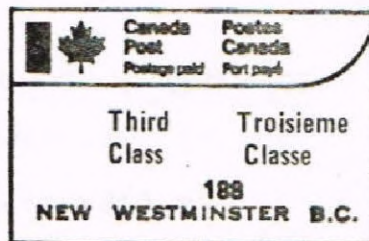


THE ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 854, New Westminster, B.C. V3L 4Z8



J. N. GANGUR,
2015 HYANNIS DR.,
NORTH VANCOUVER, B. C.
V7H 2E5

RETURN
REQUESTED



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. 28, No. 4

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

Sept. - Oct. 1979

NELSON SCOTT, PRESIDENT - 335 Churchill Ave, New Westminster, B.C. V3L 4P5

ED SHANNON, EDITOR - 20250 - 43 A Ave., Langley, B.C. V3A 5L8

NORM McASKILL, SECRETARY - 7828 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C. V2L 3K9

ARMISTICE

PARADE

NOVEMBER 11th, 1979

Assembly 9:45 a.m.

Service The Armouries

Parade To Cenotaph 10:45 a.m.

Service at Cenotaph - March Past - Dismissal

Remembrance & Fellowship / Medals and Berets

PRESIDENTS CORNER

As this issue goes to press, my team in office has reached the half way mark; there have been many items commanding the attention of the Executive with my major concern being that every opportunity was afforded to each member of the Executive to say his piece and to reach the common ground of opinion.

I invoked a Presidential order to force a majority decision in all instances; I felt that a member could not serve the Executive or the Association, to the best advantage if he abstained from voting on any issue, therefore I proclaimed that any abstention would be counted as a "YES" vote. Voting processes are not fully covered in our By-laws and Constitution. The Annual General Meeting might be a good place to air your opinions on this matter.

The Executive meetings are well attended; those who are absent consistently are the same people; we miss their counsel as they are younger and represent the Regiment in one instance. I hold to the belief that if someone accepts a nomination and is elected to the Executive, then attendance, barring illness or out of town, is compulsory. Our meetings are at 8:00 p.m. on the first Monday of every month. Perhaps you might like to drop in on us.

Basil Morgan has a section of this issue; he is giving the story on a very contentious subject; the format for our Melfa dinners. There are those who claim we could get many new faces at the dinner if the format was changed, maybe so but I feel that it would be like running the bath water without putting the stopper in, we would get an inflow but would lose some so the net gain would be nil. Basil's report is a must to read.

Some of our membership is very critical of the cancellation of the "Scholarship" program. This was not a hasty decision and was taken only subsequent to a lot of discussion which brought to light that applications were minimal as to both numbers and quality. We were caught in the bind of possibly having to issue a scholarship without any selection

whatsoever. The budgetary amount has been transferred to the Museum account. This is still within the law.

Those of you who think that the Executive live high on the hog, at your expense; because of the budgetary item, will be pleased to note that its members take turns in supplying the food, in alphabetical or McAskill order and while we do have a drink or two during our meetings, in order to retain our composure, these are available only at cost. You'll be pleased to know that yours truly is 11¢ ahead on the bar since it went into operation, an operation that was the result of economies suggested by Walter Lyle.

The Diarama fund is doing nicely thank you; some members have been most generous with their contributions. The sock is not full so if you are so inclined, perhaps now would be the time as rumour has it that completion of the project is closer to being a fact than at any previous time. Vernon Ardagh has had his problems, so have the Museum committee what with inadequate electric power source and lighting to cases etc. but the whole group are going to see this project through come hell or high water.

The Christmas Draw tickets should be in the hands of all members in British Columbia; we cannot sell outside the Province and can only sell on the general market, i.e. open placement or peddling of tickets in the lower mainland area, the sunshine coast to Powell River and Vancouver Island. Other than this special areas those with tickets must act on a person to person basis. If you have an office Christmas Fund or run a soccer team this is one way to pick up a couple of bucks from each book sold.

Ron Hurley has a contribution; if you are sentimental it will stir your heart; if you too left your cap badge under similar conditions even now it may not be too late to dream.

Freda and Walter Hogg are most active on the Museum Committee with Mike Steede as Chairman; you will find herein a letter from Walter which outlines the unifying body within the local area and some of the matters they discuss. Your Museum is to be host to a December Meeting. On the national scale,

.....con't

PRESIDENTS CORNER ... con't

the meeting scheduled for Edmonton had to be re-scheduled to Ottawa because of the influx of the "boat people"; fortunately Ian Douglas and Dick Shannon could arrange to be in the area of Ottawa at the time of the re-scheduled meeting so represented your Museum; their respective reports will be most refreshing.

