

The Groundsheet



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April 2014



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’

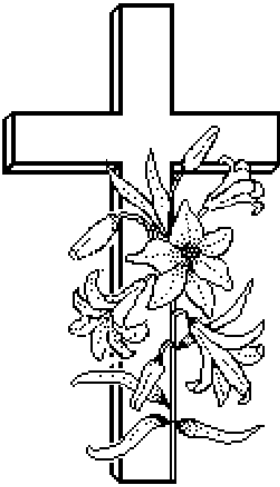
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In Memoriam



Howard Mansfield	January 2014	Ottawa ON	Westminster Regiment WWII
Preston L Storey	May 2013	Victoria BC	Westminster Regiment WWII

Health and Welfare

I understand W.O. MCKenna had an automobile accident and is at home and recovering. Additionally W.O. Beglaw has had a knee operation that has gone well. Our best wishes to both gentlemen.

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

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Hello all again. As oppose yo our last issue I have received several bits to include. I thanks those who have contributed and especially Chuck MacKinnon. He provided multiple things for the Groundsheet.

The letter on the next page is from Ted Usher, my predecessor for the Groundsheet and Website. Ted has always been a mentor for me and has brought out a few points. First is the fact that print media is dying and most publications are moving to an internet base. We can move to delivering the Groundsheet by email. There are some who do not have email or internet access. For these we can supply printed material in the same manner. Presently we have 152 members that I do not have email addresses for. So these would still require our standard mail out. To ensure a smooth transition I am recommending that we start the email out on our first issue next year. Presently we are mailing to 423 members.

Ted also mentions that our website needs an update to run with current capabilities offered by our web service. This is true and we should be moving to Word Press for our website. The issue is finding help to do this. At the moment I am not well versed on this and do not have the time. I would welcome help in doing this from anyone.

From my MIA last issue we were able to regain contact with several members. Again I present some members we are still looking for.

Again you should note the significant changes to our Melfa Weekend. Terry will comment on these and the last page will give you some more information.

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

To the Association Executive;

Yesterday I received my recent copy of the Groundsheet and based on the content I think it is time to cease publishing it and put the money used on postage and printing plus the time spent on assembling it to better use on the web site.

Having been the editor for many years I completely understand how hard it is to find articles and solicit input. As indicated by the blank and empty space of this issue, Len is struggling to find articles. Newsletters of this nature just as newspapers, are becoming obsolete. Technology has allowed everyone to receive the information more quickly and less costly through other means.

The Association web site is outdated and needs to be redone. I would suggest the Association executive put all their efforts into finding the funding and right person to set up a new web site, email service and blog to better serve our members. You will find only about 1 or 2% of the Association membership who will actually NOT have access to the Internet and email. For those "old timers", you look after them and make sure they get the info. The rest get it by going to the web site. You can also "push" things out to it's members. I belong to 3 other associations and I volunteer at another and everything is done by email and the website. You have secure private areas for members to sign in and get information. The last group I signed onto as a volunteer member, I did it all on line and the society works all from donations.

With all due respect, the Groundsheet is past it's time. Put the effort into a mail out requesting an email address by a certain date and establish an email list. Very few people change email nowadays so the system is stable. You have talented people amongst you in the Association and Regiment and its time to use them to benefit and promote a better communication system. You say in the GS you are getting more members from the Regiment in current times. Excellent! You need to jump on the age of technology NOW and maximize it for the complete benefit of those who now use social media, the Internet, blogs and email to communicate with. Paper is obsolete. Yes, some still will enjoy sitting down in the easy chair with paper in hand to enjoy a read. I do as well but I also understand the need to change is happening now. Those of you with an iPad or other device know how easy it is to read things like the paper and magazines.

