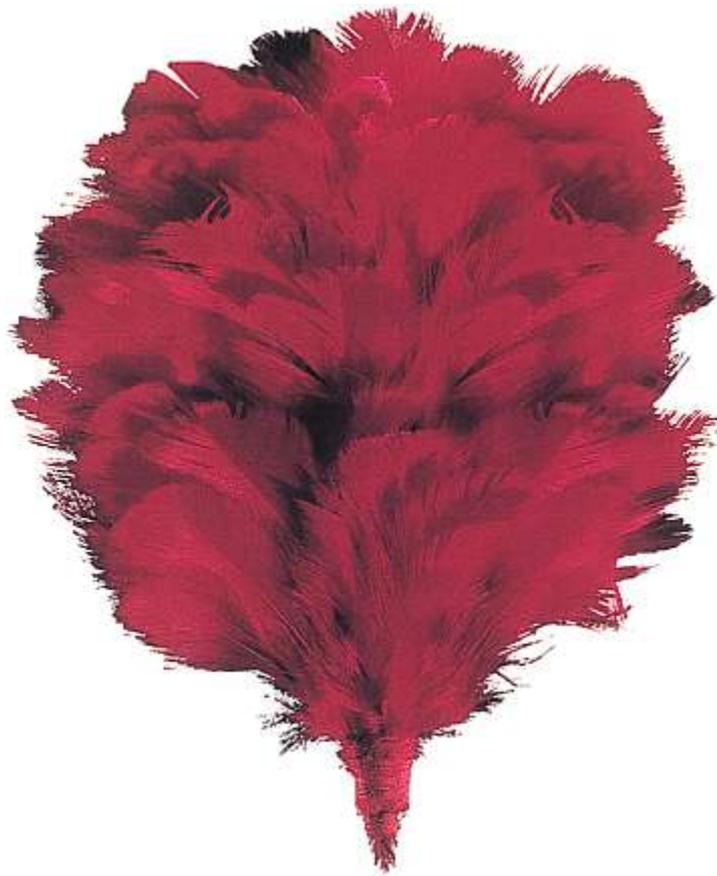


No. 152
November 2015



THE RED HACKLE

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CAN I CLAIM

If you drive your own vehicle to base and have been posted to different bases (including outside the UK), there's a good chance the taxman owes you a £2,500 refund. You may also be able to claim for Mess Dress.

Established in 1999, RIFT are the UK's leading tax refund experts. RIFT has reclaimed over £20 million for Armed Forces personnel in the last two years and in excess of £95 million for a range of sectors including construction, professional sports, oil and gas plus health personnel.

What is the claim actually for?

It's for tax relief on the cost of traveling between your main residence and your workplace. Your main residence is the place you go home to when you're on leave.

Can I claim for travel whilst I was training?

It will depend on the type of training. HMRC has strict rules about what is classed as an allowable expense around training. If it was an essential part of your contractual duties of employment then we might be able to claim for the traveling expense.

I already get expenses, can I still claim?

If you receive 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles plus 25p per mile thereafter, and you haven't paid tax on these amounts, great - you're being fully reimbursed. If it's anything less, you're entitled to claim the difference which is where we can help.

A colleague told me that service personnel can't claim back taxes, is this true?

DIN '2015DIN01-005' has been issued to service personnel to officially confirm that tax refunds for travel are claimable. It also states that you can use an agent to make a claim for you.

RIFT will act as your agent, providing an end to end service if you don't have the time or are not comfortable dealing with the technical legislation set out by HMRC. This supports the previous formal confirmation we received from the Ministry of Defence which can be read here: <http://www.riftrefunds.co.uk/helpand-advice/mod-communications/>

Can't I do my own claim?

Yes. But please be aware that you will need to comply with the legislation on temporary workplaces and have the time to liaise directly with HMRC. However if you don't apply the rules correctly and claim more than you are entitled to, HMRC may seek to recover some or all of your refund.

Can HMRC demand the money back?

Yes, HMRC can if you've claimed too much. The difference from doing it yourself is that we assess your claim thoroughly against the legislation and providing you give us full and accurate information, we offer you our RIFT Guarantee. This means that if any money recovered is repayable to HMRC, RIFT will make the repayment at no cost to you. We will also defend any HMRC enquiry free of charge - it's all part of our service.

Will it cost me anything to find out if I can claim?

It's free to find out if you are eligible for a claim, we just need to ask you a few qualifying questions first. If you do have a claim, you are not under any obligation to use our services and we don't charge you anything until we get you your refund.

For more FAQs visit:
riftrefunds.co.uk/MOD

No. 152

42nd



73rd

November 2015

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 Pipes and Drums of The Black Watch Battalion played before the Aberfeldy Muster Parade on 21st June 2015.



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If you're a member of the Armed Forces, or the husband, wife or civil partner of someone in the Armed Forces, you can register to vote either as a Service Voter or as an ordinary voter. The way you choose to register to vote is up to you and will depend on your personal circumstances.

If you're based overseas, or expect to be posted abroad in the next year, it makes sense to register as a Service Voter. This allows you to be registered at a fixed address in the UK even if you move around. A Service Voter registration also lasts for five years, so once you're registered, you shouldn't have to worry about it while you're busy overseas.

If you're based in the UK and are unlikely to change address or be posted overseas in the next year, you can register as an ordinary voter.

As you probably know, most people vote in person by going to a polling station in the UK but don't worry if you're abroad at the time of the election or have another reason why you won't be able to vote in person on the day - you can apply to vote by post or by proxy (someone voting on your behalf).

The voting age for Scottish elections has been permanently lowered to 16.

If you are under 18 years old and turn 15 by 30 November 2015 and living with a parent or guardian who is a member of HM Forces, living in Scotland or would be living in Scotland if your parent or guardian were not based overseas, then you can register as a Service Voter. Your registration will be renewed every year until you turn 18. Please contact us for a registration application form.

Want further information on registration or voting?

Phone the Freephone Helpline on 0800 393783

e-mail: ero@highland.gov.uk

or write to the Electoral Registration Officer,

Moray House,

16-18 Bank Street,

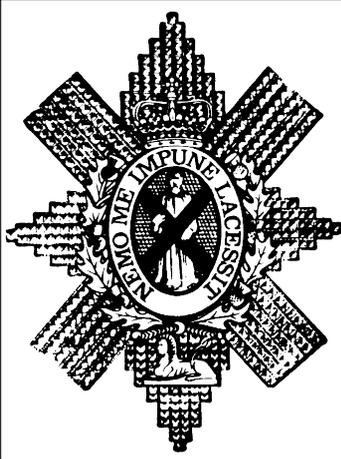
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YOUR VOTE MATTERS

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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*

**November 2015
No. 152**

Published for The Black Watch



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Editorial

The commemorations of First World War battles and events have held centre stage for the Association and Museum with the battles of Aubers Ridge and Loos and the Victoria Cross ceremonies for Lance Corporal David Finlay and Corporal John Ripley taking place. In addition the Golf Meeting, Reunion and Aberfeldy Muster have all been a success.

Branches have also been active with the Angus Branch conducting a battlefield tour to Belgium, the Perth Branch an outing to the Famous Grouse Visitor Centre as well as to the Tattoo. The Edinburgh and Lothians Branch held their first Al Basrah Dinner in May and the Fife Branch their Alma Ladies Lunch in September. In London the normal round of summer events has kept people busy and Red Hackles have been on parade across the capital.

The Museum has had an interesting summer (the weather in June, July and August was far from interesting) with an exhibition on the Battle of Waterloo and the return of many of the First World War era documents from being digitised. The staff have organised the daily ceremonies to commemorate the officers and men who were killed during the Great War as well as the two major commemorations of 1915 battles.

The Black Watch Battalion has completed an operational deployment in support of the UN (OP TOSCA 22) in Cyprus. Battalion Headquarters and two Companies deployed leaving the Rear Operations Group and two Companies in Fort George. Those remaining in Scotland undertook training in Kenya and in France. They will now enjoy a period of leave before commencing training for their new role.

There are a number of interesting articles in this edition of the magazine and during this period of Great War commemorations the memoirs of Sergeant Miller are particularly poignant. Malcolm Innes has written a short and informative piece about "Snaffles" and has illustrated it with images from his own collection. I also hope that for older readers, the images from the archive will bring back happy memories of their service in the Regiment.

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 2015/2016		
DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
2015		
19 November	London Branch Dinner	Victory Services Club London
19 December	Officers' Regimental Ball	Errol Park
2016		
9 January	Edinburgh Branch Ceilidh Night	Edinburgh
15 January	Dundee Branch Red Hackle Dinner	Dundee
23 January	Angus Branch Burns Supper	RBL Forfar
6 February	Perth Branch Burns Supper	Salutation Hotel Perth
9 March	London Branch AGM & Lunch	London
18 March	Vimy Ridge Dinner (Fife Branch)	Kirkcaldy
9 April	Angus Branch Spring Dance	Arbroath
23 April	Association AGM	Perth
23 April	WOs and Sgts Dining Club AGM and Dinner	Perth (tbc)
7 May	Al Basrah Dinner	Edinburgh
20 May	Friends' Cocktail Party	Balhousie Castle
13 June	Officers and Ladies Lunch	London
14 June	Golf v A&SH	Roxburgh
17 June	Black Watch Association Golf Meeting	Muckhart Golf Club
18 June	Regimental Reunion	Perth
18 September	Angus Branch Standard Rededication	Carnoustie
18 September	Fife Branch Alma Lunch	Kirkcaldy
1 October	Perth Branch Croix de Guerre Dinner	Salutation Hotel Perth
22 October	Angus Branch El Alamein Dinner	RBL Forfar
28 October	Officers Gathering Dinner	Perth
11 November	Balhousie Castle Remembrance Service	Perth
17 November	London Branch Dinner	Victory Services Club London

CONGRATULATIONS

To Colonel J C Roddis MBE on the award of the DSO in the Operational Honours List dated 20 February 2015.

To Major D M Sheldrick on his selection for promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 2015.

To Lieutenant Colonel R R E Lindsay on his provisional selection for promotion to Colonel in 2016.

To Lieutenant Colonel A P Reilly on his provisional selection for promotion to Colonel 2016. He commanded The Black Watch Battalion from 2010-2012.

To Lieutenant Colonel M E Munro on his provisional selection for promotion to Colonel in 2016. He commanded A (Grenadier) Company in The Black Watch Battalion during OP HERRICK 10.

The following officers and NCOs of The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland received awards for their work during OP VOCATE:

Lieutenant Colonel A P Reilly – OBE

Captain M James – MBE

WO1 P Marshall – CGS Commendation

Lieutenant N J T Coles – CLF Commendation

Lance Corporal P Dagleish – CLF Commendation.

To Sergeant Trickovic who was awarded the MBE in the New Years Honours List 2015 for his services to the Welfare Department of The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

It is a remarkable fact that by August 2017 there will be seven officers who were commissioned into The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) commanding battalions or other units in the Army.

Lieutenant Colonel D C Close – The Royal Highland Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (July 2017)

Lieutenant Colonel R S J Hedderwick – The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (March 2017)

Lieutenant Colonel N K G Tomlin – The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (August 2016)

Lieutenant Colonel J R McElhinney – 52nd Lowland, 6th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (July 2016)

Lieutenant Colonel D M Sheldrick – 51st Highland, 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (August 2017)

Lieutenant Colonel N E Ord – City of Edinburgh UOTC (July 2017)

Lieutenant Colonel A V Cooper

Editor's note: This was brought to my attention by a serving officer who was commissioned into the Royal Regiment of Scotland but who was originally on "The Black Watch Baby List". He pointed out, that without the direction and hard work of The Colonel of The Regiment (Brigadier G C Barnett) and the Regimental Secretaries (Colonel R T T Gurdon, Lieutenant Colonel S J Lindsay and Lieutenant Colonel R M Riddell), The Royal Regiment of Scotland would not be benefitting from the raft of high quality officers.

CORRECTIONS

There was a typographical error on page 5 of the November 2014 edition of the Red Hackle Magazine. In the Congratulations paragraph it should have read Lieutenant Colonel N K G Tomlin and not N K G Tomkin.

THE GOVERNOR OF EDINBURGH CASTLE

The Governor of Edinburgh Castle is a role that has traditionally been carried out by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Scotland. As the Army continues to evolve, the post of GOC Scotland is to end. The Army has decided that, in order to cover the duties associated with the Governor of Edinburgh Castle, a Reserve officer should be employed to take on the commitment. Exactly what those duties will be is still in the process of being defined but the main elements will be; being a member of the Royal Household during Royal Week, safeguarding the Army's interests in Edinburgh Castle, hosting the Army's evenings at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo and other evenings throughout the year, in the Castle's Great Hall. The Governor will also represent the Army on a number of other Committees, such as the Board of the Scottish National War Memorial. Finally, with many events in Scotland, it is anticipated that the Governor of Edinburgh Castle might represent the Army at other occasions, such as the Battle of Loos weekend in Dundee. Major General (Retired) Mike Riddell-Webster assumed the appointment on 6th July 2015.

HMS MONTROSE

HMS Montrose is still undergoing refit and there are no notes in this edition of the Journal.

REGIMENTAL HISTORY – HIGHLAND FURIES VOLUME 2

The Regimental history covering the period from 1899-2006 is now well advanced and Victoria Schofield has been working very long hours, carrying out research and writing the chapters. It is planned to have this second volume published in the Summer of 2016.

BLACK WATCH ASSOCIATION GOLF MEETING

By Major (Retd) Alex Stewart

The annual Black Watch Association Golf Meeting was held at Muckhart Golf Club this year on 19th June. We had another very successful meeting with 29 players taking part. The number was a little down on the previous year but this was largely due to the fact that nobody from The Black Watch Battalion was able to take part due to their commitments. Nevertheless, it was great to see so many of the same old faces turning up – but equally good to see lots of members playing for the first time. All players should continue to spread the word about this excellent day's golf.

The competition produced some of the best scores ever seen, played in outstanding weather considering the awful Summer we have had this year, with the odd surprise winner thrown in for good measure. The golf was played, as always, in the right spirit and as usual no quarter was given with the 'friendly' abuse being dished out. Everyone attending had a great time with some good golf being played in the beautiful surroundings of the Ochil hills.

As always, there are prize winners to be congratulated. The Best Gross winner this year was attending for the first time; with a handicap of 16, the winner was Tony Flynn with a gross score of 79. This was outstanding golf and took everyone by surprise. In addition, he was almost matched by Dave Smith who won the Best Net with a 64 and Beab Laing with the Best Stableford score of 41. In the afternoon, we played a 9 hole team Texas Scramble and the winning team was Allan Brannigan, Jamie Howe and Pete Proudfoot. There were, of course, some novelty prizes and it was pleasing to see our sponsors representative, Simon Dunn from Sidey Ltd, win the longest drive prize.

There are, of course, people to thank for their support with the Regimental Golf. Firstly, the Regimental Association Trustees who pledge a healthy subsidy which enables planning for the event to go ahead with confidence. Without this promise of support, we could not even get off the ground. Secondly our sponsors. Sidey Ltd has been our headline sponsor for a number of years now and it is hard to imagine us going forward without them – their support has been invaluable and enables us to provide the prizes for the competition. Thirdly, a more silent, but just as welcome sponsor is Falcon Food Services who are based in Stirling. And finally, the golfers themselves. Many travel great distances to take part, and a few (quietly in the background) provide additional prizes to support the day. All are welcome, and if they come bearing gifts, even more so!

The event has become an important date in many calendars and for many Regimental golfers it is the highlight of their year. It is not just the golf, but the tremendous comradeship felt and enjoyed by those

taking part and for most, the latter is the most important aspect. Next year's event will take place again at Muckhart on 17th June 2015. This is an excellent day's golf with full catering and can be enjoyed by Black Watch Association members and serving members of 3 SCOTS. Full details are contained at <http://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 akstewart42@btinternet.com.

HIGHLAND BRIGADE GOLFING SOCIETY AND BLACK WATCH GOLF

By Captain Bruce Osborne

The Society continues to have a good fixture list and for those who take part, matches at several august courses including the Old Course at St Andrews, Prestwick, Panmure, Nairn, Montrose, The Berkshire, West Sussex and to be reconstituted in 2016, a match against the Seniors at Muirfield. There can be few small societies left which can boast such a fixture list.

The highlight of 2015 was the annual Two day Spring Meeting held at Panmure Golf Club in late May. For the first time the Lowland Brigade antecedent regiments were invited to take part and they formed a strong composite team which swept the board in virtually every competition. The injection of fresh talent will certainly encourage the Highlanders to raise their game at the 2016 meeting to be held, again at Panmure, on the 24th and 25th May.

In June, in a departure from previous years, the annual match between the Black Watch and The Argylls was held at The Roxburghe outside Kelso. In all 19 golfers assembled and a most convivial day was had, helped by playing 12 holes before an excellent lunch and 6 holes afterwards to aid the digestive system. Although a young course, The Roxburghe is beautifully laid out with stunning views of Borders countryside and many testing holes and greens, tightly guarded by deep bunkers. Despite being given a sound thrashing, The Black Watch team have decided to host the match at The Roxburghe in 2016.

The final match of the season is a two day dinner match at Prestwick which alternates between the Guards and the Rifles. This year it is against the Rifles over the weekend of 17/18 October and is a hard fought affair with three rounds of foursomes. People travel from all over the world to play over the historic Prestwick links which hosted the first British Open in 1860 and the Society is extremely fortunate to still have this venue for one of its matches.



From left to right – Simon Dunn (Sidey Rep), Tony Flynn, Dave Smith, Beab Laing and Alex Stewart.

The Societies fixture list is issued by the Highland and Lowland Brigades' Club and anybody wishing to play in any match is encouraged to contact the respective match managers.

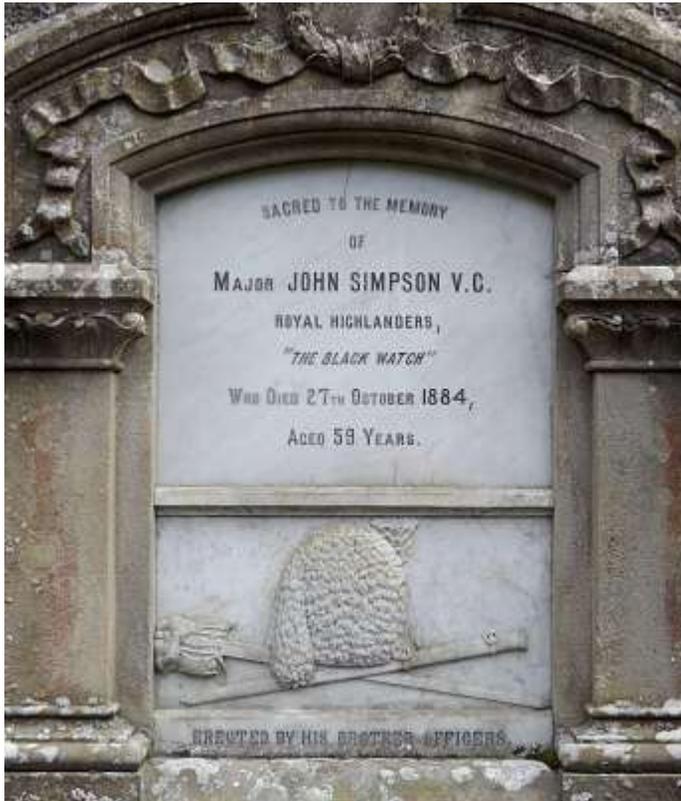
BLACK WATCH ASSOCIATION CURLING

By Major J M K Erskine MBE

The curling season will get under way in November and the first match will be against the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Inter Regimental matches are open to all ranks but Highland and Lowland Brigade Club Curling is only open to officers who are members of the Club.

2015
15 Nov – BW v A&SH (2 Rinks) Stirling

2016
21 Jan – BW v Hldrs (2 Rinks) Perth
11 Feb – H&LBCC v The New Club Kinross
17 Mar – H&LBCC v The Royal Company of Archers Kinross
24 Mar – H&LBCC Bonspiel Perth



Roy Brown (41) who worked for Perth and Kinross Council for many years found this memorial to Major John Simpson VC who won his award at Fort Ruhya on 15 April 1858. The memorial can be found at St Martins Parish Church, which is five miles North of Perth.



This signpost in the grounds of Balhousie Castle was presented by Mrs Christine Morgan in memory of her son Marc Ferns who was killed in Iraq on 12 Aug 2004.



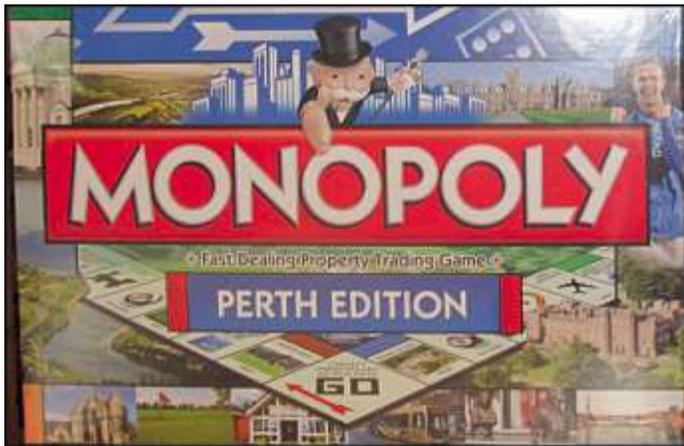
When the Church in Abercorn Barracks, Ballykinler was closed, the stained glass window presented by the Regiment was removed and returned to Balhousie Castle.



Mr David Young of Morris Young Group, a family run haulage company based in Perth, is pictured beside the third generation of trucks named after The Black Watch. This cab was bought in 2009 and the Morris Young Group have been great supporters of the Regiment.

Museum Shop

The Museum Shop has three new items for sale. The 2015 Christmas Card, a Snaffles painting, will cost £6.50 for 10 cards. The Regimental diary costs £5.99 and the new Perthshire Monopoly Board which includes the Black Watch Museum is priced at £24.99. All can be ordered on line or can be collected from the shop.



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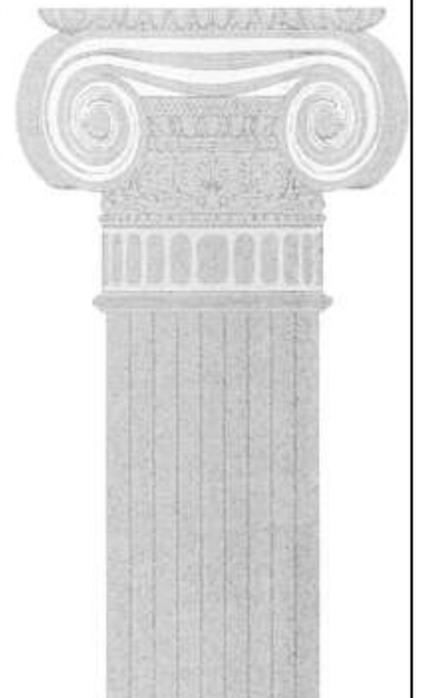
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 Angus Ferguson
 Major General Mike Riddell-Webster CBE, DSO
 Sean O'Reilly

SUMMER 2015 AT THE CASTLE AND MUSEUM

By Anne Kinnes, Chief Executive

We are delighted that for the year to date we are breaking all previous visitor number records that we held for the Castle and Museum.

From the 1st of July we increased the number of daily guided tours from one to two each day and these have been a real success. In the period 1 July to 28 August we sold 172 daily tours.

On Saturday 5th September we hosted our inaugural Summer Festival the weather was very kind to us and the sun shone. We had over 500 visitors to the Castle and Museum and from an income point of view the Café and the Museum had its most successful day since opening.

We introduced a new menu in the Café in July which has been well received. The design on the outer cover is in line with our new images. In addition we have also incorporated information on the outer cover about us as an organisation to help customers get a better understanding of why we are here.

We have run a focused marketing campaign aimed at the local visitor in particular on the old Black Watch recruiting area. This has proved most successful for us. We are about to go live with our new website for which the Association has developed and contributed their own new pages.

All these changes have resulted on our total income growing by 20% on 2014 figures with our now award winning café growing beyond all our expectations and showing an overall increase to date this year of 40%.

We look forward to welcoming all Association members to the Castle and Museum in the coming months.

FRIENDS OF THE BLACK WATCH

By Sarah Riddell-Webster

When *The Friends* were first formed five years ago our aim was to encourage people to take an interest in and support The Black Watch Castle and Museum as it underwent major refurbishment and subsequent reopening. Our early members mostly came from within the Regimental family and showed great faith in our fledgling organization as we really had very little to offer them in terms of advantages to membership. There are now many advantages to membership and as a result we have, over those five years, built a substantial following that continues to grow steadily. Roughly half our members come from within twenty miles of Perth. The other 50% come from the further corners of the regimental area and also from overseas. In August alone we welcomed new members from America, Italy and Belgium. We were delighted that at the Regimental Reunion in June a number of Association members took out membership of *The Friends*. They were all from much further afield than Perthshire, Angus and Fife, so I am doubly grateful to them for their support, as they are too far away to visit regularly.

Two years on from the reopening of Balhousie Castle we have taken stock of what we have achieved so far and how we can best help the Museum in the future. Over the last five years we have put over £21,000 into the Museum in the form of grants and help with administrative costs. We will also, at the end of this financial year, finish paying back

the start up loan we were given by the Regimental Trust. With a membership of over 400, we are in a strong position to be able to maintain that level of financial support.

The Friends have always run two keynote lectures a year with the Museum running the rest of the lecture timetable however, *The Friends* have now taken over the whole of the lecture programme. This change will allow for greater flexibility in where lectures can be held and also a more consistent experience for those attending. Through our contacts we have been able to put together a very comprehensive lecture programme given by visiting lecturers. There is a lecture every month and we are trying to cover as many of the most significant WW1 battles as we can as close to their centenary as possible. With this year being the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, we ran a series of three lectures which enabled us to cover this most significant of battles in depth. The lectures are attracting 70-80 people, which is testament to the quality of the speakers and the fascinating subjects they present. Occasionally we vary the type of lecture. Earlier in the year Louis Flood, well known Perth photographer, gave us a wonderful run through of many of the pictures he had taken of The Black Watch over 40 years. There were people and places that took many of the audience for a trip down memory lane; Colonel David Arbuthnott was able to give a fulsome and amusing commentary on each picture. We are extremely grateful to all those that give so generously of their time to come and speak on their subjects. Details of the full lecture can be found in the events section of the website, www.theblackwatch.co.uk. Everyone is welcome, just ring 01738 638152 to book your tickets.

There are other events organized by *The Friends*. As this Red Hackle arrives with you a 'weather resistant' group of *The Friends* will be taking part in a battlefield tour of Sheriffmuir. The tour is being led by Ruari Halford-MacLeod and is a follow up to the fascinating lecture that Ruari gave this summer on the 1715 Jacobite uprising and the Battle of Sheriffmuir. In February we will be taking a *Friends* tour to St John's Kirk in Perth. There are many Regimental links to St John's, one of them being the 6th Battalion window. The tour will be led by Major Derek Mowatt, who is extremely knowledgeable on the links between the Kirk and the Regiment. This year we have also hosted several *Friends* coffee mornings and the annual Cocktail Party at Balhousie. If you have not been part of any of these events but would like to be then do please join *The Friends*.



Lt Gen Sir Alistair Irwin introduces Sir Hew Strachan at a lecture given in Balhousie Castle.

MUSEUM NOTES

By Emma Halford-Forbes

Archived Material Digitised

In June 2015 we completed the first stage of our digitisation project. This saw the return of over 500 pieces of archival material that had been digitised, totalling over 20,000 pieces of paper. The digitised material will now be made available to researchers and staff on site and remotely upon request. In addition, over the coming months and years, low resolution copies will be made available via our new collections online feature on the website.

First World War Memorial Wall

Our First World War Memorial Wall project has continued with almost daily services – these are well received. Families have been in attendance for several ceremonies and have been most grateful for the opportunity to remember their family members. Over 1500 crosses have been placed on the wall already.

On 9 May 2015 we remembered the over 300 men who were killed during the Battle of Aubers Ridge 100 years before. Cadets, serving soldiers and Association members attended the service.

On the 25 September, we held a large memorial service for over 500 men who were killed during the Battle of Loos on that day 100 years before. Reverend A Forsyth led the service, which was well attended.

New Arrivals To The Museum Collection

One of our most recent acquisitions is a selection of items which belonged to Major General Sir Victor Fortune. This included a variety of medals which he was awarded throughout his service including his First World War and Second World War medals, as well as his DSO and KBE. He also received a number of gratitude medals from countries such as France and Portugal. This acquisition also included a number of his certificates including one for the Memorable Order of Tin Hats.

Major General Fortune was commissioned into The Black Watch in 1903 and served throughout the First World War, inter-war years and the Second World War. He was taken Prisoner of War in 1940 and spent the rest of the war working to improve the conditions of the men under his charge.

Waterloo Lives

In May 2015 we opened a new temporary exhibition entitled 'Waterloo Lives' that was created in partnership with the National Army Museum (NAM) in order to celebrate the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo. This included rarely seen objects from NAM's collection as well as items from our permanent collection. Exhibited is a French New Testament which was taken by a soldier of the 42nd Highlanders from the pocket of a French officer after he was killed at Waterloo. NAM has also provided the cloak and busby of Captain William Verner of the 7th Light Dragoons. He wore these at both Quatre Bras and Waterloo. The exhibition will run until to end of October.



Maj Gen M Riddell-Webster reading the narrative of the Battle of Loos at the "Memorial Wall" service.

Book Reviews

STEP BACK - Finding the way forward By Norman Drummond

Norman Drummond is a former Chaplain to the 1st Battalion The Black Watch and since leaving the Army he has been a headmaster, BBC Governor and Chair of BBC Children in Need, as well as founding Columba 1400 an award winning charity seeking to change the life outcomes of young people from challenging backgrounds.

The book is aimed at people whose lives are so busy that they do not make time to step back from the daily grind whether it be for a few minutes each day or for longer periods of time. He correctly identifies that by doing so it helps create more clarity of thought and helps people discern their true priorities.

The text is enriched by extracts of poems, proverbs and quotations which make the reader pause for thought. One example is a Sanskrit proverb;

Look to this day...

For yesterday is but a dream and tomorrow is only a vision.

But today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness

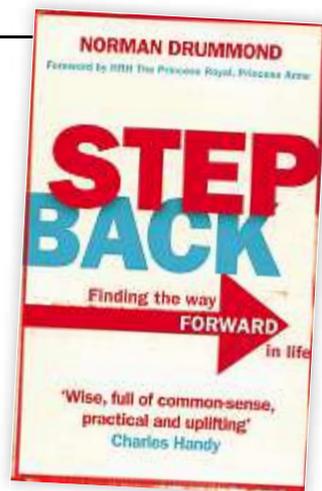
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Look well therefore to this day.

Such is the salutation of the dawn.

Norman writes in a very clear manner and the book does make you evaluate how you live your own life.

