

VOLUME 98 / ISSUE 2

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, BC V3L 4Z8

April, 1998

• England

Holland

•
New Westminster

Hitler Line

Liri Valley

Melfa River

Casino

Griffin Force

5th Armoured Div.

Melfa 98

Executive

President	Fred West	# 16 - 3397 Hastings Street, Port Coquitlam, BC	V3B 4M8	942-6275
Past President	Jerry Gangur	2015 Hyannis Drive, North Vancouver, BC	V7H 2E5	929-5785
Hon Treasurer	Vernon Ardagh	3689 Nico Wynd Drive, Surrey, BC	V4P 1J1	535-9093
Secretary	Herb Hamm	163 - 1140 Castle Cres. , Port Coquitlam, BC	V3C 5R3	941-3565
Assistant Editor	Ron Hurley	2229 Bonnyvale Avenue, Vancouver, BC	V5P 2G4	321-8464
Editor	Jerry Gangur	2015 Hyannis Drive, North Vancouver, BC	V7H 2E5	929-5785

Editor's Corner

Throughout our lifetime, events occur that may not seem significant at the time but upon reflection, years later we regard these happenings as milestones and use them as reference points in our own lives. The passing away, this February of **Walter Lyle**, the first president of the Association marks a milestone. Here was a soldier, home from the war, elected by his peers to be their spokesman in a new organization which was formed out of the camaraderie of men who wanted to keep that spirit alive, somehow. Walter occupied that office, served his time and then continued on for many years as a Director. It is worth noting that there was a run off for the office of president between Walter and **Nelson Scott**. While waiting together in the wings for the election results, they agreed that whoever came second would be appointed secretary. Nelson served admirably as secretary and later as our president and again later as our secretary. I have had the privilege of working with these two men and having

ingrained in me some of the values they both wish see kept alive. It was the associations first secretary who phoned me on my retirement as C.O. to ask if I would serve as his secretary. One year led to four and I was hooked. From secretary to director to president to editor, all because of those men who started it all.

One of the decisions taken by the association at its' formative meeting was to disregard rank within the association organization. "Leave your rank badges at the door" was a good decision as it leveled the playing field and encouraged all ranks to accept elected positions.

The future seems to be bright for the association and we are finding individuals willing to support the underlying reasons for our existence. The veterans lived the story and it is up to those who followed to tell the story.

To all who supported us over the years thank you. We continue to need your support in so many ways, so keep writing and attending our activities as best you can. **Ed. JNG**

Annual General Meeting

President's Report - Fred West

The first fifty years of activity for The Royal Westminster Regiment is now HISTORY and we are now about to begin our second fifty years of operation! I trust it will be every bit as exciting and successful as the last 50 years. I have been lucky enough to enjoy many sociable occasions with old wartime comrades as well as meeting and becoming acquainted with the younger veterans and members of the Regiment.

I have the greatest regard for the Association Executive that had the foresight and fortitude to carry on over the formative years of this Association. I guess every year is a formative one if changes and obstacles have anything to do with it, there is always new challenges and I would like to think that will always be so. I have heard of the many trials and tribulations the old timers had to contend with and they did a very fine job and deserve commendation for their time and effort. I was not a member of the Executive until very recently so I am not one of the old timers that I speak of, I did enjoy the results of their efforts though, and I am sure the younger members will also reap some benefits too.

We held a memorial service for our first President several weeks ago, and there has been several other memorials for the old timers in the last year or so, the old soldiers are gradually fading away but their deeds and memories live on. The younger generation will carry on and a

do a very commendable and gratifying job. I have had the pleasure of working with a number of them in the last *several* years and it has been a great joy and pleasure. I am confident they will handle the job very well. In the years ahead they will be able to look back with pride and satisfaction at a job well done and receive their plaudits too.

We had two other member groups in our Association. The Toronto Group have folded, they ran out of members that were able to carry on, the Chilliwack group known as D Coy Association are so few now that activities are very few as well. I have enjoyed their picnics over the years as many of you have, and I thought their flag and roll call ceremonies were very sentimental and impressive- that is also memory lane now. There will be new activities and the Association will enjoy another fifty years of fun and frolic I am sure.

