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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

April, 1997

# **MELFA 97**

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary  
of the Founding of

**The Westminster Regiment Association**  
now

**The Royal Westminster Regiment  
Association**

May 23, 24 & 25

## EXECUTIVE

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

## Editor's Comment

One of the tasks we have to accomplish in the few years is to encourage members of the serving battalion, who have recently been discharged to take part in association activities. This is not an easy task, because unlike the WW I and W.W.II veterans, we cannot turn to wartime camaraderie to provide the fuel that will motivate someone to attend meeting and participate in annual reunions sponsored by the regimental association.

While attending the symposium in Vancouver, put on by the Dutch community during the 50th anniversary celebrating the liberation of Holland by Canadian troops, one of the history guest lecturers made an encouraging statement. He stated that the interest by the current generation of history students in matters relating to world war two was intensifying in many dramatic ways. I believe this to be an accurate observation of the changing times. Our kids are bright, motivated, energetic and most of all they want to know about the past.

Fred West and his executive last year brought back some members of the regiment who served during the 70's and 80's. The interest is there. You of the Westminster Regiment (M) made history and it is our task to tell the story over and over again.

**Jerry N Gangur**

## President's Report

Our Fiftieth Anniversary.

I am Pleased to report we had a very busy and interesting year, I might add it has been Reasonably Successful too.

We have been able to add some deposits to our Endowment Fund, not as much as I would like, but reasonable I think as we have digressed somewhat due to other ventures that were not necessarily in our plans when the year started. I think the other activities were important and I am pleased to be able to say that they are almost complete. I am referring to the unveiling ceremony of the VC memorial Cairn and Plaque that will take place on April fifth.

I want to thank **Jerry Gangur** for his time and effort in chairing the VC Plaque Committee, I wonder when he finds time to do any business for himself, maybe the Army gave him a pension, I 'll have to ask him about that, anyway he has been a very busy fellow and he has done a magnificent job. I would also like to thank everyone involved, especially Legion Branch 360 (Konowal Branch) who started the ball rolling as well as the Ukrainian Civil Liberties Association and Canadians of Ukrainian heritage living in this wonderful province, as well as the Legion Branches in the Fraser Valley who have contributed to the cause. I also want to thank the City of New Westminster and Mayor **Helen Sparkes** and her Council for their help and kind consideration. I want to thank all members of my executive council for their indulgence and willing support throughout the past year. We have a hard working Membership Committee that is endeavoring to round up previous serving members of the Regiment. **Gary Brooks** and **Len Wohlgemuth** are doing a splendid job in that department. We also have a hard working Melfa Committee that is headed by **Chuck MacKinnon** (recently promoted Captain) and assisted by the Junior Ranks Club who are taking a great deal of interest in the Association. The Regiment has given us a good deal of help in planing for the unveiling ceremony and I thank them too.

The Melfa plans are under way and we hope to have a good turnout for that; we will be honouring some of our older Association members that have kept the Association going over the last Fifty years. The have done their job well and deserve the recognition and appreciation of all of us who have enjoyed the comradeship and pleasure of the Association over the last fifty years and also those that will be enjoying the pleasures and comradeship in future years.

I thank all the members of the Association for he Privilege of being your president in 1996. I hope to see you at the Melfa, May 24, 1997, the **Fifty third anniversary of the Melfa Battle**.

Thank you - **Fred West** - K47163.

# Annual General Meeting - Reports

## President's Report

President Fred West said his report would be brief as he has submitted his regular report to the Groundsheet and he didn't have too much to add. He did say that he had an interesting year and that he saw a bright future for the association. He thanked all members for their support over the last year and spoke highly of the new members on the board of directors. Being a man of a few words, president West carried on with the business of the meeting.

