



WNSR REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Perpetuating the 69th and the 75th Regiments and the 112th and 219th Battalions CEF

Summer 2022

Volume 9, Number 1

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Like us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/wnsrra
We only have 773 "Likes" and 814 followers, but you can change that.

WNSR page on Facebook is called: West Nova Scotia Regiment and has 1,184 members

If you got your newsletter by mail, we don't have your e-mail address. Please help us save paper, printing and postage costs by sending the editor your e-mail address. Thanks.

Reunion 2022? Yes or No?

It took a little time to consider all the factors, but happily, the answer is Yes. The Regimental Association Executive has confirmed that there will be a WNSRRA Annual Reunion in Camp Aldershot on the weekend of **9-11 September 2022** after a few years off because of COVID 19.

We feel that the conditions allow for a safe reunion. Of course everyone's situation has individual circumstances. Masking rules have been changing frequently, but one thing is sure: the Reunion attendees are expected to follow the Public Health protocols in place for the places where we congregate. The CAF decides the rules in Aldershot, RCL has their rules, etc. We will do our best to make sure everyone knows the protocols with as much lead time as possible. When in doubt, bring a mask.

Our Regimental Association (RA) had an established Reunion Schedule. Specific details are not available at the time of publication for this newsletter, but you can plan on the ever-popular and casual Friday Night BBQ. An annual Banquet and social evening is planned for Saturday, and Sunday will include an Annual General Meeting plus our Memorial Service and reception.

If you plan to attend this great Association event, we'd like you to tell us which events you plan to attend and how many people will be in your group. This allows us to get the right amount of food ready and the proper number of beverages cooled, waiting for your arrival. Let us know you're coming by clicking on this link [Reunion RSVP](#) and answering the simple questions

LCol Bobbitt tells us that the Regiment supports the RA and will do what they can to make this long-awaited Reunion a tremendous success. Don't miss it, and talk it up with your fellow West Novas.

In late June we received the sad news of the passing of our former Honorary Colonel, the Honourable John G. Leefe, BA, BEd, MA, ECNS, DCL. He was a scholar, historian, teacher, author, and politician, but he may have enjoyed being a part-time honorary soldier more than anything else. He was a genuine friend to the Regiment, attending all of our ceremonial, training, and social events. Colonel Leefe's uncle, Lt-Col JS Leefe, CD, was a CO of the West NSR in the mid-50s, and so his post as honorary colonel was very important to him. He truly enjoyed his six years with the West Novas. Rest in peace, Colonel John – **Semper Fidelis**.





Partial Honour Roll - April 2021 – June 2022

At this time, I cannot provide a complete and accurate list of West Nova deaths since our last newsletter. However, I will list the passing of comrades of which I know since the end of March 2021.

These West Nova Regimental Family members passed away since our last newsletter. We thank them for service to Canada and Canadians and wish them eternal rest.

Malcolm TL “Mac” Bishop WNSR Band Deceased 31 Oct 2021	J Stanley “Stan” Dauphinee RCR, CAR, and RSS WNSR Deceased of Windsor 20 Nov 2021
Kenneth M Keddy WWII WNSR Member of the Devil’s Brigade (1 st SSF) Deceased of Greenwood- 6 Nov 2021	Victor Dukeshire WWII WNSR Survivor of the attack on Pt 1009 Deceased St. Catherines, ON – 1 Jan 2022
Clarence “Diddy” Desmond Black Watch (RHC), RCR RSS with WNSR Deceased of Moncton 15 Jan 2022	Frederick A. Young WNSR Deceased of Steam Mill 16 Jan 2022
Peter M.A. Best WNSR Deceased of Kentville 20 Feb 2022	Andrew Ellsworth Hiltz Black Watch (RHC) and WNSR Deceased of Murphy Lake 3 Mar 2022
John M “Bunny” Taylor WNSR Deceased of Kentville – 22 Mar 2022	James W “Jim” Fortner WNSR Deceased of Greenwood- Apr 2021
Douglas W. “Doug” Strickland WWII – Hfx Rifles and WNSR Deceased of North Sydney 21 Jun 2022	John G. Lefe Honorary Colonel WNSR 2012-2018 Deceased of Liverpool 25 Jun 2022
Robert G. “Bob” Fraser WWII – WNSR Deceased of Bedford 1 Jul 2022	

This Regimental Association was founded and maintained for at least a half century by the World War Two veterans of the Regiment whose numbers have continually. In 2022, we have no exact count of surviving WWII West Novas, but we certainly know when we lose one. I’ve used this newsletter to give special recognition to the recent losses as a Last Post to old soldiers fading away.



