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The GROUND SHEET

The Publication of The Royal Westminster Regiment Association

*'Dedicated to the ideals and comradeship
we knew in wars and peace, in our
service, both home and abroad.'*

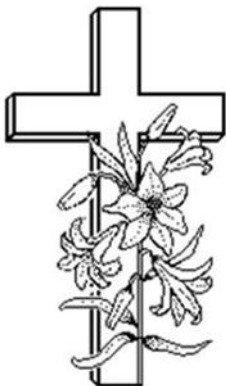
'Pro Rege et Patria'

The Armoury, 530 Queens Avenue
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www.royal-westies-assn.ca



In Memoriam



Health & Welfare

It would be appreciated if all members of The Regimental family would report births, marriages and deaths within our membership and their families. I am sure with such a young Regiment there will be lots of babies born. So please drop us a line if you know anything.

President's Report

Hello everyone, again I am honored to be re-elected as your President and you will see details of the new Board of Directors in this Groundsheet.

While there are reports on our activities in this edition, from my perspective, we again had a successful Melfa Golf Tournament and Melfa Dinner in May.

At the Annual General Meeting, there were a number of amendments to our Bylaws that the Board had proposed to the membership by means of special resolutions. These took some time to go through, but I am pleased that these were accepted and supported by the members present. They will be incorporated into an updated version of the Bylaws to be ratified by the members at the next AGM.

Looking ahead we again are planning to hold an “Association Smoker” on 21 October at the Armoury. Please check our website for details.

I was able to attend all the Annual Ceremonial Review (ACR) of our five Cadet Corps. It was very encouraging to see all the Corps are gaining in numbers and to see deserving members of each Corps being recognised on parade for their accomplishments.

Regards

Bill White, President

Your Executive
2023-2024

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Hello fellow Association members:

Good day to all.

Time sure never stands still. Half way thru summer all ready and Melfa has come and gone. What a wonderful week-end it was. Anyone who missed it sure missed a great party. Guys that took part in the Golf Tournament had a great time. Hyack Parade was a site to see, we need more of the old guard to ride in the MLVW. The diner was amazing, had quite a few people come up and say it was the best one in a long time. The food from the new cater was wonderful. Still missing some of the real old guard, lets see more of the 60s and 70s show their faces, I could name a few but will not, you know who I am referring to.

So, mark your calendars for the last week-end of May 2024.

Did anyone know of the secret rooms above the Old RSMs and Paymasters offices? Guess that is where the ghost sleeps.

Next issue will have information on Remembrance Day services.

Pro Rege et Patria

Linda Pickell

Depart with Dignity – Sgt Beth Thompson

Our Chief Clerk, Sergeant Beth Thompson is retiring from the Canadian Armed Forces, having served for 16 years. She will be moving to Edmonton. A Depart with Dignity event for her was held in the WOs and Sgts Mess on Saturday evening, 15 July 2023. A potluck supper was provided and there were a number of presentations with MWO Cullen being the MC. These were as follows, in order of presentation;

- Bill White, President of the Association – Certificate of Meritorious Service,
Op Reassurance: Rotation 20-22 Latvia
- MWO Woolley Letter from the Mayor of New Westminster
- WO Neff Letter from the Prime Minister
- Sgt Cooley Certificate of Service
- MWO Cullen Westie Mug
- Sgt Kullar Shadow Box of Memorabilia
- Cpl Bond Engraved pen set
- Capt Zhen, Adjutant Regimental Coin



Presentation by Bill White



Presentation by MWO Woolley



Presentation by WO Neff



Presentation by Sgt Cooley



Presentation by MWO Cullen



Presentation by Sgt Kullar



Presentation by Cpl Bond



Presentation by Capt Zhen

“JUST COFFEE”

☕ July’s “Just Coffee” had Tim Bits & the usual suspects. However, a number of former Westies, and a couple of serving ones too, were in attendance. From the photograph of the front page, I’ll let you decide who fell into which category.

Thanks to all who came out!

Make Note: August 13th is the next Just Coffee (Aug 6th is a long weekend).

See you in August

The Royal Westminster Regiment Association Bursary New Westminster Secondary School

The John Ford family started a bursary for a student at the New Westminster Secondary School. The Association continues to provide funding for this bursary. The criteria are as follows; “Candidates should be currently serving as a member of The Royal Westminster Regiment or The Royal Westminster Cadet Corps or a descendant of anyone who served with the regiment (son, daughter, grandchild, brother, or sister), and must have maintained a C+ average or better. The candidates will demonstrate outstanding citizenship (particularly in school affairs) and will be enrolling at a BC university, regional college, or a diploma (2 year) course at BCIT.”

