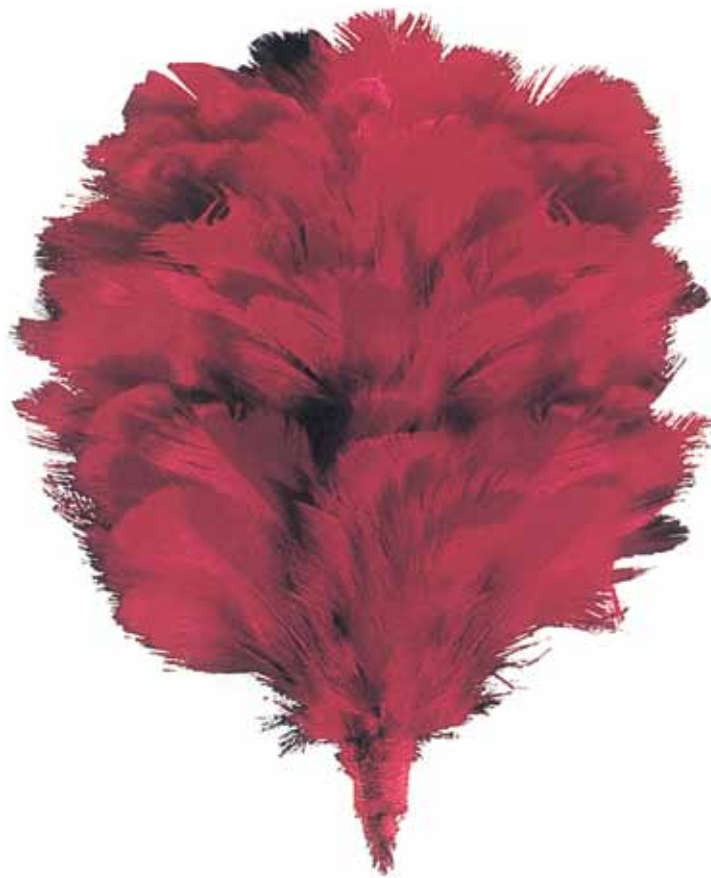


No. 121
May 2012



THE RED HACKLE



SO HOW ARE YOU GOING TO TELL MUM...

...THAT YOU WERE DISCHARGED AFTER
PROVIDING A POSITIVE SAMPLE AT CDT

A moment of madness - a lifetime of shattered memories



No. 121

42nd



73rd

May 2012

THE RED HACKLE

The Chronicle of
The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment),
its successor The Black Watch,
3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland,
The Affiliated Regiments
and The Black Watch Association



The Commanding Officer, his Battalion 2i/c and his eight Company Commanders, including Major Rob Hedderwick (left), Major Roddy Williams (4th from left), Major Harry Clark (5th from left) and Major Andy Richards (3rd from right).

DON'T LOSE YOUR VOICE - REGISTER TO VOTE

In order to vote you must be registered as an elector. If you are not on the register your views and opinions will count for nothing at election time.

You can and should register to vote if you are not already registered. If you have changed your name, please let us know.

Members of HM Forces and their spouses or civil partners can register either by means of a service declaration or choose to be registered as an ordinary elector instead.

Remember, 16 and 17 year olds who register are entitled to vote as soon as they turn 18.

P.S. Did you know that registering to vote can do more than protect your democratic rights?

It can also help you open a bank account or get a mortgage, loan or mobile phone.

For information on registering to vote:

Phone the Freephone Helpline on 0800 393783

e-mail: ero@highland.gov.uk

or write to the Electoral Registration Officer, Moray House, 16-18 Bank Street, Inverness IV1 1QY

HAVE YOUR SAY



Shop Hotline:
0845 450 8979

A new way to support our heroes



Supporting Our Heroes T-Shirts
Show your support for our heroes...
With this T-shirt... 100% cotton.
£14.00

Tote Shopping Bag
Support our heroes...
With our reusable shopping bag.
£8.00



Poppyscotland Pin Badges
The classic pin...
Steel stamped soft enamel.
Traditional or Saltire Flag designs.
£2.00

Embroidered Fleece jacket
Keep the Winter blues away with
this snuggly fleece jacket...
£28.00



To view the full Poppyscotland range visit www.poppyscotland.org.uk/shop

THE RED HACKLE



*The Chronicle of
The Black Watch
(Royal Highland Regiment)
its successor
The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion
The Royal Regiment of Scotland
The Affiliated Regiments
and
The Black Watch Association*

**May 2012
No. 121**

Published for The Black Watch



METHOD PUBLISHING
Sutherland Press House, Golspie,
Sutherland, Scotland KW10 6RA

Telephone (01408) 633871 Fax (01408) 633876
to whom all enquiries regarding
advertising should be addressed.

*Editorial Matter and Illustrations © Crown Copyright
Design and Typography © Method Publishing 2012*

The opinions expressed in the articles of the magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise, of the Regiment or the MOD. This publication contains official information. It should be treated with discretion by the recipient.

"The Red Hackle" is published every six months in May and November. Contributions large and small will always be welcome. They should be typewritten in double spacing on one side of the paper only. Photographs, cartoons and sketches of Regimental interest are also welcome and will be returned if requested.

All material for inclusion in the various issues must reach the Editor not later than 1 April and 1 October respectively.

From 1 January 2013, bulk orders are supplied at a rate of £7 per copy. Individual copies are sent out to permanent subscribers, both in the UK and abroad, at a subscription rate of £14 annually for UK subscribers, £14 annually to Europe and £16 annually Worldwide by airmail. A Gift Aid Scheme is available for individual subscribers who are subject to UK tax. The magazine fund benefits from tax reclaimed in this way. All subscriptions should be sent to the editor, "The Red Hackle, Home Headquarters, The Black Watch, Balhousie Castle, Hay Street, Perth PH1 5HR, and those interested in the Gift Aid Scheme, will on request be provided with the correct forms for completion.

Contents

Editorial	3
Regimental and Battalion News	4
The Black Watch Heritage Appeal, The Regimental Museum and Friends of the Black Watch	7
Correspondence	9
Book Reviews	9
Obituaries	10
Articles	14
The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland	20
51st Highland, 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland	46
The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada	47
The Tyneside Scottish	48
Angus & Dundee Battalion Army Cadet Force	50
Black Watch Battalion Army Cadet Force	52
Association News	55

Editorial

The last six months since the November 2011 Edition of the Journal was published, have been an extraordinary period. Like so much of Army life, this has been a period of waiting. Waiting for the news on the future shape of the Army and how it will affect The Black Watch Battalion of The Royal Regiment of Scotland and the future of the three remaining MOD funded posts in Home Headquarters The Black Watch; waiting for news about the Museum Committee's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to allow them to come to a decision about the redevelopment of Balhousie Castle and the refurbishment of the museum and waiting for news from The Black Watch Battalion in Afghanistan.

Whilst there has been a degree of speculation in the press about where the cuts in *Army 2020* will fall, the MOD are keeping the information on tight hold and it will be after the publication date of this magazine that any announcement is made. With the Army expected to lose 20,000 posts the cuts will inevitably affect the current size and structure of The Royal Regiment of Scotland and various links to antecedent communities may also be affected.

A detailed account of Project Balhousie has been included in this edition but the news confirming that the bid for a grant of £778K from the Heritage Lottery Fund had been successful, was made public on 15 March. The Trustees of the Museum Trust, after much deliberation, decided on 19 March 2012 to proceed with the re-development of Balhousie Castle. Those involved in the Heritage Appeal have worked hard to reach this point and I am sure that readers will wish this major enterprise every success.

Communications from Afghanistan have been sporadic with the battalion focussed on operations but from all accounts it has been a very busy and successful tour. The notes from the tour are well written and are comprehensive giving the officers and soldiers of the battalion a timely record of their tour and the wider Black Watch community and its supporters a privileged view of OP HERRICK 15. It was early on the morning of Remembrance Day last year that the battalion suffered its only major casualty but thankfully did not suffer any fatalities.

At the same time, the business of the Association has continued with the normal round of Branch Dinners, Burns' Suppers and Branch AGMs. It is always at this time of year that the central Association staff realise that they owe a debt of gratitude to the relatively small number of active Association members who keep Branches and Sub-Committees vibrant and functioning effectively. We have another busy year to look forward to with what we hope will be a very special Regimental Day on 23 June 2012, when the Old Colours of the 1st Battalion The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) and 1st/51st Highland Volunteers will be paraded for the final time as they are marched through Perth and are then de-consecrated beside the 51st Highland Division Memorial on the North Inch. We hope that this will be a truly Regimental day, lead by massed Pipes & Drums with Guards provided by A (Grenadier) Company from The Black Watch Battalion and the Regimental Association and Detachments from The Black Watch of Canada, the Transvaal Scottish, The Tyneside Scottish, The Black Watch and Angus and Dundee Battalions of the ACF and finally The Black Watch sons and daughters from Queen Victoria School (QVS), Dunblane. We also hope that some individuals will manage the journey north from G and V Companies of the old 1/51 Highland.

It is also planned to hold a book launch on 23 June, to mark the publication of Victoria Schofield's first volume of our definitive Regimental History which is entitled "Highland Furies" and that will be followed by the Regimental Reunion which this year will be held in the Bells' Sports Centre beside Balhousie Castle.

The 60th Anniversary Dinner to commemorate all those who fought with The Black Watch battle-group in Korea is taking shape and as well as a dinner on the 17th of November, there will be a church service and lunch in Perth. For those unable to travel to Perth the London Branch Dinner on 22 November will also honour the Korean veterans.

Finally, we sadly have to report the death of a fine "old soldier" and one of our dwindling band of 2nd World War veterans. Lieutenant Colonel John McGregor who won an immediate MC in 1943 whilst serving with the 5th Battalion died in March and his obituary appears in the Journal.



Regimental and Battalion News

FORECAST OF EVENTS 2012/2013

13 June	Officers and their Ladies Lunch	London
21 June	Friends' Cocktail Party	Perth
22 June	Regimental Golf Meeting	Kinross
23 June	Laying Up of Old Colours Parade & Regimental Reunion	Perth
16 September	Fife Branch "Alma" Ladies Lunch	Kirkcaldy
20 October	Angus Branch "El Alamein" Dinner	Forfar
26 October	Officers' Gathering Dinner	Perth
8 November	Field of Remembrance Westminster Abbey	London
11 November	Cenotaph Parade	London
17 November	Korean Veterans and Battle of The Hook 60th Anniversary Commemoration Dinner	Perth
22 November	London Branch Dinner	London
30 November	1739 Club Dinner	Dundee
15 December	Officers' Regimental Ball	Perth
18 January	Dundee Branch Red Hackle Dinner	Dundee
26 January	Angus Branch Burns Supper	Arbroath
2 February	Perth Branch Burns Supper	Perth

CONGRATULATIONS

To **Brigadier M L Riddell-Webster DSO** who was selected to be Director Defence College of Management and Technology, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, in the rank of Major General. He took up the post in January 2012.

To **Colonel A J Aitken** on the award of an OBE in the Armed Forces Operational Awards List No 38 (Afghanistan).

To **Major N K G Tomlin** on the award of a QCVS in the Armed Forces Operational Awards List No 38 (Afghanistan).

To **Major A M Philp** currently serving with 1 SCOTS on his selection for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel.

To **WO1 Shaw** on his promotion and appointment as RSM of 3 SCOTS.

To **WO1 Beggs** on his appointment as Command Sergeant Major at HQ 4 Brigade.

To **WO1 Houston** on his selection for a commission in The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

To **WO2 (RQMS) McCormack** on his selection for promotion to WO1 and his appointment as RSM Edinburgh Garrison. WO2 McCormack started his career in the RHF.

To **WO2 Colville** on his selection for promotion to WO1 and appointment as RSM of 6 SCOTS.

COMMISSIONING

Iain Walker was commissioned in The Royal Regiment of Scotland in December 2011 and was posted to the 3rd Battalion. Aged 23, he was an Army Scholar whilst at school in Plymouth. He then attended University in Wolverhampton where he read War Studies. He is a keen rugby and hockey player and enjoys sailing. His father is a Naval Surgeon.

THE REGIMENTAL DEPOT

An article in the Courier highlighting that the Regimental Depot had closed in May 1961 prompted the Reverend David Taylor to write to the "Craige Column". In his letter he said, "what memories your pho-

tograph rekindled of days of youth, discipline and self-belief. As a young soldier (Ian is now 73) I spent some time in the Barracks as a batman/waiter in the Officers Mess and the middle window featured directly under the crest was known by the Mess Staff as the "Blanco Room". It was here that the officers' kit was cleaned after a muddy day on the ranges at Kinfauns".

David Taylor is still involved with the Association and he leads the annual Act of Remembrance at Powrie Brae. He finished his letter by saying "Good luck Black Watch! They may do away with your hackle and your bonnie tartan but they can never take away your spirit!".

HMT LANCASTRIA

On 1st October 2011 Major Bob Ritchie attended the unveiling of the Lancastria Memorial. It sits close to the River Clyde in the grounds of the Golden Jubilee Hospital in Clydebank. This is where the company that built the ship, William Beardmore Shipbuilding, had its drawing office and ship ramps.

Whilst nobody knows whether any Black Watch men died in the disaster, the ship was sunk by German bombers and over 4,000 lives were lost. The action took place on 17 June 1940 during the evacuation from France and the memorial pays tribute to the "greatest loss of life in maritime history".



The HMT Lancastria Memorial unveiled in October 2011.

HMS MONTROSE

We hear occasional news from HMS Montrose. She has been on a world-wide deployment taking in South Africa and the South Atlantic.



Some of the crew at the memorial to HMS Coventry on Pebble Island.



HMS Montrose enters Simon's Town Naval Base in South Africa.

EX TARTAN CASSINO

Readers will recall reading in the November 2011 edition of the Red Hackle Magazine that a number of gallant officers and soldiers had undertaken a very testing bicycle ride for charity which started at Monte Cassino and ended at Edinburgh Castle.

Lieutenant Robert Stewart sent a very generous cheque for £4,019.23 to The Black Watch Association. With the loss of the One Day's Pay Scheme the Association will increasingly rely on donations such as this and I would ask those undertaking charitable events to remember to support their Association and not just the major charities.

To Lieutenant Stewart and his team from The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, we send a huge thank you.

TRANSCAAL SCOTTISH

We regret that there are no notes from the Transvaal Scottish in this edition of the magazine.

HEADQUARTERS SUPPORT COMMAND

In July 2011, the MOD announced proposals for restructuring the Army's regional structure with the 10 Regional Brigades and HQ London District reporting to a single commander (GOC Support Command) based in Aldershot.

By April 2012 2nd, 4th and 5th Divisional Headquarters will have been disbanded.

ST ANDREW'S DAY 2013 – GUINNESS WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT

ABF The Soldiers' Charity in Scotland is encouraging as many people as possible from all over the world to organise a Reel Party on 30 November 2013. The aim is to raise awareness of the Charity's existence as well as to have fun and raise some money. The world record attempt will focus on the Eightsome Reel. Please put the date in your diary and maybe organise your own Reel Party in aid of the Army's central charity.

LADY GROVER'S FUND

The fund helps defray expenses incurred by illness or injury to officers' families. Officers are not themselves eligible for direct benefit. Membership is open to any officer, male or female, of the three Services, who holds or has held a regular commission for a minimum of five years, and to widows or widowers of officers, divorced wives or husbands of officers, for their own benefit or that of their children, and for descendant carers of officers (within certain criteria). The fund provides quick financial assistance to cover a short term problem. Subscription is £35 a year and families can receive up to £6300 a year from the Fund. Benefits include hospital accommodation, domestic home help, home nursing and convalescence. See www.ladygrover.org.uk or telephone 0207 808 4180 or email Col Mike Vickery at ladyg@oaed.org.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANDREW BROWN MBE

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Brown, who was QM at the combined Black Watch and Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Depot at Stirling Castle in the early 1960s, died in October 2011.

He was a friendly, amusing and efficient officer who managed the influx of The Black Watch recruits and their different bonnets and uniforms with great ease. Major Colin Innes recalls that as a newly married officer, Clovannis, his wife drove him into the Castle. There chatting outside the Orderly Room was the Adjutant (Thomas McMicking) and the Quartermaster, the latter who had not met Clovannis before. "Now", he said "have you given this young lad a good breakfast?", "well", replied

Clovannis "I don't really know but he had some cornflakes and a bit of toast". "No, no, no", said Andrew "he's a growing chap and out on the ranges all day – he needs eggs, bacon, sausage etc". This excellent advice was heeded and I did get a full breakfast until I started putting on weight!

Andrew had served in Korea in the 1950s and also worked at the Scottish Infantry Depot (Bridge of Don) after he left the Army. He was well known as a fine curler, who for many years was the "Skip" of a very powerful A and SH Rink. He was well liked and respected by many of our regimental family.

MRS HILDA ROY

Hilda Roy the wife of the late "Rab" Roy, the Piper of Tobruk, died in October 2011 aged 86.

NEW VIDEO EXPLAINS SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO VETERANS

A video to help veterans learn about the support available to them has been published on YouTube by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA). The five minute video is designed to raise awareness of the one-to-one help provided by the UK's Veterans Welfare Service to anyone who



Hackle, Mr Jim Sandiland's dog who greeted many thousands of visitors to Balhousie Castle died on 9 January 2012 aged 9. Hackle had his own Facebook page with over 600 friends. Jim has been the Museum Attendant for 10 years.



Mrs Maureen Dalton retired from The Black Watch Association having completed 12 years service as the Administrative Secretary. Many hundreds of Black Watch men and their families owe her a debt of gratitude for her efficient handling of the welfare, benevolence and holiday cases processed by the Association Welfare Committee.

has served in the Armed Forces. It shows how welfare support is provided automatically to those medically discharged and those bereaved by Service, with an 'on request' service for all other members of the veterans community, including dependents and families.

The SPVA is part of the Ministry of Defence and provides vital support services for the Armed Forces and the veterans community. These include pensions and compensation for injury/disablement or death due to Service, Armed Forces occupational pensions, the regional service dating back to the Second World War. The video, which can be found on the SPVA's YouTube channel – youtube.com/user/TheSPVA – explains how the VWS has retained its core principles whilst adapting to a much wider role as part of the Government's commitments under the Armed Forces Covenant.

www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/PeopleInDefence/NewVideoExplainsSupportAvailableToVeterans.htm

CURLING

The 2011-2012 curling season has been notable for several reasons. Perhaps the most significant incident was when the Regimental Secretary arranged a training session at the Perth Ice Rink in October and introduced a number of new faces to this sport. This was a start to try and encourage more people to take up curling in the hope that the Regimental pool of players can increase. This was certainly useful when those curlers took part in some of the matches later in the season. It is hoped they will continue to maintain their enthusiasm in the future. The second point worth noting was that in March 2012, Philip Halford-Macleod was elected to be President of the Highland and Lowland Brigades Curling Club, a post he will hold for two years. There was also a rather surreal end to the season when the match between the Highland and Lowland Brigades' Curling Club and The Royal Company of Archers finished in fading light when there was a massive power cut in the area and the lights went out on the rink. That made the last few ends rather interesting.

THE MACRAE CUP

It is the way you score that counts. On 4 November 2011 the Black Watch took to the ice in Stirling hopeful that after several years of losing the match, the Regiment would eventually win back the Macrae Cup. After the first few ends all looked well, with each of the three rinks in a relatively comfortable position. Unfortunately the 'C' Rink then had big losses at two ends which resulted in them having to fight an uphill battle for the rest of the match. While the rink eventually lost 7-13, it looked as if it was going to be much worse as Jamie Montgomery threw the last stone of the match. The Argylls were lying 4 shots. However, with the stone of the match Jamie Montgomery won the end by one shot. Meanwhile David Montgomery won the first end of his match and never lost that lead, eventually winning by 6-3. The 'B' rink match swung both ways throughout the game until near the end and eventually the Black Watch rink won 7-3. So, if the scoring had been done on matches won, the Black Watch would have won the match 2-1. Unfortunately the match was scored on shots and so the Argylls once again retained the Macrae Cup with the final scores being 21-20. It could not have been closer but yet again the Black Watch came second.

For the record the Black Watch teams were:

Black Watch 'A'	Black Watch 'B'	Black Watch 'C'
David Montgomery	James Duncan-Miller	Jamie Montgomery
Will Henderson	Selby MacDuff-Duncan	Tim Usher
Duncan Cameron	Jamie Erskine	Alex Stewart
Alan McEwen	Alastair Colville	Jim Sandilands

MATCH V THE HIGHLANDERS

There was no doubting the score in the match against the Highlanders which took place in Perth on 13 January 2012. We were beaten. The intent was to produce three teams each but the Highlanders could only muster two teams and the Black Watch had fourteen willing volunteers. So, it was decided the official match would be between two teams and the Black Watch 'C' rink would curl against a mixed rink. On the day that mixed rink included Roddy Riddell, an Argyll and someone whose only experience of the military had been when he was in the CCF many years ago! In the official match the Highlanders won 24-10 and the 'C' rink drew 8-8 against the mixed team, which only had three curlers because, at the last minute, Alex Stewart decided a day in the office was better than a day of fun on the ice (or did he just forget!!). The teams were:

Black Watch 'A'	Black Watch 'B'	Black Watch 'C'	Mixed Rink
Jamie Montgomery	James Duncan-Miller	Selby MacDuff-Duncan	Roddy Riddell
Will Henderson	Alec Beveridge	Jamie Erskine	
Peter Allen	Philip Halford-Macleod	Alan McEwen	
John Twine	Billy Easton	Jim Sandilands	

HIGHLAND AND LOWLAND BRIGADES CURLING CLUB BONSPIEL

The Highland and Lowland Brigades Club Bonspiel took place in Perth on 8 March. A number of curlers were not able to take part and so we produced two full rinks, while Philip Halford-Macleod, led a team in his capacity as the Vice President which was skipped by Roddy Riddell. The 'A' team lost their first match against the Lowlanders the 'B' team won their next match against Lowlanders 'A' and were then well beaten by the overall winners- Highlanders 'A'. Unfortunately the 'B' team lost their three matches while the Vice President's rink lost their first two matches but won their last one. The teams were:

Black Watch 'A'	Black Watch 'B'	Vice President's Rink
Tim Usher	Jamie Montgomery	Philip Halford-Macleod
Alex Stewart	Alec Beveridge	Roddy Riddell
Jamie Erskine	Duncan Cameron	
Alastair Colville	Alan McEwen	

HIGHLAND AND LOWLAND BRIGADES CURLING CLUB V THE ROYAL COMPANY OF ARCHERS

The last match of the season was the Highland and Lowland Brigades' Curling Club against the Royal Company of Archers. This took place at Kinross on 22 March and, as usual, there were a number of people who could have curled for either side. The Black Watch was well represented in both teams by the following: Charles Arbuthnott, Duncan Cameron, James Duncan Miller, Jamie Erskine, Philip Halford-Macleod, Jamie Montgomery and Tim Usher. Unfortunately Peter Sutton had to pull out at the last minute. For the record each side produced four rinks and in the end the Royal Company won by 34 shots-27 shots.

CONCLUSION

While it is always good to win the matches and, in that respect, the Black Watch has not had a hugely successful season, it has been an enjoyable year with new curlers taking to the ice and the spirit of comradeship has been the real winner. Surely that is a good enough reason to curl.



Competitors at the Highland and Lowland Brigade Club Bonspiel in March 2012.

The Black Watch Heritage Appeal, The Regimental Museum and Friends of the Black Watch

THE BLACK WATCH HERITAGE APPEAL

Since the last issue of the Red Hackle magazine was published, there have been a number of notable milestones achieved with Project Balhousie, all of which have been extremely encouraging.

- On 15th February, our Planning Application for the development of Balhousie Castle went before the Development Control Committee of Perth & Kinross Council and was duly approved with only minor conditions. Subsequently our plans received building warrant approval.
- Tenders were then sent out to six contractors who had been whittled down from a very long list of companies who had registered an interest in the project. Six completed tenders were duly received back in March, with the lowest three then undergoing rigorous assessment by our professional advisers and being interviewed by a panel. It is pleasing to report that all three came in at competitive prices and, in the end, Clark Contracts have been appointed as lead contractor.
- On the fund-raising side, we launched a Final Push in late November to raise funds through further donations and grants in order to look to eradicate the funding gap between what the Appeal had raised to date and the estimated cost of the project – assuming that the HLF would hopefully confirm their grant, we were at that stage 90% there with only 10% to go. The mailshot produced a wonderful response which was then capped off with an extremely generous donation from a Charitable Trust.
- An enormous amount of time and effort went into submitting our Stage 2 Heritage Lottery Fund bid in early December and subsequently providing a huge amount of follow-up information in advance of their meeting on 15th March. It was therefore immensely pleasing (and a great relief) to be informed that our bid for £778,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund had been approved in full. There were quite a number of people who contributed to what we were told was a very impressive and professional submission but it is only fair highlight and commend the herculean efforts of four individuals in particular, without whom we would undoubtedly have struggled to 'cross the line' – Alfie Iannetta, James Watt, Emma Halford-Forbes and Tony Williams.
- Finally, on 19th March, The Black Watch Museum Trustees, together with the Trustees of the Black Watch Regimental Trust and Wavell Appeal and the Regimental Association Executive, met to examine all aspects of Project Balhousie to determine whether to proceed or not. After several hours careful deliberation, the Museum Trustees voted unanimously to proceed with the project to improve the Castle and Museum. This momentous decision was a fitting culmination for the efforts of a great many people over several years and would not have been possible without the very considerable generosity of all those of you who have donated money and/or time to the cause – we cannot begin to thank you enough!

With the decision having been made to give the project the green light, the contractor will start on site in late April with the first stage being the conversion of what was the Wavell Garden into a landscaped car park. Building work on Balhousie Castle and the new extension is scheduled to begin in late May. It is planned that the existing Museum and shop will remain open during the construction phase until 1st September when it will

then close for 7 months during which it will receive a complete make-over as part of the final stage of the project. It is expected that the revamped and extended Black Watch Museum, complete with café and shop, will re-open for business in April 2013.

Despite achieving its initial target, the Black Watch Heritage Appeal will continue to raise funds for the foreseeable future in order to try to ensure that the development project is on a firm financial footing, and to provide security for the Castle & Museum in the future. The Appeal has launched further methods of supporting the Museum:

- Buy a brick • Sponsor a display case • Adopt an artefact

More details on these methods of support can be found on the website – www.theblackwatch.co.uk – or by contacting the Museum:

t: 01738 638 152

a: The Black Watch Castle & Museum, Hay Street, Perth, PH1 5HR.

THE REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

Redevelopment plans

The next six months will be a busy time for the Museum Team. We are working closely with the Project Curator, Allan Carswell (formerly of the National War Museum Scotland) and the exhibition designer to gather the information needed for the redeveloped Museum displays. We are also preparing temporary storage areas for parts of the collections which have to be moved and for the decant of the Museum galleries later this year, before the Museum closes for the refurbishment and installation of new displays.

Internship

In October 2011 we welcomed a new staff member to the Museum team. Samantha Bannerman is on a year long internship programme, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund's *Skills for the Future* programme and administered by Museum Galleries Scotland. The internship is a learning programme, designed to give the intern a knowledge and skills base as a museum professional. It's an exciting time for Sam to join the team as we prepare for the major redevelopment project.

Acquisitions

Three of our most exciting recent acquisitions are: an eighteenth century broadsword; the Tam O' Shanter of Pipe Major 'Rab' Roy, the piper of Tobruk; and a map of the German Defences of Monte Cassino.

- The broadsword was gifted by Bob Erlandson, who has made generous donations to the Museum in the past. It is intended that the broadsword will be put on display when the museum re-opens next Spring.
- The Tam O' Shanter was donated by Pipe Major Roy's daughter, Alice Soper. It is on display in one of the Second World War galleries, alongside his kilt which the Museum already holds.
- In January 1944 the Allies, advancing up through Italy, were confronted by the defences of the monastery of Monte Cassino which dominated the surrounding area. A series of attacks by Allied troops were all repulsed by the German defenders. On 6th March 1944 the 6th Battalion Black Watch were sent to Italy and quickly deployed to the front line where

Image courtesy of Graeme Laferrière.

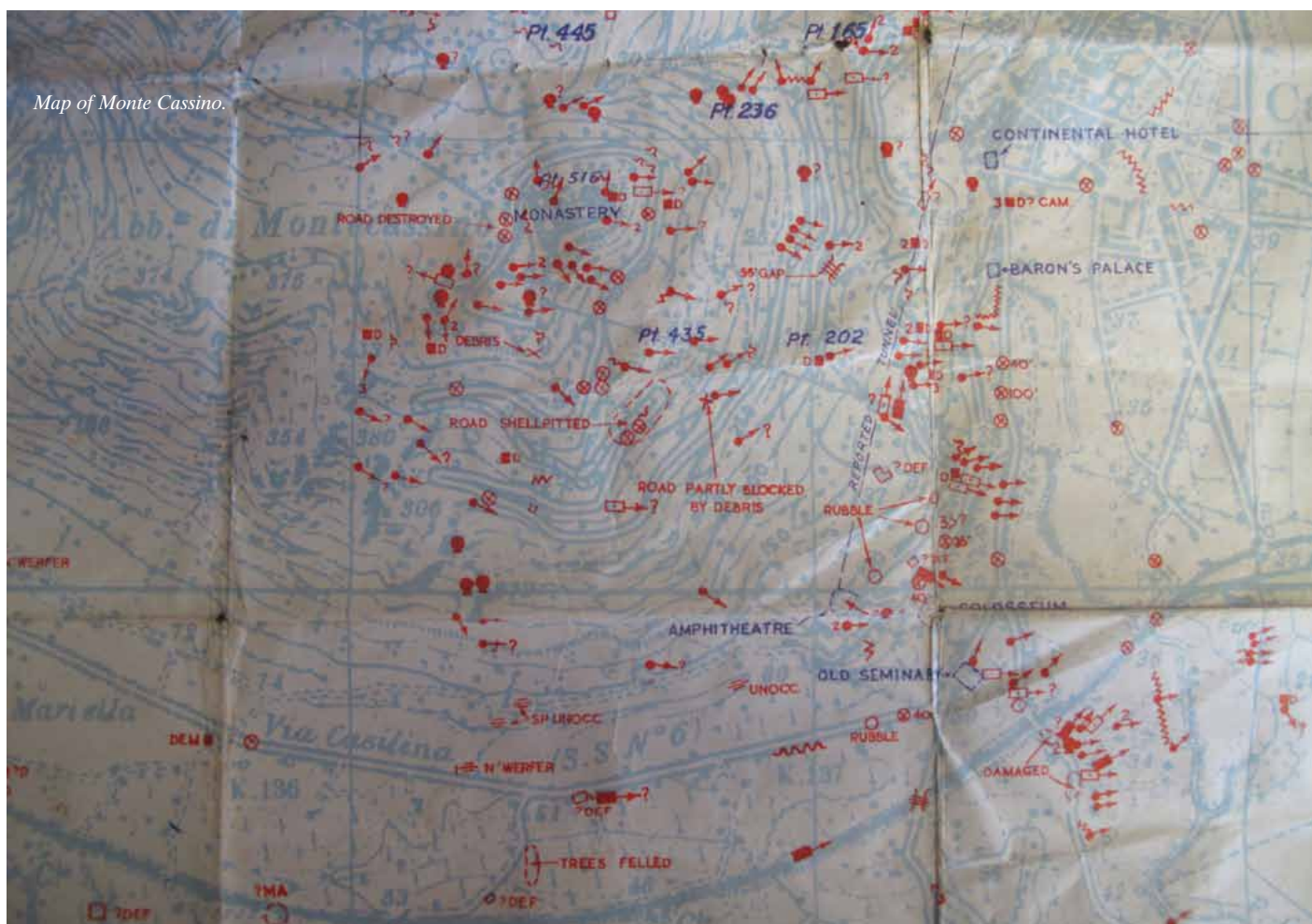


Members of the Black Watch Heritage Appeal Committee toast the decision of the Heritage Lottery Fund to grant £778,000 to Project Balhousie.



