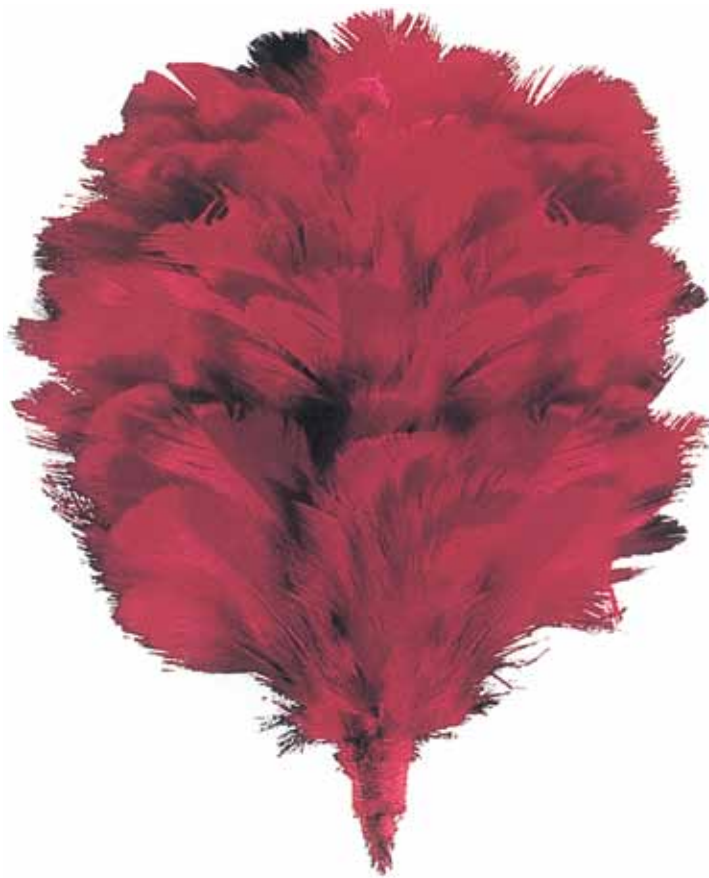


No. 141  
May 2014



# THE RED HACKLE



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May 2014

# 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*

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*On 3 May 2014 over 300 members of the Regimental family gathered at Black Watch Corner, three miles east of Ypres. They had travelled to Belgium to take part in the ceremony to dedicate the magnificent statue that commemorates the service and sacrifice of members of the Regiment from 1914-1918 as well as the action at Black Watch Corner. Pipe Major Alistair Duthie plays the Regimental Lament during the Service of Dedication. (The photos of the Service in Belgium are published by kind permission of Graeme Hart).*

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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  
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**May 2014  
No. 141**

*Published for The Black Watch*



**METHOD PUBLISHING**  
Sutherland Press House, Golspie,  
Sutherland, Scotland KW10 6RA  
Telephone (01408) 633871  
Fax (01408) 633876

to whom all enquiries regarding  
advertising should be addressed.

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## Editorial

This latest period has been relatively quiet as the staff at Balhousie Castle and in the museum, have settled into a pattern of work preparing for the 2014 season and the new Chief Executive Kathryn Howell has also settled into her, new role. The Friends of the Museum have also been active.

The Association has continued to focus on the project to erect the memorial at Black Watch Corner and in carrying out its welfare and benevolence objectives. The small staff has been very stretched arranging the bus tours, carrying out recces and liaison trips to Belgium, preparing Service sheets, Main Events Lists and planning a host of other detail that is required to make the weekend a success. At Branch level, Burns Suppers were held in Angus and Perth and in January the Dundee Branch enjoyed their annual Red Hackle Dinner. The London Branch held their annual dinner in November and the Fife Branch not to be outdone held the Rhine Crossing Dinner in Kirkcaldy.

On the other hand The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland have been extremely busy as the planning and preparation to deliver a six month training package to a Libyan Army battalion has been carried out. This particular target has moved on a number of occasions and the start date has slipped more than once. The task will involve many commanders and presents a management problem as the training will be based on Bassingbourn Barracks near Royston whilst many of the soldiers will remain in Fort George. As they look forward into 2015, Battalion Headquarters and a strong Company Group will deploy in support of the United Nations in Cyprus.

In the Articles section, there are two interesting Great War related pieces of work and as operations in Afghanistan draw down, Lieutenant Colonel David Orr Ewing has written a personal perspective about the conflict having served there for 28 months. Lieutenant Colonel Pete Little, CO of the 7th Battalion, has written an update on the future shape of the Reserve Army and finally we look back at the very successful Educational Outreach project run by Fraser Brown and Major Ronnie Proctor.

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

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

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

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





# Regimental News

## FORECAST OF EVENTS 2014

4/5 June	HLBC Spring Meeting-Golf	Scotland
17 June	Golf v A&SH	Kinross
17 June	Officers and Ladies Lunch	London
20 June	Regimental Golf Competition	Muckhart
21 June	Association AGM (am)	Perth
21 June	Regimental Reunion (pm)	Perth
TBC June	Visit to National Memorial Arboretum	Alrewas
1 August	BW Wives Association Reunion	
	Queens Hotel	Dundee
14 September	Rededication Branch Standard and Lunch – Angus Branch	Guthrie & Arbroath
14 September	Alma (Ladies) Lunch – Fife Branch	
	Victoria Hotel	Kirkcaldy
20 September	Loos Commemorative Service – Dundee Branch	Dundee
11 October	Croix de Guerre Dinner – Perth Branch	Perth
18 October	El Alamein Dinner – Angus Branch	
	Royal British Legion	Forfar
24 October	Officers' Gathering Dinner	Perth
7 November	Balhousie Castle Remembrance Service	Perth
20 November	London Branch Dinner	
	Victory Services Club	London
20 December	Officers Regimental Ball	Perth (TBC)

## CONGRATULATIONS

To **Major RJW Hedderwick** on his provisional selection for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in 2014.

To **Major MAN Williamson MBE** on his provisional selection for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in 2014.

To **Major JR McElhinney** on his provisional selection for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in 2014. (Reserve Army Selection).

To **WO1 Colville** and **WO1 Shaw** on their selection for commissioning in 2014-15.

To **Major D A J Noble DL** on the award of an OBE in the New Year Honours List.

To **ex-Sergeant Jock McInnes** on the award of a MBE in the New Year Honours List.

## COMMISSIONING

Second Lieutenant Alex Christie was commissioned into The Royal Regiment of Scotland in December 2013 and has been posted to the 3rd Battalion. In addition, Lieutenant Lucas Hawke has transferred into The Royal Regiment of Scotland from ETS and after completing his Platoon Commander's Course in May 2014, will join the 3rd Battalion.

## COMMANDING OFFICER DESIGNATE – LIEUTENANT COLONEL AFL STEELE

Lieutenant Colonel Alasdair Steele has been selected to command The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland. He joined the Army in 1998 having been educated at Edinburgh University and Dollar Academy. Commissioned into the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders his early career included, tours to Northern Ireland as the Close Observation Platoon Commander and Iraq as the Operations

Officer; he also served as a Platoon Instructor at RMA Sandhurst.

After promotion to Major, he commanded Bravo Company, The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland in Afghanistan during Op HERRICK 10. Appointments at Grade 2 have included the General Staff and MA to Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Military Strategy). Promoted in 2013, he is currently attending the Advanced Command and Staff Course. He assumes command of the 3rd Battalion in December 2014.

He is married to Lizzy and has two daughters, Flora and Hettie. His hobbies include telemark skiing, cricket and painting.



*Lieutenant Colonel AFL Steele, the Commanding Officer designate.*

## LIEUTENANT COLONEL RODDY RIDDELL

Roddy Riddell retires from the MOD on 30 May 2014. He served as the Regimental Secretary from April 2005 until the post was disestablished in November 2012. He then took on the responsibility of establishing a museum for The Royal Regiment of Scotland. He will continue to support the Regimental Association working as Vice Chairman and he will carry out many of the duties he undertook as Regimental Secretary.

## ANDRO LINKLATER

Andro Linklater died in November 2014. He was the co-author of the Regimental History published in 1977 entitled The Black Watch The History of The Royal Highland Regiment. He wrote part of the book after his father Eric, a Black Watch veteran of the Great War, died. He was a fine author in his own right and Captain Owen Humphreys represented the Regiment at the funeral.

## MAJOR GENERAL PATRICK BROOKING CB CMG MBE

Those in the Regiment who served under Patrick Brooking when he commanded 33 Armoured Brigade in West Germany and when he was GOC Berlin will be very saddened to hear of his untimely death in January 2014 at the age of 76.

He was a very great friend to The Black Watch (this had started when he was Brigade Major of 39 Infantry Brigade in Belfast in the mid 1970s) and he was the best of leaders. We all knew exactly where



we stood, we all knew exactly what was required of us and we all greatly enjoyed the experience of serving under the command of a man who, whether face to face, or vicariously by reputation, was certain to make us feel cheerful when we needed cheering and to make us determined to do better on those rare occasions when we didn't quite manage to deliver what he expected.

There will be many amongst us who will remember with pleasure his visit to the Battalion in West Belfast in 1983. We will remember with pride that it was always to The Black Watch that he turned for many very high profile ceremonies in Berlin and indeed whenever anything of especial significance had to be done. And we will particularly remember the relish and delight that he took from being an integral part of the never-to-be-forgotten visit to the Battalion by The Queen Mother in 1987 in her 50th anniversary year of being our Colonel in Chief.

In the lives of battalions higher commanders come and go usually without making much of a long-term mark. Patrick Brooking was a notable exception and it seems fitting that the passing of this very special officer of the 5th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards should be marked in the journal of one of those regiments that had the privilege to serve under him.



*General Brooking inspects the Quarter Guard in Berlin.*



*On 8 April 2014, a Press Day was held at Powderhall Bronze in Edinburgh in preparation for the move of the statue to Black Watch Corner. Private Arron Kelly of The Black Watch Battalion and Ruairaidh Proctor, the great grandson of William Reid who fought with the First Battalion during the 1st Battle of Ypres, led the statue out.*



*Photographs by kind permission of Graeme Hart, Perthshire Picture Agency.*

*Private Arron Kelly poses patiently for the many members of the Press.*

## OFFICIAL WORLD WAR 1 COMMEMORATION EVENTS

The following commemorative events have been afforded National status;

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 4 Aug 14        | – Service at St Mungo's Cathedral, Glasgow.<br>Anglo-German Service of Reconciliation,<br>St Symphorien CWGC Cemetery, Belgium.<br>Candlelit Vigil, Westminster Abbey. |
| 24-25 Apr 15    | – Gallipoli.   |
| 31 May-1 Jun 16 | – Battle of Jutland.   |
| 1 Jul 16        | – Battle of the Somme.   |
| 31 Jul 17       | – Battle of Passchendaele (3rd Ypres).   |
| 1 Apr 18        | – RAF 100.   |
| 8 Aug 18        | – Battle of Amiens.  |
| 11 Nov 18       | – Armistice.   |

## WILDERNESS SUP

**Editor's Note:** It is my intention to print occasional news about officers and soldiers who served in The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) or who served in The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland that may be of interest to readers.

Captain (Retired) Andrew Hieghton-Jackson served with The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland between January 2009 and January 2012 where he was fortunate enough to serve as an OMLT Commander in Operation HERRICK 10, a Platoon Commander in barracks and as a Company 2IC for the first Exercise ASKARI THUNDER in Kenya. As a result of injuries sustained during an IED blast during Operation HERRICK 10, Andrew was medically



retired in January 2012 and following a year working alongside other injured personnel at HorseBack UK ([www.horseback.org.uk](http://www.horseback.org.uk)) he has now set up and is running Wilderness SUP ([www.wildernesssup.co](http://www.wildernesssup.co)).

Wilderness SUP is a stand up paddle boarding adventure and exploration company based in Perth, offering trips throughout Scotland for all levels of paddler. The trips are all about the outdoor lifestyle and experiencing Scotland and each local area so by working alongside other local businesses, Wilderness SUP will provide a unique experience in breathtaking surroundings. Wilderness SUP embrace the outdoor lifestyle with a few added luxuries such as freshly brewed, locally roasted coffee and great locally sourced food and is currently running trips throughout the country from Perthshire Paddle Adventures on The River Tay and surrounding Lochs to exploration trips of Loch Lomond's Islands.

For more information please visit [www.wildernesssup.co](http://www.wildernesssup.co) and [www.facebook.com/wildernesssup](https://www.facebook.com/wildernesssup).

Andrew has generously agreed to donate some of his profit from his business to The Black Watch Association.

### BLACK WATCH ASSOCIATION ALL RANKS GOLF MEETING

The annual all ranks golf meeting will take place as usual on the day before the Regimental Reunion which this year is on 20th June 2014. In a change to the norm we will play this competition at Muckhart Golf Club for the first time and we are looking forward to testing ourselves on the 3 x 9 hole courses they have there. The competition is subsidised by the Black Watch Association and sponsored by Sidey Ltd and Falcon Catering Services.

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](mailto:akstewart42@btinternet.com).



*The Regimental Association recently paid for the complete refurbishment and painting of the Wavell Gates.*

### HIGHLAND AND LOWLAND BRIGADE GOLFING SOCIETY AND BLACK WATCH GOLF

*By Bruce Osborne*

The Society Spring Meeting is happening slightly later this year on the 4th and 5th June at Panmure Golf Club. The format will be the same as last year which proved to be a great success. The meeting starts at mid-day with lunch in the clubhouse followed by The Martin Holt Cup and Medal round being played concurrently in four balls in the afternoon. In the evening of the first day, dinner will be held in the clubhouse and the following morning The Fort George Cup is contested by Foursomes. Teams are drawn from former and present officers from The Black Watch, The Highlanders and The Argylls battalions and as ever, serving officers are particularly welcome.

On the 17th June the annual match between The Black Watch and The Argylls will take place at Kinross Golf Club. This match has a long history dating back over 100 years and for several years has been hosted by the Montgomery family.

Amongst other matches, later in the year on the 12th September, there is a Society meeting at Nairn against the golf club and over the weekend of October 18/19 there is a dinner match over three rounds of foursomes against the Guards Brigade. The latter is considered to be one of the highlights of the Society's golfing calendar being played over one of Scotland's finest courses. Participants tend to be former officers but serving officers are most welcome and encouraged to take part.

### CURLING

*By Major JMK Erskine MBE*

The Regimental Curling season started, as usual, with the annual match against the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders for the Macrae Cup. This year the Argylls hosted the match at The Peak in Stirling and there was lunch before the serious business on the ice started.

The Black Watch rinks were:

<b>'A' Rink</b>	<b>'B' Rink</b>	<b>'C' Rink</b>
David Montgomery	James Duncan Millar	Tim Usher
Will Henderson	Alex Stewart	Jamie Erskine
Alan McEwan	Duncan Cameron	Alex Beveridge
David Noble	Tim Carmichael	Malcolm McVittie

The more observant readers will know that Malcolm McVittie was not in the Regiment. Sadly Selby MacDuff-Duncan had to pull out at the last minute and so Malcolm McVittie, an Argyll travelling reserve, agreed to curl for the Black Watch and a very good substitute he was as well. At one stage the scoreline looked as if it was going to be as bad as 2012 but in the end, while the Argylls once again won the match, the final score was 20-27 and James Duncan Millar's rink managed to save the honour of the Regiment by winning his match 8-3. The Argylls have, over recent years, won this match more often than not and it would appear they were so confident of doing so again (justifiably as it turned out) that they never brought the cup to the rink, presumably because they had become tired of carrying it up and down to their Headquarters in Stirling Castle.

The next match was against the Highlanders on 10 January 2014 in Perth. Each Regiment raised two rinks.

They were:

<b>Rink One</b>	<b>Rink Two</b>
Jamie Montgomery	James Duncan Millar
Alex Stewart	Selby Macduff-Duncan
Duncan Cameron	Roddy Riddell
Hugh Rose	Jon Twine

In addition Will Henderson curled for the Highlanders who were a curler short.

Each rink played 4 ends against each of the opposition rinks thus the match was over 8 ends. After six ends the scores were level at 7-7. However, Jamie Montgomery's rink then won the next two ends with scores of 4 and 2, while James Duncan Millar's rink added another 3 shots. The final score was 16-10 to the Black Watch who, therefore, retained the Munroe Cup.

And so to the Highland and Lowland Brigades' Curling Club (HLBCC) matches. The Black Watch were represented by Jamie Montgomery, Selby Macduff-Duncan and Jamie Erskine in the match against The New Club. Like all good games, this one came down to the final stone. The HLBCC team was lying three shots in the last match at the last end when the New Club Skip threw the last stone. It was, unfortunately, perfect. As a result the New Club won the match 21-20 and thus retained the Archie Orr-Ewing Trophy.

It was the turn of the HLBCC to act as hosts for the annual fixture against the Royal Company of Archers which took place on 13



March and once again at The Green Hotel. Each side produced four rinks although the 4th rink of the Royal Company's team only had three curlers. The match was held after another very good lunch in the hotel. Unlike last year when the sides peeled, the HLBCC were comfortable winners by 39-16. Those who curled in this match were Duncan Cameron, Selby Macduff-Duncan, James Duncan Millar, Jamie Erskine, Jamie Montgomery, Roddy Riddell. Some were in the winning team, some were not! In addition Philip Halford-Macleod, the HLBCC President, came to support the team in its endeavours.

The final event of the year was the HLBCC Bonspiel on 27 March. Once again the Regiment fielded three rinks although the 'C' Rink was supported by John Charteris (late Royal Scots) and the incoming President of the Club. In the first session the 'A' rink beat the Argylls 'C' rink by 4-3, the 'B' rink won against SCOTS 'A' by the comfortable margin of 10-4 and the 'C' rink, after a close game and gaining 4 shots at the last end, beat Argylls 'A' by 7-6. Was this the first time all Black Watch rinks won in a session? In the second session the 'A' rink beat Highlanders 'A' by 4-3 and the 'B' rink overcame Lowlanders 'B' by 6-4. Unfortunately the 'C' rink could not keep up the winning streak and lost to 'SCOTS 'A' by 3-6. However, taking into account the results of the other matches, it meant that the Black Watch 'A' rink played the Black Watch 'B' rink to be the overall winners of the Bonspiel. When was the last time the Regiment provided both teams for this match? In the end the 'B' rink won by 6-3. Unfortunately, neither the skip nor third of the 'B' rink were there to receive the trophy from the President of the Highland and Lowland Brigades Club as they had to leave before prize giving. Meanwhile the 'C' rink played the Argylls 'C' rink for the minor placings and were well beaten by 8 shots to 3.

For the record the teams were:

**'A' Rink**

James Duncan Millar  
Will Henderson  
Alan McEwen  
Malcolm Innes

**'B' Rink**

Jamie Montgomery  
Malcolm Taylor  
Alex Beveridge  
Hugh Rose

**'C' Rink**

Selby Macduff-Duncan  
Jamie Erskine  
Roddy Riddell  
John Charteris



*Some members of The Black Watch Curling Teams who took part in the Bonspiel on 27 March in Perth.*

In conclusion it has been a very good season with a good turnout of curlers and the Regiment has won two trophies! The curlers are also very grateful to the Trustees of the Regimental Association for their very generous financial support they give to this sport. It seems to be in good health.

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# *The Black Watch Museum and Friends of the Black Watch*

## **MUSEUM TRUSTEES**

Chairman: Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin KCB CBE  
Trustees: Brigadier GC Barnett OBE  
Lieutenant Colonel G Couser  
Mrs Emma Niven  
Major DJ McMicking LVO  
Captain JDK Montgomery DL  
Mr JR Watt

By the time this edition of the Red Hackle goes to press the redeveloped Museum will have been in operation for some nine months. They have been a busy and promising nine months.

Although we opened for business at the end of June last year, contractors have remained on site to rectify the various snags that seem to be a surprisingly accepted part of the building construction and fitting out process. Visitors will have particularly noticed the work to re-apply the harling on the new building but we hope that they will also have noticed the repainted doors and windows on the original building, including the fine regimental badge that has been so prominently visible for so many years. Other remedial work, probably less obvious to the visitor, continues. The expectation is that all such work will have been completed by July which will mark the end of the contract defects period, at which time we will be able to pay final bills and bring Project Balhousie to a formal close. We expect at this stage that there will be a useful surplus of project funds. So although we opened three months behind schedule, we are in the satisfying prospect of delivering a high quality project at a saving against the original budget. More of this next time.

Meanwhile we have generally very encouraging news about the activities of the Museum to report. In October we appointed our new Chief Executive, Kathryn Howell. She has made an excellent start and brings with her a wide range of relevant experience. It is very good to be able to welcome her through these pages. Amongst those who were particularly glad to see her take up her duties were the trustees, and especially Jamie Montgomery, Emma Niven and James Watt. Between them they shouldered the burden of filling the vacuum in the interval between Alfie Iannetta's departure and Kathryn Howell's arrival. We all owe them a great debt of gratitude: their extra responsibilities absorbed a great deal of their time and energy. The Museum has already attracted many very satisfying plaudits from various quarters. We are all very conscious that this would not have been possible without all the wonderful work done by so many over so many years in acquiring artefacts and in displaying them so well. The importance of all that earlier work in enabling what has now been done cannot be underestimated. Having said which we recognise that it has not been possible to satisfy every taste and every interest. The intention is of course to ensure that over the years the displays will be refreshed; the programme of special, shorter term exhibitions will of course continue, as will the imaginative programme of lunch-time and evening lectures by a wide variety of knowledgeable speakers. We are much encouraged by healthy and appreciative visitor numbers; unfortunately a significant proportion of these are concession visitors (for example OAPs). This means that our takings from entry fees have not yet reached our budgeted expectations; we shall be watching the figures over the coming summer season with great interest.

The Café, after an unsurprisingly slow start, is making a really big impact. It is now exceeding its monthly turnover targets and we are building up significant numbers of regular customers. We expect very good business in the future and we plan to capitalise on our ability to offer high quality evening events. Indeed the first such event, a well attended Officers' Gathering Dinner, was held in October. Since then there has been a most successful Burns Supper and smaller private functions.

The shop is doing well but it has not yet met its turnover targets. Plans are afoot to adjust the merchandise on offer and to enhance the

online shop. Nevertheless there is a wide range of attractive items for sale, both with and without specific regimental connection. Do please remember that the shop is there and try to support it.

I have already mentioned three of the trustees. At the end of last year we were very sorry to lose David Noble from the board. He had served as a trustee for a very long time. We shall miss his commitment, his sound advice. Above all we shall remember with gratitude his energetic and highly effective work as director of the Heritage Appeal. Had that not been successful we would not have been able to achieve the results that are now being enjoyed by so many. We all owe him a great debt. Garry Barnett, Garry Couser and David McMicking all continue as trustees, along with those already mentioned above. We are currently examining how both to reduce our average age and to introduce some additional skills and experience to the board as we look to the future.

The trustees of course have the responsibility for everything that goes on at Balhousie but it is the staff that does all the hard work. I have already mentioned the new Chief Executive but it would be remiss not to mention also all the members of the staff and all the splendid team of volunteers who between them all do so much to make the operation a success. We are very grateful to them all and we are lucky to have them. We are also enormously grateful to the committee and all members of the Friends of the Black Watch Museum. Their support and their own programme of events in support of the Museum is not only hugely appreciated but also vital to our long term success.

The immediate future will be dominated by the drive to bring the redevelopment to a conclusion, by gearing up to capitalise on our first full tourist year of business (coinciding not least with the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles) and by a forthcoming visit by HRH the Duke of Rothesay. More details about this will emerge through Museum and Association channels in due course but it will be a most happy occasion on which we shall have the chance to show our Royal Patron what it is that has been achieved, not least as the result of his own wonderful support for the project.

Do please do everything you can to support the Museum. Most readers of the Red Hackle will be entitled to free entry of the Museum. Please do what you can when you come to help us secure the future of Balhousie by being as generous as you can when you see the donations barrel and as extravagant as you can when in the shop or café and recommending us to as many people as possible. And of course please be sure to give us your views.

## **MUSEUM NOTES TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS**

Our latest temporary exhibition – *Muskets, Khukris and Broadwords: Firearms and bladed weapons from The Black Watch reserve collections* – is about to close, having been popular with visitors. It will be



*The Museum temporary exhibition.*





*Robin Leishman painting a First World War scene based on archive material.*

replaced with the much anticipated *Artist in the Archive* exhibition until September. Glasgow-based artist Robin Leishman is working with the archived collection to help bring First World War stories from the archive to life through a series of artworks that highlight the collections and encourage the public to engage with primary historical sources in a new way. Robin has been working on the exhibition in a series of open studio days at the Museum over the past few months. The resulting artworks will be exhibited in a temporary exhibition alongside the documentary material that inspired them.

### LEARNING: CADETS AND SCHOOLS

Local Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Cadets and Boys Brigade groups have visited the Museum in recent months, exploring the galleries and getting the opportunity to handle uniforms, equipment and weapons. The Museum opens after hours, offering exclusive access to these groups so they get the most out of their visits. Thanks to volunteer support, groups split into two and take turns going around the Museum with a guide and, for younger visitors, a history hunt trail, and learning about the development of uniforms and equipment through dressing up and object handling.

The Castle and Museum has also become a popular destination for schools in the Regimental area since the addition of a bespoke classroom in the extension of Balhousie Castle. Nearly 1,000 school children from Angus, Dundee, Fife and Perthshire have visited the Museum since reopening in the summer and the feedback has been fantastic. Students learn from objects, photographs and uniforms in the collection thanks to a dedicated team of learning volunteers.

### VOLUNTEERS: RESEARCH IN TO UNIFORMS

Archive volunteer Derek Bowes has been working closely with the documentary records of the Museum to collate an information sheet allowing staff to date photographs, prints and paintings effectively. From the mystery of the red stripe in the Government tartan to the buttons of a Fife Volunteer uniform, each individual component of all the uniforms worn by soldiers in the Black Watch and associated regiments is broken down and dates ascribed to each one.

### MEDALS

In March, Museum Manger Emma Halford-Forbes spoke at the British Museum about the methods of displaying and interpreting medals in the redeveloped Museum. The talk – titled *Demystifying Medals* – was part of the British Museum's Money and Medals Network conference, highlighting best practice.

**The Museum Team**



*The Orders, Medals and Decorations display case.*

## THE FRIENDS OF THE BLACK WATCH CASTLE AND MUSEUM

There have been a great variety of events for Friends to attend over the last six months. Some have been Friends only events and others have been open to all comers, but with Friends enjoying a significant reduction in ticket prices. The Castle remained open late one evening in November to allow The Friends an opportunity to start their Christmas shopping. All those that attended not only enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies but also a generous 20% discount on everything they bought. We have also held two Coffee Mornings in the Copper Beech Café. These have been well attended as the Café has gained a reputation for particularly delicious cakes to accompany the freshly brewed coffee. Bonhams Auctioneers came to Balhousie in March to run a Valuation Day. This was an opportunity for Friends to bring in their treasures for valuation and, in some cases, to learn a little more



*Friends' Coffee Morning – Friends enjoying a coffee in the Copper Beech Café.*



*Friends attending the Bonhams valuation event.*

about the item they had brought. Every two months a welcome tour is run for new Friends so that they can enjoy the benefit of a guide's knowledge while they are taken around the museum. The guides are volunteers, some of whom have become volunteers as a result of first becoming a Friend.

The Friends have organised a number of keynote lectures since the Castle and Museum reopened. We were delighted to welcome Brigadier Melville Jameson to Balhousie in October, to speak on the subject of "The Military Tattoo". Brigadier Jameson's lecture was informative, entertaining and hugely enjoyable. As I write this article we are about to welcome Ted Cowan, Emeritus Professor of Scottish History at the University of Glasgow to give a lecture on The Role of James Graham, 1st Marquis of Montrose, in the Covenanting Revolution. Our Keynote lecture on 7th October will be given by Professor Sir Hew Stachan, Chichele Professor of the History of War at All Souls College, University of Oxford. Sir Hew will discuss with the audience 'Scotland and the Great War: what does the centenary mean to us?' A date for your diary, tickets on application to the Friends' Secretary at Balhousie Castle. The Friends are extremely grateful to Brigadier Jameson, Professor Cowan and Professor Sir Hew Strachan for giving so generously of their time.

I have so far only told you of events that have been organised by the Friends committee. Friends have also attended the very popular Winter Lecture Series and Musical Evenings as well as a Burns Supper, Whisky Tasting, Store and Archive tours and much more that has been organised by the Museum and Copper Beech Café staff. Friends enjoy a discount on the price of tickets for all of these events. Details for all events can be found on the museum website, [www.theblackwatch.co.uk](http://www.theblackwatch.co.uk). As a result of all that is on offer, and free entry to the Museum, the Friends membership numbers have been increasing steadily. There are currently 360 Friends.

The Friends are continuing to meet their financial commitment to support the work of the museum. This has taken the form of regular sponsorship of the Special Exhibitions, which give an opportunity to



*Museum Tour.*

display some of the many artefacts held within the archive store that are not normally on display. We have also recently purchased 4 portable audio loop systems and large print labels for the museum galleries. This project gave the Friends an opportunity to apply for external funding from Perth and Kinross Grants Direct Scheme. As a result a grant of £915 was awarded from the Perth Common Good Fund which met 50% of the cost of the project; the balance was paid by the Friends.

If you are not yet a Friend but are interested in joining please enquire at Balhousie Castle or go to the Friends page on the museum web site. Remember, if you are a paid up member of any Branch of The Black Watch Association you can take advantage of the 50% reduction in Friends membership fee, down to a tiny £1 per month.

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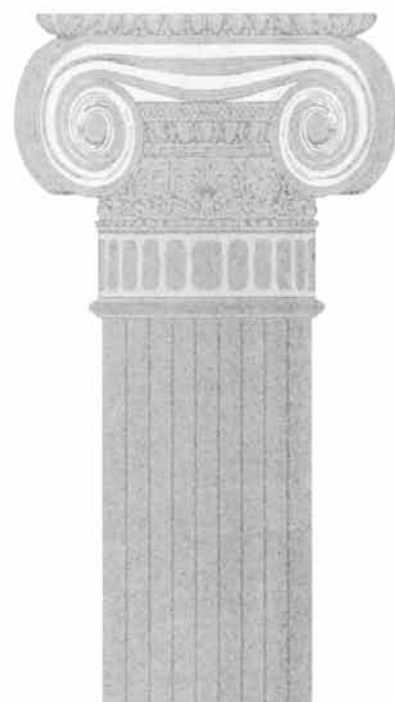
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- Or by visiting our web shop : [www.theblackwatch.co.uk/shop/](http://www.theblackwatch.co.uk/shop/)

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# Correspondence

Graveney  
Faversham

Dear Editor

In September 1936 only three years before the outbreak of the Second World War, 6th and 7th Battalion veterans of the Great War travelled to France to meet up with veterans of the French 19th Infantry Regiment at La Boisselle.

An article records that they met on the 9th of September 1936 – the men of Scotland and the men of Breton – and greeted each other warmly and then set off to fill two urns with soil taken from the cemetery at La Boisselle which would be added to soil taken from below the Black Watch Monument at Aberfeldy and that from Brittany which was taken from the Basilica of Le Folgoet.

The urns were nearly identical and were white with a blue neck, embellished with the ermine symbol of Brittany and the cross of St Andrew. The Scottish urn additionally was decorated with a thistle. The old comrades exchanged urns, the Scottish one to be carried to the holy basilica at Le Folgoet and the Breton one to find a home in Scotland.

This act of friendship recalled the period between 31st July and 2nd August 1915 when the 51st Highland Division and in particular The Black Watch relieved the Breton soldiers of the 22nd French Division in the Albert Sector.

In July 2012 I travelled to France to take part in a service to commemorate the 96th anniversary of the Battle of The Somme. I stayed with the lady who owns The Glory Hole, one of the tunnels that was dug prior to the Battle of the Somme and that was used to explode a mine beneath the German lines on 1st July 1916. My hostess is the grand-daughter of the man who was Mayor of La Boisselle in 1936.



Joe Hubble holds the replica urns whilst visiting La Boisselle in 2012.

Whilst in France, I met a number of members of the Royal Engineers' Archaeological Society who have had replicas of the original urns made and they kindly allowed me to be photographed with them.

**Joe Hubble**

*Editor's note: The Black Watch urn is now displayed in the museum but it is thought that the urn given to the Bretons has been lost.*



The original Breton urn is displayed in The Black Watch Museum.

Gateside  
Fife

Dear Editor

I write this short piece in appreciation of Major Bob Ritchie, who died recently. A major event characterised his distinguished career, when he was Families Officer in Werl at the time that 1 BW was in West Belfast (21 December 1982 to 3 May 1983). 1 BW had a successful tour, because PIRA's activity was much reduced. Obviously luck played its part but the battalion seems to have outwitted PIRA and as each day passed and nothing happened, the harder it became for PIRA to resume its hostilities. Less well known is the part played by some of the wives who supported Major Bob Ritchie back in Werl. There was no WRVS for families. The initiative came from within and a redoubtable band of stalwarts led by Jenny Barnett organised regular coffee mornings, shopping trips, Sunday lunches, Wives Club meetings and home visits as and when required. I would like to mention those that I can remember [it was over thirty years ago]; Alison Halford-MacLeod, Connie Lindsay-Stewart, Olive Beattie, Kim Davidson-Kelly, Carol Tedridge, Jeanette Williamson and Barbara Atkinson. 1 BW was very fortunate to have such team-players in support.

**Philip Halford-MacLeod**



# Obituaries

## CAPTAIN COLIN HARRISON

Colin Harrison: great soldier, great comrade, great friend, great gentleman, great husband and father. To each of us he will have been at least one of these things.

I feel more than privileged to be asked to say a few words about a man who I have known more or less all my life.

At the age of 17, Colin joined the Royal Signals at Catterick where the famous England cricketer Brian Close was in the next door bed. It was not long before Colin had seen the light and had made the journey north to Fort George where in 1949 he exchanged battle dress trousers for kilt; and blue beret with Hermes badge for bonnet and red hackle. For the next 35 years he established himself as one of the great regimental characters, because he combined all the soldierly skills with a character that attracted universal respect, admiration and, in as much as any Black Watch man would admit to it, love.

He distinguished himself in Korea, not least at the Battle of the Hook. He was in my father's Company, A Company, which bore the brunt of the Chinese onslaught. At the height of the battle he was repairing telephone cable between Company Headquarters and one of the forward platoons when the Platoon Commander, his sergeant and signaller were killed by an incoming Chinese shell. Colin was promoted in the field to Platoon Sergeant and my father was so impressed by Colin's conduct during that long night's fighting that from then on there was between them one of those special bonds that can only be forged in the heat of battle.

Colin's subsequent career took him to the fight against the Mau Mau in Kenya and then various garrison stations in Cyprus, Germany, Britain and Northern Ireland. His long career also took him from Signaller to Private soldier to Captain. And as he made that progress around the world and up the military ladder he attracted a huge army of friends and admirers, a huge army of people who had a particular memory of him.

There are those who remember his immaculate bearing and imposing words of command on the drill square – one recruit who went on to become one of The Black Watch's most distinguished Quartermaster Lieutenant Colonels remembers the shock and awe as he entered the depot in Perth for the first time and being greeted by Drill Sergeant Harrison telling him to pick his feet up.

Another of his great friends, a fellow Company Sergeant Major in Gibraltar, recalls one of the frequent so-called Quicktrain callouts to test the defences of the Rock. On this particular occasion Colin, posted back early to Kirknewton to complete his army education certificate, had finished packing all his gear but was still holding the appointment of CSM of B Company. When the whistle blew, the duty of each of the Company Sergeant Majors was to rush to the ammunition bunkers on the other side of the runway, always of course keeping an eye out for approaching aircraft. Colin, kit all packed, had to borrow what he could and off they set, the two of them, at top speed. Colin took much longer than usual to get to his post and it was found that in his haste he had put his borrowed boots on the wrong feet. Typically he found this just as ridiculously funny as his friends did.

Back in Ritchie Camp, Kirknewton there were three particular pals in the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess, Regimental Sergeant Major Dear and CSMs Hubble and Harrison. I recall as a very young officer, on duty over Christmas, being invited by the RSM to his Mess for a drink. There were the three of them enjoying what one might call a quiet dram. I have of course forgotten everything that was said but I recall with undiminished clarity the riotously funny evening that followed, with Colin very much to the fore in the joke department. In fact that is what so many people remember, that when you were with Colin you were always bathed in sunshine.

