning, a few brave Patrons met at the Volkes Rifle range for some training with the Battalion. We were given the opportunity to test our marksmanship with the C7 rifle and C9 Gpmg. It gave us a much greater appreciation of skill and dedication our soldiers have in their training regimen.

In early June a number of Patrons have signed up for a day sail generously donated by the RCN and HMCS Calgary or Winnipeg. To show the interest our Patrons have regarding Regimental events, it only took three days for the responses for this day sail to reach our quota of 20 person.

The patrons continue to support the regiment by personally contributing funds needed by the Foundation to support the museum, web site Pipes and Drums and other non-government Regimental requirements. It is only through the generous support of the Patrons that these worthwhile Regimental functions can continue. Once a Patrons has made an initial donation to join the Patrons Corp there is no obligation on his or her part to continue with ongoing support. All subsequent donations are voluntary. For this reason, the executive of the Patrons corps have been working to devise a method to recognize those patrons who have gone beyond the call in their generous support of the Regiment.

At a recent meeting of the Executive Board it was decided to initiate an award, entitled the Bert Hoffmeister Award, which will recognize those special Patrons. We think it is important that all the members of the Seaforth Family are made aware of the significant support given by certain members of the Patrons Corps and to this end the executive is working with the Commanding Officer to determine the best and most appropriate time to present the Bert Hoffmeister awards with the entire battalion present.

We are continuing with our recruiting drive and request that all members of the Seaforth Family determine if any of their friends, associates, parents or children would be interested in joining the Patrons Corps. Without new members the Corps will have a problem of aging and retirements and, as a consequence, the efforts of the Foundation may be seriously curtailed. If you know of anyone interested in becoming a patron please inform the Regimental Headquarters.

Finally, all the Patrons would like to congratulate one of our members and a board member, Anne Giardini, who was appointed Chancellor of Simon Fraser University. We all give her our best wishes in carrying out her duties in this well deserved appointment.

Patrons under the watchful eyes of Battalion members.



This is the Vancouver area. What's with all this snow?





## Association

### **Vimy Dinner a big success**

The Vimy dinner was held on April 5<sup>th</sup> at the Bessborough Armouries of 15<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment Royal Canadian Artillery. The dinner was sold out. The evening carried on long after the wine was gone.

The serving Seaforths who brought guests (wives, girlfriends, bosses, workmates, friends and children) felt they brought them to a well-run representation of a military style dinner, slightly less formal but still formal enough. They appreciated the efforts of all involved in the planning to make it an event they were proud to attend and bring guests to. Small changes to tighten up dinner timings, personal contact with serving Seaforths to get them to attend, and emphasis on bringing a guest were the main planning factors. Vimy Dinner is one of the very few occasions in the Regiment where all three messes can mingle freely and get to know each other. The main speeches, the Toast to the Regiment (WO/PMaj Vern Kennedy) and Toast to Fallen Comrades (WO Rob Deans) were very well done, and heart-felt. Several guests were in their mid-90's and hadn't been to a Vimy Dinner for over 50 years, they were truly in awe of today's serving Seaforth soldiers. The Vimy Guard, with Sgt Pat Farrell as Guard Commander did a magnificent job. Most of the Guard members have done this for many years and look forward to each Vimy Dinner. It was very gratifying and re-assuring that when these Senior NCO's were asked for help their reply was immediate, with "Sir, I know exactly what you want, I've got this, leave it with me". Many guests gave glowing comments about all the serving Seaforths, their drill, dress, deportment, overall professionalism. We can be very proud of each and every one of them.

Thanks to Rick Ciccone and his committee for all their hard work. For those who could not attend this year, this event should be a must in 2015.

### **Bursary Program expands**

We are pleased to announce that there will be a new \$1,000 bursary awarded this fall. The John Conway Seaforth Bursary has been donated by Jill Conway, wife of the late John Conway. A company commander in the Canadian infantry in World War II, Captain Conway was awarded the Military Cross for heroism in Italy. On May 23, 1944, he was leading an assault on a German machine-gun position when one of his men dropped a live hand grenade after being shot. Captain Conway picked up the grenade and hurled it away from his men, but it blew off his right hand. With his pistol in his left hand and a bandage on his right arm, Captain Conway led his men forward until the German gunners had been killed or captured, according to the medal citation. After the war, he became a historian and educator.

who in 18 years at Harvard University befriended many of the students whose curriculum he helped to shape. After leaving Harvard, Dr. Conway held teaching and administrative positions at York University in Toronto. It is very fitting to have this bursary named after a man whose post war career was spent in education.

