SOLDIERS OF THE KING:
VANCOUVER’S INTERWAR MILITIA AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

by

IAN DAVID CAMPBELL YUILL
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Department of History

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

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The interwar militia in Vancouver is a poorly understood institution, partly because scholars have come to associate the militia with militarism. However, the militia has important non-military functions and the interwar militia regiments were more than social clubs. This thesis compared the activities of two of Vancouver’s militia regiments by examining their archival holdings to see if they had documentary evidence to support the notion that they functioned as a proto-fraternal society during the interwar period. The militia regiments functioned as fraternal associations providing mutual aid as well as congeniality. In the immediate post World War One period and during the Great Depression, with successively lower militia appropriations, militia regiments were forced out of necessity to come up with innovative ways to recruit and keep men on strength. Service in the militia was voluntary with members turning their pay back to the regiments to enable many of the militia regiments to function. The militia regiments held suppers and dances, and paid transportation costs to get members out for parade nights. The militia also played an integral role in the ceremonial life of the city. The ceremonial and symbolic values of militia units on parade were accepted features of public ceremonies in the city. It reaffirmed Vancouver’s “Britishness.” This thesis compares two of Vancouver’s militia regiments during the interwar period, the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada and the British Columbia Regiment. The ethnic affiliation of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada to the city’s Scottish groups was a remarkable feature of Vancouver’s elite unit. The militia allowed ambitious and patriotic young men to follow a British aristocratic career pattern: formal education at private schools, post-secondary training and military service. Militia regiments were part of an active social network within Vancouver between the wars. They conferred status, provided aid, and supported dominant values such as in Vancouver’s society. This thesis provides some insight into the functioning of these two regiments as fraternal organizations and how they connected to the larger community.
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Preface: Vancouver’s Interwar Militia

According to G.F.G. Stanley, Canadians are an “unmilitary people.”¹ For most military historians, this assertion has become the gospel truth. While Stanley’s claim is compelling in that he clearly illustrates our federal governments’ lack of will to create and nurture a large, standing army commensurate with our geographical size, his conclusion, however, neglects the role the militia played in civilian life. Indeed, Stanley’s book Canada’s Soldiers, like most history that delves into military matters, gives scant attention to the functioning of the peacetime militia. While most of the unit histories take note of “an interwar period” when, presumably, social connections were fostered, traditions upheld, and lives lived, none of these histories explains this process of continuity.

While the immediate post-1918 period produced a number of informative regimental histories, it is ironic that at a time when their very raison d’être was most likely to be questioned, most eschewed describing their unit’s peacetime role. In reality, since most of the unit histories were written in the 1920s and early 1930s, lengthy reflection about the peacetime role was impossible. Within a scant twenty years, the world was gripped by another global conflict; consequently, the post-Second World War period is preoccupied with writing the history of this conflict. Essentially, the interwar period is forgotten or hastily described as “the nadir” of a unit’s existence.²

This neglect of peacetime activities provides the context for my thesis. Academic neglect of this area is, however, anachronistic, considering the social changes wrought by the First World War and the pronounced interest of current historians in social history. In the interwar period, university academics were well represented in the ranks of the militia. Men like Lieutenant Colonel (LCol) R.W. Brock, Dean of Sciences at the University of British Columbia (UBC), Professor H.F. Angus, Head of the Department of Economics, Sociology, and Political Science at UBC, and H.T. Logan, Department of Classics and Commanding Officer of the Canadian Officer Training Corps (COTC), were active member of the militia. The final academic from UBC who served in the militia was LCol H.F.G. Letson, Commanding Officer of the British Columbia Regiment (BCR), and later, the successor of H.T. Logan as Commanding Officer of the COTC on campus.³
The history of the militia and of Vancouver is intertwined from the earliest days of the province. The militia, as I will show, has played a formative role in the lives of many citizens of Vancouver, both prominent and humble. It linked members in a social network within each regiment and with the rest of the city. When social scientists consider the military, they usually refer to the full-time or regular force. Alternatively, they consider the British Territorial Army or the United States National Guard; rare is the study of the Canadian militia. It is even rarer to find interest in the extension of social networks associated with the militia, which is derived from the armed forces. Examples are the veterans' legions and regimental clubs and cadets that provided continuity through many generations. According to sociologist T.C. Willett, "the Militia gave substance to the idea of community... Until very recently most Canadian towns and cities had their regiments whose bands and honour guards were always present on civic occasions." Sadly, like the current academic disdain for the militia, other than a royal visit perhaps, it is almost inconceivable now to imagine the civic authorities using the militia for public ceremony. It would seem that the only recognized peacetime role for the militia today would be to turn out if needed in case of floods, or ice storms. The militia, like most old symbols of Britannic and civic pride, has faded into the background of Canadian society. Therefore it is proposed to analyze the role of the interwar militia in Vancouver as a social institution. I believe that by understanding this neglected subject it is possible to contribute equally to the rich social history of British Columbia and of Vancouver.

I originally planned to compare the other ranks and officers of the Seaforths, the BCR, and 15th Field Regiment. The comparison was to show why people were attracted to the various regiments. As well, I hoped that, since the three regiments being considered were from different arms of the military, it might be worthwhile to see who was attracted and why. While there exists a substantial body of literature dealing with the military, very little of it analyzes the interwar period. Since all three units have archival holdings, I hoped that these records would help illuminate this neglected period. Sadly, the 15th Field Regiment's holdings are strongest for the post-Second World War period. Consequently, this unit had to be dropped because of the absence of earlier records. The BCR has an eclectic collection of records from the period that only now are being organized. The Seaforths have massive holdings compared to the BCR; consequently, it was difficult not to structure the narrative around this collection.
The Seaforths, like the BCR, are starting to organize their collection. For both the BCR and Seaforths, the effects of floods, dirt, and indifference are very evident. Problems occurred when it came to applying the comparative framework. For example, the Seaforths have a number of nominal rolls listing personnel, while the BCR do not. Other problems included finding out more about the other ranks by using the City Directories. While the core of officers in each regiment stayed fairly static over time, this was not the case with the other ranks. Civilian work commitments or loss of jobs often forced members to leave. What is certain from the record is that the militia had a highly visible presence in Vancouver during the interwar period.

The militia has played a role in defining Vancouver’s identity. For example, the University of British Columbia has some visible reminders including the War Memorial Gymnasium, Military road, and coastal defence batteries (sited where the Museum of Anthropology is presently located). Even the now-defunct COTC program enjoyed a long history on campus. As T.C. Willett perceptively notes, “with the loss of the COTC program, there is no visible military presence on the campus where most of the nation’s leaders complete their formal education;” consequently, the militia is slipping further from the consciousness of our future leaders.7

The Canadian militia has a long, proud heritage. This heritage is largely founded upon the British military tradition. The British connection is evident in the distinctive uniforms and is a powerful reminder of the regular Army garrisons established during Canada’s development as a nation. As Stanley points out in his survey Canada’s Soldiers: The Military History of an Unmilitary People, while we might have what some would call an aptitude for things military, in general, “Canadians were not interested in military matters.”8 Politically speaking, this is a fair assessment. It would be useful to note that while the story of the interwar militia is one of privation - inadequate funding, working with obsolete equipment, and a process of amalgamations that saw the number of units shrink dramatically the institution adapted and continued on.9

The BC Regiment has the longest history in Vancouver. In October 1883, the British Columbia Provisional Regiment of Garrison Artillery was formed as a regiment from three non-permanent militia units: the No. 1 Company of Rifles from New Westminster, the Seymour Battery of Garrison Artillery,
and the Victoria Battery of Garrison Artillery. In 1893, Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) T.O. Townley was given authority to raise a company of artillery in the new city of Vancouver. This company was named the No. 5 Company, British Columbia Battalion of Garrison Artillery. In July 1899, the regiment was broken up, with the Victoria batteries remaining in the Canadian Artillery. The mainland batteries were converted to a rifle regiment. In 1912, with the visit of the Governor General, H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, and his subsequent appointment as Colonel-in-Chief, the unit's title was changed to 6th Regiment, Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles. After a distinguished performance in the First World War, in 1924 the unit was converted into the 1st British Columbia Regiment (infantry). In 1930, the regiment reverted to rifles, and in 1939 they were finally transformed into their present state as an armoured regiment in 1939.

The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, like the BCR, have a rich heritage in Vancouver. Unlike most units that are created by government fiat, the Seaforths were privately raised in the city. The idea of a highland regiment for Vancouver was "first mooted" in 1909. This idea for a Scottish highland regiment originated in the Gaelic Society of Vancouver. According to the first official history of the regiment, "on May 11th, 1909, a meeting was held in the St. Andrew's and Caledonian Societies' rooms, where a number of prominent citizens discussed the formation of a highland regiment." It was decided that money would have to be raised privately since the Government contribution would only amount to $10.00 or $12.00 per man. The topic of raising a regiment was "discussed in Scottish circles, and general public approbation was evinced." The St. Andrew's and Caledonian Societies' met again in January 1910 and this time were joined by the prominent local businessman, H.O. Bell-Irving. The committee continued its correspondence with the Militia Department at Ottawa, and authorization for raising a regiment of highlanders was finally obtained on November 24th, 1910. Subsequent to this permission, the new Vancouver regiment was granted permission to be affiliated with the Imperial Seaforths (Duke of Albany's Ross-Shire Buffs). The regiment began recruiting men in earnest, and the slate of officers was filled out fast. Interestingly, the desire was naturally to attract good officers. However, equally important to the new regiment was that these new officers be of Scottish extraction.
The following letter from the newly appointed commanding officer Captain R.G. Leckie, to the committee of the St. Andrew’s and Caledonian Societies’ reflects this desire:

I had been requested, previous to this meeting, by the District Officer Commanding, to go ahead and select the officers for the regiment… In selecting the officers, my first consideration was efficiency, as it is my desire to make this regiment one of the best in the Dominion; and without efficient officers, such a thing is impossible. Nationality came next in consideration; and as this is a Canadian regiment, my first choice in this particular would lie with Canadians of Scotch descent, after which, of course, would have come Scotsmen born in the Old Country. I have been fortunate in securing up to date about a dozen officers who have seen active service, and whose knowledge of actual warfare will place us in the first rank of useful regiments in Canada. Of those already selected, twenty are Scotch Canadians, or Scottish by name. Five Canadians of Irish parentage but partly Scotch, four English, three of whom I believe are partly Scotch. So you see we have an overwhelmingly strong representation of Scottish blood among the officers, more so, I think, than any Scottish regiment in the Imperial service… With respect to the non-commissioned officers and men we have had to take pretty much what we could get in the way of recruits, having regard to a high standard of physique. Here also, however, Scotsmen greatly preponderate in numbers, as may be seen from the regimental rolls.¹⁹

This emphasis on Scottish heritage in the ranks of the Seaforths is consistent with Vancouver’s demographic structure.²⁰ The Seaforths, like the BCR, went away to the First World War and returned home having greatly distinguished themselves.

The Social and Occupational Makeup of Two Regiments

Despite the ethnic selectivity of the Seaforths, the people who joined the peacetime militia came from a variety of occupations. Militia volunteers in Vancouver came from every social group and conform to the evidence of a nominal “social hierarchy” as advanced by Robert A.J. McDonald in his book Making Vancouver: Class, Status, and Social Boundaries, 1863-1913.²¹ Officers belonged to the upper echelons of society and included barristers, dentists, doctors, university professors, civil engineers, chartered accountants, and business leaders. Senior non-commissioned officers (Sr. NCOs) could be found in what we would consider “professional” vocations as well as those not requiring a formal education. Junior non-commissioned officers (Jr. NCOs) were normally tradesmen, farmers, clerks,
resource workers, or labourers. This generalization is reasonably accurate; however, there is evidence that some junior non-commissioned officers fell outside this pattern and were working in vocations not normally associated with their military peers. What is most remarkable about this group is the fact that they were employed in vocations of some status, such as barrister, bank manager, civil engineer and so on, yet had not chosen to seek commission as an officer. It is possible to infer perhaps that the prestige of being a Seaforth Highlander offset the low rank, which would otherwise have been demeaning to a gentleman. Alternatively, it could also be the result of an unwillingness to shoulder the financial responsibilities entailed by an officer's commission in the Seaforths. Whether this is accidental or the result of selection, all the officers in the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada could claim some social distinction as gentlemen and educated professionals. Likewise, so too could the Officers in the British Columbia Regiment.

For the purpose of analysis, the following tables will demonstrate how the militia members from the Seaforths and BCR fit into Vancouver's society.

Social Categories Used for Analysis

Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political and Economic Elites Definition:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Members of Parliament</td>
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<td>Members of the Legislative Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members of Civic Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large Company Owners</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Educated Professionals/ Liberal Professions Definition:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Law</td>
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<td>Clergy</td>
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<td>Civil Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chartered Accountants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6
Educated White Collar Definition:
- Self-employed
- Retailers/Small Businessmen
- Clerical Workers
- Business Employees
- Realtors

Skilled Blue Collar Definition:
- Primary Industry/Extractive Industry Workers
- Fishermen
- Loggers/Mill workers
- Longshoremen
- Drivers
- Farmers

Manual Workers Definition:
- Semi-skilled employees
- Seasonal manual labourers

Table II

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Officers of the Post World War One SHC &amp; BCR, 1920</th>
<th>BCR</th>
<th>SHC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Political and Economic Elite</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated Professionals</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated White Collar</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Blue Collar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Workers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*LCol Brock qualifies in both categories, however he has been placed as a social elite because at the time of this sample, he was the Deputy Minister of Mines.

According to the 1923 Nominal Roll for the British Columbia Regiment, many of the officers of the BCR's could also claim some distinction within Vancouver's society, albeit of a lower order than Seaforths' officers. At this time, the Honourary Lieutenant Colonel (HLCol) of the BCR was His Honour, W.C. Nichol, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of British Columbia. The Commanding Officer of the time, LCol H.S. Tobin, himself a distinguished World War One veteran, was also a partner in a leading Vancouver law firm, Pattullo and Tobin.²⁴ Two other officers on his staff were also lawyers and partners in another law firm.²⁵ The City Directory also reveals that the Deputy Commanding Officer (DCO), Major J.S. Tait, was from a prominent business family with interests as Wholesale Commission Merchants and owners of the Tait Pipe and Foundry Company.²⁶ The Regiment also had a physician, Major F.W. Lees,²⁷ another barrister, Lieutenant R.J.G. Richards,²⁸ and a clerk, Lieutenant D.S. Donaghy, who worked at Canadian Robert Dollar, steamship operators and lumber manufacturers.²⁹ Other officers
of the BCR worked as surveyors, engineers, an accountant, and a secretary of the Vancouver School Board. However, before you could become an officer in the Regiment, you needed more than a respectable occupation.

The social composition of the officer corps of the Seaforth Highlanders was similar to that of the BCR. A quick survey of the original officers of the Seaforth Highlanders reveals a number of very prominent businessmen, some of whom would go on to command the unit, while the remainder who survived the First World War returned to their place in Vancouver society.

The original Seaforth officers included Charles Tupper, a barrister, and a son of Prime Minister Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper. His brother, Reginald Hibbert Tupper, also joined the unit. Another prominent member was Reginald Walter Brock, later Deputy Minister of Mines, Dean of Science at the University of British Columbia, and Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders from 1933 until his tragic death in a plane crash at Alta Lake, British Columbia in 1935. Other officers included (The Honourable) Francis Egerton Grosvenor, son of the second Baron Ebury, and himself a manager for Norton Griffiths Company Limited. Robert Mills Blair, later a Commanding Officer of the regiment during the late 1920s and early 1930s, was employed as the manager at the Lyman Tube and Supply Company. As well, Arthur Douglas Wilson, who was to rise to the rank of Brigadier General, was a barrister and partner in the firm Jamieson and Wilson.

Perhaps the most influential member of the pre-1914 72nd Battalion Seaforths was John Arthur Clark. Educated at Toronto’s Osgoode Hall, he was to command the Seaforths during the First World War, become a Conservative Member of Parliament in the early 1930s, and remain an influential barrister in Vancouver – later honoured by appointment as King’s Counsel. In the early 1920s he accepted the prestigious role of Honorary Lieutenant Colonel for the Seaforths, thereby reinforcing his seminal influence on their development until his death in 1976.

