



Volume 2012/Issue 1
February 2012



The Groundsheet

The 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'

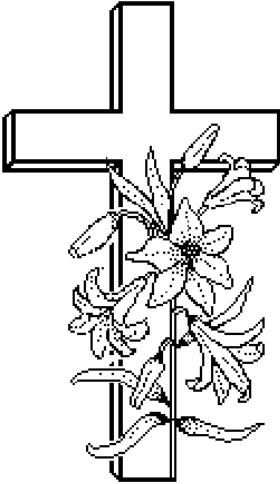
P.O. Box 954, New Westminster, BC, V3L4Z8

www.royal-westies-assn.ca

Contents

Editors Report.....	03
Letter From a Soldier.....	04
Presidents Report.....	05
Regiment.....	06
Museum Update.....	09
Veteran Thomson.....	11
Regimental Coin Application Form.....	12

In Memoriam



Morgan Doug	Langley BC	January 2012	Westminster Regiment WWII
Meehan Jerry	Chilliwack BC	December 2011	Royal Canadian Army Cadets
Herman Harry	Vancouver BC	December 2011	Westminster Regiment WWII
Tyo William	Cornwall ON	November 2011	Westminster Regiment WWII
Speir Rick	Maple Ridge BC	November 2011	2316 Cadets New Westminster
Berg Darrin	New Westminster BC	October 2011	Royal Westminster Regiment (Afghanistan)
McErvall Walter	Golden BC	August 2011	Westminster Regiment WWII
Winfield Stan	New Westminster	August 2011	Royal Westminster Regiment Association
Butler Evertt	Woodville ON	July 2011	Westminster Regiment WWII
Breaks Robert Arthur	Prince Rupert BC	July 20211	Westminster Regiment WWII

Health and Welfare

Mary Bortolussi --Wife of Gino Bortolussi passed away sorry we do not have the dates on this.

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.

Editor's Report

Your Executive

President

Terry Leith
604-521-0042

Vice President

Secretary

Herb Hamm
hehamm@telus.net
604-515-7933

Treasurer

Lee Cooke
604-460-0432

Editor

Len Wohlgemuth
604-936-0554
tedwohl@telus.net

Directors

Mike Kvammen
Kelvin Butler
Alan Morton
Jack Leoppky

Hello all again. Well things seem to be shaping up for the 150th celebration. Included in this issue is the announcement of the Regimental Coin. Our last page has the application form. So get your orders in quickly.

Looking at our last post it seems we are losing very many of our comrades now. I guess this is to be expected, but we shall miss them all. I particularly note the loss of Darrin Berg. Darren had served in Afghanistan in 2009 and returned safely. He passed with a brain aneurysm in October. It is hard to lose someone so young.

It has been a pleasure to receive a letter from Doug McNaughton. Doug and Wifred Tyo recently receive some accoutrements we have been working on for some time. Our President was able to secure the items and forward them along. Doug has responded with a nice letter I hope all will enjoy. Additionally I have included some information about another veteran that pass away last year.

I have included an update on the hockey schedule for the Regimental team. The games are in Langley and I understand the team is working hard. If you can get out and support them.

Also included in this issue is an update from the Museum. I know Herb and his staff have been working very hard on some new presentations around the Armoury.

Finally, we are trying to get information out faster to our members. To do this we would like to have every members email. Please forward this to my email at tedwohl@telus.net.

Len Wohlgemuth
Editor

24 January 2012

Mr. Terry Leith,
President,
The Royal Westminster Regiment Association.

Dear Terry:

Sorry for the delay but here is a belated "thank you" for the lapel pins and beret included with the set sent to Wilfred Tyo.

