



WNSR REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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

Spring 2021

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Like us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/wnsrra

We only have 738 "Likes" and 774 followers, but you can change that.

WNSR page on Facebook is called: West Nova Scotia Regiment and has 997 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.

Life is Complicated in a Pandemic

This newsletter was scheduled for April; however, I avoided writing it until I was sure of our plans. Our Reunion Committee and the Board of Directors were consulted around the beginning of February. We discussed the changing health risks and restrictions and also talked about the possible locations for a Reunion and who would be open and available to provide us with the services we would need. The general consensus was, "Maybe-maybe not."

You've all experienced moments during the last 14 months when you weren't sure what was open and whether you were permitted to go there. Nova Scotians have fared very well during this most unusual time, and we've even been referred to as an example of how to get through this with minimal damage. However, the news of the last few weeks has turned a little more serious; we're in lockdown at the moment and hope it will get better, but no one is too sure at this point.

I did inquire at Camp Aldershot about the September timeframe, and the Camp Commander said there were no sure answers. From that I concluded that there was little point to engaging our committee and volunteers to do the required planning if the Reunion was not likely to happen. As well, we know that DND does not want to be a vector of COVID-19 spread. Even if all the planning were done, the RA does not wish to put the health of any of our members at risk.

We can't tell the future, but I doubt that the "all-clear" will sound for us to resume doing what we always did. We will not "return to normal" because the way we do things will be forever changed. We will be able to hold reunions in future years, but unfortunately not in 2021.

This is a difficult message because I know that people will be as disappointed as I am by a second year without a reunion; however, I know the members of the WNSRRA, and I know that their desire to meet with their Regimental Family is strong enough to withstand this temporary setback.

Another newsletter will come this summer, and I hope to bring you better news. Many of us have learned a great deal about online communications, and Reserve Units and Cadet Corps have conducted training and administration from home. Plenty of Canadians have worked from home with success.

The opportunities are there, so watch for the next newsletter with details of the plan. If you have any clever ideas, let me know as soon as you can.

Semper Fidelis,

JRS



Honour Roll

September 2019 – April 2021

These West Nova Regimental Family members
have passed away since our AGM in September 2019.
We thank them for their service to Canada and Canadians and wish them eternal rest.

Capt (Retd) Ronald A. Gebhardt, CD PPCLI, WNSR Deceased of Berwick- 12 Nov 2019	Maj (Retd) Terry M. Dexter, CD B Coy WNSR, '55-59, RCR, CIC Deceased Oromocto - 23 Apr 2020
WO (Retd) Michael J. Ricketts, CD PPCLI Korea, WNSR Deceased of Aldershot- 21 Jan 2020	Maj (Retd) James D Price Halifax Rifles, WNSR Deceased of Paradise 27 Apr 2020
Henry Edward Mombourquette, WWII WNSR – Deceased of Halifax- 30 Jan 2020	Robert “Al” Fitch WNSR Band Deceased of Kentville 29 May 2020
Capt (Retd) Raymond F. McNutt, CD WNSR Deceased of Kentville- 04 Feb 2020	Sgt (Retd) Richard M Ball, CD WNSR Deceased of Kentville 12 Sep 2020
Maj (Retd) Gordon R. Hansford, CD WWII RCEME, WNSR Deceased of Kentville- 05 Feb 2020	LCol (Retd) Hugh Urquhart, CD WNSR Former CO Deceased of Bridgetown 2 Oct 2020
Russell G Johnson WNSR – 1969-‘76 Deceased of Kentville 9 Feb 2020	Corey H. Singleton, CD WNSR '80-'95 Deceased of Lockhartville - 23 Dec 2020
Donald A. Cyr, CD RCACC, 2NSH, RHC, RCR, WNSR Deceased of Kentville - 4 Mar 2020	Roy N Mansfield WNSR 1960s Deceased of West Paradise 19 Mar 2021
WO (Retd) John J Hampsey, CD RCR RSS WNSR Deceased of Aylesford 13 Apr 2020	Douglas JD Myra WNSR Band Deceased of Middleton 25 Mar 2021
MWO (Retd) Frank Arenburg, CD WWII WNSR Deceased of Kentville 19 Apr 2020	

NS Route 10 Has a New Name

The winding scenic road that spans the province connecting Bridgewater and Middleton has long been known as Nova Scotia Highway 10 or Trunk 10. This road has, for at least 84 years, been an important route for the West Nova Scotia Regiment, and it will henceforth also be known as *The West Nova Scotia Regiment Way*.



Established in 1936, the WNSR was formed by the amalgamation of the Lunenburg Regiment and the Annapolis Regiment.

Travel along this route was an essential means of communication and connection between the elements of the Regiment on either end of the route.

