

Spring 2024

From the desk of the President

Spring is always a busy time. It is a time of new growth and vitality.

The GCC Membership drive, “One a Month” is well underway. Although the program goes until Feb. 1, 2025, the special bonus incentive (one bottle of Scotch to whomever brings in the most new members by June 30 – no ties allowed) provided by GCC member and Former Mayor of the City of London, Ed Holder, will end on June 30th, 2024.

The GCC needs new members. Our membership has decreased significantly since before COVID. Membership is each member’s responsibility. Do you part to grow and strengthen the GCC. The secret of getting a new member is to ASK SOMEONE! Contact one new prospect each month and share why you are a member. Guests are always welcome at our meetings.

The Executive is pleased to welcome to the Executive, member Grant Hopcroft, as the new VP Programming. Grant is well known in London and Region. In September, Grant will take over the programming responsibilities from our immediate Past Pres. Geoff Hutton. Geoff will remain on the Executive.

The GCC Executive has tried various formats for our General Meetings. Some problems were encountered with the last Hybrid Meeting, and we are attempting to correct the problems. Sec. Randy would welcome some help in this regard. If you can help, let Randy know.

The GCC no longer has any corporate support for the GCC Bursary Program. There are a few thousand dollars still available in the GCC budget for this year. The Executive will look at available options. If you know of a corporation or individual who might be prepared to become a sponsor of the GCC Bursary Program, please let me know. If you have any ideas on how to generate Bursary Funds, let me know. Over the years, the GCC Bursary Program has assisted many Reservists in post secondary education. The Bursary funds have been much appreciated by the Bursary recipients.

I am pleased to welcome Henry Klausnitzer as our newest member of the GCC. Henry is employed by the City of London in Emergency Management.

During the summer months you may wish to go and see one or more of the military sites in the London Region. Look at the GCC website under Military Museums for a list of some of the sites of interest.

If you are interested in some military summer reading, you may wish to pick up the recent book by Romeo Dallaire, “The Peace – A warrior’s Journey”. It will make you think.

Local Reservists Head North for Arctic Training



Members from 31 Canadian Brigade Group conducting winter operations to prepare for Exercise GLACIAL Arrowhead. (Credit: 31 Canadian Brigade Group Public Affairs)

Canadian Army Reserve personnel from 31 Canadian Brigade Group are deploying to the town of Moosonee and surrounding area to train for arctic operations in support of Canadians, March 8 to 17, 2024.

Soldiers of 31 Canadian Brigade Group are tasked with providing support to the arctic and sub arctic regions. The challenges faced in dealing with these climates demands special training and in March will see these soldiers deploying to gain this training.

Soldiers from 31 Canadian Brigade Group, Michigan National Guard, and Latvia are taking part in military arctic training in Moosonee, Moose Factory, Fort Albany, Kashechewan, and the coast of James Bay and Hannah Bay from March 8 to 17, 2024. This training exercise will allow our soldier to gain the experience needed to support the Canadian arctic regions, as well as giving us the opportunity to work with our NATO allies.

Continued on page 2

Local Reservists Head North for Arctic Training

Continued from page 1



Quote

“Training of this nature is critical to our preparations for operations in arctic and sub-arctic environments. The collaboration between 31, 32, and 33 Canadian Brigade Groups demonstrates the 4th Canadian Division’s ability to force generate personnel across the province. The remoteness of Canada’s North, vast distances, and limited infrastructure, requires preparation should the

Canadian Armed Forces be called upon to support Canadians in the North.

31 CBG will be responsible for the High Readiness Arctic Response Company Group (ARCG). The ARCG is mandated to conduct sovereignty operations, humanitarian aid, disaster relief, support ground-based search and rescue, major air or maritime disaster support, and generic support when requested. These operations involve deployment for the ARCG on short notice. Sometime with a notice of only 4 days and for reservists who have civilian employment, or are students, having this training means the difference between life and death sometimes for those we are going to help, as well as ourselves.”

LtCol Carlo C. Tittarelli, Exercise Director GLACIAL Arrowhead

Quick Facts

- Soldiers will be taking part in a sovereignty operation and will be interacting with the general population on a voluntary basis.
- These soldiers have been mandated to respond on very short notice (4 days) to disasters in Canada’s Far North to support civilian authorities and to secure Arctic sovereignty and defence.
- While the Exercise is primarily comprised of 31 CBG, 32 CBG and 33 CBG will be supplying soldiers as well.
- The Canadian Rangers will be integrated with the soldiers conducting the training and will be assisting.
- Canadian soldiers develop their skills during exercises like this, which are simulated operations to better acclimate to conditions that would be found if deployed.

Lt Paul Verheyne
Public Affairs Officer
31 Canadian Brigade Group

2024 GCC Executive

President	Tom Dean
Past President	Geoff Hutton
Vice President	Mike Leatham
VP Communications	Kevin Patterson
VP Bursaries	Dr. Phil Dean
VP Special Projects	Eric Thomson
VP Programming	Grant Hopcroft
Secretary	Randy Harden
Treasurer	John Martin

Newsletter Contents

From the desk of the President	Page 1
Local Reservists Head North for Arctic Training	Pages 1-2
RCAF 100 Anniversary	Page 3
100th Anniversary Royal Canadian Air Force Airshow Events	Page 4
GCC May General Meeting	Pages 5-6
On Target: The Canadian Armed Forces Disappearing Act	Pages 7-8
GCC April General Meeting	Pages 8-9
Reservists enhance Ukrainian soldiers’ survivability	Page 10
Breakout From Juno	Pages 12-15
GCC March General Meeting	Pages 16-18

Connections Editors

Kevin Patterson - VP Communications
Tom Dean - President and Editorial Consultant
GCC Screenshots courtesy of Gary Nash, Jim Swan and Jim Dean.



GCC’s Mission to build a greater understanding, support and appreciation of Canada’s military.

