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Volume 60 Issue 7



Serving Shilo, Sprucewoods & Douglas since 1947

April 1, 2021

INSIDE This Issue



Cursed Coffee Co unveils new shop logo Page 6



CANEX staffer receives 2VP CO's coin Page 8



Honorary Colonel arrives April Fools' Day Page 8



1RCHA cook Cpl Yannick Gagnon adds a little spice during his dinner preparation prior to the arrival of hungry Gunners. *Photos Supplied*



Grilled Club house wraps (above) with onion rings, and also three club house salad wraps for soldiers with dietary restriction — the cook's Thursday lunch.

TC applauds Cpl Gagnon's diverse menu choices

Jules Xavier
Shilo Stag

Op PALACI Roto 2 Troop Commander (TC) Lt Matt McGall never goes hungry when he's overseeing the work being done by Gunners from 1RCHA.

With 1RCHA's B Bty when he's back at CFB Shilo, the lieutenant says the soldiers under his command all agree their dietary requirements are being met — and more thanks to 1RCHA A Bty cook Cpl Yannick Gagnon.

"The soldiers deployed here on Op PALACI have nothing but good things to say about the cook's meals," he told the *Stag*.

"Meal timings are ones which they never fail to meet."

According to Lt McGall, having a military cook like Cpl Gagnon as part of the team is great for soldiers' morale and appetites when they are doing a lot of work out in nature with the 105mm C3 howitzer, plus the fresh air also helping to work up a hearty appetite just in time for supper.

"Having a good cook is absolutely essential to our operation — especially with the way COVID-19 has us postured. Because of COVID-19 public health measures, we limit trips

into Revelstoke, BC, to two soldiers a maximum of twice per week.

"This amplifies the feelings of isolation. Being able to rely on our cook to provide both healthy and flavourful food is critical to maintenance of the soldiers' morale."

What does Lt McGall think about Cpl Gagnon's culinary offerings on the menu's daily offerings during Op PALACI?

"[Cpl Gagnon's] menu selection has been extremely diverse," he offered. "We very seldom eat the same main course twice."

"Not only does he cater to all of our troops' dietary restrictions, but he does so in a way that makes their food as enjoyable as possible. Furthermore, he does it efficiently by minimizing waste."

Returning from their artillery posts along the Trans-Canada Highway through Rogers Pass in Glacier National Park, Lt McGall now has a favourite meal from Cpl Gagnon's varied menu he can look forward to enjoying back in the dining hall.

"He once made fresh loaves of cinnamon bread, then proceeded to use slices of that bread to make French toast topped with a cream cheese icing," he enthused, "all paired with bacon, hash browns and fresh fruit."

When it comes to comfort foods, Cpl Ga-

gnon is cognizant of what to prepare for soldiers' box lunches when they are out in frigid mountain conditions or what they need for dinner for the last meal of the day.

"When we go out to shoot, the cook is an integral part of ensuring we're covered with respect to the food we eat," said Lt McGall. "He provides us box lunches with snacks inside."

He added, "Most often we begin our shoots in the early hours of the morning [0000-0400]. When this is the case, our cook prepares us breakfast sandwiches to-go."

"When we return from our shoots, he prepares soup, chili or a stew of some sort and usually pairs it with fresh baking."

If Cpl Gagnon was running a restaurant instead of his kitchen for the 1RCHA soldiers he would earn kudos from those who experience his culinary creativity, according to Lt McGall. And his own contribution working alongside the Gunners preparing their firing areas has not gone unnoticed, too.

"The cook we deployed with on this rotation has been key to ensuring our morale and welfare. He has gone above and beyond the expectations given to him and actively seeks to integrate with the firing troop. His efforts deserve every ounce of recognition they get."

For more turn to page 4



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Deadline for submissions is the Thursday prior to the week of publication. Submissions can be sent to the Stag via email at stag@mymts.net, dropped off at the Stag office located in CANEX or via Inter-base mail.

Submitting articles and photos for print:

- Please submit articles as a MS Word Document.
- Include the author's full name, rank, unit and contact information.
- Include photos with your articles whenever possible, however, do not embed photos in word documents.
- Please submit photos as high resolution jpegs (if scanned 300 dpi), digital images or in hard copy format.
- With photos, include a cutline which names the individuals in the photo; what's taking place; and the name, rank, and unit of the photographer.

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CAF members receive pay increase

Stag Special

Most Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members can expect to see something extra in their pay this month.

Starting March 31, eligible CAF members will receive a general pay increase, effective retroactively to April 1, 2018 and covering the past three fiscal years.

Those who may be eligible for a lump sum back-payment include Regular or Reserve Force Non-commissioned members, general service officers and pilots at the rank of lieutenant-colonel and commander and below, as well as medical and dental officers.

This pay increase does not apply to senior officers at the rank of colonels and captains (Navy) and above.

Their rates are managed separately and at this time, no decision has been made regarding an increase for them.

The compounded increase of 6.1 per cent demonstrates Canada's continued support of CAF members, fairly compensating them for their continued service.

The Government of Canada recognizes and appreciates the outstanding contributions and sacrifices made by CAF members and their families in service to our country.

The back payment covers retroactive increases starting April 1, 2018, calculated as follows: effective April 1, 2018, an economic increase of 2.8 per cent; effective April 1, 2019, an economic increase of 2.2 per cent; and effective April 1, 2020, an economic increase of 1.0 per cent.

CAF members can view their new pay rate or statement electronically via Employee Member Access Application

(EMAA), as individual payments will depend on rank, pay increment (PI), and time worked in each category.

