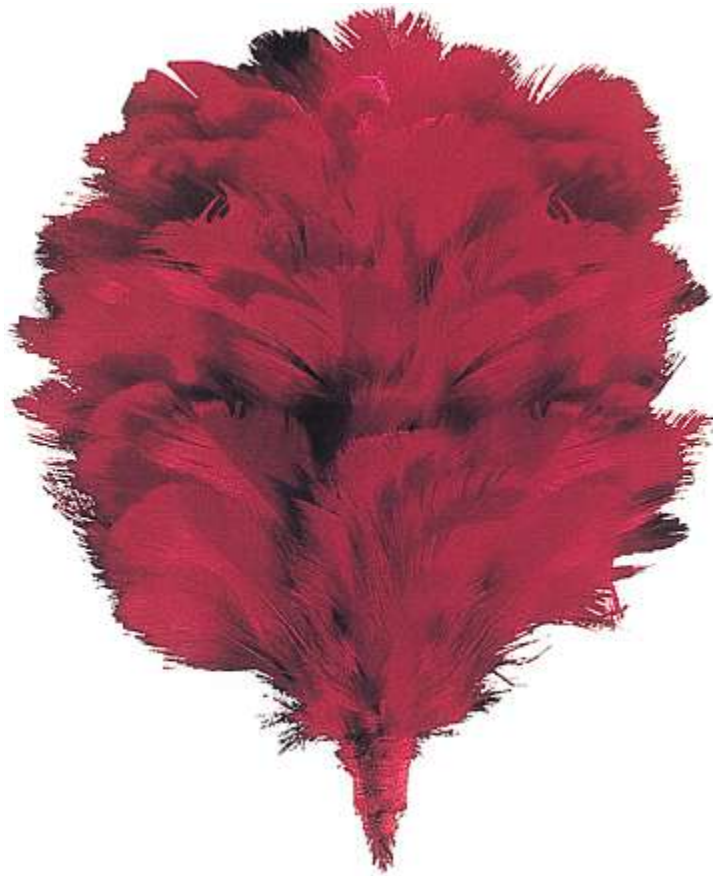


No. 171
May 2017



THE RED HACKLE

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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 Association Royal Patron, His Royal Highness The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay
attended the London Branch drinks reception at the Victory Services Club on 24 November 2016.*



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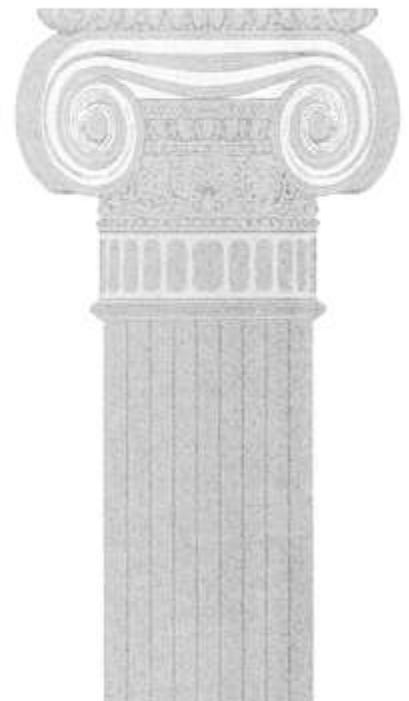
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Editorial

The dinner to honour our National Servicemen was held in Perth in November and was a great success and since then, the Association Secretariat have been working on the erection of the Queen's Barracks memorial and information panel close to St Ninian's Cathedral in Perth. The memorial will record in words and pictures, the fact that the barracks was the home of The Black Watch Depot for 80 years. The Association have also been working on plans to erect a statue in the grounds of Balhousie Castle that will depict a Black Watch piper serving in the 51st Highland Division. There is more detail on both these projects in the News Section of the magazine. Lastly, the Association are helping to replace an existing memorial at Monte Scalari in Italy, the scene of fierce fighting for the 6th Battalion in 1944.

After the busy 2016 summer, the Castle and Museum have had a more measured period. That said an example of a First World War trench was built in the grounds to allow the museum staff to expand the educational experience of visitors and there are a number of projects underway to improve the archives. In addition two temporary exhibitions were mounted.

Volume 2 of the Regimental History will be published this summer and Victoria Schofield has kindly prepared an excerpt for the magazine that appears in the Articles Section. Major Dick Parata has written an excellent article about his experiences in Aden in 1967 when serving with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and a short article about the Regimental Tweed may also be of interest.

Lieutenant Colonel Rob Hedderwick has highlighted in his Foreword, that the Battalion has been spread around the globe with Company training exercises being held in Kenya and Jordan and training support being given to the Kuwaiti Armed Forces. In August 2017 the Battalion become the Theatre Standby Battalion and then deploy as a Battalion (-) to Iraq in 2018. On current planning Fort George will remain open until 2032.

By the time this magazine is published Colonel Alex Murdoch will have handed over as Chairman of the Association to Major General JM Cowan, having started his career 54 years ago in the 6/7th Battalion The Black Watch.

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 Regimental Association 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, £30 annually to Europe and £30 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 Magazine, 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.



Regimental News

FORECAST OF EVENTS 2017/2018

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
2017		
12 June	Officers and Ladies Lunch	London
16 June	Regimental Golf Meeting	Muckhart
17 June	Regimental Reunion	Perth
30 July	Crieff Remembers The Battle of Passchendaele	Crieff
31 July	Great War Memorial Service	Balhousie Castle
17 September	Fife Branch Alma Lunch	Kirkcaldy
17 September	Angus Branch Standard Rededication	Kirriemuir
7 October	Perth Branch Croix de Guerre Dinner	Perth
21 October	Angus Branch El Alamein Dinner	Forfar
27 October	Association Trustee and Executive Committee Meeting	Perth
27 October	Officers' Gathering Dinner	Perth
10 November	Balhousie Castle Remembrance Service	Perth
12 November	Cenotaph Remembrance Parade	London
23 November	London Branch Dinner	London
4 December	Angus Branch Christmas Buffet and Drinks	Forfar
16 December	Officers' Regimental Ball	TBC
19 December	Perth Branch Christmas Buffet and Drinks	Perth
2018		
13 January	Edinburgh Branch Ceilidh	Leith Ex Servicemen's Club
19 January	Dundee Branch Red Hackle Dinner	Dundee
27 January	Angus Branch Burns Supper	Forfar
10 February	Perth Branch Burns Supper	Perth
21 March	Great War Memorial Service	Balhousie Castle
18 April	Great War Memorial Service	Balhousie Castle

CONGRATULATIONS

To Major Steven George Small on the award of the MBE in the New Year's Honours List 2017.

To the following NCOs of The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland

Warrant Officer Class 2 J Harding on the award of a GOC's Commendation.

Sergeant R Whyte on the award of a GOC's Commendation.

Warrant Officer Class 2 (RQMS) G Hannah on the award of a CGS Commendation.

Corporal A Wells on being presented with The Charlie Hankins Award To Captain Michael McCluskey Army Cadet Force on the award of the General Officer Commanding Regional Command's Commendation.



Captain Alan McEwen pictured with his family at Buckingham Palace where he was presented with his MBE.



2017 CHRISTMAS CARD

The 2017 Christmas card is a portrait of Lieutenant Colonel John Coode.

He was originally an officer in the 73rd and was killed commanding the 2nd Battalion at Magersfontein on 11 December 1899.

A pack of ten cards will cost £7.20.

LEGION D'HONNEUR AWARDS

Douglas Denwette, aged 97 lives in Kirkcaldy. He served in the 5th Battalion and took part in the D Day Landings. Prior to that he had fought in North Africa and Sicily.

In December 2016 he was awarded the Legion d'Honneur by Emmanuel Cocher, the Consul General of France in Scotland.

Mr George Brydon, aged 91 enlisted into the Regiment in January 1944. In August that year he joined the 5th Battalion The Black Watch who were fighting in Normandy. He saw active service with the Battalion at Caen and was severely wounded in September at Chateau Mauny where five officers and soldiers lost their lives and a number of others including George were wounded (see Red Hackle November 2013 page 24).

Returning to the UK to undergo several operations on his back, George was demobilised on the 22nd November 1947.

George was admitted to the Legion as a Chevalier and presented with the medal by the French Consul General, Monsieur Emmanuel Cocher at Gilmerton House near Dunbar on the 18th of November 2016. He was accompanied by his wife, their family and a large group of their wider family and close friends. Representing the Regiment were Major General Mike Riddell-Webster, Governor of Edinburgh Castle, Colonel Alex Murdoch and Major Ronnie Proctor from the Black Watch Association.



George Brydon with his wife Elma and son Angus photographed with Major General Riddell-Webster, Colonel Alex Murdoch and Major Ronnie Proctor.

THE BLACK WATCH BATTALION ARMY CADET FORCE

Colonel J M K Erskine stands down as Commandant of The Black Watch Battalion of the Army Cadet Force in May 2017. He took up the appointment in May 2013. Prior to that he was Deputy Commandant from 2009.

HMS MONTROSE

HMS Montrose is now undergoing sea trials.

MUSEUM AWARDS

In December 2016, The Black Watch Castle and Museum won the "Excellence in Tourism and Leisure Award 2016" which was organised by the Perthshire Chamber of Commerce Star Awards. Anne Kinnes the Chief Executive accepted the award on behalf of the Trustees.

Arts and Business Scotland announced that as a result of the Poppies; Weeping Window, The Black Watch Castle and Museum had been shortlisted for its enterprising museum category.

100th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Dave Hutton enjoyed his 100th birthday party on 7 April 2017 although his birthday was actually not until the 9th. It took place in Dundee. He was accompanied by his family and friends. Members of the Black Watch Association were also in attendance and Pipe Major Duthie piped in the special Regimental birthday cake and provided musical entertainment.

Dave served with the Second Battalion in Maryhill Barracks in Glasgow, Palestine, Somaliland and Crete where he was wounded and taken prisoner. After the war and eventual demobilisation he worked for the post office until retirement.



Members of the Association help Dave Hutton to celebrate his 100th birthday.

THE NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S DINNER – 4 NOVEMBER 2016

On Friday 4 November sixty four members of the Association sat down for dinner at the Salutation Hotel in Perth to honour the contribution made by the many National Servicemen who served in the Regiment between 1947 and 1963. Twenty nine National Servicemen attended the dinner and were welcomed by Lieutenant Colonel Roddy Riddell the Association Vice Chairman. Mr Mervyn Blakeney and Mr Jimmy Spankie both spoke about their experiences during their period of conscription.

Lieutenants Alasdair Pearson and Alastair Gibson, RSM Kevin Stacey and Colour Sergeant Eddie Nichol represented The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland and Corporal Christopher Watt and Private Garry McKay played an excellent Pipe Programme.

On the reverse side of the Pipe Programme the following explanation of National Service was printed;

In March 1947 a National Service Bill was tabled in the House of Commons that proposed universal military conscription for all males

between the ages of 18 and 26, for a period of eighteen months. The Bill became law in July 1947 but the period of service had been reduced to twelve months. This was rapidly amended in the light of international tensions and by December 1948 the period of service was extended to two years. The end of National Service was announced in 1957 and the last conscripts did not leave until 1963.

All Black Watch National Servicemen underwent basic training at Queen's Barracks and those selected for commissioning carried out further training at Eaton Hall and later Mons Officer Cadet School. As a result of their service, a number of officers and soldiers joined the Regular Army and many later served with the 4/5th or 6th/7th Territorial Battalions.


Those joining the 1st Battalion served in BAOR, Korea, Kenya, the United Kingdom, Berlin and Cyprus and those joining the 2nd Battalion in the United Kingdom, BAOR and British Guiana.

The British Army, with its high proportion of National Servicemen served with distinction in the complex post war world, not only in BAOR but in Colonial situations and in the Korean War. Many gave their lives for their country, many more were wounded and some were decorated for gallantry but nearly all National Servicemen who served in the Regiment added to the rich tapestry of skills and character of both the 1st and 2nd Battalions.

The National Servicemen attending the dinner were:

Ronald Adam
Ron Balfour
Peter Brown
Peter Giles
David Hayes
Jack Herschell
Malcolm Innes
Jim Mathewson
Angus McMaster
Kevin Murphy
Weir Rankin
Tom Robertson
Roland Rose
Jimmy Spankie
Peter White

Jim Anderson
Mervyn Blakeney
Jimmy Connors
Bill Harrison
Scott Henderson
Rob Inglis
Robert Mathew
Alan McKinnell
Bob Mitchell
Michael Nairn
John Rankin
Mathew Robertson
Alistair Rutherford
Bruce Tyrrie



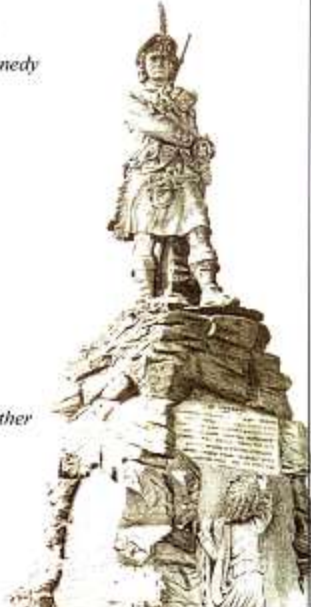
PIPE PROGRAMME

Regimental March
"Highland Laddie"

1st Pipe Set
A Company March: Atholl Highlanders
B Company March: Lord Alexander Kennedy
C Company March: Steamboat
D Company March: Scotland the Brave
HQ Company March: Road to the Isles

2nd Pipe Set
March: Ladies Frae Hell
Jig: The Curlew
Jig: Rocking the Baby
Air: Jackie's Time
Jig: Kenny Gillies of Portnalong
March: Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother

Pipers:
Corporal Christopher Watt and
Private Gary McKay
The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion
The Royal Regiment of Scotland



Pipe Programme.



Sandy McDuff and Roy Brown (41) enjoying the National Service Dinner.



Private Garry McKay (left) and Corporal Christopher Watt flank ex Drum Major Pat McLinden at the National Service Dinner.

QUEEN'S BARRACKS MEMORIAL

At an Association Executive Committee meeting held in 2012 it was noted that there was no memorial or information panel that commemorated the fact that Queen's Barracks had been the Depot of The Black Watch for 80 years. Major Bob Ritchie was asked to form a small committee to investigate the possibility of erecting an information panel but as many readers will know, he died in December 2013.

Five years later and after many delays, the project is nearing completion and the plan is to have a short opening ceremony on the day of the 2017 Reunion. The panel will sit on top of a handsome sandstone base, on the front of which is a Royal Highlanders Regimental badge.



The National Service Dinner was held in the Salutation Hotel on 4 November 2016.



The sandstone base of the Queen's Barracks Memorial sits in the centre of the old parade ground.



The top table included Mr Jimmy Spankie and Mr Mervyn Blakeney who both gave speeches at the dinner.

51ST HIGHLAND DIVISION MEMORIAL

A statue of a Black Watch piper serving in the 51st Highland Division is to be erected in the grounds of Balhousie Castle. He is dressed in battledress, in the period of the Second World War and will be three quar-

ters life size. The statue will stand on a plinth about 1.7 metres high and a crescent shaped drystone wall will be the backdrop to the statue.

It is being erected to commemorate the thousands of men, both Regular Army and Territorials who served in the 51st Highland Division from 1908 to 1967. As a fighting formation they served with great distinction in the Great War and in the Second World War. Field Marshal The Viscount Alanbrooke when talking about the Division said "it takes its place alongside the very few which, through their valour and fighting record, stands in a category of their own".

The Division was first formed by bringing together the kilted Highland Infantry Regiments. Other regiments provided machine gun battalions, reconnaissance units and pioneers. In addition the Division included elements of the Royal Armoured Corps, Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Royal Signals, Royal Army Service Corps, Royal Army Ordnance Corps and Royal Army Medical Corps as well as other supporting units.

Battalions of The Black Watch served in the Division in both wars and the statue was the project of Dr Tom Renouf MBE, MM, Legion d'Honneur who served in the Tyneside Scottish and then the 5th Battalion The Black Watch in 1944/45. Sadly he died in 2016 before the statue could be sculpted and cast.

The generosity of a number of people in helping to bring the project to fruition must be recorded;

Sculptor: Mr Alan Herriot DA, ARBS

Casting: The Powderhall Bronze Factory

The 51st Highland Division and Ross Bequest Trust

The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) Association

The Central Scotland Branch of the Drystone Wallers' Association

The Renouf Family



An early model of the 51st Highland Division statue which will be erected in the grounds of Balhousie Castle.

CRIEFF REMEMBERS – 30 JULY 2017

Crieff Remembers is a programme of events this year to mark 100 years since the 3rd Battle of Ypres also known as Passchendaele. A military parade and Drumhead Service will be held on Sunday 30th July lasting from 10.00-12.00. The salute will be taken by Major General ML Riddell-Webster CBE, DSO Governor of Edinburgh Castle. The parade will be led by The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland and will include Reservists and Veterans. They will march through Crieff and the Drumhead Service will take place at the Market Park. Legion Scotland are the lead organisation for the event which will be Scotland's National Commemoration event.

As well as the parade, Crieff will host an exhibition of Great War artefacts, letters and photographs and the Scottish Diaspora tapestry will be on display.

Those wishing to know more about the events should look at the Crieff Remembers website. The Association hope to have good marching contingent on parade on the 30th of July.

THE LAST SURVIVORS

Editor's Note: I am most grateful to the Royal Hospital Chelsea for allowing me to reproduce the image of the "Last Survivors".

The Royal Hospital Chelsea magazine "Home Front" published a photograph taken in 1880, 65 years after the Battle of Waterloo. The photograph shows two Black Watch veterans; John McKay standing on the left and Benjamin Bumstead who is sitting in the centre.

John McKay served in the 2nd Battalion 42nd Regiment of Foot and he fought in the Peninsula Campaign and was wounded at either the siege of Badajos or in the taking of the city in April 1812. Benjamin Bumstead served in the 2nd Battalion 73rd Regiment which was part of "Wellingtons Army in Belgium".

EAST SURVIVORS OF WATERLOO IN CHELSEA HOSPITAL
JUNE 1880



John McKay, 42nd Regiment Aged 95
Wounded at Badajos, Wounded at Waterloo, Served in Germany, Holland & France
Robert Norton, 34th Regiment Aged 90
Ralph Hanney, 7th Hussars Aged 88
Served in the Peninsula, Present at Waterloo.
Benjamin Bumstead, 73rd Regiment Aged 82
Present at Waterloo, 18th June 1815.
Sampson Webb, 3rd Foot Guards Aged 82
Present at Waterloo, 18th June 1815.

The photograph "The last survivors" shows the last resident survivors at the Royal Hospital on the 65th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo in 1880 (Copyright The Royal Hospital Chelsea).

THE STANDARD OF THE INVINCIBLES

Mr David Rowlands, a war artist, whilst visiting Balhousie Castle purchased volume 1 of Victoria Schofield's 'Highland Furies'. As an historian he was interested to read about the capture of the Standard of the Invincibles. In an email to the Editor he commented, "Referring to the capture of the standard of the French 'Invincibles' at Alexandria, 1801, Victoria Schofield writes, 'The whereabouts of the standard are currently unknown.' (p236, footnote 44, p638).



Painting by David Rowlands depicting the capture of the Invincibles' Standard by Private Anton Lutz (Copyright David Rowlands).

For the Tercentenary of the King's (Liverpool & Manchester) Regiment in 1985, I was commissioned to paint Pte Anton Lutz

taking the Standard from French Dragoons at Alexandria and I am aware that in a ceremony at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea in 1947, captured enemy Colours were handed to the British regiments claiming them. The standard of 'The Invincibles' was awarded to 2nd Battalion The Manchester Regiment (which bore the traditions of the old 96th, 'The Queen's Germans'). This was recorded in the Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research, Volume 26, page 45.

The remains of this standard were at the Manchester Regiment Museum at Queen's Park, Harpurhey, Manchester, where I inspected it in about 1972. The pole bore only scraps of remaining material." He then added "An appendix regarding Anton Lutz and the capture of the Standard of the 21st Light Demi-Brigade (The Invincibles), appears in Volume 2 of the history of The Manchester Regiment by Colonel HC Wyllie (1923). It records a copy of proceedings of a Regimental Committee of Inquiry, held in the Queen's German Regiment (later the 96th of Foot), at Gosport, 28th August 1802, to examine the circumstances which attended the capture of the Colour on 21st March 1801. Two privates give their evidence and Cpl Schmid was questioned as to whether he saw a Sergeant of the 42nd in the vicinity. He did not".

BLACK WATCH ASSOCIATION ALL RANKS GOLF MEETING

By Major AM Stewart BEM

The annual all ranks golf meeting will take place on 16th June 2017 which, as is the norm, is the day before the Regimental Reunion. The competition will again be held at Muckhart Golf Club who look after us extremely well. The competition is very generously subsidised by the Black Watch Association and will again be strongly supported and sponsored by Sidey Ltd along with a new sponsor - Red Hackle Security.

This is a first class day's golf with full catering and can be enjoyed by Black Watch Association members and serving members of 3 SCOTS. Due to the tremendous support we enjoy from the Association and our sponsors, we can offer excellent value for money along with some very good prizes for those who are lucky enough to play well on the day. Full details are contained at www.societygolfing.co.uk by going to Access Your Society Area and entering the username 'blackwatch' and the password 'fortytwa'. Anyone who is not already listed as a member on this site, but would like to play, or just to be added for future years should get in touch with Maj (Retd) Alex Stewart at alex8608@btinternet.com.

THE RED HACKLE CUP

The inaugural competition for the Red Hackle Cup, open to all Black Watch Association Members and members of The Black Watch Battalion (3 SCOTS), was held at Murrayshall Golf Club on Friday 10th March 2017. This was the initiative of the Black Watch Battalion Golf Society and it turned out to be a huge success.

Around 30 hardy souls tackled some difficult and testing conditions, playing the Lymedoch Course which is physically very demanding even on a good day. Despite this, the scoring was respectable and nobody was disgraced (well nearly nobody, but we don't want to embarrass anyone, especially as he was one of the organisers). There are, of course, always winners and losers and the winners on this occasion just happened to be almost exclusively members of the Association. Winning with a Stableford score of 40 points was Iain Coupar but he was closely followed by Dougie Graham (37) and Malcolm Crowe (35).

We are grateful to Colour Sergeant Eddie Nichol and Corporal Barrie Fraser (it wasn't Barrie who disgraced himself) for their efforts in organising this terrific first running of the competition, and to the Battalion for providing the magnificent trophy and other prizes. It would be appropriate at this stage to also thank the Black Watch Association for their continued strong support of our golf society in the form of a match subsidy - this generous help is very much appreciated by everyone taking part.

The Black Watch Association will organise next year's event but the date remains to be confirmed and will very much depend on the Battalion commitments. Once confirmed, the event will again be advertised on our website.



Group photograph of the day. Major Alex Stewart in the centre with Corporal Barrie Fraser on his right.



Iain Coupar being presented with the Red Hackle Cup by Captain Neil Fiddler.



The prize winners. From the left - Malcolm Crowe, Iain Coupar and Dougie Graham.

BLACK WATCH ASSOCIATION CURLING REPORT

By Major J M K Erskine MBE

The season started in its usual way with the match against the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Each side produced two rinks although one person from each Regiment did not turn up on the day and so the 'A' match was played between three curlers on both sides. Sadly once again the Black Watch failed to win the Macrae Cup. The final score was 6-19, not helped when Jamie Erskine's instructions to his

skip for the final stone at one end was so unclear that what should have been a clear two stones victory to the Black Watch ended in a one stone victory to the opposition. Despite this loss, it was a fun day and those who stayed for lunch seemed to enjoy themselves. The rinks were:

'A' Rink	'B' Rink
Jamie Montgomery	Will Henderson
David Noble	Jamie Erskine
Mike Riddell-Webster	Duncan Cameron
	Malcolm Innes

On 20 January the Regiment hosted the Highlanders in Perth. Each side produced two rinks and each rink played 4 ends against each of the opposition rinks. The 'A' rink peeled its first four ends against the Highlanders 'A' rink before losing a tight match against their 'B' rink by 2-3. The 'B' rink lost both its matches by 4-6 and 2-6; thus the Highlanders won the match 19-12. The Black Watch rinks were:

'A' Rink	'B' Rink
Malcolm Taylor	Will Henderson
Jamie Erskine	Roddy Riddell
Hugh Rose	Alan McEwan
Jon Twine	Torquil Macleod

On 9 February Jamie Montgomery and Peter Sutton represented the Regiment when the Highland and Lowland Brigades Curling Club were hosted by the New Club in the annual match. After an excellent lunch in the Club, the match was played at Murrayfield. Unfortunately the New Club won the match by 15-4. Jamie Montgomery's rink which included Peter Sutton did not fare as badly as the other rink!

The next Highland and Lowland Brigades' Curling Club match was against the Royal Company of Archers at Kinross on 16 March. Jamie Montgomery, Roddy Riddell, Jamie Erskine and Malcolm Innes formed one rink for the Highland and Lowland Brigades' Curling Club and after a tight match lost their game by 6 shots to 7. However the Highland and Lowland Brigades' Club were the overall winners by 33 shots to 24. Duncan Cameron, James Duncan Millar and Tim Usher all chose to curl for the Royal Company with mixed success in their respective games.

This year's Highland and Lowland Brigades' Curling Club Bonspiel was held on 23 March in Perth. There were a reduced number of teams this year – ten in total – and the Black Watch were only required to produce two teams. Despite that, the Regiment had to ask for Craig Wilkinson from the Royal Regiment of Scotland to curl because Malcolm Taylor was stranded in Kathmandu and the reserve was in Austria; and what an asset Craig proved to be. The rinks were:

'A' Rink	'B' Rink
Jamie Montgomery	James Duncan Millar
Tim Usher	Roddy Riddell
Hugh Rose	Jamie Erskine
Mike Riddell- Webster	Craig Wilkinson (SCOTS)

In the first session, the 'A' rink was drawn against the King's Own Scottish Borderers and the 'B' rink against Highlanders 'A'. After taking a strong lead in the first two ends, the 'A' rink just held on to beat the Borderers by 7-6 while the 'B' rink had an extremely tight match and won 6-5. In the second session, the 'A' rink were drawn against the Royal Highland Fusiliers and the 'B' rink played the King's Own Scottish Borderers. Sadly the 'A' rink lost their match 3-8 while the 'B' rink won again by one shot, the score was 4-3. In the final session, there was an outside chance that the 'B' rink could win the overall competition and while they did win their match against Highlanders 'B' 6-5, they ended up second overall to the Royal Highland Fusiliers. Meanwhile the 'A' rink played the Royal Scots in their third match. They won 9-3 but at one point observers of this match thought there had been a mutiny in the ranks as Mike Riddell-Webster left midway through the game and Jamie Montgomery was deposed as skip by Tim Usher!! While the Regiment did not retain the trophy, the teams won five matches out of six, which certainly meant it was a successful Bonspiel.

As usual the curlers are indebted to the support given to them by the Regimental Association. It is very much appreciated. While it is satisfying that the number of regimental curlers is staying constant, there are always places available for new ones. Looking ahead, it is hoped to introduce a match against the Lowlanders in the 2017/18 season but details will be promulgated when known.



The Highland and Lowland Brigades' Bonspiel was won by a team from the RHF and The Black Watch team (on the right of the photograph) that came second consisted of Jamie Duncan Millar (Skip), Jamie Erskine and Roddy Riddell ably supported by Craig Wilkinson a SCOTS officer (not in photograph).

THE CHARLIE HANKINS' AWARD

Editor's Note: Readers will be pleased to note that the Charlie Hankins' Award is still presented annually.

Charlie Hankins served with the Black Watch (The Royal Highland Regiment) from 1938 to 1943 when he was severely injured in the North African Desert Campaign in WW2. He was wounded near Tunis and lost both his legs, was blinded in one eye, and received gunshot wounds to the chest.

Charlie recounted that, "the Germans had these six-barrelled mobile mortars – we called them Moaning Minnies or the Sobbing Sisters – which used to come down like raindrops. I got clobbered by one of them.

"There was an officer and a sergeant manning a machine gun at the top of this hill we'd just taken near Tunis, and two of us at the bottom. We were trying to knock off a nearby German observation post.

"It was all chaos. I told Sandy who was with me to stay where he was, as there was no point in both of us getting killed. I tried to get to the top of the hill.

"Then one of the mortars came down, and off came my feet. Part of my hands was torn away with my chest, and one leg was shattered to the thigh, the foot torn right off.

"The other foot was hanging on by a piece of skin, and when I started crawling down the hill to get help it fell off. I also lost the sight in my right eye. The doctors say that either the optical nerve was shattered in the impact when the mortar landed, or that my retina was damaged when I was lying wounded, staring up at the sun."

It wasn't until 1971 that the last pieces of shrapnel and bullets were taken out of Charlie's chest.

In 1986 Charlie Hankins decided to travel from John O'Groats to Land's End in an attempt to raise £100,000 for the Star and Garter Home for disabled service men and women, a place he personally had recuperated following his severe injuries.

The 1,010 mile journey was to be completed in a hand-propelled WW2 tricycle that he had bought for just £2 and modified in his work shop. He planned to travel between 20 and 30 miles a day, hoping to maintain an average speed of 8 mph propelled only by his muscle power.

On 11 Aug 1986 he set off on his long journey backed up by a mobile team from the Signals Platoon of the 1st Battalion, The Black Watch (The Royal Highland Regiment). With no physical assistance he completed the journey on 22 September, with Red Hackles coming out to support along the length and breadth of Britain. He raised more than £150,000 for the Royal Star and Garter Home.

As a lasting memorial of a brave effort by a Black Watch man, an annual award was introduced for the soldier of any rank judged to have made the most praiseworthy or unusual contribution to the Battalion's life and reputation through: helping others through self-sacrifice, sav-

ing life or minimising injury, raising money for charity, or achieving a unique distinction.

On 22 August 2016, Pte McPherson was killed in an accident whilst training at Otterburn. In the aftermath of the incident Cpl Wells' actions, leadership and behaviour were exceptional and he is the deserved recipient of the Charlie Hankins' Award.

DAVID BIRRELL

David Birrell joined the Regiment in March 2004 but was later posted to The Royal Scots Borderers, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland to undertake a tour of Afghanistan. On 10 April 2010 he was severely wounded by an IED and he lost both his legs.

Treatment at Headley Court followed and he then taught himself to drive. He got involved in motor sport and this has proved to be his saviour. He is supported by BLESMA and now drives for Woodard Racing. He has great ambition and has driven at Knockhill and Brands Hatch and hopes to race in the Le Mans 24 Hour in 2017. For more about his story visit www.davidbirrellracing.co.uk



David Birrell dressed in his Woodard Racing Organisation kit has his sights set on driving at Le Mans in 2017.



On 30 October 2016 The 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland team attended the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington DC and David Birrell undertook the challenge using a hand bike. He is pictured on the left.

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE PERTH



The annual Balhousie Castle Remembrance Service was held on 11 November 2016. Captain Nick Coles represented The Black Watch Battalion.

PRIVATE THOMAS EDWARDS VC

Some years ago the Regimental Association paid for a headstone to be erected as Thomas Edwards had died a pauper in 1952 and was buried in a pauper's grave in St Mary's Church, Chigwell.

