



The GROUND SHEET

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF
THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSN.

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

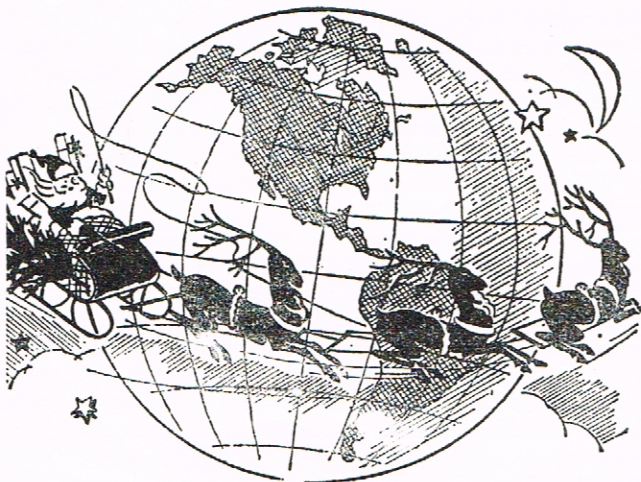
Dedicated to the Ideals and Comradeships We Knew in Two World Wars

Vol. 17, No. 8.

Box 854, New Westminster, B.C.

December, 1968.

Merry Christmas to All!



PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

COMRADES:

Greetings from your Executive at the close of another very gratifying year. This year proved to be one of our most active. To name a few of the events, there was the first pilgrimage to Europe by this Association, organized by Walter Lyle, to whom we are most grateful.

The participation of the Association in the Change of Command Ceremony was a huge success, and was much appreciated by our present Regiment.

The Scholarship was awarded to Peter Duthie, a credit to our Association!

The Melfa "dinners" in Casino and New Westminster were both successes.

Visitors were entertained during the summer — including the future Mayor of Warrick, England.

A Museum Committee has been established under the direction of Nelson Scott, committed to produce a Regimental Museum. This is going to entail the help of many bodies, so be prepared to answer the call.

The Smoker concluded the events for this year. Thanks, Doug., for taking the job at short notice.

These are some of the major involvements of this Association for this year. To those who turned out and helped make it so successful, "Thanks!" To those who couldn't be with us, "Make it in '69!"

As Christmas approaches, I take this opportunity on behalf of myself and the Executive to wish you all "Buona Natale." — J. FORD.

THE GROUNDSHEET

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.

REMEMBRANCE DAY


Remembrance Day to some of us was even more meaningful than before, because of our sentimental journey. Throughout the service held in the Drill Hall my mind went back to the cemeteries in Europe, and the hope that our comrades did not die in vain.

The service Officers were Mayor S. Gifford, Group Captain R. Coles, and Rev. C. Jack.

Following the Memorial Address by Rev. C. Jack, our band concluded the indoor service with "Onward Christian Soldiers."

As the troops moved out into the rain, J. Hou issued the red berets to the few stalwarts who decided to march come 'Hell or high water.' Well, we got the high water, and it rolled down Sixth Street in small rivers.

The wettest Armistice ceremonies concluded with the excellent performance of the Bugler, who, despite the deluge, played the Last Post flawlessly, and his rendition of Reveille made proud heads lift. "In Flanders Fields Though Poppies Blow." We Will Remember!


 EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

To all of you who have contributed to the "Groundsheet" and of course to the large majority of you who have not . . . personal best wishes for the forthcoming festive season. I look forward to increased co-operation to maintain OUR GROUNDSHEET at the highest possible level. You may be interested to learn that I have agreed to add the portfolio of your Association Secretary to my present one of Editor. This is, of course, only as long as I can uphold in some measure the magnificent efforts of retiring Secretary, Art Miller. If not, I expect to be fired so YOU may be the next one asked to perform this busy office. In the meantime, be assured that I will give it my very best. — Ron Hurley.

EXECUTIVE HIGHLIGHTS

The November eighteenth meeting started with eight men and continued this way for about an hour or so. The reason for this was that the rest of the executive who have become concerned with the Museum and are on the committee for such, were having a meeting to discuss the proper methods to portray the history of our Regiment. Through the many artifacts at our disposal we have a good chance of making a museum that people will want to see. When this gets to the point where people can view it, there will have been hours of thought and labour put into it. Right now it takes more than a little nudge to get a ponderous effort like this moving.

For a couple of months now there has been an association formed from Ottawa called the Association of Military Museums in Canada. This is a formal association designed to help military associations with an interest in building up their museums. So far the financial end will be held up by the individual groups putting up their own museums. Assistance will come in the form of proper designs for display tables and information on assembling them. It will be possible to ask for and get information from this central source regarding artifacts which may be surplus in other areas.

