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November 2014



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'

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Lest We Forget

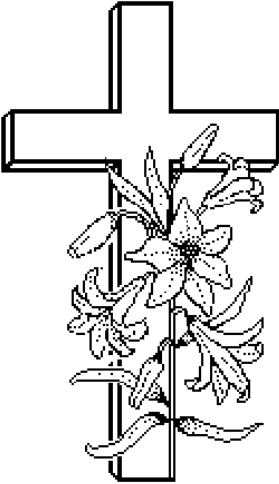
November 11, 2014

Service at the Armoury at 10 AM

“They shall not grow old, as we who are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
...We will remember them.”

-Laurence Binyon – *Act of Remembrance*

In Memoriam



Walter Tyler	Vancouver BC	August 2014	Westminster Regiment WWII
Donald Cassie	Maple Ridge BC	August 2014	Royal Canadian Army Cadets

Health and Welfare

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.

Bren Gun Carrier Dedication

Date: November 9, 2014

Time: 1600 Hrs.

Location: The Royal Westminster Regiment Armoury

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A Remembrance

Walter Tyler Joined the Westminster Regiment Militia in 1937. In 1939 he transferred to the active army.

Walter became the Bn OR clerk because he admitted that he could type.

Walter was sent with the advance party to England in preparation for the Westminster's arrival.

While in England, Walter was sent to Officer Training and returned to the Unit as a 2/Lt.

He became a platoon commander. On Dec 11th 1944 the unit was engaged in a battle at Villanova. While attempting to bomb out another tank with their PIAT Walter was severely wounded.

He was sent to England for convalescence. While convalescing Walter was put in charge of multi unit vehicle convoys. He then proceeded to Holland with his unit.

On return to Canada in early 1946, he stayed with The Westminster Regiment when they reverted back to a reserve role.

One of the highlights of Walter's career was meeting Princess Elizabeth in 1951 when she inspected the Bn. He was quite proud of the picture of Him and Princess Elizabeth

Walter went to work for DVA until his retirement.

Walter was part of the original group that was instrumental in building the Regimental Museum.

After Walter's wife passed away, Walter volunteered at the museum. He came down every Tuesday and on special occasions as his health permitted.

Walter's vast knowledge and sharp memory of his years with the unit was very helpful when families of former members of the unit asked for information.

Walter drove all the way from West Vancouver to come to the museum.

Walter would usually get here when there were no parking spaces left across from the Armoury, so he would park across 6th street at a certain spot

One thing that the museum volunteers got a kick out of was when Walter would come in grumbling that someone was parking in his spot.

Walter will be greatly missed by the museum staff

Walter rest in peace. You were a true Officer and Gentleman.



THE ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT
ROYAL CANADIAN ARMY
CADET CORPS



October 1, 2014

The training year for the Corps has started off with the usual busy flurry of activity as we started off with an Open House and spent the month processing new recruits. This year is the last year of my three-year term as Commanding Officer. Captain Rob Schell has returned as the Training Officer and was presented with the bar to his CD by LCol Vernon on 17 Sep 2014. Lieutenant Hans Mulder has returned as the Supply Officer and we are still trying to get two new adults enrolled as Officer Cadet through the Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre. Permission was been requested and granted by LCol Poitras last year, and now Directorate of Cadets has advised that we are now officially named, the **“1789 The Royal Westminster Regiment Cadet Corps”**.

We lost a few families due to moving out of the Hope area, so currently we only have 31 cadets that have returned this year, but we participated in the Hope Brigade Days parade and community event which is always a great opportunity to show Hope that there ARE Westie Army Cadets in Hope. This event makes an excellent recruiting venue. I attach a picture of our parade float that we won the trophies for “Best Male Costume” and “Best Female Costume”.

Our first fall Field Training Exercise (FTX) will be held at Jones Lake and I always look forward to getting to know the cadets better in that natural setting. Nothing like seeing someone first thing in the morning to know what they are really like! We also still have a Facebook fan page called **“UPPER FRASER VALLEY ARMY CADETS”**, so check us out there for regular pictures.

M.E. Sam Ronholm, CD
Captain
Commanding Officer
Sam.Ronholm@cadets.gc.ca



Presidents Report

Good day fellow Westies. I'm happy to finally get to use this venue to speak to you all. I'm going to use this venue here to bring you up to date on a number of things going on in the future. Before that though I'd like to speak about what's already happened. As you've been advised, we've lost one of our key anchors around the regimental family with the loss of Walter Tyler. It's difficult for the Regimental Family to lose a father figure like Walter, and is yet a reminder again of how few of these cherished gentlemen of his fighting era are left.

