



Dedicated to the Ideals and Comradeship
We knew in Wars and Peace and in
Our services both Home and Abroad.

THE GROUND SHEET

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF

THE ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION
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PRESERVING THE
HISTORY OF:

ROYAL ENGINEERS

NEW WESTMINSTER

VOLUNTEER RIFLES

SEYMOUR BATTERY OF
GARRISON ARTILLERY

104th WESTMINSTER
FUSILIERS OF CANADA

131st BATTALION
CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY
FORCE

47th BATTALION
CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY
FORCE

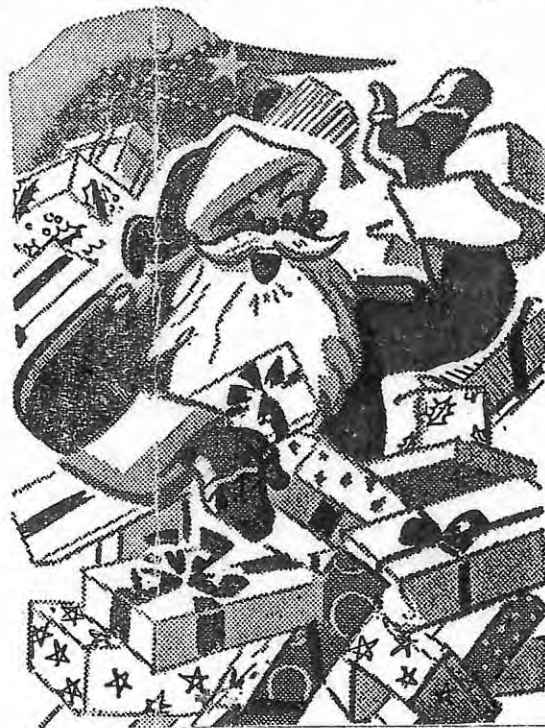
THE WESTMINSTER
REGIMENT (INF)

THE WESTMINSTER
REGIMENT (MG)

THE WESTMINSTER
REGIMENT (MOTOR)

THE ROYAL
WESTMINSTER REGIMENT

Merry Christmas to All!



❁

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As the end of another year approaches it is nice to pause and reflect upon the positive events of those few days and to look ahead to the challenges of a new Year.

The ranks of those we serve have dwindled ever more this year. Others are in hospital and otherwise restricted. Let our thoughts be with them and their families for a moment or so as we remember their contribution to the fabric of our family.

As we look back on 1985 your Executive wishes to thank you for your strong endorsement of their programme for the future of the Association and the Museum.

'Melfa '85' was one of our 'Best Ever' only because we had a good turnout and visitors from out of town. They are disappointed when they travel 3000 miles and the locals are not present.

Remembrance Day was memorable for the good weather - and good turnout. The parade was such that we felt we could 'March Past' with the best - and DID! Thanks, too, to the Regiment for supplying the creature comforts that go with the event.

The Smoker/Draw is with us at time of writing. John Rosso and John Ford wish to thank everyone for supporting the new Draw format, and to advise that the results are quite satisfactory. The Sergeants have arranged for musketry instruction and a turkey shoot and the kitchen Staff have planned a chili repast for those who attend. (Ed. Note: About 35 - 40 attended, three shooters tied for first in the turkey shoot, the chili and fixins were mmm-good, and M.G. Klinkhammer of Cranbrook, B.C. won the prize of the Draw).

Don't forget the Annual Meeting in March. We will present a new slate to carry on the deliberations in '86. (The Meeting will be March 20/86).

'Melfa '86' looks like an exciting event with Expo '86 in the background. Do your best to make it and let us know real early.

These events only turn out to be 'Great' when your Smiling Faces are present. Please make these 3 or 4 days each year a 'MUST' on your calendar.

May you all have a Very Merry Xmas and the Best
of the New Year!