### **Association sponsoring a Stand Down Family BBQ May 25<sup>th</sup>**

The Battalion stood down with a final range exercise on May 25<sup>th</sup>. The families met the members upon their return to Jericho in the early afternoon with a BBQ. This was a great opportunity for them to join in the celebration ending the first half of the training year.

## **In Memoriam**

Judith Alderson – partner to D. Wotherspoon, Patron

Kenneth H. Clark, WWII

Gordon L. Cook, WWII

Robert W. Foreman, WWII

Dick Herring, Korea

Tommy Hughes, Cadets and Post War

William J. McConnell, Cadets

Bill Worton (Skull), WWII

John Alden, Post War



## Kit Shop

The Kit Shop is ready to serve Association and serving members. The shop is open on the first Wednesday of the month in the Jericho Anderson Room at p.m.

While this is not convenient for most Association members, it is possible to order items off the following list. Please contact Trillian Mitchell [trillian.mitchell@gmail.com](mailto:trillian.mitchell@gmail.com)

### Spring 2014 Price List

#### Clothing

Crests, Blazer (hand embroidered bullion thread)	\$ 30
Hats, Baseball Caps Navy Blue	15
Hats, Fishing	15
Shirt T Wet/Dry Blue (Small to XL)	20
Jacket, Weather Resistant Stormtech (Navy Blue)	40
Ties, Regimental – Polyester	30
Diced Hose	100
Tartan Hose	100

#### Jewellery

Badge, Cap (OR)	15
Badge, Cap 3pc Officers (3D Sterling Silver)	175
Badge, Cap WO/Sgts (3D Sterling Silver)	160
Badge Cap Officers & W/O Sgts (3D)	60
Badge, Lapel Seaforth (Enamelled Blue Shield)	3
Brooch, Ladies (Sterling Silver) Miniature 3D officer's cap badge on tartan rosette	65
Pins, Lapel Canadian Flag	1
Rings, Sterling Silver	75
Tie Tacks, Sterling Silver (Large)	30
Tie Tacks, Sterling Silver (Small)	25

#### Miscellaneous

Book, Regimental History (R.H. Roy - 1919 – 1965)	35
DVD Return to Agira Op Husky 2013	20
Ice Buckets, Drum w/Regt. Battle Honours	50 (reduced)
Car Decals with logo Inside	2
Car Decals with logo Outside	2
Smokey Smith Prints	5
Mugs, Coffee Stainless (silkscreened w/logo)	20



## Cadet Corps



Col Fairweather keeping the future recruits spellbound with his stories about the Battle of Ortona.

By Karen Murphy Corr, Director of Public Affairs, Support Committee, 2277 Langley

West Vancouver resident and decorated Second World War veteran Colonel David Fairweather was a guest of honour Sunday night at a special dinner to honour the memory of Canadian soldiers on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of an epic battle fought along the Adriatic coast of Italy.

Col. Fairweather spoke to more than 350 young people from the six Lower Mainland Seaforth Highlander Cadet Corps gathered at the Cloverdale Legion for a commemorative Ortona Dinner.

"I am utterly astounded at the numbers that are here today, that so many are commemorating the battle we fought," said Col. Fairweather to the teenagers, who listened quietly to his every word. "I had the dubious pleasure to be there that December for the beginning of that battle."

Canadian troops were tasked to secure the Italian village of Ortona, but it was an important German winter defence line held by Hitler's elite paratroopers and the fighting was intense and gruesome. Amidst the brutality, Canadian officers were determined to serve their men a Christmas meal. They scrounged china and put together a menu of soup, roast pork, applesauce, cauliflower, mashed potatoes, gravy, chocolate, oranges, nuts, beer, wine and cigarettes. The soldiers ate in shifts, most in the ruins of Santa Maria di Constantinopoli Church.

Col. Fairweather was a young officer at the Battle of Ortona. He and many of his men had signed up with the Seaforth Highlanders in Vancouver just days after Germany invaded Poland in September 1939. In the Italian conflict, Col. Fairweather said he was put in charge of a Platoon in D Company that was nowhere near the size it should have been.

"We were right down to bare bones and we were the last to enjoy the dinner. At 5 p.m. we had dinner and finished about 7 p.m., but we did not dare go outside because it was impossible to move on the rubble without making a noise so we stayed in the church overnight."

Recreating the event is important for youth, says Major Rob Thompson, Seaforth Area Cadet Instructor Cadre Officer (ACICO): "It involves a whole new generation in continuing to perpetuate a tradition born from a truly amazing moment in the history of our regimental. With fewer and fewer surviving Veterans of Ortona, it's important that our youth take up the torch and remember those who gave so much that all of us may enjoy our Christmas each year in a free and democratic society."