In the event that you might be interested the following is a rundown of my military career. I enlisted in Montreal on 7 Nov. 1940 and was assigned to the signal section of the Victoria Rifles of Canada, a Montreal Reg't. Less than a month later we were sent to St. Johns, Nfld., (still a British colony). After approx. 10 months in various locations on that Island we were moved to Nanaimo, B.C. In early Dec. 1941 we made a forced march one night to Victoria where we were billeted in the Armouries and, according to rumors, the ship was in the harbour waiting to take us to H.K. Fortunately for us this plan was cancelled and we settled down in a location outside Victoria. It appears the powers that be did not know what to do with us because in late 1942 we were moved to Dartmouth, N.S. and, after a short stay, to Suddvix, N.B. By the end of 1942 the decision was made to disband the regiment and break it into small groups for O.S. service. I arrived in England in March 1943, broke an ankle shortly thereafter, spent several months in a con. depot and in September 1943 was assigned to "A" company signals with the Westies where I remained until May 1945 when I signed up for service in the far east. I was returned to Canada and remained in barracks at Barriefield, Kingston, until my discharge in November 1945.

I must say that I was fortunate to serve with a great group of individuals from the leadership of Lt. Col. Corbould, my company commander Maj. J.K. Mahony, and all the other officers and n.c.o.'s in the company. During that time I rose to the esteemed rank of L/Sgt.

continued on .../8

Presidents Report

Since my last report , I have been busy with Remembrance day and working with the C150 Committee.

I would like to encourage more Association members to participate in our Remembrance Day program at the Armoury, so that we show a strong presence to the Regt and the public.

I have attended the Men's Xmas dinner in Aldergrove, where I presented a cheque to the CO and also presented Certificates of Appreciation to the latest unit members who returned from Afghanistan. They are Major Vernon,WO McKenna,Sgt Cullen and Cpl Davies.

I also attended the 2316 Cadet Corps Xmas Dinner, which was held in the Armoury. The parent committee did an excellent job of preparing the meal, and my hat is off to them. Keep up the support, as all the cadet Corps need it.

It is with sadness that I report the passing of Doug Morgan, who was very generous to top up our future fund. I have also been in touch with Stan Conway who has his ups and downs , but is still kicking. It would be nice to hear from more of the older vets.

I received a letter from Doug McNaughton in Cornwall Ontario, who enclosed a donation to the Melfa Dinner. He hopes that others would send donations to the dinner if they cannot attend.

These donations will be used for possibly door prizes. Doug wrote an interesting account of his service during the war and with the Westies,and I enjoyed reading it.

You will read further on in the newsletter about the Numbered Regimental coin that has been produced for the Regimental family. It has been in the works for several years, and in conjunction with the C150 Committee it has finally been approved. Many thanks to the people involved. The coins that are available to the Association, are on a first come first served basis. There are 2 stipulations, that you must be a paid up member of the Association and must have served in the Regiment.

The Regiment has a hockey team that plays out of the 2 rinks in Langley. The games are very enjoyable and I try to attend as many as I can. The schedule should be on the website, and if it is not please e-mail me and I can let you know when the games are.

Your committee is preparing for this years Melfa Dinner, which will be on the 26th of May and not on the long weekend. I look forward to seeing a lot of the older members as well as members of the serving Regiment.

Pro Rege et Patria

Terry Leith

The Regiment

Beginning on Saturday 25-FEB-12 members of The Royal Westminster Regiment will be able to reserve a “numbered” Regimental Coins for \$30.00. Each coin is engraved with a unique three digit number. A ledger will be held by the Regimental Museum recording each name, service number and coin number. Payments can be made at the Kit Shop in person or by mail, cash or cheque made out to “Westie 150 Fund”. Numbers will only be reserved upon full payment. Deadline to reserve your coin is Wednesday 16-MAY-12. Coins will be available for pick up at the Melfa Dinner on Saturday 26-MAY-12. Persons that do not reserve a coin will not receive a number based on their Taken on Strength date (date joined the Westies). After the Melfa weekend remaining coins will be available for purchase at the Kit Shop. All funds raised go toward the Regiment’s 150 anniversary.

The following groups may purchase the coin (in order of precedence):

- 1) REGIMENT – Only fully trained, serving members in good standing (not NES or not pending release) are eligible for a coin. Coin number issued will be based on TOS date.
- 2) ASSOCIATION – Members in good standing, that at onetime served as a Westie are eligible for a coin. Number issued will be on a “first come, first serve” basis.
- 3) BAND – Current band members that have at one time served as a Westie are eligible. Number issued will be based on TOS.
- 4) CADET INSTRUCTOR CADRE – Any officers with a minimum of three (3) years service with the Westie CIC are eligible for a coin. Number issued to current officers will be based on TOS, followed by past members based on TOS.