Ken Keddy (Age 99)
Quiet Commando of the Devil’s
Brigade



Victor Dukeshire (Age 99)
Survivor of the Battle for Castel di
Sangro (Pt 1009)



Sgt Doug Strickland (Age 102)
Survivor of The Gully and The
Hitler Line

Our Regimental Association members are happy to have met you and proud to have known you.

Commanding Officer's Regimental Update

Fellow West Novas, current and formerly serving. It is my pleasure to submit my first update to the Association Newsletter for your review.

Introduction

For those I have not met yet, I joined the Regiment in 1990 as a private soldier and took my commission a couple of years after that. By 1996 I moved to the United States to pursue independent contracting. A year later I was back in Canada doing security work in Ottawa. In 2009 I moved back "home" to Nova Scotia, and in 2011 rejoined the Regiment as a Lieutenant. It has been my pleasure to hold a variety of roles including Platoon Commander, Company Commander, Operations Officer, and now Commanding Officer. In my civilian work I manage the Cybersecurity team supporting the Canadian Navy's new warships, the Canadian Surface Combatant. I am happily married of 27 years with three grown children.

Training

It has been almost exactly a year since I assumed Command of the Regiment and it has gone by in a flash. Right now, our soldiers are for the most part employed on Full-Time Summer Employment (FTSE) primarily in Gagetown and Aldershot. They



Photo: West Novas on a winter pistol range, Feb' 22.

are engaged in a variety of tasks including career courses, general duties, and course staff. While many of our soldiers are "away" on task, the Regiment remains highly active. We are running an Infantry Basic Machine Gunner (IBMG) course this summer, finishing our Operating Plan for the coming year, and supporting the FTSE program with personnel and equipment.

When we resume in September, we will carry-on with our typical training including ranges tactical

exercises, administration and planning, and professional development.

Exercise MAROON RAIDER

The West Nova Scotia Regt has been selected as the lead for Exercise MAROON RAIDER, which is the annual Division exercise conducted at Fort Pickett Virginia. Some of us may remember this exercise as ARCON, DIVCON, MILCON, or other names. It speaks well of the Regiment that we have been selected for such an important task, although as I will note later on, it increases pressure on the significant challenges we currently face.

In broad terms, MAROON RAIDER is a combined arms exercise that is expected to include Platoon live and dry training within a Company context. Further training will focus on integration with Artillery, Armoured Recce, Combat Service Support, and Influence Activities (e.g. PSYOPS).

Ceremonial

This May we held our first Italy Day since COVID began. For a variety of reasons, we went back to basics eating a haybox meal of spaghetti under cam net draped mod tent frames, while we acknowledged the accomplishments of the Regiment during the Italian campaign.

We look forward to supporting the next Regimental association reunion when that occurs.

In late May, the Regimental Sergeant Major and I had the pleasure of inspecting our (yet unconsecrated) Colors. The last set prepared over a year ago was found to be lacking and was rejected due to numerous errors and quality shortfalls.



Photo: West Nova soldiers, Italy Day, May 2022

I am happy to say that with a couple of minor corrections the current set looks good, and I will be

proud to see them flying on Parade soon. We have not yet fixed a date for the Colours parade however I am anticipating September 2023, barring any changes or unforeseen circumstances. It is our intent to hold the Colours Parade at Fort Ann in Annapolis Royal, and of course all members of the Regimental family are invited.



Photo: LCol Bobbitt and CWO Rogers inspect the new Regimental and Queens Colours, May 2022.

Challenges

The Canadian Army currently faces numerous challenges, most of which trickle down and can be felt at the Regimental level. The behaviour of some of our top leaders has been unacceptable and has created a negative public perception of the Canadian Armed Forces that must be corrected in order for us to be effective.

