



The Thistle

Journal of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment)

Volume 38

Online Edition

Winter 2020/21

Foreword

Brigadier G E Lowder MBE

Chairman of Trustees and President of The Regimental Association

Welcome to our first ever digital, soft copy only, Thistle. The ongoing lockdown restrictions have forced us to adopt this approach, as Volunteers cannot access The Office, in the still closed Club, to fill and address envelopes. We hope that you can print The Thistle at home if you wish to read a hard, rather than soft, copy. For those who have intimated that they still wish to receive a hard copy in future, we hope that this will again be possible. That said, we are keeping the print run and hard copy distribution under review.

I hope that this finds you well and managing to stay mentally, as well as physically fit, in these strange times. COVID 19 (C19) continues to challenge our business resilience and continuity, but I am pleased to be able to report that we continue to operate effectively. Albeit that some things take a little longer to complete in the current circumstances.

In the last edition of the Thistle, I explained our aspiration to move three of our pillars; Trust, Museum and Association, under the umbrella of a single Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). Throughout the Summer and Autumn of last year The Trustees of The Regimental Trust, Museum and Club and the Association Office Bearers, considered the final report and recommendations on this proposal. With the prior agreement of all parties Trustees agreed, in late October, to take the next steps on this path. We have now instructed lawyers and tax specialists to provide formal legal advice on the proposal. This includes a long list of specific questions provided by all our pillars. This formal legal and tax advice will be provided to us in the late Spring of this year, in time for consideration before the next round of Trustees meetings. As always, the advice we receive will be widely circulated to Trustees and Office Bearers. Assuming that there are no legal or tax impediments to proceed, then we will issue direction to do so and begin the required legal and charity procedures. Whilst there is no undue haste to move to a SCIO, we must maintain the current momentum to achieve the efficiencies and protections a SCIO will deliver, as soon as possible. I am hugely grateful to the Executive, our Governance and Legal Advisers and colleagues from Saffery Champness and Turcan Connell for all their engagement on this important work.

Over the course of the Autumn and Winter a significant amount of effort has been directed in support of the Management of The Club, as they grappled with an ever-changing situation, restrictions, new guidelines and regulations, a plethora of grants and funding opportunities, many of which took considerable effort to decipher, never mind apply for. Currently The Club remains closed. A C19 loan has been applied for and has been received, overdraft facilities are in place and appropriate guarantees have been updated. Contingencies have been considered with the input of legal "critical friends." The



employment of these contingencies will largely depend on how long The Club remains closed and unable to trade. I am deeply grateful to Adrian and his Team for their perseverance through a very difficult period in the history of The Club. The Club will need our continued support to fully recover. We must help drive increased membership, no small challenge in the current situation. We must help The Club generate as much revenue as possible when it is able to do so. May I ask that as soon as The Club is open again, that you make haste to use it for business and pleasure. We certainly aim to have a post C19 gathering of some sort there just as soon as we can.

Despite the restrictions last November, we managed to provide representation at all the national, regional and local Remembrance events that we normally attend. In some cases, such as the opening of Gardens of Remembrance, we were represented by other organisations who laid our wreath for us. In most cases, however, single representatives attended socially distanced events and laid our wreaths. These events are covered in full in this edition.

The project to install a Royal Scots Memorial Stone at The National Memorial Arboretum has progressed well through the winter. I am grateful to Gordon Vevers for taking the lead on this, with his invaluable experience of delivering a similar project for The Royal Regiment of Scotland. Our man on the ground (well, within an hour drive) is David Stuart-Monteith and both The Museum Committee and Southern Branch of The Association have been in support. Our aim is to dedicate the Memorial on Sunday 3 October 2021, our Association Padre has kindly agreed to lead the service. By which time it will of course have been carved, delivered and installed. There should be an opportunity to gather the evening before and for those who attend, to go on to join the service of dedication for The Lisbon Maru Memorial that is being unveiled on the same day. We have also contributed to this Memorial and I hope that we shall be allowed to

muster a good turnout in October.

I sense that for many this year things will be difficult before they get better. If you know of a comrade who could use some help, of any kind, not just financial, do get in touch with Jimmy or Ellie in The Regimental Office. In addition to our own benevolence resources The Team can draw down on other sources of support to alleviate isolation or loneliness. Which brings me to an update on The Regimental Office. Jimmy has informed me of his intention to retire towards the end of this year. This, the current situation and available resources, has caused us to consider how best to deliver the functions currently provided by The Regimental Office in future. This work is in its infancy, but we are looking at how benevolence is delivered and how many staff we will require in future. I'll keep you updated as we step

through this work.

Finally, I would like to thank all our Volunteers, Trustees and Office Bearers who continue to strive tirelessly to support the 4 Pillars of our antecedent Regiment. I know exactly how much you all contribute. I also know that without your efforts we could not achieve what we do. Thank you.

Yours Aye

George Lowder
Brigadier
Chairman The Royal Scots Trustees

1 SCOTS Pipes and Drums

Lt Colonel Ross Brookfield has had the unhappy duty of passing on the following message to the Regimental Family.

"On becoming a Specialised Infantry Battalion, as a result of the Army 2020 Refine announcement and restructuring of the Infantry in April 2017, 1 SCOTS Pipes and Drums (along with the Corps of Drums in LANCS and PWRR and Bugles of the RIFLES) were never formally established within a Specialised Infantry Battalion's ORBAT.

From a 1 SCOTS perspective and in recognition of the Golden Thread (both RS and KOSB) and their contribution to the moral component of the Battalion, a substantial effort has been undertaken to retain the Pipes and Drums: Firstly, through the use of unmanned liability (Black Economy) elsewhere across The Royal Regiment of Scotland,

and more recently within the structure of Balaklava Company, 5 SCOTS.

Sadly, on account of the operational tempo of 1 SCOTS, the lack of formal establishment in specialised Infantry ORBAT and an inability to sufficiently support the band appropriately, in either Belfast or Edinburgh, these demanding efforts have proven to be unsuccessful.

