

The GROUNDSHEET

The Publication of The Royal Westminster Regiment Association

*'Dedicated to the ideals and comradeship
we knew in wars and peace in our
service both home and abroad.'*

'Pro Rege et Patria'

The Armoury, 530 Queens Avenue
New Westminster, B.C., V3L 1K3

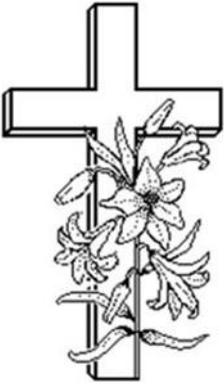
www.royal-westies-assn.ca



Volume 2022 / Issue 3
December 2022

Merry Christmas

In Memoriam



Sid Estey
David Jeffs

03 November 2022
12 November 2022

The Royal Westminster Regiment
The Royal Westminster Regiment Band

Health & Welfare

It would be appreciated if all members of The Regimental family would report births, marriages and deaths within our membership and their families. I am sure with such a young Regiment there will be lots of babies born. So please drop us a line if you know anything.

Proud day for the Skrebsky family

Sgt Skrebsky got promoted to WO.

WO Skrebsky had a baby boy with MCpl Skrebsky. The baby boy was born on 14 November 2022 at Royal Columbian, weighing 8lb 9oz. Name is Jakob Jan Paul Skrebsky.

President's Report

Hello everyone, our activities and that of the Battalion continue to return perhaps to the new normal. We resurrected the “Smoker” which we held on 15 October. There is more detail in the article in this edition. Both the Officers’ Mess and Warrants and Sergeants’ Mess held mess dinners after a gap of two years. Numbers at our monthly coffee mornings have been increasing. Also, very recently the Dinner for the Soldiers, served by the Officers and Senior NCOs (which used to be called the Christmas Dinner) was held in the Armoury on 10 December following a day of sports and shooting activities for the soldiers.

My assessment is that the Association has had a relatively good year, certainly in terms of getting back to into more of a business routine and being able to host events.

Looking ahead, planning is well underway for our trip to Europe in 2025 to cover the battles of the 47th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in France and Belgium, and of the Westminster Regiment in the Netherlands.

We could use your support in encouraging members that have left the Battalion to become a member of the Association and indeed come Association events such as the Melfa Dinner and Golf Tournament, the Smoker (in the Fall) as well as the Remembrance Day Parade.

I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas, or holiday break and all the best for the New Year.

Bill White
President

Your Executive
2020-2021

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Ernie Bodrogi

Hello fellow Association members:

Merry Christmas to all Westies I hope everyone is staying warm, and not getting snowed in.

It has been a very busy year for the Association under the direction of our president Bill White. The planning got under way for our Melfa weekend late but everything fell into place and was a great time, The golf game went off without a hitch then the dinner was held Saturday evening. Nice to see so many people that I haven't seen in a long time. The AGM was held Sunday at lunch time, would have been nice to see more members attend. Please mark your calendar for **the last weekend of May 2023** for the Melfa weekend next year.

In the fall we hosted Coffee parties on the first Sunday of the month. After many years we held a smoker for the Association and serving members. The unit invited us to try out the SAT. A lot of the Association members enjoyed trying it.

Then in November was Remembrance Day. The Westies were present in all the services from Hope to New Westminster.

To round out the year the Association has been invited to attend the Annual Levée in the Officers Mess. Please come in Association tie and jacket and usher in 2023.

Personally, I would like to wish everyone a happy Christmas and all the best in the new year. No need to be alone, reach other to your fellow association members.

Pro Rege et Patria

Linda Pickell



Our Hon Lt Col ran into a former Westie in Ottawa

Thank you, George, and nice meeting you, a fellow Westie. So many very fine memories of a great Regiment and, my time serving in it. Such wonderful people. It was such an ideal organization in so many ways. It is my cornerstone of military life. So many great and positive examples to copy. Starting with, Capt Charles Bradford, CO of 2316 Westminster Regt CC. WW1 vet who served in the Royal West Kent Regt (Cyclist Bn) in Mesopotamia in 1915. His example was, as said by our late Queen-I must be seen, to be believed.

