



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



THE GROUND SHEET

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF

THE ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 854, NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C. V3L 4Z8

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50TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL WORLD WAR II: The Desperate Years

1939

1989



We Will Remember Them

Cassino Memorial

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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT & DIRECTORS

1939 - 1989 50 long years. Congratulations to all the old 'Thirty-Niners' who still survive. Halcyon days indeed.

Those 50 years incorporate the 42 years plus of the Association's beginnings and, sadly for so many who contributed so much on your behalf: 'The Bell Tolloed' far to soon for them; and The Association misses their collective and valued contributions to The Association and 'The Regimental Family' alike. We are proud and indebted to them and to all those still serving. Elsewhere, in this edition, you will note a letter and an appeal from Hon. Judge A.S. McMorrnan vis-a-vis The Museum of The Royal Westminster Regiment Historical Society. This was and is one of the more noble efforts of The Association and it is doubtful it would be in existence today without our concerted efforts. It is one of our more memorable legacies.

Our 42 years, of course, show marked depletion in our numbers and we are trying to cope with membership rolls, The Paper Dues, etc. To paraphrase by translation, an old French saying 'The more things change - The more they stay the same. From the days of our hard working first Secretary in 1947 from all who held that position since and today: There is one Salient Fact: On average only one third of our members ever pay their dues and that same group seems to be making the most donations. Currently we have approximately 700 members. We have 200 paid up members and that includes those who have paid \$50.00 for life membership. We can do better. Note: LIFE MEMBERSHIP IS NOT TAX DEDUCTIBLE. DONATIONS OF \$25 OR MORE ARE. You will find a postage paid card enclosed. We urge you to complete and return with your address and Regt. No. THIS IS NOT AN ATTEMPT (as other Associations do) to DENY ANY MEMBERS THE GROUNDSHEET FOR NON PAYMENT OF DUES. We wish to update our mailing lists and to estimate that there is still an interest in the reception of the paper. We have had four secretaries in less than two years and some errors have been made. We apologize for delay in mailing receipts to those paying Life memberships. That has been corrected. Attendance at our functions has been too low. Let's see record turnouts for November 11th and Melfa 1990.

Thank you.