Consequently, and in order to ensure the retention of the talented soldiers (Pipers and Drummers) remaining in the band, and to provide the best possible solution for the assurance of their long-term career management, the difficult decision has been taken to formally merge the band within 2 SCOTS."

Lt Colonel Ross Brookfield



Regimental Office

My last day working from the office was 337 days ago (as of 16 February 2021) and I wonder how many more days will pass before I am able to work from there again.

On the 17th of March 2020 I thought, "give it a week or two and we will be back to normal". Not one of my greatest predictions.

However, working from home, whether it is at the kitchen table or in the spare bedroom I am pleased to report that normal service pretty well continues. Trust meetings and Executive committee meetings still happen, we continue to plan ahead as much as is possible given the constraints imposed by the pandemic. We also monitor events in the Coroners court in NI and stand ready to advise any former Royal Scots who find themselves caught up in it all. Royal Scots Benevolence continues to support those requiring assistance as it always has. We still get bills, and we still pay bills.

We continue to update the database, so if you have changed your address, telephone number(s) or e-mail address please let us know.

We still plan for those events that happen annually in the hope that they will be able to go ahead and look forward to a time when we can stop using TBC in the date column of our diaries.

For eleven years I have used an electronic system which allows us to receive and share with other charities all requests for benevolence. It is a case management system (CMS) which I have always thought extremely reliable and efficient. However, we cannot live life without change it seems and Ellie and I along with thousands of others involved with military charities are honing our skills on a replacement for CMS, CMS(2) which is to be operational from 2nd of March. Who says life is boring?

Finally, working from home has some advantages but can also be frustrating, however, spare a thought for my deputy Ellie, working from home and home schooling three children!

Captain Jimmy Springthorpe

Benevolence: Captain Jimmy Springthorpe

Every year Royal Scots Benevolence helps members of the Regimental family with requests for financial help. Anyone who has served with the Royal Scots for any length of time, and their dependants, are eligible to apply for help. We are proud to have provided grants which help people get back on their feet after a difficult period in their life, including ill health – this may be a grant related to housing, employment and training; or for health and wellbeing services, including adaptations and mobility aids. We are also able to provide grants towards the cost of funerals; helping to ease the financial strain for families at the most difficult of times.

We work alongside many other military and veteran charities and, as well as providing financial help to successful applicants, we can signpost former Royal Scots to further help from other organisations for training, social and wellbeing needs.

All the grant applications are treated with confidentiality and impartiality; to ensure this we work on a referral basis via SSAFA

who will assign a caseworker to explain the criteria, make the application on your behalf, and administer the grants if successful. We are happy to offer advice on the process though, so if you are unsure about whether you or a dependant are eligible, or how to proceed, then please give us a call, we will be more than happy to help and point you in the right direction. Please also pass on this information to others in the Regimental family and encourage anyone who is struggling to get in touch.

Captain Jimmy Springthorpe
Mrs Ellie Weir

SSAFA general number (for all of UK): 0800 731 4880
Poppyscotland (Will refer cases in Scotland): 0131 550 1557
RS Office: 0131 557 0405
RS mobile numbers, and office hours:
Jimmy (Monday to Thursday, 9am to 2pm) 07752 262300
Ellie (Tuesday to Friday, 9am to 2pm) 07745 791623

Heritage and Museum

Sadly, the Museum is still closed to all visitors and has been since March 2020. In addition, all members of the committee and volunteers have also been denied access to the Museum or the archives. Whilst this has stopped all ongoing work in the Museum except weekly health and safety checks it has not stopped work entirely.

The booklet of Drill Downs similar to the NI Booklet on specific topics has been published and distributed. Spare copies will be available from the Regimental office once Covid-19 regulations allow. In addition, using the information from the booklet, 14 presentations using photographs and voice have been created covering such topics as: 373 years unbroken Service to the Crown, the Napoleonic Wars, WW1, WW2, the Cold War and Northern Ireland to name but a few. All have been loaded onto the Web Site

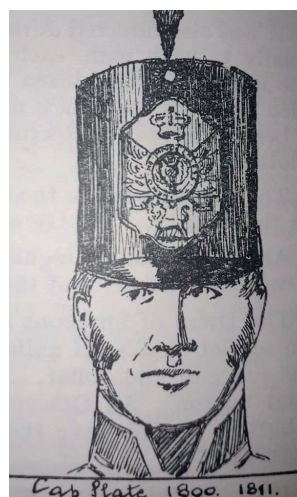
The re-evaluation of the collection has now been completed by Mark Medcalf Associates. The last review was carried out in 2012 and gives the valuation of the artefacts held within the Museum and Reserve collection. This also helps ensure that proper insurance cover is provided for the Museum.

The new penny press machine is now on order for when the Museum can re-open. It will have 4 options of the Royal Cypher, Soldiers' cap badge, Crown and One and Edinburgh Castle. Unlike the last machine, which was owned by the company, the Museum only received 30% of the takings. We now own the new machine outright and will reap 100% of the takings from the machine. It should pay for itself in 2 years once normal visitor activity returns to the Museum.

Work is ongoing on updating and upgrading the Museum with the current Gulf War diorama area being re-designed to cover all the Regiment's post 1945 operations: Korea, Suez, Aden, Cyprus, Northern Ireland and Gulf War 1. The project will cost in the region of £50K and will give comprehensive coverage of the operations.

In addition, we have had the opportunity to purchase a rare 1800-1812 stovepipe shako plate of 2nd Battalion 1st Royal Regiment (as they were known until 1812). It is part of a small collection that was excavated from the West Indies during the 1970s; full details of the excavation are awaited so that its history can be researched. Once received and properly mounted for long term preservation, it will go on display in the Museum.

Lieutenant Colonel GJ Rae



TEAM RS 373 NEWS

As the whole country continues with some collective success to bring the invisible enemy, COVID-19, under control we should perhaps think of what life was like for those Royal Scots involved in conflict far from home, including their families, before phone calls, video links and modern communications which we now take for granted were available. Years of separation in World War 2, and more recently in Korea, Aden and the Radfan, Cyprus, the Falklands and Northern Ireland with intermittent mail and reliance on the likes of 'blueys' was hard.