Our effort for the next year is mostly planning a preparing for future activities and assistance for the Museum, the Cadets and the Regiment, as well as perpetuating the comradeship that has been prevalent in the wars as well as in peace. Fraternaly, - Fred West

Commanding Officer's Report

LCol. R. Lee (C.O. on exercise - report prepared and delivered by Lt. Randy McBryan)

Unit Strength/Organization. Unit strength continues to be a strong feature of the Regiment. Effective strength has increased to 170. we expect this to be over 200 following the spring/summer recruiting



season. We have reestablished A Coy HQ, as the company is parading two well manned platoons. B Coy is parading a full strength platoon in Aldergrove. Adm Coy is growing with some additional support troops. Garrison/recruit Coy has nearly a platoon of recruits on the ground already.

Training. During spring last year members of the Bn were deployed to Ft. Lewis Washington on Exercise Cougar Salvo '97. There our soldiers and leaders earned our platoon an "excellent" performance rating as they were assessed in platoon level offensive operations. April and May were devoted mainly to ceremonial duties with the Victoria Cross plaque unveiling, and New Westminster's Hyack festivities. Two of our soldiers, Cpl. Carr (Adm Coy - QM and Cpl. Fuller (A Coy rifleman), were undergoing work-up training for peacekeeping duties in Bosnia when the "Flood of the Century" hit Manitoba last spring. They were deployed to the region as part of the largest Canadian Military operation since Korea. You may recall the Province newspaper front-page photograph of Cpl Carr (Westie cap badge prominently displayed pitching in on a sandbag chain.

Since the summer Field Training Exercises (FTXs) have been progressing from section to coy in field defensive operations with Thursday evening sessions used for pre/post exercise drills and training. Included in the training were: individual battle skills review/testing, rappelling, weapons proficiency testing and earthquake response training.

At end-January the unit hosted this year's brigade Sr. NCO training weekend and Mess Dinner. The day-staff WOs and Sr. NCOs did a great job of preparing the armory for this informative and valuable gathering as did

their mess committee for the dinner that followed.

The Battalion was deployed to FT. Lewis Wash. over the 13-23 Mar 98 period on this year's 39 Bde Gp Exercise Cougar Salvo. For this exercise several Bde Infantry units combined and organized into a Bn (-) with two rifle coys and some support elements, all under Westie Bn command. Our unit coordinated the infantry branch training and the two weekend evaluation exercises that took place during the 10-day deployment. The exercises, assessed at section and platoon level, included: (14-15 Mar) occupation and preparation of coy defensive positions, conduct of the def battle in a delaying operation, and conduct of the withdrawal to a coy RV; and (21-22 Mar) a Bde controlled all-arms defensive (delaying) operation in which "our" Bn (-) task consisted largely of two bridge demolition guards. The infantry branch training (16-20 Mar) for those who could stay through the week consisted of: personal weapon firing/testing day and ni, helicopter night insertion live fire ambush patrols, live fire GPMG Pl static def posn by day and ni under simulated smoke and HE bombardment, a Bde sports day and a section shooting competition on a 3-D computerized range.

Community Involvement. The unit continues to do well in maintaining a strong community presence. The armory is always in high demand for use by community agencies. The city police alone held several functions in the armory including their recent 125th anniversary mess dinner 7 Mar 98. Remembrance Day was well attended by the public who, as usual, filled the armory floor for the ceremony. Mrs. Freda Hogg delivered a fine presentation as the guest speaker, relating

her memories as a serviceman's wife during the war years.

Just prior to Christmas stand-down the Unit conducted an earthquake response exercise, where several civilian community agencies were again invited to take part in the training. The "civics" love it! The quality of the instruction, enthusiasm, training aids, and exercise scenarios are old hat for us, but "high speed" for most of our guests.

This was somewhat of a banner year for our unit's community involvement at Christmas time. The last Groundsheet describes our efforts and results with the Santa Fox Food Drive, and the New Westminster Christmas Bureau. Recently Cpl Fuller returned safely from his NATO peacekeeping tour in the former Yugoslavia where he was attached to an armoured regiment for the duration. (I'm hoping he will submit an article to the Groundsheet about his tour). He returned with recommendations for promotion ASAP and he has been priority listed for his ISCC (Infantry Section Commander Course).

