



The GROUND SHEET

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF
THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSN.

104th — 47th — 131st — The Westminster Regt.

Dedicated to the Ideals and Comradeship We Knew in Two World Wars

Vol. 12, No. 6.

Box 854, New Westminster, B.C.

December, 1962.

ANNUAL SMOKER

December 14, 1962

7:30 TO MIDNIGHT
ARMOURIES

REFRESHMENTS — ENTERTAINMENT — DOOR PRIZES — NO CHARGE

6th Street & Queens Avenue

New Westminster, B. C.

REMEMBRANCE BUT — HOW? WHY? WHERE? or WHEN?

REMEMBRANCE — power of remembering, act of remembering, state of memory, etc., according to the currently acceptable college dictionaries. There has, of late, been great to do, from pulpit, press, and sundry about the seemingly mad desire for all concerned to convert 'Remembrance Day' into a 'Grand Debauch' and that subsequently the dignity and solemnity of the occasion has all but vanished. This, undoubtedly, has been highlighted this year of 1962, by virtue of the not unusual collation of Armistice and Sunday, which both fell on Nov. 11th. Further criticism was directed at Federal and Provincial Governments alike for declaring the following Monday or Nov. 12th as a statutory holiday, this beneficence, supposedly in lieu of the loss of one free day, due to the unco-operation of the calendar. While there may be some justification for the cries

of 'Shame' directed at the legislative bodies, most of us probably accepted this day of grace with tongue in cheek, and used it to our own avails. This situation has existed in the past (1955, I believe), and will swoop in on us again in 1969, so there would appear to be ample time to make some readjustments, if so desired. More to the point is the many sided verbal attack on those of us who would dare to combine the depths of our dedication and honor to the fallen with more than a smidgen of festive grace and a wee bash of the grape to boot. It would appear that the prime bone of contention was not that this should happen on a Remembrance Day but, more emphatically, should occur on a Remembrance Day that is also a Sunday. It might not be the thing to do from Monday to Saturday but it could be tolerated; on Sunday however, it was blasphemous to say the least. There is, of course, no reason why any disturbance should be perpetrated on those who do not wish to join

THE GROUNDSHEET

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in, regardless of what day Remembrance Day should fall. This situation is alleged to have occurred in a northern B.C. community and, no doubt, was largely responsible for the outbreak of criticisms in general.

It is not correct, however, to infer that a memory is sullied or a memorial devoid of sincerity because one would dare to imbibe on the Sabbath. Memory, like marriage, religion and politics, is an intimate and most personal thing. It is intangible, and not to be molded and shaped to the desires of others. It is said that we do not 'Remember' on other days of the year and we are urgently asked to do so. Because of the deep personal intimacy of memory it would appear that we do 'Remember' in many ways and on many occasions. Wars did not rest on Sundays, the ugliness did not disappear. Men (and women and children) died violently and horribly on Sundays as well as Mondays and Tuesdays. Men rested on Sundays sometimes; on other occasions they drank everything they could get their hands on. Some made love and not always sanctioned by propriety. It is things like these that 'Memories' are made of and each of us will manifest this remembrance to his own conscience.

Speak not too harshly, those of you who are not in agreement; be not hasty to classify the right and wrong of things. It is considered, by many, to be socially graceful to sip the brew from long stem glasses, regardless of what day is on the calendar, and at the same time these very people judge those who would swallow the amber from the manufacturer's container, to be a vulgar, uncultured mob to be suppressed by all means available. We ask you to 'Remember'. WE have, unlike our comrades left behind, grown Old. Age has wearied many of us. At the going down of the Sun and in the Mornings We are still among you, complete with our many foibles and varied weaknesses. Let us 'Remember' in our way and then, if you will, think before you 'Condemn'. — R. R. HURLEY.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

By the time you receive this Ground Sheet you will see that we are very close to our Annual Smoker of December 14th. Scotty Lowe has done an excellent job of preparing for a good get-together for all Comrades. Nelson Scott and Bert Stephens have asked that you give full support in getting your tickets sold and the money into the hands of the Draw Committee. We ask that each recipient of tickets make every effort to sell them *ALL* and return the cash, as it is the only way we have to make enough money to keep our Association growing and to support the Regiment, as is our desire.

