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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, BC V3L 4Z8

October, 1999

1914

1918

1939

1945



NOT FORGOTTEN

Editor's Corner Jerry N, Gangur

News of friends departing always comes as quite a shock. Saw my good friend **Mike Arendarski** at the Melfa dinner and he asked me to forward the Konowal booklet to him. Thought I had some time to meet his request. Wound up being asked to say something about him at his funeral. Went to funeral with **Camille Steede**, (husband was **Mike Steede**, former CO). Also met Westie at funeral (forgot name) who had some nice things to say about Pte. **W.J Koller** (KIA - Holland). Funny thing about funerals, moments of sadness and moments of elation.

Executive wants to remind members that we have significant funds available from Casino sources which must be used for sick & visiting. Should you know of someone who is ill, or whose spouse is ill or learn of a member passing away, please phone sick & visiting or any board member.

Had telecon with **Ron Hurley**. This day he says he has been throwing up and not feeling very well. Needs lots of rest. If you can, please drop him a line, wish him well and maybe tell him of an incident you recall that

would interest the general membership.

Frequency of Groundsheet publication. The executive decided to continue publishing our newsletter three times annually. Would like to devote most of February issue to letters from our members. If you write us, we will publish your letter and Ron will reply to some of your comments. Would like very much to have you recall good or bad times with the regiment. Remember, not everyone in the regiment saw or heard all of the events you witnessed.

A story I remember... During my tour as CO, two lower mainland amouries were broken into and weapons were removed. For security reasons, the CO did not have the combination to the weapons vault. However, in the best James Bond tradition, I surmised that if someone wanted to get into the armoury, they might get a hold of me and I in turn would have to contact the QM. With the QM, Capt. Terry Leith, I worked it out a code. If ever such a request was made and I used the word **please**, his first call after hanging up would be to the New Westminster police. To this day, when I talk to Terry, I never use the word please...

Thanks for your time.... Ed

President's Report -

Len Wohlgenuth

It was nice to meet with several of you and see members from across Canada at the Melfa Weekend. This years Melfa was a great success as we had members from Ottawa to Vancouver Island and financially we broke even. In this letter I would like to thank the members of the Association for allowing me to serve as their president, introduce myself and give a brief view of my direction of the association.

I served with the regiment from 1972 through 1992 and have many fond memories of my service. During my tenure, with the regiment, I served under 6 different commanding officers and 9 different RSMs. Consequently, I have seen a multitude of changes with the reserves, as a whole, and with the regiment. Since I left still further changes have occurred and some more profound ones are expected in the future. My service with the association began in 1996 when I joined with Gary Brooks and we served on the membership committee. In 1997 I became the vice president of the association and served under Fred West's tutelage until this year when I became president.

Under Fred's direction I watched significant changes happen in the association. Fred developed a membership committee and a gaming funds committee. I believe these committees have been and are very significant to our existence. To assist myself we have a very diverse executive of 11 members representing each decade of service from the 1930's to the present.

Membership is what makes an association. It is not the symbols of the regiment, but rather the people from the regiment that have maintained the association for 52

years. Sadly, however, the association has not been effectively recruiting new members as they leave the regiment nor recruiting Westies that left the regiment further back. As the veterans pass on, the association will fade away unless new members are recruited. The membership committee is tasked with looking into way of contacting and recruiting all Westies not in the association. In the last few years, this committee has met with moderate success in contacting our comrades and welcoming them into the association. It is time now to re-double our efforts to recruit new association members. This committee has a significant task ahead of them, but all association members can help by forwarding contact information on any Westie you know of, to the Membership Committee at our PO Box 854 in New Westminster.