Every year as close to the 13th of March, the London Branch hold a small ceremony to remember his valour. At the Battle of Tamai on 13 March 1884 he was recognised;

"For the conspicuous bravery displayed by him in defence of one of the guns of the Naval Brigade, at the battle of Tamai, on 13th March, 1884. Private Edwards (who was attached to the Naval Brigade as Mule Driver) was beside the gun with Lieutenant Almack RN, and another Naval Rating, who were both killed; Edwards, after bayoneting two Arabs, and himself receiving a wound with a spear, rejoined the ranks with his mules, and subsequently did good service in remaining by his gun throughout the action."



Jeremy Hulme (left), Chick Mackie and the Reverend Ben King standing beside the grave of Private Edwards VC.

THE SIZE OF THE RED HACKLE

Readers may be interested to see the contents of a letter sent by WO1 Kevin Stacey, RSM of The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland to all soldiers and NCOs posted outside the battalion. It concerns the size of hackle to be worn by soldiers of The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

"I am writing to inform you that we are to wear a new sized Red Hackle. This comes into effect as of Wed 11 Jan 17. Major General Bruce, our Regimental Colonel, has directed that the Regiment will all wear the same sized hackles in our bonnets from the 31st

of March 2017. This will clearly affect all the Battalions in the Regiment, with some hackles increasing and some reducing in size. Regardless, it will result in uniformity across our Regiment. As a battalion, we will be the first to conform to this direction across the Regiment, demonstrating that we continue to lead the way as we move forward. We have always prided ourselves on being a "one big family" battalion, with a one team ethos of "no soldier is greater than the team". As a battalion, we are also part of a team and we will continue to play a leading role in the Royal Regiment of Scotland and welcome anyone, regardless of their background to be part of our team.

The size of our hackle is immaterial when compared to the gains we will get by demonstrating our forward leaning and regimental stance. Since we were presented the Red Hackle in 1795, it has been many different sizes. But it has always been blood red, and what it stands for, and the pride with which we wear it, will never change. The red vulture feather is synonymous with our battalion. For over 250 years it has proudly sat upon our bonnets bringing strength to the wearer in all four corners of the globe. It is the envy of many, and feared by more. We are lucky to be, for a short time, its custodians and it is impossible to overlook what our forefathers have done in its name.

The global reputation associated with it, is not because of us, but due to those who have been before us. It belongs to the 8,000 Red Hackles that fell in the Great War and to those who fought in the

Battle of the Hook; it belongs to those men who stood firm on the sinking Birkenhead to allow women and children off first and to those who have laid down their lives for their brothers and sisters in arms in Iraq and in Afghanistan. From Fontenoy to Fallujah with Ticonderoga, Waterloo, Alamein and two World Wars in between, the Black Watch has played a significant part in world history. Our modern history is impressive too, with seven operational deployments over the last twelve years. We should be fiercely proud of our heritage. Our actions, manner and bearings will shape the future of this formidable reputation as in time we pass it over to the next generation of custodians who will be judged on our performance and standards. Understanding our history is therefore fundamental to honouring those who have gone before and securing those who will follow. We must understand what it means to wear the Red Hackle, the values and courage it requires and the integrity it demands.

I expect you all to bear this in mind and to lead from the front, wearing this new hackle and any future version, with the pride and privilege it deserves, displaying loyalty to the Battalion and our Regiment.

Remember, regardless of where you come from, or indeed where you may go in the future, once you have placed the Red Hackle in your bonnet you will forever be part of the Battalion, and you will always be welcomed back as a comrade for the rest of your life."



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The Black Watch Museum and Friends of The Black Watch Castle and Museum

MUSEUM TRUSTEES

Chairman: Major General M L Riddell-Webster CBE DSO
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Colonel A Murdoch TD (until 14 April 2017)
Major General J M Cowan CBE DSO (from 14 April 2017)
Captain Angus Ferguson
Mr Sean O'Reilly
The Earl of Kinnoull
Mr Graham Halstead
Captain Anthony Perriam

Chief Executive: Mrs Anne Kinnes

Once again, we have enjoyed a busy and productive period in the Museum. Just prior to the publication of the last edition of *The Red Hackle*, the Chairmanship of the Black Watch Castle and Museum passed from Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin to Major General Mike Riddell-Webster.

General Alistair became the new Chairman of the Black Watch Museum Trust in mid 2011, having been the Chairman of the combined Black Watch Trusts for some considerable period before that. For the last five years, he has overseen progress as the build has been completed and the fledgling business has been developed until it has been able to stand on its own. That we now have both a comprehensive Regimental history (or will have once the second edition is published!) and a fine book of pipe tunes are also as a direct result of his determination to ensure that the Regiment is remembered in the best possible way and our Regimental values, standards and traditions are continued in the life of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and more widely. The Black Watch Museum now stands in a class of its own. Recognised by Museum professionals as being the leading Museum of its type in Scotland and probably the UK. We are hugely grateful to him for all that he has done.

There have been a number of other changes to the Trustees. We have bidden a fond farewell to Colonel Alex Murdoch, who has been our link Trustee with the Black Watch Association and who has provided much wise counsel over many years, particularly with regard to the financial and business aspects of the new Museum operation. We owe him a very real debt of thanks; his contribution and calmly delivered common sense have been extremely valuable, as we have breathed life into the new venture. His place has been taken by Major General James Cowan, who has taken over as the Chairman of the Black Watch Association.

We have welcomed three new Trustees to the Board; Charles Hay, the Earl of Kinnoull, whose family once owned Balhousie Castle, Graham Halstead, who comes to us from a lifetime in the banking world and Captain Anthony Perriam, who works in the property world.

There have also been changes on the staff front, as we have welcomed two key players to the Museum team. Firstly, Hope Busak has joined us from the Dundee University Museum as our new Museum Curator. She has had a flying start, has embraced the history of The Black Watch with huge enthusiasm and is now setting about ensuring that the Museum organisation and displays are as good as they can be. She has already produced a range of good ideas and now there is much to be done!

Secondly, we have been very lucky to be joined by Verity Power as our new Operations Manager. Verity will have the lead on all aspects of the shop, café and ensuring that visitors have the best possible experience as they tour the Museum. As the number of events at the Museum increases, Verity will be heavily engaged in ensuring much of the commercial success of the Museum – so vital to our future.

The Museum has been something of a whirl of events since the last edition of the *Red Hackle* magazine was published. Christmas saw the delivery of a Winter Festival, which included lunches, festive afternoon teas, shopping evenings and a wide range of gifts available in the shop. All this resulted in an upsurge of visitors to the Museum itself, which

was very welcome and kept our volunteer tour guides very busy. Half term saw a particularly busy period as many families came and explored our First World War trench and discovered a bit of what it must have been like to serve on the Western Front one hundred years ago and our small, but regular, memorial services have continued to remind us daily of that difficult period. Since August 2014, we have placed 4668 crosses on the memorial wall, leaving a further 4295 Black Watch men to be commemorated between now and the end of the war. As this is written, the one hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Arras looms on 9 April, at which there will be a larger memorial service. Shortly after that, we will be commemorating a period when the Black Watch lost 316 soldiers over the period 21-26 April 1917. Further in the future, we will be holding larger services at the memorial wall on 31 July 2017 (201 crosses), 21 March 2018 (134 crosses) and 18 April 2018 (106 crosses).

The Museum continues to mount a series of temporary exhibitions. "Next of Kin", an exhibition on tour from National Museums Scotland and hosted jointly with Perth Museum and Art Gallery came to an end in early February and was followed by "Morrison: the Man, the Search, the Discovery". This fascinating exhibition tells the story of the recent identification of 5181 Lance Corporal John Morrison, the Black Watch soldier whose remains were found in 2014 in Cuinchy, France and which were reburied in 2016, after extensive investigations. The Morrison family donated a number of objects found with John Morrison's remains, the most recognisable of which are on display, and have loaned the Museum his General Service spoon, which was the first vital clue to his identification. The Museum collected information and images from the MOD as well as contacting various members of the Morrison family, many of whom we were delighted to host on the 15th February. This exhibition will be open until 6th June, so do please make the effort to see it before its departure.

Linked with the "Next of Kin" exhibition, the Museum hosted three "Afternoon Tea with the Archive" events, where visitors were invited to enjoy afternoon tea in the Empire Gallery, whilst hearing the account of one collection of First World War letters from the archive and we hope to run further versions of these afternoons in the future. The Museum has also rerun a number of "Around the World with The Black Watch" craft activities, which continue to prove extremely popular with children and are proving to be an important plank in our educational programme.

The Museum Team continues to work on the inventory and our volunteers, without whom we could simply not get by, are currently working hard on the following projects:

- The First World War Soldiers' Database, which is a project to record the names and biographical details of all the men who served (rather than just those who were killed) in The Black Watch during the war. So far, some 22,000 names and details have been recorded.
- Work continues to repackage and reorder our collections boxes. Similar objects are being stored together, all medals in the collections are being identified and fragile objects are being stored safely to avoid damage.
- The transcription of archival documents has begun with the 18th and 19th century boxed archives well underway and three transcribers working on WWI letters once a week and making great progress.
- The Uniform Database, compiled from a variety of in-house sources, will allow us to date images accurately using minute details of uniforms.
- Cataloguing of the documents relevant to all First World War battles has been completed and information about gallantry awards for Black Watch soldiers is being added to the database.
- Research is underway to complete the muster rolls for the Regiment. Currently, the Museum possesses an incomplete muster from 1730 to 1956. Gaps in our information have been identified and we are looking into ways of filling in the blanks.

We are looking forward to a busy Easter period. We are shortly to welcome the SCOTSPIRIT letters to the Museum garden and this will ensure that our profile remains high with VisitScotland and so with the many tourists who are now coming to Scotland.

The Museum has also been extremely fortunate to be asked to become the home of a memorial to the 51st Highland Division. The memorial is to be a figure of a piper and will be erected opposite the front door of the Museum.

Finally, it is hoped that the second volume of the history of The Black Watch, written by Victoria Schofield will be published later this summer. We are all very much looking forward to the successful culmination of this ambitious project to record, in two volumes, the history of The Black Watch from start to finish. Details of the launch will be promulgated when known but our thanks go, in advance, to Victoria for all her hard work and we very much look forward to seeing the finished product.

**By Major General M L Riddell-Webster
Chairman of the Museum Trust**



Hope Busak recently arrived at the Museum and is now the Curator.



Verity Power the new Operations Manager.

FIRST WORLD WAR REPLICA TRENCH

By Hope Busak

A full-size replica First World War trench has been installed in the grounds of Balhousie Castle.

Following on from Poppies: Weeping Window, the trench is another poignant focus to the Castle and Museum's continuing programme to commemorate the centenary year of the Great War.

The structure of the trench was built over 5 days, on site using timber frames and wire gambion with the exterior wrapped in hessian. The structure stands approximately 3 meters above the ground and includes an observation post, dug out, shelter and firing step. The replica trench resource creates a rich and interactive experience for visitors.

The Castle and Museum Team have completed training with military historian and author Andy Robertshaw and are now sharing their newly acquired knowledge with visitors. They can reveal what the soldiers would have worn, would have eaten and share the day-to-day routine of life in the trenches. Visitors are encouraged to fully investigate the structure; sheltering in the funk hole, standing on the firing step or exploring the Officer's dugout.

The replica trench also forms a central part of the Castle and Museum's learning experience for visiting school groups studying the First World War, as well as creating an extension of our First World War gallery for adult visiting groups.

The trench system was sourced from Trenches for Teachers (Battlefield Partnership Limited); a joint initiative by Andy Robertshaw and military researcher and publisher/bookseller Ryan Gearing. The company specialises in providing reproduction trench systems and resources for schools; their aim is to create a modern and accessible interpretation of trench life during the First World War.

The replica trench is open to visitors during selected events throughout the year. These dates can be found at www.theblackwatch.co.uk



This photograph shows the entrance to the newly built First World War trench in the grounds of Balhousie Castle.



THE FRIENDS OF THE BLACK WATCH CASTLE AND MUSEUM

By Sarah Riddell-Webster

On the 22nd October 2016 the Friends' Events Committee were delighted to welcome Rory Stewart MP to Balhousie Castle to give a lecture about the life of his father Captain Brian Stewart, entitled *The Marches: A walk through Britain with my Father*. With good timing Brian Stewart's portrait, one of *The Last of The Tide* portraits, was still on display in the Wavell Room. Those that came for the lecture were able to see the portrait before then hearing Rory talk about his father and the very full and varied life he had led. It was a pleasure to have the Stewart family with us that evening and also many members

from the Tayside group of the Oxford University Alumni ensuring we had a full house. *The Marches*, Rory's book about his walk with his father, was on sale in the shop so visitors were able to purchase copies that Rory had signed for them on the evening. Many people also took the opportunity to buy the wonderful catalogue that accompanied *The Last of The Tide* portraits. Although that was the last week that the portraits were exhibited at Balhousie there are still copies of the catalogue available.

The lecture programme throughout 2016 marked the significant battles and events of WW1. We had covered from *The Somme* with Professor Gary Sheffield and *The Battle of Jutland* with Professor Phillips O'Brien to *Conscription* with Professor Sir Hew Strachan. In December Mike Taylor of the Tayside Branch of the Western Front Association gave a lecture entitled *1916: The Turning point?* Mike skillfully tied together all that had happened during 1916 and how the different areas of conflict had linked and affected each other throughout the year. In his lecture there were frequent references to articles in the local Perthshire press of the time.

January saw us take a step back to the 1600's and cover the subject of *The Rivals: Montrose and Argyll and the Struggle for Scotland*. Murdo Fraser MSP told us of the rivalry between Archibald Campbell, 1st Marquis of Argyll and James Graham, 1st Marquis of Montrose. The very complex comings and goings of Argyll and Montrose in the mid 1640s, the many marches, skirmishes and battles and the constant criss-crossing of Scotland were related with great clarity to an enthralled capacity audience.

It is interesting occasionally to look at conflict from the other side. On the 16th February, Major General Mungo Melvin came to Balhousie Castle to give a lecture on *Blitzkrieg in the West: Manstein and the Fall of France, 1940*. General Melvin started his talk with detail of the extraordinary life of the very young Manstein and then his military experience as a young officer in the latter days of WWI. The lessons learned and the familiarity with the ground were to prove a major advantage during the early days of WWII when General Manstein was so heavily involved in the events which led to the fall of France and with it the surrender of the 51st Highland Division at St Valery.

Having looked at war from the German perspective in February, in March we covered the very testing time that the French were having in early 1917. We were delighted to welcome back Professor Peter Jackson, who holds the Chair in Global Security at the University of Glasgow, to give a lecture on *Nivelle and the French Mutinies*. The lecture covered all aspects of the French difficulties from Generals who were or were not in favour of the early use of the rolling barrage and the problems associated with it. It is probably the first time I have ever heard it said that the British had better food and clothes than the French but apparently that was the case on the Western Front in 1917. Professor Jackson has such a wide knowledge of global events of that time that it was a real pleasure to hear him speak. We were also pleased to welcome three of his Masters' students who accompanied him on the evening. Professor Jackson and the students had time for a tour of the museum before the lecture began.

During the month of April, when this magazine is being printed, we will be hosting two lectures. On the 4th the subject is *The Battle of Arras*, which follows on from *Nivelle and the French Mutinies*. Then on the 20th, on the eve of the centenary of Private Charles Melvin winning his VC, Major (Retd) Steve Nicoll will talk about the Victoria Cross and specifically Private Melvin VC of The Black Watch.

The Friends are only able to present such a full lecture programme due to the generosity of the speakers who give their time for free and on some occasions come from a considerable distance to be with us. We are indebted to them for their generous support. We have a full programme to take us to the end of 2017 so I do hope you will be able to join us. A lecture that might be of particular personal interest to many of you reading this is the one that Victoria Schofield is giving on the 12th September entitled *The Black Watch Fighting in the Front Line 1899-2006*. Victoria will be talking about writing the second volume of the history of The Black Watch. Tickets are already available for this and all the other lectures from the shop at Balhousie. Call 01738 638152, option 1 to book your place. Details of the full lecture program are printed below and also available on the website at www.theblackwatch.co.uk



Members of the Friends enjoying a glass of wine before the lecture begins.



Murdo Fraser MSP being introduced to the lecture audience at Balhousie Castle by Lt Col Willie Coupar of the Friends' Events Committee.

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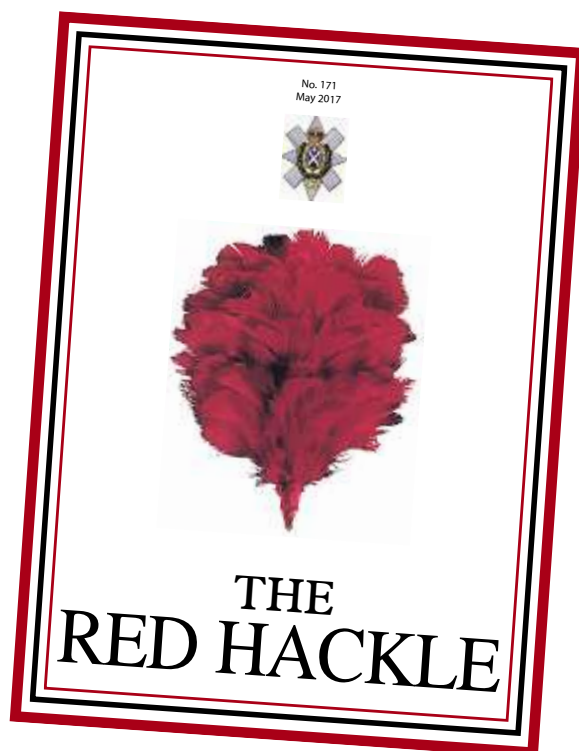
FRIENDS OF THE BLACK WATCH CASTLE & MUSEUM

LECTURES – May-Dec 2017

<p>Formation of The Royal Flying Corps and The War in the Air (1914-16) 8th May 2017 <i>6:30 drinks reception 7:00 lecture commences</i> <i>Tickets £9 non-members £7 Friends</i> Dr Daniel Paton will describe the development of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the war in the air up to 1916.</p>	<p>The Black Watch Fighting in the front line 1899-2006 12th September 2017 <i>6:30 drinks reception 7:00 lecture commences</i> <i>Tickets £9 non-members £7 Friends</i> Victoria Schofield will talk about writing the concluding volume of the history of The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment)</p>
<p>The Tanks: From The Somme To Cambrai: The Arduous Road To Victory 13th June 2017 <i>6:30 drinks reception 7:00 lecture commences</i> <i>Tickets £9 non-members £7 Friends</i> Lt Col (Retd) Geoffrey Vesey Holt will take us from “Mother”, the first tank, and their first and modest support of the infantry, to the first tank battle of history, the Battle of Cambrai</p>	<p>Passchendaele 12th October 2017 <i>6:30 drinks reception 7:00 lecture commences</i> <i>Tickets £9 non-members £7 Friends</i> Professor Gary Sheffield will talk about the Battle of Passchendaele, the major WW1 campaign of 1917.</p>
<p>The Home Front and Holidaymaking during the First World War; the Scottish experience 11th July 2017 <i>6:30 drinks reception 7:00 lecture commences</i> <i>Tickets £9 non-members £7 Friends</i> Dr Alastair Durie will look at what happened to holidays and holiday-making in Scotland during WW1</p>	<p>Cradle of Scotland 2nd November 2017 <i>6:30 drinks reception 7:00 lecture commences</i> <i>Tickets £9 non-members £7 Friends</i> Prof Steven Driscoll will talk about the archaeological dig around Forteviot, an area that played a central role in the development of Scotland from the 9th century.</p>
<p>Freddie Tait: Golfer and Soldier 3rd August 2017 <i>6:30 drinks reception 7:00 lecture commences</i> <i>Tickets £9 non-members £7 Friends</i> Major (Retd) Colin Innes will talk about Freddie Tait, a very famous Amateur Golfer and Black Watch officer who died 115 years ago</p>	<p>1917-Total War 7th December 2017 <i>6:30 drinks reception 7:00 lecture commences</i> <i>Tickets £9 non-members £7 Friends</i> Mike Taylor will give an overview of the highs and lows of a turbulent year both at home and abroad.</p>
<p>PLEASE BOOK ALL LECTURES IN ADVANCE BY TELEPHONE OR IN PERSON</p>	<p>Balhousie Castle, Hay Street, Perth, PH1 5HR +44 (0)1738 638 152 friends@theblackwatch.co.uk www.theblackwatch.co.uk</p>

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Dear Editor

THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

Some years ago when I was running the Open Churches Trust, I was told that the official prayer for celebrating the arrival of the Millennium was one of those that was to be all things to all men and that it would say little of importance. I was given permission by the Archbishop (Carey) to have a competition which included every secondary school, for a teenager to write a prayer expressing their hopes for the 21st Century. The only condition was that the prayer would need to be valid for all time.

The Trust went through various levels of judging and ended up in November 1999 with the final six being judged by the two Archbishops, the Roman Catholic Archbishop in Northern Ireland, the Moderator in Scotland and others. There was a unanimous vote for a prayer written by the choirmaster's daughter at the Royal Hospital School at Holbrook. Archbishop Carey held a press conference at which the winner read her prayer. Two days later the BBC said that they wanted it set to music and sung by Cliff Richard during Songs of Praise to be held at the Cardiff stadium. On the day, Cliff had a throat infection and could not sing a note, so it all had to be mimed.

It was at this point that I thought it would be very sad if this wonderful prayer should disappear without trace. It so happened that I was doing some business with the National Memorial Arboretum and the priest in charge of the multicultural chapel suggested that the prayer should be engraved on the wall of the entrance. It is still there today and I hope for ever.

Adam Gurdon

The Prayer

Dear Lord and Heavenly Father
At the dawn of a new millennium,
In a world of darkness, give us your light,
In lands of war and prejudice grant us peace,
In a world of despair give us hope,
In a world of sadness and tears show us your joy,
In a world of hatred show us your love,
In a world of arrogance give us humility,
In a world of disbelief give us faith.
Give us courage to face the challenges of feeding the hungry,
clothing the naked, housing the homeless and healing the sick,
Give us the power to make a difference in your world and to
protect your creation.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Anna Crompton
Aged 14



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Obituaries

MAJOR MALCOLM GOMME-DUNCAN, TD

Malcolm Gomme-Duncan died on 11th November 2016, aged 84, in Sherborne, Dorset. He was a tremendously loyal supporter of anything to do with the Regiment. A gentleman of great charm, he was always the life and soul of any occasion he attended. He was known by everyone in the Regiment as just "Gommers".

Born on 8th February 1932 in Edinburgh, he was christened in York Minster, where his father, the then Captain, later Colonel Sir Alan Gomme-Duncan, MC, MP, of The Black Watch was serving.



Malcolm was brought up at Dunbarney, near Bridge of Earn, which beautiful small estate his parents bought in 1936. He started his education at Ardvreck Preparatory School, in Crieff, and then went on to Eton College. At an early age, his sister Jean says that he was mad about trains and cars and wanted to be an engine driver.

He was called-up for National Service in 1950 and went off to the Highland Brigade Training Centre at Fort George, along with Eddie Orr-Ewing. He was apparently a real stickler for dress and kit layouts and expected all the members of his Basic Training Squad to produce very high standards. In later life we all know how maddening Malcolm could be about concentrating on fine detail rather than perhaps focusing upon the main problem ahead!

Later he joined the 1st Battalion, The Black Watch in Berlin. He had trouble with keeping time, usually because he was still polishing his buttons, which earned several Extra Orderly Officer duties. Nevertheless, he was selected to be the Colour Ensign at a Regimental Guard of Honour for General Dwight Eisenhower, then Commander in Chief NATO.

Gommers loved the Army and his parents always thought that perhaps he ought to have become a Regular but his thoughts were for University and a civilian career.

He was bound to join the TA on leaving the Battalion and duly reported to the local 6/7th Battalion The Black Watch TA HQ in Perth, where he began a long career in the Territorials, which later earned him the award of the TD. He joined B Company (Perth and Blairgowrie) and eventually rose to command that Company.

Always very keen on shooting, B Company regularly featured in the prize list at the 51st Highland Brigade Annual Rifle Meeting at Barry Buddon. In 1957 he was one of those who took up the challenge, posed by Brigadier Bernard Fergusson, to row down the Tay in assault boats from Aberfeldy to Perth, which proved a perilous event.

Up at Trinity College, Cambridge, he read Law and Economics, but the running of the Trinity May Ball each year rather diverted his attention and he did not get a very good degree. He then joined Shepherd and Wedderburn WS in Edinburgh but later worked for many years with Stewarts and Lloyds in the steel industry in Glasgow and then, when they were nationalised, British Steel, in London.

Gommers travelled up to Scotland on the Friday night train, as often as he could, to join B Company for their major weekend exercises. He was often most generous in making his home at Dunbarney, with its woods, the River Earn and numerous outbuildings, available for small TEWTS, where those taking part were entertained to an excellent picnic lunch in the house.

Later on, when our 4/5th and 6/7th Battalions were amalgamated and the 3rd TA Battalion was formed with their HQ in Dundee, Gommers was appointed Second-in-Command to the CO, Lt Col David Carnegie-Arbuthnott.

General Andy Watson, when Colonel of the Regiment, chose him to be a Regimental Trustee and said that he provided very good advice but he noted Malcolm's big fault, his inability to arrive at almost every event on time. "He could have contributed even more had he joined us at the start of our meetings!"

Gommers was also on the Committee of the Black Watch

Memorial Home at Dunalastair and always attended special occasions and played a full and sometimes original part in their discussions.

He told one great friend, late one night, that he had three problems in his life, "Ladies, Lloyds and Lateness" and that was absolutely true. Dunbarney was always full of lovely girls, none of whom quite came up to the mark with Malcolm. Then, very late in his life, aged 72, he found the brave and lively Frances Dorman-O'Gowan whom he married in 2004, a marriage lasting an action-packed 12 years.

I attended their wedding in Dunbarney Parish Church and everyone wondered whether Gommers would even arrive late for this most important occasion. Frances insisted he got dressed that morning in his wedding outfit so that she would not have to chase him to change later on. After a family lunch, she arranged for neighbour, Randal Noel-Paton, to get him to the church on time. Malcolm arrived early, to the amazement of us all and to loud applause.

Malcolm was caught twice by Lloyds and eventually had to sell the family home at Dunbarney in 1989. This was, for him and his family, an absolute disaster and a very sad chapter for such a delightful and friendly man. But it was a mark of Malcolm's character that he was always resilient and optimistic and never appeared to complain about his financial problems.

As for the lateness problem, somehow he never cured that fault. A very good looking young man, he was asked to every social event but the stories of this late arrival were legion, to the extent that some hostesses asked him an hour earlier, in the hope that he would grace their dinner parties. He somehow always got away with it, to the astonishment of all his friends who had made huge efforts to get there on time.

He was asked to one shoot and made some excuse about being "unexpectedly delayed", but said he would join in later. In fact he only arrived at tea-time. His charm and courtesy was such that he was instantly forgiven by his host. Typically, having missed the whole day, he nonetheless tipped the keeper, but declined to accept the customary brace of pheasants.

Gommers, like his father, Sir Alan Gomme-Duncan, who had been MP for Perth and East Perthshire just after the War, was always interested in politics and worked closely with the Perthshire Conservatives. He also took a great interest in the local Dunbarney Parish Church and, in a recent letter, Mrs Janice Sloan, Secretary of the local Community Council, wrote, "He was a well-loved and respected and caring individual who served his community with great passion and consideration, being a founder member of the Earn Community Council".

On giving up Dunbarney, he moved to a farmhouse, Eastfield of Dunbarney, for six years. Later, Frances persuaded him to finally leave Perthshire and move a bit nearer members of her family and they went to live near Alnwick, Northumberland for five years where Gommers had a number of friends and was very happy. The family thereafter settled in Sherborne, Dorset, near more of Frances's family.

However in 2013 he showed slight signs of dementia and became a bit difficult to look after at home, and so he ended his days in an excellent local Care Home nearby in Sherborne until he died in the Musgrave Park Hospital, Taunton on Remembrance Day.

What fun he was. I have had help from many of his brother Officers who have told me their stories of Gommers, to whom I am very grateful. Especially I must mention his old friend Nigel (Lofty) Buchanan who gave a splendid address at Malcolm's Thanksgiving Service at Sherborne Abbey.

Colin Innes

TOM NEVILLE

Tom was born in 1931 in Orange, New Jersey but his family moved to Glasgow the following year and he was educated at Glasgow High School. After leaving school he qualified as a CA with George A Touche and Co. He joined up with The Black Watch for National Service shortly after and did his basic training at Queen's Barracks. I was in a different intake but we soon became firm friends. He

went on to OCTU at Eaton Hall and became a SUO and was awarded the Sword of Honour.

After he was commissioned he joined the 1st Battalion in Crail. Tom, already a CA, was older than us and a good deal more mature; all of the other subalterns joined up straight from school and were green behind the ears so we looked up to Tom as a man of the world!

The Battalion was posted to Berlin in early 1956 and Tom was appointed the Baggage Officer (and he was called that by his army friends ever since then!) He had to arrange for all the baggage etc to be transported to Wavell Barracks in Berlin and he was in the Advanced Party to get things shipshape before the Battalion arrived. It was done very efficiently and without any fuss. Years later when he was in a care home, his charming wife, Wendy, showed me a long hand letter, which the Adjutant, Ian Critchley, wrote to him and congratulated him on a job well done. It was a very well deserved accolade and he didn't mention it to anyone. He became Mess Secretary and after a while he got fed up adding up Mess bills when a whisky was 2½ pennies a shot, (there were no calculators in these days) so he asked the CO – Mick Baker-Baker, if he could increase the price to 3 pennies a shot, the CO agreed, just a matter of almost a 17% increase!

Tom would always arrange his admin duties when there was a route march planned and some unsuspecting subaltern had to take his platoon for him, often with a cheery wave from him from the barrack square!

After leaving the Army, he was soon to join Rolls Royce Motors in Crewe and he eventually became the Finance Director and on the way, he married Wendy, the granddaughter of the Chairman of Rolls Royce; Tom always aimed for the top!

When Rolls Royce Motors was taken over by Vickers Corporation he was appointed Finance Director of the whole Company and moved to London. He was also a director of various other companies including Pendragon, Fairy Engineering Group, Simon Engineering, EuroCamp and other local businesses.

Tom was a keen and a very good golfer and was a member of The Royal and Ancient and served on various committees, including chairman of the finance committee. He travelled extensively in America and played on various famous courses, including Augusta. I would put my money on him if he played against Goldfinger, every time!

He was a great family man and enjoyed playing any games with his grandchildren but sadly he was ill for the last few years of his life. It was sad to witness but he coped with his illness stoically.

I have lost a true friend.

Ronnie Adam

CORPORAL NORMAN CHARLES STEVENSON

The Battalion are saddened to record the death of Corporal Norman Stevenson.

He joined the Army in 1989. On the successful completion of his basic training he joined the 1st Battalion, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Operationally he served in Northern Ireland in 1991 and 1994, in Iraq on Op TELIC 2 in 2004, Bosnia in 2005, Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 8 in 2008 and in Cyprus on Op TOSCA in 2014/15. For his service he was awarded the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal and his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. Corporal Stevenson joined the Motor Transport Platoon of the Black Watch, 3rd Battalion the Royal Regiment of



Scotland in 2013 from the Defence Explosives and Munitions Search School, and immediately made an impact.

