



THE CORPORATION OF THE  
CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER

★ ★ ★

CEREMONY HONOURING  
THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF  
NEW WESTMINSTER

★ ★ ★

CONFIRMATION

of the

FREEDOM OF THE CITY

on

THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT

at

NEW WESTMINSTER  
CITY HALL

SUNDAY

26th May, 1963, at 2 p.m.

★ ★ ★

GEORGE BRINE, *City Clerk*



HER WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF THE CITY  
OF NEW WESTMINSTER

Mrs. E. Wood



THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE  
WESTMINSTER REGIMENT  
Lieutenant Colonel T. W. Hall, E.D.

# New Westminster - The Royal City and The Westminster Regiment



August 2nd, 1858 — Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, proclaimed that:— "Henceforth the wild and unoccupied territories on the North West coast of North America shall be known as "British Columbia".

For the site of the Capital, Colonel Moody's first choice was Mary Hill, which he named in honour of his wife, and forthwith ordered Captain Jack Grant, of the Royal Engineers to cut the first tree on the site.

Captain Grant, however, even with his axe in hand, was certain that a mistake was being made and gave his reasons for the choice of a site lower down the river, at the head of tide water which could be reached by big ships, and was easily defensible. Colonel Moody inspected the site and agreed.

Later, on March 17th, 1859, Colonel Moody reported to Governor Douglas: "The thickets are the closest and the thorniest I ever came across — what a grand old park this whole hill would make".

Queen Victoria was asked to name the Capital. And in May 1859 a dispatch was received, signed by Lord Carnarvon: "I am commanded to acquaint you that Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to decide that the Capital of British Columbia shall be called 'New Westminster'".

Shortlived, it might have been, but in the few years before the Capital was changed to Victoria, enough had happened to firmly establish New Westminster as a great western city.

This was mainly due to a company of Royal Engineers who with their remarkable feats of survey and construction did more for British Columbia than any other group in its history.

From their camp at Sapperton, so called by the Sappers, East of the present Penitentiary walls, they conducted all the important explorations in the colony. From 1858, they surveyed and mapped the colony, built roads, designed the first schools and churches, kept order, and provided an ever present force for defence against invasion. Five years later, in 1863, the Royal Engineers were withdrawn and returned to England, their duty done.

An offer of a free land grant to those who remained was accepted by about one hundred and twenty discharged Engineers who, together with their families, cleared away the forest, established farms and became pioneer settlers.

Within one week of the departure of their comrades on 11th November, 1863, those who had chosen to remain, together with a few civilians, voluntarily banded themselves together for the defence of the mainland of British Columbia. The company numbered seventy-three and they chose the title "New Westminster Volunteer Rifles". Their uniforms were part-worn garments left behind by those who had returned to England. The following year, 1864, His Excellency, The Governor accepted the appointment of Honorary Colonel; an issue of arms was made and an inspecting officer reported the "Rifles" as fairly advanced in Drill.

For one hundred years—from that day to this—the citizen soldiers of New Westminster have never, for one moment, ceased to train and be ready in case of need, for Sovereign and Country. Son followed Father, Grandson followed Grandfather, but the Royal City of New Westminster has never been without a volunteer defence force provided by its young men. Exigencies of the service may have caused Riflemen to become Artillerymen, or Fusiliers, or Machine Gunners, but the officers and men themselves have been steadfast and unwavering.

They helped in the suppression of Indian disturbances, organised resistance against possible Fenian Raids; and upon several occasions have dropped their civilian pursuits, put on uniform and rendered aid to civil power.

In war they saw service in the South African War, 1899-1902. In 1914 The Westminster Fusiliers of Canada trained some 6500 men of New Westminster, Fraser Valley and surrounding districts for the Canadian Expeditionary Force. A Victoria Cross was won by a member of the Famous "47th" Battalion when they served in France, 1914-1918; and in world war II, as "The Westminster Regiment", they fought at MELFA, Italy, with the foe in front and the foe behind, and won another Victoria Cross. They have many Battle Honours.