Pipe Major Roy's Tam O'Shanter with his kilt.

Map of Monte Cassino.



they were deployed in the town of Cassino and on the flanks of the Monastery, which wasn't finally taken until May 17th. On Monday 6th March 2011 (coincidentally) the Museum was donated a confidential map of the German Defences of Monte Cassino, in excellent condition, and dated 25th March 1944 along with a War Office Publication Notes on Map Reading, dated 1929.

Volunteers

Our volunteers have been working on various projects, from documentation of the objects and archived material, to general maintenance around the museum. In February, our volunteers finished inputting all accession information onto the computer database, and are now in the process of checking through these to ensure accuracy. Meanwhile, the Museum Maintenance Team carried out a thorough clean of the museum and have now turned their attention to the store. We thank them for their continued efforts and dedication.

Events at the Museum

Visitor numbers did not hold up in 2011 (8,500) but we held another successful Winter Lecture series and we are already planning next year's talks. The 2011-12 series saw us running an extra lecture on the surrender at St Valery in response to high demand for tickets. The other lectures also saw high visitor numbers, with most of them selling out well in advance of the day. Next year's series will be held at the North Inch Care Home, as the building work going on at Balhousie will make it impossible to continue to use the Castle as a venue until we re-open in Spring 2013.

We have also run a series of family events which have proved extremely popular. Using the collections as our inspiration, we have welcomed children to our events for the past nine months. These events will continue until the end of the summer and will include activities relating to military pipe bands and The Black Watch's role in maritime tradition.

The Museum Team

e: museum@theblackwatch.co.uk t: 01738 638 152
w: www.theblackwatch.co.uk

THE FRIENDS OF THE BLACK WATCH CASTLE AND MUSEUM

It is now well over a year since The Friends of The Black Watch Castle and Museum was formed and I am delighted to say that the membership is growing steadily. One of the key aims of the Friends is to support the work

of the museum. At our AGM in November we announced that in early 2012 we would outline details of our first fundraising project. The museum has visitors from all over the world but is currently only able to offer them a guidebook in either English or French; something the Friends wish to rectify. We have decided that our first fund raising project will be to raise the money required to provide translation booklets in more languages and also, if possible, audio guides.

As well as launching the fundraising project, we are also about to hold our first special event of the year. As you will all be aware, The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland has recently returned from Afghanistan. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Fenton, has kindly agreed to give a lecture about the tour on Wednesday 23rd May. This will be a great opportunity to hear first hand about the deployment and some of the highs and lows of a very tough 6 months. We are all used to hearing what the media wish to tell us but it is rare to have an opportunity to hear from the people who are actually on the front line. The Battalion has been fulfilling a very different role to that which they undertook in 2009, so this lecture, I hope, will give you another perspective on what our troops are doing and their relationship with the Afghan people. All profits from the lecture and any donations received will go towards the translation booklet project.

The Friends also now have some new volunteers helping to organise and run different events. They have brought a new perspective, which I hope will result in a greater variety of events on offer and also open our doors to a broader following. I am most grateful to them for their inspired ideas, enthusiasm and hard work.

For those of you that have not yet become Friends do please think about it seriously. It is such an easy way to keep in touch and be involved in your museum and all that goes on there. There are specialist tours of the museum for Friends and even discounts in the shop.

Although the building work and the upheaval that goes with it is about to start, the Friends' events programme is not taking a back seat. We have the Cocktail Party to look forward to on the 21st June and then, on the 20th September, the lecture by Victoria Schofield on "Writing the History of The Black Watch". For further details of all these events and how to join the Friends contact:

t: 01738 638152 e: friends@theblackwatch.co.uk
w: www.theblackwatch.co.uk/index/friends

a: Balhousie Castle, Hay Street, Perth, PH1 5HR

Sarah Riddell-Webster, Friends Chairwoman

Correspondence

alfiehalford@gmail.com

Dear Editor

ROBERT STOREY

I would like to trace Bob Storey who served in the Military Band (Bass Drummer) in the late 1950s and early 1960s. I think he settled in Hampshire.

If any reader knows of his whereabouts can they please get in touch at the e-mail address above.

Jack L Halford

MR IAN MUNRO

In the May 2011 Edition of the magazine we recorded that Mr Ian Munro had presented the Museum with a writing case that had belonged to Sir John Moore. In the Correspondence Section of the November 2011 Edition Major Colin Innes outlined Ian Munro's service in the Regiment. Subsequently the Editor received a letter from Ian Munro outlining in more detail his service.

He was called up for National Service in October 1948 and completed his basic training at Fort George and was posted to the 1st Battalion in Duisburg. After a brief period of 2-3 months in A Company under Bruce Fortune he went to Eaton Hall to undertake his officer training.

At the end of his training and to his enormous disappointment he was commissioned into the Gordon Highlanders and sent to the Highland Brigade Training Centre at Fort George.

Before returning to the UK and Eaton Hall he was summoned in front of the "monocle blue eyed gaze" of the Commanding Officer, Bernard Fergusson, who politely advised him to stand at ease. There then followed the following events;

"After a brief conversation and many questions he informed me that he was entrusting me with a parcel containing the only manuscript copy of his book "The Black Watch and the King's Enemies" which I had to guard with my life and deliver safely to Collins his publishers in London.

This was duly done and I later had a chance meeting with Bernard Fergusson in London which resulted in his inviting me into his Club (Whites) where, over a pink gin, he noted all he needed to know to bend a few ears in Whitehall, to have me transferred to the 6th Battalion and subsequently to the TARO.

Back in civilian life and two years later in 1952 I was living in Nairobi, when the Mau Mau Emergency was declared and under new emergency powers I received a call up notice to report for duty and full time service in the Kenya Police Reserve (KPR). Because I held a civilian pilot's licence I was attached to the KPR Air Wing at Mweiga near Nyeri and found myself flying odd missions in support of the 1st Battalion".

Book Reviews

A PERSONAL VIEW OF THE KOREAN WAR 1952-53

By Brigadier Brian Parritt CBE

Brian Parritt's book 'Chinese Hordes and Human Waves', his personal perspective of his time in Korea, has awoken many memories of my own time in Korea. It brought back memories locked away. In many ways it is a clear and understandable description of life for a National Serviceman serving in Korea. The fun, fear and sadness, the utter boredom at times are all exquisitely portrayed. It puts his book way ahead of so many heavy tomes that have been written by 'serious' historians. A good and interesting read.

The lack of knowledge as to why we were in Korea, is clearly set out but the determination to actually join one's regiment, do one's duty and achieve something during one's National Service are highlighted. Coming from a Scottish boarding school made Army life easy but it was the people from so many different backgrounds that were the most enlightening experience of my service. This was particularly true in Korea where platoons were often made up of soldiers from different regiments and nationalities. Attachments from the Norfolks, Argylls and even young Koreans, made life extremely interesting.

The Jocks made friends easily, especially with the Koreans who in the main didn't speak English and one wondered at times how they actually understood each other but they did. Not once did I experience any gripes about life. Our latrines were deep and kept clean, the trenches and hoochies immaculate and general hygiene outstanding. The food, cooked and served in the lines was always plentiful and good and was way ahead of the tinned rations the Americans ate. That we were also able to provide alcohol to them at exorbitant prices set up the Company for a life of ease when the Battalion went to Kenya.

The boredom of sitting in hoochies, walking the trenches, patrolling, the news of the death of a friend one had just been with and the R & R in Japan all so clearly recorded.

Parritt portrays much about the life and the actions so well. He recalls in his own way the sadness at the loss of friends and highlights the lack of information that the average soldier was given and yet understands why there was such a lack. That he was wounded whilst attempting to blow up tunnels dug by the Chinese under the Hook where the battalion was positioned was interesting, especially as he was a gunner on a fight-

ing patrol with the Kings under the Black Watch position. Yet he makes no mention of where exactly he was wounded.

He is quite correct that one held no animosity towards the Chinese, probably because one never saw any and his detailing of the conditions of those captured was fair. It was only during an arranged visit to Korea in 2008 when I met ex-Prisoners of War and heard how they were treated that I had any real understanding of what they had gone through.

His photos are also interesting particularly those showing the young Korean children asking for food from the passing troop trains. That moment was particularly poignant as few of us realised the suffering of the civilians. It wasn't apparent how they had suffered until I returned many years later.

Donald McNab

AVIATION ASSAULT BATTLE GROUP

Pen and Sword ISBN 978 184884 5367

To the best of my knowledge this is the first time a book of this style has been produced by a Battle Group bearing the Black Watch name. It is part a personal tribute to the members and families of the Battle Group but it is also an inspiring account of the combined efforts of a professional, dedicated and courageous team.

The book is brought to life by the many excellent images and it is different from the vast majority of military books in that it is written by the officers and soldiers of the Battalion and not by an author or journalist. Covering the period of OPERATION HERRICK 10 during the summer of 2009, the book describes the pre tour training and then the highs and lows of operations as an Aviation Battle Group in Afghanistan, where they faced an experienced and ruthless enemy. I have no doubt this book will be a valuable source for historians in the future. The book is sold in aid of The Royal Regiment of Scotland Association and has a cover price of £30 but it may be bought from the Museum Shop for £25.



Obituaries

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN D MCGREGOR MC

John McGregor died aged 95 on 10 March 2012. Born on 3 August 1916 at the Port of Menteith he attended McLaren High School in Callendar becoming apprenticed to the Commercial Bank of Scotland in 1933.

He qualified as a Member of the Institute of Bankers in 1937 and he joined The London Scottish in 1939 and in 1941 was commissioned into The Black Watch and was posted to the 5th Battalion.

He fought with the 51st Highland Division and was Intelligence Officer of 5BW at the Battle of El Alamein, then Adjutant for a short period prior to commanding B Company in late December 1942. He was awarded an immediate MC during the Battle of the Mareth Line as he displayed great personal bravery during an attack against an enemy position. His Company successfully took its objective and was then ordered to link up with A Company who, it was known, had suffered severe casualties. This he did despite the fact that the area which he had to cross was being subjected to heavy MG and shell fire and was in the middle of a minefield. On his return to B Company he reorganized his men to resist a counter-attack. This was carried out under sporadic sniper and shell fire.

Later that night his Company were almost surrounded by the enemy and were ordered to withdraw; the then Captain McGregor organized the withdrawal and carried it out so successfully that not a man or an article of equipment were lost. For his exceptional leadership and personal bravery he was awarded an immediate MC.

In July 1943 he took part in the invasion of Sicily and was then sent to help train the 10th Indian Division.

He returned to the UK and married Mary Maor.

He rejoined the 5th Battalion to train for the invasion of France. Commanding A Company they landed at approximately 2000 hrs, the first 5th Battalion Black Watch men to land on French soil since the end of the Great War.

John was seriously wounded 5 days later near Breville and was evacuated to the UK. After 2 months recuperation he was posted to the 10th Battalion and given command of the Training Company. He was then promoted to Major and was Second in Command to Lieutenant Colonel Chick Thomson.

Early in 1945 his wife Mary and his son died in childbirth and demobilization followed later that year. On his return to civilian life he worked as Scottish Sales Manager of Jowett Cars. He moved to London and in 1951 rejoined the London Scottish. He also remarried (Anne Anderson) and had a son and daughter. By 1958 he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and commanded the London Scottish, retiring from the TA in 1961.

He continued in business until retiring in 1980 and then set about recording the history of the 5th Battalion by writing the highly regarded book "The Spirit of Angus".

His wife Anne died in 1992 and John returned to Scotland marrying Ishbel McGillivray in 1993. He was a loyal President of the Angus



Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) John McGregor briefs B Company of the 5th Battalion at Gabes in Tunisia, April 1943.

Branch of The Black Watch Association and an active member of the 51st Highland Division Officers Club. He enjoyed many sports and loved outdoor pursuits.

He was a very positive and realistic man who had high personal standards and expected all ranks to perform to those standards. He was a much respected officer who looked after his men with great care. He was a good friend to many people and he will be greatly missed.

R M Riddell

MAJOR DAVID BALFOUR SCOTT

David Balfour Scott joined the 2nd Battalion The Black Watch on an Emergency Commission in August 1946. He was posted out to India where he was amongst those on parade at the Pakistan Independence Parade in Karachi in February 1948, after which the Battalion, led by their Pipes and Drums and the Regimental Colours, marched up the gangway of the troopship Empire Halladale.



When, in 1948 the 2nd Battalion was amalgamated with the 1st Battalion in Duisburg, David received a Regular Commission in the Royal Scots Fusiliers, later the Royal Highland Fusiliers and went off to serve with them for the rest of his Army career, finally retiring in May 1965. At one point he was on the staff of the Governor-General of New Zealand before he joined the tobacco company Gallaghers.

I knew David when he was Director of the Army Benevolent Fund (Scotland) with his Office in Edinburgh Castle. Living down near Broughton in Peeblesshire, he could not go home for lunch and so generally had his mid-day meal in the Castle Officers Mess. He was a delightful person, very complimentary about his short time in The Black Watch and very good at talking to young officers serving at 52nd Lowland Brigade HQ or at HQ The Scottish Division.

On retirement he lived and farmed near Broughton and was a very keen forester.

C B Innes

ROBERT BARNFATHER

Lance Corporal Robert Barnfather died in December at the East Riding Nursing Home, Morpeth, aged 82.

For some years, Bob had suffered from dementia and had been unable to attend the Branch. Whilst fellow Branch member and former comrade Jim Taylor maintained regular visits, it was generally without much in the way of communication.

Bob joined the Black Watch in September 1952 and was discharged in July 1955. He served in both the 2nd and 1st Battalions, seeing service in Kenya during the Emergency. Prior to his service in the Regiment, Bob had served with the RAF and held a civilian flying licence for many years. He was a very private man who kept his past very much to himself, however, one of his proudest moments was to represent the Branch, along with Tommy Dignam, at the parade to unveil the Queen Mother's Memorial Gates at Balhousie Castle.

Robert was extremely proud of his Black Watch service and rarely missed an opportunity to wear his Glengarry and Black Watch badge. Always smart on parade, he was a credit to the Branch and the Association. We will miss his sense of humour and his comradeship.

M Dunn

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL

Archie Campbell died in Dundee on 5 December 2011 after a short illness. He was aged 94 and was the step-father of Davie Neave who will be well remembered by many.

Prior to the outbreak of the 2nd World War Archie worked in the Jute Mills of Dundee but in 1939 joined The Black Watch to fight for his country. As far as can be ascertained he served with the 4th



Battalion in Gibraltar. He was subsequently transferred to another Black Watch Battalion and he served in North Africa, Sicily and North West Europe. He was discharged in November 1945 in the rank of Corporal and immediately joined 4/5th Black Watch. In the TA he advanced through the ranks becoming Warrant Officer Class II in 1960 with responsibility for transport and later Company Sergeant Major of Headquarter Company.

In 1963 Archie left the TA, after 34 years continuous service with The Black Watch, in order to follow his own son who had gone to Australia as a professional footballer. Whilst in Australia he took a qualification in accountancy and obtained a position with General Motors. His wife, however, could not settle in Australia and in 1965 she returned to Dundee to be followed a year later by Archie who immediately obtained a position as an accountant with Timex and later with a construction company. Retiring from the latter he then obtained a position with an alarm company as a driver by lying about his age. He eventually retired at the age of 72.

Not to be lazy in retirement Archie, who was a talented singer, then took up entertaining residents of old peoples' homes, church groups and so on with the thought that the old folk needed to be looked after. This despite the fact that these "old folk" were in many cases considerably younger than the redoubtable Archie.

Archie's granddaughter was a talented hockey player and represented Scotland at Commonwealth Games level. This gave rise to Archie adding supporting his granddaughter and her teams to his singing duties. This he did by following them all over the UK and abroad. Such was the appreciation of his support that he was eventually made an honorary member of his granddaughter's club the Bonagrass Ladies.

A redoubtable and modest member of the Black Watch, Archie will be sadly missed and our condolences go to all of his family.

R I Rose

GRANVILLE CORBETT

With sadness I report on the death of Granville Corbett who died in Chesterfield Royal Hospital aged 87. He was born at Highfields and lived all his life, with the exception of his military service, in Tupton, Derbyshire.

Granville enlisted in 1942 and initially served with The Green Howards and the East Yorks. In 1944 he was transferred to The Black Watch and remained with the regiment until he was demobilised in 1946 and returned to his trade as a French Polisher working independently with his business partner until his retirement through ill health.

He was well known and respected professionally by local furniture suppliers and private clients.

Although he was not a member of any Branch of the Association, he was always proud of his service with The Black Watch.

R J W Proctor

ADAM CRAWFORD

Adam passed away suddenly in the Queen Margaret Hospital, Dunfermline on the 10th of November 2011. He was born on the 28th of April 1938 in the mining village of Kelty in Fife. Apart from his Army service, he spent his life in the area. As a boy he attended the Kelty Primary and later the Oakfield High School until reaching the age of fifteen when he decided to leave school and work in the local mine. In November 1957 at the age of eighteen he got itchy feet and decided he would join the Parachute Regiment and during his time with them served in the UK and Middle East. In 1966 Adam transferred to the Black Watch and during this part of his career he served in BAOR, Cyprus, Gibraltar, Malaya and Hong Kong, serving eighteen years in total.

On leaving the Regiment, it was back



to Kelty and the Pits and on their closure on to the Rosyth Dockyard until retirement. Adam was not the kind of man just to sit it out and soon got involved in the hobby of Bonsai Tree, rearing and showing, for which he won many trophies. Adam also loved to attend the Regimental Reunions and Branch meetings and exchange stories from the past and present. Adam will not only be missed by his immediate family but by those who served with him.

R M Scott

JOHN GREENER

John Percival Greener who served in the 2nd Battalion The Black Watch from 1941-46 died on 26 January 2012, aged 88. Born in Reading on 2 November 1924 he joined the Army aged 17 and was promoted to the rank of Sergeant before his discharge in 1946.

After the war he worked as a Work Study Engineer and as a Personnel Manager.

He was a member of the Stoke-on-Trent Branch of the Association.



JOHN DUNCAN KEITH

Jock, for that was how he was best known, died in Dundee on 3 December 2011 after a long illness. He was 80 years of age. Following deferment to enable him to finish his apprenticeship as a plumber, he was called up for National Service in October 1952. After training he was posted to the 2nd Battalion The Black Watch in Germany where for most of his service he was batman to and friend of the Commanding Officer Lt Col Blair. On concluding his National Service he was required to complete a further 3½ years with the TA Reserve and joined 4/5th Black Watch in Bell Street, Dundee. This 3½ year commitment became one of 27 years and in total he completed 29 years continuous service with the Regiment.

I first met Jock in 1960 when I was posted to Bell Street as Permanent Staff Instructor of HQ Company and Signals. We quickly became good friends and during my posting and subsequent return as a member of the TA he was promoted from Corporal in the MT to Sergeant and later to Colour Sergeant. Although excelling in these ranks, he was an excellent administrator as Colour Sergeant; it was when he was promoted to Warrant Officer/Company Sergeant Major in 1974 that he really came into his own... and this, despite his reluctance to accept his appointment in the belief that he was not up to it. The Regimental Sergeant Major at that time, Chic Quinn, persuaded him to accept with the promise that he would teach Jock how to be a CSM. In Chic's own words "the opposite turned out to be the case and through his ability and morality I found that Jock was teaching me". Jock's Company Commander for a large part of the 7 years that he was CSM was (now Colonel) Alex Murdoch. He says "Jock was totally reliable, unflappable and a good organiser. He understood people, their strengths and weaknesses and got the most out of them. He also knew his own strengths and weaknesses which enabled him to surround himself with the best possible team. With a good sense of humour and a kind personality he was a true friend".

Jock was admired by his men and I do not use that word loosely. However, woe betide the soldier who incurred his wrath for he would surely suffer bruised ribs when prodded with Jock's pace stick. In 1981, on reaching the age of 50 Jock had to retire from the TA.

In civilian life Jock had returned to the trade of plumber, working with Dundee Council for some years before switching to become a housing officer with the same Council. He retired from the Council in 1996 at the age of 65 having made himself as well known and popular with his clients as he had with the TA.

Always a lover of music particularly classical, this together with his garden, became important elements in his life only second to his family. It is to his wife Betty, son John and grandson Duncan, with whom he had a very special relationship that we extend our condolences.

R I Rose

RODERICK HARPER MACDOUGALL

Roddy finally lost his battle with Parkinson's disease and died on the 2nd of January 2012. He was born in Dunoon on 26th March 1929 and was part of an extended Cowal family with a proud military history. Roddy served with the 1st Battalion, The Black Watch in Berlin (1950/51) as a driver in the Military Transport Platoon.

When his mother became ill, Roddy left the Regiment to return to Dunoon and assist his father with her care. Back in Dunoon he worked as a driver with the Ministry of Defence at the NATO POL Depot at Loch Striven. He made a significant work and personal contribution to the working of the Depot. Roddy also joined the 8th Battalion The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (TA) serving for a further three and a half years.

A keen bowler, both indoor and outdoor, he won many trophies and his retirement present from his colleagues at Loch Striven was a set of monogrammed bowls which he used with devastating effect during his many happy years of retirement. An accomplished musician his favourite instrument was the button accordion and many a ceilidh was enlivened by his enthusiastic playing interspersed with his jokes. Roddy was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease some years ago but determined to remain independent which he bravely succeeded in doing until the last few months of his life.



Alan McDougal

PETER MCDUGALL

Peter Osborne McDougall died on 27 January 2012. He was born on 30 June 1923 in Girvan but his father, an Indian Army soldier died when he was 7. He was brought up in London and served with the 6th Battalion The Black Watch, being wounded and captured during the Battle of Monte Cassino (4 February 1944). He was by then an Acting Corporal but he was incarcerated in Stalag 11-A (Neubrandenburg) for the remainder of the conflict.

He recalled the scariest time of the war being when the POW Camp was liberated by "Mongol hordes" of the Russian Army.

After the war he taught at a school in Herefordshire before gaining a degree in biological sciences at Aberdeen University. He then became a lecturer at the Bede College of Education in Durham and then at the Durham University School of Education.

He was a keen ornithologist.



ALEX MELVILLE

Alex Melville's death was recorded in the November 2011 edition of the magazine but due to an Editorial error this full obituary should have been printed but was not.

Alex Melville died on the 1st of April 2011 aged 94. Alex was born on the 21st of August 1917 at a place called Bandirran near Ceres in Fife and was one of ten children. As a boy, Alex attended the Letham Primary School and proved himself to be an above average student, winning the Dux Medal before moving on to Bell Baxter High School. Alex left school at the age of fourteen, taking up employment in the local farms and by the age of sixteen was deemed competent enough to have his own team of horses, assisting in ploughing duties and other farmyard skills. In 1939, war intervened and Alex was called up and on completion of his training was posted to the 7th Battalion The Black Watch and later saw action in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. Alex was very proud of the fact that he was involved in the liberation of Holland and being part of the first



battalion to cross the Rhine along side his Company Commander Major Rollo. It was during his service that Alex earned and was justly proud of being Mentioned in Dispatches.

On demobilisation Alex returned to working on farms with a short stint working in the local beet factory but farming was in the blood and he soon returned to what he knew best. It was during this time he met his wife to be, Susan. They married and set up a home on Winthank Farm near St Andrews and from there moving on from job to job even serving as a grieve for a few years, before settling down with a family of three at Gladney Farm until his retirement.

On their retirement they were given an elderly persons house in Ceres which I visited at Christmas with his gift from the Association and I am pleased to say I got to know this proud Black Watch soldier very well. Alex at the age of 90 managed to attend an El Alamein reunion, a part of his service career he said was simply unforgettable.

Alex will be remembered as a much loved family man as well as a proud Black Watch soldier.

Robert Scott

BRUCE NICOL

Bruce Nicol served two years National Service with the Regiment from 1957 to 1959. After completing his training under Sergeant Wattie Angus and Corporal Bob Ritchie at Queen's Barracks, he was posted to the 1st Battalion who were then stationed at Redford Barracks, Edinburgh and then moved with the battalion to Cyprus. Bruce served as a rifleman in B Company until his demobilization from the Army.

Bruce was born in rural Angus at Netherton Farm near Aberlemno and apart from his period of National Service found employment in the areas around Kirriemuir, Brechin and Edzell. He worked mainly in support of local farms and estates in joinery, fencing and forestry. Although well past retirement age he worked as a general handyman at West Memus farm and as Cortachy Church Officer until his death on 1 November 2011.

He became a widower after his first wife Margaret died after twenty seven years of marriage and he also lost his daughter Jennifer after a tragic road accident in 1982. He married Elsie his second wife in 1992 and they had nearly twenty happy years together and was a doting grandfather to his and Elsie's grandchildren.

As Cortachy Church Officer he was always welcoming; with a ready smile and a good sense of humour he would brighten up the duller days. He was immensely proud to have served in The Black Watch and will be sadly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

R J W Proctor

RICHARD (DICK) OUDNEY

Dick was born in Blairgowrie on the 30 December 1931. He attended Blairgowrie High School. On leaving school he served an apprenticeship as a joiner in Blairgowrie before undertaking his National Service in the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) from 1951-1953. He served in Korea and Kenya.

He worked as a shunter at Blairgowrie Station until its closure in 1965 and then returned to his trade as a joiner.

Dick was a strong member of the Blairgowrie Black Watch Association Club until it closed.

Dick is survived by his wife Betty. He also leaves a son and three daughters.

Dick died on the 3 February 2012.



DAVE SHARP

Dave Sharp died on 31 May 2011 aged 63 after battling with cancer.

Following his grandfather and uncle, Dave enlisted into the Black Watch in Dundee on 17 March 1965 and passed out with Keren squad at Bridge of Don Barracks, winning the prize for best SLR shot.

He served with the 1st Battalion in Minden, Norway, on UN duties in Cyprus, in Libya, Gibraltar, Hong Kong and on several tours in Northern Ireland. He was a quiet but competent man who was an excellent Mortar Platoon NCO and instructor. He was well liked and respected within the battalion.

In June 1977, Dave transferred as a Sergeant from the Black Watch to the Small Arms School Corps, as an Instructor and he then left the Army in December 1980 as a WO2. He worked for a security company as a storeman and he then picked up his dream job and went to work in the Sultanate of Oman, as the Omani Olympic pistol team coach. This position took him all over the



world to various competitions including the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

On leaving Oman in 1986, he had various driving jobs and was working at a specialist turning factory in Glenrothes prior to becoming too ill to work.

Along with his wife Anne he enjoyed walking and tried to go wandering in the Austrian Alps a couple of times each year. He is greatly missed by his wife and his family.

The following deaths have also been recorded:

William Perrie of Dundee.

Sergeant Willie Menmuir – Ex 1st Battalion died in October 2011.

Lance Corporal Kenneth Speak of Colne, Lancashire who died on 14 February 2012. 2nd World War veteran.

Mr Archibald McLean.

Mr Bill Lark died in August 2011. He served in 2 BW at Tobruk, in Crete and in Burma. A full obituary will follow in the next edition of the magazine.



MUNRO & NOBLE

SOLICITORS & ESTATE AGENTS

Providing legal advice for over 100 years

Proactively serving the Armed Forces:

- **Family Law**
- **Executry & Wills**
- **Estate Agency**
- **House Sale & Purchase**
- **Other legal Services**
- **Financial Services**

phone Bruce on

01463 221727

Email: legal@munronoble.com

www.munronoble.com



*Delivering Quality
to the
Heart of Scotland*

*Perth and Kinross
is proud to be
home to the
Black Watch
Museum and
Home
Headquarters*

In the last edition of the Red Hackle Magazine we highlighted that Victoria Schofield had been given unfettered access to the archives to allow her to research and write the official Regimental History. Volume I, entitled "Highland Furies" will be in print by the time this edition is published however an extract from the book is reproduced below.

THE HIGHLAND FURIES

ALMA SEPTEMBER 1854

'On, Highlanders, on,' the old General cries –
'And you'll grant me one favour, I know –
Lads! Fire not a shot, though your Highland blood rise,
Till you stand but a yard from the foe!'

On the morning of 19 September, the British force, under the supreme command of sixty-six-year-old Fitzroy Somerset, 1st Baron Raglan, began the march towards Sebastopol. 'The weather was very warm, and as the march was pursued under the full blaze of the autumn sun, across a flat level plain, loaded as we were, we felt it very exhausting and were tormented by a burning thirst which there was no means of alleviating, no water being found on the route,' related Sergeant Edward McSally. 'After a march of about 9 or 10 miles,' Montgomery wrote, 'our horse artillery had a shot or two at some outposts of the enemy which was returned, also the cavalry had some little skirmishing with the Cossacks.'

'When we halted for the night strong outlying pickets were posted,' recalled Robb, 'and our brigade was formed into one square round the field guns, hospital staff, and commissary. We piled our arms, took off our knapsacks, unrolled our blankets, and down we went.'

Some were soon asleep, but others fell to talking about what they had to do. It was kept no secret that we were soon to be engaged, and the best of friendship was kept up among us, the older soldiers cheering up the spirits of the young ones. 'It is not surprising,' recollected Halkett, recently promoted lieutenant, and who was carrying the Queen's Colour, 'that sleep did not overcome me till near daybreak, in the first place having charge of the colours I had to take care that the sentry pacing up & down in front of where they were piled across rifles with bayonets fixed close to where I lay, was alert.' He was also thinking of home ' & all one's loved friends & relations, whom in all probability, would never more be seen – every scene of my life seemed to pass before me like a panorama'.

Eventually, Halkett fell asleep, to be woken before daybreak by the bugles sounding reveille: 'All were quickly in the ranks & standing in columns silently waiting for day. After it had been reported by the outlying pickets that no movement of the enemy had taken place during the night, we were allowed to fall out for breakfast. That meal consisted of biscuit, salt pork & cocoa.' 'Before marching a shattering fire of musketry was heard in [the] rear,' recollected McSally.

'At first we thought it was some skirmish with the Cossacks, but we soon found out that it was cattle being killed for the day's ration, each man getting his allowance of flesh warm and quivering.'

'A Gun was fired as the order to move off about 8.00 in the morning,' related Private Charles Wilson. 'I think every Band in the Allied Armies struck up a tune when this grand march commenced on this great flat plain towards the river Alma, a beautiful clear sky above, with the sun out and the wind blowing and all the Regimental standards uncovered flying to the wind.' After marching a few miles towards a rolling hillside, they saw the Russian army, under the command of sixty-seven-year-old Prince Alexander Sergeyevich Menshikov, 'strongly posted on a range of heights extending as far inland as we could see', recollected McSally. 'When we came in sight of the high ground where the Russians were, our [Lieutenant] Colonel, D.A. Cameron, gave the order for the pipers to play up,' recalled Private Bryson, 'they

played "March to the Battlefield the foe are on before us." The Duke [of Cambridge] rode over and asked our Colonel what the pipers were playing and when told, he said "Very appropriate." The position occupied by the Russians was one 'of great natural strength', with the left and right flanks positioned on the heights surrounding a 'great amphitheatre or Wide Valley'. Halfway down the slope was a trench extending for about a hundred yards; on the right was the Russian battery of heavy guns. Artillery had been posted to prevent passage across the river. On the slopes, the Russian infantry was lined up, with the reserve positioned on the heights, amounting to between 45,000 to 50,000 men: 'such was the formidable position of the Alma'.

'It was a pretty and interesting sight to all of us, the commencement of the action,' continued McSally. 'It was begun by the ships far to our right throwing shells into the left of the Enemy's position. The day was warm, with a light westerly breeze, and a beautifully clear atmosphere through which the graceful curve of smoke, left by the shell in its flight, could be plainly distinguished.'

'The noise became tremendous,' Wilkinson recorded, 'and about 40 or 50 guns of the enemy opened upon our troops, the Heights one mass of smoke... I thought now Master Fred your hour's coming... We kept advancing and lying down, and each time lying down in a spot I had seen a shell or cannon strike.'

