



# The GROUND SHEET

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF  
THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSN.

*Dedicated to the Ideals and Comradeship We Knew in Two World Wars*

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

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December, 1955.

## EDITORIAL

On the evening of November 26, '55, your president and a member of the executive, Lt. Col. "Bun" Noble, proceeded to Chilliwack to attend the annual dinner of the Chilliwack branch of the Association. After a number of false starts occasioned by Grey-Cup excitement we got away at 6 p.m. instead of 5.

We arrived late but early enough to partake of a good hot rum ration and a very fine turkey dinner. After dinner the Charter was presented making them Branch No. 3 of the Association.

As they were constituted, their membership consisted of those members of the Unit who were in when the 2nd war commenced but now, under this charter they may take in as members anyone who was in the Regiment or the Regiments it perpetuates.

Speeches over, we settled down to a happy, convivial evening. S/Sgt R. J. Franks, R.C.R.'s, was present. He has just returned from Germany where he was C.Q.M.S. in the 2nd B'n of Royal Canadian Reg't. This is the battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Gordon Corbould, D.S.O. who also recently returned to Canada from duty in Germany.

The following were present: President Phil Abbott, Major Peter Pirie, S/Sgt R. J. Franks, Geo. F. Roberts, Ivan Bailey, Gordon Newitt, F. L. Trigo, A. Ford, E. C. McFarland, Gordon Higginson, Wilf Nelson, Leo Wright, Ev Downing, Ted Beltz, R. C. Shannon, E. G. Shannon, R. Playle, R. Robinson and Jim Beltz.

And now, on a less happy note.

If my memory serves me right, the worst crime in

the army is stealing from a comrade. This is also true of comrades out of the army.

On Friday evening, the night of the Smoker, your president had a parcel — a belated wedding gift — delivered at the drill hall. During the early part of the evening it was locked in the officers' mess but after the clam chowder feast, it was brought out and placed on the long table where it could occasionally be checked as being present. The last time the owner looked, he was astounded to realize it had disappeared. As fast as possible, at his age, he dashed to the door, opened it and saw the parcel, under a man's arm, disappearing past the corner of the church. He ran the fifty yards in five seconds flat? caught the man, and demanded, "What the heck are you doing with my parcel?" or words to that effect.

After speaking his mind very freely, the owner of the parcel, instead of making the man carry it back to the drill hall as he at first intended doing, carried it back himself, leaving the light-fingered one to fight it out with his own conscience.

Turning again to pleasanter things, we owe a debt of gratitude to Gordon Rennie for the success of the Christmas draw. Under his able guidance it has always been a success and we can almost forecast a better year than last.

The Christmas smoker under the able chairmanship of Art Miller was another success and I take this opportunity, on your behalf, of thanking Art and his committee for a job well done.

My Christmas Message is a wish that the season

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may be a bright and happy one for you all and the coming years as prosperous as you wish them to be.

W. J. "BILL" WILLIAMS.

## A TRIBUTE

On a Wednesday evening in March, 1933, a good-looking boy presented himself at the drill hall for the purpose of joining The Westminster Reg't. He was one month short of being seventeen years of age which meant that his parents consent had to be obtained and this was readily given.

Thus, Basil V. Morgan became a private in the regiment and he has been with it since that date until October 1st 1955, twenty-two and a half years.

Before September, 1939, he had risen to be a Sergeant and CQMS when war was declared. Soon after the war commenced a new rank, Platoon Sg't Major was announced and he was promoted to this rank. After some months, Headquarters decided that this was not as good as the old system of Platoon officers, so he was recommended for a commission and this came through early in 1940.

He left New Westminster in May, 1940, with the Unit and returned with it in Jan. 1946. During that time he was never posted away from the Unit except to attend schools and courses. After his return to New Westminster he remained in the Unit, (a regiment of the Reserve Army it had now become) being a Company Commander, 2 1/C, and for the past four years, commanding the Battalion.

