

No. 202

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73rd

November 2021

# 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*



*Members of The Black Watch Association who attended the Aberfeldy Muster on Sunday, 5th September, conducted by the Reverend Professor Norman Drummond CBE FRSE (photograph courtesy of Frank Proctor). Christmas Card for 2021.*

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*Published for The Black Watch*



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## Editorial

Throughout this edition you will be made aware of the impact of Covid-19 on our lives. But you will also read how we have adapted and successfully mitigated the restrictions imposed upon us. You will read how The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion the Royal Regiment of Scotland prepared to deploy to Afghanistan, what they achieved there, and how the 51st Highland, 7th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland embraced 'virtual' training and increased its attendance.

For those not thought to be essential workers, life has been more difficult. The Museum with its Bistro and Shop have had to close for much of the year. However, through applying for grants and using the Furlough Scheme, the financial storm has been weathered. In fact, the Museum has wasted little time in bouncing back; the Bistro is so popular that you have to book to get a seat. There have also been a number of initiatives; you will read of a Time Capsule, a children's assault course and the Soldiers of Sacrifice Sculpture. The Museum is a vibrant and popular attraction that is well supported by the Friends of The Black Watch. In a time when other Regimental and Corps Museums are closing, The Black Watch bucks the trend.

As ever, the ACF Battalion is thriving; perhaps cadets have found virtual training easier than many of the older generations. Here too is vibrancy; you will read of the paddle boarding, wake boarding, water assault courses and mountain biking. But more classical activities, such as walking and shooting have been retained. The Regimental Secretary recommends paddle-boarding.

Early in the year it was planned to provide articles of historical interest from years ending in a 1, for instance the Battle of Crete in 1941 (written by Tess Monteith, the daughter in law of an officer who fought in Crete) and the Battle of Alexandria in 1801, which are included. The latter battle was covered in *The Red Hackle*, December 2000, but Colin Innes has rewritten the piece, with further research, having presented it on Zoom in May. We often talk of the wider family of The Black Watch but seldom record the experiences of the families. In 1953 the families of the 1st Battalion joined their husbands and fathers in Kenya, during the time of the Mau Mau emergency. You will find accounts by Bridget Lithgow, then a young wife of a company commander and Hugh Rose, the son of the Commanding Officer at that time. I commend all articles to your reading.

This year the British Normandy Memorial was opened at 13 Avenue Paul Poret, 14114 Ver-sur-Mer. If you are visiting, please sit on the bench that reminds us of the officers and soldiers of The Black Watch and The Tyneside Scottish, who landed on these beaches between D Day and D + 4. The bench is in recognition of the contribution made by The Black Watch Association to the construction of the Memorial.

Comradeship in the Association almost ceased for much of lockdown; however, you can read of the Golf, the Reunion and the Aberfeldy Muster. I say almost ceased, because for much of last winter and spring, the Association held monthly Zoom Gatherings, which has helped to connect with members. Like much to do with Covid, events have been at risk of last-minute cancellation; however, we have taken the risk and meetings have taken place successfully. During lockdown there was an unexpected fall in welfare cases across the population of ex-servicemen; this also occurred with our Association Members. It is only since coming out of lockdown that the damage caused by the enforced isolation has become apparent. It is often forgotten, or perhaps not recognised, that comradeship has an impact on welfare.

The Branches of the Association are active but ageing. On leaving the Army, ex-servicemen (one is never ex Black Watch) seldom have the time or inclination to become involved with regimental associations, they are too busy making their way in life and bringing up families. Yet this group is the source of many welfare problems, which derive from an individual's experience both during and after his Army career. It is hoped to be able to record a number of initiatives in next year's Red Hackle to attract the 35-60 years age group.

The Red Hackle reports and records the activities of The Black Watch, both for serving members and for those who will always retain a deep interest and affection for the Regiment. We draw on history and traditions to inform the high standards of the present, as we seek to improve. As Editor, it is my hope you will recognise this in your reading.



# Regimental News

DATE	FORECAST OF EVENTS 2022 EVENT	LOCATION
5 January	Fife Branch Red Hackle Day Breakfast	Fife
15 January	Edinburgh, Lothians' and Borders' Branch Red Hackle Night	Edinburgh
22 January	Angus Branch Burns Supper	RBL Forfar
11 February	Dundee Branch Red Hackle Dinner	Dundee
12 February	Perth Branch Burns Supper	Perth
27 February	Dundee Branch AGM	Dundee
24 March	Association Trustees' and Executive Committee Meeting	Balhousie Castle, Perth
TBC March	Perth Branch AGM	Perth
25 March	Fife Branch Rhine Crossing Dinner	Kirkcaldy
14 April	London Branch AGM	National Army Museum London
23 April	Annual Association Meeting TBC	Venue TBC
23 April	Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Dining Club Dinner	Salutation Hotel, Perth
28 April	Regimental Trust Board	Balhousie Castle, Perth
30 April	Edinburgh, Lothians' and Borders' Branch Al Basrah Lunch	Edinburgh
TBC May	The Not Forgotten Association Garden Party	London
TBC May	Royal Hospital Chelsea Founders Day	Chelsea
14 May	Highland Branch Aberfeldy Dinner	Inverness
13 June	Officers' and Ladies' Lunch	Caledonian Club, London
17 June	Black Watch Regimental Golf	Balbirnie Park, Markinch
18 June	Regimental Reunion	Balhousie Castle, Perth
25 June	Dundee Branch Armed Forces Day	Dundee
TBC July	Association Committee Quarterly Meeting	Balhousie Castle, Perth
28 July	Regimental Trust Quarterly Meeting	Balhousie Castle, Perth
TBC August	Inter Branch Games Day	Dundee
13 August	Highland Branch BBQ	Inverness
TBC August	London Branch summer gathering	London
TBC September	Angus Branch Standard Rededication	Location TBC
18 September	Fife Branch Alma Ladies' Lunch	Kirkcaldy
24 September	Perth Branch Croix de Guerre Dinner	Perth
21 October	Association Committee Quarterly Meeting	Balhousie Castle, Perth
21 October	Regimental Trust Quarterly Meeting	Balhousie Castle, Perth
21 October	Gathering Dinner	Perth
29 October	Angus Branch El Alamein Dinner	Forfar
6 November	Dundee Branch Laying of the Crosses	Dundee City Centre

10 November	Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey	London
11 November	Balhousie Castle Remembrance Service	Balhousie Castle, Perth
11 November	Dundee Branch Laying of the Crosses	Dundee City Square
13 November	Dundee Branch Laying of the Crosses	Powrie Brae
13 November	Cenotaph Parade	London
17 November	London Branch Dinner	VSC London
19 November	Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Dining Club Dinner	Salutation Hotel, Perth
10 December	Highland Branch Christmas Party	Inverness

## CONGRATULATIONS HONOURS AND AWARDS THE QUEEN'S NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST 2021

To John Gilfillan on the award of the BEM for Services to Bereaved people and to the Community in Fife.

## CONGRATULATIONS – PROMOTION

To Colonel R S J Hedderwick on promotion to Brigadier and selection to command a Brigade in June 2022.

To Lieutenant Colonel N P Colquhoun on his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and selection to attend the Advanced Command and Staff Course.

To Lieutenant Colonel A R P Bushby on his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and selection for Command of 6 Regiment Army Air Corps.

To Lieutenant Colonel T Petrasky on his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and Command of 3 PWRR.

## OFFICERS COMMISSIONED INTO THE BLACK WATCH (ROYAL HIGHLAND REGIMENT) AND STILL SERVING ON 1 OCTOBER 2021

After The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) was merged into the Royal Regiment of Scotland, we published a list of all those officers serving in the Regiment on 27 March 2006, the day before the merger. There were 75 names. Since then, 59 officers have retired and as at 1 October, the list consists of 16 names:

Brigadier JC Roddis MBE DSO	Comd Specialised Infantry Group
Brigadier RRE Lindsay	Director Army Division, Joint Services Command and Staff College at the Defence Academy
Brigadier BMA Wrench	Commander 51 Highland Brigade and HQ Scotland
Colonel LR MacDuff	Assistant Head Defence Diversity and Inclusion Team (Retired October 2021)
Colonel AD MacGillivray MC	Defence Attaché in Ethiopia/Djibouti
Colonel RSJ Hedderwick	DACOS, Standing Joint Command (UK)
Colonel AM Philp	Colonel CM Combat at the Army Personnel Centre
Lieutenant Colonel RF Sandford	SO1 Strategy (Land), Strategy Unit, Ministry of Defence
Lieutenant Colonel DM Sheldrick	Directorate of Information
Lieutenant Colonel JRP Bailey	CO City of Edinburgh UOTC
Lieutenant Colonel WA Colquhoun	MA SACEUR
Lieutenant Colonel SP Dallard	Army HR – Programme CASTLE (Transformational Training Programme)
Lieutenant Colonel NP Colquhoun MBE	Advanced Command and Staff Course at the Defence Academy
Lieutenant Colonel DC Close	Military Assistant to the Chief of Staff, Rapid Reaction Corps France, based in Lille
Major CMB Broadbent	Liaison Officer, LOC, Army HQ, Andover
Major AJ Colville	Chief of Staff Army Media and Comms

## BLACK WATCH ASSOCIATION GOLF DAY BALBIRNIE PARK 18 JUNE 2021

We had an excellent day's golf on 18th June with Balbirnie Park Golf Club at Markinch hosting us for the first time. This proved to be an inspired choice of venue as everyone at the club was very welcoming, were first class hosts, and the golf course was in immaculate condition. A beautiful golf course and greens, which were quick and true. We hope to go back next year!

We had a record turnout this year and we were delighted to welcome a group, from all ranks, from The Black Watch Battalion at Fort George. It was great to see the young fresh faces amongst the old and bold! It is always such a pleasure to bring both of these groups together, but they are in fact all beasts of the same kind, separated only by age! We were also delighted to welcome the President of The Black Watch Association, The Lord Lieutenant of Angus, Mrs Pat Sawers who came along not only to present some of the prizes, but also to take part in the golf itself; and very well she played winning second place in the Stableford Competition. It is fair to say she enjoyed the biggest cheer of the day when she was presented with Black Watch whisky glasses as her prize! The fine prizes we present on these competitions would not be possible at all without the help and support of our sponsors, Sidey Ltd and Red Hackle Security and we are, as ever, grateful to them for their financial backing.

We were pleased to welcome former Regimental Sergeant Major Arthur Keith from Red Hackle Security, who also presented some of the prizes. There was some excellent scoring on the day, no doubt helped by the lovely sunny weather we enjoyed. Two players scored a magnificent Gross of 74 strokes and Billy Ramsay was beaten on count back only by Jimmy Grover. Third place in this category went to Captain Robbie Lewis who scored 76. The winner of the best net (to cries of 'Bandit' – if you know, you know) was Alex Stewart who scored 64. He claims this was a once in a decade performance! Second and third in this category were John Husband with 69 and Dave Bruce with 73. Finally, the Stableford prizes went to Sergeant Barrie Fraser, Mrs Pat Sawers and William (Beab) Laing with 40, 37 and 36 points respectively.

After a fine soup and sandwich lunch, the golfers went out in teams of 4, with one unfortunate, disadvantaged, team of 3, to do battle in a Texas Scramble. The team of Jimmy Grover, Gary Liddell, John Husband and Pete Proudfoot proved to be unbeatable with a 7 under par gross total! Runners up were Pipe Major James Muir, his brother Corporal (soon to be Sergeant) Peter Muir, Steve Thomson and Beab Laing with the third place going to Billy Ramsay, Gordon (Killer) Kennedy, Mike Carstairs and Toosh McCarroll. This team competition in the afternoon is often the most enjoyable part of the whole day and it's fair to say this year was no different. Just good, relaxed, fun!

Unfortunately, due entirely to virus restrictions, it was not possible for the players to put on jackets and regimental ties after the match, nor to participate in any large group photographs. We now hope that all restrictions will be nothing but distant memories by the time we play next year and that the Regimental Reunion will again take its place on the day following the



*Mrs Pat Sawers, Lord Lieutenant of Angus and Association President receives her prize from Major Alex Stewart*

golf! The competition will be held on 17th June 2022 and anyone who is not already registered on our website, but would like to play, can email Alex Stewart on alexstewart8608@gmail.com for all the details.

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

"The Red Hackle" is published annually. Articles large and small will always be welcome. They should be sent in electronically as a Word document and photographs should be sent as jpegs. All material should be sent to the Editor at admin.bwassociation@btconnect.com by 8 August 2022.

To subscribe to the magazine please apply for details to the email address above.

MRS PAT SAWERS PRESENTS PRIZES TO THE WORTHY WINNERS



Major Alex Stewart - Best net score



Sergeant Barrie Fraser - Best Stableford score



Jimmy Grover - Best gross score



Team of Grover, Liddell, Husband, Proudfoot receiving their prizes from Arthur Keith



Team of two Muir brothers, Thomson and Laing receiving their prizes from Arthur Keith

**EDITOR AND BATTALION SUB EDITOR**

The Editor of the magazine is Major John Monteith. The Battalion Sub Editor is Major David Robertson

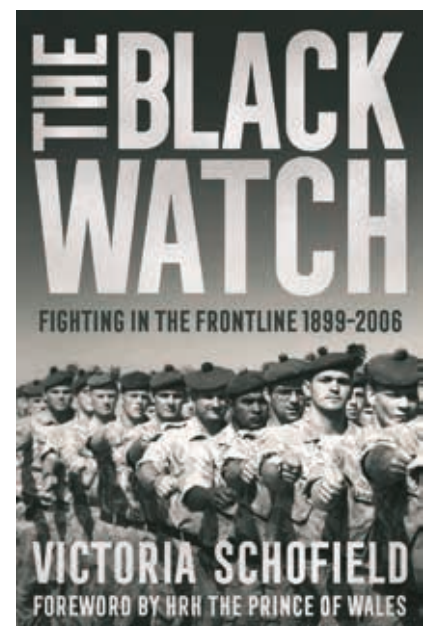
**HISTORY OF THE BLACK WATCH  
BY VICTORIA SCHOFIELD**

Following publication of Volume 2 of The Black Watch history in July 2017, I am delighted to inform readers of The Red Hackle, that a paperback edition is being published by Head of Zeus in early 2022. I feel as privileged as I ever was to have written the history at a time when I was able to interview the last veterans of World War 2 and the Korean War. Since publication of the hardback so many have now passed on including (to name a few) Henry McKenzie-Johnston, who fought with the 6th Battalion at Monte Cassino in 1944, Ian Critchley, among the first to have crossed the Rhine with the 7th Battalion in 1945, Adam Gurdon, who fought with the 1st Battalion in Korea, as did Joe Hubble

and National Serviceman, Peter Stormonth-Darling. No amount of historical research can equate with listening to their oral histories and I remain as indebted to them now as I was when they were alive. I hope readers will find this paperback edition as accessible as the hardback and perhaps lighter to carry around!

**Service of**

*History of The Black Watch -  
Paperback book cover*





*The Annual Commemorative service to mark the 6th Battalion's hard-fought action at Monte Scalari, South of Florence (See Red Hackle November 2017 page 22)*

*The Mayor of Figline and Incisa Val d'Arno, Giulia Mugnai, in a moment of respectful silence before the Memorial in 2021*

**Remembrance Balhousie Castle**

Due to COVID Restrictions we held a very small gathering for the Balhousie Castle Remembrance Service.



*Pipe Major Alistair Duthie alongside floral tributes laid on the 6th of November*



*Above - Neil Hobson, Alistair Duthie, Kevin Murphy and Kenny Forbes lay wreaths and pay their respects at the Almond Valley Memorial on 11th November. The Memorial was erected in 1920 in memory of the men in the District*



*Who is the Jock in Jerusalem, Dec 1917 - courtesy Imperial War Museum*



*Left to right, Brigadier Ben Wrench, Brigadier Garry Barnett, Captain Angus Ferguson and Brigadier Robin Lindsay. Three Black Watch Brigadiers stocking up at the Game Fair 2021 from Captain Angus Ferguson, Black Watch before founding the Demijohn Team*

# THE BLACK WATCH MUSEUM AND FRIENDS OF THE BLACK WATCH CASTLE AND MUSEUM

**MUSEUM TRUSTEES**  
Chairman: Major General M L Riddell-Webster CBE DSO  
Major General J M Cowan CBE DSO  
Captain Angus Ferguson  
Mr Graham Halstead  
Mr George Hay  
The Earl of Kinnoull  
Captain Anthony Perriam  
Mrs Elizabeth Roads  
Dr Michael Taylor

Chief Executive: Mrs Anne Kinnes

## Chairman's Introduction

As the last edition of the Red Hackle went to print The Museum was in the throes of the second COVID-19 lockdown, with staff furloughed and only essential work proceeding. Since then, the Museum has reopened as much as possible, as the Scottish Government gradually eased restrictions.

The early opening in March involved a takeaway "cakes and coffee" service at the café, with the Shop and the Museum itself having to remain closed. That minor opening did at least allow us to see some

of our customers again and to reassure them that we were well on the way to weathering the storm. In April the Shop and the Café gradually reopened even more and, by May, everything was open and operational again. Our staff had all returned and by May we had ceased to rely on the furlough scheme. We were very much standing on our own two feet. There was much uncertainty surrounding the likely return of customers to the Museum but, after a sluggish start, things picked up quickly. As we go to print this year, the Museum is completely open, all staff have returned and business is going well.

One effect of the pandemic has been the lack of foreign visitors this year. It is clear that we are largely dependent on our local supporters and by the large number of visitors from the South, who have been taking their summer holidays in the United Kingdom. We hope to welcome back our foreign visitors as soon as possible, although it is sensible to assume that international tourism is likely to be in the doldrums for at least another year.

Whilst our opening has been constrained, plans for Balhousie have progressed. We have had a very popular children's playground installed, planned exhibitions and the cataloguing project in the Museum archive and embarked on a maintenance programme for Balhousie Castle itself.



*A Picturesque Balhousie Castle in the Snow*



Our return to full time opening and adding a real impetus over the holiday season has been the arrival at the Museum of the “Soldier of Sacrifice” statue, which is the first time that this remarkable piece of sculpture has made it to Scotland; another Museum first. We were very fortunate to be able to welcome Lord Thurso, the Chairman of VisitScotland, to unveil the statue. It was the first time that he had visited the Museum and it was very generous of him to take the time to come from Caithness to do so.

So, the work to return to normal continues and our team have put in huge amounts of effort to ensure that the Museum remains a welcoming and interesting place for all our visitors. The overall effects of the pandemic are still not clear, but what is certain is that the Museum will not only survive but thrive as conditions edge towards whatever normal is going to look like in the future.

### Update from the Chief Executive Officer

*Mrs Anne Kinnes*

As our Chairman mentioned we are now back to full opening after a very challenging eighteen months filled with uncertainty, two lock downs and many Covid-19 restrictions. Our reputation and that of the Regiment helped us tremendously, people felt reassured and knew we would do all we could to keep all visitors to the Castle safe. The staff worked tirelessly to prepare for reopening last summer and then once opened we had in place rigorous cleaning schedules, new exit and entrances and one-way systems. We developed new ways of working from Bubble Tours to Branded Screens in The Bistro. Thankfully our visitors continued to come and to support us, even when all we could offer was a takeaway coffee in a paper cup in a very cold, windy and at times snowy Courtyard.

We checked the Castle every week to ensure all was well and our beautiful old castle was surviving the winter, and it did.

We had some exciting projects planned from our kitchen refit, which few people get to see but has made such a difference to all those who work behind the scenes, to the expansion of our shop. For those of you who haven't visited we now have a whole area in the Shop dedicated to all things Regimental. We now have our brand-new bespoke children's adventure trail which is very popular with our younger visitors.



*Children's adventure playground*

We spent a lot of time during the closed periods planning our events for this summer and beyond. Our first event was the Picnic @ the Castle on 10th July. This event was aimed at the local community to remember and reflect the past 14 months. We invited local care homes and primary schools to make bunting to decorate the Courtyard

on the day, sharing in pictures their experience of the pandemic. We had over 100 feet of bunting on display at the picnic.

We ended the day by burying a time capsule in the grounds of the castle. Items were chosen which reflected the pandemic and included objects which have become part of daily life such as a hand sanitiser bottle and a face mask. Finally, a small container of ashes with an explanation provided by The Black Watch Association was added. These ashes are the remains of nearly 9000



*Bunting made by  
Craigie Primary School*

crosses laid as part of the First World War Memorial Wall project, which marked the 100th anniversary of every Black Watch soldier killed in the conflict. The remaining ashes were scattered on the Tay at Aberfeldy. In 100 years, the future Museum Team will dig the time capsule up and will get an understanding of how we saw living through

the pandemic, not just the hardship but the hope and togetherness that The Black Watch Museum and Castle has sought to demonstrate.



*A family enjoying the picnic on 10th July*

The following week on a beautiful sunny July evening and after 19 long months of discussions planning and a postponement from Summer 2020, we finally welcomed the Soldiers of Sacrifice Sculpture. We opened with a private preview followed by a delicious dinner. Throughout the evening we had emotive passages taken from our

archives read to us by Museum staff and representation of the Regiment and the Association.



*Guests at the unveiling of the Soldiers of Sacrifice Sculpture – from left, Lt Col Duncan Mackinnon, CO 7 SCOTS, WO1 Martyn Gray, RSM 3 SCOTS, Captain Callum Howie, Adjt 3 SCOTS, Captain Alan McEwen, RO SO 7 SCOTS and Captain Nick Hannay, Ops Officer, 3 SCOTS*

The Soldiers of Sacrifice sculpture is a tribute to the Allied servicemen who lost their lives on 6th June 1944. Created in 2019 to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of D-Day, the statue aims to inspire and educate future generations whilst recognising the bravery and sacrifice of the 4,414 soldiers who lost their lives in the first twenty-four hours of the Normandy landings.

The sculpture was financed by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, commissioned by The D-Day Story Museum and designed by British sculptor Alfie Bradley. Made from steel rods, sheet steel, welding wire and resin, the installation is a representation of Lieutenant Herbert Denham Brotheridge, believed to be the first Allied serviceman killed in battle on D-Day. On first impression, the figure appears to be crouched down as if to throw a grenade but on closer examination you will see that he is about to release a dove, a universal symbol of peace, in recognition of the hope and aspirations of this pivotal moment in history. The figure kneels on a sea of 4,413 bullets, marking the lives of each of his fellow fallen comrades.

Before arriving at its permanent home, The D-Day Story Museum in Portsmouth, the sculpture attracted thousands of visitors as it toured sites which have personal links to Lieutenant Brotheridge and the D-Day story. They included Villa Park, where Den Brotheridge had played for Aston Villa Colts, and Bletchley Park, the centre for Allied code breaking during the war. The statue also travelled across the Channel to Normandy, where it was taken to Pegasus Bridge to mark the death of the man who inspired it. The Black Watch Castle and Museum is privileged to be the first Scottish location to host the sculpture.

Our next exhibition will be a world exclusive for three weeks in October when we will have on display at the Castle the Caledonia Brick Live

Tour 'Scotland in Bricks', this will feature 16 brick-built models including Balhousie Castle. It will be a display that will represent icons, inspiration, and innovation from across Scotland and therefore of course will include our hero model an 19th Century life size Black Watch Grenadier.

We have rebranded our café and it is now known as The Bistro, we have introduced new menus. Evening dining and traditional Sunday lunches. This has helped raise our profile and allowed more locals to visit us. These initiatives have been well received and we will continue to look at new ideas to encourage more people to visit and stay a bit longer.

We continue to offer new products from the shop, both regimental and gift products, to fill our shop and encourage locals to pop in and buy. All income we have is directly used to support the Castle and Museum and to look after and preserve the collection.



*Regimental corner in the shop*

We are undergoing a programme of improvements to the Castle and grounds, from roof level to down. These are due to be completed in the Autumn, weather permitting. We are delighted that in August our Regimental Gardening Group began in earnest. This is a group of Association members led by Alastair Duthie who are coming in twice a week to take care of our gardens and car park. They are working very hard cutting, weeding, taking down old sheds, we will gain lovely gardens and in return we keep them full of bacon rolls and plenty of tea and coffee. Our visitors are delighted to be chatting with Association members.

We look forward to seeing some of you in the coming months so that you can see for yourself some of the ongoing work and improvements at the Castle.

## MUSEUM NEWS

*By Stuart Kennedy, Curator*

This year the Museum and Archive team have worked hard to overcome the challenges of lockdown and achieved a remarkable amount in the last twelve months. Our project archivists have been finalising their work on the digitisation project that will result in The Ogilby Muster website going live before the end of 2021. The name comes from The Army Ogilby Trust who have led and funded a project including 100 Regimental collections. These collections have been scanned and uploaded for the public. It will increase access to our First World War collection for people from around the world and support the Museum and Archive team in preserving the documents. One of the collections is from The Reverend Coll MacDonald which consists of over 250 letters, a framed photograph, and some ephemera from the First World War.



*Reverend Coll MacDonald and some of his letters*

or Fort George have probably at some point seen one of his works. Snaffle's style was very distinctive. Many of his military sketches, like this one, depict an individual soldier with a short witticism attached.

We were fortunate in the last year to have been donated a pen and ink drawing called 'The Forty-Twa' by Charles Johnson Payne. He was better known as Snaffles and visitors to the Museum

We were fortunate in the last year to have been donated a pen and ink drawing called 'The Forty-Twa' by Charles Johnson Payne. He was better known as Snaffles and visitors to the Museum

Snaffles was born in 1884 and enlisted with the Royal Garrison Artillery as a gunner in 1902. It was here that he started to develop his sketching skills and would lead to him becoming an artist for The Graphic when the First World War broke out. When the war ended, he became better known as a sporting artist, producing works on hunting, fishing, polo and horse racing.

In the summer of 2021, we were inspired by the D Day: Soldiers of Sacrifice statue to produce a new Sons of The Black Watch display called 'Road to Victory'. It followed The Black Watch as they fought their way from the beaches of Normandy into the heart of Nazi Germany. The concept behind the exhibition was to use the voices and stories of the men such as Tom Renouf and Ed Meekison who were there, some seeing action for the first time.

As well as highlighting items from our collection from the Second World War, such as a Dennis Hall's leather jerkin worn during the crossing of the Rhine, the exhibition also explored the gratitude felt by those towns liberated by the Allied Forces in the days between D Day and VE Day.



*Second World War Jacket and Tam O'Shanter belonging to John Fulton Harris McAllistair who served with 5th Battalion Black Watch and was at the liberation of La Roche. Leather Jacket worn by Private Dennis Hall during the crossing of the River Rhine in March 1944*



*Ceramic plate detailing the 40th anniversary of the liberation of La Roche 1944-1984. Brass ashtrays made using the bases of shell casings, engraved with names of 5th Battalion Officers. Medals of Private George Simpson (Italy Star, Defence Medal and the 1939-45 War Medal); Private Simpson was killed on 6th of June 1944*



### FRIENDS OF THE BLACK WATCH

*By Sarah Riddell-Webster*

Having just re-read the article I wrote for the Red Hackle last year it brings home, in stark terms, just what an extraordinary year we have had. Last year I wrote of what we had organised and achieved in our first ten years. Sadly, as I sit here now thinking about the last year, I have much less to report. The Castle and Museum closed again just before Christmas for another five months which put paid to the second 'Words of War' Book Festival which we were organising for March. When the doors finally re-opened the required social distancing

regulations made any thought of re-starting the lecture programme impossible. Those restrictions are now being eased so, hopefully, next year things will return to a little more like they used to be.

Despite what I have just written all is not gloomy. Our members of the Friends have been true supporters and when all that they gain from membership was restricted, they continued paying their subscriptions. In fact, with the power and reach of the internet, even with the doors of Balhousie closed, we still gained new members, some of whom were from overseas. What all of this means is that we are in a strong position to support the Museum team as they put programmes and events in place to attract, educate and entertain the visitors to the Castle and Museum.

We have recently given the Museum a donation to help with the costs of running a children's programme centred around the special exhibition 'D-Day: Soldiers of Sacrifice' sculpture. With schools having been shut for so much time and children's activities curtailed, it has been wonderful to see them back at The Black Watch Castle and Museum learning, exploring, and having fun. It makes all that we as a Friends organisation do so worthwhile. There are more plans in the pipeline for the future and several projects have been identified where the Friends can make a positive contribution in varying ways which is great.

Since the Museum re-opened, we have welcomed Friends back and recruited some more and hopefully this positive vein will continue for next year.

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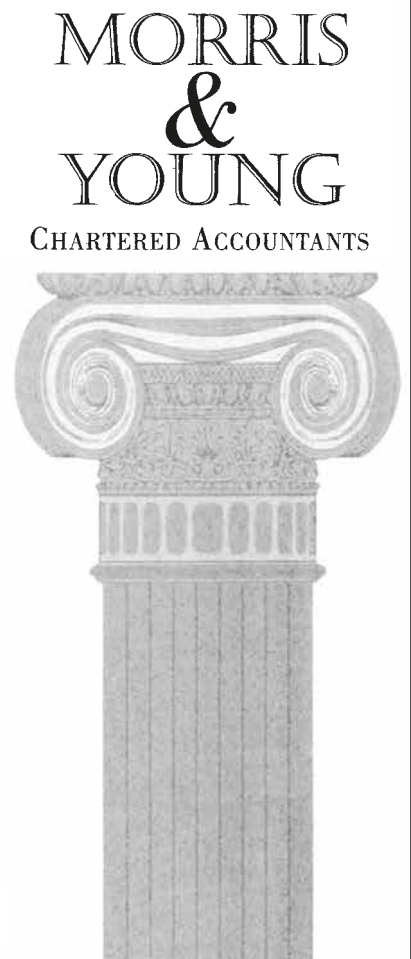
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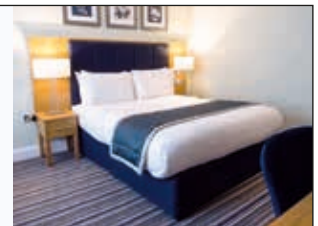
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# Obituaries

## THE REVEREND CHRISTOPHER PAUL "CHRIS" BURTON 1938 – 2020

Chris served as a National Service subaltern in Berlin in 1957.

Some may remember Chris as the officer who, after a good Mess Lunch, had the brilliant idea of seeing what would happen if he placed a tin of thunder flashes in his bath. After weighing them with bricks and placing them under water, Chris retired to his room to await the result. A large explosion ensued and Chris entered the bathroom to find the bottom blown out of the bath and the bathroom deep in water! The QM duly supplied a new bath which was seen entering Wavell barracks next morning on the back of a lorry accompanied by Chris.

After The Black Watch, Chris became a Chartered Accountant and worked for Peat Marwick and Company in London. During this time Chris also volunteered at the 'Mayflower' Christian Centre in Canning Town under the leadership of former England Cricketer and future Bishop of Liverpool, David Sheppard. This transformative time is where Chris met Jean, his wife. Jean who was also working at the Mayflower – and together, they decided to leave their city careers and embark on their own ministry serving working class communities.

Chris studied at Clifton Theological College in Bristol and was ordained a priest in 1970. He served as a curate in Wandsworth and then York. In 1975 Chris became Parish Priest of St Cuthbert's Church on Castle Vale, Birmingham. This was a tough estate where Chris's Black Watch experience came to the fore when he confronted the local gangsters that terrorised the estate. Wisely, the thugs backed off from the Vicar with a soldierly bearing, holding an incongruously intimidating hockey stick.

During his time on Castle Vale, Chris formed a very close bond with the WW2 veterans of 605 Squadron Association whose colours hung in St Cuthbert's. Chris became Chaplain to the Association, and after many years of wearing his Black Watch tie to the 'after-party' held at the Vicarage following every Remembrance Sunday service, Chris was honoured by being given his own 605 Squadron Association tie – the only non-serving member of the Association to receive one.

In 1982 Chris became the Rector of St James and St Mary's Churches in Harlow, Essex. This Parish was a partnership between the Church of England and the Methodist Church which reflected Chris's belief that the true worship of God was far more important than the actual Christian denomination that people belonged to.

In the late 80s Chris embarked on his most ambitious project: enlarging the St James Church building in partnership with the nearby Catholic Congregation. At a time when Northern Ireland was tearing itself apart during the worst of the troubles, Chris and his collaborator, Father John Timmins, had a shared vision that their Protestant and Catholic congregations – far away from the bitterness in Ireland - could in fact share the same church building, on the same day.

Chris was at the forefront of fundraising activities which included a sponsored trip where he sailed single-handedly from the River Thames and up the East Coast of England. He returned very sunburnt and sporting a massive beard. The necessary funds were raised and the building was completed in 1992 and ushered in a long partnership between the two congregations.

In 2000, after years of dedicated work researching stress in clergy families, Chris and his wife Jean were both awarded PhDs in Family Therapy by Bristol University. In 2009 their work was published as a book entitled "Public People, Private Lives." The book was way ahead of its time as very little has been done in this area of clergy care and it progressed much needed pastoral work in the Church of England.



On retiring as a Parish Priest Chris and Jean moved to Sudbury and later to Poynton in Cheshire, where Jean cared for Chris until it was necessary for him to move into a care home. Despite his increasing dementia, Chris frequently referred to his time in The Black Watch which remained a very important part of his life. Very sadly, only two months after his own death Jean died of a stroke. Chris and Jean leave two sons, Mark and Timothy. May Chris and Jean rest in peace and rise in glory.

C T Scott-Dempster

## MAJOR COLIN CAMPBELL OF KINLOCH

Colin Campbell sadly died on 23rd May 2021 aged 86. On the night of Saturday 11th July great bonfires lit every street corner of the Shankhill in Belfast and a band leading 500 protestant marchers left their predicted route to cause mayhem in the catholic Unity Flats. Colin Campbell was commanding B Company and with eight soldiers he held the wide Shankhill Road, until reinforced by one of his platoons. The platoon commander remains inspired by Colin's courage and leadership in facing down the mob. Colin, who probably drove Black Watch Commanding Officers mad in barracks, suddenly turned into a calm, gallant and inspiring commander.