Congratulations are in order for two notable promotions in the Battalion. Maj. Glen Richmond (promoted at the Mens Christmas Dinner 13 Dec 97) is the first senior officer the unit has produced totally from within in the last 15+ years. He is course qualified to Colonel. MWO Rob Gilmour was promoted at the CO's parade 11 Sep 97. He had already been CSM a Coy the rank to guide other NCOs (and Junior officers) in their duties and responsibilities.

The planned spring change-of-command ceremony is now postponed until the fall. It is expected to take place in the armoury sometime in September when our DCO Maj. Mark Fisher will take command of the Regiment as LCol Bob Lee steps down as the commanding officer (Banquet TBC; and 23 May Hyack Parade), and 30 May Regimental reunion TBC.

after a busy five-year term. Other upcoming activities include: the Hyack festivities (18 May Anvil Bty Salute; 20 May, May Day Banquet TBC. and 23 May Hyack Pde), NS 30 May Regimental reunion TBC. End.

Note: Apologies go out to the Assn. membership for the short (three-day) notice of venue change for the AGM to the JR Ranks Club. The armoury floor was being used to film a movie titled, Snow Falling on Cedars. We knew the set would occupy the floor during the week days, and that this should not have affected the meeting, but we too had short notice of their intent to "shoot" on the Thursday evening. We trust and hope that no-one missed the AGM because of this and apologize for any inconvenience. C.O.

Financial Report - Presented by

Prepared by Vern Ardagh Herb Hamm

Balance Sheet as of 31 Dec. 1997

<u>Assets</u>	<u>Liabilities</u>	
Bank - \$ 1,769.07	Due to Van Foundation	\$ 37.24
Petty Cash 1,000.00	Mahony Booklet	100.00
	<u>Surplus a/c</u>	
	Forward 1 Jan 97	1,748.59
	Net Income for year	<u>883.24</u> <u>2,631.83</u>
\$2,769.07		\$2,769.07

Statement of Income & Expenses

<u>Income</u>		
Dues	\$ 900.00	
Life Memberships	750.00	
Bank Interest	42.13	
Donations	2,260.00	
Melfa Acquittance Roll	550.00	
Income - Vancouver Foundation	2,374.39	
Sale : CD VC Plaque ceremony	<u>22.00</u>	<u>6,898.52</u>
<u>Expenditures</u>		
Administration, tel, postage	320.92	
Groundsheet		
Preparation/mailling -	637.00	
Printing	2,585.70	
Postage, envelopes	<u>688.00</u>	<u>3,010.70</u>
Melfa	1,583.66	
Cadets	<u>200.00</u>	<u>6,015.28</u>
Income/Expenses	\$	883.24

Budget- Presented by Fred West

Income

Donations	\$ 2,000.
Dues	2,000.
Income Van Foundation	2,500
Melfa Dinner	3,000.
Melfa Golf	1,500.
Life Memberships	<u>500.</u>

\$11,500.

Expenditures

Admin	1,400.
Regiment	500.
Change over dinner	400.
Poppy Fund	200.
Groundsheet	3,700.
Melfa Dinner	3,000.
Golf	1,000.
Misc.	<u>500.</u>

\$ 11,500.

Groundsheet - Jerry Gangur

Production of our newsletter continues to go well. Some members have sent in photos and items which they offered for publication. It appears that the Fall issue is a good time for passing on these kind of memories and I will try to keep to this commitment.

We will continue to produce 3 issues each year and trust that the information enclosed is what you like to receive. Ron Hurley continues to contribute in his column. For those who have written to me, thank you for the compliments. You provide the fuel to keep me going. Sincerely. **JNG**

VC Plaque Unveiling - JNG

On April 5, 1997 The RWRA together with other organizations across Canada unveiled a trilingual plaque outside the armoury in New Westminster, honoring the regiment's two Victoria Cross recipients. Guests of Honor included, Volodymyr Furkalo, Ukraine's Ambassador to Canada, Mr. Justice John Sopinka, the Supreme Court of Canada and the Deputy Comd. LFWA, BGen. Ken Quinn. The plaque unveiling was followed by a commemorative dinner with Mr. Justice John Sopinka being our guest speaker. The budget for the unveiling project was in excess of \$28,000.00 and with good planning and good fortune our regimental association was not required to dip into our funds to meet budget requirements.