Prepared by

Kingston L.N.

The application form is on page 12.

Our Cadets

2822 Surrey

Jan 7 2012 2822 sent 4 cadets to the zone biathlon in Whistler BC. All cadets placed 3rd for their age class and one of our cadets went on to compete in the Provincial Biathlon Feb 4 2012 at Mount Washington. Congratulations Sgt Robinson for making it to the Provincials!

Feb 4 2012 2822 invited 2893 to join them on a joint exercise at the Chilliwack Fish and Game Club. A total of 50 cadets and staff were on hand to put a lot of rounds down range.

2822 RCACC is in the midst of planning our 45th Anniversary celebration. We will be holding an Open House on Sept 26 2012 so any past cadets and/or officers interested in attending should either contact the Corps at 604-588-3205, or find us on Face Book under *2822 45th Anniversary 2012*

Rick Blyth

Captain | Capitaine

Commanding Officer | Commandant

2822 Royal Westminster Regiment Army Cadet Corp

1789 Agassiz – No Report

2316 New Westminster - No Report

1838 Maple Ridge - No Report.

2822 Surrey - See above

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

Doug Setter

Hockey Schedule

Langley Wolfpack	Westies	Sun, Feb 12	4:30 pm	Langley Red
Westis	Kings	Thu, Feb 16	8:30 pm	Langley Red
Westies	Bushwackers	Sat, Feb 25	7:45 pm	Langley Blue
Rage	Westies	Tue, Feb 28	10:45 pm	Langley Blue
Venom	Westies	Sat, Mar 10	3:30 pm	Langley Red
Westies	Langley Wolfpack	Sun, Mar 18	5:00 pm	Langley Blue
Westies	Kings	Sun, Mar 25	9:45 pm	Langley Blue

from.../4

I did not cross the Melfa with the attacking group but rather remained in reserve with Capt. Jake Hughes, company 2I/C, who was later promoted and transferred to the P.L.D.G"s where he was later K.I.A..

I have been a life member of the Association for many years and continue to send the occasional donation. Last year I sent a \$100.00 cheque to be used for the Melfa dinner but the only way I knew it had been received was from my bank statement. I suggest that names of those making donations (amounts not included) be included in the Groundsheet and it might encourage others to do the same. I am enclosing another cheque as a donation to this years Melfa dinner.

It is interesting to note that 6 men from this immediate area all ended up serving with the Westies yet I never met any of them until the 1960's. John MacLennan, David Tyo, Wilfred and his brother and Donnie Dewar all hailed from this district but only Wilf. and I are still alive. My time is limited because I am in my 90th year and I believe the only reason I am still on the go is happy hour each day when I have a couple of rums (a habit I learned from Sgt. Maj. Smith who used to bring around a tot of rum at night while we were living in pup tents in the hills of Italy before we went into action).

I must now end this rather lengthy epistle but thanks again for the beret. If I'm still alive on Nov. 11th I will proudly wear it to the service that day and I have left instructions that it is to be placed on my casket at death.

Best regards,



Doug. McNaughton,
#2008 - 801 4th St. E.,
Cornwall, ON K6H 7M8

THE MUSEUM

We have included a photo of the first four of our planned new “window” display cabinets. We are planning to build approximately 12 new cases on the wall of the Parade Square facing Queens Avenue where the original windows were removed and add new items and displays to bring our history more up to date depicting events participated in by The Regiment in their continuing contributions to our country during post WWII/Korea era.

The Engineers based in Chilliwack who look after our building gave us permission to build the first two cabinets, had a look at them and gave us a further OK to put up two more and said they would look at them again and then consider giving us final permission to complete the project. We are now awaiting that final approval. We have been more than two years getting this far and are looking forward to getting permission to complete the cases in time for our “150th” Anniversary in 2013.

Also currently we are choosing items for another cabinet updating, moving other displays around and generally refurbishing as much as we can in our regular space and mezzanine areas. During our normal visitation (inspection) from DHH from Ottawa in January we received a particularly satisfying performance report and promise of assistance.

