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April 2011



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.’*

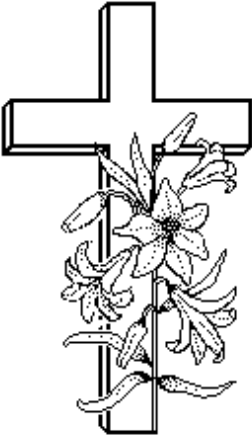
‘Pro Rege et Patria’

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In Memoriam

Armstrong, Richard John (Dick)	Dec. 2010	Mission BC	Westminster Regiment WWII
Taylor, James E.	Dec. 2008	Abbotsford BC	Westminster Regiment WWII
Gates, Glenn	Apr. 2011	West Vancouver	Royal Westminster Regiment

Health and Welfare

Herb Brown probably had a TIA (ministroke) from a blood clot or plaque dislodgement. It was resolved on its own within two hours without the need for medication I have completely recovered with no after effects, brain damage or damage to any other part of my body. Mike Bergen is out of the hospital and recuperating at home. Mike has suffered from gallstones. I am sure he would appreciate some visitors. Cpl Darosa is in treatment for leukemia and should recover as this was caught early. Ryan Doria will keep his finger(s) after suffering frost bite from an exercise in the Chilcotin.

I believe that it is the responsibility of all members of the regimental family to report both positive and negative aspects on our membership and their families. I am sure with such a young Regiment there will be births to report. So please drop me a line if you know anything.

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Editors Report

Hello all. The Melfa Weekend will soon be upon us. I see the Melfa Committee has been working very hard and is putting together a great weekend of events. Please ensure you have your reservation in before May 12th.

As usual we will be having our AGM on the Sunday. We are particularly low on having fresh members in our executive. Specifically, we have had Herb Hamm serving as secretary as well as his position as Museum Curator. He would like to remain on the executive but move away from the secretary duties. So we are asking for a volunteer for this position. Herb would be willing to help with some of the duties for a while. If you are interested in volunteering please contact our Nominating Chair Kevin Butler at 604-597-2567.

Along with our Melfa Weekend the New Westminster Salmonbellies are again hosting the Seats for Soldiers program. Please read the next page for further details. This has been very successful over the last 2 years so if you are available please show up.

“SEATS FOR SOLDIERS”

New Westminster, B.C. April 8, 2011: The New Westminster Senior Salmonbellies Lacrosse Club and The Royal Westminster Regiment are pleased to announce the third annual “Seats for Soldiers” Military Appreciation Night at Queen’s Park Arena in New Westminster on Thursday, June 9, 2011. Again, the Salmonbellies will take on one of their biggest rivals, the Victoria Shamrocks, in a unique evening to salute the Canadian Armed Forces. At this special appreciation event, anyone with an association to the military, including cadets, legion members, military association members along with their families, will be admitted **FREE OF CHARGE**. Military guests are invited to come dressed in uniforms, legion or regimental blazers complete with medals and bring along families and friends. Civilians are encouraged to wear RED for Canada! Join us as we welcome home our returning soldiers who served in Afghanistan during the past year. At this special tribute event, the Salmonbellies and Shamrocks promise an evening of warrior sport on the only wooden lacrosse floor in North America.

“On behalf of the entire military family, we appreciate the Salmonbellies and the Shamrocks extending this kind gesture which will be an entertaining respite for our hard working service members and their families” stated LCol Doug Poitras, Commanding Officer of The Royal Westminster Regiment.

Pre-game activities starting at 6:00 pm include a military display expo featuring current vehicles, equipment and weapons along with a BBQ and a beverage garden. Brigadier General Paul Wynnyck, Commander of Land Forces Western Area, will visit from Edmonton to perform the ceremonial face off. Intermissions will feature military band entertainment, giveaways and fundraising activities to support the Military Family Resource Centre. Doors open at 6:45 pm for pregame entertainment. Game start scheduled for 7:55 pm.