Basil Morgan

REPORT OF THE CANADIAN PILGRIMAGE TO ITALY

by R.W.R.A. Rep. ART MILLER

MAY, 1985



The delegation arrived in Rome, Italy, on Wednesday, May 8th, 1985. There were approximately 88 persons representing all services that served in the Italian campaign. Included in the party were several MPs and DVA chaps.

After lunch there was a briefing session covering our itinerary. There were no days off. We covered over 2000 miles and visited every cemetery where there were any Canadians buried.

There was Italian participation in many cities - Rome, Agira - Canadian War Cemetery for Canadians only - 490 buried here; Ortona, Ravenna - in Ravenna a street was named "Piazza dei Canadesi" in our honour. We also paraded around a square block and the bands and pipes performed and were enthusiastically received by the populace. We did see St. Peter's Basilica and had a very good look at it. Imagine a church six football fields long on the inside.

We were entertained by the DVA at the Canadian Ambassador's Residence. Mr. and Mrs. Charland were our very gracious hosts and all manner of free drinks and cocktail type of food was available and lots of it. In fact, I don't think anyone could have gone out for dinner later, as it was already long past the hour when we were finally rounded up and returned to the hotel. The Ambassador's Residence was newly refurbished and decorated after being vacant for 35 years. It has belonged to Canada since that time.

There were two types of parades - minor and major. The minor parades were attended by the delegates and DVA and wreathes were laid but a bugler and piper were all that was provided for the ceremonies and they played, of course, the Last Post and The Lament. There were few speeches at these minor parades. Prayers in every case were given by two Padres, one Roman Catholic and the other Anglican.

For the major parades we were accompanied by a special Guard of Honour provided by the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery who are stationed in Lhars, West Germany as a part of NATO troops. This Guard of Honour was really well turned out and smart and soldierly in every way. As we were in Italy during the Italian national elections the Guard of Honour were not allowed to bring their rifles, so there was no "Present Arms" and the command was "General Salute Salute".

The band of the R.M.R.s was in attendance plus twelve pipers and drummers at the major parades and it was very touching. A single piper piped 'Amazing Grace' then was joined by the rest of the pipers and drums and then the brass band came through and joined also and finally the band and the pipers faded out and left the lone piper to conclude and was extremely well done. The ceremonies were well performed and at the larger centers the Italians joined with some of their veteran organizations and the mayors of the cities, with their tri-colour Italian sashes, usually delivered a speech. This was interpreted into English and then French and, of course, the head of our delegation, Mr. Allan McKinnon had to return the courtesy. This was also translated into both Italian and French.

The cemeteries are simply beautiful. The grass is clipped and well manicured, in many instances a flower or plant was planted in a little plot of earth in front of the headstones, which were all of white marble. The rank, name, regimental number and the regiment were cut in the face of each stone. Each cemetery has a wall surrounding it and a steel gate with arch over it. A register is located near the front of the cemetery where visitors may sign in.

It is understandable that the country has changed since we saw it last but it was a surprise to see that from a run-down, brown grey war-torn country there has emerged an apparently prosperous, vigorous, proud nation. It is green, all over the country, trees and cultivated farm land with modern irrigation and many new apartments and villas and whole new subdivisions outside of all the populated areas and in many cases out in the country, too.

Their highways are excellent and are toll highways. You have to pay to travel on them. Traffic - you wouldn't believe. In Rome some streets are 5 abreast with autos and you merely signal that you are going to enter a street and don't stop - they'll never stop for you but they will make room. There is a great lack of parking space, so the drivers park on the sidewalks and just leave an aisle where one person has to follow another along the sidewalk.

It is a fact that automobiles have no speed limits on the highways. I know because I drove from Rome to Paris. The rental I drove was a medium sized Fiat Ragatto. It overheated at 150 KPH so I could only drive at 140 and most of the autos passed me as though I was slow poking along. Curiously the busses and heavy transport are rated individually for what speed they may travel at and a large circular sign on the rear of the bus designates this speed. The bus-

ses we travelled in were very comfortable, equipped with air-conditioning, but were only allowed to go not over 80 KPH.

