



The GROUND SHEET

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF
THE ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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

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

Vol. 26, No. 4

BOX 854, NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C. V3L 4Z8

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 1977

1977 ANNUAL DRAW NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

MORE THAN EVER BEFORE!!!

Please Try to Sell at Least One Book



ANNUAL DRAW

By now tickets should be in everyone's hands. We have had tremendous support so far this year, many of our Members have already asked for additional books and we would like to express our appreciation to all of you who are helping by selling tickets. This year especially we need the help of all who can sell at least one book. Expenses are ever rising and if we are to continue our support of the many worthy activities of our Association we do need the income the Draw provides.

We know that for various reasons some of you are unable

to sell any tickets and we have tried to exclude those of you who have asked to be left off our mailing list. If by mistake we did send you tickets you cannot sell, please return the audit slip from the back of the book with a note and we will make sure you are not bothered again. The rest of you please try to help your Association by selling what you can and don't forget as a seller you get to keep \$2.00 a book or you may keep the price of four extra tickets. The prizes are unique and well worth the price of a ticket, so won't you do your best and remember it is all for a very good cause. GLEN HOLLING, 1977 Draw Chairman

THE GROUND SHEET

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SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

EXPRESS THANKS

Your Association received three letters this summer from the winners of last year's Scholarship Awards. Patricia Simpson, a granddaughter of T. A. Harris, informed us that she plans on applying for admission to U.B.C. Medical School and that our award has assisted her in achieving her goal.

Peter B. Francis, whose grandfather served in the 47th Btn., also expressed his appreciation for the assistance provided by the scholarship. Joseph R. Rolandi sent a brief note acknowledging receipt of his scholarship award.

MUSEUM REPORT

Museum news chiefly concerns the very successful summer project, May 2 to August 31, that was entirely funded by the B.C. Ministry of Labour through its Youth Employment Program. The tangible result has been the creation of our own archives. We have on display, ready for systematic research and reference, all our records, documents, photos, orders, correspondence, diaries and albums, etc. All of these records except the albums and newspapers are stored in uniform boxes (courtesy of John Rosso), in the renovated Room 209 above the Museum Proper. The boxes are labelled from 1863 to the present — some 33. All of the items have been placed on the Acquisition Register and catalogued.

The student employed in the program was Miss Karen Addison (Cpl R.W.R.). She typed 809 catalogue cards and did a fine job.

Archives are never complete, the Museum would be glad to receive documents and other archival material that people would entrust to us. We have segregated the material chronologically and by units; the 2nd Btn, the Depot, the Association and the Warwicks have separate areas.

It can now be said that all of the Museum possessions are catalogued and stored or displayed in recorded places.

There were many visitors in the course of the summer in spite of the fact that for a while the Museum was closed for "renovation."

There was in fact a security scare that required removing all of the weapons to the Regimental vault.

Walter Tyler and Dick Shannon, at no expense to the Museum, attended the Annual Meeting of the Organization of Military Museums in Canada, held this year in Halifax. Our Museum is respected by the O.M.M.C. and considerable value is derived from that organization. At such meetings the C.F. Museum Committee heads attend and learn first hand of our needs.

Two of the visitors to the Museum this summer were Sgt and Mrs. Reibin. Don's interest in the Museum began while he was serving with the Westminsters and before he joined the Patricia's in Germany. Collecting and studying militaria has been a confirmed hobby of his and he has prowled shops in the U.K. and elsewhere, not only for his own collection, but also for hard-to-get reference books for our shelves. Don has been posted to Royal Roads as a drill instructor.

Irving House, Don discovered, has a helmet worn by the N.W. Volunteer Rifles, along with authentic badges of the period. He also knows of a similar helmet and badges in private hands in England.

One final request, we would like to label the finished scrap books with appropriate titles and the names of the compilers, but many of the originals do not bear the names of those who made up the albums. Would any of you who donated an album or scrap book to the Museum, please contact the curator and identify "your book?" We consider these very valuable and would like to credit the compilers.

COMMANDING OFFICER'S REPORT

Once again I am honoured to file a Commanding Officer's report with the former serving members of the Unit.

In my last report it was noted that our unit strength was somewhat below our authorized strength. I am pleased to report that while this is still the case, those that are serving are giving the Unit considerable support. Attendance at our annual concentration (Milcon 77), held at Ft. Lewis, Washington, was extremely high as 90% of the troops on strength were on the ground.

