

VOLUME 2002/ 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, 2002

Melfa 2002

D I N N E R

BRUNCH

GOLF

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

&

MEMORIES TO RECALL WITH OLD COMRADES

Executive

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Editor's Corner Jerry Gangur email: jgan@telus.net

Knowing the right time to make a move or surrender responsibility or chose a new course in life, doesn't take place without doing a great deal of soul searching. You know the time for leaving is when you start to feel that there is no one else around that can do the job. In fact there are others, who might even do a better job, we just have to find them. For a number of years, doing the editor's job was a source of delight, amusement and satisfaction. The rewards were many. Members were so very generous in their praise and I will have fond memories and remember many veterans because of this endeavor. The time has come, however, when the mantel should be by grasped by someone else. (See inside).

When I became editor, I made a commitment to the then president that I would do the job for at least two years and later extended it to five or until we could find a replacement for me. It took longer than five years, but someone has finally stepped forward and has agreed to takeover as editor.

During the years as editor, I believe the presentation of the Groundsheet was upgraded. This is no reflection on previous editors, but simply a recognition that technology enables one to produce a quality product without having to rely on the talents of technicians. There is much that can be done to improve the quality of our newsletter, but the onus will be on my replacement.

The Lord willing and with the approval of future executives, I will continue to remain as the Chairman of the Future Fund..... It seems that having a chair of the Sick & Visiting is difficult to find. For this reason, I will volunteer to spearhead this subgroup. For now, to all Westies, good health and long life. ... Jerry

President's Report

Hello again fellow Westies. Here is just a quick update before our Melfa Weekend.

Things have been progressing slowly on the gaming funds, as we have not received our approval yet. Everything is in order, however, and we should be hearing something soon. This is an extensive submission for a large amount of money that may be causing the extended reviewing time. Our own funds are looking good and we should be able to complete the year on budget.

As a further reminder, the Melfa Weekend will be May 24th for the golf tournament, May 25th for the dinner, May 26th for the brunch and AGM. Additionally, the V.C. Memorial Lighting has been completed and we will be doing something for it during the dinner.

As I mentioned in the last issue of the Groundsheet, we are looking for fresh members in the executive. The Junior Ranks has attended some of our meeting since my note now I am looking for more participation from the Officers and Senior NCO's. Due to personal commitments, our Vice President, **Alan Morton** has resigned. Al has served on the executive over the last 6 years and done an excellent job. He has served as our chairman of the membership committee, chairman of the Melfa Golf Tournament, and as my Vice for the last 3 years. I wish Al well and expect to see him at future events. The executive is actively searching new executive members to fill this and other positions.

Pro Regie et Patria

Len Wohlgemuth

Just a Reminder

Dues are due and as we always have need for funds, payment would be appreciated. And if you are able to, donations will help us keep our heads above water.

The Regiment

This article appeared in the Sun (CP/Stephen Thorne). The article was read initially rather quickly and without much attention to detail. However, once having learned that one of the soldiers, **Terry White**, served with the regiment prior to joining 3 PPCLI, the article was re-read and much attention paid to the actions of our troops. It was felt that knowing one of ours was involved the Afgan operations, you might want to read about it. Hope my call meets with your approval.

Terry was a Master Corporal while serving in the Rwestmr' R . Last year he took and topped the Ranger course. The tradition of Westies training and producing the right stuff continues.

Editor

Not just peacekeeping Canadian troops shine after Afghanistan operation full image Canadian troops launch their assault on the Whale's Back in Eastern Afghanistan last week. (CP/Stephen Thorne) BAGRAM, Afghanistan (CP) - Canada's troops have been promised other missions, perhaps even more harrowing ones. But none will likely match the poignancy of their first week of combat in 50 years. For many, last week's assault in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan was the pinnacle of their careers, the culmination of years of training. And it answered the lingering question that gnaws at the back of every soldier's mind at some time or another: How will I respond in the real deal?

This was no peacekeeping mission. The troops had been told there were between 60 and 80 al-Qaida fighters still on the 3,500-metre mountain called Tergul Ghar - known to them as the Whale's Back, or the Whale. Seven kilometres long, three kilometres wide at the base, the Whale contained at least 30 known cave complexes and mortar positions. It stood at the mouth of the barren Shah-e-Kot Valley, gateway to the Takur Ghar and Pecawul Ghar mountain ranges, through which al-Qaida and Taliban fighters had been escaping into Pakistan.

A few months ago, al-Qaida fighters from places like Chechnya, Pakistan and Uzbekistan moved in and told area villagers they planned to stay and fight to the death. The villagers were told they could stay or go. They all left.