I trust you took note of the special announcement on the front page; lets have a good turn out, so polish up your medals and if you are fortunate to have a red beret, weat it with pride.

Sometime in the early 1950's your Association fell heir to a typewriter, it was of vintage brew at that time, but it has served us well over the years. Like all of us, it now shows the effects of years of wear and tear and to put it into working order would be prohibitive, so all please have a moment of silence as said typewriter goes to its final resting place. Any "donation" of a replacement would be most acceptable.

The Smoker is our final event for 1979, the place is the Armouries, the date December 10th, the time 7:30 p.m., the purpose - FELLOWSHIP. Come and renew your old friendships or make new ones. Everybody will be pleased to see your smiling face. The cost is what you make it. Suds available, plus the usual cheese and crackers; maybe a bowl of chilli or clam chowder, too.

President - Scotty

TIDBIT

Vernon Ardagh didn't stay retired long; Without going into why he didn't, members will be pleased to know that he is into something entirely new to him, except for the accounting of funds; he is involved in changing the face and skyline of New Westminster with a new building.

BRANCH #3 ANNUAL PICNIC

On August 5th, 1979, Branch #3 of the Royal Westminster Regiment Association held their annual picnic at the home of Sam and Marion Soutar.

We were welcomed at the entrance by Lyn Edmonds, Darcy and Elsie Bardwin, then directed into the parking area which reminded me of the Marshalling Area of our "Spartan" excercises.

After we finished lunch, a few bubbles and renewing old acquaintances, a short meeting was held in the "Bull Pen". The meeting closed with Lyn Edmonds passing a silver flask of rum from which everyone took a sip. The Silver Flask, so I was told (correct; Ed.) has "D" Coy. Honor Roll inscribed on it; also the last man (of the old Coy.) to attend the Annual Picnic will have the honor of presenting the flask to the R.W.R.A. Museum for eternity.

Following the meeting, 'Marker' was called, the Bugler sounded 'Fall In' and we paraded to an area in front of the flag, followed by our wives and widows. There was two minutes silence, then, after Roll Call, the flag was lowered and presented to Peter Pirie, former Major of 'D' Coy.

The Parade was dismissed, then an organist entertained us and some of us danced on the lawn or at least we tried to. Tom Harris recited "The Return of Wee Albert" and " 'Orses 'Ead 'Aidle and All". Ian Douglas lead the songsters in some of his favourite songs of which most of you will recall.

I did not stay for the closing as we bid everyone adieu at 7 p.m. and found ourselves safely at home.

For those of you that did not attend you missed a good day.

Doug Glenn

HAVE YOU COME TO ANY CONCLUSION AS TO WHOSE DIARY THE PRECEDING INSTALLMENTS AND THE ONE BELOW, HAVE BEEN TAKEN? !!

IT HAS, AND IS, HOPED THAT MEMORIES ARE STIRRED. THERE ARE STILL SEVERAL MORE INSTALLMENTS TO FOLLOW

CONTINUED:

May 31st: We left the ridge which was a portion of the Gustav line and moved forward again. The country here really shows the effects of the Allied barrage. Shell craters all over, trees blasted and splintered and dust and desolation all over. Pushed on to a Div. parking area, where we stayed until the morning of the 23rd. We had a minor airraid while here, with a lot of noise and flak, but no damage. Jerry lobbed the odd shell into the area causing about half a dozen casualties..... Moved forward again on the 23rd arriving at a point close to where the 1st Div. punctured the Hitler line at about 0200 hrs. on the 24th. Stayed there till noon and advanced again, this time in earnest. Tanks ahead of us, we moved through the breached wire entanglements, past blasted Jerry anti-tank guns, tanks dismantled and dug-in as pill boxes, burned out Shermans and Churchills and the odd lad taking his last sleep. Ran into a few scattered Jerries shortly, who disappeared rather rapidly. His mortars opened on us, and things got a bit hot at that spot. The tanks could be heard firing on ahead. We proceeded again on toward the river. Reached a few scattered buildings about six hundred yards from the river and here the Company debouched, as tanks and down trees blocked further progress by vehicle. The Company pushed on to the river, while the drivers spread out and dug in. "Moaning Minnie," Jerry's five barrelled mortar, was working on our position pretty steady and a weird and spine-tingling row they make. Casualties and prisoners started coming back and S.A. fire could be heard at the river. The bridgehead was established and a counter-attack by Hun tanks repelled by .5's, Brens, rifles, grenades and "Piats." An .88 selfpropelled and a tank was knocked out by our Company and our own S.P's got a couple more. They hung on during the night and in the morning the tanks crossed

and started rolling him back.