Another prominent family represented in the Seaforth’s officer corps was the Bell-Irvings. Richard Bell-Irving and his brother Roderick Ogle Bell-Irving were both officers in the Seaforths. Roderick was killed in action at Auvilliers during the First World War, while his brother survived the war. Both were sons of H.O. Bell-Irving, a “socially advantaged entrepreneur…[who] had come from a
prominent landed and business family in the Scottish lowlands.\textsuperscript{41} The officers' file on Roderick has a note inscribed, most likely by the regiment's Adjutant, that "H.O. Bell-Irving, father of R.O. and R. Bell-Irving, was one of the gentlemen who took a very active part in the creation of the regiment and gave it financial aid."\textsuperscript{42} Another prominent family, the Hambers, had a son who was an officer in the Seaforths. The son, Eric Werge Hamber, who managed Hastings Mill, was generous to the unit "in donating finishing timber for use in the officer's, sergeant's and men's messes, recreation rooms and the orderly room."\textsuperscript{43} The Merritt family was also prominent in the Seaforths. The father, Cecil Mack Merritt, an antiques businessman, was killed during the First World War at St. Julien; however, his two sons Charles Cecil Ingersoll Merritt (who won a Victoria Cross at Dieppe in 1942) and Francis William Ingersoll Merritt both joined the Seaforths during the interwar period.\textsuperscript{44} This list of pre-World War One officers gives an indication of loyalty of some prominent Vancouver families to the Seaforth Highlanders.\textsuperscript{45}

The list of serving officers from the interwar Seaforths reads like the Who's Who of Vancouver, probably because it included some of Vancouver's leading citizens.\textsuperscript{46} The social makeup of officers of the Seaforths was similar to the composition of BCR officers. Both groups' civilian vocations were primarily in the liberal professions, classified here as 'educated professionals.' For example, George Savage Clark was a typical applicant for an officer's commission in the Seaforths.\textsuperscript{47} Clark was graduate of the University of British Columbia, having received a Bachelor of Arts in 1922. He then entered into law studies and was called to the British Columbia Bar in 1926.\textsuperscript{48} He was a partner in a firm with James H. Lawson and was a member of the Quadra Club (Vancouver), Union Club (Victoria), and the Vancouver Lawn Tennis and Badminton Club.\textsuperscript{49} He had served with the Seaforths in the First World War, at the age of 16 as a bugler.\textsuperscript{50} His character references were impeccable, including Brigadier General J.A. Clark, current officers Major R.W. Brock, Major C.C. Ferrie, and a professor from the University, H.F. Angus, himself a serving officer.\textsuperscript{51} Clark concluded his letter of application with some perceptive words: "Should my application meet with approval, I shall, of course, be prepared to assume the usual obligations of an Officer of the Regiment."\textsuperscript{52} This statement demonstrates that Clark was already familiar with the costly social functions of the officers' mess and regiment. Another applicant for a commission in the regiment was M.S. Ferguson. Ferguson was unique in that he had previously served
with the Seaforths, as a Jr. NCO in the Signal Section. Ferguson clearly would have liked to apply sooner, but felt that his “inability to fulfill the financial requirements” precluded his application. Ferguson wrote that he “acquainted with a number of the officers of the unit, several of whom I had met through my association with rugby football and other sports.” He was certain that those serving officers would vouch him. If not, the Commanding Officer could always contact his present employer, the British Columbia Telephone Company, where a Major James Hamilton would give a reference. Hamilton was an officer in the Reserve Battalion of the Seaforths. His letter to the Commanding Officer on behalf of Ferguson was complimentary and naturally flattering. Hamilton stated that “Ferguson would be quite an acquisition to your staff... he is well educated, of good family, sober and capable,” all qualities deemed desirable in a potential officer.

Coming from a certain part of society was not the only consideration facing a prospective officer. In the case of the Seaforth’s, for example, to be an officer required a certain measure of financial independence. An officer of the Regiment was required to purchase their highland regalia, which in 1930 cost approximately $500.00, a considerable sum that effectively barred those who could not afford this “price of admission.” According to LCol E.R. Vance, the museum curator for the Seaforths, there is some uncertainty over the exact number of uniforms required for an officer in the Seaforths, although five was most likely the minimum number required. While there is no consensus on the uniform total, the list of items an officer was required to wear will give an indication of the initial cost of a commission in the regiment. For headdress, officers were required to own a feather bonnet, a glengarry, and a sun helmet. Further, officers required four different tunics for the various uniform combinations. The Seaforth officers were also expected to purchase a kilt, trews (tartan trousers), a skein dhu (a knife that was worn in the sock), a hair sporran, and a claymore (a Scottish broadsword). As well, numerous belts, spats, puttees, brogues, and assorted hose were required. Coupled with the uniform being tailor made, it is easy to understand the high cost involved for prospective officers.

Likewise, a BCR policy for officers stated that: “it would in future be expected that every officer of the mess on the attainment of Captain’s rank would provide himself with mess kit, thus assuring the Regiment of full representation at any civil, military, or social function in the city.” While purchasing
their accoutrements was one major financial hurdle for the officers of the Seaforth Highlanders, and
latterly the BCR’s, there were other costs such as mess dinners and socials associated with service.
Another letter in the same file from a junior non-commissioned officer of the Seaforth Highlanders to
LCol Brock regarding his desire to commission as an officer explains that he did not apply previously to
commission “due to my inability to fulfill the financial requirements. I am now in a position, however, to
meet these fully.” 65 Another interesting document from 1935 or 1936 is a letter from Lieutenant A.J.
Cameron who having resigned his commission in the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, asks that the
Commanding Officer J.R.S. Lough to see if any incoming officers would be interested in purchasing his
highland kit. The prices were set out at the bottom of the letter and ranged from $5.00 for his Sam
Browne belt (with frog), to $40.00 for his Mess Kit. 66 This informal network of kit purchasing was quite
common, however those officers with substantial money would have purchased their kit directly from the
merchant, usually in London or Edinburgh.

An example of the “barrier” posed by the prohibitive costs of an officer’s kit in the Seaforths
came when a former member of the Seaforths applied for a commission with the Irish Fusiliers. The
Commanding Officer of the Irish wanted to know why this young man was applying for a commission
with them and not with the Seaforths, a unit where he had a good record. The reason for not going on
further with the Seaforths was simple: the man felt “…he felt he could not stand the expense of the amount
involved in getting the necessary kit.” 67 Other equally important functions of membership also required a
steady outlay of money.

The Seaforth officers’ had a few things in common. First, all were well educated. A number had
gone to private schools such as Shawnigan Lake or Brentwood College, whereas others like H.P. Bell-
Irving were educated abroad at Loretto School in Scotland. 68 Indeed, it was considered proper among
Canada’s social elite to educate one’s children privately, or abroad. According to John Porter in his
seminal study The Vertical Mosaic: An analysis of social class and power in Canada, “… [the] wealthy
and prominent families…have their own social life, their children go to private schools.” 69 After high
school, many of the officers of the Seaforths were educated at institutions such as the University of
British Columbia, McGill, the University of Toronto, Oxford, Columbia, Queen’s, Royal Military
College, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and other leading universities. A number of the officers of the Seaforths such as Richard Bell-Irving, H.P Bell-Irving, D.M. Clark, John Locke Malkin, and James Burleigh Pattullo, came from leading families in the city. As in the BCR, a number of members of the Seaforths were barristers. For example, in 1920, in the Seaforths, out of 27 officers still serving, 4 were barristers. In 1933, of a reported strength of 32 officers, the unit had seven barristers. The Regiment also had a few merchants such as Richard Bell-Irving and Harold Gell. The unit also boasted a number of officers who were sons of former members and current serving members. Other vocations represented among the officers included salesmen, clerks, accountants, chartered accountants, engineers, a few sales managers, insurance agents, brokers, an architect, a civil engineer, a safety engineer, an insurance manager, a chairman of the Vancouver Harbour Commission, and a number simply described as gentlemen.

A study of the nominal rolls of both the BCR and the Seaforths during the interwar period is a revealing look at the divisions in Vancouver’s society. According to the ‘Officers Slate’ of the BCR from 1925, LCol W.W. Foster was the commanding officer. Foster, who later took over as Vancouver Chief of Police in the mid-1930s, in 1925 was assistant manager at Evans, Coleman & Evans, an import-export commission company that specialized in steel rails, iron bars, and builders supplies. One of LCol Foster’s company commanders was Major H.F.G. Letson, a professor at the University of British Columbia who later rose to the rank of Major General. Letson’s son, G.M. Letson, was also an officer of the BCR and was employed at Letson and Burpee. Among the officers, two were law students, Lieutenant OF. Lundell and Lieutenant Wallace Ponsford. Lundell worked for C.F. Fillmore, and Ponsford worked at Congdon, Campbell, and Meredith. The unit also had two officers who worked as clerks at City Hall: Captain H. Barker-Benfield and Major Frank Stead. The unit was even fortunate enough to have the services of a Chaplain, a Captain M.H. Jackson, who was rector of St. George’s Anglican Church. Finally, Captain R.J.G. Richards, a barrister, and Major F.W. Lees, a physician, round out the officers’ slate for the BCR.
Table III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political and Economic Elite</th>
<th>BCR</th>
<th>SHC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educated Professionals</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated White Collar</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Blue Collar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Workers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The BCRs were, however, more than the sum of their officers. They also included a diverse group of Sr. and Jr. NCOs.

According to the nominal roll of December 31, 1925, the BCR had a total strength in all ranks of 272. This Regiment was divided into 5 companies (included is the headquarters as a nominal company). Concisely, A, B, and C, companies had from 39 to 45 members. ‘D’ Company had a strength return of 44 members. The remaining Company, Headquarters, comprised the rest, including the band, 24 members, 4 signallers, and some assorted clerical staff.87

Each company can be broken down into roughly 4 officers, 6 Sr. NCOs, and 6 Jr. NCOs, with the rest of the company being privates. Based on the 1925 nominal roll, we see that with the exception of two privates, H.D. Freeman, a department manager for McLennan and McFeeley, purveyors of sporting, automotive, hardware, mining, mill, railroad, blacksmith, loggers, and lumberman’s supplies,88 and J.E. McMorran, the manager of McMorran and Son, the remainder of the men in this sample worked at a modest range of jobs, mostly in manual trades. Included were labourers, clerks, helpers, salesmen, longshoremen, a miner, a bookkeeper, an assessor, a driver, a warehouseman, a baker, a planerman, a mixer, a machinist, a mechanic, and a boatswain.89

An examination of civilian vocations suggests the Jr. NCOs and Sr. NCOs of the Seaforths were drawn from the same social groups as the BCR.90 The Records of Enlisted Men book in the Seaforths Archive is an extraordinary source that provides revealing data about the lower ranks, including name, civilian vocation, address, nationality, and religion.91 Broadly speaking, the junior ranks of the Seaforths were overwhelmingly Canadian or British, with a few Scottish, Irish, and Australians represented as well.
as one American and one French Canadian. The overwhelming majority of these same men were
Protestants. The plurality were Anglican (41), followed closely by Presbyterians (32). After these two
groups, the numbers drop precipitously to 11 Methodists, 7 United Church, 7 Protestants, 3 Baptists, and
3 Christian Scientists. Interestingly, only 8 listed themselves as Roman Catholic, and 5 gave no religious
affiliation.

The religious makeup of the other ranks in the Seaforths is consistent with the composition of
Vancouver’s population. For example, an analysis of the religious character of the city in 1921 illustrates
that the city’s population was approximately 75% Protestant in composition. The Anglicans were most
numerous with approximately 28% and the Presbyterians and the Methodists next with 25% and 14%
respectively. These percentages merged after 1925 when all Methodists and most Presbyterians formed
the United Church, whose percentage is approximately 40% of the population. In the Seaforths, it is
difficult to assign a percentage to either the Roman Catholics or those who did not state a religion since
the source, The Records of Enlisted Men, does not reflect the existing strength of the regiment but rather
only those who were taken on strength. But it is possible to infer from enlistments that, like other
religious groups, Catholics and those who did not profess any religious affiliation were most probably
5%-10% of the regiment, thus conforming to the religious composition of the city as a whole.

While the members of the Seaforths are remarkably homogeneous in religious makeup, their
civilian vocations are similar to NCO’s in the BCR.

Table IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interwar Vocation Breakdown of Jr. NCOs &amp; Sr. NCOs, 1925</th>
<th>BCR</th>
<th>SHC*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political and Economic Elite</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated Professionals</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated White Collar</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Blue Collar</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Workers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The disparity in the sample size is due to the availability of records. The Seaforth’s record in
this respect is much more complete.

For example, in the junior ranks, few would be considered as professionals even by its broadest
definition. Again, broadly speaking, it is possible to categorize some of these men into identifiable
occupational groups. Twenty-four were students, half alone from King Edward High School. The second largest vocational group was clerks. Included in this group were bookkeepers, store clerks, and a junior Custom Clerk. Two distinctive groups comprised the next largest vocation. For our purposes, these have been labelled skilled industrial workers and men in primary resource trades. The two groups split evenly at 11 members each. The highly-skilled, industrial workers included machinists, a boilermaker, a sheet metal worker, a telegraph operator, and a photo engraver. The lesser tradesmen included a plumber, a carpenter, an iron moulder, and two decorators. The other occupations in the lower ranks of this group included 2 farmers, 7 loggers, a shingler, a varnisher, and a few longshoremen.

The Seaforths' nominal roll from 1933 is equally useful to this study for tracing the changes in strength, vocation, or demographics of the Jr. and Sr. NCOs. Again, while not complete, does give some insight into the nature of the members and, by extension, the regiment. The members are overwhelmingly non-professional, with a few exceptions. One of the exceptions was a new recruit, a Private W.I. Middleton, who was president of Milne and Middleton, purveyors of wholesale notions, smallwares, toys, ladies and children’s hosiery and underwear, and men’s furnishings store. Another new recruit, Private A. Bryce, was an entrepreneur like Middleton, and president of Bryce Cartage and Storage. Another Private in the Seaforths who fell outside the normative expectations of employment was F.C. Duff, who was the office manager for Buster Bryce. What was also striking about this nominal roll was the number of members not listed in the City Directory in comparison with the previous list. A possible explanation is that the members were out of town looking for work, or alternatively, that they had transferred to the inactive list. The record is not clear. For the remainder, and thus the majority, of those listed both in the nominal roll and in the 1933 City Directory, there is continuity in the civilian vocations of the other ranks. For example, the occupation most frequently represented is clerk, which 26 members claimed as their civilian occupation. Of the 26, roughly 80% were office clerks, the remaining 20% sales clerks. Tradesmen, including a carpenter, a towerman, a brakeman, a barber, and a telegraph operator, were the next largest group with 12 members.

The next notable group of 11 members claimed 'driver' as their civilian employment. There was also a miscellaneous group of 11 members who worked in jobs as varied as attendant, waiter, helper,
messenger, and orderly. In the earlier survey of non-commissioned officers of the Seaforths, it was established that the tradesmen and skilled workers were evenly represented. In the 1933 nominal roll, based on the evidence assembled, both groups had shrunk to 6 members. These skilled workers were still represented by vocations like printer, machinist, and sheet metal worker, while a contingent of unskilled workers, such as manual labourers, persisted. Although they numbered 6, one less than in the 1920s, the interwar correspondence file of the Seaforths of NCOs appealing for work suggests that there were probably more due to the Depression. Surprisingly, the number of secondary school students in the regiment inexplicably dropped from 24 to 2. It is possible that these members were absorbed by the Seaforths cadet corps and as such were still potential recruits for the regiment, but the records that would confirm this possibility no longer exist.

The Militia as A Social Institution

During the 1920s, with successively lower militia appropriations, recruiting was a frustrating enterprise. It is difficult to gauge what motivated men to join a regiment where they were required to work long hours, use obsolete equipment, and not be paid. Some people saw the militia as a way to escape the drabness of everyday life by dressing up in uniforms and playing as soldiers. A letter from James MacNeil sheds some light on this paradox. MacNeil was associated with the Seaforths, although how is not clear. Whatever his status, he wrote a letter to the then Commanding Officer, LCol A.D. Wilson, stating that while he was in Victoria, he had witnessed the Canadian Scottish Regiment (CSR) on parade. MacNeil was curious as to the reasons held out to the prospective recruit for joining. According to MacNeil, the inducements were “largely the Regimental Records and Regimental traditions.” MacNeil then asked the CSR how they hoped to keep the men. The reply is revealing in that the Canadian Scottish informants thought that, once they had a regiment, they could organize sports for the members. This rationale prompted MacNeil to remark that he could not help but think, “whereas we were trying to build a Battalion out of an Athletic Club they were hoping to build an Athletic Club out of a Battalion.”

In Military District 11, encompassing British Columbia, there were a number of very good infantry regiments, the BCRs, the Irish Fusiliers, the New Westminsters, and the Seaforths notable
amongst them. However, of these units in the interwar period, the Seaforths were clearly the best, having won many of the District awards sponsored by the Canadian Infantry Association. In 1929, for example, the Seaforths won $265.00 in prize money by placing first in the Efficiency of Personnel, Signals, and Lewis Gun Competitions. The following year, they won $255.00, again winning the Efficiency of Personnel, and Signals Competitions, and placing second in the Lewis Gun Competition. 1931 brought more triumphs when the Seaforths won the Efficiency of Personnel, the Signal Challenge, and placed fourth in the Lewis Gun Competition winning prize money totaling $235.00. In 1932, the prize money was inexplicably halved for the Efficiency of Personnel Competition, however the Seaforths swept all three categories, and won $175.00. Prize money was distributed based on a set of clear rules governing each competition. Each unit would be told a month in advance of the date for their unit’s examination, consequently it was up to them to prepare accordingly for the pending challenge. A panel of officers from the 23rd Infantry Association then judged the units. Marks were given for successful completion of tasks, appearance, and efficiency, or were deducted for sloppy or inefficient work. Cumulative score indicated the winner, and they would be eligible for a cash prize. The prize money went as high as $200.00 for the Efficiency of Personnel Competition, to a more modest award of $25.00 for the Signals Cup Competition. This money went into the regimental fund and helped units function during this difficult period. While the Seaforths were the clear winners, the BCR were normally second or third. This is not to state that the other units were ill trained, but rather that the Seaforths must have been the best trained or had a talented cadre of trained troops who were able to share their experience and knowledge with the new recruits.

