

Lord Adam Gordon *Colonel of the Regiment 1782-1801*



drinking lemonade while over-heated. *From Kay's Originals Vol 1*

Born in 1726 he entered the army in 1741 as Cornet in The Scots Greys, becoming Colonel of the Regiment on 9th May 1782. Promoted to Commander of the Forces in Scotland in 1789, he resided at Holyrood Palace which he repaired and restored. Resigning the command in 1798, in favour of Lord Abercromby, he retired to his seat of "The Burn", Kincardine, where he died suddenly on 13th August 1801, in consequence of inflammation produced by

George, Marquis of Huntley *Colonel of the Regiment 1820-1834*



Born in 1770 he died in May 1836, issueless, the last of the Dukes of Gordon of creation 1684. Whilst commanding a division of the army in Walcheren 1809 he was described as "fit and active" because he followed the example of the Dutch as they crossed the ditches in 'pole leaping' (a favourite pastime amongst the officers): "Among these measures of polar distance none took a more prominent part than the commander of the division, the Marquess of Huntley entered into it with all the fire and glee of the youngest among us." *Leask and*

McCance' Regimental Histories

In later years the Marquis, renowned for his disguises, took a bet that he could disguise himself whereby one of his closest friends would not recognise him. Equipped in all the ragged paraphernalia of a veteran gabalunzie (*med. Scots for licensed beggar*) he proceeded to his friend's house where he partook sparingly of an ample plate of cold meat and abundance of bread and beer. He complained that it had been "nothing but cold beef, sour bread and stale beer," and upon leaving the estate to the gentleman: "I have never been accustomed to such low fare." Irritated beyond endurance by the provokingly cool impudence of the supposed mendicant, the gentleman threatened to have him caged. Only then did Huntley reveal his disguise to the amazement of bystanders and his dear friend, whose wrath turned to merriment.

Bearded Pioneers

In the 18th century hair was worn long, trained backwards into a leather tubed pig-tail which hung for at least a foot down the soldier's back. "Some particular care had to be taken with the hair as it had to be smeared with lard and flour, scented with the oil of thyme, and then corded by the means of a comb; and the whiskers, which were grown on a pretty broad scale, but not bushy, also had a large share of the pomade.

The 2nd Battalion in India was ordered to let their whiskers grow, and such a conglomeration of whiskers were never seen outside of one of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas. After careful cultivation some of the men could only grow side lappets, others spotted Billy goats; one or two of the younger ones managed a hair here and there. The only one of the lot who had a beard of any magnitude was our old friend the Pioneer Sergeant, Putty R-, and his beard, instead of being scented with the oils of thyme, was usually scented with 'O. de Beers.'" *Tottie, from Regimental Journal The Thistle 1926.*

All ranks were allowed to grow moustaches once they got to the Crimea and by that winter (1855) full beards. Today Britain's armed services allow moustaches only, with the exception of beards grown for religious or medical reasons or by infantry pioneer warrant officers, colour sergeants and sergeants, who traditionally wear beards.



