

No. 204

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December 2023

THE RED HACKLE

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



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The Red Hackle is published annually in December. Contributions large and small will always welcome. They should be submitted to the Editor via projects@theblackwatch.co.uk. Photographs, cartoons and sketches of regimental interests are also welcome; hard copy items must reach the editor material for inclusion must reach the editor not later than 1 October.

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Editorial

This year's Red Hackle magazine is breaking new ground in that it is now encompassing the Departments around and supporting the Association. The branches, autonomous and as described in their notes, exemplify the membership organisation that we, the Association, are within The Black Watch Regimental Trust. Elsewhere in the magazine, articles describe the journeys that people associated with the regiment have had, literal or otherwise. Literally, there is Geordie Fergusson's account of his travelling through Myanmar, Burma, in the steps of his father; ever a volatile country, Tigyaing was seen ablaze recently in The Times after a junta attack. A metaphorical journey, of the life, death and restoration of Private Peter Black in World War One by Leanne and Ewen Ward, portraying three very different eras, displays the strength of investigation.

At Balhousie, as part of 'Friends of The Black Watch' animation of the regiment's history, a series of lectures has described the different periods of involvement by the British Army in the Korean War. It culminated in a presentation by Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin, son of then Major Irwin, covering the life, logistics, planning and the fighting by 1 BW on The Hook in 1953. Andrew Glassford's, a Korean veteran, visit to Balhousie in April this year was the first of several by members of this cohort; the most recent has been by Bill Hall to attend General Alistair's lecture.

Active participation by Association members is being encouraged in a host of varied approaches in the magazine. Colin Gray has constituted the Association Hill Walking Club; Fraser Brown has initiated the History Club; in between are many activities - the golf and curling, the Reunion and lunches or dinners, all of which also have as their core strength the comradeship on which all generations and all abilities can thrive. In the correspondence received by the Editor are reflections on and links to this common bond we all have, no matter our personal experiences.

The Trust having come into reality and contributing now to our various rhythms and activities, our Chairman and the Association Chairman both reflect on the very positive contribution made by our now departed Chief Executive, Anne Kinnes and her legacy. We wish her well in her active retirement.

The activities and deployment of 3 SCOTS and 7 SCOTS reflect very much what has been in our news throughout the year. Through the media we have been aware of British Army involvement in training support, for example, to the Ukrainian Army. However, the extent of other training commitments overseas reflects the busy life of a Regular or a Reservist in 2023. The Association and all those at Balhousie have been grateful to Lieutenant Colonel Matty Hayton, Commanding Officer The Black Watch 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland for, not only his support to and participation in activities here in Perth and at Aberfeldy, but for his active commitment to enabling and strengthening the golden thread between those who were wearers of the red hackle and those who still are, to flourish and have significance. We look forward to working with his successor, Lieutenant Colonel Rob Smith, and in the meantime wish all those on operations, or near operations, God's speed.

The Black Watch Regimental Trust

Chairman's Introduction

At the time of writing, The Regimental Trust has completed just eighteen months in its new format and much has happened in that time.

One of the principal reasons for the formation of the new Trust was to achieve a 'Unity of Purpose' for all the elements that make up the responsibilities and assets of The Black Watch. In order to develop this unity of purpose, the Board appointed a Working Group of trustees to produce a four year Strategic Plan. The Plan was to develop clear, measurable objectives that would result in the setting of priorities and subsequent allocation of resources. The plan would then be communicated to all staff so they could deliver it as they went about their daily work.

The Working Group was chaired by Major Alastair Watson, Vice Chairman of the Trust and also Chairman of The Black Watch Association. A trustee was nominated to work with each head of department to consult at all levels and to produce objectives and priorities for the department. This involved a thorough review with all members of staff of current activities and assets, together with aspiration for future developments and activities. All these elements were then coordinated by the Working Group into a final plan.

The Strategic Plan was completed and adopted by the Trustees at its third meeting in October 2022. It was then explained to all members of the staff. Performance against the Plan is monitored regularly by the Board at its quarterly meetings.

Welfare and Comradeship remain the first and second charitable objects of the Trust. The Association Chairman and Regimental Secretary, together with Major Ronnie Proctor and Major Colin Gray as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Welfare Committee respectively, have done much to improve processes within the Association, concentrating particularly on the way that welfare is administered. Some excellent comradeship events have been organised, including the Reunion which was run this year in a new way by a committee led by Colonel Jock Menzies and with excellent support from the Bistro team. Members of the Regiment, staff and volunteers are all strongly encouraged to use the facilities at Balhousie for their events and, as would be expected at the Regiment's home, no charges are made for room hire or corkage for drink brought to events. The Association's Perth Branch plans to hold its Croix de Guerre Dinner at Balhousie this year for the first time.

Work to organise the museum's records into digital catalogues continues through the efforts of grant funded project archivists. This project has been given a significant boost by a very generous donation from a former member of the Regiment to help fund a post over the next five years. At the time of writing, further donations are still required to complete the funding. A review of the collection is underway to identify gaps and duplicates and any offers of donations of artefacts and archive material, particularly for the more recent periods of the Regiment's history up to 2006, would be gratefully received.

The commercial activities at Balhousie continue to be the financial engine that helps fund the other activities of the Trust as well as the maintenance of the Castle itself. It has been a very busy year with a pleasing increase in the number of visitors to Balhousie, stimulated significantly by the presence of 'The Hauntings' in the courtyard. Its presence has drawn much favourable comment and has been the focus of special events and lectures relating to the themes of art, conflict and remembrance. Despite the difficult economic climate, museum visitor numbers and business in the Bistro and shop have all held up well.

At the time of writing, the accounts for the first year have yet to be finalised but it is clear that the value of our investments fell significantly between April 2022 and April 2023 with a recorded loss of over 9%. While very disappointing, this has not affected the day to day business of the Trust and its business activities continue to make a significant positive contribution to its finances.

The Regiment owes a great deal to the dedication and hard work of so many people and our thanks must go to our Chief Executive, Anne Kinnes, and to our staff, volunteers and friends. They contribute so much to ensure that we can continue to provide the support to those in need and to maintain a fitting tribute to the Regiment and the many thousands who served in it.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Major (Retired) David Noble
Major (Retired) Alastair Watson
Chair Association Committee
Stephen Carter Esq

Major (Retired) Colin Gray
Graham Halstead Esq

The Earl of Kinnoull
Colonel Jules McElhinney
Mrs Elizabeth Roads

Brigadier Ben Wrench

Chairman, Appointed Trustee
Vice Chairman, Elected Trustee,

Appointed Trustee,
Chair Balhousie Castle
Committee
Elected Trustee
Appointed Trustee, Chair Finance
& Investment Committee
Appointed Trustee
Elected Trustee
Appointed Trustee,
Chair Museum
& Archive Committee
Appointed Trustee

SENIOR EXECUTIVES

Mrs Anne Kinnes
Douglas Walker

Major (Retired) Tim Carmichael
Linda Campbell

Fiona Connah
Lorna Tunstall
Debbie Owen
Post vacant

Chief Executive Officer
Chief Executive Officer
(des) (4 Dec 23)
Regimental Secretary
Financial Controller,
Company Secretary
Curator
Retail Manager
Bistro Manager
Head Chef



Anne McKinnis
retiring CEO



Douglas Walker
CEO BWRT

Douglas has spent his career within the Scottish Tourism, Hospitality and Charity sectors. He joined Dynamic Earth (an Educational Charitable Trust) in 1999 as Operations Manager and was promoted to Commercial and HR Director in 2003. Douglas Project Managed several gallery updates totaling over £4m worth of developments for Dynamic Earth. Douglas was also instrumental in re-establishing Fundraising within Dynamic Earth which helped fund many of the gallery developments.

Douglas has experience of the Tourism Sector at an industry level through serving as a Board Member and Chair of the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions (ASVA) and as Chair of Unique Venues of Edinburgh (an events marketing consortium). He has also worked with VisitScotland as a member of the Quality Assurance industry development group as well as a member of the Growth Fund panel. Douglas served as the Interim CEO and Deputy CEO with Dynamic Earth before taking up his position as CEO of The Black Watch Regimental Trust in December 2023.

Douglas commented:

'I am delighted to be joining The Black Watch Regimental Trust at such an exciting stage of its development and I am very much looking forward to help furthering the charity's key objectives of: Providing Welfare, Promoting Comradeship and Preserving Heritage.'

'I have received a very warm welcome from everyone associated with the Trust and their commitment and dedication are clear to see. I look forward to meeting more of you over the coming weeks and months.'

The Association

Royal Patron	His Majesty The King
President	Mr Stephen Leckie BA, Lord-Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross
Vice Presidents	Councillor Bill Campbell, Lord-Lieutenant of the City of Dundee Mrs Pat Sawers, Lord-Lieutenant of Angus Mr Robert Balfour FRICS, Lord-Lieutenant of Fife
Association Committee	
Chairman	Major (Retired) A A L Watson LVO
Member	Major (Retired) R J W Proctor MBE
Member	Major (Retired) C Gray
Member	Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) JA Menzies
Member	Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) M Smith MBE
Member	Colonel JR McElhinney
Member	Mr Gordon Kennedy
Member	Mr R Scott
Member	Mr P Tindal
Regimental Secretary	Major (Retired) T J O Carmichael
Welfare Committee:	Major (Retired) R J W Proctor MBE - Chairman Major (Retired) C Gray - Deputy Chairman Major (Retired) B Dickson Captain (Retired) A McEwen MBE Mr W Barr Mr J Devlin Mr R M Scott JP Mr W D Whytock Mrs M O'Brien

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Black Watch Regimental Trust has now been in operation for over 18 months. And a busy time it has been, with your Committee working hard to consolidate the new structure going forward, with much discussion and forward steps in the three key areas of Welfare, Comradeship and Memorials. I am very grateful for all the work that the Committee, ably supported by the Regimental Secretary Major Tim Carmichael, has achieved. The Association is thriving as a result of considerable hard work in the branches as well as in Balhousie Castle.

You will have noted the new layout of the Red Hackle, which reflects the structure of the new Regimental Trust. The Regimental Secretary will welcome comments and recommendations for the magazine in 2024, and thereafter.

In terms of the key areas of welfare, comradeship and memorials, we have made notable progress.

The Welfare Committee has moved forward on every request as swiftly as possible and have done an excellent job in the last 18 months. Its terms of reference have evolved since being written in the 1960s and will have been rewritten and will be agreed by the end of 2024, broadly to make sure that we are completely in line with charity law.

It is important that anyone who needs support makes the Welfare Committee aware, and they can then initiate the process to work out the best way forward for that individual. Branch members have a key role. If members of branches identify someone they think is in need of support, they should pass on the information to the Welfare Committee, who will take action. The main objective of the Association is the welfare of members of the Regiment and we must all support fellow members of the Regiment in need.

In terms of comradeship, the branches are in good heart. But it would be good to have more participating members, and steps are being taken. Each branch has a full programme of events, and I congratulate branches on their efforts and delivery.

The past 18 months has brought to light the potential disconnect between the Association and those who served in both the Iraq and

Afghanistan campaigns. It is understandable that those who have served in these campaigns feel close links to those who were with them through those very difficult and challenging times. In many cases the Association is not seen as the common factor for bringing together those who served in the Regiment during those periods.

We are seeking solutions to support this cohort in their comradeship and we are in the process of setting up campaign branches, which we see as an interim measure. The Association has funded two events to date for this group, and they have been well attended and well received. One of the outcomes has been the identification of a number of potential welfare cases, which is exactly where the Association can help, and we are working to do so.

The next Reunion at Balhousie (on 22 June 2024) will be preceded by a Commemoration in Perth aimed at acknowledging and supporting those who fought in Iraq, and those who were killed or seriously injured in that campaign. 2024 is the 20th anniversary of the last year that 1 BW was in Iraq and the last time it was on operations, which we think must be recognised. So, there is to be a commemorative church service in St John's Perth at which a plaque commemorating all those who served in Iraq will be dedicated. Following the service, The Provost of Perth will hold a reception, after which the Iraq contingent will march (we hope and anticipate) behind 3 SCOTS P&D, with a marching detachment of 3 SCOTS also taking part, exercising our Freedom of the City. to Balhousie Castle to join the other members of the Association. More details will be published by the Regimental Secretary in due course. For those who were involved in the campaign in Iraq and want to be involved, it would be helpful if you could get in touch with Balhousie to express your interest.

The biennial Aberfeldy Muster to commemorate the founding of the Regiment was held this year in September, with a good turn out and a contingent from the Black Watch Battalion, with the Pipe Major, which marched from Fort George to Aberfeldy raising money for charity. The Muster was followed by an excellent lunch in the Moness Resort Hotel.

An Association initiative is meaning that members from Scotland will be able to take part in the National Memorial at the Cenotaph once, if they so wish. There is a limit on numbers for each year. Mike Smith, The London Branch Secretary, has organised the first group coming down from Scotland, this November. Once we have had feedback from this first group on how it has worked, we will move the process forward for 2024. If anyone is interested in being involved in this initiative in 2024, they should contact the Regimental Secretary.

The Association Hill Walking Club will be launched in April 2024 thanks to the dynamism and drive of Colin Gray; there are more details within the magazine. The nascent Cycling Club is expected to get traction in 2024 as well; again, anyone interested should contact the Association office.

The Garden Team is doing an excellent job in maintaining and improving the gardens at Balhousie Castle. There has been a real transformation in how the gardens look, and their enthusiasm is infectious. Aspects of planting,

We are also starting to embark on adding history into the Association offering. There are details elsewhere in the magazine, but in 2024 there will be a number of visits locally, including transport followed by a pie and a pint, for interested members. Additionally, there is a plan to have four evening zoom meetings in 2024, with a presentation on a subject on a Black Watch topic, followed by questions. Lasting no more than an hour in total, this will enable all members of the Association, however far they live from Perth, to be involved.

Looking further forward, for June 2025, there is an initiative to visit St Valéry, at the invitation of M le Maire. In conjunction with a hosting committee, the regimental associations of what was the 51st Division are producing a combined effort, which we intend will result in a three-day event, including a battlefield tour. More details are elsewhere in the magazine.

In terms of memorials, you will find elsewhere in the magazine proposals for new memorials in Dundee and in the National Memorial Arboretum. The Trust policy is to support these efforts, once approved on a case by case basis by the Association Committee, but not to provide the funding. So, part of the process will be fundraising within the Association and across the Trust and also with other bodies. Part of the challenge will be to raise this funding to build the memorials and to have enough funds to keep the memorials in good repair going forward.

In addition, as you will find in their notes, the Dundee Branch organised for a blue plaque to be unveiled in Epsom, Surrey, to commemorate that Joe Lee, a Dundonian who served in The Black Watch during World War 1 and was a well-respected poet between the wars, had lived there. These plaques are a good way to keep the Regiment and particular members of it in the public eye. However, in considering the relevant criteria, the public bodies that are responsible for erecting them may tend to focus on other attributes rather than soldiering, as the preparation for the recently unveiled plaque showed. Any suggestions, therefore, of suitable members of the Regiment with arts, cultural, scientific, humanitarian or sporting attributes no matter their rank will be very welcome.

The Dundee Branch, again, have been repairing the Powrie Brae statue, which is in need of urgent repair, and also have been working on the maintenance of the Wavell Gate at Balhousie. Their efforts are making a significant contribution to key memorials.

Over in Aberfeldy, the Highlander statue also appears to be in need of repair and renovation. The Council has been engaged and action will follow.

On the wider subject of memorials, branches have kindly agreed to take responsibility to do a survey of all memorials in their area during 2024. This will result in us having an up to date, comprehensive list of monuments and their state of repair. Following that, steps can then be taken with Councils to ensure that maintenance and repairs are carried out, in 2025. Thereafter, every 3 years, the Association will coordinate with the branches to conduct a follow-up survey. Going forward, we expect that we will need to have a memorial maintenance fund, for those memorials which Councils will not repair.

The area which we are conscious needs significant improvement within the Association is communication. There are many events and activities which members are not aware of, and might be interested in being involved, as well as other information and news. There is a newly appointed Marketing Manager in Balhousie, and by the middle of 2024 we anticipate we will have a communications plan which will meet the needs of the Association and its members.

The first 18 months of the new Trust and the bringing together of the Association and the Museum under one umbrella has been a success, under the chairmanship of Major David Noble. All parties have learned from each other and have worked hard to develop the ethos and understanding to support The Black Watch in all its facets, particularly in engaging with Association members.

The retiring Chief Executive, Anne Kinnes, has played a key part in building this relationship, and I would like to thank her and wish her and her husband well on the next stage of their life, in Yorkshire.

MEMORIAL TO MAJOR GENERAL AL WATSON CB ROYAL HOSPITAL, CHELSEA

Following General Andy Watson's death in July 2022, the family were very keen that his appointment as Lieutenant Governor of the Royal Hospital for nine years (1983-1992) should be recognised.

After some discussion it was agreed that a memorial plaque could be erected in the Colonnade at the Royal Hospital (at our own expense) and, following a further discussion, it was also agreed that the memorial should include mention of Ginty Watson, his wife of over 70 years. A first for the memorials in the Royal Hospital; and, we

think, a proper recognition of her unstinting support and devotion during a long military career, which made considerable demands of her (as indeed it does of all Army wives).

On Thursday 2nd November, a short family ceremony was held to unveil the memorial, at The Royal Hospital. The Governor, General Sir Adrian Bradshaw, and his wife Sally, kindly attended and the two Black Watch In-Pensioners took part, in uniform: John Nicoll, who was a member of the military band, and Peter Fullelove, who served in Korea.

We think that this memorial plaque is a great tribute both to my father and mother, and I think they would be very pleased to be so recognised.

A A L Watson



General Andy Watson's Plaque at Royal Hospital Chelsea

CONGRATULATIONS

The Association is very pleased to pass on the news that Brigadier R R E Lindsay CBE was appointed Military Secretary and General Officer Scotland in the rank of Major General and took over the post from October 2023. Brigadier Robin was formerly Director Army Division, Joint Services Command and Staff College, Defence Academy.

Lieutenant Colonel Alastair Colville and The King's Prize

The King's Prize is the most prestigious prize, shot for each year, of the King's Bodyguard for Scotland, Royal Company of Archers. The prize is a piece of silver and is presented to the winner by His Majesty The King before the Garden Party at The Palace of Holyroodhouse during Royal Week. 2023 was the first year in 72 years that it had been thus designated, having of course been The Queen's Prize during the reign of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Lieutenant Colonel Alastair Colville won this year's prize with 21 Archers shooting.

By gracious permission of His Majesty The King, the prize is shot for in May in the grounds of the Palace of Holyroodhouse. The competition consists of shooting ten “Ends” where every Archer shoots two arrows at a target, or “Clout” at a distance of 180 yards. The best arrow of all shot closest to the Clout’s centre wins the End and scores 1 point, should you hit the Clout it scores 2 points Alastair won convincingly by scoring a total of 5 points, winning 3 out of the 10 ends outright, two of them by scoring a Clout. His version of “direct fire” being something to behold, straight and true with a reassuring thud on impact. Although Alastair was typically modest about his victory it is poignant to record his victory in the first year of our Royal Patron, His Majesty The King’s reign.

Permission granted by Charlie Wallace at Archers’ Hall for inclusion in the Red Hackle.

James de Broë-Ferguson Chartered FCSI



Alastair Colville recipient of the King’s Prize 2023

FORECAST OF EVENTS 2024

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
5 January	Fife Branch Red Hackle Day Breakfast	Fife
13 January	Edinburgh, Lothians’ and Borders’ Branch Red Hackle Night	BMC Club Gorgie, Edinburgh
26 January	Regimental Trust Board Meeting	Balhousie Castle
27 January	Angus Branch Burns Supper	RBL Forfar
2 February	Dundee Branch Red Hackle Dinner	Black Watch Club, Dundee
3 February	Perth Branch Burns Supper	Salutation Hotel
15 February	Curling Match v The Lowlanders	Perth

24 February	Dundee Branch Annual General Meeting	Dundee
7 March	Curling Match v Highlanders	Perth
22 March	Association Committee Meeting In Person	Balhousie Castle
22 March	Fife Branch Rhine Crossing Dinner	Kirkcaldy
22 March	Highland and Lowland Brigades Curling Club Bonspiel	Perth
1 April	Angus Branch Annual General Meeting	RBL Forfar
20 April	Association Annual General Meeting	Balhousie Castle
20 April	Warrant Officers’ and Sergeants Dining Club Dinner	Salutation Hotel, Perth
26 April	Regimental Trust Board Meeting	Balhousie Castle
27 April	Edinburgh, Lothians’ and Borders’ Branch Al Basrah Lunch	Apex Hotel Edinburgh
8 May	London Branch Annual General Meeting	National Army Museum
TBC May	Not Forgotten Garden Association Garden Party	London
6 June	Royal Hospital Chelsea Founders Day	Chelsea
17 June	Officers’ and Ladies’ Lunch	Cavalry & Guards Club, London
21 June	Black Watch Regimental Golf	Balbirnie
21 June	Association Committee Meeting In person	Balhousie Castle
22 June	Commemoration and Regimental Reunion	Balhousie Castle
27 June	Ladies Lunch	Balhousie Castle
26 July	Regimental Trust Board Meeting	Balhousie Castle
3 August	Inter Branch Games Day	Black Watch Club, Dundee
15 Sept.	Fife Branch Alma Ladies Lunch	Kirkcaldy
20 Sept.	Association Committee Meeting By Zoom	Balhousie Castle
22 Sept.	Angus Branch Standard Rededication	TBC
6 October	Dundee Branch Battle of Loos Commemoration Church Service	Congregational Church, Dundee
12 October	Perth Branch Croix de Guerre Dinner	Balhousie Castle
25 October	Officers’ Gathering Dinner	Balhousie Castle
26 October	Angus Branch El Alamein Dinner	RBL Forfar
2 November	Dundee Branch Laying of Crosses	City Churches Dundee
7 November	Dundee Branch Remembrance Service	Caird Park, Dundee
7 November	Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey, London
8 November	Balhousie Castle Remembrance Service	Balhousie Castle
10 Nov.	National Service of Remembrance	The Cenotaph, London

10 Nov.	Dundee Branch Remembrance Service	Powrie Brae, Dundee
11 Nov.	Dundee Branch Remembrance Service	City Square, Dundee
16 Nov.	Warrant Officers' and Sergeants Dining Club Dinner	Salutation Hotel, Perth
22 Nov.	London Branch Dinner	Victory Services Club
13 Dec.	Association Committee Meeting By Zoom	Balhousie Castle

THE REUNION

Using the full resources of Balhousie Castle the Association's annual Reunion took place in June. Having canvassed opinion on what was wanted and considered how best to approach the organisation of the day, Jock Menzies was able to hand over planning for the event, confident that it would be appropriate and well resourced; it was. The Reunion went ahead as planned, focussed during the afternoon at Balhousie Castle, and was enjoyed by all who attended. The bar and food arrangements were all carried out by the bistro staff assisted from others across the Castle and it proved to be a popular and well attended event. The previous evening there had been entertainment provided by a combination of Messrs Menzies and Alcorn, as well as there having been various dinners in and around Perth.

However, the blues of the previous evening having been blown away, the marchers gathering at Rose Terrace had time to do what it was all about, to reminisce and to remember.



Discussing those duties in Werl, or shoe shine, possibly

Due to concurrent competition commitments no adult pipe band was available on the day, so in stepped the ACF Pipe Band under the leadership of Conner Pratt.



PM Conner Pratt leading the way

We were very well served by the band's professionalism both as a marching band from the step off at Rose Terrace under the subtle direction of WO1 Davey Stacey, who was in very good voice, and also during their set piece performance for the admiring benefit of all at Balhousie.



WO1 Davey Stacey in good voice with Brian Walker too



The marchers; what a fine selection of red hackles and none on the day

Advertised to start at 2pm, there were a number who arrived in time for a hearty breakfast at the Castle and stayed throughout to the end of the afternoon. Behind the scenes Debbie Owen of the Bistro and her team mustered and prepared the welcome. As the marching contingent arrived all was ready to swing into action. Brigadier Garry Barnett, as senior officer present, took the salute and declared the Reunion open.



Got there despite a broken ankle



Norma Gilfillan and Willy Graham

The excellent thing about the march was that, regardless of what people were wearing, they joined in. We had National Servicemen from the 1960s to those who had served in Iraq, and everyone in between. There were noticeable first time for a long time marchers, too.



Unified by the red hackle

Marching along, the Perth police ensured we were neither a hazard to others nor in danger, as we followed the time worn route to the Castle.



Evidence that Perth Branch was there



and Dundee too



Bill Davidson and the Regimental Secretary



what it is all about

The afternoon drawing to a close, the fit and able repaired to the Ex-Service Club where the singing and entertainment continued. It was tremendous to see those who had been able to get there and thank indeed to all who had played a part in organising and running it.

Next year – depending on when this magazine is published, which is to say 2024, on 22 June, the Association is holding a Commemoration in the morning for the 20th anniversary of the final operational deployments of 1 BW and this will be followed in the afternoon by the Reunion. Much more detail will appear elsewhere and through email and on social media.

Photos taken by George Wood

ABERFELDY MUSTER 2023

On a Sunday at the end of September 2023, on which the rain was threatening to join us, we mustered in Aberfeldy beneath the statue for our biennial Aberfeldy Muster. Branches and individuals had organised to attend the morning commemoration which was well attended. We were joined by a marching contingent from Fort George of men from 3 SCOTS who, under WO2 (CSM) Arnold, had completed the route march to Aberfeldy, averaging 20 miles a day, to join us in time for the muster. En route they raised just over £10,000 for the Samaritans on Exercise Taberfeldy.

Deputy Lord-Lieutenant Charlie Gallagher stood in for the Association President, Stephen Leckie, accompanied by his wife, Jane, and to whom we were very grateful to have that representation.



Charlie Gallagher DL and George Eaton Fife Branch standard bearer

Equally, confirmation of the strong link between the Association and The Black Watch Battalion was emphasised by Lieutenant Colonel Matty Hayton's, Commanding Officer 3 SCOTS, participation throughout.



Lieutenant Colonel Hayton CO 3 SCOTS, David Noble, Rob Scott and Tom Thorpe Adj 3 SCOTS

The commemoration was led by the Association padre, Reverend John Allen, and both the Association Chairman, Alasdair Watson, and Regimental Secretary, Tim Carmichael, also addressed the muster. It was particularly good to see so many who made the journey with their wives and families, whether living locally or from much further afield in Scotland, or from England who had planned to attend while on holiday in Scotland.



Jock Torrie and "Jubilee" Jim Killorn



Willie McLaren, Willie Barr, Colin Gray and Sonny Kennedy

The commemoration over, it was quite a scene to see those who had served, former soldiers and their wives and families, chatting and mingling with the serving soldiers in combats down from Inverness.



Jim McCall



Jim Sandilands, Hugh Rose, Jim Colquhoun and Roy Brown 41

The essence of it was that all were unified by the red hackle, the common theme to everyone present whether wearing one or not. It was a strength to all looking for it, an example of the tangible golden thread spoken about in years passed and evident there and then as we stood next to the Tay.



Red Hackles old and new

Afterwards, the new venue at the Moness Complex at Aberfeldy proved to be very successful and was enjoyed by all those who attended. Members and their guests or families were grateful for the ample parking area, good food and first-class table service provided by the Moness.

Photos taken by George Wood

The Officers' Gathering

The 138th Gathering of The Black Watch Officers' Dining Club and guests met at Balhousie for their annual dinner on 23 September 2023. Our Royal Patron had graciously acknowledged our loyal gathering with a letter which was read out to all assembled. The Gathering was pleased to have amongst its guests Anne Kinnes, Chief Executive of The Black Watch Regimental Trust, and Lieutenant Colonel Matty Hayton, Commanding Officer The Black Watch 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland. Colonel Matty gave the assembly a tour des horizons on the activities of the Battalion over the past year and its expected forecast of deployment.

The Pipe Major, in addition to having chosen his Piobaireachd 'MacIntosh's Lament', recorded in his sets some of those who had died in the year, acknowledging in particular Colin Innes with his father's pipe tune Lieutenant Colonel B A Innes of Glentulchan, and Fred Beattie, whose tune had been written when still a major: Major Fred Beattie MBE.

The Black Watch

Regular Warrant Officers and Sergeants (Past & Present) Dining Club

By Lieutenant Colonel J A Menzies

The Black Watch Regular Warrant Officers and Sergeants (Past & Present) Dining Club was formed in the mid 1980's.

The aim is to maintain contact (comradeship) between retired and serving personnel who attained Sergeants Mess status during their service.

Membership is open to all past and present members of regular battalions of The Black Watch, who attained Sergeants Mess Status.

The current committee members are:

- President Major (Retired) J McNally MBE
- Chairman Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) JA Menzies
- Secretary Mr WD Whytock
- Treasurer Major (Retired) RJW Proctor MBE

The club gathers biannually in the Salutation Hotel Perth. The April event is held on the same day as the Regimental Association AGM and the autumn event is held on the third Saturday in November. The next three gatherings are as follows: 18 November 2023, 20 April 2024 and 16 November 2024.

Anyone wishing to join, should contact the club secretary Mr Billy Whytock via the staff at Balhousie Castle on 01738 623214 or approach a member for details. There are currently 90 members with service ranging from the 1940's to the present date. New members (Serving or Retired) of any age group are more than welcome to join.

We welcome the following new members since the last edition of the Red Hackle: Warrant Officer Class One (Regimental Sergeant Major) Allan Ferrier (The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland), Messrs James Adams, Robert Brown, Danny Donovan and John Penrice.

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

10th November 2023

The Black Watch Association held the 18th Memorial Service in the grounds of Balhousie Castle.

The service was introduced in 2006 initially to honour those who had lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan and later those who had lost their lives in Northern Ireland and Kosovo whose names are carved on the memorial cross and stones in the grounds of the Castle.

Their families are invited every year to the short Commemoration Service which is led by the Association Padre, currently the Revd John Duncan MBE, with a Bible Reading followed by the names of the fallen being read out by the Regimental Secretary and Association

Secretary respectively. The poem In Flanders Fields was read this year by Madeline Green from the Trust.

Branch Standards were on parade. Pipe Major Alastair Duthie was the piper and Stuart Malcolm was the bugler.

It is gratifying to see the parents and families of those who lost their lives attend year on year and also serving members of our succeeding battalion who travel all the way from Fort George. Association members from all branches and other invited guests also attend. On the completion of wreath laying and the end of the service, refreshments are served in the Queen Mother's room which enables all to mingle and catch up.

R J W Proctor

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE BALHOUSIE CASTLE 2023

Montage courtesy of Frank Proctor



Welfare

The Association was formed in 1919 to help Black Watch veterans and their families, since then support grants have been made. With the creation of The Black Watch Regimental Trust (BWRT) in 2022 the status of the Welfare Committee was formalised with funding authorised by the Trust and authority for its Terms of Reference being set by the Association Committee. The Welfare Committee has been in existence since the end of WW2 in some shape or form to assist Black Watch veterans, widows and dependants of Black Watch soldiers who require help. Its aim is to signpost Association members and their dependants to appropriate welfare support.

The current Welfare Committee consists of eight former members of both the Regular and Territorial Army/Reserve Battalions of the Regiment from across the regimental recruiting areas and the very experienced in welfare and local authority social services who is the wife of a Black Watch veteran.

Welfare Assistance

In addition to applying to Social Services under the Forces Covenant or contacting the Association Branch in their local area which can provide local advice and comradeship support (via 01738 638152 and asking for the Association office). Former members of the regiment who encounter health, socio - financial difficulties etc can apply for guidance on welfare assistance from the Association. This may take the form of a conversation with one of the members of the Committee who may give advice on the options available. Financial Assistance may be available from the Trust, via the Welfare Committee is as follows. In all cases, except the first, application forms can be obtained from The Black Watch Association office at Balhousie Castle or at assoc@theblackwatch.co.uk.

If it is emergency support that is needed within 24 hours consider contacting the Association by email: assoc@theblackwatch.co.uk or, seven days a week during working hours, on 01738 638152 and ask for the Association.

Welfare Grants

Someone who has been identified, who has served in The Black Watch may find that they are in need of financial or other assistance which can be provided by the Association. The stages to be followed are:

Get it assessed. The Association is not qualified to make financial assessment, the first step for someone seeking financial assistance is to contact their local branch of the Soldiers Sailors and Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA) on 0800 260 6767/6780 or visit their website at <https://www.ssafa.org.uk/contact-us> or the Royal British Legion Scotland (RBL) Welfare Team. Applicants should have their Army number and date of service to hand.

The organisation contacted will allocate a Case Worker who will visit the applicant, complete initial paperwork (a Case Management System (CMS) Form 2) and forward it to the Association and, if required, to the TRBL.

On it being received, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Welfare Committee evaluate the case and make a recommendation and if required seek almonisation (the process of sourcing and combining funds from different benevolent organisations such as the Army Benevolent Fund, The Royal Regiment of Scotland and/or any potential funders). Once almonisation is complete the Chairman approaches the Regimental Trust Financial Controller for payment to be made to SSAFA/TRBL. Funds are never paid directly to the applicant. Only one grant per calendar year will be made to any individual, except in exceptional circumstances.

Each grant is scrutinised by the whole Welfare Committee monthly (retrospectively) where comments may be made on the aforementioned recommendations.

Holiday Grants

In 1920, when Dunalistair Memorial Holiday Home in Broughty Ferry was purchased by the Regiment for the use of Black Watch widows and their families, and the wives and families of Black Watch soldiers who were living in UK whilst their husbands were serving overseas were eligible for free holidays there until its sale in 1984. Subsequently, the funds raised have been used to provide a holiday grant to Black Watch widows up to the present day. The grant is not means tested, however proof of service and confirmed travel and accommodation arrangements are required. Only one grant can be made in one calendar year.

Education Grants

Black Watch veterans, widows and dependants may bid for grants to assist with retraining for a new job, further education and other matters relating to educational and vocational enhancement. Only one Education Grant can be made per person in a financial year.

Christmas Grants

Modest grants can be made by the Trust in time for Christmas to recommended members of the Association or their widows, widowers or qualifying civil partners in hardship where need is identified. Recommendations should be made to the Welfare Committee by Association members, with justifications to the Welfare Committee, via the Branch Chairman. The recommended recipient should not be informed of the application on their behalf until contacted by the Committee or Branch chairman.

Grave Visit Grants

Families of soldiers who have died and been buried away from their home area in other parts of the UK or overseas may find the cost of visiting the grave difficult. The aim of this grant is to ease that burden.

Military Pilgrimage Grants

Attendance at an officially organised Commemoration can be assisted. Normally only one such visit.

Tragedies Grant

On a case by case basis a grant can be recommended to the Trust by the Welfare Committee to provide assistance after a personal tragedy.

Branch Notes

ANGUS BRANCH

President	Vacant
Vice President	Colonel D M Sheldrick
Chairman	Major (Retired) Ronnie Proctor MBE
Vice Chairman/Secretary	Mr Peter Tindal
Treasurer	Mr Gordon Millar
Membership	Mr Billy Whytock

Two thousand and twenty-three has been quite an eventful year with the loss of some of our stalwarts whose names will appear elsewhere in these notes, also some of our key members were laid low through sickness and injury, however like any other good team planned events went on uninterrupted. Mr Bruce Tyrie, who is the Branch liaison member with RBLs became ill whilst holidaying with his daughter in USA and gave us all a great fright. Thankfully, he is safely home in Forfar and making a slow but steady recovery. Our Chairman, Ronnie Proctor has suffered from Kidney Stones, Sciatica and Covid all behind each other which caused him to miss the Annual Burns Supper, the first time in the branch's history, he then suffered a broken ankle and torn ligament in his left leg and a further bout of Covid which stopped his appearance at the Annual Branch Standard Rededication at Glamis and is now suffering from a bad and painful bout of shingles whilst writing these notes.

Peter Tindal our Branch Chairman stepped into the shoes of our Chairman and covered both the above-mentioned events with great style. Peter continues to be our Branch representative at the Association meetings and keeps the branch apprised of what is going on within the wider Association.

Our monthly meetings continue and use the Hybrid format enabling those who live outwith the local area to take part, however, there have been some techno gremlins in cyberspace trying to sabotage our efforts, during our latest meetings communications with Germany, Somerset and elsewhere were not 100%.

The distribution of Christmas hampers was again a great success and at the time of writing planning is currently in progress for distribution to recipients this year. It is worth noting that all recipients are most grateful to receive the hampers and are pleased to know that they are not forgotten.

The Annual Reunion went ahead as planned at Balhousie Castle and was enjoyed by all who attended. The bar and food arrangements are now all carried out in the restaurant and has proved to be popular. The biannual Aberfeldy Muster was well attended and enjoyed by branch members some of whom linked up with the Dundee Branch and shared a minibus. The new venue at the Moness Complex at Aberfeldy proved to be very successful and was enjoyed by all those who attended, members were grateful for the ample parking area, good food and first-class table service which was provided at Moness. Members also enjoyed catching up with the serving members who carried out the "Taberfeldy" march from Fort George to Aberfeldy.



Chairman of the Association, Alastair Watson and Association Secretary, Ronnie Proctor at the Aberfeldy Muster



The CO and RSM of 1981 meet again at Aberfeldy



Standard Bearers at Aberfeldy Muster, George Eaton, Angus Branch and Chris Thomas, Dundee Branch

The Branch Standard Rededication Service took place at Glamis Church with the Reverend Carleen Robertson taking the service. A wreath was laid at the Glamis War Memorial which has the names of several Black Watch Soldiers inscribed on it from both world wars including Fergus Bowes Lyon the brother of The Queen Mother who was killed at the Battle Of Loos in 1915.



Peter Burnet receives a Guard of Honour at Glamis Church



Peter Tindal receives his orders from The Revd Carleen Robertson, the Minister of Newtyle Church

The annual El Alamein dinner which was to be held on the 21 October had to be postponed due to storm Babet and the catering team from Brechin being flooded out, has been rescheduled for mid-November and we are looking forward to enjoying a good meal with our friends and a catch up. Although the current weather pattern is not very promising, we hope that our rescheduled event will go ahead without further incident.

The annual Burns supper which is due to take place on Saturday 27 January, is currently in planning and we are working towards this popular annual event, which is enjoyed by both Branch members and our invited guests from the local community. This will be our 25th Burns Supper since the Angus Branch was founded.

A good number of Branch members and our Standard Bearer, George Eaton, took part in the centenary commemoration of the unveiling of the Kirriemuir War Memorial. Although the weather was quite wet all those who attended and participated enjoyed taking part, further information on this event is shown in a separate article.

Recently we have been involved in the distribution of second-hand Electro Powered Vehicles (EPVs) to members of the Branch with assistance from Kirriemuir Rotary Club. The EPVs which had been sourced by Kevin Murphy from the Perth Branch were transported by the Rotary Club to grateful recipients in Angus. This has been a good example of the Association working in conjunction with local charitable organisations to the benefit of our veterans.



John Glen welcomes a new EPV delivered by Mr Ian Lynn, Kirriemuir Rotary

The Branch Chairman between bouts of illness managed to pay a visit to ex WO1 (RSM) Ken Prescott who recently celebrated his 98th birthday in Inverness. The Battalion RSM and Padre at Fort George managed to organise the Pipes and Drums to visit the nursing home in which Ken now resides. Their performance and repertoire were greatly enjoyed by all the residents and staff.

Ken was in very good spirits and as usual was asking about many of his comrades who sadly are no longer with us. Ken was quite proud of the fact that he was the senior surviving RSM in the Regiment. Ken joined as a young soldier towards the end of WW2 and is now the only surviving member of the Colour Party which took part in the Queen's Coronation Parade where both the Colours of the 1st and 2nd Battalions were on Parade.

Our President, Peter Burnet has sadly had to stand down due to ill health and we would like to thank him for his hard work, advice and leadership over his tenure of office and his continued support to the Branch.

We sadly have lost the following stalwarts of the branch over the past year whose obituaries will appear elsewhere in the magazine.

Lieutenant Colonel Col F L (Fred) Beattie MBE a past President of the Branch.

Mr Johnny Brown a founder member of the Branch and great supporter who travelled from North of Aberdeen to attend monthly meetings and functions.

Mr Alex Lackie a long serving member of the Branch and Chelsea Pensioner.

Mr Rob Sargent a long time Branch member and fund raiser for the Association.

Mr David Skea long time branch member and Korea and Kenya veteran.

Mr Mike Robb from Brechin.

Mr Nicky Reid latterly of Forfar.

Our condolences and sympathy are offered to their families, and they are sorely missed.

Lastly, we look forward to the new year with enthusiasm and hope that Association members continue to enjoy the camaraderie and spirit which the Association nurtures.

