

The GROUND SHEET

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF
THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSN.

104th — 47th — 131st — The Westminster Regt.
Dedicated to the Ideals and Comradeships We Knew in Two World Wars

Vol. 17, No. 6.

Box 854, New Westminster, B.C.

October, 1968.



1918 — 1968

50TH

ANNIVERSARY

OF

“REMEMBRANCE DAY”

The sacrifice which they collectively made was individually repaid to them; for they received again each one for himself a praise which grows not old, and the noblest of all sepulchres — I speak not of that in which their remains are laid, but of that in which their glory survives, and is proclaimed always and on every fitting occasion both in word and deed . . . not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions in their own country, but in foreign lands there dwells also an unwritten memorial to them, graven not on stone but in the hearts of men.—*Pericles*.

THE GROUND SHEET

President JOHN R. FORD
 3757 W. 35th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. AM 3-3682
 Secretary ART MILLER
 726 No. 2 Road, Richmond B.C. 277-8010
 Editor RON HURLEY
 2229 Bonnyvale Rd., Vancouver 16, B.C. FA 1-8464
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NOW HEAR THIS:

REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE 50th ANNIVERSARY SERVICES

PLACE: Armouries, New Westminster, B.C.
 TIME: Fall in 0945 hrs.
 DATE: November 11th, 1968.
 DRESS: Medals and Berets (Berets provided at
 Parade).

Everyone Turn Out This Year Please!

EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

Welcome back to the Fall season. Although the past summer left much to be desired re the weather, it was a most active and interesting time for the "Regiment and Association" alike. You will read elsewhere in this issue of the memorable and colourful "Trooping of The Colours" ceremonies held last June 23rd. The day was a day that will be long remembered. The weather was glorious, the sun most brilliant and the men of the Regiment and the Association were truly magnificent. Some 150 Association members marched proudly in the parade and they looked "100%" in their blue blazers, sparkling medals and the brilliant red of the Infantry Corps Berets. Parade Commander Bert Hoskins has never lost the ring of authority in his commands and one could sense the response of the members as they reacted to the drills of long ago. The Regiment were letter perfect and all agreed that there was much to be proud of in the young men of today's unit. We have placed our trust in good hands. The post parade activities were equally enjoyable at the Armouries and hats off to the Sergeants and Warrant Officers of the unit for their tolerance and patience with those of us who may have stayed too long. It is the sincere hope that we may all join together in more occasions of this kind in the future.

We are all aware of the "Return to Melfa" and you will be pleased to know that these activities will be covered in a separate "Souvenir" edition of the Groundsheet to be published soon. Our new Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Deane is a firm believer in maintaining the close ties with the Association and to further that end has appointed an Officer, Mr. Harry Seddon, to report regularly of the Regiment's activities to the Groundsheet. As editor, I am delighted to welcome Mr. Seddon's contribution and look forward to a continuation of this on a monthly basis. If submissions are as newsworthy as his current effort then we are all in for a pleasant addition to our paper.

By now you have all received Stevie's "Workshop Letter" and needless to say you know what to do with it. "Help Yourselves by Helping Your Association."

Don't forget the "50th Anniversary Remembrance Service Parade. 1918 - 1968. A half a century ago but the memory of this will not be forgotten as long as there are Association members remaining to kindle the flame.—*Editor*.

EXECUTIVE HIGHLIGHTS

By BILL ROBSON

The first meeting of the year, this September day, the 16th of the month with sixteen members present. Out of it came the following: Our Scholarship was awarded to Peter Duthie, the son of Fred Duthie who served with us during the second world war. Fred was well known throughout the regiment and it is with pleasure we received the news of his son's award.

The museum committee is being strengthened by the addition of the Padre and two Lieutenants from the Regiment, Hughes and Walters. The whole project will be chaired by Andy Hunter. This effort may require the energies of many more before it is finished. It has all the earmarks of being a rather large task. With the enthusiasm being shown, it already has a good start.