Royal Scots Museum

Moments in Time



May

1	1747 1915	1 st Battalion land in Holland 17 th Service Battalion (Lord Rosebery's) formed. Disbanded 2 May 1919, it was known as the Bantam Battalion as its' soldiers were under regulation height.
2	1854	Malta: <i>The Andes</i> arrived here in 8 ½ days with the 1 st Regiment on board. On the voyage a fire broke out, and 60,000 cartridges were thrown overboard.
4	1854	1 st Battalion reaches Gallipoli.
5	1811 1825	Battle of Fuentes d'Onor where Wellington checked an attempt to relieve the besieged city of Almeida – 3 rd Battalion. Capture of Rangoon, Burma – 2 nd Battalion.
7	1910 1998	The death of King Edward VII. Officers were directed to wear mourning until November. Major General Strudwick CBE, Colonel of the Regiment, installed as Governor of Edinburgh Castle.
8	1757	2 nd Battalion journey to North America in a convoy of 15 ships of war and 50 transports. Each regiment required six transports to convey it, flying a pennon denoting the regiment it carried. The custom was for the troops to wear their uniform coats turned inside out whilst on board ship. This caused action between one of the transports and a Yankee privateer, on which men were dressed in captured French uniforms. Each crew, by reason of their dress, took the other for the common enemy. The convoy arrived in Halifax, Canada, in early July.
9	1782 1915 1945 2007	Lord Adam Gordon appointed Colonel of the Regiment. 11 th and 12 th Battalions embark for France. Victory in Europe Day: Churchill announces the end of the war with Germany. HRH The Princess Royal unveils the updated plaques on The Regimental Monument in Princes Street Gardens.
11	1745	Battle of Fontenoy – During the War of Austrian Succession, the 1 st Battalion marched with the Allied Army to the relief of besieged Tournai. Although outnumbered Cumberland mounted a frontal attack, the British and Hanoverians on the right, Dutch in the centre and Austrians on the left. The British, despite their left flank remaining exposed by the timidity of the Dutch, broke through two lines of the French defenders only to be forced to withdraw because their Allies refused to advance. Assurances were sought from the Dutch, the British advanced once more and again penetrated the (by then) reinforced, first two lines of the French left. However, the Dutch failed to advance (again) to protect the British flank, and once more the British regiments had to withdraw. Losses were heavy. The 1 st Battalion lost 87 soldiers with 191 wounded and 8 soldiers missing – over a quarter of their strength.

14	1853	1 st Foot, 1 st Battalion. An officer only 18 years of age, without training, was backed to walk 56 miles in 12 hours for a wager of £100. The gallant young gentleman started at 7 o'clock and did his work well until about the 30 th mile, when he became evidently distressed and it was thought he would give up to old Mr Time, but <i>en avant</i> was the word, and he went into his second wind, and gained the victory with four minutes to spare. <i>Naval and Military Gazette 1853</i>
15	1915	Battle of Festubert – 8 th Battalion. 2 nd phase of recently failed attack on Aubers Ridge.
19	1643	Battle of Rocroi, France, during 30 years war, resulted in the victory of the French, under Duc d'Enghien, against the Spanish.
22	1915	Quintinshill Rail crash near Gretna.
23	1706	The Earl of Orkney's Regiment (Royals) meet the French at the Battle of Ramillies. In less than four hours, Villeroi's army was defeated. Marlborough's subtle moves and changes caught his foe in a tactical vise.
24	1819	Whilst HRH The Duke of Kent was Colonel in Chief of the Regiment, the Duchess of Kent gave birth at Kensington to a daughter, Princess Alexandrina Victoria at 4:15am. <i>Can you guess who this daughter of the Regiment grew up to become?</i>
26	2006 1940	Farewell March along Princes Street to mark The Regiment's demise as an independent body with Colours flying and bayonets fixed. Le Paradis: 1 st Battalion fight to hold Le Paradis whilst the order was given for Operation Dynamo – the Allied evacuation from France and Belgium.
27	1903 1940	3 rd Battalion return from South African War Le Paradis: 0800hrs the Battalion heavily engaged with heavy casualties. 1000hrs the Commanding Officer killed & Battalion Headquarters set on fire. 1600hrs overrun by overwhelming numbers.
28	1836	George, Duke of Gordon and former Colonel of the Regiment died.
29	1813	Battle of Sackett's Harbour – 1 st Battalion. The attack against the Americans lasted almost 4 hours, after which they withdrew, not realising that they had almost won.

Daughter of the Regiment

The Regiment incorporates the children and wives of soldiers as part of its family so there have been many sons and daughters. None as famous as the child born to the then Colonel of The Regiment, Prince Edward, The Duke of Kent, on 24 May 1819. Princess Alexandrina Victoria was to become Queen Victoria. The Duke took great pride in his daughter, bringing her to a military review to the outrage of the Prince Regent, who demanded to know what place the child had there. The Regimental March 'Daughter of the Regiment' is always played when Royalty is present on parade.

