

# The **GROUNDSHEET**

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. 7.

Box 854, New Westminster, B.C.

November, 1968.

## **Souvenir Issue**



PONTE CASSINO, 1968

## 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

Authorized as second class mail by the Post Office Department,  
 Ottawa, and for payment of postage in cash.

## EDITORIAL

This is a special issue devoted to "EUROPE '68." The project was the Association's first venture of the kind, and it must be said an ambitious and successful one.

The contacts made with our friends of the Warwicks, the cities of Amsterdam, Groesbeek and Cassino; with the gentlemen of the Legioen Nederland, as well as those of the Canadian Embassy, must have increased the stature of the Association.

And most importantly of all, those who carried the name of the Westies so far afield had, each in his or her own way, a most memorable vacation.

Those of us who contributed to this issue hope that you will find enjoyment, and perhaps a "spark of response," to the feelings and incidents here related.

GUEST EDITOR.

---

 "THAT LONG FIRST DAY"
 

---

*By Bill Robson*

Thirty-three thousand feet, three hundred and seventy-five miles an hour, six hours to Keflavick, Iceland. We had gone through routines about oxygen masks and lifebelts, as told to us by a very pretty stewardess. After taxiing into position to take off, we had a moment until the pilot received the "go ahead" from the tower, and finally we were gathering speed for this new adventure. Climbing up into the sky in a modern plane to some is no 'adventure' at all but there were one or two of us who read the same line in a magazine all the way up to thirty-three thousand feet.

The pilot spoke to us on the intercom about the many things of interest, such as when daylight would come; how high we were (when he mentioned "high" I checked, and it was still there — left inside pocket, jacket). After a half hour or so in the air, we were told we would be turning back to Vancouver to correct a minor mechanical defect. We would deplane at

the airport until it could be adjusted. The time was twelve thirty-two, it was now May first.

The airline put everyone up in hotels for the rest of the night, and provided taxis to get us to the hotels. We made it to bed at five o'clock in the morning and popped out briskly at eight-thirty. Three hours later — after a quick breakfast, another taxi to the airport, one more take-off — the trip began to assume the proportions of a holiday. Drinks were served and our next scheduled stop was Keflavik.

It was dark when we arrived at Keflavik and deplaned. Here we made many purchases, as this port has a duty-free store which handles watches, liquor, and many other souvenirs; also articles of clothing, especially in the heavy wools. Most of the purchases were kept to a minimum (a twenty-six or a forty). As the forecast was foggy for London, our take-off from Keflavik was delayed for three hours, so we were fed in the airport restaurant. It was breaking day as we took off for London, and no sooner were we in the air than another meal was served. Not being able to do justice to that steak troubled me for many days.

London was bathed in a brilliant sunshine as we flew over on our way to the airport. After landing and going through Customs, we were taken by bus to jolly old London. We were all in a good mood, our bus driver being a Cockney, and his type of humour kept us all laughing right into town. He also had a penchant for the narrowest of places, and the bus seemed so wide. However, we arrived safe and sound. Still no sleep yet, for this was the day set aside for our dinner date with the Royal Warwickshires. As Warwick is near Stratford-on-Avon, the trip would be time-consuming. Up until then, our sleep time for the two days was four hours. Our trip north from London was very eventful. Our guide knew the country well, and filled us in on many of the historical places we were passing through.

Twenty-seven of us arrived safely in the town of Warwick. Our arrival was at the town square; then we began asking around for our friends from the Royal Warwickshires. We soon found them, and in a few minutes were shaking hands all around upon being introduced by Major Reg. Fitzgerald. The castle of Warwick is a very prominent feature of their landscape, and the town had a medieval approach to the imagination, which stirred up visions of an older time, when the possibility of meeting a princely carriage on the road was not quite so remote.