Colin's Army career was notable for his loyalty to The Black Watch, as a musician, his javelin throwing records and his remarkable ability to imbibe Glenfiddich and be fit for duty in the morning. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant into The Black Watch in 1954, while the 2nd Battalion was posted on operations to prevent an anti-colonial uprising in British Guyana. During this time, he and David Wilson, who was to become a distinguished Diplomat and Governor General of Hong Kong, were inspired by Conan Doyle's novel The Lost World to complete a remarkable and successful expedition to climb Roraima, a 9000ft mountain, in Venezuela. This was an early test of Colin's toughness and resourcefulness. David reports that, much to Colin's anger, his sola topee was ruined by an infestation of termites one night.

Colin was a keen piper and particularly enjoyed the pibroch, for which he had a good musical ear. He frequently played with the Pipes and Drums and started the Regiment's Ceidh Club during a posting to Germany. He participated in the latter with great gusto, singing his favourite Highland airs. Colin loved Scottish history, bagpipe music and song, especially the Bothy Ballads, at which his eyes would light up when he recited The Ball of Kierriemuir or The Muckin of Geordie's Byre.

He wrote well, having a great facility with words and often wrote to the press on a variety of subjects, once getting into some considerable trouble for criticising the Army Board as a serving officer. At the time he was serving as the Adjutant of 4th/5th Battalion The Black Watch and was censured by the Army Board. This did not prevent him being promoted to Major and being posted as an instructor to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Colin was remembered for his charm, fun and great leadership by his cadets and his Coldstream Guard Company Sergeant Major.

It was while serving in Gibraltar that Colin bought a small sailing yacht, Sweet Gale, beginning his love of sailing and the sea. It was in 1971, at the age of 36, that he decided to leave the army and set sail in Sweet Gale with a vague plan of sailing round the world. While off Gibraltar, he received the news from his brother, Jamie, that he had bought a croft on the Island Flodda. He immediately turned northwards and sailed to his anchorage.

There was no causeway then, meaning the Flodda was genuinely an island, something which Colin absolutely loved.

And so began his time on the Island Flodda with the people of the Outer Hebrides. For the next fifty years he was part of the community, trying his hand at all the island activities, including creel fishing, seaweed cutting, mussel farming, sheep farming and many more. He started a youth club in Balivanich and between 1994-99 he was councillor for Benbecula. One lady remembers him as being erudite and a veritable wordsmith, as evidenced by the completion of the Times crossword, and with a very quick, but never malicious, wit. Many was the 'Feast' atop a mountain, beside a loch, or on Island Flodda. In return for his hospitality, all guests had to sign The Dreaded Visitors Book with clever inebriated comments! He was a darling of the hostess of a flagging party, for after a few drams had been taken, Colin would burst into song, which, on most occasions, would seem to have no endings, such as his exuberance!

Colin was a Campbell of Kinloch, in Perthshire, a branch of the Breadalbane Campbells; he was hugely proud of his lineage – his family and its history was the first passion of his life. He spent his early life in Norfolk but his family are all buried in Shian Cemetery, near Amulree. Colin was an enigma; at heart he was a shy and modest man who had stillness and humility. He was fiercely independent, highly intelligent and with a huge sense of fun. Intensely loyal to his friends, he pursued his passions with tenacity and courage – family, regimental and Island Flodda. He was a much-loved bachelor who received total loyalty from his very numerous friends.

**J D Monteith/C B Innes**

### REVEREND STEWART HYND

Reverend Stewart Hynd died on the 22nd July age 86.

Stewart served with the 1st Battalion in Kirknewton, Hong Kong, Colchester and deployed with the Battalion to West Belfast in 1974 and 1975. He also served with the Battalion in Ballykinler from 1976 – 1978 and was instrumental in leading the Kirk Session to have the Black Watch Stain Glass window installed in the Church in Ballykinler. He finished his military service as Senior Army Chaplain in Scotland before becoming the minister of the United Reformed Church in London.

Stewart was a much loved and respected Padre with The Black Watch. His common touch endeared him to all members of the Battalion. I remember first meeting him in Hong Kong when I was Recce Platoon Colour Sergeant. He had climbed up a steep hill on which we had set up an observation point overlooking Chinese Territory and shared his water with us and gave us a great morale boost, as he was the first person that we had seen from outside our small group for a number of days. He also took the hard route to the position, so that he would not be observed by the Chinese and so give our position away.

He was also forever up and about during our tours in Northern Ireland in 1974, 1975 and in Ballykinler from 1976 to 1978 where his Church services and visits were always uplifting and well received. His care and compassion to the families of the Battalion will always be remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him.



**R J W Proctor**

### MAJOR HENRY MCKENZIE JOHNSTON CB

Henry McKenzie Johnston was commissioned into The Black Watch in August 1941 and joined the 6th (Territorial) Battalion in Hampshire, where he shared a tent with the actor Stewart Grainger. The Battalion was sent to Tunisia with the 4th Division, by which time he was Signals Officer, requiring many nights to be spent mending telephone lines which had been broken by enemy shelling; a task that was often interrupted by enemy patrols. It was here that he had his first brush with death. His position came under enemy

shell fire, he and a fellow officer made for the same trench, the fellow officer was closer and reached the trench only to be killed by a shell going straight into it. Henry flattened himself nearby and during the next half hour two dud shells landed at his feet. This experience convinced him, quite absurdly but nevertheless comfortingly, that he was not destined for death in this war.

Henry Butler McKenzie Johnston was born in Edinburgh on 10 July 1921 the eldest son of Colin and Bernadine McKenzie Johnston, he was educated at Rugby School before going up to Oxford. He left university after two terms, enlisting on 27 June 1940 in the Young Soldiers Company of the 9th Battalion The Black Watch in Dundee. Although selected for officer training, he became seriously ill and it was not until April 1941 that he started his officer training on the Isle of Man. In August 1941, he was commissioned into the Black Watch and joined the 6th Battalion in Hampshire. Having completed a Signals Officer course, he fought with the 6th Battalion in this capacity through North Africa and Italy. While in Tunisia, he, with Michael Keogh, attacked a German machine gun position, armed only with a pistol. Keogh fell and Henry thought he had shot him, but luckily he had but tripped on a stone. The German machine gun jammed and the crew ran away pursued by wild pistol shots, so the position was taken "without anyone being hurt". By listening to the German radio left behind in the trench Henry was able to warn the Commanding Officer, Brian Madden, of an impending counterattack, which was thereby defeated. On 13 May 1944 he was wounded (probably by the Royal Artillery) at Monte Cassino. Re-joining the Battalion in August 1944 he was promoted to Captain and made Adjutant for the remainder of the Italian campaign and the deployment to Greece. During the Italian campaign as Adjutant, he was Mentioned in Despatches.

After the war, while still in Greece fighting the communists, he was promoted to the rank of Major. On demobilisation he joined the British Embassy in Athens in an administrative post before joining the Foreign Service in November 1947. Having served in diplomatic posts in France, Germany, Uruguay, Mexico and Trinidad he became Consul General in Munich during the 1972 Olympics. It transpired that the German administrative director for the Games had fought against the 6th Battalion in Tunisia, thereby exceptional privileges were secured for Commonwealth teams and British VIPs. Leaving the Diplomatic Service in 1973 he became Deputy to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) and on compulsory retirement at the age of 60 was made a Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (CB). He was immediately reemployed as one of three Local Government Ombudsmen for England before becoming a part-time member of the Broadcasting Complaints Commission.

In later life he became an author publishing, amongst other works, two books. The first *Missions to Mexico: A Tale of British Diplomacy in the 1820s*, which describes that process whereby Mexico was given diplomatic recognition by Britain; the book examines the problems of diplomacy caused by difficulties in communications and assesses the influence of Canning's pursuit of imperial interests. During his research he discovered a great deal of previously unknown information about the grandfather of Field Marshall Wavell. The second is a biography of James Morier: *Ottoman and Persian Odysseys*. James Morier wrote *The Adventures of "Hajji Baba of Ispahan"*, a picaresque novel, which remains a favourite amongst Iranians.

Henry McKenzie Johnston married and was predeceased by Marian 'Merrie' Middleton, daughter of Brigadier AA Middleton



RA, from Cromarty. Merrie was a descendant of Hugh Miller (1802-1856) and the Salvesen family; she died in 2009. Henry was a philanthropist and established a Trust to benefit young people in the Cromarty area, as well as donating to provide for the cost of staffing and securing the future of the Hugh Miller cottage and museum in memory of Hugh Miller's three great-granddaughters. They have a son, Robert, who had a successful career in the Army before becoming headmaster of Hanford School and then Queen Mary's School and two daughters, Stephanie, who was a professional singer and then worked for BBC Radio 3, and Miranda who was a medical secretary.

**R McKenzie Johnston**

### MAJOR ALAN MCKINNELL

Alan McKinnell died on 4 December 2020 aged 86.

Alan rose through the ranks to become Chief Clerk of 1 BW and after promotion to Warrant Officer Class 1, Superintendent Clerk at the Scottish Infantry Depot Bridge of Don. He was commissioned and served as MTO and oversaw the Battalion move from Kirknewton to Hong Kong in 1972. He also stood in as Families Officer when Captain Slim Jones, the incumbent Families Officer took ill. Through his hard work and attention to detail every family arrived at the Married Quarters allocated to them. Later, Alan was appointed Quartermaster of 1 BW and oversaw the Battalion's logistical support on Op Banner tours in West Belfast in 1974 and 1975, Ballykinler in 1976 and the move to Catterick in 1978 including an operational tour in Belize in 1979. He then served as a Staff Officer at HQNI and latterly as QM



1/51 Highland prior to retiring to become Assistant Regimental Secretary of RHQ The Black Watch and then Secretary of The Black Watch Association for a great number of years.

Alan had a rather dour exterior however this belied his kind and generous temperament which always had the interests of the soldiers he served at heart.

Alan served the Regiment well and will be sadly missed by all members of the Regiment who had the privilege of knowing him.

**R J W Proctor**

### DONALD MCNAB

Born in 1933 in Charlton, near Greenwich, Donald McNab was educated at Fettes College in Edinburgh and served as a Second Lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion during the Korean War 1951-53. He was wounded in the hand.

On leaving the Army in 1956, he became a captain in the Royal Marines Volunteer Reserves and had his own business intelligence service. For seventeen years he ran the Friends of Scottish Rugby, a group of mainly ex-pat Scots based in London. He died on 19 December 2020 age 87.

He is survived by two children, Fiona and Alsuin, and three grandchildren.



**J D Monteith**

### FERGUS KELMAN ROBERTSON TD

Fergus Kelman Robertson died suddenly in his home The Gamekeepers, Ospisdale, near Dornoch in Sutherland on 23rd November, age 84.

Born and brought up in Edinburgh, he was educated at The Edinburgh Academy, where he was a contemporary and great

friend of the later Rugby Captain of Scotland, Brian Neill, who also joined The Black Watch at the same time. At Eaton Hall OTC, Fergus passed out and was gazetted, to his horror, to the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. However, his father, an eminent Consultant Physician at Edinburgh Infirmary, knew Colonel Sir Alan Gomme-Duncan, MC, MP very well. Sir Alan had served with the Regiment in World War 1 and later still in the TA; soon Fergus was re-commissioned into his first choice The Black Watch.



Joining the 1st Battalion in Berlin in 1958, Fergus, slight of size, was a very energetic officer, always very well dressed in uniform and in his mufti and always with wonderfully polished shoes. His Platoon won the exhausting Battalion's Annual March and Shoot Competition to everyone's surprise and delight. If he had perhaps been the subject of some light-hearted ribbing on account of his small figure, that faded away pretty quickly after that achievement.

Fergus then had to serve two years with the Colours and three with the Reserves and he joined the 6th/7th Battalion in their HQ Coy in Perth. When the 4th/5th and 6th/7th Battalions were disbanded he volunteered for the Home Defence Force and then continued with the 3rd TA Battalion of the Regiment. He more than earned his Territorial Decoration.

Working for some years for an Investment Company in Edinburgh, he found another Black Watch National Service Officer – David Murdoch in the firm. Fergus also had an interest in a garage at Western Corner near his flat which overlooked the Dean Bridge. Nearing his retirement, he moved up to Sutherland where he was offered the lease of The Gamekeepers, on the Ospisdale Estate, near Dornoch, by his great friend since childhood, Margaret Thomson, who farmed the estate. Here Fergus joined the Queens Own Highlanders Cadet Battalion with their Company in Tain. Asked to give up the Red Hackle, Fergus insisted he retain his bonnet and symbol which he had worn for so long, and although he was outside the Black Watch Regimental area, they let him continue to do so. Fergus also assisted Tim Usher with the Forces Pension Committee in Scotland for some years.

Appointed an Elder at Dornoch Cathedral, for many years Fergus always helped the Minister organise an appropriate Remembrance Sunday Service. I drove North for his Service of Remembrance in the Cathedral on 9th December last year which had to be a very reduced affair due to the Covid restrictions. I was very impressed that many parishioners, unable to attend his Service had nevertheless obtained copies of the Service Sheet and had decided to line the streets as Fergus's hearse journeyed from Ospisdale to Dornoch. I spotted Fergus's Black Watch bonnet on his coffin as it was carried into the Cathedral, where the Service was taken by the Minister, who knew him very well, the former Moderator of The Church of Scotland, The Very Reverend Dr Susan Brown. I then recalled that Dr Susan Brown had also conducted the Service, which I had attended, for the late Major Malcolm MacGillivray in Dornoch Cathedral in February last year.

A lifetime teetotaler. Fergus nevertheless enjoyed a party as much as us all. Always cheerful and kind he was well respected both in the Army and in civilian life. His relatives told me that he was a great squirrel and that his house was always littered with books and documents that he decided just had to be kept.

He had two cars up North, the first a very ancient 1937 Ford V8 Station Wagon with the registration number KR30 his second, a more modern day to day car, with registration number KR31 – both cars and driver were well known in the local community, his very small figure peering over the steering wheel. The old car was a regular attender at the annual Tain Car Rally.

**C B Innes**

### LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROLAND ROSE

Roland was a great Black Watch Association member who chaired the Welfare Committee for the 40 years since its inception after the merger with the original Welfare and Dunalistair Committees in 1987. Throughout his period of Chairmanship, which he had held



until standing down in October 2020 due to ill health, he never missed a monthly welfare committee meeting.

Through his knowledge and guidance on welfare matters a great number of Black Watch serving and retired soldiers and their dependants received much needed assistance when required, in a most timeously and compassionate manner.

His dedication and concern for others is a great example to all members of the Regiment.

After joining the Regiment in 1954 he served in Kenya and Cyprus on active service, Berlin and other stations with the 1st Battalion carrying out peacetime duties. He was promoted Sergeant at a very young age and was one of the youngest Senior NCOs in the Infantry at that time.

After being posted to the 4th/5th Battalion as Battalion Signals PSI, Roland decided to leave the Regular Army and settle down with his wife Maureen. They set up home in his hometown of Dundee where

he gained employment and joined the 4th/5th Battalion as a Territorial soldier working his way through the ranks to become a Lieutenant Colonel Quartermaster with 51st Highland Volunteers, the successor TA Regiment to 4th/5th BW before retiring from the Volunteers. Although he had given up wearing uniform Roland was a great supporter of the Association and attended all events at Balhousie Castle, with his own Dundee Branch and those of other Branches of the Association. The mantra that you could take the man out of The Black Watch but never take The Black Watch out of the man certainly struck true in Roland's case.

His wife Maureen predeceased him in the autumn of 2020 after a lengthy battle against cancer. We offer our sincere condolences and sympathy to his surviving family members: Maureen his daughter, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

**R J W Proctor**

### **TOM ANDERSON**

Tom, known as Tam, sadly, after a brave fight against pancreatic cancer, died peacefully at Dunfermline Hospital on Saturday the 26th June 2021 surrounded by his family.

Tam originally joined the Regiment in 1952 and served in the 2nd Battalion before transferring to the 1st Battalion when the Battalions were merged. When the 1st Battalion served in Minden, West Germany, Tam was appointed Intelligence Sergeant, a job at which he was most proficient. He later spent a period of his career in the Quartermaster's department and in Admin Company as well as Clothing Stores PSI with 51st Highland Volunteers in Tay Street, Perth. When the 1st Battalion left Hong Kong in 1974 Tam was appointed to the Long Service List in West Germany where he served for a further three years retiring from Regular Army Service in 1977.

Tam and his family then moved back to Scotland and settled in Dunfermline.

Tam was a great Burns enthusiast and organised several Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess Burns Suppers. He was also an accomplished poet in his own right and many of his poems were published in the Red Hackle Magazine. He was a volunteer tour guide at Dunfermline Abbey where his knowledge and humorous presentations to visitors made him very popular. Our sympathy and condolences go to his wife and family.

**R J W Proctor**

### **ROBERT BATCHELOR**

Robert Batchelor, from Newburgh Fife died on 8th September 2021 aged 93. He enlisted in November 1947 and joined the 1st Battalion in January 1948. He left for Korea in May 1952, taking with him a piece of lucky white heather from a neighbour, which he kept in his wallet until his death. He fought at the second Battle of the Hook in November 1952 and then returned home in February 1953. Robert was also a Piper in the 1st Battalion Pipe Band and played at the funeral of King George VI at Windsor Castle. Robert enjoyed attending The Black Watch reunions at Balhousie Castle. He was a keen hillwalker and had a life-long interest in photography. He is survived by his wife and two daughters.



**D Batchelor**

### **PETER BROWN**

Peter Brown a National Service soldier died at Balhousie Care Home Pitlochry on 14 June 2021, age 91.

Peter joined The Black Watch in September 1947. Following initial training at both Queen's Barracks Perth, and Redford Barracks Edinburgh, he spent a short period at Castle Park Barracks in Dunbar East Lothian, before being posted to the 1st Battalion in Duisburg Germany. On arrival in Duisburg his piping ability was quickly identified and after a short period in a Rifle Company he transferred to the Pipes and Drums, where he remained until demobilisation at Aldershot in late 1949. Peter recalled that pipers needed to be extremely fit as they spent many hours playing the pipes leading Rifle Companies on lengthy route marches. On one such march they visited the Mohne Dam area and the damage from the famous Second World War Dam Busters' air raids was still clearly visible.

Peter was born at Invergowrie in July 1929. His family moved to Kinloch Rannoch in the early 1930's, where his father was employed as a sawmiller on Dunalastair Estate. On leaving school Peter joined his father at the sawmill, however, he was much more interested in mechanical engineering. After gaining experience and qualifications through short term jobs, he joined his brothers John and David in what was to become a very successful garage business in Kinloch Rannoch.

Following National Service, Peter joined the Atholl Highlanders as a piper. Peter was proud of his service with The Black Watch and he piped at many events in the local area. A remarkable achievement is that he piped annually on Armistice Day at the Kinloch Rannoch War Memorial from 1957 to 2014. Peter was also a very keen gardener and many a visitor to Rannoch stopped at West End Cottage to view the amazing array of flowers.

Predeceased by his wife Elizabeth in 2015, he is survived by his daughter Jane and sons Gordon and Alastair. He will be sadly missed by his family and the local community.

**J A Menzies**





### ALEC CAMERON

Alec Cameron who died on the 12th of February 2021 aged 83, enlisted into the Regiment in early 1960 at Queen's Barracks. He was a member of 142 Squad and completed his training between January and April 1960. He was then posted to the 1st Battalion in Cyprus and after a time in a Rifle Company he joined the MT Platoon where he spent most of his service with the Battalion. He was appointed as driver to Lt Col Tony Lithgow who was then Commanding the 1st Battalion in Minden. Alec then moved with Colonel Tony Lithgow to Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, then to the Scottish Division Headquarters at Edinburgh Castle and latterly to 51 Highland Brigade Headquarters in Perth.



On retirement from the Regular Army, he became the caretaker and groundsman at Balhousie Castle as an MOD Civil Servant where he worked until he reached retiring age.

He then continued to work at Balhousie Castle as a Regimental employee and ensured that the grounds were kept in tip top condition until ill health prevented him from doing so and caused him to retire.

Alec was a great Regimental character who was a very honest and loyal member of the Regiment with high standards of integrity which he maintained throughout his working life. He was a favourite with his fellow members of staff and visitors alike and his presence is sadly missed.

Our sympathy and condolences are offered to Margaret and her family.

R J W Proctor

### GEORGE CENTER

George, was known as Joe, died on the afternoon of Tuesday the 2nd of March 2021 after a long period of illness which was bravely borne.

Joe originally came from Blairgowrie and after completing basic training at Queen's Barracks, Perth served continuously with the 1st Battalion joining them in Cyprus in 1960 and serving at Warminster, Minden, Kirknewton and Hong Kong where he transferred to the Ulster Defence Regiment in 1972.

He was an accomplished and successful boxer competing in inter-company and inter-regimental competitions. On joining the 1st Battalion he spent some time as a Regimental butcher at the School of Infantry, Warminster and later as a Regimental cook in Minden before he returned to duty to gain promotion. His strength of character and leadership qualities on transferring to the Ulster Defence Regiment were soon recognised and eventually gained him promotion to Warrant Officer Class 2 where he completed a full career throughout the Northern Ireland troubles. He was also employed as a financial advisor and coupled this with his UDR duties.

On his retirement from the UDR he volunteered to work in the Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum in Armagh and recently had work published for which he was highly commended.

Joe was a great and enthusiastic member of the The Black Watch Association and he attended all major Association events in the UK, until his health prevented him from doing so. He was also an authority on the Great War and visited the Western Front Battlefields on numerous occasions.

Our sympathy and condolences are offered to his wife and family.

R J W Proctor

### TOM COX

Tom was born in Lumphinnans on 15th September 1939 and died on the 6th of December 2020. Although Tom was a Lumphinnans man he was educated in both Lochgelly and Cowdenbeath. On leaving school he started his working career as a tiler, but on

reaching enlistment age left his employment and headed off to Perth to join The Black Watch. During his nine years' service, he served in Cyprus, BAOR and Stirling Castle and on demobilisation returned home and found employment on building sites. Tom became proficient in handling the JCB but after a spell moved on to the open cast mine as a Security Guard. A family man primarily, his other interests were golf and he was a Ballingry Rovers supporter of note, he turned his interest to gardening and became an amateur ornithologist. He would head off into the countryside armed with his trusty binoculars for miles and hours at a time. Tom unfortunately took a fall and this led to more serious problems eventually leading to his admittance into a care home. Due to Covid even greater problems arose in the way of visits and family events and it was only in the last few weeks of his life that family could visit and say their farewells. Tom's laughter and general happy outlook on life will be missed by his family and friends and of course we of his Black Watch Family.



R M Scott

### ALEXANDER FLEMING

Alexander, known as Sandy, died on 21st January 2021 aged 67.

Sandy joined the Army at the end of 1968 as an Infantry Junior Leader aged fifteen and a half.

At the beginning of the 1969 spring term Sandy reported to the Infantry Junior Leaders Battalion at Park Hall Camp Oswestry in Shropshire where he along with other young men from all the Infantry regiments in the British Army began his training to become a future Non-Commissioned Officer and Warrant Officer in the regiment of his choice and in Sandy's case, The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment).

After two years of very thorough and arduous training at Oswestry and on field training in the rugged areas of Snowdonia and North Wales Sandy joined the 1st Battalion The Black Watch, which was stationed at Ritchie Camp, Kirknewton just outside Edinburgh.

However, there was not much time spent at Ritchie Camp as the Battalion was detailed to deploy to Northern Ireland on numerous short tours of six weeks, then in late 1971 the Battalion was deployed on a four-and-a-half-month tour in Belfast. On that tour one of Sandy's comrades and a fellow Non-Commissioned Officers in A (Grenadier) Company was shot and killed with two others being wounded, by an IRA sniper in the Short Strand area of Belfast. Service in Northern Ireland made young men grow up quickly.

By this time his leadership potential and training at Oswestry had been noticed by his officers and he gained the first step on the promotion ladder.

In January 1972 The Black Watch moved from a bleak and snow bound Scotland and flew across half the world to the hot and humid climate of Hong Kong, stopping briefly in the Persian Gulf in the Middle East and Gan in the Maldive Islands en- route.



Life in Hong Kong was busy with numerous Ceremonial Guards and duties also training exercises as well as spells patrolling the border between the Peoples Republic of China and the British Territory of Hong Kong.

One such place where Sandy deployed to was the village of Sha Tau Kok where half of the village was in the People's Republic of China and the southern half was in British territory. When Sandy and his comrades first patrolled the British area there were looks of interest and amazement from the local people when the Chinese Army first encountered soldiers wearing Tam O' Shanter Bonnets and the distinctive and famous Red Hackle of those on the British side.

They were equally surprised when they heard the skirl of the pipes as the company piper played in the Police Station in which Sandy and his comrades were billeted. The Chinese culture of keeping face meant that the Chinese Army always wanted to appear taller than the British Soldiers and had all the pavements in their part of the village built six inches higher than those on the British side.

Sandy had now become an experienced and well-respected Corporal and commanded a section of eight men in his platoon. He would have gained further promotion to eventually reach Warrant Officer and possibly commissioned rank had his career not been cut short from the result of an accident in his barrack room when he suffered an electric shock which caused him to be medically downgraded. I had the good fortune to be his senior officer prior to his discharge and realised that the Army and The Black Watch had lost a good man from its ranks but knew full well that he would make a great success in whatever he undertook in civilian life.

On returning to Kirriemuir he became a manager in the local textile factory and then struck out on his own and ran several successful businesses until ill-health prevented him from doing so.

He was greatly respected and well-liked by all who knew him.

Our sympathy is offered to his family.

**R J W Proctor**

### **JOHN FOY**

John, known as Jock, was born in Baskin Lane Dublin on the 8th of April 1938 and died on the 26th of May 2021 in Buckhaven. As a boy he attended Kin Fely Primary School, but because his father had left Dublin to find work in Scotland they were on the move. At the ripe old age of 10 years, John and his family headed for Buckhaven in Fife where his father had found employment and it was in the Buckhaven/Methil area where John completed his education at St Agathas school. On leaving school John took up employment in the coal mines, firstly training



at Muiredge in Buckhaven, then on to the Michael Colliery in East Wemyss. A good friend of his at the time decided he was leaving the pits and joining The Black Watch, so John decided to follow suit and trained at Queen's Barracks Perth. During his time with the Battalion, he served in the Far East, Middle East, BAOR and the UK. John's skill was to be as a mortarman and a very accomplished one at that. It could be said that he was part of a team lead by Major Colin Innes which convinced the MOD to change from the 3" Mortar to the 81mm version. It was during a demonstration where his skill came to the fore. They had to engage tank targets painted white at various ranges, the first was at 3000 metres and it landed just in front, a slight adjustment for the second target at 4000 metres saw the mortar round not only get near but straight down the turret of the tank which resulted in huge applause and in turn may have won the day for the change. During his time with the Battalion John was engaged in many duties but was never ever too far from his beloved Mortar Platoon or in fact the command of Major Colin Innes. On demobilisation it was back to Buckhaven and the pit but the Miners' Strike of 1984 saw him travel south into

England to take up a Security Job and because he missed his family so much he took another bold step and formed his own security firm, Forth Valley Security.

On retirement he and his good lady could be seen walking their dogs for miles and then back to his beloved garden, another keen interest of his.

I was a friend of not only Jock but also of his brothers gone before him.

He will be greatly missed by his immediate and Regimental family in turn.

**R M Scott**

### **KEN GLAZIER**

Ken Glazier died on 10 July 2021 age 96. He enlisted on the



20th of March 1943 which was his 18th Birthday and the 1st July reported to Fort George to carry out his basic training. By November he was posted to the 1st Liverpool Scottish and on the 1st of April the following year was transferred to the 5th Battalion The Black Watch, who had returned from North Africa and Sicily and as part of the famous 51st Highland Division were training for the Invasion of Europe, Operation Overlord. Ken, as part of the 5th Battalion, landed in the afternoon of the 6th of June 1944, D Day. He took part in numerous, hard-fought actions and on the 11th June

was wounded during the Battle of Breville and was returned to Park Prewitt Hospital in the UK. By mid-July having recovered from his wounds, he re-joined the Battalion which was currently involved in the heavy fighting in Normandy, during which he was again wounded and returned to Somerdale Hospital in Chichester. After being discharged from hospital and following a long convalescence Ken was posted to Queen's Barracks, Perth where he served as a Regimental Cook in the Officers' Mess until he left the Army on 11th August 1947.

Like most veterans of his time he rarely spoke about his Service and wartime experiences. Ken met Gwen and they were married in Old Woking in August 1952 and they set up home together and had four children, three girls and a boy. They then moved to College Town, near Sandhurst where Ken was in his element fulfilling his passion for gardening. Ken had many jobs throughout his working life, chauffeur, milkman, lorry driver, warehouseman and storeman to name but a few. He had a wicked sense of humour which was enjoyed and appreciated by all. He took early retirement and he and Gwen moved to Devon where they quickly made new friends in Winkleigh and joined many of the local clubs involving themselves in bowling competitions, coffee mornings and raising funds for local charities. He was also a keen wine maker which often resulted in a sore head in the morning.

Ken, like many of the surviving Normandy Veterans was awarded the Legion d'Honneur for his Service in helping to liberate France.

Ken is sadly missed by his family and all those who had the pleasure of knowing him.

**R J W Proctor**

### **EDWIN GLOVER**

Edwin, known as Eddie, died on 26 December 2020 aged 82.

Eddie served as a National Serviceman in the Scots Guards then he re-enlisted to join his brother John who was then serving in the 1st Battalion The Black Watch.

On 26th of February Eddie reported to Stirling Castle where he joined Sebastopol Platoon at the Combined Black Watch Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Depot where he carried out his training until 14th June 1962. On reaching the 1st Battalion, which was stationed at the School of Infantry Warminster, Eddie was posted to D Company. His previous Army service and leadership qualities were soon recognised as in May 1963 he attended and

successfully passed a Junior NCO's Cadre which was held at Knook Camp and run by RSM Dennis Giles. He served in a Rifle Company attaining the rank of full Corporal and Section Commander, was later promoted Sergeant and was eventually moved to the Quartermaster's Department. He was selected as a recruiting Sergeant where his pleasant and outgoing personality brought in numerous recruits to The Black Watch and other units in the British Army.

On completion of his 22-year engagement Eddie was employed as a Supervisor with Perth and Kinross Council working in the Bell's Sports Centre, situated in front of Balhousie Castle where he kept in touch with members of the Regiment. On his retirement Eddie spent his time with his family and his wicked sense of humour shone through, this was greatly appreciated by his grandchildren to whom he was devoted.

A good supporter of the Association, Eddie attended the majority of functions until illness prevented him from doing so.

Our sympathies and condolence go to his wife Isobel, his daughters Louise and Wendy and their families.



**R J W Proctor**

### GEORGE GRANT

Major George Grant MBE MM died on 16 December 2020



just short of his 101st birthday. George was born and brought up in Tayport and was one of five children. Sadly, his sister died in childhood and one of his brothers was killed while building railways and another brother who was coxswain of the Broughty Ferry lifeboat lost his life in 1959.

During WW2 he served with the 6th Battalion and won the Military Medal for his actions at the Battle of Monte Cassino.

George completed a full career in the Regiment after the war, and latterly was promoted RSM of

4th/5th BW prior to retiring. He also served as a CSM in British Guyana with the 2nd Battalion and later as CSM HQ Company in Cyprus with the 1st Battalion.

He was employed by Highland TAVRA as Quartermaster of Angus and Dundee Battalion ACF and was awarded the MBE for his hard work and dedication, particularly as President of the Battalion Pipes and Drums.

George was a long-standing member of the Association Welfare Committee and attended monthly meetings regularly until age and infirmity prevented him from doing so.

He attended a Battlefield Tour of Monte Cassino where he told the young members of The Black Watch of life and experiences in the Army at that time, and this was done in a very modest and unassuming manner.

At the time of his death, he was one of the oldest surviving members of The Black Watch.

George was a kindly father figure with a remarkable memory of the events that he had been through and was a great supporter of The Black Watch Association, he contributed greatly to all aspects of it throughout his life.

His wife Jean, whom he married in 1946, predeceased him in 1998 and he is survived by the couple's three children, George, Rosalyn, Nigel and grandsons Paul and Steven.

**R J W Proctor**

### TONY HARDING

Tony, known as Gil, Harding died in hospital in South Africa on Sunday 11th July 2021 after a short illness, age 83.

Tony joined The Black Watch in 1955 and served in the Regimental Band until 1977 reaching the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2 (Band Sergeant Major). He took part in all the various Band tours during his service, the most famous being the tour of North America in 1963 where the Band performed at The White House, shortly before President John F Kennedy was assassinated. Tony's main instrument was the French horn on which he was most proficient. He was given the nick name Gil as a shortened version of Gilbert as his surname was then associated with the famous radio and TV presenter, Gil Harding.

He was a great athlete and was a member of the Battalion athletics team which reached the final of the UK Army Athletics Championships.

On retiring from the Battalion in 1977, he was recruited by Ex Black Watch Bandmaster, Sam Holmes and joined the South African Police Band where he served as a Colonel and Director of Music until he retired in 1997. Both Tony and his wife Pam settled in South Africa but visited Scotland and Balhousie Castle in the early 2000s where he managed to catch up with some old friends. He and Pam hosted members of the Regiment who attended the Freddie Tait Golf match in 2001. He also took part in the Ceremony of Commemoration to mark the sinking of the Birkenhead where a great number of the 73rd perished.

Sadly, his wife Pam died shortly after Tony and our sympathy and condolences go to the family.

**R J W Proctor**

### LARRY JENKINS

Larry Jenkins died on 15th September 2021 age 68 after a long period of illness.

Larry joined the 1st Battalion The Black Watch in 1969, he served in the Regiment at Kirknewton Midlothian, Northern Ireland and Hong Kong.

