



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
P.O. BOX 854, NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C. V3L 4Z8

VOL: 36

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1863

125

YEARS

1988

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

*The President and Executive
of the
Royal Westminster
Regiment Association
invite you and your family to
An Indoor Picnic
to Celebrate the 125th Anniversary
of the founding of the first Militia Unit
in New Westminster.
November 20th, 1988
The Armoury
520 Queen's Avenue
New Westminster, British Columbia
1300 to 1700 hours (1 pm to 5 pm)
Please Bring this Invitation with you.*



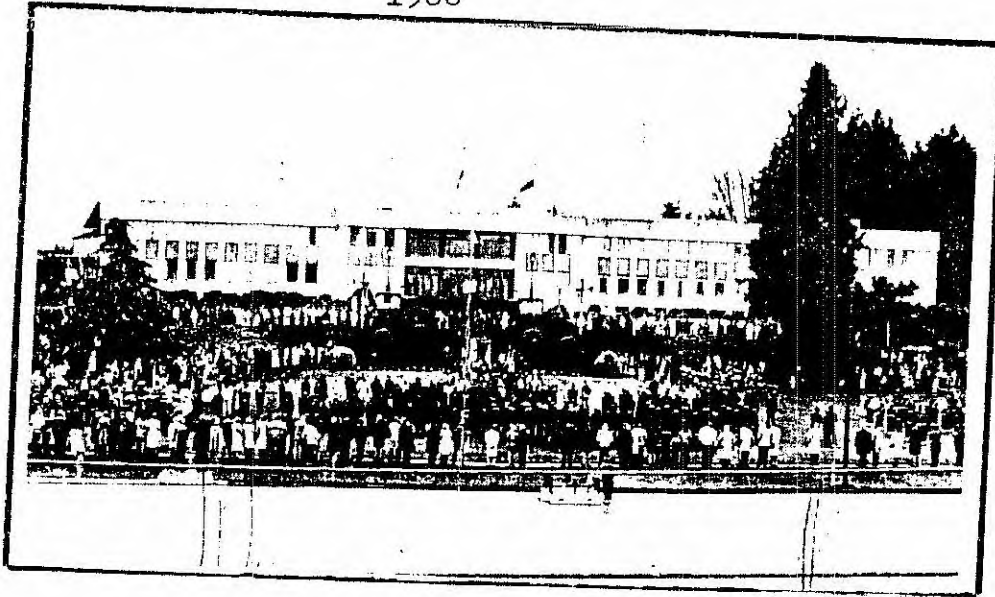
Remembrance Day

9 • 30 A.M

Ceremonies

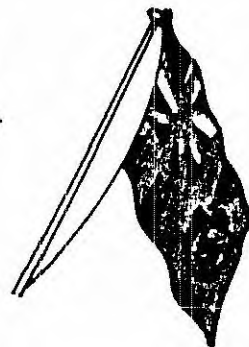
ARMOURIES

1988



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER ELEVENTH

New Westminster, B.C.



General Chairman
MAYOR
T.C. BAKER

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The busy summer of 1988 is now over and the preparations for The 125th Anniversary are well underway. Bert Hoskin finalized the details and all activities are 'Go' for November 20th. The only unknown is how many of 'The Regimental Family' will attend to enjoy it. Your invitation is printed on separate card and enclosed in your 'Groundsheet'. Additionally the invitation is printed on the cover of this issue.

I earnestly encourage you all to R.S.V.P. to Bert Hoskin immediately on receipt of your invitation. Please state the numbers you are bringing with you. This information is vital for catering purposes and will allow your committee to provide sufficient Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Soft Drinks for the kiddies, etc. If per chance a separate invitation is missing from your Groundsheet you may use the printed version on the front page. I realize that our ranks are thinning rapidly and also that there are many local members residing in the lower mainland that have never attended. That, of course, is everyone's democratic privilege. I urge all of the latter to make an exception for this November 20th. It marks an historic occasion and it is most unlikely that any of us old sweats from W.W. 2 will be available to celebrate the 150th. The invitation includes all members and all members of their families. Yes, bring the grandchildren and great grandchildren.