Some of the costs are unavoidable, display tables have glassed in tops, indirect lighting, and must be strongly made. The painting of the walls should be done in a subdued non-shiny paint, a knowledge of the hammer and saw, a little electrical knowledge and we'll be in business. The painting should come natural to anyone who has handled a roller before. It is plain to see that this will take dedication and hard work. We already have a committee, headed by Andy Hunter, who are ready to make this effort. One of their first jobs will be that of choosing a name that will draw the public.

Around nine o'clock the meeting was full again as the museum committee sat with us to hear Alec Milne give a talk on museums and the many necessary first jobs that are concerned with it. His interest in military museums began while he was compiling a history of a regiment, the experience gained at this made it easy to branch into the collection of artifacts and their display, by now, he has done so much of it, he finds it easy to pass on.

The ideas above concerning design and how to present the museum in the best light came from him. His offer of help was accepted.

Lt. Col. L. K. Deane, C.D., our new Regimental Commander, attended the meeting and is enjoying the same enthusiasm as the rest of the committee. This project appears now to be slowly moving forward. Nelson Scott is in there with both feet, using his boundless energy to give it added impetus; the executive is watching, waiting and interested to see the result.

Getting back to the meeting, the correspondence was mighty light, we are going to have to beef it up a little, write, mention names we know and remember. We like to hear from you.

Art Miller, Kamloops, B.C. — We are sure going to miss our secretary and one of the best cooks this side of the Rockies. Go ahead, stomach, suffer. I just bought my membership card for sixty nine at the cost of a dollar which hardly seemed necessary. My last year's card was just as good as new. Oh, well. — Bill Robson.

FAREWELL AND BUONA FORTUNA TO ART MILLER

The executive and entire membership are both saddened and pleased at hard-working Art Miller's decision to move to Kamloops in the sunny Okanagan. Saddened to lose the services of such a capable, tireless and dedicated Secretary but pleased that he is being promoted by his firm and moving on to higher things. We all know that Art Miller doesn't need luck — he will make out in the only way he knows how. Diligent, efficient hard work. We shall all miss him and to Art and his helpful charming wife, Phyl, we can only say Happy New Adventures, but don't stay away too long. — Ed.

A GRAND REPAST

Further to Bill Robson's reference to the Muesum Committee, a group of some 14 members were invited by Mr. Alex Milne to dinner at the Officers' Mess at Camp Chilliwack and to view at first hand the Military Museum of the Royal Canadian Engineers the existence of which Mr. Milne is largely responsible. The Dinner was sumptuous and the visit to the Museum was fascinating. I urge each and every one of you to visit this Museum and witness the magnificent displays for yourself. The Museum is open to public from 2 to 4:30 p.m. on Sundays throughout the year and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays to Fridays inclusive during July and August. THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED ON SATURDAYS.—Ed.

NOW HEAR THIS!

We neglected to mention on our Due's envelopes that the yearly membership fee is still only ONE DOLLAR — that's right, one buck. Please get yours in early. You may be interested to know that the total yearly dues collected is not sufficient to cover the costs of YOUR GROUND SHEET for 10 months but IT DOES HELP so please remit your dues NOW.—Ed.

THIS IS THE MODERN ARMY ?

Too Much Chest Chair

Fur things first: While the Russian army rattles its tanks against the Czechs and the Jordanian forces duel with the Israelis and the Biafran soldiers and the Nigerians slaughter one another, the Canadian Army has more serious problems on its collective mind. This is the amount of hair on a military man's chest. Here, exactly as they were issued, are the orders from headquarters under the heading of "Modification - Neck Opening of Field Jackets" — "To overcome the main complaint of the display of chest hair or the undershirt at the neck opening of the field jacket, base supply officers are authorized to arrange modification of the jacket by the addition of a 8135-alpha black snap fastener, approx. 2-0 and by having the lapels repressed to a slightly reduced neck opening. This simple modification can be carried out by unit tailors or by the individual without difficulty. To account for the height and girth of the wearer some latitude may be allowed in the positioning. The snap fastener shall be positioned not less than one and a half inches and not more than three inches directly above the top button. The female portion (the female portion?) shall be sewn on the right side above the button, and the male portion on the underside of the left lapel above the button hole the distance used for the female portion." There. You now have a military secret and don't you dare breathe a word of it to the Communists. . .

FROM THE POST:

A note and dues from W. A. Nelson of Balfour, B.C. and we O.K. your request re prize lists. . . A nice note and contribution from ex "B" Coy Doug Allen of Box 205, Cloverdale, B.C. Thanks for your kind remarks of the Groundsheet and keep writing. A greeting card and kind wishes from old friend Jim

Delaney, way back in Montreal. My personal best to you and yours, Jim.