On the 26th we moved the vehicles over the river, where we stayed a couple of days to bury our dead and let the lads rest a bit. The 11th C.I.B. and the tanks were keeping up the push. We lost many good lads here, mostly shrapnel wounds, but about thirty (from the regt.) were killed. Total casualties around 160. Good old Mel Jackson sleeps the long sleep on a sunny slope above the Melfa, beside twelve more of ours and two B.C.D's From there we moved on again to Ceprano, which has fallen. Past the town, harbored for the night and advanced again toward Pofi. There was minor resistance here and 'B' Company had a couple of casualties from a mine. We made a circuit of the town, over a damn donkey trail that was a driver's nightmare and stopped on a hill about a mile past the town. Drove the last mile or so under mortar fire. Many of our vehicles came to grief on the trail, some being dragged over banks so those behind could pass. Next day most of them were recovered. The 11th C.I.B. and the 1st Div. passed us again and pushed on to take Frosinone this morning. We're resting and reorganizing a bit at present and repairing a bit. Pretty rough country here again and rumor has it that our Bde. is to 'stand down' until open country is reached again about twenty or so miles ahead. I'm sure everyone is gald of the breather and the distance covered since the 24th speaks well for the 5th Div. According to reports, the Cdn. Corps has done very well in its first operation as a Corps..... Remark overheard on the 25th uttered by a British Colonel "It's not possible that the Bde. can have advanced so far in this sort of country." Well, we're a lot closer to Rome, though it looks as if the Yanks will beat us there. No doubt it will be "Out of bounds to all Cdn. troops" when we get there, as every other town in Italy worth going into seems to be. They praise the Canuck while he's fighting, but they seem to think he's not in need of such relaxation as these towns can afford. It rather gripes a guy to see a town full of Yanks and Limeys, but the old "Out of Bounds - C.M.P." plastered all over. What a life.

MUSEUM BUSINESS

Dear Nelson:

Here is the additional information which you requested in your July 13th letter re the Fraser Valley Museums Association meetings. I have been awaiting their News Letter from their last meeting, and will forward same to you when it arrives.

The meeting I attended at the North Shore Museum and Archives was informal - convening at 1:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. However, in view of the fact that many of the attending museum representatives are from some distance, it was suggested that these twice yearly meetings convene at 10:00 a.m. thus making it a longer and more interesting get-together.

Purpose: An exchange of ideas among the smaller museums of the lower mainland

Invitations: To be sent out by the host museum, and should be mailed in sufficient time for concerned museums to RSVP. Attendance varies, sometimes 20 - 25, so I was informed. I enclose a copy of nominal roll of FVMA membership.

Chairman: To be arranged by host museum. As you requested, I would act as Chairman or suggest yourself, if you would be interested.

Secretary: Notes were taken at the last meeting by Valerie (Archie Miller's paid staff). From the last meeting, Archie, curator Royal City Museum is sending out a News Letter to attending museums, incorporating these notes. Suggest you ask Doreen to act in similar capacity if our museum is host! I believe Archie has further ideas on this - could be clarified later.

..... con't

Suggested Agenda (set by host museum)

- 10 a.m. Archie Miller has offered to conduct seminar on how to put together a slide presentation.
- 12 - 12:30 Lunch. Possibly bring bag lunch, or use nearby eating facilities.
- 12:30 - 1 p.m. Tour our museum.
- 1 p.m. Reconvene. Around the table - attending museum speak of happenings of interest in their museums.
- Break for coffee and cookies. (This was supplied by host museum).
- Concluding with informal discussion of general interest to museums
- or -
- Item of particular interest to host museum.
- Adjourn About 3 p.m.

Those of our own members who were available could be asked to attend.

I will pass on any further information as received.

Sincerely

Walter Hogg

TIDBIT

Stan Moorhouse is still waiting to be contacted by Bob Ross. This was filed as the question of the month - Why Bob???? Stan is at #704 - 700 Hamilton St., New Westminster V3M 2M6 604-522-3507.

MELFA DINNERFUTURE FORMAT

Because some concerns have been expressed regarding the continuance of our dinner as presently constituted, a committee has been named to 'Review all aspects of our Annual Melfa Dinner and to Present a Definitive Motion to start the 'Ball Rolling' by way of Discussion' and to 'Have a Proposal to Support the Motion'.