The gaming fund has been a significant success in the last year. Through these funds we have been able to provide support to the cadet corps and establish a sick and visiting fund. Efforts in these areas will continue but more emphasis will be placed on supporting the regimental museum this year. The museum requires significant funds for properly securing the weapons it has collected over the years. Additionally, we are looking into supporting the commanding officers's Bren-gun carrier project and refurbishment of the regiment's original guns that are now at Westminster Quay. These gaming funds are a new resource that we can tap for particular projects without depleting the association's annual resources.

With these tasks at hand I am looking forward to a very active year and will be reporting regularly on our progress. This year will mark the first we will be holding the AGM during the Melfa weekend. This should allow many of you, who travel to the weekend Melfa, to attend the AGM.....
Pro Rege et Patria •

The Regiment

Lt. Randy McBryan

FREEDOM OF THE DISTRICT OF MAPLE RIDGE

“Royal Westminster Regiment will Fix Bayonets ... Fix... Bayonets!” Came the command from Major F. Mark Fisher, Commanding Officer of The Royal Westminster Regiment, as he began to exercise the newly granted Freedom of the City of Maple Ridge.

Months of background preparations culminated in a spectacular regimental parade on September 12, 1999. On this beautiful late summer's day the District of Maple Ridge, in celebration of its 125th anniversary of incorporation, did grant its Freedom to The Royal Westminster Regiment. Such freedom is not granted lightly. This one recognizes a longstanding relationship between the District and the Regiment.

Many members of our regiment: past, present, and future call Maple Ridge home. B Coy of our 2nd Bn was based in Maple Ridge during WW II. The Regiment fought overseas in both world wars and many of the names read out in the churches and at the Maple Ridge cenotaph on November 11th are those who served and made the supreme sacrifice in the service of this regiment and their country. In 1948 members of the unit served in rescue and dyke repair operations in a great flood that devastated not only the District, but also most of the Lower Mainland. Through the 1838 Maple Ridge Army Cadet Corps (one of our four affiliated cadet corps) the Regiment has maintained a continuous presence in the District since 1940.

In the mid-day heat the Regiment marched quietly to City Hall. En-route we were challenged by Ridge-Meadows RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) Detachment Officer in Charge – Inspector Bill Dingwall. Our Commanding Officer declared that we had come seeking the Freedom of the City. To which Inspector Dingwall replied, “Very well Sir! Follow Me!” The battalion moved forward, halted and dressed on the City Hall's front door. Whereupon Major Fisher rapped the hilt of his sword three times to summon the mayor.

The CO and the Mayor inspected the parade; which consisted of two 40-man guards (one reserve, and one cadet), the colour party and the band. Meanwhile Unit Information Officer Lt. Randy McBryan addressed the large assembly of onlookers with a history and description of the ceremony and of the ties that bound the Regiment with the District. Immediately following the inspection the Mayor addressed the parade with his reading of the proclamation unanimously passed by District Council granting the Freedom of the City to the Regiment.

Now the true pageantry of a military parade began. Bayonets were fixed; the Regimental Colour was allowed to fly after being ceremoniously uncased by Corporals Helen Goldie, and Daniel Suboski; and the Regimental Band (officially disbanded several years ago now), splendid in their red serge, began playing “Rule Britannia” – the March Past of The Royal Warwickshire Regiment our original affiliated regiment.

As the Regiment stepped off, band leading, to exercise its newly granted freedom several meticulously restored WWII military vehicles followed. These vehicles carefully restored with “Westie” markings added just that much more presence to our march through the centre of the City. Capt. (ret'd) Jeff Davis led the vehicles in his battle-dress uniform on a dispatch riders motorcycle. Jeff was the previous Commanding Officer of the 1838 Cadet Corps and his work was the genesis of this granting of the Freedom. Following Jeff were two ¼ ton jeeps with Regimental Association veterans as passengers. Then came two of Capt. (ret'd) Walter Webster's beautifully restored vehicles. Walter, a former cadet corps commanding officer, was driving his Universal Carrier (Bren-Gun Carrier) with past Regimental Association President, veteran, and former universal carrier driver - Fred West as his passenger. The end of the parade was marked by Capt. Webster's fully restored Ford 15 cwt. – a vehicle so ugly that it is cute! Incidentally Walter recently won a “best in show” award at the International Military Vehicle Convention held in San Jose, California.