Milcon 77 was a successful camp in so many ways. The training programme was well organized and the men worked long hours. During the early part of the week the Unit practised and re-practised section and platoon tactics. The highlight of the week without a doubt was our 24 hour exercised code named "Quiet Rebel." "Quiet Rebel" was an advance to contact exercise wherein enemy resistance encountered gradually intensified allowing the Unit to exercise commanders at section, platoon and eventually company level. After our final company attack the Westies adopted a defensive position in anticipation of a heavy onslaught by the dreaded Fantasians. During the final attack on our soldiers, elements from the Canadian Scottish Regiment and Recce elements from the British Columbia Dragoons, numbering in excess of one hundred fifty troops attempted to over-run our position. The BCDs were mounted on APCs and provided firing support for the attacking troops with their 7.62 machine guns. The final attack was an experience for all because for once we had no control over the size, timings and actions of the enemy.

Ex "Quiet Rebel" ceased at 1800 hrs on 01 July. Unknown to the CO and his officers, the men took up a collection and purchased a considerable amount of fireworks. Much to the consternation of other units still on exercise, the Westies celebrated the 1st of July in grand and glittering style.

One of the highlights at Milcon 77 was the completion of Ex Bayonet Point. This was a section level competition which commenced in March and culminated at Ft. Lewis. Section Commanders were under assessment in four areas. One requirement was to direct a section in live firing at a target selected by the officer on the ground. One hundred fifty rounds were fired by the section within a specified time and accuracy of the shooting was recorded. A second requirement was to lead troops in a five mile hike to demonstrate physical fitness. The final two requirements were met at Ft. Lewis and they included giving orders for a section attack and finally launching that attack. The winner of the Trophy for Ex Bayonet Point was M/Cpl McBryan RW. The competition was good and the scores were close and for a job well done the unit congratulates M/Cpl McBryan RW.

A final note on Milcon 77 concerns the Regimental Barbeque. One evening was set aside during our busy week for a social event. What started out to be a simple barbeque very quickly developed into a rather elaborate affair complete with a surprise appearance by 12 members of the Regimental Band with instruments. Barbequed steaks with background music in the middle of some grid square in Ft. Lewis is an experience one will never forget. Even our American guests claim they don't have it as well as this!

A number of events are planned that will include former serving members of the Unit. Two such events are:

- (a) Regimental Christening — 16 Oct 77 1400 hrs at Holy Trinity Church.
- (b) Regimental Birthday Festivities — 20 Nov.
 - 1330 — Church Parade.
 - 1430 — March Past on Royal Ave.
 - 1500 — Birthday Party at Armoury.

Can you help us? The Regiment is in need of a Director of Music. If you know of someone that might be qualified and is interested in leading the band, please contact the Commanding Officer.

Sincerely,
LtCOL J. GANGUR

YOU ARE INVITED TO A BIRTHDAY PARTY!

Sunday, November 20th will mark the 114th Birthday of our Regiment. It was on that date in 1863 that the original unit from which we have grown was officially formed. This year, 1977, marks the one hundred and fourteenth birthday of that auspicious occasion, and suitable birthday trappings have been planned to celebrate the event. As noted in the Colonel's Report, the Regiment plans on a Church Parade, a March Past

and following that, a monster birthday celebration in the Armouries. Your Association has been invited to participate with the Regiment in the ceremonies. The plan is to gather at the Armouries at 12:30 on Sunday, November 20th, to march with the Regiment to the Holy Trinity Cathedral for the church service, after which we will accompany the unit in the March Past, then back to the Armouries for the Birthday Party. It is expected that there will be T.V. coverage of this historic event. The Regiment will be joined by all four Cadet Corps, as well as a contingent from H.M.C.S. Fraser.

Association members are requested to be at the Armouries no later than 12:30 and to wear their red berets, extras will be available if you haven't got one.

Let's have a good turnout to show our support for our Regiment.

D COY PICNIC RESOUNDING SUCCESS

The sun shone brightly for the annual "D" Coy gathering held on July 31st as usual, at the lovely ranch of Elsie and D'Arcy Baldwin near Cultis Lake. Spirits were somewhat dampened by the unfortunate absence of D'Arcy who was still in hospital after suffering a heart attack. (I am pleased to report that he is now at home and is feeling much better.) Elsie was ably assisted by her daughter and son-in-law, the Souters, who generously hosted our affair at their home on the banks of a creek flowing into Cultis Lake. Grandchildren Bill, D'Arcy and Ann also contributed much to the evening's entertainment with their songs and help with the young children. We will have to practice to keep up with them next year.