In the long memory department: Melfa Dinner, Saturday, May twenty-four, nineteen hundred and sixty nine; Royal Canadian Legion, New Westminster. The Dinner arranged by our very capable Art Miller should be another one of our better times, so, keep it in mind.

"Sell, sell, sell, sell, sell, sell, sell, sell, sell." That word rates a whole line at this time of the year.

Walter Lyle, Ian Douglas and Bill Williams extended the hospitality of our Association to Mr. Savory and his party who were visiting New Westminster this sum-

mer. Due to the summer being a time of holidays, many of us were away from town and were unaware of this visit. So our President, John Ford, has suggested a standing committee for just such a reason. There are places to go, cars to go in, and everyone can have a little fun. After the meeting adjourned we were treated to a viewing of the motion pictures of the Centennial Parade of nineteen sixty three. These pictures taken by Bert Stephens showed close-ups of those in the parade and there was much laughter as we recognized each other, there was sadness too, for some of the faces on the film are no longer with us.

John Ford showed some excellent slides of the charter flight, all were well received by our group, there may be more in the future. We had coffee, a bite to eat, and we talked a bit, after which most of us started for home, the sluff, sluff of the cards, the klink of chips announcing to one and all this is the only way to burn the midnight oil.

"THE TROOPING OF THE COLOUR"

On June 23rd last the Royal Westminster Regiment trooped its new Regimental Colour at Queens Park in the City of New Westminster. The Colour had been presented to the Regiment last year by Her Royal Highness, Princess Alexandra of Kent, during ceremonies held in Victoria. Now the Colour was on public display for the first time, and it was very fitting that the ceremony should be held within the city from which the Regiment takes its name. And it was also significant that the Colour should be trooped in full view of the citizens of the "Royal City" as well as before the Officers and Men who comprise this old and honoured Regiment.

The Ceremony of "Trooping the Colour" goes back to those early days of the organized army when a regiment had to be able to recognize its colour instantly, so as to rally to it quickly in times of emergency. To ensure that every soldier knew his regiment's colour, it was periodically "trooped" or paraded through the drawn-up ranks of the unit. In modern times, "trooping the colour" has become a very rare and solemn military ceremony. The famous Brigade of Guards in London troop their colours just once a year, and many Commonwealth units have not trooped their colours in living memory. Indeed, in New Westminster they have, perhaps, only been paraded once before by the city's Militia unit, and the details of this previous trooping are extremely vague. The Royal Westminster Regiment was, therefore, determined that the trooping ceremony this

year would be one long remembered by soldier and civilian alike.

Preparations and training began months before. Pages of detailed instructions were prepared so that everyone involved would know exactly what they were to do; special uniforms were issued and carefully tailored; rifle and sword drill was practised over and over again; leather and brass, steel and silver, were polished until they shone like glass. Behind the scenes, programmes were printed, the public address system checked, tickets prepared, and countless other "little jobs" were done. And, as the big day drew near, everyone prayed for fine weather.

The morning of Sunday, June 23rd, dawned bright and clear. One final rehearsal in the morning — and the Regiment was ready. By 2:30 in the afternoon the spectators, including representatives of many other military units, had taken their places in the stands of the stadium. Before the trooping began, the Royal Westminster Regimental Association paraded before the Honourary Colonel, Brigadier General E. G. Eakins, M.C., C.D., their red berets and smart blazers worn with as much pride as the khaki and blue of their former days. Then the Trooping began.

Through the gates of the stadium to the music of the Regimental Band, came the men of the four Guards. Their dress and deportment were impeccable. They halted before the main stand. The Warrant Officers in charge of each Guard smartly threw their rifles up into the "Recover Arms" position, and, as one man, marched forward. The Officers, their sword blades glinting in the bright sunlight, took their positions. The ancient pageantry and tradition of the "Trooping of the Colour" unfolded before the admiring eyes of the audience. Everything was strangely and movingly quiet; the only sounds were the occasional shout of a command, and the slap of well-disciplined hands against rifles. The high-point of the ceremony was the sight of the Colour being trooped, with dignity and precision, at the slow march through the open ranks of the Regiment.