CAF members who released after March 31, 2018 will be eligible for a lump sum back payment and adjustments to their Canadian Forces Severance Pay based on the new rates effective at release March 31 of this year.

Former members who have not received the lump sum back payment by the end of this April should contact the release benefits administration via e-mail at release_benefits_administration@forces.gc.ca to inquire about their own specific case.

An estimated 10,000 former CAF members received CF Severance Pay at the time of their release; these amounts will be recalculated, with adjustments sent to the former members' bank accounts over the next few months.

This updates the rates of pay for the majority of CAF members with an economic increase aligned to the salary improvements reached through the collective bargaining process for employees of the Core Public Administration of the Public Service of Canada.

The Department of National Defence (DND) and the CAF recognize the need to ensure that military compensation remains fair and relevant, to ensure the attraction and retention of the highest standard of personnel required for the challenges of service in the profession of arms.

Treasury Board approval of these increases recognizes the value of military members, strengthens overall morale, supports Strong, Secure, and Engaged initiatives in attraction and retention, and strengthens the larger employment model of the CAF.

Bulk garbage pick-up starts May 25

Jules Xavier Shilo Stag

Mark May 25 and 26 on your kitchen calendar if you have bulk garbage collecting dust in your PMQ basement or garage.

Those are the days Real Property Operations Unit (West) - Detachment Shilo (RPOU-W) workers will be out to collect your items left out at the end of the driveway.

"Items are not to be placed earlier than the evening of [May 24]," said RPOU-W OC Maj Duncan Cornish. "As per the CFHA notice, all appliances that contain freon — fridges, A/Cs, water coolers etc — will not be picked up by the fall bulk garbage pick-up. Residents may disposed of those items at the Eastview landfill site."

Further information can be found at the City of Brandon landfill overview website www.brandon.ca/sanitation/landfill/landfill-overview

If you have been collecting bulk garbage at home since it was last picked up last October, there is another alternative you can do without leaving the Base, according to Maj Cornish.

"Shilo dump remains available for bulk garbage drop off throughout the year. It is located three kilometres east of CANEX following Aldershot Road and is open Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m."

Formerly Engineering Services (CE), RPOU-W Det Shilo provides the infrastructure and municipal services found in most cities. Under the guidance of the OC, all activities pertaining to the design, construction and maintenance of works, buildings, roads and grounds as well as the operation of utility systems — heat, water and sewage treatment are looked after by RPOU-W

Maj Cornish and his staff are responsible for real property management services of more than 220 buildings encompassing 165,188.83 m² of floor space and an additional



Maj Duncan Cornish asks that you leave your bulk garbage out the night before pick-up when RPOU-W Det Shilo staff arrive May 25 and 26.

Photo Jules Xavier/Shilo Stag

100,000 acres of range and training area.

If you have trouble calls dial 204-721-3000 ext 3111/3117. After hours call ext 3383.

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COVID modifications in place for re-opened library, says head librarian

Kimberley Kielley
Shilo Stag

This past year was one for the books at the Shilo Community Library.

Head librarian Patricia Wells has been working there for just shy of 15 years.

When COVID-19 struck, the Shilo Community Library closed for three months — until Wells devised a plan to put books back into reader's hands.

"From mid-March to mid-June, there was no traffic in the library," Wells explained.

Taking a page from provincial libraries' approach to the pandemic, Wells created a pick-up and drop-off system for library patrons to access the just-under 20,000 book collection.

For more than two weeks, Wells and assistant librarian Jessica Doucette contacted patrons to inform them of the curbside pick-up and drop-off system she had created. The response was good as committed patrons eagerly took advantage of a way to access the library.

Utilizing the library's social media tools, patrons were encouraged to visit the online catalogue at www.mssc.mb.catalogue.librairies.coop



Head librarian Patricia Wells organizes her bookshelves now that the Base library has re-opened. Photo Kimberley Kielley/Shilo Stag

There, they placed the books they chose on hold. Then the books were pulled from the shelves and readied for pick-up.

The system worked quite well, according to Wells.

"Patrons were actually quite happy to have access to the library."

Once the green light was given for allowing patrons to return to the library, modifications for COVID took place.

"We had to have barriers installed, front and back, and a sanitization station on the wall," she said. A sign-in sheet sits on the front counter for contact tracing, she pointed out.

"Only five people are allowed in at a time or a family of six if they're from the same household."

Choosing a book from the shelf also requires special consideration, Wells explained. "People come in and pick a book off the shelf. They leaf through it and maybe don't want it. They have to put the book on a cart. Then it gets sanitized."

Wells places newly dropped off books in "quarantine" for 24 to 48 hours. Then, she sanitizes them including the countertops with alcohol wipes and spray. Some libraries leave the books for several days, she explained.

While curbside pick-up is no longer offered, Wells said

the option of holding a book online still exists while using social media like Facebook — Shilo Community Library, e-mail, telephone or text or visiting the online catalogue.

While the pandemic continues to grip the Base, story time has been suspended indefinitely. Memberships are free and military members, their families and civilians working on the Base living in Douglas, Wawanesa and Brandon are welcome and continue to have access.

Collaborative work earns MWO Osztian 3CDSG award

Shilo Stag



MWO Sean Osztian received his 3CDSG commendation from BComd LCol Jeff Lyttle.

For demonstrating exemplary leadership and dedication to the sustainment of Base Food operations while coping with the COVID-19 pandemic from March 13 to July 2, 2020, MWO Sean Osztian has been recognized by 3CDSG's command team.

Working from HQ or Flatlands dining hall as the Deputy B Foods O, MWO Osztian was presented with a 3CDSG command team commendation by BComd LCol Jeff Lyttle out front of Base HQ.