COVID has restricted our ability to train and fight like we used to, and although we have adapted very well that remains a deep impact. Our numbers are, I believe, the lowest in our history at about 110 total strength. This is not a phenomenon unique to us with nearly all units in 36 Brigade below even that strength. Personnel shortages are keenly felt across the army and indeed the entire Canadian Armed Forces. I am hoping that in my next update I will be able to report on the success of a number of initiatives to attract and retain soldiers.

To compound this challenge, the so-called "missing middle" means that as a fighting force, we lack our most key resources: junior leaders who are the backbone of our organization. It is our Corporals/Master Corporals and Lieutenants/Captains that perpetuate our Regimental ideals, and we are in short supply. That means the work falls on us few who remain to professionally train our new recruits to the expected standard.

The picture is not all bleak. Although small, we boast a dedicated and highly capable group of soldiers who continue to work hard and love the job.

Our sense of camaraderie remains strong, and we are dedicated to ensuring the future of the Regiment.

The Regimental Family

Whether you know it or not you are a piece of the Regimental Family. In my civilian work when a term is capitalized that indicates that it has a formal definition and contractual meaning. As such, it is appropriate to capitalize the term here as well. The Regimental Family is a real construct, and its effects have been felt by many.

I would like to close by reinforcing our part - indeed even obligation - to the Regimental Family. It will thrive with our care, or whither on the vine with our neglect.



Photo: Highway Naming Nov '22

Our soldiers both current and former who need assistance from the Regimental Family only receive it if we come together and provide it. I recognize that not everyone will be able to contribute at all times, but that, in a sense, is the point. When we are able, we must support our fellow soldiers, but each of us in our time will need to draw on the strength of the Regimental family. For those who are able to provide that much needed support, we are profoundly grateful.

MA Bobbitt, CD
Lieutenant Colonel
Commanding Officer

Semper Fidelis



Bravery in Arms

Article by Roger Chabot, former WNSR RSS, war artist, historian, and WNSRRA member

Through the BIA documentary series and my paintings, my mission is to communicate and preserve our rich Military Legacy. “We are all Guardians of the Memory when we engage ourselves in activities of remembrance.”



Retiring in July 2016 after more than three decades of CAF service, I began the pursuit of my long time dream to become a War Artist. I started with the 50th Anniversary of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, creating my first short video series, “*In Search of Pegasus*” and the painting “The Great Adventure”. Encouraged by the success of this project, I was set to go to France in the Fall of 2018, to visit Juno Beach and other Canadian battle sites in Normandy. My goal was to create two commemorative paintings for the 75th Anniversary of D-Day, and the first Brothers In Arms series (BIA 75th D-Day). This project culminated with the unveiling of one painting, during the 75th ceremonies at Canada House, Bernieres-sur-Mer and the other at the 1 Can Para Cairn, near the Ex-Coelis Mountains, in Siffleur-Falls, Alberta.

During my first trip to Normandy, at the Canadian War Cemetery at Bény-sur-Mer, I met the gardener, tending graves. As we spoke, I asked this humble man how it feels to be a gardener in a place like this? His instant reply was; “*I think I am more a Guardian of the Memory, than I am a Gardener.*” Those words penetrated my soul deeply. It was exactly what brought me to Normandy, to be a witness of the past, a “Guardian of the Memory”. In Latin, it translates to **Custos Memoria**. From that day these words became the motto of *Brothers In Arms*, now *Bravery In Arms*. I immediately began work on another project right after the D-Day Commemorations. This next project would feature a new video series and be accompanied by a painting that would highlight the Legendary History of the First Special Service Force during the battles of the Winter Line in 1943-44.

During that first trip to Italy in the Fall of 2019, I realized how little I knew about the accomplishments of the Canadians in the Invasion of

Sicily and during the Italian Campaign. I would return to Italy, to walk in the footsteps of the 1st Canadian Infantry Division and the 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade, from the beaches at Pachino, all the way to Senio River: a gruesome campaign lasting 18 months during WWII.

The initial plan was to return to Italy in 2020, with a small film crew, to record the series, *BIA D-Day Dodgers of Canada*, in two deployments. First, during the summer of 2020 in Sicily, to experience the scorching heat, and the other in late November of the same year, to experience the cold rain of Northern Italy. Unfortunately, COVID 19 forced an indefinite pause, but I don’t discourage easily. I used this extra time to prepare better, to learn more, through a full library of books, and to launch an extensive fund raising campaign to help finance production expenses.



