



“Take Post”

The Journal of the Toronto Gunner Community

Edition 20, 20 May 2018

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This journal, “Take Post” is published under the authority of the Honorary Colonel, 7th Toronto Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery. Take Post reaches out to all Gunners and those interested in being part of the Regimental Artillery Family of the Greater Toronto Area. The purpose is to share information and strengthen the ties between serving members, retired Gunners, Gunner families, friends of the Artillery, and the Greater Toronto Community.

Notes and Letters to the “Editor” can be sent to barry@partnersindemnity.com



| REGIMENTAL CALENDAR | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 July | Canada Day Gun Salute |
| 17 Aug – 3 Sept | CNE – CAF Equipment & Vehicle Display – C3 Howitzer Display |
| 25-31 Aug | Summer Collective Training FTX |
| 06 Sept | Ironman 2018 - Petawawa |
| 10 Sept | Regimental Stand-To |
| 15 Sept | Sharp Shooter 2 and Officer's Mess Dinner |
| 17 Sept | Change of Command Ceremony |

Regimental Orders Part II
Honours, Awards, Promotions & Appointments

Appointments

Change of RSM from CWO D.H. Robinson, MMM, CD to CWO Tim Cooke, CD



Promotions



Bdr Wight (from Gnr)



Bdr Gezehan, Bdr Baghel, Bdr Hall (from Gnr)



MBdr Desormiers (from Bdr)



MBdr Waterman (from Bdr)



MWO Bankasingh (from WO) 14 May 2018

Decorations



Capt D.V. Aliberti, CD



WO T. Bankasingh, CD



MBdr R. Li, CD

Commendations



CWO Robinson, Div. Commanders Commendation

Retirements



Cpl Forrester, retirement, 05 March 2018

Life in the Arabian Desert – Op Impact

There are opportunities that come by very often, and it will just be a matter of time before an individual takes it. Then there are some opportunities that come by a number of times, and usually that individual will seize those opportunities at the last possible moment either on their own initiative or after seeking advice from a few friends. Then there is that one opportunity that only comes by once in your lifetime. Sometimes, an individual is able to recognize that opportunity at that moment, and is able to seize it, and sometimes they miss that chance and it never comes again. I believe that all of us have had one of those moments. Fortunately for me, in this case, around this time last year, I was able to recognize that this was an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me and I was able to seize it from the moment it was available.

On February 2017, the opportunity was provided for a few select soldiers to deploy on Operation IMPACT for the 5th Rotation. For those of you whom may be unaware, Op IMPACT is the Government of Canada's mission to contribute to the US-led Middle Eastern Stabilization Force (MESF) or coalition, in order to defeat Daesh, or as it's commonly known outside the Middle East, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Seeing this as one of the few or possibly the only opportunity that I would have to deploy and serve my country on an international missions, I immediately volunteered; sealing my fate for the journey of a lifetime. The catch was, I had to do all of the pre-deployment administration before and while concurrently attending the Battery Sergeant Major (BSM) course in CFB Gagetown.

After completing the pre-deployment administration and the BSM course, I arrived back in Toronto, only to grab the folder with all of my documents and head up to Petawawa the next morning to begin my Theater Mission Specific Training (TMST). After TMST, I had a week leave and then I was off to CFB Trenton to catch the next plane off to Kuwait.

Landing in Kuwait was a surreal experience. Right away, I immediately noticed, how bright, hot and sandy it was. Temperatures in June average between 50 and 55 degrees. It was immediately clear that a good pair of sunglasses and a lot of water would be beneficial to survive this desert adventure. After in-clearance and all of the briefings (because you never get to escape that even though you are halfway around the world), I was informed that I was no longer doing my original job of sergeant major for the Joint Task Force-Iraq Headquarters (JTF-I HQ). Instead I was going to be working within the task force operations cell as an operations duty officer in the Joint Operations Centre (JOC).

In hindsight, despite never working in an operational headquarters before in my career, getting re-tasked to be a duty officer provided an excellent opportunity with respect to professional development. Managing reports and returns, preparing daily briefings for the task-force commander, being involved with current operations, and being involved in the managing and solving of various issues at the strategic/operational level provide added to my professional development. Through my briefings, I was able to gain insight and improve my understanding regarding the operational planning process as it is applied towards many different scenarios. Regardless if it was observing the decision-making process to determine where to send a particular aircraft while taking into consideration the threat level in the air and the ground, to

something as simple as planning a scheduled power outage for generator repairs, to assisting with the execution of a VIP visit, as the duty officer for the task force, I had a role in either the planning or the execution. Briefing the task-force commander in the mornings allowed me with the opportunity to gain an understanding the thought process of a corps and divisional commander.