While the problems of recruiting forced units to look beyond traditional incentives like patriotism for members to join, the Seaforths attracted recruits throughout the 1920s. In 1927, the Seaforths reported a strength of 26 officers, and 261 other ranks. A year later, the Seaforths reported a significant increase in membership, reporting again 26 officers, and 299 other ranks. In June 1929, the Seaforths again reported a small increase in strength: 29 officers, and 337 other ranks. Six months later, the Regiment had grown to 30 officers, and 333 other ranks. Unfortunately, the return for 1930 is missing from the records, but the strength return for 1931 shows a decline in strength, most likely due to the effects of the
Great Depression. In 1931, the Seaforths reported a strength return of 35 officers, and 260 other ranks. By 1932, the number of officers is unchanged, while the number of other ranks continues to drop. Things improved somewhat during the following year, with the strength return for officers having dropped down to 32, whereas the other ranks gained slightly to 266. While the numbers seem substantial enough, according to a parade state of those actually reporting for service in 1933, the Seaforths could only muster 15 officers, and 130 other ranks.

A key consideration for these men was proximity to the armouries since car ownership was a privilege and was not yet common. As well, it was policy that the men turn over most of their pay to the Regiment since there were not enough funds to go around, a problem that would worsen during the Depression when Parliament voted to slash further the militia appropriation. A telling example of this came when Major J.R.S. Lough remarked that the unit’s allocation had been cut from $3000.00 to $700.00. The units were thus forced to come up with an innovative way to get the men out for their weekly parade day. The Seaforths, for example, asked for some complimentary tickets from the superintendent of the North Vancouver Ferries and were given four hundred “for members in uniform.”

It was a request repeated again in October 1929. The BCRs also had a solution for this continual problem. They, like the Seaforths, paid for streetcar tickets for the men out of regimental funds. Being given their carfare, the men had little excuse for not coming out regularly.

An attraction for the men to parade was mess social life. The mess, which originated with the separate dining rooms for different ranks, operated nominally as a club, collected monthly dues, and held various functions like dances, smoking parties, and band nights. The mess provided the men with an inexpensive place to enjoy a libation after parade night and gave the men a way to drink away from the eyes of their civilian superiors. The mess also accommodated members who wished for a military wedding. When Company Quarter Master Sergeant James Maitland and his fiancée decided to wed, after securing the Commanding Officer’s permission for his militia friends to wear their uniforms, they treated the new couple to a Seaforth wedding. For Maitland’s wedding, the members would “turn out in scarlet, and act as a Guard of Honour to my [his] bride and myself [him].” The mess also arranged for goodwill gifts for visiting dignitaries and gifts for members who were recently married or retired from the
militia. For example, when Sergeant T. Mercer wed, the mess sent him and his bride a clock as a wedding gift. As well, when a close family member died or was ill, it was not uncommon for the mess to send condolences and flowers. For these services, money and finances were always a concern.

The BCR had an informal policy of economically helping the fledgling messes along, whenever possible, eventually settling on a policy whereby the various companies of the unit were responsible for procuring the refreshments. In turn, the unit agreed to provide an unspecified monthly grant towards mess expenses. Other activities a member could participate in at the BCR Armoury were a daily sports parade – sports were often included in the training syllabus for parade nights, an active badminton club, a bowling alley, and a pool table. Thus, the regiments provided a variety of amusements at little cost for militiamen.

The armouries of both units, specifically the messes, were the site of some memorable dances. At the Seaforth Sergeants’ Mess, for example, Bill Laurillard met his bride-to-be while swinging to some big band music during one of the periodic dance nights. His memories about the social life of the mess have dimmed somewhat now that he is 91, but he did remember playing poker with the ‘Jocks’ [fellow Seaforths], holding whist drives to help furnish the mess, attending dances, teas, moonlight cruises, and participating in the annual Seaforth picnic excursion to Bowen Island. Bill’s wife also remembered a big Halloween Party that filled the mess to capacity. In all, they both said the mess was a lively place to socialize. “People were friendly, you know, everyone made you feel at home.”

Members in the Sergeants’ Mess were assessed 25 cents a month for dues. This assessment was in place until October 1930 when the mess voted to increase the dues to 50 cents a month. Not all unit social events, however, were held in the mess. The annual regimental ball was normally held outside the mess due to space needs. It would seem that the members enjoyed an active social calendar with monthly dances, frequent whist drives, and the occasional Sunday picnic. Besides the social aspect, the Sergeants’ Mess was used to communicate regimental responsibilities. Members were continuously exhorted by the Regimental Sergeant Major to make sure their troops came out to parades, reminded that the Sergeants’ Mess set the standards for the Battalion in shooting and that the members of the mess
should fully support the functions of both the regiment and the Mess. Members were even periodically reminded to avail themselves of the free highland dancing lessons.

Life in the militia units' Jr. NCOs mess is somewhat more difficult to reconstruct since the records have all been lost, and the number of members still alive is very difficult to ascertain. However, based on the reminiscences of a Sergeant Harry Mangles of Burnaby, formerly of 15th Field Regiment, it is clear there were some dances for the other ranks. Beyond the dances, there was "a smoker, two or three times a year, when you got free beer and cheese sponsored by an officer... they'd be on an evening after a parade night."

The political power of the militia officers' messes has always derived from their function as one kind of exclusive club that could be found in all major cities. The organizations were "centres of civic and national power relationships, especially given the practice of inviting carefully selected civilians to become associate or honorary members." For the officers, especially those who came from Vancouver's elite, the officers' mess was their club, akin to the Vancouver Club or Union Club. When I was interviewing Brigadier H.P. Bell-Irving about the goings on of the Seaforth Officers Mess, he gave a mischievous smile and regaled me with stories about the antics of the subalterns. According to him, a rite of passage in the Officers Mess was to have a member do a handstand against the fireplace, then while inverted, pick up a glass of scotch with his teeth and drink it. On a more serious note, he did mention the fact that the members of the Seaforth Officers Mess were "from my circle of friends... everyone knew one another... Vancouver was a much smaller town then." This remark about "my circle" of course refers to his membership in the elite of Vancouver society. Brigadier Bell-Irving also joked about how the Seaforth Officers Mess was then pejoratively known as the "junior bar association of Vancouver," because of the number of barristers and solicitors who were members of the mess and of the unit.

While the other messes of the Seaforth Highlanders held dances, whist drives and smokers, Brigadier Bell-Irving could not remember these as the activities for the Officers Mess. Brigadier Bell-Irving remembered more about the visiting of foreign militaries, or invitations to go to other units' officers' messes, and conversely, hosting guests at the Seaforths mess. For example, in July 1931, the
Seaforth Officers’ Mess hosted a dance for the officers of HMS Dragon. On another occasion, the officers entertained the officers of the destroyers HMCS Skeena and Vancouver as well as those of HMS Norfolk. The militia members also exchanged visits with foreign or visiting forces. The Seaforths, for example, were hosted aboard the French warship, Jeanne d’Arc, and then later were guests on board H.M.S. Apollo, a visiting ship of the British navy. These exchanges took Vancouver’s militiamen to the United States.

Another time, the Seaforths and the units of the Garrison were invited to take part in a “representative parade...at the Washington State Golden Jubilee at Seattle Washington in April, 1939.” The pipes and drums of the Seaforths were also invited in 1934 to an international celebration of armed forces at Sumas, Washington. The frequent exchange of personnel between the Seaforths and the Americans is an interesting example of the close friendships that could exist before the U.S.A. became a military ally. From at least 1929, and probably earlier, the Seaforths were invited guests to the States as well as visiting American warships. On another occasion, a contingent of Seaforth subalterns went to Seattle for the International Military Ball. According to H.P. Bell-Irving, it was “a grand affair...people were very taken with us in our kilts.” In 1938 the Seaforths were again invited to Seattle Chamber of Commerce, this time all the officers and their wives were welcome to come. Reciprocally, the Seaforths hosted American officers from the National Guard and Regular Army for an evening of Scottish charm and highland fun. Indeed, the bonds of friendship were sufficiently strong from this visit that the Seaforths decided to invite a Captain C.E. Anderson, an American officer who had shared a mutual “high regard” with the Regimental Sergeant Major of the Seaforths, T.N. Anderson, to the annual Burns Supper. The Burns Supper, like the Hogmanay Celebrations, reinforced the Seaforths ties to their Scottish heritage. The invitation to the American Captain Anderson – possibly of Scotch descent himself, was remarkable since the Burns Supper is the most important dinner for the Sergeants’ Mess and normally a few well chosen guests are invited to attend. Previous guests included the various generals commanding MD 11, civic officials, and the president of the Caledonian Society. Coupled with the numerous Garrison functions that officers were expected to attend, it would seem that the Seaforth
Officers Mess was a refuge for card playing – bridge (not whist since whist was judged to be an amusement of social inferiors), social drinks, and camaraderie.\textsuperscript{193} The Seaforth Officers’ Mess, like the Sergeants’ Mess, charged monthly dues. It is difficult to ascertain the exact amount a member paid monthly in dues since the records no longer exist. However, based on documentary evidence that did survive, each member probably paid $2.65 a month.\textsuperscript{194} In 1930, at the time of an audit, the mess operated with a modest surplus.\textsuperscript{195} While the amount levied was certainly not onerous for people of secure means, there is evidence that, by 1936, some people in the mess were feeling the pinch of the Depression.\textsuperscript{196} The members’ account sheet shows a number of officers in debt, albeit usually for less than $20.00 apiece.\textsuperscript{197} This was, however, an improvement over the audit board results of 1934.\textsuperscript{198} These results showed that the majority of the active officers of the regiment owed money.\textsuperscript{199} In fairness, the Commanding Officer rightly pointed out that most of the money owed was from officers still unemployed; consequently, they “are not in a position to liquidate their dues.”\textsuperscript{200} The Commanding Officer also stated that “more than half the balance outstanding is on account of Reserve Officers who cannot be expected to give precedence to mess dues over household expenses.”\textsuperscript{201} The issue of mess dues was finally put to rest when the Mess Committee empowered itself to reduce any member’s dues as it saw fit.\textsuperscript{202}

The Officers’ Mess at the Seaforth Armoury was also the place for impressive annual dinners and balls. Officers in the Seaforth Highlanders were much like the officers in the British Columbia Regiment in that both units attended to a number of significant social functions every year. For the Seaforth officers, the most important regimental function after 1918 was the annual Passchendaele dinner. For the British Columbia Regiment officers, it was the St. Julien dinner, which recalled their most notable First World War battle. These dinners acted as an emotive link to a period when a number of the unit’s members made the ultimate sacrifice. The dinners were very formal with a set of understood rules that governed their conduct.\textsuperscript{203} Beyond the etiquette of these functions, officers were expected to pay for them either out of pocket or out of mess funds.\textsuperscript{204} To lend dignity to suppers in the Officers’ Mess, it was decided that they should procure some china bearing the regimental crest from Spencer’s Department Store.\textsuperscript{205} The 1930 Seaforths Annual Regimental Ball was one such event that used this china. The list of
invitations that were sent out reflects the importance of the event to the mess members. The impressive list of guests attending included Colonel Foster (the 23rd Infantry Brigade Commander) and his wife, LCol H.F.G. Letson and wife, Brigadier and Mrs. J. Sutherland Brown (the Commanding Officer of Military District (MD) 11, plus other senior staff officers from MD.11. As well, all the commanding officers from the various units of Vancouver, Victoria, and environs had been invited.

Equally impressive were the civilian members who accepted invitations to this major military function. The list of civilians attending this Ball represented the upper stratum of provincial society. Included among the guests were The Honourable R. Randolph Bruce, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia and Miss Mackenzie, The Honourable T. Duff Pattullo, the Premier of British Columbia, and wife, Mayor W.H. Malkin and Mrs. Malkin, and a lawyer and officer in the BCR, H.E. Molson and wife. Chief Constable Bingham and his wife were invited too. Also invited were Col. Tobin, a partner in Tobin and Pattullo, and wife, LCol Victor Spencer of Spencer’s Department Store, and wife, Mr. and Mrs. E.W. Hamber, manager of Hastings Mill, Mr. and Mrs. J. Fyfe Smith, of J. Fyfe Smith Co. Ltd., Importers of Hardwood Lumber, as well as Chairman of the Vancouver Parks Board, & Miss Fyfe Smith. The Seaforths also invited some senior members of the judiciary. These included Honourable Chief Justice and Mrs. J.A. MacDonald, Honourable Chief Justice and Mrs. Aulay Morrison, Honourable Justice and Mrs. W.A. MacDonald, and his Honour Judge and Mrs. J.N. Ellis. Other guests of the mess were officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The Regimental Ball was sufficiently newsworthy that the Chairman of the Annual Ball Committee, Captain J.M.S. Tait, sent two complimentary tickets to the Society Editor, care of the Vancouver Sun. The guests would enjoy a formal meal, with a piper piping them into the room at the outset and out again at the end. During the evening mandatory speeches, toasts, and rituals were observed. After the port and liqueurs were served, the guests could retire for dancing. The Seaforth officers would most likely entertain the guests with a display of highland dancing before the band would perform for the evening’s dances. The Ball was scheduled to end at 02:00 hours but often went much later. Periodically, the Annual Ball would be held at the Hotel Vancouver, the Georgia Hotel, or Lester
Court. However, after the opening of the Seaforth Armoury in August 1936, most formal events of this nature were held at the Armoury.

Another recruiting draw for the units was their active sports programs. Members could enjoy a variety of sports like baseball, basketball, soccer, and badminton on select nights at the Beatty Street Armouries, then later at the Bessborough and Seaforth Armouries.\(^{214}\) As well, there was generally some kind of physical activity planned during the training days, be it a tug-of-war, baseball, or foot races. Periodically, through the auspices of the Inter-Regimental Sporting Committee, some of the units would get together for invitational sporting events such as softball, baseball, or rugby games. A popular match, for example, was the Seaforth Highlanders playing Victoria’s Canadian Scottish Regiment at rugby\(^{215}\). Members and officers could play in a brigade badminton tournament,\(^{216}\) a golf tournament,\(^{217}\) a five and ten pin bowling league,\(^{218}\) a basketball league,\(^{219}\) and an inter-regimental softball league,\(^{220}\) in which ultimately the teams would compete for the LCol W.H. Malkin Cup.\(^{221}\) The Seaforths also played softball against a number of civilian teams in a league series in 1925. Their opponents included Campbell Grill, Native Sons, St. Saviours, Spencers Department Store, Cedar Cottage, Standard Furniture, and Ex-King George High School members.\(^{222}\) It is also noted that the Seaforth Sergeants Mess fielded a softball team and played inter-regimentally.\(^{223}\)

Another popular outdoor event was the Seaforths yearly picnic on Bowen Island. A number of requests from differing companies were received by the Seaforths soliciting the regiment’s patronage, but it would appear that the Seaforths were happy with the transportation service provided by Union Steamships Limited.\(^{224}\) Other companies that solicited this choice piece of business included the Harbour Navigation Company\(^{225}\) and the venerable Canadian Pacific Railway and Steamship Lines.\(^{226}\) When the picnics were fully attended, which they normally were, the Seaforths were able to make a modest profit that would be deposited in a picnic trust fund, later known as the LCol Brock Picnic Trust Fund.\(^{227}\) Judging by the photos of various picnics in the uncatalogued photo collection of the Seaforth Highlanders Archives, attendance was varied although it apparently averaged 200 - 250 members, sometimes more.\(^{228}\) This annual pilgrimage to Bowen Island aboard one of the Union Steamship’s vessels, like the Lady Alexandra, was a popular event especially with the members of both
the Jr. NCO mess and the Sr. NCO mess. Events for the day included “sack races, three legged races, flat, relay and swimming races, long jump and other novelties.” Some years, with time and money permitting, the Seaforths would hold a moonlight cruise. Again, the trusty Union Steamships would be engaged and the cruise would take the regiment up Burrard Inlet.

The Militia in Civic Events

The officers’ mess was also the place where the members held their meetings to decide on the mess executive and functions for the upcoming year. For example, when the Commanding Officer, LCol Blair, went to the Bisley Rifle competition in England and won the King’s prize and the Grand Aggregate, his brother officers decided to honour him when he returned home. LCol Blair was to be brought from the train station in an open car with the mayor to the Cambie Street Grounds (directly across the street from the BCR Drill Hall on Beatty Street). Once there, the entire Vancouver Garrison, together with returned soldiers’ organizations, like the contingent of First World War Seaforth veterans, “the Old Contemptibles,” paraded past. LCol Blair then inspected the Guard of honour, and was then ‘chaired’ according to the traditions of Bisley and piped around the parade grounds. George R. Hackett of Robertson and Hackett presented a “fine chair,” for the occasion. Blair proceeded with the mayor to the Stanley Park bandstand for a civic ceremony and reception. According to the detailed orders in honour of LCol Blair:

A procession will leave the Cambie Street Grounds and proceed with LCol Blair and the Mayor to Stanley Park. The order of march will be: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Band, Brigade Staff, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, mounted troops, car with LCol Blair and the Mayor, Pipe Band of the Seaforths, Guard of Honour, detachment of the Seaforth Highlanders, Seaforth Cadet Company, and Seaforth Association, followed by the units of the Vancouver Garrison, returned soldiers’ organizations, and the route will be Georgia Street to the Park.