Each year we are happy to welcome some newcomers, this year we were joined by Major and Mrs. Neary from Victoria, the Palmers, Ron Barker and his son. Sadly some old faces were missing. What happened, Pete?

Our mailing lists are not as complete as we would like, so, if there are any ex-D Coy members who did not receive an invitation this year, please drop us a line so we can put you on next year's list. Doug and Vivian McNabb make it each year from Thunder Bay, so distance is no excuse.

As is the tradition each evening at 5:00 p.m. we held the Remembrance Parade. As always it was a very touching ceremony with two minutes silence for departed comrades and in that beautiful setting it is always difficult not to feel a lump in your throat as the names of those missing are read from the roll call.

We will look forward to seeing all of you at next year's picnic and don't forget that all Association members and serving members of the Regiment are most welcome.

LYN EDMONDS
Secretary, D Coy Reunion
33345 5th Ave., Mission City, B.C.

MAIL BAG

Our Association seems to have much in common with the Army in the early war years. I remember the emotional scene at the train station in New Westminster when we all said fond farewells as the Regiment boarded to leave to fight the foe, tears and cheers sped the Westies on their way. Not too many months later to return, not from war, but from Dundurn . . . to an exciting holding operation in the old Hotel Vancouver.

In the last issue I bid you a fond farewell as editor, saying that was my last effort. How wrong I was, it seems that your executive has as yet been unable to come up with a successor. I suppose they can't find anyone with a typewriter. At any rate, I have promised to keep writing *The Groundsheet* until a new editor is located . . . not too long, fellows. The Mail Bag is most encouraging. Over the summer we have received more letters than ever before, thanks to all of you who took time to write. It makes one realize that somewhere out there, someone does read *The Groundsheet*.

George Bayne from Antigonish, Nova Scotia, dropped us a line to tell that his son was heading out west in the hopes of finding a job. George has given his son, George Henry Bayne, age 17, the names and addresses of some of his old buddies and asks that if young George happens to call on you, please make him welcome for old times sakes. I hope the young fellow has good fortune, George.

Lt D. A. Nicks, who is now with the 416 All Weather Fighter Squadron (Norad), MPO 140 CFB, Chatham Curtis Park, N.B., kindly sends his cheque for his dues up to date. I am sure that if LtNicks has the time we would all be interested in learning about the function of his unit, security permitting.

Carl Prosser, an ex-47th, writes from 534 Ste. Marie St., Collingwood, Ont. and advises that he has just passed his 85th birthday and that he enjoys receiving *The Groundsheet*. A sincere if belated "Happy Birthday, Carl."

From Puerto Rico comes a note with dues and thanks for the *Retorno* book. Wes Cook hoped to be in New Westminster late in the summer. I hope he made better time than his letter.

Hilda and George Carlson of Bienfort, Sask., agree that we do need the information asked for in the last *Groundsheet* "Operation Undate" as the old list is hopelessly out of date. They really enjoyed visiting the Museum during their holidays.

A newsy letter from John Ginter, who was sorry to have missed this year's Melfa, said he had dropped in to see Ted Burnby in Armstrong. Ted advised John that Bill Haines was quite ill so John went to Vernon to visit Bill and found him home from hospital and feeling much better. Visited Mike Straniger in Sicamous and met another old Westie, Murray Pearson, who now lives in Enderby. Beaver Wallmsley and Ted Churchill dropped in to see John this summer. It's nice to hear about so many old friends, John. We'll have to make you unofficial Okanagan reporter.

Fred Bass, our 47th representative, passes on a letter from an ex-47th, now living in Agincourt, Ontario. L. W. Currell,

who wrote Fred to say how much he had enjoyed Fred's article in the January issue of *The Groundsheet*. He goes on to say: "You may recall, I was with Signals, Landy, Harding, Smitty, Tiny Stover and the many others of our hierarchy. You may recall me as "Curley," a nickname imported from the Huron Regiment and commonly used by Ed. Morton and Straiton and the other signallers from the Hurons, who came to the 47th bearing the regimental numbers 654 on. Mine was 654719, who forgets . . ."

Watson Straiton lives in Toronto and I see him occasionally. He is the only other surviving 47th Signaller here in the East that I am aware of.