He also received a 3CDSG Commander coin from Col Patrick Lemyre and GSM CWO Mark von Kalben.

The command team commendation reads: "MWO Osztian worked collaboratively with Strat J4 Foods to amend policy resulting in the recognition that an additional chapter is required in the Food Service Manual related to sustaining kitchen facility operations during a pandemic state."

Actions taken by MWO Osztian's contributed to maintaining the health and safety of all team members to the credit of the Canadian Army (CA).

MWO Osztian will be heading east this summer during the annual posting season — off to Toronto, Ont., where he'll work for 4 Div.

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1RCHA deployed to Rogers Pass on Op PALACI since 1961

SOLDIERS, AVALANCHE EXPERTS ENJOY COOK'S CINNAMON BUNS ON ROTO 2

Jules Xavier
Shilo Stag

"I'm going to have to start charging for my cinnamon buns recipe," laughs 1RCHA cook Cpl Yannick Gagnon.

The lone cook deployed from 1RCHA on Op PALACI Roto 2, the 1990-born soldier is in bed usually before 10:30 p.m. because of a busy daily schedule which runs Monday to Friday starting at 6:15 a.m.

With the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) for more than seven years, first thing on Cpl Gagnon's to-do list is make fresh muffins and prepare breakfast for awakening Gunners and Troop Commander (TC) Lt Matt McCall for service at 7:30 a.m.

Having been at CFB Shilo for three years this September — his first posting was 14 Wing Greenwood, NS, from January 2014 to August 2018 — Cpl Gagnon's weekend cooking schedule starts with an 11 a.m. brunch.

"I use that time in the morning to be able to Facetime my children as they live in Nova Scotia which has a four-hour time difference," he said.

1RCHA's MCpl Travis Sleep had Roto 1 as cook, working from Nov. 15, 2020 to Feb. 5 before Cpl Gagnon arrived Feb. 1. His Roto 2 is expected to end by April 31 if the advent of spring ensures avalanche conditions are no longer troublesome to keep the vital Trans-Canada Highway and adjacent Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) lines open through Rogers Pass in Glacier National Park.

While Cpl Gagnon does the cooking, he does have a nine-soldier rotation from the 17 deployed to BC where they all take turns being GDs (General Duty's) in the kitchen.

What is Op PALACI? It is the CAF's support for Parks Canada's program to control avalanches in the Selkirk Mountains.

Commercial traffic passing through Rogers Pass has been valued in the billions of dollars, so keeping the highway and rail lines is of economic importance during the winter months.

Parks Canada staff team up with 1RCHA soldiers on a



1RCHA cook Cpl Yannick Gagnon shows off his culinary creation from the kitchen — double smoked bacon Mac and Cheese.

Photos supplied

he explained, acknowledging there are four other soldiers at CFB Shilo who have had AVCON experience besides himself.

They are Deputy B Foods O MWO Sean Osztian, Foods facility manager WO Robert Young, 1RCHA cook Cpl Matt Winkie and MCpl Sleep.

Besides cooking, serving of food has taken on new challenges because of the pandemic. Cpl Gagnon serves everything as individual plates being set aside, and hungry soldiers and Parks Canada staff help themselves before sitting spaced out in the dining room. There's no more communal line-up and

daily basis, with the avalanche experts monitoring and evaluating the snow conditions in Rogers Pass.

They can predict when and where avalanches are most likely to occur. After identifying a potential avalanche, the provide this data to the Gunners manning their strategically positioned artillery posts. They then direct their fire on registered targets.

To negate a potential avalanche, 1RCHA use explosive shells to trigger safe, controlled avalanches. This prevents snow build-up which would produce dangerous, uncontrolled avalanches.

Sharing his story virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cpl Gagnon adheres to the CAF COVID protocols in his kitchen and dining area.

He wears more than a chef's hat while toiling over his stove — gloves and mask are now part of his culinary white uniform.

He bakes in the morning and most meals will see soldiers enjoying a fresh baked dessert.

"I always try to keep it healthy,"



Lunch is served — Op PALACI Roto 2 soldiers arrive at the kitchen Tuesday to a cold cut sandwich and a steaming bowl of French onion soup.

you help yourself with portions.

Cpl Gagnon said 99 per cent of the time there's no one asking for seconds because they leave the table with full bellies after each meal. That's a moment of pride for him because no one is going to bed hungry, and there's little leftovers for midnight snacks.

Soldiers are allowed to drink two beers per day based on the operational SOP, so the two Bar NCOs travel to town twice a week to replenish the beer fridge.

With the average time for an artillery shoot running from 10 to 16 hours in the middle of a good snow storm most of the time, what does cook Cpl Gagnon do?

"I take advantage of this time by getting out the kitchen" he explained, "Because I am a qualified plow truck driver I try my best to keep the gun barn, parking area and entry ways clear of snow."

"I like doing this also for the fact I know when soldiers come back from the shoot the last thing they want to be doing is having to shovel and plow snow again."

Here's what he shared with the *Stag* in a virtual Q&A from the comforts of his AVCON residence in a secluded spot in the BC mountains. He has his own bedroom and shower facilities behind the kitchen, so he does not wake up snoozing soldiers still tucked in their bunks elsewhere in the building.

Shilo Stag (SS) What's your approach to coming up with a daily menu for each of the meals eaten by the soldiers? You following the Canada Food Guide and covering the four food groups?

Cpl Yannick Gagnon (YG): "I run a four-week cycle menu. When I am building my menu, I take lots into account, including Canada Food Guide, overall diversity in meals, healthy aspects and the over all moral of the troops."