The ongoing virtualisation of the First of Foot's 373 Years of Unbroken Service will allow visitors from around the world to learn about our proud heritage whether they are for example Eskimos with wife in their igloos visiting our website or tourists visiting our physical Museum within the iconic Edinburgh Castle - which at present is off-limits because of COVID restrictions, so visitors currently are having to rely on www. Recently 14 excellent videos have been added to the Museum and Heritage section of the Regimental website <https://www.theroyalscots.co.uk/museum/>

A reminder of Team 373 virtualisation achievements so far:
World War 1 and 2 Rolls of Honour
<https://www.theroyalscots.co.uk/ww1-and-ww2-roll-of-honour/>
World War 2 Regimental Memories Film
<https://www.theroyalscots.co.uk/royal-scots-world-war-2-veteran-experiences/>

1945- 2006 Regimental Memories Film.

<https://www.theroyalscots.co.uk/the-royal-scots-scottish-soldiers-regimental-memories-1945-to-2006/>

Bosnia and Gulf War 1 interviews are being recorded to enhance the Post WW2 Regimental Memories film, the between the Wars and post 1945 Roll of Honour is being finalised and a major project is underway to upgrade post 1945 coverage in the Museum which will now include the Cold War, the seven specialist roles carried out by the 1st Battalion and the 13 Northern Ireland operational tours.

Colonel MF Gibson OBE DL



Dutch Villagers tending RS graves on Christmas Eve 2020



RS Club

Report from the Royal Scots Club by Norman Soutar, Club Trustee and Chair of the Club Management Board.

I am writing this short report while I am in the process of taking over as the Chair of the Management Board of the Club; this is the body responsible to the Trustees for the commercial success of the Club.

In the last Thistle details of a membership offer

for Royal Scots was posted and I understand just one individual took up this offer. I do not need to remind fellow Royal Scots that the Club is a living War Memorial to our brave forebears who gave their lives during the Great War. The Club remains a Rallying Point for all Royal Scots.

The Club has 1,876 members whom, like the Royal Scots who joined up during The Great War, come from all walks of life and all parts of the UK and beyond; for me, this is a source of great pride. However, what did surprise me is that we only have 75 Royal Scot members.

I would urge all readers of The Thistle to join the Club; the very reasonable deal for annual membership at £135 (split into quarterly payments if desired) and no joining fee is only open to Royal Scots. I can be contacted at normansoutar@royalscotsclub.com.

Major Norman Soutar MC



Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

People are constantly complaining about the restrictions placed upon them by Covid19 but they should pause for a moment to consider the effects on man's, oops people's best friend. I started work in the Regimental Office as a young pup in August 18 and I loved it. On the bus with my boss every morning and travelling into Edinburgh was in itself an adventure. Not being a fare paying passenger however I was not allowed a seat. I sat on the floor among trainers, brogues, stilettos and other assorted forms of footwear while people constantly ruffled my coat and admired my distinctive good looks.

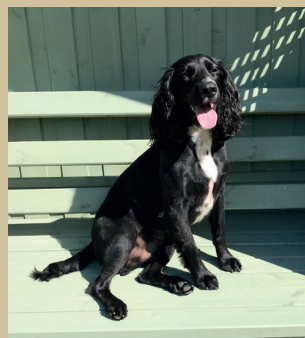
We would alight from the bus on Princes street and trek ten minutes to Abercromby Place. Anyone seeing us knew immediately who was the keenest to get to work, I had to drag him on the lead all the way! We had our own key to Queen Street Gardens so would traipse through there for a pre work toilet visit before entering the hallowed halls of the Royal Scots Club. I would be subject to more patting and cooing from Morag, Ayesha and even on occasion the big man himself, Mr Hayes on our way to the office. The Boss would normally give me something to chew on, in the hope it would prevent me from eating paper from his desk. I got a real rocket one day when I chewed up something called a thousand-pound cheque, just looked like any other bit of paper and I really couldn't understand the fuss he made.

My co-worker Ellie never had a bad word for me, even when I decided to share her lunch with her on occasion. Ellie likes me so much she is

nearly giving in to her children's wish to have someone like me. My other co-workers Andy and Jim are good chaps who would encourage my naughtiness as long as the Boss wasn't watching; I do miss that lot.

At the end of each working day, we would retrace our steps to the bus stop for the journey home and even with dinner on his mind I still had to do the dragging. The bus was always quieter on the way home, but I still could not get a seat. I did try my luck once when he was distracted and had no sooner leapt on the seat opposite than this old geezer was shouting "driver, driver that's not allowed", so much for equality.

So, March 2020 comes along and at two years old I am virtually being made redundant. Does not do a lot for one's confidence I can tell you. The boss keeps saying, "we will be back in the office soon don't worry". It might only have been a year to him but, its seven to me.



As I said, people are constantly complaining, but at least they are going to get a magic jab.

Yours

Dougal.

PS I love the ThistleI can spend hours destroying it.

1 RS 'Specialist' Roles Post 1963

In 2018 The Royal Scots Borderers, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, our direct successors, became a battalion in The Specialised Infantry Group which has the roles of training, advising, accompanying and mentoring foreign forces. Such a 'specialist' role mirrors many that 1 RS had filled during their post-1963 service.

When WW2 ended there was no return to the same peace time soldiering as after WW1. There was a rapid reduction in the size of the war time Army and the Territorial Army (TA) was disbanded, Unforeseen crisis nevertheless required intervention causing severe strain on those remaining. The growing threat from the USSR, the spread of world Communism and 'the end of Empire' led to 'Overstretch' which became a familiar theme. Two years National Service, a form of conscription, was introduced in 1947 and the TA reformed. The former ended in 1962 when the Army became a regular body to be reinforced in General War by the TA.

The intensity of activity between 1945 to the end of the Cold War in 1990 is demonstrated by the 1st Battalion changing station over 30 times during those 45 years, from the UK to Korea and other deployments in between. Many of these moves, particularly after the end of National Service in 1962, required reorganisation, adopting new specialist roles and familiarisation with new equipment. Not surprisingly, as the senior infantry battalion in the British Army, 1 RS experienced more of these roles than any other. They are listed below.