The orders went on to explain how a hollow square would be formed around the bandstand, wherein the bands will play “O Canada.” A few speeches were made, including one by Mayor Malkin who, in turn, presented a silver tea service to LCol Blair on behalf of the citizens of Vancouver. The massed bands were to play a selection, LCol Blair would say a few words, and then the massed bands would play “God save the King.” The units “will then be marched off independently to their respective
headquarters.”[sic] Later that evening, the City of Vancouver hosted a civic banquet at the Hotel Vancouver, after which LCol Blair was to “attend a private dance given in his honour at Lester Court by the men of the Regiment.” LCol Blair was also invited to “look in at [the Old Contemptibles Association during] their annual dinner at the Orpheum Café that same evening.” While this example shows an unusual level of civic attention and support for the militia, it does illustrate one of the ways in which the militia and society interacted.

The Militia in Vancouver’s Public Ceremonies

The militia also helped to put a regal face on important civic events such as the 1933 Red Cross Ball in honour of their Excellencies, Governor General, the Earl of Bessborough, and the Countess of Bessborough. The Seaforths diligently mounted the guard of honour and acted as escorts for patrons entering and leaving during the evening. In his letter of thanks to Major Lough George Lamont, a physician who was president of the Canadian Red Cross Society and a member of the board overseeing the ball, lauded the Seaforths because “it was the Seaforths that gave the state entrance such a brilliant setting and created that atmosphere which we desired and which made the Ball one with the dignity befitting the occasion.”

It is obvious that the militia and civic society came together in many different ways. In small-town Canada, the militia was a visible link to the country’s Britannic heritage. On Dominion Day holidays (now Canada Day) the Queen’s birthday the militia helped affirm Vancouver’s links to Britain. In Vancouver, a city of some considerable size, the militia’s pageantry and uniforms were visual reminders of this heritage. British pride was tangible and not something easily dismissed or ignored. The militia actively participated in civic events and this helped present the city’s Britannic face to the world. The militia was also invited to take part in pageants like the Wayfarer Pageant of 1925. This pageant aimed to illustrate Vancouver’s early history, through to the present. According to Victor Odhum, a local newspaper owner, the idea behind militia participation was that “all classes of society in Vancouver should…participate.” The pageant’s final scene should have “a good regimental showing by each Unit if they wished to take part.” Clearly the interwar militia was closely connected to Vancouver’s society and its public life.

26
The Beatty Street Drill Hall in downtown Vancouver is a city landmark. When it was first built, the surrounding area was mostly residential, but as the business district grew, the area has markedly transformed. In the interwar period, the Drill Hall was a busy place since every weeknight some unit used the building for parades, lectures, or training. The Drill Hall also came to have another purpose. During the 1920s, the BCR received a number of requests from various organizations and groups that wanted to use the Drill Hall for exhibitions, car shows, or tulip shows, and as a meeting hall. On a number of occasions at Christmas the Post Office used the Drill Hall to help deal with the overflow of mail and as a point of distribution. It also served as a polling station for the Vancouver Electoral District. Like other government agencies and the assorted clubs, the Electoral Office was allowed to use the Drill Hall if it paid the heat, light, and janitorial costs. This cooperation between the militia and the public was a feature of life in the city, and the armoury was regarded as a public facility, quite apart from its military function.

Contact between the militia and citizens also occurred in other places in Vancouver. For example, some of the bands from the Vancouver Militia Garrison performed in Stanley Park. In the militia, a band is a powerful symbol for a regiment, in part because the bandsmen wear very distinctive uniforms and because they will play distinctive regimental marches. A band has both visual and auditory impact, as the psychologist Hans Gerth and the sociologist T.C. Mills point out in their study *Character and Social Structure*.

Music is one of the more potent symbols to arouse loyal emotion and memories and, when songs are sung in cohesion with other persons and groups, a feeling of belonging; it also has the function in assisting movement by rhythm when on the march. Bands are, therefore, important factors in morale, and their presence is an index of the extent to which the subtle influence of the military is understood, especially at the civic level.

This would perhaps help explain why the militia had received numerous requests for its bands to perform at various functions. Another reason could be that the presence of a militia band was very much in keeping with contemporary norms. According to Willett, “the meaning of the military unit is conveyed by its uniforms and the impact of its public appearances, especially when these are enhanced by ceremony.”

27
Another popular service was the militia’s participation at a local “Gymkhana” or horse riding competition in aid of the Children’s Playground Movement.\textsuperscript{249} The civilian organizers were very pleased indeed that their idea of “drawing the Militia units into the affair was so heartily approved of by the public.”\textsuperscript{250} The organizer continued to praise the BCRs by remarking that “it was quite noticeable that those attending both nights were highly pleased with the various Military [sic] competitions...your officers gave us splendid support.”\textsuperscript{251}

Another mechanism used by the militia units to keep the public’s awareness of them high was to have their military orders published in the \textit{Vancouver Star},\textsuperscript{252} whose publisher and editor-in-chief was Victor W. Odum.\textsuperscript{253} The rotation of coverage was to include the Cavalry, the Artillery, the Engineers, the Officer Training Corps at the University of British Columbia, 23\textsuperscript{rd} Infantry Brigade,\textsuperscript{254} the Machine Gun Brigade, the Canadian Army Service Corps, the Canadian Army Medical Corps, and the Cadet Corps.\textsuperscript{255} As well as publishing the military orders, the newspaper included any general interest items deemed newsworthy.\textsuperscript{256}

The success of the militia as an institution was often predicated upon a good relationship with local government authorities. For example, a source of pride to the units was to have their officers invited over to the opening of the Legislative Assembly in Victoria. Based on the available records at the BCR and the Seaforths, this was a yearly event that drew steady attendance.\textsuperscript{257} Sometimes, entire militia units were invited to attend sporting matches, the Vancouver Exhibition, the Caledonian Games, and performances at the Orpheum. In these circumstances, like the Caledonian Games for the Seaforths, the Commanding Officer would apply to the Brigade Commander for permission to allow his men to wear their uniforms.\textsuperscript{258} In one instance, in 1936, the St. Andrew’s and Caledonian Society petitioned the Minister of National Defence to have the Seaforths mount a guard of honour for their Golden Jubilee, since their anniversary coincided with Vancouver’s Golden Jubilee.\textsuperscript{259} The Caledonian Society was holding its Caledonian Games at Hastings Park, and had secured the patronage of the Canadian Governor General, Lord Tweedsmuir, for this event.\textsuperscript{260} The Caledonian Society was “anxious that the Games be made as impressive and as attractive as possible.”\textsuperscript{261} Consequently, the Caledonian Society wanted the Seaforths to “perform at that time the ceremony of Trooping of the Colours for inspection by His
Excellency, the Governor General, in the oval during the afternoon of the Games. Ceremonies like
this one kept the militia in the eyes and minds of the citizens. Army reservists were a part of municipal,
provincial, and national commemorations.

In 1925, with the death of Her Majesty, Queen Alexandra, the British Empire mourned, and it
was decreed that “officers were to wear mourning bands until further notice.” When His Majesty King
George V died in 1936, the Seaforths along with the militia garrison participated in a civic memorial
service. The service was held at the Malkin Memorial Shell in Stanley Park. The people of the city of
Vancouver turned out in great numbers, and the military was prominently placed in the front, signifying
national respect for the dead monarch. Other events that brought the public and the military together
were celebrations marking Vancouver’s Golden Jubilee, in 1936.

It was decided that for Vancouver’s Golden Jubilee, a military Tattoo would be held at Brockton
Point. All of the officers of the Vancouver Garrison were encouraged to attend the Tattoo since a
“section of the grandstand had been reserved for those in uniform.” The memorandum proudly notes
that this performance, the Tattoo, “has proved to be one of the main attractions of the Vancouver
Jubilee.” Another feature of the jubilee celebrations included a military sporting tournament. Units of
the Vancouver Garrison entered members and teams into events as diverse as pillow fights, the obstacle
race, the wheelbarrow race, and the ever-popular climbing of the greasy pole.

During the celebrations of Vancouver’s Golden Jubilee, Vancouverites heard a wide array of
martial music. Every band of the Vancouver Garrison, numbering some 22, showed up for the parade.
Judging by the file, even by military standards this was an elaborate affair. The parade route was designed
to maximize public viewing and started at Burrard and Georgia streets. It proceeded east along Georgia
to Howe, then went south on Howe to Robson, before turning west on Robson to Thurlow. The parade
continued north on Thurlow to Georgia and then west on Georgia. This small detour allowed the Minister
of National Defence, a former Seaforth Highlander, the Honourable Ian Mackenzie, to take the salute in
front of the Court House. The bands then marched on down Georgia to Brockton Oval for the
performance and inspection by Prime Minister R.B. Bennett.
The City of Vancouver had witnessed similar scenes of martial prowess, albeit infrequently, for a number of years. When President Warren Harding came for a visit in 1923, crowds flocked to the streets to catch a glimpse of the President of the United States of America. Again, the military was conspicuously present as an honour guard. Another memorable visit occurred in May 1926 when the soon departing Governor General of Canada, His Excellency the Baron Byng of Vimy and his wife, visited the city. The Vancouver Garrison mounted a composite guard of 100 men and five officers from the BCRs, the Vancouver Regiment, the Irish Fusiliers, and the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada.269

The Garrison made arrangements to greet the couple warmly. Upon the arrival of the Governor General’s train a band with the composite guard were present at the Canadian Pacific Railway station and the band played “O Canada”. Later, the Governor General and his wife had a chance to re-new friendships with the Seaforths, who had been under his command during the First World War, at a special dinner held in their honour. The Vimy Dinner was a splendid occasion and prompted a touching note of thanks from Baron Byng and Lady Byng:

...I am directed by Their Excellencies to convey to you and all ranks of your Regiment an expression of sincere appreciation for your remembrance on the night of the Vimy Dinner. The Occasion was one of deep significance to them and the presence of the pipers, the dedication of the two pipe tunes and the presentation on parchment of the music score, all reminding them of the devotion of the Canadian Highland Regiments, was a matter which stirred much feeling in their hearts. These touching expressions of loyalty will always remain with Their Excellencies as a precious memory of the Dominion whose shores they are soon to leave. 270

The visit made such an impression on Their Excellencies that they offered to have the pipe majors of all the Canadian Highland Regiments put up at their expense in Ottawa at the Chateau Laurier so that the pipers could perform for them at their farewell dinner.271 The Pipe Major of the Seaforths performed at the farewell dinner.

The militia was especially busy in 1927. During the new Governor General’s visit a 100-man guard of honour was assembled and paraded for him at Stanley Park, while the band from the Irish Fusiliers provided the marching music, anthems, and the like.272 After the infantry units marched off, the
band entertained the Governor General and the public with a selection of tunes during the ensuing civic reception. 273

More significant from a local perspective was the 1927 visit of His Royal Highness (HRH) the Prince of Wales, the Colonel-in-Chief of the Seaforth Highlanders. Indeed, visits from such distinguished persons are normally high points in a unit's history. 274 The Seaforths were given their new Colours from their Colonel-in-Chief, itself a significant happening, then the Seaforths performed the Trooping of the Colour Ceremony before laying their old colours up in St John's church. 275

While pomp and ceremony are facets of militia service, church parades offer a decidedly more private function to consider. The church parade reinforces Christian morality and acts as a mechanism for fostering key values of piety, respect for life, respect for authority - both military and civic - and remembrance of fallen comrades. Every year, normally the week preceding Remembrance Day, many of the units, especially the infantry regiments, will form up at their armouries and march in "column of route" to church. This simple gesture is used to inculcate a sense of obligation in the troops and to demonstrate how vulnerable and precious life is. While this statement may sound ironic, it would be useful to understand the infantryman's creed: "the role of the infantry is to close with, and destroy the enemy in all types of weather and conditions. We do not kill. To kill implies murder. We do not kill." 276 The choice of words is deliberate since it is held that killing the unresisting enemy would be deemed immoral, and hence unChristian. During the celebrations of Canada's Diamond Jubilee in 1927, the Reverend Robert John Renison, Rector of Christ Church, extended an invitation to all Commanding Officers and officers of the Garrison to come and attend a service of commemoration. 277 Included in the invitation was to be "the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, the Mayor of Vancouver and representatives of the city Council and representatives of the University of British Columbia." 278 The Rector apparently felt it important to ask that "the militia members attend in uniform if possible." 279

The uniform is an important symbol for the military. It is intended to be something to be proud of, as well as to distinguish one regiment from other. The Seaforth Highlanders are distinctive on parade with their kilts, sporrans, and cutaway tunic, as are the BCR in their black berets and green uniforms with silver buttons and shoulder flashes. Distinctiveness from other units is desired because this in turn acts as
a source of pride for the members of the unit. According to the sociologist T.C. Willett, "the meaning of
[the] military unit is conveyed by its uniforms." 280 The uniform is regarded in "essential terms as an
enduring focus of loyalty and a sense of identity." 281 Symbols of courage and service to the militia that
are worn with the uniform are medals and decorations. These are also known as honours and awards, "the
distinction being the level, according to rank, to which the decoration is appropriate." 282 Decorations can
be given for gallantry in battle or for devotion to duty, wherever it might have been demonstrated. Willett
states that "their importance is reflected in the scrupulous care that military people take to state the
appropriate letters that follow the holder's name and to ensure that the presentation is done with proper
ceremony." 283

Another aspect of service in the militia was the active involvement of units in local charities,
notably the Santa Claus Fund. 284 The militia put on a band concert for the Infantry Brigade and employed
12 Cadets from each regiment as ushers. 285 It was hoped that both of the units had photos of their cadets
so that they could be included in the advertisement. 286 This way, the photo of these young "citizen
soldiers" might assist in the fundraising and promotion of the band concert. Another important charity
that the militia supported was the Annual Byng Boys Ball. 287 This Ball was run under the auspices of the
Ladies Auxiliary to the Disabled Veterans Association. The concert's patrons included Viscount Byng of
Vimy, Lady Byng, and some of the prominent families of British Columbia. Included were the
Lieutenant Governor and Mrs. Fordham Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Woodward of Woodward Stores,
and Mr. and Mrs. Victor Spencer of Spencer's Department Stores. 288 Another event in which the militia
was invited to participate was the opening of the Civic Airport on Sea Island. 289 A request was made by
the City Clerk to the Seaforths, inquiring if the band would like to take part in the two days of
festivities. 289 It was hoped that their presence, along with other bands, would "make the function an
outstanding success, not only for the sake of the Airport but for the general benefit and advertisement of
the City." 291

The Seaforths were also cordially invited to the former Strathcona Park, at 12th and Cambie, to
"attend the ceremony of laying the cornerstone for the new City Hall" by the Mayor, His Worship Gerald
G. McGeer. 292 The civil and military authorities often called upon the Garrison units to mount guards of
honour for public events and ceremonies. As Willett observes, “this role by the militia gave substance to the idea of community.” Essentially, the militia is the traditional link between citizen and soldier. This duality, which is implicit in the concept of a militia, expresses the principle that “military service and full citizenship are mutually inclusive.”

As described previously, royal visits, Dominion Day, civic anniversaries, and public festivities all required a militia presence. Another equally important event for the reservists and veterans was the annual Military Ball where the Garrison invited selected civic authorities for a formal evening of festivities. The militia was made aware of the importance of their presence in a thank-you letter from the Military Institute that sponsored the Ball. It stated: ...The Guard of Honour helped the Institute very materially in its effort to do something that will be remembered by the citizens of Vancouver in connection with the Militia, for some time.

Recognition and Mutual Aid

While public displays by militia personnel was important, an internal aspect of service was equally important, although markedly less obvious perhaps to the citizens of Vancouver. Many of the units held smoking concerts to assist recruiting as well as reward the troops for the hard work they put into the unit. The manly art of smoking tobacco, coupled with a concert, proved to be a popular reward. These smoking concerts were generally held every few months for the troops as a small token of appreciation for their voluntary service. It is useful to remember that the troops paraded without pay since continually shrinking budgets necessitated every economy, otherwise many units would simply not have been able to operate. An example of a smoking concert held by the Seaforths included a note explaining how

all young men desirous of becoming members of this fine battalion, are specially invited to be present, when not only will the advantages to be obtained by joining, viz. free use of gymnasium, recreation rooms, indoor shooting range (the finest on the coast), free issue of uniform, and life insurance policy, be explained, but a jolly good evening will be spent in song and story.

In 1928, the Vancouver Garrison hosted a substantial smoking concert and dinner for the officers and the sergeants of the various units. According to the memorandum, “the idea is that all officers of
the Garrison will have dinner and will accompany General J.M. Ross to the Sergeant’s Smoker.”

Interestingly, the memorandum states that the sergeants are being limited to three beers each, although officers wishing liquor will have to wait until after the smoker. The author of the memorandum also states that on the night before the dinner and ‘smoker,’ the Garrison would mount a parade so that the District Commander, General Ross, could inspect the troops and thus wish them goodbye. Most smokers were held within a unit, although another garrison smoker was organized and held at the Beatty Street Drill Hall for the officers and Sr. NCOs of the district. Its stated aim was to get “the Officers, Warrant Officers and Sergeants of all Military Units in and around Vancouver better acquainted [sic] with each other.”

