

VOLUME 2000 / ISSUE 1

Dedicated to the ideals and Comradeship
We knew in Wars and Peace and in
Our services both Home and Abroad.



THE GROUNDSHEET

The Official Publication of

The Royal Westminster Regiment Association
P.O. Box 854, New Westminster, BC V3L 4Z8

February, 2000

Sick & Visiting Committee host memorable luncheon for veterans



L-R Walter Jackson, Walter Tyler, Doug Glenn, Chuck Smithers, Jerry Gangur, Ethel Johnstone & Fred West

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Editors Corner Jerry Gangur

You may have heard and if you haven't, you should know that Reserve units have been evaluated for readiness and efficiency over the last three years. You probably would have guessed, but our regiment has come out on top. Our rating is very high and credit must go to those on watch and in particular, the current commanding officer, Major **Mark Fisher**. **Congratulations to him and all serving members of the regiment.**

As president Len notes in his remarks, we have been fortunate to have applied for and received casino funds. After operating for years on a shoe string, we have to get used to the idea that we can spend funds on our members. The casino funds allocated for sick & visiting enable your executive to assist in some small and meaningful way, those that are confined or suddenly find themselves in hospital. Just a thought, we cannot help a member that is in need of cheer if we are not aware of his circumstances.

When you meet an executive member, perhaps you might take a moment and tell him how much you appreciate his time devoted to the association. Volunteers need to be told that their work is appreciated. Without volunteers, the association would cease to function. Sometimes a simple thanks is all that is needed.

Melfa 2000 incorporates the Annual General Meeting for the first time. If you need a ride to any Melfa event, simply pick up the phone and tell an executive member and a taxicab will be dispatched.

Finally, as editor of the Groundsheet it is my task to record names 'In Memoriam.' With each passing issue, I realize of how fortunate I have been to know such fine human beings and to reflect on how some have influenced and motivate me in so many meaningful ways. In his letter published in this issue, **Ron Kearsley** says the Westies he served with were the "**Elite and the best**". How fortunate my generation is to have rubbed shoulders with the best.... Ed

President's Report

Len Wohlgemuth

Hello again fellow WESTIES. In this report I would like to present to you what we have been doing over the last year with the gaming funds, what we are planning to do submit for gaming funds this year, and what we are planning for the Melfa Weekend.

Last year we requested for Gaming Funds from the provincial government for operation of the Groundsheet, funds for the Regimental Museum, funds for our four cadet corps, and funds for our Sick and Visiting Committee. Sadly we were rejected on the Groundsheet and the Regimental Museum. The Groundsheet was rejected as it seemed to the government that it was for direct operation of the association. The museum was rejected as we did not submit properly for a particular capital project. Fortunately, both our cadet corps and the Sick and Visiting Committee were funded, although at a reduced amount. These funds consisted of \$6,000.00 for the cadets and \$1,500.00 for sick and visiting. Last February, the cadet corps we informed, the four corps, that each had \$1,500.00 to spend over the next year. The Maple Ridge Cadet Corps immediately spent their funds on life jacks and other support equipment for the canoes that the Maple Ridge Legion had purchased for them. The Surrey-Delta Corps has had financial and support problems over the last few years. Fortunately, the Surrey Legion has decided to support them by providing them with a location and other support. Our fund was also able to support this cadet corps by providing funds for the purchase of a school trailer and assistance with the moving of the trailer to the legion. Appreciation also has to go to the Abbotsford Corps who gave up their \$1,500.00 for the Surrey-Delta Corps. Finally, we were able to help the New Westminster Corps with funds for some band instruments. In all, the cadets have been reasonably funded this year and we are seeking additional funds this year.

The Sick and Visiting Committee finally got some long needed funds that has worked well this year. Through these funds, we have been able to provide flowers and fruit baskets to association members upon hearing sickness or bereavement. Additionally, we have been able to help some members get out to some of our functions such as the Melfa Dinner, Remembrance Day, and some luncheons. Our three members in George Derby were able to attend a luncheon last December. Finally, we were able to fund the purchase of an electric bed for one of our members at George Derby. We will be seeking further funding of our Sick and Visiting Committee this year.