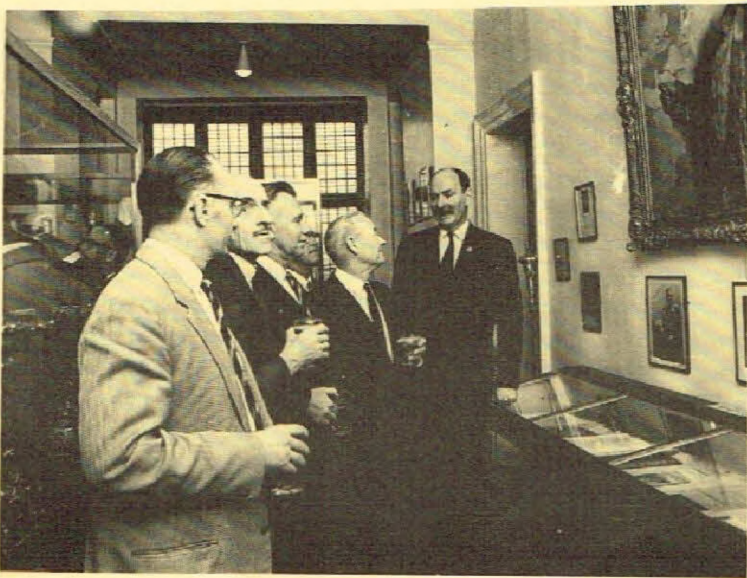
Major Fitzgerald is the Secretary of the Royal Warwickshires.  
 (Continued on Page Four)



Les German and Joe Hancock with two "Warwicks" in St. John's House.



"Somewhat more fat—somewhat less hair"  
Back Row, L. to R.: Trueman, Lyle, Hancock, Ford, McCarthy, Dennill and Neill. Front Row, L. to R.: Conway, Hall, Reeves and Nicola Lepore.



Our Travelling Executive with Major Fitzgerald in St. John's House—The Regimental Museum.



GROESBEEK — Our President and Friends.



Mr. Doppen, President Netherlands Veterans' Legion, at Groesbeek Cemetery.



The bus, the Flag, and two of our stalwarts, Bernice and Archie Davis.

## THAT LONG FIRST DAY

(Continued from Page Two)

wickshire Regimental Association, and his task is no little one, as he is responsible for keeping the many other branches throughout England informed and aware of the Association's activities. It was through his efforts, largely, that we experienced so fine a reception while there. During the evening, we met Major L. Niel, M.B.E. His interest is the Regimental Museum and the artifacts gathered there. As our time was short, we had to skim over the surface of the museum; it was all so interesting. Three hundred years of history is kept in beautiful order, and you may well understand our reluctance to leave.

Another highlight of the evening was an excellent dinner. There were, of course, a few speeches and toasts, but mainly we spent the evening getting better acquainted with our hosts and their wives. At somewhere near the midnight hour we bade our new friends a reluctant goodbye. Our first day in England had been a huge success! We arrived back in London at daybreak, looking forward to a few hours of nice, restful sleep.

## "OUR JOURNEY OF REMEMBRANCE"

*By Scotty Low*

Several months have elapsed since our trip to "Blighty." Sometimes it seems like a dream, but that's not how it was at all.

On April 30th 1968, all paid-up members of the Westminster Regiment Association Club gathered at the Vancouver Airport, and after the normal pre-flight confusion, trooped gaily to our Boeing 707 for our long-awaited trip.

I am sure we all left with mixed feelings of sadness and happiness — sad that we were leaving our families — happy that we were to make the journey of remembrance — and all of us, who had travelled infrequently by jet, with just a little feeling of trepidation. Imagine, if you will, our feelings, when a half hour later we were told that we were going to return to the Airport because of hydraulic maladjustment! Following nearly one and a half hours of "stooging about," we finally landed. What a landing — all four motors screaming in full reverse with fire trucks and other emergency vehicles roaring down the runway behind us with red flashers going — "Ah me," we aged just a little.

