



The GROUND SHEET

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF
THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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

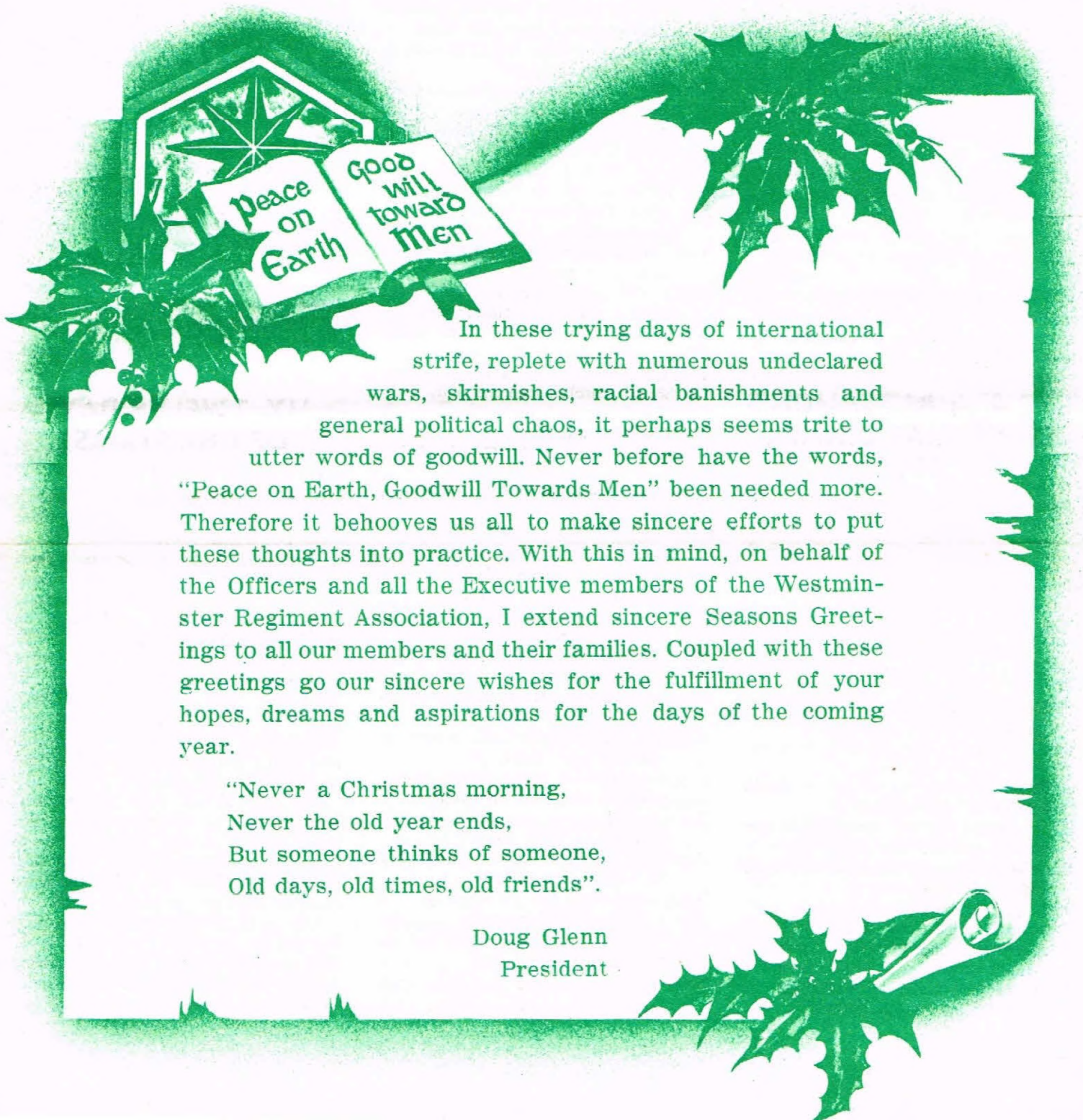
The Royal Westminster Regiment

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

Vol. 21, No. 5

Box 854, New Westminster, B.C.