DUNDEE BRANCH

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

During the period of Remembrance in November 2022, Branch members were busy attending various parades across the City of Dundee with the more prominent services being that of the Laying of Crosses at the City Churches on Saturday 5th November, Thursday 10th November at Caird Park for the memory of the men of Mains Parish who died in the First World War and the service at the City Square on the morning of Friday 11th November followed by a service at Balhousie Castle on the same afternoon.

On Sunday 13 November 2022, Joe Devlin, representing the Dundee Branch, and our Chairman, Willie Barr as Chairman of the City of Dundee Combined Ex-Services Association attended the main Remembrance service at the City Churches.

Whilst Willie and Joe were in the City Centre, a Remembrance Service organised and delivered by Colin Gray and the Rev Bob Wightman was held at Powrie Brae. This service as always, was very well attended by members of the Dundee Branch as well as members from the Angus Branch, relatives of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, relatives of Black Watch Veterans and various other ex-service personnel and local dignitaries.

The annual Red Hackle Dinner was held in the Black Watch Club, Dundee on Friday 10th February and was extremely well attended

and enjoyed by everyone. We were once again honoured that our "Local Boy Does Good", Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin KCB CBE decided to join us and share numerous memories with the members during countless reminiscing chats.



Sir Alistair, Jock Menzies and Willie Barr at the Red Hackle Dinner

The following night, a number of members represented the Branch at the Perth Branch Burns Supper.

On Saturday 4th March the Branch hosted a Games Day in the Black Watch Club against the Blairgowrie British Legion Club who included in their team, two fine Black Watch men, Bill Whytock and Paw Broon. Regrettably, the Branch were marginally beaten by the Berry Pickers but it was a great afternoon and hopefully to be repeated at least annually.

The Association Annual General Meeting (AGM) that was held in the Queen Mother Room in Balhousie Castle on Saturday 22nd April was attended by Willie Barr, Chris Thomas, Joe Devlin, Bill Whytock, Jim Crawford, Charlie Barron, Hugh Cameron and Colin Gray. Post the AGM, Bill and Colin attended the WO's & Sgts Dining Club Dinner in the Salutation Hotel whilst the remaining members had a very enjoyable evening in the Ex-Service Club. We all had a braw wee sing song on the minibus home to Dundee.



The Branch members who attended the AGM having a small refreshment in the Ex-Services Club in Perth

The Edinburgh & Lothians Branch held their Al Basrah Lunch on 29th April in the Apex Hotel, Waterloo Place, Edinburgh where Willie Barr, Chris Thomas and Colin Gray represented the Dundee Branch, thoroughly enjoyed a great afternoon of delicious food, excellent Piping and even better banter.

The Branch were well represented at the Regimental Reunion at Balhousie Castle on 17th June where members enjoyed meeting up with auld friends from across the geographics of the Association.

In July, members of the Branch commenced a project of refurbishment work at the Black Watch Memorial at Powrie Brae with a fuller report contained elsewhere in this edition.

The Inter Branch Games Day was held in the Ex-Service Club in Perth on Saturday 29th July, and we are very pleased to report that the Dundee Branch were triumphant and will now host next year's event

in the Black Watch Club, Dundee. Congratulations to the winning team captained by Gus Angus.

On Saturday 12 August, many Branch Members attended the City of Dundee Combined Ex-Services Association Veteran's Day Parade and Service on the City Square, where Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin KCB CBE as the Combined Ex-Services President was the senior officer in attendance and conducted a reading.



The Black Watch contingent prior to stepping off at the Veteran's Parade

Kirriemuir Cemetery on Sunday 27th August was the venue for the 100th anniversary of the Kirriemuir War Memorial which was organised by Ronnie Proctor and the Angus Branch. Joe Devlin and Colin Gray attended on behalf of the Dundee Branch and despite the foul weather, it was an excellent service to witness.

Saturday 2nd September was the first of many mornings where Dundee Branch members took on another project which was the refurbishment of the Balhousie Castle car park gates and the Wavell gate. From that date, and every Wednesday and Saturday morning, those members which included Joe Devlin, Chris Thomas, Jimmy Killorn, Jim Crawford, Ray Lawson and Colin Gray, stripped all the old paint off to the bare metal, then thoroughly cleaned the gates before applying a couple of coats of primer followed eventually by a couple of coats of paint. What a difference a wee bit of hard work makes. Those members would like to thank the Bistro for the extremely welcome Coffee/Tea and Bacon Rolls which were provided during NAAFI breaks.



Chris Thomas, Joe Devlin, Jimmy Killorn, Jim Crawford, Ray Lawson and Colin Gray at the Wavell Gate

The unveiling of the English Heritage Blue Plaque for Joseph Lee (Journalist, Poet & Soldier) occurred on Sunday 17th September at Epsom, Surrey and is reported elsewhere in this edition.

Jimmy Killorn, Jimmy Edwards, Chris Thomas, Willie Barr and Colin Gray attended the Aberfeldy Muster on Sunday 24th September.

Sunday 8th October, saw the Dundee Branch host its annual Battle of Loos Commemoration Service in the Congregational Church. This service was led by Rev Bob Wightman who continues to provide great support to the Branch. Readings were delivered by Colin Adam and Colin Gray with Jim Malone giving a brief talk on the Battle of Loos and the Dundee Poet, Joseph Lee. Thank you to the members of the Angus Branch and the Perth Branch for attending the service who along with the members of Dundee Sea Cadets certainly swelled the numbers of the congregation.

BATTLE OF LOOS COMMEMORATION SERVICE –

Talk by Jim Malone

We meet here today to commemorate “Dundee’s Own” the 4th Battalion Black Watch, we remember those who served in our city’s most honoured Territorial Battalion, their service, their sacrifice, and their role in forging the historic link between citizens and soldiers. One of those soldiers was Joseph Johnson Lee. Joe was 38 when he joined the Battalion, one of the ‘Fighter Writers’ who’s previous employment was in the last of the Dundee J’s, Journalism. His contribution to the Battalion’s excellent morale was noted by all who served with him, he is rightly acknowledged by scholars as a brilliant war poet, sketch artist and writer. Joe’s ability to use poetry to convey his comrades experiences is in my opinion unrivalled.

Joe’s continued correspondence to the Dundee Press allow us to experience the journey the 4th Black Watch took from Dudhope Castle on 23rd February to Loos on 25th September 1915.

The Battalion was 1009 strong, with 4 infantry companies and an additional machine gun company and HQ, the farewell was both raucous and sombre. Arriving at Le Harve 3 days later, the 4th joined the Barielly Brigade, Merritt Division; they saw action within days, on the 10th March at Neuve Chapelle the Battalion experienced the grim reality of trench warfare suffering some 140 casualties, Joe Lee composed his Poems ‘The Crucifix’ and ‘The Half Hours Furlough’ after the battle; he continued to provide comfort for many of his comrades with sketches and writing home on their behalf.

At Aubers Ridge and the Festubert Salient the 4th went over the top on 8th May, A & D companies were decimated with over 150 casualties. Joe Lee wrote arguably his greatest poem just before this Battle, ‘The Green Grass’; the poem illustrates Joe’s understanding of what probably awaited him and his comrades.

The 4th rested through the summer in reserve, with their numbers only occasionally reinforced from back home, however all were aware of an impending advance, the largest attack by the BEF was to be launched toward the town of Loos. 45 Scottish battalions would take part, the 4th would attack North of Loos with 2nd Black Watch on the left, 69th Punjabi’s in the centre and the 4th on the right. They marched overnight from Pont du Hem to their designated trench at Maquissart on the outskirts of Neuve Chapelle. At 6am the 4th advanced, by now only 423 strong, the 4th took the first German trench, then C & D companies took the second German line and were quickly joined by A & B companies. Tragically, however, on either flank the attack had wavered under intense German artillery and machine gun fire; despite numerous attempts no support was forthcoming, and the 4th were caught in a salient. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Walker, gave the order to make a stand and seek reinforcements, a task he took upon himself. Walker was mortally wounded, and the order was given to retreat in order. On their return across no man’s land to the lines, further casualties were inflicted on the 4th. Out of ammunition and exhausted the survivors were informed that the Barielly Brigade and the 4th Battalion Black

Watch had fought magnificently, their task to draw German reserves from Loos had been successful, however at roll call their number stood at 198. After The Battle of Loos Lt Colonel Walker had said ‘The men die the battalion goes on’

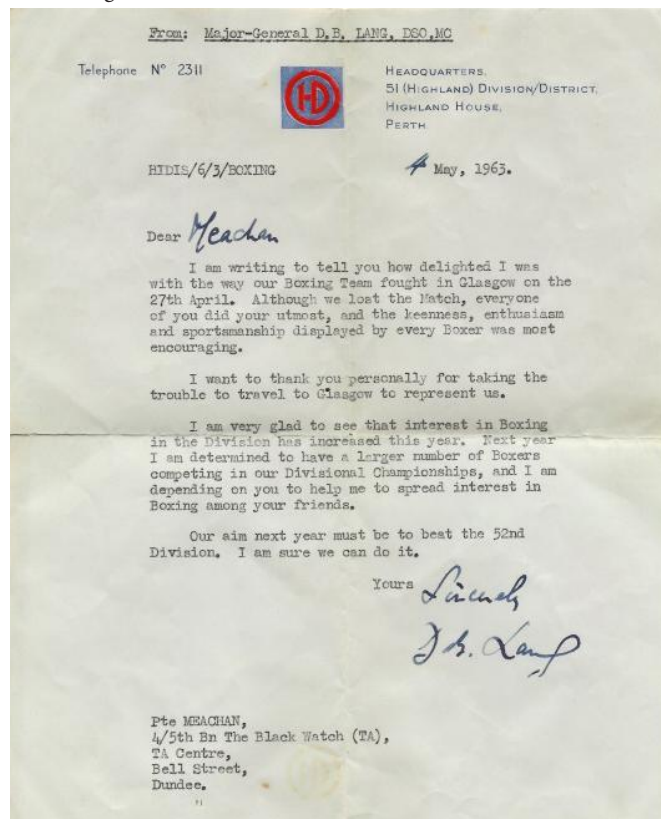
Joe Lee survived Loos, his book of poetry ‘Ballads of Battle’ was published in 1916 followed by ‘Work a day Warriors’ in 1917, Joe was commissioned into the Kings Royal Rifles and was captured in December 1917, he served as a POW in Carlsruhe and Beeskow writing a book after the war of his experience. Joe moved south between the wars continuing to study at the Slade School of Art and a sub editor with the News Chronicle. Joe lived in Epsom, Surrey with his wife Dorothy; he served in the home guard during WW2 and returned home to Dundee in 1947 where he died in 1949.

Joe Lee’s poem the Bullet – **“Every bullet has its billet; Many bullets more than one: God! Perhaps I killed a mother, When I killed a mother’s son”.**

On 17th September the Dundee Branch of the BWA made the pilgrimage to Epsom to unveil a commissioned Blue Plaque commemorating Joe’s life, today we commemorate all who served at Loos with ‘Dundee’s Own’.

The members of the Branch are constantly requested to provide interesting articles or photos for this magazine and one such member, Willie Meachan, wanted to share a letter he received in 1963 from Major General D.B. Lang DSO MC, thanking Willie and the 51st Highland Division boxing team for their efforts in a recently fought match.

For such a high-ranking officer to take the time to write to Willie and I’m sure, all the members of that boxing team, tells its own story about how we should always appreciate the efforts of everyone, just like Pte Meachan of the 4/5th Battalion The Black Watch. Thank you Willie, for sharing this letter with us.



Letter to Pte Meachan from Maj Gen Lang

We as a Branch continue to hold monthly meetings in the Black Watch Club, Dundee on the last Sunday of each month (unless notified accordingly) commencing at 1200 hrs. We also continue to attend the Veterans Breakfast which is held at 1100hrs every 2nd Saturday in a calendar month in the Market Bar, Dundee. £5.00 for a full Scottish, a brew and a guid blether, priceless. Come along and join us, just turn up, no need to book.



Dundee Branch members and friends at the Breakfast Club

Death Notices – Very regrettably and with extreme sadness, we acknowledge the passing of three members of the Dundee Branch; Jimmy Russell died on 7th February 2023. Arthur Clark died on 28th March 2023 and Jimmy Cowie died on 13th June 2023. Everyone a Gentleman, great company and sadly missed. We also sadly acknowledge on 12th May 2023 the passing of Chris Moore, the dear wife of Branch member, Peter Moore. May you all rest in peace.

EDINBURGH, LOTHIAN'S' AND BORDERS' BRANCH

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

Many congratulations to our branch President, Colonel Jules McElhinney on the announcement of his recent promotion and appointment as Deputy Commander Reserves 51st Infantry Brigade and Headquarters Scotland. We would also like to congratulate Mr Rory and Mrs Donna McIntyre on their recent marriage.



Mr Rory and Mrs Donna McIntyre (Wedding)

Branch members and guests gathered in the BMC Club Gorgie, on 14 January 2023, meeting up for the first time in the New Year and also to celebrate Red Hackle Day. The catering for the evening was provided by Perth based former Black Watch soldier George Urquhart who runs his own business (3G Catering). Pipe Major Alistair Duthie kicked off the entertainment with a collection of regimental tunes and the main entertainer was Ally Alcorn. The guest entertainer for the evening was the very talented professional singer, Sam Santini, daughter of the late Sergeant George (Tex) Reiter. A great evening was had by all, and the hospitality provided by the venue manager, Mrs Yvonne McGregor,

was very much appreciated.

The Apex Hotel, Waterloo Place, was once again the venue for the Al Basrah Lunch held on 29 April 2023. Following a fine lunch in the Forth Suite, guests retired to the Waterloo Lounge to enjoy a sociable afternoon and catch up with comrades and friends from the past.



Major (Retired) Alex and Mrs Kath Stewart (Al Basrah Lunch)

Other events attended by members of the branch since the last edition of the Red Hackle included: Edinburgh Remembrance Day Parade and Service on 13 November 2022, Anzac Day service on 25 April 2023, Scottish American Memorial Service on 29 May 2023, Edinburgh Armed Forces Day on 24 June 2023 and the Korean War 70th Anniversary Memorial Service at Bathgate on 27 July 2023. Mr Jock Boyle made the long journey south and attended the Armistice Day Parade in London on 13 November 2022.



Mr Gary Cannon, Mr Robert McLaren, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Jock Menzies, Mr Alexander Guthrie and Mr Ian Beveridge (Edinburgh Castle Remembrance Day 2022)



Mr Jock Boyle (Cenotaph London 2022)

Fortunately, the branch continues increase in numbers and we welcome our recent new members: Mr Kenny Glasgow, Mr Callum Robson, Mr Allan Smith and Corporal Tom Wallace.

The branch meets regularly at the Scots Guards Club, Haymarket and the main events currently planned for 2024 are: Red Hackle Night 13 January 2024 and Al Basrah Lunch 27 April 2024.

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 clicking, request to join on the branch social media web page. Officers and Soldiers of the Black Watch 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland who are currently serving in the local area, are particularly welcome to join.

FIFE BRANCH

Chairman and Secretary: Mr Rob Scott JP

It is hard to believe another year has passed but not much has changed in the Branch calendar.

Although the first event isn't a Branch event it is administered and organised by Fife members for the 1739 Club. The club meeting unfortunately had had to be cancelled last year because the Queen's Hotel in Dundee were taking in displaced Ukrainians. We did, at the last minute, decide we would hold a Lunch instead and it proved to be very successful.



1739 Club Lunch, Victoria Hotel Kirkcaldy. 26 November 22, Harry Thomas, Robert McLaren and Gary Cannon



1739 Club Lunch. Victoria Hotel. 26 November 22, Jock Slaven and Jimmy Cowie

Next on our agenda was our well attended Red Hackle Breakfast. This year we have taken up a new residence at the Kirkcaldy Golf Club. The club is so accommodating that the Branch have decided to use the club for our monthly breakfast in the way of a thank you to them. The Red Hackle Breakfast, like our monthly one, is always well attended as can be seen in the photographs.



Red Hackle Day Breakfast 5 January 23, Dunnikier Park Golf Club

Next in turn is the Rhine Crossing Dinner in the Victoria Hotel, Kirkcaldy. Numbers were down somewhat from previous years, but this was due to our members getting older and unfortunately some being taken home to their maker. We were lucky to have some entertainment in the way of our own Jock Gilfillan and his Burns renditions, especially of Tam O'Shanter.



Rhine Crossing Dinner Victoria Hotel 24 March 23, Alan McEwen, Rob Scott, John Smith and Peter Snaddon

Fife has taken on the caretaking of the Korean Monument in West Lothian through the interest of Bob Henry and Hugh Beattie. The Black Watch had had a Bench placed in the grounds, but unfortunately it has fallen into a state of disrepair. The Fife Branch decided to purchase a new metal one to replace the wooden one already in situ. We then met to dedicate the New Bench, inviting Korean Veterans to join us and on, completion of the ceremony, retired for lunch at a nearby venue.



Korean War Memorial, Dedication of New Bench

Armed Forces Day and our Reunion now loomed fast. Armed Forces Day Fife came first, and we paraded at the Pavilion area of Carnegie Park, Dunfermline. The Lord-Lieutenant, The Provost and some Senior Officers were among those who attended. The Council put on a Civic Reception after the parade and both the Lord-Lieutenant and the Provost thanked us for our attendance, pointing out that we always support anything the Council asked us to. From Dunfermline to Perth and our own Reunion. Members formed up at the North Inch and marched through the streets to our Headquarters in Balhousie Castle where we met with the old and bold and had some refreshments. A good day for all who attended.

It was now the turn of the delayed Regimental Muster at Aberfeldy. We gathered at the Memorial where a short service was conducted by the Association Padre and a Platoon from 3 SCOTS who had carried a stretcher from Fort George to the venue for charity, raising money for The Samaritans. At the end of the service lunch was provided for those who wished to partake.



Aberfeldy Muster 2023, Hugh Beattie, George Wood, Mike Madden and Bob Henry

The Branch now had the pleasure of hosting our ladies at the Ladies' Alma Lunch in the Victoria Hotel, Kirkcaldy. Like the Rhine Crossing Dinner, numbers were down on our usual, but the lunch was first class as was the company on the day.



Alma Lunch, Victoria Hotel. 17 Sept 23. Rob Scott, Val Elder and Jock Menzies

Unfortunately, we have had our sad days as well in the form of saying farewell to friends and comrades, sadly too many to mention. I know that the Branch, like the families, will miss them greatly, but we thank them for their loyal support.

HIGHLAND BRANCH

Chairman: Mr Alec Beattie
Secretary: Mr Gordon Kennedy

It has been a quiet year for the Highland Branch due to members' commitments outside branch activities. However, we have managed to represent the branch with members enjoying attending our sister branches at the following hosted activities:

- The Dundee Branch Annual Dinner
- The Perth Branch Burns Supper
- The Black Watch Association Games Day

Unfortunately, our own Annual Aberfeldy Dinner had to be cancelled

together with the Annual Branch BBQ due to a lack of uptake by members. A date will be set for next year and invitations will be sent out to our neighbouring branches who will be most welcome to attend.

The branch has made some changes in arrangements to our meetings. These are now bimonthly and are being held in local public houses around Inverness to try and promote a more social environment and hopefully gain a better interest in attendance.

We are pleased to have welcomed two new members this year both currently serving with 3 SCOTS. Captain James McCarthy and WO2 Bryan Young were both originally 1 BW.



Remembrance Service 2023

This year's Remembrance Sunday Parade was attended by Michael Kelly and John Anderson and thereafter to the Royal British Legion in Inverness. Also, Donald Etherington attended, to show respect and lay a cross, at the Korean War Memorial at Loch Kinellan, Strathpeffer.



the Korean War Memorial at Loch Kinellan, Strathpeffer

This largely unknown War memorial to The Black Watch was designed and built by Kenny Stewart who never forgot his comrades who died in the war. Unfortunately, Kenny died in 2016 before the formal unveiling. For readers who wish to see the full story search online for Korean War Memorial Strathpeffer.



Korean War Roll of Honour to 1 BW

As a small Branch of 25 members in the Highland Capital we are always on the lookout for new members to come along and join our branch. Our current members are reaching out to all ex Black Watch and Black Watch associated veterans to come along and join us. Please contact the Association office who will forward contact details to us.

LONDON BRANCH

President:	Brigadier (Retired) E N de Broë-Ferguson MBE
Vice President:	Brigadier (Retired) Donald Wilson CBE
Chairman:	Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) D E J Kemmis Betty MBE DL
Vice Chairman:	Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) R C Cole-Mackintosh
Secretary:	Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) M Smith MBE

The Branch Dinner planned for September 2022 was postponed, to observe Royal Mourning for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Attempts to re-schedule were then beset by industrial action with train strikes leading to cancellation of both the 2022 dinner and AGM and Coronation Lunch planned for May 2023. However, at last, we had a chance to toast our Royal Patron, The King, at the 2023 Branch Dinner which went ahead with 65 people on Friday 22 September at the Victory Services Club and was much enjoyed by all.

We paused in silence to acknowledge the sad death of four Branch members since our last dinner, including our former President Major General Andy Watson, WO2 Jimmy Russell, Ian Skivington and Ken Stewart and a number of noteworthy non-Branch members who were known to many, including: Major (Retired) Colin Innes, Captain (Retired) Tom Graham, Lieutenant Colonel(Retired) Fred Beattie QM, WO2 Maxie MacDonald, WO2 Puddles Matthews BW and AGC, Sgt Willie Pratt, Major (Retired) Alex Brown (Pipie and QM) and Major Nick Coles.

The Branch Chairman gave a brief reflection on the recent tragic death of Major Nick Coles as follows:

“Some older London Branch members will have come across Nick growing up while serving with his parents Lieutenant Colonel Tim and Rosie Coles in 1 BW and younger members will have served with him in 3 SCOTS or Army HQ and counted him as the very best of friends. Educated at Radley and Edinburgh University he was commissioned in 2013 and joined The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland. He commanded a rifle platoon, commanded the Machine Gun and Mortar Platoons including a tour with the UN in Cyprus and was then Operations Officer in Iraq in 2018. As a senior Captain he was appointed to the prodigious post of AMA to DCGS in Army HQ. On promotion to Major, he then attended ICSC in 2022, and returned to HQ Field Army in a key post with the Military Strategic Plans branch involving the organisation & structures of the Army. He was married to Tabitha, and they had a young daughter, Flora. Nick was the epitome of a model officer who would no doubt have gone on soon to be a fabulous company commander and his strong potential had already been identified for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and above. He was extremely highly regarded across the regimental family and wider Army. He was a rare talent, intelligent, reliable and operating at the top of his game. A true gentleman, Nick was utterly charming and engaging. He gave time to everybody with great enthusiasm and was universally well liked and respected by all those who met him. A passionate Army cricketer he was also team captain for the Highland and Lowland Brigade cricket team. His tragic death leaves a huge hole in the hearts of many and our deepest sympathies go to his parents Tim and Rosie, brother George, his widow Tabitha and daughter Flora and his close friends”.

Lieutenant Colonel Tim Coles asked the Chairman to pass on his sadness at not being able to attend the Dinner, but expressed his thanks to all those in The Black Watch Association who have rallied around and sent messages which have brought great comfort to the family and to all those who attended the funeral where there were circa 600-700 people including many from both the BW family and The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

Our dinner was a great success, with many thanks again being offered to Branch Piper Chic Mackie who entertained us with some excellent music, to Ian Howarth for smoothing arrangements with the staff behind the scenes, and to Peter Scott Graham for his generous donation of whisky. Both Ian and Peter were celebrating their 87th birthdays in September and are the two remaining Branch members from the 2nd Battalion.



**The Young table at the London Branch Dinner September 2023.
Maj James Farrall, Mr Bobby Stewart, Maj Tim Towler, Mr Fergus Haigh, Maj Russell Doughty, Lt Col Rob Smith, Maj Christian Voce-Russell and Capt Nick Allen-Perry**

The Chairman outlined changes to the committee over the past two years with Brigadier Edward de Broë-Ferguson taking over as President from General Andy Watson, and Brigadier Donald Wilson taking on Vice President. Thanks in their absence were given to Major Alastair Watson and Lieutenant Colonel Tim Coles for their loyal service to the Branch as Chair and Vice Chair (having been replaced by Lieutenant Colonels David KB and Richard CM) and thanks were offered to Lieutenant Colonel Mike Smith for his continued stalwart

service as Secretary. We noted that Arthur Barty (former driver to The Queen Mother) was unwell and wished him well. Arthur has for several years arranged the crosses at the Field of Remembrance. We also enthusiastically welcomed Sgt Richard Clark MC who has offered to help recruit more Other Ranks to the Branch. If anyone knows of any Jocks or NCOs living in the South, do please direct them to Richard or Mike Smith.

The Chairman highlighted that he and Chic Mackie had recently assisted members of the Dundee Branch with the unveiling of a 'Blue Plaque' in Epsom, where the World War 1 poet and writer Joseph Lee had lived for many years having earlier joined up and fought with 4BW. Do look up Joe's poetry. The Chairman highlighted news of a number of Branch members and former BW officers who are doing very well in the Army. Of particular note, Major General Robin Lindsay who is now Military Secretary and General Officer Scotland, Major General James Roddis who is Strategy Director at Strategic Command, Brigadier Rob Hedderwick who commands the Army Special Operations Brigade and will move to the Field Army HQ in 2024, Brigadier Ben Wrench who commanded 51 Brigade and is now Director Army Safety, Colonel Campbell Close who will be promoted to Brigadier as Deputy Commander French 1st Division and Colonel Jules McElhinney to be Deputy Commander (Reserve) at 51 Brigade. We also welcomed the next Commanding Officer of 3 SCOTS, Lieutenant Colonel Rob Smith who attended our Dinner with a gang of 'young' serving and retired officers all of whom had taken pride in wearing the Red Hackle. Finally, the Chairman introduced three speakers. Brigadier Edward de Broë-Ferguson spoke fondly about the late General Andy Watson, Brigadier Hedderwick about the Army and its mobilisation and modernisation programme and Major Tim Towler about the BW Battalion.

In November, Major David Wilson and Lieutenant Colonel Tim Coles represented the Regiment at The Black Watch and Tyneside Scottish plots in the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey. HM The Queen opened the Field and toured the plot stopping to chat to both David & Tim.



**HM Queen talking with Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Tim Coles
at the Field of Remembrance 2023**



Major (Retired) David Wilson at the Field of Remembrance 2023
Remembrance week then continued at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday with 30 or so Red Hackles on parade receiving very good TV coverage. It was great to see a number of folk who had made the trip South from Scotland to march for the first time, as well as a good spread of ages including Corporal Bill Hall. Bill is a Korean War veteran who was accompanied by his son, David, who served in 1BW in Werl, Berlin and Ballykinler, and his daughter, Elaine, who served in the WRAC. Bill was wounded on The Hook and Casevaced back to the UK.



Alex Reading, Ben Collis, Hugo Canon and Richard Cole-Mackintosh after the Cenotaph Parade 2023



Larrie Mair, Peter Trickovic, James Adams, Chris Badderley, John-Paul Barrie and Alex Wilson at Horseguards 2023



Korean Veteran Cpl Bill Hall with son David and daughter Elaine at Horseguards 2023



Graham Simpson with Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Mike Smith after the Cenotaph Parade 2023

Most of the group then rallied in Brown's restaurant in Victoria for an excellent lunch.



The post Cenotaph lunch gathering 2023

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

Chairman: Mr N Turnbull
Secretary: Mr P Dodds

2022 into 2023 saw a number of challenges as we lost some valuable members of the association. We marked the passing of both Malcolm Dunn and Tommy Dignam both stalwarts of the Newcastle Branch, who supported all we did.

As we experience declining numbers, we continue to keep things alive and well with regular monthly meetings being held in the comrades' club; we do find the business of the Branch taking less and less time; the real shape of things to come as we see fewer and fewer people coming forward to join our ranks.

That said however, we do support the Tyneside Scottish association and given the geographical location they see more members than that of our own Branch. The camaraderie is fully extended to us and we whole heartedly join the various events, the Burns supper, where the Chairman Nick Turnbull delivers the toast to the haggis, the St Andrews Day parade, the Remembrance events around the North east and of course The Black Watch reunion which is supported by both associations

We may be few in numbers these days, but do our utmost to retain the name and traditions of The Black Watch here in the North East. The use of groups set up on Facebook has proven beneficial and a great source of information and news that we may not normally see until the next Branch meeting. Our thanks go to all who administer these pages as it brings the working of HQ and the more northern Branches that little bit closer.

As we push towards the last quarter of the year, we get to planning our annual visit to Black Watch War graves here in the North East where a group of us meet up to lay a wreath and remember the fallen of all the conflicts where The Black Watch have served and our brothers in arms who have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

We remain in good health and spirits and hope to continue on for many years to come sustaining the name of The Black Watch, The Royal Highland Regiment.

PERTH BRANCH

President: Major (Retired) Tim Carmichael
Chairman: Mr Sandy MacDuff
Secretary: Mr Pat McLinden
Treasurer: Mrs Frances Sandilands/Mr Scott Dalton

After 17 years of dedication as branch chairman, Captain Alan McEwen stood down at the 2023 AGM, handing over to Sandy MacDuff. As a branch we are extremely grateful to Alan for his leadership, coordination and direction given to the members and advice to the committee. Not only has Alan handed over as chairman,

he has also completed his service in the Army after 46 years of unbroken service in The Black Watch and then in The Royal Regiment of Scotland. Collectively and individually, we wish him the very best in his plans for the next stage in life which included ascending to Base Camp on Mount Everest.



Alan McEwen

2023 is also seeing the handover of appointment of Treasurer. After many years of support to the Branch Frances Sandilands, with increased recognition from her other commitments - namely, being chosen as President of Bowls Scotland, is experiencing the camel's back by also being the Treasurer of the Perth Branch! The significance of the post is that she will just have taken up office and her first engagement on 24 November will have been an invitation to the 'Scottish Woman's Sports Award'. As Frances, in her understated manner, puts it "a busy time ahead". Frances' quiet diligence and competence has been a trustworthy and discrete support to the Committee and the members of the branch alike and we thank her enormously for her work for us. Fortunately, we are pleased to announce that Scott Dalton, a familiar figure who has been working both as a reservist and civilian Storeman at Queen's Barracks and who has worked part time elsewhere around Perth, has agreed to take over.

We welcome both Sandy and Scott to their new appointments.



Sandy MacDuff as new Chairman of Perth Branch of the Association with Pat McLinden, Branch Secretary flanking John Nicol

The branch held its annual Burns Night very successfully once again at the Salutation Hotel, Perth, with some excellent entertainment including performances by Cammy Goodall.

In this year of floods, despite the weather threatening heavy rain the branch was well represented and turnout was good at the Aberfeldy Muster this year; members enjoyed going onto the new location, the Moness Resort for lunch, due to the refurbishment of the Kenmore Hotel.



Jim Sandilands, Hugh Rose, Jim Colquhoun and Roy Brown 41 at this year's Aberfeldy Muster

Our other annual event was the Croix de Guerre dinner, which we held for a first time at Balhousie Castle very successfully. As a branch, we were very happy to host Colonel Andy Middlemiss of SSAFA and his wife, Jo, as our guests in the fine surroundings of Balhousie Castle's Queen Mother room. We were excellently and professionally served with noticeable panache by the staff, had a delicious meal and were entertained by Alistair Duthie's most excellent piping. Members felt the evening to have been a great success and very good opportunity to invite other, personal, guests in the future. On that note, we were very pleased that Fraser Brown and Torquil MacLeod had invited a number of the new staff working at Balhousie Castle to experience the style and warmth of a Black Watch dinner.



Sharon McLinden, Greg McGillivray and Rab Young at the dinner



Colin Ferguson and Joe Cahill at the Croix de Guerre dinner

During the summer, having won the previous event in Dundee, the branch hosted an inter-branch Games Night (during the day) with the honours being competed for to a gladiatorial standstill between

Dundee Perth and Highland branches. The whole afternoon was coordinated by Roy Brown and supported with a donation from the Exy's management.

We are very pleased to have welcomed new members this year in the form of Colin Ferguson, Joe Cahill, Wayne Ferguson (no, they're NOT related) and more recently, James Jocky Wilson. We're also pleased to hear that Ronnie MacGregor's move south has been a success.

Equally, we paid our farewell respects to George Kennedy who, amongst many attributes, was a Perth man born and bred. He described where he'd been born and brought up and then after his service how he lived a stone's throw from there in his later years. George had been a drummer in the Battalion and recalled a particularly proud event of playing when our Colonel in Chief, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, had visited Balhousie in 1962.



Perth Branch members attended the funeral service of George Kennedy on 16 August 2023.

Looking forward, we meet as usual at the Perth Ex Service Club at 7pm on the third Tuesday of the month and new members would be most welcome. Our main event dates in 2024 are:

Burns' Night celebration Saturday 3 February at the Salutation Hotel

The Croix de Guerre dinner Saturday 12 October at Balhousie Castle

The Black Watch Memorial Aberfeldy

By Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) R M Riddell OBE

As you leave Aberfeldy on the road to Weem across the magnificent Wade Bridge that spans the River Tay, the view towards Drummond Hill and the Glenlyon Hills reminds you that the town is very much in Highland Perthshire. The hills provide a wonderful backdrop to the memorial that celebrates the formation of Scotland's senior Highland Regiment.

Many memorials have been created around the world over the 267 years of the Black Watch's existence. Many have been forgotten or destroyed and sadly, no doubt many more will be lost in the future. The Aberfeldy Memorial dates from 1867. In more recent times, the South African War Memorial on the Mound in Edinburgh was erected in 1910 and after the Great War the Dunalistair House War Memorial was purchased. A fine statue at Black Watch Corner near Ypres was dedicated in 2014. It honours the service of the many thousands of men who served in The Black Watch during the First World War.

Whilst in recent times Balhousie Castle in Perth has become the spiritual home of the Regiment, it was Queens' Barracks in Perth (the Depot of The Black Watch) which was for many years, the focus for the Regiment and for the local community. The Depot was used by the Regiment from 1881 until 1961.

However, it is Aberfeldy that has remained at the centre of the Regiment's heart for it was there that in May 1740 the six Independent Companies mustered for the first time. They then underwent extensive training so that by 1742 the Highland Regiment, commanded by Lord Sempill, was properly prepared for war and in the Spring of 1743 was ordered to march south into England.

In March 1866 Major James Menzies of the 10th Lanark (Glasgow Highlanders) gathered "the natives of Perthshire" at a meeting held in Glasgow, suggesting that a committee should be formed "for the purpose of raising subscriptions to erect a memorial to mark the spot where the 42nd Regiment was first embodied". Major James Menzies was a native of Aberfeldy and was appointed as the Hon Secretary of the committee charged with raising the funds.

Various letters to the War Office and to the Commanding Officer of the 42nd were sent to try and establish exactly where the first muster had been held. Colonel R K Bayly, Commanding The Black Watch, reported from Malta that the records declared that "the 42nd was first drawn up in a field North of Tay Bridge and that they were encamped in the field between the river and Aberfeldy afterwards".

In June 1886 The Strathearn Herald published correspondence between Sir Donald Currie KCMG MP, of Garth, Glenlyon and Chesthill and Lord Wolseley who was at that time, Adjutant General. The latter's letter was published in full;

Dear Sir Donald Currie

I am very glad to hear from your letter that a memorial in honour of the Black Watch is to be erected in your neighbourhood. Scotland, and indeed the Empire generally, could not do too much for this corps that has done so much to build up and preserve the unity of the great Empire ruled over by our Queen. When in action with the Royal Highlanders one need take no trouble about the part of the field where they are engaged, for I have always then realised that what men could do, they would accomplish. Officers and men work together with an entire and mutual confidence in one another that ensures success. Whenever I go on active service, I always try to have this splendid regiment with me, because I can rely upon it at all times and under all circumstances. Whenever I see the red hackle of the Black Watch I feel I have there not only good friends but also staunch comrades who will stand by me to the last.

Perthshire has good reason to be proud of its regiment, for it is without doubt one of the finest that has ever worn the Royal uniform.

Very truly yours

Wolseley

By May 1887 the Perthshire Advertiser was reporting that a meeting had been held in the Breadalbane Arms Hotel in Aberfeldy and that the Marquis of Breadalbane had chaired it. A large number of local people were in attendance. The meeting had been called to decide on the site and design of the memorial.

Those attending the meeting were in unanimous agreement that the memorial should be placed on a triangular piece of ground between Aberfeldy and the River Tay, immediately to the left of the road leading to the Tay Bridge. Major James Menzies said that they were very much indebted to the Marquis of Breadalbane for granting them such an excellent site for the memorial.

The meeting then turned their attention to the subject of the design of the memorial. Nearly two dozen drawings were submitted with designs from architects in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Aberfeldy, Perth and Inverness. The number of drawings to be voted on was reduced to five; Mr W Rhind, Sculptor of Edinburgh; Mr F M McLaren of London; Mr D Beveridge, Sculptor of Perth; Mr D Menzies of Edinburgh and Mr W Bell of Aberfeldy. This group was then whittled down to two submissions, that of Mr Rhind and Mr Beveridge but the final vote came out in favour of Mr Rhind.

Mr Rhind's letter described the memorial; "My intention is this design is to have a colossal statue ten feet high on the summit of the cairn, representing one of the original Highlanders in the first costume of the 42nd and in the act of drawing his sword suggesting that he is going forth to fight the battles of his country: while beneath on the principal front of the memorial a life-sized figure of a Highlander clothed in the present costume of the 42nd would be executed in the act of inscribing on the tablet the names of the battles his regiment has had the honour of bearing on their colours. The cairn or pedestal would be square. The height of the monument is 25 feet and the cost will be about £350." (an equivalent value today of about £60,000). The Committee indicated that the cairn should be heightened a few feet. William Birnie Rhind RSA was a well-known Scottish Sculptor (1853 – 1933) who created several dozen war memorials including The Black Watch South African War Memorial on the Mound in Edinburgh.

On the 14 November 1887 the Perthshire Advertiser reported in great detail about the unveiling of the memorial which took place on Saturday 12th November. They described the process leading up to the great day, who had been involved in the committee and the article also described the monument. There were a great many speeches, much cheering and grateful thanks were passed to the "Most Noble Gavin, Marquis of Breadalbane". Colonel Robert Menzies and Major James Menzies played prominent parts in the proceedings. After the unveiling, a miniature Lochaber Axe was presented to Lord Breadalbane. It was made of solid silver with an ebony handle and was enclosed in a handsome Morocco case. It bore the following inscription; "The Black Watch Memorial. Presented to the most Noble the Marquis of Breadalbane on the occasion of his unveiling the Black Watch Memorial at Aberfeldy, 12 November 1887. On the reverse side is engraved the Breadalbane Arms with the motto Follow Me". The miniature axe is on display in the Regimental Museum at Balhousie Castle.

The last points of note from that day were that Chief Magistrate Forbes of Aberfeldy was presented with the deeds by the Marquis of Breadalbane and that the ceremony was rounded off by the singing of "God Save The Queen" before 300 people attended a banquet and veterans of the 42nd were entertained at the Weem Hotel.

The Red Hackle Magazine was first published in 1921 and in 1922 Major W Fowler MC was recorded bringing recruits by char-a-banc to visit the memorial. The following year the Depot Sergeants and their families visited. These visits continued in the 1920s and 30s but after the Second World War, the Association began to take a more active role with Branch visits and Association Reunions in the 1950s and 60s. At one such Reunion held on 20 July 1958 the Reverend Ian MacLellan MC JP of Weem based his sermon on 1 Corinthians, Chapter 16, Verse 13 drawing a comparison between the reading and

The Black Watch; “Watch ye – stand fast – quit you like men – be strong.”

As the result of a close connection formed in 1915 at La Boisselle between the 6th (Perthshire) Battalion and the French 19th Regiment of Infantry from Brittany, a pilgrimage in September 1936 by veterans of both Regiments led to an exchange of gifts. An urn containing soil from the mound at the Aberfeldy Memorial was mixed with soil from La Boisselle, placed in an urn and was presented to the veterans of the French 19th Regiment. They in turn presented The Black Watch with a matching urn with soil from La Boisselle and Le Folgoet. That urn is still held in the Regimental Museum in Perth.

A major milestone was reached on 5 September 1970 when the Regiment was granted the Freedom of Aberfeldy. The 1st Battalion was based in Kirknewton and had recently returned from a tour of duty in Northern Ireland. The Battalion was formed up on a parade ground on the golf course to the East. The companies all marched on from different directions to simulate the original parade when six Independent Companies had been formed up as a single Regiment. After the parade and address, the Regiment marched through Aberfeldy with “Bayonets fixed, Drums beating and Colours flying” before enjoying the town’s generous hospitality.