This will be a low key affair with no ramblings of who did or did not win The Italian Campaign Circa 1943 - 1944. If you have never attended an Association function or, indeed never come again, please make this your one exception. It is a tribute to ALL WHO HAVE SERVED IN THE UNITS OF THE ROYAL CITY FROM 1863 to 1988.

The Association is pleased to announce that we have added two members to your executive from the ranks of The Royal Westminster Regiment. They are Kevin Crawford, The Warrant Officers and Sgt's representative and Mike Morrison from the Junior N.C.O. & Men's ranks. These additions will afford us a closer bond with today's Regiment and add new YOUNG BLOOD and a closer working relationship thereto. WE NEED THEM AND THEY ARE OUR FUTURE. Don't forget November 11th, Remembrance Day and trust we will see large numbers of you on November 20th.

Bruce Eaton, President

NOTE: EXTREMELY POPULAR PRICES FOR NOVEMBER 20TH - NO CHARGE FEE

SUMMER OF CELEBRATIONS

Fall is officially upon us but, in no way dims the memories of an active and memorable year of events for The Royal Westminster Regiment and your Association alike. As noted in your last Groundsheet, Commanding Officer, Chris Bradford extended an open invitation to all Association members to participate with The Regiment in the many planned events of this The 125th Anniversary Year of 'The Regimental Family' Hon. Lt. Col. Les Deane has reported on one of the early events. 125 Officers, retired Officers and friends attended a 125th Annv. Mess Dinner. Guest of Honor was 'Hoofy' much admired Major General Hoffmiester 5th Armoured Div. Commander in W.W. 2 'Hoffy' was granted the distinction of becoming an Honorary Westie - Gen. Hoffmiester spoke of his high regard for 'His Westies' under his command in Italy and N.W. Europe. This event was followed by a visit of another Honorary Westminster. The Duke of Westminster. The Duke spent most of his evening reviewing and chatting with the young soldiers of The Regiment. Your Editor decided, in concert with his good lady, to forsake usual vacations and attend ALL events the Association were invited to. This began on May 23rd, The Queen's Birthday held at Queens Park. The Regiment exercised 'Freedom of City' rites and several Association members formed an Honor Guard on City Hall Steps. There followed Band Concerts, Hyack Festival events and, later in June, ceremonies at Matsqui and Mission. Freedom of the City rites were held in each place and The Regiment and The Band paraded in fine form. Regrettably only four Association members turned out Ron Grinstead, Cecil Grinstead, Walter Lyle and yours truly. Hon. Col. McKinney and Col. Bradford included us in all the ceremonies and it was much appreciated. At Mission, at following reception we met several former 'C' Coy Westies, Bill MacIntyre, Joe La Croix, Bob Dashwood, Gordon Radmore and Dave Leedham. The grand penultimate function was the 'D' Coy Picnic at the end of July. This is fully reported elsewhere in this issue by Hugh Shannon. We now look forward to November 20th. Its been a grand year, didn't miss a summer vacation at all, and hope to see many of you this November 20th. Please let Chairman Bert Hoskin know how many your bringing a.s.a.p.

Ron Hurley

REMEMBER

"D" COMPANY ANNUAL PICNIC

The 15th annual picnic and meeting of Branch #3 ("D" Company) of The Royal Westminster Regiment Association was held on Sunday, July 31st, 1988, with 74 members and guests attending.

The day was perfect weatherwise and a good session of visiting and reminiscing took place. John and Linda McConnell again officiated at the steak and baked potato cook-out, with support from the Soutars, and the food was heartily enjoyed. A good turnout of members and guests from outside the district was on hand and a sprinkling of young children enlivened the proceedings.