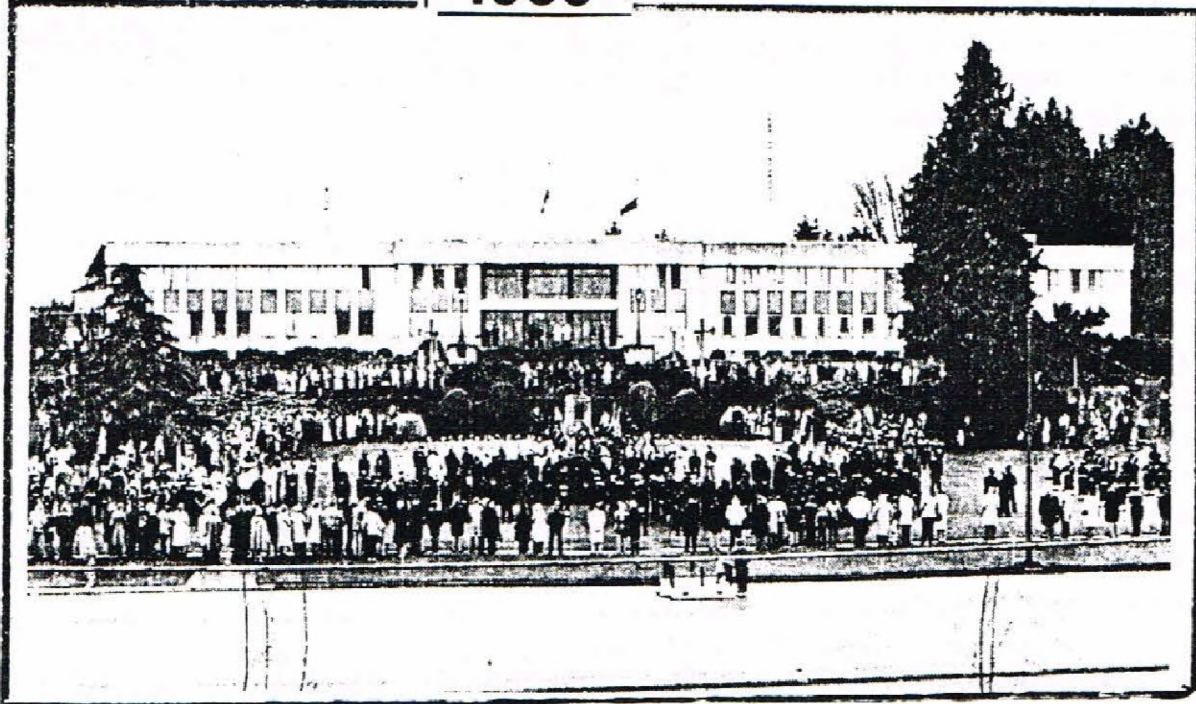
Remembrance Day

9:30 A.M.

Ceremonies

ARMOURIES

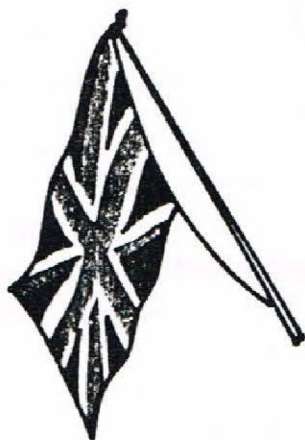
1989



SATURDAY

NOVEMBER ELEVENTH

New Westminster, B.C.





MELFA 1989

This year 122 people attended at the Melfa Dinner held at The Royal Canadian Legion Branch #2 in New Westminster, B.C. on May 19, 1989. That was 25 more than the year before. As the Chairman, I thank everyone who attended and a special thanks to all of you who took the time to show their appreciation and support to me. Our special guests this year were Mayor Betty Toporowski and husband Bob. They seemed to enjoy our hospitality. By the show in the increase in attendance for their dinner, golf and Sunday Social having the dinner on Friday seems to be appropriate.

Golf on Saturday was held at Delta Golf Club. Chuck Smithers put on a good tourney attended by 32 golfers, including a half dozen ladies. Everyone received at least one gift.

The Sunday Social was very well attended with approximately 70 people gathering in the Off/Sgt's Mess. for coffee and sandwiches. Capt. Tom Harris' widow, Chrissie Harris attended with her daughter and presented a selection of material to the museum. This seemed to cap off what appeared to be a very enjoyable weekend. It's unfortunate that more people who live locally don't attend at least one of the functions.


I take this opportunity to thank those who travelled great distances to attend. It's always a pleasure to see you each year. There were also a few new faces this year.

In closing I thank those who commented re. your feelings about the dinner. I appreciate them and look forward to seeing you next year at Melfa 1990. The date has been set for May 18, 19 and 20, 1990. The dinner is again at the legion on the Friday 18th.

Ted Usher, Chairman

SPECIAL ITEM:

Norm McAskill has provided an informative and complete guide for our members re. Vet. Independence Program, etc. You may obtain any and all information from D.V.A. by writing to D.V.A. #640 - 750 Cambie, Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 5E5.



"D" COMPANY ANNUAL PICNIC

Chilliwack Branch #3 ("D" Coy) of the Royal Westminster Regiment Association celebrated its 16th annual picnic and meeting on Sunday, August 6th, 1989, at Circle 6 Ranch, Columbia Valley. 70 members and guests attended.

As the temperature registered 32, the shade of the beautifully landscaped ranch grounds along Frost Creek was most welcome. The steak, salad and baked potato cook-out was again presided over by John and Linda McConnell, ably assisted by Bruce and Alice Eaton and Marion Soutar and family, and a fine meal was enjoyed by all. Local people were out numbered by out-of-district visitors from as far away as Nanaimo (Bob and Dene Baldwin and family), McLure (Walter and Doris Moore) and Deep Cove (Judy and Alex Cappos). Tiny Shea Henderson at three weeks old won honors as the youngest visitant, star of the show and welcome first daughter of Brand and D'Arcy Jane Henderson. Ann Soutar Britton and husband Jeffrey were on hand as part of the family team, together with electronic wizard Bill Soutar, wife Debbie and son D'Arcy.