From J. A. Bretenbach of 1347 E. 63rd Ave., Vancouver 15, B.C. a nice letter and some kind remarks re the Souvenir Groundsheet. We agree it was well done and the Guest Editor Walt Lyle and all the contributors deserve your praise. . . A word from a long-lost buddy in the person of Herb. W. Buckoll, now c/o Rayonier of Canada Ltd., Holberg, B.C. Pleased to hear you are fit again, Buck, and best of luck in the New Year when you return to work. Dues and best regards from ex-47th Alfred Goodman who was keenly interested in the European Trip as he had personally made the 1967 Holland Pilgrimage. Some kind thoughts and dues from ex "C" Coy stalwart Gordon Radmore of Mission, B.C. Gordon has two sons now in military service. One a pilot serving in Vietnam, and the other in the submarine service. Lose faith in the old footsloggers, Gordon? By way of Campbell River, news from Geo. S. Johnson who informed us he had quite a reunion with Walmsley, Gifford and Hutcheson. Bring them all over sometime, George. A note from Art Burton of Haney and sorry to hear of your lengthy illness. Hope you are on the mend. . . . A most interesting letter from one too long silent — Ron Grinstead of 5 Estey Place, Regina Sask. Nice to hear from you, Ron, and will publish your interesting letter in the New Year. Another welcome word from Ed Lennie down in good ol Clayton, Missouri, U.S.A., Sincere thanks for your kind personal remarks, Ed, and will publish your letter in the New Year. . . Thanks again to all who have written and ALL of You please drop a line. You have no idea how it helps the editor when he has a wealth of correspondence.—Ed.

THE GURKHA BRIGADE PREPARES TO STAND-DOWN

Knifed by Defence Costs

I know that many of you remember with fondness the association we had in War Time Italy with the famed "Gurkha's." I know you will read the following article with mixed feelings but I feel no words of mine could improve on this fine tribute.—Editor.

* * *

By Gamini Seneviratne, Gemini News Service

"Kaphar hunne bhanda marnu ramro."

The words are Gorkhali, their meaning the simple precept which rules the life of every Gurkha soldier. "It is better to die than be a coward."

The belief made the Gurkha one of the most feared and perhaps the only respected mercenary the world has ever known. For nearly 153 years these little men from Nepal have graced the British Army.

Now, as part of the British cuts in defence expenditure, their numbers are being drastically reduced.

" . . . the rundown of the brigade of Gurkhas to 10,000 by the end of 1969," Prime Minister Harold Wilson told the House of Commons, "will continue at the same pace until 1971, bringing the total strength of the brigade to 6,000."

Some 2,000 Gurkha troops each year will be demobilized. And to many in Britain's fighting forces who have known the Gurkhas it is a sad decision and one difficult to understand considering the frantic efforts of the British Army to recruit new men.

Whatever the reason, an era is passing. The special association of the Gurkhas and the British Army and more particularly the relationship between British and Gurkha officers and other ranks (riflemen) is understood by few outside the brigade and hardly any outside Britain.

Ironically the bond of mutual affection and respect was forged in battle.

In the second half of the year 1814, Gurkhas of the Nepalese Army were so harrying British outposts in India that the governor-general, Lord Moira, decided to eliminate the foe.

Thirty thousand troops were thrown in a four-column assault against the Gurkhas. Before long it was considered necessary to add a further 20,000 because the 10,000 Gurkhas were proving too much to handle.

It took months of heavy bombardment by cannons and innumerable assaults before the British could claim any sort of victory. In that time the British had their first opportunity to become acquainted with the dreaded kukri — the 18-inch long, broad, curved knife which has become the symbol of the Gurkhas — in action.

During an assault on an isolated hill topped by a rough, do-it-yourself fort, a troop of about 100 dismounted cavalry of the Royal Irish Regiment advanced a trifle too far.

Within minutes the detachment was routed by the deadly kukri. Four dead, fifty odd wounded, the rest in flight. It was not the last time the British were to see the kukri in action, but since then it was usually from the same (safe) side.

The lasting result of those months of war in which thousands lost their lives was mutual respect.

And so began the long association in arms. The Gurkha Corps of the East India Company was officially raised in 1815.

The Convention of May 15, 1815, which ended major hostilities, allowed Britain to recruit troops from the Gurkha Army (except from the Royal Bodyguard).

The original "Gurkha Brigade" of the British Army was made up of ten regiments, each with its own customs and traditions. Many structural changes were effected over the years and the whole radically altered after India's independence — both India and Britain now sharing out the Gurkhas (who were given the opportunity of choosing which army to serve) by regiments and individuals.

Since they first came to serve a foreign realm the Gurkhas have distinguished themselves in a variety of minor wars, rebellions, two world wars and the peace-keeping operations in places like Malaysia and Hong Kong.

Through Europe, Africa and Asia — Delhi, Baghdad, Gallipoli, Mandalay, Tripoli and Tobruk — the Nepalese have seen action and displayed outstanding valor. The stories of these actions are legion.

