



Volume 2004/Issue 2
April/May 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

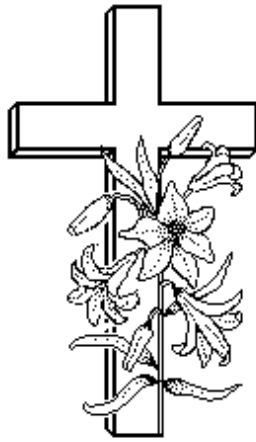
**Melfa Weekend
May 21, 22 & 23
2004**

60th Anniversary of Melfa!

**How about a trip to the Melfa River in 2005?
Plans are presently being arranged.**

Stay tuned to the Groundsheet for details.

LIRI VALLEY OFFENSIVE
MAY, 1944



In Memoriam

John GINTER, February 2004, Chase BC.

Michael STRANINGER, November 2003, Sicamous BC.

HEALTH & WELFARE

No report this issue.

Basil Morgan Receives Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation

On March 26th, our Basil **Morgan** received the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation for his work in our community.

Commendations were awarded to 15 BC residents at a ceremony in Vancouver. *“The commendation is awarded to individuals who have contributed to the care and well being of veterans or to the remembrance of their contributions, sacrifices and achievements.”*

A statement from the National Defence was as follows:

“Thanks to his dedication to the operation of the museum for more than 30 years, Mr. Morgan has given the citizens of Westminster a true understanding of the role of The Royal West-

minster Regiment in the Second World War and that of its veterans. Through his hard work, exceptional devotion and commitment to perpetuating the memory of the achievements of the members of the Royal Westminster Regiment, Mr. Morgan has been and continues to be an inspiration to all in his community.”

There is no doubt that we are all very proud of the achievements Basil has accomplished as the curator of our Museum. The entire Regimental family is very pleased that Veterans Affairs has recognized Basil for his commitment and contribution to this community.

A very well deserved award.

Congratulations.

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What is on the Editor's Mind?

I don't know if you noticed it or not but I change the heading of this section almost each GS. Why? Beats me! This is a quick turnaround from the February issue to the May issue. Melfa being the big event for the Association. I hope that we can see more out for the Melfa weekend. I know I keep harping about that but that's what this is all about. Camaraderie! Those of you post war members are who we are after. I have the list of names and addresses and I look at it all the time and say "Why don't we see that person out?" We also really depend on active members of the Regiment as well.

Great work being done in the Museum. With the old cannon project and the medal display, things are really taking shape in there all the time.

Each edition I will try and profile unit members past and present. This edition includes Mike **McBride** and our present RSM, Ray **Crevier**.

I just obtained Allan **Woodlands** book titled *Eminent Guests*. This book is about special people who have visited the Royal City. From Queens, to Princesses, Dukes and Earls to Prime Ministers, the book is a highlight of these people who have come to the City. The interesting item about the book is how many times the Regiment is mentioned. The book also mentions our Colonel in Chief and the visit by Montgomery. It is good reading.

No you are not losing your eyesight. I've decided to make the font (print) a little smaller. I went from 12 to a 11 point font. This will allow more content in the GS. The other thing I wanted to mention is I now have the software to create the GS in a PDF format so it can be sent over the internet via email. Are you interested in receiving it by email? Let me know by sending an email message to me and I will put together a mail list. We will try if for a while and see how it works. I will continue to send your copy via snail mail as well. If enough are interested it may help save us a few bucks on printing and postage not to mention the work that goes into stuffing envelopes.