Whilst serving he was part of the Provost Staff where he was a Regimental Policeman. This obviously gave Larry a grounding to where he would be in the future, as when he left the Army, he joined the Fife Constabulary.

He had a love of dogs and so much so that he transferred from the Battalion to the Army Dog Unit in Northern



Ireland, where he spent many enjoyable years. In this role he made lifelong friends and finished his Regular Army service in 1977.

He left one force and joined another force to become a Police Officer in Fife Constabulary in 1977, where he was a popular visitor to the ACIOs even as far up as Perth. He often popped in to keep updated on his beloved Regiment and to check on the lads he had encouraged to enlist into the Regiment.

Larry was very active, not one to let the grass grow under his feet. He was an Army Cadet Force serving Adult Officer in Glenrothes ACF Detachment, where many youngsters were nurtured by him and a large number went on to enlist in the Regular Battalion of The Black Watch.

He was responsible for being the Fife Area constable, teamed up with his opposite number PC Noel Murdoch, in what was known as Operation Youth Diversion. In this operation youths that were close to transgressing were diverted to attend Army events. These events were sponsored by the local Regiment, who would organise week-ends where youths would be introduced to military skills and outdoor activities to encourage them to join up. As for many of their forefathers this remains a catalyst for many young people to go on the straight and narrow and escape the life of crime.

Larry retired from the Fife Constabulary in 2003/04 where he continued an active role serving in Jordan as part of the International Police Unit training Iraqi Police officers.

**P McLinden**

### JIM LOWSON

Jim Lowson died peacefully on Monday 1st February 2021, age 90, after a short period of indifferent health.

Jim, a native of Forfar, served for two years as a National Serviceman between 1949 and 1951 with both The Black Watch and

Highland Light Infantry.

He then continued to serve in B Company 4th/5th BW for several years thereafter.

Jim, who was a founder member of the Angus Branch was a keen amateur military and family historian tracing his ancestor who served in the 42nd at the Battle of Waterloo. He was very proud of this fact and kept detailed records of his family lineage. He was a popular and often outspoken member of the Branch and also the Forfar British Legion, who could be relied upon to attend the various commemorative activities in Forfar and beyond. Although slight of stature, Jim worked as a manual labourer throughout his life and was always fit, smart and well turned out.

He was a well-known character in Forfar and will be sadly missed by all those who knew him. Our sympathy and condolences are extended to his family.

**R J W Proctor**

### **JOHN MCINTOSH**

John was born in November 1934 and sadly died on 15 November 2020 from Covid a few days before his 86th birthday.

He enlisted into The Black Watch and served in Kenya from 1953 to 1956 and completed his Regular Army Reserve in 1960

John worked for a short time on the railway in Corby, Northamptonshire and then moved to Cowie in Stirlingshire where he lived the rest of his life.

John was accident prone throughout his life but survived each one including having his appendix removed in Kenya.

**R J W Proctor**

### **BOB MITCHELL**

Bob Mitchell was born in Brechin on 26th January 1934 and died at Whitehills Hospital, Forfar on the 8th July 2021 age 87.

Bob served in the Regiment as a National Serviceman and saw action in Kenya, where he was a full Corporal in the Mortar Platoon. He had the potential to go further in the Regiment had he decided to remain in the Army, however he wished to return to civilian life and follow his trade.

Bob had served his time as a carpenter and joiner in Brechin before completing his National Service. On demobilisation he returned and worked at his trade and later worked for Ramsay Ladders in Forfar where he met Ena his future wife. They were married on 12th September 1959.

Bob was an original founder member of the Angus Branch of The Black Watch Association and was very active in helping to organise annual dinners and the monthly raffles. He was asked to carry out some work in the The Black Watch Museum by the then Assistant Regimental Secretary, which would only take three or four weeks, this work extended for a period of two years because his skill and expertise were invaluable in installing numerous dioramas and displays which brought the museum up to a very high standard. An Australian General who was visiting the Museum commented favourably that this Museum was made by soldiers for soldiers.

Our sympathy and condolences are extended to his wife Ena, and children Lesley and Heather.

**R J W Proctor**

### **GEORGE OGILVIE**

George Ogilvie passed away in Moncton NB on May 22, 2020. Born in Scotland in 1921 and joined the Regular Army at an early age.

Young officers joining 1 RHC were schooled by George in the intricacies of highland dancing, as were some wives and girlfriends of officers. George had the patience of Job in this work



and exercised great restraint in not using rude words to describe the ineptitude of his officer charges. Before retiring in the 1970s George was appointed curator of the Black Watch Museum located in the Sergeants' Mess lines. He and Kay moved to Vancouver Island on retirement.

George joined the Cadet Instructor List and was appointed Commanding Officer of the Canadian Scottish Regiment Cadet Corps in the rank of Captain. He and Kay left Victoria in 2001 to join their daughter Helen and her husband in Cold Lake. Following Kay's passing in 2011 George moved with Helen and her husband to Moncton. George retained his connections with the British Army as a Life Member of the Stoke-on-Trent branch of The Black Watch Association and regular correspondence with the Museum Curator at that time. He and fellow Corporal Piper the late Bill Lark returned to Crete for various commemorations including the unveiling of The Black Watch Memorial at Heraklion Airport. In Canada he was a long-time member of the Atlantic Branch and a life member of the Pacific Coast Branch. Finally, George was one of a kind – a kind, committed serviceman and a loyal and reliable comrade in arms.

**R J W Proctor/W R Sewell**

### **SERGEANT STEPHEN SHAW**

Sergeant Steve Shaw passed away at the age of 64 on the 24th May 2021 in Clapham Bedford from a long recurring illness with which he bravely fought two battles.

Steve Shaw (Big Shawzer) was born in Dundee and joined the Infantry Junior Leaders Battalion in Shorncliffe in 1972, passing out and joining the 1st Battalion in Hong Kong. He was posted to B Company just in time to get on the Malaya exercise. He remained with B Company throughout the tour and on returning to Colchester he remained in the Company for the two 1974 and 1975 West Belfast Tours both in 7 Platoon. Steve shone out as a very good soldier and at the end of the 1975 tour attended and passed the Recce Cadre becoming a member of the Battalion Recce Platoon. The First Battalion was posted to Ballykinler, County Down as a Resident Battalion and the Recce Platoon became part of the new Northern Ireland Patrol Group. This organisation was a new concept designed to use Force Troops from all resident Battalions trained to a specialised standard.

On return to Catterick, he was posted to B Company serving on the Royal Guard at Balmoral and on the Belize tour of 1978. Steve was a very promising soldier and quickly rose through the ranks still in B Company, he was Platoon Sergeant of 5 Platoon; when the Battalion was posted to Werl, West Germany as a Mechanised Battalion. In 1981 he was selected to become Platoon Sergeant at The Scottish Infantry Depot, Glencorse and it was from there that he left the Army.

His loss to the Regiment and the Army was profound as he had the potential to become Warrant Officer Class 1, as did his peers and friends in the Regiment.

Shortly before Steve died, he was quoted as saying "in respect of The Black Watch I loved every minute of my time in the Regiment"

He will be dearly missed.

**M Smith**





### BOB SHIVAS

Bob died on Monday the 1st March 2021 aged 82.

Bob joined the Infantry Boys Battalion (later Infantry Junior Leaders Battalion) at Tuxford in 1955 and then moved with the Battalion to Plumer Barracks, Plymouth where he served until joining Adult Service in The Black Watch. He was posted to the 2nd Battalion and served in British Guyana before transferring to the 1st Battalion after the two Battalions were merged.

Bob served as a training Corporal at Queen's Barracks amongst other extra regimental tours, where his smart turnout and bearing and military knowledge were a great advert for The Black Watch. He left the services on medical grounds in 1969 and his good humour and leadership qualities were sadly missed.

Bob was predeceased by his wife Isobel earlier this year. Isobel was an invaluable member of the Black Watch Association Welfare Committee and her advice is sorely missed. Bob and Isobel are survived by their daughter Rosemary, to whom we send our sympathy and condolences.

R J W Proctor

### JACK STOREY

It is with great sadness that I report the death of one of the Regiment's great characters, Sergeant Jack Storey who died on the 8th June aged 95.

Jack originally served in the Durham Light Infantry in Korea and transferred to The Black Watch in theatre. He left the Army for a time but re-enlisted in 1962 when the 1st Battalion was stationed at Knook Camp, Warminster. He held various appointments in the Battalion and was posted as a recruiting Sergeant in Arbroath for some time before moving to the Jungle Warfare Wing of the School of Infantry at Khota Tinggi near Johore Bahru, Malaysia on the long service list.

On completion of his service Jack became a senior range warden at Barry Buddon Camp until retirement and lived in Arbroath. He later returned to Consett along with his wife Jenny who predeceased him some years ago.



R J W Proctor

### JIM TURPIE

Jim died on 20th November aged 86.

Jim was a former Corporal in the 1st Battalion who served both in Korea and Kenya. He was a great supporter of the Association and the Regiment in general. He was Standard Bearer for the Korean War Veterans Association (KVA) for a great number of years where he paraded annually at the Dundee Festival of Remembrance and other commemorations until

illness prevented him from doing so.

He worked for Marks and Spencer's and Perthshire Housing Association prior to his retirement.

Jim was well known for his love of motorcycles and could be seen driving through Perth and elsewhere on his large Golden Wing motorbike with radio loudspeakers on full volume blasting out music of the Pipes and Drums, 1st Battalion The Black Watch, much to the entertainment of bystanders. He assisted regularly in the Museum and Museum shop and his cheery countenance is sadly missed.

We send our sympathy and condolences to Peter, Tanya and their families.

R J W Proctor

### CLIVE WILLIAMSON

Clive Williamson died on 21st April 2021 aged 83.

He enlisted into the Regiment in March 1955 and after completing training at Queen's Barracks, Perth he was posted to the 1st Battalion in Kenya where he spent a short time before returning to Scotland in September 1955. He then served with the Battalion in Berlin and was seconded to 3 PARA where he served in the Suez Campaign (1956) in Egypt.

On returning to the Battalion in Berlin he remained until they moved to Redford Barracks, Edinburgh and from here he was discharged.

On completion of his Service and returning to Stoke-on-Trent, Clive was employed by the Post Office where he worked until he retired aged 65. On settling down to civilian life Clive joined the Stoke-on-Trent Branch of The Black Watch Association where he learned to play the bagpipes. He became a regular playing member of the Branch Pipe Band and took part in the many functions and parades which the Branch attended. Clive was also a keen gardener and took great pride in his work in the garden, he was also a great animal lover.

We send our condolences and sympathies to Hazel and the family.

R J W Proctor

### TOM WILSON

Tom was born on the 17th February 1919 in Prospect Place, Lochgelly, he was third in a family of eight and died at the age of 102.

Tom left school at 14 to work in the pen factory in Leslie where he would walk and regularly run to and from work through the fields. While he was working in the factory's gold shop as an 18-year-old, making nibs for Onoto fountain pens, a young Jenny Ramsay who was 4 years younger was being shown her new job and he was pointed out to her as being the best-looking man in the factory. Romance soon blossomed and in 1944 the pair were married this was a partnership which lasted until Jenny's death in 2002.



With the coming of the War in 1939, the greatest adventure in Tom's life was about to begin. As

a member of The Black Watch TA Tom spent time camped in The Black Isle, which was later to become a favourite holiday location of his and also served in various places including Grangemouth and the Shetland Isles. In 1942 Tom saw action at The Battle of El Alamein and in the following year was taking part in the invasion of Sicily. It was during the Battle of Messina that Tom became a prisoner of war. Tom spent six weeks in prison camps before moving north as the Allies closed in. Locked in a cattle car on his way into Austria, Tom and two other NCOs pulled away the barbed wire over the ventilation window. They climbed between the wagons and jumped off the train escaping into the Italian countryside. After a ten-day trek covering 180 miles they finally reached the border of neutral Switzerland, where they were interred and cared for by the Red Cross, sleeping first in a gymnasium, Tom was then soon billeted with a Swiss family in the village of Turbenthal and so began a lifelong friendship with Hans and Emily Frey. Although interned troops worked on local farms, the Red Cross arranged for the occasional holiday. Tom

was repatriated in 1944 and married Jenny that November and less than 3 years later their daughter Doreen was born. Tom worked as a welder at the NCB Workshops in Cowdenbeath before leaving to become a postman based in Lochgelly where his cheery attitude and good nature saw him nicknamed the “whistling postie”. Tom was a lifelong Christian and an elder of his local church.

After his retiral, he and his wife Jenny enjoyed touring in the North of Scotland and clocked up hundreds of miles. He was generous and cared for his family, friends and neighbours. He took a positive take on life and infected everyone who met him.

**George and Doreen Wilson**

**The following deaths have also been recorded:**

Norman Bloxsome died on 26th of April 2021 age 98.

Gerald Brodie died on 25th of July 2021 age 83.

John Coonie died on 28th of April 2021.

Joe Dumycz died on 3rd September 2021.

George Goodall died 26th January 2021 age 82.

George McDonald died on 15th September – a full obituary will be in the next edition.

Edward McHale died on 19th December 2020 age 87. Edward served in Korea and Kenya in the 1950s and became a Pipe Major after leaving the Army

Angus McKinlay died on 16th February 2021 age 75.


Cathol Steven died on 28th March 2021 age 87.



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## FAMILIES JOINING THE 1ST BATTALION IN KENYA 1953

By Mrs Bridget Lithgow

After a hard year fighting the Chinese on the Korean Peninsula, the original plan to move the 1st Battalion to the Middle East in July 1953 was overturned when it was diverted to Kenya, where the Mau Mau rebellion was in full flow. Initially we were told this would not be a family station because of the Emergency. However, after a concerted campaign by the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel David Rose, who argued that he would lose many of his best officers and Senior NCOs if they were to be separated from their families for even longer, it was announced that some families would be allowed to join their husbands. Most of them went to Kenya in early autumn but my papers were lost somewhere in the War Office. After endless disappointments and telephone calls, they were eventually found in December and my flight, with my three children, was confirmed.

I had never flown before but eventually we left Blackbush Airport on December 23rd in a Dakota with very hard seats and 40 children on board. My weight allowance was 140lbs, and the pram weighed 100lbs, which didn't leave much room for anything else. So I wore two sets of clothes for the journey, which was not great when we landed in the searing Nairobi heat. My family consisted of a baby, Grania, of 7 months, Sara of 20 months and Nigel just over three years old. Sadly, our arrival on Christmas Eve was marred by the news that Archie John Wavell had been killed in an ambush that day. Subsequently on Christmas Day the BBC announced on the 9am news that a Black Watch Major had been killed by the Mau Mau in Kenya. No mention of his name was made until the next day, which was dreadful for the families back in the UK.

As my husband Tony's Company was deployed up country, our first home was a two roomed hut alongside the Roses and the Dennistons at the Limuru Hotel, in the north of Nairobi. We were amongst a group of eight officers' families. The next week our youngest daughter Grania was christened at St. Andrews Church in Nairobi by Reverend Tom Nicol the Battalion Padre and Reverend David Steel, Minister of St Andrew's Kirk in Nairobi. The Padre remarked what joy a christening brought to him having only held burials and services for the Battalion for so long. David Steel was the father of



March Past - Nigel Lithgow pointing out his father



Nigel, Sara and Grania Lithgow

ex-Liberal Leader of the same name.

A month later we moved to Mr Thompson's Farm on the edge of the Aberdare Forest as Tony's Company was by then based at Mweiga Airstrip. I remember a storm of locusts and having to rush out to bring the pram and baby inside. The family had a guard with a rifle whenever we left the house. One morning the children and I, pushing the pram and accompanied by the guard, were taking an early walk along the road when Tony unexpectedly appeared in his Landrover. We were ordered to go straight back to the house as he said the Mau Mau were watching and it was too dangerous to be out.

On another evening we were having dinner at the farm with the District Officer (Brigadier Geoffrey "Billy" Beyts DSO, MBE, MC.), his wife Ruby (nee Scott-Elliot) and two officers, including Adam Gurdon, when the alarms went off. The farm was being attacked. The men disappeared with their guns, leaving Ruby Beyts and I to guard the house. We were given revolvers and told to shoot anyone trying to come through the door. Ruby had worked with the Maquis during the war so knew how to fire a pistol. Mercifully nobody tried, as I know I couldn't have used it.

As the farm had become too risky to continue living there, we were moved to the Nyeri Hotel for a week. The kind District Officer then lent us a one roomed tin hut in his garden. It had a ceiling made of wire netting which became the rats' playground when the lights went off. It also had a "long drop" in the corner of the room, not very safe with small children around.

Our next move was to Thompson's Falls. Again we lived in huts in the garden of the hotel along with six other Black Watch families.





*Lieutenant Colonel David Rose with Brigadier Beys Inspecting*

Everything went well until there was a poliomyelitis epidemic. A local lady doctor died as a result and three Black Watch children got polio: Juliet Denniston and Catherine (Sgt Dunn's daughter) badly enough to have to go to hospital but the wonderful Czech Doctor asked if I would nurse our daughter Grania as she was only eleven months old. Fortunately, I had had experience of dealing with polio patients when I was nursing in Edinburgh, but it was a very worrying time as our husbands were deployed. The hotel manager banned us from continuing to use the hotel facilities, but he did provide us with a telephone and his staff brought meals to our huts.

After two months we were told that Grania must have proper treatment, so the children and I went down to Nairobi. We found a bungalow near the British Military Hospital, to which she had to go every day. Our house was on the edge of a plantation with a path along the top of our garden, which the Mau Mau sometimes used as a route to Nairobi to carry out terrorist attacks, so it was not an ideal location. We were given strict instructions that our Kenyan staff (except the guard) had to be locked out of the house by dusk each night. I slept with a revolver under my pillow and we barricaded the door with a cupboard.

The children and I went down to the leave camp at Nyali, Mombasa, three times during the year to have a break from Nairobi. We went for up to six weeks at a time, usually with other officers' families. Our guns were handed into the armoury and we spent much of each day on the beach.

And so to 1955. What with the security situation, polio, three young children and our husbands being away for much of the time, I felt it was really sad that I had seen very little of Kenya as a whole, although we did manage once to have a day's trip to Tony's camp in the Aberdare Mountains in our car. The roads were appalling and our guard had to drive with his gun resting on the steering wheel. In April 1955 we left Nairobi, joining the Battalion on the troop train which took us to Mombasa. From there we sailed home in the Empire Halladale. The whole Battalion plus families were aboard. Trying to stop the children from going down to the cabins and getting up to mischief during the Captain's rounds was quite a

problem, as once they had escaped, we were forbidden to retrieve them. We stopped at Port Said to take on wounded soldiers from Aden and Tony's brother and his family, who were stationed in the Canal Zone, came on board to visit us.

Heading North to the Suez Canal the officers' deck had been on the sunny side of the ship. Once in the Mediterranean, heading West, it shone exclusively onto the Jocks' deck, so by the time we reached Scotland we were looking pretty peely-wally!

And so to Glasgow. I will never forget the reception we received going slowly up the Clyde. The Pipes and Drums and the Military Band were playing on the forward deck. Everyone, the Jocks and their families were lining the decks. The people from the factories on both sides of the ship all came out onto the tow path cheering and waving flags, every hooter hooting. It really was an amazing sight - and all for a Scottish Regiment returning from three years on operations in two war zones. Such a wonderful reception. It really did bring tears.



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MANYATTA

# RECOLLECTIONS OF A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD FOLLOWING THE REGIMENT

*By Major (Retd) H R Rose*

In May 1953 with some relief, the 1st Battalion in Korea received official confirmation that its next move was to be to Kenya. The Mau Mau insurrection was in full swing but that did not dishearten the Battalion because the alternative had been a threatened posting to the Suez Canal Zone which was considered little better than a prison sentence.

On the Battalion's arrival in Kenya in August, the Commanding Officer (my late father Lt Colonel David Rose) found himself in some difficulty. Army Regulations allowed those who had been unaccompanied for 2 years on active service overseas to "claim" a home posting. Many of the Regimental senior officers/WOs/NCOs were about to fall into this category and any Battalion with such a high proportion of national servicemen, as we had, would find it very hard to operate effectively without its experienced cadre.

A request to the GOC for authority to fly the Battalion families out from the UK to join their menfolk was met with a frosty response. There were no Married Quarters available and the married men would seldom see their families anyway because companies would be constantly on the move between the terrorist hotspots around a very large country. However, persistence and Regimental connections paid off and the powers-that-be finally authorised our flights after receiving an assurance that the Battalion would make all its own arrangements for family accommodation.

My father had returned home for a short period of leave after leaving Korea but as an energetic 7-year-old being home-schooled by a governess and living in an all-female household, I viewed the prospect of "going out to Kenya" with increasing excitement despite the fact that I would be leaving local friends and cousins behind in Scotland. Before leaving we had to have many inoculations for such exotic diseases as Yellow Fever and Typhoid.

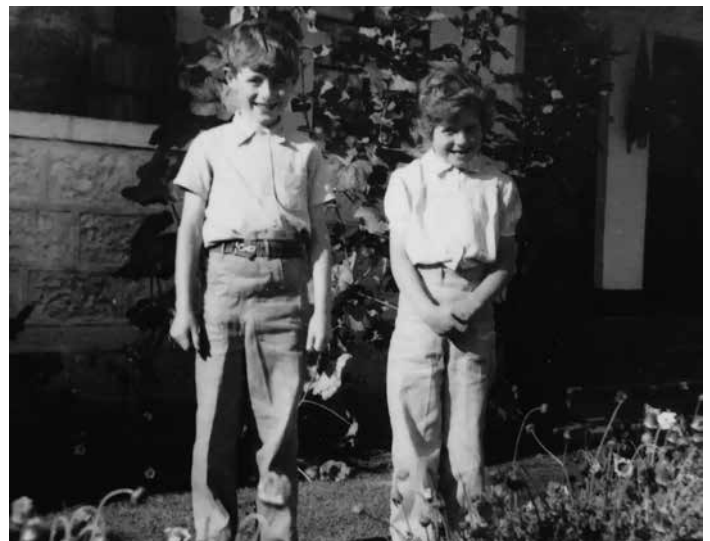
Our first adventure was the overnight sleeper train south from Perth to stay with my maternal grandmother in her very gloomy flat in London. In 1953, the city was enveloped in a real "pea-souper" (thick, foul-smelling, yellowish smog) supposedly it was not quite as bad as the Great Smog of 1952 but for a small boy, it was a disaster! One could not see the other side of the street and it was easy to get lost just trying to cross the road. So I missed out on all the promised London attractions like a visit to Madame Tussaud's waxworks or Hamley's toy shop. It was even impossible to go for a proper walk to let off steam in Hyde Park. By the time the day of our departure arrived, I don't think my fond grandmother ever wanted to see me again and I am quite sure her cook and maid were ready to strangle me!

We left Blackbushe Airport early in the morning. I remember our plane had 4 engines (which only seemed to work spasmodically) but what type of aircraft it was, I don't remember. The journey took nearly three days and we suffered engine trouble on every leg of the flight but one! Our first diversion was to Nice where we waited for many hours for repairs to be done. Then I think, while bound for Rome, we diverted to Malta where we spent an uncomfortable night on the hard floor of the terminal with nothing to eat or drink. Our next diversion was to somewhere in North Africa (maybe Tunis) for more repairs but I am not sure where we were heading at the time. Then we flew on to Cairo which I remember was very hot indeed compared to London. The onward flight to Khartoum was uneventful - possible because there was no other airfield to which we could safely divert! From the aircraft window, I do remember seeing the waters of Blue Nile and White Nile running separately for many miles downstream of the confluence between the two rivers.

Khartoum was very hot and dusty. There I remember seeing African labourers working nearly naked on the side of the airfield. They all appeared to be white because they were powdered with fine, white sand. I don't remember whether we were diverted to Entebbe airfield in Uganda by yet more engine trouble or whether the plane just broke down on landing on a scheduled stop. Anyway, we had to spend yet

another night on yet another hard airport floor. We were unable to leave early the next morning because the plane was still being mended but to everyone's great excitement, a Comet jet landed right in front of the terminal on a test flight to South Africa. The howl of its jet engines was a new experience for everyone. It was a lovely sunny morning and I was allowed to run about outside to stretch my legs. Although Entebbe is only about 4000 feet above sea level, I remember being quite out of breath, perhaps experiencing the effects of altitude for the first time or maybe just the after-effects of the London Smog!

I do remember seeing wild game from the aircraft windows as we landed at Nairobi airport but nothing more about our arrival until we reached the Brackenhurst Hotel at Limuru (about 20 miles outside Nairobi) where we were to stay. There I remember being fascinated by the wares of the many peddlers of wooden carvings in the hotel car park - mostly salad bowls and models of game animals.



*With my sister Mary at Brackenhurst Hotel*

Our rooms were in 3 apartment bungalows at some distance from the hotel main complex - we reached them down a network of concrete pathways. There were always giant brown millipedes on those paths - often they were squashed and being consumed by ants which I found fascinating! There were also many geckos climbing the whitewashed walls in the evenings and we were told to watch out for snakes!

I thought I would be the oldest of the Battalion children but I do remember that RSM Paterson's daughter Sandra was taller than me! I remember the Lithgow Family lived in the left-hand end of our bungalow and the Buchanans in the middle apartment and the Moir family lived a bit further down the hill.

After we left the Brackenhurst Hotel, we moved to Nanyuki where we lived in a rented house a mile or two from the camp towards the racecourse. The house was built on raised brick piles to avoid termite damage. This left a convenient space beneath the house and the ground where a small boy could hide to escape from his governess! The house also had a big garden with a climbing frame and swings and we often hosted other families for parties.

Nanyuki was mainly memorable because we all caught chicken pox there. My mother became quite ill but we children merely suffered the indignity of being kept in a darkened room and repeatedly being told not to scratch! We were also dabbed endlessly with camomile lotion (which left us white and splotchy!) Alistair Irwin was sent to "enjoy the disease" with us. While he was staying, my dreaded governess made us all give a recital of poetry to cheer up my mother during her recuperation! I had to wear a cheetah skin (about which more later) and recite a poem about "... I'm a mad dog, a bad dog chasing silly sheep..." my governess was a very poor animal ecologist!



*My sister Mary's birthday party - Alistair Irwin dressed as a cowboy*



*Mary Rose, Alistair Irwin and Hugh Rose*

We used to ride regularly at the local riding stable near the racecourse which was run by two tyrannical ladies who made us trot endlessly rising in our stirrups with straight back and hands held low. I preferred to adopt a more relaxed "cowboy style" but they would seldom allow us to canter or gallop. I cannot think why but there is even a photo of me riding in a kilt. I remember it was most uncomfortable – no wonder Black Watch mounted officers wore trews! One day on the way to the stables, we met a black mamba snake beside the track and my governess fled in a complete panic leaving me to fend for myself - sadly it did not chase her. I was armed with a bow and arrow but knew enough to stand quite still and luckily it did not attack!



*Another riding lesson at Nanyuki*



*Me riding in a kilt*

We could see Mt Kenya from our house and one day I was taken by my father on an expedition up the mountain - I think it must have been some sort of Battalion event because there were several young officers and civilian guests in the party as well. We drove up part of the way and then we had to walk up a game track through the bamboo to get above the treeline. It was quite a hike and at about 11,000 ft, I found I needed a few rests. Above the treeline was a sort of moorland with strange plants growing like giant cabbage trees.

We had armed guards because there were still some Mau Mau gangs active in the forest and my father was carrying his semi-automatic M1 carbine (which he had brought back with him from Korea). I was allowed to fire it - splattering a rock target with a hail of bullets which was very satisfying. I then had to search for and collect all the empty cases to prevent the Mau Mau from reloading them. For some reason I did not have a picnic with me and got very hungry. However, one of



*Rest stop at about 11,000 ft up Mt Kenya*



*With my Father and Major Iain Buchanan above the treeline*

the young officers (I think Peter Carthew) shared his sandwiches with me – rare beef with mustard has been my favourite sandwich filling ever since!



*Sitting on the tent ridge to escape Chockie*

Our next house was quite remote - up in the hills some miles from the Battalion camp at Gilgil. By then I had driven my governess to distraction. She had left us to work at one of the Kenya boarding schools, so I went to the school in the camp and was given extra Latin lessons by Rev Bill Wright, the Battalion padre. Cpl Blythe (CO's driver) usually took me home with my father at the end of the day, so I had to hang around the camp after school and try to stay out of trouble. First, I would visit the back of the Officers' and Sergeants' Messes where I had a good friend on the staff who could usually smuggle out something for me to eat. The cookhouse was a disaster in that respect – I always got chased away by the head cook who was very scary! Then I would go to check up on 2 tame monkeys kept as pets by the Jocks. One day the big one (Ginger) bit me right through my thumb nail because I had arrived to see him empty-handed. If I heard the Pipe Call for Defaulters, I would sneak off to hide behind the Orderly Room hut to listen to RSM Paterson sorting out the accused. Then I would trot off to the guard room to hear Retreat and to check up on the gleaming Regimental Gong and Bell at the front gate and "Ronson and Warsaw" (the two Korean figures scrubbed sparkling white by the prisoners). I had 'friends' all over the camp and thoroughly enjoyed myself visiting them, listening to their stories and promising never to tell my father anything that they told me!

Another good friend was Lance Corporal Humphries, my father's new batman, who came to live with us as a house guard. He used to tell me many blood-chilling stories of his military exploits and how he was planning to set up a truck haulage business after his demob. All his trucks were going to be painted crimson – I can't quite remember why – and I often wonder if his stories were true or indeed if his trucking dream ever came true.

Another event I remember clearly was the Dedication Service for a stained-glass window which the Regiment had donated to St Andrews Church, Nairobi to commemorate the founding of the Black Watch Kirk session.



*Parade outside St Andrews Church, Nairobi*

Sadly, after independence the window was removed and destroyed as being politically incorrect. Even as a child, I thought it projected

an image of which the Battalion and Kenya could be proud - not all Africans were Mau Mau. If the new Government of Kenya did not want it, a safe home could have been found for it at Balhousie.



1954 Kenya - The stained-glass window in St Andrews Church dedicated 17 Jan 1954 to commemorate the establishment of The Black Watch Kirk Session

The service and parade were both well attended by many townsfolk and what would surely be unthinkable today was that three Regimental children were allowed to stand on the pavement in front of the salute taker during the battalion march past! Only I may say, on the sternest warning that I kept my sister and the other badly-behaved, younger boy in order!)



1954 March Past Nairobi

At Nanyuki, we had occasional security issues. One night when we were warned by telephone that the Mau Mau were holding an oathing on the local farm, we barricaded ourselves into the house. My father occasionally used to hold 'live firing exercises' and my mother had to shoot her pistol from various windows at targets which he had set up in the garden. I think it was mainly designed to impress the local Mau Mau with our preparedness because I don't think she ever hit a target! She would have had much more success if she had used a shotgun as she demonstrated by shooting a puff adder which took up residence under her bedroom floor. Sadly, she blew it into 3 bits - a disaster - because I wanted to cure the skin whole and stuff it!

My contribution to the armed defence of our home was my bow and arrows and an old panga for close quarter work! My best arrow was supposedly made by a 'Ndrobo elephant hunter. It was quite short and covered in black tar with a sharp steel blade head. My mother was told it was almost certainly coated with a deadly poison, so it was confiscated until it had been cleaned up. I was out patrolling my beat one day when round the corner came a huge wild dog with its tongue lolling out. I

was meant to stay within the garden but had strayed a bit and because I only had 2 arrows with me and knew wild dogs hunted in packs, I beat a hasty retreat!

Another sporting diversion was to go shooting quail with my father and the other officers. I much enjoyed these shoots until I got home when I was invariably covered in many ticks from walking through the long grass in shorts. I would pick these off my nether regions and line them up on the edge of the bath to count them as part of the day's bag.



Tug of War 1 BW v The Locals

The Kenya settlers were very kind to us and we were often invited to stay with them or visit their farms for various events. I remember going to General Hinde's house for a big Maasai ceremony. The Moran looked very impressive with their long spears and red cloaks. One had just been mauled by a lion that morning and the great cuts on his shoulder and arm had only been roughly sewn up. He seemed very nonchalant about it and was obviously the centre of attention for all the young girls during the dancing! After lunch I was sent upstairs to look in a big box on the landing which I found to be full of tanned leopard and cheetah skins! I was told I could have just ONE - what a torture for a small boy to have to choose! I finally settled on a cheetah skin which I still have today.

We spent Christmas with the Munro family who were great friends of my parents. It was good fun not least because they had two ravishingly pretty daughters - inevitably I fell madly in love with both of them! They also had a troop of long-haired, black and white colobus monkeys living on their roof. This was a mixed blessing because although they would take food from your hand, every window and door had to be carefully barred to keep them out of the house or else mayhem ensued!

We also went to stay with Colonel Bill and Peggy Bucknall at Molo. They had lots of horses, Colonel Bill had served in The Regiment and was Master of the local hunt. I remember he rode a fearsome horse called Rob Roy in local point-to-point races. I always wanted to ride a beautiful grey pony which belonged to Jenny (now Mrs Barnett!), but she would not let me do so (maybe because I had pulled her pigtails) and so I had to be content to ride a small, very bolshy pony called Stuff instead!



African Huntsman for the Molo Hunt with his hounds

Another memory was a family safari to Tsavo Game Park in our VW Beetle which was loaded up with food and bedding for a week. We stayed in a self-catering, thatched hut within a fenced camp. Wild beasts prowled round the wire at night and we drove round rough tracks each day with a game warden guide. Picnic food seems to have played a big part in my early life - tinned sardines on Ryvita biscuits remains another favourite dish!



*At the Tsavo Game Camp*

Occasionally we were allowed to walk a bit in open bush areas escorted by a Park Ranger.

I remember sitting beside a river which was as clear as gin and we could see the hippos walking past on the river bed in slow motion amid shoals of shimmering fish. The car regularly got charged by angry rhinos and once even once by an elephant but they never actually pressed home their attacks.



