



Volume 2007/Issue 1
February 2007



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'

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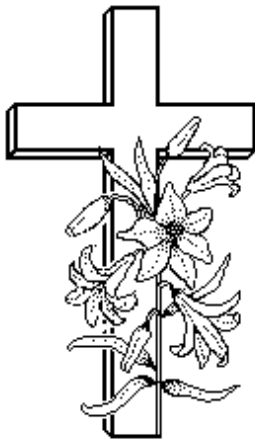
**Are Your Dues Up to Date?
Your Association needs your
financial support with your
dues.**

**Melfa Weekend 2007!
The dates this year are
May 18,19 & 20.**

**Our Regiment is deploying
eight soldiers to Afghanistan.
Support your troops!**

**A piece of WWI history finds
its way home to our Museum.
Check inside for details.**





In Memoriam

Fred WEST, June 2006, Coquitlam BC
James WARMAN, June 2006, Powell River BC
Benny ARNESON, January 2006, Wainwright AB*
Robert BOYD, April 2006, Powell River BC*
Donald GETZ, May 2006, Penticton BC*
William McIntyre, January 2006, Mission BC*

* = Courtesy of Royal Canadian Legion Last Post

Subject: Denzel Washington, and Brooks Army Medical Center

Don't know whether you heard about this but Denzel Washington and his family visited the troops at Brook Army Medical Center, in San Antonio, Texas (BAMC) the other day. This is where soldiers who have been evacuated from Germany come to be hospitalized in the United States, especially burn victims. There are some buildings there called Fisher Houses. The Fisher House is a Hotel where soldiers' families can stay, for little or no charge, while their soldier is staying in the Hospital. BAMC has quite a few of these houses on base, but as you can imagine, they are almost filled most of the time. While Denzel Washington was visiting BAMC, they gave him a tour of one of the Fisher Houses. He asked how much one of them would cost to build. He took his check book out and wrote a check for the full amount right there on the spot. The soldiers overseas were amazed to hear this story and want to get the word out to the American public, because it warmed their hearts to hear it. The question I have is why does: Alec Baldwin, Madonna, Sean Penn and other Hollywood types make front page news with their anti-everything America trash and Denzel Washington's Patriotism doesn't even make page 3 in the Metro section of any newspaper except the Local newspaper in San Antonio.

(The above story circulated on email in Janaury with several photos attached that offered legitimacy to the story. Normaly I don't place American articles in the GS but I think this one needed mentioning considering it never even hit CNN or other major news networks. Editor.)

For those that went on the Melfa Italy trip in 2006, the DVD is still being produced and should be available in the next month or so. Arrangements will be made to get it to you.

NEWS FLASH - As we reported last year some unknown low-life stole the two bronze plaques from the 6th St side of the armoury. Well you will be happy to know they are in the process of being replaced with granite one. The VC and Armoury plaques will be rededicated at a ceremony this spring. More details to follow.

How is the Editor?

Well it is now October (19) and fall is here. Beautiful time of the year as far as I am concerned. My favourite time! It probably has been only a few days since you received your Oct issue of the Groundsheet but here I am starting a new one. You see the work as the editor of this little paper takes up a fair amount of time and a few months to put an issue together. Then it takes time to deliver it to the printer, pick up the finished copies, buy stamps and then find a group to spend an hour or so stuffing, licking etc to get it out in the mail. Am I complaining? No! Just wanted you to know that there are people working like me to keep this Association going. The names listed on the left are who they are and they need your support from time to time so please make an effort to give it. We certainly love to hear from the membership out there.

YOU! The active soldier of the Regiment or a recent member of the unit who is fortunate enough to get the Groundsheet. You are members of this association and we would like to hear more from you. About 200 Groundsheets are sent out to you and your fellow members and another 225 are sent to members who served the unit since WWII; people like me. We would really appreciate it if you would stay in touch if you leave the Regiment and move on to other things. That is what this association is all about; your service in the Regiment.

