



The GROUNDSHEET

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF
THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSN.

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

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

Vol. 11, No. 6.

Box 854, New Westminster, B.C.

December, 1961.

IN APPRECIATION

Thirty four years ago I had the pleasure of meeting Nelson Scott and have known him throughout the ensuing years.

Nelson was first a student in the Technical School and in 1927 he joined the Westminster Regiment. By the time of his discharge in 1936 he held the rank of Sergeant. I have recollections of this fine young soldier.

On the team that won the Foster Cup 1934-35, he was a Corporal. As soon as the Westminster Regiment, second battalion, was authorized, he joined up, that was June, 1940. In December '41, he went to Gordon Head where he qualified and was commissioned, proceeded overseas to the First Battalion in September, 1942.

In the fall of '43 he went with the advance party to Italy and served with the regiment until 1944 when he was wounded. Returned to Canada June 6, 1944 and was hospitalized in Shaughnessy Hospital, Vancouver, until September '44.

He was retired with the rank of Major. He returned to the Customs Service where he remained until '55. He left that position to become manager of Milne & Craighead, customs brokers' office in New Westminster.

The Regimental Association which was formed on the regiment's return, had many ups and downs until in 1947 Nelson became its secretary and for fifteen years he has carried on this arduous task. When he took over there were 245 members and it was financially broke. It has now risen to approximately 1000 members and is in a sound position financially.

A great deal of this improvement is due to the hard work of Nelson Scott.

I write this because Nelson, due to other commitments, has had to relinquish this job which he has handled so capably for fifteen years.

I know I speak for every member of the Association when I say — Thank you, Nelson, for a job well done. — W. J. "Col. Bill" WILLIAMS.

SICK AND VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

Our monthly visitation was on Wednesday, the 29th November, 1961, Tommy Thomson and myself in attendance. For this time of the year there were comparatively few of our Comrades in Shaughnessy.

We visited for quite some time with Bill Lawson, who always seems so pleased with the idea of having company. Poor Bill, he seems to be such a lonely soul and his inability at present to clarify his speech doesn't help any. At times he becomes so tongue-tied that we can't really make out what he means, like when we asked him what we could bring him extra for Christmas, he became so excited and seemed to keep repeating, No! No! — finally it dawned on us that he was trying to tell us we do enough without thinking of anything extra. Well, he's wrong there, as at present our association is quite capable of looking after our hospitalized in regards comforts and the allocation to this committee is quite generous, also through the year many extra donations for the Hospital Committee are sent in by the membership. For this Christmas alone, I have received

THE GROUND SHEET

President W. S. (SCOTTY) LOW
 1481 Beth St., White Rock WE 7-7385
 Secretary R. (BOB) H. CARTER
 931 Walls Street, Coquitlam WE 9-7743
 Editor ART MILLER
 8364 - 12th Avenue Burnaby LA 2-6131

ed some \$35.00 in extra donations, and at this time would like to thank T. A. S. Hamilton, Danny Pastro and Doug Allen. May your Christmas and New Years be one of the best.

Your Committee will make it's Christmas visitation to George Derby on Wednesday the 13th December, and to Shaughnessy on Wednesday, the 20th December.

Although young Bob Norris is hospitalized again, trying to find him is like looking for a needle in a hay stack. Never mind, Bob, we are only too pleased that you can get around so well. We had a newcomer to our list, Dick O'Brine, from the 131st — he was at the Canteen or show, so we left the usual comforts and the latest copy of the Groundsheet. C. F. Harrington is back in Shaughnessy after spending some weeks in the Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster. Chuck is very thin and sure needs to put on quite a bit of weight — is very cheerful though, and feels he is on the mend again. Buster Lynche was on our list but had been discharged shortly before our visiting night. Best of luck, Buster!

Hereunder is a list of our hospital Comrades:

W. Lawson	R. N. Norris
Col Coote	Dick O'Brine
C. F. Harrington	W. Camp
D. Corcoran	G. A. Neve
F. H. Wiggins	

H. A. STEPHENS, Committee Chairman.

MEMBERSHIP

As a result of the shuffle within your Executive I now find myself Chairman of the Membership Committee.