The Band played our Regimental March – The Maple Leaf Forever – as we marched through the centre of town and past the reviewing stand where: His Worship, Mayor Carl Durksen; RCMP Inspector Bill Dingwall; and former CO, now 39 (our) Brigade Commander Colonel Bill White took the salute. Then it was down to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 88 for some well-deserved refreshments (after the RQMS received back all the weapons and whites). Tom Cameron, president of the Legion branch, and former Westie, greeted us on behalf of the branch and offered our soldiers a wonderful steak lunch with all the trimmings – the CO sprung for the refreshments. Tom Cameron and his Legion Branch 88 were other driving forces in the move to have the District grant us Freedom of the City. Major Fisher introduced our Honorary Colonel, Colonel Bill McKinney, who spoke a few words of praise and thanks for the day's events. Then our Commanding Officer presented the branch president a plaque bearing our cap badge to commemorate the event.

The day was far from over. Following a brief rest the band returned to a band shell in the town centre. There they set up for and played a concert leading up to a planned Fanfare to announce the mayors welcoming address. Several members of the band and all the officers had yet to perform at and attend a civic mess dinner. The dinner, hosted by the Officer's Mess, was held at the Maple Ridge Lawn Bowling Club. While the battalion was parading in town the Officers Mess Committee President, Capt Chuck McKinnon, and a small committee work force were preparing the club for the dinner.

At the dinner key figures associated with the day were recognized and thanked for their efforts. They included Jeff Davis and Tom Cameron who together on this their fourth attempt to see this Freedom granted saw it come to fruition; His Worship, Mayor Carl Durksen and Maple Ridge Council members: Councilor Tom Baker – former mayor of New Westminster and serving Regimental council member, Councilor Candice Gordon, and Councilor Ken Stewart.

Following a toast to the District of Maple Ridge by resident Lt McBryan the Mayor expressed how thoroughly pleased he and the council were to have granted the Freedom and he presented the District's copy of the Freedom Proclamation to Legion Branch President Tom Cameron. His Worship indicated that he could think of no better place for its safekeeping and that he fully recognizes the support the Legion provides to the youth (including Army Cadets) of, and to the community as a whole. While

responding to the Toast to the Regiment, Major Fisher presented a plaque bearing the unit's capbadge to the Mayor with an inscription commemorating this auspicious occasion. The CO also thanked the dinner staff: band, servers and caterers for a good evening and commended the PMC for "the best meal he has ever had at one of our Mess Dinners." After the dinner there was a brief scramble as the Mess committee and junior officers coordinated the clean up and transport of dinner and mess stores.

So ended the day we received our fifth Freedom of a City. We are now honored with the Freedoms of: Westminster, England; New Westminster; District of Matsqui; District of Mission; and District of Maple Ridge.



**Exercise -Wainwright - Total Ram -
A Private Soldiers' View -
Pte C. Goldsby**

From 20 -24 May, 1999 The Royal Westminster Regiment took part in their major exercise of the year, Total Ram. Held in Wainwright, Alberta, it involved reserve regiments from BC and Alberta, as well as 1st Battalion P.P.C.L.I. The Westies, reinforced by a platoon of Seaforth, sent an infantry company to the exercise. For me it was my first major exercise with the unit, an exciting prospect to say the least.