The trip was planned very well but the buses could not keep up to the automobiles and we ran late every day. Sometimes being as much as 2 hours late for a ceremony.

There were no battlefield tours this trip but I did manage to get a picture of the Melfa River from the bus as we crossed on a bridge spanning the Melfa just a few yards away from the exact spot that Charley Company crossed and that was the only battle area I recognized.

Doug Furlot and his wife were touring Italy on their own and met me in Rimini. Again we were late and dusty and hot and we had to get cleaned up to prepare for a dinner that was on very shortly so I never had too long to visit with Doug and his charming wife. He said that he could recognize Coriano Ridge but I couldn't. I think I recognized Fortunato Ridge but I couldn't recognize the Misano Ridge.

We were accompanied on our tour by DVA officers who, in my opinion, were capable and dedicated individuals and did a good job. With this report is a copy of a speech by both Maj.-Gen. B. M. Hoffmeister and Maj.-Gen. Desmond B. Smith. These were given a day apart, one at Rimini and I think the other at Ravenna at the cemetery.

I must say that the delegates that I met were all very easy to talk to and were a very congenial lot. My room-mate a WO I, was a George A. McKelvey, MM. George was a very spry 81 years old and was from the Irish Regiment of Canada. He won the MM at Coriano Ridge when the Irish took the town at the extreme left end of the ridge, as you may recall.

My bus-mate was also a WO I, named Alpheas Reynold, from New Brunswick, an ex-RCA Service Corps. A tough, burly trucker who supplied us with supplies from the Corps and Division. We finished the tour in Florence and departed for Rome that evening, arrived at 10:00 pm, and the following morning left for Canada, with the exception that I stayed. My wife joined me in Rome and after a couple of days recuperating from the past arduous days, we rented a car and drove to Paris. From there we went to London, England for several days and arrived back home on June 5th, 1985. I want everyone to know how much I appreciated the opportunity and thank you for selecting me.

Fraternily yours,

Art Miller.

TOAST TO THE MELFA 1985

Brig. J.E. Sager (Brick to all of us) never got to the Melfa. Neither did Walt Ibbott, or Peter Pirie, or Bill Roddick, or Archie DesBrisay, or Q.M.S.I. Carr, or A.A. Smith, or Buster Lynch, or C.S.M. Head or Billy Meek. None of them reached the Melfa, but if it had'nt been for them neither would the Westminsters.

They were the people - amongst a host of others - Colonels, Corporals, the leaders, instructors, task masters, drill sergeants, old soldiers who trained the Westminsters in the arts of war. They were responsible, really, for the fact that when the Westminsters reached the Melfa River and faced Kisserling and Co., they were confident, capable and ready - MELFA READY!

Everything we see of The Regiment today and hear of its achievements assures us that the traditions of training are being maintained - indeed, enhanced. The leaders and instructors of our Unit are demonstrating that the profession of arms is not a trivial pursuit.

Somewhere, some time, in our history, there will be other disputed barricades. As we toast the Melfa I suggest that we reflect with gratitude and respect on those in other days and those today responsible for making The Regiment ready - MELFA READY!

I GIVE YOU THE MELFA !

Ian F. Douglas



IN MEMORIAM

T.J. Sullivan, WW 2
Fredericton, N.B.
October 23, 1984.

Stan Johnson, WW 2
Burnaby, B.C.
November 12, 1985

Al Munn, WW 2
2nd Batt.
New Westminster, B.C.
October, 1985

Ed Greame, WW I
Canada Way Rest Home
Burnaby, B.C.
November 30, 1985



"At the going down of the sun"

Each year as November 11th nears those of us who have experienced war wonder how to explain to those who have no personal knowledge of such tragic events, that democracies whose people abhor war as a solution to major disputes between nations, must, nevertheless, resort periodically to armed conflict.

We veterans and civilians, whose lives have been altered dramatically by such catastrophic events, do faithfully pay tribute year by year to those who fell in battle in the air, on the oceans and on the land - and they fell in order to defeat the despots of the day and preserve democracy.