Hodder & Stoughton: ISBN 978-0-340-97993-8 £14.99 hardback



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Dear Editor

THE BLACK WATCH IN THE HIGH ATLAS

Sir,

I was delighted to read Lieutenant Nick Coles' article in the May 2015 edition about Exercise Northern Atlas Hackle in Morocco in October 2014. I am glad that the party of 2014 had a challenging and fulfilling trip to the High Atlas – a wild and fascinating mountain range.

However, this was not The Black Watch's first visit to the High Atlas nor, indeed, its first ascent of Jebel Toubkal, at 4,165m the highest mountain in North Africa. In 1970, a group from the 1st Battalion in Gibraltar spent a month in the mountains climbing and hill walking, including making the ascent of Toubkal and several other peaks over 12,000' or 3,660m. We took the ferry to Tangier and then drove for two days to get to Marrakech and beyond to the mountains.

Our leader was the wonderful climbing padre, Donald Beaton; I was his 2IC (apparently my O-level French was a major enabling capability!) and our admin rock was Colour Sergeant Jim Holderness, who took to all that 1970's Morocco could throw at us in his stride. He also organised an impressive donkey hire operation from our base camp at the Berber village of Imlil. I was amused to see from Nick Coles' article that donkeys are still the off-road logistic system of choice in the Atlas. A contrasting feature of our exercise was that the Commanding Officer (Andy Watson) insisted that either I or Jim Holderness drove down to Marrakech general post office once a week to report in by telephone. Getting a line through to Gibraltar was a linguistic feat in itself.

Our 1970 ascent of Jebel Toubkal was similar to last year's with a pre-dawn start from the Moroccan Alpine Club hut but was mainly up a huge steep snowfield until we came to a rocky cap on the higher reaches of the mountain around the summit which we reached about mid-morning. The view, as last year's Black Watch climbers know, was spectacular. We could see from Marrakech to the north to a distant grey image of the Sahara Desert to the south.

After Toubkal, we split into a number of smaller parties to make other climbs. Donald Beaton had inspired and nurtured climbing and mountaineering in the battalion and there were some fine climbers. Lance Corporal 'Scotty' Scott of the MT Platoon and I trekked some 10 miles to the east of Imlil to climb a 12,000' peak called Anrhemmer, having snow-holed overnight below the last 2 hours of climbing. The photograph shows LCpl Scott on the summit ridge, just short of the top. When we all returned to the battalion, Gibraltar seemed a very small place.

Well done, the Black Watch mountaineers of 2014. It's good to know that some traditions are maintained.

Donald Wilson

Dear Editor

On hearing of the death of Major Mike Lindsay-Stewart I was reminded of the many cartoons he drew during his service. One of my favourites was of Support Company in Northern Ireland in 1974. His trade mark "kilted" mouse is very much in evidence.

Donald Wilson



From left to right – Support Company 1974: Captains Irwin and Gray, CSM Jim Adam and Major de Broë-Ferguson.



LCpl Scott on the High Atlas in 1970.

Obituaries

D G BLAIR

Grahame Blair, a National Service Officer who served with the 2nd Battalion in Guyana died on 4th September 2014 after a long illness.

Educated at Glenalmond from 1949-1954 he was a fine athlete and won the Victor Ludorum in 1953. A tall, powerfully built man he captained the School 1st XV and was a good golfer.

He joined The Black Watch at Queen's Barracks in September 1954 and won the boxing competition for that entry, knocking out all his opponents including the author. He successfully completed Eaton Hall and joined the 2nd Battalion where he continued to enjoy his sport.

After National Service, he joined the Shell International Oil Company. He married his first wife, Kay, when he was 25, and had two children. His son, Professor Grahame Blair is Executive Director of programmes on the Science and Technology Facility's Council and his daughter, Fiona, is a dentist. He spent a great deal of his working life travelling abroad for Shell and was posted to Kenya for 5 years where both his children were born. He returned to the UK but his duties took him abroad, which he really enjoyed.

In 1984, he married his second wife, Brenda and in 1989, he was posted to the Maldive Islands to set up a Shell Office, prior to prospecting for oil. After 3 years there, and no oil being found, he was sent to Sweden and then on to the Baltic States, where he led a team trying to re-establish retail petrol outlets in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Belarus. During this time he was based in Latvia.

In 1994 he retired and moved to Malta where he and Brenda spent 11 happy years, living in a beautiful Maltese farmhouse.

In 2005, they moved back to the UK but unfortunately Grahame was diagnosed, first with multiple myeloma cancer and then later with dementia. He coped with all his problems with great fortitude.

R Adam



MAJOR COLIN PETER LINDSAY

Peter Lindsay, he never used his first name Colin, died on the 9th August 2015 at Muirton Care Home in Blairgowrie.

He was born on 1st November 1924 in Shanghai, China where his father Harry Lindsay, who was brought up in Montrose was in the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. Later he founded a firm of exchange brokers called Lindsay, Drackford and Davies.

Peter's mother's family also served in Shanghai but were originally Orcadian seafarers. Sheila, Peter's wife's parents were also Shanghai expatriate bankers although her mother Lady Cockburn was born in Russia and hailed from Paisley as did Sir William Cockburn.

Peter went to Durnford prep-school near Weymouth in Dorset and was introduced to crossword puzzles, a hobby which stayed with him for the rest of his life. Even when in his eighties although getting frailer and forgetful, he was able to do The Times' crossword in about an hour.

He entered Marlborough College in September 1938 and left in July 1941 aged sixteen. He was keen on sports and gifted in sketching.

His elder brother born in January 1919 was Captain Ronald Lindsay who served in The Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment and was killed in action in Tunisia in February 1943.

Peter, aged 16, attempted to join The Queen's Royal West Surrey's but was discovered to be under-age. After a few months, he joined The Lovat Scouts who were at that time, a Light Anti-Aircraft unit of the Royal Artillery based and recruited in Orkney and Shetland. The Lovats were colloquially known as "The Highland Gunners" and Peter much enjoyed their training which included mountaineering, abseiling and skiing. He enjoyed learning from the many ghillies in their ranks.



He was selected for officer training and was sent out to India as a cadet wearing a Queen's regimental badge. He trained at the Officer Training School (OTS) at Bangalore and was granted an Emergency Commission into The Black Watch on 1st November 1944. He was then posted to the 2nd Battalion – a parachute battalion in the 44th Indian Airborne Division – at Bilaspur where he commanded a platoon. He underwent parachute training at Chaklala near Rawalpindi. He enjoyed jungle training at Kota Camp (and big game shooting with a service rifle) and moved with the Battalion to Secunderabad.

Peter was selected to be ADC to Major General Ernest Down, Commander of the 44th Indian Airborne Division in Karachi. On 1st November 1945, he was granted a Regular Commission into The Black Watch and left India on Independence to be posted to the Regimental Depot in Perth and soon joined the 1st Battalion in Duisburg, Germany.

In July 1948 at the Amalgamation Parade of the 1st and 2nd Battalions in Duisburg, Lieutenant Peter Lindsay carried the Regimental Colour of the 1st Battalion and Lieutenant Ian Critchley that of the 2nd Battalion. This was an historic occasion for never before in the Regiment's long history had there been an amalgamation of the 1st and 2nd Battalions.

The Battalion trained at Vogelsang and Sennelager and, for the Brigade Games, at the Duisburg Stadium. We also enjoyed shooting at Haffen, Anholt, Gartrop near the Rhine and also on the coke bings at Essen. Many had dogs and Peter inherited a Great Dane called "Hamlet".

Peter managed to slip from the Ruhrland, firstly to attend the Small Arms School at Hythe for several weeks, and then on 11th November 1949 to marry Sheila Cockburn at St Saviour's Church in Pont Street, London. His best man was Captain Earle Nicoll who was on the Brigade Headquarters' staff and his ushers and friends were Rowley Tarleton, Ian Critchley, Sam McCall-McCowan and Bruce Hamilton's sister. Peter was allocated a married quarter in Duisburg and on 22nd August 1950 their eldest daughter was born in Dusseldorf.

The Battalion soon moved to Berlin. Peter took part in the Battalion's important role in barracks near the Gatow airfield (recently a major player in the airlift. Montgomery Barracks was on the banks of the Havel See near the Grunewald and close to the fencing dividing the British Sector from the East Germans or Russians. Ceremonial duties and others such as guarding the prisoners in Spandau were interesting.

In October 1951 the Battalion moved to Buxtehude and on 21st November 1951 Vanessa Lindsay was born in the British Military Hospital in Hamburg.

The Battalion was warned for service in Korea and posted for a short period to Crail in Fife in order that HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, recently widowed could visit the Battalion to wish it God-speed. In those days, officers' private cars were transported in military trains and ships. The Lindsay's Humber Super Snipe was delivered safely but the Critchley's brand new Austin had a hatch-cover dropped on it in Bremen harbour.

In Korea, Peter was established at 'A' Echelon – a place behind the frontlines which housed HQ Company consisting of administrators, motor transport and Signals Platoon personnel and often the Pipes and Drums when not used as a front-line platoon, as well as stores and reserves. 'A' Echelon also ran a bath-house and cinema for men given a break from the 'sharp end'. NCOs cadres were also run from this location. Peter was the President of the Regimental Institutes (PRI) charged with running various funds and the financial gifts of the 'Comforts Fund' and visited all companies of the Battalion and its Command Post.

On 2nd August 1953 Peter accompanied the Battalion to Kenya and was a Company Second-in-Command. In due course, he took command in the difficult political situation and in the unrewarding and interminable patrolling against the Mau-Mau. There were great difficulties put in the way of making Kenya a married family's station and allocating quarters. Eventually some were allowed to rent settler's houses but in the meantime RAF Indulgence flights home were allowed.

The CO, David Rose writes in his book 'Off the Record': "Poor Peter Lindsay has had such bad luck. He went off in great form to re-join his family. The plane had engine trouble and they were all told to go back to their hotels. Peter went early to bed and the others

were all whisked off to the landing ground at 4am. No-one woke Peter. He stormed round GHQ and I am told they more or less laughed at him and just said he would have to wait for a week. So Peter went home at his own expense – £140.”

Peter had some political and press difficulties which were solved by posting him home in April 1955. He sailed in the SS Dilwara with the reformed 2nd Battalion to British Guiana and was noted to be with Major Smith-Cunningham the first in the queue for the bars’ opening time. They both had the best houses in Georgetown. Peter also served in Atkinson Field and was a marked player in both the Battalion’s rucker and hockey teams. He was a rucker wing-forward and was, on the social side, pleased to be serving with the Hamiltons, Burnaby-Atkins Lloyd Jones, Watsons and Telfer-Smolletts, many of whom were life-long friends.

The Battalion was disbanded in October 1956 after a period in Edinburgh and Perth.

Peter’s last job, before retiring on 1st September 1957 was as the Regular Training Major of the 4th/5th Battalion in Dundee and Angus. A grateful government had ruled that ‘last jobs be near Regimental Depots’ thus it was that his third daughter, Harriet, was born on 5th August 1957 in the Dundee Royal Infirmary and not, as planned, in the Fernbrae Nursing Home which was a few yards from their quarters at 365 Perth Road. He was a good instructor and even taught his wife and daughters to drive.

After retiring, he embarked on a partnership with a chicken farmer who carried on their business near Winchester. Having bought a considerable property, Court Leys, Toot Baldon in Oxfordshire in 1959 which he and Sheila enhanced, he decided to use these assets, including grass-cutting machinery by running The Town and Gardens Company and by having international students boarding in the house during the holidays. They were taught English and enjoyed the many cultural visits Sheila arranged and led. Regretfully due to great difficulties over the water supply they decided to sell the house and gardens in 1970.

Peter and the family went to London to be near Sheila’s mother and Peter was employed by Westminster Chamber of Commerce and later The Institute of Packaging until 1987.

Thereafter they sought a property in the Regimental area with the proviso that it had a granny-flat for Lady Cockburn and, hopefully, some fishing. They bought Clive House in Letham in December 1987 and lived there (having made a ‘granny-flat’ and many improvements to the home and gardens) for nearly thirty years.

Peter was a tall, fair-haired and blue-eyed man who possessed considerable charm. He was amused by much in life and enjoyed much laughter at the foibles of military life. He was generous and a good godfather. He became instantly recognisable by his trade-mark dark glasses and as a very young man, by his Dunhill cigarette holder. A keen sportsman, he enjoyed golf, tennis, rucker and hockey but field sports, especially fishing, were his great love. His father-in-law’s property Elms House, Twyford, Winchester on the river Itchen, whetted his appetite.

Peter was an original and eccentric figure who was much loved in the Regimental family. He was humorous, witty, clever and hid it by playing the ‘silly ass’. He had his indiscretions and liked the high-life (we all remember his pre-lunch gin and Italians, and sometimes these for elevenses).

He was a stalwart friend and we shall all miss him.

Colonel (Retired) I R Critchley

MAJOR M C LINDSAY-STEWART

Michael Lindsay-Stewart was born in 1948, son of Lieutenant Colonel Jim and Joanne Lindsay-Stewart of Glenfarg House. He was a son of the Regiment in every sense and Alistair Irwin remembers that he and Mike made a pact to join The Black Watch whilst watching a parade as small boys in Cyprus. Mike’s education was at Pangbourne where he excelled at fencing and then at Sandhurst where James Duncan Millar and I were lucky enough to find ourselves in the same intake with him, the appropriately-numbered Intake 42. We were commissioned together and all joined the 1st Battalion in the dreary (and dreich) Ritchie Camp, Kirknewton in



January 1969. The immediate situation improved rapidly when we were sent to the Jungle Warfare School in Johore State, just north of Singapore Island, followed by the rest of the battalion for a 6 month exercise. It was an exciting period of jungle training and exercising, but also included some eye-opening forays to the nightlife of Singapore City. Mike was an eager participant.

Mike’s personality and approach to life and soldiering began to emerge. He revelled in the regimental environment; had an easy and respected relationship with all ranks but, characteristically, his impish sense of humour and his keen eye for the ridiculous also became part of his trade mark. He was a gifted artist and in particular his witty and incisive cartoons and caricatures provided an alternative view of battalion life. They came into their own when a 1BW news-sheet, *The Watchkeeper*, was published periodically during Northern Ireland tours. Mike’s cartoons were (almost) universally popular, raising a smile during some otherwise difficult times. They always contained a small mouse, observing the scene. Some might have said that this was plagiarising Terence Cuneo but the Lindsay-Stewart mouse wore a kilt!

Mike was always involved in both the professional and social sides of regimental life. As a junior officer in Hong Kong he was a noted bon viveur and Hugh Gray remembers that an impromptu cartoon on the back of a scrap of paper, in a famous bar in Kowloon, was adopted as the establishment’s Christmas card, with the artist earning free drinks for 6 months. At home, his parents’ dinner parties at Glenfarg before The Black Watch Ball were legendary.

After Shorncliffe, Hong Kong and Perth, Mike re-joined the battalion in Colchester and commanded the Anti-Tank Platoon during a demanding operational tour in the Andersonstown area of West Belfast in 1974. Support Company was responsible for the strongly republican district of Turf Lodge and was continuously involved in dangerous patrolling and frequently to countering serious public disorder and riots, with the ever-present threat of snipers and bombs. Mike led his platoon with courage and spirit, being wounded in the head by a rioter’s brick on at least one occasion. His award of a GOC’s Commendation for this tour was well deserved.

Mike and Connie McCullough’s marriage in London was a memorable occasion. As his best man, I had to master the intricacies of Exercise Atlantic Splice – Connie was from Connecticut and from a famous sailing family. Mike was by then Adjutant of 1/51 HIGHLAND and he and Connie set up home in the delightfully converted Coach House at Glenfarg. Connie Lindsay-Stewart took to The Black Watch family with great charm and enthusiasm. At some stage, a long-haired dachshund named Wellington joined the family. He was a small dog but, like his master, had a big personality.

The battalion then moved to Germany to convert to being a mechanized infantry battalion for the first time since leaving Minden in 1968. Mike became OC D Company and contributed to establishing The Black Watch’s reputation on the BAOR scene. He developed the habit of dominating the ‘bum warmer’ seat around the fireplace in the officers’ mess ante-room, telling interminable stories to a dutifully attentive audience of junior officers. Perhaps the highlight of this tour commanding D Company was on a return to counter-terrorist operations in West Belfast in 1982-83. He was Mentioned in Despatches for his leadership and conduct during that emergency tour.

I had the privilege of taking over D Company from Mike in 1984 when he went on the Staff. It was a good outfit and still bore the stamp of its commander. He loyally returned to 1BW (now back full circle at Kirknewton) in 1985 when called up by Alistair Irwin to command, this time, A Company in the then notorious South Armagh area of Northern Ireland. Mike hit the ground running in the rigorous pre-tour training and took his company to Forkhill, a fortified base close to the Armagh border with the Republic. His command of the Forkhill area of operations was exemplary and, as part of his leading from the front, he was with some of his men in a Lynx helicopter that crash-landed, breaking off its tail. Happily, all on board survived. At the end of the tour he succeeded me as Battalion Second-in-Command for the busy period in Scotland supporting the Commonwealth Games in 1986 and the battalion’s move to Berlin.

Berlin was to be Mike’s last tour with 1BW. He was posted to a training job in Sennelager where his huge experience of operations and exercises was put to great effect. Happily, those of us in Berlin were able to keep in touch with Mike and Connie.

Mike decided to retire from the Army in May 1990 and he and Connie moved to Connecticut. Mike became the Executive Vice President of International Marketing and Sales for a small innovative natural pet

care company. He expanded the business into Korea and China. He also indulged his creative nature, writing and painting and became well known for his glass engraving skills. He also wrote a book called "The Job Assault Course" used by the British Army Resettlement course and was working on the second novel of a trilogy about the British Army during the French and Indian wars.

I was lucky enough to spend a weekend with them in their delightful cottage ('Wellington's Barracks') near Hartford, Connecticut. It was in October and the New England 'fall' was in its spectacular colours. I was entertained in true Lindsay-Stewart/McCullough style and the visit remains a very happy memory.

Inevitably, contact thereafter with Mike and Connie was infrequent given the geographic separation. All his friends were therefore shocked and deeply saddened to hear of Mike's short illness and his untimely death on 5th July this year. We have lost a friend and comrade – a true Black Watch officer - and we all extend our heart-felt sympathy to Connie and to Mike's wider family in America and in Scotland.

Donald Wilson

ARTHUR MITCHELL

Arthur Mitchell died on the 12th of July 2015 two weeks short of his 89th birthday. He was born and brought up in Stoke-on-Trent and like a number of men from the Potteries, he served with the Black Watch during and after WW2 and was granted an Emergency Commission in 1946.

Arthur was an active member of the Stoke-on-Trent Branch of The Black Watch Association who regularly attended Branch meetings and functions and was liked and respected by all who knew him.

On return to civilian life he worked as a radio and TV engineer, latterly becoming self-employed and then working for Radio Rentals.

He cared a great deal about local issues and heritage in the Potteries. When Longton Town Hall was under threat of demolition in 1985 he was part of a group who formed a human chain around the building to stop it being demolished and they were eventually successful in saving the building. His name is perpetuated on a plaque inside the building.

His other interests apart from the Black Watch Association and Potteries Heritage Trust were ballroom dancing, fundraising for good causes, both local and national and flying light aircraft.

Arthur's family came first and foremost amongst his busy life and his daughters Susan and Gillian described him as a loving, loyal and supportive dad and grandad who will be sadly missed.

R W J Proctor



CAPTAIN BRIAN THOMAS WEBSTER STEWART CMG

Brian Stewart was born on 17 April 1922 and he died on 16 August 2015 aged 93. He spent much of his childhood in Scotland and was brought up by aunts in Kirriemuir. His father was a senior member of the Angus jute community in Calcutta. He with his brother George went to Glenalmond College and both won scholarships to Oxford, before being granted Emergency Commissions in The Black Watch.

George was commissioned in March 1942 and joined the 5th Battalion; he fought in North Africa and was killed in Sicily in July 1943. Brian was commissioned in June 1942 and joined the Tyneside Scottish, Black Watch and by the time of D Day was Second-in-Command of the Anti-Tank Platoon.

The battalion left Newhaven on 11 June 1944 landing on Gold Beach and were soon in action, experiencing fierce fighting in the Normandy Bocage. The fiercest was yet to come and on the evening of 30 June they were told to prepare for a German counter attack. The Battle of Rauray began at 0640 and the anti-tank guns would play a pivotal role in defeating the II SS Panzer Korps. Over 35 enemy tanks/AFVs were destroyed and 9 of these by the Anti-Tank platoon. Brian was wounded in the thigh during the morning of the battle and was evacuated.

In the period from 20-30 June the Battalion lost 180 trained men and required 350 Battle Casualty Reserves (BCRs) to bring them up to strength.



Sadly on 19 August 1944, 70th Infantry Brigade which included The Tyneside Scottish was disbanded to provide much needed BCRs for other Brigades. Many officers and soldiers joined the 1st, 5th and 7th Battalions The Black Watch.

Brian was evacuated to the UK to recover from his wounds and became Brigade Anti-Tank Officer in Northern Ireland and was attached to The Liverpool Scottish. He then moved as a Staff Officer to Malaya, his last job being the Officer Commanding the Refugee and Displaced Persons' Camp.

After the war he joined the Malayan Civil Service and passed out top of his Chinese exams. He served in Malaya during the Emergency and helped create a new educational fund as well as building low cost schools. When Malaya became independent, he joined the British Secret Service and then served in Burma and in China during the Cultural Revolution. He acted as British Ambassador to North Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

On his return to London he became Secretary of the Joint Intelligence Committee and deputy head of the Secret Service. There he went to work every day in pinstripe trousers, a black waistcoat and jacket with a bowler hat and a Black Watch tie under his stiff collar.

On leaving the Diplomatic Service he worked in the Private Sector until retiring aged 75. He was awarded the CMG in 1969.

He retired to Crieff and wrote a number of books including his autobiography called "Scrapbook of a Roving Highlander", "Why Spy" and "Cracking the Chinese Code". He travelled widely and in the last four years of his life visited Burma, Beijing, South America and Cuba.

His portrait was recently painted as part of a series of commissions organised by The Duke of Rothesay (see Articles) called "The Last of the Tide". Each artist was asked to write a few lines about how they got to know the subject of the portrait and Paul Benney said he found Brian "was like an onion he could not unpeel". Although I did not know Brian well, I think this an apt description. He was an intelligent and interesting man who often had a twinkle in his eye but I suspect there were many layers to his character. He was very good company.

His grandfather, GL Stewart served in the 2nd Angus Volunteer Battalion of the Black Watch; his father served in the Calcutta Scottish and his son Rory (MP for Penrith and Border) completed a Short Service Limited Commission with the 1st Battalion in the late 1980s.

Finally, Brian wrote a short message to me when talking about his life and career. He said "I have had a Ball". What a wonderful epitaph to his life.

R M Riddell

EWEN DOUGLAS (PEEM) COWIE

Ewan Cowie who was known as Peem by his friends and contemporaries in The Black Watch was born on second of January 1950 and died on the 5th of May 2015.

Peem followed his brother Bruce into the Regiment, although Bruce had left before Peem joined. He settled into battalion life and after attending a pipe cadre under Pipe Major Jim Anderson, he joined the Pipes and Drums as a piper and he took part in several overseas tours. His musical talent went further than playing the pipes and he was proficient at playing the guitar, banjo and the balalaika. Coupled with a fine singing voice, he was always in popular demand at events such as company and platoon parties and appeared in battalion concerts from time to time.

After leaving the Pipes and Drums his smart turnout and bearing made him an ideal candidate for the Regimental Police and this tall, smart and well turned out soldier was to greet many visitors to the battalion. He served in Kirknewton, Northern Ireland, Hong Kong, Colchester, Ballykinler and Catterick before leaving the Army in 1979. He could not however settle back into civilian life and re-enlisted into the regiment a year later. Promotion to Lance Corporal soon followed and he was employed as HQ Company arms storeman when the battalion was stationed in Aluherrra Barracks, Werl as part of the British Army of The Rhine.

Peem received a medical discharge in 1984 due to a leg injury and returned to civilian life in his home town of Dundee. He was a devoted and loving husband, father and grandfather and his family was his main focus in life.

He was a long-time and active member of the Angus Branch and regularly attended functions and meetings until illness prevented him from doing so, however he kept a close interest in Branch activities.

Peem will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

R W J Proctor

ALEXANDER GODSELL

Alexander Godsell died on the 9th of March 2015 aged 85. He served as a National Serviceman in the 1st Battalion from 1952-1954 including 15 months in Kenya during the Mau Mau emergency.

On completion of his National Service he returned home to work as a copper-smith with Normand and Thomson and lived most of his life in Cowdenbeath along with his wife and family. He was a keen supporter of The Black Watch and always took a great interest in the Regiment.

He is survived by his wife Marion three daughters and two grandchildren.



R W J Proctor

WO1 (RSM) D F W GRANT

David Ferguson Williamson Grant former Regimental Sergeant Major of the 1st Battalion The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) and known to all his friends and comrades as "wee Davie" died on Monday the 15th of June 2015 aged 88.

He was born at Ashgrove Cottages, Rattray, Blairgowrie on the 15th January 1927 and was the third eldest child of his parents, George and Elizabeth Grant's family of seven.

He was educated at the local school and when he was 13 years old his interest in the Army took hold and he joined the Blairgowrie Army Cadet Force. As the country was at war the Army Cadet Force had an important role to play in support of the war effort and Cadets acted as messengers, lookouts and carried out other duties. In 1944 when Davie was seventeen he joined the Regular Army and enlisted into The Black Watch where he was to spend the next thirty six and a half years.

Due to his age he was posted initially to the 27th Training Battalion in Derby and it was there that he met Ken Prescott who was to become a lifelong friend. Training at Kinfauns Castle and a subsequent posting to the 10th Field Training Battalion at Lockerbie then followed, before he found himself en-route to Palestine to join the 4th Battalion which had been deployed there on peace keeping duties. It was in Palestine during a fire fight with terrorists that Davie was wounded in the ear.

On the disbandment of the 4th Battalion he was posted to the 5th Battalion which was stationed in Northern Germany and then shortly after found himself in India serving as a drummer in the 2nd Battalion before returning to Scotland in 1948. Various postings in the UK and abroad then followed including a spell as an instructor at the Depot at Queen's Barracks.

Davie met Evelyn on one of his home leaves and they were eventually married in Rattray Church in 1949. They spent 48 happy years together until Evelyn died in 1997. Stewart their son was born in 1954 whilst they were stationed in Dortmund, West Germany with the 2nd Battalion.

He served with the 2nd Battalion in British Guyana and then transferred to the 1st Battalion in Edinburgh on the 2nd Battalion's final disbandment in 1956. The family moved on again and after a successful tour as a PSI with the 4th/5th Black Watch in Forfar they found themselves in Cyprus where after a few months Davie was promoted to Warrant Officer Class 2 and appointed CSM C Company. He moved to HQ Company whilst the battalion was serving as Demonstration Battalion at Warminster. He was promoted WO1 and appointed RSM in 1966 during the battalion's second year as a Mechanised Battalion based in Minden. Not long after taking over as RSM the battalion was warned off for a six month tour as UN Peace keepers in Cyprus and a frenetic period of re-rolling and training then followed with the RSM playing an important part.

Along with the Commanding Officer and Adjutant the RSM instigated changes in working dress which were more practical, removed unnecessary cleaning and saved a fair amount of off duty time for all ranks. Jersey pullovers which were more comfortable to wear replaced denim jackets, anklets were blackened and waist belts scrubbed instead of being blanched.



On the battalion's return to Kirknewton from Germany, Public Duties in Edinburgh and the Royal Guard took up a great deal of the battalion's time. Davie as RSM, ensured that Regimental standards of dress and turnout were kept high and maintained. He was always immaculately turned out and expected everyone else irrespective of rank to achieve the same high standards.

He was always firm and fair and had a great and wicked sense of humour which often came to the fore when he dealt with miscreants on Monday mornings. He took over the post of Long Service Recruiting Office RSM in early 1971 and was based in Barrack Street, Dundee until his retirement some ten years later. He was highly thought of and respected by all who worked in the recruiting team and part of his final report read "RSM Grant is an excellent Warrant Officer whose high standards are an inspiration to all who work with him and he will be sadly missed by all".

On leaving the army he continued to be involved with the Service Community working as a supervisor at the Rosendael Veterans' Home.

He kept in touch with the Regiment through meeting up with ex members and attending Regimental Reunions from time to time sometimes accompanied by his son Stewart.

Davie will always be remembered as a great Black Watch soldier who will be sadly missed by those who had the privilege and pleasure of knowing him.

R J W Proctor

WILLIAM (BILL) HERD

Bill Herd died after a short period of illness, on the 29th July 2015, a month short of his 90th birthday.

Bill was the son of William and Annie Herd and was born, grew up and was educated in Forfar.

On leaving school he worked initially as a delivery boy for a local shop and then on the construction of the Montreathmont Camp Radio Station which was wartime listening and code breaking centre operating as an outstation of Bletchley Park.

Bill first of all served in the 2nd Angus Battalion of the Home Guard which was affiliated to The Black Watch; he enlisted into the Army in September 1944 and was posted to D Company of the 4th Battalion, just after it had returned from Gibraltar. The Battalion was initially used as "enemy forces" during the training period prior to the Normandy invasion.

He then served with the battalion in Palestine and after the disbandment in 1945, served in Egypt, Cyprus, Malta, Rome and Trieste.

On return to civilian life Bill was employed as a weaver in a local jute factory and then retrained as a coach builder working with the British Road Service in Forfar until 1980 when the depot closed. He latterly became a security worker for Securicor and then G4S.

Bill joined the Angus Branch when it was formed in 1998 and was a great supporter and regularly attended functions and Branch meetings. As the oldest active Branch member he laid the wreath at the Annual Branch Standard Rededication Service at Rescobie Parish Church and War memorial in September last year.

Bill was married to Doreen for 58 years. His kind and gentle manner coupled with his enigmatic smile and dry sense of humour made him a much respected and well liked member of the Association. He will be missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

R J W Proctor

NEIL MCGREGOR

Neil was born on 21st March 1970 and he spent his formative years near Auchterarder. He enlisted in 1986 into The Black Watch and after his training he served with B Company. He transferred to the Mortar Platoon where he remained until leaving the Army in 2000 as a Corporal.

He served in Berlin, Northern Ireland, Ternhill, Hong Kong, Pirbright and Fort George.

On leaving the Army he settled in Inverness working as a labourer for Tarmac eventually becoming Foreman.



After a long battle with cancer he died 2 days after his 45th birthday on the 23rd March 2015. He was married to Gill and had 3 children, Vicky, Darren and Connie.

His funeral took place on the 1st of April 2015 and was well attended by The Highland Branch and former members of the Mortar Platoon.

ROBERT (BOB) MUTCH

Bob Mutch died on 31st May 2015 after a short period of serious illness. He was 79.

Born at Arbuthnott in Kincardineshire on the 12th of November 1935 he was the ninth of eleven children. He was educated at Kineff Primary and then Inverbervie Secondary Schools.

As a teenager he was a regular attender of Kineff Parish Church and was employed as the bell ringer before the service began and pumped the organ during the service and was rewarded with a bible for his weekly labours.