Airportable. 1963-1966 at Tidworth. Most clearly demonstrated by the move to Aden in May 1964 when, from a standing start whilst deployed on an exercise on Salisbury Plain, and including a three-day Whitsun weekend for most, they were complete on the ground in Aden, with A Company already deployed on operations in The Radfan, within 10 days.

Mechanised Infantry. 1966-1970 at Osnabruck. 1 RS were the first battalion from outside BAOR to come in and convert direct onto the then new FV 432 tracked Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC). Many doubted that such a conversion could be managed in under a year but

four months after arrival the Battalion completed a demanding Divisional exercise across the North German plain. They received high praise for their performance.

Arctic Warfare. 1970-1974 at Tidworth. 1 RS became the British Battalion in NATO's Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (Land) (AMF[LL]) with deployment options on the North Flank (Arctic Norway and Denmark) and North East Italy, Greece and Turkey in the South. The priority task was the Arctic, including in the winter, and, although not required to be ski-borne, they chose to be so and became proficient in all the skills and tactics required to operate in such a demanding area and climate.

Nuclear Convoy Escort (NCE). 1976-1979 at Munster. Working with 8 Regiment RCT and under operational command of the United States, the Battalion, operating on a Land Rover basis, was responsible for the protection and escort when deployed of the NORTHAG nuclear warhead resupply.

Armoured Infantry. 1985-1992 at Werl. Returning again to BAOR, originally as a Mechanised Battalion in FV 432s, the Battalion converted to the new Warrior Infantry Combat Vehicle, equipped with a turret mounted 30mm cannon, in early 1989. The success of this conversion was demonstrated when they took the 1st, 2nd equal and 4th places in the 1st (British) Corps Gunnery Competition later that year and, in 1991, on Operation DESERT STORM when they helped liberate Kuwait after the Iraq invasion, winning more gallantry awards than any other battalion.

Air Assault. Colchester 1996-2000. Mobile in helicopters, with a range of specialist light all-terrain vehicles and a total of 42 MILAN anti-tank missile firing posts, the Battalion was at the cutting edge of military tactics.

Other than parachuting, there were no other specialist infantry roles that the Battalion could have been involved in across those 40 years at the end of the twentieth Century – and no other battalion can, or probably ever will, approach that record.

Colonel Robert Watson

THE ROYAL SCOTS BATTALIONS' POSTINGS AND MAJOR TRAINING EXERCISES 1945-2006

(Operational tours are indicated in **Bold**)

Year	Posting	
1945	1RS India and Singapore	2RS Palestine and Canal Zone
1946	1RS Singapore and Malaya	2RS Canal Zone, Palestine and Malta
1947	1RS India (Pakistan)	2RS Malta and Trieste
1948	1RS Edinburgh	2RS Trieste and Edinburgh
1949	1RS and 2RS amalgamate Edinburgh. Hereafter only 1RS is covered.	
Year	Posting	
1950	Edinburgh	
1951	Munster and Wuppertal, West Germany	
1952	Wuppertal and Berlin	
1953	Berlin, UK and Korea	
	Berlin, although not an operational posting, was still classified as 'active service' for legal purposes	
1954	Korea and Canal Zone	
1955	Canal Zone and Cyprus	
1956	Cyprus, Elgin and Suez	
1957	Elgin	
1958	Elgin and Berlin	
1959	Berlin	
1960	Berlin, Troon, Benghazi and Tobruk	
1961	Benghazi and Tobruk, Tripoli	
1962	Tripoli	
	National Service ends. Major overseas training exercises introduced for the much smaller Regular Army.	
Year	Posting	Major Exercises
1963	Tripoli, Tidworth	Overseas Training
1964	Tidworth, Aden and the Radfan	Canada (Arctic – Hudson Bay)
1965	Aden , Tidworth	Libya
1966	Tidworth and Osnabruck, West Germany	Canada (Wainwright)
1967	Osnabruck	
1968	Osnabruck	Libya and France
1969	Osnabruck	
1970	Osnabruck, West Belfast (1) and Tidworth	
	The figure in brackets denotes the number in 13 Northern Ireland operational tours which totalled 7 1/2 years, including two 2-year residential tours, over the years 1970-2002	
1971	Tidworth, Londonderry (2) , West Belfast (3)	Norway (Winter), Greece
1972	Tidworth, Belfast/Londonderry (4)	Norway (Winter and Autumn)
1973	Tidworth	Norway (Winter), Greece and Denmark
1974	Tidworth, Cyprus	Norway (Winter)
1975	Cyprus, Kirknewton, South Armagh (5)	
1976	South Armagh (5) , Kirknewton, Munster (West Germany)	
1977	Munster	
1978	Munster	
1979	Munster, Edinburgh	
1980	Edinburgh, West Belfast (6)	
1981	Edinburgh, Ballykinler (7)	
1982	Ballykinler	
1983	Ballykinler , Kirknewton	
1984	Kirknewton, Falkland Islands	
1985	Kirknewton, Werl (West Germany)	
1986	Werl	
1987	Werl, West Belfast (8)	Canada (Suffield)
1988	West Belfast , Werl	
1989	Werl	
1990	Werl, The Gulf	
1991	The Gulf , Werl, Fort George	
1992	Fort George, South Armagh (9)	
1993	South Armagh , Fort George	
1994	Fort George	
1995	Fort George, South Armagh (10)	
1996	South Armagh , Fort George, Colchester	
1997	Colchester, Fermanagh (11)	Kenya
1998	Colchester	USA (Washington State), Belgium
1999	Colchester, South Armagh (12)	
2000	Colchester, Ballykelly (13)	Canada (Arctic), USA (Louisiana)
2001	Ballykelly	
2002	Ballykelly , Edinburgh, Bosnia	Belize
2003	Bosnia , Edinburgh, Iraq	
2004	Iraq , Edinburgh	
2005	Edinburgh	
2006	Edinburgh, Iraq	

Remembrance 2020

Remembrance 2020 was very limited due to government restrictions. This did not stop members of the Regiment carrying out acts of Remembrance which we bring to you with a short series of photographs.