What we have failed to do, adequately, is to explain the 'why' of our participation, particularly to the young. We forget that forty years have passed since the end of the Second World War. Now many youngsters are completely ignorant of the dilemma democracies faced during the rise of Naziism, and now we face once again over the turmoil in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere.

How to bring them to a realization that democracies, imperfect as they are, are still the only systems which guarantee the individual the freedom to express opinions orally or in writing, to vote as he chooses in a multi-party system, to impose self discipline by way of personal as well as national laws, to own property, to practice the religion of his choice, freedom to travel, and to operate a business where he will or seek employment within his own country. Priceless privileges ignored by so many in democracies.

A common misunderstanding is that unilateral disarmament, an increasingly attractive policy to many concerned and naive people dedicated to peace, will somehow cause all other nations to follow suit. The reality is that today's tyrants who control one-party governments in both old and developing countries, seek every avenue, mainly by police and military action, to control and enslave their people.

One should deplore the military strength of not only the U.S.S.R. and U.S.A., for a number of the smaller nations have a military presence and arsenals of the most modern weapons far greater, for example, than democracies such as Canada, which, surely, offers no ideological or military threat to anyone, yet is so vulnerable to almost any threat from others.

It is not the two major powers, nor one of the four other nations who possess nuclear weapons stockpiles - the United Kingdom, France, West Germany and China that pose the greatest threat to our world. These six know full well that their



ability to destroy mankind effectively nullifies the military value of nuclear stockpiles. It is the growing number of unstable and despotic countries who now possess the know how to construct or have obtained one or more nuclear weapons that the world has to fear.

Terrorists, too, seem to obtain with ease the most sophisticated weapons, equipment and funding, and whom we are so ill-equipped and trained to counter in our democracies. Perhaps they will in time prove to be our greatest threat.

Let us all pause every Remembrance Day to honour those who lost their lives in defence of a democratic way of life. On that day we can all, without hypocrisy, pray for peace. But let democratic nations protect our way of life by maintaining our will and strength at least at a level of parity if not superiority until the peoples of the world demand an end to the dangerous march to oblivion too many countries are now following with increasing speed and fervour.

2s DELTA OPTIMIST WEEK ENDER, Delta, B.C. Friday, November 8, 1985

NOMINATIONS FOR THE NEW EXECUTIVE OF THE R.W.R.A.

TO STAND FOR ELECTION

AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MARCH 20/86

PRESIDENT: Stan Moorhouse

VICE-PRES: Ted Usher

Alex Gibson

Dave Adlem

Bruce Eaton

Ed Shannon

John Ford

Doug Glenn

Walter Lyle

George Gibson

This list may be added to by nominations from the floor at the Meeting. All members in good standing may vote by proxy, if unable to attend.

Nominating Committee

REGIMENTAL EXCELLENCE

For the fifth time, and for the second consecutive year, the Royal Westminster Regiment has won the Canadian trophy for being the most efficient infantry militia battalion in Canada.

Lt. Col. Chris Bradford, Commanding Officer of the Royal Westminster Regiment, said Tuesday he was "pretty happy" with the award.

"No other unit in Canada has won it more times."

Judging is done on overall standards of excellence in terms of recruiting, strength of the unit, marksmanship, leadership training and developing leadership skills and marksmanship.

THE ROYAL CITY RECORD
Saturday, October 19, 1985

TRES DIFFICULT

A young South American nun who had come to Paris to improve her French was having difficulties with the language particularly over the masculine and feminine articles in front of nouns, and was constantly getting mixed up, putting feminine words into the masculine form and vice versa.

One day, in front of everyone, she exclaimed, "Forgive me, Sisters, for committing sins with sex. With these French I just can't stop."

COMING EVENT

On the occasion of His Grace, The Duke of Westminster's forthcoming visit to The Royal Westminster Regiment in February, 1986, he has expressed an interest in meeting with members of the Regimental family.