BIA D-Day Dodgers of Canada evolved into my biggest project ever. In fact, I am still at it as we speak, editing the more than 8Tb of images and footage that the film crew recorded during our 32 day deployment in November 2021, plus a second, one week trip to Sicily, in April 2022, when I went alone, to finish recording what we didn’t do last Fall. The series will be edited into 15 episodes of 20 - 25 minutes each. A gigantic undertaking.

One of the most amazing things is the extraordinary support we received from all across Canada. I am proud to say that The West Nova Scotia Regiment Regimental Association, is among the more than 160 Sponsors who joined our family of Guardians of the Memory, and is actually one of our strongest supporters and partners. In fact, throughout the series, the West Nova’s stories will be brought to light on many occasions. Garry

Randall and Ron Stonier have both been extremely helpful by sharing significant details about the Regiment's accomplishments in Italy, and by connecting me with Alessandro Teti, a Friend of the Regiment and local historical expert about the West Nova's actions at Castel di Sangro. He was instrumental in helping us film this portion of our documentary.



But I must say that my favorite segment about the West Novas is the story of Padre Wilmot at the battle of the Foglia River. Indeed, Padre Tom Hamilton, the official historian of the CAF Chaplain Branch, gave us a very emotional rendition of this event, one that will leave no-one with dry eyes.



No words can express my gratitude to our wonderful Sponsors and Partners during this incredible journey.

The documentary series will be coming out in January 2023, and I would encourage everyone to visit our website www.braveryinarms.ca and our FaceBook page *Bravery In Arms*, to learn more about us. Also, make sure to watch all our teasers

and video updates by visiting our *Bravery In Arms* YouTube channel, in the Playlist: *BIA D-Day Dodgers of Canada*. It's free to subscribe.

Anyone can become a Sponsor of *BIA D-Day Dodgers of Canada*. All you do is purchase a Sponsorship Level through the Sponsorship tab in our website. Each level is accompanied by its gifts and perks. However, EVERY Sponsor's name, will appear in the credits, at the end of each Episode of the series. (www.braveryinarms.ca/store-1)

I am looking forward to the opportunity to visit the WNSR in early December 2022, to hold a Premiere of the movie "*The Making of BIA D-Day Dodgers of Canada.*" This will be prior to the launch of the series in January 2023, leading to the 80th Anniversary of OPERATION HUSKY. Special thanks to Ron Stonier, Garry Randall, and LCol Mike Bobbitt for believing in me and this important mission.

Your Brother,
 Roger Chabot, CD, KSTG
Custos Memoria

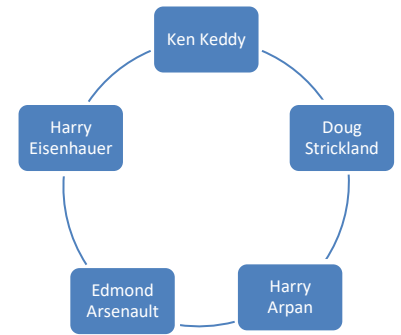
**WEST NOVA SCOTIA REGIMENT
 REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION
 PROUDLY SPONSORS
 BIA D-DAY DODGERS OF CANADA 2021**

West Novas receive Quilts of Valour



The Quilts of Valour – Canada Society is an organization whose mission as a Society is “to ensure that all Canadian military members, past and present who are ill or injured as a result of their service and sacrifice to our country, are recognized and honoured with a Quilt of Valour.” They are a volunteer society who accept and assess nominations and arrange for volunteer production and quality control of quilts as well as the presentation of the quilts to qualifying veterans. As of early June '22, they had presented 18,945 quilts. Each one a handmade hug, stitched with love and gratitude by grateful Canadians.

The names at the right are those West Nova veterans who have most recently become recipients of the Quilt of Valour. Ken Keddy's QOV was arranged by the NS Chapter Commandos Canada MC in 2020, and Harry Arpan's was presented by another organization.