December, 1972



In these trying days of international strife, replete with numerous undeclared wars, skirmishes, racial banishments and general political chaos, it perhaps seems trite to utter words of goodwill. Never before have the words, "Peace on Earth, Goodwill Towards Men" been needed more. Therefore it behooves us all to make sincere efforts to put these thoughts into practice. With this in mind, on behalf of the Officers and all the Executive members of the Westminster Regiment Association, I extend sincere Seasons Greetings to all our members and their families. Coupled with these greetings go our sincere wishes for the fulfillment of your hopes, dreams and aspirations for the days of the coming year.

"Never a Christmas morning,
Never the old year ends,
But someone thinks of someone,
Old days, old times, old friends".

Doug Glenn
President

THE GROUND SHEET

President DOUG GLENN
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"ANOTHER TIME ANOTHER PLACE"

Christmas is a grand time of the year for remembering and most of us indulge in that pleasant pastime. The following articles have appeared in your Groundsheet before but are being reprinted by special request. The locale of the first is Vimy 1917 (Oh so long ago) and was submitted by that grand old gentleman from the 47th, now residing in sunny San Diego, Calif., U.S.A., John Harrington, and the second by your old editor himself of a true experience that occurred in Italy. Christmas, 1944. (Also getting so long ago). I trust you will enjoy them.

—Editor.

1. The 47th Battalion's Christmas Dinner, 1917, by John Harrington.

2. My Twelve Days of Christmas by Ron Hurley.

THE 41th BATTALION'S CHRISTMAS DINNER 1917

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 Heinie, mud and rats!"
Colonel Frances answered sadly: "Twas the Ridge we held last year,
And 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,
The Quartermaster and his bloke and the Sergeant Cook as well,
They are all good guys at scrounging and I know 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,
The Frenchies love our bully beef, they will grab it in 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;
Then we trimmed the tree with chevrons and also our button sticks,
But when Trenchmat Willie hung up the bombs the R.S.M. said, "Nix!"
Then 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?
The old familiar "Cook House" tune, we all marched into the tent,
And we sat around the tables, sure, B Company was there,
With our Sergeant Major Crispin sitting in a big arm chair.
Now the tables were all filled with fresh vegetables, a treat,
And the big dish was the turkey roasted brown, the Christmas meat!
And the man to take all honors 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 out the beer.
Then to add to our amusement, Tweedy hollered: "I want more!"
And the Quartermaster served him and he wasn't even sore;
Then our Inkpen and McWhinney, with a laugh the joking pair,
Had the nerve to ask a Major for the Provost Sergeant's share.
Now there sat around the tables, Andrews, Blackie and Gourlay,

Bulloch, Campbell, Elliott, Hall, Fraser, Granger, Laird and Jay;
Hamilton, Leggett, Mulligan, Eckland, Hargreaves, Neal and Payne,
Huston, Henry, Millar, Pollock, Rodgers, Teed, White and Despaine;
Farther down there sat Costello, Sweeting, Burton, Whilley, Strong,
Hogarth, Macintosh, Anderson, McIntyre, and Shorty Long;
Also sitting with us that trio, Smith, Jones and Robinson,
And opposite sat Port Moody's men, McCoy and Robertson.
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 stood to attention whilst we all sang: "God Save the King!"
O the years are long and many since that merry festive day,
When the Forty Seventh Battalion at Camp La Targette lay;
But the cemeteries around tell those that went had courage high,
And I hope we all can meet again in far Valhalla's sky.

John E. Harrington.

MY TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

My "Twelve Days of Christmas", unlike the lyrics of that well known Carol began prior to Christmas day not after. Dec 14th, 1944, as many of you will remember, found the unit well forward in the "Naviglio-Lamone-Munio" pocket and a very unpleasant place it was, too. No need to elaborate on the details, suffice it to say that the war, for me, ended on, this, my first day of Christmas. Some, hulking, Scrooge like "Tedeschi", with a complete unseasonal regard for "Peace on Earth" and "Good Will Toward Men" saw fit to dispatch me, with a few, untinselled, well placed slugs to the mid-section.

My next eleven days of Christmas were veiled in an unceasing sinking and rising from a state of coma and are, to this day, almost a dream. I travelled, as did others from this area, the usual route of the casualty clearing chain.