The Gretna Train Disaster at Quintinshill 1915

At 6:45am on 22 May a troop train carrying half the 7th Battalion to Liverpool was wrecked at Gretna. The London to Glasgow express was travelling north, running late, while the troop train was travelling south. Also travelling north was a local train, switched to the south-bound track and stopped to allow the Glasgow-bound express to pass it before it returned to the north bound track to resume its journey. Disastrously, the signalmen forgot about the local train that lay in the path of the troop train, despite the fact that it lay only yards from their signal box. The troop train ran into the local train, overturning it onto the Glasgow line.

Shortly afterwards the express travelling north ploughed into the wreckage, causing the troop-train to catch fire. The carriages were wood, lit by gas contained in tanks beneath them, with a wagon containing ammunition at the rear.

Three officers, twenty-nine NCOs and 182 soldiers were killed or burned to death in Britain's worst railway accident. Of the half battalion on the train only 7 officers and 57 soldiers survived unscathed. 470 men had begun that fateful journey south. It was a devastating blow to the Battalion and to the population of Leith. The majority of those who died were buried at Rosebank Cemetery, Pilrig Street, in the south-west corner, marked by a large granite Celtic Cross. The funeral route was lined by 3,150 soldiers drawn from 15th and 16th Battalions The Royal Scots. Thousands of citizens stood shoulder to shoulder on the pavement; shops were closed, blinds drawn and traffic stopped for the 4 hours it took for the cortege to complete its task. Surviving troops were re-dispatched to Liverpool, to continue to Gallipoli, when the message came through to say that surviving men and NCOs who had survived the disaster were not to sail. On their march back to the train station, dishevelled and demoralised, the survivors were mistaken for prisoners of war and pelted by children.

Every year, on the Saturday closest to 22 May the Regimental Association, supported by local organisations, hold a Memorial Service and wreath laying at the Memorial. The Royal Scots Association commemorates the history and service of all Royal Scots both in the past and the present with those currently serving in The Royal Regiment of Scotland. New members are always welcome. See www.theroyalscots.co.uk.



Le Paradis – Royal Scots Tigers

Parisian filmmaker Hélène de Paradis visited the Castle in 2010 to film Regimental Secretary Lt Colonel Jim Blythe MBE in the Museum and research archival documents about a massacre that happened in her village during the Second World War. On 27th May 1940, 97 soldiers of The Royal Norfolks were executed by the SS Totenkopf Division. Twenty Royals also disappeared at that time.

Hélène grew up in "a village haunted by the collective imagination of the massacre." Nobody spoke about what happened, yet once a year thousands of people turned up to commemorate it, gathering at her grandmother's café. She felt very moved when she filmed one old soldier who started talking to the tombs and realised that "all the people buried in Le Paradis were his buddies." It led her to discover what really had happened.

May 2010 was the 70th anniversary of The Royal Scots 1st Battalion's heroic stand against the rapidly advancing German Blitzkrieg at Le Paradis. Ordered to defend the line and "fight to the last man", whilst the remainder of British Expeditionary Force made for Dunkirk, they were armed with rifles and machine-guns against tanks.

The Germans advanced across open country but so intense was the fire of The Royals Scots that they had to bypass Le Paradis. Reinforcements arrived and the defenders fought back but sheer force of numbers told in the end. C Company ceased to exist and Charles Johnstone, in command of what was left of A Company, found himself lined up in front of a machine gun. He did not know that 97 of The Royal Norfolk soldiers had been shot earlier, or that the German Captain who had protested against it had been bayoneted by SS soldiers. Luckily for Johnstone a German staff officer arrived just in time to save him and to say, in English, "Your men - fight like tigers."

The 1st Battalion ceased to exist as a fighting unit by the end of May 1940. During the campaign 141 were killed, 350 wounded and 292 became prisoners of war. They were commended in the war diaries of the 4th Infantry Brigade as "second to none in valour, dauntless courage and tenacity".

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