# VOLUME 97 / ISSUE 1



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

# THE GROUNDSHEET THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF

THE ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION P.O. BOX 854, NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C. V3L 4Z8

February, 1997

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the royal westminster regiment association

AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS THURSDAY MARCH 20, 1997

Place: Combined Officer's and Sergeant's Mess in New Westminster Armoury Time: 8:00 pm

> Parking in the City Hall Parking Lot IF YOU ARE EVEN REMOTELY INTERESTED IN YOUR ASSOCIATION YOU WILL BE THERE!

WE NEED YOUR ADVICE AND SUPPORT AS NEVER BEFORE AND WE NEED YOUR DUES FOR 1997.

## EXECUTIVE

President	Fred West #16 - 3397 Hastings Street, Port Coquitlam	V3B 4M8	942-6275
Past President	Jerry Gangur 2015 Hyannis Drive, North Vancouver	V7H 2E5	929-5785
Hon Treasurer	Vernon Ardagh 3689 Nico Wynd Drive, Surrey	V4P 1J1	535-9093
Secretary	Nelson Scott 710 - 7th Avenue, New Westminster	V3M 5V3	521-3294
Westie's Correspondent	Ron Hurley 2229 Bonnyvale Avenue, Vancouver	<b>V5P 2G4</b>	321-8464
Editor	Jerry Gangur 2015 Hyannis Drive, North Vancouver	V7H 2E5	929-5785

#### Editor's Corner

#### Passing of the Torch .....

One of the most difficult tasks in this world is to follow in the footsteps of someone who has done an outstanding job and over an extended period of time. I speak of Ron Hurley.

Many of you may not have realized that **Ron Hurley** has been the editor of the Groundsheet for about two thirds of the years that it has been published. For a period of time he did the editor's job while also serving as our president. For a brief period of he took a sabbatical and our dear friend **Ed Shannon** took over the duties. Ed also did a great job, but after a time he was unable to continue and Ron Hurley came back once again. Ron is stepping down as the editor...but read on!

During the last three years, while doing my apprenticeship with Ron, it became quite apparent that acknowledging all the letters that you write required an extra touch that only someone like Ron possessed. Understanding this dilemma, Ron has agreed to answer all letters received under the title of 'Westies' Correspondent.

Working with Ron during my apprenticeship period has been most rewarding. I have learned to respect him as a man of integrity and compassion and see him as someone who is considerate of his fellow man. He, by example, has demonstrated that hours of volunteer work can be rewarding and responsible for many good things happening.

Something you may not know is that Ron Hurley and Gino Bortolussi are the only two wartime soldiers who are members of the Military Sports Hall of Fame!

As I assume the position of editor, it is with the understanding that I am only one of many who served you in this manner. I think of others, not mentioned, Tommy Foreman and Allan Coe. I thank them for bringing us this far and am deeply honored to be carrying the torch for the next lap.

Please continue to give your support to the editor, the Groundsheet, the association and most of all, the regiment.

The last Groundsheet was my profile report, it was very interesting, but I thought it would prepare you for what was not to expect.

I have had an interesting term so far. I didn't expect as much excitement as we seem to have had. The big ITEM has been the Victoria Cross Plaque campaign. I think it is very interesting and I think it will attract a lot of attention, as well as inform the population of the heroic deeds of our comrades. The unveiling event will take place on <u>April 5, 1997</u> at the Armoury at 6th and Queens in New Westminster. I believe the itinerary will appear under another heading, so I won't dwell on that.

I am pleased to tell you we have a very active Membership Committee and the results so far are very commendable and our Regimenntal Association is growing very nicely. The committee members are finding our lost legion's of former members of the Regiment that got away on us! We need lots of help, we need all those post war former members of the Regiment back in the fold, we need them to carry on the good work of the Association that was started by the old sweats; the old sweats are falling by the wayside, old age and war wounds are taking their toll, not to mention mis-spent youth.

