

March 2017



The Groundsheet

The Publication of <u>The Royal Westminster Regiment Association</u>

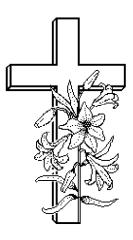
'Dedicated to the ideals and comradeship we knew in wars and peace in our services both home and abroad.' 'Pro Rege et Patria' 530 Queens Ave, New Westminster, BC Canada, V3L 1K3

www.royal-westies-assn.ca

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In Memoriam



Arthur Fisher November 11th, 1922 – December 11th, 2016.

Pte Fisher enlisted n the army on November 26th, 1942 in Edmonton, Alberta. Pte Fisher underwent basic training in Camrose as well as various arms training in Calgary, Alberta. He deployed overseas in May, 1942 and arrived in England. He became a proud member of the New Westminster Regiment (Motor) in July, 1943. He went into Italy on December 2nd, 1943 and saw action at the Melfa River. Later in the war he entered the Netherlands with the 5th Armored Division.

While serving in the Netherlands he met and married Josephina Orlemans, returning to Canada in 1946.

Our condolences to the family of Mr. Fisher and thanks to Mr. McNaughton who advised the Association of the passing and supplied the letter seen below.

Arthur Fisher

OBITUARIES

FISHER, Arthur November 11, 1922 – December 11, 2016

Peacefully on Sunday December 11, 2016 at the age of 94 years. A special thank you to his care team at the Perley Rideau Veterans Hospital who allowed Arthur the best possible a comfort and dignity in his final weeks. Loving (son of the late Emila Frederick and Rudolf Fisher of Hay Lakes, Alberta. Predeceased by a his loving wife Josephina Oerlemans, loving father of Diana English (Robert), cherished grandfather to Deborah Sprott (David) and Peter English and great-grandfather to Braden and Samantha Sprott. He was part of the New Westminster Regiment WWII Veteran who served in North Africa, Italy and the liberation of the Netherlands. Post war Arthur served a full career in the RCAF as a Military Policeman. Friends and family may pay respects at the

Kelly Funeral Home-Orleans 2370 St-Joseph Blvd. Orleans, K1C 1G1 613-837-2370

A Memorial Service will be held in the Chapel Wednesday December 21, 2016 at 11 a.m. A private inurnment ceremony will follow. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Muscular Dystrophy Society would be appreciated, www.kellyfn.ca Society would be appreciated.

Letter from D McNaughton

The Reditor, The Groundsheet, The Royal Westminster Regt. Assoc.

I cut/the enclosed obit out of the Ottawa Citizen before Christmas but am just now getting around to sending itto you. There aren't many of us left who served in the Westminster Regt. (M) throughout the 39/45 campaign. I,too,am 94 but fortunate to be able to have my own apt. in a Seniors bldg, make my own meals and ride around in my 4 wheel scooter.

For your general info I enlisted in Nov. 1940 with the Victoria Rifles, a Montreal Regt. served in Nfld, then a Crown Colony, then Nanaimo where we were being prepared to go to Hong Cong, then back to the East Coast when the Japs took over HK. In Feb. 1943 the regt. was disbanded and we went OS as reserves. Four days after arrival in Aldershot I broke an ankle, spent considerable time in con. hospital then back to Aldershot.

In Sept. 1943 was assigned to the signal section, P"A" Company ofof the Westies where I remained throughout the Italian and Western Europe campaign. I was fortunate because this was a great Regt. 1ed by Lt. Col. Gordon Courbold (D.S.O. and I believe (Bar), a great company 1ed by Major J.K.Mahony, V.C., and a great divisipn 1ed by Maj. Gen. Bert Hoffmeister. We had great Officers, N.C.O.(s) and men.

Due to serious injury and loss of life I ended up as L/Sgt in charge of Signals unti; May 1945 when I volinteered for service in the Pacific Force. I was returned to Canada for further training and following the use of the Atomic bomb and V.J. day I was greanted an honorable discharge in 1945, almost 5 years after enlistment.