When war was declared against Germany in September 1939, the Headquarters moved to Bridgewater, and soldiers trained and lived at the South Shore Exhibition Grounds. As their training and the war progressed, the Regiment, now about 800 strong, moved to Camp Aldershot for the final phase of their training until they were declared combat ready and sent to Pier 21 to embark on the *MV Chrobry*, a Polish liner converted into a troopship to transport soldiers overseas. The ship left the dock on 22 December 1939



in convoy bound for the Clyde River in Scotland where they would board trains for the South of England where they would train until they deployed for the Mediterranean to invade Sicily in the largest invasion in the world to that point in history.

The West Nova Scotia Regiment would return to Canada arriving in Halifax aboard the *Ile de France* on 01 October 1945. During their overseas exploits, they had lost 352 soldiers killed in action with 1126 instances of soldiers being wounded, some several times.

In the summer of 2019, an idea was presented to the Regimental Association by Richard Stonier, a former member of the West Novas who had just completed a 35 year service career in the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals, retiring as a Master Warrant Officer in Battersea, outside of Kingston, ON. He had seen a highway near Bellville, dedicated to The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment and thought that the West Novas should have one as well. His suggestion was that Hwy 10 should be named for and dedicated to the soldiers of the West Nova Scotia Regiment because it links the Annapolis Valley and the Bridgewater area. The wartime HQ is at one end and the West Nova Exhibit in the Macdonald Museum in Middleton is at the other end.

The recommendation was passed to the Regiment where its implementation was taken up by the then Honorary Colonel Don Downe, a former Provincial Cabinet Minister, who brought the proposal to the Nova Scotia Government. The wheels of DND and government sometime move rather slowly, but within two years, the idea became a reality and signs recognizing the dedication of the highway have been erected at both ends of its 55 mile length.

What a fitting tribute to the citizen soldiers who volunteered to leave their homes and families to fight the spread of the Nazi regime. The Regimental Association pledges to perpetuate the name and history of the West Nova Scotia Regiment, and the efforts of each individual need to be recognized as we fulfill that pledge. For the citizen soldiers of the West Nova Scotia Regiment, in peace and war, we honour your service.

We will remember them



WNSR WWII Military Medal Recipients

This is the second installment of the stories of some of our wartime heroes.

Captain Frederick E Blakeney, MM, BEM

died at 78 on 19 Mar 1996 (F49875).

NNSH, WNSR, PPCLI, RHC (Black Watch)

He was a Pte when he shipped overseas on the *Chrobry* with the WNSR (22 Dec '43).

A/Sgt in the Casualty List (Wounded: 14 Dec '43)

Sgt when recommended for his MM in Sep 44

F49875 L/Cpl Frederick Edward Blakeney - BEM

During the early hours of Saturday, 2 Nov 40, an enemy plane dropped bombs in the village of Woldingham. L/Cpl Blakeney, who was on duty at the time, proceeded at once to one of the damaged houses and assisted members of his unit, who were billeted there, to leave, and rendered first aid to one who was injured. He then led the party to another damaged house where he liberated an elderly lady who was trapped under the wreckage. The other members of the party meanwhile helped other persons to leave and rendered them every assistance. L/Cpl Blakeney then posted a sentry over the damaged house until daylight.

Source: <http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/gal/cao-aco/index-eng.asp#sr-rr>



The following is the text of the recommendation for Sgt Blakeney to receive an Immediate Military Medal:

F49875 Sergeant Frederick Edward Blakeney - MM

On 15 September 1944 'A' Company of the West Nova Scotia Regiment was attacking the feature San Lorenzo (MR 8691).

Sergeant Frederick Edward Blakeney was Platoon Sergeant of 7 Platoon.

During the attack Company Headquarters was temporarily in a house at the foot of the feature. This building received several direct hits from heavy shells and the company sergeant major and six other members of company headquarters were wounded. Sergeant Blakeney immediately took over as CSM at a time when the battle was particularly fierce. He quickly organized company headquarters and led them into the attack through very heavy shell fire and machine gun fire from dug in infantry and Tiger tanks.

When (remainder of sentence cut off)...an Orders Group, and as all the officers had been wounded Sergeant Blakeney



was left in command. During the company commander's absence, the company was attached by tanks and was very heavily shelled and machine gunned. Sergeant Blakeney personally organized the company and supervised the digging in, setting a magnificent example to the men by his courage, coolness and leadership under fire. The enemy tanks were eventually forced to retire but extremely heavy shelling continues. This NCO then supervised the collection and evacuation of the company's casualties under great difficulties, all the stretcher bearers having been wounded and there were no stretchers. The house in which the wounded were being collected was hit six times by heavy shells and was under machine gun fire. However under Sergeant Blakeney's guidance all the casualties were successfully evacuated.

Throughout the entire action this NCO displayed courage and initiative beyond praise. His devotion to duty and coolness under fire were an example and inspiration to all at a time when the situation was critical.