After a long air and long bus ride we arrived very early Friday morning in Wainwright. To my relief and somewhat surprise all of our luggage arrived as well. This lack of faith was not only due to an experience upon returning from my QL2/3 Infantry course, but from the aid to the baggage handlers we gave after watching them drop and tip over one of the large shipping boxes. Soon

we settled in and after an hour or so of sleep, breakfast and a talk from the PPCLI and 1st Battalion commanders we were off to the range to zero our weapons. With a replaced extractor for my C-9's bolt and a zeroed sight, I was more than ready to begin the 'real' part of the exercise. Following lunch at the range we squeezed into HLWVs, were driven out into the field, and soon marched out to the company and platoon hides and eventually ur trenches. The trek was not without incident for me, however, as I found a marking wire with my foot and with rucksack on, discovered what a tumbleweed must feel like. With ammo distributed we settled in for the night, eager for the live fire defensive of the next day.

Before I knew it, the time had come. After hearing firing in the distance from the recce screen as they pulled back, and then hearing the booms, overhead whistling, and distant explosions of an artillery bombardment, the 'Fantasians' were

(cont. from page 6)

upon us. Soon the air was filled with the chattering of 50 calibre machine guns, C6s, C9s and C7s (rifles or automatic weapons ..Ed) as in succession they opened n up on Armoured Personnel Carrier, tank and infantry targets. Seeing an Eryx missile in flight was a new experience. They could easily be mistaken for a large, white 'nerf-foam' missile, slowly spiraling, as it weaved its way to a target, if not for the explosion it creates when impacting the ground. Charges exploded in front of our trenches, giving the appearance of being fired upon, as we engaged more and more, closer targets. Finally Rambo himself, at least it seemed, assaulted my trench as it took approximately 150 rounds from my C9, the Grizzly dug in beside us pounding it with its 7.62mm machine gun and countless rifle shots to finally take it down. The loss of their hero must have broken the 'Fantasians' morale, as soon they withdrew and the live fire was over.

With a short pause to debomb our ammo and a short march we were off to receive briefings on helicopters for the air mobile operations which were to come. The briefings from the two US loadies on the Chinook was definitely a boost for company morale. Our first attack consisted of landing one kilometer away from a ford defended by a platoon behind enemy lines. We were to go there

ASAP and fire in a second company which would land on the other side of the river 15 minutes later. We would then defend the area while engineer units would link up with us to build a bridge, followed by a forward push by armour the next day. We loaded into four Blackhawks, two Griffons and two Chinooks and took off for our objective in the early evening. It was a fun ride in our Blackhawk as we tilted and turned flying to our LZ. Unlike the passengers of another Blackhawk, however, we didn't discover the direction spit travels inside of helicopters. We hit the ground and were off, making our way quickly to the objective and firing the other company in as we met little resistance, then cleared the area and dug in for the night. The counterattack we expected didn't come and the attack was a total success.

The next day we loaded up again, this time to capture high ground in front of the armour's advance. This time our Blackhawk landed in the middle of a huge patch of sand, adding it to the cam paint on my face and leaving the gritty taste of it in my mouth with the Blackhawk's departure. Meeting a recce element on the ground, we soon were off to attack the objective. This time we met a much better defended enemy as we took trench after trench to find only another in depth.. With

adrenaline pumping our section pushed on through an enemy towed howitzer. For me nothing heightened the senses like seeing the distant barrel of a 105 being quickly swivelled in your direction while engaging a series of trenches. With a final push to the ridge the objective was taken, and soon the action phase of the exercise was over. After an overheating-bus ride, a flight back to Vancouver and challenging the hills of New West in a bus in high gear on our way to the Armoury, Total Ram can to an end. Total Ram certainly did not disappoint and I can hardly wait for our next major exercise. •

(Ed. Many thanks to Pte. Craig Goldsby for a well presented account of his participation in Ex. Total Ram. Congratulations).

Regiment Sends Troops to Bosnia

MCpl. Bryan Woodcock

Members of the regiment this month will proceed to Camp Wainwright for training in preparation for UN duty in Bosnia. The tour of duty will be from February 2000 to September 2000.

