



Volume 2024/Issue 2
May
2024

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
New Westminster, B.C., V3L 1K3

www.royal-westies-assn.ca



The President and Directors of

The Royal Westminster Regiment Association

Request the pleasure of your company and partner at

the Melfa Dinner

Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the Battle

to be held at

*The Armoury, 530 Queens Avenue,
New Westminster, B.C., on the evening of Saturday*

25 May 2024 at 1800 hrs for 1900 hrs (Seven O'clock)

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 all, it is incredible to me that we are now coming up to the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of the River Melfa. I am hoping that as many of you can come to our annual Melfa Dinner and celebrate that victory and commemorate those that were killed and wounded.

Also, we are encouraging teams from all three messes to enter our annual Melfa golf tournament. Details about all the Melfa weekend activities are included in this Groundsheet.

I am really encouraged by our progress our planned trip to Northwest Europe in 2025. We are still planning to take selected Senior Cadets from our 5 affiliated Army Cadet Corps. Also, the CO is planning to bring a contingent of serving soldiers. So, we should have good representation from the whole Regimental family. In this edition there is link to the trip brochure and to registration for the trip.

I attended a candlelight service at the Legion in Aldergrove and there is more detail in this edition.

I was also honoured to lay a wreath on behalf of the Regiment at the Dutch-Canadian Remembrance Day Service on 04 May 2024 at Mountain View Cemetery.

I hope to see many of you at the Melfa.

Regards

Bill White
President

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2023-2024

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Hello fellow Association members:

Good day to all.

Where does the time go? We are just weeks away from Melfa, hope everyone is getting their tickets. It is going to be something special. Be sure to check out the Silent Action table and if you haven't got your new Beret, they will be available.

I would like to request that members think about submitting article for the Groundsheet. The Groundsheet is only as good as the members make it. So please take your pen and paper and send it to me.

It is always good to hear what our cadet corps have been up to so please send me some of the things you have been doing.

Pro Rege et Patria

Linda Pickell

The Tradition of Service Continues

Lieutenant Rick Wiltshire is a CIC Officer of 2822 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps, which is affiliated to The Royal Westminster Regiment. However, previously during the First World War the Regiment was the 104th Westminster Fusiliers of Canada. They recruited and raised soldiers for a number of Battalions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. The ones receiving the greatest number of Westminster Fusiliers were the 47th Battalion, the 121st Battalion and the 131st Battalion.



Rick's grandfather Walter Edgar Wiltshire, when in the 104th Regiment, signed up for active service in the 131st Battalion on 12 April 1916. His regimental number was 790916. He went overseas leaving Halifax on 1 November 1916 and arriving in Liverpool, England on 11 November 1916. He was transferred to the 30th Battalion on 13 November and then to the 47th Battalion on 03 December 1916 to join the fighting in France. He ended the war as a Lance Sergeant and was discharged on 26 June 1919.

Rick also had a great uncle, Frank William Wiltshire. He was also in the 104th Regiment and signed up for active service in the 131st Battalion on 06 December 1915. His regimental number was 790169. He went overseas at the same time as his brother and was also transferred to the 30th Battalion on 13 November 1916 and then to 47th Battalion on 27 November 1916. Later, after being wounded, he was transferred to the 66th Battery of the 14th Brigade of Canadian Field Artillery on 09 July 1917. He ended the war as a Gunner and was discharged on 28 June 1919.

Both brothers were born in Clayton, British Columbia.



8 Platoon, 131st Battalion

First Row (from the bottom - standing) – far right - Lance Corporal Wiltshire

Second Row – second in from the right – Private Walter Edgar Wiltshire



LCpl Wiltshire



Pte Wiltshire



Lt Wiltshire

[Visit to the New Westminster Archives](#)

The Winter Warfare Exercise – That Wasn't February 1973

While this particular exercise took place over 50 years ago, I will try to remember to the best of my ability, as I recall it took place in February 1973, we paraded at the Armoury on Friday evening so that we could be issued all the kit we needed. After that we were given a couple of lectures of what this stuff was, and how to use it.

