THE
ROYAL SCOTS
(THE ROYAL REGIMENT)

IN THE
20th AND 21st CENTURIES

A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS

FOREWORD

This booklet has been produced, and funded, by The Royal Scots Regimental Museum and Heritage Committee to mark the centenary of the end of the 1st World War and the 80th anniversary of the start of the 2nd.

Its aim is to provide a readable record for all current members of the Regimental Association of the key events in our history during the 20th and 21st Centuries, to remember those who served in The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) during that time, in particular those who died during that service, and to record the service of more recent generations.

Once a Royal, always a Royal

Nemo Me Inpune Lacessit

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HISTORY

The Royal Scots, the oldest Infantry Regiment of the Line in the British Army, was formed in 1633 when Sir John Hepburn, under a Royal Warrant granted by King Charles I, raised a body of men in Scotland for service in France. By 1635 Sir John commanded a force of over 8,000, including many who had previously fought as mercenaries from 1603 in the "Green Brigade" for King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden. It was by virtue of the 1633 Royal Warrant that the entire Regiment was considered as British; a regular force in a standing Army which could be recalled to Britain at will. In 1661, the Regiment was, in fact, summoned to Britain to bridge the gap between the disbandment of the New Model Army and the creation of a Regular Army, organised along the same lines as the British units in foreign service. The Regiment was thus the original model for all others.

In 1680 the Regiment was sent to Tangier and won its first Battle Honour. On its return to England in 1684 the title "The Royal Regiment of Foot" was conferred by Charles II. During Monmouth's rebellion in 1685, five companies formed part of the force concentrated against the rebels who they met at Sedgemoor. The following year, the Regiment was divided into two battalions and was not to have less until 1949.

Both Battalions of The Royal Scots saw service under Malborough during the War of the Spanish Succession, taking part in all four of his major victories, Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde and Malplaquet. This was followed with garrison duty in Ireland where they remained until 1742. From this date the two battalions were usually to be separated and posted far apart. The 1st Battalion moved in 1743 to Germany to take part in the War of Austrian Succession, including the Battle of Fontenoy. In 1745-46 the 2nd Battalion took part in the fight against the Young Pretender which culminated in the Battle of Culloden, near Inverness, the last battle fought on British soil. In 1751 the army was numbered and thereafter the Regiment was officially designated the First or Royal Regiment of Foot.

For the remainder of the Century the struggle between the two great powers moved on to the world stage. Both Battalions were involved in overseas campaigns, in particular, for the 2nd Battalion in North America. Initially they were defending British colonists, in what was soon to become the United States, against the French and their native American allies, particularly the Cherokees, on the western frontier and then at the capture of Montreal in 1760 which led to Canada becoming a British possession. in 1761 the 2nd Battalion moved to the West Indies taking part in capture of Havana from the Spanish in 1762. Then, after a period of Home Service and in the Mediterranean, it was the turn of the 1st Battalion for service in the West Indies. Disease rather than the enemy accounted for most deaths; between 1793 and 1796 the British lost 40,000 men in the West Indies of which The Royals lost 5 officers and 400 men, well over half the battalion strength.

During the Napoleonic Wars the Regiment was increased to a strength of four battalions. The 1st Battalion spent the entire period of the war in the Americas, in particular in what is today Guyana and then in the Niagara Campaign of the War of 1812 against the United States. Meanwhile the 2nd Battalion took part in the capture of Egypt (1801), then moved to the West Indies (1803-05), before travelling to India, the first time that any part of the Regiment had served there. They were to stay until 1831. In contrast the 3rd and 4th Battalions remained in Europe, with the 4th Battalion on home service until 1812 supplying drafts for the other three battalions. The 3rd Battalion first saw action at Corunna in 1809 and then took part in the Peninsular War, including twice storming the walled city of San Sebastian in 1813 in what was probably the hardest fought action in the Regiment's history. There followed the Battles of Quatre Bras and Waterloo which cost the battalion 363 casualties out of a strength of 624. Two years later it was disbanded; the 4th Battalion having suffered a similar fate the previous year.

The next ninety years produced a considerable number of moves for both the 1st and the 2nd Battalions with action in India and Burma in 1817-31 where the 2nd Battalion was stationed. The Crimean War was the next major campaign for the Regiment; it was the last time the 1st and 2nd Battalions fought along side each other - the 1st Battalion arriving in time for the Battle of Alma. The Regiment's first VC was won by Private Prosser during the Siege of Sevastopol for two acts of heroism. In 1860 the 2nd Battalion took part in the second Opium War in China. In 1900 the 1st and 3rd Battalions joined

British forces in South Africa for service in the Boer War. Most of the time was spent on mobile column work, patrolling and raiding expeditions. For the full story of The Royal Scots in the Boer War read Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard Volume One Chapter 6

World War I saw the number of battalions increased to 35 of which 15 served as active front line units. More than 100,000 men passed through these battalions, of whom 11,213 were killed and over 40,000 wounded. Seventy-one Battle Honours and 6 VCs were awarded to the Regiment as well as innumerable individual medals. The 7th Battalion suffered a disaster on 22 May 1915 when en route to embark at Liverpool for Gallipoli. Early that morning one of the two troop trains carrying the Battalion was involved in a crash just north of Gretna in which 216 were killed and a further 220 injured - still by far the worst ever railway accident in Britain. The active service battalions were involved in all areas from the Western Front to the Dardanelles, Macedonia, Egypt and North Russia.

Whereas the War in Europe formally ended on 11th November 1918, the 1st Battalion served on in Georgia until April 1919 and 2/10th only returned home from the Archangel area in June where they had been part of an Allied expeditionary force supporting the White Russians against the Bolsheviks.

In 1918 HRH Princess Mary became Colonel-in-Chief, a position she was to hold until her death in March 1965. Demobilisation soon reduced the Regiment's strength to peacetime numbers but in the years that followed there was little rest from overseas service as the two regular battalions moved between Georgia, Ireland (the Troubles), Burma, India, Aden, Egypt, China (Shanghai), the North West Frontier and Hong Kong. In 1933 the Regiment celebrated its Tercentenary. With the 2nd Battalion in India most of the commemorations fell to the 1st Battalion in Aldershot. There were two major events. First a parade attended by HM King George V and Queen Mary at Aldershot on 19 April during which The King announced the singular honour of the Regiment's pipers wearing his personal tartan, the Royal Stuart, as opposed to the Hunting Stuart. The second was to provide a Historical Pageant, involving over 400 members of the Battalion, as the centre-piece of The Royal Tournament at Olympia that year. The 1st Battalion carried out a one year operational tour against Arab nationalists in Palestine throughout 1938 where they lost 15 killed and 42 wounded. For the full story of The Royal Scots in the inter-War years 1918 - 39 read Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard Volume Two Chapter 8.

At the start of World War 2, the 1st Battalion embarked for France as part of the BEF. They fought hard and stubbornly throughout the retreat which, for most of the BEF, was to end at Dunkirk. However, for the 1st Battalion, forming part of a perimeter defence for the beaches and after a desperate defence across the Bethune-Merville road, at Le Paradis, where they suffered appalling losses, many were taken prisoner and very few escaped home. The 2nd Battalion, based in Hong Kong, saw action when the Japanese attacked in December 1941. Here too, The Royal Scots fought heroically but the result was inevitable and the whole Battalion had been killed, wounded or become POW's by the time of the surrender of the Colony on Christmas Day 1941. The 1st Battalion was reconstituted after Dunkirk and took part in the Arakan campaign in Burma in 1943 and the Battle of Kohima in 1944. A new 2nd Battalion (originally the 12th) was formed in May 1942 and served in Italy and Palestine whilst the 7th/9th and 8th fought in Europe after D-Day. During WorId War 2, the posthumous award of the George Cross to Capt Douglas Ford, for his actions whilst a POW in Hong Kong, was a unique distinction within the Regiment. Approximatly 10,000 served as Royal Scots in the War. Fortunately the numbers killed or died in WW2 at a total of 1241 were a fraction of those in WW1. Of these 243 were from 2RS who died or were killed (murdered) as POW's of the Japanese or on the Lisbon

Maru after the loss of Hong Kong. There were, of course, 18 Battalions on active service in WW1 against only 4 in WW2 (or 6 if the reconstituted 1 and 2 RS are included). Thankfully tactics were very different and medical services available to the wounded, in particular the speed of evacuation, considerably more sophisticated. The Regiment was awarded 39 Battle Honours for WW2.

In 1949 the two regular battalions amalgamated, the first time since 1686 that the Regiment had been without a Second Battalion. After 1945 the Regiment served in many parts of the world, including

Germany, Korea, Cyprus, Suez, Aden and Northern Ireland, in the last case on 13 tours, totalling some 7 1/2 years, between 1970 and 2002. In 1983 the Regiment celebrated its 350th Anniversary and Her Majesty announced the appointment of Her daughter, HRH The Princess Royal, to be Colonel-in-Chief. In December 1990 the 1st Battalion deployed to Saudi Arabia as an Armoured Infantry battalion to take part in the Gulf War. Later it also served operationally in Bosnia and Iraq.

On 28 March 2006, while the 1st Battalion were deployed on operations based at Basra in Iraq, and after 373 years of unbroken service to the day since King Charles signed his Warrant to raise Hepburn's Regiment, our direct forebears, the Regiment merged with the five other surviving Regular and two Territorial Regiments of Scottish Infantry to form The Royal Regiment of Scotland. The 1st Battalion was renamed The Royal Scots Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland. On 1 August 2006 that Battalion further merged with The King's Own Scottish Borderers Battalion to form The Royal Scots Borderers, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, abbreviated to 1 SCOTS.

THE ROYAL SCOTS (THE ROYAL REGIMENT) IN THE 1st WORLD WAR (WW1)

At the outbreak of war The Royal Scots (RS) consisted of two Regular battalions, the 1st, at, or close to full strength of some 1000 all ranks, in India, and the 2nd, needing reinforcement by some 500 reservists, at Plymouth. The 3rd (Reserve) Regular battalion, the old Militia, based at Glencorse, Penicuik, with a greater training commitment than the new (1908) Territorial Force (TF), had the role of reinforcing the active service Regular battalions. In addition there were seven TF battalions 4RS, whose Drill Hall was at Grindlay Street, opposite the Usher Hall, in Edinburgh, 5RS (Forrest Hill), 6RS (Gilmore Place), 7RS (Dalmeny Street, Leith), 8RS (Haddington and Peebles), 9RS (Highlanders)(East Claremont Street) and 10 RS (Linlithgow). During the course of the war the number of Territorial battalions rose to twenty-two, although that number was not sustained for long, and eight 'New Army' battalions and two Garrison battalions were raised. In all a total of thirty-five RS battalions served in WW1, more than in any other Scottish Regiment, of which eighteen saw active service. A short description of the service of each of the 35 battalions can be found in the 'WW1 Battalions' essay on the following pages.

9th (Highlander) Battalion resting at Leith after mobilisation August 1914

The total regular strength of the Regiment on 4 August 1914 would have been around 2000 all ranks and that of the seven Territorial battalions probably about 5,000, giving a total Regimental strength of some 7,000.

By the time of the Armistice on 11 November 1918, over 100,000 men had served with the Regiment. Of these 11,213 (Over 10%) had been killed, including, on 22 August 1914, Lieutenant G M Thompson, the first British officer to be killed in action in the war when on secondment commanding a small force of local troops against German forces in West Africa The number killed equates to roughly 1 in 10, or 10%, of all Scotsmen, of whatever arm or unit, killed on all the WW1 battlefields. A staggering percentage from a single regiment. In addition to those killed, over 40,000 were wounded, making a total Royal Scots casualty list of over 50%. For information on how to research the service of a particular individual please see the 'Help on Research' section on the Regimental website at www.theroyalscots.co.uk

For those wishing information on any Royal Scot who died in WW1, you can access The Royal Scots World War 1 Roll of Honour through the Home page of the website and clicking on the link to: WW1 Roll of Honour.

Lt G M Thompson

Note: There is an interesting comparison between the strength of the Regiment in 1914 and that at the time of the merger into The Royal Regiment of Scotland in March 2006. By then The Royal Scots had shrunk to one Regular battalion and a single territorial company totalling around 700 all ranks or 10% of the August 1914 strength in both units and manpower.

The Regiment served in every campaign except Italy, Mesopotamia and East and West Africa and was awarded 79 Battle Honours. The list of these Honours, and the Battalions who won them, can be found in the 'Battle Honours' essay.

Six VCs were won. The stories behind these, can be found in the 'Gallantry Awards' essay along with the detailed numbers of other gallantry awards won.

In late November 1914 Sir George McCrae recruited 1,350 men in just 13 days, including a large number of Heart of Midlothian Football Club and other professional footballers from major Scottish clubs, to form 16 RS. The story is given at 'The Raising of the 16th Battalion' essay.

216 members of the 7th (Leith) Battalion, en route to Liverpool to embark for Gallipoli, were killed early in the morning of 22 May 1915, in Britain's worst railway disaster, when a Glasgow bound express ploughed into the wreckage of a troop train, which had just crashed into a local train at Quintinshill, north of Gretna. More detail can be found in 'The Quintinshill Train Crash' essay.

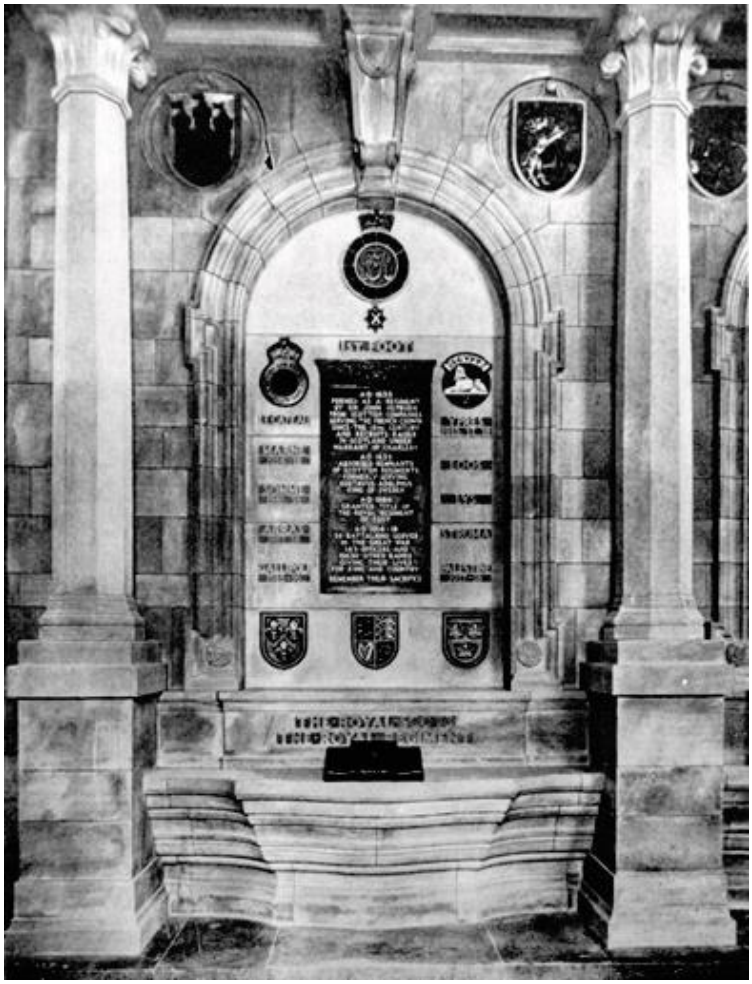
In spite of the Armistice coming into effect on 11 November 1918, one battalion, 2/10 RS, remained on operations against the Bolshevik (Communist) Army in Northern Russia until June 1919 and 1RS moved from Salonika in December 1918 to Russian Georgia, where they were deployed until April 1919.

The main Regimental Memorial to WW1 was the formation of The Royal Scots Club, opened on 10 August 1922, at Abercromby Place, in the heart of Edinburgh's New Town, as a memorial to all

those who had fallen, and to provide a meeting place for all ranks who had survived. The Club, the last of its kind in Scotland, and based on a broader membership, continues to flourish today. A set of Memorial Gates at the entrance to the Regimental Depot at Glencorse Barracks were opened as a further memorial on 18 March 1927. No longer forming the entrance to the Barracks, a memorial garden has now been incorporated within them. More information on these Memorials is given in the 'WW1 War Memorials'essey.

For those interested in history, we have added eight "essays" to this brief, concentrating on a particular action or actions for each of the years 1914 through to 1919 that a battalion or battalions of the Regiment were involved in. These are listed below and found in succeeding pages as shown on page ii - Contents

- 1914 - 2RS with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in France
- 1915 - The Royal Scots Territorials in the Dardenelles Campaign 1915-16
- 1916 - The Royal Scots 'New Army' battalions in France in 1916 and The Somme
- 1917 - Operations in Egypt and Palestine 1916-17 and Arras April-May 1917
- 1915-19 - The 1st Battalion's War and the 2/10th Battalion in Northern Russia



The Royal Scots Regimental Bay. The Scottish National War Memorial Edinburgh Castle.

The wording reads:
AD 1633
Formed as a Regiment by Sir John Hepburn from Scottish
Companies serving the French Crown since the 15th Century
and recruits raised in Scotland under warrant of Charles I
AD 1635
Absorbed remnants of Scottish Regiments formerly serving
Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden
AD 1684
Granted title of The Royal Regiment of Foot
AD 1914-19
35 Battalions served in the Great War - 583 Officers and
10630 Other Ranks giving their lives for King and Country
Remember their sacrifices.

At the foot are carved the Scottish Royal Coat of Arms flanked by the Fleur de Lys of France and the three Crowns of Sweden.

The Regimental Museum and Library are located in Edinburgh Castle where we especially welcome visitors with links to the Regiment.

For a 150 page history of the Regiment in WW1, with maps and photographs, see Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard Volume 1 by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Paterson.

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THE 1st WORLD WAR BATTALIONS

Soldiers of the 8th Battalion in France 1915

Thirty-five Royal Scots battalions served at various stages during the course of the 1st World War. The Regular Army component, consisting of two active service and one reserve battalions, served throughout the war. The seven Territorial battalions that were in being at the beginning of the war all saw some active service. Furthermore the Territorial units all raised additional battalions for greater or lesser periods of service. Eight New Army battalions were raised during the war. Two of these were raised as reserve battalions but the remaining six all served on the Western Front. Finally three special units were raised, the 19th (Labour) Battalion and the 1st and 2nd Garrison Battalions.

1st Battalion (Regular Army)

In India at the outbreak of war. Arrived in England in November 1914 and moved to France in December. Served on the Western Front until November 1915 when it transferred to Salonika. Served in the Balkans for the remainder of the war. Moved to Russian Georgia for operations against the Bolshevists in December 1918. Returned to Edinburgh in May 1919.

2nd Battalion (Regular Army)

At Plymouth at the outbreak of war. Moved to France in August 1914 and served on the Western Front throughout the war. Returned to Scotland in 1919.

3th (Reserve) Battalion (Regular Army)

At Glencorse at the outbreak of war and moved to Weymouth in August 1914. Returned to Glencorse in May 1915 where it remained until late 1917 when it moved to Mullingar in Ireland. In May 1919 it moved to Maryhill Barracks in Glasgow before the majority of its manpower was subsumed into the 1st and 2nd Battalions. The Battalion was placed in 'suspended animation' in August 1923.

1/4th battalion (Queens Edinburgh Rifles) (Territorial Force)

Mobilised in Edinburgh in August 1914. Moved to Gallipoli in June 1915. Transferred to Egypt in January 1916 and served there, and in Palestine, until April 1918. Served on the Western Front from April 1918 until the end of the war. Reduced to cadre strength in March 1919 and returned home in May 1919.

2/4 th Battalion (Queens Edinburgh Rifles) (Territorial Force)

Raised in Edinburgh in September 1914. Served in Penicuik, Peebles, Portobello, Edinburgh and Cambusbarron. Moved to Essex with 65 Division in March 1916 and then to Ireland in January 1917. Disbanded in July 1918.

3/4th Battalion (Queens Edinburgh Rifles) (Territorial Force)

Raised in Peebles in May 1915. It spent the next twelve months in Galashiels, Loanhead and Hawick training drafts for service overseas. In July 1916 it was absorbed into the new 4th (Reserve) Battalion.

4th (Reserve) Battalion (Territorial Force)

Raised at Stobs Camp, Hawick, in July 1916 by absorbing the 3/4th, 3/5th, 3/6th, 3/7th and 3/8th Battalions. Moved to Catterick in September 1916 and absorbed the 3/9th Battalion in July 1917. It returned to Scotland in November 1917 and was quartered in Edinburgh, Haddington and Cupar. In February it was moved to Glasgow where it disbanded later that year.

1/Sth Battalion (Queens Edinburgh Rifles) (Territorial Force)

Mobilised in Edinburgh in August 1914 and initially employed on coastal defence duties in Scotland. Joined 29 Division in March 1915. Took part in the Gallipoli campaign from April to December 1915. Moved to Egypt in January 1916 and then to France in March. Amalgamated with the 1/6th Battalion in France in July 1916 and served for the remainder of the war as the 5th/6th Battalion.

2/Sth Battalion (Queens Edinburgh Rifles) (Territorial Force)

Raised in Edinburgh in September 1914. Moved to Peebles in May 1915 and thereafter served at Loanhead and then Larbert. Was absorbed into the 2/4th Battalion in November 1916.

3/Sth Battalion (Queens Edinburgh Rifles) (Territorial Force)

Raised at Peebles in May 1915 and was stationed in Galashiels, Edinburgh and Hawick. Was absorbed by the 4th (Reserve) Battalion in July 1916.

1/6th Battalion (Territorial Force)

Mobilised in Edinburgh in August 1914 and initially employed on coastal defence duties in Scotland.

During 1915 it served at Selkirk, Peebles and Edinburgh before embarking for Alexandria in September. Served with the Western Frontier Force in North Africa from November 1915 to April 1916. Sailed from Alexandria to France in May and amalgamated with the 1/5th Battalion in France in July 1916. Served for the remainder of the war as the 5th/6th Battalion.

2/6th Battalion (Territorial Force)

Raised in Edinburgh in March 1915 and merged with the 2/4th Battalion in November 1915.

3/6th Battalion (Territorial Force)

Raised in Peebles in July 1915 and served at Galashiels and Selkirk before being absorbed by the 4th (Reserve) Battalion in July 1916.

Sth/6th Battalion (Territorial Force)

Formed in France in July 1916 from the 1/5th Battalion and the 1/6th Battalion. Served on the Western Front for the remainder of the war. Remained in Belgium until the end of January 1919 when it moved to Germany. In October 1919 it reduced to cadre strength and then returned home to be disbanded.

1/7th Battalion (Territorial Force)

Mobilised in Leith in August 1914. Moved to Gallipoli in June 1915 (see the separate essay on the Gretna Train Crash). Transferred to Egypt in January 1916 and served there, and in Palestine, until April 1918. Served on the Western Front from April 1918 until the end of the war. Reduced to cadre strength in March 1919 and returned home on May 1919.

2/7th Battalion (Territorial Force)

Raised in Leith as the 7th (Reserve) Battalion in August 1914 and re-designated as the 2/7th Battalion in January 1915. During 1915 the Battalion served as part of the Scottish Coast Defences Brigade. Later it moved to quarters in Innerleithen and Walkerburn before joining 65 Division in Larbert in November 1915. It moved to Essex in February 1916 from where it despatched drafts for service overseas. In January 1917 the Battalion moved to Dublin, then to tented accommodation in County Galway and it later transferred to the Curragh. The Battalion was disbanded in early 1918.

3/7th Battalion (Territorial Force)

Raised at Peebles in June 1915 to receive those members of the 1/7th Battalion who had been injured in the Gretna disaster on their return from hospital. The battalion moved to Innerleithen in November 1915 and then to Stobs Camp, Hawick in May 1916. Shortly afterwards it was absorbed into the new 4th (Reserve) Battalion.

1/5th Battalion (Territorial Force)

Mobilised at Haddington in August 1914. Moved to France in November 1914, the first Scottish-based Territorial battalion to do so and moved straight to the front, one of only three Territorial units considered good enough to be committed immediately to action. Served throughout the war on the Western Front, initialy in the 7th Division and then, from August 1915, as the pioneer battalion in 51 (Highland) Division. Remained in Belgium until March 1919 when it was reduced to cadre strength and disbanded the following month in Haddington.

2/5th Battalion (Territorial Force)

Raised at Haddinton September 1914. In May 1915 it moved to Peebles and in November, to Falkirk. In February 1916 it joined 65 Division and moved to Essex. In January 1917 it transferred to Ireland where it was disbanded in the summer of 1917.

3/5th Battalion (Territorial Force)

Raised at Peebles in December 1914 where it remained until the summer of 1916, apart from November and December 1915 when it was in billets at Prestonpans. Absorbed by the 4th (Reserve) Battalion in July 1916.

Soldier of the 9th (Highlanders) Battalion

1/9th (Highlanders) Battalion (Territorial Force)

Mobilised in Edinburgh in August 1914. Moved to France in February 1915 and served on the Western Front for the remainder of the war. Remained in Belgium until May 1919 when it reduced to cadre strength and subsequently disbanded.

2/9th (Highlanders) Battalion (Territorial Force)

Raised in September 1914. Stationed at Edinburgh, Kilmarnock, Selkirk and Tillicoultry before moving to Essex in February 1916. Moved to Ireland in the spring of 1917 and was disbanded there in July 1918.

3/9th (Highlanders) Battalion (Territorial Force)

Raised at Peebles in June 1915. Stationed at Selkirk, Stobs Camp, Hawick and Catterick before being absorbed into the 4th (Reserve) Battalion in July 1916.

1/1Oth (Cyclist) Battalion (Territorial Force)

Mobilised at Linlithgow in August 1914. Served on coastal defence duties in Scotland until April 1918 when it moved to Ireland. Demobilisation began in Ireland in the autumn of 1919 and the Battalion disbanded at Linlithgow in February 1920.

2/1Oth (Cyclist) Battalion (Territorial Force)

Raised at Linlithgow in September 1914. Served on coastal defence duties until June 1918 when it moved to Dundalk in Ireland. In July it moved to Aldershot and the following month it sailed for Archangel. It served on operations in Northern Russia until June 1919 when it returned to Scotland and disbanded.

11th Battalion (New Army)

Raised in Edinburgh in August 1914. Joined 9 (Scottish) Division and moved to France in May 1915. Spent the remainder of the war on the Western Front. Moved into Germany after the armistice and was reduced to cadre strength at Cologne in November 1919 before being disbanded.

12th Battalion (New Army)

Raised in Edinburgh in August 1914. Joined 9 (Scottish) Division and moved to France in May 1915. Spent the remainder of the war on the Western Front. Moved into Germany after the armistice and was reduced to cadre strength in April 1919 before being disbanded in the UK in June 1919.

12 RS Patrol 1918

13th Battalion (New Army)

Raised in Edinburgh in August 1914. Joined 15 (Scottish) Division and moved to France in July 1915. Spent the remainder of the war on the Western Front. Remained in Belgium after the armistice. Reduced to cadre strength in March 1919 and disbanded in the UK in June 1919.

14th (Reserve) Battalion (New Army)

Raised at Weymouth in November 1914 as a Service Battalion. Became a reserve Battalion in April 1915. Was quartered at Stobs Camp, Hawick, Richmond, South Queensferry and Kirkcaldy. In February 1916, at Kirkcaldy, it became the 54th Training Reserve Battalion.

15th (1st City of Edinburgh) Battalion (New Army) (Cranston's Battalion)

Raised in Edinburgh in September 1914. During 1915 it was stationed at Troon, Ripon and Sutton Veny. Moved to France in January 1916 and served on the Western Front from February 1916 onwards. Reduced to cadre strength in May 1918 and disbanded in August 1918.

16th (2nd City of Edinburgh) Battalion (New Army) (McCrae's Battalion)

Rasied in Edinburgh in December 1914. Moved to Ripon in June 1915 then to France in January 1916 and served on the Western Front from February 1916 onwards. Reduced to cadre strength in May 1918 and disbanded in August 1918.

17th Battalion (New Army) (Rosebery's Bantams)

Raised in Edinburgh in February 1915 as a bantam battalion. During 1915 it was stationed at Glencorse, Selkirk and Masham. Moved to France in December 1916 and served on the Western Front for the remainder of the war. Remained in Belgium after the armistice and was moved to Calais to help quell a mutiny in January 1919. During February and March it was attached to various Labour Groups to prevent looting. Reduced to cadre strength in April 1919 and disbanded in the UK shortly afterwards.

18th (Reserve) Battalion (New Army)

Formed in July 1915. Stationed at Ripon until March 1916 when it moved to Dundee. Shortly afterwards re-titled the 77th Training Battalion and disbanded in October 1917.

19th (Labour) Battalion (Mixed)

Formed at Blairgowrie in April1916 and moved to France the following month. Transferred to the Labour Corps in April 1917.

1st Garrison Battalion (Mixed)

Formed at Edinburgh in August 1915. Moved to Hawick in October 1915 and then to Mudros, and Helles, in the Dardanelles. Moved to Egypt in February 1916 and served in Egypt and Cyprus for the remainder of the war. Returned home and disbanded in May 1919.

2nd Garrsison Battalion (Mixed)

Formed in Leith in August 1916 and a year later it became the 1st Battalion Royal Defence Corps.

BATTLE HONOURS

The sheer scale and complexity of the battles of the 1st World War presented new problems over the award of Battle Honours. Battles lasted for weeks or months rather than the day or two of earlier actions. The area covered and number of troops involved, particularly in the major battles of the Western Front, eclipsed anything previously seen. With both the scale and widespread geographical areas of Regimental involvement, the number of Battle Honours that could fairly be claimed was obviously going to be too great to be accommodated on the Regimental Colour on which all pre-1914 Honours were carried. The solution adopted for the Western Front was to award a Battle Honour to cover the major operation and then additional Battle Honours for the supporting actions which contributed to the operation. An example is the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915 which was marked with the Honour Ypres 1915 (to differentiate from Ypres 1914, 1917 and 1918 all of which were awarded as separate Honours) with four supporting Honours, Gravenstafel, St Julien, Frezenberg and Bellewaarde. A further change was that, for the first time, Battle Honours were awarded for a defeat, thus both "Mons" and "Retreat from Mons" appear among those won by the Regiment. Once the list of Battle Honours was agreed by the Honours and Distinctions Committee of the War Office, each Regiment was allowed to select ten, from the total of those awarded, to be carried on the then King's Colour. These would appear in bold type in the Army List with the remaining in ordinary type.

The Regiment was awarded seventy-nine Battle Honours out of a total of one hundred and sixty eight that were designated. These covered all the campaigns and battles and the many operational theatres in which the Service Battalions of the Regiment served. A Regimental Committee then made recommendations to the War Office for the ten that were to be carried on the King's Colour. Of these seven were from the Western Front and three, Struma 1918, Gallipoli 1915-16 and Palestine 1917-18 represented the other major operational areas where the battalions of the Regiment served The full list, with the battalions that served there, is shown below. The ten Battle Honours subsequently emblazoned on the King's Colour are shown in heavy type and capitals. The supporting actions for the main battles have been slightly inset and, where they cover the main battle over a number of years such as Ypres 1915, 1917 and 1918 have been placed within the relevant year with the main action bracketed for guidance

Battle Honours	Battalion (s)
Mons	2nd
LE CATEAU	2nd
Retreat from Mons	2nd
MARNE 1914	2nd
MARNE 1918	8th, 9th, 13th (for supporting actions see below)
Aisne 1914	2nd
La Bassee 1914	2nd
Neuve Chapelle	8th
YPRES 1915	1st, 9th
Gravenstafel	1st, 9th
St Julien	1st, 9th
Frezenburg	1st, 9th
Bellewaarde	1st, 2nd, 9th
YPRES 1917	2nd, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 17th (supporting actions see below)
YPRES 1918	11th, 12th, 17th
Aubers	8th
Festubert 1915	8th
LOOS	11th, 12th, 17th
SOMME 1916	2nd, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 17th
Albert 1916, 1918	11th, 12th, 15th, 16th (for 1918 Battalions see below)
Bazentin	2nd, 11th, 12th, 15th, 16th, 17th
Pozieres	13th, 15th, 16th
Flers-Courcelette	13th
Le Transloy	11th, 12th, 13th
Ancre Heights	5th/6th
Ancre 1916, 1918	2nd, 5th/6th, 8th, 9th (for 1918 Battalions see below)
SOMME 1918	2nd, 4th, 5th/6th, 7th, 8th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 17th (for supporting actions see below)

ARRAS 1917	2nd, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th
Scarpe 1917, 1918	2nd, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th,16th (for 1918 Battalions see below)
Arleux	2nd, 15th, 16th
ARRAS 1918	(See Somme 1918
(Ypres 1917)	(See above)
Pilckem	8th, 9th, 13th
Langemarck 1917	8th, 9th, 13th
Menin Road	2nd, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th
Polygon Wood	2nd
Poelcappelle	11th, 12th, 17th
Passchendaele	2nd, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th
Cambrai 1917	8th, 9th
(Somme 1918)	(See above)
St Quentin	2nd, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 15th, 16th
Rosieres	8th, 9th
Arras 1918	2nd, 4th, 5th/6th, 7th, 8th, 13th
Ancre 1918	2nd, 4th, 5th/6th, 7th, 8th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 17th
LYS	2nd, 8th, 11th, 12th, 15th, 16th
Estaires	2nd, 8th, 15th, 16th
Messines 1918	11th, 12th
Hazebrouck	2nd, 8th
Bailleul	11th, 12th, 15th, 16th
Kemmel	11th, 12th, 15th, 16th
Bethune	2nd
(Marne 1918)	(See above)
Soissonnais-Ourcq	9th, 13th
Tardenois	8th
Amiens	5th/6th
Bapaume 1918	2nd, 5th/6th, 8th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 17th
Albert 1918	2nd, 4th, 5th/6th, 7th
(Scarpe 1918)	4th, 7th, 8th
Drocourt-Queant	4th, 7th
Hindenburg Line	2nd, 4th, 5th/6th, 7th, 11th, 12th, 15th, 16th
Canal du Nord	2nd, 4th, 7th
St Quentin Canal	2nd, 5th/6th, 11th, 12th, 15th, 16th
Beaurevoir	5th/6th
(Ypres 1918)	(See above)
Courtrai	11th, 12th, 17th
Selle	2nd, 8th
Sambre	5th/6th
France, Flanders 1914-18	1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th/6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 17th
STRUMA	1st
Macedonia 1915-18	1st
Helles	4th, 5th, 7th
Landing at Helles	5th
Krithia	4th/7th, 5th
Suvla	5th
Scimitar Hill	5th
GALLIPOLI 1915-16	4th, 5th, 7th
Romani	4th, 7th
Egypt 1915-16	4th, 5th, 6th, 7th
Gaza	4th, 7th
El Mughar	4th, 7th
Nebi Samwil	4th, 7th
Jaffa	4th, 7th
PALESTINE 1917-18	4th, 7th
Archangel 1918-19	2/10tht

GALLANTRY AWARDS WON BY ROYAL SCOTS IN WW1

During the war six members of the Regiment were awarded the Victoria Cross, and one to Lance Corporal William Angus 8th Battalion The Highland Light Infantry, whilst attached to 8RS, all of them for actions in France. Their details, and the actions for which they were awarded the VC, are given below.

In addition to those awarded the VC, 32 Royal Scots were awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) of which three were awarded bars (a 'bar' is a second or further award of the same medal, but for different actions) and one, Lieutenant Colonel J A Fraser of the 5/6th Battalion, two bars; 217 the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM), including five with a bar; 158 the Military Cross (MC) including 13 with a bar and one, Captain J A Edwards of the 10th Battalion, two bars; and 337 the Military Medal of which 11, including Pte McIver VC, won bars.

Private H.H. Robson, 2nd Battalion The Royal Scots

Private Henry Robson, a native of South Shields, County Durham, was a Regular soldier who joined the 2nd Battalion in 1912 and moved with them to France on the outbreak of war. His citation records the detail of his action as:

"For most conspicuous bravery near Kemmel on the 14 December 1914, during an attack on the German position, when he left his trench under a very heavy fire and rescued a wounded non-commissioned officer, and subsequently for making an attempt to bring another wounded man into cover, whilst exposed to severe fire. In this attempt he was at once wounded, but persevered in his efforts, until being rendered helpless by being shot for a second time."

After recovering from his wounds Robson returned to the Battalion. He was again severely wounded, still with the 2nd Battalion, at Serres-en-Ancre on 13 November 1916. He recovered again but never returned to the Front and later served in the Labour Corps. After the war he went back to the Merchant Navy, in which he had served before enlisting. In 1923, after being signed off, he sold his Victoria

Cross for £80 to pay for his passage to Canada where he became a tram (streetcar) conductor. In 1934 he entered the civil service, working in the Parliament Buildings in Ontario. He rose to Sergeant at Arms of the Ontario Legislature and then information clerk showing visitors around the Parliament buildings. He died in Toronto, Canada in 1964, aged 69 and is buried in the Military Section of York Cemetery in Toronto.

Lance Corporal William Angus, 8th Battalion The Highland Light Infantry attached 8th Battalion The Royal Scots

Lance Corporal Angus's Citation reads:

"For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty at Givenchy on 12 June 1915, in voluntarily leaving his trench under heavy bomb and rifle fire, and rescuing a wounded officer who was lying within a few yards of the enemy's position."

Lance Corporal Angus, although born in Armadale, West Lothian, came from Carluke in Lanarkshire, and was a pre-war Territorial serving with 8th Battalion The Highland Light Infantry. An officer in the same Company, and also from Carluke, was Lieutenant Martin. The 8th Battalion, Highland Light Infantry was broken up in December 1914 and its Companies attached to other Lowland Territorial Battalions to bring them up to strength for overseas service. One company went to the 7th Battalion The Royal Scots and a second, Angus and Martin's, to the 8th Battalion.

Lieutenant Martin had been wounded in a night trench raid on 11-12 June and, despite searches, could not be found. As dawn broke he was seen lying, half buried under loose earth, immediately below the German parapet some 70 yards away. The whole company volunteered to rush the German trench at dusk to rescue the officer but it was realised that, lying without water under the boiling sun, the officer would probably be dead by then. The Commanding Officer agreed at midday that one man could attempt a rescue and Lance Corporal Angus was chosen from a number of volunteers. At 2pm he left his trench, under heavy covering fire, and reached Lieutenant Martin unobserved and got him out of the loose earth. Angus, it was reported, then propped Lieutenant Martin up against the German parapet and proceeded to give him a swig of brandy from a flask that he had carried with him! The Germans realised what was going on and let fly with "bombs" (hand grenades). Angus, supporting

Martin, then dashed back to the Battalion's trenches but was wounded no less than 40 times en route. Amazingly he made it, with Lieutenant Martin, to safety. Lance Corporal Angus, who had been warned when he volunteered to carry out the rescue that "its certain death, lad" was awarded the Victoria Cross, the first Scottish Territorial to win the award. Both Lance Corporal Angus and Lieutenant Martin survived the War with the former dying in Carluke, where a road is named after him, in June 1959, aged 71

Private R Dunsire 13th Battalion The Royal Scots

Private Robert Dunsire was born at Buckhaven, Fife in 1891. The family moved to Kirkcaldy where he became a miner. He enlisted in January 1915 and, after training, was posted to the 13th Battalion.

He was awarded his Victoria Cross

"For most conspicuous bravery on Hill 70 on 26th September 1915. Private Dunsire went out under very heavy fire and rescued a wounded man from between the firing-lines. Later, when another man considerably nearer the German lines was heard shouting for help, he crawled out again with utter disregard to the enemy's fire, and carried him in also. Shortly afterwards the Germans attacked over this ground."

Private Dunsire emerged unscathed from both these rescues but, by then a Corporal, was mortally wounded in a trench mortar attack whilst in the trenches at Hulluch in the Loos sector on 31 January 1916. He is buried at Mazingarbe Communal Cemetery in France.

Captain H Reynolds, MC, 12th Battalion The Royal Scots

Captain Henry Reynolds was born in Northamptonshire. There is some confusion over the actual year, and dates vary from 1879 to 1882. He was, however, already approaching his mid-thirties, and married when he joined the Northamptonshire Yeomanry in October 1914. Commissioned into the 14th (Reserve) Battalion The Royal Scots in July 1915, he was posted to France in August 1916. Promoted Lieutenant in May 1917, and to Captain in July, he was awarded the Military Cross "for a series of actions on 12 April 1917, which meant being under artillery, machine gun and rifle fire for a considerable time". His award of the Victoria Cross was gazetted on 8 November 1917 and read:

"Henry Reynolds MC, Temporary Captain, 12th Battn Royal Scots. For most conspicuous bravery when his company, in attack and approaching their final objective, suffered heavy casualties from enemy machine guns and from an enemy 'pill-box' which had been passed by the first wave. Capt Reynolds reorganised his men who were scattered, and then proceeded alone by rushes from shell-hole to shell-hole, all the time being under heavy machine-gun fire. When near the 'pill-box' he threw a grenade, intending that it should go inside but they enemy had blocked the entrance. He then crawled to the entrance and forced a phosphorous grenade inside. This set the place on fire and caused the death of three of the enemy, while the remainder, seven or eight, surrendered with two machine guns. Afterwards, though wounded, he continued to lead his company against another objective, and captured it, taking seventy prisoners and two more machine guns. During the whole attack the company was under heavy machine-gun fire from the flanks, but, despite this, Capt Reynolds kept complete control of his men."

Captain Reynolds was later recommended for a Regular Commission by his Commanding Officer as follows:

"Capt H Reynolds served under my command in France during the greater part of 1917.

He is one of the most capable and conscientious officers that I have ever had under my command; he is attentive to every detail in connection with his company; has a sound knowledge of training and interior economy, and his company was always clean, smart, well turned-out, thoroughly trained and efficient, and always willing and ready to take part in any action.

Capt Reynolds is a physically powerful man, capable of standing any amount of strain, and his unusual sense of duty was so pronounced that in action he was invaluable.

He was awarded the Victoria Cross for a series of actions on 20 Sept 1917, at Zonnenbeke, every one of which meant facing a terrible fire for a considerable period, and the Military Cross for a similar series on 12 April 1917.

I can confidently recommend him for a commission in the Regular Army and suggest that a special preference be given to him, so that his commission may be dated back as early as possible.

(Signed) "J A S Ritson Lieut-

Colonel

12th Battn The Royal Scots

7 March 1919"

He transferred to the 2nd Bn The Loyal Regiment in 1920 and retired from the Army in 1927. In 1930, he became Superintendant and Steward at the Sir Frederick Milner Home, Beckenham, Kent. He remained there until his death at Carshalton, Surrey in March 1948 And is buried at St Giles's Churchyard, Ashtead, Surrey. His son Lieutenant Thomas Reynolds, also served in the Regiment but was killed in a traffic accident at Quetta, in India, in 1931 while with the 2nd Battalion.

Private H McIver, MM and Bar, 2nd Battalion The Royal Scots

Private Hugh McIver was born at Linwood in Renfrewshire on 21 June 1890. He worked as a miner before joining the Army on 18 August 1914. He was posted to the 2nd Battalion in France on 11 May 1915. He won the Military Medal on the Somme for actions on 14 July 1916 and a bar to it, for daring and initiative during daylight patrols in enemy lines, on 1 July 1918. The citation for his Victoria Cross recorded:

"Hugh McIver, No 12311, Private, late 2nd Battn The Royal Scots. For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when employed as a company-runner east of Courcelles-le-Comte on 23 August 1918. In spite of heavy artillery and machine-gun fire, he carried messages regardless of his own safety. Single-handed, he pursued an enemy scout into a machine-gun post, and having killed six of the garrison, captured twenty prisoners with two machine guns. This gallant action enabled the company to advance unchecked. Later, he succeeded at great personal risk in stopping the fire of a British tank which was directed in error against our own troops at close range. By this very gallant action Private McIver undoubtedly saved many lives."

McIver was killed in action 10 days later on 2 September. His Company Commander wrote to his mother a few days later:

"2nd Battn The Royal Scots,

8 Sep 1918

My Dear Mrs McIver

I am writing these few lines to you to try and express, both on my own behalf and also for the men of my company, our greatest sympathy for you in the loss of your son Hugh in the recent fighting.

It came as a great blow to me, as he was my personal orderly, and he was quite close to me when he

was killed. We were going up a hill, attacking some machine guns, when he was killed by a bullet, and it may soften your blow a little to know he never felt it.

It is only about ten days since I recommended him for the Victoria Cross, and it is quite likely that it will be awarded to you, and if ever a man deserved the VC, Hugh did, as he was one of the best and bravest boys in the battalion; in fact, the bravest I have ever known.

I am sending on to you his Military Medal and rose, which I cut off his breast for you. His other personal effects will follow later.

I can only say, Mrs McIver, that your son died a hero's death, and he has left a record in the battalion second to none. Again, expressing my deepest sympathy to you and yours,

I am

Yours very sincerely

(Signed) ALICK GORDON, Capt

Officer Commanding, C Company

2nd Battn The Royal Scots"

His parents received his Victoria Cross from King George V at Buckingham Palace on 13 February 1919. McIver is buried at Vraucourt Copse British Military Cemetery, North East of Bapaume.

Corporal R E Elcock, MM, 11th Battalion The Royal Scots

Corporal Roland Elcock was born at Wolverhampton on 5 June 1899. He enlisted underage in the South Staffordshire Regiment and was posted to France on 28 June 1915 just after his sixteenth birthday. When it was discovered that he was underage he was sent home and discharged. He was employed with Wolverhampton Corporation Electricity Works and re-enlisted, into The Royal Scots, on his eighteenth birthday in June 1917. Before he was 19 he had won the Military Medal and been promoted to Corporal. The citation for the action in which he won the Victoria Cross read as follows:

"For most conspicuous bravery and initiative, south-east of Cappelle St Catherine on 15th October 1918, when in charge of a Lewis gun team. Entirely on his own initiative, Corporal Elcock rushed his gun up to within ten yards of enemy guns, which were causing heavy casualties and holding up the advance. He put both guns out of action, captured five prisoners and undoubtedly saved the whole attack from being held up. Later, near the River Lys, this NCO again attacked an enemy machine-gun and captured the crew. His behaviour throughout the day was absolutely fearless."

His Victoria Cross was presented, along with Pte McIver's, at Buckingham Palace on 13 February 1919. After the war he was re-employed by Wolverhampton Corporation Electricity Department. He later went to India in the Posts and Telegraph Service working in Upper Burma as divisional engineer and then, on promotion, to be Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs on the North-West Frontier. He joined the Indian Army on the outbreak of the Second World War in the rank of Major but, as he was about to be posted overseas, he became ill. He never recovered and died at Dehra Dun, where he is buried, on 6 October 1944. His grandson, Private Christopher Owens, served with the 1st Battalion in the Gulf War in 1991.

Lieutenant D S McGregor, 6th Battalion The Royal Scots, attached Machine Gun Corps

Lieutenant David McGregor was born in Edinburgh on 16 October 1895. Educated at George Watson's and George Heriot's he was an apprentice of the Commercial Bank of Scotland and had joined the Midlothian Royal Field Artillery (Territorial Force) in 1913. When war broke out he volunteered for overseas service and was commissioned into the 6th Battalion in 1915. He was posted to Egypt in May 1916 from where he was immediately transferred to France with the Battalion. He served on the Somme during the summer of 1916 before volunteering for machine-gun work. After training he was posted to the 29th Battalion of the Machine Gun Corps with whom he was serving when he won his posthumous Victoria Cross. His citation records:

"David Stuart McGregor, Lieut, late 6th Battn Royal Scots (Territorial Force) and 29th Battn Machine Gun Corps. For the most conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty near Hoogmolen on 22 Oct 1918, when in command of a section of machine guns attached to the right flank platoon of the assaulting battalion. In the assembly position he concealed his guns on a limber under the bank of a sunken road. Immediately the troops advanced at zero they were subjected to intense enfilade machine-gun fire from Hill 66 on the right flank. Lieut McGregor fearlessly went forward into the open to locate the enemy guns, and having done so, realised that it was impossible to get his guns carried forward either by pack or by hand without great delay, as the ground was absolutely bare and swept by a hail of bullets. Ordering the team to follow by a more covered route, he went to the limber, got on to it, and, lying flat, told the driver to leave cover and gallop forward. This the driver did, galloping down about six hundred yards of absolutely open road under the heaviest machine-gun fire into cover beyond. The driver, horses and limber were all hit, but Lieut McGregor succeeded in getting the guns into action, effectively engaging the enemy, subduing their fire and enabling the advance to be resumed. With the utmost gallantry he continued to expose himself in order to direct and control the fire of his guns, until, about an hour later, this very gallant officer was killed whilst observing fire effect for the Trench Mortar Battery. His great gallantry and supreme devotion to duty were the admiration of all ranks, and especially the officers and men of the 1st Border Regt, who witnessed this extraordinary action."

Lieutenant McGregor is buried in Staceghem Communal Cemetery, Harlebeke, Belgium. His parents received his Victoria Cross from King George V at Buckingham Palace on 15 February 1919.

THE RAISING OF 16th BATTALION THE ROYAL SCOTS (McCRAE'S)

Sir George McCrae, born in Aberdeen, was a self made Edinburgh business man, who made his mark in the drapery trade. He became a member of Edinburgh Council in 1889. He was the City Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance Committee from 1891-1899 and also served as a Justice of the Peace. In 1899 the sitting MP for Edinburgh East died leading to a by-election. George McCrae was selected as the Liberal candidate and held the seat for that party. In 1909, after a successful career as an MP, he resigned from the House of Commons to take up a senior position in Scottish government service as Vice-President of the Local Government Board.

George McCrae had always wanted to be a soldier, but ambition was in direct competition with his growing success in business. In parallel with his civic and parliamentary life he played a prominent role in the City's Volunteer and, from 1908, Territorial Force. At the age of 18, he had joined the 3rd Edinburgh Rifle Volunteers as a Private. The Battalion was re-titled the 4th and, later, the 6th Battalion The Royal Scots, under both of which names McCrae, now a Lieutenant Colonel, proved to be a highly successful and popular Commanding Officer. He was closely consulted, both as an MP and a senior Volunteer Officer, by Richard (later Lord) Haldane over the creation of the Territorial Force following the failings highlighted in the Boer War. For his services to Volunteering and to Edinburgh he was knighted in 1908. In June 1913, six months before his wife's death from cancer, and by now a full Colonel, he resigned from command.

On 5 August 1914, the day after the Declaration of War, Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, who happened to be the Honorary Colonel of 6RS - McCrae's old battalion - was appointed Secretary of State for War. He immediately set about expanding the Army with an initial call for 100,000 volunteers to form the first of his 'New Armies'. For The Royal Scots this led to the raising of three Service Battalions, the 11th, 12th and 13th all by the end of August.

The first days of the war, as the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) mobilised and moved to France, coincided with the opening of the Scottish football season. A number of Clubs had argued for delay, and

even abandonment, until the position was clearer, but the majority voted to continue while providing recruiting facilities at their grounds. This view was supported in a statement from the War Office at the end of August ahead of the start of the English season. By this time, however, the BEF was in full retreat from Mons and had suffered very considerable casualties. A vociferous campaign began against the continuance of professional football at such a time of national crisis and, in particular, the fact that the players themselves were not leading the campaign by volunteering to serve. In mid-November the War Office finally changed its position in a letter published in The Glasgow Herald in which Harold Tennant the Under-Secretary for War, was quoted as saying 'No objection is taken to occasional recreation. It is considered, however, that (league) football does not come within that category. It is much more desirable that professional footballers should find employment in His Majesty's forces than in their old occupation'. The die was cast, football was definitely on the back foot and the 'stoppers' as they were called stepped up their campaign for the game at that level to be cancelled and conscription be brought in. Enter Sir George McCrae.

From soon after the declaration of war Sir George had been heavily involved as Scottish chairman of The Prince of Wales's Fund for the relief of Wartime Distress. Three of his sons were serving, one as a Company Commander in 6RS, but he was conspicuous in not becoming directly involved in recruitment. Early in November, with increasingly bad news coming back from France, Sir George wrote a personal letter to his old friend Harold Tennant offering to raise a battalion, provided he was allowed to lead it in the field and to share the risks of those who volunteered to join him. On 17 November he received approval for his proposal and was reappointed to the rank of Colonel. A keen supporter and Director of Heart of Midlothian, one of the two major Edinburgh football clubs and known to everyone as Hearts, Sir George realised that, if he could get some players to join his battalion 'such a happening would ensure a mighty following and a quick formation of the unit'. Having secured the names of 11 players, six from the first and five from the second team, he announced on 24 November that formal recruiting would start with a grand meeting in the Usher Hall at the west end of Edinburgh on the evening of Friday 27th November. After hearing from a number of speakers, and the unanimous passing of motions supporting recruiting and, in particular, that for Sir George's proposed Active Service Battalion of The Royal Scots, Sir George himself rose to speak saying:

'This is not a night for titles: I stand before you humbly as a fellow Scot, nothing more and nothing less. You know I don't speak easily of crisis. But that is what confronts us. I have received permission from the War Office to raise a new battalion for active service. It is my intention that this unit will be characterised by such a spirit of simple excellence that the rest of Lord Kitchener's army will be judged by our standard. Furthermore, with the agreement of the authorities, I have undertaken to lead the battalion in the field. I would not - I could not - ask you to serve unless I share the danger at your side. In a moment I will walk down to Castle Street (the local recruiting office) and set my name to the list of volunteers. Who will join me?'

With that he strode from the Hall and down to the Recruiting Office followed by most of those in the Hall. By midnight nearly 300 had enlisted. Within seven days, over 800 men had signed up for what would become 16RS but was always better known as McCrae's Battalion. That Saturday they paraded behind Sir George, still in civilian clothes, around Tynecastle, the Hearts ground, at half-time in the local derby match against the other major Edinburgh team, Hibernian or Hibs. By the following Saturday, when the Battalion paraded through the City en route to George Heriot's School which was to be their initial barracks and training base, the total had risen to over 1350 including a strong contingent of professional and amateur footballers and other sportsmen. A total of at least 30 professional footballers are listed as having joined. These included, in addition to the original 11 plus,

now, two further professionals from Hearts, taking the total to thirteen, seven from Raith Rovers, six from Falkirk, two from Dunfermline Athletic and one from Hibs. Seventy-five football clubs are listed as having contributed members to 16 RS by December 1914.

The campaign to cancel all football matches fell away although Cup games and international matches were abandoned. Many professional footballers enlisted, and many were killed in the service of their King and Country, including five killed and five wounded of the original 13 from Hearts. The Battalion moved to France in January 1916 and, still under the command of Sir George, were committed into their first major battle at Contalmaison, on the Somme, on 1 July, where, fighting alongside their sister battalion, 15RS, they were the only units in 34 Division to achieve their initial objective - but at a terrible cost of 472 killed, wounded or missing over only three days.

Note: The above information is drawn from the excellent 'McCrae's Battalion - The Story of the 16th Royal Scots' by Jack Alexander. The book is available from Amazon and provides, for those interested, much fuller background to the raising of 16RS and then its subsequent Service.

THE QUINTINSHILL (GRETNA) TRAIN CRASH – 22 MAY 1915

At 6.49 am on Saturday 22 May 1915 a Liverpool-bound troop-train carrying half (498 all ranks) of the 7th (Leith) Battalion, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) (7RS) collided head on with a local passenger train, which had been 'parked', facing north, on the south-bound main line at Quintinshill, just North of Gretna, to allow a following express to overtake it. Normally the local train would have been held in one of the loops at Quintinshill, but both of these were already occupied by goods trains. The troop train overturned, mostly onto the neighbouring north-bound mainline track and, a minute later, the Glasgow-bound express ploughed into the wreckage causing it to burst into flame. The ferocity of the fire, and consequent difficulty of rescuing those trapped in the overturned and mangled carriages, was compounded by the fact that most of the carriages were very old, made of wood and lit by gas contained in a tank beneath them. Between the crash and the fire a total of 216 all ranks of 7RS and 12 others (see Note 1), mostly from the express but including the driver and fireman on the troop-train, died in, or as an immediate result of what was, and remains, Britain's worst railway disaster.