These are my thoughts and my comments about the GS are not meant to be disrespectful. I know how hard it is to produce that newsletter and it has served its purpose. I also created the web site and quite frankly I look at it now and don't like it. The technology available now for web site design has changed dramatically and anyone can now update a website. Here at the City of Port Coquitlam, each department has people who can update the City's web site on a moments notice. It only required 3 hours of training and the password. It is so the community and public get the most up to date information by the people running the department or program. It works just fine.

I appreciate all of your efforts in serving the Association but please move it into the modern age of technology now.

Sincerely,

Ted Usher

Presidents Report

The Association is getting ready for a busy Melfa weekend. There will be the AGM before the dinner this year, (1:00 PM). It is important that you attend the AGM so you have a say in how the Association performs. This will be followed by the Change of Command from LCol Poitras to LCol Vernon.

The Association will be in the Hyack Parade in the morning, riding in the big MSVS with the Association banners on the side. I would encourage any members who would like to take part, to be at the Armoury between 9:00 and 9:30 am as the vehicle will depart for the Parade.

The golf tournament will be at the Delta Golf Course on Friday the 23rd at 9:00 am. Come out and enjoy the fun .

Jack Loepky, Kelvin Butler, Capt Ronholm (Assn Secretary) and I attended the Vimy Parade at Victory Square on April 6th . This parade is getting larger with more Cadets participating. This year the weather was in our favour. It didn't rain.

Pro Rege et Patria

Terry Leith



Jack Loepky Vimy



Kelvin Butler, Terry Leith, Jack Loepky

OUR CADETS

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

1838 RCACC

1838 RCACC has been booked and busy all training year! We started the year off well with our “back to basics” FTX; the first FTX for many of the green stars who went home with dirty sneakers and big smiles.

In October all of the star levels participated in a canoe and hike overnight FTX. The Green stars showed up the other star levels, beating their time by over 2 hours.

In early November our shooting team competed in the Alan Banky Marksmanship competition in Sidney B.C! We all enjoyed ourselves and left with a great experience.

On November 11th, 3 of our cadets were on Flag Party in Pitt Meadows, and another 6 of our cadets were on cenotaph duty, while the rest of the corps. was marching down Veterans Way.

Late December was our annual Mess Dinner. All of the corps. partook in this evening and ate lots of great food! We all got to say our goodbyes until the new year.

The new year kicked off with a green star bike ride that was over 21 km! As well as our other annual FTX up in Manning Park; our corps. went snowshoeing in 3 feet of snow as well as built different types of snow shelters. We also got to enjoy our weekend with the New Westminster corps, and learn the effects of frost bite and hypothermia as well as how to prevent it.

We are continuously being taught lessons by the master cadets and learning lots every Thursday! Just last week our silver stars presented their own lessons to one another. Every Monday all of our cadets come down and practice their skits for ACR. The band and shooting team also manage to squeeze in time to practice!

-Master Corporal Kennedy,
1838 Royal Westminster Regiment, Army Cadet Corps.

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

Arthur Pranke	Rev. William Hubbard
Doreen Churchill	Darren Crum
Richard Ruggles	Jordy Anderson

These are people we have lost contact with and need updated addresses.

The Regiment

The end of the Westie Training year is fast approaching as we head towards the Summer Training rush. Soldiers and families are encouraged to be physically and financially prepared for the summer stint of Summer Training. The Westies this past quarter were honoured to bring one new officer candidate and two new troops to the family. The regiment also would like to reiterate its service to all our soldier family who served the country in the now ended Afghanistan Operations over the past 13 years. As we head to the end of the training year the Royal Westminster Regiment is preparing to issue a reluctant and very fond farewell to our own Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Poitras at the end of the training year while simultaneously looking forward to the new experiences and leadership that will issue us forward in our Regimental history.

In addition to our undying appreciation and commitment to the serving of King and Country from our own regimental family these past 13 years in Afghanistan we also take a moment to reflect on the service of the rest of the Armed Forces, Police and populace of Canada as well as reflect on the losses. Not the least of which we look back fondly on our own direct and painful loss of our brother Master Corporal Colin Bason who was killed serving our Country in Afghanistan in 2007. Throughout the 13 years of service our Regiment and the Canadian people in general have seen hundreds of wounded Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen and experienced the saddening loss of 158 loyal souls for King and Country.