This, and those misplaced boots, show the human side of a man described by his Commanding Officer of the day, later himself a General, as the very best kind of soldier, a Company Sergeant Major who looked like one, who behaved like one, who had terrific presence, commanding the respect of all from CO to the newest joined private



soldier. One might also add to that list HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother with whom Colin danced the Dashing White Sergeant while on the Royal Guard and she is said to have been mightily impressed.

Later Colin proved to be a brilliant RSM at the Scottish Infantry Depot at Glencorse. In 1975 he was commissioned from there and rejoined the 1st Battalion in Colchester as Families Officer. Later there are those who remember the, to his friends, bizarre sight of Colin, on the advance party in Ballykinler, greeting the incoming companies mounted on a horse, an exercise not repeated after the animal bolted down the beach, throwing him to the ground causing painful injuries and the end of Colin's short-lived equestrian experiments. Those of you who know about these sorts of things know that over the years there are Families Officers who do the work because they have been told to and there are Families Officers who seem almost to have been born for the work. Colin was one of the latter. He was brilliant at it and if you wanted to describe the perfect Families Officer you would need only to describe Colin.

In that work he was wonderfully supported by his beloved Lena. They met in 1957 when Colin was on the training staff at the Depot. For the next 56 years she supported him most wonderfully in everything that he did. More than one former Commanding Officer has made a particular point of saying how much they and their wives valued Lena's generous support for the Wives' Club and for the welfare of families in general. Colin would have been a very fine man without Lena but with her he was unbeatable.

And so it came to the time for his last posting, as OC HQ Company at Gordon Barracks where he arrived wearing the Red Hackle and left in 1984 in Gordon Highlander mufti.

But as an *envoi* from the Royal Highland Regiment, I can say without fear of contradiction that all of us know that we have lost one of those remarkable men of the Regiment who did so much to enhance its reputation and who did so without ever forgetting his sense of humanity and without ever failing to live up to the highest standards. Colin was not of course born a Scot but no one could claim more than he could that he was that proudest of things, a Jock.

This eulogy was delivered by Lt Gen Sir Alistair Irwin KCB CBE at Colin's Service of Remembrance.

## MAJOR R C B RITCHIE MBE

Bob Ritchie died on the 23rd of December 2013 at St John's Hospital, Livingston aged 77. In September 2013 he was diagnosed with a serious illness but until then he had been in good health.

Bob was born in Oakley, Fife in 1936 and went on to attend the local primary and secondary schools. On leaving school aged 15, he was employed down the nearby coal mine. He soon discovered that he was not cut out to be a miner and joined the Infantry Boys Battalion which was soon re-titled the Infantry Junior Leaders Battalion at Tuxford, Nottinghamshire in what was a WW2 Air Base. He took to military life like a duck takes to water and after eighteen months as a Junior Leader Bob joined the regiment at Queen's Barracks, Perth and served in The Black Watch continuously for nearly forty years.

Posted to the 2nd Battalion who were then serving in Dortmund, West Germany, Bob then served with them in British Guiana and then Edinburgh where the battalion was disbanded. He then joined the 1st Battalion in Berlin and it was from there that he was given compassionate leave home to Scotland to visit his family who were emigrating to Los Angeles where they still are. His mother tried very hard to get him to leave the army and join the family in the US and Bob was equally determined to stay in.

His leadership potential was soon recognised and he was promoted when serving in the 2nd Battalion and became one of the youngest NCOs in the Regiment. A two year posting to the Depot at Queen's Barracks training Regular and National Service recruits followed his tour in Berlin. On being posted back to the 1st Battalion, he took part in the Royal Guard at Ballater before moving with the battalion to Cyprus to take part in the end of the EOKA campaign. When troubles



ceased the battalion became the Resident Battalion in Dhekelia and Bob was earmarked to return to Queen's Barracks once again as an instructor. It was during his second tour at the Depot that he married Gina in May 1960 with his lifelong friend Bob Shivas carrying out the duties of best man and Bob's wife Isobel being the bridesmaid to the happy couple.

During this tour at the Depot, Bob was promoted Sergeant and then moved to Stirling Castle on the closure of Queen's Barracks. He then rejoined the 1st Battalion in the autumn of 1962 and took over 15 Platoon D Company which was then commanded by 2Lt E N de Broe Ferguson. D Company was then stationed at The School of Infantry, Warminster and detached from the Battalion which was based at Knook Camp. He proved to be a very firm and fair Platoon Sergeant and as a young Jock who had just arrived from the Infantry Junior Leaders, I learned a lot from him which stood me in good stead later in life.

Bob and his platoon formed the basis of the Rocker Platoon which was made up from across D Company and was sent to guard 3 Div HQ in Cyprus as part of the UN Force. They were the first troops of the Regiment to wear the UN Blue Beret. The Platoon rejoined the battalion in Minden, West Germany however another posting beckoned and Bob spent the next two years as a Recruiting Sergeant in Dunfermline and then rejoined the 1st Battalion in Minden on promotion and was appointed MT Colour Sergeant during a busy period when the battalion were carrying out their final exercises in BAOR and preparing to move back to Kirknewton in Scotland. Promotion followed again and he left the MT and became CSM of D Company serving in Malaysia and Northern Ireland. In 1971, Bob was promoted once again and reached the pinnacle of his service when he was appointed Regimental Sergeant Major of the 1st Battalion in January 1972. Bob ensured that the high Black Watch standards were maintained throughout the tour in Hong Kong and that the Battalion which often had companies deployed on training exercises in Malaysia, Okinawa Australia, New Zealand and platoon on Honor Guard duties in Korea were always commented on favourably.

Shortly after the battalion returned to the UK and was based in Colchester Bob was commissioned and was employed as Families Officer during a period when the battalion twice returned to West Belfast in 1974 and 1975. Looking after some three hundred families was no easy task and it is worth noting that the IRA threatened the married quarters during and after the 1974 tour. Bob took this all in his stride and ensured that life went on as normal for the families who were left behind.

After promotion to Captain and a spell as Personnel Selection Officer in Dundee he moved to the Scottish Infantry Depot Glencorse as HQ Company Commander. His ability was well known outside the regiment and he was again promoted and took up the role as Training Officer at the Scottish Infantry Depot Bridge of Don in Aberdeen where the junior soldiers of the Scottish Division were trained.

Prior to the battalion deploying to West Belfast from Werl in 1982 he returned to serve again as Families Officer. Again those who were serving in West Belfast knew that their wives and children were being well looked after by Bob and his small team. For his commitment, dedication and hard work he was awarded the MBE, which was richly deserved.

Continuing as Families Officer he oversaw the move of the battalion families to Kirknewton and then a further move to Redford Barracks in Edinburgh. The latter move was carried out when the battalion was on another unaccompanied tour in Northern Ireland this time in South Armagh. It is worth noting that both the tour from Werl and Kirknewton/Redford covered the Christmas period and Bob ensured that all the families and children had as good a Christmas as possible.

He was once again posted to Glencorse and it was from here that he retired aged 55 and with nearly forty years regular service to the regiment.

Bob soon became involved with the Black Watch Association and became a very active member of the Executive Committee attending regimental functions where he enjoyed meeting up with friends who served with him. He became Secretary of the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Dining Club and was a member of the Welfare Committee whose role is to help those in need.

Bob was devastated when he heard the terrible news that our beloved Regiment was to be subsumed as a battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. He fought tooth and nail to prevent this happening and could never be reconciled with this tragic event. At his funeral it appeared

that Bob may have been looking down on those who attended, as when Padre Alex Forsyth mentioned Bob's disappointment in The Black Watch becoming part of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, the lights in the Crematorium flickered and went out for an instant. One could imagine the mischievous chuckle and twinkle in his eye.

Bob will be sadly missed by all those who had the privilege of knowing him and the regiment is indebted for his long and loyal service.

### MAJOR R C B RITCHIE MBE

I was fortunate to have worked closely with Bob Ritchie at most stages of my Regimental career. To begin with, we were chosen to take the Rocker Platoon from Warminster to Cyprus in early 1964\*. I was a newly commissioned and Bob was a hugely experienced platoon sergeant who looked after me during our attachment to 3 Div HQ and Signal Regiment. We were 31 All Ranks serving on our own well away from any Battalion interference. I recall turning up at Bob's quarter at Barton Stacey on a Sunday morning after an Op Rocker briefing at Bulford to tell him that we had been put on notice to go to Cyprus. Embarrassed that he hadn't shaved, he asked for 15 minutes and he would be ready to go. I explained that we were not leaving immediately so we repaired to the local hostelry to make plans and to discuss the personnel we were to take with us.

After Minden, on returning to Kirknewton, I was appointed MTO where Bob was already in post as MT Colour Sergeant. Again his calm professionalism helped enormously with this challenge.

When Bob was commissioned in Colchester, he helped me with looking after Rear Details and we took our turn in the Echelon duties in Andersonstown as well.

How fortunate I was to have had such a fine man at my side during my Regimental career. Bob was among the proudest Black Watch men I knew.

**Paul Sugden**

*\*(for an explanation of OP ROCKER see July 1964 Red Hackle Magazine)*

### GAVIN ROWAN-HAMILTON

At some stage during his long life Gavin's handwriting was analysed. The report reads as follows:

"This is the handwriting of an impulsive, quick, clever-minded person, who tries to keep his impetuosity in check and to outward appearances is calm and self-possessed. There is plenty of tenacity and drive, aesthetic taste and culture. The nature is kindly, sympathetic, deeply interested in people. He is a sociable type. Shyness is evident; he tries to overcome this by his ability to converse freely. The mind is practical, able to handle complicated issues, capable of prolonged effort. Very conscientious, he should develop a first class mind and do very well in any business field or post of responsibility."

I think that we can all recognise something of Gavin in this analysis, despite there being no mention of his abundant charm and delightful sense of humour.

Born in Portsmouth in 1923, the youngest of three brothers, Gavin did not have an easy childhood. His father was in the army and often absent, the family moved around a lot, and school holidays might be spent with friends and relations in Northern Ireland and elsewhere. From St. Pirans in Maidenhead he went to Wellington. There he was made a prefect 'but blew it', possibly because he was beaten 29 times. I am not sure which is the more remarkable, the impressive number of beatings or the fact that Gavin kept count. As a senior boy at the start of the war, he joined patrols around the school grounds. One night Wellington was bombed and the Headmaster killed. Gavin was near and taken away in a hurry. So, to his regret, he never got to see 'a washed-up headmaster'.

Gavin left school three days before his 18th birthday and worked on farms until he was called up to join The Black Watch, the family regiment. He learned to salute, look after his kit, do drill and run up hills with a Bren gun. He was selected for officer training and received a Wartime Emergency Commission.

After further training he was posted to Italy. He spent three days in Naples confined on board ship with 500 men and thousands of gallons of petrol, and was twice bombed. Disembarking at Anzio under shell fire, he joined the Seaforth Highlanders, there being no Black Watch





unit there. Three profitable days followed during which he dealt with drunken Jocks and won £25 (two months' wages) playing poker in the mess. Then he went up the line and spent his 21st birthday in a slit trench.

On 31st May 1944 he and his men came under friendly fire and took shelter in some farm buildings. Unfortunately, the Germans had got there first and took them prisoner. Gavin was marched north through Rome and chaos. He was transferred to trucks and trains. Allied bombing made the journey slow and dangerous, rations were short; and it was three months before he finally reached the POW camp in Brunswick. There he stayed for the next eight months, surviving, just, on cabbage soup, getting thinner and thinner. On 12th April 1945, the day that President Roosevelt died, American troops entered the camp without any fighting. Cheers all round and a few weeks later, for the only time in his life, Gavin was in a 1st class sleeper, north to St. Boswells.

There followed two months leave and double rations. Rheumatic fever prevented a posting to Japan and he went to the Shetlands. There was little to do, so he and Colonel Rusk played bridge and shot duck and snipe, and ate the snipe for breakfast. After a course at the School of Military Intelligence, Gavin was promoted to Captain and sent to Germany, where he had an interesting time dealing with Russian deserters, but stopped returning them to the check point when he discovered that they were likely to be shot. Finally, at the end of 1946, and after a slight delay because he spoke his mind a little too freely – not for the first or last time! – he was demobbed. He was 23 and it was time for university.

One can imagine the relief and feeling of freedom that Gavin must have had after five years of military discipline and privation but it could not have been easy going up to Cambridge in that bitterly cold winter and adapting to academic study, particularly as he was starting mid-year. However, he did so successfully and duly obtained a good second in French and Russian. One stroke of luck was that on the same stair in Corpus Christi was a possible kinsman, an American called David Hamilton Rowan. Despite Gavin's suggestion that he was from the wrong side of the blanket David became, with Gavin's brothers Angus and Dennis, his closest friend.

After leaving Cambridge he joined the Foreign Office and worked for MI6 for a period, before studying for and passing his Chartered Surveyors' exam. He worked at Arncliffe and at Oxenford as well as for the Scottish Landowners' Federation. He also worked at various times as a Local Councillor, as a salesman and as a Prep School teacher at Bellhaven.

Meanwhile he had been spotted across a dinner table by a girl from Northern Ireland called Mary. At once she knew that she was going to marry this tall, bespectacled, amusing young man; and several years later, in 1956, she did. Quite an achievement given that Gavin ever had a twinkle in his eye and no shortage of admirers and 'walk-outs'. In due course along came Catherine, Hamish and Paddy and in the 1960s the family moved to Stenton.

After teaching, Gavin transferred his talents and energies to building projects at Whittingehame and transforming the Stenton Farm Steading into The Horse Mill and The Old Barn. He continued to love being out and about, shooting and picking up with a series of black labs. There were Mary and the family, the six grandchildren, the garden and books. And there were his many friends, whose days were illuminated by an encounter with Gavin, by the smile and the distinctive voice, the anecdotes, the sympathetic interest.

I began with the words of a graphologist. I shall end with the announcement in last week's paper because I think that it is spot on. Gavin was "a kind and gentle man, he was much loved and will be greatly missed".

**This is an extract of the eulogy delivered by Michael Osborne.**

### **BILL ANDERSON**

William Thomas Anderson, known to all as Bill, was born in Stepney, East London on 17th August 1920.

After leaving school Bill worked locally in London before enlisting into the Black Watch in 1941. Having completed his military training he was posted to the 6th Battalion and served with them in North Africa and Italy. He was wounded at Monte Cassino in 1944 and it was to Monte Cassino that he returned in May 1989, travelling with two other 6th



Battalion members, Majors Henry Mackenzie – Johnston and Michael Keogh, for Exercise Phoenix, a mass gathering of Cassino veterans from many nations including Germany.

Whilst there, they linked up with others from the 6th Battalion and a serving officer and piper from 1 BW in Berlin. Together they attended a moving ceremony at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery, where the late Frank Bailey, who had lost a leg at the Battle of Monte Cassino, laid the Black Watch wreath and where they visited the graves of the Black Watch fallen. Bill, together with Henry and Michael, visited and climbed many of the battleground features over which they had laboured and fought some 45 years previously. An extremely moving and, for a group with the combined ages of 210, demanding experience.

After the war, Bill worked for the Cunard shipping company for some years and then mostly in the wine trade. He was co-founder and associate member of the Ilford 84 Branch of the Parachute Regiment Association and also managed the local boys' football team, Hornchurch Wasps, in which his son Neil played. Bill was an active man; being a keen golfer and an excellent shot with both pistol and rifle, having served as a sniper in the Regiment. He also had a great sense of humour and was a popular member of the London Branch. In 1950 Bill married Doris and they have a son, Neil. Sadly Bill's health deteriorated in the last few years of his life and this kind and generous man, a devoted husband and a loving father, died at the age of 92. He will be greatly missed.

**Jim Keating**

### **RAB (SHUGGLES) AUCHTERLONIE**

Rab Auchterlonie who was affectionately known as Shuggles due to his build, died unexpectedly on the ninth of January 2014 aged 72.

He joined the regiment in 1959 aged 18 and after his basic training was posted to the 1st Battalion who were then serving in Cyprus. He eventually joined the MT Platoon and was employed as a driver, an employment he kept for a good part of his service with the Regiment. On the Battalion's return to UK he was selected to join the APC Platoon as a Saracen Driver whilst the Battalion was stationed at Warminster as Demonstration Battalion. He then served in Minden, including the UN tour in Cyprus in 1966/1967, Kirknewton and then Gibraltar. It was during the latter part of his service with the Battalion that he became a Regimental Cook and then transferred to the Army Catering Corps where he completed his 22 years service and had reached the rank of Lance Sergeant during his tour with the Household Cavalry. During his time with Army Catering Corps Rab met up with the regiment again in Hong Kong when the battalion was stationed in Gun Club Barracks and he was posted to an armoured unit in the New Territories. In an amusing incident he visited Gun Club driving a Saladin Armoured Scout Car as he was one of the few members of the unit to which he was attached to have an armoured vehicle licence which he had obtained ten years earlier at Warminster.

Tom Brodie, who attended Rab's funeral said, "that despite his short and rotund build, Rab was fit and played for the Battalion First Fifteen during his service and was quite unstoppable when heading towards the opposition try line.

Rab never forgot his Black Watch roots and was a member of both the London and Stoke on Trent Branches and attended functions in both London and Stoke along with his wife May.

He had a great sense of humour and was well respected by all those who had the pleasure of knowing him and will be sadly missed.

**R J W Proctor**

## ROBERT J CHANTLER

Robert Chantler died on 25th February 2014, in the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle. Bob had been in poor health for some years; however, this had never been allowed to interfere with his duties to the Branch, where he held the post of Social Secretary for as long as most of us can remember. His attention to detail for social functions was legendary.

Bob had spent his early youth working with his father as a painter and decorator, joining the Army as soon as he was old enough. The Duke of Wellington's Regiment was fortunate to obtain the services of this dedicated soldier. With Robert serving in Gibraltar, General Franco found it necessary, on a number of occasions, to close the Spanish border with the Rock to prevent the incursions of the "Likely Lad" and his mates. Spain simply wasn't ready for the cultural experience of Bob's infectious, fun loving spirit.

Upon leaving the Colours, Bob joined a TA battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers, transferring to the Tyneside Scottish upon the disbandment of his unit. He quickly organised the Mess into a money making base to provide a Christmas party, every year, for deprived children in the surrounding area. No doubt this had a good effect upon recruitment for the unit which, despite numerous reorganisations and realignments of the Reserve Forces, still survives as 204 (Tyneside Scottish) Battery RA (V) of 101 (Northumberland) Regiment RA (V). Bob was employed at Rank's Flour Mills in Gateshead, later, taking a position on the Local Railway network and then going to BT and working at various locations in the UK. His final employment was with Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council from which he retired due to ill health.

Bob's funeral service was held at the West Road Crematorium in Newcastle on 11th March and the turnout was spectacular. As our representative on the Joint Ex-Services Association, Bob was well known in the local military family and this was demonstrated by the diversity of cap badges worn by mourners. Members of the Black Watch and Tyneside Scottish Associations provided an impressive Guard of Honour, whilst members of other Batteries of 101 Regiment RA (V) were also present, swelling the already large numbers on parade. Four Standards were carried in Bob's honour and his family must have drawn comfort from the great show of respect and affection demonstrated on this sad occasion. Bob had been married for 55 years and to his widow Elizabeth, Janet his daughter and Alex his son, we send our condolences and know that their many memories of this well-loved character will help them through the coming period of grief.

Malcolm Dunn

## WILLIAM "COCKY" COCHRANE

William "Cocky" Cochrane died on the 20th of February in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich, aged 90.

Cocky was born on the 5th of November 1923 at Cowie, Stirlingshire the son of a miner who worked in a local coal mine. Cocky joined his father when he left school and in 1940 they both enlisted in the Home Guard Company. Both father and son were tasked to guard the Whisky Distillery at Alva at night time. No one seemed to notice that the water bottles which were part of their equipment which contained cold tea when they went on duty contained something much stronger when they went off. The contents were shared around those who frequented the local Public house with no questions asked.

Bill who was itching to be involved in the war joined up at Stirling Castle when he was eighteen years and two months and first served with The Royal Scots and trained in a "Young Soldiers Battalion" at Berwick on Tweed; he then volunteered for Airborne Training but because of his short stature and light weight he was turned down. He met Alma, a London lass who was employed in the local munitions factory and by March 1942 they were married and spent nearly seventy one happy years together.



Bill was soon on his way abroad and was posted to the Cameronians in Egypt. He was not long there when he spied a notice on the Company Notice Board requesting volunteers to join a new "Special Unit" in India although he had been rejected by the Airborne previously he decided that he would try again to get to where the war was being fought and was soon on his way once again, this time to be trained in Jungle Warfare with the Second Battalion The Black Watch as part of the newly formed Chindit Force which would operate behind the Japanese lines and take the war to the Japanese. The Japanese at this period in the war were thought to be masters of Jungle Warfare and were knocking on the gates of India! As a member of 73 Column, Bill who by this time was known as Cocky was involved in as much action that he ever dreamed about and more. The Column was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Green who was the Commanding Officer of the Second Battalion. Bill served with 73 Column throughout the Chindit Campaign and took part in all the major actions in which they were involved. A full account of his experiences is told in his book, Chindit. His time in the jungle had taken its toll on his health and on his return to India he was medically downgraded and posted to Doolalli in an administrative role where he met up with his cousin who he had not seen for a number of years.

Demobilization came in 1946 and Bill returned to the UK to resume married life and set up home in London with Alma. He retrained as a bricklayer and was employed in that trade until his retirement. His skill was soon recognised and he was selected to work on several high prestige projects one of which was the restoration of the Royal Naval College, Greenwich.

Bill visited the Regimental museum and took part in the Annual Regimental Reunion some years ago and was heard to remark as he passed by the diorama depicting the 73 Column ambush near Nathkokylin "see I told you there was Japanese officer on a white horse leading the Japanese along the jungle track where we ambushed them" his family members saw the tale well displayed in the Diorama and it was proved that Bill was not telling a tall tale. His memory was crystal clear and his love and pride in serving with the Black Watch remained with him throughout his long life. On a visit to son Stewart in USA he gave the Sun City, Las Vegas veterans a talk on his experiences and they made him a life member of their Veterans Association. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

R J W Proctor

## SANDY FAIRWEATHER

Sandy Fairweather died suddenly at Monkbarns Care Home, Arbroath on the 7th of March 2014 aged 80.

Sandy was born at Guthrie Hill, Arbroath on the 12th of January 1934 and was educated at Inverbrothock Primary School and then Arbroath High school where he was awarded a bursary to further his studies. He declined this kind offer as he wanted to work on the land and had a planned outcome. By the time he was sixteen he was working on a farm in Perthshire and then moved back to the Arbroath area where he gained employment as a tractor man. This allowed him to fulfil his plan to buy a brand new Matchless motorcycle from a motorcycle stockist in Brechin. Much to the amazement of the salesman Sandy pulled out the correct amount of hard earned money to purchase the machine which was in the showroom window and headed back to Arbroath with his treasured shiny motorcycle. Motorcycles were to play a part in Sandy's younger years and a few years later he was back in Brechin trading in his Matchless for a state of the art Triumph Tiger. He even managed a solo motorcycle trip to London on the Triumph stopping en route at relative's houses in Preston and Brentwood to enable him to get thawed out. It was after his return from London that Sandy met Jean at a local dance and this was the beginning of a lifelong partnership which was only gapped during Sandy's two years National Service.

Due to Sandy being a key hand on the farm on which he worked he had not yet been called up but on leaving that employment aged twenty he received notice to report to Queen's Barracks Perth to begin his National Service. During his ten weeks basic training his great sense of humour and sense of fun came to the fore and helped keep up the morale of the fellow members of his training squad. After embarkation





leave he was sent to Fort George where he joined a draft en route for the 1st Battalion who were currently serving in Kenya during the Mau Mau Emergency. His time in the 1st Battalion was spent in "A" (Grenadier) Company and he moved with the Battalion back to Crail in Fife. It was during his time at Crail that he was involved in an accident when going home on leave on his motorcycle. Much to his chagrin his pride and joy, the Triumph Tiger was badly damaged and Sandy had sustained a broken leg but as his son Colin told me the silver lining was that he was given early demobilisation from his National Service.

Stories of Sandy driving around the countryside on his repaired motorcycle with his leg still in plaster are numerous and Jean would not venture with him on any proposed jaunts however a year later after his leg was out of plaster he and Jean were married in August 1956 and settled down to married life and working on farms in the local area with their first child Jane being born in 1957.

Like many farm workers of the time Sandy moved around the country working on different farms and he moved from the Arbroath area to a farm near Kirriemuir where he worked for eight years and where their second child, Colin, was born. After another move Sandy decided to take up further education and sat and passed his Highers at Dundee College of further education and qualified for a place at Aberdeen Agricultural College where attained a Higher National Diploma in Agriculture.

Employment in agricultural management then followed both in Aberdeenshire and then Angus. Sandy then went on to teach on the Youth Opportunities Programme in Montrose and lectured at Angus College until funding dried up. He was latterly employed by Angus Council Parks Department in Montrose until his retirement. He continued to take an active part in horticulture until his health prohibited him from doing so.

He was a great supporter of the Angus Branch of The Black Watch Association attending and participating in all functions many of which he was accompanied by Jean until he was prevented by ill health.

He will be sadly missed for his great sense of humour and gravitas which touched all who knew him.

**R J W Proctor**

### **WILLIAM (BILL) GREENHILL**

Bill died on the 7th of November after a long illness bravely fought. Bill was born on the 2nd of February 1931 in the village of East Wemyss. He went to the local School and on leaving took up employment as a painter which meant he remained in the area. National Service called and Bill found himself going abroad for the first time to serve in the BAOR. On completion of his service it was back to East Wemyss but not to his trade. Bill decided to try his hand in the local coal mine and remained there until the unfortunate disaster when the mine caught fire and men lost their lives. Bill then decided it was back to his trade and took up employment with Kirkcaldy District Council and remained with them until he retired. He enjoyed his nights out at the local Bowling Club and was in himself a keen exponent of the game along with another interest the skilful game of dominos. On the military side Bill, on completion of his National Service joined the 6/7th Black Watch and remained with it until the change where he then found himself in 1/51 and during his service attained the rank of Company Sergeant Major. He was a keen member of the Fife Branch and supported it at every opportunity, the annual reunion at Balhousie, Perth, was also a high priority for him to attend until his illness took hold.

Bill wanted his Black Watch friends and a piper around him at his interment and I am pleased to this wish was granted. Bill was a good man to know.

**R M Scott**

### **CHARLIE McCLEARY**

Charlie McCleary died in early October 2013 aged 91. Charlie had joined the 51st Highland Division's Reconnaissance Corps in North Africa in January 1942. After Alamein, he transferred to 1st Black

Watch and saw service in Sicily and Italy before being brought home for the June 1944 landings in Normandy. Charlie picked up a wound in France 1944 but was back in action by the Christmas of that year, eventually getting another wound in February 1945 during the Reichswald Offensive. He was discharged in December 1945. He was an enthusiastic and regular attendee at the Newcastle Branch, supporting most of our functions until failing health forced him into residential care. He will be missed by us all.

**M Dunn**

### **JAMES McINTOSH**

James McIntosh died on Friday 15 November 2013 aged 94. James was a member of the 5th Battalion before the Second World War and was mobilised in 1939. He served with the Battalion throughout the war and was a member of the Mortar Platoon taking part in all the major battles in North Africa, Sicily and North West Europe. He joined the Angus Branch of the Association on its reformation and attended meetings whilst he was able to do so. James was a quiet and dignified man who will be sadly missed.

**R J W Proctor**

### **JIMMY MICHIE**

Jimmy Michie died on 5 December 2013. He served in Cyprus, Warminster and Minden and was affectionately known as wee Jimmy due to his diminutive size but what he lacked in height he made up for in enthusiasm and character. He was the unbeaten Battalion Flyweight boxing champion who managed to have a walk-over in each bout as no one in the Battalion matched his weight. He always trained hard and would have given a good account of himself in the ring.

**R J W Proctor**

### **JAMES RICHMOND**

James Richmond had been a piper with the Tyneside Scottish for many years. He had pursued his Highland heritage with an enthusiasm that few could have matched for vigour and comprehensive content. As a young man he had joined An Comunn Gaidhealach and had a fair grasp of the language. Jimmy's enthusiasm for piping led him into the world of the small pipes and the Northumberland pipes which he would occasionally bring along to Branch meetings.

From the early sixties, Jimmy worked for Newcastle City Council as an architect and was with them until he retired, being well thought of in his profession.

James Richmond was an intensely private person and his family life was never discussed in company. This makes it difficult to paint a picture of the full man, although we can say, with conviction, that he was always kind, considerate to others, was not known to criticise anyone and was a very gentle person. That is a substantial amount to say about any man.

**M Dunn**

### **DOUGLAS ROGER**

Douglas (Doug) Roger died on 13 November 2013. He was a member of the 4th Battalion and landed in France as part of the BEF and then served in Gibraltar until 1944 when he was transferred to the 5th Battalion for the Invasion of Europe. He was dedicated to the Boys Brigade, Corstorphin Church, the 51st Highland Division Association and The Black Watch Association attending all parades and functions wearing his large Tam O'Shanter Bonnet which was his trademark. His death is another sad loss of a great Black Watch character.



**R J W Proctor**

The following deaths have also been recorded and full obituaries may appear in the next edition of The Red Hackle Magazine:

**Ian Hamilton McNab**  
**William Boyle**  
**Norrie Baker**  
**Alex Murray**

# Black Watch Corner

*A full report will appear in November 2014 on this memorable event.*



*The Association Standard Bearers salute the fallen during the service at the Menin Gate on 2 May 2014.*



*The Union Jack covered the base before the plaques were unveiled.*





*A time for reflection. The programme involved a visit to Tyne Cot Cemetery.*



*The two minutes' silence.*



*Brigadier E N de Broë-Ferguson MBE (left) and the Association President, Brigadier M S Jameson CBE.*



*After the service came the chance to enjoy a beer and a blether.*



*Hector Fortune, the great grandson of Captain Victor Fortune who was one of only two officers of the 1st Battalion to survive the first Battle of Ypres, is pictured with his father Captain David Fortune and his uncle Jack Fortune.*



*Members of The Black Watch battalion attended the service as part of a battlefield tour.*



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Main Street · Golspie  
Sutherland KW10 6RA

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## BLACK WATCH MEN FROM THE ARGENTINE

By Fraser Brown

On the 7th of August, 1914, a mere two days after the news of the outbreak of war was received in Argentina, Buenos Aires was treated to what one observer described as 'an outrageous, exuberant, noisy, raucous and very public demonstration of Anglo French patriotism'. The cause for celebration was the departure of the SS *Aragon* as it set off on its journey to Britain, packed with newly mobilized French and British reservists as well as the first members of what would be later known as the British Volunteers from Latin America. As the war progressed the farewells grew smaller and a good deal less celebratory but volunteers of British birth or British heritage returned throughout the war to fight for the country they still called home. In all a total of 4852 men of whom 528 would be killed made the journey and because there was no formed Anglo-Argentine unit, they appeared in almost every regiment and corps in the army, indistinguishable except for the discrete blue and yellow diamond shaped BVLA patch sewn on their tunics. By the end of the war the Scottish element numbered 547 and 122 were killed in action.

The Black Watch also had its share of Argentines for one of the distinguishing features of the returning Scots was their fondness for their own local regiments. The names of 23 Black Watch men are recorded in the elaborately titled *The Activities of the British Community in Argentina During the Great War 1914-1919* by A L Holder published in 1920. However, further research shows that number to have been a serious underestimate and recent detailed research estimates the real number at 47.

But how could an underestimate of this size have come about? The reasons are not hard to find particularly when Holder only recorded the unit men were in when they were killed or when they were demobbed whereas it has been found from medal cards and newspaper articles that these men were moved around quite often. One such case was Private David Lyall Anderson who had been sent home to Brechin High School in Scotland from Venado Tuerto in Santa Fe Province and who had enlisted underage, in the 5th Battalion The Black Watch. He died of wounds on the 8th September 1917 while with the Gordons and is recorded as a Gordon Highlander in Holder's book, although his picture shows him wearing a Black Watch badge. Inter unit movement was not confined to the infantry and because many of the Scots Argentines had experience of running frontier and narrow gauge railways, frequently holding an additional civil engineering qualification, they were prime poaching targets for the Sappers' Railway Sections. The Remounts Sections also showed a real talent for getting their hands on roughriders, often actively seeking out estancia men for their knowledge of unbroken half wild horses, but the Black Watch men were almost always lost to the Royal Engineers.

One of the other features that set the Scots Argentines apart for the rest of the British contingent was the very high rate of commissioning which by the end of the war stood at 53% of the Scottish element. That trend is a major explanation for the underestimation of numbers of Black Watch men because, for most of the war, the majority of the men commissioned from the ranks moved to other regiments. That was the case with Captain Hamish Dey M.C., 7th Seaforths who had enlisted in September 1914. The Black Watch connection only came to light when news of his award of the Military Cross was reported in the River Plate Standard where it was also mentioned that he had been on the staff of the London and River Plate Bank in Buenos Aires and had enlisted in The Black Watch on his return home. Other sources indicate that there were a number of other similar cases. By the same token a number of officers came to The Black Watch who might otherwise not have been known to the regiment. Second Lieutenant Oswald S Brown from Estancia El Cardo via Lochmaben came to the 3rd Battalion The Black Watch from the Sportsman's Battalion before being killed on 22nd December, 1915. Others are known to have entered The Black Watch through the Scottish Horse and the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry when these became Black Watch Battalions. The Scottish Horse in particular attracted men from the estancias as well as a number Scots Chileans as a picture of a number of them published in the Peoples Journal in 1915 testifies.

The Argentine Republic had always attracted an adventurous type of person so it should come as no surprise that whether returning volunteers had been Patagonian sheep farmers, gold prospectors from the Andean foothills or bank tellers from Buenos Aires, The Black Watch would make the acquaintance of at least a few of them on their return home. In these circumstances it will come as no great surprise to find that The Black Watch had its own South American revolutionary in the shape of Captain The Hon. C. Edwardes, 13th Black Watch who moved to the Tanks just before his death in action on 20th November 1917. [The details of his passing were recorded in D E Hickey's *Rolling Into Action*]. He was a son of the 4th Baron Kensington and also turned out to have been a long term South American hand having first surfaced in Paraguay where he had been involved in at least one failed revolution. Later he fought in the Boer War with the Imperial Yeomanry and returned to Argentina to go on estancia before leaving for Britain on the SS *Aragon* in 1914 and immediately enlisted in the Scottish Horse.

The Great War generation has gone in Argentina just as it has elsewhere but Black Watch men who returned from both wars did form an Argentine Branch of The Black Watch Association which was last mentioned in the Red Hackle in 1951. Former Black Watch men appeared in the Buenos Aires Herald in pictures



of the fabulously popular Caledonian Balls up to the 1980s or at the famous Dollar Academy F. P. Annual Cocktail Party in Hotel Liberator in the early 1960s but now their faded photographs hang in the Hurlingham Club and St Andrews Scots College in Buenos Aires. The Black Watch men from Argentina are commemorated at the Scottish War Memorial in St Andrews Scots College, Buenos Aires where on Armistice Day this year – as always – they were remembered.

Private David Lyall Anderson. Died of wounds 8th September 1917.  
2nd Lieutenant Thomas H Bell. 11th Black Watch. Killed in Action May 1917. London and River Plate Bank, Buenos Aires.

2nd Lieutenant O S Brown. 3rd Black Watch. Killed in Action December 22 1915. Estancia El Cardo, Santa Fe.

Lieutenant J F Crighton. 8th Black Watch. Killed in Action August 1916. La Plata Cold Storage, Buenos Aires.

Lieutenant J W Dunlop. 11th Black Watch. Died in England of an illness contacted in Gallipoli. Traffic Inspector with Argentine Western Railways,

Lieutenant W G Ewart. 14th Black Watch, Killed in Action 30th March, 1918. Estancia Los Aromas, San Gerano.

Captain the Hon C Edwardes. 13th Black Watch. Att. Tanks just before his death in action on 20th November 1917. On estancia.

Captain J H S Grainger. 11th Black Watch. Killed in Action on 12th August 1915.

Private James Martin. Killed in Action May 1915. Resident of Concordia.