The following unit members will participate in this operation:

Capt. Mathew Haussman
 Lt. Ryan Reed
 MWO Plante
 MCpl Dean Baron
 MCpl Phatixx Fuller

Cpl. Helen Goldie
 Pte. Michael Cuevas

Note: Cpl. Woodcock is also an elected director

Travelling West.

At the time of publication of this issue of the Groundsheet, former president Fred West and WWII Westminster Vet., is currently in Italy, courtesy of Veterans Affairs. He will be visiting Westie grave sites and has promised to file a report with this publication upon his return. We wish him a pleasant journey and a safe return.

47th Bn Victoria Cross Recipient WWI to be honoured in village of birth

John Gregorovich, coordinator, has announced that **Filip Konowal, V.C.** will be honored in Kutkiw, Ukraine the village where he was born. The unveiling of a trilingual memorial is to occur on August 21, 2000.

It is expected that Canadian government, military personnel (regular & reserve) and other dignitaries will be in attendance.

From the Post.....

A son remembers

Dear Sirs,

I am the son of Waverly Reynar, formerly of The Royal Westminster Regiment.

I am sorry to say that my father, Cpl Wave Reynar passed away, due partly to wounds received during WW2, Italy.

I know he was very proud of his Regiment, and we talked about it through the years.

I was born and raised in Leduc, Albert, but went off to the States and the US Marines at a very early age 17. Served in Vietnam for 21/2 years, with the 3rd Marine Division and the 3rd Force Recon, Fleet Marine Force I Company.

I saw a lot of action all over Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, and lost a lot of close friends as my father and men of your Regiment did in WWII.

It took many years, for either one of us to ever think about talking of these days of death and destruction, his war and mine.....

We talked of the good and bad times, of course, my dad always came out on top whenever we talked of our units.

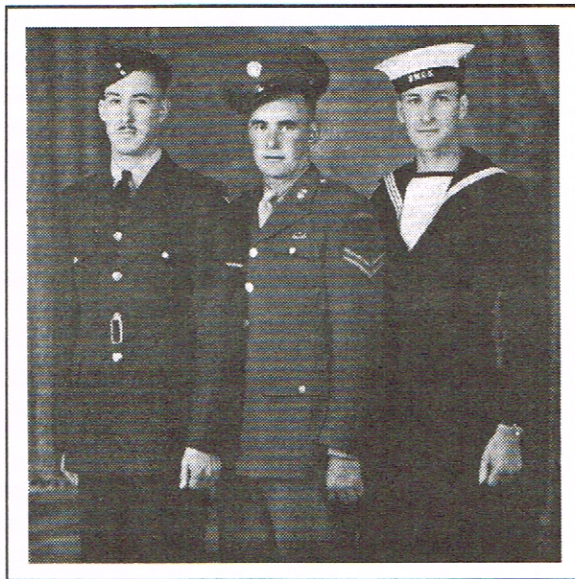
.....

We, as ex military people who have served in wars, we must be the steady hand at the reins today, to let our countries know that war is not a game, do not rush into it. The sight of a black body bag, with a young man or woman in it is something we shall never forget.....

Gunnery Sgt. USMC retired hope I can continue to get my fathers' Groundsheet, because I have adopted the Royal Westminster Regiment, as mine, here in Canada.

Thanks for your time and let there always be a Royal Westminster Regiment.

Yours truly, Waverly C Reynar Jr.



L to R Reynar brothers Oakley, Waverly & Stan

Another Pig Story. Howard Smith writes about his 'pig story'. We thank Howard and will print story in the February GS issue. .. We hope you too will jot down some memory that we can pass on.

Sick & Visiting Committee Assistance

Chairman of the sick & visiting committee, Ted McNabb is in need of assistance.

What we need are individuals who would be prepared to assist in determining and being alert to members who might need sick and visiting attention. Unlike years past, we have budget which must be used to assist those who fall under the sick & visiting umbrella. You will not have to attend regular meetings, you can do your work by phone. You can help arrange for member to get to regimental or association functions by taxi. We can pay for that item. We want to know who to send flowers to, who to cheer up and who might need to have a visit.