On 8 August 1971 a plaque was unveiled by Brigadier Sir Bernard Fergusson, Colonel of The Regiment, Provost Fisher, the Reverend John Colquhoun of Killin and Padre Donald Beaton. The inscription on the plaque is on the south face of the cairn and says “On 5th September 1970, the Freedom of the Burgh of Aberfeldy was conferred on The Black Watch. This tablet was placed here by the Regiment in grateful acknowledgement of the honour.”

There followed a period in the 1970s and 80s when the 1st Battalion was posted overseas or was on operations in Northern Ireland and only the recruiting team or Pipes and Drums or Black Watch Cadets visited Aberfeldy but in November 1987 the 1st Battalion, The 51st Highland Volunteers held a parade marking the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the statue.

In 2003 a composite Company of the 1st Battalion, recently returned from Iraq and, led by Major Anthony Fraser, marched through the town. This was repeated in 2005 but the whole battalion was on parade after returning from OP BRACKEN in Iraq.

On 26 March 2006, The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) lost its independent status and was merged into a new Regiment becoming The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland. The Association was determined to keep the name of the Regiment alive for as long as possible and so began the series of gatherings or musters on a biennial basis. Known formally as the Association Muster or Formation Day Parade it was also known by some as the Red Hackle Rally. Taking the form of an open-air Kirk Service, parades were held in May 2007, May 2009, May 2011 (attended by fifteen Second World War veterans), May 2013, June 2015 (marking the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo), May 2017 and then September 2021.

The Covid pandemic got in the way of many planned events and the September 2021 Muster was another delayed occasion. The focus of that day was to cast the ashes of the wooden crosses of remembrance onto the waters of the River Tay. The crosses had been laid at the Great War Memorial Wall at Balhousie Castle between 2014 and 2019. Each cross bore the name of a Black Watch officer or soldier who had been killed between 1914 and 1919 and was placed on the wall, one hundred years to the day after they lost their lives.

The Piper played Lochaber No More as the ashes were lowered from the Bridge to be spread onto the surface of the River Tay so that they could be taken on a symbolic journey through the heart of the Regimental area touching Perthshire, Fife, Angus and Dundee. What a fitting way to mark the sacrifice and memory of those men whose service, courage and sacrifice in that dreadful conflict exemplified what it was to be a Black Watch soldier and to their many forebears and successors.

One hundred and thirty-six years after the monument in Aberfeldy was dedicated, it remains a special place in the minds of many who have served in The Black Watch and I hope that in four years’ time, the

Association can mark the 140th anniversary of the dedication with some style.



The Aberfeldy Highlander “Going forth to fight the battles of his country”.



A Black Watch soldier of 1887 “inscribing on the tablet the names of the battles his regiment has had the honour of bearing on their Colours”

KIRRIEMUIR WAR MEMORIAL UNVEILING CENTENARY COMMEMORATION

By Major R J W Proctor

Mabel Dowager Countess of Airlie unveiled the War Memorial which was erected to commemorate the 210 citizens of the small Angus town who lost their lives in the Great War of 1914-18, a third of that number served in the battalions of The Black Watch.

The statue depicting a Black Watch soldier wearing World War Uniform and Equipment, stands at the "On Guard" position overlooking the Valley of Strathmore to the south and guarding the gateway to the Angus Glens and Grampian Mountains to the North.

The figure stands some 9 feet six inches high on top of the most imposing plinth which shows the 210 names on each of the 4 panels of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice to enable us to enjoy our freedom today. The complete south facing panel and half of the east panel shows the names of all ranks of The Black Watch.

On Sunday 27 August 2023 after a very heavy downpour of monsoon proportions Veterans from the Black Watch and other Arms and Services, Sea Cadets, Army Cadets and townsfolk assembled around the memorial to take part in the Centenary Commemoration, which was organised by Major Ronnie Proctor, a Director of Kirriemuir Heritage Trust, who welcomed all those present. Local Clergy from the Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic and Episcopalian Churches officiated with Major General Martin Smith late Royal Marines gave the address.

Commander Jim Smith composed and recited his poem The Kirriemuir War Memorial, wreaths were laid on behalf of Veterans Organisations and local organisations.

Pipe Major Alistair Duthie played the Lament and Hey Jonnie Cope whilst the Forfar Instrumental Band accompanied the hymn singing, the National Anthem, the last post and reveille.

It was most encouraging to see Association members from Angus, Dundee, Fife and Perth along with their Branch standards along with those from the RN, RE, RAMC and ACF which added colour, dignity and gravitas to the event.



Standard Bearers at Kirriemuir War Memorial 100th Anniversary service (Photograph courtesy of Frank Proctor)



Association Members and Guests attending the Kirriemuir War Memorial 100th Anniversary service (Photograph courtesy of Frank Proctor)

REFURBISHMENT OF THE BLACK WATCH MEMORIAL AT POWRIE BRAE, DUNDEE

By Major (Retired) C Gray

In the Spring of this year, and on the conclusion of an inspection of The Black Watch Memorial at Powrie Brae, Dundee, it was agreed that an immediate and substantial refurbishment and then ongoing maintenance was required to ensure that this famous Memorial was displayed in its full glory. The Dundee Branch of The Black Watch Association decided that they should now take on this project and so on 4th July, Joe Devlin, Barry Mason, Jim Crawford, Chris Thomas and Colin Gray, commenced a period of weeding. A few days later on 9th July the task continued with the team, now enhanced with the addition of three more workers in the form of Willie Barr, Bill Adamson and Bill Lickley. Ray Lawson paid a visit bringing bacon rolls, sausage rolls and egg rolls along with coffee and water. The team did a fantastic job and the area was already looking better but we now needed professionals in to conduct work on the paved, grassed and walled areas.

Through the remaining weeks of July and into August, Colin Gray contacted various local Stonemasons and gardening companies to obtain quotes for the required work. In this same period Joe MacDonald paid a couple of visits to the site to keep the weeds under control.

After brief discussions with two local Black Watch Veterans who run their own gardening companies, namely, Peter Fotheringham of Operation Garden Force and Barry Mason of Barry's Garden Services, they immediately agreed to join forces to refurbish all the paved and grassed areas at Powrie Brae. On Friday 18th August, they were given the go ahead to proceed with their work and duly commenced on the evening of Monday 21st August. By Friday 25th August they had uplifted all the paving slabs on the upper tier of the Memorial, levelled the ground before re-laying all the slabs thereby ensuring that previous trip hazards were eradicated, and all broken slabs had been replaced.

During the following days and weeks, Peter and Barry assisted on occasions by Chris Thomas and Colin Gray, ploughed on with the work, power washed all paving slabs and stonework surrounding the Memorial and created a border around the outside wall of the Memorial where in future, relatives of the fallen can lay their own private memorials. They also edged and cut all the green areas, lifting the cut grass on every occasion.

A huge vote of thanks to Black Watch Veteran, Wullie Whyte for obtaining and delivering a huge amount of paving slabs to replace all the broken ones. Wullie also uplifted and dumped (legally) all the broken slabs and rubble.

At the time of writing this article, the work to lift, level and relay the

main path from the road to the Memorial as well as the area at the bottom of the Memorial steps will be completed before the period of Remembrance. The remaining areas will be finished thereafter.

Once the gardeners have completed all their work, and funds raised (see article re Black Watch Memorials in Dundee & a Fundraising Appeal), a local Stonemason will be employed to repoint the stonework on the wall surrounding the Memorial and the plinth on which the Statue stands.

Thereafter, it will be a case of continual maintenance of all areas.



The Weeding Team having a well-earned rest



Chris Thomas working hard



Levelling Work Commences



Levelling Complete

Association Clubs

CURLING REPORT 2022-2023

By Major (Retired) J M K Erskine MBE

MATCH v ARGYLL AND SUTHERLAND HIGHLANDERS

The annual match against the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders took place at The Peak, Stirling on 3 November. Each Regiment fielded two rinks and things did not start well for the Black Watch. After four ends the Black Watch was 2-11 down and the signs were ominous. However, suddenly the matches swung and much to everyone's surprise The Black Watch won the match 15-13 after seven ends. The 'A' team won 11-5 after three comfortable wins in the last three ends and the 'B' rink recovered their situation although they did lose 4-8. The rinks were:

'A' Rink	'B' Rink
Jamie Montgomery	James Duncan Millar
Hugh Rose	Alan McEwen
Ramsay Macdonald	David Noble
Jamie Erskine	Jon Twine

Unfortunately, The Peak had not restarted serving food after the pandemic and so we had to have lunch in a local diner but it did give everyone the chance to catch up with chums.

MATCH v LOWLANDERS

The next match was not until Thursday 16 February and was against the Lowlanders and played in Kinross. This was a closely fought match with the rinks playing two lots of four ends against the opposition rinks. The A Rink lost its eight ends by 7 shots to 9 but the B Rink won 9-6 and so the Black Watch were the overall winners by 16-15. The rinks were:

'A' Rink	'B' Rink
Jamie Montgomery	James Duncan Millar
Hugh Rose	Will Henderson
David Noble	Mike Riddell-Webster
Jamie Farquhar	Jon Twine

MATCH v HIGHLANDERS

On 9 March the Regiment played its third inter-regimental match of the season, against the Highlanders. This was another very close match, being decided on the last stone of the match. The 'A' Rink won the first four ends against the Highlanders 'A' Rink 5-1 and the 'B' rink peeled 3-3 against the 'B' Rink. The rinks then swapped and in the second half the 'A' Rink lost 0-4 and the 'B' Rink lost 4-5. The overall score was therefore 13-12 to the Highlanders. Lunch was held at Balhousie Castle where we were looked after very well. The rinks were:

'A' Rink	'B' Rink
James Duncan Millar	Will Henderson
Hugh Rose	Jamie Erskine
Jon Twine	Mike Riddell-Webster
Bruce Osborne	Malcolm Innes

HIGHLAND AND LOWLAND BRIGADES CURLING CLUB BONSPIEL

The Highland and Lowland Brigades Curling Club (HLBCC) Bonspiel was held on 24 March. Strangely each Regiment seemed to struggle to find curlers and, while BW fielded two rinks the 'B' rink only had three in the team. The KOSB also had problems, only fielding two members in their one rink, with the other places being filled by outsiders! There were three sessions of 5 ends during the day, split by lunch and the AGM. In the first session the BW 'A' rink beat RS 7-2 while the 'B'

rink lost to the HLDERS 'B' rink 3-6, a match that was tied 3-3 going into the last end. After lunch the 'A' rink were beaten by the HLDERS 'B' 2-5 and the 'B' rink was beaten 0-7 by RS. In the final session the 'A' rink beat HLDERS 'A' 7-2 while the 'B' rink played against A and SH in the wooden spoon game. After the five ends this match was tied 4-4 but, because the BW rink won three of the five ends, it avoided the wooden spoon. The responsibility of organising the day, keeping the scores and working out who played who in each session fell to Al Campbell A and SH. After he had worked it all out, the 'KOSB' rink which won three out of three games were the overall winners. BW 'A' came second taking into account the shots for and against compared to RHF and HLDERS 'A' both of whom also won two matches. The BW rinks were:

'A' Rink	'B' Rink
Jamie Montgomery	James Duncan Millar
Will Henderson	Jamie Erskine
Hugh Rose	Bruce Osborne
Malcolm Innes	

Jamie Montgomery must be congratulated because, at the AGM, he was unanimously elected Vice-President of the HLBCC.

The curlers would also like to thank the Regimental Association for their continued financial support in the inter-Regimental matches. It is so much appreciated.

2023-2024 SEASON

Looking ahead, the current dates for the regimental matches for the 2023-2024 season are:

2 November 2023 - Match v Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in Perth.

15 February 2024 - Match v The Lowlanders in Perth

7 March 2024 - Match v The Highlanders in Perth

All the above matches will be played between two rinks in the morning with lunch at Balhousie Castle afterwards.

The Highland and Lowland Brigades Curling Club Bonspiel is currently due to take place on Friday 22 March 2024.

On 2 November those who curled against the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders ensured we retained the Macrae Cup- 15-14. It turned out to be quite tense but it was a good result for us. The closeness of the final score does not really tell the whole story- one of our rinks won 12-2, while our other rink lost 3-12! The Macrae Cup will only show we won 15-14. I will be in touch either in December or early January about the next two matches which are on 15 February (v Lowlanders) and 7 March (v Highlanders). For both matches we are the 'hosts' and will be in Perth in the morning with lunch at Balhousie Castle afterwards.

BLACK WATCH ASSOCIATION GOLF

Balbirnie Park 16th June 2023

SPONSORED BY SIDEY LTD AND RED HACKLE SECURITY

By Major (Retired) A M Stewart BEM

Editor's Note: A "MAJOR" THANK YOU

The Black Watch Association owes Major Alex Stewart and his wife Kath a huge "thank you" for the many years that they have planned and run the annual Regimental Golf Matches.

This has been no easy task as he has had to gather a group of loyal sponsors, as well as to maintain the interest of the regimental golfers. He has welcomed officers and soldiers from The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland and he and Kath (a keen and successful golfer in her own right) had to mastermind the organisation for each match day, gathering in players, money and prizes.

During Alex's tenure the match has been held at Kinross, Muckhart and now Balbirnie Park and each move required additional work.

We hope that he can now relax and enjoy his golf but without Alex and Kath's hard work and loyalty the golfing fraternity would not be in such a strong position.

Dougie Morgan and Rory McIntyre are now the joint Secretaries.

The Black Watch Association Golf Meeting was held at Balbirnie Park again on 16th June 2023 which represents the first event of the Reunion weekend. This year's competition was played in sweltering conditions and was a real test of stamina, especially in the afternoon Texas Scramble round. 33 players took part which is close to the maximum we can manage but sadly the Pipe Major and Drum Major from the Battalion had to pull out at the last minute due to changes in flights to Kenya. We did welcome Sergeant Barrie Fraser who is now a regular attendee and is currently based at ITC Catterick.

There was some exceptional scoring throughout the day and clearly players were enjoying the sun on their backs. Full results from the morning competitions were:

- **Gross competition**
 - 1st Stefan Mackie - 71
 - 2nd Billy Ramsay - 73
 - 3rd Jimmy Grover - 80
- **Net competition**
 - 1st Arthur Keith - 62
 - 2nd Mike Carstairs - 70
 - 3rd Davie Smith - 70
- **Stableford competition**
 - 1st William (Beab) Laing - 41 points
 - 2nd Dougie Morgan - 39 points
 - 3rd John Jack - 37 points

This was the second year in a row that Billy Ramsay has been pipped at the post for best scratch, despite having played excellent consistent golf throughout. Let's hope 2024 is your year Billy! It is also the second year in a row that Beab Laing has won the Stableford prize so the handicap committee will be keeping a close eye on him next year. A (very) slight vote of sympathy goes to Billy Whytock who lost out on 3rd place in both the scratch and net competitions on countback.

The Texas Scramble competition in the afternoon is extremely popular, even in the extreme heat experienced this year and it is keenly contested. There was only 0.28 between the 1st and 3rd placed teams. The winners were:

1st Place	2nd Place
Gordon (Killer) Kennedy	Dougie Morgan
Craig Peters	Ian Johnston
Steve Thomson	Billy Johnston

Novelty prizes were won by Arthur Keith - Nearest the Pin, Stefan Mackie - Longest Drive and Alec Merritt 'won' the prize for most golf played! Having featured in the winners list last year, this was obviously an off day for Alec. Arthur Keith scored the only 2 of the day so he had his hands full going home.

All of the prizes (except his own) were presented by our co-sponsor, Arthur Keith and we are grateful to him, and to Sidey Ltd, for their continued support of this important Regimental event.

Following the prize giving, we held a raffle due to the generosity of our players who brought along a variety of items to be used as extra prizes. We were especially grateful to Gordon Kennedy who brought along a voucher for a 4 ball at Ballumbie Golf Club among other things. Kev Wann also brought along another 4 ball voucher for Lytham St Annes which was bought by Dougie Morgan and the funds were passed on to the Regimental Association. Many thanks again to all who contributed. It adds a nice extra touch to the day.

So to next year. The date is set for 21st June 2024 which, as usual, is the day before the Regimental Reunion. It will be held at Balbirnie Park again who have provided excellent service and first class catering to us all over the past three years. Alex Stewart has decided to pass on the reins for the golf to Dougie Morgan and Rory McIntyre. We are sure that Dougie and Rory will bring new energy and lots of fresh ideas to this well-established event and we know the golf will be in good hands going forward. Anyone who would like to take part in

next year's event, who is not already signed up to our website, should contact Dougie Morgan on djgraham61@gmail.com There is a limit on the number of players but a reserve list will be kept in case of any cancellations.



Arthur Keith, who won the Best Net prize - The Alan Mutch Memorial Cup - receiving the cup from Billy Whytock



Beab Laing celebrating the winning of best Stableford!



Texas Scramble runners up. Ian Johnston, Dougie Morgan and Billy Johnston



The prize table, funded almost entirely by our sponsors, Sidey Ltd and Red Hackle Security



The three main prize winners with Major (Retired) Alex Stewart



Winner of the Best Scratch (Gross Score) Stefan Mackie



Winners of the Texas Scramble. Dave Smith, Gordon Kennedy and Craig Peters

BLACK WATCH ASSOCIATION HILLWALKING CLUB



The Black Watch Association has formed a Hillwalking Club and is now recruiting for Members. In order to provide potential members with enough information as to assist in their decision making about joining the Club, extracts from the Club Constitution are hereby reproduced.

OBJECTIVES The Club is established to pursue the following objectives:

- Enjoyment of and participation in Hillwalking within Scotland and in particular, the mountains described as Munros, Corbetts and Grahams.
- The organisation, management, and development of Hillwalking for all members of the Club to the full extent possible considering their own ambitions and abilities.
- To provide a structure for the promoting of Comradeship amongst the Club members.
- The sharing of knowledge and experience to support skills development, progression, risk awareness, safety, and self-reliance among its members.
- The promotion of respect for and responsible access to Scotland's Mountain environment, minimising our impact on the landscapes we explore.

AFFILIATION The Club will be affiliated to Mountaineering Scotland, which is the recognised representative body for hillwalkers, climbers and mountaineers in Scotland.

MEMBERSHIP Membership of the Club is open to all Black Watch Association members, their spouses, widows, widowers, children, Trustees and employees of the Black Watch Regimental Trust, Friends of the Black Watch Museum and anyone who has a Black Watch connection as verified and agreed by the Committee.

Membership categories will be:

- Full – Members of the Black Watch Association; i.e. those who served in the Regiment.
- Adult – all others over 18 years of age
- Youth – all under 18 years of age

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE The affairs of the Club shall be conducted by a Management Committee consisting of as a minimum, Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and an Outing Co-ordinator.

OUTINGS The Club outings will be organised to climb Scotland's Munros (mountains over 3,000 ft in height), Corbetts (mountains over 2,500 ft but less than 3,000 ft in height) and Grahams (mountains over 2,000 ft but less than 2,500 ft in height). There are, 282 Munros, 221 Corbetts and 219 Grahams and our outings could include a mixture of all these.

Outings will consist of either a short day (up to approximately 10 miles), a long day (up to approximately 20 miles), a weekend (up to approximately 40 miles) or a 3-to-5-day outing (up to approximately 100 miles).

Outings as a minimum, will be held at least once in every calendar month (weather permitting), however, there will be opportunities

for numerous outings to be conducted especially within the spring to autumn period. Members are expected to choose outings that are within their own physical capabilities.

INSURANCE One of the primary benefits of Mountaineering Scotland club membership is their specialist insurance policy for clubs. The constitution of our club almost certainly makes Committee Members personally liable for the liability of the organisation. Specialist comprehensive third-party liability insurance is therefore an essential requirement.

The Mountaineering Scotland Combined Liability policy is designed to protect our club, its office bearers and members for claims awarded and arising from issues related to club governance and a broad range of mountaineering and social activities.

The Combined Liability policy is designed specifically to meet the needs of Mountaineering Scotland and its affiliated individual members, club members and associations.

Insurance cover is only available to fully paid-up members who have a permanent UK address.

Youths, (defined within our Club as anyone under 18 years old) may join our club and participate in our activities and the club will be indemnified against liability. Although youths legally cannot be held responsible for their actions, the insurance charge is still applicable because when liabilities are incurred by a youth in respect of third-party personal injury or property damage, the duty of care will ultimately lie with the club. All youths will be classed as Youth members of our Club.

YOUTH ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT OR NOMINATED ADULT Our club will permit youths to attend club outings, but only when accompanied by a parent/carer, or an adult nominated by a parent/carer. Providing this is adhered to, the club is not required to adopt the Mountaineering Scotland Child Protection Policy or a policy of its own.

A parent/carer may give consent to anyone they wish to act as a nominated adult. A "nominated adult" is someone aged 18 years or over to whom a parent consents to taking their child hillwalking or mountaineering.

In situations involving an overnight outing, then the parent/carer must provide the Club and the nominated adult with consent in writing, to formally advise the club of the arrangement, parental / emergency contact information, and any medical issues.

The parent/carer and the youth must understand the type of activities to be undertaken and any arrangements relating to transport and accommodation. The parent/carer may then make an informed decision regarding the youth's participation.

The Mountaineering Scotland publication "Children ...Hill Walking, Climbing and Mountaineering: Information for Parents" may be downloaded from the Mountaineering Scotland website at **kids-info.asp** and will assist parents to make choices concerning the type of activity which may be suitable for their child.

TRANSPORT On most occasions, it would be expected that members use their own transport to get to and from outing locations and should liaise with other members for vehicle sharing. For certain outings, centralised transport may be provided by the Club, however, there may be a requirement for members to contribute to transport costs. The Committee will confirm the transport requirements for each outing.

FEES Annual Membership runs from 01st April of any year until 31st March of the following year. Fees will be used to finance the cost of our affiliation with Mountaineering Scotland (which includes our Insurance Policy) and any administrative costs as deemed necessary by the Committee. Fees for the coming year (01 April-31 March) must be paid to the Club by 15th March of the previous year. The cost of Annual Fees is;

Full member	-	£30.00
Adult member	-	£30.00
Youth member	-	£20.00

GRANTS As a Black Watch Association Club approved by The Regimental Trust, an annual Grant to the Club to assist in offsetting administrative costs will be applied for. The amount of the Grant will be determined by the Trustees of the Black Watch Regimental Trust on an annual basis.

CODE OF CONDUCT All Members will be required to abide by a Club Code of Conduct, a Complaints Policy and must sign a Club Members Declaration agreeing to abide by those rules contained within those documents.

Are you Interested in joining this Club? If so, please contact Major (Retd) Colin Gray via his email address at **blackshade2017@outlook.com** as soon as possible but certainly before the end of February 2024 so that membership numbers can be confirmed, Fees collected, and Insurance obtained. If you would be willing and able to assume any of the office bearer positions within the Management Committee, then please inform Colin accordingly.

It is hoped to obtain sufficient numbers of members to form the Club with a start date of 01st April 2024.

Further details can be obtained, and questions answered via Colin's email address.

MATTERS HISTORICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER SIC LIKE THINGS

'History', in the words of Henry Ford, the great champion of the gas guzzling automobile, 'is just one damned thing after another.' For those of us who suffered in silence during boring history classes there is a good deal to be said for this point of view.

On the other hand, the Black Watch Museum have taken a very different view. In a new initiative involving the three universities in the old 42nd Regimental recruiting area, it has set up a scholarship for one Honours year student per university who wants to research aspects of our regimental history. There is a fourth scholarship reserved for former Black Watch or 3 SCOTS soldiers, or members of their extended families. These are essentially practical scholarships where five days' access to the regimental archives is given free of charge to each student and they receive free travel and a snack meal for every day of study. All students will have access to museum professionals and will be assigned a mentor working at Doctoral level. These scholarships are formally known as Black Watch Regimental Trust Scholarships. The first students will be selected at the end of session 2023 -2024.

But how does the Regimental Trust stand to gain from this? First, the students granted the scholarship are amongst the best in their year and research findings which they will share with the Museum will be of best quality. Of equal importance is the prestige this development brings to the Museum and to the Regimental Trust. It is always worth remembering too that Julie Danskin's much acclaimed book *A City at War; The 4th Black Watch, Dundee's Own* was written and researched under similar circumstances.

Other initiatives, to undo the damage wrought by generations of boring history teachers to the cause of progressing historical consciousness amongst former Black Watch men, are also in the planning stages. History is all around us, too. It is proposed that the nascent Association History Group can arrange for those interested to visit local events: Killiecrankie, Bannockburn, Culloden and Fort George are one option, but so too are visits to the east coast Second World War defences in Angus, or the Forth Bridge defences from the Great War; or in a local venue setting up meetings to identify faces and places in old regimental photographs. Equally, several anniversaries of important historical events are fast approaching, not least of which is the anniversary of the Highland Division return to St. Valery in 1944. There are others too, and for a regiment whose history stretches as far into the past as does ours, these are not hard to find.

... And for those still not greatly enthused by a call to love history and forgive terrible teaching – just think of this sort of thing as another form of comradeship. Get in touch with your suggestions and ideas with the Association office or via your local branch.

Museum News

2023 has been an exciting year for the museum team for reasons of staffing, displays and developments. Funding is the lifeblood of research and our ever-developing archive as well as the more obvious updating and presentation of our exhibits and displays in the museum galleries. We have been fortunate to receive grant funding which has allowed us to appoint a new Learning and Audiences Officer and to continue the work of the Project Archivist for a fixed period. Both these positions make a considerable difference to how the museum can share what we have in the collection and archive, both through the discovery of new stories and information and in the ways that we engage with our visitors. (Concurrently, with a generous donation received our applications for other grants will continue to seek out that lifeblood to enable us to assure the output from their posts well into the future.)

Much of our focus this year has, of course, been on The Hauntings. In the months running up to his arrival in July, the team had been working on a variety of projects including the creation of new schools' programmes, community workshops and exhibitions.

In the galleries, we have had two special exhibitions in our temporary exhibition space. The first, which was installed in the autumn of 2022, focussed on The Black Watch during the Korean War and included letters and artefacts relating to 2nd Lieutenant David Nicoll, who was killed in August 1952. These letters provided the narrative for our Remembrance dinner that November.

Our second special exhibition, REPAIR, had brought to light stories of injured Black Watch soldiers and the objects and archive they created through their rehabilitation. These items varied from carved children's toys to beautifully written script. Visitors were encouraged to imagine the difficulties felt by those who had experienced – and others who still do, traumatic life limiting injuries by having a go at our new participatory activity. This consisted of assembling a simple jigsaw, made more difficult by wearing a pair of heavy gloves with the loss of dexterity in one's hands or wearing adapted glasses which gave the effect of a visual impairment.

In addition, three new panel exhibitions were created to highlight the themes of The Hauntings. The first looked at the inspiration, creation and installation of the sculpture, while the second focussed on the impact of conflict in all its domains on the human. Finally, as part of our remembrance commemorations, the last set of panels reflected on those who made the ultimate sacrifice through the witness of four men in our archive.

The museum continues to accept new artefacts and archive into the collection. Recently we were delighted to receive a collection of letters written by a Lance Corporal William Malcolm to his young son during the First World War. Starting with his training in Nigg Camp in 1916, they continue right through to July 1918. Tragically, he was killed in action on 28 July 1918.

One of the highlights for the museum team this year has been the start of photograph identification sessions with Black Watch Association members. Our Project Archivist sourced photographs in our archive for which we had little or no information of the event, participants, location or when it had been taken. In April, we met with members of the Perth branch here at the castle. Recently, we travelled down to Kirkcaldy to meet with the Fife branch. Both sessions were really successful in providing the museum with detail it could not otherwise have accessed, highlighting the wealth of knowledge held by those who served with the Regiment. It is our intention to travel to other branches so that this type of more convenient to the majority, regionalised interaction becomes the first of many.



Identity parade at Balhousie Kevin Murphy and Alan McEwen



Fife photoing



Was it really a military subject they're looking at? Majors McLeod and Rose and Vicki Spinks of the Collections

The originals of all such photos are held in the collection. For the archive to be capable of holding such items in a neutral environment, for the benefit of future research, it has to be in a critically controlled medium of temperature and humidity. As we move forward, in keeping with many other museums, we are constantly looking for and grateful to receive grants or other sources of funding which enable us to increase our storage capacity.

Not Just a Bistro

The castle bistro is a warm and welcoming space for all. We aim to give each and every person - whether they are a frequent visitor or first timer, a young family or a veteran, crossing our threshold a home from home experience that makes them want to come back time and time again. Of course, the Home of The Black Watch is here, at Balhousie, therefore Association members and their families are made especially welcome. We serve breakfast until 11.30 then straight into lunch from 11.30 – 3pm and, of course, we also serve delicious baking, teas and coffees throughout the day seven days a week.

Not everyone may realise that we are also fully licensed should you wish the odd tippie with lunch.

There again, this bright and familiarly attired room looking onto the courtyard is not just a bistro. With its pictures and photographs on the walls and the magnificently heroic painting by William Barnes Mollen - which everyone who has served will recognise, 'The Black Watch at Bay' on the end wall, there are also the events we look after. Through the diversity of the events and the working of the bistro, our staff and facilities play an integral role in the success and ongoing development of Balhousie castle. The castle bistro, ably supported by our kitchen, has earned a justifiably high reputation for good quality food and service and as a consequence we attract a wide range of social, commercial and regimental events. Welcoming and encouraging all, we have our part to play in continuing to make money for the upkeep of the whole place.

We hire out suitably available spaces in the castle for various events such as weddings, birthday and anniversary celebrations and of course a yearly programme of regimental events. Upstairs, we have the Wavell room, able to accommodate up to 12 diners or participants at a meeting supported by appropriate wifi and conference or kitchen facilities. On the ground floor, adjacent to the bistro, we have the elegant Queen mother room for larger gatherings and also, on a more hands on activity style activity, we have the Waterloo room.

If it is not dinners and receptions for others, we also host the annual Association Reunion, run a sequence of evening lectures for the Friends, host The Black Watch Ball and provide formally organised dinners and receptions. We were delighted, this year, to host the Perth Branch Croix de Guerre dinner at the castle for the first time and to hear that the success of the evening means we will also continue to host it in 2024.



Part of the bistro team Morgan, Maeya, Debbie and Esther, Croix de Guerre dinner 23

Readers and members of all branches may also like to be reminded of The Balhousie Offer. Anyone who has served in The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) in any rank wishing to hold an event with us at the castle whether regimental or private might consider we give complimentary room hire to all of our Association members as well as a 20% discount on food and no corkage charges, but equally, no

discount on alcohol. The offer applies to pre-booked events only (ie not Bistro Bookings) for which prices, discounts and any additional staffing charges are agreed in advance.

So, whether you're coming in for lunch or a snack or that it is for a planned formal event we hope to see you all soon.

Retailing at Balhousie Castle

Entering the shop, the Retail department is the first point of contact for everyone coming into Balhousie Castle, the home the Black Watch Regimental Trust. Whether coming frequently or someone visiting for a first time - perhaps arriving for a meeting with a colleague, to visit the museum or, most numerous, as a customer to the Bistro or the Shop, each person is greeted at the front desk and directed to where they need to be. For seven days a week, the staff of the Retail Department provide much more than a shop, it is the hub of all activity in the castle.

The retail staff also act as the ticket office for Museum entry, giving a warm welcome and an introduction to the Museum. There are entry rates for Association members, for groups and families. We explain the layout of the galleries and what to expect to find which makes the visit easier to navigate.

The Castle runs a host of different events and activities for the public, for Association members and for Friends of the Black Watch. These include such as lectures, craft sessions, targeted coffee mornings and dinners. We in the Retail department sell tickets for all such events, selling them in the shop, online or over the telephone.

In addition to Association members, we have a remarkable number of people dropping in who, having gained a measure for how they are received, will spontaneously ask for advice into their relatives' careers or service with the Regiment. Recently, having chatted with the Reception, an American visitor was able to establish - with help from the Association and the Archive, that her ancestor had served in the 42nd of Foot during the American Wars of Independence and had stayed there 'afterwards'. Similarly, as you will see from articles in this year's Red Hackle itself, we are able to put casual visitors to the museum in touch with the other departments of the Trust which result in significant gaps in research being filled and a fuller picture emerging - see the article Peter's Story.

Casual visitors to the Castle include entire cycling teams, from Canada and the Isle of Man. This was especially so during the preparation for Gran Fondo and Medio Fondo cycling events which closed roads across Perthshire. Knowing of Balhousie Castle through their Black Watch of Canada connections the Canadian team heard of The Hauntings on local media and found we would be a great backdrop for their publicity photos.



The Entire Manx cycling team leaves Balhousie August 2023



The majority of the Canadian Gran Fondo cycling Team at Balhousie Castle August 2023

In the shop, we sell a huge selection of products to meet the needs of all our diverse range of visitors. From locally sourced products whenever possible, trying to keep the prices affordable, to regimental items such as red hackles to books, clothing to inscribed glassware and other regalia, we have something for all audiences and all ages whether they are visiting the Bistro, Museum or are a Black Watch Serving or Association member. We also have an online shop to meet the needs of our national and international customers. There are plans afoot for this is to be upgraded which will improve shoppers' ability to find and purchase items from us more easily.



Bruce the Canadian cyclist team's Captain

FRIENDS OF THE BLACK WATCH Castle & Museum

Friends

By Bill Macpherson, Chairman

The last year has been a year of change for the Friends' organisation from the Presidency to the membership of the Trustees/Management Committee and membership of the Events Committee.

At the AGM in December, we said farewell to two stalwarts of the Friends organisation. Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin stood down having been President of the Friends since they were formed. James Watt, our guiding light on finances and constitution, also decided it was time to retire from his position on the management committee. We thank them both for the active support they have given over many years.

At the same AGM we were able to welcome two new members to the Management Committee/Trustees: Dr Nicky Small and Captain (Retd) Bruce Osborne. Dr Small brings with her a wealth of experience in the academic sphere of history and Captain Osborne has stepped into the position that is traditionally the most difficult one to fill in any voluntary organisation – the Treasurer. We thank them both for agreeing to join us.

Another change at the AGM was agreement to the adoption of amendments to the constitution of the Friends charity. With the amalgamation of The Black Watch Association and The Black Watch Museum Trust it became necessary to update our own constitution to reflect that change. The core objective, however, hasn't changed, that of supporting the Museum that stands as a testament to the men and families of the Regiment for over nearly 300 years.

Our Chairwoman of many years standing (since the inception of The Friends I think), Mrs Sarah Riddell-Webster, intimated that she felt it time to retire as Chairwoman. A couple of months later, somehow, I find myself in that role. I will strive to keep up her good work. I am very glad to report, however, that Sarah has stayed on the Management Committee and retained the more arduous position of Chairwoman of the Events Committee. Thank you, Sarah, and for all the support you have given me since I took on this role.

I am also glad to report that the Riddell-Webster presence has been increased in the management structure by Major General Mike Riddell-Webster agreeing to take on the Presidency of the organisation. One couldn't wish for a more able successor to Sir Alistair.

Probably the most visible aspect of the Friends has continued over the past year – that of the monthly Lecture programme.

In November 2022, Tess Monteith gave us a lecture on the battle of El Alamein. What made this event particularly notable was that Tess included a number of speakers who either were at the battle or whose family member had been at the battle. It was a real privilege to have two El Alamein veterans present on the evening.

In December, Major (Retd) Simon Carew Price gave us first-hand information on the lead up to and then the fighting involved in the

taking of Mount Tumbledown during the Falklands War.

January's lecture was given by Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Leslie Boswell on the Fall of Malaya & Singapore 1941-1942. This covered the horrors of that lost campaign and the deprivations of the men that fought in it.

In February, Colonel (Retd) AK Miller took us through the politics and the practicalities that led to the formation of the State of Israel from 'The Hope' in 1877 through to the end result in 1948.

March's lecture saw the return of Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Andy Middlemiss talking on the Malaya Emergency starting with the invasion by Chinese insurgents in 1948.

Our newly appointed President Major General (Retd) Mike Riddell-Webster spoke in April on Iraq, 20 years on. This was the campaign that was to see The Black Watch, Royal Highland Regiment awarded its final Battle Honour.

Our May lecture, given by Professor Gill Plain, had a subject that was different to our norm being on the poetry and literature of World War II. Most people are aware of the World War I poets, but the World War II literature was a reminder that the written word can exist long after the spoken word has dropped from memory.

In June, Professor Niall Barr talked about the part The Black Watch played in Operation HUSKY, the invasion of Sicily in 1943. It was almost exactly 80 years from when the 1st, 5th and 7th Battalions had taken part in the invasion.

August's Battle of Kursk lecture by Major General (Retd) Mungo Melvin was a fascinating comparison of the German and Russian tactics around Kursk in 1943 and the similarities to the campaign currently being fought over the same ground by Ukraine and Russia in 2023.

September's lecture by Tony Pollard covered the archaeological investigation of the site of the Battle of Waterloo and the very real information it can give us about the battle and the way in which it was fought.

Full details of each month's lecture and how to book can be found on the Museum website at www.theblackwatch.co.uk. Although the Friends Events Committee organise and host the monthly lectures, all proceeds go directly to The Black Watch Castle and Museum. The Friends income continues to come just from our memberships, so thank you to all our members for their continued support. So far this year we have donated over £11,000 to the Museum including a major contribution to the cost of bringing the stunning 'The Hauntings' sculpture to the Museum and to help further the core work of the Museum. Our fund is there to help and support the Museum when need arises, we have a broad remit and so can help in a variety of different ways.

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

COMMANDING OFFICER'S FOREWORD

Commanding Officer: Lieutenant Colonel M C Hayton/
Lieutenant Colonel R Smith (des)

Second-in-Command: Major A J Magee

Adjutant: Captain T M Thorpe

Regimental Sergeant Major:
Warrant Officer Class 1 (RSM) A Ferrier

This year's foreword will be my final one as Commanding Officer of The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, and so I'd first like to thank the Association and all the members of The Black Watch family for the support and kindness you have given me and the Battalion over the past two and half years. As is tradition, my contribution to this journal will paint a picture of a busy pace of life in the Battalion, but if successful, I hope it will also remind the readers of how, despite the amount of change some things always remain the same.



A dip in the Moray Firth - CO's PT at Fort George



Sharpshooter Barry Buddon

The last twelve months have seen the Battalion's reputation for excellence and dedication enhanced. We returned from our tour in Eastern Europe on a high, in the knowledge that we had completed a challenging job well. Following a well-earned break, we began the new year by reorbating to get ready to take our place as a Security Force Assistance Battalion (SFAB) and were given our specific area of interest, the Indo-Pacific. This signified a return to the region the Battalion had left more than 25 years ago after closing the British Garrison in Hong-Kong.

Naturally, being the Indo-Pacific facing SFAB we immediately sent Alpha (Grenadier) Company to Kenya for 6 weeks. There they operated alongside the Coldstream Guards during the worst period of rain in recent memories, which saw soldiers resorting to sheltering in Porta-loos to avoid the deluge. As ever, when on exercise with another unit, the Jocks excelled, drawing praise from all around them. Concurrently, as part of our Indo-Pac SFAB journey, the Battalion



headquarters deployed to Bosnia to train the Bosnian Readiness Battalion headquarters to conduct planning as part of their training towards NATO readiness and finally we deployed a training team to Gambia to assist their force preparation ahead of a UN deployment.



Battalion Headquarters in Bosnia

However, the Battalion got its first taste of the Indo Pacific when Alpha (Grenadier) Company deployed to Brunei on Ex SARI BEAR alongside B Company 1 Royal Gurkha Rifles (1RGR) spending a month improving their jungle skills and refamiliarizing themselves with operating in that part of the world.



The Jocks in the Jungle - Brunei

Their deployment was followed rapidly by a Brunei version of the Cambrian Patrol in which the Battalion gained a silver and bronze medal. Thereafter Bravo Company deployed to Korea on Exercise IMJIN WARRIOR, returning to the peninsular 70 years after the last time the red hackle was worn there.



B Company in South Korea

They exercised alongside the Korean 11 Brigade embedding in their teams and headquarters before enjoying some much-earned cultural time in Seoul and visiting some of the battlefields of the war. As I type Alpha (Grenadier) Company are deployed in Hawaii, working alongside the US SFABs with the Royal Thai and the Indonesian Army and the Pipe Major is on USS PEARL HARBOUR touring the Islands of Oceania. Very shortly the Delta (Golden Don) Company will deploy to Japan and the battalion headquarters will deploy to Australia.



Sgt Tudor, Sgt Dalglish, Cpl McLaughlin and LCpl Skirving receiving Army Commendation Medals from the 5 SFAB of the US Army



Reception with the Speaker of the Northern Territories in Darwin
So, activity in the region is very much a reality for the Battalion.