## Treasurer's Report - Year end Financial Statements

Balance Sheet	Statement of Income & Expenses
<b><u>Assets</u></b>	
Bank	\$ 2,525.83
Petty Cash	<u>1,000.00</u>
	\$ 3,525.83
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$3,525.83</b>
<b><u>Liabilities</u></b>	
Due to Future Fund	\$ 227.24
Konowal Plaque	<u>1,550.00</u>
	1,777.24
<b><u>Surplus Account</u></b>	
Fwd 31 Dec 95	\$ 3,259.79
Deficit (I&E)	<u>1,411.20</u>
	1,748.52
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 3,525.83</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>	
Donations	\$ 660.00
Life Memberships	850.00
Dues	1,230.00
Interest bank	93.09
Vancouver Foundation	<u>2, 119.91</u>
	5,353.00
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>	
Admin/telephone/postage	1,431.17
Legal - filing fees	20.16
Wreath Konowal	71.00
RC Legion	100.00
Changeover Dinner	320.19
Traveling Expenses (Gangur - Toronto)	250.00
Annual Gen Meeting	68.02
Sick & Visiting	100.00
Donation - Royal War- shire Regt Mus	100.00
Groundsheet Prep	900.00
Printing	1,843.33
Postage	<u>882.60</u>
	3,625.93
Melfa Deficit	377.73
Grants - Cadets	<u>400.00</u>
	6,864.20
<b><u>Deficit - for year</u></b>	<b>1,511.20</b>

## The Regiment

**Unit Strength/Organization.** Despite the enrollment/transfer in of 44 members the Battalion's strength has fallen to 135+ from last years 180+. Of this 45 member drop 20 have transferred to other units -- the remainder (60) have been released from the CF. We identified a "training system crisis" (with recommended solutions) to higher command last year -- the system lacks the capacity to train recruits to basic infantryman level. Last year only 11 Westies completed their infantryman course, we had as many as 30 turned away due to lack of course vacancies!

The Bn has a leaner more operationally realistic organization. We have collapsed the rifle coys HQs and applied these resources to recruiting. The Bn has a new RSM. MWO Pete Stott took over as RSM from MWO Arnie Day at the 27 Feb 97 CO's parade.

**Training.** One year ago the Bn was on Exercise Cougar Salvo 96 completing our defence training. At this exercise the Westies hosted all BC District's Combat Arms Units in a section level live fire defence stand. Other training included: range field firings, FIBUA, fighting patrols, march and shoot competition, and a coy def FTX complete with battle simulation charges. During the summer over 40% of the Bn attended courses or taskings!

September's training included an individual battle skills test exercise. The fall saw us conduct section-level offense training and range work--personal weapons testing, grenade throwing, and LMG/MMG familiarization. In December we conducted our earthquake preparedness/response exercise.

Spring activities update-- MTSC section attack evaluations in February went very well - Westie section commanders rated an overall "Excellent" performance. Capt. Haussmann earned the Westies another "Excellent" rating when he led our platoon through the assessed platoon quick attack at Exercise Cougar Salvo 97. Our administrative support soldiers also shone as high performers within a pooled group of BC District support troops at this exercise.

**Public, Ceremonial and Social Duties.** The Band continues, under trying circumstances, to be a part of the Regimental family. They have made several public appearances both as our Band, and as the combined 15th Fd Band. We are not accepting their disbandment -- efforts are ongoing to have them reinstated as an authorized Westie Band! The Bn is working with the Band on a summer program which would see local sponsorship of public performances by our band members, and cadets in New Westminster during public performances by our band members, and cadets in New Westminster during the "tourist" season. Something to add a little military colour to the Royal City

Last year the Bn participated in several Hyack activities: The Anvil Battery Salute, the 10 Km run, and the Hyack Parade. We also took part in the City's hospital bed races, and other public fundraising events elsewhere.

The Annual Regimental Officers' Mess Dinner was held on February 22nd with Colonel-in-Chief, Colonel His Grace the Duke of Westminster, OBE and Lt Gov Garde Gardom attending. Colonel Bill McKinney who only the day before fell and broke his hip. Though he is slowed down a bit for a while the Colonel is in fine spirits!

Upcoming events include: The April 5th unveiling ceremony, the Hyack activities and the Melfa reunion.

Unit Chief Clerk Sgt Nangle did a great job with this year's children's Christmas Party. Too bad (for us) she is being posted out to an operational air unit (she hopes). CWO Chuck MacKinnon (now Capt) is to be congratulated for taking the initiative and leading the Unit to an individual sponsor first place finish in the radio sponsored Santa-Fox food drive. Westies provided more food and cash than any other individual sponsor for this charity event!