Nice to have met you all and, I wish you all well for the future.

Go Safely,
Don Reibin

Remembrance Day – 11 November 2022 – New Westminster

For the first time in two years, following the relaxation of COVID restrictions, the annual Remembrance Service at New Westminster was open to the public. The Service was held at the Cenotaph at City Hall. There was a march on of the Parade consisting of following contingents;

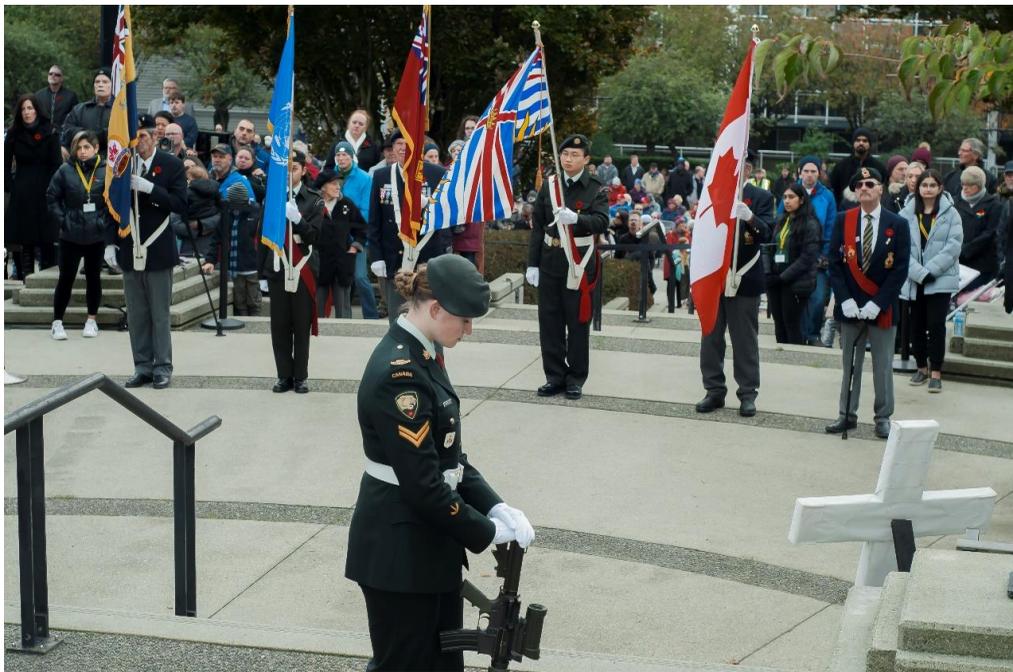
- The Royal Westminster Regiment Band
- Old Guard (retired members of The Royal Westminster Regiment)
- No 1 Guard, The Royal Westminster Regiment
- No 2 Guard. The Royal Westminster Regiment
- New Westminster Police Department
- New Westminster Fire Department
- 102 Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps - Fraser
- 2316 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps
- 13 Navy League Cadet Corps - JF Williams
- 513 Hornet Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Cadets
- Scouts Canada

Brigadier General Gwen Bourke, Deputy Commander of 3rd Canadian Division gave the Memorial Address and took the salute on the March Past.