Living conditions were in weather havens (with two air conditioners to keep things comfortable). We had shower and laundry facilities, two lounges that had Wi-Fi connections to the internet, two gyms and if anyone was so inclined they were able to go to the American camp where they had a pool. So I'll admit, we were provided with a lot more amenities that are usually provided than a standard typical tour. Despite that, water shortages and power shortages were common, and we were forbidden to leave the base unless it was a requirement for your task. It was common to hear of soldiers who have spent their entire tour and they have never left the base unless it was for HLTA.

Speaking of HLTA, I spent mine in New Zealand. A very beautiful country. If you need a destination and you're looking for an amazing place to visit, I'd highly recommend it. I joined with a tour group and we started the tour in Auckland and end up in Wellington and Queenstown and finished in Christchurch. Our tour guides were excellent, and I'd highly recommend them for anyone looking to tour New Zealand.

Upon return I had 2 ½ months left. Before we knew it, our replacements had arrived and we starting to plan our return home to reunite with our families and friends. For obvious reasons, the highlight of the end of the tour was standing with everyone and receiving our medals for our hard work performed during the tour. Finally after seven months, I made my way to the airport and got on the plane for the long flight back to Canada. I realized at the moment, when the plane landed in Toronto that this wonderful experience with an amazing group of people was finally coming to an end.

The operations cell was a group of amazing people. We had both NCMs and officers with a mix of combat arms and general service trades to support trades, and personnel from all three elements. With respect to the CAF, our cell was one of the most diverse groups that was on our rotation. This provided me with an additional professional development opportunity as it allowed me to learn more about what life was in the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Canadian Air Force; further developing my understanding of the Canadian Armed Forces as an institution. I would say that it was one of major highlights of this tour.

Finally, if I were to impart wisdom from this, it would be to always work hard and earn that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity when it presents itself. When it does, seize that opportunity. After you've seized it, then work hard to demonstrate to everyone that you in fact did deserve it. Most importantly, have fun and enjoy it, so that once it's finished, you can look back fondly and be proud that you were part of it.



-By WO T.O. Bankasingh, BSM130

FTX Zero Kelvin 2

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

However; this tale of two cities is not about Paris and London. Instead, this tale takes place in Toronto and Burwash and upon reflection: it was mostly the best of times. 13 soldiers from 9 and 15 Battery braved the elements of what passed for a snowy season this year as part the unit's annual Winter Warfare exercise; Ex ZERO KELVIN II. Although the definition of winter was stretched, these soldiers applied the skills learned/re-learned during the previous Ex ZERO KELVIN I.

The intent of the exercise was to put into practice the skills and fieldcraft required in a winter environment. The Master Events List included: expedient shelters; tent group routine; packing and movement of a toboggan; field feeding; and, building a survival fire. A relatively small turn out forced a last minute change to the scheme of manoeuvre but the overall intent of the exercise was dutifully achieved.

The number of attendees and distribution of rank allowed for three sections; one officer section, one senior NCO section, and one junior ranks section. Upon arrival in Burwash on Friday night, our Advance Party lead the group to the tent area where a quick night routine was performed and followed by a fitful sleep. The night was relatively warm but it quickly became apparent that the area we occupied was rather popular. Members of the 48th Highlanders, themselves conducting a full Basic Winter Warfare course, arrived to pitch tents immediately alongside our position. At 0200hrs, members of 7 Toronto Regiment were graced with a very loud, thorough, and lengthy lecture on pitching an arctic tent (normally a good sleeping aid but not when actually trying to sleep.)

Saturday morning saw the group strike their tents and move by toboggan to the next position of the exercise. This component proved challenging, though not for reasons of inexperience or poor toboggan packing but more the fact that the snowy surface was more of a thinly covered granular surface not exactly suitable for toboggan-trekking.

From this position, the three sections completed several interesting tasks. Each of the three sections established new tent positions, built expedient shelters, and practiced the art of fire building. Of course, these activities were interspersed with the consumption of delicious IMPs and hot drinks, allowing those present to become expert in the use of Coleman stoves and pressure cookers.

“Here’s a tip. Pressure cookers do not efficiently boil water.”

Saturday night was capped off with an old-timey sausage cook-off; an often ignored (but often diarrhea-inducing) winter survival skill.

On Sunday morning, the position was collapsed and equipment prepared for the return to Toronto. In standard military fashion, the attendees then marched back out to the bussing point. Though the march was short – only a few kilometers – this allowed the soldiers to appreciate the difference of marching with additional kit in a winter environment.