I must also mention our V.C. Plaque committee. The Chairman of that committee went to Toronto to see how Legion Branch #360 carried out their tribute and the Konowal Plaque unveiling. I am sure it will be a hard act to follow. Jerry Gangur is the chairman of that committee and has been working very hard getting it together. I am looking forward to a very successful Plaque presentation and tribute to our Regimental Heroes, Sgt Filip Konowal WWI at hill 70, and our own native son Major, later Lt. Colonel John K Mahony WW2 in Italy and the famous Melfa River Crossing. We are looking forward to a very large turnout to this event, as Filip Konowal was a Ukrainian immigrant; the Ukrainian community is very active in assisting and will have a large attendance from their various communities across Canada. Jack Mahony was a local citizen prior to WW2 and I am sure the Fraser Valley will be well represented, as the Regiment's original strength was recruited throughout the Fraser Valley and also reinforced by areas of the Province in both world wars. We mustn't forget the Apple Knockers from the O.K. Valley and Cow Pokes from the Cariboo, the Smelter workers from Trail and the Coal Miners from Fernie, and the Farmers from the Prairies. Have I missed some? if so come along to the ceremony on April 5/97 and tell me who I missed. I know we have a sister association in Toronto and I would like to see them represented too, as well as our new distant relative in Ottawa, the GGFGs. The GGFG (77th Btn) was Filip Konowal's original regiment, but he was serving with our WWI Reg't (the 47th Btn) when he performed his heroic deeds. The event will be a very historic affair as well as a very sentimental tribute to out Heroic Comrades.

I hope to see many of you on <u>April 5th</u> and also don't forget the Melfa Dinner, May 24, 1997, the 53rd anniversary of the Melfa Battle and the 50th Anniversary of the Regimental Association. We will be honouring our older members and founders. I hope I have't Boored you - Fred West K47-163

"Life is not a dress rehearsal, so come and enjoy yourself."

## Commanding Officer's Report - Lt Col RA Lee

The pace of training and ceremonial events quickens following the Christmas leave period. On the training side, the unit has just returned from a section battle drill exercise in Chilliwack. (Aptly names Ex Westie Whiteout in keeping with the season's minus 20 degree C temp. - and that's prewind chill!). In February, we will return to the Columbia Valley for an MTSC (Militia Training Support Centre) evaluation section attack exercise. This is part of Land Force Restructure program that will evaluate the performance of each Militia unit over the next two years.

Exercise Cougar Salvo 97 takes place in Fort Lewis, Washington during the school spring break, March 14-23. Our unit will be evaluated (MTSC) on platoon level offensive operations during the first weekend. The remainder of the week will be filled with section and platoon level infantry training, including live field fire for those members able to remain after the evaluation weekend.

The final pre-summer planned training for the battalion is scheduled for May 16-19. During this exercise, the unit may deploy to the Chilcotin Training area for a challenging patrol training exercise.

Public duties or ceremonial events start Saturday Feb 22nd with the Annual Regimental Officer's Mess Dinner. This invitation only dinner gives the battalion an opportunity to host and thank friends of the unit in a formal fashion.

Saturday April 5th will be a special day at the armoury. A guard of honour and the band will be present at the unveiling ceremony of a monument dedicated to our Victoria Cross recipients: Sgt Konowal and Major Mahony. This will be an important day for the regiment and the association. We look forward to meeting you again.



Left to right. Sgt Keaton & MCpl Hannaberry.

Dealing with the infantryman's friend.

### Sick and Visiting

#### **JAN 16/97**

Four of our members are still in George Derby Centre and they are:Walter LyleWalter JacksonBill ThorarinsonMaurice Spanerand in Royal Columbian Hospital:Allison Russel

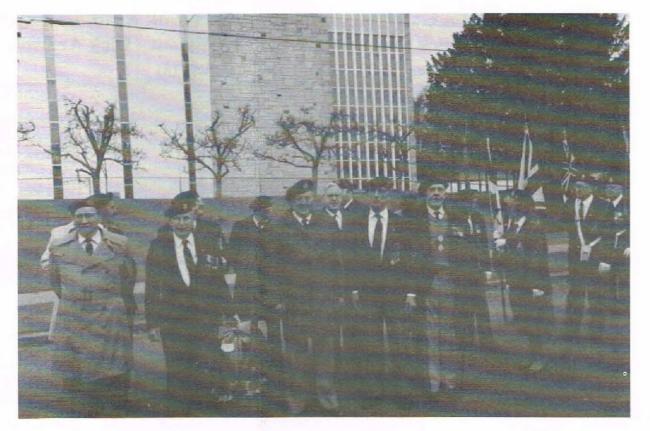
For Xmas each of the above received a gift certificate for coffee etc. at the George Derby Centre.

I visit George Derby each Thursday and usually see the boys somewhere in the building.