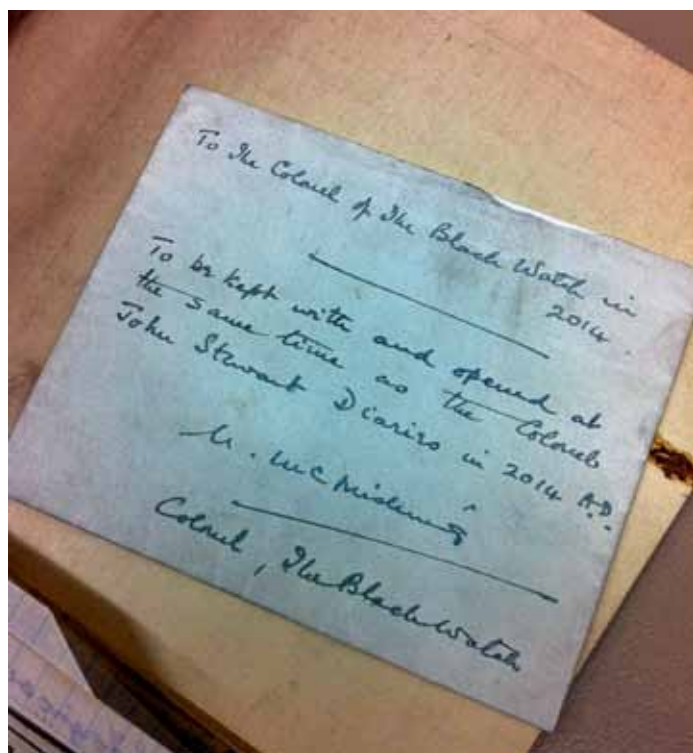
## THE LIEUTENANT COLONEL STEWART PAPERS

*By Richard McKenzie*

It was with great excitement that that staff of The Black Watch Castle and Museum had the privilege of starting the museum's First World War centenary remembrance commemorations by opening a sealed folder of documents belonging to Lieutenant Colonel John Stewart. Contained in a rather scruffy looking brown leather briefcase folder, with a sticker on it which stated 'Not to be opened until 2014,' this item had been flagged up by staff as something to be opened just as soon as everyone returned following the Christmas break.

The folder was found to be stuffed full of papers which, when sorted, turned out to be divided into two categories; a large collection of letters and a set of accounts of battles as witnessed by Lieutenant Colonel Stewart. Furthermore the folder contained seven leather bound pocket diaries dating from the 25th December 1914 through to the 21st March 1918.

One of the first documents to catch the eye of the staff was a small envelope addressed to 'The Colonel of the Black Watch in 2014,' signed 'N Mckmicking, Colonel of the Black Watch.' In the letter inside he gave a possible reason as to why this folder of documents might have been sealed for he wrote, "I was a Second Lieutenant when John Stewart left as a Captain and went to Canada. He came back for the 1914-1918 war and commanded the Second Battalion for a while. He was eccentric and was known not to get on with some of his seniors." This letter was signed and dated, 18th October 1954.



*The letter written in 1954 by Major General Neil McMicking to the Colonel of the Regiment in 2014.*

Having been made aware of the contents of this letter, the other documents were now approached with a degree of curiosity and a suspicion that the material contained within might be of the 'interesting' variety. There are over one hundred letters written by Stewart to his wife and/or children covering four years of service from July 1915 until May 1919. Not all the months are covered, for example there are no letters from August 1915 until February 1916, but from then on it appears he was a most persistent letter writer.

As for the contents of these letters, which are being transcribed as you read this, I fear I must disappoint you. Far from containing acidic comments about his superiors, it would appear that Stewart was preoccupied with the things that have worried soldiers throughout the centuries, namely food, comforts and the enemy, not necessarily in that order. The sheer quantities of home cooked, home caught, or home bought foodstuffs that reached the trenches is simply staggering. It would not have been an unusual week for Stewart to have been given in his parcels from home, several puddings, a few cakes, around thirty eggs and other edibles, not to mention the usual socks, tobacco and other comforts.

What does not come across from the letters are any aspects of the war. Fighting, when mentioned, is stated in the most perfunctorily terms before being dismissed as concerns about his family and life at home take over. It may be, though, that such short sentences contain a wealth of information which is now lost to us. The reason I say this is that our volunteer transcriber believes that there may be a hidden code contained within the letters. This would not be the first time that such a thing has been encountered in the archive but I am afraid that you will have to wait until more letters have been transcribed for further developments.

The final sets of documents were the accounts of campaigns and battles as witnessed by Lieutenant Colonel Stewart. They start off with two typed accounts of the Battle of Loos, 25th September 1915, which were written up "partly from memory and partly from a few notes made on an envelope during the actual fighting." At this point in the First World War, Stewart was a Black watch Officer with the 44th Brigade



*A selection of The Stewart Papers.*



involved in the heavy fighting around the village of Loos and Hill 70. From this battle he learnt three things, that he specifically noted down. Firstly, "that all ranks should, in an attack and forward movement, know the position of the Commanding Officer of the Battalion." Secondly, "that Commanding Officers should be forbidden to go closer than 150-200 yards behind the actual firing line." Thirdly, that machine guns should be supplied with extra parts, in particular spare springs, so that breakages could be easily repaired. For as he says himself "Out of our four guns, one was blown to pieces with its crew, and the other three were put out of action, one after the other, owing to weaknesses in the springs etc."

The lessons that he appears to have taken to heart following the Battle of Loos would later be put to the test when, on the 21st April 1917, he took over as Commanding Officer of the Second Battalion, which was then fighting the Turks in Mesopotamia. It is from this point on that the accounts of battles and actions take over. Having set the scene in a thirty page handwritten document which describes his sailing to Mesopotamia, setting off on the 26th December 1916, he goes on to write about the advance to Baghdad, the occupying of the railway station at Samarra and the capture, and formal award, of the Baghdad Bell, which can be seen in the First World War gallery in the Museum.

The final few accounts narrow down the field of historical vision from large scale Divisional advances towards more localised attacks.

In particular he writes about the attacks on the Turkish positions at Sannaiyat, 21st February 1917; Istabulat, 20th April 1917; Dujal River, 21st April 1917 and the Tabsor System, 19th September 1918.

A close reading of these accounts reveal the increasing weakness of the enemy's fighting strength and as the war progresses from the Battle of Sannaiyat with its numerous enemy counter attacks and tough fighting, through to the Tabsor System assaults with "the various Turkish positions being reached with consummate ease." Equally an improvement in the supply system for the British Forces can be ascertained to the point where the British artillery was now able to launch a devastatingly effective barrage in both assault and defence.

In summary, therefore, it is safe to say that a rather innocuous looking brown leather folder has been found to contain a wealth of information. Not only are we able now to speak of Lieutenant Colonel Stewart, not just as a fighting soldier but also as an individual; the husband as well as the warrior. Equally, he has illuminated a part of the First World War that is too often ignored in the face of the tragedy of the Western Front, namely that Black Watch soldiers were fighting and dying on other Fronts as well. His eye witness accounts of actions that have hitherto only been known from the pages of Wauchope's *History of the Black Watch in the First World War*, add greatly to our knowledge and help place the fighting on the Mesopotamian Front on a more equal footing to that which was happening in France and Belgium.

## AFGHANISTAN – A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

*By Lieutenant Colonel D R Orr Ewing*

The British have been involved on and off in Afghanistan for the last three centuries. Details of the first three Anglo Afghan wars have been well documented elsewhere. I wish to give you a personal perspective of the changes and improvements that have occurred in the latest campaign covering the period in 2006 when the 3 PARA Battlegroup deployed to Helmand, to 2014 as ISAF prepares to draw down and transition to the possible new NATO mission post 2014. These changes include development of a coherent campaign plan, improvement in the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), improved ability to conduct elections and the nascent ability for cross government working. These observations have been based on my recent experience in Afghanistan. I have been lucky to be involved at all levels from strategic down to tactical, being employed in US Central Command on the Afghan/Pakistan Desk, HQ Regional Command South as lead planner and most recently in HQ ISAF Joint Command again as a lead planner and with these employments have been in Theatre every year since 2007 to 2014, less 2011, either on visits, recces or deployments – totalling 28 months in country.

In 2006 the coalition commitment to Afghanistan was totally under resourced and this was typically reflected with the UK commitment of a battlegroup plus, that rapidly became overstretched as it tried to have a presence all over Helmand Province, an area almost the size of Republic of Ireland. At a time when the Coalition presence was still welcomed and the population was still susceptible to influence, the British forces struggled to make any significant gains, particularly in the governance and development arenas. The UK was not alone in this issue – the US was still totally focused on Iraq and therefore forces committed to Afghanistan were lacking in key equipment and capabilities. The Campaign was further hindered as the US had adopted an enemy centric approach to Counter Insurgency (COIN). This was exemplified as late as 2008 when I observed the US deploy a STRYKER Brigade Combat Team (STRYKER is an 8 wheeled armoured vehicle) and United States Marine Corps Regimental Combat Team to the Theatre and these forces deployed to wider Kandahar/Zabul and the south of Helmand respectively. Whilst these forces cut insurgent ratlines, they could not address the population's needs as these areas were sparsely populated. Therefore the US continued playing 'wack-a-mole', without being able to deliver long-term governance and development solutions. At the same time I regularly visited Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan. At the time it was run down, there was little or no employment and economic development and the threat was extremely high for the Coalition. Consequently there was very little sign of normal life around the capital; the roads were full of Coalition forces moving at high speed.



*Lieutenant Colonel David Orr Ewing who leaves the Army in September 2014 completed 28 months on operations in Afghanistan.*

Therefore over the period 2007-2009 we saw the international and Coalition commitment grow with the commitment of more troops and resources. In particular the UK commitment grew from just under 3000 troops to over 10,000 troops. However, it was not until the US surge in 2010, coupled with the change in the campaign to a population centric

COIN did we see any possible signs of progress. The Decisive Terrain was identified as Kabul City, Kandahar City and the Central Helmand River Valley; with the key Highways being the Key Terrain (Highway 1 (The Ring Road), Highway 4 (Kandahar to Spin Boldak) and Highway 7 (Kabul to Torkham Gate). In identifying this terrain the focus was now truly on the population and the key economic routes. As a result the campaign was able to make major gains by securing key nodes in Helmand and Kandahar (Marjah, Zhara'y and Panjwa'i) through the MOSHTARACK and HAMKARI series of operations. 3 SCOTS played a part as the Regional Battle Group South by setting conditions for these operations during its tour in 2009.

At first the focus was on generating combat power of the ANSF with the generation of infantry kandaks (battalions) and untrained police. Whilst this was sufficient to counter the increasing insurgent threat, it was not suitable for generating security forces capable of surviving and sustaining post the coalition's departure. Therefore in 2011 the focus changed to generating institutional capability for the long term with a focus on specialist units. This included reducing the amount of untrained police. As a result there was a sea change in ISAF's approach to working with the ANSF. ISAF changed its Security Force Assistance methodology moving away from partnering to 'train, advise, assist and once a unit became capable the frequency of interaction was reduced from daily to weekly and finally periodically. This approach was also accelerated by the reduction of Coalition Forces in 2013, particularly as the US had to meet its manpower cap of 34K set by President Obama to be achieved by early February 2014; a reduction of 50%. Therefore by mid 2013 we saw the ANSF in the lead for all operations, which was formally sealed in 18 June 2013 with the 'Mile Stone 13' ceremony. At this point the coalition, including Special Forces, did not conduct any unilateral operations, unless it was for its own force protection. The ANSF proved to be proficient at being in the lead, despite many detractors, the ANSF did not lose any of the terrain that had been hard fought and won during the 2009-11 surge. Furthermore, when the Insurgency did have a success the ANSF responded rapidly, working across all the pillars, and retook the captured outpost or District Centre. However, this did all come at a cost. While we had seen the Coalition's casualties reduce significantly; the ANSF was now taking large casualties, with 2013 seeing approximately 4,000 ANSF killed and another 10,000 wounded. Hence the need to focus on ANSF institutional capability such as MEDEVAC, training and logistics.

Furthermore, the improvement of the ANSF and the gains made by the Coalition in 2009-11 has allowed the key cities of Kabul and Kandahar to enjoy better security. This has been achieved by the 'ring of steel' (a series of check points integrated with patrols and offensive operations) around each city. As a result, on a daily basis, both cities are similar to any south Asian city with a bustling vibrant feeling. Traffic has increased, resulting in regular traffic jams; the economy is improving with all the bazaars full of fresh produce. Everywhere you look there is some form of construction as the Afghans take ownership of restoring both cities.

At the time of writing this article the Afghans are about to embark on the most important event in recent history; the 2014 Presidential and Provincial elections, which are due to be held on 5 April 2014.

Technically these are the third set of elections as they have also been held in 2004 and 2009. However, these will be the first Afghan run, Afghan secured elections and the eyes of the world are on this event to see if Afghanistan can stand on its own feet. First, can the Afghans secure all 8,000+ polling sites. In 2004 the elections were restricted to around Kabul. In 2009, the force assigned to help secure the elections included over 100,000 Coalition troops and approximately 190,000 ANSF. This year there are 350,000 ANSF available for election security. Second, in 2009 there was a significant amount of fraudulent behaviour, which put into question the credibility of the election process however there is doubt that the Afghans can run such an event without malign influences taking over. Currently this is a major focus for both the Afghan led Independent Election Commission and the ANSF charged with its security. On a recent road show, both Dr Nooristani, Head of the IEC and General Salangi, Deputy Minister of Interior (Security) continually emphasised the need for fair and free elections and that the security forces must remain independent. Finally there is the question whether the ANSF can logistically support the elections, particularly with the delivery and recovery of election material. In past elections the majority of the movement of such material was executed by the Coalition. This year, due to reduction of forces and operational reach the Coalition can only reach about 20% of polling sites and additionally will only consider supporting when it can be shown that neither the IEC nor the ANSF can execute missions. As an indicator, the recent District Voter Registration process saw the Coalition support movement of material to 9 of the 440 sites, yet three months later the ANSF were able to recover material from all but one site, thus showing continued improvement in capability.

In the early days the whole government approach was only seen in Kabul, but even so it was disjointed. The only form of governance seen in the districts and provinces was from weak governors supported by the ANSF. Over the last few years there have been efforts to weed out weak and corrupt officials and now effective governance has reached all provincial capitals and is growing day by day in the districts. In Kabul there is now a weekly Plans meeting, that I had the privilege to represent the Coalition on. Initially it was only attended by the ANSF, but over the last year it has grown with representation from the key non-security ministries to include Independent Department for Local Government, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Reconstruction and Rural Development, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry for Hajj and Religious Affairs and Ministry for Information and Culture. This forum now plans, coordinates and implements Whole of Government policy ensuring a joined up approach. No security operations will be executed until the governance and development is in place to build on any military clearance operations. We now have Afghans making and implementing policy for Afghanistan.

This article has illustrated that the situation has slowly been improving in Afghanistan, but it is at great cost – over 3,000 Coalition soldiers killed, of which 448 are from the UK, (21 from the Royal Regiment of Scotland). However, Afghanistan is not out of the woods; it will need to continue improving its capability, hold successful elections and most importantly receive the support and funding from the International Community, without which it will wither on the vine.

## FUTURE ARMY RESERVES 2020

*By Lieutenant Colonel P Little, Commanding Officer 51st Highland, 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland*

Following the publication of the Defence White Paper on 'Reserves in the Future Force 2020 – Valuable and Valued' in July 2013, the Army Reserve is set to grow to 30,000 (a growth in real terms from the current manning level of circa 19,000) while the Regular Force continues to reduce to a size of 82,000; the product will be an integrated force of 112,000, Regular and Reserve, offering the optimum size and spectrum of capability to meet the requirements of Defence beyond 2020. The implications of the changes for current and future 7 SCOTS soldiers are significant and it is worth outlining some of them here:

- **The 'Offer'.** Reserves are now entitled to paid leave at 1 day for every 10 days of training commitment. From 1st April 2015, Reserves will also have access to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme, without forfeiting a Training Bounty. Access to the annual Standard

Learning Credits, which contributes up to £175 to help pay for recognised courses and qualifications, will also shortly be available in 2014. There is now greater provision for welfare support to Reserve Soldiers and their families and improved health care for Reserves, particularly in the area of mental health. The development of the New Employment Model (NEM) will also see closer comparison between regular and reserve career profiles and the ability to move more easily between the two.

- **The 'Expectation'.** Reserves will be asked to commit to up to 40 Man Training Days per year and be eligible for routine mobilisation for one year in every five. For most, this does not represent a significant increase in their commitment or service based on that shown in the last decade but there will be a greater level of integrated training with the Regular Army and Reserves will be asked to maintain a willingness to meet immediate tasks in the case of emergency or crisis and to be prepared to mobilise in a reduced timeframe.



- **The Employer.** The White Paper recognises the important role of the employer in enabling the aspirations of the Army Reserve and the Reservist and a new relationship must reflect that. There will be improved openness and communication between the Army and the employers to retain their support and mitigate the impact of potential deployments. Predictability was a key concern of most employers, gleaned during the consultation phase of the development of the White Paper and greater notice will be provided to employers to inform them of training schedules (3 months prior to the start of the training year), liability for a programmed 'high readiness' year (at least 12 months out) and planned mobilisation (at least 9 months out) – accepting that there may still be unforeseen emergencies or urgent operational requirements to meet at shorter notice. Additional financial provision has also been planned to compensate small and medium sized employers from the impacts of mobilisation of their personnel, with a greater commitment to be flexible through dialogue to prevent single and small business from losing several Reservists at the same time where the business might suffer.
- **Structure and Basing.** The number of Infantry Reserve Battalions will remain the same but the establishment for each will reduce to circa 400; each Battalion will have a Battalion Headquarters, Headquarter Company and 3 x Rifle Companies (one less than the current structure in 7 SCOTS). This structure will deliver 6 x Rifle Platoons and 4 x Support Weapons Platoons (currently planned to be Mortars, Javelin (Anti-Tank), Machine Guns and Assault Pioneers) in addition to the Quartermaster, Motorised Transport and Signals Platoons. Much of

the work to model and transition to these structures is still ongoing. The laydown in the Highlands will change to accommodate this new structure with a growing emphasis on the key population centres to provide the bulk of the required manpower and less reliance on the small and relatively inefficient outstations. Between now and the end of 2016, 7 SCOTS must cease operating from Kirkcaldy, Dunoon, Keith and Wick but will once again take responsibility for Elgin. B Company will cease to be a Company in its own right and will be absorbed into A and C Companies. Losing historically important locations, such as Kirkcaldy, is always sad but the manning levels of all of these targeted locations has dwindled to such a level that they no longer offer effective or efficient manning of the Future Reserve.

- **Regular and Reserve Pairing.** One of the significant enhancements for Army 2020 will be the pairing mechanism between Regular and Reserve Units which will see a relationship develop to deliver improved training and operational output. While 7 SCOTS will be prepared to support all elements of the Royal Regiment of Scotland when required, the primary pairing relationship will be with the 3rd Battalion based in Inverness. We are fortunate in Scotland to have both regimental and geographical links, which is not the case for many other Units across the UK; further, the 'Red Hackle' regular and reserve threads will endure through the 3 SCOTS/7 SCOTS partnership. Although we have been supporting Regular Units routinely in recent years, in training and on operations, this formal and tailored relationship is a new initiative and I look forward to updating you on our progress in future.

## BLACK WATCH MUSEUM EDUCATION SERVICE

*By Fraser Brown*

The day before the new Museum of the Black Watch opened its doors in 2013, another much less flamboyant but arguably equally effective teller of the Black Watch story to children of school age made its final appearance. This was the Black Watch Museum Educational Service (BWMEs), also known as the 'Two Old Goats and a Gun Show' (the old goats were Fraser Brown and Ronnie Proctor), which had been visiting schools all over the old regimental area and well beyond, for a period of six and a half years.

During its existence BWMEs taught an estimated 35,000 children in all of the Secondary Schools in the old regimental area for a minimum of a one hour session except for three establishments which did not tackle the First World War in Standard Grade History. A strict count of the pupils seen in Primary Schools and Community Groups visited, was lost long ago as BWMEs was almost knocked over in the rush for presentations, when they pioneered 'Great War Study Day' presentations for the New Scottish Higher. That project was so innovative that some believed beforehand that no matter how good it might be, it could not be done. But as General Irwin delivered his lecture on the Scottish Military Contribution in the Great War, Loos was refought on a twenty foot long floor map painted by Rab Simpson and samples of the regimental archives were shown by Tom Smyth to over a hundred State School pupils.

BWMEs had achieved a sort of national 'lift off': it had appeared on page three of the Times Educational Supplement and on a slot on Reporting Scotland. On it went as the BWMEs was consulted as part of a major High School Inspection, receiving plaudits from the Inspectorate for the quality of the work and it even had an honourable mention in the Scottish Parliament. In Service and Continuing Professional Development sessions for all Perthshire and Angus History teachers were provided; occasional lectures at Dundee University were delivered and, with the blessing and encouragement of the Local Authorities we ran our own Black Watch Curriculum Development Group. Various paying commissions were completed for three Local Authorities delivered in CD, lecture or large pamphlet form which were in use for three years in all Dundee History Departments and elsewhere. By raising thousands of pounds in fees every year and by encouraging schools' participation in the Buy a Brick scheme, BWMEs became a donor to the Museum in its own right.

BWMEs began as a bit of light relief cooked up by Major Ronnie Proctor and Fraser Brown in response to occasional requests by a

few local primary schools for a visit from the Museum. It developed rapidly in response to demand but it was clear from the very beginning that to succeed this scheme would have to be firmly rooted in a distinct methodology where educational respectability was represented by Fraser Brown (a retired Black Watch soldier and headteacher) and military authenticity was provided by Major Ronnie Proctor.

In 2006 no such system existed so we developed one but because this was the year a motion to ban Regimental Information Teams from schools was proposed but rejected by one of the teaching unions at Conference, the four different Local Authorities had to be persuaded BWMEs were not recruiters. Equally important was the process of open consultation with a number of practicing senior educationalists across the regimental area. Their message was clear and uncompromising – either 'dabble in a bit of supervised child minding if you must' as a very senior educationalist said, or provide a service model of engagement and delivery that derives from existing major strengths.

With the support of Lieutenant Colonel Riddell, the second option with all that implied was chosen – curriculum relevance had to be established and maintained, responses to developments like Curriculum for Excellence had to be appropriate. To be genuinely inclusive we could never turn down a request to present anywhere or to any class and cross-curriculum work had to be encouraged as did teacher consultation at the planning stages. As one very influential Secondary Rector and his Head of History put it to Major Proctor and Fraser Brown (rather directly over tea in the Headmasters study), to achieve anything you 'have to do a lot less colouring in and a lot more actual history in your sessions' than Museums usually give. In other words we had to deliver what teachers wanted, when they wanted it while including every pupil in the delivery of those bits of the curriculum that we could present more effectively than the teachers – all while keeping our material up to date and ensuring the people delivering the package were credible and could be understood by the pupils. In fact, as noted by many in authority, reaching the previously unreachable element of the school population was a BWMEs speciality. After all, as one Head of History famous for his authorship of textbooks and utterances of one line quips opined, 'We all know that the kiss of death on any topic is the moment the unbelievable addresses the unenthusiastic.'

The Two Old Goats were given a dramatic example of the truth of that remark when one day, six very big boys 'with attitude' were brought in by two teachers and placed at the front – where they could be watched.



Photograph courtesy of DC Thomson

*Mr Fraser Brown and Major Ronnie Proctor as part of The Black Watch Museum Education Service visit Kirkcaldy High School.*

The Two Old Goats were setting up at that point and Major Proctor picked up the demonstration SMLE and cleared it. The younger of the teachers then picked it up when a voice from the front row said with the clear, icy sneer of true contempt, 'Pit it down, daftie! Can ye no see! He's the real thing – an' you arenae that!' The boy was immediately removed by someone very high up the educational food chain but the damage to the teacher had been done. On the positive side the remaining five lads stayed behind during their break time to chat for a bit and tell us about Black Watch relatives.

Jim Sandilands and Rab Simpson, who came out so often during the last two years, setting up the Loos floor map as well as others like Tom McCluskey, Bob Mitchell, John Glen and Frank Barclay, all witnessed their own particular special moments such as the time a girl was pushed forward by her pals ... 'Gonnae tell the sodgers' they said. She looked at us and said very simply, 'I am Dunsire VCs great, great, grand-daughter' or when descendants of soldiers whose pictures we had shown in presentations such as those of Lieutenant. Colonel Wyllie of 6th Battalion fame, came forward and introduced themselves. But Jim Sandilands tolerance level was the one most severely tested as day after day, he would be picked up at six o'clock, to arrive at some distant school for 7.15 to set up for eight o'clock, so that Fraser Brown could deliver staff development before the first bell at nine, then teach for the rest of the day. George Webster from St Andrews University who delivered a talk on Haig, and Tom Smyth who brought out material from the Archives time after time at the Higher Study Days played an important part in the success of these particular ventures and endured similar early starts.

There were some touching moments too. One of these happened several years ago on a bitterly cold day in late December, and when

in spite of warnings never to go to a particular school, Major Proctor and Fraser Brown accepted the invitation and, as always, made it clear that we never refused any pupil. On arrival about twenty boys of around fifteen years old were working in the freezing, snow covered playground washing cars. The two hour long presentation began and the same lads, still damp in patches, sat significantly distanced from the neatly uniformed ranks of the ninety or so other pupils. They sat in perfect silence while we told the packed Assembly Hall about the 7th Black Watch and showed them pictures and newspaper cuttings of the Black Watch men from their town and the women and children who supported them on the Home Front. They handled the artefacts with great respect and when they spoke to us to thank us they said 'Sir' and meant it. Then it was over and as the Rector handed us a substantial school donation for the Museum made much heavier by coins collected for the car wash, he told us what that activity had been about. Subconsciously, he said, this had been a statement by these lads of their self pride and self worth, but above all he assured us, they had done it so they too could pitch in and show their support for the Black Watch. I presume that is an example of what the Minister for Education means when he talks about pupil inclusion in the big society.

**Editor's Note:** *The Black Watch Museum Education Service was a great success and the deeds of our forbears and the name of the Regiment were kept alive in a most effective and professional manner by a very dedicated team. The project was innovative and was respected by the teaching profession and Fraser Brown and Ronnie Proctor, as well as their many helpers deserve our thanks. An education service still exists in the Museum but relies to a greater degree on children coming into Balhousie Castle.*



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

## BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

Commanding Officer:	Lieutenant Colonel A P Reilly
Second-in-Command:	Major A Richards
Adjutant:	Captain M Stanning
Operations Officer:	Captain A Phillips MC
Regimental Accounts Officer:	Major D Dunford MBE
Regimental Sergeant Major:	WO1 (RSM) Shaw

## COMMANDING OFFICER'S FOREWORD

There has been plenty to write about since the last edition of the Red Hackle. We completed our high-readiness role as the United Kingdom's Contingency Battalion – deploying both Bravo and Delta Companies to provide emergency cover during the Fire Brigades' Union industrial action; we conducted a number of battalion training events; and we are now ready to receive the first Libyan Armed Forces recruits at Basingbourn, where we will deliver a 24-week training package. In the margins of all of these activities, normal battalion life has continued and individuals and teams have enjoyed a range of training activities throughout the UK, Europe and North Africa, some of which is detailed in the notes that follow.

The Rifle Companies have been busy conducting tactical training across the country and Fire Support Company has been working hard to establish a new structure too, with each of the Support Platoons completing specialist training. The Battalion came together for a challenging live-firing exercise in Warcop and Otterburn in November. The weather was miserable, but the Jocks' sense of humour and determination never faltered. We ran some tough company attacks as a finale, where the combination of tactics and sizeable supporting firepower was impressive and a great credit to the professionalism of our soldiers.

Our focus from the start of the New Year has been preparing to deliver training for members of the Libyan Armed Forces. A considerable amount of time and effort has gone in to readying Basingbourn, in Cambridgeshire, to train the Libyans there. The companies, organised into training teams, have worked hard preparing for their instructional role, and Arabic language lessons have been part of our daily routine. The fickle security situation in Libya has caused a number of delays to the arrival of our trainees but the preparations are going well and the majority of us will deploy ready to deliver our training from the end of March.

It would be remiss not to mention the Pipes and Drums who are busier than ever. They have re-trained to form an Assault Pioneer Platoon while continuing to support an extraordinary number of events worldwide. They have performed for a State Banquet and leading at the Cenotaph in London and abroad in Libya, Tanzania, Italy and notably for the 50th anniversary memorial service for President Kennedy in Washington. Their programme for the rest of this year is just as busy including performances at Balhousie Castle, in Belgium at Black Watch Corner, at the Commonwealth Games, at the Edinburgh Tattoo, and for HM The Queen in Edinburgh and at Balmoral.

Those not deploying to Basingbourn will have little chance to see Fort George. Charlie (FSp) Company will be commanding almost 350 soldiers that are committed to a busy programme. Three platoons are currently in Kenya exercising with the Royal Ghurkha Rifles, and over the summer red-hackles will be deployed across the UK and overseas in Canada too. We will also be providing security assistance for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and look forward to working alongside the civil authorities in what will be a high-profile event.

Once we finish in Basingbourn the Battalion will face a period of change. We will move under command of 51 (Scottish) Brigade and we will train for and then deploy on Op TOSCA – a six month UN deployment to Cyprus. All of which we will do while we continue to prepare to assume our role as a Light Protected Mobility Battalion, for which there is still a significant amount of work to do before taking delivery of our new Foxhound vehicles.

Lastly, this year marks the 100th Anniversary of the start of the Great War. It is right that as a Battalion we play our part in remembering those – and others – that have bravely fought under the hackle that we now proudly wear. The Battalion will be sending a number of individu-



*Lieutenant Colonel Adrian Reilly, Commanding Officer, looking calm.*

als to conduct a battlefield study in France and Belgium prior to attending the unveiling of the memorial statue at Black Watch Corner with members of the Association. The journey is sure to be a poignant one that reminds us of our responsibility in the history of this great regiment and its forebears.

## THE OFFICERS' MESS

President of the Mess Committee:	Major CMB Broadbent
Mess Secretary:	Captain NJ Drapper
Mess Treasurer:	Captain SW Lewis

Despite potential Fire Brigade Union strikes, Battalion exercises, the possible arrival of Libyan Recruits, snow, wind and rain on the A9 and flooding down in the south of the country, the Officers' Mess of The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland has managed to maintain a full and varied Mess life.

There have been mixtures of both formal and informal events that have been enjoyed by the Mess, notably, The Black Watch Association Dinner held for the first time at Balhousie Castle back in November which saw a strong contingent from the Mess make the trip down the A9 to participate in a thoroughly enjoyable night of good food and good company in the newly refurbished home of The Black Watch. The St Andrew's Dinner night provided Major Jim Reid (OC B Coy and then PMC) with an excellent opportunity to conduct some young officers' education, schooling the newly indoctrinated members of the Battalion in the dark art of Athol Brose, which may or may not have been the



*Maj Bailey ensures decorating is carried out to the highest standard.*

undoing of many a mess member during the evening itself (and well into the next day!).

The month of December raced in with four equally well run events. The first event was the Mess decorating party and family Kirk service, where the wives and children from the Patch came in and aided in turning the Mess into a wonderful winter wonderland and it was excellent to see so many children getting involved in the Mess. Captain Hamilton broke through the inertia, taking it upon himself to organise a Christmas fancy dress party run by the livers in. After much deliberation over the theme, (most of the suggestions perhaps not suitable enough to print), it was decided that a 1920s themed "Prohibition Party" was the way forward. Armed with a meagre budget from a scrooge-like Major Christie Broadbent who had been newly installed as the PMC, Captain Hamilton and his team set about converting the Mess into an underground bar, accessed through a secret door, concealed by a movable bookcase! Behind this was an array of forbidden pleasures, gambling tables, swing band, pianist, and alcohol a-plenty craftily concealed in water jugs, teapots and flower vases! Not to be outdone, Captain McRobbie decided to re-establish his old Aberdeen University Officer Training Corps connections and secured invites for the younger members of the Mess to attend their Christmas Ball; the writer of this article has been assured that all Officers conducted themselves to the highest possible standards throughout the evening (although this was probably a little more challenging for some). Lastly, the annual Christmas carols event took place. Unfortunately with fewer numbers due to Op VOCATE manoeuvres, it still proved to be a tremendous success. Fuelled by the RMO's home brew, the livers-in went door to door, "serenading" those officers living on the patch and enjoying a dram after each performance – perhaps more as an incentive to stop singing!

An important part of the Mess social calendar is our interaction with the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess and it is with a great sense of pride we can say that in December we thumped them on their own turf and at their own games. Having enjoyed a good buffet, following the traditional Jocks' Christmas lunch, it was time to get down to the business of competition. In a display of both moral and physical courage, Lieutenant Young was able to triumph in "Peg Puss". Unfortunately the Officer's Mess just lost the dance off, despite a truly elegant and light on his feet performance from Captain Drapper, but cometh the man, cometh the hour and Captain Colquhoun dominated in the "Bush Tucker Trial", forcing down all manner of ants, insects and bugs securing a 2-1 victory for the Officers and so with heads held high, (and a little bit worse for wear), the officers departed triumphant!

The New Year heralded the start of a new era for the Royal Regiment of Scotland with the appointment of a Major General James Cowan CBE, DSO to the role of Colonel of the Regiment. Shortly before his appointment, the Battalion were able to host him during the course of his duties as GOC 3 Div over the 13th and 14th January 2014. The visit, primarily designed to provide a platform to back brief the GOC on all Battalion business, allowed the Mess the opportunity to invite Major General Cowan to dinner, demonstrating that although the people within the current Battalion may change, the values and ethos from the Battalion he left, remain the same.



*A fine array of Christmas jumpers.*

The New Year has seen no let up in pace for the social calendar (surprisingly), despite a Bassingbourn deployment fast approaching. On the evening of 8 March the Mess held an informal Ladies Dinner Night. This event was a very relaxed affair with good attendance from across the Mess and was the first time that the ladies have been invited in this year. Following a few welcome drinks and a fork buffet dinner, the assembled masses got down to the serious art of reeling in a space far too small to accommodate it!

It has not all been smooth sailing for the members of the Officers' Mess and one very important and divisive issue has haunted the halls.....Coffeegate! For the last few months there has been a marked increase in the cost required to cover the average Mess bill. This increased figure was eventually tracked to the cost of Officers Coffee! It seems that with a Mess crammed to overflowing, our coffee intake has spiked! Whether this is as a result of the build up to our upcoming tour or the Battalion 2IC running the command team at full tilt we are not sure – but what we are sure of is the cost! Debate has raged as to how this cost is covered; liver-in has blamed liver out, coffee drinker has been assaulted in the halls by non-coffee drinkers and the tea drinkers do not know which side to choose! Thankfully this is the only ripple in an otherwise smooth pond and I'm sure we'll get to grips with it soon enough!

Since the last submission, we have seen many new members arrive and welcomed into the fold. Before Christmas we welcomed 2Lt's Coles, Young and Pearson fresh from Platoon Commander's Division and 2Lt Hawke from RMA Sandhurst. In the New Year, we had Lieutenant Gellender arrive from the Army Air Corp to complete a 10 week attachment and to aid us during our Op VOCATE commitment, we have seen Lieutenant French, (Intelligence Corps) and Captain Linehan, (Duke of Lancaster's Regiment), attached to the Battalion. Nor have they just been home grown; Lieutenant Fabien Rulle from the French Army joined us to gain some Infantry experience – and some cultural surprises – for three weeks during January.

As always with such an organisation, as people arrive, others leave, and so we need to say goodbye to several of our Mess members. Since the last edition, we have seen the departure from this Battalion and indeed the Army, of Captain's Russell Doughty, Paul Seligman, Alex Jackson and Andrew Halliday. Our best wishes for the future go with them. They will be missed and will always be welcome in the Mess should they ever find themselves passing by. A further leaver this year has been Captain Jamie Tait but this is only temporary as he has moved down to Bulford to take up the post of ADC to Major General Cowan.

Lastly, the Battalion wishes Captain Doughty all the best for his marriage on Friday 21st March 2014. The ceremony is due to take place in America and we are all keen to see pictures and receive a report on how it went!



## WARRANT OFFICERS' AND SERGEANTS' MESS

PMC: WO2 P Anderson  
PEC: Colour Sergeant C Weir  
Property: WO2 R Tollan  
Messing: Sergeant D Primrose  
Treasurer: Sergeant D Bruce

This period started with a Games Night against the Corporals' Mess which was organised by them, for us. There are no prizes being awarded for guessing who the winners were! This was soon followed by the Saint Andrew's Ball which was held in the Royal British Legion, Inverness (more about that below). The Mess also provided support to the Ardersier Remembrance Parade on the 10th November 2013.