Anyway, following a short wait, we learned that we would take off at noon on May 1st, and you can

imagine the consternation with goodbyes to be said again, hotel rooms to be found, etc., etc. I'll draw the blind by saying that somehow we all made it safely back by 10 a.m. and, as promised, we did leave on time. I do recall the deep silence as we roared down the runway. Perhaps we were all holding our breath, and I imagined I heard a deep exhaling from most of us as we banked and climbed into the deep blue sky.

The service was wonderful, all the hostesses were delightfully helpful, the meals were excellent — not to mention the champagne and other libations. Some of us snatched a few winks, and the trip to Iceland was in full daylight all the way. Of course, we did have another wait of four hours in Iceland (fog at our destination, Gatewick Airport). The gremlins were certainly working overtime. However, the airport facilities were very good. We had an Icelandic meal and, naturally, some took advantage of the duty-free store. No names, no pack drill, but John, that was an awfully big bottle we *had* to kill before arriving in England. Anything, though, to help a pal get his allowance down to the required one bottle.

We were all pretty sleepy and tired on arrival, but with some slight delays, were clear of Immigration and Customs formalities and whisked to London by charter bus. Our poor drivers had been waiting four hours for us, never having received our message of the last delay. It was a beautiful, clear morning and the English countryside was at its very best — flowers and trees in full Spring blossom. Some talked a mile a minute; others sat quietly and reminisced as they spotted familiar sights — houses, pubs, the busy market street, and the signs over the pubs, "Ye Old Brown Jug," "Beer and Skittles," "Free House." Then, of course, as we approached the Centre of busy old London with the parliament buildings, Big Ben, and Buckingham Palace in the distance; Nelson's Monument in Trafalgar Square getting its first spring cleaning in a hundred years. Ah yes, we were all overcome with feelings of nostalgia.

Hurriedly we all checked into our hotel in Russell Square; bathed, changed, exchanged our Canadian funds for Sterling, and an hour or so later were lined up to make the trip, again by bus, to Warwick (the home of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment). You can imagine the difficulties we had caused our hosts, the Regimental Association of our affiliated Regiment, who had expected us for lunch. Here it was past that time, and over a hundred miles to go. Anyway, lunch became dinner. What a wonderful welcome, just like going home! I'm sure Walter Lyle and Basil Morgan will be telling you

all about that, so I'll leave that portion to them. Suffice to say that when we rolled back into London at midnight, or thereabouts, very sleepy and tired after nearly forty hours without bed, we all felt that it had been most rewarding and we would not have missed it for anything.

We went our separate ways on Friday, May 2nd — some to visit friends and relatives, old familiar places and things, then to return for the continental tour in a few days. Others, like my wife and myself, to remain in the "Old Country" until joining the flight home on June 1st.

Following a trip to my wife's homeland, Scotland, which lasted a lovely but wet ten days, we returned to Yorkshire and Lancashire, where we had many old friends to see. Then, with a little English Ford as transportation, we toured by ourselves through Wales (a familiar sight to us from our previous years in England), and on to the southwest of England and new ground for us to investigate.

The weather became more friendly, and it was a delight to wander the by-ways and back roads, wherever possible, through Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. We didn't quite make Lands End, but very nearly. The people were as friendly as we all remembered, the hotels were comfortable, the beer (Red Keg, especially), was better than remembered, and ah, that Cornish cream and fresh strawberries. . . We spent a very pleasant few days in Bournemouth. Relatives of friends made us feel so welcome, and we wandered the beautiful beach, gardens and pier to our heart's content.

Finally, all too quickly, our last few days had come, and we needs must journey back to London, not forgetting to wander up through Surrey, as beautifully green as ever. We called at Godalming, Aldershot, Bramshot, and all the other familiar towns enroute. They have changed — our old barracks are gone forever, replaced with new apartment accommodation and a through-way. We nevertheless reminisced at each stop, each last look at a once-familiar place, and on to London. Busy, busy — changed, but with its own delightful atmosphere found nowhere else in the world. Characters in every style of dress — long hair, short hair, bowler hats, rolled umbrellas — all were there, and, of course, for a middle-aged gaffer, the opportunity to at least "LOOK" at the shortest skirts and the nicest legs found anywhere! Ah me, to be young again!!!