*Elephant which charged us*

Another treat was a visit to the Mombasa Leave camp on the coast. Here we could swim and schnorkel in the safe sea inside the reef and also go out deep sea fishing. It was great fun to catch barracuda and kingfish which we then took to sell at the fish market where we could admire all the other types of fish on display.

We hired the boat from a retired game warden/white hunter called Mr Blunt. One day he came out with us dressed in shorts. I was fascinated to see huge, jagged scars running up the inside of both his legs. I plucked up the courage to ask how he had got them and learnt that he had been knocked down and gored by a rogue buffalo. His wife was with him carrying a shotgun and bravely rushed up and fired both barrels at point blank range right into the buffalo's ear thus saving his life. I remember they also had outlines of all the biggest fish caught in their boat painted on the tiled floor of their veranda and tame bush babies in a cage. They would let the bush babies out to sit on my shoulder. Often, they would gently place one cold, damp paw on my cheek as they gazed around with their sad eyes. I later discovered bushbabies urinate on their paws to improve their grip!



*Game viewing with a Park Ranger*



*Kitty Willett caught the biggest kingfish!*

One day we drove up the coast from Mombasa to Malindi and had to cross a river on a car ferry which ran on chains - a gang of natives pulled the ferry across. They were a cheery bunch who sang songs as they worked - our Swahili was very limited (probably just as well) because it soon became apparent that they were singing songs about us!

Finally, the time came for us to go home on board the troopship Empire Halladale. For the first couple of days, our cabins were nearly uninhabitable. Someone had thrown a tear gas grenade into the Battalion train as it was leaving Nairobi and my father's clothes were all impregnated with the gas. The sea voyage was very boring especially as we had to attend daily school lessons taught by our various mothers. We were not allowed to explore the ship and there was very little for children to do. However, I did enjoy our transit through the Suez Canal and the trips ashore at Aden, Port Said and Port Suez. Particularly memorable were the souks and 'gully gully men' who produced live chicks from all parts of one's clothing.

Eventually we reached Glasgow where the weather was cold and dreich. My father handed over command of the Battalion and we went back for three days to our home outside Perth. Then I had to go south again to boarding school so my happy life as a 'barrack rat' with 1st Battalion in a sunshine posting came to an end a few weeks before my ninth birthday.

# CRETE MAY 1941

By Mrs Tess Monteith

The battle for Crete was fought against the background of the German offensive to secure its Southern flank in advance of Operation Barossa, the invasion of Russia, scheduled for later in the summer. The German Army possessed overwhelming air superiority and, with the arrival of Romell's Afrika Corps in the Western Desert, the Allied forces were greatly stretched.

Freyberg, The VC awarded New Zealand General, was in command of the New Zealand forces deployed in March 1941 to shore up the defence of Greece. This was in the face of the rapidly advancing German Army. Amid constant air attack, and with few resources, the engagement was one of withdrawal and retreat. Freyberg, credited with salvaging an orderly and coordinated evacuation, arrived in Crete on the 28th April. Lack of shipping, and time, necessitated abandonment of heavy armour in Greece, including 8000 tracked and wheeled vehicles which would have been useful in the defence of Crete. Freyberg was amongst the last to leave and criticised heavily the lack of a strategic plan for the Greek campaign. He arrived on Crete with little in the way of defensive capability. Planning for the defence had been minimal. Only in April 1941 had it become apparent that Crete was likely to become a battlefield. A reconnaissance of the island, conducted only in March, concluded that there was only one barely serviceable road on the north side and an opportunity to use the 15,000 Italian prisoners of war to improve the route to Sphakia on the south coast had been missed. There had been no time to establish airfields on the South side of the island. The majority of the equipment remained in Palestine due to an administrative failure. Greek forces on Crete were minimal, the Greek government having been assured that Britain would assume responsibility for its defence, and use it as a naval and air staging base. Attempts to bring in supplies had come under sustained German air attack. By May of the fifteen ships bringing supplies, eight had been sunk and only 3,000 of the 27,000 tons of equipment landed.

On arrival in Crete, Freyberg discovered that his headquarter staff and communications equipment had been redeployed to Alexandria in anticipation of reconstituting the 2NZEF in Egypt. "I had to start by taking men from units to make a headquarter staff and, although they tried hard, they were not in the accepted term, a staff. One of the greatest mistakes in the evacuation from Greece was the failure to evacuate from Greece to Crete a headquarters, of which there were at least four". Lt Richard Fleming, of The Black Watch, describes his staff as being 'inadequate to a degree. I was only 26, never been to Sandhurst, the Staff College, and only had a minimum of training'. Yet he was made Brigade Major, the senior Staff officer. Of his two intelligence officers, one was charming but not trained, the other Paddy Leigh Fermor, a mad Irishman, very erudite maybe, but quite wild and, at that stage, quite useless!

Thus for the defence of Crete Freyberg had at his disposal no heavy armour, poor infrastructure, inadequate supplies, no air cover, poor communications, a crucial lack of communications equipment and an untrained headquarters. It would appear he did at least have men. However of the 30,000 British troops and 11,000 Greek, 10,000 of

each had no weaponry. 800 Greek pilots had no planes. An unwelcome added responsibility was the Greek royal family, remaining there on London's advice to bolster Greek morale. Fleming had to lend his car for their transport. Their eventual evacuation necessitated deploying a rather too visible white mule with amorous intentions. However, King George of the Hellenes did not let the side down, being attired in full service dress, medals, Sam Browne and highly polished boots.

The keys to Crete lay with the three airfields at Maleme, Rethymnon and Heraklion. Hold these and the island would be secure but the nature of the terrain on this Northern coast divided the land into discreet battlefields. Communications and the ability to deploy reinforcements from one sector to another was much hampered by geography; outcrops of the central mountain range intersecting the northern coast. The 2nd Battalion formed part of the defence of Heraklion under Brigadier Chappel's 14th Infantry Brigade. The vulnerable eastern airfield of Maleme was defended by the 4th NZ Brigade under Brigadier Inglis. Both the Germans and the British were aware that any attempt at a sustained seaborne landing would be vulnerable to the attentions of the Royal Navy. However, British air defences were much hampered by the loss of some 200 aircraft in the flight from Greece.

Freyberg, in a personal letter\* to General Wavell, the GOC-in-C Middle East, assessed the situation thus:

"Given a little more time I am certain that we could make our position here a relatively strong one. I am certain that everybody will do their best and the morale is now high. If they come as an airborne attack against our aerodromes, I feel sure we should be able to stop him if he comes after the 16th. If however he makes a combined operation of it with a beach landing with tanks, then we should not be in a strong position.

I am glad you think I inspire confidence. I appear at any rate to have a fatal habit of backing into the limelight. Everybody is in good form and I know they are looking forward to the battle."

Two points from this letter indicate Freyberg's pressing concerns. One, the importance that he attached to the security of ULTRA intelligence is reinforced by his P.S. "I will be very discreet over O.L." Two, his assessment that their defensive position was vulnerable to seaborne invasion.

General Kurt Student, Commander of the XI Air Corps conceived operation Mercury however as an airborne attack. Hitler was skeptical of its success; 15,000 troops to be airlifted, initially using gliders and parachutists. He also enjoyed air support from some 570 fighters based around Athens. The RAF contingent, having come under sustained attack was unviable, and its remaining few aircraft were evacuated to Egypt.

The German airborne assault started on 20th May with glider troops landing first at Maleme. The initial attack was nearly disastrous with troops widely spread. The attacks at Rethymnon and Heraklion were largely also successfully repelled. Accounts of the vulnerable parachutists being easy targets for rifle fire abounded. Sergeant (later RSM) Wharton was interviewed about his experiences during a Battalion battle field tour in 1995. "And the bombers came over, and we didn't take any notice of them and then we came outside for a bit of a rest making sure there was no spotter plane up and we heard this noise out to sea and we are looking up to see and suddenly they dropped and they come in at sea level, I suppose to dodge any fire and then they swung up over us and started dropping the paratroops. As soon as they started dropping we threw back the covers just as one man and let go with everything we'd got. All the Bren guns and everything, it was a slaughter, a slaughter. They were bumping into each other, Germans were firing at us coming down and hitting their own men and everything, an awful mess."<sup>1</sup>

1. Letter, A.P. Wavell Archive, Courtesy of Owen Humphreys, The Joint Owners of the Wavell Papers

Captain Jack Monteith, the Garrison Adjutant, wrote to his stepfather, General Sir Reginald May, who was the commander of the Dumfriesshire Home Guard describing in some detail what to expect.

"I feel it can do no possible harm to give you a first-hand account of paratroops, as the Germans already know all about their own and I think it might be of great use for your Home Guard.

The initial landing comprised about a brigade (or a regiment in German) and took place from about 5:30 pm to 5:45 pm in four separate localities in an area 6 miles x 2 miles - each landing occupied an area 3/4



*The Arrival of HMS Dido 1941 by Noel Syers. HMS 'Dido' was one of the ships sent to evacuate Allied troops after the fall of Crete. German bombers attacked the fleet and one bomb exploded in her canteen amongst the evacuated soldiers.*

of a mile long by 200 yards wide planes came in Y formation of three is at a steady height of 150 to 200 feet. All were three engine Junkers painted green with a yellow tail. Fourteen men appeared to jump from each plane on the flank, while the centre plane drop six containers and two or three men. The men had green and brown camouflage chutes and stores, white ones. Areas chosen all gave good cover e.g. vineyards, olive groves and in one case rocky ground. No landing was made on the aerodrome, The nearest be about 3/4 of a mile away, although the aerodrome was definitely the objective. All wore German flying uniforms with overalls, and ones I saw definitely landed in forage caps but others are said to have landed in steel helmets, and the only weapons on them were Luger pistols and bombs, the latter singularly ineffective; When troop carriers appeared the ground straffing and bombing ceased completely. Troop carriers were not armed or at least did not retaliate when shot up with Tommy guns. The men landing within rifle range or on occupied positions did not stand a chance and few survived. Also our troops counter-attacking in the landing area within ten to fifteen minutes found them easy meat.

Following types of weapons were landed by chute: 3.7 cm anti-tank guns attached to four parachutes, complete even to shell in breach; 81mm mortars and smaller mortars (very good weapons); the anti-tank rifle bore was less than .303", but with very large cartridge (like the .22" Hornet ammo (this has good penetration on carriers at any angle); normal medium machine guns, Tommy guns, rifles and bombs. The container I got to contained (as far as I could make out for there was a sniper who made a complete investigation impossible) one machine gun, spares and 6 belts (one in breach), one Tommy gun with six magazines of forty rounds with a bore of about .32", six rifles with a hundred rounds in pouches, one entrenching rod, one pair wire cutters, one map case and field stationary set, one pair of field glasses and other odd items e.g. one pipe and tobacco.

When the initial attack failed further troops were landed the following morning but only about three companies and supplies. The enemy seemed at a loss to know where his own men were as some supplies landed on us! The fire power of the people who had not been mopped up the previous evening i.e. those who landed outside the defended area was pretty terrific and they showed no sign of conserving ammo, firing in bursts of a hundred rounds, or so, where we would fire ten. Containers were shaped and about 5 foot long, opening with two clips for the whole length. There was also at least one motorcycle combination dropped, but out of six parachutes only one opened so it was pretty well smashed up. Later landings were done well away from the (our) defended area and their own (enemy) localities and the defended area strafed simultaneously to keep our heads down."<sup>2</sup>

*2 Jack Monteith, Garrison Adjutant, Monteith Family Papers*

The following diary extracts from Gerald Barry (commanding Headquarter Company) give a flavour as to the intensity of the fighting.

" 20 to 24th May. I am writing this in a slit trench which is my observation post and company Headquarters. Tremendously exciting events have taken place in the last five days. On the afternoon of the 20th, I received a warning at 2 pm to stand to in battle positions. Shortly afterwards hordes of bombers and Messerschmitts arrived and proceeded to bomb and machine-gun the aerodrome and all around very heavily for the next two hours. Enemy fighters swept incessantly over us only a few feet above our trenches, which presaged something unusual. About 5 pm a lot of German troop carriers arrived and proceeded to empty parachutists all round, all among us, behind us, and in the valley below. All of a sudden there were about 200 men dangling on their ropes, descending from a height of about 300 feet all round us, and masses more up the valley. A tremendous scrimmage then occurred. I was far too occupied in our immediate vicinity to notice what was going on elsewhere. Three men on parachutes dropped within a few yards of our shelter, and Bill and I polished them off with revolver and Mills bombs. Bill was splendid and went quite wild! In the meantime, there was a hell of a lot of shooting going on.

No one had any sleep that night. At dawn, the enemy had organised themselves more or less, and tried to attack our position from in front. This we beat off, killing a good many again. A number had survived on the hill behind us, and a platoon of the company was sent out to deal with them. Unfortunately they met with a lot of fire and suffered heavy casualties, about 10 killed I heard, with Tweedy missing.

24 May. The battle hangs in the balance at the moment but I do hope they will send us reinforcements from Egypt for we cannot go indefinitely without being relieved. There is no S support here now, after five days of this we are indescribably dirty, bearded and very tired.

Today is Alan Temple's birthday, we drank his health with a bottle of gin at lunch.

27th May. We are still in the same slit trench, after 7 days of invasion. The life we lead is terribly tiring. We are compelled to sit in this narrow cooped up place for 16 hours a day. It is impossible to move outside one's trench at all in daylight because of the number of machine guns posted on the other side which immediately open up on one."<sup>3</sup>

*3. Gerald Barry, Diary Vol 1, 25/09/1939-02/07/1941, held in The Black Watch Museum, Balhousie Castle*

From the German perspective, early targets had not been achieved. Troops and materiel landed at Rethymnon and Heraklion had been widely scattered with heavy casualties sustained. Although without air support, the defending forces had been able to mount strong counter attacks and prevent German consolidation of troops. Student, sensing the near failure of the airborne assault decided to throw everything into taking Maleme, the NZ having abandoned the crucial Hill 107 overlooking the airfield. Confusion in Freyberg's mind as to a likely attack by sea, saw him reluctant to commit the necessary forces for a counter attack. He was privileged to ULTRA intelligence, which he was unable to discuss or share with his staff and had misinterpreted a crucial message indicating a likely seaborne attack. He failed to commit his reserve; the 1st Battalion The Royal Welch Fusiliers, who were held back at Canea. Thus the Germans were able to establish themselves and land troops in numbers at Maleme, swinging the course of the battle. Beevor, in his book, *The Battle for Crete*, asserts that in the crucial first forty-eight hours, the means to prevent German consolidation was there, but the opportunity was lost.

Freyberg signaled to Wavell that, handicapped by a lack of transport, communications and staff, and coming under unopposed aerial attack, the continued defence of Crete was untenable. "It was certainly not the fault of the troops'. The decision to withdraw was taken on the afternoon of 27 May, with the Heraklion troops to be evacuated by sea the following night, the Black Watch being taken off principally by the cruisers HMS ORION and DIDO. Some troops in the ill fated destroyer, HMS IMPERIAL had to transfer at sea to HMS HOTSPUR as she had to be scuttled, being beyond repair, her steering gear had been damaged.

Accounts as to the numbers of troops lost in the suicidal air attacks on the journey to Alexandria is the subject of debate. Bernard Fergusson made the claim that whilst only two officers and thirty men had been killed on Crete, over 200 perished in the evacuation. IA Davidson in his 2004 article published in the *Journal of Society for Historical Research*, cites the casualties as thirty-four killed in Crete and 27 during the evacuation. Gerald Barry's diary extracts would support this as he refers to forty casualties in all amongst the troops on HMS DIDO. Also study of Australian records give similar figures. The iconic painting, depicting Piper Geordie Ogilvy, piping a lament as HMS DIDO limped into Alexandria, gravely stricken, with multiple casualties taken, added weight to Fergusson's interpretation. In fact, the piper was aboard the destroyer HMS JACKAL, which had avoided attack. Wavell himself was much grieved on the numbers of casualties sustained by the Black Watch.

Losses on the German side were considerable. At Heraklion alone in the first assault over 300 lost their lives including three brothers, descendants of Von Blucher, saviour of Wellington at Waterloo; Count Wolfgang aged 24, his brothers 19 and 17. In all The German forces sustained 3986 dead, half of that number being paratroopers killed on the first day. Hitler never again conceived an airborne assault but in London hefty consideration was given to its continued threat. Against the odds, the Germans had successfully taken Crete from 200 miles away. Whether the successful capture of the island was ultimately of strategic value to Hitler is a further matter for debate; had Britain retained it, what expense in terms of men and materiel would have been expended in its continued resupply and support?



*German Paratroopers landing on Crete*

# CAPTAIN JOHN ORR OF THE 42ND HIGHLANDERS – TWICE WOUNDED WATERLOO SURVIVOR

By Brigadier R R E Lindsay MA

Whilst locked down during the COVID pandemic, I suspect that for many of us, one of our few pleasures has been walking. My particular distraction has been strolling round Edinburgh Cemeteries, which have not only provided a venue for fresh air, but also a fascinating portal to history. Amongst other military worthies, I ‘met’ General Sir Alan Cunningham GCMG KCB DSO MC in Dean Cemetery and Brigadier Lorne MacLaine Campbell<sup>1</sup> VC DSO (and Bar) OBE TD in Warriston Cemetery. Warriston Cemetery is very rich in history and contains a number of impeccably kept Commonwealth War Graves; one particular gravestone caught my attention; that of Captain John Orr of the

42nd Highlanders, who served in the Peninsular War and at Waterloo.



John Orr wearing the Waterloo Medal

remember that the 42nd Highlanders fought with great valour at the Battle of Quatre Bras, suffering heavy casualties. Under considerable pressure from French Lancers of Werthier’s brigade, the Highlanders were forced to hastily form a square, but were unable to prevent elements of a lancer squadron entering it. A desperate fight took place with most of the lancers being bayoneted. They in turn speared many highlanders, most notably the Commanding Officer Lt Col Macara who took a lance under the chin which penetrated his brain. Command passed to Lt Col Dick who was soon wounded, then Brevet-Major Davidson who was mortally wounded, then Brevet-Major Campbell<sup>1</sup>.

John Orr’s descendant, Lady Rosslyn Macphail, has a note written by him in which he records: “At Quatre Bras I commanded a company and did duty as Adjutant. The enemy had a gun on our flank and we were formed into a square. A man was tardy and slow in turning and I took hold of him by the arm and said ‘Come up, Sir’. I felt the wind of a ball whiz though the air and it struck the man, knocked his head off, the brains spattered about, some on my coat. The French cavalry were only a few yards off and I gave a yell and shouted ‘Charge’ and we did so and drove them off.”<sup>2</sup> Archibald Forbes, in his Regimental History, records that the casualties of the battle included Lieutenant John Orr, who was wounded in the battle.<sup>3</sup>

On the evening of 17 June, The Highlanders had relocated to Waterloo and, on 18 June, were on the left of the Army’s line behind La Haye Sainte. Lieutenant John Orr was with them, in Captain Alexander Fraser’s company, despite the wound he sustained at Quatre Bras. The 42nd Highlanders endured heavy artillery fire in the morning, repulsed some subsidiary attacks, before going forward as part of the general advance that finally broke the French Army. At some part in the day,



The Black Watch at Bay

John Orr was wounded again, this time in the left knee by a musket ball.

In 1831 he became the Superintendent of the Scottish Naval & Military Academy in Edinburgh which he ran until it closed in 1868. The school trained young men for service with the British and East India Company forces; while he was Superintendent about 1300 young men obtained appointments in the Navy, Army and with the East India Company Services<sup>4</sup>.

He died in December 1879 aged 89 and was at that time one of the last surviving Scots who fought at Waterloo – indeed, some suggest he was the last surviving officer of Waterloo.



The grave of Captain John Orr in Warriston Cemetery, Edinburgh

## NOTES

1. <https://www.britishempire.co.uk/forces/armyunits/britishinfantry/42ndblackwatch.htm>
2. <http://www.inverclydesheritage.co.uk/captain-john-orr/>
3. Archibald Forbes: “The Black Watch, The Record of An Historic Regiment”, Cassell: 1910. P273
4. <http://www.inverclydesheritage.co.uk/captain-john-orr/>



# MEMORIES OF MY TIME WITH THE BLACK WATCH

*By Colonel (Retd) A E F Cowan*

I am perhaps in an entirely different position to almost all your other correspondents in that I came from The Royal Scots to The Black Watch as Second-in-Command at the invitation of Ian Ker spending nearly three very happy years with the Battalion. After that I went to 7 UDR as their Commanding Officer. The last part of my career was spent in the former Yugoslavia as Defence Attaché where some years before Claude Moir had preceded me.

My first sight of The Black Watch took place in Libya when 1st Battalion The Royal Scots (1RS) in 1961, as the resident battalion in Benghazi, played enemy to 3 Brigade from Cyprus which included the 1st Battalion The Black Watch. One afternoon I was given command of The Royal Scots Recce Platoon to do whatever I liked with it. It consisted of six land rovers and not much else plus four or more Jocks in each vehicle. The landscape being the desert provided plenty of room for manoeuvre. Wearing our bonnets, we passed some 3 Brigade armoured recce vehicles that asked no questions and found ourselves astride the brigade centre line with a mass of D10 black cables lying on the sand which we promptly cut. We then headed up the centre line until we met 'A' echelon of 1 BW. (Here, as I discovered many years later, was Slim Jones, then I think a lance corporal), who witnessed us motoring on into the back of 1 BW's main defensive position. We opened fire with our blank ammunition and our not so blank white phosphorus grenades which we hurled in all directions as we passed your battalion command post and numerous 1 BW sangars all beautifully constructed with your

Jocks wearing their red hackles. One officer, I believe your adjutant, probably Captain Andrew Wedderburn-Bethune, was so angry that he came running at us throwing a large lump of rock which just missed my head. Another spectator, as I again discovered later, was your brigade commander who apparently approved of this upset which had enlivened an otherwise boring afternoon. Without a doubt in reality the Royal Scots Recce Platoon would have been wiped out but a couple of nights later having lived in a hypothetical sense to fight another day I lay on top of a sand dune, fired a very pistol and there, lined up once more in beautiful order, were two complete companies of Black Watch soldiers again wearing their red hackles ready on the start line for a night attack. Of course, such affairs are very difficult to organise but I for one was reminded of General Wauchope and Magersfontein.

Having served for thirty-three years I have a mass of memories and of course most of these related to 1 RS but some bear comparison with 1 BW more especially service in Crossmaglen. From Western Germany some people from my time with 1 BW may remember an exercise with our 432s in 1980/1 where each rifle company section had to carry out a set number of tasks for example: driving round an obstacle course, repairing a 432 track, digging a defensive position to name a few. The final test involved two live chickens per section which the Jocks were invited to kill, pluck and cook. This was a left over from an exercise again in the Libyan desert where the 2IC of 1 RS (ex SAS) had organised a similar cooking competition with two rabbits per rifle section. Results in both cases were mixed as you can imagine.

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## REMEMBERING: THE BATTLE OF ALEXANDRIA ON 21ST MARCH 1801

### The British Victory in Egypt and The Defeat of Napoleon's Army of the Orient

*By Major (Retd) C B Innes*

The 42nd of Foot, later named The Black Watch, played a major part in the Battle of Alexandria. It is from this conflict we carry the Battle Honour of The Sphinx to this day. In 1801 Britain was at war with France, Spain and Russia. Two years before that, in 1799, Admiral Nelson had severely hampered French military prospects by destroying the French Fleet at the Battle of the Nile. However, Napoleon had managed to land an army of 30,000 men. They had become stranded there in the dirt and dust of Egypt and, with morale low, were anxious to be repatriated to France. This army however posed a significant threat to the British supply line with India. The Prime Minister, William Pitt, together with his Secretary of State for War, Henry Dundas, later Viscount Melville, considered it imperative to remove and defeat what Napoleon called his "Army of the Orient" before it could be reinforced and pose further problems to this important trade route.

Napoleon himself had deserted his Army and escaping back to France in a fast frigate, continued his political and military career. General Jean-Baptiste Kleber had been left in charge, but he was assassinated by the Arabs, who vehemently resisted the presence of the French. General Menou succeeded him, but he was a poor fellow, soon nicknamed "Abdallah de Menou, after his marriage to an Arab spouse and having turned Moslem to do so. Menou spread his Army around Egypt in order to maintain law and order. So dispersed, he forfeited the ability quickly to re-assemble his forces in face of a resurgent enemy.

The decision having been made to attack the French in Egypt, the 67-year-old General Sir Ralph Abercromby, whose family came from Tullibody in Clackmannanshire, was appointed to lead a force of 15,000 men. Abercromby made his way to Gibraltar and gave orders for his force to assemble there.

It is of note how often the names of prominent Scots occur, for Scotsmen filled most of the main appointments in the British Army dispatched to Egypt in 1801; they were referred to by the other British participants, in envy, as "The Scots Pack". The troops though, coming from all parts of Britain, and some held on board ship for many months, required training. From England came the Coldstream, Scots Guards and nineteen other English units, including

the Gloucestershire regiment who were to distinguish themselves in battle. From Scotland, in addition to our 42nd of Foot, came the 1st of Foot (Royal Scots), the 79th of Foot (The Queens Own Cameron Highlanders), the 90th Perthshire Rifles (Perthshire Greys) and the 92nd Gordon Highlanders. Reinforcements were also ordered up from India including the 25th of Foot (The KOSB) and the 90th Cameronian (Scottish Rifles), all commanded by General David Baird, yet another Scot.

Within the confines of The Rock, General Abercromby was unable to undertake any serious training with his assembling force and so he made arrangements for his whole Army to move to the South Coast of Turkey, near Marmaris, where he was able to disembark his force once more and start training in earnest. In good open countryside, he practiced for an assault-landing near Alexandria in Egypt.

The General was extremely poorly briefed by the War Department. He was provided with no naval charts of the Egyptian coastline, only being given the general advice that there might be a suitable landing beach at Aboukir Bay, near Alexandria. His Cavalry regiments had been dispatched, at very short notice, without their horses, on the assumption that these would be readily available in the Mediterranean. Realising this he sent messages to the British Ambassador in Turkey, a friend of his, Thomas Bruce, Lord Elgin, requesting him to procure horses for his cavalry units. The animals rounded up were of very poor quality and so the cavalry played only a minor part in the Alexandria battle.

It is worth emphasising the very important part played by the Royal Navy, who exhibited considerable skill at landing the British Army at Aboukir Bay in what was an extremely difficult operation. Fortunately, the coastline at the Marmaris training area was similar to that at Aboukir Bay, the very shallow waters making it impossible to bring in big ships close to the shore. Soldiers would have to be trained to be offloaded onto small ships flatboats, and lighters and then, and only then, having been lined-up under the orders of Captain Alexander Cochrane RN, of Culter near Cupar, could boats be rowed ashore and men could clamber out to fight in an assault-landing operation in Egypt.

Sailing from Turkey to Egypt, the British force, which numbered about

15,000 men, was unable to land for seven days because of high winds and bad weather. Only when conditions were favourable could Admiral Lord Keith justify authorising the landings at Aboukir Bay. Fortunately the British met with relatively light opposition and were swiftly able to establish a firm bridgehead. The French fled back towards Alexandria, allowing Abercromby to off load his ammunition and stores and horses largely unopposed.

Marching his men inland to meet the French, there was a small engagement at the Battle of Mandara, where Lieutenant Colonel Charles Erskine of the Gordons, a distant relative of Major Jamie Erskine, sustained wounds to his leg. It was shattered, necessitating amputation and he later died of his wounds. The Colonel was buried in the sand but, ninety-three years later, in a surprising development, British troops on exercise in Egypt, digging a hole for water, accidentally exhumed his remains. The Colonel's body was identified by the fact that he only had one leg and they found a gold locket containing the hair of a lady, possibly his fiancé around his neck. Later the Colonel was interred with full military honours in Alexandria and the locket was returned to the Erskine family. General Abercromby ordered that the Gordon Highlanders should bear the Battle Honour "Mandara".

Coming to the Battle of Alexandria it is worth remembering that General Abercromby suffered from partial blindness or bad eyesight, or ophthalmia. So, his Second-in-Command, Major General John Hely-Hutchison, another Scot, often advised Abercromby about his next step. It was found that the French had established a particularly strong position around the "Roman Ruins", ruins indeed of the ancient palace of the Egyptian Ptolemys. These ruins dominated the desert plain ahead and for seven days the British moved forward, examining the area, and bringing artillery and ammunition closer for a major battle.

Meanwhile, General Menou, observing the British build-up, decided to seize the initiative without further delay and, hoping to achieve a degree of surprise, he gave orders for an attack at 0440 hours on 21st March 1801. General Menou's attack came in the form of a feint on the British Left Flank, but in fact his main attack came on the British Right Flank, which was commanded by General John Moore (of later Retreat to Corunna fame). The 42nd of Foot were part of the force holding the Roman Ruins.

But General Abercromby was ready for just such a surprise attack and had ordered all his men to sleep in their clothes with their weapons at hand beside them and he had posted pickets well in front to give early warning of any attack. Thus, his Army rose to fight an early morning battle.

Riding over to where the noises of battle were loudest and from where he could see more clearly, Abercromby saw General Moore was already calling forward his Reserves, which included the 42nd of Foot. The fighting was very fierce as the French charged forward shouting their battle cry "En Advance, En Advance". General Moore's horse was shot under him and he had to find a remount causing a momentary lack of command. Some British Regiments gave out orders not to fire until "they saw the whites of the enemies' eyes", thereby ensuring that their musket fire was at close quarters and very accurate.

At one point Colonel Chambers of the Gloucesters, whose regiment was surrounded by the French, gave the famous order "Rear Rank 28th, Right About Face" and with a single volley they dispersed their attackers." The Gloucestershire Regiment, now part of The Rifles, have been able to carry on the tradition, of wearing a cap badge to the front and another to the rear of their headdress to commemorate the Gloucesters actions during the Battle of Alexandria. It is in similar vein to the Royal Regiment of Scotland's black spat buttons, a former Gordon Highlanders distinction. This had been adopted in memory of General Sir John Moore who died alongside that regiment at Corunna in January 1809.

At about the same time, Major James Stirling of Craigharnock in Stirlingshire, of the 42nd of Foot, led his five Companies forward on the left of the Reserve, just in time to face a full assault from the French General Lampon's 21st Legere Regiment, who had earlier been nicknamed "The Invincibles" by Napoleon in his recent Italian campaign.

The 21st Legere succeeded in passing some troops behind the left flank of the 42nd and Major Stirling turned his rear rank around and ordered them to charge the French, breaking their column and most importantly taking their surrender and capturing the Standard of the Invincibles. The French unit's Standard was the equivalent to the Regimental Colours of a British regiment and was something that should never be lost. There is a bust of General Stirling and a small fragment of the Standard of the Invincibles in the Balhousie Museum.

The Roman Ruins fell to the British after heavy fighting. General Abercromby rode forward to encourage the 42nd. He was heard to shout out "The French must not be allowed to regain the Heights. My brave Highlanders, remember your Country, remember your forefathers".

Shortly afterwards some French Dragoons galloped forward and rushed the General who was slightly wounded by a sword thrust. He managed to wrest the weapon from the dragoon using the vigour and strength of his arm. Here, a Corporal Barker of the 42nd, who saw what was happening, ran to the General's assistance. The Corporal had run out of ball ammunition for his musket and so, loading it with powder, he quickly inserted his ramrod and fired that at the enemy and so protected the General.

General Abercromby had one fault. He tended to come too far forward in battle, thereby risking his life. Almost unnoticed during the battle, he had been wounded by a musket ball in the thigh. Dismounting, he had walked around

the battlefield until he came to a ridge held by the Guards Brigade, from where he had a good view of the conflict below. Only when he was certain that the battle had been won, did he allow himself to be carried back to the rear. There he fainted from loss of blood; surgeons discovered the musket ball had penetrated his groin. He was taken aboard Admiral Lord Keith's flagship where he died seven days later.

The General's son, Colonel John Abercromby, who was serving as the DAG to his father, was consulted about his father's burial. Colonel Abercromby asked whether it was possible for his father's body to be returned to Scotland and for him to be interred in the family vault in Tullibody. So, the body was immersed in a barrel of rum to preserve it, but, on its way back to Britain in a Frigate, some naval ratings, knowing about the barrel of rum, opened it to get at the liquor and so the General arrived in a very smelly barrel when the frigate reached Malta.

Unfortunately, the Captain of the Frigate refused to take the body any further and so General Abercromby was buried in Fort St Elmo, part of the Grand Harbour of Valetta in Malta.

Meanwhile the French Army had begun to retreat in disarray, whilst it was said a "melancholy gloom spread over the whole British Army when they learnt of the wounding of their much respected and much beloved commander". By 10 am that morning, all firing had stopped as two French ammunition wagons blew up in a huge explosion. General John Moore said "The business of the day has fairly proved the superiority of the British troops and British weapons over those of the French". In the following five months the British cleared the French from Egypt, taking their capitulation in Alexandria, along with Cairo, which the British captured soon afterwards. The British Army suffered over 1361 men killed or wounded during the Egyptian Campaign. The 42nd of Foot lost 313 men. This was one of the largest losses for a regiment. The Battle of Alexandria however proved that the French were not invincible. Napoleon enjoyed significant success and domination of Europe for many years till the tide began to turn, first during the Peninsula Wars of 1807-1814 and then culminating at the battle of Waterloo on 18th June 1815.

But more immediately, the British had removed the French threat to the British Empire in India and the Far East.

Footnote on the Colours

The 42nd of Foot gained the Battle Honour of The Sphinx, eventually to show upon their Colours.

The Colours of the 42nd of Foot, which were carried throughout the Egyptian Campaign, lie safely in Novar House, near Evanton in Ross-shire. On the grant of New Colours, the old Stand of Colours, which had been granted to the 42nd of Foot in 1785 in Halifax in Nova Scotia, were gifted in 1803 to the Colonel of the Regiment at that time, General Sir Hector Munro of Novar KB.