The WNSR Regimental Association has become involved to recognize the sacrifice of our members, and so far Garry Randall has been the lead: nominating, arranging presentations, and participating in presentations. There are also a number of other former West Novas who have had careers in the Regular Force who have been recognized in this way, having been nominated by persons or organizations other than the WNSRRA and we congratulate them as well.

When the RA nominates an individual, we attempt to have a West Nova, former or serving, in attendance or participating in the presentation such as Garry Randall in Sydney, Brad Paul in Calgary, and Ian Haley in Hamilton. This is another good initiative by your RA.

QOV Canada Society is a volunteer organization and you can read more about their work, see their quilts, nominate a veteran, become a volunteer, or make a donation at <https://www.quiltsofvalour.ca/home>

The WNSRRA Kit Shop - Always there for you

Get WNSR kit online any time. Many members attend regimental events such as parades, inspections, or funerals in the RA Kit (Blue blazer with crest, white or light blue shirt with Regimental tie, gray trousers, and black shoes).

Go online and order your kit today.

- We still have copies of *Times to Remember* by Bill Thexton.
- The Kitshop now operates online in a hassle-free, convenient way to get the kit you want. We have blazer crests, Regimental ties, brass cap badges, ball caps, licence plates, and much more at wnsr.ca/catalog/24 Come in and browse around to see if there's anything you like.



West Nova Scotia Regiment Way Opened in the November Sun

It was a sunny sixth of November - a Sunday morning in Middleton when local citizens and a contingent of the Regimental Association joined with a team from the Regimental HQ to conduct the official naming of NS Hwy 10 between Middleton and Bridgewater as the *West Nova Scotia Regiment Way*.

The Commanding Officer, LCol Mike Bobbitt, was there to conduct the proceedings, supported by the RSM, CWO Rogers, HLCol Gibson, and former HCol Don Downe who was instrumental in seeing this project come into being. You can also see many familiar faces of RA members who spanned decades and showed up to witness this

moment in Regimental history.

If you weren't there, then you missed one of the longest and most entertaining unveiling ceremonies in the history of the Canadian Army which made the experience all the more memorable. It was a great ceremony with excellent weather and a good turnout with a number of friendships renewed.

Since the naming of this highway in honour of our Regiment in Nov 2021, a number of other Atlantic units have made application to have their regiments honoured in the same way. We wish them the very best of good luck in their efforts to follow our lead.

The Regiment and the Association also generously included time on that morning to say good-bye to me as I was moving to Ontario after my service in the Regimental Association. I felt highly honoured to receive a farewell gift designed and made by Duke Davidson. The framed brass badge was wonderful, and the words of my comrades were welcome and kind.

I already miss my West Nova friends, but they'll always be my brothers and sisters in arms no matter where I am. I don't regret any of the many days wearing that beret in the hot Valley sun and the frequent weekend rain. I'll never forget the pleasure and incredible satisfaction in doing things for the Regiment and the soldiers who have given me so many valuable memories, opportunities, and lessons. It has been a genuine privilege to have walked the same ground with so many talented, patriotic Canadians in this Regimental Family.

Thank you and *Semper Fidelis*.



Macdonald Museum Raising Money to maintain the museum that is the home of The West Nova Scotia Regiment Exhibit

The Macdonald Museum in Middleton has provided a home for the artifacts of the history and heritage of the WNSR since May 2017 absolutely free of charge. For decades members of the Regiment and the Association dreamed and schemed about having a Regimental Museum. We had plenty of material to show and stories to tell, but we had no building, no staff, or no funds to operate a museum.

The Macdonald Museum in Middleton has made that regimental dream a reality. Our job now has two components. First, we must refresh the exhibit on an annual basis by adding new items of interest so that visitors will enjoy the exhibits and tell their friends. Secondly, we must help the museum remain open to the public so that we have a home to tell the story of The Army of the Annapolis Valley.

One way to help the museum which houses our exhibit is by supporting their fundraising projects. One of their major projects is shown in the poster on the right. It's a fun night to help them celebrate forty years in operation. It's tough to keep a real museum operating these days, so if you can help, your Regiment would be grateful.

If you're not available, can't dance, or don't have any black or white clothes, then please visit their website at <https://macdonaldmuseum.ca/exhibits> and see some of the other ways you can support this museum which was there for us when we needed them. The staff there are a small, hard-working group who love what they do and want to keep this facility open year round.