Those that know me, know I am not into politics and as an Officer in the CF I shouldn't speak out about our government. But some of the recent issues in the media regarding the equipment, or lack of, being obtained for our troops infuriates me. I recently read about a new truck purchase that was cancelled because it wasn't Canadian. It was an order that was to piggyback on a huge US Army order that would have saved us tax payers millions not to mention the fact the vehicles would have been issued very quickly. Now I support as often as I can to 'Buy Canadian', but sometimes you have to bite the bullet. I've also been reading about aircraft replacement that could take 10 to 15 years for the Buffalo and Hercules not to mention a lifetime to get new fighter jets. And the helicopters? Don't get me going! This is not the way to get our troops the equipment they need. I am always amazed (or disgusted) to walk past our vehicle compound to see that MLVW sitting there looking ragged and rusty and being almost as old, if not older than most of our soldiers. Something has to be done.... NOW! (Ah, I feel better!)

In Brian *The President Knipstrom's* report, he mentions a couple of "older" soldiers coming to Melfa. Chuck **Prince** and Ed **Farkas**. These are two old friends of mine as well. Brian and I have been bugging the hell out of both of them to come to the Melfa Dinner. Chuck is coming from Edmonton and Ed is travelling all the way from White Fish Bay Wisconsin. Way to go guys! Looking forward to seeing you. Those that are in the New Westminster area from the 1970s and 80s, What's your excuse? Let's try and make it one hundred at the dinner this year.

Not sure I mentioned this before but the Regiment has a new affiliated army cadet corps out in Agassiz. It is 1789 RCACC and commanded by Captain B. Erickson. All the cadet corps affiliated to the Regiment will now receive a copy of the Groundsheet to help keep them informed of what is going on with their Association. I also hope that you get this edition before May 8th in time to see all 5 Westie army cadet corps on parade in Queens Park. Check page 12.

It is always sad to hear about the passing of a soldier. It was a sad day for me when I noticed that John **Ginter** had passed away. When I chaired the Melfa Dinner's a few years ago, John always travelled down and was a great supporter of the event. The encouragement and support he expressed to me personally was always appreciated. He will be missed as so many are.

Lastly, the next issue will be published under a new editor. Well not really. It will still be me but I retire from the New Westminster Police Service August 31st after 30 years of service to the City. What am I going to do? I am off to Vernon Army Cadet Summer Training Centre (Camp Vernon) for 8 weeks this summer. I was last there 30 years ago as a Platoon Commander. In the fall? I don't quite know. I'm going to take a few months and see what life brings. I've also agreed to be the new CO of the army cadet corps housed in the armoury. I take over at the end of June. This will be my fourth time as CO. I guess I'll get it right! Being 50 years of age in August, I still have some good years ahead, I HOPE. Have a good summer. Ted **Usher**.

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.

**PAID YOUR
DUES FOR 2004?**

Lost and Found

Again, several Groundsheets came back from the last mailing. But we did find Colin **McQuarrie**. He is now living in Delta. Those from the 1970s era remember Dave **Dunnington**? Dave has been in the Regular Force and is at CFB Comox. Now on the mail list. (Dave - did you get the Groundsheets? How about a story on your career?)

If you look back in some past GS issues, most of those people are still missing. If you come across someone who was once in the Regiment, let me know and we will add them to the mail list.

Are you looking for someone? An old soldier friend? Let us know and we can publish the name here.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

A warm **HELLO** to all the Regimental family. Your executive has been busy these last months. A number of projects are on the go. The Melfa River Crossing Commemorative Project to Italy is well under way under the expert guidance of Jerry **Gangur**. You're past president Len **Wohlgemuth** and his committee are busy sourcing out a Bren Gun carrier to restore for the front of the Armoury. Mike **Major** is looking for interested persons to form a Regimental shooting team. Ted **Usher** (your Editor) has formed a new committee to assist our five (yes, count them, 5!) Army Cadet Corps. Last but not least, the Melfa 2004 weekend is being chaired by yours truly.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to Jerry Gangur in his relentless work and effort to make the Italy project a reality. To assist Jerry, he would appreciate if any of the veterans who were actually at the Melfa to step forward and volunteer to attend the ceremonies. If you are interested in a trip of a lifetime please contact Jerry as soon as possible.