The militia was also quick to acknowledge popular officers and friends with a dinner or presentation of some kind. These affairs could be elaborate, formal mess dinners or could be less intimate events and held at the Vancouver Club. It is revealing that the militia used the Vancouver Club since it was the “most exclusive...club,” indeed, a club for wealthy professionals and businessmen of Vancouver’s fashionable society. Some officers in the militia, like LCol H.F.G. Letson of the BCR and Lieutenant G. Clark of the Seaforths, were both members of this prestigious institution. This underlines the connection between the city’s social and business elite and the militia. Your position and the degree of esteem with which you were held largely spelled out the size and scope of the event. For example, when it came to entertaining Colonel W.W. Foster, a former Commanding Officer of the BCRs and a Brigade Commander, the units arranged a first class dinner and presentation at the Vancouver Club. While the dinner was being hosted at a prestigious Vancouver’s Men’s Club, the author of the notice later wrote that it was imperative that the units forward the monies prior to the dinner since there were no funds available from Brigade. A similar event took place in May 1934 for the outgoing General Commanding of MD 11, J. Sutherland Brown. Rather than incur the extra expense of going out to the Vancouver Club again, the units hosted him and guests in the officers’ mess at the newly opened Bessborough Armoury.
The Militia as a Benevolent Fraternal Society

It is possible to broadly identify seven types of benevolent society, each with its own aims and rituals. With the rise of the welfare state in the twentieth century, “this sort of society became less and less relevant.” The societies include social, benevolent (or service), ethnic, trade, mystical (or religious), political, and criminal. Reasons for joining any of these seven societies are naturally diverse, however it is possible to offer some general explanations about possible motivators. According to the sociologist Alan Axelrod, the reason people join a society “depend both on the organization and on the person joining.” A person might be attracted to a society for business reasons. Alternatively, a person might desire to be “different.” As well, good fellowship, habit, status, and mutual aid are all valid reasons for joining a society. If the militia is compared to a number of the societies already itemized, namely, social, benevolent, ethnic and perhaps trade, it is possible to see it as a comparable institution. In the nineteenth century, countless benevolent societies were set up as a form of “proto-welfare state, to provide a cushion against accident, old age and even in some cases unemployment.” Yet despite the rise of the welfare state in mid-twentieth century Canada, militia regiments still provided some of the services of a benevolent fraternal society.

What motivated a person to join the interwar militia is difficult to say. Patriotism was also a factor, but other factors were more likely to entice someone to join voluntarily, knowing that they would receive no money for the work they performed. Ethnic ties, especially in a unit like the Seaforths, could also be a motivation for people to join. Sociability and mutual aid clearly were factors since the fraternal aspect of the militia removed any stigma that might be attached to accepting charity. For example, militia members, especially First World veterans, were guaranteed a paid burial by national and local associations (including militia regiments) thereby alleviating the member’s family from this responsibility.

A member’s regiment would also help him find work in hard times. Membership in the militia also conferred status on its members, especially those who progressed up the ranks through promotion. The adornment of members in colourful regalia and participation in public events were equally valid for those members seeking social prestige. It would have offered them a chance to socialize with people of
the same ethnic heritage, and possibly same religion. The final reason a person might join would be to further his business ties. In the 1934 Souvenir Directory from the Sixteenth Reunion Dinner, J.A. Paton, a First World War veteran of the Seaforths, reeve of Point Grey, and President of the Seaforth Association, exhorts the membership to patronize the various members who have advertised in the directory. Paton stated:

As far as possible we have secured the occupation of all the boys listed. The main idea being that we might be able to help one another through business interchange. The spirit of comradeship and goodfellowship that existed overseas was the most wonderful experience that I can imagine one could have and I see no reason why we should not get shoulder to shoulder again in this present emergency.  

Fraternal organizations have a broad appeal and, according to the German sociologist Max Weber, can be understood as "typical vehicles of social ascent into the circle of entrepreneurial middle class." The militia, which had aspects of a man's social club and benevolent society also offered people a chance at upward social mobility and status apart from their role in civilian society. The Great Depression, however, acted as a catalyst for the decline of voluntary fraternal societies. Indeed, "comparatively modest sums needed for lodge dues proved too much for many."

The militia, like benevolent societies, had a difficult time adapting to the pressure of the Great Depression. While the militia knew how to fete a favoured friend, they also knew how to help those less fortunate within their ranks. During the Great Depression, all the units felt the economic pinch. This hardship was particularly difficult for the other ranks, since the members returned their meagre pay back to the Regimental Fund, with the exception of the small amount they earned at summer camp. Based on the interwar correspondence of the Seaforths, the pattern that emerges is a militia regiment attempting to use its web of social connections to help secure employment for those members unlucky to be out of work. This assistance also extended into the member's family. For instance, in 1932 Major Lough of the Seaforths sent the wives of two members to a shoe store so that they could acquire some footwear to be charged to the Regimental Account.

The unit was active in helping members secure work during the Great Depression, however, whether they enjoyed much success is not clear based on the record. In the Seaforth Archives character
references, letters inquiring about work, and letters stating admissibility to work relief camps are almost all from the period of the Great Depression and demonstrate the compassion that units like the Seaforths held for its members. The regiment recommended people on the basis of character, work ethic, and loyalty to the regiment. For example, the regiment wrote a number of letters for its members, such as Privates H.C. Finlay, A. Dick, M. Erickson, T.E. Foster, A.P. Helliwell, K.W. Anderson, and D. MacIntosh, stating they were members in good standing and eligible for entrance into work camps.321 Many letters emphasized the member’s reliability, efficiency, and trustworthiness.322 Members who were in better standing in the regiment were normally accorded a more descriptive letter that emphasized the member being “conscientious” and “thoroughly dependable.”323 Other attributes the letters illustrated included whether the member was a non-smoker or a teetotaler.324 The regiment also included physical descriptions – for instance, “he has good physique” for those members trying to secure employment with the British Columbia Provincial Police.325 Also included in some of the letters was information on the member’s marital status, ability in sports, and dedication, resulting in his promotion in the militia.326

Of all the letters of reference, one from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to the Chief Commissioner of the Greater Vancouver Water Board perhaps best expresses the regimental concern for its members. The letter was written for Corporal (Cpl) E. Metcalfe, a bricklayer by trade, who had been unable to secure any employment for three years. Cpl Metcalfe was supporting his family and had served with the Seaforths for a number of years. LCol Brock stated that “he has been a loyal and faithful member of the Seaforths for eight years, and so might be considered to have some claim on the public whose life and property he has helped ensure for so long a period at a great cost in time, effort and money on his part.”327 LCol Brock concluded the letter by stating that “from the standpoint of defence we want to see the reliable members of the force kept in the city.”328 The self-interest of a unit in retaining valuable members was a consideration in finding them employment. Finding work was consistently a problem according to Major J.R.S. Lough. Lough stated a number of times in replies to external solicitations for work “that we have several men in the unit whom we are unable to place.”329

The Seaforths also attempted to provide its members with indirect financial relief by writing to the Poll Tax Office at City Hall, informing it periodically of those members eligible for a poll tax.
exemption.\textsuperscript{330} That the Depression was economically devastating is obvious, but a consequence of this economic malaise was an increase in the number of the people who, assuming they were a Permanent Force unit, applied for positions with the Seaforths.\textsuperscript{331} The response from the Seaforths was invariably polite, and included information about where applicants could apply to the Permanent Force. This illustrates the difficulty of getting steady employment for their members during the Depression.

While these examples provide some insight into the nature of the militia experience, others were considerably more grave in nature. Since the end of the First World War, all the units of the Vancouver Garrison had provided various groups with guards of honour, firing parties, buglers, or bands to perform at occasions marking the death of First World War veterans. Some of these ceremonies were small, dignified events, while others rivaled Royal visits in size, complexity, and scope. For example, each year, the Seaforths dutifully and voluntarily attended the memorial service of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE) at the Returned Soldiers' Plots at Mountain View Cemetery.\textsuperscript{332} Diligently, the IODE would send a thank-you letter to the units turning out, often remarking how "much of the beauty of the Service was due to the presence of the soldiers and bands, [we] are very grateful."\textsuperscript{333} Other funerals that the Seaforths attended included those paid for by the Last Post Fund, a dominion-wide council, with representation Canada wide.\textsuperscript{334} In 1932, the Last Post Fund again called on the Seaforths to attend its memorial service at the Returned Soldiers' Burial Ground in Mountain View Cemetery.\textsuperscript{335} This time the Last Post Fund wanted not only to extend an invitation to the officers and members to attend but also to request the presence of the pipe band, a bugler, a platoon of men, and a firing party.\textsuperscript{336} The author of the request noted the previous attendance of the Seaforths and hoped that they would "be able to make the same representation this year."\textsuperscript{337} Another letter that reveals how loyal a regiment could be for 'one of their own' dates from 1932 when the Seaforths turned out for the funeral of their Regimental Historian, Bernard McEvoy, and sent flowers. The McEvoy family sent a thank-you letter to the Seaforths, noting, "the presence of men wearing the uniform of the Regiment of which he felt honoured to be called the historian."\textsuperscript{338}

The militia could also turn out in strength when faced with the loss of one of its prominent members. When General R.G. Leckie, the first Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, died, the regiment
turned out in full and buried him with full military honours. Indeed, they also sent money to Major R.H. Tupper of Tupper, Ball, and Tupper who were raising a subscription for a memorial tablet for the recently-deceased General Leckie. In 1935, when the current Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, LCol R.W. Brock, died in a plane crash, it seemed as if the whole city came out for the funeral. Another funeral worthy of note was that of Brigadier General R.P. Clark. Again, the garrison turned out in strength. It was an elaborate affair with some three hundred men from the various units of the Vancouver Garrison comprised as the funeral escort. The officers and warrant officers were instructed to wear black mourning bands on their arms, and those who wished to proceed to the cemetery were advised to park their cars near the Georgia viaduct. Wearing mourning bands was considered proper and one way to show citizens respect for the loss of this esteemed officer. The request for those wishing to proceed to the cemetery to park their cars near the Georgia Viaduct reveals that this was a large funeral. The procession took the garrison through the downtown core before heading to the cemetery, thereby allowing Vancouver’s population a last glimpse of the district commander’s casket and the military in mourning. When the Honourary Colonel of the Seaforths, Major General Stewart, died in September 1938, again the whole Regiment paraded through the city, sharing its grief over the loss of a dear friend. For a regiment like the Seaforths, the loss of an Honourary Colonel was akin to the loss of a favourite uncle, the men felt a profound sense of loss since these people were a tie to their own past.

To ensure that the funeral went smoothly, the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths cabled the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Ian Mackenzie – himself a former Seaforth, enlisting his help in expediting their request for a gun carriage from the navy. The Minister wrote back thanking the Commanding Officer for the letter describing the funeral and commented that he had heard from some of those present “that it was one of the most impressive ceremonies ever witnessed in Vancouver.” Further, he went on to say that General Stewart “was a great friend of the Seaforth Highlanders... I am very glad the Regiment was there in such splendid strength at the last ceremony.” The Commanding Officer also wrote to the police department of the city of Vancouver to thank it “for the efficient cooperation... in the handling of the funeral procession.” Another letter was sent to the Commanding
Officer of the British Columbia Provincial Police thanking them for “the efficient and splendid cooperation... in the handling of the procession.” The Commanding Officer of the Seaforths also sent a letter of thanks to Deputy Chief Constable A. Grundy, for “the efficient manner in which you and members of the Police Department, especially the Traffic Department, handled the duties entailed at the funeral of our late Honourary Colonel, Major General J.W. Stewart.” The Commanding Officer of the Seaforths also sent a letter of thanks to Major Hill, the Commanding Officer of ‘E’ Division of The Royal Canadian Mounted Police for his lending a horse for the funeral. The final letter among many thank you letters was one sent to the venerable old Piper, Pipe Major John Gillies, who had recently retired. It is a touching note that illustrates the bonds of loyalty and affection engendered in the regimental family. A further acknowledgement of this feeling of kinship comes from a personal letter from a former Seaforth officer, then the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, E.W. Hamber. While most such letters of thanks are eulogistic, they do reveal how well the Seaforths were connected to departments of the city, as well as show that the funeral of the Seaforths’ Honourary Colonel was a public event. The exemplary level of cooperation displayed by the various departments of the militia and the city authorities reveals the deep interconnectedness of these two institutions.

Conclusion

As stated, the history of Vancouver’s militia in the interwar period is not well understood by most historians. This was an institution that helped define Vancouver’s character for the world, and clearly, it was an indispensable element in the city’s public life. The militia was interconnected to Vancouver’s society and assisted the civic officials in defining our city by performing duties as diverse as guards of honour and band days in Stanley Park. Vancouver’s ceremonial life necessitated the militia presence as a reinforcement of our Britannic heritage. The uniforms, parades, and bands of the militia acted as a visual reminder of this preferred British heritage. The militia was active in charity work for the city as well as for its members. Membership in the militia created mutual obligations of support and help much like the duties of kinship. The analogy to a fraternal society is apt since the regiment offered its members good fellowship, status, mutual aid, and possibly a chance to further business connections. A common pool of shared experience, mostly of hardship and privation, punctuated periodically with gratitude, among the
militia volunteers helped keep the militia grounded in the community during a time of great social upheaval in the interwar years. As Willett perceptively notes, "the amazing thing is that this entirely-voluntary force continued to exist despite these upheavals, yet another indication that its real reason for being was not only its military function." The militia in Vancouver was a dynamic institution. It drew its membership from across Vancouver's society and was representative of the community it was sworn to serve. The evidence presented of who was attracted to membership in the Seaforths supports the notion that there was a clear social distinction among the militia units and that the Seaforths were Vancouver's elite unit. Statistics presented confirm this position. Further, the evidence also allows us to see that units such as the Seaforths were integrated into the city through complex webs of social connections and organizations such as the St. Andrew's and Caledonian Society. It is unfortunate that the records of the Irish Fusiliers were lost in a fire since it would have been informative to compare their nominal rolls against the Seaforths to see if there was a strong representation of people of Irish extraction in their ranks. As well, since the Seaforths were intimately connected to the St. Andrew's and Caledonian Society and perpetuated Scottish festivals such as Hogmanay and the Burns Supper, it would have been interesting to see if the Irish Fusiliers were connected to Irish organizations in the city. The makeup of the Seaforths and the BCR is consistent with what we know about society in interwar Vancouver. The militia was indeed a social institution in that it was, to use formal language, "an established form of ideology, structure, and process" that expressed "the cultural modalities of the nation." As Willett states, "it is an institution of particular distinction because it combines civic and military characteristics in a unique blend." The militia in the interwar years was rooted so obviously in Canada's history that it would be misleading to regard Canadians as an unmilitary people. Canada's contribution in two world wars is enough in itself to contradict this label. In sum, the militia has had a rich history in Vancouver, and was rooted in its community. By understanding this institution and its function in peacetime, it is possible to glean valuable insight into the larger community.

2 The British Columbia Regiment (BCR) (formerly Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles) Royal Canadian Armoured Corps (RCAC), Regimental Museum and Archives (hereafter BCRRMA), Historical Section - General Staff, Department of National Defence, Notes on Military District No. 11 pg. 34. This unpublished account is a broad
overview of Military District 11 (including Vancouver), and gives a brief impression of the district up until 1925, which the author calls "the nadir" (the 1919-1925 period), alluding to Canada's post-war reaction against the military. This reaction was a logical outgrowth of the population’s desire to return to pre-war conditions. Great sacrifices were undertaken by the nation in waging the war, and the government’s lack of preparation for demobilizing soldiers only exacerbated this burden. Canada’s population was weary of having waged a war that produced so much pain, misery, and suffering to her people. Coupled with the post-war recession felt worldwide, military spending declined precipitously.


5 For me, this thesis is a very personal undertaking. In part, as the son of a career officer in the military, coupled with my having served both with the Primary Reserves and the militia, I found myself seeking information that would perhaps help me better understand my heritage. I firmly believe that writing reflects your interests, and indeed, I am no exception. My cultural baggage has coloured my studies and affected my academic interests. As I read about my stated area of interest, I was struck by some inconsistencies in the literature. As I attempted to explain these inconsistencies, I realized that perhaps I was looking at a topic that had “fallen between the cracks” of military and social history. Consequently, I fervently hope that this thesis might in some small way bridge the chasm between the two disciplines and thus shed some much-needed light on this neglected area. As stated, we recreate the past in light of our own experience, and I wonder if it is the disillusionment of the Vietnam generation that has produced this academic antipathy towards the military and the study of it as an institution.

6 The militia was an overwhelmingly male domain, consequently, women are absent from the record.

7 Willett, Canada’s Militia, pg. 79.

8 Stanley, Canada’s Soldiers, pg. 211. Much has been written about our exploits in the First and Second World Wars. We were a nation that had failed to spend any considerable amount on defence yet still managed to produce some splendid troops and a number of superlative leaders. For a useful overview of this see Jack Granatstein’s The Generals (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd., 1993). See also Desmond Morton’s When your Number’s Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War (Toronto: Random House of Canada Ltd., 1993).

9 Stanley, Canada’s Soldiers, pgs. 339-344.

10 Harker, The Dukes, Chs. 1-5.

11 Ibid.

12 Bernard McEvoy, History of the 72nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders of Canada (Vancouver: Cowan & Brookhouse, 1920), pg. xix.