Brigadier GE Lowder laid a wreath on behalf of the Regiment at the Royal Scots Club on 11 November 2020.



Peebles. Captain Alex Dockar laid a wreath at the Memorial in Peebles on Remembrance Sunday 2020.



Southern Branch Alex Moore, photograph taken at Remembrance event.

France

The local CWGC Cemetery at La Gorgue, where among 152 War Dead there, mostly from WWI, are one 2nd Bn Royal Scot killed in action in November 1914 and one 1st Bn Royal Scot killed in action in May 1940 leading up to the Battle of Le Paradis.

Despite pandemic restrictions you can see that our friends in France continue to honour the fallen.



Op GRANBY

This year marks the 30th Anniversary of the Gulf War and the last Battle Honour for The Royal Scots. The story of the 1st battalion's role in this conflict is given in the post campaign article written by the Commanding Officer Lt Colonel (later Brigadier) I A Johnstone OBE. The excellent essay was used by Brigadier Johnstone as the basis for many talks to Staff Colleges and other military bodies. The full story is too large to reproduce here but can be found on the Regimental

website

<https://www.theroyalscots.co.uk/the-regiments-last-battle-honour/>

. The Regiment was awarded two Battle Honours for this war: Wadi Al Batin and GULF 1991, the latter being carried on the Colours.

This was not the last time The Royal Scots were on Operations, but it is their last Battle Honour.



National Memorial Arboretum

While we remain under Covid restrictions and there is some doubt as to when they will be lifted, there is sufficient light at the end of the tunnel to plan some engagements. To this end there are two events planned to be held at the National Memorial Arboretum on Sunday 3rd October 2021.

The first event is the unveiling of the memorial to those lost on the Lisbon Maru while they were being transported to Japan as POWs. 147 Royal Scots lost their lives in this sinking out of a total of 303 members of 2RS who had been captured at Hong Kong. The last known survivor recently passed away, Dennis Morley, and you can find his obituary later in this edition. The Memorial involves all who were on board and The Regimental Trustees have contributed to this new memorial. The story of the sinking of the Lisbon Maru can be found on the Regimental website:

<https://www.theroyalscots.co.uk/lisbon-maru/>



The second event is a purely Royal Scot event and is the unveiling of the Memorial Stone dedicated to The Royal Scots. This has been covered in previous editions of The Thistle and after consultation with the Regimental Family, the Regimental Trustees began the process of arranging this to be sited at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. The project has been led by Lt Col Gordon Vevers and is approaching its conclusion. The stone will be of Scottish granite with a brass plaque. The Service of Dedication will be led by our Association Padre Rev Iain May BSc, MBA, BD.

Arrangements are being made for people to travel to the National Memorial Arboretum for these Services and details of how to apply to attend and travel will be given closer to the day – keep an eye on the Regimental website.

Charity Fund Raising Events by Royals.

Mental Health And Veterans – It's Not All About PTSD And Never Was. Colonel Peter Fraser-Hopewell CMG, MBE

Mental Health issues for both serving and veterans of the Armed Forces whilst being more widely recognised is still, in my view, an area that needs increased awareness. During my time in the Army I saw, and experienced, a number of events which impacted upon friends and soldiers I served with. Whilst help was given I cannot but think we could have done better. Mental Health is no respecter of gender or rank and personnel should have no fear in discussing their concerns, through the chain of command, with family, friends, mentors, the Regimental Association or veterans' charities. All of these can be of help, even if it is just a chat or advice on where more professional help is available.

As a volunteer I am area representative for Combat Stress in Essex and Suffolk. Combat Stress aims to deliver best service for veterans with complex Mental Health challenges; it's not all PTSD. That is one end of the Mental Health spectrum, but many individuals do not need this level of support. Friends and/or the Regimental Association could be one of the first ports of call. Remember veterans and their families have one resource that civilians can never have - membership of the Regimental and Military family. The social support and network of comrades, along with the Regimental Association and appropriate charities are at the bedrock of managing any mental issues which may occur after service.

I have seen strong, robust and brave Special Forces soldiers seek help; if they can ask for assistance so can everyone. Help is available but often the first, and most difficult, step to take is talking to someone - if you are concerned, please don't hesitate.



Tam Millar, as ever is out and about taking part in marathons raising money for Service charities



Ongoing Event

I am looking for help in getting my donation page on "Just Giving, willma-gray-3" out to the wider world.

Channel 5 News interviewed me and included the interview on their 5 o'clock National news programme. Only problem with the report was that they said I spent 26 years in the Bn. I did tell them that I spent 24 years in the army and that I had served in 1RS.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PSDbRhQfXc>

I am now trying to get my story out to a wider audience and wondered if you could place the story on The Royal Scots (Royal Regiment) website.

Inspired by Capt Sir Tom Moore, but unable to do a walk due to arthritis I decided on Wednesday 12th Jan to start sleeping out in a tent in my garden. The only items in the tent are my home-made bed (made of pallets), bedding, electric lamp and clock. My aim is to carry on sleeping out until at least the 28th of February, and beyond if the donations warrant it.

The Stranraer and Wigtownshire Free Press ran the story last week to much acclaim. That brought it to the attention of Ch 5 and Border News. Border News decided at the last moment to cancel my interview (for reasons only known to themselves),

Any help from The Royals would be very much appreciated.

Regards

Wilma Gray (Formerly Cpl Bill (Dolly) Gray 1RS)



SSAFA - Armed Forces Charity Providing Assistance To At Risk Veterans After Britain's Departure From EU

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity is encouraging at-risk UK Nationals from the Armed Forces community to complete the necessary residency applications after Britain's departure from the European Union.

Now that the UK has left the EU, some UK nationals living in certain EU member states will need to take actions to secure their residency rights, so that they can continue to live and work in their host country as of now.

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity is working alongside the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to support UK National veterans living in France, Germany, and Cyprus.