An artist's impression of the crash as the Glasgow-bound express is about to hit the engine of the troop train

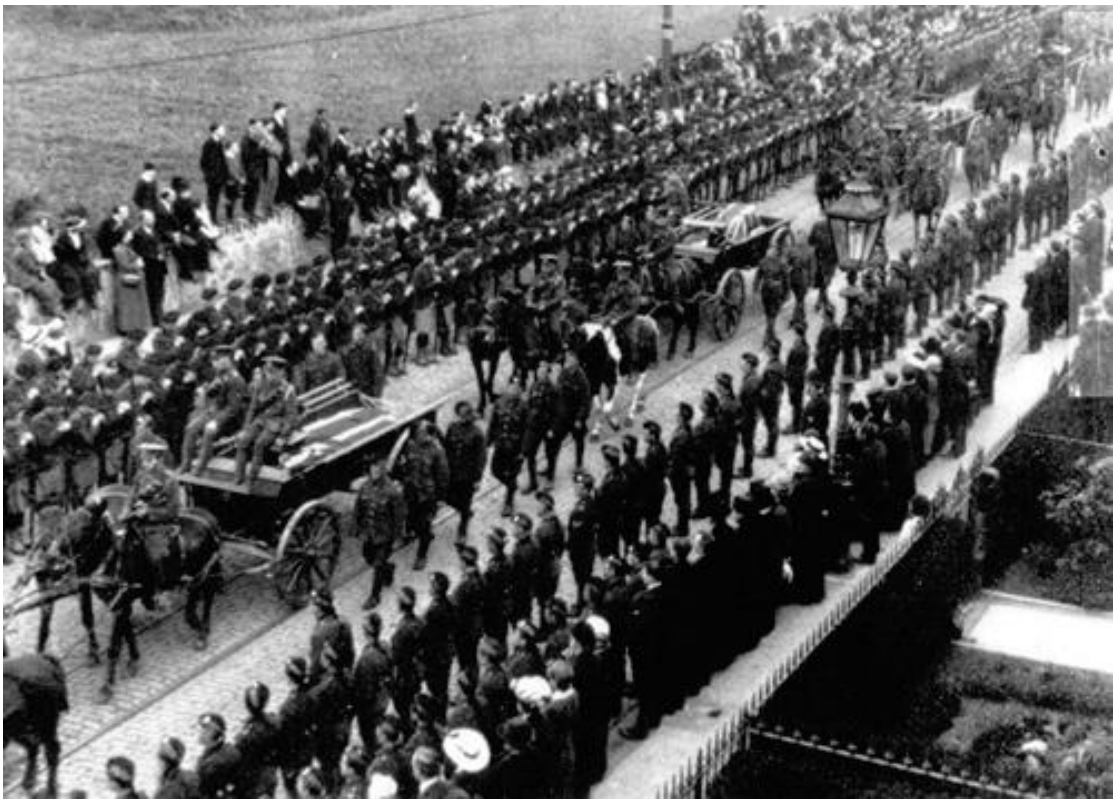
7RS, a Territorial battalion recruited mostly from Leith, then a separate Burgh from Edinburgh, had been mobilised at the start of The Great War and then employed on Coastal Defence duties on the Forth until April 1915 when they moved to Larbert, near Falkirk, to concentrate with 52nd Lowland Division before deploying to France. At the last moment orders were received changing the Division's deployment to Gallipoli. The Battalion was meant to leave Larbert on 21 May to board the troopship Aquitania in Liverpool, but she ran aground in the Mersey and the move was delayed twenty-four hours. At 3.45am on Saturday 22 May the first train left Larbert Station carrying Battalion Headquarters, A and D Companies. The accident happened at 6.49 a.m. The reaction to the accident was swift and spontaneous.

'The survivors at once got to work to help their stricken comrades and soon the whole neighbourhood was alarmed, and motor cars from near and far hastened to the spot with medical and other help. The kindness shown on all hands will never be forgotten, especially by the people from the surrounding area and Carlisle who gave such valuable assistance to the injured. Their hospitals were soon overflowing, but all who needed attention were quickly made as comfortable as possible. Their Majesties The King and Queen early sent their sympathy and gifts to the hospitals.'

Of the half-battalion on the train only sixty-two survived unscathed. These survivors, including the Commanding Officer, continued to Liverpool where six officers embarked, and sailed on the Sunday on HMT Empress of Britain with the second half of the Battalion, while one officer and the 55 NCO and soldier survivors were sent back to Edinburgh.

The Roll Call of the 62 survivors at Quintinshill being taken by the CO Lt Col Peebles

It was a devastating blow to the Battalion and to the whole population of Leith - it was said that there was not a family in the town untouched by the tragedy (see Note 2), probably made worse by the fact that, out of the 216 who died in the disaster, or soon afterwards from their injuries, only 83 were ever identified. The remaining 133 bodies could not be identified or were, literally, cremated within the firestorm of the wreckage. On Sunday 23rd 107 coffins were taken back to Edinburgh and were placed in the Battalion's Drill Hall in Dalmeny Street, off Leith Walk. On the afternoon of Monday 24th May, 101 of these were taken in procession for burial in a mass grave that had been dug in Rosebank Cemetery, Pilrig Street, about a mile from the Drill Hall. 'The route was lined by 3,150 soldiers [by comparison, the total figure on parade for Her Majesty's Birthday Parade in London in 2013 was given as 1,000, including street liners], thousands of citizens stood shoulder to shoulder on the pavement; shops were closed, blinds drawn, and the traffic stopped.'



The Funeral Procession to Rosebank Cemetary

A Board of Inquiry, convened three days after the crash, found a number of serious failings in procedure which, when combined, led to the disaster. The worst of these was the failure of the two signalmen on duty in the Quintinshill Box, now demolished, but which then immediately overlooked the crash site, to alert the troop-train to the local passenger train waiting in its path. Both signalmen were subsequently charged, appeared before the High Court in Edinburgh on 24 September, found guilty of culpable homicide and sentenced to periods of imprisonment, one of them with hard labour.

Very soon after the crash it was decided to raise a memorial, paid for by public subscription, alongside the communal grave in Rosebank Cemetery. The Memorial, unveiled by the Earl of Rosebery, Honorary Colonel of the Battalion, on 12 May 1916, takes the form of a Celtic cross, standing 15ft 6ins, made from Peterhead granite with an inscription and an explanatory plaque to the front and shields, bearing the Regimental Badge and Leith Burgh Coat-of-Arms, one on each side. On either side to the rear, against the Cemetery wall, are tablets each with five bronze plaques. On these plaques are the names of 214 who died in, or immediately after the disaster, arranged by rank, and in alphabetical order. These include the name of Sgt James Anderson, who died in September 1917 having never recovered from his injuries and was added later. For some unknown reason the name of Pte George Garrie was missed out on the plaques although he appeared on all the lists, including those of the plaques, published later. His name, together with that of Pte William S Paterson, who was also missed out, is to be added on a separate plaque in 2015, bringing the final official total of 7RS killed in, or as a direct result of the crash, to 216. Although funded by public subscription, the Memorial has been adopted by The Commonwealth War Graves Commission who maintain it, and the grave area, superbly. 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. In 2015 major commemorations took place at Gretna on 22 May and at Rosebank Cemetery on the 23rd, both in the presence of HRH The Princess Royal, the Patron of The Association.

The memorial at Rosebank Cemetery

Notes.

1. The names of the dead are listed in this updated Roll. The 12 non-Royal Scots dead, in addition to the two crew of the troop-train, are, from the Glasgow-bound express, listed as two RN officers, three officers from 9th Battalion The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, two civilians and a sleeping car attendant, together with a mother and her baby son on the local train.

2. As a result of the Haldane Reforms of 1908 the Territorial Force (TF) was created from the old Volunteer and Yeomanry units. This led to five Royal Scots Territorial Battalions, the 4th,5th,6th, 7th and 9th(Highlanders) Battalions being based in and recruiting from different areas, and often different trades and similar groupings, across Edinburgh and Leith. The 7th Battalion, with their Drill Hall in Dalmeny Street, just within the then Burgh of Leith, drew nearly all its recruits from that Burgh, Portobello and, a sizeable number, concentrated in A Company, from neighbouring Musselburgh. This very local recruiting had not altered much by 1915 although the Battalion had been reinforced to War establishment for deployment overseas by a Company from 8th Battalion The Highland Light Infantry, drawn mostly from the Lanark area, two of whom were killed. Within the Battalion roll of those involved in the crash are listed a few men from the Lothians and from Fife and one, Pte John Fyfe, who was killed, from Lima, New York, USA.

For fuller details on the disaster see "The Quintinshill Conspiracy" by Jack Richards and Adrian Searle published by Pen and Sword Transport in 2013 (ISBN 978 1 78159 099 7), and "The Ill-Fated Battalion" by Peter Sain Ley Berry published by ECW Press in 2013 (ISBN 978 1 84914 414 8)

The Royal Scots War Memorial Club

At the end of the War there was considerable discussion about how the sacrifice of those who had fallen while serving with the Regiment should be commemorated. The lead in these talks was taken by Colonel Lord Henry Scott, the fourth son of the sixth Duke of Buccleuch, and Honorary Colonel of 3RS. He suggested that any Memorial should take the form of something more useful than just a Monument. In particular it should exist to honour the fallen while maintaining the comradeship that had bound them and their comrades of all ranks together as they shared the horrors of war, wherever they served.

At a meeting in Edinburgh on 11 March 1919, attended by representatives from across the ranks of the RS active wartime battalions, it was agreed that the Memorial should take the form of an 'all ranks' Club to be situated in the heart of Edinburgh. Looking back from today it is difficult to appreciate the significance of such a proposal, almost a social experiment, which, in spite of the considerable advance of egalitarianism as a result of the War, ignored the much more rigid class structure that still existed at that time. The fact that the proposal came from the son of one of Scotland's premier Dukes probably helped! The aims of the Club were to provide a tribute to those who had fallen in the Great War; to act as a rallying place for all Royal Scots past, present and future; and as a centre from which all schemes for the benefit of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) could be worked.

Fund raising started immediately and, as a temporary home, a large hut, and its contents, standing in St Andrew's Square and which had been the American YMCA, was purchased, and opened for all Royal Scots in the autumn of 1919. The search for a permanent and substantial home continued and, in November 1920, Nos 30 and 31 Abercromby Place, in the heart of the Edinburgh New Town, were purchased at the very reasonable price of £5,460 19s 6d (£5,460.98 today). After extensive renovations and alterations, the new premises were occupied on 27 February 1922 before being officially opened by HRH The Princess Mary, Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiment, on 10 August 1922. At that time, apart from normal club facilities covering bars, sitting areas, library, dining room and kitchen etc,

there were also ten bedrooms, two, later three, billiard rooms and a theatre area where reunions and concerts could be held. In 1929 the Club was extended with the purchase of No 29 adding a further eleven bedrooms as well as other facilities.

The Club has had its ups and downs over the years but, following a major refurbishment in recent years, it is now a thoroughly modern Club offering 25 bedrooms and excellent facilities for guests, social events and business meetings. Membership has been broadened and reciprocal arrangements exist with over 230 similar Clubs both within the United Kingdom and right across the world. The Royal Scots Club remains, however, first and foremost, a living Memorial to those Royal Scots who made the supreme sacrifice for their Sovereign and Country since 1914.

In March 2019 the Club celebrated the Centenary of its founding with a number of commemorative events including the launch by their Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, of the story of the Club "Not for Glory nor Riches" written by Roddy Martine. Copies are available from the Club.

Further information can be found in "A History of The Royal Scots Club (War Memorial)" written by Duncan McDougall, published in 1999, but now out of print.

For full details of the Club today visit its website at http://www.royalscotsclub.com

The Glencorse Memorial Gates

Memorial Gates 1927

A rather more conventional Memorial exists in the form of the Memorial Gates erected at the then entrance to former Regimental Depot at Glencorse Barracks, Penicuik, some ten miles to the south of Edinburgh. The Memorial combines traditional Scottish stone-work, with materials from Craigleith and Craigmillar quarries in Edinburgh, Caithness slate roofing and wrought iron gates bearing, in bronze, an enlarged reproduction of the cap badge worn in 1878. The Memorial bears the following inscription: 'To the Glorious Memory of those Royal Scots who faithful unto death gave their Lives for King and Country in the Great War 1914-1918'. When opening the Memorial on 18 March1927,

HRH The Princess Mary had this message for the Regiment.

May all who pass in on their career learn how best to devote themselves to the service of their country and remember the deeds done in the Great War by those Royal Scots whose fame is commemorated by these Gates.

Glencorse ceased to be the Regimental Depot in 1959 when, over three years, it was rebuilt to become first, in 1963, the Depot of The Lowland Brigade, then of The Scottish Division and, later, The Scottish and King's Divisions. It closed again in 2004 and went through a major rebuild to convert it into a modern barracks, now the home of The Royal Highland Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland. The entrance to the barracks has been moved some 150m along the road to the west. The Memorial Gates are now permanently closed and the area just inside them has been turned into a memorial garden for all those who served in The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) The First of Foot from 1633 -2006. Every year at 11.00am on the 11 November members of the Regimental Association parade at the gates to remember those who have gone before them with a short Act of Remembrance and the laying of a wreath.

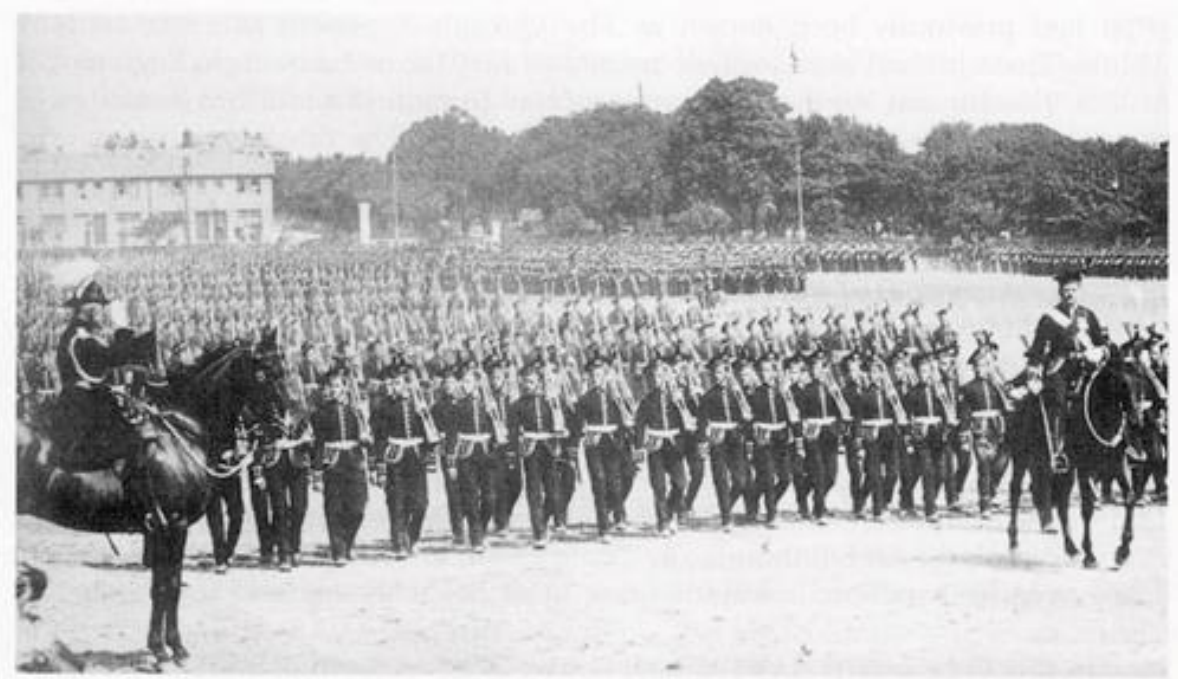
Memorial Garden 2014

By arrangement through the Museum Office (contact details can be found at the end of the WW1

page), the ashes of former Royal Scots, and only former Royal Scots, can be scattered in the planted area of the memorial garden and/or memorial plaques may be placed on the memorial board. Plaques can only be displayed for those who have died since 28 March 2006, or 1 January 1946 if death was in Service. Plaques must conform to a standard pattern, details of which will be supplied by the Museum office.

2nd BATTALION THE ROYAL SCOTS (2RS) WITH THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE (BEF) IN FRANCE

AUGUST TO MID-NOVEMBER 1914



The 2nd Battalion marching past Lieutenant General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, Plymouth, 1913

Before the Storm. General Smith-Dorrien was to be 2RS's Corps Cammander in the BEF.

Preparation and Deployment

2RS were on annual field firing training when it received instructions on 29 July 1914 to return to its barracks in Plymouth. The order to mobilise arrived on 4 August and measures were immediately taken to bring the Battalion up to its war establishment of 30 officers and 972 other ranks. In 1914 a battalion was organised with a Headquarters, including a machine gun section of two Vickers-Maxim guns, some horse-drawn transport and the band, and four companies of six officers and 221 soldiers, each consisting of four 50 strong platoons divided into four sections. On 6 August three officers and 160 soldiers joined from 3RS, the reserve regular battalion, and the following day some 507 reservists, ex-regulars with a reserve liability, reached 2RS in Plymouth, followed, on the 8th, by a final draft of 50 regular cadre from the Depot and a few more reservists. The Battalion, now more than double its pre-war strength, reported 'ready to go' on the 9th. Finally, on the 10th, 'peace details' of two Officers and 160 moved to join 3RS who were now at their mobilisation station in Weymouth. The whole mobilisation operation, taking under a week, had gone extraordinarily smoothly and efficiently considering the numbers involved moving around the country, lack of media communications (radio, TV and telephones) in those days, and the distance many of the recalled reservists had to travel.

With all arrangement complete, reservists joined their companies and began training on the 'short' Lee-Enfield rifle (SMLE), which had recently replaced the 'long' version, as well as improving their fitness through route marches and PT. Orders to move were received on 12 August and, the following day, two trains carried 2RS to Southampton where it embarked on the SS Mombasa, sailing that

evening for Boulogne where it disembarked early on the afternoon of the 14th. The warmth and exuberance of the welcome the Battalion received was overwhelming. It formed up with difficulty and, with the pipers playing La Marseillaise, marched off to spend its first night in France at a rest camp. The following day it entrained for the BEF concentration area which lay between Le Cateau and the fortress town of Mauberge, just south of the Belgian border (see the map at the end). 2RS were billeted in the village of Taisnieres where, over the next few days, a mixture of route marches and other training further helped the reservists integrate with their regular counterparts.

On 20 August, barely two weeks since the declaration of war, the BEF, some 100,000 strong, was complete in its concentration area. It was divided into two corps (three from 31 August) each of two infantry divisions. These, in turn, comprised three, four battalion, brigades. There was also a 9,250 strong cavalry division and a further independent cavalry brigade, plus Army-level troops, including five squadrons of The Royal Flying Corps. That day orders were given for the whole force to advance into Belgium, on the left of the French Fifth Army. 2RS was in 8 Brigade, 3 Division, which was part of 2 Corps. The Battalion marched to billets just short of the Belgian border that day and, on the 21st, crossed the border receiving a token formal protest from the few Belgian soldiers on duty manning a barricade there. There was no news of the enemy, but the soldiers suffered greatly during the day (and over the next three weeks) from the intense heat and the cobbled roads, which made marching a real test for the feet. Matters were not helped by the locals 'forcing' bottles of wine and fruit on the passing Jocks! On the 22ndthe Battalion marched to Petit Spiennes, a few miles south of Mons and, on the 23rd, were ordered to prepare defensive positions against the advancing Germans.

Mons, Le Cateau and the Retreat from Mons

2RS's position, on the right of the Brigade, was along a 2 'l2 kilometre section of the Mons-Harminges road, with the prominent feature of Hill 93 on its right flank. This was a longer frontage than normally allocated to a battalion, so the reserve had to be reduced to only two platoons. The main German assault fell on the left of the Brigade position leaving 2RS relatively undisturbed during the morning, during which they improved their positions. During the afternoon, however, the Germans mounted an attack on Hill 93 which was driven off, with heavy losses, by the accurate rifle fire of the defenders. The Battalion was reinforced by two companies of The Royal Irish at around 4 pm, ahead of a further strong German attack between 7 and 8pm. Again, accurate rapid fire drove them back and no further effort was made to take the position. The Germans, however, had made progress through Mons itself and this threatened to outflank the 8 Brigade position. At about 10.30pm the Battalion was warned to prepare to withdraw. This was successfully accomplished in the early hours of the 24th, 2RS being the last unit in 3 Division to withdraw. Total casualties that day, in which considerable losses had been inflicted on the Germans, were two wounded and four missing.

The next two days were spent withdrawing to the south-west under a blazing sun which left all of the Battalion parched with thirst. Pursued by the Germans, there was little rest until, having passed to the west of Mormal Forest, they came to the area of the village of Le Cateau on the evening of the 25th. The original plan was to continue the retreat, starting before dawn on the morning of the 26th. With some troops only arriving in the area at 2 am, however, and the route out of the Le Cateau area dominated by a ridgeline to the north-east which, if not held by our own forces when day broke would have meant the withdrawal would have been in full view of a much stronger enemy force, the decision was made to stand and fight. The Battalion's position was near the centre of 2nd Corps whilst most of the action during the day was against the flanks. By 2 pm, however, major attacks were developing on the boundary between 2RS and 1GORDONS to their left, but, as at Mons, the enemy were kept at bay by the withering and very accurate fire that was the hall-mark of the BEF's professional infantry,

firing bolt-action, magazine-fed rifles. Two platoons of D Company reinforced the Gordons during this battle. 2RS held their position until 4.30 pm when they were ordered to withdraw, a manoeuvre which had to be accomplished in full view of the enemy leading to its heaviest losses during the day. These, amongst the officers, were one killed and three wounded, including the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel McMicking, who, severely wounded, had to be left behind. A further nine officers were reported as 'missing' although two of these, with small parties of soldiers, rejoined the following day. One was later confirmed as killed, three others were found to also have been wounded but evacuated and two more eventually rejoined the battalion on 8th September having been with other units since Le Cateau.

In the confusion of the withdrawal it was not initially known how many soldiers had been killed, wounded or were missing, although an examination of the post-war casualty lists suggests a figure of 24 were killed that day, a total of 175 had been captured, including some wounded, and 30 were missing. D Company was reduced to a strength of one officer and seventeen soldiers, against their establishment of six and 221. This was partly due to the fact that the Gordons, still with the two D Company platoons under command totalling some 100 men, never received the order to withdraw, remaining in position until dusk fighting off German attempts to follow up on the withdrawal. Their action and the price they paid later, having been surrounded and most of the battalion, including the two platoons of D Company, taken prisoner, allowed the rest of the Division to withdraw, under the very eyes of the enemy, with surprising ease and, under the circumstances, without disproportionate losses. A further 'casualty' in the action was the loss of the Battalion's transport, including the Pipes and Drums instruments which were on it, to German shelling of the village in which the waggons had been harboured. Not everything was destroyed however, as, in 2014 while reorganising a display with the Museum we found an inscription on a plaque on an old bass side drum which reads "Carried by 2nd Bn The Royal Scots during The Great War and into Germany 1914-1919".

By nightfall on the 27th the German pursuit had been shaken off and, although the Battalion continued to withdraw under a blistering sun during the day, and with little opportunity for rest at night, matters became slightly better. Major John Ewing, in his two volume history of the Regiment in the 1st World War, described the days immediately after Le Cateau, as groups of soldiers, often from a variety of cap badges, sought to rejoin their own units as 'organised disorganisation'. The BEF was a professional army with immense reserves of physical stamina and mental determination. The retreat from Mons was never in danger of becoming a rout. Ewing attributes this to the fact that 'The whole peace-time training of the British Army had been directed to teach the men to organise themselves, when there was no officer to do so, and the immense value of this training was never better exemplified than during the retreat from Mons.' Further evidence that this was a remarkably disciplined and controlled 'rearward movement', is shown by the fact that, on 29 August, the Battalion received its first mail from home since arrival in France. To escape the fearsome sun which continued to beat down, some soldiers discarded their glengarries, which offered little protection, in favour of the broad brimmed straw hats usually worn by French peasants. Others put cabbage, or marigold, leaves under their glengarries to provide some cover.

The withdrawal continued through to 5 September when the Battalion arrived at Retal, some twenty-five miles south-east of Paris. During the previous twelve days 2RS had fought two holding battles and marched 140 miles. Since the stand at Le Cateau, the sun had proved a much more intractable enemy than the Germans. Significantly, however, both the BEF, and the French Fifth Army on their right flank, had escaped from encirclement by the German right flank. The stage was now set for the BEF to move onto the offensive.

The Advance to the Aisne

2RS, having received its 'first reinforcements' (Battle Casualty Replacements or BCRs in today's language), left Retal at 6 am on 6 September, marching north and east for the next two days. On the evening of the 7th the 'second reinforcements', of one officer and 93 men, joined the Battalion. At 5 am on the 8th it moved off heading north: by 10 am it was being shelled, but the advance continued, despite some resistance from enemy infantry, and the Battalion took 160 prisoners during the day against a loss of some 25 casualties of their own. On the 9th 2RS advanced to Citry on the River Marne. It experienced some shell fire but there were no casualties and it crossed the river unopposed at 7 pm. The War Diary for that day records that Lieutenant MacLean, who appears to have been serving with the Royal Flying Corps, 'was doing aerial reconnaissance work at Citry.' This is the first record of an airborne Royal Scot on active service. Over the next three days the Battalion saw no action as it advanced to Braisne, just six miles south of the Aisne. The major difference from a week earlier, other than advancing rather than withdrawing, was that the weather had changed to heavy rain leading to muddy, churned up roads which slowed the advance.

The high ground on the north bank of the Aisne, now occupied in strength by the Germans, dominated the BEF's approaches to the river. On 13 September, 2RS, with 8 Brigade acting as the Divisional vanguard, and having been subjected to artillery bombardment, closed up to the Aisne by 10 am to find that the Germans had destroyed both the railway and main road bridge on the 3 Division front . Near the destroyed road bridge, however, they found a narrow plank with ropes attached to it stretched across the river. The Germans in their earlier haste to withdraw had failed to pull the plank away. Wasting no time, Lieutenant Colonel Duncan, now commanding the Battalion, pushed A and C Companies across the rickety and perilous route. They were followed by The Royal Irish and by 3 pm a small bridgehead had been secured. By 6 pm the remainder of the Battalion had crossed to be followed during the night by 9 Brigade. During the night a German patrol of an NCO and fifteen soldiers was captured by A Company. At dawn on 14 September the Battalion attempted to continue its advance onto the high ground to its front. It quickly came upon the main German defensive position, which in spite of a number of local, company-sized actions, could not be penetrated. Eventually, running low on ammunition and with casualties increasing, including Lieutenant Colonel Duncan, whose horse had been shot from under him, the Brigade withdrew to a line on a low ridge just north of the original bridgehead where it initially established a line of rifle pits, each containing a few men, rather than the continuous and complex trench lines, including various support lines and communication trenches, which developed later in the war.

The Battalion remained in position, improving and connecting the rifle pits into a basic trench line, until 25 September during which time it suffered considerable casualties. Captain Price, the Adjutant, was killed amongst a total of 25 casualties on the 16th alone. Many of these casualties resulted from German artillery fire - although the rifle and, increasingly, the machine gun was still the chief weapon of the infantry, for the army as a whole the artillery was now assuming an importance it had never previously held. Much greater effort was required in digging trenches providing protection against shellfire. The strain on individuals gradually relaxed as reinforcements arrived, one officer and 100 soldiers on the night of the 19th and a further one and 150 on the 22nd, but the wet trenches and, now, piercing coldness of the nights played havoc with general health and several men had to be evacuated to hospital. Finally, on 25 September, the Battalion was relieved. It withdrew back across the Aisne and marched to Courcelles, some seven miles to the south, where it remained in billets until the end of the month. All was not rest, however, as the War Diary records on Sunday 27th, 'Church Service (voluntary) held in the morning by the Rev Meek: a small number of men attended'; and the following day, 'General Smith-Dorrien [Commander 2 Corps] expected to inspect 8 Bde in the morning but did not arrive. Men told to be in readiness during the day. All billets to be perfectly clean. Later in the day heard General's visit postponed till the next day.' He eventually arrived at 1 pm on the 29th!

Church service in the field

The Race to the Sea

By the end of September, it was clear that neither side was going to make any significant progress on the Aisne. The only direction in which there was scope for manoeuvre was northwards, towards the strategically important Channel ports. In early October the BEF was moved, in strict secrecy, to the area to the west and south of the town of Ypres in Belgium.

During the first ten days of October the Battalion, under Captain Croker, by then the senior officer, moved North, on a circuitous route, travelling by night, and remaining out of sight by day. Most of the distance was covered on foot, but trains and motor transport were also used on occasions. Marching proved a severe test to the feet after the long spell in wet trenches and many men fell out over the first few days. That together with a number of cases of drunkenness was commented on at a Battalion parade addressed by the Brigade Commander on 7 October. On 10 October the Battalion was reinforced by the arrival of two Captains and seven Second Lieutenants. On 11 October the Battalion arrived at Le Cornet Malo, just north of Bethune and some 90 miles north of Courcelles, their start points, where it replaced a French cavalry unit. The area is the 'Black Country' of France. The land is flat and soggy, almost without cover and criss-crossed with broad, deep dykes while numerous mining structures and cottages provide strong points from which a determined enemy could only be driven at considerable cost to the attacker.

On the 12th the Battalion received orders to advance north-east to secure the Pont du Hem - Neuve Chapelle road. The going was very difficult over the open water-logged country and they suffered over 70 casualties including three officers. Ewing makes the comment that the Battalion 'had been operating against an enemy whom they could not see and who, well supplied with motor cars, moved off to a fresh post whenever The Royal Scots came within striking distance.' While similar to the

tactics of the Boers using their ponies to retire from the kopjes dominating the open veldt of South Africa fifteen years earlier, it was probably one of the earliest uses of motor vehicles in the front line. The 13th and 14thOctober were no easier with little ground gained towards the objective and, again, heavy casualties taken. On the 13th two officers were killed, both of whom had been amongst the reinforcements who had arrived three days earlier, and a further five wounded. On the 14th, Major General Hamilton, GOC 3 Division, was killed by a sniper while walking along a road in sight of the enemy. While proving that Generals did not sit back remote from the action, as some authors have suggested, it also proved that they, like ordinary soldiers, were not immune to bullets. By the evening of the 14th, with two more Captains wounded that day, only subaltern officers were left in the Battalion and, on the 15th, Captain G Thorp, an Argyll and Sutherland Highlander serving as a staff officer at 8 Brigade, temporarily took over command of the Battalion. Pushing forward against considerable opposition, the attack was again brought to a halt, this time as darkness fell, still some 500 yards short of the objective set for 12 October. Brigade, however, ordered that the road had to be secured that day. A night attack was therefore launched and, to everyone's surprise and relief, reached the road at about midnight without encountering any opposition. Fifty-three soldiers are recorded as having been killed on the 15th, although it is appears likely that that total covers the four days of the action.

8 Brigade, with 2RS, moved into reserve on the 16th, and the next day, with Major Dyson now in command, the Battalion marched to Aubers where they moved into billets. On the 18th, due to German shelling, the Battalion had to withdraw from the village to a field outside. The War Diary records the seemingly important information that 'Also GOC's two chargers [horses] killed'! On the 19th the Battalion moved forward into a firing line about % of a mile east of Aubers, where they remained until the night of 22/23 October when the Division withdrew to the line of the Fauquissart – Neuve Chapelle road covered by the Battalion who themselves then withdrew. The following night the Battalion fired on a large party of Germans who were patrolling close to the front line and drove them off. About two hours later several hundred Germans successfully attacked 1GORDONS on the Battalion's left, driving them from their trenches. The sounds of that encounter, 'cheering, shouting, trumpet calls etc', alerted the Battalion which changed its dispositions to protect its left flank. Later the Germans made an attempt to storm the Battalion's trenches but were driven off by concentrated rifle and machine gun fire, the latter from one of the Battalion's two machine guns which had just been redeployed, under fire, to cover the flank.

Patrols were sent out to discover what had happened to the Gordons, but their trenches were found to be unoccupied, apart from dead and wounded Germans and Highlanders. In due course 4th Middlesex, the reserve battalion of 8 Brigade, took over the Gordon's trenches and the situation was restored. The position might have been much more serious had the Battalion not reacted so determinedly both to the initial German probe and the later threat to its flank. The War Diary estimated that 75 of the enemy were killed with several taken prisoner. 2RS's losses were one officer killed and one officer and seven soldiers wounded. The following day was tense with incessant rifle and artillery fire during which several officers and men were killed or wounded. The War Diary reported 'heavy rain all night, many rifles rendered useless on account of mud jamming the bolts.' Four Captains from The Border Regiment joined to replace some of the Battalion's losses.

On the 27th the Battalion was relieved in the front line and moved into reserve trenches from where it prepared to support a battalion of Sikhs who were to make a night attack on Neuve Chapelle. That attack was postponed and, instead, 2RS were ordered to take the village the following day. The attack started at 1 pm and soon came under rifle, machine gun and artillery fire. Before leaving our own lines, however, the Battalion was ordered to stand fast and occupy trenches and, at 6 pm, to fall back to a

new position at Pont Logy where it endured further shelling. On the 30th the Battalion was relieved and moved back to Fauquissart where it occupied the former trenches of the Gordons and where it received further reinforcements of one officer and 115 soldiers. On 2 November the War Diary noted 'Germans evidently thoroughly understand our method of signalling [during range firing practices] as they signal back "misses" with a long pole to each shot fired by our snipers'. (Who said the Germans have no sense of humour?) The Battalion continued to occupy trenches in that area throughout the first half of November but, by then, the intensity of the action had subsided. The 'Race to the Sea' was over. Europe was now divided by a continuous line of trenches running from the English Channel to the Swiss border and both sides settled down to what was to be four years of slogging trench warfare at a terrible cost in human lives.

Summary

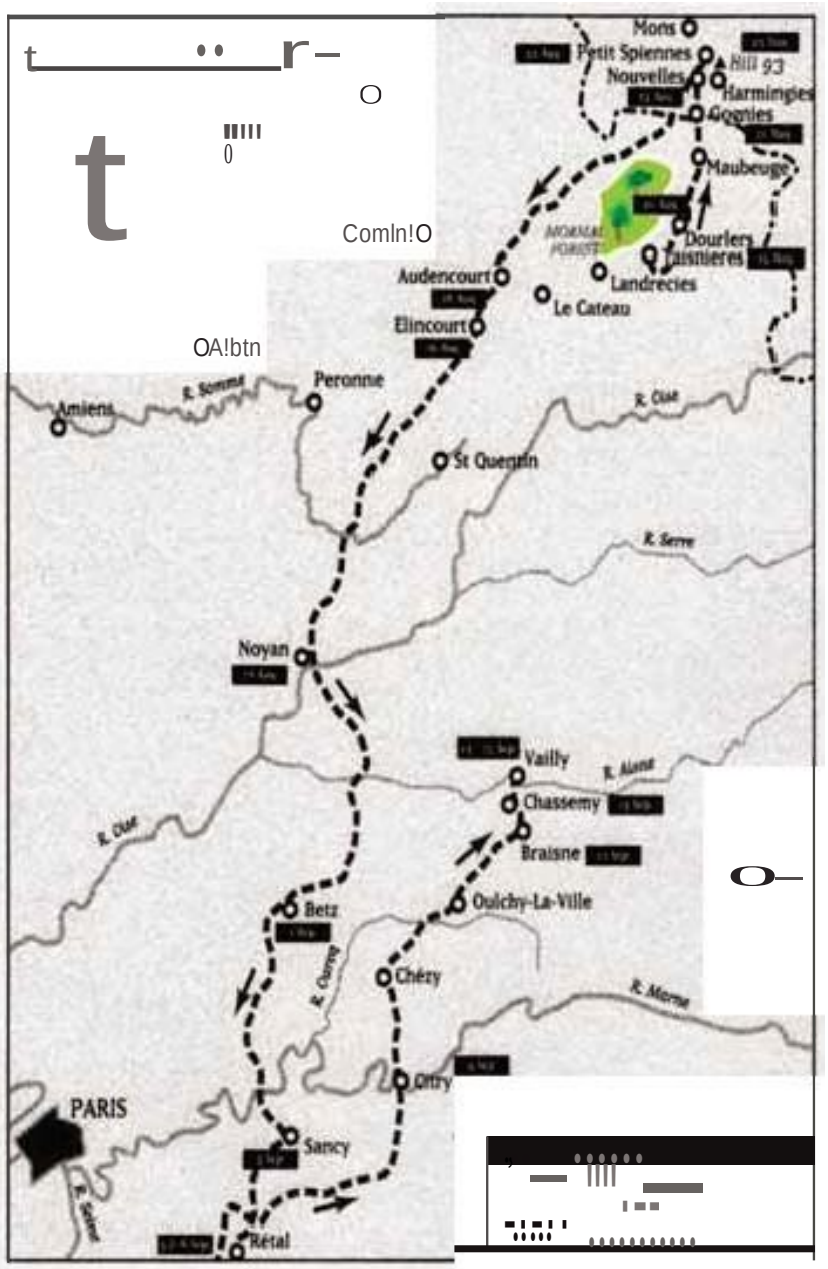
Undoubtedly 2RS had made an auspicious start to the Great War; again, without doubt it had been lucky. By the end of the year the BEF, by then seven infantry divisions strong, had sustained some 90,000 casualties, a figure matching the original force that had landed in France in August, and one-third of the original force was dead. The omens for the future were ominous. During the first Battle of Ypres, subsequently known as the graveyard of the BEF, which officially came to an end on 22nd November 1914, the casualties totalled 50,000. Of the fifty-two battalions that had landed in France in August few could muster more than 300 men by the end of the year, and eighteen were reduced to fewer than 100. By comparison 2RS, which had been reinforced steadily across the period by over 600 officers and soldiers, a further clear demonstration of the administrative efficiency of the BEF even during intense operational movements, remained viable - as shown below.

In the period from arrival in France to 15 November 2RS suffered the following known casualties: Officers: Nine killed and 22 wounded with one missing - probably one of the D Company platoon commanders attached to 1GORDONS at Le Cateau, the other was killed. A total of 31 casualties against a war establishment of 30 or, in other words, over 100% casualties in less than three months. Soldiers: 144 killed. There is virtually no information on numbers wounded but, if the same ratio of wounded to killed for the officers is used, the figure would have been 351. This gives a total of 495 casualties or 51% of establishment. 215 were listed missing, of which 193 were known to be POWs. Reinforcements: Over the period 5 September - 30 October 2RS received 25 Officer (12 Captains and 13 Subalterns) and some 600 soldier reinforcements. If the casualty and 'missing' figures above, based on the best information available today, are accurate, the Battalion strength in mid-November 1914 would have been around 24 officers (-6) and 862 soldiers (-110) although that is probably a bit high.

Battle Honours

The Regiment was awarded the following Battle Honours in recognition of the 2nd Battalion's actions over this period. Mons, **LE CATEAU**, Retreat from Mons, **MARNE 1914,** Aisne, La Bassee 1914 and Neuve Chapelle. The Honours **LE CATEAU** and **MARNE 1914** were subsequently chosen to be amongst the ten to be carried on The King's Colour.

Retleat from Mons



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The race to the sea, 11 October–15 November 1914 – 2nd Battalion, The Royal Scots

THE ROYAL SCOTS TERRITORIALS IN THE DARDANELLES CAMPAIGN 1915-16

Introduction

The Territorial Force (TF) was formed from the former Yeomanry and Volunteer Forces in 1908. Their role was to provide Home Defence to replace the Regulars deploying with a British Expeditionary Force (BEF) overseas. Individuals, provided they met the standards for regular enlistment, and units could, however, volunteer for overseas service on mobilisation. In the cases of the seven Royal Scots (RS) TF battalions mobilised on 4 August 1914, all immediately volunteered for overseas service and six of them began raising second, based on those either ineligible or not volunteering (very few) for overseas service and, later, third battalions. The role of these new TF battalions was to replace their, now, first battalions in their home defence roles and to provide reinforcements to the latter if and when they deployed overseas. The only battalion not to immediately raise a second battalion was 6RS who initially provided two companies of reinforcements to 4RS and one to 8RS to bring them up to war establishment. 7RS were similarly reinforced with two companies from 8HLI who also sent one to 8RS, amongst who was Lance Corporal Angus who was awarded the VC in 1915. 6RS raised a second battalion in early 1915 before it itself deployed to Egypt in August 1915.

Four battalions of the Regiment took part in the Dardanelles/Gallipoli campaign from April 1915 to January 1916. Three of these were TF battalions, 4, 5 and 7RS and the fourth was the 1st Garrison Battalion. The first three played major roles in the Gallipoli operations landing in the order 5RS, in the initial landings of 29 Division on 25 April, followed by 7RS and 4RS with 52(Lowland) Division in the second phase landing between 11 and 14 June. The 1st Garrison Battalion deployed as a labour battalion in early November to the Greek island of Lemnos, 50 miles west of the Gallipoli Peninsula, on which the Army Headquarters and Administrative Base was established around the port of Mudros, with detachments deployed at Cape Hellas on the point of the peninsular itself. They lost four men whilst there and before withdrawing to Egypt where, with elements in Cyprus, they remained until returning to Scotland and disbanding in May 1919. Their service in Gallipoli earned them a First World War 'King's Colour' which was a very rare award for a Garrison battalion.

This short paper covers the key deployments, strengths and casualties of the TF battalions. Fuller details of their actions can be found in Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard Vol 1 pp 270 -291 and The Royal Scots 1914-1919 Vol 1 pp 116-171.

5RS

In March 1915 5RS was posted to 88 Brigade of the regular British 29th Division who, with Australian and New Zealand (ANZAC) and French forces, were tasked with landing on and capturing the Gallipoli Peninsular (see map) after a joint British and French Fleet had failed to force the Dardanelles in a straight naval operation aimed at threatening Constantinople (Istanbul). The Battalion sailed on the SS Caledonia from Avonmouth on 20 March, arriving at Alexandria on 2 April. It sailed on from there on 11 April and reached Lemnos on the 13th, leaving for Gallipoli in the assault fleet on the 24th. Two companies landed on W Beach at about 12.30 the next day without casualties and moved up to establish support trenches.

W Beach Cape Helles (Drawn by 2nd Lt Hislop 5 RS)

The other two companies remained in the Beach area unloading stores until 4 May. The two landed companies took part in the major attack on 28 April that attempted, but failed, although advancing some two miles, to reach and capture the dominating feature of Achi Baba which had been the objective for the 25th and, without which, the whole campaign was doomed to fail. On the night of 1 May the Turks launched a major attack to drive the Allies back into the sea, breaking through the British line in several places. The two companies of 5RS were in reserve trenches but immediately launched a counter-attack at one of the breaches, driving the Turks back at bayonet point. Confused fighting continued throughout the night and, by dawn, both sides were back where they had started, without doubt, however, on the night of 1/2 May 5RS had demonstrated that, although a TF battalion, they possessed fighting qualities to match those of the regular battalions of 29 Division. On 4 May the two companies that had been employed unloading stores rejoined the rest of the Battalion. The whole Battalion then took part in the next major attempt on Achi Baba, on 7/8 May, with no more real success gaining only a few hundred yards for considerable loss. Over these operations nine officers were killed and 13 wounded, 22 out of the 28 that had landed only some two weeks earlier. No details of soldier casualties are given in the War Diary, but they must have been of similar proportions as, by 6 May, the Battalion strength was down to 600. The Battalion rotated between the front line and reserve trenches over the next month but did receive first reinforcements of three officers and 98 men from 2/5RS on 27 May and, on 1 June, a further 11 officers, of which six came from 14RS, a 'reserve' New Army battalion. A further draft of 2 officers and 168 men arrived from 2/5RS on 10 June.

Fighting on the Peninsula, although still referred to as 'trench warfare', was very different from that in France. In many cases the opposing trenches were much closer and, with much less in the way of wire obstacles in 'no man's land' between them, greater alertness was required to prevent sudden attacks. In a number of cases opposing trenches were in bombing (grenade) range of each other and home-made grenades were fired at the enemy from improvised catapults. Nowhere on

Home made grenade launcher

the Peninsula was absolutely safe from Turkish bullets. It was often safer to be in the protection of front-line trenches. Those troops in reserve were more vulnerable to snipers, a number of whom continued to operate behind the Allied lines (see CQMS Dewar in the 4RS section). Furthermore, the heaviest shelling, including from very large calibre Turkish guns firing across the Dardanelles, invariably fell on the rear trenches and the so-called rest camps near the beaches, At least in France, when you were 'out-of-the-line', you were safe from enemy fire and could have showers, a change of clothes and a proper rest.

On 19 June the Battalion distinguished itself by recapturing, with a bayonet charge, a trench which had been lost by another unit to a Turkish counter-attack, but at a cost of 60 casualties. The CO, Lieutenant Colonel Wilson, now the only officer left with the battalion from those who had landed on 25 April, was awarded an immediate DSO and other awards included two MCs and three DCMs. This rare success, particularly for a single battalion operation, brought personal congratulations from every level of command up to General Sir Ian Hamilton, the overall Commander of the Dardanelles operations, as well as The Lord Provost of Edinburgh. The next major advance was on 28 June, in

conjunction with the newly arrived 52 (Lowland) Division, including 4RS and 7RS, as part of the last major attempt to gain Achi Baba. Although 5RS achieved its immediate objective, without any artillery support, it was at a terrible cost of 34 killed, 156 wounded and 80 missing believed killed. In spite of receiving quite substantial reinforcements in the preceding month the battalion was now down to an effective strength of only one company.

On 11 July the Battalion was withdrawn to Lemnos for rest, returning to the peninsular on the 28th. On 12 August Lieutenant Colonel Wilson handed over command on promotion to command an ANZAC Brigade. On 21 August the Battalion took part in the landings at Suvla, some 15 miles up the west coast of the Peninsula, in an abortive operation aimed at outflanking the Turkish positions to the south. From 31 August to 7 September it was again withdrawn, this time to the island of Imbros, before returning to Suvla, and the Peninsula, for the last time. On 18 October, after a quiet tour, and now barely 100 strong, 5RS was withdrawn to Lemnos where it remained until the end of the campaign, sailing from there to Alexandria on 7 January 2016.

5 RS cleaning riftes at Suvla

5RS Strengths

20 March Embarkation	30 officers 1012 ORs Total 1042
25 April Landed Gallipoli	28 officers 941 ORs Total 969
By 3 October	23 officers 319 ORs (Number taken from post-War records)
Wounded	22 officers 797 ORs (No record held. Based on 2.5:1 killed)
Total estimated casualties.	45 officers (161%) 1116 ORs (119%) (% against landing strength)
Reinforcements (mostly from 2/5RS)	39 officers 306 ORs

Estimated strength on leaving Suvla 22 Officers (but probably many fewer) and 131 ORs

7RS

In April 1915 7RS joined 156 Brigade of 52nd (Lowland) Division at Larbert, near Stirling, expecting to deploy to France. As a result of the stalemate after the initial landings in Gallipoli the Division was diverted there. Early on the morning of 22 May the Battalion boarded three trains, two troop and one stores, the latter including the battalions horses and carts, heading for Liverpool to embark, with 4RS, on HMT Empress of Britain for Alexandria. The first, with Battalion HQ, A and D companies on board, totalling 15 officers and 483 ORs left Larbert at 3.45am. At 6.40am it ran head on into a local train parked on its line at Quintinshill, just north of Gretna. The crash was followed a minute later by a London to Glasgow overnight express piling into the wreckage. What followed was the worst disaster in the history of British railways. From 7RS three officers and 213 ORs were killed and five and 215 injured. Only seven officers and 55 ORs were uninjured and continued on to Liverpool from where one officer and the 55 ORs returned to Edinburgh while the remaining six officers including the CO, Lieutenant Colonel Peebles, sailed for Alexandria with B and C Companies. They arrived there on 3 June, had five days ashore, and then re-embarked for Lemnos, arriving there on the 11th, and sailing to Gallipoli, by small cargo ship, the next day.

The Battalion, still only two companies strong, played a major part, with 4RS, in the battle of Gully Ravine on 28 June where they lost 11 officers and 230 ORs killed, wounded or missing (presumed killed). On 7 July, pending the arrival of reinforcements, particularly of officers for 4RS, the surviving elements of 7RS combined with those of 4RS into a single battalion of three companies, one 7RS and two 4RS, under Lieutenant Colonel Peebles. The merged battalion was again in a

Krithnia Nullah to the East of Gully Ravine

major action on 12-15 July when the 7RS element suffered a further 53 casualties. On 11 August the 'merger' ceased with the arrival of a new CO and other officers for 4RS. 7RS, however, were still only at a strength of nine officers and 159 ORs formed into two small companies each of two very under strength platoons. Ten officers arrived that day, however, followed on 13 August by a further 13 officers and 440 ORs from 2/7RS, including many of those who had been injured in the Gretna crash but had now recovered. The Battalion was reorganised onto four companies each with an 'old' platoon, A Company with the Gretna survivors, B Company with the 2/7th reinforcements and C and D Companies with the earlier, pre-deployment, 8HLI reinforcements. On 21 September the War Diary records that '25 Newfoundlers and one officer joined for instruction.' This is the first

recorded meeting between The Royal Scots and what was to become one of our allied Regiments, The Royal Newfoundland Regiment. Newfoundland was an independent Dominion until it joined with Canada in 1949. Its 'army' therefore served within British formations rather than Canadian ones during WW1. For the rest of its tour the Battalion remained on the Peninsula, combining again with 4RS into a single battalion, known as 7RS, from 4 November. On 9 January 1916, at 3am, 7RS were the last element of 52 (Lowland) Division to withdraw from Gallipoli. On 19 January the Battalion left Lemnos for Alexandria.

Strengths

22 May	Entrained Larbert	31 officers	1026 ORs	Total 1057
23 May	Embarked Liverpool	20 officers	477 ORs	
12 June	Landed Gallipoli	18 officers	458 ORs	
15 July	(After Gully Ravine)	6 officers	169 ORs (83% casualties since Larbert)	
22 January 1916 in Egypt		20 officers	336 ORs	

(With the 23 officers and 440 ORs noted as reinforcements in the War Diary, 7RS's casualties from departure from Larbert, exactly eight months earlier, totalled 34 officers and 1110 ORs or 108% of the entrained strength).

4RS

4RS, including the considerable reinforcement from 6RS, were brigaded, with 7RS, in 156 Brigade of 52 (Lowland) Division in April 1915 and, like them, left Larbert on 22 May for Liverpool to embark and sail for Alexandria on HMT Empress of Britain on 23 May, and later on to Lemnos. Their crossing from Lemnos to Gallipoli on the night of 12 July almost ended in as big a disaster as 7RS had suffered at Gretna. Battalion HQ and two companies where embarked on HMS Reindeer, which, while steaming unlit at 17 knots, rammed and sank an equally unlit, but fortunately empty of casualties, hospital ship. HMS Reindeer was in grave danger of sinking as well. The 4RS 'passengers' were assembled on the upper deck, without any lifejackets and with no panic. Reindeer then returned, under tow and stern first, to Lemnos with the soldiers being moved from side to side to trim the ship. Their 'gallant behaviour', before they had even joined the battle, was acknowledged in a General order from General Sir Ian Hamilton who, coincidentally, was Honorary Colonel of 9RS. 4RS eventually completed its landing at W Beach on 14 June. It moved into the front line on 19 June, relieving its sister

RS in the Gallipoli rear areas

battalion, 5RS (before the TF reorganisation of 1908 the two battalions had been the 1st and 2nd Battalions of The Queen's Edinburgh Rifle Volunteers). This was the only time the two battalions 'crossed' in Gallipoli. 4RS took early casualties from shell and rifle fire. It was not one-sided, however, as the Battalion had always been proud of its shooting achievements, winning many prizes at Bisley. CQMS Dewar, who had won the King's Prize, the individual Championship, there in 1914 now killed a Turkish sniper with his first shot in anger. This led to the GOC congratulating him saying his 'skill and proficiency as King's prizeman was of eminent value to his country in the field' to which the Corps Commander added 'Sergeant Dewar never made a 'bulls-eye' at Bisley as he did on this occasion'.

On 28 June the Battalion led the Brigade assault in Gully Ravine, taking all its objectives and repulsing two immediate and major counter-attacks for which the GOC signalled 'Well done Royal Scots'. As mentioned earlier, however, the attack, across the whole front, failed in its main objective of securing Achi Baba. Casualties were very heavy with nine officers, including the CO, and 57 ORs killed, 7 and 147 wounded and 6 and 141 missing, presumed killed, a total of 22 and 345 casualties

View looking North from the British front line across Turkish wire. Achi Baba on the skyline

or over three-quarters of the officers and one-third of the Battalion's OR strength in a single day two weeks to the day after landing in Gallipoli. On 6 July the Battalion, at a strength of 5 officers and 519 ORs, forming two companies, amalgamated with 7RS 'as a tentative measure pending the arrival of reinforcements. These came on 10 August with 14 officer reinforcements, including a new CO, Colonel Young. 4RS reorganised as a separate Battalion and moved back into the line. A further six officer reinforcements reported on 19 August. The Battalion remained in front line or reserve trenches throughout September and October. There are frequent mentions in the War Diary of aircraft activity over the lines. At the end of October mention is made uncertain weather and very varying temperatures affecting the general health of the Battalion; '6 officers (including the CO) being sent to hospital (in that month alone) chiefly from jaundice and dysentery'. Although only mentioned in the 4RS War Diary, the same problems affected all those serving in Gallipoli from the earliest days. Despite several truces arranged to recover and bury the dead there was a constant smell of a mix of human excrement (diarrhoea was a major problem and troops could not leave their trenches for proper field latrines) and that from bodies decomposing in the heat. Swarms of flies and mosquitoes, and pervasive dirt and sand were everywhere. Every drop of water on the Allied side had to be brought to the Peninsula by sea. Consequently, it was mostly used for cooking and drinking. There was never enough for the

latter especially in the heat of the summer. Even less was available for personal hygiene which made the troops more susceptible to sickness and disease. At night the temperatures plummeted, and men found it difficult to sleep, even without the almost constant noise of the guns.

The Battalion strength as at 31 October had shrunk to 12 officers and 330 ORs but the 'efficient rifle strength' is given as only 181 - or well under one company's establishment. As a result, on 4 November, the Battalion again formed a composite battalion 'for tactical purposes' with 7RS, to be named 7RS, which remained the organisation until the end of the Campaign and until it reached Egypt after the withdrawal. On 15 November the Battalion successfully attacked and held a Turkish trench to their front, with very low casualties, and which was subsequently held against a counter-attack, earning a message of congratulations from the Corps Commander. The weather deteriorated rapidly from that point with heavy rain and snow flooding trenches and dugouts, the former becoming canals forcing men to stand precariously on the narrow fire-steps and risking becoming targets for snipers. One particularly violent storm, with hurricane force winds, rain, sleet and snow, swept the Peninsula from 26 -28 November destroying the piers and lighters on the beaches upon which the Force was entirely dependent for its supplies. This only strengthened the arguments for abandoning the campaigns, a decision which followed in December. 7RS remained in the lines to the very end, being the last unit of 52 (Lowland) Division to leave Gallipoli at 3am on 9 January 1916. In contrast to the failure of so many operations during the campaign the withdrawal was a brilliant success with the whole force slipping away unnoticed and without casualties. The luck which had surrounded 4RS on their aborted arrival on HMS Reindeer reappeared on their departure on the battleship HMS Prince George. Soon after sailing from Gallipoli she was struck by a torpedo but it failed to explode. The composite Battalion left Lemnos for Alexandria on 19 January, arriving at Alexandria on the 21st and moving inland to Abbassia where, on 25 January, Colonel Young having returned from hospital, the Battalion reformed as 4RS.

Strengths

22 May Entrained Larbert	31 officers	995 ORs	Total 1026
25 January having reformed at Abbassia	20 officers	278 ORs	Total 298
Casualties Killed	12 officers	207 ORs, including 35 from 6RS. Total 219 (There are very few details of wounded in the 4RS War Diary, other than seven officers on 28 June)	
Reinforcements	29 officers	62 ORs, all from 3/4RS	

(Unlike 5RS and 7RS, 4RS appear to have received very few OR reinforcements during the Campaign)

It is difficult to be accurate on exact casualties as they were not always detailed, particularly the wounded, in Battalion War Diaries at this time. Using post-war lists of those Royal Scots killed, however, and including those in the Gretna Disaster, perhaps the most chilling figures are those below, totalling the figures for 4RS, 5RS and 7RS in the eight months from April to December 1915. Note: A figure of 200 ORs has been deducted to reflect the members of 8HLI attached to 7RS as those killed are listed on their parent battalion roll.

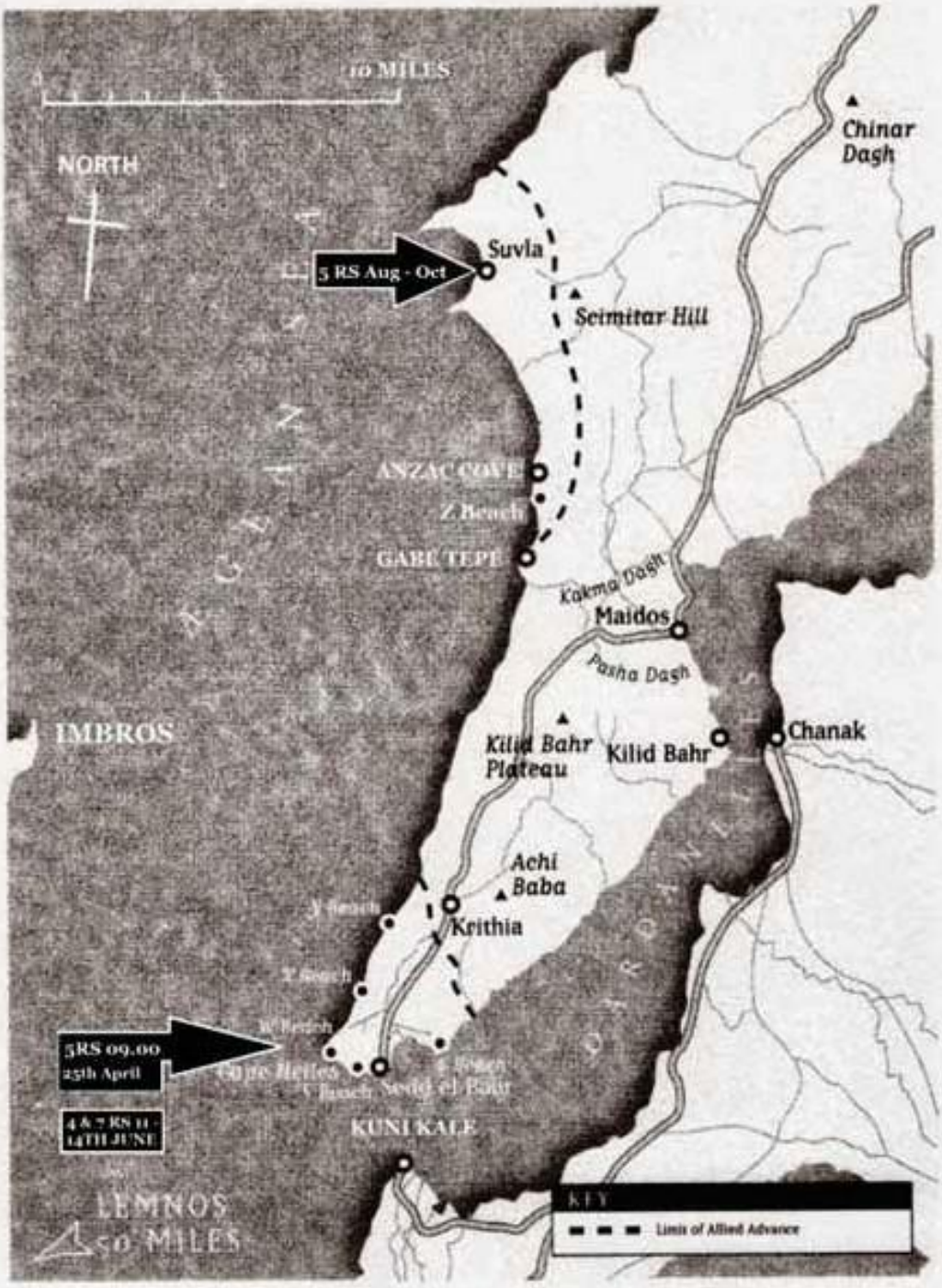
Entrained/Embarked UK	93 officerS	2833 ORs	Total 2926
Killed	44 officers	786 ORs	Total 830
%	47.3	27.7	28.

t would be reasonable to expect at least two wounded for every one killed.