One cold grey morning in a rare moment of lucidity, I snapped out of my moribund trance and, forgetting for the moments, how sorry I felt for myself, tried to take stock of my sur-

roundings. I noticed that I had a partner in this small room, (chap from the Perth (I believe) and HE was a sick man. If it had not been for the sure knowledge that I, personally, was the most seriously wounded man in the Italian Theatre, I could almost have felt pity for him. Suddenly, during this appraisal of my companion, a loud clanging of bells pealed throughout the corridors, adjacent to our tiny cubicle. Perth flashed a look of stark terror through his pallid eyes, and I am sure, that he read the same message in mine. 'Air Raid'. How do we get out of here?

The clanging grew louder and our weakened pulses sprang to life with anxiety. We spoke not a word. We were helpless and knew it. The clanging bells burst right into our very room. Perth, I am sure, sank back into a coma, and I was incredulous at the sight of, not Air Raid evacuation personnel, but, a bevy of bell ringing Canadian Nursing Sisters. I was dumbfounded and, just as Perth aroused himself once more, they chorused "Merry Christmas, our slumbering babes are awake at last". "Bring on the Mistletoe", one cried and two bewildered emaciated soldats were hugged and soundly bussed by them all. Following this display of affection, a group of them gathered together and sang Christmas Carols. The usual ones of course, but, one in particular that I have remembered to this day. "The Twelve Days of Christmas". Adorned in their unfetching operating room caps, wrinkled uniforms, exhausted and grossly overworked, these wonderful "Ladies of the Lamp" were beautiful to behold, just beautiful. At the close of the singing, two girls wheeled in a hospital cart, complete with Christmas Dinner with all the trimmings. Ignoring the fact that Perth and I both had no solid nourishment for twelve days they cajoled and teased us to partake of the Xmas goodies. Noticing our bed charts, one yelped, "OOps pardon us, wrong room, but Merry Christmas anyway". "Perhaps they would like some beer", a blithe dark haired sister queried. "Why not", echoed another, "Come on fellas, a little beer for Xmas won't hurt you". Perth, as I have said, was sick and he seemed to slip away again at the thought of this. Miraculously I found my weakened voice. "If some one will help me sit up — I'll be delighted to join you in a Christmas drink." Willing hands supported me and with one Sister holding the bottle of ordinary E.F.I beer to

my parched lips I did indeed have my "Christmas Spirit". Not much, to be sure but — Gad! that was good beer. I have had a fondness for the amber ever since and if, as the aristocracy says, Beer is for the hoi-poi-loi, I consider myself fortunate to be born to this class. I have also retained a fondness for the nursing profession and every Xmas since, on my "Twelfth Day of Christmas" I reminisce and drink a silent but sincere toast to those wonderful nursing sisters of long ago — with a glass of Beer, of course.

"And to all a goodnight",

Ron Hurley.

9255 - 118th St.
North Delta, B.C.
30 Sept., 1972

The Westminster Regiment Association
c/o LCol L. K. Deane
5720 Monrach St.
Burnaby 2, B.C.

Dear Sirs:

I would like to take this time to convey to you my thanks for your most generous scholarship.

I have been at the Institute for about one month now, and find it not too hard, but there is a tremendous amount of work that always needs doing. I am enjoying it very much. It is nice to be constantly working at one thing that you are interested in.

Again, please accept my sincere thanks, and my best wishes to all.

Yours sincerely,

M. R. Atkins,

Pte. M. R. Atkins,
Royal West'r Regt.

FROM THE POST

A word from Fort Sask., Alberta, from H. H. Steinbeck. Many thanks and your requests have been fulfilled.

A nice word and kind donation from old and loyal member I "Killer" Bailey of Chilliwack. We share your concern Killer re the unpaid 400. Perhaps they are all on welfare as you suggest but that seems to be increasing so perhaps we'll hear from them yet.

Wes Cook of A.M. Corp 20600 Chagrin Blvd., Shaker Heights, Ohio 44122 U.S. writes of his recent trip to England. Thanks for your kind remarks Wes and trust you enjoyed your voyage.

Thanks to Jim Knill of 701 Agnes St., New Westminster, who sent us word of Paul Ostafew of Vernon and his receipt has been forwarded.

Thanks also to Norm Palmer for advising us of Wilson Hall of Wawata, Sask.

A pleasant letter from Al Hansen of 10847 - 111 St., Edmonton, Alta. Many thanks Al and have noted your new address.

From the prairies again a word from Jim Kyle of Manor, Sask. It's always a pleasure to hear from you Jimmy.