He enlisted into The Black Watch in 1952 and after completing his basic training, served with the Second Battalion which was then stationed at Hubbelrath and then Dortmund in West Germany. He completed his three year engagement at Queens Barracks.

On his release from the Army, Bob returned to work on the land and in 1959 he met Lilly at a dance at Rosemount; they became engaged in 1960 and were married in August 1961. Bob and Lilly set up home at Braeside and he continued to work on the land however, after two years he obtained employment working in the local foundry in Montrose and moved to live there.

He later changed jobs and worked with the Water Board for twenty two years until he retired. He was a great supporter of Montrose Football Club. In his youth Bob played football for a local junior team; latterly bowling, golf and swimming kept his keen interest in sport alive.

Bob was a great supporter of the Angus Branch of The Black Watch Association and regularly attended monthly meetings and events. He and Lilly attended the unveiling of The Black Watch Corner Memorial in May last year. They were both regular participants at the annual Spring Dance in Arbroath and they attended this year's dance a month before Bob was admitted into hospital.



R J W Proctor

JOHN (ROBBIE 04) ROBERTSON

Johnnie Robertson died aged 67 in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary on 2nd of June 2015 after a short illness. Johnnie, who was affectionately known to many as Robbie 04 was brought up in Blairgowrie.

During his service with 1st Battalion The Black Watch, Johnnie had postings in Minden, Cyprus, Gibraltar, Kirknewton and various tours of duty which included Belize, Hong Kong and Northern Ireland.

In 1971 he was due to go on the advance party to Hong Kong to prepare for the Battalion's arrival but on his stag night he severed his Achilles tendon and was in plaster for some months. This delayed his arrival at Delta Company. He served in Delta Company in Northern Ireland in 1974 and 1975 and was groom in the Colchester Stables looking after the Commanding Officer's horse prior to the New Colours parade in May 1975.

One of the memorable moments for him was on the day of the parade when the Queen Mother stopped to have a short conversation with him about the training of the horse he was riding and the other horses on parade.

He then joined the MT Platoon. During the Battalion's first tour to Ballykinler in 1976, he became the Padre's driver. He then went on to driving the ambulance that transported the patients from the medical centre to various local and Belfast hospitals and back. He was happy to grow his hair that wee bit longer and got to work in civvies for these duties.

When the Battalion was posted to Catterick, Johnnie worked in the Garrison Stables and took on all aspects of the job from mucking out, to grooming and training the horses.



Johnnie was not a regular at the annual reunions, but he always spoke about The Black Watch with pride.

He was a great character. He'll be sadly missed.

The Robertson family

RAYMOND JOHN SMITH

Raymond Smith who was known to his friends in the regiment as Ray died very suddenly at home in Kirriemuir on the 8th of April 2015 aged 70. His funeral took place at Parkgrove Crematorium, Friockheim in Angus on the 17th of April. Apart from family members, friends and former work colleagues his funeral was well attended by members of the Angus Branch of the Black Watch Association and former members of the Regimental Band including former Bandmaster Norman Rogerson who travelled all the way north from the South of England.



Ray was born two months before me in the same council housing estate called Knowehead and for a time we grew up together before moving to different parts of the town. On leaving school Ray worked in the local jute factory for around a year before he followed me into the Regiment.

Due to Ray being over the entry age for the Infantry Junior Leaders Battalion he was posted to the Highland Brigade Junior Band Company at Fort George where he carried out his basic training and was taught to play the clarinet.

After finishing his Junior Soldier's service at Fort George and completing a refresher period of training at the combined Black Watch and Argylls training depot at Stirling Castle, he was posted to the 1st Battalion in Warminster, in 1963. He joined the Regimental Band under Bandmaster Duncan Beat. The band began to prepare for the forthcoming Pipes and Drums and Regimental Band Tour which was to take place in North America towards the end of the year. This was the most eventful tour in which he took part as the band had performed at a charity concert hosted by President Kennedy at the White House just over a week before he was assassinated.

Ray developed into a first class musician in a top class band and soon widened his musical ability by becoming a very talented saxophonist. By now he was a senior corporal in the band and took part in all their tours and engagements throughout the world. He served with the 1st Battalion in Warminster, Minden in West Germany, Kirknewton, Hong Kong and Colchester. Being a member of the "Swing Band", which was formed by Bandmaster Norman Rogerson, kept Ray fully occupied and after the band's successful recording of Scotch on the Rocks and numerous other records, Ray decided to leave the Army in 1975 and return to Kirriemuir.

Had he remained to complete a full career he had the potential and musical ability to gain further promotion.

He gained employment in the factory where he worked prior to his enlistment. His leadership and management skill were soon noticed as he was appointed to a charge hand technician, a post which held until ill health caused him to retire in 2007.

R W J Proctor

STEVIE YULE

Stevie Yule died on the 23rd March 2015 in his home town of Arbroath; Stevie started his affiliation with The Black Watch in 1984 as a cadet with the Arbroath Detachment of the Angus & Dundee ACF Battalion.

He then joined the Junior Infantry Battalion Ouston and was part of Tangier Platoon which won the Champion Platoon competition.

He joined the Battalion in Ballykinler and that is where I first met him as a member of 10 Platoon in Support Company. I was the Platoon Sergeant and there is no doubt he was a bit of a "jack the lad". In some ways he made life easy as he would always own up to his misdemeanours. He had a great sense of humour and was a good soldier.



He served in Ternhill in the Mortar Platoon and in Hong Kong and it was from there he left the Army.

He returned to Arbroath and worked in the Oil and Gas industry as well as getting married to Timea, a Hungarian national.

He died of a heart defect and will be missed by many as a respected soldier and friend.

Charlie Tough

The following deaths have also been recorded:

Lieutenant Frank Lysons, aged 88 who held an Emergency Commission in the Regiment in 1946.

Thomas Bailey aged 87 who served in the 1st Battalion. He died in Stoke-on-Trent on 8 March 2015.

Frances (Frank) Adams, who died aged 76, served in the 1st Battalion from 1958-60.

James Linton died in Dundee on 8th January 2015 aged 77.

Corporal "Basil" McKay who served in Hong Kong and Colchester and Northern Ireland died in September 2015.

Charles Anderson who served in the 1st Battalion died on 5 September 2015 aged 61.

Charles Butler who served from 1974-1980 died in August 2015. He spent some time in the Pipes and Drums.



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FIFTY YEARS AFTER

By Thomas Moles

Introduction: One Hundred Years Later:

The typescript of this memoir came in to my hands, via a book dealer, in the early 1980s. Although, from the text, it was apparent the writer was named Miller, no other clues as to his identity were available. Then in 1992 a militaria dealer had on his listing a similar photocopy of the typescript which was entitled, by Miller, 'Fifty Years After'. Evidently written in 1968 and 'photocopied' at the same time, according to the specially coated paper then used. At the time of writing I have been unable to find anything about Miller, neither his Christian name nor number, despite a search for his medal card. As he was wounded in late August 1917 at Passchendaele, he may be on a published list of wounded that has eluded me. Now one hundred years after, it is, we understand, published for the first time. It is obvious that Miller refreshed his memory as to which brigades and divisions his battalion served in and is, perhaps, all the better for it – it does not detract from his personal account.

Very little editing has taken place save for some additional punctuation and correcting Miller's habit of using numbers rather than the full written word. His spelling of place names has been retained for interest. The temptation to add numerous notes has been avoided as this is his narrative.

By Miller

It does not seem like 50 years since that 1st March 1913 when I started my three years apprenticeship as a clerk with a salary of £10, £15 and £20 per annum and how little I dreamt of the changes that would mark the next 6 years.

As junior I was running messages for everyone, but was delighted to find that one of my bosses was the first man to fly in Scotland and that he was preparing a plane for demonstration in France of his new turning improvement.

The plane was being assembled in Gourlay's old yard in East Dock Street and all pieces were being numbered for packing and dispatch by one of the D.P. & I. steamers.

Preston Watson often had messages for Jim Manson, his mechanic, and I was delighted to have an opportunity for close inspection of one of the new flying machines.

I am afraid that I put off a lot of time just looking at it and asking Manson questions.

Next year was the beginning of the first World War and the 4th of August 1914 marked a new world for us all.

On the 10th October I joined the 4th Black Watch, but as I had just turned 17, I had to join the 2nd Battalion in the Drill Hall in Bell Street while the 1st was in Dudhope Castle and was responsible for the Tay defences.

These days of drilling and discipline were full of interest, although we had a long time in civilian clothes, as uniforms were in short supply.

We marched nearly every day to Victoria Park for drill and went to Barry for shooting practice, but by the end of the year we were all in uniform and getting accustomed to the kilt.

The 2/4th were now moved to Hawick and a third battalion was started. The enthusiasm for the local Regiment continued with a steady flow of recruits.

In Hawick I joined the Orderly Room staff and there the training of the battalion went on.

During February the 1/4th left for France and the 1/6th now took over the Tay defences and moved into the Castle from the old poorhouse in Blackness Road where they had been since November 1914.

In April the 1/6th left for France and the 2/4th were recalled from Hawick to take over Dudhope Castle and the Tay defences.

The orderly room and the officers quarters were in the entrance to the Museum building, while the companies occupied the Castle and the Deaf and Dumb building, which was just beyond the castle. Here I was fortunate as the sentry was on duty at the entrance to the castle and did not challenge anyone going into the Museum, as they were usually officers and many a late night I had without being caught.

The 1/4th had joined the "Brailly" Brigade, Meerut Division with the 2nd regular battalion and were taking part in the fighting of the time, Neuve Chappelle and Festubert were becoming familiar names.

Reinforcements were now required from time to time and these were drawn from our battalion and, as reserve battalion, we were now moved to Bridge of Earn where the 2nd battalions of the 5th, 6th and 7th were under canvas with us on the site now occupied by the Hospital.

Here I was tired of being an office soldier and returned to my company and was trained as a Machine Gunner during the summer.

The Battle of Loos took place on the 25th September 1915 and 480 men were needed to make up the tremendous losses the 4th had sustained. As I was now 18, I was allowed to go with these reinforcements.

When we joined the battalion, we found we were in an unusual position as the Indian Army was being withdrawn from France and being sent to Mesopotamia, but the Territorial units were to be left behind.

In November we were sent to the 9th Scottish Division and did 14 days in the trenches at Vermelles with them. This was the place where the ground was all chalk and it was nearly impossible to keep uniforms without a white covering.



6th Battalion machine gunners 1915/16.

In December we joined the 15th, again a Scottish Division, and in January 1916 we joined the 51st Division, which was rapidly building the reputation for its fighting qualities that stirred the world.

Alas, we were not allowed to remain with them, and at the end of February we moved north to make that union with the 5th which made the new battalion the 4/5th.

In the new battalion "A" and "B" companies were from the 4th while "C" and "D" were the old 5th and the first parade of the new unit took place, with Major Muir taking the 4th companies and Major Murray the 5th ones.

They both called their sections to attention, when Lieutenant-Colonel Scales rode up and he gave his first command without naming the unit "Highlanders" "Stand at ease."

The new battalion now joined 3 other Territorial units 1st Cambs., 1st Herts. and 6th Cheshires to make the 118 Brigade, with 117 and 116 Brigades of Kitchener's army coming from England to make the new 39th Division.

After nearly 4 months, we now commenced the long spells in the trenches again, the 118 Brigade having had experience, broke in the other two who were soon playing their part.

Although I was a trained Machine Gunner I had avoided the gun section as I did not like to carry the heavy gun the long distances entering and leaving the trenches, but now a new unit, the Machine Gun Corps, was started and the infantry were issued with the new Lewis Gun which was much lighter, and I joined the Lewis gun section.

The Lewis Gun Section had only four guns and were attached to headquarters with the Signalers, and the band shared billets with them when out of the line, and in the line the guns were placed at suitable positions without being attached to any company.

During the spring and summer we worked every section from Festubert, Richebourg to Givenchy and here the Germans used to send over mortar bombs nearly every evening just as the light was failing, and we could not see them and we soon learnt to know the sound of them being fired and watched anxiously until they fell.

This game the Germans played regularly but fortunately without much success. They also fired one at the place a machine gun was fired

from, so every time we fired, we fired from a vacant bay so that the bomb would land away from anyone's position.

The gun crew I was with had LCpl Jock Hutchison in charge and when the C.O. of the company in the line told us we should be firing the gun more, Jock took the gun and me along to an empty bay near his dugout and we fired from there and then ran. The bomb that followed shook his dugout badly and he never asked us to fire again, and always seemed to have a soft spot for us afterwards.

Jock Hutchinson was killed on the Somme later that year.

Another incident at that time caused a bit of trouble to me. At this sector we only had a dugout for four and during the day when fifth were off duty, the fifth one had nowhere to go.

It had been raining hard all day and I was fifth man, so to get shelter I went along the trench to the bomb store which was very dry and I slept on top of the bombs, but it had been decided that we would be relieved without giving us notice and I was missing.

All the trench was searched and the team had to leave without me, and when I woke and returned to the post, I thought I had had it as the men in the trench wore trousers. I felt sure they were Germans.

"Are you Miller?" I was asked and told to get down to Givenchy vil-lage quick before you are reported missing.

I arrived just as Sergeant Dave Ogilvie was starting on Jock Hutchison, so of course he then started telling me what he thought of me for sleeping in a place which might go up and leave no trace of me at all.

Dave was afterwards promoted Sergeant Major and after the war I met him many times while he worked again with the Gas Department.

The battle of the Somme started on the 1st July 1916 and the 39th Division had to make a feint attack on the Festubert/Givenchy front. The 116 Brigade made this attack on Saturday 1st July. They advanced over two lines of German trenches and held them all day, and retired at dusk.

During the night we took over from them and in the morning a number of bodies were seen lying in No Mans Land. As the day went on, it was found that a number were still alive. An officer of "C" company went out and brought the first one in and, as no firing started, it was not long before men were going out to bring as many as possible while the good mood lasted.

One man was brought in to the bay we occupied and when we assisted the stretcher bearers to lower the man into the trench, one shot was fired over the trench to let us know that we were being allowed to save all the men as possible.

Early in August we were moved to the Somme area and we had to walk making nearly twenty miles a day. This was a test of endurance.

The Somme fighting had all been to the south of the river Ancre, but the 39th Division were to make the first attacks to the north in front of "Beaumont Hamel" and the 4/5th were in the first attack on 3rd September.

The number of Lewis Guns had been increased to 8 and were now posted to the companies. I was posted to "B" company and this company was to be in reserve to the others which were to make the attack.

The forth men of this platoon were placed in two dugouts under the railway embankment and here took place one of these incidents in which was shown the terrible efforts men will make to save their pals.

One of the dugouts was blown in and all the men buried, but when the alarm was raised the expert diggers set to save them under Sergeant Walter Baird.

There was only room for four men to work at one time and they went all out. As soon as they were exhausted they fell back and the next four moved in. It was amazing to see how hard these men worked.

My share was to bring up supplies of water and have it there for the men who were working, and to clear the faces and throats of the rescued.

The first four were not badly hurt but, as we got deeper, the injuries became worse and the last four were dead.

Our attack companies made their objective, but the unit on our left did not and, as our flank was left exposed, our boys were told to return to the positions they had left.

The Battalion was relieved that night and in the morning the casualties were replaced by men who must have left the base before the attack was made and we returned to the same place on Sunday night, manning the trenches at the same railway embankment.

It was not long after dawn when the sentry saw a man moving out in No Mans Land and reported to Sergt. Harry McGregor who was in charge of this part of the line.



This photograph shows an anonymous Sergeant bomber of the 4th Battalion and was taken in Montrose in 1915. He is wearing the bombers badge; in this case it is a brass grenade on a red cloth backing above his chevrons. He is also a qualified Scout as defined by his brass fleur-de-lis badge on his lower left arm. (Copyright Thomas Moles).

Harry looked through his glasses and saw that it was one of our boys who must have been lying there since Saturday and, without further thought, he at once went out and carried this lad in from just short of the German wire.

Later, on the other side of the embankment, he again went out for a lad who was seen lurking in a clump of trees between the lines. This lad had been unconscious until Sunday and then could not decide which side was ours and hid in the trees until he saw Harry McGregor coming towards him.

The next day a German came walking along the railway line towards us but, when he was halfway between the lines, he seemed to realize that the wire he was approaching was on the wrong side of the trench to be German and he stopped. Sergeant McGregor jumped from our trench and ran to the German, who stood still and then shook hands with Harry.

He then turned to go back, but Harry soon made it clear that he must come to our trench. We had now been five days in the trenches and were a dirty crowd, all unshaven, and when this man came into our trench, he thought his last day had come and burst into tears and was not comforted when big Charlie Dillon, who was over six feet tall, clapped him on the shoulder and said "Ye're a'right noo, you are finished wi the war."

Sergeant McGregor was awarded the Military Medal for his gallantry but we thought that he should have had a higher honour.

While we were doing our next turn in the line I had my 19th birthday and so did a lad from Newcastle who had just joined us and, as we both had parcels from home, the team had a great feed one night.

This turn was spoiled by a return of our old friend the Trench Mortar, as the first night they started, one landed in a bay and killed seven. This was a new thing here and we did not have the best lookout, especially with so many new lads who did not know them, but they got no more when we were watching for those bombs.

The advance had been made through Thiepval to Swaben Redoubt and the 4/5th were given the task of taking the top of the hill. This attack was made on the 14th of October.

As two Lewis Gunners were left out of every attack so that there were always some gunners left, it was my turn to be left out of this one, and this was certainly one to be out off as it was defended with all the skill and courage the Germans had, and our boys had a tough time taking it and we had 240 casualties.

Our strength was made up in two days and we returned to hold the position we had taken and when you were on top of the hill you saw why it was so important, as we could now see for nearly 10 miles over the German lines to Grandcourt and looking back we could look out over our lines to Albert.

We were only 48 hours in this position and it was about the worst time we ever had, as the Germans were shelling us the whole time and tried on the second day to take it back, but we were able to hold on and keep them down the hill.

This time we now had 280 casualties and were relieved to be again made up.

After a short rest we returned to the same place to take the advance down to the river Ancre. This attack was made on the 13th November and was known as the battle for "Beaumont Hamel" as the naval division took this village on the other side of the river that day.

The 4/5th had it very easy that day, although we had a bit of confusion as our front contracted as we approached the river, and it was a very dark morning.

In the darkness I found Jimmie Robertson lying with a smashed ankle and, after putting on a dressing, I sat with him in a shell hole where we were joined by Sergeant Tom Bowman with some of "A" company who were also lost in the dark.

When the light improved we joined up with our companies after getting Jimmie Robertson to the first aid post. Jimmie was not back as his leg took a long time to heal, but I met him after the war in his Father's business in Barrack Street.

We had now been on the Somme for 13 weeks and had suffered 1300 casualties and when we were moved out, we had hopes of a long rest, but we were moved to the Ypres sector and took over from the last French division in the north and we were next to the Belgian Army.

The 39th Division took over on the 1st December and went on to the longest spell of any division in the Ypres salient, as we were there until January 1918.

Our first turn here was in support and when we sat at night round a small fire the rats came out and joined us and we concluded that the French must have made pets of them, but that did not last with



A proportion of the 4th Battalion's machine gun section transferred to the Machine Gun Corps (MGC) in 1915. Note that some members of this squad are already wearing the MGC capbadge. The MGC was formed by Royal Warrant on 14 October 1915. (Copyright Thomas Moles).

us and the rats soon kept away when they had been chased with bayonets a few times.

During the next six months we were round every sector of the salient and in May were at Hill 60 as preparations were being made to blow it up.

We were moved out on rest and to get ready for the next attack, but were again brought forward when the hill was to be blown up and were in camp about five miles behind that night.

As Lloyd George and the Cabinet heard the explosion in London, we had our sleep disturbed badly when the ground trembled and shook. This action was a complete success and we returned to our battle training.

At this time, leave was being brought forward and as I had been out since November 1915, it was my turn the first two weeks in July.

The Lewis guns had been increased to one for every platoon and I had been in charge of 5 Platoon gun since leaving the Somme, and Will Coupar was senior NCO of the "B" company guns and was on leave before me.

He told my father I would be on leave as soon as he returned and before my leave was finished my father had the unhappy job to take the news to Mrs Coupar that her husband had been killed six days after his return.

As my parents knew I would be taking over his job when I returned, this put a sadness to the end of my leave, especially as we knew that a new attack was to be made soon.

The Third Battle of Ypres started on the 31st July 1917. The 39th Division was going over in three waves and the 118 Brigade was the third. This meant that we started last and had to go over all the ground already covered and to start our fighting after passing through all the shell fire on the others.

"B" company were to advance and occupy a German gun position which was three miles from the starting point and we were to have the help of a tank to give us cover in the last part.

5 Platoon had a strength of 40 but when we arrived 300 yards short of the position. There were only seven left and the tank did not arrive, and we could not move for the German machine gun, which had clear field of fire against us.

Lieut Milne, our platoon officer, had been wounded and Sergeant Jock Dewar was in charge and we had first to send two men to report our position to Headquarters, and that left five.

It was now my job to go on with the plan as much as possible and take my gun out 50 yards to give cover to our position if the Germans should counter attack and, as now only two could go, Louis Reid offered to go with me and Sergeant Dewar insisted on going too.

Our first rush took us about 30 yards before this machine gun opened fire and we dived for the nearest shell hole. I saw a shell hole 25 yards ahead and suggested that I should rush forward to it and if I made it Louis was to follow and Jock Dewar was to go back after we gave him the O.K.

We were in this position about 11 o'clock and we enjoyed the rum ration which I had put in my water bottle and rested until about 3 o'clock, when the Germans started to advance against us.

Louis Reid and I were about 50 yards nearer than any others with a Lewis Gun and 8 magazines of ammunition, but we sat tight and fired all the ammunition before making a rush back to the others. As we ran, we passed Sergeant Dewar's body and realized that the German machine gunner had made up his mind to get the third man of this party and had waited for him to move and got him.

In the position some of the men of 6 Platoon had joined us and we all fired all the time at the advancing Germans. "C" company on our right were about 100 yards away and the advancing Germans managed to get round them and they had to retire. I moved my gun into the corner to keep these from getting round us and the lads kept filling up my magazines.

This was the only time I ever had such a chance with the Lewis Gun and fired about 1500 rounds and lost count of the Germans that fell.

During the afternoon we had been sending up flares for Artillery support but the guns were being moved forward and could not help us but Colonel Scales had seen our position and sent up a message to retire at dusk on the position of the 117 Brigade 400 yards behind.

About 6 o'clock one of our planes now flew over, but we had no more flares and he must have thought that all our lads were back, and the artillery opened fire on us as well as the Germans on our right, so I ordered the lads to go back to the position as ordered, two at intervals, although it was still some time before dusk. Sergeant Davie Hutton was on our left with the remainder of 6 Platoon and we took them back with us.

In the early morning that band had been up with rations and Sergeant Hutton and I divided them out, and included was a jar of rum to which Davie and I did full justice as we took it round the lads.

In the evening we were withdrawn and left the 117 Brigade to hold the line while we returned to the canal bank from which we had started the morning before.

After a good night's sleep and a good breakfast, we paraded to reform and "B" and "C" Companies were joined to make one company.

Two mornings before, we had eight Lewis Guns with 72 men, but we now had one gun and 16 men, as I was the only gunner to come back and able to bring my gun. As we moved forward in sections over the old German line, we passed the men of the Pioneer Corps making a cemetery and burying the lads who had died two days before. We were making for the German dugouts to get ready to relieve the 117 Brigade that night.

As I led the 16 gunners forward, a shell landed just beside us and another five were casualties, including myself, as a piece of the shrapnel entered my left side. Three of us were able to walk and made our way to the First aid post and, after having our wounds dressed, traveled in an ambulance to the Casualty Clearing Station, where wounds were again dressed and injections given.

I used to wonder what all the padres did when the fighting was on but I found them here helping the wounded in every way they could by serving food, supplying Field cards to write home and writing them if that was necessary. They were doing a very good job which was a great help to the lads.

A train was being loaded for clearing and we arrived at the 10th Stationary Hospital at Rouen next day and found it was very much overcrowded, and after three days those who were not badly wounded were sent to Convalescent Camp near Rouen and I went with them.

The only Black Watch man with me now was one of C company who had had a furrow made along the back of his neck by the shell which hit me and this healed quickly, and after 10 days he was returned to base at Etaples, but I had to stay another two weeks before the Doctor would allow me away.

It was now the end of August when I arrived at Etaples where Sergeant Tom Boulton was in charge of the 4/5th lines. He found out from my papers that I was a clerk and asked me to stay as his assistant and as the fighting was still as bad as ever at Passchendale, I was pleased to stay out of it for a while.

I celebrated my 20th birthday here and it was heaven to be able to have a special tea in the Army Huts, and after being in the line nearly two years, having a comfortable bed and regular meals was bliss indeed.

I had been very lucky to get away from Passchendale with a light wound and to be able to stay away while the fighting still went on and, when near the end of November my time was up, I returned to the battalion ready to start again.

Captain Phillip was pleased to have me back and I was again in charge of "B" company guns, and it was fine to arrive just when the battalion came out for a rest and to find that it was nearly my turn for leave as, although I had been away for four months, I had not been out of France and was to be home for New Year.

So, on the 27th December when the battalion went back to the trenches, I went on leave. This was the first New Year I had had at home since 1914 and I made the most of it.

When I returned on 14th January I was greeted with 'you lucky sod missed the trenches again and we are now out for a month.'

As I had been wounded 17 days after my first leave I took a bet that we would be in the trenches for 31st January and I would be hit again.

We were moved south to the front, where Gerry was expected to make his new attack, but were in position behind Gouseaucourt ready to take over the new front on 1st February, and here I had one of the worst nights I ever had as, out of 16 NCOs, I was chosen to go to the trenches on 31st January, to take over and guide the Battalion in when they came next day. This was the fateful day and every machine gun that rattled and every shell that whistled over, I thought was meant for me.

This was the nearest I got to understanding the poor fellows who were shell shocked. On this new front, both sides were making regular bombing raids to find out what units were holding the line and where the attacks were to be made. We relieved a battalion of the Sussex Regt. the night after five men had been lifted from a listening post and my gun was chosen to cover this post while we were here, and Captain Philip expected that we would see that this was not repeated, but no further attempt was made while we were there.

The next time the 4/5th were in support, it was decided that we would make a raid to try for a prisoner or two. As I had never been on one I wanted on this one and was given the job to take two men straight forward when we went over and on the German parapet see that the main party were not taken from the back.

We arrived at the German trench and found it deserted, but could hear the main party enter the trench and make their way along, but they found the same conditions and, as the raid was timed to fit with the Artillery, we had to return with nothing to show for our night's work.

On the 21st March the Germans launched their expected attack and at this time the 16th Irish Division were in the line and the 118 Brigade were to support them.

To me it seemed that we should have been moved up to fill the gap in the front, but General Gough knew that we were the only reserves he had and he kept us about three miles behind the 16th Division, and on the morning of the 22nd March the line broke and the Germans came through.

I do not know what casualties the 16th Division had, but very few came back and the Division was broken up until August, when it was reformed in England with the 9th Black Watch as one of the battalions.

Now started the most fantastic 10 days of the war as we tried to stop the German advance.

We held a position and when the Germans came forward they stopped and sent a party to cut us off and we had to run again. This went on-run two miles, come back a half mile, take up another position, wait again and repeat same three times a day.

On the third day everybody was on edge and when the 4/5th held a position before Bray, two Germans on a motor cycle made us all run by getting along the end of our trench and firing wildly along and shouting at the same time.

The road they came along should have been covered, but it had been over looked and so the rush began again, but Johnny Herd and I were tired carrying a Lewis Gun and Magazines so we went about 30 yards and took cover in a sunken road, and turned to see what chance we had and saw what was happening, so we gave the Germans half a magazine and they tumbled into the ditch and followed the remainder of the battalion at our leisure.

The next day we were now on high ground behind Bray, and to the road below was packed with transport of all kinds getting back, when a German plane dived on them firing his guns. In his dive he was almost level with us, so I gave him a magazine and he broke off his attack and swung away, but he came back and now dived on us firing all his guns. Needless to say we did not wait to be killed but we had given the road transport a chance to clear.

Day after day we dodged and came back until 31st March, when we passed through a line of Australians and the line held in this 10 days. We had retired 120 miles, but must have covered twice that distance and all retreats and the returns we made.

As all the units were hopelessly mixed, each one was given a gathering point and the 4/5th gathered together at their point 120 men out of the 750 who took up position on 21st March.

A week later a party of eight NCOs were sent to a school at Hazebrouck and took the train from Amiens to Etaples, where they were to spend the night and we found that about 40 of our men had kept on going back and had arrived at Etaples still thinking the Germans were after them. They were soon sent back to the unit, but when the school party arrived at Hazebrouck, the school was cancelled and we had to rejoin our Battalion as it was expected that the Germans would try another attack on the Ypres front.

Here the 4/5th and the 9th were joined to make a battalion and we took over the trenches near Hill 60 which we had occupied often during 1917. The shell fire was very heavy, but no attack took place at once and a new scheme came forward - four Officers and 16 NCOs were detached to join the American army now landing in France as instructors, and I was one of them.

We had first the 77th Division, which was recruited from New York and were very difficult, as many could not speak English and after 4 weeks we had the 30th Division, which was a territorial division from Carolina and Tennessee. These were great men and afterwards played a good part when the war entered its final stages.

The cadre of instructors was now returned to England and at Aldershot a new battalion was formed, which was now the 9th Black Watch with Major Cruickshank of the old 5th as CO.

1600 men were sent to join us before our Medical Officer could get 750 he would accept for active service and, as they had all to be taken on the strength and then removed again, the orderly room staff had to have assistance and as I was Battalion Lewis Gun Sergeant and free until gun teams were made up, I joined Sergeant Tavendale of Montrose in the Orderly Room.

It was now July and during the six weeks we had at Aldershot we all had a weeks leave and I was home again six months since my last leave, which was greatly relished after the long time before my first leave.

Many of the old Irish Battalions had been made up but a new Brigade was formed and the 9th Black Watch was one of the battalions in it when we returned to France again.

We now had 16 Lewis Guns and two Sergeants were needed and Jock Hutcheon of Montrose joined me in the job, and we had no more trench duties as we were busy with new classes all the time, as I had passed as an instructor with the GHQ Lewis Gun School at Le Touquet.

The school asked Col. Cruickshank to leave me as an instructor at the school, but he insisted that I should remain with the battalion.

During October it became apparent that the Germans were approaching defeat and as our lads advanced the staff had to follow. We had to bring along the crocks who were not signed unfit by the M.O. every day and a sergeant was detailed for this duty.

This was a very difficult task as you did not know where you were going every day and had just to follow at the speed of the slowest and arrive when you could. Needless to say the air was blue every night with the language of the sergeant who had had this job that day as he arrived about two hours after everybody else was in, and then had to see that his stragglers got rations and a place to sleep.



Officers of the 6th Battalion in the trenches. Note the gunboots being worn by the Lieutenant on the left and the Captain on the right.

I had my share of it and finally lost my temper and told them that if they did not keep up with me, I would see that they got no rations that night. The pace improved greatly and we arrived not too far behind the others.