That night we slept in the range and were awakened at 0600 Hrs. After throwing on my combats, I went up to the parade square for the morning inspection. After that we were fed breakfast that was made by Pte. Gillam in the kitchen beside the officer's mess.

After breakfast we loaded all the Q stores, we needed into the 3-ton stake truck that I drove up to the training area, which was up in Garibaldi Park, east of Whistler Mountain. So, began the most uncomfortable exercise I ever took part in.

The drive up was uneventful, but there was a light rain falling most of the time. When we arrived in Garibaldi, we turned off onto a logging road, which had some snow on it but was mostly gravel in the beginning. As we went up the mountain there was more snow and ice and we got to a point that I could get my 3 ton to go any further. It actually started to slide back down the hill, so we stopped there and unloaded the stores onto little white metal toboggans and began walking the rest of the way up the hill. Finally, we came to a fairly open area where we started setting up our tents to bivouac overnight. Once the tent was up, I set about cutting some tree boughs to line the floor and got my sleeping bag ready for the night.

We still had time to do some training that afternoon and so we went off on a patrol up the road and of course ran into our eternal enemy, the Fantasions! They fired at us, we dove for cover and returned fire and conducted our attack. When we completed our attack, I looked around and noticed that we were missing one of our guys, so I went back to where the action had started and started a search for him. I put a foot on the back on the side of the road, stepped up and looked over, and there he was. He had jumped over the side and into a bank of snow and sunk up to his armpits and couldn't get out.

I said to him to pass me up his rifle. He did that muzzle first. I had that feeling that this wasn't right, but I grabbed the barrel anyways and started to pull. Just when he was starting to come out, I had the end of his barrel right against my stomach. And all of a sudden, "*BANG*", his weapon went off and it blew over backwards onto the road. Now the water running down was making me even wetter than I already was! As you can imagine, I wasn't really happy with him and called him a few choice names.

We did finally get him out and carried on with our training patrol for the rest of the afternoon. When we got back to our camp, we started cooking our ration on the little one burner stoves we were given. - Oh yum!

As night came upon us, I got ready to hit the hay to try and get some sleep, sentries were assigned, then I went in the tent. My combat uniform was absolutely soaked and there was no way I was putting it anywhere near my sleeping bag, so I saw that there was a white cord that ran around the tent, so I figured that was a perfect place to hang my combats up to dry. - Opps another mistake. When I woke up in the morning, I reached out from my sleeping bag to grab my uniform. When I touched it, it was hard as a rock! During the night the temperature had dropped significantly, and my combats didn't dry out but had frozen rock hard. Unfortunately, this was the only uniform I had, so I had to put it on. That was very uncomfortable and when I did that, I ran outside and got one of the cook stoves and fired it up so I could squat over it to melt my combats.



3 Ton Stake – at Garibaldi



Section packed up – waiting to go



Pte Noble – 3 Ton Stake Truck

After a bit of breakfast, (ugh) we grabbed our snowshoes and walked back up the road to an open, fairly flat area. On went the snowshoes and off we go. It turned out to be much more difficult than I had thought. Because of all the rain that had fallen, the snow was very heavy! Picking up your foot was almost impossible, so it was necessary to change out the trail breaking lead solider much more often than usual.

Trudging around for a while with my parka on, even though the rain had stopped for a bit, I managed to get soaked from sweat. After the fun snowshoeing trip, we went back and tore down the camp, packed it to the trucks and left to go back to the Armoury.

For the entire exercise, I was wet & cold, the only time I got warm was sleeping at night, I found out during this time that our parkas didn't shed the rain, but instead, soaked it up like a sponge. Same with the rest of our arctic Gear. So wet, cold & bad food made for what turned out to be a typical Westie exercise. If it rains, it must be a good time to go out in the field.

Corporal (Retired) Doug Noble

2316 RCACC New Westminster

Our Westie Corp is presently parading about 45 cadets on our Thursday nights. new recruits continue to walk in, and our total strength is 68. Our team participation has also increased. We run marksmanship and pre-para on Monday and Recce and now First aid on Tuesday.

Our last parade prior to Christmas had a fun visit from the team at bubble soccer and battle archery. Santa also was able to drop in and made our closing parade more fun than usual.