Joining us in this project were a number of organizations/individuals who deserve to be singled out. RCL Branch 183, located in Montreal, RCL Branch 360 (Konowal Branch) in Toronto, the Hon. Lt.Col GGFG, Maj. Gen. Bob LaRose, and Professor (RMC) Lubomyr Lluuik. Locally, I must thank Roy Lisogar, owner of the Royal Towers hotel, who paid for the construction of the cairn housing the plaque, Julia Stashuk and members of the clergy from New Westminster. Special mention also goes to Art Castle, the centurion, who served in the 47th bn. and says he is alive today because of he actions of our first VC recipient, Filip Konowal. Joining us from the second war at the ceremony was Jimmy Wilson (age 94) and present at the action when our second VC recipient, Jack Mahony received his award. Finally, thanks to Harley of Rogers Cable who video taped and edited the unveiling ceremony. The unveiling ceremony was shown on public service community TV stations in New York, New Jersey, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Victoria, Kelowna and Vancouver. A number of Government agencies requested and were supplied with a copy of the historic video. Overall, a great achievement on the part of our Association.

Video Orders

For those who ordered videos, we will be forwarding them to you shortly. Cost \$22.00 cheque payable to RWRA.

Future Fund- Jerry Gangur

Progress todate



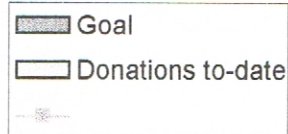
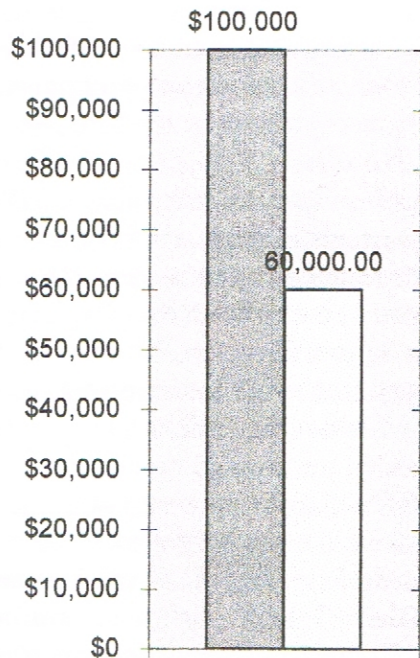
Our goal of establishing a fund to provide an income in perpetuity for future executives of our association was set at \$100,000. As Fred West stated, we did not envision or expect to have anything interfere with this project. Since the establishment of the Future Fund, in the Fall of 1993, we have had to divert our energies to deal with three 50th anniversaries and a VC Plaque unveiling. At this point, it seems that we can revisit, uninterrupted, our original undertaking and do all we can to achieve the objective set some five years ago.

We invite all members to consider making your association the beneficiary of your charitable donation for 1998.

Your executive is examining ways, other than direct donations, of raising funds for the future fund. We have applied for a casino license and if approved, we will need volunteers to help out in the casino location.

Your association has already benefited from the principle deposited with Vancouver Foundation.

For three years we have received an income in excess of \$2,000. annually from the funds. Our association *needed* that income to meet budget requirements. Your assistance is needed and much appreciated.



Election of Officers

President - Fred West Vice-Pres. - Len Wolgemuth
Directors Gary Brooks ♦ Pete Collins ♦ Mike Kelly ♦ Al Morton
Pat Hyska ♦ Brian Woodcock

Note: President West will appoint two directors.

The Regiment

Looking back.....

Capt C. MacKinnon, CD

The majority of you are probably aware that the first military unit in New Westminster (Sapperton) was the **Royal Engineers**. As well as, you might know that the Royal Engineers probably were a factor in the formation of the following military units: new **Westminster Rifles Corps, Number 1 Company**; the **Seymour Artillery Company** and the **Home Guards**. That the Engineers had an influence on **The Royal Westminster Regiment** and the **City of New Westminster's** heritage would be an understatement.