Our three fundamental tenets are
Support, Assist and Connect.



Statement by Minister Blair and Minister Petitpas Taylor on the 100th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force

The Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Bill Blair, and the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, issued the following statement:

“Today, we celebrate 100 years since the founding of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in 1924. This milestone anniversary is an opportunity to highlight the RCAF’s outstanding work in defending Canada’s sovereignty and contributing to global peace and security.

“Members of the RCAF have served in harsh and challenging conditions during some of Canada’s most pivotal moments. RCAF members made enormous sacrifices to defend democracy during the Second World War. Following the conflict, they again deployed overseas to support United Nations forces fighting in Korea, and to protect our NATO allies during the Cold War.

“For decades, Canadian aviators have helped protect North America through the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD). More recently, on expeditionary operations in the conflict in the Gulf, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq, our air force worked alongside our allies to actively defend peace and security around the world. Our aviators also contributed to peacekeeping efforts in places like the Middle East, Central America, East Timor, Haiti, South Sudan and Mali.

“In the past few years, RCAF members have been hard at work to deliver approximately 16 million pounds of Ukraine-bound military aid. They have been there to assist Canadians during natural disasters here at home and during international crises, all while carrying out their Search and Rescue role to help people in need.

“None of this work would happen without thousands of dedicated Canadians who make the RCAF’s missions possible. We thank and express our deepest admiration to all those who support missions in Canada and around the

world: the engineers, avionics technicians, intelligence operators, control tower officers, chaplains, cooks, image techs and other service members, as well as the civilian staff working behind the scenes to support their efforts.

“Our Air Force has a proud history, and we are confident that it will also have a bright future. To ensure Canada’s ability to defend itself from new and emerging threats, we are making historic investments in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Over the last few years, we have invested approximately \$44 billion and signed agreements for approximately 140 new or refurbished aircraft for the RCAF. This includes new fleets of F-35 fighter jets, P-8A Poseidon multi-mission aircraft, Remotely Piloted Aircraft, Strategic Tanker Transport Aircraft, and more.

“In addition, in June 2022, we announced a generational investment of \$38.6 billion to modernize NORAD. This is the most significant upgrade to Canada’s NORAD capabilities in almost four decades and will enhance our ability to detect threats and better position us to protect North America.

“Today, we offer our sincere congratulations to all current and former RCAF members on this historic milestone. To RCAF members past and present: thank you for your commitment to keeping Canada safe and to global peace and security.

“The legacy of the RCAF, the collective spirit of its people, and its bright future demonstrate that the RCAF remains strong and ready to adapt to modern challenges.”

“Sic itur ad astra.”



Image from Canadian Warplane Heritage -Lockheed CF-104D Starfighter.

100th Anniversary Royal Canadian Air Force Airshow Events

Below are listed some of the airshows events celebrating the RCAF 100th Anniversary.

May 18, 2024 - **Comox Armed Forces Day**

June 15-16, 2024 - **Barrie Air Show**

June 19, 2024 - **North Bay Armed Forces Day**

June 22-23, 2024 - **Bagotville International Air Show**

June 29-30, 2024 - **Quinte International Air Show**

July 1, 2024 - **Canada Day Mass Flypast over Ottawa**

July 6-7, 2024 - **Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum**

July 13-14, 2024 - **Yellowknife Air Show**

July 20-21, 2024 - **Cold Lake Air Show**

August 3-4, 2024 - **Manitoba Air Show**

August 9-11, 2024 - **Abbotsford International Air Show**

August 17-18, 2024 - **Alberta International Air Show**

August 24-25, 2024 - **Air Show Atlantic (Nova Scotia)**

August 31 – Sept. 2, 2024

Canadian International Air Show Toronto

September 7-8, 2024 - **AERO Gatineau-Ottawa**

September 14-15, 2024 - **London Airshow**

September 21-22, 2024 - **Volaria Aeronautical Festival**



CWH's Avro Lancaster will appear at a number of the air shows.



Canadian Warplane's Grumman Avenger AS 3 and PBY-5A Canoe will also take part in some shows.

Every Member should be a GCCPP

(Garrison Community Council Project Person)



Who Can Participate in the GCC? All Of Us!

The Garrison Community Council is open to any individual, or organization representative wishing to participate in any activity to raise awareness of and support for the local military community - past and present.

GCC May General Meeting



Our Speaker for the GCC's May AGM Meeting
Aaron Rozentals, P.Eng,
Division Manager of Water Engineering
City of London

Aaron is responsible for managing the drinking water assets of the City of London including infrastructure renewal, development review, billing, conservation, and outreach. Aaron is a graduate of Western University in Civil Engineering and has worked for the City of London in various capacities since 2007. He lives in London with his wife and three children.



Regional Water Supply



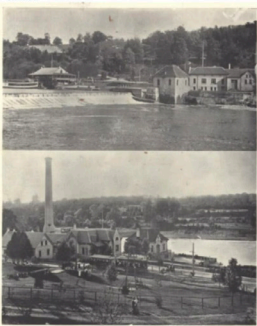
Capacity: 340 million litres per day



Capacity: 91 million litres per day



Our Water System - History



Project Highlights

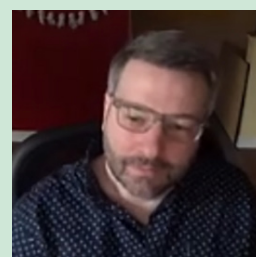
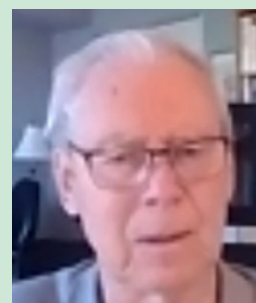
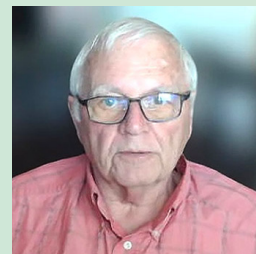
2024 Springbank # 2 Reservoir
Reconstruction and Expansion