At 3:45 the annual meeting of the Branch was convened under President John McConnell, with 21 members and guests present and Lyn Edmonds, former Branch Secretary, acting as recorder. The Branch's welcome was extended and it was noted that "Duke" Wellington's name had been added to the Flask. Bert Hoskin was again appointed Parade O.C. Reports were received from Captain Martin Hilmer, Regimental Communications Officer, and Bruce Eaton, Regimental Association President. The strength of the Regiment was noted to be 125 all ranks and active planning was underway for participation by the Regiment and Association in New Westminster's birthday celebration on November 20th. Contributions by the members and guests of \$324.00 were received, together with the generous pledge of a \$1,000.00 donation by Norm McAskill, which was warmly appreciated. Marion and Sam Soutar were again thanked most heartily by the members for their kind hospitality. President, John McConnell, 1st Vice, Ed Shannon and Secretary, Hugh Shannon were re-elected by acclamation.

The Branch parade was called around 4:30 p.m., with Sam Soutar as Flag Officer and Dick and Ed Shannon as members of the colour party. John McConnell called the Roll of Honour. Following the Last Post and the playing of the 23rd Psalm, Elsie Baldwin was presented with a plaque in appreciation of the many years of gracious hospitality at Circle 6 Ranch enjoyed by the Branch since 1974.

An announcement was made by Bert Hoskin that preliminary advice had been received from Ottawa, subject to confirmation, that Ron Hurley and Gino Bortolussi, former Westminster Regiment track stars, had been admitted to the Canadian Forces Military Athletic Hall of Fame. Ron Hurley then addressed the parade and acknowledged with thanks the untiring and successful efforts over many years by Bert Hoskin to have this high honour for himself and Gino recognized.

"D" COMPANY ANNUAL PICNIC (Cont'd.)

The playing of the lament "The Flowers of the Forest" by Piper Bernie Doughton then concluded the program, and the parade was dismissed "Until Next Year".

Hugh Shannon

 THE ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION WELCOMES MAJOR BILL WHITE
 AS INCOMING C.O. OF THE ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT

Detailed information on Major White, at this time is somewhat incomplete but thanks to Hon. Col. Bill McKinney we can tell you Major White comes from The Engineers. It is most fitting that The Unit has come full circle on this the 125th anniversary of The Regimental Family. From Col. Moody in 1863 to soon to be Col. White of The Royal Westminster Regiment enhances our history indeed. Col. McKinney tells us that Major White hails from Ireland and has an Engineering background as his father was a senior officer with The Royal Engineers. Major White served for some time in Eastern Canada. On coming to B.C. he served for some two years as Brigade Major at Pac Command H.Q. He was C.O. of 6th Field Coy. Royal Canadian Engineers in North Vancouver, B.C. An Engineer and an Irishman - now that seems an excellent combination, albeit your editor may be somewhat biased as also coming from Irish Stock. We welcome Major White and hope to learn more of him later.

Ron Hurley - Editor

BURSARY PRESENTATION 1988

The first recipient of The Royal Westminster Regiment Association JOHN FORD MEMORIAL BURSARY is Miss Gabriela Bloss of School District No. 40 (New Westminster). Mrs. Helen Ford presented the award in memory of her late husband John. It was a fitting tribute to one who has contributed so much to your Association. Interestingly, Miss Bloss is planning a career in physiotherapy, a position John Ford devoted his entire working life to at George F. Strong Rehabilitation Hospital.

ATTN . ' SNIPER' BROWN OF KELOWNA:

No time for retyping Bob but your excellent and most appropriate piece of poetry printed as recieved on Pg 10



MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS:

Curator Bas Morgan keeps The Association informed re. Museum Activities. He is working extremely hard and would still appreciate some volunteers from The Association for a variety of tasks. The Museum and The Association are still vital and integral components of 'The Regimental Family' and it should be noted that: The Museum is Our Final Heritage. Museum Registry indicates hundreds of visitors over The Summer Months. There is some important future work to be done at the Museum such as: Remaking Displays Start of Story Line case, office filing, map cases, etc.