Whether you yourselves as members realize it or not, Membership in your Association is and always been a constant headache to the Secretary trying to keep nominal rolls and addresses up to date.

We realize Postal Zones change from time to time and people do move at some time or another; if you have moved recently and are not getting your copy of the Groundsheet, the onus is on you. All I am going to ask is if you're on the move, get in the groove and send us your new address and don't become one of the many "What Became of Kelly's" listed below.

What Became of Kelly?

C. Alcock	J. A. Kilgour
P. Bailey	J. H. Knight
Tom Bryson	Dake Liversidge
S. C. Carlsen	E. H. McConnell
Allan Coe	G. McDonald
G. W. Craigen	J. H. Murphy
H. S. Creasey	F. Myer
A. E. Davies	J. M. Pollock
Ed. Fairholm	George Randall
D. A. J. Fancy	Frank Reiser
W. J. Ferguson	N. R. Sadler
K. N. Knox	J. H. Sclater (Life member)
Alexander Gilbert	John B. Stewart
A. W. Goyne	T. Soderstrom
Cecil R. Ginsted	B. Turvey
Bill Gunn	J. I. Williams
L. Head	

B. E. (Barney) JONES, Chairman Membership Comm.

AT THE BEGINNING

I am looking at a picture of those members of the Officers' Mess, who were present January 25, 1940. On the left was Col. C. J. Loat, who was the Commanding Officer of the Regiment. Col. Loat retired late in 1939 and the Unit was taken over by Lt. Col. J. E. Sager, affectionately called "Little Joe" whose oft exclaimed expression "is just not 100%" is well remembered.

Looking at the picture further we see the following: Major, then Lt. Col. retired A. B. "Bun" Noble, a past president of the Association, and still a very active member. Lt. Col. N. D. Theobald, M.C. Col. Theobald reverted to Major to take over Headquarters Company during the early days of the war. Col. Theobald later served in the Depot, subsequently retired, and is now resident in White Rock, B.C. He was a most welcome addition to the welcoming committee which received the bottle of Melfa River water at the airport two years ago. The next familiar face we see is that of,

then Capt. W. T. "Walt" Ibott, M.M., subsequently promoted to Major as O.C. "A" Coy., then to Lt. Col. and finally to full Colonel. Following the war he was engaged in his own insurance business in Vancouver, and unfortunately passed away about two years ago.

Next is Major W. J. "Bill" Williams, now Lt. Col. retired. Col. Bill, as everyone affectionately calls him, was O.C. "B" Company, was later responsible for recruiting for the Regiment, and subsequently recruiting for the Canadian Army in B.C. Col. Bill, a former teacher at the T. J. Trapp Technical School, is extremely active, both with the Association as an executive member, and with The Westminster Regiment Cadet Corps as their "Honourary Colonel". Col. Bill is also a Past President of the Association. All old timers will remember Major H. A. Eckhardt, popular O.C. "C" Company at the outbreak of the war. He spent some time with the Regiment and ultimately joined the Canadian Educational Services. There was no Company like "D". Major P. F. "Peter" Pirie, M.M., and his Company from Chilliwack, once known as the "Farmers", came to town and changed the entire history of the Regiment. It was never the same after "D" Company made their presence felt. Major Pirie remained with the Regiment for some time, was subsequently with the Depot, retired at the end of the war, and returned to that thriving metropolis of Chilliwack, where he is an active Legion and Association member. Present members of the Association are quite familiar with Lt. Col. F. J. Simpson. Col. Simpson is a former Commanding Officer of the Regiment, and at the outbreak of war, reverted to Captain, and served as Adjutant for some time, subsequently regained his proper rank, and did great things on the man-power and labour scene during the war. He is now retired and resides with his sister. He does an especially good job for the Association and is responsible for our beautiful life membership cards.

Looking at the left of this group we see Capt. G. R. Burrows, later to be Major, O.C. "B" Coy. Later was transferred to another Corps and retired from the Army in 1945. Major Burrows met with an unfortunate accident at his home several years ago. He is remembered.