Due to the snow we had to cancel a few parade nights in January. Area-directed activities continue and are well attended by our members. EX WESTIE RAID was attended by 9 senior cadets and 3 officers from our Corp and a contingent of 5 seniors and 1 officer from 2922 Abbotsford Westies. The weekend was a great success. Lots of fun for the cadets with challenging field craft, navigation and patrolling lessons ending with a night nav ex. The highlight on Sunday morning was being in the middle of the raid at the end of the EX. We got more training done in one weekend than most can accomplish in 3 weekends.

Fantastic effort and dedication by the whole regimental team to make it a successful and worthy event for our cadets.

1838 RCACC Maple Ridge

Our nominal roll is currently 35 cadets with 25 of them parading regularly on Monday and Thursday nights. We keep getting new recruits through word of mouth with a total of 4 this past month. Unfortunately, 2 cadets left the corps in January. We have added a new member to our pre-para team even though none of our cadets will be eligible for this year's course due to age, we are hoping for positive results next year. Our cadets are also continuing to improve with new shooting awards being handed out monthly.

Our annual mess dinner was a great success back in December with special guests from the Regiment, the Maple Ridge Legion and the Army Cadet League.

We were lucky to only lose one night worth of training due to the snow.

We had an excellent winter exercise this past weekend in Manning Park. Mukluks and military sleeping bags were provided to all. Cadets mainly set up camp the first night. A few lessons about winter survival and appropriate dress for various activities were presented while in the modular tent we had set up. Thanks to ASU for their support in providing the equipment. Cadets slept in tents the first night. On Saturday morning, cadets learnt about how to make snow trenches for sleeping in. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough snow to build snow caves. After the lessons, the cadets put into practice what they had learnt. In the afternoon we went snow-shoeing. It was a challenging trek of 5.5km with a considerable amount of it being a steep uphill. For some, this was their first-time snow-shoeing. Everyone managed to push through and get the job done. Prior to dinner cadets continued on their snow trenches. Most cadets felt comfortable sleeping in their handmade shelters overnight. Games were played prior to everyone going to bed for the night after an exhausting day. With a light snow coming down most of Sunday was spent on camp clean-up. Taking down the shelters, the tents and the mod-tent etc. ready for the bus ride home. When picking up their cadets, most parents commented how tired yet happy they looked. A very successful training weekend was had by all!

Next month will bring more star level training with an emphasis on leadership and drill.

1789 RCACC Hope

1789 Royal Westminster Regiment army Cadets held a 2 ½ day training exercise on April 12,13,14. This exercise focused on team building for the new cadets and leadership training for the junior NCOs. The exercise got off to a rocky start as the road (Hwy 1) was closed due to an unfortunate vehicle collision and many of the cadets were stuck in traffic with their parents. However, once the cadets arrived at the training site it was smooth sailing from there. Friday night was filled with campfire stories for the cadets and briefings for the junior NCOs. Saturday consisted of team building activities such as a low obstacle course, archery and indoor rock climbing all coming to the highlight, night maneuvers using radio procedures. Sunday consisted of a rather competitive game of volleyball between Team Daigneault vs Team Perry (no one kept score) and camp take down. Several firsts happened at this camp including a first time in command for a MCpl, a first overnight camp for a new Cadet and a birthday of a certain Captain. All in all, this exercise was deemed a complete success by cadets and officers.





Linda Pickell

Candlelight Service – Aldergrove – 07 April 2024

The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 265 Aldergrove held a candlelight service in commemoration of the 107th Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.



Following the “O’Canada” and “Welcome”, the Master of Ceremonies, Doug Hadley, introduced John Goheen who spoke about Lieutenant Robert Hazelette Simonds of the PPCLI who is one of the names on the Cenotaph.

Invited guests and members were accompanied by Cadets, from 1922 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps (affiliated with The Royal Westminister Regiment), to place the candles (solar powered) around the Cenotaph as shown in the picture above. The first candle was laid by a Second War veteran, 103-year-old Mr Bud Freeston of the Black Watch.