During this past quarter the Regiment hoisted one of the most successful Soldier For a Day exercises yet; bringing in 11 professors, bosses, coworkers and friends of the regiment! Held on a suitably rainy weekend in March the SFAD participants got to shoot the C9 LMG (Picture Below), Familiarize with the C7A2 and got to cross a rope bridge in the snow and rain. Though a wet and therefore more authentic representation of soldier training, the participants had a blast and we encourage all members of the regiment to be proactive in inviting their professors, coworkers and especially bosses, come the next Soldier for a Day!

As we head to the end of the training year the following issues are important to keep on top of!

As may be seen by the many posters around the Armoury a great push this year is for full participation in the late August Chilcotin exercise Kootenay. Troops are encouraged to liaison with their chain of command and employers in order to make sure they can get the time off for the near week long exercise at the end of August. An Infantry centric operation, Kootenay Cougar will no doubt be a priceless opportunity and a lot of fun full of stands and an emphasis on war fighting skills.

With shocking little time left we now realize that our good Commanding Officer of over four years Lt. Colonel Doug Poitras will be retiring as our Commanding Officer and from the Canadian Armed Forces entirely. Lt. Colonel Poitras has seen the unit through a drastic period of revival over the past near five years, including but not limited to the Regiment's marked 150 year anniversary. As we prepare to say good bye to our valued Commanding Officer we are also

looking forward to the legacy left behind as well as what lays ahead as a new era and a new Commanding Officer prepares to take the reigns.

And so we find ourselves walking to the edge and the end of yet another successful training year. In true Westie fashion we will gear up and march forward into the Summer Training season to get stronger and more proficient for our return in September. We look back at another successful year challenges and successes and wish our troops a successful Summer and a fond farewell and a good luck message to our Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Doug Poitras. Pro Rege Et Patria!



CWO Gardner counsels a Soldier For a Day Participant in the art of firing the C9 LMG

Canadian Troops To Get New Boots

March 21, 2014. • Section: Defence Watch David Pugliese Reprinted from Van Arty Assoc and RUSI Van Members News March 25, 2014

The government has awarded two contracts totalling \$11.7 million to Kodiak Group Holdings and LP Royer for two types of new Canadian-made boots for the Canadian military. The Kodiak Group Holdings contract is valued at approximately \$4.2M for 28,000 pairs of one version of boots, according to the DND news release. The company's headquarters are in Cambridge, Ontario, and the boots will be manufactured in Harbour Grace, Newfoundland.

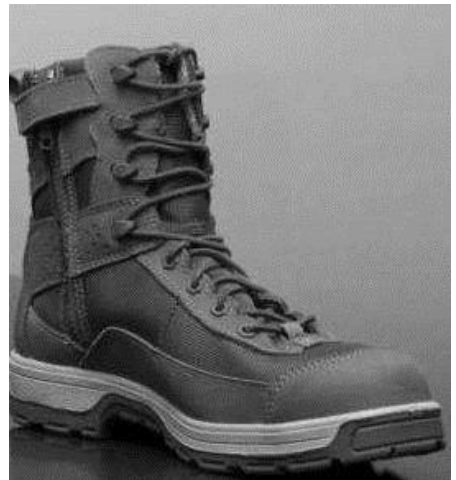
The L.P. Royer contract is for 52,000 pairs of a second version and is valued at approximately \$7.5M. They will be manufactured onsite in Lac Drolet, Quebec. The contracts include options to buy up to an additional 70,000 boots over 4 years, which could bring the contract value up to an estimated \$22 million. Production of the new boots will commence in the late Spring/Summer of 2014 and will be ready for use in early 2015. Soldiers were consulted during the selection process and the final decision was based on user trials in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. Soldiers will soon have a choice as to which type of boot they wish to wear depending on the fit and features of each.



