



The Thistle

Journal of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment)

Volume 46

Winter 2024



Presentation of Branch Standards to the newest branch of the Association, the Fijian Branch.
l to r: Jone Leweni (Vice Chairman Fijian Branch), George Lowder and Peni Ravutia (Secretary Fijian Branch).

Foreword

Brigadier G E Lowder MBE. Chairman of the Regimental Trustees, President of the Regimental Association and Chairman of the War Memorial Fund Trustees

As I put finger to keyboard to write this foreword, the sky is blue and cloudless and Spring seems to have finally sprung. I hope that you have made it through a particularly wet, cold and dreich winter.

Governance – Regimental (SCIO) Trust. At the time of writing, we are embarking on our second full year as a SCIO, comprising three of our Regimental Pillars, but not the Club. We are still bedding in and finding that there are some processes and procedures that require refinement. The Regimental Secretary is working with Office Bearers and Boards to complete this and we should be in truly excellent shape by the end of this calendar year. I can reassure you that there is no cause for concern, but if we are to fully realise the benefits of a single SCIO there is room for a bit more coherence in our treasury, accounting and other procedures across all of our activities. Our investment funds have been transferred to our new Investment Managers, Evelyn Partners and early impressions are positive with a good regular dialogue established. Valuation of the combined fund is healthy, and we will continue to be proactive to drive growth in the fund to help meet as much as possible of our spending requirements. Our refreshed Regimental Strategy was approved by Trustees, both Regimental and War Memorial Fund in late 2024, we are now delivering it. The Regimental Secretary can provide a copy should you wish to read it. Our budget for 2025 includes an allocation to address communications, particularly our website. We have embarked on this task and will do it well, not in haste. We also intend to make much more of other channels available to us. This will be an iterative process, so please bear with us as we progress through 2025.

The Association and Associating. It was a privilege to present the Fijian Branch of the Association with new standards at the Association AGM on 28 February 2025. The Association is a tale of two parts. Most branches continue to thrive while Edinburgh remains in suspended animation and Highland will transition to suspended animation after they run an event this Summer. This reflects where Old Royals are in numbers and wish to engage with The Association. Elsewhere less formal associating continues to take place and be supported, including through golf, curling, lunches, dinners, visits and drinks. We will continue to support these gatherings where we can, to help maintain comradeship and enable catch ups. To that end and mindful of the successful Op BANNER dinner, it has been suggested that we run a number of operational tour gatherings, for instance Bosnia in 2002/3 and Iraq in 2003/4 and 2005/6. This would include a gathering in February 2026 to mark the 35th anniversary of the first Gulf War. It would be our intention to open these events to all Royals and not just those who served on these operational tours. The Office Bearers, Regimental Secretary and I would welcome your thoughts on this idea. We have a very full forecast of events again this year, with many now being cemented into our annual calendar and recurring each year, allowing you to plan well in advance. I would be keen to see a strong turnout at the following:

Saturday 24 May. Gretna commemoration at Rosebank Cemetery.
Saturday 7 June. Unveiling of the final addition to the Monument in Princes Street Gardens West and Beating Retreat at The Club.
Saturday 28 June. Edinburgh Armed Forces Day.
Saturday 16 August. VJ Day commemoration. Lauriston Castle.

And planning well ahead the laying up of 1 SCOTS Colours on Sunday 29 March 2026.

We know that there is a VE Day Concert in The Usher Hall on 8 May, but we don't have details of what Edinburgh or Scotland is planning to mark the 80th anniversary. As soon as we do, we will confirm our level of participation.

