



GARRISON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

London and Region

Connecting

Fall 2020

From the President

We certainly live in interesting times.

Our daily lives have been radically altered to help curb the spread of Covid – 19.

We not only worry about ourselves but also about our families and friends.

However, it is what it is and for the time being we should be doing what we can to maintain our friendships and connections.

Your GCC Executive has considered the use of ZOOM meetings in lieu of in person gatherings. We have had one meeting on Zoom. Although the turnout was less than hoped for we did find the meeting format to be workable and in some regards better than an in-person meeting. You may be asking how a Zoom meeting can be better. At an in-person meeting you may not have the best view of the screen and you may need to stretch and turn to see. Whereas on a Zoom meeting the photos, documents, charts etc. appear right on your computer screen for easy viewing.

On a Zoom meeting everyone can clearly hear the speaker and yes you can ask questions.

It is amazingly easy to connect to a Zoom meeting. All members (called guests on Zoom) receive an invitation to join the meeting. The guest simply clicks on "Join" and Zoom guides you there on. If you have not been on Zoom before, you will be asked

to download the Zoom program. Once on your computer, you are not asked to do that part again.

During our time of no meetings, the Executive has made conscious and deliberate efforts to forward to the membership articles or links to articles that are military related and may be of interest.

The GCC Bursary Programme chaired by Past Pres. Geoff Hutton is moving along and well under way.

For the time being and until **at least** Dec. 31, 2020, all GCC meetings will be by Zoom.

Although we may miss the fellowship of in-person meetings, our primary concern is the safety and health of our members a few of whom by reason of age or medical conditions are viewed as "vulnerable persons".

You can place a few bucks down on a horse race or buy some lottery tickets, but we should not gamble with the welfare of our members.

You will notice that in this edition of the Newsletter, we have an article published by espritdecors which is Canada's only independent monthly defence magazine.

Espritdecors has graciously agreed that the GCC can reproduce articles appearing its magazine.

Our future programs offer a wide range of interesting speakers.

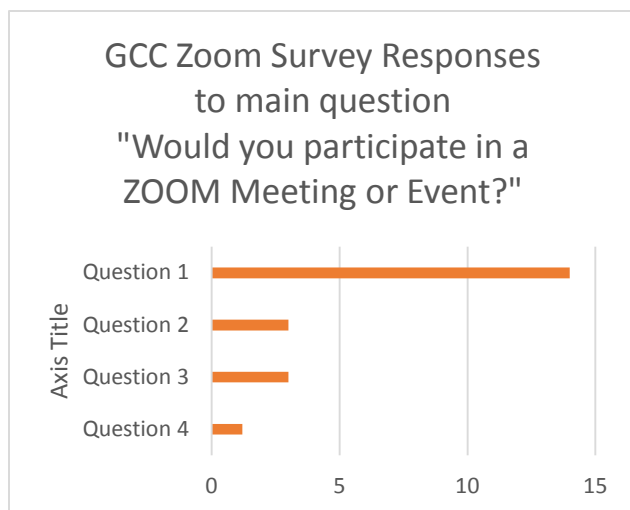
Please join us at our next meeting on Wed. Oct. 14th at 12 noon on Zoom, (We are trying to keep the same schedule that we have had in the past)

If you have any questions about Zoom or the GCC, please feel free to contact me at tomdeangcc@rogers.com or by phone at 519-657-6887.

Survey

We thank those of our members who took the time and made the effort to complete the Survey that went out to the membership.

The survey results are indicated below:



Q1 - Definitely Yes

Q2 - Only if I am interested in the topic

Q3 - No, I have no interest in ZOOM meetings

Q4 - Only if in person meeting is not practical

Answers numerically

Q1 - 14

Q2 - 3

Q3 - 3

Q4 - 1

Total Responses - 21

Of the responses, a majority indicated that they would participate in a ZOOM meeting or event.

Based on the survey results and the analysis of Zoom features and usage, the Exec. has decided to proceed with Zoom meetings.