Source: <http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/gal/cao-aco/index-eng.asp#sr-rr>

This passage is from Bill Thexton's *Times to Remember* describes an action outside the town of San Lorenzo in Sep '44: "During the Battalion "O" Group, "A" Company HQ was hit by an artillery concentration, and CSM Enos Nauss and the company signallers were all wounded. On his return, OC "A" Company had to improvise a temporary HQ with Sgt Fred Blakeney as acting CSM." *Times to Remember*, p. 171.

In October of '44, Thexton tells us that Sgt Blakeney had been transferred to D Coy as the CSM. *Times to Remember*, p. 182.

Editor's Note:

I enjoyed the privilege of knowing Fred Blakeney; he settled in Kentville after his long life of service, and we met at Reunions and at the monthly West Nova Valley Memory Club (a meeting and guest speaker each month) which met one Wednesday a month at the Officer's Mess at Camp Aldershot, and, were it not for COVID, would still be doing so. There were usually four or more West Nova WWII veterans at those meetings in the 80s, and their stories were incredibly interesting and inspiring.

WNSRRA Kitshop
Online 24/7
wnsr.ca/catalog/24

News of the West Nova Affiliated Army Cadet Corps



The last fourteen months have been a real challenge for the Cadet movement right across the country. For the most part cadets were not permitted to conduct in-person training, and when they did, it was done observing all the identified Public Health Measures for their province or area. This forced them in front of computer, tablet, and phone screens for virtual training. As expected, there was some attrition, but it didn't have the impact most anticipated.

When the Summer Cadet Training Centres closed last year, cadets who had been offered staff positions were employed as were some of their officers in preparing lessons and activities to be delivered virtually at the corps level. It was amazing to see some of the innovative and interesting things they produced for cadets to do during these months of the pandemic.

In addition to the good news that cadets were progressing in some of their course and weekly training, there was some good news for one West Nova Corps in particular. You may remember from the last newsletter that Cadet CWO Sara Greenough of 2688 Bridgewater Kinsmen RCACC won the NS Branch President's Trophy as the Outstanding Army Cadet in Nova Scotia. The story did not end there as C/CWO Greenough was also selected as the Outstanding Army Cadet in Canada and therefore the winner of the Walsh Memorial Sword. Besides being the RSM of 2688, Sara is an honours student, and accomplished musician, a competitive athlete, and an active volunteer. The presentation of this sword is usually made by the National President or Colonel Commandant of the ACLC, but this could not happen because of Covid-19 restrictions. The patron of the NS Branch ALCL is the Honourable Arthur J LeBlanc, Lieutenant Governor of NS who agreed to make the presentation at Government House. When restrictions were light, the presentation was made with 18 guests in attendance. C/CWO Greenough is the first Nova Scotia cadet to merit this prestigious award, and she's a West Nova. Congratulations Sara, and best of luck in the next phase of your life.



Interested in supporting the Nova Scotia Army Cadet league?



The ACLC (NS) is a charitable organization providing support for the 27 Army Cadet Corps of the Province. Recently, we've had some financial setbacks and have begun a different way of fundraising to push ahead to support the best youth leadership and citizenship program in the country, free to all participants aged 12-18.

We have a monthly online 50/50 raffle for NS residents 19 years of age and older. People visit the website, select a corps to support, choose the number of tickets to purchase, and pay with a credit card. You then receive emails to tell you how big the prize is getting. The winner gets half, and the League gets half, pays the admin fees and taxes, and splits the rest 30% to the League and 70% to

the corps. The more a corps is supported, the more money they raise.

The active link to the monthly draw is: <https://www2.rafflebox.ca/raffle/rcaclns> You can win money and support Army Cadets at the same time. West Nova affiliated corps include 1714 Annapolis Royal, 2444 Kings County, 2688 Bridgewater, 603 Weymouth, and 686 Passchendaele (Bridgetown).

We appreciate any support you could provide, and Good Luck.

The WNSRRA Kit Shop is always there for you

- We now have a supply of WNSR Regimental ties in the original colours available at the kitshop for \$20 each.

Go online and order your kit today. wnsr.ca/catalog/24

- The Kitshop now operates online in a hassle-free, convenient way. 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.



- ▶ WANT TO SUPPORT PROJECTS OF YOUR REGIMENTAL FAMILY?
- ▶ WONDERING HOW TO PAY YOUR ANNUAL DUES?
- ▶ NOT YET A MEMBER OF THE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION?

DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS, IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF MEMBERS WOULD PAY THEIR ANNUAL DUES (\$30) ONLINE AT www.wnsr.ca/ra THE REGIMENT ANTICIPATES RECEIVING NEW COLOURS IN A YEAR OR TWO, AND WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

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

- There are still 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 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 997 members, many of whom you probably know. You can also support us by "liking" the **West Nova Scotia Regiment Regimental Association** page.

Semper Fidelis