The Salmonbellies Lacrosse Club, formed in 1889 in New Westminster, has long been one of the fixtures in the Western Lacrosse Association, winning 24 national championships during its 120 year history. In 1928, although Lacrosse was considered a demonstration sport, they won the Olympic Gold Medal. To show support for our Armed Forces, last December, the Salmonbellies and their sponsors shipped lacrosse equipment and shirts to our serving troops in Afghanistan. This June, along with their fans, the Club will show their appreciation once again to the Canadian Military by inviting everyone to experience the excitement this team always delivers. “Two years ago, when the Salmonbellies celebrated its 120th year, we thought it very fitting to do something with one of the Royal City’s oldest and prestigious partners, The Royal Westminster Regiment. Dovetailing off the success of the Operation Salmonbellies Project in 2008, it was the right thing to honour all past and present members of our military. We want to continue this tribute again in 2011!” said Dan Richardson President and GM, New Westminster SR Salmonbellies.

The Royal Westminster Regiment is the oldest active unit in British Columbia with a 148 year history in New Westminster. The militia light infantry battalion has served in The Boer War, World War I, World War II; augmented numerous overseas deployments on UN and NATO missions; served in Bosnia, Croatia, Cyprus, the Golan Heights, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan. In addition, the unit has assisted the community by providing protection from civil unrest, providing a relief centre during the Great Fire of 1898, assisted with the Fraser River floods of 1948 and aided with the Okanagan Wild Fires of 2003. Westies have been deployed annual from 2007 -2011 to serve in the Afghan Conflict and several currently serving overseas will return in late 2011. During 2010, the Regiment provided security support to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

For information contact: David MacGrotty, Chairman of Seats for Soldiers or Honorary Lieutenant Colonel Karen Baker-MacGrotty at [604-526-2988](tel:604-526-2988)

Presidents Report

It has been fairly quiet since my last report. I attended a fundraiser for True Patriot Love Foundation, which Supports the Military and their Families. It was held at the new trade and Convention Centre in Vancouver. Dinner was Buffet style and you got your dinner on the old style mess hall trays. Several lower mainland Reserve units, including The Westies put on displays in the foyer. It was a very enjoyable evening, and they raised about 1.3 Million dollars.

Your executive has been quite busy preparing for this years Melfa Dinner. We are soliciting donations for The Silent Auction, and possibly door prizes.

The Executive would like to remind you to notify us as early as possible that you will be attending the dinner, as we have to let the caterer know the numbers a week before. Last year we ran out of place settings because people showed up at the door, so some did not get in.

I look forward to seeing you at the dinner.

Pro Rege et Patria
Terry leith



Wreaths are placed in memory of Vimy Ridge during remembrance ceremony Saturday at Vancouver's Victory Square. The battle, April 9-12, 1917, cost 3,600 Canadians their lives, with 7,000 wounded. An estimated 700 to 800 of the slain were from B.C.

Regiment

Ex COUGAR DUCIMUS in Victoria 25-27Mar11



**A member of the Royal Westminster Regiment
Taking a bound with his C9 LMG machine gun**



MCpl Fuller leading a section attack designating the direction of the attack

Our Cadets

1789 Agassiz - No Report.
2316 New Westminster - No Report
1838 Maple Ridge - No Report.
2822 Surrey - No Report.
1922 Aldergrove - No Report.

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

Douglas J Flint
Jason Syverson

Kit Shop

Association Tie.....	\$35.00
Association Blazer Badge.....	\$35.00
Association Lapel Pin.....	\$ 4.00
Association Beret with Cap Badge.....	Free

Contact the Regimental Museum during open hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Ex COUGAR DUCIMUS in Victoria 25-27Mar11



A member of the Royal Westminster Regiment throwing an empty box of ammo he just removed from his C9 LMG



A member of the Royal Westminster Regiment attempting to remove a box of ammo from his C9 ammo pouch on his Tactical Vest

Remembering a Veteran and a Friend

PoCo resident honours Frank Whitford, a local veteran who died earlier this year

John Goheen

An important anniversary was observed this past May in the Netherlands and in some quarters of Canada. The Dutch well remember that “sweetest spring” 65 years ago in 1945 when they were liberated, mainly by Canadians, from five long and brutal years of Nazi occupation. More than 7,600 Canadian soldiers were killed in the Netherlands, with more than 1,300 dead in the last six weeks of the war.

It would be understatement to suggest that the Dutch remember those days and the dear price paid by Canadians for their liberation.

Reverence by the Dutch for the Canadians, who came from so far away to restore freedom and asked for nothing in return, remains strong to this day despite the passage of time and the succession of generations.