On the ninth of November the 9th Bn. were cut out and had to stand still the next two days.

On the morning of 11th November a shortage of ammunition was reported and Hutcheon and I went to find some when we met a runner on the road with the message that the war ended at 11am.

It was a lovely autumn day and it seemed that the sun shone brighter with the glad report.

After dinner Jim Phillip, who was now Major second in command of the battalion, told me to get the lads out to make a bonfire and we would have a show with all the flares and Very lights we had, and a show we had with an extra rum ration for everybody.

On 26th December Jim Phillip told me that a new order had just come out that anyone going on leave and having a job did not have to come back and he was going on leave the next day, but so was I and, as soon as I got to Dundee, I saw Mr William Phillip and made arrangements to get my release.

I joined up two months after the war started and was home two months after it finished, to get back to the old life again.

CORPORAL JOHN RIPLEY VC, COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY 9th MAY 2015 – Keith, Banffshire

By Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin

Editors' Note: *The British Government have funded the Victoria Cross Project to ensure that every VC winner whose award was made during the Great War is commemorated in the town or village of his birth.*

On 9th May 2015 the actions of Corporal John Ripley (1st Battalion) who was awarded the VC for conspicuous bravery at Rue de Bois, Aubers Ridge was dedicated in Keith and on the same day the plaque commemorating Corporal David Finlay (2nd Battalion) was dedicated at Guardbridge in Fife. His act of bravery also took place during the Battle of Aubers Ridge.

Corporal John Ripley's winning of the Victoria Cross was marked in a moving but simple ceremony in Keith on 9th May 2015. Those participating, including a party led by the Second-in-Command from The Black Watch battalion at Fort George, members of the Highland Branch of the



The Highland Branch and soldiers of The Black Watch Battalion were on parade at the unveiling of the Ripley VC Plaque.



Roger Goodyear, The Vice Lord Lieutenant of Banffshire and Stephen Ripley (Great Nephew) unveiling the plaque in Keith. Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin gave an address.



The Ripley VC memorial in Keith.

Association and several members of the Ripley family, gathered in the Royal British Legion Scotland Clubrooms before parading the short distance to the Keith War Memorial, led by the Glen Isla Pipe Band.

In the presence of the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Banffshire, and with many onlookers, the ceremony was introduced by Councillor Wright, convener of Moray Council. John Ripley's great-great nephew, Mr Stephen Ripley, spoke about Ripley's life and times and Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin then told the story of the action that led to the award. The commemorative stone was unveiled by the Vice Lord Lieutenant and Stephen Ripley while the band played *Black Bear*.

Immediately afterwards a similar stone was unveiled to mark another Keith VC, this one awarded to Lance Corporal George Sellar of the 79th Highlanders who won his medal in Afghanistan in 1879. A small party of Seaforth Highlanders Association members was present, with Lieutenant Colonel Bob Towns assisting in the unveiling.

The ceremony was concluded with prayers spoken by the Revd Donald Prentice and the singing of the National Anthem. Everyone then returned to the Legion Clubrooms for refreshments provided by Moray Council. With a fine showing of Red Hackles and with much local interest it had been a very suitable tribute to a Black Watch hero.

LANCE CORPORAL DAVID FINLAY VC

By Major R J W Proctor

The centenary commemoration to mark the winning of the Victoria Cross by Lance Corporal David Finlay was held at his home town of Guardbridge in Fife on Saturday the 9th of May 2015.

A large turnout of serving soldiers from the Black Watch Battalion stationed at Fort George, Black Watch Association members including Standard Bearers from Fife, Angus and Perth, Black Watch Army Cadets, Royal British Legion members, family members, local dignitaries including Councillor Jim Leishman the Provost of Fife, teachers and pupils from Guardbridge Primary School gathered around the memorial stone which was later unveiled by Mr Robert Balfour, Lord Lieutenant of Fife.

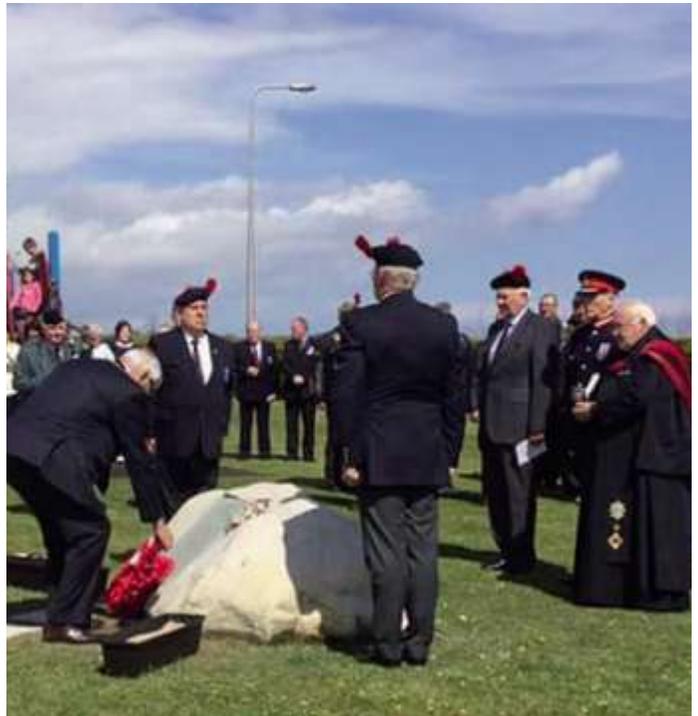
The Black Watch Association Chaplain, the Reverend Alex Forsyth officiated with Colonel Alex Murdoch, Chairman of The Black Watch Association and Mr Robert Balfour Lord Lieutenant of Fife reading lessons. Provost Leishman gave an insight into David Finlay's life in Guardbridge prior to his enlistment into the regiment. Major Ronnie Proctor then told the story of the action at Aubers Ridge on the 9th of May 1915 which led to David Finlay being awarded the Victoria Cross, his subsequent service and rapid promotion to Sergeant and his death during the attack on Hanna, Mesopotamia on the 21st January 1916.

Wreaths were laid on behalf of the community by the Provost, by Mr Stewart Bett on behalf of The Black Watch Association and by a nephew of David Finlay.

Pipe Major Peter Snaddon played the Regimental Lament, Lochaber No More and after the silence, Jonnie Cope. On conclusion of the formalities Bob Scott, Chairman of the Fife Branch superintended the march of the veterans and serving soldiers led by Pipe Major Snaddon to Guardbridge Primary School where those present were entertained by the singing (with great gusto) of popular World War One songs by the primary school children. Exhibits by the school children, The Black Watch Museum

and a family tree of David Finlay's family were also on display. The local community and Historical Society provided an excellent buffet and refreshments which were enjoyed by all.

David Finlay was a true Black Watch hero whose indomitable spirit and courage was a shining example to all.



The Memorial to Sgt Finlay VC was dedicated in Guardbridge.

SERGEANT SAMUEL McGAW VC –

Remembrance Service at Kyrenia Cemetery 22nd July 2015

By Major Brian Cooper

Editors Note: Major Brian Cooper was RSM of the 1st Battalion The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) during the invasion of Iraq and was commissioned into the Regiment. He is currently QM of The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

On return to the Battalion after a four year absence I was delighted to be informed of our tour to Cyprus working for the United Nations. The reasons were more than getting a sun tan and Longer Separation Allowance, it would give me the opportunity to visit Sgt McGaw's grave in Kyrenia Cemetery. Regimental History lessons on my JNCO cadre many moons ago had given me an interest in all the Regiment's Victoria Cross winners.

On arrival in Cyprus I started my research into where Sgt McGaw was buried and a chance encounter by the Commanding Officer with a member of the Kyrenia Royal British Legion at the Army Benevolent Fund charity concert, led to a meeting with the Branch Chairman Major (Retd) Brian Thomas BEM late Duke of Wellington's Regiment. The Kyrenia Branch have taken on the responsibility for what is called the Old British Cemetery Kyrenia and they do a magnificent job in maintaining the cemetery in a pristine condition. They are also responsible for the memorial wall which is the only memorial to all servicemen and women who were killed in Cyprus during the EOKA campaign.

The Black Watch Association is no stranger to the cemetery having purchased the gates and a memorial tablet of commemoration for the five battalion members in the cemetery.

After the initial meeting with the Chairman it was over to the Regimental Sergeant Major who was already in the later stages of planning a service with the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess. This by coincidence would allow Brigadier Aitken, who was visiting the battalion in his role as Deputy Regimental Colonel, to attend and lay The Black Watch wreath along with the Commanding Officer who laid the Regimental wreath and Major Thomas laying the Legion wreath. The service was conducted jointly by our stand in Padre Phil Paterson from 51st Highland, 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland and the Rev Wendy Hough, St Andrews Church and Padre for the Kyrenia RBL.

The service was an act of remembrance with a personal touch commemorating Sgt McGaw VC on the anniversary of his death 137 years ago. Colour Sergeant Currie read a tribute to Sgt McGaw which in parts could have been him reading about his own service record. The Stoutest Man in the Forty Two was sung by enthusiastic Mess members and a bewildered British Legion congregation but they soon joined in with as much enthusiasm as all battalion members.

After the service we retired to the Bellapais Gardens Hotel and Restaurant for a delicious supper and a chance to thank our hosts for their excellent hospitality.

SGT SAMUEL McGAW TRIBUTE

Read by Colour Sergeant Currie

Samuel McGaw was born in 1837 in Kirkmichael village, Ayrshire. He was the eldest son of William McGaw and Sarah Thomson. Sometime after 1853 Samuel along with parents and his seven siblings moved to Kilmarnock, where his father worked on the railway lines.

At twenty years of age on the 15th August 1857 Samuel enlisted in the 42nd Royal Highlanders in Glasgow. At his time of enlistment his trade was given as a mason, now that is a very interesting point and an indication that Samuel was a wee bit different...as most soldiers don't become a mason until after they have joined the Watch'.

The day before his enlistment, the 42nd had sailed from Portsmouth for service in India where the mutiny had broken out. Samuel was probably drafted to the Regiment the following year (1858). In which case he would have seen action in many of the battles during the Indian Mutiny.

Now like most Black Watch soldiers Samuel was not shy of the odd bit of 'drama' and over the next few years he was promoted and demoted on at least two occasions before reaching the rank of Sergeant, before true to fashion, being reduced to the ranks again in 1865. Now clearly with no offer of a 'job on the rigs with his Uncle' and with his initial engagement due to expire, Samuel extended his service on the 20th February 1867 whilst stationed in Peshawar.

After spending nine years in India, he sailed with the Regiment for Scotland. On arrival in Edinburgh he was promoted to Corporal but by June some three months later he was again reduced to Private. In 1868 Samuel made the trip down south as the Regiment was posted to Aldershot and whilst on leave in 1870 he met his wife to be, the widower Ann Stalker in Kilmarnock. It's good to see that giving a Jock two weeks leave and he comes back married isn't exactly a new phenomenon.

By 1873 and no doubt under duress from Ann, Samuel had knuckled down and attained the rank of Lance Sergeant and was again on his travels, this time to Africa, to take part in the Ashanti Campaign. It was during the main action of this campaign at Amoaful that at the age of 36, Lance Sergeant Samuel McGaw, although severely wounded early in the attack, led his section through the dense thorny bush and engaged the enemy several times during the day. For his conduct throughout the battle Samuel was later awarded the Victoria Cross, one of only four VCs awarded during the Ashanti Campaign.

The following month, King Karikara agreed to sign a peace treaty and on the 23rd March 1874 the 42nd arrived back in Portsmouth some four months after leaving. The Regiment spent the next eight months in Portsmouth and whilst stationed there Sgt McGaw was gazetted on the 28th March 1874 as being awarded the Victoria Cross for action at the Battle of Amoaful. On the 18th April he was presented with his award by Her Majesty Queen Victoria at Osborne Castle on the Isle of Wight. The following month in Kilmarnock, Samuel received a presentation and testimonial signed by dignitaries and people of the town in recognition of his bravery.

In November 1874 Samuel would embark on what was to become his final campaign, sailing from Portsmouth to Malta. The Regiment remained garrisoned in Malta for 4 years before moving on to Cyprus where they disembarked at Larnaca on the 22nd July 1878, and set off for camp Chiflik Pasha this very day some 137 years ago. Whilst on the march to the camp, Sergeant McGaw took ill and died of heat stroke. He was buried close to where he had died and a wooden marker was erected to mark the spot.



Kyrenia Cemetery from left to right – Major Brian Thomas, Lieutenant Colonel A F L Steele and Brigadier A J Aitken at the grave of Sergeant McGaw VC.

Some three years later, the commissioner of Kyrenia, Colonel Scott Stevenson formerly of The Black Watch, learned that a Greek farmer who owned the land Sgt McGaw was buried on, had started to rework the land and had ploughed over his burial site. Colonel Stevenson traced the site of the grave, exhumed the remains and placed them in a coffin which was taken to Kyrenia. At his funeral here in this location the coffin was carried by six Turkish Zaptieths. Afterwards Mrs Stevenson decorated the grave with wreaths of passion flowers and jasmine.

Today we stand here to honour the memory of Sgt Samuel McGaw. His 21 years' service to the Regiment saw him travel throughout the Empire and take part in many a campaign. And although he died here in Cyprus 137 years ago, today he will forever be remembered in the "Watch" for his heroics at Amoaful which won him the VC and the respect of a nation.



Some of the Mess Members who attended the service of Remembrance for Sergeant McGaw VC.

THE LAST OF THE TIDE – A Royal Exhibition

By Lieutenant Colonel R M Riddell

It is well known that His Royal Highness The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay has a love of painting, both as a practitioner and as a patron and that he has a passion for military history. These attributes led him to decide to commission the portraits of some veterans of D Day who served in Regiments of which he is, or had been, Colonel-in-Chief. The D Day portraits were inspired by a similar series commissioned by the Prince in 2012 which focussed on Battle of Britain pilots. Twelve artists were chosen to paint them, many associated with the Royal Drawing School.

The Association were approached by his staff and we put forward both Brian Stewart and Tom Renouf as possible subjects. Brian was a young officer in the 1st Battalion Tyneside Scottish (Black Watch) (and later the 5th Battalion) and at the time of D Day was Second-in-Command of the Anti-Tank Platoon; they landed as part of the follow on forces on D+6 as part of 49th (West Riding) Division. His portrait was painted by Paul Benney.

Tom who was also in the Tyneside Scottish (and later the 5th Battalion) landed with the rest of the Battalion on Gold Beach. He was wounded during the advance from Caen to Lisieux and was awarded the MM. His portrait was painted by Clara Drummond.

The portraits were exhibited at the Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace in June 2015 and will also be exhibited at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in the January of 2016. Further details can be obtained on www.royalcollection.org.uk



The Association's Royal Patron chats to Brian Stewart at a reception in London.



The portrait of Brian Stewart painted by Paul Benney.



The portrait of Tom Renouf painted by Clara Drummond.



Tom Renouf and Clara Drummond at the Queen's Gallery in London.

A PROMISE KEPT

By Mr Norval Black

Editor's Note: The article that follows describes a personal visit to Flanders to commemorate the death of Corporal Henry Black who was killed with 1st Battalion The Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) at the Battle of Aubers Ridge. On 9th May 2015 people gathered at Balhousie Castle to remember the 388 officers and men of the 1st and 2nd Battalions who were killed on 9th May 1915. In Cyprus Delta Company also held a service to mark the battle.

My grandfather, Corporal Henry Black 3/3969 of 'D' Company 1st Battalion, The Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), was killed in action at the Battle of Aubers Ridge on 9 May 1915. Before the war he had been a Territorial in the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry, but in September 1914 he joined The Black Watch and in March 1915 crossed to France. On receiving the news of his death, the family contacted his battalion for further information and received this reply from the Adjutant, Major Victor M Fortune, (later Major General Sir Victor Fortune);

"I regret to tell you Cpl Henry Black was killed on 9/5/15. He participated in the charge and in the evening was missing and was duly reported as such. We were withdrawn that evening and went to another zone altogether. On the first opportunity we sent a party to identify the dead and Cpl Black's body was identified by his papers (as this had to be done in the dark). Our line is well in front of this spot now and he was buried near the Rue de Bois by another Division.

With deepest sympathy and very many thanks for your kind letter.

Yours truly,

Victor M Fortune, Major and Adjutant

PS: He was reported killed by us after identifying party returned about 15th May."

In spite of this letter, Henry Black has no known grave, as his resting place was lost in further fighting over the ground at Aubers, but his name is inscribed on a panel at the Le Touret Memorial for the Missing a few miles to the west.

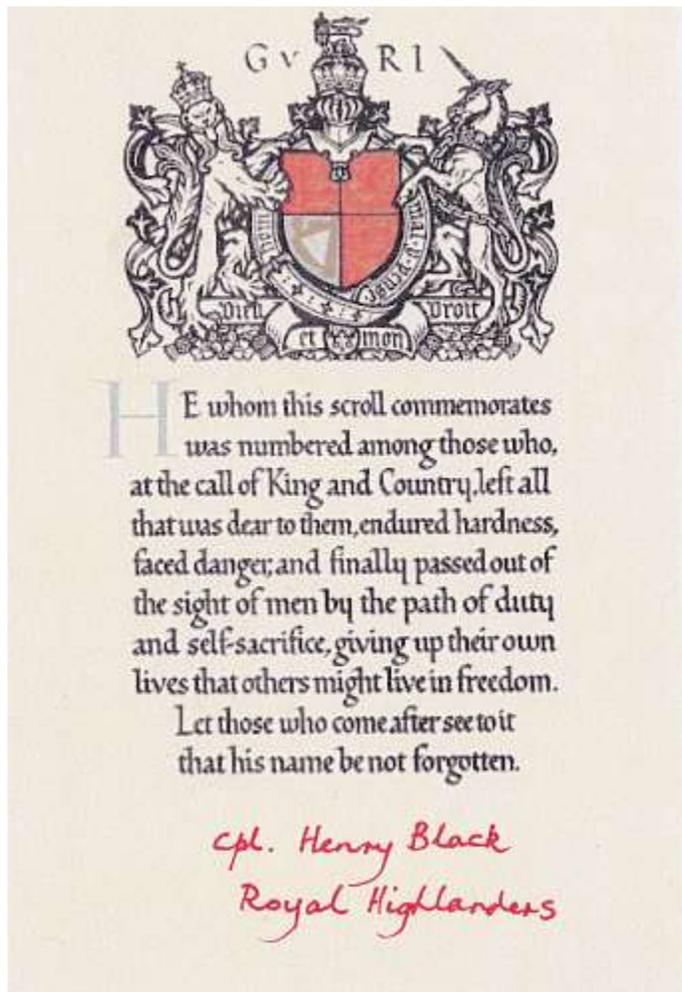
It had long been my intention to commemorate in some way, the centenary of my grandfather's death, by visiting the battlefield. So when 2015 arrived I contacted the Black Watch in Perth. Major Ronnie Proctor was extremely helpful and through him I obtained a wreath with a Black Watch badge to take with me to France. From Fort George, the CO of Delta (Light) Company, Major John Bailey sent me a charming letter, along with a Red Hackle to wear when laying the wreath. Major Bailey also explained that as Delta Company would be deployed in Cyprus on United Nations duties, they would be unable to send anyone to France but that the centenary would be marked by a ceremony at Balhousie Castle.

After making the necessary travel and accommodation arrangements, my cousin and I and our spouses left by ferry from Hull on the 7th of May. Next day we drove from Zeebrugge to Ypres stopping at several CWGC cemeteries: Poelcapelle which contains the grave of Private John Condon, killed on 24 May 1915, aged 14, the youngest known battle casualty of the war; Brandhoek to see the grave of Captain Noel Chavasse, doctor, Olympic athlete and VC and Bar; and Essex Farm, where the Canadian doctor, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae wrote his famous poem, 'In Flanders Fields'.

I had contacted the Last Post Association who organise the nightly closing of the Menin Road at 8pm and the playing of that piece at the Menin Gate by buglers from the Ypres Fire Brigade. They were kind enough to suggest that we could lay our wreath as part of their ceremony. It had been my original intention to place it at the battle site but this seemed a more appropriate location. However, on the 9th May we did travel down to Aubers. From Regimental records I knew that the 1st Battalion had bivouacked the night before the attack at what they called Chocolat Menier Corner, a reference to an advert on the gable of a ruined café, (and now the site of a modern bungalow). In 1915 the attack took place in the afternoon with the battalion attempting, under withering fire, to cross the 300 yards to the German line. Only a handful of men under Acting Sergeant John Ripley reached the German position and held it briefly until almost all were killed in the counter-attack. Although wounded, Ripley succeeded in returning to the British positions. For his actions this day he was awarded the Victoria Cross. The battlefield site today is an innocuous flat area, now simply a great field of oil-seed rape. It is hard to believe that hundreds of men died here. At 3.57 pm, the time of the assault,



Henry Black before the outbreak of war, dressed in the uniform of the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry. He was killed at the Battle of Aubers Ridge on 9th May 1915 serving with the 1st Battalion.



The Scroll commemorating the sacrifice of Cpl Black sent to his family after his death.

we placed a small cross at the Chocolat Corner, said a few silent words and then returned to Ypres. The evening ceremony at the Menin Gate was, as always, quite stirring, and on this occasion, perhaps due to its proximity to the 70th anniversary of VE Day, attracted a very large crowd. At the appropriate moment we were called forward to lay our wreath beside others mostly placed by the military. It was a very moving experience.

On return to Scotland I read about the large ceremony held in Perth to commemorate the men killed at Aubers Ridge and this included the placing of a cross on the Black Watch Memorial Wall at Balhousie Castle for each of the 388 men lost. Sometime later I received a letter from CSM Paul Anderson in Cyprus telling me that on 9th May, members of Delta (Light) Company also commemorated those who fell at Aubers with a service conducted by Battalion Padre, Major John Duncan. At the service CSM Anderson described the battle and Corporal Lawaci QGM gave a reading. The poem 'In Flanders Fields' was read by Captain Hawke, appropriately a Canadian like John McCrae, and a piper and bugler were present to play.

And so, after a hundred years, Henry Black was remembered not only by his family but he and his comrades were also honoured by their Regiment in two separate ceremonies.

On my study wall I have a scroll bearing my grandfather's name. Over a million were produced and every bereaved family in the First War received one. The text, written in part by Rudyard Kipling who himself lost his son Jack in the war, reads as follows;

"He whom this scroll commemorates was among those who, at the call of King and Country, left all that was dear to them, endured hardness, faced danger, and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of duty and self-sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom. Let those who come after see to it that his name is not forgotten."

This year I have learned that The Black Watch does not forget.



Mr Norval Black, the grandson of Henry Black wearing his Red Hackle at the Menin Gate Ceremony on 9th May 2015.

2nd BATTALION THE BLACK WATCH – Archive Photographs

Mr Andrew Robertson, known as Taff served in the 2nd Battalion from 1952-1955. He spent much of his career in the MT Platoon in Colchester, Dusseldorf and Dortmund and drove the Commanding Officer. His twin brother Geoff also served in the 2nd Battalion. The 2nd Battalion had been amalgamated with the 1st Battalion in July 1948, was reformed in April 1952 at Colchester and was then posted to Hubbelrath (October 1952), Dortmund (July 1953), Crail (August 1954) and to British Guiana (September 1954) before returning to Edinburgh in April 1956 for disbandment in October 1956. He has kindly gifted a large number of photographs to the Museum and a selection of them are reproduced for readers to enjoy.



1, 2 and 3 Platoons passing out parade Queen's Barracks, Perth 1952. The bulk of these soldiers were posted to the 2nd Battalion.



From left to right – Ptes Lawson and Roy, Cpl Robertson and Pte Davidson walking out, Dusseldorf June 1954.



Lt Col Bradford escorting the Colonel-in-Chief at the parade in Crail before deploying to British Guiana.



LCpl Taff Robertson with the CO's Austin Champ.



From left to right – Ptes Bob Meldrum, Geoff and Taff Robertson pictured beside the CO's Ford Willys Jeep.



From left to right – Ptes Frazer Clunie, Dave Elder and Taff Robertson at Roman Way Camp, Colchester, 1952.

CHARLIE JOHNSON PAYNE, AKA “SNAFFLES” 1884-1967

By Malcolm Innes

Editor's Note: The author was a National Service officer in the Scots Guards and then completed 6 years in the 6/7th Battalion The Black Watch.

Throughout history, war and conflict have been portrayed through art; artists have recorded the visual and sensory dimensions of war in a way that written accounts cannot achieve.

Artists and their work affect how subsequent generations view military conflicts; their art embraces the causes, course and consequence of conflict in a unique way.

It is not known why Charlie Payne called himself “Snaffles” from around 1906 but we do know that, by then, he was fascinated by both soldiers and horses which gives us a bit of a clue (a snaffle is a mouth-piece for controlling a horse). The first illustration shows an early 1904 watercolour entitled “The Forty-Twa”.

The Regiment is indeed fortunate to have in their Museum copies of all the Highland Brigade subjects “Snaffles” painted then printed. These include “Jock K1” (Kitchener's First Army) showing a Jock pulling his rifle through the wrong way! Apart from their appeal as accurate and appealing recordings of Service life covering both World Wars, these pictures proved to be good investments. Single-figure military prints fetched as little as £25-£50 in the 1970s but can now make £250-£300 at auction, quite high enough for any traditional works in today's rapidly-changing climate. Larger prints, such as “The Finest View in Europe”, can make as much as £2,000.

“Snaffles” was keen to be a soldier but he was short in stature and fitness so he joined the Naval Auxiliary Service during the Great War. Born in Queen Victoria's reign, he was still painting in 1967 aged 83. Between the World Wars he was able to cover hunting, polo



The “Forty Twa”.

and pig-sticking during the Raj, Great Britain's sovereignty in India; he was a devotee of Rudyard Kipling. Though he could not begin to match Sir Alfred Munnings when it came to equestrian art, he made up for it in the movement and humour in his pictures, all carried out with an economy of line. His style is not unlike the work of John Leach, the Scot George Denholm Armour, the Australian-born Henry Mayo Bateman, best known for his "The Man who" series and another Scot, the contemporary Alasdair Hilleary, aka "Loon".

"Snaffles" unique, often humorous style won him great popularity; his work has proved ageless and is still keenly sought after today. He did his own photo-lithographic prints of his pictures, hand-colouring many of them either by himself or with the help of two of his sisters. They were (unfortunately) super-imposed on low-grade paper and card which means they are frequently in need of restoration before they can be hung.

"Snaffles" was also an illustrator in *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, *The Bystander*, *Punch* and, as a War artist, in *The Graphic*, all in the days before photographs had become general. During the Second World War he helped design camouflage and joined the Home Guard. He also produced books and Christmas cards during this period. "Snaffles" was one of the greatest sporting and military artists of his generation. Who else could capture the spirit of a Highland Regiment better than his "The Black Watch", where the caption at the foot reads "The Dismiss. An Impression of Spats and Sporrans", by far my favourite of all "Snaffles" rich output.



The Dismiss – "An impression of spats and sporrans".



Jock K1.



Blue Bonnets.

OP GRITROCK – Fighting Ebola in Sierra Leone

By Lieutenant Colonel Campbell Close

As I stepped off the plane at Lungi Airport, I had a strange sense of returning home. It was eight years since I had spent an amazing year with the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) as a Brigade Operations/Training Advisor to the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces' 5th Infantry Brigade. As we approached the terminal building, the all-pervading smell of chlorine hit us as we were directed towards chlorinated handwash bays, by nervous-looking faces, hidden behind protective equipment.

Operation GRITROCK was an entirely novel operation. As the ebola epidemic in West Africa spread at an alarming rate in mid-2014,

the World Health Organisation asked three countries each to take the lead in coordinating international efforts in one of the three worst affected nations in the region. The US were asked to lead in Liberia, France in Guinea and the UK in Sierra Leone. This in itself, was unprecedented. As the lead nation in Sierra Leone, the UK nominated the Department for International Development (DfID) as the lead government department with significant support from both FCO and MOD. Defence's contribution began in earnest in September 2014 with the deployment of a brigade headquarters (104 Logistics Brigade) to form the core of a Combined, Joint Inter-Agency Task Force (CJIATF) that was led by a DfID 2-star. Quickly other elements were added and the UK contingent peaked at just over 700 military personnel from all

three services and small (but significant) military contributions from Canada and the Republic of Ireland under command.

11 Infantry Brigade were the first of the Army's new Adaptable Force Brigades to be formed in September 2014. As Chief of Staff I was very focussed on making the new concept work, particularly for the five infantry battalions under command, when in November, I received a call from the Divisional Chief of Staff warning me that we were in the frame to replace 104 Logistics Brigade in January 2015. The Commander, DCOS and I conducted a brief recce in November 2014 and then following a brief period of pre-deployment training we deployed in late January 2015. By this stage, the spread of the disease had certainly slowed but the fight was by no means over. It was clear from the outset that those deployed on Op GRITROCK 1 had done a quite outstanding job. The UK had funded (and UK military had designed and built) 5 ebola treatment units, all of them built during the height of the rainy season (traditionally a period when there is no construction work). We had staff integrated at all levels in the National Ebola Response Centre (NERC) and we had deployed forward operating bases with small military/civilian teams to support the District Ebola Response Centres (DERCs) in 8 out of the 14 provinces. There was also a UK military-run ebola treatment unit at Kerry Town which provided treatment to medical personnel working in other ebola treatment units – an essential part of the reassurance required to attract international and Sierra Leonean health care workers to combat the disease. The RFA ARGUS was anchored offshore as a key enabler – the first time (we think) that an RFA vessel has been under direct command (OPCON) of an Infantry Brigade HQ, and she brought with her a conventional hospital afloat, three Merlin helicopters and a boat detachment from the Royal Marines, all of which proved invaluable in moving personnel and stores and sustaining the deployed force. The complexities (and novel nature) of this environment cannot be overstated. For a start, there was a strict “no physical contact” rule – ebola is a disease spread by bodily contact, so there was no hand shaking and you became very aware of your personal space. At the slightest symptom of illness (and there are many in West Africa) “Op ISOLATE” was implemented, where individuals self-isolated, called a medic and the medical chain went through a set drill, until ebola could be ruled out. Working in the Inter-Agency environment created its own intrigue. DfID staff were generally great to work with but had a very different way of working to



Major Close (centre of picture) coordinates the Commander's evening Update Briefing during the visit of Secretary of State for International Development.

the military. Many of those we were “coordinating” did not take kindly to being asked to do things (they certainly didn't take orders) and some of the more “humanitarian” of NGOs wanted nothing to do with the military at all, although they often had to listen to DfID who held the purse strings.

11 Infantry Brigade saw significant change during our 4 month tour and as we handed over in May 2015 to a bespoke HQ, things were in a much better place than they had been. The scope and diversity of tasks undertaken by the military are too many to list but my enduring memory of Sierra Leone is the broad utility of our people – often very junior officers and NCOs, who with no experience or training in public health emergencies, arrived in Theatre, turned their hand to whatever was asked of them and built strong teams from some very disparate groups. Op GRITROCK has been a considerable success and will undoubtedly be looked at in Whitehall as a model that can be followed in the future.