And then it was all over, and the Regiment had retired. To the observers it was as if a spell had been broken. They began to talk quietly, smile at each other, and make that facial expression which says, "Now, *that* was something, wasn't it!" Close friends of the Regiment in the audience gave little silent sighs of relief — there had not been a single mistake, the whole thing had gone like clock-work — and their grins grew broader!

For the Officers and Men of the Regiment, the end of the trooping ceremony meant the culmination of weeks of hard effort. Now it was all over, and their relief was tinged with a touch of sadness. But the dominant feeling was one of pride. The Westies had just trooped their colour. And they had been there . . .

H. A. Seddon.

THE REGIMENT REPORTS

Those of us who currently constitute the Royal Westminster Regiment greet and salute *you*, the past members of our great Regiment. It is hoped that this column will become a regular feature of the "Groundsheet," and serve to bring the Regiment and the Regimental Association closer together. This is certainly the wish of the present members of the Regiment. We are well aware that whenever we pay tribute to the achievements of the "Westies," be it formally on a big parade, or informally over a drink, we are not referring to ourselves. The Present members of the Regiment were not at the Somme, at Ypres, or at the Melfa Crossing. . . We are equally aware that the Present and Future fortunes of the Regiment have been entrusted into our hands, and that you will be watching us.

Our Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel L. K. Deane, C.D., expresses our feelings this way: "The Regiment is a very large family made up of all of us who have served, are serving, or will serve in war or peace in the unit. I hope that you past members are interested in what the Regiment is currently doing — the hopes, the problems, and the news of our activities. It is the practice to take new recruits to the small but growing museum we are putting together in the Armoury to give them an insight into the history of the Regiment they are joining. I feel that this is a tangible way of making the young men of today aware of the great contribution made by the former members of the Regiment. Perhaps the news of unit training appearing in editions of the "Groundsheet" will help us all to know each other better." And so the Regiment reports. . .

Some Association Members may not be aware that several years ago the Regiment underwent some significant reorganization. The "Valley" Company at Mission was transferred to Abbotsford, taking over the excellent facilities of the former Service Corps detachment at the Airport. This Company, which still draws some of its strength from the Indian Residential School at Mis-

sion, is "Baker" Company commanded by Major "Larry" Watkins. "Able" Company, under Maj. "Bill" MacDonald, parades at the New Westminster Armoury, as do "Charlie" Company (Capt. Charles Birch, O.C.) and H.Q. Company, Capt. "Mike" Steede commanding. In addition the Regiment sponsors two Cadet Corps; 2316, The Royal Westminster Regiment Cadet Corps, at New Westminster; and 1922, the Royal Westminster Regiment Cadet Corps at Abbotsford. Cadets at Haney (1838), in the Haney Legion Cadet Corps, are affiliated with the Regiment. The corps at New Westminster is commanded by Maj. "Howie" Lee. Now you know where we all are!

Within the past few months the Regiment has been engaged in many activities: the Annual Camp at Albert Head; Trade and Promotional Courses involving 67 successful "Westie" candidates — out of 67 tries! — several members of the Regiment served during the summer with the Regular Force in Germany, and so on. However, two Regimental engagements during this period deserve special mention. The first of these was the Pacific Region Strike Battalion Exercise at H.M.C.S. Quadra, held during the Easter week.