Words of praise to the Association and a generous donation from Wick Stewart of Box 41, Kitimat, B.C. Sincere thanks Wick and we could use more members like you in the association.

A word from George Harkness of 112 Colley St., Trail, B.C., and I trust my letter to you has cleared things up for you.

Stan Bennett of Minto Rd., R.R. 1, Courtenay, B.C., sends his dues and regards. Always welcome Stan late or otherwise.

A thank you note from Terry Leith and wife Marg. for the Bible presented to their son Kevin at the Regimental Christening. Our congratulations to all three of you Terry.

I trust that Cecil Jeffries of 1200 Avocado Isle, Fort Lauderdale, Florida; U.S.A. 33315, is now receiving his mail. What about that "Neither Sleet nor Dark of Night" stuff Cec?. Have been using the above address as always.

The letter from John Harrington is a fine tribute to a departed comrade and we are glad to publish it as written. —Ed.

4530 Edgeware Road
San Diego, California
U.S.A. 92116

November 18, 1972

Dear Ron:

Have just received "The Groundsheet" and was sorry to read of the death of Art Hargreaves, whom I knew well in those long ago days of War One. He was one of the Platoon Sergeants of B Company in the 47th Battalion which for a time was known as the 4 H Sergeants Company, as the Platoon Sergeants of the four platoons names had the letter H, with Huston of 5 Platoon; Hargreaves 6 Platoon;

I had 7 Platoon, and Hamilton 8 Platoon.

Art was a happy cheerful fellow who always had a story to tell, and was well liked. A good soldier, and a good comrade God rest his soul.

Ron, I hope to be in Vancouver for Christmas so will try and get in touch with you. I was sorry I did not make it to see you last Christmas, but with all that snow you had; this old California hot house weed stayed in as much as possible. Trust you will accept my excuse.

Kindest regards, and a Merry Christmas to you and all Westies.

Sincerely,
John Harrington

An Interesting Letter

*From Brigadier Tom Rutherford
To Bernie Neary*

Downtowner Hotel,
Owen Sound. Ont.

My Dear Bernie:

When I went down for my mail this morning, there was a small parcel from my son, Bob in Toronto, containing an assortment of letters and Christmas cards re-addressed to me by the hotel here to Harbon Island, Bahamas, which should have been Harbour Island, Bahamas, but they had eventually found their way to the Bahamas, Harbour Island being a tiny island of about 1 square mile. One of Bob's coloured friends down there has got hold of them somehow and having Bob's address, sent them on to him. He had a house there for three weeks over the Christmas holidays and had invited the old man to go down and spend it with he and his family. So that is where your letter, and some others, was all this time.

The last time we were in touch with one another, I was looking for staff for the VLA but you were there, I think, earning a living printing Bibles for John Buchan in New York and Toronto and the Government of Canada was in no shape to compete. However, I eventually got D'Arcy and he did a good job for a number of years as Superintendent for B.C. However, Ross Johnston eventually stole him away from me to head his Labour Board. I

had a card from D'Arcy at Christmas and had sent him one addressed to Chilliwack as I knew he would eventually get it. I lost my old address book about 6 years ago. He came in to see me in Vancouver but it was after his boy died and he was living on a farm in the Fraser Valley. I also met him in the Old Vic about the last time I was out.

It was funny that I should get your letter this morning as I was thinking a lot about you only yesterday and wondering where I could get in touch with you. I have had a lot of trouble with my eyes over the years and have difficulty reading and writing and I can't read what I have written. There was a great deal that I had planned to write which I will never be able to do.

Some of it had to do with the old 1st Armoured Brigade and the wonderful people in it which one did not realize at the time. I still have the Score Sheet of General Sansom's first general inspection which you will remember he conducted in England just one year after the Brigade was formed using a team of about a dozen staff officers. Our Brigade had 19 per cent more points than the 2nd Brigade and while all the units were higher than their counterparts, the big difference in the total score was largely accounted for by the score made by the Westminsters which was 80 as compared to the next highest of 69. You sure had a well rounded out regiment and little Joe did a great job of picking his officers and N.C.O.'s. I didn't realize it until recently when Bruce McDonald, Bill Milroy and I met in Montreal at a meeting of the Armoured Corps Association that our old Brigade had produced for the Canadian Army, eleven Brigadiers, three of which became Major Generals, which I think must be a record for all brigade formations existing at that time. It seemed too bad that such a grand brigade had to cut in two despite the fact that we were too large and complex as indicated by experience in the desert but such are the fortunes of war.