Your Committee so Named - Chairman - Bas. Morgan with Members - Walter Lyle and Stan Moorehouse met at the home of Walter Lyle on the night of September 26th. We want to thank both Walter and Emily for their kindness and hospitality.

The Committee is prepared to make the following Motion --

- 1) That we carry on with the Melfa Dinner as a "Stag Affair"
- 2) That the Dinner be held in the Armouries
- 3) That we continue with the Golf Tournament
- 4) That we cancel the "Wives Dinner" on the night of our Melfa Dinner
- 5) That we cancel the Sunday Tea that follows the Dinner

REASONS & PROPOSALS1. Dinner "Stag"

The reason for the dinner is simply to provide a medium for fellowship and a nostalgic recall of perhaps, the most influential turning point in each of our lives.

This period was a personal adventure shared with an exclusive family.

Our only common denominator was the Regiment.

It is fitting that we take one evening a year to remember

and to be reminded that we were the "Best in the Business".

Our constant attendance, although not spectacular does not vary greatly from year to year.

We have to ask ourselves whether or not we could improve our overall attendance by changing the format.

Most correspondence and verbal comment appears to suggest "NOT"!!!

OUR PROPOSAL

Is to carry on the dinner in its present form of "STAG".

2. Location "Armouries".

The costs of hall rental plus catering would appear to be greater than now expended.

The Armouries provides a reminder that it was and is our home.

Our History and Physical reminders are here in the form of our Museum.

The Cenotaph is nearby

OUR PROPOSAL

Is to use the Armouries.

3. Golf Tournament

This event appears to be gathering momentum and provides a good beginning for the day.

OUR PROPOSAL

Is to keep it going.

MELFA DINNER con't.....4. Wives Participation

This dinner was organized to accomodate people travelling from outside the area so their families would not be stranded in their hotel rooms.

We have not had a handful of such since we started.

Selecting a suitable location and facilities for after dinner appears to be relatively impossible.

The cost is beyond the means of the Association.

We do not feel it is fair to prevail upon the generosity of private individuals.

OUR PROPOSAL

Is that we choose another time and reason for this event. i.e. One of our nicest evenings has been the change-over dinner. Why not enlarge upon this to be a formal installation dinner for everyone. Perhaps the Reg't would participate. A follow-through Sunday Brunch in the Armouries could provide a great alternative.

If the proponents for a mixed affair were to form a planning committee and present a proposal we feel certain your Executive would lend active and enthusiastic support if necessary.

The Museum committee might feel this would be an appropriate vehicle to discharge some of their obligations.

5. Sunday Tea

This was put on the agenda of events as a partial answer to the inclusion of our ladies.

Attendance has been falling off which perhaps suggests that it is not fulfilling its requirement.

con't.....

OUR PROPOSAL

Is that we cancel this as an annual event and that consideration be given to its inclusion with whatever is decided upon for our wives.

MORE TIDBITS

The C.O. advises that a scheduled Band Concert has been postponed until the Spring of 1980. Did you see the Regimental Band on T.V.; they played to welcome U.S. and Canadian Navy vessels to New Westminster.

The Regimental Christening has also been re-scheduled for early 1980. Dates will be made known as soon as possible. In the interim if you know of any child that is eligible please let the C.O. know or advise our Secretary.

LITTLE YOKES

I have the most furstrated pet in the world - a turtle that chases cars.

Also..... Nowadays people can be divided into three clases - the Haves, the Have-Nots, and the Have-Not-Paid-For-What-They-Haves.

M A I L B A G

We have sort of stirred up a can of worms regarding just who should receive the Groundsheet and why. The original idea was for all ex-members of the Regiment, plus current members to receive it if we could get them on our mailing list. This implied that they would like to become members of the Association and as such would be willing to pay the annual dues.

Perhaps this idea was a bit over-optimistic. Human nature being what it is, we have a great variety of eligible members. Dedicated, hard working ones, middle of the road ones, interested but faraway ones and some who shed their war-ingendered sense of closeness along with their uniforms. Then there are those who would like to help the Association and attend the annual functions but are unable to because of age (none of us are getting any younger!) physical incapacity and possibly financial inability.