Mr. Currell recently donated some very interesting artifacts from W.W. I most welcome additions to our Museum.

Spence Bolton writes to say how much he enjoyed this year's Melfa reunion, he comments how nice it was to see many of his buddies, some of whom he hadn't seen since Italy and Holland. He was surprised that several who lived nearby didn't show up. Spence was most enthused about our Museum and voices the opinion that every member, their sons and daughters should make an effort to visit it . . . then as he says: "Maybe they would understand what their Dad was talking about."

Thanks also to Bill Jasman for your note and dues, as well as John Reeve, who liked the *Retorno* book and all the rest of you who sent in the much needed dues which make the publishing of *The Groundsheet* possible. If you haven't sent in yours for 1977, why not do it today before you forget.

Roger Hassard of Regina sent us a report of his 1977 trip to Italy and as I am sure all of you will enjoy reading Roger's report, I would like to reproduce it in its entirety.

HASSARDS' TRIP TO ITALY

Roma, August 5th, 1977

Dear Comrades,

I have made my return to Italy with my wife. We landed in Rome Wednesday, August 3rd, 1977 and leave tomorrow morning to travel north though Italy and end up at Paris. We are on a tour, so our time is limited. Wednesday and Thursday we did the city of Rome, Vatican City, Catacombs, Colosseum, etc. Something I didn't have time for in '43 and '44. We were too busy chasing the Germans. But today was a free day, or we could go on a trip to Naples and Capri. But I want to see the Cemetery at Cassino, where we left some of our pals. So this morning my wife and I went by train to Cassino. I do not parl much Italian, just enough to get the cafe operator at the train station to understand that I wanted a taxi to take us to the War Cemetery. He went and got a taxi driver who understood no English, but he dashed off and came back with another driver who had been to America and had no trouble with English. The driver wanted ten thousand lire to take my wife and I to the Cemetery, which was four and a half miles, so they said. So after thanking this one and that one, we finally had a taxi and were off. In Canadian money, one hundred lire

is about twelve cents, or was when we changed money to come to Italy, so I drove a good old bargain: for ten thousand lire, he must drive us to the Cemetery, wait until we were ready to come back and then take us to a good cafe as I was hungry and wanted some good Italian spaghetti. At the Cemetery I soon found the graves of our comrades, with the help of the book *Return to Italy*. I wanted to see where three of my chums were, Jerry Brisbee, Freddy Hansen and Webb. Cpl Webb was raised and went to school a few miles from my home. It was hard to stand there and think back. They were young then and had come to a sudden end. I was there at the spot where Jerry and Freddie were hit. Freddy Hansen's brother joined us about 2 days after Freddy was killed. I found the graves of sixteen Westminster boys that I knew well. Then I said to my wife: "We must go. They have to stay here. Thank God I don't." It was hard to leave them before and "now."

We returned to town and a lovely Cafe. I had my spaghetti and with the help of the old lady's daughter, we had a lovely meal for one thousand, six hundred lire. With lots of wine and coffee to go with it. It was funny at one point. There were several cab drivers and they all cheered our driver and we found out why. They figured he had got a rich American and would make a big haul. Needless to say he didn't.

We returned to Rome over well remembered parts and towns of Italy. I read *Return to Italy* as we rolled along and it brought back many memories and helped me remember the names of the villages and towns. Cassino is all built up and a nice town. The Monte Cassino Abbey is rebuilt too. We did not have time to go and see it. As we had tickets for a outdoor opera, we had to be back and be ready for our bus. We are now back at our hotel, the Hotel Albergo Bologna. Tomorrow we leave. Like the last time I was here, I am ready to leave.

We will be back in England by August 16th, to help my wife's dad celebrate his 80th birthday. He is a World War I veteran with the Canadians and now lives in Peterborough, England.

I hope to be home August 25th in Good Old Canada.
Cheerio or Buena Sera
R. HASSARD

3434 College Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 1W4

Well, I am home again. Have not had time to find out if we are going to have a get-together this fall or not. Jim Gould was in Regina while I was on Holidays. Norm Brault is a Granddaddy now. Ron Hockley is moving to Weyburn, says he has bought a house there and is going to be a city dude now. I was talking to George Carlson and he had lost a sister and was going to Moose Jaw for her funeral. Have not heard from Jim Kyle yet, but will do.

My pictures of Cassino and of the trip all turned out fine. It's nice to go on a Holiday to Italy, France, England or other places. But I am always glad when I get home to Canada. Those other countries have to go a lot to beat this country of ours.