The charity is providing support to those who are most at-risk, such as those living in care homes, in rural areas, or those without access to computers or the internet. In addition, the charity are supporting those with PTSD to ensure they receive the practical support they require via a team of trained case workers.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the team at SSAFA are continuing to support those most at-risk and are encouraging members of the Armed Forces community to contact SSAFA if they need support or assistance.

Sir Andrew Gregory, CEO at SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, said: "We are encouraging members of the Armed Forces who have not yet started their application to begin as soon as possible and for those who need extra support, to contact SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, either in person or through a family member who can alert us to their predicament. We are supporting at-risk veterans in France, Cyprus and Germany, to ensure they are able to remain in the country they call home."

If you would like to find out more or receive support, please call us from the UK on 08001930474, Cyprus 0780077058, France 0805119617, Germany 08000009913 or visit

<https://www.ssafa.org.uk/VIE>

ENDS



Obituaries



Brigadier Charles David Maciver Ritchie CBE

Brigadier Charles Ritchie died on 16 December 2020 after a very short illness and just four days after celebrating his 79th birthday.

Born in Inverness, he was the elder son of Lieutenant Colonel 'Bill' Ritchie, himself a distinguished Royal Scot who latterly served as Regimental Secretary from 1973-1977. To further complete the

family links, his younger brother, Alastair ('Al') served with 1RS late 1960s early 1970s.

After leaving Wellington College, Charles entered Sandhurst in January 1960, passing out in the top twenty of his Intake, before joining B Company of the 1st Battalion in Tripoli in January 1962. He served with the Battalion until 1965, including in Canada and the Radfan. During the latter tour he commanded C Company's support platoon as well as acting as a Forward Air Controller with The Federal Regular Army. He was fortunate to escape with only severe burns after blowing himself up whilst delousing a local house with a petrol flash burn. After Aden he went as ADC to Major General 'Jumbo' Delacombe, the 27th Colonel of the Regiment, during the latter's tour as Governor of Victoria, Australia. On return to 1RS he took part in the Battalion's first OP BANNER tour in West Belfast before a tour as an instructor at Sandhurst. From there, after attending Staff College, he returned to the 1st Battalion as OC A Company in the NCE Role based in Munster. This was his last Regimental tour, as he then moved to the British Commanders-in-Chief Mission to the Soviet Forces in Germany (BRIXMIS), based just outside East Berlin, as the Operations Officer.

He thoroughly enjoyed his time there (for which he was awarded the MBE) until he was formally ejected from East Germany for spying - but not before his Russian counterparts had thrown a farewell party in recognition of their grudging but genuine respect for 'the mad Scotsman'.

His Service thereafter saw him commanding 3UDR (OBE); a two-year tour as a DS at the Joint Services Staff College at Greenwich during which he married Araminta Luard; overseeing Military Assistance Overseas as a Colonel in MOD and then, on promotion to Brigadier, Commander of the UDR (CBE). As a linguist, fluent in French, with good German and Italian and a smattering of Russian and other assorted languages, some of which he appeared to make up as he went along, he moved to the International scene serving successively as the UK National Military Representative at SHAPE; Chief of Staff to a French General commanding the UN Protection Force in Former Yugoslavia; and, finally, as our Military Attaché in Paris, where, just before retirement, he was heavily involved in the repatriation arrangements after the tragic death of Princess Diana. During these later years of his service, he held the appointment as the thirty-first Colonel of the Regiment from 1990 to 1995. This period covered the Gulf War, during which he and Araminta supported the families in Werl and, immediately after the end of that war, the announcement of the Government's decision to amalgamate the Regiment with The King's Own Scottish Borderers. The former members of the Regiment immediately mounted a campaign under his guidance to oppose this and, in February 1993, the amalgamation was cancelled. He served as an ADC to Her Majesty The Queen from 1994 to 1997 and was a member of The Queen's Bodyguard for Scotland (Royal Company of Archers) from 1981 until retiring, as a Captain, in 2016. On retirement to the family home at Dolphinton, near West Linton, he became the Secretary of The New Club in Edinburgh, was on the Board of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo and Chairman of the Scottish Committee of The Soldier's Charity (ABF) as well as being active in many local organisations and committees.

His interests, centred on the Regiment, were both wide and liberal,

encompassing his family, friends, the wider military and the countryside. To all, ably supported by Araminta, he brought a generosity of spirit and infectious enthusiasm, a theatrical, sometimes schoolboy sense of humour, endless storytelling, often complete with actions, and a great sense of duty.

He devoted much time latterly to writing his memoirs, reflecting the dramatic and adventurous quality of his life, the manuscript of which was delivered to his publishers just 48 hours before his sudden death, the resulting book, "Laughter is the Best Weapon - The Remarkable Adventures of an Unconventional Soldier", is to be published by Pen & Sword books and will be available in the summer or early autumn of this year.

A Memorial Service, to which all are invited, is to be held in The Canongate Kirk, the Regimental Church, at a date to be announced when the current COVID restrictions allow it. Details will appear on the Regimental website closer to the time.



IN MEMORIAM
Warrant Officer Class 2 Ronald John Macdonald

(Ronnie to a few, Maxie to most)
Born 13 July 1937 in London. Died
19 November 2020 in Inverness.

Maxie was brought up and schooled in the East End of London apart from an unhappy period when he and his older sister were evacuated to Devon during the Blitz. In 1953 it was suggested to his father, by an officer of the law, that joining a branch of the armed services might be a sensible move by his boy. His

father, a former merchant seaman, agreed and he recommended that the Navy would be a suitable career for his boisterous son to follow. Maxie however thought that his musical interests would be best served in the Army.

Later that year saw him at Winston Barracks in Lanark having enlisted in the Cameronians as a Boy Musician learning to play the trumpet. At some point he made the move from the Military Band to the Pipes and Drums where he spent the next 14 years. He became Bugle Major at a relatively young age, the position he held when the Cameronians were disbanded in 1968. During these years he saw service in Kenya, Jordan, Germany, Aden and Edinburgh and it was in Kenya that he met his wife to be, Jennie.