Graham **Riemer** is still looking after recruiting new members into the association. If you are aware of anyone who was in the Regiment and is interested in staying in touch with his or hers comrades, tell them to contact Graham or any other member of the committee.

It's a sad fact of life that our original founders are fading into the past. Lets not have their memories or their contributions to our magnificent Regiment fade with them. It's up to us to keep the Regimental family alive and vibrant! I am told that a number of the Westies from the good old 70's are going to be at the Melfa this year. Chuck **Prince** (from Edmonton Alberta) and Ed **Farkas** (from White Fish Wisconsin) come to mind. *Oh my poor mind!* The stories they have or think they have! What about Mark Nanka? I slurred him in the last issue and he didn't reply. Getting soft and cuddly in your old age Mark? I understand a six figure grid reference is available for the location of the golf course for you.

Lets get together and have a great time. **See you all at the Melfa!**

Brian N. Knipstrom, President

PRO REGI ET PATRIA

Some Military Humor!

Two privates posted at Wainwright were handed shovels and told to bury a large, dead animal. While digging they got into an argument about what they were burying. "This here's a big mule!" "This ain't no mule, this here's a donkey." "Mule!" "Donkey!" Well, this went on for a while until the camp chaplain came by. "What are you boys doing?" "We're diggin' a grave for this mule." "Donkey, dammit!" The chaplain cut in, "Boys, this isn't either one, it's an ass." An hour later, the camp commander came up and said, "What are you men doing, digging a slip trench?" "No sir. We're diggin' an ass hole."

THE REGIMENT

No Report this issue.

Cruising in Kabul, Army style...

Canadian troops in Kabul have taken delivery of 60 new Mercedes Benz G-Wagons and are already putting the vehicles to good use on patrols.

The first 60 of the 802 G-Wagons acquired by the Army to form part of its Light Utility Vehicle Wheeled fleet arrived in Afghanistan between March 5 and 13. Dedicated to operationally tasked field units—both Regular and Reserve Force—and training establishments, the G-Wagon will be used to provide tactical transport in the fields of command and control, liaison, reconnaissance and military police.

You only need to take one look at the new 4x4 to appreciate the sharp and rugged style of the G-Wagon. With its 2.7 litre, 5-cylinder turbocharged diesel engine, near a ton of plated armour and bulletproof glass, and almost a half-metre of ground clearance, it has nothing on your normal SUV.

Those who had the chance to test drive it on the 20 km trip from the Kabul airport to Camp Julien were unanimous: The G-Wagon is robust, drives smoothly and leave you with a confident feeling of security. It has many advantages over similar vehicles.



One of those advantages is the armour protection systems kit. Tailor designed so complete sections of the vehicle—such as doors and windshield—can be removed and replaced by armoured modules, it will provide NATO level 1 protection against small arms and protection against hand grenades and anti-personnel mines. Additional armoured components are included to protect the floor, roof and rear wall of the crew area.

A total of 802 G-Wagons and 160 armour protection systems are being supplied to the CF by Mercedes Benz Canada through the \$130.4-million contract awarded in October 2003. In addition, 1 061 militarized commercial off-the-shelf (MILCOTS) Silverado (4x4) vehicles in three variants—basic, cable layers and military police—are being acquired from General Motors and will be distributed to both Regular and Reserve Force units across the country to replace the Iltis.

Beyond the 60 G-Wagons already received by troops deployed in Kabul, an additional 40 will be delivered to the CF shortly, and the remainder of the fleet will be fielded over the next several months to units in Canada.

Already, the vehicles are put to good use. They are cruising the streets of Kabul in lieu of some of the Iltis and LAV III, giving our personnel a distinct feeling of safety and a professional look.