13 Ibid., pg. 1.

14 Ibid., pgs. 2 & 3.

15 Ibid., pg. 2.

16 Ibid., pg. 3.

17 Ibid., pg. 4.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., pgs. 4 & 5.

20 Bruce MacDonald, Vancouver: A Visual History (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1992), pg. 72. In the passage on ethnic heritage, MacDonald’s chart indicates that in 1911, 1921, and 1931, roughly 28% of Vancouver was of British descent. Coupled with his religious demographics on page 74, it is possible to conclude that the numbers of recruits the Seaforths attested could indeed be overwhelmingly of Scotch ancestry. Another approach, although somewhat dubious as a methodology would be to look at the surnames of the members. While the original nominal rolls are lost, in Harker’s history of the BCR a sample of the names of those who joined in 1899 reflects that of sixteen members listed, eleven have names consistent with a Scottish heritage. Again, hardly scientific, but in the absence of records, a useful exercise to gauge the accuracy of the stated comments of Captain R.G. Leckie (later Major General Leckie).


22 There is some evidence to support this. In the book Records of Enlisted Men, in the Archive of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada (SHCARS), two junior non-commissioned members, Robinson, Clarence Waren, Regimental number 7213, and Forbes, Lorne Robertson, Regimental number 7028, list their occupations as Optician and Druggist respectively. Further proof comes from the Sixteenth Re-union Dinner for the Seaforth Highlanders, 1934 Souvenir Directory. Inside this remarkable document all the vocations of the members are listed. Of note were the members who fell outside the normative conventions of status as broadly defined by Robert A.J. McDonald. For example, a Lance Corporal T.P. Elder is listed as a barrister, pg. 12, a Sergeant J.L. Goddard is listed as a barrister, pg. 14, W.W. Hemmingway is listed as the Chief of Police for the District of North Vancouver, Sergeant C.D. Houghland is listed as a Druggist, pg. 16, C.E. Kelsey is listed as a Bank Manager (and lives at 1291 42
West 38th Avenue), pg. 18, F.E. Larnder is listed as a Civil engineer, ibid., D.P. Lockhart is listed as a Banker, pg. 19, A.B. Moore is listed as a Bank Manager (and lives at 4516 West 8th Avenue), pg. 20, T.W.L. Mutch is listed also as a Bank Manager, pg. 21, J McWilliam is listed as a Fire Captain, pg. 23, Corporal J.C. Rolston is listed as a Barrister (and lives in the fashionable Shaughnessy Heights at 5357 Angus Drive), pg. 26, J.J. Scanlan is listed as an Engineer, pg. 27, G. Vance is listed as a Dentist, pg. 29. Seaforth Highlanders of Canada Archive (SHCARS), Untitled File Box, Souvenir Directory: 1934 Sixteenth Re-union Dinner.

Social status did not always conform to economic function. British and Canadian ancestry were prerequisites for admission to the social elites.

Major J.M. Rolston, and Captain H. St. J. Montizambert were partners of Montizambert and Rolston. City of Vancouver Archives (CVA), Wrigley’s British Columbia directory 1928 (Vancouver: Wrigley Directories Ltd., 1928) pg. 1113 & 1034.

Ibid., pgs. 1170-1171.

Ibid., pg. 956.

Ibid., pg. 1103.

Ibid., pg. 807. The Canadian Robert Dollar Company had a mill at Dollarton and logging operations at Deep Bay.

BCRRMA, Interwar File Box: Nominal Rolls, and CVA, City Directory 1925, pgs. 943, 1227, 1222, 1182, & 941.

It would be useful to note that the records of the Seaforth Highlanders are considerably more complete than those of the BCR, consequently it will be possible to go into more detail with them.

SHCARS, Officers’ Box, Record of Officers’ Services, Militia Book No. 42, (hereafter Officers Service Book) vol.1, pp. 333-335.

Ibid., pg. 177-180.

Ibid., pg. 277-280. Also see SHCARS, Interwar File Box, File titled “Memorial of Reginald Walter Brock.” Pamphlet from the Geological Society of America, Pgs. 157-167.

Ibid., Officers’ Box, Officers’ Service Book, vol. 1, pg. 225-228.

Ibid., pg. 181-183.

Ibid., pg. 161-164.

In the militia, the ceremonial positions of Honourary Lieutenant Colonel (HLCol) and Honourary Colonel (HCol) are normally given to prominent men in the community or former commanding officers who had proven their mettle in battle. The Honourary Colonels were guardians of the regimental traditions. As well, they acted as fundraisers to assist the regiment in purchasing cadet uniforms, or band uniforms. Sometimes they might offer a grant to the unit for a special function. During the Great Depression, when the strings of the government’s purse were drawn tight, the Seaforths could rely on the valuable experience for fundraising their Honourary Colonels possessed. Essentially, the Honourary Colonel served to bring about a closer liaison between the regiment and influential men in the city or province. Both members were accorded the privileges of officer status in that they were entitled to receive salutes, be addressed as sir, and often turned out in uniform as guest of honour to take the salute during parades, or speak at mess dinners. A notable Honourary Lieutenant Colonel for the BCR was W.C. Nichol, the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia. The Seaforths had a remarkable group of Honourary Colonels. Included were Major General J.W. Stewart who first held the HLCol position from 1915-1924, then took over as HCol in 1924 and served in this capacity until his death in 1938. Brigadier J.A. Clark served as HCol from 1924 until 1938, then took over from J.W. Stewart as HCol until 1957. Two HCols who were strong patrons of the regiment were His Honour E.W. Hamber and H.R. MacMillan. Both gave generous amounts of time, and some money, to the unit. The Seaforths also had two highly decorated members serve as HCol, Major-General B.M. Hoffmeister and LCol C.C.I. Merritt. The current HCol of the Seaforths is John Fraser, former Speaker of the British Columbia Legislature.

SHCARS, Officers’ Box, Officers’ Service Book, vol. 1, pg. 137-140. Judging from the size of the crowds in the photos, Brigadier Clark had a very large funeral complete with the regiment turning out for the funeral procession. The SHCARS has a number of these photos in its uncatalogued photo drawers germane to this event.

Ibid., pgs. 149-152 & 145-148.

McDonald, Making Vancouver, pg. 143. McDonald offers an excellent analysis of H.O. Bell-Irving.

SHCARS, Officers’ Box, Officers’ Service Book No 42, vol. 1, pg. 147.

Ibid., pg. 97-99.

Ibid., pg. 93-96. Cecil Merritt married into the Tupper family of political fame, and rose after World War Two to partner in the law firm Bull, Housser, & Tupper.

Others have been omitted from this list for the sake of brevity.

SHCARS, Untitled File Box, Interwar Nominal Rolls; specifically, Nominal Rolls dated 1930, 1935, 1936, & 1938. As well, see also, Officers’ Service Book, vols. V & VI.

Ibid., Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from George S. Clark to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths requesting to be considered for a commission, dated October 5th, 1933.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., Letter from M.S. Ferguson to the Commanding Officer applying for a commission, dated July 12th, 1934.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., Letter from James Hamilton to the Commanding Officer, dated July 31st, 1934.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., Officers’ Box, Officers’ Services Book, vol. 1., pg. 159. Marginal note from the Adjutant. Apparently another estimable quality in an officer of the regiment was his ability to speak Gaelic.
60 Ibid., Officers’ Mess Box, Officers’ Mess Correspondence File. Personal letter to Lieutenant Jon H. MacAleney from LCol R.W. Brock, October 11th, 1934.
61 Interview of LCol E. Roderick Vance by the author, June 16th, 1998.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 BCRRMA, Officers’ Mess Box, Officers’ Mess Minutes Book, pg. 26.
65 SHCARS, Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from M.S. Ferguson to the Commanding Officer, LCol Brock, dated July 12th, 1934.
67 Ibid., Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Irish Fusiliers to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, dated April 11th, 1934. This letter is quite revealing since it demonstrates that this was an effective barrier precluding many from joining.
68 Ibid., Officers’ File Box. Frances Ingersoll Merritt went to Shawnigan Lake School, John Locke Malkin, son of a Vancouver Mayor and Grocery Wholesaler, went to Brentwood College, and H.P. Bell-Irving followed family custom and went to Loretto School in Musselburgh, Scotland. Other officers who were educated in Britain included John Moore Spottiswood Tait, who was educated at England’s Blundell School, John Alexander Hope, who was educated at Eton, and Sir Charles Piggott Piers, who was likewise educated at Eton, then continued on to Trinity Hall, Cambridge. For a complete list of the officers see SHCARS, Officers’ File Box, Officers’ Services Book, vols. 1, V, & VI.
70 See Officers’ Box, Interwar Officers’ Files, for a complete list of schools attended.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid., A.D. Wilson, J.D. Forin, G.S. Clark, J.B. Pattullo, I.A. Mackenzie, H.E. Bond, again, to name a few.
73 Ibid., Officers’ Box, Nominal Roll – Officers, dated April 24th, 1923. While the date of this nominal roll is inconsistent with the stated date 1920, it reflects the officers who were on strength with the unit after the reorganization of the militia. The total number of barristers is 8, however only those who had not transferred to the inactive reserve list were considered.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid. J.A. Clark’s son D.M Clark was a Seaforth officer, so too were the two sons of R.M. Blair, R.W. Brock’s son T.L. Brock served while he attended university, and H.P. Bell-Irving followed a family tradition of military service.
77 Ibid.
78 Unfortunately the files of the BCRs are not as complete as those of the Seaforths, consequently it will be necessary to look at the Seaforths in greater detail.
80 Ibid., pg. 958.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., pgs. 968, and 1085.
83 Ibid., pgs. 653, and 1156.
84 Ibid., pg. 920.
85 Ibid., pg. 1103.
Ibid., pg. 956.  
BCCRMA Interwar Box, Nominal Rolls, 1925.  
CVA, Wrigley-Henderson amalgamated British Columbia directory 1925, pg. 844.  
Ibid., various pages. By using my copy of the nominal roll, I checked as many members as possible in the City Directory to ascertain their civilian vocations.  
SHCARS, Other ranks File Box, Records of Enlisted Men Book, unpaged.  
Ibid. The book was used for new members when they were sworn in as members of the regiment.  
Ibid. It is important to realize that this book only represents those who were attested during the 1920s, and cannot be considered complete. I suspect there was more than this one book, however it is no longer in the possession of the SHCARS. Consequently, this list is merely being used to illustrate a few broad and general trends. The number of members who claimed Canadian heritage was 64. The number who claimed to be British subjects was 16. The numbers of the remaining men in the book drop dramatically from here: Scottish 6; Australian 3; Irish 2; French Canadian 1; and 1 American.  
Ibid., and by this I mean Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist.  
Interview between Dr. Peter Moogk and Colonel Graham Blyth, formerly a member of the 15th Field Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, in the 1930s, November 24, 1984. Colonel Blyth responded to the question “what was the unit’s religious makeup,” by stating “mainly Church of England [Anglican] and a few Roman Catholics.”  
SHCARS, Other Ranks File Box, Records of Enlisted Men Book, unpaged.  
MacDonald, Vancouver: A Visual History, pg. 74.  
Ibid.  
Ibid.  
Ibid.  
Ibid.  
Unfortunately the BCRs do not have a record listing the religious denomination of their non-commissioned officers.  
There were a few exceptions - see note 21.  
SHCARS, Other Ranks File Box, Records of Enlisted Men Book. Although there were a few others who had previous cadet service at other local high schools like Kitsilano Secondary School.  
Ibid.  
While not intending to “split hairs,” the distinction seemed logical since presumably those who were machinists had some kind of apprenticeship to fulfill whereas a carpenter might not.  
SHCARS, Other Ranks File Box, Records of Enlisted Men Book, unpaged.  
Ibid.  
Ibid., Untitled File Box, Nominal Roll 1933, unpaged. The civilian vocations were checked in the 1930, 1933, & 1935 City Directory.  
CVA, Wrigley’s British Columbia directory 1930, pg. 1159.  
Ibid., pg. 750.  
Ibid., pg. 858.  
This was perhaps due to the effects of the Great Depression. An exhaustive reading of the City Directories from 1930-1935, shows that some of these ‘missing’ members periodically reappear only to disappear later, perhaps searching for work out of town.  
SHCARS, Untitled File Box, Nominal Roll 1933, unpaged.  
Ibid. Perhaps reflecting the ubiquity of automobiles in Vancouver.  
Ibid.  
Ibid. It is interesting to note that their decline corresponds with the beginning of the Great Depression.  
Ibid. See also, SHCARS, Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. There are a number of letters from the Seaforths to various companies, organizations, and the like seeking employment for their members. As well, in the same file, there is a letter from one of the Company Commander’s to the Adjutant listing those members in his Company that were unemployed. Of the ten on the list, six have their vocation listed as labourer. Consequently, it would be a safe assumption that although the regimental nominal roll of the period would allude to the fact that only six members of the regiment were labourers, in fact, this simply was not the case.  
Ibid.  
Ibid., Officers’ Mess Box, Officers’ Mess Minutes Book, pg. 67. An interesting observation was made at a Mess meeting when a member motioned that the Tennis Club’s deficit should be partially paid out of Regimental Funds. The reply was not only would this set a bad precedent, meaning writing off a largely external debt, but the “Regiment’s revenue has been reduced from $3000.00 to $700.00,” thereby making it impossible to do anyhow.  
Stanley, Canada’s Soldiers, pgs. 339-344.  
SHCARS, Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from James MacNeil to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, dated March 10th, 1927.
Ibid. Unit Training Box, Training, and Awards File. One way a unit could add some needed money to its Regimental Fund was by winning any number of these competitions since most offered a cash prize as well as a trophy.

Ibid., Memorandum from Brigade to the Seaforth Highlanders, dated July 11th, 1929.

Ibid., Memorandum from Brigade to the Seaforth Highlanders, dated October 6th, 1930.

Ibid., Memorandum from Brigade to the Seaforth Highlanders, dated September 30th, 1931.

Ibid., Memorandum from M.D. 11 Infantry Association to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths regarding prize money won, dated April 14th, 1933

While the Seaforths effectively ‘cleaned up’, the other units won their share of prize money also.

Ibid., Interwar Box, Unit Strength File Box, Strength Return, dated December 31st, 1927.

Ibid., Strength Return, dated June 30th, 1928.

Ibid., Strength Return, dated June 30th, 1929.

Ibid., Strength Return, dated December 31st, 1929.

Ibid., Strength Return, dated December 22nd, 1931.

Ibid. Surprisingly, while the number of other ranks declined precipitously, the number of officers increased some 20% to their full allotment. One possible explanation for this could be the cachet of prestige associated with being an officer in the Seaforths continued to draw people of money and status to the regiment.

Ibid., Strength Return, dated June 22nd, 1932. The reported strength of the Regiment now stood at 35 officers, and 250 other ranks.

Ibid., Strength Return, dated June 22nd, 1933.

Ibid., Interwar Box, Parade State File, Parade State, dated June 25th, 1933.

The exception to the policy was during summer camps when the men, and not the officers, were allowed to keep their pay. A survey of the Seaforths’ Petty Cash Ledger (SHCARS, Administration Box, Petty Cash Ledger) reveals this practice was common and necessary since most months the petty cash fund barely operated at a surplus.

SHCARS, Officers’ Mess Box, Officers’ Mess Minutes Book, pg. 67.

SHCARS, Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from the Adjutant of the Seaforths to the superintendent of the North Shore Ferries, September 22nd, 1927. The next request was made two years later on October 31st, 1929. Both requests were granted.

SHCARS, Sergeants Mess Minutes Book, pg. 365.

SHCARS, Sergeants Mess Minutes Book, pg. 70-71 & 84.

BCRRMA., Interwar Mess Box, Memorandum from DCO to all Company Commanders, dated September 25, 1928.

Ibid., Interwar File Box, various entries. Apparently badminton was quite a hit, with most of the courts full when they played. They were loosely associated with a local Vancouver badminton club (most likely the Vancouver Lawn and Tennis and Badminton Club) and eventually Professor Letson as Commanding Officer had a constitution drafted and proofed by one of the lawyers on his staff.

Ibid., Letter stipulating the rules of the bowling alley, November 7th, 1929.
Ibid., Memorandum laying out the rules governing the use of the pool table, November 7th, 1929. This was one place within the Regiment where rank was of little consequence. The rules clearly establish a 30-minute maximum play time, if anyone is waiting, with no distinction for rank.

SHCARS, Correspondence Box Interwar Correspondence File, Memorandum from Regimental Sergeant Major T. Anderson to the Adjutant of the Seaforths, Lieutenant G.S. Clark, regarding inserting an upcoming dance in regimental orders, dated May 5th, 1938. It would be useful to realize that there were annual dances, and monthly dances. Annual dances were very formal, and normally held outside of the mess, due to space requirements. A frequent site of them was at the Alma Dancing Academy. See SHCARS, Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File, Memorandum from Sergeant Newberry, Secretary of the Sergeant’s Mess to the Adjutant of the Seaforth, Captain J.A. Creighton, dated November 16th, 1934. Monthly dances were normally only open to members of the mess, however if attendance had been poor at one, there might be an invitation to other ranks, or officers. See Memorandum from RSM Anderson to Adjutant Lt. Clark extending invitation to the members of the Officers Mess, dated May 5th, 1938.

Interview of Warrant Officer (II) Bill Laurillard by the author, May 22nd, 1998. Bill was helpfully prodded by his delightful wife Edith, who happen also to remember why her husband joined the militia. Part of his decision was predicated on patriotism, but also important was his brother Jack’s decision to join. So, together in 1926 they joined the Seaforth Highlanders.