During these four years the Battalion has lived up to the high standard of excellence it reached in the wartime years. Lt. Col. Basil V. Morgan was transferred to the Supplemental Reserve on October 1st, 1955, and it would be regrettable if the talents of this young, enthusiastic senior officer were not to be utilized in some active manner. We know, should another major engagement start up in the next ten or fifteen years, he will be ready physically and in a military way to do his share.

Speaking for the Association, we, the members thank him for his co-operation and for the able manner in which he has commanded the Regiment of which we are all so proud.

W. J. "BILL" WILLIAMS.

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE PADRE

There is a timely story told of Lord Tennyson. One day he met an old woman and greeted her with the question, "And what's the news today?" And from the lips of the poor old creature came the arresting words, that the only news she had which was worth telling, was that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. "Ah," said the great man, with a profound reverence. "That is good news, and it is true news; It is old news, and it is new news." The Christmas news is just that, and can never grow old. Just thank of it, — The roar of modern life for a moment is stilled; millions of hearts are radiant with joy; millions of songs resound; a flood of sympathy and charity sweeps over this cold, hard world of ours; a spirit of forgiveness and unselfishness mellows countless hearts; and all because a little Baby Boy was born. His coming was heralded by patriarch, psalmist and prophet. The wisdom of the Ancient World gathered at His cradle. The weary nations hailed "the day-spring from on high" and kings, the brightness of His rising. But the most wonderful thing by far, was that when the angelic armies announced His Birth with rapturous song, the sons of men were startled by the voice of the angel, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy."

A Baby Boy; yes, only a Babe! A manger in Bethlehem; yes, only a manger cave! But that day bisected history. The old world died, B.C. — A new world began and throughout the ages till He shall come again, its time will be A.D. And from that day, springs of joy and hope and peace have flowed on with ever increasing volume, and rays of light have flooded this dark world because Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

Christmas! Christmas! Hail it with reverence and gladness. Let friendship clasp hands with renewing vows, and charity go forth to feed and clothe our brothers, the poorer members of God's great family. Cease family quarrels, stop open hostilities and veiled neutralities. Knock once more at the old home, you prodigals. Clasp hands once more, ye alienated friends. The brightest day of the year is here, and in the power of the love of the ever-living Christ, let sorrow and sighing flee away. O come all ye faithful, and as you stand with bowed heads

the minutes, but each member, individually expressed his appreciation for the sustained interest Gordon shows in our Association and for a "job well done" on the draw. Gordon seems to thrive on fraternal work, he is President of the Legion and also looks after their Annual Hamper draw; we wonder when he finds time to sell real estate.

Phil Abbot reports that Peter Pirie, Major — Westminster; has just completed a very successful year as President of the Chilliwack Branch of the Canadian Legion. Peter was with the original "D" Coy boys in 1939 and towards the end of the last war was Educational Officer. We are told that he has had the misfortune to lose a small fortune on his turkey raising venture, a business that is risky at the best of times, and we sincerely hope that he has better luck with whatever he undertakes to do in the future.

Mention has been made of S/Sgt Franks elsewhere in these pages. To recall him for you, he was a Sgt. in "D" Coy with the Westminster O/S and remained in the Army at the end of hostilities. His claim to fame is that he was a member of the first Canadian Army Rifle team that qualified for Bisley. He has just finished a three year stint in Germany under Gordie Corbould, will serve the next two years at Jericho Beach, Vancouver, then retire on Pension.

Special thanks to Mrs. Hughes for her continued loyal support of the Association and her Annual donation to the Sick and visiting committee.

The Decals are now available for sale. By the response shown at the Smoker, the idea is a good one. Sales amounted to \$39.00 and the attendance prize of a set of Tumblers with Decals attached, drew many favourable comments. The Association is indebted to Walter Lyle for his donation of tumblers.

