



Volume 2004/Issue 1  
February 2004



# The GROUND SHEET

The Official Publication of  
The Royal Westminster Regiment Association

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

**'Pro Rege et Patria'**

P.O. Box 854, New Westminster, BC. V3L 4Z8

**Do You Know How Old  
Your Regiment Is?**

**Learn About The  
Museum Project.**

**June 6th?**

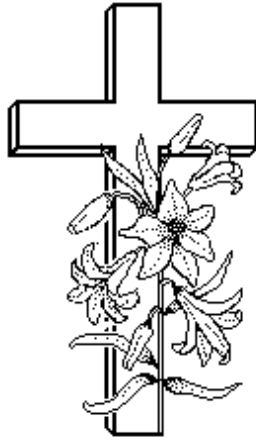
**Date Sound Familiar?**

**Some Local Events  
Are Being Planned.**

**Melfa 2004!  
Plan To Attend.  
Dates Are Inside.**

**Ever Thought To Offer  
Some Help In The Museum?  
Why Not? They Can Use It!**

**How about being at the  
Melfa River for May 2005  
for a very special occasion?**



# *In Memoriam*

**George BAYNE**, August 2003, Antigonish NS.

**Herbert W. BUCKOLL**, July 2003, New Westminster BC\*

**Henry R. CAMPBELL**, December 2002, Surrey\*

**Cecil R. GRINSTED**, February 2003, Merritt BC\*

**Jack J. HUNT**, February 2003, Salmon Arm BC\*

**Jack KOHLRUSS**, November 2003, Meadow Lake SK\*

**Frank MORRIS**, February 2003, Vancouver BC\*

**Michale M. O'KRANETZ**, July 2003, West Vancouver BC

**Lawrence WARD**, March 2003, Ft Saskatchewan AB\*

**Albert E WRIGHT**, October 2003, Melfort SK.

\* Courtesy of Legion Magazine - Last Post

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## **HEALTH & WELFARE**

No report for this issue.

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### **How to Prepare for a Deployment to Iraq**

This article was found on the internet. Due to extra space in this issue, it was thought that it would make some interesting military humor. TU.

1. Sleep on a cot in the garage.
2. Replace the garage door with a curtain.
3. Six hours after you go to sleep, have your wife or girlfriend whip open the curtain, shine a flashlight in your eyes and mumble, "Sorry, wrong cot."
4. Renovate your bathroom. Hang a green plastic sheet down from the middle of your bathtub and move the showerhead down to chest level. Keep four inches of soapy cold water on the floor. Stop cleaning the toilet and pee everywhere but in the toilet itself. Leave two to three sheets of toilet paper. Or for best effect, remove it altogether. For a more realistic deployed bathroom experience, stop using your bathroom and use a neighbor's. Choose a neighbor who lives at least a quarter mile away.
5. When you take showers, wear flip-flops and keep the lights off.
6. Every time there is a thunderstorm, go sit in a wobbly rocking chair and dump dirt on your head.
7. Put lube oil in your humidifier instead of water and set it on "HIGH" for that tactical generator smell.
8. Don't watch TV except for movies in the middle of the night. Have your family vote on which movie to watch and then show a different one.
9. Leave a lawnmower running in your living room 24 hours a day for proper noise level.
10. Have the paperboy give you a haircut.
11. Once a week, blow compressed air up through your chimney making sure the wind carries

**Continued on page 5**

## EDITOR'S NOTES

I just came home from the November 11th service at the armoury and cenotaph. It was one of the largest crowds I've seen in the past 10 or so years. Over 1000 sat and stood in the armoury with another 400 in Queens Ave. church. We had a video feed over to the church to ease up on over crowding the armoury. It was a beautiful sunny day at the cenotaph. As the chairman of the service, I made a few changes to allow better access to the cenotaph for the wreath layers and the general public. For those that haven't been to the cenotaph recently, there is now a new courtyard surrounding the area. It isn't parade friendly any more but it is much more user friendly as far as visiting. Lots of seating for people to visit. I had the parade groups form up on the road between City Hall and the cenotaph. 99.5% of comments were very positive about the new parade format. I will fine tune a few things for next year. Thanks to all who attended.