Remembrance Day just passed us a few days ago. As the Chairman of the New Westminster service, I am proud to say, it was a wonderful day. With the threat of rain, the sky broke and we had a beautiful clear day with the LtGov arriving a few minutes earlier than scheduled. It appears from all who had a chance to speak to Her Honour, she enjoyed being in the company of Westies. We had a few historical military vehicles that carried some of our Association members down the hill to the cenotaph and then through the parade for a 'drive' past in front of the LtGov. Again, it was a wonderful day. I want to thank all of the Regimental members who helped set up the Armoury and clean up after. Well Done! I also want to advise that this was my last time as Chair of the Remembrance Day committee. I advised the Mayor that I would not accept another term. Five years was sufficient as I would like to attend Nov 11th and enjoy the day for what it stands for. I certainly enjoyed the opportunity of looking after this very important day of the year.

Our web site, www.royal-westies-assn.ca, is a big success. In a short period of time it has been on the web, hundreds are viewing it. I will continue to add new things to the page on an ongoing basis so make sure

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you keep checking back. Did you know the entire Westminster War Diary is now on the web site. Jim **Oldfield**, the author, granted permission to have the book scanned and loaded onto the web site. Thanks Jim, much appreciated! As a result of the web site, we have picked up a few new 'old' friends of the Regiment. Recently I received an email from Bob **Walsh** of Medeira Park on the Sunshine Coast. Bob said he was in the unit in the 1960's. He is now on the mail list for the Groundsheet. Welcome back Bob! I also got an email from a 'old' friend Chuck **Marshall** who was looking at the web site and the 1940's photobook of the unit at the barracks near 10th Ave and 8th St. Chuck mentioned about how he found my grandfather, Jack Usher in one of the photos and it reminded him of the story my father (Jack) told Chuck about when my Dad arrived in England, underage, following his Dad to war. When those stories surface it sure does bring back memories.

I am very proud of the **Usher** name and its association and history with the Regiment. Having had both grandfather's, father and both brother's serve the Regiment is truly something to be proud of. I am equally proud that my mother, Barrie served the Regiment in a women's band not to mention the huge support she gave my Dad and us three boys as members of the unit and cadets. My Mom also served a time in the WAC's. As well, my mother's father Benjamin **Naylor** joined the 104th in 1915. He served for a year as a Color Sergeant then signed up for the 131st Overseas Batt. He didn't go overseas due to a medical category. My father's mother had three brothers (**Shaw**) that also served in the 104th. I am not sure how many years it all adds up to but it must certainly be over 100 years of service. Something to be proud of for sure!

What will 2007 bring - Peace? Doubtful! My hope and wish for 2007 is that our troops overseas continue to make a difference to those they are aiding; that Canadians continue to support our troops no matter what our government does; and that all, *every last soldier*, arrives back home healthy and safe.

Even though I sound like a broken record, your support of this newsletter, our new web site and this Association is both greatly needed and appreciated. We still continue to struggle somewhat to get people involved in our Executive. It has been pretty well the same group year in and year out running this Association. Where the hell are the rest of you? Can you not offer up some of your time to step forward and help out a few times a year. You don't have to serve on the Executive but we do have small committees or projects you can help with from time to time. It doesn't take much of your time. Please consider it and give Scotty **Morton** a call.

(December) A great thing happened recently. I found on the web auction site eBay an Officer's swagger stick with the 47th emblem on it from WWI. I sent around an email to a few people to let them know but before I could consider a bid on it the wind came in to Vancouver and my power went out for a day or so. In the meantime, serving unit officer Captain Ben **Pong** made a bid and won the item from the seller in England. The item is on it's way here and should arrive early January. A number of us have come forward and offered to help Ben pay for the item which will be donated to the Regiment for display. Good going fella's! (Don't forget to slip Ben a few bills. I know he is modest, but it will help.)

Until the May issue, I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year and stay tuned to the web site and the Groundsheet for upcoming events that your Association will be involved with.