90 ML Floating Storage Reservoir



Project Highlights

2021 Chamber 13 Reconstruction



Continued on Page 6

GCC May General Meeting *Continued from Page 5*



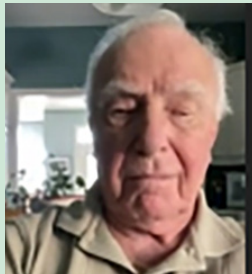
Water as a Human Right – Conservation and Support

- Leak Allowance Program
- Customer water efficiency audits
- Troubleshooting leaks



Outreach and Education

Developed material and programs to educate public on water quality, stewardship, and leak prevention. Including: media sponsorship (Budweiser Gardens), in-home leak and water usage monitoring program, teaching toolkit for educators, and programming at Storybook Gardens



LCdr Barrette, from HMCS Prevost, joined us on Zoom from a Canadian ship at sea off the west coast of Canada.





ON TARGET: THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES DISAPPEARING ACT

May 6, 2024
By Scott Taylor

It would seem that the senior leadership of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) continues to whistle past the graveyard as it becomes clearly evident that the personnel shortfall has begun crippling Canada's military operational readiness.

A recent CBC headline noted *"Changes to training forced by budget cuts could leave military less ready for a fight, experts warn"*. The CBC story noted that drastic internal DND budget cuts have led to the cancellation of a qualifying exercise for combat troops headed to Canada's forward deployed battle group in Latvia.

The 'expert' sounding the alarm bell on this development is none other than Lt-Gen (ret'd) Andrew Leslie, a former Army Commander.

Since Canadian battle groups began deploying to Latvia in 2017 as part of NATO's Operation REASSURANCE, the final phase of their training was conducted at CFB Wainwright. These qualifying exercises were combined-arms training wherein soldiers would coordinate infantry, tanks, artillery and aircraft.

Without that level of training Leslie fears that Canadian soldiers are now "going to have to learn on the job, using other people's equipment and expertise".

The explanation given to the CBC by Chief of the Defence Staff General Wayne Eyre was that these qualifying exercises were cut to allow the soldiers deploying to spend more time with their families. "What we're finding was the battle groups, the various units that we're deploying, were spending a lot of time on exercise here at home to get to a very high level,

and then going to Latvia and doing much of the same work." So in other words 'not to worry folks, no need to study for the exam, we'll pick it up during the test itself'.

The problem with Eyre's comments is that he knows his former Army Commander, Lt-Gen Leslie is correct.

The cracks in the CAF's operational readiness are not limited to just the Army. The RCAF has recently announced that they are grounding their aging fleet of jet trainers (which are actually newer than Canada's CF-18 frontline fighters) and farming out pilot training to allied nations.

The current shortfall of trained pilots has resulted in the cancellation of international deployments in support of NATO objectives.

The commander of the Royal Canadian Navy, Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee issued an unprecedented video message last year wherein he admitted that due to personnel shortcomings the RCN will not be able to fulfill its operational objectives through the foreseeable future. It was a brave admission, but definitely one which resonated with Topshee's sailors.

As an Ottawa resident I must admit that I was surprised to learn that the Ceremonial Guard will not be performing the Changing of the Guard ceremony on the lawn in front of Parliament Hill again this summer. The band will still make a daily appearance and there is a much reduced guard changing ceremony performed at Rideau Hall.

However that long standing martial spectacle has been suspended. It was halted first in 2020 due to Covid-19 but now it is due to a shortage of personnel in the two Reserve regiments that constitute the Ceremonial Guard - The Governor General's Foot Guards and the Canadian Grenadier Guards.

Continued on page 8

THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES DISAPPEARING ACT

Continued from page 7

Not everyone realizes that the Scarlet coated guardsmen with their towering bearskin hats were actually serving members of Canada's militia. They are combat capable soldiers who have often deployed abroad alongside our regular forces. In order to keep the tourist friendly event a fixture in Ottawa, the Changing of the Guard ceremony may need to become a privately owned re-enactor enterprise in the future.

Now before the Colonel Blimps begin heartily thumping on their tubs at the loss of another tradition, there are many examples where this is indeed the case. At the Citadel in Halifax the 78th Highlanders perform drill and musket demonstrations and at Fort Henry in Kingston Ontario, it is a foundation that funds the re-enactors each summer. They have no formal connection to the CAF.

Perhaps it is also time to do something similar with the RCAF's demonstration squadron known as the 'Snowbirds'. The aged out Tutor planes which the Snowbirds use are overdue for retirement and it seems unlikely that any government of the day will spend the billions of dollars necessary to buy a new fleet of show planes. Particularly when skilled pilots are in such scarce supply.



espritdecorps
CANADIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

GCC April General Meeting



Master Sailor Dustin Hare
Divisional Petty Officer,
HMCS Prevost

Master Sailor Dustin Hare attended Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology studying General Carpentry, obtaining his Red Seal qualification in 2013. He enrolled in the Naval Reserve at HMCS Prevost, London Ontario in 2018. Completing his trade training and he graduated as an Operator in 2021. He currently serves as a Divisional Petty Officer at HMCS Prevost. MS Hare has delivered historical briefs for the RCN and is active in researching the history record of the RN/RCN in southwestern Ontario. MS Hare is currently employed as a Carpenters' Union Business Representative, representing workers in labour relations. He actively works with Helmet's to Hardhats, supporting veterans in the workplace. MS Hare spends his free time volunteering with the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, having participated in multiple maritime search and rescue taskings on the Great Lakes.

Topic: The Fairmile B Motor Launch vessels contribution to Canadian Coastal Defense, and their Navy Reserve Crews. The Fairmile B vessels played a significant role in anti-submarine warfare and sea denial.