UK and NZ joint planning in Australia

Away from the day job, the Battalion has been equally as active in the sporting arena. Last winter we deployed teams to Norway, Germany, France and Austria to compete in Nordic and Alpine Skiing as well as Bobsleigh, Skelton and Luge.



3 SCOTS Bobsleigh Team



3 SCOTS Rugby team - Army Championship winners in action

The Battalion Rugby team is undefeated in 2023, thanks to the distance teams are prepared to travel to play us and the exceptional coaching from Pte Bulumakau and Maj McRobbie - in that order. Golf remains high on the Battalion's sporting priorities and the team completed a successful tour of Fife and Perthshire this year. However, less traditional sports are also featuring in the Battalion. There are several ice-hockey players and archers, taekwondo is a regular feature on Wednesday afternoons, we even have a Battalion darts team who compete in a local league.

Finally, the Battalion's first Highland Games for many years was a great success with Charlie (Savages) Company coming out on top this time.



Support Company at other times



HQ Company team at the Fort George Highland Games

Alongside this activity we still take time to honour those upon whose shoulders we stand. Red Hackle Day in January still began with Jonny Cope echoing around the ramparts and gunfire for the Jocks. The Officers' Mess won the traditional football game at a canter, before completing the day with a victory in the Sergeants to Officers challenges.



Maxwell Shield inter-company raft race

On Ticonderoga Day the PTIs laid on a 5km gun run, to commemorate the lack of guns in the battle, in a session which is still discussed to this day. As part of our run in to the Aberfeldy Muster the Battalion raised £10k for the Samaritans by walking from Fort George to Aberfeldy over a period of 5 days.



Taberfeldy - from Fort George to Aberfeldy for the Muster

The Charles Hankins prize was awarded to Private Campbell of Bravo Company for his heroics at the scene of a particularly bad car crash and the Andrew Maitland award was given to Captain Scouse Grisdale who, as Welfare Officer, went above and beyond in his two years in the Battalion.

So, it is very much plus ça change in the Battalion. The Jocks are still hard at work, they still have fun and get in to trouble and there is still a deep sense of pride in the hackle and all that it represents and 'Twa recruiting sergeants' is still sung in messes or after socials; The Senior Highland platoon, Doomers and Comrades still have a strong rivalry but fierce esprit de corps.



A (Grenadier) Company on the Palace of Holyroodhouse Guard

We are routinely all over the globe, making a name for ourselves when doing it. Most importantly, the Battalion is respected for its dedication, skill and adaptability. I am sure that you would be as rightly proud of them as I am, there really isn't a better collection of good humoured but formidable soldiers than those that wear the Red Hackle.

Affiliated Regiments

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

BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

Commanding Officer:	Lieutenant Colonel D I D Watson
Second in Command:	Major I Bunce
XO:	Major P Colville
Adjutant:	Captain I Pearson
Regimental Sergeant Major:	Warrant Officer Class 1 B Warwick
Quartermaster:	Major M Morrison
Officer Commanding A Company	Major D Hood
Officer Commanding C Company	Major M Dalzel-Job
Officer Commanding D Company	Captain A Cross
Officer Commanding HQ Company	Major B Cooper

Everyone starts a Newsletter with "It's been a busy year" but in 7 SCOTS case this has been particularly true. This year has seen the Battalion deploy troops on operations, and on overseas exercises to Sicily, Mont Blanc and Croatia. While 7 SCOTS soldiers have been deploying on exercises around Europe we have also been conducting routine training and community engagement activities in all of our company areas throughout the year. All of that does not include the normal day to day activities that keep the wheels greased and the Battalion running smoothly.

In March we deployed 14 personnel on Operation INTERFLEX, the multinational mission to train Ukrainian forces in the UK. These troops formed part of a completely Reserve Sub Unit as part of the 2 RIFLES/4 LANCS Battlegroup. Most of the troops deploying have completed a variety of instructional courses and qualifications before and since deploying and they have been putting these skills to good use throughout the year. By the time they de-mobilise they will have helped train 1,200 Ukrainians and they will return to 7 SCOTS with more knowledge, experience and skills that will greatly enhance our training in years to come. We should also have a number of newly qualified Junior NCOs who will return to lead their troops.

In order to be able to deploy our soldiers on exercises and operations we need to ensure they are properly trained. This year that has meant a series of challenging training weekends on training areas across Scotland building up their Basic Combat Syllabus (BCS) skills so we were ready to deploy on our Annual Deployment Exercise (ADE). These weekends covered basic individual skills, urban skills, fireteam and section level training, patrol skills and culminated in a challenging platoon attack weekend on a very damp Garelochhead Training Area, not to mention finding time to get in the usual fitness tests. This did, however put the troops in a good place when we eventually deployed on ADE which this year was an overseas exercise in Croatia, Exercise SAVA STAR.



Assaulting the position - Platoon Attacks weekend Garelochhead Training Area August 2023



Orders - Patrols training weekend on Castlelaw Training Area June 2023



Preparing to cross the Line of Departure - Platoon Attacks weekend Garelochhead August 2023



Preparing to cross the Line of Departure - Platoon Attacks weekend GareloRight Flanking - Section Attacks on Castlelaw Training Area April 2023

Exercise SAVA STAR deployed in the last two weeks of September. Two weeks on the Gascini Military Training Area in the west of Croatia training alongside the Croatian Armed Forces 2nd Mechanised Battalion “Pumas” from the Guards Armoured Mechanised Brigade. This is quite a high-profile exercise in the Croatian Armed Forces calendar and proved to be a challenging exercise for the 7 SCOTS, as well as 6 SCOTS, 3 SCOTS, Royal Anglian, Royal Irish, REME and RLC troops on the ground. They conducted some urban operations, raids and Fighting in Woods and Forests (FIWAF) culminating with a battalion attack onto an enemy position witnessed by numerous dignitaries from the Croatian Armed Forces, the British Ambassador to Croatia, Simon Thomas, and the Director Reserves, Major General Simon Graham.

This Exercise took an enormous amount of planning and coordination to get to the start line from all members of the battalion. There was a significant amount of staff work and coordination with the Croatian Armed Forces before we deployed. Everyone deploying had to ensure they were fully fit necessitating numerous visits to Medical Centres for hearing tests and vaccinations etc coordinated by the Company Admin Offices, not to mention all of the other personal administration that was required. There was a significant amount of preparation training that everyone also had to complete. The QM dept also had a significant road move through several European countries to get all of the kit and equipment to Croatia and back. At the end of the day the exercise was a success and a lot of experience and training value was gained by all ranks, even if some of that was just how resilient they can be in arduous conditions living out of a bergen in atrocious weather; we went from high 30s and sun splitting the pavement to 36 hours of torrential rain on the first day of the field exercise.



Fighting in Woods and Forests on Ex SAVA STAR September 2023



ENDEX - 7 SCOTS and 2nd Bn PUMAS on Gascini Military Training Area in Croatia at the end of Ex SAVA STAR September 2023

In August, 16 soldiers from across the Battalion deployed on Exercise NORTHERN HIGHLANDER, a summer mountaineering expedition following the world-famous Tour du Mont Blanc trail through France, Italy and Switzerland. Starting in Les Houches, France, the expedition, led by WO2 Sammy Woods covered a total of 170km over 9 days staying in various campsites along the route supported

by a small G4 team led by the RQMS, WO2 Steve Lawrence. This was no small undertaking and the soldiers on the expedition had quite a bit of build-up training before they deployed, not least taking part in the Cateran Yomp (more on this later). The troops thoroughly enjoyed the exercise despite the weather not always being great and issues with one of the vehicles meaning some significant adjustment to movement plans, but these were overcome and the expedition recovered to Scotland in good order.



At the start point in Les Houches - Ex NORTHERN HIGHLANDER August 2023



Descending to the pickup point on day 8 - Ex NORTHERN HIGHLANDER August 2023

We deployed 24 more troops overseas in March on Exercise HUSKY HIGHLANDER, a Battlefield Study to Sicily to look at Operation HUSKY, the allied invasion of Sicily during World War 2 and in particular the part the 51st Highland Division played in it. Organised by the Battalion Second in Command, Maj Ian Bunce, the Study stayed in Catania and travelled daily to various battle sites on the western edge of the island looking at various actions conducted during the operation. From the landings in the South near Pachino where the 51st came ashore to Gerbini on the Plain of Catania where they fought their last major action on the island. These actions and others conducted by neighbouring formations were looked at in turn and discussed in a modern context by the syndicates taking on the study.

While the memory of Operation HUSKY is important to Sicilians (they actually have a very interesting museum in Catania dedicated to it) and there are several locations where fortifications and defences are still visible, due to civil development many other sites now bear little resemblance to the way they were in 1943. The study packs provided images from the campaign but quite a bit of imagination was required to see what the combatants actually had to contend with. The study was very well received by the troops deployed and sparked some interesting debate about how the operation had been conducted compared to how we would go about the same task now. We were ably supported by Major (Retd) Bob Darby ex 3 PARA and a veteran of the Falklands War who now leads Battlefield Studies over the globe – so a big thank you to him for delivering the Study.



Ex HUSKY HIGHLANDER at the landing point of the 51st Highland Division on Sicily



Ex HUSKY HIGHLANDER visiting the Meorial to the 51st Highland Division overlooking Gerbini in the Sferro Hills Sicily

The Ceteran Yomp is a significant challenge held in the Perthshire hills in June. Organised by the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) to raise funds for their very noble cause, this event is a 54 mile yomp over these hills to be completed in 24 hours or less and competitors come from all over the world to take part. As mentioned, the troops on Exercise NORTHERN HIGHLANDER took part in the yomp as part of their build up training. That, however was not our only involvement. The Allied Forces Foundation (AFF) is a charity that was established “to unite wounded, ill, and injured service people and veterans as well as caregivers from US, UK, and allied nations forces in wellness and healing”. The AFF brought a group of approximately 70 service men and women recovering from injuries and trauma from the US, the UK, Canada, Denmark, France, Georgia and many other allied forces including a team of Ukrainians to take part. They had a couple of days to visit some cultural sites in Scotland, including Stirling and

Edinburgh Castles and a distillery tour. Once the yomp was over they had a chance to let their hair down with a Highland Games (and a couple of beers) on the shores of Loch Tay. This is obviously a serious undertaking and 7 SCOTS provided the real life support (food, accommodation and transport) for them while they were in Scotland.

Community Engagement is vital to keep the Army (and wider Armed Forces) in the mind of the public so we can be seen as relevant in the local community as well as on the wider national stage. This has meant that companies have been involved in numerous events all over Scotland, sometimes on our own and at other times with other units and services depending on the scale of the event. Things like the Energy Festival in Perth, an Energy Sport and STEM festival, aimed to encourage positive health and wellbeing by providing taster sessions in a wide range of activities. We were there with the Regular Army and the Royal Navy to promote the Armed Forces as a positive career choice. A Company also spent some time in the Gordon Highlanders Museum helping them maintain their World War 1 Trench exhibit in the course of which they turned it into a Defensive Operations lesson and made use of other exhibits in the museum to conduct Values and Standards training.

So, it would seem that 7 SCOTS has had a particularly busy year and next year shows no sign of slowing down much. Planning is already starting for our annual training exercise next year. 19 Brigade is a new formation brought back into existence specifically to command a large portion of the Army Reserve Combat units. They are running a Brigade exercise in Germany next year where there will be a full Reserve Battalion of 300 to 400 Reservists drawn from all of the units in the Brigade conducting Operations on the Bergen Hohne training area. This deployment will be part of a multinational exercise that will have 16,000 personnel from the UK across 11 different countries as part of a NATO exercise. 2024 already looks like a lot of fun. If you know of anyone who may be interested in taking part in the Army Reserve then please put them in touch with 7 SCOTS and we can assist them in understanding more and invite them to visit a training session.

The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada



Our Unit held a Change of Command ceremony on 10 September 2023. A big thank you goes out to the outgoing Command Team, Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Roy and Chief Warrant Officer François Mamen who have left our unit under RSM Keith Fuller and Lieutenant-Colonel Rob Unger in good health, and more importantly, in good spirits. Best of luck in your next postings.



Pipes and Drums march on for Change of Command ceremony



Lieutenant Colonel Francis Roy gives final salute

Since the last edition of Canada's Red Hackle, the unit has been very active. We sent 78 officers and soldiers on career and other qualifying courses over the year, with two notable mentions, Cpl McEachern and Cpl (PMaj) Kerr, who were top candidates on their respective serials of the Primary Leadership Course (PLQ). All soldiers having completed PLQ have been subsequently promoted to the rank of Master-Corporal and have been assigned a junior leadership position within the Unit.

The effects of global warming resulted in the worst summer forest fire season that Canada has ever experienced, with several provinces and territories becoming overwhelmed and requesting a federal response; seventeen Black Watch soldiers answered the call and were deployed to fight fires in northern Quebec and the Northwest Territories, (N.W.T.) Some of our soldiers in (N.W.T.) experienced a close call and had to evacuate rapidly, being forced to leave behind all their personal equipment. Luckily, the fire did not reach their base and they were able to recover their kit. Thank you to those soldiers who answered the call, to do what we do best, protect Canadians.

The unit's focus over the next few months is to ensure soldier readiness, as we expect to have to generate a significant number for deployments starting in mid-2024. Events of the past 12-18 months have forced our NATO allies to increase the deterrence force deployed in the Baltic region. Canada will take on a leading role by increasing the force package deployed as part of Operation REASSURANCE in Latvia, increasing from a battle group to a brigade group. As the Canadian Armed Forces are currently in reconstitution following the effects of three years of global pandemic, the Army will rely heavily on its Reserve Force to fill billets in Latvia, but also on Operation UNIFIER, Canada's mission to provide training of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and Operation IMPACT, Canada's mission in the Middle East region.

Until the deployment cycle starts, the unit will conduct collective training to keep infantry skills sharp. Our Unit is again responsible for providing leadership and most of the soldiers for a platoon capable of operating in the high Arctic. It is expected that this platoon will participate in a sovereignty operation, a show-the-flag exercise to demonstrate to the world that we take protection of our Arctic region and its people seriously.



FTX, soldiers from A Coy place trip flare during XERUS AGUERRI

Our beloved Bleury Street Armoury is undergoing a massive renovation project centered around an upgrade to the electrical infrastructure, which is expected to continue for the duration of the training year and through a good part of next summer. We hope to be able to hold most of our annual events in the Armoury, and above all we hope this disruption will be over in time for the start of the 2024 training season. Fingers are crossed.

ARTEFACTS FROM THE BLACK WATCH OF CANADA COLLECTION

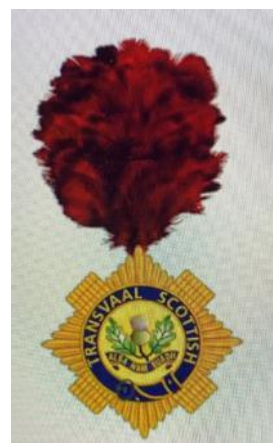
ABERFELDY STATUETTE, 1937

By Earl John Chapman

This hallmarked sterling silver statuette, measuring 43 cm high, was presented to The Black Watch of Canada in the 1950s by General Sir Neil Ritchie. A small plaque attached to the statuette explains how it came into the possession of General Ritchie: "Presented to Brevet Lieut.-Col. Neil Methuen Ritchie, DSO, MC, on his marriage by his brother officers in The Black Watch, past and present, 4th December 1937." Manufactured in Edinburgh by silversmiths Mackay & Chisholm, the statuette is a well-executed miniature reproduction of the memorial cairn erected in Aberfeldy, Perthshire, to commemorate the first muster of The Black Watch of Scotland in 1740. Designed by the Edinburgh-born sculptor, William Birnie Rhind (1853-1933), and costing between four and five hundred pounds sterling to construct, the memorial cairn was unveiled on Saturday, 12 November 1887 by Gavin Campbell (1851-1922), 7th Earl, and 3rd Marquis, of Breadalbane, who donated the land upon which it stands. It features a Highland soldier wearing the original uniform of the gallant 42nd, standing on a cairn which is itself atop a grassy mound. [Editor's Note: For detail on the Aberfeldy Monument, see article by Lt Col (Retd) RM Riddell OBE] General Ritchie was a great friend of Canada's Black Watch, having first visited Regimental Headquarters in 1937. On retirement from the British Army in 1951, he decided to live in Canada. He was in Montreal for a short time where he became well acquainted with the Canadian Regiment, serving on its Advisory Board where "his advice and wise counsel were invaluable." In 1953, for business reasons, he moved to Toronto but still maintained a keen interest in the regiment. He died in Toronto on 11 December 1983. General Ritchie presented other items to The Black Watch of Canada, including the Bengal Tiger Skin also featured in this series of articles.



Aberfeldy Silver Statue 1937 - Courtesy of The Black Watch of Canada Museum & Archives, photo by Peter Ferst



Transvaal Scottish Regiment Cap Badge

Transvaal Scottish Regiment Affiliation with The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment)

Editor's note: This article is the transcript of a significantly longer letter sent by TSRA Jul 23 now held by the Archive.

In October 1927, the Transvaal Scottish was affiliated to The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) following a request by Lieutenant Colonel CS Rendall, Commanding Officer the Transvaal Scottish to Lieutenant Colonel LP Evans VC CMG DSO, Commanding Officer 2nd Battalion The Black Watch who wrote 'On behalf of all ranks 2nd Bn The Black Watch, I wish to express our appreciation of the compliment you have paid the Regiment in desiring affiliation with The Black Watch and to thank you for it. We are all most pleased that the affiliation has been sanctioned, and desire to offer you the warmest welcome.'

The Transvaal Scottish and the Red Hackle

In 1938, Lieutenant Colonel WE Dalrymple, Commanding the newly resuscitated 2nd Battalion Transvaal Scottish, approached the Commanding Officers of the 1st and 2nd Battalions The Black Watch, Lieutenant Colonel AV Holt DSO and Lieutenant Colonel AK McLeod, both stationed in the United Kingdom at the time, for permission for 1st and 2nd Battalions Transvaal Scottish to wear the Red Hackle of The Black Watch, on the basis that the Regiment had been affiliated to The Black Watch since 1927. Both Commanding Officers gave their approval, but the decision lay with the Colonel of the Regiment, General Sir Archibald Cameron. In due course news was received by the Defence Headquarters in Pretoria that approval had been given - a distinction The Black Watch had gained in the early 1800s. In this way the Transvaal Scottish was the first Commonwealth regiment to be accorded this honour.

The Founder of the Transvaal Scottish

John George Stewart-Murray, the Marquis of Tullibardine, later 8th Duke of Atholl, was born on 15 December 1871. Educated at Eton, he was gazetted as a 2nd lieutenant in 3rd (Militia) Battalion The Black Watch in 1891. He was attached to 1st (Royal) Dragoons for service in the Boer War and took part in the Relief of Ladysmith and the Battles of Colenso, Spion Kop, Vaal Krantz, Tugela Heights and Pieter's Hill.

On 9 June 1902 shortly after the Boer War had ended, Tullibardine raised the Transvaal Scottish Volunteers as an infantry unit to be part of the embryonic Defence Force of the Transvaal Colony. He found the Caledonian Society of Johannesburg just as supportive as in December

1900 when Lord Kitchener had invited him to raise and command the Scottish Horse, recruited from Scots all over South Africa. The Regiment first saw action in Natal during the Zulu Rebellion of 1906.

A 2nd battalion was raised for service in the German South West Africa Campaign 1914-15. Both battalions saw action in different sectors. The 1st Battalion was demobilised in August 1915 while the 2nd Battalion was disbanded. A large proportion of both battalions re-enlisted in the 4th SAI (South Africa Scottish), an Imperial Service Unit, which was the 4th regiment of 1st SA Infantry Brigade. Like other countries of the Empire, the local Defence Act disallowed 1 and 2TS from serving beyond their country's borders under their own name. The SA Scottish served with distinction in Libya, France and Flanders 1916-1918, earning 10 Battle Honours.

The Transvaal Scottish re-formed after WW1 and was involved in the suppression of the Rand Revolt in 1922. Three battalions served in the Second World War of 1939-1945.

1TS helped defeat Mussolini's troops in East Africa in 1941, then fought the Afrika Korps in the Western Desert of North Africa in 1942, notably at Gazala and El Alamein. In 1943 it amalgamated with the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles and the Rand Light Infantry to campaign in Italy with the 13th South Africa Brigade. This new creation was known as the 4DSR' - Dukes, Scottish and Rand Light Infantry.

In 1936 2TS had been resuscitated and brigaded with two battalions of the SA Police to form the 6th South African Brigade. The brigade saw action at Sollum, Halfaya Pass, Acroma Keep and Commonwealth Box before 2TS was captured at Tobruk in 1942. (See letter in Correspondence.)

3TS also served in East Africa before deploying to North Africa where it was outnumbered and overrun by enemy armour in a desperate battle at Sidi Rezegh in November 1941.

1 & 2TS amalgamated in 1954; 3TS resuscitated after WW2 as 7th Medium Regiment (SAA) (3TS) was disbanded in 1960, but 2TS was re-formed in 1970. 1TS took part in the incursion into Angola in 1976 while 2TS served along the Caprivi Strip. Both battalions mounted counter-insurgency operations during the Border War until 1984. Until that year men of both battalions were called up at least once a year for three months service in the South West Africa Border War.

Until the 1990s the role of 1TS had been a conventional one. They participated in a number of important operational exercises and also conducted peacekeeping operations in black unrest areas on the Witwatersrand and in Natal. 2TS during this period, conducted counter insurgency operations along the North Western Transvaal border with Botswana and along the border with Zimbabwe.

Into the New South Africa

The regiment's last major service was to provide troops for, and remain on standby throughout, the country's multiracial general elections in April 1994. The Transvaal Scottish had helped assure their country's peaceful transition to full democracy, and with it, signalled their own readiness to contribute fully to the new South Africa.

In 1995 a 44 strong Transvaal Scottish tour party visited the battle site of Delville Wood in France, their former colonel-in-chief, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother in London, 1st Battalion of their allied regiment The Black Watch at Pirbright, Surrey and its 3rd Battalion in Perth and the 10th Duke of Atholl and the Atholl Highlanders at Blair Atholl.

"Alba nam Buadh"

Regimental Association



'The View', in Parktown, Johannesburg

The Transvaal Scottish Regimental Association (TSRA), as we know it today, dates back to 1950 when the associations of all three battalions amalgamated. The TSRA is steadfastly committed to fulfil our objectives to foster esprit de corps, to wherever possible, cater and care for the welfare of past members of the Regiment and to uphold, carry out and maintain the traditions of the Regiment.

The TSRA host several annual memorial parades and services, most notably the commemoration of the Battle of Delville Wood, Remembrance Day and Sidi Rezegh. Members regularly meet at 'The View' in Parktown, Johannesburg which houses the outstanding regimental museum as well as the Regimental Council and the civilian Friends of the Jocks. Nearby stands the well-known 'Jock' statue which commemorates all Transvaal Jocks who gave their lives, both in wartime and during peace-keeping operations. The Association publishes a digital quarterly journal, The Jock Column. The Association has a strength of 255 members throughout South Africa, Namibia, Kenya USA, Canada, UK, Australia and beyond.

We welcome you to visit our website for more information: <https://jocks.co.za/>



The Jock Column

The Black Watch Battalion Army Cadet Force

Honorary Colonel:	Colonel JMK Erskine MBE
Commandant:	Colonel AAR Halford-MacLeod
Deputy Commandant:	Lieutenant Colonel K Douglas
Chief Executive Officer:	Major ACM Potter
Cadet Quartermaster:	Captain A Williams
Battalion Training Officer:	Major B Sangster
Officer Commanding Alma Company:	Captain T Cameron
Officer Commanding Burmah Company:	Major S McKenzie
Officer Commanding Korea Company:	Major J Douglas
Officer Commanding Ypres Company:	Captain M Elliot
Officer Commanding Ticonderoga (Bands) Company:	Major M McCluskey
Regimental Sergeant Major Instructor:	RSMI P Cameron
Training Safety Advisor:	Warrant Officer Class 2 I R Campbell

The past year has been as actioned packed as ever. Not only has the ACF Battalion been involved in the Coronation, we have worked hard to make sure all the cadets get the benefits from progressing through ACS 21, but we have changed the camp model from one fortnight long summer camp to a Spring Camp in Barry Buddon and Summer Camp in Garelochhead. The Spring Camp or Camp 1 (September to April) focussed on the badging boards, getting cadets qualified in their star levels and the Summer Camp, Camp 2 (May to September) was all about the Battalion Competition and fun. In addition, much of the residential training was cancelled as the two Battalion ACF Cadet Training Centres in Glenrothes and Dunkeld were restricted in their use as the buildings needed updating for fire safety. The issue has now been closed but the Battalion is having to deliver the Cadet Experience in much more restricted conditions. Not surprisingly, in line with other youth organisations, the Battalion is facing ever constrained times.



Colonel Jamie Erskine MBE, Honorary Colonel, speaking to 3 Star Cadets, Spring Camp 2023

As mentioned before Spring Camp was all about Star Boards. 280 cadets attended Spring Camp at Barry Buddon where they embarked on an intensive week on training and testing to qualify in their respective star grades. Not only were we lucky to have had excellent weather we were supported by the Army Reserve throughout the training. 154 (Scottish) Regiment RLC provided a MAN Troop Carrying Vehicle (Enhanced Seating) to transport the cadets and CFAVs round Barry Buddon. After all the training and risk assessments everybody got a ride in the truck, it was a very popular asset to have on camp. To bring a wee bit more colour to activities the medics from 225 Medical Regiment were on site to add some realism to the 1st Aid training and to show the cadets what the modern RAMC role is and what kind of kit they have.



Cadets visiting the Royal British Legion Poppy Scotland Micro Museum at Spring Camp

Poppy Scotland came by to show and explain the origin of the RBL and what it does to support serving and retired service personnel. Visitors included Colonel Ashley Fulford, National Colonel Cadets; RSMI Dave Lightfoot, National ACF RSMI; Colonel Alex MacNamee, Colonel Cadets 51 Brigade and Colonel Pat O'Meara, Army Cadets Head of Wellbeing.



The MAN Troop Carrying Vehicle provided by 154 (Scottish) Regiment RLC proved to be a very popular choice for transport!

Summer Camp, again at Garelochhead, was an equally intensive affair. Not only did the cadets have lots of adventure training and the Battalion Competition hosted the 20 strong Polish Contingent as part of Exercise SOBIESKA. They took part in activities as if they were British Cadets and were able to visit Edinburgh Castle and Wellshill Cemetery to pay their respects to the Polish fallen from World War 2. Up to 300 cadets and CFAVs spent a week in July in a camp that was also undergoing extensive rebuilding. There was no live firing but instead everybody was able to take part in paintballing under the keen eye of SMI Dale Girdwood and SSI Dougie Gold.



The Polish Contingent on Summer Camp



Burma Company, BW Bn ACF Competition Champions 2023

There were competitions for CIS using PRR, tag archery and laser clay pigeon. Each company had to organise and run evening activities which were very popular as well. Adventure Training was led by SSI James Martin comprised canyoning and paddle boards, thankfully the weather held out for an exciting adventure for everyone. The Battalion held its first competition since before the Covid pandemic and it was much enjoyed and after all the points were totalled from all the activities Burma Company very deservedly won. Well Done Burma Company!



Lt Col Kat Douglas, Dep Comdt presenting a quaich to Deputy Commander Cadets, Brigadier Neville Holmes MBE on his visit to the Battalion on Summer Camp

Outside the camps the Battalion continued activities apace! The Military Band was on parade for the Proclamation of the King, both bands had a very successful Summer Camp in London culminating in Beating Retreat on Horse Guards. They were also a major part of the cadet contingent at the ACCT Scotland Beating Retreat at Edinburgh Castle.



The Pipes and Drums at Horse Guards



The Military band Performing at the ACCT Scotland Beating Retreat on the Edinburgh Castle Esplanade

D of E has a very big presence in BW Bn ACF. This year alone almost three quarters of the cadets have started training for bronze, silver or gold awards. Captain Abi Robertson, the BW Bn ACF D of E Officer, has done sterling work creating and organising opportunities for every cadet. SSI James Martin has revolutionised the AT in the Battalion planning and running water sports and mountain biking for cadet and CFAV alike.



Starting off for expedition as part of D of E training and assessment

The Battalion entered the 51 Brigade Military Skills Competition, held at Barry Buddon. This year a selection process and pre-competition training was organised by the Training Sergeant Major (Cadets), SMI Jamie Gibson. As a result, the Battalion entered a strong and motivated team. In the end, the team, comprising cadets ranging from 2 to 4 Star level, came in as Runners Up to the ACF winners, Glasgow and Lanarkshire Battalion and were 3rd in the competition of 14 teams (both ACF and CCF). It was an outstanding result. Very much a Cadet Experience for all those involved. Cadet Cpl Codi Clarke won the Best Instructor category at the 51 Brigade Drill Competition, held at Glencorse Barracks, hopefully giving the Battalion strong grounds for a chance of winning more next year.



At the STEM Concentration in Perth

Cadet Sergeants Sky Challis and Jessica Edmondson were appointed Lord-Lieutenant's Cadets for Fife and Perth and Kinross respectively. Well done both of them. They have already been busy representing the Battalion and supporting their Lord-Lieutenants at a number of high profile civic events.



Cadet Sergeant Jessica Edmondson receiving her Lord Lieutenant's Certificate from Stephen Leckie, Lord-Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross

For personnel in the Battalion there has been quite a bit of movement. Colonel Jamie Erskine MBE has been appointed as our Honorary Colonel and already he has taken a keen interest in cadet activities visiting the Battalion on Spring Camp and the 51 Brigade Military Skills competition to name but a few. Alma Company has a new commander, Captain Trich Cameron, as does Burma Company with Major Steven McKenzie, Korea Company with Major John Douglas and Ypres with Captain Mark Elliot. Lieutenant Colonel Douglas has been appointed the Deputy Commandant and Major Bob Sangster has taken over her role as the Battalion Training Officer. Finally, Major Mike McCluskey is now the Public Relations Officer and he has been very much making sure the Battalion presence is being felt in social media.



OC Korea Coy is keen to impress

There is so much more that could be reported on! To keep aware of what the Battalion is up to just follow us on social media. 2024 promises to be busy as ever. Again, the Battalion will be having a Spring and Summer Camp, at Barry Buddon and Garelochhead using the same formula as for 2023. Both the bands will be busy recruiting and performing all around UK. We will be striving to perform even better in the 51 Brigade Military Skills competition, hopefully putting in two teams this time. Of course, there will be a plethora of AT and D of E activity that will attract and train the cadets in fun activities they would not normally have access to.

Finally, a very big thank you must go to the RFCA Permanent Staff who make sure that everything is made possible to ensure the BW Bn ACF CFAVs are able to deliver the Cadet Experience. Without them and their dedication BW Bn ACF would not be able to survive.

Obituaries

LIEUTENANT COLONEL FREDERICK LAMB BEATTIE MBE



Fred Beattie died on 8 August 2023, aged 84.

Fred was born in Arbroath in November 1937 to James Beattie, a lorry driver and his wife, Jean. He was one of six children, the only surviving being Dorothy Spence. After education at Arbroath High School, Fred worked with the Robb Brothers' lemonade firm and McVitie's biscuits on deliveries. In 1954, aged 17, he began his long and successful career with the Army, joining The Black Watch and rising through the ranks to Lieutenant Colonel.

By 1970 he had been promoted to Colour Sergeant and had already gained a reputation for looking after his men and had an enviable eye for logistical details.

General Alistair writes:

'I first met Colour Sergeant Beattie, as he then was, when I joined B Company as a very green-about-the-gills subaltern in 1970. We deployed for three weeks to Londonderry and it was here that he taught me the first of many lessons without which I doubt I would have lasted very long in the Army. We were inside an empty factory beside the river Foyle and it was time for the evening meal served to the whole company out of hay-boxes. There was enough for second helpings and I stepped forward mess tin in hand. "The men first", he said "you take your turn after them." I confess that my first reaction was one of dislike, but it did not take long to recognise that, not only was he exactly right, but that he was a man to be greatly admired.

'Later that year the Battalion took part in a pretty grim exercise in Aberdeenshire and Morayshire. When it was over, we were delivered to Aviemore Station to catch a special train back to Kirknewton. Predictably, alone amongst the companies, CQMS Beattie had worked wonders and had a hot meal waiting for us on the platform before we boarded the train: how grateful we were to him as we all slid into the oblivion of a well-fed post-exercise sleep on the way down the track.

'In Dungannon the following year the logistic arrangements for B Company were impeccable and this was recognised by Fred being

promoted to WO2. We all enjoyed as much as he did his newly contrived title of Company Quartermaster Sergeant Major.

'In due course, and to absolutely nobody's surprise, he was appointed Regimental Sergeant Major, and it was during his tenure that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother came to Colchester to present new Colours to the 1st Battalion. Thanks to Fred Beattie's determination to achieve perfection, that is exactly what was delivered on the day. In the rehearsals the officers, so often immune from the more lurid bellowings of an RSM, were left in no doubt about their imperfections. But even Fred was lost for words when, on the dress rehearsal, the Battalion second-in-command's horse bolted when the pipes and drums first struck up. That was a memorable parade and of course Fred himself, always immaculate whether in No 1 Dress or combat kit, or anything in between, was positively gleaming. It was a proud moment for us and it was an especially proud one for him. It was the attention to detail and the absolute insistence on the highest of standards in all things that was another of the great lessons that Fred's example taught us all.

'Not that this prevented a light-hearted touch from time to time. At a Sergeant's mess meeting there were discussions about a forthcoming Hawaiian night. RSM Fred concluded the item by stating that he expected a big turnout appropriately dressed for the occasion. "What do Hawaiians wear, Sir?" asked one of the more daring and senior of the mess members. Instantly came the reply; "We will wear what the detective chap on Hawaii Five O wears. It's a dark suit, white shirt and regimental tie."

'Quite rightly Fred was awarded the MBE at the end of his outstanding tour as RSM, much of it on operations in Northern Ireland. He received the medal from Her Majesty The Queen at an investiture in Hillsborough Castle in Co Down a few miles from the battalion base at Ballykinler.

'In due course Fred was commissioned and in the early 1980s he found himself Quartermaster (Technical) of the 1st Battalion, by now in the armoured infantry role in West Germany. The Cold War was still in full swing. Our exercises and practice call-outs were all done with the possibility in the background that Cold might become Hot at any moment. It was during this time that Fred made his reputation for excellence, by now firmly established in the regiment, much more widely known. The brigade and divisional commanders and their staffs began to notice the slick efficiency with which Fred and his team carried out the so-called rolling replenishments of armoured columns in the field. It wasn't long before the word in 1 (BR) Corps was: if you want to know how to do it ask Captain Beattie – he is the expert.

'He was the Quartermaster when I commanded the Battalion in South Armagh, Edinburgh and West Berlin. It was a bonus beyond words to know that, whether it was on operations in so-called bandit country, whether it was practically running the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, or whether it was moving lock stock and barrel to Berlin, Major Beattie was at the quartermaster's helm. If there were problems they would be overcome: everything would always be exactly as it should be. He was not on parade when The Queen Mother came to celebrate her 50th anniversary as our Colonel in Chief but a complicated and varied day of royal activity in Montgomery Barracks would have been a shambles without Fred's immaculate eye on all the logistic preparations in the background.

'Fred left us to go to Belize as Force Quartermaster. I remember writing to the commander there saying that he was about to receive a very special man. Several weeks later came a letter from the force commander saying that Fred was the best Quartermaster he had ever served with. He was later promoted, the final step in a career of no less than 10 promotions, a distinction achieved only by a very few of the best.

'After a final posting to the infantry training centre at Ouston his uniformed service came to an end and he was appointed, as a retired officer, Camp Commandant of Edinburgh Castle. There is no record to prove this but those of us who knew our Fred are quite sure that,

MAJOR ALEC BROWN



Alec Brown, known as Eck died on 22d July 2023 at the age of 64, whilst taking part in a contest in Newtonards, Ireland.

Alec was born in Lochore and one of seven children born into a family of musicians and his life was defined by the bagpipes from an early age. He joined his local school band and quickly became juvenile world champion. Eck tried several careers before joining The Black Watch, which he served in for 30 years. He signed up as a private and left as a late entry Major, spending several years as Pipe Major.

His career took him all over the world and during this time he played for royalty and witnessed the handover of Hong Kong from the UK to China in 1997. He studied at Edinburgh Castle and became a senior instructor there. He competed many times at Ballater Highland Games. When Eck set his sights on something he always made it happen.

He was an Instructor with the Raphoe Ulster-Scots Pipe Band and was also an executive member of the Irish Pipe Band Association.

Tributes were paid by many saying "Alec was simply a good human being who had a heart of gold and was a great friend to everyone and that he died doing what he loved".

Piping played a huge part in Eck's life but his family was his pride and joy.

Eck had been living with Maria in Donegal for the last ten years, but he never forgot his Fife roots returning as Chieftain at a competition in Benarty in 2016.

R J W Proctor

MAJOR NICHOLAS (NICK) COLES



8 June 1987 – 4 August 2023

The picture was taken just before a 'Father's Night' dinner at Fort

George in 2020

Nick was born on 8 June 1987 at the British Military Hospital, Munster and spent the first year of his life with his parents Tim and Rosie near Soest in West Germany. This was followed by a move to join the Battalion in Berlin before going to Ballykinler, Northern Ireland. By the time a further posting came, his younger brother, George, had arrived. Next there were two happy years in Northumberland, then Camberley. From there he went to boarding school at Woodcote House, Windlesham. Thereafter a move to Rheindahlen, West Germany, where the brothers had plenty of space for adventures during the holidays. From 2000, Northwood was home for 9 years during which Nick clocked up several experiences from working at Moor Park golf club and as, 'Sarrie the camel', the Saracens rugby team mascot. In 2000 Nick went to Radley College, where he threw himself into anything he could which required energy and gumption. He was RSM of the CCF, won the Sword of Honour, played all the games possible and performed in the play 'Oh what a lovely war' at the Edinburgh Festival. He achieved four A grade A levels before leaving in 2005.

During his 'gap year' Nick travelled to Kenya with Africa Asia Venture (AV) where he taught at a school on the farm next door to where his father had been brought up near Kitale. He enjoyed both the teaching and the opportunities to have fun and travel with other AV colleagues.

Edinburgh University was his next destination from which he graduated in 2010 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Part of Nick's mantra was to make the most of every chance to learn and enjoy life which included many a reel party. Nick joined the University Officers Training Corps, played, and ran his own rugby team and established the Chancellor's Court Corridor Cricket Club which has fielded a side every year since.

A highlight of his time was to be in the university team for one of the most dangerous activities, the Cresta in St Moritz. A mistake on one run led to a crash at 'Shuttlecock' corner which he survived unharmed and earned the right to wear the associated tie.

Nick spent a year working in London before going to Sandhurst in April 2012. Unusually for a 'first term' he was allowed to spend time that summer playing cricket thus avoiding some drill parades. In April 2013 Nick was commissioned into the Royal Regiment of Scotland and proudly followed his father into the Black Watch battalion. As a platoon commander he trained and cared for his jocks and had fun playing rugby with his Fijian teammates who were effective bodyguards for the tenacious scrum half.

In 2014, following the rise of Islamic State and a crisis in Libya, there was a requirement for the Army to train Libyans for a new defence force. The Battalion was sent to Basingbourn Barracks on Operation VOCATE. It was a demanding role for a young platoon commander, at the end of which Nick was awarded a Commander Land Forces' Commendation. The presentation took place during a visit by the then Royal Colonel, HRH The Duke of Rothesay at Fort George.

Having commanded the Machine Gun platoon Nick graduated to the Mortars where they fired a lot of ammunition in various locations.

In 2015, during Operation TOSCA, a six-month 'sunshine tour' with the United Nations force in Cyprus, Nick was the Adventurous Training officer, responsible for ensuring all battalion personnel enjoyed a week away from their routine tasks.

Finally, he was appointed Operations Officer. He deployed with some of the Battalion to Iraq on Operation SHADER. On return to Scotland the Battalion prepared for Exercise WESSEX STORM, a testing time. For Nick, this included the particularly challenging task of moving the Battalion from Fort George, Inverness to Knook Camp on Salisbury Plain and back.

There are many accounts of the antics Nick was involved with during time off where many friends enjoyed themselves doing things they may not have considered possible if they had not been drawn in by his joie de vivre. Clay pigeon shooting from the ramparts of 'The Fort' was an activity introduced by Nick and enjoyed by many participants. Mini quad bike time trials around the inside of the battlements after dinner are legendary – thankfully without casualties.