SHCARS, Sergeants Mess Box, Sergeants Mess Minutes Book, pg. 358. Appropriately, the theme of the Halloween night was to be a hard times ball.


SHCARS, Sergeants Mess Box, Sergeants Mess Minutes Book, pg. 216.

Ibid., pg. 203. While the unit employed the Alma Dance Academy, the Sergeants’ Mess preferred the White Rose Ballroom.

Ibid., pg. 212.

Ibid., pg. 216-217. For the casual reader the ‘Minutes Book’ is rather innocuous looking. However, a close reading of it reveals the dynamics of the unit, the mess, and the values of the members. It is a remarkable source of information.

Ibid., pg. 220. According to the minutes, “it was mentioned the Pipe Major was holding dance rehearsals every Thursday night, and as the Pipe Major was giving his time and talent free it was expected everyone would take advantage of learning the graceful art.”

The records of the BCR are only now being organized under Major Jim Barrett. He stated that it was nearly impossible to reconstruct much of the record since successive Commanding Officers and others have had some of the files thrown out to save space. The Seaforths records have not fared much better. The effect of a flood over the Easter weekend in 1926 is still evident in the staining of some of the records that did survive. Again, neglect has been as detrimental as the flood to them as no one seemed sure of their value.

Interview between Dr. Peter Moogk and Sergeant Harry Mangles, formerly of the 15th Field Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, November 24th, 1984.

Moogk interview with Colonel G. Blyth.

Having been in the Seaforth and BCRs officer’s mess, the parallel to ‘club’ is apt. While these messes may not be as well appointed or as sumptuous as the Vancouver Club, they certainly have their share of charm and warmth.

Apart from the levity of the Brigadier’s remarks, it could be interesting if future directions looked at the connection between the Seaforth Officers Mess and the business community.


Ibid.

Ibid. Membership in the mess was not predicated solely on membership in the Regiment but rather you could be invited to join the mess as an associate member. This way, the various messes could further their social connections with society. The people approached to join were normally distinguished citizens, politicians, judges, and businessmen, however they did not enjoy the privilege of voting on mess policy.

Ibid.

Ibid.

SHCARS, Officers’ Mess Box, Officers’ Mess Minutes Book, pg. 71.

Ibid., pg. 115.

Ibid., Unit History File Box, Chronology of Significant Events, pg. 2.

Ibid., Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders to the Commander-in-Chief of HMS Apollo, dated August 27th, 1936.

Ibid., Letter from the organizers of the Jubilee festivities to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, dated March 21st, 1939.

Ibid., Unit History File Box, Chronology of Significant Events, pg. 2.
Honourable Randolph Bruce, then Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, made a donation to the unit coffers of Mississippi should wear mess dress, dated June 14th, 1929.

Unfortunately, when they reached their destination they continued to have a few more libations and ultimately forgot to scatter the ashes. When they got back to shore and realized their mistake, no one was in any shape to row back out so they returned with the late member’s ashes to the mess. He has resided in an urn since the 1920s and every November 11th, they diligently observe this unique tradition. While parts of the story may be apocryphal, it does convey the sincerity and seriousness of the various unit traditions. Indeed, I imagine one could write an interesting history of the various regimental mess traditions and how they have evolved over the years.

Bishops” in medieval European festivals. My personal favorite of the traditions that are scrupulously followed is the annual Hogmanay Ball on New Year’s Eve, dated December 20th, 1937. Legend has it that this member expired and his wife donated his ashes to the mess since ‘he apparently spent more of his time at the unit than at home.’ The Sr. NCOs thought they should give him a suitable going away party, then scatter his ashes in English Bay. Apparently the party was in full swing when they set out to scatter his ashes. Unfortunately, when they reached their destination they continued to have a few more libations and ultimately forgot to scatter the ashes. When they got back to shore and realized their mistake, no one was in any shape to row back out so they returned with the late member’s ashes to the mess. He has resided in an urn since the 1920s and every November 11th, they diligently observe this unique tradition. While parts of the story may be apocryphal, it does convey the sincerity and seriousness of the various unit traditions. Indeed, I imagine one could write an interesting history of the various regimental mess traditions and how they have evolved over the years.

Wealthy people like H.O. Bell-Irving and others were infrequent ‘patrons’ of the regiment. In 1926, The Honourable Randolph Bruce, then Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, made a donation to the unit coffers of
$1000.00, a considerable sum that was to be used for the trust fund that continued the charitable work of the 1st Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders. See SHCARS, Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from Private Secretary to Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, dated January 12th, 1926.

SHCARS, Officers' Mess Box, Officers' Mess Minutes Book, pg. 56-57.

Ibid., List of Invitations to Annual Regimental Ball, November 24th, 1930.

Ibid.

Ibid., H.E. Molson was an officer with the BCR, eventually rising to command them on the eve of World War Two. Molson was a partner in the prestigious law firm of Walsh, Bull, Housser, Tupper, & Molson, today known as Bull, Housser & Tupper. I believe Molson was a Captain or a Major at this time, although the list only shows him listed as 'Molson.'

This is the Spencer of the Spencer Department store.

J. Fyfe Smith was the owner of J. Fyfe Smith Co. Ltd., Importers and Exporters of Hardwood Lumbers, and he was also the Chairman of the Parks Board.

SHCARS, Officers' Mess Box, Officers' Mess Minutes Book. List of Invitations to Annual Regimental Ball, November 24th, 1930

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Memorandum stating the rotation and times of the sporting events to be held on the floor of the Seaforth Armouries, undated. Monday-Volleyball, Tuesday-Badminton until 19:30, Wednesday-Basketball and Badminton, Thursday-Badminton, Friday-Softball, Saturday-Badminton, and Sunday-Tennis or Badminton all day and evening.

Ibid., Telegram from the Commanding Officer of the Canadian Scottish to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths regarding upcoming rugby match, dated April 10th, 1929. Reply dated April 11th, 1929.

Ibid., Memorandum from Brigade to Garrison officers regarding upcoming badminton tournament, dated February 23rd, 1929.

Ibid., Memorandum to Major Lough of the Seaforths regarding a golf tournament to be held at Jericho Golf and Country Club for those military members who had served overseas, dated October 17th, 1929.

Ibid., Letter from LaSalle Recreations Limited to the Seaforths regarding their interest in joining either a five pin or ten pin bowling league, dated October 3rd, 1936.

Ibid., Memorandum from Brigade regarding the Seaforths’ participation in forthcoming basketball league, dated September 8th, 1926, as well as January 22nd, 1931.

Ibid., Memorandum from the Sports Officer of the Vancouver Regiment to the Sports Officers of the Seaforths, BCRs, and the Irish Fusiliers regarding formation of an inter-regimental softball league, dated May 18th, 1933.

Ibid., Letter to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders from the Brigade Sports Officer, dated July 17th, 1933.

Ibid., Untitled Box, Interwar Sports File, Scorebook for Baseball and Softball, 1925.

Ibid., Sergeants Mess Box, Sergeants Mess Minutes Book, pg. 353. A reminder to the members that they had a match upcoming against the Irish Fusiliers.

Ibid., Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from the General Manager of the Union Steamship Company to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, dated July 24th, 1926. The manager makes the observation that “our relationship with the Seaforth Highlanders has always been in every way delightful, and we are particularly pleased that the cruise itself was enjoyable.”


Ibid., Letter from the Canadian Pacific Railway and Steamship Lines to the Secretary of the Seaforths, dated March 11th, 1938.

Ibid., Administration Box, Memorandum from Company Quartermaster Sergeant James Maitland to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths regarding picnic, dated August 26th, 1935. For example, CQMS Maitland attached an expense sheet listing the costs of the picnic and found that the unit enjoyed a surplus of $10.63, thanks largely to a donation by E.W. Hamber of $10.00.

Ibid., Maitland states that “this year’s picnic was very satisfactory and enjoyed by all who attended, over three hundred in all.”


Ibid., Correspondence File, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from the Union Steamships Limited to Lieutenant Norman Burley of the Seaforths, dated May 15th, 1931.

Ibid., Officers’ Mess Box, Officers’ Mess Minutes Book, pg. 19, & 21. The reason for the celebration was because Blair had just won the Empire’s greatest rifle competition and was the first ever to win both the King’s Prize and the Grand Aggregate. Blair was subsequently honoured in the later “Blair Prize” for shooting, and in the former “Blair Range” in the Lynn Canyon.
Ibid., Parades and Social Functions File Box, LCol Blair Celebrations File. Letter dated August 15th, 1929.
Ibid., letter dated August 29th, 1929.
Ibid., LCol Blair Celebrations File, pg. 1.
Ibid., pg. 2.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid., Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter of thanks from the President of the Canadian Red Cross Society, George A. Lamont to Major Lough of the Seaforths, dated September 11th, 1932.
Ibid.
Ibid., Letter from Victor Odium to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, dated August 21st, 1925.
BCRRMA, Interwar File Box, assorted correspondence. Letter dated March 8th, 1928, from the Spring Flower and Tulip Show to the Commanding Officer of the BCRs, LCol H.F.G. Letson requesting the use of the Drill Hall for the annual Tulip Show. Letter remarks how “we have always held the Tulip Show in that building, and the Committee have always been so well satisfied with the arrangements there, that they sincerely trust the same will be available again this year.” Another letter in the file is from the I.O.O.F. who similarly remark on having used the building numerous times previously for their “International Rally.” As per previous years, they are prepared to pay for the use of the Drill Hall should their request be met with approbation.
Ibid. The file contains a number of requests from the Post Office to help them manage the Christmas rush. Letters requesting the use of the Drill Hall are dated September 6th, 1924, November 23rd, 1928, and September 30th, 1929. The 1924 request makes mention of having used it the previous two seasons.
Ibid. Letter from the Returning Officer, Vancouver Electoral District, dated June 11th, 1928.
Ibid.
Ibid., Canada’s Militia, pg. 49.
Ibid., pg. 47.
Ibid. Letter from the Vancouver Riding and Driving Club thanking the BCRs for their cooperation in staging the Gymkhana, dated May 7th, 1930.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid., Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from the publisher of The Morning Star, Victor W. Odium, to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, LCol A.D. Wilson, dated October 27th, 1926. This letter is an attempt to keep the militia close to the public’s attention. See note 252 for fuller explanation.
Ibid., Memorandum from the Commanding Officer of the BCRs to the Military Editor at the Vancouver Star, dated March 21st, 1930.
Ibid., The rotation for the infantry units was as follows: - the British Columbia Regiment (DCOR), the New Westminster Regiment, The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, and the Irish Fusiliers of Canada (the Vancouver Regiment). Odium’s idea was to keep the militia in the “news” thereby helping the various units with recruiting. Since the first message originated during his tenure at The Morning Star, which he tried to repeat a few years later while at The Vancouver Star, it is most likely that this section of the newspaper did not enjoy great success.
Ibid.
Ibid., Draft letter from W.W. Foster, the Colonel Commanding 23rd Infantry Brigade to the Commanding Officers of the Infantry units with copies to other formations, for information.
Ibid., Memorandum from M.D. 11 to the Commanding Officer of the BCRs, dated January 31st, 1927. See also, SHCARS, Interwar Correspondence Files. Memorandum dated January 27th, 1931, and Memorandum dated October 23rd, 1925.
Ibid., Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders to Brigade regarding permission for his members to wear uniforms to the opening of the Caledonian Games, dated July 23rd, 1925. See also Memorandum from Commanding Officer Seaforth Highlanders to Brigade regarding permission for members to wear uniform for “Gymkhana” at Hastings Park, dated April 24th, 1925, and for the performance of Rob Roy at the Orpheum, dated May 4th, 1925.
Ibid., Letter from the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Ian Mackenzie, to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, dated May 11th, 1936.
Ibid., Letter from the Secretary of the St. Andrew's and Caledonian Society to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths requesting guard of honour, and members to perform the trooping of the colour ceremony.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid., Memorandum from the Department of National Defence.
Ibid., Uncatalogued photos from the file drawers, titled 1919-1939.
Ibid., Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence Files. Memorandum From Vancouver Garrison to all Commanding Officers, dated August 13th, 1936.
Ibid.
Ibid., Memorandum from Seaforths showing their entries for sports at the Jubilee games.
Ibid. Instructions to bands for the Vancouver Golden Jubilee, dated July 1st, 1936.
Ibid., Warning Order detailing the visit of the Governor General of Canada, Baron Byng of Vimy.
Ibid. The social evening, and evenings of this nature, while certainly rare are crucial to building of morale and fostering esprit-de-corps since they engender such strong feelings of comradeship. The esteem that the Highland Regiments held for their First World War Commander was remarkable indeed. The Pipe Major, John Gillies, an outstanding Piper, composed the two tunes for Their Excellencies, The Lady Byng of Vimy March, and “The Canadians' Farewell to the Lord Byng of Vimy,” dated May 4th, 1926.
Ibid., Letter from LCol Urquhart to LCol Wilson regarding itinerary for Pipe Major John Gillies visit to Ottawa for performance for Governor General, dated March 29th, 1926.
Ibid. Memorandum dated April 4th, 1927 pertaining to the visit.
Ibid.
Laurillard interview with author. According to Bill Laurillard, from his vantage point as a sentry during the guard of honour for the Royal Visit, large, enthusiastic crowds turned out for a glimpse of the prince. He stated that the public was getting as big a thrill as was the unit.

SHCARS, Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Memorandum dated April 4th, 1927. This ceremony is steeped in history and significance. The Colours are embroidered with the unit's Battle Honours and are a visual testament to the sacrifices of her members. The ceremony itself is quite beautiful and moving. To gauge how significant an event this is, a cursory glance through most unit histories will reveal that most felt it sufficiently worthy to be included in the narrative. Indeed, when the Seaforths opened their new Armoury on Burrard Street in 1936, the invitation states precisely that “you are cordially invited to the opening of our new Armoury, and the Trooping of the Colour Ceremony.”

The Seaforth armories have this creed inscribed around the frame of a picture that shows an angel carrying the broken body of a soldier skyward.

SHCARS, Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from Reverend Robert John Renison, to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, dated June 10th, 1927.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid., pg. 47.
Ibid.
Ibid., pg. 49.
Ibid.
Ibid., Letter from 23rd Infantry Brigade to the Adjutants of the Seaforths and the Irish Fusiliers of Canada, dated December 8th, 1927.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid., Letter from Campaign Manager to the Seaforth Highlanders, dated November 10th, 1933.
Ibid.
Ibid., Letter from the City Clerk to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth's, dated May 8th, 1931.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid., Letter from the City Clerk to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth's, dated June 24th, 1936.
Willett., Canada's Militia, pg. 2.
Ibid.
Ibid., Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from the President of the Vancouver Military Institute to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth's, dated November 21st, 1935.
Ibid., Administration Box, Untitled File. Notice of Seaforth Smoking Concert, dated Monday August 27th, 1929? (There was no date on the notice, however it has to be earlier than 1927 since it mentions the Seaton Street Drill Hall which the Seaforth's vacated in 1926.)
Ibid., Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Memorandum from Brigade pertaining to the garrison dinner and smoking concert, dated March 30th, 1928.
Ibid.
Ibid.
The term 'smoker' is still in use today although its meaning now has been appropriated to refer to the post-military exercise party. See also McDonald, Making Vancouver, pg. 106.

SHCARS, Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Memorandum from Brigade, March 30th, 1928.

Ibid., Memorandum from the Sergeants' Mess, 11th Machine Gun Battalion to the Officers' Mess of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, dated September 22nd, 1936.

Ibid., Memorandum from 23rd Infantry Brigade to all Commanding Officers regarding dinner at Vancouver Club in honour of Major W.G. Colquhoun, dated December 13th, 1935.

McDonald, Making Vancouver, pg. 162.

BCRRMA, Interwar File Box, Memorandum from Brigade to all Commanding Officers informing them of the dinner to be held at the Vancouver Club. Memorandum states that cheques should be made payable to LCol H.F.G. Letson, dated December 13th, 1935. See also SHCARS, Officers' File Box, Officers' File. Lieutenant George Clark's request for commission in Seaforth Highlanders, pg. 2, where he lists his membership in various clubs including the Vancouver Club, dated October 5th, 1933.

Ibid., Memorandum from 23rd Infantry Brigade to all the Commanding Officers of the Garrison regarding Colonel Foster's dinner and presentation, dated May 1st, 1934.

Ibid., Follow up memorandum exhorting the units to forward the monies for Colonel Foster's dinner, dated May 15th, 1934.

Ibid., Memorandum from 23rd Infantry Brigade to all Commanding Officers, dated May 21st, 1934.

Ibid.

Ibid., pg. x.

Ibid., pg. xii.


As noted, the exception is the member's summer camp pay, which he was allowed to keep.

SHCARS, Mess Dinners File Box, Souvenir Directory from the Sixteenth Reunion Dinner, 1934, pg. 3.


Axelrod, Secret Societies and Fraternal Orders, pg. xiv.

Ibid.

There is strong evidence to this effect in the SHCARS, however due to the paucity of records elsewhere it is difficult to determine if the Seaforths were exceptional or the norm. It is certain that in times of dire need, the unit would attempt to help in some non-material way, however it could.