As you are aware I am a life member of the Assoc. and it was always my wish to attend a Melfa weekend but circumstances didn,t permit and now I am too old to travel. I am enclosing a small cheque to be used in some way at this years Melfa celebration.

> Best regards to all, Doug, Mc Naughton

Pardon the errors but my typewriter, like me, is getting old and prone to making a) errors.

Memorial Service – Gerald Cavendish Grosvenor 6th Duke of Westminster, KB CB CVO OBE TD CD DL 1951 - 2016

Major General Gerald Grosvenor was the Colonel-in-Chief of The Royal Westminster Regiment from 01 November 1993 until his untimely death on 06 August 2016 at the age of 64. Although there was a private family funeral a memorial service was planned.

The Memorial Service took place at 1400 hours on Monday, 28 November 2016 in the Cathedral, in Chester the ancestral home of the Duke. The day turned out to be a cool dry winter's day in Chester.

I knew that I was not going to be on the official guest list (the CO and the RSM were), so with the approval of the Directors of the Association, I entered the draw for additional invitations in order to be the representative of the Association. When submitting one's request to attend the Memorial Service one had to include their connection to the Duke. It was subsequently estimated that there were 1400 people in attendance inside the Cathedral. There were also many onlookers outside the Cathedral, there to see the family and the Royals who attended the service. Years earlier as Commanding Officer, I submitted the request for the Duke's appointment as the Colonel-in-Chief of The Royal Westminster Regiment. There were concerns at that time that he, not being a member of the Royal Family, would not be appointed. However through sources we were aware that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, if she received the request for further information i.e. date of birth, place of birth all related to a security check. My chances of being selected had increased and indeed that was the case. I received a ticket with full name and accompanying information in order to report to the Chester Race course for security screening.

On the day of the Service there was a significant security presence around the Cathedral with a number of roads closed for the duration of the service. Report time at the race course for security screening was between 1000 and 1100 hours. I duly arrived shortly after 1000 to check in. Once through the metal detector I was directed to a pavilion where refreshments were being served. Also running on video monitors throughout the pavilion were images of the Duke and family and short video clip from a fishing trip.

Attendees that I met in the pavilion included a fellow from the Cheshire Yeomanry, (there were a number in attendance), Richard Humphries MBE Esq, the Upper Bailiff of the Worshipful Company of Weavers. The Duke was a Liveryman of the Company.

It was announced that the first coach to the Cathedral would leave at 1115. I had deduced that there would be opening seating so I took the first bus. I sat beside a gentleman who, in his youth, had been on a university exchange at the Agricultural College in Guelph, Ontario. When we arrived at the Cathedral I took a seat in the first row of the block assigned which was about mid-section of the seating in the south transept. I sat about three quarters the way along the row so that I had a view (to the Northwest) of the Nave. Directly ahead were the choir and the organist.

I learned later that the CO and RSM were seated in the Nave along the south side.

As we had arrived shortly before noon and the service was to start at 1400 hours there was lots of time to get to know the other mourners and listen to the music prelude from .the organist and the City of Chester Male Voice Choir. A lady sitting beside had worked for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). A number of years ago, The Duke of Westminster led their centenary appeal and had stated that they would raise more than £1,000,000 a month which was achieved that year. I let her know, when the Commanding Officer that I had put in the request that the Duke be our Colonel-in-Chief. She asked me about the decoration "CD" which the only she didn't know. She then said that I was responsible for the Duke being awarded the CD. I also learned from a lady sitting behind me that her father had been in the Royal Canadian Navy.

Members of the Royal family who attended the service were:

The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge

Princess Eugenie of York

The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester

The Lady Rose Gilman

The Duke and Duchess of Kent

Prince and Princess Michael of Kent

Princess Alexandria and the Honourable Lady Ogilvy

While I had a view of the Nave and those coming up the centre aisle when everyone stood for the arrival of the Royals I could no longer see them. There were two TV monitors that had been set up in the South Transept so that we could.

The Service, which lasted for over an hour, was led by the Very Reverend Professor Gordon McPhate, Dean of Chester. The Service comprised fanfares, readings, hymns including the 23rd Psalm, selections of music and prayers. A copy of the Order of Service is in our Regimental Museum.