Where is Gordon now? I lost track of him when he left the Service. I

used to hear about the Hall boys when I would be out in B.C., they were both doing well. You mention a Westminster Regiment Association in your letter. I have never heard from them for many years. I sent a Christmas card to the Regiment but never heard from them. Nor did I get a copy of the history if one was written. I have the history of the other units and would be glad to buy one if one were published and to receive copies of the Groundsheet and paper membership in the Association. I belong to the First Hussars Association and get their monthly bulletin. I would also try to make a reunion if invited. I worked very hard for the twenty years following the war and apart from those I met on my travels which seemed to turn up in every Province, I didn't get a chance to do any visiting. But now, in my 80th year and nearly blind and half fare on the planes, I could still get around. I had a date with Benny Goodman to meet him in Toronto on March 8 but I see his picture in today's paper. You will remember him as the little Jewish boy in the Fort Garry's who was on my staff on various occasions but principally at E Group. He was wounded several times and once beat it back to the on his own which got everyone upset. I am sending the picture along.

Dick Malone was in Owen Sound for a couple of hours on Sunday. He was up to see his son who was skiing at Collingwood but I had gone out to the farm and didn't tell the people at the hotel where I was. You will remember Dick who was Staff Captain while we were at Hindhead. He is now, as you probably know, Head of the old Sifton chain of papers from the Toronto Globe and Mail to the Winnipeg Free Press, Calgary Herald, and I think the Vancouver Sun. I tried to get CMHQ to switch Charlie Turnbull and let me keep Dick on as Brigade Major but they had other plans for him. His father was with the Greys in the first War.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DRAW - 1972

MAJOR PRIZE WINNERS

1. Doug MacLanders — 6969 124 Street, Surrey, B.C.
2. J. C. Rowder — 2108 Kings Avenue, West Vancouver, B.C.
3. Don Fraser — No. 521 Louis Reil House, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby.
4. C. Edington — 60 N. Ranelagh, Burnaby 2.
5. M. Kerr — 1441 Westall Avenue, Victoria, B.C.
6. T. Corbett — No. 106, 33298 Robertson Cr., Abbotsford.
7. S. Lakey — 29554 Dienean Ave., R.R. 2, Aldergrove.
8. Wayne Reader — 11912 - 96 Ave., Delta.
9. R. McComber — 6289 Tisdall, Vancouver 13.
10. Barb Markle — No. 81 - 2881 Barnet Hwy., Port Coquitlam.

SELLERS

1. T. Leith — 12139 - 250th Street, Maple Ridge.
2. J. Cockle — 729 E. 5th Street, North Vancouver.
3. Barney Jones — c/o Canadian Customs, Douglas, B.C.
4. G. H. Churley — Royal Westminster Regiment.
5. W. Smith — 94 Crease Avenue, Victoria.
6. Maj. G. L. Potter — R.R. 3, Mission City, B.C.
7. M. Glover — 34897 Vye, Abbotsford.
8. L. R. Phillips — 11912 96 Avenue, Delta.
9. — 13889 - 28th Avenue, Surrey.
- 10.

CONSOLATION AWARDS

1. J. Briscoe — R.R. 1, Oliver, B.C.
2. P. J. Bakker — 3908 Fraser Street, Vancouver.
3. M. Bridge — 1453 West 59th, Vancouver 14.
4. B. Neary — 3720 Cadboro, Victoria.
5. Bill Fox — 66649 Dawson Street, Vancouver 16.
6. E. R. Latta — 1105 Dublin Street, New Westminster.
7. J. Yaschuk — 6105 Nelson Avenue, Burnaby 1.
8. Lorna Estridge — 7574 Cariboo Road, Burnaby 3.
9. Gail McKernan — 291 Steveston Hwy., Richmond.
10. K. L. Earl — 25881 - 116 Avenue, Maple Ridge.
11. Mr. W. Knipstrom — 7633 Cariboo Road, Burnaby 3.
12. B. M. Reid — 10374 McSween Road, R.R. 3, Chilliwack.
13. J. E. Sylvio Ethier — 12511 - 113B Avenue, Surrey.
14. Dorothy Roberts — 13889 - 28th Avenue, Surrey.
15. Mrs. L. Alter — 8647 - 10th Avenue, Burnaby 3.
16. Larry Simmons — 212 E. 6th, North Vancouver.
17. W. Dumonski — Box 1222, Merritt, B.C.
18. Ed Helgason — 2680 E. 8th, Vancouver 12.
19. John Boyko — Box 17, Savona, B.C.
20. R. Moore — 2815 Jane Street, Port Moody.