The Munro-Ferguson family still live at Novar. Enquiries were made as to whether they might be perhaps donated to the Black Watch Museum in Perth, for they are the oldest Stand of Colours belonging to the Regiment. However, under the care of Mr Ronald Munro-Ferguson they are beautifully displayed in a fine Gallery in the house. On one side, and on a wall, there is a small, framed plaque with the following writing, "These Colours should never be removed from Novar while one stone remains above another". In another letter owned by the family, Sir Hector Munro says, "The torn, tattered state of the Colours will show the number of enemy balls shot through them". Indeed, it is easy to spot the squash-ball size holes in the old fabric, to this day.

So, there they remain. Actually, those Colours do not contain The Sphinx because that had not been authorised in time for inclusion when they were taken out of use in 1802. Neither are there any battle honours depicted, for again they predate the award of such honours being permitted on Colours.

They are very large Colours, measuring 5ft 6 inches flying and 6 foot deep at the pike. They would have been extremely difficult to carry in any form of breeze. Nowadays British Army Colours are much smaller measuring only 3ft 9 inches by 3 feet. Instead of a spearhead at the top of each spike we now have a golden lion and unicorn fixture

Major Innes advises that a very good new book recently published by Frontline-books, ISBN 1526758466, written by the Scots military historian, Stuart Reid, entitled "Egypt 1801, The End of Napoleon's Eastern Empire". This book has a front and back cover depicting soldiers of the 42nd of Foot, together with many other interesting illustrations.



*The locket found on Lieutenant Colonel Charles Erskine*

# GENERAL WADE'S REVIEW OF SIX HIGHLAND INDEPENDENT COMPANIES

*By Earl John Chapman*

Account of Lt Gen George Wade's Review of Six Highland Independent Companies, Ruthven Barracks, Badenoch, 6 August 1731  
Extract of a Letter from Ruthven in Badenoch, AUG 7.

Yesterday the Six Highland Independent Companies (who have been incamp'd here some Days) were Reviewed by (Lt) General (George) Wade, in Companies, and afterwards in Battalion, and performed all the Parts of both Manual and Evolution Exercise, with an unimitable (sic, inimitable or unparalleled) Dexterity, to the entire Satisfaction of his Excellency, and the Admiration of many other Officers of Distinction. They indeed made a fine Appearance, being all handsome well bodied Men; and habited in a Dress so very like the ancient Romans, revived in the Spectators an idea of that brave People. An Officer of Distinction express'd himself in the following Words on this Occasion, "These Men, as now disciplin'd, together with intrepid Prowess peculiar to the brave Highlanders, will challenge a Place among the best Veterans on Earth."

Source: Caledonian Mercury (Edinburgh), 16 August 1731, p.2. Originally transcribed by Paul Pace, Revolutionary War Highland Research Group, January 2021.

## Notes:

(1) This review shows that the six Highland Independent Companies (a.k.a. Black Watch) initially raised on 31 May 1725 (Warrant antedated to 24 April), were observed being exercised and reviewed as a battalion in August 1731, eight years before being officially regimented as the 43rd Foot (Earl of Crawford's, 25 October 1739). One wonders if Horse Guards considered them as an unnumbered battalion, much like Fraser's Highlanders in 1757 (initially raised as the 2nd Highland Battalion of Foot, entered into the Line as the 63rd Foot, and later renumbered as the 78th Foot).

(2) Another review took place, also at Ruthven, on 8 August 1732. This suggests that the Independent Companies were reviewed as a battalion on a regular basis.

*1 Caledonian Mercury, 8 August 1732. See also, Victoria Schofield, The Highland Furies: The Black Watch 1739-1899, (London, 2012), v.1, p6.*

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## THE BLACK WATCH MEMORIAL HOME DUNALISTAIR

*By Colonel The Hon W D Arbuthnott MBE*

At a meeting of The Black Watch Association in Perth in the autumn of 1919 the idea of a memorial to those killed in the War first took shape. It was agreed that the memorial should be a building of practical use rather than a statue or a monument. A committee was formed under Brigadier W. Mcl. Campbell to decide what form the memorial should take and to raise the necessary funds. It was decided that the memorial should take the form of a Holiday Home for the widows and orphans of men of the Regiment killed in the War. Fortunately, Dunalistair House, a substantial mansion in Broughty Ferry, was offered to the Committee at a reasonable price. On inspection Dunalistair with its spacious grounds proved to be entirely suitable and it was bought in February 1920. Considerable alterations and improvements were made to the building during 1920 including the installation of central heating and the addition of new lavatories and bathrooms. The three large public rooms became the dining room, a large day nursery and a sitting room for the mothers.

A House Committee was set up representing the ladies of Dundee and the counties of Perth, Fife and Angus with the Countess of Strathmore, the Queen Mother's mother, as President. This committee was responsible for the furnishing of the Memorial, the appointment of a matron and for the running of the Home. Mrs Ethel Shepherd was the first matron to be appointed and she remained in post until July 1946. Regulations for Admission were drawn up; a 14 day stay was to be normal, the fees being 10 shillings a week for women, 5 shillings for a child with 2/6 for each other child. The Fund now stood at £42,000 with the Dundee committee raising £12,000 in 3 months.

The Home first opened to receive visitors in April 1921 but owing to the unsettled state of the country due to the coal strike applications were sparse to begin with. However, initially, vacancies were filled by the wives and families of men from the Depot or of Reservists who had been called up because of the emergency but by mid-summer widows and orphans were arriving. That first year 92 mothers and 181 children stayed at Dunalistair. Also in 1921 the first Pound Day was held and, through the years, this was to become a popular fund-raising event and Garden Party held every year, usually in June.

During the years that it was open the home provided a holiday for over 20,000 ladies and over 7000 children; in addition, between 1922

and 1939 two camps for a fortnight each year were held in the grounds for boys. In addition to Pound Day each year the other big occasion was the annual visit made by the Queen Mother; first from her home at Glamis in 1925 and latterly during her annual holiday at Balmoral she would visit the Home each autumn and great was the competition amongst the ladies to book a holiday during the appropriate period. During the Second World War the number of visitors was limited to 25 per fortnight (and only adults allowed) but in April 1946 normal admissions were once more agreed including the boys' camps. Mrs Davies became the new matron.

Part of the refurbishing and decoration carried out in 1920 was the erection, above the front door, of a large stone Black Watch badge. It is shown in photographs of the exterior of the front of the building. When the Home was finally closed in 1983 this badge was moved to the grounds of Balhousie Castle where it can be seen standing on the right of the entrance gates. There it stands amongst the other memorials as a reminder of the foresight and generosity of several generations of members and former members of the Regiment.



*Dunalistair House*

# COLD WAR WARRIOR – EXERCISE LIQUID CHASE

By Major A A L Watson LVO

Editor's note: The Battalion's account was written in The Red Hackle Magazine in December 1983 - this is a personal account.

The 1st Battalion The Black Watch was selected to do the first chemical warfare trail at battlegroup level in The British Army of the Rhine (BAOR), involving the Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down, and many hangers on from across BAOR and the Army. The aim was to confirm what was physically possible in terms of tactical activity while in IPE (protective equipment including a respirator) for a considerable amount of time, without a break. This is termed "fighting dirty" (i.e., without decontaminating either vehicles or equipment), which was then the current doctrine for dealing with a chemical attack in BAOR. To assist us, we were testing a new hand-held piece of equipment which could "sniff" the air and confirm contamination on people, vehicles or the ground. This was CAM (chemical agent monitor).

Time dulls the memory, but there were a number of different exercises including a battlegroup tactical replenishment by night and a company in defence.

In the infantry on foot, rather than in a pressurised air-conditioned vehicle such as a tank, working in full IPE for extended periods is very difficult and debilitating. With a complete additional layer, from the respirator, hood, suit, gloves and rubber overboots, there were obvious immediate problems with eating, drinking and going to the loo. And more liquid is required, because of the heat generated. In addition, there was no chance to wash or shave, which gradually causes problems with rashes, feet etc. Walking long distances was a challenge. Writing or detailed dexterous work with the hands (such as vehicle repairs) was made much more difficult. Physical activity heated you up rapidly, as you were wearing an extra impervious layer, and you had to breathe forcibly through a filter on the respirator, which also required additional energy; increasing with exertion. In addition, everything required complex decontamination processes if you needed to remove equipment to eat, drink or go to the loo. Overall, something similar to Dante's vision of hell.

While CAM did help, nevertheless the time and effort expended in doing anything was exponentially greater than normal, with considerable implications in terms of military efficiency. In addition, there was the isolation imposed by the respirator and the resulting inability to communicate. These also had psychological effects. Further, when tired, it was very easy to fall asleep while not even realising it had happened. So, while in IPE continuously, abilities were progressively degraded.

Remembering the running replenishment, it was both very much slower, and also physically challenging. Armoured vehicles rumbling around in the dark (with the drivers also in IPE, so with limited vision), a very noisy environment, very limited vision when wearing a respirator – it acted rather like wearing blinkers - and the impossibility of identifying anyone without getting "muzzle to muzzle". In addition, the transfer of fuel involves spillages which, if it splashed on to the IPE, degraded its protection, and will need a change of clothing. To be sent to find a particular individual by night, as we were on radio silence and no lights, was a time consuming and very difficult task, with the additional challenge of not being run down by a 432 on the way around. But it was achieved in good order.

The company in defence - digging trenches, wiring etc – worked to the physical limit, as digging trenches to the required dimensions – up to 6 ft deep and 3 ft 6 inches wide - was hard enough work without the additional imposition of IPE. The Company achieved the task but was non-operational the following morning. They had literally worked themselves into a state of exhaustion.

I'm not sure that we saw the detailed report for the Exercise. But



NBC Suit

it was clear that fighting dirty for a long period is not an act of war for the infantry. Perhaps one could rotate troops in the front line, rather like in the trenches in the First World War, but it would have to be done frequently – perhaps as often as every 24 hours. The other option is either to leave the area, or use tanks and other pressurised air conditioned vehicles to contain and control any assault. But they cannot hold ground.

Serendipity then had a part to play. When it was clear that the First Gulf War was due to take place, I was appointed as the lead in the Army NBC cell in the Joint Headquarters bunker at High Wycombe. In part because of my assumed expertise in NBC; In part because there was nobody else. The cell started out as a corporal driver and me, with boxes of NBC pamphlets, which I began to read cover to cover.

As soon as the brigades from BAOR were warned off, the brigades rang me up to ask about NBC policy and, in accordance with doctrine, I said of course we will "fight dirty". This didn't go down well. They muttered about the heat etc. I held the line even with irate brigadiers, and meanwhile the cell gradually grew to 10, 20 and then 30. Three shifts etc.

The intelligence picture concluded that SCUD B missiles, which was the means the Iraqis had to deliver chemical agent, was designed to deliver nuclear warheads and as a result was only accurate to a km or so (because of the size of warhead, a little inaccuracy was not a worry). This meant that it would be very difficult for the enemy in a missile strike to achieve the density of chemical which would be required to have a significant effect on the ground. Further, the only time a chemical strike could be tactically effective would be before dawn, when the ground and air were cool. As soon as the sun rose, and certainly by midday, the chemical would all be burnt off vehicles, and significantly reduce the need for decontamination. So the threat was not as great as first envisaged.

Brigades were still complaining about IPE, heat, operational capability etc.

At that point, I left the Army from the bunker and left them to it.

Fight Dirty did not survive long; air-conditioned containers were dug into the desert and procedures were changed. As an operational concept, in Liquid Chase we had broadly proved that "fight dirty" did not work for the infantry. However, with the IPE equipment and detection and decontamination equipment then in service, it was the only viable option available. Until a real war came along, and then the policy did not stand up to examination, when there was a very real threat – despite my best efforts!

Luckily, we were not tested; neither in BAOR nor in Iraq.

# AN OLD SOLDIER REMEMBERS ABERDEEN CAMP, XEROS, CYPRUS

*'It's sad to know I'm done.  
But looking back, I've had a lot of great memories.'*

The Zurich Agreement of the 11th February 1959 brought hostilities in Cyprus to an end. The Black Watch was stationed in a tented camp by the Limni Copper and Sulphate Mines on the northwest coast of Cyprus. In the spring of that year, we moved east along the coast to the village of Xeros to take over from the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in Aberdeen Camp. It was named Aberdeen Camp by the Gordon Highlanders who were the first battalion to occupy the camp. It was also a tented like Limni but there were tarmac roads and the messes, cookhouse, company and headquarters' offices, admin facilities were in an assortment of Nissan huts large and small, there was even an open-air cinema. It also had a parade ground, the RSM was beside himself with joy.

The camp was in the grounds of the Cyprus Mining Corporation and was an improvement on our last camp, which was a soggy tented camp on a barren north-facing slope with very little protection from the elements. Aberdeen Camp was well maintained and had been improved by previous regiments. It was a comfortable little camp that seemed to enjoy our presence. It sat quietly by the side of the Xeros river and was shaded by tall eucalyptus trees. To the north of the camp was the village of Xeros, which was near the port village of Karavostasi (which means boat port in Greek), where the copper ore was loaded onto ships. To the south of the camp was the Turkish village of Lefka.

Life for us was more relaxed now that the hostilities had ceased. We were allowed to walk out and visit the village of Lefka, where we tasted Ouzo and the fiery Zivania for the first time and of course the local beers, Keo and Leon. Ouzo and Zivania were deadly drinks and left many a poor hapless soldier, including me, with horrendous hangovers. We used to send a company at the weekends into the walled city of Nicosia to enjoy the delights of the bars and cabarets of Ledra and Regina streets. We were only in the camp for a few weeks, when we had a concert party by the Combined Services Entertainment. Harry Secombe was the star of the show, there was also a bevy of leggy showgirls. Harry entertained us with some goonish antics. He then sang some of his well-known songs, which the Jocks loved, he finished off with Puccini's *Nessum Dorma*, which received thunderous applause. He stayed on stage for several encores.

## THE GENERAL CAME TO VISIT

Midway through our time in Aberdeen Camp, we received a visit from the Commander-in-Chief Middle East, General Sir Roger Bower, I've no idea why he came to visit us, probably to tell us how marvellous we were. We spent days before his visit tidying up the camp. No stone was left unpainted. Tent flaps were rolled up with clinical precision, fire buckets were refilled with clean water, monsoon ditches were swept clean, guy ropes were tightened and lined up like guardsmen on parade. The camp began to take on an almost un-lived-in look. We were ready for the visit of the Grand Poobah.

The regimental bin men, no shortage of manpower in those days, two old soldiers, both battalion characters, they were quite content with their lot and had no ambition to do anything other than spend a considerable amount of their leisure time in the NAAFI beer bar, their job was to keep the camp tidy. They were briefed by the RSM that they had to be out of the camp with their bin lorry before the General arrived to inspect the quarter guard. 'Aye nae bother Sir', they said in unison, 'we'll be oot oh the camp before the high heid yin comes.' All was prepared to greet the General, the Quarter Guard was lined up in front of the Guardroom along with the Commanding Officer, the Adjutant and the RSM. The Cawnpore Gong, which had been captured by the Regiment at the battle of Cawnpore circa 1857, was polished to such brightness that it almost outshone the sun. The General arrived on time and as he got out of his staff car to inspect the quarter guard, round the corner came the bin lorry laden down with rubbish, driving past the General's staff car, the bin lorry almost side-swiped his car. The bin men to their credit both saluted the General smartly, despite the

fact that one of them was driving the bin lorry. The visit went downhill from there.

The General visited the cookhouse where the regimental butcher was butchering a cow. The General tapped the butcher on his shoulder and said, 'and what are you doing soldier?' The regimental butcher, a taciturn national serviceman from Angus, turned to the General, blood dripping from his saw and said in a very disdainful voice, 'can you nae see man, I'm sawing this coo in hauf!' The RSM was chewing on his pace tick. The Adjutant was trying not to laugh and the Commanding Officer was speechless. The General said 'jolly good' and moved on. As the General's party walked away, the Regimental Butcher could be heard saying to the Master Chef, 'well he did ask me whit I wis daeing.'

The visit continued to the next item on the programme. The inspection of a company in full battle order. The General stopped in front of the one man in the company who should never have been on parade, Private Smith. He said to Smith 'do you have your rifle cleaning kit.' 'Aye sir', said Smith. 'Let me see it' said the General. Smith fumbled with his pouch, dropping his rifle in the process, the RSM managed to catch it before it fell on the General's foot. 'Do you have oil in that oil bottle' he said to Smith. 'Aye sir' said Smith. The General said 'let me see it' holding out his hand, whereupon Smith tips the oil onto the General's hand. The General looked at the oil which was running through his fingers and said, 'so you have' he then wiped his hand on Smith's jacket. The General was quickly whisked away by the Commanding Officer to the Officers' Mess for lunch and no doubt a very large Gin and Tonic.

## THE REGIMENTAL CADRE

I was lying on my bed one morning in the Company Lines reading a comic when the Company Sergeant Major came into my tent. He was an avuncular kindly man affectionately known to the Jocks as Gobby. He said, 'ah Phillips, just the man you are going on the Regimental Cadre on Monday.' I said 'no me sir, I like being a private soldier, am no NCO material.' At the time I was the battalion projectionist and only worked evenings. He said, 'aye you sir, pack your kit and report to Corporal Hargreaves in Charlie Company on Friday and let me have that comic.' I won't bore you with the details of a Regimental Cadre, however, I do remember that the RSM gave us a lecture on the Manual of Military Law and Company Office procedures. He started his lecture by saying 'pay attention you lot' as if we wouldn't pay attention to the RSM. He said: 'if I take the time from my very busy day to write out a charge sheet with your name on it, you are guilty. You will be marched in front of your Company Commander and the charge sheet will be readout. The Company Commander will say to you, how do you plead and you will say guilty as charged sir, he will then sentence you and you will say thank you sir, and march out.' Life was much simpler in those days. (Back then the RSM wrote all charge sheets in longhand).

## EPILOGUE

I have taken a small liberty with the facts of the GOC's visit: the story of the GOC's arrival and the visit to the regimental butcher are true, private Smith and the oil bottle is almost true. As Mark Twain said, 'never let the facts get in the way of a good story.' I have been back to Xeros recently, Xeros is now called Denizli because it is in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The Cyprus Mining Corporation buildings are still there but I could not find any sign of the camp. Lefka has evolved beyond all recognition and is now no longer a village but a small university town. As I drove away from the area many memories of the happy time that I spent as a young soldier in Aberdeen Camp, nearly sixty years ago came back to me with great clarity. Sadly, many friends and comrades are no longer with us, certainly not many, if any, of the reluctant soldiers that were on my regimental cadre.

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



Editor's note: Readers will become aware these notes were written in a period of uncertainty. This uncertainty resulted in the Battalion being stood-to as the UK's Strategic Reserve, prepared to redeploy to assist with the evacuation from Hamid Karzai Airport in Kabul shortly after these notes were drafted. In the event they did not redeploy to Afghanistan..

## COMMANDING OFFICER'S FOREWORD

Commanding Officer: Lieutenant Colonel GJ Sefton  
Lieutenant Colonel  
M Hayton (Sep 21)  
Second-in-Command: Major D M Robertson  
Adjutant: Captain C Howie  
Operations Officer: Captain N Hannay  
Regimental Sergeant Major: Warrant Officer Class 1 (RSM)  
M R Gray

In last year's Red Hackle, I wrote that the Battalion was due to deploy on Op TORAL 12 in first quarter of 2021. Despite the uncertainty surrounding the United Kingdom's future role in Afghanistan we ensured the Battalion was ready to deploy. So, when the confirmation came, we deployed in good order to conduct the relief in place with the Royal Highland Fusilier Battalion.

In preparation for being part of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force commitment throughout 2020, the Battalion successfully demonstrated its readiness to 51 Brigade's Commander in September during a five-day activation exercise, before deploying en-masse south to Galloway Forest for a week's training. The visit by the outgoing Divisional Commander couldn't have been timed better, cementing the Battalion's reputation as the most ready and highly trained unit in the Division – a fact of which the Jocks can be rightly proud. This was the culmination of a year of hard work in which all have maintained high standards and professionalism. The Battalion handed over as the lead battlegroup commitment to 1st Battalion of the Royal Irish at end of 2020.

In early 2021 all effort turned to pre-deployment training. In February, the Battalion completed a three-week Mission Rehearsal Exercises on Salisbury Plain and at Thetford Training Area, displaying their readiness to deploy on Op TORAL 12 to Headquarters 51 Brigade and Headquarters 1 Division. The Battalion maintained Black Watch standards under intense scrutiny and the final report was rewarding. Despite the lack of collective training prior to the exercises, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Jocks attitude and willingness to learn shone through.

In a deployment surrounded by uncertainty with near constant changes to the scale and nature of our task, the Battalion successfully completed a three-month tour of Afghanistan. It is difficult to commend the performance of all those deployed, and those back in Fort George, highly enough. Constant positive feedback was received from our headquarters and our NATO partners. The Battalion has enjoyed a well-deserved summer leave and in the second half of the year has been focusing on training for the future. One thing is clear we do not expect to return to Afghanistan any time soon, since the Taliban routed the Afghan Army in mid-August.

There have been a few changes within the Battalion Headquarters: Captain James Ramsay has moved to pastures new in 12 Brigade in the G5 sphere. Captain Al McCormack has moved to the ISR wing of 3 Division. Captain Tom Thorpe has taken over as the Regimental Signals Officer on return from Op TORAL 12, replacing Captain Stew Briggs who has moved to Kenya as the Quartermaster Technical BATUK. Captain Dan Connelly has taken over from Captain Jules Anderson as the Regimental Administrative Officer as she moves to a G3 Outreach role. Captain Danny Hillan replaced Captain Scotty Munro who is the new Regimental Administrative Officer of 2 Battalion Military Intelligence.

Looking forward, we have some exciting opportunities to build on individual and collective training. We will start with exercises across the United Kingdom and then deploy to exercises in Germany, Kenya, USA and Oman. As the Integrated Defence Review shifts the focus towards Global Hubs, the Battalion will capitalise on the expansive training areas across the world to complete collective training in demanding environments.

This will be my final foreword in the Red Hackle as I hand over the reins to Lieutenant Colonel Matty Hayton after summer leave. It has been an absolute honour to command the Battalion for the last two and a half years. Thank you to The Black Watch Association for being so welcoming and all who have supported me throughout my tenure.

## THE KIRK

The Kirk remains central to the Battalion, there for those serving in the Battalion. It is part of the Battalion's history and the present for those serving. Last year there was a 'committal of ashes' of an 80+ year old veteran who had stood guard in Fort George 60 years ago. Whether it is for the celebration of a life 'milestone' event, a quiet place to think or pray or simply a place to get away from the 'crowd-noise' inherent in Battalion life, the Kirk is there for everyone.

The Kirk of the Black Watch was established in the 1700's and our record books listing services, marriages, baptisms and funerals date back to this time. A further two more soldiers were added to the marriage list in March 2021 after we conducted their weddings in the Fort George Kirk. The weddings were smaller due to COVID restrictions but both couples had a great time and we look forward to a larger 'renewal of vows', with a suitable party, when restrictions are fully lifted.

Both weddings had the spectacular backdrop of the old Regimental and Battalion Colours for their wedding photos. Due to the advanced age of some of these Colours, which also date from the 1700's, the Regimental Associations and museums will have to remove them for permanent storage which will be a sad, but needed, loss to the interior of the Kirk.



*The Fort George Kirk*

There have been very few services in the last 20 months, the last large gathering was the 2019 Remembrance Service where the Kirk was packed; a marked contrast to the restricted 2020 Act of Remembrance, which, whilst small, was no less poignant. Just before lock-down, we had re-established a monthly Sunday 'Family' (read 'Chaotic') Service at Fort George with refreshments for all ranks in the Sergeants' Mess



*Inside the Kirk on Remembrance Sunday*

afterwards; a service it is hoped to resume in the near future. The one service which did go ahead was the 'Love Known; Love Remembered' Service just before Christmas leave. This Service is a quiet time of prayer, reflection and thanksgiving for those we have lost, either family or friends, and an acknowledgement of our grief and the mutual support we can get from each other.

**BATTALION HEADQUARTERS**

Since October Battalion Headquarters has spent its time winding down the Battalion's commitment to the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) and starting the build-up of mission specific training for the deployment to Afghanistan on TORAL 12 in April 2021. An exciting but uncertain time! The Battalion Headquarters' ability to predict US foreign policy was fully tested, with a 'Will they? Won't they?' debate raging daily.

In early November key planning staff were involved in a Land Warfare Centre (LWC) Wargame to test our understanding of Light Mechanised Infantry doctrine and capability against a Russian peer threat in defence and offensive scenarios. There were a few eye watering moments where many were privately glad the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force were not deployed to fight a Russian advance in the Baltics! This rounded off a year of being part of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force.

The Op TORAL 12 Mission Specific Training started in January with Battalion Headquarters completing their final live firing ranges and training. This saw all of Battalion Headquarters and Headquarter Company personnel firing up to Fire Team at night in the driving rain of the Fort George Range Complex.

We then deployed on Ex KABUL LION - a Command Post Simulated Exercise in the Combined Arms Tactical Trainer at Warminster. This exercise tested the interaction between the Battalion Headquarters deploying as the Kabul Protection Unit on Op TORAL 12 and the Kabul Security Force Combined Joint Operations Centre, of which the Movement Control and Incident Response Operations Room was staffed by our own team under the Officer Commanding Bravo Company. This tested our ability to conduct routine Command and Control in response to a series of increasingly complex "Worst Day in Kabul" scenarios.

Ex KABUL LION built the foundation for Ex KABUL DAWN, the Mission Rehearsal Exercise to test the whole Battlegroup on serious incidents that might occur in Afghanistan. Although Bodney Camp and Stanford Training Area do not really resemble the landscape of downtown Kabul, this was an excellent, progressive exercise building our skills and confidence. The Battalion passed the test with ease and earned the required 'Green' for their endeavours. It was particularly rewarding and a relief to have succeeded while managing the threat of Covid-19 and without it detracting from the training.

After a protracted period of Mission Selective Training Battalion Headquarters deployed to Kabul in early April. Unfortunately, due to an oversight at the Defence Managed Quarantine Site, the majority of Battalion Headquarters personnel were forced to isolate for a further week at the airport in Kabul. Upon release the headquarters flew to New Kabul Compound to oversee the closedown of the base; this included recovering some of the more valuable items to adorn the gym in Fort George! Battalion Headquarters then operated from the airport, overseeing the 'retrograde' of kit and recovery of personnel, before and flying back to the UK in late June.



*The RSM Salutes General Miller*



*Flag Lowering at New Kabul Compound*



*The Last KSF Chiefs - Chief of Operations, Major Magee and Chief of Staff, Major Robertson*



*Armed Forces Day 2021 - Piccadilly Circus*



*Major Marshall leads final flag lowering for Commander KSF General Miller and US Ambassador*



*Final Foxhounds departing Kabul*



*The final flight departs Kabul*

### THE OFFICERS' MESS

President of the Mess Committee: Major EB Gorrie  
 Mess Secretary: Captain C A W Howie  
 Captain T Thorpe

I had said previously that the last period of the Mess' history would no doubt be one of its most extraordinary and this has sadly continued to be the case. Whilst there was a slight hiatus in some of the COVID-19 restrictions prior to the winter period, the Mess has had to continue to operate in a reduced capacity.

We were however very fortunate prior to Christmas to be able to welcome Lieutenant Colonel Roddy Riddell to the Mess, to mark and celebrate his many years of service to The Black Watch and now to the Royal Regiment of Scotland. As Vice Chairman of The Black Watch Association, he has maintained a strong link between the Association and the Battalion, providing funding and bridging the gap between those on both sides of the new Regiment and antecedent association. In addition to his work supporting the welfare of The Black Watch Battalion soldiers in recent years, he was also responsible for recruiting many officers to The Black Watch, who have served since 2006 in the Royal Regiment of Scotland. He recently celebrated with eight Lieutenant Colonels in command that he had selected as potential officers. He has continued to support young officer education in the 3rd Battalion, to maintain the golden thread and has been particularly active in his support of sport and adventure training in the Battalion through grants from the Highland and Lowland Brigade Clubs and The Black Watch Association. It was a great opportunity for us to personally thank Colonel Roddy for all he has done over the years.

The Battalion's focus in 2021 has been on the deployment to Afghanistan. The early return of the Mess and the proposed reduction in restrictions, means that we are hopeful that the Mess will be able to re-open fully later in the summer. This should mean the resumption of functions which we have missed so much.

Work has continued steadily to make improvements to the Mess, internally and externally.

Captain James Ramsay departed as Adjutant, Captain Al McCormack

as Training Officer, Captain Stew Briggs as RSO, Captain Mikey Fairweather as MTO, and Lieutenant Jean-Marc Roberti and Lieutenant Hector Cowie as platoon commanders. We welcomed Major Iain Maclachlan as QM(T), Captain Dan Connelly as RAO, Captain Dan Hillan as the Det Comd, and Captain Ralph Lorne as EME. We also welcomed Second Lieutenant Will Dakin and Second Lieutenant Rebecca Strawbridge, both having recently been commissioned from Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and completed their Platoon Commanders Battle Course at Brecon.

### WARRANT OFFICERS' AND SERGEANTS' MESS

Presiding Mess Member: Warrant Officer Class 1 (RSM)  
 M R Gray  
 President of the Mess: Warrant Officer Class 2 (CSM)  
 Committee: P Roadnight

Welcome to this year's update on the activities of the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess. We hope that this year's entry finds you well after yet another strange year under the cloud of COVID 19. The last twelve months have seen the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess presented with numerous challenges and last-minute changes, which have provided opportunities to demonstrate that there really is not a challenge the members of the Mess cannot meet.

Operationally, the preparation and deployment on Op TORAL 12 was the focus for the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess: the goal posts often changed, with the inevitable end to operations in Afghanistan; maintaining focus and shifting priorities at short notice quickly became the way of things. Throughout, members of the Mess kept the ship on course proving to be resilient and adaptable and conducting themselves in the very best traditions of the Mess to which they are proud members. It is no small thing to 'retrograde' (the word of the tour) 20 years of UK involvement in Afghanistan. As an example, Colour Sergeant Meighan, assisted by Sergeant Woodrow, and alongside our American and Danish partners, set about the complex task retrograding the New Kabul Compound (the original US Headquarters since our involvement in Kabul) and ensured it was in a suitable state to hand over to Afghanistan Government officials. This was a huge task for Sergeant Woodrow and his Task Line who were on-hand to assist wherever needed, and they worked tirelessly to ensure the legacy of the British Army's high standards were maintained.

In addition, the RSM, WO1 Gray who was 'double hatting' as both our RSM and COMBRITFOR's Command Sergeant Major found himself organising the ceremonial handover of various sites in front of the international press. With fewer aircraft available due to the draw down, on more than one occasion he had to commandeer General Miller's personal Black Hawk helicopter to deliver both flags and WO2 McCarthy with his pipes for ceremonial events. I should point out that Loon had very little on at the time, having been given the job of Op TORAL RQMS(M). Still, it gave him a chance to get out of his ISO containers.



*Final flag lowering at HKIA with WO2 McCarthy playing the Pipes*

As always, the door to the Mess continues to revolve with many fond farewells and the welcoming of new members to our team. Welcome to Sgt Cruickshank, Sgt R Smith, Sgt Ashford, SSgt Lennan, WO2





*New artwork with current members of the Mess*

Docherty (RSWO), Sgt Mullen, WO2 Morris (RAWO), CSgt Irvine (UWO) and Sgt Paterson (Sys Coord).

Welcome and congratulations on the following promotions: Sgt Campbell, Javelin Pl, D Coy, Sgt Mackenzie, Mortar Pl, Sgt McTernan, Machine Gun Pl, Sgt Muir on appointment to Pipe Major, and CSgt White on appointment as the Reconnaissance Pl 2IC.

We wish a fond farewell to: CSgt Tripney, WO2 Weir, CSgt Barrie and CSgt Cooper, who all go on to a new chapter in the civilian sector. Also, a farewell to: Sgt Heaney posted to Catterick, WO2 Bonnar posted to 7 SCOTS, CSgt Bellshaw posted to 1 SCOTS and CSgt Lockhart who is posted to Kenya.

With the usual day to day activity in the Mess forced into a temporary hibernation, the opportunity to update the interior of the Mess was eagerly taken. Under the direction of RQMS Ferrier,

the interior of the Mess has seen some much-needed improvement, including a commissioned artwork containing all the names of the current members of the Mess, and plans continue to develop to ensure that when we are finally able to open fully that the Mess is ready to welcome its members back.

The gradual easing of COVID restriction has seen the Mess slowly reopen in a limited capacity and, on writing this, it is worth noting that the closing of the Mess has given us a chance to see what life is like without this historic institution and highlighted how important the Mess is to the quality and experience of Regimental life.

### ALPHA COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major EB Gorrie Major T Towler (from Aug 21)
Second-in-Command:	Lieutenant R Lewis
Company Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 2 Couper Warrant Officer Class 2 Bruce
Company Quartermaster	
Sergeant:	Colour Sergeant Ritchie
OC 1 Platoon:	Lieutenant L Broad
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant Paton
OC 2 Platoon:	Lieutenant R Walters
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant Purse
OC 3 Platoon:	Colour Sergeant Lockhart
Tech Sergeant:	Sergeant O'Gorman

Alpha (Grenadier) Company have returned from Op TORAL 12 after what has proven to be a busy and, at times, uncertain nine months. The Company completed its tenure being held at readiness for the NATO Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) commitment in December 2020, whilst our focus increasingly switched to the pending deployment to Afghanistan in the spring of 2021.

The autumn quarter began in earnest, as members of the Company took part in a cycle along the North Coast 500 route. Whilst the weather was not always kind and it perhaps felt like the head wind never abated, it was a memorable seven days. Joined by Kev Stacey, former Regimental Sergeant Major of the Battalion, it proved to be a challenge.

