

Volume 99 / Issue 2

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

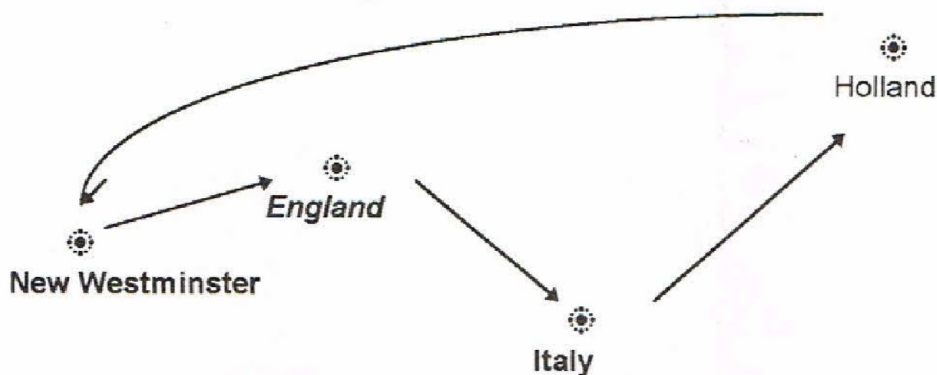
THE ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 854 NEW WESTMINSTER, BC V3L 4Z8

April, 1999

Melfa 99

May 28, 29 & 30

Last Dinner of the Millenium



Golf

Dinner

Brunch

Executive

President	Len Wholgemuth	534 Ailsa Avenue, Port Moody, BC	V3H 1A6	415-6000
Past-Pres.	Fred West	# 16 - 3397 Hastings Street, Port Coquitlam, BC	V3B 4M8	942-6275
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 Jerry N, Gangur

It appears that a new generation of members is well motivated and prepared to accept the awesome responsibility of continuing moral and financial support of the regiment and elements of the regimental family. In addition to these tasks, there is the more difficult obligation, that of preservation the history of the deeds accomplished by members of the regiment in their service to the nation.

Our museum is one of the finest in the nation and will require a colossal effort in terms of resources and manpower to continue telling the regiment's story. Some members who helped create the history we are preserving are still around and helping out in the museum, but like the larger than life **George Hughes**, many are failing to answer roll call. We continue to be grateful to **Basil Morgan**

for the many hours he devotes to the museum. If the regiment holds an event open to the public, Basil is there greeting visitors.

Canada at War....Who would have thought this possible in 1999!..... Some may have forgotten, but our regiment has sent more than a platoon in total over a period of time to serve in some area of the Balkans... It looks very much that our boys may be asked to participate again.

Judging from the commanding officer's reports, our regiment is performing well. **Major Mark Fisher**, says this is important as regiments across Canada have been under intensive evaluation and scrutiny over the last three years. If and when a decision is made to reduce or eliminate units we hope that our superior performance will result in uninterrupted service for our regiment.... Best wishes to all.

JNG

President's Report - Fred West

I am greatly honored to have been your President for the last three years! The job was not always easy, but we got through it and achieved our objective, I think.

The first year was very busy, we took on the job of building a memorial cairn and providing a bronze Plaque in Honor of our V.C. winners. There was a lot of planning to do, since Sgt. Konowal was a Ukrainian immigrant, the Ukrainian community was very interested and very generous with financial help as were several Legions and some individuals. I thank them all very graciously and look forward to further association with them. The Governor General's Foot Guards have the same bronze Plaque in their armoury.

We did not always have the same co-operation from some members of the so called Regimental Family, but I thank those who came on parade and made a very nice showing at the consecration ceremony. I was a member of Jack Mahony's Company and was able to witness the winning of a Victoria Cross, something I never ever dreamed of, so to be able to be of some assistance in providing the Memorial was a second pleasant surprise and experience for me.

The **Future Fund** was Jerry Gangur's idea and a damn good one in my opinion. When he took the chair and asked for volunteers to join the Future Fund Committee, I volunteered. After the cessation of hostilities in 1945, I said I would never volunteer again, but here I am. I think the future fund was very necessary for this Association and I thank all those who have made a contribution to that fund. It is approaching **\$60,000.00** and I hope it will continue to grow. The objective is \$100,000.00, so we still need donations, contributions, benefactions, grants, gifts - well money is what I am getting around to.