**St Andrew's Ball.** WO2 (CSM) Anderson was given the opportunity to organise the function. The initial reeling practices were very entertaining with WO2 (CSM) Fraser providing a great deal of amusement for all attendees. What soon became apparent was that quite a few of the Mess members were secret dancers and took great pride in showing off their moves. By the evening of the ball, all the members of the Mess had mastered the reels – some to a very high standard! A number of Officers were invited and were very appreciative of the opportunity to show off their dancing "skills". The idea behind having the function out of camp was to provide a change of scenery and also to support the local Legion by ensuring they got some (actually plenty) money behind the bar. They were very supportive throughout, from the initial recce of the location right through to the end of the night.

**To-ing, Fro-ing and Celebrations.** As you would expect, there have been a number of changes to the personalities within the Mess. We have welcomed a fair number of new members who



*Some of the guests at the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess St Andrews Ball.*

have been posted in from around the Army; some new and some returning. Colour Sergeants Carlisle and Hannah were greeted into the Battalion from RMA Sandhurst. Sergeants Grant, McCarthy and Robb arrived from the 5th Battalion in Canterbury. Sergeant Thomson arrived from the 4th Battalion in Fallingbowl and Sergeant Dunn was posted into the Battalion from the Regimental Training Team in Edinburgh. Warm welcomes also go to Sergeant Mortley, Sergeant Pasiful, Staff Sergeant Laker, Sergeant Bonnar, Staff Sergeant Murray and Sergeant Baron.

Celebrations are always good news and there have been a number of promotions within the Mess of late. Congratulations must go to the following people in their promotion to Sergeant – and into the Mess: Corporals Pratt, Dunn, Campbell, Hendry and Wedgewood. Stand by for Mess bills and we're looking for fresh blood to head up the next Burns' Supper!

For their efforts in seeking to expand the Regimental family, the following are to be congratulated for the birth of their children: Sergeant Bruce and Vicki for the birth of their son Dwayne, Sergeant Young and Sammi for the birth of their daughter Layla, Staff Sergeant Porter and his wife on the birth of their daughter Emily, Colour Sergeant Taylor and his wife Lorraine on the birth of their son Zander and Colour Sergeant Shearer and his fiancé Sarah on the birth of their little boy Cameron. Welcome to the world and make sure you pick up your regimental baby grow from the PRI!

Unfortunately, as people arrive, others leave and we have had to say farewell to a few of our friends due either to the end of their service or because they have been posted elsewhere. It is with fond memories that we say farewell to the following: WO2 (CSM) Fraser, Colour Sergeant McCulloch, Sergeant Benson and Sergeant Morse.

It is also time for the current Mess Committee members to change and we have recently begun our handovers. The RSM would like to take this opportunity to show his appreciation to the old committee for all their hard work over the past 6 months and looks forward to seeing what the new committee members can achieve.

Position	Outgoing Committee	Incoming Committee
PMC	WO2 Anderson	WO2 Smith
PEC	CSgt Weir	CSgt Bright
Property	WO2 Tollan	Sergeant Bruce
Messing	Sergeant Primrose	Sergeant Primrose
Treasurer	Sergeant Bruce	Sergeant McAloom
Transport	Sergeant Wells	Sergeant Wells
Piping/Music	Colour Sergeant Grisdale	Colour Sergeant Copeland
Presentations	Colour Sergeant Copeland	Colour Sergeant Copeland

**The Future.** As we continue to move into 2014 and despite Op VOCATE seeing our mess members split between the Fort and Basingborne until October, we have managed to retain a number of forthcoming events, such as the dining out of the current RSM (congratulation on his LE commission), and the dining in of the new RSM. Whilst we are unsure if we will be able to hold a summer function this year, the aspiration is to hold another "Mess Fest" and we look forward to reporting how we have got on in our next submission to the Red Hackle.

## CORPORALS' MESS

PMC: Corporal Forbes  
PEC: Corporal White  
Treasurer: Lance Corporal McGuinnies  
Property: Corporal Showel

Since the last article submitted for Corporals' Mess, we have continued to grow in strength under the direction of the new PMC. As part of a programme to develop esprit de corps, the Mess has continued to improve their environment and services offered to members through implementing a more robust duty barman rotation and the reintroduction of tea and toast being available on a regular basis.

The Corporals' Mess has taken the opportunity to effectively "lease" their premises so that it can be used to host events which have varied recently from Company Smokers to most recently, after game drinks for the Battalion Rugby team.

The end of the year has been dominated by the annual Christmas function this time held in the Battalion gym, which had been transferred into a "Christmas Wonderland" theme! Mess members and partners arrived to the function location in a large red double-decker



*Some Corporals' Mess members enjoying a well earned beer.*



*The RSM looking stunned as to why his team was defeated in the Landrover pull.*

bus, which wouldn't have looked out of place from the set of "On the Buses"; the event itself was a Disco and band, with activities such as a Raffle and Curry Buffet. It was a great night and we would like to take this opportunity to thank Corporals Forbes, Hattan, Downie and Lance Corporal McGuinnies for their hard work in successfully planning and pulling off an amazing evening and function with typically short notice!

Whilst the pace of life means that we have been spread to the four winds particularly as a result of supporting Op VOCATE, we have still been able to make room for events. Consequently a Games Night with the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess was held in the Corporals' Mess. The evenings' activities consisted of time honoured games such as "the Pub Quiz", "Canoe Tip", a Pool competition, "Beer Pong" and the "Land Rover Pull". Organised by Corporal Forbes, it was a great success with everyone getting involved. Importantly, the Sergeants' Mess failed to beat the Corporals' Mess in the final and deciding game of the "Land Rover Pull"! Despite great effort and even changing into their finest tug of war footwear, they couldn't beat the Corporals Mess. The look on the RSM's face, said it all, wondering how five members of his Mess, in their best footwear couldn't move the Land Rover but five Corporals could in their disco shoes! What they didn't know though, was some friendly LAD mechanics had tightened the back brakes of their vehicle!



*Corporals Gilmour and Douglas have just realised what Wi-Fi is.*

Recently members of the Mess attending external courses such as the Section Commanders' Battle Course in Brecon have had a good show. Lance Corporals Hart, McFarlane and Cain are commended on doing very well throughout and on completion of this testing course.

We have a busy Forecast of Events which will see the Battalion concentrating on OP VOCATE but those Mess members back at the Fort will also have to provide support to various exercises and commitments across the country. However, there remain a number of planned future functions for the Corporals' Mess which will see the dining out of some of Mess members who will soon be departing after 22 years of loyal service. Notably we will say a fond farewell to Corporal's McIntyre, Meade, Douglas, Wallace and Ferguson. Such occasions will also provide an opportunity to have a final "knees up" with those from the Mess who are departing after being picked up on the Tranche 3 Redundancy round. We also look forward to the imminent changeover of Adjutants with a traditional dining in/out of the Battalion Adjutant where we will say farewell to Captain Colquhoun and welcome Captain Stanning.

Whilst we must say farewell to a number of individuals, we also look forward to welcoming fresh blood into the fold! The committee would like to welcome the following newly promoted Lance Corporals: Batidreu, Brogan, Buie, Carter, Gaines, Hooper, McFarlane, Omondi, Pritchard, Smith, Spears, Wallace, Withington, Poole and Laughland. Welcome all – and make sure you get your Mess Dress sorted out!

As ever there are those who promoted a little further and so we would like to congratulate the following Lance Corporals on their promotion to Corporal: Bell, Blane, King, Little, Lowe, Muir, Qalobulaisaikaabara, Richardson, Robertson and Uluilakeba.

As ever the committee members serve a short term and have just changed over again. The RSM would like to take this opportunity to thank the old committee for all their hard work over the past 6 months and wishes the new committee well for the coming 6 months. Previous Committees have worked hard to develop the Mess over the past year and as always, there's much to do in order to develop this further – off we go!

Appointment	Old Committee	New Committee
PMC	Cpl Forbes	Cpl Richardson
PEC	Cpl White	Cpl Thomson
Property	Cpl Showel	Cpl Harris
Messing	LCpl Smith	Cpl Powell
Treasurer	LCpl McGinnies	Cpl Whalley
Housing	LCpl Goldsworthy	Cpl Errington
Transport	Cpl Gilmore	Cpl MacInnes
Piping/Music	Cpl Campbell	Cpl Lowe
Bar Manager	LCpl Parsen	Cpl Buchan



## A (GRENADIER) COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major G K Adamson
Second-in-Command:	Captain C McRobbie
Company Sergeant Major:	WO2 (CSM) J Fraser WO2 (CSM) G Hannah
Company Quarter Master Sergeant:	Colour Sergeant Carlisle Colour Sergeant J Copeland
OC 1 Platoon:	Lieutenant J Fish
Platoon Sergeant:	Sgt Welshman
OC 2 Platoon:	Lieutenant Z Smyth 2Lt E French Int Corps
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant Sharp MC Sergeant Pasifull
OC Machine Gun Platoon:	2nd Lieutenant J Young Sergeant Pratt

Those of you who are avid readers of the A (Grenadier) Company pages will recall from the last edition the continuing saga of the CQMS. No sooner than Colour Sergeant Carlisle arrived, taken over the store and done his CQMS' course than he was (rather inconveniently) selected for promotion. He will stay with the Company as the instructor for Op VOCATE and will move on later in the year. Enter CQMS number four in the last year (and Corporal Brown's eighth trainee), Colour Sergeant Copeland from the Training Wing.

Perhaps the biggest change in the Company is the move of WO2 (CSM) Fraser. He is comfortably the biggest character in the Company and one that will be missed by all. Before he departed to take over from his predecessor at the Platoon Commanders' Division at the Infantry Battle School, he handed over to WO2 (CSM) Hannah who joins us from C (Fire Support) Company.

In other Sergeants' Mess news, Sergeant Pasifull has taken over from Sergeant Sharp in 2 Platoon and we welcome Sergeant Pratt to the MG Platoon.

Things are beginning to shift on the Officer front too. Lieutenant Zach Smyth has left to learn Arabic and has been replaced by 2nd Lieutenant Ed French from the Int Corps. Lieutenant James Fish has been signed off fully fit and has completed PCBC and is now in command of 1 (Senior Highland) Platoon.

### Operation VOCATE

Like most operations that have taken place in recent years the Black Watch and 3 SCOTS were to be involved from the outset. But unlike these operations this one was to take place in the UK – at Basingbourn Barracks in Cambridgeshire. Basingbourn famously started life as an RAF station during the Second World War and the USAAF bomber *The Memphis Belle*, immortalised in the 1990 film of the same name, flew her combat operations over Germany from this airfield. Latterly it was the home of the Queens Division and an Army Training Regiment that has had instructors from and trained recruits for this Battalion. Of greater significance is the fact that the nearest town to the camp is Royston where the Black Watch were presented with their Hackles in 1795.

So what of the task? Following the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi in the Arab Spring of 2011, the security situation in Libya has been in steady decline. The Prime Minister announced at the G8 Summit last year, that member states would train 7,000 members of the Libyan Armed Forces (LAF) and the Foreign Secretary confirmed this in a written statement to Parliament on 9 July; the British Army would train 2,000 of the recruits. You would be forgiven for having missed the news – the announcement took place two days after Andy Murray won Wimbledon.

The battalion find themselves on this task as part of the new Adaptable Force, an organisation designed to prevent conflict before it happens or if the worst should happen, act as a follow on or stabilisation force following a Reactive Force deployment. It is for this reason that the Battalion finds itself continuing its preparation for Op VOCATE.

Following Christmas Leave, the Company changed its structure to reflect the operational requirement. Two thirds of the Jocks have been signed over to Charlie (Fire Support) Company for safe keeping and most of them have deployed to Kenya on Ex ASKARI STORM. Those that have remained with the Grenadiers have been formed into a Training Support Platoon who will act in support of the Company's JNCOs who will be delivering the training to the LAF recruits.

Operation VOCATE will perhaps be the most testing for the



*Lance Corporals Gordon, Farmer and Dalgleish lead the parade.*



*Lieutenant Fish grapples with the Burma Bridge.*



*OC A Company leads the way on the Basingbourn Assault Course.*





*Privates Braes and Buchanan do some removals.*

JNCOs who will deliver the training to the Libyan recruits, but if it is fading them then it doesn't show. They have practised drill, battle exercises and drill lessons until they have become second nature and the Company has a high degree of confidence and pride in its abilities.

We have now deployed to Bassingbourn to put some of the final shine on the preparations; all we need are the Libyans!

#### **BRAVO COMPANY**

Officer Commanding:	Major J Reid
Second in Command:	Captain R Weir
Company Sergeant Major:	WO2 (CSM) I Smith
Company Quarter Master Sergeant:	Colour Sergeant C Weir
OC 5 Platoon:	Lieutenant A Deck
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant M McLaughlin
OC Machine Gun Platoon:	Captain R Martin
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant M Robb
OC 7 Platoon:	2nd Lieutenant A Pearson
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant R Wedgewood
Training Support Sergeant:	Sergeant S Hendry



*A section of B Company receive a battle lesson.*



*Pte Maher in a fire position during a battle exercise.*



*2nd Lieutenant Pearson has taken command of 7 Platoon.*

#### **Battalion Collective Training Over the Year**

With the Battalion being exceptionally busy over the last six months, providing support to the civil authorities during the Fire Brigade industrial action (Op FODIENT) and also preparing for a six-month deployment to train the Libyan Army (Op VOCATE), planning Company scale training exercises has proven to be challenging. The battalion has conducted a number of sub-unit level training exercises – grouped conveniently under the general description of “Collective Training” Level 2 (CT2). Such exercises provide an excellent opportunity to practice lower-level infantry skills and also allow for progressive and realistic training in a variety of core skills. It is therefore essential for ensuring the Battalion is trained and ready to meet future operational demands.

Developing our CT2 competency within the Battalion, we deployed on Exercise BORDER HACKLE in November 2013. This was a two-week live firing concentration run on both the Warcop and Otterburn Training Areas. For the majority of the Jocks, this was the first opportunity to practice their infantry skills in a live firing context in some time. The exercise was split into two distinct phases; the first which was conducted at Warcop Training Camp, saw each Company run their own live firing ranges. In order to allow progression and to maximise the potential for developmental coaching, the first few days were given over to practicing very low-level skills. The ranges then progressed from individual fire and movement through to fire-team fire and manoeuvre and section attacks. During this period Charlie (Fire Support) Company conducted a firepower demonstration, which was an excellent display of the considerable assets the Battalion has at its disposal. On completion, the Battalion traded in the very poor weather and moved en-masse to the second phase of the exercise, based at Otterburn Training Camp





*Members of B Company conduct a section attack during Ex Border Hackle.*

where bigger and more complex ranges were run. Platoon attack lanes were conducted with a greater array of weapon systems being integrated, such as the 60mm mortar and the use of Battalion assets including snipers, recce and the newly formed and qualified assault pioneers. The exercise culminated with a series of sequential Company dawn attacks. This range was by far the most complex conducted throughout the two weeks and the terrain, weather, simulated artillery fire and chemical attacks, tested commanders and Jocks alike. But what a great opportunity as all the assets a Company might normally expect were present and commanders at all levels enjoyed the benefit of 81mm mortar cover, snipers and a dedicated machine gun platoon.

The Battalion maintained this high intensity of training well into the New Year. In February 2014 members of D Company deployed to Garelochhead on Ex FIRST STRIKE. They decided to brave the sub-zero conditions in order to have a “run out” and practice their basic infantry skills prior to deploying to Kenya on Ex ASKARI STORM to augment 2 RGR. Despite severely adverse weather conditions, the exercise was a success and stood them in good stead for the slightly warmer climes of Kenya. Likewise C (Fire Support) Company has also been busy, running an anti-tank cadre in order to train and qualify the Jocks in the newly formed Anti-Tank Platoon, as well as deploying the Mortar Platoon on Ex STEEL SABRE and BORDER STORM, both live firing exercises enabling them to practice and hone their key skills further.

#### **Routine Notices**

With so much training going on, it is perhaps not surprising that B Coy has been as busy as ever and has seen a number of key personalities come and go over the past six months. Last year a re-ORBAT was conducted across the Battalion to ensure that it is structured in the optimal way to provide training teams designed to deliver top quality training to the Libyan General Purpose Force (GPF) when it arrives. With B Company being an integral part of this, many of our Jocks who are not deploying were moved to augment both C and D Companies. Due to these moves, there has been some disruption for the Jocks however they are doing well and we think of them often. As with all such organisations, there is also the normal churn of personnel on posting. The Company has said goodbye to WO2 (CSM) Fairweather who has left us to take up the position of Ops Warrant Officer (and is currently somewhere in Libya!). In his place, we are very fortunate to have gained WO2 (CSM) Smith, who has relinquished command of the Sniper Platoon in order to take up the reins. Likewise, Lieutenant Walker has moved on to take command of the newly formed Anti-Tank Platoon. His replacement, 2nd Lieutenant Pearson, joined the Battalion and the Company in January, following his successful completion of the Platoon Commanders’ Battle Course (PCBC). Captain David Hamilton has now also moved to take over the Reconnaissance Platoon and is still undergoing his course – no news is good news! Our illustrious leader, Major Reid, has also been absent since January as he is also currently heading the Op VOCATE Forward party in Libya. In this challenging role, he is responsible for overseeing the recruitment and processing of the new Libyan soldiers bound for the UK to undergo training. After initially believing that his deployment to Libya would only be for several weeks, three months later he is still somehow maintaining a sense of humour...hopefully he will be back with us soon! In his absence, the new Company 2IC, Captain Robert Weir who



*Pte Brown 62 fires the 60mm mortar during the battalion live firing.*

has recently arrived from the Infantry Training Centre, has stepped up to command which, although good for his career profile, has visibly aged him in the short time he has been here.

With the pace of life in the Fort and the anticipation of our forthcoming task, morale within the Company remains reassuringly high. Having conducted some seriously good training over the past six months we remain ready to tackle the challenges which are likely to be thrown our way in the not too distant future.

#### **CHARLIE (FIRE SUPPORT) COMPANY**

Officer Commanding:	Major C M B Broadbent
Second in Command:	Captain J Tait
Company Sergeant Major:	WO2 (CSM) Beaton
Company Quarter Master Sergeant:	Colour Sergeant Hannah
Reconnaissance Platoon Commander:	Captain T Towler
Reconnaissance Platoon	
Second in Command:	Colour Sergeant Taylor
Reconnaissance Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant Hunter
Anti Tank Platoon Commander:	Lieutenant I Walker
Anti Tank Platoon	
Second in Command/CQMS:	Colour Sergeant Mitchell
Anti Tank Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant Brady
Mortar Platoon Commander:	Captain M Dobson
Mortar Platoon Second in Command:	Sergeant Mortley
Mortar Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant Grant
Sniper Platoon Commander:	Colour Sergeant Lockhart
Sniper Platoon Second in Command:	Sergeant Dunn
Pipes and Drums Platoon Pipe Major:	Colour Sergeant Grisdale
Pipes and Drums Platoon Drum Major:	Sergeant Mclaughlin

The platoons within this Company have continued to be at the very heart of a wide range of battalion activities. This has ranged from



*Charlie Company Dinner Night.*

supporting the Rifle Companies with their integrated training requirements, to focusing on the ongoing development and maintenance of our core specialist skills and competencies through cadres, overseeing the reintroduction of the Assault Pioneer Platoon and the development of the Anti-Tank Platoon, ensuring that the Pipes and Drums continue to meet their musical commitments and ensuring that normal daily routine and frictions are dealt with. With so much diverse activity it has certainly been fast and furious. You will read about separate platoons and their specific activities in the entries which follow this overview.

Critically, we have also been contributing significantly to supporting the Battalion's commitment to Op VOCATE. Whilst the Company has not been mobilised en masse to support this key task, we are supporting it in two important ways. Firstly, manpower has been removed temporarily from the Company to undertake specific tasks. The Reconnaissance Platoon under Captain Towler, has been cut away to be utilised as a demonstration platoon working to A (Grenadier) Company. Many of the senior members of the Sniper Platoon have also been cut away to bolster training teams in both A (Grenadier) and B Companies and as the commitment extends, we are a replacement pool for individual augmentees should bodies be required.

Secondly, as not everyone is committed to Op VOCATE, normal business must continue for those remaining within Fort George. This includes normal career courses, daily routine, leave periods, training, exercises and so forth. We are also the focal point for those personnel not deploying with the other companies. Consequently, the Savages are exercising command and control over a further 4 composite platoons, in addition to our integral platoons. Our numbers at the last count ranged up to 265 and we are currently responsible for the deployment of personnel to Kenya, Canada, supporting the many, many RAAT tasks demanding personnel for activities all over the United Kingdom, preparing and training shooting teams for a number of SAAMs in 51 Brigade, 4 Brigade and 3 (UK) Div, supporting pairing activity with the 7th Battalion, deploying personnel to support SF exercises, deploying personnel on adventurous training where we can, ensuring individuals undertake career courses such as SCBC, PSBC and specialist courses such as the Snipers "zero to hero" course in Brecon and we are also undertaking the planning and execution of the Battalion battlefield study to Belgium. If anyone was foolish enough to think that by remaining behind they would be underutilised and left aside, then they certainly are under no illusion now! Whilst the pace of life is hectic, opportunities to undergo some excellent training abound.

As a Company we are keen to foster and build relations where we can and so were delighted when we had the opportunity to solidify our

maritime links further by despatching a piper to play on the Bridge of our affiliated ship, HMS MONTROSE, on her return to port. This is becoming a regular fixture and it is great we are in a position to support this.

During Ex BORDER HACKLE, the Company switched seamlessly into their role of the providing specialist support whether that was through the provision of MFC's and mortar fire, the Recce leading troops in, the Snipers causing havoc or the Assault Pioneers providing some excellent simulated explosions. Consequently, it was a tired C Company that headed towards a well-earned Christmas leave, although before this, we were able to gather for another excellent Company Dinner night organised once again by WO2 (CSM) Beaton. This is the second year we have run such a dinner and again it proved to be an excellent night. Given the number of activities the platoons support, it is not often that we can all gather together so this provides an ideal opportunity for the chain of command – from the most junior of Junior NCO's to Field Officer – to assemble in one place at the same time – quite a challenge in the Savages! Even the RSM enjoyed himself (once various items were returned to his Mess the following day!).

Since our return from Christmas leave and despite the new challenges that Op VOCATE has brought, we have also sought to take the opportunities to develop our support weapon competencies where we can and so the Anti-Tank Platoon cadre under Colour Sergeant Mitchell took place in early 2014, based in Knook Camp on Salisbury Plain. The Pipes and Drums not only have ensured their playing skills continue to develop by sending individuals to the Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming but they are the new Assault Pioneers. Their initial cadre held in Weymouth was a great success and personnel have been deployed on course in Gibraltar Barracks, during this first half of 2014 to qualify as Pioneers. So far, they seem to have been keeping a balance in both their musical and pioneer commitments!

Inevitably, within such a large Company, there have been considerable movement. Whilst these will be addressed within the platoon articles, collectively Tranche 3 and 4 redundancy has seen a number of individuals begin transition to civilian life and we wish them and their families all the very best for the future. WO2 (CSM) Beaton has completed his tenure and is currently undertaking his RQMS course at Deepcut before he commences his posting as RQMS in BATUK. I am sure he will miss the endless paperwork and think of it often as he sips his gin and tonic on his veranda (or perhaps not!) His replacement, WO2 Blackley will be returning to the Battalion and we look forward to working with him soon. Our CQMS, Colour Sergeant Hannah has also moved on due to being promoted! He now takes up the reins as



CSM for A (Grenadier) Company. We wish them and all the others who have left the Savages, all the very best for the future. To those who have arrived, welcome – whilst you may think what on earth has hit you, I guarantee you will not be bored! There have also been a number of marriages and the arrival of a number of baby Savages – our congratulations and best wishes go to them all!

So life in “The Savages” continues apace. We certainly have a packed programme to see us through and it can at times seem daunting. When I look at our forecast of events, I often say this “how do you eat an elephant?” The answer is “One bite at a time”. We look forward to tackling the many events we are responsible for throughout 2014.

### THE RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON

Platoon Commander:	Captain TJH Towler/ Captain JR Tait
Second in Command:	Colour Sergeant D Taylor
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant R Hunter

After a lavish summer in Edinburgh as the Guard of Honour at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, the Reconnaissance Platoon came back down to earth with a bump, as we returned to the conventional reconnaissance role. Pristine white spats were exchanged for muddy boots and any hint of a summer tan was covered up with cam cream as the platoon reminded itself of its primary purpose. Not before one final exciting task though.

As the rest of the Platoon prepared the final touches to their Observation Post roof sections, a small team made its way up to the north coast. Living incognito in a fishing village, we were tasked with conducting surveillance on a nuclear facility prior to launching a full scale attack to test their security procedures. The week-long task was an exciting one for those involved and one that we hope will now become an annual fixture for the Platoon; the Jocks certainly relished the chance to go toe-to-toe with the MOD Police and other agencies. Their only complaint being the barren nature of the night-life on the north coast!



*Recce Platoon Dry training.*



*The Recce Platoon prepare to practice contact drills.*

Back to business, we left the Fort to complete our annual Light Reconnaissance Patrolman's Cadre. This consisted of a three week training package in Barry Buddon, followed by live firing and a final exercise in Otterburn. Our period in Barry Buddon was an excellent opportunity to remind and revise our specialist skills and to introduce some individuals to their new role. The live firing package was challenging, and culminated in ranges supported by 39 (Engineer) Regiment. Patrols were tested both day and night and their final test saw them withdrawing from an enemy ambush under significant amounts of Indirect Fire, Improvised Explosive Devices and Small Arms Fire care of our Engineer friends. As each patrol made use of their claymores to repel the enemy forces, the Jocks were exhausted, but had clearly enjoyed the challenge.

During a short respite from the excitement of live firing the Platoon sent a team, under Colour Taylor and Corporal Ritchie, to enter Exercise CAMBRIAN PATROL, an arduous and challenging patrol competition held annually in Wales. It attracts units from across the world and is seen as one of the premier patrol competitions of its kind. Training prior to the event had been minimal due to summer tasks and the ongoing cadre but the team displayed a great deal of grit, spirit and tenacity. They patrolled 70km in 48 hours and were tested in a wide range of skills including CBRN, close target reconnaissance and combat first aid; they deservedly returned home with a silver medal which was the best result the Battalion had achieved in recent memory.

On completion of our own platoon training, we joined the Battalion in Warcop and Otterburn to provide reconnaissance support to the Rifle Companies as they went through their live firing package. Patrols led the Companies into their attacks with rigour and were delighted to take a back seat with the prevalence of a Nuclear, Biological and Chemical threat!

Since then, the Battalion's focus has changed to Op VOCATE and consequently, the Platoon has been spread to the four winds as the NCOs prepare for the challenge of instructing Libyans. The Platoon has also been through a number of other changes: Captain Towler handed over command of the Platoon to Captain Tait at the end of the 2013, before the latter was selected to replace Captain Stewart as ADC to GOC 3 (UK) Division. Captain David Hamilton will imminently take command of the Platoon on completion of his Light Reconnaissance Commander's Course. Colour Sergeant Taylor's tenure as Second in Command will end shortly, after his promotion to WO2 and selection to become Company Sergeant Major of HQ Company, and Sergeant Hunter will also leave us shortly. As always we wish those leaving the Platoon the best of luck for their future endeavours.



*The Recce Platoon practising model making during training in Barry Buddon.*



## SNIPER PLATOON

The Sniper Platoon has undergone some major changes and since October there has been a mixture of both busy and calm periods, both in barracks and in the field. In preparation for Battalion exercises and to generate some specific training, the platoon was split into their two sections, commanded by Lance Corporals Blain and Jamieson respectively, with Sergeant Dunn and Corporal Hatton overseeing the training. We took the opportunity to head down to Barry Buddon ranges for a period of four days, in order to concentrate on developing the essential individual skills required as both snipers and sniper pairs. This was a great chance for the Platoon to bond a little more, as we had just received newly badged snipers into the Platoon. The main goal for this was to get the Platoon comfortable operating within the context of Collective Training Competency 1 (CTC1) which they achieved, before moving to meet the Battalion and the Companies we would support at Warcop and Otterburn, continuing with our Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT).

The good times continued for the Jocks on arrival at Warcop! We continued to carry out more LFTT with more sophisticated unknown distance shoots to test the abilities of the snipers in judging distances. Working in pairs, this enabled both shooter and spotter to hone their combined skills as they started real time scenarios. "Real time" actually means the pairs lay in position for up to 2 hours in the wintery weather before they get to shoot again. Despite the temporary discomfort, the Platoon reaped the benefits from this package, as it brought them together ready for the next phase of training. It was no rest for the wicked, as on arriving at our third destination of "fun", the Platoon was tasked to give fire support for two company attacks, which were run sequentially. This was very much the finale for the Platoon, as it allowed them to put into practice all they had achieved over the previous two weeks. The sniper sections were tasked with initiating H-Hour with a multi-weapon shoot, onto pre-designated targets. As each company advanced, the snipers then switched roles and started providing real time information on enemy positions and locations, demonstrating the other roles in which we can be employed.

Of course there were moments of rivalry with the Reconnaissance Platoon. Whilst we are always busy, there are moments to sit and think and during one of those moments, a game was invented. Those who role the lowest number on a pair of dice loses; and the Recce did! They had to forfeit a prized Recce Platoon "hoodie" to the Snipers – which unbeknown to them, was placed on a figure 11 target and the Padre, WO2 (CSM) Beaton and WO2 Smith were invited to have a fun shoot at a target in the distance. By the time they realised what it was they were shooting, the "hoodie" was riddled with bullet holes! It was also encouraging to see that the higher up the ranks you go, they could still shoot!

Back within barracks at the Fort, as Bob Dylan sang, "the times they are a-changin' " and this has been the case within the Sniper Platoon.



*WO2 Smith demonstrating that old habits die hard.*

The Platoon Commander has changed with WO2 Smith moving to become the CSM of B Company and Colour Sergeant Lockhart moving in to take up the reins. Corporal Cain has been posted to the SCOTS Recruit Training Team (SRTT) and Corporal Hatton is getting ready to leave the Army in mid-2014 although will ultimately be transferring to be a Sniper within the Australian Army. Thankfully people are able to fill the gaps and we must pass on congratulations to those who were promoted at the Jocks' Christmas Lunch. Well done to Lance Corporal Blain who is now a Corporal and to Private Carter who is now a Lance Corporal.

After a well earned Christmas leave, the Battalion soon focused on our Op VOCATE task and a re-Orbat was required to ensure the right training teams were formed which naturally affected our ability to train as a Platoon with the Sniper NCOs moved around to support the various teams. But sniper training has not stopped and a new batch of potential snipers have joined the platoon. Ensuring they are prepared properly for the Sniper course given that most of the instructors are working with other Companies has been somewhat of a command challenge but we are confident we will prevail in maintaining the standards achieved and expected of the 3rd Battalion Sniper Platoon.



*Lone sniper.*



*Snipers at work.*





*The Battalion Pipes and Drums before the Murrayfield International.*

### **PIPES AND DRUMS**

Pipe President: Major CMB Broadbent  
 Pipe Major: Colour Sergeant RK Grisdale  
 Drum Major: Sergeant AL Campbell  
 Pipe Sergeant: Corporal JG Muir

It has always been both a pleasure and a privilege to be a member of the Pipes and Drums where we take part in a wide variety of activity from high profile events to down and dirty infantry work. The pace of life is fast and furious.

Returning back to Battalion life after some well deserved leave and the sparkle and delights of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, was a shock and not a pleasant one!

The Battalion hosted the first SCOTS Highland Games at Fort George. Whilst the event was covered in the previous edition of the Red Hackle, the Pipes and Drums undertook a number of competitions during the day, holding a Solo Piping and Drumming competition much to the delight of Captain McRobbie who was "requested" to take part by the Commanding Officer. As the Pipe Major, I must say that he is coming on well – who knows, he might even get to come on tour with the Platoon one of these days (to carry our bags)!

As readers will know, in a Highland regiment the Pipes and Drums play a crucial role and demonstrating the prowess of the P&D reflects on the health of the Battalion. So, these competitions also gave the other SCOTS battalions Pipes and Drums a chance to show whether they had what it took to stand up to the mighty Black Watch! A great competition ensued between us all but as readers will no doubt be aware, history shows us the Black Watch always do well and this was again repeated with Corporal Muir picking up 1st place in the Piobaireachd and March Strathspey and Reel.

Readers will also be aware that the P&D are dual roled as a Platoon. Down the line they have been stretcher bearers, a Machine Gun Platoon, recently a Fire Support Group (FSG) and now, under the new Army 2020 structure, the re-introduced Assault Pioneer Platoon. So after a successful period of ceremonial activity and significant playing, the Pipes and Drums refocused our sights on developing our green skills and the need to develop our Assault Pioneer qualifications.

Our new role was kick started by attending a very busy and thorough two week in house training cadre based in Weymouth. Why here? It has the only remaining functioning Infantry Assault Bridge in the UK

with all others committed to Op HERRICK! It was a great location and gave us the crucial insight into basic pioneering. The two weeks covered everything from bridging gaps, building sandbag walls to the always popular demolitions and explosives day. Indeed, the P&D got first hand experience of explosives during what can only be described as a "Royal Engineer Range Day". From this basic qualification, we have been able to support Battalion level training through battle simulations (BatSims) greatly enhancing the realism of training. Courses are ongoing to further qualify the troops through Infantry Assault Pioneer Courses which are centrally run by the Royal Engineers at Gibraltar Barracks. All those who have undertaken the course have passed, thoroughly enjoying their time and are becoming even more qualified in their role.

But the real role of the P&D is never far away and we are always in demand. Consequently a variety of tasks come our way which makes it such an interesting role. It helps that we have always had our fair share of good looking soldiers and you could never accuse them of being camera shy! The BBC came calling wishing to document the history of Pipers and Drummers and that the ancient traditions (such as Duty Calls, Reveille and so forth) are still in use today. The ever so good looking Private McDonald and newly promoted Corporal Lowe were the unfortunate men who will be following the also time honoured tradition of "getting crated" when the programme is aired in mid-2015.

With November came the honour of undergoing State Ceremonial tasks. With Pipe Major "Scouse" Grisdale now on first name terms with members of the Royal family (note: his words not ours and no comment has been received from the Palace!) it fell to him to source and lead the 12 pipers from across the Royal Regiment of Scotland to play at the State Banquet for the State Visit of The President of The Republic of Korea held at Buckingham Palace. Meeting in Redford Barracks for a week of intense rehearsals and preparation with a full dress rehearsal in front of the Director of Army Bagpipe Music, Major Steven Small was a fantastic education for the six pipers from the Battalion who worked hard and were rewarded by playing at the Banquet. As the other SCOTS pipers left London, we remained with the drummers, bouncing directly onto the National Act of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, which we have been privileged to do for the last two years. It was an honour to be involved in such a significant event and one I hope we repeat again this year.



However, not all of us were in the cold – Private McDonald was very lucky to be chosen by HQ 4 Mech Bde to fly to the British Embassy in Tripoli, Libya to play at an act of Remembrance at the British War Cemetery in Tobruk.

The minute our ceremonial tasks were completed, the kit and uniforms were packed away and we drove directly to Otterburn Training Area where we joined the Battalion on Ex BORDER HACKLE, putting our new Assault Pioneer skills into practice building defences and obstacles for the Company battle exercises such as cat wire fences and low wiring entanglements. The Commanding Officer is still unsure as to whether the Pipes and Drums should be using (or indeed know how to use) battlefield simulation explosives but never the less, the Pipe Major took a small team off with enough explosive to do some real damage if a person knew what to do. Fortunately, this wasn't the case! But they did manage to bring the various range packages to life and from the comments overheard as the troops went through, they were something they enjoyed.

Green kit was again swapped for ceremonial kit and a weekend supporting the rugby internationals at Murrayfield – for the Scotland vs Republic of South Africa match. Corporal Muir and Private Archibald were tasked with playing music they had only learnt that morning. However, that was the least of their problems: they had to do this on top of the stadium and neither like heights!