To this end, members of The Royal Westminster Regiment Association and their wives will be welcome at a function at the Armoury on Sunday, 23 February, 1986, at 1300 hours.

It is hoped that as many members of the Association as possible will avail themselves of this opportunity to meet His Grace.

This is one of very few opportunities to meet with all ranks of the Regiment. Please make an extra effort to swell the ranks. **B.M.**

REGIMENTAL CHRISTENING

To be held at the Armoury on April 13th, 1986.

Please advise Adjutant of names of parents of infants and expected infants who are children of past or present serving members, so that appropriate arrangements can be made re gifts and church.



MELFA '86 CELEBRATIONS - EXPO '86 YEAR

Hello again. It is my pleasure to look after the Melfa Dinner again this year. We have changed the place of the Dinner to the Royal Canadian Legion, which has been relocated on 12th St. in New Westminster. They had to move to make way for the ALRT. The new Legion is smaller but a better facility. The Brunch will be held at the Armoury the following day.

To have the Dinner in the Armoury is the right place to a lot of people, due to the 'home' atmosphere. I agree, but to the people who plan and put the Dinner together, to have it in the Drill Hall is a logistical nightmare. So please don't allow the location of the Dinner to affect whether you come or not; it's the people, 'comrades in arms' and their wives, you are coming to see and will be dining with. Yes, the Dinner is 'mixed' again.

This year tickets must be purchased in advance. You will have an order form attached in this issue and in the next issue. When you send your reply also enclose your payment. We are limited to about 200 people for dinner, so don't delay. We won't be accepting money at the door, so order before to ensure a place for dinner.

Because of EXPO '86 all accommodations and services are 'real tight', so we suggest you book early for hotels, etc.

While I have your attention please make an effort to attend the Annual General Meeting (March 20) in the new year. Last year's turnout was very good and I hope to see a better turnout at the next meeting.

Ted Usher
Vice-Pres.
Chairman Melfa '86

.....
ORDER FORM MELFA '86
.....

GOLF: \$12.00 each YES:..... NO:.....

DINNER: \$12.00 each YES:..... NO:.....

BRUNCH: \$ 6.00 each YES:..... NO:.....

TOTAL: _____ NAME: _____

Mail to: Ted Usher
802 - 4390 Grange St.
Burnaby, B.C. V5H 1P6

11.

Please include your payment along with the above return slip. Your tickets will be given at the door. All tickets must be paid in advance. Make cheques or money orders payable to The Royal Westminster Regiment Association.

MAIL BAG

To those of you who have driven and rode in that mechanical contrivance known as a Universal (or Bren Gun) Carrier, you will no doubt be happy to hear that the Association (complements of the Museum) now owns one, vintage '41. The old flat-head Merc V-8 runs like a charm but the controls were pretty well siezed up with rust and dirt. But three of us spent every Friday for a few months working on it, re-wiring, scraping, cleaning and painting, and it looks quite lethal again and does skid turns with ease. Thanks to permission from the Regt., it is comfortably housed in the Armoury basement. Invaders take warning!

Got a nice letter from Bill Majury in Toronto, with best wishes to Ford and Rosso for success in the Draw, and a nice donation to the Museum, for which our hearty thanks, Bill. Sorry to hear you've had trouble getting the Groundsheet, but I think we have your address right this time. Tho' there isn't much difference between 23 and 25 (one house?) and I don't think much of your postman if he couldn't figure it out.