LOUIS FLOOD – Archive Photographs

Editor's Note: It is my intention to publish a number of the photographs over a series of editions of the magazine. The photographs selected show parades at Aberfeldy in 1950 and 1970 as well as in Perth in 1948 and 1952.

On 30 April 2015 Colonel David Arbutnott and Mr Louis Flood gave an illustrated talk based on the images taken of Black Watch events by Louis' father during the 1950s, 60s and 70s. They have been presented to the museum but Louis Flood will maintain the copyright of the images.



On 18th June 1950 a gathering of Association Branches was held at The Black Watch Memorial at Aberfeldy (see Red Hackle Magazine July 1950 for more details). Note the First World War Medals worn by some of the veterans.



A group photograph in front of the Aberfeldy Memorial, 18 June 1950.



November 1948. On the North Inch. The Laying up of the 1st Battalion's Colours in the presence of Field Marshal Lord Wavell.



The 1st Battalion on parade in Aberfeldy, September 1970.



October 1952. Major General RK Arbuthnott (late Black Watch) Commander 51st Highland Division, inspects a Guard of Honour from the Depot in Campbell's Dye Works. Lieutenant Bob Tweedy and Major Jack Monteith accompany the General.



From left to right – The Earl of Mansfield, Alistair Duncan Millar, Laura Ferguson, Lois Duncan Millar, Provost Fisher, Bernard Fergusson, Lady Mansfield and Lord Balneil (Minister of State for Defence) September 1970.



October 1952. Lieutenant Bob Tweedy leads three cheers for Major General Arbuthnott who retired from the Army in November 1952.

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

BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

Commanding Officer: Lieutenant Colonel A F L Steele
Second-in-Command: Major N G Jordan-Barber
Adjutant: Captain T J H Towler
Operations Officer: Captain R J Stewart
Intelligence Officer: Captain M A Dobson
Regimental Signals Officer: Captain C G McRobbie
Regimental Sergeant Major: WO1 (RSM) Marshall

COMMANDING OFFICER'S FOREWORD

The battalion arrived back from Operation TOSCA in early October having handed over to The Royal Scots Borderers. Although OP TOSCA was not a tactically difficult, it remained busy and interesting throughout the six months. All ranks have performed superbly and the battalion has left Cyprus with first rate reputation.

The momentum generated from the restarting of the stalled Cyprus settlement talks which began in May, continued to build during the summer and there is now a palpable sense of optimism within the UN, British High Commission and the wider diplomatic community. Although it would be easy to be cynical about the prospects for a solution, they do not appear to have been this positive for over a decade. As the negotiations progressed, we saw a steady rise in operational tempo.

The growing frequency of Leaders' meetings, bi-communal events and the visits of foreign dignitaries wishing to lend their endorsement to the process, all came with an increased security and liaison burden. There was an additional requirement to step up framework patrolling to deter potential spoilers. We were also busy identifying military and civilian confidence building measures in anticipation of the political requirement to mobilise public support in favour of a settlement.

The Tour was a real tonic for the battalion after Operation VOCATE. Junior commanders have had the opportunity to exercise genuine command responsibility and develop their subordinates free from ORBAT disruption. For those in more senior command and liaison roles much has been learnt from working within a multinational, multiagency environment. Aside from military activity the battalion has made the most of the sporting and cultural activities across the island, this included the inaugural UN Highland Games and a particularly poignant visit to the grave of Sergeant Jock McGaw VC.

There was no let up for those left in the UK. Alpha Company Group deployed to Kenya to provide the opposing force for an exercising unit and then moved straight to France via Lydd to train in the superb urban operations complex near Reims. A great deal has been learnt from their experience which will be ploughed back into

the Battalion's training programme next year. Throughout, the Rear Operations Group has put in an extraordinary shift. With command and G4 elements split for two consecutive six month deployments the BHQ (Rear) and the Quartermaster's Department workload has been unrelenting. That they have managed it with good grace and efficiency says a lot about the strength the battalion has in depth.

Now that we are all back in the Fort for the first time in 16 months, there is real sense of excitement at the prospect around converting to Light Mechanised Infantry. When the battalion returns from Post Tour leave next month, we will reorganise into two Rifle Companies and split Support Company into a Manoeuvre Support Company and ISR Company. The versatility of this new role, coupled with our recent experience of peacekeeping and training foreign armies, will make us widely employable when we take on the Divisional "High Readiness Role" towards the end of next year.

There is a long way to go before then and a lot has been done to set the conditions for conversion. As well as looking at how to exploit the many benefits of being in the Highlands, we have developed innovative ways to mitigate the limitations of Fort George's infrastructure, the constraints of the environment and the pressures on resources. This has included a complete reorganisation of the MT and LAD compound; and the redesign and relocation of the training wing. We hope to be able to invite those posted at E and Association members to Fort George in the New Year to see the progress that has been made.

BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

The Battalion's deployment on Op TOSCA 22 has been the main focus over the last several months. As the deployment draws to a close we



The Battalion Open Water Swim Team.



Combined dinner night, Officers' Mess with WOs' and Sgts' Mess.



The CO and the Foreign Secretary.



Lt Becky Hannah leads a Green Line Tour.

can now reflect on the activity of the summer and look forward to the new challenges which 2016 will present.

Op TOSCA has seen BHQ deploy alongside Bravo Company to Ledra Palace Hotel and near Delta (Light) Company, who operate out of the UN Protected Area, in the heart of Nicosia. Amongst the vibrant, modern city, the staff in the headquarters have been working tirelessly in a ramshackle building in the old Wolesley Barracks just across the road from the hotel. They have had to rapidly learn the delicate business of international peacekeeping – a far cry from traditional infantry soldiering practiced at Otterburn and Brecon.

Throughout the heat of the summer our main focus has been the planning and conduct of deliberate operations to support the negotiations taking place in Cyprus. The members of BHQ have often worked long hours and have been thankful for the air conditioning which has made life more bearable. Some have been busier than others, and it is possible to gauge the amount of office hours kept by individuals by the colour of their tan (the Media Officer's deep mahogany glow versus the Ops Officer's ghoulish white).

Working alongside the regular crew from Fort George there have been a number of attachments for the tour who have all added to the local colour. Among them the Intelligence Officer, Lieutenant Liam Herbert, who has managed to keep all entertained in his morning briefings. His ability to break down complex and serious issues into simple and trivial ones is second only to 'The Sun' but he tirelessly keeps the



The RSM at a sports day in Sector 4.

Battalion up to date with the wider world. He was ably supported by CSgt Currie and LCpl Ash (attached from 7 SCOTS) who take their leader's quirky sense of humour and poor sense of comic timing in their stride.

Alongside the heat and the usual complexities of operating with foreign armies, BHQ has had to suffer the additional burden of a Battalion which is dispersed throughout the world. Delta (Light) Company may only be 6 miles away at UN Headquarters but for the ROG and Alpha (Grenadier) Company, (in Fort George) there has been little chance to get together over the year. BHQ officers have looked on with envy as their counterparts in Alpha (Grenadier) Company visited Kenya and CENZUB in France and listened with awe as the Battalion 2IC described the horizontal rain of a Scottish summer in Fort George, something many of them thought they would never miss.

The dispersal of the Battalion has made it difficult to maintain the sort of cohesion and sense of belonging which is usually associated with a family infantry battalion. The challenges of maintaining morale and a sense of unified purpose have tested our resolution.

The arrival of the remainder of the Battalion's Officers and SNCOs for MS week allowed the Battalion to conduct detailed planning and begin to address the challenges for next year. It seems that there will be no rest for the wicked as the process for conversion to Light Mechanised Infantry (LMI) begins before the majority of the Battalion returns from Cyprus. The vehicles will arrive and no one is more excited about the prospect of change than the Anti-Tank Platoon Commander who will swap his trusted black taxis for a convertible land rover. Plans to purchase a dry suit in order to survive the winter are afoot.

The visits and media cell has also been busy throughout the tour with a huge number of visitors from all walks of life, all eager to come and see the Battalion in Cyprus. Notable highlights include the Foreign Secretary, the Minister for the Armed Forces and Brigadier Aitken, as well as pilots and engineers from RAF Akrotiri, taking a well-earned break to soak up some local history. These visits have regularly featured a tour of the famous Green Line, running through central Nicosia, and between them the two visits officers have racked up an impressive 82 tours throughout their time in Cyprus.

Alongside the military training and the operational demands we have found time to get involved in all manner of sporting events taking place on the island. Cross-country races, mountain runs, hockey, triathlons and long distance swimming have all been gamely tackled, with some mixed results. 2Lt Becky Hannah, AAC made a remarkable habit of winning silverware, much to chagrin of the regular Cypriot competitors, and the Commanding Officer put in a strong showing in the water during the Bay 2 Bay open water swim event, coming 16th out of 223. This has led some to speculate if swimming is going to become a regular addition to PT back in the Fort (or Firth!).

Over the course of the tour we have had to bid farewell to the Adjutant, Capt Martin Stanning, who moves on to take command of Charlie (Fire Support) Company in Fort George. His replacement,

Capt Tim Towler, has grasped the torch firmly with both hands. His first responsibility has been looking after the Defence Attaché's dog which has already proved to be highly insubordinate; a serious challenge to his leadership and authority.

The opportunities that next year presents are many and varied. At the heart of it is a chance to bring the Battalion together and recover some of the cohesion that has been lost as a consequence of being spread far and wide on different missions. It is also a chance to return to the core business of an infantryman, to re-learn the old skills of dismounted close combat and forge a highly effective force. The challenges may be great, but we look forward to the coming year fortified by our experiences of the tour and quietly optimistic that the soldiers of the Black Watch Battalion will overcome whatever is asked of them.



Capt Walker and the Minister for the Armed Forces.

THE OFFICERS' MESS

President of the Mess Committee: Major A J Phillips MC
 Mess Secretary: Capt C G McRobbie

The summer of 2015 has most certainly been a tale of two halves. The Mess in Cyprus has played host to countless formal functions bringing a touch of flare and a taste of Highland hospitality to Cyprus, whilst those trying to avoid the sun have done what they can in Fort George. Whilst each side has had their fair share of pain to endure (sun cream isn't cheap in Cyprus, nor is heavy wool in Scotland) they have embraced the oppor-



Lt Pearson set the example for the Officers' Mess dress regulations.



Officers' Mess members enjoy a spot of Mountain Biking.



3 SCOTS and 1 SCOTS Dinner night.

tunities that they have had available to them with vigour. Lieutenant Nick Coles has maintained his reels education program (less wigs much to the disappointment of Lieutenant Zach Smyth and Captain Alex Deck) whilst Captain Hamilton has maintained his croquet development course.

On the home front the Mess has had the pleasure of hosting the wives at both a joint Mess BBQ, with the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, as well as during the annual Historic Scotland celebration of the Fort "through the ages".

As always there has been the inevitable parting of ways and we must unfortunately say goodbye and good luck to some of our number; Majors Adamson and Bailey move on to warmer climates south of the Hadrian's Wall, as does Captain Lewis who moves to meet up with Captain Martin at "thunderbirds" school (AAC). Captain Rivington also leaves us to join Captain Allan-Perry across the water with 1 SCOTS; a Mess road trip is inevitable.

Fine gentleman such as those that are found within the Officers' Mess cannot run free forever and so it is of little surprise to hear that there have been even more weddings to celebrate this summer. The season started off with Capt Nigel Drapper and Tessa's big day in March before moving onto Captain Christian Voce-Russell and Lucy's in July, in which The Guard of Honour did much to impress the local people of Liverpool and Chester! Unfortunately the next generation doesn't seem to have the same flare, and whilst their drill and bearing were impeccable their ability to talk to the fairer sex was somewhat lacking. Captain Bobby Stewart and Jamilla concluded this wedding season with their vows exchanged at the end of the summer.

As if the Mess couldn't get any bigger we also welcome some more additions; the Stanning household now has an extra dismount whilst Alpha (Grenadier) Company receives Second Lieutenant Gibson. Time will tell as to who got the better deal.

With the Battalion's return imminent it is safe to say that the Mess is looking forward to having a period in barracks together. The Ball in November will certainly dust off the social cobwebs and they will be well and truly removed by the time Christmas week and the Black Watch Ball arrive; there's always light at the end of the tunnel.



Officers' Mess adventure training weekend in Cyprus.

WARRANT OFFICERS' AND SERGEANTS' MESS

Regimental Sergeant Major: WO1 (RSM) P Marshall
 President of the Mess Committee: WO2 (CSM) D Taylor
 President of the Mess Committee (Cyprus): WO2 (SQMS) M Philip

The Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess has again been split for a lengthy period of time between Cyprus and Fort George. However, both at home and abroad the Mess Members have kept themselves busy. The PMC, WO2 McCready, CSgt Dowdles and Sgt Thomson took part in the 2015 Royal Regiment of Scotland Pacestick Competition held in Elgin, run by the RSM of 7 SCOTS. A good day was had by all, the team finished in second place. CSgt Dowdles was also awarded best paceslicker.

The first few weeks of Op TOSCA was an extremely busy period for the forward element of the Mess. This was a time of meeting and greeting which meant a number of cocktail parties, formal dinners and various relaxed social events were held. During this time United Nations Staff were introduced to the Pipes and Drums and many of them also participated in the Highland Games.

A formal regimental dinner marked the departure of WO2 (RQMS) Mikey Fairweather and WO2 (CSM) Iain Smith. Other events, formally known as 'Mess outings' saw the Mess go to Fasouri waterpark, adventure training in the Troodos Mountains and even a touch of Scottish dancing at a Caledonian ceilidh. The recompense trip saw us head to Shakespeare House. Dressed as Braveheart's and in full voice, the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess stole the show at an ABF charity



Sgt Hendry and Sgt Pratt become the Mess table tennis champions.

event. Tradition was broken that evening when the Mess was awarded first prize for their dress efforts. This was the first time the best dressed table was awarded to an MOD organisation!

Competition was as fierce as ever between all three Messes but there were no prizes for guessing which one continually collected the silverware. Sgts Pratt and Hendry were easy winners of the doubles table tennis competition and a tripartite games night with the Officers' Mess and UN Police brought us victory again.

We would like to offer our congratulations to our recently promoted Mess members. Sgt Mark Robb promoted to CSgt and appointed as CQMS HQ Company, and Rab McCready who was promoted to WO2 and has moved to the Training Wing.

We would also like to welcome Sergeants Bob Powell, Jamie Steele, Barry Smith, John Lawaci QGM, Paul Whiteside and Martin Arnold, all joining the Mess after promotion. There are also new members who have been posted in; WO2 Jimmy Fraser from IBS Brecon has assumed the role of RQMS (Tech), CSgt Sammy Torrance arrives from 7 SCOTS to become the assistant RCMO and Sgt W Rankin has been posted in also from 7 SCOTS.

The Mess would also like to extend a fond farewell to those leaving; WO2 (RQMS) Mikey Fairweather on promotion to WO1 has been posted to 7 SCOTS as the RSM. Following him there is CSgt Ian Grant. CSgt Bryan Young has been posted to RMAS as an instructor and Sgt Wilson-Matthews (Catering PI) has been posted out. We also bid farewell to CSgt Andy McCrindle after 22 years' service. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours.



Mess dinner in Cyprus.



"Bravehearts" dressed to support the Soldiers' Charity fundraising event.

CORPORALS' MESS

President of the Mess Committee: Cpl Kyle
President of the Entertainments Committee: Cpl Gilmour
Treasurer: Cpl Buchan
Property: Cpl Harris

The Corporals' Mess has been split in half for the majority of this year, with some of its members deployed on Op TOSCA and some in Fort George. Those deployed on Op TOSCA have been commanding the Jocks on routine patrols in the Buffer Zone, working alongside our multinational partners in the UN. They also held a Mess function in Cyprus that provided an opportunity for those deployed to get together.

Those in Alpha (Grenadier), Charlie (Fire Support) and HQ Company have also had a busy period with deployments across the globe. They deployed to Kenya to support Ex ASKARI STORM, with tasks varying from playing enemy to running ranges in the permanent range team and providing a platoon for force protection. After the exercise the majority of people managed to take advantage of Kenya's many adventure training opportunities. Activities included white water rafting, kayaking, mountain biking, canyoning and abseiling. On return

to the UK many Mess members quickly found themselves en route to France for two weeks to take part in Ex GAULISH EAGLE at CENZUB, the largest purpose-built training facility in Europe for urban warfare. This provided a fantastic opportunity to refresh and enhance our skills in the urban environment.

We congratulate the following members on promotion to Corporal: Cpls Brogan, Gracie, Hunte, Jones, McKenzie, Smith and Spears. We also welcome the following to the Mess on promotion to Lance Corporal: LCpls Bosman, Crawford, Livingstone, Marshall, McPhate, Meldrum, Noble, Randall, Salter, Steel and Tuilevuka. We say farewell to Cpl Miller who has been posted to ITC Catterick for 2 years and to Cpl Downie who has been posted to ATR Winchester. We welcome back Cpls Brady and Holliday from their postings, and a further welcome to LCpl McQueen (REME) who has been posted into the battalion. The Mess would like to congratulate LCpl Hooper and his girlfriend Heather on the birth of their baby girl Kiara and LCpl Ratumaisesese and his wife Akesa on the birth of their baby girl Olivia.

After a very well deserved bit of leave we will be looking forward to teaching on support weapon cadres and preparing for the Cambrian Patrol. After those deployed on Op TOSCA return to Fort George, we will have a Christmas Ball to look forward to.



Cpl Bell receives his triathlon medal.



Cpl Fay surveys the scene in the Buffer Zone.



Cpl Tanoli hanging on for dear life...



LCpl McNicol observing the Buffer Zone.

A (GRENADE) COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Maj B O'Neill
Second-in-Command:	Capt C Voce Russell
Company Sergeant Major:	WO2 (CSM) Hannah
Company Quartermaster Sergeant:	CSgt Copeland
1 (Senior Highland) Platoon Commander:	Lt J A Young
1 (Senior Highland) Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt Bellshaw
2 Platoon Commander:	Lt A F Bullen
2 Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt McMaster

Whilst Bravo and Delta (Light) Companies have been conducting operations in Cyprus, the Grenadiers, supported by elements of Charlie (Fire Support) Company have been globetrotting and conducting conventional training with four exercises back to back. True to form, the Grenadiers emerged triumphant against men from Yorkshire, Lancashire, Frenchmen and even the odd big game animal too!

As soon as Major O'Neill arrived he got the company moving with plenty of direction...mostly south, away from the Fort. 1 (Senior Highland) Platoon travelled to Salisbury Plain Training Area to support the Grenadiers of 4 SCOTS on Ex LION STRIKE, the exercise for the next batch of Majors destined for sub-unit command. Such was the professionalism shown by the Grenadiers of 3 SCOTS that Mr Young was asked politely to stop pushing one of the OCs so hard!

Soon after ENDEX was called, the men of 1 Platoon were travelling to the East Coast of England to meet up with the remainder of the Company to revise their conventional and urban doctrine and tactics on Ex URBAN GRENADE in Norfolk. Lt Young was (temporarily) relieved of his command and 1 Platoon came under the command of 2Lt Hannah (AAC), who had arrived straight from Sandhurst. 2Lt Hannah certainly proved that she was up to the job as lead platoon commander into that attack on Eastmere village.

No sooner had the Grenadiers arrived back at the Fort, than they received a quick issue of lightweight combats and were back on the bus to Brize Norton to deploy to Kenya as enemy forces on Ex ASKARI STORM. The Company arrived in Nairobi late at night, and after a 'dynamic' bus ride the Grenadiers made it to Lab East Camp in Nanyuki. There they meet up with some old friends from 4 SCOTS who had deployed to return a favour. After a few days of acclimatisation the Company deployed into the field for a live fire package. All ranks agreed it was great to stretch their legs, test trigger fingers and admire the beautiful flora and fauna of Kenya. The most memorable moment during live fire ranges was Ptes McAllahan and Veuteroi seeing a lion and quickly asking Capt Voce Russell from a position of overview if lions could climb trees!

After live firing, the Company re-deployed to Archer's Post and got stuck into the role of playing the enemy against the 2 LANCS Battlegroup. This was an excellent opportunity for the Grenadiers to get into the mindset of looking at British tactics and defeating them; easy it seemed, but reassuringly, a difficult task!



Improving their urban warfare skills.



Simulated casualty is evacuated.

During the final phase of Ex ASKARI STORM we played out several scenarios against the 2 LANCS Battlegroup and it was clear that with the support of the 3 SCOTS Recce Platoon and MFCs of Charlie (Fire Support) Company that we made it very difficult for the men of Lancashire. The key highlight was when the Company Clerk, Pte Jones, attacked and killed several enemy single handed. Little did he know at the time that he had actually just killed the CO's Tac Group including the 2 LANCS RSM!

After ENDEX was called we were again saying goodbye to our friends from 4 SCOTS, hastily packing our bags and redeploying to the next challenge. No sooner had the wheels touched down at Brize Norton, we were met by the cheerful faces of the Battalion 2IC, the MTO and a platoon of reinforcements from Fort George. We then got on to another bus, this time to North East France, to begin an urban operations exercise called Ex GAULISH EAGLE.

Ex GAULISH EAGLE was conducted at the CENZUB training area, considered the best urban training centre in Europe. It was a huge privilege for the Company to be sent there to train with the French urban operations subject matter experts. It also has the benefit of being based next to the Champagne region, so naturally that was a bonus too!

The first week was instruction from the French, where they taught us the French way of assaulting buildings, storming rooms and destroying tanks. The tactics were very similar to British doctrine, so the Jocks had no trouble cherry picking the best bits and using them with what they already knew. The weekend was spent conducting a battlefield tour to High Wood on the Somme and learning about the heroic efforts of the Newfoundland Regiment and the brave men of the 51st Highland Division – a truly humbling experience.

The final week in France was spent on our own test exercise in a stifling 35C heat. The men from A Company and C Company were pitted against the French OPFOR with their knowledge of the areas and support from their APCs and tanks.

After a long journey back to the Fort, we enjoyed a change of pace, attending Highland Games in the local area to help the recruitment

team before some well earned summer leave. Overall the four exercises were a great opportunity for everyone to get back to conventional training and to train with our colleagues in 4 SCOTS.

Alpha (Grenadier) Company also supported the Highland Military Tattoo. This has involved stiff competition amongst the company to decide who had the best kit in order to show off when on parade. A cast of 12 were picked, led by a smartly turned out (for once!) Lt Young. The tradition of having a glass of port before every parade was kept alive and the string of shows went off without a hitch.

All ranks of Alpha (Grenadier) Company extend their congratulations to Sgt Bellshaw for his promotion, Sgt Cruickshanks on his promotion and receipt of Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and Cpl Hunte on his promotion. We would also like to congratulate Cpl Gordon and Alice on their marriage. The summer has also seen four births to the soldiers of Alpha (Grenadier) Company. Congratulations to Pte Jack and his partner Amy on the birth of their daughter Paton, LCpl Frearson and his fiancé Verdie on the birth of their daughter Maddie, LCpl Campbell and fiancé Kayley on the birth of their daughter Kiera Marie and Cpl Gordon and wife Alicia on the birth of their daughter Alexia.

Alpha (Grenadier) Company has had a busy but fun and varied time in the last 6 months. With new challenges on the horizon such as becoming a Light Protected Mobility Battalion, there is no doubt that with the strong ethos we have, the Grenadiers will embrace the challenges that will present themselves over the next few months.



Preparing to enter a building.



Quick battle orders are issued.

BRAVO COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Maj A Bayne
Second-in-Command:	Lt Z Smyth
Company Sergeant Major:	WO2 (CSM) M Gray
Company Quartermaster Sergeant:	CSgt E Nichol
5 Platoon Commander:	Lt A Pearson
5 Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt S Hendry
6 Platoon Commander:	Lt A Christie
6 Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt B Smith
7 Platoon Commander:	Lt R Harris RY
7 Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt S Pratt

Bravo Company found themselves in the thick of things again. Bouncing straight from one operation to the next, the soldiers and officers have had a busy year deployed on OP TOSCA 22. While the operation can be slow paced, it is complex. Things can, and very much do, spring up out of the blue. Despite this, the Company conducted themselves with the spirit and professionalism they pride themselves on.

Bravo Company has been employed as the Operations Company on Op TOSCA. The job of the Operations Company is to patrol a sector of the Buffer Zone. The UK Sector (Sector 2) is 22km long and ranges from 6km, at its widest point, to 3.3m at its narrowest. The city of Nicosia is directly in the centre of the sector. This represents a sector that is complex and often congested, both militarily and politically.

The Jocks have had some adjustments to make. For many straight from training, this is their first operational tour. For others, their last experience of operations was Afghanistan. For both groups of soldiers it has been a challenge coming to terms with the variety of tasks to be carried out. Bravo Company's three platoons worked on a two week rotation; cycling through each half of the UK Sector and then guarding Ledra Palace Hotel, our quaint, bullet-hole pockmarked accommodation. Ledra Palace Hotel was once the jewel of Nicosia and accommodated some of the city's most prestigious guests; Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor among them. Much has changed since the hotel's heyday but we are reputed to be the first Battlegroup not to complain about the state of the rooms.

The Buffer Zone in Sector 2 varies between open farmland on either side of Nicosia city, to the abandoned suburbs and the 'erie' Green Line, running through the city centre. To patrol with greatest effect a number of methods are used. Jocks patrol on bicycle, vehicle and foot in order to maintain situational awareness and to reassure either side that the Buffer Zone is effectively monitored. The Green Line, in the inner city and suburban areas, is patrolled on bicycle or foot as it is very congested with buildings, alleys and scrap material littering the routes. Vehicles are utilised in the more rural areas to allow patrols to cover the ground quicker. The patrols scan along the Buffer Zone to ensure there have been no changes made which may be interpreted as a change of posture. The Jocks require vigilance and attention to detail. The secondary role of the patrols is to ensure that the integrity of the Buffer Zone is maintained. As a demilitarised zone, civilian presence is closely monitored. It is down to the patrols to question anybody found inside the Buffer Zone.



Sgt Robb and Pte Clements await the arrival of a helicopter.



Members of the Military Skills team come 2nd in the competition.

All operations and patrols are intelligence led in order to ensure our resources are ideally placed for maximum effect on the ground. Our Intelligence Cell assists in the planning process, offering intelligence on previous operations in the area, likely trends and hotspots and cultural sensitivities or calendar events that may shape our activity.

Members of Operations Company have also had a great opportunity to get involved with a lot of sporting and adventurous training activities during their time in Cyprus. The Jocks clearly enjoyed the warm waters of the Mediterranean as we had no trouble generating volunteers for a Bay-to-Bay swim in Episkopi where we raised over £600 for the Army Benevolent Fund. Sprint and super-sprint triathlons hosted by the K1 Triathlon Club were also popular with Private Lee putting in a hearty performance. On top of this, representatives from the Company took part in a bike-and-run duathlon, two 10km cross country races, and 10km and 15km mountain races where Ptes Croll and Clements performed well. Operations Company Jocks and JNCOs also entered a team in the Episkopi Services Sailing Club Raft Race where their boat definitely looked the part but failed to retain enough buoyancy to stay dynamic in the water. Nevertheless, the Jocks battled through the lengthy course led by Cpl Bell at the helm.

The two British teams that entered into the UN Military Skills Competition were mostly manned by Operations Company. The competition was different from most of its sort that members of the Battalion have experienced before, in that it was designed to test skills useful in the peacekeeping environment of Op TOSCA. After the mandatory 5 mile race with kit, temporarily carrying a log, the team moved on to driving tasks, command tests that focused on good communication, a swimming race and an incident management serial. Team A was stripped of its Platoon Commander, Lieutenant Pearson, during training, which provided the opportunity for Cpl Bell to step up to lead the team. With help from LCpl Broatch and a very strong section of private soldiers, they came second in the competition.

The Battalion also sent a team to play in the Akrotiri Tens Rugby Competition, where a number of Bravo Company Jocks helped the team to reach the semi-final. With notable performances from Ptes Vunibobo, Lee and Keltie, the team jelled with five soldiers from the Argentinian contingent. Bravo Company Jocks were also in the vanguard of the Battalion's commitment to the British Forces Cyprus football team, with Ptes Pearson and Keenen demonstrating their skills to high praise.



Cpl Fay gives a ground brief to his patrol – Callsign 22E L-R Pte Miles, Pte Finlayson, Pte Randall.



Cpl Bell cheering on his team.



Lt Pearson leading the Guard of Honour at the UN cocktail party.



Members of B Company on bike patrol.



Members of B Company at the British High Commission after playing tennis.

The integration of Reservists into the Company has been a successful venture. As expected, our main contributor was our paired unit 7 SCOTS, but 6 SCOTS along with 14 other units from across the UK also provided soldiers. Operations Company had Reservists fully integrated into all platoons from the rank of Private up to Lieutenant. 7 Platoon was commanded by Lt Richard Harris from the Royal Yeomanry who took a break from his Troop to join us in Cyprus.

In some senses Op TOSCA is the right environment for factors peculiar to the Reserves to come to the fore. An alternative thought process to solving problems can not only specifically help manage disputes in the Buffer Zone but also benefit a regular soldier's wider awareness and development. This is especially so if those Reservists are from other professions such as the police service or teaching (both of which we have in this Battlegroup). The integration of the Reserves into The Black Watch Op TOSCA 22 Battlegroup has benefited all involved.

The future holds great potential and opportunity for Bravo Company and the Battalion, with the conversion to the Light Mechanised role coming up immediately on the horizon. There will be the chance to invest time, strengthening the bonds and relationships we have with our friends and families on the home-front, and also to strengthen our reputation and ethos as a strong, family centred Battalion of the Highlands.

CHARLIE (FIRE SUPPORT) COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Maj A Phillips MC
Second-in-Command:	Capt C Treasure
Company Sergeant Major:	WO2 (CSM) K Blackley
Company Quarter Master Sergeant:	CSgt A Bright
OC Sniper Platoon:	CSgt Hunter
Sniper Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt Dunn
OC Recce Platoon:	Capt D Hamilton
Recce Platoon 2IC:	CSgt Sharp MC
Recce Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt Blake
OC Mortar Platoon:	Capt C Treasure
Mortar Platoon 2IC:	Sgt Mortley
Mortar Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt Steele
Anti Tank Platoon Commander:	Capt I K Walker
Anti Tank Platoon 2IC:	CSgt Buist
Pipe Major:	WO2 Gridale
Drum Major:	Sgt Campbell

It is no easy task to write a set of notes that cover any six month period; it is far more difficult to write them when you have spent that time dislocated from your Company. Charlie (Fire Support) Company on Op TOSCA consists of a handful of Jocks 'loaned' to Bravo Company, CSM Blackley committed to the Civil Affairs cell with Pte Lyon and CQMS CSgt Bright stepping up as the RQMS. The OC has been a Military Observation and Liaison Officer (MOLO) and assumed command of the Mobile Force Reserve (MFR); a self-styled 'half battalion Commander' with two companies under his command. The experience of the Company in Cyprus is covered in depth by other contributors. The focus of Charlie (Fire Support) Company has been on the hard work they have been putting in from Fort George while half the Battalion has been operationally committed.