Members as of date confined to home:Ron HurleyGino BortolussiAllen Coe(Richmond Lions Manor, 11771 Sentimann Place, Richmond)

I CAN COVER ONLY SO MUCH GROUND. BE MY GUEST IF YOU HAVE THE TIME TO SPARE AND VISIT AT LEAST ON OF THE ABOVE. THE SANDS OF TIME ARE RUNNING LOW.

DOUG GLENN / SICK AND VISITING (OF ONE) 522-0890



On parade November 11, 1993 Recognize them?

# Melfa 97 May 23, 24 and 25

# Join Us in Celebrating and saluting our comrades for the 50th Anniversary

of

## The Royal Westminster Regiment Association

1947 - 1997

Golf \* Brunch \* Parade \* Museum \* Dinner Old Timers New Timers All Timers

## What is happening and When?

Golf - Friday, May, 23

Tee Off: 11:00 AM Cost per Golfer: \$35.00 (Includes lunch and prizes) MOBILE CARTS \$15.00 Phone Delta Club for Cart Reservations Where? : Delta Golf Club, 11550 Ladner Trunk Road, Delta 594-1414 Chairman: Chuck Smithers; executive assistant - Dick Armstrong (After March 3, phone Chuck Smithers (604) 936-7328)

Hyack Parade - Saturday, May 24

Veterans and Association recognized by the citizens of the City of New Westminster. Asking all member to meet (tentatively) at CPR station at 0800. Parade strarts at 1000 hrs. We will ride in WW II vehs - participation dependent on number that turn out. So join us and make it happen.

Melfa Dinner - Saturday, May 24

Royal Towers Hotel: Cocktails 6 pm Dinner 7 pm Cost \$40. per person Chairman: Chuck MacKinnon

Brunch - Sunday, May 25 The Armoury 10:00 am to 1 pm

# Memories Personalities and Happenings .....

A letter ....

September 30, 1995

1733 Southmere Crescent White Rock BC V4A 7A8

Dear Ron :

I want to express the thanks of my family and myself to all the Association members who conceived and carried out the Memorial Service last Sunday for my brother, Ian Douglas.

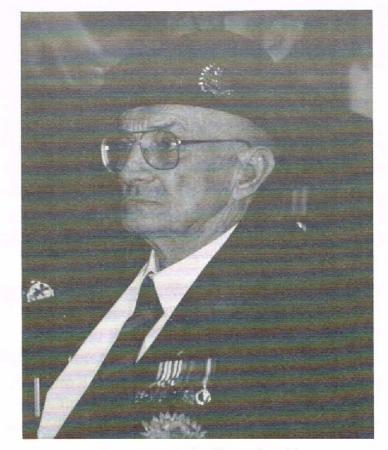
It was well done, and I felt allmost overwhelmed at all the things that were said about him, and by the kindly sympathy that so many expressed to me after the service.

Thank you all.

Sinccerely,

Ross Douglas

Ed Note: Ross, regret delay, space limitation in previous editions.



Deep in thought. November 11 Walter Jackson



Todays Regiment Corporal Edwards Equal opportunity

# REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION PLAQUE UNVEILING HONOURING THE REGIMENT'S VICTORIA CROSS RECIPIENTS APRIL 5TH,1997

#### Presented by Jerry N Gangur, VC Plaque Committee Chairman

In New Westminster on April 5th, 1997, a plaque honouring Cpl (later Sgt) Filip Konowal and Major (later Lt. Col) John Keefer (Jack) Mahony, will be unveiled on the 6th street side on the armoury. Invited to officiate over the ceremony is a significant government official, the Honourable Mr Justice Sopinka of The Supreme Court of Canada and The Ukrainian Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Volodymyr Furkalo.

As mentioned in October 1996 Edition of the Groundsheet, the trilingual plaque to be unveiled in New Westminster honoring Filip Konowal is the last of three plaques erected in his honour. The first plaque was unveiled in Ottawa, in the Cartier Square Drill Hall, the armoury housing the Governor General's Foot Guards, the second was erected on the outside wall of The Royal Canadian Legion (Konowal), Branch 360 in Toronto.

The plaque honouring Jack Mahony will be inscribed in Canada's two official languages and will read as follows:

Born in New Westminster in 1911, John Keefer "Jack" Mahony was one of the first to enlist with the Westminster Regiment (Motor) when the Second World War broke out. By 1944, he held the rank of Major. On 24 May 1944, despite being wounded severely, he successfully commanded his company in the stubborn defence of the Melfa River bridgehead during the Battle of the Liri Valley, in Italy, for which he was twice presented the Victoria Cross - in the field by His Majesty King George VI, on 31 July 1944 and again at a Buckingham Palace investiture. He died in London, Ontario in 1990.