For many Canadian soldiers the Christmas meal would be their last supper, while soldiers from other regiments only got to eat a bit before returning to the fight.

"My grandfather was not able to finish his," Jocelyn DeLorme told the gathered cadets. Her grandfather Jack DeLorme served with the Loyal Edmonton Regiment and the DeLorme family has a long established relationship with the Seaforth cadets in Surrey and Langley. She said her grandfather and some other soldiers were in a bombed out house near the church, just starting to enjoy their plates of food when they came under attack and he was knocked unconscious.

"He woke to a severed foot lying in the middle of his precious Christmas dinner."

After that shock, Private DeLorme resumed fighting. The Canadians were ultimately victorious and the Battle at Ortona gained much media coverage at the time as a significant battle won at huge cost. It saddens his granddaughter that Canadian history books seem to have forgotten this pivotal battle of the Italian campaign, which does not get the same remembrance as the landings at Juno Beach and battle of Dieppe.

Several of the cadet corps has recreated the Ortona Dinner since 2001, but this is the first time the six corps have come together as a single battalion, thanks in large part to the generosity of the Cloverdale Legion donating their entire space. Many volunteers decorated the Legion to look like the ruins of a church and three professional chefs volunteered to prepare the food for several hundred.

The cadets of 2812 Surrey, 2277 Langley, 1867 Delta, 2893 Port Coquitlam, 72<sup>nd</sup> Vancouver and 2963 Sechelt Corps enjoyed the same menu as the Seaforths in 1943, except they got root beer rather than beer or wine and candy sticks instead of cigarettes.

The mood at the meal was festive, but became more sombre when speakers shared stories about the harsh realities of war with the teens. Weaving anecdotes about the battle, tales of heroism and displays of military artefacts by the Canadian Military Education Centre in Chilliwack into the evening program, the dinner became a huge living history lesson.

"I always love historical war stories," said Corporal Cole McCrindle, a grade eight student at Walnut Grove Secondary School and member of the 2277 Corps. "I am really interested to hear about what they have experienced."

Fittingly, there was an empty table set in memory of fallen comrades adjacent to the head table. The night ended with the cadets and their officers singing the same carol the Canadian soldiers sang seven decades ago while an organist played in the ruins of the Italian church and German soldiers listened from nearby tunnels.

A notable difference this December evening when young Canadian Seaforth Highlander cadets joined in the verses of *Silent Night* is that they knew they were going home and not back into the nightmare of battle. However, judging by their faces, they were thinking long and hard about those like Col. Fairweather who served and those who died.



Regt Historian  
Capt (retd) R. MacDonald, CD

### Our Forgotten VC



**Sergeant Robert Gordon McBeath VC**

Every officer and soldier becomes acquainted with the Great Names of the regiment within a few years of service, and anyone with a passing interest in Regimental History uncovers a great many more with little effort. Indeed, with some 400 bravery decorations awarded to the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn alone since 1916 we have a great deal to write about.

One recipient of the Victoria Cross, however, served with our 1<sup>st</sup> Bn for nearly 5 years and then passed almost immediately into obscurity.

Robert Gordon McBeath, VC (22 December 1898 – 9 October 1922) was born in Kinlochbervie, Sutherland. He joined the 1/5th (The Sutherland and Caithness) Battalion Seaforth Highlanders (one of 9 Territorial Battalions of the Seaforth Highlanders) and went with them to France in 1915.



**A carte-de-visite photo taken some time before November 1917 shows him in wartime 'Walking-out dress', as a Lance-Corporal with one good-conduct chevron (2 years clean conduct-sheet) and one wound stripe**

On 20 November 1917 during the Battle of Cambrai in France, 19-year-old Lance-Corporal McBeath volunteered to deal with a nest of machine-guns that checked the advance of his unit and which had caused heavy casualties. He moved off alone, armed with a Lewis gun and a revolver. Finding that several other machine-guns were in action, McBeath attacked them with the assistance of a tank and drove the gunners to ground in a deep dug-out. McBeath rushed in after them, shot the first man who opposed him and then drove the remainder of the garrison out of the dug-out. He captured three officers and 30 men. McBeath's award was published in the London Gazette on 11 January 1918, which reads: *For most conspicuous bravery when with his company in attack and approaching the final objective, a nest of enemy machine-guns in the western outskirts of a village opened fire both on his own unit and on the unit to the right. The advance was checked and heavy casualties resulted.*