(Courtesy of Department of National Defence Web Page)

MWO Ray Crevier CD, RSM

MWO Ray **Crevier** was born in Montreal in January 1954. He later enrolled in the Canadian Forces in October 1972. In his early years he served with 2nd Battalion, Royal 22e Regiment and in 1974 joined the 1st Battalion in Lahr Germany. Mr. **Crevier** remained in Germany for 10 years with numerous positions from a soldier in an infantry platoon to communication NCO for the Armoured Defense Platoon, to Platoon 2 i/c in the infantry unit. In 1984 Mr. **Crevier** was then transferred to the 1st Airborne Regiment as a section commander and later became the platoon 2i/c. In 1985 he was transferred to 2nd Commando with the Armoured Defense Platoon and was appointed section commander. He was also the course 2i/c for the TOW Course during this period as well.

In 1986 the RSM was posted to Cyprus with the Airborne Battle Group. In 1988, he was then posted to the 3rd Battalion Royal 22e Regiment in Valcartier and appointed as a platoon 2i/c. In June 1990 he received another transfer to the Canadian Airborne Regiment and became the Unit Emplaning Officer for 1 Commando.

With the situation in Somalia heating up, the RSM was sent in December 1992 with the Canadian Forces in to this worn torn country with the advance party and stayed until June 1993. On his return to Canada, Mr. **Crevier** was posted to CFB Chilliwack where he was assigned as the School Quartermaster for the Canadian Forces Officer Candidate School. With CFB Chilliwack coming to and end, the RSM was there to assist in the closing of the base in 1998. He then took his retirement from the Canadian Forces.

The RSM then joined The Regiment in May 1998 and became a platoon 2i/c and later was appointed CSM for A Coy. He received his present appointment as RSM in September 2001.

Missing medal surfaces

The Mounties have been asked to investigate how a Victoria Cross won by a Canadian soldier in the First World War appears to have come up for auction 30 years after being lost or stolen from Ottawa's Canadian War Museum. The Commonwealth's highest honour for bravery was awarded in 1917 to Filip Konowal — a celebrated figure among Ukrainian-Canadians — but went missing in 1973. London, Ont.-based Jeffrey Hoare Auctions has announced the upcoming sale of the medal in Hamilton on May 30. — News Services

The article at left appeared in the Vancouver Province paper on Sunday April 3rd 2004. The recipient of this VC, Filip **Konowal** was a member of our Regiment when he was awarded this prestigious medal in 1917.

Anyone have deep pockets full of cash and can attend the auction?

Filip Konowal, a Ukrainian Canadian volunteer serving as a corporal with the 47th Canadian Infantry Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, fought with exceptional valour in August 1917 during the battle for Hill 70, near Lens, France. For his courage Konowal was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest decoration of the British Empire, by King George V, in London, on 15 October 1917. (Source - Internet - Infoukes.com)

What's Happening With Army Cadets?

This past March the Royal Canadian Army Cadet's started celebrating their 125th Anniversary. Yes, Canada's largest youth organization is 125 years old. To celebrate, many events will happen this year especially at summer training centres. To start with, Canada Post has published a commemorative 125th stamp located on the right. This image is located here but you must see it to appreciate the color. If you go to the Canada Post web page at www.canadapost.ca, you will see the stamp and the explanation of it. On the left is the 125th logo that has been made into a pin that will be issued to every army cadet in Canada to be worn on the front pocket for one year. Please do your best to help support your local army cadet corps. They are our future soldiers and citizens.



Navigational Error

Below is a transcript of a US naval ship with Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland.

Americans: "Please divert your course 15 degrees to the North to avoid a collision."

Canadians: "Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees to the South to avoid a collision."

Americans: "This is the captain of a US Navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course."

Canadians: "No, I say again, you divert YOUR course."

Americans: "THIS IS THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE SECOND LARGEST SHIP IN THE UNITED STATES' ATLANTIC FLEET. WE ARE ACCOMPANIED BY THREE DESTROYERS, THREE CRUISERS AND NUMEROUS SUPPORT VESSELS. I DEMAND THAT YOU CHANGE YOUR COURSE 15 DEGREES NORTH. THAT'S ONE-FIVE DEGREES NORTH, OR COUNTER MEASURES WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THIS SHIP."