Well here it is 2004. Where does the time go? I hope you and your family had a great Holiday Season and I would like to wish you a very Happy 2004. What's new? Well after a nine year break on the Supplementary Reserve List, I was officially re-enrolled in the CF on Oct. 31, 2003. What a great feeling! It is a strange feeling but it is good to be back at it. I am the AdminO for the Army Cadet corps housed in the Armoury.

The other thing I am dealing with is my 30 year employment with the City of New Westminster is winding down. I think I am dealing with it well, but who knows. I am prepared for retirement (age 50) the first time and plan to do many things. I will soon begin working towards my second retirement. Between my father and I, we have continuously served the citizens of New Westminster since 1948.

I still enjoy working on the Groundsheet (GS). I only wish more people would send in notes or letters about their military experience or just to say Hi.. I also need you to keep your eyes and ears open to those missing members. After the last GS, I had about 15 GS returned for people who have moved. I do my best to track them down but often can't. The other thing we need you to do is to tell us when our members have fallen ill or have passed on. That is most important. Please help.

The lucky recipients of my offer to sell two Westminster War Diary's for a donation to the Army Cadets was taken by Curtis **Beglaw** (a Sgt. in the Reg't) and Barney **Jones**. Their contribution to the cadets will be greatly appreciated.

### Your Executive

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Mail should be directed  
to PO Box or via email  
to any of the above.

We lost many members this past year. The ones listed In Memoriam are the ones we only knew about. Thank goodness for the Legion magazine. Please, please let us know if a former member passes on.

Have you visited our Mueseum lately? The volunteers there are doing a fantastic job. The cabinet for the medals have all been re-done. My brother Ken and I agreed to loan our father, Jack **Usher's** medals to the Museum. They remounted them and display them in fine fashion. What do you want to do with your medals *after*? Please consider the Museum.

Great project underway by Jerry **Gangur** for a planned trip to Italy in May 2005. Jerry, you are a 'trooper' for all the effort you put into this Association. Well Done and THANKS!

A couple of events are being planned in the area to commemorate the June 6th battles in Europe. I know New Westminster and Port Moody are both planning a service. Details will be in the next issue.

By the time you get this issue I would have already started on the May issue. I struggled a little to put this issue together. I really would like to have some notes and articles from you, the Reader. This is your Groundsheet and I believe our members enjoy reading it. We all enjoy hearing about your experiences in training, overseas deployment and happenings around the unit. In particular, I would like to see more news from the active Private/Corporal soldier. Think about it.

I look forward to seeing as many out for the Melfa Weekend in May. Let's get off your rear and come out and play some golf on the Friday. Perhaps we can convince Terry Leith to jump into the pond again. Oh, the Fraser River is right next to the course as well!!!!!!! **Ted Usher**

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## Are Your Dues Up To Date?

The Royal Westminster Regiment Association depends on your dues and donations. Yearly dues are \$15 and a Life Membership is \$100. How about a tax deductible donation? You can identify where you want the donation to go. The Future Fund, Cadets, Health & Welfare, or whatever you feel is worthwhile. Whatever you support, it is appreciated. Send in your dues today. Thanks.

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## When is Melfa 2004?

The dates are set for

**May 21,22 & 23.**

**More in the spring issue.**

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## Lost and Found!

As a result of the last mail out of the Groundsheet, the following members are now lost. If you know where they are, let us know: Richard **Boulter**, George **Harkness**, A **Ford**, Peter **Kish**, Harvey **Bonner**, John **Wilson**, Gerald **Treen**, Gordon **McCourt**, Arnold **Wray**, Burt **Turvey**. Please let us know if you know where these people are. Gary **Crossan** was found recently and is now on the mail list.

Still looking for Bert **Larsen**. Dan **Nikiforuk** got back in touch from Rocky Mtn House and paid his dues. David **Demers** where are you?

**IF YOU MOVE, PLEASE LET US KNOW  
YOUR NEW ADDRESS. TX**

# PRESIDENTS REPORT

**HAPPY NEW YEAR** to all the members of the Regimental family, Veterans, Members of the Association, the Regiment and all the Cadet Corps!