Born and bred in Glasgow, Corporal Stevenson was chirpy and grumpy in equal measure. A larger than life character, with a wicked sense of humour, he was also a man of great integrity who was never anything other than utterly reliable. He was naturally outgoing, fun, and had an unquenchable thirst for mischief and adventure; he loved to wind people up. His comic timing and delivery were always faultless and even the most measured of colleagues would succumb to his acts of humorous sabotage. He was also the consummate professional, always willing to help others and never willing to accept a drop in standards.

He was a natural coach and instructor and was renowned for being able to teach even the very worst driver, not only to pass a driving test but to drive well. As such, he would regularly complain about the standard of his students as he would always be sent the most challenging of individuals to train. His role in the platoon was pivotal and his contribution was impressive.

Corporal Stevenson was always full of energy, and never short of something to say. But this was most likely due to a constant sugar rush from his unfaltering love of Irn Bru; his Achilles heel! Also a fan of hot chillies, he had been known to underestimate their strength. To the great amusement of his friends, he was once found rolling on the floor in agony for half an hour, drinking three cans of Irn Bru, in an attempt to recover from one of his spicy friends!

In 2016 his health began to deteriorate and he became less able to complete normal duties. He remained characteristically positive despite his frustrations. In preparation for an operation he was sent home to recuperate. He could not wait to get back to full fitness and return to work.

Throughout his time in the Army, "NORBAT", "Ninja Norrie", "the Gremlin", touched everyone's heart. He was fiercely proud of his service, and loved to share stories of his experiences with anyone willing to listen. His loss is sorely felt, not just in the Battalions he served in, but across the whole Royal Regiment of Scotland.

ALASDAIR AITKEN

Alasdair Aitken died on the 6th of December 2016 aged 74. He is survived by his wife Elizabeth whom he married in 1966 and their three children and their families.

On leaving school Alistair worked on the land before enlisting into The Black Watch. After the completion of his basic training at Queen's Barracks he joined the 1st Battalion in Cyprus. He then joined the Pipes and Drums as a piper and remained in that employment until he left the



Army for the first time in 1970. Apart from Cyprus, Alasdair served in Warminster, Minden West Germany and Kirknewton. He also took part in many of the Pipes and Drums tours including the tour of North America in 1963 where he played at the White House charity event prior to the assassination of President Kennedy. Alasdair was also deployed with the Pipes and Drums to Northern Ireland and Gibraltar.

After giving civilian life a try for two years, he re-enlisted into the Regiment and re-joined it in Hong Kong this time he was employed a "Padre's Driver" and he and the Revd Stuart Hynd struck up a long lasting friendship.

On returning to the UK and the battalion's deployment from Colchester to Belfast in 1974 and 1975 Alasdair felt that he had to put his family first and left the Army in 1976.

Alasdair and Elizabeth settled down in Arbroath and he found employment as a light goods vehicle driver with a local factory. On retiring he became a volunteer driver taking people to hospital appointments and various other tasks.

Both he and Elizabeth were heavily involved in fostering children from within the county of Angus and beyond and gave many unfortunate young people some stability and home life which they might have never found but for their kindness. He was also a member of the Angus Branch of The Black Watch Association and attended when his busy schedule permitted.

R J W Proctor

ERIC BROWN

Eric Brown died on 6 April 2016 aged 89. Born in Ipswich, Eric enlisted in The Black Watch during the Second World War and he served in both the 4th and 6th Battalions reaching the rank of Colour Sergeant. He served with the 6th Battalion in Italy and this, combined with his service in Scotland, led to a lifelong passion for both Scotland and Italy.

Eric was a great supporter of the London Branch of The Black Watch Association and the Royal British Legion in Suffolk.

R M Riddell



JIM CLARK

Jim Clark died on Monday 13th March aged 80. He was born and raised in Falkland and attended Falkland Primary and Auchtermuchty Secondary schools.

On leaving school he worked at Auchtermuchty Foundry followed by Tullis Russell's paper mill before being called up to do his National Service with The Black Watch in 1956.

On completing basic training at Queen's Barracks, Jim was posted to the 1st Battalion which was stationed in Berlin. He joined the Pipes and Drums as a piper and remained in that platoon until he was demobbed in Edinburgh in 1958.

Being selected to play as solo piper at the Edinburgh Tattoo was the highlight of his time in the Regiment. He often looked back on his "army days" with fondness and pride.

On leaving the Army Jim worked in the building trade as a plant operator and in 1957 he met Nan who at that time worked at Tullis Russell and in March 1960 they were married in Falkland Church and later their son Ian was born.

Caravanning and motor bikes were Jim's great passions apart from his family and he liked nothing more than helping his family and neighbours and sharing his expertise in DIY.

He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

R J W Proctor



GEORGE CURRY

Geordie Curry died on the 18th November 2016 aged 81; his funeral took place at Springfield Parish Church and was attended by a large number of Black Watch veterans, local friends and his family.

He was born in Bowhill, Fife where his father was employed as a miner and was educated in the mining village school at Cardenden.

Geordie enlisted into The Black Watch in April 1958 and reported to Queen's Barracks on the 10th of that month to join 127 Squad. He passed out on the 29th of June and was posted to the 1st Battalion in Edinburgh. Moving with the battalion to Cyprus in 1958 he later served in Warminster, Minden and Cyprus during the UN tour in 1966. He left the army in 1967 on completion of his nine year engagement.

Geordie married Margaret in 1962 whilst the 1st Battalion was serving as Demonstration Battalion at the School of Infantry, Warminster and like most newly married couples they had not yet been allocated a married quarter. As soon as the fall out was blown on a Friday afternoon Geordie was seen heading out of the gate with a weekend bag over his shoulder, dressed in number two dress, tartan trews and heading for the main road where he would hitch hike all the way to Fife. He was always present and correctly turned out on the Monday morning muster parade and I can never recall him being absent without leave.

On leaving the Army, Geordie settled in Springfield, a small village outside Cupar where he and Betty set up home and raised



their family. Sadly Betty died in 1996 but he continued to involve himself with the community and his family of which he was most proud. He maintained an interest in the Regiment and visited Balhousie on his 80th birthday.

The large turnout at his funeral was a testament to his popularity within the community and the Regiment.

R J W Proctor

TAM DRUMMOND

Tam Drummond joined the Army as a Junior Bandsman in October 1962 and was trained at the Junior Bandsmen's wing in Fort George.

He was posted to the Regimental Band of the Black Watch in Warminster in the aftermath of the American tour.

He moved with the Battalion to BAOR garrisoned in Minden. During the Minden tour he accompanied the band on the Cyprus UN Tour and the many band engagements throughout BAOR and Europe. Postings to Kirknewton and Gibraltar followed. He was a proficient musician and a very competent skier, learning the latter skills on the well-known Ex Snow Queen.

In 1971 he decided to apply to transfer to the RAMC Staff Band; due mainly to his musical proficiency he was accepted immediately and served with the RAMC Staff Band until he decided to leave the Army in 1978. On demob he joined Securicor and settled with Trudy in Burntisland. He did not give up on his military roots as he was a very proactive member of the Legion; in 1984 he moved South to Westham, in East Sussex. Tam's affiliation with the London Branch came about by a chance meeting during Remembrance week. He came across a Branch member selling poppies at the local supermarket. In 1988 he was asked to move again with his job which he declined and took up a post as a fitter with Alpha Lava Pumps and remained in Westham, finally retiring in 1988.

He was an active member of the Legion and was appointed Branch Chair of his local Branch in 2013.

Tam died after a short illness on 29 November 2016.

M Smith



VICTOR HERD

Vic Herd died on the 2nd of February 2017 aged 85, after a period of illness and his funeral was held in St Marnock's Church, Fowls, near Dundee on the 13th of February. The large turnout at his funeral service was testament to his popularity within his home city of Dundee and beyond.

Vic was born, bred and educated in Dundee and on leaving school he was employed as a delivery boy where he delivered from a horse and cart before gaining an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic and serving his time. He was called up to complete his National Service in 1953 and served in the Parachute Regiment until 1956. Service in the Middle East and promotion to Sergeant ensured he had a rewarding time.

On returning to Dundee, Vic and his brother Jim who had also completed National Service joined the 4th/5th Battalion The Black Watch and were drummers in the Pipes and Drums. Both Jim and Vic had another musical talent apart from playing the side drum, as they were accomplished classical singers and sang at various concerts throughout the city.

Vic was actively involved in both the Dundee Branch of The Black Watch Association and also the Parachute Regiment Association, he was also a founder member of the Dundee Combined Ex Services Association where he held the appointment of President for fifteen years.

He was also an active member of Dundee and Angus SSAFA Fund Raising Group as well as being involved in numerous volunteer groups varying from sports to musical societies.

Vic married Maisie in 1956 but sadly she predeceased him however they are survived by their sons Victor and Kurt.



A small man in height but large in stature and well known throughout the City of Dundee and beyond, Vic will be greatly missed by all those who had the privilege of knowing him.

R J W Proctor

GEORGE HUBERT HOLLINGS

George Hubert Hollings was born in Leeds, West Yorkshire in 1925. He was called up in June 1943 and joined the 1st Battalion Tyneside Scottish (Black Watch) at Thetford in April 1944, prior to the invasion on 6th June. He was then aged just 19 and therefore able to be deployed overseas. He landed on the beach at Ouistreham on D Day +4. After the breakout in Normandy he went to the 5th Bn The Black Watch and he served the rest of the campaign in 18 platoon "D Coy. Disbandment took place at Steyerberg, Germany in January 1946 and demob came in June 1947.

When he left the Army he returned to Leeds and in 1945 married his fiancé Hilda. Hilda had also served during that war in the Womens Land Army in Cornwall and Devon. They had one daughter born in 1948 and one granddaughter born in 1980.

George returned to his job with a company of paper merchants. He had started working in the warehouse when he left school and remained with the company for the whole of his working life, moving into management in later years.

He was a sportsman and won many trophies for running, football and golf. His greatest sporting achievements were in the field of crown green bowls where he played for the county and won many prestigious competitions.

He retired when he was 60 and had a long and happy retirement. The family were always very proud of George as a D Day veteran. He returned to France four times for the Heroes Return and on the last occasion found the actual area of the beach on which he had landed all those years ago. He had clear recollections of his army service and his association with the Black Watch was always very important to him.

In 2016 he was appointed to the rank of Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur by the President of the Republic of France in recognition of his acknowledged military engagement and steadfast involvement in the Liberation of France during the Second World War. He was presented with the medal at the Evington Air Museum in York in May. It was providential that he received this shortly before his death at the age of 91; he died in October 2016 following a short illness.

Maggie Smith

DAVID JOHNSTON

Dave Johnston died at Perth Royal Infirmary on the 13th December 2016 a month before his eighty second birthday. Born on the 9th of January at Brighton of Ruthven farm in Angus, he was educated at Ruthven Primary School and then Webster's Seminary, Kirriemuir.

On leaving school he followed his father, who had also served in the Regiment to work on the farm before being called up to do his National Service in The Black Watch.

After completing his training at Queen's Barracks, Dave joined the 1st Battalion and after further training, served in Kenya as a medic and was promoted Lance Corporal; he also served in the UK and Cyprus before returning to civilian life. He married Doris in the late 1950s, with daughter Jacqui being born in 1961 and son Douglas in 1970.

Dave was a quiet and practical man who took life in his stride and was a devoted father, grandfather and great grandfather.

He was very proud of being a member of The Black Watch and of following in his father's footsteps. He was doubly proud that his grandson Graham had also joined the army and is currently serving as a Corporal with the Black Watch Battalion at Fort George.

He will be sadly missed by all those who knew him.

R J W Proctor



THOMAS McKAY

Tommy was born in Leith in September 1930 and served in the 1st Battalion in Korea and Kenya. He died on 27 October 2015.

Before starting his National Service he was a time served plumber and on demob in 1954 he then worked as a pipe fitter until 1972. He then joined the Fishery Protection Agency where he served until retirement.

In 2014 he was presented with the Korean Peace Medal by the South Korean Ambassador which was a great honour for him and his family.

He is survived by his wife Molly and six of his seven children.

R M Riddell

GEORGE MOUG

Geordie Moug died aged 79 on the 10th of January 2017, at Ninewells Hospital.

He served in the 2nd Battalion in British Guyana and then joined the 1st Battalion in Edinburgh in 1956 where he served for some time in the Assault Pioneer Platoon; he then moved with the battalion to Cyprus.

After promotion he was posted to the Depot at Queen's Barracks, Perth as a Training Corporal and when the Depot closed in 1961 he moved to the combined Black Watch and Argylls' Depot at Stirling Castle. By 1962 he returned to the 1st Battalion which by now was employed as the Infantry Demonstration Battalion at the School of Infantry. Geordie was appointed a Section Commander in 15 Platoon D Company.

Shortly after arriving in Minden, West Germany he was promoted to Sergeant and moved into the Anti-Tank Platoon where he became quite an expert in Anti-Tank warfare. His career continued with periods of serving in the 1st Battalion and at Extra Regimental Duty on such jobs as Recruiting and finally as a training platoon sergeant at the Infantry Boys Battalion at Shorncliffe, Kent.

He was always a keen sportsman and was a very good cross country and long distance runner successfully taking part in numerous battalion and formation events.

On his retiral he was employed as a gamekeeper and surfaced now and again at country sporting events and game fairs. Although he did not attend many Association events he was very proud of his service in the Regiment and will be sadly missed by those who had the privilege of serving with him.

R J W Proctor

ALEXANDER MUNRO

Alexander or Sandy Munro died on Christmas morning 2016 aged 80. Like many members of the Regiment, Sandy was given a nickname. He inherited the name Mungo from his Uncle Alex who had served in the 2nd and 1st Battalions during and after the Second World War.

After leaving school and working in various jobs he joined The Black Watch in 1956, aged 20, as a National Serviceman. After completing his basic training, he then joined the 1st Battalion and later became a regular soldier. He served in Berlin, Edinburgh, Cyprus, Warminster, Minden, Kirknewton, Hong Kong, Colchester, Ballykinler and Catterick from where he left the Army at the end of a full career. He also took part in the emergency tours of Cyprus (UN), Gibraltar and numerous tours in Northern Ireland.



Sandy joined the Signals Platoon and became a very competent and experienced signaller whose talent was soon spotted by his superiors and after completing a Regimental Cadre, gained promotion. After a number of years serving in the Signals Platoon he moved to the Quartermaster's Department and ran the Battalion Rations Store which was a busy and very responsible job, particularly as the battalion was regularly completing emergency tours and exercises overseas. He gained further promotion and was promoted to Colour Sergeant in charge of the Accommodation Stores before completing his engagement.

Sandy married Barbara in 1966. On his return to civilian life he worked for Marconi Electronics outside Dunfermline, working on MOD Missile Contracts until he retired. He and Barbara settled in Townhill. Barbara died in 1997 and Sandy then lived in Townhill with his second son Ian. He was involved in the local community and was an Elder in Townhill Parish Church.

He was a quiet, intelligent man who had a wicked sense of humour. He was devoted to his family and was respected by all who knew him.

R J W Proctor

ALEXANDER MURRAY

Alex was an In Pensioner at the Royal Hospital Chelsea and he served in The Black Watch as well as the Royal Engineers.

Born in Glasgow in 1927 he enlisted on 29 January 1945 and spent four years in the Regiment before transferring. He finally retired as a Captain (LE) in 1978. He served in the UK, Germany, the Far East and Aden.

R M Riddell



JAMES RAYSON

Jim Rayson died on the 23rd February 2017 at Cumberland Hospital, Carlisle aged 76 after a period of illness.

Jim joined the regiment after serving in the Merchant Navy for a number of years and in September 1962 reported for duty at the combined Black Watch and Argylls' Depot at Stirling Castle to join Lucknow Platoon commanded by Lieutenant A M Dewar-Durie, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. On completion of his training he joined a draft and arrived at Knook Camp, Warminster in November 1962 and continued another period of training where The Black Watch shine was inculcated into new recruits.

Jim then joined the Pipes and Drums and learnt the art of Tenor Drumming and took part in the North American tour of 1963 and played at the White House prior to President Kennedy's assassination a short time later.

He remained in the Pipes and Drums for the remainder of his nine year engagement and returned to County Durham where he settled down.

R J W Proctor

DAVID ROBERTSON

David Robertson who was known as "Plug" by his friends died on the 13th of January 2017 aged 74. Sadly his brother Syd who also served in the Regiment died 13 days before him.

David was brought up in Bendochy between Coupar Angus and Blairgowrie; he attended school locally before enlisting in 1958 into the Black Watch as a Junior Piper at Bridge of Don.

On the completion of his Junior Service, David was employed as the "Duty Piper" at Queen's Barracks, prior to joining the 1st Battalion in Cyprus where he became a member of the Pipes and Drums.

Returning with the Battalion to Warminster he showed his prowess and skill as a piper. He was selected to attend an NCOs' Cadre



in 1962 and he passed with flying colours. 1963 saw the Pipes and Drums and the Regimental Band, amongst numerous engagements, preparing for the tour of North America and the United States. Playing on the White House Lawn in front of President John F Kennedy and his family was a memory which Dave treasured all his life. Although he was not one of the pipers who played at the President's funeral, the 1963 tour was something he always remembered.

He married Rosemary in 1964 and they spent 53 happy years together.

Moving from Warminster to Minden in West Germany he took part in all the engagements with the Pipes and Drums including a visit to Moscow.

The Pipes and Drums were deployed to Cyprus on the 1966-67 United Nations tour and David was actively engaged in both piping and field duties.

Whilst he was there he composed a tune called "The Black Watch Salute to the United Nations" which gained quite a bit of publicity at the time. The tune is now held in the Regimental Archive.

Returning with the Battalion to Scotland in 1968 he took part in numerous high profile band engagements, including the Edinburgh Tattoo. In 1969 he decided to leave the Army but was only out a short period of time before re-enlisting into the Royal Scots as a Corporal Piper; he continued to serve until he had completed 25 years' service. He served in Northern Ireland on numerous occasions and successfully completed a Pipe Majors' Course.

On leaving the forces he was employed in the Security Industry as a Dog Handler.

David suffered from chronic chest complaints called Bronchiectasis and COPD. These limited his mobility in later years however his character and spirit continued to shine through to the end. He was very proud to have served in the Regiment and liked to keep abreast of events. He was a great character who will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

R J W Proctor

SYDNEY ROBERTSON

Syd Robertson died on the 1st of January 2017 aged 76. He was raised at Bendochy, between Coupar Angus and Blairgowrie and joined the Army in August 1958 on a six year engagement. His younger brother David also served in the Regiment and died on the day of Syd's funeral, the 13th of January.

On completion of his training at Queen's Barracks in October 1958, he was posted to the 1st Battalion in Edinburgh and moved to Cyprus in December of that year. After a spell in a Rifle Company he joined the MT Platoon as a driver for the remainder of the tour of Cyprus. On the Battalion's return to the UK in December 1961, Syd trained as a Saracen Armoured Personnel Car (APC) Driver and became part of the APC Platoon which was formed when the Battalion became the Infantry Demonstration Battalion at the School of Infantry.

Syd completed his six year engagement after the Battalion moved to Minden in Germany and returned to the UK and civilian life, got married and raised a family.

He was always a quiet man and was intensely proud of his family and his time in the Regiment.

R J W Proctor

WILLIAM TINDAL

Bill Tindal who was born on the 2nd of September 1933, died on the 9th of March 2017. He was born and educated in Forfar and served his time as a joiner before being called up to do his National Service with The Black Watch in 1953.

After completing basic training at Queen's Barracks Bill was posted to the 1st Battalion who were stationed in Kenya. Bill's talents as a carpenter were soon spotted by the Quartermaster, Gordon Gillies and he was drafted into the Static Pioneer Section of the



Quartermasters Platoon where he remained for the rest of his time with the battalion until he was demobbed at Crail in 1955.

Bill returned to civilian life and resumed his trade, working for the same firm for forty years until an industrial accident forced his early retirement.

Bill married Jean in 1958 and set up home in Forfar and raised their family of William, Peter and Morag. Both William, known as Bernie by his pals in the Regiment, and Peter, followed in their father's footsteps. Peter completed a full career and reached the rank of WO2.

Football played an important part in Bill's life and he played for Forfar West End until he was 39 and then took an active part in the running of the club and became Chairman. His family and gardening took up most of his Bill's spare time however, he was a founder and active member of the Angus Branch of the Black Watch Association and attended and took part in all Branch activities until prevented from doing so by illness. He also assisted in the work on the establishing the 1st World War Room at Balhousie Castle in 2000 along with others from the Angus Branch and the work was admired and complimented on by all who visited the museum.

Bill was a quiet man with a great sense of humour who was liked and respected by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

R J W Proctor

ALFRED WADE

Alf joined the Army as a regular soldier in 1958; after basic training in Queen's Barracks he was posted to the Battalion in Cyprus, joining A (Grenadier) Company.

On returning to the UK (Warminster) he moved to the Mortar Platoon and stayed in this role until demobilisation in Minden in 1964.

Alf returned to Ipswich and joined the local TA unit (a Battalion of the Royal Anglian Regiment) serving for 6 years. He made many friends during this time and their turnout at his funeral was testimony to the lasting friendships he made.

He took up employment as a scaffolder, then moved to British Rail working on track laying and maintenance.



He then moved into safety management which culminated in his appointment as the Rail Health & Safety Manager for the Ipswich area.

Alf was a conscientious individual who was fiercely proud of his service with the Regiment. He was an extremely loyal Branch member who participated in many Branch events.

He fought his illness very bravely over a protracted period of time and even when confronted with the knowledge that it was incurable, remained upbeat. He maintained his support to the Branch and the Regiment to the very end.

M Smith

JOHN WHYBROW

John Whybrow, who was known as Jack, died on 19 January 2017 aged 90. He was born in Lewisham in June 1926 and joined the Army aged 17 in 1943 and served in North West Europe landing on D Day + 3.

On demob he worked as a plasterer, milkman and as a quality control officer of a vending machine company.

He was above all a family man who was friendly and outgoing and in his free time he enjoyed golf. He was in that generation of 2nd World War soldiers who did their duty without complaint.



The following deaths have also been recorded;

Frederick Adams a 2nd World War veteran who died aged 98 on 17 February 2017.

Dennis Archibald of Kirkcaldy who died aged 54 on 14 February 2017.

Allan Cadger-Baird died on 1 Mar 2017 – a full obituary will appear in the next Red Hackle Magazine.

George Falconer died age 90.

Ian Purvis of Jedburgh who died on 1 November 2016.

James McGregor Shanks a Korean War and Kenyan Emergency veteran who died on 23 February 2016.

RIFT

RIFT celebrates 3 years

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2017 marks RIFT's third year of partnership with The Soldiers' Charity, making a donation for every MOD tax refund we handle. That's over £41 million put back in soldiers' pockets so far, and £150,000 of donations made.

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THE BLACK WATCH FIGHTING IN THE FRONT LINE 1899-2006

Editor's Note: Volume 2 of the Regimental History entitled, "The Black Watch Fighting in the Front Line, 1899 – 2006" has been completed and will be published in July this year. There will be a book launch in London at Daunts Bookshop in Holland Park Avenue. In addition Victoria Schofield will give a lecture at Balhousie Castle on 12 September 2017. This is an excerpt from Chapter 11: 1941: All Hell Broke Loose.

TOBRUK BREAK OUT

During the spring and summer of 1941, the Allied position in North Africa had steadily deteriorated. Having diverted troops to Greece in April, Wavell was left with inadequate forces to defend the Western Desert against the German Afrika Korps (later known as the Panzer Group Afrika), commanded by General Rommel. His advance from Tripoli resulted in the Allies being pushed back towards Egypt, leaving Tobruk isolated. Defended by the 9th Australian Division along a perimeter approximately twenty-five miles from sea to sea, its retention was considered vital; not only was it the only port in North Africa between Alexandria and Tripoli, but it was an impediment to Rommel's further progress towards the Suez Canal. Furthermore, its capture would greatly shorten Axis supply lines. With the port bombed and strafed by the Luftwaffe during the day, supplies and reinforcements could only be brought in at night by the 'Tobruk ferry service', composed of Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy ships, which also evacuated the wounded.

Coincident with the Syrian operation in mid-June, Wavell had launched Operation Battleaxe: an attack on Axis positions on the Egypt–Libya border at the Halfaya Pass, which Rommel had fortified after an earlier attack in May. Although initially successful, Allied troops had had to withdraw. A week later Churchill ordered Wavell to exchange commands with General Sir Claude Auchinleck, who had been serving as Commander-in-Chief India, the handover effected in the first week of July. Less than a fortnight previously Germany had invaded the Soviet Union, resulting in Stalin's entry into the war on the Allied side.

Despite the failure of Battleaxe, Tobruk had held out. In October orders were issued to replace the 9th Australian Division with the newly formed 70th British Infantry Division, commanded by Major General Ronald Scobie, which included the 2nd Black Watch in 14 Brigade. Leaving Alexandria on the morning of 22 October, the Battalion reached Tobruk harbour at nightfall. 'The scene that met the eye was not exactly beautiful,' recorded Captain Gerald Barry the following morning. 'The wrecks of hundreds of cars and lorries are strewn all over the place, junk of all description as far as the eye can see in every direction.' Their biggest fear, recorded Private Andrew Meldrum 'was not so much the enemy as the booby traps and mines that the Aussies had left behind.

On 29 October the 2nd Black Watch moved up to the perimeter. 'Life was Spartan,' commented Lieutenant John Benson. There was 'practically no drink and one gallon of water per day per man which had to suffice for drinking, cooking, washing including clothes, and for a period I believe we only had three quarters of a gallon. 'Really this is a filthy place!' Barry was noting on 2 November. 'It is quite impossible to keep clean, and one's hair becomes a clogged mass of dirt. Washing one's head in sea-water with soap is fatal, the whole thing congeals into a mass of semi-glue, through which the comb will not penetrate... how the Australians lived here for seven months under these conditions, I cannot imagine!' Contact with the outside world was spasmodic, only improved when Barry, in command of HQ Company, acquired a radio and compiled its news into a daily newssheet, *Tobruk Truth*.⁵⁰

'Rations in Tobruk consist mainly of bully beef, biscuits, or canned meat and vegetables,' recorded the War Diary on 11 November. 'NAAFI supplies confined to strictly limited rations of cigarettes and matches with very occasional packet of biscuits, tins of fruit or tube of sugar gums. Only communication is by sea and the extremely hazard-

ous voyage is only made when absence of moon will allow ships into harbour unobserved by enemy bombers and "Bardia Bill" a long range gun which consistently shells the harbour.' This gun, comparable to the huge 'Big Bertha' in the First World War, had acquired 'an animate personality in the minds of the troops. ... He used to join in whenever a ship arrived. If the evening air-raid aroused more attention than usual, Bill would barge in again.'

The Black Watch did not have to wait long for action. Pressed by Churchill to mount a new offensive into Libya, Auchinleck planned Operation Crusader, to be carried out by the Eighth Army, formed from the Western Desert Force. Like Battleaxe its aim was to dislodge the Germans from the Halfaya Pass. In support, the garrison at Tobruk would 'break out'. On 18 November the Eighth Army, under Lieutenant General Sir Alan Cunningham's command, advanced across the desert. Addressing the 70th Division, Scobie assured the men that the 'break out' would only take place once 'the German Armoured Divisions and the other formations on the front had already been thoroughly pounded and smashed.'

'Things were hotting up and there was a terrific tank battle going on on our left flank,' related Meldrum. 'This was at Sidi Rezegh. A push was on. The Tide was turning for us. We were going to break out and meet up with the advance.' Two days after the main offensive had begun, Rusk received the codeword 'Pop' indicating that the 'operation will take place tomorrow... At 1700 Bn. commences to move to assembly areas. Very quiet night, no arty [artillery] activity but numerous flares sent up by enemy in all sectors. Tanks move up to assembly area.' 'We took up our position at midnight waiting for the dawn and every man was given a tot of rum' continued Meldrum. 'Everything we had was going over our heads.' The 2nd Black Watch's objective, with the support of the 4th Royal Tank Regiment and the Royal Horse Artillery, was to capture a strongpoint codenamed 'Tiger' leading to the ridge of El Duda. First, several Forward Defended Localities had to be taken, of which 'Jill', a 'stout stone sangar about 8 feet in diameter', was in the Battalion's line of advance. To the right the 2nd King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment would assault 'Butch', while the 2nd Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders would advance on the left.

At zero hour, 6.30 a.m. on 21 November, the 2nd Black Watch, with twenty officers and 580 men, was ready to cross the start line. 'The white tapes had been well laid, & we had no difficulty in finding our proper position. The Battn was lined up in four waves of attack, 75 yards apart between each,' recorded Barry. But 'through absolutely no fault of our own, the attack got off to a bad start,' commented Lieutenant Benson, commanding D Company. 'First the tanks supporting us never appeared... and secondly, because the tanks did not appear we waited for them... darkness or first light plus the tanks were to be our help and shield. We lost both.' Having started late, 'everything went quite well for the first 200 yards.' 'Then the whole world seemed to wake up,' continued Barry. 'Machine guns opened up from the front, as well as all the hostile guns in our area of attack.' Having advanced no more than 400 yards, Benson was hit in the thigh, finding himself 'immobilised'.

'All hell broke loose,' recorded Rusk, who was travelling in a mobile HQ consisting of four vehicles. 'In the succeeding din, smoke, dust and flying ironmongery, I was suddenly diverted from our regular progress by hearing Roy, our Pipe Major's chanter penetrating the blast.' Since he was playing 'Lawson's Men', that "puts the leap upon the lame", Rusk realised that he was 'in the forward C Company area, whose Company March it was.' The sound of the pipes, recorded one soldier 'was instrumental in kindling the spirit with which the whole attack was carried out'.

'Butch on our left had evidently fallen to the King's Own,' continued Barry, 'but Jill put up a stiff resistance, and as we approached its wire, it was plain that we had lost a good many tanks on the minefield which had not been thought to exist. Casualties now began to occur, and I saw rifles and bayonets stuck upside down in the ground to denote their positions to the stretcher bearers coming on behind.' This was 'possibly

a mistake in the open desert,' commented Benson, 'as I well remember those of us wounded being machine-gunned for a time after everyone had gone through.' For some, the battle went better than expected: 'There was I with my Bangalore torpedo at the ready but my job was a suicidal one,' recollected Private Meldrum. 'I'd to get that torpedo over the wire. God must have been on my side because, that day when we reached the enemy defences, there was no trip wire or mines. The enemy had been prepared to attack but we had beaten them to it. We arrived at their dugouts, firing at anything that moved. All I could see were Italian soldiers surrendering all over the place.'

The advance three miles from their start line had cost the Battalion dearly, the effect of the German machine guns devastating. 'Of the 600 men of my battalion who crossed the start-line,' Rusk noted that only '160 survived to consolidate Tiger.' 'What a day we had yesterday!' Barry was writing on 22 November 'from a small shallow dug out' on Tiger. 'I am so weary, I hardly know what to do. My feet are sore and swollen, and I am aching in every limb, as if someone had beaten me with a heavy stick all over the body.'

One of the several hundred casualties was Captain Mungo Stirling, who had been fatally wounded in the stomach. Captain Neville Blair, commanding B Company, had been hit in the shoulder and arm. Taken to the Regimental Aid Post, he praised the medical officer, Captain Gibson and the Padre, Bill Cochrane, for doing 'excellent work,' observing that the Italian prisoners helped to carry the wounded, although 'the Germans wouldn't.' One German medical officer, however, was also doing 'excellent work,' caring for both British and German casualties. Also wounded was Pipe Major Roy. 'One of the first hail of bullets must have hit him,' recorded Lance Corporal James McGraw. 'He dropped and got up. Then he was hit again and again – he got up the pipes still under his arm. When he was hit a third time he could not get up but he still played lying on the ground'. After being taken to the RAP, Roy continued to play for both friend and foe, acquiring the name 'The Piper of Tobruk'.