Apart from funding the cadets and sick and visiting we are also seeking funds for the museum to purchase securable cabinets for the weapons and to put lighting on our Victoria Cross Memorial. This time we believe we can make a proper submission for these areas.

Moving on from gaming funds, this year's Melfa Weekend is shaping up to be a memorable one. The golf tournament will be held on the 19th of May at the usual time and location. For the dinner, on the 20th of May, I am working very closely with the Commanding Officer to bring the dinner back into the armoury. In particular, we are working on reducing the acoustic problems through some overhead covering and soft walls. The meal will be a buffet and we are aiming the cost to be the same as last year. On the 21st we will be holding the brunch followed by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in the armoury. This will be the first time that we have held the AGM after the Melfa Dinner. This move of the AGM will finally allow members from out of town to attend. The executive members that are organizing the Melfa weekend are Alan Morton for Golf, myself for the dinner, and Sgt. Mike Kelly for the brunch. We are all looking forward to seeing you at the Melfa Weekend.

The Regiment

The past issues of the Groundsheet have had contributions with a farmyard theme (pigs). It has reminded me of my brief experience as a Peacekeeper. I thought, I would share with you this one.

During my 1992-93 tour in Cyprus, I was attached to 1RCHA (Royal Canadian Horse Artillery). During our tenure, the Norwegians departed and our areas of responsibility expanded. I was a Platoon Warrant Officer and tasked to conduct a recce, for our new area of responsibility. You, you may have guessed, it included an abandoned farm or specifically a Mediterranean Orchard with Olive trees. A familiar landscape, I would presume, to our D-Day Dodgers. I have forgotten the Observation Post number; but this house was to become a Platoon House for our unit.

As we approached the new house, I could see the outline of a Volley ball net and posts. To some of your reading this - that may not seem important. However, when your soldiers are confined to the area of an isolated house; any activity that would break the boredom was a welcome sight. Finally, I thought, piece of civilization in this time capsule of destruction.

However, as we got closer to the house and the volley ball court, I noted something that was odd. The volley ball court was located in the backyard of the house. A nice clearing at the edge of the orchard. The peculiar thing was the amount of deflated volley balls lying around the court. "one", I muse, "I could accept, but five?" My curiosity was peaked. I asked the previous residents, "What's with all the deflated balls?" "Oh, yea, that," they replied, "The volley ball court is in the middle of a minefield." They continued, "Here, is our Out!"

Chuck MacKinnon

Westies will soon be departing for Bosnia - Herzegovina. Best wishes and God speed to a healthy return. Members of the unit will going over with 3PPCLI Battle Group as part of Operation PALLADIUM Rotation 6 Forces. They will leave in February and they should return home in August. As far as I know it will be the first time that the Unit has sent two Officers overseas since WW II. Captain **Matthew Haussmann** & Lt. **Ryan Reed** have been selected to be liaison officers. For some of the Westies it will be their second tour to the Balkans. Chuck Mackinnon

Greetings to members of the Serving Battalion! As a serving member of the regiment, past issues of the Groundsheet have been distributed to you through your respective messes. The executive has decided that commencing with this issue, you should receive your Groundsheet in the mail..... You are always invited to contribute photos or articles for publication. ...If you know o someone who served with the regiment and is not receiving a copy of the Groundsheet. Call us.....Ed itor

Letters

Ron,

Just a note to say how much we appreciate your continued news of the association in the Groundsheet. Hope you can read this scrawl, how are things going with you these days? Didn't think we would ever live to reach this year did we, but we showed them. Just give a 100% as Little Joe used to say eh? Am having kidney problems myself and a now on dialysis at RCH every other day.

Had a phone cal from Victoria the other day from Jack Terpenning's widow Lea to tell us of Terps passing from a stroke, so was sure sorry to hear that. My wife and lea were school mates so we have kept in touch all through the years. Have many memories of Terp in action. I phoned another of our old regiment, Malcom Flewwelling in Nova Scotia to tell him of Terps passing as they had been great pals during the war.

See also Bill Robson and Harold Searle have passed on, our ranks are getting thin.

One incident in Italy remains in my memory of a sergeant in Support Coy herding back a flock of turkeys to our casa with his only support a Thompson machine gun - somewhere in Italy.