Canadian Army Looking For New Tactical Assault Vest – Bids Expected This Fall

By David Pugliese

The Canadian Army is looking for a new tactical assault vest/load carriage system as it strives to improve the gear its soldiers are issued.

A Request for Proposals is expected to be issued to industry sometime in the fall, Army officials told Esprit de Corps.

The current tactical assault vest was originally designed based on the Canadian Armed Forces' experiences in the Balkans in the 1990s. That design assumed soldiers would carry minimal equipment in a standardized fashion, but it is common knowledge that the current vest is not well liked by

troops, who – in response - often purchase their own such kit.

LCol Ray Corby, who served as Director of Soldier Systems for the Canadian Army's Directorate of Land Requirements before leaving the post in July, readily acknowledged the current vest is no longer sufficient to meet soldiers' needs. In fact, surveys conducted by Defence Research and Develop Canada show that the tactical vest is at the top of the list of equipment that soldiers would like to see replaced, Army officials point out. Most soldiers cite the lack of modularity with the current vest as the main cause of their complaints.

The Requests for Proposals for the new load carriage system will be specifically written in a way to encourage creativity on behalf of industry, according to Canadian Army officials. The bid package will outline what soldiers need to do, what they carry and where they operate, as well as provide industry with flexibility to determine how those roles can be accomplished by a new system. Delivery of the new equipment is expected to begin in 2022.

Corby noted that small amounts of equipment could be purchased at first, with modifications made later. "We want to prove that we as an Army can quickly and efficiently trial and select equipment so that going forward we can capitalize on industry's advances," he explained. "We are not looking for a 20 to 30-year solution. We want a bit of the best every five years or so for those who need to retain the advantage on the battlefield."

Selection trials of new load carriage systems are currently scheduled for next summer, which will see industry prototypes evaluated by a cross-section of soldiers from a range of Canadian Army trades. The goal is a modular system that will give soldiers more flexibility to configure their equipment according to occupation and body type, Army officials say. Besides modularity, the other major factor to consider is that of "burden management", a reference to the weight of

all the combined equipment a soldier needs to carry. Too much weight has the unintended effect of slowing soldiers down.

The Canadian Army, however, has yet to announce the results of its testing of a new camouflage pattern. In September 2019, trials began of a new prototype disruptive pattern involving troops with 2nd Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group in Peta-wawa, with the soldiers mostly belonging to the 3rd Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment. The majority of soldiers wore a pattern called "Prototype J."

The trial lasted approximately six months and ended in February 2020 and produced a wealth of useful data, according to the Canadian Army. In addition, members of the Battalion continue to wear Prototype J.

The troops involved in the Prototype J camouflage tests were issued with uniforms, a soft field cap, helmet covers, and fragmentation vest covers.

Some of the tests used uninhabited aerial vehicles to determine the extent the new pattern can be seen from such drones.

The Army has stated that a final decision on the new camouflage is expected no later than 2022. A full roll out of a new camouflage uniform would take place in 2027.

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CONGRATULATIONS!



HMCS Prevost and the GCC would like to congratulate Sean Batte, MSc, DC, CD for his most recent promotion to Captain (Navy), and for his appointment as Central Region Captain, effective 1 July 2020. Capt (N) Batte joined the Naval Reserve at HMCS Prevost in January 1990 as a Maritime Surface Officer. Since that time, he has earned several accolades, including his Bridge Watch-keeping Certificate, his Mine Countermeasures, and his Patrol Craft Training Officer In Charge designation, the fourth part time reservist to do so. Capt(N) Batte has been the captain of several vessels, and has taught at Naval Officer Training Centre VENTURE, and Canadian Forces Fleet School Quebec. Prior to completing his Command Part One in 2011, Capt(N) Batte served as Executive Officer (XO) in HMCS PREVOST and then at sea as XO of two MCDVs. More recently he graduated from the Canadian Forces College Joint Staff and Command Program and served as Commanding Officer of HMCS PREVOST from 2014-2017.