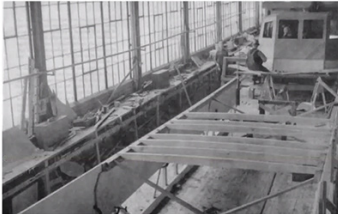


Continued on page 9

GCC April General Meeting *Continued from page 8*

Canadian Manufacturers

- Ontario Fairmile Association
- Vancouver Shipbuilding Co., Vancouver, British Columbia
- A.C. Benson, Vancouver, British Columbia
- Star Shipyards Co., New Westminster, British Columbia

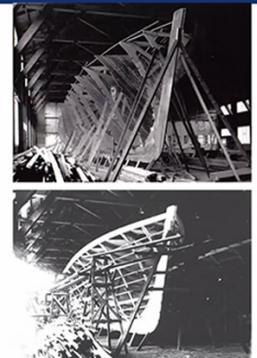


UNCLASSIFIED



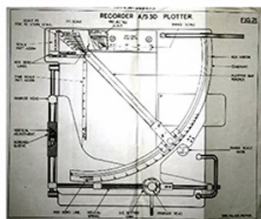
Engineering

- Length - 112'
- Displacement - 100 tons
- Beam - 18'
- Draught - 4'10"-5'2"
- Speed - 24 Knots
- Range - 400-1000 miles
- Fuel - 2,320 Imp Gal



Equipment

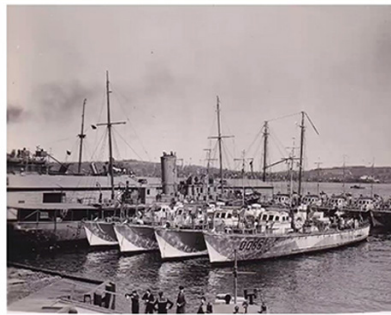
- ASDIC Type 134 A, C, D
- Radio Systems



Armament - Y-Gun Mk III



Operations



U-889 Surrender

- 13 MAY 1945, Shelbourne, NS
- ML Q117



Conclusion



Reservists enhance Ukrainian soldiers' survivability



CAPTION: An Australian Army soldier delivers a Platoon and Company Sergeants Battle Course lesson to Armed Forces of Ukraine personnel in the United Kingdom during March for Operation Kudu. (Image has been digitally altered for security purposes.) Story by Lieutenant Carolyn Martin. Photos by Corporal Nicole Dorrett.

Four Australian Army Reserves engineers have deployed with the first rotation of Australian Army soldiers delivering leadership training courses to Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) soldiers in England.

Reserve soldiers also make up the majority of the 20-strong Finnish Army contingent who are partnering with the Australians in delivering the leadership training.

Commanding Officer of the Finnish contingent Captain Visa Saaristo believed it was the first time Finnish and Australian Army soldiers were working together in significant numbers.

"We have seven regular soldiers and 13 reservists in our team," Captain Saaristo said.

The Finnish soldiers are divided among the teams and work hand in hand with the Australians to deliver the leadership training.

The training is part of the UK-led multinational mission, Operation INTERFLEX to provide military skills training to the AFU.

"It was a small surprise how similar we are, our instructor skills, orders, weapon

handling, everything is quite similar," Captain Saaristo said.

He said the Finns had enjoyed getting to know the Australians and constant engagement between the two teams meant training had gone smoothly. They were both, at the end of the day, working to the same outcome.

"Our aim of the mission is to increase the skills of the Ukrainian soldiers," Captain Saaristo said.

An Australian Army Reserve combat engineer from Adelaide's 9th Brigade (names and ranks are being withheld to protect identities) said he had jumped at the opportunity to be part of the mission.

"We don't get these chances very often, especially in reserve time. I'm happy to be here and contribute what I can," the combat engineer said.

A firefighter in his civilian job, the combat engineer said his role on Operation Kudu (Australia's contribution to the UK-led multinational mission) was to deliver additional coaching in counter-explosive ordinance in relation to mines, booby traps and improvised explosive devices.

He and the other engineers had been pooling their resources and skills to add useful training segments to the course as necessary.

Another of the reserve engineers, a Defence public servant from Adelaide, delivered a classroom lesson in identifying vulnerable points when conducting mounted operations, identifying indicators of explosive hazards and how to deal with that threat.

Using a whiteboard, he demonstrated how to position infantry fighting vehicles and soldiers most effectively, to navigate congestion points and move forward safely on the battlefield.

The engineer said as much as he has enjoyed delivering lessons, he has been learning just as much from the AFU soldiers.

"Some of our tactics are old school and we have had to adapt our training to suit their current needs," the engineer said.

"They have more battle experience than we do. For example, they have taught us a lot about the enemy using drones to drop explosives."

Reports are that morale is high among the Ukrainian soldiers, many of who were using their time in the UK to rest from the high stress environment of the front line and learn as much as they can before returning to the battlefield.

"I'm just glad to be able to offer anything we can in terms of teaching and training that gives them that one per cent advantage in the fight."



CAPTION: An Armed Forces of Ukraine soldier takes notes during a Platoon and Company Sergeants Battle Course lesson being delivered by an Australian Army reservist.

Looking for Funds* to Assist with your Further Education?



STUDENT BURSARIES 2024

In appreciation of your service, London and Region's Garrison Community Council, with support from General Dynamics Land Systems - Canada and Militex Coatings Inc. in London, will award a number of bursaries to serving military personnel in Primary Reserve units who are enrolled in post-secondary education. Each bursary is worth \$1,000 and may be used for any educational expense.

*Tax free, by CRA regulation, when used for post-secondary education.