New Westminster, today, has the activity and bustle of the large city that it is; and at the same time maintains an atmosphere that is both personal and friendly. It is compact enough to retain a high measure of community spirit which has shown itself to great advantage in times of fire and flood; and should they be needed, the citizen-soldiers are still there — "THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT".

---

## Order of

A detachment of The Westminster Regiment, together with The Westminster Regiment Cadet Corps will parade under Captain H. E. Hamm at the City Hall, New Westminster, B.C. at 1330 hours, May 26, 1963.

While awaiting the commencement of The Ceremony, the Band of The Westminster Regiment, under the direction of Band Master, W. O. 1, A. Morris, will entertain.

At 1400 hours, May 26, 1963, Lieutenant Colonel T. W. Hall, E.D., The Commanding Officer of The Westminster Regiment, Will approach the City Hall door and knock.

The City Clerk, Mr. G. Brine, will attend the door and ask the Commanding Officer who he wishes to see.

The Commanding Officer will humbly request an audience with Her Worship, Mayor E. Wood of the City of New Westminster.

Immediately on the Mayor's appearance The Commanding Officer will request as follows: "Madam Mayor", as Commanding Officer of The Westminster Regiment I humbly request that the honour of the Freedom of the City of New Westminster be conferred on The Westminster Regiment.

We would be honoured if you would inspect The Westminster Regiment and the Cadet Corps.

---

# Ceremony

---

The Inspecting Party will move to the City Hall steps immediately in front of the Parade.

General Salute.

The Parade Commander will advance and report the Parade ready for inspection.

Inspection of the Parade by Her Worship Mayor E. Wood, of the City of New Westminster.

The Mayor's address, following which she will direct the City Clerk to read The Scroll.

Presentation of The Scroll to the Commanding Officer of The Westminster Regiment by Mayor of the City of New Westminster.

Acceptance Address by Lieutenant Colonel T. W. Hall, E.D.

The Scroll Party will advance and accept the Scroll from The Commanding Officer.

The Commanding Officer will request permission from the Mayor to march the Parade through the City of New Westminster with bayonets fixed, Band playing and drums beating.

The Mayor of the City of New Westminster will give permission.

The Commanding Officer will order the Parade Commander to march off with bayonets fixed, Band playing and drums beating.

March Past on Royal Avenue with The Mayor of the City of New Westminster taking the Salute.

---



1914

# The City of New Westminster

To The Officer Commanding  
The Westminster Regiment

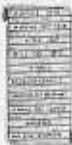


## GREETINGS

The Mayor, Aldermen  
and Citizens of the  
City of New Westminster



in the County of Westminster,  
Province of British Columbia, fully  
realizing and appreciating the  
splendid record of the Westminster  
Regiment in this Province and City,  
and being gratefully aware of a  
particularly close and cordial  
relationship which has long  
existed between the Westminster  
Regiment and this City.



Do by these presents confer upon you

## The Freedom of The City



and thereby confer upon you the right  
privilege, honour and distinction of  
marching all or any units, companies  
or detachments through the streets  
of the City on all ceremonial occasions  
with bands playing, drums beating  
and bayonets fixed.



*In Witness Whereof*  
we have caused our Corporate Common  
Seal to be hereunto affixed this twenty fourth  
day of May one thousand nine hundred and  
sixteen, pursuant to a By-Law lawfully  
passed by the City Council on the twenty fourth  
day of May one thousand nine hundred and  
sixteen.



APRIL 17 1916  
RECEIVED

*Ed. Hall*  
Mayor



City Hall



Barracks



Presented to  
THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT  
By  
THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER  
on their formation  
to the Training in 1857 of the Regiment  
26<sup>th</sup> JULY 1863



# HISTORY OF THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT

"The history of The Westminster Regt., oldest unit on the British Columbia mainland, dates back to 1863. In that year a company of the famous Royal Engineers, sent out by Queen Victoria in 1859 to bring law, order and help in the construction in this western out-post of her far flung empire, was disbanded and returned to England.

On the disbandment of the Engineers, the citizens of New Westminster, then a busy centre of the thriving Fraser River Goldfields, felt the need of protection from the twofold threat of Indians and lawless miners. A petition was sent to Governor Douglas in Victoria asking permission to form a non-permanent military unit.