Summary

1915 was 'The year of the Territorial' for the Regiment. Apart from the 4/5th and 7th Battalions deployed in Gallipoli, 6RS deployed to Egypt and thence to Mersa Matruh, to the West of Egypt, where the local Senussi tribe where threatening problems, and the 8th and 9th Battalions were in France. In spite of, by today's standards, horrendous casualties and terrible living and fighting conditions, never once was a Royal Scots TF Battalion, or an individual Royal Scots Territorial, found wanting in their Service to King and Country.

NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSIT



Gallipoli – 4th, 5th and 7th Battalions, The Royal Scots

THE ROYAL SCOTS 'NEW ARMY' BATTALIONS IN FRANCE 1915 -16

Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, who had been appointed Secretary of State for War on 5 August, the day after the declaration of War, was almost alone in appreciating that the War would not 'be over by Christmas'. He immediately called for a major expansion of the Army and, on 6 August, Parliament sanctioned an increase of establishment by 500,000. His intention was to raise a series of New Armies, from volunteers, for overseas service, organised on regular army lines, and trained by Regular Army personnel. Each New Army was to be replica of the five, then six, infantry division British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and was to include cavalry, artillery, engineers and the appropriate logistic support. Recruiting of the first 100,000 began on 11 August and the target was reached within two weeks. These volunteers, within their newly created units, were formed into five Divisions, one for each of the Army's geographically-based Home Commands and were collectively known as K1 (for Kitchener's first Army). In Scotland these new units formed the 9th (Scottish) Division. The overwhelming response to the first call for volunteers was followed, on 28 August, by a call for a further 100,000 (K2) who, in Scotland were formed into the 15th (Scottish) Division, and subsequent calls in 1914 (K3-K5) each of which was formed into an 'Army' of six Divisions, but no longer geographically grouped.

The response from Edinburgh and the Lothians was remarkable. Enough volunteers had come forward by the end of November to raise seven new Royal Scots battalions. The 11th and 12th in K1 in 27 Brigade of 9 (Scottish) Division; the 13th in 45 Brigade of 15 (Scottish Division) and 14th (a reserve battalion) in K2; and the 15th (Cranston's - with a strong element of Scots from Manchester), 16th (McCrae's) and 17th (Rosebery's Bantams - formed from men between 5'3" and 5'6" tall) in K3 and K4. The first two served in the 34th Division and the third in the 35th Division, both of which formed part of the Fourth New Army.

Most battalions had a small number of former officers and soldiers, regular and territorial, amongst those who volunteered who were able to provide an elementary military knowledge. These individuals were backed up by those who, for officers, had been in the Officers' Training Corps. formed as part of the creation of the Territorial Force in 1908, with junior sections at many schools and senior ones in the universities, or in organisations, such as The Boys Brigade, particularly strong in Scotland, or Scouts, which, in those days, were quite military in their outlook and training. Many, however, particularly amongst junior officers and NCOs, had no military background or experience at all, and were selected by commanding officers and company commanders based on their civilian experience, often in managerial and foreman type roles, or simply a 'gut feeling'. Perhaps surprisingly, when looked at by today's selection procedures, there appear to have been very few mistakes - and the soldiers supported those selected to be in charge of them, and their Battalion, with a fierce loyalty.

The rapid increase in the size of the Army brought with it huge logistical and training problems – not least in accommodating the numbers involved, many of who were initially in tented camps or had to be billeted in private houses. There was an acute shortage of khaki service dress with volunteers initially training in their own civilian clothes before the problem was overcome by the issue of 500,000 sets of blue serge uniforms, known as 'Kitchener blue' and universally unpopular. That problem did not affect the 16th (McCrae's) Battalion who, on Christmas Day, marched through Edinburgh, all smartly turned out in khaki. It may just have had something to do with the mysterious disappearance, following a raiding party, apparently led personally by Sir George McCrae, of a load of khaki cloth from a wagon in the St Leonard's railway yard! Weapons and ammunition were even scarcer. During training, which for the 11th and 12th Battalions took place in the south of England, supervised by Regular Officers and NCOs, rifles were shared within battalions, and initially, the full

scale of rifles, machine guns and ammunition was not issued until battalions were about to proceed overseas. The 9th (Scottish) Division received its full scale in April 1915 and moved to France in early May, while 15th (Scottish) Division received its full complement of arms and ammunition in late May and moved to France in early July.

The 11th and 12th Battalions gained their first experience of trench duty in the area of Festubert in early July, followed by the 13th, in August, further to the south. It was not until the Battle of Loos in September, however, that the Battalions participated in a major offensive. Initially all three battalions were in their respective Division's reserve. The fighting followed a pattern that became all too familiar on the Western Front. The initial assault achieved considerable success, but at a high cost. Later, vigorous German counter-attacks necessitated the reserves being committed at a time when the battle was at its most chaotic. The attack began at 6.30 am on 25 September, and all three battalions were in action trying to hold the gains of the assault troops by midday. By the 28th all were back in their initial lines, with no ground gained but at a cost of over 1000 casualties between the three of them, or around one-third of those who had landed in France a few months earlier. Throughout the fighting there had been many remarkable acts of bravery and Private Robert Dunsire of the 13th Battalion was awarded the Regiment's third Victoria Cross of the War for the rescue, under heavy fire, of two wounded comrades.

For the 11th and 12th Battalions the winter and spring of 1915-16 was spent, initially in the area of Loos then in the Ypres salient, in the routine of trench warfare with little in the way of action. For the 13th, however, on 11 May, the Germans launched a major attack on the position they were holding near the German-held Hohenzollern Redoubt, some three miles north of Loos. At about 4pm a terrific bombardment was unleashed on the forward trenches. A shell landed on the Headquarters dug-out killing or wounding the whole of the staff including the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Raban of the 1st Lancers (Indian Army), who had only taken over in April. This was followed, at 6pm, by an overwhelming infantry assault. After initial success in driving B Company from its front line trenches, the German attack was held by D Company, and the survivors of B Company, at the support line. In spite of a number of attempted counter-attacks during the night the Germans held firm and the former support line became the new British front line. Casualties in this one brief defensive battle totalled 13 officers, and 226 other ranks. In May the 11th and 12th Battalions were withdrawn and moved south to the area of Albert for training ahead of their commitment to the Battle of the Somme. The 13th Battalion remained in the Loos salient until June and then also moved south to prepare for the Somme.

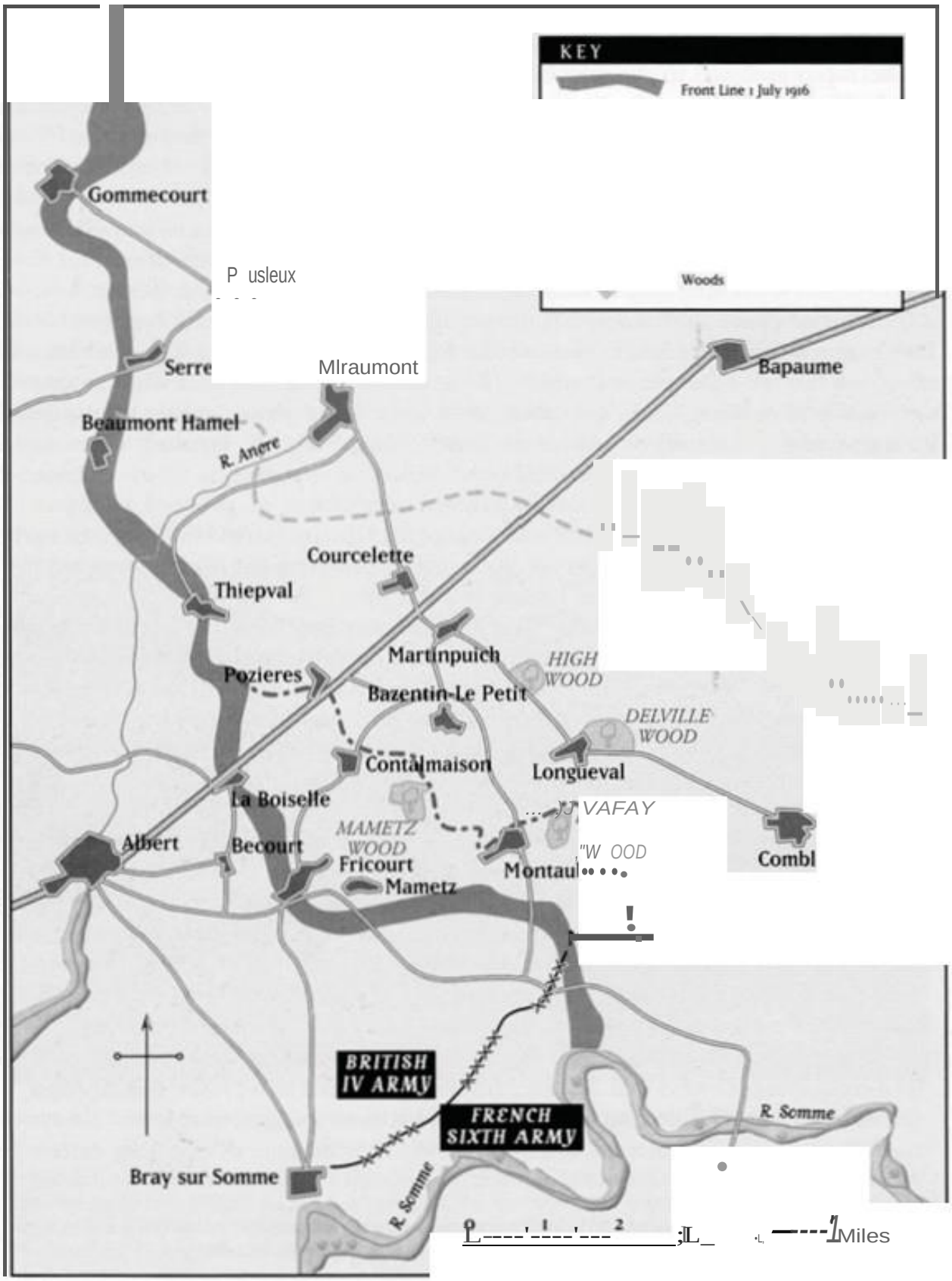
In January 1916 the 15th, 16th and 17th Battalions arrived in France. During the first half of 1916 all three had a relatively straightforward introduction to the Western Front during which companies were attached, in rotation, to more experienced battalions serving in the trenches. Until April the 15th and 16th, as part of 34 Division, were stationed in the Armentieres sector, generally regarded to be one of the more favourable localities. Thereafter they were withdrawn from the line to put in some strenuous training for the forthcoming offensive on the Somme. The 17th, in 35 Division, continued to occupy trenches, latterly in the Neuve Chapelle and Festubert areas, until mid-June when, after twelve days for rest and training, it moved to the Somme sector in early July.

THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME

By the summer of 1916 the British Army in France had grown to some fifty-eight divisions, in all some 1.5 million men. Haig, who had taken over as Commander-in-Chief from Sir John French in December 1915, now had the manpower that he had lacked earlier and, at 7.30 am on 1 July, eleven divisions, nine of them New Army divisions, advanced simultaneously against the German positions on the north bank of the Somme. By nightfall British losses were over 57,000, of whom nearly 20,000 were dead. Some gains were made by the attacking forces on the right (southern) flank, but elsewhere the attack had stopped in its tracks. The first day of the Somme, in terms of casualties, remains the blackest day in the history of the British Army.

9 RS in wet weather

The object of the Somme offensive was to capture the low plateau that lay between the Somme and the Ancre. The fighting, although not in Haig's original plan, fell into three phases. During the first phase, which lasted until mid-July, the southern crest of the plateau was seized from Delville Wood to Bazentin-le-Petit. The second phase raged from mid-July to early September during which the British managed to hang onto their gains, despite almost continuous German counter-attacks. By September the Germans had accepted that they could not dislodge the British and began to prepare the Hindenburg Line, some fifteen miles to the east of the front line of 1 July. Against that background the British were able to occupy the whole of the plateau during phase three, which lasted from early September until early November, when the onset of winter rains brought the campaign to a close. All six Royal Scots New Army Service Battalions took part in the campaign as did the 2nd Battalion and the 8th and 9th Territorial Battalions. This paper will, however, only concern itself in detail with the story of the New Army Battalions.



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The Royal Scots Battalions at The Somme - 1 July-1 November 1916

Background

The following nine Royal Scots Battalions were involved in The Battle of The Somme:

2nd (Regular), 8th (TF), 9th (Highlanders) (TF), 11th and 12th (K1), 13th (K2) and 15th, 16th and 17th (K3/K4).

The 2nd had deployed to France in 8 Bde, 3 Div, with the BEF on 14 August 1914.

The 8th landed in France on 5 November 1914, the first Scottish-based Territorial Force (TF) unit to land there and, along with only two other TF Battalions, was judged to be fit for immediate deployment, joining 22 Bde, 7 Div on 11 November. The Battalion became the Pioneer battalion of 51 (Highland) Div in August 1915.

The 9th (Highlanders) landed in France on 26 February 1915 and, by the Somme, were serving in 154 Bde, 51 (Highland) Div.

The 11th and 12th, raised in Edinburgh in August 1914 as part of Kitchener's first army of wartime volunteers (K1), landed in France 9-12 February 1915 as part of 27 Bde, 9 (Scottish) Div.

The 13th, raised in Edinburgh in September 1914 as part of K2, landed in France 7-13 July 1915 as part of 45 Bde, 15 (Scottish) Div.

The 15th (1st Edinburgh) (Cranston's), raised in Edinburgh in September 1914 as part of K3, and including 300 Scottish volunteers from Manchester, landed in France 8 January 1916 as part of 101 Bde, 34 Div.

The 16th (2nd Edinburgh) (McCrae's), raised in Edinburgh in November 1914 as part of K3, landed in France on 8 January 1916, alongside the 15th, as part of 101 Bde, 34 Div.

The 17th (Rosebery's Bantams), raised in Edinburgh in February 1915 as part of K4, landed in France on 1 February 1916 as part of 106 Bde, 35 Div.

The Battle

The operational experience of the individual battalions directly reflected the length of time they had been in France. By 1 July 1916 the 2nd, 8th and 9th Battalions had all been through the early battles and those of 1915 while the 11th, 12th and 13th had all been at Loos in 1915. By contrast the 15th, 16th and 17th had had a relatively straight forward introduction to the Western Front, from January 1916, during which companies were attached, in rotation, to more experienced battalions serving in the trenches in relatively quieter sectors. This changed, however, in April when the 15th and 16th Battalions were withdrawn from the line to put in some strenuous training in preparation for the Somme to be followed, in mid-June, by the 17th Battalion.

The Battle of the Somme began at 0730 on 1 July when 11 divisions, nine of them New Army, advanced simultaneously against the German positions on the north bank of the River Somme. The 15th and 16th Battalions took part in the initial assault on 1 July on the right flank of the British attack. In doing so they were the only part of the 34th Division, and virtually in the whole of the British offensive, to achieve their initial objective, yet had advanced less than two kilometers. They were relieved on 3 July and went into a rest area until 30 July when, with their casualties replaced, they returned to the front line in the Mametz and High Wood area. They were relieved on 15 August when 34 Division moved out of the Somme sector.

The 11th and 12th Battalions major involvement in July was the attempt to take the village of Longueval at the start of the second phase, which began on 14 July, and lasted, unsuccessfully for the Battalions until the 17th when they were relieved and left the Somme front on 23 July. They returned to the Somme on 10 October and moved into the area area of High Wood, during the third phase, on 19 October where they were involved in actions to secure the feature known as The Butte de Warlencourt. The weather was appalling, and everything was a sea of mud leading to large numbers suffering from exposure and trench foot in addition to considerable losses in action. They finally left the Somme sector on 24 October.

The 2nd Battalion's involvement on the Somme began on 7 July when they arrived in the sector and moved into front line trenches. They were in support to the attack on High Wood on 14 July but not directly involved. On the night of 20/21 July they were committed to the capture of the village of Guillemont which involved them in heavy fighting until relieved on the night of 25/26 July. The Battalion played no further major role on the Somme and left the sector on 23 August.

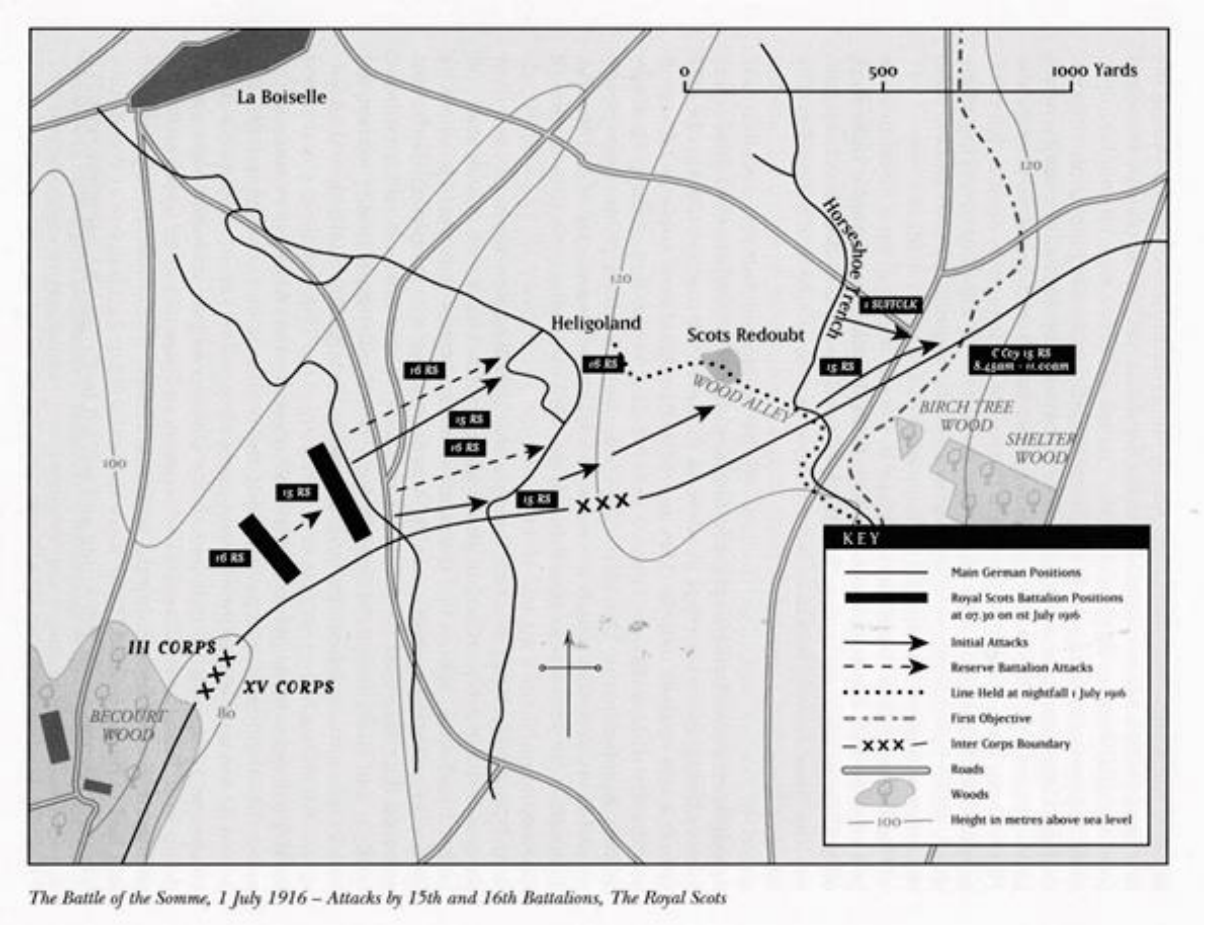
The 17th Battalion had moved to the Somme sector in early July. Thereafter, together with the rest of 35 Division, it worked ceaselessly in the rear areas providing working and carrying parties to support units in the front line. On more than one occasion it was stood by to play a more direct part in the action, but all came to naught. The Division left the Somme on 30 August.

The 9th Battalion, together with the 8th arrived in the Somme sector with the 51st (Highland) Division on 20 July. The 9th were deployed in attacking the Mametz/High Wood area from 23-26 July before being relieved. The 8th were deployed throughout in its Pioneer role, which, while not directly involved in the fighting, cost it many casualties. The Division withdrew from the Somme area on 9 August.

The 13th was the last of The Royal Scots Battalions to arrive in the Somme area, reaching it on 21 July. It moved into the Contelmaison area on 9 August and, thereafter, was either manning sectors of the front line or providing working parties until the Division was withdrawn on 4 September to prepare for a major attack on 15 September, the third and final phase of the Somme offensive. The attack, with German resistance worn down over the previous ten weeks, achieved the greatest successes since 1 July with the Battalion capturing Martinpuich and the feature known as 'Push Trench'. Casualties were still considerable, however, a number as a result of moving too close to our own artillery barrage, but fortunately the percentage killed compared to those wounded or missing was considerably lower than normal. The Battalion was relieved on18 September and, by the time it returned to the front lines in mid-October, the worsening weather was rapidly bringing the campaign to a close. The Battalion remained in the Somme area throughout the winter.

The 15th and 16th Battalions were in the initial assault on 1 July which was preceded by a six-day long bombardment. Both battalions were on the right flank of 34 Division which sat astride the Albert-Bapaume road and their initial objective was the once heavily fortified, but by the now ruined, village of La Boiselle. The enemy's front line consisted of front, support and reserve trenches, all well protected by barbed wire. The 15th was to advance to a strong point, subsequently named Scots Redoubt, which lay some two kilometres south-east of La Boiselle. Thereafter the 16th was to pass through the 15th and advance to the outskirts of Contalmaison.

At 7.30 am on 1 July the first waves of the 15th Battalion swarmed over their parapets 'with great heart and in grand form' and began to advance against the German positions. Almost immediately it became clear that neither the preliminary bombardment, nor four pre-placed mines, had achieved their intended results. The attackers were met with a deadly mixture of artillery and machine-gun fire. They pressed on but soon the long, assaulting lines became mere clusters of survivors. Miraculously the survivors of C Company managed to reach the extreme right of the 15th Battalion's objective, the German front trench, known as Peake trench, just north of Birch Tree Wood (also known as Peake Wood). They were joined there by survivors of the 16th Battalion as well as soldiers from The Suffolk Regiment, who had been on their left flank. That composite group was the only part of the Division to gain its initial objective. However, in doing so, it found itself dangerously exposed and was forced to withdraw to the vicinity of Wood Alley where, at a strength of around 100, in the overall confusion it seems likely that the Germans were unaware of the tiny pocket of British troops in their midst as no counter-attack was mounted. During the night the force grew in strength as it was joined by other groups which had survived the day's fighting. Sir George McCrae, Commanding Officer of the 16th Battalion, managed to reach the survivors who then numbered one officer and about 150 men from the 16th, two officers and about 85 men from the 15th and six officers and 60 men from the Lincolns, Suffolks and Northumberland Fusiliers. Additionally, the remnants of B Company of the 16th were occupying a trench not far to the rear of Wood Alley. Despite the ferocity of the previous day's fighting, the troops were in good heart, although they were all thirsty and hungry.



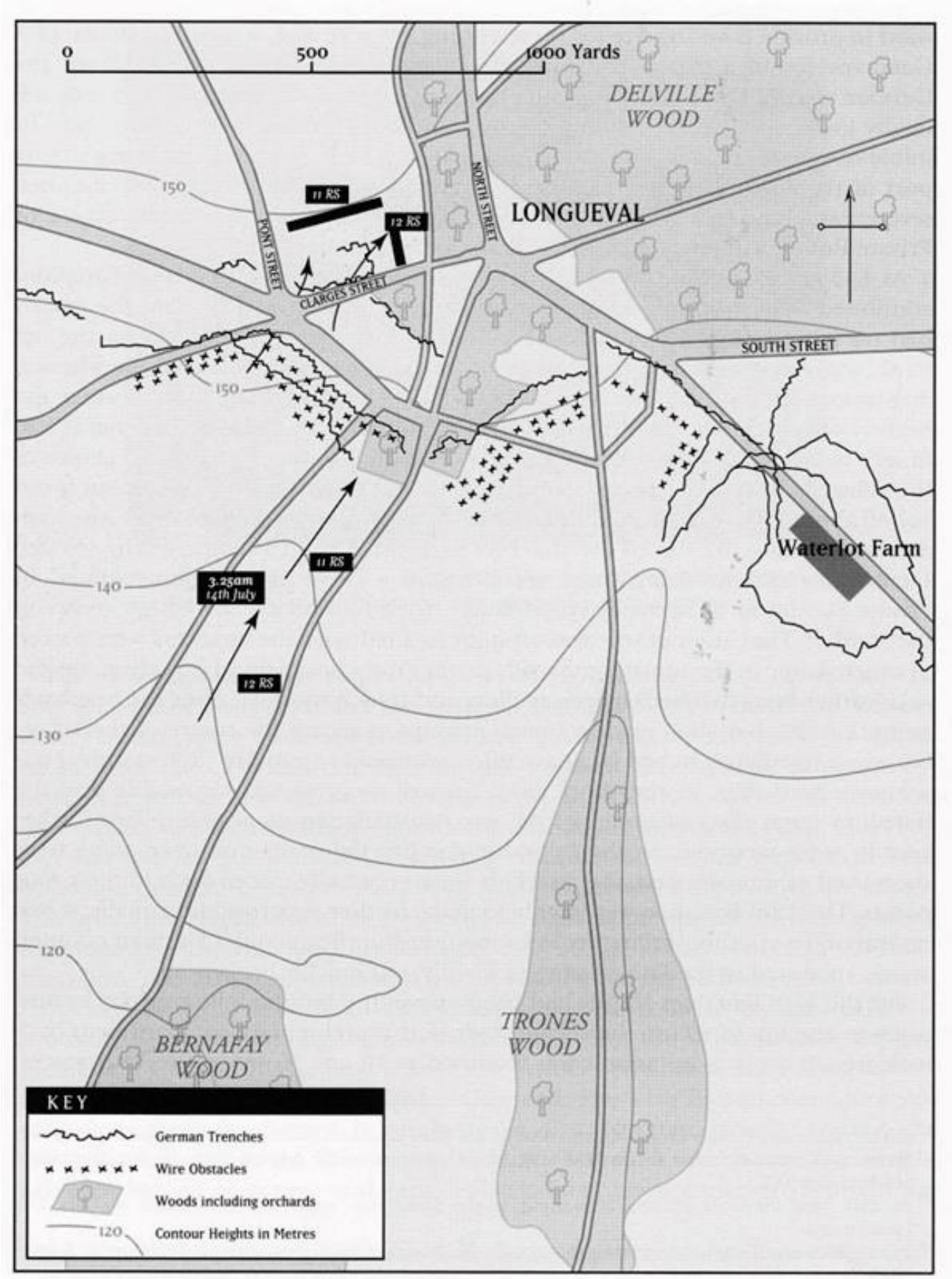
The Battle of the Somme, 1 July 1916 – Attacks by 15th and 16th Battalions, The Royal Scots

Sir George immediately set about organising the Wood Alley garrison. Food,water and ammunition were carried forward while he made plans to strengthen the position. At about 1 pm the survivors of the 15th Battalion successfully attacked the Germans still holding the Scots Redoubt, capturing 53 prisoners, including three officers. Shortly afterward the survivors of the 16th attacked the Germans occupying a trench known as the 'Horseshoe', bombing their way about 150 yards up the trench. At the same time two companies of the 7th East Lancashire Regiment drove the Germans from the strongpoint known as 'Heligoland'. By the night of 2 July, the garrison's position was much more secure and, importantly, it now had a relatively safe link to the rear. During the night a further 400 reinforcements, drawn from a variety of units, reached the position while carrying parties carried up ample supplies of bombs, water and food, the last including a full supply of hot meat so that all enjoyed a good meal for the first time since the opening of the battle. On 3 July a German counter-attack was beaten off without difficulty and, as a result of having outflanked La Boiselle to the south, that village finally fell to an attack by the 19th Division.

On the evening of 3 July what was left of the 15th and 16th Battalions were relieved, and they marched back to Becourt wood. They had been more successful than any other unit in 34 Division, yet they had advanced less than two kilometres. The price had been high. The 15th Battalion, who had led the attack, lost 18 officers and 610 soldiers, killed, wounded or missing while the 16th's figures were 12 officers and 460 soldiers. The losses were such that in the future neither was able to rely solely on recruits from Edinburgh, where both had been raised. For the rest of the war both battalions received drafts from throughout Scotland but, despite that necessity, they retained their special links with Scotland's capital. For their actions over this period soldiers of the 15th Battalion received immediate awards of a DCM (the RSM) and 7 MMs and three officers received the MC. In the 16th Battalion there were a DCM and three MMs for soldiers and two MCs for officers.

The 11th and 12th Battalions, having moved to the area of Albert in June, were initially hard at work carrying stores of all natures to dumps near the front, but did not participate in the initial assault. On the night of 2 July, they moved forward to positions in Montauban. At 9 pm on 3 July the 12th Battalion mounted an attack on Bernafay Wood and, unexpectedly, the Germans withdrew, leaving behind four field guns and one machine gun. Despite that auspicious start, Bernafay Wood proved an unwelcome gain. Regular shelling resulted in numerous casualties. The 12th manned its positions there until 8 July when, together with the 11th Battalion, it was relieved, and both battalions marched to the rear for some much needed rest, re-equipment and re-organisation.

German dugout at Bernafay Wood



The Battle of the Somme, 14 July 1916 – The attack on Longueval and Delville Wood by the 11th and 12th Battalions, The Royal Scots

The next major action for both Battalions was the attempt to take Longueval and the adjacent Delville Wood. These two features were situated on the crest of the plateau and were key positions. If the British

could force the Germans out of their well-prepared defences, the prospects for being able to continue the advance were good. Inevitably, however, the Germans were equally aware of their significance. The attack began on 14 July. The 11th, together with the 9th Scottish Rifles (Cameronians), were to capture the German trenches in front of Longueval and, thereafter, both Royal Scots Battalions were to seize the village. The operation began with a wholly successful night approach march during which the attackers moved silently into positions some 300 to 500 yards from the German front line. Sadly, however, the Commanding Officer of the 12th Battalion was killed in random shellfire during the move. Our artillery bombardment started at 3.30 am and five minutes later the infantry advanced. The 11th Battalion encountered wire entanglements before it reached the first German trench. During the inevitable delay, while the wire was cut by hand, casualties were heavy. Once the first trench had been secured the Battalion had little difficulty in taking the remaining German trenches forward of the village and its initial objective was secured within the hour. The 12th Battalion, following in support of the 11th, had closed up on it at the German wire. It had also sustained severe casualties and, as a consequence, B Company of the 12th was led into the attack by Private Roden who was awarded the MM for his actions.

At 4.15 am the artillery bombardment lifted from the village and both Battalions continued their advance. It immediately became clear, however, that the enemy had no intention of giving up its hold on the village. The 11th, on the left flank, was able to advance to positions on the western edge of the village where it dug in to await the 12th coming up on its right. The latter's advance met stiff opposition but, despite losing nearly half of its fighting strength, by 7 am it had fought its way forward to occupy a shallow trench just south-west of the centre of the village. After a brief pause a further attempt to advance was made but it was again halted, 50 yards from the centre of the village, by murderous defensive fire, forcing the attackers to dig in. The 12th made two further attempts that day to secure the village bur with no more success. Reluctantly it was acknowledged that, in the short term, further progress was impossible, and the Battalion spent the remainder of the day consolidating its position. The following day, the 15th, two further assaults were mounted but the gains that were made were short-lived as, in each case, the attackers were eventually forced back to their start points. The 12th Battalion was unable to make further progress but, equally, it had no intention of relinquishing its lodgement in the village and a German counter-attack, mounted late in the evening, was quickly broken up.

The ruined village of Longueval

The next day the 11th Battalion attempted to secure the village. Following a preliminary bombardment by Stokes and 2-inch trench mortars an assault was mounted at 10 am. Due to a lack of room for manoeuvre, it had to be carried out by a single platoon. Progress was extraordinary difficult due not only to the German fire but also to wire entanglements and broken trees which were almost impossible to crawl through. After six-and-a-half hours and many casualties, who were replaced individually because it was 'considered useless sacrifice to throw more platoons into the fight until we had more room to manoeuvre', the 11th had been no more successful than the 12th. They, however, mounted a final attack on the village at 2 am on 17 July. The night was dark and wet and involved fighting from house to house. Inevitably in these conditions the fighting was confused, and, although progress was made, it subsequently became clear that pockets of Germans had been passed over without being killed or captured. Again, the attackers were forced to retire but, despite the confusion, they succeeded in taking their wounded with them.

By late on 17th July, after three days of continuous, close-quarter fighting, much of it in a (once) built-up village area, both Battalions were exhausted and were relieved and withdrew to positions in the rear and then away from the Somme front. The 11th Battalion had lost 13 officers and 308 soldiers while the figures for the 12th were almost identical at 13 and 304. All told, during July 1916, the 11th, 12th, 15th and 16th Battalions had lost over 2000 all ranks killed, wounded or missing.

By the end of July, the 15th and 16th Battalions had recovered from their experiences at the beginning of the month. The 15th had received some 500 reinforcements, mostly from other Royal Scots Battalions. They included a draft of 299 from the former 6th Battalion which, together with the 5th Battalion, had moved to France from Egypt in April/May where they merged to form the 5th/6th Battalion and remained as such for the rest of the War. The 16th Battalion had received about 370 reinforcements, including 254 from the 5th and 6th Battalions Scottish Rifles (Cameronians). On 30 July the 15th battalion moved into positions at the north of Mametz Wood while the 16th took up positions to the east of High Wood.

12 RS transport lines in Happy Valley to the west of, and below, High Wood. Some of those watching are wearing captured German helmets and caps.

The latter was sent forward to occupy a trench, half of which, as a consequence of an earlier attack which had only been partially successful, was occupied by Germans held back by a barricade. Determined to evict its unwanted neighbours, D Company mounted five bombing raids along the top of the trench on the night of 1 August but without success. The following night the Company mounted a further assault and, this time, drove the Germans back along the trench for some 150 yards but then had to pull back 30 yards as they had insufficient strength to hold the whole trench. During the following nights both Battalions were involved in further attacks on the German positions, and eventually the Germans were driven out of the location known as the 'Intermediate Trench'. Thereafter both Battalions occupied positions near High Wood but, on 15 August, 34 Division was relieved and left the Somme for the Armentieres sector

The 13th Battalion, having moved to the Somme area from the Loos salient on 21 July, moved into support positions at Contalmaison on 9 August. Thereafter it was either manning sectors of the front line, or providing working parties, until it was withdrawn to prepare for the assault that was to mark the third, and final, phase of the Somme offensive. The attack was planned for 15 September and the initial objective of the 13th was the German trenches in front of the village of Martinpuich. By then, after over ten weeks of attacks, German resistance was weakening. After a heavy preliminary bombardment, the attack was launched at dawn. Practically no hostile fire was encountered and only token resistance as the enemy was taken by surprise, the 13th did, however, suffer many casualties from our own artillery fire. Nevertheless, it speedily seized its initial objective and continued on through Martinpuich to the feature known as the 'Push Trench'. During the process they captured nearly 200 prisoners including a battalion commander and his adjutant. The War Diary contains the entry 'At 6 am 'tanks' on right and left could be seen advancing.' marking the first appearance of these, still somewhat unreliable, machines on the battlefield.

A ditched British tank

The gains made on 15 September were the greatest achieved since the offensive opened and marked the turning point of the campaign. Despite weakening German resistance, however casualties, totalling 270, were far from light that day. Thankfully, and for a welcome change, the great majority were wounded, including all nine officers and 143 of the soldiers; 23 further soldiers were killed and 95 were listed as 'missing'. The Battalion was relieved on 18 September, and by the time it returned to the front in mid-October, the worsening weather was rapidly bringing the campaign to a close.

The 17th Battalion had moved to the Somme sector in early July. Thereafter, together with the rest of 35 Division, it toiled ceaselessly in the rear areas. On more than one occasion it seemed as if it would be called on to play a direct part in the action, but its role was confined to the frustrating, albeit essential, task of providing working parties to support units in the front line. At the end of August, it left the Somme for the Arras area.

Postscript to the Battle of the Somme.

The detail and, in particular, the scale of casualties in the first phase of the battle, emerged slowly but, when they did, their impact on the Nation was profound. The scale of the tragedy was exacerbated by the composition of the assaulting divisions. They were predominantly composed of the New Army battalions, described by John Terraine in his book The Great War 1914-1919 (Hutchinson, London, 1965, p251) as:

'The eager, devoted, physical and spiritual elite of the British nation who had answered at Lord Kitchener's call. The massacre of this breed of men was the price the British paid for the voluntary principle [as opposed to the Continental conscription], the principle of unequal sacrifice.'

There is, however, another aspect of the Somme. The battle lasted for 140 days and, ultimately, it inflicted the first major defeat on the German Army. Despite the horrific casualties sustained on the opening day, and the appalling conditions that had to be endured every day, the British troops, predominantly New Army battalions, displayed the physical and mental stamina that succeeded in grinding down the German Army. The Somme was the British 'battle of attrition'. Beyond doubt the price was high, but by the time the weather brought the offensive to a close, the Germans knew they could not defeat the British Army. The Somme was the turning point of the war, and it turned on the heroism and stoicism of Kitchener's New Armies.

By the end of 1916 the New Army battalions had proved their mettle in the bloodiest battle in the history of the British Army. A third, volunteer, army had been superimposed on the pre-war Regular Army and the much expanded Territorial Force. Nevertheless, despite the number and quality of the volunteers for Kitchener's New Armies, they were insufficient to meet the country's needs. The introduction of conscription in 1916 would lead, in 1917, to the emergence of a fourth army, where the composition of battalions would be more socially and geographically cosmopolitan. Notwithstanding the impressive achievements of Kitchener's New Armies in 1916, they did not survive for long as a discreet part of the British Army. The remarkable response to Kitchener's appeal had, however, been a demonstration of the Nation's determination to ensure success, whatever the cost.

Casualties

Any discussion of British casualties on the Somme tends to concentrate on the figure of 20,000 killed and some 37,000 wounded on the first day. The casualty level, however, continued at a very high rate, at least into September, rising steeply at the times of major attacks. The figures for The Royal Scots battalions involved in the July battles are given below. They are taken from the individual Battalion's War Diaries in which the way of presenting the information varies between Battalions. Most, but certainly not all, differentiate between officers and other ranks, killed, wounded and missing, but others, notably the 15th and 16th Battalions, simply group all under 'casualties. For the purpose of this exercise all ranks have been grouped together under 'Killed' or 'Wounded/Missing'. Where such division has not been available, such as with the 15th and 16th, the figures have been calculated from

an average percentage across those Battalions who provided a breakdown.

Battalion	Killed	Wounded/Missing	Total Casualties
2 RS	79	335	414
8 RS	19	130	149 (A Pioneer Bn)
9 RS	26	186	212
11 RS	85	399	484
12 RS	104	403	507
15 RS	111	517	628
16 RS	84	388	472*
Totals	508	2358	2866

*To put the above figures into context, 16 RS crossed the start line on 1 July at a strength of 810 All Ranks. By 3 July they had suffered 472 (58%) casualties.

Other significant casualty figures during the campaign were:

2 RS (August)	13	82	95
11 RS (October)	21	141	162
13 RS (September)	32	278	310
(October)	13	64	77
17 RS (October)	18	134	152
Totals	97	699	796
Grand Totals	605	3057	3662

Postscipt

This Grand Totals of casualties are 'not less than' figures and, taking the 810 strength figure of 16 RS on 1 July would equate to the total loss as casualties of four and a half out of the nine, or just over half, of the total strength of The Royal Scots Battalions committed to the Somme. One result of these losses in such a short time was that the Regiment was no longer able to rely solely on reinforcements recruited from the Edinburgh area. For the rest of the War such reinforcements generally, but not always, came from across Scotland.

During the 1st World War The Royal Scots raised 35 Battalions. Over 100,000 men served in the Regiment of who 11,213 were killed and over 40,000 wounded, a casualty rate of over 50%. The 3662 casualties shown for the Somme, in only 3 months, represent 7.2% of the total casualties in 5.9% of the length (51 months) of the War. That total does not, however, include all the Regiment's casualties in France or those in other theatres. The total of casualties over the period was, therefore, significantly above the average throughout the War. A further difference was that so many occurred amongst the Battalions of the 'New Armies' raised from the volunteers of 1914 and early 1915 rather than amongst pre-War regulars and territorials. The losses were, therefore, spread much more into every area and street of the Country, though often, as a result of 'the Pals' Battalions, concentrated into very small areas.

OPERATIONS IN EGYPT AND PALESTINE 1916-17

When the 4th and 7th Battalions withdrew from Gallipoli they moved to the island of Mudros in the Aegean and then to Egypt in January 1916. Throughout the first part of that year they were employed protecting the Suez Canal. The heat caused more suffering than the enemy and the only sign of the Turkish forces was the occasional aircraft.

7 RS acclimatising in Egypt

Both Battalions trained hard; in particular they got used to marching long distances in the desert sand and observing strict water discipline. In mid-summer the British established a defensive line some twenty-five miles east of the Canal on the northern edge of the Sinai Desert. The monotony was broken in July when a Turkish force, some 18,000 strong, advanced across the desert and attacked the British position. The 4thBattalion was in reserve and saw little of the action. The 7th Battalion was at a rest camp near Alexandria when the Turks were first spotted but it was swiftly moved forward by rail. However, it experienced little close infantry fighting and the Turkish attack was halted by a mounted counter-attack.

The Turks withdrew and, in October, the British force began an unopposed advance to the east. By the end of the year it had reached El Arish, close to the Mediterranean, 100 miles east of the Suez Canal and only some 25 miles from the border with Palestine. The advance into Palestine was dependent upon the capture of Gaza which was strongly defended. Neither battalion was involved in the initial, unsuccessful, attack at the end of March 1917. A second attempt the following month was also a failure. Both battalions were involved on that occasion and sustained about 150 casualties. It quickly became apparent that the capture of Gaza would require considerable preparation, indeed it did not fall until early November. During the heavy fighting both Battalions distinguished themselves. The 4th in particular, which had been given the daunting task of storming a key position in the defences, earned the unstinting praise of its Brigade Commander. Bearing in mind the intensity of the fighting the casualties were not unduly severe - some 200 in the 4th Battalion and a little under 100 in the 7th Battalion.

7 RS 0fficers' Mess, Palestine 1917

With the collapse of the defences around Gaza the subsequent advance quickly became a relentless pursuit. Both Battalions distinguished themselves again during successful attacks on Burkah, some 25 miles north-east of Gaza in mid-November. Major W R Kermack MC, then commanding a company in the 7th Battalion left this account of the attack on the Turkish rear-guard positions.

One battalion of the brigade (4th RS) was, even as we company commanders were getting our orders, already about to advance against an isolated hill east of Burkah, which became known as Brown Hill; we ourselves, with two companies of the 8th Scottish Rifles supporting us and covering our left flank, had the task of capturing the ridge which ran north-westwards from Burkah. The village itself, with its formidable cactus hedged gardens, we were ordered to leave strictly alone.

For a rear-guard position, this was undoubtedly a strong one. Between the wooded outskirts of Esdud, where we deployed, and the ridge which was our objective, were nearly three miles of apparently unbroken plain. A study of the map suggested that there might be cover half way across in the Wady el Mejma, and rather more than three-fourths of the way in another unnamed wady, which, about two miles due west of Burkah, unites with the Wady el Mejma. I resolved, if practicable, to bring the Company Lewis Gun ponies with ammunition as far as this first wady and settle them there under cover. Apart from this it seemed impossible to forecast the course of events. We had already "dumped" our packs and put our reserve rations and cardigans into our haversacks. We now deployed in artillery formation on a wide front, and about 11.00 am began our advance.

7 RS resting on the march in Palestine

The Turkish artillery open up almost at once with shrapnel and high explosive; but we pushed right on, almost without checking, across the Wady el Mejma, which proved to be twelve to fifteen feet deep, with steep but broken sides. Then, coming under machine-gun fire, from both the ridge for which we were making and from the flanks, we ran forward to the second wady (which was, I think, the enemy's first trench). This was much shallower, indeed hardly breast-high, and there we formed a firing line. Our line seemed very thin, but the longer we stayed in this trench the more accurate the enemy shrapnel became. The only course was to push on; and the line worked up, bit by bit, quite on the Drill Book pattern, coming at last under the curve of the crest which gave better shelter from the shrapnel. From there we at last rushed the crest, to find the shallow trench there almost unoccupied.

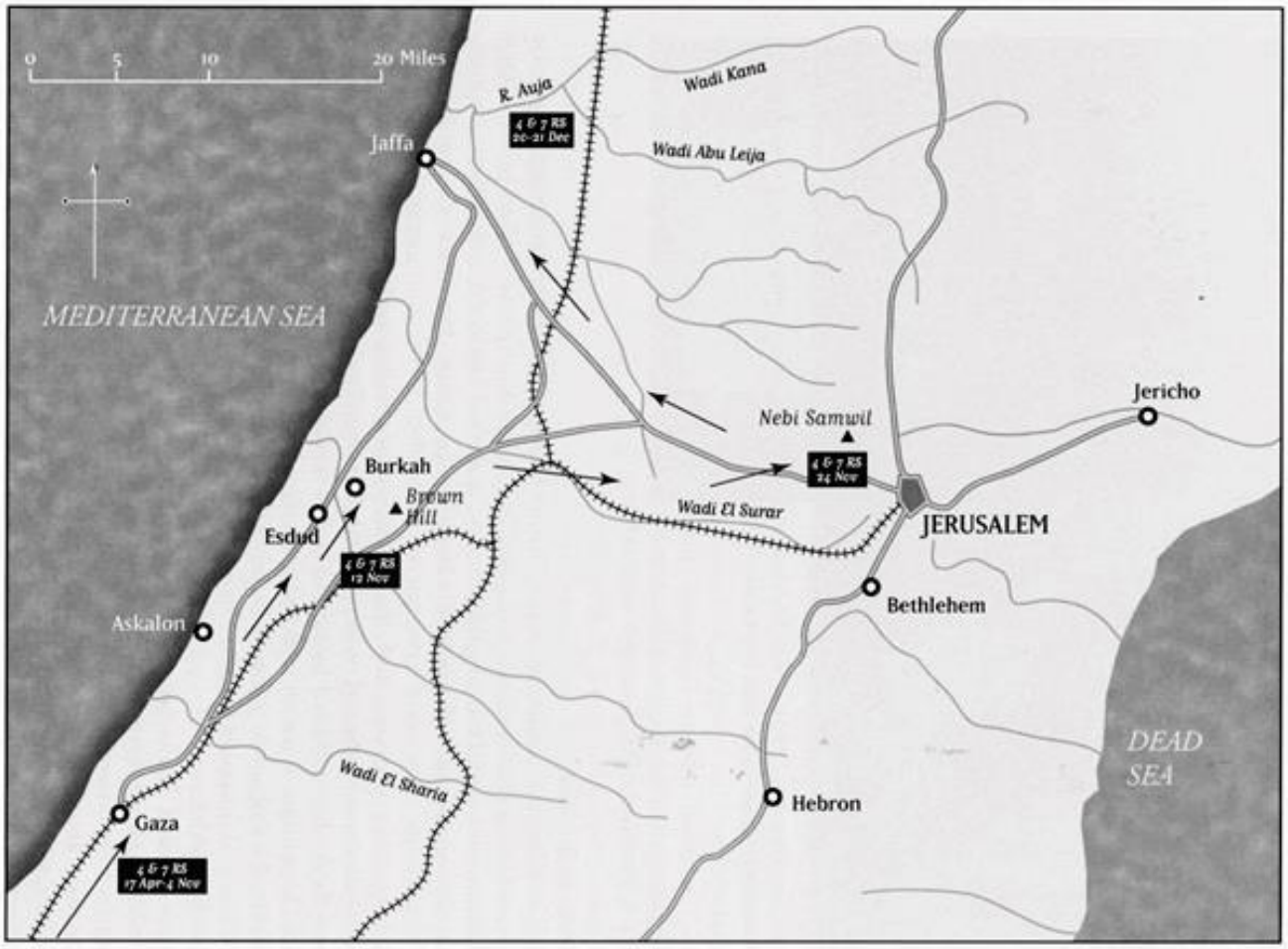
Our orders had been to consolidate the position during daylight on the near side of the crest line, and not to push on over it until after dark; and these orders we proceeded to carry out, one company holding the crest of the ridge while the remainder started digging in down the slope. Meanwhile on our right things were not doing too well. The 4th Battalion had met with much heavier opposition than we did; and though they had taken their objective, we could, from our own ridge, see them being heavily counter-attacked, and driven back down the slope. There they very gallantly managed to hold on for the rest of the day till reinforced by a Gurkha battalion when, tired as they were, the handful of them left gave the Gurkhas a lead up the hill.

The Turks, who had gone back from our ridge, had taken up a position on another ridge, 8-900 yards in rear, where they had a third line of trenches partially prepared. Now, about sunset, came orders that this second ridge had at once to be taken. There was again no time for preparation, nor indeed much preparation that we could make. The attacking companies now moved off in two lines in the quickly falling dusk. After a time came sound of a burst of rifle fire, but no report came back of their failure or success. However, much to our relief, the scouts we sent forward reported that the position was safely in our hands.

The attack undoubtedly came as a surprise to the Turks, or our losses would have been much heavier than they were. As was natural in the darkness, and where it had been possible to arrange little beforehand, there was a good deal of confusion, but the leadership of the officers and NCOs brought, out of confusion, success.

View from Nebi Samwil towards Jerusalem

Thereafter the Turkish forces split, with some heading north, and others to the hills in the east. By the end of November, having marched through some desolate, rocky country, both battalions were converging on Nebi Samwil, the key to Jerusalem. There the 7th in particular, was involved in further heavy fighting. The Nebi Samwil feature fell in early December enabling the British forces to enter Jerusalem on 9 December. Towards the end of that month both battalions participated in a highly successful surprise night attack across the River Auja to help secure the port of Jaffa. That operation was a fitting end to a remarkable campaign in which the 4th and 7th Battalions had played a prominent role. It also marked the end of the campaign in Palestine, the only major Allied success of the year.



Palestine, November–December 1917 – 4th and 7th Battalions, The Royal Scots

ARRAS APRIL-MAY 1917

The Battle of Arras began on 9 April 1917, preceded by a four day bombardment, and lasted until 16 May. Its aim, as for the Somme in 1916, was to break through the German line, this time in conjunction with a major French assault, the Nivelle Offensive, 50 miles to the south. The French attack was timed to start a week after the British attack allowing the latter to, hopefully, draw German troops away from the French front.

Arras, in contrast to the Somme, was a highly successful offensive (although still hugely costly in casualties), at least in its early stages. Probably the greatest single reason for its success was the effectiveness of the artillery bombardment which destroyed much of the German's wire and artillery and devastated the defenders. Furthermore, the preparations for the offensive were comprehensive and the orders detailed and timely. Unfortunately, the weather was foul, with a very heavy snowstorm on the night of 9 April which prevented the artillery deploying forward to support further advances after the gains of the first day; and the failure of the French offensive, which to reduce the pressure on them, meant the British attack had to be continued long after it was capable of achieving proportionate tactical gains.

While Scottish battalions had more than played their part at Loos, in 1915, and on the Somme, in 1916, Arras saw the greatest concentration of Scottish battalions in any of the set-piece battles of the war. With the 9th and 15th (Scottish) Divisions and the 51st (Highland) Division, together with a number of Scottish battalions in other Divisions involved, there were a total of 44 Scottish battalions committed to the battle including eight from The Royal Scots, the 2nd, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th and 16th. One-third of the 159,000 casualties were Scottish. As well as the Scottish battalions there were seven Canadian battalions with Scottish heritage, including The Canadian Scottish, and The Newfoundland Regiment (the Royal Newfoundland Regiment from 28 September 1917 - the only Regiment to be so honoured during the 1st World War), both of whom were later allied to The Royal Scots.

The initial attack was carried out in phases in which colours were used to indicate the successive lines of objectives for the assaulting troops (see map). The 9th Battalion, serving, together with the 8th, in 51 (Highland) Division, took part in the assault on the Black Line at the southern end of Vimy Ridge (which was taken by the Canadians) in the area of Poser Weg. The Division was relieved on 12 April, by which time the 9thhad sustained some 240 casualties. After three days' rest, the Division re-entered the battle, in the Fampoux area, on 15 April.

Infantry leaving the trenches 9 April

The 15th and 16th Battalions were serving with 34 Division south of Roclincourt. Initially the 16th led the assault with the 15th in support. The fighting was intense and much raw courage was called for from both battalions. By the time the 15th was due to advance on the Brown Line its fighting strength had been reduced to only four officers and not much more than 100 soldiers. Both battalions were relieved on the night of 14/15 April until returning to the line, in the Point du Jour area, on 23 April.

The 11th and 12th Battalions, serving in 9 (Scottish) Division were next to the South. The war diary of the 12th describes the advance to the Brown Line as 'effected like a drill parade, correct dressing and distances being kept between 'waves' being maintained throughout'. Although casualties were high, some 300, mostly wounded, between the two battalions, but including the Commanding Officer and, later, the RSM of the 12th who were both killed, the Division had secured all its objectives by mid-afternoon and the leading units of 4 Division passed through to secure the Green Line.

South of the River Scarpe, **the 13th Battalion** was serving with 15 (Scottish) Division. Its initial objective was to secure the village of Blagny. At first some fierce opposition was encountered but the combined use of Stokes trench mortars, rifle grenades, recently introduced and, according to the War diary, much more effective (and safer for the user) than the hand thrown version, and sheer human aggression enabled it to capture the village by 9am. Pte Clark, from West Croydon, in London, and a 'collector' in civilian life, who had joined the Battalion in August 1916, left this description of the events of 9 to 12 April:

'The battalion moved up to the front line at midnight, for the attack was coming off at 5.30 am 9th. I am on duty 5.0 am bombardment terrible all previous day and night, 5.25 am all officers getting excited, bombardment gradually ceases, and all quiet at 5.28. Its raining a little but the sun is trying to shine, 2 mins peace. And then, at 5.30, the most wonderful and perfect besides terrible bombardment of the War. The earth shook all over, and at the same time the lads are over the top, the bombardment keeps up, and the range is lengthening as they go on, the CO is waiting anxiously for news, we are watching the boys from our point of vantage, everything going well, a runner from one of the captains

arrives, battalion going strong and artillery splendid, very few casualties, but hundreds of prisoners, have taken Blagney, first objective and still pushing on, artillery also advances, and big guns keep up bombardment, everything goes well, at night we shift up to a new position deep German dug-outs at Railway Triangle, we stay there the night, and then move up further along the railway, we stop on the embankment lyeing (sic) in support, have advanced 5 miles, Germans reached new position and holding another division up, we lay in shell holes for three hours, heavy snowstorm on, very cold, and Germans bombarding railway heavily. Stayed here all night and early morning of the 11th was called out to reinforce 37th Division. Battalion suffered pretty heavily by snipers and machine gun fire but was successful in taking along with the rest of the brigade, the 37th Division's objective. it was a hell of a time, you couldn't move for snipers, we were in this state all day, but were relieved in the early morning of the 12th and came back to our old positions of the 9th, but was unrecognisable having had an heavy bombardment. During the day we moved into Arras again and I tell you we were glad to get a rest and had nothing but a few biscuits during the last 4 days, and the drop of tea we got in Arras, was the best I've tasted in my life. In all we advanced 9 kilometres, a little over 5 miles, taking thousands of prisoners, plenty of guns, large and small, and tons of ammunition and material.'

12 RS Lewis gun team wearing respriators

To the south of the 13th Battalion the 2nd was serving in 3 Division. It was not involved in the initial assaults, but it took over the lead from just east of Tilloy and advanced nearly three miles towards Feuchy Capel before being halted by enemy resistance.

The attacks of 9 April had been a huge success but, sadly, exploiting the initial gains was rendered all but impossible by the weather. The intermittent rain that had fallen during the day developed into a driving blizzard of snow and sleet throughout the night. Such conditions could be miserably endured by the infantrymen in forward positions, but it made it impossible to move guns and limbers forward to better support the advancing troops. The initial success was, however, marred by the need to resume offensive operations on 23 April to provide some relief for the disastrous French attack further south. Both the 9th and 13th Battalions were involved in the initial resumption of operations and both suffered severely. The 9th lost some 60 killed, 115 wounded and 55 missing (probably killed) in inconclusive fighting near Roeux and, consequently, it had to be relieved. The 13th experienced a similar reverse to the south of Monchy. Its attack, despite repeated efforts to move forward, was

halted by the enemy in the area of Dragoon lane with the loss of some 30 killed, 170 wounded and over 70 missing. Again, Pte Clark's diary tells us of his experiences.

