



UNITED SERVICES INSTITUTE OF NANAIMO AND NORTH ISLAND

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Volume 24 Number 06, June 2016

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“THE BRAVEST CANADIAN AND OTHER ROYAL NAVY HEROS”

President's Message

Greetings to all members of the USINNI!

I am very pleased to announce that Surgeon Captain **Francis John Blatherwick, CM, OBC, CD, FRCP(C)** will be our guest speaker for this month's luncheon in the Crystal Room of the Grand Hotel Nanaimo. The cost will be \$22 per member/member spouse and \$25 per non member to attend this luncheon. The topic will be "The Bravest Canadian and other Royal Navy Heroes". I attended the Battle of the Atlantic Dinner at

HMCS Discovery recently and had the pleasure of sitting beside the Captain! We had a great discussion over many CAF re-



lated topics as Captain Blatherwick served in

the Canadian Forces reserves for 39 years, retiring in 2000 with the rank of Captain and the position of Senior Naval Reserve Medical Advisor. He served in the Air Force, Army, and the Naval reserves, and was Canada's representative to the NATO Reserve Medical Officers' Congress from 1989 to 1995. He was the Honorary Colonel for 12 (Vancouver) Field Ambulance (2006 to 2012). As you can see he has a well rounded view of all things CAF

...continued on page 4...

Military & Security Musings

“GOING WALKABOUT”- BUT BEING SMART ABOUT IT!

Nanaimo, 20 May 2016...

Before getting too far into this, let me first admit it's been three years since Denyse and I did

any serious travelling abroad. However, much, much further back in time, after just a couple of weeks in Middle Eastern sun, chameleon-like, I was well able to disap-

pear into whatever street scene was handy. Indeed, it was only on my third visit to one local Beirut shop that the shopkeeper admitted he had only recently learned

I was a Canadian. He said he had assumed from my “accent” that I was an Iraqi! *Alhamdulillah*, faint praise indeed for my Egyptian tutor back in Ottawa. *But, that was then.*



More recently, but still back a dozen or so years, Denyse and I did a London-Paris organized tour, followed by a week-plus of a self-navigated Western Europe tour of the battlefields. Then I drove a big Citroen sedan proudly flying a Canadian flag. *That was also then.* Just three years ago, on a more recent trip, I rented a more modest car in Holland, making the arrangements in English, using French, German and English in that order thereafter as I could while we toured the Lowlands, Germany and France. I wasn't intentionally hiding our nationality; I was simply doing something recommended for tourists...doing your hosts the courtesy of trying respectfully to use their language as best you are able. Along with a smile, that works & hasn't changed. *But, that too was then.*

Today, the security problems for tourists have changed. There are things to do and not to do now that are far different from even just a couple of years past. The worst that can happen is happening. If you're travelling abroad, much as we do while driving

here, you need to travel consciously *thinking defensively, assuming the worst can happen to or near you!* My own experiences are European and Middle Eastern where, as a Caucasian, I can and have nicely blended in. So, for that part of the globe, let's talk about travelling safely.

Assuming air travel, it's the airlines & airport authorities who set the standards. Understand what you can and cannot carry or pack, and don't try to play silly bugger. Baggage fees notwithstanding, the less you try to carry into the cabin, the smoother security screening and getting into a seat will be. Before that, one of the first things we vets need to do is to divest ourselves of extraneous ID that focuses on our Service pasts. Unless you're planning visits to RUSI London or to a Legion branch somewhere else, why carry an old CF 35 ID card or Legion or USI membership cards? Indeed, to make ID theft less easy for a thief, ruthlessly purge your wallets and purses of bank and other cards & ID not actually required for your trip. I myself “split” my assets going abroad between pockets & wallet, with a light money belt worn snugly next to my underclothing. In Europe too, statistically, nine out of ten travellers with Canadian flags on their baggage or accoutrements aren't Canadians. Get rid of the flags. They're not helpful anymore. The exception is Holland where, flagged, we're still nine out of ten.

Arthritic, when booking into sleeping accommodation in Europe, at other than a *B&B, pensione* or *gite*, I used to ask for a lower floor room. Not now! Stopping only to think about the escape-from-fire risk up higher, at a hotel, we would now insist on an upper floor room, even if it increases the *tot*. There, with a

worst scene security situation developing down below, up above, I get time to at least consider our evasion options. I never settle in a hotel room without checking that the door to an Emergency Exit actually works & goes somewhere. I don't actually clock the distance, but I do form a solid idea of how to get from our room out through the Emergency Exit, even in complete darkness. Denyse is even smarter; she totes a key chain LED light about with her.

Again for reasons of safety, invariably when dining out, my long-time Beirut-learned preference remains “inside rather outside”, in a back corner as far from windows as possible, preferably with good sight lines to all doors and exits. Don't be a loud tourist. Boisterous tourists attract attention. Out in

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public & faced with a developing serious incident, you only have two quick choices: *fight or flight*. Paralysis, inertia or dithering are never the right answers! Nor is stopping to take a selfie! On the other hand, running from the unimaginable may end up with you running into the imaginable. In addition, in the middle of a serious incident, a panicked constable is liable to shoot someone running from an active crime scene on the sim-

ple assumption that the runner may be the problem. You could be that someone. Think what you're doing, but, do so with the speed of light! Do something, even if you only think it may be right. Inertia kills!