Museum and Heritage. Terms of Reference have now been agreed with The Royal Regiment of Scotland (SCOTS) for a Joint Working Group to develop a plan for a joint museum in The Castle from April 2031, when current public funding towards our Museum Curator is expected to cease. We will be represented on the Working Group by Dickie Donovan, Chair of the Museum Committee, David Jack our Regimental Secretary and Allan Carswell our Regimental Trustee who leads on heritage. We note that Allan has a foot in both camps as he is also a Trustee of the SCOTS Museum, but this is no bad thing. Museum Outreach in May in the week preceding the Gretna commemoration will focus on the Gretna disaster and the Gallipoli campaign. The project to update our Monument in Princes Street Gardens West with a bronze bust of Her Majesty, the late Queen Elizabeth II is coming to fruition. The bust will be unveiled on Saturday 7 June 2025. We are very grateful to Malcolm Copland for all his support as Project Officer. Malcolm has dealt with the City of Edinburgh Council and a raft of other stakeholders to bring our plan together. We have been working with the Le Paradis Commemorative Group to support their plan to erect a monument, details of which were in the previous Thistle, at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA). This memorial will be unveiled and dedicated in late September this year. We anticipate sending representatives and a piper to attend this. I hope with a strong contingent from the Southern Branch of the Association.

The Club. The Club continues to generate a surplus that not only maintains the Club but also supports our wider Regimental activity. The War Memorial Fund Trustees have provided clear direction to The Directors of RSC Management Ltd regarding the level of surplus they would like to see each year. In a fresh initiative last October, the Club provided a curry lunch for Veterans and Associations who had attended the opening of the Edinburgh Garden of Remembrance. The Lord Provost joined us, and the hospitality was well received, especially by our fellow antecedent infantry regiments. We hope that this will continue to encourage further use of the Club by veterans. The work to renovate our new property at 1A Dundas Street and join it to 34A Abercromby Place will conclude this Spring, when a further 3 en suite rooms will become available. The Club will then have a total of 34 bedrooms which will be an appropriate maximum for the current size of the business.

Finally, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all Trustees, Directors, Committee Members, Office Bearers and Volunteers who keep our show on the road. We have a strong and diverse team in place, many of whom were not Royal Scots or veterans but they are very much part of our wider Regimental Family. I am deeply grateful to every one of them – thank you. Succession planning is an ongoing task, and we are continually refreshing the team through natural churn and for good governance. If you would like to get involved do let us know.

I look forward to the next time our paths cross and hope you can make it to one or more of our planned events this Summer. Please do come along and if at all possible, bring a Royal who we may not have seen for a while.

Yours aye

George

Regimental Day Dinner

Thirty members of the Association gathered in the Club on Friday 28 March 2025 to mark Regimental Day and enjoyed an excellent dinner served in the Douglas Room. They had been welcomed by Piper Mike Pretsell, who then entertained them after dinner with some accomplished piping. Tam Douglas will in the summer relinquish his last remaining position in the Association as leader of the Standard Party, a role he has held for 21 years and in which he has ensured that the Party represents the Regimental Trust to the highest standards. To mark his dedication and unstinting work for the Standard Party Tam was presented with a statuette of a standard bearer. We wish him a happy and relaxing retirement.



The group before dinner. Photo Malcolm Ross



I to r: Dave Milne, Paul Robertson, William Hoy, Mick McCann, Stuart Aitken, Tam Douglas (with his statuette of a standard bearer), Tam Logan, Mark Doig, Jamie Colquhoun, Malcolm Ross and Sonny Walker. *Photo Stu Marshall*

1 RS Regimental Band Members Lunching

Six Regimental Band stalwarts including their ladies gathered for the advertised informal lunch in the RS Club on Saturday 14 September 2024. We met in the bar, lunched in the dining room subsidised by a generous grant from Regimental Trustees, and told tall tales of yesteryear over coffee afterwards in the library.



I to r: David Nelson, Mhairi Blythe, Frances Proctor, John Proctor, Gerry Stryker, Jim Blythe.

This year's informal arrangement was in response to the question asked of Band members after last year's lunch, i.e. whether to hold lunches every year or every two years. Predictable, there was a 50/50 split. Hence trying an informal arrangement this year and a formal one next year. Next year's lunch will be a formal one in the Douglas Room, as per last year, already booked for Saturday 13 September 2025, with another formal one in 2027 - unless there is any appetite for another, smaller informal one in 2026.