The whole purpose of the Future Fund is the ongoing life of this Association. Regiments can disappear at the whim of Politicians, but the Association will have a life of its own, or a hereafter,. It can go on forever, of course somewhere down the road it may need more than a hundred thousand dollars. Money seems to have a habit of shrinking in value, so therefore it is an "ongoing challenge."

This Association becomes a very sentimental to old soldiers. Comradeship is nurtured in the Army, especially where danger exists. I always enjoy coming to Association functions and having a visit with an old comrade or two especially on Remembrance Day, not only to visit old comrades but also to remember those that gave their all and weren't to come home and reminisce with us. Thank you again. I have been very honored to be your President.
Good Luck and a good future!

Annual General Meeting

① Financial Statement for the year ending December 31, 1998

Balance Sheet

Assets		Liabilities	
Cash	2,990.79	Mahony Booklet	100.00
Petty Cash	1,000.00 (1)	Surplus account	
Acc Rec	100.00	Fwd	2,631.83
		See below	<u>1,358.96</u>
	<u>4,090.79</u>		<u>3,990.79</u>
			<u>4,090.79</u>

Statement of Income & Expenses

Income			
Dues		873.00	
Life membership		150.00	
Donations		2,905.00	
Bank Interest		39.70	
Vancouver Foundation		3,078.74	
Sales Video		55.00	
Late Rev '97 VC Ceremony		25.00	7,126.44
			<u>7,126.44</u>
Expenditures			
Expenditures		174.31	
P.O. Box rental		186.18	
Membership Cards		285.00	
Wreath RC Legion		110.00	
Legal Report & By Law Amendment		81.44	
Melfa		1,685.59	
Groundsheet			
Prep /mailing		938.70	
Printing	1,995.00		
Less Donation	500.00	1,495.00	
Postage/envelopes		691.26	3,124.96
Sick & Visiting		120.00	5,767.48
			<u>5,767.48</u>
Excess of Revenue/Expenditure			1,358.96

Notes to financial Statement:

- (1) This is to fund the first issue of the 1999 Groundsheet.
- (2) We have submitted a total of \$52,337.24 to Vancouver Foundation

② Budget 1999

Income	1998	1999
(Where known actual figures inserted)		
Donations	2,905.	2,000.
Dues	873.	2,000.
Interest (V.F)	3,078.	2,500.
Melfa Dinner	3,000.	3,000.
Melfa Golf	800.	800.
Life Membership	150.	500.
Gaming Funds	00.	9,000.
	<u>\$10,806</u>	<u>\$19,500.</u>

Expenditures

Administration	852.	500.
Regiment	0.	500.
Cadets	800.	6,000.
Change over dinner	0.	0.
Poppy Fund	110.	200.
Groundsheet	3,624.	4,000.
Melfa Dinner	3,000.	3,000.
Golf	800.	500.
Sick & Visiting	120.	3,000.
Misc.	500.	500.
Van. Foundation	1,000.	1,300.
	<u>\$10,806.</u>	<u>\$19,500.</u>

③ Sick & Visiting

Our sick & visiting representative at George Derby, **Doug Glenn**, reports that **Jimmy Wilson** entered the facility and his presence has added some sparkle to the atmosphere. Others staying at George Derby include **Ethel Johnstone**. Ethel we understand that life is very difficult for you now and we want you to know that we are thinking of you. **Walter Jackson**, another resident, appeared to be in good shape on Nov. 11. Look forward to next get together. **Bill Thorinson**, we say hello to you also. .. Our man **Doug Glenn** is also under the weather. He has recovered from his aneurysm operation, but now he has other problems. Our best wishes go out to you. **Jack Hartley** tells us his health is not the best and he always has to have an oxygen supply handy ... Telephoned **Scotty Low** today and he reports that he is nearly blind and has to have someone read the Groundsheet to him. **Nelson Scott** is slowing down. To all Westies we extend our best wishes.....Editor

News Item: Our WWI Vet **Art Castle**, now into his 102nd year, received a special award from the French Government. Check next few pages for details.

④ **Melfa Weekend**

May 28, 29 & 30

May 28 - Delta **Golf** Course
11550 Ladner Trunk Road
Delta (Hwy 10 & No. 91)

Cost: \$35.00 per Golfer
(Includes lunch 19th hole)

May 29 **Dinner**

Cocktails: 6:00

Dinner: 6:45

Cost: \$30.00 per person

Where? Holy Eucharist
Ukrainian Catholic Church
501 - 4th Avenue
New Westminster, BC

Note: Wheelchair access from 5th Street. Go down ramp to underground. Door opens to Hall.

