

VOLUME 2001 / ISSUE 3

Dedicated to the ideals and Comradeship
We knew in Wars and Peace and in
Our services both Home and Abroad.



THE GROUNDSHEET

The Official Publication of

The Royal Westminster Regiment Association
P.O. Box 854, New Westminster, BC V3L 4Z8

April 2001

Melfa 2001

May 25, 26 & 27

Golf

Dinner

Westie
Camaraderie

Brunch

Annual General
Meeting

Executive

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Editor's Corner..... Jerry N. Gangur
 email: jgan@telus.net

One of the pleasures of life is to do something, not expecting to be praised or thanked for doing the deed. However, I now do know, that little inward glow of warmth that other editors experienced when someone complimented them on the fine job they were doing as editor of the Groundsheet. Kind words have been written by some of you and this comes as an unexpected bonus.

As the president, in his remarks says, work on the Jack Mahony Booklet is progressing. The experience of sitting down with the editing group for this project has been most rewarding. Memories relived and vocalized at the editing sessions have been mesmerizing, particularly when each man at the battle has a different story to tell. One A Coy veteran took the time to tell me of the kindness and concern Jack Mahony had for his soldiers, even after the war. It is truly impressive to have so many people offer so much praise, with so much genuine affection for someone who commanded them in wartime... After our researcher put the material together a committee consisting of the following reviewed the content: **Vern Ardagh, Joe Bush, Jerry Gangur, Herb Hamm, Basil Morgan, Jimmy Oldfield, Len Wohlgemuth and Fred West.** We will have enough booklets printed to distribute to all associate members. If you don't make it to the Melfa Weekend, we would like to send you a copy of the booklet, and ask only that you consider a small donation of \$2.00 to cover the cost of mailing. It would be most appreciated.

In past years, the regiment has sent soldiers to participate in United Nations operations and little or no fuss was made on their return. We want this passiveness to change. The regimental association will join the regiment, in participating with families and friends in a **Day of welcome and appreciation** to the returning peace makers. The date is for the event is Saturday morning, May 5th. The executive is encouraging our members to attend. The presence of Veterans of WW 2 would be especially appreciated. Remember, if you can't get a ride, come by taxi and give us the bill. Come as a group or come by yourself. ... See you on May 5th.

President's Report

Len Wohlgemuth

Hello again it has been awhile but we have been working hard. I would like to thank the Regiment for its input into the last Groundsheet issue. This was a significant contribution and shows that Westies are continuing the tradition of voluntary service for our country as peacekeepers in foreign lands. The association would like to do something for those who have returned and those returning from the latest rotations. I am working with the regiment to provide a reception for them and their families early in May.

Well your executive has been working diligently on the projects that we set out last fall. The museum is well underway on the construction of secure weapons cabinets, the sick and visiting has provided the successful Christmas light tour, provided funds for our members through our George Derby canteen fund, and is planning a luncheon. The V.C memorial lighting should be completed this summer and the official lighting should happen in the fall. The Jack **Mahony** booklet is almost complete and the aim is to have it ready for the Melfa dinner. During this project, I have gained new insights into the Regiments activities around and during the Melfa and about Jack Mahony. I believe you will be impressed by the results of this booklet.

The Future fund is growing and we are confident our targets can be met. I would like to thank those who were able to contribute and to thank Jerry Gangur for his continuing efforts on making this fund grow. Presently, the majority of our operational funds come from the future fund.

Recruiting has been moving forward and we have gained some new members. Most of these new members have been gained through contacts with present members. This process is very important to provide a sustained and strong membership in the future. Additionally, we are asking to be approved at our AGM, a position of associate membership. This would be a non-voting position for people who have not served in the Regiment but have had a relationship with the regimental family. Your executive would approve each associate membership. The associate membership would allow for relatives of members and persons who have assisted the regimental family to be recognized. I hope that all members will join in supporting this proposal.

Finally, I would like to talk about the Melfa Weekend. This year it is being held on May 25th through the 27th. Again the dinner, brunch, and AGM will be held at the Armouries on the Saturday and Sunday. The golf tournament will again be held at the Delta Golf Club on the Friday and is being organized by **Alan Morton**. **Graham Reimer** is organizing the dinner and brunch. We are cognizant of the few problems with last year and are making efforts to correct them. I will see you all at the Melfa Weekend.

THE REGIMENT

Commanding officer's report LCol. GWJ Richmond

Greetings & Salutations!

Since I took command at the end of September 2000, there has been a whirlwind of activity at the Regiment. The Winter saw The Festival of Trees "nesting" in the Armoury for several weeks and putting on a grand spectacle which rivaled a "Hollywood" production. Then there was the unfortunate passing of Col. Bill McKinney which led to a Regimental funeral which, I believe, had the right mix of "pomp and circumstance" while maintaining the dignity that such a ceremony deserved.