Prior to activities related to the Konowal Plaque unveilings in Ottawa and Toronto, our association had not considered erecting plaques to honor our Victoria Cross recipients. One reason, perhaps was the rather significant expense involved in such an undertaking. Following our initial request and agreement by The RCL, Branch 360 to pay for a Plaque honoring Filip Konowal, more discussions followed and this same Branch 360 agreed to pay for the preparation construction and shipping of a bronze plaque honoring both Victoria Cross recipients. Canadians of Ukrainian heritage in British Columbia than accepted the challenge from the chairman of the VC Plaque Committee to pay for other costs associated with this historic event. For your information a budget is enclosed.

PROGRAM FOR	VC UNVEILING CEREMONY - 5 APRIL 1997
Time	Activity
10:30 am 11:00 am 12:15 pm -	<ul> <li>Assemble at Plaque Location</li> <li>Arrival of Guest of Honour</li> <li>Ceremonial Greeting</li> <li>Speakers</li> <li>Plaque Unveiling</li> <li>Consecration of plaque monument</li> <li>3:00 pm - Refreshments and sandwiches served. Armoury and Museum open to public.</li> </ul>
Where: R phone: 1	5:00 pm - Cocktails 7:00 pm - Dinner Cost: \$100.00 per ticket (tax receipt for \$50.00 will be issued). Veterans & Seniors: \$50.00 (no tax receipt) oyal Towers Hotel, New Westminster. For hotel accommodation 800 663-0202 Special room rates: Victoria Cross Dinner attendees. please contact Sec Scott, Pres West or VC Chairman

**Flash:** A soldier, Art Castle, now 99 years of age, served in the 47th Bn says that he is here today because of Filip Konowal. This gentleman along with Jimmy Wilson (age 94 and a WW II Vet) will be guests of honour of the association for the unveiling and the Dinner. Both veterans will assist in unveiling the plaque honoring our Victoria Cross recipients.

Budget VC Plaqu	e Unveiling	
Item (	Cost	
Plaque (Manu/delivery)	\$5,000	Originally, our plans were to have a plaque unveiling for Jack
Lighting Conduit prep	200	Mahony within one year of the Konowal unveiling, and
Construction of Cairn	1,000	than early in Jan of this year, we decided to have the
Equipment Rental	200	Mahony plaque unveiled on May 25. For good reasons,
Program Printing	1,000	we then deicided to unveil both plaques on April 5/97
Post Event Preservation	300	One reason for separating the two events is that Branch
Postage/Fax/Tel/Adm	1,000	360 produced a supurb commemorative booklet on Filip
Invitations/Envelopes	1,000	Konowal. We felt we needed at least one year to arrange
Dinner (200 guests)	8,000	financing for a similar booklet on Jack Mahony. An
Promotion	300	ad hoc committee has informed us that such a
Commemorative Booklet (Kono	wal) 2,000	project would cost approx \$10,000. President West wants
Transportation for Vets	200	such a booklet prepared. If you want to contribute to
Airfare	1,200	our VC Plaque Unveiling or the Mahony booket, we
Total	\$ 21,400	would be grateful for your assistance. If you want to assist financially in this undertaking, we would be grateful.

#### Meet him and you would never know ...

#### Nov/Dec 1944

Where to begin? On a troop ship "Morrow Castle," bound for Naples; ship broke down and drifted towards North America for 3 days. Protected by American submarines.

Met Westminsters in Italy in Avelino. Had a choice of units to cook for and opted for Westminsters. Met Tiny Robertson. Have some stories to tell. Toured Pompeii with him.

Rank progression: Arrived in Italy as a corporal, promoted sergeant. Wants to move on to area of his choice, does, but becomes private. Eventually gets Cpl stripes, arrives in Enchedea, Holland and is greeted by CO of new unit and addressed as Staff Sgt. Does not understand promotion, questions it, but officer tells him it's in writing. Promptly asks that his pay book be up-dated.

While in Amsterdam, V2 lands near him and blows him through canvass of vehicle he is riding in. Cannot hear anything & spends eight weeks in hospital. When regiment moved into forward area, remains behind. At wars end found himself in Enchedea, Holland.