Remember! We are all out of luck if we haven't got that buck.

NEWS ITEM

Many old timers of the Regiment will be pleased to know that George Davis and his wife, Marion, attended the ceremony at the Drill Hall on Remembrance Day, November 11th.

Ron Hurley writes that he was most pleasantly surprised to meet George and his wife there and recalled that Ron indeed introduced Marion to George back in 1939. George and Mrs. Davis have a 22 year old son who is in the Canadian Army, permanent force, as a Lieutenant and for some time was the youngest subaltern in the Canadian armed forces. George, Ron and many of the old timers who turned out for Remembrance Day had a pleasant afternoon at the Drill Hall and later went on, at the invitation of the Navy, to their headquarters on the Essington.

COMING EVENTS

Watch this space for further important announcements, as 1963 is the one hundredth birthday of the Regiment. We are pleased to announce a gala celebration on the occasion of the Melfa River Battle will be held at the Canadian Legion Auditorium on Saturday, May 25th, in New Westminster. This is a "MUST". We will have more to report, as time goes by.

ITALY REVISITED

Two weeks ago a friend of the Westminster Regiment, Lawyer Hugh McGivern, invited members of our Executive to his home, where we spent a very enjoyable evening and saw many of the films that Hugh took when he and Colonel McMillan, Military Attache to the Canadian Consulate in Rome travelled up to the Melfa River to obtain the Melfa River water that was later flown to Vancouver by C.P.A. in time to become the centere piece at our annual Melfa Dinner, held in the Astor Hotel in 1959. Hugh, through the medium of his films, took us on a tour through some of the famous battle fields that the Westies fought over in Northern Italy. Hugh and Mrs. McGivern also travelled through some of the Canadian military cemeteries, particularly the one close to the battle of the Melfa, where we saw the graves of some of the boys who were killed in this battle. Ex-members of 12 Platoon "C" Coy. will remember H. R. Talker who was killed in the slit trench with a direct hit of the 88 millimeter firing off on our right flank. Also shown were the graves of F. G. Jefferies, killed by the same shell. T. Richards of another Platoon and Vic K. Drummond. These chaps were all buried in the cemetery which is, as usual, with Canadian military cemeteries abroad, kept by a War Graves Commission and they are beautifully and carefully tended in their many locations throughout Italy and the European battle grounds. Hugh's pictures took us across a short trip of Greece, Egypt and finally, to Belgium where Mrs. McGivern's brother was killed during the Second World War, also. Hugh told us of the endeavors of his little cab driver who drove them from the hotel to the cemetery and then spent literally hours walking up and down trying to locate Mrs. McGivern's brother's grave, which he finally did, after much perseverance. On finally being returned to the hotel all the fare he asked for (more than four hours of his time and driving) amounted to less than \$5 in Canadian funds. His remark to Hugh on being asked why the charge was so small when, in fact, Hugh reports every where else they went they had to pay plenty "as becomes American tourists" and his remark was "you Liberated us". Hugh finally sent him on his way, much better rewarded. A highlight of the evening came when we ran through one half of the old Canadian Army films of the inspection of the King and Queen at Frenchman Commons in England. All old timers will recall this inspection — with the carriers going and the motor cyclists dashing

madly about and the Infantry swinging off the trucks into camouflage positions and advancing. This occasion was made hilarious by the fact that the last time the film had been wound on a reel it was backwards. Words can't describe how peculiar and yet in some ways how natural too this film became so devastatingly funny to see the carriers charging along backwards sucking in the great clouds of dust and laying it down behind them, soldiers gliding smartly and swiftly backwards to disappear into fox holes and then be covered up by a flying mass of twigs and straw that settled down miraculously, one stick upon the other until absolutely nothing could be seen of the occupants, motor cycles driving along backwards, up over the hill and out of sight. This hilarious occasion will remain a high spot in the memory of your representative for a long while and our grateful thanks to Hugh McGivern and Mrs. McGivern who, although feeling somewhat ill, treated up right royally to their most hospitable board.