Cheerio for Now,
R. HASSARD

MODEL BUILDERS NEED YOUR HELP

Vern Ardagh, who is acting as the liaison between our Museum Committee and the group of professional model builders who are building a scale "Diorama," which is a miniature scene in three dimension in a naturalistic setting, advises that the model makers are intent on getting as much detail as they can to make the scene lifelike.

The project they are concentrating on is a full Regimental vehicle parade of the war strength of our Motor Battalion. In order for them to get as much accurate detail as possible they have asked that any of our members who may have snapshots of any vehicles as they were in action to please send them to Vern. Of particular interest at this time are photos of the vehicles used as water wagons, there doesn't seem to be any official photos of those particular rigs and so your help is requested.

This project will be an outstanding display when finished and should be a fine addition to our Museum. An anonymous donor has provided much of the funding for the project and it has been underway for some time now.

TORONTO CHAPTER REPORT

Just a few lines to let you know that we are still in existence down here in the East, although getting smaller in numbers. It is with great regret and sorrow I must report the passing of one of our beloved comrades, Jim McEachern. Jim had just retired this spring from the railroad and had bought a smaller home for he and his wife Mary. He was walking in his garden when he suffered a fatal heart attack. We will miss Jim as he was one of our most loyal supporters.

I am just sending out the notices for our fall meeting. It will be held on Friday, September 30th, and we usually get about 10 at our meetings.

One of the things we really enjoy is *The Groundsheet*. All of us down here in the Toronto Chapter look forward to each issue, for it keeps us informed as to what the Association is doing. Keep up the good work and keep *The Groundsheet* coming.

A. G. WHITE, *Secretary*
The Royal Westminster Regiment
Association, Toronto Chapter

O' Wot A Luvly War!

The following news item will probably make most old sweats groan in disbelief . . . but as they say, times do change, don't they . . .

Imagine the enthusiastic response we would have received to a request for "overtime." Read it and weep.

DUTCH TREAT? NOT IN NATO!

UTRECHT, the Netherlands (AP) — The union representing Dutch army draftees says its members are against serving on North Atlantic Treaty Organization bases because they have to salute, can't grow long hair and don't get overtime pay for weekend duty.

Such practices are an infringement on the rights of union members, leaders of the 30,000-member organization said at a meeting in this central Dutch city.

The union had the salute abolished years ago at camps in the Netherlands, and soldiers are allowed to grow hair and beards any length they want and get paid overtime.

But regulations are more traditional on NATO bases, where Dutch soldiers serve with troops from other alliance nations.

The union called for a halt to further integration of Dutch troops in NATO activities.

A PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE WAR

The following consists of excerpts from a personal diary written by one of our members during his war service 1939-1945.

We won't identify him at this point, but as the series continues you may be able to identify the author.

(Continued)

JANUARY 21st — They've finally decided on a spot where the W.R. can make its debut, so tonight we proceed into the line, à la 1914-18 style. About four miles by truck, the remainder on foot, with full marching order and our weapons. Mules will bring up our bed-rolls, ammo, supplies, etc. What a belly-laugh for an outfit who once was the crack unit of the 5th Div. and one of the most mobile in the Army. Of what use the years spent in training, in fact, manoeuvring, in taking I.Q.s and 'M' tests, and trade and technical courses. It doesn't require any specialist training to load a guy down like a mule and slog through the mud, then to sit in a slit-trench and dodge mortar and shell-fire. Might as well have been in the infantry, and we'd at least have been trained for that stuff. Just some more of the old Army boondoggling. Its supposed to be a very quiet sector into which we're going, which is a break, no doubt. Two regts. of the 11th Bde. went in about a week ago, and it seems they got mauled around a bit, so they're finding a quiet spot for them. Too much peace-time soldiering, it looks like. It remains to be seen what sort of show we can put on. Our job will be mostly night patrols, in mountainous country. Well, a guy can't live forever.

JANUARY 22nd — Last night turned out a sort of a bust, as far as some of us were concerned. We pulled out at 1715 hrs., full kit and ready to go, all except some drivers and a few signallers. Went forward about four or five miles by truck, then stopped. We sat in the trucks for about an hour and a half, then someone decided they only needed three platoons of us, so the rest of us prepared to return to the Valley.