All the best to you and yours.

Joe Strawson
January 9, 2000

Ed,

Am sending you a cheque for fifteen dollars for my dues, also to let you know that my brother George Griffiths passed away in Merritt, BC on July 4, 1999. He was with the Westminster Regiment (Motor) in WW2 1940 to 1945.

Sincerely, LL Griffiths
November 22, 1999

Ed

I had the privilege of knowing Jack Terpenning for over fifty-three years. Jack served during World War Two with the Westminster Regiment and I with both the British Columbia Dragoons and the Westminster Regiment. We served in both Italy and Northwest Europe.

Jack and I were together in the same dwelling with a Dutch family at on time in the small town of Norg in the Province of Groningen in North-West Holland. This family held Jack in the highest regard and we spoke about this relationship once in a while when we had coffee together years later, on different occasions.

I had known Jack, too, while serving in Italy, albeit with different Regiments. He was held in high regard as a very fine soldier and Senior N.C.O. by all who knew him and those who served with him in the Westminster Regiment. Indeed, Jack served Canada with pride and distinction and this is borne out by many of his associates that I have been in touch with through the years, both army-wise and in civilian life.

After the war ended, Jack attended UBC and then worked for many years in the Fisheries Branch of the BC Government.

After his retirement from the BC Government, Jack's interest in Education came to the fore-front and he returned to the University of Victoria and attained advanced degrees. One of his special interests was Political Science and he often related to me some of the interviews he had with some very colourful politicians of yesteryear in BC political history.

I have been in touch with the Executive Committee of The Royal Westminster Regiment Association and they have asked me to express their deep regret on Jack's passing to his wife and children and to this I also add my sincere regret.

Finally, a well known quotation;

*"We grow not old as those who are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn,
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them."*

Sincerely,

Peter Adlem
January 6, 2000

Ron,

Enclosed are a couple of amusing moments. I'm sure the brass would not have found it funny at the time. Hope this finds you both holding up well.

In 1943, on one of our schemes, we were using expropriated land that was owned by some upper-crust Brit. **George Dominick** and myself, carrying rifles and live ammo, came to a high fence on high ground. We heard voices and a lot of traffic, which turned out to be a village adjacent to the land we were using. We figured there had to be a pub down there, so we climbed over the fence, and followed our noses. Several beers late, and in no pain, we decided we had better get back to the unit. While we were looking for our platoon, we came across a beautiful estate home, complete with nice lawns and a huge patio with several marble statues... all nudes. In our "unbalanced" state, we decided to test our marksmanship by removing all the sculptured protuberances, including noses, from those statues. After doing so, we ambled our way back to battalion, quite satisfied with a "job well don". I often wonder what went through the minds and came out of the mouths of the owners when they saw those noseless eunuchs and flat-chested females.....

Ted Churchill asked me to sent this.... Some Westie named Henesey was eating a sandwich made with that dark Italian bread. Maj. "Mother" McKenzie had issued orders forbidding the boys from eating any foreign food that had been handled by non-Canadians. The major said, "I told you not to eat that bread. What have you go to say??" Henesey's reply was, "My mother told me not to join the army, but here I am."

Have a good one**Murray Brown**

Ron,

Don't be shocked at hearing from me, but I know that you will be interested to get this information and news of our old comrade **Frank Seriani**.

My wife & I attended the service which was a great send-off for him. He was well respected in the community and the indications of this was obvious by the many who attended the service

Sorry to hear of John Ginter's wife Marg. You may have already go this information I plan to attend

the service Aug. 14. Surrey, BC.

Hope your health has improved. All the best to you and your wife.....**Len Bailey**

Editor

It is with much personal sadness that I am writing to advise you of the passing of my father, **Stanley James Hammond** of Armstrong, BC. He passed away in Vernon Jubilee Hospital, where he was born in 1919, in March of this year.

He was proud of "his" regiment and it's accomplishments during WW 2. He and I would get together over a bottle , even up to last year, and he would regale me with the humorous side of life in Italy and Holland during the war. He rarely touched on the tragic side, for that I have the Westminster War Diary.

As a point of interest, My Grandfather, **H.J. Hammond**, lost a leg in France in 1916 while serving with the 47th Canadian Infantry Battalion.