Although the 70th Division's attack had taken Rommel by surprise, the 7th Armoured Division's defeat at Sidi Rezegh had jeopardised the operation's gains. While the 2nd Black Watch remained in possession of Tiger, fierce shelling continued. 'We are still on Tiger, and there is no change in the situation,' Barry was commenting on 24 November. 'The 8th Army is still unable to get through to us, in spite of the fact that the BBC announced that the relief of Tobruk was imminent!'

At the Eighth Army's headquarters, Lieutenant General Cunningham was suggesting operations be curtailed. His advice, however, was not acceptable to his superiors and Auchinleck relieved him of his command, calling upon Black Watch officer Major General Neil Ritchie to take his place. Writing in later life, Ritchie, who had come to the Middle East as Deputy Chief of Staff, General Staff, in June 1941 shortly before Wavell's departure and been retained by Auchinleck, considered the decision was unwise. 'In the light of after-events, my own view is that Auchinleck should have accepted the fact that he must himself take over the command temporarily of the [Eighth] Army whilst asking for a senior general to be sent from home to assume command... this would have been a far more reasonable proposition than putting in a very junior individual to carry out nominal command under his control.'

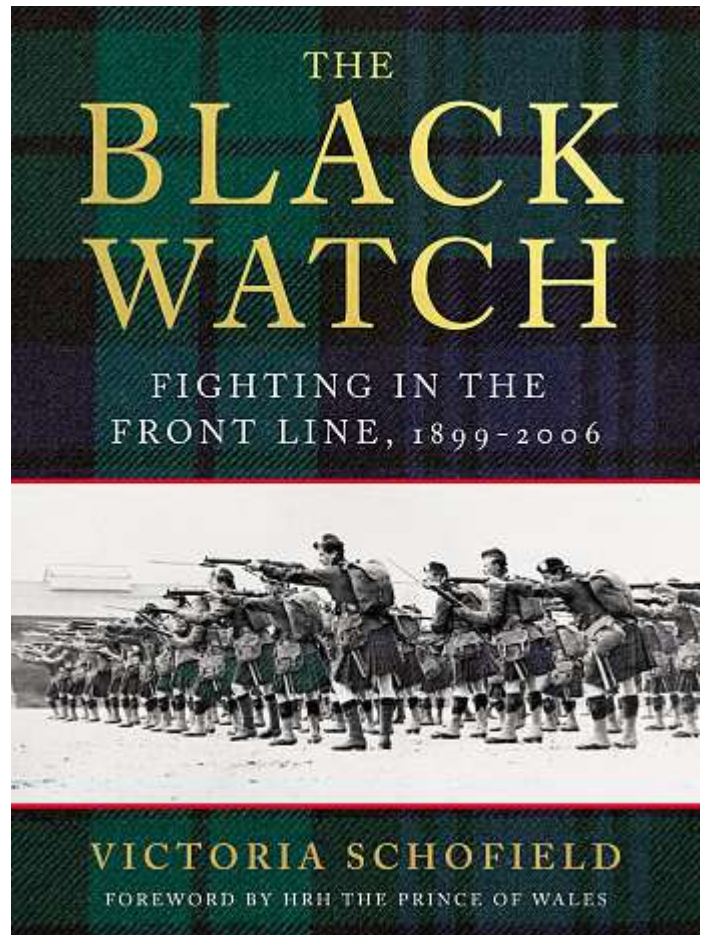
Briefly, the tide of operations turned. 'A terrific tank battle is raging at this very moment in front of us,' observed Barry on 26 November, describing how at 6.15 that morning the tanks of the Royal Tank Regiment had left Tiger for the capture of El Duda. 'Their silhouettes, with pennants flying, as they moved up to the attack against the dawn sky, made a wonderful spectacle. As they went down into the shallow valley in front, enemy artillery opened up, and soon all hell was raging.' The 70th Division's attack on the El Duda ridge had at last enabled the Tobruk garrison to link up with a small force of New Zealanders from the Eighth Army in the early morning of 27 November. 'This more or less completes the cordon, starting from Tobruk and going south to the escarpment, bottling up the eastern sector,' noted Barry. On 9 December the 2nd Black Watch moved from Tiger back to Tobruk. For

the rest of the month sporadic fighting and mopping-up operations continued. Unable to capitalise on his position, in late December Rommel withdrew his forces to Gazala.

On 11 December Rusk addressed the depleted Battalion, still in Tobruk: 'I have never felt more proud of anything in my life than of being privileged to command you all on the most severe test of the 21st November. I have never seen the Regiment advance more steadily under fire, even at Loos in the last war, when we lost over 700 casualties. Indeed the fire was enough to stop all but the most determined troops. You were all magnificent and true to the breed. After all, why should it change?' Mindful of those lost, he continued: 'The only pity of it all is the price that had to be paid and it is always the best that pay.'

The 2nd Black Watch returned to Egypt in late December. 'The journey back to the Delta was too miserable to dwell on,' related Captain Bernard Fergusson who had rejoined the Battalion ten days after the battle. Together with Captain David Rose, appointed Adjutant on 3 December (in place of the fatally wounded Stirling), he had contacted 'all the base units and headquarters collecting all Black Watch officers and soldiers who had been employed on base jobs' to bring the Battalion back to strength. 'At every stage one looked for some comrade or confidant with whom to exchange grumbles and grouses – only to remember that he was either fighting for his life in hospital or buried in Tobruk.'

*Remote from pilgrimage, a dusty hollow
Lies in the Libyan plain:
And there my comrades sleep, who will not follow
The pipes and drums again.
Bernard Fergusson*



The book cover of volume 2 of the Regimental History.

BLACK WATCH REGIMENTAL TWEED

By Lieutenant Colonel R M Riddell

An email sent from Johnstons of Elgin (via Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin) asked the Regimental Association to provide infor-

mation about the Regimental tweed so that it could be included in a reprint of a book called "Scottish Estate Tweeds". As with many simple requests for information, providing the answer proved more difficult.

There was little or no information held in the Museum Archive and so a phone call to Colonel David Arbuthnott (a former Regimental Secretary) became the start point. He had seen a short piece in a Red Hackle Magazine about the tweed and he also pointed me in the direction of a book called "Canada's Black Watch" by Colonel P Hutchison.

In the Editorial of the January 1938 Red Hackle Magazine, a short notice stated "It is notified for information that the correct Black Watch Tweed introduced by the 3rd Battalion prior to the Great War is held by Messrs Stewart Christie & Co of Edinburgh. This tweed has been approved by the Colonel of The Regiment as the one and only correct pattern. Officers wishing to purchase this material are advised to go to the above firm".

I then phoned Messrs Stewart Christie and asked if they held records of letters from that period. The firm stated that they had found an example of the tweed in a pattern book dating from about 1840 but the reference in the 1938 Red Hackle Magazine infers that the tweed was not produced until just before the Great War. Whether the Stewart Christie records are correct is a moot point.

Readers will also be interested to know that research in the book "Canada's Black Watch" produced the following information;

In 1915, the 42nd Battalion Royal Highlanders of Canada (Black Watch) were formed. Because of the mobilisation of such a large number of men, Highland dress was depleted and it was not possible to obtain further supplies from Scotland. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel GS Cantlie thought of having Black Watch Officers' tweed reproduced in Canada to be turned into kilts and glengarries, which harmonised so well with khaki tunics of wartime. This example was followed by Lieutenant Colonel P Davidson who was commanding the newly formed 73rd Battalion, Royal Highlanders of Canada (Black Watch).

An example of a kilt and glengarry made of Black Watch tweed are held in The Black Watch Museum.

Cloth can still be bought from the Museum Shop but it must be made up with the blue line of the overcheck uppermost but the colours used are regimental colours of blue over red over green.



The Stewart Christie archive record of Black Watch tweed.



The Black Watch of Canada kilt and glengarry made from Regimental tweed and worn in 1915.

REGRETS I HAVE A FEW?

Editor's note: In the February 2017 Edition of the Scottish Field the following article written by Guy Grieve described a visit he made as a potential officer to the 1st Battalion The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) whilst Lieutenant Colonel Alasdair Loudon was commanding (December 1995-30 June 1998). Whilst not all his recollections are correct (the Battalion was based at Fort George from July 1996-July 2000 and deployed to Hong Kong in June 1997), I am grateful to the Editor of the Scottish Field and to Guy Grieve for allowing me to reproduce the article.

Once upon a million years ago I telephoned my girlfriend (now my wife) from the Officers' Mess of the Black Watch in Catterick, North Yorkshire. I was calling from a little woody cubicle during a break from being put through tests, over a few days, to see whether I might be deemed suitable to join the regiment once I had passed selection for Sandhurst and then Sandhurst itself. It was not long before the Black Watch was about to be deployed to provide ceremonial duties during the Hong Kong handover.

That call remains vivid in my memory to this day, the reason being that I was so completely happy. Purely and without reserve. I liked the fact that the men around me spoke of their 'brother officers'. I enjoyed the quiet banter and camaraderie. The unspoken code of understatement, modesty, humour and fair play. The history thrilled me too. The colours, frayed and worn and patched with battle honours. Paintings and regimental silver depicting stirring images of bravery and sacrifice.

Yet there was also a great freshness to the place. A wholesomeness, I suppose, which I was reminded of recently when I fetched my eldest son from rugby training on a recent frosty night. As he folded his big frame into the passenger seat a scent of cut grass, mud, open air and vigour came with him, taking me straight back to those few days with the Black Watch.

I was twenty three years old and had trained hard in the hills of Mull for the physical tests. I arrived as fit as a Sherpa and more than held my end up during the various runs and assault courses. The commanding officer, Lt Col Loudon, was a softly spoken and highly capable man, intelligent and genuinely interested in the potential that might reside within us little squibs. His wife had been an anthropologist and I remember that she spoke with great insight about life in the clan of her husband's regiment set within the extraordinary tribe that is the British army.

And then there were the sinewy NCOs and soldiers of the regiment. Sharply turned out and proud. Hob nailed boots on the parade ground and pipes being tuned. Jokes and piss taking and straight forward camaraderie. What appealed to me most was the sense of a world not dominated by money, but instead motivated by a different currency; honour, comradeship, love of country and a spirit of true self-sacrifice.

Of course it's all as old as the hills. The regrets of a man in his forties. In the end I failed my regular selection board and the army asked me to come back for another try. It was a common test of resolve. Sadly, I was way led and listened to those literally begging me not to try for the army. Instead of taking the long view, I joined the rest of the working world.

But what if? Certainly life with the Black Watch would have been difficult and dangerous. No regimental silver in Iraq and Afghanistan. And a high chance of death or injury. And yet? And yet?

What got me thinking about all this recently was that over the last few years I've met a few men around my age who did follow through on their dream to join the army. And on balance they've had rich and rewarding lives. There's not much money about, not too many fancy cars or houses, but I can't help but feel that they've been able to lead the ideal kind of life for a man.

In a world where multi-million pound marketing budgets persuade us endlessly that we are the centre of the universe, they have been part of

something far older than money or even concepts of 'self'. Of course I'm being hopelessly romantic about all of this – but then again, can there be anything more romantic than being prepared to risk everything? Even one's life? Motivated not really by king or country but on a deeper level by love of one's fellow soldier.

On a lighter note – during the Hong Kong handover the Chinese army challenged the Black Watch to a game of rugby. A team was picked from the regiment and was duly wiped out by the Chinese who had prepared and trained a crack team of Special Forces soldiers. I suppose I should be glad I escaped that.

ADEN 1967 – REMINISCENCE

By Major R H Parata MBE

Editor's Note: Richard Parata, known as Dick, joined the 1st Battalion in Minden in 1966 having obtained a Short Service Commission by passing out from Mons Officer Cadet School. He was sponsored by Brigadier Sir Bernard Fergusson, then Governor General of New Zealand. Dick told me that as a New Zealander he came from an egalitarian society and wanted to be judged on merit and so being granted a Regular Commission later in his career vindicated his views on life.

He enjoyed all aspects of his career as a Platoon Commander, as a Support Weapons officer and training recruits in Aberdeen but he particularly enjoyed commanding A (Grenadier) Company in Andersonstown, the Jungle Warfare School in Belize and commanding the Northern Ireland Patrol Group (NIPG) in Ballykinler (he was awarded his MBE for the work he undertook in creating and leading the NIPG). The latter organisation later morphed into the Close Observation Platoon concept and with other groups was the genesis of the current Army Reconnaissance Regiments.

Dick enjoyed the more unusual aspects of soldiering rather than the more mundane aspects of the Cold War and exercises in West Germany. He left the Army in September 1979.

This article will be published nearly 50 years after the operational tour undertaken by a platoon of The Black Watch which supported the 1st Battalion The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in Aden in 1967.

Introduction

In October 2016 the Editor of the Red Hackle Magazine asked me to write an article about Aden in 1967 when I took a platoon from 1 BW to 1 A&SH who were short on numbers for their upcoming tour. I felt at a bit of a disadvantage. When I left the Battalion in 1979 I left two MFO boxes, one to follow me, the other, rubbish for the tip. Unfortunately the box addresses were reversed. I lost notes and pictures that might have helped prompt my memory. This was fortuitous because I needed to do some research but I did not want to regurgitate military history; you can go elsewhere for that. This was to be a personal perspective. A central contribution to the article is from someone who served in the platoon. I have called him "Anon", because nobody knows who wrote the article in the Red Hackle in 1967 that sums up so well, life in Crater, Aden.

The article is aimed at Red Hackle readers but may appear in the Argyll's "Thin Red Line".

1BW were serving with the UN in Cyprus when there was a notice in Part 1 Orders asking for a platoon of 30 volunteers to serve with 1 A&SH (commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Colin Mitchell) on a tour in Aden. I phoned the Adjutant, Garry Barnett, to be told an officer had already been selected. Later he phoned to ask me if I was still interested. Of course I was. Apart from the prospect of seeing some action, I had been in Aden before for twenty hours when travelling by boat to join the Army. I was fascinated by its barren landscape almost devoid of greenery, Arabs, the dry heat and the smell of spices.

The Argylls were due to take over from 1st Battalion The Royal Northumberland Fusiliers (1 RNF).

Fast forward to Plymouth where the Argylls were stationed. I was given command of a platoon in A Company commanded by Major Ian Robertson. I had mastered the Scottish dialect of the east coast and had now to master the more difficult dialect of the west.

The Red Hackle article recorded; *"On the 7th of June 1967, an air of expectancy could be felt at Seaton Barracks, Plymouth as two busloads of Black Watch/Argylls stopped at the guardroom – we were met by the Second-in-Command and as both parties suspiciously inspected one another, someone was heard to say that the platoon was no longer Black Watch but Argyll. This was put down to rumour and any differences were quickly sorted out in the beer bar in the nights that were to follow.*

Within half an hour of arriving we were in fact split up – a section to each company. The Argylls had done a tremendous amount of training and in the next ten days we had some catching up to do. The gymnasium seemed to be the centre of most activities. Training was done in heavy clothing and the central heating was turned on full to try to get every man pre-spining – this wasn't hard after four weeks leave!"

The training was very impressive. The CO had sent people to Aden and sought expert advice before deployment. The training was before its time and a fore runner before the likes of Hythe village in Kent for pre Northern Ireland training.

The Red Hackle continued: *"Ten days later, a little more knowledgeable and considerably fitter, the main body left for Aden. The shocking news of the massacre of the 20th of June reached Plymouth just as the first flight was leaving. An air of confusion and shock came over the camp, as the news got round.*

We arrived in Aden to a very turbulent situation. It was a sad end to the tour of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers and a tragic start for the Argylls in which three men were lost."

Background

The British Government had committed to withdraw from the Aden Protectorate and surrounding areas by November 1967. There had been a state of emergency for five years. It was also in line with the policy of the government to gradually withdraw East of Suez. There had also been a growing nationalism throughout the region fuelled by President Nasser of Egypt. Any political decision to withdraw and handover power is fraught with difficulties and there have been many examples of failure over the last century e.g. India/Pakistan, Ireland and Iraq. In Aden there was no real legitimate body to hand over power to. The armed forces were being bludgeoned by various groups.

Readers wishing to know more should refer to an excellent You Tube documentary, "End of Empire (1985), chapter 9: Aden"

20th June Ambush

Editor's note: On 20 June 1967, 22 British soldiers were killed during a mutiny. Three Argylls were among the dead.

The website of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders records: *"On 1st June, 1967, the Federal Regular Army (Five Battalions) and the Federal National Guard (Four Battalions) were amalgamated to form the new South Arabian Army. Their Headquarters were in Seederseer Lines and their Training Depot at Lake Lines. The other two para-military forces in Aden were the Federal National Guard 2 (a loosely knit force of tribal police based in Champion Lines) and the Armed Police (based on the Armed Police Barracks in Crater). Both these forces were recruited from up-country tribesmen. The civil police remained unchanged during the military reorganisation.*

The Senior Arab Officer of the new South Arabian Army was not acceptable to the other Senior Officers of the Force. In addition the influx of the Federal National Guard 1 into the Army produced a tribal imbalance in the ranks of the Senior Officers, a balance which had been carefully maintained before amalgamation. This caused eleven Senior Officers to present a petition to the British Commander of the Army and the Federal Supreme Council. As a result of the petition four Senior Colonels were suspended pending an investigation. This caused grave dissatisfaction throughout the Army and in the early morning of the 20th of June 1967, the Apprentice School at Lake Lines mutinied and burnt down some buildings. This mutiny reverberated throughout the South Arabian Army, but was put down without loss of life by the Army authorities themselves.

The suspended Colonels were immediately reinstated by the Supreme Council. Meanwhile in Champion Lines, the Training Depot and HQ of Federal National Guard 2, inter factional fighting had broken out and the armoury was broken open. Thus armed, the FNG went berserk, shooting at each other and firing out of the camp over Khormaksar Airfield and over the main road into Radfan Camp which contained elements of three

British Battalions. At the height of the trouble the FNG cruelly ambushed a British Royal Corps of Transport truck returning from the rifle range, killing all eight occupants. As the situation was out of control the Supreme Council requested British Army assistance and a Company of the Kings Own Royal Border Regiment moved in to subdue the mutineers.

The Armed Police in Crater, whose morale had been low for some time and who were known to have been infiltrated by terrorist organisations, hearing that British troops were attacking Champion Lines, got out of control. It is not certain whether they thought that the 1 RNF party of which Major Malcolm, Private Hunter and Private Moores from 1A&SH were part were coming to attack them, or they were reacting to the bad news of the Arab/Israeli war and the subsequent anti-British feeling prevailing at the time. The point remains that they fired on the two open Land Rovers and massacred the occupants."

Occupying Crater

The Red Hackle article then recorded; "We quickly became acclimatised, and within forty eight hours, platoons were taking over observation posts established by the Fusiliers on the A1 Mansura ridge overlooking Crater, now deserted by British troops.

Crater, the heart and commercial centre of Aden State, has for the past eighteen months been a trouble spot which came to a head on the 20th June. It is an area of only one square mile and is dominated on either side by ridges of slippery volcanic rock. Along these ridges our observation posts were sited. Two roads lead into Crater, (Main Pass and Marine Drive) both of which were sealed off allowing only pedestrians through after thorough searching.

Between the 20th June and 3rd July fighting continued with fury. The observation posts were continually sniped at throughout the day, reaching a peak at dusk. Royal Marines from 45 Commando manned the road block at Main Pass and their snipers took a heavy toll of terrorists. At night, patrols probed into the town with the future intention of moving back into Crater. From these patrols, a plan was drawn up and approved for the re-occupation of Crater.

At dusk on the 3rd July the Battalion moved back into Crater. It was a brilliant operation with no casualties to the Argylls. The Adenies were stunned, and even more amazed the following morning to hear the Pipes and Drums playing Long Reveille."

It was a text book operation brilliantly executed. I learnt that in urban/terrorist operations, the big picture is fine but it is so important that every soldier needs to know his role, his place e.g the street, the doorway, the junction, where at the junction. Tactically this is very important but it also re-inforces in the soldier that his individual role matters. As a consequence he feels and is a better soldier.

The Red Hackle author commented; "With the Battalion firmly established in Crater, the next job was to set up Company bases. Companies were allotted areas and houses, hotels and roof tops were taken over as patrol bases and observation posts. The standard of these positions varied from luxury air conditioned flats to smelly rooms without water. Platoons were kept busy patrolling by day and night and searching people, cars, and buildings in an effort to flush out the terrorists. Once the terrorists overcame their initial surprise at being surrounded by soldiers, the grenades began to fly, and the shooting started – we were in business.

A typical day in Crater starts at five o'clock when the first clearance patrols go out and comb the area for any booby traps that may have been set during the night. The day is at its coolest with a temperature of around 75o Fahrenheit. The sun rises higher, cars begin to move, children come out to play on the streets, and the wail from the Mosques heralds another day. The streets are littered with rubbish which the goats churn up. By eight o'clock, the town is alive, the market is noisy and the Battalion net begins to crackle with information. Foot patrols filter through the alleys, checking shops and cars. An observation post reports that leaflets are being distributed in the street. When the patrol arrives, the person has gone, but the leaflets are still there. A Mercedes is parked at the street side, giving an impression of the wealth of some of the inhabitants. The smell gets more pungent as the day grows hotter.

Elegant Somali women glide past in their bright coloured robes. Children crowd around and the men step aside. The patrol returns to its base.

Another patrol of eight men begins at 1030. All of a sudden there is a deafening explosion which shakes the ground. People scatter in all directions, shops close within seconds, and our patrol races in the direction of the explosion. A combat report is rushed through to Battalion Headquarters – "Grenade, one casualty". The area is cordoned off, and everyone is brought from their houses. As usual no one saw anything. Two suspects are taken away for questioning."

I recall an incident early one morning when a patrol I was commanding, to relieve an OP, had a grenade thrown at it. The shout of "Grenade" – everyone quickly dropped to the prone position- as per training. The grenade went off and one in the patrol was unfortunately wounded – a little slow in getting down. My point is not the attack itself, there were many. Rather the risks of attack are heightened if you are predictable in terms of time, routes taken, size of the patrol i.e. never set a pattern for the enemy to exploit. All rather obvious but I am sure the IRA exploited patterns and I was probably guilty of having done so myself.

When commanding A Company 1BW in Andersonstown, I encouraged my patrol commanders to change their modus operandi so that they did not set patterns so as to thwart attacks and threaten escape routes of potential attackers.

The final paragraph of the Red Hackle article continues; "By 11.30 the heat is unbearable and the smell from the market the same. At 12.30 the shops close and Crater is quiet until they open again at 3 o'clock. Most of the men sit in the shade chewing a green leaf which is supposed to increased manliness. At 5 o'clock the wailing from the Mosques starts again the heat subsides a little, by 6.30 everyone is inside their house as it is not safe to go outside. The streets become quiet except for the occasional clatter of goats. Another tiring day ends.

September has been a quiet month as there have been no incidents since the end of August. We have had a chance to do some swimming and climbing and a few lucky ones have had a week off to explore the delights of East Africa.

Aden is a strange place when one doesn't know what the Civil Police or the Army are going to do next. So far we have been sniped at, mortared, more mortars, and had grenades thrown at us. However, life is not as hard as all that as most of us own either a transistor or a new watch. Morale is very high even though some of us haven't met since Plymouth. No one knows when we are coming back, but when we do, there will be some good stories to tell."

The Battalion withdrew from Crater via Marine Drive on 26 November with the local army occupying the area through Main Drive.

Orbat: 1 BW Platoon

The Museum archive did not hold an orbat for the platoon but with help from the Black Watch Forum the following served in Aden but thirteen names are missing.

2Lt Dick Parata

Cpl Mac McGregor – deceased

Cpl Martin

Cpl Jimmy Boyle – deceased

LCpl Card promoted Cpl on tour

LCpl Burns

LCpl Westwater

Pte Caber Feidh Edwards promoted LCpl with on tour – deceased

Pte Jimmy Low, wounded in a grenade attack

Pte Gibb

Pte Donaldson

Pte Frank Baily-deceased

Pte Roy Fowler

Pte Johnny Greer

Pte Ronnie Major –deceased

Pte Rab Law

Pte Jimmy Williamson, youngest in the platoon, later commissioned into 1BW, retired as a Major.

Commanding Officer

Lieutenant Colonel Colin Mitchell Mitchell, dubbed by the media "Mad Mitch", was an enigmatic extrovert and controversial figure. He had taken over command from Malcolm Wallace of The Black Watch who had commanded 1A&SH in Borneo; the two were complete opposites. Later, reading military history, he reminded me of Field Marshall Montgomery; short in stature and with a tremendous ego. When I first met him he immediately remarked about my height in a complimentary way that seemed to satisfy him of my eligibility; I was just a few inches taller than him.

He obviously irked higher command with his use of the media. He was a pioneer in this area but uncontrollable and I think he knew it.

However, more importantly was he authorised to re-occupy Crater? There was ten days between the ambush and re-occupation, so there was ample time to mount an operation much sooner. Research suggests 1 A&SH were authorised to just carry out a "probe" and finding no resistance carried on and occupied Crater,

stretching the original order. Lieutenant Colonel Colin Mitchell could have been replaced/fired but that would have fed into the hands of the British media.

I had no direct contact with him until summonsed to say goodbye on our return to Plymouth. There was a thank you and he said that the 1 BW platoon had the worst disciplinary record of all the platoons on the tour. I said – on reflection very brave of me as a humble 2/Lt – that if we had been kept together rather than dispersed, he would have had no disciplinary problems. For a moment he was speechless and his face turned red. I saluted and left quickly. Later I discovered that Pte Caber Feidh Edwards had been promoted to Lance Corporal, LCpl Wattie Card had been promoted to Corporal- not a bad record for a platoon of 30 that had been attached to another regiment for just four months.

Later, in civilian life, I sat beside Colin Mitchell on a trip from London to Central America. Aden was off topic and he appeared very dejected

Anecdotes and Notes

- Everyone in 1 A&SH was extremely welcoming of the new platoon and lasting friendships were made.

- Initially I commanded a platoon in A company located at a school in the North West of Crater near Main Pass. I handed over to Malcolm McVittie in early September. He had just arrived from Sandhurst and the Argylls obviously wanted him to gain immediate experience. I was then shuffled around, relieving platoon commanders so that they could go on leave. It was fun seeing other aspects of the battalion.

- Leave was a week in Mombasa, Kenya where I spent a couple of nights at the Tsava game park in a lodge overlooking a lake. The lodge was run by a formidable lady, Mrs Campbell, who must have been in her 60's or 70's who introduced me to Tilapia, from the lake. It was the finest fresh water fish I had/have tasted; it was wild but has since lost its reputation now that it is a farmed fish.

- It may be currently unfashionable to say so but I enjoyed the cry from the mosque in the morning and evening. It was haunting. I loved the smell of the cooking in the market place although I did not have the courage to taste the food.

- The green leaf chewed by men starting daily around midday was qat/khat grown in Yemen and Somalia. Described as a stimulant but really an aphrodisiac- or “manliness” mentioned by “Anon” and obvious but disconcerting when searching at that time of the day.

- I received an invitation to a black tie dinner from the High Commissioner, Sir Hugh Trevelyan courtesy of the then Sir Bernard Fergusson, Governor General of New Zealand who had written to him. Government House was splendid and opulent. I arrived back at the check point at Main Pass to be met by my signaller the excellent Pte McDiarmid – later CSM. I had to change quickly and set off down the road to A Coy HQ during the curfew. It was surreal and incongruous but very British.

- There was still patrolling on foot at night during the curfew; there were no street lights and it was very dark. I was second or third in the patrol when a Jock hastened back and pointed to a figure positioned with arms raised against a wall in the search position. I stepped forward clasped under the suspects armpits leapt back in shock, to the amusement of the Jocks. It was a huge billy goat that lived in the streets. Clearly I had been set-up

- When we withdrew back to the barracks, everyone went to bed, ready to fly out the next day and looking forward to the end of the tour. I was woken up and told to report to the company office. I was met by the excellent CSM Wilson to be told that the OC was being briefed and he had a job for me. Another two hour wait when the CSM said there two machine guns had been left in Crater and I was to take a patrol to retrieve them. Another one hour wait until the CSM confessed with a laugh that it was a hoax. I never had the opportunity get even with him.

Thin Red Line Post Aden Article

After the tour I was asked to pen an article for the “Thin Red Line” the Argyll's regimental magazine. It is repeated here in full; I had forgotten I had written it. In hindsight I would not change a thing, except that I would not wish to undermine the active service experience of The Black Watch in Korea, Kenya and Cyprus. Barrack discipline is necessary as soldiers are likely to get bored. RSM Giles' Saturday morning parades in Minden are still remembered with dread but served a purpose. I recall the Cameronians got into

a bit of trouble and I would put that down to boredom that often breeds mischief. I remember prior to Aden, while we were on exercise in the Libyan Desert, where rocks were placed around entranceways to Messes and Regimental Headquarters were painted white, a reflection of too much time in barracks, perhaps? Or as the Jocks said “Join the Army and see the world, join the Black Watch and paint it!”

“In writing an article such as this, a number of controversial points could arise and it is important not to offend either regiment. It must be made clear there are great differences between the two regiments as in recent years they have had different roles.

Of the two regiments, the Argylls have been fortunate enough in being on active service almost continuously since the Second World War. The Black Watch have had to be content with only occasional overseas postings. This makes comparisons difficult. Both regiments could be likened to two tigers – one in the zoo, the other wild in the jungle. The tiger in the zoo is not tame though he is gazed at continuously by the public. However, he has all the instinct of the tiger in the jungle, but is unable to practice them and is only occasionally let loose. The other tiger is free.

In the Black Watch concentration is on training taken mainly from Army training pamphlets. The Argylls invaluable experience has found for them an easier and perhaps more efficient way to cope with situations, using methods not entirely in the book.

The other notable difference is in the way the Argylls have been able to prune out the old lags at each level of seniority who have proved of no use on active service. Many soldiers, a nuisance in barracks, have risen to considerable heights in Borneo and Aden. It is apparent that the good well- behaved barrack room soldier may be quite useless in the field while the reverse applies.

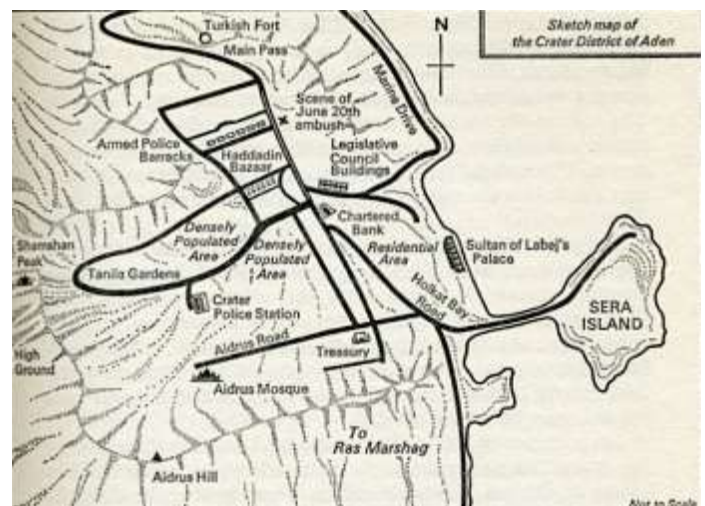
It is apparent that the Jock arriving from the Depot into a battalion on active service finds that what he has learnt during his training comes into almost immediate effect. The surprising jolt of bullets very close to him quickly induces a professional outlook and makes him realise very quickly how important his training was.