The Spring saw the Regiment attending it's annual composite training in Fort Lewis, WA. as part of exercise Cougar Salvo. This training concentrated on Fighting in Built Up Areas (FIBUA) as the Army is recognizing the need to train for urban operations as the majority of the world's population resides in town and cities. The soldiers, who gave up their "Spring Break" or otherwise took time off of work, showed both great dedication and professionalism. This became self-evident as news crews and various VIPs (including Members of Parliament) were treated to a first class effort by first class soldiers.

We are in the midst of fundraising for the Courtyard Project. This is a large paved patio area which is to be constructed between the Armoury and the Jr. Ranks building which should accommodate over 100 people. This area is to be used by all ranks and will be made available to various community groups (by permission) and will be an excellent space for: wedding receptions, BBQs, company parties, etc., etc. It is our intent to honour the memory of Col. Bill McKinney who gave so much to the Regiment by naming it after him. I would ask that you consider making a donation to this most worthwhile project which not only benefits the members of the Regiment but which will increase our "footprint" in the community. Donations can be made by cheque to "The Royal Westminster Fund" (Colonel Bill's Courtyard).

You may probably sense, that I am justly proud of my soldiers. I grew up in this Regiment as an Army Cadet and from this humble beginning, recognized that the opportunity to lead men and women is a true privilege. To this end, I pledge my best effort as is only fitting if I am to expect the same from my soldiers. Self improvement is the key to success and I would like to encourage all members of the Regimental family to consider this as a life long quest.

I would like to share with you a quote on this topic:

The Ten Commandments of Leadership

1. Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
2. Set the example for others to follow.
3. Be an active coach.
4. Maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity.
5. Insist on excellence and hold your group accountable.

(cont)

Commanding Officer's Report (cont)

6. Build group cohesiveness and pride.
7. Show confidence in your people.
8. Maintain a sense of urgency.
9. Be available and visible to your staff.
10. Develop yourself to your highest potential.

F.A. MANSKE JR.

This passage is applicable to both civilian and military organizations. As leaders in our communities, it is incumbent on us to treat others as we ourselves would wish to be treated and be patient with those who may not agree with us or who fall short of our expectations.

I present these thoughts in the hope that you will all continue to do your best to work together for the betterment of the Regiment. We must put the Regiment first and avoid the pitfalls of personalities and self-interest. We have a fine Regiment with many dedicated individuals who continue to provide their support in so many ways. Keep up the good work and thank you for your all of your efforts. ♣

We're Comin Home

Pte.R.Watson,

To the regiment

I just got your email. Thanks for the update I was wondering what was going on back home. About the questions you asked, I think I am on one of the last flights back to Canada April 2. I guess they don't like the idea of Operations going home too soon. Ha,Ha. By the sounds of it over here (working in BGHQ and all) the westies will be leaving at completely different times. I love the idea of being at the airport at the same time, but I am not sure it will work. We've just received our leave memo. It states we'll be kept in Winnipeg for two days after our redeployment. That means from March 25 to April 9 people will be arriving back in Vancouver and of course some are getting there flight somewhere else (to visit family).

From: "**David Antolinos**"

Subject: My Flight out

Date: Thu, 01 Feb 2001 07:19:29 -0800

Hi Chuck, we now know our return dates, I fly back to Winnipeg April 2nd, I am on one of the last flights out, my leave runs out the 30th of April, exactly when my contract finishes. So two months left, there is light at the end of the tunnel! But as you know things change and I might end up coming home earlier or later. I'll keep in touch during the remainder of my stay. See you soon David

Melfa 2001

Activities

Golf

Friday 25 May

Golf chairman: Al Morton
525-6814

Time: 9:00 am Tee Off

Place: Delta Golf Course
11550 #10 Highway, Delta

Cost: \$45.00 per golfer

Dinner

Saturday 26 May

Time: 6:30 pm cocktails

7:30 pm dinner

Where: Armoury

Cost: \$30.00 per person

Brunch

Sunday 27 May

Time: 9:00 - 10:30 am

Place: Offr/Sgts Mess

AGM

Sunday 27 May

Time: 10:30 am

Place: Offr/Sgts Mes

Parking: Over the years parking regulations and space has presented us with a challenge. The editor has been assured free parking is available to members in the City Hall parking lot. For those who take a cab, give us the receipt and we will paid the freight.

From the Post...

Jerry,

I'm dropping you a few lines and am enclosing a donation for the Future Fund.

I hope everyone has survived the winter ok. We've had a lot of snow - more than we've had in the past few years. It's started to melt, but still has a long way to go.

My wife and I ae both doing ok all things considered. Didn't move out of the house much at all during the winter. Hopefully, the weather will keep getting nicer so we can go out more often.

Keep up the good work you do. I really look forward to getting the Groundsheet. There's certainly not to many of us "old " ones left.