November 11 was especially hard for me this year. I am the President of our Legion Branch and it was with great difficulty that I read at 11:02 that Thursday:

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
we will remember them.*

Sincerely.....**Jack Hammond**

Ron,

..... Several years back, I had my wife in town shopping. I was going from the car to the store when the foot on my artificial leg broke. A friend of mine happened along at that time. He offered to help me get back to the car. As we were returning to the car, a nun came along. She asked my friend if I would be able to drive. My friend said "Yeah, He's been driving for years like that."

Here's a story of my time in Borden, before being shipped overseas. We were out on maneuvers one day. I had to use the bathroom. I spotted a pile of brush. Before I could get done up and away, I was stung 2 or 3 times around my "privates." It was sore! I finally went for medical help later that day. I was given some pills which eventually solved my problem. After the rest of the boys in 12 platoon found out, they had a great laugh and I took a lot of ribbing . One statement which stands out in my memory is "are you a man or a stallion?"

Your comrade.....**George Bayne**

Editor

Some nut in our Groundsheet complained about no input from the readers. As the Italian Officer in the T.V. series 'OLLO , OLLO' said, 'What a mistaka to maka,' Now you've got me writing. You brought it down on your own heads, so here goes. First to, **Basil Morgan** your wonderful welcome to my wife Lilian, son Terry and myself has left an everlasting warm spot in all our hearts. You and the Westies' museum was the highlight of our trip to BC.....

At 85 years of age Lilian and I thought of this as our "final fling," but due to your warm welcome we are planning a return trip for Melfa 2000.....

Now to Hurly Burly **Ron Hurley**. Sorry to hear things are not to well Ron; words of help "all of us were lucky to get this far Buddy." Think of us three in Holland, Ron, a wonderful trip but now we are two.....Remember leaving the tents outside Naples? Boy I was glad to get away from that damn smoldering Volcano. Always the cautious timid type, it done me no good to be told how many years it lay dormant. Any way I think we moved to the big new school in MATURA or some other place with a musical sounding name, like CASINO, CORINA RIDGE, lovely names for tiny bit of "hell." After supper, all the well behaved members of 17 platoon headed into town. No pubs, but a rustic old place, long benches on each side of long tables with long mugs of nice tasting wine. Having led a very gentle sheltered life, I had no idea of the wines atomic action once you tried to stand up. Your body gets up but your head stays on the table. However, thanks to my robust and caring comrades, I was dragged back to barracks, literally poured into my bed roll and good old **Tommy Thompson** flopped into his bed roll close to me on my right . Heaven only knows how long I was able to cling to that swaying, rolling, tossing floor that kept changing places with the walls and even the ceiling. Finally, as I attempted to untangle myself from those far from luxurious blankets, Tommy called "What the hell are your doing Kearsley?" On being told that I wanted to be sick, he said "Here, do it in your helmet!" Time being of the essence, I promptly did just that. Peace reigned supreme until the usual ride awakening and like all good soldiers, I was up, washed, shaved and

ready for parade. We made up our bed rolls, straightened out our kit, neat, tidy & snug. Tommy with an unholy swishing, stinking mess, said, "here is your helmet Kearsley." To which I replied, "No that's yours Tommy, mine is over here!" Needless to say, it was some weeks before Tommy and I went drinking together and some months before he made his bed any closer than ten feet from mine. Isn't war hell Ron?

Now to the nicer thoughts; many things go into making a good fighting regiment. Some are big and some are small, but lasting. Aldershot and a bun throwing incident had a deep effect on our regiment. When a whole Coy of men cheerfully and laughingly bring together as one, determined to stick together "on for all, all for one." The Westies changed forever. They established a Unit without bias, badges or prestige; the ordinary group of men were the regiment's "Elite" the best, the main, the most important group when it came to the crunch. Our officers (a fine group themselves) learned once and for all just who could be depended on. As for us we learned real togetherness. The glue that held us all together through many dark days ahead. In short, Ron, I hope the man that threw that damn bun realizes what he done for all of us in the Westies.