There is a noticeable difference between the two battalions. On the one hand the rather rigid barrack room discipline of The Black Watch, on the other, the looser field discipline of the Argylls, based on Officers, NCO's and Jocks living in close proximity to each other for long periods of time.

In all these points mentioned there are differences between the two Regiments due to the vastly different situations the two battalions have recently been in. Put The Black watch in the same situation as the Argylls I am sure that they would have been equally successful. In my opinion there is no substitute for active service for sorting out a battalion”.

Acknowledgements

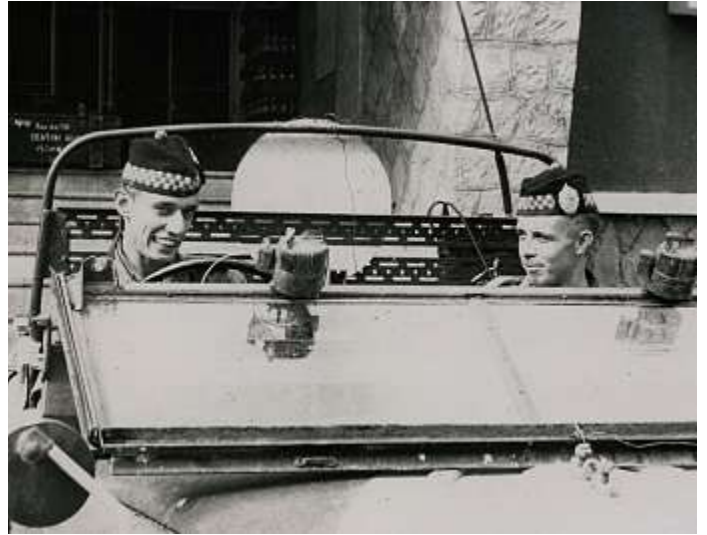
I am particularly grateful to Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm McVittie (A&SH) for his advice and help as well as to Majors Ronnie Proctor and Jimmy Williamson. Finally, I would like to thank the Editor for the opportunity to write this article nearly 50 years after the actions in Aden that involved thirty men of The Black Watch in support of the 1st Battalion The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's).



Crater Map.



Crater from the South looking towards Main Pass.



Lt Neilson and 2Lt Dick Parata (right) outside A Company base.



2 Platoon patrol in Haddaddin Bazaar.



Corporal Mac MacGregor.



Lieutenant Colonel Colin Mitchell pictured talking to the media.



Private George Westwater.

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



BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

Commanding Officer:	Lieutenant Colonel R S J Hedderwick
Second-in-Command:	Major J A Reid
Adjutant:	Captain T J H Towler
Operations Officer:	Captain C M Treasure
Intelligence Officer:	Captain C G Voce Russell
Regimental Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 1 K Stacey

COMMANDING OFFICER'S FOREWORD

It is an absolute delight to be back with the Battalion having spent the last three years working elsewhere. I am not sure I have ever seen the Battalion so busy but there are some exciting opportunities ahead and the Battalion is on very good form. 2016 was a difficult year following the deaths of Private Conor McPherson in August and Corporal Norrie Stevenson in December. However, the way the Battalion has come together, coped with these tragedies, and responded so positively to everything asked of them since has been impressive and speaks volumes of our men and women. There is an abundance of talent across all ranks and it is a joy to be back amongst it.

2017 has started brightly, with the Battalion fulfilling commitments across the globe. As I write this, Bravo and Charlie Company Groups are deployed in Kenya supporting 2 SCOTS on Ex ASKARI STORM, D Company Group is in Jordan operating alongside the Jordanian Armed Forces and A (Grenadier) Company Headquarters is in Kuwait providing assistance to the Kuwaiti National Guard. Concurrently, our UK Commitments Company is meeting our standing UK tasks, conducting local community engagement and preparing for Brigade and Divisional shooting competitions. Such a disparate laydown may appear to be extraordinary but as part of the Adaptive Force, simultaneously meeting such an array of training and Defence Engagement tasks is very much part of our remit. It is an exciting place to be, with opportunity and leadership challenges freely available. So far, all groups have performed superbly. B Company has given 2 SCOTS a fierce fight on the plains of Kenya, combatting not only our sister Battalion but also the terrain, heat and wildlife. Close encounters with herds of elephant and buffalo have been a daily challenge but it has proven a superb environment for exercising low level tactical training. Warranting particular mention are LCpl Mackenzie for his superb and spontaneous fire mission that destroyed an entire 2 SCOTS Company, LCpl Dixon for leading a small reconnaissance patrol that infiltrated the entire 2 SCOTS reconnaissance screen and identified all their defensive positions, and LCpl Bartlett for identifying, engaging and causing havoc with the 2 SCOTS Commanding Officers' tactical party! Likewise, C Company ran the live firing permanent range team for 2 SCOTS with aplomb. Their enthusiasm and professionalism proved infectious and was described by the British Army Training Team in Kenya as being one of the best range teams they could remember. So, through everyone's combined efforts, the reputation of the Red Hackle is being enhanced, both at home and on an international front. Furthermore, our experiences have re-inforced the Battalion's readiness to deploy anywhere and execute our tasks with the ferocity and professionalism that this Battalion is renowned for. However, the pace of life is unlikely to relent as we march into the summer. After some well deserved Easter leave, the Battalion prepare to become the Theatre Standby Battalion on 1 August 2017 as well as getting itself ready for a Battalion deployment to Iraq in 2018. It has been ten years since the Battalion has been in Iraq and we are looking forward to our role of training the Iraqi Army for their fight against Da'esh.

The announcement that Fort George will not close until 2032 has provided the Battalion and our families with some welcome clarity and stability. Although it is possible that the Battalion may move before this, we have been assured that we will be given at least two years' notice but our future home has not yet been confirmed. In the meantime, we will continue to make the most of the many positives our current location affords and we have done a huge amount to the infrastructure of Fort George. We recently had funding approval for a Multi-Use Games Area on the 'cricket' pitch to the west of the Fort which will make a significant

difference to daily life. WIFI coverage will also get a £150,000 upgrade over Easter, as will the Red Hackle Club. Soon, we will also have reduced the accommodation in the Fort to being a maximum two man occupancy and we are seeking funding for equipment cages in the accommodation to create further living space. The new armouries are on the cusp of opening and our gymnasium has had a £70,000 overhaul.

Significant investment is also going into the personal development of our men and women. In January the Battalion embarked upon a year-long leadership programme, the intent being that it acts as a catalyst for all ranks to study leadership in greater detail and get a broader and deeper understanding of what it entails. The programme started with a presentation from the Centre of Army Leadership and in total, we have a further sixteen presentations scheduled, including some extremely high profile names from the military, sporting, political, literary and commercial sectors. The Battalion are placing great emphasis on this programme. In our profession, everything we do is a human endeavour – our Jocks have always been our most potent weapon – and if we get the leadership right across all ranks in the Battalion then conceptual and physical excellence inevitably follows. Sport and AT is therefore also featuring heavily on the forecast of events. The skiing teams had a super festive period bombing across Alpine slopes, the football and rugby teams head off to La Manga, Spain, in July to compete, and we have a third of the Battalion doing a mixture of kayaking, rock climbing, hill walking and mountain biking this summer. Captain Iain Houston is also threatening to row the Great Glen this summer with a handful of volunteers, the RSM is leading a cycling team to the WW1 battlefields in France and we hope to support Battle of the Hook commemorations in South Korea later in the year. There is a lot going on!

So, what of the future? The recent Army 2020 refinement process has confirmed that we will at some stage return to being a Light Role Battalion. Correspondingly, our liability will grow by another sixty two officers and soldiers to a total of 567. Our transition is likely to be graduated and not before 2019. With so much going on in 2017-2018, the deliberate nature of change for us is good news, meaning individual careers can be managed carefully and with plenty of warning. Intuitively, we know that any future deployment is always going to require some form of mobility anyway so our accumulation of Light Mechanized skills will mean we are well set to meet any eventuality.

As ever, we are incredibly grateful for the support we receive from Balhousie Castle and the Association. We remain a Battalion that prides itself on our family roots and we would be delighted to see any former officers, non-commissioned officers or soldiers back within the Fort's walls. I will sign off by saying again how proud I am to be back within our Battalion. With such an exciting twelve months ahead, I look forward to reporting back how we fare!



Lieutenant General Nick Pope DCGS visited Fort George and was greeted by a Quarter Guard.



Lieutenant General Nick Pope DCGS briefs the Battalion as part of the Commanding Officer's Leadership Programme.

THE OFFICERS' MESS

President of the Mess Committee: Major Brian O'Neill
 Mess Secretary: Captain James Farrall
 Mess Treasurer: Captain Iain Walker

As ever, it has been a hectic period for the Battalion, however, the Officers' Mess has been able to fit in an exciting period of social and public events. Having completed Ex WESSEX STORM the Mess said farewell to the Commanding Officer, Lt Col Al Steele and his wife Lizzie and welcomed back Lt Col Rob Hedderwick and his wife, Lottie. In the interim, the Mess had the belated Summer party! The subalterns designed and put together a celebration of all things German and Scottish – Jocktoberfest. The arches underneath the front of Fort George were sealed, the banners were hung and a German Beer Hall was formed. The Oompah band was fantastic and set the tone brilliantly throughout the evening. The Subalterns pulled off a fantastic evening and utilising the Mess as a blank canvas, transformed it into a phenomenal night for all, even if the Schnapps did take some getting used to.

The final events of 2016 enhanced the family spirit that had sustained us over a testing year. First up in December 2016 was the Battalion's Community Engagement Event in the Fort George Kirk. The event was superbly supported by the Battalion's Pipes and Drums, the Fijian Choir and the Inverness Military Wives Choir. Combined with the scintillating conversation provided by the Subalterns the evening was a huge success and undoubtedly our relations with our friends throughout Inverness-shire, Nairnshire and Morayshire have been reinforced as we stepped forward into an action packed 2017.

After the Fijian Choir and the Inverness Military Wives Choir have set the standard at our public event, the Mess was keen to step-up to the plate and show our own choral prowess during Christmas week at our annual Patch Carols. While X Factor judges would have given our carol renditions several "No's", 'Facebook live' managed to get a few likes! To make the week even more memorable we had our final Games Night of the year in which the Mess hosted and again defeated the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess following a fine performance by the Officers Mess acapella group. They may not have been pitch perfect but they certainly deserved their 'mic drop' finish!

Early 2017 has seen Bravo, Charlie and Delta Company prepare for their overseas deployments to Kenya and Jordan respectively while A Company have been conducting Defence Engagement in Kuwait. The remainder of the Mess, however has found the time together with the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess to host a number of talks as part of the Battalion Leadership Programme. The Mess has been fortunate to receive an excellent mental health talk by Mr Geoff McDonald, former Human Resources Executive Officer of Unilever, and by Lieutenant General Nick Pope, Deputy Chief of the General Staff on his 'view from the top'. The next eagerly awaited presentation will be by Major General Patrick Marriott in late April.

The Mess has said farewell to our Royal Marine attachment, Lt Tom Liddell who has returned to 43 Commando and Lt Angus Bullen on his posting to the Army Training Regiment Pirbright. However, we do say hello to Lt Michael Gray from 1 SCOTS and Lt Tom Fortune who has recently completed his Platoon Commanders' Course.



Some of the Black Watch Battalion party at The Black Watch Ball, from the left, Captain Tim Towler, Richard Martin, James Tait and Nick Coles.



The four musketeers await the arrival of the Sergeants' Mess, from the left Maj Christopher McRobbie, Lt Axie Deck, Capt James Fish and Capt David Hamilton.

WARRANT OFFICERS' AND SERGEANTS' MESS

Presiding Member: Warrant Officer Class 1 (RSM) K Stacey
 President of the Mess Committee: Warrant Officer Class 2 Weir

The Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess has been at the forefront of a very busy period in our new role as a Light Mechanised Battalion, culminating in a six week deployment onto Wessex Storm in late 2016. Nevertheless we have still had time to enjoy a bit of quality Mess life.

Our Christmas function was held outside Fort George in the Craigmonie Hotel in Inverness. CSgt Hendry PMC of this function provided a well run and entertaining night with some great prizes to be won. CSgt Hendry and his committee did an outstanding job.

The Sergeants' Mess versus Officers' Mess Games Night on Red Hackle Day was another cracking event with not a single drop of alcohol involved in any of the games. Shouts of unfair conduct could be heard from the Officers' Mess. The genius behind our creative games was WO2 John Harding. In case of a resulting draw (unlikely) in any game there was to be a decider, which involved balancing a ping-pong ball on your head the longest. The nomination from each Mess had to play against each other to see who had the most skill. Needless to say, the RSM was the Mess nomination and duly won (he does have a distinct advantage).

On Red Hackle Day it was good to see the Mess winning the football as usual. Played in very blustery gale force winds, which added a bit of spice and more fun to the occasion, this year's fancy dress theme was Donald Trump (Officers Mess) v Mexicans (WO's and Sgt's Mess). Not to be outdone LCpl Lyon, referee for the match was dressed as Barack Obama. The Officers' Mess did very well holding out until the MTO rolled his ankle and had to leave the pitch after which it turned into

a free for all for the Sergeants' Mess. It later transpired that he had fractured his ankle. Of particular note, was the RSM's screamer from the half way line, wind assisted of course and made to look even better by their goalkeeper! The final score ended 9-1 to the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess with Mr Kelly scoring a consolation goal.

The Burns Supper was overseen and delivered by WO2 Marty Gray with his 2IC CSgt Andrew Bright and the Burns Supper committee. The night was a great success with fellow Mess members giving some great performances. Of particular note was Sgt Scotty Mackie's rendition of Tam O Shanter. It was great to see some of our "Old and Bold" who had travelled from far and wide who attended this year's event. On a sad note, our very own Mr Hubble could not make it this year and this was his first non-attendance since 1983.

More recently, the Mess has made contact with Mr Ken Prescott who lives locally in Ardersier. Mr Prescott aged 90 and still remarkably fit, is one of only a few surviving ex-serving soldiers of the 2nd Battalion The Black Watch. The RSM welcomed Mr Prescott for lunch.

Since the last edition we would like to welcome, WO2 Weir as CSM HQ Company, CSgt Ferrier as B Coy CQMS on return from RMAS, SSgt Fielder RAPTIC as the resident Gym Queen, Sgt Evans into the LAD, Sgt Ritchie on return from ITC into the Recce Pl, Sgt Alderson as SSA, Sgt Runciman CIS Pl and Sgt Roadnight into D Coy.

The following have joined the Mess on promotion; Sgt Patterson CIS, Sgt Thompson MT, Sgt Wishart as D Coy Tech Sgt and Sgt Lilley currently detached to the SRTT.

Congratulations to the following on their selection for promotion to Warrant Officer Class 2; CSgts Allan Ferrier, Al Bowe, Andrew Bright, Scotty Currie and Billy Carnegie.

We wish the best of luck to the following that have departed the Mess; WO2 Robbie Tollan (The General), CSgts Torrance and Carnegie and Sgt Liddell LAD. All have moved on to pastures new.



WO2 Tollan (left) and CSgt Hastings pleased that the handover of the RSWO post has been completed.



Mr Prescott (ex 2 BW) and RSM Stacey at Fort George.



RSM Stacey at the JNCO's passing off parade.



Trump v Mexicans football.

CORPORALS' MESS

President of the Mess Committee:	Corporal Palmer
President of the Entertainments Committee:	Corporal Ure
Presentations Member:	Corporal Holliday
Property Member:	Corporal McIvor
IT & Music Member:	Corporal Hume

Firstly, the Mess would like to congratulate and welcome LCpls Withington, Maclean, Matthew, Barlett, Pearson, Bruce, Kumar, Petrie, Kenyenda, Brown 69, Rhodes and Hopkins on their promotion into the Mess. I am sure you will enjoy your time with us!

After a busy period last year with a number of commitments, the Corporals had a couple of well-deserved functions: firstly, the Christmas Party in December and then shortly after our Burns' Night in January. Both were a roaring success! The Christmas function was headed up by Cpl Hume and Cpl Murphy who did a fantastic job organising the evening. On this occasion, it was agreed that we would wear Christmas jumpers; this proved to be a great idea and really made the Mess members feel relaxed throughout the night. It would seem that Primark have upped their game with Christmas jumpers as some even have lights on nowadays! The guests arrived through our very own Santa's Grotto thanks to Sgt Wishart and were given gifts on arrival before heading into the marquee that had been erected in the gymnasium for the evening. There were plenty of prizes to be won in the raffle, which helped a few people out for last minute Christmas presents for friends and family!

Shortly after the Christmas function we came together as a Battalion for Christmas week. The week is always anticipated given that for those privates who are qualified, it can be their first step up the promotion ladder. There were a number of promotions and we enjoyed Christmas dinner with the rest of the Battalion in the main cookhouse. Thankfully, there was not any food fights this year; however, the party poppers, crackers, hats and cheap toys that are only acceptable at this time of year certainly made a mess for the hierarchy to clear up.

No sooner had the Christmas leave period passed and it was time to knuckle down however, to lift our spirits at the start of the New Year and when the nights were still cold and long, we held our Burns' Night. This was headed up by Sgt Thomson from the MT Platoon who most likely hoped that organisation of this event would have been reapportioned following his promotion to the Sergeants' Mess; however he was lucky enough to see it through to the end!

The Burns' poems were of a good standard this year and the Mess thoroughly enjoyed seeing the performance of those who took part. Due to various other commitments, we had to ask a few members of the Sergeants' Mess to lend a hand with the poetry – thanks again! To mitigate the issue in future the RSM has now issued each Company with poems – so get learning people! The Corporals' Mess also contributed financially to allow the wives and long-term partners to have a Burns' celebration in the Community Centre on January 20th. This was very well received and is something that we would look to support again.

It has not all been about functions as some of us have flown off to Kenya on Exercise ASKARI STORM from 13 February until 30 March to assist 2 SCOTS in their training for future deployments. This allowed us time to try out some new kit and equipment and get our sections together for the first time this year before we prepare for our own arduous training later.

Finally, and although not part of the Mess, we would like to extend our farewells to Mrs Jacqueline Smith who was the Battalion Clerk. For all of us who have been anywhere outside the Battalion using civilian transport, Jackie would have had a part in arranging it promptly and with a smile on her face. From all of us here in the Corporals' Mess, thank you very much for your time with us Jackie, and good luck in the future.



JNCOS of the Pipes and Drums enjoying the Corporals' Mess Christmas Party.

ALPHA (GRENADIER) COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major B O'Neill
Second-in-Command:	Lieutenant A Pearson
Company Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 2 M Wilson
Company Quartermaster Sergeant:	Colour Sergeant S Hendry
Officer Commanding 1 Platoon:	Lieutenant N Weake
Platoon Sergeant 1 Platoon:	Sergeant Bellshaw
Officer Commanding 3 Platoon:	Lieutenant J E Mitchell
Platoon Sergeant 3 Platoon:	Sergeant Mackie

Following from a well deserved period of October leave after Exercise WESSEX STORM, Alpha (Grenadier) Company deployed to Sennybridge Training Area in Brecon to conduct a tasking as enemy and as friendly rifle platoons for Direct Fire Division's Machine Gun Commanders' Course final exercise.

The exercise lasted for two weeks over November and December and allowed the Rifle Platoons to develop their low-level skills. The Section Commanders had a unique opportunity to liaise with Machine Gun Platoon Commanders on dynamic fire support plans and control measures while in the attack – which developed their understanding of the wider platoon and Company attacks. The Jocks thoroughly enjoyed experiencing Brecon kit shops during their downtime, with Private McCormick demonstrating his unhealthy obsession with owning ALL the kit possible. The exercise provided a unique opportunity for those aspiring to attend promotion courses to view, understand and train on the area where they will be tested on these courses. An opportunity that is not normally afforded a Scottish Battalion based in the Highlands.

In February 2017, 3 Platoon deployed to Kenya on Exercise ASKARI STORM as COEFOR for 2 SCOTS. Attached to Bravo Company Group we formed the third rifle platoon of the Company. We looked forward to embracing our inner 'bad guy' and donning our blue enemy uniforms. Despite a rather long journey to RAF Brize Norton and the usual wait that ensues, the Jocks were in good spirits as we boarded the plane 48 hours after leaving Fort George. As most of the platoon were fresh from Infantry Training Centre Catterick, and this was their first military overseas exercise, the stand-in Platoon Sergeant, Corporal Methven, was on Passport Patrol for a straight 96 hours!

Once settled "in country" the Company deployed forward to conduct a week of blank fire platoon training focussing on patrolling, ambush and anti-ambush drills and culminating in Section, force on force. As the Sections ambushed each other over a six square kilometre area they became very wary of obvious patrol routes and the Jocks' drills became faster when reacting to the enemy. By the end of the week the Sections faced each other in a force on force operation; a highlight was Lance Corporal Bartlett's 'epic' 500 metre leopard crawl around the whole area that contributed in no way to his Section's attack. It was the local wildlife who won in the end as the platoon were chased from the rocks by a local family of 40 Baboons.

The next phase of the exercises saw the Company Group deploy to conduct various operations against 2 SCOTS Companies. 3 Platoon led the way with an assault onto a defensive position. After a crash course in mountain climbing, how to use snipers as a lead assaulting pair and last ditch charges we thoroughly tested the opposition positions.

For the final phase of the exercise the 2 SCOTS Battlegroup undertook a series of missions against the COEFOR Group. Though mostly on the receiving end of British indirect fires, the small groups of determined Grenadiers that remained proved they had what it takes to stop a Battlegroup on the advance. Sergeant Mackie's outstanding use of the GPMG rates of fire, Corporal Laughland's 'strike teams' and the 'Eagle Eye Bartlett' helping to win the day.

On completion of the exercise, the platoon recovered for a week in Kenya and had the chance to reflect on the excellent training offered by Ex ASKARI STORM and see the good people of Kenya once more. The exercise provided a sound base of core knowledge for the Jocks that Alpha (Grenadier) Company will no doubt find invaluable in the next year.

While the platoons were deployed to Kenya and Jordan, Company Headquarters decided to go on their own overseas travels! Major O'Neill, WO2 (CSM) Wilson and CSgt Hendry, along with Captain Smyth the Battalion Training Officer (and former OC 1 (Senior Highland) Platoon) took on the role as Training Needs Advisors (TNA) for the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) as part of 51st Infantry Brigades' Defence Engagement activities.

The purpose was to assess the KNG's capabilities and provide recommendations on how 51st Infantry Brigade could train with the

KNG for the good and benefit of both organisations. The visit was a huge success with Major O'Neill and his team giving a brief to Sheikh Mishal, 3rd in line of the Kuwait Royal Family. Captain Smyth seemed to have a good time hanging upside down with a pistol with his Kuwaiti Special Forces friends too. Overall the visit was lots of fun and we were extremely well looked after – all of us will miss the endless cups of coffee, staff cars and General Salutes! I am certain, however, that you will be reading about the future exploits of Red Hackle wearers with the KNG in the not too distant future.



Capt Zac Smith (left) and CSM Wilson try to persuade members of the Kuwait National Guard to join 3 SCOTS.



Cpl Methven of 3 Platoon briefs his Section in Kenya.



Lt Mitchell (back to camera) briefs on trench clearance.

BRAVO COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major L Curson
Second-in-Command	Lieutenant A Atterbury
Company Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 2 M Gray
Company Quartermaster Sergeant:	Colour Sergeant A Ferrier
Officer Commanding 5 Platoon:	Lieutenant N Hannay
5 Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant G Simpson
Officer Commanding 6 Platoon:	Captain J Farrall
6 Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant S Watt
Officer Commanding 7 Platoon:	Second Lieutenant C Howie
7 Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant B Smith

Since Bravo Company last contributed to the Red Hackle, our focus has changed somewhat but the momentum has certainly been maintained. We bounced off the back of a highly successful Ex WESSEX STORM and quickly settled back into Fort George routine. It was a common feeling of relief across the entire Company not to be living out of a FOXHOUND daily as we had done for the majority of August and September. I am sure there are not many of the Company who would volunteer to drive the vehicle fleet the length of England again!

October was spent enjoying a week of leave with families and friends in amongst some surprisingly good autumnal weather, particularly in the Highlands. Upon return to work the Platoons were given some time to train alone and the opportunity was not wasted. Two weeks were split across a package of low-level training, including navigation and survival techniques, in Rothiemurchus Lodge and conducting sport and recreational activities in and around Inverness, which enabled the full integration and welcoming of new Jocks who had arrived in the summer months. This was well received by the platoons who, for the majority of 2016, were subject to a centralised Battalion programme of training. The highlight of the Rothiemurchus package was certainly the catching, skinning and devouring of local rabbits, which was a novel concept to a few, however all enjoyed a tasty dinner.

In early November, focus for the Company turned to refinement of our dismounted and urban skills. Whilst planning had commenced in the summer for two packages of training away from Inverness, at the end of Ex WESSEX STORM the Company had been given the task of deploying to Kenya in February and March 2017 to provide the COEFOR Company for 2 SCOTS. Thankfully, our pre-arranged training would support our preparation for deployment to Kenya and planning was able to continue. The Company initially deployed to Barry Buddon for a week of live firing. The week commenced with completion of our mandatory annual range tests and these were planned and executed superbly by the Corporals from within the Company. We progressed onto the field firing package including Defensive and Ambush shoots which further improved the marksmanship and shooting skills across the Company.

A quick turnaround of two weeks in Inverness then saw the Company head south to Copehill Down Village on Salisbury Plain Training Area. We had become well accustomed to the village during Ex WESSEX STORM however, we did not have the opportunity to exploit the full capability it provided at that time. Lt Atterbury and Sgt Smith designed an excellent training package, although I am not convinced any of us were expecting the extreme cold temperatures we experienced. I am sure the majority of the Company took on board the advice to deploy with the bouncing bomb sleeping bag and not the lighter, smaller jungle sleeping bag!!

The end of the year saw us run the annual Company Kukri competition, which focused on sections competing against one another. The competition incorporated events that a Light Mechanised Unit is exposed to on a daily basis and involved the entire Company whether they be participating, planning and executing or spectating. The award in 2016 went to the section commanded by Corporal Chamberlain who has made an instant impression having only been promoted to Corporal on the morning that he was presented the Bravo Company Kukri!

Upon return from some well-earned Christmas and New Year's leave, the focus was directed at preparing the Company for our deployment to Kenya. In camp training included medical, fitness and navigation training, whilst we also conducted two weeks of marksmanship training on Fort George ranges. The wider Battalion support was excellent in ensuring we were fully prepared administratively and medically for our deployment. I am sure two of the most relieved individuals to see us head off to RAF Brize Norton were the Adjutant and Operations Officer who no longer had to deal with the constant requests for changes in names to the orbat!!

For the majority of the Company, deployment on Ex ASKARI STORM to Kenya was the first overseas exercise they would undertake, thus much excitement ensued. Even more appealing was the opportunity to provide the COEFOR (enemy) for one of our brother Battalions. The icing on the cake however was that it had been C Company 2 SCOTS who had provided the 3 SCOTS COEFOR on Ex WESSEX STORM in 2016 and now it was our chance to take revenge.

Upon arrival in Kenya, early training phases included acclimatisation, Adventure Training and recces, which were closely followed by a weeklong package of low level collective training planned and executed by the Platoons. The Platoons did not waste the opportunity to train with the wider Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance detachments that deployed to Kenya with us and this certainly was of benefit throughout the remainder of the exercise. We then moved into the phase of the exercise where we truly played out the role of the 'enemy'. A nine-day package in the heat of Archers' Post where we split into two and enabled the Defensive Lane and Convoy Patrol Lane, which was then followed by a 48 hour rehabilitation period, prior to deployment on the 10 day final exercise.

The final exercise was an excellent training opportunity where I am confident all members of the Company Group personally and professionally developed. Having to try to out think a well-manned Battle Group HQ when the odds are firmly stacked against you from the outset ensured we all thought long and hard about how we could cause as much detrimental effect as possible – Regimental pride was very much at stake! Although we were valiantly defeated by 2 SCOTS BG, we certainly gave them a bloody nose and we can hold our heads high following our performance throughout the full exercise.

Following our return to Fort George, we now prepare for a well earned period of Easter leave prior to a return to work and preparation for our future commitment as the UK Standby Battalion. We will continue to ensure professional development of all ranks across the Company with soldiers down to deploy on the Section 21C Cadre and others due to attend the Infantry Battle School in Brecon. The summer of 2017 will see significant churn of staff in the Company so the next Red Hackle will see us with a number of new faces in key appointments. I have no doubt all will ensure the Bravo Company flag continues to fly high.



Bravo Company Group in Kenya.



Snipers conducting and observing a stalk.

CHARLIE (MOBILITY SUPPORT) COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

Officer Commanding: Major H Wilson
 Company Sergeant Major: Warrant Officer Class 2 D Buist
 Company Quartermaster Sergeant: Colour Sergeant A Bowe

On the departure of Major Stanning, it took no time at all for Major 'Shug' Wilson to take the helm and alter the bearings of the Company. Suddenly, there was a lot more attention on equipment care and digging into the weeds of the G4 world! This provided time for the platoons to conduct some much-needed housekeeping to ensure that they were in a good place before standing down for Christmas leave.

On our return from Kenya, we bid farewell to Colour Sergeant A Bowe who has done a fantastic job in his short time with us. The African plains of Laikipia and the Java Coffee convinced him to move to Nanyuki and become a member of the BATUK staff. We wish him the best of luck and congratulate him on his promotion. He will conduct his handover during the LEA inspection to Colour Sergeant J McCarthy who returns to Inverness from the Support Weapons School. Sadly, for the Company and Battalion we say farewell to Sgt Lawaci as he is off to be an instructor at Bovington.

Cpl Qalobulaiwasaikabara will also hand over the reins as a valuable storeman as he moves to Bicester.

On a lighter note, congratulations are in order for WO2 Buist and SSgt Gordon on their engagement which provided a brilliant opportunity to have a celebratory smoker!

Exercise ASKARI STORM Permanent Range Team

Since the beginning of the year, the Savages have been focused on their deployment to Kenya, where they formed the Permanent Range Team (PRT) for 2 SCOTS Battlegroup on Exercise ASKARI STORM. The Company was delighted to welcome some non-Savages into the fold that caught the selector's eye to form part of the elite PRT. Within a few weeks, the OC could play a 'full house'!

With Pam 21 by his bedside, Major Wilson took the lead ensuring the PRT were completely up to date with all the recent changes and the correct procedures for any scenario. A considerable portion of the Company completed Team Medic Cadres and Safety Refresher training before embarking on the six week deployment to the equator. After some last minute changes and alternations to the batting order we finally boarded the plane at RAF Brize Norton leaving behind gales and snow in Inverness.

The base of Mt Kenya provided a marvellous setting for us to acclimatise to the weather before the heat was turned up a couple of notches when we moved north to Archers' Post. Remarkably,



Bravo Company Group in Copehill Down Village.



Major Curson, OC B Coy delivering orders in Kenya.

the vehicles all made it to Forward Operating Base TWIGA on the first convoy move after making a short stop at an Emergency Rendezvous Point (ERV): 'Chuckie's Chips' on route to Archers' Post.