### **PAY 1956 DUES PROMPTLY AND RECEIVE YOUR DECAL FREE!**

Lewis Sangster suffered a dislocated shoulder and multiple bruises which required hospitalization recently. He suffered a fall outside his home, ironically while leaving to attend a safe driving meeting. This could explain why the Groundsheet has not been favoured with a write up on our pictures that appeared in the last two issues. Lewis was requested to give us a write up; his historical knowledge of the old 47th, their going and comings, was

thought very sufficient to give us a real good story. Incidentally we have not had too good a response to our request to identify the picture, consequently no more will appear.

We extend a welcome to an old timer to our Association in the person of Albert McGugan, Trochu, Alberta. This will be his first issue of our paper and we hope that he finds it interesting.

Bernie Neary paid a flying visit to the coast again this year, spent a little time at the Armouries meeting a few old friends; his trip was strictly business but he delayed his departure for Vancouver Island long enough to drop in to the Mess. Bernie represents Thomas Nelson & Sons (Canada) Ltd. and works out of Toronto. We mention this as so many of our readers still think you are with the Indian Dept. Bernie. Of course if we aid in the sale of a few books, our commission is not too high. Hope you had a pleasant and successful trip.

James V. Hollingum, 1738 San Jose Ave., San Francisco 12, Calif., writes requesting the assistance, of all our readers, in obtaining Volume 2 of the book entitled "Canada's Sons in the World War". While he was in Vancouver last summer he obtained Vol. 1 but was unable to find the second volume. His request to the publishers brought the reply that it was out of print, and had been for years. If any of our readers has a copy of this book, Mr. Hollingum wishes to either borrow or will purchase same, if you are agreeable. Please contact him direct. As he lives in San Francisco, he has very little hope of getting this book without your help, it being useless for him to prowl the 2nd hand book stores in that city. If you do not wish to write Mr. Hollingum, contact our secretary and he will make the necessary arrangements; dont put it off, have a look now.

### **READERS WRITE**

Two letters from Fred West, Trail, B.C. In the first he encloses a newspaper clipping concerning Scotty Clifford and in the other he gives us the name of a new member for the Association in the person of George Harkness, 112 Colley St., Trail, B.C. Fred had great hopes of organizing a group to come down to the Smoker but, due to circumstances, as he puts it, it will be another year before they make it.

Regarding Scotty Clifford, his news concerns his winning an award of \$500.00 by the Consolidated Min-

ing & Smelting Co. for a useful on-the-job suggestion. Scotty is a purification operator at the company's ammonia plant at Trail and his suggestion was a modification in the cooling system of the gas purification system. His award was the largest granted by the plant this year. We note from the report that Scotty was congratulated by the Plant Superintendent with the following remarks, "his ingenious and valuable suggestion which so well merits this award and for the creative thinking that brought it about."

Fred is with Van Horne Electric Supply, working out of Trail, says that there is a chance that he may be moved to the Vancouver area in the coming year, in which case he will grace all our gatherings with his presence. He closes his letters with best regards to all his friends and an earnest plea for a ticket winner for the Trail area.

Scotty Weir, 793 Fuller Ave., Kelowna, advises that things are a little tough for him right now; he has been in and out of Shoughnessy since February, 1953, and that

raises heck with an employment record. He remembers one occasion when he had the company of Al Little. He looks forward to the Groundsheet which he enjoys and appreciates our sending it to him. Heres a wish that 1956 will bring you better health and greater prosperity, Scotty.

Bob Eacrett, up at Whitehorse, Y. T. Has been doing a little soliciting of new members and comes up with the name of Jim Palmer. We heard from Jim direct, requesting that he be made a member; he was told about us by Bob. Going back several years, to 1941 in fact, when Jim first joined the Unit at Camp Borden, Bob was then a Sgt. in "C" Coy and that is where Jim started from. He has an addition request. He would like to hear from all former No. 16 Platoon, Support Coy fellows. His address, James S. Palmer, Post Office Box 759, White horse, Y.T.

*That is all for this issue, however in closing, please accept sincere season's greetings from your Sec.-Treasurer and may the New Year bring you the fulfillment of your hopes and plans with happiness and prosperity.*

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From THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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