Ted Usher, Editor

Presidents Report

I would like to extend my best wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year to all the Regimental family. As is the custom your executive did not meet in January, so it seems quite a while since the last meeting. But now that we are well into 2007, I'm sure that we are ready to get back down to work.

I was very pleased and honoured to attend the Men's Christmas Dinner back in December. It had been very many years since I had witnessed such an event and I was impressed with the great spirit of the current serving members who obviously carry on the task of representing our Regiment so well. Len **Bailey** and his wife were also in attendance and Len presented his trophy to the current best marksman. It was good to see you again Len.

We have begun planning this years Melfa weekend. The golf tournament will be on Friday May 18th, the dinner will be on Saturday May 19th and the AGM will be on Sunday May 20th. The dinner this year will be held in the Roma Hall in Queensborough. This is a first class facility and by all accounts they serve a great meal. Please mark the dates in your calendar and plan to attend. Please also pass the word to any other former Westies as we would love to see them attend.

New Westminster Secondary School has been in touch reference the annual Bursary. This bursary is available to a NWSS student with family ties with a member of the Regimental family. Hopefully, it can be awarded this year to a deserving graduate.

Eight members of the Regiment are currently heading to Afghanistan We should be proud of their obvious dedication and service. This deployment is proof positive of the fine job our Regiment is doing. On behalf of the Association I would like them to know they will be in our thoughts as they perform this important task and we wish them a safe return.

Finally I would like to encourage everyone to try and track down our lost former members of the Regiment. We served with so many that have slipped through the cracks, it would be great to bring them home.

Pro Rege et Patria **Alan Morton, President**



November 11th 2006
**Her Honour the Lieutenant
Governor of BC, Iona
Campagnolo (left) with serving
member Warrant Officer Perry
Feidler and Regimental
Association President, Alan
'Scotty' Morton.**

The Regiment

Greetings current and former Westies,

This past summer had some memorable events. We welcomed home MCpl **Sandulak** from Afghanistan in August. We also had two Westies earn the top candidate award on course this past summer, Cpl **Mann** for the Primary Leadership Qualification (PLQ) course, and Pte **Brinson** on the Basic Infantry Qualification (BIQ) course. In the fall, Pte MacKay earned the top candidate award on the Basic Communicator course. All three are to be congratulated for upholding our high standards. Also of note, former Westie CO Glen **Richmond** is to be congratulated for being promoted to Colonel and being appointed Commander of 39 Canadian Brigade Group in November.

We have again been asked to supply a contingent of soldiers for a future rotation into Afghanistan, this one in the February – August 2008 time frame. So far, thirty-five Westies have stepped forward. This is in addition to the eight that are presently on pre-deployment leave, and will deploy with 2 RCR in February, 2007. These eight soldiers are: Cpl **Bason**, Cpl **Campbell**, Cpl **Guilman**, Cpl **Iverson**, Cpl **Jackson**, Cpl **McIntyre**, Cpl **Stepen**, and Cpl **Zonnenberg**. All Westies are proud of these eight outstanding soldiers for answering the call. On behalf of all Westies, I wish them a safe and interesting tour of duty.

In January 2007, I learned unofficially that The Regiment has been selected to be a ‘lead unit,’ forming the nucleus of a Territorial Defence Battalion Group (TDBG). As such, we will provide the headquarters of a composite battalion that will be called on for domestic operations (e.g. natural disasters) and will also be a battalion-sized organization for collective training. It is a great honour to have been so designated. We are one of only two such ‘lead units’ in BC, The Canadian Scottish Regiment being the other. Details are still quite sketchy and this is still unofficial until the Minister of National Defence announces it. Our strong success at growth was a major factor in us receiving the lead unit status and our growth must continue. This means we need all soldiers to attend as much training as they can so they can gain the experience they need to develop into good NCOs. It also means we need to keep recruiting strongly. If any of you know of suitable young men and women, encourage them to call recruiting at 604-666-4282 to learn more about how to become a Westie.