SHCARS, Correspondence Box, Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from Major J.R.S. Lough to Messrs MacDonald and Lumsden requesting that they supply the bearers with one pair of women's shoes, and two pair of children's shoes and one more pair of women's shoes, dated September 8th, 1932. Interestingly, Mr. Lumsden was a former officer of the Regiment from the 1920s.

Ibid., Letter from the Adjutant to the Superintendent, Single Unemployed Relief, requesting that a member of the regiment be allowed entrance to a government work camp, dated February 18th, 1936.

Ibid. Multiple letters emphasize these qualities. The common thread between them was the fact the member being written for normally had only a little bit of service with the regiment.


Ibid.


Ibid., letter dated February 14th, 1935.

Ibid., Letter from LCol Brock, to E.A. Cleveland, Chief Commissioner of the Greater Vancouver Water Board, dated April 19th, 1934.

Ibid.

Ibid., Letter from the Seaforths to E.E. Kearney regarding his prospects for employment with the Seaforths.

Ibid., Numerous letters all dating from the Great Depression.

Ibid., Again multiple letters from across the country and the United States were received, all dating from the Depression years.

Ibid., Letter from the Imperial Order Daughters of Empire to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, dated July 6th, 1927, June 8th, 1937, and others.

Ibid., Letter from IODE to Seaforths dated July 6th, 1927.

Ibid., Letter from the Last Post Fund to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, dated May 18th, 1931.

Ibid., Letter from the Last Post Fund to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, dated May 6th, 1932.
Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., Letter from McEvoy family to the Seaforth Highlanders, dated February 22nd, 1932.

Ibid., Unit History File Box, Chronology of Significant Events, pg. 1.

Ibid., Interwar Correspondence File. Letter from the Adjutant of the Seaforths to Major R.H. Tupper of Tupper, Ball, and Tupper, dated November 12th, 1925.

Ibid., Unit History File Box, Chronology of Significant Events, pg. 3. See also uncatalogued photo collection at SHCARS, file drawer 1919-1939.

Ibid., Unit History Box, Parades File. Memorandum from Brigade to the Commanding Officers of the Garrison regarding the funeral arrangements for Brigadier General R.P. Clark, dated April 12th, 1932.

Ibid.

Ibid. According to the memorandum, the route from the church would be Georgia-Cambie-Dunsmuir-Beatty Streets to the Georgia Viaduct then to Mountain View Cemetery.

Ibid., Letter from Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to the Minister of National Defence, dated September 20th, 1938.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to Inspector W. Lemon, Police Department, dated September 29th, 1938.

Ibid., Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to the Commanding Officer of the British Columbia Provincial Police, dated September 29th, 1938.

Ibid., Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to Deputy Chief Constable A. Grundy, dated September 29th, 1938.

Ibid., Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to Major Hill of the RCMP, dated September 29th, 1938.

Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to John Gillies, “thanking him for attending and playing at the Church yesterday.” The letter continues by saying “I am sure General Stewart would feel happy that you – an old friend – were thus saying ‘Farewell’ to him.” Dated September 29th, 1938.

Ibid., Letter from the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, dated October 4th, 1938.

Willett, Canada’s Militia, pg. 73.

Ibid., pg. 203.

Ibid.
Bibliography

Archival Sources and Primary Sources
The Seaforths and British Columbia Regimental Archives are currently being organized. In the absence of a formal organizational structure I have decided to list all the files and letters individually.

British Columbia Regiment

Interwar File Box:
- Letter from the I.O.O.F. requesting use of the Drill Hall 192?
- Letter from the Returning Officer, Vancouver Electoral District, dated June 11th, 1928
- Letter from the Spring Flower and Tulip Show to the Commanding Officer of the BCRs, LCol H.F.G. Letson requesting the use of the Drill Hall for the annual Tulip Show dated March 8th, 1928
- Letter from the Vancouver Riding and Driving Club thanking the BCRs for their cooperation in staging the Gymkhana, dated May 7th, 1930
- Letter requesting the use of the Drill Hall dated September 30th, 1929
- Letter requesting the use of the Drill Hall dated September 6th, 1924
- Letter stipulating the rules of the bowling alley, November 7th, 1929
- Memorandum from Brigade to all Commanding Officers informing them of the dinner to be held at the Vancouver Club dated December 13th, 1935
- Memorandum laying out the rules governing the use of the pool table, November 7th, 1929
- Nominal Roll 1925
- Notes on Military District No. 11

Interwar Mess Box:
- Memorandum from DCO to all Company Commanders, dated September 25, 1928

Officers' Mess Box:
- Memorandum exhorting the units to forward the monies for Colonel Foster's dinner, dated May 15th, 1934
- Memorandum from 23rd Infantry Brigade to all Commanding Officers, dated May 21st, 1934
- Memorandum from 25th Infantry Brigade to all the Commanding Officers of the Garrison regarding Colonel Foster's dinner and presentation, dated May 1st, 1934
- Mess Minutes Book

City of Vancouver Archives

City of Vancouver Archives (CVA), Henderson's Greater Vancouver city directory. 1914 (Vancouver: Henderson Publishing Co., 1914)
CVA, Wrigley's British Columbia directory. 1920 (Vancouver: Wrigley Directories, 1920)
-----Henderson's Greater Vancouver directory, 1923 vol. 30 (Vancouver: Henderson Publishing Co., 1923)
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The Militia List, 1928. (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1928)

The Militia List, 1929. (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1929)

Canada. Defence Force List, Canada (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1930)

Defence Force List, Canada. (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1931)

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Militia Orders. (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1922)

Militia Orders. (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1923)

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Seaforth Highlanders of Canada

Administration Box:
- Petty Cash Ledger
- Memorandum from Company Quartermaster Sergeant James Maitland to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths regarding picnic, dated August 26th, 1935
- Company memorandum, ‘A’ Company, Seaforths to members, dated May 12th, 1927
- Notice of Seaforth Smoking Concert, dated Monday August 27th, 192?
Correspondence Box:
- Draft letter from W.W. Foster, the Colonel Commanding 23rd Infantry Brigade to the Commanding Officers of the Infantry units with copies to other formations, for information
- Instructions to bands for the Vancouver Golden Jubilee, dated July 1st, 1936
- Letter from the publisher of The Morning Star, Victor W. Odlum, to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, LCol A.D. Wilson, dated October 27th, 1926
- Letter from M.S. Ferguson to the Commanding Officer, LCol Brock, dated July 12th, 1934
- Letter from Reverend Robert John Renison, to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, dated June 10th, 1927
- Letter dated February 14th, 1935
- Letter from Brigadier General Clark to S. McClay at the Vancouver Harbour Commissioners, dated October 17th, 1933
- Letter from Campaign Manager to the Seaforth Highlanders, dated November 10th, 1933
- Letter from Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to E.A. Cleveland, Chief Commissioner of the Greater Vancouver Water Board, dated April 19th, 1934
- Letter from Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to the Minister of National Defence, dated September 20th, 1938
- Letter from CQMS James Maitland to the Commanding Officer LCol Blair, dated May 11th, 1932
- Letter from Harbour Navigation Company to the Seaforths, dated May 5th, 1933
- Letter from IODE to Seaforths dated July 6th, 1927
- Letter from James MacNeil to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, dated March 10th, 1927
- Letter from LaSalle Recreations Limited to the Seaforths regarding their interest in joining either a five pin or ten pin bowling league, dated October 3rd, 1936
- Letter from LCol Brock, to E.A. Cleveland, Chief Commissioner of the Greater Vancouver Water Board, dated April 19th, 1934
- Letter from LCol Urquhart to LCol Wilson regarding itinerary for Pipe Major John Gillies visit to Ottawa for performance for Governor General, dated March 29th, 1926
- Letter from Lieutenant A.J. Cameron to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, LCol J.R.S. Lough, dated 1935/1936
- Letter from Major J.R.S. Lough to Messrs MacDonald and Lumsden requesting that they supply the bearers with one pair of women’s shoes, and two pair of children’s shoes and one more pair of women’s shoes, dated September 8th, 1932
- Letter from McEvoy family to the Seaforth Highlanders, dated February 22nd, 1932
- Letter from Private Secretary to Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, dated January 12th, 1926
- Letter from the Adjutant of the Seaforths to Major R.H. Tupper of Tupper, Ball, and Tupper, dated November 12th, 1925
- Letter from the Adjutant of the Seaforths to the superintendent of the North Shore Ferries, September 22nd, 1927. The next request was made two years later on October 31st, 1929
- Letter from the Adjutant to the Superintendent, Single Unemployed Relief, requesting that a member of the regiment be allowed entrance to a government work camp, dated February 18th, 1936.
- Letter from the Canadian Pacific Railway and Steamship Lines to the Secretary of the Seaforths, dated March 11th, 1938
- Letter from the City Clerk to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth’s, dated May 8th, 1931
- Letter from the City Clerk to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth’s, dated June 24th, 1936
- Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Irish Fusiliers to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, dated April 11th, 1934
- Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders to Brigade regarding permission for his members to wear uniforms to the opening of the Caledonian Games, dated July 23rd, 1925.
Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders to the Commander-in-Chief of HMS Apollo, dated August 27th, 1936

Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to Brigadier General Alfred T. Smith, Fort Lewis Washington, regarding permission for Captain Anderson to attend the Sergeants Mess' annual Burns Supper

Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to Deputy Chief Constable A. Grundy, dated September 29th, 1938

Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to Inspector W. Lemon, Police Department, dated September 29th, 1938

Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to John Gillies dated September 29th, 1938

Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to Major Hill of the RCMP, dated September 29th, 1938

Letter from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to the Commanding Officer of the British Columbia Provincial Police, dated September 29th, 1938

Letter from the General Manager of the Union Steamship Company to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, dated July 24th, 1926

Letter from the Imperial Order Daughters of Empire to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, dated July 6th, 1927, June 8th, 1937

Letter from the Last Post Fund to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, dated May 18th, 1931

Letter from the Last Post Fund to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, dated May 6th, 1932

Letter from the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, dated October 4th, 1938

Letter from the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Ian Mackenzie, to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, dated May 11th, 1936

Letter from the organizers of the Jubilee festivities to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, dated March 21st, 1939

Letter from the President of the Vancouver Military Institute to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth's, dated November 21st, 1935

Letter from the Seaforths to E.E. Kearney regarding his prospects for employment with the Seaforths.

Letter from the Seattle Chamber of Commerce to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, dated March 14th, 1938

Letter from the Secretary of the St. Andrew’s and Caledonian Society to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths requesting guard of honour, and members to perform the trooping of the colour ceremony

Letter from the Union Steamships Limited to Lieutenant Norman Burley of the Seaforths, dated May 15th, 1931

Letter from Tom Brock to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths thanking him and the mess for “the wonderful silver cigarette case” he received as a wedding present, dated September 19th, 1937

Letter from Victor Odium to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths, dated August 21st, 1925

Letter of thanks from the President of the Canadian Red Cross Society, George A. Lamont to Major Lough of the Seaforths, dated September 11th, 1932

Letter to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders from the Brigade Sports Officer, dated July 17th, 1933

Letters to LCol Archibald W. Melchior and Major N. Kilgariff enquiring if they would come to the annual Hogmanay Ball on New Year’s Eve, dated December 20th, 1937

Memorandum dated April 4th, 1927 pertaining to the visit

Memorandum dated April 4th, 1927.

Memorandum dated January 27th, 1931

Memorandum dated October 23rd, 1925

Memorandum from 23rd Infantry Brigade to the Adjutants of the Seaforths and the Irish Fusiliers of Canada, dated December 8th, 1927

Memorandum from Brigade pertaining to the garrison dinner and smoking concert, dated March 30th, 1928

Memorandum from Brigade regarding the Seaforths’ participation in forthcoming basketball league, dated September 8th, 1926, as well as January 22nd, 1931

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- Memorandum from Brigade to Garrison officers regarding upcoming badminton tournament, dated February 23rd, 1929
- Memorandum from Brigade to the Commanding Officers of the Garrison stating that those officers going to the civic banquet for H.M.S. Colombo and U.S.S. Mississippi should wear mess dress, dated June 14th, 1929
- Memorandum from Brigade, March 30th, 1928.
- Memorandum from Commanding Officer of the Seaforths to Brigade, dated September 1st, 1934
- Memorandum from Commanding Officer Seaforth Highlanders to Brigade regarding permission for members to wear uniform for "Gymkhana" at Hastings Park, dated April 24th, 1925, and for the performance of Rob Roy at the Orpheum, dated May 4th, 1925
- Memorandum from M.D. 11 to the Commanding Officer of the BCRs, dated January 31st, 192?
- Memorandum from Regimental Sergeant Major T. Anderson to the Adjutant of the Seaforths, Lieutenant G.S. Clark, regarding inserting an upcoming dance in regimental orders, dated May 5th, 1938
- Memorandum from RSM Anderson to Adjutant Lt. Clark extending invitation to the members of the Officers Mess, dated May 5th, 1938
- Memorandum from Seaforths showing their entries for sports at the Jubilee games
- Memorandum from Sergeant Newberry, Secretary of the Sergeant’s Mess to the Adjutant of the Seaforth, Captain J.A. Creighton, dated November 16th, 1934
- Memorandum from the Commanding Officer of the BCRs to the Military Editor at the Vancouver Star, dated March 21st, 1930
- Memorandum from the Department of National Defence
- Memorandum from the Seaforths to Brigade with list of officers wishing to attend. Included were B.M. Hoffmeister, C.C.I. Merritt, and H.P. Bell-Irving
- Memorandum from the Sergeants’ Mess, 11th Machine Gun Battalion to the Officers’ Mess of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, dated September 22nd, 1936
- Memorandum from the Sports Officer of the Vancouver Regiment to the Sports Officers of the Seaforths, BCRs, and the Irish Fusiliers regarding formation of an inter-regimental softball league, dated May 18th, 1933
- Memorandum From Vancouver Garrison to all Commanding Officers, dated August 13th, 1936
- Memorandum stating the rotation and times of the sporting events to be held on the floor of the Seaforth Armouries, undated
- Memorandum to Major Lough of the Seaforths regarding a golf tournament to be held at Jericho Golf and Country Club for those military members who had served overseas, dated October 17th, 1929
- Telegram from the Commanding Officer of the Canadian Scottish to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths regarding upcoming rugby match, dated April 10th, 1929
- Telegram from the Commanding Officer of the Seaforth Highlanders to the Commanding Officer of the Canadian Scottish dated April 11th, 1929
- Uncatalogued photos from the file drawers, titled 1919-1939
- Warning Order detailing the visit of the Governor General of Canada, Baron Byng of Vimy.

Interwar Box:
- Parade State, dated June 25th, 1933
- Strength Return, dated December 22nd, 1931
- Strength Return, dated December 31st, 1927
- Strength Return, dated December 31st, 1929
- Strength Return, dated June 22nd, 1932
- Strength Return, dated June 22nd, 1933
- Strength Return, dated June 30th, 1928
- Strength Return, dated June 30th, 1929

Officers’ Box:
- Record of Officers’ Services, Militia Book No. 42, (hereafter Officers Service Book)
- Officers’ Service Book, vol. I
- Officers’ Service Book vol. II

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- Officers’ Service Book, vol. III
- Officers’ Service Book, vol. IV
- Officers’ Service Book, vol. V
- Officers’ Service Book, vol. VI

Officers’ Mess Box:
- Audit sheet of the Officers Mess, dated December 31st, 1930
- List of Invitations to Annual Regimental Ball, November 24th, 1930
- Member’s Account Sheet, dated January 2nd, 1936.
- Officers’ Mess Minutes Book
- Personal letter to Lieutenant Jon H. MacAleney from LCol R.W. Brock, October 11th, 1934
- Souvenir Directory from the Sixteenth Reunion Dinner, 1934.
- Souvenir Directory from the Sixteenth Reunion Dinner, 1935

Other Ranks File Box:
- Records of Enlisted Men Book

Parades and Social Functions File Box:
- LCol Blair Celebrations File. Letter dated August 15th, 1929
- Letter dated August 29th, 1929
- Memorandum from 23rd Infantry Brigade to all Commanding Officers regarding dinner at Vancouver Club in honour of Major W.G. Colquhoun, dated December 13th, 1935

Sergeants’ Mess Box:
- Sergeants Mess Minutes Book

Unit History File Box:
- Chronology of Significant Events
- Memorandum from Brigade to the Commanding Officers of the Garrison regarding the funeral arrangements for Brigadier General R.P. Clark, dated April 12th, 1932

Unit Training Box
- Memorandum dated October 6th, 1930
- Memorandum dated April 14th, 1933
- Memorandum dated November 19th, 1931
- Memorandum from Brigade to the Seaforth Highlanders, dated July 11th, 1929
- Memorandum from Brigade to the Seaforth Highlanders, dated October 6th, 1930
- Memorandum from Brigade to the Seaforth Highlanders, dated September 30th, 1931
- Memorandum from M.D. 11 Infantry Association to the Commanding Officer of the Seaforths regarding prize money won, dated April 14th, 1933
- Training, and Awards File.

Untitled File Box:
- Interwar Sports File, Scorebook for Baseball and Softball, 1925
- Nominal Roll 1923
- Nominal Roll 1930
- Nominal Roll 1933
- Nominal Roll 1935
- Nominal Roll 1936
- Nominal Roll 1938

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--- When your Number’s Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War, (Toronto: Random House of Canada Ltd., 1993)


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-- Canada and the British Army 1846-1871, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1936)


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