"Running a four-week cycle at AVCON helps a lot because it will make it so we have minimal amount of waste at the end of Roto 2. As the building we use is not being used during the summer months."

See **DIETARY** page 5

Avalanche experts enjoy Army cooking

Jules Xavier
Shilo Stag

When it comes to co-ordinating efforts with 1RCHA's soldiers manning their 105mm C3 howitzers, Parks Canada's avalanche experts are privy to the culinary skills of Cpl Yannick Gagnon.

Just ask avalanche operations officer Danyelle Magnan, who works out of both Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks, during Op PALACI.

Currently on Roto 2 for the 2020-21 season, Magnan enjoys being fed by an Army cook when she's not in the mountains analyzing the snow pack offered up in Rogers Pass in Glacier National Park.

"Often our control missions extend into [or start during] the overnight period, resulting in a very long day," she explained during an interview with the *Stag*. "We really appreciate the support of the Army cooks, providing us with meals during these extended missions so we can focus on the important work we are doing."

And it's important work so there's no closure of the Trans-Canada Highway during the winter months because of an avalanche.

When she does experience Cpl Gagnon's culinary skills

— there's one item on his menu which she looks forward to in the morning hours: "Breakfast sandwiches are my favourite, hands down!" she offered.

How important is it to have a full belly when going out to do the job Magnan does in helping 1RCHA's soldiers hit their targets using the 105mm C3 howitzer?

"Being well fed keeps all of our energy levels up and our minds sharp to maintain focus during these extended missions," she said. "The health and well-being of all avalanche program team members is important to ensure their own safety as well as the safety of all those travelling through this section of the national transportation corridor."

Working alongside 1RCHA soldiers has been interesting for Magnan and her Parks Canada teammates — especially observing them in action firing their artillery rounds into areas where it's deemed important to negate avalanches from happening.

"Parks Canada has been working in partnership with DND since 1961 and I am always proud of the work we do together, collaborating to keep the highway and rail-line safe," she said.

"The professionalism and expertise of both Parks Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces personnel, under Operation PALACI, for the avalanche control program in Glacier National Park, has ensured the program's success for the

last 60 years."

How does one become an avalanche expert in Magnan's trade working for the national park system, where mountains play a part during the winter months? Is there special schooling when it comes to dealing with mountain snow?

"The beauty of working in the avalanche industry is that there is always more to learn," she explained. "Many years go into developing the skills needed to work safely in avalanche terrain, and to understand the intricacies of the avalanche threat. Generally, people start out taking recreational level avalanche courses, and build their experience."

She added, "In order to work as an avalanche technician our staff require professional level training provided by the Canadian Avalanche Association. To reach the avalanche operations officer level [like me], there is easily a decade worth of professional level courses required in addition to on-the-job experience."

Besides Cpl Gagnon's breakfast sandwiches there's another item from his menu list which piques her interest in the morning. And she's willing to trade her own favourite recipes to obtain it so she can make at home.

"One of my current faves [recipes] is slow cooker pulled pork enchiladas and my homemade granola is a staple," she said. "I would happily share my recipes with Cpl Gagnon if he shares his cinnamon bun recipe with me!"

From page 4

SS: How do you grocery shop based on your daily menus? Bulk buying ordering from a nearby grocery store, or is it preferential to go and do your own shopping? Where do you go grocery shopping for your food items?

YG: "We have two different ways we acquire are groceries. 1 GFS [Gordon Food Service] I definitely order most of my groceries from there. I have a delivery that comes every Wednesday morning, now with GFS I must have the order submitted by no later than 4:30 p.m.

"I also have access to an online ordering program with the local groceries store in Revelstoke I will use. Having the access to a groceries online shopping store helps a lot by being able to get items in a smaller quantity and also helps with the individuals who have meal restrictions. We have two soldiers who go in to town to pick up mail and other items which they also pick up the order."

SS: What's your idea on providing, as a cook, comfort foods for the troops — perhaps once a week — like Kraft Dinner, hotdogs, burgers and fries, chicken noodle soup and sandwiches/subs or French toast/pancakes?

YG: "I build my menu so it felt like you were eating something totally different everyday, besides breakfast during the week. I have soup and sandwich Tuesday. I do a pub night on Friday which gives the soldiers the opportunity to be able to have a alcoholic beverage in the lodge down stairs as I also bring the food down to the lounge.

"Every Sunday supper I always try and do something a little more on the fine dining side of things. I also do breakfast specials for brunch every Saturday and Sunday [like serving] Eggs Benedict, farmers skillet, apple cinnamon strudel pancakes. But overall, I try and keep it very flavourful and healthy minded."

SS: How do you handle dietary requirements for the soldiers you are feeding — lactose tolerant, vegan or Gluten free?

YG: "This is really when experience comes in to play and being able to fully understand the daily nutrition requirements that are needed for all of the various health and religious eating restriction.

"But a lot of the time I like to sit with the individuals and just get a taste [no pun intended] of what kind of foods they like and dislike.

"Currently, I have two soldiers who are both Gluten intolerant, and I have had a lot of experience with this and also having cooked for one of the soldiers during AVCON Roto 2 in 2019.

"In my previous two Rotos up here, I have also had one soldier with IBS and another who was Vegan."

SS: Why is it important your soldiers are well-fed before they head out to do their job keeping the vital Trans-Canada Highway open through Rogers Pass in Glacier National Park?

YG: "It is absolutely vital not just the soldiers, but also the Parks Canada ACS crew are very well feed. When both Parks Canada and the soldiers are getting ready to deploy the days prior for myself are pretty busy, from having to make box lunches that are going to have enough calories and food so they can all successfully conduct avalanche [control].