HOW TO APPLY

Relevant information and Applications Forms etc. are available on the GCC website under Bursaries at <https://gcclondon.ca/bursaries-page/>

Applications must be submitted in electronic format only and sent by e-mail to: garrisoncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

Reservists serving in the following units and are eligible to apply for a GCC Bursary:

HMCS Prevost
31 Canadian Brigade Group HQ
1st Hussars
31 Combat Engineer Regiment (The Elgin's)
31 Signal Regiment Detachment
4th Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment
31 Service Battalion
31 Military Police

London
London
London, Sarnia
St. Thomas, Waterloo
London
London, Stratford
London, Windsor, Hamilton
London

The submission deadline for applications is

8 November 2024

June 6, 2024 is the 80th Anniversary of D-Day

BREAKOUT FROM JUNO: FIRST CANADIAN ARMY AND THE NORMANDY CAMPAIGN



By Mark Zuehlke

On June 6th 1944, the greatest air and naval armada in history struck the Normandy coast of France. Breaching Hitler's Atlantic Wall was a tremendous feat, but in the days and weeks ahead, citizen soldiers of the world's democracies had to hone their craft against some of the toughest and most experienced troops of the German Wehrmacht. This excerpt is from the ninth volume of Mark Zuehlke's Canadian Battle Series and tells the story of the Canadian attack on the Carpiquet airport. Although Canadian soldiers achieved the greatest penetration of the first days of June, progress afterward was measured in blood against dug-in, fanatical resistance.

To indicate the location of a wounded man, the nearest soldier would drive the man's rifle bayonet into the ground so the butt was visible above the wheat. The rifle markers also helped prevent tanks and Bren carriers from running over the fallen. On the extreme left flank, the North Shore's carrier platoon rumbled along in their Bren carriers next to the railroad. Their commander, Captain J.A. Currie, thought the "dust and smoke made it like a night attack...and during the clear spots, we could see men going forward, but had no idea so many had been hit. Padre [R. Miles] Hickey was right among them, giving the last rites and so was Doc [John Aubry] Patterson with his medical kit. No other unit had a pair to match them."

Hickey had waded into the midst of 'B' Company, shredded even as it advanced towards the start line. "Everywhere men lay dead or dying," Hickey wrote. "I anointed about thirty right there."

'A' Company's Major Anderson thought the "advance through the grain field was little short of hell." He kept his bearings in the boiling smoke by taking constant compass readings. Behind him, one platoon wandered off at a right angle to the line of advance. Lieutenant Darrel Barker had been mortally wounded, and, unable to see the rest of the company, the platoon drifted out of sight into the smoke before Anderson could bring it back on course.

Many of the fifty 12th SS soldiers deployed in the field west of Carpiquet had been killed or so badly dazed by the shelling they meekly surrendered when overrun. But a few remained defiant. Their fire added to the casualty toll. "I am sure at some time during the attack," Anderson recalled, "every man felt he could not go on.

Men were being killed or wounded on all sides and the advance seemed pointless, as well as hopeless. I never realized until the attack on Carpiquet how far discipline, pride of unit, and above all, pride in oneself and family can carry a man, even when each step forward meant possible death."

'B' Company's Lieutenant Charles Richardson had only twenty of the thirty-five men in his platoon left. Lieutenant Paul McCann's platoon was on his right. Both men were using compasses. When the smoke lifted momentarily, Richardson saw that McCann's men were now to his left. He had no idea how that had happened. His men emerged from the smoke in an extended line and suddenly faced a field that had been burned to stubble by artillery fire. Charging forward, they wiped out a slit trench defended by five Germans. Richardson saw a pinwheeling stick grenade land in front of him. "I felt a hot stinging in my right side and left hand, then thought it didn't matter too much." Suddenly alone, Richardson took on the German position single-handedly and killed its defenders. His batman and two runners had all been seriously wounded by the grenade.

"My side started to bother me badly and my left hand was peppered with shrapnel. I had a long cigarette case in the inside pocket of my battledress and a towel wrapped around my waist. In order to look at my side, which was throbbing, I unbuttoned my tunic and the towel was full of shrapnel. I felt I was not hit too badly but out of nowhere appeared our beloved colonel and I quickly had orders to get back to the first aid post—which marked the finish of my first month in action."

Continued on page 13

BREAKOUT FROM JUNO: FIRST CANADIAN ARMY AND THE NORMANDY CAMPAIGN

Continued from page 12

Two Fort Garry Horse squadrons were riding right on the heels of the North Shores and Chauds. One Sherman rolled up and spun in a full turn that buried Sturmman Karl-Heinz Wambach to the chest in the sandy soil of his slit trench. He was trying to free himself when a voice yelled, “SS bastard, hands up!” Two North Shores dragged him free and tied his hands. One then punched him in the face. He was taken to the rear, urged along by rifle butt blows, and tied to a fence post for some hours in an area subjected to frequent shelling by German 88-millimetre guns.

Wambach’s complaints about his treatment led the North Shore’s historian to comment that “given the way Canadians felt about the 12th SS, he got off lucky.” During its advance across the field, the North Shores took thirty-five prisoners and killed an equal number.

At 0625 hours, almost ninety minutes after the attack began, the North Shores reached the shelter of a stone wall in front of Carpiquet and reported being on their first objective. The Chauds signalled brigade a few minutes later that they had men on the village edge and among the nearby hangars. Carpiquet was still being heavily shelled, forcing a twenty-minute pause. More casualties resulted when shells burst in the tree canopy next to the Canadian positions. When the artillery ceased firing, both battalions plunged into the village. Most of the small garrison actually deployed within either surrendered, were already dead, or quickly fled. The North Shores sent back twenty more prisoners. In the Chaudière sector, a handful of hard-core 12th SS in the hangar complex were burned out of concrete pillboxes by Crocodiles. At 1056, the Chauds reported their grip on the hangars secure.

Surprisingly, there were French civilians still living in the badly damaged village. Some, who emerged from bomb shelters and basements, had been wounded, and most seemed to be “in a state of severe shock,” Lieutenant MacRae wrote. “One old couple passed me going to the rear with their few possessions in a wheelbarrow. They looked too dazed to know what was going on.” While most of the civilians immediately fled towards the Canadian lines, a few were driven back into hiding when the Germans slammed Carpiquet with heavy and continuous mortar and artillery fire.