'On the night of the 21st we went into the line again, Saturday night, and we went over the top again on the 23rd, we were shelled pretty heavy during the two days, Coy Headquarters being in a cellar on the left of the Cambrai Road. The 23rd arrived, my Coy was brought back out of the front at 2.30 am to a trench 70 yards back, I don't know why but it proved disastrous, at 4.30 am we kicked off, but got a terrible bombardment from the Germans. I hadn't gone far when I was buried by a shell, I don't know how long I was there, but when I got going again, the Coy was not to be seen. I went on again and found my pal Mac, he had also been buried, and was wandering about like a lost sheep, we both went on to find the battalion, but strayed and got mixed up with the Worcester Regt, they were supposed to be on our left, but were all mixed up, we decided to stop with them, and assisted the stretcher bearers. I dressed a wounded officer and he gave me a 20 Franc note out of his pocket book as a souvenir, it was all torn shrapnel having hit his note book, and going right through, we stayed with this regiment till Tuesday (the 24th)when somebody told us the Scots had been relieved, so we went also, we got back into Arras, and reported but found the battalion had not been relieved yet, they told us to rest and get some grub and next day we were to go back again. I had run out of fags, so had to bust the wounded officer's souvenir. We left to join the battalion again Wednesday afternoon and found them at night, the Signalling officer told us to stop at headquarters, our pals were glad to see us, as we were reported missing, we shifted up to new headquarters at night, in some old German gun-pits, it was cushy here, but fierce fighting was going on up the front line and the battalion had suffered heavily. Friday night (the 28th) I was put at an advanced headquarters up the line, it's a good job we wasn't shelled much, we only had a waterproof sheet covering us, the wire also kept pretty good, only breaking twice, we stayed here all day Saturday, and we nearly fainted with joy when we heard we were being relieved that night, it was early Sunday morning when we left, what was left of us in my company (D Company), there were no officers left. Only 1 Lance Corporal and 17 men, if I hadn't been buried I don't suppose I should be here now, it was the worst time of my life, and how I got through it all I don't know. We arrived in Arras about 5.30 am Sunday morning, had a good tot of rum which nearly knocked us all drunk, cigarettes, chocolate, and cake were supplied by the Padre, and the remaining officers, they also sprang it on us again at breakfast, 2 fried eggs and ham for breakfast.'

The original of Pte (later L/Cpl) Arthur G Clark's unpublished diary, Diary pour la Guerre, is in the possession of the Imperial War Museum. He took part in the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) in July and August 1917 and suffered the discomforts of trench life during the winter of 1917-18. He was killed in action near Bethune on 27 August 1918 and is buried in Hersin Cemetery.

The lack of Officers and NCO's amongst the survivors of D Company may well have resulted from an apparent (very sensible) German policy of targeting commanders leading an assault, as shown by a comment from Major Mitchell, by then acting Commanding Officer of the 13thBattalion, in the War Diary. ' _ I would also suggest there was a considerable amount of close range sniping. I have arrived at this conclusion from the number of Officers and NCOs I had killed here. All my Company Officers and all my Sergeants and most of my Corporals, became casualties early in the operations. This accounted for the fact that no information was received for (? Note: this may be a mistype for 'from') Companies and it prevented the necessary organization being carried out. The men were prepared to hold the ground they had gained but they were incapable of re-organizing for a further advance.'

On 28th April the **15th and 16th Battalions,** both now only 400 strong, were in action in the area of Roeux. Sadly they were no more successful than the 9th had been earlier. The 15th suffered nearly

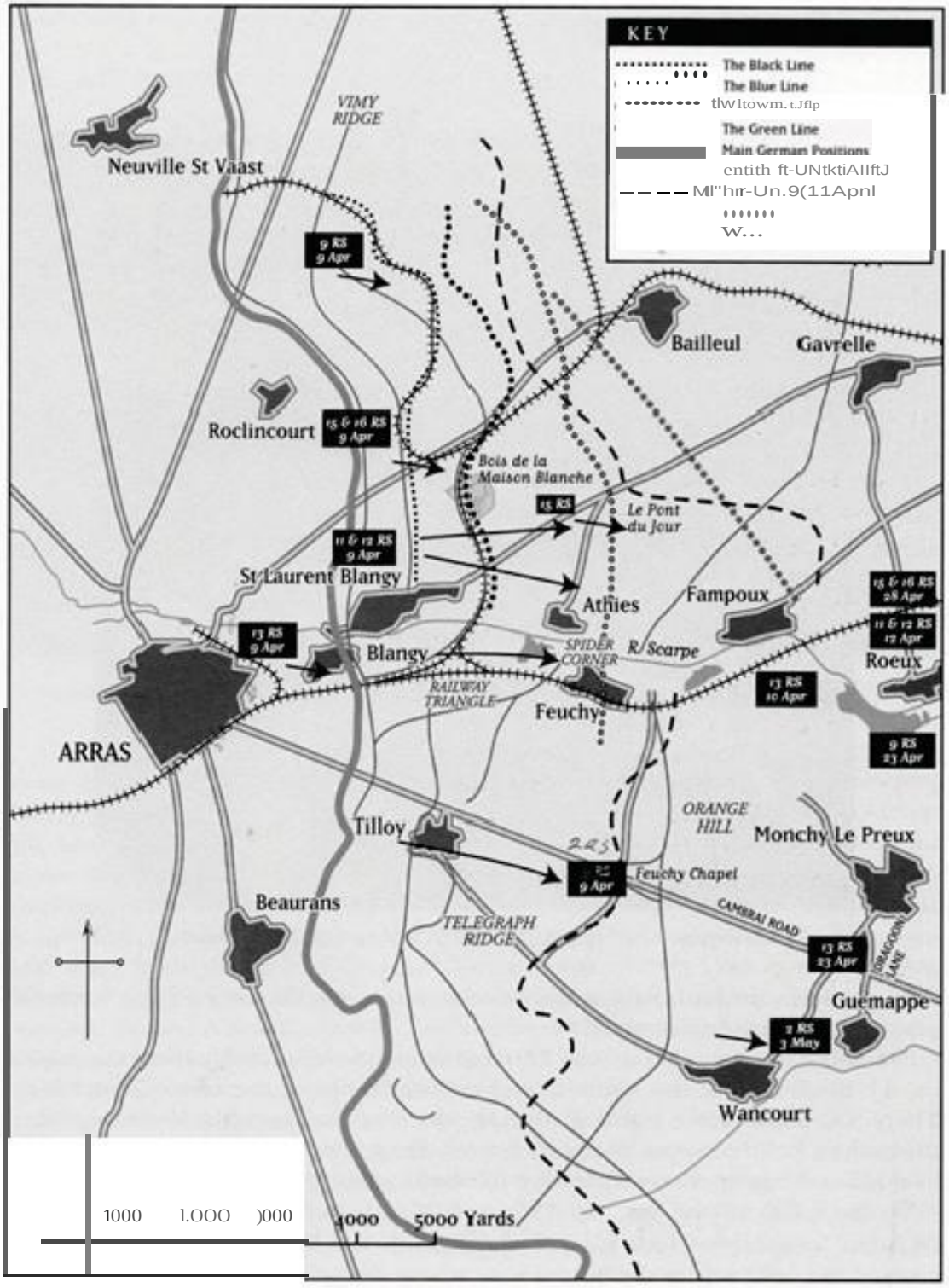
300 casualties and the 16th over 300.

The experiences of the various battalions of the Regiment at the end of April were typical of all units in the Arras area. Nevertheless, because of the continuing need to assist the French, the offensive was resumed again on 3 May, involving the **2nd and 12th Battalions** in further fighting. The 2nd 's attempt to advance in the area of Monchy le Preux on 3 May was a disaster. The day was spent pinned down by fire in front of the enemy's wire and having to endure the full force of the sun. When night fell those survivors that were still capable of movement made their way back to their original positions. The following night they were relieved having lost 12 officers and 254 soldiers since 24 April. South-east of Gavrelle, on the night of 3/4 May, about 150 members of the 12th Battalion, by now virtually the combined strength of two companies compared to the establishment of 227 for one, attacked the German lines in front of them to assist the escape of three companies of 6th Battalion The King's Own Scottish Borderers who had been cut-off in an attack earlier that day. Many of the Borderers made it back, but at a cost of over 120 casualties to the 12th Battalion.

The 8th Battalion had worked ceaselessly at its pioneer tasks in support of 51 (Highland) Division throughout the battle of Arras. The dangers of working close to the front line were clearly demonstrated by its casualties of ten officers and 93 soldiers killed or wounded in April and May. When these are added to the losses of the other seven Royal Scots Battalions involved at Arras, the total figure amounts to over 3,100 casualties in less than four weeks.

Such gains as were achieved on 3 May were wholly out of proportion to the heavy losses sustained and, soon after this, all fighting on a big scale in front of Arras came to an end for the year. The pressure was still on the French, however, and the need to relieve this simply moved the action north to Flanders and the Third Battle of Ypres, or Passchendaele as it is more often known, which opened on 31 July.

Passchendale



171, *Bottle Of Arras. 9tll April-4 May 1917*
2 rd, *9tll, lith, 12th, I)th, J"II and 16th &Jtalkms, 1'1te f((J]al $tots*

THE FIRST BATTALION'S WAR

The 1st Battalion had, by many standards, an unusual war. At the outbreak of war the Battalion was in India. By mid-November it was back in Britain where it immediately mobilised. By 19 December it was at its war establishment of 30 officers and 972 soldiers. Three days later it marched from Winchester to Southampton where it embarked for Le Havre. By early 1915 it was in the front line in Flanders where it quickly learnt to adapt to the monotonous, yet dangerous, routine of trench warfare – holding the front line, being relieved, resting, providing working parties, relieving and holding the front line again. That routine was conducted against a backdrop of endemic sickness and violent death – a far cry from garrisoning the Empire of India.

From mid-April to late May the Battalion was engaged in the second Battle of Ypres. Although not involved in the fiercest of the fighting its casualties, nevertheless, totalled nine officers and 332 soldiers.

It continued to serve in France until late October. Thereafter it moved to Salonika in north-east Greece to help support Serbia, an ally, against the threat from Bulgaria, an opponent. Although it served in Salonika throughout 1916 it saw no action until September when it took part in the capture of the village of Zir in the valley of the River Struma, some 50 miles north-east of Salonika. The following contemporary account of the action at Zir illustrates the tactics used. These are reminiscent of the late 19th century and contrast starkly with the stalemate of the Western Front.

As dawn broke on 30 September we heard sounds of rifle fire from our immediate front but the support and reserve battalions continued to advance in Artillery formation, which meant that each company and platoon was deployed in sections in file maintaining its proper space in a square of about 400-500 yards on each side. The ground was level with no cover. The forward troops could be seen in line, with the company pipers playing the advance. On the right flank after some twenty minutes heavy machine gun fire was heard which continued for a long time. Meanwhile our artillery barrage could be seen in front of the forward companies whose bayonets could be seen flashing in the first light of the sun. The objective, some five miles away, the villages of Bala and Zir, could hardly be seen because of the dust thrown up by the exploding shells.

Behind us we could see on the height's spectators watching the battle. On our level we could see the artillery galloping into action, the guns being swung into position and the teams galloping back to a position of safety while the guns opened fire and the noise of the shells above our heads was at times quite deafening. There was also a cable wagon in front of the gun line galloping across the front with mounted linesman paying out the cable as they rode. It was in all a scene of the old South African type battlefield which no one who was there would ever forget.

Serre road, Salonika

1917 was much the same as the previous year. The Battalion remained on the front line in the Struma Valley but there was little action. Garrison duties were combined with patrolling and during rest periods a wide variety of sports were enjoyed. In stark contrast to the situation on the Western Front, the Battalion was able to enjoy football, hockey, athletics, boxing, all types of race-meetings, tennis and even golf, with two golf courses being laid out partly under the direction of Lieutenant Gorrie of the Battalion. In the spring preparations were made for an offensive but, to the disappointment of the troops, that operation was cancelled. In the summer malaria became an increasing problem and the Battalion was withdrawn from the valley to the nearby foothills. That move allowed the Bulgarian forces to occupy villages in the valley but those were successfully raided in July and October and after the October raid the valley villages were reoccupied.

In April 1918, while still in the Struma Valley, the Battalion was relieved by a Greek unit. Thereafter it participated in an intensive training period before transferring westwards, in July, to the Vardar front where it replaced a French regiment. Initially there was a brief, but successful, struggle for the domination of no-man's-land but, thereafter, there was little serious action other than raids and shelling.

The Salonika front, 1915–1918 – 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots

At the beginning of September, the level of activity was raised in an attempt to convince the Bulgarians that an offensive was about to be launched. In fact the activity on the Vardar front was part of an elaborate deception plan for an attack on another point. A diversionary attack in early September was successful but the new positions, which had recently been vacated by the enemy, had to be held for three weeks and throughout that period the Battalion was subjected to heavy shelling.

The Bulgarian defences were tested nightly by patrols and, on the night of 26/27 September, it was discovered that the enemy was vacating his forward positions. A general advance began at daybreak on 28 September, but by then the enemy was in full flight and Bulgaria, realising that Germany could no longer win the war, capitulated on 1 October. Although not on the scale of the Western Front the battalion's losses on the Vardar were not inconsiderable. Three officers and 17 soldiers had been killed and four officers and about 100 soldiers had been wounded. Many others had succumbed to malaria. There was no great rejoicing when hostilities stopped. The Battalion, in common with other units, was put to work mending roads. It was an inauspicious end to what, for the Battalion, had been a disappointing campaign.

Being a regular Battalion, however, meant that its military duties did not cease with the end of the war. In December 1918 it sailed from Salonika through the Dardanelles to the port of Batum in Russian Georgia, at the eastern end of the Black Sea. From there it moved eastwards to Tiblisi where it provided guards on vulnerable points in the town. On 3 March 1919 it moved by train to Baku on the Caspian Sea to assist in taking over the Russian Caspian fleet from Bolshevist crews, but the latter had handed the ships over before the Battalion's arrival. From Baku it returned to Tiblisi where demobilisation began.

Miners, students, professors and men over 41 returned home to be discharged and soldiers with less than two years of their engagement to serve were either discharged or posted home to join the 2nd Battalion. By the end of April, the 1st Battalion had reduced to a strength of 15 officers and just 265 soldiers and shortly afterwards, it returned to Redford Barracks in Edinburgh. There it received recruits from the 3rd(Reserve) Battalion and platoons and companies were reorganised. In September 1919 it left for Burma where it served until 1922.

Postscript: In the early 1970s the then 1st Battalion had the role of the UK infantry battalion committed to the NATO Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (Land) or AMF(L) as it was known. This was a reinforced Brigade-sized force, drawn from a number of Nations, with deployment options on the Northern and Southern flanks of NATO. One of the options was North-East Greece deploying through Thessalonika (the modern name for Salonika). In 1971 and 1973 the Battalion deployed there on major Divisional-sized exercises, in cooperation with the Greek Army, operating over the same ground as the 1st Battalion had in 1915-18.

A Coy led by Maj JV Dent in Serrai 1971

2/10TH BATTLION IN NORTH RUSSIA

The 2/10th Battalion was raised in Linlithgow in 1914 and spent most of the war on coastal defence duties around Berwick. In June 1918 it moved to Ireland and, shortly afterwards, it received orders to move to Russia. By that stage of the war the Battalion was largely manned by soldiers who, although rich in experience, were officially graded as fit only for garrison duty. Similarly, many of the officers were spending a six-month period of service at home following long periods of duty in France. Yet, at the end of July, reorganised and reinforced to a strength of 1,000, it left Ireland for Aldershot and, in early August, sailed for Archangel in northern Russia as part of a task force comprising of British, Canadians, Australians, French, Italians and Americans.

2/10 RS march through Archangel

At that time the Allies considered that the Russian Bolshevik regime was a puppet of Germany. Accordingly, it was felt that, if those forces opposed to the Bolshevik government were reinforced and encouraged, the Romanovs might be restored. From Archangel two routes led south towards Moscow some 500 miles away: the railway line and the River Dvina. Due to the physical nature of the countryside, movement was restricted to routes lying close to the river line. In the area of operations, the Dvina was between one and three miles broad and the surrounding countryside was flat, marshy and densely forested. The enemy consisted of Bolshevik columns that appeared to have little if any local support. On 26 August three companies embarked on barges at Archangel and, five days later, reached the village of Bereznik near the confluence of the Dvina and Vaga. The area of operations was in the lower Dvina and extended some 60 miles south east of Bereznik.

The first action occurred on the night of 11 September when an attack by a Bolshevik column was successfully repulsed. Shortly afterwards a small force continued its advance up the river and captured a 76mm (3-inch) gun and a staff officer who provided useful information. The gun was brought back

to Linlithgow by the Battalion and is now located by the Keep in Glencorse Barracks by Penicuik. The advance up the river line continued sporadically for the next two months. Progress was slow, largely due to the terrain, and there were frequent lively engagements. By late October the deteriorating weather forced the troops to retire to more easily defensible positions. In late October there was a severe setback when an attack on the village of Topsa was unsuccessful and the Battalion's losses were about 8 pounded or missing.

The Archangel Gun

Ironically, on 11 November, the day when the war in other theatres was coming to an end, the enemy mounted a major attack supported by gunboats. The attack on the right bank was checked without difficulty but, throughout the day, there was fierce fighting on the left bank during which the outcome was never certain. The resistance was desperate and is perhaps best typified by Sergeant Salmons who rushed into the midst of the enemy firing a Lewis gun from the hip until he was killed. By nightfall the surviving Bolsheviks began to withdraw, and the battalion moved back into those buildings from which they had been driven during the day. Several hundred of the enemy had been killed or subsequently died of their wounds, or exposure, while the Battalion's losses were 19 killed and 34 wounded. The determination of the defenders was acknowledged by the award of three Military Crosses, two Distinguished Service Crosses and three Military Medals.

Private John Stewart left this account of the action on 11 November.

It was on the 11th day of November, in the early hours of the morning, we were suddenly alerted by a

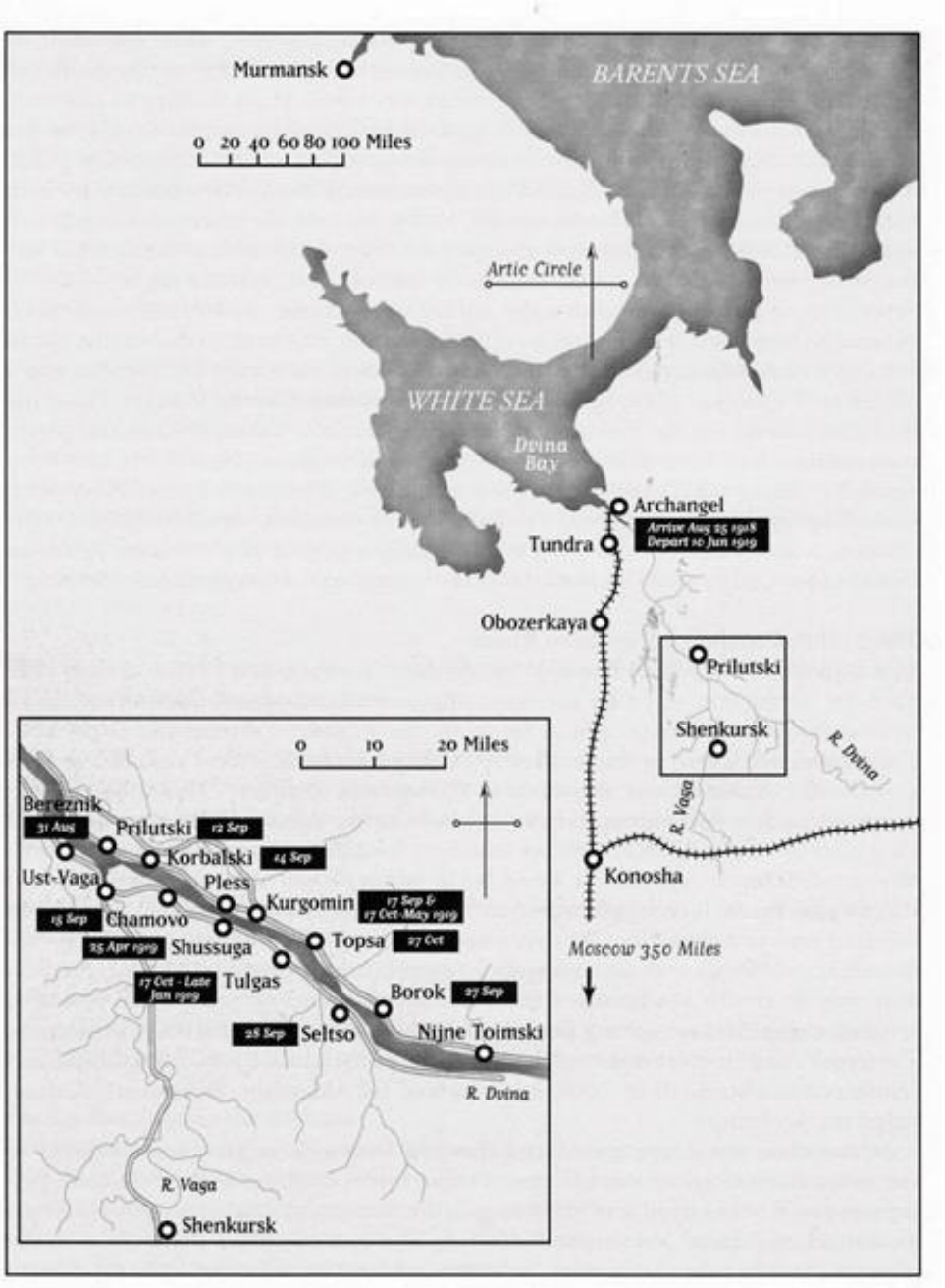
terrific bombardment of rifle and machine-gun fire. We were surrounded on all sides. Hastily dashing out with rifle and hand grenades, we threw ourselves on the frozen ground firing as fast as we could. Many by this time were killed or wounded. Our two officers, Lieutenant Hastings and Captain Shafto, standing with pistols in one hand and directing operations with the other, led charmed lives. How they were not killed was a miracle. Then all at once things began to happen. The Canadian artillery appeared on the scene and directed a goodly supply of shrapnel at the advancing Bolshies, killing and wounding many until they retreated back into the forest. But they had not given up the fight. They continued machine-gun fire from the cover of the forest and it was at that point I received my own souvenir, a bullet in the lower part of my chest. It was now getting dark and one of my comrades, noticing me lying on the ground, came forward and cut my field dressing from the inside of my tunic. He was in the act of applying it to my wound when a sniper's bullet got him in the head and he lay dead beside me. I don't know how long I lay there. I was gradually freezing to death. I knew I must try to get away. It was now dark, and I saw a light in the not too far distance, like a door opening and shutting, so gathering my remaining strength, I staggered towards it and was overjoyed to find it was an American casualty clearing station. What a mess it presented inside, dead and wounded side by side. My own wound was soon attended to, sterilised and bandaged. Given a dixie of hot bully stew and a good tot of rum I soon revived.

By mid-November active operations began to dwindle as the countryside fell into the icy grip of the Russian winter. The Dvina and its surrounding marshes froze, and snow fell to a depth of between five and ten feet. Movement through the forests was now relatively easy for those equipped with sledges, snow-shoes or skis. The troops were issued with snow boots, sheepskin coats, fur hats and gloves and, according to their abilities, were reorganised into snow-shoe or skiing platoons. Patrolling remained a regular feature of life, despite the weather. Those in forward positions lived in blockhouses while the remainder were billeted in villages.

2/10RS escort a military funeral in Archangel

In late January 1919 the enemy resumed hostilities and some forward positions were abandoned. As the winter abated the enemy began to mount offensive operations on the Vaga although there was little change in the position on the Dvina. By the spring it was becoming clear that the allied intervention in northern Russia had no prospect of strategic success. In May the American troops were withdrawn but Britain was slower to face up to reality. However, in June the Battalion was relieved by the 2nd Battalion The Hampshire Regiment which allowed it to move to Murmansk. A few days later the Battalion embarked at Murmansk and sailed into Leith on 18 June 1919. They marched through cheering crowds from the Imperial Dock to Leith Central Station en route to Redford Barracks where they were to be demobilised.

The Battalion had been in existence for five years and, although it had only seen operational service for ten months, it had suffered 132 fatalities. It also achieved the distinction of gaining for the Regiment the battle honour 'Archangel 1918-1919', the only battle honour won during the war by a second-line battalion of the Regiment and an honour shared with just two other regiments of the British Army.



The 2/10th Battalion in Northern Russia, August 1918–June 1919

THE ROYAL SCOTS IN WORLD WAR 2 (WW2)
INTRODUCTION

The Second World War was very different from the First, the so called war to end all wars, which had only finished some 21 years earlier. From the Regiment's point of view, WW1 had essentially been an infantry war with huge set piece attacks, extending over weeks or months and often leading to very high casualties. This was reflected in the 18 'service' (fighting) battalions that the Regiment raised compared with only six in WW2 - two of which were replacements for the 1st and 2nd Battalions that were effectively totally respectively destroyed in France 1940 and in Hong Kong . The other major difference was that only on the Russian Front was there any real equivalent to the WW1 battlefields of France and Flanders, with its vast network of trenches continuously fought over for four years. Instead it was a truly 'World War' fought on every Continent less the Americas, with a much more 'fluid' war of movement, be it advancing or withdrawing, often involving large armoured formations and with considerable direct air support in addition to the artillery. Perhaps the most interesting comparison of the Regiment's involvement in the two World Wars lies in the time spent 'in the front line' directly involved in operations. While in WW1, 2RS were deployed to France, from August 1914 through to November 1918, followed by a further 17 Battalions there and in other theatres with much of that time actually in the trenches facing the enemy, the longest continuous period of action by a Royal Scots Battalion in WW2 was the 10 months of the 8th Battalion in North-West Europe from June 1944 to April 1945. Indeed, in the four-and-a half years, from the outbreak of War in September 1939 to the 1st Battalion's involvement in the Battle of Kohima in April 1944, the Battalions of the Regiment were only involved in direct operations against the enemy for a total of around 6 months. This is demonstrated in the table below and is probably very little different from many other Regiments who did not have battalions involved in the Mediterranean Theatre. The Theatres of Operations in which Battalions were involved were NW Europe 1RS 1939-40, 7/9 and 8 RS 1944-45, 2RS Hong Kong 1941, 1 RS (new) Indo-Burma 1943-45 and 2RS (new) Italy 1944.

TIMELINES OF ROYAL SCOTS BATTALIONS SERVING ON OPERATIONS IN WW2

Year	Dates of Activity	Location	Battalion(s) involved
1939	Nil		
1940	10 - 30 May (20 days)	Belgium & France	1 RS
	12 - 17 June	France	7/9 RS
1941	8 - 25 December (17 days)	Hong Kong	2 RS
1942	Nil		
1943	Feb - May (4 Months)	1st Arakan, Burma	1 RS (new)
1944	18 Apr - Sep (5 Months)	Kohima , India	1 RS
	Jun - Dec (6 months)	France, Belgium and Holland	8 RS
	Jul - Dec (5 months)	Italy	2 RS (new)
	Oct - Dec (3 Months)	Belgium and Holland	7/9 RS
1945	Jan- Apr (4 months)	Mandalay, Burma	1 RS
	Jan- Apr (4 months)	Holland and Germany	7/9 RS
	Jan -Apr (4 months)	Holland and Germany	8 RS

BATTLE HONOURS

The Regiment was awarded thirty-nine Battle Honours in WW2 of which ten were selected to be carried on The Queen's Colour. The Honours awarded are listed below, with the individual Battalions involved shown and those carried on The Queens Colour in bold and capitals.

Battle Honour	Battalion(s)	Battle Honour	Battalion(s)
Dyle	1st	Goch	8th
DEFENCE OF ESCAUT	1st	**RHINE**	8th
St Omer-La-Bassee	1st	Uelzen	8th
ODON	8th	Bremen	7/9th
Cheux	8th	Artlenburg	8th
Defence of Rauray	8th	**NORTH-WEST EUROPE 1940**	1st
Caen	8th	**1944-45**	7/9th, 8th
Esquay	8th	**GOTHIC LINE**	2nd
Mont Pincon	8th	Marradi	2nd
AART	8th	Monte Gamberaldi	2nd
Nederrijn	8th	**ITALY 1944-45**	2nd
Best	8th	South-East Asia 1941	2nd
Scheldt	7/9th	Dobaik	1st
FLUSHING	7/9th	**KOHIMA**	1st
Meijel	8th	Relief of Kohima	1st
Venlo Pocket	8th	Aradura	1st
Roer	7/9th	Shwebo	1st
Rhineland	7/9th, 8th	Mandalay	1st
Reichswald	8th	**BURMA 1943-45**	1st
Cleve	8th		

In 2013, while weeding historical files, those of The Regimental Battle Honours Committee were found. The Committee had sat in 1955-56 and was composed of representatives from all the WW2 Battalions including, separately, the 'old' (France 1939-40 and Hong Kong) and (reformed) 1st and 2nd Battalions The files (now held in the historical archive) give the full story of why individual Honours were selected, from a list provided by The War Office Honours Committee, and, in particular, the ten Honours to be carried on The Queen's Colour. There were two areas of contention,

1. St Omer-la-Basee covers the 4 Brigade stand around Bethune at the end of May 1940. We, jointly with The Royal Norfolk Regiment, put up a strong case to have Le Paradis recognised as a separate battle, and therefore Honour, but The War Office Committee would not agree.

2. A long drawn out, but eventually unsuccessful battle, fought mostly on our behalf by Augustus Muir, the then Regimental Historian and author of the Regimental History of WW2 'The First of Foot', to have the Honour HONG KONG awarded for the 'old' 2nd Battalion's action there. He succeeded in getting a number of major re-writes correcting errors of fact within the Official History after it had been approved but before publication, but The War Office Committee were not prepared to upgrade the Honour from the Theatre award of South-East Asia 1941. The story, filling several files, has been indexed within the archive and would be worth a book on its own except that General Delacombe, the then Colonel of the Regiment and the Chairman of the Regimental Honours Committee, instructed that the matter was to be considered closed and no further appeal was ever to be made.

CASUALTIES

Obviously, with far fewer battalions committed to action, and over much shorter periods, the number of casualties suffered by The Regiment was significantly lower than in WW1. Nevertheless 97 officers, including seven out of eleven Canadians attached to the 8th Battalion under the CANLOAN scheme, and 1151 soldiers were killed during the War, a total of 1241 Royal Scots (WW1 11,213), and many more were wounded, including all four of the remaining Canadian officers. The breakdown between Battalions, where known, is given below.

Battalion	Killed		Wounded/Missing		Total
	Officers	Soldiers	Officers	Soldiers	
1RS	9	132	350 Officers	& Soldiers (est)	491
2RS Hong Kong 1941	12	178	17	213	337
Lisbon Maru	3	178			181
POW 1941 - 45	3	59			62
(2RS Total 1941- 45	18	332	17	213	580)
1RS (new) Arakan 1943	6	26	11	168	211
Kohima 1944	2	76	15	193	597
Mandalay 1945	0	36	1	89	126
(1RS Total 1943-45	8	138	27	450	597)
2RS (new) Italy 1944	2	40	15	168	225
7/9 RS 1944-45	1	59	258 Officers	& Soldiers (est)	318
8 RS 1944-45	13	224	48	971	1256
Totals	51	925	107	1802	3493

The ratio killed/wounded appears to be 1:2.6 compared with roughly 1:3.6 in WW1.

Details of those killed in WW2 can be found on the WW2 Roll of Honour through the Homepage of the website at www.theroyalscots.co.uk

WW2 WAR MEMORIALS

Those killed in WW2 are commemorated along with those on WW1 within The Scottish National War Memorial in Edinburgh Castle and in The Royal Scots War Memorial Club. Specific memorials are a plaque within the Club and eight memorial cottages, particularly for the disabled, erected four at Penicuik, two at Muirhouse in Edinburgh and two at Haddington. Individual Battalions erected memorials at home and overseas and individuals are commemorated in Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemeteries and on city, town, and village memorials throughout the land.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

The following individual awards were made to members of the Regiment while serving operationally with Battalions of the Regiment

George Cross 1 (Captain Douglas Ford 2RS)

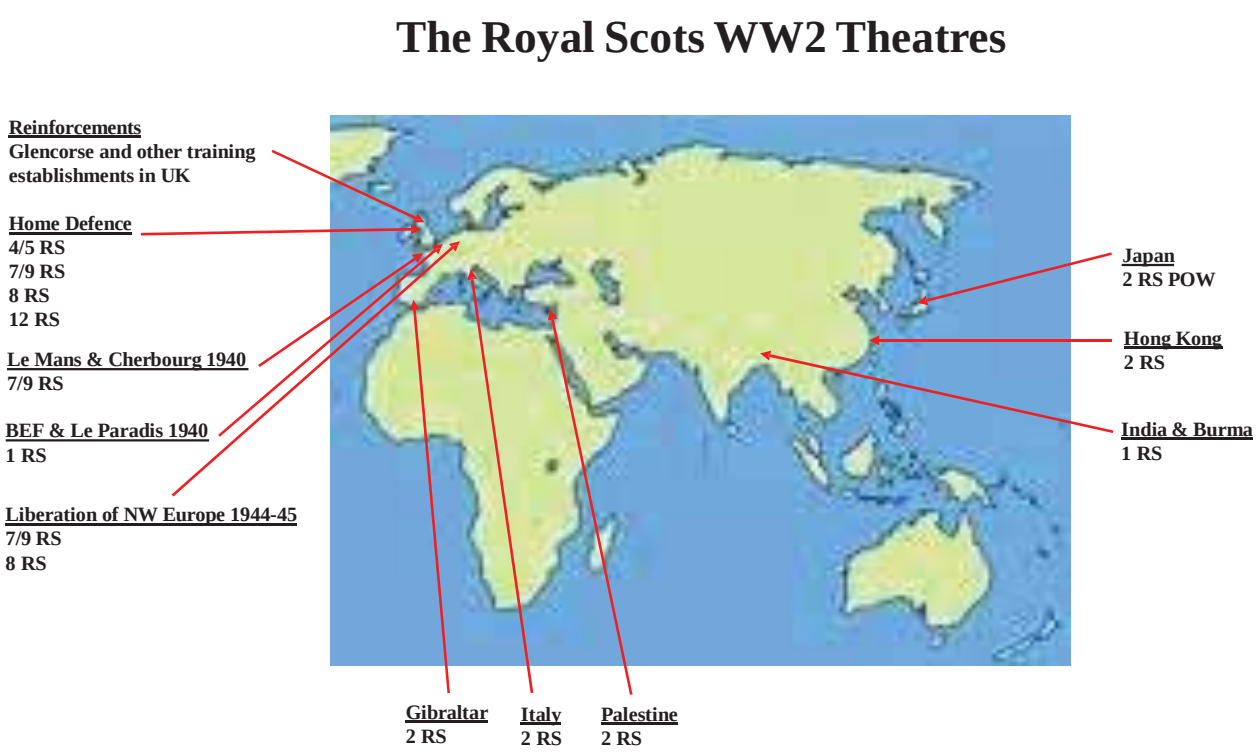
Distinguished Service Orders 14

Military Crosses 42

Distinguished Conduct Medals 10

Military Medals 40

THE ROYAL SCOTS WW2 THEATRES



FURTHER INFORMATION

Short histories of the individual Battalions' service in WW2 follow in the Battalions in WW2 section. Further detail on the sinking of the Lisbon Maru carrying 2RS POWs to Japan in 1942 (for the Regiment a similar disaster to the Quintinshill rail crash in 1915) and the Battle of Kohima (1RS (new) Burma 1942) can be found in the individual essays on each subject.

BATTALIONS OF THE ROYAL SCOTS (THE ROYAL REGIMENT) IN THE 2nd WORLD WAR

On the outbreak of War on 3 September 1939 The Regiment consisted of 5 battalions, two Regular and three Territorial (TA). The 1st Battalion was at Aldershot having moved there on return from an operational tour in Palestine throughout 1938 during which they had lost 15 killed and 42 wounded. The 2nd Battalion were in Hong Kong where they had arrived in January1938 having left England in 1926 for Egypt then successively China (Shanghai) and Quetta and Lahore in India. The TA battalions were the 4th/5th (Queen's Edinburgh) which had converted to a searchlight regiment in January 1939 so were, de facto, part of The Royal Artillery, the 7th/9th (Highlanders) based in Edinburgh and the recently reformed 8th (Lothians and Peebles) Battalion based temporarily with the 7th/9th but with Companies outside Edinburgh as their title indicated. The Regimental HQ and Depot was at Glencorse Barracks at Penicuik, south of Edinburgh. The 5 existing Battalions in 1939 immediately mobilised.

The 1st Battalion were virtually destroyed defending Dunkirk but a new 1st Battalion was immediately formed in England. Similarly the 2nd Battalion were all killed, or captured at Hong Kong in December 1941. On 16 January 1942 the Army Council redesignated the 12th Battalion as the 2nd Battalion.

An outline of the War Service is given for each Battalion below with fuller information under Further Reading. PPB denotes Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard Volume 2. The official Regimental WW2 history is The First of Foot by Augustus Muir published by The Royal Scots History Committee in 1961

Transcribed copies of the War Diaries of each of the Battalions can be found at:

https://www.royalscotskosbwardiaries.co.uk/

1st Battalion.

The Battalion deployed to France with the BEF on 21 September as part of 2nd Division and spent the 'Phoney War', other than 3 weeks over New Year when they deployed to the Maginot Line, on the Franco-Belgian Border at the large village of Lecelles, some 10 miles due south of Tournai in Belgium. On 10 May 1940 the Germans invaded Belgium and the Battalion moved forward to its pre-arranged deployment position at Wavre on the river Dyle, only some 5 miles east of Waterloo. They remained there without contact with the Germans, apart from bombing, until the night of 15/16 May when they were ordered to withdraw as the German advance threatened to cut off the BEF from the Channel ports. The withdrawal continued with only minor contact with the enemy. By the 21st the Battalion was holding a position on the River Escaut just south of Tournai. The Battalion was in continuous action all day, suffering over 150 casualties but not losing an inch of ground. The fighting continued the next day, losing a further 50 casualties, until the Battalion was ordered to resume the withdrawal that night. This continued until 26 May when the 2nd Division was ordered to fight 'to the last round and last man' as part of an outer defensive perimeter, beyond artillery range, to cover the evacuation from Dunkirk. After a desperate defence, together with the 2nd Battalion The Royal Norfolk Regiment, of the Bethune-Merville road in the area of the village of Le Paradis, and after appalling losses and virtually out of ammunition, 1 RS had effectively ceased to exist by 30 May. They, with the Norfolks, had disrupted the German advance for three critical days during which a closer defensive line had been created around Dunkirk and the evacuation had been organised and got well under way. It was at Le Paradis that almost 100 soldiers of the Norfolks were massacred after surrendering to the Totenkopf SS Regiment. Only a handful of Royal Scots made it back to England with 292 eventually becoming prisoners of war. Close to 500 had been killed or wounded including, amongst the latter, Lieutenant Colonel Money the Commanding Officer. He was seriously wounded on 27 May and evacuated to a dressing station at La Gorgue, the very spot he had been taken to

25 years earlier when wounded in the Great War. Eventually he made it back to England over the beach at Dunkirk. Perhaps the two greatest tributes to the Battalion were paid not by members of the Regiment or the British Chain of Command. Lieutenant Michel Martell of the famous French brandy family and the Battalion's French Liaison officer wrote to the, by now, Brigadier Money after the war saying 'Your Battalion was the most wonderful anyone could have hoped to command and, during the five years we waited for our freedom (he was a POW), after living with The Royal Scots, I could never despair of seeing Germany beaten'. The other was from a German officer who escorted some wounded Royal Scots to a French hospital. On handing them over to the Chaplain there he stated 'They fought like lions'. Defence of Escaut was subsequently awarded as a Battle Honour and carried on the Queens Colour. With the Norfolks we sought Le Paradis as a separate Honour but the Honours Committee ruled that it was covered by the 4 Brigade Honour of St Omer-La-Bassee.

Further Reading: WW2 Essay Le Paradis on the Regimental Website "www.theroyalscots.co.uk" under World War 2. The Thistle January 1946 and PPB pp 67-92

The 'new' 1st Battalion.

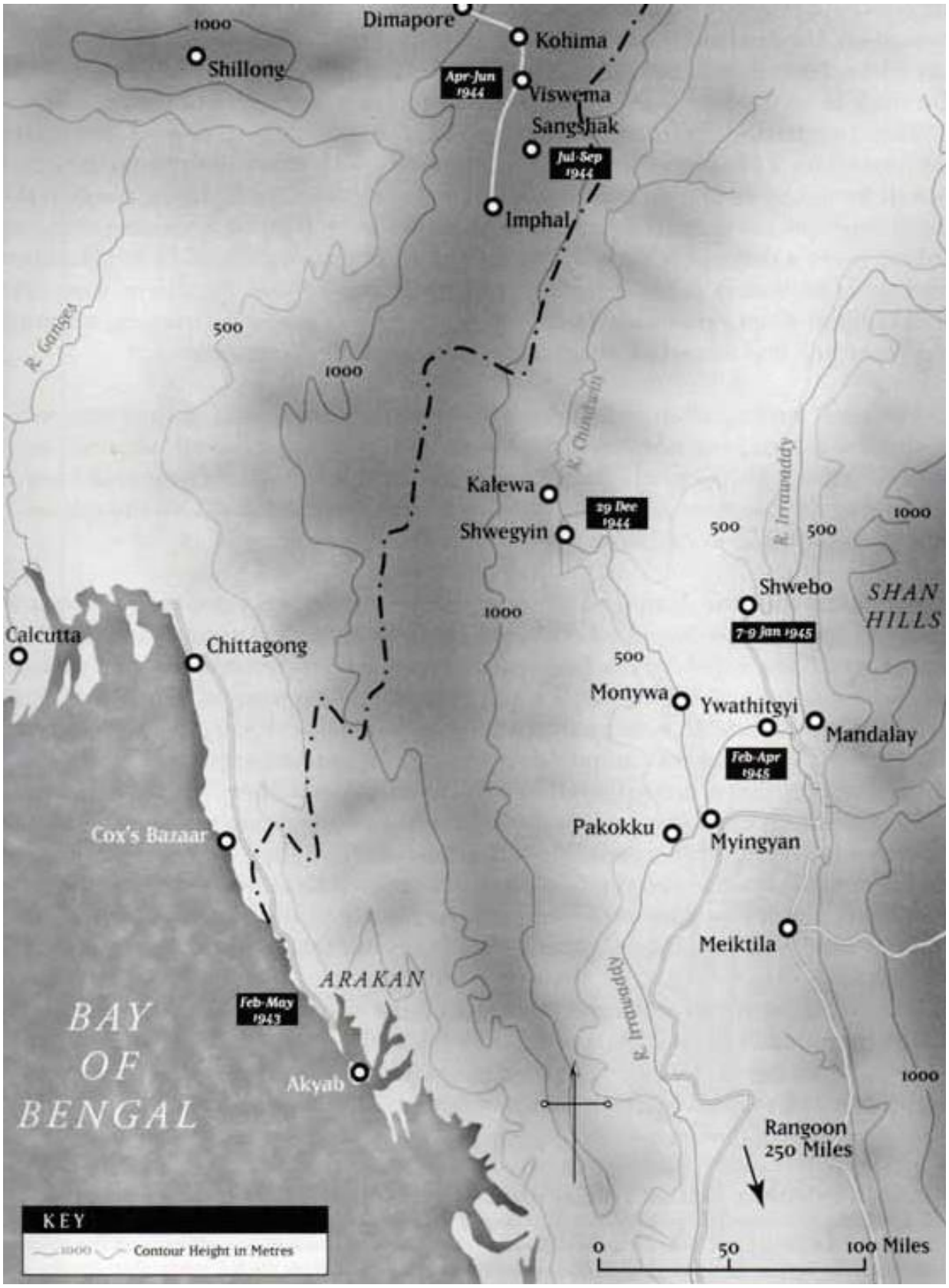
Within days of the completion of the Dunkirk evacuation the 1st Battalion was reconstituted at Bradford in Yorkshire under the command of a Royal Scot, Lieutenant Colonel Purves MC. It was made up of some 250 Royal Scots, drawn from various sources, and 600 men straight out of initial training. It soon moved to Great Driffield and, while beginning to train as companies and a battalion, was responsible for coastal defence over a 50 mile length of the Yorkshire coast. In December 1941 it moved to Burford in Oxfordshire for intensive training where it received visits successively from HM King George VI, HRH The Princess Royal and the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. On 15 April it sailed from the Clyde, again as part of the 2nd Division, on the transport Orbita for an unknown destination. Also on board were their old friends 2nd Battalion The Royal Norfolks. After a brief stop at Cape Town, with some time ashore on training, the 'unknown destination' proved to be Bombay (Mumbai) in India which they reached on 10 June. On disembarking they moved to Poona, inland in the hills.

Due largely to the monsoon the operational situation on the Indo-Burmese frontier had reached stalemate and, therefore, the second half of 1942 was devoted to training. There were regular long route marches, opportunities for field firing, special boat drills and some elementary combined operations and jungle warfare training. The training increased steadily in intensity and complexity. In late 1942, the Battalion moved from 4 to 6 Brigade, which was training for a special operation. In December the Battalion move to Calcutta and then, by air, to Chittagong

The first Arakan campaign had begun in late September 1942 as the first counter-attack against the Japanese. The plan was to advance down the coast from Cox's Bazaar to seize the Mayu Peninsula, followed by a seaborne assault on Akyab Island to capture the Japanese airfields there. This last phase was the planned objective for 6 Brigade but the Japanese halted the advance near the end of the Peninsula and 6 Brigade were committed on 18 March 1943 to try and clear the Japanese positions, They failed to do so and, by early April, were at risk of being cut off by a Japanese hook to the sea further to their north. Slowly the Brigade withdrew north from position to position with many fierce fights leading to considerable casualties en route, particularly amongst the officers. By 13 May, with the monsoon imminent, and the long-expected Japanese attack on the Brigade position at the north end of the Peninsula started, a further withdrawal to the 'monsoon line', some 50 miles south from the Indo-Burmese border took place. The campaign had been a costly failure but the Japanese had been held at the gates of India. In late May the Battalion withdrew into India and on the 24th it entrained for Chittagong, In mid-March the Battalion's strength had been 39 officers and 691 soldiers. Casualties had been 6 officers and 26 soldiers killed, 10 and 117 wounded and 1 and 51 missing - a total of

17 and 194. A further 550 had succumbed to sickness, mainly malaria. During the campaign it had received 500 reinforcements but, even with these, by the time it left Chittagong, it had been reduced to just 400 all ranks.

The Battalion then moved back to the Bombay area where it rejoined 4 Brigade and undertook an intensive period of anti-malarial medication during which no serious training, or exercise, was carried out. Once completed substantial reinforcements were received, taking the strength to almost 900 all ranks, and a comprehensive period of re-training began. At the end of January 1944 the Division moved to Belgaum in the central Ganges plain where it was possible to undertake intensive jungle training. They learnt that the jungle was their friend - you can not only live in it but also on it - you can find all you need to keep you alive there. More importantly they learnt to believe that they could beat the Japanese in it. This, and the subsequent deployment of 2nd Division to counter the major Japanese offensive westward towards Kohima and Imphal, in particular the Battalion's role in the holding of Kohima and the subsequent defeat of the Japanese there is described in the essay 'The Kohima Campaign 1944' found in the WW2 essays. The Battle Honour Kohima is carried on The Queen's Colour.



Burma, 1943-1945, 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots

Towards the end of June the Battalion moved back to a position on the road to Imphal some 12 miles south of Kohima where it carried out training for two weeks. It then moved some 20 miles across country to the east, but 40 miles by march route, to establish a Battalion patrol base at Sangshack

from which to scour the surrounding country for any signs of the enemy. There were none. From 21 August to 5 September it mounted a Battalion fighting patrol, supported by 140 mules, to ensure there were no Japanese operating west of the Chindwin. None were found but the operation was very seriously handicapped by the complete breakdown of the supply system which had been based on air drops and which, overall, were a failure. The column often operated above 6,000 feet, the maps were almost useless. The monsoon had begun many weeks earlier and what tracks there were, were veritable quagmires. Mules often slipped from these down the steep slopes and their loads had to be manpacked up again. A number of mules died and mule and bamboo became the main diet in the absence of any other rations. The Battalion covered between 100 and 150 miles over 16 days on 10 days rations before returning, starving, to Sangshak which they left on 11 September to return to the Kohima - Imphal road. The Battalion remained there, on a non-operational basis, until 2 December during which on, 25 November, the Battalion memorial to those killed in the Kohima battle was unveiled and dedicated at Kennedy Hill on the Aradura Spur.

On 2 December the Battalion moved further south to below Imphal. It was apparent that they would return to battle soon, so Christmas was brought forward to 21 December. Captain Tom Drysdale, the QM, with the help of the Pioneer platoon made a large clearing in the jungle in which they constructed a huge U-shaped table at which, after a carol service, the whole Battalion sat down together for a memorable 'Christmas' lunch. As they had guessed, they were on the move on Boxing Day and by the 29thhad reached Kalewa on the Chindwin, where they embarked on floats which were towed down to Shwegyin. On 7 January they made first contact with the Japanese some 8 miles north-west of Shwebo, defending possible routes to crossing sites on the Irrawaddy. On 9 January the Battalion forced the canal bridge (later found to be mined with a 250 lb aerial bomb) and the main road bridge across a moat, opening the way into the town. On 29 January, by now on the open plains leading to Mandalay, orders were received to capture the strongly held village of Ywathitgyi on the North bank of the Irrawaddy, the defenders of which had to be taken out before any crossing could be contemplated. The thickly wooded village stretched for about one and a half miles along the river and was about 500 yards wide. It was defended by a reinforced company with several MMGs and LMGs and was supported by guns and mortars firing from the south bank. A major undertaking for just one battalion but there were no others immediately available.

Ywathitgyi – CO's O Gp

Assault Pioneer platoon preparing for battle

The battle began on 31 January with an air strike by 8 squadrons of light and fighter bombers which lasted for 30 minutes, followed by A and B Companies, supported by tanks and Wasps (carriers equipped with flame throwers), assaulting the eastern end of the village. Initial progress was quick but, after breaking into the village, met well prepared and very difficult to pin-point enemy positions and each one had to be dealt with separately. Only about two-thirds of the village had been secured by nightfall when the attacking companies went firm. That night patrols failed to locate any enemy in the village, and the following day there was little change in the overall position. During the day, however, plans were made for the attack to be resumed on 2 February. This attack was preceded by a further air strike from three squadrons of Thunderbolt fighter bombers, and supported by a squadron of tanks and the fire of seven batteries of guns. By the end of the day the Battalion had secured the rest of the village and consolidated for the night. Much movement was heard in the village, mostly Japanese who had been cut off trying to reach and cross the river. Two parties were fired on, one in a boat which was engaged and sunk by machine gun fire, and the other trying to launch a sampan which was grenaded. Screams and groans were heard from both but it was impossible to assess casualties in the dark. Mopping up operations continued on the morning of the 3rd and the village was declared clear of enemy by mid-day. RS casualties were 15 killed and 37 wounded, Japanese as at least 60 killed and 4 prisoners taken. GOC 2 Division described the operation as 'one of the most formidable Battalion tasks that my Division undertook in Burma'

The remainder of February was largely uneventful and the Battalion eventually crossed the Irrawaddy by pontoon on 28 February, the last battalion of 2 Division to do so. On 5 March the Battalion, supported by a squadron of Sherman tanks and a troop of Wasps, attacked an area of pagodas about 5 miles south of the river with immediate success. Thirty Japanese bodies were counted, including an officer, and a considerable amount of documents and small items of equipment found, for the loss of one wounded. This was followed by further small actions all of which were convincingly won by the Battalion. Late March and early April saw the Battalion advance towards Mandalay but, by the time they reached it, the Japanese had been beaten and were withdrawing to the south. On 28 March the Battalion moved by vehicle to the area of Pyzni some forty miles to the south-west with the task of destroying those Japanese forces trying to escape over the Shan Hills to the north-east. On the night

of 3-4 April, after discovering one of the routes the Japanese were using, D Company mounted what the Divisional Commander described as 'a classic ambush'. They killed 53 Japanese in it and large quantities of weapons, ammunition, other equipment and documents were seized for the loss of one killed and one wounded. It was the last major action by the Battalion and was a brilliant example of how they, along with the other British, Indian and Gurkha troops in General Slim's 14th Army, had proved they were better soldiers than the Japanese. It had taken several years but, in the end, the Japanese Army had been beaten fighting in its own environment.

On 10 April the Battalion flew to Chittagong and, on 13 April, began to arrive near Calcutta where it started to refit and retrain for the assault on Rangoon but, before they were called forward, Rangoon had fallen. For the 1st Battalion the war in Burma was over.

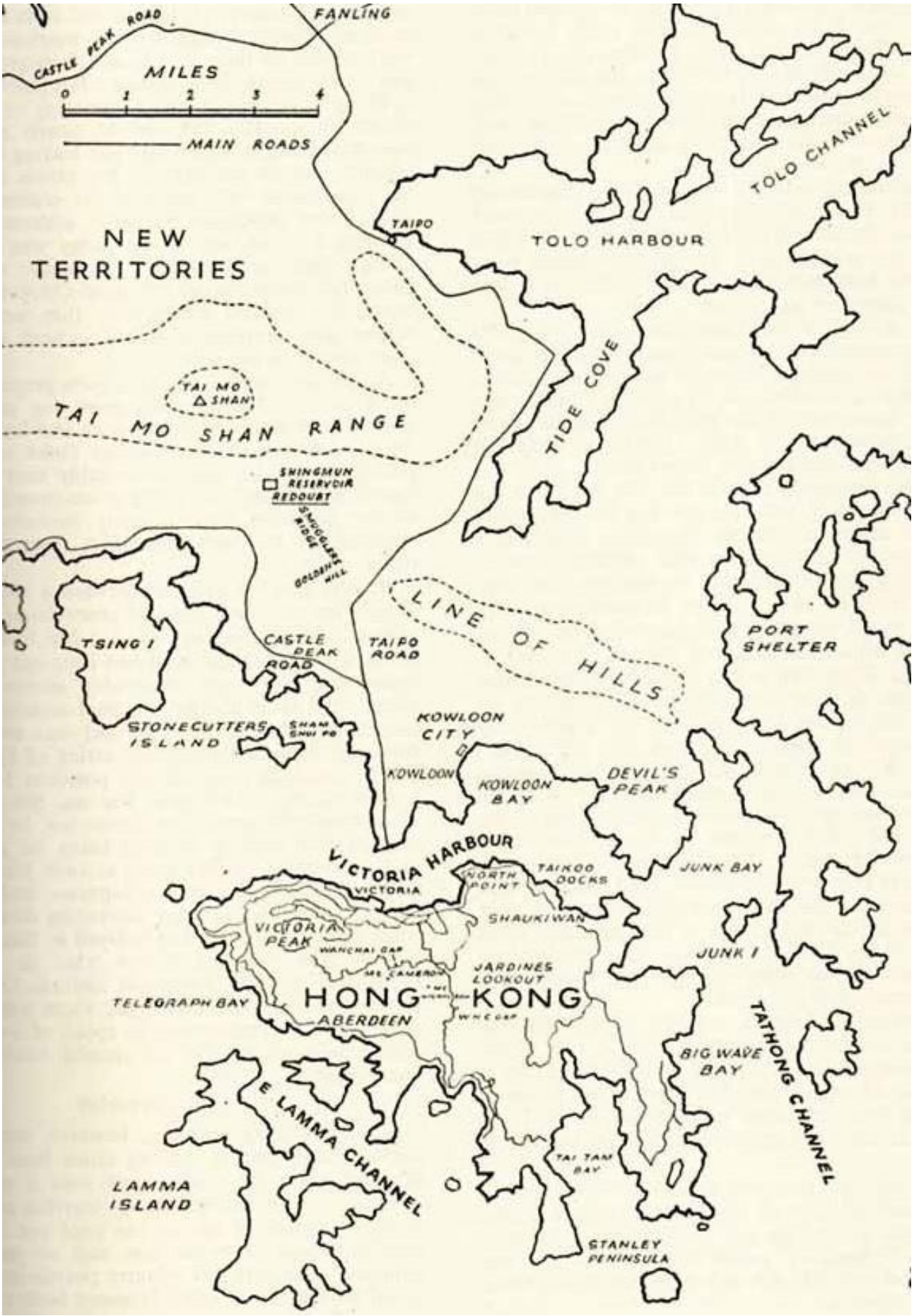
Aftermath. Although the 1st Battalion's war was over, the Battalion itself did not return to the UK until January 1948. Once the war with Japan finished in September many individuals were demobilised and new drafts, totalling 550, arrived in October. When the Battalion left Bombay in December it was, therefore, effectively a new or, at least, a different one. Initially it was understood its destination was Hong Kong but this changed to Singapore en route, where it arrived on 28 December in time to celebrate New Year. It spent a year moving between various locations on the mainland of Malaya and Singapore island before moving in January 1946 to Karachi in India, soon to be Pakistan. It was at a strength of only some 300, of which a few were still Burma veterans, but drafts, including some Danish soldiers who had volunteered to serve in the British Army to gain experience, took it back to over 500. They provided the Guard of Honour for Earl Mountbatten, the last Viceroy and Mr Jinnah the first Governor General of Pakistan, at the ceremony on 14 August in Karachi at which Pakistan gained nationhood. The Battalion sailed for home in mid-December, arriving back not far short of six years since they left the Clyde.