I trust you all had a great holiday. The Executive stood down over the holidays to enjoy their families and friends. The New Years Levee was held, as usual in the Mess's and all had a great time. Wonderful to see a couple of the 'old' fellas still around and contributing. Lorne **Pleasants** (Major - was a member of the Regiment in the 1960s as well.) is now the Area Cadet Instructor Cadre Officer for the Vancouver south region. He looks after the 5 Westie army cadet corps and a corps in Squamish. He is presently the Commanding Officer of the corps in Squamish. A long drive from Chilliwack! Great to see Lorne still caring and helping our **FUTURE** soldiers find their way into the Regiment.

The Executive has ongoing projects for 2004. Jerry **Gangur** is working feverishly on getting a huge representation to Italy for the Melfa crossing commemorative plaque. Len **Wholgemuth** is negotiating a deal for a Bren Gun carrier. Mike Major is recruiting members for a shooting team. Remember the great times at the Blair? These are all important projects your Association Executive is looking after.

The Melfa Weekend is quickly coming up for 2004. Keep an eye for further details and Mark Nanka at the golf tournament! We found some vertically challenged clubs for you Mark!

In closing, please pass on your camaraderie to another WESTIE and convince him/her to join 'THEIR' Association. Strength is in numbers! PRO REGI ET PATRIA

Your President, **Brian N Knipstrom**

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## **Iraq - Continued from page 2**

the soot across and on to your neighbor's house. Laugh at him when he curses you.

12. Buy a trash compactor and only use it once a week. Store up garbage in the other side of your bathtub.

13. Wake up every night at midnight and have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on a saltine cracker.

14. Make up your family menu a week ahead of time without looking in your food cabinets or refrigerator. Then serve some kind of meat in an unidentifiable sauce poured over noodles. Do this for every meal.

15. Set your alarm clock to go off at random times during the night. When it goes off, jump out of bed and get to the shower as fast as you can. Simulate there is no hot water by running out into your yard and breaking out the garden hose.

16. Once a month, take every major appliance completely apart and put it back together again.

17. Use 18 scoops of coffee per pot and allow it to sit for five or six hours before drinking.

18. Invite at least 185 people you don't really like because of their strange hygiene habits to come and visit for a couple of months. Exchange clothes with them.

19. Have a fluorescent lamp installed on the bottom of your coffee table and lie under it to read books.

20. Raise the thresholds and lower the top sills of your front and back doors so that you either trip over the threshold or hit your head on the sill every time you pass through one of them.

**Continued on page 6**

# THE REGIMENT

No Report This Issue.

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## Iraq - Continued from page 5

21. Keep a roll of toilet paper on your night stand and bring it to the bathroom with you. And bring your gun and a flashlight.
22. Go to the bathroom when you just have to pass gas, “just in case.” Every time.
23. Announce to your family that they have mail, have them report to you as you stand outside your open garage door after supper and then say, “Sorry, it’s for the other Smith.”
24. Wash only 15 items of laundry per week. Roll up the semi-wet clean clothes in a ball. Place them in a cloth sack in the corner of the garage where the cat pees. After a week, unroll them and without ironing or removing the mildew, proudly wear them to professional meetings and family gatherings. Pretend you don’t know what you look or smell like. Enthusiastically repeat the process for another week.
25. Go to the worst crime-infested place you can find, go heavily armed, wearing a flak jacket and a Kevlar helmet. Set up shop in a tent in a vacant lot. Announce to the residents that you are there to help them.
26. Eat a single M&M every Sunday and convince yourself it’s for Malaria.
27. Demand each family member be limited to 10 minutes per week for a morale phone call. Enforce this with your teenage daughter.
28. Shoot a few bullet holes in the walls of your home for proper ambiance.
29. Sandbag the floor of your car to protect from mine blasts and fragmentation.
30. While traveling down roads in your car, stop at each overpass and culvert and inspect them for remotely detonated explosives before proceeding.
31. Fire off 50 cherry bombs simultaneously in your driveway at 3:00 a.m. When startled neighbors appear, tell them all is well, you are just registering mortars. Tell them plastic will make an acceptable substitute for their shattered windows.
32. Drink your milk and sodas warm.
33. Spread gravel throughout your house and yard.
34. Make your children clear their Super Soakers in a clearing barrel you placed outside the front door before they come in.
35. Make your family dig a survivability position with overhead cover in the backyard. Complain that the 4x4s are not 8 inches on center and make them rebuild it.
36. Continuously ask your spouse to allow you to go buy an M-Gator.
37. When your 5-year-old asks for a stick of gum, have him find the exact stick and flavor he wants on the Internet and print out the web page. Type up a Form 9 and staple the web page to the back. Submit the paperwork to your spouse for processing. After two weeks, give your son the gum.
38. Announce to your family that the dog is a vector for disease and shoot it. Throw the dog in a burn pit you dug in your neighbor’s back yard.
39. Wait for the coldest/ hottest day of the year and announce to your family that there will be no heat/air conditioning that day so you can perform much needed maintenance on the heater/ air conditioner. Tell them you are doing this so they won’t get cold/ hot.
40. Just when you think you’re ready to resume a normal life, order yourself to repeat this process for another six months to simulate the next deployment you’ve been ordered to support.