Canadians: "This is a lighthouse. It's your call."

Delta Company (CRC) 2 PPCLI in Bosnia

Most reservists never get the chance to serve with a Regular Force battle group overseas but for those who do it is an unforgettable opportunity that brings invaluable experience to their home units. In October 2003, five members of The Royal Westminster Regiment returned from Bosnia Herzegovina after over 12 months of training and deployment with 2 PPCLI. Lt **Shelrud**, Sgt **Bergan**, MCpl **McKinna**, Cpl **Delaurier** and Cpl **Laporte** augmented 2 PPCLI as a part of an all reserve Company (Delta) during Roto 12 Operation Palladium.



Delta Company was the first reserve Company comprised of soldiers from all trades within the combat arms in Canada to deploy to Bosnia. This variety of skill sets presented many challenges because the initial training focused on infantry tasks that were unfamiliar to many of the soldiers from armour, engineer, artillery and air defence regiments. Following some initial training and administration in Winnipeg, Delta Company deployed to Ft. Knox, Kentucky for a month of intensive training and selection that was aimed at turning the sub unit into a cohesive team as well teaching infantry skills to the other trades. Many of the original soldiers did not make the final cut and were sent home or re-attached to other organizations within the 2 PPCLI Battle Group. However, in the end,

Delta Company emerged strong and prepared for what lay ahead in Bosnia.

Once deployed Delta Company played an integral part in Battle Group operations, which focused on loosening the grip of organized crime on the local societies in the Canadian area of operations. These operations included a variety of cordon and searches and monitoring activities, as well routine patrolling and security tasks. The 502 Brigade Gang became a particular target of interest for Delta Company because it was using war time connections to develop significant control over business and industry in Bosnia. This in turn prevented the local economy from progressing, creating low unemployment and poverty, which worked to hinder the country's chances of entering the EU. Through a focused campaign of operations Delta Company was able to succeed in changing local opinion on organized crime and reinforce the strength of the local police in the region.

Throughout the operations the reservists were observed as displaying a high level of motivation, bringing new ideas and approaches to solving problems on the mission. This enthusiasm and ability to adapt was unique to Delta Company and was seen as one of the strengths that reserve soldiers provide a regular force battle group. Unfortunately, with the end of Roto 12 comes the end of over ten years of The Royal Westminster Regiment service in Bosnia Herzegovina. As the Canadian Forces prepares to withdraw next year, in order to support operations elsewhere in the world, a chapter in the history of the Regiment is coming to an end. Although, the Regular Force will gain a welcome reprieve from the commitment to Bosnia, The Royal Westminster Regiment will not lose the wealth of experience that is gained on deployment to the Balkans. Let us hope that new missions provide even more opportunities for Westie deployment in order to continue our reputation of excellent service abroad.

Lt. Shelrud T.D





Former Westie Now Medical Branch CWO

Chief Warrant Officer **McBride** joined the Canadian Forces in July 1974. Initially, he served as an Infantryman with The Royal Westminster Regiment, which included a tour with UNEF II in Ismailia, Egypt. He transferred to the Regular Force in the fall of 1976 and, after trades training, Private **McBride** was posted to 1 Field Ambulance, CFB Calgary AB in March 1977 where he was employed as an Evacuation Company Medical Assistant and a HQ Driver/Operator. January 1979 saw Cpl **McBride** join LdSH (RC) as a Sabre Squadron Medical Assistant. During this tour, he accompanied the regiment to Cyprus. MCpl **McBride** was posted to 1 Combat Engineer Regiment, CFB Chilliwack BC where he was employed as the Regimental Medical Section Commander and served as a member of the combat dive team. During this tour, he had the opportunity to participate in several small unit exchanges with the US Navy SEALs.