May 30 **Brunch.** Armoury
10 am to 1 pm

Help Us Plan

Use stuffer to tell us if you are coming to Melfa. Enclose money and forward to our post office address.

⑤ **Groundsheet** Jerry Gangur

Publication of the Groundsheet continues at the pace of three issues annually, namely in February, April and October. The February issue is timed to notify the membership of the AGM and outlines the activities planned for the Melfa Weekend. The October issue precedes Remembrance Day. Each issue contains 12 pages.

The cost of production cost of each newsletter includes; preparation for printer, printing, mailing & imprinting of envelopes and can be broken down as follows:

Preparation for printing	\$ 300.00
Printing	650.00
Mailing	200.00
Imprinting envelopes	150.00

We continue to encourage the serving battalion to fill four pages of each issue with items of current activities. Any description of activities, both home & abroad would be appreciated.

To WWII veterans, we continue to call for the recording of your experiences during your time in service. Any incident, humorous or otherwise that affect you would be appreciated.

Finally, I continue to deem it an honor and a privilege to be your editor and pray that the newsletter continues to be of value to you.

⑥ **Motion Approved**
Change of Date of
Annual General Meeting

The following motion was approved at the Annual General Meeting:

Be it resolved that the date of the annual general meeting and the election of officers be held on the Sunday of the Melfa weekend and in any event, not later that the 31st of May.

⑦ **Cairn Report**.....

The cairn erected outside the armoury, honoring our two Victoria Cross recipients, has one phase of construction yet to be completed. It was always our plan to have a light shinning on the cairn. This will soon be done.

Planning ahead, we must be prepared for the time when the surface of the cairn will have to be maintained. Unique plans are being pursued to bring in funds for this purpose.

The cairn has proven to be a popular attraction as we have received numerous reports of visitors stopping to have their photograph taken by the monument. Jerry Gangur

AGM cont.

⑧ Gaming License Report Gary Brooks

Gary Brooks tabled his report on the results of the gaming license application. He noted that although we had applied for more than we received, our association did receive a cheque for \$9,000.00. Three thousand is earmarked for sick & visiting and six thousand will be directed to our affiliated cadet corps. Gary went on to say that we will apply for a casino license once the funds have been disbursed.

⑨ Membership Report Al Morton

Committee chair, Al Morton, reported on steps being taken to contact post-war members and efforts made to encourage such folks to join the association. Al says is optimistic about bringing in new members and noted that we are already seeing some new memberships.

Anyone who knows of an ex-Westie who is not a member of the association should contact **Al Morton at 525-6814**

Note: Membership dues: Annually \$15.
Life membership: \$100.

⑩ Election of Officers and Directors

Past-President, Jerry Gangur, as chairman of the nominating committee presented the following slate for the 1999-2000 executive. The slate of officers and directors presented and elected was as follows:

President:	Len Wohlgenuth
Vice-Pres	Al Morton

Directors:

Gary Brooks	Bruce Howells
Lee Cooke	Ted McNabb
Mike Kelly	Bryan Woodcock

As his first order of business President Len asked Herb Hamm if he would continue to serve as secretary and Jerry Gangur if he would continue to serve as Editor. Both agreed to continue in their respective positions.

For your information:

Len Wohlgenuth served in the unit for over a decade and achieved the rank of Warrant Officer.

Al Morton, served over 10 years, Sergeant

Lee Cooke, served 20 years +, a Sgt. In the band

Bruce Howells, served over 10 years. Sergeant.

Mike Kelly, Currently serving. Sergeant.

Ted McNabb. Currently serving. Lieutenant.

Bryan Woodcock Currently serving. Jr Ranks

Congratulations to the New Executive.
We wish you well and look forward
working with you.

That's it for the AGM !!

Vernon Army Cadet Camp Reunion

Re-experience your youth and your friends again

July 30, 31 - August 1, 1999

Have you ever been to Vernon Army Cadet Camp as a cadet or staff instructor either militia or regular force? Well this summer marks the 50th anniversary as a cadet camp. Yes the camp opened as a training facility in 1949. There was a reunion in 1994 which was a great success, but this one plans to be bigger and better. Many events are being planned from meet and greets, to a parade down the hill into Polson Park on Sunday. There is also a golf tournament planned for the 29th. The planning group has developed a unique organizational committee. It's called a battalion command structure. Sound Familiar? Yes the planning group have organized like a well tuned army battalion with company's from HQ to G (for Golf...get it...golf company...they're organizing the golf tourney). Well why not check out what is planned. Become a member of the VACC Alumni. Our goal is to form a legacy for the camp to keep it going for years to come. You may not realize that our Ottawa powers at be almost tried to close the camp. We can't allow that, so the focus of the reunion is also to get a large Alumni Association formed as a solid voice for the future of the camp and our youth.

