



# 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. 18. No. 5.

Box 854, New Westminster, B.C.

Dec., 1969/Jan., 1970.

## PRESIDENT'S GREETINGS:

Comrades, once again it is my pleasure to bring you greetings from the Executive and myself. This is the traditional season which brings families closer together and goodwill prevails more than any other time in the year. Our Association is no exception. We meet and exchange good wishes at our annual Smoker, as this event climaxes our year. For all the hard-working committees, and the people who labored so long and hard to ensure that our Christmas Draw will prove successful. Sincere Thanks . . . All the committees have been very active and the results speak for themselves. Soon—you will be able to bring your families and friends to visit our Museum—our newest and most interesting project. You will be able to acquaint your family proudly with the Regiment, The Association and its interesting and long standing traditions. I, personally, as I'm sure most of you are, extremely proud of OUR ASSOCIATION, the finest in Canada. I ask your continued support and even greater efforts in the coming year to assure our continuing growth and improvement.

I single out one of our Active Executive members this year for special thanks. This man has been an executive member since the inception of the Association. He still frames pictures for our Museum Archives, inspects the Cadets, handles Life memberships, among many other tasks, and all at the young age of 83. Thanks Col. Bill Williams. To you and ALL the members of the Association — Buona Natale.

J. Ford.



## THE GROUND SHEET

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## SECRETARY'S CORNER:

The days grow short for the 60's and we are about to embark on a new decade. It is hoped that the Seventies will bring bigger and better things for our Association. The latter, of course, depends entirely on YOU AND YOU AND YOU, ETC. As a point of interest it is gratifying to note that our actual paid up membership is at an all time high, some 516 in number. We hope this is an indication for improvement in the future. 1969 saw a few setbacks where it hurts the most, in our

## REMEMBRANCE DAY:

Traditional grey, damp skies rolled over the cenotaph in New Westminster during the 1969 Armistice Day Services. Some 25 members marched in the parade with the Association and there were a few others in the ranks of local service organizations. The principal service address was given by Rev. Koontz (A mere boy of 16 yrs. in Wartime Holland. His words were most appropriate as he spoke of the difficulties of life under harsh enemy occupation. He still recalled the almost unbelievable surprise and exhilaration, when he saw the first liberating Canadian Troops. A unique situation, probably known by many through the press, resulted at the post services gathering in the Officer's mess when Ron Mannering introduced Mr. Wilhelm Hartmann. Hartmann had been a young boy serving in the German Naval Marines in Holland. A very young looking man of 41 yrs., Hartmann has now been a Canadian Citizen for 18 yrs. and a successful businessman in Vancouver. He had been opposite the Westies in the spring of 45 and had sought aid through a Vancouver Newspaper as the whereabouts and welfare of his former enemies. There were no animosities present this day and Hartmann and all those present enjoyed a relaxed and friendly chat. (If we could only produce this solution to the violent beleaguered countries of the world to-day). The Sgt's Mess were their usual gracious hosts and warmth and goodwill prevailed throughout the afternoon and evening. It is only to be hoped that more of our members will turn out in the future . . . Ed.

*Its been many years since the memorable Christmas Dinner mentioned in this complete version of John Harrington's Poem. We hope it brings back many fond memories . . . Ed.*

## THE 47th BATTALION'S CHRISTMAS DINNER 1917

*by John E. Harrington*

December Nineteen Seventeen and the Forty Seventh lay,  
 At La Targette west of Vimy. 'Twas a week to  
 Christmas Day.  
 Said, Carmichael the Adjutant, better known to all as Slats!  
 "Sir, next week we man the trenches fighting Heine,  
 mud and rats!"  
 Colonel Frances answered: "Winslow, held the Ridge with  
 us last year,  
 "But our Christmas dinner was hard tack and that is  
 lousy cheer,