**Cadets.** Our four affiliated cadet corps report that ten cadets will be attending the National Star Certification Exam this Easter. Our Maple Ridge Cadet Corps made local news headlines twice these last few months: once to report on Capt. Davis's recent Legion sponsored tour of European Battlefields, and the second time to credit corps members for their actions as first responders in a tragic search and rescue situation. The four corps have gotten together more frequently this past year -- they will next mass in June for a combined annual inspection parade. **End**

### **V.C. Committee Report.**

Chairman, Jerry Gangur noted that plans to unveil a commemorative plaque honoring Filip Konowal, V.C. and John Keefer 'Jack' Mahony, V.C. are progressing well. He outlined the some of the problems experience in the early stages of the project, but said that all was now running smoothly. He thanked those members of the board and serving battalion that were serving on the various subcommittees. The plaque and cairn will be located outside the armory on 6th street.

**Groundsheet Report.** Our Editor effective earlier this year was Jerry Gangur. He expressed his appreciation to the former Editor Ron Hurley for all the good work he did over the years and for agreeing to continue on answering all correspondence in his capacity as the Westies Correspondent.

## Election of Officers

Chairman of the nominating committee, Mike Kelly, made his report and the following committee was nominated and elected by the members present.

### 1997 - 1998 Executive

President	Fred West
Past President	Jerry Gangur
Vice President	Len Wohlgemuth
Treasurer	Vernon Ardagh

### Directors

Gary Brooks	Al Morton
Mike Kelly	Herb Hamm
Ken Knipstrom	Chuck MacKinnon
Brian Woodcock	

President Fred West will appoint a secretary and a director.

**To the new executive congratulations and God Speed!**

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**Your Melfa Return for you to complete is on the Reverse Side.  
Fill in the information, make a cheque payable to the association.**

**And Mail to Melfa Chairman  
P.O. Box 854  
New Westminster, BC V3L 4Z8**

**If you think we are doing something right, write us and say so. If you want something to be done differently, we want to know about your feelings. Your letters mean a great deal to your executive.**

# Memories Personalities and Happenings .....

Letters.....

110 Miner Street  
New Westminster, BC

August 1, 1996

Dear Mr President,

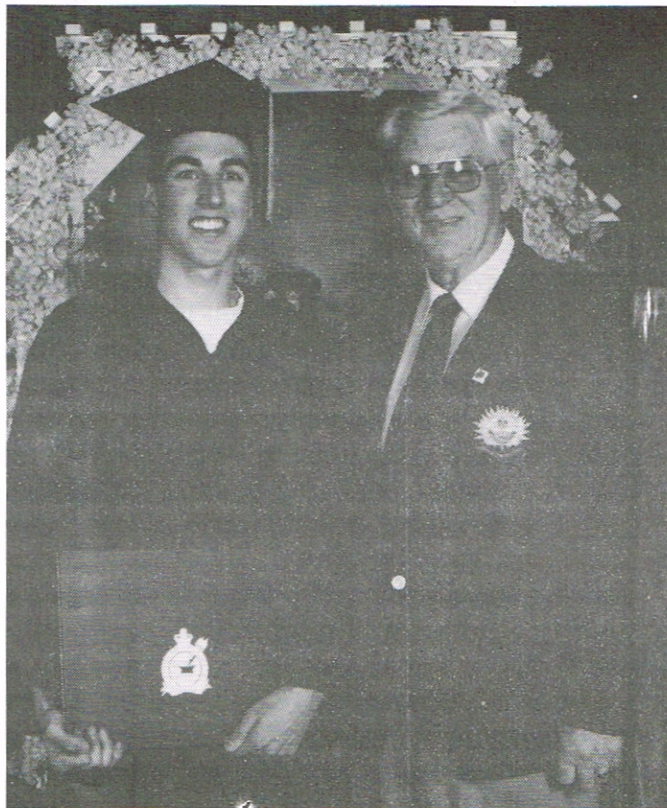
I would like to thank The Royal Westminster Regiment Association for awarding me the 1996 John Ford Memorial Bursary.

I will be attending Simon Fraser University this September and have been given direct entry to their Kinesiology Program. At this time, I plan to pursue a career in Sports Medicine, after completing my undergraduate degree.