Pro Rege et Patria **M.P. Haussmann, LCol, CO**



Our Cadets Corps 2316, 2822, 1922, 1789 & 1838

Things continue to happen around our cadet corps. Most recently with the home corps based out of the armoury, 2316 cadets started their first Phase of National Star Certification Examination. This is an annual exam that senior cadets take part in order to qualify for advanced courses and over seas exchanges. Sgt's J. **Darby**, R. **Adam** and M/Cpl A. **Kohnen** all successfully passed Phase 1. Phase 2 is in February. Also from 2316, 5 cadets were presented their Army Cadet Service Medal on 29 January for 4 years of continued service to the RCACC. Well done!

Changes are occurring with 1922 corps in Aldergrove. Capt Ken **Hoogstraten** is stepping aside to further his education and Capt Brandon **Banks** will be assuming command of the corps shortly. Capt Banks is the former CO of the 1725 Engineer corps in Chilliwack. Welcome Capt Banks and Good Luck Capt Hoogstraten! (Did you know that the cadet corps at the old base Chilliwack was once a Westie corps?)

The newly appointed CO of 1789 corps in Agassiz is Major Lorne **Pleasants**. Major Pleasants was a former Westie soldier back in the 60s and went on to work with cadets. Major Pleasants is the former CO of the 1725 Engineer corps in Chilliwack. (Now where have I heard that one before?) Welcome Major Pleasants!

Cadets are our leaders of tomorrow. Please do what you can to support of cadets in your community.

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.

MIA/AWOL

W.H. Fairweather, New Westminster
Jack Laing, Bellingham Wash.
Cedric Jones, Mission

If you know these members, please have them contact us to get them back on the address list.

Have you got any ideas or something you could contribute to our web site? Any old photos, articles or a story? We would sure enjoy your input. Hundreds of hits are being made on our web site so lets make use of it.

www.royal-westies-assn.ca

THE MIGHTY MAROON MACHINE

The Westminster Regiment was fortunate, in its role in the Fifth Canadian Armoured Division, to be commanded by Major General Bert Hoffmeister. Like many other general officers, Hoffmeister was a good strategist and tactician but he was much more and he had the reputation of being a “soldiers’ general”. He listened to his men and when he planned actions for them he would do so in a way that kept battle losses to a minimum. The Fifth Division was very much “his” Division, reflected by its nickname, Hoffmeister’s Mighty Maroon Machine. Maroon was the colour of the shoulder patches we wore. The Westminster’s patches were unique, in that they had WESTMR embroidered across them, in green thread - the only Regiment so designated, I believe.

The good feeling that the Regiment had for its Commander was reciprocated and General Hoffmeister on more than one occasion said that he was proud of the Westminster’s performance and honored to have them in his Division. The Regiment’s greatest battle honor was won at the Melfa river crossing, in southern Italy, which opened the way for our troops to the Liri valley, which was the road to Rome. It was in this battle that Major Jack Mahony, commanding A Company, so distinguished himself that he was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest decoration of the British Commonwealth. Major Mahony received his Award in the field, from the hand of King George VI. There were other places where the Westminster’s distinguished themselves, including the taking of Coriano Ridge in northern Italy, which opened the way into the vast Po river valley. Then, after the Division had been moved to northwest Europe to join the rest of the Canadian Army, the Regiment played an important role in the break-out from Arnhem and the bypassing of the enemy’s Grebbe line.

General Hoffmeister was a citizen soldier and after the War he intended to leave the Army and rejoin the H.R. MacMillan Export Company, in the lumber business. But this was not to be. The Canadian government was asked to provide a Division of troops in the war against Japan and Hoffmeister was chosen to command it. But before he left Europe, the General travelled around to all his units, thanking and praising them for their efforts and he said that he wanted everyone to see the mighty machine that they had been a part of. To this end, he assembled all the troops with their tanks, armoured carriers, trucks, guns and other equipment on an airfield in northern Holland, near Groningen. It was indeed an impressive sight and those who were there will likely not forget it. I know that I won’t.