With the 42nd under fire for the first time since Waterloo, 'the artillery men on both sides were plying their guns as fast as they could,' recorded McSally, 'while a continuous fire of Musketry was kept up.'

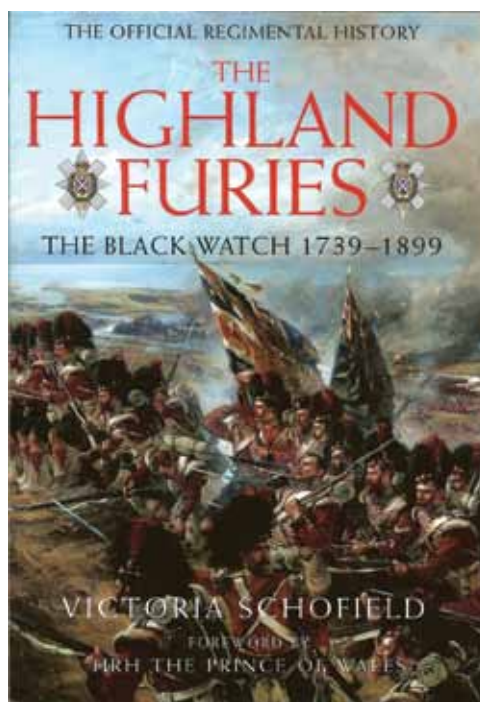
'We had to lie down with the shot and shell coming in amongst us,' Montgomery wrote, confessing 'that is the only time I felt afraid and flinched at every shot.' As McSally recollected, the men were very thirsty; when they came to a vineyard 'the vines hung with grapes that looked cool and inviting. Everyone stopped, and plucked and ate them, although grape-shot and shell were being showered down by the enemy. Pushing across the vineyard we came to the river.'

In front of them, the Light Division crossed first, but, as Raglan later reported to the Secretary of State for War, the Duke of Newcastle, the banks of the river were 'extremely rugged, and in most parts steep; the willows along it had been cut down in order to prevent them from affording cover to the attacking party, and in fact everything had been done to deprive an assailant of any species of shelter'.

'On ordinary occasions,' McSally continued, 'when a man is wounded and falls, he has a chance, indeed is certain, to be picked up and taken care of, but in a river, he is more likely to be drowned.'

Our good luck hitherto, did not, however, desert us here, and we all got over safe.' Halkett, 'encumbered' with the Colour, was given a hand up. Having forded the river, Colin Campbell halted the Highland Brigade under a bank, sheltered from the Russian guns, so the regiments could take up formation. He then spoke 'a few straightforward soldierly words':

Now men, you are going into action. Remember this: whoever is wounded – no matter what his rank – must lie where he falls till the bandmen come to attend to him. No soldiers must go carrying off wounded comrades. If any man does such a thing his name shall be stuck up in his parish church. The army will be watching you; make me proud of the Highland brigade!



EX-SERVICEMEN FORM FIGHTING BODY!

You may know that an M16 isn't a motorway and that a P45 isn't a handgun but if you want to know where you can find the country's finest - and free - Pensions advice can be found, join the Legion!

The RBLS is open to *all* ex-servicemen and women, and provides a forum and fighting force for all ex-service affairs.

We have hundreds of Branches throughout Scotland who will be delighted to see you. If you're concerned about your future consider joining us.

Please check out our website on: www.rblscotland.org



The Royal British Legion Scotland offers all sorts of social, sporting and musical events too.

Last year our Pensions Department ensured that thousands of ex-service people in Scotland received millions of pounds in benefits.

80 years of experience proves we have a role - and clout - to help you get the best from life.

No, a UB40 has nothing to do with submarines and an SLR is a camera. Think about us, we're thinking about you.

The Royal British Legion Scotland, New Haig House, Logie Green Road, Edinburgh EH7 4HR Tel: 0131 557 2782

Accountants to The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment)

For over 60 years the primary concern of Morris & Young has always been to provide sound business advice which is truly appropriate to the client's needs. In order to achieve this it is vital to understand the commercial objectives, structure and nature of each client's business and/or their personal financial aspirations.

Our clients range from private individuals to public limited companies who require a rapid response to take advantage of new opportunities and whose activities may present major tasks requiring specialist knowledge.

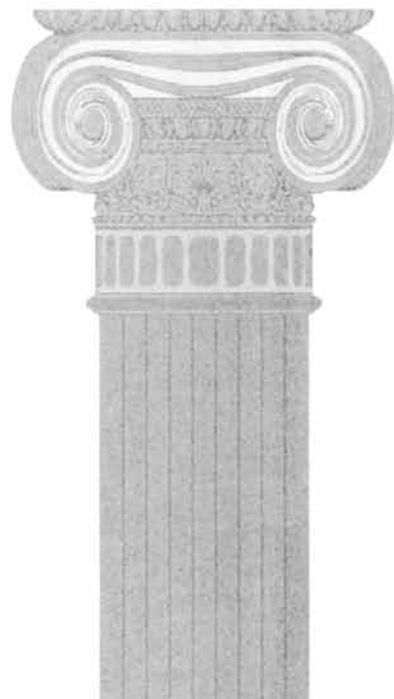
Long connections with **The Black Watch** give the firm a genuine understanding of the needs of those connected with the Regiment.

For a copy of our brochure and/or a no obligation consultation contact Peter Young.

6 Atholl Crescent, Perth PH1 5JN
Tel: 01738 626257
Fax: 01738 630845
e-mail: info@morrisandyoung.co.uk

Registered to carry on audit work by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland and authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority for investment business.

MORRIS
&
YOUNG
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS



LEAN, WIND, LEAN

I recently came into possession of a book called *Detour*. Printed in 1946, the book recorded the story of OFLAG IVC (Colditz) and the stories of many of the prisoners held in the camp. It was edited by Lieutenant J E R Wood MC (Royal Canadian Engineers) and was illustrated by Lieutenant J F Watton (Border Regiment). Three Black Watch officers featured in the book; Captain David Walker and Captain Pat Campbell-Preston both of the 1st Battalion The Black Watch and Lieutenant P T M Barott of The Black Watch (RHR) of Canada. The book was sold to raise funds for the Red Cross in recognition of the life saving work they did by ensuring that food parcels were delivered to Prisoners of War.

OFLAG IVC, the “Sonderlager” or Special Camp was the German idea of an escape proof camp for captured officers. It was the only one of its kind in Germany and the Castle, originally the hunting lodge of the King of Poland dated back to the 16th Century. The majority of the prisoners were officers who had escaped several times, those who had offended the German Authorities in one way or another or else were regarded as important, such as relatives of the Royal Family or prominent politicians. They were from all three Services and included British and Dominion prisoners as well as Americans, French, Polish, Czechs, Dutch and Serbians.

The escapes described below were made from Camps other than OFLAG IVC and record details of two successful escape schemes which involved three Black Watch Officers and resulted in them, on recapture, being sent to Colditz.

David Harry Walker MBE was commissioned in January 1931 becoming ADC to the Governor General of Canada in October 1938. He served with the 1st Battalion in France and was captured in 1940 remaining a POW for five years. He was promoted to Major in July 1946 and was Comptroller to Viscount Wavell, Viceroy and Governor General of India until his retirement in October 1949. He settled in Canada and was quite a prolific author, his best known book being “Geordie” which was made into a film.

George Patrick Campbell-Preston MBE was commissioned in August 1931 becoming ADC to the Governor General of Canada in December 1936. He was promoted to Captain just before the outbreak of war and deployed to France with the 1st Battalion. He was captured in 1940 and he too spent five weary years as a prisoner. He later commanded the 1st Battalion as a temporary Lieutenant Colonel but retired on medical grounds in January 1953.

Lieutenant Peter Murray Barott known as Pete, was from Montreal. An Economics Graduate of McGill University, he joined the Active Army in 1940 joining the 1st Battalion The Black Watch (RHR) of Canada and was captured at Dieppe. He took part in a number of escape attempts including the Eichstatt Job and on another occasion exchanging identity with a French Officer. After the war he served in the Canadian Militia from September 1948 until August 1949 and then worked in the USA.

The book described David Walker as “heady, keen and coolly efficient; he was a member of the Colditz Escape Committee and he and Pat Campbell-Preston had worked as a team on two escapes – the “Warburg Wire Job” and the “Eichstatt Job”. Pat Campbell-Preston was one of those who acted as the catalyst for the idea and was very involved in the planning behind the latter escape.

THE WARBURG WIRE JOB – 29 AUGUST 1942

By Captain D H Walker, The Black Watch

This scheme was simple but effective and in less than a minute 43 prisoners got away. Three of this group made the “home run” to England. The following extract written by Captain David Walker describes the escape:

“We sat and watched. It was quiet in the hut. There was no noise except the creak of heavy packs being eased against the wall. Five minutes ago it had seemed as if we would never be ready – the ladders were being angled in through the door and a dozen small difficulties had still to be fixed.

We looked out towards the wire. The lamps on the perimeter stood barely against the night, each making its own small pool of brightness. Every now and then a searchlight beam played on the flat ground beyond and reduced the lamps to their proper status.

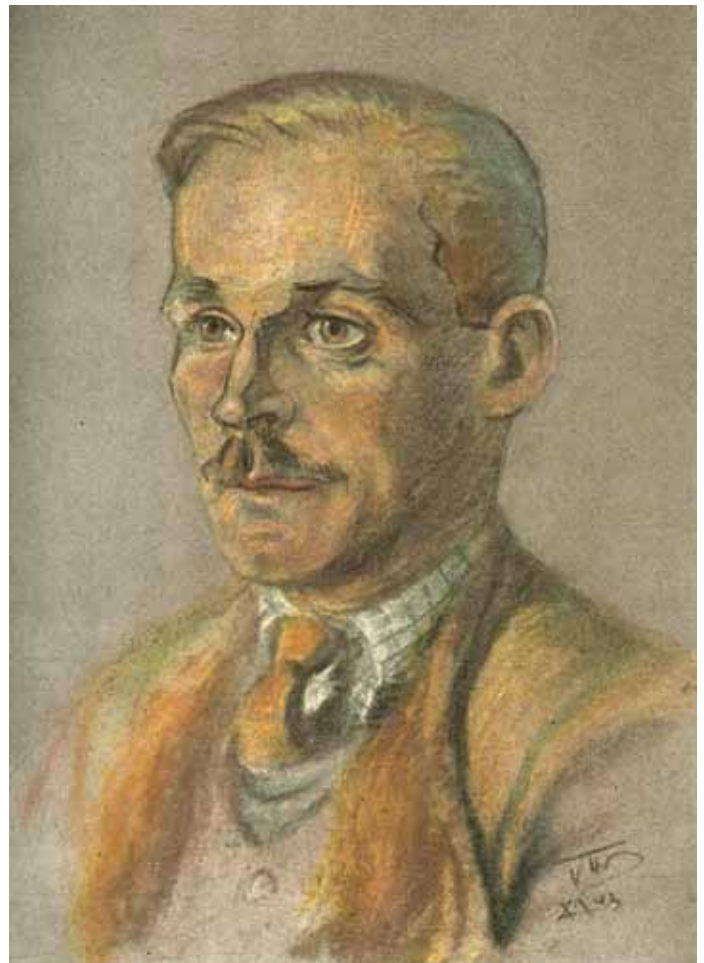
It was a bench we sat on. I remember very little of those minutes. All



The ladder and bridge constructed by POWs in Warburg and used during the escape in August 1942.

that I have now is a memory of smearing my face with charcoal from the wall of the hut stove, and of the last few minutes of great tension. I sat beside a pair of young Scotsmen. They talked with nonchalance of this and that. These were two of the people who are never excited.

The scheme depended on the lights. If we succeeded in fusing them we would make our attempt. If we failed we would sneak back to our huts in anti-climax. Somebody was waiting half way down the camp, waiting for the signal to put his metal across the two wires. Perhaps he was nervous like I was, holding himself in check, or perhaps he was like the two Scotsmen beside me, calm and certain of himself. There was



David Walker – by John Watton.

nothing of ordinary life in this. For the moment we were people apart, people waiting, timeless and the victims of time.

Then the lights went out. There was blackness and we all stood up. The people in front went through the door and carried the ladder down the steps. It was even quieter than before. Only fifteen seconds ago we had begun to move. Now we had action and the time of waiting had gone. This was reality and clear.

The other ladders came out with us. We all turned and swung into line facing the dim etching of the wire. It was still quiet but on both sides I could hear the rattle of the diversions. The diversion men had thrown in their grapnels and were shaking the wire fence. Already there were the familiar high-pitched cries of disconcerted Germans. We had waited a long time for this.

We went ahead in line. First we came to the trip wire, a few feet back from the main fence. It had been whitewashed so that it would be visible but it was no more than a pale outline as we stepped over.

The front of the ladder went up. The first man of my team raised the bridge. I could see it against the sky. Now that we had been in the dark for a minute or so, things were showing up. I saw the others in front of me, the fence above, and through it the flat plain and the little hut which would guide us when we were over.

The Number One pushed up the bridge ladder. I heard the click of the sockets and then the tingle of the wire as the bridge lay across it. He went up at once, with the second man close after him. The rest of us crossed in order at the bottom. This was the thing we had practised so often. This was the thing we could do with our eyes shut. Easy it was. The three other teams were going too. The wire rattled and twanged.

Pat and I were half way down the team of ten. It went fast, faster perhaps than ever in training and each one of us was drilled to be automatic. I do not have much memory of going over; only a climb, a scramble, a grip of the dropping bar and down on the other side. Pat was in front of me. I followed him past the small hut. There were a few shots round about and by this time the sentries were in full voice. The diversions had shocked them but this was something “unheimlich”.

The first fifty yards were easy going. Then we came to a patch of beans. They were high beans, nothing is thicker nor more tenacious.

We came through the beans to a patch of grass and turned left over ploughed fields. We ran along almost parallel with the camp. Pat forged ahead going well, much too well, I was dead tired already and I saw him fading into the dark. Then he stopped and came back. He forgot his English voice and he said in a hoarse Scottish whisper “arre ye wounded, Davie?”.

THE EICHSTATT JOB – 3/4 AUGUST 1943

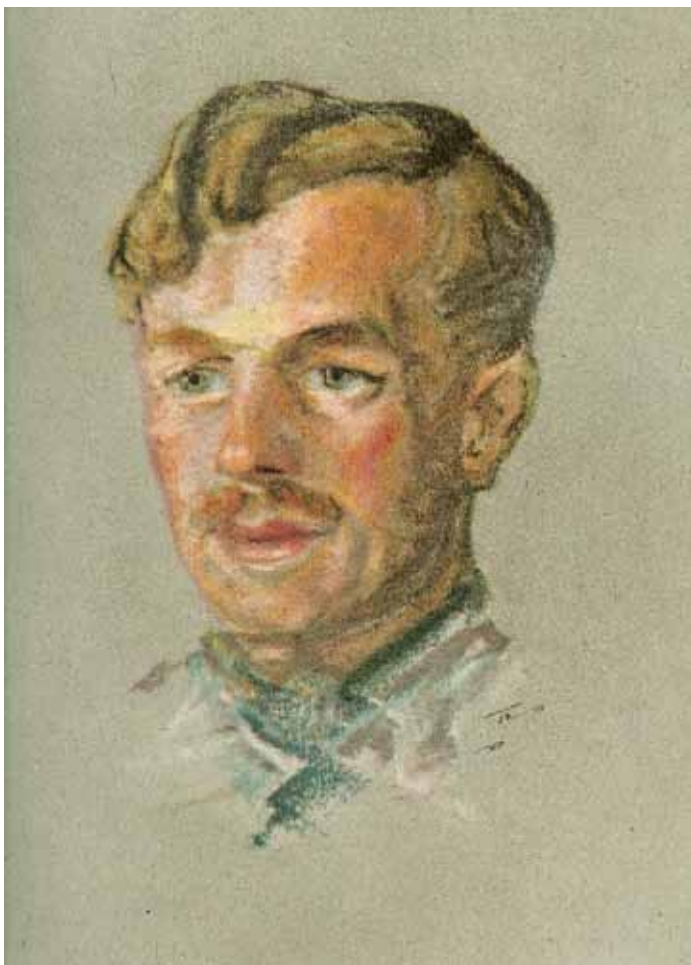
By Captain F W C Weldon, MC Royal Horse Artillery

On the night of 3/4 August 1943, 65 British Officers escaped by tunnel from OFLAG VIIB in Eichstatt, Bavaria. The majority had been POWs since the Dunkirk days of June 1940 but included David Walker, Pat Campbell-Preston and Lieutenant Barott.

“At about 9.45 pm we were on our way up the “groove” for the last time. During three years of unsuccessful tunnelling I’d often had serious doubts that this moment would ever arrive, and the progress of this particular tunnel had certainly been no exception to the rule. I had also often idly thought what it would feel like, but it certainly didn’t live up to expectation, and romance was singularly lacking. Much more immediate problems drove everything else out of mind – wondering who or what in the whole complicated plan was most likely to break down and coming to the regretful conclusion it was me, how ridiculously overdressed I was, and if I took off my hat I should ever find it again, and how to stop the iron spike stuck under my shirt and trousers from skewering me.

Apart from two large rocks which had been defying the laws of gravity and then suddenly gave up the unequal struggle, the whole process of breaking went so exactly according to plan, it seemed too good to be true. But having scrambled out and crossed the open stretch in safety, in spite of it being a fine calm evening instead of blowing a half gale, confidence flowed back slowly.

Making the hole in the fence took an unconscionable time, but at last the signal for the general evacuation could be sent, much to everyone’s relief, judged by the remarks overheard from the windows of Block 2. In a surprisingly short space of time, heavy breathing, grunts and the swishing of grass announced the arrival of the next two out. A few seconds later we were on our way up the hillside,



Pat Campbell-Preston – by John Watton.



Pete Barott – by John Watton.

reeling out the guide string on the way, and eventually arrived sweating and heaving at the top.

Just before crossing the sky line, I took what I fondly hoped would be the last look at the camp. It was now quite dark and the orderly lines of perimeter lights with the occasional flash of a searchlight made quite a picturesque sight. And here I must admit a pleasant feeling of satisfaction. Whatever happened now, the gentlemen who so unwisely said tunnelling here was "Ganz unmöglich", had never been more wrong".

David Walker was also the author of the popular book 'Geordie' that was later made into a film.

David Walker and Pat Campbell-Preston managed less than 12 hours of freedom on their first escape but evaded capture for nearly 4 days on the second breakout. The sense of frustration must have been immense after so many hours of planning and expectation.

Colditz was liberated by the Americans on 16 April 1945 and David Walker played his part in the final act of this event, being sent out to meet the leading US forces. His memoirs are recorded in his book "Lean, Wind, Lean" from his early days as a child in Fife (Rankeillour House), his life as a soldier in India and the Sudan and as a Prisoner of War; his time working as Comptroller

for the Viceroy in India and then life in post war Britain and lastly from 1948 in Canada. The book was published in 1984 (ISBN 0-00-217235-6) and took its title from a short piece of poetry but for older members of The Black Watch other well known names appear in the story; Thomas Rennie (who married David Walker's sister), Vesey Holt, Neil Blair, Neil Ritchie, Jack Monteith, Archie John Wavell, Freddy Burnaby-Atkins and of course Field Marshall Lord Wavell. Freddy Burnaby-Atkins had also been a POW and he too took part in an escape but from OFLAG 5B (Biberach-am-Riss in Bavaria) and was free for 10 days before being captured on the Swiss Border.

Lean, wind, lean
For summer has been
Cry, plover, fly,
For the year must die

R M Riddell

Editor's Note: If any readers are interested in the film "Geordie", it is available on DVD from the following contact raremoviesuk@aol.com at a cost of £7.99.

THE IRAQI NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

*By Lieutenant Colonel R C Cole-Mackintosh –
NATO Adviser to the Iraqi War College*

The NATO Training Mission – Iraq (NTM-I) formally ceased operating on Saturday 18 December 2011 with a short closure ceremony at its headquarters, FOB Union III, located in the shadow of the old Iraqi Baath Party Headquarters building. In contrast to the formal withdrawal of US troops, which took place two days earlier, the NATO ceremony was small but it was also a fitting conclusion to a largely successful training partnership which had made significant advances towards producing functioning and self-sustaining Iraqi Security Forces. The ceremony was attended by a large number of senior Iraqi military and political staff, headed up by the Chief of Staff, General Babiker, all members of the NATO Mission and a number from the United States Mission. At the time of its closure NTM-I was made up of 141 individuals from 12 countries, including 27 British personnel from all three Services. At times it had been much larger.

NTM-I was established in 2004 at the request of the Iraqi Interim Government under the provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1546 in order to assist in the development of the Iraqi Security Forces' (ISF) training structures and institutions. The NTM-I End State was to assist Iraq in the delivery of 'a training level that produces functioning and self-sustaining Iraqi Security Forces and has the structures that are able to meet the present and future security challenges'. This translated into the provision of advice and assistance at the strategic, operational and tactical levels:

At the strategic level NTM-I was involved in providing assistance to Iraq with the development and articulation of a Future Strategic Context from which to determine their Defence Policy, Future Operating Concepts and Future Capability Requirements.

The Operational level focus was to ensure that the ISF recognised that they would be able to deliver Iraqi Defence Objectives, their 'ends', with existing Iraqi capabilities, the 'means', via the effective interoperable application of Training, Education and Doctrine, the 'ways'.

At the tactical level NTM-I strove to provide effective mentoring, advice, support and training to the ISF in Doctrine, Education and Training. Unsurprisingly, it was at this level that the majority of NTM-I personnel operated but by July 2011, this had been reduced to support to the Iraqi National Defence University, support to, and training for, the Iraqi Police by the Italian Carabinieri and a truly combined and joint team involved with NCO Training in Taji, north of Baghdad. NTM-I also co-ordinated out-of-country training courses for Iraqi nationals at a series of NATO schools and training establishments.

NTM-I's Officer Education, Training and Advisory Branch (OETAB), which was predominantly staffed by British personnel, provided assistance to the National Defence University in the development of an Iraqi led, sustainable and comprehensive Officer Education and Training System. OETAB personnel acted as advisers

and mentors to the National Defence University commanders and their staff providing advice and support on Training Management, Doctrine and Logistics education, training and implementation. The National Defence University, comprises five separate establishments, three located in Baghdad and two at Ar Rustamiyah, some 12 kilometres south east of the city centre.

SANDHURST IN THE SAND – THE IRAQI MILITARY ACADEMY AT AR RUSTAMIYAH (IMAR)

IMAR was established by the British in 1924 and retained strong links with Sandhurst until 1990. In 2006 NTM-I assumed responsibility for supporting the development of the IMAR and the Joint Staff and Command College at Ar-Rustamiyah in 2006. Since then the Academy has graduated some 2,577 new officers from all regions across Iraq and there are some 570 officer cadets under training on the two Basic Officer Career Course Intakes currently in training. The current Commandant is a former RMAS cadet and has the task of ensuring the Academy returns to its former glory after being severely damaged and looted during, and following, the 2003 war. Now the cadets are smart and proud and attend well-structured lessons run by instructors with the qualifications to teach, reinforced with operational experience. Each annual intake of up to 300 cadets is selected through a rigorous procedure that closely mirrors the Army Officer Selection Board at Westbury but, once selected, Iraqi cadets commence a 2 year course. The NTM-I presence at IMAR was withdrawn at the end of August 2011.

IRAQI STAFF COLLEGE

The Iraqi Staff College delivers staff training courses at all levels from Junior Staff Officer through to Brigade Commander. However, the principle course is the coveted Joint Staff and Command Course (JSCC) which entitles successful graduates to wear a red velvet band on their rank slides and use the rank prefix 'staff'. The staff qualification is as sought after in the Iraqi military as it is in any other which ensures there is a steady flow of ambitious candidates passing through the College every year. At the Staff College, British personnel worked alongside colleagues from other nations to promote an effective Iraqi led Staff and Command training capability and NTM-I mentored the establishment of new Air and Maritime Departments, thus making the College truly 'joint'. As with IMAR, the JSCC advisers and mentors were withdrawn at the end of August 2011.

IRAQI WAR COLLEGE JULY-DECEMBER 2011

The Iraqi War College is charged with delivering the requisite command and staff training to enable selected officers to hold senior appointments such as Divisional Chiefs of Staff, Directors and Brigade Commanders, the latter also having to attend the Brigade

Commanders' Course at JSCC. The IWC course is a year in duration and structured for 40 students but there has been only one complete course since the reformation of the college in the post Saddam era and that ran from October 2010 to September 2011. The Dean of the Iraqi War College, staff Major General Ziad, is himself a graduate of the course and the son of a Sandhurst educated Lieutenant General.

At the time of NTM-I's withdrawal the most pressing issues facing General Ziad were: confirming the selection criteria for the course, selecting students for course 2 and course accreditation. The Iraqi officer career structure and career development models are well established and proven but there is a significant training and education gap resulting from the lack of War and Defence College courses from 2003-2010. In broad terms Iraq had two options: adhere to the models and create a 'lost generation' who have missed some levels of training or revise the models and attempt to re-focus training at more senior and experienced officers, effectively aging the officer corps. NATO advocated the former but there was significant support for the second option in the upper echelons of the Iraqi Forces and it will be interesting to see which way things progress. The issue of accreditation was very emotive: the Iraqi War College had awarded a Masters' Degree to successful candidates, much the same as the US Army War College. However, the degree is not accredited by an established seat of learning; Iraqi universities will not accept it because it is awarded following a year of study, whilst their Masters' Degrees routinely take two years to complete. NTM-I worked very closely with the US Forces in order to examine options based on US examples and those of our own Defence Academy which partners both King's College London and Cranfield Universities. Establishing globally recognised accreditation will need to be approached holistically, covering all Iraqi seats of learning, and will take a great deal of effort and a number of years but it is essential if Iraq is to establish itself as a partner of choice.

NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE

The Iraqi National Defence College delivers training for general officers and could be seen as the equivalent of the Royal College of Defence Studies. It faces the same problems over target audience, selection

and accreditation as the Iraqi War College but increasingly, one of relevance and credibility, having not delivered a course for some years. The Adviser to the College Dean was provided by the Italian Air Force.

THE IRAQI INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

The United States funded the construction of a campus known as the Iraqi International Academy which offers the opportunity for all Baghdad based colleges of the National Defence University to relocate into purpose built accommodation. Under proposals drawn up jointly by NTM-I and the United States, the colleges were to be joined in the Iraqi International Academy by the Defence Languages Institute, the Ministerial Training and Development Centre (MTDC) and a new institution proposed by the US, the Mesopotamia Centre for Strategic Studies (MCSS). The concept behind this last institution can be equated to that of RUSI. The long term aspiration is that by co-locating it with the senior Iraqi Military educational establishments and the civil service (MTDC) all elements of the Iraqi International Academy will develop into regional centres of excellence, attract accreditation more easily and assist Iraq to assume a more prominent position regionally and globally. However, there is a very long way to go; the site has yet to be occupied and no date had been set for any move by the time NTM-I closed.

NTM-I's original mission was due to end in December 2011 but in Autumn 2011 the North Atlantic Council agreed to accept an invitation from Prime Minister Al-Maliki to extend the mission until the end of 2013. The extension of the mission was seen as good news, as it allowed NATO to build the foundations for a proper bi-lateral partnership with Iraq. However, whilst the North Atlantic Council had approved the funding for an extension to the mission, NTM-I faced two greater challenges: securing force protection in the face of the US draw-down and agreeing a legal framework with Iraq. In common with their refusal to grant US personnel 'immunities', the Iraqis would not offer NATO a legal framework which was acceptable, which left NTM-I personnel vulnerable to Iraqi jurisdiction. On 12 December 2011 the decision to cease NTM-I operations was announced and the closure ceremony followed on Saturday 18 December with all NTM-I personnel departing Baghdad the next day.



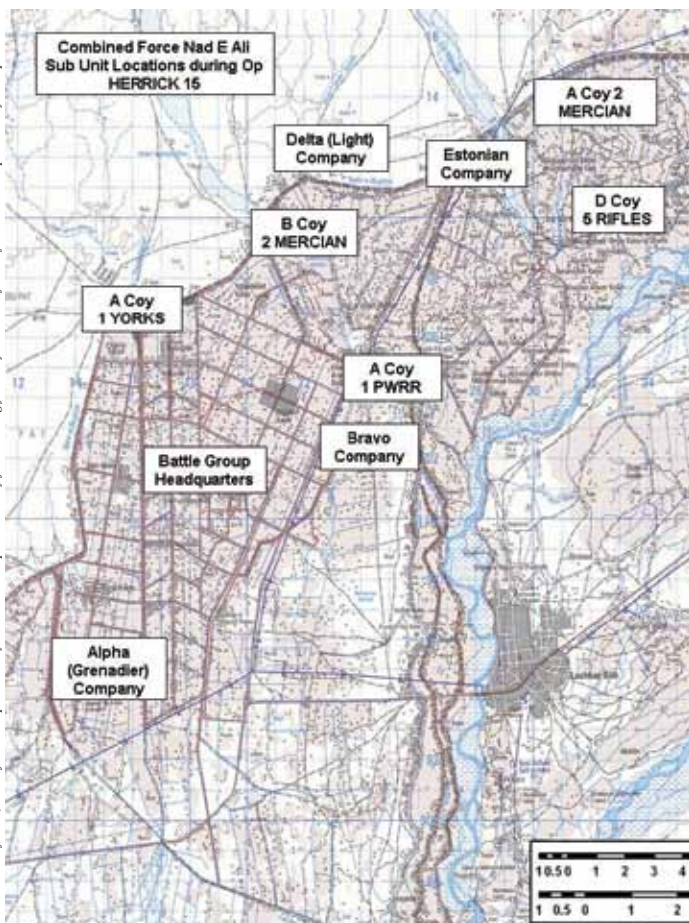
Lt Col Richard Cole-Mackintosh in Baghdad.

The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland

COMMANDING OFFICER'S FOREWORD

The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland took command of Combined Force (CF) Nad-e Ali for the duration of Op HERRICK 15. This was the largest of all the operational areas in Task Force Helmand and involved battle grouping never less than eight companies, ten in all passing through our command. This has resulted in our Jocks being outnumbered by soldiers of other cap badges. We started the tour with A, B and D Companies 3 SCOTS, A and C Companies 1 PWRR, A Company 1 YORKS, B Company 2 MERCIAN and Charlie Company, Scouts Battalion from the Estonian Defence Forces. In January 2012 C Company 1 PWRR left us to reinforce CF Nareh Saraj (North) and B Company 3 SCOTS re-rolled as Police Advisory Teams: but no sooner had we done that than we assumed more battle space and with it A Company 2 MERCIAN and D Company 5 RIFLES – all honorary Scotsmen for the last six months!

Nad-e Ali District comprises a large crescent of ground to the west of the city of Lashkar Gah some 144 square miles in area. Like most dry countries, the pattern of human habitation is dictated by the provision of water and to the west, Nad-e Ali is bounded by the Nareh Burgha Canal, created in the 1950s to channel water away from the Helmand River and provide a swathe of irrigated land. To the west and north of the canal is an area of desert known as the Dashte and while this area is not irrigated by a canal, boreholes do provide access to water for farming. These boreholes provide water for agriculture with the assistance of pumps.



Map of Nad-e Ali.

The District itself has a population of some 141,000 people with the majority of the population concentrated in the cohesive villages or 'kalays' of the south. These people have good access to security and enjoy a strong government influence. Further north, the population is more dispersed and the population enjoys less attention from their government, giving greater freedom for the Insurgent to operate. Further

complicating the District the people within the Canal Zone are seen as legitimate in the eyes of the government, whilst those in the Dashte are seen as illegal settlers. The relationship between Dashte and Canal Zone is further complicated by the fact that many Canal Zone farmers also grow poppy in the Dashte. All in all this amounts to a large District with a diverse population and a complex set of challenges.