When you support the Macdonald Museum, you support the West Novas.

ANNAPOLIS VALLEY
Macdonald Museum
Presents
Celebrating 40 years 1982-2022
THE BLACK & WHITE GALA
Featuring
THE ANNAPOLIS BIG BAND
Saturday September 24th 7:30pm
At NSCC
295 Commercial Street, Middleton, Nova Scotia B0S 1P0
Tickets \$40 per person
Silent Auction
Cash Bar
Hors D'oeuvres
50 / 50 Draw
Dress Code : Black & White
Tickets available from August 1st online at macdonaldmuseum.ca
Or in person at the Museum 21 School Street, Middleton 902-825-6116

If you are a West Nova, we have a mission for you

Situation: We've been out of action for two years
We'll soon receive our new Colours

Mission: We need to support this major Regimental ceremony physically and financially

Execution: In short, we need you to pay annual dues

Phase 1: Go to your computer and turn it on

Phase 2: Go to www.wnsr.ca/ra and find this icon

Pay Association Dues

Phase 3: Press it and follow the directions until your dues are paid

Phase 4: Stand down and know you've done a good thing for the Regimental Family

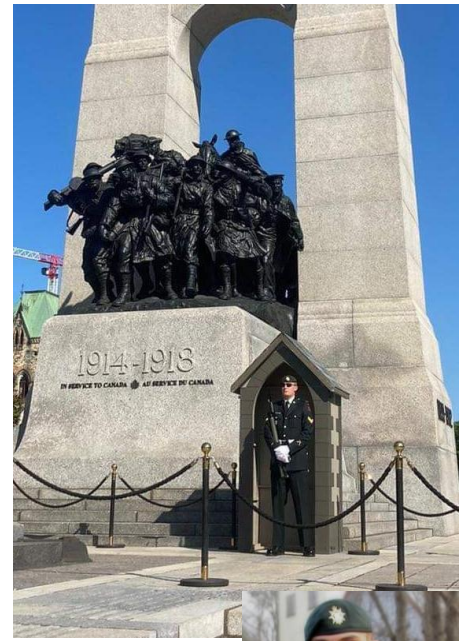
Please take the initiative to pay your annual dues of \$30 (the price of a pizza and pop). It would be greatly appreciated if all of our Regimental Family would help on this important historical occasion.

We Stand on Guard for Thee



We all recognize the location of this important landmark as the National War Memorial with the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa. However, if you look carefully, you will see that the soldiers in both photos are wearing the accoutrements of the West Nova Scotia Regiment. That's because on the left is Corporal Judson Luttmann of Middleton, and on the right is Corporal Quinton Fraser-Oickle of the WNSR. These soldiers are on Sentry Duty during the month of July 2022

At lower right is a closer look at Cpl Fraser-Oickle who hails from Bridgewater in a photo from Remembrance Day 2019.



What an incredible honour and opportunity for any soldier. Congratulations to both you young men, and thank you for your service in the performance of this important ceremonial duty.

I'm reminded of the words of a former colleague from the Regiment who used to say, "When you're a West Nova, sometimes it's hard to be humble." JRS

Not yet a member of the Regimental Association?

Wondering how to pay your annual dues?

Want to support projects for your Regimental Family?

The Regimental Association is an active organization, preserving the past, supporting the present, and preparing for the future. We need a strong team to do this, and the task will be easier with greater numbers.

There are still many former West Novas who haven't received this newsletter and don't know what they're missing. If you know a West Nova who doesn't get our newsletter, please forward this one and encourage him or her to join the Regimental Association.

Even if you're not able to attend Reunions, you can help support the projects of the Association to preserve the memory of soldiers of the WNSR by joining the

WNSRRA and paying your \$30 annual dues.

Just go to www.wnsr.ca/ra/docs, complete the application for contact information (if you're not already a member), and pay your dues online with PayPal. You will have joined the best Regimental Association in the Canadian Army Reserve.

On *Facebook*, "Like" us at **West Nova Scotia Regiment** and join an excellent group of 1,200 members, many of whom you probably know. You can also support us by liking the **West Nova Scotia Regiment Regimental Association** page.

Semper Fidelis