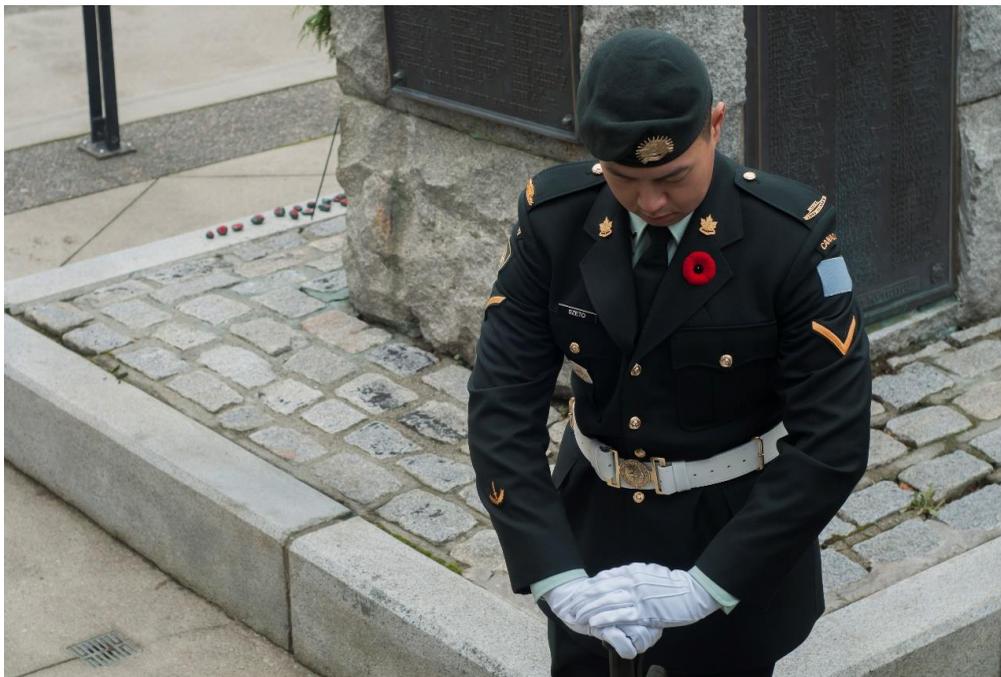
All photographs in this article are included with the kind permission of the City of New Westminster



Master of Ceremonies – Capt Paul Guilmain, The Royal Westminster Regiment



Cpl Cherris-Kelly, Cenotaph Guard with Legion Colour Party behind



Private Szeto, Cenotaph Guard, The Royal Westminster Regiment



Mayor Patrick Johnstone, welcoming all to the Service



Brigadier General Bourke, Deputy Commander, 3rd Division, giving the Memorial Address



Terry Leith, President, Royal Canadian Legion Branch #2 says the Act of Remembrance



Old Guard, No 1 Guard, No 2 Guard, The Royal Westminster Regiment



Captain Singer, Parade Commander, The Royal Westminster Regiment



Captain Areekadan, Commander No 2 Guard and members of the Guard



**Hon Lt Col George Salamis, laying a wreath on behalf of Honour House;
Cpl Bhanot, Cenotaph Guard**



Lt Col Greg Chan, CO & CWO Chris Hennebery, RSM laying the wreath



After the end of the Service



Royal Westminister Regiment veteran Ron O'Bray looks skyward as a RCAF CP-140 Aurora aircraft flies past, during the ceremony at the cenotaph in New Westminster. (Darryl Dyck/The Canadian Press)

SOLDIERS' BBQ 2022

Prior to COVID-19 the Association has hosted a BBQ for the soldiers at the start of the training year and this year it was on the 1st of June, the end of the training year. It was a regular parade night but this time it was for fun and food without uniforms.

The parade square was made into a hockey rink, with tables on their sides for the boards, and after they were set up WO Woolley announced the activities of the night, and that the Association was hosting a BBQ for the soldiers. Then the games began.

Colleen Melville, Director, had Sgt. Erik Skrebsky, a Director of the Association and mess rep for the WO and Senior NCO's mess, directed her to Cpl Dyble to assist in the serving of the food on the back deck. Cpl's Na and Saeed and Pte. Panergo helped to set up the tables and serve the food. At about 1945 hrs the BBQs were started and of course, it started to rain. The tables were quickly placed under the deck for the Officers and WO and Senior NCO's messes and a tent set up for the rest.

There were about 100 soldiers there and it took some time to get everyone fed. When the CO, Lt Col Greg Chan, came along towards the end to get his food it was still raining and very dark. Members of the Association really appreciated the opportunity of interacting with and getting to know the soldiers.

The Smoker - 2022

The last smoker that we had was several years ago and it was nice to host it again. There was a good turn out with both the former and serving members included the Honorary Lt Col. George Salamis, Lt Col. Greg Chan, the CO, and CWO Chris Henneberry, the RSM.