As the year hit a high, so did the Pipe Major's Air miles. It was with some pride that with the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the assassination of President John F Kennedy, the Pipe Major and Private McDonald were invited to Washington D.C. to play at Arlington National Cemetery at the Grave of the Late President. As readers will no doubt know, The Black Watch played at his funeral and therefore it was a great honour to also play at this commemoration.

The New Year saw a change of Drum Major as Sergeant McLaughlin moved to take over the role as Platoon Sergeant of 5 Platoon. Sergeant (Drum Major) Campbell is now firmly in the seat although we are struggling to get a jacket to fit him and his beard requires more growth! As 2014 has progressed, Battalion requirements have seen the Platoon split between the South of England and Inverness continuing to improve and qualify as Assault Pioneers.



*The Pipe Major playing outside the Governor's House, Edinburgh Castle.*



*The Pipe President, Major Broadbent and the Pipe Major, Colour Sergeant Grisdale shaking on another dodgy deal!*



*Corporal Muir on top of Murrayfield Stadium – Health and Safety compliant although not very stylish!*

Throughout, we are also actively seeking to develop talent and invest in keen and enthusiastic soldiers by ensuring they attend courses at The Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming. One of the latest to return is Private Crawford who was already a drummer before joining and consequently, was fast tracked from his Class 3 Course to his Class 2 Course and was recently awarded best drummer and best student. He has re-joined the band as the lead tip being the first Private to do this since the current Drum Major arrived in the battalion – perhaps this is an omen for the future (although he has a long way to go!)

We are a very busy Platoon both with our Piping and Drumming commitments and our developing Assault Pioneer role. Hopefully having read this, you will agree that one thing is for sure, the Platoon are as busy as ever and if the forecast of events for the remainder of the year is anything to go by, this is unlikely to change – it's great to be wanted!



## MORTAR PLATOON

Officer Commanding: Captain M A Dobson  
Second in Command: Sergeant I Grant  
Platoon Sergeant: Sergeant E J Mortley

So another six months have passed and time has come again to write the next edition of the Platoon's Red Hackle submission, and what a six months they have been. Having completed a Battalion re-orbat in September 2013, the Platoon was uplifted by some 18 Private soldiers, all of whom required to complete the infamous Mortar Numbers Cadre before taking their places on a deployable Mortar Line. Having agreed with the OC, we were given the time and space needed to get some useful training done and so it was with a large degree of excitement that we deployed as a Platoon, to Warcop Training Camp in late September for our annual cadre and live firing.

With a supportive chain of command, over the month, the platoon conducted the standard Numbers Cadre overseen and authorised by the Distributed Training Cell and enhanced with a further week of dry exercise and subsequent live firing. Competition throughout the cadre was fierce; no more evident than the intense personal rivalry between Corporals Ellis and Kyle as they competed for the best section! On an individual level, the performance was consistently high throughout. However, Private McKenzie soon emerged as the strongest individual across all aspects of the course and was rightly awarded the top student.

If the cadre was going exceptionally well, it simply marked the beginning of an excellent period of enhanced training opportunities for the Platoon. Having deployed in support of the Rifle Companies throughout the annual Battalion live firing during Exercise BORDER HACKLE, we went into a well deserved period of Christmas leave. Following this necessary downtime, we returned to a busy time, seeing everyone preparing to support Op VOCATE in some form or other. With some personnel temporarily seconded to Company Training Teams, there was concern that we may be entering a fallow period. However, we needn't have worried as Battalion Headquarters was busy ensuring we were offered up to support as many exercises as we could – excellent training opportunities to spend someone else's budget and fire their precious ammunition! Consequently, the Mortar Platoon now finds itself deployed supporting Exercise STEEL SABRE 14, from where I am penning these notes.

It is taking place on Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) and is the Army's annual Air Land Integration (ALI) training event within the Joint Fires component, focusing on operations at Battle Group level and above. In terms of the Mortar Platoon, it provides us all with an excellent opportunity to train and fire alongside our affiliated gun battery, as well as a large number of external assets, particularly Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and Aviation within a complex scenario. Given the move back into contingency, we are unlikely to see such assets, combined together, in any real meaningful context in the near future again! From this exercise we shall be immediately deploying on Exercise BORDER STORM which is a 4 Mech Bde sponsored



*Corporal Ellis returns from supporting an Armoured FST.*



*Corporal Steel manning the CP during Ex STEEL SABRE 14.*



*The Mortar Platoon on deployment on Salisbury Plain.*





*Corporal Ellis' Section conducting basic drills in preparation for live firing.*

event in Otterburn – again, an excellent opportunity to get some experience and practice! Once we complete this, some well earned Easter leave is (hopefully) promised before some members of the Platoon head down to the Support Weapons School in Warminster to undertake long term qualifying courses.

Aside from the usual training update it is also important to update the wider regimental family on personal achievements from within our ranks too. Congratulations to Privates Hooper, McGarvey, McKenzie and Smith on their recent promotion to Lance Corporal as well as to Lance Corporal Walker whose partner has recently gave birth to their second child.

So as this exceptionally busy period for the platoon comes to a close, I am sure you are wondering what lies ahead. I can assure readers that the next six months will likely prove as exciting as those just gone and there will certainly be no rest for the wicked (appropriate given that we are the Mortar Platoon!). This is particularly true for the Platoon's executives, who will depart en masse later in May, to support 1 SCOTS GUARDS throughout their Ex PRAIRIE STORM events in BATUS, Canada. Supporting elements of what will become the next Lead Armoured Battle Group under the Kings Royal Hussars, will prove extremely rewarding for all those involved, exposing them to the armoured tempo of operations simply unachievable in our usual light role.

As previously stated, the remainder of the Platoon not deploying on exercise will be employed on long courses at the Support Weapons



*Sergeant Mortley manning the FPC during Ex STEEL SABRE 14.*

School, ensuring the maintenance of our key skills and qualifications within the Battalion. This will see Sergeant Mortley attending his Mortar 21C course which will enable him to support three more junior members who will be selected in due course to attend the Mortar Standards Course over the same time period. Corporal Watson will also attend the Mortar Advanced Course during this period.

### **DELTA (LIGHT) COMPANY**

Officer Commanding:	Major J R P Bailey
Second-in Command:	Captain P E R Seligman/ Captain T H Blair
Company Sergeant Major:	WO2 (CSM) P S Anderson
Company Quarter Master:	Colour Sergeant J-P Barrie
OC13 Platoon:	Lieutenant R L M Crook
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant A Bavadra
OC 15 Platoon:	Captain C M Treasure
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant A S Bright
OC Machine Gun Platoon:	Second Lieutenant N J T Coles
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant J McCarthy

Whether throwing on fire suits, wearing heavy thermals or jungle hats, The Golden Don has displayed both fortitude and adaptability since its last Red Hackle update.

The main feature of the last six months has been the Company's contribution to the Battalion's UK Contingency commitment, specifically Operation FODIENT during which it provided support to the Government following industrial action by the Fire Brigades' Union. Though trained by a highly professional team, Lance Corporal Bain could not overcome his fear of climbing a ladder but at least he was able to find a helmet that would protect his head if he fell, unlike Private Amankwah who struggled to find one large enough. With great anticipation the Jocks waited for the all important phone call sending them to deal with some roaring flames or to save a damsel in distress. Unfortunately, the most exiting incident fell to Lieutenant Crook who valiantly commanded his team as they provided cover for a controlled burn on a construction site. It was at least enough of an excuse to fire up the engine and to switch the siren on.



### Exercise BORDER HACKLE

Towards the end of the UK Contingency commitment, the Battalion's focus switched to Exercise BORDER HACKLE. This was to be Captain Seligman's last hurrah in the field sporting the Red Hackle. His main challenge, appeared to be finding a location with enough of a signal to allow him to monitor the international cricket and rugby. Clearly it made sense to stay in camp and watch it live rather than fearing an interruption on the exercise area. He did, nonetheless, mysteriously appear for his own fireworks display on bonfire night. In the meantime Major Bailey was leading by example, demonstrating fine route selection on the fire team attack range when he found himself up to his chest in muddy water assaulting enemy positions. If the 1 lb burger challenge van was not a big enough morale boost the sight of a very wet OC walking back to the range certainly was!

The last night saw Major Bailey give his orders for a Company attack the following morning. After a 15 mile vehicle insertion led by Lieutenant Treasure, Delta (Light) Company were in position for what was about to be a record breaking Company attack. Lieutenant Smyth's platoon had the privilege of being attached to the Company in order to boost numbers. In the attack he was given the freedom he wanted, carrying out Major Bailey's intent with panache. Second Lieutenant Coles' first run out with the Company was by the OC's side coordinating fire support with Sergeant McCarthy allowing rifle platoons to clear the enemy positions.

### Sub zero temperatures in Garelochhead

As rumours of participation in Operation VOCATE increased, Delta (Light) Company were warned off that they would be deployed to Kenya on Ex ASKARI STORM to support the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles. The Company deployed on exercise in the sub zero temperatures of Garelochhead to practice low level skills and

SOPs before flying out to Kenya. Few enjoyed it more than Colour Sergeant Barrie's new puppy who bounded about in the snow skidding on the ice. Captain Blair, the new Second-in-Command, led a rather tasty insertion tab before he left platoons to harbour up on a muddy landslide. The men of The Golden Don were not to be beaten, finishing the week with two well executed dawn attacks under the watchful eye of OC Charlie Company in the knowledge that the next time they would be working together they would be streaming with sweat on the Equator avoiding lions, hyenas, elephants and leopards.

### A wee recce...

Meanwhile as troops were enduring the rain and cold the commanders spent time in Bassingbourn ready for the arrival of the Libyan General Purpose Force (GPF). During a small gap in lectures, three platoon commanders and two platoon sergeants drove out to the training area to conduct their recces. Confronted with what looked like a small puddle, and after a bit of spurring each other on, they drove their vehicle briskly and successfully over a water feature. They were then met by a dead end. People say a magician should never show his tricks twice. Rather than turning the vehicle around the driver chose to reverse back through the water. Needless to say the next 30 seconds saw three platoon commanders waist deep pushing a vehicle out of the water. With much relief the vehicle crawled out of the pond and, other than the squelching boots and wet trousers, Company Sergeant Major Anderson would have been none the wiser.

There have of course been times to have fun and enjoy this busy period. If Sergeant Bright's true Scottish nationality has ever been brought into question, it was clearly shown on the evening of the Company smoker in the Royal British Legion. Somehow mince and stovies for the entire Company (allegedly approved by a phantom Company Sergeant Major) was the preferred favourite over alternatives for the same price.



*Sergeant Bright acting as the safety supervisor.*



*Private Watson ready for action.*



*A Platoon Commander's folly? I am sure the water did not look that deep when we drove through it!*



*Warcorp – not so Golden Dons.*



*Instruction on a heavy calibre weapon.*



*Corporal Rabuno has finally got his own shop.*



*Corporal Rana administrating HQ Company.*

Over the six month period there has inevitably been change in the Company. Delta Company stalwart Sergeant 'Davey' Roy could only put up with Second Lieutenant Coles for six weeks before he moved to the Motor Transport Platoon, handing over the reins of the Machine Gun Platoon to Sergeant 'Loon' McCarthy who was relieved to return to the Battalion after his posting to Canterbury with 5th Battalion. The loving command relationship shared by Captain Treasure and Sergeant Hunter had to come to an end as they both moved to different jobs within the Battalion. Captain Seligman swiftly handed over the position of Company Second-in-Command to Captain Blair, taking no longer than a few hours without the distraction of the Ashes cricket or the dreams of joining civilian life in London. Congratulations are owed to Lance Corporals Pritchard, Spears and Brogan for their promotion off the back of their successes on courses and Colour Sergeant Bright for his recent promotion. The next six months will be an interesting chapter as the Company is spread far and wide to cover tasks in Kenya, Canada and Bassingbourn.

### **HEADQUARTER COMPANY**

Officer Commanding: Major C McInroy  
Company Sergeant Major: WO2 (CSM) A Dunn  
Company Quarter Master Sergeant: Colour Sergeant R McBride

This submission to the Red Hackle from Headquarter Company sees some major changes going on in the Battalion. Principally, with the Battalion having been selected to undertake Op VOACTE, this Company has been tasked to provide Training and Support Staff to Bassingbourn; a major undertaking considering that the Barracks was not in a good state having closed as an Army Training Regiment location some years ago. To get it up to scratch prior to the Libyans' arrival, is ongoing and proving to be a fairly lengthy process, with an ever ending stream of G4 personnel travelling the A9 and A1 most weeks. With manpower split, other standing tasks have had to be managed and we are proud to have been able to get to grips with the mandatory annual tests (MATTS) which we need to do – not an easy task for the Sergeant

Major to deliver piecemeal, as chasing people in this Company is like trying to herd cats!

As ever, we had a busy social calendar in the run up to Christmas and as ever, during Christmas week, we ensured that all the Jocks were fed a slap up 3 course meal washed down with a few beers – a good way to round off to a busy year! Starting afresh in 2014, the annual celebration which is 'Red Hackle Day' so the Jocks fed well again and considerable sporting fun was had – as ever, the input by HQ Company, largely behind the scenes, ensured this all ran smoothly.

And we have been busy supporting worthy causes too – some serious charity events were conducted; of note, WO2 (CSM) Dunn managed three marathons in one day: 25 miles running, biking and rowing – an incredible feat! Importantly, he also managed to raise a substantial amount of money for Poppy Scotland and should be congratulated for this. Another gargantuan effort was undertaken by the RSM, WO2 Butch Parker and Colour Sergeant Copeland who all decided to complete every physical test in the Army – in one day! The list was impressive: PFA, CFT, 2 miler, 3 Miler, 8 mile CFT and the 2 stage CFT and it was a magnificent effort which resulted in a lot of blisters, quite a few sore backs and some very tired 'laddies' after that event. They did very well raising a huge amount of money for various cancer charities – a deserved "Well done boys"!

Company HQ has also seen a number of changes. Corporal McIntyre working in the RCMO's office, won the Charlie Hankins award this year for his continued support in dealing with all our soldiers who found themselves in Tranche 3 of redundancy. He spent much time ensuring that our troops were getting the best deal when their resettlement started. This is well deserved recognition for Corporal McIntyre who sadly will leave the Battalion and Army this year, after a long career. Further change has seen Corporal Peacock leave us to get to grips with the appointment of Provost Sergeant. Corporal Harris has (again) followed the OC into Company HQ handing over the PRI to Corporal Rabuno who has moved to us from the Regimental Provost staff – and who already is making his mark. Corporal Whalley joined us as we lost Private Tilley to the 'world of warcraft'! WO2 McSeveney arrived





*The RSM and the RP Staff.*



*Corporal Errington and Sergeant Gary Dunn in the stores.*



*WO2 (CSM) Dunn – 78 miles completed, now for a beer!*

to ensure that those recruiting for the Regiment were looked after and he has spent many hours and days scouring the countryside to try and recruit as many able bodied young men into the Royal Regiment of Scotland as he can. So far things are starting to look up!

Headquarter Company has also had a plethora of individuals posted in over the past 6 months but too many to mention here. I am sure that with the variety of tasks ongoing, they will enjoy their time with the Company. Finally, here are some farewells to those who have recently left the Army for pastures greener. We wish them all the very best in their future life as civilians. They are; WO2 Clutton, Colour Sergeant Braid, Sergeant Winton, Sergeant Morse, Corporal Lang, Corporal Fraser, Corporal Nisbet, Lance Corporal Brown, Lance Corporal Clements and Private Thomson who all leave the Army after loyal service or who were made redundant through Tranche 3. A number have been posted including

Staff Sergeant Carpenter, Lance Corporal Catlin and Lance Corporal MacDonald; we wish them all the best.

So to conclude, we have had a busy few months ensuring the Battalion continues to function whether on exercise (which you will read about in specific platoon notes) or in camp (two camps thinking about it) and a busy year rolls out ahead of us. I am confident that HQ Company will – as always – lead the way. Run fast and shoot straight!

### QUARTERMASTERS DEPARTMENT

Quartermaster:	Major J Howe
Quartermaster (Technical):	Captain G Hogg
Regimental Quarter Master Sergeant (Maintenance):	WO2 A Cunningham
Regimental Quarter Master Sergeant (Technical):	WO2 P Marshall

OP VOCATE (the training of the Libyan Army) has been the main task keeping the QM's Department busy over this period and we have been split between Fort George and Basingbourn since early November 2013. This has been a significant challenge and one the troops have worked tirelessly on, rotating between the two locations for a few weeks at a time; and the team have performed really well throughout. Op VOCATE is taking place in Basingbourn Barracks and they have been transformed from their previous state of slumber having been closed down in 2012 to one which is now up to the modern standards required to receive and train a foreign force. This has been our main effort for the last 6 months and will continue to be so until the task is complete at some point in October 2014.

The high profile of Op VOCATE has attracted a significant number of visitors to the camp and this has given many members of the



*The quantity of kit and equipment required for Op VOCATE is difficult to imagine!*



*Corporal Richie Catto doing what he does best – preparing the QM's tea.*

Department the opportunity to shine. However, RQMS(M), WO2 Allan Cunningham took things to a new level, taking the opportunity to show his hospitality to GOC 3 (UK) Div, Major General James Cowan, during his visit – having been tasked by the QM to ensure the obligatory brews and refreshments were in place for the GOC, the RQMS was overheard saying to the other members of the Department that only he can serve the General with his refreshments! I'm sure the fact that his Commissioning Papers had been submitted and the Commissioning Board were due to sit later that week, had no bearing on his desire to be seen at all!!!

With the changes to the Department brought about by the restructuring under "Army 2020", Staff Sergeant 'Smudger' Smith and Private 'Cammy' Cameron our Royal Logistic Corps 1st Line Optimisation additions, have been showing their logistic expertise in Hanger 1 in

Bassingbourn. The equipment we have taken receipt of for this task is considerable and it appears that we have taken control of the Army's entire supply of Clothing, Defence Accommodation Stores and Webbing to name but a few commodities! Consequently, the accounting task has been significant and the Department can truly be proud of their efforts in the effective and diligent management of this task.

Op VOCATE aside, the Department continues to support the Battalion on the many, many other tasks it has to undertake and has recently passed an LSI and an ECI both with a grading of Green; which is a tremendous achievement.

In the coming months, a number of key individuals will sadly leave the Department. Captain Glenn Hogg will move to Edinburgh Castle as OC SCOTS Recruiting, RQMS(M) WO2 Cunningham will move on promotion to Captain as the Battalion UWO and RQMS(T) WO2 Marshall is to be RSM of the Battalion. In addition, Sergeant Pratt, who has been in the Department since the days of the "Korean Campaign", has finally moved on and has now taken up his post as a Technical SNCO in Charlie Company. We thank them all for their excellent efforts and wish them well in their future posts.

### CIS PLATOON

The CIS Platoon has continued to work hard supporting the Battalion in all the various events it has undertaken. A tricky balancing act within the platoon as the numbers in our ranks have sadly been cut following the Tranche 3 Redundancy round, as well as a recent Battalion reorbat and so we have had to say goodbye to some long-term stalwarts of the signals world. Colour Sergeant Braid has recently left and in civilian life is now looking to join Police Scotland locally, in Inverness. Sergeant Winton has setup his own Landscape Gardening business in Brecon (in between playing golf). Corporal Hodgekinson has bought a long distance delivery company and Privates Warren, Seath and Ross have all moved on.

Whilst it is always sad to see so many and such specialist talents leave the Platoon, their departure opens the door for many new members to

join, with fresh blood they bring fresh ideas and skills. With the influx of new talent, the Platoon has embarked on a period of internal training, getting everyone up to the standard before any big exercises come round, conducting back to back Basic Radio User (BRU) and Infantry Platoon Radio Operators (IPRO) courses.

During March we expanded horizons further by taking part in Ex SOUTH TALK, a long distance HF exercise that saw us communicate with the Regimental Signallers Course based in Bovington. The Platoon was able to communicate clearly, over 600 miles using one radio set and their own organic antennas. This exercise proved to be an excellent teaching opportunity, demonstrating the capabilities of our radio equipment and is an exercise that can be developed further for the future. The next Ex SOUTH TALK is due to take place in June and we will be playing a greater part.

But all work and no play makes the CIS dull! So despite all the Platoon and Battalion level training the CIS Platoon has conducted over the last few months, some members have managed to find the opportunity to enjoy a bit of down time and escape the hustle and bustle of Battalion life. At the time of writing the RSWO, WO2 Tollan, has managed to secure a place on a Short Term Training Team (STTT) to Kenya where he is meant to be teaching the Kenyan Armed Forces the capabilities of the BOWMAN radio. However, from the few updates that have been sent back so far, it seems to be more sun and sangria, rather than hard graft! The Platoon looks forward to having him back in April and he may be surprised to find some of the wheels are still attached!

The rest of the year looks like it will be very busy for the Battalion with Op VOCATE on the horizon, the conversion to the Light Protected Mobility role and Op TOSCA in the first half of 2015, all of which will have a Signaller or two lurking in the background. But for now the Platoon will continue to concentrate on rebuilding and retraining, so we are fully prepared for anything that gets thrown our way – even busy Company Commanders and Battalion Staff Officers who can't quite understand the new internal digital filing systems!

### TRAINING WING

Training Officer: Captain James  
Training WO: WO2 Parker  
Training Sergeant: Colour Sergeant Copeland  
Training Corporal: Corporal Wedgwood

#### "Don't just train; inspire!"

The Training wing continues to live up to its motto. Leading the way has been WO2 Parker's inspiring "Sair Sodjer". This event was based around all the Operational Fitness Tests and required all 9 to be completed: a distance of 54 miles with weights ranging up to 35kg and all completed within a 24hr period – a truly epic event! Despite everyone saying it was not possible, the whole training staff and a few hangers on looking for glory, pledged to join him (less the Training Officer who had more sense and confirmed that in his day these tests were all completed in time for breakfast!). Well, it was done and done well. More than this, over £3000 was raised for the Archie Foundation, which helps sick children in the local areas. Huge congratulations go to the team for their combined efforts, but particularly to WO2 Parker and WO1 (RSM) Shaw who were the only two who not only completed but passed (within the normal test times) every event!

Given that we focus on preparing the Battalion and individuals for future activities and given the demands of Op VOCATE, the Training Wing remains a hive of activity helping to deliver that varied training across the Battalion, preparing individuals for specific courses. We have successfully introduced a Pre-Course which is paying dividends. The pre-courses run by the Training Wing are aimed at confirming those nominated to attend courses are in the right state, mentally and physically, to undertake what will be asked of them on whichever course they are scheduled to attend. By monitoring and then confirming an individual's abilities, soldiers can be filtered out if it is identified that they require more development, saving time and resources; this has proved to be extremely effective when sending individuals on the SCOTS Regimental Training Team (SRIT) courses with students from the Battalion finishing repeatedly within the top third cohort. More recently the January 2014 Junior NCO Course saw all six students from the Battalion placed within the top 10 and of particular note, Lance Corporal McClaren finished as the top student. So the reputation of the Battalion goes from strength to strength with results on all major infantry courses showing tremendous improvements, including four Instructor recommendations from Junior Brecon.



*Checking equipment in the CIS Platoon Store.*



The Training Wing has also been at the centre of the training and preparation of our soldiers to deliver training to the Libyan General Purpose Force in Bassingbourn, as well as establishing a Training Wing that is capable of supporting the programme. This has been a strain on finite resources – particularly personnel – with the ongoing support required to the Battalion as well as to the development of Bassingbourn; this has left WO2 Parker predominantly leading with all training at Fort George given that Colour Sergeant Copeland has recently left the Training Wing to take up his post as CQMS A Company; a job I'm sure he will excel at (once he finds where the store is!). Ultimately, it has been a very busy few months supporting the Battalion and OP VOCATE.

### CATERING PLATOON

Regimental Catering Warrant Officer

(SQMS):

Platoon Sergeant /IC Messes:

Platoon Sergeant/OP VOCATE:

WO2 M Philip

Sergeant Primrose

Sergeant Ross-Matthew

Like every other department within the Battalion, it continues to be a busy working environment for all the members of the platoon as we seek to maintain our professional hard-working ethos, by assisting the catering contract in the provision of a consistently high standard of daily service in the midst of copious and varied commitments both professional and social within Fort George, on exercise and importantly, on Op VOCATE.

Since November 2013 the platoon has essentially been split in half; WO2 Philip, Sergeant Ross-Matthew, Corporal Armstrong and Private Kayiwa predominately being located in Bassingbourn Camp sorting out the kitchens and contracts awaiting the arrival of the Libyan General Purpose Force personnel to start their training. They have the mammoth task of activating the kitchen facility whilst cooking for a small contingent of soldiers on the Operational Field Cooking System. This has been an arduous task for those involved, ensuring that all three meals have been produced and the kitchen and dining facilities are ready for use.



*Corporal Bisset working hard in the temporary kitchen at Bassingbourn.*

The remainder of the platoon not committed to Op VOCATE has been working just as hard back in Fort George, under the direction of Sergeant Primrose. Given the reduced manpower, it was equally as busy with the build up to the festive commitments and the new civilian partnering scheme; collectively they completed a wide range of Christmas functions with feeding numbers of up to 400 soldiers. The end of this period was eagerly welcomed to say the least! This was all capped off by Corporal Armstrong winning the 51 Brigade Christmas Cake Competition with 3 of the 8 cakes produced being brought back to Fort George where they were auctioned in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, raising £800 for a number of chosen charities.

The well earned festive break was over far too soon and the platoon was called upon again to cater for the numerous functions to celebrate Red Hackle day. A wide range of other high profile catering functions were conducted, including the visit of Major General Cowan.

As ever, there is plenty of movement of personnel and over this period, we have had to say our goodbyes to Sergeant Taroga on her posting to 1 SCOTS in Dreghorn Barracks and also to the RCWO, WO2 Elliott Clutton on completion of 24 year service to the Crown. There have been many more through Tranche 3 of redundancy and we wish them all the very best for their future careers. WO2 Clutton's successor, WO2 Philip Muir was welcomed, arriving from 39 Royal Engineer Regiment and Privates Hannah Henderson and Kara Pallister were also welcomed into the Platoon where they are looking forward to being an integral part of supporting the Battalion.



*Sergeant Taroga showing her skills before being posted.*



*The winning cake made by Corporal Armstrong.*



## KIRK OF THE BLACK WATCH

*By Padre J C Duncan CF (CS)*

### Padre's Patter!

Hello there!

Since arriving with the Battalion in June 2013, I have notched up a considerable number of firsts: my first Kirk Muster, first Kirking o' the Council in Inverness, first Officers' Mess St Andrew's Day Service and first Jock's lunch and Christmas Carol Service. Indeed, in the inter-company "X-Factor Christmas Carol Contest" at the Battalion Carol Service, HQ Company won convincingly – in both decibels and quality! Two tubs of Cadbury "Heroes" were presented to Major McInroy by the CO although I'm not sure if they made it out of Company HQ! But I digress...

The Battalion's Remembrance Day Service was held this year during Ex BORDER HACKLE at Warcop Training Camp. We had a fine day for our service with the winter sun shining (albeit with the warmth of a one bar fire!), which was better than the rest of the week when I was tramping about the hills issuing morale sweets to wet and windswept Jocks!! If you like mud the Jocks can point you in the right direction! It is true what they say; "It isn't training if it's not raining!" What also made this Service memorable was that I have chosen to embrace the 21st Century through the use of an iPod! This was connected to the stereo system in my official Padre's car, and so, with the doors open and windows down, I was able to blast out the hymns, Last Post and Reveille – I think most of the Jocks were given a minor surprise when they heard a Kirk organ accompanying our outdoor singing from a Vauxhall Corsa! Significantly, the Commanding Officer laid a wreath on behalf of the Battalion at the Memorial outside the headquarters at Warcop Training Camp before Captain McRobbie played the Lament.

I have also been able to conduct a number of Baptisms for battalion personnel both in the Kirk and at various other locations. Congratulations go to the following families who celebrated with christening services: Gregor Lawrence, son of Colour Sergeant Ian and Mrs Eleanor Carlisle, on 26th October 2013 at Fort George Kirk. Daisy Louise, daughter of Major Andrew and Mrs Catherine Richards, on 1st December 2013 at Fort George Kirk. Charlotte Aileana Darcey Borkowka and Elliot Edwards Thomas Borkowski daughter and son respectively of Major Christie and Mrs Katherine Broadbent on 7th December 2013 at St Margaret's Chapel, Edinburgh Castle. Significantly, at each of these baptismal services I was privileged to use the baptismal bowl presented to The Black Watch by the family of the late Major General Sir Victor Fortune KBE, CB, DSO. The golden thread of history continues.



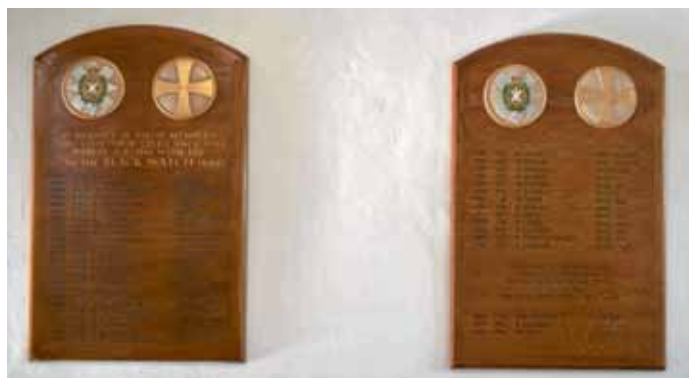
*The Alter in Fort George Kirk.*



*Padre John Duncan conducting the Baptism of Major Broadbent's children at St. Margaret's Chapel, Edinburgh Castle.*



*Commemoration Boards in Fort George Kirk.*



*Remembrance Boards in Fort George Kirk.*





*The Pipe Major trying to confess his sins as the Padre tries not to listen anymore!*



*Baptism bowl.*

As the Battalion continues to lay down roots within Fort George, I have also been busy making Fort George Kirk our home with the Drum Kit, the Memorial Boards to our fallen and the iconic painting of the Padre at the Battle of Fontenoy as well as the plaques which acknowledge the contribution of the late Lord Ballantrae and the Chaplains and Session Clerks of the Kirk of The Black Watch. A new pulpit fall with the

cap badge of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and the Roman numeral III is now in the Kirk and I am grateful to the combined efforts of our Master Tailor and the Master Tailor of The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland for their work in making the pulpit fall. The pulpit fall is now added to our moveable Kirk kit to use on exercise or whenever the Battalion is deployed. I do hope those of you reading will be able to come and visit – you will be most welcome!

With every blessing,

### MT PLATOON

Transport Officer: Captain S McKenzie  
Motor Transport Sergeant: Sergeant Wells

It is very tempting to start these notes with the sentence “It has been another busy period for the MT Platoon”; however this would be an old cliché and due to the current tempo of training and exercises, would be applicable to the whole Battalion. October 2013 proved to be a very productive month with the MT establishing the first hazardous material (HAZMAT) classroom in Scotland that can teach “In Tanks”. Much of the credit must go to Corporal Cruickshanks who oversaw this project which will be very useful in the future.

October also saw the long awaited Combined Assurance Week (CAW) in which the Platoon represented itself and the Battalion very well, gaining excellent results in both the ECI and LSI – possibly something to do with the two months of preparation and multitude of coordinating conferences!?

November saw the Platoon heavily involved in Exercise BORDER HACKLE, the Battalion’s annual live firing exercise which was held in both Warcop and Otterburn training areas. This demanded a complex matrix of road moves, drivers and packet timings but with the amount of road moves the Battalion has done over the past twelve months, the move to Warcop/Otterburn was pretty routine. The Sunday road move to Otterburn Training Camp was to prove eventful for some, with Corporal Forbes from Charlie Company losing the keys to the Pantec truck – much to the frustration of his CQMS, Colour Sergeant Hannah! In a frenzy of activity, they managed to transfer the stores and get to their destination before the Main Body but only just!

After some well earned Christmas leave, the focus for the MT Platoon firmly switched to supporting Op VOCATE, with Corporal Blair deploy-



*Captain McKenzie and the MT Platoon.*



*The Team led by Sergeants Roy and Wells.*

ing forward to Bassingbourn in order to establish the MT forward, in anticipation of our deployment. Concurrently, the service has to be maintained within Fort George and so the department has grown significantly in order to replicate each role both in Bassingbourn and the Fort. As ever, driver training remains one of the key tasks for this platoon and it is a credit to Corporals Gilmour, Thomson, Wishart and Stevenson that we have achieved significant inroads to licence acquisition for the Battalion since the last notes were penned. Well done!

As always, the dynamic of the Platoon continues to change. The following new arrivals are now firmly part of the platoon: Sergeant Roy (MT 2IC and Defence Driving Examiner (DDE)), Lance Corporal Aitken (POL), Privates Philip (G1098), Berry, Jones, Batau, Kamdaya and Wood. It is also with great delight that Lance Corporal Thomson has been promoted to full Corporal. However it is with great sadness that we will see the departure of Corporal Richardson to the RCMO’s office and Private Roy to civilian street – It’s all downhill after having spent time in the MT! As Op VOCATE focuses our minds for the remainder of 2014, the future is bright within the department, with succession plans and additional qualifications being implemented and bid for and a multitude of licences and vehicle platforms (such as FOXHOUND) are being tackled in order that we will be fully ready to embrace our future as a Light Protected Mobility (Lt PM) Battalion.



*The MTO planning his transport snake.*



## RAO'S DEPARTMENT

RAO:	Major A Dunford, MBE AGC(SPS)
Detachment Commander:	Captain S Lewis AGC(SPS)
RAWO:	WO2 (SQMS) Young AGC(SPS)
FSA:	Staff Sergeant Downie AGC(SPS)
Regimental Accountant:	Sergeant Penman AGC(SPS)

A busy battalion takes a lot of supporting, and the Staff and Personnel Support (SPS) soldiers of the Regimental Administrative Office have been working hard to support the delivery of personnel administration amidst a backdrop of uncertainty. The detachment's troops have been spread to the four winds, with personnel based as far away from Inverness as Brecon, Bassingbourn, Norway and Libya during the last six months. The Battalion's deployments, wherever they have been, have all been supported both by the embedded Human Resources specialists (still reassuringly referred to as Company Clerks!), and also by a strong headquarters team back in Fort George, who have conducted numerous pre-deployment checks of each individual that has crossed the line-of-departure, be that on Exercise or Operations. Outside of the office, AGC(SPS) soldiers have been taking part in a wide variety of Battalion sport, Adventure Training, and social activities such as an intra-Detachment paintballing afternoon held on the Black Isle in March. Also, it is a great pleasure to announce that Corporal Prem Tamang has recently been naturalised as a British Citizen. The last six months have also seen turbulence in the manpower of the AGC(SPS) Detachment and we have said a fond farewell to Corporal Mark McCrosson and Lance Corporal David Balshaw of A (Grenadier) Company and D (Light) Company respectively. Lance Corporal Bull has therefore taken on full responsibility for the administration of A Company and has ensured that the Company are administratively ready to deploy having been "fast balled" down to Bassingbourn. We also welcome Sergeant Kevin McAloon and Sergeant Pete Baron. Sergeant McAloon, the new Staff Support Administrator (SSA), has been quick to get to grips with both the administration of service discipline alongside the Adjutant – and also the Powerlifting bar in the gym. Sergeant Baron, the new Systems Coordinator, has made his mark and lends vital instruction, guidance and knowledge to the clerks in the Companies. He also has the accolade of being the first SPS SNCO to deploy to Bassingbourn.

Charlie Company's Corporal Tamang is working extremely hard to support over two hundred and fifty troops, initially with the assistance of Corporal Asenaca Vaniqi and latterly Lance Corporal Balshaw, both of whom have been stemming the relentless inflow of admin to be expected from two hundred and fifty troops, most of whom are either deployed to Kenya, or preparing to deploy to Canada or elsewhere. Private Taylor is ruling the admin side of life in B Company with an iron fist and doing a fine job for one so junior. Corporal Milan Rana and Corporal Anthea Whalley are HQ Company's G1 gurus, assisting the most disparate company,



*Corporal Prem Tamang receiving his naturalisation as a British Citizen.*

as it provides support to both Bassingbourn and Fort George. As G3 Clerk, Corporal John Buchan has been invaluable in assisting the Training Officer to achieve his goals for Instructor qualified soldiers in the Battalion for everything from Skill at Arms to Equality and Diversity: particularly important as we look forward to Op VOCATE. Private's Tilley and Whittal are now working in Battalion HQ, where their administrative might is channelled by the RAWO, WO2 Sharon Young. WO2 Young is still yet to arrive at work after the flag is up, or leave before it comes down again, being diligent in her role and remains in post as the Battalion's designated information and solution dispensary – a font of all knowledge and a guiding hand to ensure the Officers get their reports in on time!