**Melfa River Commemorative Plaque Project (Italy)**  
**Presented by Jerry Gangur, Coordinator,**  
**Committee to Erect Melfa River Crossing Commemorative Project (Italy)**

**Under the distinguished patronage of The Honorable Iona V. Campagnolo, PC, CM, OBC,  
Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia**

In May, 1944 the Westminster Regiment (Motor) and the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), elements of the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Division, fought a major battle at the Melfa River and established a bridgehead which enabled the British 8<sup>th</sup> army to continue on into Europe. At the battle of the Melfa River (May 24-25), Major Jack Mahony, VC, commanding 'A' Company of the Westminster Regiment (M) was a recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest award for bravery awarded in the British Commonwealth. Captain Edward Perkins, serving with the Straths, received the DSO for this acts of bravery during this action.

The Royal Westminster Regiment Association, in cooperation with the serving battalion and the Honorary Officers, plan to erect a plaque on the Melfa River in Italy near the site of the Melfa River Battle May 24-25, 2005. Plans are tentative but currently envision sending 10 members of the Association (spouse or escort), a Guard of Honor from the Regiment accompanied by the Regimental Band. The Lord Strathcona's Horse and the Straths Association will be invited to join us in marking this historical event. We will also be contacting and inviting all Mayor's of the County of New Westminster to join us in this project.

We have been honored by the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of British Columbia, The Honorable Iona V. Campagnolo, PC, CM, OBC, with her willingness to be our patron for this project. The Association is considering sending a representative to Rocasenca in Italy to attend ceremonies on 24 May 2004. Much has yet to be done. Most important the financing of this project. Our plans are ambitious and we should be in a position to finalize plans by the fall of 2004. Success of this project is dependent on support and cooperation from all elements of the Regimental Family. The author is happy to report that the support of the Honorary Colonel Les **Deane** and the Honorary Lieutenant Colonel Peter **Legg** has been instant and overwhelming. In addition, Commanding Officer of the battalion, LCol. Glen **Richmond** has given his total support. With the Regimental Family working together, this project will succeed and honor will again be brought to the Regiment. We will limit to numbers but any WWII veteran wanting to attend the Melfa River Commemorative Project should notify the President of the Association. We make no promises but we do need to know who would be willing to make the trip.

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**Word has been received that a dinner honouring Smokey Smith is being planned for March 27th 2004. Tickets are \$50.00 and it is being held at the Seaforth Armoury. The organizing committee is aiming for 300 people to attend. No more details at the time of printing.  
Contact Brian Knipstrom or Jerry Gangur if you want more details.**



*This is one of the carriages that has been completely restored. They are presently in storage at the City Works Yard. The canons are also being restored and will be mounted on the carriages. By May, they will be on permanent display in front of City Hall by the Cenotaph.*