The platoon updates cover their specific activity but the Company column allows the opportunity to give an overview of the Charlie (Fire Support) Company activities. Opportunities have come thick and fast.

Specialist Support Platoon cadres have been a priority with emphasis placed on maintaining and generating the specialist capabilities. The recce team delivered a cadre early in the year as a foundation for two Overseas Training Exercises in Kenya and France. The Snipers have done a fantastic job of re-building the capability in the Battalion and getting soldiers badged. Of note is the Battalion's recent performance at the Sniper Division where we had the highest pass rate of any unit to date. This is due to the hard work and preparation invested by CSgt Hunter and Sgt Dunn. Following their success they were nominated to run the Regimental beat up for candidates from all SCOTS Battalions.

The Mortars have also conducted their cadre and at the time of going to press will be completing their annual live firing shoots. An opportunity the platoon always enjoys. Due to operational manning requirements, the Anti-Tank Platoon has been split to backfill rifle platoons and provide extra manning, giving a number of individuals the chance to deploy on Op TOSCA.

The opportunities for Overseas Training Exercises have been superb with the majority of the Company deploying to Kenya as OPFOR, permanent range team or as BATUK Force Protection Platoon. A number also deployed to CENZUB, an urban training facility in France to support Alpha (Grenadier) Company.

No Charlie (Fire Support) Company article is complete without mention of the Assault Pioneer/Pipes and Drums Platoon. They have had a very exciting few months with a tour to Cyprus which aided the



Maj Phillips MC receives a participation award.

influence campaign and brought a little ray of Scotland to the island. They were well received on a tour visiting the Argentineans, Slovaks, Hungarians and even local Scout groups. On return to the UK they have had a hugely successful competition circuit and performed at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

Running in the background to all of this activity has been Fort George routine and career courses. Congratulations to LCpls Jones, Jamieson, Methven and Cameron for completing SCBC; to LCpl Drinkwater, Dalgliesh and Pte Souter for badging as snipers and to Cpl Watson for completing the Advanced Mortar course and to LCpls Hooper and Taylor for passing the Mortar Standard course. All of these are promotion qualifying courses. The Company has also had some success on the JNCO cadre with Simmons and MacDonald both passing the course.

By the time of publication Charlie (Fire Support) Company will be in the capable hands of Major Martin Stanning, who assumes command in October. After eight years unbroken Regimental duty, Major Phillips finally has to leave 'never never land' and stop pretending to be Peter Pan – the wider Army beckons.



The Pipes and Drums playing at the UN Highland Games.

RECCE PLATOON

OC Recce Platoon:	Capt D Hamilton
Recce Platoon 2IC:	CSgt Sharp MC

The last seven months has seen the Reconnaissance Platoon really come into its own, with a strong performance during two recent OTXs. Ex ASKARI THUNDER saw us playing enemy for the 2 LANCS BG in Kenya. This was the Platoon's first exercise since forming in January and everyone performed well. Five weeks of winning every ISTAR battle – consistently and decisively defeating the 2 LANCS Recce and Sniper platoons and destroying their artillery observers – is all the summary that you need to know.

Our thanks go to Cpl Smith and his snipers and Cpl Watson as our MFC for their professionalism and assistance in these battles – they would not have been won without you. One personal highlight has to be a recce by stealth of a company defensive position at night. Kit cached in the FRV and a magazine in the pocket, a three man team probing the line on a belt-buckle. They cut the wire at a blind spot, infiltrated past the trench network and using silent bounds from bush to bush they moved through the position. Communicating only through hand signals they found the enemy CP, executed the OC and disappeared into the shrub without engagement. My sincere thanks go to 'Andy' Rodgers and Shaun 'McNab' for what was simply the most thrilling soldiering experience of my life. Un-doctrinal as it was, it is a demonstration of what a reconnaissance team can do at its very best.

Ex GAULISH EAGLE saw the platoon deployed as part of the Alpha (Grenadier) Company Group to the CENZUB training area in France: a massive urban city complete with industrial zones, high rise city blocks and underground car-parks. The training was unparalleled, and again the Platoon consistently added real value to both the planning process and indeed the battle proper. CSgt Sharp led the platoon through a series of key objectives to relieve the pressure on the main body at critical moments in the battle.

The Recce Platoon then had the opportunity to represent the British Army at the Lithuanian Best Section Competition in August, and will participate in the infamous Cambrian Patrol in October, where we proudly represent the Red Hackle and the Royal Regiment as a whole. If we continue our upward momentum through these tasks then the Platoon will have justly regained their reputation as the finest that the Battalion has to offer.

MORTAR PLATOON

Platoon Commander: Capt C M Treasure
Platoon Sergeant: CSgt I Grant

For the Mortar Platoon the last six months have been dominated by a 7 week deployment to Kenya. The platoon fulfilled the role of the British Army Training Unit Kenya's Force Protection Platoon. In this role we were responsible for providing an armed guard at three of the BATUK locations, a Quick Reaction Force, as well as manning the Operations Room. Training for this role required a trip to the Mission Training and Mobilisation Centre at Chilwell and subsequent completion of the Team Medic Cadre for many of the soldiers.

The Section Commanders, Cpls Steele, Kyle and Peebles, managed to ensure that their soldiers got to experience some of the sights of Kenya on their days off. Trips included visits to game reserves and animal sanctuaries. The deployment culminated with four days of adventure training, where the platoon got to try white water rafting, rock climbing and mountain biking.

The platoon is now preparing for its yearly Mortar Cadre where we welcome new members of the platoon and re-qualify existing members. This will be conducted over a 4 week period in Fort George and on Salisbury Plain Training Area.

Congratulations go to Cpl McKenzie and Cpl Smith on their promotion to Corporal and LCpl Tuilevuka and LCpl Salter on their entrance into the Corporals' Mess. Further compliments go to Cpl Watson, LCpl Hooper and LCpl Taylor on passing the Mortar Advanced and Standard courses respectively and Pte Simmons for passing his Section 2IC course. We will say good-bye to CSgt Grant who has done a sterling job as Mortar Platoon 2IC for three years. We wish him all the best as he moves to 7 SCOTS as an instructor.



Capt Treasure and LCpl Salter take a break during the mountain biking trip.



Pte Dodgson on a visit to an animal sanctuary in Kenya.



Members of the Mortar Platoon on a zeroing range in Kenya at the start of their deployment.

ANTI-TANK PLATOON

Platoon Commander: Captain I Walker
Second-in-Command: CSgt Buist
Platoon Sergeant: Cpl Wilson
1 Det Commander: Cpl Campbell
2 Det Commander: Cpl Gracie

The last several months have seen the Anti-Tank platoon split in two distinct halves. One half has been providing support to Bravo Company for Op TOSCA in Cyprus, and the other has been traveling the world supporting various exercise such as Ex ASKARI STORM in Kenya and Ex GAULISH EAGLE in France. This has meant that the Platoon has had its fair share of sun and has perfected the 'squaddie tan', much to the amusement of those back in Inverness.

Those members deployed to Cyprus have been patrolling the Buffer Zone and those members that deployed on Ex ASKARI STORM acted as enemy for 2 LANCs Battlegroup. The latter group were able to use their intimate knowledge of ground analysis to make sure the LANCs were sufficiently held up in their attack. Following the exercise, the half platoon attached to Alpha (Grenadier) Company group, redeployed immediately to CENZUB in France, the premier urban training facility in Europe.

Despite being split across the globe, the Anti-Tank Platoon has performed admirably in all of its tasks. Noteworthy successes include the promotions of Cpls Campbell and Gracie. They now each take command of an Anti-Tank Det and will be putting their new found experience to good use on the qualification cadre in November.



Anti Tank Platoon members get to grips with French weapons.



Anti Tank Platoon members on Op TOSCA.

SNIPER PLATOON

Sniper Platoon Commander: CSgt R Hunter

The Sniper Platoon spent the majority of the last four months deployed in support of Alpha (Grenadier) Company on Exercise ASKARI STORM in Kenya. This was followed by a short deployment to the CENZUB Urban Combat Centre in France. These exercises provided the snipers with their first real chance to put into practise everything they have learned since our return from Op VOCATE last year. They performed extremely well, with most notably Cpl (Smudge) Smith and LCpl Boa managing to gain a simulation kill of the 2 LANCs RSM and injuring their Commanding Officer whilst acting as enemy snipers in Kenya.

In France the Platoon had the opportunity to share and acquire new skills with the French instructors in the fantastic Urban Combat Town of CENZUB. This environment provided the opportunity to practise high angle shooting in a very challenging environment.

The Platoon would like to congratulate LCpl Drinkwater, LCpl Dagleish and Pte Souter on their successful completion of the arduous and difficult Basic Sniper Course. The Platoon will now focus on preparing our new snipers for completion of this course as we seek to return to full strength for our conversion to Light Mechanised Infantry. Later in the year we will complete high angle live firing from the tower on Tain training area and hopefully send some sniper pairs on the Alpine Sniping Course in Bavaria to expand their skillset.



LCpl Boa and Dixon with the French Instructors.



LCpl Dixon in a bush hide.



Pte Davit in overwatch of a village.

PIPES AND DRUMS

Pipe President: Major A Phillips MC
Pipe Major: WO2 R K Grisdale
Drum Major: Sgt A L Campbell

In the last several months the Platoon has been as busy as ever. With the Battalion deployed on Op TOSCA the Platoon also deployed, for a few weeks, to assist with ceremonial tasks. It was with great regret that we were unable to stay with the Battalion in Nicosia, instead staying in Dhekelia Garrison. The Platoon can certainly pass a military swim test now.

The return from Cyprus saw the Platoon directed to Tidworth for a surprise dining out of Major General J M Cowan CBE DSO, before a long drive up to Inverness for a reality check. During May the Drum Major went on his Platoon Sergeant's Assault Pioneer Course and the platoon split into two parts. Cpls Muir and Low took the majority of the Platoon to support 7 SCOTS in Sweden at the International Tattoo. The Pipe Major had selected two others to accompany him to a battlefield tour of the Netherlands and Belgium.

With the beginning of June came another flight to Belgium for the Pipe Major, attending the Commemoration of the Battle of Hooge. Late June saw the Platoon supporting the Black Watch Association Regimental Weekend. Living in Queen's Barracks in Perth for the weekend was in itself a camping event. The Platoon was invited to an impromptu gathering in the Ex Servicemen's Club the night before. It's a good thing that the parade stepped off at 1300 and not any earlier. The Platoon would like to thank Pipe Major A Duthie and Pipe Major McIntosh for an excellent night. Saturday saw the Platoon parade through Perth, marching the Association to Balhousie Castle. Sunday saw them up early and away to Aberfeldy for the Muster. After a short display of piping, drumming and dancing the Association took the Platoon for a very nice lunch.

With the Drum Major back with the Platoon he took the opportunity to take them to his home town for the Armed Forces/Gala day. It was the wettest day in 100 years and with a street march long enough that it should be considered as a pass on the CFT. Still the organizers made up for it with the buffet. Cpl Muir was eating the leftovers for days at home. Cpl Muir and Pte Montgomery headed off to Edinburgh to support 2 SCOTS Pipes and Drums at Royal Week, whilst the Platoon returned to Fort George to prepare for leave.

The Platoon was to attend five competitions during the month of August, attending Bridge of Allan for our first outing of the season. It was no walkover as the attendance was large and the big boys turned up to play. Achieving 1st in the March, Strathspey and Reel was a fantastic boost for the boys. Coming fifth in the Marching Tunes was also not too shabby. The next weekend was North Berwick on the Saturday achieving 1st in the March, Strathspey and Reel, 1st in the Marching, 1st in the Marching Tunes and Smartest Band on parade. Although Pte Archibald categorised it to be the best looking band on parade. A quick change and off to that evening's Tattoo, only to be back on the bus Sunday morning and off to Perth Highland Games; we had another good day and were placed 2nd in the March, Strathspey and Reel.

After a week of hard practice preparing for the World Championships in Glasgow, the Saturday morning came and so did an early start. This was a fantastic day out that was not only an education but also enjoyable. We competed against bands from all over the world. The Platoon did not let the power of the big bands knock their nerves and they came 2nd in the qualifier round grabbing a place in the afternoon final.

Playing in the final in the afternoon was an achievement in itself. After a long bus journey back to Edinburgh and a rush to change for the Tattoo, news started filtering in. I'm proud to say that the Pipe and Drums of The Black Watch placed 7th in their new grade from last year.



Pipe Major and Pte Moir with Maj Gen Cowan in the background at his farewell parade.



Pipes and Drums perform a set.



The Pipes and Drums attended an Armed Forces Gala day with the BW ACF Pipes and Drums.

DELTA (LIGHT) COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Maj A Phillips MC
Second-in-Command:	Capt L Hawke
Company Sergeant Major:	WO2 (CSM) P Anderson
Company Quartermaster Sergeant:	CSgt W Carnegie
13 Platoon Commander:	Lt W Kelly
13 Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt A Lavery
15 Platoon Commander:	Lt A Atterbury
15 Platoon Sgt:	Sgt D Bruce

Delta (Light) Company has had an exceptionally busy 6 months in Cyprus. We deployed to Cyprus to form a component of the Mobile Force Reserve (MFR) and the Company worked directly for the Force Commander, a Norwegian 2 Star general. Unlike Bravo Company and BHQ, we didn't have the luxury of a former 5 star hotel to live in. We were based in the United Nations Protected Area; a pocket of UN controlled land centered on what was Nicosia International Airport. Located just to the West of the city, it hosts the Headquarters of the UN in Cyprus. The Company was therefore under the constant eye of the Force Commander and Chief of Mission, so had to be on its best behaviour!

The MFR is a multinational Company drawn from the different national contingents deployed in Cyprus. With soldiers from various nationalities integrated down to fire team level, Delta Company soldiers have been working closely with Hungarians, Slovaks and Argentinians. This has tested the soldiers' languages to the limit, however it has been fantastic to see the enthusiasm with which they took to the task.

As the Force Commander's Reserve the MFR can be deployed anywhere on the island at short notice. The Company conducted operations as varied as protecting de-miners in the Buffer Zone to setting up observation posts in order to identify hunters on the United Nations Protected Area. One of the primary tasks of the MFR was to provide security to the negotiations between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. This role was high profile and required strong leadership from JNCOs in order to be successful.

Overall the Company performed their role to an extremely high standard over the six months. There were challenges, chief among which was the heat which at times, overwhelmed sun shy Jocks. This inevitably led to some lobsters being seen around camp! Despite this the Jocks enjoyed the opportunities the sun delivered, such as the chance to take some leave in Ayia Napa.

During Op TOSCA all of our soldiers worked very closely with other nationalities. Cpl Poole in particular had the unique opportunity to work alongside the Argentinean Army in one of their remote Patrol Bases. He deployed for three days on a one for one swap with an Argentinian soldier. When first arriving in Cyprus his "spang-lish" barely got by with the four Argentinian soldiers in his section. As the tour progressed his Spanish has improved to a more intermediate level thanks to Google Translate and hours spent trying to communicate with Argentinian soldiers.

The multinational make-up of the MFR provided an excellent opportunity for showcasing national cuisine and traditions. Each contributing nation put on a national night. The Jocks led the way, putting on an international night organized by the CSM. It was an excellent event featuring a performance from the Battalion's Pipes and Drums. While some failed to appreciate the unique sound most had an excellent time. The evening also saw the Fijian choir perform. Led by Sgt Lawaci QGM they put on a superb show!



Pte Davidson and two Argentinian soldiers.



Mobile Force Reserve Patrol in Sector 4.



Maj Bailey leads the UN Summer Medals Parade.



Lt W Kelly (left) with his fellow Platoon Commanders, Lt P Lovas of Hungary and Lt M Dalzotto of Argentina.



CSgt Carnegie and the 2IC, mile 4 of 110 through the Buffer Zone.



A Section from the MFR at the Eastern edge of the Buffer Zone.

The Argentinian response featured a barbeque with an excessive amount of meat! It was an excellent event offering food, wine and an insight into their country and culture. This was followed up by a Hungarian night with a traditional goulash and some particularly vicious spirits!

The Company has also competed in sporting events across the Island, winning the Argentinian Sports Day in the process. In this context the multinational element was a real asset, with Argentinian support on the football pitch particularly apparent.

The end of the tour saw CSgt Carnegie take on a unique challenge. Raising money for three different charities, he committed to running a 110 mile route through the Buffer Zone, from the far Western edge in the Argentinian sector, to the far Eastern edge in the Hungarian and Slovakian sector. Accompanied by the 2IC, the two runners completed the entire distance in three consecutive days of running. Their support team was led by Cpl Barkley, assisted by LCpl Hanlin, Ptes Mackie and Phillips, and under the careful supervision of their medic LCpl Fitzwarren. He raised over £2000 for charity, and the company would like to extend their congratulations to him for completing such an arduous challenge and raising a significant amount of money for a good cause.

This tour also saw us say goodbye to a long time member of Delta (Light) Company. Major Bailey left on posting. Previously serving as a Platoon Commander and Second-in-Command of Delta (Light) Company we wish him the best in his future career. He has been replaced temporarily by another former Platoon Commander in the Company, Major A Phillips MC. He commanded the company for the remainder of the tour, before also departing for a posting south of the Hadrian's Wall.

Taking a break from the rigors of Op TOSCA, Lt Atterbury represented the Army U25 squash team on their annual tour of Gibraltar. A five day competition featuring some of the world's top 200 players proved a standard too high for most; however it was still a fantastic week on and off the court. Lt Atterbury narrowly failed to qualify for the main draw after being knocked out by a local player. Despite the disappointment this caused he was able to console himself with the knowledge that he would have been embarrassed had he got any further.

The Company would like to congratulate LCpl Rokoduguni and his wife on the birth their second child Semesa. We would also like to extend our congratulations to LCpl Whittall on his engagement to Emily Sims. We congratulate Sgt Lawaci QGM on his promotion, as well as Cpl Gracie, Cpl Spears and LCpl Marshall on their promotions.

QUARTERMASTERS DEPARTMENT

Quartermaster: Major G Hogg
 Quartermaster (T): Capt S Mackenzie
 RQMS (T): WO2 Fraser
 RQMS (M): WO2 Stacey

Since returning from Op VOCATE in November 2014 there have been many personality changes in the Quartermaster's Department. From losing Major Jamie Howe, RQMS (T) Fairweather, SSgt Al Smith, Sgt Brennan, Cpl Aaron Sloan and LCpl Ralph Porter, we have also said our goodbyes to Cpl Sammy O'Gorman our ammunition storeman who moved to Alpha (Grenadier) Company to get back into the soldiering and Cpl Rebecca Errington, who departed on promotion to Sergeant.

In their place we have received Major Glenn Hogg formerly QM (T) as the Quartermaster of The Black Watch. WO2 Fraser picked up

the slack as RQMS (T), however his feet didn't touch the ground as he went straight onto Op TOSCA as TATE (Training, Adventure Training & Education) Warrant Officer. SSgt Beddoes arrived as the head of the RLC 1st line optimisation detachment with Cpl Stephen Taylor and LCpl Nathan Churcher. We also gained Cpl Beattie and Pte Minta-Junior (MJ) who aspires to transfer to the RLC.

In early 2015 we were very busy supporting the training for Op TOSCA. The deployment resulted in the QM's Department being split much like on Op VOCATE only 4 months early. The QM (T) Capt Scott McKenzie, RQMS (T) Fraser, CSgt Currie, Cpl Catto and LCpl Cameron all deployed in support of the Battalion, leaving Major Hogg, RQMS (M) Stacey, CSgt Hastings, SSgt Beddoes, Cpl Taylor, LCpl's Kelly and Churcher. Major Brian Cooper returned from his holiday as QM Brecon to assume the post as QM in Cyprus but he will revert back to Commanding HQ Company on his return to the UK.

Those deployed on OP TOSCA have managed to squeeze some quality adventure training in as well as topping up their tans and getting fit. They have been busy, albeit in a slightly different capacity. Capt McKenzie was given local rank of Major in order to carry out his role as the SCAMLO (Civilian Affairs) for the UN, a very demanding job which has used up most of his goodwill.

A wee incident happened shortly after arrival on tour when LCpl Cameron decided to wipe out several white bollards as he drove the 12 tonne UN truck into camp. When questioned why he thought this happened, he replied he 'couldn't see the white bollards due to the cleanliness (whiteness) of the UN truck'.

Despite our reduced manning back in the Fort we still managed to provide G4 support to numerous exercises and external events. The quick turnaround of Alpha (Grenadier) Company in Lydd and Hythe between Ex ASKARI THUNDER in Kenya and Ex GUALISH EAGLE in France was of particular note. The department also found time to attend a charity raft race for which we raised some £215 for Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS). The fact that MJ decided to tell us all as we crossed the start line that he couldn't swim had us tightening his life jacket.

We now look forward to the Battalion's conversion to Light Mechanised Infantry.



The Quartermaster's Department visited The Black Watch memorial in Aberfeldy.

CIS PLATOON

Regimental Signals Officer: Capt C McRobbie
Regimental Signals Warrant Officer: WO2 R Tollan
CIS Platoon CQMS: CSgt K Dowdles
Bowman Systems Manager: CSgt C Bonnar
Platoon Sergeant: Sgt C Ross

Where to begin with the ongoing wizardry of the CIS Platoon? From March to October, 11 members of the Platoon were deployed on OP TOSCA 22 in Cyprus. Very capably supported by four Reservists this has been a challenging period of finding our feet within the UN. During this deployment there was ample opportunity for adventure training and to explore the sights and sounds of this terrific island.

Those left as part of the Rear Operations Group in Fort George got their allocation of sunshine supporting Alpha (Grenadier) and Charlie (Fire Support) Companies in Kenya and France, though without the need to deploy with pool attendants. Now back on home soil there is no rest for the wicked. As well as holding the Fort and carrying out routine duties there are also the various other tasks to support both the Brigade and those deployed.

As always there are numerous people to congratulate: CSgt Dowdles promotes and prepares to take over as BSM while Cpl Ahmed has promoted on completing the RSDC course. Pte Cameron successfully completed both his PTI and PJNCO cadres.

We must also unfortunately say goodbye to Capt Nigel Drapper after two years in command and a lot more grey hair.

As one leaves another follows, and we welcome Capt C McRobbie into the mysterious G6 world of wizardry. The final departure is that of CSgt Bonnar who will undoubtedly miss running the iHub and the constant requests for password resets.

With 2016 fast approaching and the challenges of converting role and working through a G6 solution for the new fleet of vehicles, it is safe to say that everyone within the Platoon is being kept busy. We are all looking forward to the Battalion returning to Inverness.

CATERING PLATOON

RCWO: WO2 M Philip RLC

The Catering Platoon has been split in two for the duration of Op TOSCA 22. The majority were led to Cyprus by the RCWO, leaving a fraction behind in Fort George under the direction of Sgt Brian Wilson-Matthew.

The team who deployed to Cyprus has certainly earned their crust. They have catered for a vast number of functions and for periods, reaching a frequency of one every three days and ranging from formal Regimental dinners and cocktail parties, to BBQ's and fork buffets. However, with the use of the philosophy 'work hard, play hard' the team has taken full advantage of the Training, Adventure Training and Education team at Dhekelia. All chefs have endured at least one week of adventure training. The sporting members of the Platoon have also managed to participate in events around the island. LCpls Pallister and Smith took to the Mediterranean Sea and successfully completed the Bay 2 Bay swim, and LCpl Halford's efforts in the Battle Group cross country team were significant. Sgt Leye's time spent in 'Sector 3' is equally noteworthy. After a long and arduous tour the RCWO and his team are looking forward to some good cold Scottish weather and enjoying their well-earned leave.



LCpl Pallister preparing for a Dinner Night.



Catering Platoon on Op TOSCA with OC HQ Company.

Those who were left in Fort George have also had an eventful six months. Cpl Adu and LCpl McCombie assisted 2 SCOTS Catering Platoon on the Royal Guard at Balmoral, almost immediately after returning from Kenya with Alpha Company.

For his efforts on Op VOCATE, Sgt Wilson-Matthew was awarded the CGS Commendation and subsequently selected for promotion to SSgt. Other promotions have included Cpl Bob Powell to Sgt and Pte Luke Halford to LCpl.

KIRK OF THE BLACK WATCH

By Padre J C Duncan, Battalion Chaplain

The sun is shining on the righteous! However, I should qualify that statement by reminding everyone that the sun is one of the absolute guarantees of Cyprus. Although, when the Battalion arrived in 'sunny' Cyprus in March 2015, it did rain!

I have accompanied the Battalion as part of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and I am the Chaplain to the British Contingent. I lodge at Ledra Palace Hotel and visit the other members of the British Contingent at Blue Beret Camp.

One of the privileges of this post was being invited by the United Nations Police, Australian Police Contingent, to preach at their ANZAC Day Commemorative Dawn Service. This was held at Wayne's Keep, Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in the Buffer Zone. This year was the 100th Anniversary of the Australians and New Zealanders landing on the shores of Gallipoli. This is Australia's and New Zealand's main day of remembrance for their fallen.

I have also conducted short services of remembrance at Wayne's Keep for old comrades who come to visit their friends who were killed during the EOKA campaign from 1955 to 1959. After they visit the cemetery we move to St Columba's Church in the United Nations Protected Area for tea or coffee. At the rear of the church there is lounge area where photographs of the fallen are displayed. These occasions have been poignant and moving, as for most of those former soldiers it is their first visit since serving on the island.

Kirk Musters were held for Victory in Europe Day on the 8 May and Victory over Japan Day on the 15 August at Wolseley Barracks,



Padre Duncan (middle) leads the hymn Amazing Grace during the ANZAC Day Ceremony.

Nicosia. Reflections at both Kirk Musters were given on the part played by The Black Watch during the Second World War. At our VE Day Kirk Muster we were joined by Major Tandberg of the Norwegian Army who reflected on the significance of VE Day in Norway, as this is their main day of remembrance.

On 9 May at Wayne's Keep War Graves Cemetery Delta Company held a Service of Commemoration on the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Aubers Ridge during the First World War, when Delta Company of The Black Watch made a significant contribution and sacrifice to this battle.

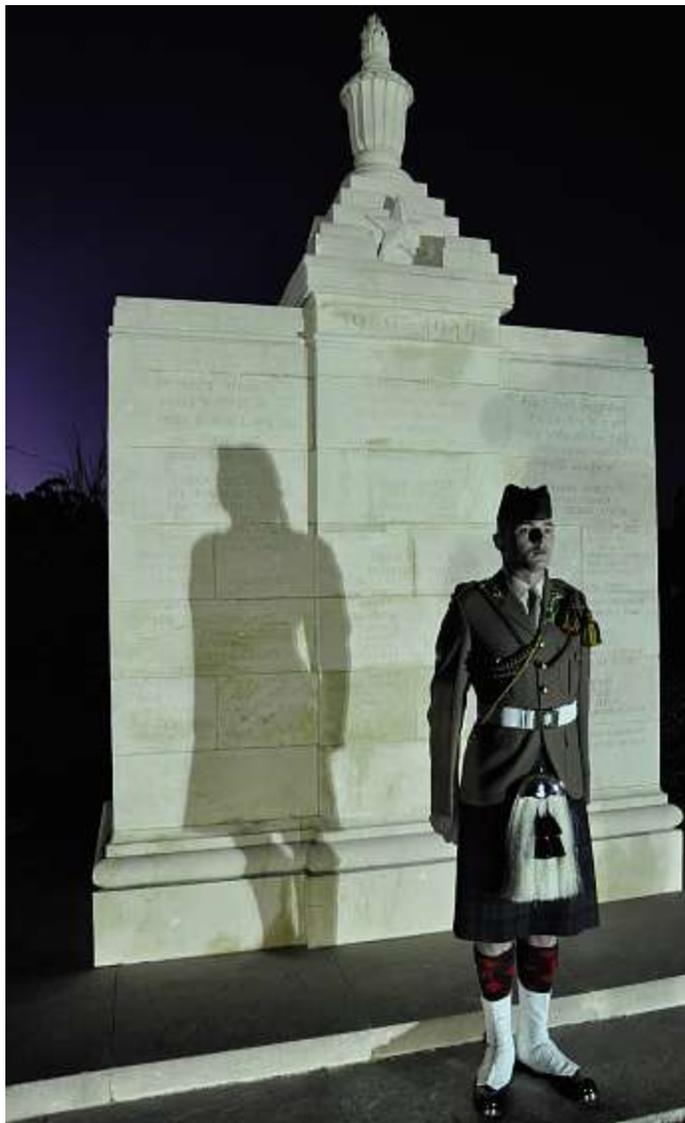
The British Contingent gathered to celebrate Father's Day on Sunday 21 June when we had a service at St Columba's Church followed by that well liked staple of Army lunches, curry! The lunch was al fresco, it being a sunny 30 centigrade.



The children of those who are resident on the island and the children from the patch back home expressed their greetings hand painted on some 'old' white sheets (thanks to the Unit Welfare Officer and his staff) suitably displayed with Father's Day greetings.

A Commemorative Service was held for

LCpl Broatch stands to attention as part of the Honour Guard for ANZAC Day.



Pte Crawford Standing Guard at Wayne's Keep.

Sgt Samuel McGaw VC, the 42nd Regiment of Foot, who died in 1878 while serving in Cyprus. The service was held at the Old British Cemetery, Kyrenia, where Sgt McGaw is buried. During the service four soldiers were also remembered who died while serving on the island and are buried in the cemetery: Pte Marr, Pte McDonald, and Pte Barrie of the 42nd, and Pte Troubridge of the Army Hospital Corps. I am grateful to the Chaplain of 7 SCOTS, Padre Philip W Patterson, who during my absence on R and R led the service with the Chaplain to the Royal British Legion, Kyrenia Branch, the Reverend W Hough.

After the sun and heat of Cyprus, I look forward to the cool breezes of Fort George, I am certain Fort George will not disappoint me!

Blessings.

MT PLATOON

MTO:	Captain Pete Marshall
MT Sgt:	Sgt Harkness
Driver Training Cell:	Cpl Gilmour, Cpl Wishart
Fuel NCO:	Cpl Thomson
JAMES Operator:	Cpl Aitken
Servicing Bay:	Cpl Brown, Pte Tay

Since March 2015, the MT Platoon has been split in two for the commitment to OP TOSCA and the support of the Rear Operations Group. As part of pre-deployment training the Platoon moved the Battalion from Fort George to Catterick. After a week it was a move across the country to Nescliffe for the MRX. The Battalion then returned to Fort George where the focus switched to the deployment of the Battalion out to Cyprus. This saw members of the MT Platoon delivering soldiers and their kit to various airports across the country, from Prestwick to Brize Norton.