His next posting as a senior captain was to be AMA to DCGS (Assistant Military Assistant to the Deputy Chief of the General Staff) at Army Headquarters, Andover. The general was responsible for many things including the review of the Army structure and the Army's response to the Covid 19 pandemic. With two offices, one at Andover and the other in the Ministry of Defence, Whitehall, Nick

(Glencorse), rejoining 1 BW as Operations Officer in Werl, West Germany. He attended Staff College in 1982 and he was then posted to HQ Northern Ireland to undertake his Grade 2 staff job. Command of Delta Company followed in Werl and Edinburgh and South Armagh and then a three year posting to the School of Infantry in Warminster.

In April 1990 he took command of the Junior Infantry Battalion Ouston and he served in Northumberland until September 1992. He was a meticulous and effective staff officer with postings in HQ Northern Ireland (G4 Quartering), at the Infantry Manning and Records Office in York, the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow and his final job was as Chief G4 at Headquarters Scotland which rounded off a long career.

It was while Rory was working in York that he fell critically ill. He developed septicaemia and he nearly died. As well as the skill of the medical staff, his fitness, determination and faith were factors that helped him survive and recover.

He left the Army in 2005 and he and Liz settled near Lochearnhead, creating a wonderful garden. He was always content in retirement and enjoyed being part of a community, happily volunteering in support of local organisations. His main focus was his family.

Some brother officers remember Rory's sometimes school masterly style as he looked over his glasses in a quizzical manner, as he thought of a suitable riposte to a question or statement that he found amusing. His answer would normally be accompanied by a smile and Gilchrist laughter.

Rory had a quick mind (he was a clinical, calculating Bridge player) and a ready wit. He knew his soldiers well and he cared for them. He was a family man who enjoyed the simple things in life. Rory faced his illness during the COVID pandemic with a pragmatism that was inspiring to anyone visiting him.

R M Riddell

CAPTAIN TOM GRAHAM



Tom Graham died on 13 June 2023 aged 75. Tom was born in Aberdour in 1947, son of Thomas, a First World War veteran and his wife Janet. Educated at Aberdour Primary School then Burntisland Secondary School. Aged 15 Tom decided to join the Army as an Infantry Junior Leader and joined the Infantry Junior Leaders' Battalion at Parkhall Camp, Oswestry in Shropshire. Training was hard and demanding the young men who were to become the future Senior NCOS and Warrant Officers of the Regiments of the Footguards and Infantry of the line. Training was carried out in Snowdonia, Sennybridge and the Brecon Beacons and two years later Tom joined the 1st Battalion in Minden as Part of the British Army of the Rhine.

As his career progressed so did travels and promotion serving in Cyprus, Libya, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, the jungles of Malaysia and Belize, Northern Ireland on numerous occasions and all places in between and gaining promotion from LCpl through the ranks to

being promoted Warrant Officer Class 1 and appointed Regimental Sergeant Major of the 1st Battalion The 51st Highland Volunteers based at New Queens Barracks Perth.

The pinnacle of this part of his career was the privilege of organising the presentation of new Colours by her Majesty the Queen Mother on the North Inch, Perth on 4 July 1986.

Tom had initially met Helen when they were teenagers but they parted when he joined the Army, however they met up again in 1974 and married at Dalgety Bay and went on to have a family of three daughters and a son who accompanied them throughout their peripatetic Forces life style.

Tom was commissioned into the Regiment and served as Unit Families Officer in Berlin from 1987 to 1989 just before the Berlin Wall came down. He then ensured that some three hundred plus families moved smoothly into the Battalion's next station at Ballykinler in Northern Ireland. His attention to detail and sympathetic style made him a well-liked and respected Families Officer by all the families in the Battalion.

Tom decided that he wanted to broaden his horizons and secured an appointment as Motor Transport Officer with 6th Gurkha Rifles in the New Territories of Hong Kong in 1990 where Helen and their family enjoyed their time in the far east and all that it had to offer.

On completion of his tour of duty in Hong Kong he moved with his family for the last time when he was posted to Redford Barracks, Edinburgh to command the Cadet Training team however Tom decided to retire from the Army and settle down, in 1994 he was appointed Camp Commandant of Cultybraggan Training camp near Comrie where he remained for the next 12 years when the camp closed down. He then became Camp Commandant of Barry Buddon Training Camp until he retired aged 65.

He and Helen had moved house several times, but they finally settled down in Dalgety Bay and their lives and travels had gone a full circle.

Tom gave so much to the Regiment and is sadly missed by all those who had the privilege of knowing him.

R J W Proctor

MAJOR COLIN BEROWALD INNES



5 June 1936 - 17 June 2023

Major Colin Innes was born in London as the eldest son of Berowald and Betty Innes. Betty was in London but his father, Berowald, was serving in India with 1 BW at that time. His mother was a Sandeman of port fame.

Three years later his twin, but not identical, brothers were born. Throughout their lives they had a close relationship and

travelled to Oporto to sample that special drink.

Their family home was Tulchan near Glenalmond in Perthshire, an area of Scotland he loved and where he spent many happy days.

He was educated at Wellington College in Berkshire.

After enlisting in December 1954, he served briefly at The Black Watch Depot in Queen's Barracks, Perth, where his Squad Sergeant was "Busty" Mitchell. He went to RMA Sandhurst in 1955 and became a Junior Under Officer before being commissioned on 27 July 1956.

Major Innes was the third generation of his family to be commissioned as a Black Watch Officer following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Colonel S A Innes DSO and Bar, who served in the Boer War and the Great War and his father Lieutenant Colonel B A Innes, who commanded 4BW in Gibraltar during World War Two and later 1 BW in Germany after the War.

He joined 1 BW in Berlin, then served in Edinburgh and later Cyprus during the EOKA troubles. He was a powerful athlete and a member of the successful Battalion athletic team at this time.

Returning to the United Kingdom he was posted to Queen's Barracks to train recruits, moving to Stirling Castle when the B W Depot and Argyll Depot were amalgamated. In 1960 he and Thomas McMicking were ADCs to the Lord High Commissioner to The General Assembly in Edinburgh.

Serving at the Depots, he probably received more shooting invitations than anyone else. While at Stirling Castle, he married Clovannis Cathcart, whose father served in The Black Watch (TA) from 1939 and was awarded two DSOs during the Second World War.

Returning to 1 BW, at that time the Demonstration Battalion at The School of Infantry, he commanded the Demonstration Platoon of The Support Weapons Wing at Netheravon. When the Battalion moved to Minden, West Germany in 1964, he was 2IC of A Company, commanded by David Arbuthnott, for two years. He was then posted to Dundee as Adjutant of 4th/5th BW. During this tour he was selected to attend, the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo in Brussels as our Regimental Representative. He then returned to Minden to take over command of A Company, then on to Kirknewton before attending the Staff College in Camberley for a year. His first staff appointment was as GSO2 TA in West Midland District based in Shrewsbury.

Returning to 1 BW in Hong Kong in 1972, he commanded A Company. During that tour he took A Company to New Zealand for a nine week "exercise" which included meeting up with the New Zealand Scottish, who had been allied to The Black Watch since 1939. The military "exercise" included sailing, fishing, sheep dog trialling, touring and sight-seeing. Colin planned to entertain their New Zealand hosts with piping and songs so put together a booklet with thirty-five Scottish and Regimental songs. He had a good voice and loved singing them himself.

1 BW moved to Colchester and yet again he commanded A Company, including a four month unaccompanied tour in Belfast, before moving to Perth as Chief Staff Officer to Brigadier Tony Lithgow MC, who was commanding 51 Highland Brigade.

In 1977 he was appointed GSO2 MOD, Inspectorate of Establishments, a job he hated because he was tasked to write papers recommending cuts in the Army. Next back to Scotland first as DAAG Army HQ Scotland and then GSO2 TA 52 Lowland Brigade, retiring on 27 September 1983, after more than 37 years' service.

After leaving the Army he, a keen golfer, was appointed Secretary of The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers at Muirfield before running Highland Heather Ltd for a short time. He then returned to the military as RO2 at the Army Careers Office in Edinburgh for eight and a half years before a final retirement after 37 years' service. Alison Halford-MacLeod who worked with him said he did a fantastic job and was very popular with young and old.

He was stoical in adversity and had a number of family tragedies with the loss of his son, Andrew, in an accident in 1991 and Clovannis, and daughter, Emily Jane, who both died of cancer in 2012. His third child

was Katherine. He subsequently married Caroline, herself a widow of an Army Officer, and they had a happy ten years together. She has survived him.

Away from the military he played golf and organised shoots for many years and was always a very good shot.

Major Colin Innes was very interested in Military History and gave many well researched lectures about the Regiment but others including the Battle of Alexandria, the Crimea and The Boer War and wrote many articles for the Red Hackle Magazine. He really loved The Black Watch and kept up with many of all ranks. He will be missed by a great number of those who served in The Black Watch and many others.

G C Barnett and D J McMicking



Alistair Duthie played at the memorial service for Major Colin Innes on Thursday 14 September 2023. He was accompanied by Colin's brother Malcolm. Alistair is carrying the Pipe Banner that belonged to Colin and Malcolm's grandfather

MAJOR IAN MURRAY LATTIMORE (LATTS)



Ian Lattimore died aged 61 on 28 January 2023. As a Lieutenant Ian was attached to 1 BW as an exchange officer on Exercise LONG LOOK, from the New Zealand Army in 1983. Under the eye of Hugh Rose as B Company Commander in Werl, Latts was taken under the wing of Chris Tweedy, a fellow subaltern, for the duration of his stay who writes:

'When on Leave, the two of us had epic tours together, which sometimes required greater attention to detail. Perhaps this was demonstrated best by one trip in particular, a grand tour of Europe, to

the soundtrack of Eddy Grant, in a Ford Fiesta XR2 (which doubled as a camper van), sampling the multitude of beers on offer with the culminating mission of attending the Oktoberfest in Munich. Having travelled through Holland and Belgium we ended up in France, waking up one morning in the car on the beach at St Tropez surrounded by semi naked beauties; Spain, Monaco (couldn't afford to stop), Italy and Switzerland followed before duly arriving in Munich, on 1st October. That's when we discovered that the Oktoberfest was held in September! It didn't change what we did, but 'time spent in reconnaissance' and all that...'

Latts' upbringing was heavily influenced by a grandfather, great uncle, uncles and a cousin who all gave proud service to their country during three wars. By the age of 8 he, too, had decided that his future would lie in this direction. With his great height and leadership qualities, Latts had been Head Boy and Captain of the 1st XV Rugby team at Ashburton College, NZ. In 1981, he underwent officer training at the Officer Cadet School in Portsea, south of Melbourne, where New Zealanders and Australians were trained together. He graduated into the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment and, following his platoon commander's course in Waiouru, NZ, his first posting was to 1 BW on Exercise LONG LOOK, with Will Carmichael travelling to NZ between August and December 1983.

'Latts was OC 6 Platoon, B Company, with Brian Moffat as his platoon sergeant, whilst Eck Forrest and the unlucky Jocks of 5 Platoon, had me. We were based in Werl to deter the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies from crossing the Iron Curtain. With Latts' help, or possibly despite it, we somewhat surprisingly achieved our aim. Not so long ago, I met a Ukrainian tank commander who had sat on the opposite side of the curtain at the same time as us. He confirmed their alcohol consumption which if true, probably explains, thankfully, why nothing ever happened.'

In 2018, on what was to be his last trip to the UK, Latts attended Chris's daughter's wedding - and also a dinner at Edinburgh Castle at the invitation of the then Governor, Major General Michael Riddell-Webster. Chris and Latts subsequently toured the WWI battlefields of Flanders and the Commonwealth War Grave cemeteries where his various relatives had been laid to rest.

Following his posting to The Black Watch, Latts served with distinction on postings around the world within the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment as well as in numerous other roles in the New Zealand Army and wider New Zealand Defence Forces. These included Sinai, Bosnia, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and East Timor and he became a highly respected and professional officer with a deep interest in and knowledge of military history. Towards the end of his career, he commanded the Youth Development Unit at Burnham Camp, outside Christchurch, being particularly passionate about supporting, coaching and developing these young New Zealanders.

A recent article about Latts describes, above all else, how his motivation came from his pride in and deep desire to serve his country, and of his pride in the All Blacks and his local team, the Canterbury Crusaders. He was also very proud of his service with and connection to The Black Watch.

For their part, the New Zealand Army and indeed, his country were equally proud of him for his distinguished and loyal service over more than 40 years. It was a mark of the man, widely respected for his professionalism, comradeship and great sense of humour that his funeral was with full military honours, including his coffin being borne on a gun carriage, and that the New Zealand Chief of the General Staff led the addresses. In addition to his sister, Kate, Latts leaves two daughters, Sarah and Maire, and many friends around the world.

C J Tweedy

HUGH LINDSAY



Hugh Lindsay died suddenly in Dorset on 18 August 2023, aged 89. He had been commissioned into The Black Watch as a National Service Officer and joined the Second Battalion in Germany in 1953. He commanded 5 Platoon in B Company and was a member of the successful Battalion cross country team. He also led the Battalion Ski Patrol Recce Team in the divisional competitions. On completion of his National Service he went to Magdalen College, Oxford and then trained as an accountant. Much of his subsequent career was spent working for the International Monetary Fund (IMF), helping developing and war torn countries resolve some of their financial problems. In succession he worked in Gambia, Lebanon, Indonesia, Uganda and Tanzania - several of these being extremely dangerous at the time. He is survived by four children and ten grandchildren.

S J Lindsay

NICHOLAS McANDREW



Nicholas McAndrew died on 26 May aged 88. He was a National Service Officer who served in the 1st Battalion in Korea and Kenya from 1953 to 1955.

In civilian life Nicholas qualified as a Chartered Accountant of Scotland in 1961. He then had a career in investment management, leading businesses first at SG Warburg and then NM Rothschild

in London, and then Murray Johnstone in Glasgow where he was Chairman. He and his wife retired to the Black Isle in 1998, cementing a lifelong love of the Highlands. He served as a board member of Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the North of Scotland Water Authority. He was an active fundraiser for the Highland Hospice. He is survived by his three children and seven grandchildren.

C McAndrew

MAJOR JOCK ROBB



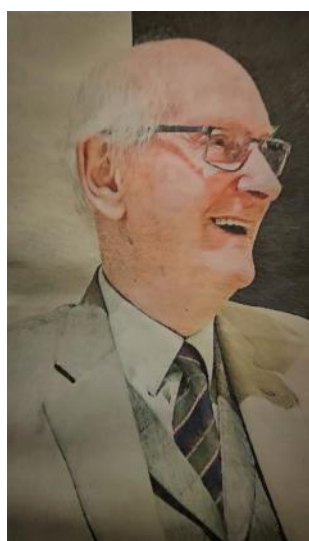
Major Jock Robb died on 8 January 23, seventeen days before his 85th birthday which would have been on the 25th of January.

Jock enlisted into The Black Watch in the mid nineteen fifties and served in Crail, Berlin, Edinburgh, Cyprus, Warminster and Minden, West Germany before transferring to the Small Arms School Corps (SASC) where he rose rapidly through the ranks and was later commissioned into the Royal Pioneer Corps where he attained the Rank of Major before retiring.

Jock was a first-class soldier and NCO in The Black Watch and whilst his transfer to the SASC was a great loss to the Regiment, he never lost his love of the Regiment and kept in touch through visiting Balhousie Castle and joining the Fife Branch of The Black Watch Association.

R J W Proctor

PIPE MAJOR HARRY ELLIS



Harry Ellis died in Roxburghe House, Dundee on 13 November 2023 age 91; he had served with the 1st Battalion in Kenya during the emergency. He had piping in his blood. His father also named Harry, learnt to play the pipes whilst serving in India with The Royal Scots Fusiliers. After serving in France during the 1st World War, he returned to India and became Pipe Major. Sadly, Harry's father died when his son was eight and would not see his piping legacy passed to his son and his grandchildren. Harry picked up a chanter at the Boy's Brigade and had a natural aptitude, something that was developed during his two years at Queen Victoria School,

Dunblane. In 1957 Harry married Jessie Donald and continued playing the pipes and taught numerous pupils who became established pipers in their own right. Harry was a member of the City of Dundee Police Pipe Band in the 1960s and then the MacKenzie Caledonian Pipe Band in the 1970s and 80s. He taught pipers in the MacKenzie Caledonian, Vale of Atholl, Dundee High School, Fintry, The Boys Brigade and Tayside Police Pipe Bands. With chanters at home his son

Lindsay and daughter Maggie took up piping.

Always immaculately turned-out, Harry supported the Association at Regimental events. He was a great ballroom dancer, who enjoyed attending the Association annual Reunion supper dance before it ceased.

He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Jessie, and survived by his son, Lindsay, and daughter, Maggie, and their children and grandchildren.

R J W Proctor

JOHNNY BROWN



John Patterson Brown was known as Johnny Brown died on 12 October 2023, aged 85 at home with his family. Johnny was born on 25 September 1938 in the mining village of Lumphinnans, Fife the youngest of a large family. He attended Lumphinnans Primary School then Cowdenbeath Secondary until aged 15 when he attended the Mining School and then followed the rest of his family down the mines. In 1958 he married his sweetheart, Elizabeth. Johnny decided on a career change and enlisted into The Black Watch in February 1959. Leaving Elizabeth at home he reported to Queens Barracks to begin basic training. During this time Helen, his Eldest was born.

After passing out at Queen's Barracks the young family moved to Cyprus where his son John was Born. After some time in a rifle company Johnny moved to the MT Platoon where he spent most of his time in the regiment. During his time in Cyprus he took part in a training exercise in Libya little did he know that he would he would be returning to Libya in 1965 and 1966 from Minden in West Germany. Returning to UK with the Battalion where it took up the role Demonstration Battalion at the School of Infantry, Warminster Johnny was selected to join the APC Platoon whose members drove the armoured fighting vehicles which took part in all the Officer Training courses which were carried out on Salisbury Plain. He gained experience in driving Ferret Scout Cars, Saracen APCs and Humber 1 Ton Vehicles which was to stand him in good stead for the Battalions next posting to Minden, West Germany as part of the BAOR.

On the move to Minden Johnny moved to the Recce Platoon where he was employed as a Ferret Scout Car Driver. The youngest of the family, David, was born in the British Military Hospital, Rinteln completing their family.

The Battalion carried out a six-month UN tour in Cyprus before returning from Germany to Kirknewton outside Edinburgh.

Johnny had returned to the MT Platoon and had been promoted to Corporal and took part in overseas training in Malaysia and an unaccompanied six-month tour in Gibraltar. Soon more separation was to follow as the battalion was deployed to Northern Ireland on numerous occasions prior to a two-year tour in Hong Kong. His last move was to the Scottish Junior Infantry Depot, Bridge of Don Aberdeen where he was promoted to Sergeant and was firstly employed as the provost Sergeant. He was an ideal man for the job as although he had a stern exterior his fatherly character ensured that many of the errant juniors were kept on the straight and narrow. His second employment as MT Sgt where his years of experience in transport matters came to the fore and ensured that the transport ran like a well-oiled machine.

On completion of his 22-year engagement Johnny gained employment as the WO and Sgts Mess Caterer at the Bridge of Don until the barracks closed down as a Regular Army Training Establishment in 1987.

Johnny and Liz settled in Potterton to the North of Aberdeen, where he worked in security until his retirement. A great family man and founder member of The Black Watch Association where he attended all monthly meetings and functions. He was also a member of the Fife Branch giving them his support whenever possible.

His presence within the Association will be sadly missed and we send our sympathy and condolences to Liz and the family.

R J W Proctor

VINCE CARLTON

Vince died on 14 May 23, aged 88. He served for 22 years in the Regiment spending some time in the Anti-tank platoon, his final posting was as a Recruiting Sergeant in the Regimental Area where he gained numerous recruits for the regiment. He was then employed as an MOD Guard at Cultybraggan where he often interfaced with members of the regiment who were taking part in training exercises. On the closure of Cultybraggan Camp he was redeployed as a member of the security team at 51 Highland Brigade Headquarters at St Leonard's Bank in Perth. He was a member of the Perth Branch Association and kept in contact with the regimental family.

R J W Proctor

ARTHUR CLARK



Arthur Clark was born on 12 December 1931 and died in March 2023 aged 91. Arthur served as a National Serviceman in Kenya with the 1st Battalion from 1953-1955. He later served with the 4th/5th Battalion in Dundee. He was a great supporter of the Association and the Dundee Branch and attended all Branch and Regimental events.

Prior to National Service, Arthur worked as a cabin maker/joiner with Oastlers, a Dundee carpentry firm.

R J W Proctor

JIMMY COWIE



James (Jimmy) Atkinson Cowie who was originally from Tayport, Fife, but lived in Dundee, died peacefully at home after a short illness on 13 June 2023, aged 74.

Jimmy enlisted at Bridge of Don in 1966 before joining 1 BW (Delta Company) in Minden in 1968. He moved with the Battalion to Kirknewton and exercised in Canada for chemical warfare training before becoming a member of the Mortar Platoon, serving with them in Gibraltar, Malaya and Northern Ireland. During the tour in Northern Ireland, Jimmy's daughter, Sharon, was born. He

then moved to the Medical Centre as a corporal, and it was during

the Hong Kong tour of 1971-1973 that his son, Steven, was born. 1 BW were then posted to Colchester where Jimmy decided to end his service.

On returning to civilian life, Jimmy worked for a number of years as a Tug Master at Dundee Port Authority before moving to Bournemouth and Poole College as their caretaker where he remained until he retired. Jimmy and Bebe moved to Birnam for a short spell before finally settling down in Dundee. Jimmy was an extremely popular and active member of the Dundee Branch of The Black Watch Association. His funeral was well attended by the Dundee Branch and other Association members who knew him.

C Gray

GEORGE KENNEDY



George (Chuckles) Kennedy died on Sunday 30 July 2023, aged 82. George joined The Black Watch in 1958 and, after completing recruit training at Queens' Barracks, joined the 1st Battalion in Cyprus where he became a side drummer in the Pipes and Drums where he remained until he left the Regiment at Warminster in 1963. He was well known for his drumming and bugling skills and was a worthy winner of the Commanding Officer's Silver Bugle becoming the CO's Bugler from time to time.

His dry sense of humour and endearing laugh earned him the nickname "Chuckles" which he answered to, when in the Regiment and after he had left.

On returning to civilian life George had several employments and worked mainly on the railway until retirement. He had a great affection and interest in railways and locomotives which he shared with his family. He was a founder member of the Perth Branch of the Association attending all Regimental Events and was a regular visitor to Balhousie Castle, latterly on his electric scooter.

R J W Proctor

IAN KETTLES

Ian died on 1 March 2023, aged 71 on the Isle of Skye where he made his home. Ian joined the 1st Battalion in 1968 at Ritchie Camp, Kirknewton and served in Malaysia, Gibraltar and did several short tours in Northern Ireland when the battalion were deployed in 1970 and 1971. He moved with the battalion to Hong Kong and took part in the numerous training exercises and border tours. He then served in Colchester and took part in the unaccompanied tours to West Belfast in 1974 and 1975. Returning to Northern Ireland in 1976/78 he took part in various operations and deployments including the Firemen's Strike of 1977/78. He latterly served as Corporal Driver Operator to Lieutenant Colonel Giles Le Maitre who was then commanding 3/51 Highland.

R J W Proctor

JOHN KING



John died on 21 January 2023 age 84. He had enlisted into The Black Watch in October 1956 and did a tour of Cyprus and Berlin attaining the rank of corporal. He demobbed in October 1959. The Black Watch sculpted the rest of his life. His lifelong career was to become a police dog handler. When he retired, he became the sole carer for his disabled wife, Pauline. His funeral took place at West Wiltshire crematorium.

A very proud Black Watch soldier throughout life and into death.

May he rest in peace.

Dave King

STANLEY KIRK

Stanley died in a care home in Northumberland aged 78.

Stanley joined the 1st Battalion in Warminster from the combined Black Watch and Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Depot at Stirling Castle in November 1962.

He served in the Regiment for twelve years and retired as a corporal section commander in B Company in 1974. Stanley was a good Junior NCO and was renowned for his great sense of humour and was given the nick name Woody to which he answered throughout his service life and beyond.

On retiring from the regiment, he became a Warden at HMP in Northumberland where he worked until retirement. A great regimental character who is sadly missed by all those who had the privilege of knowing him.

R J W Proctor



ALEX LACKIE

It is with great sadness that I announce the sudden death of Alex Lackie aged 84 on the morning of Sunday 8 October 2023 at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, London.

Alex was born into the regiment in 1939 in Jerusalem whilst the 2nd Battalion were serving there shortly before the outbreak of World War Two. His father, a sergeant with the 2nd Battalion, deployed to Eritrea after war broke out and the families were sent to safety in South Africa. Alex was nearly nine years old before he first met his father who was a complete stranger to him.

Alex moved to Kirriemuir when his father was employed on the Logie Estate by his former Commanding Officer. Following in his father's footsteps he joined the Kirriemuir Black Watch Company of the Army Cadet Force and later B Company 4th/5th Black Watch whilst he was employed in the local factory. He then enlisted into the Royal Signals where he served for twenty-four years reaching the rank of WO2 (RQMS). He continued working with the armed forces as a civilian until he retired.

Alex returned to the regiment of his birth when he and his late wife, Janet, moved to Stoke on Trent where he joined the Stoke on Trent Branch of the Association and took over as Secretary, a position he held for a number of years until ill health prevented him from doing so. He decided to become an in-Pensioner at Chelsea after the sudden death of his son, Robert, and continued to keep in touch with the regiment of which he was very proud to be associated with.

R J W Proctor

HUGH McCULLOUGH

Hugh (Shuggie) McCullough died on 11 January 2023 at Darlington Hospital after being recently diagnosed with stage four cancer. Shuggie served with 1 BW from 1990 until 2006 and then The Black Watch 3rd Battalion Royal Regiment of Scotland from 2006 to 2011. Latterly, he was posted to the ITC Catterick until the completion of his service in 2015. He attained the rank of corporal and served both in the MT Platoon and Quartermaster's Department in Iraq.

R J W Proctor

THOMAS MACDONALD

Thomas (Tom) MacDonald died on 10 September 2023, at Braintree Nursing Home, Braintree, Essex. Tom served as a National Serviceman in Berlin, Germany, during the mid-1950's, serving with the 1st Battalion The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment).

On demobilisation, Tom returned to his native Kinloch Rannoch for a short period, before joining the Merchant Navy. Based in London, he then spent the rest of his working life on the "High Seas" as a Marine Engineer.

One memorable period in his career was when he was assigned to ships that were moving military equipment to the Ascension Islands in the South Atlantic as part of the Falklands Campaign in 1982. During the later stages of his career, he was employed as an engineer on the Cunard Lines, shipping goods around the world.

On retirement Tom settled initially on the Isle of Dogs and then moved to Canvey Island. Due to ill health, Tom sadly spent a good number of his later years in a care home. He will be sadly missed by his family and the many friends he made on his travels.

R J W Proctor

STUART (MAXI) MACDONALD



WO2 Stuart Macdonald died on 4 September 2023 aged 72, after an extended period of illness.

He was the eldest of seven children born to a retired regular soldier of the 1st Battalion The Black Watch who had fought in Korea and Kenya.

Stuart enlisted in 1966 as a Junior Leader at Infantry Junior Leaders Battalion, Oswestry and after completing his training joined the 1st Battalion The Black Watch in 1968. He was given the nickname 'Maxi' shortly after joining the regiment and he

was soon followed by his brother Ramsay in 1969 and then later by brothers Bruce and Tom (aka Young Maxi).

Stuart spent most of his time in the Signals Platoon interspersed with periods in rifle companies, a posting as a Training Instructor at SID Glencorse and also as Signals PSI with 1/51 Highland Volunteers. However, it was with the Signals Platoon that he thrived and was often seen on the plains of Soltau commanding one of the command vehicles, OC (Zero Charlie), whilst being driven by Young Maxi who had joined him in the platoon. Stuart served his full time as a regular soldier and achieved the rank of WO2 and the appointment of Regimental Signals Warrant Officer (RSWO).

On retirement in 1989 he settled down in Doncaster, South Yorkshire an area he knew well. He is survived by his ex-wife Pat, daughters Kirstin and Fiona and his son Iain as well as several grandchildren. In addition, he has three surviving brothers, all time-served members of The Black Watch, and a sister Elizabeth, who had served in the WRAC.

D R Macdonald

EDDIE McLEAN BEM

Corporal Eddie McLean died on 7 November 2022 in London. He served for 18 years during which time he became well known as an accomplished Regimental medic and football referee. He was part of the small Black Watch team that was deployed on Op AGUILLA during the transition of Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, during which time he was awarded the British Empire Medal for his unstinted medical assistance to the native population with whom he came in contact. After leaving the army he and his family moved south where he had built up a property maintenance business in the London area. Eddie was originally an Angus man who came from Montrose.

R J W Proctor

BRINSLEY McNAMARA



Brinsley McNamara died on 13 November 2022 aged 89. Brinsley was a National Serviceman who after completing his basic training at Queen's Barracks, Perth was posted to the 1st Battalion in Korea where he eventually attained the rank of corporal and saw action on The Hook. His next deployment was Kenya during the Mau Mau Emergency. Brinsley had followed in the family tradition as his father, Michael McNamara, had also served in the regiment and saw action during WW2 in North Africa, Sicily and North West Europe as part of the reformed 51st Highland Division. Brinsley was fiercely proud of his service with The Black Watch and also that of his father.

He married Mary Ann, and they had 62 happy years together and raised a family of four sons and a daughter. He settled in Kettering where he had several administrative jobs and worked for the NHS as a storeman until his retirement aged 65. Although he had lived in Kettering for most of his life, he never lost his strong Glaswegian accent of which he was immensely proud.

R J W Proctor

BOB MANNING MM



CSgt Bob Manning MM died on 4 February aged 90. Bob served a full career in the regiment and was awarded the Military Medal as a LCpl in Korea for successfully commanding his section despite being twice wounded during B Company's successful counterattack during the Battle of the Hook on the 18/19 November 1952.

During his military career Bob had postings to Cyprus, Germany and, latterly, Perth as the CSgt PSI with the newly formed B (Black Watch) later renamed K (Black Watch) Company at Hunter Street, Kirkcaldy. Bob was a great fan of country and western music. He retired in 1974 and went on to work as a school caretaker and in security in Perth Theatre.

R J W Proctor

KENNY MUNRO



Warrant Officer Class Two Kenneth (Kenny) Munro died on the morning of Friday 30 December 2022 at the Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy.

Born in Fife, Kenny followed his brother Sandy, who also had a full career in the regiment, into the 1st Battalion. Their uncle Sandy, the original Mungo Munro, had served throughout the war and beyond in the 2nd Battalion.

From 1971 he spent several years in the Signals Platoon. While stationed at Kirknewton, Kenny and Isobel were married and by 1973 in Hong Kong he was a section commander and they had their first young son, Barry.

In 1976, during the Ballykinler tour, in conjunction with Kenny Glasgow and Bryan Dickson they ran the Operations Room for almost a year, doing shifts of 12 on 12 off. While not in the Signals Platoon, Kenny also consistently featured as a key personality in the Battalion Intelligence Section. These were both areas where his intellect, together with his mature and considered approach, were well suited. In his dealings with others, he was a thinking and compassionate man, well able to assess how his subordinates – and the officers he worked with, were faring and what could be expected of them.

Throughout his service he rose to become Warrant Officer Class 2, initially as the Regimental Signals Warrant Officer in Werl in the 1980s and then as Company Sergeant Major, his approachable manner and sharp intellect made him an excellent Warrant Officer and credit to the regiment.

Kenny Munro was a tough and resilient man, who overcame numerous vicissitudes in his life, not least in more recent years life-threatening medical ones. He loved his family and was a tremendous grandfather. He was a dryly humorous, modest, generous and above all unselfish man, proud of being a Black Watch soldier and very proud of his two sons, Craig and Barry, both of whom followed him into the regiment. To them and his widow, Isobel, we offer our sympathies and condolences.

Ronnie Proctor, Bryan Dickson and Kenny Glasgow

ALFRED PERRYMAN



Alfred Anthony, known as Tony, died on 24 August 2023, aged 93. Tony was called up on 4 April 1949 and reported to Fort George. He trained for three months with the Gordon Highlanders, as his brother had before him, before being posted to 1 BW. From Inverness he entrained for Glamorgan Barracks, Duisburg. He was promoted to LCpl within nine months.

In about April 1950, he was posted to Berlin where he met up with his brother, Roy, not long before Roy's departure to Korea after transferring from the HLI to the AandSH. Tony was present during moments of tension when the Russian troops threatened the security of the allied sector. He

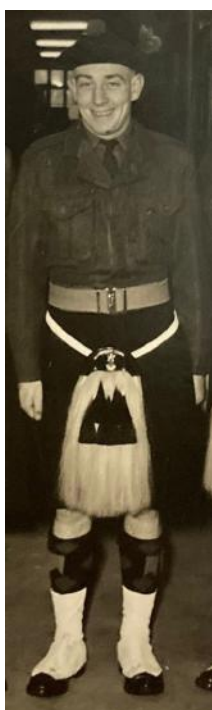
served for a while as a Regimental Policeman and company clerk.

Tony was a keen sportsman and was picked for an 'International' soccer match playing for England against Scotland, the teams drawn from members of the regiment. The score was sadly not recorded by Tony. He was discharged in April 1951 and returned to Horsham where he married Audrey June Rowland and they had two sons, Martin and Roy.

Tony ran his own small business as a painter and decorator pursuing his love of football by playing for local teams. At the age of 60 Tony retired from work as a Clerk of the Works for Westminster Council and spent the next 28 years with Audrey in happy retirement travelling extensively in Europe and the UK. He found joy in his children and grandchildren whom he would regale with incidents comic and serious from his time with the regiment. The last 5 years of his life he spent without his Audrey, but was cared for by his family until his death after a short illness at East Surrey Hospital on Sunday 20 August 2023.

R J W Proctor

HUGH SWAN WALLACE MILLER (SHUG)



Hugh died peacefully on the Wednesday 25 October 2023 at Queen Margaret Hospital, Dunfermline aged 89. He was born on 21 October 1934 in Union Street Kelty and apart from his time in The Black Watch he spent his entire life there. He attended the local school apart from playing truant on occasions, and left school aged 14. He went down the mines aged 16, one of the youngest men to work at the coal face.

In August 1956 Hugh joined The Black Watch signing on for three years with the Colours and four with the Reserves. After completion of recruit training at Queens' Barracks Perth, he joined the 1st Battalion in Berlin and became a Regimental Signaller in the Signals Platoon. He moved back to Redford Barracks, Edinburgh and then to Cyprus during the Emergency before completing his engagement with the Colours. Hugh was immensely proud of his service in The Black Watch and had he remained in the Army promotion would have surely followed as his discharge book states that "he was an intelligent signaller, a hard worker showing qualities of leadership."

He was a keen footballer who played at a semi-professional level and was team captain when playing for The Black Watch. Hugh continued his interest in the Regiment and attended annual events such as the Regimental Reunion and kept up to date with Regimental news.

Hugh met and married his wife Margaret McDonald in 1952 and they remained a devoted couple until Margaret died in February 2020. They went on to have two children Jemima who was born in 1953 and David who was born in 1960.

On leaving the Regiment he gained employment with the National Coal Board within the brickworks until it closed during the miners' strike. The work was hard and physical and Hugh often worked double shifts to provide for his family.

He had many interests out with his family to which he was totally devoted and was a keen gardener, fisherman and shooting enthusiast. He was also an avid reader of fiction and history who liked to enter crossword competitions and take part in television quiz shows throughout his life.

As a parent, grandparent and great grandparent Hugh encouraged his family to achieve higher education and vocational training. He was much loved and respected by his family and friends alike and is sadly missed.

R J W Proctor

WILLIE PRATT



The death of Sergeant Willie Pratt (known as Wullie) came as a shock to all ranks of the Black Watch. Wullie was a revered Regimental character and well known to all ranks who served in the First Battalion.

Wullie joined the Army from Fife in 1973, completing his basic training in Marne Squad, Bridge of Don Barracks in Aberdeen. He was drafted to 1 BW in Gun club Barracks in Kowloon Hong Kong. He was a promising football player with a very quick turn of speed. He was posted to B Company on his arrival and very soon featured in the Battalion second eleven, eventually representing the Regiment in the First team. During his tour in Hong Kong, B Company exercised in Malaya. Throughout this time Wullie was developing into a very competent Rifle Company Jock.

Wullie served his entire service in the Battalion seeing service in the UK, Northern Ireland, Belize, Werl, Berlin and Hong Kong, mainly in the Rifle Companies, serving in A, B and D Companies. He was also a member of the Battalion Provost staff for a while.

Promoted into the WO's and Sgts' Mess he held appointments by the way of pl sgt, Assault Pioneer Sgt in Berlin and Provost Sgt in Hong Kong - on the second tour.

Wullie had stepped down from the battalion soccer team in his later service and became a regular feature in the Battalion rugby 1st xv. He adapted very quickly to the change of discipline and was an extremely fast, hard inside centre. Wullie gave 100% to the regiment, he was loyal, dedicated to his job, worked hard and played hard. He epitomised the type of soldiers that we in The Black Watch had, it's what made us special.

He was a dedicated family man who supported him and the Regiment throughout. His pronounced pride was when his son Sean joined The Black Watch who also served a full and successful career in the Battalion. He was demobbed on the Battalion's return from Hong Kong to Elizabeth Barracks, Pirbright, Surrey in 1995. After settling his family in Warminster, he started a second career in the MPGS where he served in uniform for a further 15 years.

M Smith

RSM CHARLIE QUIN



Charlie Quin, known as CQ died, suddenly at home in Dundee a week after his 84th birthday.

His last posting before completing a full career of 22 years was as RSM of 1st Battalion 51st Highland Volunteers with the headquarters in Perth and companies in Dundee, Kirkcaldy, Liverpool and London. Charlie's character and sense of duty helped weld the geographically spread battalion into a cohesive and well-trained fighting force.

Charlie was the epitome of a Black Watch Regimental Sergeant Major, always well turned out and smart in both uniform and civilian dress. His no-nonsense attitude mixed with a great sense of humour endeared him to all and gained him respect throughout his full 2 years career.

He was born in Dundee on 28 October 1939. His father, Bernard was a foreman in a jute factory and during the Second World War, Bernard served with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and was captured in Malaya and held as a prisoner of war for two and half years. Charlie, who had seven siblings, one of whom also served in The Black Watch and RAOC, attended Ann Street Primary and then Stobwell Boys' School.

In 1956 he joined the Merchant Navy as a cabin boy before enlisting into The Black Watch on 1 May 1958. He met his future wife, Lucille, in a chip shop in Hilltown, Dundee. They married in 1959 at Dundee Registrar's office and went on to have three children: Charles, Bruce and Terence. After joining The Black Watch, Charlie served in Cyprus during the Emergency and then again with United Nations, Libya, Germany, Northern Ireland, Hong Kong and South Korea before being promoted WO1 (RSM) in 1979. He was posted to Queen's Barracks, Perth to take charge of the 1st Battalion 51st Highland Volunteers. At the end of his full-time military career, Charlie became caretaker at the Territorial Army centre in Rodd Road, Dundee, and then at the Special Air Service centre in Invergowrie. Charlie was a great regimental character and an active Association member, being a member of Dundee and Fife Branches and the initiator of the 1739 Club which was formed to enable members and former members of The Black Watch, irrespective of rank to meet annually.

Charlie, who was predeceased by Lucille, spent most weekends in his static caravan, helped organise regimental dinners and led several Remembrance Day parades. He had enjoyed his posting to Cyprus and in his later years returned to the island with Lucille for holidays. Charlie was a grandfather to six and great-grandfather to 10.

STEVE REID



WO1 (Superintendent Clerk) Steve Reid peacefully passed away at his home in Branda Ha, Forfar on 10 November 2022, aged 74.

Steve was a great regimental character who was small in stature big in kindness, hard work and service to the Regiment he loved, The Black Watch. He was one of the few members of the Regiment who through hard work, attention to detail and devotion to his work made the grade and was promoted to the rank of WO1 Superintendent Clerk.

He played a full part in Regimental Life and was a well-respected leader of the Cubs and Scouts in the Battalion. Steve confided in me during one of my visits to him that he wished his funeral to be "private with no fuss" and this was confirmed to me by his family.

I am sure that you all have your special memories of Steve as 432 Driver in Minden, as Chief Clerk, as Scout leader or in any one of the many ways that you were privileged to have known him.