We were in front of the artillery and they were raising quite a row behind us. The high spot was when Jerry threw back a half a dozen heavies, and though they were quite a way off, they sounded like they were coming right into our laps. Makes the war rather personal. We finally drove back, down a twisting mountain road in pitch darkness, and got "home" at 2315 hrs. Had to roll into a makeshift bunk and damn near perished before morning.

JANUARY 27th — On the evening of the 22nd our Scout platoon, plus four of us from Coy H.Q., were pulled out again, this time to go and reinforce 'C' Coy, who seemed to be short of men. We went by truck to within two or three miles of their position, then bailed out and hoofed it the rest of the way. The walking was good, on the road all the way, and we arrived at the group of houses that was 'C' Coy's position about 2100 hrs. Here we were split up and a few men sent to each of their sections. M. E. and I were sent to help out a section holding a regular little blockhouse, with the door barred and braced, the windows bricked up, and just a peephole on each side. Quite comfortable, with straw on the floor to sleep on (when you get a chance to sleep!) and a fireplace to keep warm with. Our rear window looked out across No Man's Land, with Jerry's positions on a high ridge overlooking us about 2000 yds. away. A low ridge in between, called "Intermediate Ridge," was anybody's ground, and the scene of several patrol clashes. Our artillery fired intermittently practically all the time, and Jerry replied once in a while with mortar and a few heavies, which shook the whole mountain and made a real bang when they exploded. Seemed to be a lot of duds among his stuff, though. Some Ghurkas were stationed near us, and they did most of the patrolling. 'B' Coy sent out their clerk and five or six others to bring in some wounded Ghurkas, and they were ambushed. The clerk stopped a burst, which wrote him off instantly. Four of the others got bashed on the noggin and left for dead. They finally got back in. Next night a fairly large Indian patrol was ambushed and lost about ten or twelve, killed and wounded. It seemed odd that all our patrols should be ambushed so easily, and it made you wonder if our "friends," the locals weren't reporting to Jerry whenever a patrol set out. They're a pretty shifty lot, and more of a nuisance than anything else. The nights were pretty busy with small arms fire, grenades and flares, but the days were sunny and quiet, except for the artillery duels. We didn't get much rest, though, for you had to stay awake to eat in the daytime, and at night the jittery L/Cpl. we were with had us all at "stand to" if a rifle shot went off a mile away. That, plus a regular guard shift, left a man pretty weary by morning. We pulled out at around 2100 hrs. on the 25th, the Ghurkas taking over our positions, and returned to the Valley. Except for the lads who went on patrol, the whole thing was rather boring, about like one of our old schemes with eternal guard duty. The organization seemed sort of screwy, and God knows what would have happened if we'd been really attacked. Each section would have been isolated in its house, and could have been mopped up one by one. Not quite the way I thought a war was fought. It's most uncomfortable back here in the Valley, living in pup-tents and everything a sea of mud. We had a fine storm last night that threatened to blow the ruddy tent away, but thank goodness it held. We got an issue of rubber boots yesterday, which were just what we needed, although as usual there wasn't enough to go around.

JANUARY 30th — A quiet week, with little to do, for some of us, though others were called out as a road-gang to help build a new road somewhere. We moved about three thousand yards out of our mud-hole onto higher ground, so it's a lot nicer camping. Swell weather since the storm, too, and everything is drying up fine.

Got two parcels yesterday, one from home and one from the V.C.L., which makes it a red-letter day.

Today everyone is just basking in the sun and catching up on odd jobs. Nice while it lasts, but we'll be off again soon, no doubt.

FEBRUARY 16th — The unit moved into the lines again on the 1st of February, where we were before, but this time the Battalion was holding the front that one Coy held before. All the drivers, including myself, were L.O.B. with the vehicles. A pretty soft life, with only guard to do every third night.

We raised a few eggs by the old barter system, and they were a welcome change in the diet. Kept our hands in as soldiers by spending the odd afternoon shooting at cans at the foot of the cliff or throwing them into the Sangro and sinking them as they floated past. Had a few picture-shows, and played "casino" a few nights over in Sup't Coy lines with Ted and Angus.

The unit came out around the 6th, minus Sgt Simmonds and Mr Oldfield from No. 2 Pltn., our Coy. Jimmy copped a Mauser slug high in his chest, and Mr Oldfield had his big toe shot off accidentally, by a Limey Sgt. 'C' Coy lost four men, by a grenade shot through a window. A Sgt and a Cpl killed and two men wounded. The unit stayed overnight at our parking place, then pulled out the next day for the front again, this time N.E. of Lanciano.

