

# Edinburgh troops continued fighting after the Armistice

WHEN the church bells of Armistice Day rang out across the country, the sound of jubilation was not heard by all.

Hundreds of soldiers fighting for Scottish regiments remained in battle on November 11, 1918 with dozens dying on the day that marks the end of the "war to end all wars".

As celebratory searchlights swooped over the Scott Monument and crowds hung out flags, donned red, white and blue and partied in streets, troops remained crouched, killing and defending in northern Russia and the Caucasus, among other theatres of war.

Among them were the men of the 2/10th battalion of the Royal Scots who were fighting Bolsheviks on the banks of the River Dvina near Archangel on November 11 1918. Also in the area were the 2nd Highland Light Infantry and 2nd Cameron Highlanders.

The soldiers were living in deep snow packed up to ten feet deep and temperatures of 30 to 40 degrees below zero.

It was impossible to live in trenches given the cold, with the men sleeping instead in blockhouses wrapped in barbed wire to deflect gun fire.

At 7.45am on November 11, 1918, a "violent bombardment" was launched by enemy gunboats against the Royal Scots while Russian infantry advanced from the woods to attack forward positions on both banks.

Nineteen Royal Scots died that day, their families not learning of their deaths until long after the Armistice bells had faded.

One soldier was killed by sniper fire as he tried



to apply a field dressing to the chest of a wounded comrade.

Colonel Martin Gibson OBE, trustee the Royal Scots Regimental Museum in Edinburgh, said: "At 7.45am on November 11, 1918 we know that the Royal Scots were coming under heavy bombardment in Russia.

"When we are pulling on our nice warm winter coats on the 11th to attend a Remembrance Service, we should remember that this is what was going on in Russia. We should remember these men."

The 2nd battalion of the Royal Scots did not return to Scotland until June 1919.

A letter to the Edinburgh Evening News, published in April that year, asked the public to remember those fighting in Russia as well as a second battalion which remained in the Caucasus.

It said: "Sir, May I point out to your readers that

two battalions of our local regiment have not yet been so fortunate as the most of our army in having an end to hostilities on their front. The 2nd battalion have been, and it may be at the present moment are very hard pressed and spring is not likely to come in that latitude for some weeks yet.

Written by Miss E Duncan, joint honorary secretary of the Royal Scots Association, the letter added: "May I express the hope that the generous public of Edinburgh and the surrounding counties will not forget these two battalions in their distant and inhospitable surroundings."

A commemoration is planned to mark the 100 anniversary of their return home next June.

According to the Scottish National War Memorial, 80 men who fought with Scottish regiments died on November 11 1918.