One last fling in London Town with old friends just returned from the Continent and all the other places they had been. Cocktails and dinner in luxury

(mustn't take any Sterling home), a last walk down Piccadilly and Oxford Streets to Hyde Park — ah, wonderful — a few hours of snatched sleep (very few), to 3 a.m. The return to Gatewick in the quiet of the early morning, with London just beginning to awaken; a short wait at the airport (short? — heck, two hours!), and so to our "Bird" and familiar crew members. Yes, an uneventful flight home, no delays, no stopovers, arriving home at 9 a.m. local time.

What were our reactions, our conclusions? I think it took us all several days to come to any. But I, for one, would like to do it again, and I'm sure many others would agree. It was a grand tour — maybe we will even make the Continent next "go." It's like having eaten only half a meal, missing that part, but I gained weight even so. Sorry so many of you could not join us. . . How about next time? Yes, I'm certain it will always be a delight to remember all the days of our life.



#### DINNER AT BIRMINGHAM, MAY, 1968

*By Basil Morgan*

It was our proud pleasure to represent the Association at a dinner of The Birmingham Branch of The Royal Warwickshire Regimental Association. We were warmly received and made so comfortable that we felt a part of the family. Family it truly is, with all ranks and their wives reminiscing over their many varied and proud years.

We were privileged to meet the present Commanding Officer Col. W. W. Etches, O.B.E., M.C. To him fell the onerous task of informing this group that The Royal Warwickshire were no longer a part of the British Army — that they were now The Royal Fusilier Regiment and they expected all would continue to serve Queen and Country under this new title.

This was a moving moment when one could see every face straining to absorb this fact. There was a quiet acceptance and I am sure that proud family will go on in service and comradeship. Our thanks go out to the Birmingham branch for a never-to-be-forgotten evening.

On behalf of the Association I extended your warm greetings and advised them of our request that the affiliation continue through The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. This is now a fact.

We presented Col. K. W. Grimsley, T.D.D.L., the president of the Birmingham Branch, with a Totem Pole. In return we were given a beautiful souvenir menu

with signatures of everyone present at this dinner. This is now in your Regimental Museum.

I took Margaret on a guided tour of Aldershot, Farnham, Hove, etc. We toured all your former training areas such as Crowborough, Pippingford Park and Frensham Common. Remember Gold Hill and Whitcroft? Pubs too numerous to mention and as we left them, but in quieter form.

The Brunswick in Hove will be remembered by many and Hettie sends you best wishes.

London is changing face but you could go blindfolded to all your old haunts and find them as yesterday. A few are gone with the new look but very few. A wonderful City in which to begin and end a holiday. Time was too limited to do all that one would wish but the hospitality and the gratefulness of this Island will never be forgotten.



#### "SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY" — IMPRESSION

*By Bernice Davis*

As we stood in the squares of so many cities, sometimes in the evening; sometimes in the morning, looking at the architecture of the beautiful ancient buildings, it never ceased to amaze me. What stories these buildings could tell, if they could only speak!

At "Vimy Memorial," my mind went back to my school days, when a goodly number of school children sang, "In Flanders Field" in the old Denman Auditorium, Vancouver. (Never dreaming then of our trip through France and Italy, when I actually saw the fields of poppies which I sang so lustily about so many years ago.) I also found out what GUMBO was, trying to take a picture of an old dugout. Never did get the picture taken, as I would have been up to my knees in no time in the stuff.

I've been asked many times since coming home, "What city did you like the best?" I really couldn't say, as each one has its own individuality, steeped in history hundreds of years old. The beautiful statues and fountains were a breathtaking sight!