Meanwhile, whether a member or not, use the RS Club for meals in the dining room, bar lunches, morning coffee, afternoon tea, or simply for refreshments in the bar. But declare yourself as an Old Royal in order to keep the RS flag flying.

Jim Blythe

The Royal Scots Association, Fijian Branch Update and our first Fijian Day Celebration

In 1961 the British Army struggled with volunteer recruitment after the abolition of National Service. Recruiting teams were sent to three remaining colonies and found an excellent source of volunteers in Fiji. 200 men and 12 women enlisted and served with distinction. For several generations Fijians have served in the British Army with some serving in the SAS but none in a Scottish Regiment.



The Marshall's with the Fijian Branch Committee.
l to r: Jone Leweni (Vice Chairman FB),
Epeli Qolikibua (Chairman FB) Jennifer and Stu
Marshall and Peni Ravutia (Secretary FB).

This changed in 1998 when the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) Band came all the way from Fiji to participate in the Edinburgh Military Tattoo in 1998 and 8 members of the band decided to join the British Army. Following that event they enlisted in December 1998. After they ("the mighty 8") completed Phase 1 at Glencorse Barracks and Phase 2 Training at Vimy Barracks, Catterick in 1999, they joined the 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) in Hyderabad Barracks, Colchester. Many more followed and this new pathway has allowed Fijians to serve throughout the British Armed Forces with over 10000 Fijians Fiji now living in the United Kingdom.

After leaving the Army a few of us who had settle in or around Edinburgh would meet up for casual chat and a meal at the Toby Carvery Club in Granton, Edinburgh. After the meal, we all decided to get together at Mr Ravutia's (Rav) for a grog session and catch up, as some of us had seen each other for a couple of years. It was at these gatherings we thought about the possibility of joining The Royal Scots Regimental Association.

We approached the Association and it was suggested that we could form a new branch and so the Fijian Branch (FB) of The Royal Scots Regimental Association was established following the Annual General Meeting on the 3 March 2023. A big 'Vinaka Vakalevu' (huge thank you) must go to Lt Col David Jack for suggesting to name our Branch as Fijian Branch, and the Committee of The Royal Scots Regimental Association in allowing us to keep our indigenes identity as Fijians and making us part of The Royal Scots Regimental Association. Ever since we have been up and running, our branch has been participating and getting involved in most of the events with other branches of the Association. In 2024 our Branch had the honour of representing the Association as Standard Party at the memorial service at Lauriston Castle to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Kohima, attending Burns Night, the Regimental Day Dinner with our wives, and the Summer Party.



The Royal Scots Regimental Association, Fijian Branch celebrating Fiji Day 2024.

The 2024 was an excellent and very memorable year for the Fijian Branch as we hosted our first Fiji Day, which was held on Saturday 12 October 2024 at Dregghorn Barracks. Our guests of honour this year were Stu and Jennifer Marshall and as such they were presented with and wear the Salusalu (pronounced as sar-loo-sar-loo) which is Fijian for garland. It can be described as a necklace of flowers woven together by strands of vau (dried bark of wild hibiscus). These were made in Fiji and have the Royal Scots Regimental colours in them.



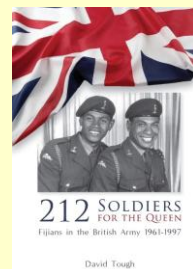
Emori Waqa mixing Kava, a traditional Fijian drink.

Kava is traditionally served as part of a ceremony commonly used to welcome guests into a village and on important occasions.



Stu Marshall receiving and drinking the Kava on behalf of all the guests in attendance.

Photos by Malcolm Ross



Further reading is available in the book; 212 Soldiers for the Queen, Fijians in the British Army 1961-1997 by David Tough.
Available in Paperback ISBN: 9780648202523 and available in Hardcover ISBN: 9780648355212.