While conducting some research, I have discovered some other information about the Royal Engineers. Firstly, the Royal Engineers were not the very first British military unit to the area. Captain **James Cook** and his crew of Royal Navy personnel and Royal Marines aboard **H.M.S. Discovery** had sailed into the area, in 1778. Secondly, the **Royal Engineers** were not the first army unit either. The Spanish had a settlement, at Nootka, on Vancouver Island, in 1789. One of the **Spanish** units could be credited as being the first militia unit in the area. Finally, the Royal Engineers in Sapperton were not the only Royal Engineers in the North West area.

Royal Engineers were dispatched to both colonies on the North West Coast. A detachment was sent to Fort Victoria in the Vancouver Island Colony. While two detachments were sent to the mainland Colony. First the **Boundary Commission** and then the **Columbia detachment**.

The Boundary Commission was derived from the Oregon Boundary Treaty of 1846. The treaty established the United States and Canadian (British North America) border at the 49th parallel from the Continental Divide westward.

British and US authorities finally met in 1857. The US Survey detachment arrived at Fort Victoria on the 22nd of June 1858 (with 4 infantry companies - approx. 400 personnel). The majority of the British Boundary Commission arrived in Fort Victoria on the 13th of July 1858 (with 63 personnel - the remainder came with the Columbia detachment).

The Commissions then surveyed and cleared a ½ mile wide strip of land to mark the border. At Point Roberts, Wash, USA a cairn was erected to indicate the start point of the border on the mainland. The cairn was provided by Mr. E Brown of New Westminster, BC The two commissions surveyed 400 miles of border from Point Roberts to the Continental Divide. Only 190 miles of the border was cleared. The US line, the British line and an agreed upon line by both surveyors which is equal distance between the two other borders.

The objective of the Columbia detachment was set out by the British Colonial Secretary of State, Sir **Edward B. Lytton**. Sir Edward B. Lytton stated "the force was sent for scientific and

Regiment (cont)

practical purposes and not solely military purposes.” Furthermore, the Engineers were to ensure to set up an infrastructure i.e. roads, government, churches etc. , so that, “the colony of British Columbia shall be self supporting and the land sales would help to off set the costs of the Royal Engineers”.

The Columbia detachment of 7 officers, 12 Senior NCOs and 128 men arrived on 5 ships in 1858. The Sappers departed from Plymouth and arrived aboard the ships: *La Plata*; *Arato*; *Thames City*; and *Euphartes*. The Commanding Officer - Colonel **Richard Clement Moody** arrived on the *Asia* on Christmas day, in 1858. Thirty-nine of the sappers came with their families and brought thirty-four children to the new colony. Later, three “**Bride ships**” were sent to bring spouses for the Sappers.

From 1858 to there disbandment in 1863, the Royal Engineers left a distinctive footprint in British Columbia. The Royal Engineers surveyed man settlements such as: Vancouver, New Westminister, Hope and Barkerville. They completed a road network from as far east as Rock Creek to as far north as Barkerville. They also established a route to Bella Coola and not one but two routes through and around the Fraser Canyon. However, the RE achievements came with a price. The Columbia detachment had become too expensive to operate. The land sales had not offset the costs for the REs to operated. Beside the economic cost, 15 Sappers had lost their lives (8 deserters) in the Engineer endeavors.

On the 10th of November 1863 an announcement in the newspaper the **British Columbian** called for the “participation of the inhabitants to attend a meeting to form a volunteer Rifle Corps.” On the 14th of November 1863, the 22 returning Royal Engineers departed New Westminister aboard the *Enterprise* and the *Chamelon*. On the 21st of Nov. 1863, Governor **Douglas** gave the inhabitants permission to for the **New Westminister Rifle Corps, Number 1 Company**. The Colonial Secretary of State in England did not approve this Rifle Company until February of 1864.