WO2 Buist and CSgt Bowe blooded the Platoon Commanders as they were introduced to their daily 'Freeletics' workouts that saw them doing frog-leap burpees up and down the dusty FOB track. That detail must have been in the small print that the young officers had not read when they signed up to be members of the PRT.

LCpl Kumar quickly earned his keep within minutes of being in control of SAPU targets and had them bopping up and down like a traditional bush dance. Cpl Q and his merry men honed their sentry duties skills down to such a 'T' that LCpl Baco stopped three SF soldiers trying to outwit him, claiming they were going rock climbing. Once the ranges for the CALFEX had been finalised and the grenade pits had been dug to the correct height, the PRT lay in place awaiting the much anticipated arrival of the Kenyan Defence Force (KDF) and 2 SCOTS BG.

Disappointingly, however, Pam 21 did not have the solution to speeding up the range clearance. Although the PRT were hovering on the line of departure hours before H-Hour, inevitably, the ranges did not go live until all 1001 donkeys, giraffes and ostriches had been cleared off the firing template. This meant two things; firstly, the day was getting hotter the longer we waited and secondly, the supply of cigarettes was dramatically diminishing as we killed time under the scorching sun.

While the 2 SCOTS machines guns rattled from the high ground and the mortars echoed down the valley demolishing in depth targets, the safety staff ensured that the training was safe yet challenging. CSgt Campbell opened up the ranges with a 'bang' allowing the 2 SCOTS Companies to begin the attack, sidestepping the acacia bushes and destroying the sentry positions that 'The Captain' (Capt Coles) had set up. The complex ranges incorporated a large number of moving parts, several grenade positions, bayonet dummies and the well-known sunken village. Lt Weake and his range team brought the village alive with a truckload of furniture, cattle and market goods with the noises of a farmyard booming throughout the wooden complex to add to the hustle and bustle. Sgt Lavery took the lead for the company night attack while the BATUK staff spent hours debating the moon millilux levels, which would be incorporated into secret formula to establish which colour cylum the exercising troops would wear. The final phase of the CALFEX lane allowed the chance for the exercising troops to form a "2-up" attack on to two compounds with grenade bunkers to delay their advance.

As soon as the final round was fired by the third 2 SCOTS rotation, the PRT switched fire to adventure training and other excitements that lay in store. Sadly, for the B Company corporals their time was up and they had to return to join the B Company COEFOR and don the blue uniform of the simulated enemy. Meanwhile, the PRT was able to exploit the opportunity to conduct five days of adventure training and learn how to start a fire with elephant dung under the guidance of a Masai warrior. Pte Wilkinson confirmed that he was no stranger to using a bow and arrow as he struck a tomato three times in a row from 40 meters.

Members of the Company played in a fast paced Rugby Sevens tournament in Nanyuki, battling against teams from 2 SCOTS, the Royal Army Medical Corps, the Scots Dragoon Guards, and some disconcertingly lithe locals. The Battalion team put up a valiant fight in hot and dusty conditions. Some excellent rugby was played, with Cpl Smith and LCpl Vulaca outwitting the opposition in true Fijian style. Meanwhile, Capt Coles and Lt Gibson focused intently on not dropping the ball. The team finished an admirable fourth of eight teams.

Pte Jeans-Bawden and Cpl Armstrong took part in some local community engagement work helping to install a gutter and water drainage system in the local school and others enjoyed looking out for lions and chimpanzees at the Ol Pejeta Game Reserve.

Our return to the Fort was met with a biting chill in the air but with Easter leave in sight, the Company can enjoy a well-earned break before the next battle is assigned to us.

MORTAR PLATOON

Officer Commanding: Captain NJT Coles
Second-in-Command: Warrant Officer Class 2 J Harding
Platoon Sergeants: Sergeant Ellis, Sergeant Kyle, Sergeant Steele

The thought of putting the HUSKY vehicle platform to bed on the completion of Ex WESSEX STORM was a very exciting prospect for the mortar platoon after all the troubles and sleepless nights that the

DMIs had endured. This meant that the platoon's attention could revert to their bread and butter of the dark arts of mortaring. The platoon was able to reassess its priorities and prepare for the next challenge on the horizon. Unsurprisingly, this was the constant trawling list from BHQ needing soldiers to play enemy in Wales or be a driver to collect MFO boxes from the far ends of Scotland. In the New Year the platoon took up a brilliant opportunity to conduct some low level training at the Mortar Division under their instruction. LCpl Bacogacoga and Cpl Smith carried their weight and the platoon endured a heavy carry on the frozen hills with some new surprises!

With Kenya looming around the corner, Ptes Currie, Lorenzo, Nightingale and Palmer volunteered to join B Company to support the COEFOR efforts to pin down the 2 SCOTS Battlegroup with a special mention to LCpl Peebles and Cpl McKenzie who 'killed' CO 2 SCOTS on two occasions during the exercise. Meanwhile the remainder of the platoon deployed to Kenya as members of the PRT. Cpls Leith, McKenzie, Smith and Taylor facilitated the 2 SCOTS Mortar Lines to fire after chasing off a heard of goats that had taken a keen interest in them. Luckily for the platoon, Ptes Leith's and McKenzie's off road Mortar Platoon racing skills came in handy as they drove through deep Wadis. WO2 Harding was extremely patient with the BATUK staff as he spent many late nights submitting traces to incorporate continued changes to plans.

Meanwhile back in Scotland, as Cpl Watson endured weeks of studying in the education centre, Pte Katchimanga and Pte Dodgson were put through their paces on the JNCO cadre and were quickly selected to join the shooting team on completion of the course.

Pte Shepard was pleased to announce his engagement and we wait with fingers crossed for a few births in the near future. Sadly, we bid farewell to Sgt Mortley who has been a talisman to the platoon. His posting to 7 SCOTS will allow him to remain close to the fold and help the Mortar Platoon pairing. LCpl Hooper has chosen to pursue a career outside the military and is due to become a fibre optic guru in the next few years before the platoon lure him back to fix the internet in the Lines.

Pte Burns also left the platoon and we wish them all the best of luck.

MACHINE GUN PLATOON

Officer Commanding: Lieutenant AW Gibson
Platoon Sergeant: Sergeant A Lavery

The Headquarters and Section Commanders of the Machine Gun Platoon were put through their paces at the Support Weapons School in Warminster in November 2016. Lt Gibson, taking over as Platoon Commander and Cpl Fay set to take over as Platoon Sergeant, undertook the Machine Gun Platoon Commanders' Course. Meanwhile, Cpl Spears and Cpl Chadburn completed the Machine Gun Section Commanders' Course.

Each course focused on using machine guns to optimal effect against an enemy in support of a Company or Battlegroup. The course deepened the students' knowledge of the GPMG's impressive capabilities in the Sustained Fire role, and culminated in a challenging ten day exercise in Brecon. Core tactical skills were honed and so too was the students' understanding of the Machine Gun Platoon's supporting role in a wider operational context. The Platoon looks forward to applying these lessons on a three week Machine Gun Cadre in the summer of 2017.

Meanwhile, Ptes Gurley, Karim, Clements and Adamson are congratulated on recently returning from the Junior NCO Cadre. They look forward to applying their newly developed leadership skills in the Platoon. The Platoon also congratulates LCpl Vunibobo, who recently moved his wife and child from Fiji to the Inverness patch. We warmly welcome them both to the Black Watch community.



2Lts Howie and Weake of the Permanent Range Team enjoy a break.



Adventure training cyclists take a short breather at the base of Mount Kenya.



Cpl Leith protects the Mortar Line.



Capt Coles leads the Mortar Platoon on a heavy carry.



Pte Graham tries to teach an ostrich some tricks.



Cpl Armstrong takes a moment to enjoy the view.



Sgt Lavery carries out a walk through on his range.

PIPES AND DRUMS

This period has seen the Band perform on the international stage at the National Act of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in London. This was the third time in a row we had played at this prestigious event. An important day in all soldiers' calendars and one we were immensely proud of being involved in.

After our engagement at the Cenotaph we then put our instruments down and focused on military training leading up to some well deserved leave at Christmas.

2017 began in the traditional way with some good old Burns' events and as you can imagine, Pipers and Drummers from the band at this

time of year were in high demand not only at battalion level but further afield. The Pipe Major being one of those, attending a Burns' style evening for HRH The Duke of Rothesay at Clarence House in London in late January.

However, the Pipes & Drums cannot always be rubbing shoulders with royalty and the rich and famous and the good old military training and courses continued. This also saw the Drum Major being deployed to Kenya as a Demolition Safety Officer to assist 2 SCOTS.

Our focus this year until late summer is ceremonial engagements and competition. The preparation for this has already begun and the Band have already had its musical skills tested at the Army Piping and Drumming Championships which were held at Inchdrewer House, in March. This two day event involved many different solo contests as well as a mini band contest that would determine who would be the current Army Champion Pipe Band. Many prizes were won by members of the Band which included; 2nd Place in the novice March for Private Norris, 2nd place to Lance Corporal McDonald in the senior March Strathspey and Reel, 4th place in the Open Hornpipe and Jig to Private McKay and two 3rd places for the Band in the two disciplines in the mini band contest, earning an overall 2nd place in the Army standings. Congratulations to all involved.

April will see the Pipes & Drums travel to Arras, France, to take part in an international event commemorating the Battle of Arras in 1917. A combined effort with the Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and pipers from RAF Leuchars.

We would like to extend our congratulations to Corporal Lowe on passing his Assault Pioneer Platoon Sergeants' course, Private Hall on passing his JNCO Cadre and achieving the best shot award, Private Wainwright on passing his Class 2 Intermediate Pipers' Course and Lance Corporal "Ted" McDonald on passing his Pipe Majors' Course. All of these are major achievements.



The Pipes and Drums lead the pulling out of Lt Col Steele.

DELTA (ISR) COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major R Smith
Second-in-Command:	Captain A D S Pearson
Company Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 2 I Carlisle

Between November and April, Delta (ISR) Company have recovered from Ex WESSEX STORM, delivered training cadres to qualify private soldiers in their specialist platoons and prepared and deployed soldiers to Kenya on Ex ASKARI STORM and to Jordan for Ex OLIVE GROVE. Each Platoon has had a successful period and now boast newly qualified personnel each adding value to the Company Group. We have had a number of personalities moving in and out of the Company; Capt Hawke has been replaced by Capt Pearson as Company Second-in-Command; Capt Deck has been replaced by Lt Kelly as OC Recce; CSgt Hunter has moved on to Ticonderoga Platoon and Sgt Roadnight, from 2 PWRR has replaced him as OC Snipers.

In February, a number of the Recce and Sniper Platoon personnel deployed to Kenya whilst the remainder of the Company deployed to Jordan for our own Ex OLIVE GROVE. In Kenya, the Company elements would be assisting the 2 SCOTS Battlegroup during their live fire package and also contributing to Bravo Company Group as the COEFOR. In Jordan meanwhile, the majority of the Company would

be a world away from Inverness, training in an environment that looked closer to the surface of Mars than the North of Scotland. The exercise took place over 5 weeks and consisted of an eight day live fire package, working up to section attack at night; a platoon level dry training phase; a combined training phase with Jordanian forces; and finally an FTX which tested the British and Jordanian forces on the lessons they learnt over the preceding weeks.

A busy period but excellent training that has allowed D (ISR) Company to focus on low level skills and drills and set excellent foundations for the year ahead.



Captain Alasdair Pearson at Petra, competing for the best looking person in the Battalion.

SNIPER PLATOON

Platoon Commander:	Sergeant Roadnight
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant Simms

Once recovered from Ex WESSEX STORM the Sniper Platoon played a crucial role in coordinating and delivering the 51 Infantry Brigade Sniper Cadre. The Cadre consisted of training in Tain, Otterburn and Barry Buddon training areas over a gruelling ten week period. The hard work paid off and the Battalion had a 100 per cent pass rate from our students, a feat that no other Battalion in the Brigade were able to replicate. Upon the culmination of the Cadre, we said a fond farewell to CSgt Hunter and a warm welcome to Sgt Roadnight, the new Sniper Platoon Commander.

After the long road to individual excellence on the Cadre, the platoon then provided soldiers to both Ex ASKARI STORM and Ex OLIVE GROVE. Sgt Roadnight took five snipers to Kenya on Ex ASKARI STORM where they provided range safety staff in support of the 2 SCOTS training and also manpower to deliver their final exercise. Meanwhile, Sgt Simms took eight men to Jordan on Ex OLIVE GROVE. The Jordanian terrain proved to be excellent sniping country. The pairs have developed their camouflage and concealment and observation skills along with completing a testing live fire package. The platoon is looking forward to Ex RHINO SNIPE, a 1st (UK) Division Sniper competition where they will compete against fifteen other Infantry teams for attendance at the tri-service shoots later on in the year.

Congratulations to our newly badged snipers Pte Wallace, Pte Gray-Gardner, LCpl Meechan and LCpl Dixon.



Snipers in Jordan during target observation training.

ANTI-TANK PLATOON

Officer Commanding: Captain J E Fish
 Second-in-Command: Sergeant D Pasiful
 Section Commanders: Sergeant Morrison, Sergeant Wilson

Despite a very quick turnaround after recovering from Ex WESSEX STORM, the Platoon deployed onto a Javelin Gunners' Cadre for 2017. The troops worked extremely hard on this course and refined their knowledge and skills on the Javelin weapon systems. Their expanded knowledge is in no small part thanks to the instructors on the Cadre - Cpls Campbell, Gracie and Tod. LCpl Roy must be commended for his outstanding performance, as he was placed top in a fiercely competitive cohort. LCpl Copland performed best in the theory tests and LCpl Stevenson was named as the Soldiers' Soldier.

The New Year brought with it the challenges of deploying on Ex OLIVE GROVE in Jordan. The highlight, thanks to the USMC and Jordanian Armed Forces, was the opportunity to see the firing of the 9M113 Kornet anti-tank missile. Given how rare it is to see a Javelin fire live, it was truly a once in a lifetime opportunity that could not be missed! LCpl Kah welcomed the birth of his first daughter recently and we are pleased to announce both mother and child are doing well. From all of us in the Platoon, we wish them the very best of luck.

Congratulations should also be extended to LCpls Brown and Petrie who were promoted at Jock's Christmas lunch. The lunch also saw Cpl Morecroft being awarded a CO's Coin for his exceptional performance on Ex WESSEX STORM. In the coming months we bid farewell to CSgt Brady who is off to the QM's Dept. LCpl Clement leaves us for pastures new in the Unit Welfare Office. Cpl Morecroft and Pte MacNeil are off to try their hand in civvies, and finally Capt Fish is off to Afghanistan for a six month tour but not before he hands the platoon over to the very capable hands of Lt Andrew Atterbury.



Some members of the battalion Anti Tank Platoon with the United States Marine Corps advisor and the Jordanian Anti-Tank gunners.

RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON

Officer Commanding: Lieutenant W Kelly
 Second-in-Command: Colour Sergeant Blake

It was at the tail end of November that the Platoon completed their specific Observation Post and Close Target Recce training.

In late 2017 and with Ex OLIVE GROVE on the horizon, the Platoon analysed the training that would be required for Kenya and Jordan. As military preparation, the Platoon focused on developing their skills in the conduct of the Close Target Reconnaissance and Observation Posts. The emphasis was on the development of low level skills and included a robust and testing physical training programme, concentrating on high intensity interval training workouts.

The manpower that has deployed to Jordan is junior in rank and therefore the exercise has been conducted in the form of lesson based activity as opposed to a complete Platoon being tested within a Company Group or Battlegroup context. To keep up fitness during periods in Camp we enjoyed two and three milers and a number of night time navigation exercises. We completed a LFTT package, which culminated in a live ambush coordinated by a subject matter expert from a Joint Defence unit that normally operates at the strategic level. This proved to be a very worthwhile opportunity for enhancing our lower level skills and drills while broadening the Jocks' awareness of physically and mentally rewarding employment opportunities elsewhere in the Army.

The senior ranks of the Recce Platoon were putting their bodies through a similar amount of strain on 'Op PIZ BUIN' as part of the Permanent Range Team in Kenya. The Platoon has also been in a transition as we have welcomed a couple of old pairs of hands back to the Platoon in the form of Sgt Ritchie and Cpl White. We also say farewell to Capt Deck who has recently handed over and is currently deployed on Op SHADER in Iraq with 4 SCOTS.

Congratulations are in order for Cpl MacLaren for passing the Light Reconnaissance Commander's Course, a tremendous effort and milestone in the career for any member of the Recce Platoon.



The Recce Platoon out for a "tab" in the Jordanian mountains.

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

Officer Commanding: Major Tobias Christie/Major Christopher McRobbie
 Company Sergeant Major: Warrant Officer Class 2 C Weir

Headquarter Company has spent the majority of the last 6 months looking after the UK based commitments from supporting routine Army training activity and external support to assisting all the other Companies out the door and off to sunnier climates. The Company also received a welcomed Christmas present, the return of the CIS platoon from their yearlong jaunt with Delta (ISR) Company and naturally, we had to celebrate with a Company smoker and some questionable general knowledge questions from newly promoted Cpl Hague.

Fresh after Christmas leave, the Training Wing hit the ground running with a pre-JNCO cadre on a brisk Highland winter morning. From there onwards, the focus was on getting B, C and D Companies out the door and getting their residual non-deploying manpower into HQ Company to ensure they were looked after for the Spring period. The list of small random tasks quickly started to mount up, the first of which was to provide the Edinburgh Castle Guard to celebrate Accession Day on 6 February. This conveniently prepared many of the Company to support a further parade in Dingwall though the weather for round two was not as forgiving as the glorious Esplanade.

Throughout the time in Fort George, the Leadership Programme regularly brought the Company together under a common purpose and this routinely resulted in thought provoking discussion for several days after. Of note was Geoff McDonald's contribution, which left everyone, thinking about mental wellbeing and the mutual support we all can provide to each other. Currently we are supporting the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Ex Wavell's Warrior, which is an opportunity for those fresh back from the JNCO cadre to show off their new found command, confidence and control against a fierce Officer Cadet enemy. Sadly reports from the front suggest the odds may have been stacked against us.

The last 6 months have also seen a change in personalities; we say goodbye to Maj Christie on promotion to Lt Col, conveniently in time to leave his wife to work through a house refurbishment project. We also see the RSWO, WO2 Tollan leave the Signals Platoon after 20 years as he has swapped the CIS Wing for Kenya. Congratulations are also due to RQMS(T) Fraser who somehow convinced the appointments board to make him RSM of 2 SCOTS in 2017.



Some members of the battalion on location in the Cairngorms whilst filming for Army recruiting.



CIS Platoon enjoy the early morning sunshine on Edinburgh Castle Esplanade.



DCGS presenting CGS's Commendation to WO2 (RQMS) Hanna.



HQ Company use the new gym equipment.

KIRK OF THE BLACK WATCH

By Padre Stewart A Mackay, Chaplain

Worship and Prayer

Although everyone in the unit has the opportunity to attend services in civilian churches around the Inverness area I felt it would only be right to get something going regularly in Fort George, other than Kirk Muster. As such I have explored options for Sunday evening services and Thursday Prayers. Given that there are more folks around on Thursdays than on Sundays, Thursday evening prayers now takes place weekly at 1730hrs. This is a simple and accessible prayer time and much to the relief of some of the guys there is no singing (*as yet!!*). Simply, and hopefully meaningfully, we can open up the Word a little, and bring our prayers for the Battalion and its wider family to God, in the sure and certain knowledge that He does listen and answer prayer. On that note, I copy in below as a reminder of our spiritual roots the Collect of the Black Watch. Another prayer that I came across is that of a military spouse, whose service to Queen and country we would do well to remember also (please change the gender specific references to suit; the author is unknown).

The Collect of the Black Watch

*O God, whose strength setteth fast the mountains,
Lord of the hills to whom we lift our eyes:
grant us grace that we, of The Black Watch,
once chosen to watch the mountains of an earthly
kingdom, may stand fast in the faith and be strong,
until we come to the heavenly Kingdom of Him,
who has bidden us watch and pray.
Thy Son, our Saviour and Lord.*

Military Wife's Prayer

*Give me greatness of heart to see,
the difference between duty and his love for me.
Give me understanding so that I may know,
when duty calls him, he must go.
Give me a task to do each day,
to fill the time when he's away.
When he's in a foreign land,
keep him safe in your loving hand.
And when duty is in the field,
please protect him and be his shield.
And Lord, when his deployment seems so long,
please stay with me and keep me strong.*



The memorial bench in memory of Sgt Sean Conor Binnie, Fort George Kirk.

ALPINE SKIING

By Lieutenant A Gibson

It was with great excitement and trepidation that The Black Watch Alpine Skiing Team arrived in Val d'Isere in early December 2016. The team, a diverse mix of four seasoned skiers and three novices, was embarking on Ex FROSTED BLADE 16/17. The exercise, run annually in Val d'Isere, trains Infantry soldiers in the precise and challenging art of Alpine Skiing. Consisting initially of an intensive three weeks' training, the exercise culminates in a highly testing two-week racing period.

Led initially by Lt Liddell RM, the team (consisting of LCpl Keltie and Ptes Stirling, Mundell, McPhee and Wilkinson) found its feet remarkably quickly. Pte McPhee and Pte Stirling, novices to the sport, progressed quickly and confidently down Blue, Red and – eventually – Black slopes under the expert instruction of local tutors. The remainder of the team, as proficient and experienced skiers, enjoyed advanced instruction on the finer nuances of skiing efficiently and quickly down steep, undulating slopes. Lt Gibson, a novice skier, joined the team in mid-December, (gradually) picking up the basics in the short time before racing began.

The team's administration off the slopes was as important as its physical performance on them. Each evening, following a long and leg-draining day on the slopes, skis were sharpened and waxed, and bindings and boots adjusted for optimal control. With racing seeds being distinguished by fractions of a second, small details counted for much.

Following this basic skiing instruction, the team honed its race-specific skills. Much time and effort was devoted to finding the perfect "line" between gates (two poles conjoined by a flag), and turning smoothly and sharply in order to maintain maximum speed during a run. Each man's courage was tested to its limits on extremely steep and rough slopes where speed was the only determining factor of success.

Christmas and New Year was spent in Val d'Isere and we enjoyed several social events hosted by the Exercise. Through its interaction with other teams, we were exposed to broader Army life.

Immediately after the festive period, we commenced the intense and challenging racing period. The team, by now depleted to four skiers due to injury and an unforeseen circumstance, raced in the Exercise's most advanced division. Pitting itself against Slalom, Giant Slalom, Super Giant Slalom and (most terrifying of all) Downhill slopes, the team performed well and surpassed most expectations. On slopes where many crashed due to turning at ferocious speeds of up to 130kph, the ability of each team member to simply finish resulted in respectable seeding. Pte Wilkinson and LCpl Keltie skied especially well during the Giant Slalom and Downhill races.

Admirably, and as testimony to the courage and dedication of its members, the Black Watch finished 15th of 32 teams. Taking on a uniquely enjoyable and challenging exercise, the Battalion Alpine Ski Team proved its mettle once again.



The ski team in festive spirit (from left) Ptes McPhee, Stirling, Mundell and Wilkinson.

NORDIC SKIING

The Battalion Nordic skiing team was put together in the wake of Ex WESSEX STORM. The opportunity was advertised as three months of gruelling physical training in sub-zero temperatures. The following soldiers put themselves forward; LCpl Donald (B Coy), LCpl Broatch (HQ Coy), Pte Clark (A Coy), Pte Croll (B Coy), Pte Greig (B Coy), Pte Ross (A Coy). The team was captained by Lt Hannay (B Coy).

The team departed Fort George in late November to travel to the high altitude resort of Tignes in the French Alps. Here the team joined other teams from the Infantry for Phase 1 of Ex NORDIC FROSTED BLADE 2016. This first phase focused on learning basic skiing. Only LCpl Broatch and Pte Croll had experience in Nordic Skiing and the rest of the team had no experience in any form of skiing whatsoever. The team therefore faced a steep learning curve. This was demonstrated after the first week when only half the team could successfully stop themselves on their tiny and unstable biathlon skis and Pte Clark and Pte Greig could only turn right. But in true Jock fashion after two weeks of anger, tantrums and hard work the team were looking more confident on their skis. Off the slopes the team demonstrated its potential, consistently beating other teams in PT sessions on days when snow was lacking.

We then travelled to Bessans, France. Here the team would take its skiing ability and add the challenge of shooting. This manifested itself in many cold days on the range firing the .22 Anschutz rifle. The different shooting positions required in Biathlon were initially strange to the team but fortunately the marksmanship principles transcend weapons systems and the Jocks picked up the shooting with ease.

After a brief break for Christmas we returned to Bessans for the Infantry Championships. The team performed well, beating the other Novice competitors and even some of the veterans. The best discipline was Biathlon where our shooting ability allowed us to mitigate our lack of experience in skiing. We won best Novice team for the Biathlon Relay which demonstrated the effort and hard work the team had put in.

On conclusion of the Infantry Championships we moved to Serre Chevalier, France, to compete in the Army Divisional Championships, Ex SPARTAN HIKE 2017. Due to a lack of snow the races were conducted on a glacier at a suffocating altitude, coupled with this was



LCpl Keltie and Pte McPhee dress for the occasion on Christmas Eve.

the high winds, which pushed the temperature down to -36 degrees centigrade! Again the Jocks demonstrated their determination. The blue ribbon event was the Military Patrol Race and involved the team donning their cricket whites (think James Bond henchman), carrying 15kgs for 25km and conducting command tasks including grenade throwing and memorising faces.

Unfortunately, the experience of the well funded Corps teams dominated the Championships, however, considering the lack of experience the top of middle third position the team finished in demonstrated the hard work and determination every Jock put in throughout the season.



The Nordic Ski Team (from left to right) LCpl Broatch, Lt Hannay, Pte Clark, Pte Ross, LCpl Donald and Pte Croll.



(left to right) LCpl Broatch, Lt Hannay, Pte Croll and Pte Clark.

SPORT

'One man can be a crucial ingredient on a team, but one man cannot make a team'

OIC Sport:

Major L Curson

2IC Sport:

Lieutenant A Atterbury

The Battalion offers a wide range of sports to all ranks, varying from the traditional Football and Rugby to the niche skills of many differ-

ent Field Sports. We have many members from across the Battalion, including attached Arms, who play regularly at Army level in the major sports but we also have a number of individuals who fly the flag for the Battalion in some minor sports – Ice Hockey for example. Sport supports the development of physical fitness, the maintenance of morale as well as encouraging competitive spirit amongst all ranks and thus is a key part of the Battalion's battle rhythm.

The completion of Ex WESSEX STORM in September of 2016 has allowed the Battalion to return to a period of 'normal' in camp routine and thus the many sport's teams from across the Battalion have reformed and played their part in supporting the development of our soldiers and re-establishing our competitive footing both in Scotland and across the Army.

Immediately on return from October leave, both the Football and Rugby teams deployed to Edinburgh for week long training camps. This allowed them to conduct a period of intensive training away from the distractions provided by life in the Fort. It also provided an opportunity for the team coaches to identify new blood for the teams from the soldiers and officers who had arrived in the Battalion over the summer months.

The Battalion Football team has played in the Tri-Service Scottish league this season with a number of fixtures left to be played in the last months of the season. The Battalion also took part in the Army Cup and travelled to Aldershot to play against the Grenadier Guards, which despite an excellent fixture resulted in defeat; nonetheless many lessons have been learnt and will be taken forward to next year's competition.

The Rugby Team has played in the Army Rugby Union Premiership 2 this season. The high standard of Rugby across the Army at present, and with many of the key facilities being in the South of England, means most of the teams in this Division are located along the A303 – London corridor, which inevitably means much travelling for the Rugby squad. Despite that, the Rugby team has competed in many fixtures and has ensured that the Battalion retains a very good reputation across the Army Rugby community. Focus will now turn to the Rugby 7s competition in April 2017 in Penicuik, with the priority being on building on the success of last year.

The Football and Rugby teams are heading off to sunnier climes later in the summer with a tour to the La Manga games. This will undoubtedly provide an excellent opportunity for further development of all players in both sports as they prove themselves against a number of British Army teams but also against the civilian teams who enter.

The Golf Society continues to exploit the many courses in and around the Highlands and has developed an excellent rapport with the Nairn Golf Club. The Golf members, whilst the weather has limited rounds being played in the Autumn and Winter, are very much looking forward to a Golf tour in the summer and the forthcoming Alawahla Cup.

The Padre and Training Officer continue to build the strength of the Running Club with their weekly jaunts up and down various features in the Highlands. The Running Club goes from strength to strength and has a focus on preparing its members for a number of longer endurance events in the Summer. The Cycling/Triathlon Club enjoy exploiting many of the quieter routes locally and a Wednesday afternoon in Fort George often sees many riders in various cycling get-ups venture out to cover a few miles.

The Boxing team has been reasonably quiet since the success of last year's Regimental Boxing night in July 2016. Due to the commitments of the Battalion in the early part of 2017, the next boxing competition will take place in the autumn. It has not been all quiet as we have supported the Army Scotland squad against Navy Scotland at Faslane in what is becoming an annual fixture and we hope to build on the success that will no doubt be generated from this year's Battalion competition and provide more boxers and coaches to the Army Scotland team in years to come.

In beautiful countryside one mile south of the small Cotswold town of Corsham – midway between Bath and Chippenham lies



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



BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

Commanding Officer:	Lieutenant Colonel PGB Strudwick
Regimental Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 1 (RSM) MJ Fairweather
Executive Officer:	Major WAB Wright/ Major JD McCallum MBE Major MJ Pearson
Quartermaster:	
Regimental Administration Officer:	Major PJ Ward
Adjutant:	Captain TH Blair
Regimental Operations Support Officer:	Captain AG McEwen MBE
Regimental Career Management Officer:	Captain BS Baxter
Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant:	Warrant Officer Class 2 (RQMS) S Lawrence
Regimental Operations Support Warrant Officer:	Warrant Officer Class 2 L McDowall

COMMANDING OFFICER'S FOREWORD

Life in the Army Reserve continues apace! With our substantial footprint throughout Highland Scotland where we draw on the local population to join 7 SCOTS, we recruit from all walks of life from chefs, emergency services, financial services and many more.

We've had another hugely varied and interesting year. Our soldiers have deployed on operations alongside our Regular counterparts to Cyprus and Afghanistan and soldiers have exercised around the globe. The Battalion has also competed in sporting competitions at home and abroad.



The Commanding Officer, Lt Col Piers Strudwick who hands over command to Lt Col Matt Sheldrick in the summer.

Paired with 3 SCOTS we have sent soldiers on Ex WESSEX STORM and completed a very successful mortar shoot with them in Warcop. We will continue to work with our sister Battalions in 2017, at home and on overseas exercises.

We recruit our people from across the Highlands. Soldiers from as far south as Stirling mix with colleagues from Wick; men and women from the west coast work alongside those from Kirkcaldy. I continue to be impressed by the commitment shown by our Reservists; they truly are a credit to the Nation.

ALPHA (FIRE SUPPORT) COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major A Cameron
Company Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 2 S Woods
PSAO:	Captain S Langdale
RSUSO:	Captain M Dunnigan
Anti-Tank Platoon Commander:	Second Lieutenant S Adkin
Mortar Platoon Commander:	Vacant
Rifle Platoon Commander:	Second Lieutenant R Hand
SPSI Dundee:	Sergeant Morley
PSI Aberdeen:	Sergeant Barr
CQMS (FTRS):	Colour Sergeant J Twine
CQMS (Res):	Colour Sergeant G McKenzie

A Company is in fine fettle, well manned with motivated, committed Reservists keen to do their part for the Company and the Regiment.