The return trip to Toronto could be copied and pasted from any exercise: Lt Proner (the OPI of the Exercise) gave words of encouragement, boxed lunches were grudgingly consumed, and drool streamed from open-mouthed sleepers.

Ex ZERO KELVIN II was a morale-boosting and refreshing weekend exercise. After reading this article, this author hopes that those soldiers who did not attend will realize the excitement that was missed out on. See you next year!

-written by Capt Curtis Roach, BC9



The Senior NCO’s improvised shelter made use of a ground sheet and a snow dugout as the basis for its structure. A solid silver medal effort.



The Junior Ranks smile broadly in front of their improvised shelter. A strong effort that went on to fuel Saturday night's sausage cooking.



The Officer's shelter. Naturally, a planning cell was stood up to occupy the space. The RSM slept in this shelter on Saturday night. This was interpreted as silent approval of the officers' effort (which is all they ever reawfully wanted.)



A "survival fire." Its small size offers an ideal cooking source and can heat a small, enclosed space.

Mortar Course 0199

Despite being less iconic than a howitzer, the 81mm mortar still plays a key role in the CAF. The 81mm mortar is crucial in the CAF as an augmentation the M777 howitzer. While the M777 is far superior in engaging distant targets, it has a shortcoming when it comes to close range engagements, particularly when high angle is required. This is where the mortar fits in perfectly, protecting the M777 or any other local defense assets by engaging targets up to 5km. Another interesting fact is that an 81mm mortar illumination round is brighter than a 105mm howitzer round, making it very effective at that task. 7th Toronto Regiment has prided itself in recent years of being the only reserve regiment to field two batteries; one of which was exclusively focused on this 81mm capability. To continue this capability, 7th Toronto Regiment ran a mortar course from February 7th to 25th May to qualify nine soldiers on the weapon system.

As with every qualification in the forces, members are instructed from a crawl, to a walk, to a run. Within hours of instruction candidates began to pick up confidence; within days of instruction and practice the members became competent on the weapon. With all the theory and dry practice done, the soldiers headed to the field to confirm their knowledge in a realistic scenario.

On the 23rd of May, Mortar Course 0199 headed to the field, alongside 7th Toronto Regt, 56 Field Regt, and 11 Field Regiment who were participating in ex COOP GUNNER at the time. After receiving final confirmation of areas available, helicopter operations, and de-conflicting with the rest of the busy training area, Mortar Course 0199 stepped off Saturday Morning at 8 am. The first deployment was to AMA 407, where the brisk spring winds were cold enough to freeze the diesel lines in one of our vehicles. Alongside the course came two officer cadets from RMC, one of which was qualified artillery and, under supervision, got some practice in for the member's next career course. Although ammo was lacking to say the least, every course member managed to fire some rounds.

After firing from AMA 407, the soldiers did several more deployments, including dismounted and night moves to make them truly master the weapon system in all scenarios. Carrying a mortar and a full battle load is no easy task, with there being cases (outside of the course) of soldiers having over 200lbs of load to carry. Night deployment is also no joke, with reduced visibility being something that all soldiers need to train for. It requires extreme knowledge and competency to be able to operate with limited light.

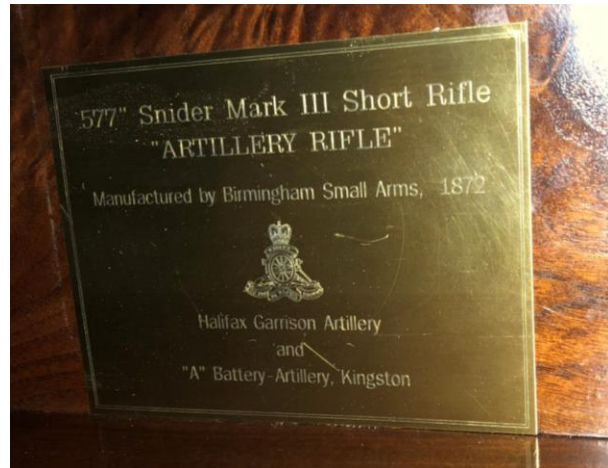
Returning from the field that Saturday night after a night deployment, the soldiers did maintenance on the weapons and went to ground feeling accomplished. The next day the course traveled back to Moss Park where they further prepared the kit for storage, turned in their kit, and went home as better soldiers than when they left on Friday. solid groundwork for Hogtown Gunner II in November. UBIQUE!