The Depot Quarter Master was Capt. E. T. Dawson who also in the picture. He did not see active service with the regiment and is therefore not too well known. Many of the older members will recall Major H. A. Des-

Brisay, M.O. during the early days and later at Camp Bordon. He finally took a Field Hospital overseas.

Capt. Al Harding, well remembered Q.M. who served with the Regiment throughout the war, now operates a jewellery business in Nanaimo.

Paymaster of the Regt. at the outbreak was Capt. George A. Johnstone, who due to severe disabilities incurred during W.W. I subsequently served with the Depot.

Another famous name of the Westminster was that of Lt. Col. G. B. Corbould who also reverted to become Depot Adjutant. He was the father of the popular W.W. II C.O. of the Regiment, Lt. Col. G. C. Corbould, D.S.O. Extreme right of this picture as an insert is Lieut., now Lt. Col., J. K. Mahoney, V.C., who is well known by all. The next picture unfortunately does not show too clearly Capt. George Grossman, brother of Pete Grossman. George, who had been promoted to Major, was later transferred to the Holding Coy. as Q.M. and was for some time stationed at Whitley Camp, Eng., where our reinforcements were quartered.

All Her Majesties loyal Irishmen will recall Capt. H. R. H. (Hal) Campbell. Capt. E. S. Catherwood, who was subsequently killed in action is next in the picture. Lieut. R. J. Grinstead served throughout the war and attained the rank of Captain. He is presently with the Canadian Immigration Service. Lieut. T. W. Hall, who served in Italy with the Unit as a Major is presently Commanding the Westminster Regiment and was recently promoted to Lt. Col. In civilian life he is the Warden of the B.C. Penitentiary. Many members will recall Lt. D. L. Watts. After leaving the Unit he served as Air Liaison Officer. Presently he is operating his own business and resides in White Rock.

At the extreme right of the picture is Lieut. G. C. Corbould, subsequently C.O. of the Regt. in the field. Gordon, is now retired after many years in the Regular Force. Lieut. B. F. Neary, with the Unit in the early months of the war, went to Staff and earned the highest regard in Planning. Bernie is now in the publishing business in Toronto. The next person we see is Lt. I. F. Douglas, who was promoted to Captain, then Major and O.C. "C" Coy. He served with distinction throughout actions fought by the Regiment. In civilian life Ian is a High School teacher. All "B" Coy. members will recall 2nd Lt. G. D. Johnson, who completed

his service with the Unit with the rank of Major. In all actions he was the very popular O.C. of "B" Coy. Subsequent to the war he was appointed O.C. B.C.D.'s in the interior, with the rank of Lt. Col. Lt. P. A. Grossman, promoted Captain, then Major, and finally 2 i/c of the Unit during the Melfa River crossing, is now librarian for the City of Vancouver.

Lt. F. W. H. Meek comes next. Bill, a Captain, was badly wounded in Italy. He presently operates the printing firm of Wm. Meek Ltd. in North Vancouver. Bill kindly publishes our "Groundsheet". Last, but not least, was 2nd Lieut. E. V. Ardagh, well remembered by "B" Company where he started as a 2nd Lieut. the first day of the war, and later commanded "A" Coy. as a Major. He now manages the Bank of Montreal across from Woodwards in New Westminster.

There were many other officers of the Regiment but this is a composite picture of those appearing in this picture, printed by the Vancouver Daily Province on January 25, 1940.