The awards ceremony for the 2022-23 school year was held at the school on 13 June 2023. This year’s recipient was Alvin Won, who unfortunately was away on the awards night. In a letter to the President, he advises that he has been accepted by the Royal Military College.

At the same awards ceremony, the President, Bill White also made presentations on behalf of the Major Ian Douglas Bursary.

Melfa Dinner 2023

The Melfa Dinner was held at the Armoury on Saturday evening, 27 May 2023. This is the second dinner held in the Armoury post COVID-19. There were 92 in attendance, including members of The Royal Westminster Regiment Band. This year we able to bring back giving out

of door prizes and a successful silent auction to raise funds for the Association. The door prizes were drawn from the helmet by the newest soldier (Private Soldatenko) attending the dinner. Funds were also raised to assist our colleague Shuan O'Mara is getting an eye operation for damage caused to his eyes on an operational tour in Croatia for UNPROFOR. \$865 was raised which was passed along to the RSM to add to the GoFundMe appeal.

This year a number of soldiers had applied for the Bursary and the President, Bill White read out the three names of the soldiers that had been selected to receive the \$1000 each. These are;

- Cpl Fernandes
- Cpl Pengelly
- Cpl Tian Yi Wan



Cpl Wang receiving his bursary cheque

The Association recognizes soldiers who have deployed either overseas on Operational tours of duty or on operations, in support of the province, to respond to natural disasters such as fires. The following soldiers, who were at the dinner received certificates of Meritorious Service;

- Operation Lentus 2017 – 4 (Support to British Columbia (Fires)) Capt M.G. Smith
- Operation Impact – Rotation 7 – Iraq – MWO J.A. Cullen



Capt Mark Smith receives his certificate.



MWO Joe Cullen receives his certificate.

Melfa Golf Tournament

The Melfa Golf Tournament was held at the Delta Course on Friday 28 May 2023. There were 12 golfers in attendance. The day was a good one for both the weather and the camaraderie. The winners are pictured below with President, Bill White.



Greg Bell – low gross



Mike Campbell – low net – Association



Todd Singer – Longest Drive



Andrew Trafananko (accepting for brother Mike) – closest to the pin

The CO, Lt Col Greg Chan was the low net for the Serving Members.

Thanks to Greg Bell for organizing the tournament and arranging for the prizes.

REMEMBERING OUR 47TH BATTALION VETERANS

By Steve Cowan, Comox BC

Over the past few years, the Canadian community has been observing various centennial and significant events relating to World War One. Besides our attendance at Remembrance Day services across Canada, Canadians have been travelling to Europe to visit military cemeteries and battlefield sites; the significant one being Vimy Ridge. And while most of our war dead are memorialized in France, Belgium and England, there are many places where our soldiers are remembered by family and communities.



“The Wee Church on the Wall”.

Saint Augustine's Church, Londonderry

Photo: Steve Cowan

completely intact and is an excellent way to walk around the city. And we strolled the very wide walkway we came across the “Wee Church on the Wall”, Saint Augustine's Anglican Church. The doors were open, so we ambled in to explore. And on the wall was a memorial featuring sailors and soldiers from the parish “who gave their lives for King and Country in the Great War”. As I read the list I saw “William M. Davin Pte 47th Canadians” listed; a Westie from Londonderry.

While traveling around the island of Ireland (Éire) we drove 2,500 kilometres through some 18 counties of both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Both Judy and I have significant Irish heritage; three of my grandparents were Irish with the fourth being a Scot. And in several villages and towns we would see their cenotaphs.

After exploring Northern Ireland, we stopped at Londonderry before we swung back to the Republic. An interesting feature of Londonderry, commonly called Derry, is it is a walled city; the walls date from the early 17th century and circle the city at 1½ kms in circumference. The wall is



Memorial at St. Augustine's Church, Londonderry with Westie Private William M. Davin listed on the left. Photo: Steve Cowan

629592 Private William Maurice DAVIN enlisted on 3 November 1915 with the 47th Battalion in New Westminster, age 22.

He was the son of George Davin of Londonderry Ireland. William's trade when he enlisted was a rancher; he was 5'11" tall. No date is found on when he left Ireland or when he came to Canada.