Well Bernie, as I scribble, I can see you come in, pad and pencil in hand, and get more done while still standing up in five minutes than most people could do in an hour. You had been then, as I remember, a teacher in an Indian School up in the Interior. But, baby, look at you now. I hope we can get together some time. I generally go to Hawaii in the winter, but this Winter, I decided to stay in Owen Sound. When I came back from Ottawa, I built a small home on the shore of the bay on the old farm and am there all Summer, so if it is at all possible, nothing would please me more if you are in this part of the world than to have you come up and spend a few days with me and if she is with you, be sure to bring Betty along. You might tell her that Dalena Leggate who was from Owen Sound and nursing at Watford when I was there, died here last year. Dr. Cy Houck and Gordon Buzza are still here.

Speaking of Hawaii, the last time I was there, I was laying on the beach at Waikiki amongst a lot of people and I heard the couple next to me mention the name D'Arcy Baldwin; although coming from different places, they apparently both knew him and certainly gave him the reputation of being an awfully fine fellow. The woman said she had just had a letter from him saying that D'Arcy had just taken some of his grandchildren down that week to see Disneyland.

Well, it was great to hear from you, Bernie, so when you get time write again and give me some more news. That is if you are able to read my writing which is more than I can do.

Give my best to Betty.

As ever,

Tom Rutherford.

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NAME Address

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LEST WE FORGET

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†
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Saanichton, Van. Is., B.C.

†
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†
JACK SNOWDON,
Hamilton St., Vancouver, B.C.

†
H. CORLEY,
Whalley, B.C.

†
CLIFFORD WRIGHT,
Vancouver, B.C.

†
JACK McLEAN,
New Westminster, B.C.

RECENT CHANGES OF ADDRESS. PLEASE AMEND YOUR DIRECTORY
ISSUE LIST.

CORRECTED ADDRESSES

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M. A. Cameron, 1023 Auckland St., New Westminster, B.C.
W. Apps, Apt. 251 - 2691 E. 49th, Vancouver, B.C.
E. Carpenter, 23 - 201 Cayer St., Coquitlam, B.C.
W. (Bill) Gunn, No. 24 - 3271 Cowichan Lake Rd., Duncan, B.C.
Col. Bill Williams, 11th Floor Shaughnessy Manor, 1125 W. 12th, Van., B.C.
Malcolm D. Stewart, Ste. B, 2 - 610 Hamilton St., New Westminster, B.C.
Earl Ross, 5285 Chester St., Vancouver 10, B.C.
Gordon Craigen, No. 5 - 701 Agnes St., New Westminster, B.C.
Sam Fields, Box 155, Savona, B.C.
F. A. H. (Alec) Stuart, No. 305 - 345 Springfield Dr., Richmond, B.C.

WHAT BECAME OF KELLY?

C. A. Peele, No. 1406 - 621 8th, New Westminster, B.C.
A. G. Smith, 221 Stirling Ave., Sea Island, B.C.
Arthur Fisher, 1224 Prince of Wales Dr., Ottawa 5, Ont.
Bert Penny, 49 Victoria Ave., Orillia, Ont.
T. F. Franklin, 2967 W. 42nd Ave., Vancouver 13, B.C.
Gordon Berry, 8131 - 114th St., North Surrey, B. C.
F. C. Johnson, Box 2025 Fort St. John, B.C.
R. Smith, 4338 Dundas St., Burnaby 2, B.C.
P. N. Cavanagh, 1918 - 152nd Ave., Whiterock, B.C.
A. G. Swan, Evergreen Court, Ladner, B.C.
Mrs. F. J. Hammond, 3106 - 37th Ave., Vernon, B.C.
Walter Cosman, No. 2 - 816 Milton, New Westminster, B.C.
Fred Day, R.R. No. 1, Sunnyside Rd., Westbank, B.C.

RETURN
REQUESTED

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



E.G. SHANNON
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RICHMOND BC