My grandpa, Fred Duthie was thrilled that I received this bursary and it will certainly help me meet the expenses of a university education. Thank you once again for choosing me as your recipient of the John Ford Memorial Bursary.

Sincerely

Graham M. Duthie



President Fred West presents RWRA John Ford Memorial Bursary to Graham Duthie.

Tear off

Tear off

## Melfa 97 - Return

Yes, I \_\_\_\_\_ will be attending the Melfa weekend on the 23rd - 25th of May 1997. I will be participating in the following:

Friday 23 May Russian Sub Tour \_\_\_\_\_  
Fraser River Fort Langley Adventure Cruise \_\_\_\_\_  
Fraser River Sunset Cruise \_\_\_\_\_  
Golf Tournament Number attending \_\_\_\_\_ x \$35.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Irving House Tour \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday 24 May Brunch at the old CPR Station \_\_\_\_\_  
Muster & mount WWII vehicles & participate in parade \_\_\_\_\_  
Attend Melfa Dinner . Number in party \_\_\_\_\_ times \$40.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday 25 May Attend brunch at the Armoury. \_\_\_\_\_

Note: You must send in money for Golf Tournament and Dinner. Address on reverse side.



# 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

### Friday, May, 23

Activity	Time	Where	Cost
1. Golf Tournament	11:00 am	Delta Golf Course 11550 Ladner Trunk Road Delta (604) 594-1414	\$35.00 per golfer. Carts \$15.00 Contact Chuck Smithers 936-7328 or Dick Armstrong (604) 581-6373
2. Russian Sub Tour	2 pm	Westminster Quay	\$5.00 (Plus GST)
3. Fraser River Boat Cruises			
a. Ft. Langley Adventure	10:00 am to 5 pm	Dep Westminster Quay	Seniors \$43.95 Adults \$48.95
b. Sunset Cruise	7 pm to 10:00 pm	Westminster Quay	Seniors \$ 43.95 Adults \$48.95
4. Irving House Tour	11:00 am	Irving House	
5. Sunset Ceremony R Westmr R	8 pm	New Westminster Quay	No Charge Times are tentative

### Saturday, May 24

**1. 0830 hrs - meet at the old CPR Station.** The City of New Westminster and Hyack are honouring our veterans and the association. It is intended to have veterans lead the parade in WWII vintage vehicles. The committee is requesting that all who take part in the parade meet at the old CPR station on Columbia Street, now a Keg Restaurant, where at 0830 hrs a brunch has been arranged for us. There is charge of \$15.00 per head for this brunch. Guests are invited. From the Keg Restaurant, members will receive a Police Escort to the parade starting point (approximately 1015 hrs).

**2. Hyack Parade.** "New Westminster to Salute our Veterans" parade starts 1100 am. Dismiss at Armoury & arrangements will be made to take you back to Keg Restaurant.

**3. Melfa Dinner - Royal Towers Hotel.** Cocktails 1800 hrs dinner at 1900 hrs. Cost: \$40.00 per person. Serving Bn Jr Ranks \$25.00 (Various in house fundraising efforts by the serving battalion have raised funds which have been applied to all Jr Ranks dinner tickets).

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

There is no charge for this function, but you can be sure that the regimental catering staff will put on a magnificent meal.

### Accommodation

**Melfa Chairman Chuck Mackinnon** has provided the following information regarding local hotel accommodation (The Royal Towers Hotel is fully booked).

**Hotel bookings. You must act quickly.** (Special rates, must book before 23 Apr).

Westminster Quay  
Chelsea Best Western Inn  
Best Western on Kingsway

Let Us Know if You are coming to Melfa 97, tell us how many are in your party and which events you will attend. Finally, send us money soonest. See page 7 for your return. Send it to us.

### Groundsheet Contributions

Do you want to say something or have a photograph published? Any item of interest pertaining to the regiment or association will be appreciated. This newsletter belongs to the membership. A unique wartime experience would be something we could use. Please help us make it a better product with each publication.