On the disbandment of his Regiment, Maxie opted to join the Royal Scots, a decision, he said was the best move he ever made. Like the many other Cameronians who made the same decision, he blended in seamlessly and continued his successful military career.

His first post in the Royal Scots was as CQMS C Company in Osnabruck and he went on to become CSM of A Company before moving to the Pipes and Drums as Drum Major. During this time, he served in Germany, N Ireland, Tidworth, Norway, Greece and Cyprus. This was a busy period for the Pipes and Drums, carrying out their operational duties and, in addition, their numerous Band commitments as far afield as the USA and Australia as well as all over Europe and at home in the UK.

Maxie became the Army's senior Drum Major and led numerous

massed bands in Australia, the Wembley Pageant and also, the Edinburgh Military Tattoo on numerous occasions. He was an immaculate figure at the head of the bands and a credit to The Royal Scots.

He left 1RS in 1977 and spent his remaining time as a regular soldier with 1KOSB in Fort George and Belize, also as Drum Major, until his retirement from the Regular Army in 1978.

After a short stint training the Sultan of Oman's Pipes and Drums in Salalah he settled down in Inverness where, for the next forty years or so, he led a very happy and fulfilling life in employment and with his ever-growing family. Maxie was a keen golfer and so enjoyed his time on the golf course at Torvean sometimes playing three or four times a week. He was also something of a sun worshipper and loved the family holidays in the Mediterranean and Florida. During this period his eldest son Colin and youngest son Kevin followed their Dad into the Royal Scots with Colin serving for 23 years and Kevin for four.

In recent years Maxie's health began to deteriorate and eventually, after a brave fight, this large-as-life character finally succumbed to, what had become, a prolonged illness in November 2020.

Maxie was a devoted family man and is survived by his wife Jennie, his three sons, Colin, Garry and Kevin, seven grandchildren and five great grandchildren by whom he is lovingly remembered.

Lt Colonel John Sands MBE



Dennis Morley, Royal Scots bandsman who survived a Japanese massacre – obituary

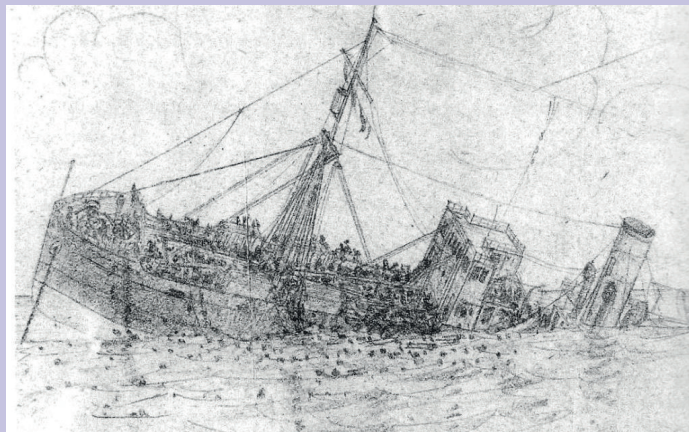
Captured in Hong Kong, he was on the Lisbon Maru when it was torpedoed, leading to the enemy firing on the prisoners, killing 828

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Dennis Morley, who has died aged 101, served with the Royal Scots (the Royal Regiment) in the defence of Hong Kong, and subsequently survived the sinking of the Japanese freighter, Lisbon Maru, when it was torpedoed by an American submarine; he was believed to have been the last survivor of the sinking.

Japan attacked Hong Kong early on December 8, 1941 and the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Scots, flanked by two Indian battalions, were deployed in a defensive line across the New Territories. Morley, a bandsman in HQ Company, was a stretcher bearer and was in the thick of the fighting. His battalion, however, was greatly outnumbered and took heavy losses. The survivors were evacuated to Hong Kong Island, but after a week of bombing and shelling, the Japanese launched an invasion of the island itself. The Royal Scots, defending Mount Nicholson, overlooking Wong Nai Chung Gap in the island's centre, saw more fierce fighting. Morley was admitted to St Albert's Hospital suffering from battle fatigue. Three other front-line hospitals were the scenes of rapes of nurses and massacres of patients and medical staff, and on the morning of December 23 Japanese soldiers burst into St Albert's. A Japanese officer was lying in the hospital morgue and a nurse, Mary Currie, with great presence of mind, covered his body with a Japanese flag in a gesture of respect. Morley was taken prisoner, but he believed that this action saved their lives.

Morley was incarcerated in Sham Shui Po PoW Camp, a former British Army barracks. He and his best friend, Paul Connolly, discussed escaping, but Connolly broke out on his own; he was recaptured and executed. In 1942 Morley survived an epidemic of diphtheria, and at the end of September, together with some 1,800 fellow British PoWs and about 800 Japanese army personnel, he embarked on the armed Japanese freighter Lisbon Maru, bound for Japan.



The sinking of the Lisbon Maru sketched by Lt WC Johnson of the US Navy for the records of the Middlesex Regiment

Down in the hold, in the most squalid conditions, the Pow's were being transported to work in Japan in order to release Japanese manpower for their armed forces. An American submarine, however, tracked the vessel and, on the morning of October 1, torpedoed it. It bore no markings to show that it was carrying British Pow's. The Japanese battened down the holds to ensure the prisoners could not escape and were then taken off the listing ship by a destroyer. The Pow's had no food, water, fresh air or toilet facilities. Many were suffering from dysentery and other serious diseases. The air became increasingly foul and the conditions intolerable; some men died during the night.

After 24 hours the ship started to sink and the Pow's were able to cut through the hatch covers. Japanese guards fired on those who reached the deck, while others who escaped were machine-gunned in the water by Japanese soldiers on rescue ships. In all, 828 men died in the atrocity. It was not until some Chinese fishermen started to pull Pow's out of the water that the Japanese began to do the same. Morley was picked up by one of the Japanese ships but was always grateful to the Chinese fishermen whose heroic action prevented a complete massacre. When he reached the deck, in contrast to the murderous actions of the Japanese soldiers, a Japanese sailor gave him a cigarette and a cup of green tea, which he said tasted like nectar.