**Personal Message from the Army Commander  
All Ranks 1 Canadian Corps**

Now that 1st Canadian Corps is leaving Eight Army, I want to thank you all for your splendid contribution to the success of the Eight Army in the Sicilian and Italian campaigns. As a Corps you had, after a long period of training, your first battle experience with the Eight Army. In the Sicilian battles and in those ensuing you showed a magnificent fighting spirit, skill, determination and endurance, and these qualities produced the successes they deserved. In the battles of the Sicilian campaign, in the landing in Italy and the advance to Campobasso, at the crossing of the Moro and the capture of Ortona, in the advance up the Liri Valley and the breaking of the Hitler Line, in the breaking of the Gothic Line and the capture of S. Fortunato, and finally in the capture of Ravenna and the advance to the Senio, in all of these you have maintained and enhanced the great reputation that Canadian arms established in the last war at Vimy Ridge and on other historic battlefields.

You leave at a time when we can look forward with confidence to an early and final victory over the Germans. To this your contribution has already been outstanding, and whatever the future may bring I am confident that your progress will be as distinguished as it has always been in the past while serving with the Eight Army.

We shall miss you much. All good luck

**R.L. McCreery, Lieut-General, G.O.C., Eight Army, Main HQ, Eight Army, 17 February, 1945.**

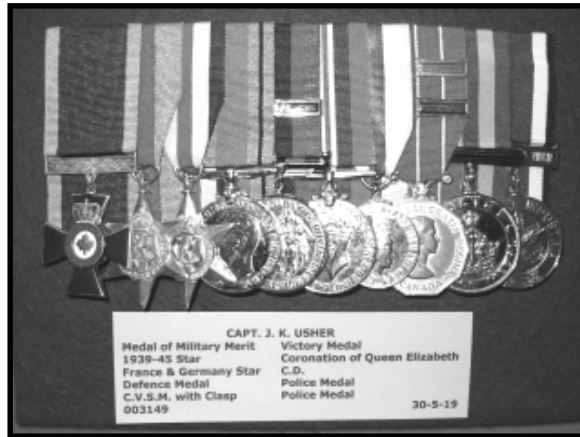


# THE MUSEUM

The Museum Volunteers are still very busy with the projects reported in the last Groundsheet and plan several more that need to be done. It seems the work is never-ending but enjoyable to all concerned.

The Cannon Restoration is now at a point where we can plan the presentation to the City of New Westminster of the completed 24-pounder howitzers and it looks like it will take place on the Melfa weekend in May. We thought that would be a good time to do it so all the members attending Melfa will be able to take part in any ceremonies. (Just a reminder – this will be the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Crossing of the Melfa).

The carriages are complete, the new wheels are in place and the barrels have been refurbished as well as can be done. The next step will be to install them and that should be a four or five hour task. The City has agreed to permanently place them by the Cenotaph in front of City Hall, which will give proper recognition to the Regiment and our predecessor The Seymour Battery. We will give you more information as plans are finalized.



*These are the medals of Captain Jack Usher MMM CD. The museum has remounted them and now display them in fine form.*



*A sample of the WWII medals on display in the Museum.*

The Medals Display is really coming along and should also be completed for viewing by Melfa time. Fred Wilks and Fred Deighton have done an excellent job. The old cabinet was taken apart and some space from the adjacent one was added, relined, new lighting installed and the medals refurbished as needed. They have been mounted on new boards and the description cards redone in an easier-to-read type. Room has been left for additions and if you know of anyone who should be recognized by having their medals displayed please let us know and we'll be pleased to add them.



Editor Ted has taken pictures of these two projects and hopefully will find room for them on this page.

We look forward to seeing you in the Museum any Tuesday or Thursday and especially any out-of-towners at Melfa time. If you have any suggestions on anything you would like to see in YOUR Museum please let us know.

**Herb Hamm**

Editor's Note - I have observed over the past months the efforts that has gone into these display cases. My brother Ken and I were very pleased to loan our father's medals to the museum for display purposes. Please consider the museum as a place to donate any items of military significance that you may have. T.U.

