

**"BEST WE'VE HAD YET"**

## Grenadiers Get Riotous Welcome

Some 4,000 Winnipeggers Tuesday evening jammed their way into the C.P.R. depot and overflowed to the street outside. They argued with service police, got pushed around, and did a little pushing around themselves.

They were there to welcome the largest group of Winnipeg Grenadiers to return to Winnipeg. Welcome them they did, in their own style. It was anything but orderly. No one cared.

No one, that is, but train reception committee members. A small man at the public address microphone pleaded and threatened. Second battalion Grenadiers and service police had their hands full.

The crowd gave—only sufficiently to clear a portion of the floor space

And then the Grenadiers came marching in. The crowd replied with cheers. The lines of guards folded under pressure. The rotunda was jam-packed with Grenadiers struggling to reach relatives struggling to reach their men.

Two bands blared, but not loudly enough to drown the cries, the laughs, the yells.

One elderly woman in the relatives' waiting room fainted.

Representatives of the province, of the city and of M.D. 10 were pres-

ent. No one cared much about that either.

The Grenadiers were grabbed by their families and hustled out the front entrance to the 150 cars placed at their disposal by the Young Men's Section of the Board of Trade.

There was much noise. Much confusion. It was like a good reception should be . . . completely uninhibited.

The special C.P.R. troop train left Vancouver with 101 men and seven officers aboard from the Grenadiers, and 187 men and 16 officers from the Royal Rifles.

Nine of the Grenadiers missed the train at Brandon. Four of them, F. J. Lavalee, W. Chavoyer, W. Coates and N. W. Kowalchuk, were all from Winnipeg. They arrived one hour later, at 6.45.

Trying to get hold of Grenadiers to talk with them was like trying to catch fish with bare hands. It could not be done.

But a question would be half asked, a reply half given. But this much was gathered, and it was said by Sgt. E. Neil of Fort Francis.

"Brother, Winnipeg has given us the best reception we've had!"

Col. Trist came up the stairs and was instantly surrounded by a score of people. He was almost bodily carried from the station.

Capt. Leboutillier of the Royal Rifles cried: "Anyone know Mrs. John Park. I've got a message for her." Half a dozen people were eager to take it. It was this: "Love, dear."

There was Capt. D. G. Phillip, 74 Hargrave ave.; Sgt. Gordon McKinnon, A. J. Neault of Dauphin, who said that Joe Skworak also of Dauphin, "is fine and will be home soon."

With Neault was J. F. Robinson. "Say, we saw Harry."

"Harry who?"

"Harry Atkinson. We worked together on the docks."

And there was Harry, first Grenadier to return to Winnipeg, pushing his way through the crowd, shaking hands with old friends.

Cpl. E. Dickie, formerly of Dauphin, now of Winnipeg, said, "Oh, I drove a steam engine for the Nips."

Pte. Mulvaney, 553 Elgin st., joked about a finger stump. How did it happen?

"It was hacked off by a spade by one of them \* ) ( ' \* Nips. I stooped to pick up a cigarette butt."

Most of the boys could think of their experiences both ways: Some could laugh them off. Others couldn't bear to speak of them.

Pte. Steve Yormula, Molson, Man., attracted attention by his hearty laugh; he was blond, little, grinning, and he had beautiful teeth. What was the joke?

"They call me Smiler. Yes, I made 'em laugh in camp too. All I had to do was grin and the boys grinned with me. I got cracked a couple of times by the Japs for doing it. I'd like to spit in their eye!"

Pte. George Le Blanc, 630 Jessie ave., was met by a Hong Konger who got home last Saturday. Pte. Oliver Holden. They were buddies in Jamaica as well as Hong Kong. Oliver had something on his mind. He put his hand on the reporter's arm:

"I want to tell you something about Sgt. Watson — I don't

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know if he's home yet, I don't know his address. He saved my life. He carried me. I was wounded in the leg, yet we had to march four miles out of Hong Kong. If I'd fallen down I'd have been bayoneted, like the others were.

"He kept me up. I want to find him some day and tell him how I feel. That's all. Don't make too much of it," pleaded Oliver Holden.

His mother said she understood now why her son looked the way he did, odd moments, since he'd been home.

Cpl. F. J. Morgan, 411 King Edward rd., had two little daughters to greet: Sharon, who was just a baby when he went away, and Diane, who wasn't born then. Both little girls wore a red rose from the bouquet their dad wired their mother from Victoria Sunday. His grandmother told the story.

L. E. Birch, 188 Kennedy st., a tall, spare man, came down to welcome his nephew, Pte. Lloyd Poole, Neepawa. He was hoping to come again soon to meet his son, Alvin Birch.

Sgt. R. Manchester, 34 Morecambe Lodge, tried to fold his wife in his arms but he was encumbered with two big cans, one of syrup, the other high protein milk. They were given him on the train. "I think at Brandon," he said. Friends took the stuff, so he would take his wife. A tall, big man, he was in high spirits.

Pte. Victor Oke, 433 Winterton ave., had parents to meet him here; he planned to go down to Hamilton soon to find his wife. "That's my home," he said with a smile that showed good teeth. Then rice had some nourishment in it? "Say, there was nothing in the rice to wear 'em out," he explained.

Cpl. Gordon Hollinsworth, Barmar ave., was met by Bill Laidlaw's mother. When she didn't hear for two years from Bill, she kept her hope alive because Gordon's family had heard from him and the two boys had been together all through. They both came out all right. Asked if officers and men were segregated, Gordon said, "The men were sent to Japan to work but the officers stayed in Hong Kong."

Pte. Jim Fidler, Selkirk, was met by his brother, Walter, on crutches, who beat him home from the war by a short time. What would he like to do to the Japs? "No use talking of revenge; may as well forget it," said Jim philosophically.

But Pte. Herbert Millar, 1163 Strathcona st., said he'd like to "fry 'em in their own oil." His wife, son and brother Terry, also home from the wars, carried him off to a party.

Mrs. R. Brooke, Rutland st., was down looking for Pte. Don Atkins, "an English boy who has no relatives here though he enlisted in Winnipeg. We want to take him home with us." Whether she found him in the throng is unknown.

Pte. George Tipping, St. Peter's, Man., was one of the first men through the rotunda out to the waiting cars. "I got my weight back and more," he called, as he was propelled out.

Both Grenadiers and Royal Rifemen, who stopped in Winnipeg briefly, were anxious that the Red Cross "wasn't forgotten."

Parcels stamped 1941 and 1942 were finally given to the Canadians when the Nina saw how the battle was going. "At the proper time," said Rfn. McCorkell, "they would have saved many lives."

Coffee and cakes were given out by members of the train reception committee, and Legion members brought the returning men into the station. Two bands present were No. 10 District Depot, and Grenadiers' Reserve.