Concurrently with his Naval Service, he earned four degrees, culminating with a Master's in Medical Biophysics at Western University and a Doctor of Chiropractic in St. Louis. Dr. Batte opened his own clinic in

2001. Dr. Batte volunteers at London's Salvation Army Centre of Hope clinic. He is married to Lt(N) Becky Haydon-Batte and welcomed their daughter Modena to their home in May of 2014.

Capt(N) Batte has been a supporter and friend of the GCC since his time as the Commanding Officer of HMCS Prevost. We celebrate with him.

GCC Dues (Sec. Randy Harden)

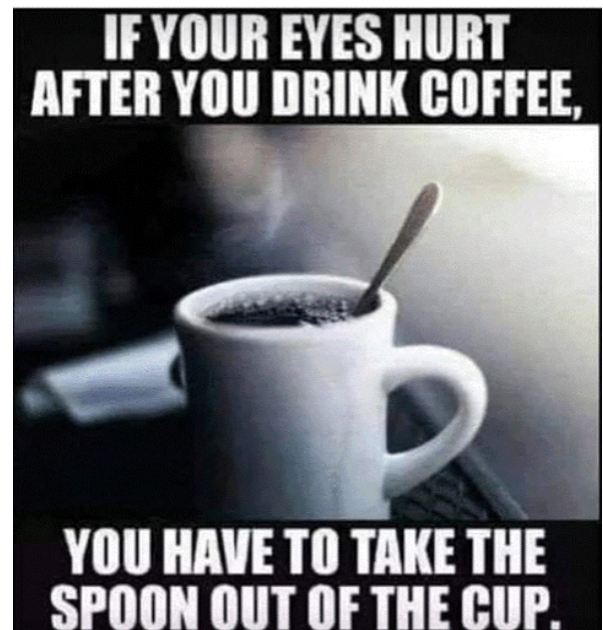
Garrison Community Council records indicate that some 2020 membership dues are still in arrears. Support of the GCC is important now more than ever. Of particular concern is our ongoing Student Bursary program. The Executive appreciates your support in these difficult times. Although Wolseley Barracks is closed to civilians, cheques made out to the Garrison Community Council can still be forwarded to:

Garrison Community Council London and Region

c/o 31 CBG, HQ, Wolseley Barracks

701 Oxford Street East

London, ON N5Y 4T





Combat engineers (The Elgins) adapt to COVID-19 environment

By **Lieutenant (Navy) Andrew McLaughlin**,
31 Canadian Brigade Group

London, Ontario — Members of 31 Combat Engineer Regiment (31 CER) have overcome limits imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic by running virtual exercises.

Combining hands-on training with physical distancing, Exercise CYBORG SAPPER allowed a group of combat engineers, or “sappers,” from 31 CER, to fulfill Individual Battle Task Standard (IBTS) and mandatory training requirements.

It included both theoretical and practical elements, including Non-Standard Bridge (NSB) parts and construction methods.

“The basis of the exercise was to allow hands-on, distance learning for our sappers who have not yet built a real NSB,” said Master Warrant Officer Arthur Churcher, Squadron Sergeant Major of 7 Engineer Squadron. “The model kits seen in the pictures were produced from materials on hand at the garrison by members of the regiment. The kits were distributed to the sappers with contactless delivery, so that there would be minimal contact between members.”

The sappers constructed the bridges at home after classroom lectures delivered through WebEx, a digital platform used by

the Canadian Armed Forces for distance learning.

Participants also studied and applied the Sheffield Method for destruction of bridges using explosives.

“When the after-action review was conducted, the soldiers were ecstatic with the fact that they were able to continue hands-on training,” MWO Churcher explained. “The following day, sappers had a quick refresher on demolitions to include charge preparation, firing circuits, and an introductory class on the Sheffield Method.”

The Sheffield Method is used to destroy bridges using the most economical methods, and participants prepared their bridges for simulated explosive charges, laid out their firing circuits, and submitted pictures by email for review.