The last of them to win the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest military award "For Valour" in the face of the enemy, was Lance Corporal Rambahadur Limbu.

In Sarawak in November 1965 Rambahadur Limbu was leading his section along a sharp ridge in dense jungle towards a pocket of some 30 Indonesian guerrillas. The ridge could hardly take three men abreast.

Suddenly the enemy opened up with machine-gun fire from 10 yards. One Gurkha fell immediately. The lance corporal leaped at the gun nest and killed the gunner with a grenade. He then came under intense fire but left his captured retreat to position his men.

Two others were hit but, under murderous fire, Rambahadur went out and brought them back one by one. His leadership rallied his group and twenty-four Indonesians were killed and the rest put to flight as the position was taken by the Gurkhas.

Steadfast to his ideal of death rather than cowardice the Gurkha will die cheerfully. He is not only dedicated to his duty but enjoys enormously the whole business of soldiering.

Now several thousand Gurkha troops are being sent back to civvy street. Nearly all will go back to Nepal some, conceivably, may enlist in other armies.

In a recent written answer in the House of Com-

(Continued on Page Six)

THE REGIMENT REPORTS

Since the last regular edition of 'the "Groundsheet" the 50th Anniversary of the 1918 Armistice has come and gone. The serving personnel of the Regiment were very impressed with your special edition to commemorate that historic event. Mr. Hurley and his Staff did an excellent job of recreating moments that the calendar tells us happened so long ago, but seem so recent every November 11th.

As we approach the Christmas season, The Royal Westminster Regiment would like to wish our friends in the Association a very, *very* Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year. (We look forward to meeting you all at the Annual Smoker on the 7th).

H. A. Seddon.

* * *

A Message from the Commanding Officer

The fall trainning season has been an active and hard-working one for the Regiment. The LHQ training parades, the range practice, the driver training, the TEWTS, the platoon and section exercises, the small-bore shooting, and the floor hockey are but some of the activities that have kept us "Saturday Night Soldiers" busy.

A lot of work goes on "behind-the-scenes" to make the Regiment function. It is wonderful to see the help that members of the Association are giving to the Regiment. How about Frank Sullivan and Jim Flintoft who come down faithfully every Friday to coach on the .22 range — many thanks. Then there are Ron Mannering and Ernie Wood who help with the presents for the Children's Christmas Party. And Andy Hunter and Nelson Scott, who are actively engaged in the Regimental Museum. Basil Morgan is a tireless worker upon whom I can always rely. Not to mention Bill Meek who handle our printing needs. Did you know that Ron Hurley had offered to organize a sports and field day the cadets? And D'Arcy Baldwin . . . and Tom Hall . . . and so many more it is hard to name them all. To all — many thanks!

Yours sincerely,

Lieutenant Colonel.

L. K. Deane,

* * *

Printer's Note—This copy arrived Sat. a.m. while we were running overtime on first side so we had to leave a lot out, using the space reserved for the Draw Results. Balance of Regimental copy will appear in the January issue.

GURKHAS STAND-DOWN

(Continued from Page Five)

mons Reginald Prentice, minister of state for overseas development, said, "We are about to undertake a major road project in Nepal. This, with other projects, including special training for ex-Gurkhas, will raise the total of British aid to Nepal to over a million pounds a year over the next four years. . ."

Somehow, it is difficult to see the little soldiers cutting roads with the same enthusiasm with which they have been carving up the opposition with their kukris for the past 150 years.

WHAT BECAME OF KELLY ?

Major N. L. Topham—UNTSOP APO, New York.
H. G. Troke—15341 Royal Ave., White Rock, B.C.
E. J. Greensill—Mica Creek, B.C.
Capt. G. J. S. McCrea—4292 Winnifred St.,
South Burnaby, B.C.
R. O. Chandler—7716 Dow, South Burnaby, B.C.
Charles C. Bell—722 Eighth Street, Nelson, B.C.
Danny Pastro—Box 2080, Whitehorse, Y.T.

LEST WE FORGET

B. J. Barton, Vancouver, B.C.
W. T. Amos, Sydney, Vancouver Island.
Ed. Kelln, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
H. A. Allan Whiterock, B.C.
R. J. Pollard, 3660 Franklin St.
Vancouver 6, B. C.
W. H. Stone, Box 367, Port Hammond, B.C.
Arthur E. Cooter, 320 Strand Ave.
New Westminster, B. C.
D. Manuel, Box 230 Chase, B. C.

PITY THE POOR SERGEANT !

Tough Sergeant to private, snarling, "I suppose that when you're discharged you'll wait for me to die, so you can spit on my grave." "Not me," quipped the private. "When I get out of this man's army, I'm never going to stand in line again."

From THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 854, New Westminster, B.C.

E.G. SHANNON
940 DIXON ST
RICHMOND BC