--written by Lt Juraj Proner, Course Officer

Recognizing a “Gunner Great” with the Hawkeye Trophy



After three years as the Honorary Colonel of 7th Toronto Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery (RCA), Brigadier-General (retired) Ernest Beno, OMM, CD is proud to bestow the Hawkeye Trophy to this fine Unit. Inspired by a phenomenal “Gunner Great,” Brigadier-General H.E. (Ted) Brown, OBE OStJ, ED, CD, BA (who was a former Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel and Honorary Colonel of 7th Toronto Regiment), this handsome trophy consists of a .577” Snider Mark III Short Rifle, manufactured in England by the Birmingham Small Arms Company. Produced on a Canadian Government contract, this rare, highly collectable, compact firearm was designed specifically for the Artillery and was issued to both the Halifax Garrison Artillery and Battery “A” Kingston (which is recorded as such through a carving still legible on the butt). Resting within a beautiful case of local black walnut with a bird’s eye maple inlay, designed and hand-crafted by Mr. Brian Steeves of Fredericton, New Brunswick, the Snider sits upon wrought iron brackets and contains plaques describing the trophy and name plates for future recipients.



When queried as to the “why” of the trophy’s name, Brigadier-General Beno responded that he was inspired by the nickname of his beloved and revered former Honorary Colonel, Brigadier-General H.E. (Ted) “Hawkeye” Brown, who was laid to rest by family and friends in October

2014, still spry at 102 years of age. This renowned Gunner was an icon across the Canadian Army, as one of the finest officers of Canada's greatest generation. Brigadier-General Brown set the example of what all soldiers and officers ought to be – fit, brave, determined, honourable, loyal, and dedicated.

Enrolling with Canada's Militia in 1928 at the age of 16 with the Manitoba Rangers, this superb marksman quickly rose through the Non-Commissioned ranks as an instructor at the Canadian Small Arms School, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1932. Re-badging to the Artillery in 1936, he joined the Canadian Army Active Force as a Lieutenant in January of 1940, following the outbreak of the Second World War. Promoted to Major and Commanding 37 Field Battery, he deployed to the Ortona sector of Italy in 1943. Soon thereafter, he was promoted to Acting Lieutenant Colonel as the Commanding Officer of 1st Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery (1 RCHA). Hospitalized for two months after being severely wounded when his vehicle was hit by a German 88mm gun, he returned to his Regiment, where he led them during operations to breach the Hitler Line, where 1 RCHA fired its first William target (in a matter of minutes, 19 field regiments, 9 medium regiments and 2 heavy regiments unloaded 74 tons of explosives against enemy positions in Aquino, Italy). As the war continued, he led his Gunners during multiple operations, which included Liri Valley, the crossing of the Melfa River, and breaking the Gothic and Gustav Lines. For his superior leadership and exemplary performance, he was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire.



Brigadier-General HE (Ted)
“Hawkeye” Brown, OBE, ED,
CD

Following the cessation of hostilities, Brigadier-General “Hawkeye” Brown continued a remarkable military career, and upon retirement maintained close connections with Gunners of all ages, from talking with young Officers at Shilo, lecturing Senior Officers at Staff College, and providing first-hand accounts during battlefield tours. Ever busy, among many pursuits (far too lengthy to list in full), he was the President of the Fort York Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, a life member of the Royal Canadian Military Institute, and a scholar. A proud husband and father, he maintained an active lifestyle up to 100 years of age, walking to church and participating in Regimental events. As an avid hunter, and a great shot, even when he was a very-retired Officer, he would wake up his Aide-de-Camp in Shilo during the annual Junior Officers Course, so he could hunt ducks in the early morning, prior to breakfast! Considering the extraordinary measure of such a great Gunner, the Hawkeye trophy is a wonderful way to cherish such a remarkable legacy, while inspiring Artillery soldiers of today and tomorrow.

With his tour of duty at 7th Toronto Regiment, RCA complete, Brigadier-General Beno was proud to state that: “as both an Honorary Colonel and having served as a Gunner and Lance Bombardier in a predecessor of my unit (42nd Medium Regiment, RCA (M)), I wanted to leave a legacy through the Hawkeye trophy. It will be awarded annually at the Regiment's Soldiers' Christmas Dinner, as a way of giving Gunners an example that they can aim to emulate.” Brigadier-General Beno also mentioned that he would be remiss were he not to thank both Lieutenant-Colonel (retired) Ike Kennedy, OMM, CD and Lieutenant-Colonel (retired) William Leonard, CD of Fredericton for

their advice and assistance – without them, this wonderful project would not have come to fruition. A final, and special word of appreciation goes to Mr. Brian Steeves of Fredericton, for his outstanding attention to detail, and superb craftsmanship in the creation of the trophy case for the Hawkeye Award. The talent for skill and craftsmanship in the Fredericton region is really quite remarkable – this being one example.