We have had some good letters on the subject and of course we hope to get more. One hardy soul states bluntly "NO DUES - NO PAPER". Another suggests the Groundsheet to dues-paying members only, with an annual copy once a year to others to remind them we still exist. Another says the original idea of the Groundsheet was to keep alive the spirit of comradeship among the members, that loyalty and friendship have no cash equivalent and if a man forgets or is unable to pay, or doesn't write, he is still an ex 'Westie' and shouldn't be dropped from the roster except by personal request. We hope to hear more on the subject.

In the mail we had a nice long scholarly screed from Ian Douglas. He stated his views very concisely, for which we thank you, Ian. That is what we're looking for..... Mrs. John E. Harrington writes from San Diego, Calif. to say emphatically that John enjoys the Groundsheet, which she reads to him (John is 93! ex-47th and Mrs. Harrington is 78. That's a lot of years). Many thanks for your long letter and your thoughtful donation, Caroline and our very best wishes to you both. I have written to you regarding your request for a plaque..... Jack Smith, 237 Hart St., Coquitlam, B.C. V3K 4A3 sends us a letter a little different from the usual. We understand and accept your reasons for not showing up at the Association get-togethers and we sincerely hope your health improves in every way, but for the rest Jack, I'd like to contradict you! Not interested? You wrote in, didn't you? With a Regimental number like yours, you were one of the

early birds. I think we can still afford you a Groundsheet..... A cheery note from Bill Rogers, 20208 Wharf St., Maple Ridge, B.C. V2X 1A3 saying as how to keep 'er coming men, he likes it and even re-reads it. Stout fella! Know what you mean about retirement, Bill. Odd, isn't it, how you seem to get side-tracked from all the things you were going to do?..... Robert E. Hardy writes from 2108 Dolphin Crescent, Clearbrook, B.C. V2T 3T1, with some suggestions on streamlining the Groundsheet in the interest of economics. Some good ideas, Bob, and we'll see what the Executive think of them..... One from Cliff Wetmore, 835 E. 24th Ave., Vanc., B.C. with best wishes to the Association, also stating he appreciates the Groundsheet and with a pat on the back for the producers. (Take a bow, fellas) ... An affirmative on the Groundsheet question from E.D. Campbell, 2008 Lorraine Ave., Coquitlam, B.C. V3K 2M6 and funds to cover a Regimental History and an Association Crest. Norm will be looking after those for you, so you'll likely be hearing from him..... A nice note from George Bayne, R.R.#3, Antigonish, N.S. B2G 2L1 (About as far East as you can get, eh George?) He sends a request for and the price of a Regimental History, which I'm sure you'll find interesting. I see you got your 'C' Coy. picture O.K. and we chuckled at that, George. Norm our Secretary sent it to you, but missed putting in the information with it, so no wonder you were puzzled as to where it came from. He has sent you a letter explaining how it happened. You were lucky, George, for those pictures are pretty rare items, negatives being non-existent.

A very welcomed letter from Jim Oldfield, 1325 N.W. 15th Street, Corvallis, Oregon 97330 and it was good to hear from you, Jim. You're very well remembered up here, especially by the old 'Scout' platoon members. Glad to hear the Groundsheet is getting to you O.K. and that you like it. We appreciate these morale boosters. Jim was a member of an agricultural delegation that visited China in July, logged 7000 miles inside the country and found it fascinating, which I can well believe. December 8 is the Christmas Draw and Smoker, Jim, if you feel like some more travelling! a long letter from Dave Crossfield, 6042 McNeil Rd., Duncan, B.C. V9L 2H9, I know the Museum will appreciate any souvenirs you may send them Dave and Norm will be writing you with information on the other subjects you mentioned. Many thanks for the good wishes to the Association.

..... con't

MAIL BAG con't.....

In answer to Fred Bass's request for contact with W.W. 1 members, three have so far written in to let him know they are still with us, and our best congratulations to them. Roy York #209-5262 48th Ave. Delta, B.C. V4K 1W5 sends a donation for the Groundsheet for which our best thanks, Roy. He was with the first overseas draft of the 47th in June, 1915. Another who was in the same draft is Harry Corder, Rm 53 - Golden Ears Retirement Centre, 12155 Edge St., Maple Ridge, B.C. V2X 6G7. Don't kid us, Harry, you write a very legible letter. The information was most interesting and many thanks for the good wishes. And Reg LeBrun, 801D 28th St., Anacortes, Wash. 98221 writes a most enjoyable letter to us and he saw considerable of that 'Kaiser's' war in the 131st, 47th, and 4th Bn. C.M.G. Many thanks for the papers and pictures, Reg. I know the Museum will be glad to have them.