Further Reading: WW2 Essay The Kohima Campaign,1944; The Thistle January 1946 - Kohima, April 1946- Arakan and July 1946 - Mandalay; PPB 133-165.

2ND BATTALION. (HONG KONG)

The Battalion moved to Hong Kong from Lahore in India in January 1938, the year after the Chiefs of Staff in London had concluded that, although a four battalion garrison could not hold the Colony, it should neither be reinforced nor evacuated. This became even more relevant after the start of the Sino-Japanese war in 1938. Even before the outbreak of war with Japan, it was realised that from a military standpoint the colony was a liability rather than an asset. The emergence of Japan as a strong naval and air power and the development of Formosa by then had rendered Hong Kong indefensible as an independent strategic point. On 7 January 1941, by which time the Japanese had pushed the Nationalist Chinese beyond the Colony's land border, the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, wrote 'There is not the slightest chance of holding Hong Kong or relieving it. Instead of increasing the garrison (still at four battalions with supporting arms and services plus a locally enlisted Volunteer Defence Force) it should be reduced to symbolic scale..'. Everything that follows should be seen in the light of these statements.

Hong Kong consisted of the Island and the New Territories, or Mainland, across a strait less than a mile wide at its narrowest point. The Island, which is mountainous, measures a maximum of 12 miles from east to west and 7 miles from North to South. The capital, Victoria, on the north shore looked across to Kowloon, which housed the bulk of the population. From there the Mainland stretched north, through mountainous and sparsely populated country, to the Chinese border some 20 miles away. Only two roads, one hugging the west and the other, together with a railway line, the east, ran north from Kowloon both meeting at Fanling before the border.



Hong Kong 1941 – Area of operations

The Battle for Hong Kong was undoubtedly the most contentious action that the Regiment was involved in during WW 2. Although nominally involving two Brigades it was in practice, particularly on the Mainland, a series of actions fought by individual battalions and companies with, usually, very little support. This essay therefore leads off with considerable background to set the scene. Equally it would be too large an undertaking in this potted history to describe all the actual fighting from 8 December up to the surrender on 25 December, and the aftermath in the Japanese POW camps. Those seeking further information are therefore urged to follow up the sources quoted in Further Reading at the end - and, in particular, the War Diary written up by the CO Lt Col White, in 1945 after his release from captivity but from detailed notes made and hidden while a POW

In the summer of 1940 all The Royal Scots families, some 40 in total, with the exception of one or two wives who were members of the Nursing Detachment of the Volunteers, were evacuated to Australia. The Colours and silver were sent to Singapore for safekeeping there. They subsequently fell into the hands of the Japanese but, remarkably, the Regimental Colour and most of the silver, were recovered after the Japanese surrender in 1945. At much the same time the Battalion's efforts to prepare for war were severely hampered by the posting out (known as milking) of experienced officers, warrant officers and NCOs to form new units or fill staff or training appointments at home. By way of example, by the time of the Japanese attack in December, there were only four officers in the Battalion holding regular commissions.

In spite of Churchill's letter, in November 1941 the Garrison was 'reinforced', by the arrival of two partially trained Canadian battalions without their transport or support weapons. Until then 2 RS had been responsible for, and trained on and for, the defence of a sector of the Island. They had little or no knowledge of the Mainland. The additional manpower however allowed the GOC to adopt a new defence plan, resurrecting one that had been abandoned in 1938, through the creation of two, three-battalion brigades. One, consisting of 2 RS and two Indian battalions, occupying the 'Inner Line' on the Mainland some five miles north of Kowloon, and the other, the Island Brigade, composed of 2nd Battalion The Middlesex Regiment (2 MX), a machine gun battalion occupying a number of pillboxes around the coast of the island, and the two Canadian battalions. The 'Inner Line' stretched for some eleven miles from near Gin Drinkers Bay in the west to Port Shelter in the east. Some limited defence preparations had been begun in 1938 but no work had taken place since then and much of what had taken place was now in a state of total disrepair. The Inner Line had originally been planned to be held by at least a Division. The textbook norm for a Battalion frontage in such a position was 1000 yards. 2 RS, on the western end of the Line, were now allocated a frontage of some 5,000 yards running from west to east over heavily wooded hills with valleys bisecting it on roughly a north to south axis. The GOC who, like many at that time, believed that the Japanese were an inferior enemy, and did not accept intelligence reports of a significant build-up on the frontier, believed that the line could be held for seven days, allowing time to destroy the port facilities, thereby denying the main strategic objective of Hong Kong to the Japanese.

The Countryside in the New Territories on the Mainland in 1941

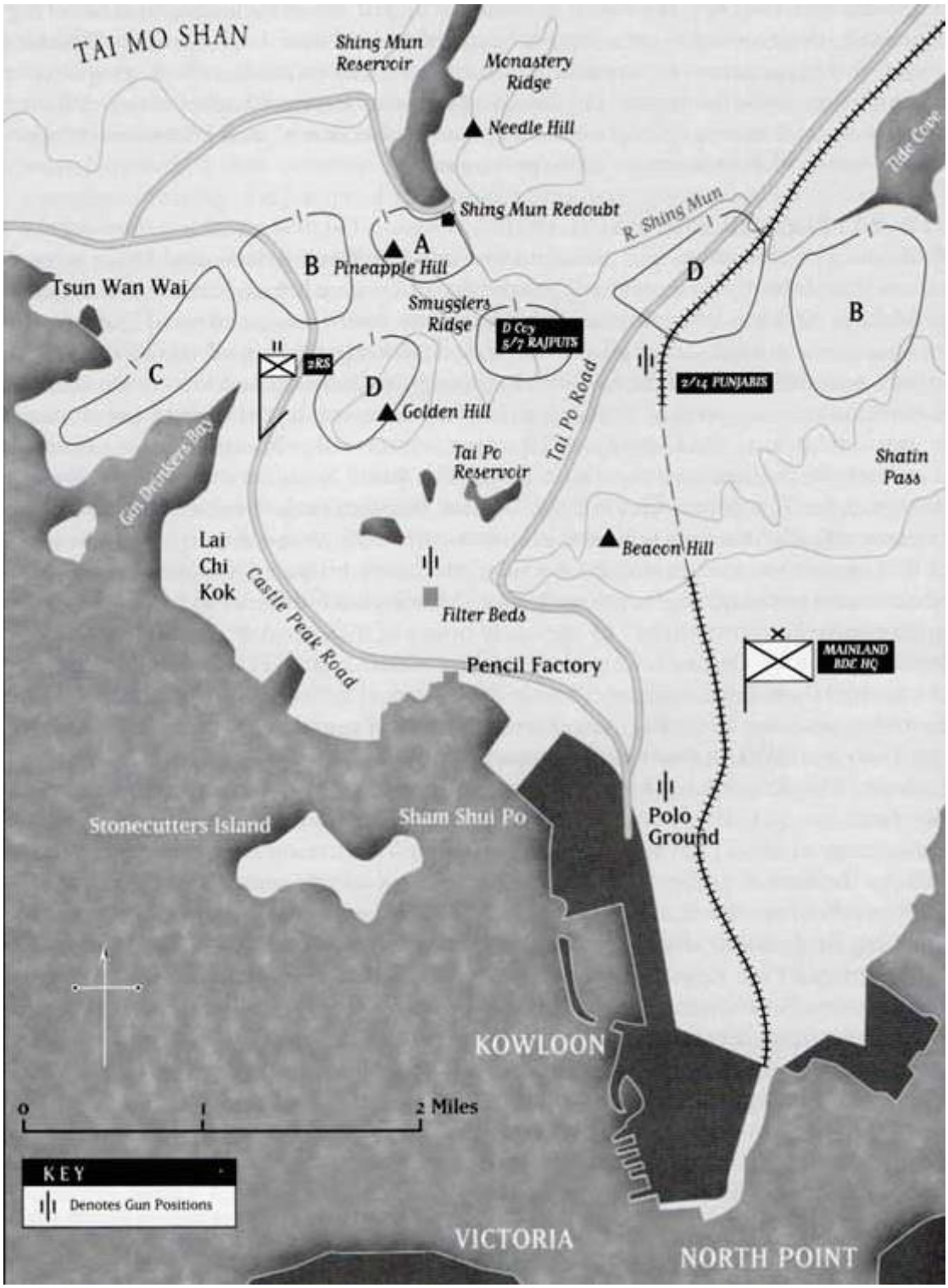
At the end of September Lieutenant Colonel Simon White MC, who had been Second-in-Command of the Battalion, took over command. This coincided with the Battalion's annual period of intensive training on the Mainland close to the border. This training was, however, interrupted as Companies progressively moved to their defence locations allocated under the new plan to repair, refurbish and, where required, replace and improve the limited work that had been undertaken in 1938. There was a lot to do and preparations were hampered by restrictions imposed by the civil government on such areas as the ranging of the Vickers MMGs and the laying of anti-personnel mines, of which only 90 were eventually issued to the Battalion, a fraction of what was needed to cover the many approaches into the area. Most, but by no means all, of the preparations had been completed by 7 December. There had, however, been little, if any, time to rehearse or co-ordinate patrol routes or procedures. Counter-attack routes had been reconnoitred by the CO and company commanders but there had been no time for platoon commanders to do so or for troops to rehearse the plans. Similarly, and critically, there had been no planning or rehearsals of withdrawal routes. All were planned for the week ending 13 December but, by then, it was too late. The Japanese had already overrun the Mainland.

There was another, more disturbing, restriction on the demanding physical work that is inherent in the preparation of a defensive position in such a rocky area - the effect of malaria. This had been a problem before the Battalion deployed to work on its new positions, but it soon got much worse as the area was considered to be the worst for malaria in the whole Colony, with an estimated rate of 75% incidence of it among any British troops stationed there. At that time there was no preventative medicine for malaria, only a daily dose of quinine which reduced the effect but gave no immunity. On 28 November the Battalion established a convalescent camp on the coast just north of Kowloon under the Battalion Medical Officer. 180 members of the Battalion were treated there but it took time

for individuals to build up their strength after they recovered. There were still about 70 in the camp when hostilities commenced. They were sent back to duty but were of very limited value.

The vital ground for the Mainland Inner Line was considered to be the Shing Mun feature on which the 'Redoubt' had been built in 1938. The name is misleading as it suggests a compact field fortification. In practice it consisted of 12 acres (6 football pitches) of a rocky and precipitous hillside, with a perimeter of at least three-quarters of a mile with some barbed wire as its outer defence. It is a principle of defence that, to be effective, any such wire obstacles must be covered by observation and fire. For much of its length, with the numbers available, it would have been difficult to achieve this by day and quite impossible at night, in particular if a patrol was out reducing the manpower available as sentries. At various points on the feature were five pillboxes, designed and sited to hold MMGs with their long range capability rather than to cover the 'dead ground' to their immediate front. Some of these pillboxes were 2-400 yards apart, linked by tunnels and trenches. On the high ground to the rear (south) of the position a concrete emplacement had been built into the hillside as an artillery observation post but this could not observe the ground immediately to the front (north) of the Redoubt or the most likely approach, the dam across the river itself. As a strong point with such a key role in the defence plan, the Redoubt was, at best, makeshift, and then only with a proper force of at least a company within it rather than the platoon of 27 allocated to it. 12 of these were committed to manning 4 Vickers MMGs leaving a maximum of 15 to watch the perimeter, and the dead ground beyond it, this became even more difficult at night when the orders required each Company to put out three fighting patrols of 9 during the night. The GOC, Major General Maltby, visited the Redoubt in late November and, in spite of being shown its deficiencies, the difficulty of defending it at close quarters with the lack of manpower, and the one mile gap to the Punjabis on its right rear flank, confirmed that it was his view 'that it was the key to the entire defence system'. Furthermore with proper vigilance and resolution, and given adequate artillery support, he believed the single platoon could hold the Redoubt against the Japanese for at least a week. This was the same General who considered the Japanese an inferior enemy who could not operate at night, did not accept the intelligence suggesting an immediate Japanese attack and, on 19 November, had signalled to the War Office referring to holding the Inner Line permanently.

This shortfall in numbers was reflected throughout the Battalion. On 8 December the strength was given as 33 Officers and 738 soldiers against a war establishment, including first reinforcements, of 25 and 771. On paper, therefore the Battalion was close to full strength but the reality was very different. Two officers and 153 soldiers, mostly suffering from malaria, were listed as being in hospital or convalescing following hospital treatment, 2 officers and 2 soldiers were on courses in India and four officers and 14 soldiers were on detached duties within Hong Kong leaving an effective strength of 27 and 569, including the 70 from the Battalion convalescent camp, or a deficit of 200 against the war establishment. The brunt of this was borne by the rifle companies who averaged some 70 against the 100 establishment or, in simple terms, one platoon light out of three.



The Battle for the Mainland 8-11 December 1941 showing 2 RS's Positions

By 7 December, on the eve of war, the Battalion, along with the rest of the Mainland Brigade was manning its battle positions. C Company, on the left, held the Texaco Peninsula, south of Castle Peak Road. B Company in the centre lay astride the Castle Peak Road and on the high ground east of the Pineapple Pass Road. A Company was on the right with Company HQ and 8 Platoon in the Redoubt, 7 Platoon on Pineapple Hill some 1000 yards to the west and 9 Platoon further to its left. D Company

was in reserve on the western slopes of Golden Hill. 'Forward troops', under command of Major Burn, the Battalion 2ic, based around the five carriers of the carrier platoon supported by two Defence Volunteers armoured cars, were deployed up to the frontier tasked with delaying the Japanese main thrust, which, in the west, was expected to come down the Castle Peak Road. (Author's Note. The conviction that the Japanese would follow the roads, ignoring their very real ability to move across country, be it through hills or jungle or both, probably accounted for too much emphasis being put on blocking these and led to a lack of numbers available in The Redoubt and its surrounds. A similar situation occurred in the defence of Malaya and Burma where our forces tended to tie themselves to the roads and were frequently outflanked. In the official account of the Hong Kong campaign the War Office historian emphasised that for many years the British Military attaches in Tokyo had been sending reports making it abundantly clear that, far from being a potentially inferior enemy, as many senior officers frequently stressed, the Japanese Army was a most efficient force with "with great physical endurance ...and could move across country at great speed and be self supporting for several days".)

By dawn on the 8th December the Battalion was informed that Britain and Japan were at war and, at 0800, they saw Japanese aircraft flying south on a bombing raid to attack targets in Kowloon and on the Island. In the process they bombed Kai Tak airfield destroying on the ground the five obsolete RAF aircraft which would have provided the only air reconnaissance capability for the defenders. There was no fighter defence. The forward troops fell back in front of the advancing Japanese blowing demolitions on both the main roads as they did so. By early on the 9th it was clear that the Japanese were close to the Inner Line and at 0630 the forward troops were ordered to withdraw into the defensive line. With the now clear evidence that the Japanese could operate successfully at night, D Company of 5/7 Rajputs from the Brigade reserve were ordered forward to plug the gap between A Company and the 2/4 Punjabis, coming under command of the latter. Its primary role was to cover the approach from the north through the gap to the Tai Po road and its subsequent deployment could do little or nothing to cover the eastern side of the Redoubt and prevent, or at least disrupt, any approach down there to get onto Smugglers Ridge above and behind the Redoubt.

The Shing Mun Redoubt (on hill to the left of the road) taken from the North, the direction of the Japanese approach across the dam wall. Note what is a considerable amount of dead ground from below the crest of the hill. The pill boxes were set even further back. Taken in 2000.

During the day the Japanese 228 Regiment moved forward towards Monastery Ridge from where the CO was able to observe how weakly the Redoubt was held and that there were no defences on the obvious approaches. By the time it was dark, its III Battalion, which was to assault the Redoubt, was within 2,000 yards of its objective, both unsuspected and undetected, with a planned H hour of 2100. The night was dark with light rain and some ground mist. At 2000 a 10 man patrol, under Second Lieutenant Thomson, left the Redoubt to patrol to the southern slopes of Needle Hill, along the Shing Mun valley and check in with the Rajput Company HQ, which was sited towards the Tai Po road, before returning to the Redoubt. The patrol returned at 2220 having spent some time with the Rajputs but with nothing to report of the enemy. Thomson went to Company HQ, co-located within the Artillery OP in spite of orders that troops, unless specifically ordered to do so, were not to occupy pillboxes by night but to be outside in fighting positions. It would seem beyond doubt, in view of the short time that had elapsed, that Thomson did not patrol towards Needle Hill or down the Shing Mun River or he would have run head-on into the advancing Japanese. The first group of these, about 150 strong, reached the Northern perimeter of the Redoubt, undetected as they moved silently on the rocky terrain in their rubber-soled boots, at about 2215 and began cutting their way through the wire. They were detected by a sentry at about 2315 but, by then, they were already within the perimeter. A second party of Japanese, of similar size, had worked their way round onto Smugglers Ridge behind but above the Redoubt from where they also attacked the defenders. Due to a further error Company HQ found itself locked inside the Artillery OP, the sentry on the door having been sent on a task and locking the door behind him. Trapped inside, the OC, Captain Jones, was unable to effect any command over the defence of the Redoubt. At 0245 on the 10th the Japanese blew the roof off the Artillery OP and the Company Commander surrendered it. By that time, of the three officers and 15 who appear to have been in the OP when the Japanese attacked, two of the Indian Gunners within the post had been killed and the three officers and six soldiers were wounded. In the meantime the balance of the platoon, totalling 22, were fighting the attacking force. Four, manning the pillbox nearest the Dam, held out until the afternoon of 10 December when the pillbox received a direct hit from a British shell intended for the Japanese still on the position. All four were dug out alive by the Japanese. Of the now remaining 18, one was killed and three wounded before Sergeant Robb, the platoon Sergeant, out of contact with any of his officers, heavily outnumbered and realising that nothing could be gained by further resistance, led the remainder along the crest of Smugglers Ridge to join up with D Company of the Rajputs. The Redoubt, built on what was considered the vital ground for the defence of the Mainland, had fallen in some three hours from the initial contact. Extraordinarily, Captain Jones, the Company Commander, was taken back to it on 31 January 1942 by Lieutenant General Kitajima, the, by then, Japanese Commander-in-Chief in Hong Kong, to reconstruct the events of 9/10 December. He reported that, in the General's opinion, the defences had three serious weaknesses:

1. The Redoubt was not held in sufficient force. Failure to garrison it with at least one company was, he said. 'absolutely fatal'. This was a cardinal error to which he constantly referred.
2. The approaches were insufficiently patrolled.
3. There was no obstacle on the dam. The General would have blocked it with wire and a minefield and placed a strong force of suicide troops in front. (Not a British tactic! - Author)

Due to a combination of basic errors of appreciation at the highest level, in particular in allocating troops to tasks across the Inner Line, and local failures at the tactical level in the lead up to and actual defence of the Redoubt, the route to Kowloon, and thence the Island, now lay wide open. The only hope of restoring the credibility of the Inner Line was to mount an immediate counter-attack to retake the Redoubt or its area. Considerable pressure was put on Colonel White to undertake one but there were many reasons why he resisted this. In simple terms the positions and immediate intentions of the Japanese were anything but clear before he could realistically launch an operation in the dark, which had neither been reconnoitred or rehearsed, over difficult ground and for which no obvious troops

were available. Instead he redeployed the Battalion to face the threat of the Japanese advancing west from Smugglers Ridge down to Castle Bay Road and, thereby, cutting the Battalion in two. The GOC and Brigade Commander, neither of who were prepared to actually order a counter-attack, finally accepted at 1000 that there would not be one.

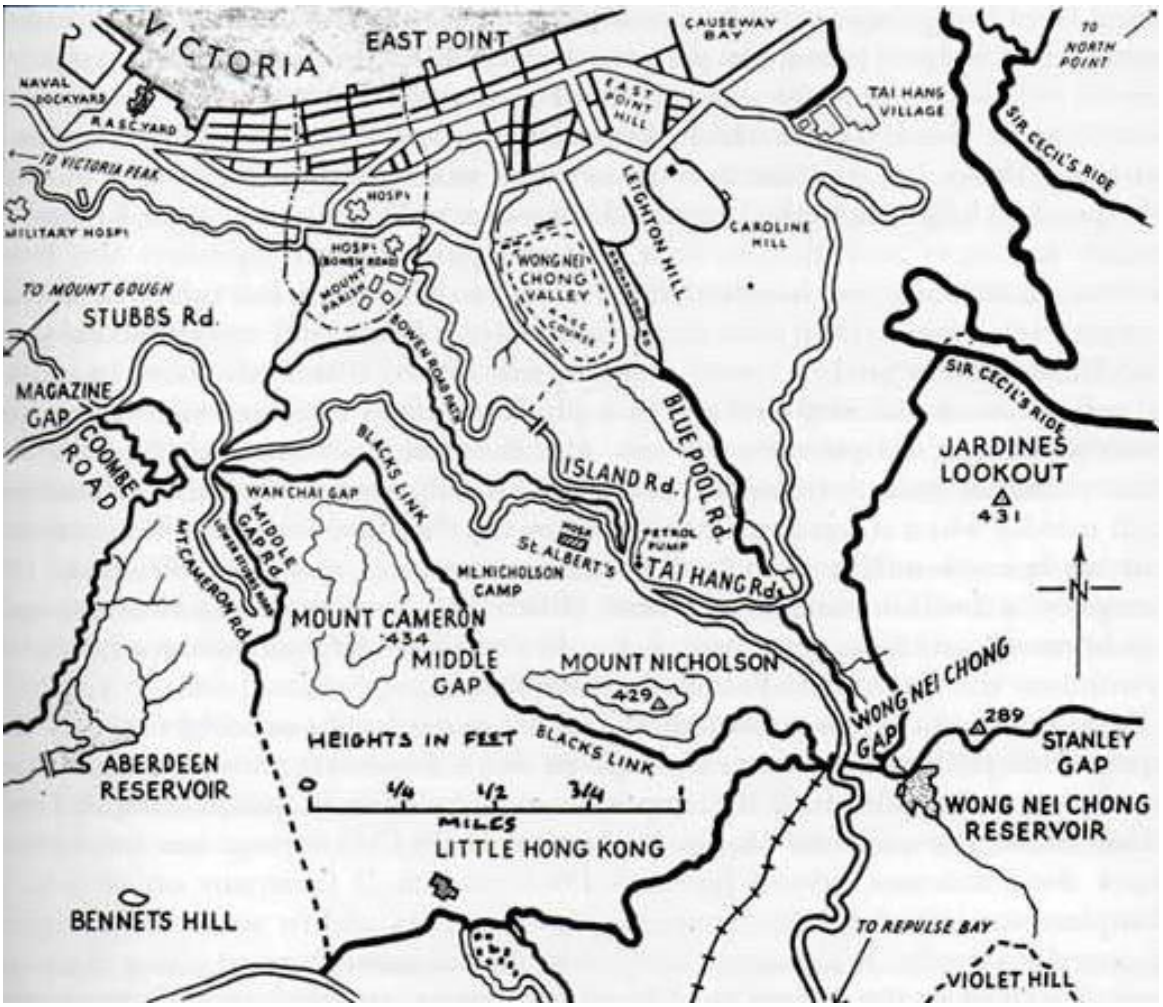
In fact the Japanese did not follow up their earlier successes (a failure on their part which was also noted in the Burma Campaign) and there was very little infantry action on the rest of the 10th. That night the Battalion withdrew to a new line of Smugglers Ridge - Golden Hill- Lai Chi Kok Peninsula. D Company held the right hand side of the ridge and Golden Hill itself. To its left was C Company reaching down to the Castle Peak Road with a carrier road block on its left flank. B Company was behind and slightly to the left of C, astride the Road. The two remaining platoons of A, which had withdrawn when the Redoubt fell, were in a reserve position down the road about half-a-mile behind B.

Two Japanese Battalions (some 2,000 men) followed up the withdrawal and initially attacked D company on Golden Hill. This began at first light on the 11th and continued through until the afternoon by which time D Company, effectively now only 8 strong, had halted the Japanese in the most important action during the fighting on the Mainland. Early on, while D Company had been holding the Japanese on Golden Hill two, possibly three, Japanese companies, supported by 4 inch mortars. had penetrated the gap between D Company and the rest of the Battalion. They attacked C Company from its flank. The Company was caught by surprise and, during some fierce fighting, ln which the Company had 22 casualties including both the OC and one platoon commander killed. Without contact with Battalion HQ, and having lost key commanders, C Company fell back on B, whose OC had also been killed early in the action. Some of B Company joined the unauthorised withdrawal but one platoon stood firm a little to the West of the Road until the arrival of the Battalion 2ic, plus the A Company platoons standing firm, meant the position began to stabilise. That night the Mainland Brigade, less the Rajputs on the extreme right in the Devils Peak Area, withdrew to the Island with, mostly as a result of D Company's actions that day, little or no interference. The Battalion's casualties over the fighting on the Mainland totalled 6 Officers and 32 soldiers killed and 67 wounded, excluding those lightly wounded who fought on. By way of comparison, and demonstrating how the weight of the Japanese attack had fallen almost exclusively on 2 RS, of the two Indian battalions involved the one that suffered most had just 11 casualties.

From 12 to 15 December the Battalion occupied positions on the north of the Island from Causeway Bay around to Tai Koo docks. All rifle Companies were reinforced to nearly full strength by men from Headquarter Company or the return from hospital of those who had recovered from malaria. Six officer reinforcements came from commissioning members of the local Volunteers and two Royal Scots officers returned from staff appointments on the Island to take command of B and C Companies whose OCs had both been killed on 11 December on the Mainland. At midnight on 13/14 December the GOC created an East and West Brigade. The Battalion formed part of the West Brigade commanded by a Canadian, Brigadier Lawson, with responsibility for the key area of Victoria, its hinterland and the strait facing the Mainland. Its HQ was in the Police Station and pre-War shelters at the Wong Nei Chong Gap (WNCG) where the main road from Causeway Bay to Stanley, Repulse Bay and the south crosses the ridge. The road effectively divides the island in two and, consequently, the Gap was of key strategic importance, the 'Redoubt' of the Island, and to play as significant a part in the coming battle as the latter position had on the Mainland.

On 16 December, to the Battalion's surprise, it was ordered to hand over its positions to the Rajputs, who had withdrawn to the Island on the night of 13 December, and to move into a reserve position around the Wanchai Gap, some two-and-a-half miles to the north west of the WNCG. The original intention had been for the Battalion to help defend the latter but General Maltby expected the invasion

to be launched from Kowloon in the west. He was wrong and the War Office historian subsequently said that his failure to concentrate adequate reserves in the vicinity of WNCG "resulted in the enemy being able to reach this vital point without meeting serious resistance." As things turned out 2 RS were soon to bear much of the brunt of this failure.



Hong Kong. The Battle for the Island, 19-25 December 1941

On the night of 18/19 December the Japanese landed six battalions in the area that the Battalion had recently handed over to the Rajputs. They quickly overran the Rajputs and moved swiftly to the south-east to secure the high ground of Jardine's Lookout (JL) which dominated WNCG. 2 RS, at Wanchai Gap, were ordered to stand fast, facing east on a north-south line to prevent the Japanese from moving towards Victoria. At this time, and through to 1100 on the 19th, Fortress HQ believed that only two Japanese battalions had landed on the Island. By dawn it was clear that the Japanese were threatening West Brigade HQ at WNCG. At 0700 the Battalion was ordered to send A Company, the Fortress Reserve, with all possible speed, to help relieve Brigade HQ which was by now surrounded and under severe threat. Thirteen minutes after receiving the order they were on their way by truck. They debussed some way short of WNCG and then advanced, deployed, up the road. The Company was soon pinned down by heavy fire from JL a few hundred yards short of WNCG itself. A few members of the Company, including two Sergeants, managed to fight their way through to the Brigade HQ. Soon after 1000, however, Brigadier Lawson made the decision that the only possible course of action was for those surviving to fight their way out. This they did but not one, including the few reinforcements from A Company, survived. A Company continued to hold its forward position until midday but, with mounting casualties (the effective strength of the Company had been reduced from 76 to only 15),

the OC and 2ic wounded and the only other officer killed, Sgt Whippey organised their withdrawal to Battalion HQ., which had now moved to a position north of WNCG. This he successfully achieved, an action, combined with further acts of considerable leadership during the fighting on the Mainland, earned him the subsequent award of the Military Medal.

The loss of Brigade HQ was serious, the fact that the Brigade Commander was not replaced for 24 hours was even more so as there was now no coordination for Brigade actions. This was compounded by the fact that East Brigade, commanded by Brigadier Wallis who had been the Mainland Commander, was allowed by General Maltby to retreat in front of the Japanese to the Stanley area. This move, subsequently described by the War Office historian as "a major tactical error" and "disastrous", meant that within 24 hours of landing the Japanese had physically split the defending forces in two.

At 1330 Colonel White had been ordered to leave all his positions on the Wanchai Gap and to hurry eastwards to try to restore the position at WNCG, which had become critical. To achieve this would require securing JL and the capture of the police station standing on a knoll above the road. Wired by the Garrison before hostilities began, the station dominated the immediate approaches to the Gap from all directions and was now strongly held by the Japanese. Since early that morning it had been attacked from the south by parties of troops sent in driblets to drive the enemy from the area of the Gap. These included a company of the Winnipeg Grenadiers, a Royal Navy party from Aberdeen fighting as infantry, who were ambushed en route, a composite group of Royal Engineers with more Navy personnel and finally, after dark, by a force of 100 Indian gunners under Major Hunt and supported by two armoured cars from the Volunteers. Despite the fact that they had inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, all the assaults had been driven back with heavy casualties themselves. The reason for this waste of effort and lives was due, at least partially, to the fact that there had been no coordinated plan to counter-attack WNGC, nor could there be with West Brigade HQ overrun and no new Brigade Commander appointed, and East Brigade HQ withdrawing to the south.

The Wong Nei Chong Gap in 1941. Looking south from the main direction of approach with the police station on the top of the knoll to the right of centre. The steps leading up to it can be seen as a thin line running up the hillside. The main road from Repulse Bay is on the right with Mount Nicholson looming behind it. Jardine's Lookout would be to the left rear.

Returning to 2 RS and their move from Wanchai Gap in the early afternoon. A Battalion attack on JL, less A Company, was planned. A composite force, formed from what remained of HQ Company and B Company was to advance via the south of Mount Nicholson to WNCG while C Company, advancing up Blue Pool Road was ordered to attack the south-west side of JL from the valley below. On the original plan D Company, supported by the three remaining carriers and some Vickers MMGs mounted on trucks, was to come up the main road from Causeway Bay swing left on a side road and come in on the left of D while supported by the MMGs firing from the slopes above Tai Hang Road. Artillery support was promised but in the event none was received. D Company had just begun its move when Fortress HQ informed the CO that WNCG was believed to be, for the moment, very lightly held, if at all, by the Japanese and D Company was to push on direct for it at best possible speed. While the Battalion, after A Company's experience of that morning, received this news with incredulity, the carriers, with two sections of MMGs were ordered to push on while D Company followed on foot up the road at best possible pace. Sadly the information proved to be incorrect and the Company came under very heavy fire in same area as A Company had been caught earlier The leading carrier suffered a direct hit from a mortar bomb killing all in it. The other vehicles managed to turn round and seek cover while the main body sought cover off the road which was not easy as the road had been cut out of the hillside with steep slopes above and below it. Attempts were made to fight a way forward but these were unsuccessful and it was decided to withdraw a short distance and to await nightfall. The composite force and C Company had both faced similar problems and been forced to halt by very heavy Japanese fire from JL where the Japanese were now dug in and using the pillboxes that were located there.

After the failure of the Gunner attack, at around midnight, Major Hunt made his way through WNCG and met with Captain Pinkerton, OC D Company, and told him his force had now 'dispersed'. Captain Pinkerton and D Company immediately moved up the road, this time unheeded, to WNCG in the darkness to attack the police station, the capture of which was essential if JL was to be cleared and the main route to the south reopened to link up again with East Brigade. There were only two ways of attacking the station; first, by a direct frontal assault across a flat but very exposed, short stretch of open ground, unfortunately so narrow that it only allowed one platoon to deploy at a time; and second, round its right flank to attack it from the rear up a steep, thickly overgrown and wired bank which, in the end, proved too dense to get through in the darkness. With the need for speed, Pinkerton's first assault was frontally with one platoon to get to the flight of steps leading up to the entrance. They were met with a hail of rifle and machine gun fire and, as they got closer, grenades thrown down on them. They could find no cover and were driven back with a number of casualties. A second platoon of D Company was dealing with Japanese snipers on Mount Nicholson and generally to clear the area to the west of WNCG. In the meantime the third platoon, under Second Lieutenant Jim Ford was working round the right flank. As they, unsuccessfully, tried to force their way up the slope Captain Pinkerton organised all available men and led a second frontal assault. He got up to the front entrance to the station but could get no further. He himself was wounded. Casualties were mounting and Ford decided to pull out and reorganise. He found Pinkerton half way up the steps and helped carry him back. For his superb fighting spirit and resolute leadership, both here and previously in holding Golden Hill on the Mainland, Captain Pinkerton was subsequently awarded the Military Cross. In his determination that the attack should not be halted he ordered Ford to carry out a third frontal assault. While he was preparing for this Ford's elder brother, Captain Douglas Ford, arrived at WNCG with his composite party drawn from HQ and B Companies.

This group had had a difficult route moving in the darkness to join D Company north of WNGC via Back's Link and across the shoulder of Mount Nicholson. They had come under heavy mortar and automatic fire. Captain Ford had left one platoon to the left of the track while the rest of the force struggled on over difficult ground. It was fortunate that Sergeant Sutherland, from the D Company platoon clearing to the west of the Gap, had climbed up alone to this bullet-swept hill-side and had

made contact with them to guide them down to WNCG. For this, and many other acts of courage in the Hong Kong fighting, 'Sandy' Sutherland was awarded the Military Medal. One of the unfortunate features of 2 RSs assault on WNCG was that, after the initial approach had been halted in the afternoon, and the Composite Company had been delayed crossing Mount Nicholson in the dark, the Battalion had been unable to carry out the hoped for co-ordinated attack, two companies strong and with MMG support, on the police station that night. Captain Ford now took command of all Royal Scots at the Gap and led the composite force rapidly across the open ground while his brother, with the remnants of D Company, once again tried the right flank and to work up through the scrub and wire there. This time the frontal assault reached the station but could not break in and was taking heavy casualties. The only hope was that the platoon on the right flank would at last succeed in penetrating the defences there. When this proved impossible Captain Ford decided to withdraw the survivors from a hopeless position in which complete annihilation would be certain with the coming of daylight. During the fighting on 19 December the Battalion had lost4 officers and 20 soldiers killed and 4 and 48 wounded, effectively a company's worth of casualties in a day.

Thereafter Captain Ford's force withdrew to positions on the lower slopes of Mount Nicholson from where it could overlook WNCG and prevent any enemy movement westward. The rest of 20 December was, for those who had pulled back, rather quieter, despite continuous mortar fire, unceasing rain and a lack of food. A move further up Mount Nicholson would have provided greater security but to control WNCG it was necessary to stay on the lower slope and there the Japanese could fire down on them from JL. Indeed B Company had to withdraw from Mount Nicholson to the area of Battalion HQ shortly after daybreak when they found the position they had occupied in the darkness to be untenable. Towards evening the Japanese attacked Captain Ford's right flank. Captain Ford saw that he would be sacrificing every man in his depleted force to no good purpose if he held on. Ordering his brother and a few men to cover their retiral he led his party down to Battalion HQ which was now established on Tai Hang Road near St Albert's Hospital.

While those on Mount Nicholson had been holding on, B Company of the Punjabis on the left of 2 RS, and occupying a knoll north of JL, which was believed to be now held by 500 Japanese with mortar and light artillery support, had asked for help. A Platoon of C Company were sent to reinforce them for as long as they were needed. There was, however, a 400 yard gap between the Punjabis and C Company, Colonel White ordered B Company less one platoon to that area. Placing his two platoons on the lower slopes of JL but suffering casualties en route, Lieutenant Glasgow led a party up the hill to Sir Cecil's Ride and managed to ambush and inflict heavy losses on Japanese who were advancing along the track. After returning to the platoons, Glasgow realised that come daylight they would be very exposed to Japanese mortar fire directed from higher up on JL. He had already lost nearly a quarter of his men. He therefore pulled back to a slightly less exposed position above the Tai Hang Road while another platoon was sent to fill the gap to the Punjabis.

At first light, about 0630, on the 21st,, B and C Companies were attacked from the direction of WNCG. The attack was broken up with heavy casualties inflicted on the enemy. Lt Stancer, who was commanding C Company, was wounded. Captain Cuthbertson, the Adjutant took over as OC and Captain Ford took over as Adjutant. A further attack astride Blue Pool Road against C Company succeeded in penetrating their forward positions but a spirited counter-attack with the bayonet forced the Japanese back and allowed the line to be stabilised. The Company was now only 30 strong but the Battalion were still astride the Tai Hang and Wong Nei Chong Roads. Casualties on the 20th and 21st totalled 19 killed and 36 wounded.

The Battalion position and strengths on 22 December was: A Company, approximately 20 strong holding the Petrol Pump crossroads supported by the one remaining carrier; C Company, less the platoon still with B Company of the Punjabis, approximate strength 30, astride the Tai Hang Road;

B Company approximate strength 50, astride the Island Road some 200 yards south of the Petrol Pump, and the handful of D Company remaining resting near Battalion HQ on Stubbs Road, just north of Petrol Pump. At about 1130 all positions came under heavy mortar fire followed by an attack which failed to penetrate and the Japanese were forced to withdraw. Fortress HQ had learned that the Japanese were working their way round the slopes of Mount Nicholson and even over to the south of Mount Cameron. Black's link was open to them as far as Middle Gap so it could only be a matter of time before the Battalion was attacked from the rear. At 1300 the Battalion was ordered to withdraw that night to a line west of Nicholson Camp, extending north astride Island Road which was to be blocked. The withdrawal was to begin at 1900. At 1800 Battalion HQ, which must have been located by the Japanese, was heavily mortared, Amongst the wounded were Colonel White, who declared himself able to retain command, and Major Walker the acting 2ic. Captain Ford now assumed that appointment as well as Adjutant. At 2100 the Battalion reported to Fortress HQ as being in its new positions, having disengaged from the enemy without incident.

At 0200, the Battalion having no means of contact with West Brigade HQ other than by runner, a despatch rider from Brigade brought a message saying Mount Cameron had been captured by the enemy. Colonel White decided to withhold this information from his Battalion and told only Captain Ford, now the next senior officer and who might have to command. Those from Mount Cameron were reforming at Mount Gough and Brigade HQ was moving to Magazine Gap. It appeared, therefore, that both the Battalion's flanks were exposed. All ranks were by now extremely tired, companies were weak in numbers and only a few effective officers (two companies were being commanded by Second Lieutenants) and senior NCOs remained. Colonel White therefore ordered them to lie 'doggo' with absolutely no movement during daylight and replied to Brigade that, unless otherwise ordered otherwise, he did not propose to withdraw further to the Wanchai Gap area until after dark. At about 0900 the enemy attacked but, although the forward positions were driven in, the enemy were repulsed and did not attack again until after dark. By 1730 the Battalion, less D Company, had withdrawn to the Wanchai Gap and the positions on Mount Cameron which was found to be unoccupied by the Enemy. In the early evening D Company positions were heavily mortared followed by an attack which forced them to withdraw to the north having suffered heavy casualties (relative to the actual remaining strength of the company) including the OC and Second Lieutenant Ford, the only officers left in the Company, both being wounded. In the early hours of the 24th the seven survivors rejoined the Battalion. Casualties on 22 and 23 December totalled 25 killed and 63 wounded - another company lost. Second Lieutenant Ford was subsequently awarded The Military Cross "for his untiring energy, courage and good leadership on both Golden Hill on the Mainland and his subsequent actions on the Island".

24 December was a relatively quiet day by comparison with those before, nevertheless a further seven were killed and fifteen wounded. One area of progress, unfortunately rather late in the action, was the delivery of 200 pairs of brown PT shoes for use at night. It was estimated that their arrival improved the Battalion's patrolling by 100% that night - sadly on what was to be the last one. A Company, 14 strong, and D, only 7, were sent back to rest that night having fought almost continuously since 9 December with no rest and little time to reorganise.

In the early morning of 25 December, Christmas Day, the Battalion was attacked but no penetration was made. General Maltby had earlier sent "Xmas greetings to you all. Let this day be historical in the proud annals of our Empire. The order of the day is Hold Fast." At 0900 Fortress HQ ordered that no offensive action was to be undertaken until 1100 as some women and children were being conducted through the fighting lines from Repulse Bay to Wong Nei Chong. This 'truce' was pretty one sided as Colonel White observed "during this .. the enemy moved troops forward, and bombed, shelled and mortared all known positions. When we requested permission (from Fortress HQ) to dispose of an enemy mortar which was being dug in some 200 yards to our front, permission was

refused on the grounds that we were not being attacked until the mortar actually fired on us." The Battalion's last Bren carrier had been captured by the Japanese but, in a daring sally, Corporal Stewart of C Company recovered it and drove it back. Supported by artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire (and later aircraft), the Japanese made an all-out attempt in the early afternoon to break through the Battalion and other units defending the Island HQ. C Company were ordered to withdraw to a police building, subsequently set on fire by incendiaries dropped from the air, while the other three companies, reduced to a skeleton force, doggedly held their positions. Colonel White was ordered to report personally to Brigade HQ, He was most unwilling to leave his Battalion at this critical moment but, soon after arriving there, an order was received to return to the Battalion and fly the white flag. Not believing it, Colonel White contacted Fortress HQ and spoke to Colonel Newnham, the GSO 1, who assured him the order was genuine and must be obeyed at once for General Maltby considered that "further fighting was useless slaughter and the white flag must be flown." - so much for his Xmas Greetings of earlier that day!

At 1640 Colonel White returned to Battalion HQ and informed Captain Ford, Lieutenant Glasgow, Second Lieutenant Fairbairn and the RSM of the order and, at 1643, the white flag was hoisted. The Jocks were as disbelieving of the news as their CO had been. They had reconciled themselves to ' a fight to the finish with the Nips'. Indeed, when a runner was sent with the news to Second Lieutenant Hamilton whose platoon was slightly isolated, he put the man under close arrest and sent one of his own men to Battalion HQ to find out the truth. Weapons were unloaded and a roll call taken of all ranks still in action'. This came to 4 Officers and 98 other ranks. The total casualties suffered by the Battalion since 9 December were:

Killed	Officers 12	Other Ranks 95	Total 107
Wounded	17	213	230
Total	29 (88%)	308 (54%)	337

There was one isolated area of Christmas cheer that day. Lieutenant Drummond Hunter the Intelligence Officer, had been wounded in the fighting on the Island and evacuated to hospital, There he was married, one hour after the surrender, to Miss Peggie Scotcher, a Volunteer nurse. She was interned at Stanley whist he was in a POW Camp. They did not meet again until after the Japanese surrender

Any final view on the defence of Hong Kong is best summarised in the words of Winston Churchill; "The Garrison were faced with an impossible task that from the outset was beyond their powers".

It fell to the 2nd Battalion, understrength through illness, lacking experience in a number of key appointments, far too thinly stretched over difficult ground and, along with the higher command, ill-prepared to oppose the better trained, better equipped and more experienced Japanese forces, to face the brunt of the enemy attack at the outset of hostilities. Many officers and soldiers performed well during the fighting on the Mainland and, those who survived, throughout the heavy fighting on the Island (where nowhere were they broken through) gave of their very best. For that, and for their subsequent conduct during nearly four years of dreadful captivity, the 2nd Battalion occupies a special place in the history of the Regiment.

Aftermath. After the fall of Hong Kong twenty-two officers and 608 soldiers of the 2nd Battalion became prisoners of the Japanese. Of that number three officer, including Captain Douglas Ford GC executed (murdered) by firing squad, and fifty-nine soldiers died in captivity and a horrifying three officers and 178 soldiers died at sea as a result of the Lisbon Maru incident.

Captain Douglas Ford GC

Captain Douglas Ford was in command of The Royal Scots in Sham Shui POW Camp on the Mainland. He made contact with loyal Chinese outside and thus badly needed medical supplies were smuggled in to help sick men who were slowly dying through lack of proper medical treatment. Later on, Captain Ford hoped, a break-out from the camp might be possible. Word was secretly passed to General Maltby and a link was formed with the British Intelligence authorities in China who promised to help when the time of escape drew near. Unfortunately, due to the carelessness of a Chinese messenger, the Japanese got wind of this and several officers and Sergeants were arrested by the Kempei, the Japanese Gestapo. Suspecting that officers of high rank were implicated, the Japanese resorted to torture in order to get the names and evidence they wanted. Because he accepted full blame, special torture of the most ruthless kind was used on Captain Ford. His steadfast refusal to give anyone away, even at times of great physical agony, evoked the surprise and admiration of his torturers. From his arrest on 10 July 1943 he was held in solitary confinement on starvation rations. Along with others he was eventually brought to 'trial' on 1 December on charges of espionage (an illegal Court Martial as Captain Ford, as a British Officer, could not be subject to Japanese military law). He was sentenced to death along with his co-accused officers, Colonel Newnham of The Middlesex Regiment and Flight Lieutenant Gray RAF. Three Sergeants, including one from the RAF and another from the Canadian Signals, who were tried on lesser charges, were each sentenced to 15 years hard labour. Ford then lay for eighteen days with no hope of reprieve and the certain knowledge that he would not get even one square meal or five minutes exercise in the open air before his death, yet he never lost his courage. When taken to the place of execution with the other two condemned prisoners, both of them, like him, sick from malnutrition and torture, his resolution was such that he was able to help them from the truck. As the junior officer he took up position on the left of the three but the Japanese officer

in charge of the firing squad, having heard of his courage, insisted on his standing in the senior position on the right. And so Captain Douglas Ford met his death. Subsequently all three officers were posthumously awarded the George Cross, the United Kingdom's highest award for heroism not involving military action, and a unique distinction within the Regiment. Colonel White left this fitting tribute: "Captain Douglas Ford's cold, calculating courage, soldierly behaviour and conduct at this time might conceivably have been equalled in the proud annals of the Regiment, but it certainly could not have been surpassed." He is buried in Stanley Military Cemetery.

Two soldiers, Privates Gallacher and Hodges managed to escape from the Sham Shui Po Camp. Making their way out of Japanese-held territory they reported to the British authorities in China who arranged for their transport home. For their courage and success they were both awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Gallacher subsequently served with the 8th Battalion in North-West Europe, while Hodges served with the 'new' 2nd Battalion in Italy, Both survived the war. Gallacher remained a Regular, and, as a Corporal, was killed while serving with 1st Battalion, The King's Own Scottish Borderers in Korea on 20 May 1951.

Somewhat similarly Captain Pinkerton MC, after recovering from being wounded, survived as a POW, served in Korea and then was killed in Port Said during the Suez operation on 15 December 1956.

Nemo me Impune Lacessit

(No one dares me with impunity – The Regimental Motto)

Lieutenant Colonel Simon White (back to camera) interrogating Colonel Tokunaga, the Japanese Commander of POW Camps, in September 1945, after the surrender of the Japanese in Hong Kong,

Further Reading: WW2 Essay Lisbon Maru; The Thistle October 1946 and January 1947- 2nd Battalion (Old) 1940-45, October 1946 -Sinking of the Lisbon Maru, November 1946 -Osaka POW Camp, July 1946 - Recuperation in New Zealand, July 1946 - Posthumous award of the George Cross, October 1950 - A Fortnight in Hong Kong, 1945. There are also articles on The Recovery of the Regimental Colour (April 1946) and Mess Silver (October 1947) and in the Essay on Regimental Silver on the Regimental web-site Museum and Heritage; PPB pp 93 - 132.

THE ‘NEW’ 2nd BATTALION

On 16 January 1942, only three weeks after the surrender, the Adjutant-General wrote to The Colonel of the Regiment to inform him that "The Army Council has decided that it is very desirable that the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Scots, which was unfortunately lost at Hong Kong, should be reconstituted at once." The letter went on to say that the 12th Battalion, itself formed from the 50th Holding Battalion in June 1940, would be redesignated the 2nd Battalion. This took place formally on 28 May 1942.

12RS had been deployed on coastal defence duties in Aberdeenshire and Northumberland until moving, in October 1941, to the Shetlands where it was stationed as part of the defence force at the time of redesignation. Throughout 1942 it trained very hard in the expectation of being posted overseas on operations. In November 1942 it moved to Caithness and then, in March 1943, to St Andrews and the rumour that it was destined for 'a tropical clime'. On 14 April the Battalion sailed from the Clyde but the 'tropical clime' turned out to be as part of the garrison of Gibraltar. This was a huge disappointment to the whole Battalion who were in peak condition and highly trained for battle. Further garrison duty was the last thing they wanted or expected.

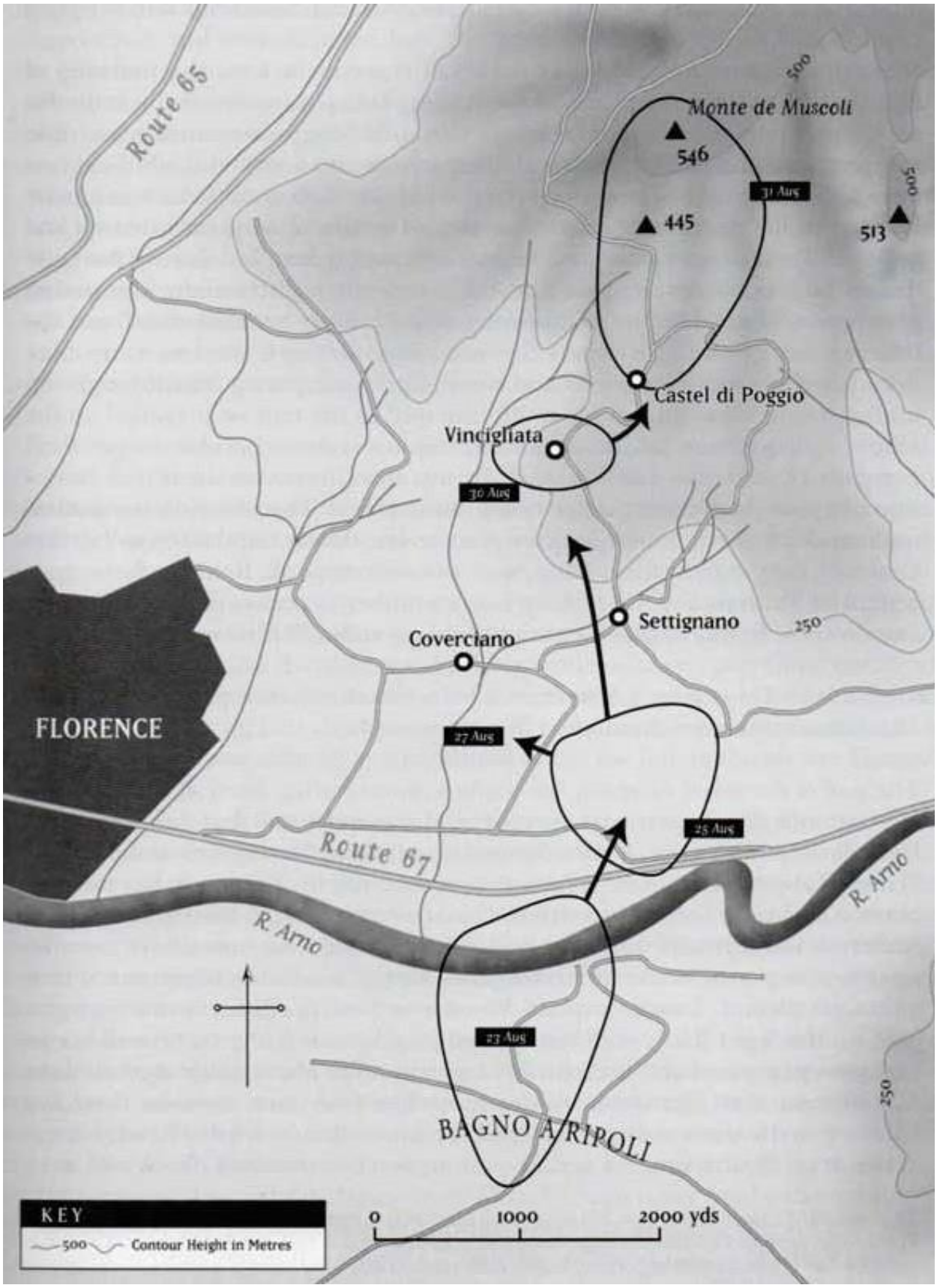
The Pipes and Drums of the 2nd Battalion playing on an Aircraft Carrier, Gibraltar 1943

The Battalion endured fifteen boring months at Gibraltar where, inevitably, its training, other than physical fitness, suffered considerably. The only reasonable training facilities that existed were in North Africa and, due to commitments in Gibraltar, it was only possible for one company to train there at a time, and then only for short periods. Relief did not come until July 1944 when 2RS received orders to move immediately to Italy from where many experienced units, both British and American,

had been withdrawn to take part in the landings in Normandy and, later, the south of France.

The Battalion disembarked at Naples from Gibraltar, in company with 1st Bn The Hertfordshire Regiment, on 29 July. Both Battalions spent a week drawing up transport and stores before moving to the Piedmonte area where they linked up with 11th Bn The Lancashire Fusiliers, who had come from Malta, to form 66 Brigade. The original plan was to undergo a badly needed, three month, intensive training period working up to operations at brigade level. Circumstances, however, precluded that opportunity as it was clear that, unless operations started immediately, there would be no opportunity before the onset of the Autumn rains and bitter winter to break through the immensely strong Gothic Line, constructed by the Germans along the up to 6000 foot high ridge line of the Apennines, running from coast to coast across Italy north of Florence. Furthermore the reduced strength of the Allies could result in the Germans further reinforcing the Gustav Line and wresting the initiative back from them.

By 21 August 66 Brigade, now forming part of 1st British Infantry Division within the US 5th Army, commanded by General Mark Clark, had moved up to an area just to the east of Florence. The Division's objective was to the east of Bologna and the plains of Lombardy where they were to link up with the 8th Army. The 1st Division was to use 'Arrow Route', a relatively minor route following the valleys, running from Florence through Borgo San Lorenzo to Faenzo some 10 miles south-east of Imola, while the US 85th Division pushed up Route 65, the main Florence to Bologna road. B Company of 2RS were immediately deployed securing Revezzano Ford a key crossing on the River Arno about two miles east of Florence from where the other Companies carried out an aggressive patrolling programme to probe the German positions in the foothills south of the Apennines.



Crossing the Arno 25-31 August 1944

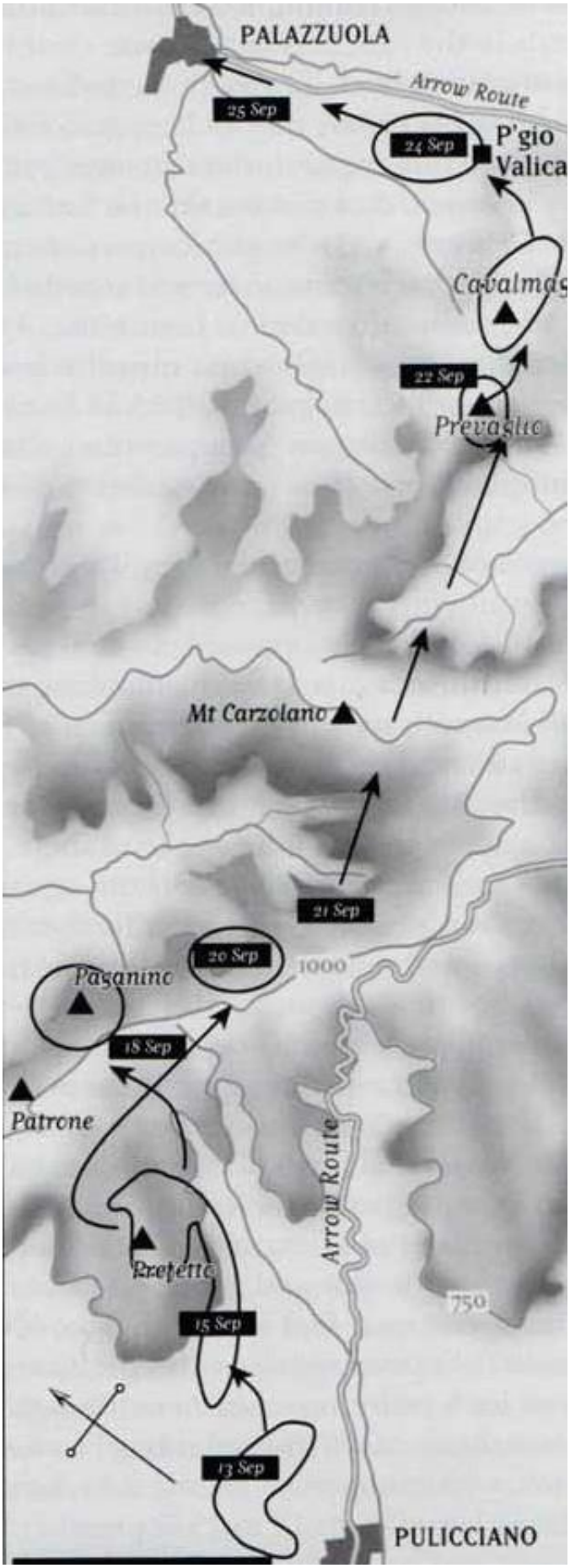
These had a number of clashes with stay behind parties. The most serious was on 25 August when D Company, led by the OC, Major Robertson, was tasked to secure the high ground at Castel Di Poggio (quite literally a medieval Castle) about three miles north of the Ford and which had been identified as

a German stronghold. A company attack secured the high ground with eight Germans killed and four captured. Major Roberson then led a small party to the Castle itself. They came under heavy fire and were forced to withdraw. Major Robertson was wounded twice and it proved impossible to evacuate him. By this time the rest of D Company had come under heavy mortar fire and were themselves forced to withdraw having suffered one killed and 14 wounded. Major Robertson was captured by the Germans but survived his wounds as the Battalion later learnt when they found a message written in chalk on a table in a deserted farmhouse which read "Greetings to the RS - the finest English (sic) regiment. Major Roberson is well."! Nevertheless, a bridgehead two miles deep had been secured in only four days after the Battalion had commenced operations. Two days later a fighting patrol was sent to the hamlet of Vincigliata about half-a-mile south west of Castel di Poggio, and again dominated by a stone castle. This time the patrol managed to scale the wall before they were seen and came under heavy fire from different directions. Private Robert Bell, a Bren gunner, managed to silence one of the German machine guns while Lieutenant Anderson, the patrol commander withdrew the patrol, which was in danger of being wiped out, back across the outer wall and moat He was wounded whilst doing this and again subsequently. Bell covered this withdrawal by racing up to the Castle wall and firing his Bren gun at point-blank range into windows and weapon slits. He continued to cover the patrol as it withdrew out of action leaving Lieutenant Anderson, on his direct orders, behind. For his actions that day Bell was awarded the Military Medal. Anderson managed to get himself into some woods where he was found by an Italian partisan who helped him back to Battalion Headquarters. For his leadership he was subsequently awarded the Military Cross. On 31 August the Battalion advanced over the ground it had dominated over the last ten days to take the 1775 foot high feature of Monte de Muscoli, four miles north of the Arno, thereby securing the east flank of Arrow route for 1st Division to begin its advance North.