Cutting of the Fiji Day Cake. I to r: Paul Robertson, Sid, Epeli Qolikibua, Jennifer and Stu Marshall, Jone Leweni, Karalo Malumuvatu and Peni Ravutia.



A traditional dance (Meke) was provided by the Fijian Branch ladies and children. Centre front row is Litiana Qolikibua and centre back row is Susana Ravutia.



Our MC for Fiji Day, Jone Leweni.

Fiji Day is held on 10 October each year to mark our independence as a nation in 1970, and it is a day of jubilation and pride for the island nation of Fiji. The annual celebration is filled with rich history, vibrant traditions and deep sense of cultural identity. The festivities offer a window into Fijians' way of life, with traditional ceremonies, performances and community gatherings. Understanding the significance of Fiji Day and various ways it is celebrated helps to appreciate the culture and heritage of the Pacific Island nation. Fiji Day was a success as the traditional Kava (Fijian traditional drink) ceremony was presented as symbolising unity and preserving Fijian heritage. Cultural performances such as Meke (Fijian Dance) were performed by our ladies, and our young girls played a significant role in storytelling and presenting our heritage. Fiji Day is an opportunity to educate and involve guests in Fijian customs, ensuring a respectful celebration of the culture. The Fijian diaspora and global celebrations of Fiji Day play a crucial role in promoting Fijian heritage worldwide. Those who attended 2024 Fiji Day enjoyed the event immensely, with lots of food, a live band by our very own Mr Tagica (Tg), and grog (Kava) on the night. Our next Fiji Day will be on Saturday 11 October 2025 with the time and venue to be confirmed later.



Our Fijian Branch ladies who were the Master Chefs for the day. I to r: Logalumi Malumuvatu, Susana Ravutia and Tina Roden.



Other entertainment for the day was a live Fijian Reggae music by the one and only Kamineli Tagica (Tg).



I to r: Tina Roden, Jennifer and Stu Marshall and Logalumi Malumuvatu.



Fiji Day Cake 2024.

It has been a fantastic and successful year for our Fijian Branch and we hope that many more good years are to come for the Branch. The aim of our Branch is to have a strong and active membership of The Royal Scots Regimental Association. Building on the strengths and activities of our Branch is the most important task and representing the Association. It has not all been easy, and we are grateful for all the support and advice we have received from the Association, and other branches and members. We aim to increase our support to Association activities and look forward to attending more events in the future.

May God Bless you all.

"UP THE ROYALS".

Mr Peni Ravutia

Yet another example of the value of the RS Museum Outreach programme promoting our Regiment's enduring legacy came on Remembrance Sunday at the Hearts Memorial Clock at Haymarket.



Andy Gilmour with Julia by the Heart of Midlothian Memorial Clock in Haymarket.

Outreach 2024, with its Act of Remembrance in the Scottish National War Memorial on 1 July that coincided with the annual Pilgrimage to Contalmaison and was followed by the highly successful temporary exhibition at Tynecastle during Hearts 150th anniversary, is that members of the Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard team of volunteer guides were invited to have "touchline" seats at the Hearts Memorial Clock on Remembrance Sunday.



Ian Fair (left) (RS Assn wreath layer) with Hearts volunteer Jim Ross.

Andy Gilmour had been presented with a wreath to lay at the war memorial of his choice by the Linburn Branch of RBLS of which he had been president and took Jim Blythe along with him. Andy had said, "The Hearts Memorial Clock was the obvious choice following the Tynecastle exhibition, especially after the Hearts Museum had interviewed me for my memories of growing up next door to Tynecastle for their Living History project". Both were accorded a very warm welcome by Hearts Museum personalities and by members of the Tynecastle senior management team. They were also reunited with several of those they had worked with during the exhibition. Andy was greeted in person by Hearts owner Ann Budge, whereupon Andy recounted to her, in terms of his Living History experiences, that as a boy he used to avoid the turnstiles by climbing over the wall to watch matches.



* Standard Bearers l to r: Stuart Aitken and Mark Diog.

