



Princess Mary
The Princess Royal
Colonel-in-Chief of the
Regiment 1918-1965
 Appointed in October 1918 Princess Mary was only 21 at the time. She confessed that her new responsibilities – to look to the welfare and good name of the oldest regiment of the line – seemed at first pretty formidable, but her happiness was unbounded when she took up her duties and found herself in the midst of friends. Following in the footsteps of her great grandmother Queen

Victoria, who was born in the Regiment (her father was Colonel in Chief), Princess Mary took a keen interest and involvement in Regimental affairs. She married Viscount Lascelles on 28 February 1922. He was 39 and she only 24.

Some like it hot

"I was lying for one day at Mettapolium, a short time ago, when I complained of the heat, a soldier (one of the "backbone of the Army" too) assured me that it was nothing at all, compared to what he had experienced; he went on to inform me that at Aden he had frequently seen the thermometer at 140 degrees in the shade *at night*. I listened with an air of guileless simplicity and belief, and he was proceeding to tell me strange tales of places where specially constructed thermometers had to be used, as the ordinary ones would burst, when stern duty called me away, and I was prevented from hearing all the details.

We're not so bad as that here yet, the ordinary thermometer serving our turn pretty well, but it is certainly quite hot enough for any reasonable human being, 92 degrees in the shade being quite an ordinary occurrence, whilst the air outside is, from 9am till 4pm, perpetually quivering in a manner which is only seen at home close to an outdoor workman's brazier.

Still, though we have a good many in hospital, the majority of cases cannot be set down to the climate. The football field is responsible for a good many, as kicks, and hurts of a like nature, generally take a bad turn here." *From a Malapurian Correspondent in The Thistle, the Regimental Journal March 1893*

1st Battalion Sergeants' Mess 1911

During the inoculation for plague in April, the following dialogue occurred. I'll not mention names. The moral is not to crow before you are out of the wood. Quoted the old dog of 20 years' service (with a large family) to the hard lad (with a midland county brogue).

The Old Dog – "All these young soldiers are bound to be knocked up by inoculation. It takes us old dogs to stick anything like that, doesn't it?"

The Hard Lad (*encouragingly patting the old dog on the back*) – "Av coorse it does, lad. Us old dogs for the hard road, eh!"

They were duly inoculated the following day. The "hard lad" was not seen for six days, and when seen was a very meek animal. The "old dog" was discharged from hospital two weeks later, and is still undergoing a course of sulphuric (I may be wrong) baths.

"SCRUBBO, MARK II"



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| 2 | 1729 | Standards of height set at: The Foot Guards – 5 feet 9 inches The Foot – 5 feet 8 inches. <i>The Royal Regiment of Scotland now asks for a minimum height of 158cm.</i> |
| | 1920 | 2/10 th Territory Army Battalion disbands. |
| 6 | 1685 | Death of King Charles II and Monmouth, natural son of the late king, rebelled. Having fought alongside The Royals in the French Wars he said (upon facing them), "I know these men will fight. If I had them I would not doubt of success." <i>He failed.</i> |
| | 1810 | Island of Guadeloupe captured by 1 st Battalion with 3 soldiers killed and 13 wounded. |
| 9 | 1826 | Battle of Pagan Myo, Burma 2 nd Battalion The Royals arrived in Rangoon in February 1825 and left in March 1826. During 14 months The Royals lost 9 officers and 418 soldiers. |
| | 1909 | 1 st and 2 nd Battalions meet at Bombay – the first time both battalions had been together since the Crimean War. By 1911 the 1 st Battalion moved to Allahabad and from 22 April to 2 May was isolated following an outbreak of bubonic plague. Later in the same year cholera resulted in twelve deaths. Medals were presented to 14 privates who volunteered to nurse the cholera patients. A recent visitor brought in a new addition to the museum of one of these medals; awarded to Private Albert Belcher. Private Belcher died on 3 June 1915 whilst serving with the 2 nd Battalion in the First World War. |
| | 1949 | Amalgamation parade of 1 st and 2 nd Battalions at Dreghorn Camp, Edinburgh |
| 11 | 1991 | 1 st Battalion prepares for action during the Gulf War. |
| 13 | 1992 | Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal and Colonel-in-Chief, Princess Anne, visits 1 st Battalion in Fort George. |
| | 1776 | 2 nd Battalion having left Minorca at the end of 1775 disembarks at Portsmouth. |
| | 1794 | 1 st Battalion, barely 400 strong sent to garrison two sea ports in Domingo (Now Haiti) to deal with revolutionaries. |
| 17 | 1794 | An attack upon St Florent, Corsica with 2 nd Battalion commanded by Lt Col (later Sir) John Moore. |
| | 1946 | Memorial Service at St Giles for those killed in 1939-45 War. 8 th Battalion leaves Germany to disband. |
| 19 | 1816 | 1 st Battalion marches to Portpatrick to embark for Ireland. |
| 22 | 1801 | 2 nd Battalion sets out for Alexandria and arrives on 1 March. Due to bad weather disembarkation not possible until 7 March With notable success against the French, |