RESULTS OF THE DRAW, DEC. 15th:

1. \$300.00—Richard Higgins, Fruitvale, B.C.
2. \$200.00—C. L. Bjorkman, Britannia Beach, B.C.
3. \$100.00—Nick Semeniuk, 10291 - 140 Street, North Surrey, B.C.
4. \$100.00—Vi's Fashions, 4797 Kingsway, Burnaby.
5. \$100.00—J. N. Rosso, 218 Ash Street, New Westminster, B.C.
6. \$100.00—Mrs. A. Browning, 1414 London Street, New Westminster, B.C.
7. \$100.00—Don Hobbs, Box 515, Quesnel, B.C.
8. Case of Scotch—G. Rai, 2805 Murray Street, Port Moody, B.C.
9. Case of Rum—C. N. Schaldemose, 7188 Gray Ave., South Burnaby, B.C.
10. Case of Vodka—M. Morino, 274 Virago, Victoria, B.C.
11. Case of Rye—Mrs. Lily Dunlop, Egmont, B.C.
12. Ten Dozen Beer—R. J. Harrower, 22881 - 56 Ave., R.R. No. 7, Langley, B.C.
13. \$10.00—W. E. Coffee, 959 Madore Avenue, Coquitlam, New Westminster, B.C.

14. \$10.00—E. W. Shaw, Dunsmuir Hotel, New Westminster, B.C.
15. \$10.00—W. Harrison, 341 Leroy Street, New Westminster, B.C.
16. \$10.00—Barbara Carlson, 3818 Pine Street, Burnaby 1, B.C.
17. \$10.00—Bonnie Stanchuk, Box 227, Grand Forks, B.C.
18. \$10.00—L. Mullin, 7211 - 4th Street, New Westminster, B.C.
19. \$10.00—C. H. Collision, 6150 Highbury Street, Vancouver 13, B.C.
20. \$10.00—Gerry Wood, 6507 Neville Street, South Burnaby, B.C.
21. \$10.00—John Chandler, Lillooet, B.C.
22. \$10.00—Neil Donegan, 576 Sperling Ave., Burnaby.
23. \$10.00—Mrs. Erna K. Ewing, Box 607, Abbotsford.
24. \$10.00—Grace Burns, R.R. 2, Box 9, Hope, B.C.
25. \$10.00—Mrs. M. Craig, 1788 East 3rd Ave., Vancouver 12, B.C.
26. \$10.00—F. Miller, 707 - 7th Ave., New Westminster, B.C.
27. \$10.00—J. R. Doutaz, 14066 - 104th Ave., North Surrey, B.C.
28. \$10.00—Minnie Chicaine, 5541 Imperial Street, South Burnaby, B.C.
29. \$10.00—P. O. Thompson, Lakelse Hot Springs Resort, Box 1479, Terrace, B.C.
30. \$10.00—Rhoda Amos, 669 Martin St., Penticton.
31. \$10.00—E. Williams, 6666 Hosgard, South Burnaby.
32. \$10.00—V. A. Watteyne, Box 637, Quesnel, B.C.

SELLERS PRIZES

1. \$100.00—H. R. Johnstone, Box 237, Arcola, Sask.
2. \$10.00—G. W. Harkness, 112 Colley St., Trail, B.C.
3. \$10.00—H. McDonald.
4. \$10.00—Albert Morris.
5. \$10.00—John Hou.
6. \$10.00—John Rosso.
7. \$10.00—Archie Browning.
8. \$10.00—Al Harvey.
9. \$10.00—H. W. Parker.
10. \$10.00—R. Janelle.
11. \$10.00—Fred Craze, 291 Rosebank, Victoria, B.C.
12. \$10.00—B. F. Vaughan.
13. \$10.00—Wally Fenton.

HISTORY OF THE WESTMINSTER REGT.

The following brief Historical Sketch of The Westminster Regiment, currently being furnished to the recruits of the present Regiment, is reproduced as it was thought that it would be of interest to the Association members.

"The history of The Westminster Regt., oldest unit on the British Columbia mainland, dates back to 1863. In that year a company of the famous Royal Engineers, sent out by Queen Victoria in 1859 to bring law, order and help in the construction in this western out-post of her far flung empire, was disbanded and returned to England.

On the disbandment of the Engineers, the citizens of New Westminster, then a busy centre of the thriving Fraser River Goldfields, felt the need of protection from the twofold threat of Indians and lawless miners. A petition was sent to Governor Douglas in Victoria asking permission to form a non-permanent military unit.