A SPECIAL REQUEST VIA THE MUSEUM TO ALL EX MILITARY MOTORCYCLISTS: Co Authors, Ken Messenger and Max Burns are writing a book 'Story of Canadian Military Motorcycling'. They need, photos, information, stories, etc. and they will pay for photo reproduction, xerox costs, etc. if you can help: ALL YOU SNORTIN NORTON pilots write to the following: Ken Messenger, 314 Leonard Street, North Bay, Ontario P1B 5K4.

SPECIAL 125TH ANNIVERSARY BOOKLET:

A special 74 page book with photos and stories highlighting our 125th year history is at the printers. It will be ready for sale on November 20th. Estimated cost \$10.00 - \$20.00.

SPECIAL REQUEST TO MEMBERS:

It has been suggested that a paper back edition of our War Diary be printed. Question? LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.



Left: In September, 1939, Ron Hurley (left), Bas jennens and Fred Evans of the B.C. Dragoons met while doing guard duty at a bridge in Prince George, B.C. Above: Forty-six years later the Legionnaires met again at Vandam, Holland, while celebrating the liberation. All served overseas during WW II.

From their camp at Sapperton, so called by the Sappers, East of the present Penitentiary walls, they conducted all the important explorations in the colony. From 1858, they surveyed and mapped the colony, built roads, designed the first schools and churches, kept order, and provided an ever present force for defence against invasion. Five years later, in 1863, the Royal Engineers were withdrawn and returned to England, their duty done.

An offer of a free land grant to those who remained was accepted by about one hundred and twenty discharged Engineers who, together with their families, cleared away the forest, established farms and became pioneer settlers.

Within one week of the departure of their comrades on 11th November, 1863, those who had chosen to remain, together with a few civilians, voluntarily banded themselves together for the defence of the mainland of British Columbia. The company numbered seventy-three and they chose the title "New Westminster Volunteer Rifles". Their uniforms were part-worn garments left behind by those who had returned to England. The following year, 1864, His Excellency, The Governor accepted the appointment of Honorary Colonel; an issue of arms was made and an inspecting officer reported the "Rifles" as fairly advanced in Drill.

125 years - from that day to this - the citizen soldiers of New Westminster have never, for one moment, ceased to train and be ready in case of need, for Sovereign and Country. Son followed Father, Grandson followed Grandfather, but the Royal City of New Westminster has never been without a volunteer defence force provided by its young men. Exigencies of the service may have caused Riflemen to become Artillerymen, or Fusiliers, or Machine Gunners, but the officers and men themselves have been steadfast and unwavering.