Staff Sergeant Les Downie is currently deployed in Libya: what was initially billed as a two week recce – has now crossed the three month mark and we hope that when he deployed, Staff Downie had prayed for the best but packed for the worst! Sergeant Jamie Penman, like all Regimental Accountants at one time or another, can sometimes be found curled up in a corner in Battalion HQ hiding from the relentless processing of Mess bills, payment vouchers, and audit reports, which he insists are watching him! Luckily, Captain Stephen Lewis' office is often empty to offer a place of refuge; whilst this implies that Captain Lewis is much like an appendix – superfluous – he has been busy helping the Nordic skiing team achieve success at the Army Championships. Overseeing it all is Major Drew Dunford MBE, who has an uncanny ability to be right when he's right and right when he's wrong! Rumour has it that he thought he might have been wrong once but it turned out he (rather everyone else) was mistaken. No problem lasts long once subjected to his knowing smile and half raised eyebrow: no doubt this is why he was recently appointed MBE, and picked his gong up at an investiture in December.



*Corporal Prem Tamang and Lance Corporal Jack Bull at the end of paintballing.*



## UNIT WELFARE OFFICE

UWO: Captain P Marshall  
AUWO & WIS Manager: Sergeant P Trickovic  
Community Centre Manager: Corporal D Ferguson  
Welfare Clerk: Private Haines

Over the winter months, the Welfare Office has been busy continuing to provide a wide variety of support to the troops and their families within the Battalion. This has ranged from assistance with housing matters to supporting community events in the Community Centre. On this note, there have been a couple of very successful social events worth mentioning.

The Families Committee hosted a very busy “Children’s Christmas Party” with Sergeant Lenny Ramsay stepping up to the plate as Santa Claus. He was more than ably assisted by his charming helper elf which came in the shape of Sergeant Brian Young. For Sergeant Ramsay this was his last time in uniform (an elf one to boot) before joining the ranks of Civvy Street. It was a great event and was well supported. This event was then followed by a really busy “Ladies Christmas Party”. Again, it was a great night and well supported although I think looking after the many children full of sugar and excited by Christmas was easier to control!



*Address to the Haggis – Ladies Burns Supper 2014.*

After a restful and well earned leave, the New Year got off to a flyer, with a fantastic “Ladies Burns Supper” which was held in the Warrant Officers’ and Sergeants’ Mess in Fort George. Special mention must go to Mrs Fiona Marshall and her small committee who put an enormous amount of hard work into planning and running this excellent event. The Welfare Team would also like to thank the Regimental Sergeant Major, WO1 (RSM) Shaw for allowing the use of his Mess and providing the mess membership to support the event.

Thankfully, the embattled welfare team has recently seen an increase to its staff. Private Kim Haines is a 7 SCOTS soldier who will be employed within the Welfare Office on an Additional Duties Contract (ADC) for 3 days a week. This is a unique arrangement which is a fantastic opportunity to enhance the pairing partnership between 3 SCOTS and 7 SCOTS. Within Fort George, welfare support to the soldiers has been increased with the addition of a RVS Welfare Support Officer as well as the reintroduction and refurbishment of a RVS Centre for the soldiers to escape to. The RVS Centre provides an alcohol free environment for the private soldiers to get some down time away from their chain of command. This is currently the only RVS post in Scotland which supports a regular battalion so we are privileged to have it and it’s doing a great job.

With the commitment to Op VOCATE seeing personnel possibly deployed to Bassingbourn for an extended period of time away from their families, we are continuing to work hard to ensure that information and support is available to all those who need it, when they need it.

## ENTENTE CORDIAL – A VISIT FROM A FRENCH EXCHANGE OFFICER – SECOND LIEUTENANT RUELLE

*By Lieutenant Nick Coles*

The origin of the Red Hackle was explained with great pleasure to a young French officer visiting the Battalion for a month at the beginning of the year.

Like a re-enactment of *Stars in Their Eyes*, Second Lieutenant Fabien Ruelle, full of anticipation, appeared from behind the airport arrivals’ doors to be greeted by two members of the Officers’ Mess sporting traditional regimental uniform. Stunned and slightly bewildered, he shook hands with his hosts with no idea what to expect of the forthcoming month.

No sooner had he arrived than he was thrown into a Blues Night, being held coincidentally, in honour of Major General James Cowan. Despite the latter’s illustrious career it was noted that his uniform was still less ‘bling’ than the Frenchman’s. Equally, Lieutenant Ruelle is still under the illusion that this was his welcome party!

Lieutenant Ruelle volunteered to come to the Highlands to visit the Battalion to improve both his language skills and his understanding of how we operate. His English certainly improved although the “jockanese” still required some work! His view of current British Army tactics may have been hampered by the amount of time spent at tourist hotspots.

He enjoyed the “traditional” Scottish cuisine: trying haggis, deep fried pizza and Mars bars all being washed down with a brightly coloured orange drink which he described as looking “poisonous”. Thankfully, he was not in the presence of Colour Sergeant Barrie at the time.

Having returned from a few days of culture, visiting Balhousie Castle and staying in Edinburgh Castle, he longed for some time to sleep and recover. Instead, he was woken at the crack of dawn by two subalterns who bundled him into a car and took him to Aviemore to test him on skis. Seconds after he had been fitted for skis he was heard practicing his ‘Jockanese’ on a pretty lady as he shared a button lift up the mountain.

Lieutenant Ruelle was not afraid to pass comment in the Mess either, when speaking to Second Lieutenant Young he remarked; “...you are funny; because you are not funny” and he was eager to get involved in all activities; playing the bagpipes, bucket reeling, hunting “Heelan’ Coos”, firing on the ranges and he even gave a personal presentation to the Jocks about his military experience to date. However, he chose his moments with care, as soon as the heavens opened on the ranges at Barry Buddon, he did not waste time hiding away in the warmth of the range safety vehicle for an entire day – “You Scottish people are crazy” was his only response when asked if he was alright! To the admiration of those present, he deployed on Exercise FIRST STRIKE with Delta Company to Garelochhead to endure five days on exercise conducting basic soldiering skills in sub zero temperatures. He admitted that it opened his eyes to the realities of the infantry and remarked; “I now know why the Scottish soldiers wear kilts, it is because they have big balls”!

Over a four week period Lieutenant Ruelle gained a valuable insight into life as a platoon commander, discovered some of the similarities and differences of how we operate compared to the French Army and most importantly, picked up a few keys phrases from the ‘Jockasaurus’. He returned to France with the knowledge that this Battalion continues to thrive on the tradition of sarcasm and that despite cultural and military differences, “plus ca change”.



*2nd Lieutenant Ruelle with officers in different orders of dress.*

## THIS IS LIBYA – OPERATION VOCATE LAND TRAINING UNIT FORWARD DEPLOYED ELEMENT

By Major James Reid SCOTS

*"That is no country for old men"* William Butler Yeats

In June 2013 the Group of Eight held a Security Compact with the Government of Libya at Lough Erne, Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. Her Majesty's Government agreed to train up to 2,000 Libyan soldiers in the United Kingdom over a two year period while the United States, Turkey and Italy agreed to train 6,000, 3,000 and 2,000 soldiers respectively. Italy and Turkey decided like the UK, to train Libyans in their home country while the USA would utilise training facilities in Bulgaria. Former Libyan Prime Minister Zeidan outlined how the Libyan Government wished to improve both the quality and size of their Land Forces in order to improve their country's security, now three years post revolution.

In late August/early September 2013, a number of tri-lateral working groups took place in the Corinthia Hotel, Tripoli and reached a common agreement on what was needed to deliver a project that would be now termed the 'General Purpose Force' (GPF). The working groups were attended by the Libyan Armed Forces (LAF) chain of command, representatives from the UK, US and Italy with Turkey, Bulgaria, NATO and the UN as observers.

The aim for the Libyan Government is to utilise the GPF as an internal security capability that is capable of supporting the Libyan Government in counter terrorism operations and border security. This is to be achieved by the creation of nationally recruited "Katibas" (Arabic for battalion or phalanx) for the GPF which will reflect the ethnic and regional makeup of the whole country. The GPF is also to be a vehicle for the integration of the "Thuwar Militias" (revolutionaries) into the established security force. The new Katibas are to be initially commanded by existing LAF Officers and NCOs.

A 'Technical Agreement' (TA) was reached by both governments outlining the criteria for new recruits wishing to train in the UK. These are:

- To be aged between 18-35
- To have passed the screening of the Libyan 'Integrity Commission' to ensure no former regime or Islamist leanings
- To be passed medically fit by a Libyan doctor (overseen by a UK RMO)
- To hold a valid Libyan Passport
- To have no bar on securing a UK visa on criminal or security grounds
- To attempt a UK Personal Fitness Assessment (PFA) with a target time for completion of the 2.4km run of 12 minutes 46 seconds.

The history of Libya is vast and beyond the scope of this article. The 2011 revolution, after 42 years of oppressive rule is still fresh in the mind of Libyans even if the gaze of the International Community has long since switched to Syria, Crimea and elsewhere. Like many of the organisations of state, the Gadhafi regime has left the Land Forces with a legacy of institutional neglect, low morale and lacking any capability in a conventional sense. Gadhafi focused on rash purchasing of equipment and arms while constantly degrading the manpower of his forces ensuring he had sufficient mass to deter any would be adversaries, whilst guaranteeing that his forces would not become strong enough to become a threat to the status quo.

In the last decades of the regime, recruitment was effectively frozen for most parts of defence, and this has led to a wholly inverted pyramid in the current Land Force and in wider defence manning. Promotion was based on time served alone and this legacy of joining the Army for self-interest has endured to the present and blights plans for rebuilding. The Army also had a history of conscription and this has deprived it of the opportunity to develop a strong non-commissioned officer cohort. Happily there is a consensus that a generational shift is required in order to allow new ideas and practices to permeate and the Government is trying to push through a much delayed retirement law for the MOD in 2014.

Due to the 2011 Arab Spring and subsequent revolution, LAF manning issues were further compounded due to issues of credibility of military personnel. Credibility is dictated by the exact date at which a person came over from Gaddafi's forces to the rebel side and due to this there are probably some competent individuals from the former Army who will never hold any power or influence again

due to the perception of jumping to the winning side too late in the day and when their success was assured.

The Libyan Land Forces are an organisation now facing considerable change that arguably eclipses anything currently being conducted by European Armies. This does not bode well for international allies seeking assurances for the delivery of their part of the GPF program. The Libyans have to transform their structure, manning, and equipment while also fighting a near insurgency in the east of the country, against both secessionists and Islamists. This is all while trying to wrestle the legitimate mandate for the use of force from various Militia groups who continue to hold considerable influence in large sectors of the population. The Militias may currently be a necessary evil to prevent the spread of Islamists and secessionists, however their continued existence in the long term undermines the rule of law and hence the need for a GPF.

The Turkish Ministry of Defence moved quickly in their preparations and commenced selection of their GPF recruits in November 2013. The Turkish used the same location in country where UK selection is currently underway; an Air Defence camp called Thanaweya Al Jaweeya (TAJ) in South Eastern Tripoli. When the Turkish Army commenced their processing, the camp was in a much poorer state of affairs with leaking roofs and no sanitation. Due to the speed in which the Turkish conducted processing they were able to get their recruits to Sparta to commence training very quickly indeed. However once deployed the unintended consequences of a shortened processing period came to the fore. Discipline amongst the recruits was very poor and they were initially unwilling to accept any kind of orders from either Libyan or Turkish instructors. This resulted in the return to Libya of 120 recruits and has caused the Libyan MOD a significant degree of embarrassment.

The Italians have fared better however at the cost of a much longer screening period in Libya which took place over two months from October to December 2013. Their recruits flew to Italy in January 2014 to commence training at camp in Cassino. As both Italy and Turkey have deployed their GPF recruits, the UK has benefitted from the lessons learnt and we have refined the UK plan.

The UK has a small contingent of tri-service personnel called the Defense Advisory and Training Team (DATT) embedded with the British Embassy and charged with assisting the Libyan MOD and Armed Forces. The DATT has a lead officer, Lieutenant Colonel Mickey Stewart IG who is responsible for assisting in the preparation and deployment of the UK GPF for their training in the UK. The processing period is complex and requires augmentation of manpower from the UK and the prevailing view was that this should be drawn from the unit who will be responsible for training the GPF once in the UK and hence why I am writing this article in country. The VLTU Fwd therefore consists of:  
Major Jim Reid SCOTS – OC Bravo Company, 3 SCOTS  
Major James Anderson RAMC – RMO, 3 SCOTS  
WO2 M Fairweather SCOTS – RQMS(T) Des, 3 SCOTS  
Staff Sergeant L Downie AGC(SPS) – Financial Systems Administrator (FSA), 3 SCOTS  
Sergeant G Bowery APTC – SMI, 1 SCOTS.

The principle task of the team was to ensure that the UK bound GPF complete all of the mandatory requirements to ensure they can travel to the UK. There was also a requirement to provide concurrent activity whilst medicals and Home Office visa applications were completed. The concurrent activity was to provide an introduction to the UK in general and to provide answers to their many questions about the training and Bassingbourn as a location.

The team deployed on 8 January 2014 in order to commence the screening of recruits on Sunday 19 January. Part of the imperative to deploy was driven by visa expiry dates and a need to ensure that when the Libyans called forward their recruits, the UK was ready to process them. Shortly after arrival however, it became clear that the TAJ was not ready and while it only required a week of preparation consisting of completion of the ablutions and the delivery of 500 mattresses and bedding, there was a block on the release of funds to enable this; a situation that became known as "Mattress-gate". The Libyan MOD ascribed the poor initial performance of their troops in Turkey to the poor preparation and living conditions that they had to endure at TAJ before deployment and therefore was keen to make sure they did not make the same mistake twice. The subsequent eight weeks proved to be very frustrating for all involved. The



## Op VOCATE



*Eyes front!*



*Major James Anderson commencing medicals.*



*Kit issue.*



*The raw material.*



*Major James Anderson at the Commonwealth War cemetery.*



*Marcus Aurelius Arch.*



*We have christened them, the 'Golden Don' drill squad.*



*You can take the Instructor out of Sandhurst.... WO2 Fairweather with his potential officer syndicate.*

money for the camp and therefore the earliest arrival of troops was always one week away, *Insha'Allah!*

Whilst delayed, we prepared as much as we could for the commencement of screening but also had spare time to assist the other members of the DATT on their own lines of development. WO2 Fairweather and Sergeant Bowery were an integral part of the delivery of a successful Libyan Army Young Officer Selection board. Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Tink SCOTS was the lead officer and his job was to assist the Libyan chain of command in selecting the best Officer Cadets to be put forward for English language training and then subsequent attendance at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, RAF Cranwell or HMS Britannia Royal Naval College.

The selection process was modelled on the UK Army Officer Selection Board (AOSB) and consisted of command tasks, general knowledge tests, interviews and an English language assessment. An Army Personal Fitness Test (PFT) was included as an assessment to give them an insight into what would be required to achieve on commencement of training. Finally to test their physical courage and determination there was an endurance event (stretcher race) at the culmination of the week. Six successful candidates were selected from a group of 24 potential officers.

Due to various engagements and meetings we were able to see a lot of Tripoli and when time allowed visited points of interest such as the Marcus Aurelius Arch. A highlight from a military perspective was visiting the immaculate Tripoli War Cemetery in the town centre. There is representation from a number of antecedent Scottish Regiments including a considerable number of fallen comrades from the Black Watch. It was very reassuring to see the site in such immaculate condition compared to the Italian one next door which had been ransacked and is now disused.

Finally, in late February we got our wish and the money required to finish the refurbishment of TAJ camp was released. This allowed the Libyan MOD to mobilise manpower from recruitment centres around the country and orders were issued for them to assemble at TAJ to commence screening.

The first Libyan recruits started to arrive on 2 March. The DATT had been provided with a list of over 400 recruits' names who has been identified for the Katiba in January 2014 and had commenced applications for approval of a body called the 'Integrity Commission'. As the men started to assemble it was clear that the real issues were only just beginning. As it transpired, the mobilisation process in Libya proved ineffective, leading to further delays.

The recruits registered so far reflect the geographical mix of the country and are an extremely positive group of men. To get to this point however has been not without its difficulties. In spite of many meetings when age was discussed and assurances received, 6 recruits who turned up were under 18 and had to be turned away for this training rotation. At the other extreme, the majority of SNCOs are well over 35 with the eldest Warrant Officer wishing to travel was aged 56; needless to say he will not be.

The behaviour of the majority of recruits has been excellent in spite of there being two fights at the outset; one involved a Libyan full Colonel and the other was a drug fuelled knife fight. All those responsible for each incident were immediately removed from camp as the Katiba Commander does not want troublemakers in the battalion. Fitness levels vary and our slowest time recorded on the PFA was over 18 minutes while the best was a very credible 8min 45s.

At the time of writing the team has been in close working partnership with the Katiba for four weeks and relationships are developing well. With the recruits, most faces are now recognised and names have been associated with some of the more outgoing men. This has been helped by a short program of lessons and interest periods on the culture of the UK, and introduction to the British Army and to Basingbourn. WO2 Fairweather has also provided a show and tell on the equipment the recruits will be issued. The sample set has been eyed covetously by all Libyans who have seen it.

By far the greatest number of questions asked have been about the training they will receive and Basingbourn camp itself. It has given us confidence in our own collective planning thus far, that all of their concerns have been addressed or will be considered in time, less perhaps the difference in the cost of cigarettes. Up to date photographs of the camp have shown UK efforts such as the Mosque with its feet baths and the training wing signs in both English and Arabic. There were a few questions that did take me aback somewhat, such as "who won the Second World War?", "can I visit the

Queen?" and "do trains travel under water?" (Not that stupid in a country with no rail network).

In spite of various setbacks and problems we now have over 300 recruits in the camp and may shortly exceed the total of 360 men that we have agreed to train. A decision fast approaches about booking the aircraft to fly men to the UK and finally we will be nearing the end of a very long beginning. Goodwill remains high on both sides and in spite of setbacks we continue to inch forward.

### RUGBY TEAM

Club President:	Lieutenant Colonel A Reilly
Officer in Charge:	Lieutenant IK Walker
Coach:	Captain M James
Assistant Coach:	Lance Corporal Ratumaisese

Despite the many Battalion commitments faced by us all, Battalion rugby has continued to go from strength to strength this season and we have been competing in the Army Championship Cup. The team started the season with some good pre-season performances against local teams such as *Craig Dunain*, which many members of the team now play for in their own time. Such games allowed us to build up to the first stages of the Army Championship, where we won all but one game against 2 SCOTS (where we lost by a very narrow margin of 17-15). The team pushed through the first round of quarter finals against 1 R IRISH, taking the lead early on and continuing on to a win despite a strong comeback in the last 10 minutes. Once again, the team were pitted against 2 SCOTS to push for a place in the final, however we were pipped to the post by a well organised 2 SCOTS side, losing by the smallest of margins, 13-12. Despite the loss, this was perhaps our best game with considerable personal sacrifice from all members of the team.

We have not been solely focused on Army competitions; the team have been looking to further community engagement within the Highlands with several local tournaments being entered over the coming months; In particular the Banff 7's in May 2014, as well as the Dreghorn 7's this summer. This builds on our already strong ties with *Craig Dunain*, who until recently had been struggling for players. It was agreed that we could train together on some evenings and this helped to foster our bond. *Craig Dunain* now sit somewhere in the middle to top of their league whereas they had been sitting at the bottom last season.

Over the year there have been some outstanding individual performances; aside from the norm it should be noted that Lance Corporal Vunibobo has had three, man of the match nominations which, for a man of his age is no small feat! Congratulations! Thanks must also go to Lance Corporal Ratumaisese who, even following a knee operation, continued to support the head coach. We must however say goodbye to Captain Jamie 'The Heed' James, as he is due to be posted. His impact upon the development of the team has been great and the team would like to extend their thanks to him for all his hard work and commitment to Battalion rugby over the last few seasons.

### BATTALION FOOTBALL TEAM

Football Officer:	Captain McRobbie
Football Manager:	WO2 Beaton
Kit Man:	Sergeant Currie

Lady Luck can be a fickle mistress: and she has not been kind to the fortunes of 3 SCOTS football team of late!

Prior to the beginning of the season a naive young(ish) officer volunteered to embrace the challenge of looking after a football team. Having been firmly raised within a rugby environment, this was seen as a "command challenge" but ultimately, and at the end of the day, paperwork is paperwork – regardless of the sport. WO2 (CSM) Beaton headed up the practical training and selection of the team aided by the ever encouraging Sergeant Currie. On the pitch itself, Drum Major Campbell led the team as Captain throughout the season with utter selflessness and impeccable self discipline.

Going back to the summer, with Charlie (Fire Support) Company deployed on the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, they grasped the opportunity to compete against 1 SCOTS and mark the beginning of the season with promising and decisive victories. With 5 SCOTS completing their final football tour before becoming a ceremonial Company, we had the pleasure of welcoming them to Fort George on a typically wet and windy day although the action on the park was soon to heat things up! The end result was another 3 SCOTS victory and so confidence



going into the Army and Infantry competitions was high; unfortunately it would turn out to be too high!

Having entered the Army and Infantry Cup, the Battalion would face 9 Army Air Corps and 1 COLDM GDS. Playing 9 AAC would reunite the team with its former coach, Captain Dargavel, who unfortunately for us, demonstrated the same tactical ability that took the team to the Infantry Cup final during his tenure. The 4-2 result did not reflect the competitive nature of the match in which we led for much of the game. Alas, the team would have to deploy on exercise without a victory – but two weeks on Live Fire ranges in the wet and cold of Warcop and Otterburn would take their minds off things!

Moving onto the Infantry Cup, 1 COLDM GDS made the unenviable trip north to Fort George for a game that would go all the way to the wire. Numerous chances were unfortunately squandered and when the Coldstreamers had a man sent off late in the second half, the game looked set to be wrapped up. To their credit, the opposition put in a solid defensive performance and held out to penalties, resulting in 3 SCOTS heartbreak and a 2-1 loss.

With a painful season now behind them, the team must learn from the mistakes it has made and take the time to practice and rebuild a team of players that gets back to the basics; work for each other as a team and perform during the big games. After all, we have previously beaten a team (7-1) who are currently in the Infantry Cup semi-final. Op VOCATE will challenge the manner in which the team is run and trained but it will not stop it. Indeed those in Bassingbourn will have ample opportunity to develop their footballing prowess over the coming months and I look forward to taking the team forward!

But underlying this all, we must remember first and foremost: the beautiful game was made to be enjoyed!

## GOLF SOCIETY

Golf Officer: Major J Howe  
Match Secretary: WO2 R Tollan  
Handicap Captain: Staff Sergeant Smith

“He’s a bandit!” is the common cry often heard on the golf course from many members of the Golf Society as the season has progressed. A number of golfers think they are “fly” and will do everything and anything in their power to win their game – or one of the trophies that have been up for grabs over the course of the season. They do this in a number of ways such as playing with a bogus handicap much higher than they really have (WO2 Allan Dunn take note!) or by rustling their chocolate wrappers when the other players are addressing their ball (Major Jamie Howe take note!). Some are less than honest when they lose their ball, pretending they have found it by slyly replacing the lost ball with one from their pocket (Captain Glenn Hogg take note!) whilst others will seek to exploit an advantage when they adjust their horrible ball position to one that looks like it has been placed on a Tee in the rough (WO2 Paddy Marshall take note!). But despite this, we can all still work together and all in all, it has been a cracking season and most importantly, all the members have had fun in a sporting and friendly environment.

The Society is now ramping up to start the new season and despite the Battalion’s deployment on Op VOCATE with members split between the Fort and Bassingbourn, there are plenty of events planned. We are scheduled to play the usual spattering of Monthly Medals, The Ahluwalia Cup and, if time permits, it is our aspiration to play matches against other SCOTS Battalions and local units in the area. In addition we will do all we can to provide some players in support of The Black Watch Golf Association in their annual golf event!

There have been many prizes up for grabs over the season with the main ones being the Ahluwalia Cup and the Order of Merit Trophy for the individual who has finished in a top three place on each Monthly Medal. These rightful prize-winners are:

### Ahluwalia Cup 2013 Results

Winner	SSgt Allan Smith	43 Points
Runner up	Cpl Malkie Wilson	40 Points
Third	CSgt Mark Shearer	39 Points
Longest Drive	LCpl Ralph Porter	
Nearest the Pin	SSgt Allan Smith	
Gross Comp	SSgt Allan Smith	

### Order of Merit Winner 2013

Cpl James Purce (Average Stableford score over 3 rounds – 35.33).

Finally, if you are reading these notes and you fancy a game against this formidable 3 SCOTS Golf Society, please don’t hesitate to contact



Staff Sergeant 'Smudger' Smith,  
Ahluwalia Cup Winner 2013.



Captain Glenn Hogg –  
All the gear...

the Golf officer or Match Secretary and we will try our very best to facilitate a match where we can – and we promise no sweetie paper rustling, bogus handicaps or ball tampering!

## BATTALION BOXING

By Lt J E Fish

Unit Boxing Officer:	Captain C M Treasure
Unit Boxing 2IC:	Lieutenant J Fish
Head Coach:	LCpl J McGarvey
Assistant Coach:	Cpl J Downie
Boxers:	Sgt A Wells
	Cpl J Reddington
	LCpl F Gracie
	Pte D Pauley
	Pte J Palmer
	Pte T Sweetin
	Pte S Dawson
	Pte R O'Malley



Corporal Reddington landing a punch during a recent sparring session.



*Lance Corporal Gracie and Private Palmer preparing for a sparring session.*

Having joined the Battalion in 2013 with a newly found passion for boxing, I was quite surprised to find that there was no current Boxing Club at the Fort. Perhaps understandable due to the pace of life and commitments over the past few years but having identified a gap in the market, I took it upon myself to once again begin to establish a Battalion Boxing Club. The aim was to have a club that would welcome anyone, regardless of experience. Individuals could learn the noble art of pugilism and those who had both the interest and the skill could be selected to represent the Battalion. I soon found out (as so many who have gone before me have found out) that it is all very well having bright ideas as a young subaltern but actually putting them into practice is a different matter. As I began to get to grips with the mountain of regulations that are rightly put into place to ensure boxers are kept safe, the scale of the task began to hit me. Help however, was at hand!

The first two recruits into the newly reformed Red Hackle Boxing Club were Sergeant Wells and Lance Corporal McGarvey. Sergeant Wells had some previous boxing experience and Lance Corporal McGarvey had a wealth of experience from his time as a boxer in 5 SCOTS. Their steady hands brought me down from orbiting the moon and finally, after a number of months wrestling with paperwork and gauging interest amongst the Companies, the boxing club was ready to take its first tentative steps. Alas, no plan survives contact with the enemy and all too soon, it was time for me to leave battalion on a career course!

In my absence Captain Craig Treasure and Corporal Downie stepped up and took over. Though the club is only in its early stages, with their help and the support of OC Charlie Company, 8 men have been chosen to represent the Battalion at the forthcoming Regimental Boxing Night. To help the team prepare, a space in the gym was dedicated to the Boxing Team and almost over night the men took it upon themselves to decorate their new home. When both Captain Treasure and I went to visit them during training we were both pleasantly surprised to see every single Mohammed Ali quote posted on the walls! It was really encouraging to see the camaraderie and team spirit develop so quickly.

The 8 battalion boxers have worked tirelessly over the past 6 weeks to prepare for the boxing night. The Highland Boxing Academy was good enough to open its doors to the team allowing the boxers to both train under a different set of coaches and conduct full contact sparring sessions. The boxers have learnt a great deal from these lessons – not only about the sport but about themselves and our thanks go to the Academy for all their efforts and support.

The boxers are now itching to get into the ring and put all they have learnt into practice. With such a positive and encouraging start, the future looks bright for the Red Hackle Boxing Club. Our numbers continue to swell and future events are sure to inspire other young Jocks to join us.

## EXERCISE NORDIC HACKLE

*By Captain S Lewis AGC (SPS), AGC Det Comd*

As 2014 was a Winter Olympic year it was a fitting time to restore the Battalion's Nordic Skiing team. However, having been employed as the UK Contingency Battalion and the on-going commitment to Operation VOCATE, it was not easy to find six members of the Battalion who were prepared to give up their Christmas leave to do hard physical exercise in the cold! Nevertheless, convinced by the prospect of returning fitter than they could think imaginable and visiting most of Western Europe on the way, a team of six was assembled from the available volunteers. Funding was rapidly drawn together from both 3 (UK) Division and the numerous and generous donations from charitable funds for forces based in Scotland. All participants in Exercise NORDIC HACKLE were complete novices, and so a six week "zero-to-hero of Telemark" training package was planned, comprising training in Norway and Austria, followed by a competition in France. As all participants were complete novices, the team did not expect to qualify for the Army Championships in Bavaria.

Nordic skiing comprises cross country skiing and Biathlon, both with the same overall aim: complete the set course in the fastest possible time. Cross country is a straight test of physical endurance and speed, whereas Biathlon has the added dimension of having to shoot targets with a small bore rifle that the skier carries around the course. Nordic skiing combines the two defining features of soldiering: fitness and marksmanship and it requires serious dedication to training, as well as teamwork and of course, a sense of humour.

So, on 7 December 2013, Privates McLeod, Currid, Marshall and Browne, Lance Corporal Balshaw and Captain Lewis, started their epic journey across Europe. The training began in Sjusjøen, a small village in the mountains above the 1994 Olympic city of Lillehammer, Norway. Although Norway used to have a ferry link with Aberdeen the ferry closed in 2012, necessitating a 1500 mile detour via Harwich and Denmark including two overnight ferry crossings – and a lot of coffee for the drivers!

Training was led by Ex-Army Instructors and rapid progress was made on the fresh and plentiful snow in Norway. The group swiftly built up its stamina and by day four were ready for the first practice race, a 5km Cross Country. A start time of 0730hrs meant waking up to begin pre-race procedures at 0500hrs: stretching, a hearty breakfast of porridge (including the mandated tablespoon of salt for Pte McLeod) and most importantly, selecting the correct grip wax. Grip wax enables cross country skis to climb up the hills whilst also allowing them to freely glide downhill and maintain the speed that the skier so painfully earned during his ascent. Too hard a grip wax and you won't be able to get up the hill, whereas too soft and the snow will stick to the skis and form an "ice boot". Twenty to twenty five minutes of lung-burning exertion later, and the team were back in the warm mini-bus, exhausted, and ready for a Norwegian sauna and a plateful of Captain Lewis' trademark scrambled eggs!



*L-R Private Currid, Captain Lewis, Privates Marshall and McLeod.*





*Private McLeod, exhausted having climbed The Wall at Ruhpolding.*



*Privates McLeod and Marshall before the Military Patrol Race.*

After more practice races in Norway, the team bid farewell to its instructor, and headed towards the first real test, the World Championships course at Hochfilzen, Austria. As there is currently no Infantry Nordic championships, the team had been invited by the RA, RAC and AAC Nordic Ski Association to take part in their annual Austrian event. The team stayed in the spartan *Waldlager* Austrian Army accommodation, a stones throw from the small-bore range. It was at this point that the focus was firmly shifted to the shooting side of biathlon and each man fired several thousand practice rounds: any round missing the target during a race means an extra 150m penalty ski! This practice paid off and the team posted the best shooting of any novice team, a feat we were to better at the Divisional Ski Championships held in Les Contamines, at the foot of Mont Blanc, by being the top shooting team at Exercise PIPEDOWN – no mean feat!

Although the accolade of “top shots” wins no silver wear in itself, it resulted in a somewhat surprising call-up for the team (by this point looking forward to getting home) to the Army and British National Nordic Skiing Championships in Ruhpolding, Bavaria. The Army Championships were a significant step up in the standard of racing; many of the racers were seasoned veterans who had competed at the championships many times before and some of the teams had even started their training back in October. Additionally, the course at Ruhpolding is a formidable beast, including sections with names such as “The Wall”, and “Cannonball”. Tackling these on skis little more than an inch wide, whilst carrying a rifle and towards the end of one’s exertions, is the ultimate test of Nordic skiing. Although the team was inexperienced in comparison to many of the other competitors, we acquitted ourselves well; the highlight being Private Marshall and Captain Lewis being selected for the Infantry team for the Inter-Corps competition.

Finally, on 8 February 2014, two weeks later than anticipated due to the surprising qualification to the Army Championships, the team recovered back to Fort George, having fired ten thousand .22 rounds, covered five thousand miles on the road, skied countless kilometres on training loops and most importantly over 200km of gruelling Nordic races. What an experience and achievement and one that has ensured this will continue – planning has already begun for later this year!

### **EXERCISE ASKARI STORM 06/13**

*By Captain T H Blair, Delta (Light) Company*

For elements of the Battalion not committed to Operation VOCATE a welcome break from normal battalion life came in the form of an attachment to the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles for their trip to Kenya on Exercise ASKARI STORM 06/13.

To prepare for travelling to the British Army’s warmest training area a company strength group formed under Charlie (Fire Support) Company and deployed to Garelochhead in early February to conduct Exercise FIRST STRIKE. A predictably cold and wet week ensued and by the end of our time at Garelochhead the Company had some fairly saturated Jocks but Jocks who were well prepared and well practiced in the skills they would need in Kenya.

Exercise ASKARI STORM 06/13 was split into three main phases and spread across three distinct areas of Kenya. The first phase, Exercise ASKARI WARRIOR, focused on operations from fire team up to company level, both live and dry. Operating from company harbours, the exercising troops were able to get to grips with the environment and get to know their parent companies for the exercise while exercising basic infantry skills and developing the procedures they would require for the rest of their time in Kenya. As the full contingent of 3 SCOTS personnel deploying to Kenya were unable to deploy on Exercise FIRST STRIKE, Exercise ASKARI WARRIOR was a chance for commanders in acting appointment to get to grips with their new roles and bed themselves in firmly. Despite some notable (but thankfully harmless!) encounters with a lion, the Jocks were quick to impress; one Company Commander commented he found it hard to believe the platoon he had attached was a composite and that most commanders were in acting rank for the exercise. The Jocks also had their first taste of Gurkha hospitality involving goats swiftly dispatched by kukris and even more swiftly turned into curries!

The following phase, Exercise ASKARI CENTURION, saw the companies move three and a half hours northeast of Nanyuki to the Archers Post training area. This stage of the exercise was divided into three phases. The most testing was a 26km route clearance



through the heat of the day. Temperatures in the area were around 10°C hotter than the southern training areas and the six days at Archers Post proved a stern challenge for Jocks more used to the temperate climes of Inverness.

Exercise ASKARI SPARTAN, the final exercise, was delivered by 4 Brigade and consisted of a demanding six days in the Lolldaigia Mountains. This complex phase mixed conventional war fighting with stabilisation activities and was a good chance for the exercising troops to experience the kind of operations the Army may have to conduct in the future. From digging trenches and preparing defensive positions to delivering humanitarian aid, the Jocks approached the whole enterprise with good humour and the professionalism expected of soldiers in the Royal Regiment of Scotland. On return from the final exercise the majority of the our soldiers were able to participate in adventurous training, ranging from mountain biking



*Lunch is prepared – Gurkha style!*



*The B Company platoon in Kenya.*

to rock climbing, allowing them to unwind before beginning the long journey home.

Throughout our time in Kenya, the Gurkhas proved to be excellent hosts and we found we had just as much in common with them as there were differences between us. The Gurkhas have a long tradition of fighting alongside the Scottish regiments and are almost as proud of their pipes and drums as we are. Many strong friendships were struck up between the Jocks and the Gurkhas, and many kukris were swapped for Tam O' Shanters bearing red hackles!

#### **INVERNESS 5 KM TEAM ATTACK**

Sunday 9 March 2014 saw a team of four officers from the Battalion compete in the Inverness 5km team attack challenge with the aim of retaining their title of 'fastest corporate team'. The Global Energy 5K Team Attack is held as part of the larger Inverness Half Marathon event and around 3500 people from all over the Highlands descended on the Highland capital to compete. The team attack event is based around four people running individually, but having their times combined at the end, in order to give a total time. In 2013, the Officers' Mess team had been crowned champions, so it was with some trepidation that this year's team lined up at 1340hrs on the start line.