The Whale played a key role in stalling U.S. forces when they launched Operation Anaconda last month. It had been heavily bombed. The Canadians were asked to finish the job. A, B and

C companies of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry were there, along with a platoon of mortars, a direct-fire support unit, an administrative company and 12 Field Squadron of the Edmonton-based 1 Combat Engineer Regiment. There were also 120 assault troops from the U.S. 10th Mountain Division. They were all led in by the PPCI's reconnaissance platoon, the eyes and ears of the battalion.

There was a sense of history on the tarmac at Bagram air base last Wednesday as the Canadians in their distinctive green combat fatigues lined up in 43 to 50-person chinks, or helicopter loads, ready to be ferried into the combat zone. There were four women among them. If one helicopter were brought down, the next one wouldn't stop or turn back, Lt.-Col. Pat Stogran warned his troops.

Under the hot Afghan sun, the soldiers waited, some standing, some sitting, their masses of equipment lined up in rows. Some used the sighting mirror on their compasses as they painted their faces shades of green and brown for camouflage. Others quietly talked or appeared to be off in thought. Military chaplains administered communion to those who wanted it. When the order to move out came, the soldiers were packed like sardines into the twin-bladed Chinook helicopters. A crewman pointed a heavy machine-gun out the open back.

The 55-minute flights - probably the most dangerous 55 minutes these troops will ever spend in the air - were rough. They flew low, following the contours of the mountains and the hills, passing over walled compounds and villages, scattering herds of sheep and goats. They landed in clouds of dust halfway up the Whale, troops pouring out the back of the choppers and scattering like ants up the steep ridges and into the crevices for cover. The 20-man reconnaissance, or recce (pronounced REK-ky), platoon forged ahead, splitting into sections of seven or eight apiece.

Capt. Ryan Latinovich, a graduate of the Royal Military College and, at 28, already a nine-year Canadian Forces veteran, commanded the platoon. Latinovich, a native of Welland, Ont., made his way up top and down the ridgeline with his signaller, Master Cpl. Erik Kerr of Edmonton, and Sgt. **Terry White** and his section - Master Cpl. Chuck Cote of Edmonton, Master Cpl. Vic Mover of Thunder Bay, Ont., and Master Cpl. Jeff Whibbs of Peterborough, Ont., along with Pte. Shaun Cameron of Duck Lake, Sask., and Pte. Francis McCann of Langley, B.C.

It was hard going. The mountainsides were steep and covered in loose shale. There were the remnants of the U.S. bombing - craters in the hard rock the size of Jacuzzis or bigger. Unexploded ordnance and ammunition were scattered everywhere.

Loaded down with packs weighing between 25 and 45 kilograms, carrying weapons, helmets and flak jackets, they proceeded slowly, carefully placing each step. The thin mountain air robbed lungs of oxygen; the anticipation of what lay around each corner and over each rise quickened heart rates and compounded the effects of altitude and exertion. The closest welcoming committee was friendly: anti-Taliban Afghan soldiers sitting on the peak of the nearest outcrop. They watched for a while, then left.

The Afghan troops had moved in while the Canadian operation was being planned, rousting some al-Qaida but at the same time preventing the Americans from dropping three powerful daisy-cutter bombs intended to make way for the Canadian assault. They Afghan allies killed two al-Qaida and captured 12, "screwing it up for the rest of us," Stogran told his troops with typical bravado when the operation ended.

White's section with Latinovich and his signaller made it up top within a few hours. U.S. marine helicopter gunships flew overhead, a comforting sight that was not seen much in the days that followed. The Canadians were almost totally dependant on U.S. logistical support and didn't get enough. Rations - food and water - were critically thin by the time resupply arrived two days later. Air support was minimal and airlift was undependable. But Commodore Jean-Pierre Thiffault, the top Canadian commander at Central Command in Tampa, Fla., praised the "team work." "Considering the situation, the support we got was excellent," he said Sunday.

Thiffault, commander of the Joint Task Force, South West Asia, is in charge of all Canadian forces committed to the war against terrorism. "I was quite pleased with the support."



Sick & Visiting - JNG

Members still on sick parade.... Ron Hurley reports that getting around continues to take a toll on him, but his spirit remains high.... Nelson Scott finds it difficult to continue the short walks he always enjoyed. .. While visiting Vernon Ardagh, his wife showed me photographs taken during the war. Turns out he was quite a handsome guy. He gave me a book to read. Started to read it, couldn't put it down. Vernon finished it the first weekend & I will be having coffee with John and have him return the book to you.... Dave Growler continue on road to recovery from his stroke....Fred West, out past president, says he's to old to attend executive meetings and we know he is mending well....