The annual meeting of the Branch was convened at 3:40 p.m., with 31 attending. President John McConnell welcomed the members and guests and reported that no addition to the Flask of Remembrance had been made during the year. He noted that a presentation would be made to Norm McAskill after the Memorial Parade and called for the observance of a moment's silence for Mike Steede who had passed away December 17th, 1988. E.B. "Tiny" Robertson was named parade C.O., and time of the parade would be at twenty minutes after the Branch meeting, or at about 5:00 p.m.

Lyn Edmonds assisted as Secretary and read correspondence from Elsie Baldwin and Margaret Howell, who sent regrets. Messages of regret were also noted from Heather Ballam, Beth Street, Ethel Mary Knight and Christy Harris. A letter of apology from the former C.O. of the Regiment for the Band's failure of last year was noted. The Financial Statement showed a bank balance of \$950.74 and was applauded, but it was pointed out that it was mainly the result of Norm McAskill's generosity.

The Regimental report was given by Lt.-Col. Bill White who expressed his pleasure on becoming C.O. of the Regiment and referred to its history and traditions. Current strength of the unit was reported to be 170 odd, with the paratroop platoon proving to be very popular and with many applications. He advised that participation in a summer



militia training scheme had been very successful, with video tapes of the scheme showing an impressive contribution by the unit.

Bruce Eaton, Association Past President, reported that President Doug Glenn had unfortunately been ill and unable to attend. He noted that Ron and Ruth Hurley had sent regrets as they would be out of the Province on the 6th.

At this time the Flask of Remembrance was circulated. Bruce Eaton recommended that Trustees be appointed to provide for the security of the Flask and to ensure its final disposition, when decided. Marion Soutar had agreed to act as a Trustee and the Branch Officers and Copper Newitt were invited to serve as well. A resolution, after amendment, was passed to provide that additions to the Flask be restricted to the original members of "D" Coy, but that any man who qualifies must have attended a "D" Coy meeting.

Contributions were generous and totalled \$314.00. Marion, Sam and Elsie were given a warm vote of thanks for their continued kind hospitality. John McConnell was nominated by Bert Hoskin as President for 1989/1990 and the current slate of Officers was re-elected by acclamation: in addition to John, Ed Shannon, 1st Vice, Hugh Shannon, Secretary/Treasurer.

The Branch parade was called around 5:00 p.m. with "Tiny" Robertson, C.O., Sam Soutar as Flag Officer, and Dick and Ed Shannon as members of the colour party. John McConnell again called the Roll of Honour. Following the invocation, Last Post and playing of the 23rd Psalm, the parade was dismissed and reassembled on higher ground. Norm McAskill was then presented with a plaque in appreciation of his generous donation of \$1,000.00 to the Branch and responded suitably. The company was then dismissed "Until next year". Next picnic meeting will be held on Sunday, August 5th, 1990.

Hugh Shannon

PHILOSOFACTS

If you think no cares if you're alive, try missing a few installment payments.

Diplomacy, at one time, consisted of giving a hand without a handout.

It's easy to meet expenses these days ... you find 'em everywhere.

Learn to profit by the mistakes of others; you can't live long enough to make all of them yourself.



Extract from a letter by Hon. Judge A.S. McMorran
Museum Royal Westminster Regiment Historical Society

Mr. President:

The Historical Society has been responsible for the Regimental Museum and has been maintaining and safeguarding the artifacts formerly owned and/or loaned by the Association.

This legally formed Society, inc. under The Society Act is preserving a permanent collection of artifacts and/or memorabilia from The Regiment and its antecedents - this to focus attention for the considerable contributions made to The Nation by The Regimental Family and the future continuation of the Museum and all its possessions.