Promoting an expeditionary mindset, the Company grasped the opportunity to deploy by RAF Voyager (Airbus 330) in November, from Glasgow Prestwick to RAF Brize Norton, beginning a two-week package of dry and live training on Salisbury Plain, Ex GRENADIER JUMP. Our training focussed on our upcoming deployment on Op TORAL in 2021. Whereas the last eighteen months have been centred on contemporary war fighting against a near peer enemy; Op TORAL to Kabul required a change in mindset to operating in a predominantly

urban environment in a Force Protection role.

We were fortunate to be able to take delivery of six Light Anti-Tank Missiles for the final phase of our live firing package. A possibly unique opportunity as chances to fire these weapons are rare. It demonstrated the Jocks ability to take control of unfamiliar systems, use them effectively and marked the end of what has been a disjointed, but excellent year of training for the Company.

We travelled to Thetford in February to complete the final phases of our preparation for deploying to Afghanistan, the Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX). We were blessed with good weather throughout and the Company was able to make the best of the opportunities presented to us. Operating for periods under strict test conditions, the Company demonstrated that it was fully prepared to deploy and able to adapt to a multitude of situations that could be faced in theatre.

The deployment to Afghanistan began in March, we arrived in theatre after a period of isolation in England. Takeover of roles between the Royal Highland Fusilier and Black Watch Battalion began in earnest, but the announcement by President Biden that US troops would withdraw from Afghanistan by 9/11, reduced the requirement. The majority of A Company personnel did not deploy, instead they were held at readiness at Fort George. Whilst hugely frustrating after all the hard work and preparation for the tour, this presented an opportunity for the Company to conduct adventurous training.

A series of navigation events were run in Ballater, increasing in complexity each day and allowing personnel to stretch their legs over the hills. Personnel were able to attend adventure training qualification packages that will allow the Company to conduct its own adventure training activities in the future. We have also summited Scotland's two highest Munros and our own local mountain, Ben Wyvis.

Led by Cpl Everett, the Jocks conducted a week of intense urban warfare training, which culminated in an exercise using simulated ammunition, at an abandoned Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Warfare facility in Kinloss. These skills were put to good use a few weeks later, when on the ranges, as the Jocks conducted a series of live fire exercises clearing 'shoot-through' buildings. These packages have sought to hone their skills and increase communication in what are often complex situations.

Competition motivates, a shooting competition and two patrolling competitions gave the Jocks a chance to demonstrate their will to win. We are constantly seeking out new activities to which we can introduce the Jocks and use to add new challenges.

Those who remained in Afghanistan operated as part of the Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) Force Protection Company. This included providing intimate protection to advisors supporting the Afghan Government and Security Forces, there were also stints of being at high readiness as the Kabul City Quick Reaction Force. There was also the opportunity to conduct force protection from the air, from the RAF's PUMA helicopter force.

Inevitably the Jocks did themselves and the Battalion proud and where fine ambassadors for the UK. This may prove to be the Grenadiers' last deployment to Afghanistan, at least for the foreseeable future, the Company having served with distinction in Afghanistan over the last twenty years. The Jocks ensured that that the reputation was further enhanced.

The Company was fortunate to visit Balhousie Castle in July prior to the summer leave stand down. Particularly for the new Jocks in the Company, this represented a great opportunity to understand a bit more about the proud history they now represent. The week focussed on developing Regimental pride and the Jocks also visited Edinburgh Castle to study some of the battles our antecedent Regiments took part in.

We have welcomed and said goodbye to several key personnel. In June, CSM WO2 Couper left to assume the role of RQMS(M) at The Royal Scots Battalion in Belfast and he leaves with our best wishes for the future. It is the first time for several years that WO2 Couper is not having to commute weekly between Belfast and Inverness, which will provide a welcome break. WO2 Bruce has joined the Company as CSM. We welcomed 2Lt Will Dakin who completed the Platoon Commanders' Battle Course in spring 2021, to then immediately deployed on the Battalion's Mission Rehearsal Exercise in Thetford, suggesting that going straight into the heat of the battle is the best way to settle into the Company. Major Gorrie hands over command of the Grenadiers to Major Tim Towler in August. We would also like to congratulate Tim and Lottie, who were married in July prior to returning to the Fort.



*A Company conduct a FOB defence on Salisbury Plain during Ex GRENADIER JUMP*



*Pte Gilbert conducts First Aid training during Ex GRENADIER JUMP*



*A Company is always seeking to deliver challenging and realistic ranges, here combining PT and CQB Pistol*



*Left - Medical training continues to be of primary focus, particularly as we built up to deploy to Afghanistan*

*Below - Arriving back at the Fort after completing the North Coast 500*



*A Company conduct a live firing night attack, Kirkcudbright*



*A Company FHDs stood ready to react as part of the HKIA FP Coy QRF in Kabul*



*Urban CQB drills, utilising the disused CBRN facility at Kinloss*



*Left - The Grenadiers conduct a vehicle mounted live firing range on Salisbury Plain*



*Left - Conducting stacking drills as part of the Urban training course, led by Cpl Everett*



*A Company conducted a patrols competition which involved shooting and a series of battlefield focus*

## BRAVO COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major AJ Magee
Second-in-Command:	Lieutenant ERM Smith
Company Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 2 D Blake
Company Quartermaster Sergeant:	Colour Sergeant S McFadden
Officer Commanding 5 Platoon:	Second Lieutenant B Dodson
5 Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant G Lilley
Officer Commanding 6 Platoon:	Second Lieutenant S Smith
6 Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant K White
Officer Commanding 7 Platoon:	Second Lieutenant S Hayes
7 Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant J Woodrow

Summer 2021 saw a significant change in the leadership of the Company; a new Commander, Company Sergeant Major and Company Quartermaster Sergeant along with two new platoon commanders. The Company was brought up to full strength with the reestablishment of 6 Platoon. Returning from summer leave the soldiers of the Company were quickly back into training, making the most of the local area, we brushed up navigation skills on the Cawdor Estate. Pte McDowall proved that there is no such thing as impassable terrain, confidently leading his section over the edge of a significant valley and proving the sceptical onlookers wrong.



*Cawdor Estate Navigation Exercise*

The Jocks proved their marksmanship as part of the Battalion Readiness Verification Exercise, the hard work put in over the previous twelve months paid off with an excellent standard of marksmanship. The Company subsequently deployed to a wet and fog bound Galloway Forrest via West Freugh airfield, where we received a very welcome and excellent hot meal courtesy of the Battalion chefs. In the Forrest, the Jocks adapted well to the very difficult terrain, living from their vehicles and conducting platoon level training with the Foxhounds across the training area and benefitting from working alongside their Recce and Machine Gun Platoon colleagues. The exercise culminated in a Company Raid during which Sergeant White and the newly reformed 6 Platoon managed to keep their feet dry, while Private Sarwar enjoyed seeing the Platoon Commander go up to his chest in the river en route to the forming up point. Recovering to Fort George in our Foxhounds gave a rare opportunity to drive a long distance in the vehicles, much to the surprise of the locals of the smaller villages of Dumfries and we rolled through.



*Cheerful looking Privates Whyte and Gray in Galloway Forrest*

The latter part of the year was focused on live firing, this time in Otterburn. The firing package built on what had been learnt in Galloway Forrest earlier in the year and was a chance to hone our skills both dismounted and in the vehicles. Challenging training was conducted both by day and night with a few ranges being conducted with no artificial light at all. The Jocks confidence and professionalism were excellent, and this culminated in platoon night attacks across the saturated ground of Northumbria, supported by the Foxhounds, no dry feet this time. A highlight of the training was the opportunity to fire the full range of company weapons, including combined machine gun and pistol shooting from the vehicles.



*Private Lauder unfazed by a few hills in Otterburn*



*Pistol firing from the Foxhounds to engage close targets*



*Section Commander moving into the assault*

The year ended with an unconventional Christmas week before much deserved leave and it also marked the completion of the NATO readiness commitment.

The start of 2021 saw Company moving to an operational footing in preparation for deployment to Afghanistan. The platoons each formed two task lines (formerly known as multiples) and the Company Headquarters trained and deployed to provide the basis of the Combined Joint Operations Centre, responsible for control of NATO forces across Kabul. The changing situation in theatre meant that not all deployed, but those who did not soon found themselves on other tasks.

A team from the Company deployed under Corporals Gunn and Brogan to Serbia to train alongside the Serbian Army. The task saw the Company soldiers, led by their JNCOs, work with Serbian, Greek and US forces and taking the lead in dismounted patrolling and urban operations. There was the opportunity to conduct a battlefield study and an inter-nation sports competition, the training culminated in an exercise that was observed by numerous dignitaries, including the UK Defence Secretary. Pte Lauder was commended for stepping up to section 2IC in a very successful demonstration. Other tasks saw the Company soldiers deploy as part of the Royal Guard in Edinburgh, to Ballater and Kenya as a Force Protection Platoon.



*B Company ready to breach in Serbia*

Those that deployed to Kabul were expected to be amongst the last UK soldiers in Afghanistan at the end of a 20-year campaign. They operated across the city, supporting the international community, providing protection to advisors and ready to react to incidents. The tasks saw operations conducted both by road, in the Foxhound vehicles and by aviation with the RAF Pumas. Lieutenant Smith led the Gold Team, responsible for the close protection of the Commander of British Forces and Kabul Security Force.



*B Company Task Line preparing for an aviation lift to support ANA advisors*

Over the year we have also seen several promotions, with promotion to Corporal for Gunn, Ross and Randal, and Lance Corporal for McDowall, Edger, Gray and Verrall, who performed excellently on the School of Infantry Potential Non-Commissioned Officer Cadre. Finally, we were delighted to welcome several births to widen the Company family. All B Company soldiers have now returned from operations and look forward to some well-earned summer leave.

### **CHARLIE (FIRE SUPPORT) COMPANY - The Savages**

Officer Commanding: Major RA Illing/Maj N Drapper  
Company Sergeant Major: Warrant Officer Class 2 J McCarthy

Company Quartermaster Sergeant: Colour Sergeant T Meighan

2020-21 has proved yet again to be a year of continual flux for the Savages with not a moment available for standing still. Since the last issue of the Red Hackle, the company has said goodbye to several key personalities. Technical Sergeant Garry Cruickshanks did not get a moments' slack time all the way up to his last day in uniform, maintaining the company vehicle fleet and training the Battalion's soldiers to maintain all manner of Green, Brown and White fleet vehicles. Also, the newly promoted Corporal Barry Ross, of the Machine Gun Platoon, bids us farewell as he moves on to a Platoon Sergeant's role with Balaklava Company, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in Edinburgh.

With sad goodbyes come warm welcomes and reinforcements came in the form of Major Nigel Drapper, who arrived to take over as Company

Commander in August 2021. Sergeant Fay has been backing up Sergeant McTernan in the Machine Gun Platoon, and Sergeant Pete Muir, who returns from a successful posting at AFC Harrogate, to join his brother, the Pipe Major, as a new member of the Sergeants' Mess.

But it is not all about the 'head-shed' and, for the first time in a long while, Charlie Company has welcomed a significant number of new soldiers directly from training at Infantry Training Centre Catterick. They are all confounding conventional attitudes about Fire Support Company soldiers by integrating quickly and getting stuck into the busy training schedule that was waiting for them at the back end of 2020. Special mention must go to those new soldiers who deployed on the Class 3 Piping and Drumming courses soon after joining the Battalion in early 2021.

At the time of writing, the Company is still in suspended animation as its constituent elements are spread across the deployed Battalion Group and the Rear Operations Group. The Pipes and Drums Platoon have made the most of the time spent back in the UK as you will read later. The Company Headquarters have fulfilled vital posts across the Battalion, with the Company Quarter Master Sergeant and Company Sergeant Major both having instrumental roles in the withdrawal of equipment and materiel from Kabul, and other members of company Headquarters acting as key enablers within the Rear Operations Group.

As the last elements of the Savages return to Fort George following the end of Op TORAL 12, the Company looks forward to some well-earned leave. It will then focus again on its core specialisms by running Support Weapons cadres in the early autumn, allowing the Battalion to re-grow its Battalion Group capabilities ahead of collective training assessments due in 2022.

### **MACHINE GUN PLATOON**

Platoon Commander: Captain H W Atkinson-Clark  
Platoon Sergeant: Sgt McTernan

After Summer leave, we received an influx of keen new machine gunners from the Infantry Training Centre at Catterick, and they were thrown straight into Ex CLOSE-QUARTER SAVAGE. This was an exciting week of ranges at Fort George where we practised pistol shooting and rifle to pistol transition shooting. At the end of September, we were back to Warcop for Ex CHARLIE BIG-BANG. The Jocks took part in grenade, Underslung Grenade Launcher (UGL) and bayonet ranges and a good time was had by all. Shifting away from machine gunning towards small arms shooting and Op TORAL 12-focused training, particularly Revised Weapons Mounted Installation Kit (RWMIK), we once again deployed to Warcop at the end of October on Ex PURE SAVAGE to complete live fire ranges up to platoon level by night and vehicle top cover shoots from Foxhound vehicles.

Our transition from Husky to Civilian Armoured Vehicles (CAV) saw many of the soldiers gaining driving qualifications before a well-deserved Christmas leave.

The new year threw all manner of challenges at the platoon, with prospective operational tasks, and consequently, training requirements, changing rapidly and often. Despite this, coupled with the frictions of preparing for operations in the middle of a pandemic, the Platoon coped admirably and with the flexibility and patience that is now the hallmark of a modern infantry soldier. The Platoon deployed on the Mission Rehearsal Exercise at STANTA in Thetford, where it was tested on a variety of scenarios in its role as two force protection 'task lines', transporting advisors and mentors throughout the 'Green Zone' of the simulated Kabul city. Following the Battalion's success on this validation exercise, it was time to gain the remaining few individual qualifications that were needed before preparing to depart into pre-deployment quarantine, ahead of the flight into theatre itself.

However, Clausewitz's eternal truth came to be borne out - no plan survives contact and Op TORAL 12 was not to be any different for The Black Watch Battalion's machine gunners. The rapid decision to end the NATO Operation Resolute Support commitment came in the middle of our take over from the Royal Highland Fusilier Battalion. Whilst some elements of the Platoon reached theatre and remained to begin the task of dismantling the UK presence in Kabul, those who had not yet left the UK were ordered to return to barracks and join the Rear Operations Group. This was not to be all bad for those who remained at Fort George. Adventurous and military training were provided to keep up the morale and motivation of those on the home front.

By the end of July, all elements of the Platoon were re-united in Fort George and following a period of summer leave, will be gearing up for the highlight of any specialist weapons soldier, the Fire Support Company cadre periods. With prospective deployments to Germany and Oman on the horizon, the Machine Gunners look set to get ample opportunity to practise their craft in a variety of tactical scenarios before the year is out.

## MORTAR PLATOON

Platoon Commander: Captain F Haigh  
Second-in-Command: Warrant Officer Class 2  
D Dempster

Another busy period for the Mortar Platoon saw us finish 2020 by completing our role on NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force and re-role as a force protection platoon for deployment on Op TORAL 12. The early return from Afghanistan as the NATO force completed its mission has added potential deployments to Germany, Kenya and beyond for elements of the Platoon.

The latter half of 2020 saw the Platoon deploy to Galloway Forest as part of Ex GALLOWAY HACKLE. This exercise tested the Platoon's ability to deploy within five days of receiving a test activation for the NATO's Vanguard Joint Task Force (VJTF). A useful and eye-opening task as we continued to develop our understanding of the logistic burden of projecting force at reach. This proved to be the culmination of the VJTF tasking as we handed over the lead element to 1st Battalion The Royal Irish for 2021.

No sooner had one task finished than we were swiftly preparing for the next. The Battalion deployed to Afghanistan on Op TORAL 12 in the spring of 2021. Prior to deployment a significant amount of training was required as we moved away from the conventional style of warfare that we had trained hard for during our NATO commitment. Our new focus was on advisor force protection tasks, base security and quick reaction force actions.



*Aviation Recce Kabul*



*Mortar Platoon travel Business Class to Kabul*



*Camp Taipan Force Protection Platoon*

The training began with a live fire package at Warcop culminating in live-firing platoon attacks by night. Time was also spent working hard on the basic soldiering skills that we would rely on in theatre such as navigation, casualty evacuation drills, and counter improvised explosive device drills. This thoroughly enjoyable exercise was a fitting end to a 2020, which had been limited by Covid-19.

We began 2021 training in earnest for the forthcoming deployment. With the platoon re-rolling into a force protection platoon, a new skillset had to be learnt and then demonstrated during the Mission Rehearsal Exercise. The All Ranks Brief was an informative and useful week spent with the Army's theatre-specific training teams. This week gave a contextual understanding of Afghanistan and the Op TORAL mission, an understanding of the specific skills we would require whilst in theatre, and useful briefs from service personnel who had recently returned.

Using what we learned on the All Ranks Brief we set to and designed an exciting training package gearing the Jocks up for what they would likely face in theatre. The local area around Ardersier Port provided an ideal environment to practice the various elements of our training. We attended the Mission Rehearsal Exercise in Thetford; excellently resourced and great training, the exercise set us up well for Afghanistan.

After a period in quarantine, the Platoon deployed in April. With a good handover from the Royal Highland Fusiliers, the Platoon was set and ready for the task ahead. The Platoon protected the TAIPAN base from which the RAF Puma helicopters operated. The task saw the Jocks rotating through providing base security from the sangar positions, providing a Quick Reaction Force for any incidents, and protecting vehicle moves for personnel throughout the Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) complex.

Returning at the end of June and after another period of quarantine, the Platoon participated in the Maxwell Shield sports competition before going on leave.

## ASSAULT PIONEER PLATOON/PIPES AND DRUMS

Assault Pioneer Platoon Colour Sergeant (Drum Major)  
Commander: C Lowe  
Platoon Sergeant: Sergeant (Pipe Major) J Muir

This edition of the Red Hackle finds the Pipes and Drums as busy as ever. The end of October Sergeant Muir was appointed Pipe Major, as the Band bid farewell to Colour Sergeant Alistair Tripney, who is off to pastures new in civvy street: the Band wishes him all the best and thanks him for his huge contribution over the last few years.

Normally in November the Band is busy with ceremonial events but due to the ongoing pandemic, this was not possible so, in order to not disappoint and to still play our part in National Remembrance, the Band recorded a socially distanced online video that the Drum Major kindly edited. The Platoon also took part in Ex PURE SAVAGE at Warcop, gaining the live fire qualifications required for deployment on Op TORAL 12.

At the turn of year, and with some sense of normality arriving back to Fort George, the Battalion celebrated its traditional Red Hackle Day. This saw our younger pipers waking up the troops in the early hours of the morning with the traditional reveille tune of 'Johnnie Cope'. A special mention must go to Pte McCormick for taking part in his first Red Hackle Day as a qualified army piper.

In February the platoon deployed to STANTA in Norfolk for the final Mission Rehearsal Exercise prior to the Battalion's deployment to Afghanistan. The Platoon was then used as Battle Casualty Replacements and held at readiness in Fort George during the tour. This was to allow us to re-build our capability after the best part of a year away from our instruments under Covid restrictions. The Band caught up on courses that had to be rescheduled and completed some much-enjoyed adventure training. Members of the platoon qualified

as Assault Pioneers, Chainsaw Operators, Water Safety Officers, Basic Boat Operators, Pioneer Section Commanders and Class 2 Drummers. Special mention must also go to Lance Corporal Scott 'Lexy' McCaskill who passed his Pipe Major's course with Double Distinction Honours. Leading into the summer the Band relocated to Redford Infantry Barracks in Edinburgh. This was to allow them to undertake a KAPE tour, called Raising the Nations Spirits, which saw the Band travelling across The Black Watch recruiting area. On the KAPE tour the Pipes and Drums visited primary schools, care homes and hospices in Aberfeldy, Fife and Perth. The tour finished at Balhousie Castle, split into groups under the Pipe Major, Drum Major and Corporal Noble, to give the younger soldiers a guided tour. The KAPE tour attracted the attention of Forces TV, Army Media, BFBS and the local papers.



*The OC and CSM with the Pipes and Drums at Aberfeldy Monument*



*Drum Major Lowe and Pipe Major Muir speaking with a Black Watch Korean veteran*



*The band plays at Victoria Hospice*

*Private Moores with his rendition of Saturday Night Fever*  
 The summer was rounded off with the arrival parade of Her Majesty The Queen at Holyrood Palace, a far cry from what would have been in place under normal conditions but rewarding none the less. The platoon welcomes several new members. Privates Buchan, Gratton, Kelly, Moodie, Noble, Prince and Taylor. We would also like to say a fond farewell to Cpl Ryan "Gonzo" Gonsales who has recently left the army and moved to Canada; Pte Shirreffs is also off to civilian street; we wish them and their families all the very best. Congratulations are also to several members of the Platoon on becoming fathers: Pipe Major Muir on the birth of his daughter Lucy, Cpl Peter Muir on the birth of his son Noah and Pte Jones on the birth of his son Lucas. One final congratulations to Cpl Peter "Pete" Muir on his selection for promotion to Sergeant after a successful two years at AFC Harrogate.



*Corporal Jake Noble and Private Saul Bruce on the AA Chainsaw Course*

**DELTA (LIGHT) COMPANY**

Officer Commanding:	Major MA Dobson
Second-in-Command:	Lieutenant S Adkin/Captain T Thorpe
Company Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 2 P Roadnight
Company Quartermaster	
Sergeant:	Colour Sergeant Lavery
Tech Sergeant:	Sergeant S Grandison

Dislocated from the rest of the Battalion for most of this period due to the implementation of COVID Force Health Protection Measures, Delta (Light) Coy has over the past 10 months faced several significant G1-7 challenges. Each one I am pleased to say has been overcome in the true spirit of our historic name "The Golden Don." October saw the Company return to our transient home in Cameron Barracks following the successful completion of Exercise GALLOWAY HACKLE, a brigade readiness verification exercise aimed at assuring the Battalions readiness to deploy under Op AGORA, our high readiness NATO commitment. With this completed, attention soon turned to achieving the Individual Mission Specific Training Requirements for Op TORAL 12, with a major focus on driver training and live firing.

After an enforced lay off in November, due to a Company-wide period of COVID isolation, we reconvened in Warcop Training Camp to complete a live fire training progression that would see the soldiers of Delta (Light) Company progress from fire team attack to platoon at night over a busy week of firing. Excellently planned and delivered by Lt Adkin, the package was a great success, even if the Communication and Information Systems Platoon did try to avoid the inevitable left flanking attack up the infamous 'chocolate factory' in favour of a novel but much drier full-frontal assault.

Elsewhere, the RSO and RSWO had a thoroughly enjoyable time preparing the NATO's Vanguard Joint Task Force fleet of command Landrovers for handover to 1st Battalion The Royal Irish. The complexity of this task should not be underestimated, and the delivery of a successful handover noted by the Divisional Headquarters as best practice was as a direct result of some long hours, not only by the Quartermaster Technical and his team, but also the command and Information System Platoon as they attempted to reconcile the entire VJTF Bowman Systems accounts. Well done to all involved.

December brought with it a much-reduced Christmas week given the restrictions in place, but also confirmation that we would be deploying on Op TORAL 12 as one of two Force Protection Companies (Alpha (Grenadier) Company forming the nucleus of the other). The unique operational force structure required us to detach the CIS Platoon in January to form the Kabul Security Force Combined Joint Operations Cell (CJOC) under Major Andy Magee (Commanding B Company) and received in return two platoons from B Company.

It was in this organisation that we then deployed, first to Warminster and subsequently Theford, on Exercises KABUL LION and KABUL DAWN, a series of Mission Rehearsal Exercises. Whereas Exercise KABUL LION tested the Combined Joint Operations Cell headed by B Company Commander, Exercise KABUL DAWN was very much a sub-unit affair. Deploying to converted farm at Westmere the Company set up a Forward Operating Base (FOB) to train for the role of the Headquarters Resolute Support (HQRS) Force Protection (FP) Company. With a strength of 174 that included attached Royal Artillery Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) soldiers and a Battle Casualty Replacement Platoon, the Company were tirelessly tested in Incident Response, Base Defence and Advisor Force Protection. Despite the demanding nature of the serials the Jocks, to a man, were quick to praise both the professional delivery of the exercise and the realistic nature of the training events. Our thanks to Mission Training and Mobilisation Centre for ensuring we deployed in good order.

Op TORAL 12 itself was characterised by change. Following President Biden's withdrawal announcement, the UK commitment reduced in scale to one Force Protection sub-unit. Having initially been scheduled to deploy to the New Kabul Compound as one of two Inner City Quick Reaction Force (QRF) Companies, the second provided by Denmark, the Company found itself re-organising during the take-over to assume the role of the Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) Force Protection Company. This change saw us assume command of two A (Grenadier) Company Task Lines (a platoon) as we took under command elements which had already arrived on the initial flights into theatre.

The Jocks, faced a challenging and ever-changing situation. For the three months we were deployed the Company moved between every major British Base in Kabul spending time in New Kabul Camp, Hamid Karzai International Airport and eventually Headquarters Resolute Support as a Quick Reaction force and providing Force Protection. The Jocks earned a reputation for diligence, professionalism and, perhaps most importantly, their positive attitude and approach to the task at hand. It was no coincidence that the Company achieved four 1\* Commendations: well done Captain Thorpe, Lieutenant Smith, Sergeant McLaren and Sergeant Smith (LAD).

As I sit and write this now in MOD quarantine, following our return from theatre, it would be easy to focus on what is to come for the Company. Post summer leave in August we will reform as the D (Light) Company to train on the basics as covered on the Soldier First and Battle Craft syllabuses. I would be remiss, before finishing, not to focus on some of the wider achievements and movements across the Company.

Congratulations to Sergeant Brownless for an outstanding performance on the Sniper Platoon Commanders' course, and to Sergeant McLaren and his Recce Section in becoming the first section in three years to pass the All Arms Search Team Course without any deferrals or resits.

Individual congratulations must also be said to Corporals Cameron, Stewart and Tudor who were successfully selected for promotion to Sergeant.

As ever we must also bid farewell to several of the Company strength. In the CIS we say farewell to Capt Briggs (RSO) who leaves us to take up the role of QM(T) in BATUK; as does the RSWO WO2 Bonnar who moves to 7 SCOTS, the Reserve Battalion in Perth, as the CIS PSI; and Sgt O'Driscoll who moves to RMAS as a CIS Instructor. In the Recce Platoon we welcome the newly promoted Colour Sergeant White and pass on our thanks to his predecessor Colour Sergeant Bellshaw as he moves to the Royal Scots Battalion. Whilst in Company Headquarters, we will finally say goodbye to Sergeant Grandison as he moves on to become the Battalion JAMES SNCO.



*Coy HQ QRF Pre Deployment Checks*

## **THE COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS (CIS) PLATOON**

Regimental Signals Officer:	Captain Briggs/Captain Thorpe
Regimental Signals Warrant Officer:	Warrant Officer Class 2 Bonnar Warrant Officer Class 2 Docherty
CIS Platoon CQMS:	Colour Sergeant Smith
Bowman Systems Manager:	Colour Sergeant Paterson
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant O'Driscoll
Training Sergeant:	Sergeant Ross

The Communications and Information Systems (CIS) Platoon has had another busy period, characterised by uncertainty and change.

In November the Platoon deployed on a Company Live Firing Camp at Warcop, as part of Mission Specific Training, an opportunity to return to the basic of infantry soldiering. Whilst being reintroduced to the "chocolate factory" was an enjoyable experience for all, the Platoon was also required to improve our knowledge on deployable Electronic Counter-Measures (ECM), detaching Cpls Eadie, Omondi, Kah and LCpl Pope to Bassingbourn to become ECM instructors, enabling them to take the lead on delivering this critical training to the whole battalion ahead of deployment on OP TORAL 12.

December was a particularly busy period for the Platoon with the focus on handing over the NATO's Vanguard Joint Task Force fleet of command vehicles to 1st Battalion The Royal Irish. As always there were teething problems but with a bit of guidance and experience, we managed to get the fleet handed over in good order, much to the QM(T)'s relief. After a well-deserved Christmas leave elements of the platoon deployed to Malvern to conduct a HeATs & GrATs course to assist satellite-based tracking ground call signs in theatre - an essential skill for the platoon as we began training for our deployed role as the Kabul Security Force Combined Joint Operation Centre (CJOC), under B Company Commander, Major Magee.

The cornerstone of this training was inevitably the deployments on the Mission Rehearsal Exercises including Ex KABUL LION to conduct Combined Staff Tactical Training (CSTT), where the Platoon was put through their paces in their deployed roles as watch keepers and signallers within the Combined Joint Operation Centre. The Mission Rehearsal Exercises certainly challenged the Platoon to deliver, with demanding digitally simulated scenarios based around past events within the Kabul Area of Operations. The guidance of B Company Commander and the ever-present input from Mission Training and Mobilisation Centre enabled us to build technical and team skills to

deliver successful outcome.

On completion of Ex KABUL LION, the battle group moved directly to Bodney camp on the Stanford Training Area, Thetford, to conduct Ex KABUL DAWN. The final Mission Rehearsal Exercise confirmed scenarios, confirming all skills taught throughout the Combined Staff Tactical Training exercise. This was an eye opener for the younger members of the Platoon, as they worked in support of deployed company groups for the first time.

After some pre-deployment leave, most of the platoon deployed as part of the Combined Joint Operation Centre on Op TORAL 12 taking over from the Royal Highland Fusiliers. Those deployed put in an impressive performance in such an uncertain period and ever-changing tour length, effectively co-ordinating the movement of all NATO forces and deployed diplomatic missions around the streets of Kabul.

As ever though, the work never stops back at Fort George, with Colour Sergeant Paterson, Corporal Hanlin and Lance Corporal Osanya heading across to Aberdeen University Officers Training Corps in April to teach the potential officers and seek out future Signal Officers. Corporal Murphy completed his Range Management Qualification course in Strensall, a qualification, which will become a great asset to the Platoon, enabling us run our own live firing ranges in the future.

We have seen some significant changes of late, with the departure of the Regimental Signals Officer, Captain Briggs, on taking up his new post as QM(T) BATUK (Kenya) and Warrant Officer 2 Bonnar moving to 7 SCOTS as the SPSI. We welcome Captain Thorpe as Regimental Signals Officer and Warrant Officer 2 Docherty as Regimental Signals Warrant Officer.

We also bid farewell to Colour Sergeant Paterson and Sergeant O'Driscoll, who will soon both depart to pastures new – to take up roles in Aberdeen UOTC and Sandhurst respectively – where they will pass on their knowledge and help shape the Army's future young officers.



*Private Beats and Private Russell getting some training in prior to MST*



*CIOC Team on Op TORAL*

## SNIPER PLATOON

Platoon Commander:	Colour Sergeant A Stevens CGC
Platoon Sergeant:	Sergeant T Brownless
Section Commander:	Corporal P Dalgleish
	Corporal D Meechan

During the pandemic, the Sniper Platoon has provided an outstanding service as part of the Mobile Testing Unit for the Highlands. However, this task and the constraints of the Force Health Protection measures has meant our training, including sniper training, was much reduced. When possible with the forecast deployment on Op TORAL 12, we maintained our sniping ability. All activity, including any form of training, during the pandemic has been a challenge.



*Sniper Platoon on exercise in Kenya*



*An O Group for Snipers*

From November our attention turned to pre-deployment training to ensure everyone was ready to deploy on Op TORAL 12. This included live firing camps, driver conversion to Foxhound and eventually the Mission Rehearsal Exercise (Ex KABUL DAWN). During this time the Platoon went back to basics to complete all the necessary training for deployment, taking time to practice crossing tough terrain while driving the quadbikes; except for Private Armstrong who still owes the Commanding Officer a new quadbike and trailer! The Snipers were then split into different teams for deploying on the Mission Rehearsal Exercise. Most of the Platoon formed the Commander Kabul Security Force's GOLD Team, responsible for the movement and protection of the 1-Star Commander – a high-profile role awarded in recognition of the capability of the Platoon. Beyond Op TORAL members of the Platoon have also assisted with various other tasks, including supporting the Recce Commanders' Course, Force Protection in Kenya and trialling new equipment in support of Defence Equipment & Support Capability Development.





*A very relaxed casualty on Mission Specific Training*

Throughout the last six months the Sniper Platoon have also worked hard to build the broader competencies required to be a Battalion Group. Corporal McCarthy and Lance Corporal Campbell successfully passed the Regimental Signals Cadre with Lance Corporal Campbell then going on to attend and pass the Regimental Signals Detachment



Commanders' Course, further enhancing the Platoon's operational capability. Continuing the theme of excellence, Sergeant Brownless also completed the Sniper Platoon Commanders' course with Distinction, whilst Lance Corporal Frearson, who recently moved to the Sniper Platoon, completed the All-Arms Physical Training Instructors course.

*Sniper Platoon (Gold Team) on deployment in Headquarters Resolute Support*

### ANTI-TANK PLATOON

Platoon Commander: Lieutenant S Adkin  
 Second-in-Command: Colour Sergeant R Miller  
 Section Commanders: Sergeant Campbell, Sergeant Gordon, Sergeant King

The Anti-Tank Platoon concluded its role as part of the British Army's COVID-19 response force (Op RESCRIPT) before switching focus to the preparation and deployment on OP TORAL 12, a 6-month deployment to Kabul, Afghanistan.

During this deployment the Anti-Tank platoon reorganised into two multiples and to conduct routine patrolling around the heart of Kabul. The platoon first had to retrain on the Foxhound Light Protected Patrol Vehicle, a novelty for many of our drivers who are used to the open-topped Revised Weapons Mounted Installation Kit (RWMIK) and JACKAL platforms. Foxhound introduced many of the platoon's more seasoned soldiers to the luxuries of a bomb proof roof and ice-cold air conditioning, must-haves in Kabul.

Preparation started in earnest when we deployed on the Mission Rehearsal Exercise, which consisted of one month on Stanford Training Area, Norfolk. This exercise saw the soldiers tested in their ability to adapt from war fighting anti-tankers to peace keeping security forces. It required the Platoon's junior leadership stepping up to fulfil key rolls within the multiples. Corporals Livingstone and Tod became the Multiple Second-in-Commands and Corporals Roy and Wallace acting as the Charlie (3ICs). The NCOs demonstrated a flexible mind-set, in the face of change, and determination, to lead their subordinates with the distinction that contributed to a successful deployment.