The survivors were rounded up and taken to Shanghai and thence to Japan, where many would die of exposure, disease, malnutrition, and exhaustion. Morley spent the rest of the war at Kobe House PoW Camp, where he worked as a stevedore in the docks and at the airport. After he got a hernia he was given an easier job operating the cranes. Morley returned to Japan in later years and was able eventually to forgive his captors for the suffering he had endured. In June 1945 the camp was destroyed by a series of incendiary raids by American bombers. Morley was finally liberated by American forces and returned to England by way of Vancouver and Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Dennis John Morley Hickenbottom was born in London on October 26, 1919, changing his surname to Morley after the Second World War. He left school to serve an apprenticeship with Philips Radios at

Mitcham in Surrey. Morley wanted to travel and enlisted with the Royal Scots as a band boy. He was posted to the 2nd Battalion in Lahore, India, but in 1938 he accompanied the battalion to Hong Kong. As a bandsman who played the drums and the French horn, he had plenty of outside engagements. He met and fell in love with a young woman whose brother served in the Seaforth Highlanders in Shanghai, but war intervened. After the war, Morley worked for Hoffmans Manufacturing, then for an insurance company, and subsequently for British Petroleum. He did not want to retire, and for some years he worked voluntarily in a computer business.

He revisited Hong Kong several times and also returned to Japan. He was able eventually to forgive his captors for the suffering he had endured and regarded those events as over and done with. For the last 15 years he had lived with his daughter near Stroud in Gloucestershire. His main interest was walking, and Snowdonia, the Forest of Dean and the Lake District were particular favourites. Shortly before he died, he was delighted to learn that a memorial to the victims of the Lisbon Maru is to be built at the National Memorial Arboretum. He had been planning to attend the Dedication in October later this year. Dennis Morley married, first, in 1951, Phyllis Grace Edmunds. She died of cancer aged 30, and in 1952 he married Eva Starkey. She also predeceased him, and he is survived by a daughter of his first marriage. Dennis Morley, born October 26 1919, died January 3 2021.

Joseph Brown, Pipe Band 2RS

Joe was with 2RS in Trieste in 1947/48 where he was a member of the Pipe Band. Although his time with the Regiment was brief, it made a lasting impression on him, one which remained with him for the remainder of his life. Joe's father served in the Royal Scots during WW1, surviving the war to take young Joe to the Royal Scots Club on many occasions in his early years. More recently Joe and his wife, Deborah, stayed at the Club while visiting Edinburgh. Towards the end of his time in Trieste and with 2RS, Joe was offered a commission but decided not to accept as he had decided to return to Edinburgh to become a Minister. Some years later Joe did return to the army, as a Chaplain and served with The Gordon Highlanders in Korea and Aden before returning to civilian life and a parish. Joe died on 30th November 2019.

Deaths

Late notification

Mr Joseph Brown – 30th November 2019 – 2RS

Mr Andrew Robertson - 10th August 2020 - 1RS/RAMC

Mr John Dignan - 31st August 2020 - W02 1RS

Mr Tam Gorrian - 19th September 2020 – CSgt 1RS

Mr Bruce Allan - 20th October 2020 – LCpl 1RS

Mr James M Clarke (Nobby) - 16th November 2020 – CSgt 1RS

Mr Ronald John (Maxi) MacDonald - 19th November 2020 – W02 Cameronians/1RS/1KOSB

Mr Joesph (Joe) McCamley - 22nd November 2020 – Sgt 1RS

Mr Robert (Jonah) Johnstone - 9th December 2020 – LCpl 1RS

Brigadier CDM (Charles) Ritchie CBE - 16th December 2020 – Col of Regt 1990-95

Mr Dennis J Morley – 2nd January 2021 - 2RS

The Editor relies on friends and relatives to provide timely and meaningful contributions to record the life and achievements of former members of The Regiment.

From The Editor

Again, the Editorial Team are grateful for the articles and photographs sent to us and we try to use most of these in The Thistle. Space constraints may mean that the article has to be edited which is at the Editor's discretion. Please refer to The Regimental website for confirmation of events venues and timings. We welcome any comments, ideas, constructive criticism so if you have any of these then either give the Team a phone call or drop us an email. All articles for The Thistle should be sent to thistle.editor@theroyalscots.co.uk. Timeline for the Summer edition is 31 July 2021.

Forecast of Events

Normally this Section would include a list of projected events for the next 12 months. With the current uncertainties surround Covid-19 we are not currently doing this. What we would ask is that you keep checking the Royal Scots website to get information of events as they become known. -We hope to be able to produce a full list in the Summer edition when there is more certainty to life.

Details of events, numbers permitted to attend, and any other details will be notified on the website closer to the events.

If you have any queries, call the Regimental Office who will be happy to assist where they can.

Branch Details

EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Branch are having to relocate to a new meeting place. Details will be made known when this has been arranged. In the meantime:

Contact: Mick McCann
mikemccann4130@hotmail.co.uk

CENTRAL SCOTLAND

First Sunday of each month at 2.00 pm at Hillcroft Hotel, Whitburn, West Lothian

Contact: David Milne
David.milne3343@live.co.uk

EAST OF SCOTLAND

Last Saturday of each month at 7:30 pm at RBL Prestonpans

Contact: Peter Blackie
peterblackie@yahoo.co.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND

First Tuesday of each month at RBL Ards

Contact: Davy McKendrick, Secretary
Davidsmck1@sky.com

HIGHLAND

First Sunday of each month at 6pm at Raigmore Recreation Rooms, Inverness

Contact: Tam McFadyen
tamrosie@btinternet.com

SOUTHERN

No Branch meetings but events arranged during the year.

Contact: Tam Millar
Weetam0571@sky.co.uk

PIPE BAND

Contact T Corkerton for information re Band practice days.
Contact: Torquil Corkerton
torquil@ednet.co.uk

For further information contact the:

REGIMENTAL OFFICE

The Royal Scots Club, 29-31 Abercrombie Place,
Edinburgh EH3 6QE

Tel: 0131 557 0405

Email: admin@theroyalscots.co.uk

Thistle.editor@theroyalscots.co.uk