"But I don't see why we can't have ere we go into the line,  
 "A Battalion Christmas dinner. It would make us all feel  
 fine!"  
 So he shouted for his runner: "Get out there and beat  
 the drum  
 For the officers and sergeants as I want them all to come,  
 And the Quartermaster and his bloke, the Sergeant Cook as  
 well;  
 They all know the ways of scrounging, so I'm sure they'll  
 work like hell!"  
 When he had them all assembled, he said: "Now you  
 understand  
 "That this dinner we'll be having has to be a banquet  
 grand.  
 "So get out and start your scrounging, and instead of  
 using cash;  
 "All the Frenchies love our bully beef, they'll grab it  
 in a flash!"  
 Now the scroungers did it handsome, getting rations  
 from the store  
 And exchanging them for items such as turkeys by the score;  
 Then we pitched a wopping canvas what they call a big  
 marquee,  
 And we filled it up with tables and a stolen Christmas tree,  
 That Trench Mat Willie had taken from the Chateau  
 de la Haie,  
 While the Brass Hats were 'Out of Bonds' down Camblain  
 l' Abbe way.  
 So we put on top a bright tin star to shine over the lot,  
 Which the Pioneer Sergeant had cut from a madam's  
 chamber pot.  
 When the bugler sounded 'Mess Call,' you remember how  
 it went?  
 That old familiar 'Cook House' tune, we all marched  
 into the tent,  
 Where the tables were all filled with fresh vegetables,  
 a treat!  
 But the big dish was the turkeys roasted brown, the  
 Christmas meat!  
 And the man to take all honours was Art Saunders, B's  
 own cook,  
 For he made the Christmas pudding fit for any gourmet's  
 book.  
 All the officers were waiters though it's not in K.R. Rule,  
 But as Captain Mills said grinning: "Boy, I know I feel  
 a fool!"  
 And our Padre McCausland, a man of godliness and cheer,  
 But he never was more cheery than when serving us the beer.  
 Now the band played lively music just like officers at  
 mess,  
 Alternating with the drums and pipes in their new fancy  
 dress;  
 With the Bandmaster and Drum Major both looking  
 proud as Punch,  
 While they wondered if there would be any turkey left  
 to munch.  
 Now the companies were seated in their order A to D,  
 Then the signallers, the runners with their boss, Tom  
 Macafee,  
 Next the gymnastic guys who tortured us with physical  
 jerks,  
 Then the pioneers, and the scribes known as orderly room  
 clerks.  
 So the Forty Seventh feasted; sure B. Company was there.  
 With our Sergeant Major Crispin sitting in a big arm chair.  
 Here's the roll call at B's table: Andrews, Blackie and  
 Gourlay,  
 Bullock, Campbell, Anderson, Hall, Fraser, Granger,  
 Laird and Jay;  
 Hamilton, Leggett, Mulligan, Eckland, Hargraves, Neal  
 and Payne,  
 Huston, Henry, Millar, Pollock, Rodgers, Teed, White  
 and Despaine;  
 Farther down there sat Costello, Sweeting, Burton,  
 Whitley, Strong,  
 Hogarth, Macintosh, Harrington, McIntyre and Shorty  
 Long;  
 Also sitting near us that trio, Smith, Jones and Robinson,  
 And opposite sat Port Moody's men, McCoy and Robertson.  
 Then to add to our amusement, Tweedy hollered: 'I want  
 more!"  
 And Old Brasso came and served him and for once he  
 was'nt sore.  
 Then our Inkpen and McWhinney with a nerve the joking  
 pair,  
 Laughed and asked Me Lad Yer Jackson for the Provost  
 Sergeant's share.  
 Then the band played Christmas Carols and we sang  
 them loud and clear,  
 Then we stood around the tables singing! 'O Canada,'  
 dear!  
 Jock Mackenzie played the bagpipes and we made 'Auld  
 Lang Syne' ring,  
 Then we all stood to attention whilst we sang: 'God  
 Save the King!'







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be called "First Sergeant" for everybody to know it. And we had stretcher bearers, not corpsmen.

If we needed to do a lot of shooting in a hurry, we used Brens or Stens — BARS are places where you got a drink and there weren't any around where the shooting was going on. If you needed to shoot a little more, call in the Vickers, not Browning.

G.I. is an illiterate term coined by a crop of conscripts. I wasn't Government Issue, I volunteered. I started free, I fought free and I ended free.

Incidentally, my enemies were Jerrys. Kraut was and is an insipid way to serve cabbage. Those bad people inhabiting Italy were Eyeties. Wops were and are hoods living in New York and Chicago.

If we Canadians are going to reminisce about our wars, let us do so in terms familiar to those of us who fought them. — A. R. Trimble, Osoyoos, B.C.

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