Perhaps, only those who know what it is like to have their freedom taken away and then- restored can appreciate the magnitude of the liberation in 1945. That is why after more than six decades - the Dutch remain grateful and honouring of Canadian veterans. That is why younger generations of Canadians who visit today are treated with special care. The ranks of the veterans, now in their mid-80s and beyond; diminishes with each passing year, but as the Dutch will tell you, “We never forget.”

The Dutch commemorate their liberation every May 4. The largest celebrations occurred on the 50th and 60th anniversaries, but are also significant during each five-year interval. Canadians at home are mere observers to the spectacle that occurs on these occasions in the Netherlands when, seemingly, the entire nation “welcomes again” the Canadian veterans. The grandest event of all was in 1995, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the liberation when more than 10,000 Canadian veterans returned.

In cities and towns across the Netherlands, “Welcome Again” committees ensured that every veteran would be looked after. The returning liberators were treated like kings. Most of the old soldiers were “adopted” by Dutch families and invited into their homes to stay for the duration of their visit. A week of commemorative events culminated with one of the most magnificent televised spectacles I have ever witnessed.

Those 10,000 veterans gathered in the town of Apeldoorn for a parade. With a regular population of just over 150,000, the streets swelled with an estimated 300,000 cheering Dutch. They all came to see the liberators again. What began as a parade soon resembled more of a love-in, as it was hard to separate spectator from veteran.

The old soldiers were organized into their old divisions, with the 1st Division in the lead, followed by the 2nd, 3rd, 4th Armoured and 5th Armoured divisions. The parade snaked through the people-packed streets for hours; it simply took that long to get through. The atmosphere was euphoric, and I recall thinking then that I was witnessing





something that would never be, could never be, seen again.

Some scenes etched in my memory include mothers literally handing their babies over to the veterans just so that their child could have the honour of being held by a liberator. Trays of beer eagerly passed over the heads of the spectators into the hands of the marching Canadians. Two young women, in their 20s, putting their arms around the old soldiers as they passed and planting some heartfelt kisses on the old boys, which, I am certain, recalled episodes 50 years before.

There among the veterans was my old friend Frank A Bren Gunner in the Westminster Regiment, Frank Whitford was not even 20 years old and had been in combat for almost a year in the Italian campaign, when his regiment, along with all the Canadians fighting in Italy, were moved to the Netherlands in March 1945. Frank spent the next several weeks, usually cold and wet, fighting in the last actions of the war. While always very proud of his service in Italy, Frank experienced, and never forgot, the gratitude extended by the Dutch in those last weeks of the war.

That is why he returned to the Netherlands to - attend the 40th and 45th anniversaries and would later attend the 55th and 60th commemorations, but, I know on that special 50th anniversary day

in Apeldoorn in May 1995, my friend Frank experienced his finest hour.

Before the parade, the veterans assembled and formed up in their old units awaiting their turn to “march on.” Frank made his way through the cheering mob and various parade elements to find the 5th Division assembly area. The division — once known as “Hoftmetster’s Mighty Maroon Machine” in recognition of their wartime commander, Maj. Gen. Hoffmeister, and the formation’s maroon-coloured uniform patch — was the last to march in the parade. Frank later told me how he approached a group of 5th Division veterans somewhere at the front and asked, ‘Who is in charge of this outfit?’ When nobody came forth, Frank decisively announced, “OK, you guys, fall in behind me.”

And so that is how my friend Frank came to lead the entire 5th Division through Apeldoorn that magical day. Of course, I did not know this until I watched the event live on television. There he was, ramrod straight, medals gleaming, his parade commander’s stick under his arm leading hundreds of his old comrades. Later, I asked him just how he happened to have his parade stick with him. “You never know when you might need to lead a parade,” was his reply, said through grinning lips. If you knew him, that comment and smile were pure Frank indeed.

Not all aspects of Frank’s visits to Holland were so celebratory. About a half-hour drive east at Apeldoorn is Molten Canadian War Cemetery. The cemetery, situated in the middle of a forest, contains 1,382 burials, almost all Canadian. William “Bill” Macdonald is one of those burials; he was killed the last two weeks of the war when a shell hit the

turret of the tank he was commanding. Bill and Frank were friends from Canada.