Our tour must be seen in the context of the last year. During the winter of 2010 and 2011, significant gains were made by the Royal Irish with the defeat of the enemy in the south; 45 Commando continued the good work with a suppression of the fighting season in the south of the District over the summer of 2011 and the establishment of a strong Afghan Local Police. As a result they witnessed the insurgency being openly mocked in public meetings by local nationals. Further north, however, 42 Commando experienced a highly kinetic summer 'fighting season' which dragged into early autumn. Just prior to our deployment, 3 Commando Brigade directed the amalgamation of the two battlegroups with responsibility for the north and south of the District into one cohesive Combined Force. This has resulted in a closer alignment between Governance and ISAF boundaries, the benefits of which have been clear to see over our tour, with only one Commanding Officer answering to the District Governor over his area of responsibility.

Our task was to work hand in glove with our Afghan National Security Force Partners to clear and secure northern Nad-e Ali, whilst getting the south ready to "Transition" to Afghan security lead. The Combined Force conducted significant clearance operations through the north of Nad-e Ali in the first 3 months of the tour. This saw us clear through areas that over the previous 12 months had seen some of the most intensive fighting in Helmand. With our Afghan partners to the fore we cleared the ground of Insurgents and built 11 new Check Points, creating an Afghan-led 'hold' and domination of northern Nad-e Ali for the first time. The effect of these operations was that prior to Christmas, the majority of the District was finally secured under Afghan control. That only left the area known as 'Kopak' to be cleared. It was part of Nad-e Ali but had previously sat within the neighbouring Combined Force of Nahr-e Saraj (South). They and the Afghan National Security Forces cleared Kopak in early February, built a further 7 Check Points and we then took the area over, for the first time in the Herrick Campaign reuniting all of Nad-e Ali District under the District Governor, the venerable Habibullah Khan, and securing the notoriously dangerous 'Tri-Boundary Area' under Afghan government control.

Nad-e Ali is now further ahead than other Districts in Helmand and to underline the progress in a significant proportion of the District we have now handed over lead authority to Afghan Security Forces. The District has been the first rural area to enter this process following the "Transition" of Lashkar Gah and the attention on Nad-e Ali brought about by Transition appears to have had a galvanising effect with government and security leaders taking pride in the prospect of increased Afghan ownership of affairs in the District. Most importantly a meaningful understanding of what security primacy and responsibility means to Afghan partners is starting to take root. This process will ultimately set the conditions for the withdrawal of combat forces by 2014. Further north the 'hold' has been deepened across the north of Nad-e Ali with nascent security now 'rooted' in the minds of the local populace. The enemy has been driven out of the Canal Zone and into the Dashte by a series of synchronised clearance operations with our Afghan partners. In the Canal Zone we have created protected communities supported by an enduring Afghan National Security Force presence and as we depart, across the whole District there is a strong local appetite for security and development, with a growing sense of confidence in our Afghan partners. The north has now experienced 4 months with only ineffective intimidation, minimal Insurgent presence and the Government 'offer' has been clearly made in areas which were under enemy control only a few months ago. By way of example a recent shura to the north of Patrol Base Shahzad provided reassuring evidence that locals believe things are really starting to change across the area. The Afghan National Army organised the shura and a hundred local elders attended from the surrounding area. The shura took

place in a Check Point built during our tour, following a large clearance conducted by the Afghan National Army. We have witnessed a change from a population which was afraid to approach security forces, to a population that actively seeks to evict Insurgents when they are conducting hostile activity. It was heartening to hear this point of view expressed by the local elders themselves, expressing their thanks to the Afghan National Army and their local commander for the security provided; in sum a connection of the Afghan Government with its people enabled by its own security forces in an area which saw heavy fighting in the Autumn. Underpinning our activities has been the building of personal relationships with Afghans at every level. From the Commanding Officer with the District Governor or the District Chief of Police, to the Company Commander with Police Precinct Commanders and key leaders in the community, to every individual Jock with locals that he meets on patrol. All these relationships have been built on trust and mutual respect. Critical to enabling this trust has been a population centric approach to countering the insurgency. Every man in the 1500 strong force understood that protecting the people was the priority over targeting the Insurgent.

Our key role and focus of continuity for 1 Royal Anglian was to keep the "Transition" momentum going and to get the Afghan National Security Force fully capable to operate without us. Their progress has been good, their will to lead readily apparent. To protect "Transition" and continue to buy the Afghan National Security Forces the space to develop, we had very much taken the fight to the Insurgents concentrated along the Nad-e Ali fringes in the Dashte. Using up to 4 companies and coordinated with the US Marine Corps operations on our flanks, the open space and terrain has seen us engage in more conventional manoeuvre operations, albeit within Counter Insurgency principles, using protected mobility vehicles, helicopters and foot to insert on operations. At one stage we were regularly using more aviation than when in role as the Aviation Assault BG on Herrick 10!

The Transfer of Authority to 1 Royal Anglian took place on 4 April 2012 and we were very much ready to hand over. The officers and soldiers are tired but very proud of what they have achieved. Few have stood still through the tour, either moving location as a result of "Transition" progress, reinforcing the fight where needed or changing role to work more closely with the Afghan Police. All have experienced the pressures of fast-paced, highly kinetic operations, as well as the more routine but equally demanding framework security tasks with the ever present IED threat. That our casualty toll has been so light I put down to the strength of junior leadership, the sustaining of offensive spirit to keep the enemy on the back foot, and no small amount of luck: it is not reflective of a 'quiet tour' by any means.

In summary it is important to recognise the achievements of every individual in the Battlegroup during the sixth month tour. It has been a challenging tour in many respects. It has required different approaches across the varied stages of "Transition" readiness of the District and in itself this has required patience and flexibility of mind as we have constantly regrouped within boundaries. The span of command has challenged the capacity of the Headquarters while at Company level there has been a constant need for moral and physical courage to use minimum force only when required, sometimes not even returning fire; this ensures the safety of innocent civilians and is a more powerful message than the use of firepower. We have also done everything in our power to advance the capability of the Afghan forces and to show respect for the people and their culture in every situation. This does not come easily and patience and endurance have been required. The Jocks always have been and remain, the Regiments' best weapon.

The Battalion was all complete in Fort George by 16 April. After the week of Homecoming Parades we will have taken a month's post operational leave as a Battalion. While the majority of the Battalion is on leave, a platoon of new Jocks who did not get to deploy will support 4 SCOTS in the Falklands, a good experience for them and some compensation for not getting out on Herrick. Through the summer we are supporting Op OLYMPICS with 150 soldiers but the main commitment for us is the Royal Guard at Balmoral from July to October, for which there is no shortage of volunteers. We are very much looking forward to the honour of providing the Guard, under command of Major Rob Hedderwick with Alpha (Grenadier) Company. We will also support the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo through August with the Honour Guard and ringside help, again a popular task.

The period May to July sees over 250 of the Battalion undertake adventure training and sport – canoeing and camping in the Rockies supported by the Black Watch of Canada, mountain biking in the Harz

mountains in Germany, multi activity courses at Capel Curig, rugby 10's in Belgium and a golf tour to Spain to name a few.

We arrive back in Fort George satisfied with a job well done, relieved to bring all back home and we are now ready for what challenges may face us in the uncertain future of a changing Army.

COMBINED FORCE HEADQUARTERS

Chief of Staff:	Major H J L Clark
Battery Commander:	Major J Craven RA (26 Regt RA)
Adjutant:	Captain W Johnson
Intelligence Officer:	Captain O Lever
Assistant Intelligence Officer:	CSgt McBride
Int 'Alpha':	Lieutenant F Robertson INT CORPS
Targets / Influence:	Captain A Phillips MC
Ops Officer:	Captain A Sweet
Ops Bravo:	Captain M Stanning
Battle Captain:	WO2 McSeveney
Ops WO:	WO2 Fisher
Watchkeepers:	Sgts Braid, MacGinn and Collins BGE
CIED Advisor:	Captain A Hayes RE
TFH Liaison Officer / RSO:	Captain N Raepier RE
USMC Liaison Officer:	Captain H Gladstone
BG Logistics Officer:	Captain A Cameron
EME:	Major D Bruce
SMO:	Captain A Walker REME
Med LO:	Lieutenant Colonel D Singer RAMC
J5 Plans:	Lieutenant K McArthur RAMC
OC Afghan Local Police:	Major F Luckyn-Malone
RSWO:	Major M White RLC CSgt Shearer

The Black Watch, 3rd Bn The Royal Regiment of Scotland assumed command of Combined Force Nad-e Ali District from 45 Commando on the 1st of October in a short flag ceremony. The handover was conducted in the context of the recent mergers of two Battlegroups under one Headquarters. As a result the staff assumed responsibility for a Combined Force of eight sub units rather than the five companies we had been expecting for most of the pre-deployment training, by far the biggest Battlegroup in Helmand. The whole Battlegroup did not take over at once and the handover could be better described as a series of Company handovers spread over a six week period. For example, Alpha (Grenadier) Company had been in place for 10 days by the time Battlegroup Headquarters arrived. Within the Headquarters, Major Fergus Luckyn-Malone, Major Mark White, and Captain Ollie Lever had the honour of filling continuity posts, which required them to come out a full three weeks early!

On takeover and despite our excellent hand-over from the Royal Marines, it became clear that there was scope for considerable opportunity to improve the somewhat tenuous security situation in some parts of the District. The Headquarters launched straight into 'CAST-like' planning for the deployment of Delta (Light) Company into the North of the District in order to increase the density of security. A joint operation with the Afghan National Army and Police to clear the area North



Handover of 45 Commando RM to 3 SCOTS on 1 Nov 2011.



The Commanding Officer accompanying the Secretary of State meets the District Governor.



Poppy Wreaths at the memorial in Shawqat.

of Chah-e Anjir and establish new Check Points quickly followed. This set the tone for the tour and given the tempo of operations and the size of the Combined Force, the Headquarters remained under pressure throughout. Whether it was planning complex clearance operations in the Canal Zone, coordinating up to four companies in a single air assault operation in the Dashte or re-grouping Rifle Platoons to form Police Advisory teams, the team had to remain agile throughout.

As an example of the complex nature of operations Op ZAMESTANI PEEROZI (Op Winter Victory) was the largest operation undertaken by the Battlegroup during the tour. It was directed at a provincial level

shura (meeting) as a priority operation to clear Insurgents from an area known as the 'Tri-boundary area' over the period of mid December. As the name suggests, Insurgents have exploited the fact that this area is on the boundary between three Battlegroups; Lashkar Gah, Nareh Saraj South and Nad-e Ali. This Brigade operation brought six companies of the Afghan National Army into the District, partnered by troops from Nad-e Ali. A Company 1 PWRR partnered the 1st Kandak, while Bravo Company partnered the 6th Kandak. The clearance itself was conducted in a record three days and allowed a further three Check Points to be built to the North of Patrol Base (PB) Shahzad. These



RSM Shaw 1st Kandak Ops Warrant Officer and the Commanding Officer.



Padre MacKenzie conducts a Service of Remembrance in Shawqat.



Shawqat Bazaar.



Afghan Local Police.



Maj Hedderwick gets some good quality J2 from Sgt Kettles.

Check Points were then occupied by the Afghan National Army to enable more enduring Afghan led security in an area which had seen heavy fighting over the summer.

The preparations for and entry to Tranche 2 of 'Transition' has been the key theme of the tour for the Headquarters, with Major Lucklyn-Malone acting as a dedicated staff lead. The process saw areas of the District gradually transfer lead security responsibility to the ANSF, a critical pathway to the UK's departure from Helmand in the future. Nad-e Ali formally entered the process on 1st January with a four phase model transferring security in stages, south to north as security conditions through the summer deliver sufficient stability to allow ANSF independence. This is a complex business which required detailed monitoring and judgment of ANSF capability in the south while concurrently conducting tactical level, 'war-fighting' activity in the north. In an eight company force dealing with this significant span of complexity the staff had to stay balanced across all lines of development, keep a balanced overview of the whole AO and not become like 'moths drawn to the bright lights' of the more obvious fighting with the enemy. To enable this, the HQ staff concentrated on delivering an approach that allowed the CO to deliver Battlegroup level effect, rather than a collective of independent sub unit activities and thereby allowed a coherent methodology to challenges such as J2 targeting and manoeuvre. As a result, the Combined Force unashamedly conducted the most number of Battlegroup level operations and used the most amount of aviation across the entire Task Force; one operation was described by the Brigade Chief of Staff as akin to Op MARKET GARDEN. All this did not come easily and the Joint Operations Cell, led by the Ops Officer, regularly dealt with days that would have had OPTAG staff turning pale. Concurrently the Battlegroup Logistics Officer supported by A2 Echelon or Rear Ops Cell in Camp Bastion somehow kept over 2,000 personnel in remote locations resupplied with all of life's necessities (and some home comforts) through a combination of support helicopter, local 'jingly' trucks and complex ground Combat Logistic Patrols. At times the scale of the whole operation was intimidating. The list of staff at the start of this article is lengthy (and this is only the key staff) but underlines the complexity of the environment.

ALPHA (GRENADE) COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major R S Hedderwick
Second in Command:	Captain M Dobson
Plans Officer:	Lieutenant D Withers RLC
Company Sergeant Major:	WO2 (CSM) Stacey
Company Quarter Master Sergeant:	CSgt Anderson
OC 1 (Senior Highland) Platoon:	Captain R Stewart/ 2Lt C Voce-Russell
PI Sgt:	Sgt Clark MC
OC 2 Platoon:	Lieutenant C McRobbie
PI Sgt:	Sgt Sharp MC
OC 15 Platoon:	Lieutenant N Allen-Perry
PI Sgt:	Sgt Hunter

After six months of intensive Mission Specific Training it was with some relief that the Grenadiers deployed on Op HERRICK 15 in September



Cpl Partridge entertains local children.



LCpl McGinnies on the ground during Op Tora Sephar 55.

2011 to the south of Nad-e Ali, Helmand Province. Bordered by the United States Marine Corps to our south and Combined Force Lashkar Gah to our east, we have essentially provided the southern block for Combined Force Nad-e Ali. Although once highly kinetic, it was clear on our arrival that the situation in southern Nad-e Ali had dramatically improved and that we needed to drive forward the campaign and be in a position to handover responsibility for our area to the Afghan Forces by the end of Op HERRICK 15.

For the first few months of the tour the Company concentrated on continuing to suppress the traditional summer fighting season. Based out of five separate Check Points (Kalang, Ranger, Tanoor, Sabat and Bolan T) we dominated the area with an almost constant presence on the ground. Often carrying weights in excess of 100lbs over difficult terrain, the tempo of patrols was tiring but it enabled us to effectively disrupt insurgent activity and establish strong relations with the local nationals. The latter is of particular importance. Whereas



Sgt Hunter hands over Bolan T.

we are generally process driven in the west, the Afghan culture is based almost entirely on relationships and so the rapport established between ourselves and the people we are here to protect has been fundamental to success. The Jocks, as always, have been superb at this and Lt Stewart, Pte Coulson and Pte Stevens in particular seem to have become adopted sons of Saidebad! The Jocks have empathised with the Afghan's fears and concerns, respected the Afghan culture and religious sensitivities and drunk countless cups of 'chai', discussing topics as far ranging as the weather to football. Their efforts have been repaid with genuine affection by the vast majority and the populace of Saidebad and Zaborobad now have an understanding of the bagpipes and the current plight of Rangers Football Club!

As security in Nad-e Ali has matured over our six months, it has required a good deal of flexibility to meet the evolving Afghan aspirations. The size of our area of responsibility doubled in December 2011 and we have continually closed, transferred and taken on responsibility for new Check Points. Often there have been no more than twelve men in a Check Point placing considerable emphasis on the junior commanders in the Company who have led patrols and, on occasions, been required to run every aspect of Check Point life. They have all performed admirably, very much working to the mantra of mission command – a centralised intent with decentralised execution. Wives and mothers would also be extremely impressed with the Check Point husbandry on display. Cooking, cleaning and washing has all been part of everyone's daily routine. Some have flourished at this more than others; in particular Pte Hunter has shown he is ready to take on any celebrity chef in a 'cook off', LCpl Hutton's pizzas became a firm favourite at CP Tanoor and Pte Vuanicau demonstrated that his DIY skills can make anywhere liveable. It should also be noted that with such a disparate laydown, additional pressure has been placed on those responsible for providing the re-supply of vital equipment forward to the Check Points. The Company have been superbly looked after by our G4 team of CSgt Anderson, Cpl Baxter and LCpl Brown. They have worked extremely hard to ensure that we have wanted for nothing and it has meant that life has been slightly less austere in the smaller bases than it otherwise could have been. Not renowned for their collective smiley demeanour, the three amigos have been integral to the effectiveness of the Company (it should be noted that LCpl Brown is now regularly smiling since his engagement on his R&R!).

It really has been a Company Group effort. Our Chefs (Ptes Kayiwa and Muhia), Fire Support Team, Desert Hawk detachment and Afghan Army advisors have all provided outstanding service to the Company as have our Fitter section (I imagine that they never wish to see another field generator again!). At times we have numbered over two hundred soldiers in the Company and every single man has played their part. As always there are a number of farewells to say. The Pioneers who swelled our ranks during pre-deployment training have been fantastic

and it will be sad to say farewell to them when they return to Gloucester at the end of the tour. WO2 (CSM) Stacey will be posted soon after we return and we wish him well in his new post as Divisional Sergeant Major at the Infantry Battle School. His efforts have been instrumental in any success we have enjoyed as a Company and he has been a tower of strength throughout. Sgt Clark MC and Cpl Caird are to leave the Army soon after we return to pursue other interests and we wish them every success in their civilian lives.

It has been a challenging tour in many respects. It has required a specific brand of counter-insurgency in the south of Nad-e Ali. Foremost has been the need for moral and physical courage to always use minimum force, even sometimes not returning fire to ensure the safety of innocent civilians. It has meant always doing what you know to be correct and not what is easiest. It has meant doing everything in your power to advance the capability of the Afghan forces and a need to show diplomacy in every situation. It has required patience and endurance and the Jocks have not been found wanting. They always have been, and remain, the Regiment's best weapon.

With one month to go, there is still plenty of work to be done removing the remaining vestiges of Insurgent influence in the south of Nad-e Ali and setting the conditions for the deployment of Op HERRICK 16 but it is with a genuine sense of optimism for the future of southern Nad-e Ali that this article is written.

1 PLATOON

By Lieutenant R Stewart

As with the rest of Battalion, it has been a busy year for the Senior Highland Platoon. Some have been kept busy by new arrivals in their family and we have seen 4 new babies born whilst we have been deployed on Op HERRICK 15. Sgt Clark MC, Pte Power, Pte Brown and Pte Jagne all have sons and were delighted to be able to see their new sons during R&R. Pte Martin's wife is also expecting their new-born child in early April. Congratulations to one and all – hopefully the next generation of the Senior Highland Platoon!

Fortunately many of the platoon deployed on Ex ASKARI THUNDER to Kenya in 2010. This prepared us well for Mission Specific Training since the platoon was able to focus on learning the new skills and tactics for Afghanistan having already operated together on a demanding exercise. We finally deployed in September, with the All Arms Search Team deploying slightly earlier than the rest of the platoon for some additional specialist training.

The platoon has been based out of a number of Check Points and patrol bases throughout Nad-e Ali district. Some of these have been partnered locations and Pte Gracie has continually proven to be the firm favourite of the Afghan National Security Forces. The platoon's morale has been at its highest when the conditions have been the most austere with minimal welfare facilities with Cpl Wedgwood, Ptes Jagne,



1 Platoon having chai with the Afghan Local Police.



Lt Stewart talks to a local.

Brown and Power always quick to get the gym established whenever we moved (the remainder of the platoon remain unconvinced it has made any difference to their fitness).

Our focus and main consideration in everything that we do has been the people of Afghanistan; from providing security for the population to continuing to develop and train the ANSF. The platoon has seen real progress being made as schools in the area were opened and security for the surrounding area being provided by ANSF. These schools teach boys and girls a number of different subjects including English. The Jocks have grasped this concept well and have enjoyed interacting with the local population on patrols and it was never long before children were running up to patrols asking for 'Janou' (Pte John Ward) and 'Dauod' (Pte David Martin).

The platoon has completed everything that has been asked of them to a high standard, remaining flexible throughout. Everyone is excited about the prospect of Royal Guard in Ballater during the summer. The Jocks are hoping that they will be the ones asked to dance with The Queen at the Ghillie's Ball. Hopefully their reeling will be better than their dancing in 'Miami' night club in Inverness!

2 PLATOON

By Lieutenant C McRobbie

2 Platoon have had a very challenging and successful year. We reformed under Alpha (Grenadier) Company in early April and quickly got stuck into the fast paced pre-deployment cycle. To all intents and purposes this was a newly formed platoon with commanders and soldiers posted in to fill up its ranks. We bonded quickly and effectively to successfully complete Mission Specific Training in good order.

The platoon quickly embraced the need to work hard both in barracks and socially, taking every opportunity to get onto the football and rugby pitches (for physical training of course!). The platoon deployed to Aberdeen for its final OP HERRICK 15 preparation where under the careful direction of the NCOs' the platoon honed in on its field craft skills: fire and movement; use of cover and concealment; target indications and fire control orders. The NCOs were also tested on their creation and presentation of Quick Battle Orders to the Jocks. It turns out you can learn a lot from paintballing.

On 16 September 2011 we deployed on OP HERRICK 15, less Sgt



Lt Bobby Stewart and Cpl Wedgewood with the Senior Highland Platoon.



2 Platoon pose for one last photo before leaving Checkpoint Ranger.



The Doomers (2 Platoon) preparing to board their Osprey.



A mighty United States Marine Corps Osprey takes to the skies. The Battalion were allocated Osprey on occasions.

Sharp and the newly promoted LCpl Nisbet who decided they couldn't wait till then and jumped on an earlier flight. In the early stages of the tour we were split up and placed into Check Points Ranger and Tanoor, where we quickly realised how much we missed having our mothers' home cooking!

From here on the platoon remained very flexible, adapting to the needs of the Company and moving as and when required. We made the most out of our surroundings and became very capable of making ourselves as comfortable as possible. It was not until the closing phases of the tour that the platoon finally got together in Kalang to bring their own spark of life and humour to Company HQ and enjoy the numerous perks and opportunities. In total the Platoon has occupied five Check Points, one Patrol Base and one Main Operating Base!

We now look forward to a busy year on our return. The Royal Guard is just months away and preparation will soon have to start. Adventure training in the form of kayaking in Canada has also been planned. We have timed our visit to coincide with The Black Watch of Canada's 150th anniversary, and the annual memorial weekend for the Battle of Ticonderoga.

BRavo COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major R Williams
Second in Command:	Captain R Doughty
Company Sergeant Major (until Jan 12):	WO2 Marshall
Company Sergeant Major (from Jan 12):	WO2 Fairweather
Operations Warrant Officer:	WO2 Bruce
Company Quarter Master Sergeant:	CSgt Beaton
5 Platoon Commander:	Lieutenant R Weir
5 Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant McCready
6 Platoon Commander:	Lieutenant T Blair
6 Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt Buist
7 Platoon Commander:	Lieutenant T Towler
7 Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt Ferrier

Following some well earned summer leave, Bravo Company deployed to Camp Bastion during September 2011 and, after completing mandatory 'Reception, Staging and Onward Integration' training, beyond to Patrol Base (PB) CATINA in the Nad-e Ali district of Helmand Province. The Company by this stage had grown in size and capability with reinforcements from both the SCOTS TA battalions, our own Fire Support Company, the ARRC Support Battalion (in the form of RLC Drivers and RLC Pioneers) and many other critical specialists. It has been said that today's Counter-Insurgency Operations in Afghanistan has seen a weighting of Company HQ to resemble what might have once passed for a Battlegroup HQ in World War Two; certainly by the time you add 'Gunners', 'Sappers', 'Spanner Monkeys', 'Green Slime' and others it is a large and diverse group. Thankfully we had been reinforced with some very experienced individuals, not least WO2 Bruce who as a former member of 2 SCOTS, knew both the CSM and CO very well!

The first elements of Bravo Company to arrive in PB CATINA were all at sea since they initially had to understand what the Royal Marines of Whisky Company, 45 Commando were saying ('galley', 'heads', 'wets', 'scran', etc) and then begin to learn the Area of Operations (AO) they were to inherit. At the time we arrived, Patrol Base Catina was the main Patrol Base within AO Centre-East (AO CE) and we had one other ISAF location, Check Point (CP) Yaw-Mutay (occupied by 7 Platoon under Lt Towler and Sergeant Ferrier). AO CE was unique in Nad-e Ali in that it did not have an open flank; it shared boundaries with five Nad-e Ali Companies and Combined Force Lashkar Gah (CF LKG) to the East. Hard fighting on HERRICK 13 and clever soldiering on HERRICK 14 had driven out the Insurgents and cultivated a relationship with the local people and Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP). Not that there weren't any Insurgents on our arrival; they were assessed as using AO CE as a bed down location (many known Insurgents had family in the area) and then heading north to do their fighting. Thankfully the 'Insurgent offer' had been made irrelevant by engaging directly with the people and displaying our support for the police; this was to be the model for transition in Nad-e Ali.

Shortly after our arrival Corporal Sam Watt took a bespoke section away to provide a 'force protection section' to some Afghan National Army (ANA) advisors; having been an 'OMLT' on HERRICK 10 Corporal Watt was deemed the best man for the job. Thanks largely to the situation we inherited from our predecessors, the Company had a very quiet first six weeks until AO CE was merged with AO Centre. This freed up Bravo Company to support operations in the North of Nad-e Ali; effectively we became a second 'Ops Company.' Sergeant McCready's multiple rejoined the Company following a detachment to Alpha (Grenadier) Company and were welcomed back with opened arms! Just before they arrived Lieutenant Weir's multiple were moved north to support operations in AO North Centre and experienced Bravo Company's first contacts on the tour. Sadly, during a planned operation into a heavily contested area, they also suffered the first casualty when Private Steven Bainbridge was caught in an IED blast. Thankfully, due to the quick reactions of those with him, the excellent issued 'Personal Protective Equipment', the life saving treatment provided by the 'medic' and the speed of his 'CASEVAC' he was in Bastion's role 3 hospital and on the operating table in less than an hour. He is now recovering in Headley Court and is making great progress. 7 Platoon was also detached and worked alongside the Estonian Company in AO North East, occupying the most northern Check Point of Nad-e Ali and helping to cover the arrival of a new Estonian Company.

We moved to PB SHAZAD in mid November, having first established a new Ops Room and accommodation, with 5, 6 and 7 Platoons complete and raring to go; the fighting elements of the Company were quickly dispatched to AO North East to begin operations in one of the last contested areas of Nad-e Ali. Company Main HQ, under Captain Doughty, remained in PB SHAZAD with Company Tac HQ and the platoons deployed forward to Patrol Base WAHID. This patrol base sits alongside the Nareh-e Burgha (NEB) Canal which separates the agriculturally productive "Canal Zone" and the unforgiving Dashte (desert) to the north. Patrol Base WAHID was originally established by Bravo Company during HERRICK 10 so the younger members of the Company were treated to some lantern swinging by the platoon sergeants; Sergeant Buist conducted a few unofficial 'battlefield tours' whilst we were up there! The next four weeks saw Bravo

Company, accompanied by the Battalion Recce Platoon under Captain Colquhoun and Colour Sergeant Smith, conduct Operation TORA PANCHAI (Brave Panther) 2 during which the Company managed to expand the area of ISAF influence and ensure that the 'protected community' of Loy Mandeh was allowed to grow and prosper. We knew we were in for an interesting time when, on the first 'recce' of possible new Check Point locations, we had 14 contacts in five hours and required an Apache attack helicopter to fire one 'Hellfire' missile and conduct a number of 'strafing runs' against Insurgent firing positions. The OC came in for much good natured abuse as, in his O Group the night before, he had said that he expected to be off the ground within a couple of hours! Operation TORA PANCHAI 5 successfully saw the clearance of a much needed road network and the establishment of three new Check Points. 6 Platoon, under Lieutenant Blair and Sergeant Buist, were left behind to man the new Check Point on Route URANUS; Sergeant Buist insisted on telling everyone who would listen all about HERRICK 10 and the fact that the compound they were living in had been an Insurgent firing point!

Once the platoons had been relieved by the Estonians the Company reformed in Patrol Base NAHIDULLAH (the best PB in Helmand; hot showers, proper loos and excellent food!). By this stage winter was upon us and the short days were bitterly cold. From PB NAHIDULLAH we supported Op ZAMESTANI PEEROZI, an ANA and AUP led clearance operation to sweep north through the last contested areas in the north of Nad-e Ali (the infamous 'tri-boundary area'). Company Main accommodated various Advisor and Silicon (ANA and AUP mentors respectively) call signs onto the Company radio net as well as the platoons who were deployed to support the ANSF. The Insurgents, facing overwhelming overmatch, gave way to the forces facing them and disappeared but in doing so they allowed the ANSF to exploit various IEDs. As the operation was drawing to a close the Company were directed to seize compounds further south than those established during Op TORA PANCHAI 2; this was what had been hoped for, to drive the final nail in the coffin of the Insurgent in AO North East. So with distance to go (and a river to cross!) and night closing in, the platoons swiftly moved to occupy compounds in what was feared to be 'the heart of darkness'. A hard slog by the platoons paid off and they were able to seize a temporary Check Point before dark and the OC



A member of B Company on patrol.



Pte Vulaca keeps his feet cool.



A roof-top sentry at a temporary Checkpoint.



Returning after a patrol.

flew in with the supplies and bergens. However, just as we were all congratulating ourselves on a job well done the weather closed in, 'Patrol MINIMISE' was enforced (no movement and no helicopters) and the troops were stuck out on a limb! Effectively the Company was cut off for a period of five days. Thankfully the foresight of a good packing list for ordinary patrols as well as discipline and good cheer saw them through the coldest and foggiest of days, along with the OC's 'kukri' which was used to chop fire wood! Luckily the weather lifted in time for everyone to be extracted back to Patrol Base NAHIDULLAH for a traditional deployed Christmas.

Following our stint in PB NAHIDULLAH we reformed momentarily in PB SHAZAD and bid farewell to CSM Marshall and hello to CSM Fairweather. Under direction from the powers that be the

Company formed four 'Police Advisory Teams' (PATs) from 5 and 7 Platoons and attached a multiple to Bravo Company 2 Mercian, leaving the Ops Company with just 6 Platoon and occasionally, the Recce Platoon reinforced by Pipe Major Grisdale's 'Fire Support Group'. For the final weeks of HERRICK 15 Bravo Company joined with elements of Delta (Light) Company to form the basis of an Operations Company and took on Delta Company's Stores and 13 Platoon, under Lieutenant Jamie Tait and Sergeant Torrance, who, along with 6 Platoon, held Check Points in the newly formed AO Kopak South. As I write this the warning order has just come from Battlegroup HQ to deploy on an operation in the Lashkar Gah AO and the Ops Company will take a platoon from Alpha (Grenadier) Company and A Company 1 YORKS under command to do so; it has been nothing if not a lesson in regroup-



L/Cpl Ritchie, Cpl Walker and Cpl Hendry.



Pte Van Der Boon of B Coy writes home.



*Pte Bruce of B Coy talks to his family 2,000 miles away by satellite phone.
Pte Bruce's father served in the Black Watch.*



Maj Roddy Williams conducts a shura with a village elder.



Pte Hutchison of the FSG takes the wet route.



Sgt Buist and CSM Marshall conduct planning before a patrol.



A soldier from B Coy obstacle crossing.

ing and staying flexible! The logistics burden during the tour with AOs merging, extended lines of communication, formation of PATs and the reformation of an Ops Company has been significant. Colour Sergeant Beaton has been rewarded for his efforts however by his success on the Colour Sergeants to Warrant Officers board; we congratulate him and wish him well as CSM of C (Fire Support) Company.

With less than a month of HERRICK 15 left the Company is looking forward to enjoying some well earned leave later in the year and has been warned off to support the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo in the summer!