We met, at Hugh McGivern's, an ex-Perth Regiment man, Bob Black, now an ex-Westminster, who has served time since the war with our militia unit. He wondered if we could locate the Westminster soldier who had lost his his right big toe on a land mine near Crechio on the occasion of the march into Crechio. Bob happened to be in a bed adjacent to this chap and Bob has the distinction of losing his left big toe. He would like to have a chat again with this old buddy.

NEWS ITEM

All members of our Association will be pleased to learn that the Executive has presented Gordon Corbould, ex-Officer Commanding Westminster Regiment and a friend of all Westies, with a beautiful dinner gong. This gong was created from a 4.5 Howitzer shell casing suitably inscribed with the Westminster Regimental battle honors on both sides. This beautiful gong was mounted on a hardwood panel, complete with a small handsome mallet, made for us by a craftsman through the courtesy of Lt. Col. Tommy Hall, who has recently retired from active command of his regiment. The gong carefully and lovingly packed by Nelson Scott was sent to Gordon Corbould at his home, which is (as most of us know) Tweedsmuir Lodge, Bella Coola. We know it will occupy an honored place in Gordon's lodge through the coming years, to commemorate his wonderfully given address to the Melfa at our last Melfa Dinner at the Astor Hotel in 1961. We all join in a "hearty thanks" and "well done" to our old C.O.

HISTORY OF THE ROYAL WARWICKSHIRE REGIMENT (Formerly the 6th Foot of Warwick, England)

From the time of its inception until the conclusion of the Boer War. (Due to the length of this history, we will break it into three parts. The second and third parts to be shown in the next two following issues.)

Many members of the Westies will recall that we have been affiliated with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment since 1936, when, under the auspices of Lt. Col. Fred Simpson, this affiliation was made. I'm sure that ex-Westies will appreciate the many gallant actions and battle honors earned by this fine regiment.

The Royal Warwickshire Regiment was first organized in 1674, and was composed of adventurous Britons who, finding no occasion for the display of their ardent courage in their native land, placed their services at the disposal of the Dutch Government, then battling in the cause of civil and religious freedom against the ambitious Louis XIV of France.

In the 11 years of campaigning in Holland, which preceded their enrolment as a Regiment of the British Army, they gained a distinguished reputation for discipline and courage. In 1676, especially, their heroic conduct at the siege of Maastricht brought them much renown. In the quaint wording of the HAGUE GAZETTE "The English gained very great honour". Again, in 1678, at a severe conflict at St. Denis, we read that "The Earl of Ossory and his troops performed wonders".

Among these troops was the regiment now known as the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. So great indeed was the estimation in which they were held that when, on peace being declared, the Dutch Army was reduced, the wise Hollanders chose rather to dispense with their own soldiers than lose the services of these gallant Britons. But others were equally sensible of their value, and in 1685 the British Government made them a Regiment of the British Army as the 6th Regiment of Foot, although the Dutch were still allowed their services on loan.

In 1688 King James II became so unpopular with the people of this country that it was resolved to call over the Prince of Orange, the recognized champion of religious freedom. The 6th or Warwickshire Regiment cast in its lot with that of the Prince, and with him landed at Torbay on the 5th. November, 1688. How

gladly the Prince and his gallant little army were received by the English people is a matter of history and in a very short time the Prince became an English Sovereign under the title of William III.

King James had, however, many adherents in Ireland, and The Warwickshire Regiment was therefore sent to that country, and at the Battle of the Boyne, and at the many sieges and conflicts which ensued before order was finally restored in Ireland, the Regiment behaved with the gallantry which its previous conduct had led its countrymen to expect.