Out and about, by day or night, wandering around as a tourist, be aware of where you are and who else is about. Bedecked with cameras and other tourist costume & paraphernalia, you might as well be wearing a bull's-eye sign for every pick-pocket, purse snatcher or thug in the business. Particularly in the big city in the evening, it is easy to find yourself increasingly alone in alien inhospitable circumstances. If you've kept your wits about you, you'll realize this sooner rather than later. Promptly head back out to the bright lights and mainstream tourism. Leave the back streets of Soho; romantic Parisian evening strolls along the Barbes Boulevard, the Forum des halles or the banks of the Seine; or, Cairo-at-the best-of-times, to the locals or the penny dreadful fiction writers.

Caught in a situation from which there is no sure run option, hiding or playing dumb or possum sometimes works, but probably only if the bear is vegetarian! Immediate escape and evasion from a developing security problem is your real out. Of course, if you're part of a guided tour, your hosts may have other ideas. But, whatever needs doing... needs doing rationally & quickly... using your own smarts. It's your life and your call!

That said, holidays abroad are too precious to waste worrying about this or that possibility. However, really smart travellers keep their wits about them, at all times. Most times in life we can see, hear & sometimes feel the train coming. Be smart and get out of the way! Being consciously alert, you'll be around to enjoy the holidays and to share the stories with us in the autumn. So, this summer, keep safe and travel smart!

This musing & commentary column is that of



Col (Retd) Bill McCullough, Chair of our Military Committee and a Past President of our Institute.

The worries, views and suggestions expressed are entirely his own. However, he suggests that a little judicious paranoia is not always a bad state of mind, particularly now, while travelling abroad. Sometimes people really are out to get you!

This month's
Luncheon
Meeting
will be held

at

The Grand Hotel
4898 Rutherford Rd
Nanaimo

on

Wednesday
Julne 8, 2016
1130 hours

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\$22.00
per member/
member spouse



The US Navy's new Littoral Class Coastal Frigate Combatant. These are the two experimental vessels, with the first of 40 new combatants hopefully to be commissioned in 2018. Now, about the RCN.....

This edition of the USINNI Newsletter has been published and authorized
for release by

WO (Retd) Edwin J Peeters, Vice President, USINNI.

Any Member of USINNI wishing to make a contribution or comment with respect
to this publication may do so by contacting the same.

This Month in Canadian Military History

- 01/06/1876** - The Royal Military College of Canada opens in Kingston, Ontario, with a class of eighteen cadets.
- 02/06/1917** - Captain W.A. (Billy) Bishop attacked a German airfield near Cambrai, a feat which later earned him the Victoria Cross.
- 04/06/1742** - The first warship built in New France called the CANADA is launched.
- 06/06/1944** - Approximately one hundred and ten Canadian warships participate in the Allied landings in Normandy.
- 15/06/1940** - The Canadian Provost Corps is authorized.
- 19/06/1812** - The United States formally declares war against Great Britain.
- 21/06/1749** - A military expedition led by Colonel Edward Cornwallis arrives at the harbour at Chebucto, N. S. and establishes the Halifax military base.
- 28/06/1922** - The National Defence Act is passed, incorporating the Department of the Naval Service, the Department of Militia and Defence and the Air Board as a new Department of National Defence.
- 28/06/2001** - Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson officially dedicates the National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Forces at Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa.

LUNCHEON MEETING ATTENDANCE

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President's Message (continued from page 1)

related. Some of you might be familiar with his work as the Medical Health Officer in the Simon Fraser Health Unit for nine years. He received his MD from the University of Alberta in 1969. He then started in public health when he left a residency in Internal Medicine at Vancouver General Hospital in 1971 to set up the Pine Street Youth Clinic. He received his Diploma in Public Health at the University of Toronto in 1975 and completed his Fellowship in Public Health at University of British Columbia in 1976. Later Captain Blatherwick served as the Medical Health Officer or Chief Medical Health Officer in Vancouver, British

Columbia from 1984 to 2007. As the medical health officer for the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, he has been the moving force behind a number of important programs, especially those involving youth, people with disabilities, people living with AIDS, combating drug addictions, and the move to abolish smoking in the workplace. Blatherwick became skilled at media relations and was well known for voicing independent, authoritative opinions on controversial health issues. Premier Bill Vander Zalm publicly threatened to fire him – twice – over his advocacy for condoms and sex education in schools. Insight, the first legal supervised safe injection site in

North America, opened during his tenure. He also led Vancouver's public health response to the SARS epidemic. It has been quite some time since we have had a speaker of this caliber attend our luncheon and I would implore all of you to encourage your friends & family to join us in welcoming Captain Blatherwick to our luncheon!

Pete

Just a reminder to all that use of the underground parking at the Grand Hotel is free and there is an elevator from the underground parking garage to the main lobby of the hotel!