7 PLATOON BRAVO COMPANY

By Lieutenant T J H Towler

It is odd to think back to Mission Specific Training (MST) and have your brain tell you that it passed in the blink of an eye. Although it seems like only yesterday that we began training for Op HERRICK 15, the process was certainly not fast and it was a long, hard road. Often forgotten are those that feel the costs, but do not reap the rewards, the families of all the Jocks I am lucky to command. The culmination of that long road was the final part of Reception Staging and Onward Integration (RSOI) training in Bastion. As the platoon put everything together and demonstrated their aptitude in Counter-IED, accurate shooting, judgemental and physical tests, the manner in which they did was at the standard our Battalion prides itself upon. We were more than ready.

Five months in to the tour I am able to reflect on a first half well done. The Jocks have not just maintained that aforementioned level but in true fashion they have constantly sought to build upon it and the success we have had is unquestionably due to them. Unlike many contests, however, there is no half time; HERRICK is a relentless beast. Furthermore, it is a beast with many faces; a beast which we have seen at its best and its worst.

At its best was no doubt in Check Point (CP) Yaw Mutay. Yaw Mutay was in a quiet corner of Nad-e Ali surrounded by cotton fields, irrigation ditches and locals who had shunned the insurgency. It overlooked one of the main routes from the district centre to Lashkar Gar, the provincial capital. Insurgents and their families were still in the area but the local elders and police had made it clear that they were not to operate in the area and they had listened. The Check Point had a 25 square kilometre area of operations (AO) and so usually we would find ourselves conducting two patrols, up to four hours long, each day. It did not take long to meet all the local characters and to start building the necessary relationships. It was difficult to patrol without stopping for chai at least twice with familiar faces; the greatest threat we faced were children throwing stones, apparently a rather popular pastime in this neck of the woods. Four weeks in, Cpl Watt's section was sent north to work with the ANA and would not rejoin the platoon until the New Year. In his place we welcomed the support we received from the attached Fire Support Group.

By the time we handed over the Check Point to the Afghan Uniform Police we felt confident about the area's future and almost sad to say goodbye. CP Yaw Mutay had been a brilliant experience. We had facilitated the delicate removal of a paedophile police chief, helped support works to improve water and education in the area, seen the weekly Shura attendance go from four to forty and had had enough faith in the Afghan National Security Forces to follow their lead on patrols; we had

proven the area was ready for transition. We now knew the conditions we would have to set for transition and as we bid farewell to the only real home we would have on the tour, we were determined to be able to experience that level of security again.

Our journey as wandering Bedouin began shortly after leaving CP Yaw Mutay. We found ourselves in the North East of the district on the Nahr-e Saraj border working in an Estonian Check Point. As a member of the coalition, the Estonians play an important role in Helmand. Our job was to maintain a presence on the ground whilst they conducted their six monthly Relief in Place, with their incoming sub unit.

CP Brekna, was located on the southern edge of the Nareh Burgha canal. It looked north into the Dashte, east into Nahr-e Saraj where you could hear contacts raging daily, 200m south into Mangal Kalay and west into Loy Mandeh Kalay. At least half of Loy Mandeh Kalay was a 'no go' area due to IED seeding and Mangal Kalay sat at the limit of the Estonian patrol presence. We were suddenly in a much less friendly area. As we began to acquaint ourselves with the impressive insurgent scouting screen, we knew it would only be a matter of time before punches were thrown. Little did we know that we were destined to clear through this whole area in the not so distant future.

Leaving CP Brekna was frustrating as we had seen the potential of the area and we were keen to see it reach the same state of security we had experienced in Yaw Mutay. As we rejoined the company we were swiftly re-tasked and one multiple flew out with the Recce Platoon to CP Kahmanan in Nahr-e Saraj (South) NES(S), the neighbouring Battlegroup. Our task was to disrupt the Insurgents in his home, called 'the Tri-Boundary area'. This is the area straddling the boundaries of Nad-e Ali, Nahr-e Saraj and Lashkar Gah Battlegroups. We drew as much of the Insurgent attention as we could to enable operations to our North in the vicinity of Mangal Kalay, to go smoothly. We were contacted four times in the short 700m move and as we withdrew due to comms issues, we were followed up all the way back to the CP. The Recce Platoon had faced the brunt having been on the wrong end of a grenade machine gun; all the contacts were well coordinated and extremely accurate, we were clearly uninvited and extremely lucky not to take casualties.

We returned to CP Brekna shortly after, still attached to OC Recce. As we pushed out of our CP again, Insurgent radio traffic started. They knew we were there but did not know why or where we were going. Fighters and weapons were moved into place and ambushes were set as we moved towards them. As we saw the Insurgents moving weapons concealed in bundles of straw we stopped, hidden in ditches and bushes. They did not know where we were and the enemy started firing at us in an attempt to encourage movement. As punches were thrown, the intensity grew and OC Recce called in an A-10 strafing run to silence the Insurgents. With the desired effect achieved we began to move back across the wadi towards Brekna; the enemy still wanted to play however and both multiples were ambushed on their return. We received extremely accurate small arms fire and as we lay in the little cover we had, the ground around us resembled a mini sand storm as rounds erupted through the air and landed all around us. Our reply was instant and aggressive; the 66 rocket was the final boom and came with our finest of compliments. The attack OC Recce faced was more complex and prolonged and once again he called upon his American friend in the sky to call "time at the bar". Five strafes complete we left the battlefield on top and feeling strong although luck had once again been on our side.

By mid-November the Company had handed over its area of operations and had assumed the role of an Operations Company. Company Headquarters moved three kilometres north to Patrol Base Shazad, and the Company reformed and went into battle prep. We made the short journey from CP Brekna to meet in Patrol Base Wahid, first built by the Battlegroup on HERRICK 10. Op TORA PANCHAI (Brave Panther) 2 would see the Company Group increasing the protected community around the Loy Mandeh Bazaar and pushing the Insurgents south, away from the Loy Mandeh Bazaar. The platoon bounded from compound to compound, each time causing the Insurgents to react in an impressive manner. As the Jocks enjoyed the austere conditions of dirty compounds and progressively colder weather, the Insurgents added single round engagements, under slung grenades and PKM to the mix. As we moved to occupy our last compound of the operation, it took the Insurgents barely 30 minutes to demonstrate their displeasure. As our guns sang in unison to quash their attempts, a sniper engaged our location with six extremely accurate single round shots. Once again its accuracy was felt on the roof. Pte Hutcheon, my gunner, confident



7 Platoon during Op BRAVE PANTHER 2.

he was only centimetres away from catching the sniper's offerings in his left ear lobe.

It took an aggressive response to a complex ambush and compound attack to seemingly silence the Insurgent's continued attacks. As Sgt Ferrier's multiple pushed out of the gate, the Insurgents were waiting and engaged them and the compound from four positions. All were extremely accurate and as our guns relentlessly engaged the enemy firing points we were determined that the Insurgents should feel our true weight. It did not take much encouragement to see the 66mm rockets flying towards the firing points, swiftly followed by a volley of 40mm grenades. As the rockets struck home, the Jocks cheered as if watching their favourite football team take the lead in the local derby. As we pulled out of the area, farmers had returned to their fields for the first time in years and shops were springing up in the bazaar. It was rewarding to see tangible results; the Jocks all knew they had really made a difference.

The Company moved again, this time to Patrol Base Nahidullah. We would accompany the Afghan National Army on a final clearance of the tri-boundary area, moving through the area we had first visited with the Recce Platoon. After the ANA Brigade Commander, General Sherin Shah, finished his motivational summary, a rather impressive column of Afghan Warriors began to move out of the gate. The "Warriors" looked up for it, marching in columns of three out of the gate their full tool kits on display; belts of link worn as warm kit.

The weather changed for the worse. Visibility dropped to less than fifty metres and it became bitterly cold. The weather meant that we were forced to stay in the temporary Check Points and the focus switched to keeping warm. Two of the Jocks, Privates Hutcheon and Grant, were affected by cold injuries and everyone was relieved to get off the ground on Christmas Eve. Warm showers, fresh food and cot beds saw morale rise instantly. The 'unleaded' gun fire and the Pipe Major at 0630hrs on Christmas Day ensured the Jocks kicked off Christmas in good spirits while Privates McKenna and Pattie demonstrated a ruthless but hilarious, character assassination of their Platoon Commander in the afternoon skits.

New Year came and went and Cpl Watt's section returned from Patrol Base Wahid where they had been working as part of the Brigade Advisory Group, mentoring the Afghan National Army. The platoon conducted another re-orbat and then deployed on a number of air assault operations. These were focused in the tri-boundary area and sought to protect the building of Check Points to ensure a permanent security presence was achieved.

As the operational tempo began to relax the platoon began to pre-

pare for its inevitable transition to Police Advisory Teams. Yet another change would see the Jocks once again having to up-sticks, hopefully for the last time. The platoon split in two with Sgt Ferrier's team moving to Lashkar Gar and my team remaining in Nad-e Ali. As both teams began to get to grips with the new challenges being faced, the Jocks were relieved to have a bed they could call theirs until the end of the tour; they more than deserved it. To date, 57 Jocks, pioneers, gunners and Medics have been a part of Seven Platoon in all its guises. I have never been as proud as I have over the past six months; I am not sure how I will explain the Jock mentality to my friends and family but in simple terms, they never give up, they always achieve and somehow they maintain a sense of humour throughout. It is no wonder their reputation is envied by many and feared by more.

CHARLIE (FIRE SUPPORT) COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major F A L Luckyn-Malone
Company Sergeant Major:	WO2 (CSM) McSeveney
Company Quarter Master Sergeant:	CSgt McCulloch
Reconnaissance Platoon Commander:	Captain R J Colquhoun
Reconnaissance Platoon	
Second in Command:	CSgt I Smith
Reconnaissance Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt S Leslie
Fire Support Group Commander:	Captain M Stanning
Fire Support Group Second in Command:	WO2 F McConnell
Fire Support Group CQMS:	CSgt Barrie
Mortar Platoon Commander:	Captain A Phillips MC
Mortar Platoon Second in Command:	Sgt Porter
Mortar Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt Bright

OVERVIEW

For "the Savages", the deployment of 3 SCOTS Battlegroup to Helmand Province, Southern Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 15, the last seven months has been characterized by intensity and high tempo. It has seen the Company conducting a wide variety of tasks on deployment. What has been common to all has been the sheer complexity of the tour and the challenges that have been presented to us.

It is true to say that the full spectrum of Counter Insurgency has been experienced throughout the tour: from strategic planning of transition of security from NATO ISAF forces to the ANSF, to conducting deliberate operations into the Western Dashte (desert). What is also true is the benefit we have all gained from the once seemingly relentless period of Mission Specific Training (MST) before we deployed. However, this rigorous and thorough training has since

paid huge dividends. Never truer are the words, "Train hard, fight easy".

The Tour has seen the Company split to conduct its specialist roles although happily there have been welcome reunions between Company HQ and the platoons passing through FOB Shawqat! The Company have performed exceptionally well throughout the tour and the Recce Platoon, Fire Support Group and the Mortars all have a hard earned reputation amongst the supported Rifle Companies. It has been a long and hard journey from the completion of the Spearhead role 12 months ago, from the start of MST to the end of the tour itself. Typically, the Jocks have excelled on operations and every man in the Company can stand proud having done his part on what has been a significant, memorable, and unique tour.

THE RECCE PLATOON

By Captain R J Colquhoun

The Recce Platoon has had the privilege of operating throughout the Battlegroup's area of responsibility and at the time of writing, has worked with every Company Group bar one. We are trying to achieve eight out of eight soon! Luckily we were well prepared for this prior to deployment, having supported four different companies during Mission Specific Training (MST) exercises. This left the Platoon well prepared, if a little unsettled but we were confident in our skills and abilities. One particular incident during training helped display a little more than expected of a typical rifle platoon. Inserting a cordon around a target compound before a Company clearance operation, members of the platoon became aware of some whispering away to a flank. Creeping forward, they were able to establish that there were two enemy waiting in an ambush position. A little stealthy repositioning and our own ambush was sprung. This played havoc on the ensuing serials when the intended effect didn't happen on time and forced the directing staff to investigate. Their surprise at finding two Ghurkha 'Taliban', sitting in plasticuffs without a shot or shout being heard, was a picture. The sheepish looks of our prisoners was only matched by the grins of the Jocks.

Following deployment we swapped our trusty Jackal vehicles for the better protected Husky for operating in the built up Canal Zone (CZ). Lance Corporal Goldsworthy and his team of drivers have had their work cut out to keep these more temperamental beasts on the road but they have transported us around (nearly) all of the time. Until January we were unable to call any one patrol base home. We have moved

regularly between tasks and at times wondered which Patrol Base of Pimon, Shahzad, Kamiabi, Foad (briefly) and Wahid we should unpack our bags into!

Initially the Platoon was used to find information, help understand issues and deliver influence messages to local nationals by conducting reassurance patrols to support ground holding units. It wasn't long before our patrols became more Insurgent orientated – trying to find their dispositions, understand their capabilities and disrupt their effects. Soon after arrival, whilst on patrol, we met an Insurgent response robust enough to have both multiples pinned to the ground for the best part of an hour. The heavy weight of small arms fire was accurate enough to create little enthusiasm for following up as the Insurgents extracted with the weapon. The more experienced members of the Platoon were reminded of their most vivid experiences of the last tour. For others it was a baptism of fire that showed the steep learning curve to be quickly surmounted in order to overcome the enemy's skill.

The Platoon initially deployed to Check Point Kamiabi to draw out an Insurgent grouping that had been intimidating the local population and destabilising their security. In the three weeks that followed, 'contact' with the enemy was made on a regular basis. With an aggressive patrolling matrix, the Platoon managed to help the ground holding unit to force the Insurgents further away from the centre of population. Off patrol, the routine of Check Point life, although austere, was reassuring. It didn't take long patrolling the same ground to recognise the people and build up relationships. Equally the local children soon learnt which Jock was the soft touch for 'shocklit' and 'boilees'!

Unfortunately, our time in Kamiabi soon came to an end and we became nomadic once more. Leaving Lance Corporal Armstrong behind to take charge of some new Jocks (and improve his grasp of Monopoly and Risk!), we gained Privates Anderson, Cruickshanks, Fraser and Kyle in return. A series of helicopter assaults followed as we probed enemy dispositions in the Insurgent dominated 'tri-boundary area'. Each of these showed the Insurgents to be extremely capable although luckily so were the Jocks and using every bit of courage and skill at their disposal the Platoon (plus a little extra technology and equipment) achieved a disproportional disrupt affect and extracted, exhilarated, to help inform the picture ahead of a Battlegroup clearance operation.

To support the clearance south of the Loy Mandeh Kalay, and as Bravo Company pushed back the enemy defensive line and cleared a



The Recce Platoon commanded by Capt Rob Colquhoun and CSgt Smith photographed in front of a Husky.



LCpls Davidson, Taylor and Johnstone of the Recce Platoon.

safe route through a heavily seeded IED belt, the Platoon helped to keep pressure on the Insurgent flanks. After a number of long days patrolling out of Wahid, the Recce Platoon then led a pre-dawn move to seize and occupy a suspected IED factory to establish a new Check Point location to dominate the route to the south. Once there, the Jocks held the position while Engineers built up defences and prepared the compound for handover to our Estonian allies. Following this, several more joint patrols were conducted to push back firing points and clear the IED threat from the immediate area. We were lucky to work so closely with the Estonians and built up a great rapport with these brave and experienced soldiers.

Pulled out of the line after several weeks of deliberate operations, we were rewarded with a rest and directed to provide the Battlegroup Reserve for an ANA led operation. Dreams of a few days 'feet up' were short lived however as the Brigadier told the Commanding Officer over lunch on the second day that we had become "victims of our partners' success" and a hasty exploit was needed to maintain momentum. Up step the Recce: "deploy into a screen to protect seizure of an additional Check Point. You'll only be out a night but you need to be on the ground in two hours."

With a very quick set of battle orders the Platoon was out the gate, and having negotiated the IEDs again, in position by last light. Sangars were built up and the filling of sandbags kept the Jocks warm until dawn. The following morning however the land was shrouded in freezing fog, reducing visibility to less than 100m; the Engineers could not bring stores to build the new Check Point and helicopters were unable to resupply our forward positions. Having deployed in light scales (without sleeping bags) and temperatures dropping to minus eight degrees Celsius, the Jocks huddled around makeshift stoves to keep warm between stags. Our single night out turned into a six day winter survival as we used every rag we could find to cover ourselves through the nights. The inevitable fleas seemed a small price to pay for the warmth we so desperately craved!

Our morale was lifted late on Christmas Eve as we were ordered back to Wahid. We patrolled back as quickly as possible to revel in warm showers, clean clothes, silly hats and Estonian festivities in full swing. The dinner next day was delicious and the Commanding Officer's visit cheered us all as he stated "I don't need to tell you of the Battlegroup's achievements as you've been in the thick of them throughout."

Over the New Year period, we conducted more screen operations to support the Estonians, often with snipers in support. The Insurgents however seemed to have melted away with the cold weather and so in mid January we recovered back to Shahzad to prepare ourselves for a change of role. Unpacking our bags at last, we have used Shahzad as a firm base from which to conduct regular short surges into the desert. These continue to keep the pressure on the Insurgents and prevent his re-infiltration into the cleared CZ. Recently we have been very fortunate to work with the Pipe Major's Jackal mounted Fire Support Group and our combined 'Recce Group' has been very potent at nearly forty strong in up to nine vehicles.

The Recce Platoon has had a busy, varied, challenging, and rewarding tour so far. Undoubtedly we have been fortunate with our tasks but that is a credit to the quality of the soldiering that the Jocks have displayed

throughout training and deployment. It has been an intense operational tempo with little time to settle into a routine or recover from exertions before we are off again. We were forced to say goodbye to Lance Corporal Orrock who picked up a non battle injury (involving a skipping rope!) and released Lance Corporal Ritchie to attempt Junior Brecon but have welcomed Lance Corporal Gasaulayawa, and Privates Crosbee and Black to backfill our numbers as a temporary measure. Going where others will not, at a pace they cannot, we have been lucky too. We will look back on our achievements with pride and perhaps some others might with a little envy too.

THE FIRE SUPPORT GROUP (FSG)

By Captain M P Stanning

Pre-deployment training was hard work for the FSG, with driving courses filling up whatever spare time was left after learning everything there was to know about heavy weapons in classrooms and on ranges. Despite all the odds and in a very compressed timetable, the 65 strong group were qualified to operate their Jackal vehicles and crew their 12.7mm (0.50cal) Heavy Machine Guns and 40mm Grenade Machine Guns in time for deployment. Most challenging of all, however, was the unusual requirement to provide heavy weapons fire support from a Jackal Group on a hill top in Otterburn on the last day of May, to then march in full Number One Dress opposite Holyrood Palace for the presentation of the new Colours, less than 24 hours later! Pipe Major Grisdale led the way to change his versatile band from drivers-driving and gunners-gunning to pipers-piping and drummers-drumming.

Following deployment, with multiples spread to support each of the Company Groups, Captain Stanning found himself liaising between the Battlegroup in Shawqat and the Brigade Headquarters in Lashkar Gah. Colour Sergeant Barrie also became redeployed as a glorified camp janitor for PB Shahzad, looking after Alpha Company 1 PWRR, a Counter IED team, a Combat Engineer Troop as well as the Jocks of the Ops Company, Recce Platoon and anyone else who passed through wanting a bed or hot water in the showers.

Elsewhere, multiple commanders enjoyed varying amounts of independence and mission command. Sergeant Roy and his band of merry men with Alpha (Grenadier) Company conducted regular Jackal patrols through the south of the District while Sergeant Brady had a more exciting time with Alpha Company 1 YORKS in PB Pimon, pushing his vehicles deep into the Dashte to singlehandedly throw back the Insurgency. Corporal Walker dismounted from his vehicles and moved with Bravo Company during their time as the manoeuvre company clearing south of Loy Mandeh and ended up in Check Point Kamiabi. Pipe Major Grisdale has moved a lot with his 2IC Colour Sergeant Rose from the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, to Pimon, Folad, Wahid and finally to Shahzad in support of the Ops Company and latterly the Recce Platoon. The Estonian Company Commander in particular was as confused as anyone to hear a Pipe Major from a Scottish battalion with a Scouse accent arguing with a Geordie! Lance Corporal Jose had a narrow escape when his body armour prevented a sharpshooter's bullet penetrating his belly, though he will no doubt carry the scars and memories for a while to come. WO2 McConnell, with Corporal Pratt,



Members of the FSG in Patrol Base Pimon commanded by Cpl Palmer (front) on board their Jackal.



The fearless men of the FSG.

formed part of the FSG attached to the Charlie Company Group, 1 PWRR. They were redeployed from Nad-e Ali to the Nahr-e-Saraj (NES) Battlegroup AO following on the withdrawal from Theatre of the Danish Battlegroup in January.

It's been an experience and undoubtedly, the increased mobility and fire power that each FSG has provided to their Company Groups have allowed dismounted troops to manoeuvre in contact and provided a much welcomed mounted screen function.

THE MORTAR PLATOON

By Captain A J Phillips MC

Throughout the build up to Op HERRICK 15 the Platoon spent a great deal of time out and about on the UK's training areas providing Fire Support for the mounted Combined Arms Live Firing Exercise in Castle Martin, conducting live firing in Otterburn and finally coming together for the FTX on Salisbury plain. With the Mortar Fire Controllers (MFCs) involved in a great many live firing exercises, integrating with our Royal Artillery colleagues from 16 (Sandham's) Battery 26 Regiment Royal Artillery to form Fire Support Teams (FST), the intensive preparation period has paid off and the Platoon deployed in good order.

The Mortar Platoon initially deployed with two Mortar lines, the first in support of Alpha Company 1 YORKS and the second in support of Alpha (Grenadier) Company 3 SCOTS with their range rings providing coverage for the majority of Nad-e Ali. Ever on stand by to support, the Platoon has had to maintain a high level of readiness and keep their weapon handling skills well practiced. Unfortunately for Mortar men but luckily for the longer term security situation in Afghanistan, there has been little requirement to use high explosive fire support during this tour of duty, although numerous smoke and illumination missions have assisted operations and patrols by day and by night.

Demonstrating that the men of the Mortar Platoon are soldiers first when not manning the Mortar Line they have patrolled in multiples, driven vehicles and manned guards around Check Points. This additional manpower generated by the Mortar Platoon has increased operational capability and flexibility and been a great help to the rifle platoons.

Captain Phillips MC has been an integral member of the Influence



Cpl Ellis chatting with locals.



Pte Easson rests during a patrol.



Sgt Bright takes a break in the shade.

and Targeting cell, helping building target packs on suspected Insurgent members and their locations. Sergeant Bright, amongst other jobs, has helped to liaise with the Estonian Mortar Line while providing his advice as a MFC wherever required, as has Corporal Stewart. Cpls Ross, Ellis and Shields have acted as MFCs within Fire Support Teams while Sgt Porter and Cpl Stewart have spent the majority of their time commanding the Mortar sections with the occasional foray as a MFC. Cpl Mortley even found himself briefly as a section commander in one of the most disputed areas of Insurgent activity.

The Mortar Platoon, although spread to the four winds has had a successful tour.

D (LIGHT) COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major A Richards
Company Second in Command:	Captain A Halliday
Company Sergeant Major:	WO2 (CSM) Wilson
Company Quarter Master Sergeant:	CSgt Fairweather/CSgt McQuade
Officer Commanding 13 Pl:	Lieutenant J Tait
Platoon Sergeant 13 Pl:	Sgt Torrance

Op HERRICK 15 has been a varied, if turbulent period for D (Light) Company and its personnel.

Tasked initially as the Battlegroup's Ops Company, available for deployment across the Area of Operations, we were restructured pre-tour to suit the role, losing 15 Platoon but gaining the Recce Platoon and the Pipe Major's Fire Support Group (FSG). On arrival in Theatre, Company HQ, 13 Platoon, and the FSG deployed to PB PIMON on the Nareh Burgha (NEB) canal, which marks the boundary between the irrigated Canal Zone to the south, and the Dashte to the north and west. Whilst sitting, waiting to be launched into a suitable piece of real estate, the Recce Platoon were pushed forward in support of another Company, doing what they seem to have done for most of the tour, namely attracting hostile fire.

Our first and only deployment as a complete company came during late October, when we were deployed into Ops Box Perth, a wedge of land in an area known as 31 West, in which the insurgents retained significant influence. Joining the Company for this operation was a Platoon of the Mercian Regiment, who arrived in Theatre expecting to



LCpl Brownless looks North across the Nareh Burgha Canal.



Dawn during a Cordon and Search operation.



Major Andy Richards and CSM Wilson at dawn.



LCpl Beveridge mans the GPMG.



Pte Marshall, Cpl Everest, Ptes Peutherer, Fraser, Aitken, Kyle and LCpls Brown and MacCarthy relaxing in Checkpoint KAMIABI.



Crossing the NEB Canal.



LCpl Brownless and Pte Boa looking for targets.

settle into their own little bolthole, only to find that it was now already occupied by Jocks.

The hostile nature of the area was demonstrated during one of the first patrols, with a 13 Platoon soldier being injured by shrapnel from an under-slung grenade launcher round. In this instance, the robust response by the Platoon allowed an effective casualty evacuation under fire – no easy task. An insurgent follow up, targeting Check Point Kamiabi and inflicting a further casualty, was seen off in short order, with several insurgents falling to accurate and well controlled fire from the sangars.

In the following days, as the Company continued to patrol into the Ops Box, the insurgents were drawn out into the open, where a number were dispatched by US Marine Corps attack helicopters. Coupled with complementary operations to the East, this served to dishearten the remainder, who either opted for a low profile or extracted to more agreeable areas. For the remaining period until the Ops Box was collapsed, the efforts of the Company became focussed on patrolling intensively to discourage the re-infiltration of the Insurgents, who resorted to shoot and scoot tactics, whilst trying to gain an understanding of the population, and connect them with the representatives of their government, including the Police.

By mid-December, with the area relatively quiet and the focus shifting elsewhere, the Company was split up to backfill other elements of the Battlegroup with the Platoons moving on to further adventures elsewhere, whilst the Company Headquarters personnel spread into a variety of roles across Nad-e Ali. As I write, with a little over a month remaining on the tour, we are now looking forward to the reforming of the Company prior to the handover to 1 Royal Anglian Regiment and what will doubtless be the competitive inter-Platoon recounting of war stories and tall tales!

13 PLATOON

By Lieutenant J Tait

Platoon Commander: Lieutenant J Tait
Platoon Sergeant: Sgt Torrance
Section Commanders: Cpl Everett
Cpl Hattan
Cpl Riddock

The tour began in sedate style for 13 Platoon, when we deployed to Patrol Base Pimon and had a relaxed few weeks of battle prep, sport and sunbathing before our campaign began in earnest with our deployment into a Check Point in Ops Box Perth. From there on in there was very little rest for the Platoon, who went on to work with seven out of eight Companies within the Battlegroup, conducting tasks which have included ground holding, deliberate operations, Helicopter Assault Force operations and Force Protection for the ANA Advisors.

The period of October to December was the busiest period for the Platoon; with the majority of us never having been in contact it was without a doubt a very steep learning curve. Just four hours after arriving at our new home in Check Point Kamiabi, Insurgents fired small arms and under-slung grenades at the sangars. Just four days into this deployment, Ptes Gracie (13 Pl) and Terry (Mortar Platoon 2 MERCIAN) were injured by shrapnel from grenades in separate incidents. The Insurgents had a great deal of influence over the population in the adjacent Ghazni Street area, and used it as a suitable forming up point for attacking our patrols. A common tactic was to engage the rear of the patrol; this made life interesting for Cpl Riddock and Pte Jones at the back of 81B and Cpl Everett and Pte Begbie at the rear of 81A.

The fighting continued up until the Islamic Religious holiday of Eid in November, after which all went quiet due to successful targeting in the area and the start of the cold winter weather. Even without the Insurgents, Pte Rothwell still managed to have a near death experience after falling in to a deep open-top well. Hearing the words 'Man Down', most of the patrol wondered where the threat was coming from, whilst Pte Wilson 46 ran to his aid and pulled him out, still clutching his rifle and equipment.

Life in the Platoon Check Point was comfortable and the Jocks did well to make it their own, taking it in turns to cook each night. Ptes Saurara and Clement were the most frequent chefs (mainly for their bread making ability) and even LCpl Bell, the Platoon Medic, took her turn but was quickly relieved of her cooking duties after multiple cases of suspected food poisoning. The approach to 'cook until black then scratch until the desired look is achieved' doesn't go down too well with the Jocks of 13 Platoon!

In mid December, the Platoon moved under command of A Company 1 PWRR to provide Force Protection for the Afghan National Army Advisors during Op ZAMESTANI PEEROZI (Winter Victory), an ANSF led operation to clear an area known as 31 East. This saw the Platoon deployed over the Christmas period with Cpl Riddock's multiple stuck in an Afghan compound, where Pte Wilson 91 decided to let off a smoke grenade inside the room to 'clear it of fleas' (not a bad idea had it not been in the middle of a kit check).

The other half of the Platoon was in CP Daqhiqh in the role of A Company 1 PWRR reserve, conducting resupply runs to 81B with spare Sat-phone batteries. Christmas Day came and went with the Platoon's worth of presents sitting in an ISO container in PB SHAZAD but the PWRR ensured that the Platoon had an hour back together in CP DAQHIQH to eat a full Christmas dinner. The operation finished on the 27th December and there was a quick 24hr turnaround (including opening Christmas presents) before we were moved again in support of Alpha (Grenadier) Coy in the South.

The Platoon successfully completed a number of aviation assaults under Alpha (Grenadier) Company. During one of these Pte Balcarras found 200 rounds of PKM ammunition. Elsewhere, Pte Anderson made good use of the ISTAR cameras, spotting an IED team digging in a device in what was supposed to be a relatively safe area. Living in PB KALANG with BFBS TV, internet and a chef, the Jocks thought they had it easy until Sgt Torrance led a PT drive which saw daily circuits on the HLS. For two weeks during this period, 81A did a two week stint in FOB SHAWQAT with the ANA Advisors, where Pte Begbie utilised the dining facilities to best effect, often going back for seconds and on one occasion thirds. This was clearly still not enough; on one occasion he was caught tucking into a tube of Pringles at 2am having woken up hungry. This may explain why he was unable to beat Pte Marshall in a race around the camp in body armour!

After a month with A Company, 13 Platoon moved up to the North East to support the Estonians whilst the clearance of Kopak took place. The Platoon took over a particularly spartan Check Point known as Compound 66, previously held by Bravo Company and then the Estonians, who had stripped it bare. A lot of time between patrols was spent building shower and toilet facilities, as well as filling sandbags. This task was led by Ptes Anderson and Easson of the Mortar Platoon. The IED threat in this area was higher than anywhere we had been before and the Jocks did well to keep their motivation and spirits up towards the end of the tour, resulting in some legacy IED finds with the Afghan Local Police.

Having experienced the highs and lows of CP life and moved all over the District with often little information and time for battle prep, the Platoon have made the most of their tour and remained flexible in an uncertain land. All in all, it has been a fascinating experience to have worked not only with seven different Infantry Companies but also with the Afghan National Army, Afghan Uniformed Police, Afghan Local Police, and Afghan National Civil Order Police. It is especially reassuring to see the progress made.

15 PLATOON

By Lieutenant N Allen-Perry

The previous 12 months in 15 Platoon have seen busy and demanding periods of change, with "Transition" being a key theme throughout the period. In the Spring of 2011 the Platoon welcomed Sgt Hunter closely followed by Lieutenant Allen-Perry into Platoon HQ. 15 Platoon is traditionally part of Delta (Light) Company but the Battalion's re-orbiting, in order to meet the operational need in Helmand Province, saw them form the third Platoon of Alpha (Grenadier) Company – this transition was met with much relief from the Jocks since it had previously been rumoured that we would be amalgamated into Alpha Company 1 Yorks for a short period.