As Monarch of the United Kingdom, King William continued the struggle against the French King, which he had so steadily waged as Prince of Orange, and the Regiment therefore again found itself facing its old foes on the battle-worn fields of Flanders. In 1692, at the closely contested battle of Steinkirk, the British troops with their usual desperate courage flung themselves in the midst of the enemy, but their allies thought discretion the better part of valour, and left them to bear the whole force of the enemy's army. Though forced by numbers to retreat, they did so with reluctance, and the Warwickshires in particular withdrew from the field a mere skeleton.

In 1695 the Regiment added to its laurels at the siege of Mamur, and in 1702 shared the rich booty gained at the capture of Vigo, a Spanish port in which a richly laden fleet had taken refuge.

In 1705 they were again in Spain under the command of that gallant and romantic nobleman, the Earl of Peterborough. The story of this remarkable campaign has long been the admiration of military men.

The extraordinary marches, the gallant exploits and dashing victories of the small force of this famous peer are equally the honours of the Warwickshire Regiment. At the capture of Barcelona the Regiment so particularly distinguished itself that its Colonel was warmly embraced and thanked by King Charles of Spain, for whom the English were fighting.

In 1707, at the Battle of Almanza, it fought with "unparalleled resolution" and it was on this occasion that the Regiment won its badge of an Antelope, having captured a standard with this badge from the enemy. In 1708 it was at the capture of the Island of Minorca on which occasion we read that the fury and resolution of the assailants terrified the garrison into a surrender, which they deeply regretted when they saw by how small a force they had been conquered.

In 1710 they fought the Battle of Saragossa, when King Philip, the rival King of Spain was utterly defeated, and the Colonel of Warwickshire was, as a mark of honour to the Regiment, selected to carry the news of the Victory to Queen Anne, together with the colours and other trophies of Victory.

In 1719 it was again at Vigo, when immense quantities of stores gathered for the invasion of England were destroyed. It then fought with success in the West Indies, against Spain in 1741, and again in 1773, against the natives who were committing great depredations.

(Second part continued in next Ground Sheet issue.)

LEST WE FORGET

C.Q.M.S. Alf Eamer, buried at Mission, on
Thursday, October 11th, 1962.

Mr. Crossland Oddy, passed away peacefully,
94 years old, on October 14th, 1962.

READERS WRITE

W. R. (Bill) Saunders has written from Ottawa to say "thanks" for the wonderful time he had at the Melfa Dinner, and sends his best regards to all 1939'ers.

We acknowledge a dollar for dues for '63 and the correct address of M. E. Currie, 651 Belevue Dr., Chilliwack, B.C.

G. W. Harkness, 112 Colley St., Trail, B.C., writes to say "howdy" and sends his membership fee, also a couple of names of "A" Coy. ex-Westies, Orbin Simle, 1106 2nd Ave., Trail, B.C., and J. C. Russell of 3181 Highway Drive, Trail, B.C. We welcome these two ex-Corporals from "A" Coy. and hope you get this first copy of the Ground Sheet.

A big "thanks" to Mr. Pat Aitkins of Kelowna, B.C. He has sent in a cheque for \$10 for the Hospital Fund and best regards to the Association.

A life-time membership is being sent to John Dowling of 515 Cliff Ave., N. Burnaby, who is 86 years of age. He writes about his tickets and the fact that he

has not been well. Hope you are up and around soon, sir.

A welcome letter from Thomas Davidson, 2721 Ontario St., Vancouver, who writes in for more tickets.

As you know the draw is on December 14th. We require your tickets in by December 11th, if possible. Keep up the good work.

Best regards to all, especially those from "A" Coy. from Bruce (Pappy) Broadfoot of Nelson, B.C.

Frank Hopkins, 138 Jerymn, Penticton, and Reg LeBrun of Anecortes, Wash., write to say how much they enjoyed their visit to Vancouver. Be sure to come to our Smoker, December 14th, Reg.

We welcome an ex-47th member, E. Clair Tennant, No. 629981, from Naramata, B.C.

We received our annual letter from Danny Pastro, Mayo, Yukon Territory. He tells us that he buys the tickets that we send and he always puts down the Hospital Fund. Too bad you can't make it this year, Danny. Best regards from your Comrades.