"I also have hay boxes here so when the crews are out for longer than eight hours I am able to provide them with a hot meal to eat."

SS: What type of feedback do you receive from your fellow 1RCHA soldiers or Parks Canada staff when it comes to meal planning?

YG: "For myself, the best feedback I receive is a quite dining room during meal time. Because that means they are all



Cpl Yannick Gagnon enjoys an opportunity to be out with the Gunners preparing their gun decks, here showing off an axe he used to chip away thick ice during avalanche clearing in BC's Rogers Pass prior to the COVID pandemic last year. *Photo Supplied*

Dietary needs met with cook surveying soldiers about their food likes, dislikes

eating and enjoying the food.

"But all of my Rotos have been very respectful by just saying thank-you or just having them come down from their rooms in the middle of the afternoon wondering what I am making since it smells so good."

SS: What are they asking for you to cook, from breakfast to supper?

YG: "This Roto is hotdogs, and for myself I am not a fan of them so it was hard having to serve them. But when I got to see just how excited they were having me cook hotdogs for them it just made it all worth it."

SS: How do you keep it mixed up and not routine on your menu list when it comes to feeding hungry soldiers heading out in the morning or when they are back for supper after a long day of firing their 105mm C3 howitzers?

YG: "At anytime of the day the soldiers have access to cereal, fresh fruit and veggies, bread, bagels and also some of the leftovers of the previous meal."

SS: What's your favourite meal to prepare for the soldiers? Why?

YG: "Farmer Eggs Benedict breakfast skillet — because who does not like steak, ham, bacon, breakfast sausage, pepper, onions, hash browns with two over-easy eggs topped off with some yummy hollandaise sauce and garnished with a little parsley and shredded cheese?"

"And I just love making this because no matter what time of the day I make this meal, I have never met a soldier who has not been full of excitement."

SS: What's your go-to meal for any occasion if your supplies are running out, and you need to make a trip to the grocery store?

YG: "Grilled ham and cheese sandwich, with a fresh cream of tomato soup. I have found you don't need to do much to please the average soldier. Just a nice fresh hot meal. And coffee, lots of coffee."

SS: What is the favourite meal you cook and receive the most kudos from your soldiers, and if they could have you prepare it for every meal? Why is that meal a favourite?

YG: "For this Roto its not much a meal, but more about the cinnamon buns, so I will occasionally wake up even ear-

lier so when it's time for breakfast they can have some fresh out-of-the-oven cinnamon buns.

"Myself, my favourite meal is pretty simple: barbecue chicken with couscous and veggies. I could eat this every day and be a happy man!"

SS: When it comes to providing healthy meals, how much meat and vegetables go into your cooking? Or are you finding your customers at the dinner table prefer rice, pasta and salads?

YG: "I would say that at least 60 per cent of my meals are veggies, 25 per cent protein and 15 per cent carbohydrates."

SS: How do you deal with the sweet tooth of your soldiers? What are their preferences when it comes to desserts?

YG: "If you were to talk to any of the previous soldiers I have cooked for at AVCON they will probably tell you I do not have a sweet tooth.

"Now that does not mean I don't occasionally surprise the soldiers with dessert, but I also always make fresh muffins in the morning which are always a very big hit.

"I try my best to provided the soldiers with access to a fresh fruit salad at every meal."

SS: What does having cooks on an operation or exercise mean to the soldiers who you serve with your culinary skills?

YG: "To the soldiers it means they are going to be getting one or two hot meals a day. And I personally believe with every single operation, deployment or exercise there's always that crew of cooks in the back ground who not many remember about, but are a very very big part of the absolute success of the mission of protecting are great land of Canada."

SS: Is there a meal you've cooked for your soldiers which received poor reviews and you no longer add to the menu?

YG: "Yes, last year when I was up here for Roto 1 and when I was making the creole seasoning for the jambalaya, I may have put just a little too much cayenne pepper in it.

"Most tried to eat it, but just could not muster it. Now, I definitely still have it on the menu because who does not like a good old Louisianan night, but now I just make it with a lot less cayenne."

SS: What have you noticed about hungry soldiers when they come back from a vigorous day out in the mountain fresh air and after firing their 105mm C3 howitzer at the far off targets to reduce avalanches? Little food left because they are extra hungry?

YG: "All they want is a nice warm bowl of soup with a fresh bread roll, a nice warm shower and some sleep."

SS: While you might be the cook, and keep the army bellies full, how do your fellow Gunners give you an opportunity to escape the kitchen and be part of what they do out in nature?

YG: "I also go to the gym for three hours, five times a week when I am up here. But I also try my best to go out with the soldiers sometimes to do some ring maintenance or join in the occasional Wednesday afternoon sport.

"But usually in the evenings you will find me in the lounge watching TV or sports and just having fun with the guys."

SS: Finally, why choose the cook trade when you joined the CAF to serve your country?

YG: "I joined the cooks' trade because I wanted to do something within the military I knew would make a very big impact on the overall success and readiness of the CAF as a whole."

Cpl Gagnon takes pride in his deployment on this domestic operation in the BC mountains.

As a cook, he has the most combined rounds fired at the moment from three combined Rotos — round total is 914 and counting as this story went to press.

For Cpl Gagnon's cinnamon buns recipe see page 6

"If you were to talk to any of the previous soldiers I have cooked for at AVCON they will probably tell you I do not have a sweet tooth. Now that does not mean I don't occasionally surprise the soldiers with dessert, but I also always make fresh muffins in the morning which are always a very big hit."