This permission was granted and on November 20, 1863, the New Westminster Volunteer Rifles were formed. Comprising seventy-three all ranks, this colourful force was comprised to a large extent of former members of the Royal Engineers Company who had decided to remain in British Columbia and seek their livelihood in this new land of opportunity.

First Active Service

This unit saw its first active service in the late spring of 1865. In May of that year a tribe of Chilcotin Indians went on the warpath, raiding construction camps of road builders and engineers in that area. Governor Douglas called on the New Westminster Volunteer Rifles to put down the uprising. In the following two months after several brisk skirmishes with the Indians, the ring leaders were captured, brought to Quesnel, tried and later executed. The rebellion ceased. In 1866 the threat of Fenian invasions from across the American border saw the formation of a second military unit in New Westminster. This unit was later disbanded in 1872, when the supposed threat no longer existed. For the next several years the New Westminster Volunteer Rifles went through several changes of names and organization but a continuous record of unbroken service was maintained. In 1910 the unit became the 104th Westminster Fusiliers of Canada.

World War I

When war broke upon the world in 1914 the Westminster Fusiliers of Canada became a training unit

for regiments of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, in all, 6500 men of New Westminster, Fraser Valley and surrounding districts received initial training in the 104th. Drafts were supplied to the 7th, 9th, 13th, 29th, 72nd and other regiments of the C.E.F. Two C.E.F. units from New Westminster were trained in the 104th New Westminster Fusiliers.

These were the 47th and 131st. The 47th Battalion proceeded overseas in 1916 and established a fine record of service. The "Fighting 47th" took part in the battles of Amiens, Ypres, Vimy, Hill 60, Valenciennes, Canal du Nord, Paeschendale and many other major engagements.

One Victoria Cross was won by a member of the 47th.

On arrival in England the 131st battalion was broken up, supplying drafts to Canadian units in France. With peace, the C.E.F. units disbanded and the 104th Westminster Fusiliers of Canada became the military unit of the Royal City.

Militia Reorganizes

In 1920 in a reorganization of the Canadian Militia, the 104th Westminster Fusiliers of Canada became the Westminster Regt. (Inf.). In a further reorganization in 1936 the unit became a machine gun regiment, training in the use of the Vickers machine gun.

World War II

At the outbreak of World War II the unit was mobilized as Corps troops. Following several months of training in the Royal City the unit proceeded to Dundurn, remaining there for the summer of 1940. In November the unit returned to Vancouver, and in December, 1940, became a motor battalion in the First Cdn Armoured Bde of the 1st Cdn Armoured Div. In May, 1941, the "Westminsters" joined the division for concentrated training in Camp Bordon. The name of this Div. was later changed to the 5th Cdn Armd. Div. In November, 1941, the unit proceeded overseas with the Div. Following two years of training in various parts of England the Div. sailed for Italy to become part of the "Eighth Army".

The Westminster Regt. perpetuates the 47th Batt. C.E.F. and the Regimental collar badges and buttons have the figure 47 on them. The allied unit of the British Army is "The Royal Warwickshire Regt." and in peace time very close and friendly relations are maintained between the two regiments.

Enviably Record

The Westminster Regt. has an enviable record of

its actions in World War II both in Italy and North West Europe. The regt. spent a total of 192 days in contact with the enemy in Italy and 40 days in the line in Holland, making a total of 232 days in action. This figure only takes into account the days when the Battalion was actually fighting or under enemy fire and the days spent in reserve and on tactical moves are not included. During all this fighting the Battalion never failed to take an objective and once having taken it was never knocked off. Only three men were taken by the enemy as prisoners of war and they were all

captured at the same time on the 24th of May, 1944, during the crossing of the Melfa River. The Battalion won the following decorations during the World War II:

- 1 Victoria Cross,
- 1 Order of the British Empire,
- 3 Distinguished Service Orders,
- 1 Member of the British Empire,
- 5 Military Crosses. Won by Officers.
- 1 Military Cross. Won by a WO1.
- 18 Military Medals,
- 24 Mention in Despatches.

From THE WESTMINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 854, New Westminster. B. C.