Altogether RS was well represented by RS Association wreath layer Ian Fair of the East of Scotland Branch, sadly there no longer being an Edinburgh Branch. Several other Old Royals were in attendance, most having been readily identified by Hearts stewards and ushered into the VIP enclosure in front of the Haymarket Bar which was only a very short step away for refreshment afterwards, in the company of several Hearts personalities, a former Lord Provost, the High Constables of Edinburgh and various Jambos.



* l to r: Andy Gilmour, Jack Wilson and Jim Blythe.

On the other side of the City, 2025 will be the 150th anniversary of Hibernian FC and plans are proceeding apace for 7 RS and Leith to be the focus of RS Outreach activity that will include another temporary exhibition, collaboration with various Leith bodies including Hibs and will culminate in our annual Service of Remembrance at Rosebank Cemetery.



* Ian Murray, The Secretary of State for Scotland speaking below the Heart of Midlothian Memorial Clock in Haymarket.

The Heart of Midlothian War Memorial located at Haymarket was paid for by HMFC and its supporters. The Memorial remains, to date, as the site of the HMFC's annual Remembrance Service. In 1914, eleven HMFC players enlisted in Sir George McCrae's battalion and would go onto actively serve in World War One. Four of the enlisted players are seen training in a newspaper photograph from the same year.



An example to others. Some of the eleven leading professionals of the Heart of Midlothian Football Club who have joined the Edinburgh Active Service Battalion.
Photograph from the Illustrated Sporting & Dramatic News, 5 December 1914, HMFC Museum Collection.

The sculpted monument, with its distinctive clock face and hand carved lion's heads, was unveiled on the 9 April 1922 before a solemn crowd of approximately 40,000 people. The impressive ceremony was conducted by Mr Robert Munro (1868 – 1955), Secretary of State for Scotland, and attended by many dignitaries who heard tributes paid to the members of the Heart of Midlothian FC who joined the 16th Battalion Royal Scots in 1914.

The Heart of Midlothian Memorial was designed by Sir Thomas Duncan Rhind KBE (1871 -1927) and sculpted by Mr Henry Snell Gamely RSA. The monument was built by Messrs John Angus & Sons whose works were on Duff Street near Tynecastle and the clock was designed and made by James Ritchie & Son (est. 1809). The C Listed structure, in the heart of Haymarket, is dedicated to the memory of the club's players, members and the people of Edinburgh who fell in the Great War and World War Two.



To find out more about the history of the club and to learn more about the events surrounding the Haymarket Memorial, please scan the QR Code or visit <https://www.heartsfc.co.uk/pages/club-history>

As part of the 150th Anniversary celebrations, the club undertook essential works to dignify the memorial in the summer of 2024. The stone immediately surrounding the War Memorial was replaced with a more decorative stone, inscribed with suitable quotations, helping to restore its dignity as a significant place of remembrance.

Expert advice on the cleaning and conservation of the monument will also be undertaken, and a conservation plan commissioned to ensure that it is cared for using best practice and preserved for future generations.

This work has been generously funded and supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

I think it is worth mentioning that although Hearts led the way, other clubs including Hibs also joined 16 RS. I am repeatedly reminded by the Hibs historian, with whom we are working closely for Outreach 2025, that other clubs were also represented in 16 RS.



Jim Blythe

Officers' Golf Match and Regimental Dinner

Once again, golfers attending the Officers Regimental Dinner gathered at Gullane No 3 to compete for the prestigious Officers' golf trophy. Blessed with a near perfect day for November, there were few excuses for errant shots and the overall scores were encouragingly good. With handicaps from four to thirty-three, it was difficult to predict the outcome but after some very good golf, the honours finally went to Ross Hunter who pipped Billy Young on countback with a score of thirty-six Stableford points. Ross was presented with the Trophy at the dinner. Other prizewinners were Zander Russell who won the longest drive by a few inches from Brian de la Haye, Cliff McAuley, Nearest the Pin on the 8th, Arthur Frame, Nearest the Pin on the 6th and David Dickson who secured the prize for Endeavour.