Along with several other members of the Association I attended a Regimental Inspection Parade. The Inspecting Officer had some nice things to say about the Regiment. These were deserved, I'm sure, for they were a smart-looking lot out there, and the steadiness and precision would have pleased even 'Little Joe'.

Remember the Draw and Smoker on December 8th and if you sell all your tickets contact Nelson Scott - he will be delighted to send you more. GOOD HUNTING!!

Editor

L E S T
 W E
 F O R G E T

James Delaney, W.W. #2
 Verdun, Quebec
 May 15th, 1979

COMMANDING OFFICER'S REPORT - GROUNDSHEET

Since my last report perhaps the most noteworthy event involving the unit was Milcon 79. Sixty-nine all ranks attended camp and if we add to this figure the dozen away on various courses, it appears the unit is continuing to hold its own.

An Infanteer should know how to shoot well and be able to do so consistently. To this end the Regiment is determined to upgrade the shooting skills of every single serving member. We will do so in a number of ways. First every third Tuesday of the month, while Officers and Senior NCO's are participating in Officer and NCO training, the rank and file, will under the supervision of our regular force detachment, conduct dry fire training. We will revert to the very basic and fundamentals of musketry and gradually improve our skills. Secondly, every soldier must fire a target each quarter on the FN C1 rifle (with adapter) in the indoor rifle range. We have also requested that the Regimental Rifle Association provide us with coaches on our own range exercises. If you have kept up your shooting skills come and give us younger fellows the benefit of your experience. You will be very welcome. If you are available please contact the rifle association of the Battalion Orderly room.

Commanding Officer's parades will be held every two months. The parade commences at 2100 and everyone reading this Groundsheet is invited. A letter will be forwarded to the homes of each unit member extending an invitation to all parents.

BAND UNIFORMS: To-date we have received donations for band uniforms totalling \$130.00. The unit would be grateful for any size donations to assist in the meeting this major expense for the unit.

Significant dates are listed below:

Oct. 13	- Range Exercise	Oct. 16	- Commanding Officer's
Dec. 11	- Commanding Officer's Parade		Parade

J.N. Gangur, Lieutenant Colonel, Com. Officer

A BADGE OF ROMANCE

Our world is in dire straits - we are all sick: Cancer is rampant in everything we eat, touch, drink or smoke. The Ayatollah is banning our music - the Arabs are trying to freeze us out of house and home... Newspapers, T.V., the media in general, confirm all this. Indeed; when did you last read or hear of a happy story?

Bear with me, I believe I have just that for you in this small report.

I do not read fiction, although I respect the creativity of the novelist, but some of this reads like pure Harlequin Romances, Romeo and Juliet or the best of Hollywood's melodramas. There is, however one unique distinction. All that is recorded here is absolute fact and lends credence to the old adage "Truth is stranger than fiction".

There are three main phases to this tale. A beginning of course. A separation (approx 40 years) and a culmination, not an end but perhaps in the Churchillian sense 'The end of a beginning'.

There is happiness, sadness, bitterness and a good measure of personal tragedy as well.

The beginning dates back to 1940 in Dundurn and Saskatoon, Sask. My first awareness of this poignant drama dates only from Aug. 1979. 1940 is the proper time to begin this tale. I must tell you however, that my participation was initiated by a telephone request for a Westminster Regt M.G. (We were once so designated) Hat Badge. The call came from one Allen Spencer Lee. Most ex'C' Coy and 9 Platoon, in particular, were more familiar with him as 'Mowitch' Al explained his rather unusual sobriquet as being of Prince George Indian origin and according to what definition you believed meant, Deer Meat, Moose Meat, Mighty Hunter - what have you? For all intents and purposes it purportedly described Al's considerable hunting exploits (Apparently a good deal of it out of season we were to learn later).

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con't.....

I have only seen Mowitch, that is Al Lee, once previously since the end of the Big One W.W. 2 and that was many years ago in Shaughnessy Hospital. Now in 1979 we exchanged a few pleasantries and Al reiterated his desperate need for a hat badge. He informed me that he had just been reunited with his old sweetheart of 1940 and they were soon planning to wed. The badge was to replace one once given to her as a pledge and unfortunately lost in the long interval since their 1940 courtship days. I did indeed have an extra cap badge and invited Al and his lady over to claim it. Most of us of course, had several badges during the span of six years and some of us were lucky enough to retain their original issue. I kept a spare one among my mementos yet cherished the original most dearly. It is old, worn, the points bent rakishly (against Pt 2 Orders) but it was one of the few things that survived with me throughout. I had taken it back to Italy in 1975 (Affixed upon Al Coe's borrowed Beret) and had worn it proudly at all the memorial ceremonies at the gravesides of our fallen comrades. It was, to me, an inseparable keepsake.