Private Feldman manned his wireless in a concrete bunker the Chauds were using as a battalion headquarters. Lieutenant Colonel Paul Mathieu, Major Lapointe, the battalion padre, and Feldman felt pretty secure there until “we heard this big noise and knew it was coming close. I was facing one way and the shell...hit the HQ in another place.

I was in the ‘dead zone’ or I’d have been killed by the concussion...I was knocked flat into the bunker and the officers looked at me and thought I’d died...I had landed on my set and that really prevented me from getting hurt, but the set was damaged. We got it going again and it was a miracle.”

To the south, as Fulton’s ‘D’ Company had closed on the first of the three hangars, it began taking heavy small-arms fire in addition to being shelled and mortared. All three platoons were shredded. Fulton was the only officer still standing. “We made a final rush and got into the hangar, taking over the extensive network of deep weapon pits and trenches developed by the Germans to guard the hangars. It was then that the heaviest bombardment I experienced throughout the whole war was brought down upon us. If it hadn’t been for the excellent German trench system, I believe none of us would of survived.”

Fulton radioed Lieutenant Colonel John Meldram. His company held the hangar but was too weak to go any farther, Fulton reported. However, he believed it could repel the likely counterattack. ‘A’ Company had been forced to ground a hundred yards short of the hangars. Meldram decided to feed ‘B’ Company through to the hangar held by Fulton. He also requested that 8th Brigade release some of ‘B’ Squadron’s tanks to accompany it.

Blackader reluctantly agreed to release one troop along with four Crocodiles. ‘B’ Squadron was Blackader’s only armoured reserve, and he intended to have it support the follow-on assault by the Queen’s Own Rifles to clear the control and administration buildings in the northeast corner of the airfield. Because the Winniepgs had failed to clear the hangars and remove the German threat to the Queen’s Own from that flank, Blackader had delayed this phase. He also ordered the Queen’s Own to form up inside Carpiquet for the launch of their attack.

B’ Company met the same murderous hail of German shells the two leading companies had endured. Only about half the men reached the hanger Fulton held. Captain Jack Hale had been wounded. Fulton combined the survivors with his own. But the Winniepgs were still unable to clear the Germans out of the concrete pillboxes and trench systems defending the other hangars. The Crocodiles, the Winnipeg war diarist wrote, “proved useless.” As for the Fort Garry troop, its four Shermans met deadly fire from hidden anti-tank guns. Lieutenant Arthur Edwin Rogers and Sergeant Alastair James Innes-Ker were both mortally wounded when their tanks burst into flames.

Continued on page 14

BREAKOUT FROM JUNO: FIRST CANADIAN ARMY AND THE NORMANDY CAMPAIGN

Continued from page 13

The demise of those two tanks prompted the remaining two to flee.

Wireless contact between battalion headquarters and the forward companies was so erratic that Meldram ordered Fulton to come back for a briefing. "I had no desire to make my way back across the airfield again, a target for the German guns; mine not to reason why, however." As Fulton ran back, he spotted Rifleman Leonard Miller calmly lying in a slit trench and reading a pocket-sized New Testament. Meldram ordered the lead companies pulled back to a small, sparse wood a few hundred yards ahead of the original start line. Artillery would then plaster the hangars, and a new attack would go in with 'B' Squadron alongside. As Fulton passed Miller's slit trench on his return run, he saw the man had been killed by a mortar round.

At 1600 hours, the new attack went in behind another bombardment. Rifleman Edward Patey, a Bren gunner in 'C' Company, had just started forward when mortar and machine-gun fire tore into his platoon. Three men went down. He recognized one as a man in his mid-thirties everyone had nicknamed "Pops." The man lay "writhing on the ground, his whole stomach ripped with bullets." Patey "was hit by a mortar piece in the eye and upper chest and...left deaf for a couple of days."

'B' Company's Sergeant Major Charles Belton suffered a chest wound. "I can remember when we were kids, we watched an Indian-cowboy movie and someone got shot and hit the ground and was dead. When I looked down and saw this blood spurting out of my chest, I thought I'd better lie down, so I did. I was fortunate. The shrapnel came through a book I had in my upper right breast pocket. Otherwise I would probably have had that shot go right through me. But the book stopped the shrapnel, although it took two pieces of cardboard and that book into the wound and that infected it and made it worse."

As Belton started crawling to the rear, a German sniper in a nearby tree shot him in the leg. One of his men gunned the sniper down. Belton was evacuated to a field hospital. "There were so many of us in that tent that stretchers were only about [six] inches apart, just enough room for the nurses to walk in between...just row, and row, and row of us on these stretchers. I lay so long on this stretcher that my back pain was far worse than the wounds. I finally got back to England on a barge."

While the infantry had gone straight for the hangars, the Shermans had executed a "sweeping attack" to get around the left flank of the Germans inside. Within minutes the tankers found their planned charge slowed to a crawl by thick bands of barbed wire and other obstacles, as well as anti-tank fire coming from in and around the hangars. Major Christian also reported the squadron was taking heavy fire from Panthers on the high ground behind the village of Verson to his right. The British were to have taken this ground but were stalled inside Verson.

'B' Squadron was completely out of contact with the infantry, which, having regained the first hangar, were again stuck there. Christian manoeuvred the squadron towards the hangars but found his tanks caught in a vise between a force of Mark IV and Panther tanks near Verson and other tanks at the hangars. A fierce shootout ensued. Soon burning tanks littered the airfield. 'B' Squadron had gone into the attack fifteen strong. When the tank battle broke off, nine remained operational.