We've recently supported the hugely successful Army Reserve Highland Tour, which saw a large number of A Company personnel, led by Capt Dunnigan tour the Highlands of Scotland to drum up interest in Army Reserve Service. You may have seen the video of four members of the Pipes and Drums at the top of Cairngorm Mountain, which was picked up by the BBC and has subsequently been viewed more than 650,000 times!

Our traditional Christmas function was held in Dundee and saw a large number of the Company turn out. We also sent a large contingent to the Battalion St Andrew's Night, another standout event in an ever busier Mess calendar. While we were unfortunately unable to field a full team for this year's Cambrian Patrol competition, we did contribute 2Lt Adkin and LCpl Henderson who, in a combined 6/7 SCOTS team achieved a very creditable bronze medal.

We now turn our attention to a busy summer 2017. We are set to deploy to Benbecula in mid-May to the Battalion Support Weapons camp, where we look forward to brushing up on our fire support capabilities including the JAVELIN anti-tank weapon system and the 81mm mortar system. The Battalion is planning a field training exercise in Otterburn in October 2017 and A Company are confident we'll be able to deploy a full platoon to this exercise, commanded by one of our own platoon commanders. In addition we plan to send some of our pipers and drummers out to Hong Kong to mark the 20th anniversary of the handover parade, more to follow no doubt in the next edition of *The Red Hackle!*

The last six months have seen many of the familiar faces in A Company move on; Capt Langdale replaces Capt Reid as PSAO and Sgts Mortley and Barr have replaced CSgts Mitchell and Grant as PSIs. WO2 Penrice has moved on to the Army Training Unit in Edinburgh.

BEAUMONT HAMEL BATTLEFIELD STUDY

From the 10-15 November 2016 the Battalion conducted a Battlefield Study around the area of Beaumont Hamel focusing on the actions of the 51st Highland Division, *'The Fighting 51st'*.

Day 1 & 2 Travel

The journey began with 2 days of travel, taking the ferry from Hull to Zeebrugge and then a road move to the town of Arras in the North of France. Arras is a town tracing its history to pre medieval times and was one of the few towns in the First World War to be on the front lines throughout the entirety of the conflict.

Day 3

Once established in the town we proceeded to visit several cemeteries for British and Commonwealth troops in the surrounding area. The cemeteries contained the dead of the Battle of Ancre (13-18 November 1916) which was a sub battle within the Battle of the Somme. The Battle of Ancre resulted in the capture of Beaumont Hamel by the 51st Highland Division.

Cemeteries visited were;

- Bucquoy Road Cemetery where 1453 British soldiers and 447 Canadian soldiers were commemorated. 136 British soldiers killed in the German advance through France during the 2nd World War were also commemorated.
- Three cemeteries commemorating the dead at Redan Ridge. There were 269 British and Commonwealth troops buried in the three cemeteries.
- Hawthorne Ridge Crater and the memorial to the 7th and 8th Argyll and Southern Highlanders. The Memorial to the Argyll's is dedicated to the 51 officers and 831 other ranks killed and the 105 officers and 2527 other ranks wounded from the 1st of May 1915 to the end of the war.
- Newfoundland Memorial Park and museum. This park contained 809 Commonwealth commemorations within three cemeteries. Once we had visited them we proceeded to take a tour of the Allied and German trench networks which are still visible to this day. Within the memorial park we also visited the Caribou Memorial to the 1st Battalion, the Newfoundland Regiment and also the memorial to the 51st Highland Division.

We then proceeded to visit the village of Beaumont Hamel.

We then travelled north to Ypres in Belgium to watch the Menin Gate Last Post ceremony. The Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing records the names of the 54,896 Commonwealth soldiers who died in the Ypres Salient and whose bodies were never found.

Day 4

On Sunday the 13th of November we returned to the Memorial of the 7th and 8th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and proceeded to parade the Colours down the main road and into Beaumont Hamel, halting the parade at the point where the 51st Highland Division captured the village.

From there we conducted our own Last Post Ceremony. The parade and Colour Party (WO2 Lawrence, WO2 McDowall, WO2 Hamilton, 2Lt Adkin, 2Lt Hand) was led by the Regimental Sergeant Major, WO1 Fairweather, with a local French pipe band, WW1 re-enactors and various veteran associations also joined in. The parade was attended by the British Army, Defence Liaison Officer for France.

After the parade in Beaumont Hamel we then went back to the Newfoundland Memorial Park to conduct a smaller service at the statue to the 51st Highland Division (Last Post was played by Band Master, SSgt Forsyth). The Colour Party were piped through the park and across the battlefield by LCpl Macey-Lillie.

Day 5

On the Monday morning we visited the Wellington Quarry Tunnel museum. The museum was founded to the memory of the thousands of British and Commonwealth Forces who lived under the city during the Great War. In particular, the work of the New Zealand Division is commemorated. The New Zealand Tunneling Company was based in Arras and was responsible for digging the network of tunnels under the town. This is part of a 12-mile network built during the build-up to the Battle of Arras, which was launched in the early hours of the 9th April 1917.

Once we had visited the Wellington Quarry we visited the Black Watch Corner memorial. This memorial commemorates the actions of The Black Watch in the 1st Battle of Ypres on the 11th November 1914 as part of the 1st Guards Brigade within the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). At this point the 1st Battalion was reduced to 9 officers and 228 soldiers who, as part of the 7850 strong BEF were tasked with holding the area of Ypres. The BEF faced twenty-five battalions of Prussian Guard, some 17,500 strong. The main assault came just north of the Menin Road and fell upon The Black Watch, Scots Guards and Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders. The BEF was successful in preventing the German advance.

On 12th November, the day after the battle, the strength of the 1st Battalion The Black Watch had been reduced to just 2 officers and 109 men.

We then moved on to visit the last memorial of the trip, the Canadian National Memorial at Vimy Ridge. This commemorates all the mem-

bers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force who were killed during the conflict and marks the point at which the Canadians captured Vimy Ridge during the Battle of Arras.



The Colour Party at the memorial to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.



Some of the 51st Highland, 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland party photographed in front of the 51st Highland Division Memorial.



The battlefield tour party at Black Watch Corner.

PER ARDUA AD SCOTI (THROUGH ADVERSITY TO THE SCOTS)

By Captain James Farrall

Wishing to fulfil my dream of being an Infantry Officer in the British Army, some say I started a little late. The main reason for my tardiness was an eight year career in the Royal Air Force but for various reasons I decided my future lay elsewhere.

My ultimate goal was to serve in the Royal Regiment of Scotland and more specifically, through friends and family connections, The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland. Whilst researching the best way to achieve my goal, I was fortunate enough to meet several members of the Army Reserve including the Commanding Officer of 7 SCOTS, who offered their assistance.

Due to my previous qualifying service I was able to transfer my Commission into the Army Reserve and start as soon as my time in the RAF ended. The Army Reserve was my main form of employment and therefore I was able to commit fully to training and preparing myself for the Regular Platoon Commanders' Course, held at the Infantry Battle School in Brecon.

Regular elements of the Royal Regiment of Scotland also contributed to my training, assisting with time on the ranges, practising with various weapon types and time spent on the hills with a map and compass. I was able to spend a good portion of my time with the SCOTS Regional Training Team, which normally prepares private soldiers for their first promotion to Lance Corporal and subsequently, preparation for Section Commanders and Platoon Sergeants courses, also held at Brecon. The course for private soldiers lasts 6 weeks and is a combination of tactics, field skills and Skill at Arms range qualifications. I jumped straight in; a Captain running around as rifleman number 3 in 3 section. I don't think I was too much of a burden but it certainly blew out the cobwebs from basic training and got me into an infantryman's mindset. I also got to be the radio operator for the platoon commander (by chance a friend) and despite my RAF version of voice procedure, didn't do too bad a job by all accounts.

My next step was the pre-Brecon cadre aimed at Lance Corporals and Corporals, preparing them for their next professional course. An intense 15 days on the hills of Sennybridge, with fitness, military knowledge tests, and theory all thrown in for good measure. This proved invaluable as I got to navigate and fight my way around the very terrain the Officers' course would spend 90% of its time in and amongst.

Back in Queen's Barracks, Perth, the team at 7 SCOTS worked tirelessly to ensure all the admin was in order and I had all the final ticks in the boxes that I would need to start at the same level as the Regular Officers straight from Sandhurst.

Off I went, back into the Phase 2 training system for the first time in eight years. Slightly apprehensive I hoped that my age (30, compared to the majority who were mid twenties) wouldn't be too much of a fac-

tor. As far as my military skills were concerned, the preparation that both Regular and Reserve Army instructors had given me was perfect and it was just a case of building up my experience. The first phase was live fire tactical training and gaining the range qualifications a platoon commander needs. This gave me a good opportunity to build up that experience and get to know my fellow section and platoon members. Several age related nicknames were soon bandied around as I managed to find my place amongst approximately 60 officers who had spent the best part of a year working and getting to know each other.

The more demanding tactics phase began at the beginning of June, and this was where we would really cut our teeth in learning the tactics and leadership skills needed to lead our platoons in the future. Although it is the Platoon Commanders' course, we spent a lot of time in other leadership roles, section second in command, section commander, platoon sergeant (all which I had been exposed to on the SRTT courses). When not in leadership roles, we were the private soldiers, grenadier, gunner, radio operator, all designed to expose us to jobs the men would do, who we would ultimately be commanding.

The tactics phase was broken down into sections that covered a wide range of operations that we would be likely to conduct. These included; offensive and defensive operations, as well as enabling actions. Additional theory was covered, as well as platoon commanders' responsibilities in garrison and soldiers' career management. This was designed to give us the pre-requisite skills and knowledge to command and administer our platoons.

The final phase of the training was an overseas exercise to Belize. This was aimed at bringing together everything we had learned up to this point and put it all into one challenging environment that would push us and expose us to frictions (climate, logistics and terrain) that we hadn't encountered thus far. In the end, something far more challenging was thrown our way in the form of Hurricane Earl. The hurricane brought a pause to the exercise, and instead we found ourselves assisting the clear up operation in and around the British Army Training Unit, before getting back out into the jungle to finish the exercise.

In all the 16 week Regular Platoon Commanders' course was one of the toughest challenges of my life. Not only was the course itself demanding but trying to cram in the pre-requisite military skills, restart my physical fitness, as well as realigning my military ethos and way of life to that of a different Service, proved a significant challenge. In light of all I have achieved, I have only thanks and praise to those individuals and teams that have helped me through.

Although my ultimate goal is to become a regular officer again, should I wish to remain in the Army Reserve I would not be better placed. Working with and getting qualified with Reserve and Regular counterparts ensured that I have the knowledge, skills, appreciation and understanding of the way of life of a soldier, that I could integrate, and lead both Reserve and Regular soldiers should that be required.



Captain James Farrall (front centre) and other SCOTS officers at Brecon with thoughts of the jungle far behind them.

ALLIED FORCES FOUNDATION MARINE CORPS MARATHON 2016 (MCM2016)

The Battalion supported two wounded veterans with their aspiration to complete the MCM2016 in late October 2016 and raised £6600 for SSAFA and £2300 for the Allied Forces Foundation. A team of ten personnel including two wounded veterans, deployed by trooper flight to Dulles Airport on 26th October 2016. They visited some key establishments in Washington DC, including the Whitehouse, Pentagon and Senate completed the MCM2016 and recovered to Perth on the 3rd of November.

This was a community and defence engagement opportunity but more importantly a superb event that tested the physical and mental strength of all those who took part. David Birrell (Davie Nae Legs as he likes to be known), who was injured in Afghanistan, completed

the marathon on a hand bike in just over 2 hours and finished in the top 20! Everyone in the team completed the marathon with very little training but guts and determination got us through! Capt Baxter got the fastest time of just over 4hrs followed by LCpl Hay, CSgt Renton, Maj Pearson (OIC) and others not far behind. The Pipey even played us on the march to the start point only to then run back and get changed after a wee mix up with his personal admin (much to his annoyance and our amusement)!

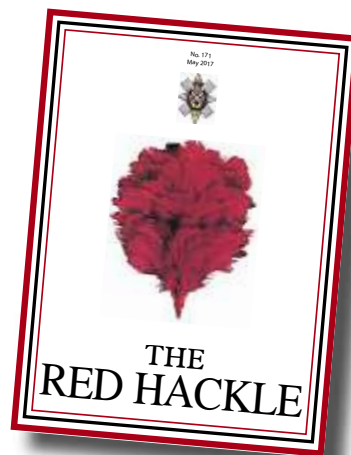
During our stay we were driven, escorted and looked after by the AFF team and some hand-picked members of the Marine Corps. We had a fascinating visit to the FBI Academy and were entertained by some special agents on forensics and IEDs and saw a huge array of weapons.

The team are very proud to have raised the money for SSAFA and AFF. The trip was a resounding success.



The marathon team pictured at Arlington Cemetery.

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The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada

As The Black Watch (RHR) of Canada prepares to embark on a new training year, we are pleased and excited by new challenges and opportunities afforded to the Regiment by Brigade and Division. Having already been granted authority to grow by an additional Rifle Platoon, The Black Watch has received new orders to husband a critical component of the 2nd Canadian Division's influence activities capability. Beginning on April 1st, 2017 we will be responsible for force generating an Influence Activities Coordination Centre (IACC) for all operations assigned to the Division. The IACC, consisting of thirteen officers and Senior NCOs, is a Brigade or Task Force HQ asset, that coordinates all influence activities for the formation commander, to ensure the right tactical effects are being achieved in furtherance of the commander's plan. An investment of twenty six new positions will be made to our authorized unit establishment so that two IACCs may be trained at all times. Many Black Watch members have already received training in influence activities and indeed were deployed on operations in Afghanistan in that same capacity. The Regiment will continue to generate a dismounted infantry capability for Brigade and Divisional operations in addition to the new IACC.

As populated urban environments more frequently become the epicenters of major military operations the necessity to operate on a three-dimensional plane with threats appearing around, above and below, has become a basic tenant of soldiering. In the context of training for the modern battlefield, the battalion conducted Exercise URBAN HIGHLANDER over the last weekend in February 2017.

The exercise saw soldiers operate in a kill-house training area set-up in our own Armoury in downtown Montreal. The training commenced with fire teams practicing basic skills and concluded with platoon level operations. The goal of the exercise was to teach soldiers that situational awareness, personal initiative, and basic infantry drills become even more critical in the continuously changing urban environment. Equipped with live non-lethal training ammunition and confronted with an active enemy force, the troops dealt with prisoners, friendly and enemy casualties, successful and unsuccessful breaches, and night-time operations. Emphasis was placed on the soldier's knowledge of friendly emplacements, considering the continuous progression through the compound and the possibility of ballistic penetration causing unwanted casualties. The training was a great success and well received by the soldiers, but also demonstrated the complexity of urban operations and the requirement for frequent practice.

The Regiment continues to be a dynamic and robust force generator for the Canadian Army. Having recently celebrated our 155th birthday on the 31st of January 2017, we have much to be proud of and are thankful for the rich heritage and tradition of service that we have inherited from so many generations of citizen soldiers who have come before us. In the coming weeks, we will mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge where three battalions of The Black Watch of Canada ascended that ridge to victory. It is the sincere desire of today's Black Watch members that we honour the sacrifice of our antecedents by being ready to answer our nation's call now and into the future.



Soldiers clear a room in the Kill House.



A patrol stack outside one of the houses in the compound.

ARTEFACTS FROM THE BLACK WATCH OF CANADA COLLECTION

THE STIRRUP CHARGE AT ST QUENTIN, 1914

This small bronze statuette, measuring 15 inches in length by 12 inches in height, depicts a soldier of the Black Watch going into action at St Quentin (Picardy, France) in August 1914 by hanging on to the stirrup leathers of the Scots Greys. The story originated with a soldier of the 1st Battalion, Black Watch, and was quickly picked up by the British Press to boost morale in the early days of World War One. On 11 September 1914, the prestigious *Illustrated London News* added to the tale by carrying an illustration by Richard Caton Woodville captioned, "An incident at the battle of St Quentin." There can be no doubt that Woodville had used the famous painting of the Scots Greys at Waterloo, so memorably painted by Stanley Berkeley, as the inspiration for this work of imaginative fiction. The story was eventually refuted in 1926 by Major General A.G. Wauchope in his history of The Black Watch during World War One – perhaps the sole occasion "when a regiment has denied an exploit with which it was credited!" As explained by General Wauchope: "an action was fought on this day by the Scots Greys and the 12th Lancers; but the only connection between these regiments and The Black Watch is that their patrols passed through the billets of the Battalion during the day." The extensive press coverage and resulting public interest inspired Countess Feodora Gleichen, RA (1861-1922) to create this impressive bronze sculpture late in 1914. Gleichen, a very accomplished London sculptor, was related to Queen Victoria, and the first woman member of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. Reproductions of her bronze were executed "by Messrs. Waring & Gillow, Ltd., Bronze and Statuary Department, 180 Oxford street, London, W." with the proceeds of the sale given to charity. Two versions were produced:

one, "in bronzed metal, so that even the humblest household can afford one..."; the other in "real bronze." The "bronzed metal" reproductions sold for thirty shillings in 1914, while the "real bronze" reproductions sold for £10. 10s. One of the "real bronze" reproductions was purchased by Robert Lindsay, a wealthy Montreal stock broker who presented it to the Royal Highlanders of Canada in 1915, having served as a junior officer over the period 1876-1881 (his son, Captain Stanley B. Lindsay, served in the regiment's 13th Battalion during World War One). [Earl John Chapman, *Canada's Black Watch, 1862-2012: Legacies of Gallantry & Service* (RHC, Montreal, 2012)]



Stirrup Charge Statuette 1914 (Image Credit: Black Watch of Canada Museum and Archives, photo by Peter Ferst).



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Black Watch Battalion The Army Cadet Force

Honorary Colonel:	The Reverend Professor Norman Drummond CBE FRSE
Commandant:	Colonel J M K Erskine MBE
Deputy Commandant:	Lieutenant Colonel C Hubcock
Training Officer:	Major S Rae
Adjutant:	Captain M McCluskey
Officer Commanding Alma Company:	Major K Douglas
Officer Commanding Burma Company:	Major S Truscott
Officer Commanding Korea Company:	Major C Tough
Officer Commanding Ypres Company:	Captain R Scott
Regimental Sergeant Major:	Regimental Sergeant Major Instructor P Cameron
Permanent Staff:	
Cadet Executive Officer:	Major A C M Potter
Quartermaster:	Captain R G Hallum

INTRODUCTION

As the dark, short days of the winter brighten and lengthen with the arrival of spring so the tempo of the Army Cadet Force increases but this reporting period covers the autumnal months which are some of the busiest of the year. Company weekends, adult specific weekends, poppy collection and Remembrance Sunday related events, sporting competitions and the detachment end of year events all take place.

COMPETITIONS AND AUTUMNAL ACTIVITIES

The autumn is a time when a number of competitions are held. This year it was a case of “nearly but not quite” when it came to bringing home prizes. In September Regimental Sergeant Major Instructor Cameron took a team to compete in the 51 Brigade Drill Competition. The team acquitted themselves really well but narrowly failed to win. Major Gill trained a team to take part in the 51 Brigade Military Skills Competition in September. This is a really good competition when the cadets are tested in a number of disciplines. While the team came near the top at some stands, they fared less well at others and so when the final scores were added up, the team was not among the prize winners. On the sporting front, teams were entered for the ACFA Scotland Football and Cross Country competitions and again they came home without a trophy but having displayed a huge amount of enthusiasm and skill.

On 8 October, Headquarters 51 Infantry Brigade ran the second of its Ex ALBAN SODGER competitions. Teams were asked to research a matter relating to the First World War and then, in front of a panel, give a presentation about what they had researched. This year, Cadet Staff Sergeant Charles Barrahan and Cadet Shaun Jackson, Crieff, gave a talk on Lieutenant John Manson Craig who was born in Comrie, went to Morrison’s Academy and won a Victoria Cross with 4th Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers in Palestine. The competition was fierce and the quality of entrants really high. Unfortunately the team was just pipped for first place.

Later in October the Pipes and Drums took part in the week long concentration in Redford Barracks. This is an excellent opportunity for them to learn and improve their skills. At the end of the week there is a competition day and the cadets did themselves proud.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is recognised worldwide and the Army Cadet Force has always prided itself in providing cadets and adults the opportunity to achieve the awards. After a quietish few years, 29 cadets took part in a Bronze and Silver expedition in September. It is hoped this will be the beginning of something much more in the next year or so. The opportunities for adventurous training are endless when it comes to taking part in activities and Cadet Fraser Robertson took advantage of one such expedition when he went rock climbing in Spain.

The focus of the first half of November is Remembrance Sunday. Most detachments were involved in collecting for Poppy Scotland and all took part in their local Remembrance Sunday events. Indeed in some places they were the only Army presence on parade.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

The pinnacle of a cadet’s career is to become a Master Cadet. During the period Cadet Sergeant Major Michael Robertson and Cadet Sergeant Major Liam Breslin went on the course and came back with excellent reports

Of course there is much more to the cadets than following the syllabus or taking part in various events. The idea of a Cadet Presentation Team was introduced by Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association in 2015. The idea is for teams of Cadet Force Adult Volunteers and Cadets to speak to Opinion Formers, national and local institutions and explain what the Army Cadet Force has done for them. For anyone to speak to a large audience of people can be daunting at the best of times but a number of the Black Watch Battalion cadets, led and encouraged by Staff Sergeant Instructor Marci Alzamora have done this in 2016. Without fail they have wowed their audiences. A training weekend was held in October and it is hoped more adults and cadets who attended it will be used in 2017 to speak at suitable events.

Staff Sergeant Instructor Dougie Gold has continued to run the Linked Detachments in Fife where he goes into two Secondary Schools in Kirkcaldy and takes willing pupils through the APC syllabus. This has been quite a challenge but the two head teachers have both commented on the enormous benefits gained by those pupils who have been involved in this project. There have been other ACF Battalions in Scotland that have also been running this project in their areas. There is intent to roll it out throughout the country but the secret is having a Cadet Force Adult Volunteer available to do this and, most importantly ensuring the contract and remuneration package are in place from the outset. Not being content with running these linked detachments, Staff Sergeant Gold was also selected to be the Voice of Scotland when he took part in the promotional video for the National Recruiting Campaign for the Army Cadet Force, which was shown in cinemas throughout the country.

As well as providing advice on training matters, the Battalion’s Training Safety Advisor, Warrant Officer Class 2 Garry Erskine introduced a Coaching and Mentoring Course in the autumn for the adults. Two adults, Staff Sergeant Instructors Gold and Gill are now qualified practitioner coaches, a recognised civilian qualification and they have presented the subject to sixty percent of the adults. This course provides the adults with a very useful tool in their armoury about how better to interact and relate to cadets.

Fundraising has always been part of the Cadet Force psyche. As an example, in October adults and cadets from Crieff Detachment carried out a “bag” at the local Co-Op and raised £360 for a local charity “The Friends of MacRosty Park”. The donation will help with the creation of play facilities for children with disabilities in the local play park.

MUSICAL MATTERS

The Band has had an extremely busy time since the last notes were written. They organised and played at a concert and Service of Remembrance in Dunfermline Abbey on 20 November which was well attended by a good audience and the Battalion was honoured that the Honorary Colonel and Lady Elizabeth Drummond were also there. The Padre led the Service of Remembrance and gave a very good and thought provoking address.

A week later, the Band and the Pipes and Drums went south and played at the Birmingham International Tattoo. This took a huge amount of organising and the permanent staff, in particular Warrant Officer Class 2 Garry Erskine, worked very hard to ensure the event went ahead. Two weeks later the Band then laid on a Christmas Concert and end of year prize giving in Limekilns Parish church. This suited the Commandant very well as the church is 10 yards from his house. Colonel Stephanie Jackman, Deputy Commander Reserves and Karen Buchanan SO2 Cadets from Headquarters 51 Brigade came to it with the former presenting the prizes at the end of the evening. The audience, about 100, included a number of the congregation from the church. They were so impressed with what they heard that they asked if this could be repeated in 2017.

It would be wrong not to record that Pipe Major Scrivener-Anderson has been promoted to Senior Cadet Pipe Major and that Cadet Staff Sergeant Coyle has been promoted to Senior Cadet Drum Major.

2017

The beginning of the year started with the usual adult training day and the Burns Supper. The day was extremely useful and set the scene for the coming twelve months. The evening was quite excellent thanks to Major Kat Douglas who masterminded it and to the permanent staff

who decorated the hall quite magnificently. This year the guests included the Honorary Colonel who made a tremendous speech at the end of the evening which the adults really appreciated. Major Liz Mason who has been such a supporter of the Battalion for years was another guest. She was the first female adult instructor in the Battalion when it was decided to allow female cadets to join up in the early 1980s. She has also been the Sports Convenor of ACFA Scotland for 20 years. The Battalion relies on support from the Regular and Army Reserve regiments and so it was an honour that Captain Pete Marshall and Second Lieutenant Rory Hand from 3 and 7 SCOTS respectively could join us. The fifth guest was Andrew Macnaughton who took over as the Deputy Chief Executive Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association at the end of last year. The Regimental Band played throughout dinner and were quite magnificent. The Pipes and Drums gave a really stirring performance after the food was over and combined with the regimental band for two numbers at the end. In addition cadets from the Perth Black Watch and Dunkeld detachments acted as waiters and could not have been more attentive. Clark Christie addressed the Haggis in a very theatrical way while Sergeant Phil Gray gave a thoughtful and well researched Immortal Memory. Second Lieutenant Steven Mackenzie toasted the Lassies and PI Keryn Barr replied. Both of them were excellent with the usual attempts at point scoring. Finally Dougie Gold recited Tae a Moose- which everyone enjoyed.

After that weekend the pace of life ramped up with further training weekends for adults who wish to join as instructors, those who wish to seek a commission and those who wish to become more involved in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and so on. Meanwhile the Companies have held training weekends in anticipation of the forthcoming Spring Camp. On the sporting front, rugby training started early in the New Year under the enthusiastic and watchful eye of Stewart Taylor. Meanwhile PI Abigail Robertson and Cadet Sergeant Major Michael Robertson took advantage of the opportunities afforded to them and went skiing in Bavaria in February.

PERSONNEL ISSUES

On the personnel front, Major Gill decided to leave the Army Cadet Force after serving the Battalion in a number of roles. He will be greatly missed. His last job was commanding Korea Company. As a result of his decision there have been a number of changes of Company Commanders. Captain Charlie Tough moved from Burma Company to replace Major Gill; Major Sue Truscott has moved to Burma Company from Ypres Company and Captain Richard Scott has moved up from Company Second-in-Command to replace her.

The Battalion was absolutely delighted when, at the end of 2016, Captain McCluskey was awarded the General Officer Commanding Regional Command's Commendation for his outstanding service to the Army Cadet Force over so many years. He has held numerous posts throughout his time with the Battalion including, Training Officer and currently Adjutant. In whichever role he has held, his priority has been to ensure the interests of the cadets have always come first.

PERMANENT STAFF

It would be wrong to end these notes without mentioning the permanent staff led by the Cadet Executive Officer, Major Andy Potter. Without them the Battalion could not function. Much of their work is done in the background, often unseen, and sometimes at short notice. The Battalion is fortunate to have such a supportive and dedicated group of people and they are owed a debt of thanks by everyone in the Battalion.



Colonel Jamie Erskine making a presentation to Major Liz Mason.



Crieff Detachment presenting a cheque to the Friends of MacRosty Park.



Members of the Regimental Band with colleagues from Queen Victoria School at the 20th Rorke's Drift Concert in Brecon.



Colonel Erskine presenting Captain McCluskey with the GOC Regional Command's Commendation for Outstanding Service to the Army Cadet Force.



Burns Supper Top Table.

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Association News

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Vice Presidents:	Mr Robert Balfour, FRICS Lord Lieutenant of Fife Brigadier M S Jameson CBE Lord Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross Mr Bob Duncan Lord Lieutenant of the City of Dundee
Chairman:	Major General J M Cowan, CBE DSO (from 29 April 2017)
Vice Chairman and Trustee:	Lieutenant Colonel R M Riddell
Secretary and Trustee:	Major R J W Proctor, MBE
Trustee:	Major J M K Erskine, MBE
Trustee:	Major J D Monteith, MBE
Trustee:	Captain B M Osborne
Trustee:	Mr G Hay, LL.B CA
Executive Committee:	Lieutenant Colonel F L Beattie, MBE Lieutenant Colonel M Smith, MBE Captain A McEwen, MBE Lieutenant Colonel J A Menzies Lieutenant Colonel R I Rose, TD Mr R Scott, JP Mr G Kennedy
Welfare Committee:	Lieutenant Colonel R I Rose, TD – Chairman Major R J W Proctor, MBE – Secretary Mr J Baird Mr J Devlin Major G Grant, MBE, MM Captain T Graham Mr R Scott, JP Mrs I Shivas Mr G Ross Captain A McEwen Mr W Barr Major B Dickson

ANGUS BRANCH

President:	Lieutenant Colonel Fred Beattie MBE
Vice President:	Major David McMicking LVO
Chairman:	Major Ronnie Proctor MBE
Vice Chairman:	Mr Peter Tindal
Secretary:	Mr Tom McCluskey
Treasurer:	Mr Jim Penny

The normal autumn and winter activities have been held within the Branch and our El Alamein dinner was again enjoyed by all who attended. Our guest of honour was the Association Chairman, Colonel Alex Murdoch; we were fortunate to have our oldest Branch member and only El Alamein veteran, Mr John Henderson in our company. John although very senior in years is very fit and kept us entertained with his humorous anecdotes of his time in the 5th Battalion and the lighter side of the battle and subsequent actions. His zest for life and the “water of life” have not diminished over the years! Ron Scrymgeour one of the Associate members is to be thanked for collecting John and returning him safely home at the end of the evening.

In keeping with the centenary of the Great War our Branch Secretary, Tom McCluskey gave a short dissertation on the taking of the Schwaben Redoubt and how in some ways it was similar to some of the actions which took place at El Alamein some 26 years later.

Christmas hampers were again distributed to our senior Branch members and widows. This annual task is masterminded by John Glen who is ably supported by his wife Jeanette as well as by Branch members and serving soldiers from the Black Watch Battalion. Morrison’s Supermarket, Arbroath are to be thanked for their

generosity in giving us a very good deal. In recognition of this a Black Watch plaque was presented to the store manager in appreciation of the help that we have received over the years.

The Burns Supper continues to be a successful event which is on the calendar of “events to attend” in the county of Angus and beyond. It is supported not only by Branch members but many from the local community attend. This year, Tam O’ Shanter was performed by Commander (Retd) Jim Smith RN. Jim who is a member of the Scottish National Burns Society kept the company fully enthralled and amused as he galloped around the auditorium on his trusty mare Meg and sat down to a long standing ovation. The usual suspects also performed; Bob Mitchell with his rendition of the Selkirk Grace, Pipe Major Peter Snaddon whose piping is always of the highest order, Ronnie Proctor addressing the Haggis and chairing the dinner with his usual humour and poetic doggerel and Secretary Tam McCluskey gave an innovative version of the Immortal Memory. Lastly Brian Smith’s recitation of “The Soldier’s Return” was well received.