Due to the accelerated withdrawal by NATO from Afghanistan, the Battalion returned to Scotland three months sooner than expected. Since returning, the platoon has continued to distinguish itself in the Maxwell Shield events, with Private Appiah-Kubi winning the Table Tennis and Cpl Wallace contributing to a Delta Company win in the Duathlon. The platoon is now preparing to go on a month's well-deserved leave, before focusing on more traditional Anti-Tank skills on our return through completion of the Battle Craft Syllabus.

### HEADQUARTER COMPANY

Officer Commanding: Major D McCutcheon  
 Company Sergeant Major: Warrant Officer Class 2 A Bowe  
 Company Quartermaster Sergeant: Colour Sergeant C McColl

This year Headquarter Company has been focused on the preparation for Op TORAL 12 and the coming deployment to Afghanistan. Along with the preparation for all those who would be deploying from the Company, we also assumed the role of Rear Operations Group (ROG). This saw the ranks of Headquarter Company swell with the soldiers from across the Battalion who would not be deploying to Afghanistan.

The Company took on the responsibilities normally held by the Rifle Companies in February, which allowed the Battalion to focus on pre-deployment training and deploying to theatre in good order. With COVID 19 still playing a big role in all our lives, the deploying force had to go into isolation prior to onward travel to theatre. This gave the QM and MT departments some additional G4 problems above the normal scale of deployment.

With the Battalion almost out the door and Rear Operations Group beginning to settle into its routine, we received the news that the operation in Afghanistan did not require the numbers initially expected and the tour was possibly going to be shorter. The QM and MT departments sprang into action once again to start the process of receiving the Battalion back from Theatre. Again, another well executed performance from them saw the Battalion back in Fort George by mid-July and preparing to stand down for a well-deserved summer break.

The Pipe Band was initially part of the ROG and completed a "Raising the Nation's Spirit" tour around the old recruiting areas of The Black Watch, culminating in a photo being taken in Aberfeldy at The Black Watch monument where the OC and CSM had to visit and selflessly jump in the photo. The tour was a resounding success and certainly raised the spirits during these COVID times.

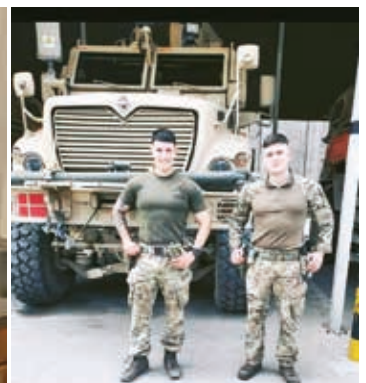
Along with preparation for leave the Battalion ran a highly demanding Maxwell Shield sports competition. A tight contest that saw the Company stretch away victorious for a second year running. A gargantuan well done to all those who participated in the events.

The Company would also like to congratulate a couple of individuals who have stood out over this period. Private Manners from the Catering Platoon was awarded a coin from GOC 1 UK Division for her incredible efforts after being selected to chef for Major General C S Collins in June this year. This is a remarkable achievement given she was just four months out of training. Corporal Haig and Lance Corporal Conn from the Regimental Aid Post have also been singled out for exceptional performance whilst deployed on Op TORAL 12. They received a Memorandum for Record from the Commander of the Role 1 Hospital at Camp Resolute Support in Kabul - a significant achievement from them, working in a multi-national setting in a world class expeditionary medical facility.

As the Battalion went on leave, the Rear Operations Group covered duties and maintained support to the sub-units until mid-



*Private Manners and GOC's Coin*



*Cpl Haig and LCpl Conn with Danish QRF Vehicles*

August. Looking to the future the Battalion will again be busy, with deployments to the US, Germany, Kenya and Oman ahead of a likely test-exercise, Ex WESSEX STORM, in twelve months' time. As ever HQ Coy will deliver the support required, whatever the task and the ask.

**MT PLATOON**

Motor Transport Officer: Captain Mikey Fairweather  
 Motor Transport Colour Sergeant R Gilmour  
 Second-in-Command: Sergeant Ryan Richardson  
 Motor Transport Sergeant:

This has been another busy period for the Motor Transport Platoon (MT Pl). Once back from the COVID-19 hiatus, planning started for a Battalion road move to Galloway Forest, which doubled as a 51 Infantry Brigade assurance check for our NATO readiness commitment. The entire fleet made it in one piece. There was a minor accident 1km from camp but thankfully, the only thing that took a dent was Corporal Mudunavosa's pride. The Battalion deployed A1 Echelon to support the exercise and A2 Echelon was based at West Freugh Camp.

On return to Fort George, we over-saw the handover of the majority of the 200-strong NATO fleet to The 1st Battalion The Royal Irish. This meant moving a plethora of different vehicles to a hangar in Kinloss, preparing them to the highest standard for inspection. Handover of both Green (soft-skin) and Brown (armoured) fleet went very smoothly and was completed ahead of schedule – a testament to the hard work of the MT team and the LAD mechanics.

We deployed with the rest of the Battalion on the Mission Rehearsal Exercise at Thetford for the Battalion's Op TORAL 12 deployment to Kabul. On return from the 3-week exercise, we completed our mandated training. The Platoon then split into the Deployment Group and Rear Operations Group. This was the start of a busy period involving moving freight to the Joint Air Mounting Centre in South Cerney in Gloucestershire and deploying soldiers down to the Quarantine Facilities (QFAC) at various parts of the UK. Lance Corporal Ndugi missed this entertainment by deploying to Kenya.

For the deployed teams the task was of getting all the UK's operational vehicles and kit ready to be returned to the UK, after being checked and cleaned. Over the whole period the team still managed to fit in various career and education courses, including driver training, achieving ninety-six theory tests and fifty-one practical test passes – a fantastic result.

The Platoon said farewell to Capt Mikey Fairweather in June, who has now taken post as the Scottish, Welsh and Irish Divisional Career Management Officer and will soon welcome Capt Allan Campbell, currently Unit Welfare Officer, in his place.



*Quad Bikes Hitting the Road for Galloway Forest*

**WELFARE**

Unit Welfare Officer: Captain Campbell  
 Assistant Unit Welfare Colour Sergeant Irvine  
 Officers: Corporal Taroga  
 Unit Welfare Admin Rhoda Mills

After its refurbishment last year, it was great to finally get the doors open to the Community Centre for the families of 3 SCOTS. The easing of the COVID restrictions meant that we were able to start running events.

The first event for the families was an outdoor Easter Egg Hunt. CSgt Irvine planned the entire event placing clues around the estate and providing maps for the children to locate letters to make a word associated with Easter. Once they had rearranged all the letters the children returned to the Community Centre to receive an Easter

Egg. The eggs were kindly donated by the local TESCO and ASDA. The Welfare Team have also been able to run weekly events such as coffee mornings, youth drop-in sessions and Mums and Tots. The UWO's wife, Anne has hosted weekly bedtime story evenings and has run a couple of craft afternoons. Families monthly Bingo, run by Fiona Marshall, has also started - which is a great night to be had by all.

With the Battalion being deployed on OP TORAL the Unit Welfare Team spent from the Families' Deployment Grant to arrange several events. The first was a children's movie night. The children enjoyed the film and, of course, the free popcorn, sweets and juice.

The next event was a cruise along Loch Ness. The Welfare Team chartered a private hire from Jacobite Cruises for 70 partners and children of our deployed soldiers. The cruise left Dochgarroch Loch at 5:30pm for a 2-hour trip allowing the families to take in the breathtaking scenery and find out about the history that surrounds Loch Ness, as well enjoying a cold finger buffet on board, provided by Red Poppy Catering. D&E Coaches kindly provided the transport to and from Dochgarroch Loch from Wimberley Way Estate.

Now that the soldiers of 3 SCOTS have returned, we are looking forward to our summer event. We have organised a trip for the families to the Highland Wildlife Park at Kincaig. The families will be able to discover Scottish wildlife and endangered animals of the world's mountains and tundra in the park's spectacular setting. Again D&E Coaches have agreed to provide the transport for the event.



Urquhart Castle from The Water



Children's Arts and Crafts Fathers' Day



Left – Loch Ness Cruise

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



## BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

Commanding Officer:	Lieutenant Colonel DDJ Mackinnon
Regimental Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 1 (RSM) J Knox
Second-in-Command:	Major I Bunce
Training Major/XO:	Major H Wilson
Quartermaster:	Captain S Shaw
Quartermaster (Res):	Major H Hood
Adjutant:	Captain E Shepherd
Training Officer (Res):	Captain K Greene
Training Warrant Officer:	Warrant Officer Class 2 R Parker
Intelligence Officer (Res):	Captain K Rehman
Regimental Administration Officer:	Major PJ Ward
Regimental Operations Support Officer:	Captain AG McEwen MBE
Regimental Career Management Officer:	Captain BS Baxter
Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant:	Warrant Officer Class 2 S Lawrence

## HEADQUARTER COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major B Cooper
Permanent Staff Administrative Officer (PSAO):	Captain S Rae
Company Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 2 S Woods
Senior Permanent Staff Instructor (SPSI):	Warrant Officer Class 2 C Bonnar
Company Quartermaster Sergeant Full Time Reserve Service CQMS):	Colour Sergeant J Twine

## COMMANDING OFFICERS' FOREWORD

The last time I wrote for The Red Hackle we were in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and although now the light at the end of the tunnel is certainly brighter, we are still fighting a battle that none of us would have anticipated.

That being said, once again I take enormous pride in the commitment and determination of our soldiers and their attitude in the last twelve months. On a number of occasions, they have been asked to provide assistance to the Government and the NHS and have never failed to answer the call.

I wrote last year that the restrictions had forced us to develop novel training methods centred in the virtual world, and that as per their character, the Jocks had taken the change in their stride. Although we had gradually started to return to in-person training towards the end of 2020, sadly a second lockdown forced us to return to the virtual world. Again though the trainers did what they do best and got on with the task at hand, slipping back to the virtual training they had been conducting so well previously.

Thankfully this year, as life has returned to near normal and restrictions have eased, we have gradually resumed training in the physical sense. We are all glad to be doing so. The start of the year saw a weeklong range and training package in Barry Buddon. It was well attended and gave everyone a chance to reconnect and get their webbing and cam cream back on. This was followed up by some conceptual training with the Officers, Warrant Officers and SNCO's in Dunkeld. A well-designed session that honed everyone's minds towards leadership and training development. We are now looking forward to the two-week Battalion Training exercise in Lydd and Salisbury Plain in September.

It is important to note the number of deployments that have taken place throughout the pandemic and the essential work our soldiers have been doing. Not only have our men and women helped the NHS, we have also had soldiers deploy to Kenya, Malawi, Cyprus and Afghanistan. Once again proving our utility and credibility as a reserve Battalion.

Of course, we could not have done any of this alone, and I must pass on my thanks to a number of supporters. Most importantly are our people, alongside their families and employers who continue to engage in the right way. Also, to the wider regiment, and, once again, to Balhousie Castle for their continuous involvement.

As we move towards the second half of the year several key personalities have moved on and it is important to mark these occasions. We say goodbye to the Regimental Sergeant Major, WO1 Carlisle (now Captain). He has been the absolute example of everything an RSM should embody. He has been the voice of the soldiers and provided unrivalled council on the tough issues we have faced. We wish him the best of luck in his new role as Regimental Career Management Officer at the Black Watch Battalion and extend a warm welcome to his replacement WO1 (RSM) Knox. We also wish the Battalion Second in Command Major Alec Rose a well-earned retirement. Alec is a powerful figurehead in the Highlands and been a leader of community engagement. He will be well missed and is always welcome at the doors of 7 SCOTS. Replacing him is the Company Commander of Headquarter Company Major Ian Bunce.

It should also be mentioned that our new Headquarter Company Commander, Major Brian Cooper, has finally left the Regular Army. He finished here at 7 SCOTS as the Quartermaster, and has moved seamlessly into his new role now in the Reserve Army. A storied career that has many chapters yet!

I finished my article last year by stating that although the future had the potential to be uncertain, I had no doubt that the Battalion will emerge as strong as ever. I feel that sentiment stands as robust today as it did then. We have witnessed an unprecedented period of uncertainty and friction. The one constant, however, is that our soldiers continue to step up to the mark time and time again. So, I look forward to the next twelve months and am in no doubt that we will emerge strong and ready.



*LCpl Low leading his team on the RSMs Patrol Competition*



*Commanding Officer*



*Deputy Commander Field Army, Major General William O'Leary meeting troops at Barry Buddon*



*The Commanding Officer presents Captain Spats Baxter with a Certificate from SSAFA for 10 years loyal service*

## ALPHA (FIRE SUPPORT) COMPANY

Officer Commanding:	Major JA Valentine
Second-in-Command:	Captain MG MacLean
CSM:	Warrant Officer Class 2 L Penrice
PSAO:	Captain S Langdale/Capt L Stewart
RSUSO:	Captain M Dunnigan
Aberdeen Platoon Commander:	Gapped
Dundee Platoon Commander:	Second Lieutenant E McCracken
Kirkcaldy Platoon Commander:	Colour Sergeant G McKenzie
SPSI:	Colour Sergeant L Jones
PSI Aberdeen:	Colour Sergeant T Brady
QOMS:	Colour Sergeant S McGregor

Over the last twelve months we have emerged from our virtual and hybrid training regime to a point now where we are back to something resembling full time physical activities. It has been a rollercoaster ride after the return to restrictions at the start of this year, everyone is glad of the opportunity we now have, to get together and deliver our core activities and role. Our Camp is planned for the end of September, two weeks in the south of England: one week on the ranges and a week on Salisbury Plain, Copehill Down Village.

The Company has been involved in three mobilisations over the last twelve months, Op RESCRIPT twice and Op TORAL once. All soldiers have now been de-mobilised. During Op RESCRIPT those mobilised delivered mobile COVID tests, with several soldiers joining the civilian testing teams after demobilisation, as a civilian occupation. We had two soldiers mobilise with the Black Watch Battalion for Op TORAL 12, both have now demobilised.

We have been lucky to deploy twice this year to train, firstly at Warcop for ranges and to Dalbeattie for an exercise. The second opportunity was at Barry Buddon for further range work. Our mortar section live fired at the start of the year in collaboration with 6 SCOTS, a particularly sodden experience, but six new mortar men fired for the first time and newly qualified range staff were able to gain experience. Our monthly Company training weekends continue; with all training nights and weekends now being 'physical' again. The good attendance during the virtual program has continued to improve as we revert to the 'physical'. Weekends at Castlelaw and Barry Buddon have been well attended by the Company. Adventure training has been on the programme this year, Colour Sergeant McNiven planned and delivered a weeklong adventure training package for the Battalion, which was well supported by the Company. We are now in the process of introducing the new Army physical training (PT) standards and tests. This is a challenge made harder by the gap between the demise of the old test and the introduction of the new and sedentary lockdowns, not everyone is as fit as they should be.

Attendance has improved and a number of long-term non-attenders have been discharged. Despite having no recruiting initiatives and relying on our being in the community, recruitment is very healthy. Transfers from the University Officer Training Corps, as soldier recruits, along with transfers from the Regular Army and other reserve units continue apace alongside a stream of new direct entrants.

The Company welcomes back Sgt Robertson as the Full Time Reserve Service Recruiting and Recruit Mentoring SNCO. Sgt Robertson finished as a reserve at new year, then successfully secured the FTRS post, starting in April.

It has been a real struggle to get recruits on courses, a great amount of patience has been required of and demonstrated by recruits. Extra recruit courses have been programmed, so we can look forward to an improvement. As usual we have helped several individuals to return to the Regular Army and to other specialist reserve units. Congratulations to Private Davidson and Private Hutchinson, who were awarded the Best Recruit prize on their Combat Infantry Courses, Private Davidson has now joined the Regular Army.

Congratulations also go to Corporal Laing, Corporal Ross on passing their Section Commander Battle Course. Corporal Laing has since instructed on a Potential JNCO course and Corporal Ross has now posted out for three years, to ATUOTC, as an assistant instructor. We also have Corporal Smith who has posted for three years as a section commander/instructor, training recruits. Congratulations go to Colour Sergeant McNiven and Corporal Ross on their promotions this year, two key figures within the Company.

The Company welcomes, Mr Les Downie, who has assumed the position of the Dundee Administration Officer. He was a Regimental Administrative Warrant Officer within the Regular Army and has now

transferred to us as the new Company reserve Clerk, as Cpl Downie! It is good to have these two positions filled by such a well-qualified person.

Captain Dunnigan has moved to Headquarter Company as MTO with an additional responsibility for recruiting. He has had a long career within A Company, originally climbing through the ranks of the Anti-Tank Platoon to Colour Sergeant and Second in Command of the Platoon. Since being commissioned he been a Rifle Platoon Commander, Anti-Tank Platoon Commander, Company Second-in-Command and as Acting Company Commander.

Despite not being with us for long, we say farewell to Captain McClean as Company Second in Command, he has moved abroad to pursue civilian employment. Finally, a farewell to 2Lt McCracken who has moved elsewhere in the UK.

Corporal Wully Brown, our Reserve Company Clerk, sadly passed away this year. He had a long and Regular career within the Army Personnel Centre, reaching the rank of Staff Sergeant. In addition to being the Reserve Clerk, he had been covering the Dundee Administration Officer duties. An amusing person, who was full of energy, he has departed too early and will be missed by all.



*Left - Cpl Laing,  
ATD 1, Dalbeattie*



*Pte Howe and WO2 Penrice (CSM), Bravo Course  
pass out parade Winchester*



*Barry Buddon range weekend, A Coy in attendance*



*Left - Warcop mortar shoot.  
Mortar No.1 Pte Breslin  
(centre), No.2 Pte Patterson  
(left), No.3 Pte Grant (rear)*



### **We Are Here For Veterans**

SVR provides accommodation and support for homeless and vulnerable veterans. For more information visit [www.svronline.org](http://www.svronline.org)

or call **0131 556 0091**

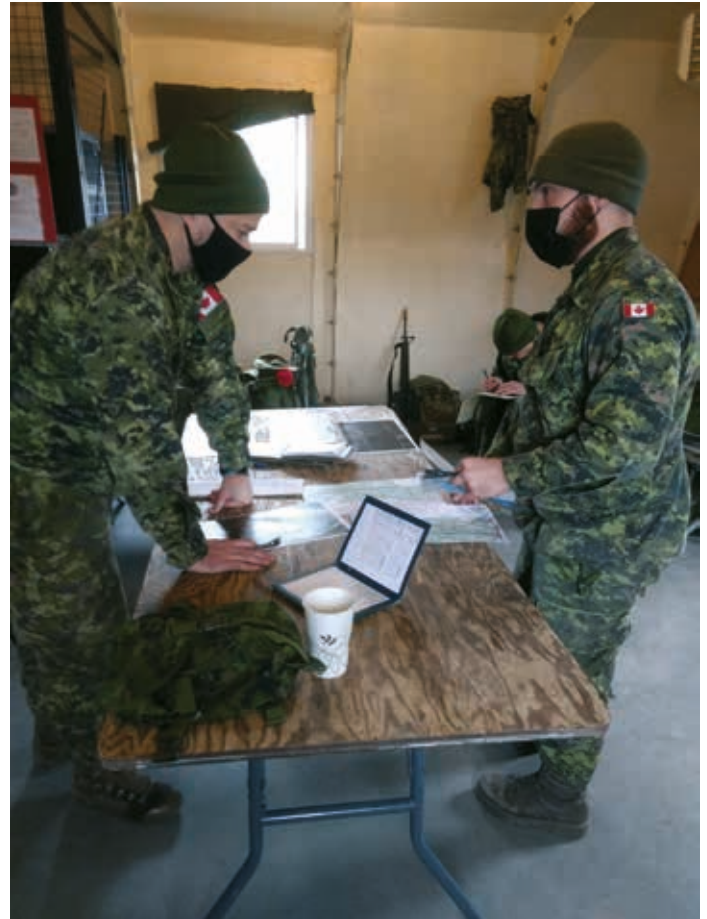
Registered Charity SC012739



# The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada

Montreal, Quebec - The new realities of training and readiness really hit home during our first unit range exercise in September of 2020. We arrived at CFB Farnham, the small training centre located approximately 45 minutes to the southeast of our armoury, where we debussed and began the short march to FOB Passchendaele. Upon arrival we were pleasantly greeted by new COVID-19 measures which limited accommodations to forty-five soldiers; we were over seventy-five. LCol Francis Roy, Commanding Officer, directed by inverse order of rank that we were to sleep outside. This put a little smile on my face. For a late September exercise, the average evening temperature remained at 15 degrees C, there was no rain, and we were even able to squeeze in some tactical shooting before returning home. The first in-person unit level pandemic exercise was a success.

Training has never stopped. Adjustments were made as the third wave of Covid and curfews became the norm, and the balance between operational readiness and force protection became a daily critical information and decision requirement. Society as a whole came to a dead stop and yet the Regiment persevered and continued generating forces



*Patrol Orders - 2Lt Andrew Ward on left and MCpl Kyle St-Onge on right*



*Sgt Alexander Likins briefs section before live fire section attack*

for individual instruction, domestic, and expeditionary operations. The Black Watch has a reputation of punching way above its weight, having generated over forty soldiers over the last decade serving full time with Regular Force units. Additionally, we have five members that are slotted to deploy to Iraq, Ukraine, Latvia, and Congo. MCpl Tabet arrived in July 2021 in Kuwait working with the Operational Support Hub – Southwest Asia. As a Canadian Army Reserve unit, we continue to provide individual reinforcements to missions, many on relatively short notice. There is presently a pool of soldiers from the rank of private to major ready to step out the door tomorrow.

Every task assigned this year was undertaken with great pride and determination. COVID-19 measures did not hinder in any way the generation of a full infantry platoon, the command cell of an arctic response platoon, and the ability to run the first part-time infantry course held at our Unit in as long as memory serves. Training requirements were decreased to limit the spread of the pandemic, yet we exceeded them all operationalising the Unit. The training year culminated with a focused leadership development training target towards all junior leaders preparing for officer phase training and non-commissioned member leadership courses. This course was run over five weekends with a final deployment to the northern most sectors of CFB Valcartier, where at the end of March there was still over two feet of snow on the ground. With snowshoes strapped, rifles slung, and ammo loaded, a dozen junior officers and NCMs conducted day and night reconnaissance patrols against a dynamic OpFor, with an emphasis on battle procedure, tactics, and communication. It is expected they will all pass their training in the summer.

Pandemic aside, force generation has gone into overdrive. We have over a dozen soldiers attending basic military qualification, over a dozen soldiers completing their full time infantry soldier course, four on their infantry section commander course, and a half dozen junior officers completing their first phase of officer development. These numbers are expected to increase in the coming year due to a robust recruiting plan making use of all digital and virtual means developed during the lockdowns.

The one thing we truly miss is our mess life: the vibrance of the officers' Annual Reunion Dinner with whisky flowing in decanters and

the subalterns planning their next submarine missions, the stoic resemblance of order established by the Warrant Officers' and Sgts' Mess during their annual Robbie Burns Dinner, and the wild Friday night parties held by the Red Hackle Club. All these social institutions have been sorely missed during the course of this crisis, and hopefully will be welcomed back with open arms in the coming months. The camaraderie, the traditions, and the celebrations are all a part of our highland soul.

The halls of our armoury will soon again be filled with the sounds of bagpipes, NCOs driving our young soldiers to become the next generation of highland warriors, and the Regimental family carrying on the tradition of service, honour, and excellence. The upcoming year will continue to be filled with challenges, but I have no doubt they will be overcome and our Regiment will continue to wear with pride the name Black Watch.

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## ARTEFACTS FROM THE BLACK WATCH OF CANADA COLLECTION PAINTING, BATTLE OF WATERLOO, 1815

*By Earl John Chapman*

This fine oil on canvas, measuring an impressive 91 by 165 cm, was executed by George Jones (1786-1869). It depicts Field Marshal Arthur Wellesley, the 1st Duke of Wellington, with his staff at the battle of Waterloo, Sunday, 18 June 1815. A plaque attached to the frame lists the various personalities in the picture, including the Marquis of Anglesey (commanding the British cavalry) and Lord Edward Somerset (commanding the Household Brigade). The 42nd (Royal Highland) Regiment of Foot (Black Watch) is shown on the right of the painting, which would explain why the painting ended up in the collection of the Black Watch of Canada, however the details of the acquisition are not known at this time.

With the return of Napoleon, no time was lost in speeding the 42nd back to Flanders. The 42nd played only a minor role at Waterloo, but its fifty killed and wounded was a high enough total considering the casualties two days before at Quatre Bras, "a scrappy sort of fight, in which regiments stood largely on their own." Despite sustaining heavy casualties, including the death of its commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Sir Robert Macara, the 42nd beat off both infantry and cavalry charges, holding firm until reinforcements arrived to drive off the French attack. The stand of The Black Watch at Quatre Bras has gone down in history as one of the "most heroic actions of the Napoleonic Wars." However, the events of that day have always been overshadowed by the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo two days later. Victory at

Quatre Bras allowed Wellington to force Napoleon to engage him at Waterloo, "his preferred choice of battleground." The action at Quatre Bras has led one prominent historian to claim, "their part in the whole is undiminished, for without the hard-won victory at Quatre Bras, there would have been no Waterloo."

Of regimental significance, the 2nd Battalion of the 73rd Regiment were also heavily engaged at Quatre Bras, suffering "around fifty dead and wounded of all ranks." Thus the 73rd as well as the 42nd took part in the battle; and today's Black Watch, having been amalgamated from these two regiments, "is the only regiment in the British Army which can claim that both its Battalions fought in this, the most historic battle in world history."

George Jones was the son of a mezzotint engraver, and trained in art. He studied at the Royal Academy schools at the beginning of the 19th century, before serving in the Peninsular War (1808-1814). Jones was elected a Royal Academician in 1824. He was an important figure in the Academy, becoming Librarian in 1834, and subsequently Keeper over the period 1840-50. Waterloo was particularly attractive to Jones and he exhibited no less than five paintings of the battle at the Royal Academy and six at the British Institution, earning him the nickname "Waterloo" Jones. One of these is on display at the entrance to the Royal Hospital Chelsea Museum in London.



*The Battle of Waterloo 1825 (Black Watch of Canada Museum and Archives, photo by Peter Ferst)*

# HMS MONTROSE – MARITIME SECURITY OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

HMS MONTROSE has an illustrious history being the name of two ships in the Royal Navy, the former ship was DO1, an Admiralty Class destroyer that saw service throughout World War 2. The HMS MONTROSE (DO1) was at Dunkirk, an example of the unstinting and costly efforts of the Royal Navy, whether off the beach in Normandy, from Crete or from La Corunna; the Regiment is indebted to them.

In May Commander Charles Collins wrote that, the Starboard Crew were manning the ship on Operation KIPION, under the command of UK Maritime Component Command in Bahrain. Preparation included several weeks of training in Devonport and at the Harbour Training Ship HMS Monmouth. This has proved to be an excellent induction for new hands and a good refresher for returning crew.

On 20 March following a period of isolation the Starboard Crew deployed to Oman to take over the Ship, which after almost three years since she deployed from the UK and almost twenty years of service, needed dockyard maintenance. This maintenance has been completed by the crew and contractors at Duqm in Southern Oman. Those not involved in the maintenance were able to complete adventure training and many of the crew completed a 5km a day for a month challenge, which took place on the jetty; a fine way to acclimatise.

After refurbishment, HMS MONTROSE has returned to protecting shipping, countering narcotics across the Middle East and engaging with our allies in the Region. Due to Covid

it has not been possible to host any 'in person' visits but a Zoom programme has been run.

In mid-August The Starboard Crew handed over to the Port Crew, under the command of Commander Paul Irving. Deployment of the Port Crew (200 pax) was delayed, as the Brize Norton runway melted! Prior to becoming operational, demanding work-up training at sea accompanied by a team from Fleet Operational Sea Training has to be completed. Such training includes not only fighting the Ship but also surviving fires, floods, collisions, groundings and battle-damage scenarios. Having completely the training successfully, HMS MONTROSE is now back on station.

Keeping a vessel in peak condition at sea requires continuous maintenance. The Ship depends on talented and resilient engineers and logisticians, who conduct regular maintenance and ensure the correct stores are on board. Much of this is done at sea by those onboard but each Crew can expect to have a maintenance period alongside during their four-month deployment; as is the case at the time of writing.

Commander Collins and Irving write that the crew of HMS MONTROSE remains proud of their long affiliation with The Black Watch with our extensive history and enduring camaraderie. They wish the serving personnel The Black Watch Battalion and members of the Association exciting times ahead.



*HMS MONTROSE*



# Black Watch Battalion The Army Cadet Force

Honorary Colonel:	The Reverend Professor Norman Drummond CBE FRSE
Temporary Commandant:	Colonel A McNamee
Deputy Commandant:	Lieutenant Colonel T Dowson
Officer Commanding Alma Company:	Major R Sangster
Officer Commanding Burma Company:	Lieutenant K Stark
Officer Commanding Korea Company:	Sergeant Major Instructor S Skene
Officer Commanding Ypres Company:	Lieutenant F Campbell
Officer Commanding Ticonderoga Company:	Major M McCluskey
Battalion Training Officer:	Major K Douglas
Public Relations Officer:	Major N Murdoch
Regimental Sergeant Major Instructor:	Regimental Sergeant Major S Smith
Permanent Staff:	
Cadet Executive Officer:	Major A C M Potter
Quartermaster:	Captain A Williams

The Black Watch Battalion Army Cadet Force recruits from the Fife, Perth and Kinross areas with twenty-two detachments including Pipe Band and Military Band Detachments.

Another year, another set of challenges, however no one ever thought it would be as dramatic as 2020, the COVID - 19 year. Oh, what a change as Detachments closed and we transferred all our training to the virtual world. Who would have thought that we would have become experts in Zoom, Skype, that video conferencing and on-line learning would become the 'new normal'. After a year of being behind our computers we slowly but surely have come back to non-residential training with a whole programme of summer 2021 activities: in bubbles and socially distanced.

As a Battalion we have managed to organise socially distanced ranges, sports, adventurous training, including paddle boarding, wake boarding, water assault course, mountain biking and walking, including a navigation exercise. The main event during the summer activities being an overnight exercise which was facilitated using single person tents supplied by a grant of £1500 from the Army Cadet Force Association.



*Perth and Kinross Cadets from Perth, Dunkeld, Auchterarder, Crieff, Kinross taking part in a Fieldcraft Exercise under the watchful supervision of Regimental Sergeant Major Steve Smith*



*Perth and Kinross Cadets climbing a water mountain in Victoria Docks, Dundee*



*Sergeant Major Jim Martin, Adventurous Training Officer shows Perth and Kinross Cadets the ease with which to stay upright on a paddle board, shame the rest of us could not find it that easy!!!!*

*Right – Company Sergeant Major Jack Sweeney still smiling halfway through the Exercise*

Although socially distanced and in bubbles, the Battalion achieved its aim of providing fun filled activities throughout the summer, leading hopefully to further impetus for the new school term.

All the Battalion's detachments are now back to functioning within the United Kingdom and Scottish Government COVID-19 legislation at evenings and weekends. Hopefully once the restrictions loosen further, we will be in the position to engage fully in all activities including planning for 2022 Camp.

As you will no doubt see from the photographs, the Summer Activities 2021 programme was packed and interesting with a number of Cadets firing weapons for the first time, as well as cooking and eating in the field, trying such delights as sausage and beans casserole and Thai chicken soup. Overnight exercises changed completely in their structure, with everyone from permanent staff, officers, senior ranks and cadets being pushed to their limits to comply with the rules and still enjoy activities in whatever format could be achieved.



*Cadet Sergeant Siusaidh Johnston, Crieff Detachment – On the Range*

**CAPTAIN WILLIAM DAVID BURNS**  
Black Watch Army Cadet Force



*Cadet Sergeant Kayla Cruickshank,  
Auchterarder Detachment - On the Range*

All Detachments on returning will have a packed programme of Drill, Skill at Arms, First Aid, Fieldcraft, Navigation and much more to interest and teach to both new recruits and the long-term Cadets who have managed to attend, albeit virtually. We are now looking forward to a full adventure packed year ahead where staff and Cadets manage to participate in the maximum number of activities allowing us "To Inspire To Achieve".

As ever the Battalion is always looking for high quality volunteers to join the organisation, if interested please contact us at: [hi-bw-recruitment@rfca.org.uk](mailto:hi-bw-recruitment@rfca.org.uk)

**APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY COMMANDANT**

Congratulations to Lieutenant Colonel Tony Dowson, who has been appointed as the Deputy Commandant, The Black Watch Battalion Army Cadet Force, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

Lieutenant Colonel Dowson joined the Territorial Army in 1980 later transferring to full-time service with the Regular Army. He was commissioned into The King's (Manchester and Liverpool) Regiment later serving with The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment and The Adjutant General's Corps (Education and Training Branch). His service took him to: Mainland Europe, Scandinavia, The Balkans, Middle East, Australia, Cyprus, USA and the Falkland Islands. He joined The Black Watch Battalion Army Cadet Force as an adult instructor in 2015.

Lieutenant Colonel Dowson has served in various roles within the Battalion, including Education Officer and Area Commander (North).

As the Deputy Commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Dowson's main role is to lead in the delivery of the Cadet Experience. This involves providing well organised, progressive and high-quality training experiences to cadets and adults across the Battalion.

Lieutenant Colonel Dowson a native of Bury Lancashire. He now lives near Pitlochry and is married to Fiona. His interests include sailing, powerboating, military history, travel, foreign languages and literature. He is a local Community Councillor, Resilience co-ordinator and helps to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Support.



The late William David Burns, known to many of us as Davie or Paddy was born on 26 June 1952 at Belfast in Northern Ireland. He served in uniform as both boy and man for over fifty years and died as he lived, as a dedicated officer of the Army Cadet Force, especially The Black Watch Battalion Army Cadet Force.