— 1RCHA cook Cpl Yannick Gagnon

Renamed Cursed Coffee Co has potential, says owner

Kimberley Kielley

Shilo Stag

"I've always joked I'm cursed," said owner Rayna Moffat of the newly named coffee shop Cursed Coffee Co.

The logo sports a railway spike driven through the center of a coffee bean.

Apparently, this negates any bad juju Moffat pointed out.

"The spike protects against any curses," she laughed.

The spike originates from the back room, a left-over from the previous owner. The coffee bean should be obvious and matches a tattoo on Moffat's arm.

She has a few tattoos. A wheelbarrow, semi-colon and palm tree. There's a story behind every one of them. And she'll tell you if you ask her.

As she puts a shelf together, 26-year-old Moffat doesn't shy away from challenges. Rolling up her sleeves and diving in, this is Moffat's first kick at the coffee can. She bought Forbidden Flavours in December 2019 after being laid off from a job in finance.

"I had a job and got laid off in July 2019," she recalled. "I was out of work when this place came up for sale."

Three months later COVID hit. It wasn't a good time to open anything let alone a coffee shop already established in CANEX.

Maybe it was the combination of her mentor and a background in finance and business administration which kept her going.

"I'm a numbers girl," she said.

She credits her former boss Richie from Marino's Pizza in Brandon for mentoring her and basically helping her keep her stick on the ice during the pandemic.

"I wouldn't be able to do it without him," she said.



Rayna Moffat has reason to smile after her new signage arrived for the renamed Cursed Coffee Co.

Photo Jules Xavier/Shilo Stag

Somehow, Moffat managed to hang on and now employs five staff who are mostly university students.

While her background in finance was definitely a bonus, Moffat always wanted to own a coffee shop. Since she was 13 anyway.

"I'd dream about the uniforms we'd wear," she recalled.

Owning Cursed Coffee Co has been a dream come true. She even registered the name so no one can claim it as their own, making Moffat's business unique.

"We did everything by the book," she said.

The psychology behind a cup of coffee can be a complex thing, explained Moffat. "Coffee is such an emotional thing. My husband does something nice for me every morning and makes my coffee for me. I go to Starbucks when I'm happy or having a bad day."

She wants Cursed Coffee Co to be "that" experience.

Cursed Coffee Co is armed with its own special blend of coffee and Moffat gets excited when she thinks about the potential her little coffee shop has.

A self-proclaimed food snob, she admits the weekly specials may become a little boujie. But that's the exciting part as she is finally departing from the previous menu because she's the boss.

In the meantime, she has plans to offer evening activities such as wine and cheese night, night appies, charcuterie boards and trivia night. The list goes on

and on.

There is a grand re-opening planned, but Moffat is waiting for her signage. And then full steam ahead.

"I'm very much trying to make an identity for us," she said. "I want to be a big part of the community."

TRCHA cook shares his popular recipe

Cpl Yannick Gagnon's Cinnamon Buns Recipe Yields 12 buns

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp active dry yeast
- 1 ½ cups warm water (110 degrees F)
- ½ cup of sugar
- ¼ cup of canola oil
- 3 ¼ cups of All Purpose flour
- 1 tsp of salt
- 1 cup of soft butter
- ½ cup of sugar
- ½ cup of brown sugar
- 1 tbsp cinnamon
- ½ cup of butter
- ½ cup of brown sugar

Directions:

Pre-heat oven 350 degrees

Place yeast, ½ cup of sugar in the bottom of a bowl — make sure the bowl can hold at least three cups of water — pour 1 ½ cups of hot water over both the yeast and sugar

Combine flour and salt in mixer or bowl

Wait about five minutes for the yeast to activate and then combine the liquid mixture, oil in to the flour and salt. Use the dough hook attachment on your mixer — or your hands in you don't have one — mix and kneel dough for about five minutes

Spray a bowl with Pam and place the dough in the bowl and then cover it with a warm damp cloth, wait till the dough has double in size

Place ½ cup of butter and ½ cup of brown sugar in a sauce pot and melt until it has dissolved all of the sugar. The pour the liquid in a 9x12 baking pan — make sure to spray the pan prior to this step

Combine ½ cup of sugar, ½ cup of brown sugar and cinnamon

When the dough has doubled in size lightly flour a work area and using a rolling pin, roll out the dough in to a rectangle shape having the dough at least ¼ inch thick

Spread soft butter over all of the rolled dough then sprinkle step seven over all of the butter

From one end of the dough start rolling, it tightly, end result should be a log looking roll

Using a serrated knife start cutting the log in to one-inch-wide piece placing them on top of the melted butter and brown sugar, making sure to leave a little space in between each roll

Let it proof again for about 30 minutes uncovered

Place in the pre-heated oven for 25 minutes

Immediately take the buns and flip them on to a cooling rack — make sure to have something under it so catch all the melting butter

Let cool, then enjoy



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LETTER HOME FROM FRANCE

Pte Minary apologies for awful scribbling in his letters

Editor's Note: During the First World War Pte Cecil Minary served in the CEF, beginning his military training at Camp Hughes prior to being shipped to England for further training. He saw his first action soon after Canada's involvement in the Battle of Vimy Ridge in France. His great-great-niece Kendra Minary has spent the COVID pandemic going thru the original letters he wrote home from England and France prior to being KIA on Aug. 28, 1918. The Lewis gunner died on the battlefield after his crew was hit by a German artillery shell. The Stag will share Kendra's great-great-uncle's letters with our Stag readers to give you a peek at what a soldier was contemplating with pencil and paper while in the UK training or in France in a trench waiting for the next attack or counter-attack. Cecil's letters are transcribed as they were written, so this includes his spelling, grammar and punctuation. Of note, from his letters home he rarely described his clashes with Fritz, instead preferring to enquire about life on the family farm or what his family and friends were doing back in Manitoba. Unlike some some soldiers who would share their war stories in their letters, Pte Minary had his own distinct writing style no matter if it's his dad, sister or a relative. He also made the job of Army censors easier by not including war details which would be blacked out. That's the reason why his letters are "somewhere in France" once he left England for the Western Front.