The platoon has embarked on four demanding training exercises as part of Mission Specific Training, numerous vehicle courses and of course a six month operational tour of Afghanistan. Fortunately it has not been all hard work this year, the Platoon has enjoyed several moments in which they could relax together and bond as a unit away from the field. Highlights have been Pte McArthur's refreshing interpretation of the song 'Message in a Bottle' through the medium of mime in the Inverness Branch of the British Legion. Days before deploying the platoon took one last opportunity for a day's adventure training in which they went canyoning in Aviemore, a dangerous and exhilarating experience for all concerned, particularly their Platoon Commander who found himself washed away by the white water rapids, much to the amusement of his platoon.

The platoon was initially split into two multiple locations in southern Nad-e Ali. The Alpha multiple was commanded by Lt Allen-Perry with Cpl Forsyth as his 2 i/c; the Bravo multiple was commanded by Sgt Hunter with Cpl Lavery as his 2i/c. Both multiples had to hit the ground running since the handover periods with 45 Commando were often as short as 36 hours. We were deployed to Check Points Sabat and Bolan T; these two locations could not have been more different. Check Point Bolan T had been a former Company location and was complete with the plush surroundings befitting a Commanding Officer with a chef, allowing Sgt Hunter to live in relative style in a tent quickly named the 'Sultan's Palace'. The Alpha multiple meanwhile set up home as best they could in the austere and remote Check Point Sabat enjoying nightly fine dining supplied by the Jocks themselves (of particular culinary note was Pte Taylor's tuna and powdered egg combo!). The latter half of the tour has seen Check Points successfully transferred and the platoon consolidate in Patrol Base Kalang. Since then we have continued to focus on ensuring that the Insurgents do not return to the area and have helped the Afghan Security Forces to take responsibility for the area. So far we have been successful and our hard work from the first half of the tour seems to be paying off.

It has been a challenging twelve months but one the platoon have taken in their stride. The men have adapted to change well and conducted themselves superbly in Theatre showing absolute professionalism and treating the population of southern Nad-e Ali with respect and compassion. It is with excitement that we look forward to the challenges of life post Op HERRICK 15 (after a brief rest...!)

HEADQUARTER COMPANY

Officer Commanding/BG Log Officer: Major D Bruce
 Company Sergeant Major: WO2 (CSM) E Duff MBE
 Company Quartermaster Sergeant: CSgt J Fraser
 Quartermaster: Major C McInroy
 Quartermaster (T): Major G Tait MBE
 Motor Transport Platoon Commander: Captain H Hood
 Motor Transport Warrant Officer: WO2 G Parker
 Regimental Signals Officer: Captain H Gladstone
 Regimental Signals Warrant Officer: WO2 J Fisher
 Regimental Administration Officer: Captain A Hughes
 Chief Clerk: WO2 G MacDonald

HQ Company has applied itself to a wide variety of tasks over the course of the tour. We have been split far and wide between the A2 Echelon in Camp Bastion, the Rear Ops Group in the UK and FOB Shawqat, to name but a few. The OC and CSM have also been given the additional roles of OC FOB SHAWQAT and FOB CSM, as well as Battlegroup Logistics Officer, for the duration of the tour. The additional FOB tasks have involved discipline and administrative duties in support of some 300 personnel including UK civilian employees, locally employed civilians and interpreters. We have also been responsible for the Force Protection of the FOB using the HQ Staff and Officers to conduct the Sangar duties.

The A2 Echelon has been commanded by both Majors McInroy and Tait, with a switchover mid tour in order to provide variety. The work carried out by A2 has been instrumental in the provision of equipment and stores by both aviation and combat logistics patrols. Their workload has been increased due to the significant changes in force lay-down, which have been conducted throughout our tour. Every Check Point or patrol base handover brings a significant logistics burden in the form of extraction of infrastructure and equipment. The grouping of subunits to different Battlegroups has also presented a challenge in terms of handover of equipment accounts.



Civilian contact Rotary Wing provided much of the logistic support for the Battlegroup.



Logistics in action at Fob Shawqat.



A1 Echelon including the MT Platoon and RLC drivers was commanded by Capt Hood.

The Rear Ops Group has been instrumental in the provision of Battlefield Casualty Replacements, while there have not been a significant number of casualties during the tour, there has been the usual churn of injuries and medical problems. These all require replacements. We must also thank them for their hard work in organising the homecoming parades – to which we are all already looking forward!

The Headquarter Company personnel based in FOB Shawqat have been involved in the daily resupply by Support Helicopter, Civilian Contract Rotary Wing Helicopters, Civilian Contract Road Move ('Jingly Trucks'), and Combat Logistical Patrols, of food, water, and rations. Resupply has had to cater for a Battlegroup of 1700 personnel spread across 144 square kilometres. The loads have been ably distributed to their onward destinations by the CQMS and his team. Credit must go to Sgt Currie for his relentless quad bike driving and to Cpl Sloan for his Fork Lift distribution. CSgt Fraser also provided an excellent Father Christmas with a sleigh constructed by the Engineers!

Captain Harry Hood has led the Mastiff Group in their daily resupply tasks across the District. His drivers have been drawn from across the Combined Force, with the vast majority coming from the MT Platoon. The group have been divided into two task lines, with one line commanded by the Capt Hood and the other commanded by WO2 Parker, the MTWO. They have divided the district in two, with WO2 Parker concentrating on the North and Capt Hood concentrating on the South.

WO2 (CSM) Duff as the FOB Sgt Major has been a never ending source of inspiration and morale. He has overseen the G4 activity at the HLS, enforced discipline during the weekly Combat Logistic Patrol resupply, managed a complex sentry duty rota and has maintained a close eye on personnel administration including the Company R and R Plot.

We look now to our return to Fort George where we will support the Rifle Companies as they perform the Royal Guard, the Edinburgh Tattoo and the Olympics. We will also take part in a wide variety of adventure training activities. Headquarter Company should be very proud of their contribution during the tour.

CIS PLATOON

Regimental Signals Officer:	Captain H W Gladstone
Regimental Signals Warrant Officer:	WO2 Fisher
CIS CQMS:	CSgt Tollan
Bowman Systems Manager:	CSgt Shearer
CIS Pl Sergeant:	Sgt Braid
RSIST Commander:	Sgt Collins
Rear Link Detachment Commander:	Sgt McGinn

The CIS Platoon has provided support to the Battlegroup by manning the Company Signals Detachments, the Battlegroup Headquarters Joint Ops Cell and the provision of signals expertise to A2 Echelon in Camp Bastion. We have been lucky to be supported by a Rear Link Detachment which includes 8 signallers from the Royal Signals, commanded by Sgt McGinn, alongside our existing Royal Signals Infantry Support Team commanded by Sgt Collins; of the 27 deployed signallers, 13 of them are Royal Signals cap badge. Whilst the RLD have been attached to us for the duration of the tour alone, the RSIST have been embedded in the Battalion since October 2010.

Each Company Signals Detachment consists of a Corporal, Lance Corporal and two Privates. One of the soldiers in each detachment is from the Royal Signals and provides specialist skills such as the use of satellite communications. The size of Company areas of operations has required signals detachments to achieve communications over ranges up to 10 Km, between up to five patrol bases and as a result traditional skills such as the setting up of radio re-broadcasts have proved essential. Particular credit must go to Bravo Company and Cpl Rae for communicating back to Patrol Base Catina over a period of four days whilst conducting compound clearances during Op TORA PANCHAI (Brave Panther) 2 at considerable range. Credit must also go to Sgt Braid and Cpl Ross for setting up a Combined Force Forward HQ during Op Winter Victory in Char-e-Anjir police station.

At a Battlegroup level, voice communications have been used to coordinate all vehicle moves through the district on a routine basis. Command has been exercised almost entirely over "JChat." This takes the form of an internet chat window in which sub unit watch keepers have posted messages in text form. Chat is carried out using voice procedure and negates the need for radio logging, because all posts are recorded. During large Combined Force operations we have operated a traditional command net alongside our chat window to ensure that Battlegroup call signs such as CO's TAC are kept up to speed with developments. The tour has been characterised by changes in the force laydown as Companies have merged their areas of operations and bases have been closed. This has demanded much of the CIS logistic chain and credit must go to CSgt Tollan and his team for carrying out all the equipment transfers required for the transfer of C Coy IPWRR to CF Nahr-e Seraj North, and Bravo Coy personnel to the Police Mentoring and Advisory Group in Lashkar Gah.

REAR JOINT OPERATIONS CELL (JOC) CAMP BASTION

Officer Commanding & Quartermaster:	Major G Tait MBE
Regimental Administrative Officer:	Captain A Hughes
Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant:	WO2 (RQMS) Cunningham
ET SNCO:	CSgt Anderson
Supplies Forward SNCO:	CSgt McCulloch
CIS CQMS:	CSgt Tollan
CQ2 – Rear based Company Storeman:	One per Coy (8 in total)

As we approach the end of Op HERRICK 15, the tempo is starting to increase again in the Rear JOC or A2 Echelon with the Relief in Place on the horizon.

There were doubts that we would keep up the frenetic pace initially set at the beginning of the deployment but we have managed nevertheless. Its worth mentioning that we have done so with fewer personnel and a larger Area of Operations than the preceding Battlegroup; this is testament to the hard work of the QMs Department.

The role of the Rear JOC is primarily to ensure that all those commodities that the Battlegroup needs to operate are supplied forward to the right location in the right quantity and condition at the right time. We also have a personnel support function which ensures the routine but essential activities of pay, administration and R&R as well as the manifesting of every member of the Battlegroup for the Relief in Place.

Current operations in Afghanistan demand that we support fighting elements forward in a slightly different way than we may have been used

to in the past. With all the main logistic nodes here in Camp Bastion we receive every individual item directly to the Rear JOC from where the QM(T) directs the supply forward of ammunition, fuel, rations, water, vehicle spares, medical supplies, clothing, boots and everything else. Military and civilian rotary assets, military ground convoys and contracted road moves are all used to move on average 250 tons of materiel per week, an enormous undertaking.

As an organisation we are located in a tented camp within Camp Bastion where we own a sizeable chunk of real estate to manage the some 160 ISO containers which we use to manage those stores we supply forward. Most of the team can now operate the 3.5t Fork Lift truck which has certainly earned its keep over the last 6 months. The Rear Ops Cell works as a tight unit and often work long and unsociable hours and while there have been niggles and the odd moan, to the credit of every soldier in the Rear JOC, morale has never wavered. The QM has even been known to make the occasional brew (although the RQMS's jokes can have an adverse affect on the usual high quality banter in the office). As our counterparts from 1 Royal Anglian start to trickle through Camp Bastion, the relief is evident on the faces of the Rear JOC, although we know the job is not yet complete.

To summarise, it has been an extremely demanding but rewarding tour for the soldiers in the Rear JOC and they have taken it all in their stride and managed to do so with a smile on their faces.

Everyone can certainly look forward to their well earned Post Operational Tour Leave.

THE OFFICERS' MESS

President of the Mess Committee:	Major R A D Williams
Mess Secretary:	Captain R J Colquhoun
Mess Treasurer:	Captain H W Gladstone
Mess Colour Sergeant:	Colour Sergeant Chessar

Out in Afghanistan, the officers have shown great fortitude and resilience to maintain a semblance of normality in extraordinary circumstances. Some have committed their spare time to honing skills and toning biceps: Captain Halliday, impressed by the Royal Marine example, ran his own death gym in Patrol Base Pimon where lesser mortals entered a circuit training session with him at their peril. Captains Sweet and Johnson have added a new question to the estimate and planning process "what are their bicep curls doing and why?" while Major Bruce is getting fed up with unnecessary requests for new shirts for their bigger arms. Captain Phillips has also taken the stress of a desk job out on the weights machine and now looks more like the Aryan super soldier than the propaganda officer ever believed possible.

Others have taken a gentler approach to their 'down time'. Following the mantra displayed in the entrance to the Intelligence Cell, 'Make tea not war', Captain Lever has worked hard to impress on all the more delicate appreciation of loose leaf Earl Grey. Not to be out done, Lieutenant Colonel Singer welcomes all to his Medical Centre with bone china cups and saucers, a silver(y) tea pot and Fortnum and Mason's Tea. With less panache but equal enthusiasm, Captain Colquhoun has bounced between locations on a caffeine high, taking cake to Shawqat, coffee in Shahzad and cookies from Wahid, whilst pretending to be planning his platoon's next exploits in search of a chat.

Of an evening Lieutenant Fiona Robertson has encouraged non-infanteers to practice their house keeping skills, issuing cross stitch patterns to some worryingly willing participants, while Lieutenant Towler has kept others awake laughing with his insatiable appetite for Romantic Comedies. Lieutenant Weir has kept others awake laughing at his inescapable appetite for calamity. Whilst speaking to the Commanding Officer of the Police Mentoring and Advisory Group about an intended reveille:

"Sir, what time are you getting up in the morning?"

"0620, Bob. I always wake at 0620."

"That's interesting Sir, it's just I need to get up at 0600. Is there any chance you could set your alarm earlier and wake me up then?"

"I'm not in the habit of waking subalterns. How about I wake up at 0620 and if you're still in bed I'll let you know you're late."

"Very good Sir!"

While you'd be forgiven for thinking that an operational deployment might curtail Mess social activities, the wives have not been under that impression. The social swirl of drinks and dinners has kept them all entertained while leaving their husbands often wondering why they couldn't get through on the telephone. They have, however, been simply superb at holding the home front, maintaining morale with parcels

and letters and once again we acknowledge their hardships through separation and anxious waits for news and we salute their huge contribution to our war effort.

Finally, congratulations go to Captain Martin Stanning who took full advantage of his R&R trip to Paris to become engaged to Miss Anna Jane Sharp.

WARRANT OFFICERS' AND SERGEANTS' MESS

Presiding Member: WO1 Duffus, WO1 Shaw
PMC: WO2 McSeveney
Mess Manager: Sgt Muirhead

During our deployment the Mess members have had varied experiences depending on where they have been deployed. It is clear however that the standard of leadership expected of the members has been beyond reproach. In Shawqat entertainment has been limited to an ongoing darts competition. In this department SSgt Eagle has proved herself a strong contestant! Sgt McKewan has raised morale no end with his delicious food, Sgt Muirhead has proved a valuable vehicle commander in CO's TAC and Sgt Buist has been seen wearing a dressing gown in a Check Point!

We must congratulate a few of the Mess Members on some recent births. Congratulations must go to Sgt Hunter and Donna on the birth of their daughter Ellie, CSgt Brown and Shaz on the birth of their son Levi and Sgt Clark and Heidi on the birth of their son Riley George. Lastly congratulations must go to CSgt Mair on his marriage to Gemma prior to deployment. We have seen a number of new faces arrive in the Mess including RQMS Cunningham, WO2 Bruce, WO2 Howe, Sgt Ramsay and Michelle, Sgt Hunter and Heidi, Sgt Brady and Emma, Sgt Benson, Sgt McGinn, SSgt Ronald, SSgt Carpenter, CSgt Fraser and Laura, CSgt McCulloch and Amanda, CSgt McQuade, Pipe Major Grisdale, and Sgt Bright.

The Mess would also like to wish the following all the best on their new assignments; CSgt Blyth on his posting as CQMS in Hereford, CSgt Carlisle on his posting to Sandhurst as an instructor, SSgt Searles on his posting to Brunei, Sgt Copeland on his posting to Harrogate, and Sgt Fitzpatrick on his posting to ITB Catterick. The following must be congratulated on their promotion to WO2; CSgt Fraser, CSgt McQuade, CSgt Beaton, CSgt Smith, and CSgt Blythe. We are indebted to those back in the UK for their continued support during the tour. Planning for our return has already started, with a Summer Ball planned in July. We will also swap around the Mess Committee appointments on our return.

TICONDEROGA COMPANY – REAR OPERATIONS GROUP

Officer Commanding (until 10 Jan 2012): Major G Tait
Officer Commanding (wef 10 Jan 2012): Major C McInroy
Company Second in Command: Captain A Rose
ROG Adjutant: Captain L McDougall
ROG Company Sergeant Major: WO2 J Bruce

The fast pace of life for the Rear Operations Group (ROG) continued relentlessly from the moment the last elements of the Battalion deployed in mid September until the first elements started returning in mid March. The first task was to provide at short notice, 17 additional reinforcements to the Battlegroup. Captain Andy Colquhoun applied his staff work skills to process the reinforcements through the pre-deployment training. This involved sending parties to Northern Ireland for range packages including GMG/HMG, Lydd & Hythe for Theatre Specific Training and Sennelager for Team Medic training. The stream of new recruits continued until January with an additional 80 young soldiers joining from Catterick. CSgt Chessar supported by Sgts Atkinson, Ferguson and Crawford were regularly preparing and delivering lessons and local training packages. In order to provide the ROG a sense of identity, the OC directed the restructuring of the ROG into Ticonderoga Company with Moray, Tay and Forth platoons. Shortly afterwards the Company welcomed 2 new young officers who had deployed for 3 months on RSOI at Camp Bastion following their Platoon Commanders' Course. Soon after arriving, 2Lt Voce-Russell led his platoon on Exercise Jock Tiger which involved being flown to a snow-wept Ben Wyvis training area by Pumas from RAF Benson for a week of Counter Insurgency training. This provided an opportunity for LCpl Stewart and Pte Seath to escape from the Signals store and engage in signaller mountaineering. After 2Lt Voce-Russell deployed as an individual reinforcement, the other young officer, 2Lt Martin was left to train a Company's worth of soldiers. His consolation prize was the prospect of a six week deployment to the Falklands leading a platoon to reinforce a 4 SCOTS Company. The handover of OCs took place in Bastion in January with the role of Quartermaster changing hands at the same time.

Visitors during the period included the outgoing and incoming Commanders of 19 Brigade, Deputy Commander 20 Armoured Brigade, GOC 3 Division, CO 7 SCOTS and Lieutenant Colonel Roddy Riddell. We also welcomed the Representative Colonel, Brigadier Mike Riddell-Webster, to the Jocks' Christmas lunch where the platoons performed skits, where no members of the hierarchy including the OC, 2IC or CSM were spared. The Regimental Catering Warrant Officer, WO2 Clutton



Some members of the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess at the Service of Remembrance.



Exercise Jock Tiger.

and his team provided an excellent lunch and helped to generate some festive mood.

In the New Year, the Real Life Support tasks to Herrick 16 training meant that WO2 Bruce was regularly tasking sections to travel down to Thetford or Salisbury Plain. The MT Platoon led by Sgt Hamilton assisted by LCpl Richardson were kept very busy managing the vehicle fleet or booking hire cars for the non stop journeys south.

The ROG has provided experience for senior and junior ranks to take on additional responsibilities. SSgt Welsh operating from three desks, juggled accounting, regimental administration and R&R coordination. His team was bolstered by the arrival of SSgt Hughes and Cpl Tamang. Sgt "George" Benson made up for the temporary absence of an RQMS and LCpl Stewart covered the function of the Regimental Signals Warrant Officer.

Congratulations are due to LCpl Simpson for passing his Junior NCOs Cadre and to the soldiers who passed their Assault Infantry Cadre.

At the time of writing, Major Tait, in his capacity as Quartermaster has returned safely with the last contingent of deployed soldiers and the ROG is busy preparing to support the Homecoming Parades.

UNIT WELFARE OFFICE

UWO:	Captain S MacKenzie
AUWO:	CSgt Mair
UWO SNCO:	Sgt Reilly
UWO JNCO:	Cpl Steele
WISMIS Clerk:	Sgt Trickovic
Community Centre Manager:	LCpl Brady
Welfare Clerk:	Cpl Vaniqu
CDW:	Mrs Helen Martin
CDW:	Mr Davey Robinson

It is now nearing the end of the deployment and the pace of life is as busy as ever, the telephone remains red hot and the arrival of Cpl Vaniqu as the Welfare Clerk has helped greatly with the many administrative issues the dependants find themselves dealing with.

Events

The support we have had in organising and running events has been outstanding; we have run one hundred and fifty events including cinema trips, Ballet at Eden Court, fitness classes and Sunday lunches. The key has been variety. Christmas day saw the welfare team deliver an excellent Christmas dinner to thirty five family members; assistance from the ever reliable Sgt Donnolly from the Catering Platoon is not to be underestimated. Mrs Metuisela provided a Fijian theme and her crab dish was a firm favourite with many.

ArmyNET

ArmyNET remains the primary means of passing on restricted information both in Theatre and in the UK. The Welfare Office continues



Santa receives a warm welcome in the Community Centre.



Joining the cast of Cinderella on stage at Eden Court.



Welfare Officer collecting parcels from a Scout group in Cathcart, Glasgow.

to lead the way from the UK and Capt Harry Gladstone (RSO) has ensured the Company pages are updated in Theatre.

Briefings

Major Gary Tait and now Major Colin McInroy have been conducting fortnightly briefings in the Community Centre and these are always repeated, morning and evening for maximum attendance. The raffle for the £20 voucher from a local butcher has surprisingly ensured maximum attendance. The briefs are very comprehensive; however the most popular part continues to be the questions, which come thick and fast at the end.

Parcels

The Welfare Office has sent out eight hundred parcels to named personnel from 3 SCOTS BG. A huge thank you must go to Ali Sutherland from Parcels4Troops, this small organisation has already donated almost 600 parcels for us to send into Theatre, and we have ensured that every man, regardless of rank receives one. As well as Ali we have been inundated with parcels from local groups and organisations and it is great to see the amount of good will within our local and wider community.



Photograph courtesy of the D C Thompson.

Mr Dave Arnold from Glenfarg and Duncrigvie and his team delivered over 100 parcels to Balhousie Castle for the Black Watch Battlegroup.

THE LIFE IN A POLICE ADVISORY TEAM

By Lieutenant R Weir

For the second half of the tour, 5 Platoon has been converted into two 'Police Advisory and Training teams' or PATs. We have been used to help deliver training to the Afghan Uniformed Police. One battlegroup is always deployed in the role of Police Mentor and Advisory Group (PMAG) and during our tour this has been the 1st Battalion of the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment. The PMAG is the controlling HQ and their eyes and ears on the ground are the PATs who visit the Police Check Points.

Now what is the job of the PAT team? It is a very varied task with a large number of responsibilities and the information we have to gather is critical. I have yet to visit an Afghan Uniform Police Check Point that is operating exactly as it should. Gathering information is the daily task of the PATs and getting the information can require a psychology degree to navigate the vast cultural differences. The beginning of any transaction begins with the greetings; this can take anywhere between five minutes or half an hour depending on the number of people involved and how friendly they are (ironically, the better you know them the longer it can take) and during this period we will have been ushered into the Check Point to take part in 'Afghan hospitality', I have never been made to feel as welcome by strangers as I have in Afghanistan. The stove will be on in their accommodation pumping out an infinite quantity of 'Chai' (the Afghan tea variant) and if it is near lunch time, food will be offered as a standard. One Check Point commander offered me lunch and when I explained that this was not possible as I had 11 men who also required feeding he responded by saying 'It would not matter if you brought one thousand I would still feed them all.' Ten out of ten must go to this man for his effort and dedication to making his guests feel welcome!

After the greetings have been completed and miscellaneous questions have been answered, there may be an opportunity to get down to business. This involves looking round the Check Point and ensuring that sangars are manned (or at least one of them!), the vehicles are fit and the patrolmen are properly dressed. The standard of policing depends almost entirely on the standard of the commander – if the commander is professional and motivated, then the patrolmen will follow. I have seen a gradual improvement in Check Point commanders since the arrival of the Commanders' Course delivered by Lashkar Gah Training Centre.

Afghans do not believe in continuation training which can pose a problem for maintenance of Police skills. With this in mind I have found that reverse psychology is a useful way of achieving training success. I often get Policemen to teach our soldiers the skills they have learned. The Jocks enjoy this and it proves to the team that the Policemen understand the basics of being a patrolman. In fairness, the most interesting counter IED lesson I have had, came from an Afghan patrolman, who could not only find them but pull them out of the ground without being blown up. I have yet to see this and I certainly hope that he does not get too carried away with his maverick attitude to high explosives.

After gathering our information and assisting with training, the PAT will head back to base where commanders fill in the patrol paperwork and Check Point assessments as well as highlighting problems. Despite the amount of paperwork involved, being a PAT team is enjoyable because you really do get to embrace the Afghan culture. More than once I have been shown the Check Point fighting dog which is the 'champion of Helmand' (I have yet to meet a dog that has lost). Once a commander asked if I would like 'to see the dogs fight'; naturally I declined as politely as I could. 'Ah' says he 'the British do not like to see the dogs fight; perhaps you would rather watch the chickens fight instead?'

LIFE IN A CHECK POINT

By Pte Melliush

For a soldier deploying to Afghanistan, many of the realities of a modern overseas conflict are apparent long before you arrive in the Theatre of Operations. Television, newspapers and the internet are full of tales of the battlefields of Helmand Province but very little attention is paid to the day to day living conditions experienced by British troops on the ground.

As a 22 year old Private soldier, currently serving with 3 SCOTS in 1 Platoon (the Senior Highland Platoon) and this being my first deployment, I was initially unsure of what to expect a British manned Check Point to look like. My first thought as I pushed the back doors of the Mastiff armoured vehicle open, was that Check Point Samsor was small and more primitive than I had anticipated. I had previously spent some

time in a larger, better furnished patrol base named Patrol Base Kalang and whilst nowhere near the size of the sprawling city-like Camp Bastion, it was still a fairly large location compared to what would be our home for the coming weeks.

On an average day we would wake up around 7.30 am and two of the lads would cook a hot breakfast for everyone, usually sausages, beans and some porridge. After breakfast we would do the necessary daily jobs around the Check Point, such as topping up the diesel in the generators, burning waste, and pumping water from the well. If not on patrol or guard duty, you would have an hour or two to go to the gym or grab 40 winks before lunch. The afternoon would usually be filled by a major task, for example, moving kit from one storage container to an identical storage container. At around six o'clock everyone in the Check Point would converge on the kitchen to discover what the day's chosen cooks had rustled up. Despite the fact that all the food cooked started life as a ration pack, some culinary masterpieces occasionally surfaced as well as the odd culinary abomination. Pizza and beef stew were the two clear favourites and once, even canapés graced our plates.

Although there was a multitude of jobs and cooking to be done, most of the day would be spent either on patrol or on guard duty. The patrols were either mounted (in Mastiff armoured vehicles) or dismounted (on foot) and could last anything from 1 hour to 10 hours on a busy day. Vehicle patrols took us to many other Check Points and Patrol Bases, to collect and deposit both kit and personnel. Foot patrols usually took us to Afghan army or Police bases or other British manned Check Points. No matter how far you travelled, foot patrols always left you feeling tired and sore but it was always worth getting outside the wire to meet the Afghan people and see a bit of scenery.

The bane of our life at Check Point Samsor was guard duty. To be woken sharply at 3am followed by two hours on a freezing guard tower was enough to ruin anyone's night. Every 24 hours you could expect to do between 2 and 6 shifts depending on manpower and patrols.

Despite the increased workload and worse living conditions that came with manning a Check Point by ourselves, we found that we were happier at Check Point Samsor than at the larger and better furnished Patrol Bases. Check Point Samsor was small and slightly rough around the edges but it was 1 Platoon's castle and we were all a bit sad to hand it over entirely to the Afghan army in a brief but touching ceremony.

Life in a Check Point is not easy. You are always tired and there is always work to be done but looking back I have fond memories of my time at Check Point Samsor and it was an experience that neither myself nor any other member of the Senior Highland Platoon is likely to forget.

Op TORA PANCHAI 2

By Lieutenant T Blair

The first major operation undertaken by Bravo Company south of the Estonian line of patrol bases, was Operation TORA PANCHAI (Brave Panther) 2. The precursor to this operation was a heliborne assault on the 12th of November alongside the recce platoon, that gave us a taste of what was to come with a few small arms contacts and significant enemy scouting. The decisive phase of Operation TORA PANCHAI 2 started towards the middle of November as the first in a number of operations aimed at building new Check Points across the Tri-Boundary Area to enable an enduring hold, to allow the first real government contact with the people of the area for some time. The Tri Boundary Area is the name given to the northeast of Nad-e Ali, running along the boundary with the neighboring districts of Lashkar Gah and Nar-e Saraj to the south and east. In spite of its relatively small size of ten or so square kilometers it had developed a reputation as being an Insurgent safe-haven for the past few years. The main crop was overwhelmingly poppy and given the Insurgent freedom of movement, the lack of coalition or government presence and the residence of a large number of IED facilitators, builders and emplacements it was known as one of the most heavily IED-seeded areas of southern Helmand. As we pushed south, an engineer team was used to clear IEDs from route Mercury so that we could establish sustainable Check Points and enable freedom of movement.

The first few days saw us operating out of Check Point Limbang in the south of Loy Mandeh Kalay just south of the Nareh Burgha canal, maintaining a constant platoon-level presence on the ground from within the Company. Initially taking substantial enemy fire within 150-250m of the Estonian Check Points the Company racked up no fewer than fourteen small arms contacts on the first day, calling in attack helicopters to engage enemy positions three times. On the third day and following a notable near-miss with a large command-wire IED on a



Members of 6 Platoon preparing supper in a temporary Checkpoint.



Some members of 6 Platoon prepared for patrol.

road junction just 250m from Limbang, we started to bounce in and out of compounds, using them as bases from which we could launch patrols ever further south. We swiftly began to get in behind the enemy's first defensive line. A series of similar pushes south followed over tactical bounds that roughly corresponded to the grid system of the fields with heavy fighting being done over the width of fields around 300m in size. Initially limited to living from patrol kit and conducting resupply on foot (when it was conducted at all) and after two large pushes to the south we had established a line of temporary Check Points of roughly platoon size that were defensible, (one of them at the end of the ironically named 'IED alley'). Some hard, cold nights were spent in compounds taking small arms fire, patrolling out to test enemy strength during the day under the almost ever-present cover of Apache or A10 gunships. After a few more days of patrolling and pushing south, the Engineers had cleared and improved the roads to the extent that our vehicle resupplies could be moved forward to make conditions slightly more livable. The pattern of clearing a bound in front of the Engineers continued for some days until they were able to get sufficient supplies and manpower forward to establish the first two permanent Check Points, named 'Jawa' and 'Compound 17', built around pre-existing compounds with added sangar positions and defensive structures.

Following the establishment of these two Check Points the Police and the Estonians moved into Jawa and Compound 17 respectively, freeing up B Company to reconsolidate and move onto a secondary axis of Route Uranus which runs south along the Loy Mandeh Wadi from Wahid. With 5 and 7 Platoons occupying further temporary Check Points to the North and East, 6 Platoon pushed into what was to become another permanent Check Point named 'Compound 29'. Upon arriving we realised that this very compound had been used as a firing point by Insurgents during our last tour!

Again the Engineers came forward to build a 'Super Sangar' and Hesco baskets replaced the holes in the walls. Of note during the build phase was the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) clearance of the ground around the compound that turned up no fewer than six IEDs in a three hour period! While the remainder of the company extracted to Patrol Base Shazad to prepare for Operation ZAMESTANI PEEEROZI (Winter Victory), 6 Platoon continued to occupy Check Point 29 until it was handed over to the PWRR in early January to free up what was now the Operations Company for other tasks.

LIFE IN PATROL BASE HAZRAT WITH THE BRIGADE ADVISORY GROUP

By Captain A Jackson

It was with great sadness that in March 2011 I handed over 6 Platoon after 14 terrific months in command. Leaving the platoon in the capable hands of Second Lieutenant Tommy Blair and Sergeant Danny Buist, I departed Fort George for Ballykinler with a heavy heart and the honest belief that somebody in Glasgow had it in for me. Despite Ballykinler being one of the most remote and desolate postings in the British Army, both Lieutenant Paul Seligman and I were made to feel extremely welcome by 2nd Battalion, The Rifles. I remain indebted to the Officers' Mess for the hospitality that has been shown to us, and I am very pleased to report that the notion of *savoir faire* has transcended the Irish Sea and exists outside the esteemed confines of Fort George! Despite the disappointment of losing my platoon, I resolved myself to face the new challenge head on and quickly embraced the Brigade Advisory Group role.