Kodak Boot

“In providing choice in their boots, DND will

ensure increased user satisfaction with their footwear,” Chelsey McLellan, a spokeswoman for the ADM Materiel Group, told **Defence Watch**. “A performance based specification was used to procure the boot. Both the Kodiak Group Holdings and L.P. Royer boots met technical performance criteria and scored well in user trials.



Royer Boot

The Kodiak Group Holdings boot is a lace-up while the L.P. Royer has a zipper as well as laces. Both styles will be a shade of brown as this has proven better in camouflage testing than a black colour. The suede-nubuck leather and textile upper materials are more comfortable and breathable than full grain leather previously used on in-service Land Forces footwear.”

It's time to reconsider service delivery at Veterans Affairs Canada

Too often, structural changes are proposed to deal with problems that are actually the symptoms of a much larger issue.

Veterans Ombudsman Guy Parent says the outcomes often experienced by veterans who are denied benefits, after having gone through the entire application and appeal process, are a symptom of problems rooted in the application process itself. If we fixed the front end of the process, we would reduce the effort (and cost) currently expended to provide the various levels of appeal at the end of the process.

By VETERANS OMBUDSMAN GUY PARENT

Published: Monday, 03/31/2014 12:00 am EDT

Last Updated: Monday, 03/31/2014 12:12 am EDT

OTTAWA—Too often, structural changes are proposed to deal with problems that are actually the symptoms of a much larger issue. Concerning problems with service delivery at Veterans Affairs Canada, we need to deal with the root causes and, to do that effectively, we need to understand the end state we are trying to achieve. Simply going for structural change, as proposed by Michel Drapeau and Joshua Juneau in their Jan. 13, 2014 article in *The Hill Times*, where they put forward the need to create a new administrative oversight body, may justify the existence of such a new organization, but would it be any more effective than the current structure if we haven't addressed the root causes of today's problems? I don't think so.

The support of veterans and their families through effective and fair access to benefits—regardless of where or when one served—should be a priority for Canada. Since the current way of doing business is not generating the results needed to resolve the problems facing veterans and their families, we need to change our vision of the future and tackle the problem of service delivery head-on at the root level.

I believe that the structural elements necessary to effectively deliver benefits and services to veterans are in place today, but the system continues to fail some of our veterans for two primary reasons. The first reason is addressed in my report on the New Veterans Charter and concerns the shortcomings in three Charter program areas: financial, vocational rehabilitation and assistance, and family support. The second reason is a complex, multi-layered and outdated service delivery process. The outcomes often experienced by veterans who are denied benefits, after having gone through the entire application and appeal process, are a symptom of problems rooted in the application process itself. If we fixed the front end of the process, we would reduce the effort (and cost) currently expended to provide the various levels of appeal at the end of the process.

Specifically, if applicants had a clear understanding of application requirements; if they received full disclosure on what documentation the decision maker was considering; if they were consulted in the process when documentation was not sufficient, and; if they received very clear and understandable reasons for decisions that showed the logic for the decision, we would likely see a reduction in the number of reviews and appeals.

Indeed, I have reported on this in the past and emphasized that Veterans Affairs Canada and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board should be focusing on finding ways of making the right benefit adjudication decision on the first application based on liberally interpreting legislation, rather than expending effort (and cost) on perfecting the appeal process. Let's expand on this further.

Once service relationship has been established, what would happen if Veterans Affairs Canada started accepting veterans' documentation at the front end of the process at face value and applied a presumption that military service has an impact on veterans and their family, that the majority of veterans

are honest and that medical professionals are qualified to provide the appropriate substantiation. Would the benefit adjudication process fall apart? I doubt it.

If the criteria are clearly communicated and a medical professional provides a diagnosis, why does every application need to be scrutinized further in the minutest detail? This level of examination for every application is slowing down the application process for all veterans and affecting access for many eligible veterans on the off chance that someone may not qualify for a benefit.