In July 1984, on promotion to Sergeant, he was again posted to 1 Fd Amb where he spent the next four years employed as Air Ambulance Supervisor and as both an Evacuation Platoon 2 i/c and Commander. In 1988, Sergeant **McBride** was posted to Canadian Forces Hospital Esquimalt Victoria BC where he sailed in numerous minor war vessels in support of coastal operations. He completed Physician Assistant training at CFMSS Borden ON and subsequently joined HMCS KOOTENAY as the ship's PA. This tour was interrupted in August 1990 by a short-notice move to serve as Medical Regulator/Liaison Officer in Task Group 302.4, Canada's naval contribution during the Persian Gulf War. Upon repatriation, Warrant Officer **McBride** returned to HMCS KOOTENAY. This was followed by service in HMCS SASKATCHEWAN and at the Base Hospital CFB Esquimalt as Hospital Warrant Officer.

In 1994, he was tasked to join the Royal Canadian Dragoons Battle Group as the Armoured Ambulance Troop Commander. During this tour in Bosnia, Warrant Officer **McBride** planned and led the highly successful evacuation of 138 critically-ill civilians from the Muslim enclave of Gorazde. Promoted upon return to Canada, Master Warrant Officer **McBride** then served on the staff of Commander Sea Training (Pacific) and was subsequently selected for employment with United States Transportation Command where he served as an Aeromedical Evacuation Operations Officer at the Global Patient Movements Requirements Centre located at Scott AFB IL USA. In September 1998, CWO **McBride** returned to Esquimalt in order to take up the duties and responsibilities as the first Coxswain of the newly stood-up Formation Health Services Unit (Pacific) and as the Senior Physician Assistant of Maritime Forces Pacific.

In April 2001, Mr. **McBride** was appointed Medical Branch CWO and Sergeant Major of the Canadian Forces Medical Group. (Well done Mike!)

Field Marshall Montgomery Visits for Melfa Dinner in 1956 & 1960

Viscount Montgomery's visited the Regiment in June 1956 and May 1960. On both occasions he attended to help celebrate the Melfa Dinner. In his speech, he compliment Officer Cadet H.E. **Hamm** for his outstanding presentation of the Melfa Address. Presiding at the head table was Major Walter **Tyler** and Lt. Col Ted **Eakins**. According to Allan **Woodlands** recent book on special visits to the Royal City, the Viscount also conducted an inspection of 300 members of the Regiment and its three affiliated cadet corps. This must have been a very exciting moment in the Regiments history to have been on that parade or to have attended the dinner.

Melfa Weekend

Here is what you need to know!

Golf is again at Maple Ridge Golf Club. Call Bruce Howells at 465-4182 for details. Start time is 0930 so be there by 0900. Your fee will get you golf, a burger and a libation. Bruce is always looking for some prizes to be donated.

Dinner is again at the armoury. Cocktails will start at 1800 hours followed by dinner at 1900. We've taken your advise and the buffet will be improved this year. Last year was good but a little heavy. Feedback is always appreciated.

Sunday brunch is FREE and at the armoury from 0900 to 1030.

The Annual General Meeting starts at 1030. Please be there!

If you require any further information please contact any other the Executive listed in this Groundsheet.

Melfa Weekend 2004

RSVP

Tear off this portion and return to the Association so you can be included in the Melfa Weekend of May 21, 22 & 23 2004.

Your Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Golf (Friday May 21st) Cost \$40.00 X _____ = _____

Dinner (Saturday May 22nd) Cost \$35.00 X _____ = _____

Brunch/AGM (Sunday May 23rd) FREE X _____ = \$0

_____ Total

On Saturday May 8th at 1000 hours, The Royal Westminster Regiment affiliated Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps will parade in mass at Queens Park in New Westminster. There should be well over 100 army cadets from 5 corps on parade with a band. All Association members are invited to attend this event.

Return This RSVP Before May 15th 2004 to

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

Your support is greatly appreciated at this years Melfa Weekend, especially the AGM on Sunday.

Please come out and enjoy the weekend!