The Regimental Family, past and present, serving members of the community et al owe a great debt of gratitude to ALL who have done so much to preserve the esprit of the unit over many years since 1945. These dedicated people, without recompense, gave their time freely and with devotion. The Museum has been honored and congratulated by Def. Historical section in Ottawa. Despite this, grants obtained have done little to barely keep "heads above the water".

Fund raising efforts have been poor despite some 500 letter appeals. 52 only received to date. Our appreciation and tax receipts have been duly mailed out.

Passage of time has taken its toll; it is essential that we fulfill our mandate to the pride of the Reg't. Family.

We hope to obtain funds from Provincial and Federal sources alike, but the directors feel our position would be strengthened if it can be shown ALL Reg't. Family members support the Museum and the Historical Society. WE are hopeful, also, that many of 'The Family' will volunteer assistance in Museum Operations.

Our Society precludes any Government Agency, including Dept. of National Defence from taking or attempting to take any of Museum's artifacts.

The Society hopes that all realize what an integral part of the community we represent via The Regiment.

It would be wonderful if more adequate space existed to display all artifacts and memorabilia for everyone to see; and to show our pride in the Regiment and all it stands for. We must all strive for this and ALL be its benefactors. Yours truly, The Hon. Judge A.S. McMorran

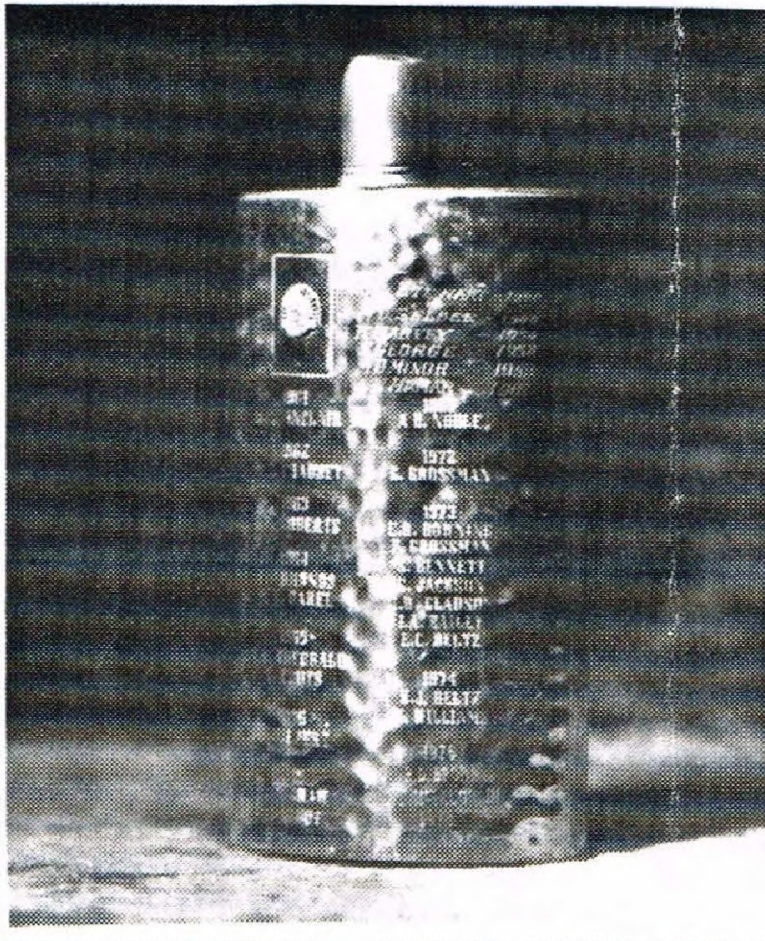
ORIGIN OF BRANCH #3 FLASK OF REMEMBRANCE

First move towards providing a Memorial Flask for Branch #3 came with an Executive Committee recommendation dated November 28th, 1957:

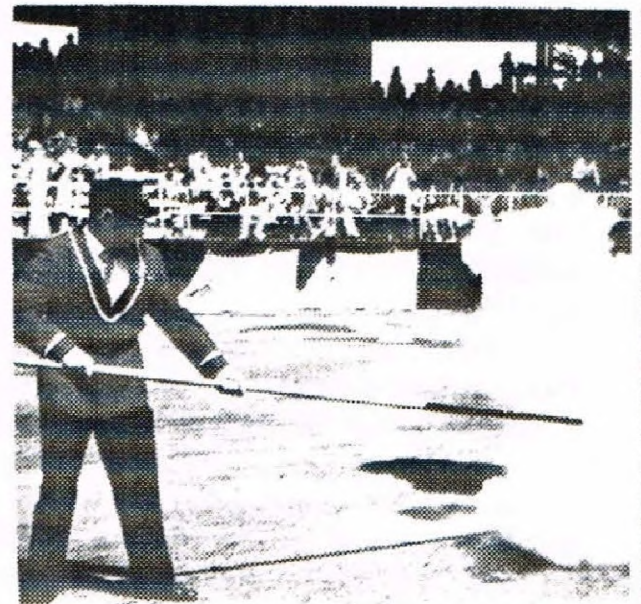
"That a Loving Cup inform of a Flask be purchased and suitably inscribed with names of our comrades who have passed away since the formation of our Organization and the inscriptions be kept up to date."


At the 12th Annual Banquet meeting on November 30, 1957, Bill Williams and Ron Hurley attended from New Westminster and the following entry was made in the minutes: "A Flask purchased by the Association ("D" Coy) was introduced to the members; it is intended to engrave the names of deceased members of the Association from time to time."

The Charter authorizing ex-members of the Westminster Regt. to form Branch #3 of the Association had been presented to the 10th Annual Banquet meeting on November 26, 1955. An extract from Groundsheet Vol. 2, No. 8, dated December, 1955,, was included in the minutes as follows: "As they were constituted, their membership consisted of those members of the Unit who were in when the 2nd War commenced but now, under the Charter, they may take in as members anyone who was in the Regt. or the Regt's it perpetuates."



"D" Coy. Flask of Remembrance
HONORED ANNUALLY AT PICNIC





ODE TO A VETERAN

My friend, my fighting days have long since gone.
I barely hear you when you call my name.
And as I sit against my garden wall in the sun,
I live through all our battles once again.

Do you remember, old friend, the stark Italian hills,
The chilly rains, and the thunder of the guns,
And the men that died, and those that disappeared??
Ah, old friend, you and I were among the lucky ones.

Those friends we left behind on a foreign soil
Each earned a medal and a final bugle call.
One thing I know for certain, my old friend,
I'm glad to be sitting in the sun against my garden wall.

Are Italian days as hot as when we knew them then
While laying in the dirt, waiting for the foe -
And wondering if we were the next to fall??
Old friend, it really doesn't seem that long ago.

Remember too the signorinas of that land
Who made us feel like the men we hoped to be!!
I've spent many an hour wondering, old friend,
If I was fooling them or if they were fooling me.

So now you've come to see me in my town.
It's good to see your face and shake your hand,
And think of those we met and grew to know,
And talk of things that only veterans understand.

Anon.