Very sincere thanks were given to the Royal Scots Club for sponsoring the event and to Malcolm Ross (former 1 RS) who came to provide some professional photography.



Ross Hunter (left) being present the Winners Trophey by George Lowder



George Lowder (left) presenting Gordon Rae with Regimental Prize



The gathering for the 2024 Officers' Dinner

The annual Officers' Regimental Dinner was held in The Royal Scots Club on Friday 1 November 2024 and was attended by 57 officers. As usual the Club provided an excellent dinner and we were entertained by an ensemble from the Lowland Band of The Royal Regiment of Scotland and Cpl Euan Jardine, Pipe Sgt SCOTS DG and formerly RS, did a magnificent job piping for us. We were joined this year by six former officers of HMS Edinburgh, a Type 42 destroyer with which we maintained a close affiliation from 1985 to 2006. It was wonderful to re-establish this connection and we hope we can strengthen these bonds of friendship. Our guests this year were Mr Peter Taylor OBE, who has given over 25 years of service as a Director of RSC Management Limited, bringing his significant hotel experience to assist in developing the Club into the successful business it is today, and Lt Col Gordon Rae, who was awarded the Regimental Prize for his dedicated service as Chair of the Museum Committee over the last 8 years. The evening concluded with the customary lusty rendition of The Gallant Royal Scots.

Lieutenant Colonel Brian de la Hay OBE and Lieutenant Colonel David Jack

Bathgate to the Baltic 1998 – A very, very much delayed PXR

Background The coup against Gorbachev in August 1991 was the start of the collapse of the Soviet Union. This led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 with the former superpower being replaced by 15 independent countries; Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

As such, a few of these new countries turned to the West for both trade and military assistance and advice. As time passed, a few small Training Teams were sent to train their military personnel. This is the story on one such Training Team.

"The Aim of Battle Procedure; Is to ensure that the frontline soldier is launched into battle with the minimum of fuss, knowing exactly what he has to do, how he is going to do it and what fire support is available to him."

After three years of recruiting out of Bathgate ACIO I was on the brink of returning to the Battalion in Colchester at the end of March 1998. However, with the Battalion still in America on exercise Trumpet Dance at the time I fancied my chances of some leave before heading to Colchester. A phone call to W02 Jago Spiers confirmed my request and he said, "Take three weeks, however phone back on Wednesday to confirm with the RSM Shanks as he will be back then".

On Wednesday I drove to Bathgate ACIO to confirm my leave with the RSM and fax down a leave pass. Before I could do this I was asked by the W02 in the office if I had received a phone call from a Capt Thompson WFR in Tidworth to which I replied "No". One hasty phone call later, I had been informed that in ten days time I was going to Estonia as part of a short-term training team. My initial reaction was "Where, when, what". All I knew about Estonia was they failed to turn up for a World Cup match against Scotland eighteen months previous. The plan was to fly out from Gatwick the following Sunday however before that I had to go to Tidworth for a security briefing and meet the rest of the team. So now, my 3 weeks leave was now cut to ten days with a two-day trip to Tidworth in between.

The following Monday I left for Tidworth and when I returned on the Wednesday all I found out was who was in the team and when we were flying out. Nothing about what exactly we were supposed to be doing, what kit and equipment we required to take and what was available once we arrived, what accommodation was available or what transport we were going to get. This is when I started to question the Aim of Battle Procedure.

Back home I now went about trying to get together kit and equipment for the trip which isn't easy when you are stuck between postings and not really in a position to be administrated by anyone in particular, a bit like being disowned I suppose. However come departure day all was packed and I was ready as I was ever going to be. I left early on the Sunday and headed off to Gatwick after picking up Sgt O'Meara 3 PARA in Edinburgh. We arrived at Gatwick and met up with CSgt Lamb RGJ and Sgt McManus KINGS in McDonald's in the departure lounge, not realising this was our last decent meal for a wee while, and not to let the officers down, the commander of the team Capt Thompson WFR arrived just in time to catch the flight. A sign of things to come!