*The photograph above shows one of the medal display cases that has a great collection of WWI medals. These have all been properly and carefully remounted.*

*The photograph on the right shows a overall display case of WWII medals including Major Jack Mahony's tunic.*



## Legion Magazine Jan/Feb 2004 Issue

You should have a read of the January/February 2004 issue of the Legion Magazine. In the Features section under Canadian Military History In Perspective, the Westminster's are mentioned several times in a article regarding The Liberation of Western Holland. The following paragraph is the first of three pages regarding the 5th Div.

***"The 5th Canadian Armoured Division—Major-General Bert Hoffmeister's Mighty Maroon Machine—began operations in the Netherlands on March 21, 1945 when the Westminster Regiment (Motor) took over a sector of the Nijmegen front from the 12th Manitoba Dragoons. Holland, with "electric light, running water and radios in the forward area," was a new experience for the veterans of the Italian Campaign but cold rain and mud in a flat, flooded landscape was all too familiar to those who had wintered in the Valli di Commachio."*** (Courtesy of the Legion Magazine) If you don't get the magazine but have access to the internet, the article is there as well. Here is the link. <http://www.legionmagazine.com/features/canadianmilitaryhistory/04-01.asp#1>

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### Who's Been Writing Us?

Short email note from member Gerry **Pickell** on Saltspring Island congratulating Brian on his appointment as President of the Association. Gerry also commented on his recent surgery and that he "Should be good for another 50 thousand kilometres". Good to hear from you Gerry.

Freda **Hogg** dropped a note along with a letter she asked to include in this edition of the GS from R.L. **McCreery**, Lt. Gen 8th Army. Wish granted!

As the Chairman of the Remembrance Day committee for the City, I asked Stan **Conway** to take the salute with the Mayor and CO as the parade marched past on Royal Ave. on Nov 11th. This is the letter Stan wrote in.

"Hi Ted: Just wanted to give you a run down on what I was doing over the armistice week. Firstly I got a call from Jerry **Gangur** to see if I would talk to some students at Glenbrooke Middle School (New Westminster). At first I thought it was just a class but it turned out to be the whole school assembly. It went very well. A member from the Legion was there and spoke about the poppy and what it meant. When I spoke my main topic was the V.C. and the rest of the medals we receive. The kids were very interested on what I had to say. I would like to see more vets doing this every year. This all happened on the 9th of Nov. On November 11th, you had asked me to take the salute on the march past. Ted it was honour to be asked. We went to the Mayor's office after and it was very nice. A few people wanted me to have my picture taken with their family and I asked why. The answer was they like the medals I was wearing. Ted, it was a real honour to represent the Vet's on the podium. Thank you, Yours.... Stan Conway."

Stan..... it was an honour for me to see you standing there on that very special day, taking the salute. Ted.



Sgt. Brian **Gardiner** conducting mountain warfare operations on a rope crossing of Sleese Creek this past October.



Lt. Trevor **Shelrud** on pre-deployment with 2PPCLI in Winnipeg before heading overseas.

### Humor

A couple was touring a shipyard area in a coastal city of Italy when they saw a strange looking craft. They stopped and asked a worker, “*Sir, is that a U-boat?*.” “*No,*” he replied, “*shesa belonga to da goverment.*”

It was announced today that Canada is now prepared to help the United States in its war against terrorism. They have promised to commit 2 of their largest battleships, 6,000 armed troops, and 60 fighterjets. However, after the exchange rate, that comes down to a canoe, 2 Mounties, and a flying squirrel.

### *Camp Vernon, A Century of Canadian Military History*

This is the title of a great new book that was just published this past December. It is a book of over 500 pages of the history of the Military Camp that Vernon is known for that dates back to the 1800s. Many images, clippings and personal memories is how the book is written. The book was published by Kettle Valley Publishing (1-888-986-2266) and the authors are Hugh Rayment and Patrick Sherlock. The forward was written by Pierre Berton. The ISBN is 0-9687917-1-9. Check the book on [www.kvp.bc.ca](http://www.kvp.bc.ca)



The Canadian Forces Philatelic Society (CFPS) was formed in 1975 for stamp collectors who are members of the Canadian Forces, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Department of National Defence civil servants, and their families. Membership is also open to retired members of these organizations and to serving or retired members of the armed forces of other NATO countries.