Al and his lady Alice duly arrived and, upon hearing their story, I willingly presented them with my original. I'm sure you would all agree with that decision. Some of you will recall that Al and his brother Roy were tandem brother reinforcements from Prince George with Art and Ed Greensill. They soon became well know in Charlie Coy.

Al was as dark as Roy was fair and much bigger also. He was a good looking curly haired kid with the upper body of a heavyweight boxer and considerable strength to go with that build as well. This physique, no doubt, built up by his early experiences as a logger and faller.

As stated, the two Als (Allen & Alice and that is how they are known) met and romance blossomed in Saskatoon in 1940.

They were both committed to each other and deeply in love. The path of true love is seldom smooth, as has oft been said. A cap badge was given as a pledge of Al's love for Alice (who could afford an engagement ring on a buck twenty a day?). One of those typical lovers quarrels ensued. Alice left, hurt

..... con't

A BADGE OF ROMANCE con't.....

and in tears. Allen was bewildered and confused. They were not to be reunited until August 1979, a few short weeks before relating their story to me while requesting the badge.

Alice had married in haste and unwisely and had been divorced for many years. Allen had never married and had not genuinely loved since their unhappy separation. There was no doubt, in this August of 1979, that they were deeply in love. Time seemed of no consequence and a 40 year hiatus mattered not at all. It was, and is, a tear jerker story, no sentimental drivel, absolutely sincere and most moving to hear. I felt as I was privy to something extremely private. They assured me that the wedding would be soon but Allen was destined for surgery first (little did I realize the severity of this visit) I would be invited, of course, and would be duly notified. I was filled with intrigue and curiosity. How did they establish their reunion? Who helped them? And why so long etc.?

The answer to those questions were only provided from the past. As often happens in wartime, separations are inevitable. Al and his brother Roy parted in England. Al to a holding unit (at the insistence of a former subaltern, now departed and therefore nameless) and Roy remaining with the unit.

This separation is the lone vestige of bitterness Al holds to this day. As I experienced the same treatment, I can certainly empathize with his feelings. Fortunately I was able to rejoin the unit outside Crecchio. Al was eventually relegated to active service with the S.S.R.'s (South Saskatchewan Reg't) in N.W. Europe and was grievously wounded in combat. Brother Roy was not spared either and many particularly Roy Richard and Bill Gunn will recall the near amputation of Roy's hand in a carrier accident in the Gothic Line. The Al Lee, before me in my house in 1979, was not the 'Mowitch' I had remembered. His wounds had left him too skinny, strips of sinew for legs, a right arm bent almost in reverse position and enough shrapnel to effect a permanent ballast. He is truly a mobile medical marvel. All doctors, of course, advised that he would have to forego his pre war logging activities. Al's replies are unprintable here but suffice to say that he did indeed go logging and tree falling again and lasted until a few short years ago where he had the
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misfortune to break his neck in three places as the result of an industrial accident - in the bush of course. Only since that misfortune has Al been relegated to a less vigorous vocation. He has been working for B.C. Parks board at Manning Park and only the onset of circulatory problems and gangrenous infection had him temporarily grounded. This then was his condition as he sat before me awaiting immediate surgery and planning an early marriage.

Alice had indeed tried to locate Al for many years. She had learned somehow that he had been wounded but no trace as to whereabouts. She tried D.V.A. by phone but no luck (perhaps that information is confidential). She had moved to New Westminster and had lived there for many years (unknown to her, Al was working at Peace Arch Park and living in White Rock). She was not aware of the Regiment Association. In desperation she had a novel idea. She recorded a tape cassette outlining her continuing devotion and sincere desire to meet again. She mailed this to D.V.A. Van. B.C. They were obligated, of course, to attempt delivery. As Al was and is a disability pensioner that precious message arrived, at last, at its desired designation. Phase two had been accomplished and they left me as two lovers in the springtime of their youth.

Shortly after and much sooner than I expected, I received an invitation to attend the wedding of the two Als at Manning Park Lodge, Sept. 29th, 1979. I accepted post haste.

Perhaps the story should end here but I would be most remiss if I did not mention this truly remarkable ceremony.