We have had the pleasant opportunity to welcome the regiment back to its training year, which began short weeks ago. The association was pleased to offer a BBQ for the regiment at their Stand-To parade. We will look for further opportunities to connect with our serving battalion and seek out small yet distinct ways we can assist them in their training objectives.

At this time I want to invite all of you to think of our events in November. Of course, our national day of remembrance will be observed with respect at our armoury and cenotaphs both in the New Westminster City and our soldiers in the Fraser Valley. I want to take this opportunity to let you know of another venue. The George Derby centre is in our backyard, on the corner of 16th and Cumberland. GDC serves as a medical housing facility for veterans and has long held a Remembrance service of its own that has been attended by serving members of the Battalion on Remembrance Day. If you're looking for a place to go to have a different experience than usual, consider stopping by there ANYTIME. Not just for remembrance week.

On 9 November 2014, 1555-1630, we will be conducting a dedication ceremony in front of the armoury in New Westminster to complete the last task of the Bren Gun Carrier Project. We will use that opportunity to thank those in the community that helped, along with conduct a ceremony that is fitting and respectful of the era of soldiers that served the county of Westminster in that vehicle from peace and War. Refreshments will follow in the SNR NCO mess. All westie association members and families are invited to attend. Dress is blazer and medals if you have it, Sunday church clothing if you don't.

I'll also use this space as a bit of an education piece. I want to provide clarity for all westies as to what is done by the different bodies within the regimental family.

The regimental family includes all of the following organizations that I will mention.

- 1) The serving Battalion. The serving battalion is the current strength of the military unit of the Royal Westminster Regiment, and consists of the NCMs and officers in a position number of the Unit.
- 2) The Affiliated Cadets. Cadet corps are affiliated and supported (use of armoury) by their parent military unit. There are westie cadets, PPCLI cadets, and HMCS Tecumseh cadets across the country, although they tend to be affiliated by geographical proximity.

- 3) The Regimental Association. This consists of all card carrying members, serving and retired, which pay annual dues to the association. The association is tasked with maintaining the ties and comradery known and experienced by those members when they served. So for example, if the regiment were disbanded, Melfa dinners and regimental association events would still occur in that area. Think of the ICER association that still meets in Chilliwack, regardless of their parent battalion moving to Edmonton.
- 4) The historical Society. All our artifacts including glass displays on the parade square, our cannons at city hall and all our displayed and stored items for the museum are not the property of the Canadian Forces, specifically because our historical society is charged with the ownership, care and maintenance of them. So regardless of future political orders given to the regiment, these artifacts remain in the regimental family. It's the historical society that ensures those remain in our community, regardless of future orders that may be given to the serving battalion.

This is a brief outline of who is in the family. It also outlines why some units have formed a body they call the Regimental Senate, which is tasked with coordinating all these bodies of the regimental family.

Lastly, I want to outline our operations going forward in regards to this publication; The Groundsheet. We are proceeding with further modernization of our information systems with a more direct focus on the online side. Yet, while we do so, we can't forget those of our membership that wish to stay on ground mail and we won't forget them. The subsequent two issues of the groundsheet are going to contain a return card. If you want to remain on ground mail, simply indicate so on the card and your wish will be carried out. The remainder will be sent out as a PDF file, by email. Any funds that are freed up with less printing and postage will be reallocated to the website or to other priorities.

The association wishes the serving battalion much success in the upcoming training year, and are here to support the entire regimental family as needed. Take care, and check in with each other from time to time.

Pro Rege et Patria

Brian McKenna

The Regiment

This is my first article as the new Commanding Officer of the Royal Westminster Regiment. At the change of command parade on 24 May, I spoke of how my feelings were somewhat mixed. First, I am elated to be given the opportunity to command the finest infantry unit in western Canada. However, I'm also somewhat nervous at being given the opportunity to command the finest infantry unit in western Canada. I am extremely fortunate to take command after the excellent work done by my predecessors: Col Haussmann and LCol Poitras and all ranks in the battalion. The nervousness stems from the knowledge that I have big shoes to fill - I've been handed a winning team and the challenge is to keep that momentum going.

My bio is available for anyone to read at the unit, so I won't bore the readers with it in this forum. In summary, I've served 31 years with the Westies being my fourth Regiment (the others being PPCLI, L Edmn R and the R Regina Rif). These units shared a similar operational focus that we see in the Westies today. I like to believe that my experience in these other units provides me with some insights that can be employed in the Westies.

