

17 July 2007

Westies,

Today, we buried MCpl Bason. RSM Crevier spent countless hours planning the funeral, and today his masterpiece was revealed for all to see. It was magnificent; I couldn't imagine a more fitting tribute to a fallen Westie. Well done RSM! Photos are available for viewing on the Association Website at: [www.royal-westies-assn.ca](http://www.royal-westies-assn.ca).

All the Westies that had roles performed brilliantly. Everyone that I saw was well turned-out, every bit of boot and brass highly shone. I was so proud of the Regiment on this day. MCpl Bason's family were extremely grateful for the farewell we gave their son and husband. Well-done to all! For those that weren't able to attend, I will describe the event:

We set off from the funeral home and marched to the church. MCpl Bason was borne by a WW2-era Bren Gun Carrier (this was the primary vehicle The Westminster Regiment (Motor) fought from in WW2), so it was fitting. There are many fine photos of the procession on the Association Website. The church was packed with well over 500 people. It was so full that an overflow area was set up in the basement with a closed-circuit TV to broadcast the service. During the service, I was honoured to be asked by the family to speak a little on Colin as a soldier so I thought I'd share my words here (with apologies to those that were there):

"Today, we bury a soldier, a comrade, a Westie. A man of duty, integrity, discipline, honour, and self-sacrifice. He died a soldier's death, and today, we honour his memory as he gazes down on us. He was a man who gave 110%. I will remember, and miss, several MCpl Bason's. I will remember the MCpl Bason who, as a very junior instructor, still growing into his skin as a MCpl, did an exceptional job as a teacher and assessor on a junior leadership course. I will remember the MCpl Bason who led a recce patrol through a blizzard at EX COUGAR SALVO 06 to guide the landing of helicopters containing the rest of his company. When I linked up with his patrol, he was waiting for them to arrive, sheltering in a small shack, cracking jokes to keep morale up, as the boys were getting pretty cold and tired. I'll remember the MCpl Bason who couldn't wait to get to Afghanistan, who was a soldier first, passionate about serving. But most of all, I'll remember the MCpl Bason who, along with Brad Nixon, Matt LaPorte and others, would set the example for all at the Soldiers' Christmas Dinner, who would get the boot going 'round, who would cheer louder than anyone else when Col Deane took a drink from it. That's the man I will miss, and will never forget. MCpl Bason's death was a costly sacrifice on the altar of freedom and hope for people in a faraway land. The cost of

this sacrifice will be paid most heavily by Katrina, and especially by Vienna, who will never have a conversation with her father. But let no man say she will never know her father. I know a Regiment full of soldiers that will take all the time in the world to tell her about her father, our brother Westie, who we lay to rest today."

After the funeral service, we traveled by police escort to the cemetery in Abbotsford, down Hwy 1, which the police had closed to traffic while we passed by. At the interment, the bearer party, firing party, and escort all performed flawlessly. We modified the traditional ceremony by adding a second flag, which I handed to Katrina, after I'd handed the first (along with beret and medals) to Mrs. Bason. After the interment, we headed back to the Aldergrove Mess for some well-deserved refreshments. Roughly one hour later, the reception turned into a wake, as individual soldiers and friends shared their favourite memories of MCpl Bason. At 1700hrs, the bus left for New Westminster, where, for all I know, the party is still going strong.

In all, it was a funeral to be proud of, and I'm sure MCpl Bason is sleeping with a smile on his face, knowing that his regimental family pulled out all the stops to honour him on this day. I need again to thank the RSM for planning and running an outstanding funeral from start to finish.

Also at this time, I need to thank three other people. Capt Mallette handled all the million small administrative details required to make this funeral work so well. We couldn't have done it without him. Capt Hubbard, our Padre, helped officiate the service, but has done so much more than that these past two weeks. He's been the rock that has anchored the support to the Bason family, and he's also provided incredible support to Capt MacKinnon, the Assisting Officer. Last, I need to thank Capt MacKinnon, who has taken such good care of the Basons that they couldn't say enough good things about him, about the Westies, or about the Army. This was due to both his and Padre Hubbard's tireless efforts.

In conclusion, all Westies should hold their heads high today, as you all honoured your comrade in a manner in which I know he would be extremely proud.

PRO REGE ET PATRIA

M.P. Haussmann  
LCol  
CO