May the Hawkeye Trophy remain a fitting symbol of good soldiering and good shooting in 7th Toronto Regiment, RCA – in memory of one of the greatest soldiers to serve the RCA and 7th Toronto.



By Captain Nicholas Kaempffer, CD (RCAS)

A MATTER OF MASCOTS

Those who follow the *RCAA - AARC – Artillery* Facebook page may recall an October article featuring The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery School's mascot Gnr(C) Loki. Canadian gunner units having mascots is certainly not a new phenomenon. A photograph of the 9th Battery, taken shortly after the First World War hostilities ceased, shows at least six dogs; rather than mascots these should probably be considered as working dogs for they all appear to be some form of "rat terrier".



At the start of the Second World War the 7th Toronto Regiment consisted of a headquarters, four field batteries (9th, 15th, 30th and 53rd) and four medium batteries (21st, 23rd, 24th and 25th). The 9th, 15th, 53rd and 23rd Batteries were mobilized on September 1st, 1939. As the Batteries underwent their mobilization training the Toronto Daily Star ran a series of articles on the issue of Battery Mascots.

October 12, 1939 – No Squawks, Just Cheers New Kind of Army This!

Recruiting appears to have been thrown open to mascots.

Among units which have taken on such recruits is the 9th Battery, R.C.A. The mascot – Gunner Bones, a Belgian police dog, presented to the battery by Sgt. Ray Johnson.

Gunner Bones has every official right to his title, for his name is carried on battery records and he has been issued regimental number 6199. No, he doesn't draw pay, but he does draw rations and they claim he's the best fed dog in Toronto.

Like other of the 9th, Gnr. Bones is now undergoing intensive training. The battery bugler is teaching him bugle calls. Others are training him to obey all regular army commands because, as Sgt. Johnson explained, "you can't shout 'stop' every time you want Gnr. Bones to halt with the men".

G.B. like other recruits takes his place on parade and his former master claims he stands just as still in the ranks as other gunners at attention.

G.B's uniform includes a harness with the battery insignia attached and quartermaster's stores is expected to produce a blanket to fit, with the crest of the R.C.A. embroidered suitably thereon.

October 13, 1939. The mascot situation is booming along in fine style. Two doors away from the 9th battery at University Avenue armories is the 53rd. Yesterday we told you about the 9th's German police dog, Gunner Bones. Well now the 53rd's got a Russian wolf hound. (The 9th-ers claim Bones is "Belgian" but we're entitled to a little poetic license or something, aren't we?).

In between the 9th and 53rd is the 15th and its commanding officer Major A.B. Matthews is bringing his two Airedales down one of these days. The 15th may end up with three mascots, for at Petawawa on the Ottawa River where the battery trains each summer, they usually manage to find a turtle somewhere in a nearby swamp which becomes mascot until camp breaks up.

Some of the 9th-ers are all for getting a turtle somewhere else and carrying on with the tradition.

The army's telephone men are having a great time these days handling pet shop operators and others trying to sell "pedigreed mascots" for \$10.

October 14, 1939 – Gunner Bones No. 6199 He's a Hound For Sure.

Mascot of 9th Battery R.C.A. Is Neither a Shepherd Dog Nor a Police Dog But a Contribution From the Humane Society.

This mascot situation is getting us down. Remember Gunner Bones of the 9th Battery, R.C.A. whom we described variously as a Belgian shepherd dog and a German police dog? Well today Gunner Bones, regimental number 6199 is a hound – at least that is what some claim.

And don't start blaming us because Gunner Bones, number 6199, was a police dog one day and a hound the next. There is no inaccuracy here. It really happened that way.

Gunner Bones the first had only been mascot one day when the real owner who had lost him some time before claimed him, so the 9th-ers were momentarily without a mascot. So the boys went up to the Humane Society and Gunner Bones the hound was the result.

October 23, 1939. . . . the 15th Battery has acquired a new mascot, a goat . . . the 23rd Battery has a springer spaniel appropriately named "Gunner".

It seems that the 15th Battery is not particularly fussy when it comes to selecting mascots. – Turtles, dogs, goats and, during one summer concentration at Camp Grayling, Michigan the BC of 15th "Hogtown" Battery, Major Dennis Downs, purchased a namesake porker as mascot. I'm led to believe the end of camp barbeque was most satisfying that year.



The last mascot for the Hogtown Gunners

--by LCol (ret'd) Colin Mouatt, a former CO he is the unofficial historian of Artillery in Toronto