Your comrade, **George Bayne**
RR#3, Antignish, NS B2G 2L1

Gentlemen

Thought it time I wrote to inform you of my husband.

Alfred White - Alfred G. White to be exact B64655 'C' company has been receiving duplicate newsletters. Alf suffered a server left-sided stroke last March 28, 2000, following a quadruple bypass three weeks →

earlier (Feb 25). Over these many years he's enjoyed reading the Groundsheet, especially now that the Toronto chapter is no more.

He sends his greetings to all & is touch with **Ed Lasher & Pat McCarthy** by phone.

Sincerely, **Dorothy G. White**

Dear Jerry

5 Feb 01

Man Looking for relatives

The letter below recently appeared in Editorial Section of *The Glengarry News* . Sent to us by **Doug McNaughton**. His letter follows.
Ed.

Dear Editor

I have recently received an email from a Dutch gentleman who is trying to trace a JD MacLennan who stayed with his parents in Onderdendam, Holland, 15 km north of Groningen (WW2).

..... it is a coincidence that my father Dr. John D. MacLennon RCAMC was also in Holland at the same tme.... Can you shed any light on the John D. MacLennon in question?

Ed. Our John D. MacLennan was found.

Doug tells of his meeting John D. Mac Lennan and finally realizing who he was. Doug's letter follows.

From the Post cont.....

Dear Editor

Attached is a clipping taken from *The Glengarry News*

Although I was born and brought up in Glengarry County about 30 milers form the villiage of Dalkeith when **John MacLennan** was born and raised we never met until early in 1960 when we were attendees at the same church, but at that time, there was never. any talk about war service. In late 1962 we were both at a dinner at the home of a mutual acquaintance and after dinner John asked our host if he would mind turning on the TV because there was a program on the Canadian Army in Italy. Naturally, I too was interested but when John said, "I am watching for 54 on the side of the vehicles" my ears really perked up. It was then That I learned we were in the same regiment. I was assigned to the Westminsters in July or August 1943 and I believe John may have gone over with the Regiment. In any event I then learned that there were several Cornwall and area residents in the unit and one , **Dave Tyo**, was one of John's special friends. On one occasion the three of us attended a re-union dinner at Weston, Ontario - arranged, I believe by **Pat McCarthy**. I also believe John attended a Melfa dinner, possibly accompanied by Dave, in the 70's or 80's. In any event, my wife and I became good friends of the MacLennans , but John , his

Scottish war bride, Barbara and Dave are all deceased. At the time of their demise I sent a donation to the Future Fund in their memory.

To get back to "the letter", I contacted John's only offspring, a local lawyer and she, in turn, indicated she would be writing to the letter's author in Oakville. I can recall being billeted in a private home for a short period of time before going into action in Holland, but I certainly do not recall the name of the family nor the name of the other individual with me although it may have been **Flewwelling**, another signaller from A Co. HQ. My old brain is in its 79th year and memory fails me quite often.

My military service started at age 18 when I joined the Victoria Rifles in Montreal. We travelled from St. John's NFLD., to Nanaimo, BC and points in between before it was determined the unit should be kept as a training unit in Canada so I eventually landed in Aldershot in March or April 43 and to the Westies where I remained until late May 45 when I volunteered for the Pacific Force.

I had great respect for all ranks who staffed the unit and I have often commented that I believe our casualties would have been much higher had it not been for the calibre of leadership that trickled right down to all other ranks. I appreciate the Groundsheet and the work and effort that has been put into it by a dedicated few, but one would have expected this from the men who staffed our great unit.

.... Please find enclose a donation to the Future Fun.....
Doug McNaughton

Dear Jerry, Editor Groundsheet March 26/2001

Enclosed please find my cheque for 2001 dues. I am also enclosing a few papers about the history of Putten, Holland.

On the night of April 17, 1945 'A' Company with some tanks of the 8th New Brunswick Hussars attempted to take the town of Putten and on the morning of April 18th completed the job.

I was in **Jim Oldfield's** #1 Platoon & **Doug Flint** was in #2 Platoon.

Through the internet it was arranged that on May 3rd 2000 Doug & I and our wives would visit Putten - which we did and truly it was a very special day.

I would bore you with all the details, but I would like to tell you about the memorial in the enclosed picture.

The memorial is in memory of Cpl. **Pewtress**, Ptes **Wakula** and **Waters** all in #2 Platoon - who were killed in this action & the memorial is erected almost exactly where these men were killed.

The Westminster sign that you see in the photo is now I understand in the museum at Putten.

I hope this picture & the papers enclosed are of some interest to some of the fellows - perhaps to **Bill Morgan** of New Westminster.

In closing I wish the fellows to know that the Westminster Regiment is well thought of in Putten.

I enjoyed reading the Groundsheet and if possible I would appreciate a copy of the **Jack Mahony, V.C.** booklet.