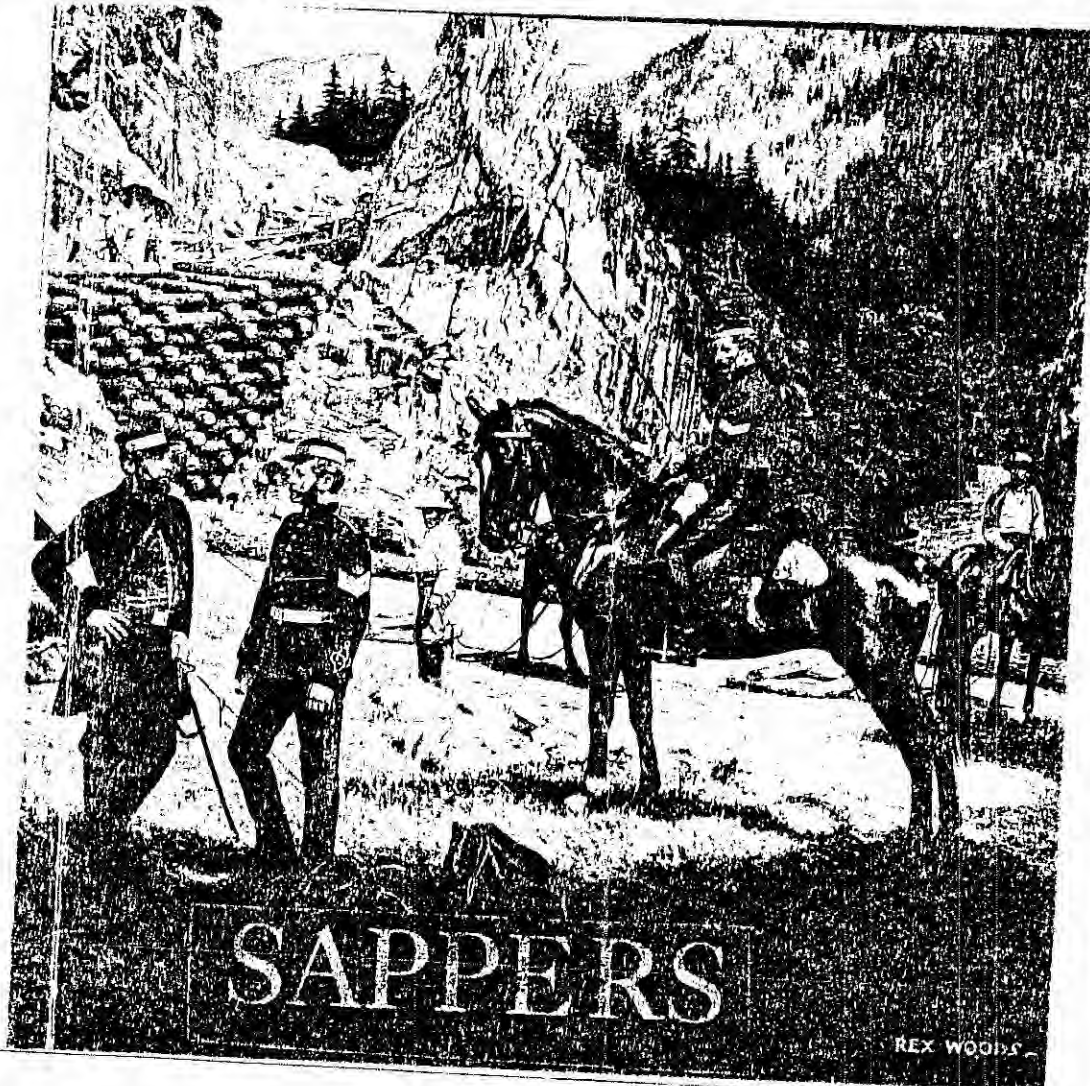
They helped in the suppression of Indian disturbances, organised resistance against possible Fenian Raids; and upon several occasions have dropped their civilian pursuits, put on uniform and rendered aid to civil power.

In the war they saw service in the South African War, 1899 - 1902. In 1914 The Westminster Fusiliers of Canada trained some 6500 men of New Westminster, Fraser Valley and surrounding districts for the Canadian Expeditionary Force. A Victoria Cross was won by a member of the

OUR HERITAGE (Cont'd.)

Famous "47th" Battalion when they served in France, 1914 - 1918; and in world war II, as "The Westminster Regiment", they fought at MELFA, Italy, with the foe in front and the foe behind, and won another Victoria Cross. They have many Battle Honours.

New Westminster, today, has the activity and bustle of the large city that it is; and at the same time maintains an atmosphere that is both personal and friendly. It is compact enough to retain a high measure of community spirit which has shown itself to great advantage in times of fire and flood; and should they be needed, the citizen-soldiers are still there.



**** ODE TO A VETERAN ****

ANON.

My friend, my fighting days have long since gone.
I barely hear you when you call my name.
And as I sit against my garden wall in the sun,
I live through all our battles once again.

Do you remember, old friend, the stark Italian hills,
The chilly rains, and the thunder of the guns,
And the men that died, and those that disappeared??
Ah, old friend, you and I were among the lucky ones.