For the duration of the deployment I operated from Patrol Base Hazrat, located in the northern Nahr-e Saraj District of Helmand Province to the east of Gereshk. The Patrol Base is situated in a rather picturesque location, nestled in a nook of the meandering River Helmand and commanding stunning views of the local countryside from a craggy, hilltop setting. The camp is a 30 minute walk from the quaint poppy farming communities of Dargan and Saidan, both steeped in centuries of enduring tradition and populated by hearty, rural people. Saidan, in particular, is an extremely popular tourist attraction for visiting Pakistanis and Chechnyans. Our hosts and resident ground holders throughout the tour were two units from the Danish Army, The Guard Hussars (Gardehusarregimentet) and The Royal Life Guards (Den Kongelige Livgarde), and we worked very closely with an American Fire Support Team from the United States Marine Corps.

The task given to me and my Second in Command, Colour Sergeant Tony Norton, was to advise 1st Tolay, 3rd Kandak 3/215 Brigade. The Tolay consisted of a collection of relatively inexperienced soldiers, drawn from across the Afghan National Army. This satisfied the perfectionist within me, presenting something of a blank canvas and the opportunity to forge a cohesive unit from disparate beginnings. The first month was spent getting to know all of the key players in both 1st Tolay and the Danish Company and revolved around face time, lashings of Chai and Bollywood films. Early patrols were spent assessing the existing capability of the Tolay and identifying key areas for improvement. Only ten days after arriving in Hazrat, we deployed on the week long Operation Gold Storm 3, a clearance of the green zone to the west of the Patrol Base Line. This provided the perfect forum for seeing the Afghan National Army in action and gave us a greater understanding of our role as advisers. Nights spent sharing a compound with the Company, offered the chance to engage with the "Warriors" and develop strong working relationships that would stand us in good stead for the remainder of the tour.

Of course, our time among the Afghan National Army has not been without a catalogue of amusing episodes. From navigating at right angles, to chopping down small trees in order to avoid getting their feet wet during river crossings, the average patrol provides ample entertainment. During a partnered vehicle Check Point, a suspected insurgent made the imprudent decision to avoid the Afghan National Army by



Capt Paul Seligman models a new form of dress protected by WO2 McConnell and his FSG.

riding his motorcycle across nearby farmland. Having commandeered a motorcycle from a bemused local, the commander, Lieutenant Ebrahim, gave chase across the poppy fields in a scene reminiscent of the final sequence from the Great Escape. With loud cheers coming from the Afghans and advisers alike, Ebrahim ran down his quarry and returned triumphantly with the despondent detainee riding pillion! This incident involved just one of the fourteen suspected Insurgents detained during my time with 1st Tolay. By the end of the tour I felt more like a local Justice of the Peace than a soldier.

One of the largest talking points of the tour, and one that frequently featured on the agenda of the Combined Force Nahr-e Saraj (North) Commanders Conference, was the pet monkey kept by 1st Tolay in Hazrat. Visitors would look on in puzzlement as the monkey took his daily exercise, being walked around the Patrol Base on a lead by his devoted master, Sergeant Mohammed Mahadi. After one of the soldiers was bitten on the hand (while posing for a photograph with the monkey on his shoulder), the Danes suffered a chronic sense of humour failure and the senior Medical Officer outlined his final solution to the monkey problem. With much persuasion from the advisers, the Danes were steered away from their murderous intentions and the monkey was eventually exiled to an outlying Check Point, never to return again.

Despite holding initial reservations, my time with the Brigade Advisory Group has been extremely rewarding. During the course of Op HERRICK 15 I have helped 1st Tolay evolve from a fragmented group of individuals who refused to leave the gate without an adviser presence, to a cohesive and well-drilled unit who willingly conduct independent patrols across the breadth of the area of operations and are one short step away from taking over lead security authority. Time spent operating in a multi-national environment has not only broadened my horizons but also made me realise just how much I miss the fighting Jock and a Highland Officers Mess.



Capt Alex Jackson and his advisory team were attached to an Afghan Company in the area of Gereshk



Capt Jackson discusses the plan with an ANA Company Commander.

THE PATROL BASE LINE AND THE BRIGADE ADVISORY GROUP

By Captain P Seligman

With the focus of operations shifting towards the development of the Afghan National Security Forces, namely the Afghan National Army and the Police, the number of advisors in Theatre has increased steadily. Hence, in April 2011, Lieutenant Jackson and I left Fort George to join the Brigade Advisory Group headed up by 2nd Battalion, The Rifles, in Northern Ireland. We were attached to I Company, commanded by Major Bryan and consisting of officers, sergeants and other ranks from across the Brigade.

The responsibilities of members of the Brigade Advisory Group encompassed all aspects of the institutional development of the ANA including advice on tactics, development of the logistical chain, help in planning, and training in low level skills. It is a job that requires much patience.

Sgt Bannon (Rifles) and I have been based out of a number of different camps and patrol bases in the northern Nahr-e-Saraj District advising the Afghan National Army garrison force the 3rd Kandak (battalion) of the 3rd Brigade in 215 'Maiwand' Corps. The partnering force was the Danish battalion until late January when they were relieved by the C Coy of the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment.

We started the tour in the tiny patrol base of Shir Agha, just north of the Helmand River to the east of Gereshk. This establishment contained just fifteen "Afghan Warriors" and an even smaller number of Danish soldiers. Sgt Bannon and I were the only UK soldiers present. It was an interesting few weeks in which I was introduced to the alternative practices of the Afghan National Army. Halfway through my first patrol Lt Aminollah, the Afghan commander, rode past me on a red bicycle that he had borrowed from a nearby compound, giving high fives to my Danish protection group as he passed!

From Shir Agha, we moved to the far more comfortable Camp Gereshk, very close to Mobile Operating Base Price, to advise the Heavy Weapons Tolay. This lasted only a short time, however,

before we were moved again to the Patrol Base Line, a group of bases that form a block to the east of Gereshk. Advising an Afghan Tolay in a hotly contested area of operations on tough and complex missions in the Green Zone was a real challenge. Our diplomatic skills were required on a daily basis dealing with an abrasive Tolay commander. Our weeks were enlivened by a constant flow of antics by the very lively Afghan Warriors, including a memorable occasion when they almost caused a friendly fire incident after attempting to fish in the Helmand River with a grenade!

For the last couple of months on the Patrol Base Line we nurtured the partnership between C Company 1 PWRR and our Tolay. C Company had previously served in Nad-e Ali and came with a 3 SCOTS Fire Support Group commanded by Sergeant Major McConnell. After so long away, it was fantastic to work with Jocks again and to hear some proper Scots at last!

Working for the Brigade Advisory Group has been an exhilarating and exciting experience with plenty of mental and physical challenges. Particularly enjoyable has been the close association with so many soldiers of different nationalities; British, Afghan, Danish, and American. Despite being away from the Regimental family, I have had an excellent six months.

HOMECOMING PARADES

The Black Watch Battalion undertook a series of Homecoming Parades in Inverness (18 April), Forfar and Kirkcaldy (19 April) and Dundee and Perth (20 April) and in each town or city they were welcomed home by many hundreds of well-wishers. Each parade had its own distinctive feel and each Council provided a "Welcome Home" reception that involved The Black Watch Association as well as the serving community and their families. Whilst sunshine and showers were forecast, the marching troops and the well-wishers remained dry; a blessing indeed.

In Forfar, the Royal Colonel of The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, who is also Patron of The Black Watch Association took the salute and met serving and retired soldiers after the parade. (The photographs in this article are used by kind permission of Mr Frank Proctor and Mrs Katie Gladstone).



Captains Doughty, Phillips, Colquhoun and Stanning waiting for the photograph of the Battalion to be taken in Dundee.



The Royal Colonel attended the parade in Forfar.



RSM Shaw and A Coy led by Maj Hedderwick salute the Royal Colonel in Forfar.



Lt Tim Towler marching in the Dundee Parade.



The Pipe Major leads the parade in Dundee.



The Adjutant and Alpha (Grenadier) Company on the North Inch in Perth.



Red Hackles to the fore prior to the Dundee Council Reception.



Bravo Company marches through the North Inch in Perth.



Sgt Hunter and Captain Gladstone present arms after the Perth Parade.



Lt Tait carries the Queen's Colour during the Dundee Parade.

51st Highland, 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland

Commanding Officer: Lieutenant Colonel EC Chelsea
Lieutenant Colonel P Little
from August 2012)
Second in Command: Major RJ Barker
Training Major: Major JR Anderson
Adjutant: Captain JA Thompson
Quartermaster: Major JD McCallum MBE
(Major K Wood from July 2012)
Regimental Sergeant Major: WO1 SR West
OC A Company: Captain MW Dunnigan

Ex 1BW and Serving SCOTS SNCOs:

Regimental Operations Support Officer: Captain Alan McEwen (FTRS)
Quartermaster (V): Captain Spats Baxter (TA)
SPSI A Coy: WO2 Billy Easton (SCOTS)
PSI C Coy (Stornoway): CSgt Craig Weir (SCOTS)
Signals PSI: CSgt Lindsay Ward (SCOTS)
Drum Major: Sgt Cammy Goodall (TA)

The most significant training event in the A Coy calendar during this period has been the long awaited Live Mortar Shoot. Due to the current financial situation there has been a dearth of ammunition available to conduct any live mortar training, however we managed to secure an allocation and duly planned a live shoot for December. The newly qualified commanders conducted training for the new members of the Platoon who had not fired live before as well as refresher training for the more experienced ones. Training tests were completed and passed before we deployed to Warcop training area where a very successful shoot was conducted. The whole mortar line was soon working well together and drills were becoming slicker as the day wore on. A number of D Company JNCOs joined us for the weekend to practice live Arty Target Indication, an experience they found very useful and possibly not as easy as some of them thought.

On Saturday 10 March, 7 SCOTS were proud and privileged to accept the Freedom of the City of Stirling, on behalf of The Royal Regiment of Scotland, from Provost Fergus Wood. A full Guard of 96 rank and file, Colour Party, Band and Pipes and Drums led by the CO marched from Stirling Castle to Stirling Council's Old Viewforth offices as part of their 'Freedom of the City Parade'. The Regiment was awarded the Civic Honour in recognition of their services and strong links to the Stirling area and are now entitled to enter Stirling 'with drums beating, Colours flying and bayonets fixed'. Awarding the 'Freedom of the City' is an age-old tradition dating back to the laws of ancient Rome that made it a capital offence for Roman legions to

enter the city in formation or with weapons without permission. It was meant to ensure that ambitious generals did not mount a military coup against the Senate.

Troops from both 3 SCOTS and 7 SCOTS took part in Ex MONTROSE MARCH 24-25 March to mark the 400th Anniversary of the birth of James Graham, 1st Marquis of Montrose in 1612 – arguably Scotland's greatest battlefield commander and one of the finest generals in Europe. The 32 mile patrol recreated part of the march on Inverlochy Castle by Montrose and his Royalist army to face the Covenanter army of the Earl of Argyll in 1645. The Ex also had a serious training emphasis. They were tested on tactical navigation, patrol endurance, first aid, administration in the field, in addition to using this unique opportunity to study a past military campaign.

Regular Army personnel reductions and increasing the trained strength of the TA was mentioned in the November issue, but as yet no formal announcement has been made on the future Army structure. There has been, however, a significant and increased national TA marketing campaign – 'Do More. Be More. Territorial Army Recruiting Now' to get the message out that 'the TA including 7 SCOTS are recruiting, and recruiting hard'. As the only TA Infantry Battalion North of the Forth and Central Belt, covering an area which stretches from Dumbarton to Stornoway in the West and Kirkcaldy to Peterhead in the East, there are a number of worthwhile, challenging and rewarding part time job opportunities to offer both ex Regulars and civilians alike.

Annual camp this year is to be held in Sennelager, Germany from 9-23 June. The exercise is called Ex LEOPARD STAR; the planning for this is currently in full flow and gathering momentum under the direction and guidance of the Training Major and the Quartermaster. The opportunity to conduct or take part in an Overseas Training Exercise (OTX) continues to be extremely useful and hugely popular, both in terms of the unique training opportunities but also for the cultural and social aspects of an overseas camp. The excellent training facilities (familiar to most) which the Sennelager range complex has to offer will undoubtedly provide challenging and demanding, but interesting and rewarding training opportunities for all.

At the time of writing these notes we have soldiers serving with the following regular receiving units; 3 SCOTS, 1 PWRR, 2 Rifles, ODG, 200 Signals Squadron and 1 Medical Regiment and we are in the process of recovering a total of 25 of our TA officers, SNCOs and soldiers who deployed on Op HERRICK 15 and Op HERRICK 15B. In addition to this we are currently putting together a 7 SCOTS TA cohort of 50 to deploy with their regular counterparts on Op HERRICK 18, who are likely to mobilize in November of this year.



3 and 7 SCOTS soldiers who took part in Ex MONTROSE MARCH at the entrance to Inverlochy Castle.



The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada

HAPPY 150th ANNIVERSARY

This is a year of reunions and celebrations for all members of the Black Watch Regimental family. A century and a half of service to our Country and Canadians is a significant landmark in our military history and we will celebrate with all the exuberance and pride that such accomplishment merits.

Our anniversary year got off to an auspicious start with the unit's deployment on Exercise Noble Guerrier from January 1-8 in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, where all Army Reserve troops from Land Force Quebec Area trained and validated their respective operational readiness mandate. More than 650 troops from 34 Brigade units were assessed for their operational capabilities and skills, including the ability to deploy and demonstrate a cohesive and structured command and control. In addition to its infantry contribution, the Black Watch was assigned command of 34 Brigade Battle Group for the exercise. We were assessed and confirmed in our operational capacity at the conclusion of this exercise. The troops and the Battle Group HQ, mainly consisting of Black Watch personnel, were visited by the Commander of the Canadian Army and were praised for their professionalism and dedication. At the conclusion all returned to their civilian lives and their families, which was for most of the participants less than 12 hours after leaving the Armoury. Such commitment is one more proof of the dedication of our soldiers.

The official birthday of our Regiment is January 31st. This year the Anniversary parade and drumhead ceremony was presided by BGen Simon Hébert, Deputy Commander, Land Force Quebec Area. BGen Hébert inspected the troops and addressed the members of the Regimental family and troops. On this occasion he highlighted the proud history and current accomplishments of the Black Watch and its service to Canada. After the ceremony he joined all present to share the traditional birthday cake and was joined by 34 Brigade Commander, Colonel Marc Richard. The presence of two of the most senior soldiers of the Area is a clear recognition of the high regard that our chain of command has for our Regiment and its operational contribution to the Army Reserve in Quebec.

Early this year the Regiment was honoured to have two of its senior non-commissioned officers inducted as members of the Order of Military Merit. Regimental Sergeant Major Robert Unger and Pipe Major (MWO) Cameron Stevens have received their medals from the Governor General of Canada. This is a significant achievement in the Canadian military and to have two of our senior members receive it at the same time demonstrates the quality, professionalism and dedication of our soldiers.

As the month of March ends in the southern part of Quebec, the northern

part will still experience minus 35C without the windchill factor. In that inhospitable environment, six members of the Black Watch volunteered to deploy on EX Guerrier Nordique at Salluit, Quebec. This exercise's main objective was to maintain our winter warfare skills and operational effectiveness in the northern regions of Canada. All came back in good spirits and ready to share their experience with their comrades.

At the same time, the rest of the unit got ready to welcome our brothers-in-arms of the 1st Battalion 111th Infantry Regiment, "The Associators". The Black Watch relationship with this United States National Guard unit dates back to 1763 at the Battle of Bushy Run, near modern-day Pittsburg. The 42nd Regiment of Foot was part of a relief column during the French & Indian War. Both Regiments have maintained a loose relationship through the centuries. That common bond was rejuvenated in 1956 when 3rd Battalion The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada was asked to perpetuate this historical relationship, one of the longest between units in North America, and has been maintained ever since. Both commanders seized the historical bond between the units and decided to bring it to the operational level. Exercise Highland Yankee/Early Thaw brought together, for the first time in almost two and half centuries, the troops of both Regiments to share their military experience, hard learned on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. This is the initial part of a reciprocal training cycle that brought a platoon from 1-111th Infantry to Camp Valcartier for two weeks. A platoon of the Black Watch will deploy during the summer of 2013 in a similar exercise in United States with the 1-111th. All participants learned a great deal and are looking forward to having the opportunity to train together again.

Three of our members have been selected to be part of the Canadian Ceremonial Guard that will travel in France and Belgium on the occasion of the 95th Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. The Black Watch, then represented overseas by the 13th, 42nd and 73rd Battalions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, was the only Canadian Regiment that fielded three frontline battalions during that historic battle.

Although 2012 is still young, our 150th Anniversary has already been highlighted by several social, community and military events across Canada and the Regiment has received several recognitions.

The month of May will bring the first major anniversary celebration weekend when members of the Regimental family, from all parts of Canada and overseas, will gather in Montreal for several social and military events that will culminate with our annual Church Parade.

The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada is still relatively young and in good shape. With the strength of our history and the pride of our current accomplishments, we are looking forward to many more years in the service of our Country.



1-111th Infantry receiving their safety briefing by our Mountain Ops Instructor, WO Pierre Brasseur.

The Tyneside Scottish

204 (Tyneside Scottish) Battery RA(V) have been unable to send full notes for this Edition of the magazine due to a changeover of staff but have sent two images.



The Battery Sergeant Major WO2 Andy Loader and two of the Battery SNCOs sporting their Red Hackles in America during an exchange visit with the US National Guard.



Battery members fire the 105mm Light Gun marking the start of the Minute's Silence on Remembrance Sunday 2011.

SCOTTISH SPORRANS

Professionally designed and handcrafted in Scotland by Janet Eagleton, MBE, and Son

Scottish Sporrans, based in Perth in Scotland, are professional sporran makers with over 20 years experience of handcrafting quality custom-made leather products

Handcrafted sporrans – traditional and contemporary • Belts and chainstraps
• Full Highland Dress outfits • Sporan repairs and remodeling • Sporan handbags



*New sporran designed for the Royal Regiment of Scotland
Prototype made by Janet Eagleton, MBE*

www.scottish-sporrans.co.uk

Tel: 01738 447187 (shop) • 01738 710385 (workshop)
39 George Street, Perth PH1 5LB

Tartankilts.com

Black Watch and Red Hackle accessories

www.tartankilts.com

For 10% discount use code HACKLE011

Tartankilts.com

Tower House, Ruthvenfield Road, Inveralmond, Perth PH1 3UN
You can telephone us on 01738 604054 or email info@tartankilts.com

Victim Support

Helping people cope with crime

Victim Support is the national charity for victims of crime offering:

- Emotional Support ■ Information
- Practical Help

through trained volunteers based in local Schemes and Witness Services

If you have been affected by crime call:

Victim Supportline 0845 30 30 900

PO Box 11431, London SW9 6ZH

Open 9am – 9pm weekdays, 9am – 7pm weekends & 9am – 5pm Bank Holidays.

All UK calls charged at local rates.



**Dingbro Inverness & Perth Branches
would like to support
The Black Watch**

Our fine and outstanding Regiment

CIVVY STREET NEEDS YOUR HELP.

If you are about to leave the Forces and have time to spare, come and work as a part-time volunteer for charity.

The organisational skills you learned can be of vital importance to the success of a voluntary organisation – and help give you a new lease of life into the bargain!

REACH provides a free job-finding service throughout the UK and could find you a satisfying, voluntary opportunity nearby.

Phone for details or visit our website at www.volwork.org.uk

reach

89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TP.

Tel: 020 7582 6543

Registered Charity No 278837

We fought through hell and fire to give freedom to you.

Donate at erskine.org.uk

ERSKINE
Proud to care

Erskine is the trading name of Erskine Hospital. Scottish Charity No. SC036609

Angus and Dundee Battalion Army Cadet Force

Angus and Dundee Battalion have at last come out of hibernation. It seems like an age ago since we carried out a weekend training at Barry Buddon in November 2011.

Not before time I say! Recruiting is hard enough at the best of times, retention is even more difficult, especially during the winter months. But thank heaven Spring is here. Numbers 'enlisting' are very good and the only thing that puts a dampner on things is the short supply of uniforms which doesn't bode well when you tell a 12 year old they will have to wait until we 'get some more in'. "When will that be" they ask!".

Regardless of what organisation a young person joins, the main emphasis is for them to get their uniform, it makes them feel that they 'belong' and they want to be like their friends.

At the end of last year, each detachment held their own Christmas outing ranging from nights out at Battle Field Live in Dundee (Laser shooting) to having a more sedate event such as a Christmas meal in their local restaurant.

Grove Detachment, based in Broughty Ferry held a parents evening in the local church hall where rifle drill, drill and first aid demonstrations were given mainly by new recruits. It was a great success and a great end to the year especially as SI Jennifer Martin made the buffet herself.

An important date in the Battalion's diary is always in November. The Festival of Remembrance, held in the Caird Hall, Dundee. This is a major event which is in the forefront of everyone's mind with many of our troops serving in various 'theatres' around the world. This was brought home to us even more with The Black Watch 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland being deployed in Afghanistan.

When the Black Watch are announced at the Caird Hall, the 'Jocks' representing the 3rd Battalion, march down the aisle with pride, the audience 'salute' them with their applause. They are quickly followed by the Army Cadets from Angus and Dundee Battalion, (mostly Black Watch Cadets). Immaculate in their uniforms, some of them only 12 years of age, arms swinging and heads held up high. Then, the various Remembrance Parades take place the following weekend; again many cadets and adults are proud to be a part of each and every parade.

The Angus Cadets due to the burgh locations and affiliations, attend their local town parades whereas the 13 Dundee Detachments parade together along with other military and uniformed organisations in the City of Dundee.

A Company have had a quieter time of late but they have been busy behind the scenes. They have run cadre training and shooting opportunities in their home locations.

Just after the turn of the year, a new trophy was presented to the Battalion by George Hill, a former Sports Officer in the Battalion. The first recipient of this trophy was a Montrose Royal Artillery Cadet, Colour Sergeant Laura Balneaves. Laura was a worthy winner of the new trophy as she has been a regular source of medals for the Battalion in disciplines such as swimming, the shot and discus. She has represented Scotland on numerous occasions and has an impressive haul of medals that she can be very proud of.

In February 2012, the Battalion ran an extra 1 Star Board. This Board was aimed at Basic Cadets who couldn't go to Camp last year or who joined the Battalion after Camp and were 'ready' to move on to the next level.

B Company have continued to step up to the plate by organising 'in house' training; this included basic recruit testing, drill and first aid.

The Company has certainly swelled its ranks as new cadets practically poured through detachment doors.

The last B Company weekend of 2011 was very successful with a number of recruit passes, which are important when we try to retain cadets with a view to them moving on to the next level.

At the other end of the scale, there are those who have achieved much in the Cadets. One of these ambitious cadets was newly promoted Cadet Colour Sergeant Richard Todd. Richard joined the Cadets in 2008 and we have watched his meteoric rise with pride. So far this year, both the Officers Mess and Sergeants Mess have organised their respective Burns' Suppers; these were a great success.



C/Sgt Richard Todd and Major Waterson.



The successful B Company Cadets who passed their recruit training.



Gun Run Dundee.

In February, the formation of a 'Gun Run' team was organised by the RSM and Colour Sergeant Steve Pryde.

The Dundee Sea Cadets were presented with two miniature field guns a good few years back and to make use of them, it was suggested that a Cadet Tri Service competition be held.

Heats take place at regular intervals during half time at Dens Park Football Stadium. The final is scheduled to take place before the end

of the football season. Unfortunately it's got off to a slow start. We are hopeful that the Army Cadets will prevail and carry home the trophy.

A First Aid Competition is the most recent Battalion event and this was held at the beginning of March. The winning team will go forward to the Scottish National Competition, to be held in Fife in June. Cadets from both A and B Companies and C Squadron took part. They pitted their wits and their knowledge against each other individually and as a team. This involved the Cadets dealing with a car collision involving 3 casualties. Team management, timing and knowledge were all assessed resulting in B Company being the winning team with C Squadron as runners up. The winners and runners up will now receive more in depth training in the run up to the main competition.

Lastly and most recently was a 'Regimental Dinner' organised by Grove Detachment which was held in The Royal Tay Yacht Club in Broughty Ferry on the 17th March. Invited guests included the Commandant Colonel Andrew Cassidy, the Honorary Colonel, Colonel Kenny Simpson and his wife Margaret, Major Allan Donnelly, Cadet Executive Officer, Padre Andy McAfferty, Major Andy Waterston, B Company Commander, RSM Michael Pascoe and Lt Danny Massam, CAA from Dundee. The Cadets all looked resplendent and their behaviour was impeccable. The dinner is arranged each year as an exercise in social skills.

After the slow start to the year the pace is picking up as we have a number of cadets preparing to go to Cyprus for a week at the beginning of April and then we have an action packed Annual Camp to look forward to.



First Aid Competition.



The Grove Detachment Regimental Dinner "team photograph".

Black Watch Battalion Army Cadet Force

2011 will go down as the wettest year in Scotland since records began and, on one occasion, the gales were the worst for a numbers of years. However, despite this, in the last few months of the year and the start of 2012 life in the Battalion went on as normal with no let up in the programme. The following notes may appear to be rather self congratulatory, however, there is no doubt that members of the Battalion have achieved some notable successes which are worth reporting, not only for the record but to remind everyone of what can be achieved through hard work and dedication.

As the notes for the last edition of the Red Hackle went to print it had just been announced that Cadet Staff Sergeant Bradley Anderson (Perth Viewlands) had won the 2011 Claire Shore trophy. This was an immense achievement and he won it in competition with nineteen of the best cadets from throughout the United Kingdom. The competition tested both physical and mental aptitude. It required cadets to compete against each other both individually and as members of a team in a range of activities, before facing an interview panel. Throughout the competition, the assessors looked for signs of leadership, teamwork, self discipline and unselfishness. Cadet Staff Sergeant Bradley Anderson was subsequently presented with the trophy by Brigadier Flint at the Cadet Training Centre in Frimley in front of his parents, other cadets and Colonel Passmore.

The first major external competition of the autumn was the Brigade Military Skills Competition. The team coached by Major David Gill was determined to do better than in previous years. Despite being a relatively young and inexperienced team they excelled themselves and at the end of the event were placed 2nd equal.

The Battalion's First Aid Team once again did extremely well this year. In the Army Cadet Force Competition held at the Royal Military

Academy Sandhurst, the cadet team of Cadet Staff Sergeant Lewis Sinclair, Cadet Sergeant Fiona Crawford, Cadet Corporal Heather Crawford, and Cadet Stewart Robertson came first while the young adult team of PI Christopher Henderson and Cadet Sergeant Stuart Kilday came fourth. Once again the success was down to the hard work of Sergeant Major Instructor Tracy Scott. Her enthusiasm for First Aid was an example to everyone.

The Battalion Shooting Team has also continued to produce excellent results. The team of Cadet Sergeants Lewis Fennell, and Caitlin Barnes, Cadet Corporals Connor Boag, Jordan McKeown and Stuart Kilday and Cadet Lance Corporal Marion Mackenzie won the Scott Cup. In the Cadet Inter Services Small Arms meeting, the results were hugely impressive. The team was third in the Tri Service Team competition and the second placed Army Cadet Force team, the highest places ever from a Scottish team. In addition Cadet Sergeant Lewis Fennell, Cadet Corporal Jordan McKeown and Cadet Lance Corporal Shannon Birks were in the Top 50 Cadet Shots and Cadet Corporal Jordan McKeown won the Pool Bull for the second year in a row. These results could not be achieved without the planning, preparation and coaching put in by the adult instructors, lead so enthusiastically by Lieutenant Charlie Tough. He still finds time to compete, witnessed by the fact he and Sergeant Barnes were both placed in the top ten of the adult competition at the Cadet Inter Services Small Arms Meeting. In addition in the Corsar Quaich which involves all detachments from Scotland, Stanley came third and Blairgowrie came fifth. Finally on the shooting front, Cadet Corporal Connor Boag has now reached the end of his career as a Cadet. He has been a huge credit to the Battalion and has achieved some remarkable results. There is no doubt his success has inspired others.



Burns Supper. Back row Mrs Sheila Culliven, Mr John Culliven, Mrs Kate Gregory, Mr John Gregory, Ms Jane Potts, Mrs Valentine Hodges. Seated. Lt Col Rob Orr, The Commandant, The Honorary Colonel, Sqn Ldr Chris Hodges.



The Cadet band played at the Burns Supper.

Internally this year the Training Officer, Major Ewan Marshall, reintroduced the battalion Military Skills competition in a revised format. It was devised by Captain Mark Scott and took place over a weekend in Glenrothes. Nine teams, some of which were an amalgam of more than one detachment, entered the competition. At the end, the winning team was the combined one from Glenrothes, Woodside and Leven, with Perth Viewlands second equal with Perth RLC. The First Aid Competition which was separate but run within the overall competition was won by Perth Viewlands.

While applauding those members of the Battalion who have achieved so much in the various competitions, it is important not to forget those who have contributed in so many other ways. Major Truscott once again organised and took a party to Belgium in the autumn. While the cadets enjoyed the trip, there was no doubt many of them found it a very moving experience. It helped set the tone for the activities surrounding Remembrance Sunday when so many of the cadets paraded in their local communities. While a high profile day, Remembrance Sunday was just one of the many occasions when



Cadet Corporal Cara Henderson and Cadet Lance Corporal William Blanche who have been selected to attend the 2012 Rotary Youth Leadership Awards Camp in July 2012.



The Commandant inspecting a Drill Display Team.



Cadet Staff Sergeant Bradley Anderson with the Champion Cadet Claire Shore Trophy.



Cadet Staff Sergeant Bradley Anderson being congratulated by Brigadier Ted Flinton on winning the Claire Shore Trophy.

the cadets were visible in their local area. Major Ian Taylor and Staff Sergeant Richard Scott took a contingent to Dunfermline Abbey at the end of November for a service in aid of SSAFA. This event had originally been due to take place twelve months previously to mark the 125th anniversary of the charity. However, it had to be called off at the last moment due to the snow. SSAFA was not the only charity to benefit from the support of the cadets during this period and the Kinross Detachment was even out between Christmas and the New Year raising money for Help For Heroes. The Pipes and Drums and the Regimental Band go from strength to strength and they have also played their part in raising money for charity. Most notable was the combined concert they put on in November when a number of service charities benefited.

One of the highlights for the Regimental Band was when they played at the ACFA Scotland dinner in the Royal Scots Club in Edinburgh. Those attending dinner included representatives from most of the ACF units in Scotland, the Cadet piping world and a number of other distinguished guests. The band quite rightly received warm plaudits for their efforts.

Possibly the most successful community based activity the Battalion has been involved in over recent years has been the OUTREACH programme. The autumn period is a time for reflection and for preparing for the following year. Major Douglas Pover held a dinner in December to thank those people who had supported the programme in 2011. Unfortunately, the weather played its part and two of the main guests had to call off at the last minute because of the storms. What is more concerning is that the National Committee for the OUTREACH programme has decided to focus the project on a different age group to the one with which the Battalion has worked in the past. As a result the future of the Battalion's project has been brought into question. At the time of writing these notes a decision is still to be taken on the way forward.

In addition to the above activities, Detachments have continued to open twice a week and Companies have held training weekends throughout the Autumn. All this has been designed to ensure the cadets were trained in accordance with the approved training syllabus and prepared for their relevant Star Boards. However, none of this would happen without the dedication of the adult volunteers. As well as planning and running their own events, whether it be for a Detachment or the Battalion, they often stand in for each other at short notice and provide adult cover for non Battalion sponsored activities. There is no doubt they enjoy seeing the results of their endeavours while the cadets and their families really do appreciate what they do. This is all too apparent at parents' evenings. At these events the cadets enjoy showing off their new found skills while their parents, guardians and friends are delighted to see the cadets enjoying themselves so much. However, it is all too obvious and understandable that the adult volunteers cringe when another extra bureaucratic demand is placed on them, especially those that are deemed to be unnecessary or counter to a previous diktat.