Lieutenant Alex Deck was the only team member to be retained from last year's championship team but he was joined by Captain Billy Garrick, Lieutenant James Fish and 2nd Lieutenant Dan



*A home for the night – Jocks prepare their basher.*



*Lieutenant Fish making sure the medal is real.*





*The Battalion teams before the race.*



*Unveiling the Commonwealth Flag with the Lord Provost of Inverness.*

Gellender (attached from the AAC). The weather that morning had been promising, with the sun making a tentative appearance around mid-morning. However, in true fashion, as the race approached the clouds gathered and threatened a downpour. With the gloom setting in and the winds howling, the hooter sounded and the competitors set-off along the picturesque River Ness into Inverness City Centre itself. A crowd had gathered to cheer the runners along and as the Officers' Mess team crossed the main bridge in the city centre to start the return route along the opposite bank of the river, it was clear the men from Fort George has established a dominant lead. The real competition now came in the form of another Battalion team, that of the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess! As the two teams upped the pace and gritted teeth for the rapid race back to the finish line, the route wound its way from the city centre and over the famous Ness Islands. Finally, the route led the runners into Queens' Park athletics stadium and a large crowd had turned out to cheer the runners home. With 3 SCOTS soldiers occupying 7 of the top 10 positions, both the Officers' and Sergeants' Mess teams had a nervous wait to see who would be crowned champions. Despite Staff Sergeant Murray (APTC) winning the race in a time of 18":04", the combined times of Captain Billy Garrick, Lieutenant Alex Deck, Lieutenant James Fish and 2nd Lieutenant Dan Gellender (AAC) was strong enough to see off the stiff competition. Consequently, the men from the Officers' Mess were once again crowned champions for 2014!

#### **Results**

##### **Officer's Mess Team – Fastest Corporate Team (Overall winners)**

Capt Billy Garrick	(18m 28s)	2nd place overall
Lt Alex Deck	(20m 04s)	7th place overall
Lt James Fish	(20m 48s)	8th place overall
2Lt Dan Gellender(AAC)	(20m 56s)	9th place overall

##### **Sgt's Mess Team – Fastest Male Team**

SSgt Al Murray (RAPTC)	(18m 04s)	1st place overall
Cpl John Buchan	(19m 51s)	5th place overall
CSgt Ross McBride	(19m 56s)	6th place overall
CSgt Craig Weir	(24m 04s)	19th place overall

### **COMMONWEALTH DAY IN INVERNESS – 10 MARCH 2014**

*By Major (Revd) John Duncan CF (CS)*

In this year of Scotland hosting the Commonwealth Games, we were delighted that the Provost of Highland Council, Councillor Alex Graham, kindly invited Commonwealth soldiers from the Battalion to celebrate Commonwealth Day at the Town House, Inverness.

The Battalion were represented well by a number of individuals from across the globe as follows:

Corporal Mujoma (Zimbabwe), Corporal Veniqi (Fiji), Lance Corporal Hooper (St Vincent), Private Bosman (South Africa), Private Gurung (India), Private Olaleye (Nigeria), Private Tay (Ghana). Even Scotland was represented by the Padre, Sergeant Trickovic (Assistant Unit Welfare Officer) and Private Haines (Welfare Office and the photographer)!

Members of the Battalion were introduced to the Provost and Councillors who were delighted to see so many different countries represented and which demonstrated the geographical spread of the Commonwealth. On the steps of the Town House the Provost read

a message of support from HM The Queen and the Commonwealth Affirmation in both Gaelic and English followed by the Commonwealth Flag being unfurled.

After a brief speech in the Town House, in which the Battalion were warmly and generously praised by the Provost, members of the Battalion were able to enjoy morning tea (the scones and cream cakes were great!). The Provost also gave members of the Battalion a conducted tour of the Council Chambers where both the Cabinet of Prime Minister the Right Honourable Mr David Lloyd George MP met in 1922.

In the year when Glasgow will be hosting the Commonwealth Games, Commonwealth Day was a simple but rewarding ceremony which served to remind us of the variety of cultural backgrounds we have in this Battalion and the British Army in general and the valuable contribution the Commonwealth continues to make in the provision of individuals from such diverse backgrounds, who are willing to share the common values and standards of being a British soldier.

### **SHINTY CLUB**

OC Shinty: Captain P Marshall

Coach: Flight Sergeant Cooper, RAF

It is with some pride that I pen this article for the Red Hackle Magazine. I am not aware of their having been an entry for Shinty before but this is the newest sport to be introduced to the Battalion although it is one of the oldest recognised sports in the world.

Partly to embrace the fact that we are a Highland Battalion at home in the Highlands and that we plan to be here for sometime, a decision was made (with some gentle pressure from the Welfare Officer) for the Battalion to oversee the introduction of Shinty as part of our Wednesday sports afternoons. With some effort, kit and equipment has been sourced and provided with coaching coming from some external sources. But it is growing in popularity amongst the Jocks and officers, which is really encouraging to see. Indeed, the Commanding Officer has also picked up a stick (and put a ball through the QM's store win-



*Shinty Squad 2014.*

dow) and strangely, the Battalion 2IC, Operations Officer, Regimental Signals Officer and other staff officers have also suddenly developed an interest in this sport too! The more the merrier!

The origins of Shinty can be traced back over 1500 years and has always had strong links to the Highland Regiments. Shinty was reintroduced in its present form to the Armed Forces in 1994 where it continues to flourish; albeit as very much a minority sport. Being based in Fort George – and in the heart of Shinty country – gives the Battalion the ideal opportunity to get fully involved in the sport and develop the club.

As I said, it is a minority sport, and there is currently only one other team within the Armed Forces! This is the SCOTS Camanachd and is truly a joint team, with members being drawn from the Royal Navy (including the Royal Marines), Army and RAF. For the Battalion in the long term, it is hoped that from the introduction of the sport at the tail end of last year, enough interest will be generated and membership sustained, that eventually a squad strong enough to enter a local league will emerge. Thankfully, the initial signs are really encouraging. In the short term however, the intention is to host the first ever “Inter Services six-a-side” competition later in the year and we are on track to do so. As with many physical sports, Shinty is based around high standards of fitness, team work, communication, and in particular, courage. So, those players who demonstrate that they have reached a reasonable standard, will also be given the opportunity to go and represent the Battalion with the SCOTS Camanachd team.

I have a real passion for Shinty, and it really is Scotland’s National Game; a true sport for all which can be played by anyone who has the enthusiasm and confidence to pick up a stick and get involved!

## SPEAN BRIDGE COMMANDO SPEED MARCH – 2014

*By Lieutenant Z Smyth*

The Spean Bridge Commando Speed March has been held annually since 1996 to commemorate the original World War II Commandos. The premise of this iconic event is based around the initial stage of commando selection and training when Achnacarry House by Loch Lochy, was established as the first Commando Training Centre. Back then, the potential Commandos would get off the train at Spean Bridge to find no transport waiting. They would be told they had one hour to reach the gates of the house, just short of 7 miles away, and be required to complete it in their own equipment including rifle, to the weight of 36 lbs. Those coming in over the time would be returned to the train station to go back to their parent units.

Readers may recall that we entered into the competition in 2013 where we did surprisingly well for a scratch team with little preparation. I was determined to do better, so this year’s challenge saw six members of the Battalion compete in the event with the added aim of raising money for Forces Charities. As the Battalion was originally supposed to be deployed on Op VOCATE in March, we were forced to put together a team at very short notice. Despite this setback we still managed to round up 8 volunteers (twice last year’s number) who were willing to give up their spare time in order to raise money for charity whilst testing themselves physically and mentally on an event dominated by both the Parachute Regiment and Commandos. In addition to this, the short period of time before the event – which included two weeks of very welcome battalion leave for those personnel who would be deploying on Op VOCATE – meant that there was little scope left for good quality and prolonged training and thus the team would be relying on their current level of fitness and determination to see them to the finish. Unfortunately, with only days to go, two of our number were forced to drop out leaving us short of two capable runners. Nonetheless, on the morning of the race, morale and adrenaline was extremely high.

The route is arduous. It takes competitors from the Spean Bridge train station (the closest transport link to Achnacarry House) straight up the hill to the famous Commando Memorial, over the Caledonian Canal and along the banks of Loch Lochy before turning into the grounds of the house itself.

The course was made slightly more acceptable by the number of spectators and veterans offering real encouragement all along the route – all six team members were able to finish and the timings are as follows:

Lieutenant Smyth	00.57.51
2nd Lieutenant Pearson	00.59.22
Corporal McFarlane	01.01.44
Corporal Ward	01.04.03
Corporal McMillan	01.04.09
Lieutenant Crook	01.05.19

Whilst only two of us would have made it to Commando selection I feel it was a respectable performance for all concerned given the lack of training!

Although only able to muster a team of six from a Battalion of hundreds because of the many commitments we have, the initial volunteers doubled last year’s team sheet and, with the support regularly received from the Battalion itself, this will hopefully grow still further for next year and become a permanent fixture in our Battalion calendar.



*The team made it!*



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

Commanding Officer:	Lieutenant Colonel PM Little OBE
Regimental Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 1 (RSM) JJ Dickson
Second in Command:	Major RJ Barker
Training Major:	Major ARW Watson
Reserve Training Major:	Major J Anderson
Quartermaster:	Major W Hunter
Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant:	WO2 (RQMS) S Lawrence
Adjutant:	Captain CM Grant
Operations Officer:	Captain A Cameron
Intelligence Officer:	Captain N Wheatley
Motor Transport Officer:	Captain R Coppard
Regimental Administration Officer:	Captain PJ Ward
Regimental Operations Support Officer:	Captain A McEwen
Regimental Operations Support Warrant Officer:	WO2 L McDowall
Regimental Career Management Officer:	Captain BS Baxter

## BATTALION OVERVIEW

Since writing for the November issue last year the Battalion has continued to be extremely active both in training and as part of Op FORTIFY, the recruiting surge to bolster the ranks of the Reserves. Even in this 'relatively' quiet period for exercises and deployments we have had soldiers deploy to both Denmark with 7 RIFLES and Cyprus with 1 SCOTS. Our troops have taken part in a wide range of activities and the opportunities for overseas deployments, some already mentioned, have never been so diverse for the Reserves. I have attempted to capture only the main events of the last 6 months from a Battalion perspective and have included some of the Company articles to add additional flavour.

**OP VOCATE.** In support of our paired Regular Unit, 3 SCOTS, we have soldiers deployed to support Op VOCATE; the training of Libyan soldiers in Bassingbourn. Repeated delays have made it difficult to deploy Reservists on this Operation but at the time of writing we have had five soldiers deploy to Fort George to assist with the preparations, so with a bit of luck when this goes to print, the training will be in full swing. When the training does begin in earnest 7 SCOTS personnel will be assisting in some of the key supporting roles. Already in place is Lance Corporal Shaw who is putting his PTI qualifications to good use, Private Malley is working with the medical staff, Lance Corporal Baker is working with B Company and Corporal Stewart deployed for two weeks to assist the G1 staff with MCCPs and other G1 functions. Others are primed to deploy for varying lengths of time and are looking forward to working with our regular partners and the Libyan Army.

**Op FORTIFY.** As stated in the last edition of the Red Hackle in order to deliver the Army Reserve 2020, a national operation (Op FORTIFY) is now in place to recruit the additional 11,000 personnel required to meet the 30,000 strong force, trained and deployable; the target date for full manning of the Reserve has been adjusted slightly to April 2019. Our role in that is significant; the Battalion is currently manned at approximately 50% of the required level in terms of active and effective personnel and will need to grow accordingly. The 7 SCOTS recruiting target has been adjusted accordingly with the aim to recruit 300 additional soldiers in the next 4 years, by April 2018, with all personnel trained and integrated by April 2019. This constitutes a growth of 75 Soldiers, year on year, and will remain the key focus of our efforts. There has been some notable success in the first 6 months of the operation to date, during which 30 personnel have been added to our ranks, mainly from Regular to Reserve transfers and postings in from other Reserve Units. But there are also early signs that the inflow of new soldiers is slowly picking up speed and we should start to see the transition of recruits into training in the next 6 months.

**Training.** The Battalion is gearing up for the Annual Training Deployment (ATD). This year we will deploy a Light Role Infantry Company on Ex IBERIAN STAR 1 to Fuerteventura (the Canary Islands), Spain during the period 31 May-15 June 2014. The first week will see composite platoons from across the Battalion come together for some all important low level training. This will forge the new pla-



*Some of the Battalion recruiting team hard at work.*



*A soldier of the 7th Battalion on exercise covering his arcs in the sunset.*



*Pipe Major Walker tackling the Serre Chevalier slopes doing his part in leading the Battalion team to victory in the UK North Army Reserve Alpine prize.*

toons into effective fighting units before the second week of the exercise. There will be a slight pause to recover and enjoy some well earned adventurous training in the middle weekend before plunging into a joint exercise with the Spanish army that will see our platoons operate as a Company group in a challenging exercise.

Training at home has certainly not been forgotten in the run up to our trip to Fuerteventura. In addition to Company training and sweeping up any remaining annual tests (MATTS), the Battalion has been preparing for the Brigade Skill at Arms Meeting (SAAM). On the weekend 22-23 March teams from each of the Companies entered the Battalion SAAM to pick the team for the Brigade competition. Competing against each other and 2 SCOTS, the Reserves managed some notable victories and the team selection is complete ready for the Brigade SAAM. With a bit of luck our winning streak will continue.

**Adventure Training – Exercise Spartan Hike.** In January 2014 Captain Hugo Cannon (A Company) took a team of four men to the UK Regional and Territorial Army Ski Championships held in Serre Chevalier, France. The team consisted of Captain Cannon, Pipe Major Walker, Lance Corporal McNicol and Private Higgins. Building on their successes of previous years the team won the UK North Army Reserve Alpine prize and were presented the trophy by HRH The Duke of Kent.

### HQ COMPANY – PERTH

OC & PSAO: Major JSL Langdale  
CSM: WO2 R Bustard  
RSO: Captain I Bunce  
RSOWO: WO2 J McColl  
Signals PSI: Sergeant R Duncan

HQ Company has continued to see a number of personality changes since the last report with many moving on to different things and some fresh faces having joined. The Quartermaster Major Kevin Wood left us in September, on promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and after a short gap we were thrilled to see the arrival of Major Watty Hunter in January 2014. Sergeant Early also left as Signals PSI to become a civilian with Sergeant Robert Duncan taking over; he has already scored a notable achievement in getting rid of all the Clansmen radio kit which has been gathering dust for what seems years, so a great start to his tenure. HQ Company has progressively gained in experience and military knowledge with soldiers attending numerous and varied courses and with high attendance at Battalion and Company training weekends.

As a Company of varied departments, the training is geared towards ensuring each soldier receives the training relevant to his Platoon or Detachment but a bit of cross training keeps the interest high on drill nights and training weekends. An example of this is the REME under the guidance of Staff Sergeant John Dalziel and Sergeant Colin Bruce who have taken our Signals Platoon and given them basic knowledge on vehicle maintenance and hands on training on the use of generators and manual handling practices. Basic Infantry skills and Bowman radio work have been the main focus for the Signals Platoon for most of this training year with recruiting now featuring heavily in the forecast which if successfully applied should see the Platoon filling its empty slots. To support the Company during training weekends the Catering Department has also been busy, they have excelled themselves producing excellent menus for both normal training and for both Messes. Lance Corporal Jarvie in particular has excelled in providing the HQ with a varied lunch menu which is not only cheap but tasty and she deserves a special mention for her support to SSAFA. WO2 Biggar has been extended as RCWO for another year and we look forward to some food handling training for all ranks from him in 2014. The MT as ever are very busy with WO2 Davy Swash growing greyer by the day and Mr/Corporal Stevie Burns having just returned to work after a period of illness and it is good to see him back to his normal self and blasting the ears of Lance Corporal Mike Ramsey, the CO's new driver.

The Company welcomed back after a period of mobilization on Op HERRICK 18, Private Gary Carling and Corporal Joe Lally; it is good to see them both return safely. The RMO has also been on her travels and we welcomed her back from operations in Cyprus where she took part in Op TOSCA. As a Company we are going from strength to strength and with recruiting our main focus for the near future we continue to work towards achieving full strength once

again. We will of course also maintain each Department's core skills and we have soldiers booked on various career and trade courses. The training diary for 2014/15 remains full and offers varied events and opportunities; the aim is to deliver effective capability while ensuring that all of our training is interesting, fun and relevant. The Annual Training Deployment (ATD) as always remains a high priority and as a Company, our soldiers have been fortunate over the last couple of years, enjoying overseas exercises in France, Germany, Cyprus, America and Denmark with 2014 seeing our soldiers looking forward to deploying to Spain for two weeks. I would also like to give all our civilian staff a mention as without them we would certainly not be able to function; their commitment and output is always appreciated.

### A COMPANY – DUNDEE, KIRKALDY AND STIRLING

Officer Commanding:	Major R Davies (From Jan 14)
Second in Command:	Captain M Dunnigan
CSM:	WO2 Parker
PSAO:	Captain R Reid MBE
Platoon Commander (Stirling):	Capt H Cannon
Platoon Commander (Dundee):	2nd Lieutenant R Walker
Platoon Commander:	2nd Lieutenant C Duncan
Platoon Commander:	2nd Lieutenant M Orr
SPSI:	WO2 G Woolley
PSI:	Colour Sergeant I Robertson
PSI:	Sergeant W Rankin

The pace of life never slows and the Company has been supporting numerous exercises and operations. There was a good turnout on the Remembrance weekend with representation in the Caird Hall (Dundee) and parades including Dundee, Stirling, Angus and Fife. It was particularly poignant this year after the loss of Private Bobby Hetherington on Operation HERRICK in April 2013. After this we had the normal lull for some Christmas festivities in which we enjoyed the Jock's Christmas lunch in Stirling. This however was no excuse to avoid training and even as the food was being prepared the troops were savouring a morning filled with CBRN training; there is nothing like respirator training to whet the appetite. Since Christmas the main focus has been preparation for live firing in early March but on top of this the Company recruiting effort has continued at pace. The hard work of Sergeants Wade in Dundee and Simpson in Stirling along with both of their teams must be mentioned; their work can often seem a thankless task but their efforts are vital to the future of the Company.

As current operational commitments in Afghanistan reduce we have seen Colour Sergeant Hamilton, Sergeant 'Ghosty' Thomson, Corporal Smith, Lance Corporal McLean and Private Adams back from operations with 2 SCOTS. They were deployed in various roles from ground holding, to Police Mentoring and training the ANP in the Lashkar Gah Training Centre. The last of the Op HERRICK returning soldiers was none other than Captain Mike Dunnigan who returned to the fold in November after spending his tour deployed with 1 Mechanised Brigade working in the Task Force Helmand HQ. Also back from operations in Cyprus on Op



*A Company soldiers gather for Quick Battle Orders from Lance Corporal McNicol.*





*A Company Mortar Platoon on exercise – Private Christie laying on his Mortar in preparation for a Fire Mission.*

TOSCA are Privates Anderson and Taylor while even closer to home Private McNicol (who had volunteered for operations but was unable to deploy) was granted an FTRS contract that he used to great effect in completing the Regular JNCO Cadre. Finally rounding off the last few months the very same Private McNicol (and now Lance Corporal McNicol) managed to escape to France along with Captain Cannon and the Pipe Major, Sergeant Walker to take part in Exercise SPARTAN HIKE (Army Reserve Skiing Championships).

Now it is time for a few farewells and some congratulations. No sooner had we welcomed him back we were saying farewell to WO2 Hamilton who has promoted and takes on the challenges of CSM Delta Company. WO2 “Penny” Penrice also promoted and has moved to Mortar Platoon 2IC and last but not least we say well done to Lance Corporal McNicol who gains his first and arguably most elusive stripe. Congratulations to all three soldiers. We welcome several new members; our new OC, Major Robin Davies joins us from the Australian Army much to the relief of Captain Valentine. Captain Valentine handed the reins over in January and can now breathe easy without simultaneously spinning plates as OC, 2IC and Mortar Platoon Commander. We welcome back Sergeant Billy Taylor – a name that should be familiar as, until recently, he was the PSI in Kirkcaldy. Welcome also to Privates Primrose, Burnett, Hay, and Devlin. We say farewell to Lance Corporal Mellish who has, after a somewhat fraught journey through the ‘one Army’ recruiting system, joined the Regular Army. We wish him all the best for his future with them.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to mention another member of the A Company family who is no longer with us. Private George Fleming from Stirling was a well liked, highly regarded and very capable soldier, not to mention a devoted family man. He sadly passed away on 01 February 2014 whilst hill walking in the Stirling area with some of his friends. The large number of family, friends and comrades who attended his funeral was a testament to his popularity. He will be sadly missed.

## If you're not registered, you can't vote.



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. Ordinary voters need to re-register every year (annually).

Remember, 16 & 17 year olds can register but cannot vote until they are 18 except in the Scottish Independence Referendum on 18 September 2014.

For information on registering to vote:

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e-mail: **ero@highland.gov.uk**

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

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# The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada

It has been an active and interesting training year for the Canadian Black Watch. In an environment of Defence Renewal and budget cuts to the Canadian military, The Black Watch carried on with training activities focused on a back-to-basics approach to section and platoon fighting skills. It should be noted that one of the key tasks of the Army Reserves in Canada is to "Connect with Canadians" in order to maintain a strong link with the local communities in which we serve. This past year we continued to excel at this task due to the continued involvement of the Pipes & Drums at local events and parades, as well as through several social activities in which we continue to participate.

The Annual Saint Andrew's Ball was well supported by the officers of the Regiment. It was the first time in recent memory that we were represented by three serving Lieutenant Colonels: the current CO; the immediate past CO, Lieutenant Colonel Bruno Plourde, now CO of the 2nd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group and Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Mackay, who had recently returned from a deployment in Afghanistan and is now working at Army HQ in Ottawa. As is tradition, the 450 guests from the greater Montreal community were treated to a show by the Black Watch Pipes and Drums and the Cadet and Association Pipes and Drums.

This past February the Officers' Mess hosted the Annual Highland Dinner. This is an event that was started by Lieutenant Colonel Plourde as a way of allowing members of different military and civilian communities in Montreal to experience the history and traditions surrounding a Highland Mess Dinner. The dinner was a fundraiser to assist one of the local communities planning to erect a new cenotaph for the citizen soldiers who have served in Afghanistan. This was an outstanding event in which we had the opportunity to showcase our Regiment to a wider community.

The Toronto Black Watch Association, originally formed from members of the Black Watch (RHR), held their annual Red Hackle Dinner in January. The Guest of Honour was Lieutenant Colonel Peter Little OBE and was well attended by the leadership of several Canadian Highland Regiments to hear Lieutenant Colonel Little give us an update on the current situation in the British Army and the Black Watch in Scotland. We presented him with gifts on behalf of the Regiment which included a bottle of our 150th Anniversary single malt whisky. It is through events like this, organized by the veterans of our many Association Branches across Canada, that The Black Watch is unique as a reserve regiment, in that we are able to connect with communities across the entire country rather than just in our own local community.

Individual members of the Black Watch Pipes and Drums also did some terrific work to raise awareness about the Regiment on the local



*St Andrew's Ball 2013 past and present Commanding Officers.*



*Remembrance Day Ceremony 2013 at McGill University Campus.*



*St Andrew's Ball 2013.*



*Annual Highland Dinner 2014.*

and national stages through our support for some very good causes. Last summer there was a disaster in the outlying community of Lac-Mégantic, where a train full of oil exploded in the middle of the town destroying several blocks of houses and businesses, as well as killing close to 50 people. Master Corporal (MCpl) Jeff McCarthy decided to help the residents of this town and organized a Celtic Festival to raise funds for the Red Cross, raising over \$7000 to assist the victims of this disaster. Another member of the Pipes and Drums, MCpl Alexandre Leger, also raised significant funds during the annual "Movember" campaign in which men grow moustaches through the month to raise funds for men's health. His efforts to mobilize and promote this campaign resulted in a national news story about the fundraising campaign and the involvement of the Black Watch soldiers.

These are only a few highlights of the activities that took place during this past year. Overall, through the collective and individual efforts of the members of the regimental family, we can safely say that The Black Watch (RHR) of Canada has exceeded its task to "Connect with Canadians". We are proud of our members both serving and retired who continue to support and promote the Regiment while also serving their communities in many different ways.



# Artefacts from The Black Watch of Canada Collection

*Editor's Note: This is the second instalment of a new series. A similar series has been introduced in the Canada's Red Hackle which will feature artefacts from The Black Watch Museum collection. New instalments will be featured in both Regimental Magazines on a regular basis.*

## PERTSHIRE VOLUNTEER BUSBY, C.1873

The head dress shown here, a rifle pattern busby, was introduced in British rifle regiments in 1873 as a replacement for the 1861 pattern quilted shako. It was worn until about 1878 when it was replaced by the spiked Home Service pattern helmet. The busby is made of sealskin and topped with black and red horse-hair plumes, suggesting it was worn by a senior non-commissioned officer – officers' pattern busbies were made from black Persian lambskin topped with feather plumes, while other ranks' pattern busbies, also made of sealskin, were folded flat like a wedge cap. The busby is ornamented in front with a tooled leather boss, representing the cockade or rosette used on earlier British shakos, as well as a stringed black-painted bugle badge with thistle insert. The stringed bugle with thistle insert suggested a rifle regiment with a Scottish connection and this has been confirmed by recent research. Early militia units in Britain were known as rifle volunteers and in 1909 they were re-designated as the Territorial Force. About 1860, two battalions of rifle volunteers were formed in Perthshire, Scotland, and in March 1880, one of these battalions became styled the 1st Perthshire Rifle Volunteers. Two years earlier, this unit had adopted the rifle busby "complete with a black-and-red plume and bugle badge," the thistle insert employed to display its Scottish origins. Following the 1881 British Army reforms (which saw rifle volunteer battalions linked to regular army regiments), the two Perthshire volunteer battalions were linked to the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), the 1st Perthshire Rifle Volunteers eventually becoming the 4th Volunteer Battalion of the Black Watch. Unfortunately, the provenance of the busby is not known. [Earl John Chapman, *Canada's Black Watch, 1862-2012: Legacies of Gallantry & Service* (RHC, Montreal, 2012).]



*The Perthshire Volunteers' Busby.*

## HMS MONTROSE

Since the beginning of August HMS MONTROSE has travelled thousands of miles through the Mediterranean and Red Sea, navigating the Suez Canal and transiting through the Strait of Hormuz into the Persian Gulf. Having originally been part of the annual 'Cougar' deployment, in which elements of the UK's Response



*Boarding Operations in the Persian Gulf.*

Force Task Group (RFTG) hone their skills through exercises with a number of key allies, HMS MONTROSE went on to conduct counter-terrorism and presence operations in the Persian Gulf, working for UKMCC Bahrain, under the banner of Op KIPION ensuring that the vital sea lanes remain open.

On entering the Persian Gulf tasking was varied and interesting, at times providing assistance and support to legitimate fishermen, to more specific tasks such as developing tactics with the Kuwaiti Navy off the coast of Kuwait City to combat fast moving inshore attack craft. Vitally Montrose were engaged in a mock war as part of an exercise with fighter jets from several different nations in the 40 degree heat of the Northern Arabian Gulf, before spending several days in the pouring rain in Ras Al Khaimah (in the United Arab Emirates), hosting members of the ruling family.

In the middle of December the ship put back to sea to continue in her role as the UK's primary deterrence and presence patrol in the Middle East after a 2 week stop in Dubai where the ship underwent a mid-deployment maintenance package. A key part of MONTROSE's 7 month deployment to the region was the deployment of the ship's Royal Navy and Royal Marines boarding team (RNRMBT) in support of the US-led Combined Task Force 152 (CTF 152). CTF 152 is the organisation within the Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) that patrols the crowded and strategically vital Persian Gulf. CMF is a 29 nation strong partnership that provides ships, submarines and aircraft across the region, and CTF 152 warships patrol the waters of the Persian Gulf, working



*Royal Navy and Royal Marines Boarding team of HMS MONTROSE.*



*Able Seaman (Warfare Specialist) Titherington manning the ship's starboard GPMG during Force Protection training in a CBRN environment.*

together to disrupt and deter the illegal use of the sea whilst reassuring and working with those mariners who are plying legitimate trade. The RNRMBT is made up of Commandos from S Squadron of 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines and is complemented with sailors from the Ship's Company. The bulk of the work carried out by the boarding team is visiting the numerous fishing dhows of the Gulf that ply their trade under the hot sun for days on end. The RHIBs approach the dhows and pull up alongside, before the boarding officer and his team begin interacting with the fishermen. These visits are vital for the work of CTF 152 as it is the most effective way to gather information and build a picture of the activity in the area in order to improve security of the seas to those who use it day in and day out.



*Able Seaman Tom Hardman, the most recently joined member of the Ship's Company, was proud to display the Red Hackle whilst conducting upper deck maintenance.*



The Christmas and New Year period are traditionally a time for celebrating with family and enjoying some well deserved relaxation time but of course every year there are thousands of Service personnel who are unable to do so due to the vital need for operations around the world to continue. The Ship's Company of HMS MONTROSE took their turn this year, spending Christmas Day at sea in the Persian Gulf.

After New Year the Ministry of Defence announced that HMS MONTROSE was being re-tasked to assist in the multi-national effort to remove chemical weapons from Syria. With orders to join the Danish-led Task Group tasked to execute Operation "RECSYR" (an acronym that stands for "Removal of Chemical Weapons from Syria"), MONTROSE left the Gulf in early January (replaced by her sister ship, HMS WESTMINSTER), in order to relocate to the Eastern Mediterranean. Repositioning to an entirely different ocean to join a multi-national task force, with only a week's notice, was a considerable logistical and training challenge but one that HMS MONTROSE adapted to well.

While Britain was in the grip of floods and bad weather, and the media's attention was drawn thereto, off Syria, the Royal Navy was at the very heart of a mission of global significance. Operation RECSYR marks the culmination of the diplomatic efforts to eliminate the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic, following the decision of Syria to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention in October 2013, and the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118, which called for the expeditious destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

As such, MONTROSE joined ships from Denmark and Norway to shepherd the two merchant vessels carrying the chemical weapons

as part of the United Nations mission to remove Assad's chemical arsenal from the war-torn country. During her time on task, MONTROSE and the multi-national task group completed three 'pickups', escorting the merchant ships TAIKO and ARK FUTURA to the Syrian port of Latakia to collect the chemicals.

To put these chemicals beyond use forever, they are being loaded on to the merchant vessels (out of the reach of the Syrian Army) and eventually being taken to Gioia Tauro, near the south-western tip of Italy, where the dangerous materials will be transferred to a US Government vessel, MV CAPE RAY, for subsequent destruction.

In addition to the Danish-Norwegian-British effort, there are also Chinese and Russian warships working independently of the RECSYR task group but with the same aim, and relations with them are "cordial and professional". Apart from the odd logistical stop in Cyprus, the ship's company of 200 have been working round the clock since arrival in Theatre in early January, and even received praise for her efforts from Sigrid Kaag, who heads the UN Joint Mission set up to remove chemical weapons from Syria. She visited the frigate in Limassol, where she told the Ship's Company they should be "proud of their courage and commitment, which speaks volumes for the UK's vision for international peace and security".

However, all deployments come to an end, and after an extremely busy seven months away, HMS MONTROSE returned home on 12 March 2014, after handing over her Operation RECSYR duties to HMS DIAMOND. Following a short maintenance period in her base port, she will assume the role as Fleet Ready Escort in summer 2014, the Royal Navy's high readiness "on-call" warship, ready to respond to a wide range of short notice tasks from search and rescue duties to maritime security patrols.



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# Black Watch Battalion Army Cadet Force

This reporting period started with a bang. No sooner had the last set of notes been written than the Battalion held its annual Military Skills Competition. This year twelve detachments entered and were joined by Dollar CCF whose purpose of joining in was to gain experience and their scores were not included in the final results. This year the event was held over one glorious September day in Fife. The stands were well thought out and challenging. They covered a variety of activities including map reading, drill, fieldcraft, first aid, signals, a variation on Kim's game and a Command Task. At the end of a long day the overall winners were Glenrothes Viewfield while Perth RLC won the Jenna Morris First Aid trophy.

Two weeks later the Battalion entered a team, once again coordinated by Major David Gill and RSMI Smith, for the Brigade Military Skills Competition. This year the direction given to the organisers was to make it stimulating, challenging and different. It was certainly that and the Battalion team came a very creditable 5th. However, perhaps most pleas-

ing was the fact that it won the Night Navigation Stand, a competition which all the teams that took part thought was both difficult and tiring.

The highlights of the months of October and November are the annual trip to Belgium which Captain Sue Truscott organises and the events leading up to and including Remembrance Sunday. The Belgium trip was a great success and the cadets were very much in evidence throughout the area collecting for Poppyscotland and flying the flag on Remembrance Sunday. Their smart turnout was commented on by a number of people, some of whom wrote complimentary letters to the Headquarters afterwards. In a similar vein, a number of cadets took part in a service in Dunfermline Abbey in December in aid of SSAFA, an event attended by the Lord Lieutenant and Provost of Fife.

In the last notes, it was reported that Major Jim McIntosh was due to leave the Battalion on retirement. He has been replaced by Major Andy Potter whose last job in the Army was as Quartermaster of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards. He did not take long to make his mark and, with no previous ACF experience, has brought a freshness to the job and an outsider's perspective on what the Battalion does with ideas on how it could be improved. There was a slightly surreal moment when, not long after Major Potter arrived, the Commandant (late BW) walked into the Barracks wearing a SCOTS DG tie in his capacity as their Regimental Secretary to find Major Potter (late SCOTS DG) wearing a Red Hackle. His first major challenge was to mastermind the arrangements for the opening by the Lord Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross in November of the Blairgowrie Combined Cadet Centre which Highland RFCA had rebuilt. This was a marvelous occasion with a number of local dignitaries including the Provost of Perth, councilors, cadets and their families present. The new Centre was much admired by everyone who was there and is a great improvement on the old but much loved premises.

On the sporting front, the Battalion did not enter anyone for the ACFA Scotland Cross Country competition in October which was disappointing but did enter junior and senior boys' teams for the five-a-side football competition. In January, for the first time for a number of years a number of the cadets took part in ACF Rugby when they took part in a centralised training session. It is hoped this is just the beginning of rugby in the Battalion.



*The opening of the Blairgowrie Detachment Cadet Centre.*



*Cadets in Belgium in October 2013.*





*Glenrothes Detachment parading at Ladybank on Remembrance Sunday.*

The Battalion sent a relatively inexperienced team of ten cadets from seven different detachments to Bisley in October to take part in the CISSAM. Although they did not win any trophies, the experience they gained bodes well for the future.

As far as music is concerned, the Military Band continued to fly the flag for the Regiment and in December they put on an outstanding concert in Kincardine to a packed audience. Not to be outdone by the Military Band the Pipes and Drums continued to flourish. They were well represented at the Piping and Drumming concentration in October. The culmination of the week was the competition day at the end. The Pipe Major, Cadet Sergeant Isla Stout came third in the Open Piobaireachd competition and then decided to try her hand on the drums and won the Novice Snare competition. Cadet Chloe Thompson and Cadet Sean Reid came respectively second and third in the Novice March competition and the Piping Quartet came third in the Pipe Quartet competition.

2014 began in similar vein to previous years. The Training Officer, Major Ian Taylor organized a training day for the adults on 25 January. Maximum use was made of the time with everyone taking part in some important training to ensure they are competent and current when it comes to teaching the cadets. That evening Major Ian Taylor and Major Kathy Douglas once again organized the Burns Supper. This was the last time they would do so before handing over the reins to Second Lieutenant Jenni Gerard and Staff Sergeant Bob Sangster. This year the Battalion was honoured because the Provost of Perth and Kinross, Councillor Liz Grant, came as a guest as did Lieutenant Colonel Peter Little, Commanding Officer 7 SCOTS. In addition Major Jim McIntosh and Helen also came. This gave the adults a proper opportunity to say farewell to them. The Military Band and the Pipes and Drums royally entertained everyone throughout the evening and their playing was much admired by everyone, including Major Andy Potter, no mean piper himself who, later in the evening, brought out his own pipes. Second Lieutenant Jenni Gerard gave an excellent and well researched Immortal Memory, Staff Sergeant Euan Patrick toasted the lassies in a very considered way and Sergeant Sharon Swash replied with an extremely amusing poem which also required some of those present to take part.