No sooner had the TOSCA team deployed than it was then the turn of Alpha (Grenadier) Company and elements of Charlie (Fire Support) Company to deploy to Kenya. Again this went without a hitch. Following the deployment to Kenya, the MT Rear then enabled and supported the Alpha (Grenadier) Company deployment on Ex GAULISH EAGLE in France. This saw vehicles move from Fort George to Lydd Camp. Alpha (Grenadier) Company were then collected from Brize Norton and moved to Lydd. This was then followed with a trip from Dover to Calais and then onto CENZUB just North East of Paris. During the deployment to France a couple of the team found themselves in different posts than they are used too. Pte Tay who went to school in Marseilles and is fluent in French deployed as a linguist. An unusual job for a Jock but one he relished and really enjoyed. Special mention must go to Sgt Pratt who deployed to support the MT as an extra driver. No sooner had he arrived in France than he found himself in role as a Rifle Platoon Sergeant. After an initial few grumbles, Sgt Pratt got right into the swing of things, throwing himself through windows and diving about as though he was 21 again. With the problems at Calais, the return journey had to be diverted to Zebbrugge. This saw no complaints from the Jocks who all seemed to enjoy their overnight ferry journey.



Cpl (The Waterboy) Blair unloading the Ops Company bottled water.



A very serious Pte Kamdaya outside the Ledra Palace MT.

Without counting the miles, this has to have been one of the longest distances any unit in the UK has deployed their Green Fleet. The drivers and commanders all deserve great praise as the deployment went relatively smoothly. So life on the ROG has been really busy and by all accounts just as busy in Cyprus.

The pre-advance party arrived in Cyprus in early March in preparation for the handover. Most important in their preparations would be route recce, with the route to Ayia Napa being their top priority. After the main body of the Battalion arrived, the Platoon got down to work making sure everyone passes an UN driving test. This was done by our UN assessors Cpl Blair and Cpl Stevenson. Sgt Harkness has got the Platoon in good shape, and the only problem he is having is to remember to come to work after 1330.

The MT has also welcomed some much needed manpower in the way of three Corporals. Cpls Black, Dalzell and March being attached to the Battlegroup arriving at a much needed time and helping massively with all the MT's tasks.

LCpl Laidlaw is running the show when it comes to the fuel account. Not an easy task at all but he also casts an eye over any servicing that is required.

Pte Jones continues to be the Senior Jock although at times it's questionable. It's pretty straight forward to start a vehicle whilst sitting in the driver's seat, turn the ignition on and away you go. But Jonesy starts the vehicle standing at the side, forgetting the vehicle is in gear and drives over his own foot. Pte's Butao, Kamdaya and Mike-Philip continue to do a smashing job on the upkeep of vehicles. Keeping the vehicles clean, serviceable and on the road is not an easy task so a complementary pat on the back is well deserved. Pte Wood continues to be the CO's driver and trying to fit a day off in the CO's busy diary is tough at times but with Woody, where there's a will there's a way for a day off, even if he gets the Adjutant to drive.

RAO'S DEPARTMENT

RAO: Capt N Fidler AGC (SPS)
 Det Comd: Capt S Lewis AGC (SPS)
 RAWO: WO2 (SQMS) S Young AGC (SPS)
 FSA: Staff Sergeant L Downie AGC (SPS)

The RAO's Department have been working hard to ensure that the many and varied commitments of the Battalion are supported by troops who are well administered and have the correct documentation to achieve the mission. Deployments to Kenya, France, Cyprus, Malawi and Lithuania have been the focus but a lot more has been going on in the



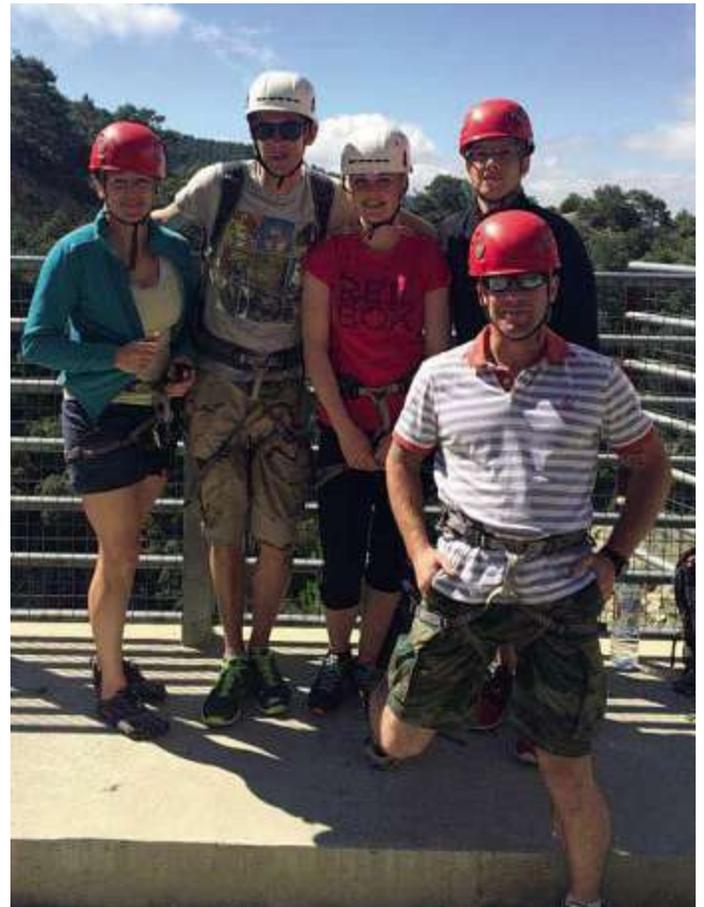
Pte (RSM) Jones putting the Combat in Human Resources.

side-lines. Half of the detachment including the RAO deployed to Cyprus to support Op TOSCA, although the RAO's duties necessitated returning to the UK every three weeks to keep a hand on the tiller for the Rear Operations Group (ROG).

ROG and TOSCA halves of the detachments were reunited in Cyprus for a week of Adventure Training focussing on rock climbing. Cpl John Buchan ended the week with some impressive rope burns having been caught after a spectacular fall on a lead-climb, although he maintains that the return car ride through the Highlands was more nerve-wracking thanks to Cpl Browne's famous driving skills.

On exercise in Kenya, Pte Craig Jones has been impressing the Jocks of Alpha Company with his marksmanship as he achieved a TES-kill on the opposing force (2 LANCs) Regimental Sergeant Major. Following the Viking mantra of "you keep what you kill", Pte Jones achieved an honorary promotion to WO1 for the day.

Real promotions and departures saw Cpl Becky Kane leave for civi-street, whilst SSgt Downie takes up the reins as RAWO for SCOTS DG in Leuchars and Capt Steve Lewis starts a new chapter as a trainee Army pilot.



The RAO's Detachment Adventure Training in Cyprus.

UNIT WELFARE OFFICE

UWO: Capt A H Cunningham
 AUWO & WISMIS Manager: Sgt Trickovic MBE
 Welfare JNCOs: Cpls Simpson & MacInnes

The departure of soldiers from the Battalion to Cyprus, Kenya and France has resulted in numerous events back home to keep the families occupied during the deployments. From the Loft Activity Centre in Kinloss to ice skating in Inverness, the families of the Battalion have been well entertained. However, watching Inverness win the Scottish Cup at Hampden will be remembered by all who travelled to Glasgow for some time to come.

A well planned and attended Community Day organised by Cpl Simpson has been a highlight so far, with families from all corners of the globe cooking, baking and showing off their cultures in national dress. The dancing was a great success, though the Welfare Officer clearly needs to go back to dancing school and get his money back. Some people enjoyed the day more than others, in particular Sgt MacAloon who appeared to be troubled by a sticky floor next to the bar!



The Fijian wives perform a traditional dance.

Healthy living is essential to all in the military and Cpl MacInnes organised a Health Fair for the families on the patch. The day gave the families the chance to learn about a range of subjects including dental hygiene, nutrition and general wellbeing. In addition there were two very informative presentations given by Elizabeth MacIntosh on mental health and by Mr Tim Allan from Active Highlife Highland on nutrition and physical fitness.

The summer months also included a large number of activities for the soldiers and families including trips searching for the Loch Ness monster and visits to Dunrobin Castle, home to The Duke of Sutherland. The wives participated in the wives exercise in late August where they were able to show who really is 'the boss' in their households!

CRICKET

Officer Commanding Cricket: Lieutenant N J T Coles

Traditionally, in the UK the month of April brings showers as the cricket season gets underway. Players are eager to put their freshly pressed whites on and welcome the sound of leather on willow and the smell of freshly cut grass. This season, the Battalion Cricket Team was fortunately able to enjoy their matches without being affected by rain or influenced by the Duckworth Lewis. The Battalion side played in the Cyprus Cricket Association league representing Nicosia Cricket Club kindly arranged by Colonel Seb Pollington, the Defence Attaché. This provided a unique opportunity for the team to play regularly on Sundays within the Buffer Zone. The stunning backdrop of Pendadhaktylos mountain range with the giant Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus flag on the mountain side reminded the players of the location and why they have been posted on Op TOSCA. However, the games weren't just limited to the Buffer Zone; the side was invited to take part in 6-aside

cricket tournament in Kyrenia next to the British Military cemetery, and also played against 2 PWRR in Dhekelia Garrison.

The matches were well attended from players throughout the battalion, including a number of reservists attached to the battlegroup. Eight different nationalities were represented within the team of all ranks from Pte to the CO in the opening fixture. The results on paper do not give a fair reflection of the standard played throughout the season. It took a few matches for the side to adapt to the 20Twenty style of cricket played by opponents but on few occasions were we outplayed. Individuals tirelessly gave up their one day off to represent the side in the heat and take the gamble of not dropping catches or being removed for a duck. The Doctor, not previously known for his cricketing prowess improved his career best from 3 runs to scoring a maiden 50. After the loss of Dave Janes, the Doctor flirted with the idea of becoming the new Jack Russell behind the stumps and learnt his lesson that wicket keeping with a hangover is far from ideal in the midday heat. Despite LCpl Clements' injury of 2014 this did not affect his positive attitude and hunger for the game at all. Clements managed to torment batsmen by bowling off a few yards and gaining some real height reminding the batsmen that their grill was not there for a BBQ. Gurley, Singh and Tanoli regularly troubled the batsman with their pace collecting a number of wickets, and all three illustrating their ability to swing the bat at crucial times as well. LCpl Withington brought the 'northern' element to the side with regular words of encouragement from deep fielding positions and securing his catches while Spring, Thomas and Kumar demonstrated different fielding techniques. LCpl Dad on occasion managed to find some grip on the wicket and he kept them guessing with his variation of deliveries. Lt Pearson played some cameo roles with the bat showing that he can easily adapt his tennis stroke to off drives. The Commanding Officer led by example regularly steaming in over after over demonstrating his agility with two caught and bowled catches taken down by his ankles and a few in the slips.

Finally, I would like to extend our thanks to Colonel Seb Pollington for kindly inviting us to take part in the league and for his generous hospitality throughout the tour.



Lt Pearson carrying his bat.



The Black Watch Op TOSCA Cricket Team.

ADVENTURE TRAINING

Officer Commanding: Lieutenant N J T Coles
Second-in-Command: WO2 (CSM Gray)/WO2 (RQMS) Fraser

The Training, Adventure Training and Education (TATE) cell was introduced at the beginning of Op TOSCA 22 as a battalion asset located in Dhekelia Garrison. Since we deployed to Cyprus the Battalion has made great use of the TATE, providing members of the Battlegroup the opportunity to conduct military low level core skills, as well as attend adventure training and mandatory education courses.

During the deployment period the TATE has facilitated low level military training, from an individual soldier level up to platoon level, making use of the training opportunities offered on the island. It has provided a fantastic location for sections to prepare for the UN military skills competition, improving their military knowledge, weapon recognition, fitness and navigation. It has allowed commanders to take command of their fire teams, sections and platoons in order to build unit cohesion and a high level of soldiering. Sections have attended range days to improve their shooting and coaching skills supported by the SASC. They also completed their ACMTs in a more comfortable environment than the gales of Inverness. Day and night navigation exercises have been conducted using the local areas in addition to the United Nations Protected Area, to master basic map reading on unfamiliar terrain. Basic Radio Users cadres have allowed soldiers to build their confidence in voice procedure, in addition to qualifying them as Level 1 soldiers waiting in the wings for promotion. Jocks have attended a pre-SRTT cadre and will compete in a section patrol competition in preparation for the Cambrian Patrol on our return from Cyprus.

What better place to conduct adventure training than in the summer climates of Cyprus! The adventure training cell has run a number of foundation courses in rock climbing, mountain biking and kayaking whilst also seeking the opportunity to send members of the Battlegroup on sailing, parachute, gliding and diving courses with CJSATC. The support provided by our reserve instructors has been tremendous as they have delivered fun, challenging, adventurous and rewarding courses using a number of locations on the island that has helped the battalion train our own instructors to enable us to conduct overseas expeditions in 2016. The skills and experiences gained throughout the tour will be developed further on the Battlegroup's return to the Highlands.



Kayaking in Fisherman's Bay.



Perfecting CQB drills.



Hold your breath...



TATE team on Op TOSCA.



Rock Climbing in Drousia.

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

Commanding Officer:	Lieutenant Colonel PGB Strudwick
Second-in-Command:	Maj J Anderson
Executive Officer:	Maj WAB Wright
Quartermaster:	Maj Pearson Hunter
Regimental Administration Officer:	Maj PJ Ward
Adjutant:	Capt TH Blair
Regimental Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 1 (RSM)MJ Fairweather
Regimental Career Management Officer:	Capt BS Baxter
Regimental Operations Support Officer:	Capt A McEwen
Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant:	WO2 (RQMS) S Lawrence
Regimental Operations Support Warrant Officer:	WO2 L McDowall
Officer Commanding Headquarter Company:	Major IT Bunce
Company Sergeant Major:	WO2 R Bustard

BATTALION OVERVIEW

51st Highland, 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (7 SCOTS), has continued to be at the forefront of the Army Reserve in Highland Scotland.

We are part of Scotland's proud military tradition and we continue to have bases that are at the heart of communities throughout the Highlands. We remain a battalion with strong links to our past and we have recently welcomed in a new crop of Red Hackle wearers to the battalion in the shape of the new Adjutant and Regimental Sergeant Major.

The last few months have been filled with exciting opportunities. In just the last six months we've sent soldiers all over the world on operations and to conduct training in places such as Canada, the United States and France. Most recently the 22 reservists we mobilised to deploy on Operation TOSCA have returned after their 6 month tour in Cyprus with The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland. In September we mobilised a number of Reservists on Operation TORAL in Afghanistan where they will complete a 6 month tour with the Royal Highland Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland. Closer to home we've been helping out in the local community providing support to a number of events such as the Highland Military Tattoo, the Inverness and Inverary Highland Games and the Scottish Car Show. We've also conducted some really worthwhile military training, allowing us to concentrate on our basic soldier skills. From pistol ranges near Aberdeen to a field exercise near Glamis, life in the Army Reserve is every bit as varied and interesting as it is in the Regular Army.

Our first major commemorative event was the Battle of Loos and this took place in Dundee in September; WO1 (RSM) Fairweather was lucky enough to command the parade commemo-



RSM Fairweather on Parade in Dundee.

rating this most Scottish of battles and we were proud to take part in this event.

Looking forward we're sending teams to take part in competitions that will pit them against some of the best units across the British Army, in the shape of patrol competitions. Our highly trained volunteer soldiers will test their soldiering skills in disciplines such as navigation, first aid, vehicle recognition and much



Training at Barry Buddon.

more. As a Highland battalion, winter sports are always a big part of our life and this winter will be no different. We're sending ten soldiers to France for a week to train them as alpine and nordic skiers. If they do well during their training there's a chance they could get to compete in the Army Ski Championships!

A COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major A Cameron
Second-in-Command:	Captain J A Valentine
CSM:	Warrant Officer Class 2 S Woods
PSAO:	Captain R Reid MBE
Mortar Platoon Commander:	Captain J A Valentine
Anti-Tank Platoon Commander:	Lieutenant B Anderson
Rifle Platoon Commander:	Lieutenant M Thornton
Rifle Platoon Commander:	2nd Lieutenant M Orr
SPSI:	Colour Sergeant Mitchell
CQMS:	Colour Sergeant J Twine



Anti-Tank training.



Army Fishing Championships (Game), CSgt Twine, 1st prize in the newcomer category, 3rd place in the Team category.

After the upheaval of the structural changes to A Company earlier this year, we have undergone a much needed period of consolidation. This has allowed us to concentrate on soldier development and our main effort which is recruiting. The concerted recruiting effort of the last two years is certainly starting to pay dividends now and we are getting close to being fully manned. There is still a steady stream of new and ex regular soldiers joining us and this effort will continue until all the Platoons are fully up to strength. We are looking forward to welcoming back the eight soldiers and NCOs currently deployed on Op TOSCA. Their attendance at Company training will be most welcome again, as I am sure their stories from Cyprus will be. We now have a reduced commitment to Op TORAL and only LCpl Gary Wallace is being mobilized.

The Annual Training Deployment took place over the summer and consisted of a two week cadre camp based in and around Warcop. Soldiers from A Company were trained on Javelin and Bowman. Annual MATTs were also conducted to enable the soldiers to qualify for their annual tax free bounty. We recently came top at the annual Battalion patrols competition with LCpl Ross receiving the CO's coin for his efforts. We lifted 4 trophies at the UK Military Skills competition (Reserve) including the team



Armed Forces Day Dundee, Pipe Band.

assault course, team highland games, team rifle and best SNCO/Officer rifle shot; we must congratulate Lt Thornton and his team who put in a strong performance. We have enjoyed a wide variety of training opportunities and there are always more cropping up; sailing, skiing, fishing, and exchange trips (US/Latvia) to name but a few. As always soldiers have attended various career courses. Of particular note was Pte Burnage passing his PJNCO cadre run by The Black Watch Battalion. This was a special achievement as Pte Burnage was, by some considerable margin, the oldest student on the course. Despite his age, he obtained a good pass.

Looking forward, we have various Field Exercises/Range Weekends planned which will include MATT training to ensure all Company members have a minimum of two opportunities to complete the necessary training. As we enter 2016, the Mortar and Anti-Tank Platoons will conduct fire support weapon cadres, with the Mortar Platoon conducting a live firing package before April. The planning for this is already underway and we hope that both 3 SCOTS and 6 SCOTS will be able to participate in the Mortar shoot as they did this year.

We also have a welcome addition to the Company in the form of CSgt Ian Grant from The Black Watch Battalion. CSgt Grant has an extensive Mortar background, which will be a great benefit to the Company. Farewells go to our outgoing SPSI CSgt Rennie, who was with us for only a short period of time. CSgt Mitchell already our Anti-Tank PSI has now moved into the SPSI seat with the support of CSgt Grant (Mortar PSI) and CSgt Robertson (Kirkcaldy PSI). With no further permanent staff changes over the next year we should have a period of stability which will allow us to move forward and build on the firm foundation we now have in place. Welcome back goes to Cpl Wilkinson. After an extended leave of absence, he has now re-engaged and we look forward to his witty banter once again.

Our sympathies go out to the family and friends of the late Cpl Jimmy Adams who sadly passed away this year. Jimmy had served with distinction over a long and varied career as the Pay Corporal and had only recently retired from the Reserves prior to finding out about his illness. The Officers, WOs, SNCOs and Junior Ranks that knew and came into regular contact with him, were saddened to hear of his passing and he will be sorely missed. A special mention of thanks must go to Wullie Barr from the Black Watch Association who acted stoically as the standard bearer at Jimmy's funeral.

US EXCHANGE

By WO2 Penrice (Mortar 2IC)

I had the privilege to participate in the Military Reserve Exchange Program (MERP) and work with the New York Army National Guard 1st Battalion 69th Infantry (Fighting 69th) during their annual training deployment at Fort Drum New York State. After arriving in Washington D.C and checking into my hotel for the night, I linked up with my host Unit for the next two weeks, after receiving a kit issue I had the opportunity to do some sightseeing for a few hours, as I had been informed that I was to deploy into the field for the next two weeks I took the opportunity to see as many sights as possible with the few hours I had available. I jumped in a taxi and went for a whirlwind tour taking as many pictures as I could on my phone.

The next day I was taken out to West Point for a tour of the Officer Training College which was very interesting, then BBQ lunch before transportation to Fort Drum for the start of the exercise. After introductions to the command team, Company First Sergeant and Mortar Platoon, I received an orientation brief on what was going to be happening and how I was going to participate in the Exercise. I discovered it was going to be a very hands on experience.

After familiarization training on the M4 carbine I conducted my safety tests, zeroed my rifle and passed the US version of the ACMT. I then participated in Medic training where I was required to give an IV. This was a new experience for me as only medics in the UK give IV's. I'm not sure who was more nervous the soldier or me but we both survived the ordeal. I then moved to the Mortar Platoon and started my familiarization training on the 60mm, 81mm and 120mm mortar. After a period of build up training I had the opportunity to fire all three calibres of Mortar; previously I had fired the 60mm and 81mm but the 120mm was a new experience.

The tempo of the exercise never let up over the next week. I continued training with the Mortar Platoon serials but also participated in PZ/LZ Ops (Set up, Receive Birds), Penetrator Lift, MEDEVAC Operations with UH 60 and too many other activities to mention. The scale of the overall Exercise was impressive and the resources made available demonstrated the capability that the US can call upon. After 13 nights in the field, sleeping in the supplied one man tent, my time on the Exercise was up. Before I was released I was given the opportunity to receive an IV in return for the one that I had administered at the start of the Exercise. Not wanting to seem reluctant I allowed them to give me 1 litre of IV into my arm. After our farewells I headed off to the airport, but I had to stop 3 times to relieve myself!

I thoroughly enjoyed my two weeks with the Fighting 69th and appreciated their friendship. They were professional in all areas and I observed a lot of similarities in the way we both conduct our training, which can only be a good thing. I would not hesitate to deploy with them. The two weeks were a fantastic opportunity to work with the US Army and learn how they operate. In short the Fighting 69th welcomed me into their unit and treated me as one of their own. I now have many new comrades and good memories and I would highly recommend this exchange to anyone.



WO2 Penrice presents a SCOTS Regimental plaque to the "Fighting 69th".

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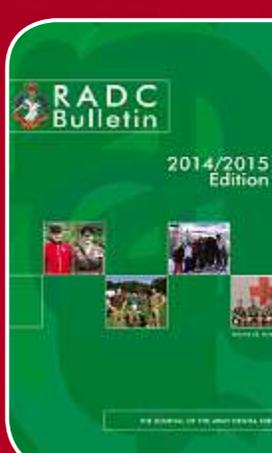
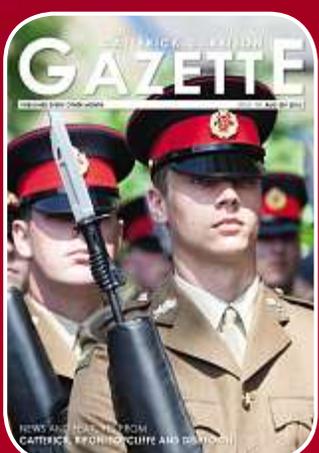
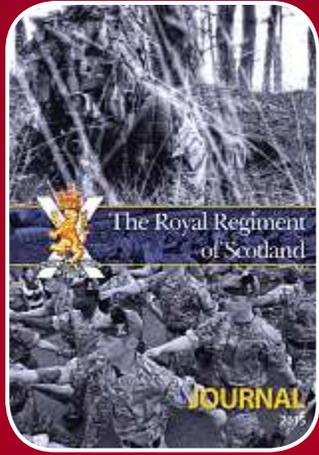
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METHOD PUBLISHING



The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada

Following a successful training year, The Black Watch (RHR) of Canada shifted gears for the summer months from collective training to individual courses and other community activities. This transition was marked by the annual Church Parade weekend in May. The weekend started with the Honorary Colonel's Dining-in where the officers had the opportunity to honour Colonel Steven Angus for 60 years of service to the Regiment both in and out of uniform. On the Sunday, the entire Regimental family including our Pipes & Drums, Cadets, and of course our veterans marched out of the Armoury to the Church of St Andrews & St Paul. The parade drew a large gathering of spectators and family members who followed us all the way to the church. Following a powerful Remembrance Service at the church, we returned to the Armoury for awards and presentations before dismissing the troops and moving to the Messes for some celebrations. One of the key presentations following the parade was the unveiling of a new battle honour plaque for Afghanistan that will now hang next to our WW1 and WW2 Battle Honours.

COURSES AND TRAINING

Over the next few weeks over half of the Regiment departed for various qualification courses across the country. These included the basic infantry qualification, leadership courses and specialized trade courses. These courses will help position the Regiment for the next collective training year with soldiers and officers having the opportunity to practice the skills that they learned over the summer. This individual training period was capped off by the annual Militia Concentration that gathers reserve soldiers from across the province of Quebec to conduct collective training up to battalion level. This year's exercise included platoon live fire defensive operations, which was very much the highlight of the exercise for most of the soldiers.



Glengarry Highland Games.

COMMUNITY

While the troops were out of the Armoury over the summer period, construction began on the long awaited renovations to the regimental museum. We are all looking forward to seeing the completed renovations in 2016. In late July, we also received the news that the Government had committed \$12M to the renovations of six historical armouries in the Montreal region, including the Black Watch Armoury on Bleury Street.

On the weekend following this announcement, we participated in the Highland Tug-of-War at the Glengarry Highland Games. While these games are best known for the North America Pipe Band Championships, the gathering of ten Scottish Regiments from across Canada for a Tug-of-War is drawing a lot of attention. While the Black Watch was not successful in capturing the trophy this year, the team was able to improve their technique in preparation for the Montreal Highland Games the next day. As part of the activities in Montreal, The Black Watch Tug-of-War challenge encourages organizations in the city to put together a 10 person team to challenge us to a best of three pulls. All competing teams raise money for the Children's Wish Foundation. We are very proud to announce that this initiative raised more than \$6700, which was presented to the organization at a special ceremony at City Hall.

The Tug-of-War was not the only competition for us. The Black Watch Pipes and Drums were heavily involved as volunteers in the entire event, and they were placed third in the Grade 3 competition. This capped off a long period of preparation and rehearsals which took place in between multiple engagements, parades, and events through-



The Militia Concentration 2015.

out the summer. As has become the standard over the past decade, the Black Watch Pipes and Drums continue to represent the regiment and the military throughout the community with their professionalism and talent. They continue to be a source of pride to us all.

Even though we call it a “summer stand-down”, the reality is that the soldiers of The Black Watch (RHR) of Canada are extremely involved in training and in community events throughout the summer period. We are now starting the collective training year, and the soldiers are ready to get back to it with new experiences, some new faces, and some great memories from the summer of 2015. The next training year is going to be a good one.

ARTEFACTS FROM THE BLACK WATCH (ROYAL HIGHLAND REGIMENT) OF CANADA COLLECTION

Perth Street Lamp, c.1860

On the closure of The Black Watch Regimental Depot in Perth, Regimental Headquarters and the Museum of The Black Watch moved to Balhousie Castle, Perth. This very old street lamp stood outside Queen’s Barracks (on the nearest lamppost to the entrance gate) for over one hundred years. Originally installed in about 1860, it started out as a gas light, was then converted



The original gas light that stood outside Queen’s Barracks main entrance gate is now mounted outside the Black Watch of Canada’s Regimental Museum.

to electricity before being relegated to the scrap-heap in 1965. Before it could be destroyed it was purchased from the City of Perth by Major C R Trenholme of the Canadian Grenadier Guards, who presented it to The Black Watch of Canada. The old lamp is presently mounted at the entrance to the Regimental Museum in Montreal.



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Black Watch Battalion Army Cadet Force

Honorary Colonel:	The Reverend Professor Norman Drummond CBE FRSE
Commandant:	Colonel J M K Erskine MBE
Deputy Commandant:	Lieutenant Colonel C Hubbock
Training Officer:	Major S Rae
Adjutant:	Captain M McCluskey
Regimental Sergeant Major:	Regimental Sergeant Major Instructor P Cameron
Permanent Staff:	
Cadet Executive Officer:	Major A C M Potter
Quartermaster:	Captain R G Hallum

Time waits for no man, nor do the Red Hackle notes, at least the Editor does not. And there is never an obvious pause between the end of one set of notes and another.

EARLY 2015

The year started with the introduction of the first of two new initiatives with which the Battalion became involved this year. On 22 February Mr Richard Pattinson held a training day at Dunkeld to encourage cadets and adults to become part of the Cadet Presentation Team, an initiative set up by Highland RFCA to promote the organisation to the business world and opinion formers throughout the country. Fifteen cadets and five adults from the Battalion took part in the day which started with a small exercise when everyone had to introduce themselves to each other and ended with a presentation by cadets and adults giving a 6 minute talk on what being in the Cadet Force had done for them. Following this day, Staff Sergeant Aaron Joyce and Cadet Corporal Shae Simpson were part of a team which gave a trial presentation to the Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association Annual General Meeting which included a number of senior armed forces personnel and the majority of the Lord Lieutenants throughout the Highlands. Momentum built up behind this initiative throughout the year and other adults and cadets became involved at various times, in particular Shae Simpson who fast became an important part of the Cadet Presentation Team.

On the same weekend this initiative started, a number of cadets took part in the trials for the ACFA Scottish Rugby team after which Cadet Corporal Keir Anderson and Corporal Cameron Bowie (both Glenrothes Woodside) were selected to represent Scotland in the

Senior Team and Cadet Calum Davidson Perth RLC was selected for the Intermediate Team. However at the end of March they were joined by Cadet Staff Sergeant James Ross (Auchterarder) and Cadet Corporal Charles Barraha (Crieff) who were selected for the senior team for the trip to Brecon to represent Scotland in the ACFA's Rugby 7-a-side competition. Both the teams did well and reached the semi-finals of what were extremely tough competitions. Thanks are due to Staff Sergeant Instructor Taylor and Sergeant Instructor Morrison who acted as chaperones and drivers.

SPRING CAMP

Spring Camp was as usual in the first week of April, a time of year when good weather cannot be guaranteed. The week before camp started was cold and wet but when the cadets started to arrive at Barry Buddon the weather took a turn for the better. On the second day it was positively Mediterranean, which caught everyone by surprise. The Battalion was honoured when Mr Robert Balfour, the new Lord Lieutenant of Fife, paid his initial visit to the Battalion at Spring Camp. After being given a comprehensive brief about the Army Cadet Force and the Battalion he saw some training and even braved the curried chicken he was offered in the field by a member of the recruit cadre.

It is not often that the Battalion has a Cadet RSM but it was decided that Jack Sweeney had achieved so much in his time with the cadets that he should be promoted. With only a few months left before he would have to leave due to his age and on the first day of camp, barely a week after he had achieved a Highly Competent Grade on his Master Cadets Course, he was promoted. At the same time it was announced that Cadet Staff Sergeant Judd Clark and Caitlin MacGillvray would be the Lord Lieutenants' Cadets for Fife and Perth and Kinross respectively, for the forthcoming year.

Camps are always busy and there never seem to be enough adult instructors to do what is required. As a result any outside help is greatly appreciated. This year the Battalion was delighted to be supported by four members of Edinburgh UOTC and two from Tayforth UOTC. They were a great asset and joined in with everything. In an attempt to forge a closer link with the Regular Army, the recruit cadre went to Fort George where they spent a day with the Black Watch Battalion. This was a great success and the Battalion was very grateful to those who hosted the recruits in Fort George.



Cadet RSM Jack Sweeney being presented with the ACF Certificate of Good Service by the Honorary Colonel.