Is that fair?

Without getting into the mechanics of how this would work, let's look at this idea conceptually. How would Canadians like it if the Canadian Revenue Agency made no presumptions when citizens file their income tax return? If they weren't afforded some presumptions it would be a long, drawn out process for everyone with an audit on all of their filed information before a decision could be made. We're talking months, if not years, on the adjudication of one tax year alone. I don't think many Canadians would be happy with this scenario. Do you? So, why are veterans subjected to such scrutiny by the Veterans Affairs Canada's service delivery application process?

I suggest that Veterans Affairs Canada adopts a system similar to that used for the Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, or the Canada Revenue Agency whereby if the documentation criteria are met, benefits are provided and periodic audits are done on files to ensure quality control and to detect any fraudulent applications. In fact, this approach is already being used by Veterans Affairs Canada in some areas of service delivery, such as health-related travel or the Veterans Independence Program, so why not for the application process of other benefits?

And, I'll go further.

I believe that the current system of veterans' legislation is too complex. Generations of legislation have been piled on top of the other without sufficient attention to simplifying the complexity of this legislative build-up. Complexity is costly and at a time of economic restraint, would it not make sense to stop tinkering with individual components, collapse legislation and adopt a plain language approach.

In addition, is it not time for Veterans Affairs Canada to begin to truly liberally interpret legislation, as it is meant to do? Is it not time that the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada services and benefits are better aligned so that the transition from military service to civilian life is much less complex than it is today? Something as simple as starting a Veterans Affairs Canada file the moment a member joins the Canadian Armed Forces, conducting a direct transfer of files when a service person transitions from the Canadian Armed Forces to Veterans Affairs Canada, and providing a veterans identification card when a service person leaves, could be major enablers to improve how services and benefits are provided.

Last fall, the Veterans Consultation Group called on the Government of Canada to have a "heroic moment" and do what is right for our veterans and their families. Now is the time to move forward and reconsider service delivery at Veterans Affairs Canada.

Finding better ways to support our veterans and their families is not impossible, but it does require a change in our vision of the future. The gaps that need to be addressed in the current suite of benefits have been identified and validated in my report on the New Veterans Charter. We need to make these changes and then move forward with a new vision of service delivery at Veterans Affairs Canada. Anything less is a disservice to veterans and their families and Canadian taxpayers.

The time for action is now. The future awaits us.

Guy Parent is Canada's Veterans Ombudsman.

MELFA WEEKEND 2014

May 23, and 24

MELFA GOLF TOURNAMENT

The Melfa Golf Tournament will be held at The Delta Golf Course on May 23rd 2014. First Tee time is 9:00 am The Cost is \$60.00 per golfer which includes Golf and Beer and a Sandwich If you are planning on entering, Please contact Alan Morton @ amorton25@telus.net Or Terry Leith @ tmleith@gmail.com. Or send a cheque or money order to the Association at 530 Queens Avenue

New Westminster, B.C. V3L 1K3

Entries must be received by May 16th. In the past people have said they were coming and cancelled at the last minute. We have to pay for the number that we tell the Golf course that we will have, so it is important that if you say you are going to play please show up.

IMPORTANT NOTICE RE: AGM

A motion was passed at the January meeting to move the AGM from Sunday morning to Saturday afternoon at 1:00 PM in order to have more of the serving members attend the AGM and find out more about The Association. This would also allow for people that come from out of town, to be able to make arrangements to return home earlier the next day.

Melfa Dinner:

Location—The Armoury New Westminster

Date – Saturday May 24,2013

Cocktails 1800 to 1900 Hrs.

Dinner at 1900 Hrs.

Dress—Casual Dress (No Jeans) or Uniform

Cost--\$50.00 per person by May 11, 2013—No Tickets after that date

RSVP by mail or e-mail to tmleith@gmail.com or hehamm@telus.net

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