Practically every vehicle became stuck solidly, as soon as it left the road, for the cultivated ground under the olive trees is very soft, and it had rained and snowed recently. Doing our own cooking here, and the grub isn't exactly fancy.

Got two more parcels, one from Bar and one from the Connor W.A., both very welcome.

On the night of the 15th (Dick's wedding anniversary, by the way) it snowed up to a depth of about six inches, making the poor old pup-tent sag alarmingly. It's not too bad when the weather is fine, but it's a bit depressing when it's wet, cold and muddy. Went into Lan. yesterday to see an M.O. about my face, on which some sort of infection has broken out. Result: evacuated to San Vito for treatment, leaving my poor old White axle-deep in mud, also the old gang.

First trip to hospital since leaving Canada, though this is not exactly a hospital, being an A.D.S. I only hope I'm not S.O.S. of the unit, for that will mean reinforcement camps, pushed here and there, winding up Lord knows where. All for a few miserable spots on my face. Very dim view. I'd much rather either stay as I was or else have something bad enough to get out altogether. The very earth here seems rotten with infection, and any little cut or abrasion becomes septic without the least warning. A lad in the Irish Reg't got a piece of mortar shrapnel through his thigh, not exactly a mortal wound, but

he was dead in two days. Gangrene.

MARCH 4th — Got out of the A.D.S. on the 26th, much to my relief. Went to an advanced holding unit, which happened to be only about six hundred yards from where our 'B' echelon and 'F' vehicle were parked. My first taste of an A.R.D., and I can't say I cared much for it. Dodged fatigues and guards there until the 1st, when I was "sprung" and returned to the unit.

The outfit was still in the lines having a fairly long stretch of it this time. They moved out to a "rest centre" on the 2nd, about a mile or so behind the lines, which consists of a small village pretty well knocked to hell; but I suppose anything does for a change from the constant strain of the forward positions.

Some of the boys have gone on leave to the big rest camp at Bari, which is about as close to civilization as one can find in Italy, according to reports.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

If your Membership Card for 1977 is Number 255, you will receive a free card for 1978.

Please notify the Secretary with your name and address.

OPERATION UPDATE

One of the biggest problems facing your Executive is the task of trying to keep track of our members. So that we may start with as up-to-date a record as possible we hope you will take a couple of minutes to complete the following update of your record with the Association. We would like to know the unit and company in which you served as well as your current address. Please take the time to assist us.

Put the form in an envelope and mail to:

NAME

ADDRESS

UNIT

COMPANY

W.W.1 W.W.2 OTHER PERIOD



LEST WE FORGET

W. R. CROWDER
Surrey, B.C.
Westminster Regt. WW2

CANON T. DEPENCIER
White Rock, B.C.
Westminster Regt. WW2

G. A. DYSON
Victoria, B.C.
47th Btn. WW1

SAM FIELDS
Savona, B.C.
Westminster Regt. WW2

A. HACHEY
Vancouver, B.C.
Westminster Regt. WW2

J. O. HALL
Chilliwack, B.C.
Westminster Regt. WW2

HENRY 'SCOTTY' THOMPSON
Trail, B.C.
Westminster Regt. WW2

JIM MCEACHERN
Etobicoke, Ont.
Westminster Regt. WW2

WHAT BECAME OF KELLY?

STAN CONKEY
1206 Mitchell Road
Surrey, B.C.

MILTON MIRANDA
315 Boyne Street
New Westminster, B.C.

DAN NIKIFORUK
R.R.1, Site 5
Red Deer, Alta.

REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES

Association Members are requested to be at the Armouries in New Westminster at 9:30 a.m. Friday, November 11th. Service at 10:00 a.m.; followed by a wreath laying ceremony at the Cenotaph.

Medals and berets should be worn. The Secretary will have a few extra berets available.

COMING EVENTS

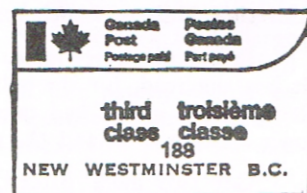
November 11 — Remembrance Day Service

November 20 — Regimental Birthday Celebrations

December 10 — Annual Smoker and Draw — Armoury

**RETURN
REQUESTED**

THE ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 854, New Westminster, B.C. V3L 4Z8



LEO STANT,
HARDISTY, ALBERTA.