Somewhere in France
Sunday April 2nd 1917

Dear Edna,

Hello, well I am again and still feeling fine and dandy. I received your splendid letter of Feb. 11th yesterday and was glad to get it, I always like to get your letters for you write such nice chummy (sic) long ones, and say Edna those snaps you sent are splendid, especially the one off you by yourself; at least all my chums hear think so "ha ha" but to put all joking aside, you certainly look good in that picture.

There was a pretty big mail yesterday. I got five other letters besides yours, all good long ones too, but yours was the longest, one was from home one from Margaret Smith with a piece in it from dad, and then three from Berta Prette, a month between there dates from Jan 29th to Feb 28th.

I answered the one from home last night and yours tonight another tomorrow night and so on untill (sic) they are all answered, for one letter at a time is all that I can manage laziness or some thing the matter.

Please excuse this awfull (sic) scribbling for I'm stretched (sic) out full length on bed with a candle for a light and my water bottle for a writing desk, then there is a fellow just at my elbow cleaning his rifle and he is not keeping what you would call still but we should worry we're in France now. We are still in the third entrenching Battalion and have no idea when we are going to the Battalion mabe (sic) tomorrow mabe (sic) a month, we are out on work parties every day or night.

I worked March out and April in, up in the support trenches started at half past six in the evening and finished at two in the morning, we are still shelled every day or two but are getting used to that in a way now. My address is the same 829297 52nd Battalion Canadians BEF France.

Say Edna I met or rather he met me one of the Grey Boys he is in the third entrenching too, we were having an inspection one day and he seen my name on my equipment, he asked me where I come from and if I knew any Minary's in Ontario, it turned out that he came from near Uncle Daves and knows them all

his name is Doherty, I don't if that's spelt right or not, but its the best I can do.

I don't know where Uncle Joe Patterson is but I have a suspicion that he is in France and so am watching all the Canadian Motor lorries in hope of seeing him. My but we are having awfull (sic) weather here now, colder than Manitoba at this time of the year, there is a regular blizzard on here tonight, I was certainly lucky today to get on a day party.

You said you were home sick when your chum went home Well I feel that way quite often especially when I get a bunch of letters like I did last night. Well Edna I guess I'll have to sing off for this time as news are rather small and anyways I feeling kind of tired tonight, I have got a nice story to read entitled The Call of Fame by Mable Norris. The YMCA gives them free so I'll just roll into bed and have a good read.

So will close for this time hoping to hear from you soon again.

With love to all
From your Cousin Cecil

Vaccination roll-out on Base for soldiers expected to start around April 19

Kimberley Kielley
Shilo Stag

During a virtual town hall event, 11 CF H Svcs C presented an update on COVID-19 vaccinations for CFB Shilo's military members.

Deputy Base Surgeon Dr Steven Nordstrom and community health nurse Shannon Wall spoke to local military members by telephone, mobile app and through a virtual meeting application.

During the presentation, members learned about COVID-19 vaccines and the fundamentals of how it works. Members were brought up to speed on the CAF vaccine campaign.

It was the first COVID-19 community town hall meeting said Dr Nordstrom. There will be another meeting after spring break April 8.

In a Power Point presentation, Wall explained the COVID-19 vaccine is the best

chance to end the pandemic and return to normal activities. Military members will be receiving the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine (mRNA-1273).

"It is used to prevent COVID-19," according to the Health Canada website. "The vaccine is approved for people who are 18 years of age and older. Its safety and effectiveness in people younger than 18 years of age have not yet been established."

Wall explained of the side effects, most are mild and occur in one to three days and resolve themselves. It's rare to have serious side effects which occur in every two to three million doses.

However, she explained catching COVID may impact a CAF member's ability to do their job, particularly going on deployment. Military members do not work in isolation. As a result, the potential for infecting co-workers and family members is great.

The Moderna vaccine is not a live vaccine, she explained. It never enters the DNA of

cells. The protein in the vaccine disappears from our bodies in a short time, creating antibodies in the process.

"After we get the vaccine, our bodies will recognize the protein and fight the virus."

While it isn't mandatory for CAF members to receive the vaccine, she explained it's strongly recommended as herd immunity isn't as reliable as the vaccine. Long-term effects of the virus are still unknown.

Wall said it's normal to experience side effects after receiving a vaccination. Our body is generating antibodies.

"An allergic reaction is very rare," she said.

Wall acknowledged there hasn't been any serious side effects noted in the CAF since the vaccine program began.

"Public health measures will continue until everyone is vaccinated. As long as the virus continues to mutate, we have to continue vaccinating."

The recommendation is that everyone be-

come immunized. For CAF members who are immune suppressed, unwell, pregnant or breastfeeding, it is their responsibility to reach out to the clinician prior to receiving the vaccine and inform them of their specific circumstances.

Wall recommends CAF members educate themselves on the Moderna vaccine prior to receiving their vaccine or reach out to 11 H Svcs if they have questions.