FROM THE POST

By way of Moosomin Sask. a word from H.L. 'Whimpy' Jones. Note your change of address formerly Mayberry Sask. to P.O. Box 760 Moosomin Sask. SOG 3N0. Pleased to note that you enjoyed the 125th Annv. Video & Booklet - sorry to hear of your ill health and hope you have much improvement ... From Wally Mullholland of Rocky Mtn. Rangers (and an old pal and comrade of mine from Prince George Bridge Guard Detail Circa 26 August 1939) a word of an old Westie Norman Stephanishin. Sorry to learn of your recent heart surgery but pleased to hear you are home and recovering ... Kind words for the Groundsheet and a small correction in address of T.H. Guest Dufferin Ave., Saskatoon. Thanks Tom correction made to 2506 Dufferin Ave., Saskatoon, Sask. S7J 1C6. Word from New Westminster Secondary School from Diane Waterston advising The Assoc. that the \$450.00 Royal Westminster Regiment John Ford Bursary had been presented to John Demeulemeester. Included was John's acceptance and course record for 1989 Fall Semester at S.F.U. Helen Ford again made the presentation. Chrissie Harris, widow of late Tom Harris writes of her niece Pat a former Scholarship Winner in 1975. She is now Dr. Patricia Simpson and she sends best regards to all the Assoc. from her and her husband Capt. Brian Roach, who met some of us at a 'D' Coy picnic. Dr. Pat has just completed her residency in psychiatry and plans to work for the military. It's nice to know that our Scholarships/Bursaries, etc. are appreciated and have produced such great results ... A copy of a most interesting letter that had been sent to Dave Leedham from a Mr. R. Zuiderveld of Groningen Holland. Mr. Zuiderveld also included a nice poem of 'Farewell To The Canadians' written in 1945. He wants specifically to obtain information on An Allegorical Parade featuring a pseudo Hitler, Goebbels and Goring. He wonders if any Westies recall this parade of parodies and took pictures, etc. 'C' Coy was located there for some time after May 1945. If you can help send word to your Editor ... Thanks to Bill Brain notifying us that his father Tom G. Brain of 9860 5th St., Sidney, B.C. V8L 2X3 was a member of the unit in W.W. 1 and W.W. 2. He first enlisted in 1915, December 9th, Rgt. No. 710062. This information received courtesy of Museum Curator Bas Morgan and we will be pleased to put him on Groundsheet mailing list. Please to hear from Assoc. Stalwart Walt Barnum and proud to learn you laid a wreath on our behalf 47th Annv. of 17th Fd. Regt. Roy Can Artillery, 5 Can Armoured Div. Thanks to Bas Morgan again for address of Frank Johnson, 604 Jessie Avenue, Winnipeg, Man. R3L 0P9 transferred to B Coy Sigs from Fort Gary Horse.



FROM THE POST (Cont'd.)