31 CER is an Army Reserve unit of 31 Canadian Brigade Group and consists of two Ontario squadrons: 7 Engineer Squadron in St. Thomas and 48 Engineer Squadron in Waterloo.

The Elgins have deployed to places like Iraq and Ukraine and sent personnel and equipment to aid Canadian communities during natural disasters. Combat engineers’ unique skills are critical to operations like the 2019 flood relief efforts in the Ottawa region, where the regiment rapidly deployed sappers and various pieces of heavy equipment.

Staying ready for these missions isn’t always easy for an Army Reserve unit, but especially so during a pandemic.

“Bridging is critical annual Engineer Battle Task training,” said MWO Churcher, “and this situation demonstrated that we needed to adapt to ensure readiness.”

Adapting isn’t new for the sappers of 31 CER, he added.

"In previous years, 31 CER has quickly produced plans to load and move mobile bridges on our trucks. We've also conducted actual bridge builds in various locations."

The myriad challenges that arose during CYBORG SAPPER provided valuable lessons-learned for the next time distance learning is required, as issues related to the use of available technology were reported and reviewed.

The unique exercise demonstrated these combat engineers' perseverance and adaptability; traits often associated with the sapper ethos.

"The objective for the exercise was to complete mandatory briefings, learn how to build an NSB and simulate blowing it up," said MWO Churcher. "All of these objectives were achieved, while our sappers had a little fun along the way."

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GCC Bursary

Despite COVID-19 the GCC 2020 Bursary Programme has been developing since March. We are fortunate again to be supported by General Dynamics Land Systems. The Bursary Programme is open to all Reservists of HMCS Prevost and the units of 31 Canadian Brigade Group. Notices for the Bursary Programme were prepared and distributed at the beginning of September and sent to all units for posting in unit lines. The programme is receiving strong support from all levels of leadership. The Bursary Applications are **due by 23 October** with Bursary Awards winner being declared on 3 November.

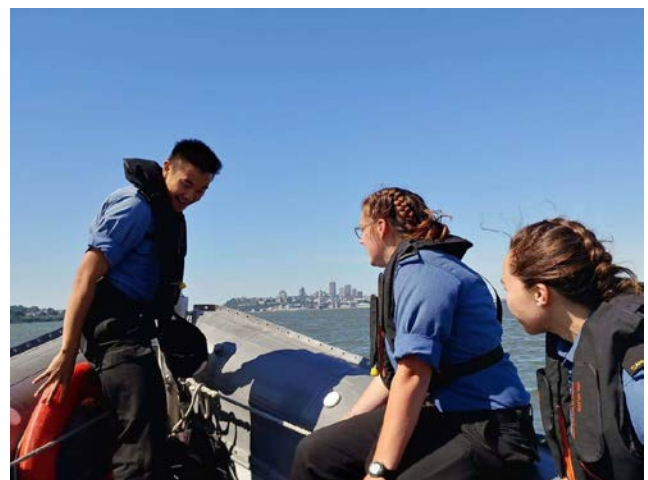
This summer, as they did in Spring of 2019, the Reservists of London and Region have demonstrated the contribution that they can make to the well-being of our Country. The Garrison Community Council takes great pride in offering the Bursary Programme as a tangible demonstration that the GCC and the Community value the dedication and commitment of our Reservists.

Primary Reserve members serving in the following local Units and noted locations are eligible for a GCC Bursary:

**1st Hussars [London, Sarnia]
31 Combat Engineer Regiment (The Elgin's) [St. Thomas, Waterloo]
31 Signal Regiment [London]
4th Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment [London, Stratford]
31 Service Battalion [London, Windsor, Hamilton]
31 Military Police [London]
31 Canadian Brigade Group HQ
HMCS Prevost**

Encourage a reservist to apply.