Sgt Kerekanich, the RQ, had arranged for a loan of a big BBQ from the 39 Service Battalion and Dennis Keeton, Director, was the BBQer. As the back deck is being replaced the BBQ was in the parking lot so, the hamburgers, hotdogs, vegetables, chips, and pop were set up on the parade square. The WO and Sgt's mess was open, with Sgt Esaw as the bar tender, and they provided us with some free beer!

We had the two 50/50 draws where the Hon Lt Col. won the first one and Bill White, Association President of the Board of Directors, won the second, and the winnings were donated back to the Association.

Chuck MacKinnon, the new Museum Manager, was there and the museum was open. Chuck, at one point, said that as October was Womens' History month he asked about getting photos of the

women that served in the unit for the Museum to have. People took out their cell phones to show some of their pictures!

The battalion opened their indoor rifle range, the Small Arms Trainer (SAT) range, and most attendees got a chance to fire the C7. A few had to learn, or relearn, on how to use it and the trainers, Cpl. Pengelly and Pte. Jones, were very good, and patient, teachers. It was very different to the indoor range we had before. It's set up in one of the huts at the back of the Armoury and instead of targets it's like playing a video game, on a very big screen, holding a real C7 and fire dummy, not blank, bullets while laying on a mat and not sitting on a couch!



Bill White, President, George Salamis, HLCOL, Chuck MacKinnon, Museum Manager, Lt Col Greg Chan, CO at the SAT Range

Passchendaele Dinner – 19 November 2022

The Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess held the Passchendaele Dinner on Saturday 19 November 2022. Due to COVID 19 restrictions the dinner had not been held in 2020 or 2021. So, there were a number of former members that were “mugged out” and received parting gifts. The tables were set up on the drill floor under a canopy of cam netting. The guests at the dinner, were the Commanding Officer Lt Col Greg Chan and President of the Association, Bill White. The following were those individuals being “mugged out” along with the name of the individual that presented them with their gift;

- Capt Curtis Beglaw (former MWO – transferred out November 2018) – presenter CWO Hennebery
- CWO Mike Bergan (transferred out November 2018) – presenter MWO Baron
- MWO Pat Bornestig (retired March 2022) – presenter CWO Morrison
- WO Trevor Avey (retired October 2020) – presenter CWO Gardner & Sgt (Ret'd) Harley
- WO Brandon Neff (transferred out July 2022) – presenter MCpl Pepper
- WO James Cooley (transferred out September 2022) – presenter Sgt (Ret'd) Morrison
- Sgt Rob Harley (retired February 2019) – presenter Sgt Kerekanich
- Sgt Brandon Morrison (retired August 2022) – presenter WO (ret'd) Avey
- Sgt Andrew Tan (transferred out September 2020) – presenter Sgt Esaw
- Sgt Andrew Trafananko (retired February 2022) – presenter Sgt Dales

The bungled bayonet was awarded, in absentia, to WO MacIssac.



Sgt Matthew Dales speaking as part of the presentation to Sgt (Ret'd) Andrew Trafananko



Sgt (Ret'd) Trefanako & Sgt Dales



WO Neff & MCpl Pepper



Sgt (Ret'd) Morrison & WO (Ret'd) Avey



Sgt (Ret'd) Morrison & WO Cooley



Sgt Matt Esaw & Sgt (ret'd) Rob Harley



Capt Curtis Beglaw & RSM Chris Hennebery



Sgt (Ret'd) Rob Harley & WO (Ret'd) Avey



MWO (ret'd) Pat Bornestig & CWO Mike Morrison



Sgt Andrew Tan



RSM Chris Hennebery presents one of his paintings to WO (Ret'd) Avery



CWO Mike Bergan & MWO Roger Baron



Presentation gifts and the Bungled Bayonet award



The RSMs, CWOs Mike Bergan, Bryan Gardner, Chris Hennebery

Soldiers' Dinner – 10 December 2022

On Saturday evening 10 December 2022, the Junior Ranks held the annual dinner at which the Officers and Senior NCOs serve the Soldiers. The Head Table consisted of the PMC, Cpl Cherris-Kelly, the Commanding Officer, Lt Col Greg Chan, The RSM, CWO Chris Hennebery, the youngest soldier Pte Will Andaya, the oldest member of the Junior Ranks, Cpl Czajkowski, Craig Savage, (Padre designate), Chief Harley Chappell, Semiahmoo First Nation, Bill White, President of the Association and MCpl Gonzales, Vice-PMC. A small ensemble of The Royal Westminster Band was also there to play music for the dinner as well as “The King”, “Last Post” and the “Rouse” and “The Maple Leaf Forever”.