Our staff are all Volunteers and they do a great job and keep us running efficiently and it is a very friendly place to work. Tom Lam, Terry Leith, Terry Oliver, Wayne McCallum and part time volunteers – mostly former serving members of the Regiment. Our extremely efficient and pleasant Secretary and acquisitions person - Lila Wood – will be moving to Vancouver Island later this year and will be terribly missed by us. We also have great support from Regimental personnel.

We are still open Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30 to 3:00 as well as many special occasions. Please drop in and visit us when you can – we would appreciate visiting with you.

Herb Hamm



Typical Window Display Cabinet

George Henry Thomson

Below is some information about a WWII veteran who passed away in January of 2011.

Image of George taken in 2010.



George was born in Prestbury, England on January 17, 1922. He came to Canada at the age of four with his parents John and Violet, baby brothers Jack and William, and even the family dog, Nellie. Their sister Margaret was born later on in Canada. They settled in Mission B.C. where George remained until his death. The 3 brothers, George, Jack and William, helped their Dad with the family farm.

When the boys were teenagers they joined the Pacific Coast Rangers Militia, in which they were involved until the first part of WW2. George was called up to serve in the army in 1942. He spent approximately one year in training in Wainwright, Alberta for approximately one year before he was sent to England. He served in Italy, France, Belgium, Holland and ended up in Wilhelmshaven, Germany at the end of the war. From Germany he was sent back to England.

During one of his leaves he went to visit his Godparents, Mr. and Mrs. Foden, in the village where he was born. During this visit he met a beautiful blue eyed, brown haired English girl named Grace Oldfield. He told her that as soon as he met her he knew that she was the one for him. They were married on July 6, 1946, in the same church that George was baptized in. George left England six weeks after they were married.

*for Canada
& Rome*

At the time of their marriage the Canadian government paid all the expenses to bring the war brides to Canada. They were told that it would take up to two years before Grace would be able to travel to Canada. Her parents agreed to the marriage on the understanding that she would remain in England for those two years.

Unexpectedly she received her travel documents and tickets in October of 1946, and had one week to prepare everything to come to Canada. She arrived in Mission, British Columbia in November 1946 to begin her new life.

They lived with George's parents for 5 years, during which time they had their first daughter, Jennifer. They then cleared some of the property George had bought when he came home from the war and built a small house from the lumber they had milled from the trees that were off of the property. Grace was pregnant with their second daughter Susan while they were building their house. They lived in the same small home for the rest of his life. They added to the family every four years, with another two girls, Patricia and Kathleen, followed by their son Kevin.

During these years George worked at two or three jobs at the same time. He continued to farm on the old homestead up until 1996, but also worked for Dr. Woods doing blood testing on cows for a few years in addition to spending nineteen years as a janitor at Hatzic Elementary.

George is survived by Grace, his loving wife of 64 years, his children Susan (Carsten) Christensen, Patricia Turcotte, Kathleen (Bruce) MacDonald and Kevin (Nickie) Thomson. Numerous grandchildren, great grandchildren and one great great grandchild. Pre-deceased by three granddaughters, Paula Christensen, Candice Cail and Andrea Christensen, also his eldest daughter Jennifer (Stan) Cail and his brother William (Laura) Thomson.



ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT

REGIMENTAL COIN

530 Queens Avenue
C/O Sgt Hennebery, Kit Shop
New Westminster, B.C
V3L 1K3

NAME: _____ **RANK:** _____

SERVICE NUMBER: _____

***T.O.S. DATE** (date joined the Westies): _____

*Current qualified member Association Member *Band *Cadet Instructor Cadre

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **POSTAL CODE:** _____

E-MAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

Cheques made out to: **WESTIE 150 FUND** REGIMENTAL COIN: **\$30.00** (CDN)



ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT

REGIMENTAL COIN

530 Queens Avenue
C/O Sgt Hennebery, Kit Shop
New Westminster, B.C
V3L 1K3

NAME: _____ **RANK:** _____

SERVICE NUMBER: _____

***T.O.S. DATE** (date joined the Westies): _____

*Current qualified member Association Member *Band *Cadet Instructor Cadre

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **POSTAL CODE:** _____

E-MAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

Cheques made out to: **WESTIE 150 FUND** REGIMENTAL COIN: **\$30.00** (CDN)