Davie started his long association with the Army and Army Cadet Force when he joined The Junior Leaders Regiment Royal Artillery, Nuneaton, followed by the 5th Enniskillen Dragoon Guards, Belfast Army Cadet Force, serving from October 1971 to May 1974.

On moving to the Kingdom of Fife in September 1974, he joined Fife Battalion Army Cadet Force, which soon amalgamated to become The Black Watch Battalion Army Cadet Force.

Davie was commissioned from the ranks in May 1996 and promoted to Captain in December 2000. Due to his long and dedicated service, he was awarded the Cadet Forces Medal in 2006 with clasps in 2010 and 2015 and both the Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilee Medals in 2002 and 2012 respectively.

During his long association with the Army Cadets, Davie fulfilled many roles within the Battalion including as an Adult Instructor in the ranks from Sergeant Instructor to Sergeant Major Instructor; or before Company Sergeant Major; also as a Detachment Commander of several detachments, Company Commander of Ypres Company and finally with the Pipe Band Detachment.

Davie's last camps will be well remembered for him carrying out the welfare and support role, with a positive word and encouraging smile irrespective of whether you were an officer, senior rank, or cadet.

During his long association with the Army Cadets, he also spent 22 years working for the Ministry of Defence as the Caretaker of the Glenrothes Reserve Centre, a role he carried out with great humour and a smile for one and all.

Davie is survived by his wife Moira, son David, daughter Donna and four grandsons. A good man who will be sorely missed.

**Neil Murdoch**

# Association News

Royal Patron	HRH The Prince Charles Duke of Rothesay KG KT CB OM
President	Mrs Pat Sawers, Lord Lieutenant of Angus
Vice Presidents	Mr Robert Balfour FRICS, Lord Lieutenant of Fife Mr Stephen Leckie, Lord Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross Mr Ian Borthwick, Lord Lieutenant of the City of Dundee Major General J M Cowan CBE DSO
Chairman	Major R J W Proctor MBE
Association Secretary and Trustee	Brigadier R R E Lindsay
Trustee	Brigadier B M A Wrench
Trustee	Lieutenant Colonel J A Menzies
Trustee	Major J M K Erskine MBE
Trustee	Major A A L Watson, LVO
Trustee	Mr G Hay LL.B CA
Regimental Secretary	Major J D Monteith MBE
Executive Committee	Lieutenant Colonel M Smith MBE Major C Gray Captain A McEwen MBE Mr R M Scott JP Mr G Kennedy Mr W D Whytock Major R J W Proctor MBE - Chairman Major C Gray - Deputy Chairman Major B Dickson Mr J Devlin Captain T Graham Mr R M Scott JP Captain A McEwen MBE Mr W Barr Mr W D Whytock
Welfare Committee:	

## REGIMENTAL REUNION JULY 2021

At some risk and following a postponement, an Association Reunion was held on 3 July 2021 at Balhousie Castle. In the words of Major Ronnie Proctor, this was due to Covid-19, to be a Reunion like members have never had before. Not only were the restrictions under which the Reunion was to be held limiting but also it was at the beginning of the Pingdemic, which meant if you had been in contact with someone who had developed Covid-19 you would be notified and have to self-isolate.

One of the restrictions was that the Reunion would have to be held outside; of course, in Scotland with the probability of rain, this was impractical. However, as is always the case there was a way of circumventing the problem, if you were in a rectangular tent with three sides removed you were deemed to be outside. Whether inside or outside one had to be seated at a table and drink could not be bought from a bar, strangely one could order food from a counter but not drink; this meant there was table service.

Travel throughout the UK was much restricted and within Scotland those at one Level of restriction were not permitted to travel to an area with a different Level of restriction. To overcome this an IT system was hired to enable the Chairman to address the Association by Zoom; for those attending to 'meet' with fellow Association members using Zoom and for those not attending to be able see what was happening at Balhousie. This 'virtual' capability showed great potential.

Nothing can be planned with certainty during Covid-19 and the Cadet Band that was due to entertain us during the afternoon was 'Pinged', so had to self-isolate for a week starting on the preceding Wednesday evening. Luckily the Regimental Secretary had heard Coleen Nicoll, a soprano from Dunkeld, singing and at short notice she stepped in to replace the Cadet Band. The Commanding Officer of The Black Watch The 3rd Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, Lieutenant Colonel Graham Sefton had also kindly given permission for the Battalion Pipes and Drums to perform

The marchers set-off, under the command of Mr Gordon Stacey and led by the Pipes and Drums, from the North Inch for Balhousie at a suitably relaxed pace. Halting in the Balhousie Castle Courtyard, they were then given the order: 'to your beer fall-out'. So began a convivial afternoon. The Chairman gave his welcome. The Pipes and Drums, under Drum Major Lowe, Beat a Retreat and Piper Buchan danced. Coleen Nicoll entranced many with her fine singing. All were kept topped up with drinks and snacks by the Museum staff, who had worked hard in preparation and patiently throughout. As might be expected remaining at one's table was liberally defined but most of us had got used to events constrained by Covid restrictions.

The Reunion was better attended than expected. In total, according to 'Track and Trace', there were 168 people present. The Tyneside Scottish had brought a full minibus of members, as had the Highland Branch in Inverness; their presence and exuberance was much appreciated.

As ever rain was forecast, but not until 1630 hrs. As the Reverend John Duncan, the Association Padre, was present, it was believed that there was sufficient top-cover. As it transpired the rain held off until 1645 hrs by when the Last-Post had been sounded and most of those attending had departed.





## ABERFELDY MUSTER

It was 10am on Sunday 5 September when I arrived at the Memorial in Aberfeldy. Although I was an hour early, plenty of Black Watch soldiers had arrived earlier. There was much chat and ribaldry as colleagues and their wives met under the lowering skies. The Perth and District Pipe Band was tuning up, they made a fine sight, being about twenty-five strong. Chairs were laid out for the infirm and programmes were distributed, as about ninety gathered for the display and service.

So, at 11am promptly the Pipes and Drum led by Drum Major Kenny Forbes and Pipe Major Alistair Duthie started to Beat Retreat. They played, as many will have done in the past, alongside the Tay making its muted passage to the sea and under the grateful gaze of those who had served in the Regiment. I say grateful because the Band had stepped in to replace the Pipes and Drums of The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, who had at short notice been deployed to South Cerney Airfield, ready to fly on orders to Afghanistan. An event in Scotland without tartan or a piper is that much the poorer and it is gratifying to hear that Commanding Officers still value their Pipes and Drums and good civilian bands still thrive.

The Pipes and Drums 'fell out' and a bearded man who I was told was the Regimental Secretary gave the welcome from the Chairman. Who has ever heard of a Black Watch officer with a beard, it wouldn't have happened in my time! Anyway, he said that members of the Association were experiencing bad times, of which some of us were aware. He went on to explain that friendship has always been our solace in bad times and this is why the comradeship is so important. He exhorted us to keep in touch with each other and keep an eye on each other. It seemed to make sense.

Then came the big event, the Reverend Norman Drummond. Despite his bright red cassock, it was not difficult to remember the hard fly-half, who was so respected that I used to go to the Kirk without being ordered. As usual he spoke well and this time, I had remembered to ask him for a copy of his address:

"When some years ago Bridget, Mrs Ker, called me to let me know the sad news of Colonel Ian's passing and invited me to say a few words at his Service of Thanksgiving in the south, I was yet again reminded of what a remarkable family The Black Watch is and, all being well through 3 SCOTS and The Black Watch Army Cadet Battalion, always will be.

For very few people in life can say that they belong, and I mean belong, to an organisation which mustered some 282 years ago here in Aberfeldy and thence to other parts, an organisation which still cares for and cherishes each other, no matter what throughout each and every year.

Small wonder then that our two Readings this morning are first of all The Parable of the Good Samaritan, so clearly and well read by Major Ronnie who himself has been something of a Good Samaritan over many years to so many grateful members of the Regimental family. For in The Black Watch it was and is commonplace to endeavour to live out the actions of the original Good Samaritan who actually told that story about himself and his care and his love for us. It is a story which for over 2000 years has not only encouraged but also inspired men and women like you and me to cross the road, to bind up the wounds of our fellow travellers, to take them to the inn of recovery and yes, to keep going back to them if and when they are in need.

To cross the road, to go the extra mile, to give your coat to another, to share your ration pack, to bind up the wounds of the fallen, to comfort the brokenhearted who like so many of us gathered here still desperately miss the physical presence of close loved ones.

Surely on reflection this is what it means to be 'Black Watch' – to 'hing together' and always to be there for one another, looking out for one another, having each other's backs as members of a 282-year-old family.

Surely on reflection this is what it means to embrace those values within our second reading from Philipians read with such care and sensitivity by Colonel Roddy, our long serving and devoted former Vice Chairman to whom so many of us are abidingly grateful. Remember how the passage ends...Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy think about such things – and the God of Peace will be with you.

You will all likely know that the most continuously successful sporting team of modern times also contains the word 'Black'.... The All Blacks of New Zealand, somewhat younger in years than The Black Watch but every bit as proud and relentless in seeking to maintain three core

values – three core values which are exactly in keeping with why we are gathered here today.

First of all an All Black is proud to be one, he or she plays on and off the field at their best – they set themselves the highest of standards in order to bring their best possible self in service to secondly the Team or in our case the Battalion or the Regiment.

Yourself, your Team and finally an All Black gives his or her best performance as the New Zealanders have it 'for those in our past'.

And here we are today some 282 years on still giving our best self for the Team, the Regimental Family, remembering today and every day those in our past who have given us an ancient family to belong to and a sense of 'service beyond self' of which the Good Samaritan would undoubtedly approve and of which example of values based leadership of 'service before self' this country and this United Kingdom of ours needs now as perhaps rarely before.

And so we gather the best of ourselves, of our Regimental Family, of those in our past and we say together, as we have done so many times in sundry places over the years, 'The Prayer of The Black Watch'.

*O God, whose strength setteth fast the mountains*

*Lord of the hills to whom we lift our eyes:*

*Grant us grace that we, of The Black Watch*

*Once chosen to stand the mountains of an earthly kingdom,*

*May stand fast in the faith and be strong,*

*until we come to the heavenly Kingdom of Him*

*who has bidden us watch and pray,*

*Thy Son our Saviour and Lord.*

*Amen"*

After the Collect, not any old Collect, but that of The Black Watch, PM Alistair Duthie and Mr Billie Whytock took up position on the old Wade Bridge. They stood in the alcoves provided to avoid being run over, it is the only Wade Bridge still in use and is a bit narrow. While Pipey played Lochaber No More, Billie lowered a small bucket of ashes on a string, which he tipped into the Tay. These ashes were from the 1st World War Memorial Fence that had been erected at Balhousie Castle between 2014-2018. So, a two-minute silence followed; now either Pipey's watch works slowly, or global warming is to blame but these two-minute silences are getting longer as I grow older. At last, Pipey breaks into Johnny Cope; a surprise tune considering it commemorates the first battle of the 1745 Jacobite Rising, the Battle of Prestonpans, which the Jacobites won.

A further hymn and a blessing in which we were invited to lift our eyes unto the hills, not difficult at Aberfeldy, and the service ended. We chatted again for a while before making our way to the Hotel at Kenmore. Over drinks, which awaited our arrival, I was introduced to the Commanding Officer from Fort George, Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Hayton and his RSM WO1 Gray, it was good to meet proper soldiers

again; I and everyone else were delighted to see them. The Padre must have been delayed en route because the waiting staff were serving out the first course before he arrived to say the Grace; but one must not grumble about Divine Intervention, even if it was in the shape of Lieutenant Colonel Jock Menzies.



*Reverend Professor Norman Drummond leads the service*



*Service Congregation*



*Billy Whytock and Colin Gray*



*Lieutenant Colonel Matty Hayton and Lieutenant Colonel Jock Menzies*



*Perth and District Pipe Band*



*Mrs Sonya Arbuthnott, Colonel David Arbuthnott, Arthur Clarke and Joe Barton*



*Jamie Duncan-Millar, Jim Herschell, Colonel Arbuthnott and Joe Barton*



*Above - Pat McLinden speaks to Rab Young with Sharon McLinden looking on*

*Left - Billy Whytock lowers the ashes into the Tay*

**ANGUS BRANCH**

- President Major Peter Burnet
- Vice President Lieutenant Colonel D M Sheldrick
- Chairman Major Ronnie Proctor MBE
- Vice Chairman Mr Peter Tindal
- Secretary Mr Steve Reid
- Treasurer Mr Gordon Millar

The Angus Branch continued to function throughout the pandemic as we were the first Branch to hold virtual meetings using the modern technological wonder of Zoom. Monthly meetings using this means have been well attended with members from as far afield as Germany, Northern Ireland, the South of England as well as those who live locally all taking part. Our Branch President alternates his appearance from month to month from either Bannatyne House, Newtyle or from down south at Newmarket. On the first Zoom gathering meeting one of our Association members, retired Headmaster Mr Eric Summers, gave an interesting presentation on Winston Churchill. It was encouraging to see individual members and those from other Branches joining in.

As the Covid restrictions have lessened, we have reinstated actual meetings in the Royal British Legion Club Rooms in Forfar, which has gained a reasonable attendance. The Zoom meetings had been so successful that we now mix virtual and actual and hold hybrid meetings. These have been well received with members attending the Legion Club Rooms linked electronically to those who are abroad or some distance from us or who cannot attend in person. This has been enjoyed by those who have taken part and will be continued in the future; a silver lining from the cloud of Covid.

The Annual Reunion was reasonably well attended by Branch members and again the use of modern-day technology came to the fore, whereby Gus Proctor compiled a slide show of photographs of members of the Regiment, covering the Korean war period up to the present day. This was shown across the World on the day of the Reunion and created much interesting conversation.

At the time of writing the Annual Branch Standard Rededication Church Service is being planned to be held in Newtyle Parish Church on 26th September 2021. Our President, Major Peter Burnet and his wife Andrea have kindly offered to host Branch members at their home, Bannatyne House after the service and prior to the lunch at the British Legion in Forfar. Plans are also in train to hold the Annual El Alamein Dinner in late October. Christmas gifts for pensioners and widows will also be distributed as per 2020. The 2022 Burns Supper is being planned for the 22nd January (TBC).

Our regular Branch member Dr Fraser Brown and Associate member Dr Derek Patrick co-wrote the Book "The Black Watch in the Great War". Many of our members have contributed to this book which

was reviewed in the November 2020 Red Hackle Magazine. It is an enjoyable read and would be a very nice Christmas gift.

It is with great sadness that I report on the death of one of our Branch Stalwarts and founding members, Bob Mitchell whose obituary can be found elsewhere in the notes. Bob is sadly missed by all the Branch members and his unstinting hard work and attention to detail which he carried out on behalf of the Branch was



*George Panton leader of the Standard Bearers*

second to none. It is good to see old stalwart Jock Torrie again managing to attend Branch meetings after suffering from a long period of serious illness, and the many others who have managed to come back to our monthly meetings either in person or on Zoom their attendance is greatly appreciated.

Before closing these notes, I would like to pass on Christmas greetings and a happy New Year on behalf of the Angus Branch.



*Angus Branch Members*



*Billy Whytock salutes the ashes*



*Angus Branch members and ladies at Newtyle*

## DUNDEE BRANCH

President: Major (Retd) Colin Gray  
Chairman: Mr Willie Barr  
Secretary: Mr Colin Adam  
Treasurer: Mr Len Mitchell

Since last year's edition of the Red Hackle Magazine, many events and services were either cancelled or reorganised to accommodate the Covid-19 restrictions that were still in place. That said, the Dundee Branch tried to meet when permitted and attend certain events to keep the Red Hackle in the public eye.

On Thursday 5th November 2020, Willie Barr, Joe Devlin and Colin Gray conducted a small service at the Caird Park Stadium Monument, which was erected in memory of the men of Mains Parish who made the supreme sacrifice in the Great War 1914-1918.

The annual Powrie Brae Remembrance service was to be a very surreal occasion as owing to the Covid restrictions, we were not permitted to hold any organised events, however, on Sunday 8th November 2020 many members of the Branch decided to pay their own personal respects at the monument which was erected to the memory of All Ranks of the 4th and 5th Dundee and Angus Battalions of The Black Watch who died in the Second World War 1939-1945.

On the same day and prior to visiting Powrie Brae, Willie Barr, Joe Devlin and Colin Gray, on behalf of the Dundee Branch laid wreaths at the City Churches and the Law.

There were no events held in Dundee on Armistice Day, Wednesday 11th November 2020.

Our annual Red Hackle Dinner as well as many other events that would have been held and attended in the first few months of 2021 were all cancelled.

The 9th May 2021 was an extremely sad day for the Dundee Branch and the whole of the Black Watch Association as we were given the news that our very dear friend Lt Col Roland Rose TD had passed away. Roland had not been in the best of health for the last few years and eventually he took up residence in a Care Home. However, with the Covid restrictions, there were only a few occasions when he could receive visitors but even then, it was very limited. His long-time friends Willie Barr and Arthur Keith were the only people outside his immediate family who were permitted to visit Roland. This was not how we would have liked to say our farewells to this great man.

Roland's funeral was also a restricted numbers occasion, however, the Black Watch Association and in particular, the Dundee Branch ensured that Roland received the best possible send off. Rest in Peace dear friend.

On 26 June 2021, Willie Barr and Colin Gray represented the Dundee Branch at the official dedication of the City of Perth Ex-Services Monument erected in St Johns Street, Perth.

The Regimental Reunion was held at Balhousie Castle on Saturday 3rd July and although there was a wee hiccup with transport, many members of the Dundee Branch attended and enjoyed a great afternoon in great company.

The Inter Branch Games Day on Saturday 14th August 2021 was held in Dundee in the Black Watch Club and proved to be another great day. Thanks to Ray Lawson for organising the games (Pool, Darts and Dominoes) and keeping tally of the scores even though he got pelters from the Ladies who were representing the Highland (Inverness) Branch. The eventual winners by a clear margin were the Dundee Branch. Obviously, the outcome was never in doubt. A huge vote of thanks goes to everyone who attended and represented their Branches and to our Chairman for laying on a fantastic Curry Lunch.

Saturday 4th September 2021 was another sad day when we learned of the sudden passing away of our great Branch member, Joe Dumycz. Joe will be remembered as a character within The Black Watch both as a Regular and TA soldier. At Branch functions, Joe would always pull out his hip flask and offer it to anyone foolish enough to take a dram. He never did let on as to what was in the flask but he took great delight in seeing the faces of the brave few who never knew better. Rest in Peace Joe.

The following day, Joe Barton, Willie Barr, Arthur Clarke, Jimmy Edward, John Graham, Brian Kelly, Bill Meachan and Colin Gray represented the Dundee Branch at the Aberfeldy Memorial Service. This was a thoroughly enjoyable day as we listened to and watched the Perth and District Pipes and Drums display before taking our places for the Memorial Service led by Padre Norman Drummond. Lunch for the

Dundee Branch members was held in The Black Watch Inn, Aberfeldy where we had a great laugh as well as Toasting the loss of our pal Joe Dumycz.

The regular monthly Branch Meetings are now back up and running as well as the monthly Breakfast Club in the Market Bar, Dundee.



*Aberfeldy Service – Lt Col David Arbuthnott meeting Arthur Clarke*



*Aberfeldy Service - Jimmy Edward, Brian Kelly, Bill Meachan and John Graham*



*Aberfeldy Service - Joe Barton*



*Caird Park Service - Willie Barr, Joe Devlin and Colin Gray*





*Games Day with Colin Gray, Larry Hutchison, Jim (Shorty) Crawford, Chris Thomas, Gordon (Sharky) Kennedy and Scott (Dinger) Bell*



*Inter Branch Games Day Winners - Jimmy Killorn, Ray Lawson, Frankie Clark, Alfie Docherty, Stefan Wojnarowicz and Colin Gray*



*Aberfeldy Monument - Colin Gray, Arthur Clarke, Bill Meachan, Brian Kelly, Joe Barton, John Graham, Jimmy Edward and Willie Barr*

### **EDINBURGH, LOTHIAN'S AND BORDERS' BRANCH**

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

Many congratulations to Mr Philip Horwood who was awarded the MBE in recognition of his service to the Scottish Parliament as the Security Projects Manager.

Attendance at the annual Edinburgh Garden of Remembrance Service in Princes Street Gardens was restricted to one representative from each regiment. On 26 October 2020, Lieutenant Colonel David Orr-Ewing laid a wreath on behalf of The Black Watch Association.



*Lt Col David Orr-Ewing laying a wreath at Princes Street Gardens*

On Sunday 08 November 2020 our branch president Lieutenant Colonel Julian McElhinney laid a wreath at The Black Watch Monument on The Mound Edinburgh. The inscription on the monument reads: To the memory of Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and the Men of The Black Watch Who Fell in the South African War 1899-1902.

On Sunday 08 November 2020 Captain Bob Henry laid a wreath at the Sottish Korean War Memorial in Bathgate. Branch member Mr Hugh Beattie regularly visits the memorial site to ensure that The Black Watch memorial bench and surrounding area is kept in good order. This dedication and commitment are appreciated by both the local community and by relatives of those who were killed in action during the Korean War.



*The Black Watch Memorial Bench at the Scottish Korean War Memorial Bathgate*

After many months of Lockdown and meetings via Zoom, Branch members gathered at the Scots Guards Club Haymarket on 16 June 2020. The gathering was well supported and the short briefing delivered by Major John Monteith, Regimental Secretary, was well received.

The Branch is very much looking forward to returning to some form of normality in relation to social events. Confirmed dates for the Red Hackle Night and the Al Basrah lunch will be published in the Association Forecast of Events. Anyone wishing to join the Branch (Serving or Retired) is more than welcome to do so and should make contact through a branch member or by posting a request to join on the branch social media web page.

### **FIFE BRANCH**

Chairman/Secretary: Mr R M Scott JP

I am sorry to say, there has been little or nothing to report from the Branch due to the restrictions of Covid 19. Events such as the Rhine Crossing Dinner and the Ladies Alma lunch have not been celebrated because of said restrictions, but we are hoping events will get back to normal soon. We were lucky to meet, although with limited numbers, to hear Major John's presentation on the Proposed Unification of the Trusts, which I am happy to say was met with a positive response.

The dreaded Covid also meant that we could not as a Branch say our farewells to those taken home in our normal manner, but even with reduced numbers we still gave them as good a send-off as was allowed. Some of the Branch travelled to Perth and the Reunion, again restricted in movement but at least it was good to see friends were still around and at a distance give our greetings. The future looks brighter though as we have the Aberfeldy Muster to look forward to and hopefully Branch events revival. One good part of the year was our Red Hackle Day Breakfast, we were lucky enough for it to fall in the less restricted gaps of Lockdown. The Breakfast was as always well attended and as is the norm our Gun Fire was supplied by David Thompson, thank you again David. I am, as the Branch is also, looking to a revived return to the norm and wish all a safe few months until we meet again.

## LONDON BRANCH

President	Major General AL Watson CB
Chairman	Major AAL Watson LVO
Vice Chairman	Lieutenant Colonel TA Coles MBE
Secretary	Lieutenant Colonel M Smith MBE

In 2020, due to the pandemic there could be no Association representative at the Field of Remembrance to be introduced to the Royal family. Nevertheless, the task of laying the wreath in a true regimental fashion was done by Arthur Barty, who served in the 1st Battalion. Arthur has taken on this annual task from the late Joe Hubble. We also look after and lay the wreath on the Tyneside Scottish plot.



*Arthur Barty by the Black Watch Plot*



*The Fallen*

In the past year the Branch has been unable to hold an event, apart from remembering St Valery. We have been able to make use of the Zoom Gatherings run by the Regimental Secretary, and we have used Zoom three times to develop our understanding of the Unification of the Association and Museum Trusts, at which the Chairman and Regimental Secretary have been online.

The Branch is widely dispersed and so has a different character to those in Perthshire, Fife and Angus. The dispersion of our members may mean we make more use of Zoom in the future.

Looking forward, we hope, Covid-19 permitting, to participate in Remembrance services and to holding our Branch Dinner on the 18th of November. We expect to hold a full programme of events in 2022.

## PERTH BRANCH

President:	Major (Retd) Tim Carmichael
Chairman:	Captain Alan McEwen MBE
Secretary:	Mr Pat McLinden
Treasurer:	Mrs Frances Sandilands
Accounts Auditor:	Major (Retd) Colin Wilson

Over the course of this year the Branch has welcomed several new members but sadly has recorded the deaths of stalwart members Alan McKinnell, Jim Turpie, Eddie Glover, Alec Cameron and Bob Shivas, following which Branch members formed a Guard of Honour at each funeral. COVID-19 throughout this period necessitated the Branch holding virtual monthly meetings and the AGM using Zoom which worked extremely well and provided a valuable forum to better understand specific health and welfare issues of our members. Grateful thanks to Heather Edment for facilitating these meetings. Although COVID-19 restrictions throughout Perth and Kinross had a

significant impact on all Remembrance Services, Branch members were delighted to have the opportunity to lay a Poppy Wreath at the Polish War Cemetery, Perth Cathedral, St Ninian's, St John's Kirk, Scone War Memorial and Lochore War Memorial.



*Perth Branch members at the Queen Mother Gates form an Honour Guard for the passing of the funeral cortege of Jim Turpie on 2nd December 2020. Colin Innes, Kenny Forbes, Neil Hobson, Roddy Riddell, Jack Herschell, Sandy MacDuff (Standard Bearer), Greg McGillivray, Roy Brown, Kevin Murphy, George McDonald, Fraser Brown, Bob Shivas, Willie McLaren, Tim Carmichael, Ronnie McGregor and Jim Sandilands*



*Pat McLinden lays a Poppy Wreath at the War Memorial in Lochore, Fife. The names of two of Pat's Great Uncles are inscribed on the memorial, one Black Watch, the other Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Pat keeps their death pennies safe at his home*



*Left - Kenny Forbes lays a Poppy Wreath at the Perth Cathedral, St Ninian's*

Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Roddy Riddell OBE stood down as Branch Vice President following the AGM on Sunday 16th March 2021 after some twenty years as President and a further one year as Branch Vice President. Throughout this time Roddy was an absolute stalwart who demonstrated the utmost loyalty and although he will remain a member of the Branch, all members wish him a long and happy retirement from Branch management, committee duties and responsibilities.

Typical of Roddy's commitment to the welfare of others, he and Tim Carmichael completed a 10-mile walk 'March in March' in the hills south of the river Braan to raise over £4,000 from the generosity of others for Combat Stress.



*Major (Retd) Tim Carmichael and Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Roddy Riddell OBE ready for the 'March in March' off and wearing appropriate head dress*



*Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Roddy Riddell OBE allows his dogs the chance to cool down during their long 'March in March' walkies*

The official unveiling of the Armed Forces War Memorial in St John Street, Perth took place on Saturday 26th June and several Dundee and Perth Branch members were in attendance along with the Standards of these Branches.



*Dundee and Perth Branch members with Branch Standards at the official unveiling of the new Armed Forces War Memorial in Perth on Saturday 26th June 2021. Sandy MacDuff (Standard Bearer), Jimmy Colquhoun, Roy Brown, Alan Whyte, Willie McLaren, Tim Carmichael, Provost Dennis Melloy, Jock McBride, Sandy Clephane, Dave Thomson, Dougie Hutton, Jack Herschell, Ronnie McGregor, Colin Gray and Willie Barr (Standard Bearer)*

Branch members look forward to the comradeship events listed in the Forecast of Events.

### OPERATION VENTOUX HUFF'N PUFF

Ventoux Huff'n Puff was developed from a cycle ride involving Charlie Bushby, Mark Ewing and myself - Jamie Ritchie in 2016. On that ride we hatched a plot to drag along two other friends who had served with us in Ballykinler, Tern Hill and Hong Kong into a follow up. It was to be a gathering of friends and an extended bike ride set in Provence in Southern France.

The objective was relatively simple: to cycle from, La Plaine, Jamie Ritchie's home in Grasse, to Sault in the Vaucluse, and then make an ascent on Mont Ventoux, the 'windy mountain' via the classic Bedoin route. The mountain is a classic Tour de France climb and is famous for the steep ascent.

Although the plan was hatched in 2019, Covid 19 got in the way. Frontiers were closed, training was curtailed, some caught the disease and after three failed attempts it looked as if it might never happen. And then suddenly, in the summer of this year, the borders opened and there was no longer an excuse. Ventoux Huff'n Puff was going to happen or be consigned to the wastepaper basket, regardless of the relative levels of fitness in the team. And so it was, that on Wednesday 8th September, the team assembled at La Plaine to start the journey.

The team were six 'veteran' cyclists in their mid-50's Charlie Bushby, Mark Ewing, David Gardner, Jamie Ritchie, Robert Scott Dempster and Colin Wallace. They were ably supported by Mark's son, Archie Ewing, who was responsible for transport, provisioning, technical support and defibrillation.

The route had been kept fairly secret before the expedition started, as there was no time for a detailed recce. Ultimately it involved two and a half days of cycling. The first day was through the uplands of the Cote D'Azur via the Gorge de Verdon to the picturesque village of Moustiers nestled in the Haute Provence. The journey was tough at the outset as the team climbed away from the glittering Mediterranean into the barren and empty interior. Thankfully temperatures were kind at around 25 degrees, and after 138 Kilometers and 2350m of climbing the team arrived in Moustiers for a very well-deserved beer.

The second day was planned to be shorter at 110km and hopefully less than 2000m of climbing. The team passed through hilly, barren and rugged rural Provence for the first part of the morning, and then descended into lavender fields, which were sadly past their summer best. Day 2 saw brushes with, tractors, drones and the local fauna, sanglier (wild boar) and donkeys, all of which interrupted an otherwise smooth progression to Sault. Ewing, with the aid of his various apps, mobile phones and a Garmin became the navigator, finding the most efficient route across indifferent roads and broken country. Bushby won the name of the 'Tractor of Provence' for his seemingly tireless stretches at the front of the peloton. And so it was that at the end of second day the team arrived, still in one piece, at the Hotel Albion in Sault, at the base of Mont Ventoux.

Mont Ventoux stands alone to the north of the Luberon range, just

to the east of the Dentelles de Montmirail. The top of the mountain is bare limestone without vegetation or trees, which makes the barren peak appear, from a distance, to be snow-capped all year round (its snow cover actually only lasts from December to April). Due to its isolation, it overlooks the length of the southern Rhone valley and dominates the whole of Vaucluse. It can be seen from fifty kilometers away on a clear day.

At 1,909 m (6,263 ft), it is the highest mountain in the region and has been nicknamed the “Beast of Provence”, the “Giant of Provence”, or “The Bald Mountain”. It gets windy at the summit, especially when the Mistral wind blow at speeds of up to 200 mph. Cycling up it is a daunting prospect on an ordinary day, but after two days of hard riding there was a general sense of anticipation and slight dread.

Unfortunately, Day 3 didn’t start with a straight forward climb. The Sault climb of Ventoux is long and pleasant ride with a gentle gradient that winds slowly up the main ridge culminating with a challenging last six kilometers. After some debate it was agreed that such a gentle ascent was not really Black Watch, so the team set off to cover the 23 kilometers and 400m of climbing that takes one to the bottom of the Bedoin climb.

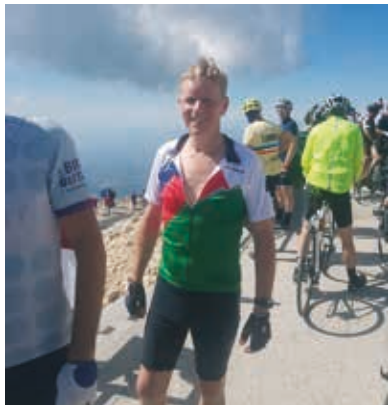
We descended into Bedoin at around ten o’clock. Most were unaware of what was to follow. Climbing Ventoux by the Bedoin climb is only 21.5km. But it is 1,612 meters of ascent, with an average gradient of 7.5%. Compare this to the famous Alps D’Huez climb at 14km and 1120m and one begins to understand why Ventoux has become so infamous. The first five kilometers are relatively gentle, about 3-4% and passing through fields and well-kept vineyards. It doesn’t prepare the

amateur for what is to follow. Suddenly, after 5 km it all goes horribly wrong. Just as the fields are beginning to feel a little too warm in the Provencal sun, you turn into the shade of the pine trees at the foot of the climb. The relief is short lived as the gradient jumps to 10% and remains that way for the next 10km. As the gradient kicks in, you shift to the easier gears and the breathing drifts between aerobic (good) and anaerobic (very bad). Within minutes the fatigue of a third day in the saddle reveals itself and the body deploys its reserves. And after that there is nothing coming to the rescue.

Suddenly the peloton was split for the first time in three days, The cyclist has to find his own pace on climbs like these. Charlie Bushby was in the front and a very bedraggled Ritchie brought up the rear. Charlie just dropped down a gear and ground his way up the mountain with a remarkable performance reaching the Ventoux peak in under two hours. The rest of the team joined him in the twenty minutes that followed. Grueling, seemingly endless, no mountain for old men, but eventually the whole team made the summit on a clear morning on Saturday the 11th September. It was a substantial team effort.

The descent was uneventful other than brushes with the local fauna (bees and sheep this time), until we reached to base of the hill just outside the village of Sault. There, resting on the bonnet of his car and grinning was Captain Piers Bishop of the Black Watch, fresh from the Matterhorn. There was much laughter, and Bishop joined the team for the evening’s celebrations.

So, it can be done. A group of old Black Watch friends, two and a half days, 320km and around 6000m of ascent and home for a well-deserved dinner. Where next?



*Charlie Bushby at the top of Mt Ventoux*



*Captains Bushby, Gardner, Ritchie, Wallace and Ewing*



*What’s the problem!*



*Left to right - Captains Bushby, Scott Dempster, Gardner, Wallace, Ewing, and Ritchie*