The "Westies" have been required to make one Company permanently available for use by the Region as a highly trained, mobile, and versatile component of a coastal strike force. Rather than have one Regimental company do it all, the Strike Company drew its personnel from all four companies. Training began in the fall of last year with 100 officers and men selected after keen competition, to "do the job." The "bugs" were gradually ironed out during the winter and early spring months during weekend exercises at our Abbotsford training ground. Finally, on March 14th, we boarded H.M.C.S. "Porte de la Reine" at Vancouver, and headed up the coast. For a whole week, in conjunction with other units from the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island, we trained in section, platoon, and company attack exercises; amphibious landings; signals; map reading; target recognition; and weapon training. It was hard work by any standards. Our days began at 5:30, with P.T. at 6:15. Training went on continually until 5:30 p.m. Then, after supper, we prepared for the following day's Inspections and Parade — spitting and polishing until "lights out." For many of the lads, most of them still in their 'teens,' it was their first real taste of "what it's all about." And the "Westies" did a bloody good job! Ours was the only Regiment with a full contingent, our lines were undoubtedly the

best, and our spirit in the field would have made any Association Member proud. We all stood a little taller and a little straighter that week. And when it was all over, we had a party that did our hearts good — although the same cannot be said for our heads! The unanimous opinion among all who took part in the Exercise was one of complete enthusiasm; the Strike Battalion concept is unquestionably the best thing to happen to the Regiment, and the Militia, for many years.

The second items of specific interest in the Regiment was, of course, the Trooping of the Colour Ceremony in June. Many Association personnel took part in that stirring and memorable parade. Lieutenant Colonel Deane wishes to convey this personal message to the Association for their participation that day:

"I must tell you how grand a sight it was to see the marching members of the Association complete with red berets taking an active part in the Trooping of the Colour on June 23rd. Thank you for making the parade such a success."

(For those Associate members who were not able to attend the Trooping, a detailed report of the occasion is included elsewhere in this issue of the "Groundsheet.")

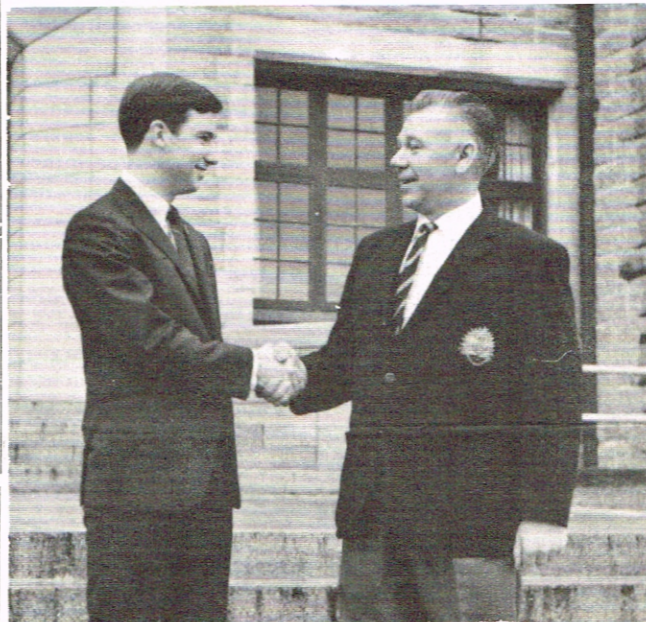
The Regiment will shortly be embarking on a full-scale recruiting drive, involving the Press, Radio and T.V. . . . local stores, etc., and we would appreciate any help which the Association can give us in this connection. In particular Associate members could remind the young men of their acquaintance of the location of the Armoury or, better yet, bring them down here! We feel the Association could assist us greatly in keeping the Regiment up to strength.

Finally, a story that occurred during the "Quadra" Easter week Exercise.

Number 2 Platoon of the "Westie" Strike Company had just hit the beach during the Concentration. Striking inland, they encountered strong enemy forces. The situation was critical and tense; the fire fight was at its height. Thick yellow fog from smoke grenades swirled around the lead section, filling lungs and eyes with its acrid fumes. Thunderflashes cracked, blank rounds chattered from the Bren and barked from the rifle group. Teeth were gritted, sweat ran down faces, eyes strained to pierce the yellow murk. The situation couldn't have been more realistic. Then a young soldier approached his platoon commander through this simulated hell of

war. He grinned sheepishly. "Excuse me, sir," he said, "but it's 12 o'clock and I have to go on Church Parade!" — H. A. Seddon.