R J W Proctor

NICKY REID

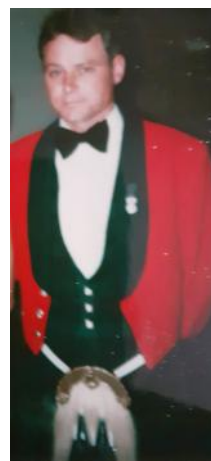
Nicky Reid died at home in Forfar on Saturday 14 October 2023, aged 72.

Initially serving in a rifle company, Nicky was employed as a PTI and spent time in the Recce Platoon. He was a LCpl in the 1st Battalion serving in Kirknewton, Gibraltar, Hong Kong and in Singapore with the platoon which was attached to the GORDONS. He also served in Colchester and Northern Ireland.

He was a member of the Angus Branch of The Black Watch Association and attended meetings until prevented by illness.

R J W Proctor

GEORGE (Tex) REITER



George Reiter died on 15 December 2022 some three months off his 75th birthday. He served a full career in The Black Watch and had various roles in the 1st Battalion from being in a rifle company to working in the Officers' Mess as Mess Corporal and, eventually, Mess Sergeant.

His peers in the battalion very early on in his service gave him the name Tex as some of them mistook his surname Reiter as Ritter which was the surname of the famous western cowboy Tex Ritter of the 1950s and 60s. He was a member of the Battalion intelligence team during operational tours in Northern Ireland.

George was always fit and a keen athlete, winning the Junior Hill Race prize at the Alva games whilst he trained as a chef at the Golden Lion Hotel in Stirling. On joining the Army he kept his fitness going and was a member of Company and Battalion athletic teams. He served in Minden as part of the BAOR, Cyprus,

Kirknewton - where he met his beloved wife, Lorena, Gibraltar, Northern Ireland on numerous occasions, Hong Kong, Colchester, Ballykinler, Catterick, Belize, Werl, Edinburgh and Perth.

His smart and immaculate turnout, combined with a very honest and outgoing personality, made George the ideal Recruiting Sergeant. This was a job at which he was very successful and was often visited by recruits that he had enlisted thanking him for helping them choose the correct branch of the army which they joined and were enjoying themselves.

George was the third generation to serve in the armed forces as his grandfather on his mother's side had served in the Regiment in Egypt and Palestine. His father, who was a despatch rider in the Polish Army, was stationed at Montreathmont Camp in Angus and, like so many Polish soldiers, married a local girl, George's Mother who came from Arbroath. After the war, George's father found work in the coal mines in the central belt and later he was offered a special housing flat in Tillycultry, the town where George grew up.

Settling with Lorena and their family in West Calder where he was the perfect host, his BBQ sauce and beef curry were legendary to family and friends. He was a great supporter of the local Bowling Club and had other hobbies. His greatest love was his family, and he was a very devoted father, grandfather and husband to his loving wife, Lorena.

R J W Proctor

MIKE ROBB

Mike Robb died at Whitehill Hospital in Forfar on 14 July 2023.

Mike joined the 1st Battalion in Cyprus shortly before it returned to Barton Stacey and then Warminster in 1961. He served in D Company and then the MT Platoon in Warminster and Minden, West Germany.

On leaving the Regiment at the end of his service, Mike returned to his hometown of Brechin and was a coach driver. He attended the Regimental Reunion on numerous occasions but his work as a coach driver excluded him from attending Angus Branch meetings and events.

His younger brother Ian, who predeceased him, also served in the regiment in Minden and Kirknewton

R J W Proctor

WO2 JAMES RUSSELL



Warrant Class 2 James (Jimmy) Russell started his career in The Black Watch and is remembered as a real strength of character, an able anti-tanker and a really nice guy.

Jimmy was a jovial and social character with a sharp Dundee wit. An enthusiastic footballer and Dundee United fan, Jimmy was never more emotional than when his beloved team was playing. He carried a sense of passion, dedication and enthusiasm to service with him throughout his career in his beloved "Black Watch." He continued his association and connection with the Battalion long after he had left Regular service such as his love and pride in the Regiment in which he had served; a diligent and committed soldier and liked by all who met and worked with him.

The best loved and remembered stories are the less-than-perfect ones. This is true of Jimmy when equipped with a single, live, Milan missile to fire for the whole platoon during a battle exercise on a concentration exercise competition at Catterick. Cpl Russell, in those days, as a detachment commander duly went through the exercise. Trepidation and suspense mounted, for some reason there was a delay, The Black Watch platoon was one of the last to go through the battle run; the infiltration was completed, the designated firing point reached, the target was engaged and ...

he missed. The poor guy: he received no amount of humorously delivered abuse from the other detachment commanders thereafter.

A lover of the Scots community, he would seek out those from the Battalion whoever they were and whenever they were in the area and remained a great ambassador for Scottish soldiers. Jimmy was a great inspiration and leader to many and will be sorely missed.

In 2003 he deployed on Op TELIC as 2IC Milan Platoon and left the Platoon later that year. He moved to be Warrior Sergeant Major B Company in Iraq 2004, working with Tim Elliott as company commander under James Cowan who was commanding officer. Jimmy Russell left the Regular Service in 2007 and was dined out in 2008 from Fort George by The Black Watch 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

With re-engagement into the Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) in 2008, Jimmy started another military life as a private soldier. In 2017 WO2 Jimmy Russell joined DIO, HQ Salisbury Plain Training Area on a Full Time Reserve Service contract. He was employed as a Deputy Training Safety Officer and was responsible for the management and maintenance of Bulford and Warminster Small Arms Ranges. Quiet and unassuming, Jimmy went about his daily business in a professional and hugely diligent manner. Always looking for solutions rather than problems, continuously going the extra mile to ensure that soldiers employed on the ranges received the best possible facilities in order to train and prepare for future operations.

Extramurally, Jimmy developed a passion for Golf (for which his ambition outweighed his ability) and continued his love of football. Over the years he also raised huge sums of money for the Royal British Legion and other charities that were close to his heart. Great company and highly thought of by all members of HQ SPTA, Jimmy will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

AQMS Trg

ROB SARGENT

Rob Sargent died on 12 April 2023, aged 84 after a prolonged period of illness.

He served in the Regiment in the mid 1950s and was an accomplished Highland and Scottish Country dancer, he was frequently asked to give dancing displays whilst a recruit at Queen's Barracks. However, during his training he sustained a leg injury which led to his discharge on medical grounds.

Although Rob was born in London, his Scottish grandmother instilled a love of Scotland and all things Scottish including The Black Watch, Highland and Scottish Country dancing in him. After his return to London and recuperation, he felt that he was fit enough to take the floor once again. He organised Scottish Country Dance Societies and was a much sought after dance instructor both South and North of the border.

His employment as a high-quality chocolate salesman took him all over the country and Europe whilst working for a large chocolate wholesale company. In 1984 he decided to become self-employed, and dove tailed his business activities with his dancing. At one point he was asked to dance on the "White Heather Club" which was a favourite programme on Scottish Television in the 1960s.

Rob married his wife, Jenny, an accomplished artist in 1971, and they later moved to Scotland when Rob became self-employed buying a lovely cottage at Dores to the South of Inverness. Jenny continued her artwork whilst Rob travelled the country selling high quality chocolates, organising Scottish Country Dances and indulging in his other pastimes, collecting vintage sports cars and looking after exotic birds.

Around 2000 Rob visited Balhousie Castle intending to sell chocolate for sale in the Museum shop which we did not buy, however he left with numerous items of Black Watch memorabilia and kept coming back for more. He joined the Association and was a very active member attending all events including every march to save the Regiment from being merged. After 2006 he continued to support the Association and

raised thousands of pounds for the Association Funds by producing and selling CDs of Scottish Country Dance music which had a Black Watch connection, generously donating all profits to the Association.

He was also a great choreographer and devised The Black Watch Reel which was danced once at The Black Watch Ball. He was extremely well known in Scottish dancing circles particularly by the late, perennial Robbie Shepherd, who produced the popular weekly Radio Scotland dance programme "Take the Floor". I was delighted to be invited along with Rob to the BBC's Beechgrove studio to comment on The Black Watch Reel.

Rab did so much for many people and charitable organisations including the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital and never sought reward; his cheery countenance and impish grin will be missed by all who knew him.

R J W Proctor

ANDREW SCOTT

Andrew (Andy) Scott died in Perth Royal Infirmary on Tuesday 6 December 2022 aged 75, after a brave fight against serious illness.

Andy joined the Regiment as a junior piper at Fort George in 1962 and served with the 1st Battalion mainly in the Pipes and Drums where he was promoted to corporal and latterly the Regimental Police prior to the completion of his service in 1974. Andy was always immaculately turned out and was a talented piper. He was a great advert for the regiment on the numerous band tours and engagements in which he took part. His smartness and deportment never left him when he was appointed as Pipe Major of the Blairgowrie, Rattray and District Pipe band, an appointment he held for a number of years.

Andy had followed his father into the Regiment and his son, Andrew, duly followed Andy, having an operational tour in Afghanistan whilst serving with 51st Highland 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

R J W Proctor

DAVID SKEA

David Skea, a long-time member of the Angus Branch of The Black Watch Association, died peacefully at Cairnie Lodge, Care Home, Arbroath on Saturday 29 October 2022.

David was very proud of his service in The Black Watch where he served in both Korea and Kenya. He was a regular attendee at the Regimental Reunion and other Regimental events. More latterly, he was well known at Arbroath Car Boot Sales and a regular attendee and supporter of The Town Mission, Arbroath. He was a quiet and private person who is sadly missed by all those who knew him.

R J W Proctor

IAN STIVEN



Ian Stiven was born in Weybridge, Surrey on 20th June 1924 and died on 24 March 2023, aged 98. Apart from his time in Scotland and India, he always lived within 15 miles from where he was born.

His desire to be in the army started whilst at Charterhouse school in Surrey, where he joined the Home Guard and was soon made House Platoon Sergeant in the OTC (Officers' Training Corps). He also attended a lecture from a Brigadier Burrows, Ex Indian Army, who came to give the older boys a lecture on the Indian Army.

On leaving school, in September 1942 he volunteered for The Black Watch, then based at Queens Barracks, Perth. His army number was 14402775, in the infantry.

As a Private and nearing eighteen years in age he undertook the advanced training at Kinfauns Castle. He was then posted to the 'Young Soldiers Battalion' at Fakenham in Suffolk as part of the Highland Regiments and became a lance corporal. He was proud to be able to keep his red hackle as the other four regiments were obliged to hand in their metal badges for their new 'Highland' badge.

On arriving in Wrotham in Kent, they were tested on their ability in driving trucks and riding a motorcycle. Very soon Ian was posted to the 2nd Battalion of The Black Watch stationed in India; and after a spell of embarkation leave he found himself on his way to India. They sailed from Glasgow on the SS Britannic and, by way of South Africa, arrived in Bombay in June 1943. Hearing that The Black Watch, in Karachi, were training to be parachutists and having specifically requested to be an infantryman, he opted out and volunteered for the Indian Army.

Having learnt Urdu on board ship and at Bangalore, in September 1943 he joined the Queen Victoria Own Corps of Guides, the senior unit of the Frontier Force Regiment (PFFR), EC 12229, taking up his posting at Sialkot in the Punjab with The 12th Frontier Force Regiment. The 12th Frontier Force had been formed in 1922 and consisted of 5 battalions made up of, primarily, British Cavalry and Infantry soldiers; the rank and file were predominantly Sikh. The prime role of this force was to act as guides to Frontier troops in the field and gather intelligence beyond as well as within the North-west Frontier of India. This regiment was located at Mardan on the Peshawar border. The Corps of Guides were the first soldiers in the British or Indian Army to wear Khaki which derives from the Indian word for Dust.

In June 1945 he served in Iran then back to Meerut in India, now with the Guides (the name given to the infantry group of the

organisation). Eventually, whilst stationed at Kohat in the North West Frontier Province, he became Mortar Officer, later promoted to Captain and Headquarter Company Commander. During partition he secretly drove the Sikhs and Hindus in the 'Indian Army' to safety in India. Soldiers would not attack other soldiers but the general Muslim community were not so discerning. In 1947 the Frontier Force (Calvary) and the Guides (Infantry) were allocated to Pakistan on Partition and became known as The Frontier Force Regiment.

Demobbed in 1947, he returned to England and took up a teaching post at Feltonfleet School, where he met Audrey whom he married in 1950. They returned to India, near Madras, where Ian had taken a year-long contract with sugar factory owners Parry & Co. In 1951 they returned again to England, this time with their first daughter. He then worked in the City of London for the Yorkshire Insurance company. In 1956 after the birth of their second daughter they moved to West Byfleet, where Ian and Audrey lived for the rest of their lives. He loved cricket, happy to watch school, county or England matches. A keen golfer, he liked to take the grandchildren to play or practice on the driving range.

Ian's association with The Black Watch and the Indian Army was a long and happy one, visiting both countries several times for army reunions and holidays. Being a member of the Black Watch Association London branch, he regularly attended meetings and dinners.

M L Smith

HARRY LORIMER WARDEN

Harry Lorimer Warden, known as Lori, died on 8 November 2023, aged 76. He was the manager of the "Golf Club" and also worked in the Red Hackle Club when the Battalion served in Werl, West Germany from 1980 to 1985. During the Battalion's 1st tour in Ballykinler from 1976 to 1978, he also worked in the "Plastic Pub".

R J W Proctor

The following deaths have also been recorded:

Allan Brannigan died on 29 October 2023, aged 60. He had served 8 years in the 1st Battalion rising to Cpl.

Ian Bruce died in February 2023 aged 37.

Robert John Bruce died on 26 September 2023, aged 72.

Robert was from Aberfeldy. He was a LCpl in the 1st Battalion in A (Grenadier) Company in 1970-71 when he took part in operational tours in Northern Ireland.

Colin Malcolmson died on 13 March 2023, aged 87. Colin was a National Service officer.

Frank Noble died in December 2022, aged 90.

Sam Stenhouse-Craig died on 27 January 2023, aged 91. He had been HLI attached to BW in Korea.

Correspondence

Dear Editor,

Whilst I was in South Africa earlier this year to look at potential Wind Farm locations in the Matjiesfontein area I stayed at the Lord Milner Hotel.

In the bar I found a picture of a poem titled 'The Black Watch at Magersfontein' dated 11 December 1899, dictated by 'One who was there'. The poem was taken down by a Private (Volunteer Company) at the dictation of one of the Black Watch while they were together in the Convalescent Camp at De Aar. I think that your readers may find this to be of interest. AAS MacDonald



The Lord Milner Hotel in 2023 at Magersfontein (c)
AASMacD

THE BLACK WATCH AT MAGERSFONTEIN (by one who was there)

Tell you a tale of the battle!
Well, there is not much to tell.
Nine hundred went to the slaughter,
And nigh on four hundred fell.

Wire and the Mauser rifle,
Thirst and the burning sun,
Knocked us down by the hundred,
Ere the long day was done.

Wet was the night, cold and dreary,
Chilled were the men to the bone,
Bivouacked there in the open,
Thinking perhaps of their home.

Midnight they came round to wake us,
Forming us up in the dark,
Officers whispered their orders,
Never a light or a spark.

Onward we went till the morning
Dawned in the East, grey and drear,
While in the front of us looming,
The kopjes bold outline showed clear.

Away on the left of the kopjes
We noticed a light burning bright,
And just as the column halted,
It vanished from sight.

Then ere we knew what had happened,
Two shots on our right ringing out,
To the Boers in their trenches gave signal,
And rifle balls answered our shout.

Someone yelled "Charge" and we started
Rose up and rushed out in the fire,
Meaning to give them the bayonet,
But checked and stopped by the wire.

Bullets and shells ne'er appalled us,
Trenches nor boulder strewn hill,

But just a few yards of wire fencing,
Brought us, nonplussed, standing still.

"Over the wire men, or through it,
Drive the charge home to the hilt!!!"
Vain were the struggles and climbing,
Barbs sticking deep through the kilt.

Strong grows the light of the morning,
We halted, the lead on us rained,
Still we remained there before them,
Holding the ground we had gained.

"Down on the face, men – seek cover!"
Nothing could live in that fire,
"Off to the right, men, to flank them!"
Forward! Lie down, men! Retire!

Then we turned back and we cursed them,
Macfarlane's dead form stood erect,
Volley on volley we gave them,
Until their fierce fire was checked.

Then our brave Adjutant rallied
Remnants of different Corps,
Some of the Black Watch and Argyles,
And some of the gallant Seaforths.

All day long in the same position,
Watching our own shells burst,
Lying with dead men and wounded,
Lips swollen blue-black with thirst.

Not thirty yards from the trenches,
Brave General Wauchope lay dead,
Our Colonel, too, lay beside him,
Their lives by the Boer bullets sped.

Such was the day for our regiment,
Dread the revenge we will take,
Dearly we paid for the blunder,
A drawing room General's mistake.

Where was the Guard's "gallant" General
Three miles in our rear out of sight,
No one to issue us orders,
Men doing what they thought right.

Not a man knew when we started
What we were going to do,
Take up or rush a position,
Were the Boers many or few.

Had they retired! Were they coming!
Had they slunk off in the night!
Should we attack in the darkness!
Or wait to attack in the daylight!

Why weren't we told of the trenches!
Why weren't we told of the wire!
Why attack in the quarter column!
May Tommy Atkins enquire!

Why were no scouts sent forward!
Why were no scouts on our flank!
Why were we marched up in column!
Who made the mistake! Give his rank!

Do they know his name Old England!
Do they know his incompetence yet!
Tommy has learned to his sorrow,
And Tommy will never forget.

Nigh on eight hundred our losses,
English and Irish and Scotch,
Half them fell in one regiment!!
God help the noble Black Watch.

Such is the tale of the battle
It's easy for me now to tell,
But nine hundred men in a death trap,
And nearly four hundred fell!!



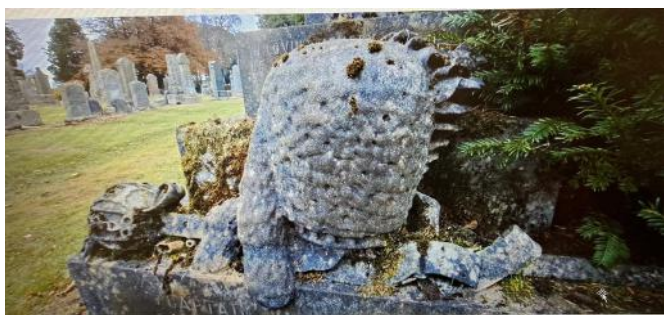
'No Surrender, The Battle of Magersfontein, The Black Watch 11 December 1899' by Frank Feller

Editor's note: while conducting a property check at Fort George with 3 SCOTS in September I came across this painting in the Officers' Mess which I did not recall from during my service with 1BW. The original is at the museum: 'No Surrender, The Battle of Magersfontein, The Black Watch – 11 December 1899' by Frank Feller. He was a Swiss-born artist whose work and choice of title reflected the popular mood of the time – shock and a strong empathy for the fighting soldier.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM MACFARLAN KILLED IN ACTION MAGERSFONTEIN IN 1899

Dear Editor,

Living near Lennoxton I walk regularly visiting war graves in Glasgow graveyards one of which is the old High Church of Campsie which has many WW1 graves. A grave I have just discovered which had, until recently, been obscured is that of Captain William Macfarlan The Black Watch. The bushes having been cut back has revealed the headstones of father and son. Capt MacFarlan was killed in action at the battle of Magersfontein, South Africa in 1899.



The headstone of Capt MacFarlan

The grave is highly decorative and has a beautifully carved stone highland hilted claymore and feather bonnet including its chequered band.



Script on the headstone

The headstone lists his father as Lieutenant General David Macfarlan of the Royal Artillery.

You have a painting of Captain Macfarlan in the Collection in which he is holding his basket hilt sword.



Capt MacFarlan portrait

I have seen many war graves but this one stands out due to the detail of the claymore hilt and feather bonnet. The grave detail could perhaps benefit from a light clean, but I do not want to do that without knowing what I am doing. If you are not aware of this grave and you have any person who researches such information and wishes to visit and photograph it properly, I will be most happy to show them its location. Yrs etc Craig Brooks.

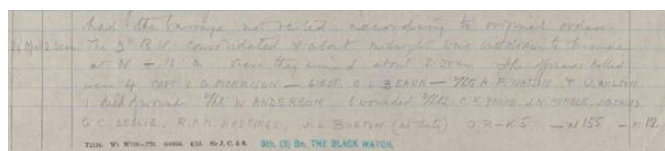
THE SWORD OF LIEUTENANT O L BEARN BW

Sir, Provoked by the recent reacquisition of a sword which had belonged to a relative who served in The Black Watch in WW1, I submit the following which may be of interest to your readers:

From a family line coming from Brechin, Octavius Leslie Bearn (OLB) was born in Manchester on 26 December 1891, the youngest of eight children of James & Isabella Bearn. He was second cousin to my grandfather, Benjamin Bearn, who had served in The Royal Scots during WW1. OLB attended William Hulme Grammar School in Manchester. Completing his education, he had gone to Canada where he worked for a bank and joined the Imperial Territorial Force serving with 100th Regiment Winnipeg Grenadiers.

On the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 he had immediately returned home and was commissioned into 9th (Service) Battalion The Black Watch. His brother, Frederic Arnot Bearn, was the Medical Officer in the same battalion and appears at length in Wauchope's regimental history. As a further coincidence, their brother in law, Captain Bell, was also serving in the same battalion.

OLB was Killed in Action near the village of Guemappe on 23rd April 1917. The war diary factually records:



9BW War diary entry 23 April 1917

24 Apr 2.30am. The 9th BW consolidated + about midnight was withdrawn to [?] at N - 15, a there they arrived about 2.30am The officers killed were 4 - CAPT LG MORRISON - LIEUT OL BEARN - 2Lts BF WATSON, - J WILSON 1 died of wounds 2Lt W ANDERSON, 6 WOUNDED 2Lts CK YOUNG JN HUMBLE JB [THIRD?] GC LESLIE RAM HASTINGS JL BURTON (at duty) OR-K5-W155-M12

Men who had fought alongside him recorded in his school magazine that, *"Mr Bearn was the best friend a man could have: he shared everything he had, and always thought of the comfort of others before his own. He was never afraid to lead his men, and died fighting fiercely."*



*Back row standing left to right - 2/Lt. Anderson
front row left to right - Lt. Bearn Major Murray.*

Lieutenant Octavius L Bearn is front left

Many of OLB's regimental artefacts, including his medals, had disappeared over the years. However, in March 2023 my aunt found reference to an engraved sword for sale in an auction house in America. With the assistance of a clergyman in Providence, on Rhode Island USA, we successfully outbid other interested parties and it is now back in the family. On 12 November 2023 it will have been used at the Remembrance Service at St Paul's Church in Monte Carlo. A member of The (Monaco) King's Bodyguard will bring it into Church whilst my son, Frederick, will play "Going Home" on the pipes.

Reverend Hugh Bearn

Chaplain to His Majesty The King (of Monaco)
Serving as Chaplain at St Paul's Anglican Church, Monte Carlo

THREE GENERATIONS OF BLACK WATCH NICHOLSONS RESEARCHED

Editor's note: Paul Nicholson had been in touch with our Archivist, Jenny Marshall, to research three generations of BW men in his family. Although this enquiry was greatly assisted by the quality of information supplied by the family, it is linked to other 2BW enquiries in WW2 and amplifies military generations. It is hoped that Mr Nicholson's research will be published in the Red Hackle in due course.

I've provided details of my family members who served with the regiment below and would really appreciate if you could provide any information on their service history. I would like to pay a visit and look at any material myself and would appreciate it if you could inform me if and when you have any findings. Also, I visited the museum many years ago and was shown a photo album compiled by someone from my father's battalion, which included photographs of him. If it is possible, I would really like to see it again and obtain some copies of these.

Father - David Dickson Nicholson, serial number 2568138. I think he served initially with the 2nd Battalion after enlisting at Perth with the T.A. in 1932 but transferred to the 1st Battalion in 1933. He was in India and the Middle East and moved back to the 2nd Battalion in 1939, seeing service in Palestine, Aden, Crete, Egypt (El Alamein and Tobruk), India, Burma (Chindit) and North West Europe.

Grand Father - David Alexander Gillespie Nicholson, serial number 345691. Served in India (Bareilly), The Boer War and WW1 (Flanders and Mesopotamia).

Great Grand Father - David Dickson, serial number 1140. Enlisted at Perth in 1877 served in Malta, Cyprus and Gibraltar.

Thanks in advance. Paul

SERVICE IN THE TRANSVAAL SCOTTISH IN WW2

Editor's Note: There is also an article about the Transvaal Scottish written by their regimental association in this edition.



The Transvaal Scottish Drum in the Balhousie collection

Dear Editor,

Through our chance encounter earlier this year, I was interested to see the photo of the Transvaal Scottish drum that is part of the collection at Balhousie Castle, marking the link between our regiments. Although I also served in the regiment, the photograph reminded me of my father, Eric, who fought in Second Battalion, the Transvaal Scottish during World War II. He was captured in Tobruk in 1942 but managed to escape. I included an account with his escape in my book, *Bigger than me*:

'My father Eric was a Lieutenant in the Second Transvaal Scottish Battalion and saw intense action in North Africa against Rommel, arguably Germany's greatest general. He was, with most of his men, captured at Tobruk and force-marched to a prisoner of war camp in Italy. [...]

'But my father was an officer. It was his sworn duty to escape and no death threat would thwart him. He escaped again and this time he got away.

'For most of that year —1943 — he was on the run, and no one, least of all the Germans, knew where he was. After many months of anguished waiting, my grandmother received a telegram from the Red Cross stating, "We regret to inform you Second Lieutenant Eric Henderson is missing, believed killed in action."

'The family was devastated and feared the worst. Except my grandmother.

'[...] Nine months later he arrived in France, having walked most of the length of Italy through mountains, forests and even crowded towns and cities festooned with Axis soldiers. He lived entirely by his wits, helped by the fact that he was a linguist and spoke fluent French, Italian and German. Fortuitously, he was also a talented artist and could forge food ration and identity documents, some of which we have to this day.

'He wanted to get back into action, but the War Office decided he'd had enough death-defying escapades for one lifetime, not to mention the Germans would execute him on sight if captured. He spent the rest of the war as an interpreter.'

Yours etc Peter HH

2BW ON CRETE

Editor's note: Mrs Maliphant, daughter of the late John Rome, who served in 2BW during WW2, was in touch regarding her then forthcoming visit to Crete. Chris Tweedy, who's uncle was killed on Crete while also fighting in 2BW is buried there, was able to describe where a memorial to the dead of 2BW on Crete would be found, having himself recently visited.

Dear Editor,

I found Souda Bay War Cemetery profoundly moving. It is so well kept and in such a beautiful situation. I was shocked by the numbers of unnamed graves. I have, of course, seen unnamed graves before, in France and Belgium but never so many in one place. I spoke to one of the gardeners who told me that the bodies were not recovered until after the Germans had left the island and nearly all their dogtags had been removed. I found that so sad.

I know my father, John Rome, had been based for a while at Heraklion but I'm not sure where else he had been on Crete. We have photographs of the German Paratroopers falling from the sky. I was astonished by the difficult terrain that the troops had had to clear on their way south to escape, it must have been awful. We also visited the German Cemetery at Maleme which is run by an organisation for peace. It had very good information boards in all different languages. The other interesting visit was to a family run museum at Askifou in the mountains. The grandfather started collecting war items in 1946 and they have masses of all sorts of equipment. They still find about 20 pieces a year!

I clearly remember my Dad speaking about Pipe Major Roy. I love

the story of him marching out of the prison camp. My Dad was at Tobruk and in Palestine. He came off Crete on the Dido and told me that he was scared to go below and so sheltered behind one of the guns which the gunner chose to allow. If not, he may not have survived the Dido being hit and flooded. He told of how they were wakened in the middle of the night and put on little boats to go out to the ships. They were told to hold their right arms up in the air and the sailors grabbed them and pulled them on board. He told my sister he was terrified. It's odd that he told me little bits of the story and told her other little bits and it isn't until now that we have started to put them together. When they [the survivors] got to Alexandria, he said there were mountains of underwear piled up and they just had to take what they could get. I suppose anything would have been welcome as all they had was what they were wearing.

At some point my Dad sat exams for the Royal Corps of Signals and that is who he was with in India and Burma. I don't know when or how this occurred. He was a Maths prize winner in school and had wanted to go on to University but his father had a building firm and all the boys were forced into the business, like it or not! Also, my father had been in the OTC at school and after and should have gone into Officer Training but again my grandfather would not allow it. For a long time, I couldn't understand how his father could have stopped him, but I think it was because he was in a Reserved Occupation and his father, as his employer, had to sign his release papers. He had had a relative who had been an officer killed on the Somme so perhaps that was why.

In his retirement Dad and three other Black Watch friends used to meet for a walk and a cup of tea every Monday afternoon for many years. My Mother used to raise her eyes to the heavens and say, "They fight the War every Monday in the park!" They used to go to the reunions in Perth every year, they were all BW through and through. I live in [the south] but do visit Scotland so hopefully I'll get to Perth one day...it's on my bucket list!

Afternote: 2BW were part of 14th Infantry Brigade which began arriving on Crete from 6 November 1940. 2BW arrived aboard HMS YORK and landed on 19 November 1940. 2BW were initially stationed at Souda Bay; their main task was to defend the Navy's fuelling base there. They also strengthened the island's defences as they were very concerned about attacks from the air.

Also of interest, provided by our Archivist, is this blog post: <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/the-defence-and-loss-of-crete-1940-1941-part-2/>

NATIONAL SERVICE QUEEN'S BARRACKS COLD WAR

Letter dated 4 July 2023 from Mr E C Watt ISO Dalgetty Bay

Sir, I saw in today's Times that Colin Innes had died last month and that a memorial service is to be held in Dunkeld Cathedral on 14 September.

Initially inducted as a management trainee at Rosyth Dockyard in 1958 I write as one of the last intakes of National Servicemen called up in 1960 to be trained at the long-gone depot, Queen's Barracks, where Colin Innes was my training officer. Serving on an initial 28 shillings per week less barrack damages (a somewhat specious deduction) we sprogs were put through our paces on the square, mastering the 7.62 rifle and LMG, and running around the Inches, marching up Kinnoull Hill, and shooting at Barry Buddon ranges, before passing out under the eagle eye of the inspecting officer, Brigadier Sir Bernard Ferguson.

The Depot's primitive facilities - 24 men to a barrack block with tepid or cold showers at 0630 were certainly no Hilton, but we worked hard, got the kilt sitting correctly with the (wretched) white Blanco applied to the sporran, polished up for a seemingly endless parades and played hard in the little spare time we were allowed. The depot hosted a number of professional footballers, including Big Bill McGarry whom I bounced off; I recall exchanging a guard duty with Jim Baxter

so he could play at Ibrox on a Wednesday night and my next bed mate was Jimmy Kilgannon of Stirling Albion. My squad sergeant was MacAulay who, I think, had served in Korea. I later transferred to the Intelligence Corps to serve in West Germany, keeping an eye and ear open on the Russians over the East German border, as the Berlin was built.

My grandfather, Captain (acting major) Alexander Ward of Dundee, served in the regiment in World War I and died of wounds suffered during the Battle of the Somme in 1916, leaving behind a widow and five children, subsequently to be brought up in Monifieth. Had he been confirmed substantive, that would have made a difference to his widow's pension. Even so, the family prospered, and my late father was twice elected Provost and made a Freeman of the Burgh of Monifieth, of which he and we were very proud.

Editor's note: In addition to a generous contribution in memory of Colin Innes, the erstwhile 23795397 Private Watt said he would be delighted if his letter were to be published 'for such may stir some memories of still living contemporaries and other old soldiers of 60 years ago who served at the spartan Queen's Barracks'.

Black Watch Memorials Dundee a Fundraising Appeal

By Major (Retired) Colin Gray

Within Dundee, Scotland, there are two Memorial projects relating to The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) that require substantial amounts of financial assistance in order to make them fitting Memorials to our illustrious and famous Regiment. These projects are:

Project A – The Black Watch Memorial at Powrie Brae, Emmock Road, Dundee

Inspired by Brigadier James A Oliver and Lieutenant Colonel Charles N Thomson, both of whom had served in the 4th and 5th Battalions of The Black Watch during WW2, this memorial was created by Scott Sutherland, a Scottish sculptor who was also responsible for the Commando Memorial at Spean Bridge and other memorials around Dundee and Angus. The bronze statue was modelled by Sandy Rankine who served in the 4th Battalion during WW2.

On the front of the statue plinth, the inscription states, *"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"*.

The Memorial on its original site to the north of Powrie Castle, was unveiled by HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother on 15 October 1959 in front of 3,000 people. In 1985, when the A90 Dual carriageway was constructed, the Memorial became rather isolated, therefore it was decided to move the Memorial to its present position on Powrie Brae, Emmock Road.

On 18 October 2009, 50 years from the original unveiling, the then HRH Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay attended a re-dedication at Powrie Brae where he was welcomed by Dundee Lord Provost John Leford, a great supporter of all matters relating to The Black Watch. The service was conducted by Reverend Vincent Logan, Bishop of Dunkeld, Canon Peter Allen and Reverend Bob Wightman, Chaplain to the City of Dundee Combined Ex-Services Association. In attendance were many serving Black Watch Officers and Soldiers, Black Watch Veterans and relatives of Sandy Rankine and of the men who served and died during WW2.

Since those early days, the Dundee Branch of The Black Watch Association hold their annual Remembrance Sunday Service at Powrie Brae, where they are joined by members of the Angus Branch, relatives of Black Watch soldiers who have lost their lives and many local politicians and other dignitaries and representatives from other

organisations. It is always a dignified, respectful yet enjoyable event.

However, during the Spring of this year, reports were received that the Memorial was looking the worse for wear, therefore during a site inspection in May, it was very apparent that the Memorial and surrounding areas required a fair bit of work done. A team of volunteers from the Dundee Branch got together and commenced a period of weeding and tidying up, but it soon became very apparent that a more professional approach and workforce was required.

After consulting and obtaining quotes from local landscaping companies, two gardening services companies, owned and run by Black Watch veterans, **Peter Fotheringham of Operation Garden Force** and **Barry Mason of Barry's Garden Services**, decided that, for this project, they would join forces to bring this memorial back to its former glory. They would uplift, level, realign, and then re-lay all the paving slabs on the Memorial as well as the surrounding pathways. Once done, they would power wash all paving slabs and stonework before creating a border around the external Memorial wall where relatives of the fallen can lay their own private memorials. They will also prepare, cut and maintain all the grassed areas, lifting the cut grass on every occasion, thereby creating a striking and respectful visual affect.

Once Peter and Barry have completed their work, a local stonemason will be employed to repoint all the stonework on the wall of the memorial and the plinth on which the statue stands.

The costs of materials and a relatively small element of their time for Peter and Barry, is £1,200.00. The Stonemason's costs are currently scheduled to be £5,262 giving a total requirement of £6,462.

Project B – The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) Memorial on Black Watch Parade, Dundee

Colonel Alex Murdoch, a previous Chairman of The Black Watch Association, had a desire to have a Statue (Memorial) erected in Dundee to commemorate The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) 1739-2006. The idea was to replicate either The Black Watch (Highland Division) piper located at Balhousie Castle or the statue erected at Black Watch Corner, Ypres, in Belgium.

The process commenced in late 2018 with a small committee in the shape of Colonel Murdoch, Willie Barr (Chairman of the Dundee Branch) and Major (Retd) Colin Gray (President of the Dundee Branch). In October 2019 an initial meeting was held with members of Dundee City Council planning department.

Potential sites suggested by the Council included Euclid Crescent to the right of Dundee High School and just behind several bus shelters, outside the Chamber of Commerce building on Panmure Street and behind the Wellgate Centre on the grassed area outside the Central Library. The committee decided that none of these sites were suitable for such a prestigious memorial.

The committee suggested strongly to the Council that the ideal location for this memorial was on Black Watch Parade which is located on the newly developed Waterfront and was so named, after a very successful campaign by Charlie Reid, Ex Warrant Officer in 1 BW. Black Watch Parade is a walkway/cycle path, directly on the edge of the River Tay running from the bottom of South Crichton Street to just under the Tay Road Bridge.

This location is in Dundee, with its back to Angus, looking across towards the Kingdom of Fife and looking westwards up the River Tay towards Perthshire. The four traditional recruiting areas of our illustrious Regiment.

During that initial meeting, it became quite apparent that the City Council were not in favour of having a memorial such as we had suggested (HD Piper or BW Corner). They believed that such a figure would not necessarily blend in with the more modern surroundings of V & A Dundee, the Urban Beach nor the then proposed Whale Sculpture. It was agreed that the committee would come up with a different proposal. At this stage, Colonel Murdoch handed the project over to the Dundee Branch for them to drive it forward.

After consulting a local stonemason, further ideas for the memorial were developed, including having a tall obelisk with a semi-circular arched wall containing all the Battle Honours as well as a large Black

Watch badge on the face of the structure.

Another meeting was set up with the City Council planners. However, yet again it became quite apparent that the visual aspect of the proposed memorial was perceived to not fit in with the existing and future surroundings. There were also additional problems with the site as it would be sitting above a water catchment tank, therefore substantial groundworks would be required, and planning consent would be a major stumbling block.

After detailed discussions with the members of the City Council, it was decided that a fresh approach was needed, and ideas were exchanged. The outcome was that the revised proposal was vibrant, modern, thought provoking, educational and much more whilst still retaining the purpose of the memorial.

The initial thoughts for the new proposal, was not to erect a single memorial, but to create a Walkway using the length of Black Watch Parade to tell the story and history of the Regiment. At both ends of the walkway could be large modern metal sculptures containing either a Black Watch badge or Red Hackle with part of the history embedded into the sculpture.

Along the route, paving stones would be etched with significant events such as Battle Honours and specific timelines in our history. QR Codes would be placed along the walkway, allowing the user to obtain further information via the Black Watch Castle & Museum website.

At the time of creating this article, John Gray, a retired member of Dundee Council Planning Department and an extremely eager supporter of the proposal, is liaising with local artists. The process will then be, that John will issue the artists a brief, containing the fundamental principles of what we desire to achieve, and ask them to produce their own ideas and impressions. From these ideas and impressions, the Committee, which will then include John and Fiona Connah (Curator of the Black Watch Museum), will select the one which has produced the best outcome. At this juncture, the Artist who has been selected will become a member of the Committee and then the hard work truly commences.

The costs involved in all of this is currently unknown as we need to obtain various quotes for all the work including the Artists' costs, however, using John's experience and knowledge of previous projects I am projecting that a figure of £80,000 will be required.

Fundraising

It is my intention to raise the total sum of £86,462.00 (cost of both projects) through fundraising and corporate and personal donations. The Dundee Branch will be working hard to raise as much as possible through various events and it is hoped that the other Association Branches may support us and do likewise.

Corporate and personal donations can be made via either a bank transfer to the Black Watch Regimental Trust account or through the Just Giving page. All monies received will be deposited into a Restricted Account to be used purely for the purposes of these two projects. Any monies remaining after all costs have been paid, will be used to conduct future maintenance work on either of the Memorials.

To make a donation via a Bank Transfer (BACS) payment, please use the following details:

Name of account: The Black Watch Regimental Trust Limited

Sort Code: 83 47 00

Account Number: 11477506

To make a donation through the Just Giving site, please visit the Black Watch Castle & Museum website and follow the links or donate via Just Giving pages on Facebook.

If Donors would prefer to make a donation for a specific Project, then simply enter a Reference with the donation; if you want to make a donation specifically for Project A, use the reference **Powrie Brae** and for Project B, use the reference **BW Parade**.

Continual updates on how the Fundraising is progressing will be communicated via, Trustees and Association Committee meetings, emails to all Association Branches, various Black Watch related Facebook pages, the Just Giving platform and hopefully, articles in

the local press and media.

National Memorial Arboretum (NMA), Staffordshire

The NMA is a 150-acre site on the edge of the National Forest in Staffordshire. It is part of the Royal British Legion and exists to ensure that those who have served and sacrificed are never forgotten, that Remembrance is passed on through the generations and that there is a year-round space to celebrate lives lived and commemorate lives lost. They welcome over 300,000 visitors a year. The site hosts over 400 memorials of many former and current regiments, nestled among 25,000 trees.