Enjoyed shopping in London, perhaps since they could understand me better there. The tourist vendors on the Continent, in their stalls everywhere, amaze me; then I realized that this was their remunerative way of life.

Westminster Abbey, St. Peter's Church, The Vatican, the Sistine Chapel, and many other edifices I stood before in reverence and awe. Now, when I see these on

television, they come to life more for me. The paintings done by Michaelangelo in the Sistine Chapel are something I will never forget.

The beautiful mountains in Austria made me homesick; also, the boat trip on the Rhine will live long in my memory — such traffic, nearly as bad as a freeway!

The elevators in the hotels were really something — some held two people and luggage (tight squeeze). Enjoyed the food immensely; never ate so much cheese in my life before. The narrow and wide streets did not faze our bus driver, Andre, or our courier, Jack. Traffic was tremendous in Paris, Rome, and the other large cities.

The hospitality of the Amsterdam Legion was marvelous, and I felt right at home. The Canadian cemeteries are beautifully kept; I was so very proud of the boys that stood around me there, also of the ones buried there.

I would be amiss if I didn't say something about my companions on this wonderful trip. Each of us with our own individualities spent a pleasant three weeks together. Greta and Norma, are you still shopping? Boys, did you ever see your comrades dance in the aisle of the bus together. "Emily, where is David?", from our Walter. Les — "Bev, have you got the tripod?" Jack and Archie — "Let's have some beer or wine." These and many other remarks will live long in my memory. It was fun, and I enjoyed every minute of it, even when I had laryngitis for a few days, and couldn't talk.



## ‘‘ HIGHLIGHTS ’’

*By Stan Conway*

The highlight of the tour for the Conways, Anne and Stan, was reached at Rimini when the Richmonds "kidnapped" them to do a short tour of their own in Charlie's rented car. According to the letter from Stan, he and Charlie shook themselves loose from their wives somehow and proceeded to make a search on their own for some of our comrades in several Commonwealth cemeteries nearby. It is Stan's opinion that, as an Association, we should make an effort to have the resting places of our fallen comrades listed for the benefit of any touring member in the future. No doubt, too, Stan (and many others) will agree with Charlie Richmonds' strong ideas on the whole subject.

Stan's letter continues, "It sure was an experience to drive with Charlie on those Italian roads. He drove just like the rest of them, and they are crazy. If we

drove like that in this country, we would get pinched for sure!"

"The first cemetery we came across was Gradara. We were really impressed with this one; there were about seven tiers of graves in a half-moon shape on a side hill. They had the Canadians right where they should be, on the two top tiers. This was where we found the grave of Major Jack Hughes of the Lanark and Renfrew, but to a lot of people he was still a "Westie." In this cemetery we came across nine graves of old comrades, and they were beautifully cared for. From here, we proceeded farther south and off the main road about six kilometers to Necchiano, and looked at every headstone, and found five more graves of our fallen comrades."

"Just standing there and thinking back twenty-four years brought lumps to our throats, and we thought of how fortunate we were to be able to return and see all this. We returned to our hotel after this and related our trip to Johnny Ford, Walter Lyle, and the rest of the boys, and I sure hope, Walter, that you still have the list of names we gave you, because I sure can't find mine."

"The following day the tour proceeded to Florence without my wife and I, as we were going to drive to the next hotel with the Richmonds and pick up the tour again in Florence. On the way we were looking for Commonwealth cemeteries to visit and also viewing the countryside by car. We visited three more cemeteries at Cesena, Forti and Faenza, just outside of Ravenna, but we were having no luck to find any more of our boys."

"From Faenza we took the back roads to Florence, and to Charlie and I, this was the old Italy we remember — narrow streets in the towns, beat-up buildings, and also we saw an old Italian woman doing her laundry in the creek. (Niente Sapone?)."