#### Congo

Now as Capt RCASC, assigned to UN duty in Congo August 1960. Serves there until April 1961. What a nightmare this tour turned out to be!

Was Food Services Officer for 57 Cdn Sigs Unit; task was to establish communications throughout Congo.

Location Leopolville: One day, remarks to his boss, Col Smith that he would like to get rid of the considerable accumulation of garbage. Col. agrees and Capt leads a detail consisting of one truck with a corporal and a driver and a Jeep with a Lieutenant who is able to speak French. Along way discuss with detail whether they should take some of the garbage to a local pig farm. They approach a fork in the road. right turn leads to pig farm, left turn leads to Congo River, where garbage is normally disposed. Decide to stop off at pig farm and just as decision is made, his detail is attacked by sixty or so members of the ANC, some of whom speak French, but no English.

Captain remembers that the Lieutenant with him just froze. He could not speak and ceased to function. The ANC force took the vehicles, disarmed the four Canadians and ordered them to take off their clothes and shoes. The Canadians then are made to run to the top of a nearby hill where the STANLEY MONUMENT is located. Once at the top of the hill, Captain remembers that the four were forced to run a gauntlet of a distance of about one-quarter of a mile and while doing so were hit by tribesmen with rifles and clubs. At one point Captain fell and one of the natives took this opportunity to ram a rifle barrel up his rectum. Captain got up, continued running and does not remember much after that. He was told later that he continued running to the end of the gauntlet and made it to the huts where the Canadians were held prisoner until a random was negotiated with the United Nations. A UN negotiator was on hand that evening and because of Captain's condition, he was released and immediately taken back to the CDN MIR. While there, a priest visited Captain and administered last rites, "just in case."

Captain refused to come home until he completed his tour of duty. However, on his return to Canada, he was hospitalized for 90 days. Today he suffers permanent damage to his prostrate, has headaches (for which he

#### cont from page 10

takes Tylenol and morphine). He continues to have nightmares and told me of having one as recently as two nights before this interview. Captain says of the men that shared this experience with him; the Lieutenant was admitted to a mental institution, the Cpl. died of a heart attack three months later and the driver also died of a heart attack approximately one year later.

After retiring from active service in 1969, Captain served with Wasties for 4 years, finally retiring in 1977. While serving as Food Services Officer with the regiment, he lived in Chilliwack.

This Captain is the kind old, lovable Mike Kedziora.

Note: As told to Editor, November, 1996

#### Westies' Correspondent

**Preamble:** All you 'Westies' will recognize that I no longer have the title of Editor after all these many years. This is my own decision & approved by President Fred West. There is good reason for the change. You will appreciate that the Association is in a vital transitory mode & it's time to pass the torch to younger hands, to the members of The Royal Westminster Regiment Association. I have not abandoned you, however. I will now be the official & exclusive 'Westies Correspondent' and will continue to respond to all mail from you 'Westies' which is what we were known as overseas. I will also continue to acknowledge All Obituaries. As long as my health allows I will continue because I realize that it was you 'The Westies' who started the Association & have to continue to support us financially for our 50 years of existence. Having said this, it does not preclude me from responding to letters from members & Ex members of the Royal Westies WW 2 vintage.' Your new Editor-in-Chief will be Jerry Gangur - a post war C.O. and a staunch contributing member of The Association. He has worked with me for several years & knows my style by now. I thank and admire all you Westies for your long support. Please keep writing, it will help me considerably. SEND YOUR MAIL AS ALWAYS TO BOX 854 - That will allow them to extract money donations before sending to me at my home. Saluti to ALL WESTIES. As Ever Ron Hurley

**From the Post...** A word from Les Griffiths. Thanks Les for your new address, now No. 5238 Silver Star Rd, Vernon, BC...An interesting letter from R.G. Adams of Scarboro Ont. re his brother and his grave site in Ravenna War Cemetery. Briefly the Regiment went overseas in November 1941. A lengthy stay in England 1942 & 1943. The Regiment join 1st Div as part of 1st Cdn Corp. I recall your brother and have visited the war cemeteries (17 in number)I am most familiar with Ravenna area. Personally I was severely wounded on Dec 14th, 1944 not to far north of Ravenna itself. It is most heartwarming that you & your family were able to visit your brother's grave site. I trust this will provide you with some of the information you requested... A change of address from Harry M Jol, now at the Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin EAU Claire Box 4004 Eau Claire, Wis W1 54702 USA.