Can you give us one day a month and you chose the day. We need help in all areas of the province. We are able to give our members some extra attention these times, but we have to know who can on the receiving end.

Contact any member of the executive if you can in any way be of assistance.

Long time Editor and Westie correspondent, **Ron Hurley** notes that mail is drying up. Ron has not been in the best of health last few days. Lets use this time between now and Feb to give him lots to read. Ron says he wants to write something, but he needs material from the boys.

Reminders

- The Annual General Meeting in 2000 will be held on the same weekend as the Melfa weekend.
- The February issue will be devoted to printing letters we receive.

Dues

If you are not a life member and have forgotten to pay your dues, please forward a cheque for \$15.00.

- Suggestions for improving the Groundsheet. Any production or task can be improved upon. If there is somehow you believe we can improve our newsletter, we would appreciate hearing from you. What is it you would like to see more of?
- Event attendance. If you want to come to the services on November 11 and you require a taxi, please call us and we will arrange the cab ride at no cost to you.
- The post office in New Westminster is being relocated. Good news, our postal address will not change. Box 854 and the postal code remain.

Future Fund - Jerry Gangur

The financial status of the association, both current and future has received considerable attention from your executive. For some current needs and projects we are looking for assistance from the provincial casino funds. We feel confident that for the next short while the budget needs for sick & visiting and financial assistance to our cadet corps will be forthcoming from this source. We cannot use casino funds for our Future Fund.

Our long term consideration has to do with publication of the Groundsheet, assistance to the regiment and other projects that will not be eligible for support with casino dollars. I have often stated that those who served before the present day active battalion have contributed to and made the history of the regiment. The historical events of both war and peace must be preserved. Telling, recording and preserving the history can sometimes be as challenging as making it. Funds for this aspect of our activities will always be required.

An example of building for the future started many years ago. Just 5 years ago a permanent record of members telephone numbers did not exist. So we set out to capture all members telephone numbers.

Today, we are able to contact most of our members by telephone should the need arise. What a great advantage for any new executive. Just one small improvement.

Were it not for the contributions members made to-date to the Future Fund, we would probably not be able to publish the Groundsheet at the frequency we do today.

Our original goal was to raise \$100,000.00 for the future fund and we are just at the 60% mark. We continue to seek your support to achieve this target.

We ask you consider supporting our Future Fund in one of two or both ways. First, consider your association in your annual charitable giving. Secondly perhaps you might consider making a bequest in your will. A short visit to your advisor can ensure this happens.

Your regimental association has the potential for a productive future. Many activities and projects in support of the regiment and association will continue to demand our attention. With your help, the executive will be there to say yes when asked to assist.

Donations

Please make cheque payable to The Royal Westminster Regiment Association. Attn: Future Fund

IN MEMORIAM

Mike Arendarski (Langley) ... Polish Air Force WWII and The Royal Westminster Regiment
William HandfordWestminster Regiment (Motor) W.W.2
Frank ScrianiWestminster Regiment (Motor) W.W.2
Doug StevensWestminster Regiment (Motor) W.W.2
Tiny Robertson (Ottawa) Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W.2
Art B Ward (Surrey)Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W.2
Waverly C. Reynar (Leduc).....Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W.2

Remembrance Day Ceremonies

Ceremonies marking Remembrance Day will follow the procedure of previous years. All messes will open following Cenotaph Service.

Timings: 0945 hrs - Indoor Service
1030 hrs - Form up in front of armoury
1045 hrs - Cenotaph Ceremony

Dress: Blazer, Berets and Medals.

Arrive early: Seats reserved for Assn members

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Sick & Visting

We remind you that we need to know if someone is confined to home, hospitalized or passes away. Contact any member of the executive. The message will get to the sick & visiting committee.