The setting was magnificent and the rites performed by a baby faced minister in front of the lodge fireplace. More than the site however was the contribution of Al's fellow parks board workers. They had staged the entire event and theirs was a fitting testimony to the esteem with which they held Al in their hearts. Noticeable also was the youth of the gathering. True they were a couple of 40's (disdaining their advancing years) but the real oldsters were the groom, best man brother Roy and this invited guest. Most however were in their early

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A BADGE OF ROMANCE con't

twenties and there was no generation gap on this evening.

All too often, youth of today are condemned out of hand by general terms and often by our peers as 'Pot Heads' 'Weirdos' 'Freaks' etc. There were no types like that at this gathering and they came from all over, Newfie to Australia, Alaska and England. They were truckers, loggers, waitresses, ski patrollers, rangers, managers, foremen, administrators etc. No bride and groom could have been treated more royally and no guests, such as my wife and I, received more warmly. They are a credit to this province, the country and to all who should be so fortunate to meet them. Al Lee's indomitable will and plain old fashioned guts should not go unnoticed here. An hour before his wedding I sat with Al in his room and watched as he carefully cut a hole in his shoe to allow room for his grossly swollen foot (his recent operation far from healed and he in obvious pain). His friend, Wes had to put his sock on. Not once did I hear a whimper or complaint. At the banquet and later reception Al made every attempt to dance as long as possible.

I know Al and Alice, as were my wife and I, deeply moved and appreciative of the wonderful people who helped make this such a grand occasion. From regional Mgr. Herb Green, Lodge Mgr. Al Campbell, Wes Hotance, M.C. Doug Gough, Jim Stewart, Harley, The Music Man and a host of others and all the charming ladies it was truly a generous and magnificent gesture.

It is to be sincerely hoped that every precious remaining seconds, minutes, hours, days, months and years will be full-filling and overflowing with happiness for Allen and Alice Spencer Lee; and that those long yearning years apart will soon fade into memory.

Their's is a beautiful story and they are the living legends that indeed "Love Will Find A Way". We wish them well

As Ever

Ron Hurley

WHAT A LOVELY WAR

The joint Canadian-U.S. military exercise on the beaches of northern Vancouver Island was postponed because of rain and wind. This is the best news of the week. Does it mean that war will once more become a gentleman's game, fought by polite rules?

Let's hope so. For too long, war has been in the hands of illmannered foreigners and politicians with their dirty tricks like attacking in the rain, or on holiday week-ends.

The rot started when they invented the gun, which allowed a peasant to shoot a gentleman off his horse without learning the ABC's of chivalrous combat. Since then, it has grown steadily worse.

Those small-c conservative politicians are right when they say we must get back to the old values. The generals and admirals of the mock war have been listening to this good advice.

With any luck, we will be able to put a stop to the creeping professionalism of the last several centuries, and restore warfare to its rightful place as an upper-class sport. Preferably, warfare can be boiled down to two gentlemen in the middle of an arena jousting with lances, and the rest of us watching.

If it doesn't rain, that is.

JOKE TIME

Drop-In: My husband, a sky-diving enthusiast, parachuted into our large front yard one Sunday afternoon, drawing quite a crowd of awestruck children and wondering adults. I'll never forget their expressions as he said matter-of-factly, "It sure beats fighting that traffic!"

ALSO: It's more fun to arrive at a conclusion than to justify it.

CANADA AND THE NETHERLANDS

To commemorate the 35th anniversary of the liberation of Holland next May, two National Committees have been created, one Dutch and one Canadian.

Maj. Gen. Chris Vokes, CB, CBE, DSO, CD., is Chairman of the Canadian "We Do Remember" working committee, all members of which are unpaid volunteers. Holland's "Thank You Canada" committee, is similarly constructed.

The object is, to bring together, Canadians who served in Holland, and their spouses, with Dutch families for a stay of 8 to 10 days, as guests, while attending the various functions. The hosts will provide accommodation and breakfast at no cost to the participants.

The official ceremonies will take place in Nijmegen, May 5th and Groesbeek, May 7th and 8th.

The basic air fare from Vancouver to Amsterdam will be \$660.00 per person.

After the 10th, two 13 and one 20 day tours are offered if wanted, from prices between \$808.00 and \$1,357.00 per person.

Full information and application forms may be obtained from;

We Do Remember Committee
335 Bay St., Ste. 1105,
Toronto, Ont. M5H 2R3

N.B. If interested, time is important. According to the info the Association has just recently received, the deadline is September 30th.

"THE USUAL --- 'TOO LITTLE & TOO LATE' "