I'd like to take this opportunity to say farewell to LCol Doug Poitras. He served the Regiment well and he will be missed. Although he is now instructing on the Army Operations Course (staff college), he is still close by and ready to provide me timely advice. Plan on seeing him at various Regimental events in the future.

Despite the usual summer stand down following the change of command, we were kept busy with summer courses and getting ready for the annual Brigade Training Event, Exercise Kootenay Cougar which was conducted in Trail at the end of Aug. The exercise was a platoon level military skills competition and I'm proud to report that the Westie platoon was the winner. This is the second summer in a row that the Westie platoon has won the Brigade competition and both platoons were commanded by Lt Scott Anderson - well done. It is also worth noting that the Westies had the largest platoon, were the largest overall contributor to the exercise and even supported the Service Battalion by providing a 13 man support element of vehicles and drivers.

The quest for physical fitness excellence continues with noteworthy efforts by various dedicated soldiers. MCpl Skrebsky assembled and trained a team for the gruelling Tough Mudder Competition in Whistler and Sgt Buikema ran a half marathon at the annual Army Run in Ottawa.

Our marksmanship team has also done quite well with a respectable showing during the Blair Shoot and a few members making the team for the CAF Small Arms Competition in Ottawa. WO Bergan has been instrumental in training our shooters and was picked to run the pistol competitions in Ottawa.

The training year has started again with the unit Stand To on 13 Sep where over 110 soldiers were processed through a personal readiness verification. The day was capped off with a barbecue generously provided by the Association. Our first exercise has already been conducted with a good portion of the soldiers qualifying to level 3 of the personal weapons test.

We look forward to the official dedication of the bren gun carrier - the culmination of a tremendous amount of work. It sits in front of the Armouries now and looks fantastic. There are so many people who contributed a lot of effort to the project and I fear that by identifying some, I will do a disservice to others that don't get mentioned. I must make special mention of the work of MCpl De Laurier whose efforts made the foundation pad a success. Also, Capt Mulder (of the Westie Cadet Corps in Hope) invested many hours in the refurbishment and then tried to personally "man handle" it off his trailer and on to the pad.

Sadly we attended two memorials in Sep. The first marked the one year anniversary of the passing of Maj Beglaw. The second was to celebrate the life of Maj Walt Tyler, one of our few Second World War veterans.

I hope to see you all on Remembrance Day when we will honour all those who sacrificed in the service of Canada and the Regiment.

LCol Dave Vernon
Commanding Officer



Bde Comd, Col Haussmann, inspects the parade



Newly promoted LCol Vernon slightly miffed at having to do the Westie Quiz before being allowed to take command...



Bde Comd inspects the Old Guard



4 Colonels pose for a picture: L to R Col Baker MacGrotty (HCol), LCol Vernon (new CO), LCol Poitras (outgoing CO) and LCol Strahl (HLCol).



Taste of victory - The winning Westie platoon at the Brigade Mil Skills Competition line up to swill champagne from the Cougar Cup



Tough Mudder Team. The Westie team that competed in the gruelling Tough Mudder Competition in Whistler.

Our Cadets

1789 Agassiz-Hope – See page 4

1838 Maple Ridge – No report

1922 Abbotsford – No report

2316 New Westminster – No Report

2822 Surrey-Delta – 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

Bruce Eaton
Jordy Anderson
Terry Orser
Rick Cable
Kirsten Luomala
Joe Swift
Ray Pattenden
Jeff Courson
Travis Meade

2014 Melfa Golf Winners

Low Gross - Lee Cooke - 91

Low Net - Robert White - 74

Low Net Serving Member – Alan Kerekanich - 74

Longest Drive – Andrew Trafananko

Closest to the Pin – GBill White

Foursome Challenge – W.O. \$ Sgt's Mess
Brian Gardner,
Brian McKenna,
Chris Henneberry,
Alan Kerekanich

The Move of the Groundsheet to Email Distribution

Starting next year on our first Groundsheet of 2015 we will be distributing more of the Groundsheet through email. To move your delivery to email please send an email to:

groundsheet@royal-westies-assn.ca.

You should include in the message you want to move to receive the Groundsheet via email. Additionally, include an update of your address and contact numbers.

For those of you that want to continue to receive your Groundsheet through Canada Post please fill in. cut out and return sheet below to our address on the front page.

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I have been an Association Member since: _____

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