PETER DUTHIE WINS 1968 SCHOLARSHIP



President John Ford congratulates young Peter Duthie, 1968 Scholarship Award Winner.

Your hard working Scholarship Committee consisting of Chairman Ian Douglas, John Ford, Peter Grossman, Alan Coe, D'Arcy Baldwin, John Hou, Bill Williams and Walter Lyle, met on August 28th last to select our 1968 Scholarship winner. After long hours of research, discussion and elimination, they are proud to announce that the deserving winner is young Peter Lewis Duthie. Many of you will remember his father as our own Fred Duthie of W.W. 2 Westies. Sincere congratulations from all the membership to young Peter and we share in the pride of his family for his accomplishments and hopes for the future. Further to the above, everlasting gratitude to a most capable committee who devote many long hours of personal time during the summer to effect the selection of our Scholarship Award.—Ed.

SICK AND VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER, 1968

It has been some time since I have sent you a report for the Groundsheet, Ron, however visits to the Veterans' Hospitals have gone on as usual at least each month, and as invariably happens our hospitalized members decrease in numbers during the summer months.

We have had some interesting characters in and out so to speak, such as Billy Thorarinson all the way from Arcadia, California. Bill has become a confirmed Americano and was up here to Shaughnessy in regards complications which have arisen due to a wartime injury he received whilst with the unit overseas. Bill has gone back to his beloved Arcadia and we do expect to hear from him in the not too distant future. Archie Browning was hospitalized for a while and asked to be remembered to the Association, still lives in the Queen City. I called on Ben Witt on a couple of visits and he finally got so almighty healthy that he was discharged, and I haven't heard from him since. Clem Carmichael was back in Shaughnessy for quite a spell, and had started to write an article on the old 47th, which we hope you will receive before long. Harry Oliver, a very staunch member, passed away during this period and will be sorely missed. Harry and another old timer who passed away not too long ago, C. P. Armour, were responsible for the sale of some two hundred books of our Christmas tickets, over the past several years that I have assisted in the Christmas fund raising campaign, quite an effort from two very fine gentlemen.

Bob (Scotty) Brown has been in George Derby Hospital for several months, he is up and around all the time and I'm sure would appreciate a visit from some of his old cronies. Scotty is in Pavilion 2. Thure Storme and Dan Corcoran are also at George Derby, Dan in Pav. 1 and Thure in Pavilion 2.

Mike Lepard is back in Shaughnessy, the old ticker acting up again, although Mike was in bad shape when he first came in this time, when I last saw him on the 25th of September he was looking fine and in the best of spirits.

H. A. Allam is also back in Shaughnessy and is in a bad way, but the last time I spoke to him he was as cheerful as ever. That's what never ceases to amaze me is the fine spirit in which these old timers take their hospitalization, and how appreciative they are that their comrades still remember them.

H. A. Stephens—Committee Chairman.

NEWS RE THE CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

ALL tickets have gone out for our Xmas Special and now the success, or failure, is up to you, the membership who have on so many occasions requested if there is anything that you can to assist your executive in furthering the interests of this outstanding Association of ours. **THIS IS YOUR CHANCE** to do just that, as you are well aware it takes a large sum of money to operate this, our Association, in the standard to which we have come to expect, and you are also well aware that our very meagre dues could never supply this amount. So this *is it*, the only method we use to raise the thousands of dollars required.

How about it, forget your dislike or scruples about tickets and get out and sell. Let's make this a bumper year. Help us secure our Groundsheet, help us secure our Association.—H. A. Stephens, Co-Chairman.

WHAT BECAME OF KELLY?

G. Jackson—1138 Nelson St., Vancouver 5, B.C.

W. C. Brumpton—3409 McGill, Vancouver 6, B.C.

Anton Watsch—Box 91, Mission, B.C.