The Duke's son Hugh, now the 7th Duke of Westminster read the Rudyard Kipling poem "If", which apparently was a favourite of his father's.

The first tribute was given by Jeremy Newsum, Executive Trustee of the Grosvenor Estate, who spoke about the Duke's business interests around the world including mention of Vancouver. The second tribute was given by General Sir Timothy Granville-Chapman, Programme Director, The Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre. In referencing the decoration TD (Territorial Decoration) he spoke about how proud the Duke was of his service, as a reservist, in the British Territorial Army.

The third tribute was given by Andrew Hay a family friend and relative.

The fourth entitled as "A Letter to my Father" was given by Lady Edwina Snow, daughter of the Duke and god daughter of Diana, Princess of Wales.

At the end of the service and upon exiting the Cathedral, there was a collection for the Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre (DNRC). This was an initiative of the Duke of Westminster, who made the first investment of £50 million. The Centre, which is still under construction, is intended to be a world-class rehabilitation facility to care for Britain's wounded and injured service personnel as well as civilians.

It was clear that the Duke had lived life to the full, and had a significant impact on many within the community of Chester and throughout the United Kingdom. It was indeed a memorable send off for a remarkable man and we were fortunate to have had him as our Colonel-in-Chief.

Colonel (Retired) Bill White

Editor's Report

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Hello Westies! It has been a busy time for the Association and the Regiment as a whole. We have a great deal on the horizon from a battalion march past and Vimy celebration, to the Melfa Dinner and associated events to the Italy trip. As well the unit and cadet corps have been busy training with some significant training events both past and future. In fact the battalion training this year changed in response to direction from 39 Brigade and will now by participating in the Brigade Training Event in April instead of the summer.

Editorial note: I received quite a bit of positive feedback for the last issues article about Ex Westie Fusilier, however I failed to mention the authors name: Cpl Joe Waugh. Thanks again for the great submission Joe, it was very well written and quite an entertaining story.

Thank you for your submissions for this issues and as always if you have any for the next issue please email me.

Paul Guilmain Editor

Presidents Report

Good day to all.

I hope everyone had a great holiday season and all are doing well. Hopefully winter will soon be behind us. We have had to cancel a couple of executive meetings due to the amount of snow we have had this year in BC. Still not as much as what most of our members east of us have had to put up with though.

Despite some of these challenges, the executive have been hard at work with lots of projects on the go. Many of which are detailed in this edition of the Groundsheet.

The deadline for this years' bursary is fast approaching. Applications can be found on the Association website and must be in by the end of March. All applications will be reviewed and the bursary will be awarded at this years' Melfa Dinner.

The Melfa Dinner this year will be a little different than usual. Unfortunately due to some increased costs for catering etc. and the fact that we want to do more things for our members, we have had to increase our tickets by \$5.00. Our green fees for golf have also gone up slightly. For those that don't know, every golfer in attendance also receives a prize. For this reason we have also raised the price of the golf tournament by \$5.00. This is the first time in quite a number of years that we have had to consider raising the prices, but the money goes to a good cause. Whenever we can support our serving members it is always a good thing. Our AGM will still be held on the Sunday and I am happy to say that we will not need to charge \$5.00 extra for that...it is still free to attend. Hopefully we will see you there!

At this years' dinner we are reintroducing a 50/50 draw. The more people that attend the bigger the potential pot! I want to give a quick shout out to Kerry Malish for all of his efforts in obtaining prizes for the silent auction. I believe members will be impressed with the quality this year. As most of you are aware we are planning a trip to Italy in 2019 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the crossing of the Melfa River. All proceeds from the silent auction will go directly into the Italy trip fund.

Due to the amount of planning involved for the Italy trip, a committee has been formed to stick handle all of the details with the final approvals being done by the executive. I would like to personally thank Hon. Lt. Col. Chuck Strahl for taking on the role as committee chairperson. There is no doubt that the trip planning is in very good hands. I also want to thank Bill White, Jerry Gangur and the rest of the committee for their efforts in organizing this as it is not an easy task. For those that don't know, Gerry was involved in organizing the 50th anniversary trip and his knowledge and insight thus far have been extremely valuable.