Ironically, the General didn’t get to take part, himself. He had already been recalled to Canada, where he was busy recruiting officers for his Division in the war against Japan. As it turned out, the Division was never used, since before it shipped out, the A-bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to all intents and purposes the War was over. The accompanying pictures are of the assembly on the Dutch airfield.

Jim Oldfield, Corvallis, Oregon, USA.

News Flash - The Association beret’s are in. Those that ordered one will be contacted very soon. Those that want one, please contact Len Wohlgemuth at 604-936-0554 or email at kitshop@royal-westies-assn.ca To see the beret, go to our web site and click on Association and then Kit Shop.

Task Force 1-07

There are 27 Reservists from the 39th brigade on Task Force 1-07. Out of that 27, 8 are Members of The Royal Westminster Regiment. In April, those eight Westies joined C-Coy of 3 PPCLI in Dundurn Saskatchewan. The meet and greet with our new company was short and we began with live fire ranges immediately. On this exercise, the basics were all that were being developed. The pace was noticeable fast and would remain that way for the duration of our make-up training. After settling into Third Battalion, we were off to Golden BC for a Basic Mountain Operations (BMO). During that week in the mountains our daily activities consisted of tying knots, river crossings, repelling, rock climbing and learning basic mountain movements. Working in complex terrain helped form a foundation for a newly developed team of professional soldiers.

The first real tactical exercise was a patrol school put on by 3 PPCLI in Hinton Alberta. This time was utilized to standardize our patrolling SOP's. With 408 Squadron's assistance, helicopter insertions and extractions were possible. Don't think just because helicopters were present that walking was cut out. This was not the case at all. One week was living in a patrol base conducting patrols of every nature. The final task was a raid on an airfield at dawn the last day. After patrolling through the night to our objective, the sun's rays were cresting the trees and we knew it was time to rock. After the objective was cleared we started our journey to the extraction point 38kms away. This journey was a true gut check containing 38kms of swamps, dead fall and mountainous terrain along with a roaming enemy force making roads impassable.

Live fire, live fire and more live fire. This was the name of the game in Shilo Manitoba. The main

focus in Shilo was section level live fire to company level live fire. The best type of background activities are the ones that explode! M72, claymore and the 60mm mortar were all good to go. The company range was run by 2PPCLI from Shilo. There is no question that 100% was put into assembling that range. There was fast air and Lav 3's with G wagons firing over head at targets in depth during the attack. The Combat Engineers did a good job cutting holes in walls with chain saws and blowing up what needed to be blown up.

Now that C-Coy was fully developed, it was time to meet the rest of the Task Force: 2 Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR). As a light infantry coy we needed to hone our vehicle skills. Different driving techniques and parking formations were learned and mastered. Improvised Explosive Device (IED) training that was presented to us complemented what had been already learned throughout work up. 2 RCR made a coy live fire range that allowed full freedom of movement. Live tanks, artillery and mortar fire helped with taking the objective. 2 RCR took 5 hours to clear the objective. C-Coy 3 PPCLI, on the other hand completed the same objective from start to finish in 85 minutes. That is 5 minutes less than what our company commander said in his combat estimate.

The Combat Manoeuvre Training Center or CMTC is located in Wainwright Alberta. All soldiers going over seas must go through this center before deploying. CMTC re-emphasizes all of the training we have had along with teaching some new lessons. CMTC gave the Task Force leadership a chance to work with the entire Battle Group.

Continued on page 10

In between exercises, we participated in many courses and training. Some of the courses were Gun Fighter, Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC), Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD), Riot Control, Remote Weapons System (RWS) and driver courses for both Nyala and G-Wagon. Many skills were kept fresh through repetition.

The past ten months have been full of excellent training that has prepared us for the challenges to come. We will be departing mid February to Kandahar Air Field (KAF).