HMCS Prevost



HMCS PREVOST and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Bringing Stability in a Time of Uncertainty

**By PO2 Emely Melendez Rodriguez, PA
2I/C, HMCS PREVOST**

The COVID-19 Pandemic has been life-changing to say the least. This is nowhere more true than at HMCS PREVOST, where the normal routine of parading on Mondays and Wednesdays suddenly stopped in favour of sheltering in place orders and finding ways to connect with our shipmates remotely.

But with the sudden change also came a reminder that every sailor joined the navy not just for a chance to travel the world and have adventures, but also to bring about positive change through any challenge that is presented to them. In this this case, this meant several members of PREVOST putting themselves in front of a deadly pandemic that at the time of writing, has infected 29.7 million and killed 937,000. Through OPERATION LASER, the CAF's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 20 sailors from PREVOST answered the call to service and prepared themselves to enter several Long-Term Care homes.



The challenge for these sailors was different than any other challenge that has even been given to them: stay home, stay safe, stay healthy, and be ready to deploy to wherever Canada needs you. For the sailors of PREVOST, participation in OP LASER did not ultimately result in their deployment to Long-Term Care Homes, but it did require each member to remotely integrate into a Local Response Forces (LRF). The LRF refers to unit-level organizations across the Canadian Armed Forces that are not yet tasked as part of Operation LASER Task Forces but may contribute to community-level activities as municipalities continue to deal with the spread of COVID-19. Through these LRFs, each sailor was to remain in constant contact with their leadership and remain ready to help their local community.

While these orders may not seem to have been familiar or traditional, it does remind of us of one thing: the challenges a modern military faces are hardly ever the ones we expect, and it truly underscores the need to have a force that is constantly ready, endlessly adaptable, and always willing to stand up for Canada no matter what the circumstance.

Finances – Treasurer John Martin

As the programs and meetings have been scaled back due to covid-19, the expenses have been less than was budgeted for in the beginning of the year.

Most of our members have paid the annual dues. Some of the planned expenditures for updated computer equipment have also been deferred. The organization is in good shape financially.

Copy of financial information available to members upon request.

Vice President's Report – Mike Leatham

I would like to thank all members and the new members for their continuing support of the GCC.

I look forward to seeing you in the near future as this pandemic subsides and we can once again hold in person meetings.

Please stay safe.

**Next Meeting – Wed. Oct. 14
at 12:00 noon via Zoom**



Guest Presenter – Lt(N) Andrew McLaughlin, Public Affairs Officer, 31 Canadian Brigade Group with an update on the Brigade.

Andrew is well known to the GCC and as shown in the photo has helped us out in several areas.

We are pleased to Zoom with Andrew.

An invitation to join the meeting will be forwarded to all members by email.

Keep an eye out for your invitation.

Future Meeting Dates

Wed. Nov. 4 (a week earlier than usual to avoid any conflicts with Remembrance Day)

Speaker is **Assoc. Prof. Graham Broad** from Kings University College. Topic is “On the Home Front” during World War II.

Dr. Graham Broad has been a member of the department of history at King's since 2009. He is a scholar in the field of war and society studies and the author of *A Small Price to Pay: Consumer Culture on the Canadian Home Front 1939-1945* (UBC Press, 2013, shortlisted for the CP Stacey Award) and *One in a Thousand: the Life and Death of Captain Eddie McKay Royal Flying Corps* (University of Toronto Press, 2017). He has served as a guide for the Canadian Battlefields Foundation in Belgium and France.



Wed. Dec. 20
A Christmas and New Years with the GCC.



Vice – President Mike Leatham

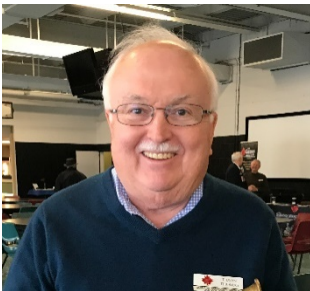


Secretary Randy Harden



Your GCC Executive
(In case you forgot what they look like!)

Pres. Tom Dean



Treasurer John Martin



Past Pres. Geoff Hutton