Want more information about the reunion? Call toll free 1-877-388-VACC. Do you have access to the Internet? Check out the web site of www.vacc.armycadet.com

If you plan to come, register early. If you don't have access to the internet, call the toll free number and get on the mailing list for the alumni association. Be a voice to be heard and help support the best youth organization in Canada... The Royal Canadian Army Cadets. If you require any further information feel free to contact me at (604) 526-4605 or email at tu@bc.sympatico.ca or tusher@city.new-westminster.bc.ca I'll be glad to help you out. Thank you.

Ted Usher

Your regimental association believes in and supports the cadet movement in many ways. Our donation of \$1,500.00 to each of our four affiliated corps is only a small measure of our recognition of the value of such an organization to the future of Canada.....Ed.

104th Bn, Vimy veteran Art Castle honored at ceremony

Arthur Castle, a First World War veteran, has been appointed a Knight of the Order of the **Legion of Honour** at the request of the government of France. Presenting the medal to **Art Castle** last week, the French consulate general, **Michel Dejaegher**, stated that his country owned so much to the many Canadians who fought in the Great War and that it was a great honor to make the presentation on behalf of a grateful nation. Attending the ceremony and representing the Association was President **Fred West**. The regiment was represented by the commanding officer, Major **Mark Fisher**.



Presenting cheques in the amount of \$1,500.00 to Cadet Corp COs. Left to right, Major T. Buchenaue, Cadet Liaison Officer, Capt. Trevor Henderson (1922 Cdt Corps), Capt. Paul Savoie (1838), Capt. Jim Blomme (2316), President Fred West and Major M Fisher, commanding officer, R Westmr R. Absent from photo is Capt. Wendy Blomme, (2822)

Letters...Memories.....

Privates **Burden & Solanas** arrived off leave late, as a result up before the Company Commander. He asked **Burden** the reason for his late arrival and after listening, went on to explained why you had to be on time. He kept saying, do you understand me. A speech **Burden** would voice his agreement. He got 5 days pay loss & 5 days confined to barracks. When **Andy Solonas**, nick named **Ugh** came up. His answer to all questions was ugh. Finally company CO bawled the hell out of him. As I escorted them out, Solanas grins at **Burden** and says, you lost money & time . I am just a big dumb Indian all I got was hell.

Jack Hartlry - Apt 55, 9055 Ashwell Road, Chilliwack BC V2P

Got your letter & to late about election. I do remember **Jerry Brisbin**. **Bribin & Hinkle** & I were in a pup tent & just got back from the line. We were playing poker & Jerry went broke & said to me, I'll give you this ring & I want it back when I get 500 lire. I said to Jerry, you keep the ring & he said no, you take it. So we played only a few hands & we had to go out to the front for the night. As he went out the door he said, don't let anybody have that ring. I said OK & he later went out & got killed. So I still have his ring. I have it in safe locker in the bank. He was a real nice guy. I often think of those times. Sniper **Bailey (Len)** & the water truck & remember when he rescued the little boy in no man's land and he got shoes for him. I got an army suit made. And when his grandparents came & took him away, he cried and said I don't want to go with those old people. I am a Canadian....We were stationed first, close to the Gurks, a good outfit, we used to go over to visit them. They were the ones that captured Casino....Often wonder why we sailed to North Africa for two days...As for sniper **Bailey**, he sure did a good job for the Westministers. I have some photos of him & our truck driver **Gallop**. Towards the last I was out wounded & way in a hotel which served sergeants. I also have photo of **Hains & Oldfield**.... I was on run To Czech. And helped drive truck to Czechoslovakia. Please excuse the writing I am 85 years old & been alone for over 20 years....Did you ever hear of the young fellow Canadian who jumped up on a German tank & threw a grenade in at the Melfa (that was **Cpl Cullen** & he received the MM for his efforts....Ed)...We had a bad afternoon & had to back off. C Company came in and took over & in the morning in came a new German truck with a full meal and a keg of beer. One guy told me this was the best meal he had, lot better than ours....So all the best, I remember you also **Freddie West**. You lived close to me in Annable after the war.