As in recent years, these notes conclude as the Battalion is looking ahead to the coming year, the planning for which is already well underway. An adult training day was held towards the end of January which gave the Commandant the chance to reflect on the previous year as well as explain his plans for the next twelve months. Perhaps the biggest challenge will be to provide every Detachment with a laptop and internet access. The day was also a chance for the Battalion to welcome the new Training Safety Advisor, Warrant Officer Class 2 Ian Martin who had previously served in the Royal Artillery. The culmination of the day was The Burns Night which once again was organised by Major Ian Taylor and Captain Kathy Douglas. The guests included the Honorary Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel Rob Orr who had recently taken over as the Deputy Chief Executive of Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association. In addition the Battalion was delighted to host John Culliven, John Gregory and their wives. They have been hugely helpful in the setting up of the Pitlochry detachment. The speeches this year were shorter than in the recent past but just as amusing. Second Lieutenant Brian Morrissey gave a very well researched Immortal Memory before Staff Sergeant Richard Scott proposed the toast to the Lassies and Staff Sergeant Jenny Gerard replied. The Commandant proposed the toast to the guests to which Squadron Leader Chris Hodges, another very welcome guest and who had flown in from Northern Ireland, replied.

While the Battalion plan for the forthcoming year has been published, there will inevitably be many more activities in which the cadets will become involved. For example, Cadet Corporal Cara Henderson and Cadet Lance Corporal William Blanche have been selected to attend the 2012 Rotary Youth Leadership Awards camp in July 2012 and Cadet Sergeant Lewis Fennell has been selected to go to Canada with the United Kingdom Cadet Rifle Team. Whatever happens, one thing is certain – the cadets will not be idle.

Association News

Royal Patron: HRH The Prince Charles Duke of Rothesay KG KT GCB OM
 President: Mrs Georgiana Osborne, Lord Lieutenant of Angus
 Chairman: Brigadier E N de Broë-Ferguson, MBE
 Vice Chairman: Lieutenant Colonel R M Riddell
 Secretary: Major R J W Proctor, MBE

Trustee: Colonel A Murdoch, TD
 Trustee: Lieutenant Colonel T A Coles, MBE
 Trustee: Major J M K Erskine, MBE
 Trustee: Major D J McMicking, LVO

Executive Committee:
 Lieutenant Colonel F L Beattie, MBE
 Lieutenant Colonel J Keating, OBE
 Captain A McEwen
 Major R C B Ritchie, MBE
 Lieutenant Colonel R I Rose, TD
 Mr R Scott, JP

Welfare Committee:
 Lieutenant Colonel R I Rose, TD – Chairman
 Major R J W Proctor, MBE – Secretary
 Mr J Baird
 Mr J Devlin
 Mr H Dunn
 Major G Grant, MBE, MM
 Major R C B Ritchie, MBE
 Mr R Scott, JP
 Mrs I Shivas
 Mr W D Whytock

ASSOCIATION FORECAST OF EVENTS 2012/2013

13 June	Officers and their Ladies Lunch	London
22 June	Regimental Golf Meeting	Kinross
23 June	Laying Up of Old Colours Parade & Regimental Reunion	Perth
16 September	Fife Branch "Alma" Ladies Lunch	Kirkcaldy
20 October	Angus Branch "El Alamein" Dinner	Forfar
26 October	Officers' Gathering Dinner	Perth
8 November	Field of Remembrance Westminster Abbey	London
11 November	Cenotaph Parade	London Branch
17 November	Korean Veterans and Battle of The Hook 60th Anniversary Commemoration Dinner	Perth
22 November	London Branch Dinner	London
30 November	1739 Club Dinner	Dundee
15 December	Officers' Regimental Ball	Perth
18 January	Dundee Branch Red Hackle Dinner	Dundee
26 January	Angus Branch Burns Supper	Arbroath
2 February	Perth Branch Burns Supper	Perth



Jock McNiven (Dundee Branch) and John Glen (Angus Branch) salute the 26 First World War soldiers whose names are inscribed on the Mains Memorial in Dundee. The memorial has been moved to a safer site and on 11 November 2011 it was re-dedicated in the George V Stadium. It bears the names of 12 Black Watch soldiers and Mr Tom McLuskey and Roland Rose were both involved in the preparation and planning for the move.

ANGUS BRANCH

President: Lt Col Fred Beattie MBE
 Vice President: Maj David McMicking LVO
 Chairman: Maj Ronnie Proctor MBE
 Vice Chairman: Mr Peter Tindal
 Secretary: Mr Billy Whytock
 Treasurer: Mr Jim Penny

The year has certainly flown past and it seems like yesterday that we were compiling the notes for the November edition reporting on a very hectic summer programme of activities and now this summer's events are looming closely towards us.

Our annual distribution of pensioners' and widows' Christmas parcels went ahead in mid December and as usual was masterminded by our Branch President, Lt Col Fred Beattie who was ably assisted by his usual team of helpers; Jock Paton, Jim McEwen, Norrie Dewars and John Gordon. We are also indebted to Fred's wife Olive who shopped around the local supermarkets and stores and ensured that we obtained the best quality items at the best prices. It is always gratifying to note that this small annual gesture is greatly appreciated by all recipients.

The annual Burns Supper was the main event of the season and



Sgts Mess Dinner Club.



The Duke of Rothesay talks to Association Veterans Jock Paton (left), Ian Heron (2nd from left), Dave Mitchell and Major Ronnie Proctor.

although numbers were slightly down on previous years it was enjoyed by all who attended including Councillor Ruth Leslie Melville the Provost of Angus who was our guest of honour. The home grown talent of Ronnie Proctor, our Chairman, Bob Mitchell, Billy Whytock, our Secretary, Pipe Major Peter Snaddon and John Smith was again used this year. Bob started the evening off with the Selkirk Grace and comments on those who are less well off than ourselves were given the true sentiments of Robbie Burns. Ronnie chaired the evening, addressed the Haggis with flair and aplomb and proposed the toast, the Immortal Memory which gave a different and thought provoking slant on the life of the National Bard. Billy Whytock's word perfect recitation of the Soldiers Return and John J Smith's poignant toast to absent friends were enjoyed by all.

Our guest performers were Jim Duncan the proprietor of the Park Tavern at Roondyhill, outside Kirriemuir and known to all as "Roondy Jim" who enthralled those present with his rendition of Tam O'Shanter, wearing his guid Blue Bonnet and riding his trusty mare (a chair) around the room to the amusement of all. Not to be outdone Eric Summers the headmaster of Websters' High School, Kirriemuir and his wife Allison's outstanding Toast to the Lassies and reply received a standing ovation by an appreciative audience of which one of the younger female members was heard to comment "I wish I had a cool headmaster like Mr Summers when I was at school, I may have worked harder".

Pipe Major Peter Snaddon provided his usual high standard of playing by piping in the Haggis and providing a foot tapping repertoire of Company Marches, Strathspeys and Reels which culminated in his own composition of the lovely slow air "Ruaraidh's Lullabye".

To the enjoyment of all Mike Mooney who originally served in the Welsh Guards and then the Army Physical Training Corps literally sang for his supper by entertaining us with a fine programme of Burns's songs and self accompaniment on his guitar which was appreciated by all. Mike first visited the Regiment when the 1st Battalion was stationed in Werl, West Germany in 1981-82 during the Novices boxing championships when he was SMI with 50 Missile Regiment, Royal Artillery. He was later commissioned and posted to Headquarters 2nd Division at Craigiehall near Edinburgh from where he retired. We were most grateful to Mike for his musical contribution and like most Welshmen he has a fine singing voice. We hope he will come back again.

Syd Mather was sadly missed as Posey Nancy and bringing the evening to a close with his quick wit and humour, perhaps John Smith was not that far off the mark when as part of his toast he said that Syd probably has St Peter in stitches!

Lastly before I leave the Burns supper we are most grateful to the Royal British Legion Forfar for the use of their premises, excellent catering and efficient and polite staff.

The annual Spring Supper Dance will soon take place in the Royal British Legion Clubrooms in Arbroath. This has been a popular event in the past and we hope to emulate the success of recent years. At the time of writing we are looking forward to the return of the Black Watch Battalion from their recent and successful tour in Afghanistan and their homecoming march through Forfar, the county town of Angus. I am sure that they will receive a warm reception by veterans and public.

An initial visit to Belgium has been carried out by Tom McCluskey, Major Proctor and Brigadier de Broe-Ferguson to the site where the proposed Black Watch Corner Statue is to be erected. We were warmly received by the Belgian authorities, however much work has still to be carried out.

Our annual El Alamein Dinner will take place in the Royal British Legion Club Rooms, Forfar on the 20th October and the Burns Supper in the same venue on the 26th January 2013.

Two of our Branch members have recently undergone serious surgery and appear to have made a good recovery and we wish Norrie Dewars and Jock Torrie well. Lt Col Fred Beattie is at the time of writing convalescing again after a lengthy operation and we hope to see him back in rude health soonest.

On a sad note our first Branch President, Lt Col John McGregor MC died recently aged 95. His funeral was attended by the Branch Chairman, Jock Paton, Bob Inglis and John Glen who carried the Branch Standard. Dave Taylor from Highlands Branch along with two members of Inverness Royal British Legion were also present. A moving and fitting service was conducted in St Columba's Roman Catholic Church and we formed a guard with dipped Standard as the piper played Colonel John to the hearse and his final resting place.

A grand old soldier who will be missed by us all.

DUNDEE BRANCH

The Angus Branch held their annual El Alamein dinner in Forfar on 15 October and this was attended by several of our Branch members, including Roland Rose, Dave Ritchie, Joe Devlin, Jim Herd, and Willie Barr.

Our comrades from the Liverpool Scottish held their annual dinner in the Adelphi on 22nd October and Roland Rose and Willie Barr represented the Branch.

The Branch took part in Dundee's cross laying ceremony as part of the Veterans contingent, with the Branch Standard being carried by John McNiven. Dave Ritchie represented the Branch at Dundee's City Square for the Armistice ceremony on 11th November and the Standard was again carried by John McNiven.

Remembrance Sunday parade was held as usual at the 4/5th Battalion statue on Powrie Brae. There was a large turnout by not only Branch members and A Company but also of politicians of all persuasions, as well as the general public. Hospitality was laid on at the Black Watch Club in Artherstone Terrace and several members then retired to the bar at Oliver Barracks to continue the movement.

The Lord Provost's Ball, the last for Provost John Letford, was attended by Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs Rose, Major and Mrs Ritchie and Mr and Mrs Barr.

The Branch held its Annual Red Hackle Dinner at the Black Watch Club on 21 January, with a good attendance. We welcomed General Irwin, Lord Provost John Letford and Major John Stevenson from the Inverness Branch. General Irwin spoke about the Regiment and Major Ronnie Proctor spoke about the Association. We also welcomed, as we do every year, several of our comrades from the Liverpool Scottish, who also joined a large Branch contingent at the A Company Burns Supper the following evening.

The Branch AGM was held in Arthursstone Terrace on 26th February. Our President, Major Jimmy Connors sadly stood down due to ill health, and he does so with our thanks and best wishes.

The office Bearers elected were:-

Honorary President	Colonel Alex Murdoch
President	Major Dave Ritchie
Vice President	Major Mike Lindsay
Chairman	Mr Willie Barr
Secretary	Mr Colin Adam
Treasurer	Mr John McNiven

On 23 March a contingent from the Branch attended the Fife Branch annual Rhine Crossing Dinner in Kirkcaldy. We now look forward to the Homecoming Parade of 3 SCOTS being held in Dundee on 20 April 2012.

Future Events

Laying up of Colours & Reunion, Perth	23 June 2012
Armistice Parade, Powrie Brae	11 November 2012
Red Hackle Dinner	18 January 2012

The Branch continues to hold its monthly meetings in the Black Watch Club on the last Sunday of each month at 12.00. All serving or ex members of the Regiment are welcome to attend.



LEAVE THE STRESSES OF LIFE BEHIND BECOME A CHELSEA PENSIONER



Sheltered, independent living supported by full medical care and catering services, in some of the most beautiful buildings in the UK, gives you and your family peace of mind.

For over 300 years Chelsea Pensioners have led rich, varied and dignified lives at the Royal Hospital which is the Nation's Covenant with her old soldiers.

Retired soldiers can apply to become a Chelsea Pensioner from 65 years of age onwards.

Applicants should be active enough to become ambassadors and travel the UK and overseas with their comrades, representing their home and all that it stands for.

HRH The Prince of Wales recently opened our new state of the art care home, hospice and medical centre, with its gymnasium, hydrotherapy pool and physiotherapy facilities.



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: www.chelsea-pensioners.org.uk

CALL: 020 7881 5204 EMAIL: saraaddelsee@chelsea-pensioners.org.uk

WRITE: Royal Hospital Chelsea, Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4SR



Guests at the Fife Branch Rhine Crossing Dinner held in March 2012.



Members of the Fife Branch at Remembrance Day in Kirkcaldy.



Smiling faces at the Rhine Crossing Dinner.



John Anderson Highland Branch Standard Bearer.



Highland Branch members at the Remembrance Parade Inverness; Scott Bell, Eric Mills, Joe Barbour, Gordon Kennedy, Mike Kelly and David Robertson.



The Highland Branch Chairman at the Dundee Dinner.

FIFE BRANCH

It has been a very quiet period over the last six months. The Branch continues to meet on a regular basis and attracts a very good attendance with as much as half the membership at most meetings.

At the end of February, we were invited to the Middle Bar in Crossgates to help the local Bikers Chapter in a remembrance day for an ex member namely Archie Peacock. The day consisted of various money raising raffles and projects from which good causes would benefit. We were lucky to be in their thoughts and at the end of the day the Branch received a very substantial donation towards the cost of our Standard. Dunfermline was another beneficiary in that two pairs of peacocks were presented to the local Glen Gardens, with the stipulation that one of the cock birds was to be named "Archie".

We unfortunately had the sad duty of attending the funerals of Branch members who had passed away. It was after the funeral of Adam Crawford, that his wife and family contacted me to say that it was Adam's wish, that a donation should be placed into the Branch funds, as a thank you for our support and friendship.

On Friday the 23rd of March the Branch met for our annual Rhine Crossing Dinner to which sixty five, including guests, sat down. It was good to see members from Perth, Dundee and Angus Branches join us and as an extra surprise, both Tony and Gordon Firth came up from England. Colonel Philip said a few words on how things were going with the Association and the Black Watch Battalion, along with a very passionate plea to keep up the good work and support for the forthcoming events. The music for the night was provided by an old friend, Pipe Major Peter Snaddon and all complemented him for his selection and prowess. We know we have a very busy few months ahead of us and I am sure we will enter into it in the usual regimental manner.

Lastly, Sunday the 16th of September is a very important day for your diary as the Branch members and their ladies meet in Kirkcaldy for the Alma Lunch, which is open to other Branches to attend.

R M Scott

HIGHLAND BRANCH

Chairman: Maj John Stevenson
Vice Chairman: Joe Barbour
Treasurer: Derek Reid
Secretary: Gordon Kennedy
Piper: David Robertson
Standard Bearer: John Anderson

It gives me great pleasure to inform the readers that we have taken charge of our own Branch Standard. Our Secretary Gordon Kennedy has done a fantastic job securing the funding and the delivery of the Standard. It enhances the Branch commitment and our intent for a long presence in the Highlands and committed support to our members.

Membership

Like all the Branches we endeavour to recruit and distance is no object,



Highland Branch Members at the Dundee Dinner; Barry Wales, Eric Mills, John Anderson and Scott Bell.

our latest recruits are Maj (Retd) Alex Brown who joins us from the Republic of Ireland and I am sure his beloved Island of Aran will forgive him for his joint relationship to Scotland. We also have a new associated member W02 Glynne Mills who has just retired from the Army (late Royal Irish) and both make a colourful addition to the Branch.

Attendance and Events

During the Battalion's deployment we still have had our monthly meetings. Our Branch members attended the Remembrance Parades on the 11th November in Inverness and a large contingent attended the Dundee Branch Dinner. We are holding our Aberfeldy annual dinner on the 19th May at the Waterside Hotel on the banks of the River Ness and with the Battalion back in station we are expecting a large turnout.

Branch Meetings

8 May Monthly meeting
12 Jun Monthly meeting

LONDON BRANCH

Memo to self: remember to ask Stephen Hawking why time is accelerating and the years getting shorter. There must be a formula for it! We are barely over Christmas and it is almost Easter and time again for the writing of Red Hackle notes.

The cycle for our Branch year is like the seasons: constant and fairly predictable. The latter end of 2011 was no exception, with November being our busy month. Remembrance saw a good Black Watch turnout at Westminster Abbey for the Field of Remembrance, attended in 2012 by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. On his review of the Plots, the Duke spoke to our Branch Chairman, Brigadier Donald Wilson, fronting the Black Watch Plot and to Joe Hubble in front of the Tyneside Scottish Plot (which we man on their behalf). Special mention must go to Joe who, every year on behalf of the Black Watch Association, trav-



Some of the BW Contingent on Horse Guards.



The grave of Pte Docherty at Mazingarbe.



James Kirkness clearing Tsunami debris (and training for tossing the caber).

els to London a day or two prior to the opening of The Field to 'plant' the rows of poppies in the Black Watch plot.

On Remembrance Sunday many of the same London Branch members made the journey back to London to represent the Black Watch Association at the Cenotaph. Some members who had been unable to make it on the Thursday attended, and ex-Black Watch veterans from other Branches and elsewhere in the country also joined us for this very special annual event. Several parading that day had made long journeys to do so, with two travelling all the way south from Perth to march with the Black Watch Contingent. Well done, and thank you! Although the Contingent was small it was larger than the previous year and hopefully, will continue to attract Black Watch men to swell the ranks.

Later in November we gathered at the Victory Services Club for our annual Red Hackle Dinner organised, as ever, in exemplary manner by Ian Howarth our Dinner Secretary. Our thanks go to all members of the Dinner Committee (not forgetting those wives who also played their part) who helped to make this evening such a great success. On this occasion we were entertained by not one, but two pipers. Thank you Kevin Jenkinson and Chic Mackie. There was a good turnout and many of the guests had their evening enhanced by winning one of the superb draw prizes. For several years now Alastair Walters has been organising the draw on our behalf, always obtaining truly excellent prizes. These have included mini cruises, Harrods Christmas hampers, bottles of mature single malt whisky and top quality champagne. In addition he also provided that all-important nip of good quality whisky at the table. Sadly Alastair has decided to step down, as the demands of his ever-increasing duties as a District Councillor have made it impossible for him to continue. He will be greatly missed on the Committee and his will be a hard act to follow.

We also received a generous gift of two cases of quality wine for the occasion from Peter Scott-Graham. Thank you Peter!

It is usual for a small delegation from the Branch to go to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea to visit any BW In Pensioners there and to have lunch with them prior to Christmas. In December David Imrie, who spent



Members of the London Branch at the Field of Remembrance.

the majority of his Service in the RAOC, was the only ex-Black Watch In Pensioner in the Royal Hospital. RAOC is his chosen Corps, and the RLC visited him in December 2011. However, ex Band C/Sgt John Nicoll has recently become an In Pensioner, so normal service will be resumed again this year. Branch members going to Founder's Day in June 2012 are looking forward to seeing John on parade in his "scarlets".

We were unable to commemorate the life and valour of Private Edwards VC in March 2012, as Chigwell Parish is currently without a Vicar. Bill and Debbie Parr went to the church, tidied up around the memorial and placed a wreath there. The Branch intends to hold a proper ceremony again next year, with or without a vicar!

Readers may recall an item and photograph in our May 2011 Red Hackle notes about Pte John Docherty. Docherty served in 9th and 11th Battalions and was 'shot at dawn' on 15 February 1916. Isaiah Rosen, an Honorary member of the London Branch, sent in the photograph of Pte Docherty's plaque, taken at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. He then set himself the task of finding and visiting Pte Docherty's grave, a War Grave located in the village graveyard at Mazingarbe where the execution of Pte Docherty took place. He did this on a minimal budget, with no personal transport but with great determination. He submitted the following photograph to mark his success:

From time-to-time one gets a glimpse of the diversity of activities undertaken by Branch members and just such an instance is demonstrated in the following photograph. It shows London Branch member James Kirkness (still very fit looking at the age of 71) helping to clear tsunami debris following the dreadful Boxing Day tsunami at Ranong, Thailand, in 2006.

James served in HQ Coy, 1BW in Berlin, Edinburgh and Cyprus.

Finally, we have just learned of the death of a London Branch member, John Greener. John served as a Sergeant in the 2nd Battalion between 1941 and 1946.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

With there being no dinner in 2011, the winter period has been unusually quiet. It is hoped that a formal dinner will be held in 2012, however, discussions are at an early stage.

November saw the usual hardy members turning out for duty at the two main Remembrance Parades, one at the Jigsaw Memorial in Killingworth on 11th November and the other at Eldon Square in Newcastle on Remembrance Sunday. A wreath was laid at each of these venues. The British Legion Festival of Remembrance, which should have been held in Gateshead, was, unfortunately, cancelled because the organizers were unable to secure the services of a military band. This was a major break with tradition and concerns are being expressed about the future of this event.

Paddy Ireland, shortly before his death, instituted a Branch tradition of laying a wreath on a Black Watch War Grave in the area on the Saturday prior to Remembrance Sunday. This year, the grave chosen was that of WWII soldier, No 14620332 Private Linwood Alexander Lambert in Preston Cemetery, North Shields and a strong representative group turned out for the occasion. The Branch subsequently received correspondence from the family of Pte Lambert thanking us for the tribute. Linwood died on 7th November 1947.

Bill Brown, our Standard Bearer, has had a rough time. He fell in the street and landed with his rib cage in contact with the top of a bollard. He is much improved, having recovered from broken ribs, which damaged his lung. At the same time, he has been looking after



The 1739 Club members met on 26 November 2011 in The Queens Hotel, Dundee.



The grave of 14620332 Private Linwood Alexander Lambert, who died on 7th November 1947.



Lindsay Strachan and Robert Tasker laying a wreath at the grave of Robert McLean McLaren, Bunessan Cemetery, Isle of Mull on Thursday 8th March 2012 during a family visit to the Isle.

REGIMENTAL REMEMBRANCE SERVICE HELD AT BALHOUSIE CASTLE



Children from Kinnoull Primary School read their poem.



Mrs Margaret Dean Lord Lieutenant of Fife and President of The Black Watch Association attended the Regimental Remembrance Service at Balhousie Castle on 11 November 2011.



Family members of those killed in Iraq and Afghanistan attended the annual Regimental Remembrance Service.



Soldiers from the Black Watch Battalion also attended the Service.

his wife who has had long term health problems. These circumstances led to the appointment of Eric Armstrong as Assistant Standard Bearer to the Branch.

Our Social Secretary, Bob Chantler, is still not firing on all cylinders, and Elizabeth, his wife, has her work cut out looking after Bob and her mother, Lilly, who now needs some attention at the age of 102. We do not think that Lilly will be coming to Perth in June, although, it will be the first reunion she has missed for a number of years.

The AGM was held in February and as usual, the Treasurer made both sides of the balance sheet add up to the same amount, despite it not having been the greatest year on record. To strengthen the financial position, it has been decided to withhold the offer of life membership to any new applicant for membership and a system of voluntary annual subscription has been commenced for existing life members. This last move has had a better than expected response. To date, we remain bereft of a President and the matter is in the hands of the Committee for consideration.

In December, we lost our good friend and long time member Bob Barnfather and his obituary is included in this publication.

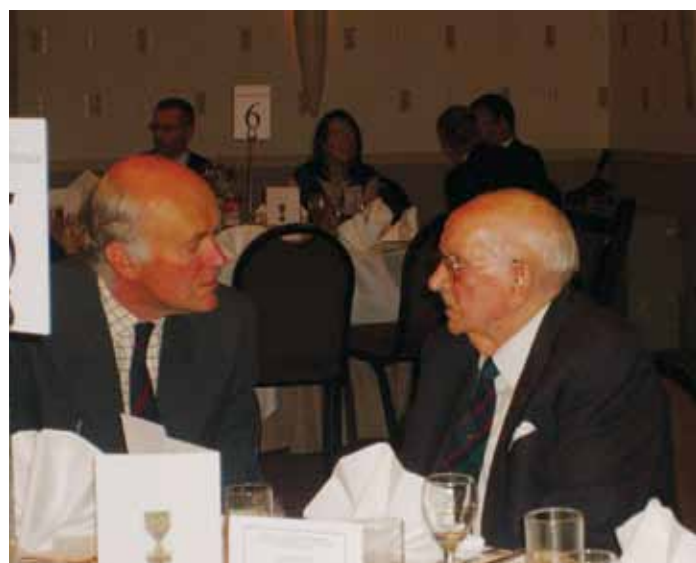
PERTH BRANCH

President: Lt Col (Retd) Roddy Riddell
Chairman: Capt (Retd) Alan McEwen
Treasurer: Mr Winkie Greer
Secretary: Mr Jim Sandilands
Piper: Alistair Duthie

As you will notice from the list of Branch Officials, Brian (Spats) Baxter and Jim Baird stepped down at our AGM in March. Although we have lost 2 tireless workers as officials, I am sure that they will be just as active in the body of the kirk.



Mrs Margaret Dean Lord Lieutenant of Fife and President of The Black Watch Association attended the Croix de Guerre Dinner held in Perth on 15 October 2011.



Mr Bill Kerr a Second World War veteran talks to the Perth Branch President during the Croix de Guerre Dinner.



A Perth Branch Reunion in London in March 2012. In Pensioner John Nicoll with "Spats" Baxter, pictured at the Union Jack Club.



Some of the guests at the Croix de Guerre Dinner.



Alan McEwen and Jenny Riddell chat to Provost Dr John Hulbert and his wife Sara before the Perth Branch Burns Supper.



Alistair Duthie, Spats Baxter, "the haggis" and Bob Shivas.



Some of the hosts and guests at the Perth Branch Burns Supper.



The Band led the Parade in Newcastle-under-Lyme (see Stoke on Trent Branch notes on next page).

On 15 October 2011 the Branch had an excellent evening in the Queens Hotel, Perth for our annual Croix de Guerre Dinner where the Lord Lieutenant of Fife and President of the BW Association, Margaret Dean and her husband Brian were our guests of honour.

On 4 February 2012 we held our Perth Branch Burns Night in the Salutation Hotel Perth. As usual our main guest was Provost John Hulbert who in his term of office has been a great supporter of The Black Watch and the Perth Branch and we would like to thank him and wish him well on his retirement.

The Burns Supper itself was a rousing success thanks to our guest speakers and the whole evening was well presented by our own shrinking violet Spats Baxter.

On Sunday 27 May, the Branch (with our ladies) will head for Aberfeldy to visit the statue where the Regiment was raised and to have lunch. This will be an excellent day out.

On 23 June is the BW Reunion in the Bells Sports Centre to which the Perth Branch look forward to meeting up with our colleagues from other branches.

The 2012 Croix de Guerre Dinner will be in October with the date to be confirmed later and our Burns Supper will be held on the 2nd of February and again all visitors are more than welcome.

Our Branch membership is on the up (103 members) which is very encouraging and our members seem to be in the best of health. If during the Reunion, you happen to see a moving letter box don't worry, it is not the drink, just our own John Nicoll in his "scarlets" as he has left us to join the Chelsea Pensioners. Although we were sorry to see him go we are also very proud of the fact that one of "oor ain" is there representing The Black Watch.

STOKE ON TRENT BRANCH

Since the last Hackle Notes it has been a reasonably quiet period for the Branch. The Remembrance Parades in Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent, were both well attended by our local membership, and a few also attended the Cenotaph in London.

Our Pipes & Drums, once more led a very large parade in Newcastle, watched by a large crowd of locals.

The Band did hold a special Burns Night Supper at the West End Village, at Stoke, but the heavy snow which fell on that evening, put a dampener on the event, however it was still well attended.

Almost all the band were stuck in snow blocked roads and heavy traffic, except for one lone Piper who braved the elements; well done Jimmy Fraser.

As I said at the beginning, the last period was quiet, but not so for the next couple of months. Firstly, it's up to Perth on 21st April 2012, for the AGM. However on the same day, a parade at Market Drayton in support of the Royal Irish Regiment, who are based at Tern Hill and who are receiving the Freedom of the town. The local Council have requested that 'Standard Bearers' from the Associations of all the Regiments who have received the Freedom of Market Drayton, attend to take part in the ceremony. Our Standard Bearer for this event will be Arthur Simmonds, who will be representing The Black Watch.

The next item, is the Annual Dinner & Dance, which will take place on Saturday 19th May 2012, at the North Stafford Hotel in



Alex Lackie, presents a cheque and kilts to Arthur Simmonds the Drum Major as a result of our appeal.

Stoke. Ticket sales are again not going as fast as we would like but we still have another four weeks to go.

On 26th May 2012, representatives of the Association, will be attending the National Memorial Arboretum, at Alrewas, for the un-veiling of the Monte Cassino Society Memorial. Our Pipes & Drums will be in attendance. One local member of the Branch in particular, Mr Ernie Morris fought there with our 6th Battalion and so the Red Hackle will be on parade.

28th May 2012, is the date of the un-veiling of the memorial to the Ulster Defence Regiment at Alrewas and once again a representative will be attending on behalf of the Regimental Association.

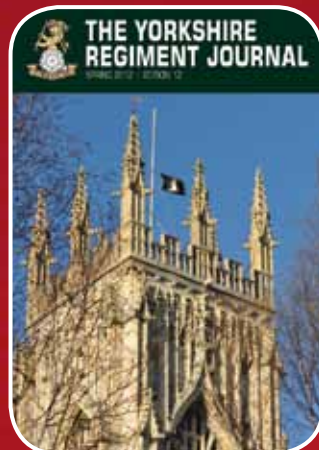
On 23rd June 2012, a number of the Branch members will be attending, not only the Laying up of Colours Parade but also the re-union.

In the last edition of our local Newsletter, (Autumn 2011) we asked for help, on behalf of our Pipes & Drums, for equipment which was needed for band members. The response was nothing short of fantastic, with 7 kilts, 2 Glengarries, 2 TOS's, 2 Sporrans and one pair of Trews, together with monetary donations which now amounts to £575.00.

On behalf of all the members of the Pipes & Drums and myself, I would like to sincerely thank everyone, for their generous donations.

In our last Branch Newsletter, we also asked for donations to Hackle's Plaque fund. Hackle of course was Jim Sandilands' dog, who greeted guests to Balhousie Castle and the museum. To date I am very pleased to say that we have £125.00 to donate to this fund, (who said Jocks were tight *****), even Yorkshire members have donated !!!)

Method Publishing



METHOD PUBLISHING
Sutherland Press House
Main Street · Golspie
Sutherland KW10 6RA

Telephone · 01408 633871
Facsimile · 01408 633876

A division of Scottish Provincial Press Ltd



A service you can rely on
METHOD PUBLISHING

Raising to Distinction



Queen Victoria School

**Open Morning
Sat 15 Sep 2012**

Queen Victoria School in Dunblane is a co-educational boarding school for children of Armed Forces personnel who are Scottish, have served in Scotland or are part of a Scottish regiment.

The QVS experience encourages and develops well-rounded, confident individuals in an environment of stability and continuity.

The main entry point is into Primary 7 and all places are fully funded for tuition and boarding by the Ministry of Defence.

Families are welcome to find out more at our Open Morning or by contacting Admissions on **+44 (0) 131 310 2927** to arrange a visit.



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Queen Victoria School
Dunblane Perthshire
FK15 0JY
www.qvs.org.uk