A change of address from P. E. Doncaster, Suite 7, Dorchester Apts., 1370 Beach Dr., Victoria, B.C.

Thanks to you all for writing.

"A TIME OF REMEMBERING"

"Remembrance Day 1962" was not well attended by members of the Westminster Regt. Association but for the some fifteen or twenty who did attend, it was one of the most memorable services in years. The ancient Drill Hall was packed to capacity and there was standing room only for many of the late arrivals. Her Worship, Mayor Beth Woods, presided over the ceremonies in the Armouries in a manner that was well received by all. The highlight, if there can be such a thing considered as a highlight on Armistice Day, was the memorial address presented by Rev. Jack Pitt. This eloquent gentleman may have shocked some of the gathering, by his succinct and direct remarks, but to the veterans it was thought to be the finest memorial message heard in the City of New Westminster for some time. Enough of the 'Old Guard' gathered to form a rather depleted, if somewhat spirited, platoon for the march to the Cenotaph for the closing services and the customary laying of wreaths. The march back to the Armouries was performed in a brisk military manner to the accompaniment of several bands. The parade was dismissed and many then retired to the Sgt's Mess for the well known 'Pause that Refreshes'.—R. R. Hurley.

SICK AND VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

31st OCTOBER, 1962.

On this visitation I had Tommy Thomson with me again, Tommy having returned from several months' visit to his home land, Scotland.

When we arrived at Shaughnessy we sure were surprised to find that we had only two of our Comrades hospitalized this evening, Colonel Coote and Bill Lawson, consequently we were able to have quite a lengthy visit with each of them.

Colonel Coote, although ninety-four, is still quite agile of mind even if he is bed-ridden. His memory as it stretches back over the years is quite amazing and Tommy and I have listened to many a tale of the First World War, some of the doings of the old 47th Batt. and some of the other units that this great old veteran had served in. He still chuckles when he tells the yarn about the time that an official was sent out to New Westminster to see about a site for a new Armoury. Apparently the old veteran was in command of the Chilliwack Company at the time and was also of the correct political stripe so he boarded the train several stations beyond Chilliwack and by the time they arrived in Chilliwack had convinced the official that the best place to build would be in Chilliwack, and that is the reason why we have such a nice large Armoury in the comparatively small town of Chilliwack.

Bill Lawson hasn't changed much over the past years and although he understands us perfectly he has quite a time getting across to us exactly what he means. When he is stuck he gets so mad with himself and this sure doesn't help matters. We just make him take it easy and finally we understand and he feels much better. Bill doesn't read at all but he loves to look at pictorial magazines such as Look, Life or others of this variety. I have often put out the call to the membership for such magazines, the only stipulation being that they must be in almost new condition, otherwise I always buy a couple each time I visit (just for old Bill).

In my last report I wrote about my visit with Alf Eamer who at that time was in the last stages of his fight against cancer. I admired his courage so much

and was greatly saddened when one evening not long after my visit a friend of the family phoned to tell me that Alf had finally lost the battle, and we in turn had lost a very faithful member of our Association.

H. A. STEPHENS, Committee Chairman.

WHAT BECAME OF KELLY?

We received a letter from Tex Labere who has advised us that his new address is 15351 Mid-Crest Drive, Whittier, California, and we sent last month's Ground Sheet to this address and it was returned. So, anyone that can get in touch with Tex, please let him know that the Post Office are not delivering his mail or the address he gave us is incorrect, as shown.

J. L. BARKWILL	Vancouver, B.C.
L. H. COOL	New Westminster
WALTER E. ERIJSEN	South Burnaby, B.C.
SYD JOHNS	Whonnock, B.C.
R. O. JONES	Victoria, B.C.
K. E. W. LUKE	North Vancouver
R. MACKAY	Haney, B.C.
JACK MAHONY	Edmonton, Alta.
BOB NORRIS	North Surrey, B.C.
LORNE E. SOMERVILLE	Burnaby, B.C.



PRESIDENT JOHNNY HOU & THE EXECUTIVE
OF THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT

Wish Each and Every One of our Members

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

and a

HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS

1963