After the Loyal Toast, Toast to the Fallen and to the Regiment there were a number of presentations as follows;

CWO Gardner Civilian Service award – Capt Mike Kelly, HQ & Svcs Coy;
Regimental Marksman Award – Pte Simon Jorgensen, D Coy;
Regimental PT Champion – Cpl Joel Plata, A Coy;
Top Soldier Award – MCpl Jeremy Pepper, D Coy; and
The Golden Grenade – Cpl Scott Wang, A Coy.

The CO made the following promotions:

To MCpl – Cpl Taro Whittier; and

To Cpl – Pte Elijah Ward, Pte Brendan Woods, Pte William Jones.

Bill White, President of the Association also made a number of presentations. The first one was a cheque in the amount of \$500 to the CO. The second one was a gift card given to WO Skrebsky for his recently newborn son, Jacob.

The remaining presentations were Certificates of Meritorious Service which the Association gives to soldiers that have deployed on an operation. Due to the COVID restrictions of the last two years a number of certificates had not been presented. So, the presentations made covered a number of Operations as follows.

- Operation Podium (Winter Olympics in 2010)
MWO JA Cullen
- Operation Lentus 17-04 (Fires in BC July to September 2017)
Cpl IS Bhabba
MWO JA Cullen
Cpl SR Kim
Cpl RW McRobert
Pte JG Plata

Cpl D Wang

- Operation Lentus 18-03 (Floods in BC, May 2018)
Sgt M Dales
OCdt JP Kozicynas
Sgt SS Kullar
MCpl JC Pepper
Capt TS Suri
Sgt LR Wang
- Operation Lentus 18-05 (Fires in BC, August – September 2018)
MCpl WT Whitter
Capt TS Suri
- Operation Lentus 21-06 (Floods in BC, November 2021)
MWO JA Cullen
Cpl AYW Foreman
MCpl K Negahdar-Cherlarci
Pte W Tang
MCpl WT Whittier



WO Skrebsky receives gift card



MWO Cullen - Op Podium



**Cpl Plata, Cpl McRobert, Cpl Bhabba, Cpl Kim, MWO Cullen, Cpl Wang
Op Lentus 17-04**



**Sgt Kullar, Sgt Dales, MCpl Pepper, OCdt Kozicynas, Capt Suri, Sgt Wang
Op Lentus 18-03**



MCpl Whittier, Capt Suri – Op Lentus 18-05



**MCpl Whittier, MWO Cullen, MCpl Negahdar-Cherlarci, Cpl Foreman, Pte Tang
Op Lentus 21-06**

Operation Lentus 2021 - 06 – CAF Response to Flooding

There was an abundance of rain that occurred during November 2021, which caused catastrophic flooding throughout the Fraser Valley. As a result, the water levels on the Nooksack River in Washington raised and eventually spilled over into Abbotsford, BC. These events inevitably forced residents to evacuate portions of the Fraser Valley as their homes were beginning to fall victim to the flooding. The situation reached a point where a call for service was needed and assistance from the military was a necessity. Multiple public service organizations were involved in the aid of British Columbians during the floods, but the situation was deteriorating rapidly enough to warrant the use of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) regular and reserve forces. The CAF was officially approved to assist the Province of BC on 17 November 2021, and members began being deployed on Operation Lentus.

On 25 November 2021, F Squadron, Domestic Response Company (DRC) rendezvoused at Seaforth Armoury with all their kit packed and ready to make the road move to Pacific Regional Training Centre (PRTC) at the former Base in Chilliwack, BC. Various units and trades from 39 Canadian Brigade Group (CBG) made up the F Squadron (DRC) that stayed at PRTC ready to respond to various areas of the Fraser Valley.