(Cont. from 10)

Another letter..... Lilian and I happily celebrating 60 years of married life.... Having just received the Groundsheet, I was interested in page 9, particularly the PIG CHASE. In my case, it happened in Holland, not Italy.Arriving in Holland, 17 platoon took over a front line position from the second front fellows. It was a small house close up to a high dike that had a road running along its top. ...The Sarge showing us the position was so different from ones from the 1st or 5th Divs, just as the food, equipment, supplies and ammo had no relation to what we were accustomed to. First we were ankle deep in spent 303 cartridges. When I commented on what a hot spot this must be, the Sarge replied no, really quiet! How come all the spent cartridges? Oh, that's from our hymn of hate each night and morning!! What the HELL IS A HYMN OF HATE? Each night and morning Jerry opens up with all he has so we reply. Do you have many casualties I asked? Hell no Sarge replied, both of us just fire into the air as the dikes stop us from hitting each other!! No shortage of ammo here!! The road that I mentioned on top of the dike had a lovely shell hole right in the centre and in no time us D Day Doggers tunneled into it from our side then tunneled out to the other side clearing a nice peek hole with a removable sod to cover it from Jerry in the daytime. Ahead lay about 50 feet of nice flat land and beyond was a canal roughly 100 feet wide, on Jerry's side another nice dike about 15 feet high, the same as ours. Our first intense observation revealed flat peaceful looking land, with but one lone bit of life in sight, a lovely fat little porker, nibbling away in happy contentment and on OUR SIDE. JUST WAIT TILL DARK LITTLE PIGGY. So once night settled in, half of 17 platoon over the dike and after the little piggy. He stood out as plain as could be, a lovely pink porker! Soon we discovered it was one thing to catch the little devil and another thing to hang on to him. He would struggle and squirm right out of your arms. This damn chase got wilder and wilder. We ran harder and the pig grew faster and faster able to turn on a dime and give us six cents change. How long this circus went on as we done our best to encircle and trap him. At last with a new burst of speed that porker broke through our lines with me in hot pursuit. Suddenly, in crushing smashing collision, I was knocked bruised battered and breathless to the ground. Regaining my breath, I yelled, YOU STUPID BASTARD, WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING. Heard a big deep drawn in breath then a voice replying MINE GOTT IN HEMIL!! And I sat facing the biggest damn Jerry I had ever seen. Silence reigned supreme for about ten seconds then he burst out with the biggest heartiest laugh one could imagine. Being unarmed and a lot smaller than him, I too started to laugh. This all ended with us helping each other up. We were weak from laughing. The mixed force of would be hunters shook hands and each retreated. I think both sides often recounted THAT NIGHT IN ACTION BETWEEN THE DIKES IN HOLLAND....

Love, Hugs & Best Regards Walter R Kearsley

In Memoriam

Ken Campbell..... Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. 2

Westies' World War 2 Correspondent Ron Hurley

To all Westies Out in the Big Beyond!!!!

The Sand in the hour glass is nearing the empty zone, which reminds us all to be prepared to face THE BIG MILLENNIUM, I believe it cometh soon, the onus is on all. I trust we will all be prepared to make it better than the Fractious 20th Century, just passing by..... I trust this finds you all Well & Happy.

My handwriting come out like a page of the Koran.

Not have any Arabic training am forced (and not to well) to use an old fashioned typewriter. It's an English on, which make it better.

DON' T FORGETElsewhere in this issue.

FINAL NOTICE: RE: Last MELFA DINNER This Century - 1999
RE: Remembrance Day Service - 1999

My Best Memory of Melfa - 1999. Was a speech given by Cpl Rob Delaurier, his was the finest of the evening, this was agreed by all of Old Vets. He was articulate and has excellent voice projection. We can hope to enjoy him at future functions. Congratulations Rob.

The mail was lean but thanks for correspondence & donations to C. Smithers, Dick Armstrong. Thanks to Walter Kearsley and you chase with the Pig.

That's it RR Hurley

Melfa 99 - Return

Yes, I _____ will be attending the Melfa Weekend on May 28, 29 and 30. I will participate in the following:

Friday 28 May **Golf Tee Off 9:00 am** Cost \$35.00 per Golfer x _____ = \$ _____
(number in party)

Saturday 29 May **Dinner** Cost \$30.00 per person x _____ = \$ _____
(number in party)

Sunday Brunch (No charge) I will attend _____

Make cheque payable to: The Royal Westminster Regiment Association and mail to
P.O. Box 854, New Westminster, BC V3L 4Z8