A convoy on Arrow Route

Much to its surprise the Battalion was withdrawn to Florence that night before being moved in transport the next day up Route 65 to the area of Montorsoli. They remained there until 5 September, patrolling constantly across countryside infested with mines and booby-traps, against an able and determined enemy from the German 4th Parachute Division, at a cost of 20 casualties. The most serious loss was when a stray shell knocked out the whole of D Company's O group while they were recceing for a planned Battalion night attack on 2 September (later cancelled), killing two and wounding the remaining three (having already lost Major Robertson their OC). During one of the patrol actions, after the patrol was effectively surrounded by the Germans, Pte Thomson, another Bren gunner, although wounded in the shoulder stayed behind for fifteen minutes to cover the patrol's withdrawal before, dragging his gun behind him, managing to rejoin them.

.For this action he was subsequently awarded the Military Medal. The Battalion returned to Florence



The Advance to Pallazuola 13-27 September

on 5 September until 12 September when they moved forward to north of Borgo san Lorenzo to join the rest of the Division in the operation to break through the Gothic Line, with 66 Brigade playing the leading role. 2RS's task, within 66 Brigade, was to clear the enemy from the high ground to the West of Arrow Route by advancing along the ridge line while the other two Brigades of the Division pushed up the road into the valley below.

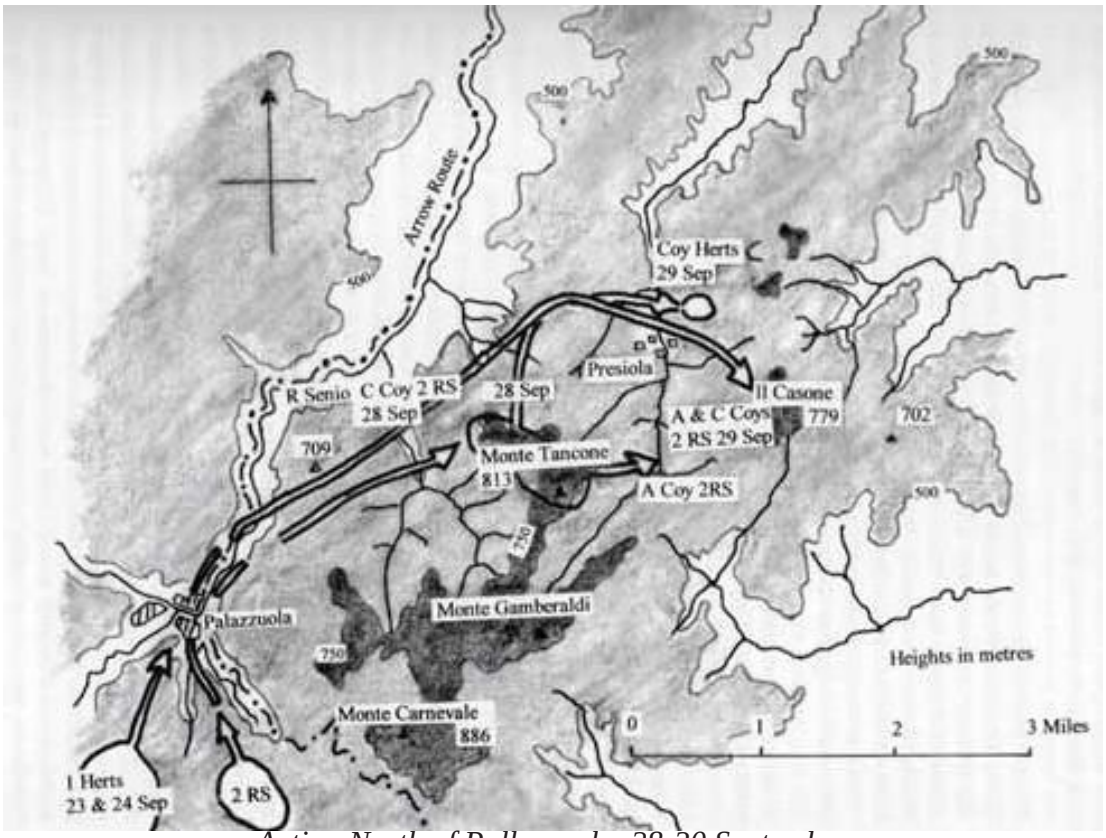
All supplies would have to be brought forward by mule-train. Fortunately both the CO and 2ic had been with the 7th/9th Battalion when they were training as a Mountain Division in the Cairngorms and were able to oversee the training of men from HQ and Support Companies in the loading of these animals. The following day the advance began on foot from the village of Pulicciano with B Company leading along the narrow spur leading up towards Mount Prefetto. Almost immediately patrols located defensive positions. The following morning the Company was strongly attacked and the forward position was initially forced back a short distance but they halted the attack and inflicted heavy casualties before advancing and regaining the lost ground, It had not been without cost however. B Company had now lost all its platoon officers and two sergeants. C Company, in the meantime, had been cut off for 16 hours in a hollow just below the crest line. With all senior to him killed, wounded or missing, Sergeant Gott organised the Company into a defensive position and, that night, led them back to rejoin the rest of the Battalion, bringing their casualties with them. For this outstanding display of leadership he was rightly awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Assisted by the two other battalions in the Brigade the attack was pushed forward and, in less than 36 hours Monte Prefetto had been secured. After the Americans had captured Monte Patrone, the next objective was Monte Paganino, the highest point in that area of the Apennines and, in turn, one of the principal bastions of the Gothic Line.

By this time the weather had broken and the autumn rains, which had begun a fortnight before with sudden drenches, were now coming down in long steady torrents. The attacking troops had to scramble up as best they could, often on hands and knees, carrying equipment, weapons, ammunition and food. As they climbed over rocks or clawed their way up through deep mud, they were halted every now and then by machine-gun fire. The dense undergrowth further impaired their progress but the Jocks were often grateful for the cover it gave them.

H-hour was at 1000 on the 19th. Before noon, A Company, leading the Assault on a ridge which was so narrow that it could only accommodate one, by now, weak company at a time, were within 300 yards of the summit having wiped out two machine-gun posts en route. At this point they came under further heavy machine gun fire supported soon after by sustained mortar fire. It was obvious that the summit was defended in considerable strength and, by 1400, only a further 100 yards had been gained, although at a heavy cost.

The Company went to ground and stayed there until dawn the next day when they rose from their hollows amongst the scrub and converged on the mountain crest and, fighting their way yard by yard into the midst of the enemy position, a small party was on the top by 0645. All around the summit the rooting out of the enemy from their defences began and, by 0920, after almost 24 hours of desperate fighting, without a break, the OC was able to declare that Mount Paganino was secure and the Gothic Line breached although not yet broken. Significantly, having crossed the watershed of the Apennines the mass of streams and rivers were now running north towards the plains of Lombardy.

Following the capture of Mount Paganino the lead was taken over by the other battalions of 66 Brigade, with the objective of the village of Pallazzuola, and 2RS moved into Brigade Reserve. They supported others as required as they advanced nearly thirty miles along razor edged ridges, across deep valleys and up again into the mountains, Every few miles small enemy positions, magnificently sited, well camouflaged and potentially almost impregnable, had to be stormed in the face of accurate Spandau and mortar fire. On 21 September, the Battalion advanced some four miles led by B Company, by now only 50 strong, but augmented with a platoon from A Company, to attack Monte Prevaligo. As night fell B Company were short of their objective so formed a tight defensive perimeter and dug in. At first light the Company stormed up the steep slopes and took the crest. From prisoners they learnt that the next feature, Cavalmagro, was strongly held. Nevertheless Major Mackenzie decided to maintain the momentum and two platoons headed down the forward slope, sliding and falling as they went, until they were within attacking distance of Cavalmagro. With covering fire from massed Bren guns on top of Prevaligo, under the direction of CSM Cameron (who played a major part in many of the 2nd Battalions actions and was later to be a most distinguished RSM of the 1st Battalion from 1953-59) the platoons stormed the first line of German defences but were halted by machine-gun fire from their left flank. Major Mackenzie led another platoon to clear that area and then established his Company on the mountain-top from where they beat off several counter-attacks. Major Mackenzie was subsequently awarded the Military Cross for his courage and leadership during this operation. By 27 September the Battalion was concentrated in Palazzuola.



Action North of Pallazzuola, 28-30 September

The next night the Battalion detached C Company to support the Hertfords who were having trouble trying to secure the village of Presiola and the Il Casone feature some five miles further forward. To the Jocks who made that march the night was to be remembered as the worst in all these weeks of bad weather. The rain fell without a break, they were often up to their knees in mud and a bitter wind lashed their faces. When they reached Presiola they found the remnants of the Hertfords Company taking refuge in a small chapel. Soon after dawn the Brigade Commander and the CO of the Hertfordshires arrived at the chapel and it was agreed that C Company should take over the capture of Casone. This they duly achieved after a day and night of hard fighting in conjunction with A Company of 2RS. By the end of September the Battalion had been in action continuously for eighteen days, against a stubborn enemy, in demanding countryside and appalling weather, and was overdue a rest. On 30 September the position at Casone was handed over to 6 Gordons from 2 Brigade, and the only other Scottish battalion in the Division. The Battalion then had long march back beyond Palazzuolla before eventually meeting up with trucks to take them back to Borgo san Lorenzo.

The shortage of officers and men was now being felt more severely than ever. With the demands of reinforcements for North West Europe taking priority, there was no hope of getting replacements in Italy even to bring the Battalion up to a War Establishment that had been reduced by 5 officers and 108. 2RS, still far below even that, was reconstituted into three rifle companies, each seriously understrength. On 12 September they moved back to the front. They found that 1st Division had barely moved forward more than a couple of miles north of Casone to positions just south of Mount Ceco which had already changed hands several times in some of the bloodiest fighting of the campaign and which the Germans obviously intended to hold at all costs. The Battalion was assigned the role of right flank protection on the ridge south of Ceco which overlooked the Senio Valley to the left and the smaller valley of the Sintria to the right. This flank was completely open as the 1st Indian Division was lagging behind by some five miles. It was a busy, yet unrewarding, period for the Battalion. Patrol activity was heavy as attempts were made to establish the location and strengths of the enemy in the Sintria valley about a mile to the east of Mount Ceco. The Lancashire Fusiliers gained a foothold on

the summit of Ceco on 13th October and the Indians at last came up. The Battalion now gradually infiltrated into the Sintria Valley. As the weather became steadily worse, the river became impassable and a block and tackle was used to ferry supplies across to the Battalion, which was now strung out three miles down the valley and a further two miles up into the hills on the far side. On the night of 27 October the Battalion relieved the Hertfordshires to the North and East of the Ceco summit. Two days later it itself was relieved, again by 6 Gordons, and, once more, returned to Borgo san Lorenzo remaining there until 8 November.

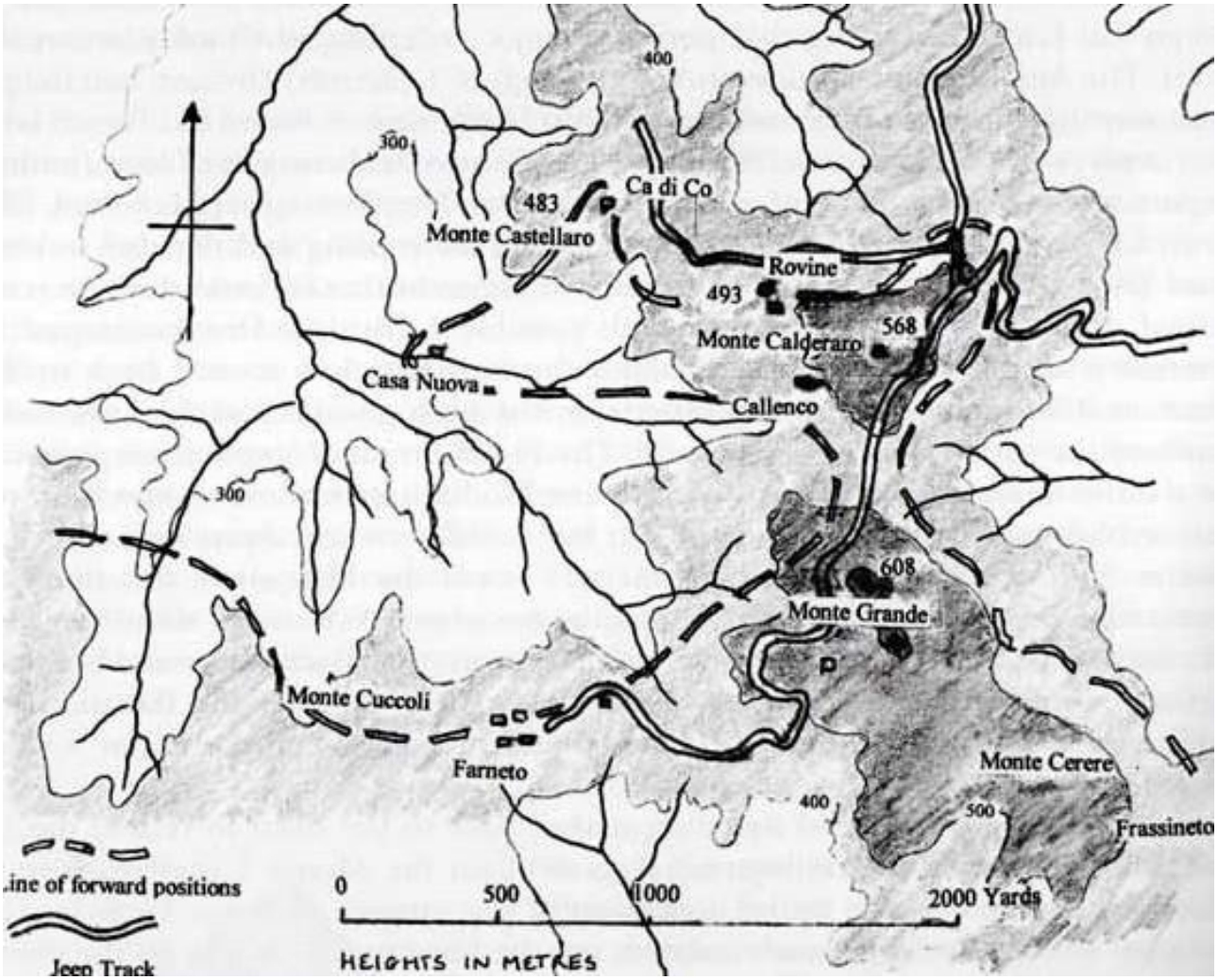
A carrier to mule re-supply changeover point

Final stage of re-supply – man-packing

By now it had become obvious that the exceptionally early and heavy rains, combined with the original shortfall in available troops and in the face of determined German resistance, meant that the Allied advance was halted at all points and, instead of being on the Lombardy Plain they would have to hold a winter line in the Mountains with re-supply lines stretching back sixty miles, over, in the British sector, few and very poor roads, certainly not what might be expected for a Divisional Main Supply Route (MSR) particularly with the standard British four wheeled lorry when compared wlth the big American six-wheel drive trucks which could go pounding over holes and through axle-deep mud and could even slog their way across open country. While the Americans were generous in their support, once the supply run forward to the Companies left the road, even jeeps could seldom cope. The supplies were usually transferred to Bren gun carriers which took them as far as they could to a change-over point to mules. Forward again to, in almost every case, the final leg of man-packing. Amazingly, thanks to the commitment of all concerned, the occasions when hot meals and other key supplies failed to get through were very rare. By contrast the German resupply line was now only a fifteen minute drive across the plain from the main road through Bologna.

On 9 November the Battalion returned to the line. The Americans had taken Monte Grande and established a salient some four miles wide but only half-a-mile deep forward of it. The inter-Division (and British/US Corps) boundary was now moved to the west and responsibility for the Monte Grande feature, and the salient to the north, passed to 1 Division. On deployment the Battalion occupied positions on the high ground less than two miles to the south of the summit. The three rifle companies were by now reduced to around 65 strong including stretcher bearers, signallers and others in Company HQ which made it very difficult to cover the ground allocated as well as maintaing vigorous patrol programmes and constant vigilance in defensive positions. On 18 November the Battalion was relieved and, once again, moved back to Borgo san Lorenzo for a short period of rest.

On 24 November the Battalion moved back up to the Monte Castellaro area to relieve 1st Bn The Duke of Wellington's Regiment. The position, which was dangerously isolated, was the most northerly one on the whole Apennine front. An officer on the staff of HQ 1st Division described the Monte Grande sector "as a position to be held for a long time in bad weather, which had nearly every disadvantage and very few compensating advantages"



The Monte Grande Area 24 November 1944-8 January 1945

Battalion HQ was established at Callenco; C Company occupied the hamlet of Rovine on the shoulder of Mount Calderaro; A Company was to the right of Castellaro running eastward to the hamlet of Ca di Co; and B Company occupied the most isolated position of all on the summit and to the left of Monte Castellaro and, although the Company was just 56 soldiers strong, it had to provide a detachment of one officer, one sergeant and sixteen to man a liaison post with the Americans in the valley to the south-west at a farmhouse called Casa Nuova. Although this post was just a mile away the return journey due to the difference in height between the two locations, took three hours. For the next three days the Battalion manned these exposed positions, which were in view from elements of the 1st German Parachute Division 'from their right front, their front, their left front and their left rear'. They were constantly under very heavy mortar and shell fire leading to a steady number of casualties. A veil of mist that shrouded the mountain-top meant that positions had to be strongly-manned and alert both by day and by night. The same 1stDivision officer added that the sector had never been planned as a defensive position: on the contrary "the front line was simply one where the partially successful American offensive (to break out of the Apennines into the plain only three miles to the north) had

happened to come to an end . . Its serious lack of depth made it difficult to recapture any position that might be lost". The whole situation, isolation, weak in numbers, stretched over a considerable frontage and a strong enemy with good support close to hand, bore many similarities to that faced by the former 2nd Battalion on the Mainland in Hong Kong almost exactly three years earlier.

On the night of 28 November the weather began to improve. The whole Battalion area had been subjected to particularly heavy mortar fire that day, over 400 bombs in six hours. At 2300 the B Company post at Casa Nuova heard enemy patrols moving on the hillside between them and the main Company position. Soon afterwards the post was attacked and they withdrew into the farm house. Major Mackenzie sent a fighting patrol to support the detachment while he himself went forward to check on his own front, informing Captain Dick, the OC of A Company, that he wondered if the attack was a ruse to draw off men from their main position on the hill-top. Meantime it was reported that Germans were advancing on A Company's right flank towards Ca di Co. This was halted by the Company's Bren guns. At the same time Major Mackenzie returned to his now very depleted B Company. Almost immediately, and preceded by a hail of hand-grenades, a German force, having bypassed the listening posts forward of Monte Castellaro, attacked and captured the summit. Major Mackenzie rallied all his available troops and counter-attacked. In hand-to-hand fighting they recaptured the summit but lacked the strength to hold it when the Germans, having been reinforced, attacked again. Contact having been lost with B Company the CO had ordered A Company to send a patrol to find out what was happening on the top of Monte Castellaro, This patrol quickly ran into trouble in the fighting on B Company's position. Captain Dick himself then set off to find his patrol and see what was happening at B Company. In his own words he never saw the patrol again. On the way back to reorganise his remaining two platoons, one still in Ca di Co, he heard and saw a party of Germans advancing towards his own headquarters; they were so close that he was doubtful whether he would get back in time to repel this attack. But suddenly, from the forward slope of his own company's position, a Bren gun opened fire. The gunner, Private Preston, a sniper attached to A Company, and who had manned the Bren gun on his own initiative, continued to fire until he succeeded in forcing back the German party. Because his own company headquarters was now exposed to direct fire Captain Dick was forced to move to the reverse slope of the ridge. To thicken up the defence he withdrew the platoon from Ca di Co. At that point Major Mackenzie was brought in wounded and confirmed that the Germans now held Monte Castellaro. Having informed the CO of this, Captain Dick was ordered to hold fast while arrangements were made for a concentration of all available artillery to fire onto the top of Castellaro before any counter-attack was launched. This unfortunately meant a delay of three-quarters of an hour during which further German reinforcements had come up and all resistance had ended in the former B Company area.

Meanwhile a new threat had developed on A Company's right flank from Germans who had occupied Ca di Co and were now working round to A Company's right rear. Captain Dick requested the artillery to switch to this new threat and, as soon as they had, he led one platoon of the Company to attempt to recapture the former B Company position. Almost as soon as they set off they came under fire from a machine-gun which commanded the whole of the ridge running between the two positions. Once again Private Pearson stepped forward and neutralised the machine gun while Captain Dick led his force off the ridge into a hollow and up towards the enemy. As he prepared to attack he realised that with only six men left he had insufficient force to have any chance of success so went back to bring forward his last platoon. Leaving CSM Cameron, now with A Company, and about six men, some of them wounded, to secure the base, he led the platoon back again to launch the counter-attack. After a desperate effort by all ranks they succeeded in driving the enemy from the high ground. A rapid consolidation was necessary to meet the German's next assault which was bound to develop. At that point Captain Dick was wounded, as was the only other officer, and there were further casualties. Realising that to hold on would only lead to the force being wiped out, he reluctantly decided to withdraw to his own base where he found CSM Cameron still holding on. It

was obvious however that, with the coming of daylight, the enemy would be able to pick them off at leisure. On reporting this to the CO he was ordered to withdraw with all survivors, now down to 20, and join C Company at Rovine. It is doubtful if any of them would have got back but for, yet again, the action of Private Pearson who, again on his own initiative, covered the withdrawal until all were clear, when he followed them back. Not surprisingly he was awarded the Military Medal for all his actions that night. Captain Dick was awarded the Military Cross for his leadership. Only the lack of men had prevented him from holding Monte Castellaro which he had won back for The Royal Scots. The Battalion now reorganised into a single position consisting of C Company, including the survivors from A and B, and the Command Post. The reorganisation was complete by 0530 when the artillery fired concentrations onto A Company's former position.

From midday on the 29th the enemy resumed heavy mortaring of the Command Post and C Company areas while preparations were made for a company from 2 Foresters to attack and recapture Monte Castellaro that night. The piquet at Casa Nuova, which had held out through the night, was resupplied. No attempt was made by the enemy to follow up on their success in taking the northern part of the salient. Just after midnight, as the Foresters were leaving for their counter-attack, an exceptionally heavy barrage of 110 mortar bombs in 45 minutes was launched on the Battalion position. Despite massive artillery support the attack came to nothing and, by 0420 on the 30th the remains of the Company, only some 40 strong were back in 2RS's lines. Meanwhile Casa Nuova continued to hold out throughout that day but at 2205 1st Recce Regt, in the valley to the south of them, reported hearing heavy firing in the area and all communications were lost. Three separate patrols were sent out to try and re-establish communications the last of which found the buildings on fire. They got within 20 yards and shouted but got no answer before they came under fire. At 0800 on 1 December a patrol from 1st Recce got to the Casa to find it deserted and no sign of the B Company piquet.

While the loss of Castellaro was a severe blow to the Battalion's and, indeed, 1st Division's self-esteem (it was the only reversal suffered by the Division in the six-month period from August 1944 – January 1945) it was, realistically, due to its isolation, and the surrounding terrain, a very difficult position to hold and, probably impossible, against a determined assault by first-class troops. It was in no way, however, and in spite of many similarities, a repeat of the Hong Kong Mainland Battle of three years earlier. The Battalion, unsupported, had fought the enemy to a halt, giving up what was really only an outpost line and, in the process, losing 11 soldiers confirmed as killed; 3 officers and 36 soldiers wounded and 1 officer and 48 soldiers 'missing' - a total of 99 or not far short of half the 225 casualties suffered in their whole six months in Italy.

As a result of their losses, and effectively being only one rifle company strong, the Battalion was withdrawn from the front line on 2 December into reserve for two nights before moving south to Vallombrosa, some fifteen miles east of Florence, where it spent several weeks, including over Christmas, training and reorganising. On 31 December Lieutenant Colonel Delacombe, who had commanded 8RS in Normandy until wounded, took over command from Lieutenant Colonel Campbell and, that day, the Battalion moved back to the Monte Grande sector, this time at Frassineto, just to the south of Monte Cerere, where the snow was now lying to a depth of four inches drifting up to four feet. The first week of January passed relatively quietly but the weather was more of a challenge than the enemy. Then, to everyone's surprise, it was suddenly announced that the 1st Division was to be relieved by the 85th (US) Division and to proceed to Palestine. 2RS was relieved on 8 January and set off on a long journey south reaching Taranto, a major port in Southern Italy, on 23 January and sailing from there on 26 January reaching Haifa on the 31st. At the time it was envisaged that the Division would return to Italy later in the year but, in the event, the war ended in May before they were due to return.

Not enough is known in, or acknowledged by, the Regiment about the re-constituted 2nd Battalion

and its very hard six months fighting in Italy, overshadowed at the time by events in North-West Europe. It was very much an infantry war, in some extremely difficult country, and fought at the junior leader level with much patrolling and many platoon actions. This was recognised in the award of decorations and the relatively high proportion won by junior ranks, in particular private soldiers. These were:

Distinguished Conduct Medal 1 (Sgt Gott)

Military Cross 5 (including one to the Padre)

Military Medal 6 (including 3 to Private soldiers)

Mention in Despatches 8 (Lt Col Campbell, 2 Sergeants, two Corporals and 4 Privates)

After note: As well as those serving with 2RS a number of Royal Scots serving with other units in Italy received decorations. These included a DSO, three MCs and a MM. The Distinguished Service Order was awarded to Lieutenant JA McGregor. He had joined the 1st Battalion on commissioning from Sandhurst in 1938, and went to France with them in 1939. Having taken part as a rifle platoon commander in the withdrawal to Le Paradis, he was promoted to acting Captain in the post of Motor Transport Officer based at B Echelon so became one of the handful from the Battalion who escaped through Dunkirk. He was one of the first to join the newly formed Parachute Regiment and then later transferred to the SAS in North Africa. After the Italian surrender on 3 September 1943, following the Allied invasion of the mainland from Sicily, large numbers of Allied POWs broke out from the camps in Italy and made their way south hoping to reach the Allies' lines. Lt McGregor led a party of seven who parachuted into the Chieti area, about half way up the Italian Adriatic Coast. In the space of a fortnight he sent 500 POWs on their way to freedom. Later he and his team caused further problems for the Germans before escaping in a stolen rowing boat back to the Allied Lines. The citation for this rare distinction for a subaltern, who had just turned 25, records it as being "for having maintained himself across enemy lines of communication for three-and-a-half months in the autumn of 1943". By any standards he had a quite amazing war - and 'peace' afterwards - and readers are encouraged to read his obituary at:

https:/www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1408949/Major-Alastair-McGregor.html

Further Reading: The Thistle April 1946 and PPB pp 166-187

THE TERRITORIAL BATTALIONS IN WW2

In September 1939 the Regiment had three Territorial Battalions all of which were mobilising, the 4th/5th (Queen's Edinburgh) manning searchlights, the 7th/9th (Highlanders) and the reforming 8th (Lothians & Peebles) both in the infantry role.

4th/Sth Battalion (Queen's Edinburgh Rifles)

The 4th/5th were in fact the first battalion of the Regiment to see action being engaged in the first air raid of the war when the Luftwaffe tried to bomb the Forth Bridge on 16 October. On 23 October, the first enemy aircraft to be shot down crashed near Humbie in Midlothian near a 4th/5th detachment who took the pilot prisoner- the first German of the war to be captured. He had no doubt that the war would be over by Christmas and he would be home in Germany! The 4th/5th were converted to the anti-aircraft role and on 1 August became a Regiment of the Royal Artillery but proudly retained their Queen's Edinburgh connection. This was strengthened in December 1944 when the reformed 1st Battalion, serving in Burma, received ninety-nine, particularly welcome, reinforcements from 405 Searchlight Battery, formerly part of the 4th/5th!

7th/9th (Highlanders) Battalion

The 7th/9th Battalion, as part of 52nd (Lowland) Division, mobilised in September and deployed on coastal defence duties on the Forth based around Kinghorn in Fife. From there it moved to the Dumfries area and, in May 1940, to the south of England in preparation for deploying to France. As the month progressed, however, the news from there became progressively worse culminating in the evacuation from Dunkirk. To bolster French resistance it was decided to send the Division to France and the Battalion sailed from Southampton to St Malo on 12 June - nine days after the last troops had been evacuated from Dunkirk. On arrival the Battalion moved to a position near Le Mans, eighty miles south-west of Paris only to be told to immediately return to Britain, Despite the proximity of German troops and aircraft the Battalion was able to leave Cherbourg on the morning of 17 June less than a week after they had landed. There were no casualties, but all the Battalion's transport, less eight of its nine carriers which were successfully loaded onto a ship, had to be destroyed before embarkation.

On arrival back in England the Battalion reformed in East Anglia with the role of anti-invasion and airfield defence. After 6 months, with the Battle of Britain won, the Battalion returned to Scotland where it moved successively to Alloa, East Lothian, Bridge of Allan and, finally, Peterhead/Cruden Bay. In the autumn of 1942 the Division began to train for possible operations in Norway. This involved learning to work with mules, mountain training and long arduous exercises in the Cairngorms in all types of weather. This training continued throughout 1943.

The 7th/9th Battalion training in the Cairngorms with an Indian Army mule team

The winter and spring of 1943-44, when snow conditions were fairly severe, saw the completion of the Battalion's mountain training with long periods living in the mountains on major exercises, skiing, handling of loads on pack horses and sledges drawn by both men and dogs. The Division was now classified as 'Mountain' and added that flash below the Divisional badge. In May 1944 the Division moved to Inverary for combined operations training. There was bitter disappointment when D-Day passed and the Battalion was not called on to play an active part in events.

All was to change, however, when the Division was placed under command of First Allied Airborne Army as an air transportable unit. Scales of transport were considerably reduced and all ranks had to become familiar with the intricacies of loading aircraft with everything needed for operations. As soon as these skills had been learnt the Battalion moved south to Buckinghamshire. From then onwards it was either at twenty-four or forty-eight hours notice to board its aircraft and join the war in Europe. Several operations were planned and were on the point of coming to fruition when they were cancelled, largely because by then operations on the ground, following the breakout from Normandy, were moving forward faster than expected, A total of four such operations were cancelled in the months of July and August. In September the Division was due to take part in the Arnhem operation as soon as a landing ground had been secured but, with the failure of the initial phase of the operation, the Battalion's fifth and final planned air landed operation was cancelled.

With the approaching autumn weather precluding any possibility of further air operations, 52 (Lowland) Division reorganised yet again, this time as a conventional infantry division, and prepared to move by sea and to come under command of the First Canadian Army for operations in the Scheldt Estuary. On 16 October the 7th/9th embarked at Southampton for Ostend. On 3 November the Battalion was launched in the assault on Flushing on the Island of Walcheren at the entrance to the Scheldt leading

to the key port of Antwerp. Most of the Island was flooded, the sea walls having been breached by a mixture of RAF bombing and German demolitions. It was a curious and ironic twist of fate that the Battalion, after all its long years of training to fight on the mountain-tops, and being carried to war through the air, should eventually enter battle through an amphibious operation below sea level!

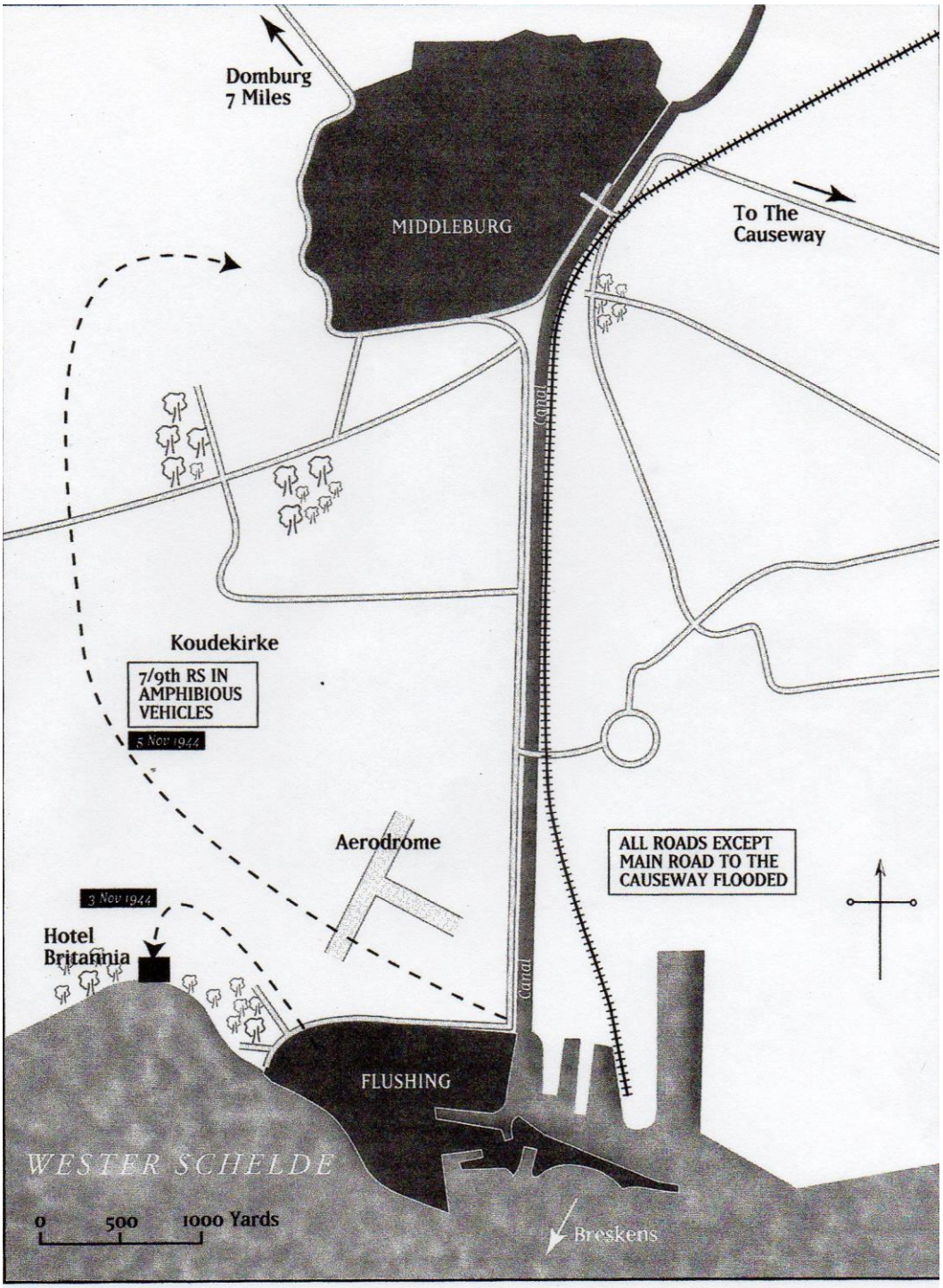
The Battalion's objective was the Hotel Britannia, slightly to the west of the town itself. It was believed to be a minor strongpoint with a garrison of around SO in total. H hour was set for 031S on 3 November. The plan was to assault from the north with Band D Companies whist C Company and the Carrier Platoon provided support from the flanks. The assault was to be preceded by a heavy fire plan involving two medium and four field regiments firing across the river from the mainland. As a result of the breaching of the sea walls the whole area was subject to tidal flood. Although it was estimated the depth of water would not exceed eighteen inches in practice it proved to be up to five feet in many places with a flow of up to five knots. Everyone wore Mae Wests. Major Rose, commanding B Company, organized his men so that the taller members were spread out within the column in order to help the shorter ones through the deeper parts.

The assault got within 7S yards of the first objective, a pillbox, which was surprised and quickly captured with thirty-five prisoners. It rapidly became obvious, however, that the Hotel itself was held in much greater strength and with considerably more in the way of fortifications than had been originally estimated. A revised plan was therefore agreed involving all three companies in assaulting the Hotel itself but it was not until around 1200 that it was finally taken after some fierce fighting including the capture of what turned out to be the underground Headquarters of the Flushing Garrison and its Commander, Oberst Reinhardt.

In this, their first action of the *War,* the 7thjgth had lost three *officers,* including Major Chater OC D Company, and 1S soldiers killed and one *officer,* Lieutenant Colonel Melville the *CO,* and 49 soldiers wounded. They had, on the other hand, accounted for SO Germans killed and some 600 captured. Major Rose was subsequently awarded the DSO for his exceptional leadership during the fighting.

Two days later, on S November, it was the turn of A Company, commanded by Major Johnstone. Mounted in Buffalo amphibious tracked vehicles they were ordered to try and break into the town of Middleburg in the center of the island from the west .They were to make a reconnaissance in force to try and seek out and parley with General *Daser,* the German Commander of the Island. The route was difficult with varying depths and wire obstacles making the retention of any tactical formation impossible. Eventually they preceded in line ahead. As they entered the town one of the Company HQ Buffaloes struck a mine taking considerable casualties and causing some temporary confusion in the command arrangements. Once this had been resolved the Company pushed on up flooded but empty streets until reaching dry land. They began to meet Dutch civilians who said there were lots of Germans further into the town. The Company pushed on and eventually arrived at the main square which was above the water level and full of cheering Dutch and into which fully armed and equipped Germans began to erupt in astonishing numbers- but no sign of General Daser or his Headquarters.

leaving his platoons at various points around the Square, Major Johnstone set off to find his Norwegian interpreter who had been sent on ahead to look for General Daser. This he had done in a second smaller square. There was a problem, however, as Daser was not prepared to talk to or negotiate with anyone below the rank of full Colonel. Major Johnstone, thinking fast, quickly added the two 'pips' of one of his Lieutenants to his own Major's crowns and the newly promoted 'Colonel' Johnstone met the General. He informed him that the British Army was present in strength and that unless he ordered an immediate cease fire and surrendered Middleburg, along with its Garrison, would be completely destroyed by bombing and shell fire. Eventually the General agreed. The Dutch left the two squares and the German garrison of some 2,000 were concentrated there.



Flushing and Middleburg, 3–6 November 1944. 7/9th (Highlanders) Battalion, The Royal Scots

General Daser being led away by Major John Knox RA, Brigade Major 155 Inf Bde after surrendering to A Coy 7/9RS

German prisoners in the town square

After a very difficult night, with the Germans herded into the town square, and A Company pretending there were far more of them than there actually were, reinforcements from another Brigade arrived and A Company who had suffered only six killed, six wounded and the loss of one Buffalo, were able to hand over to them. The History of 52 (Lowland) Division, written after the end of the War,

described the Battalion's actions as having 'turned out to be one of the finest exploits in the fighting history of the Division'. Lieutenant Colonel Melville, the CO was wounded during the attack on the Hotel Britannia but saved from drowning by floating in his Mae West until grounding on a sand bank where he was found and rescued. He later commanded 1RS in Korea in 1953-54. Major Dawson, the 2ic and himself a Territorial, took over command. Flushing was awarded to the Regiment as a Battle Honour.

Route of the 7th/9th Battalion 18 October 1944 -5 May 1945

During the winter the Battalion was involved in Operation Blackcock holding the Heinsberg salient near Maastricht to clear the last German pockets of resistance on the west bank of the Maas. This was finally achieved with a pincer attack on the town, in conjunction with 4 KOSB, on 24 January 1945. In mid-February, with a Dutch company under command, the 7/9th moved north to Gennep, on the River Maas. It was committed to operations in the Broederbosch, a forest of many thousands of acres. The main objective was Kasteel Blijenbeek, a medieval Durth fortress close to the German border. The Battalion closed up to it but, in daylight, found the Kasteel, and the high ground behind it, completely dominated the whole of the surrounding area and any movement attracted heavy and accurate fire. The walls of the Kasteel proved impregnable to 25pdr shells and a company attack by the KOSB had to be called of because of the loss of so many supporting tanks. Eventually the RAF were called in and, with the aid of 1000lb bombs and rocket-firing Typhoons, the Kasteel was eventually abandoned and the Battalion, which had suffered 44 casualties in a week, were withdrawn.

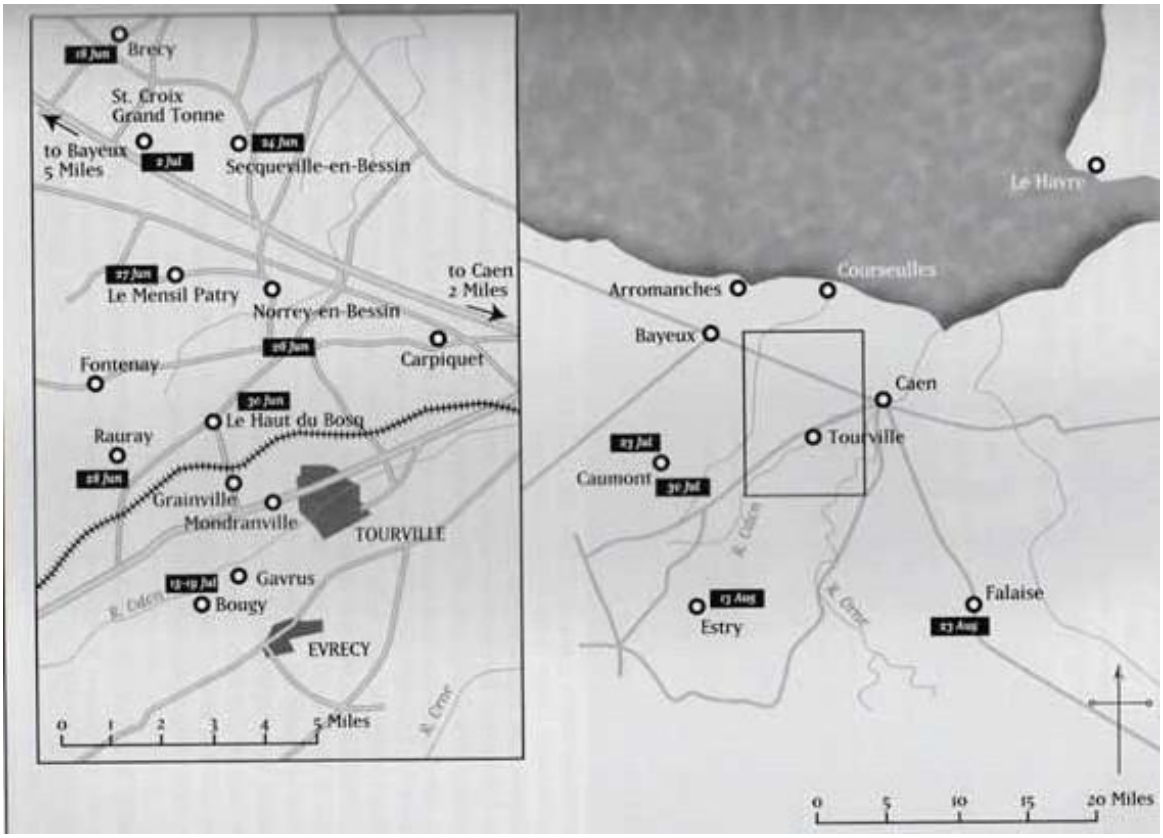
By early March they were poised at Xanten on the Rhine. After crossing the Rhine on 28 March, meeting the 8th Battalion en route, 155 Infantry Brigade, of which the Battalion formed part, came under command of 7th Armoured Division, 'The Desert Rats', to spearhead the breakout from the bridgehead. It remained with them until the closing stages of the campaign. In a rapid advance across Germany they cleared the Teutoburger Ridge, secured Barnstof and ended up in Soltau on 17 April, which they captured after a stiff battle supported by tanks and flame-throwers. Rejoining 52 (Lowland) Division they played a major part in the taking of Bremen and ended the war garrisoning that port.

8TH (LOTHIANS AND PEEBLES) BATTALION

Following Hitler's seizure of Czechoslovakia in 1938 the Territorial Army was doubled in size and the 8th Battalion was reformed, with much help from the 7th/9th Battalion. By July 1939 it had reached a strength of 500 and it was officially established on 1 August. On the outbreak of war, the Battalion initially moved to the area of Earlston and Lauder where it continued to build its strength and develop its military skills. By December it was considered fit to relieve the 7th/9th Battalion on Forth Defence duties. In April 1940 they moved to Galashiels and then, as the German attacked through Belgium, down to the south of England where they moved around, as part of 15th (Scottish) Division, on anti-invasion roles until the end of 1941 when they moved to the Northumberland coast and were put on Lower Establishment which meant they had to supply drafts to units going overseas.

In April 1943 Lieutenant Colonel Delacombe took command, shortly after the Battalion returned to the Higher Establishment and the Division was joined by the 6th Guards Tank Brigade. Colonel Delacombe was a ferocious trainer of both individuals and the Battalion as a whole as the tempo increased throughout 1943 and into 1944 with the approach of the invasion into Europe.

The 8th Battalion landed in Normandy on D+10, 16 June 1944. They were soon in action with 15th (Scottish) Division in establishing what became known as 'The Scottish Corridor' with the aim of relieving German pressure on the Americans to the west by securing a crossing of the River Odon and into the area to the south of it.



Normandy 18 June – 23 August 1944

The Battalion was involved in three major assaults in the close rolling country, criss-crossed with hedgerows, steep-sided lanes and small woods, during the operation which began for them on 26 June. The first attack quickly secured its objectives at the northern end of the Corridor, although at some cost from snipers, skilfully sited machine guns and, later, artillery and mortar fire. The Battalion

was relieved early on the following morning and moved back to rest and be reinforced with 100 all ranks. That evening they set off again on their second attack, to expand the corridor to the east and secure a route to the River.

Moving forward past scout cars 28 June 1944

Advancing through a cornfield supported by tanks

After 36 hours of heavy fighting their objectives were secured and early on the morning of 30 June they were relieved and, after holding off German counter-attacks in an interim position, were withdrawn on 2 July to a rest area where they received a further 123 reinforcements. Amongst these was Major PR Layne-Joynt of the South Lancashire Regiment who took over as 2ic from Major Eykyn who had gone to command 11 RSF. By now a bridgehead had been secured over the River Odon and, on 7 July,

they moved into this area before the break out to the south. On 16 July at 0530 the Battalion crossed its start line and, by 1015, had taken all their objectives including the villages of Gavrus and Bougy The fighting, however, was far from over. Throughout the remainder of the day it was subjected to air attacks, constant mortar fire and counter attacks. Its position was perilous as both flanks were exposed but, by late afternoon, it had driven back the enemy and consolidated its small bridgehead south of the Odon. Their attacks on Gavrus and Bougy were described as 'classical examples of tank and infantry cooperation'. The Battalion had suffered 57 killed and 324 wounded or missing in just over three weeks of fighting in Normandy including the Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Delacombe who was wounded by mortar fire at the start of the Battalion's third attack, just after being awarded the DSO for his leadership in the earlier attacks. After recovering from his wounds he took command of 2 RS in Italy in January 1945 and then in Palestine where he had been awarded the MBE with the 1st Battalion in 1938. Major Layne-Joynt, although 42 years old, about 10 years more than most COs at that time, took over command of the 8th Battalion

After the breakout and German defeat at Falaise the Battalion took part in the rapid advance across France, crossing the Seine on 28th August and entering Belgium in early September.

Route of the 8th Battalion September 1944 – July 1945

The first serious resistance was encountered at Aart on the Meuse-Escaut Canal where the Battalion, having established a small bridgehead against light opposition on 14 September, were expanding it when the Germans put in a series of counter-attacks. Two were beaten off in the early afternoon but, as the day progressed, the opposition became more determined. At about 2200 a heavier attack than hitherto led by German tanks broke into the Royal Scots' positions on the eastern side and along the bank of the canal. Ammunition was running short and it was clear that a dangerous crisis was developing. There was very heavy fighting and some great acts of bravery and outstanding leadership, notably in B Company, which had been cut off, withdrawing through the German lines in single file and complete silence - at one point moving alongside the Germans who must have mistaken them for German troops, into the Battalion bridgehead, now reduced to some 100 yards in width and 50 in depth, Losses continued to be heavy. Ammunition ran low but always at the last minute, or so it

seemed, further supplies were ferried across the canal. Two jocks managed to bring an abandoned German anti-tank gun into action forcing some of the German armour to withdraw. The fighting died down at about 1100, 24 hours after the first German counter-attacks and, in the lull, 6 RSF got across the canal. This allowed the bridgehead to be slightly expanded but a further counter-attack forced the defenders back into the former very tight bridgehead. At about 2000 that evening 6 KOSB were further squeezed in.

It was planned that these two battalions would launch an attack at 0700 the following morning, Saturday 16 September. In the midst of the preparations, however, the Germans put in an attack of tremendous force. Throughout the morning German attacks continued; and even when there was a lull, the enemy gunners kept up their heavy and accurate concentrations. After dusk that evening it appeared that the Germans were massing for another assault. The Artillery Forward Observation Officer called for three minutes rapid fire from one hundred guns. Then silence, broken by some shouting which appeared to be calls for stretch bearers. Immediately another three minutes was unleashed followed by total silence for the rest of the night. The next morning, three days after the Battalion had established the bridgehead and of virtually continuous close range fighting, they filed down to the canal bank and returned to the other side. The last man to leave was the Commanding Officer who wanted to ensure that every Royal Scot had left the bridgehead. He was awarded the DSO for his leadership in this battle and the Regiment earned the Battle Honour Aart which is carried on the Queen's Colour. The three days of fighting had cost the Battalion 163 casualties. After less than two days rest it was again in action, this time in the area of Eindhoven where it received 120 reinforcements but, by the end of the month, it had suffered a further 50 casualties.

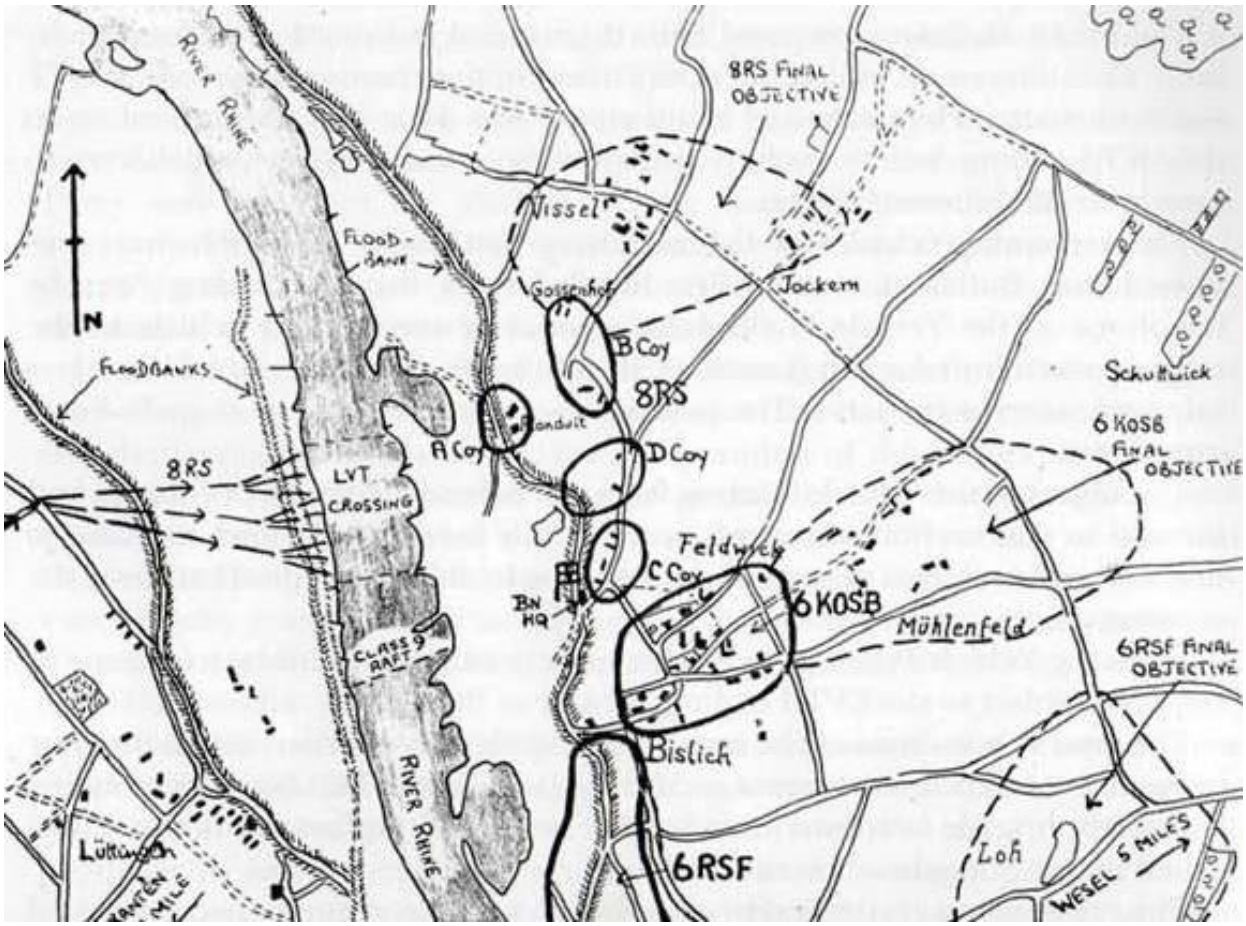
In mid-November Colonel Layne-Joynt, having reached the age of 43, handed over command to Lieutenant Colonel Pearson A&SH. On 3 December the Battalion took part in the assault on Blerick the western suburb of Venlo It was notable for the fact that the Battalion was carried into the assault and right onto the objective in 'Kangaroos', Sherman tanks with the turret removed and able to carry a section of soldiers crouched inside, protected from enemy shellfire, who then dismounted over the top and set about the enemy.

A 'Kangaroo' with mounted infantry on board

Advancing on tanks south of Goch, February 1945

This was the first time the Regiment acted as armoured infantry. The end of 1944 and beginning of 1945 were relatively quiet but a period of exceptional tension and vigilance. By 23 January the Battalion was back in Tilburg to prepare for Operation Veritablethe aim of which was to break into the Siegfried Line and destroy the enemy between the Maas and the Rhine. The attack began on 8 February with the Battalion's main involvement around Goch on 18 and 19 February later described in the Brigade history as 'perhaps the finest performance of The Royal Scots in the War'. Both the Commanding Officer and Major McQueen (CO 1RS 1957-59) were awarded the DSO for their actions there, the former the third CO in succession to be so decorated in just 7 months. An MC and two MMs were also won and some 300 prisoners taken It had been another month of heavy fighting with 26 killed and 115 wounded. At the end of the month the Division was withdrawn to prepare for its most ambitious and significant operation of the campaign - Operation Torchlight the crossing of the Rhine.

The Battalion moved back to Haelen in Holland where everyone was given 48 hours leave to Brussels, and morale soared! The Battalion went into hard and detailed training for their role as one of the lead assault battalions crossing the Rhine in Landing Vehicles Tracked (LVTs) or 'Buffaloes', well known to the 7th/9th Battalion from Walcheren but new to the 8th. It is not commonly known but the assault crossing of the Rhine was virtually an all-Scottish affair with 51st (Highland) Division in the North, 15th(Scottish) Division in the Centre and 4 Commando Brigade to the South. Every infantry Battalion in the assault force was Scottish and every Scottish infantry regiment was represented. In the middle of March two full-scale rehearsals of the operation were carried out on the River Maas. The first was done in slow time by day and the second was a full-dress rehearsal carried out at the correct speed by night. Every aspect of the crossing was tested with the troops doing the crossing in the actual Buffaloes in which they were going to cross the Rhine. It is interesting to note that, whereas in the rehearsals almost everything went wrong, practically everything went right on D-Day itself. The Battalion was allocated 36 Buffaloes to cross in four waves of nine.