After the candles had been placed the bugler, Art Black played the Last Post. Following the two-minute silence piper Ronan Terryp played the Lament and then the Bugler played the Rouse. The programme ended with the playing of “God Save the King”.

On the Cenotaph there are 120 names, all from the area. The following are the Westies who served in the Second World War.

Regt #	Rank	First name(s)	Last Name	Unit	Died
	Lt	John Henry	FRISBY	Westminster Regt	28 Dec 44
K46204	Pte	Nickolo	FRUNO	Westminster Regt	25 May 44

The following are the Westies who served in the First World War. All the units they served in have been included. 12 were in the 104th Regiment, Westminister Fusiliers of Canada (shown as the 104th Regt below) and then signed up for active service.

Regt #	Rank	First name(s)	Last Name	Units	Died
429549	Pte	Paul	DOUTAZ	7th Bn (47th Bn (104th Regt))	27 Sep 16
826689	Pte	Stephen John	EMPTAGE	47th Bn (143rd)	05 Jun 17
790846	Sgt	John Cromwell	HENDERSON	47th Bn (131st (104th Regt))	28 Sep 18
463308	Pte	Stanley William	JEFFERSON	3rd Cdn Pioneer Bn (62nd Bn (104th Regt))	09 Jan 21
790318	Pte	Frank	JOHNSON	29th Bn (131st Bn (104th Regt))	12 Aug 17
429259	Pte	Noel Wilfrid	KENDALL	7th Bn (47th Bn (72nd Bn))	14 Feb 17
628684	Pte	William	LEE	7th Bn (47th Bn (104th Regt))	13 Jun 16
790247	Pte	Francis Hubert	READ	7th Bn (131st (104th Regt))	10 Nov 17
463352	Pte	Frederick Orlando	ROBERTS	3rd Cdn Pioneer Bn (62nd Bn (104th Regt))	03 Jun 16
790520	Sgt	Alexander Eugene	ROSS	47th Bn (131st Bn (104th Regt))	09 Jan 18
629125	Cpl	Leslie	SWAIN	47th Bn	05 to 07 May 17
790360	Pte	John	TOPPING	47th Bn (131st Bn (104th Regt))	22 Oct 17
790038	Pte	Alfred W	TRATTLE	47th Bn (131st Bn (104th Regt))	23 May 17
628577	Pte	William Arthur	WILSON	47th Bn (104th Regt)	29 Oct 17
17073	Sgt	Jesse	WRIGHT	7th Bn (104th Regt)	14 Apr 17

Note – date of death for Corporal Swain was only identified as being within the period of 05 to 07 May 1917.

Memorial Service in Putten, Netherlands



Every year there is a ceremony of remembrance at a memorial in Putten to three Westminsters and a trooper from the 8th Hussars, namely, Cpl Charles Pewtress, Private Frederick Waters, Private John Wakula and Trooper John Burpe who were killed during the night of 17 April 1945. This will be one of the monuments to be visited during the Association trip in 2025.

Photo – Curtesy Sjoerd Roozenbeek, Putten

MELFA DINNER

Cocktails: 1800 hrs

Dinner: 1900 hrs

Dress: DEU

Location: 530 Queen's Ave, New Westminster

Unit Contacts:

Officers:

Capt Kelly (michael.kelly@forces.gc.ca)

WOs & Sgts:

WO Skrebsky (skrebsky@hotmail.com)

Junior Ranks:

Cpl Simpson (jessielainesimpson@gmail.com)

25 May 2024

\$70

Payable by etransfer : Treasurer@royal-westies-assn.ca



MELFA GOLF



Time: 1000 hrs

Location: Delta Golf

CONTACT: Greg (treasurer@royal-westies-assn.ca)

24 May 2024

\$90

ettransfer: Treasurer@royal-westies-assn.ca

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Time: 1030 hrs

Location: WO & Sgts Mess

26 May 2024

Royal Westminster Regiment Association

NW EUROPE

Paris - Arras - Ypres - Arnhem - Putten - Otterloo - Amsterdam

April 24 - May 7, 2025 (14 days)



For more details and to register for the trip please visit the Special Travel International website;

<https://sticanada.com/rwr25>

re 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.