Those friends we left behind on foreign soil
Each earned a medal....and a final bugle call.
One thing I know for certain, my old friend,
I'm glad to be sitting in the sun against my garden wall

Are Italian days as hot as when we knew them then
While laying in the dirt, waitin for the foe
And wondering if we were the next to fall??
Old friend, it really doesn't seem that long ago.

Remember too the senioritas of that land
Who made us feel like the men we hoped to be??
I've spent many an hour wondering, old friend,
If I was fooling them or if they were fooling me.

So now you've come to see me in my town.
It's good to see your face and shake your hand,
And think of those we met and grew to know,
And talk of things that only veterans understand.



National Defence

Défense nationale

Assistant Deputy Minister
(Personnel)Sous-ministre adjoint
(Personnel)National Defence Headquarters
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0K2Quartier général de la Défense nationale
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0K2

5591-3 (ADM(Per))

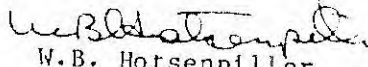
26 August 1988

ELECTION TO CF SPORTS HALL OF FAME
SGT HURLEY RR/SGT BORTOLUSSI G

- References: A. CFAO 50-17
B. CF Sports Hall of Fame Nomination dated
1 March 1988

1. In accordance with the above references, the nominations of Sgts Hurley and Bortolussi were considered by the most recent meeting of the CF Sports Hall of Fame Board of Governors. I am pleased to inform you at this time that they have been elected to the CF Sports Hall of Fame for their outstanding accomplishments in Track and Field.
2. To appropriately honour their achievements, their names will be added to the CF Sports Hall of Fame plaque display which is located on the concourse of National Defence Headquarters. Scrolls signed by the Chief of Defence Staff, General Manson, will be prepared and forwarded for presentation prior to your Regiment's 125th Anniversary. Additionally, a new page will be commissioned for the CF Sports Hall of Fame Book of Honour which is now on display at over 30 locations throughout the CF. In this regard, a black and white, 8" x 10" photo of each inductee, preferably portraits in uniform will be required by DPORA.
3. As the most recent Sports Hall of Fame members, Sgts Hurley and Bortolussi join a very select group of serving and former CF athletes to be so honoured. I would appreciate it very much if you would convey to Sgts Hurley and Bortolussi my personal congratulations on their splendid achievement.

Canada


W.B. Hotsenpiller
Vice-Admiral

IN MEMORIAM

Wilson Markle	W.R.	W.W. 2 Westminster Regiment
Terry Williams	W.R.	W.W. 2 Westminster R Korea Perm Forces
Capt. 'Bud' Brumpton	W.R.	W.W. 2
Doreen Cull		Royal Westminster Regiment
Orval Richardson		W.W. 2 Westminster Regiment
David C. Wells		W.W. 2 Westminster Regiment
K48 032		
James V. Swanson		W.W. 2 Westminster Regiment
Norman Dunn		W.W. 2 Westminster Regiment
Wick Stewart		W.W. 2 Westminster Regiment
Ray Hockley		W.W. 2 Westminster Regiment

'SAPPERS' A MUST READ BOOK BY AUTHOR BETH HILL OF VICTORIA, B.C.

Author Beth Hill has graciously granted her permission in writing to excerpt from her excellent chronicle of Our Engineers Forebears. I mentioned this book in last issue and considered expanding upon it. After thoughts, however, leave me to believe it would be a disservice to the Author. I can tell you it is the most definitive account of 1858 - 1863 Royal Engineers I have ever read. It is written in a most informative and understandable mode, devoid of hyperbole and soaring rhetoric. I believe this should be required reading for all serving members of the Royal Westminster Regiment today and it would have been a great addition to our training manuals of 1939 - 1945.

Ron Hurley

NOTE: I know there are copies in some local libraries but I obtained mine from Duthies in Vancouver at the modest cost of \$9.95.

Apologies to Col. Chris Bradford. Reg't report received too late at press time despite a week post deadline. Grace.

Regrets to all correspondents - none received from Secretary re - summer, will acknowledge all plus donations next issue.

Editor