Finally, one of the individual highlights of this period was when Cadet Sergeant Jack Sweeney from Glenrothes Viewfield detachment was selected to take part in a televised debate in the House of Lords in November after going through two selection days. This is just one example of what opportunities can exist within the Army Cadet Force. The report of the day in his own words is as follows.

On 29 November 2013 the English Speaking Union held its annual debate in the House of Lords Chamber. For only the 7th time members of the public were allowed to sit on the red benches and participate in a live debate. The topic for the debate would be; "The Great War, listening to the past, looking to the future. Some 100 years on what is its legacy and how did it shape our nation today?" There were to be three threads to the debate; firstly, Britain is now a more globally responsible nation; secondly, Britain is more aware of the effects of war; and thirdly, Britain has not learnt from the Great War. Supporting each view would be two key speakers who were to deliver three minute speeches, several floor speakers who were to deliver 90 second speeches and one summary speaker who was to deliver a three minute speech. At the end there would be a vote by all participants and a conclusion drawn.

During the debate I was asked to play the part of a floor speaker, which came as quite a shock to me as I had originally thought I was only going as a supporter, in other words a non-speaker. However, two weeks before the debate I received a phone call offering me the position as a speaker as there were more openings. I did not really know what that would entail

but, none the less, I accepted the offer. And it wasn't until the week before the event that I read an email asking me to write a speech by 23 November. So with a week to go and no idea how to write a speech I set to work with the help of my school teachers and family friends. After a few days I had my speech ready. It was titled "Why Britain is a more globally responsible nation since WW1."

On the day of the debate I had to fly down to Gatwick airport at 6am with my Company Sergeant Major, WO2 Deehan. So after a 3.30am reveille I was ready to go. I remember feeling sick with nerves the whole day but the journey went smoothly and, after journey by car, plane, train and tube and a small walk, we arrived at Horse Guards Parade. We changed into our uniforms there before heading to the Houses of Parliament. With plenty of time to spare, we went sightseeing. However, after a chilled couple of hours it was time to go into the House.

Walking into the Houses of Parliament we were handed official IDs that we had to wear all day, and were searched for any prohibited items. Before the debate we went to a room at the top of the building to meet the other speakers. After some small talk and a few snaps of the view we went off to practice our speeches. After that we had a quick guided tour of Parliament after which we had lunch.

After a rather calming lunch we headed into the Chamber. I was sat in the very front row, right behind the speaking table. We had a quick briefing from a door keeper then the Lord Speaker entered and the debate started. The prepared opening speeches were absolutely brilliant which made me feel increasingly more nervous but the debate went on and eventually it was my turn to give my ninety second prepared speech. The first line of my speech went down well, as did the second line although there was what felt like a life time of a pause between them. However, after that I overcame my nerves and finished my speech. I remember sitting down with the most relaxed and glad feeling I had ever experienced and I wasn't shy to share it with the girl sitting next to me. She was still shaking with nerves as she was up next. That was amusing. After a long heated debated which was live on TV, it was over and a conclusion was drawn. Britain has not learnt from its experience!!!



*Top Table at the Burns Supper. Standing L-R Colonel Erskine, Lieutenant Colonel Hubert, Major McIntosh, Lieutenant Colonel Little, Seated L-R Mrs McIntosh, The Provost of Perth and Kinross, Mrs McIntosh.*



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# Tyneside Scottish

## INTRODUCTION

In September 2013 the new Clan Chieftain, Major Eyton Parker was appointed as Battery Commander for 204 taking over from Major Billy Murray who is now posted to Regimental Headquarters. This has come at the same time as the unit has started to re-role from Surveillance and Target Acquisition to MLRS and our soldiers have started to undertake their trade courses in order to be able to take their place in a Strike Battery.

Over the last few years the Tyneside Scottish have started to grow again. We are now a sub-unit that has two strong affiliated cadet detachments and a cadet pipe band. We also have an acclaimed adult pipe band. We have become in a short space of time a family in the North East that has something for the young and the old and all of us wear our Red Hackle with pride.

This is good timing as 2014 sees the 100th Anniversary of the Tyneside Scottish and the start of four years of commemorative events led by Major Ian Jones (Retd) under the banner of TS100. The Battery will host a dinner on 5 July which will serve the same menu served at the WW1 veterans reunion in 1922 and on the 30 August will see Magpie Music 2 and the story of the Tyneside Scottish told to music with a parade of our soldiers, cadets, musicians and veterans at Newcastle City Hall. This is a flavour of events to come and we would welcome soldiers past and present from the Red Hackle community to pop in or join us.

## BATTERY UPDATE

September 2013 saw the return of Lance Bombardier Bruno Dos Santos from Afghanistan. Lance Bombardier Dos Santos was deployed in role in support of 1RRF. In the course of the tour he was awarded the Brigade Commanders Coin for his actions on a suicide bomber trying to get into a patrol base. Subsequently he has returned to the Battery and running the gymnasium. He has also attended his Bombardier's Cadre as well as being the subject of flattering articles in the Evening Chronicle!

Annual Camp 2013 was held at Wathgill Camp in Catterick. The Regiment conducted an exercise using MLRS on the training area and soldiers conducted training on our new equipment and other core areas such as logistics and signals. The middle of the camp was dominated by the Regimental smoker which gave the Tyneside Scots an opportunity to unwind before their second week of training. This has been a sharp learning curve for the soldiers who are now working with armour and



*Bombardier Holloway with new friends in front of a 155mm Paladin in Minnesota.*



*Bombardier Moore at Camp Smith on an US Army exchange.*



*Some members of the Tyneside Scottish at Annual Camp Wathgill 2013.*





*Sergeant Lally and Gunner Walsh at Annual Camp.*



*Officer Cadet Bottomley receives orders at a joint Battery training weekend.*

all that goes with it; however it's a challenge that we are easily up to and we look forward to seeing our first trained MLRS Detachment Commander in due course.

Training has seen us work much more closely with 203 (Elswick) Battery based in Blyth. Tuesday night has seen reports and returns and Command Post Training being delivered over the airwaves and we hope that in time that it will be the norm to talk on radio between all sub units and that Virtual Battle Simulators will also be used by our MLRS Crews. We also look forward to having our soldiers live fire MLRS in early 2014.

2013 also saw Officer Cadet Bottomley, Bombardiers Moore and Holloway travel on exchange to the USA. OCdt Bottomley deployed to Fort Lewis in Washington State where he completed the US Army Officers Commissioning course which took place over a six week period and saw him take part in everything from square bashing to an air assault from Black Hawk. Bombardiers Moore and Holloway deployed to Arkansas and Minnesota.

Bombardier Moore worked with the 153rd Infantry Regiment. The exchange saw her take part in a wide verity of activities, including HUMV driver training and an impressive weapons package, were

she got hands on with a large variety of American weapon systems. Apart from rewarding training and acting as safety staff on the ranges, Bombardier Moore also found time to take in Arkansas and relax with her new found friends. She went to a Travellers Baseball game and also took part in cultural visits to Fort Smith including where Elvis got his first ever buzz cut when he was enlisted. Bombardier Tom Holloway found himself at Camp Ripley with the 1-125th Field Artillery equipped with the 155mm Paladin self-propelled howitzers. He took part in a 10 day field deployment where he carried out both dry and live fires. He also was able to experience the American surveillance and target acquisition radar systems, and was a member of the forward observation party, controlling and directing complex fires onto mock enemy positions. After the work came the play and after a burger in a 'Man Versus food' challenge bar he got to attend a baseball match and watched the state team the 'Twin Cities'. On his last evening Bombardier Holloway attended an NCO induction ceremony where he was inducted into the NCO Cadre of the US Military as well as the obligatory huge BBQ!

The work front has of course been busy however there has been time for play. Bombardiers Holloway and Moore also organised a Christmas party which had several live bands all which were brilliant as was the Bratwurst van organised to feed the hungry party goers! New Year saw the Battery host the Officers' Mess Burns Supper, closely followed by the All Ranks Battery Burns Night. The first event saw Major Byers and our dancers leading the guests in the 'Gay Gordon's', guests left exhausted but smiling; the second event was organised by the BSM WO2 Gibbons and we had diverse reading done with exotic accents of East London and Sierra Leone as well as Dundee! The cadets also held their Burns Supper at the Living Rooms in Newcastle and an Officers Mess one at Debdon Gardens; all were supported by our adult or cadet Pipes, Drums and Highland Dancers.

Piping, Drumming and Highland Dancing have witnessed a great resurgence in the last year. Recently our adult band has announced that they are competing and Pipe Major Craig Noble will be leading the competing band. Recently they won 25 trophies in the North West and then the North East (England) competitions on the 1st and 2nd of February 2014 and if you are at Forres or the Worlds this year then please give them your support. The cadet pipe band has now grown to 18 players who have been tutored by the adults. Cadet Li recently won novice chanter at the North East Competition, a great result as it was his debut for competing. The next year should see development in ceremonial and competing and members of both the junior and senior bands will travel to Germany, Poland and France.

All Army Reserve units have been tasked to recruit to 100% and if possible more and we are no exception. We have welcomed several new soldiers into the family and these include Captain Spain, WO2 Sharp, Staff Sergeant Hunter, Gunner McDonnell, Gunner Drummond and Private Richardson. We are always recruiting and if there are any Royal Regiment of Scotland soldiers that have settled in the North East, who are still eligible to serve, they would be welcome to join the Tyneside Scottish. There are also the two cadet detachments and for those pipers, drummers and dancers amongst you our Adult or Junior Pipe Band and of course the Associations of the Tyneside Scottish, Tynemouth Volunteer Artillery and the Black Watch. Please contact Captain Billy Perkins our PSAO on 101RA-204-PSAO@mod.uk or call us on 0191 2142401 for further details.

**Cadets.** The family has grown in the last year and Northumbria ACF has a fair few officers and NCO's wearing the TOS of the Tyneside Scottish. A large number of serving and retired Tyneside Scots have joined Northumbria ACF recently and even the Commandant Colonel David Middleton was the Clan Chieftain at one point!

**Heaton Manor.** 2013 was a fantastic year for the Detachment starting with two of our cadets going to Cyprus with 2RRF. This was closely followed by Rugby success with all but one of the senior Northern Rugby Team made up of cadets from the Detachment. The team then took the Region to the finals losing only to Wales; not bad for a first outing and a huge accolade for the Tyneside Scottish. In athletics we achieved the largest team at the inter Company meeting with 13 Cadets and achieved twelve firsts, four more than any other detachment in the county. Summer Camp 2013 saw the cadets travel to Barry Buddon. The spiritual connection wasn't lost on them and the cadets took advantage of opportunities to visit the Black Watch Museum in Perth. It was a really well attended camp and 25 cadets attend from the detachment. Major Parker handed over command of the Detachment to AUO Keyte in front of the cadets and the back drop of the Barry Buddon Camp Gate Guard.



In September our cadets won the annual best detachment competition for the Company which was not bad going considering they have only been in existence since September 2011. At the same time a well-attended annual detachment formation dinner was held at the Living Rooms in Newcastle. Subsequently the detachment saw a raft of promotions which was the prelude to a new term of achievement. So far we have seen 6 of our cadets pass their Bronze D of E in 2014 and 4 complete their BTEC CVQO Level 2 Public and Uniformed Services and in sport, we significantly contributed to our Company winning the Cross Country especially the girls where Lance Bombardier's Dunigan, Nassar and Quinn were selected for regional squads. In the football, Cadet Gharti was selected for the football nationals. In the background the cadets have been raising money for Op Ducey and Ex Seria, a cadet trip to Borneo, by taking part in the annual torture of the Boxing Day dip in the North Sea. The cadets are now looking forward to a fiercely contested football match against the Police Cadets and their Company Camp in Otterburn.

**Kingston Park.** Now parading a regular fifty cadets, Kingston Park cadets have been busily involved in activities and events which straddle both the Army Proficiency Certificate (APC) and non-APC framework. From annual camp at Barry Buddon and Company training weekends at Otterburn, to community engagement, such as the Armed Forces Day display in the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne, and the parade at Tynemouth Priory. Our cadets have been successful at Regional and National level in rugby, athletics, cross country and football, and participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award is healthy, with cadets working on Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. Our current focus is the battlefield study in July 2014 to Normandy to follow the D-Day Landings and role of the Tyneside Scottish. In parallel are all the preparations and plans we have to commemorate the Great War between 2014-2018. All this requires funding, and the detachment is working hard to raise the necessary money, which has included bag packing at local supermarkets and a lucrative race night for parents and the wider Tyneside Scottish family.

We receive excellent support from our Tyneside Scottish colleagues, our neighbours at 204 Battery and the Tyneside Scottish Association. They help the cadets to appreciate the bigger picture, how the past connects to the present and the opportunities that are available to them not only now, but perhaps also in the future.

### THE TYNESIDE SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION

The old comrades of Tyneside Scottish Association continues its close relationship with the serving TS. In January TSA members were invited to 204 Battery's annual Burns supper, together with the Newcastle Branch of the Black Watch Association. Once again the skirl of the



*Cadet Piper Minjie Li at the Commando Memorial Commemoration held by NACF.*



*Kingston Park and Heaton Manor cadets at Armed Forces Day Parade Tynemouth.*





*Heaton Manor Cadets Lance Bombardiers Ross Slater and Suroj Roka Maga at Barry Buddon Ranges.*



*Major Eyton Parker hands over Command of Heaton Manor Detachment to AUO Alison Keyte.*

pipes invoked many memories, though even after decades of service the haggis continues to be a topic of conversation.

The year will prove to be a busy one for the TSA. In July Association members together with TS ACF are off to Normandy for a commemo-

orative service at Ducey St Marguerite to commemorate the part played by 1st Battalion Tyneside Scottish (Black Watch) in the Liberation of Normandy in 1944. As part of the trip, a battlefield tour of the Normandy Beaches will be conducted before visiting Rauray, the location where 1 TS won a battle honour for the Black Watch.

With 2014 being the centenary of the First World War, the Association are working closely with the cadets and serving TS through a series of events as part of national and local commemorations.

**Major Eyton Parker**

## Association News

Royal Patron:	HRH The Prince Charles Duke of Rothesay KG KT GCB OM
President:	Brigadier M S Jameson CBE, Lord Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross
Vice Presidents:	Mrs Georgiana Osborne (Lord Lieutenant of Angus) Mr Bob Duncan (Lord Lieutenant of the City of Dundee) Mrs Margaret Dean CVO (Lord Lieutenant of Fife)
Chairman:	Colonel A Murdoch, TD
Vice Chairman:	Lieutenant Colonel R M Riddell
Secretary:	Major R J W Proctor, MBE

Trustee:	Brigadier E N de Broë-Ferguson, MBE
Trustee:	Lieutenant Colonel T A Coles, MBE
Trustee:	Major J M K Erskine, MBE
Trustee:	Major D J McMicking, LVO
Trustee:	Captain B M Osborne
Trustee:	Mr G Hay

Executive Committee:	Lieutenant Colonel F L Beattie, MBE Lieutenant Colonel J Keating, OBE Captain A McEwen Lieutenant Colonel J A Menzies Lieutenant Colonel R I Rose, TD Mr R Scott, JP Mr G Kennedy
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Welfare Committee:	Lieutenant Colonel R I Rose, TD – Chairman Major R J W Proctor, MBE – Secretary Mr J Baird Mr J Devlin Mr H Dunn Major G Grant, MBE, MM Captain T Graham
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Mr R Scott, JP  
Mrs I Shivas  
Mr G Ross  
Captain A McEwen  
Mr W Barr

### 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 T McCluskey
Treasurer:	Mr Jim Penny

Congratulations are in order to Peter Tindal, Bob Mitchell and all those who contributed to the planning and execution of a very successful El Alamein Dinner. All those who attended the Dinner lavished praise on the lads from The Black Watch Battalion who graced the evening with their company. Sergeant Pratt (son of Wullie Pratt) supporting a chest full of medals led the small group consisting of Lance Corporal Peebles who talked about sniping and also Private Beats who made up the trio. The current Association President Brigadier Jameson was our Guest of Honour and he thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

A number of the Branch members attended the Service of Remembrance at Balhousie. The inclusion of the school children who play a big part in the ceremony was very heart-warming, and all credit to the preparation by their teachers. The schools participation is the result of the visits to schools by The Black Watch Educational Outreach Programme.

The gathering at Balhousie by the bereaved families sharing their collective loss is a very special ceremony. Among the grieving relatives at the service was Private Robbie McLaren's parents; they moved to Kirriemuir from Mull not long after Robbie's death. The service was again conducted by the Branch Padre the Reverend Alex Forsyth.

The organisation of the annual Christmas Comforts distribution to widows was taken on by John Glen. Colonel Fred Beattie and his wife



Olive have carried out this task for a number of years which was always appreciated by the recipients but they felt that it was time for them to stand down from the task. The Branch is grateful for John taking over this important job so making sure our widows and elderly are not forgotten.

The New Year kicked off with the Burns Supper at Forfar RBL. Sixty-five members and their guests sat down and enjoyed fine fare. Comments from the Branch members who attended the Burns Supper were that the standard of entertainment this year was probably the highest we have had to date. The waiting service and fare afforded by the Forfar Royal British Legion was also of the highest order.

The evening was chaired by our Branch Chairman, Major Ronnie Proctor with his usual good humour and wit, introducing each speaker with his own poetry, or doggerel as he describes it. The Selkirk Grace was given by Bob Mitchell who also gave a short and thought provoking prologue. The haggis was addressed by our Chairmen who managed to pierce the "beastie" without sticking the dirk through the haggis, salver and table this year. The Haggis was carried in by Jim Anderson from Forfar and piped in by Ruairaidh Proctor the Chairman's grandson. Ruairaidh also provided an excellent programme of tunes later in the evening which was enjoyed by all.

Doctor Ian Duncan from Glamis toasted the Bard's Immortal memory in a brilliant manner and had the company enthralled from start to finish and received a standing ovation.

Peter Tindal our Vice Chairman gave an excellent rendition of Tam O' Shanter at very short notice and was not in the least nonplussed by the presence of Doctor Ian Duncan and Lieutenant Commander Jim Smith who are both members of the National Burn's Federation. Peter also gave the toast to Absent Friends at the end of the evening. The Soldier's Return which is a regular item on the programme was again given by Billy Whytock who explained that that he had first been asked to recite this poem was when he was serving with the 1st Battalion at Redford Barracks in 1987. Lieutenant Commander Jim Smith and his wife Muriel from Kirriemuir had us in stitches with their most entertaining toasts,



*Some of the Angus Branch members and their guests at the annual El Alamein Dinner.*



*The Angus Branch Burns Supper was held at RBL Forfar.*

"The Lassies" and "The Lassies Reply". We hope that we can entice them back next year.

Major Mike Mooney who is now an associate member provided excellent musical entertainment with his singing of Burns songs. A Vote of Thanks given by the Chairman closed the evening.

Currently we are looking forward to the unveiling of our 1st World War Memorial at Black Watch Corner in Belgium where a good representation of the Branch will attend. In advance we thank the Association HQ at Perth for all the hard work they have done to organise the event which we are sure will be both enjoyable and memorable.

Lastly we are sad to announce the deaths of James Macintosh of Arbroath, Sandy Fairweather of Montrose and Alex Murray and pass on our condolences and sympathy to all their families.

**T McCluskey and R J W Proctor**

## DUNDEE BRANCH

The Branch took part in Dundee's cross laying ceremony as part of the Veterans' contingent, with the Branch Standard being carried by John MacNiven.

Remembrance Sunday parade was held as usual this year at the 4/5th Battalion statue on Powrie Brae. There was a large turnout by not only Branch members and A Company but also of politicians of all persuasions as well as the general public. Wreaths were laid by Major Dave Ritchie for the Branch, by A Company and by both Dundee and Angus Councils. Hospitality was laid on at the Black Watch Club in Artherstone Terrace.

The Branch held its Annual Red Hackle Dinner at the Black Watch club in Artherstone Terrace on 31 January with a good attendance. We welcomed General Irwin and Lord Provost Bob Duncan. General Irwin spoke about the Regiment and Major Ronnie Proctor spoke about the Association. We also welcomed, as we do every year, several of our comrades from the Liverpool Scottish, who also joined a large Branch contingent at the A Company Burns Supper the following evening.

The Perth Branch Burns Supper was held in the Salutation Hotel on 8th February. The usual suspects, i.e. Willie Barr, Dave Ritchie, and Roland Rose attended from the Branch.

The Branch AGM was held in Artherstone Terrace on 23rd February.

The office Bearers elected were:

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

A contingent from the Branch made up of Lieutenant Colonel Roland Rose, Major Dave Ritchie, Major Jim Connors and Messrs Willie Barr, Joe Barton and Kenny Grant attended the Fife Branch Annual Rhine Crossing Dinner in Kirkcaldy on 21 March. It was a fine occasion and Bob Scott deserves much praise for the organisation.

The Branch continues to hold its monthly meetings in the Black Watch Club in Artherstone Terrace on the last Sunday of each month at 12.00 Noon. All serving or ex members of the Regiment are welcome to attend, and all members would be glad to see you.

**D M Ritchie TD**

## EDINBURGH, LOTHIAN'S AND BORDERS BRANCH

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

Throughout the history of the Regiment, Edinburgh and the surrounding area has been a regular focal point for battalions and training organisations. It is therefore, no surprise that a considerable number of former officers and soldiers have returned to the area to follow a second career path or to settle on retirement. With the combination of the use of social media and the old boy network, a campaign to drum up support for the formation of a new branch, gathered pace after the 2013 reunion in Perth. It is with great pleasure, we can announce that the Edinburgh, Lothian's and Borders Branch, reformed on the 10 January 2014.

Support for the Branch has been growing steadily and it is encouraging to note that upwards of forty individuals have joined since January 2014. We meet regularly at the Scots Guards Club, Haymarket. This location is a central point in the city and is on the main route for buses, trains and the new trams. We owe Rory McIntyre a massive thank you



*The Edinburgh, Lothian's and Borders Branch laid a wreath at the Boer War Memorial on The Mound on Remembrance Day.*



*Members of the Branch including the late Billy Boyle who recently died.*

for his time and effort over the past few months. Rory is our events coordinator and point of contact for current members and also for anyone wishing to join the Branch.

We are very fortunate to have Major Julian McElhinney as our President. Prior to joining the Territorial Army, Julian served in both The Black Watch and The Royal Regiment of Scotland. This provides an invaluable link to local units and we hope to develop comradeship with local servicemen in the area. In line with other Branches, we intend to hold a number of annual events. The exact dates are currently work in progress, however, we should be able to provide details in the November edition.

Standing proud on the corner of Market Street and North Bank Street, on the Mound, is the bronze statue of a Black Watch soldier in Highland Dress. This Memorial is dedicated, "To The Memory of Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men of The Black Watch Who Fell in the South African War 1899 – 1902". On a very cold 2013 Remembrance Sunday a small gathering of "Red Hackles" attended a short wreath laying ceremony at the Memorial. Sadly, this was to be the last public appearance for Billy Boyle who passed away, after a long and courageous battle against illness. He will be sorely missed by us all.

**J A Menzies**

### **FIFE BRANCH**

It doesn't seem like six months since our last report but six months it is; I think time does go a little faster as you get older. We start off with our visit to Perth for the Croix de Guerre dinner. It was a well attended night and it is always a pleasure to break bread with friends from another Branch. From Perth it was back to the Kingdom for a visit to Dunfermline Abbey to support the SSAFA Christmas Carol Service. Mrs Margaret Dean (Lord Lt) and our own Mrs Alison Halford-MacLeod were in attendance along with a contingent from the Black Watch ACF. It was a cold day but again well attended by the Branch Members. In January it was north again, to Dundee, to support the Dundee Branch with their Red Hackle Dinner and a pat on the back should go to Willie Barr because this year he never burnt the soup.

Still travelling, it was then north west to Perth again, this time to celebrate our Bard by way of the annual Burns Supper. There were many memorable moments but I think Brian Baxter's Tam O Shanter will sit in my memory for a wee while to come. In the background there was a lot going on with the sale of the Black Watch Watches and the preparations for our trip to Black Watch Corner along with our own Annual Dinner. The Rhine Crossing Dinner was held in the Victoria Hotel Kirkcaldy with a record attendance and was supported by our stalwarts from the Dundee, Perth and other far out places; it is always good to see them. Our guests for the evening were the Lord Lieutenant Mrs Margaret Dean and her husband Brian along with Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin. The Branch presented Margaret with a token of their appreciation for her continued support of the Regiment by way of a bronze coloured statuette of a Boer War Black Watch Soldier to which she was overjoyed with both the statuette and the wording on it which just said (A gift from the Fife Branch of the Black Watch Association).



*The SSAFA Christmas Carol Service.*



*The Rhine Crossing Dinner top table group.*

Another small presentation was given to John Smith in the way of a Black Watch New Testament, not for John I may add but for a friend of the Regiment who is an important player in the Houston, Texas, space programme. John will pass it on to him when they next meet. Along with our happy times we have had our share of sad times as well with our attendance at funerals not only of Branch members but well known Regimental names throughout the Scottish area. There is a great deal to look forward to in the coming six months with Black Watch Corner, the Reunion etc and as I write I have just received letters from both the Lord Lieutenant and General Sir Alistair thanking the Branch for a wonderful evening.

**R M Scott**

### **THE HIGHLAND BRANCH**

Chairman: John Stevenson  
Vice Chairman: Joe Barbour  
Branch Secretary: Gordon Kennedy

Where has all the time gone? It seems only weeks since we were writing our last edition notes and a reminder from our Branch Secretary that The Highland Branch is now in its 5th year was the icing on the cake.





*Highland Branch members enjoying their annual Aberfeldy Dinner held in March 2014.*

The Branch focus has been very much on the Belgium trip and with the planning nearly complete we decided to have our annual Aberfeldy Dinner on the 8th March, instead of the traditional May date. With kind permission from the Regimental Sergeant Major we were back at the Fort in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess; our members had invited a fair number of personal guests and the location and setting doesn't get any better.

With Eck Brown stranded on the Emerald Isle and Scott Taylor unavailable to Pipe, luckily the Officers Mess had a Reels night on that evening of the Dinner, so the Battalion Pipe Major kindly piped us into dinner and returned between Reels to play a few sets. A very suitable replacement and a special treat for our members and guests.

The Chairman (John Stevenson) had the usual Dundee Mafia in attendance and a special mention was made to his parents who were celebrating their sixtieth Wedding Anniversary. A fantastic evening in a fine setting. John will not be standing for re-election as Chairman, it was always his intention to help Gordon Kennedy to establish the Branch and to have it on a good footing. With it well established the time is right to allow a new younger Branch member to take the helm. He will stay a committee member and we all recognise the fine direction he gave the Branch during his leadership.

The Branch holds an open monthly meeting, on the second Tuesday each month at the Battalion Community Centre Wimberley Way. I invite anyone in the area to attend.

### **LONDON BRANCH**

Although, despite the chill winter feel, it is now officially spring I am going to hark back to November 2013 as the start point for my notes. November is traditionally a busy period for the London Branch and we had a particularly good turnout of Red Hackles at the Black Watch Plot at the Field of Remembrance on Thursday 7th November. Once again HRH The Duke of Edinburgh attended the ceremony, touring the Plots and speaking to veterans and representatives from the various Corps



*Tam Drummond and Ian Elphick prepare to parade.*



*Ron Olley, Bill Parr and Jeremy Hulme at Chigwell.*

and Regiments. This is a quite remarkable achievement for a man in his 90s who, only a short time before had been unwell and in hospital. What a remarkable sense of duty and recognition of our Nation's fallen. On this occasion he was accompanied by HRH Prince Harry.

Numbers in the Black Watch contingent at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday were fairly low but those on parade stood out enough to catch the eye of the BBC, who picked out the Red Hackles of the Black Watch and gave the regiment a good mention. It is hoped that our contingent will attract greater numbers in future but it is appreciated that many Association members have other duties and other parades at Remembrance. Two such are London Branch members Tam Drummond and Ian Elphick, Chairman and Standard Bearer respectively of the Westham, Pevensey and Stone Cross Branch of the RBL. There has clearly been a silent coup on this part of the south coast, as Trudy Drummond is the Branch Secretary and Dot Elphick the Treasurer. Great Black Watch infiltration!

However, if you would like to swell the ranks of the Black Watch contingent at the Cenotaph this year please brush off your blue bonnet or TOS and put Sunday 9th November in your diary now! Whilst on the subject of Remembrance, it was interesting to note that on their financial page recently, the Daily Mail used an archive photograph of the Black Watch contingent from a parade of several years ago, when the Black Watch Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland were serving in Iraq, to illustrate an article about the victory of an ex-serviceman in his fight against HM Revenue and Customs. It's great to know that the red hackle also strikes fear into the heart of HMRC!

The 21st November saw a good gathering of members and guests at the Victory Services Club for our Annual Dinner, at which the principal guests were Colonel Alex Murdoch TD, Chairman of the Black Watch Association, and his wife Ina. It was a good evening, much enjoyed by those attending and, as ever, our thanks go to Ian and Ondree Howarth and Ian and Dot Elphick for their work in making the evening such a success. The following day, 22nd November, was the 50th anniversary of the death of President John F Kennedy and several of our members were on the Pipes and Drums and Military Band tour that played on the White House lawn only nine days before the President was assassinated. Three of these, Geoff Glover, John Nicholl and Kenny Stubbs are in a photograph below, taken at our Branch AGM but the other member shown, Tam Drummond, says he is far too young to have been there. His older brother Andy was though!

Bill Parr organised a small ceremony at Chigwell Parish church on the first Sunday in March to commemorate Private Edwards VC of the Black Watch who is buried there. The four members who attended are in the two photographs of the occasion, and Jeremy Hulme reported that Ron Olley's piping was excellent and did Edwards VC proud.

Bill Parr also deserves mention for being one of the veterans selected by the 'Not Forgotten' Association (NFA) – who had been chosen by the Daily Telegraph to be one of the recipients of their 2013 Christmas



# Balhousie Castle Remembrance Service 2013







*Our Branch Quartet. Geoff Glover, Tam Drummond, John Nicholl and Kenny Stubbs.*

Charity appeal – to appear in their appeal write-up. Bill spends at least one day a year collecting for them at one of London's busiest railway stations and his very smart photograph in the Telegraph was a great advert for the NFA and also for the Black Watch Association.

Also in early March we held our Branch AGM and lunch at the London Scottish Reserve Centre in London. It was a good venue, a pleasant lunch and a fairly reasonable turn out, with some 'wide ranging' discussion at the AGM. Several members attended for the first time and it was good to see them. There will always be room for more, so please try to support your Branch and attend. As previously mentioned the Branch now boasts several musicians from the Military Band, four of whom attended the AGM. Perhaps we will be able to persuade them to dust off their instruments and entertain us at a future Branch Dinner. That would be quite an occasion and one to look forward to.

Our regular summer activities beckon, with Founder's Day at the Royal Hospital Chelsea and the 'Not Forgotten' Association Garden Party. However, in May this year we have an additional event to look forward to with the visit to Flanders for the unveiling and dedication of the Black Watch statue at Black Watch Corner. A London Branch coach will take members there for the period of the early May Bank Holiday and several more members are making their own way to Ypres. This will be a fitting and memorable event and will act as an early focal point for the forthcoming commemorations of The Great War. We look forward to joining up with the Scottish Branches of the Association for this important occasion.

**Jim Keating**

### NEWCASTLE BRANCH

Our annual dinner was held on 26th October 2013 and was a great success. It was held at the REME TA Centre in Walker, Newcastle upon Tyne, close to the birth place of great warships such King George V; HMS Nelson, HMS Daring; HMS Ark Royal, HMS Cossack to name but a few. Cossack was the ship responsible for the boarding of the prison-ship Altmark in Jossingfjord, thus rescuing the prisoners taken from British Merchant ships which had been sunk by the Graff Spey. After the German occupation of Norway, a sign was erected saying, "Here, on the 16th February 1940, the Altmark was set upon by a British sea-pirate".

The guest of honour at our dinner was Sir Alistair Irwin, who was accompanied by Lady Nicola. Lieutenant Colonel Adrian Reilly, the Commanding Officer of the Black Watch, 3rd Battalion the Royal Regiment of Scotland was also present and replied to the toast to The Regiment and the Association. Captain Lang of 186 (TEE) Field Company REME was a guest with his wife, Nicola. Numbers were a little short this year. John King was unable to be present as he was recovering from an operation to remove a brain tumour and his good friend Tom Renouf was also much missed by his many friends. Restrictions on numbers at our previous venue may have played a part in the low turnout, however, health issues were the biggest cause of absence. Never the less, more than fifty meals were served and that was encouraging. It was good to see our Chairman looking more like his old self and performing his duties in his own inimitable style.

Those who were present enjoyed a first class meal, supplied by one of our members, who operates a catering company. Many of the diners

became involved in an impromptu choral extravaganza, culminating in a less than tender rendition of Danny Boy. Most of the ladies had withdrawn by the time this performance reached its climax but some noteworthy characters were involved. Ex Drum Major Ian Alexander made a notable contribution as choir master. He may have found a new vocation. Pipers from 102 Engineer Regiment entertained us after the meal and gave a very interesting and professional performance.

### Remembrance Weekend

As has become our custom, on Saturday 9th November the Branch laid a wreath at the Black Watch War Grave of S/6663 Private D L Robertson, who died on 14th March 1916. The following day, members attended the Cenotaph at Eldon Square, Newcastle upon Tyne and Tom Dignam, a veteran of the Hook, laid the Branch wreath. On Monday 11th, members were present to lay a wreath at the Jigsaw Memorial, in Cramlington. Altogether, a busy period.

The AGM in February saw the Chairman reappointed for another term of office along with the Secretary/Treasurer. It is hoped to have a number of events for the enjoyment of members and supporters over the coming year.

On a sad note, we have lost three members during the last few months, Charlie McCleary; Jimmy Richmond and Bob Chantler. Where appropriate, obituaries are included elsewhere in this publication. You may remember that Charlie McCleary had a full history published in the May edition of the Red Hackle last year.

**M Dunn**

### PERTH BRANCH

President:	Lt Col (Retd) Roddy Riddell
Chairman:	Capt (Retd) Alan McEwen
Treasurer:	Mr Fraser Brown
Secretary:	Jim Sandilands
Social Convenor:	Ally Alcorn
Branch Piper:	Alistair Duthie

I am pleased to inform Red Hackle readers that the Perth Branch of the Black Watch Association have just had an OBE and an MBE



*Ally Alcorn was Master of Ceremonies during the Burns Supper.*





*The Perth Branch Annual Burns Supper was attended by the Provost of Perth and Kinross.*



*Kevin Murphy attending the London Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph.*

bestowed upon two of the Branch members; an OBE to Major David Noble for his sterling work for Poppy Scotland and the MBE to Jock McInnes for all the fund raising he has done for various charities.

Not to be outdone, Spats Baxter has just been selected to carry the Commonwealth Games baton through Scone on its journey to the event being held in Glasgow. Spats was selected in recognition for all the work he has done for SSAFA. All good news for the Branch.

You may have noticed on our list of Committee members that the Treasurer is now Mr Fraser Brown; Fraser isn't one to let the grass grow under his feet. A retired school head master who recently returned to university to get a Masters degree in History, he has taken over from Jim Baird who was our acting Treasurer. We are very grateful to Jim for his excellent work and support over the years. There is no doubt that Jim will still be just as active in the body of the kirk as he has always been. A recent example of his efforts is that the other day he, Kevin Murphy, George McDonald and Jim Sandilands were at Tesco on the Creiff Road in Perth with our buckets collecting for the Soldiers' Charity.

The Branch had a successful Croix de Guerre dinner at the Queens Hotel, Perth with guest of honour Brig Mel Jamieson Lord Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross and our Association President. On the 8th February we held our annual Branch Burns Supper in the Salutation Hotel and our guest of honour at this event was the Provost of Perth and her husband. This event is fast becoming a "must attend" party not only by Perth Branch members but members of other branches as well. I don't know how it's done but each year seems to be that bit better than the previous; special thanks go to Ally Alcorn for making it a superb night and also to our guest speakers.

Ally took his music equipment into the lounge bar after the supper where an impromptu karaoke started up where we had renditions of Moon River to Twa recruiting Sergeants! The lady behind the bar was delighted as she had received £140 in tips!!

To our members who attended the various Remembrance Day parades, whether they were in London town or London Links I thank you; and thank you also for attending our other Branch functions. Finally, I wish to thank all members of the other Branches who attend our functions. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to seeing you all in the future.

**Jim Sandilands, Secretary.**





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