A note from Ted Burnby in Vernon with a picture (from the

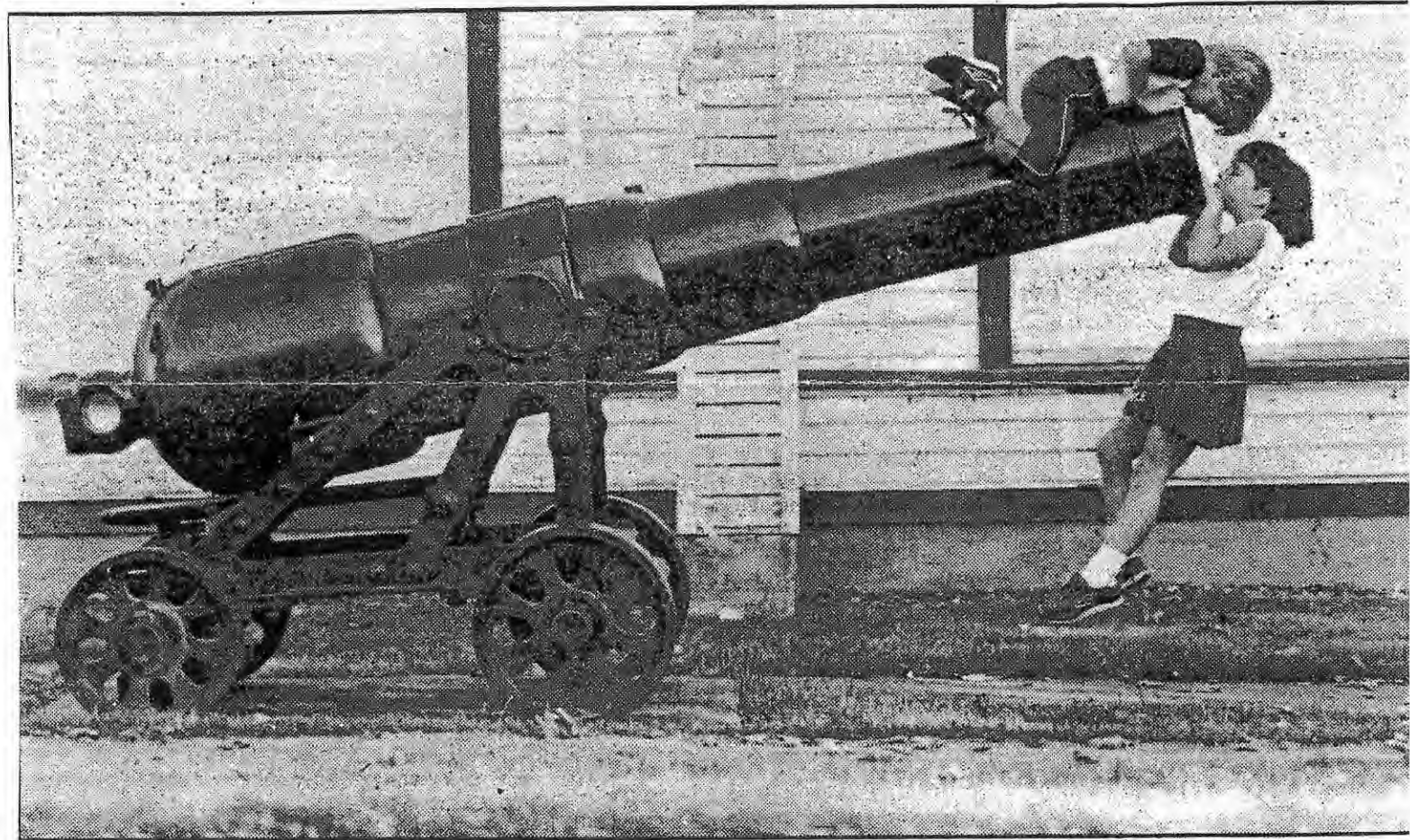
Vancouver Sun) of our Armoury's cannon. This gun sat in a special gun-room in the Armoury, and through a gun-port guarded the New Westminster waterfront. It now sits on a cement base at the front entrance, after being painted and muzzle-capped. See back page.

A very Merry Xmas and a peaceful and happy New Year to all of you out there, and cheerio! for now.
Ed.



Bernie Neary and Jack Mahony
way back when.

A BARREL OF FUN



CURIOSITY may have killed the cat, but it proves less dangerous for Brennan Day and his sister Taralyn as they peer

- COURTESY VANJUN —Peter Battistoni photo
into mouth of a display cannon outside the Royal Westminster Regiment Armouries in New Westminster on Sunday