On 13 November 1915 the 47th Battalion sailed from Montreal aboard R.M.S. MISSANABIE of the Canadian Pacific Line (built in 1914 at Glasgow, Scotland and later sunk by UB87 on 9 September 1918 52 miles off the south coast of Ireland). William arrived at Plymouth England on 29 November 1915. After a long period of training the 47th Battalion left England for the Western Front and arrived in France the next day on 11 August 1916. William was wounded on 10 Nov 1916 with a gunshot wound to his back and thigh. He was evacuated to England at the London Temperance Hospital and then, in January 1917, he went to the Canadian Convalescence Hospital in Kent.

By 12 May 1917 he is back with the 47th Battalion. While his Commonwealth War Graves certificate has a death date of 26 October 1917, his records show 26-28 October 1917 and in France or Belgium. I have not researched the WWI war diaries of the 47th Battalion to find where the Battalion was at this time. Private William Davin is remembered on panel 10-26-28 of the Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgium.

Finding a WWI Westie memorialized in an Irish church added some historical and regimental appreciation to our trip. And this made me reflect on another Canadian soldier with a personal connection who also served in the 47th Battalion in WWI.

428105 Private Frank Riddell Steven (1880-1941) joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force (C.E.F.) on 12 March 1915. Earlier I mentioned a fourth grandparent being a Scot; Frank Steven was his 10th and last child who was the youngest brother of my grandfather, William George Steven (1871-1939). In doing our genealogy I knew where the other four sons and five daughters were; no one in the family knew what happened to young Frank. Two of the sons moved to South Africa in the late 1800s and in a family letter written by a South African cousin it referred to "Uncle Frank joined the Canadian Army in WWI"! I retrieved Frank's file from Library and Archives Canada and saw his was a Westie.



The two medals earned by William Davin and Frank Steven for their WWI service – The British War medal 1914-1918 (left) and the Victory medal (right).

When he enrolled in New Westminster, he was put into the 72nd Battalion (Seaforth Highlanders); on the same day of 12 March 1915, he was transferred to the 47th Battalion; his service number is of the block of numbers for Westies. And he went overseas to England and France with the 47th Battalion. Soon after arriving in France, he was transferred to the 7th Battalion with whom he served with for the rest of WWI.

I was curious as to why there was no discharge certificate in Frank's file. He was released from the C.E.F. in England, where he was born. He did come back to Canada in the 1920s and died in Vancouver in 1941. I found his grave in Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver.

And I didn't know I had another Westie in the family during the years I was a Westie.

#1922 RCACC (Aldergrove) Annual Ceremonial Review



1922 RCACC (Aldergrove) held their Annual Ceremonial Review (ACR) on June 11 at CFS Aldergrove. This was also a celebration of the Corps' 80th anniversary. As a Westie cadet corps, they were honoured to have LCol Gregory Chan as their reviewing officer. Also in attendance were Col Bill White (ret'd), Capt Kody Thompson (CO of 192 CEF), Lt(N) Kevin Deck, CWO Marko Vanninen (Finnish Army), Capt Trevor Henderson (former CO of 1922), Dana Garcia-Annand (Army Cadet League) and Byron Bassaraba (Legion Rep).

Despite a loss of much senior leadership during COVID and a late influx of new cadets, the cadets performed very well on parade, giving a traditional Westie 110%. WO Jaelyn Ross was awarded the Legion Medal of Excellence for excellence in citizenship outside of the Cadet program and Sgt Aryan Bhardwaj was awarded the Lord Strathcona Medal for exemplary performance in physical and military training.

#1789 RCACC Hope Annual Ceremonial Review

The Westie Cadet Corp in Hope held their ACR on June 3rd. Special guests included were Col White, Col MacKinnon, Lt (N) Kevin Deck from the RCSU, Ian Williams, President of Hope Legion and Linda Pickell and Doug Noble from the Association.

This cadet corp has growing steadily over the year. Their drill and parade were amazing when you think the cadets are mostly first year.

Following the parade, the cadets had displays that the guests and families could look at and refreshments were served.

All the officers, CI staff, and private individuals should be very proud of their cadets.

Welcome done #1789.

Are Your Dues Up To Date?

The Royal Westminster Regiment Association depends on your dues and donations. Yearly dues are \$20 and a Life Membership is \$200.

Send in your dues today to;

Treasurer@royal-westies-assn.ca

Thanks.

What became of Kelly?

(Help us reconnect with former members)

How about reaching out to your friends that you soldiered with and persuade them to join the Association.