All the best to some of the Best.... **Ron Kearsley**

Editor,

I would like to inform you that my father **James Walsh**, K1375005, of Cranbrook, BC, passed away on February 5, 1999. He served with the Westminster Regiment 1940-45.

I thank you to update your records'

Yours truly, **James Walsh (son)**

Sick & Visiting

We are grateful for any news concerning members who may be confined at home or in hospital for health reasons. If you have time, visit or phone your comrades.

In George Derby Centre 7550 Cumberland St, Bby
Ethel Johnstone **Walter Jackson**
Bill Thoranson **Hector Roberge**

Hospitalized on and off at Lions Gate Hosp., North Van. Mike is now at home.
Mike Kedziora **988-1065**

Colin McQuarrie Canada Lodge 7197 Canada Way,
 Burnaby

Colin wishes to thank all members for the flowers he recently received. He says they were magnificent and brightened up his day.

Hospitalized over Christmas was our devoted honorary treasurer, **Vernon Ardagh**. I believe it was his plan all along, just to give us a scare. We do not care for a repetition, Vernon.

Doug Glenn says he will continue to visit our members George Derby Centre, but he says he is slowing down and our members could always use some company.

Editor: My wife and I were visiting Mike Kedziora in hospital when flowers from the Association happened to be delivered. Mike's face lit up in a way that is difficult to describe. The flower arrangement was beautiful. Mike says thanks much.

Help us help you. Take a confined or hospitalized veteran for an Outing. Funding, from Casino proceeds, for this activity is available.

No matter where you reside. If you know of a veteran or member who is home confined or hospitalized, we

ask that you arrange for them to be taken out for brief period. If you can arrange for a group of veterans to have a break from hospital food, contact any director or the editor for further information. Already two outing were organized and both proved to be most welcomed by those in attendance.

Melfa 2000

May 19	20	21
↗	↗	↑
Golf	Dinner	Brunch & AGM

Melfa 2000 ends the millenium appropriately with change. This year will see our Annual General Meeting held in conjunction with the Melfa Celebration. Your executive hopes that holding the Annual General Meeting during day light hours will encourage more of our Veterans to attend.

Cost: Our executive feels that costs will be as last year. \$30.00 per person. All relevant details will be outlined in the April/May issue of the Groundsheet.

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Another Reminder

The Annual General Meeting will not take place in March as in the previous 50 years. The date has been changed and will occur on the last day of the Melfa Weekend. The meeting will be held in the armoury on Sunday 21 May, after our annual brunch at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Recognition & Awards

R & R well earned. Museum committee pays tribute to long time treasurer of the Museum of The Royal Westminster Regiment Association. **Nelson Scott**, with his devoted wife **Nora** at his side gives finally words of advice and thanks to museum committee.



President Len Wohlgenuth congratulates Kimberley Hurford, recipient of The Royal Westminster Regiment - John Ford Memorial Bursary. This bursary is awarded to a student attending New Westminster Secondary School in New Westminster.

55 th Anniversary trip in Commemoration of the War in Italy - Fred West
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On September 30, 1999 the delegation assembled at the Lord Elgin Hotel in Ottawa. Delegates came from all of Canada, from Victoria to Cornerbrook and way points, and were all veterans of the Italian Campaign that ended in 1945. I met a veteran of the Strath's who joined the Navy following WW2, as a stoker. He became a Lt. Commander. He was involved in the advance to the Melfa and we had several conversations on the adventure. Smokey Smith, V.C., O of C., C.D. was also a member of the delegation. Our only V.C. that can travel.

Activity	Cdn Graves
Oct 2. Marza wreat laying ceremony	22
Oct 3 Agira Cdn Cemetery nearly	500
Oct 4 Anzio Wreath laying	22
Oct 5 Rome War cemetery Vatican City	22
Oct 6 Casino War Cemetery	855
Casino Memorial Abbey at Monte Casino	192
Oct 8 Ortona Civilian Cemetery Moro River Cemetery	1,375

Visited Casa Birardi where Maj. **Triquet** was awarded the V.C. There is a nice memorial in his honor. I would like to see some thing along the same line at the Melfa **Jack Mahony!**

Oct 9 (Sat) Bus laid on for a return visit to River Moro Cemetery. Leisurely visit there where I found **Alex McCrea's** headstone (our first A Coy loss).