8 RS. The Crossing of the Rhine 23-24 March 1945

44 Brigade was the right hand assault brigade of 15 Division wit 8 RS on the left and 6 RSF on the right with 6 KOSB in reserve to follow in assault boats. 8 RS left Haelen on 22 March reaching their marshalling area at around 0600 on the 23rd. The morning was spent resting before loading the Buffaloes that afternoon under cover of a vast smokescreen that had been covering the river and its approaches for some days. By a happy coincidence the near (west) bank from which the Battalion was to launch its assault was held by its sister Battalion, the 7th/9th. At 1800 a ferocious artillery barrage began across the river from every available gun At 2200 the Companies moved off to embark on their Buffaloes. Zero hour was at 0200 and punctually at that time the leading wave of Buffaloes, carrying A Company entered the water, followed at four minute intervals by three further waves carrying the rest of the assault element of the Battalion. About this time the enemy had come to life and some shelling and mortaring fell on the near bank and several Spandau machine guns opened up from the bund on the far side, but the firing was inaccurate and there were no casualties. A and B Companies quickly secured their objectives about half a mile inland from the far bank. But C Company had a hard fight, taking a number of casualties before securing theirs, At about 1000 the companies moved further to secure their second objectives about a mile inland. It was at this point that the massive airborne operation flew over at about 1000 feet to successfully drop, or land in gliders, the 6th Airborne Division about three miles further ahead. Radio communication was established with the airborne forces and by 1530 a patrol from the carrier platoon had made physical contact. There was to be no repeat of Arnhem. The Battalion had suffered 34 casualties in the day and had taken 310 prisoners.

The next morning the Battalion moved through the Airborne Division and after some stiff fighting by 0200 on the 26th had reached the autobahn running south to the Ruhr. That evening at 1900 the Battalion advanced again against a strong German position at Heisterhof which A Company eventually captured and held against a series of German counter-attacks. They were, however in a

very precarious position with their left flank totally exposed as a result of 51st((Highland) Division being held up in their advance. Every officer in A Company was wounded and, at one point, the Company ran out of ammunition but the attackers were held off by artillery fire until more ammunition arrived. The actions of Cpl Mallon of A Company deserve special mention. With both his platoon commander and sergeant wounded he took command of the platoon, drove off a German counter-attack through effective fire control and then, single handedly attacked a farmhouse in which some Germans had taken shelter. Despite being wounded in the side, and having lost his sten gun, he found two Germans hiding and physically attacked them, knocking one out whilst the other fled. He continued to command his platoon, in spite of his wound, until ordered back to the Regimental Aid Post. Not surprisingly he was awarded the Military Medal for his leadership and personal example. CSM Morton of C Company was also awarded the Military Medal for his actions that night. All the next day the Battalion defended the exposed left flank of the Brigade until late on the night of the 28th, five days after crossing the Rhine, the 15th (Scottish) Division were relieved by the 53rd (Welsh)Division. The Battalion had suffered a further 90 casualties. The Regiment was awarded the Battle Honour Rhine for their actions.

Follow-up elements disembarking from assault boats

8RS, supported by carriers, April 1945

The Battalion remained in the area of the Rhine until 4 April when it moved to the area of Borgholz near the Dortmund-Ems canal. Three days later it moved through Osnabruck en route to Minden on the Weser. From 10-20 April it moved every day until reaching Luneberg on the 20th, collecting many prisoners on the way. At Luneberg they spent a week 'at rest' in the old cavalry barracks there which allowed some sporting and social life - plus Battalion drill parades (with the Adjutant on a docile ex-German charger!). This ended abruptly on 29 April when the Battalion led yet another major assault river crossing, again in Buffaloes, this time of the Elbe. In many ways the crossing was harder and more unpleasant than that of the Rhine - there was not so much ground opposition, but very much more enemy shell and mortar fire, and even at this very late stage of the war, repeated enemy air attacks during the following morning on the crossing site. The Battalion suffered some 40 casualties in the crossing and a further six in the following days, including Major Drummond, who had commanded B Company since November, who sustained serious leg injuries from a shell on 2 May, Once established on the far bank nothing could hold them. During the next four days they pushed forward to Bargetheide, about 25 miles north of Hamburg, capturing many hundreds of prisoners en route. It was there, on 4 May, that they learnt of the total surrender of German forces on the Second Army Front.

It is wrong to single out one battalion of the Regiment in comparison with the deeds and actions of the others but the intensity of the 8th Battalion's campaign in north-west Europe from 26 June 1944 - 4 May 1945 is reflected in the honours it gained and its casualty list. The honours included 4 DSOs. 7 MCs, and 12 MMs. 61 officers became casualties of whom13 were killed or died from their wounds and48 were wounded, captured or reported missing, Soldier casualties totalled 1,195: 224 killed or died of wounds and 971 wounded, captured or missing. These figures need to be seen against the war establishment of an infantry battalion: 37 officers and 845 soldiers. The overall percentage of casualties against the establishment was therefore 142 per cent, with 37 per cent killed. The 'junior' Battalion of the Regiment had earned its reputation in the traditional manner - a finely balanced mixture of highly professional competence and real determination.

THE KOHIMA CAMPAIGN 1944

Apart from those in B Echelon, very few officers and men of the 1st Battalion who had taken part in the heroic actions leading up to and at Le Paradis, defending the perimeter of Dunkirk, were taken off the beaches in 1940 There were the wounded who had been evacuated earlier in the fighting and a few who had got away partly by using their wits, partly by trusting to luck and going hell-for-leather for the coast. Those who did make it, less than 50 in total, were very quickly formed into the basis of a re-constituted 1st Battalion at Bradford, in Yorkshire, based on some 250 NCOs and men who were already Royal Scots and six hundred raw recruits. The next two years were spent on coastal defence and then training for the return to Europe. On 15 April 1942, however, the Battalion, again as part of the 4th Brigade, 2nd Division, alongside our old friends 1st Battalion The Royal Norfolk Regiment, who had also been re-constituted after Le Paradis, sailed from Glasgow en route to India to join the defence of India against the Japanese who were by then advancing up through Burma.

In early March 1943, after considerable training, and a number of false starts, the Battalion was committed to action in the Arakan. The action there was not successful and the British and Indian force withdrew back to Chittagong in India.

During the last week of May 1943 the 1st Battalion moved from Chittagong by train to Ahemednagar, east of Bombay, where it rejoined 2 Division. Thereafter, for a ten day period, the whole Battalion, having taken 550 sick in the Arakan, mainly from malaria, was subjected to an intensive period of anti-malarial medication during which no strenuous training, or exercise, was carried out. Shortly afterwards it received reinforcements and undertook a comprehensive period of re-training. At the end of January 1944 it moved to Belgaum in the central Ganges plain where it was possible to embark upon intensive jungle training. The feature of jungle training loathed most by the Jocks was the presence of leeches as Sergeant Easton recalled.

We had puttees instead of gaiters because the place was alive with leeches. You even had to put grease on the eyeholes of your boots to save them going in, and even then they got in. You felt them getting into your flesh and when you took your puttees off at night your trousers were filled with leeches that had had their fill and were lying in the bottom of your trousers.

In early March 1944 the Japanese launched a major offensive westwards from the Chindwin towards Kohima and Imphal. Their initial aim was to seize Imphal in order that it could be used as a supply base for the invasion of India. The British and Indian troops operating to the west of the Chindwin fell back on Imphal and the village of Kohima, which they were determined to hold as their strategic importance was fully realised. The nature of the countryside on the Indo-Burmese border, an extreme mix of almost trackless mountains and jungle, made the possession of motorable roads essential for success. The British and Indian forces were supplied from the railhead at Dimapur via the road through Kohima to Imphal. If that road was cut men and pack animals had to be re-supplied by air.

It was against that background that the 1st Battalion, along with the remainder of 2 Division, was ordered to move to Calcutta by train and then to Dimapur by air. The Battalion moved at a strength of forty officers and 830 soldiers. For many this was their first experience of flying. Kohima's garrison consisted of just 1,000 troops and it was being threatened by a Japanese force of 12,000. The Japanese closed the Dimapur-Kohima road, however, just a few miles to the north-west of Kohima on 7 April, about a week before the Battalion was complete in Dimapur.

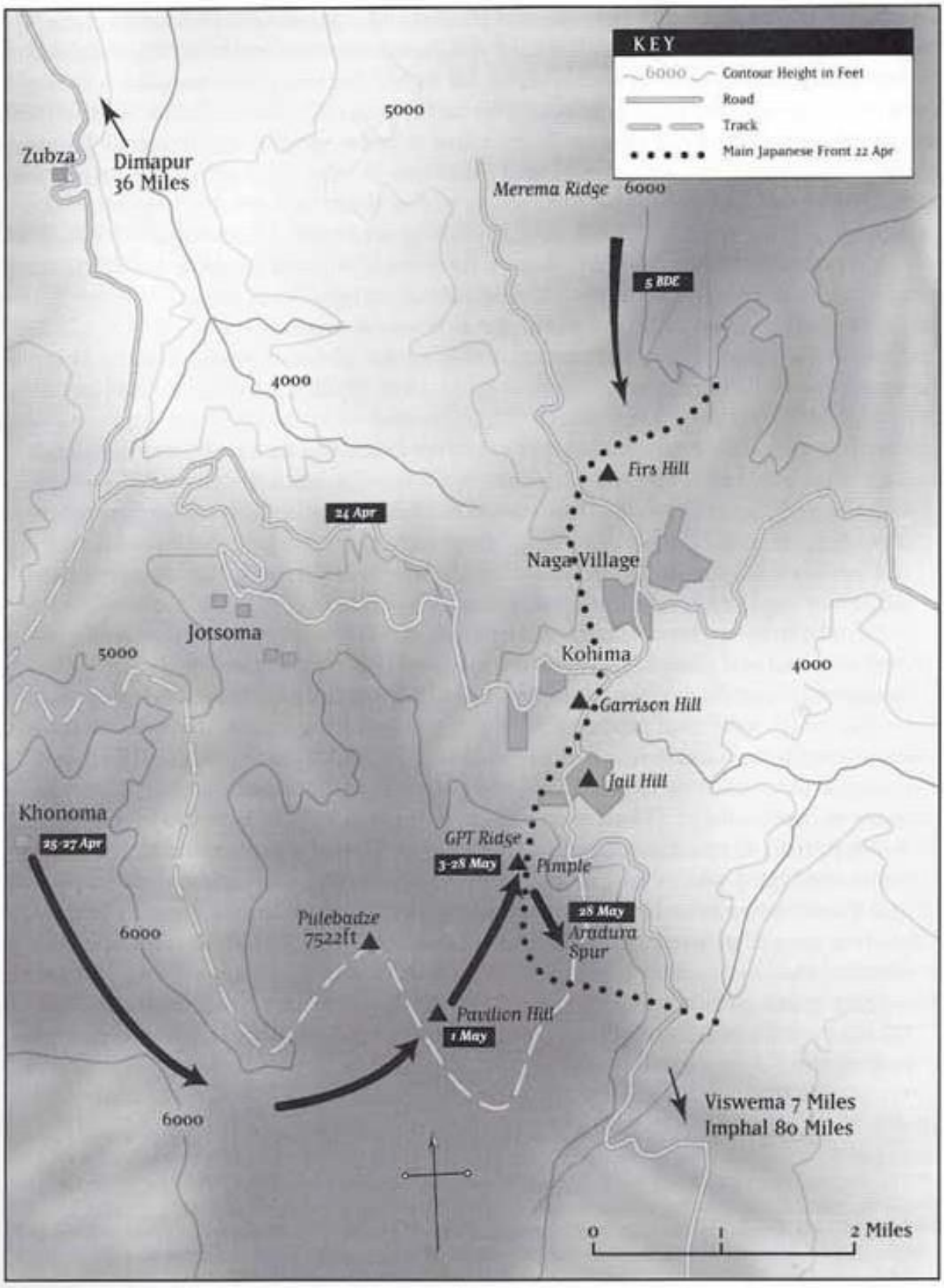
5 Brigade was the first formation of 2 Division to be committed to the relief of Kohima. It seized the Japanese positions blocking the road at Zubza and Jotsoma on 14 April and, by 18 April, with the Garrison Commander estimating that he could hold our for no more than a further twelve hours,the road into Kohima was again open and the garrison was reinforced by fresh troops. The relief of Kohima was the turning point of the war in Burma but in mid-April 1944 the road through Kohima to Imphal was still closed and Japanese troops still held many strong positions in the Kohima area. The next phase of the battle was the destruction of these positions. During the third week in April 5 Brigade began a cross-country left hook which was designed to enable it to attack the Japanese positions at Kohima from the north, while 4 Brigade mounted a cross-country right hook aimed at seizing the Japanese positions on GPT Ridge, to the south of the village.

The 1st Battalion, however, was in action in the Kohima area before 4 Brigade launched its right hook.

Our first task was to take over two hills, later extended to a third, on the north side of the road at milestone 32 [three miles north-east of the village of Zubza]. We relieved the 1st Battalion The Royal Berkshire Regiment and took over features known as Bolton and Reading. They were razor-backed, precipitous spurs covered in thick jungle. A narrow track that kept to the highest ground wound along the tops and ended in a close-built wooden village.

We occupied these features without any trouble and dug in. It was all very peaceful that afternoon. One could see for miles across the valley and on to the outskirts of Kohima. There was some shelling from one of our batteries away to the south-west, but nothing very serious, nothing more than peace-time manoeuvres would put up. It reminded one of all the war books one had ever read - and warned us. Then came the evening, and the jungle noises became more insistent. Previously they had hardly broken through our own activities.

As we started to stand-to we heard them clearly. Something moved in the thick vegetation below us. A twig broke and then another. Our nerves were taught and the simplest sounds appeared more menacing than anything we had heard on our jungle training. But the night passed quietly. Once or twice a sentry decided that a Japanese battalion was on top of him, but our training and discipline came to our aid. There was no false alarm and morning found the Battalion with one more lesson learnt: never fire at night. It was the golden rule of the Fourteenth Army.



Kohima, April–June 1944. 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots

There were soon other, more important, lessons to be learnt.

A day or two after we had settled in came our first contact with the enemy. Major Russell, commanding D Company, had sent a patrol along a track to the south-east. It bumped the enemy, had some casualties and withdrew. The remainder of the platoon was pushed in and then the whole company. The Japs

were well dug-in on a steep cliff. We could not see them, but they could see us. We probed all round them, lost about a dozen men and then the company withdrew. Our losses had not been heavy, but we had the unsatisfactory feeling that we had lost some very good men, and we could not swear to having killed a single Jap. It was our first attempt to turn the little yellow rats out of their holes without supporting fire, and our last. Just another jungle warfare lesson learnt.

The lesson was quickly learnt, however, and the Jap position was subjected to artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire. Initially all that effort seemed to be of no avail as a second attack was again met with determined resistance and had to be called off. The recipe was repeated and this time the results were different.

On the road to kohima. Major hayward, second in command of the 1st battalion (centre) with captain currie, adjutant, on the right

Next morning Lieutenant Darling, patrolling down to the enemy position, reported it clear of Japs. We went down and found it devoid of life, but by no means clear of Japs. There were considerably more dead Japs than our total casualties, and that cheered us up enormously. We saw what a shambles the place was. The reverse slope where our mortars had got busy seemed particularly damaged. There must have been a company headquarters and a first aid post there and both had received direct hits. Sergeant Smail dug up one grave with twenty dead Japs in it. All had been wounded and then beheaded before their 'comrades' withdrew. This put a very different complexion on the battle. We realised that though we may not appear to inflict casualties on the enemy we were doing so the whole time. It was a good lesson and we remembered it throughout the campaign.

The Battalion's casualties for April 1944 were fifteen soldiers killed, two officers and thirty-five soldiers wounded and one soldier missing.

On 24 April the Battalion moved forward on the main road towards Kohima to a position north of the village of Jotsoma. From there, on the following day, it moved by a mixture of vehicle and march route up to the village of Khonoma from where it began its cross-country approach to Kohima on 27 April, but it did not arrive at GPT Ridge until 3 May. It was a hazardous journey.

The march was probably not more than thirty miles and it was expected to take about five or six days. To those who do not know the country this sounds a fairly easy feat. But it was not. The track had been made by the Special Service Company under Major MacGeorge, The Royal Scots. It was a single-file march and in parts ropes had been put down to drag oneself up the sheer precipices. Naga porters helped with some of the heavier equipment and with rations, but no air drop was attempted, firstly because there was no possible dropping zone, and secondly, to maintain surprise. Mules, of course, were out of the question. It was simply a matter of climbing to the top of a ridge and slithering down the other side on one's haunches. The ridges varied in height from hundreds to thousands of feet, and the temperature in the valleys and on the tops varied accordingly. It was not a march in the accepted sense of the word. It was a climb, pure and simple, which was in direct contrast to our language, which was neither.

During the flanking move there was some action on Pavilion Hill on 1 May. A group of unarmed Naga porters was ambushed by the Japanese. Not surprisingly they dropped the rations they were carrying and fled. A platoon of A Company,anticipating that the Japanese would return to retrieve the rations, mounted its own ambush at the same spot. The Japanese duly returned and the ambush was sprung leaving three dead. Later in the day the Japs mounted attacks on Pavilion Hill which initially was held by just two platoons of A Company and the Manchester's Machine- Gun Platoon, but later reinforced by the arrival of C Company.

Fortunately the Jap decided to attack from the south-east and walked, or rather climbed, straight into A Company's LMGs. He withdrew after about twenty minutes and left us very much master of ourselves and of the situation. Just then Major Menzies arrived with C Company and Somerville's platoon rejoined after their successful ambush on the Japanese on 1 May. That put a very different complexion on the affair and the next attack, which was launched just before dusk, was beaten off with considerable slaughter. Fortunately for us, it seems it was a Jap habit to announce his intention of attacking by screams of 'Banzai' and other encouraging noises, which always gave us ample time to prepare for him. Another of his habits which militated against success was his invariable practice of reinforcing failure. From dusk to 11 pm he put in an hourly attack at exacdy the same place, in exactly the same way with exactly the same result. It is true that on one occasion he managed to get two or three men inside our position, but they were immediately dealt with by Lieutenant Black and Lance Corporal McKay. Our total casualties did not amount to half a dozen and we picked up and buried seventeen of the enemy in the immediate vicinity of our posts. That there were many more nearby was proved by the fact that a few days later another unit was unable to stay on Pavilion Hill owing to the smell of carrion.

The attack on GPT Ridge was led by The Royal Norfolks with The Royal Scots in support. Surprisingly the attack caught the Japanese unawares and the Norfolks drove forward to within 100 yards of the end of the ridge with the 1st Battalion following them closely. The two battalions were surrounded by Japanese, but in such thick country it was possible for patrols to get through to the rear without being discovered. Both battalions quickly set about consolidating their positions with dogged determination.

We arrived on 3 May and I suppose we were there about a week. For the first day or two we were continually sniped and harried by an active enemy who was fighting on his own ground and knew

every track and game trail. But gradually we got the better of him. First we blitzed the area between ourselves and the Norfolks and joined up the [battalion] boxes. Then we started counter-sniping, at which we had considerable success. RSM Brunton was a particularly keen and efficient shikari (Hindi word for hunter).

A patrol on the approaches to kohima

He discovered a Japanese water point and sat over it. I have forgotten what his exact bag came to, but it was a welcome addition to the daily total. We also laid some very successful ambushes around our position. The Pioneer Platoon was notably successful and one of their ambushes so annoyed the Japs in the big bunker to our rear as to make an attack upon us. This was more noisy than effective and was easily repulsed. An immediate counter-attack by the Carrier Platoon, in which Sergeant Dick greatly distinguished himself, caught the enemy just as he was reforming. Our bag for that day, I remember, was thirty-one counted Jap bodies.

Sergeant Syme, who was a Section Commander in the Carrier Platoon, having been forced to leave their vehicles behind and now forming Patrol Platoon, recalled the part he played in the action around Kohima on 5 May.

Once the Japs began taking pot shots at A Company, and some of A Company began to get a wee bit shaky, so the Patrol Platoon was sent for and out we went - the whole Platoon. It just so happened that I was the leading Section to go, so that the rest of the Platoon could stretch out behind me. I'll tell you, I went along there and there was nothing that I didn't see. We stopped when we were in line and we turned and we had a wee rise up to where they were [the Japanese] and we went up over the rise. I had my Bren gunner killed, that was the first man I'd ever lost.

The Japanese, however, refused to be driven from their positions and there was heavy fighting

involving the Norfolks and C Company of The Royal Scots to try to drive them from a major bunker on a feature known as the Pimple. The enemy held out for nine days in that position which was eventually cleared by B Company after it had been subjected to direct fire from tanks at a range of thirty yards.

The next objective was to clear the Japanese from their positions on Aradura Spur which was attacked on 28 May. Again the enemy's resistance was determined and casualties were so high that the attack had to be called off. Once again Sergeant Syme was involved in the action.

The Japs were falling back from Kohima, and this next hill, [Aradura Spur] we patrolled it daily for a week before putting in an attack. Although we had patrolled the area daily we lost sixty odd men in the attack, killed (17), wounded or missing and Christ knows where they [the Japs] were because we never saw them. We couldn't stay on top, we just had to come back off it. The next time we went there was nobody there, they were away!

By then, however, the Japanese were feeling the pressure of the incessant attacks being mounted throughout the whole of the Kohima area. Furthermore their morale was being undermined by the failure of their supply system to provide them with food. On the last day of May 1944 the local Japanese commander decided, against his orders, that he would have to withdraw. That movement started in early June. The battle for Kohima was over; it had lasted for sixty-four days and witnessed some of the fiercest fighting of the war. In May the Battalion had lost one officer and thirty-six soldiers killed, seven officers and 115 soldiers wounded and nine soldiers missing. Imphal was still cut off but, as the Japanese withdrew, the British and Indian troops were free to follow them south down the road to Imphal.

The final major battle of the Kohima campaign for the 1st Battalion took place at the large village of Viswema, twelve miles from Kohima and seventy-five miles from Imphal, on 6 June. The Lancashire Fusiliers were the lead battalion of 2 Division with The Royal Scots immediately behind them. The initial attack by the Fusiliers was repulsed and both battalions attacked in concert the following morning. Again Japanese resistance was determined but the attackers managed to break into the enemy's perimeter. The battle lasted three days and casualties were heavy.The position was eventually cleared by a set piece attack by the 7th Battalion The Worcestershire Regiment. Once Viswema fell the operation became an advance in contact and, although there were some stiff local actions, 2 Division was able to make steady progress towards Imphal. On 21 June the troops thrusting south from Kohima met up with those pushing north from Imphal. The Japanese advance into India had been defeated. The Battalion's losses during the Kohima campaign were two officers and seventy-six soldiers killed, fifteen officers and 189 soldiers wounded and four soldiers missing. On 24 June, at the end of the campaign, the Battalion's strength was twenty-six officers and 512 soldiers - the difference of some seventy all ranks from the emplaning figure in early April being accounted for by sickness.

Postscript. While the 2nd Division set about erecting a Divisional Memorial to those who had fallen in the epic struggle to relieve Kohima and open the road to Imphal, the 1st Battalion were equally determined to additionally commemorate their own. This Memorial was designed and constructed by The Royal Scots themselves under the supervision of a small committee. It was made of local stone and wood and was erected by the Pioneer Platoon. The Monument is sited at Kennedy Hill, on the Aradura Spur, and was unveiled by Lieutenant Colonel Masterton Smith, who had fought throughout the Battle and was now the Commanding Officer, on 25 November 1944. The Monument, overseen by The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, is now surrounded by local housing but (in 2017) was reported as being in good order and carefully looked after by the family living around it.

Dedication of 1st battalion memorial, aradura spur, imphal, 25 november 1944. The padre is the reverend crichton robertson

**When you go home Tell
them of us and say
For your tomorrow We
gave our today**

The Kohima Epitaph

THE LISBON MARU

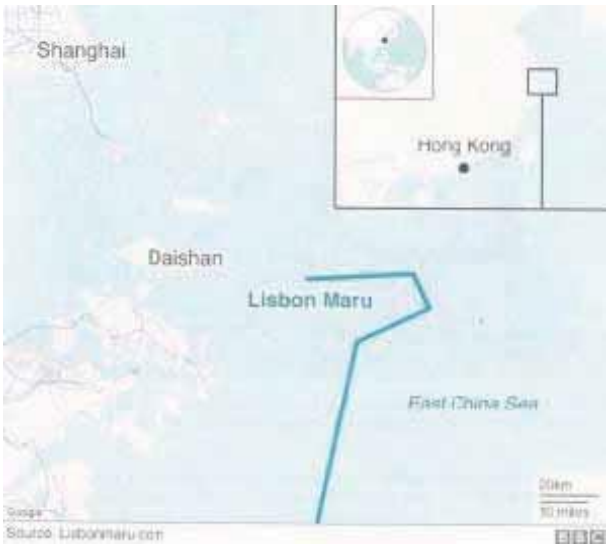
POSSIBLE DISTURBANCE OF THE WRECK OF THE LISBON MARU AND ANY HUMAN (BRITISH POW) REMAINS THAT MAY STILL BE ON BOARD OR ON THE SURROUNDING SEABED

Background

The Lisbon Maru sailed from Hong Kong on 27 September 1942 en route to Shanghai and Japan. She was armed and carried, in addition to 1816 British POWs, 778 Japanese troops and a guard of 25 for the POWs. There was nothing that identified her as carrying POWs.

The British POWs were mostly drawn from The Royal Navy (379) 'accommodated' in No 1 Hold at the front of the ship, 2RS (373) and 1MX (366), with others from various cap badges to a total of 1077, 'accommodated' in No 2 Hold forward of the Bridge and the RA (380) 'accommodated' in No 3 Hold at the stern. The Senior British Officer on board was Lt Col HWM Stewart, CO 1MX, in No 2 hold. Conditions in all three holds were very crowded.

Just after 0700hrs on 1 October, in a position 6 miles off the Sing Pang Islands in the Chusan (now Zhousan) Archipelago off the coast of Chekiang Province (south of Shanghai), the Lisbon Maru was hit in the engine room, at the stern, by a torpedo fired from the US submarine USS Grouper. The engines stopped, the lights went out and those few POWs who were on deck were pushed back into the holds. The ship's gun began firing. The POWs were kept in the partially closed holds throughout the day with no food, water or access to latrines. No blame has ever been, nor ever must be, attached to the USS Grouper. There was nothing that identified her as carrying POWs; there were a large number of Japanese troops on board; and she was armed. Everything that could be seen identified the Lisbon Maru as a legitimate target.



At 1700 hrs the 778 Japanese troops were taken off onto a Japanese destroyer and merchant ship which had arrived, leaving the British POWs, their guard of 25 and the 77 crew on board. In doing so they removed the ship's four lifeboats and most, if not all, of the six life rafts ensuring that none would be available for any possible subsequent evacuation of the POWs. At about 2100 hrs, allegedly fearing the POWs could break out and overpower the guard, the Guard Commander ordered the ship's Captain to fully close the hatches and batten them down with canvas. Conditions in all three holds deteriorated rapidly. In No 1 Hold two diphtheria patients died and in No 3 hold, nearest where the torpedo had struck, water was rising rapidly. The POWs manned the pumps; but because of the extreme heat and shortage of air some of them collapsed into the water and drowned.

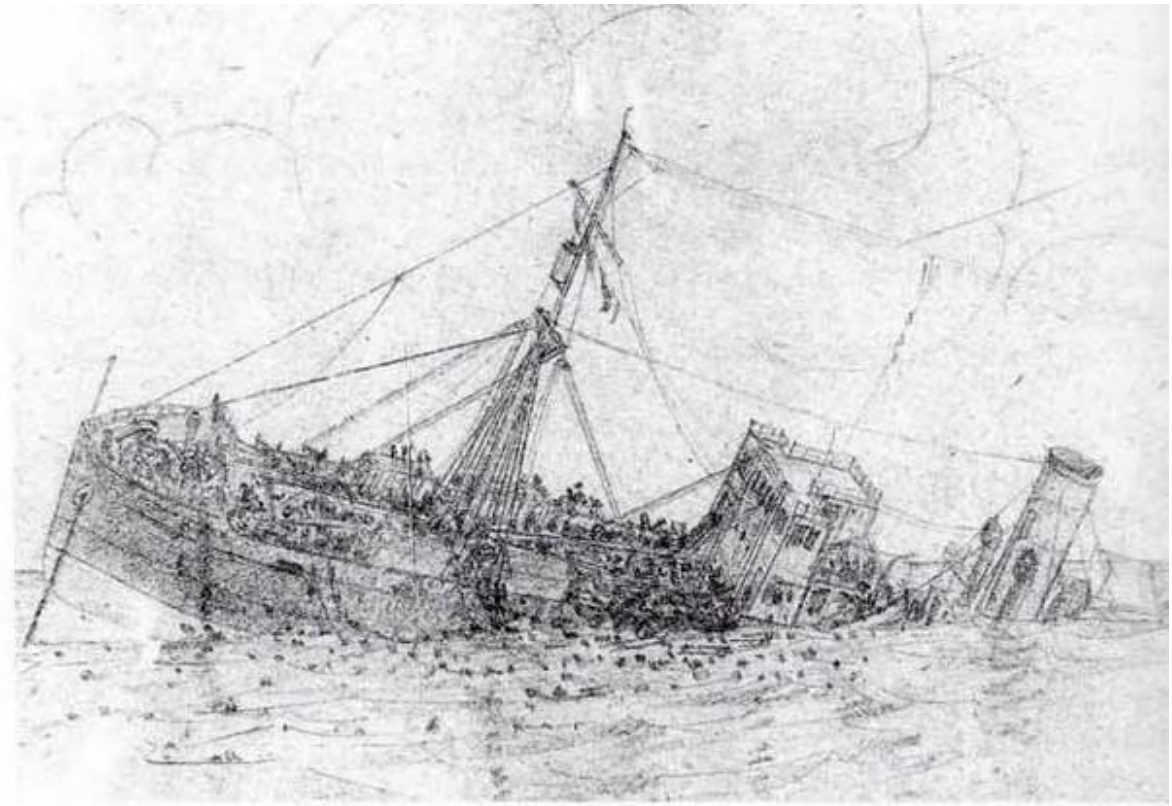
By dawn on 2 October it was apparent that the ship was in imminent danger of sinking and soon afterwards the crew and all but five of the guards were taken off. At about 0900 hrs the ship gave a violent lurch and it was apparent that she could not last much longer. Lt Col Stewart ordered a Royal Scots officer, Lt Howell, to attempt to break out through the battened hatches. He succeeded in doing so and, after being shot at by the remaining Japanese guards, which led to two men being killed, reported to Col Stewart that the situation was desperate and that the ship was in imminent danger of sinking, but that he had seen an island some distance off. Col Stewart gave the order to leave the holds and a number of the POWs rushed on deck, plunged overboard and began swimming towards the island. The remaining guards began firing at them until the weight of numbers of POWs pouring onto the deck overpowered them and, probably, threw them overboard.

Most of the PoWs scambled to safety but hundreds of others saw their escape thwarted

By good fortune the stern at this point became stuck on a sandbank leaving the forepart as far as the bridge sticking out of the water for about a further hour which gave sufficient time for all live men to climb or be assisted out of the holds. Many men did not have lifebelts and many could not swim. Between the ship and the islands were a number of Japanese auxiliary vessels and tugs, some of them surrounded by men in the water vainly asking to be picked up and, if they were, then pushed them back into the water; and the firing of shots could be heard. The Lisbon Maru finally sank at about 1045. At some stage the Japanese boats started to pick up those prisoners still alive in the water and who had not drifted past them towards the Islands.

Lt Howell, having been picked up by fishermen in a sampan, was among the first to reach the largest of the Islands and was able to explain to the villagers there that the heads bobbing about in the water were British prisoners and not Japanese. As a result the Chinese set off in junks and sampans to assist the survivors. They picked up a considerable number of exhausted swimmers while other villagers assisted those who had drifted or swum to the islands and helped them to land on the rocky shores. Some 200 survivors were assembled on the islands, where the villagers fed and clothed them from their own scanty supplies and treated them with great kindness until the Japanese landed in force on the following days and rounded up all but three of the prisoners. These three, all civilians who had been working in Hong Kong - two with the Royal Navy, were hidden by the village representative, who later arranged for their escape to Chungking.

Those picked up by the Japanese ships were collected together on the deck of a large gun boat where, exposed to the elements, some died of exposure and exhaustion before finally being landed south of Shanghai on 5 October.



Sinking of the Lisbon Maru in the China Sea, 20 October 1942. A pencil sketch drawn by Lieutenant W C Johnston, US Navy while a prisoner of war at Kobe, Japan and later presented to the Regiment

Of the 1816 POWs who had left Hong Kong only 973 (including the three escapees) survived leaving 843 (46%) who were assumed to have been killed by the Japanese firing on them or drowned - many of the latter being non-swimmers, without life-jackets or other means of support, and some, it was reported, as the result of shark attack. Amongst The Royal Scots a total of 183 died, many more than the 107 killed in the whole of the battle for Hong Kong. Relatively few of the POWs, only those who had died on board before she sank, would have gone down within the ship. The remains of the others will have been scattered in the surrounding seas.

Aftermath

Subsequently Lt Howell was awarded the MBE for his gallantry in breaking open the hold and Lt Norman Brownlow the same award for organising the evacuation of the ship and then, having reached the island himself, obtaining a small boat and rescuing men from the sea who were trying to reach and clamber ashore on the islands.

After the war a fund was organised amongst survivors in order that the proceeds might be sent to to the Sing Pang islanders as a token of gratitude. In February 1949 the Governor of Hong Kong presented to Mr WooTung-ling, the village representative who had hidden the three escapees, and other islanders a motor fishing launch and some monetary awards.

All thoses who died as a result of the sinking are commemorated on panels at the entrance to the Sai Wan CWGC cemetery on Hong Kong island.

Possible Disturbance of the Wreck and its Surrounding Area

There have been recent suggestions that the wreck of the Lisbon Maru might be raised and any remains found in or near it possibly repatriated to the UK..

There are two aspects that arise from this:

1. The first is would the hull survive 'recovery'? I am certainly no expert but it was an old, lightly-built merchant ship with large holds as opposed to a warship, possibly with an armoured hull and many bulkheads to increase its survivability when sustaining damage in battle. After 75 years in salt water it might just, quite literally, fall apart.
2. The definition of a "war grave" is a burial place for members of the Armed Forces or civilians who died during military campaigns or operations. The term can be considered to apply to ships sunk during war time. By any standards the Lisbon Maru meets this definition. The UK has clearly defined its position on this within The Protection of Military Remains Act 1986, which, in simple terms, states that such ships, and any remains on them, should be left undisturbed. While this Act can only apply within British-controlled waters including, for example, those around the Falklands, it does express the British Government's views on the treatment of such 'war graves' including those involving foreign and merchant vessels. In British waters it has already been extended to include the wreck of a German U-Boat and the Storaa Judgement of 2006 formally confirmed that it could extend to merchant vessels. It is reasonable, therefore, to expect the British Government to oppose as strongly as possible any planned or proposed disturbance of the Lisbon Maru or its immediate surrounds, albeit concerning a Japanese ship in Chinese waters.

On the possible repatriation of any remains the practice only began for us, the British, when it was offered to the Next-of-Kin (NOK) of those killed in the Falklands conflict in 1983. This was partly because the numbers involved were relatively small (compared to the major conflicts of the 20th Century) and partly because the difficulties NOK would encounter visiting the war graves at such a distance and the fragile transport links. This policy has extended to all those who have been killed or died on active service, including in Northern Ireland, since then. Remains of any British war dead from World Wars 1 or 2 that appear today, whether identified or not, are not repatriated but are re-buried in the nearest CWGC cemetery. In the case of any remains that might be recovered from on or around the Lisbon Maru we believe, after 75 years, even with the huge advances in DNA testing, identification would be impossible probably even the linking iof ndividual bones to each other.

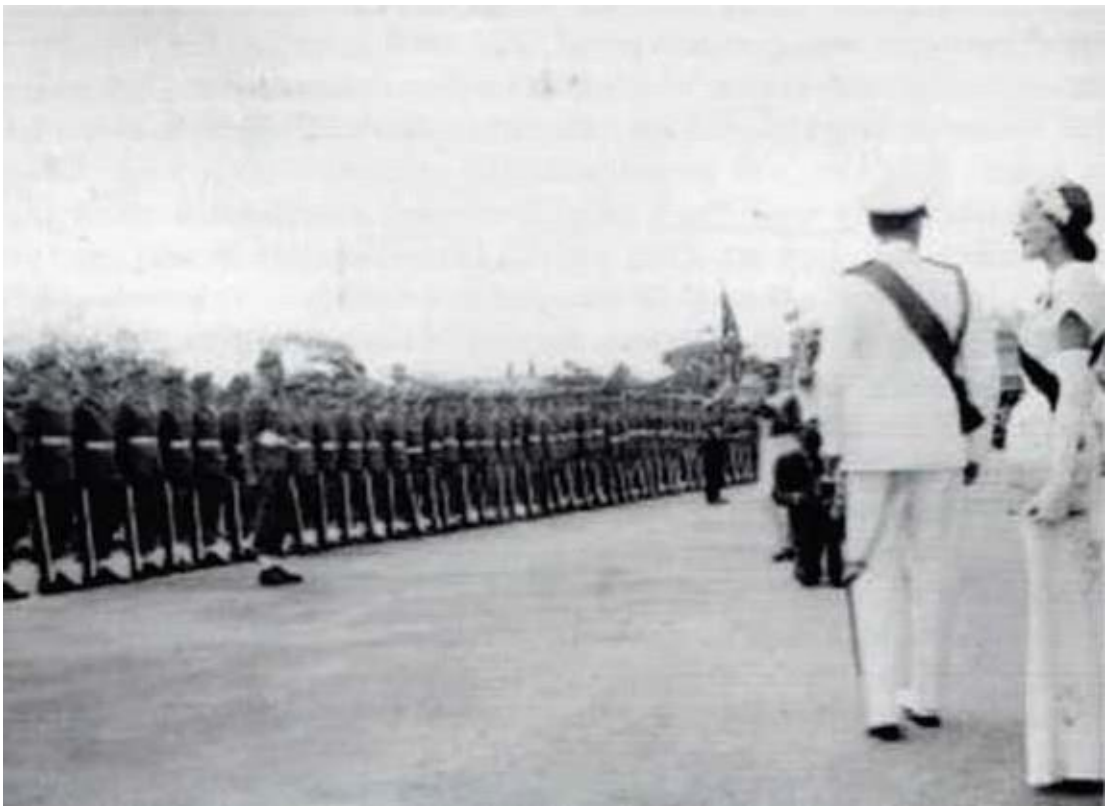
The Trustees of The Royal Scots are firmly committed, and will take all measures possible, to ensure that the Lisbon Maru and its surrounds remain undisturbed and respected within the British Government's interpretation of a War Grave at Sea. Our view is fully endorsed by The Royal Naval and The Royal Artillery Associations with who we have actively consulted on this subject.

THE COLD WAR 1945 – 1990

Following the end of the Second World War there was to be no return to the traditional round of peace time soldiering as occurred after 1918. The period is marked by the variety of roles required from and commitments of the Army, in particular low-intensity operations from the infantry. Reductions in the size of the Army led to amalgamations and disbandments of many famous Regiments while at the same time unforeseen crises requiring military action created severe strain on the forces remaining. 'Overstretch' became a familiar theme. National Service, initially for eighteen months but, from 1949, for two years, was introduced to provide the manpower to meet this. It lasted until the final men were called up in 1960 with the announcement of the introduction from 1962 of all-regular forces (plus, for the Army, the TA).

In Europe the post-war occupation forces remained in Germany, Austria and other former Axis areas. From 1949 these became part of The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) as a deterrent against the Russian threat as wartime alliance changed to 'Cold War'. Outside Europe the Palestine problem continued until the creation of the state of Israel in 1949. The transition of former Colonies to independence was not always peaceable. The containment of Communist expansion in Malaya and Korea demanded the deployment of large forces. In 1969, the Army had to be deployed to support the Police in Northern Ireland and remained in that role, in often very considerable numbers, right through to July 2007.

The intensity of activity over the period from 1945 to the end of the Cold War in 1990 is demonstrated by the fact that the 1stBattalion changed station over 30 times in that time and covering from the UK to Korea. Many of these moves required reorganisation, adopting a new role and familiarisation with new equipment. In addition eleven 'emergency' tours were carried out requiring a move at short notice to some critical situation – latterly normally to Northern Ireland.



Earl Mountbatten, last Viceroy of India, moves to inspect the 1st Battalion Guard of Honour at The Pakistan Independence Parade

Field Marshal Montgomery visiting the 2nd Battalion in Trieste, July 1948

In December 1945 the 1st Battalion was posted from India to Singapore and Malaya until January 1947 when it moved to Karachi where it remained until the partition and emergence of the separate states of India and Pakistan, including providing the Guard of Honour for the Pakistan ceremony of Independence. It sailed for home in December, one of the last British battalions to leave the sub-continent, and nearly six years after they had left for Burma. On arrival it moved to Dreghorn Barracks in Edinburgh to assume the role of Training Battalion for the then four Lowland infantry regiments. Meanwhile the 2nd Battalion remained in Palestine maintaining order between Arabs and Jews apart from a four month tour in the Canal Zone. Two members of the Battalion were killed during these operations. In April 1946 it moved to Malta and then, in June 1947, to Trieste as part of of the occupation force in an area disputed between Italy and Yugoslavia. At the end of 1948 they too returned to Edinburgh where, on 9 February 1949, they amalgamated, on a very wet parade, with the 1st Battalion as part of the reduction in Army force levels after the independence of, and therefore no longer need to garrison, India and Pakistan.

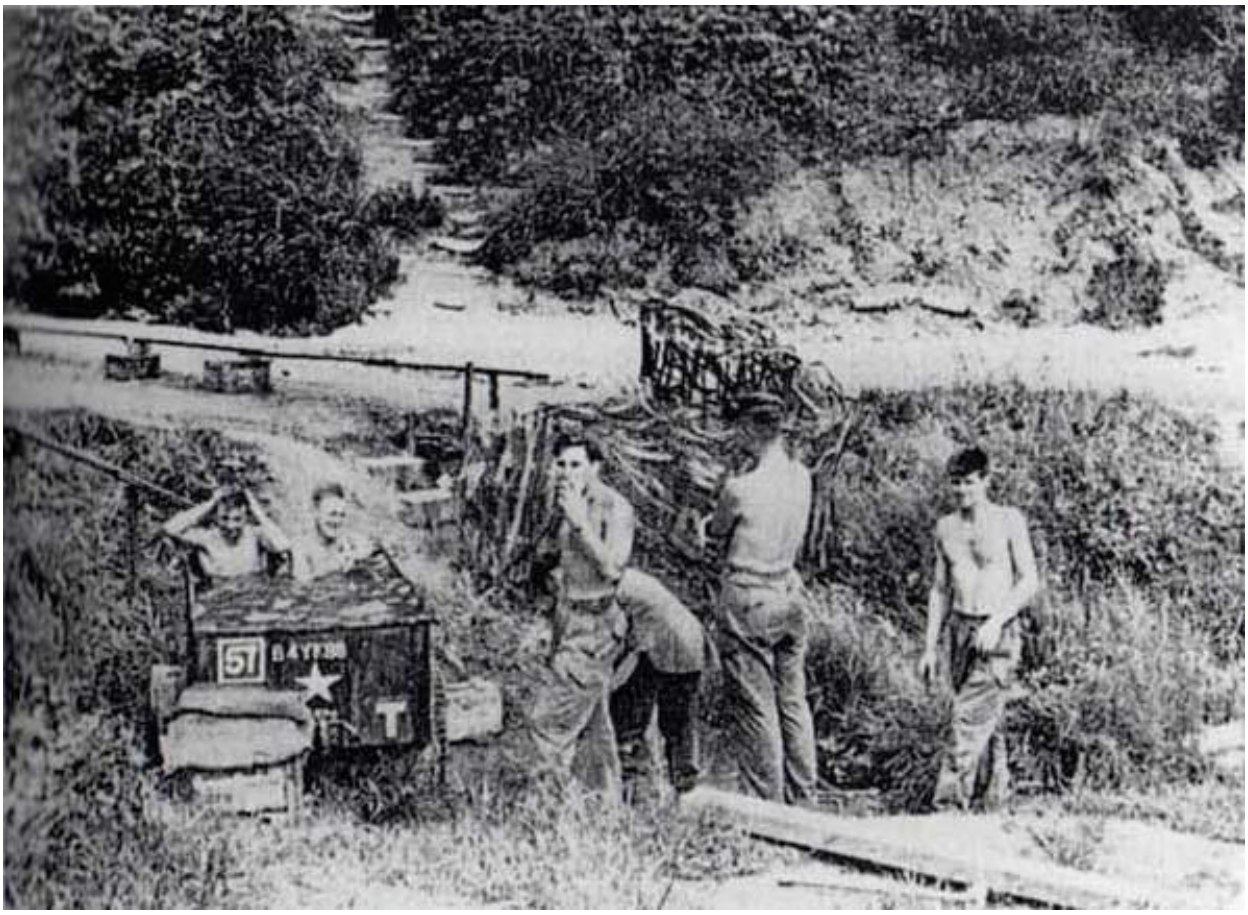
The Amalgamation Parade of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, Dreghorn Barracks, Edinburgh, 9 Feb 1949

This was the first time the Regiment had been reduced to one regular battalion since 1686 (262 years), a unique record for a Regiment of the Line. In the meantime both the 7th/9th and 8th Territorial Battalions having initially been stationed, and employed, as part of the occupying force in Germany had been disbanded respectively in June and February1946 only to be reconstituted as part of the re-formed Territorial Army(TA) in the spring of 1947.

In February1951 the 1st Battalion moved to West Germany to join The British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) as part of Britain's contribution to NATO. Initially they were stationed in Munster but moved to Wuppertal in December. In May 1952 they moved again, this time to Berlin which remained a city occupied and governed by the wartime Allies, The United States, France, Russia and Great Britain. They remained there until April 1953 when they returned briefly to transit through Top Camp, next to Glencorse, before sailing for Korea. On 26 July1962 HRH The Princess Royal, the Colonel-in-Chief, had opened the Regimental Monument just below The Mound in West Princes Street Gardens.

HRH The Princess Royal, Colonel-in-Chief, unveiling The Regimental Monument in West Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh, on 26 July 1952

In 1950 Communist North Korea, backed by Russia and, later, China, invaded South Korea. The United Nations, under US leadership, immediately deployed considerable forces in support of South Korea. The British contribution expanded from a single Brigade to the 1st Commonwealth Division including troops from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and India. In 1953 the 1st Battalion were posted to relieve The Black Watch. They sailed from Southampton on the evening of 2 June, Coronation Day, the Colour Party having taken part in the Coronation Parade in London that day and handing over the very damp Colours to a Regimental party from the Depot as they went up the gangplank. The Battalion landed at Pusan on 7 July and carried out intensive training until they were due into the line on 29 July. On the evening of 26 July it was announced that a truce would be signed the following morning and that a cease fire would be effective from 2200 hours that evening. At that time a Royal Scots bugler sounded the 'Cease Fire' which echoed round the valleys. It was, however, only a truce and the Battalion spent a busy year occupying and improving the front line while carrying out much training. Sadly three members of the Battalion died in accidents during the tour, two in drownings and one in a tent fire.



A jeep trailer bath in Korea

In April 1954 the Regiment moved back into its Headquarters and Depot at Glencorse outside Edinburgh. The Battalion remained in Korea until June 1954 when they moved to the Suez Canal Zone in Egypt. Since the end of World War 2 the Egyptians had been trying to remove the British presence by civil disorder, murder and hit and run shooting attacks. The Battalion therefore had to adapt from the role of general war to one of internal security. Meantime another uprising against British rule had broken out in Cyprus when the EOKA terrorists, seeking Enosis, or union with Greece, began the now familiar pattern of riots, assassinations and sabotage followed by guerilla attacks from their hides in the Troodos Mountains. In September 1955 the Battalion was moved at short notice to the Paphos area of Cyprus where the Police had become virtually ineffective. Initially the Battalion was deployed in small groups throughout the area to restore police confidence before concentrating in company areas to mount anti-terrorists operations against EOKA. Two soldiers were killed during these before the Battalion left the island in January 1956 to return to Elgin in Scotland where they spent the summer on ceremonial duties.

Stability was short-lived, however, as in July President Nasser of Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal and, in November, a joint British and French expeditionary force invaded to recover it. The 1st Battalion joined this operation which was surrounded by political indecision and prevarication. Although it proved militarily possible to regain control of the Canal, world opinion, and, notably, US opposition, made it politically impossible to do so and, in December, the allied forces handed over to the United Nations and withdrew. The Battalion had one fatality when Major David Pinkerton was shot and later died from his wounds. He had been a Company Commander with 2RS in Hong Kong, winning the MC for his bravery and leadership in both the Mainland and Island battles, and survived the Japanese POW Camps. He had served in Korea and, but for his death, would almost certainly have commanded the 1st Battalion.

Returning to Elgin in January 1957, the Battalion remained there until January 1958 when they again moved to Berlin as part of the continuing Allied occupation force in that still divided city. Their tour was remarkable for both military and sporting successes, winning the BAOR Machine Gun Competition and the Football, Boxing and Rugby Cups. While there the four Lowland Regiments replaced their individual cap badges with the unpopular Lowland Brigade shared one. After two years the Battalion returned to Dundonald Camp near Ayr in Scotland. At the same time, the TA, no longer having former National Servicemen to fill its ranks, was reduced in size with the 7th/9th and 8th Battalions amalgamating to form the 8th/9th Battalion. Glencorse Barracks had also closed in 1960 to be be rebuilt as The Lowland Brigade Depot and Regimental HQ moved into offices, and later added a Museum, within Edinburgh Castle.

In October 1960 the Battalion moved on posting to Libya, British troops having remained there since 1945. Although much reduced, there were still garrisons in Tobruk, Benghazi, Tripoli and Homs at the request of King Idris to provide stability and security to his Kingdom. Initially the Battalion was based in Benghazi with a company detached in Tobruk to provide security for the large RAF staging airfield at El Adem. After a year, the Battalion concentrated in Tripoli where it remained until April 1963.

Libya 1962. The Battalion had been issued with the Self Loading Rifte (SLR) and combat suits

It was during this period that National Service ceased and the Regular Army became an all volunteer force for the first time since 1939. The Battalion was desperately understrength with only two rifle companies, each of only two rifle platoons and a support platoon. Recruiting of sufficient regulars proved a demanding and difficult task, especially when based in North Africa.

In April 1963 the Battalion returned to Britain to be stationed at Tidworth on Salisbury Plain as part of the Strategic Reserve. They now had to be organised, equipped and trained for short notice deployment by air to any crisis point requiring military action. In January 1964 a reinforced company trained for two months in Arctic operations at Fort Churchill on the Hudson Bay. In mid-May, during a

Battalion Exercise on the Plain, a message was received ordering the Battalion to move immediately, by air, to Aden. Here tribal uprisings in the hinterland of the Aden Protectorate were threatening the road running between Aden and the garrison at Dhala on the Yemen border. A six week operation had secured the road but the dissidents remained a threat and the Radfan area of steep, high and rugged peaks had to be occupied. At the same time two rival nationalist groups, encouraged by President Nasser, began a campaign of murder and intimidation in Aden itself, and its surrounding area, despite the British Government's undertaking to grant independence by 1968.

A Company patrol in the Wadi Taym, Radfan

Foot patrol in Aden Town

The Battalion was complete in Aden by 24 May, less than 10 days from the first warning, with A Company already deployed at Thumier providing defence for the Radfan base. The next nine months found the Battalion carrying out four, one month long operational tours up country in the Radfan, interspersed with 'rest' periods in Aden town which usually involved intensive internal security duties, urban patrolling by foot and vehicle and little 'rest'! It was like a very hot (temperature) Belfast six years early! Operations in the Radfan, with temperatures up around 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and often higher, were 75% combatting administrative, climatic and terrain conditions and 25% active patrolling and similar operations. While the Battalion was in Aden, The Pipes and Drums made two tours to Australia and South America - both 'firsts' in the Regiment's history.

In February 1965 the Battalion returned to Tidworth and then, in August 1966, after work-up training in Canada, moved to Osnabruck in Germany and converted to the mechanised battalion role in AFV 432 tracked Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs). It was the first battalion to convert direct to the role which brought the requirement for many new skills such as driving, maintenance and radio operating, together with the need to react tactically much more quickly and at greater speed than before. The success of our conversion was watched very closely but, by the end of the year, having completed a Divisional Exercise across German countryside, a new experience rather than on a training area, we were judged to have passed all tests, and received considerable praise.

6 Platoon, B Company assaulting from FV 432s supported by pintle-mounted machine guns

In 1967 the Territorial Army was again reduced considerably in size and renamed The Territorial, Auxiliary and Volunteer Reserve (TA&VR). The Regiment's element was reduced to only one company, A Company of The 52nd Lowland Volunteers. This was followed in early 1968 by the merger of the Lowland and Highland Brigades to form The Scottish Division exercising administrative command of all the Scottish Infantry Battalions and their two Training Depots. The following year Regimental cap badges were reintroduced to the pleasure of all Royal Scots. On 1 July 1968 HM The Queen, accompanied by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, had unveiled an extension to the Regimental Monument commemorating the 47 years that HRH The Princess Royal had served as our Colonel in Chief from 1918-1965.

In 1969 a new era and area of operations began for the British Army when, on 14 August, 1st Battalion The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire were deployed on the street of Londonderry, in Northern Ireland, to assist the hard-pressed and exhausted Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) in combatting the severe rioting that was taking place. What started as inter-communal strife between Catholic Republicans demanding civil rights against Protestant Loyalists, soon developed into an anti-terrorist campaign, still in support of the RUC, aimed at containing the ambitions of the Irish Republican Army and its allied organisations seeking a united Ireland. Within days of the first troops deploying, reinforcements were sent to the Province and, by October, ten battalions were helping to police Ulster. This task was to dominate British Army commitments for the next thirty-five years including over the major campaigns of the Falklands, Gulf and Iraq. The 1st Battalion, stationed in Osnabruck, were the first reinforcement battalion to deploy from BAOR arriving in Belfast on 2 March 1970. It was during this tour that the Provisional IRA emerged and commenced their campaign of bombings and shootings.

Major A R G Addison and B Company on The Falls Road, Belfast 1970

The Battalion suffered five operational and two non-operational deaths during the 13 tours and a further 2 attached from other Corps were killed in accidents.

A Company on riot duties Belfast

An observation post on the Fermanagh Border

The Army's task grew from riot control and 'Keeping the Peace' to quelling and defeating urban and rural terrorism. Force levels in the Province varied during this time in response to the intensity of terrorist activity, peaking at some 22,000, including 27 infantry battalions or infantry roled units, over Operation Motorman in July/August 1972 when the Battalion was on a short-notice emergency tour and deployed to the Creggan Estate of Londonderry for the Operation itself. It is interesting to note that the size of this deployment with the Ulster Defence Regiment and RUC in support, was very similar to the British Army element in The Gulf War in 1991-2. Overall between 1970 and 2002 the Battalion carried out 13 operational tours in Northern Ireland, including two, two year resident tours, totalling some 71/2 years in the Province.

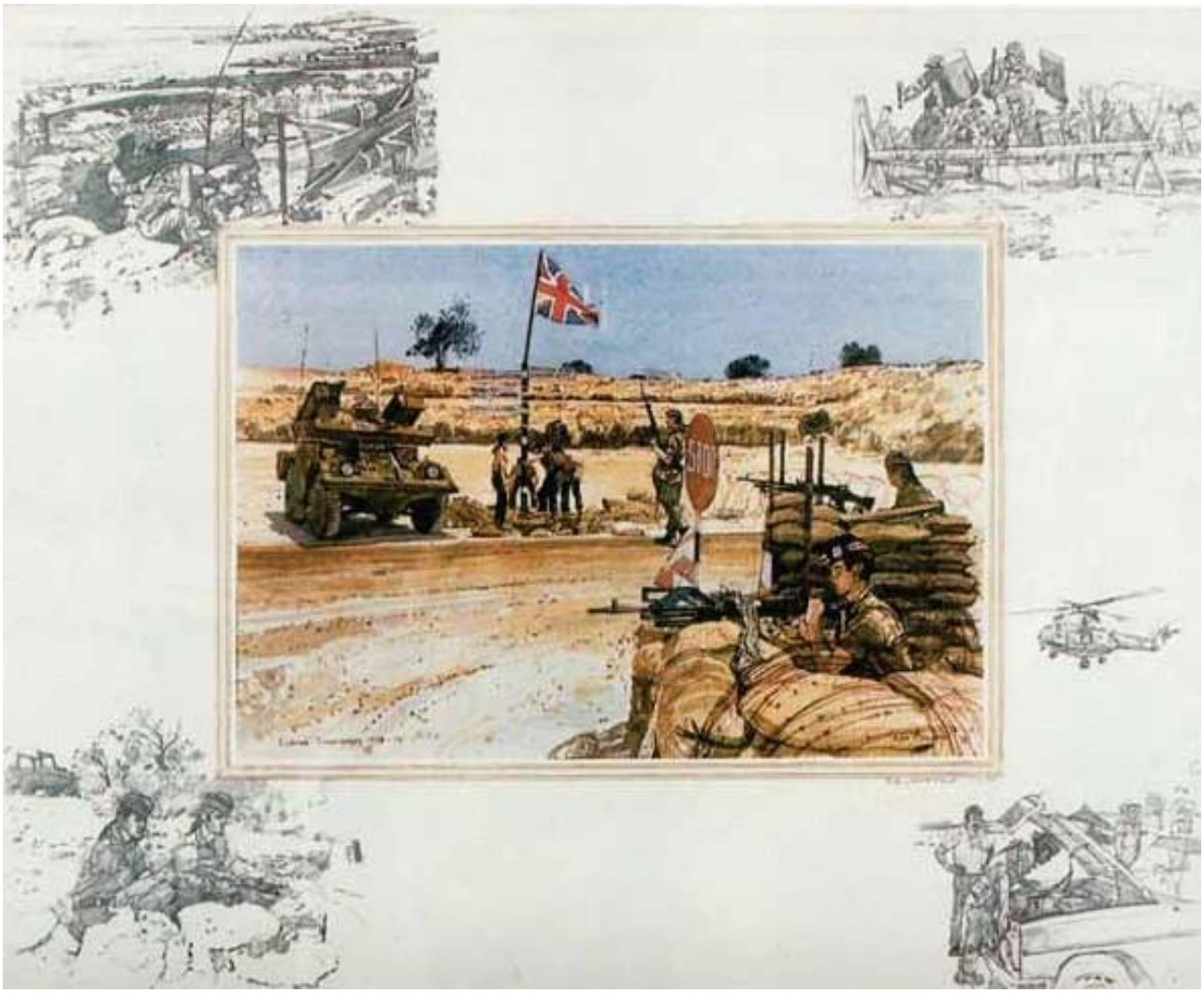
The Battalion returned for a second tour to Tidworth in November 1970 to take on the role as the British Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (Land) (AMF(L)) battalion. The AMF(L) was a multi-National, Brigade-sized formation whose role was to deploy in a deterrent role to the flanks of the Organisation at short-notice during an early stage of crisis to build confidence, display solidarity and, if required, fight alongside the single National forces normally deployed in those areas. The Battalion's priority was to learn to operate in the Arctic of North Norway, followed by rather more conventional warfare in Denmark and, on the Southern Flank, Italy, Greece and Turkey. Much time was spent on major exercises, study periods and winter training, including operating on skis, over the next four years. Together with three short-notice (24 hours!) deployments to Northern Ireland, not much time was spent in Tidworth.