Cpl Iverson MRA

**By Courtesy (St. John's) The Independent
Friday, January 26, 2007**

**By Rick Mercer (Comedian - very big supporter of our Canadian soldiers)
For The Independent**

Poor Noreen Golfman. She wrote in her Jan. 12 column (Blowing in the Wind . . .) that her holidays were ruined by what she felt were incessant reports about Canadian men and women serving in Afghanistan. So upset was Noreen that, armed with her legendary pen, sharpened from years in the trenches at Memorial University's women's studies department, she went on the attack. I know I should just ignore the good professor and write her off as another bitter baby boom academic pining for what she fondly calls "the protest songs of yesteryear," but I can't help myself. A response is exactly what she wants; and so I include it here. After all, Newfoundlanders have seen this before: Noreen Golfman, sadly, is Margaret Wenthe without the wit. Dear Noreen,

I am so sorry to hear about the interruption to your holiday cheer. You say in your column that it all started when the CBC ran a story on some "poor sod" who got his legs blown off in Afghanistan. The "poor sod" in question, Noreen, has a name and it is Cpl. Paul Franklin. He is a medic in the Forces and

has been a buddy of mine for years. I had dinner with him last week in Edmonton, in fact. I will be sure to pass on to him that his lack of legs caused you some personal discomfort this Christmas. Paul is a pretty amazing guy. You would like him I think. When I met him years ago he had two good legs and a brutally funny sense of humour. He was so funny that I was pretty sure he was a Newfoundlander. You probably know the type (or maybe you don't) — salt of the earth, always smiling, and like so many health-care professionals, seemingly obsessed with helping others in need.

These days he spends his time training other health-care workers and learning how to walk again. That's a pretty exhausting task for Paul . . . heading into rehabilitation he knew very well his chances of walking again were next to none, considering he's a double amputee, missing both legs above the knee. At the risk of ruining your day Noreen, I'm proud to report that for the last few months he has managed to walk his son to school almost every morning and it's almost a kilometre from his house. Next month Paul hopes to travel to Washington where he claims he will learn how to run on something he calls "bionic flipper cheetah feet." The legs may be gone but the sense of humour is still very much intact.

Forgive me Noreen for using Paul's name so much, but seeing as you didn't catch it when CBC ran the profile on his recovery I thought it might be nice if you perhaps bothered to remember it from here on in. This way, when you are pontificating about him at a dinner party, you no longer have to refer to him simply as the "poor sod," but you can actually refer to him as Paul Franklin. You may prefer "poor sod" of course; it's all a matter of how you look at things. You see a "poor sod" that ruined your Christmas and I see a truly inspiring guy. That's why I am thrilled that the CBC saw fit to run a story on Paul and his wife Audra. I would go so far as to suggest that many people would find their story, their marriage and their charitable endeavours inspiring. Just as I am sure that many readers of

The Independent are inspired by your suggestion that Paul's story has no place on the public broadcaster. Further on in your column you ask why more people aren't questioning Canada's role in Afghanistan. I understand this frustration. It's a good question. Why should Canada honour its United Nations-sanctioned NATO commitments? Let's have the discussion. I would welcome debate on the idea that Canada should simply ignore its international obligations and pull out of Afghanistan. By all means ask the questions Noreen, but surely such debates can occur without begrudging the families of injured soldiers too much airtime at Christmas?

Personally, I would have thought that as a professor of women's studies you would be somewhat supportive of the notion of a NATO presence in Afghanistan. After all, it is the NATO force that is keeping the Taliban from power. In case you missed it Noreen, the Taliban was a regime that systematically de-peopled women to the point where they had no human rights whatsoever. This was a country where until very recently it was illegal for a child to fly a kite or for a little girl to receive any education.

To put it in terms you might understand Noreen, rest assured the Taliban would frown on your attending this year's opening night gala of the St. John's International Women's Film Festival. In fact, as a woman, a professor, a writer and (one supposes) an advocate of the concept that women are people, they would probably want to kill you three or four times over. Thankfully that notion is moot in our cozy part of the world but were it ever come to pass I would suggest that you would be grateful if a "poor sod" like Paul Franklin happened along to risk his life to protect yours. And then of course you seem to be somehow personally indignant that I would visit troops in Afghanistan over Christmas. You ask the question "When did the worm turn?" Well I hate to break it to you, but in my case this worm has been doing this for a long time now. It's been a decade since I visited Canadian peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and this Christmas marked my third trip to Afghanistan. Why do I do it? Well I am not a soldier — that much is perfectly clear. I don't have the discipline or the skills. But I am an entertainer and entertainers entertain.