Jim Brown and his quartet again regaled us with an excellent selection of Burns music and songs in which the company lustily joined in.

Our new Atholl Brose maker has served his apprenticeship and Associate member Gordon Millar passed the test with flying colours. His Atholl Brose received high acclaim from all who partook of it much to the satisfaction of his tutor and journeyman Bob Mitchell who has hung up his ladle after producing gallons of the noble liquid over a number of years.

Lastly, our President, Fred Beattie gave a rousing vote of thanks to all who took part and organised the evening.

At the time of writing the Branch is preparing to take part in the ANZAC Day commemoration in Arbroath, the Battle of Arras Commemoration at Edinburgh Castle and the Charles Melvin VC centenary commemoration in Kirriemuir; shoes highland and medals are being highly polished, Blue Bonnets are being brushed and Red Hackles are being replaced.

Some of Branch members, namely Bob Mitchell, Billy Whytock and Jim MacEwan have all suffered from illness over the past few months and reports are that they are making good recovery and we wish them well. We have lost a number of members to the grim reaper and their obituaries are shown elsewhere in this edition. Our sympathies are offered to their families.

On a happier note we look forward to the annual Reunion and unveiling of the Queen’s Barracks memorial on the 17th of June and we welcome ex Superintendent Clerk, Stevie (Lugs) Reid back into the fold after his long sojourn in Germany; we hope that you enjoy your new home in Forfar and manage to take a full part in future Branch activities.

R J W Proctor



Angus Branch Burns Supper top table.



Tam McCluskey reciting the Immortal Memory.



Jim Smith on his trusted mare Meg.



El Alamein Dinner, from left: Gus Proctor, Ronnie Proctor, John Henderson, Ron Scrymgeour and Bob Mitchell.



The official opening of Houses for Heroes at Camus Crescent, Carnoustie, from left: Major Ronnie Proctor, James Dolan, Jim Massie (all Black Watch veterans), Keith Brown MSP and Major Jim Barton.

DUNDEE BRANCH

President:	Colin Gray
Chairman:	Willie Barr
Secretary:	Colin Adam
Treasurer:	Len Mitchell

The Dundee Branch has supported many events throughout the Association area whilst spreading the good name and fantastic work the Association conducts.

On the 1st October 2016 Roland Rose, Colin Gray, Dave Ritchie, Chris Thomas, Joe Barton and John Smith attended a thoroughly well organised and enjoyable evening at the Perth Branch Croix de Guerre Dinner in the Salutation Hotel, Perth.

The 22nd October saw the Angus Branch playing host at their El Alamein Dinner with Roland Rose, Willie Barr, Colin Gray, Dave Ritchie, Jimmy Kidd, John Smith, Bill Adamson and Joe Barton representing the Dundee Branch on another great night.

The Salutation Hotel in Perth was again the venue for another super night with auld friends and Association members at the National Servicemen's Dinner on 4th November. Roland Rose, George Grant, Willie Barr, Colin Gray and Joe Barton were the Branch members who attended this function. There was many an interesting tale told that night.

The 5th November saw the start of the Remembrance season with the Laying of Crosses Service at the St Mary's Church, Dundee with Willie Barr, Colin Gray, Vic Herd, Jimmy Killorn, Larry Hutchison, Jimmy Edwards and Joe Devlin in attendance from the Dundee Branch. The Angus Branch was also represented at this service as John Glen volunteered to carry the Dundee Branch Standard.

That same night, Alex Murdoch, Roland Rose, Willie Barr, Colin Gray, John Smith and Jimmy Kidd attended the Festival of Remembrance in the Caird Hall, Dundee.

On 10th November a Remembrance Service was held at Caird Park Stadium, Dundee to remember those men from the Mains Parish who served in The Black Watch and who were killed during the First World War. Roland Rose, Willie Barr, Colin Gray, Joe Barton, Jimmy Killorn, Larry Hutchison, Jimmy Edwards, Mike Lindsay, Bill Mechan and Bill Taylor (Branch Piper) were present from the Dundee Branch, whilst the Angus Branch were represented by John Glen and Alex Stott and Charlie Quin represented the Fife Branch.

Armistice Day saw the following Branch members attend a reception in the Dundee City Chambers before taking part in the Remembrance Service on the City Square; Willie Barr, Colin Gray, Vic Herd, David Taylor, Jimmy Killorn, Jimmy Edwards, Larry Hutchison, Harry Ellis and Boris Reid. That afternoon, Roland Rose, Willie Barr and Colin Gray attended the Remembrance Service at Balhousie Castle, Perth.

Remembrance Sunday saw the Dundee Branch holding its annual Remembrance Service at Powrie Brae. This service was attended by well over 100 Branch members, families and friends with many of those attending ended up in the beer bar at A Company, 7 SCOTS for some post service refreshments. Alfie Docherty and Ray Lawson are reported as still being there.

Throughout the Remembrance period, Jimmy Killorn spent many long and cold hours selling Poppies in various locations in the City Centre and it is thanks to people like Jimmy that the Poppy Appeal is so successful. It is hoped that more volunteers from the Dundee Branch will be out selling this year.

After the festive season, the first function of the year was the Edinburgh, Lothians' and Borders' Branch, annual Ceilidh which was held in the Ex-Servicemen's Club, Leith on 14th January. John Smith, who was the Dundee Branch sole representative, reported that this was another tremendous night.

On 20th January, the Dundee Branch held its annual Red Hackle Dinner in the Black Watch Club. We were honoured to have as guests that night, Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin, Brigadier Alistair Aitken, WO1 (RSM) Mike Fairweather and Lord Provost Bob Duncan. The Dundee Branch as expected was very well represented by its own members as were the Branches of Angus, Edinburgh, Fife and Perth. It was also a pleasure to see our Liverpool friends and Honorary members in the shape of Mick Molyneux, Bobby Lynch, Hughie Campbell and Jimmy McVie.

Alistair Aitken, who as Brigade Commander, gave an excellent talk on the role of 77th Brigade. This insight into what must be the most unique Brigade within the British Army gained the full attention of everyone in the hall. Roland Rose stated that in all the years he had been attending Red Hackle Dinners, this was the first time a guest speaker

had totally captivated the audience. It truly was an education and we are grateful to Brigadier Alistair for giving his own time and making such a long journey especially as he had to be back down in Thatcham the following morning.

After the dinner we were regally entertained by Jock Menzies and Ally Alcorn. Their songs and music rounded off a great night. A special thanks to our own Branch Chairman, Willie Barr who orchestrated the whole evening including preparing and cooking the meal. Thanks also to the Branch members who assisted in setting the hall up for the Dinner and to Willie's serving and behind the scene staff for their hard work during the evening which all ensured another very successful function.

28th January saw Roland Rose, Willie Barr, Davie Young, Joe Barton and Colin Gray attend the Angus Branch Burns Supper in the British Legion, Forfar. A night full of great poetry, a super meal and fantastic company.

More of the same on 4th February as the Perth Branch held their Burns Supper in the Salutation Hotel. This time it was Roland Rose, Willie Barr, Davie Gow, Joe Barton, John Smith and Colin Gray who represented the Dundee Branch. The standard of speakers at this function was simply outstanding. Ally Alcorn, Davy Stacey, Jock Gilfillan and Cammy Goodall were absolutely brilliant.

The Dundee Branch received the very sad news that our great friend and loyal Branch member, Victor Herd passed away on 1st February 2017 with his funeral services taking place at Fowlis Church and Liff Church Cemetery on 13th February. The sheer numbers of family and friends present at both these services was testament to what an exceptional man Vic was. A full obituary is contained elsewhere within this edition but it goes without saying that Vic is dearly missed by everyone in the Dundee Branch.

Our Annual General Meeting was held on 25th February with all current Office Bearers being re-elected. This meeting was followed by a Families Function, which attracted many families and friends and was a roaring success. Ally Alcorn provided his usual high standard of entertainment and Willie Barr served up a great buffet in the form of sausage rolls and a curry. A great afternoon and it is very much hoped to make it a regular event. Thank you to the other Branches who supported this function.

The following members of the Branch deserve a special mention for their continual support and attendance at numerous events throughout the year. It is thanks to these individuals who willingly give up their own time and in many cases their hard earned money, that the Red Hackle and the name of the Black Watch is constantly being seen and heard throughout the Dundee area.

“Roland Rose, Willie Barr, Colin Gray, Joe Barton, Jimmy Killorn, Larry Hutchison, Jimmy Edwards, Jimmy Kidd, Bill Adamson, John Smith, David Ritchie, Davie Young, Chris Thomas and Davie Gow. Many of these members have also been strongly supported by their lovely ladies.

It is also important to recognise the service that the Committee and other Branch Members give to the Branch throughout each year and without whom the Branch would struggle to survive. Willie Barr as Chairman and Branch Standard Bearer, Colin Adam as Secretary, Len Mitchell as Treasurer, Harry Ellis as hospital visitor, Mike Lindsay as auditor and Brian Kelly as the monthly meeting raffle coordinator.

Colin Gray



Colin Gray, Dave Ritchie and Chris Thomas at the Croix de Guerre Dinner.



Oliver Barracks post Remembrance Service refreshments with Colin Gray, Willie Barr, John Smith, Boris Reid, Kenny Grant and CSgt Sean Pratt.



Families afternoon with Jimmy Kidd, Joe Barton, Bill Adamson and John Smith.



Red Hackle Dinner Top Table.



Dundee Branch members enjoying the Perth Branch Burns Supper.

EDINBURGH, LOTHIAN AND BORDERS BRANCH

President: Lieutenant Colonel Julian McElhinney
Chairman: Lieutenant Colonel Jock Menzies
Secretary: Major Alex Stewart BEM
Treasurer: Captain Ramsay Macdonald
Events Coordinator: Mr Rory McIntyre

On 14 January 2017 Branch members and guests gathered in the Leith Ex Servicemen's Club to celebrate Red Hackle Day. This event is now a firm fixture in the annual social calendar and the support from Association members from across the length and breadth of the country is very much appreciated. Pipe Major Alistair Duthie played the pipes to his usual high standards with some excellent combinations of tunes and he also played several dance sets, which gave guests the opportunity to take part in a few reels. The entertainment provided by Ally Alcorn ensured there was never a dull moment and guests thoroughly enjoyed his repertoire of old and new songs.

To mark the centenary of the Great War, Reverend Neil Gardner and the congregation of the Canongate Kirk, identified several gravestones in the Kirkyard that refer to a soldier killed in action between 1914 and 1918. Lance Corporal David Simpson was killed serving with 2nd Black Watch in Mesopotamia on 14 March 1917. Lance Corporal Simpson was born in Queen's Barracks Perth, where his father George Simpson was serving as a Sergeant in the Black Watch. On Sunday 19 March 2017, family members and the congregation gathered at the Simpson family headstone for a short Commemoration Service. Captain (Retired) Ramsay Macdonald laid a wreath on behalf of the Black Watch Association.

Further, Great War centenary events are scheduled to take place at Edinburgh Castle: The 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Arras, will be marked by a service of commemoration and Beating Retreat on Sunday 9 April 2017; this will be followed by an ANZAC Gallipoli Day Service on Tuesday 25 April 2017. Branch members have been invited to both events and we look forward to attending and providing a short report in the next edition of the Red Hackle.

With regards to Branch membership, we continue to recruit new members, the most recent being Mr Tam Dick, whose final appointment prior to retirement was Company Sergeant Major, Headquarter Company and Mr Charlie Ewart who is a member of a unique band of individuals who served a full career as a private soldier. New members to the Branch will always be welcome. Past and present members of The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, are particularly encouraged to make contact through any existing members or by requesting to join on our Branch Facebook page.

Jock Menzies



Red Hackle Night from left to right Major (Retired) Alex Stewart, Mr Geordie Ross and Mr Arthur Keith share a bottle of beer, taking austerity to a new level.

FIFE BRANCH

This reporting period started with a very important visit to Balhousie Castle to take part in the Families' Remembrance Service on 10 November 2016. It has become an important event in our Branch Calendar, not only for the act of remembering but to let our families see that they are still thought about and that we share in their grief. From Perth it was back to our own villages and towns to show the same respect by attending the services at the War Memorials. On the 5th of January members of the Branch met in Glenrothes to celebrate Red Hackle Day with a hearty breakfast and Gun Fire (supplied by our own David Thomson). This was the second outing for the Branch members on this important day in our Regimental History and I am happy to report a significant increase in numbers from last year. It is hoped that other Branches may join us at future meetings and a special thank you to Mr Neil Henderson who kindly wrote an article for our local Press expressing the importance of the day to Black Watch veterans. The Edinburgh and Lothian Branch Ceilidh was the next port of call and it was by all accounts a resounding success. A week later we journeyed to Dundee to enjoy their Branch Red Hackle Dinner, Willie's soup and steak pie being the attraction. The Angus and Perth Branches celebrate the Bards work, again good reports from both occasions where the whisky flowed well.

We are now entering the end of our reporting period, so it was back to Fife and our own Rhine Crossing Dinner to which Colonel Alex Murdoch was invited, to be dined out. Colonel Alex spoke to the company for about ten minutes giving them a flavour of what was happening and what was to come and we as a Branch thank him for that and his support.

We catered for seventy and had an enjoyable dinner.

As a Branch we meet regularly with an average of forty five members attending and I thank them for that.

Rob Scott



Rob Scott and Jock Menzies at the Rhine Crossing Dinner.



Roland Rose and Alex Murdoch at the Rhine Crossing Dinner.



Jamie Sean Binnie, nephew of the late Acting Sergeant Sean Binnie at the Kirkcaldy War Memorial in November 2016 (Courtesy G Mcluskie).



Mike Mitchell, the Fife Branch Standard Bearer was on parade at the Kirkcaldy War Memorial (Courtesy G Mcluskie).

HIGHLAND BRANCH

President: WO1 (RSM) Kevin Stacey
 Chairman: Mr Joe Barbour
 Vice Chairman: Mr Donald Etherington
 Secretary: Mr Gordon Kennedy

The Highland Branch continues to meet on the second Friday of each month in the Community Centre, Wimberley Way, Inverness.

Since the last notes we have held a Christmas function well attended by members and partners although due to other commitments the President could not attend. January tends to be quiet for everyone. A few members did attend the Black Watch Battalion Burns Supper. In February some members and partners deployed to Perth for another Burns night hosted by the Perth Branch, an event which was once again superbly organised by Ally Alcorn.

Our next major function is on the 13th of May, The Aberfeldy Ladies' Dinner Night once again to be held in Fort George. Members of the Dundee Branch have already replied saying that they will be attending.

Branch membership is good and due to our affiliation with HQ Company the number of serving members remains steady. Our newest members are Major Gary Wallace (QM) and Captain Ian Houston (QMT). Our President is always trying to encourage serving soldiers to join us taking them away from the misconception that we are just a bunch of old guys sitting about telling war stories. The Royal Regiment of Scotland Association has now formed an Inverness Branch which meets in the Reserve Centre Gordonville Road Inverness although at the moment we do not know the frequency of their meetings or how many serving soldiers have joined.

Remember if you are free on the second Friday of the month and at a loose end then come along and join us.

Gordon Kennedy

LONDON BRANCH

President: Major General A L Watson CB
 Chairman: Brigadier D R Wilson CBE
 Major A A L Watson LVO – designate
 Vice Chairman: Lieutenant Colonel T A Coles MBE
 Secretary: Lieutenant Colonel M Smith MBE



Cenotaph Parade – from left to right; David Kemmis-Betty, Piers Bishop, Alastair Watson, Tim Coles and Edward de Broë-Ferguson.

Introduction

It was very inspiring to have such a large contingent marching on this year's Cenotaph ceremony and I hope that this enthusiasm for the event continues. Similarly the turnout at the Annual Branch Dinner to meet our Royal Patron at the pre-dinner reception was excellent. Thank you all for making the effort to attend these high profile events which have nicely rounded off a very successful year.

The second half of the year tends to be a busy period for the London Branch as they prepare for the major national events in the Capital during November. Many of these activities and occasions are supported by a number of regular Branch members without whom we would be at a loss, especially with regards to the administration and service support required to set them up. We are grateful to those who contribute in this area. As usual Joe Hubble's thorough arrangements resulted in a well attended summer lunch at The Albert on Victoria Street in August. Thanks to a subsidy from the Association a number of members are given the incentive to travel to London from as far away as Eastbourne for this jolly outing. We caught up on news of various members living south of Hadrian's Wall and planned our participation in forthcoming events. Sadly this was the last time we had the pleasure of the company of the ever cheerful Tam Drummond accompanied by his wife Trudy. Tam was not on parade at the Cenotaph due to his declining health and he died at the end of November.

On Thursday 10 November a delegation of eleven members of the Branch attended the Memorial Garden ceremony at Westminster. The Branch was responsible for two plots; The Black Watch and The Tyneside Scottish. Once again we are grateful to Joe Hubble who made the necessary arrangements of placing all the memorial crosses in the ground. This year he managed to recruit a couple of young volunteers to assist with this labour of love. Other Fields of Remembrance were established at Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh.

On another brilliantly sunny autumn day, a gallant band of 36 veterans formed up on Horse Guards Parade under the control of the parade marshals/Royal British Legion Drill Sergeants prior to forming up in Whitehall. It was good to see some new faces including Rupert Forrest and Richard Cole-Mackintosh among the old stagers like the Warminster team, Tom McGregor Brown, Brian Morris, John and Ian Bowles, Tom Brodie and Piers Bishop. Under command of our very own Sergeant Major Joe Hubble, The Black Watch contingent was among the lead units of the parade and it was an impressive sight to see such a flurry of Red Hackles. It was a sizable group who created quite an impression as we marched along Whitehall. Many thanks to all those who came along and also to those in support. It would be good to see the numbers increase for the main effort next year as we commemorate the end of World War 1.

A good lunch was enjoyed in the upstairs dining room of The Albert pub following the parade.

For all those who have never experienced the Cenotaph parade it is one to put on your "bucket list"; it is very memorable.

On Thursday 23 November 2016, the 97th Branch Dinner was held. Entitled the "Somme" Dinner our Royal Patron attended the pre-dinner reception.

Organized by Ian Howarth, the Dinner Secretary, this splendid occasion was held in the Victory Services Club with a big turnout of some 120 members and guests. It is the high point on the London Branch social calendar and it was a great honour to host the Association Royal Patron to the pre dinner drinks reception. Prince Charles managed to speak with everybody in the room and seemed to enjoy being there and said he would like to return if invited. Some excellent photographs were taken by Dick Goodwin and his wife Susie.

The dinner fare was to the usual high standard and the service delivery by the Club staff was very good. The evening was topped off by the Branch Pipe Major Chick Mackie and the Branch Pipe Band. Members and guests were entertained to some excellent pipe music and renditions of regimental tunes that will have awakened many old memories of bygone days. It was a very fitting end to a memorable evening.

Looking ahead, we are already filling up the invitations to the summer events namely The Not Forgotten Association Garden Party at Buckingham palace on 30 May, Founders Day at the Royal Hospital Chelsea 8 June and the Regimental Reunion on 17 June.

Mike Smith



Last man (and women standing) at the Albert: from left to right Cath Stewart (sitting), Linda Smith, Tim Coles and Alex Stewart.

The London Branch Drinks Reception and Dinner





NEWCASTLE BRANCH

Chairman: Mr Nick Turnbull
Secretary/Treasurer: Mr Malcolm Dunn

November followed the now well-known pathway established by the Branch over recent years. On the Saturday preceding Remembrance Sunday, members met to lay a wreath at the grave of a Black Watch soldier. Due to lack of transport, the number of sites, available to us, has reduced over the last few years and we were back at West Jesmond and the grave of Private Findlay. On the Sunday, our Vice Chairman, Tom Dignam laid our wreath at the Eldon Square Cenotaph in Newcastle City Centre and on 11th November, a wreath was laid at the Cenotaph in Monkton Village. On St Andrew's Day, members of the Branch joined members of the Tyneside Scottish Association and the Northumberland Fusiliers' Association in a ceremony to commemorate the Tyneside Scottish Brigade at the Battle of the Somme. Being a busy part of the day, the parade drew considerable attention, particularly when Pipe Major Anderson played the lament. A bugler from the Fusiliers sounded Last Post and the Rouse.

In January, tentative enquiries were received from Catterick ITC, asking if the Secretary would like to be part of the inspection team at a passing out parade, containing a number of Royal Regiment of Scotland personnel. After some discussion, it was agreed that three members of the Branch would attend the final rehearsal for the passing out parade and act as the inspection party. An opportunity to speak informally with the troops would be given at the end of the parade. Questions of security were overcome and arrangements finalised. Naturally, these arrangements involved a very early start to the day and we arrived at the appointed hour to be met by Cpl Hart (3 SCOTS), who would look after us for the rest of our visit. Having watched an early rehearsal, it was our turn to participate in the proceedings and taking a rank each, we progressed through the ranks, having a brief word with each of the men. Almost by instinct, the Jocks responded naturally to our questions; The Black Watch badges seemed to put them at ease and with a little encouragement from Captain John Young, also 3 SCOTS, a few smiles appeared. Two of the boys destined for the Black Watch Battalion, had come first and second in the shooting competition, with only one point separating them. When the parade was finished, we had a chance to chat with the lads and tell them how good they were and get a laugh or two from them as they relaxed. Then we were taken to meet the training staff, many of whom wore Red Hackles. A cup of tea and the best of chocolate biscuits and we were taken to the Sergeants' Mess for lunch, where we were well looked after. Other 3 SCOTS staff we met included CSM Gallagher and Capt McQuillin. Cpl Hart was given a bottle of malt for his unflinching commitment to us and he seemed chuffed. After all of this, we were given a good send off with a strong invitation to visit again, to watch training or for a social exchange. The visiting party consisted of: The Branch Secretary, Malcolm Dunn, Nick Turnbull and Tommie Dignam the Branch Vice Chairman. The Branch AGM was held in February and Mr Nick Turnbull was elected Chairman.

Malcolm Dunn



Members of the Newcastle Branch attended a passing out parade at ITC Catterick and were hosted by the training team from The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

PERTH BRANCH

President: Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Roddy Riddell
Chairman: Captain Alan McEwen MBE
Secretary: Ally Alcorn
Treasurer: Frances Sandilands

The Perth Branch continues to foster comradeship during Association, wider Branch and Perth Branch events and we have enjoyed each other's company at a number of social events throughout this period.

Charitable Activity. You will have read in the November 2016 edition of this magazine that raffle ticket takings during the annual get together before the Reunion, raised the sum of £350.

On 3rd November 2016, Ally Alcorn presented a total of three cheques; firstly, two cheques were given to Lieutenant Colonel Roddy Riddell and Major Ronnie Proctor. The first was for £150 to the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) Association and the second for £100 to the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF), the Soldiers' Charity. Earlier in the day Ally also presented a cheque for £100 to the Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS), Perth and Kinross. Thanks to all those members from other Branches and the Perth Branch for their very generous contributions.

Croix de Guerre Dinner. The Branch held its annual Croix de Guerre dinner in the Salutation Hotel, Perth on Saturday 7th October and was delighted to welcome Mr Robert Balfour, Lord Lieutenant of Fife and his wife Jessica as our principal guests. We were also thrilled that Lieutenant Colonel Alasdair Steele, Commanding Officer The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland and Lieutenant Colonel Piers Strudwick, Commanding Officer 51st Highland, 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland and his wife Jane were able to join us. It was just fantastic to have Lance Corporal Watt and Private Moir from The Black Watch Battalion entertaining us so well with their excellent piping display. It may sound strange to those who are younger but when we "oldies" hear Highland Laddie and the Company marches being played, it lifts our spirits and then we think of ourselves as "young soldiers" again, marching behind the Pipes and Drums. It conjures up wonderful memories of friends, places and our service in the Regiment. It was a thoroughly enjoyable night. It is always absolutely wonderful to see all Branches coming together for a pleasurable social gathering.

Burns Supper. The Perth Branch of The Black Watch (RHR) Association Burns Night has become established on the social calendar for all Branches of the Association to attend. Jim Baird started the ball rolling, holding our first Branch Burns Night approximately 18 years ago. However it moved to the Salutation Hotel and we have held it there every year with great success. Attendance figures have been growing year on year and, next year's Burns Supper will be held on Saturday the 10th of February 2018 at the Salutation Hotel.

This year's Burns Night saw a charismatic line up to entertain the Branch Members and guests. We had the privilege of having the services of three Black Watch veterans Cammy Goodall, Jock Gilfillan and Dave Stacey who performed superbly on the night giving us a most memorable night of Burns passion, wit and genius.

The night started with the Address to the Haggis by Ally Alcorn who was accompanied by Sandy Clephane as Posey Nancy and the superb Branch Piper, Alistair Duthie. After the "Bill O Fayre" we then had a detailed and masterly Immortal Memory by Jock Gilfillan; his delivery and personality whilst performing this tale of the Bard's life is expertly delivered and one of the best you will see and hear.

However just when you think this cannot get any better Jock and Cammy Goodall came together to give us their rendition of "Twa Dugs" and I have to say this was one of the funniest moments I've experienced at a Burns Night. With very little rehearsal time they both delivered a recital of this tale that would have been worthy of an Oscar. They both brought to life these two characters and had the whole audience mesmerised and laughing at their antics and actions throughout. As they are both acting out a role of two dogs it's the first time I have seen Jock panting very heavily however I have seen Cammy panting quite a few times especially after a BFT.

Dave Stacey was up next with the Address to a Toothache and I'm sure if ever there was an advertisement to ensure that your dental health was up to scratch, then this was it. He made my back teeth ache and he also had a stash of medicine (port) in the secure possession of Roy Brown 41 to be administered on his request.

Cammy Goodall finished the recitals with Tam O Shanter and I have to say that world class is a phrase that comes to mind when you observe how Cammy delivers probably Robert Burns' greatest masterpiece. He was that good that Dave Stacey comically fainted during this very aggressive and witty delivery of the works that Cammy threw his heart and soul into. Sandy McDuff gave us an emotional Absent Friends and this was respectfully observed by the Branch Members and guests.

Thanks must go to the following people who helped to make this event a great success; Mr Jim Sandilands for doing the introductions as our MC for the night; Roy Brown 41 and Winky Greer for their great effort in running the raffle and to all members who donated the prizes. Finally, Mrs Frances Sandilands for ensuring the finances were in order throughout the event. We are grateful to everyone who made the night such a success.

Once the Burns Supper is finished in the Moncrieff Suite we normally retire to the bar/lounge for an after dinner drink and entertainment and this year was no different and our final thanks goes to Lee Fitzpatrick for his superb entertainment during the night, a very talented guy and musician.

Other Social Events. It has been a hugely enjoyable, but particularly busy period during which Perth Branch members attended a number of other Branches events; the Fife Branch Alma Ladies Lunch, the Angus Branch El Alamein Dinner, the Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch Ceilidh Night, the Dundee Branch Red Hackle Dinner, the Angus Branch Burns Supper and the Dundee Branch Families Day. We also look forward to attending the Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch Al Basrah Dinner on Saturday 6th May in the Apex Hotel, Haymarket, Edinburgh and the Highland Branch Aberfeldy Ladies Dinner Night on Saturday 19th May in Fort George, Ardersier. Sincere thanks to those Branches for being such fantastic hosts at all these splendid comradeship events.

A McEwen and A Alcorn



Sgt Kyle (left) and Sgt Ellis (right) from 3 SCOTS.



Jenny Barnett and Lt Col Alasdair Steele at the Croix de Guerre Dinner.



Ally Alcorn presents cheques to Lieutenant Colonel Riddell and Major Proctor.



WO1 Fairweather and Major Gary Wallace at the Perth Branch Burns Supper.



Alan McEwen, Cluggie Wood, Captain Nick Coles and Jenny Riddell at the Croix de Guerre Dinner.



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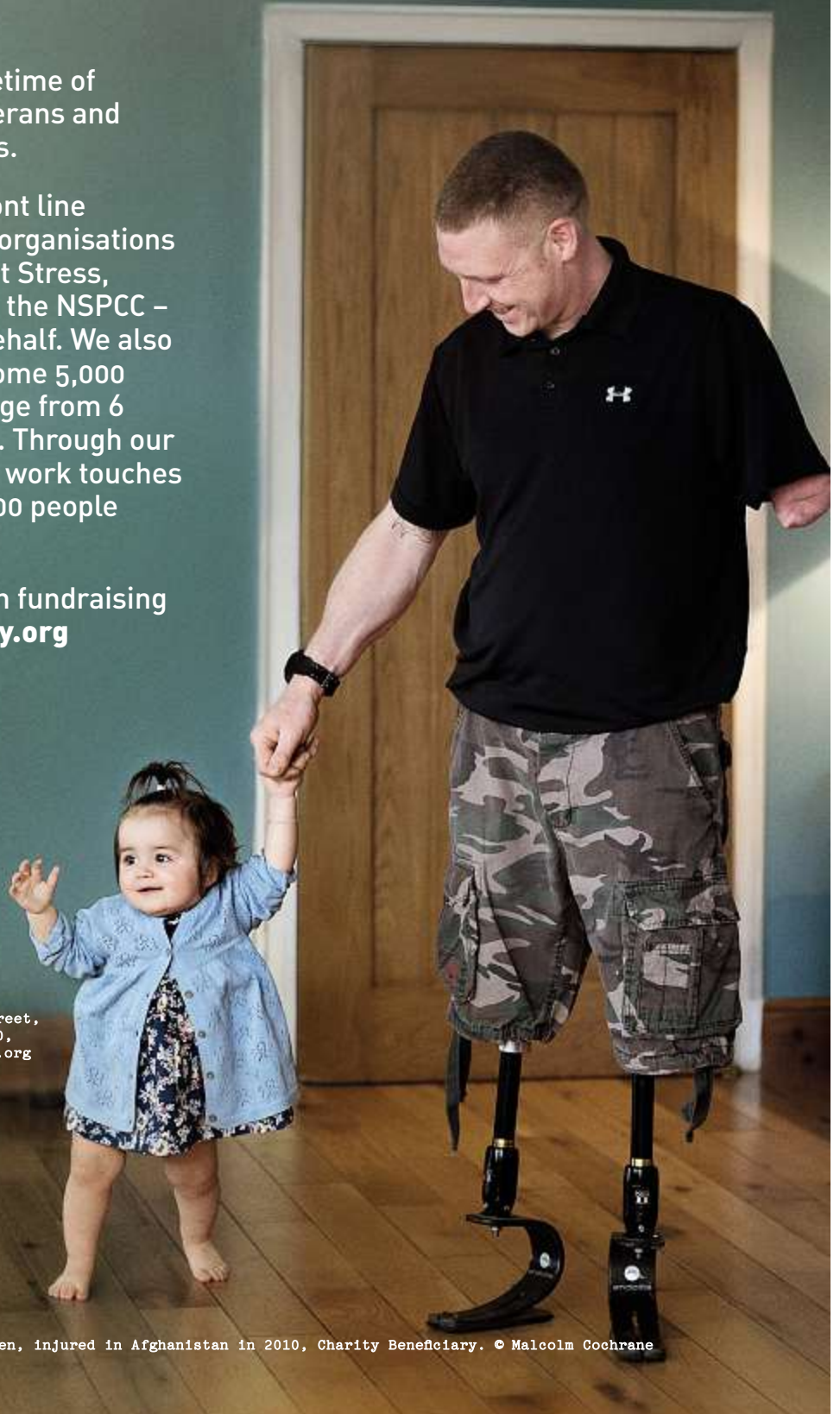
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