Records indicate that of, the Royal Engineers that remained. That six sappers became part of the Rifle Company. Four sappers eventually became part of the Seymour Artillery Company and at least 1 sapper was involved with the Hyack Fire Company. The Royal Engineers not only helped to establish British Columbia but also helped it to evolve. They provided a foundation for the Community and a militia. ♣


Membership Roster

We continue to maintain a current membership rooster, together with telephone numbers. At the present time, the current list of members is being loaded into a new computer program. It is planned that by the Fall we will be in a position to forward a membership rooster to any member requesting same. If you know of some who has moved or is not receiving the Groundsheet, drop us a note. “**Keep in touch, so we can keep in touch.**”

MELFA - 98

May 22, 23 & 24

<u>Day</u>	<u>Item</u>
Friday May 22	Golfing at the Delta Golf course. Cost \$35. per golfer Tee Off: 9:00 am Refreshments on 19th hole.
Saturday May 23	Things to do while you are here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 9:00 am - Breakfast at the Keg. Cost: Individual Bills Location: Old CPR Station in New Westminster. (Down by the Quay) ◆ Tour of Russian Foxtrot Class Sub U521. Time: 12:00 am - 1:00 pm ◆ Dinner: 6 pm to midnight. Royal Towers Hotel Cost: \$40 per person
Sunday May 24	10:00 am - 1:00 pm - Brunch - Armoury, Officer's Mess



Let Us know
Your Plans

Accommodation: Royal Towers Hotel Limited Space. First come first serve.

Reservations: Toll Free 1-800-663-0202

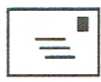
Note: Cut off for special reservation room rate: May 12, 1998

Message to local fellows: Some of our members come from great distances and often remark on the low number of local boys in attendance. Local boys - this the only opportunity to meet a large number of comrades who would not normally come to New Westminster. Make the effort to attend this year and make someone happy because you are there.

Assistant Editor

Ron Hurley

Ron reports that correspondence has been dwindling to a trickle and that aside from some notes dealing with our In Memoriam notice, he has nothing to report. Surely, there are many stories out there that need to be told. Would like to hear from you.



Presidents - Can You Help?

When our amended constitution is published, it is our intention to include some information concerning the history of our association. In this regard, a list of our presidents is being compiled. We **know** who the presidents were in the 1970's, 80's and 90's. We believe the following served as presidents in the years noted. Can you fill in the blanks? Write to Editor.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Name</u>
1947-48	<u>Walter Lyle</u>	1960-61	_____
1948-49	<u>Walter Lyle</u>	1961-62	_____
1949-50	<u>Tommy Foreman</u>	1962-63	_____
1950-51	_____	1963-64	<u>John Hou</u>
1951-52	_____	1964-65	<u>John Hou</u>
1952-53	_____	1965-66	_____
1953-54	_____	1966-67	<u>Ron Hurley</u>
1954-55	_____	1967-68	<u>Ron Hurley</u>
1955-56	_____	1968-69	<u>Nelson Scott</u>
1956-57	_____	1969-70	<u>Nelson Scott</u>

Some of the names that might apply are: Bill Williams, Stan Moorhouse, Art Miller, Walter Tyler, Bob Carter, Bert Hoskin, Bruce Eaton, Gordon Rennie, Tom Hall, Ernie Dayton, John Rosso. Check your old Groundsheets or even reach back in your memory bank. Your help will be much appreciated. Write the Editor.

Proxy Returns: Over sixty of our members responded to our request for proxies for our AGM. To you, we express our thanks and want you to know that your gesture does a lot for morale. Thank you comrades.



IN MEMORIAM _____

Stan Bishop Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. 2
 Walter Lyle Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. 2

Melfa Return.

It helps so much if we know who is coming to our Melfa Events. Need to order food and make all the necessary arrangements to ensure you have the best of times.

Complete and Mail your Melfa
Return Today.

Also Book Your Hotel Room Early.

Dues

Our budget requires the income from the dues we receive annually. We would like to hear from you.



Our book of records shows that not all dues have been paid.

Groundsheet Contributions

We welcome photographs and stories that would be of interest to the general membership in future issues of our newsletter. If you have been recognized by any organization in anyway, we'd like to know. If you know of someone who has accomplished something significant, do let us know. Finally if one of our members is on sick call, please let us know and our sick & visiting committee will contact him/her.