At present, there is no memorial dedicated to The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) and a proposal has been voiced by a number of Association members from the Dundee Branch, Angus Branch (who visited the NMA) and London Branch, that we should rectify this and set in motion a plan to establish a fitting memorial to The Black Watch. The plan as it is so far, has considered the possibility of either re-using the mould of the piper at Balhousie Castle created to commemorate the 51st Highland Division, or to create a new statue, plinth or pillar perhaps with a large Black Watch badge to represent the Regiment from its formation to 2006. Other options may also emerge. Plans are afoot to form a committee lead by London Branch with input from all main Branches and to scope out costs (including a maintenance endowment), to liaise with NMA to find a suitable site, to go firm on a suitable memorial and then to agree a means of raising funds.

Further details will follow from the committee once a lead has been established. All those, no matter where you are in the country nor the attribute you may be able to bring to the feast, who are interested in giving up some time to help make this happen should speak to the Regimental Secretary who will pass on their details.

London Branch

Articles

PRESENTATION OF THE KOREAN PEACE MEDAL TO ANDREW GLASSFORD

The family of Andrew Glassford, an ex BW National Serviceman at the time of the Korean war, had arranged for Andrew to come to Balhousie Castle for a formal presentation of the Korean Peace Medal which Andrew had been presented by the grateful government of South Korea for the part which Andrew, as then Private A Glassford, of D Company 1st Battalion The Black Watch, played in the safeguarding of the South Korean Republic. He was met by the Regimental Secretary and Major Proctor who escorted the family round the museum.



Andrew Glassford in front of the last 1 BW Colours

As we passed through the museum, viewing in due course, the WW2 galleries, Andrew recalled in detail Pipe Major Roy 'The Piper of Tobruk'. The display cabinet shows his kilt and pipes as well as a painting of HMS DIDO on which men of 2 BW were evacuated from Crete. However, this wasn't about the war this was a recollection of an altogether more personal nature, cross-generational and from home. Andrew knew the name and the legend well; the reality was that the Roys had lived along the road from the Glassfords in Castlemilk – if I have that detail right: "Ah yes, Pipe Major Roy, what a man; my father called him Rab and I called him Mr Roy"! It was tremendous that a warrior from one of our battle honours should be talking about a warrior from another and totally out of context on the military scale, but entirely in context on the human scale.



Korean Peace Medal recipient Andrew Glassford reading the 1 BW Korean war Roll of Honour

It was quickly obvious that Andrew was very modest about what he had been through and fought against. His ready sense of humour to the fore he was not visiting to talk about himself, but about others and about the world as it is now.

The citation of the award reads:

Ambassador for Peace Mr Andrew Glassford.

It is a great honor and pleasure to express the everlasting gratitude of the Republic of Korea and our people for the service you and your countrymen have performed in restoring and preserving our freedom and democracy.

We cherish in our hearts the memory of your boundless sacrifices in helping us re-establish our Free Nation.

In grateful recognition of your dedicated contributions, it is our privilege to proclaim you an AMBASSADOR FOR PEACE with every good wish of people of the Republic of Korea. Let each of us reaffirm our mutual respect and friendship that they may endure for generations to come.' Signed by Minister, Patriots and veterans affairs, Republic of Korea.



Korean Peace Medal recipient Andrew Glassford with his son and daughter in law during their visit to Balhousie Castle in April 2023

Afternote: It was indeed our honour to have been able to host one of our surviving Korean war veterans; should the opportunity arise we are hoping that it will be possible for an oral recording to be made within the family of Andrew's experiences on The Hook as part of a library of such accounts we are building in the archive.

FOLLOWING THE STEPS OF BERNARD FERGUSSON IN UPPER BURMA

By Geordie Fergusson

In 2011 near the end of a short attachment to the British Embassy in Bangkok, I received an email from a Financial Times journalist called Tim Johnson whom I did not know. He asked if he could pick my brains over an expedition to Upper Burma which he was planning to track down places his father had visited in 1944. His father had been serving in 16 Brigade which was commanded at the time by my father, Bernard Fergusson, and was the only Brigade to march into Burma during the second Chindit expedition.

Tim Johnson turned out to be based in Bangkok and by the time I left the country after a convivial lunch the following day, I discovered that I had volunteered to accompany him. The 2nd Battalion The Black Watch also took part in the second Chindit campaign in 1944 as part of a different brigade. My father, Duncan Menzies (his adjutant) and Peter Dorans (his orderly then more feudally known as a 'soldier servant') were all Black Watch and had been on the smaller-scale first Chindit expedition in 1943. Duncan Menzies was captured and executed: my middle name is Duncan after him. Peter Dorans also named one of his sons after him. (Another son (Allan) is currently the MP for Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock).

In 2011 Burma was at the start of its tragically short, political thaw; the country's strict controls were easing slightly. Aung San Suu Kyi was still under house arrest but expected to be released soon. Nonetheless, Tim's attempt to get permission for us to replicate 16 Brigade's trek into Burma from Ledo in India was turned down (to my discreet relief) but we put together an alternative plan travelling mainly by train. We still intended to give ourselves a short taste of a jungle march – made more palatable than for our fathers by lighter kit, better boots and waterproofs, decent anti-malarial drugs not having the Japanese shooting at us.

We would fly to Myitkyina (the most northern town in Burma; take the railway to Indaw (whose capture, with its airfield, had been 16 Brigade's first objective); then take a short train journey back north to Mawlu (the site of Brigadier Mike Calvert's 1944 stronghold "White City"). We would then make a two-day walk west to my father's stronghold "Aberdeen". I had the names and details of some local Kachin tribesmen who had helped the Brigade in 1944 and whom my parents had met again when they revisited the area in 1960. My father had wanted to thank them and make enquiries about any reprisals they might have suffered. From there we would follow (on foot) the route taken by 16 Brigade when, already exhausted by their long march in, they had tried to capture the airfield and town of Indaw.

A description of 16 Brigade's activities was vividly written up in my father's book "Wild Green Earth". The book he wrote about his visit in 1960, "Return to Burma", was more helpful in giving us people's names: there had been less time to make social acquaintances in 1943 and 1944.

We made a smooth start. Myitkyina was a pleasant town, with good, clean lodgings in the YMCA, and a surprisingly smoky air as the evening woodstoves lit up. During our one-night stay, it also had two small earth tremors and we heard a bomb go off: safely distant, but a sign of possible complications to come.

At Myitkyina the station master could tell us when the train left, 7.45am, but not when it would arrive at Indaw. We pressed him for an estimate, which was maybe unkind. He came up with 3.00pm. The train trundled slowly south at about 15 mph. Many of our fellow passengers were uniformed soldiers carrying AK47s. We arrived at Indaw station at 6.00pm. As we quickly learned to be the normal situation, (usually helpful) English-speaking, self-appointed minders emerged from the shadows to greet us. One man with 'Indaw General Administration' printed on his shirt took us under his wing, as did another who informed us he was the Assistant Director of Education for the Township. (The latter, whenever he mentioned it over the next 24 hours, pronounced the last letter of "township" with a 't' instead of a 'p', which I found slightly distracting!) They took us down through the buzzy, central streets of the town to a guest house - there were no cars, a few trucks, but lots of bikes and motorbikes and the odd ox-cart.

We then suffered various setbacks. This first guest house announced that it was not allowed to take foreigners, but a second took us in. A nice but firm official in a black leather jacket, whom we dubbed Mr Immigration, then joined us at supper and asked to see our permission to be in Indaw. We explained through our minders that we had been consistently assured, from the London Embassy to the Myitkyina Tourist Office, that we didn't need permission. He replied that we would be escorted back to our hotel after supper and needed to report to the Town Office at 8.00 next morning. There we had a curious split day: on one side handling questions from Mr Immigration, who gradually telephoned more and more senior offices elsewhere; on the other dealing with a small but growing group of the town's scholars and historians who were intrigued by us, and more by the photos in my father's books and our maps. The photos in 'Beyond the Chindwin' (my father's account of the 1943 campaign) and in "Return to Burma" were excellent quick explanatory indications of what we were about and were much passed around. They found the scale of our maps difficult to deal with. The only maps legally sold in the country then (other than road plans of the big cities) were single-sheet maps of the whole country at 1:2,500,000 scale. Eventually Mr Immigration said we would have to be put on the overnight train to Mandalay, and meanwhile must go back to our guest house, under escort.



Indaw lake from North

However, we did persuade him to let us go (under our escort) to the site of the battle on the north side of Indaw Lake. So off we went in a curious posse on motorbikes: us, Mr Immigration and several of the town intellectuals. That visit was brief but well worth doing. Some touching, individual, Japanese family memorials had been put up on the site since the war. We could easily see the layout of the battle which the tired units of 16 Brigade had fought there with the Japanese forces between them and the lake. A section of the Leicester Regiment who were desperately thirsty, broke out fatally to try to get to the water. Before going on to the station, and hoping to see a little of the town, I asked if I could get my hair cut. Permission was granted – but the walk there and back, and the haircut itself, were also completed under escort.

That night's train journey wasn't the most comfortable: kind fellow passengers, again, many of them soldiers, found seats for us in a very crowded carriage, but the hard, wooden seats made ScotRail suburban trains feel luxurious, and our ungrateful bottoms were very sore after a bumpy night sitting on them.

One notable point was seeing a station sign for Bonchaung and then going very slowly over a bridge in the dark. I managed a remarkably bad, blurred photo of a slowly passing bridge girder and thought of my father's No 5 Column blowing up the Bonchaung Gorge bridge in 1943, their most tangible achievement in an expedition from which only 95 of the 300-strong original column returned.

We spent the next day in Mandalay going gloomily around various offices, being told that we didn't need permission to be in Indaw but, no, they couldn't put that in writing. When we said we needed more than that to satisfy our new friend, Mr Immigration, they eventually rang Naypyidaw, the new and inaccessible capital, who said we did need permission, we'd need to go to Naypyidaw to get it, and it would take ten days to come through.

We then had the bright idea of taking a river boat to Katha, about 10 miles east of Indaw, and with luck out of Mr Immigration's bailiwick, or at least his line of sight. The three-times-a-week boat was leaving that night. This involved 36 hours on a bigish 'steamer', the Pinbon. I found out later that she had been commissioned in 1940; sunk by the British in 1942 to stop her falling into Japanese hands; refloated and put back into service by Japanese hands – and not much restored since then! We had a cabin and, more importantly, were able to get onto the top deck by day to sit behind or beside the funnel.



Pinbon 2011

There we made a base, where we read and watched the river go by. ("Deck class" involved sitting below deck on a secured patch of floor, literally cheek to cheek (both kinds!) with your next-door neighbour or family group). We got food at each stop when food sellers rushed onboard up planks from the muddy bank. The journey was punctuated by sudden midstream stops, as we hit sandbanks. Some took 20 minutes or so to get off, but no-one seemed much concerned.



GF Disembarking Pinbon

We stopped at some places long enough to be able to get to a tea-shop/restaurant: one was at Tigyaing, where my father had crossed the river with his column in 1943, aware that the Japanese knew where he was heading after his column had blown the bridge at Bonchaung. Watching the banks as we approached Tigyaing became interesting. Helpful, detailed descriptions in "Beyond the Chindwin" and "Return to Burma" made it easy to identify the landmarks.

We could see Pagoda Hill from way off, where Captain Tommy Robert's machine gun platoon had been placed to cover a possible Japanese arrival from the south or west, while the column organised its crossing, ate full meals and stocked up for the rigours ahead.

My father thought he had three hours start on the pursuing Japanese but took precautions against their arrival before the column had got across. On the eastern bank, I could see the shore "a couple of hundred yards downstream from Myadaung" where 5 Column had landed. My father was the last to jump into the last boat just as the Japanese came within firing range. He had to remain on all fours just as he had boarded because each time he tried to move, the overloaded boat wobbled dangerously and everyone swore at their commanding officer. He claimed ever after to have been the first British officer to have crossed the Irrawaddy in such an undignified position.

We went ashore and had time to get to the hilltop pagoda where Roberts' machine gunners had been placed. The town was attractive, compact, neat and quite prosperous, with few obvious signs of change since the 1940s. We could envisage the Chindit troops marching in, with their deliberate three-abreast formation, to display bravado and dispel Japanese propaganda of them as stragglers.

We had a good lunch near the waterfront, soon joined by a man with reasonable English, Kay Kyaw, who said he was also called Joe: he was the local Receiver. We asked about U Tun Sein, the waterman who had taken my father and many others over the river, and others, including the merchant who had sold the column food.



Burma11 GF Tun Sein in Myadaung

He said he thought he knew whom we meant, and that U Tun Sein was still alive and living across the river in Myadaung. Did we want to see him? We had to tell him that the boat would be leaving in 10 minutes, but that we might just be back later in the week. We exchanged cards, promising to ring from Katha if we came back by river. The ship's whistle blew so we had to pay our bill and move quickly. The boat corporal was looking worried as we arrived back. I said to Tim that, like my father, we were leaving Tigyaing by river, with full stomachs. "But not on all fours", he pointed out.

We reached Katha and booked into a guest house. Next day, we went up to Mawlu, on the railway line, where Mike Calvert's 77 Brigade had established the "White City" stronghold about 20 miles east of my father's "Aberdeen".



Site of White City light plane strip, railway to left

My father had visited three or four times, eventually flying back out to India from there. We travelled on the backs of two motorbikes on a rough road from Katha: two to three hours each way, passing occasional elephants. Again, in Mawlu we fell in with someone with a little English and went up to the recognisable centre of the old base. It was very messy, as they were just packing up from a pagoda festival, but we could see where the light airstrip had been and the site of Calvert's headquarters, as well as the pagoda itself, which had been the scene of heavy fighting in 1944. We were also able to walk a short way into the jungle, passing visible remains of dug trenches and parapets, and getting some sense of jungle marching.

The books, with their photos proved to be useful 'explainers' once again. Our new guide in Mawlu knew the name of the headman, then 35, who had hosted my parents in 1960 and been mentioned by name in "Return to Burma". He had met my father as a young man in 1944, and his parents been much more directly involved. Our guide suddenly noticed a new grave near the Headquarters gully with this man's name on it - maybe a coincidence, but it made a meeting unlikely. We went to the widow's house. He had died about 6 months ago and would have been the right sort of age. It was not at all clear that it was the right person, but it was rewarding to be in the house and telling the story to a dozen relations and neighbours who all seemed most interested.



At U Tin Maung's house



Grave of (a) U Tin Maung, Mawlu

We were told that we could only get to Mahnton (the village at the centre of the former Aberdeen base) by motorbike on a bad road, taking maybe two hours each way. There wasn't time to do that the same day (and the walk option had been specifically forbidden during our earlier visit to Indaw). So we bounced back on the bikes to Katha, looking forward to getting to "Aberdeen"/Mahnton, even if only briefly the next day.

The next day we hired a car and driver to save our bottoms and spines from completely excessive motorbike bouncing and planned to return to Mawlu. Meanwhile, there must have been some official "warning off". Any notion of our going on to Mahnton had fallen sharply out of fashion. It might now take five hours each way; the road was very bad indeed; "this is not "normal times"; "killing"; "soldiers"; and "die" - all of which were a bit discouraging. In the end it was clear that pushing on would be a bad idea, even if we had been able to hire motorbike rides. So, it was back to Katha which was disappointing because Mahnton was the place where we had the most named contacts to follow up and where Tim's father had been too.

We fell back on the plan to visit Tigyaing, setting off next morning in a so-called fast boat which was much less stately than the Pinbon. There were no real floorboards, and it took us a long time to work out how to place our feet on the hull ribs, while minimising the pain to our long-suffering bottoms on the hard thwarts that ran from one side of the boat to the other. On arrival, after a trip of about six hours, we found Kay Kyaw again, whom we managed to contact by telephone. He confirmed that Tin Sein, the boatman, was now living across the river, and took us over – at the same late afternoon time that my father had made his crossing. It was a similar boat too, but now with an outboard instead of paddles. We eventually found Tin Sein's house and were quickly joined there by many relations and neighbours. Tantalisingly, Tin Sein had lost his memory and certainly had no recollection of the war. It wasn't clear that he was the right man, though his name, age and occupation as boatmen were correct; and he sparked at the name of the Chinese merchant who my parents had established in 1960 had hired him to make the crossing in 1943. In the end, I thought there was only about a 60% chance that he was our man. But again it was fun sitting in the house telling a younger generation the story, through our guide-interpreter and they were very engaged.



discussion Tigyaing

Here, as in Mawlu, I was very struck by how little the young people and even many of the middle-aged people knew about the war. By and large, there was vague recollection of having heard that once there had been fighting between – was it the British? and maybe the Japanese? – somewhere near their village. Put like that, it did seem slightly improbable: both countries now seem far away and memories of the British Empire, let alone the Japanese Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, are very hazy indeed. The collapse of much of Burma's education system, and the likely narrowness of any historical curriculum in the earlier years of the Burmese Road to Socialism won't have helped. Nonetheless, it was sobering to realise the gulf between our historical memory of the country (disproportionately focused on the war years perhaps) and that of the local people whom we met.

That evening, in the dark, we crossed back to Tigyaing and stayed in another guest house for the night. Twelve hours this time on those fast-ferry wooden thwarts took us back to Mandalay the next day and the end of our trail.

Debate still continues about the success and purpose of the Chindits' two big operations. We couldn't really claim our far more indulgent expedition had been any more successful in achieving its objectives. But I found it very rewarding, seeing places, many remarkably unchanged, which had played important parts in the campaign which my father described as a watershed in his life. And sad, to have seen a country which after decades of misgovernment and inter-ethnic wars, seemed to be on the cusp of greater freedom and prosperity, which has since lost that chance again.



Map of Burma

All Photos: Tim Johnson

Bernard Fergusson's accounts of the 1943 and 1944 Chindit campaigns, Beyond the Chindwin and Wild Green Earth, are still in print and available: <https://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk/search/author/Fergusson>

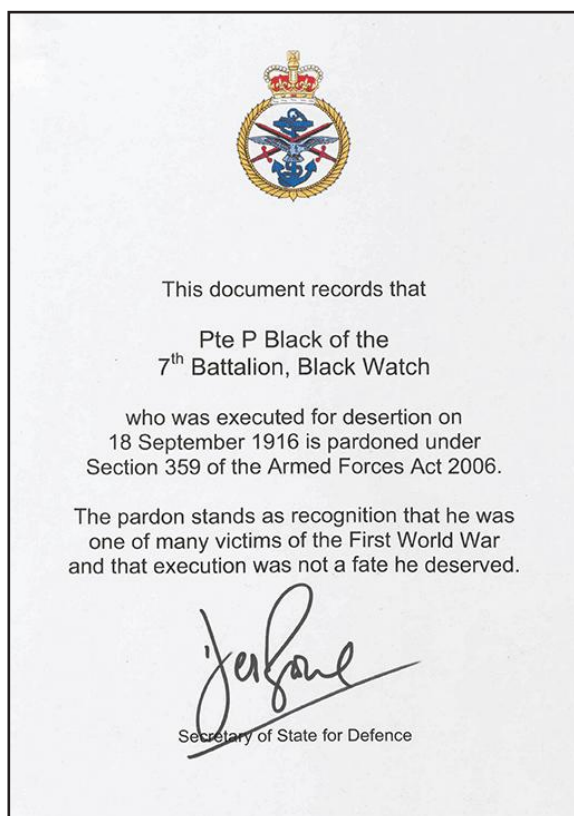
PRIVATE PETER BLACK'S STORY

Among the many poignant statues and tributes at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire you can find the Shot at Dawn Memorial. When you approach in the woodland you come across a clearing of trees where you are faced with the figure of a WW1 soldier, he stands tall, blindfolded, his hands tied behind his back, and behind him in a semicircle there are 306 wooden stakes, each bearing a plaque with the name of a soldier, rank, battalion, and the date of their execution. Men who were sentenced to death and executed by their own for desertion, many who we now would understand to be suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders, mentally ill . . . not a coward.



Shot at Dawn Memorial

It was 89 years after the end of The Great War before the families of these men received posthumous pardons after the passing of the Armed Forces Act 2006. Our family was one of them, my grandmother Jean receiving the pardon for the uncle she never had the chance to meet.



Private Black Pardon

Peter was born in Market Street, St Andrews on 1 April 1895 to George, a gardener, and Maggie, a domestic servant. Peter grew up in a blended family, his oldest brother Alexander was born in 1888 to mother Alice who sadly died of consumption when he was only 6 weeks old, George then married Maggie in January 1891 who already has "illegitimate" son James Wilkie born 1888, then sister Agnes arrives two months later, George junior was born 1892 followed by Peter in 1895 and Andrew in 1898, following the death of wife Maggie in 1901, 1902 sees George marry Mary Robertson in Kemback, completing their family with my great grandfather James Myles Black who was born 1903 in Fliskmarch, Flisk.

In the years that follow, school records show the siblings attending Flisk Public School while the family reside at nearby Wormit Farm.

Peter volunteered his service in 1914 enlisting with The Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 1/4th (City of Dundee) Battalion (Territorial Force) along with his brothers Alexander, 2nd Black Watch, George, Australian Infantry Brigade and Andrew 2/4th Black Watch. The article below appeared in the Dundee People's Journal in July 1915, documenting the family's dedication to the war effort.



The Black Family article – Peoples Journal

As the article states, by the time of its print Peter had seen active service in Neuve Chapelle (10-13 March) and Festubert (15-25 May) with Loos (25 September – 13 October) on the horizon. I cannot imagine what he would have experienced over these months.

In November 1915 suffering from Shell Shock (it is documented that Peter experienced vivid hallucinations) he deserted for the first time, he was absent for over a month before he was captured, he was court marshalled and sentenced to 3 years penal service as punishment and returned to his unit. Unfortunately, this would not be the last time for Peter and after going absent again in the wake of the Somme he was charged on 3 September 1916 with desertion.



Peter's plaque, Shot at Dawn Memorial

A report on his court martial states the following:-

“No. 2120 Private P. Black 14th Bn. The Black Watch attached 1/7th Bn, was tried by Field General Court Martial on the following charges:

“When on active service deserting His Majesty’s Service, in that he, in the field, on the night 21st/22nd July 1916, absented himself from the unit to which he was attached until apprehended on 2nd August 1916”

The sentence of the Court was “To suffer death by being shot”.

During WW1 200,000 men were court martialled, 20,000 convicted of offences that carried the death penalty, 3,000 men received it, however only 346 were carried out. 4 of these men belonged to The Black Watch.

Private Peter Black, 6744 1/4th Battalion Black Watch was executed by firing squad at Le Creche on the French/Belgian border on 18 September 1916 at 05.47, he was just 21 years old.



Peter’s Grave

I can only imagine the anger and sadness that was felt by our family at the time and how the news would have reached his brothers, did they feel shame? anger? Did they understand why the army felt the need to make examples of men like Peter? Unfortunately, I don’t know the answer to those questions and would long to have asked my grandmother had she known of Peter’s demise all of her life, did my great grandfather James speak of his older brother? As aforementioned my grandmother Jean received the pardon on her Uncle Peter’s behalf 90 years after his death, there was a lot of local interest and I can remember her being interviewed for national news segments. She talked very passionately on the subject and was quite determined there was no doubt that he should be pardoned as he had been a young man with a mental illness who had played his part and had been wronged by the army.

With a story so tragic and the injustice Peter received it is hard to look for the good in this situation. The small comfort for my family comes from the people of Newport on Tay and Wormit and the community support for a family who had lost their son to war.

Name.		Corps.		Regt. No.	
BLACK Peter		R. HIGHS		2120 6744	
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.		
Victory	G 102-830	2644			
Honour	Do	Do			
15 Stan	G/6 B	705	Desertion 14-9-16		
Theatre of War first served in		(1)			
Date of entry therein		24-2-15			
K. 1380					

Peter’s Medal Card

In the years that followed the end of the war, committees were established in villages, towns and cities to fund and build fitting memorials to the lost men. Peter’s execution for desertion posed a problem as the Newport committee believed that a deserter had no place with his fellow 83 fallen soldiers of the village and when the list of names for engraving was published his name was missing.

The Courier Newspaper of Thursday 18 May 1922 has an article entitled NEWPORT MEMORIALS MISSING NAME - Protest by Ex-Servicemen, the article goes on to explain how at the well-attended public meeting fellow soldiers petitioned the committee for Peter’s name to be included with a Mr C N Craig stating: “although no ex-serviceman would dispute the finding of the Court Martial they had resented the fact that a Court Martial should be set up in Newport by a body of men who did not know the hardships that Peter had endured”.



Newport and Wormit War Memorial

However, some of Peter’s friends had taken their disgust to another level. In a letter to the editor in The Courier and Advertiser of 24 June 1992, Harry Spark wrote “The late Peter Black was a very close

friend of my family” he goes on to say “several ex-soldiers including my uncle who had joined with him, decided that if his name was not added the Newport memorial would be blown up. Explosives were stolen from a nearby quarry and were wrapped in an oilskin. They were strapped under the U-pipe of my grandmother’s house at 12 Robert Street”. He finishes “As history confirms of course, Peter Black’s name was added to the memorial, the crisis passed and the explosives were “filtered back” to the quarry.” I can only imagine that many other families in the same position as the Blacks would not have had this outpouring of local compassion and support and suffered in silence and shame. George Black remained resident in Queen Street, Newport on Tay until his death in 1930 with generations of his family still living nearby to this day.

The people of Newport on Tay continue to tell Peter’s story, in October of last year we attended the same public hall, where those fraught committee meetings had taken place, to see Lest We Forget – Poppy Project 2022. It was an exhibition by Newport History Group as it was 100 years since the memorial had been unveiled; each name was represented by a poppy made by the local primary schools and there were displays on the local men lost with their individual stories told. Being able to see his story shared with the new generation of residents of Newport on Tay in such a visual way felt very special. With a young son ourselves we realise how important it is to mark their sacrifice so they are not lost.



Flisk School Memorial



Peter’s name on Newport Memorial

As a family we hope to travel to Trois Arbres Cemetery, Steenwerck, France to pay our respects at Peter’s final resting place. However, we are forever grateful that his name remains along with his fellow men on the banks of the River Tay on the Newport and Wormit war memorial, in the honour roll in the stained-glass window of Newport Church of Scotland, and on the memorial plaque on the former schoolhouse he attended at Flisk.



Newport Parish Church Window

Leanne & Ewen Ward
October 2023

Sources:
Mairi Shiels Newport History Group - newportontayhistory.org.uk, Newport on Tay and Wormit Memorial by Gordon Small, Greatwardundee.com, Black Family Tree Ward Family photographs Ancestry UK Find my past newspaper collections Fold 3

NATIONAL SERVICE

(an inconvenience, a curse or a blessing)

Life Experience prior to National Service

By Brian Walker

Born 1934, in the small town of Elland, twixt Halifax and Huddersfield in West Yorkshire, two towns that dominated my life for sixty years up to retirement. At the age of five years, in August 1939, I entered the local council run school and the following month the Second World War was declared on Germany. On 30 September 1939 my younger brother was born, the fifth child in our family, joining myself, one sister and two older brothers.

For the next few years our life was influenced by the surrounding military activities and the effects of the war. We were all issued with gas masks, including a special one for our newly born brother, in which he was completely enclosed. A local Home Guard unit was formed which held regular parades at the nearby drill hall and our church Sunday School buildings were commandeered for military use, thus our Sunday School had to be held in the church hall for the period until the end of the war in 1945.

Residents of Elland were supplied with Anderson air raid shelters to be sited in their gardens and our school playground was excavated and underground tunnel air raid shelters constructed and the tarmac surface replaced. At the end of our garden, behind a low dry-stone wall, were two fields which were taken over by the military and used by travelling army units and were often filled with trucks, tanks and artillery weapons. Passing army units would hold exercises in these two fields, digging slit trenches and larger dugouts for housing camouflaged artillery weapons. We children referred to these fields as the "Army Fields" and used them as play areas when no army units were present.

Aged nine I joined a junior brass band where I was taught to play the cornet. Throughout the war and subsequent years, the brass bands in which I was a playing member would lead the annual parades to the local Cenotaph remembrance services.

I also became a member of the Life Boys and after two years moved up into the Boys Brigade, where the activities included physical training, marching drills and visits to annual camps with the BB Battalion.

In 1943, aged 33, my father enlisted for service in the King's Regiment and on completion of his training was transferred to the Royal Welch Fusiliers. During early June 1944, they landed in Normandy on to Gold Beach, wading in chest high water from landing crafts and fought alongside the Black Watch through to the battle for Caen and on through France up into Belgium. On reaching Antwerp, his battle group were taken out from the front line for three days rest. On his first day back in the front line, he was wounded when a bullet went through his steel helmet and entered his head, resting beside his brain along with shrapnel from the helmet. He was flown by air back to England to a hospital in Bath where a lady brain surgeon removed the bullet and some of the shrapnel. The surgeon suggested fitting a silver plate over the head wound, but this did not take place. My father was medically discharged from the services and, gradually, small pieces of shrapnel worked their way out from his head wound which would not have been possible had the silver plate been installed. He was on a medical discharge pension until his death from a brain haemorrhage at the age of 61.

Our connections with the military continued; my eldest brother was enlisted for National Service in 1947. He served as a telegraphist on the Flagship of the Fleet, the battleship HMS THE DUKE OF YORK. My second eldest brother was enlisted in 1951; he completed his training in the Royal Artillery. Having qualified as a Chartered Engineer prior to National Service, he served the remainder of his term as a sergeant in the Education Corps, based in Nienburg in BAOR Germany.

Following my service in The Black Watch, my younger brother, born on 30 September 1939, was called up on the very last day of National Service enlistment and served two years in the RAF in Scotland and England.

From 1945 to 1949 I attended Elland Grammar School and, on leaving aged fifteen, embarked on a six-year engineering apprenticeship serving three years in the machine shops and three years in the drawing office, while attending evening classes at Technical College studying mechanical engineering. I continued to play the cornet in brass bands and performed with some of the local senior bands.

By the end of May 1955, I had completed my final term at the Technical College and was called to attend a medical prior to National Service. This I passed A1 and awaited my enlistment notice. Having just completed the engineering apprenticeship I decided not to apply for the Engineering Corps in the forces, but tried to pursue my hobby in music by playing in a military band for the two years of my National Service.

I had received a letter from the Highland Light Infantry band master offering me a position in their military band based in Bulford, but I selected to enlist in The Black Watch (RHR) and apply for membership in their military band.

Embarking on National Service

My enlistment notice arrived on 6 July instructing me to present myself at Queen's Barracks, Perth on 21 July 1955 between 9:00am to 4:00pm. Since I had never had the experience of travelling by train unaccompanied, I was quite nervous of the journey ahead. My girlfriend, who with her parents had moved to Elland from Edinburgh eight years earlier, accompanied me to the station for me to catch a night train up to Scotland via Leeds, Edinburgh and on to Perth, arriving at 10:00am the following day.

Arriving at Queen's Barracks, I was taken into the guard room where an NCO proceeded to ask questions and enter details into my Soldier's Record and Pay Book. When asked my religious denomination, I replied "Congregational" to which the NCO pondered about the spelling. He eventually entered "C of S", hence I became a member of the Church of Scotland for the duration of my National Service. During the day around forty enlistees arrived, and we were divided into two squads and shown into our respective barrack room quarters.

I was placed in Squad 87, which comprised 17 national servicemen and 4 regular signees and I believe the other squad was of a similar make-up. There were two other further advanced squads in the barracks which had commenced their training six weeks earlier and we were in awe of them, watching their marching and drill skills on the parade ground.

Squad 87 was introduced to our training instructors; L/Cpl Campbell and Sgt Cameron, who quickly converted us from civilian to army life. Routine training commenced and we were continually reminded of the standard which we were required to attain in order to complete the ten-week initial training course successfully.

One main skill required was to be proficient on the rifle range with the Lee Enfield 303 rifle and the Bren light machine gun. On our first visit to the Kinfauns rifle range, I was only able to close my right eye thus unable to position my left eye in line behind the rifle sights. As a result of this handicap, I was issued with an eye patch to wear over my left eye, enabling me to see the target with my right eye correctly positioned in line with the weapon sights. After a while, I succeeded in training my left eye muscles to open and close at will. I was relieved at not having to wear the eye patch and gained a first class pass prior to the end of training for the LMG and the rifle.

Other tests in which we had to achieve high standards were physical fitness, running various distances within time limits. The 100 yards was no problem, but the one-mile run caused concern. The PE instructors gave instructions to turn left out of the barrack gates and run up Dunkeld Road until reaching the first roundabout, run round the roundabout and return back down Dunkeld Road. They stated that the PE Staff Sgt would be positioned on the roundabout to make sure that no one cheated. I kept looking at my watch and realised that we had passed our allocated time for one mile and had not even reached the roundabout. Some of the squad had ceased running and were now walking but we finally reached the roundabout, encircled it and started on our return run back to the Queen's Barracks, having noticed that there was no PE Staff Sgt in sight. It had been a hoax and

we had run over 3 miles, however the ones who had completed the run passed our test, the ones who had dropped out and walked back had to do the 1 mile run again at the next PE session.

On the first Saturday morning we were marched to the medical centre for our first TT inoculation which made everyone feel ill for two days with flu-like symptoms and, the following Saturday, went for a further APT inoculation.

Soon we went on our first route march with full packs, steel helmets and rifles, led out to the edge of Perth by two pipers, and then left to march 14 miles through the countryside. It was a hot, sunny, early August day and sweat was just running down my face throughout the march and I kept convincing myself 'this is doing me good, this is doing me good!' As we returned to the edge of Perth the two pipers were waiting to lead us smartly back into our barracks.

On return to our quarters an officer examined our feet, checking that we had completed the 14 mile route march unscathed and no blisters.

Four weeks into our training we sadly lost our Sgt Cameron whose wife died in a road accident, and he was placed on compassionate leave. Sgt Fielding was appointed our new squad Sergeant; he had previously served in Korea with the Kings Own Scottish Borderers and on his return to Scotland had been transferred to The Black Watch.

One day following training we were transported out into the Perthshire forests to assist in dampening down forest fires due to the hot dry summer. We worked long into the night, digging fire breaks and beating out the spreading ground fires. By 2 to 3am we were allowed to rest for a while, just laying down on the forest ground for a little shut-eye, only to be awakened around 4am by a strange singing approaching through the forest. This turned out to be a large group of berry pickers walking from one fruit farm to their next location.

We returned back to the barracks in time to see the duty piper playing 6am reveille and face another day of training exercises and drill sessions.

My 21st birthday on 30 August was just another routine day of training. 6am reveille, barrack room cleaning for inspection, after breakfast transported out to Kinfauns Range for rifle practice, lunch on shooting range eaten out of our mess tins and then completing the target practice until mid-afternoon.

We returned to barracks by 4pm and commenced boiling out our rifles when suddenly we were instructed to proceed at the double to the parade ground for a drill session, after which we collected our mugs, plates, cutlery and the squad marched to the mess hall for evening meal. On arriving back at our quarters after our meal, we were immediately called onto parade for rifle inspection, whereupon the drill was to remove the rifle bolt and, on command, raise the rifle with the butt in the air and the barrel sloping down for the inspecting officer to spy into the barrel. Unfortunately for me, when the officer attempted to look into my rifle barrel, he encountered a trickle of rusty water running down his cheek and promptly shouted, "Charge that man!". What a day, what a 21st birthday, ending up being put on a charge.

The following day I was marched in front of the Officer Commanding, Captain Trotter, who asked me to explain the state of my rifle, to which I replied that due to the length of time between boiling out and cleaning with the 4x2 pull-through and the time of the late evening inspection, the rifle barrel had been sweating and thus became wet. For punishment I was given 1 Mark Drill, which was a session of drill in full kit on the parade ground on the following Saturday afternoon. The list of attendees for the mark drills was posted up on Company Orders and although there were at least 8 names on the board, my name was not one of them, I was never called to serve that punishment.

The two squads who had commenced their training before us had been doing all the guard duties, which involved a 3 man contingent in full dress uniform having 1 sentry on duty at the main gates of Queen's Barracks. Our squad members were looking forward to when we would be proficient enough to take on these guard duties when the previous squads would soon be completing their training and moving

on to join the 1st Battalion.

The week when this time arrived, the whole of the British Forces were put on alert due to an attack by the IRA on the REME depot at Arborfield in Berkshire, where a quantity of weapons and ammunition had been stolen.

The guard routines at all Army establishments were upgraded and changes were made immediately at Perth. Guarding procedure on the main gate was replaced by a 12 hour guard, comprising guard commander and 10 man unit, not in number one dress but battle dress, boots and gaiters. One guard positioned inside the barrack's rear gate, one guard patrolling the side of the parade ground and one guard on the front main gate, so that the three would always be positioned to see each other.

The tenth member of the guard would spend the whole night in the depot armoury. This change increased the number of men required for guard duty over seven days each week and meant that our turn for guard duties were much more often and hence very tiring.

A special moment during our time in training was the visit to the depot of our Colonel in Chief, Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, when we lined up to form a guard of honour on the route from the front gates to the Officers' Mess. Our term of training came to an end with our passing out parade and a feeling of relief that we had completed the course successfully and were now soldiers of The Black Watch RHR.



No. 87 Squad – August 1955

Completing our training, we were rewarded with a seven day privilege leave when I travelled home to Elland on 30 September. It was whilst on this leave I became engaged to my Scottish girlfriend, a member of the McRae clan.

On returning to the depot in Perth on 9 October, our squad prepared for our move to Crail to join the 1st Battalion where we became part of D Company. I learned that The Black Watch military band was away in Holland on a four-week Tattoo engagement and would have to await their return to Crail before making an application to join their ranks.

In the meantime, our training regime continued each day and, since I was qualified as a football referee from the age of 16, I officiated at some inter-regimental football matches in the Crail barracks.

I was asked to draw on a large blackboard a sectioned drawing of a grenade used for firing from a Lee Enfield 303 rifle, taken from a sketch in a weapons training guidebook. This was the type of drafting work I had been trained to do in civilian work and the finished drawing seemed to attract the attention of several officers and NCOs.

Our D Company were very quickly deployed to a training camp at Barry Buddon near Monifieth for a four-week spell of schemes and exercises. By this time, in October, it was very cold on the bleak moorland and we welcomed our return to Crail.

I went on Company orders to apply to join the military band, but the interviewing major (who was President of the Band) intimated that all of the band players were Regulars and he believed that National Service soldiers should be trained to fight and not play instruments; however, he stated that if I was prepared to sign on as a Regular, I could move my bedding down to the Band quarters. Unfortunately, this I was not willing to do, because on entering the forces for two

years National Service, the company employing us at home had to reserve our jobs for the duration.

Unbeknown to me, the drawing I had produced earlier must have attracted the attention of Lieutenant Rennie, who informed me that he had submitted my name to attend a War Office course for draughtsmen. Lieutenant Rennie told me how proud he was to be wearing the kilt which had belonged to his father, General Thomas Rennie, who was killed on the Rhine crossing in 1945 in the Second World War.

On 20 November, one of the lads told me that my name was on company orders, this was at 6pm and I was to depart from Crail that evening at 8pm, travelling by train overnight via Edinburgh and London to Newbury in Berkshire. My friends assisted me in packing up all my kit and handing my rifle and bedding into the stores. I was supplied with a travel warrant and pack of sandwiches, said goodbye to my comrades and was driven by jeep to the Crail railway station on a very cold and dark night.

The War Office course arranged by Lieutenant Rennie had suddenly come to fruition and travelling alone by train all night I arrived at the School of Military Survey in Hermitage by midday on 21 November.

The course was mainly concentrated on maps, mapping and enlarging maps by draughting and also sketching of vistas and identification of aerial photographs. The attendees comprised mostly national servicemen, a few from individual infantry regiments but mainly members from the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers.

While I was at the School of Military Survey, the 1st Battalion moved from Crail to the British sector of Berlin.

Since I had successfully completed the course, I returned to the depot in Perth on 30 January to await details of a War Office posting. After four weeks as a holdee at the depot, I received a posting to 4th GUARDS Brigade HQ in Hubbelrath BAOR 44.

Once again, I packed up all my kit, collected my travel warrant and pack of sandwiches, leaving Perth railway station on the overnight train to London. The following day I travelled on the train to Harwich and the night troopship, sailing to the Hook of Holland, followed by the train to Dusseldorf in Germany. There, an army bus was waiting for troops returning from leave in Britain and transported us to Llanelly Barracks at Hubbelrath.

HQ 4TH GUARDS BRIGADE - BAOR

Housed in the Flak-Kaserne barracks built in 1938 and used by a German Panzer unit during World War Two, it was renamed Llanelly Barracks by the Welsh Infantry Division following the war.