I also want to remind everyone to visit our updated website. Karyn Dyer, our Vice President, has been working hard on this project. You will see many changes, but most importantly is the events calendar. Don't wait for the Groundsheet to come out to be informed. The calendar on the website is updated frequently with upcoming events and information. Also, thanks to Sam Ronholm, our Facebook page is updated with upcoming events. After the Melfa Weekend the Association's next biggest event will be to take part in the Regiment's Vimy 100th Anniversary

Parade. This will be held on 9 April 2017. A full rehearsal will be held the day before. I would like to see as many members as possible attend this parade given what it means for the Regiment. If you can attend, please email the secretary or myself with your RSVP so that appropriate amounts of refreshments can be arranged on the day.

In closing I would just like to say that I hope to see as many of you as possible over the Melfa Weekend. The success of the dinner relies on your attendance and participation and it's a great way to catch up with old friends. Thank you all in advance for your continued support! Pro Rege Et Patria

Museum





The Museum has seen some changes lately. More items are being put on display around the Armoury. The original floor has been uncovered and recoated. This was done over the Xmas stand down. We are slowly receiving more artifacts from the families of former members. Pictures are being scanned and digitized so that we can further protect the originals from deterioration. We are planning on putting a monitor in the museum in order to show more photos.

The Museum is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1100hrs until 1300 hrs. Also one Wednesday parade night a month. (Last Wednesday of the month)

Thanks to all the people that have volunteered to assist us in improving the Museum.

Cadets

Another calendar year has come to an end and the cadet units are heading into the typical holiday stand down period. Each of the five cadet units affiliated to the Regiment have completed at least one field training exercise in the past couple months, and all helped to support their local Legions by very actively participating in the Poppy Campaigns and Remembrance Day ceremonies in their local communities.

December is now the month for each unit to have their annual Xmas Dinner. Some Corps turn this into a family affair, while others keep it more formal and traditionally military with the youngest Cadet having the opportunity to wear the Commanding Officers' tunic and be "in command" of the evening events.

The next major multi-Corps event planned will be the Air Rifle marksmanship competition called the "Westie Cup" that is usually held the last weekend in January.

The Corps are doing very well in keeping their "numbers up"; at last count, 1789 in Hope has 21 Cadets, 1838 in Maple Ridge has 42 Cadets, 1922 in Abbotsford has 35 Cadets, 2316 in New Westminster has 64 Cadets and 2822 in Surrey has 44 Cadets.

All units are thankful for the great support the Regiment continues to provide to help make the training program interesting. "Captain Buck" mascot of 1838 Cadets concurs.

Capt Sam Ronholm

The Battalion

Ex DUCIMUS SPEAR

Exercise DUSIMUS SPEAR occurred on 18 Feb 17. This was a one-day exercise concentrating primarily on Fighting In Built Up Areas (FIBUA). The intent of this exercise was to give an introduction to how Operations occur within such confined built-up spaces and demonstrate what skills are necessary for the achievement of tasks.

The Exercise started off with the pairing up of fire teams and practicing the fundamentals of snap shooting. This included learning to get into a comfortable gun fighter stance quickly and consistently. Then swiftly moving into reload drills, which included emergency mag changing and planned mag changing. During the duration of the drills,

Troops started off in the low ready and when a threat popped up they would engage, follow the threat down, check arcs, put weapon on safe, do a buddy check and then bring weapon to high-port from the gunfighter stance.

We then progressed into target shooting -2 to the body and one to the head while incorporating the previously mentioned drills. Next was moving and shooting all the while practicing our mag changing drills. All this became more and more difficult as you had be able to think and act on the move while maintaining a safe point of aim in a limited workspace.

next on the agenda was det size training or 4 person stacks. We covered "pieing", "highlow", "in-out". The staff first taught how to do the techniques, followed by a demonstration and then then the troops practiced them within the area. Furthermore, troops were taught the correct way to communicate and verbalise what was in front of them. This is a primary concern for leadership within sections, platoons and Company level Ops because communication is key to understanding portraying the images of the battle space in front of them

As a pleasant surprise the Commanding Officer of the Royal Westminster Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Vernon and Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel Chuck Strahl came and paid the troops a visit. The CO explained the reasoning and the importance of the training that the troops are conducting on a modern day battle field and shared experiences.