## ‘‘ THEY SHOULD BE TOGETHER ’’

*By Charlie Richmond*

With regard to the Melfa River, I had a map given to me by Alan Coe which was dated May 4th, 1944. With roads and trails changed, buildings gone, etc., it was difficult to recognize the "B" Company crossing. With the very kind assistance of a young Italian, I found the place where Alan Coe got a belly full of shrapnel and also the trail where we used to take our vehicles across the river. When we crossed the river bank in 1944, it had very little cover, but now the trees are 25

to 35 feet tall and like a jungle. There was only one farm house and barn left at this spot, and the lady living there now said that her father had lived there during the war. She showed me the two gun slits that our men had made in the wall of the barn (on the Melfa River side). As I remember, the wheat was about the same height this time at it was in 1944.

As for slides, I have some that I took at the Melfa, but I am sure no one would recognize the spot at all.

The one thing that disturbed me greatly was the fact that the British Commonwealth have 28 War Cemeteries in Italy. I feel it is a real disgrace that our buddies who fought with us for our freedom were not buried together in one cemetery. They were good enough to give their lives for their Country, but their Country didn't bury them together. I would estimate 99¾% of our people are not aware of this fact.

---

### "REMEMBER MANLIO?"

Many of our readers will remember Lt. Manlio Raponi, who was attached to the regiment during our term in Italy.

It was too bad that we had not contacted Manlio directly before we left Canada, in time at least for him to arrange to attend the Melfa Dinner in Cassino.

However, John Ford contacted him by 'phone, and he came with his wife, Franca, to meet us at our hotel. They spent the afternoon with John and Helen Ford and Greta Robson, showing them some of Rome's interesting places.

---

### "POFI"

*By John Ford*

Our approach to Cassino became more interesting as we rolled along; the conversation increased amongst the Westies. The name "Tony Finlayson" was mentioned, that lovable Sgt. from 9 Platoon, a real friend of all the regiment. Along with Tony of course was Willie, or better known as "Limey" Wilson, who had his spine injured and suffered so many years before his demise.

The capture of Pofi naturally came up in the conversation, and it was located on the Courier's map. We decided to sidetrack there for our coffee break, as Pofi was only two miles or so off the freeway.

\* \* \*

John goes on to say that our arrival in this little un-

changed town, created quite a stir. It was a holiday, Assencion Day, so the town was crowded. It was difficult for most of us to actually recall the lay-out and we had a few debates among ourselves as to the road we had entered and so on.

Lots of pictures were taken with the locals and a newspaper correspondent for a Naples newspaper interviewed John.

We overstayed our break but it was a change from our usual halt for this time we felt we were in one of our "own" towns.

---

### A YOUTHFUL VIEW

*By Lynn Hall*

I wish to tell you all how much I enjoyed the trip because it was like walking in a dream, having heard of all these places and hoping to see them.

Even though I am too young to know the horror of the Second World War, it was still heartwarming to see all the graves of the men who gave their lives so that the next generation, like me, may grow up in a free country.

---

### "EUROPE '68"

*By Walter Lyle*

(Continued from the June Issue)

After the Melfa Dinner in Cassino, we proceeded back up the Italian "boot" to Bologna, and with our Italian "theatre of war" behind us, we reverted once more to the ranks of tourists rather than pilgrims.

The elections which go on for an entire week of voting, were in progress. Colourful banners, "Vota Comunista," or "Vota" — any one of about fifteen various parties — were stretched across the streets overhead in every town and village. There was an unbelievable mess of pamphlets littering the streets.

At Bologna we split the party for a day. Some who wished to see Venice journeyed to Innsbruck by train, with a stop-over in Venice. The others continued by bus, as scheduled, directly to Innsbruck. Innsbruck is beautiful. Colourful dirndl skirts of the girls, and "leder hosen" (very short leather shorts) worn by young men and boys, were very much in evidence. Also, the walls of many houses are decorated with quaint fresco paintings depicting religious, rural or wine-making scenes.