This permission was granted and on November 20, 1863, the New Westminster Volunteer Rifles were formed. Comprising seventy-three all ranks, this colourful force was comprised to a large extent of former members of the Royal Engineers Company who had decided to remain in British Columbia and seek their livelihood in this new land of opportunity.

## *FIRST ACTIVE SERVICE*

This unit saw its first active service in the late spring of 1865. In May of that year a tribe of Chilcotin Indians went on the warpath, raiding construction camps of road builders and engineers in that area. Governor Douglas called on the New Westminster Volunteer Rifles to put down the uprising. In the following two months after several brisk skirmishes with the Indians, the ring leaders were captured, brought to Quesnel, tried and later executed. The rebellion ceased. In 1866 the threat of Fenian invasion from across the American border saw the formation of a second military unit in New Westminster. This unit was later disbanded in 1872, when the supposed threat no longer existed. For the next several years the New Westminster Volunteer Rifles went through several changes of names and organization but a continuous record of unbroken service was maintained. In 1940 the unit became the 104th Westminster Fusiliers of Canada.

## *WORLD WAR I*

When war broke upon the world in 1914 the Westminster Fusilier of Canada became a training unit for regiments of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, in all, 6500 men of New Westminster, Fraser Valley and surrounding districts received initial training in the 104th. Drafts were supplied to the 7th, 9th, 13th, 29th, 72nd and other regiments of the C.E.F. Two C.E.F. units from New Westminster were trained in the 104th New Westminster Fusiliers.

These were the 47th and 131st. The 47th Battalion proceeded overseas in 1916 and established a fine record of service. The "Fighting 47th" took part in the battles of Amiens, Ypres, Vimy, Hill 60, Valenciennes, Canal du Nord, Paeschendale and many other major engagements.

One Victoria Cross was won by a member of the 47th.

On arrival in England the 131st battalion was broken up, supplying drafts to Canadian units in France. With peace, the C.E.F. units disbanded and the 104th Westminster Fusiliers of Canada became the military unit of the Royal City.

### *MILITIA REORGANIZES*

In 1920 in a reorganization of the Canadian Militia, the 104th Westminster Fusiliers of Canada became the Westminster Regt. (Inf.). In a further reorganization in 1936 the unit became a machine gun regiment, training in the use of the Vickers machine gun.

### *WORLD WAR II*

At the outbreak of World War II the unit was mobilized as Corps troops. Following several months of training in the Royal City the unit proceeded to Dundurn, remaining there for the summer of 1940. In November the unit returned to Vancouver, and in December, 1940, became a motor battalion in the First Cdn Armoured Bde of the 1st Cdn Armoured Div. In May, 1941, the "Westminsters" joined the division for concentrated training in Camp Borden. The name of this Div. was later changed to the 5th Cdn Arm. Div. In November, 1941, the unit proceeded overseas with Div. Following two years of training in various parts of England the Div. sailed for Italy to become part of the "Eighth Army".

The Westminster Regt. perpetuates the 47th Batt. C.E.F. and the Regimental collar badges and buttons have the figure 47 on them. The allied unit of the British Army is "The Royal Warwickshire Regt." and in peace time very close and friendly relations are maintained between the two regiments.

### *ENVIABLE RECORD*

The Westminster Regt. has an enviable record of its actions in World War II both in Italy and North West Europe. The regt. spent a total of 192 days in contact with the enemy in Italy and 40 days in the line in Holland, making a total of 232 days in action. This figure only takes into account the days when the Battalion was actually fighting or under enemy fire and the days spent in reserve and on tactical moves are not included. During all this fighting the Battalion never failed to take an objective and once having taken it was never knocked off. Only three men were taken by the enemy as prisoners of war and they were all captured at the same time on the 24th of May, 1944, during the crossing of the Melfa River. The Battalion won the following decorations during the World War II:

- 1 Victoria Cross,
- 1 Order of the British Empire,
- 3 Distinguished Service Orders,
- 1 Member of the British Empire,
- 5 Military Crosses. Won by Officers.
- 1 Military Cross. Won by a WO1.
- 18 Military Medals,
- 24 Mention in Despatches.