The battle clearly stalemated, Meldram told Blackader at 1725 hours that "it would be impossible to hold on without increased [support]. Blackader had nothing more to send. When a mixed force of tanks and infantry approached the airfield from the east, artillery managed to scatter it. But the Germans only "dispersed and rallied" the moment the guns ceased firing. Blackader ordered the Winniepegs back to Marcelet. As the infantry withdrew, the surviving tanks joined them. At Marcelet the Winniepegs dug in. Blackader ordered his battalions to reorganize where they were.

"What had we accomplished?" Fulton wondered. "Possibly the Germans recognized our intention to take Carpiquet and that we would be back. But at what a cost!"

Blackader ordered the Queen's Own to join his other battalions holding Carpiquet. To reach the village meant running the gauntlet of artillery and mortar fire through the wheat field. En route, 'B' Company's Rifleman Alex Gordon was wounded and left behind. Rifleman J.P. Moore rolled up in his Bren carrier just as the men in Gordon's platoon realized he was missing. They warned Moore that "the fire was so heavy that anyone in the wheat field would be killed." Moore gave the carrier full throttle, drove like mad into the wheat field, grabbed up Gordon and threw him in the carrier and brought him to safety."

As the battalion closed on Carpiquet, one carrier platoon section, operating as foot infantry, sought shelter beside a concrete bunker. Suddenly, a German inside it opened up with a Schmeisser, and Rifleman Art Reid was shot dead. The entire battalion went to ground and called for tanks and Crocodiles to destroy the position.

Continued on page 15

BREAKOUT FROM JUNO: FIRST CANADIAN ARMY AND THE NORMANDY CAMPAIGN

Continued from page 14

When the armour arrived, the Crocodiles blasted “with flame the walls about the entrances, which were set in a wide trench on the south side. This treatment merely blackened the [heavy] concrete walls and appeared to have no effect upon the enemy within. Nor were the tanks able to damage the structure,” Major Steve Lett, the battalion’s second-in-command, wrote.

Corporal Tom McKenzie noticed six ventilation shafts poking out of the bunker’s roof and dropped a Mills grenade down one of the pipes. When nothing happened, he realized the pipe was virtually the same diameter as the grenade and this prevented the firing pin from releasing. Flipping the pins free and then dropping the grenades down the pipe worked, but the explosions still failed to convince the Germans inside to surrender.

Because the Germans had killed Reid, McKenzie was getting “madder than hell.” So he stole a carrier’s four-gallon jerry can, emptied the gas down the pipe, and dropped a phosphorous grenade down after. A lot of smoke boiled out of the ventilation duct and there were some satisfying secondary explosions, but still no Germans appeared.

While McKenzie had been taking on the bunker, the battalion’s pioneers had unsuccessfully tried to blow the roof open with a 25-pound demolition charge. “Others tried to blow the steel doors set within the entrances, but here the approach was covered by fire from a sliding panel in the wall through which weapons could be pointed. Several men were killed in this attempt.”

McKenzie took the problem to an engineering officer, Lieutenant John L. Yeats from 16th Field Company, RCE, which was supporting 8th Brigade. When he explained the problem, Yeats showed him a shaped explosive 10-pound charge he had slung on his back. When detonated, this type of charge focused on a wall rather than dissipating the blast in all directions. With McKenzie providing covering fire, Yeats wriggled up to the bunker door, set the charge, lit its fuse, and then both men scrambled for cover. This time the explosion had the desired effect.

A German soldier “emerged from the outer door, announcing himself as spokesman for the remainder, who were afraid to come out, and asking permission to surrender.” Eleven 12th SS troops warily emerged. Several said they had been “told that Canadians take no PW. Consequently they [were] reluctant to surrender, preferring to fight to the last.” The youths admitted “a great hatred for our arty, which is far superior to their own, and never gives them rest.”

Inside the bunker, Lett found the corpses of an officer and sixteen other men, who had been killed by the grenades, burning gasoline, and detonation of the shaped charge. Having cleared the bunker, the Queen’s Own continued into Carpiquet. “Jutting into enemy territory at the tip of the newly-won salient, the village was open to hostile fire from three sides and the three battalions, huddled with their tank squadrons and other

supporting arms under the shelter of battered walls, were now being severely shelled and mortared.”

Winning Carpiquet had exacted a dreadful toll. The North Shores lost more men than on any other day of the war—132, of which 46 were killed. The Chauds had 57 casualties, 16 killed. The Queen’s Own suffered 4 killed and 22 wounded. In its failed assault on the southern hangars, the Winnipeggers lost more men than during the D-Day landings or when they were overrun at Putot-en-Bessin on June 7–8. Forty of its 132 casualties proved fatal. The Fort Garry Horse lost 8 men killed and 20 wounded—most from ‘B’ Squadron—while 16th Field Company, RCE, had 10 casualties, of which 3 were fatal.

North Shore’s medical officer, John Patterson, and Padre Hickey opened an RAP in a German dugout within the village because “there wasn’t a building left standing, even the trees were smashed to splinters.” Wounded poured in, and the medical teams worked frantically to stabilize people before evacuating them rearward to casualty clearing stations and field hospitals. When Major Blake Oulton was carried in on a stretcher with a bullet in his leg, Hickey said he was a “lucky dog” to have received such a “lovely wound” that would take him out of this hellhole. As dusk fell, Hickey and Major G.E. Lockwood led a burying party during a short lull in the German shelling. You “could fancy how the wheat field had been just like any of our wheat fields back home,” Hickey wrote. But “now the wheat was just trampled into the earth; the ground was torn with shell holes and everywhere you could see the pale upturned faces of the dead. That night alone we buried forty—Carpiquet was the graveyard of the regiment.”



espritdecorps
CANADIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

GCC March General Meeting



Our Speaker for the GCC's March General Meeting
Lieutenant-Colonel David E. Meehan CD
Assistant Chief of Staff
31 Canadian Brigade Group

Lieutenant-Colonel David Meehan was born in Scotland and immigrated to Canada in 1967. LCol Meehan first became involved with the military in 1980 when he joined the Royal Canadian Air Cadets where he earned his glider pilot's wings and rose to the rank of Warrant Officer 1st Class. Two years later LCol Meehan returned to the Army and the 56th field Regiment. Over the years, with the Regiment, LCol Meehan rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and became the Commanding Officer from May, 2008 to June, 2012.

