

16754 Pto. Bryant



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

7th Canadian

1918.

The Queen joins me in welcoming you on your release from the miseries & hardships, which you have endured with so much patience & courage.

During these many months of trial, the early rescue of our gallant Officers & Men from the cruelties of their captivity has been uppermost in our thoughts.

We are thankful that this longed for day has arrived, & that back in the old Country you will be able once more to enjoy the happiness of a home & to see good days among those who anxiously look for your return.

George R.I.

Left

This letter, which appears to be in the handwriting of King George V, is actually a printed form letter sent to many of the prisoners of war released shortly after 11 November 1918 in accordance with the terms of the Armistice. This letter was sent to 16754 Private H.H. Bryant of 3 Company, 7<sup>th</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> British Columbia) Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He was taken prisoner on 24 April 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres near Saint Julien, Belgium. Germany gave notice of his capture on 15 May 1915, and he was kept at a prisoner of war camp near Munster, Germany until his release.

Right

This official portrait of King George V hangs proudly on display at the Bessborough Armoury.



camps in early 1919. The battalions returned home in the ensuing months and were demobilized and dismissed with appropriate ceremony and fanfare.

The greatest problem that faced the army after the war was reorganizing and perpetuating 260 reinforcing and 59 fighting battalions of the Canadian Expedition Forces within the "Old Militia" regiments that remained behind in Canada. In British Columbia, National Defence Headquarters decided to create the 1<sup>st</sup> British Columbia Regiment with six battalions. The DCOR and the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion joined to form the First Battalion (7<sup>th</sup> Battalion CEF) 1<sup>st</sup> BC Regiment (DCO). The 29<sup>th</sup> (Vancouver) Battalion formed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> British Columbia Regiment, and the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion and the Westminster Regiment formed the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> British Columbia Regiment.

The Beatty Street Drill Hall was a busy place, with the Vancouver Regiment parading Monday and Wednesdays, the Seaforth Highlanders on Tuesday and Thursdays, and the 1<sup>st</sup> BC Regiment parading on the other days.

In 1927 Lieutenant-Colonel William Wasborough Foster, CMG, DSO, VD, became the new commanding officer of the regiment.

In the 1920s Vancouver's militia regiments had undergone a series of amalgamations, brought on by cuts

in the defence budget. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was renamed the British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's

Own Rifles) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was redesignated the Vancouver Regiment; the latter was amalgamated with the Irish Fusiliers in 1936. In 2002 the Irish Fusiliers were amalgamated with The British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own).

Throughout the inter-war period the militia in Canada was badly equipped and underfunded—still wearing uniforms and using equipment left over from the First World War."