Yours very truly, **Doug Blakely.**

Editor: Your information will be past on to museum and you certainly will receive a copy of the Mahony booklet.



Left to right: Doug Flint and Doug Blakely

From the Post cont.

Received a letter and many enclosures from **Everett Ray Butler**. Everett lost touch with us, but we are delighted to have him with us again. Everett enlisted with The Irish Regiment in Toronto in 1940 and later transferred to the Westminster Regiment. He sent me a number of newspaper clippings, one of which is reproduced below from the *The Toronto Daily Star* in March 1944.

...(action Feb 6, 1944 Ed).

"Busy on Patrols"

Quote "Apart from patrol work we haven't seen much action yet," said **Major PAF Grossman**, Chilliwack, BC, "but we have had a few brushes and so far the score has been well in our favor."

Biggest show for the westerners was an abortive German attack on one of their company positions the night of February 6. About 60 enemy, taking advantage of poor weather, tangled with one Westminster platoon and were driven off after losing 14 dead and six prisoners.

The Westminsterers whose own casualties were comparatively light were praised for the action by Lt. Gen **Sir Oliver Lesse**, Eight Army commander and by Lt. Gen **HDG Crerar**, Canadian Corps commander.

First reports that enemy were approaching the company commanded by Major **Ian Douglas**, New Westminster, were received shortly before midnight and in the next half hour two Germans were killed. Two platoons, under Lt. **JW Biggs** and Lt. **TO Hall**, both of New Westminster, engaged the Germans.

All Night Skirmish

The main attack was on Biggs' platoon and there was spasmodic fight right up until first light. Biggs'

wireless set was useless most of the night and communication had to be conducted through Hall's platoon.

When morning came a relief party under Capt. **WJ Neill**, New Westminster, went out and rounded up two unwounded Germans, who surrendered under a white flag, and several wounded prisoners.....

Wounded in this action were the following:

Pte John Hiles
Pte Ken Morgan
Pte Cecil Paul
Pte White
Cpl George King
Pte Dennis Bailey
Pte Everett Butler (Bullet wounds in both legs)

Yours' to tell and Ours' to Learn

Life experiences are varied as were your wartime adventures. If you have a story to tell, please share it with us.

After years of talking with WW2 veterans, one thing I have learned is that the Westies may have fought the same battle, but each will have a different story. In some cases the story you tell maybe the first time your close buddy has heard it. Often when a story is related in a group, someone is heard to say, "son-of-a-gun, I didn't know that."

Jack Mahony's Muffins

The Jack Mahony booklet will be distributed at Melfa 2001. His daughter Laurie recalls the reason Jack told his young children why he received the Victoria Cross. A Touching story from a great man and to find out what he told his daughter, you'll have to wait until you receive your copy of the Mahony booklet. **Editor**

Westie Peacemakers Returning From United Nations Duties

A Day of Thanks

Join the Regiment and Regimental Association in welcoming
members of the regiment upon their safe return from
United Nation Duties in the Bosnia

When? May 5, 2001

Where? The Armoury

Time: 1000 Hrs to 1200 Hrs

Wives, Family and Friends welcome.

For additional information phone the armoury: 666 - 4374.

Proxy

The Royal Westminster Regiment Association

The undersigned, being a member in good standing of the above mentioned Society, hereby appoints
_____ or failing him/her _____

To attend, act and vote for and on behalf of the undersigned at the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society to be held on Sunday May 27, 2001.

Signed this ____ day of _____ 2001

Name & Signature of Member

Note: Forward this proxy to the member you wish to act on your behalf or Box 854, New Westminster, BC V3L 4Z8

In Memoriam

Murray Brown (Kelowna) Westminster Regiment (M) WW2
 Ted Churchill (Kelowna) Westminster Regiment (M) WW2
 Ted Hammersley (Saltspring Island) Westminster Regiment (M) WW2

Special Obituary: Margaret Morgan, devoted wife of Basil Morgan

REMINDER: If you are not planning to attend the Annual General Meeting, we need your support. You can make your presence felt by completing the proxy return on the reverse side of this page and mailing it to our postal address.

Melfa 2001 Return

Yes, I _____ will be attending the Melfa weekend on the 25th, 26th and 27th of May 2001. I will be attending the following:

Friday	Golf: Tee Off 9:00 am	Cost \$45.00 per golfer \$45.00 x _____ = \$ _____
Saturday	Cocktails 6:30 pm Dinner 7:30 pm	Cost \$30.00 per person \$30.00 x _____ = \$ _____
Sunday	Brunch 9:00 am	Number in Party _____
	Annual General Meeting 10:30 am	Number in Party _____

Please remember to enclose cheque and make payable to: The Royal Westminster Regiment Association and mail to P.O. Box 854, New Westminster, B.C. V3L 4Z8