*When a Lewis gun was called for to deal with these machine-guns, L/Corpl. McBeath volunteered for the duty, and immediately moved off alone with a Lewis gun and his revolver. He located one of the machine-guns in action, and worked his way towards it,*

*shooting the gunner with his revolver at 20 yards range. Finding several of the hostile machine-guns in action, he, with the assistance of a tank, attacked them and drove the gunners to ground in a deep dugout.*

*L/Corpl. McBeath, regardless of all danger, rushed in after them, shot an enemy who opposed him on the steps, and drove the remainder of the garrison out of the dug-out, capturing three officers and 30 men.*

*There were in all five machine-guns mounted round the dug-out, and by putting them out of action he cleared the way for the advance of both units. The conduct of L/Corpl. McBeath throughout three days of severe fighting was beyond praise.*

L/Cpl McBeath continued to serve with the Seaforth Highlanders until the end of the War. He married soon after the Armistice and then moved to Vancouver. It's possible that he directly transferred to the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada -as was possible, indeed not at all unusual in those times – because by 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1919 he was a Sergeant with the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn when it provided the Guard of Honour for HRH the Prince of Wales on His first visit to Vancouver.



Sergeant McBeath is standing in the front row, centre, between Captain M Reid MC (King's Colour) and Captain (later Brigadier) Lough CBE DSO MC. The mystery here is that although you can see 1 DSO, 3 MCs, 5 DCMs and 'many' MMs in this photo, everyone but McBeath are wearing 'undress' ribbons on their full-dress tunic – and he is wearing his VC with the undress ribbons for the 1914-15 star, BWM and Victory Medals.



Robert McBeath was sworn-in as a Constable in the Vancouver Police Department on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1921.

On October 9, 1922, while walking the beat on Granville and Davie Streets with his partner, Detective R. Quirk, McBeath stopped and arrested a known drug dealer named Fred Deal for impaired driving. While escorting the prisoner to the nearest call-box, the man pulled a handgun from his pocket and shot both officers; MacBeath's partner survived, but McBeath died almost instantly. He was 23 years old, and the first VPD constable to be killed in the line of duty.

Robert McBeath was given what was called at the time "the largest official funeral in Vancouver history." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzCnboIjHs>

His widow returned to Scotland after the funeral, and his medals are held by the Regimental Museum in Fort George.

There is no record of any Regimental presence at his funeral, he is not mentioned in any archival material yet examined and it would seem that his memory only lasted within the Regiment while his peers still served.

Sgt McBeath's time with the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada would still be forgotten had it not for a newspaper article about a local effort to restore Mountain view cemetery

A member of the Regimental association caught the word 'Seaforth' and 'VC' while he was idly flipping through the paper, found the grave, and began laying a wreath annually on 11<sup>th</sup> November.

The Vancouver Police Department hold an annual graveside service on 11<sup>th</sup> November, and in 2013 they kindly invited the Seaforth Highlanders to participate.





## In the Crosshairs

# WHAT IS A VETERAN

For those who consider themselves "unworthy" of the title of Veteran, simply because someone else decided not to order them downrange, I suppose I can understand to some extent. I once felt that way myself. But a Veteran's counselor (a Vietnam Combat Veteran himself) told me that kind of thinking is a holdover from the 'quaint humility' of the 1940s, but is actually a latent form of survivor's guilt, one of many kinds of self-defeating unhealthy thinking. He said we invested a certain amount of our lives for it, trained for it, we sweated for it, endured the hazing and the stress for it, got the cuts, scrapes, bruises and dirt for it, we learned drill, customs, history, and rendered honors for it, we conformed to the military community for it, actually transitioning ourselves from the slacker life to become highly-skilled and qualified members of the military for it, we may have sacrificed holidays and birthdays or watching our children grow up for it, some of us shipped overseas to other duties in other countries for it, we may have gotten ourselves injured, or slightly deafened for it, but just because some officer in a higher pay grade sent others downrange ahead of us, holding us in reserve, doesn't make us any less of a Soldier, Marine, Sailor, Airman, or Coastie. Nor does it makes us any less a VETERAN. I wrote down a direct quote from what he told me, something I thought was so profound then and it still applies today: "Don't demean yourself! Sure, don't claim you did more than you did, because that would be dishonorable. But to deny your honorable service is self-loathing, dishonest and wrong. Anyone who has ever served in real combat, really been shot at or watched buddies die, wishes they hadn't. You wish you were them. They wish they were you. Be a better friend to yourself. You served. Be man enough to own it and be proud of that."

... Bret Whitmore / Veteran