Without a crystal ball, it is difficult to know who is under the weather, so we need to be told. We ask that members across Canada contact us when you have knowledge of a comrade who is hospitalized or confined. Your association wants to touch base with members during times of illness. _____

Future Fund

Asking for money is never easy and the fellow burdened with the task always seems to have his hand out. This being the case, let me once again ask for your financial assistance. Let me also confirm that two members who have already made donations to the Future Fund, have pledged to make \$5,000. One will make a donation when the fund reaches \$90,000. 00 and the other donor will donate his \$5,000.00 when the funds donated total \$95,000.00. Thus if we reach the \$90,000.00 mark, we will immediately have \$100,000.00 in our fund.

While we have deposited \$66,387.00 to the Fund, our fund has been internally credited additional units. The market value of these units is \$74,549.00. When income is assigned to our association each year, it is the market value that is used to determine the income we receive.

For those who may wish to remember us in their Will, your association would be most grateful and would put the funds to good use. Remember our association can only use the income earned from the fund and the principal cannot be encroached upon. Donations to the Future Funds in any amount will be appreciated. Many thanks Jerry N. Gangur

New Editor: **Ted Usher**, a long time member of the association will takeover as editor. We will jointly work on the Fall issue and thereafter Ted will be the man in the chair.

Melfa - 2002

May 22, 23 & 24

<u>Day</u>		<u>Activity</u>	
Friday	May 24	Golf	Time: 9:00 a.m. Tee Off Place: Delta Golf Course 11550 #10 Highway, Delta Cost: \$40.00 per golfer Note: Need returns by 13 May
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Chairperson : Bruce Howells (604) 465-41 </div>		
Saturday	May 25	Dinner	Time: 6:30 p.m. Cocktails 7:30 p.m. Dinner Where? The Armoury Cost: \$30.00 per person
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Chairperson: Len Wohlgemuth (604) 936-0554 </div>		
Sunday	May 26	Brunch	Time: 9:00 am - 10:30 a.m. Place: Offr/Sgts Mess Cost: Nil
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> OIC: Mike Kelly </div>		
Sunday	May 26	Annual General Meeting	Time: 10:30 a.m. - 11:45 Place: Officer's Mess

Reporting Pages: Pages 9 & 10 are designed for tear-off and mailing.

Melfa 2002 Return

Yes, I _____ will be attending the

Melfa weekend on May 22-24. I will be attending the following:

Friday Golf - May 24 Tee Off 9:00 a.m. Cost \$40.00 per golfer X _____ = \$ _____

Saturday Dinner 7:30 p.m. Cost #30.00 per person X _____ = \$ _____

Sunday Brunch. No charge Number in party _____

Annual General Meeting Number in party _____

Mail your return today. We need to know for planning purposes.

Tear along this line

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Proxy

The Royal Westminster Regiment Association

The undersigned, being a member in good standing of the above mentioned Society, hereby appoints

_____ or failing him/her _____

To attend, act and vote for and on behalf of the undersigned at the **Annual General Meeting** of the Society to be held on Sunday May 26, 2002.

Signed this _____ day of _____ 2001

Name & Signature of Member



It's Up For Sale and We Might Buy it.

Proud as punch, a parade in Mission, **Fred West** riding a carrier, like the one he rode at the Melfa, May 24-25, 1944. Reports have it that once in the machine, it was hard to get the guy out! He kept insisting the driver go around the block one more time.

Our executive has been approached to make a purchase. The carrier pictured above is available for purchase and our executive is now investigating our options. The president will no doubt have more to say when some very important as details are ironed out. What do you think? Would this be a prize to have?

In Memoriam.....

Ian Beckett	The Royal Westminster Regiment
Ross Douglas	Westminster Regiment (M) WW 2
Walter Jackson	Westminster Regiment (M) WW 2
Hector Roberge.....	Westminster Regiment (M) WW 2

MEMORIES

To those who served in WW2. While you are able to recall, share a event or happening during your war service. Your comrades will appreciate your memories and may even encourage someone else to pick up the pen and tell his story..... this invitation is also extended to Westie peacekeepers. The story can be as brief or long as you wish. We will publish. Don't worry about spelling, gremlins in the computer work hard to correct such errors. To those responding to our request, we do offer our gratitude and thanks. All letters will eventually be turned over to the museum.

Plan to be there!!

Melfa 2002 - Annual General Meeting

A note to our local boys. Members come from across the nation for Melfa reunions and some travel many miles and they do want to see some of their comrades. No excuses,