The HQ Command Unit, accommodated in the palatial building on the left of the entrance to the barracks



Left Barracks Main entrance



Sergeants Mess and Admin Block

comprised the following officers:

Brigadier WAG Burns MC - COLDSTREAM GUARDS

Brigade Major DAH TOLER MC - COLDSTREAM GUARDS

Staff Captain Gregor MacGregor - SCOTS GUARDS

Intelligence Officer Captain HF GIBBS - COLDSTREAM GUARDS

The main work in this HQ Command Unit was the planning and preparation of schemes and exercises to be carried out in the field by the 4th Guards Brigade. Llanelly Barracks' guard room was manned by 2nd Battalion Scots Guards who occupied the larger portion of the barracks. Other members of 4th Guards Brigade were 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards stationed in Gort Barracks half a mile down the road and 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards stationed 20 miles away in Bradbury Barracks, Krefeld. A squadron of Royal Signals was attached to 4th Guards Brigade and were also billeted in Llanelly Barracks, as was a company of REME serving the MT section and Armourers.

The first task I had to complete on joining the Intelligence Office was to prepare a large two-metre square map of the surrounding area. On it, the positions to which all units of 4th Guards Brigade would be rapidly dispatched in the event of a Russian attack from the east were to be marked.

The technique was to draw the Ordnance Survey map grid to a larger scale and then copy by hand each grid square details from the ordnance map. This produced a much-enlarged, detailed map which was locked away in a Top Secrets room, only to be seen by a few high-ranking officers.

Our routine work was preparing maps for the schemes and exercises carried out throughout the year by 4th Guards Brigade. The maps were mounted on boards and covered with rigid perspex which could be marked on with chinograph coloured pencils. We would prepare the card docket covers to enclose the typed scheme instructions, prepared by the HQ office clerks.

The length of time for each scheme or exercise varied from a few days to up to three weeks. Our unit took part in the schemes, being transported in a 1-ton truck carrying our maps and equipment with a large portable canvas awning serving as our field office. We would set up our field office in woods, fields, farm yards or buildings, depending on where the schemes were taking place.



The Field Office



Cpl Walker digging slit trench



Cpl Walker with Field Clerks



Things didn't always work out!

In the 1956 -1957 era each of the Guards regiments had more than one battalion and thus were able to perform their royal household duties in London whilst other battalions were deployed abroad. In both 1956 and 1957 whilst the Household Division was Trooping the Colour on Horse Guards, the 4th Guards Brigade presented the spectacle in Dusseldorf.

This took place in parkland and was used to keep the Guards proficient with the right drill routines, ready for returning to the Household Division duties. For both these annual performances, I accompanied Captain Gibbs to organise the sergeants who were deployed for the sale of official programmes. Wearing No. 1 dress uniform, I was proud to be involved in these prestigious events.

Just two weeks prior to demobilisation, Captain Gibbs enquired if I had any leave to come. Since I had used up the two leaves allocated for travel back to Britain during my 16-month tour of duty in Germany, he stated that I had earned a special leave and suggested that I took a week's leave in Germany. I intimated that I would be pleased to visit my friends in The Black Watch who were stationed in Berlin. Captain Gibbs immediately telephoned the Adjutant of The Black Watch and arranged for me to be accommodated with the 1st Battalion in Berlin, purely for a holiday and no duties.

Within two days I was issued with a travel warrant and travelled on the leave train from Dusseldorf to Hannover. The train journey from Hannover to Berlin was at nighttime, passing through the Russian zone corridor with the carriage blinds closed. Since it was 1 July and daylight at 4:30am, I was able to have the blinds open and see the towns and countryside of what was then East Germany.

Arriving at the Berlin station I joined the leave bus collecting soldiers returning from leave, only to be called off as the Adjutant had kindly despatched his personal jeep to collect me. I was met and greeted at the entrance to the barracks by the Adjutant and several members of the old Squad 87. It was a terrific week in Berlin, especially due to the kind arrangements organised by the Adjutant.



Black Watch colleagues in Berlin



The Brandenburg Gate

On leaving my friends in Berlin I arrived back at Llanely Barracks on 9 July, leaving me just two days to clear my desk and hand in my kit. I was approached by our Pay Sergeant who offered me a promotion to Sergeant if I would sign on as a Regular, but I turned down the offer and left Dusseldorf on 11 July 1957, landing at Harwich the following morning and back home in Elland by the evening.



National Serviceman back home -23157103 Cpl B WALKER

Back home from the two years of adventure and experience of National Service, I had a week settling down before returning to work in the drawing office of the engineering company where I served my six-year apprenticeship in Huddersfield. I remained at this company for a further three years preparing detailed drawings for electrostatic precipitators to be installed in coal-fired power stations and steelworks. I then moved to a company in Halifax as a senior design draughtsman.

In 1959 I married my fiancée from Edinburgh and, through her many relatives in Scotland, have visited north of the border several times every year. I was enrolled as a life member of The Black Watch Association on 3 February 1999 and enjoy each and every visit to Balhousie Castle, especially the shop and restaurant.

The four officers at 4th Guards Brigade HQ advanced in their military careers since my National Service days. It was a great privilege for me to serve under them as a representative of The Black Watch (RHR).

Briefly, the advancements in their military careers was:

Major General Sir WAG Burns GCVO CB DSO OBE MC KStJ Coldstream Guards Commander Household Brigade.

Major General DAH Toler OBE MC DL MA Coldstream Guards Commander Land Forces Northern Ireland 1969.

Brigadier Sir Gregor McGregor, 6th Baronet, Chief of Clan Gregor. Aide de Camp to Queen Elizabeth II 1979. Colonel of the Scots Guards 1973, Brigadier 1977.

Captain HF Gibbs - remained in the Coldstream Guards for a further 10 years and promoted to major.

National Service; an inconvenience, a curse or a blessing?

On mixing with the other NS men for two years, I found a few considered National Service to be an inconvenience because it interrupted their lives. A few found it a curse because they hated it

and just could not enjoy service life. For myself, and many like me, National Service was a blessing. It was to me a University of Life, presenting us with comradeship, self-discipline and, most of all, self-confidence and self-assurance, an opportunity to learn additional skills to use afterward in civilian life. On enlistment, I was nervous about rail travel but gained confidence on the journeys traveling alone throughout England and Scotland, to Berlin and back to England. The confidence I gained from just being a member of The Black Watch enabled me to start my own business and build up my companies and live life to the full.

Editor's Note: Brian had very generously donated the collection from his wife's funeral, held at Aberdaigie, to The Black Watch. Following this he reconnected with the Association and wrote a more substantial record of his life now held in the archive, from which this article is an extract. In 1963, aged 29, he went on to become successful in founding manufacturing companies in UK and internationally. He also developed his love of brass music, being 'connected with the Lindley Band for 64 years, 8 years as a player, 20 years as Secretary, 15 years as President and I'm still on the Committee and a Trustee'. It was very good news that Brian was able to attend the 2023 Reunion, taking part in the march.

A BLUE PLAQUE UNVEILED IN MEMORY OF JOSEPH JOHNSTON LEE - JOURNALIST, POET & BLACK WATCH SOLDIER

Background

Jim Malone is a keen World War historian, especially anything related to The Black Watch, and also an Associate member of the Dundee Branch of the Association. In June 2022, he approached the Dundee Branch with an idea about making an application to erect an English Heritage Blue Plaque on a house in Epsom, Surrey where Joseph Johnston Lee, had resided between the years 1926-1947. The Branch was fully supportive of Jim's idea, and he was asked to proceed with the initial information collating and procedural requirements.

Jim soon learned that the process of obtaining permission to erect this plaque would be frustratingly slow, but he was determined to see it through and therefore formed a group of willing personnel to assist in pulling together all the pieces required to achieve the aim. This group included the current owners and occupiers of the house, Matt and Gabriela (Gaby) Eddolls. It also included Nancy Hughes who is Joe's only remaining living relative (great niece), Caroline Brown and Mathew Jarron from Dundee University and Kriss Holmes (Jim's Son-in-Law) for local planning experience. Major Colin Gray, as President of the Dundee Branch and Major Ronnie Proctor who had valuable knowledge about Joe Lee, both provided substantial assistance to the group.

The Black Watch Association Committee, once informed about the proposal, was also very supportive and keen to learn more about the story behind the man.

Early Life and Career

Born in Dundee, in 1876 Joseph (Joe) Johnston Lee was the grandson of Sergeant David Lee, who had fought in the Napoleonic Wars, and was one of nine siblings. Joe began his working life at the age of 14. After a spell of employment in the office of a local solicitor, he went to sea for a time as a steamship's stoker.

While working in Dundee, Joe had taken art classes at the local YMCA and by 1904 was working as an artist in London drawing cartoons for the Tariff Reform League, and subsequently became a newspaper artist. While in London he also studied at Heatherley's School of Fine Art. He returned to Dundee in 1906 and started to write for, produce and edit several local periodicals, most notably The City Echo and The Piper O' Dundee. In 1909 he founded and edited The Tocsin a monthly periodical which promoted the labour

movement in Dundee and included contributions from Dundee's Labour MP Alexander Wilkie. This publication won praise from leading figures in the Labour Party including Keir Hardie and Philip Snowden, but folded after less than a year. These works also featured many illustrations by Joe, sometimes produced under the pseudonym 'Crowquill', such as cartoons of the then Dundee MP Winston Churchill.

In 1909 he gained employment with the Dundee newspaper and periodical publishers John Leng & Co. He was soon a regular contributor of poetry to their weekly newspaper *The People's Journal*, a publication which he would go on to edit. In 1910, he published his first book of poems, *Tales o' Our Town* and in April 1914 his play, *Fra Lippo Lippi, Painter of Florence* was produced and performed by students of the Dundee Technical College and School of Art. This was Joe's second theatrical work after a one-act play called *The Song: An Episode from Bohemia*, which was performed in Dundee in 1913.

Joe was also in demand as an illustrator, with his drawings featuring in books including *Dundee from the Trams* (1908) and *Lochee as It Was and as It Is* (1911) as well as in his own *Tales o' Our Town*.

World War One

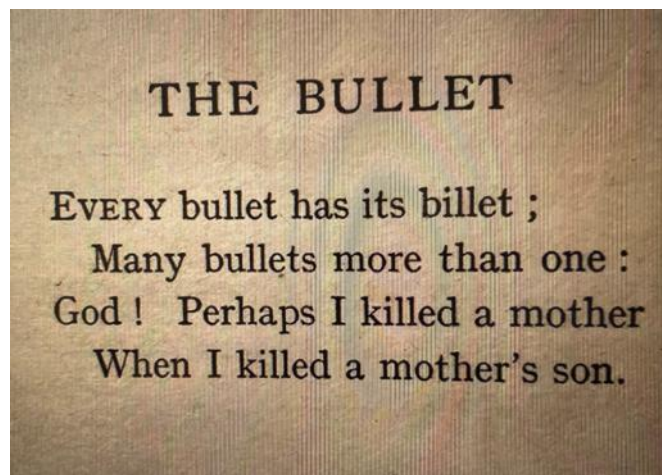
Although he was approaching 40 when World War I began, Joe despite his age, health problems (he was suffering from asthma) and the fact many of his associates in the labour movement in Dundee strongly opposed the war, enlisted into the 4th Battalion of The Black Watch. It is possible he was inspired by the fact his grandfather had fought at Waterloo (Joe wrote a poem about this in 1915), or was swept up in a wave of patriotism which swept Dundee at this time. However, whatever his reasons were, it is unlikely he realised his involvement in the War would prove to be the key point of his literary career.

Joe rose to the rank of Sergeant and he and eight other Dundee journalists who had joined the battalion were soon dubbed the 'Fighter-Writers'.



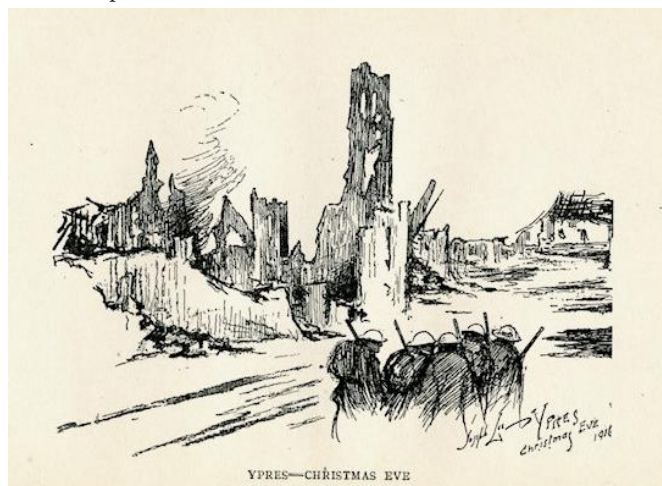
Joseph Lee in Black Watch uniform

The 4th Black Watch was sent to France in 1915, and in that year took part in the battles of Aubers Ridge, Neuve Chapelle and Loos. During his time fighting, Joe sent sketches and poems back home to Scotland and became known as 'the Black Watch Poet'. These poems were eventually collected in two books of poetry, *Ballads of Battle* and *Work-a-Day Warriors*.



The Bullet

In 1917 Joe gained a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the 10th Battalion of the King's Royal Rifle Corps. Later that year he was reported to be missing in action. In fact, he had been captured and became a prisoner of war in Germany where he was held at camps at Karlsruhe and Beeskow. During his imprisonment, Joe kept journals in which he included sketches and other material. These journals were adapted into *A Captive in Karlsruhe*, a book that chronicled his time as a POW published in 1920.



'Ypres-Christmas Eve' sketch, 1916

Later Life

In 1924 Joe married Miss Dorothy Barrie, who was a well-known viola player. The couple settled in Epsom and Joe became sub-editor on the *News Chronicle*. During this period, he also studied at the Slade School of Art. From 1940 to 1944 he was a member of the Home Guard. He returned to Dundee in 1944 and died there in 1949.

Music

Some of Joe's poems have been set to music. A musical score to accompany poems from 'Ballads of Battle' which had been set to music by Dundee musician J. F. Heyde (real name James H Foote) was published in 1916. This was followed in 1917 by 'Songs from Somewhere (5 further Ballads of Battle)' which was also set to a score by Heyde. A new musical version of Joe's poem 'The Listening Post', to a setting by Dallahan, was performed for the first time at a national commemorative event held in Dundee in 2015 to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Loos.

Reputation as a Poet

Joe's war poetry was widely praised when it was published during the Great War. His poem *The Green Grass* was acclaimed by John Buchan as one of the best war poems he had read. In 1918 the *New York Times* described his work as 'rather widely quoted'. His

reputation as a war poet, once ranked alongside those of Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and Rupert Brooke. However, as the works of Owen and Sassoon grew in popularity, Joe's fame waned, and his poetry became neglected.

Joe's biographer Bob Burrows suggests that one reason why his poetry failed to achieve the lasting recognition of that of his more famous contemporaries was because he did not have the backing of an influential supporter. He also notes that Joe came through the War relatively unscathed and returned to his old work as a journalist after his release from captivity in Germany. Burrows also suggests that Joe had no ambition to be a great literary figure and thus did little to push his work. In addition, he puts forward the view that Joe's working-class origins would have made it difficult for his work to achieve widespread acclaim.

Reputation as an Artist

Joe was the artist who dominated Dundee's newspapers and magazines before the Great War. In 1915 Joe's art works were the subject of a full-page section in the People's Journal entitled "Dundee's Own' Artist at the Front".

When in London after the First World War, Joe is known to have sketched many famous figures that he encountered including Edward Elgar, Max Beerbohm and Edith Sitwell.

Some of the sketches which Joe sent home during the War were exhibited in the Albert Institute (now the McManus Galleries) in Dundee.

Legacy

Joseph Lee's papers are now held by Archive Services at the University of Dundee. They include Joe's correspondence with a Robert Bridges as well as material relating to his time as a prisoner of war. The collection also features copies of Joe's publications and material relating to them, including a letter from Keir Hardie. Over 250 of Joe's drawings, including ones sketched while a prisoner of war in Germany, are held by the University of Dundee Museum Services.

A biography of Joseph Lee, by Bob Burrows, was published in 2004.

An exhibition devoted to Joe was held at the University of Dundee in 2005 and was opened by his great niece Nancy Hughes. In 2011 materials from Joe's papers, including extracts from the diary he wrote during his spell as a prisoner of war, were featured in an exhibition held by Archive Services to mark Remembrance Day. Another major exhibition of Joe's work was held in the University from August to November 2016.

The University of Dundee holds a 1921 portrait of Joe by Henry Young Alison and a 1913 lithograph portrait by Stewart Carmichael. Another portrait of Joe, by David Foggie is held by the Dundee Art Galleries and Museums Collection.

Publications

Joe's first major collection of poetry, *Tales o' Our Town* (Dundee: George Montgomery, 1910), features around sixty poems, most of which relate to people, places and events in his native Dundee. The volume also contains illustrations drawn by Joe.

His first collection of war poetry, *Ballads of Battle* (London: John Murray, 1916), contains 38 poems and 17 illustrations drawn by Joe.

Work-A-Day Warriors (London: John Murray, 1917) contains 39 poems, including four which had previously been published in *The Spectator* and one, "The Carrion Crow", which had earlier been published in *The Nation*. As with his earlier works, this volume also contains drawings by Joe. The New York Times regretted Joe's choice of title for this volume, as it felt it failed "to convey the real depth of Mr. Lee's work".

A Captive at Karlsruhe and other German prison camps (London: John Lane, 1920) is the published account of Joe's time as a prisoner of war and is based on the journals he kept while a prisoner of war.

A new volume of Joe's War poetry was launched at the University of Dundee in October 2014.

The Unveiling

Jim Malone, after numerous discussions with the local Council and other regulatory bodies, submitted an application with English Heritage for the erection of the Blue Plaque onto the house at 32 West Hill Avenue, Epsom and after many months of toing and froing he eventually received the authority to proceed. It was then a case of agreeing on the size of the plaque, the wording to be applied and a date for the unveiling. All this was achieved by the efforts of the group that Jim had formed, and it was decided that at 1300 hrs on Sunday 17th September 2023, the plaque would be unveiled.

Once again after many weeks of organising, the plan for the unveiling was finalised. Jim Malone, Willie Barr as Chairman of the Dundee Branch of The Black Watch Association, Ian Grant a former colleague of Jim's and another great supporter of the Association and John Justice a Dundee Publican and a financial supporter of the project, travelled down to Epsom on Friday 15th September. On Saturday 16th, the plaque was erected and covered up and then the Dundee crew attended an excellent exhibition of Joe Lee's works and life at the Bourne Hall Museum in Ewell, Surrey.

The unveiling on the Sunday was attended by the men from Dundee, Lt Col David Kemmis Betty representing the London Branch, Chic Mackie was the Piper, The Mayor of Epsom, local Ex Service Association members and many of Matt and Gaby's neighbours. The bad weather held off just long enough to make the event a fitting occasion for the commemoration of such a talented Black Watch Soldier.



Just before the Unveiling Ceremony



The Blue Plaque

BELIZE REVISITED AFTER 44 YEARS

By Pete Pendlebury

In 1979 the battalion embarked on a 6-month deployment to Belize as part of Battle Group North; the battalion's main location was Airport Camp on the outskirts of Belize City. In country, 80 miles to the west, close to the border with Guatemala in the Cayo District was the town of San Ignacio, to the east of San Ignacio was Holdfast Camp the battalion had a rifle company with supporting elements on a 2-month rotation located here. In San Ignacio was Plassey Camp a small platoon location. Plassey was where the battalion had the Recce Platoon permanently situated. The Battalion's jungle warfare school was located at Guacamallo bridge close to the Macal River deep inside the Belize Jungle, each platoon rotated through the school carrying out an intense 2-week jungle training package.

44 years later I, Pete Pendlebury, and two friends, Gus Angus and Danny Donovan having all served there revisited Belize to discover once again this lovely, intriguing part of the Caribbean. Our visit was planned for two to three days in Belize City, three in the Cayo District and San Ignacio and our last seven on Caye Caulker.

Day 1-3 Belize City.

With the help of a Mexican guide, we picked up our Jeep at the Mexican border and were on our way, Pete behind the wheel. Gus had conveniently forgotten his driving licence, after the first hour Danny was commenting on the driving conditions and on Pete's driving skills and some 4 hours later, we arrived at our hotel in the Belize City suburb of Ladyville, to be informed our booking had been cancelled. In good Black Watch fashion, we relocated to the Raddison hotel by the seafront and later found out that a trade delegation from Taiwan had fully booked out our first hotel.

With a touch of excitement and curiosity we ventured into downtown Belize City. Here we were, 44 years later and Belize was completely different! It had avenues, highways and by-passes which included road markings and tarmacadam. It also had more than its fair share of potholes and speed bumps, witness to this was Gus' head as he sat in the front passenger seat.

As we drove into town it became apparent, to our delight, that in part the old Belize city of mud roads and shanty town along the bustling streets filled with traffic, bicycles and pedestrians was very much still there.

Belize city is split by the Haulover Creek, a type of lade which is an offshoot from the Belize River which meets the Caribbean Sea further north. We were on the north side of the creek and ahead of us we spotted the swing bridge.



Bamboo Bay and Swing Bridge

The bridge spans the creek and allows vessels up and down the waterway. In its designated place next to the swing bridge still sat the famous, or infamous, Bamboo Bay Bar, not a place you will find on trip advisor, but we couldn't resist going in for a taste of one of our old

stomping grounds and some refreshments. With the slight smell of marijuana and the reggae music in the background we sat for an hour or so taking in the atmosphere. Danny popped into a bank to find that US dollar was the foreign currency of choice, that usually you got Belize dollar in your change, that credit/debit card was accepted at most places and that cash in the form of Belize Dollar was best got from an ATM.

That evening we got a taxi outside the hotel, a vehicle that a scrap merchant would turn a nose up at. The elderly female driver confidently told us it had passed its MOT. Being in two minds where to go, she put us right telling us that Belize wasn't the Belize of 44 years. She dropped us at Lucca bar and grill, a lovely sea front bar with an open front onto the Caribbean Sea. We struck up with a few ex-pats and later the Royal British Legion (RBL) guy, Bob Stevens, we were hoping to get in touch with, joined us for a beer and the following morning picked us up for a guided tour around Belize city.



The 3 of us at Lucca Bar and Grill

Price Barracks, the main base of the Belize Defence Force (BDF) and the location of British Army Training & Support Unit Belize (BATSUB), named after George Cadle Price a former Prime Minister of Belize, is 7 miles outside Belize city next to the international airport. It was formerly Airport Camp, housing the Headquarters of the UK forces and the majority of Battle Group North.



Airport Camp now Price Barracks

The main entrance to the camp had changed; inside, the old guardroom with its 120mm anti-tank gun was still there with some new structures and then the old Nissen huts, many of them still in use. The BATSUB compound was next to the camp swimming pool, which has hardly changed in 44 years - another surreal experience bringing back so many memories. Our next port of call was the conveniently situated Belikin Beer Brewery, directly outside the barracks. Next door to that was the revamped Byjos Bar, looking quite plush in comparison to days of old when it had been a hut with a veranda on the dirt track into camp, a popular watering hole frequented by the Jocks at the weekend. Danny recalled having been in there one Sunday evening, getting carried away and still being there when his platoon passed on the 6am morning run. Promptly putting down his beer he had tagged on the back of the platoon, completing the run and returning to camp. But, he was duly reported and charged, not for missing the run, but for being improperly dressed on it (in civilian clothing) and for being under the influence of alcohol.

Days 3-6 Cayo District & San Ignacio

The main highway to San Ignacio in 1979 had been a larger wider dirt track. I recall there having been a competition to see which duty driver on the mail run between Airport and Holdfast camps could achieve the best time. Eck Welsh from the Mortar Platoon, a very skilful but scarry driver of the 1 tonne Land Rover, held the record at one time. It was about a 70-mile run with dust bellowing from the rear of the wagon; whether Eck kept the record I wouldn't know. The challenge kept an interest for the potential F1 drivers, but it was white knuckle ride if you were a reluctant passenger of one of those speed goers. The highway was now fully tarmacadamed with road markings, proper junctions and roundabouts; this is where Gus's head, sitting in the front, really came to the fore and damaged the roof of the jeep.

We eventually sussed the problem; you could be motoring along at 60+ mph and there would be a bus stop. In Belize bus stops are directly across the road from each other and between them is a high, unmarked speed bump for pedestrians to walk across when they catch or get off the bus. It took about 50 miles and over an hour of Gus's head bouncing of the roof - Pete taking all his curses, before the penny dropped. The clue was if you see a bus stop ahead it meant speed bump, so slow down.

We stopped at Belmopan, the capital of Belize, a clean, modern town with a north American crisscrossed type road network with plenty of traffic lights. After lunch it was back to the jeep and back on the road. The Hawksworth bridge, built in and imported from Middlesbrough in 1949, spans across the Macal River in San Ignacio. Since 1979 there is a second bridge across the river. Later in the afternoon we arrived at our hotel, the Cahal Pech resort, high on the hill to the west of and overlooking the town of San Ignacio.



SSE having not visited Hawksworth Bridge recently



Overlooking San Ignacio from the Cahal Pech

The following morning it was off to Plassey camp. The old location of the recce platoon was still very visible and brought fond memories streaming back. Now a school, the janitor had seen us and made inquiries about our business. Explaining who we were he invited us into the compound and gave us a guided tour of the location, it was fantastic to see some of the old Nissen huts including the guardroom and to reminisce as to where other sites were, such as the cookhouse vehicle park.



Plassey Camp entrance

In San Ignacio, we parked up outside the Blue Angel night club which had been the regular watering hole of the Jocks when off duty. San Ignacio's pleasant old town appearance hadn't changed despite being a bit larger, but it still gave you the feeling that you were in a town from a spaghetti western.



The Blue Angel San Ignacio



Holdfast Camp never changing

30 minutes later, outside Holdfast Camp, Pete talked the guard commander into allowing us to enter. After a phone call, to our surprise the battalion second in command appeared and offered us a guided tour of the camp. Holdfast was now a battalion location for the BDF rather than a company location with supporting elements as it had been for the British Forces when there. The camp had not changed much. The platoon Nissen huts were still recognisable alongside the washhouses and ablutions, the large REME Nissen hut was still down at the MT with a scrap 4-ton Bedford RL recovery truck sitting outside it. Our guided tour ended at the Commanding Officer's chalet who came and sat with us in his garden area, talking and supplying us with cold beers. The Second in Command had done Commando training at The Commando Training Centre Lympstone and The Commanding Officer had done his officer training at Sandhurst. His Platoon Colour Sergeant having been a Scots Guardsman was, he said, why he could understand us. It was a worthwhile visit and brought back memories and stories, once again we were like three excited kids.



Chatting with the CO of Holdfast camp outside his cabin

With CO at Holdfast Camp

The Cayo Observation Post (OP) had been to the west of San Ignacio and was the main observation post in the Cayo district, overlooking a crossing point at the Belize Guatemala border. In 1979 Delta Company had been the first Black Watch company to occupy Holdfast camp; a section would occupy the Cayo OP on a one-week rotation. In 1979, Pete, as a section commander had been the first to occupy the OP, flown in by helicopter and taking over from Worcestershire & Sherwood Foresters. The Xunantunich Mayan ruins were also west of San Ignacio, on route to the border.



Some of the Mayan ruins at Xunantunich



Hand pull ferry over the Mopan River

The ruins are on the other side of the Mopan River from the main highway. To reach them there was a hand cranked ferry and then a drive up to the car park. In 1979 it had been a small boat or canoe crossing, followed by a walk up. Gus had served in Belize with the Queen's Own Highlanders in 1977 due to him being under 18 when the battalion were on an Op BANNER tour of Ballykinler. There had been no Cayo OP in 1977; instead, the ruins had served as an observation post overlooking the Guatemalan border. (At the age of 68, Pete was glad there was now a car park halfway up!) The ruins, built 1200 years BC have six major plazas with more than 25 Mayan temples and palaces. "El Castillo" (The Castle), the largest pyramid at 130 feet above the plaza, has a panoramic view of Cayo, the border and Guatemala.



El Castillo Mayan ruins



The view over the Guatemalan border

Across the river on the ferry and we were Westward bound on the short journey towards the Guatemalan border. It was probably the best highway we had driven on and took only 10 minutes. The border crossing had completely changed. Now, it had all the mod cons with booths for the uniformed security guards and electric barriers. 44 years previously, it was manned by Guatemalan military personnel with an old T62 tank. From what Pete could recall of the main battle plan, the Cayo OP section was to use an 84mm Karl Gustav to take out the tank if it ever crossed the border hoping it blocked the track to other vehicles. The section were then to hold back infiltrating forces with suppressive fire until reinforcements arrived from Holdfast camp.

Moving on, as we got higher the roads got rougher and the jungle thickened. There were some lovely villas now built on the high ground overlooking the border and we reached a point where Pete thought the OP may have been located, directly next to a very plush villa, but access was denied.

Days 7-13 Caye Caulker

We checked out of the Cahal Pech in the early morning heading for the ferry terminal in Belize City. It took you back in history, a bustling, busy place with the smell of coffee from the coffee bars. People were rushing about to and fro, running for a ferry, getting off a ferry, chatter was intense. The luggage collection and drop off point was in the one main concourse which also had the music and beat of a Caribbean steel drum band playing away.



Music at the Belize City Ferry terminal



The ferry Terminal



Hustle and bustle at the Ferry Terminal

We purchased our tickets and went for breakfast at one of the open sided coffee bars. An hour later, after handing in our luggage we boarded the ferry bound for San Pedro which took 1 hour 30 minute via our destination of Caye Caulker which was a 30-45 minute journey. Moving down the estuary of Haulover Creek we could see the swing bridge and Bamboo Bay behind us; shortly afterwards we were bouncing over the crystal blue open sea of the Caribbean.

Editor's note: Days 7-13 to be continued in 2024 edition.

HONG KONG - RED FEATHERS

By Major (Retired) Hugh Phillips

In 1990 I was posted to the Staff of HQ British Forces in Hong Kong where Chris Patton had been appointed as the last colonial Governor. His was a political appointment. The Mandarins at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) seemed not to be pleased, believing that a diplomat and a Sinophile should have filled the post. However, they were stuck with Patton, whom the Chinese press called “Fat Pang”.

Our small part in the handover preparations was the handover of the military estate to the Hong Kong Government. The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) was expected to take over all of the military estate, which formed a large part of Hong Kong's infrastructure. The Hong Kong Government and, by extension, the British Government did not want the PLA stationed on Hong Kong Island or in Kowloon so the plan was to sell off all the military assets in both of these areas before the handover in 1997 to the People's Republic of China (PRC).

My branch of the HQ was to host a delegation of sixty Chinese from the People's Republic of China (PRC). We were told that there would be some senior PLA officers in the group but that all the Chinese would be in civilian clothes. We had two days to bus them around the New Territories and show them the military estate there which consisted of three Gurkha battalion-size camps, a Brigade Headquarters, accommodation for support units, sports fields, training camps, an airfield and hundreds of Married Quarters (MQs). There were also staff officers from HQ British Forces Hong Kong and FCO and civil servants on hand to answer any questions from the Chinese delegation. The Chinese provided the interpreters.

Near the end of the second day of our tour of the New Territories, I was becoming very bored hosting the unsmiling members of the delegation. Late in the afternoon, I saw one of the interpreters speaking to a couple of the Chinese who looked like soldiers in ill-fitting suits. They were looking over towards me and pointing. The attractive young female interpreter came over and asked me in perfect English.

“Sir, why do you wear red feathers in your hat?”

I replied:

“My regiment, The Black Watch, is a very famous Scottish regiment and has fought and won many battles. Our feathers were white but at the end of each battle we would dip them in the blood of our enemies.”

She went back to the two military men and translated what I had said and they both gave me a little bow. One of the FCO ‘suits’ had heard me talking to her, and said:

“You know, Major, the Chinese have no sense of humour!”

I replied to him:

“You think I was joking?”

I am afraid I would never have made a good diplomat!

Noticeboard

In no particular order, the following notices are brought to readers' attention.

The Association History Group. There is an article by Fraser Brown about it; essentially, with History all around us anyone can respond and join in as they feel they want to. There are the visits with a talk, walk, pie and a pint approach; there are meetings online or in person to discuss a particular item or contention and then there is the research into regimental or broader affairs for the more specialised. Get in touch with the Association on assoc@theblackwatch.co.uk if interested.

The 20th Anniversary Commemoration of the Last Operational Deployment by 1 BW 22 June 2024. To be held in Perth, there will be a commemoration for veterans of the Iraq deployments and invited guests, a Freedom of Perth march and a civic reception prior to joining the rest of the Association for the Reunion in the afternoon. A concurrent exhibition of artefacts and detail provided by the Iraq veterans, curated by a committee drawn from the two deployments of 2003 and 4 will be on display at Balhousie. If you're interested in helping organise, run or participate in the various activities get in touch via assoc@theblackwatch.co.uk.

Battlefield Study to St Valéry 11-14 June 2025. To commemorate the 85th anniversary of the surrender at St Valéry the Association – and those of the other regiments of 51st Division, is planning to take a party from Scotland to take part in the battlefield study, the celebrations and the commemorations. Much more detail is being prepared and will be broadcast via the branches. Assistance is needed to coordinate movement, bookings, funds and accommodation. If you would like to assist in preparing, that will secure your place, or just in taking part get in touch via assoc@theblackwatch.co.uk.

Italian Campaign 80 Anniversary Commemoration 9 - 14 May 2024. 6 BW was instrumental in the Allies' success in the Fourth Battle of Cassino. The Royal Engineer's Association is leading the commemoration on 13 May 2024 of the Amazon bridge and the fall of the Gustav Line. Association Pipers will be following the route taken by 6 BW; there is a gripping account of the battalion's actions in Madden's 'A History of the 6th Battalion The Black Watch 1939 – 1945'. If you are interested in participating on a private basis you can be put in touch with the organisers, via the Association.

Recording Verbal Histories. While there is a particular relevance and need to capture those who fought on The Hook, the validity of everyone's oral history for future generations to hear can be realised by everyone with a recording device, a set of points to lead the discussion, a sense of humour and a readiness to realise that each of our own experience is as valid as the next man's. Get in touch with Fiona Connah, our Curator, no matter where you served, when you served or your rank – if you're interested.

Retraining Grants. If you are moving between jobs and need to upskill, the Trust, via the Association, is able to assist with the costs of retraining courses. If it might make the difference of getting the job get in touch with the Welfare Committee via assoc@theblackwatch.co.uk or 01738 638152 and ask for the Welfare Committee.

Volunteering to help - at the Castle, through SSAFA, or to help run Association events. Volunteering comes in a wide range of forms, from our ever popular and hard-working Gardening Team, via occasional meet and greet teams for activities at the Castle, Guides, research topics and assisting in running Association business; get in touch with Madeline Green, our Volunteers' coordinator via enquiries@theblackwatch.co.uk. Volunteering for SSAFA is a different nature, but as an organisation closely linked to our welfare activities, we keenly promote their initiative. Enquire via the Association or online via SSAFA.

Identifying the who, what, where, when and why via regimental photos. The team from Balhousie will be arranging more visits, bringing reams of unlabelled photos held in the Collection that need to be identified, to the Branches. Members' knowledge of the who, what, where, when and why in identifying the details then allows the Archive to generate and hold the detail. As a result, when someone asks, 'Have you got a photo of my grandfather?' increasingly they can say 'Yes and where, when, who else and why'. The sessions, lasting a couple of hours or so, are also a good daytime opportunity to meet up locally with mates.

Dress code at BW Association events. From photos of the marchers at this year's Reunion, you'll know it's not what you wear that defines if you can take part. Not everyone has a blue bonnet, some have a glengarry and others have a

TOS - most have a red hackle to wear in it and, besides, they're on sale here in the shop. What is significant is, having worn the red hackle, that you are joining in, being part of the Association to whatever extent you feel appropriate with.

Blue Plaque Ideas. Joseph Lee, thanks to the diligence of the Dundee Branch, now has national recognition of his contribution to the cultural life of GB. If you are aware of someone who served in The Black Watch who also achieved significantly in other domains – the sciences, the arts, sport, business etc do consider putting their name forward for consideration for a plaque. Contact the Association with suggestions.

Original Documents and Artefacts. Access to original documents is essential for researchers to understand as complete a picture as possible. If you have letters, diaries, documents or a thing relating to the regiment, consider sending a single photo of them or otherwise contacting the museum via enquiries@theblackwatch.co.uk. The Black Watch archive data base is nationally recognised and can be accessed by academics or individuals – ourselves, when researching a project.

Accessing Welfare Support through the Association. You, or someone you know through your service in The Black Watch, may find that you need financial or other assistance which can be provided by the Association. The stages to be followed are:

Get it assessed; this must be done through the case workers of SSAFA or the Royal British Legion Welfare Service.

This is best accessed by phone to your regional local number or via 0800 2606767.

Try to have your Army Number and dates of service to hand, to save time later or where you served.

If it is urgent, do not waste time getting in touch with the Association directly. The Case Worker will present the case to the Association Welfare Committee.

In turn, the Association Welfare Committee will assess the case and be back in touch with SSAFA or the British Legion who will complete the loop back to yourself.

If it is an emergency support that is needed within 24 hours consider contacting the Association via 01738 638152 or email: assoc@theblackwatch.co.uk.

Exhibition of Op TELIC & Op BRACKEN related photos, documents. As part of the 20th anniversary commemoration on 22 June 2024 of the last operational deployment of 1 BW there will be a display panel exhibition at Balhousie relating to those deployments. A committee, drawn from those who deployed, will work in conjunction with the Association and Museum to select suitable items, present the narrative and mount the exhibition. If you have items or artefacts you think could be telling part of that story do not send them in – yet, describe or photograph it and send it to assoc@theblackwatch.co.uk. The committee will act as the filter for what comes and what can be used and will be back in touch with you.

Association monthly coffee mornings at Balhousie. Providing a place to meet friends in the Association and to hear the story of artefacts held in the archive, Balhousie is holding a monthly coffee morning for members and their families to come to. It's informal, dress as you feel and meet the staff as well; it's proved to be an opportunity to meet, talk, exchange ideas and hear about what is going on. Dates are published monthly on social media and are sent out to branches.

The Balhousie Dining Offer. The Trust is offering the following discount on pre-booked events only (not Bistro Bookings) No room hire charges, ie the Queen Mother, Waterloo or Wavell rooms. 20% Discount off food only No corkage charges on drinks supplied by the host for their guests. No discount on alcohol bought from the bistro.

Discount is eligible to all people who have served in The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) in any rank, Castle staff, and volunteers. Discount is only eligible for pre-organised events, with prices/discounts agreed in advance with the CEO or a Head of Department (HOD). Discount is only eligible for personal bookings and non-commercial events. If an event requires extra staff or they are requested, then an appropriate charge, negotiated in advance, will be made.

Annual Remembrance Services in Europe

Black Watch Corner

A Remembrance Service organised and led by Mr Erwin Ureel MBE has been held annually at Black Watch Corner since the erection of the Black Watch Corner Statue in 2014.

Dignitaries and guests from the surrounding area attended this event which according to one of the local people "is a classic."

This year's guest of honour was Mrs Ingrid Vandepettite the Mayor of Zonnebeke, the Earl Haig Memorial Pipes and Drums provided

the musical accompaniment. Numbers attending have remained constantly high with an average attendance of 120, however this year's numbers were extremely high with 180 attending.

We are extremely grateful to Erwin and all those who support him remembering those of The Black Watch who served and fell in the Great War. May 2024 marks the 10th anniversary of the unveiling of the memorial.

R J W Proctor



Erwin Ureel, the organiser of the Annual Black Watch Remembrance Service at Black Watch Corner



Pipe Major of the Earl Haig Memorial Pipes and Drums



Speech given by Mrs Ingrid Vandepettite, Mayor of Zonnebeke

Remembrance Service 2023 in the Commonwealth Graves Cemetery in Eggewaartskapelle, Veurne, Belgium

On 12 November 2023 a wreath was laid on behalf of The Black Watch Association by Chief Chaplain, Mr Erwin Vilain, to commemorate fallen Black Watch soldiers, Privates Westwater and Kell.

Since 2000 the organisation of Remembrance Day has been the initiative of Retired Police Chief of the Policezone Spoorkin, José Clauw, in cooperation with 38 Sqn RAF MARHAM (who's crew, Pilot Vivian Rosewarne, is buried in Veurne).

In Eggewaartskapelle lies the crew of Pilot Thomas Leggett of 103 Sqn RAF. The son of the only survivor of this Lancaster crash in 1944 attends every year for this commemoration.

Sometimes members of other army units (B.E.F, Grenadier Guards) also attend. This year there was assistance or participation at the cemetery from The Royal British Legion, Royal Canadian Legion, 11 Field Company Royal Canadian Engineers and The Black Watch.



Headstone of Private WE Kell, died 1 June 1940, aged 21

Mr Erwin Vilain, Chief Chaplain, and Retired Police Chief of the Policezone Spoorkin Veurne, José Clauw.