And occasionally, like most Canadians, I get to volunteer my professional time to causes that I find personally satisfying. As a Newfoundlander this is very personal to me. On every one of these trips I meet Newfoundlanders who serve proudly in the Canadian Forces. Every day they do the hard work that we as a nation ask of them. They do this without complaint and they do it knowing that at every turn there are people like you, Noreen, suggesting that what they do is somehow undignified or misguided.

I am also curious Noreen why you refer to the head of the Canadian Forces, General Rick Hillier, as "Rick 'MUN graduate' Hillier." I would suggest that if you wish to criticize General Hillier's record of leadership or service to his country you should feel free. He is a big boy. However, when you dismiss him as "Rick 'MUN Graduate' Hillier" the message is loud and clear. Are you suggesting that because General Hillier received an education at Memorial he is somehow unqualified for high command? We are used to seeing this type of tactic in certain national papers — not The Independent. You end by saying you personally cannot envision that peace can ever be paved with military offensives. May I suggest to you that in many instances in history peace has been achieved exactly that way.

The gates of Auschwitz were not opened with peace talks. Holland was not liberated by peacekeepers and fascism was not defeated with a deft pen. Time and time again men and women in uniform have laid down their lives in just causes and in an effort to free others from oppression.

It is unfortunate, Noreen, that in such instances people like yourself may have your sensitivities offended, especially during the holiday season, but perhaps that is a small price to pay. Best wishes for the remainder of 2007; may it be a year of peace and prosperity.

Canada's New Government Announces Changes to Reserve Force Personnel Pension Plan

December 21, 2006

OTTAWA – The Honourable Gordon O'Connor, Minister of Defence, and General Rick Hillier, the Chief of Defence Staff, are pleased to announce that all Reserve Force members will now be eligible to contribute to and earn benefits from the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) for all periods of Reserve service.

The amendment to the Canadian Forces Superannuation Regulations means that starting January 1, 2007, all Reserve Force members will contribute to CPP on the same basis as any other Canadian worker earning above the basic exemption, regardless of the nature or length of the Reserve service. "Canada's New Government has made this change because we believe that all Reservists should be able to collect a pension that will allow them to build for retirement and provide their families with basic financial protection," said O'Connor. "Canada's New Government is proud of the brave men and women who serve our country daily and this amendment is another example of our commitment to support them."

"This change is excellent news for Reservists," said Hillier. "Whether Canadians choose to serve full-time or part-time in the CF, they will be able to start building upon their CPP pension and create a more secure future," he added.

At least 8,500 Reserve Force members previously excluded will now be eligible to contribute to and earn benefits under the CPP. As of January 1, 2007, Reserve Force members will pay CPP contributions of 4.95% on their Reserve Force earnings that range between the Year's Basic Exemption of \$3,500 (or earn more than \$291 a month) and the Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE) set by CPP, which will be \$43,700 in 2007. (Source - DND website)

Melfa Weekend 2007 May 18, 19 & 20th.

This year our Melfa Dinner will be held at the community home of our Italian neighbours and friends in New Westminster. The Roma Hall in Queensborough has been the meeting place for the Italian community for many years. The Association would like to carry on from where we left off from the Melfa Trip 2006 and have a celebration in true Italian style. The Roma Hall features a splendid dining facility where the meal is prepared and cooked by ladies from the hall. You can't beat the taste anywhere! Your executive is looking at a menu that will be 3-5 courses. The cost will be very reasonable and well worth it. As well, the hall is very easy to get to as it is just off the Queensborough Bridge. It has loads of parking and easy access to the hall.

So mark your calendar for this special event. Details of times, cost etc will be in the May issue of the Groundsheet. This is your notice to attend the Annual General Meeting.

Make this Melfa Weekend the year YOU attend!