Currently, LCol Meehan is the Assistant Chief of Staff for 31 Canadian Brigade Group overseeing recruiting and individual training. In the past LCol Meehan has had the honour of Commanding 56 Field Regiment RCA, 31 and 32 Canadian Brigade Group Battle Schools, the Grey and Simcoe Foresters, and for a short time 32 Combat Engineer Regiment. LCol Meehan is now looking forward to assuming Command of the 31st Service Battalion. He has spent time at 4 Division HQ as Senior Staff Officer for Ontario and as Deputy Director Artillery Reserves for Canada.

LCol Meehan currently resides in London with his wife Carrie.

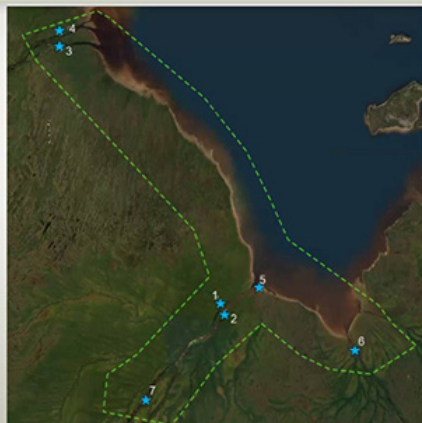
Topic: LCol Meehan spoke to the current priorities of Reconstitution and Readiness. This will include a synopsis of where 31 CBG has succeeded this year, particularly in the area of Recruiting.



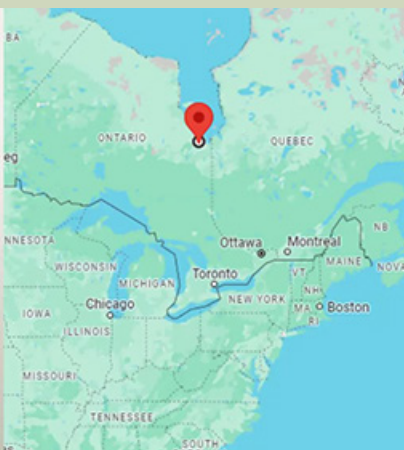
What you will see and hear



GCC March General Meeting



- Locations**
1. Moosonee
 2. Moose Factory First Nation
 3. Fort Albany First Nation
 4. Kashechewan First Nation
 5. James Bay coast site
 6. Hannah Bay coast site
 7. Moose River Bridge



Why are we here?

Soldiers of Southern Ontario are tasked with providing support to the arctic and sub arctic regions. The challenges faced in dealing with these climates demands special training and in March will see these soldiers deploying to gain this training.

31 CANADIAN BRIGADE GROUP

UPDATE: RECRUITING & ATTRACTION

FY 23/24 - Measures of Effort & Effectiveness

David Meehan
Lieutenant Colonel
Assistant Chief of Staff
David.Meehan@forces.gc.ca



GCC March General Meeting

COMD 4XX 'GUIDE FOR ACTION':

READINESS

CULTURE

SAFETY

RECONSTITUTION



31 CBG Recruiting - Effective Staffing

Initiatives put in place to increase effectiveness:



31 CBG Recruiting Improvements

Co-Ownership of Attractions/Recruiting

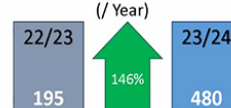
- Attractions responsibility tasked to Units
- Commanding Officers and Recruiters measured by the same metrics
- Monthly Sitreps exchanged between 31 CBG Recruiting and Units
- Regional Unit Recruiter participation in Unit O Groups
- Deliberate coordination between Unit Attractors and CBG Recruiters

COMPARISON SUMMARY – 22/23 vs. 23/24

31 CBG Recruiting

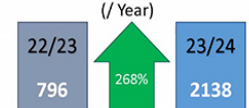
1. Attraction Activities

(/ Year)



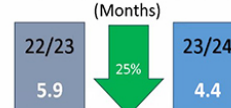
2. Online Applications

(/ Year)



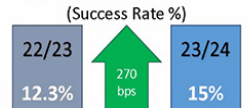
3. Application Process Time

(Months)



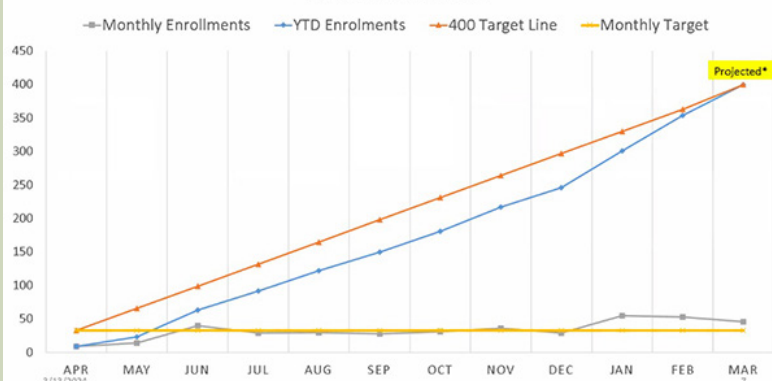
4. Application-to-Enrolment

(Success Rate %)



ENROLMENTS - 23/24

31 CBG RECRUITING



31 CBG Recruiting - Current Status

Position continued success in 24/25

- Increased effectiveness of applicant processing
- Higher sustainable battle rhythm
- Continued staff development and shared learning
- Expansion of Unit led attractions
- Focus on developing sustainable reusable products
- Increased IT capacity to meet increased enrollments