The trip continued in fabulous scenery, and we halted overnight in Rudesheim, a gay little river town on the German Rhine. From there, the next morning we boarded a Rhine steamer. The music of the famous melody as we passed the Loreley rock, the beautiful scenery, the schlosses, the vineyards, and the relaxed atmosphere of the boat was very welcome to us all.

Back on the bus again for a sweep through Germany to the Dutch border south of Nijmegen.

We crossed the border without any formality whatsoever, after finding out only that we were Canadian veterans, the guard waved us on with a "Go ahead — Welcome to Holland."

At our hotel in the centre of Amsterdam, we were pleasantly surprised to find the President of the Netherlands' Legion, Mr. Doppin, together with the president of the Eemland Branch, Mr. Klauui, accompanied by Mrs. Klauui and several members of their executives, waiting to welcome us. This was, we all felt, a most hospitable gesture, but when they showed us the programme they had arranged for us, we were completely overwhelmed! Mr. Doppin said they had just heard of our visits about a week before, and that this short notice "hadn't given them much time to prepare."

Well, I do not know how much time those Hollanders require, or what kind of arrangements they would have been able to make if they had more time. I cannot imagine how anything better could have been arranged. The list of functions they had prepared for our two days would have honoured much more important people than ourselves!

They had prepared a ceremony at the Canadian Cemetery at Groesbeek, at which they had also arranged the attendance of Mr. Docherty, Canadian Charge d'Affaires. They were thoughtful enough to know that we would wish to lay a wreath there, and that we'd have no time to obtain one, so they had it ready for us. There was a reception hosted by the town of Groesbeek following that ceremony.

On the way back to Amsterdam, it was arranged for us to stop and park where "no parking" is the rule, so that we could take pictures of the palace home of Queen Juliana. Mr. Karsters, secretary of the Legion, told me that Prince Bernhard would have met us himself, except for the fact that he was accompanying the Queen that very day on a visit to London.

In the evening, we were conducted with a mounted police escort to the Dam Square and were serenaded by a most excellent military band, the Legion Band. From the square we then marched — some, at least, in step —

behind the band to the Leeuwenpoortje (the Lion's Gate), a building which is about six hundred years old and now the headquarters of the Netherlands Legion.

Not only were we lavishly entertained (being unable to pay the bartender for anything), but the Association was presented with a beautifully-framed Legion Crest which will be on view for all to see.

The next day was the one described elsewhere by John Ford — a civic reception by the City of Amsterdam, the ceremony at the Dutch National Monument, a canal tour with the compliments of the City, and the dinner in the Officers' Mess of the Oranje Nasseau Barracks given by the Minister of National Defence.

From that dinner we proceeded by our own bus to the Hook of Holland, where we boarded our boat for Harwich and London.

One final touch was the attendance by Mr. and Mrs. Klauui to see us off and, incidentally, to ensure that we could board ship again without the normal customs and passport formalities.

So ended our Continental Tour on the best possible note. Harry Trueman had told us before that the highlight would be the hospitality of the Dutch. He was right! Those arrangements could not have been bought for *any* price. They were free to us, simply because the Dutch remember the part Canada played in Holland's liberation.

Back in London for a last look at "Blighty" as Scotty Low describes, and finally our non-stop flight (this time without a hitch) back home, and it was all over. All over — except for the memories.

---

## FLASH!!

A get-together to view slides, movies, etc., must be arranged, Walter. The closed mall at Brentwood would be available.

---

## FLASH!!

Still on gambling, we visited the famed Casino at MONTE CARLO. How it ever became famous is a mystery to us all . . . the signals hut at any time was *much* more active, though less formal. Certainly Las Vegas or Reno would make the Monte Carlans' eyes pop. However, it was early afternoon, thus a quiet time. Walter Lyle lost not only about seven bucks, but a good hat besides, but still has the metal claim check for his hat. Next visit, "get the hat *and* the seven bucks."