..... continued on page 12

## IN MEMORIAM

Gino Bortolussi	
George Wm Billany	
James Claxton	Westminster Regiment (M) W.W. 2
Don Campbell	Westminster Regiment (M) W.W. 2
Edward Gutherie	Westminster Regiment (M) W.W. 2
Henry (Hank) Hurford	
Mrs RP Reynolds	Widow of Bob Reynolds
Frank Richardson	Westminster Regiment (M) W.W. 2
George K Sangster Wes	tminster Regiment Fusiliers 131st Bn W.W.I
Tommy Smith	Westminster Regiment (M) W.W. 2
Lloyd Stuart	Westminster Regiment (M) W.W. 2
Cliff Wetmore	Westminster Regiment (M) W.W. 2
Hughie WrayW	estminster Regiment (M) W.W. 2 & Korea

Westies Correpondent (continued from page 11)

Donations and a nice letter from old C Coy stalwart Barney Jones; sincere thanks re your complimentary remarks re the Groundsheet....Thanks to Bill & Greta Robson from the land of eternal sunshine, Arizona; a shame that you two missed our record snowfall. Trust your health has improved Bill....From Edmonton, Land of perpetual Deep Freeze, a letter with donation & appreciation for receipt of Cap Badges. George Shaw send a thank you to Brice for obtaining THEM...Long time letter write in person of Jack Terpenning. Thanks for your 97 dues Jack & yes Life Membership is still \$50.00...Dues& a thank you from old friend James Walsh of Cranbrook...Sincere appreciation to Zoe Young, a kind donation in remembrance of her late husband & a close personal friend of Doug Young K47305...A nice donation from the Leneghans, thanks to both Bill... A special thank you from Tiny Robertson of Rideau Health Center of Ottawa. May you continue to improve you health...New address Fred Murrary, now 41 Gillies Bay BC V0N 1W0. Pleased that you enjoy the solitude Fred. Thanks to the ever moving Nomad for your kind letter. Pat McCarthy please advise us post haste should you pull down your most recent Tent...Thanks to Irene Hurford with the sad news of Hank. He is well remembered by all. Despite her recent sorrow of Hank's death, Mrs Hurford has kindly sent a nice donation to the association.

As Ever, Ron Hurley

Dues - Reminder - We need your dues. Do not forget to complete the Proxy Stuffer and return same to your designated hitter before the AGM. Those able to attend, do so, as your presence is always an insentive to your board of directors.

# The Royal Westminster Regiment Association

PROGRAM FOR VC UNVEILING CEREMONY - 5 APRIL 1997 Honouring Filip Konowal, VC and John Keefer 'Jack ' Mahony, VC The armoury, 530 Queen's Avenue, New Westminster (North of City Hall) This event is open to the General Public				
Time	Activity			
10:30 am - 11:00 am -	Assemble at Plaque Location Arrival of VIP Guests Mr. Justice John Sopinka, The Supreme Court of Canada Volodymyr Furkalo, Ukraine's Ambassador to Canada Major General N Bruce Jefferies, CD, Commander, Land Forces Western Area Ceremonial Greeting Speakers Plaque Unveiling Consecration of plaque monument			
12:15 pm - 3:00 pm	- Refreshments and sandwiches served. Armoury and Museum open to public.			

Filip Konowal, VC - Jack Mahony, VC Commemorative Dinner Guest Speaker: The Honourable Mr. Justice John Sopinka, the Supreme Court of Canada

6:30 pm - Cocktails 7:00 pm - Dinner Tickets : General: \$100.00 (\$50.00 tax receipt will be issued) Veterans & Seniors: \$50.00 (no tax receipt issued)

Dress - Men: Black Tie or Dark Suit

Ladies: Formal

Place: Royal Towers Hotel, New Westminster (6th and Royal Avenue). For hotel accommodation & special room rates phone: 1-800-663-0202

For tickets please contact: Fred West 942-6275 or Jerry Gangur 984-4515 or Mail Cheque to: The Royal Westminster Regiment Association, P.O. Box 854, New Westminster V3L 4Z8

Tickets are limited and will be sold on a first come first serve basis.

Yes I'm attending the Konowal/Mahony Commemorative Dinner				
Name Address	Tel:			
Cheque enclosed:	Tickets times \$ = \$ (number required) (see ticket prices above)			