Winter Training in Norway 1970-74

During 1971 a second TA Company was added back to the Regiment when the 52nd Lowland Volunteers was enlarged to two Battalions. Both RS Companies were in the 2nd Battalion.

After four winters in the AMF(L) role the battalion was posted to Cyprus in May 1974. At that time the Battalion had had more family separation in the previous four years than any other in the Army.

All ranks and their families were therefore looking forward to two years stability in the sunshine as they took over responsibility for security of the Akrotiri and Dhekalia Sovereign Base Areas. This was not to be. On 15 July President Makarios was deposed by elements of the National Guard who were still, as in 1955, seeking Enosis or Union with Greece despite Cyprus having become an independent Republic in 1961. The situation deteriorated rapidly as the National Guard - manned by Greek Cypriots, took control and forced the Turkish Cypriot minority into their enclaves. This resulted in Turkey invading the island and the division of the Republic, which continues as of the time of writing. The British Bases were not directly involved but the plight of the majority of the families, living off base in the Republic, became critical and they, together with thousands of tourists, had to be evacuated to the UK through the Bases. Throughout this period the Battalion was deployed on internal security, both on the edge of and outside the Bases, and assisting with the evacuation. They remained, mostly unaccompanied, on the island until January 1975 when they returned to Edinburgh.



Cyprus 1974-75

During the next year in Edinburgh the Battalion was involved in Ceremonial duties, assisting the civil authorities during a strike of refuse workers in Glasgow and a fifth emergency tour in Northern Ireland. This tour, our first in South Armagh, was one of the hardest ones we undertook. Sadly we lost three soldiers when the vehicle in which they were travelling was blown up. In June 1976 the Battalion returned to Munster in West Germany where they had been stationed briefly in 1951. They formed the unique role of Nuclear Convoy Escort Battalion, mounted in Land Rovers, and working

closely with 8 Regiment RCT and US troops, in providing security of resupply of warheads for the nuclear artillery. These three years, when we were removed from the Northern Ireland roster, provided a much needed respite from the intensive activity of the previous six.

The Battalion returned to Edinburgh from Munster in March 1979 to undertake more ceremonial duties and a sixth, four month tour, in Belfast, before moving in February 1981 to Ballykinler in Northern Ireland, this time as a resident battalion for two years where they formed part of the Province Reserve. Not having their own area of responsibility companies were often deployed under command of other units as reinforcements. We lost a soldier killed on one of these.

In 1983 the Battalion returned to Edinburgh to take part in the celebrations to mark the 350th anniversary of the raising of the Regiment in 1633. The climax of these was a Review of the Regiment by HM The Queen in Holyrood Park. It was at this parade that Her Majesty announced the appointment of Her daughter, HRH The Princess Anne, to be our Colonel-in- Chief.

'Royal Scots 350' A composite painting of scenes during the 350th commemoration events

In March 1984 the Battalion deployed to the Falkland Islands and South Georgia for five months where a garrison had been maintained since the defeat of the Argentinian invasion in 1982.

In April 1985 the Battalion returned to BAOR in the role of a mechanised battalion stationed at Werl. A major armoured training exercise in Canada was followed by an eighth tour to Northern Ireland, in West Belfast, from December 1987 to March 1988. 1989 saw the issue of a new Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle - the Warrior - with a turret mounting a 30mm cannon which introduced a completely new range of tactics and skills to the Battalion. This coincided with the end of the Cold

War, after 40 years, with the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, followed by the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, without a shot being fired.

POST COLD WAR 1990-2006

While the Battalion settled in enthusiastically to conversion training the debate began on the future structure and organisation of the British Army. This was put on hold after Iraq invaded Kuwait and a Coalition Force, including the 1st British Armoured Division, was assembled to eject and defeat them. The 1st Battalion deployed to Saudi Arabia in December 1990 and played a major part in the short but fierce ground war of 25-28 February, gaining more gallantry awards than any other unit in the Division. Very sadly Private Tom Haggerty was killed in an ammunition accident just after the actual fighting had finished. The full story of the Battalion's role in The Gulf War is given in the essay 'The Regiment's Last Battle Honour' in the History section of the Regimental web-site.

0peration Desert Storm. Royal Scots fighting onto an objective

On 27 June The Princess Royal reopened the totally refurbished Regimental Museum in Edinburgh Castle. A month later, on 23 July, it was announced that the 1st Battalion was to amalgamate with that of The King's Own Scottish Borderers. Immediately after this depressing news, and only six months after they had fought on behalf of their country, the Battalion returned to Fort George, outside Inverness, in Scotland. Then, in early 1992, the number of Royal Scots Territorials was reduced again to only one company. From September 1992 to March 1993 the Battalion undertook its ninth Northern Ireland tour in South Armagh. It was during this tour, on 3 February, and much to everyone's joy, the planned amalgamation with the Borderers was cancelled. By early 1994, not surprisingly after the turmoil over the previous eighteen months and the lack of a defined role in an isolated barracks, poor recruiting and retention were seriously affecting manning levels in the Battalion. On 1 March the Regimental Band, along with those of all the other Scottish Infantry Regiments disbanded and

formed into the Lowland and Highland Scottish Division Bands. From November 1995 to April 1986 the Battalion returned to South Armagh for its tenth Northern Ireland tour. Sadly a Junior NCO was shot and killed at the very end of the tour.

In July 1996 the Battalion at last left Fort George for Colchester where it assumed the really different role of that of an airmobile battalion. Strong in Milan anti-tank missile capability and light cross-country mobile vehicles, the Battalion was reinforced by a full company of Gurkhas who formed B Company. During the next four years the Battalion trained as a Battalion in Kenya and the USA and completed its eleventh and twelfth tours to Northern Ireland. B (Gurkha) Company were not allowed to deploy to Northern Ireland so were replaced respectively by a company from The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment and The Duke of Wellington's Regiment on these tours while B Company deployed twice on operational tours to Bosnia. Separately, during their time in the airmobile role, rifle companies trained in Cyprus, the USA and on winter warfare training in Canada.

A mortar platoon 'All-terrain Weapons Platform'

Winter warfare training, Canada, 2000

It was with great sadness that we said goodbye to B (Gurkha) Company in March 2000. Our own numbers during this period had, however, been boosted by the very welcome arrival of some fifty Fijians from 1998 onwards - the first ones having joined from the Royal Fijian Military Forces Band during their participation in the Edinburgh Military Tattoo that year. In later years they were joined by a number of other recruits from the Commonwealth, notably Kenya and South Africa.

The first Fijians arrive in 1999

The Battalion moved to Ballykelly, near Londonderry for its thirteenth (final) tour, and second two-year residential one, in August 2000. By the time the Battalion arrived the IRA had ceased to be tactically relevant but there was always the threat to the ongoing peace process from dissident groups from both sides. While continuing to maintain a high operational level throughout the tour the opportunity was taken to encourage sport. With the arrival of the Fijians the Battalion won both the Army and, outstandingly, the Middlesex Rugby Sevens. Adventurous training was enthusiastically undertaken, apart from much use of local facilities within the Province, activities included gliding in Oxfordshire and bobsleighing at Lillehammer in Norway and expeditions as far afield as India, Jordan, Egypt, Spain, Ascension Island, France and sea sailing off Scotland.

In April 2002 the Battalion returned to the excellent Dreghorn Barracks in Edinburgh. The priority, in spite of excellent retention rates in Ballykelly and, at 140 in 1991, the best enlistment figures for over a decade, was very much recruiting. Behind the logo 'The Boys are Back in Town' the Battalion marched through Edinburgh in combat kit with Colours flying and bayonets fixed to remind the City that we were home. Soon afterwards a composite Company trained in Belize before the Battalion settled down to prepare for a six-month tour in Bosnia. They deployed in November and rapidly established their strong presence in a delicate political arena with some determined searches and large finds including within the Republika Srpska (Bosnian Serb) Houses of Parliament and their Ministry of Defence.

Displaying one of the weapons finds

They returned to Edinburgh in April 2003 and the delayed presentation of new, and what was, sadly, to prove to be the Regiment's final Colours, took place in glorious sunshine within Dreghorn Barracks on 4 July. Before the Presentation the Battalion had been warned for an emergency tour in Iraq from November, not as a formed battalion but as three separate companies reinforcing other units. A very small Battalion HQ deployed filling posts within the Divisional HQ from which they could oversee Battalion administrative matters on the ground. Preparation and training were fitted around provision of Her Majesty's Guard at Balmoral and support to The Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Deployment was in November which meant that elements of the Battalion had operated in jungle, mountains and desert, along with a substantial element of ceremonial, all within the space of eighteen months, and a major change from the Northern Ireland treadmill of the previous ten years. The three companies all had very different, successful but busy tours under command of various units, mostly Royal Artillery and Royal Armoured Corps operating in the infantry role but also, in C Company's case, under command of a Danish Battalion, probably a unique event in the Regiment's long history. The deployment did not however help Battalion cohesiveness and the major task on the return of the three companies to Dreghorn in April was to rebuild that.

That rebuilding came rapidly with a Battalion training exercise in Galloway followed by a major all-arms test exercise on Salisbury Plain. On 21 July 2004, in a statement to the House of Commons, the Secretary of State for Defence delivered a long awaited statement, Options for Change, on yet another restructuring of the Army - in the infantry's case to lead to a reduction from 40 to 36 regular battalions. While the detail was still supposedly to be decided it was clear that the Scottish Regiments were under severe pressure and could lose two of their six regular battalions. Throughout the rest of 2004 the 1st Battalion concentrated on doing things that had not been possible for a bit. The sevens team won the Army competition for the sixth time running, companies held training camps, adventure training took place and, critically, individuals undertook career courses. Halfway through this period the Battalion was warned as a standby reserve for Iraq from January to July 2005 and training swung

into the, by now, well-established preparatory path leading to deployment on operations. This allowed the serving members to concentrate on something positive for the future while the retired members of the Regiment, meeting within the Regimental Council, coordinated the Campaign to save not just The Royal Scots but all the existing 40 battalions which were already desperately over-stretched against existing operational commitments. On 15 December, carefully timed just as the House departed on its Christmas Break, the announcement came that The Scottish Division would lose one battalion and merge into The Royal Regiment of Scotland of seven battalions, five regular and two reserve (formerly territorial). The reduction to be achieved through the merger of the 1st Battalions of The Royal Scots and The King's Own Scottish Borderers. Regimentally the decision was made that we would continue to fight against any reduction in the infantry but do nothing that would damage the difficult job of uniting the two Battalions harmoniously. On Saturday18 December the Regimental Association Pipe Band led a march of 3,500 supporters of the 'Save the Scottish Regiments' campaign along Princes Street for a rally in the Gardens. The Royal Scots contingent of 800, by far the largest, was at the front and, being the last Saturday before Christmas, the Street was packed with shoppers who to a man (and woman) applauded and supported us the whole way. For a complete record of the events leading up to and following the announcement of Options for Change see part 2 of Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard (PPB) Vol 3 - The Regimental Campaign.

In the event the 1st Battalion were not required in Iraq and reverted to a period of uncertainty and a multitude of support and assistance tasks which sapped at the hard won battalion cohesion. It was then warned for a Northern Ireland tour in South Armagh from January to July 2006 which at least allowed focused training and protection from other commitments. Iraq and Afghanistan were now assuming ever more importance as operational commitments and, in early December, Northern Ireland was changed to Iraq with the Battalion, less one Company, to be based in a reserve role outside Basra and one company in Baghdad. Deployment was in early January and was followed by a busy, varied and operationally active tour. The rugby team was initially left with the rear party and won the Army Rugby Cup for the first and only time in the Regiment's history - and the sevens for an unprecedented seventh year in a row.

On the 28 March 2006, Regimental Day, while the 1st Battalion were deployed on operations in Iraq, and after 373 years to the day of unbroken service to Sovereign and Country since King Charles 1 had signed his Warrant to raise Hepburn's Regiment, our direct forbears, the Regiment merged with the five other surviving Regular and two Territorial Regiments of Scottish Infantry to form The Royal Regiment of Scotland, abbreviated to SCOTS. As it would have been hugely difficult to merge the Battalions while on operations, The 1st Battalion was temporarily re-titled The Royal Scots Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland (and 1KOSB similarly temporarily renamed - see Aftermath below). The 28th March is now celebrated as Formation Day by the new Regiment and marks their inheritance from us of the position of the Senior Infantry Regiment in the British Army.

Lowering of the old and raising of the new Regimental Flags Shaibah Base, Basra, 28 March 2006

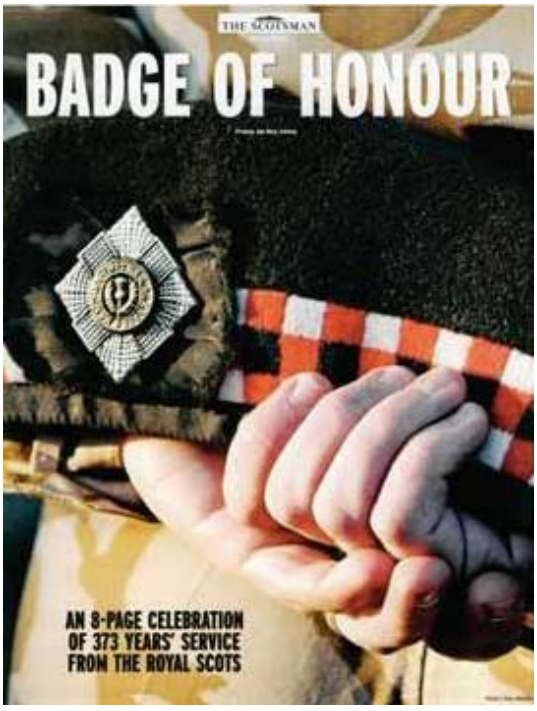
AFTERMATH

The Battalion returned to Dreghorn in early May 2006. On 26 May, under its new name, it marked its homecoming by parading down Princes Street, behind its old Colours and, for the first time, in front of HRH The Princess Royal in her new appointment as Royal Colonel rather than Colonel-in-Chief. They were followed by a huge contingent from The Regimental Association led by their Pipe Band, representatives from our affiliated and allied units, HMS Edinburgh, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, The Canadian Scottish and The Royal Newfoundland Regiments, our former TA Company (now part of 6 SCOTS), and members of our affiliated cadet forces.

On 1 August, Minden Day, celebrated by The King's Own Scottish Borderers as their Regimental Day, the two battalions merged to form The Royal Scots Borderers, 1st Battalion the Royal Regiment of Scotland (1 SCOTS).

On 9 May 2007 HRH The Princess Royal, now The Royal Patron of The Regimental Association, unveiled two plaques on the Regimental Monument in West Princes Street Gardens The first, of carved stone, marked the end of our 373 years of independent service and the merging of the Regiment into The Royal Regiment of Scotland while the second, a bronze plaque, commemorated her 23 years as Colonel-in-Chief. The opportunity was also taken to add the final Gulf Battle Honours and the remaining places we had served to the Monument.

Part 3 - Epilogue - of PPB Vol 3, published in 2007, completed the story of the Regiment and explains how elements of the Regiment, such as items of dress, have been incorporated into SCOTS and the detail behind the actual formation of the new Battalion.



Further Reading: Greater detail on the whole of the period covered in this essay can be found in the relevant copies of the Regimental Journal, The Thistle. Details can be found on the Regimental web site at www.theroyalscots.co.uk

Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard (PPB).

Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard, published, two volumes in 2001 and the third in 2007, is the definitive History of The Royal Scots. Volume 1 covers the period from 1603 when the predecessors of the Regiment fought for Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden in the Thirty Years War to the end of World War 1 in 1919. Volume 2 covers 1918 to 2000 and Volume 3 takes our story from 2000 to the merger of the Regiment into The Royal Regiment of Scotland in 2006 and the immediate aftermath of that merger. All three are richly illustrated in both colour and black and white and enhanced with a total of 86 maps to assist the reader.

Copies of the Three Volumes are available from:
The Royal Scots Museum Office
The Old Provost Marshal's House,
The Castle,
EDINBURGH
EH1 2YT

at a cost of £25 for the three. P&P is additional and, due to their weight, can be expensive, especially for overseas delivery. Those wishing copies are therefore advised to collect them from the Museum Office, or have them collected for them. If advised in advance free access can be arranged into the Castle but only to the Museum.

THE REGIMENT'S LAST BATTLE HONOUR

This is the then Lieutenant Colonel Iain Johnstone OBE's personal report as Commanding Officer on 1 RS's participation in Operation Desert Storm- the liberation of Kuwait from Iraq in 1991 for which it was awarded its 147th and 148th (final) Battle Honours over its 383 years of Service, Wadi El Batin and GULF 1991, the latter carried on the Regimental Colour.

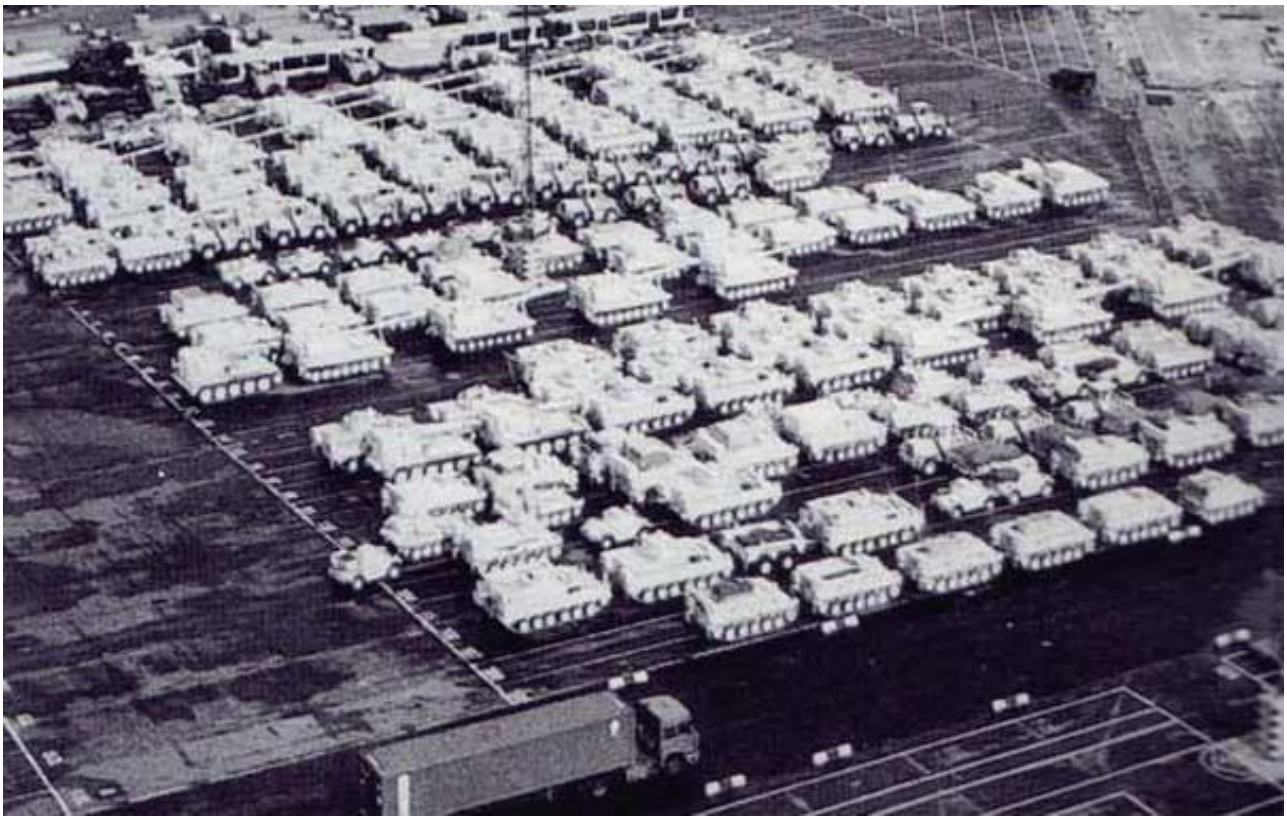
COMMANDING 1RS BG OP GRANBY/DESERT STORM 1990-91

This is based on something written not long after the event, and I think it is important that it is relayed as it was, not as it now appears. This is an important point because, as General Rupert Smith once said, "I am becoming less certain exactly when I began to know what I know now".

This is a personal account of commanding a Battalion during the Gulf campaign, with 4 Armoured Brigade, as part of the 1st (UK) Division. I took over The First Battalion The Royal Scots in October 1989. It was an Armoured Infantry Battalion in 6 Armoured Brigade, consisting of 3 companies each of 16 Warrior IFV, a platoon of 24 Milan ATGWs mounted on FV 432s as were a section of eight 81mm mortars, my main headquarter vehicles as well as the ambulances. There were also a Reconnaissance Platoon, a platoon of 90 electrical and mechanical engineers and a convoy of soft skinned vehicles providing support and resupply. Its strength was about 800 men. Within a week I was throwing it about as part of a battlegroup on Soltau training area. I was lucky because the next year, in 1990, our division became the Support division for BAOR, which meant that not only did we get more than our fair share of simple repetitive manual tasks, but we were also at the bottom priority for training. This meant that Soltau that year was a low-key affair with no tanks, no gunner support and an ever-increasing number of restrictions that had been placed on us to appease the civilian population. We were not at our peak.

Perhaps sensing that and not long after our return to base, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. We reported in at CEFT 1,1 (a combat readiness level) making us one of the few units with 95% of our established manpower and equipment in place and ready to go. As a result we thought we would be sent. We weren't. Instead we watched suspiciously as 7 Brigade were stood by and as units were stripped to reinforce them. Eventually we were warned to be ready to chop to 4 Brigade in order to replace 7 Brigade in March 1991 on rotation. To move up to our war establishment as well as taking account of the postings that had already taken place for our imminent Arms Plot to UK we took a formed company of 3 RRF under command and moved down to Hammelburg, the Geman Infantry urban warfare training center, in our new ORBAT to shake ourselves out. We had plenty of time to get to know our new brigade headquarters or so we thought.

Our real participation in GRANBY was announced to me at Hammelburg on the 15 November..we were to load our vehicles and kit for the Gulf on 30 November.



British Military vehicles at Bremerhaven awaiting shipment to the Gulf

GRANBY 1.5 had been born. For us it had 5 phases:

Phase 1, Rumour Control. Phase 1 had by this time taken place. There had been a bazaar of rumour at all levels. The OPSEC was dreadful and speculation was fuelled by "experts", both green ones and television ones. As the commander it was important to discover the truth and to stamp out rumour. This was tricky as there was a whole range of information, most of which was as well informed as mine and which certainly sounded more interesting. You see, there is a fine balance between overbriefing, underinforming and speculation, and we found it once the operation had been born by skipping the chain of command and I briefed all of the soldiers directly twice a day before battalion fitness training. Briefing the soldiers did not necessarily mean that the information got to the wives so the Families Office and the HIVE (families meeting center) had to become information nodes. Nothing unsettles people more than uncertainty. This was a lesson that permeated the whole campaign.

Phase 2 : The Preparation. At least by Phase 2 we had been told that we were actually going. The problem was that we had to be ready to ship out in a fortnight. The schedule was tight and the help that was imposed upon us gave us little freedom of action. We gave up the company of 3 RRF because their unit was going too, and we took on board a company of Grenadier Guards instead. They had been stripped out to reinforce 7 Brigade and were a reconstituted company who hadn't worked together. All the commanders were sent north to fire the 30mm guns whilst the soldiers were sent east to Sennelager to be processed through a well-intentioned sausage machine that was unfortunately outwith my control.

In the meantime the Adjutant had to sort out bums to seats, a procedure which is not easy nowadays because of the degree of specialisation in the modern Infantry: none of our soldiers come out of the

backs of their vehicles without some specialist trade: there are no simple load carriers and shit-pit diggers left. During this my headquarters was being engaged in a series of briefings and work up exercises and it became difficult to predict who in the Headquarters was going to be where when. A commander can't be everywhere at once and there were a myriad of decisions to be taken. I laid down a series of principles: for instance: I want to be administered by the Advance Party not briefed to death: and then left the implementation to everyone else. Mission Command has its place in the office as well as on the battlefield.

As far as manning was concerned the mission was clear: we had to deploy to the Gulf with the strongest team possible: that encompassed selection as well as training. If you weren't happy about the crew you could either sack people or redeploy them. We did the latter. All Armoured Infanteers have skills, but they were not necessarily doing the job at which they were strongest when the order came. This is the problem with having to operate during peacetime with an organisation designed for wartime: some people are just in the wrong place.

To prepare the Battalion for war we closed down the messes and put everyone on ration strength, feeding the Battalion in the cookhouse. We held a Battalion muster parade before dawn every morning where I briefed the men on what was going on before we all went for an hour's violent fitness training. The same procedure was repeated before last light (about 1600): more fitness: and then we worked on until we could do no more. Breaking the going-home-for-meals cycle early was important. Soldiers clocked in at home only to sleep. This became a declaration of commitment by the soldiers and their families alike. We made the deadline: just.

Phase 3 : The Deployment. We moved to theatre around Christmas, but this process covered some weeks. During this time clarity of purpose was paramount. Our mission became to deploy to the desert as soon as we could, in order to get on with theatre training. We soon found out though that if you sat about and waited your turn, you would be by-passed. There seemed to be a need to fight for everything. There was also a need to guard your kit jealously, because there were a lot of sticky fingers about itching to relieve you of it. Trust only those you know and keep your beady eye on them. Little worked as planned. What came off the ships bore scant resemblance to the manifest. Although the DOAST (Desired Order of Arrival Staff Table) was meticulously planned, ships overtook each other and some broke down. Planes arrived at strange times and low loaders didn't turn up. As a result, every hour brought a change of plan, and so, to make the most of what we had got, we decided to deploy piecemeal. Working on the basis that half a company in the desert is worth two in transit, we deployed the vehicles with just the drivers and commanders and then bounced the Jocks into the field to join them within 24 hours of touchdown.

This was now the time to take stock: we were about to go on the offensive in the open desert, not on the defensive in woody old North West Europe, and not with the people we had been training with either. We had also to maintain the aggressive spirit in the Jocks despite the fact that there were few resources available.

"A reputation of such strength…." Private Owens during the training phase. Private Owen is a grandson of Cpl Elcock VC MM who won his medals with the 11th Battalion in France in the Great War

We had no idea when or indeed if war would start, but we did know that there was no time to waste. We imposed strict standards from the start. People carried all their operational kit all the time. Stand-to was enforced at 0530 and 1800. Light discipline was harsh; Drivers and commanders were forced to drive closed-down wherever they went. Vehicle batteries began to boil in the heat, filling the turret with acid fumes, our remote chemical alarms gave off rogue warnings and we masked in record-beating times while we experimented with numerous measures to reduce sand ingress into the vehicle engines. We were lucky because we had learned much from the STAFFORDS who had been in theatre with 7 Brigade a couple of months longer than we. Never be too proud to take advice. Tempers were lost on an hourly basis in a clash of wills. Slowly but surely the hard posture became second nature, but to maintain it required steadfastness of purpose.

Officers lived with their vehicle crews. There were no perks for them. Everyone was treated in the same way. We backloaded everything that was not essential and then we threw out most of what was left. Bergens (including mine) were shared, leaving a set of clean clothes, washing kit and a notebook as the only personal items. Everything else was communal. The loneliness of command, a somewhat naval concept, had no place in the desert. Personally, it was vital that the vehicle crew knew me, knew when I was tired, knew when I was under stress. I lived with them as a member of the crew and we shared everything. The buddy-buddy system applies as much to officers as to men.

We trained as hard as we could. We had to extract every last ounce of value from the limited resources at our disposal. We set up our own illegal field firing ranges, we scrounged ammunition, we fired day and night and conducted progressively more demanding practices. When one of our company commanders was shot in the stomach during a complex live firing night trench-clearing practice, we were firing again within five minutes of the CASEVAC helicopter taking off. We needed to show everyone that we meant business, and the Jocks thrived on it. They took a pride in the tough image that they were creating and, as the Press began to notice, the tougher they became. They positively revelled in it.

Then at last we began to train with our armour. This was the first time that we had ever worked together and we had a lot of ground to make up: but we were limited in what we could achieve by a shortage of spares and real estate. Everything we used in training would not be available for immediate action. This was a chronic juggling act that must have taxed Div HQ constantly. We had to practise new procedures as well as old: anti missile drills, meeting engagements, counterstrokes and, because we had never worked together before, we had to keep everything as simple as possible. In fact we began to emulate the Soviets, not only in their tactical drills, but in their norms of support as well. There were other problems to address too: the anonymity of the commander was one. It seemed pretty pointless going forward to inspire the troops if they did not know you were there. So, my vehicle flew the somewhat large commanding officer's Saint Andrew's flag on its turret (Note. the flag was indentical to the Lieutenant Colonel's Colour first recorded in 1680!). In the end the whole battlegroup configured on that as a matter of procedure.

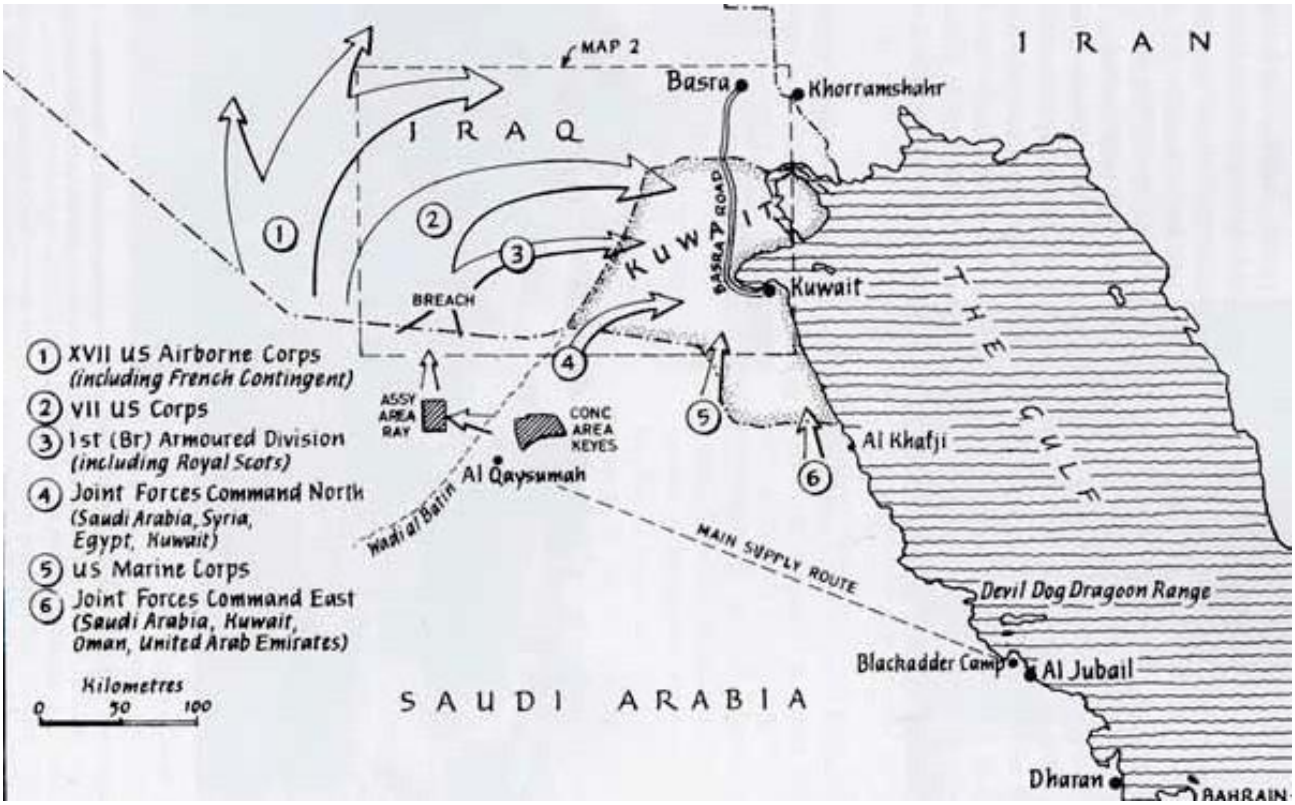
Commanding 0fficer's Warrior in action ftying his ftag

At formation level the Div Comander briefed us on the actual plan and then ran it through as a command exercise. This allowed the battlegroup commanders an opportunity to discover potential problem areas, and also gave them the chance to alter procedures.

We then ran through the breaching operation with the 1st US Div (the Big Red One) who were going to make the hole in the Iraqi defences, and practised passage of lines. It was a shambles, but it did allow us to make alterations so that, on the night, the whole thing went like clockwork. Never turn down the opportunity to rehearse. We also used the time to iron out a few misunderstandings at brigade level as well.

General Smith visited regularly and gave us great confidence. He used our operational deployment to the west as a training exercise to practise the plan, so we were becoming pretty familiar with it. This was most reassuring. Talking of reassurance, we had meanwhile been issued with satellite navigation kits, and these proved to be truly wonderful pieces of equipment. Command was suddenly made much easier and every procedure from reorganisation to CASEVAC was speeded up. We split the limited issue of Satnav 50/50 between the teeth and tail. This was a war of logistics, and a REME recovery vehicle with satnav could quickly bring forward a platoon's worth of refurbished firepower, while spending twice as much time repairing kit, instead of charging around the desert looking for it. There was a deluge of new equipment. We were being given the very best that money could buy and I doubt if any British force has ever been so totally supported. We were given rifle grenades, rocket propelled mine clearers, radar, night viewing aids. We had M548 tracked load carriers to assist resupply, decoy tanks, chemical sheeting and a whole mass of other bits and pieces. Unfortunately, we did not have much time to train on it.

Phase 4, The War. We moved up into our forward assembly area. We had been injected against Anthrax and plague (with a whooping cough floater) we had been taking Nerve Agent Protection pills for months. We hadn't had a drink for ages and my liver thought that it had been transplanted. The Jocks were fitter by not drinking and there had been no discipline cases.



The Brigade was to attack through the US bridgehead to destroy the enemy tactical reserves in order to secure the right flank of the 7 (US) Corps. 1RS was to be in reserve initially, was then to destroy the enemy Battalion(-) in the western half of BRASS and was finally to be ready for further moves culminating in the destruction of the Republican Guard. The enemy Counter Attack capability was the initial target. Anything that could move or shoot a long way was to be destroyed.

We were configured as a 1,2 Battlegroup with C Squadron The Life Guards with 15 Challenger tanks, a troop of armoured engineers with CET (combat engineer tractor), bridge layers, mine ploughs and fascines, an ambulance collecting section and a Forward Air Controller under command with up to 2 regiments of artillery in support. The Battlegroup was now over 1000 strong. We moved up to the staging areas and, after it was decided to despatch 7 Brigade first, and after they had gone, we transited the breach. En route to the forming up place the Brigade Commander changed the plan.

1RS were now to clear and destroy the enemy in BRONZE. This had not originally been our task and, to be honest, I hadn't paid much attention to the detail. And that is another lesson! I tried unsuccessfully to contact all the company commanders on our recently fitted secure radios but their limited issue meant that we didn't have an all informed secure net and I had to use other means. I held a quick set of orders at the back of my vehicle.

Lieutenant Colonel Iain Johnstone giving his orders. Maj John Potter OC B Coy, kneeling with a notebook, with Maj Norman Soutar OC A Coy to his left. Both were awarded the MC for their leadership in action

Dusk fell. It was a dark, rainy night. Each vehicle showed a red light at the back as an identification feature. That and the lack of ambient light effectively obscured the Warrior's Image Intensification sights. The Thermal Imaging sights on Challenger, which identify heat sources, worked fine, but they couldn't see the red lights. Despite the ability of Warrior to match Challenger's cross country speed, the different sighting systems on that night reintroduced the old divide between armour and Infantry.

H hour arrived. We were expecting to be gassed. We had 3 doctors and 19 ambulances with us and were expecting to take heavy casualties, particularly from artillery and chemicals. We should have been frightened and perhaps we were. As we moved off, the MLRS rockets streaked above us and I offered up a prayer, "Please God don't let my vehicle break down again", and we were off

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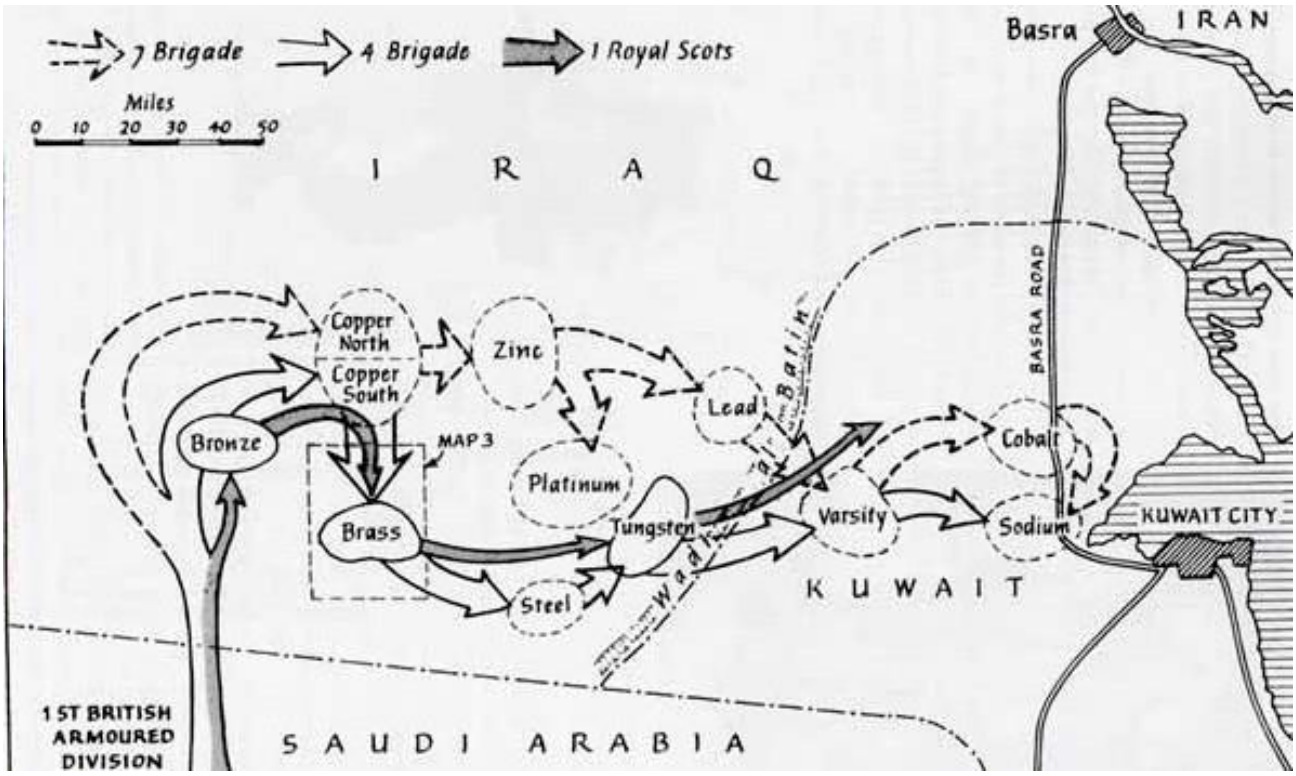


Immediately we were cut in two by a gunner convoy of over 100 ammunition trucks. Our lead vehicles went off a bit far north and got tangled up with the tail of another unit, the Recce Platoon had a contact to the south and I was concerned that we would get sucked into the very defensive line we were supposed to be bypassing. Sweat was pouring down our faces because we were closed-down and in NBC suits with body armour on top. We moved off in our now so familiar formation and reached Objective BRONZE at midnight.

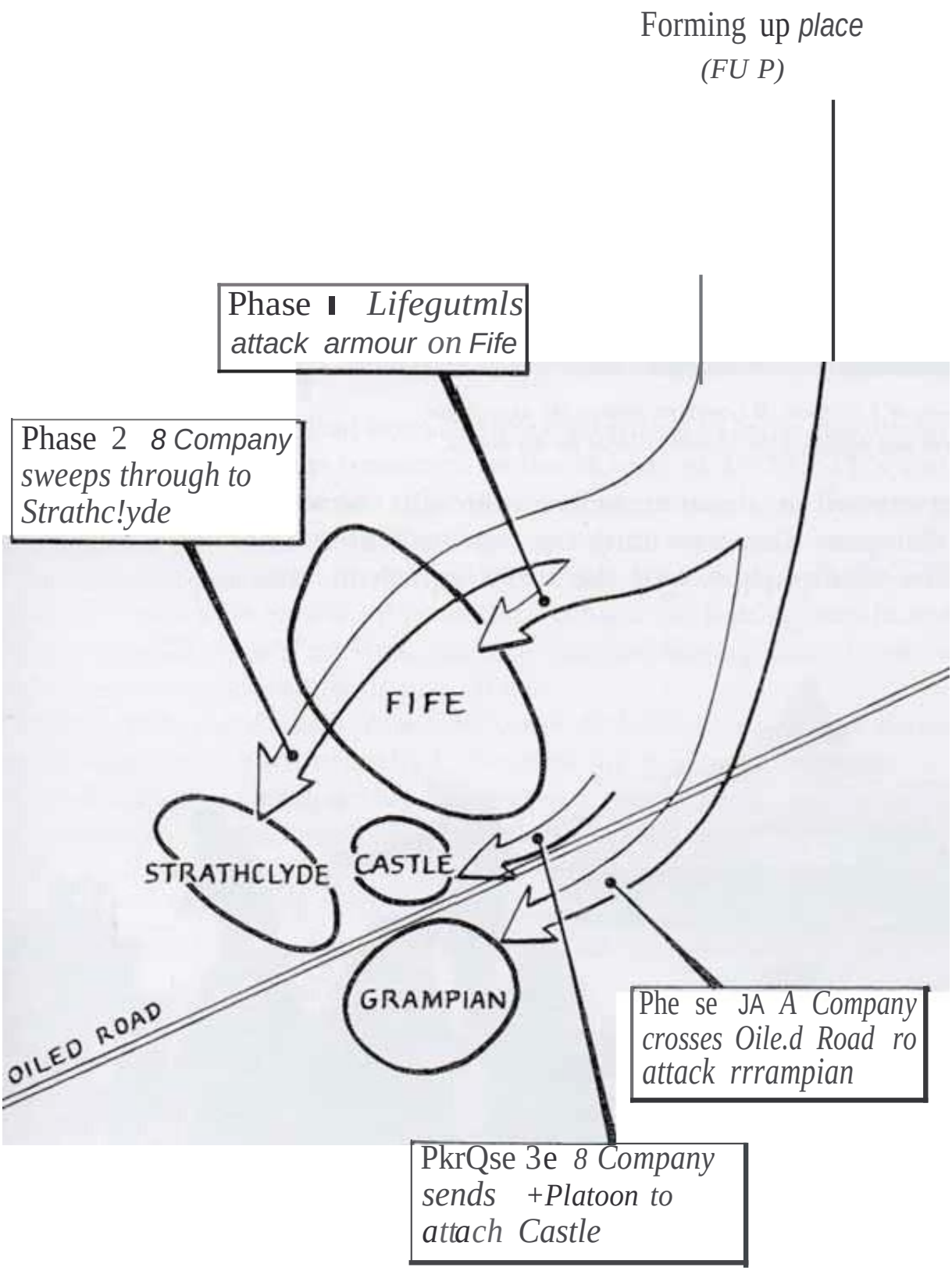
BRONZE was quite slow. The "clear" mission that I had been given meant that we had to take out every enemy position, and that took time. We destroyed a batch of M46 guns, cleared a string of bunkers and captured about 100 PW.

Iraqi prisoners being rounded up

Hot interrogation outlined the extent of minefields and located the next gun position for us. Leaving B Company to finish clearing up, we moved on using the Lifeguards and A Company. We were accustomed to each other by now and only the minimum of orders were needed.

As we cleared BRONZE we swung north and ran into what appeared to be an infantry position with a large column of armoured vehicles some 2 kms behind it. We were unable to identify them. It was confirmed that there were definitely no friendly vehicles at that grid: we used the gunners laser kit to get a 100% read out but somehow it didn't have the right feel. We let the armour escape and took out the Infantry position around dawn.

Sometime later we discovered that those unidentified vehicles had been a British dressing station with 30 odd geographically embarrassed armoured ambulances. AFV recognition at long range on TI is difficult. We were now faced with a dilemma. Even though we were under pressure to move on there were quite a few enemy dead and seriously injured soldiers to whom we had a responsibility under the Geneva Convention. The Regimental Aid Post treated the enemy wounded and the padre quickly buried the dead. We loaded the seriously wounded into our ambulances and we set off again. We went due north and then swung down south to take the enemy from the rear on BRASS.



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We had actually planned this attack on BRASS. All of the soldiers had been briefed on it in detail. Sitting in the back of a vehicle without any vision ports and without access to the net, with the prospect of launching yourself from it into a well-fortified Iraqi position is not to be envied. The soldiers therefore deserve the very best plan and briefing that time allows. Ours got it. This particular plan had 3 phases: destruction of tanks first, the northern mechanised position next and the southern one last. As we moved off, our heavy artillery fire coupled with strong winds whipped up a sand storm so that visibility was severely reduced. The Lifeguards destroyed the first tanks. There were more than we had expected.

Once the enemy tanks were burning I launched B Company to roll up the right flank. We really had taken the enemy from the rear. Some of his vehicles were dug in so deep that we debussed soldiers to destroy them from the ground. Once the north was secure I launched A Company, who had been creeping down the left flank in anticipation, and they put in their own two-phase armoured infantry assault driving through their own covering barrage so that as it lifted the enemy were at rifle point. About 6 T55, 20 APC, 6 AA guns and miscellaneous trucks, bunkers, stores and ammunition were destroyed. We took another 100 or so prisoners, quite a few of them wounded.

Private Gow of 5 platoon, B company during the assault on Brass. He was awarded the Military Medal for his action

By this time it was becoming quite apparent that the fight had been knocked out of the Iraqis and that many of them had fled. They seemed to be offering no coordinated resistance. I say seemed because it was impossible to be certain. Unlike other operations this one was so quiet. The commander was cocooned. There was no noise save that of the radios and the throb of the engine. Fighting at night in particular and using the II sights was like playing a computer game on a green monitor with the sound

turned down. It was easy to be calm because there was an unreality about it all. It was only when the hatch was thrown back to debus that there was a shock-wave of sound with tracer bouncing off everywhere. You felt safe: too safe: detached from reality. Not an Infantry feeling at all.

Whilst 14/20th and 3 RRF sorted out their objectives, we cleared through the rest of the position. There were a lot of mines and bomblets about, and a number of vehicles had explosions under their tracks. Further orders were called and we were told to take out Objective TUNGSTEN with 3 RRF that night.

The bad news was that, in our northern half of TUNGSTEN, according to the not particularly detailed brief, there were the remains of 2 artillery battalions, 2 mechanised infantry companies, 2 armoured squadrons and an ordinary infantry company at the following seven grid references. Apparently the promised detailed intelligence picture was still in the post. Never believe promises. However, the good news was that the enemy were believed to be significantly reduced. We asked for, and received, an additional tank squadron. It arrived late. Our Recce Platoon, which had been sent forward to identify a crossing point over a pipeline, had become involved in a running contact, and our main headquarters element, which included the mortars and RAP, had been separated from us by a rogue convoy cutting across them. So we were pretty late.

Configuring the Battlegroup as 2 company/squadron groups we crashed over the pipeline from a running start and assaulted one position after the other, rolling across the 17 km objective. It took us until first light to finish and we then swung north into a blocking position. It was all getting a bit too easy and it was tempting to take risks. But what for? We were already moving faster than the Corps could accommodate, and there was the added risk of running into the Egyptians.

We were also terribly tired: a constantly moving operation like this allows no sleep for commanders, and as deputy commanders have to command their vehicles too, they don't sleep either. The high-tech 24-hour-a-day battle had arrived, and tired people were making small mistakes and took longer to do things. Risk and gain: that is the fundamental equation for all commanders. If there is no gain then take no risk.

We replenished. Our A1 echelon had been tucked up into main headquarters and we had dropped back some MILAN for protection. It carried only ammunition and fuel, the rest was further back. This meant that we were topped up again within an hour or so. In the interim, we had to take out another position, which had been firing mortars. We were getting pretty slick by now, and B Company sorted it out with a fire mission regiment and a platoon attack. We were on the move again that afternoon, but shortly afterwards the tank regiment on our right had a blue-on-blue with the tail end of 7 Brigade and so we were told to hold firm. Thereafter we received a series of orders that were intended to take us north, south and east. Eventually we went east at dawn, in order to cut the road out of Kuwait City, to destroy the remains of the encircled Iraqi army. We stopped some 30 kms short when offensive operations were suspended. For us the short, violent and very successful war had really finished.

Phase 5 : The Debrief. The subsequent spell in the desert was tricky. The place was littered with the debris of war; dangerous debris at that. We reconfigured in a semi non-tactical layout, and suddenly our routine was shattered. The hard tactical posture that had become a way of life had gone and we needed to do something. It seemed silly to train for what we had just done and so we ran a series of cadres in preparation for our Arms Plot move back and during that time we assessed just what, if anything, we had learned as commanders.

The overwhelming use of air power and the stunning logistic success have already been catalogued as

operational lessons. From a lower level we learned that IFF needs to be addressed across the whole spectrum, visible and non-visible. We found that PWs, particularly wounded ones, can slow you down. We relearned that people make mistakes when they are tired and that commanders in a mobile war are more likely to get tired than their men. We also discovered that the shift away from an all informed net by using trunk communications or secure radio on limited issue degrades command and inadvertently leaves some people out of chunks of the planning process. We reminded ourselves that the tried tools of command still work: human contact, building trust, ensuring mail gets through, and enforcing firm and fair discipline. Not surprisingly we showed that cutting out booze makes better soldiers and that they didn't really mind too much provided that it is made very difficult to get hold of.

We also reinforced the point that TD (tactical doctrine) and terminology must be consistent, must be learned and understood by everyone, especially if they're to be switched between formations. From my command level GRANBY highlighted the need for combined arms training to be conducted on a regular basis exercising with the same units with whom you intend to fight.

There's no substitute for this intensive field training: because that's where the sort of problems occur that happen for real. The beauty of DESERT STORM was that it was so similar to our training. The British Army should take comfort from that. However, the prospect of ever diminishing opportunities to carry out such field training in the future is concerning. It will have repercussions for commanders and subordinates alike. It might even encourage Lindt's "zero defect mentality" where commanding officers, given only one chance at jumping through the hoop might become less prepared to allow their subordinates any opportunity to make mistakes. That would lead us down the path towards rigid centralised control: a dangerous path for all that. Things happen so fast in this high tech environment that rigid centralised control can't keep up, as the Iraqis discovered.

I said at the very beginning that command in war was easy. This is perhaps not surprising as we had been given time to conduct work up training before we launched and, once we did we had air supremacy, significant reinforcement, the best equipment and the very best of soldiers. We also had tremendous support from our Army and our Public. Despite the fact that we had transited minefields, attacked an enemy who was reported to have 125 brigades of war hardened troops and one who would not hesitate to use chemical weapons, we suffered virtually no casualties. We were outstandingly lucky. We were luckier still to have been part of such an overwhelming success because nothing makes command easier than success.

0il by David Rowlands painted in 1991 for the Warrant 0fficers and Sergeants Mess

NIGHTS OUT OF BED (ON OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENTS AWAY FROM HOME BARRACKS) POST - 1945

Although the British Army, in the post-1945 period, has been engaged, almost constantly, on many operations, only three 'wars', Korea 1951-53, the Falklands Islands in 1982 and the Gulf War of 1991 have been recognised with the award of Battle Honours. While the 1st Battalion had arrived in Korea before the ceasefire was declared, it was not deployed on full operations, and, as such, did not earn the campaign or any individual Battle Honour. Those serving in the 1st Battalion at that time did, however, receive both the British and UN Korean War medals. The only Honours therefore earned since 1945 are from the Gulf War in 1991. These are Wadi El Batin and **GULF 1991**. The latter has been added to the Regimental Colour.

Apart from those wars for which Battle Honours have been awarded, there have been many campaigns or operational situations in which the Regiment has been involved since 1945 and for which, in some cases, a General Service Medal with one or more bars has been awarded. These have included Palestine (2RS 1945-46), the Canal Zone (1954-55), Cyprus (1955), Suez (1956), Radfan and South Arabia (1964-65) and, of course, Northern Ireland.

The 1st Battalion served on thirteen operational tours in Northern Ireland of which two were resident. These are listed below:

Belfast	Mar - Jul 1970
Londonderry	May-Jul 1971
Belfast	Oct-Dec 1971
Belfast/Londonderry	Jun-Aug 1972
South Armagh	Dec 1975-Apr 1976
Belfast	Feb-May 1980
Ballykinler (Resident)	Mar 1981-Mar 1983
Belfast	Dec 1987-Mar 1988
South Armagh	Sep 1992-Mar 1993
South Armagh	Nov 1995-Apr 1996
Fermanagh (part deployment)	Jun-Dec 1997
South Armagh	Mar-Aug 1999
Ballykelly (Resident)	Aug 2000-Apr 2002

With the unaccompanied tours in Cyprus, after the Turkish invasion, from August 1974 - February 1975 and the Falkland Islands from March - July 1984, plus, of course the Gulf War from January - April 1991, a total of well over eight years, or 25%, were spent on operational deployment in the thirty – two years of 'peace' between 1970 and 2002. That figure does not include deployments away from Barracks on major exercises. In the years 1971-74 when the 1st Battalion was the British battalion in the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force(Land)(AMF(L)), the Battalion trained every winter in Norway and took part in a major NATO Exercise in Greece, Denmark or Norway every autumn, leading to a further 6-8 weeks away from barracks every year. In the years 1970-74 the Battalion had the dubious distinction of having the most separation of any battalion in the British Army. (Known, following studies into this and the resulting effect on enlistment, re-engagement and general morale, as 'Nights out of Bed').

The pace continued after the 1st Battalion's return to Edinburgh in April 2002 with a deployment to

Bosnia from September 2002-April 2003. This was followed by Iraq from November 2003-April 2004 and again from January-May 2006 where they were serving at the time of the merger into The Royal Regiment of Scotland on 28 March 2006.

In 1994 the Accumulated Service Medal was introduced to recognise the fact that many individuals had served for many tours in Northern Ireland or other theatres for which the General Service Medal 1962 with a clasp had been awarded. The qualifying period is thirty-six months of such service since 14 August 1969 - the start date for the award of the clasp 'Northern Ireland'.

PRE-1914 BATTLE HONOURS

The full list of the twenty-eight pre-1914 Battle Honours (excluding the Sphinx and "Egypt") carried on the Regimental Colour is as follows. The Battalion or Battalions involved, the date of the action and the date of the award is also shown.

Battle Honour	Battalion(s)	Date of Action	Date of Award
Tangier 1680	Regiment	1680-1684	1910
Namur 1695	Regiment	1695	1910
Blenheim	1st & 2nd	1704	1882
Ramillies	1st & 2nd	1706	1882
Oudenarde	1st & 2nd	1708	1882
Malplaquet	1st & 2nd	1709	1882
Louisburg	1st	1758	1882
Havannah	2nd	1762	1909
Egmont-op-Zee	2nd	1799	1821
St Lucia 1803	1st	1803	1821,1910 1
Corunna	3rd	1809	1832
Busaco	3rd	1810	1817
Salamanca	3rd	1812	1817
Vittoria	3rd	1813	1817
St Sebastian	3rd	1813	1817
Nive	3rd	1813	1817
Peninsula	3rd	1810-1813	1815
Niagara	1st	1813-1814	1815
Waterloo	3rd	1815	1815
Nagpore	2nd	1817	1823
Maheidpore	2nd	1817	1823
Ava	2nd	1824-1826	1826
Alma	1st	1854	1855
Inkerman	1st	1854	1855
Sevastopol	1st & 2nd	1854-1855	1855
Taku Forts	2nd	1860	1861
Pekin 1860	2nd	1860	1861,1914 2
South Africa 1899-1902	1st & 3rd	1899-1902	1903

1, "St Lucia" was granted in 1821 and the date "1803" in1910 to differentiate between the various other dates on which the island had been captured.

2. The date "1860" was added by Army Order of July 1914

The Last Queen's and Regimental Colours of the 1st Battalion