## "OFFICIAL RECEPTION, AMSTERDAM"

By John Ford

I do wish to tell you of our official visit to Dam Square, where the Canadian Military Attache, Captain Don Saxon, accompanied me to lay a wreath on the Dutch National Memorial. The Dutch had mounted an honour guard, and a bugler played the Last Post.

We then walked to the City Hall and were welcomed by the Deputy Burgomiester at an official City reception. This included cocktails, cigars, etc. The Dep. Burgomiester, after having many questions asked of him about the city government, again spoke to us, including many interesting observations about the beautiful hall. He insisted on meeting and shaking hands with every one there.

The City had made a photographer available to take a group picture. This turned out very well, and was much appreciated by us.

Following the picture-taking, we crossed the street and got onto a canal boat. We had a wonderful tour of the canals; while a most charming girl, a student, gave us an entertaining commentary as we passed by many interesting spots, such as the house where Anne Frank hid from the Germans, and many other historical places. The tour, which we hoped would never end, did so at the Oranje Nasseau Barracks, where we were entertained at a dinner in our honour, put on by the Minister of National Defence, and hosted by the Garrison Commander, Col. Krul.

---

## "MUSINGS"

By Harry Trueman

After the captains and the kings have departed, and we are all back doing our "thing," what does one say? "How're you gonna keep 'em down on the farm?" or "It's a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there," or just ignore the old cliches and the quick retorts altogether and store the memories quietly away with all the others which make up a man's life.

It is said that a man is the sum total of his experiences. (This also includes the ladies, of course.) What a variety of crazy, delightful, apprehensive, poignant, gay and sometimes annoying circumstances were added to our memory bank, beginning with that award-winning headline in *The Columbian*, "Westminster Invasion delayed 12 hours."

What a night the writer and Mike McGeough put in sendng telegrams to hotels, tour operators, and airlines, etc., protecting space and onward reservations. If

you may have noticed our red eyes, nervous twitches and slightly slurred speech occasionally, blame it on battle fatigue, not the L.C.B.

When Walter Lyle called us a couple of years ago suggesting the Sentimental Journey to The Melfa, this writer delved into the history of The Regiment, took a trip to Cassino, and did everything except see the film. The 18-day tour of the Continent, with two and three night stays in the major capitals, and including Cassino, the Melfa (the object of the exercise), and Groesbeek, took on a more impossible aspect. Compromises were made on both sides as time went by. Why couldn't the second war campaigns have been as static as the first, when our fathers spent a leisurely four years in the same waterlogged, mud-filled, vermin-infested trench? It sure would have kept the travelling time and the costs down to a minimum.

When Mike returned from the London Pub Crawl (as an *observer* only, it was reported) having safely seen the group off to the Continent, this writer looked forward to plain sailing through France and a joyful rendezvous at The Melfa just before arrival in Cassino.

Well, unless one has been through a French national strike, one has not lived. To cut a long story short, your scribe obtained a Hertz U-Drive in Caen under false pretences (for "local" driving only), then drove to Brussels, acquiring the last gallon of gas in Amiens on the way, negotiated the Belgian frontier choked with trucks and cars, stayed up all night at Brussels airport, no rooms being available of course, and cajoled, coerced, and lied his way via Milan, Rome and Naples in order to arrive at Cassino in time. The rest you know . . . the fashionably late arrival of the tape machine, the photographer, the two different electrical current outlets in the dining room, the serious hotel manager who objected to singing (completely un-Italian, even if it *was* three a.m.), the long distance calls to New Westminster, and the bad connection which made our voices seem garbled and slightly unintelligible.

The civilized human facade, which of course the boyish exuberance reinforced, cannot reflect always the emotions and innermost thoughts of man. Such as the trip to the Melfa by the young men and boys of 25 years ago, the meeting in the dried-up river bed with Nicola Lepore, who was three years old on that fateful day, and who led ten of us up the tortuous path to the farmhouse. The senora who, without prompting, remembered the two brothers, one of whom paid the ultimate sacrifice on her little plot of land. The wine and the friendship freely given. The immaculate ceme-