John Demeulemeester
June 27th, 1989

928 - 13th Street,
New Westminster, B.C. V3M 4N2

Dear Sirs,

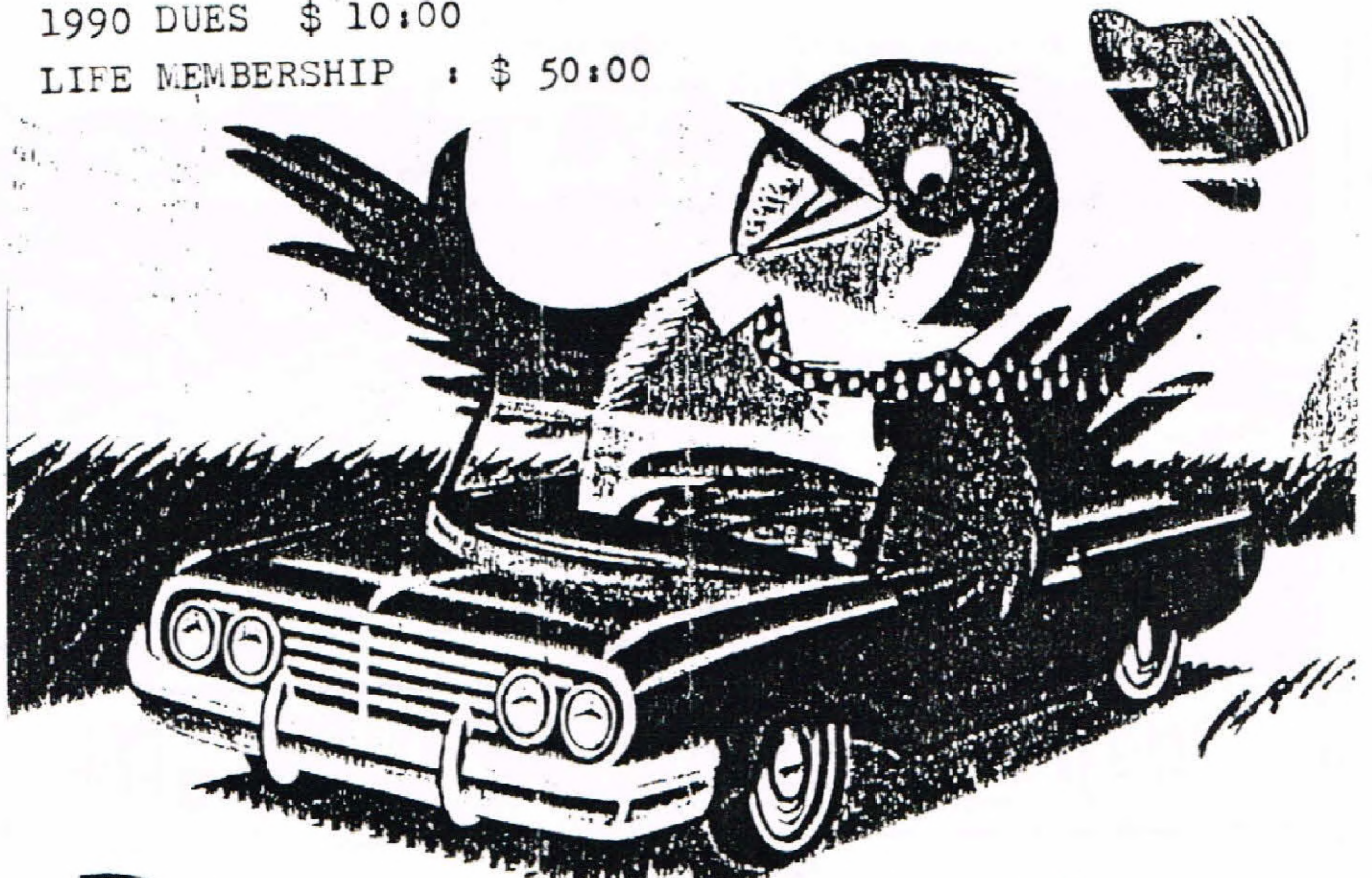
I am greatly honoured to receive the John Ford Memorial Bursary from the Royal Westminster Regiment Association.

I shall use the award to help pay for further study at Simon Fraser University. I plan to study history and eventually go on to teach. My ultimate goal is to become a professor at one of British Columbia's Universities.

I am grateful for the assistance that this bursary will provide in achieving these goals.

With many thanks,
John Demeulemeester

1990 DUES \$ 10:00
LIFE MEMBERSHIP : \$ 50:00



Be an early bird!



IN MEMORIAM

A. Vickberg	Westminster Reg't	(m)	W.W. 2
Bert Shaw	Westminster Reg't	(m)	W.W. 2
Andy Shymkowitch	Westminster Reg't	(m)	W.W. 2
C.G. Thody K47960	Westminster Reg't	(m)	W.W. 2
W.A. Reynar	Westminster Reg't	(m)	W.W. 2
Gerald S. Roberts	Westminster Reg't	(m)	W.W. 2

SPECIAL OBITUARY

Sheila Sheppard, Age 101 years. Widow of late R.S.M. Sheppard
W.W. 1 and W.W. 2.

FAREWELL

Soldier, you went through mud and dust,
Through loneliness, pain and disgust,
You drove our enemy away,
You fought untill the final day
And then you came to Roden.

Perhaps we did not understand
Just how you felt and what you meant
When fighting during all those years,
Far from your home and from your dears,
We, villagers of Roden.

Likewise maybe you never guessed
The way in which we were suppressed.
We feared and hated every day,
Many of us were dragged away,
Did not come back to Roden.

But yet our struggle was the same,
For freedom was our common aim.
We have to part, your hands we shake
And back to Canada you take
The Gratitude of Roden.

Roden, Holland

H.S.B.

November 1945