The average day would start with breakfast between 0600 and 0800, unless F Squadron was tasked out to an area then the day would start even earlier. After breakfast, the chain of command would pass down orders to prepare to move and the troops would organize their kit needed for the task and be ready to move to the area that required assistance. Most of the tasks performed during the flood response involved filling sandbags, tying sandbags, and moving sandbags to form a barrier.

Platoon 53, which included members of the Westies, received their first task on operation. The chain of command informed platoon 53 that they would be heading up to Boston Bar, where members of the platoon would be assisting the local firehall to build a sandbag barrier as a preventative measure to ensure the firehall would not flood again. The process of filling and tying the sandbags was done at a separate location a few kilometers away from the Boston Bar firehall. The filled sandbags were then transported via MILCOTs (Military Commercial off the Shelf) vehicles to the firehall location where members would begin placing them to form a barrier around a portion of the firehall to direct the potential flood water to a drain as opposed to the building. The duration of this task lasted all day, and once the sandbag barrier for the firehall was built, members were then transported to the sandpit where additional sandbags were being filled. The platoon filled even more sandbags to ensure the locals in Boston Bar had sandbags available to them. The platoon was then transported back to PRTC (Provincial Regional Training Centre) via MSVS (Medium Support Vehicle System) vehicles after the tasks of the day were completed.



Cpl's Suto and Kim on a tiger dam along highway 1

Huntingdon Village, Abbotsford was the next location. The F Squadron (DRC) was tasked alongside members of the Lord Strathcona's Horse to build a sandbag wall over 500 metres along the railway track in an attempt to try and deter the potential of the Nooksack River overflowing into Huntingdon Village. The construction of the sandbag wall was a task that took the entire day despite the overwhelming number of troops who were on site assisting with the task. In addition to the troops working the site, a number of local civilians came to help carry sandbags down the railway to build up the wall. The sun inevitably started to disappear, but the wall was still unfinished, so members worked through a portion of the night to ensure it was completed. Civilian community members not only assisted in building the sandbag wall, but quite a few also started pitching tents, providing an abundance of food and drink, and providing

support in various ways even if that just meant offering a dry spot to stand for all the CAF members there helping. After completion of the sandbag wall and after a long downfall of rain, members of the 39 CBG started packing up in preparation to return to PRTC.

One of the last tasks for F Squadron (DRC) was an elderly community in Chilliwack, BC that required assistance with sandbagging a wall around the back of the community near an area prone to flooding. Sand was brought in to fill the sandbags with, it was dumped on the road in front of the houses in the community. The day was spent using the entirety of the sand provided to fill sandbags and to build the barrier around the rear of the houses in the community. The members worked efficiently, and the elderly members of the community showed their generosity to all the CAF members involved.



Cpl Burnett, Cpl Whittier, Pte Jorgensen, Cpl Kim, Cpl Hoven, Cpl Cherris-Kelly, Sgt Dales

Overall, members of the 39 CBG came together in a time they were needed to efficiently and professionally complete tasks that were required of them. Great experiences were had, and many friendships were formed throughout the duration of Operation Lentus. On 6 Dec 21, the F Squadron (DRC) was stood down and shifted to operation as a standby unit ready to assist if needed. Eventually, Operation Lentus 21-06 ended on 17 Dec 21.

Annual Christmas Concert at Holy Trinity Cathedral – 11 December 2022



The Choir of Holy Trinity Cathedral, New Westminster under the direction of George Ryan, O.D.N.W. and the Band of The Royal Westminster Regiment under the direction of Bdr Gary Tse, put on a Christmas Concert on Sunday 11 December 2022 at 1500 hours. Entry was by donation and about \$2400 was raised for the Breakfast Program.

Missing Groundsheets

We are still in the process of converting all editions to searchable electronic versions but are missing a number of editions. If you have any old copies especially prior to 1970 please let the President (president@royal-westies-assn.ca) know which editions you have.

Are Your Dues Up To Date?

The Royal Westminster Regiment Association depends on your dues and donations. Yearly dues are \$20 and a Life Membership is \$200. Send in your dues today. Thanks.

What became of Kelly?

(Help us reconnect with former members)

How about reaching out to your friends that you soldiered with and asking them to join the Association.