Then book the appointment for receiving the vaccine and bring your vaccine booklet with you. Once the vaccine has been administered, members must stay for 15 minutes to have any reaction monitored. Members are encouraged to report anything serious after receiving their vaccination, Wall recommended.

Dr Nordstrom expects the vaccination roll-out to begin around April 19, with the campaign lasting eight weeks. The second dose of the vaccine will be administered 28 days after the initial one.

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COVID-19 UPDATES for CFB SHILO

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April 1 ideal day to announce Honorary Colonel

Shilo Stag

An announcement from Base HQ will be made at noon today regarding the appointment of a Hollywood star to a prominent role on the Base.

Personnel with 2PPCLI and 1RCHA will attend the press conference expected to attract a horde of western Canadian media because of the status of the Canadian-born actor.

"Regarding this appointment, I'm thrilled to announce Kim Cattrall from Comox, BC, has accepted the appointment of Honorary Colonel of not just 1RCHA, but also 2PPCLI," said US Army BGen Sloof Lirpa, here on a military exchange with the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). "We've been looking for a high profile Canadian to take on this role, and she's been gracious enough to support not just one unit, but both units at CFB Shilo."

Intending to take on a similar role with the RCAF at CFB Comox — the home she grew up nearby before moving to the United States to begin her acting career is adjacent to the Base — Cattrall chose the Canadian Army because of the histories associated with PPCLI and RCHA.

"Look at what the soldiers have done with the Patricia's and the Gunners during the last century in different wars, and I thought it would be an honour to be their Honorary Colonel," offered Cattrall while relaxing in BComd LCol Jeff Lyttle's office. "This is as big an honour to be asked as having my hand prints on the Hollywood Walk of Fame or winning an Emmy for playing Samantha on *Sex and the City*."

For those not familiar with Cattrall's work, the former *Sex and the City* star had her breakout movie role in a Canadian comedy called *Porky's*, then earned praise from the Hollywood press for her roles in such films as *Mannequin*, *Police Academy*, *My Boy Jack* and *Big Trouble in Little China*.

On the occasion of this major CAF announcement, BGen Lirpa said the US Army has a number of Hollywood stars who are big supporters of the military, and are quick to add their support if approached like Bob Hope used to do with his tours in Korea and Vietnam.

"Ordinarily, I don't get too excited about making announcements, but because I'm a big fan of *Sex and the City*, and especially Kim's role as Samantha, I was equally honoured when asked if I would like to introduce her to the soldiers, and officers on this Base as part of the appointment."

LCol Lyttle conceded his favourite Cattrall movie is the 2007 drama *My Boy Jack* based on David Haig's 1997 play *My Boy Jack*, which also featured *Harry Potter* star Daniel Radcliffe playing author Rudyard Kipling's son Jack. The story is related to Kipling losing his son on the battlefield during the Great War.

"Seeing Kim arrive on the Base on the first day of April to represent both 2PPCLI and 1RCHA means a lot to the soldiers who call CFB Shilo home," said LCol Lyttle. "Having visiting US Army BGen Sloof Lirpa introduce Kim at noon out front of our headquarters is an added bonus because he's such a big fan of our Canadian actor."

Editor's note: For those who missed the April 1 event, there's always next year if BGen Sloof Lirpa — his unique name spelled in verse reads April Fools' — announces a new Honorary Colonel for the Base. Note, take the first letter of each paragraph and see what it spells.



Canadian actor Kim Cattrall will be introduced at Base HQ today by US BGen Sloof Lirpa as the Honorary Colonel for 2PPCLI and 1RCHA.

Photo Jules Xavier/Shilo Stag

CANEX veteran Kim Charles receives 2PPCLI CO's coin for her dedicated service

Stag Staff

Veteran CANEX staffer Kim Charles, who makes sure the beer, wine and liquor stock is replenished while ordering from the confines of her office space tucked behind the coolers for booze, dairy products and Red Bull, has been recognized by 2PPCLI CO LCol Michael Reekie.

She was recently presented with a CO's coin from LCol Reekie at CANEX in front of her peers and manager Rick Kehler.

In his letter to Charles, he wrote: "I would like to take this

opportunity to extend our sincerest appreciation for the efforts of Kim Charles in support to the morale and welfare of 2PPCLI.

"Her assistance to the Battalion canteen has been instrumental in ensuring our troops are well cared for, whether if be in Garrison, on exercise, or deployed.

"She has time and time again demonstrated a keen understanding of what the soldiers want and need, and has gone above and beyond countless times to make sure our soldiers get the morale boost they need.

"Kim has always gone out of her way to ensure all orders are filled promptly as possible, something that was particularly pertinent during the Christmas period, where sustainment of our Operation LASER force was via unpredictable air movement.

"On more than one occasion, her expertise has been utilized to increase the efficiency of the canteen."



CANEX staffer Kim Charles shows off the 2PPCLI CO's coin she received from LCol Michael Reekie, when he visited the Base store to meet her and manager Rick Kehler.

Photo Jules Xavier/Shilo Stag

He added, "During the deployments to Shamattawa First Nation and Red Sucker Lake First Nation, on her own accord during her vacation, she ensured CANEX was stocked to ensure our troops have whatever they needed.

"She also helped to alleviate concerns the company quartermasters have had, re-absorbing any returning field canteen stock, and allowing them to order sufficient quantities for the expected duration of deployment.

"Kim has been so instrumental over the last six months in supporting the Battalion that without her, a minimum, 50 per cent of the field canteen orders would not have been actioned in time to support operations in northern Manitoba.

"While the last six months have been quite busy for 2PPCLI, it has been all that much easier due to the exceptional supported provided by Kim Charles."

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