FROM THE POST:

Not too much in the way of correspondence but we do have some nice letters of appreciation that should prove interesting. Last June your executive invited their patient and long suffering wives for dinner. Among the guess was a most charming and interesting lady friend of Col. Bill Williams and his wife Rae. This was a Miss Eva Calder, a well known Canadian personality in the literary field. Miss Calder is currently a free lance writer and a life member of the Canadian Women's Press Club. We were delighted to have her and appreciate her charming letter of thanks. It is hoped that ALL OF YOU will please submit reams of correspondence for future publication.—Ed.

* * *

A HAPPENING TO REMEMBER

'What is so rare as a day in June?' asks the poet and after my summer sojourn in Beautiful B.C. (with no apologies to your License Plates) I could mention many rare things but one of the rarest for me was to receive an invitation to the Executive Dinner of the Royal Westminster Regimental Association

Being almost a perennial plus visitor of a Colonel's lady and having previously met many members of the Association I anticipated much pleasure in being the dinner guest of Rae and Col. Bill at this gala Happening.

From the first to the last sip it was an evening of not only enjoying conviviality but of being graciously welcomed into a unique circle of friendship. It was also an opportunity to become acquainted with a group, distinguished in battle and strong in traditions of peace.

It made me realize why Col. Bill held the Regiment in such high esteem and how well he represented the same. Had Kipling been privileged to meet the fairer sex of this 'in gathering' he'd have been quick to explode his Judy O'Grady theory. As the candle-lit party progressed it was easier to understand why Rae had forsaken the Red River Valley for that of the mighty Fraser.

In addition to delectable food there was much food for thought in Walter Lyle's vivid report on the recent European Tour and Col. Morgan's nostalgic reminiscences of Warwick and such garden spots of England.

Lastly, as we listened to the record of the Melfa Memorial Dinner, taped in Italy, we were conscious of a splendid past, of history in the making.

'What is so rare as a day in June?' My evening with the Executive of the Royal Westminster Regimental Association. . . A June twenty-second to remember.

EVA CALDER.

* * *

The Royal Westminster Regiment
The Armoury, New Westminster

25 June, 1968.

Dear Sirs:

I felt that I had to write to the Regimental Association to tell you how thrilled I was by the wonderful turnout of your members to support the Trooping of the Colour on Sunday last.

Your marching unit under Lt. Col. Hoskin was very smart and looked striking in your blazers and berets. I wish that your members had still been "in uniform" for they would have made a worthy escort for the Colour, especially since so many of them had taken part in the actions embroidered on the Regimental Colour as battle honours. The support given by the hund-

reds of members and families who were not acually marching but filled the stands was also wonderful.

As I begin my term as commanding officer, I look forward to a continuation of the warm relationship which exists between our two parts of the Regimental Family.

Please convey my thanks to all your membership who added so greatly to the Trooping of the Colour by their presence.

Yours regimentally,
L. K. DEANE, Lt. Col.
Commanding Officer.

TEAR OUT HERE

ADVERTISEMENT

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TEAR OUT HERE

Ste. 6 - 331 Agnes St.
New Westminster, B. C.
June 28, 1968.

Ron Hurley, Editor:

Dear Sir:

Archie and I wish to convey our "thanks" to those who made "Sentimental Journey" such a memorable occasion.

Of Walter Lyle, I can only say he deserves more than praise. Can you picture Walter with a "halo"? He certainly deserved one, our interests were his first consideration. He went beyond the call of duty when he escorted some of the ladies to the fashion show in Rome. Of course he had a stalwart R.C.M.P. along with him, David Lyle, 3 years old, also Emily keeping an eye on him.

To all on the bus, may I say it was a pleasure meeting all of you, and making new friends.

Hoping to meet you all again sometime.

Archie and Bernice Davies.

LEST WE FORGET



Neil H. Johnston — 1215 Lillooet St.
Vancouver 6, B. C.

A. "Spike" McDougall — Box 201
Lumby, B. C.

William Carney Bell — 12719 - 96th Ave.
North Surrey, B. C.

From THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 854, New Westminster, B.C.

E.G. SHANNON
940 DIXON ST
RICHMOND BC