## Westies' Correspondent - Ron Hurley

Words received from **Chuck Morwood** of Salmon Arm, BC. Enjoyed your remarks re our beloved C Coy O.C. **Ian Douglas**. Your memento re Ian inspection C Coy viz. his habit of going behind tipping a man's hat forward with his swagger stick, announcing firmly, "HAIR CUT." Indeed he was a man a cut above. These are fond memories and I share your thoughts completely....A change of address from Assn. stalwart **Ted Burnby**, now of 5284 Vernon, BC. Thanks Ted, your assn. need information like that.....To **Anne Wray** stating she will also miss the April 5th ceremonies. Off to England for a wedding. Enjoy Anne. You will receive GS as long as you are interested. You will get some back copies of Feb. 1997. How many do you wish? Let us know. .... A special note from long time friend of 60 yrs and counting. **Fred Evans**. Sorry to hear of your medical troubles-I can empathize with you Freddie viz. the last six yrs. Just think it has been 58 yrs. since Aug 26, 1939, we guarded The Rail Road Bridge as part of a detachment for B.C.D.'s. Did a grand job too; it's there still. Citizens of Prince George could rest easy knowing we were there. Get well Fred, that's an order....Appreciation to **Eileen Drummond** for nice donation re late husband.....Word from **Ben Vaughn**--No need to apologize Ben, we are glad to have you back; Sincere condolences Ben and family on the loss of your son. Most tragic.....An emotional note and donation from **Nellie Smith** on behalf of her late husband Tommy. Thank you Nellie. It is most heart warming that you and many other wives and or families keep responding -- Often sometimes for many years after the death of a loved one.....By way of Antigonish Nova Scotia, a most interesting letter from **George Bayne**. Your comments re the camaraderie of **THE WESTIES** note that you were that you were seriously wounded in Feb 1944. Personally, I received a rather dangerous 'Blighty', on Dec 14, 1944. For me WW2 was over. Went through numerous hospitals from Italy to U.K. and later after 8 months back to Canada via stretcher all the way. Nice to hear from you and I guess you and I are the 'True Survivors.'..... An interesting and warm letter from **Mrs. Gordon Higgonson** who tells us "What a wrench it was to give up house and particularly the park like lawns, trees, flowers etc." It had been Gordon who devoted much of his life to achieve it. Nice to know that you have relocated and are near many friends. We wish you well also for the Dues Donation in Gord's memory.... Dues an a letter from **Bruce Hardy** of Burnaby...**Wilfred Tyo** writes that the only information he can provide is that **David Tyo** has been deceased for 2 years. Thanks for your effort Wilf.....Donation from **Bill Lenaghan** re the Konowal/Mahony plaque. Your thoughts are most aptly expressed... A nice note from this years Vimy Rep **Joe Strawson**. We are sure you will be a fine representative at the Hallowed Vimy Shrine. Enjoy and bring back some photos...Thanks to **Doug Morgan**. I can assure you that your queries will be addressed...Appreciation to **Mike Kedziora**. Sends best wishes and regrets he will be unable to attend April 5th, 1997 I recall you from my early residence in Penticton. Hope you improve.....From **Ruth Hume** of Kelowna sends dues, donation in memory of **Murray Hume**. Ruth, my Ruth is fine now, nursing this old crock....Thanks to Harold Searle and your complete Medical Dossier information. Re your father's service with 47th Bn in World War I is most interesting. End.

## In Memoriam

Bill Baker .....	The Royal Westminster Regiment
Robert Benson .....	Westminster Regiment (M) W.W.2
Ken Gamage .....	Westminster Regiment (M) W.W.2
Paul Scott .....	The Royal Westminster Regiment
Les Thompson .....	Westminster Regiment (M) W.W.2

### Memories

**Art Castle a member of Corporal Filip Konowal's Section. Says he is alive today because of his brave section leader. Art fought at Vimy, where he was wounded in the knee. He was sent to England to recover and that is where he met his bride, one of the nurses who treated him. In six weeks, Art Castle will have lived a century.**

**Here is a marching song he recalled from his service with the 47th bn.**

**We are the fighting 47th  
 We never stay behind  
 We hit the front line Hun  
 While some stay with the bread line bums.  
 We are the fighting 47th  
 We never stay behind.**

**Remember to send in your return for Melfa 97. If you are not able to attend and would like to tell a story of the early days of the association, we would appreciate it very much. Our next issue of the Groundsheet will present a photo overview of the commemorative plaque unveiling honoring Filip Konowal and John Keefer 'Jack' Mahony which occurred on 5 April 97**