Oct 10 Ancona Was Cemetery	161
Gradara Cemetery	369
Oct 11 Cesna War Cemetery	307
Villanova Cemetery	206
Ravenna War Cemetery	438

Oct 12 We departed Montechio and a ceremony where 289 Cdns are buried, then on to Tevulia and a visit and ceremony at the 5th Division Monument, a very impressive monument where we held a ceremony and wreath laying. The next visit wa to Coriano Ridge Cemetery where 427 Cdns are buried. And back to Rimini where we had a farewell dinner.

We had a number of our serving troops with us, they carried out the ceremonials and look after our baggage and helped an on that need help. There was also a number of Cadets with us who were also very helpful where it was needed. I think this was a good idea and they learned a lot about war and what it was all about. We also had troops from Kosovo and Bosnia for several days. They drove over to Italy to join us and I assume they also go a first hand lelsson too. All those headstones were very impressive I am sure, not to mention the conversations ands stories of he various battles and adventures. The troops also did some entertaining. They had their own bus and would go on ahead to prepare for the ceremonies etc. According to the RSM they also practiced their singing. They gave us a demonstration at the farewell party by singing to us. Their selection was the son The D Day Dodgers sung to the tune of Lily Marlene. They did a fine job and we gave them a standing ovation.

We were treated always royally and I am glad I was able to participate.

End

Correspondence - Ron Hurley

Nice to receive your letters. Thank to **George Bayne** of Nova Scotia..**Sniper Brown** for your interesting notes.. From **Bus Morison** who as a recent great grandfather, is still restoring ancient vehiclesFrom another old friend **Len Bailey** and for your information on **Seriani** ...**Jack Hammond** thank you for taking the time to write us about your Dad and Grandfather. To **Walter Kearsley**, Editor Jerry tells me he was delighted with your brief letter...**Joe Strawson** thanks for your update and kind words about old **Terp**....**LL Griffiths** sorry to hear of your brother passing on....**Peter Adlem** thank for the fine tribute... To all, do take the time to write and tell us what is new in your life....Hope to see many of you at Melfa 2000.



During his tour commemorating the 55th anniversary of the War in Italy, **Fred West** visited many grave sides of fallen Westies. He took many grave photographs, but space limits us and we have chosen to show Fred standing by grave of Pte. **G.G. Brisbin**.

In Memoriam.....

Henry	Bartell (Hedley).....	Westminster Regiment (Motor) W. W. II
Don	Drummond (North Van).....	Westminster Regiment (Motor) W. W. II
Robert M.	Garrison (Cumberland).....	Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. II
George	Griffiths (Merritt).....	Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. II
James	Hammond (Armstrong)	Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. II
William	Handford (Gibsons)	Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. II
Jack	Hartley (Abbotsford)	Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. II
Peter	Holmes(Stoney Plain).....	The Royal Westminster Regiment
Elmer	O'Brien (Carman)	Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. II
Bill	Robson (Vancouver)	Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. II
Frank	Seriani (Nanaimo)	Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. II
Jack	Turpenning (Victoria).....	Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. II
James	Walsh (Cranbrook)	Westminster Regiment (Motor) W.W. II

Special Obituary

Mrs. Dick Armstrong..... Mrs. John Ginter and..... Mrs Bill McIntyre

Major General **Bert Hoffmeister**, described by one historian as Canada's "best fighting general," died on December 4, 1999. As major general, Hoffmeister led the 5th Cdn Arm Div establishing a bridgehead on May 24, 1944. This is the action where the "Hoffy's Might Maroon Machine," saw Major **Jack Mahony**, a company commander with the Westminsters, win the Victoria Cross. Later in August of the same year, the 5th Div. broke through the Gothic line, and British General Oliver Leese described the action as "one of the biggest victories of the war." During a meeting with Ron **Hurley** within last two years, "Hoffy" spoke highly of Lt. Col. **Courbould** and went on to say how proud he was of the Westminsters, who fought as part of the 5th Cdn Div.

Westie veterans should know that serving members of the regiment formed part of the honour guard at the funeral service at Christ Church in Vancouver. The commanding officer, Major Fisher, his staff represented the regiment and your editor represented the regimental association.