Cadets from The Black Watch Bn ACF completing a National Navigation Award Scheme course at West Lomond Fife. Present were SSI Cunningham and SI Langridge.



Cadets from The Black Watch Bn ACF completing a British Canoe Union Level One course at Loch Tay. Present were SI Glover and PI Smeaton.

Adult training is an ongoing process and over the past few months a large number of people have shown interest in becoming instructors. As a result nine adults were taken through their basic training at Spring Camp while five adults went to Redford to do their Advanced Instructors' Course. Meanwhile the Pipes and Drums took part in their concentration in Inverness and the Military Band took part in the Tri-Service concentration in the Angus and Dundee ACF centre at Barry Buddon. The culmination of that week was the Beating Retreat they performed in Dundee which was very well received by all the spectators.

SUMMER CAMP

For several reasons Summer Camp is always different from Spring Camp. The programme is geared towards adventure training, sports, fieldcraft exercises and the Inter Company competitions while the weather is normally more conducive to being outside. This year's Summer Camp was spent at Strensall Barracks, the home of Headquarters 2 Medical Brigade. The Training Officer had put together an interesting training programme but one which was run along slightly different lines to previous years. On the first day the Inter Company Drill and Sports Competitions were held. Unfortunately the senior Cross Country race was declared null and void when a number of runners took a wrong turning. The main programme ran for four days with the companies taking part in a circuit on the outdoor ranges, the Dismounted Close Combat Trainer, a fieldcraft exercise, an 'Its A Knockout Competition', an obstacle course competition and a series

of command tasks. Unfortunately the weather was changeable and so three companies had to forego the "Its A Knockout Competition" and went to Eden Camp instead. This is a multi-award winning Modern History Theme Museum housed within the grounds of an original World War Two Prisoner of War camp and stands as a tribute to all people, civilian and military, who endured hardship throughout World War Two.

The Battalion had a number of visitors at camp including Colonel David McFadyen (Colonel Cadets 51 Infantry Brigade), Colonel Jeffries (Deputy Commander 51 Infantry Brigade), Brigadier Mark Dodson (the recently appointed Chief Executive Highland Reserve Forces and Cadet Association) and his Deputy, Mrs Sarah Rawlings. However, it was a particular pleasure to welcome the Honorary Colonel, The Reverend Professor Norman Drummond, to camp for just under 24 hours. He came on the last full day of training and in the evening presented the prizes and awards at the prize giving before meeting a number of adults in the Mess on the final evening.

The culmination of camp was the prize giving. Each company won something and while Korea Company was the Champion Company for the year, it was particularly good to be able to present three Army Cadet Force Certificates of Good Service to Cadet Regimental Sergeant Major Jack Sweeney, Cadet Sergeant Major Caitlin McGillivray and The Band Sergeant Major Instructor Robert Cowan. A fourth cadet, Cadet Staff Sergeant Judd Clark, was presented his certificate after camp.



ALMA Company The Black Watch Bn ACF at Loch Morlich.

POST CAMP ACTIVITIES

The period after Summer Camp is always a strange one as it coincides with the holidays and everyone has a pause. However, many of the cadets like to be occupied and with this in mind, Major Andy Potter with help from the recently retired Training Safety Advisor, Jim Martin, organised and ran a highly successful kayaking week in the middle of August. In addition about one hundred cadets went to Edinburgh to watch a rehearsal for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. The omens looked good weatherwise when they arrived on the Esplanade but towards the end of the show the heavens opened and rather spoilt the end of the evening. As August turned into September the pace of the battalion started picking up. A number of cadets and adults went on climbing, caving and kayaking courses; the Band put on a very successful concert in Dunfermline raising £300.00 for the Soldiers' Charity and Companies held training weekends. At the beginning of September Alma Company spent a weekend at Rothiemurchus Lodge, accompanied by the inevitable swarm of midges, where the cadets took part in a variety of activities including climbing, kayaking on Loch Morlich, archery and hill walking which for some included being tested for the National Navigation Awards Scheme. On the same weekend a large number of the cadets went to the ACFA Swimming Championships and did the Battalion proud. Although it may be invidious to pick out particular cadets, Cadet Lewis Walker (Crieff) came first in the Junior Boys Breast Stroke and Back Stroke while Cadet Conner Summers (Pitlochry) won the Junior Boys Butterfly race. In the Senior Girls competition Cadet Ellis Johnston won the Back Stroke, the Butterfly and the Freestyle races while the senior girls won the Freestyle relay and the overall team trophy.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement plays a big part in the world of the Army Cadet Force and range from small events such as local galas, church fetes, highland games to much bigger national occasions. This year has seen a number of anniversaries being marked. 2015 is the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Loos and in June a number of cadets went on a battlefield tour to that area led by Colonel Passmore, the past Commandant. This was an educational but very moving trip enjoyed by everyone. It is also the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo and the SCOTS DG detachments took part in a huge parade in Edinburgh to mark this anniversary. The Battalion also had a small representation at Balhousie Castle when the Armed Forces Day Flag was raised on 22 June 2015. Closely linked to this aspect of the cadet world is that of fundraising and throughout the year various detachments have played their part in fundraising for local and national charities.

It is always good to be recognised for what one does and, by way of illustration as to how the links work, on Thursday 26 February, Glenrothes Woodside Detachment was given a cheque by the local Asda store for their efforts in supporting the local community. On the same evening Blairgowrie Detachment held a well attended parents evening and took the opportunity to present the representatives of ABF-The Soldiers' Charity and SSAFA with a cheque for money the cadets had raised for them.

CONCLUSION

These notes started by mentioning one of the two new initiatives in which the battalion became involved this year. The second initiative came to fruition in the summer. The aim of this one was to set up Linked Detachments in Secondary schools in Fife. After much groundwork by Major Andy Potter, the Cadet Executive Officer and following several meetings with the local education authority, Staff Sergeant Instructor Dougie Gold was employed to set up detachments in Viewforth High School and Kirkcaldy High School. The aim of the project is to take the children through the APC syllabus which will also contribute towards a recognised qualification for them at school. Much credit is owed to Staff Sergeant Instructor Dougie Gold for the hard work he is putting into this although the success of this project will not really be known for some months.

Finally it should be noted that the Battalion has rebadged a number of its detachments to more closely align them to parent regiment. This has resulted in the detachment in Queen's Barracks, Perth being rebadged Black Watch. This means that both Perth detachments in the city now wear red hackles.



Major Douglas on the scramble net at camp.



Staff Sergeant Instructor Aaron Joyce preparing to show the cadets how to climb the Climbing Wall at Rothiemurchus.



Lieutenant Colonel Craig Hubbuck, Deputy Commandant visits The Black Watch Battalion on the Green Line in Cyprus. On the left is Captain Iain Walker of The Black Watch Battalion.



Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Fife, Judd Clark, meeting HRH The Duke of Edinburgh when he visited 2nd Bn REME in Leuchars on 15 September 2015.

Association News

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KG KT GCB OM

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Mr W Barr
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THE REGIMENTAL REUNION AND ABERFELDY MUSTER

On Saturday 20th June the Regimental Reunion was held at Balhousie Castle. The day started with the traditional march from the North Inch to Balhousie Castle and over 100 veterans marched behind the Pipes and Drums of The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

The Chairman and President of the Association both addressed the parade and the spectators and then between 300 and 400 members and their families enjoyed the sunshine and surroundings of Balhousie Castle.

The following day the biennial Muster Parade was held at The Black Watch Memorial in Aberfeldy. Before the service, the congregation was treated to a first class display of piping and drumming and highland dancing by the Pipes and Drums of The Black Watch Battalion.

The short church service was led by the Reverend Neil Gardner and focussed on commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. Major General James Cowan described the events leading up to the battle and the part played by the 42nd and 73rd.

After the service the majority of people enjoyed lunch at the Kenmore Hotel. The next Aberfeldy Muster will be held in 2017.



A Black Watch member of the Royal British Legion Motorcycle Branch.



The Association steps off before the Reunion and were led by the Pipes and Drums of The Black Watch Battalion.



The sun shone for the Regimental Reunion.

ABERFELDY MUSTER



Mike Mitchell (Fife Branch) and Sandy MacDuff (Perth Branch) photographed before the Service.



The congregation at the Service.



Willie Barr (Dundee Branch), the Waterloo re-enactor and Brian Smith (Angus Branch).



From left to right, Major Ronnie Proctor, Major General Cowan, Colonel Alex Murdoch, Lieutenant Colonel Roddy Riddell and the Reverend Neil Gardner.

**THE BATTLE OF LOOS COMMEMORATION WEEKEND
“LIVING OR DEAD WE ARE COMRADES ALL”**

On Friday 25 September at 06.30 the beacon on the Dundee Law was lit to mark the time at which 100 years ago the Battle of Loos began. A number of Association members attended this event which marked the start of a weekend of commemorative events.

At 11.00 that day a service was held at Balhousie Castle and 547 crosses were laid at the Great War Memorial Wall. Veterans, family and friends as well as school children took part in the service that was conducted by Padre Alex Forsyth.

On Saturday 26 September the City of Dundee hosted the Scottish National Commemoration of the battle in which many battalions of the Regiment played such a heavy price but the 4th Battalion (mainly recruited from Dundee) was in the forefront of many people’s minds.

Veterans and serving soldiers paraded and marched to the City Square which had been laid out like an open air cathedral. Their Royal Highnesses, The Duke and Duchess of Rothesay joined many hundreds of others for the Service.

On the following day a Kirk Service was held in Dundee Parish Church (St Mary’s). It was a joint service arranged with the City of Dundee to remember those who were killed, wounded and maimed during the Battle of Loos but also all those who suffered as a result of war. The sermon was given by The Reverend Professor Norman Drummond a former Chaplain to 1st Battalion The Black Watch.

The Lord Provost of Dundee (President of the Association) laid a wreath at the memorial to the 4th (City of Dundee) Battalion which is located in St Mary’s Kirk. The memorial has the epitaph “Living or dead we are comrades all” carved into it.

The service was a fitting end to the weekend of commemorative events.



The Standard Bearers who took part in the Church Service.



Members of the Association parade before the National Commemoration of the Battle of Loos in Dundee.



The Reverend Professor Norman Drummond (left) gave the Sermon and The Reverend Keith Hall led the Service.



Cadets from the Angus and Dundee Battalion ACF helped at the Church Service on Sunday 27 September. They helped collect £895 for Poppy Scotland.



Some members of the Association including Charlie Quin enjoying the September sunshine before the Battle of Loos Church Service on Sunday 27 September.



At 06.30 on Friday 25 September a beacon was lit on Dundee Law Hill to mark the start of the Battle of Loos 100 years before. The Lord Provost of Dundee and members of the Association attended the ceremony.

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 McLuskey
Treasurer:	Mr Jim Penny

Summer, if we can honestly say that we have had one, has been a full and busy period for the Angus Branch as annual activities have followed one after another in fairly quick succession.

The Spring Supper Dance which was held in the RBLs clubrooms in Arbroath was both successful and enjoyable for those who attended and both Jim McEwan and John Glen are to be thanked for their hard work in this venture.

No sooner had the dancing shoes been put back into the shoe rack for another year than the weeks of planning for our battlefield tour to the Great War battlefields at the end of May and beginning of June came to fruition. Those who took part were on the parade at 0600 in Forfar, en - route for Discovery Point, Dundee to pick up Willie Barr and Alfie Docherty of the Dundee Branch. We later headed south to pick up Mr and Mrs Legatt who had a relative who had lost his life at Loos with the regiment. We also picked up our driver and guide who accompanied us to Belgium. Sailing from Hull on the overnight ferry on the 28th of May we commenced touring as soon as we hit terra firma on Friday the 29th. Highlights of our extensive and enjoyable tour were many however visiting Black Watch Corner, where Tom McCluskey gave a short dissertation on the Battle of Nonneboschen and the Branch Chairman appraised those present on the background of how the iconic statue came about. Alfie Docherty of the Dundee Branch laid a wreath on behalf of The Black Watch Association flanked by Standard Bearers Brian Smith and Willie Barr. Ruaraidh Proctor who took part on the tour as Branch Piper played a lament and was later accompanied by a young Belgian Piper who between them played a most enjoyable repertoire of pipe music which was enjoyed by the tour group and Belgian and other visitors who happened to be present.

In the evening we took part in the Menin Gate ceremony where a crowd of some fifteen hundred had gathered. The Branch Chairman who was laying a wreath on behalf of the Association was asked at two minutes notice to recite the Exhortation, Willie Barr and Brian Smith took charge of the assembled standard bearers and Ruaraidh Proctor played the lament after the Buglers had sounded the Last Post at what was quite an emotional ceremony.

Visits to numerous war cemeteries took place and Sonia Proctor found the grave of her great uncle Private George Reid who served in the First Battalion and who died of wounds on 31st December 1914; Anne McCluskey found the name of her grandfather Corporal William Moreland who had served in the HLI on the memorial wall at Dud's Corner Cemetery and Brian Smith and his son Ewan visited the grave of their great uncle John Swan who also served in the regiment. Our Branch Piper played a lament on each occasion and small crosses were laid at each Black Watch grave which was visited.

Visits to Beaumont Hamel and Thiepval were made in an incessant downpour but were enjoyed by all. The inclement weather gave us an insight, if only briefly, as to what our forefathers had to put up with as the trenches left open for visitors could be seen to fill up with water. Visits to the Irish Tower Memorial, Talbot House, Arras Tunnels, Tyne Cot Cemetery and many other places of interest including the execution yard at Popperinghe all made an impression on all those taking part in the tour.

Bob Myles from Glen Esk, one of our tour guests who was greatly affected by what he saw, composed a short poem on his reflections and it is shown below.

Great War?

When nations divide and diplomacy fails,
Idealism, religion, lust for power prevails,
Then Calls for the men of the towns, hills and dales
To fight the good fight, and ignore all the wails
And wisdom of voices for Peace.

Headstone after stone with a story to tell,
How they lived, loved and laughed, and then struggled through Hell
With bullets and shrapnel from many a shell,
Gas, lice and rats their companions as well,
As they died for some reason, and Peace.

We must learn from the suffering, hear of the pain,
How they fought through the mud and mostly in vain.
So many lives lost, for so little gain!
We can go home, and must think again:
War is no way to win Peace.

© R. G. Myles 2015

Tuesday the 2nd of June saw everyone back home after a very full, demanding and memorable tour.

Branch members also attended and took part in the unveiling of the Memorial to Sgt David Finlay VC at Guardbridge, Fife on the 9th of May, the Regimental Reunion at Perth and the Aberfeldy Muster.

The Annual Branch Standard Rededication took place on Sunday the 20th September at Glamis Church and was led by the Reverend Carleen Robertson. The service was also the Branch's commemoration of the centenary of the Battle of Loos in which many Black Watch men from Glamis including Fergus Bowes-Lyon the late Queen Mother's brother died. An enjoyable lunch then followed at the Royal British Legion Clubrooms in Forfar. The Branch was heavily involved in the National Commemoration Weekend to mark the Centenary of the Battle of Loos and took part in the Lighting of the Beacon at 0630 on the 25th September at the Law Hill, Dundee on what was a rather cold and windy morning followed by the laying of the crosses on the memorial Wall at Balhousie Castle at 1100. Many attended the parade and reception on the City Square on Saturday the 26th September where our Royal Patron, HRH The Duke of Rothesay talked to members of the Branch. This was followed by the Scottish Premier League Football Match with Dundee playing Ross County and wearing the specially designed football strip in commemoration of the

battle. Sunday concluded the commemoration with a Church Service in St Mary's (Dundee City) church with our old Black Watch Padre the Reverend Professor Norman Drummond preaching. John Glen and Brian Smith are to be thanked for turning up at every event with the Branch Standard as are all those who took part.

Our next main event is attendance at the Auchy-Les-Mines ceremony to mark the action at the Hohenzollern Redoubt in 1915.

The annual El Alamein Dinner will soon follow on the 24th of October but more about these events in the next notes.

Sadly we have lost a few of our Branch members since the last edition of the magazine: Ray Smith, Bob Mutch, Bill Herd, Ewan (Peem) Cowie and Jack Lamb who are all sadly missed, our sympathy and condolences are offered to their families.

R J W Proctor



The Angus Branch conducted a battlefield tour to France and Flanders in May 2015.



The Angus Branch Standard Rededication Service took place at Glamis on 20 September.



Tam McCluskey, Ronnie Proctor and Alfie Docherty at the Menin Gate "Last Post" ceremony.

EDINBURGH, LOTHIANS' AND BORDERS' BRANCH

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Treasurer:	Captain Ramsay Macdonald
Events Coordinator:	Mr Rory McIntyre

The highlight of our recent activities was the gathering for our first Branch dinner (the Al Basrah Dinner) which took place in Haymarket on 9 May 2015. Our Branch President, Lieutenant Colonel Julian McElhinney, who served as Mortar Platoon Commander in Basrah, gave a very interesting account of The Black Watch actions during the Battle of Al Basrah. We were also honoured to have as our guest, Major General ML Riddell-Webster CBE, DSO, who commanded the Black Watch Battle Group during operations in Iraq. This event also marked the first outing for our Branch Pipe Banner and our guests appreciated the excellent piping sets performed by Pipe Corporal Charlie McLean. During a moment to remember Absent Friends and in particular our Fallen Comrades, Drum Major Brian Alexander played the Last Post.

A number of Branch members took part in The Armed Forces Day Parade in Edinburgh on 27 June 2015. With tremendous support from thousands of locals and tourists, there was a fantastic atmosphere as the veterans marched behind the Pipe Bands. The post parade entertainment in the Grassmarket was very much appreciated by those who attended and there is no doubt that this is a great day out for veterans and their families.

During the summer months Captain Bob Henry formed a small team of volunteers to take part in a fund raising cycling challenge (Pedal Scotland). The team consisted of Bob Henry, Jock Gilfillan, Ian Johnston and Rory McIntyre who raised considerable sums of money for their chosen charities. They are to be congratulated on their dedication and effort.

The main events for 2016 are the Ceilidh Night on 9 January 2016 and the Al Basrah Dinner on 7 May 2016. We are very pleased to report that our membership is increasing and we meet on a regular basis at the Scots Guards Club, Haymarket. Finally, as the UN Tour in Cyprus draws down for The Black Watch Battalion, we look forward to rekindling links and also to remind all ranks that they are welcome to visit or join our Branch when it is convenient for them to do so.

J A Menzies



Annual Al Basrah Dinner – Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Forrest and Robert (Paw) Brown.



Annual Al Basrah Dinner – Mick Madden and Hugh (Shug) Beattie.



Cycle Challenge – Rory McIntyre, Captain Bob Henry and Ian Johnston.

THE FIFE BRANCH

It seems like only yesterday that I was sitting here writing the six monthly report and here I am again. Where has time gone? The activities of the Branch started on the 16th of May in Guardbridge, with the honour of being requested to attend the Memorial Service and unveiling of a stone to commemorate Sergeant Findlay winning the Victoria Cross. It was a well attended parade with not only a military presence, but was supported by the local school children and other organisations. After the service we retired to the school where the children sang songs from the period along with poems and a little display of pictures and equipment of the day. We then entered June and the first function was our own Regimental Reunion at Balhousie, it was again well attended, with the usual handshakes and hellos from those not seen for a wee while. A break from tradition was next in the form of our biennial meeting at Aberfeldy. It was good to see so many make it to the Muster after what for some, may have been a heavy day before.

It was back to the Kingdom for our next duty and the unveiling of the Fife Armed Forces Day Flag in Leven; the ceremony was conducted by the Provost who spoke very highly of the Regiment and his time with us

the year before in Belgium. A few days later it was a visit to the City of Dundee and their Armed Forces Day parade. It was well attended and supported by the people of the City.

We had a fairly quiet July and August but started off September by being invited to join the people of Dairsie to help them dedicate a plaque to those who fell in WW II. This we did and it was good to see General Sir Alistair Irwin unveil it. It was a day of note for me, because I was promoted by the Courier to Lieutenant General, the headlines read Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin inspects the Guard of Honour at Dairsie and there I was in all my glory; thank you Courier!

Our last but very important function for the period was In the Victoria Hotel Kirkcaldy and the Ladies Alma Lunch. We had sixty sitting down to lunch and it was good to see people from Perth, Angus and Dundee in support. The lunch has been going for five years now, so as a wee thank you, a Commemoration Wine Glass was given to the ladies present and by all accounts the lunch and gift were well received. Fortunately, we haven't had too many funerals to attend this time, other than the funeral of ex RSM Davy Grant.

R M Scott



Guests at the Alma Lunch.



Armed Forces Day in Fife.



The Top Table at the Alma Lunch.

THE HIGHLAND BRANCH

President: Major (Retd) John Stevenson
Chairman: Joe Barbour
Vice Chairman: Donald Etherington
Secretary: Gordon Kennedy

The Branch held their Annual Dinner in Fort George although this year it clashed with the Edinburgh Branch Dinner held on the same night. Despite serving members being deployed on Op Tosca we still had a good attendance, made better by RQMS Kev Stacey bringing his pipes out of retirement.

Our monthly meetings have now been changed from a Tuesday to a Friday night. This was a decision made in order to allow more members to attend, then enjoy a few drinks afterwards knowing that they did not have to go to work on the Saturday; this is proving to be successful and meetings will continue to be held on the second Friday of the month normally commencing at 18.30hrs in the Community Centre, Wimberley Way.

Branch recruitment is on the up as we are now firmly paired with Headquarter Company; thanks must go to Major Brian Cooper in Cyprus and Kev Stacey in Fort George whose gentle persuasion has led to a lot of new faces joining us.

Despite members being scattered all over the Highlands and in Cyprus, we have managed to take part in various activities, the first being a commemorative service held in Keith for Sgt John Ripley VC. This was attended by several members along with General Sir Alistair Irwin. We attended Armed Forces day in Inverness and our next commitment will be the Freedom Of Inverness Parade which is being held in October.

On the social front a very good BBQ was held on Friday the 14th of August to which the Chairman and Alec Beattie put their culinary skills to the test and managed to cook and feed everyone without food poisoning. The food must have been good as Billy Watson was seen filling his plate on at least 3 occasions. Our next function will be an Xmas get together in December to be held in the Legion Club.

Gordon Kennedy

LONDON BRANCH

Chairman: Brigadier (Retd) D R Wilson CBE
Secretary: Colonel Mike Smith MBE

Introduction

The lazy summer months are just a memory as these notes go to print. This is a time in the London Branch calendar of many small gatherings that are an integral part of much bigger events, often of National level. Never-the-less it is very encouraging to see the Branch members rally to the muster, ensuring that Red Hackles are in attendance at these prestige events.

Summer Events

We offered congratulations to Dan Holbrough a Branch member and a full time Reservist with the Tyneside Scots on his marriage to Katherine in Shrewsbury on the 9th May; we wish them both many years of happiness and just in case he went AWOL on the day we sent up Joe Hubble to ensure he was on parade in time. Dan has now seen the light and is in the process of enlisting into the Black Watch.

Founders Day The Royal Hospital Chelsea

HRH The Duke of Kent joined Chelsea Pensioners at the Royal Hospital as well as other guests for the annual celebration of Founders Day. This commemorates the escape of the then future King Charles II from the Parliamentary forces after the Battle of Worcester in 1651. The event is held annually as close as possible to his birthday (29 May) and this year ten Branch members attended.

The Not Forgotten Association Garden Party Buckingham Palace

“The Not Forgotten Association” is a unique national tri-service charity which provides entertainment, leisure and recreation for the serving wounded, injured or sick and for ex-service men and women with disabilities. The highlight is the Garden Party hosted in Buckingham Palace. Some 20 members and ladies attended this year in grand weather; the event was hosted by HRH Princess Anne and Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence.

The Regimental Reunion and Aberfeldy Muster

A small delegation attended the annual regimental weekend at Balhousie Castle and Aberfeldy. These gatherings have grown in popularity and now represent a mixture of all ranks covering decades of Black Watch men; it is also enjoyed by the ladies many of whom have fond memories of “life in the Army” and enjoy meeting up with old friends.

The Association Albert Lunch

20 members sat down for lunch on a dreich day in August for the annual Albert Lunch organized by Joe Hubble; it was not long before the company brightened up the day.

New Members

We welcome some new members into the London Branch: Tim Petransky; Jon Dalley; Ian Findlay; Tam Bain; Jamie Tait; Alan Hunter; Brian Morris; Alan Hunter. We thank them for joining us; and look forward to seeing them at future events.

Looking Forward

The Branch are now finalizing the autumn/winter programme of activities, namely the Annual Dinner this year named the Op



Dan Holbrough and Joe Hubble on Dan's wedding day.



Some of the group before the strawberries and cream were served – left to right – Rob and Creena Millard (South Africa), John Bowles, Joe Hubble, Jim Keating, Maureen Bowles, Susan Maybery and Tom Gregory-Brown all attended the Garden Party.



Jim Keating and Alf Wade pictured with the “Waterloo Highlander” at Aberfeldy.

Banner Dinner as well as the Remembrance events and the AGM in March 2016.

It has been a busy but I hope enjoyable period over the summer months and my thanks are extended to all members who continue to support by attendance and by the giving of their time to the maintenance of the Branch.

Mike Smith

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

Harold Dunn, known to some as "Shrapnel Harry" and to others as Drummie, has been in hospital following a fall in his home. At the time of writing, he has enjoyed a four week stay and there is no immediate plan for discharge. He is receiving regular visits.

The other member of the Dunn duo, Harold's younger brother, had a couple of weeks in hospital whilst they tried to work out how to fix the electrical junction box in his heart, which was misbehaving. Seems they did a rebuild and soldered a few bad contacts. The pump seems OK now.

On a happier note, the fittest member of the branch, Robert Sinclair, our resident member in Kirkwall, has been bashing the hills in Orkney on his Claud Butler bicycle, raising monies for, among other Service charities, Combat Stress. Combat stress is a bit neglected, but many of our boys and girls have deep seated and very difficult problems arising from their service. The group with which Robert was riding raised the substantial sum of £9166.59. Rumour has it that he intends to cycle to the next Branch Meeting. (I wonder if he knows there is a Highland Branch).

By the time this is being read, our Branch Dinner will be a distant memory. The numerous commemoration ceremonies being held this year, together with the sudden movement of numerous reserve personnel, has caused some problems in obtaining guests for the Top Table, however, the WWI ceremonies are once in a lifetime events and of huge significance to us all and in particular, to anyone who is able to attend one of the events. The rest of us must stay at home and do our best to pay our respects at local events whilst letting our imaginations transport us to other times and places. The Tyneside Scottish, who were raised during the First World War are holding a series of events commemorating the centenary of many of their historic engagements, and I am sure that the Branch will be represented at a number of them.

The year seems to have flown past and we have accomplished little, despite our seemingly endless efforts. I suspect that the efforts made, were less than the memory suggests and that working up to the 'doing' bit has taken a greater effort than the particular job took. Some of us made the trip north to the Reunion in June and enjoyed the weekend. Due to pres-

sure from the Ladies, we were unable to attend the Red Hackle Muster at Aberfeldy, however, the commercial brethren of Edinburgh profited from the retail therapy indulged in by our company. Seldom has so much been lavished on so few etc.

We are all watching the rugby and some lucky few have tickets for the Samoa v Scotland game at St James' Park. I'm not sure what we will see from level seven but we will enjoy the game.

Malcolm Dunn

PERTH BRANCH

President:	Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Roddy Riddell
Chairman:	Captain Alan McEwen
Secretary:	Jim Sandilands
Treasurer:	Fraser Brown
Social Convener:	Ally Alcorn

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

What a thoroughly enjoyable day, what a delicious lunch and what an inspirational Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo performance on the night of Saturday 8th August 2015. Brigadier (Retired) David Allfrey, Tattoo Director has, once again, created an amazing balance of entertainment to capture the imagination of the audience and leave them absolutely spell bound.

A number of Branch members (Eddie Kulik, Jim Sandilands, Sandy MacDuff, George McDonald, George Kennedy, Jack Hershall, Eck O'Brien, Sandy Clephane, Winky Greer, Dave Thomson, Donald Reid and Alan McEwen) and their ladies, along with a number of Ex Servicemen's Club members and their ladies, left Perth at 1130am by coach for the short trip across the Forth to Edinburgh. Before sitting down to a late lunch there was just enough time (about an hour and a half) for some light refreshments (men to the Ex Servicemen's Club bar) and retail therapy (ladies to Ocean Terminal shopping complex). Our thanks go to those club members and staff at the Edinburgh Ex Servicemen's Club for the warm welcome shown to us all and for providing us with such a splendid three course lunch. Once back on the bus it was off to a drop off and pick up point outside the National Museum of Scotland in Chambers Street adjacent to Greyfriars Bobby. Although there was a few spells of slight precipitation, the night was mainly dry and not a bit too cold (and certainly not if one had remembered to pack their hip flask). Before the performance started the Branch received a very warm welcome over the public address system from the legendary Tattoo commentator, Alasdair Hutton.



Newcastle Branch member Claud Butler from Orkney raised £145 for Combat Stress.

The Tattoo theme of 'East Meets West' drew in performances from five continents. Among a number of features was one of the most popular military college marching bands in the United States, the 70-piece Citadel Regimental Band and Pipes, who travelled to Scotland from Charleston in South Carolina. For the sixth time in the Tattoo's history, the Swiss contingent, Top Secret Drum Corps, featuring 30 top percussionists from one of the world's most sensational marching rhythm groups, carried out a display of unpredictable style and dynamism that drummed its way into the hearts of the audience. The Royal Air Force, which is set to observe the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain in 2015, was represented by the RAF Pipes and Drums together with the Queen's Colour Squadron; their spirited display of piping, drumming, dance band classics and precision drill delighted the audience. Finally, along with the Massed Pipes and Drums were some of the foremost services bands in the world; the RAF massed Bands embracing representatives from The Central Band of the Royal Air Force, The Band of The Royal Air Force College and The Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment in company with The Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, with over 120 musicians drawn from across the UK. What a night to remember.

After the short trip back across the Forth to Highland Perthshire, it was back to the Perth Ex Servicemen's Club for those in the mood for further light refreshments and for those others (lightweight author included) it was off to bed with a hot cup of cocoa. Our gratitude and thanks to Ally Alcorn, Social Convener and Fraser Brown, Treasurer for their efforts in planning and ticketing and handling the financial matters for this outing.

Horse Back UK

On Monday 14th September Kenny Forbes, Kevin Murphy and Jim Baird travelled to Dinnet in Aberdeenshire to present a cheque for £120 to Horse Back UK. The money had been raised at the pre-Reunion gathering in the Ex Servicemen's Club in Perth. They were met by CEO and co-founder Jock Hutchison who gave the Association members a briefing about the Charity. It aims to help veterans who are physically and mentally scarred the opportunity to regain their confidence, dignity and in the case of amputees, more mobility.

The visit was very informative and worthwhile and further information can be read at the www.horseback.org.uk

Captain Alan McEwen



Members of the Perth Branch visited the Famous Grouse Experience in April and are seen admiring the colour of the whisky.



Kenny Forbes, Jim Baird and Kevin Murphy travelled to Dinnet to present a cheque to Horseback UK a charity that supports wounded Servicemen.



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