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| | 1801 <i>(cont)</i> | Cairo surrenders in June followed by Alexandria in September. Napoleon's army of the East has been defeated. The Royals were granted the distinction, by King George III, of bearing on their colours the Sphinx, superscribed with the word 'Egypt'. |
| 23 | 1992 | RS Battlegroup moves to attack after Iraq invades Kuwait. |
| 24 | 1948 | Colonel in Chief visits The Royal Scots Club to unveil memorial plaques. |
| 26 | 1992 | B Company engages enemy with 30mm cannon and machine gun fire whilst Mortar Platoon provides illumination. |
| 28 | 1992 | At first light the Battlegroup advances rapidly eastwards to Kuwait-Basra highway. Hundreds of Iraqis try to surrender. At 8am the Battlegroup hears of the ceasefire on the BBC World Service, just as it enters Kuwait. There was loss of one life – Private Tom Haggerty on 3 March. He had been carrying out routine maintenance on his Warrior when a grenade exploded. |
| 26 | 1815 | Napoleon escapes from Elba – by 1 March he had reached France and was back in power. |
| 28 | 1922 | Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal and Colonel-in-Chief Princess Mary, marries Viscount Lascelles. |

1st Battalion in the West Indies

You might think that a trip to the West Indies sounds like a nice holiday for The Royal Scots. On 20 January 1790 the 1st Battalion embarked at Cork for Jamaica with a strength of 22 officers, 410 soldiers, 62 women and 70 children.

When dealing with revolutionary Dominicans (following the French Revolution 1789) the Royals lost five officers and 34 men. However yellow fever was a greater threat than revolution and at the beginning of 1794 the Battalion's strength was close to 500 but those fit for duty numbered only 264. By 1 March 1797, after enduring seven years of debilitating disease only 10 officers and 159 soldiers were able to embark at Port-au-Prince for the return journey to England.

Between 1793 and 1796 the British Army lost 80,000 men in the West Indies – half died from disease whilst the rest were rendered unfit for further service. These losses were higher than those sustained by Wellington throughout the Peninsular Campaign against Napoleon.

Lieutenant Colonel Nicholson commanded the 1st Battalion in the West Indies 1801 - 1812. He had an interesting life – a Royal Marine who joined The Royals as Ensign in 1781, he served at the siege of Brimstone Hill in 1782, was then invalided to England for twelve months but was back on duty to participate in the operations on St Domingo.

By Sept 1797 he purchased a majority in 78th Foot (Ross-shire Buffs) but rejoined The Royals as Lieutenant Colonel the same year. He became commandant of the island of St Martin. Despite high mortality he managed to give a "Ball and Supper on 4th inst., in honour of His Majesty's birthday which cost him 300 guineas."

Upon leaving St Martin's when the islands were restored to their former owners the inhabitants donated 100 guineas for a sword of honour for Lt Col Nicholson, thus demonstrating the esteem in which he was regarded.

From Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard Vol I, page 105-6

Washed Out

"In the year 1905 I was encamped on the old racecourse at Kingston, Jamaica, ... undergoing a course of musketry .. just prior to the rainy season – early May or October, I forget which. The rains arrived unexpectedly at dead of night, and we had to turn out and dig fast and furiously to prevent the water washing us out entirely.

In the evening I discovered a number of bones, skulls, etc, in the debris, and on making close examination I found a number of buckles and buttons. These latter I cleaned up, and was able easily to decipher a large figure '1' with the letters 'F O' on one side and 'O T' on the other – thus 'F O 1 O T'.

I made enquiries and was informed that many years before the First Regiment of Foot had been encamped on the racecourse, and had been smitten with cholera, the epidemic being so bad that victims were buried as they died – it would seem, actually, in their uniforms."

Lieutenant Etherington adds that the remains were collected and reinterred with due honours. 1st Battalion was stationed in Jamaica from 1791 to 1793, both battalions served in other West Indian islands at other periods. Frequent reference is made to the ravages made by sickness among the troops, though "Yellow Jack," and not cholera, appears to have been the worst enemy. *From The Thistle, 1922*

We have some buttons which were dug up in Jamaica in 1948 on display in the museum – can you find them?



A Wandering Royal Scot from 1911

George Pirie, born in Banff 1862, was apprenticed as a baker but with a yen for travel he reached the United States, worked in Chicago and San Francisco and travelled to Panama and Ecuador, timber cutting. After being attacked, he fled in a boat but was shipwrecked and washed ashore in an arid desert. The only survivor to cross it, he reached a river to return to malaria-stricken Panama. Onward to Jamaica where, penniless and broken, he left as a stowaway. Meeting The Royals on board, he enlisted. They were on their way to serve in South Africa and St Helena where he won his Sergeant's stripes and with his educated background, was appointed Schoolmaster to the Regiment. Discharged in Kimberley he became a gun-instructor to Mashonland, taking part in operations against Lobengula. After which he prospected the vast territory from Crocodile River as far north as Tanganyika, discovering rich lodes of coal, copper, tin and gold. He shot numerous elephants and lions, but constant exposure in a deadly climate sent him south to Natal to recuperate. Whilst there, the Boer War broke out and he joined the Imperial Light Infantry as Colour-Sergeant. Invalided to Cape Town he was sent home to London for the Coronation of King Edward.

Returning to South Africa he traversed German East Africa, discovering great lonely areas all the way down to the southern Belgian Congo. He sent home unique diaries describing customs now possibly lost. He died of sleeping sickness on 1 June 1911 at Kilma, Central Africa. *From The Thistle 1912 p 415*



The Royal Scots Museum

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