After a quick scenario brief the troops were off on to the certain sections they were assigned and the scenario based training began. Troops were put into positions where they would have to go into the unknown and clear rooms and areas with known enemy within them. Obstacles added complexity to the scenarios within the rooms and troops were instructed on how to approach, clear and communicate obstacles efficiently. Then soon after "breachers" were introduced into the scenarios, and the troops were taught techniques on how to enter with a breacher and continue onto their room clearing drills.

The training concluded with a culminating training scenario which was commenced using simulation ammunition. The scenario was that the one entire area of the training facility, needed to be cleared. The Platoon Commander, Lt Uttley was leading the charge through the rooms. This required all of the dets to be used and reused. There were Casualty Collection Points (CCP's) designated on route and many linkup points allocated during the attack. The attack was extremely labour intensive and required the troops to use all of the training they had learned throughout the day to be used over and over. This revealed

the weakness and gaps individuals still had in their training and was a great way to test accumulated knowledge.

Overall, troops liked the fact we were not rushed throughout the day. The gradual pace that the staff had set was encouraging and motivating. This enabled a constant interest and gave time to hone vital skill sets that many soldiers were learning for the first time. The troops also liked that we were do able to a steady transition from individualistic skills then to team then to 4 person dets, then to section and then as a platoon. This put perspective and a far-sighted vision into the soldier's minds and painted a holistic picture of how the tasks that infantry soldiers perform is vital to the outcome of the mission.

Furthermore, there were many brand new privates off the DP 1 infantry course. For a majority of them, this was their first exercise in regards to FIBUA. This exercise provided a really good opportunity to show how battle procedure works and fits in with the larger scheme of things. It explained how the components of a section attack, such as cover and movement, are transferable skills that are used in all infantry tasks. In addition to old skills, learning to check fire, watching arcs when space is restricted and learning to move through tight spaces was taught remarkably well

Conclusively, the intent of the exercise was to give an insight into how tasks like FIBUA are achieved. The staff had built an excellent training cycle that honed skills sets starting from the individual level and worked up to the platoon context. The skills were then tested during the culminating exercise.



Photo credit, 2Lt SuriCpl . Pte Bishop-Charvet, Cpl Law, Cpl Urquart.Description: preparing to breach a room on the right.



Photo credit : 2Lt Suri Capt. Singer



Doing fire team training.

Battalion March Past – 100th Anniversary of Vimy Ridge



As we all know the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge is nearly upon us. As such the Battalion will by conducting a march past in Queens Park Stadium in New Westminster on April 9th, 2017.

The event is also in anticipation of the expected receipt of new unit colours and will be one of the last times that our current colours will be on display with the unit.

The reviewing officer for the parade will be The Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia.



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second will not be in attendance.

From the Association Secretary:

Hello Members of The Royal Westminster Regiment Association, here is some further information regarding the Regimental Parade at the Queens Park Stadium in New Westminster on 09 April 2017. This will be an outdoor event taking place, rain or shine. The Parade will include, the Battalion, Association, affiliated Army Cadet Corps, and the Band. The Reviewing Officer for the Parade will be The Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia.

Lt Col Dave Vernon, the Commanding Officer, would like to have as many Association members join the "Old Guard" as possible. So while some of you may not have all the Association accoutrements, we don't want that to be the reason for you not to join the "Old Guard". Business attire is acceptable.

Also the "Old Guard" will only be on parade for the inspection. For those members, that are interested and able, can join the march back to the Armoury for the reception.

Confirmation

The Battalion would also like to have a forecast of the number of family and friends that are planning to come, in order to plan for reserve seating and refreshments at the reception.

Parking

The Battalion also has approval for visitors to use the City Hall parking lot.