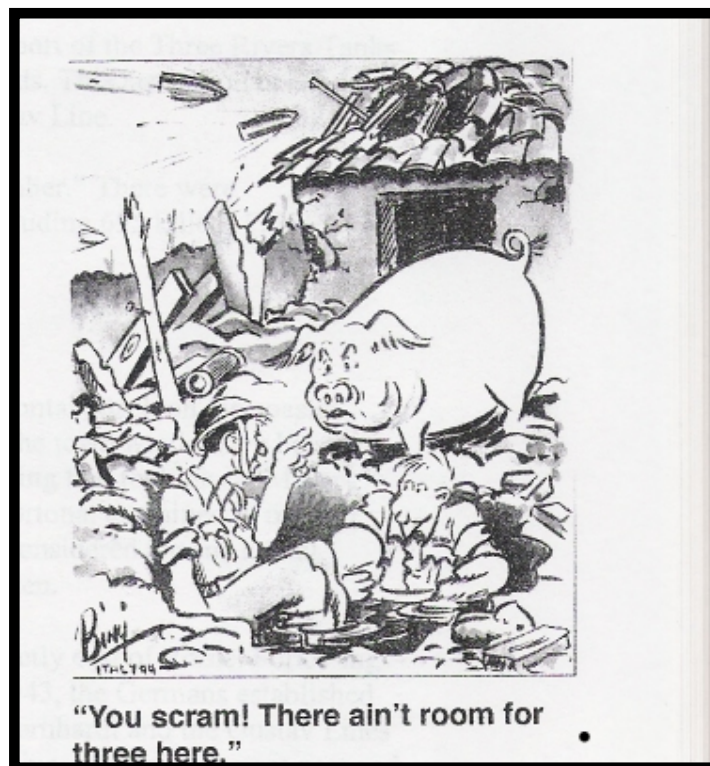
Frank always visited Bill on his return visits to the Netherlands. I had the fortune to be with him on two of these occasions. "Poor old Bill," Frank would sadly say and then he would take a few quiet moments before placing a poppy at Bill's grave. Frank always considered himself one of the lucky ones, saying, "I got to come home."

Frank returned to the Netherlands again in 2000 and 2005 for the celebrations and to visit Bill's grave. However, shortly after returning from 60th-anniversary commemorations in 2005, his health started to decline. There would be no more grand parades through Apeldoorn and no more visits with his friend Bill.

I was last in Holten just over a year ago and went to visit Bill's grave for Frank. I placed a poppy on Bill's grave and recalled Frank's quiet moments there several years before. I knew how much Frank would have wanted to be there. My friend Frank died this year. More than the loss of a friend, Frank's passing marked an end of an era for me. I have known many veterans over the years, but I knew Frank the longest and the closest of all. He was of that greatest generation that volunteered, risked everything and set the world free. I will remember many things this Nov. 11; I will reserve some special memories of my friend Frank.

- John Goheen is principal of Alderson Elementary and a longtime guide for the Royal Canadian Legion's Pilgrimage of Remembrance to the battlefields of Europe.

This article is reprinted from the original article in The Now News covering Coquitlanm, Port Moody Anmore and Belcarra of November 10, 2010.



Melfa Weekend 2010

May 20, 21, and 22

Melfa Golf:

Location - Maple Ridge Golf Course
208818 Golf Lane
Maple Ridge, B.C.
Date - May 20, 2011
Tee-Off - 9:00 AM
Cost - \$50.00 per Golfer (Includes Golf, Sandwich, and a Beer)
Registration - By May 12, 2011
Contact - Alan Morton
(604) 315-2114

Melfa Dinner:

Location - Armoury
New Westminster, B.C.
Date - May 21, 2011 Dress- Casual(No Jeans) or Uniform
Time - Cocktails 1800 Hrs. Dinner 1900 Hrs.
Cost - \$50.00 per Person Before May 12th and \$55.00 after May 12th
Registration - May 12, 2011
Contact - Terry Leith at 604-521-0042 or email - tmleith@gmail.com
or Herb Hamm 604-515-7933 or email - hehamm@telus.net

Brunch/ AGM:

Location - Armoury
New Westminster, B.C.
Date - MAY 23, 2010
Time - 0900 Hrs Brunch/ 1100 Hrs AGM

Melfa Weekend RSVP Tear off and mail to Association by May 12th.

Golf (\$50.00/Person) _____ = \$ _____

Dinner (\$50.00/Person) _____ = \$ _____

Brunch/AGM (No Cost) _____ = NA

Total _____ \$ _____

Print Name _____ Phone # _____

AGM Proxy: I hereby appoint Herb Hamm as my proxy for the AGM on May 22, 2011

Signature