Timings

Key timings are as follows;

Members for the Old Guard report to Queens Park at 1330

Guests to be seated by NLT 1355 hrs

Parade at Queens Park Commences at 1400 hrs

Bn begins march back to Armoury NLT 1500 hrs

Post Parade Reception at Armoury 1515 to 1700 hrs

<u>RSVP</u>

Please let the President, Dennis Keeton at <u>president@royal-westies-assn.ca/</u> or me know if you are able to join the "Old Guard" and the number of family and friends that will be coming with you as spectators.

Regards

Bill White Secretary The Royal Westminster Regiment Association

MELFA WEEKEND May 27-28, 2016

MELFA GOLF TOURNAMENT

The Melfa Golf Tournament will be held at The Delta Golf Course on May 26th 2017. First Tee time is 9:00 am The Cost is \$70.00 per golfer which includes Golf and Beer and a Sandwich If you are planning on entering, Please RSVP Alan Morton @ <u>amorton25@telus.net</u>, no later than March 19th, 2017.

Melfa Golf

Date: Friday, 26 May 2017 Location: Delta Golf Club Time: 0900 hrs Cost: \$70 Contact: Alan Morton <u>amorton25@telus.net</u>

AGM

The AGM will be held in the Warrant Officer's and Sergeants Mess at 11:00 on 28 May, 2016.

AGM

Date: Sunday, 28 May 2016 Location: Warrant Officer's and Sergeants Mess Time: 1100 hrs Dress: N/A

MELFA DINNER

Melfa Dinner

Date: Saturday, 27 May 2017 Location: The Armouries Cocktails: 1800-1900 hrs Dinner: 1900 hrs Association Dress: Blazer no Medals or DEU for serving members Dress: Business Casual (no jeans, no t-shirts, no runners) Cost: \$55 – cheque or money order made out to The Royal Westminster Regiment Assocation Contact: Karyn Dyer <u>karyn1@shaw.ca</u> RSVP: No later than May 12th, 2017

Please remember to bring cash as there will be a silent action. The purpose of the auction is to raise money for the Melfa 2019 trip.

Hyack Parade

Hyack Parade

Members of the Association ride in a Military Vehicle behind The Royal Westminster Regiment Band Date: 27 May 2017 Location: New Westminster RV: report to the Armoury by no later than 1000 hours Dress: Blazers with medals

ITALY TRIP – 2019

Purpose:

- To formally commemorate the Battle of the Melfa River on its 75th anniversary, May 24th, 2019.
- To visit the graves of members of the Westminster Regiment (Motor) who are buried in Italy
- To conduct battlefield tours covering the actions of the Westminster Regiment (Motor) in Italy.

Participants:

It is anticipated that the tour party will consist of member of:

- The Association
- Regiment
- Band
- The 5 affiliated Army Cadet Corps
- & family members of the above mentioned.

Cost:

The current estimate is \$3500 per person

Sign up:

You will need to submit a deposit to secure a place on trip. The initial contribution will be \$250 per person and payment to the Association should be made by 30 April 2017. Please complete the Sign Up Form and forward to the Secretary along with payment. If you are unable to make a

contribution by 30 April but would still like to come on the trip please provide your details on the sign up form and send it to the Secretary.

Receipts will be issued for contributions received. Sign-up sheet is included at the end of the Groundsheet.

The Royal Westminster Regiment Association Sign up for the Italy trip

Are you a member o	f the Association?		
Are you wishing to b	ring family members?		
How many family me	embers will be coming with you?		
Number who will be	less than 18 years old in May 2019		
Your Name			
Your Address			
Phone No:			
Email:			
If you would like to come on the tour please complete the information above and submit a \$250 deposit (per person) to reserve a place on the tour. (Please make out a cheque to The Royal Westminster Regiment Association)			
Amount of deposit	\$		
If you are able to make a deposit at this time but would still want to come on the trip, please fill out the rest of the form and return it to the Secretary.			
Signature			
<u>Note 1</u> . Serving members of The Royal Westminster Regiment are members of the Association. <u>Note 2</u> . Full deposits for the trip will be returned if cancelling prior to 01 September 2018			

Return to:

Secretary The Royal Westminster Regiment Association The Armoury 530 Queens Avenue New Westminster, B.C., V3L 1K3