After a three hour flight and putting our watches forward two hours, it was fairly late at night when we arrived in the capitol of Estonia Tallinn. Tallinn sits right at the north of the country and about a thirty minute flight South of Helsinki across the Baltic Sea. We were met by a liaison officer from the local Estonian military headquarters who took us to a large hotel in the city where I did not know it at the time but I was about to spend my last night in a real bed until sometime in late June!

In the morning we paid a short visit to the British Embassy in Tallinn before we were bundled in a minibus and driven South for about four hours to our final destination. We were convinced that the minibus driver was in the running to take over from Michael Schumacher in the F1 Ferrari team. On arrival at the Estonian Battle School (BV Lahingikool) we were met by the School Commandant who turned out to be an Estonian Lieutenant who had been in the army around five years and was running a school that was the equivalent of one of our own ITCs. We thought we had problems with manning and money. We were quickly introduced to the Master of Stores (QM). He was a rather older Russian who was very much still set in the old Soviet ways. The Master of Stores then took us to our



I to r; Sgt McManus KINGS, Sgt Notman, Teet (Interpreter) and CSgt Lamb RGJ.

accommodation down in the local town of Võru (Google maps - Võru) about four miles away. As we drove into town we suddenly turned into this rather rough looking housing scheme, which to be honest made Niddrie look like New Orleans, and I certainly felt even more apprehensive when we went up a staircase to our flat that the Health and Safety Act would have condemned in the fifties let alone the nineties. However once inside it was not too bad although a bit cramped. We had a one bedroom flat for three of us. After drawing straws Capt Thompson, CSgt Lamb and I were to stay in the flat and the other two were going to another flat about a mile further into town. At this stage we were all now wondering who had drew the short straw, as it appeared in the morning we were the lucky ones as the other two were in another one bedroom flat but sharing it with a fifty year old Soviet woman who slept on the sofa in the living room. We certainly complained about the standard of the accommodation and said this is not what we are accustomed too and certainly not what was on the "Memorandum of Understanding" between the two countries. The situation was resolved after a couple of weeks when three of the team were moved to a local hotel with CSgt Lamb and myself staying in the flat. The old Master of Stores never understood why we were complaining because the flat we were staying in was far better than what a colonel in the Soviet army could expect. This became more apparent when on one of the three occasions when we flooded the flat downstairs we discovered that although, the flat was the same size as ours, it actually housed a family of thirteen. So with the accommodation sorted, and by now we had a vehicle, we had about a week to sort out classrooms, reccce the camp and local training areas, see what the commandant of the school wanted and get some sort of programme made out.

After our initial recces were complete we now knew what was required and what we were meant to achieve and what was available to us. We were told the course would consist of soldiers in the age bracket of twenty two to thirty two however when they arrived the age bracket had opened up to forty two. We were told to work on the assumption that anyone over the age of twenty eight had served sometime in the old Soviet Army. The remainder had all been conscripts in the Estonian Army who had decided to stay on in the army and make a career out of it. Our interpreters initially were not too good. However, after about two weeks we received a couple who had just returned from six months with the Americans in Croatia where they had been on a Mission! They turned out to be very good and were not only keen to assist in translation but very interested in our methods of teaching and training.



The training began with four weeks of Method of Instruction including taking lessons and a fair bit of range work in which we were trying to standardise their training and weapon handling with their Galil rifle. Easier said than done. Before we could even begin we had to familiarise ourselves with the weapon first. We found the Estonians had a very dry sense of humour and any attempt to try and bring any fun or humour into a lesson was met with blank expressions on the students faces. We learnt never to try and tell a joke through an Estonian interpreter. Once we got the students out of the classrooms and on to the ranges we found them a lot easier to motivate. They certainly enjoyed life more on the ranges and on exercise as we found out during the tactics phase. The only live firing facility that we had was an old SS21 (Scarab) Missile Base about five miles from the camp.



The Galil Rifle



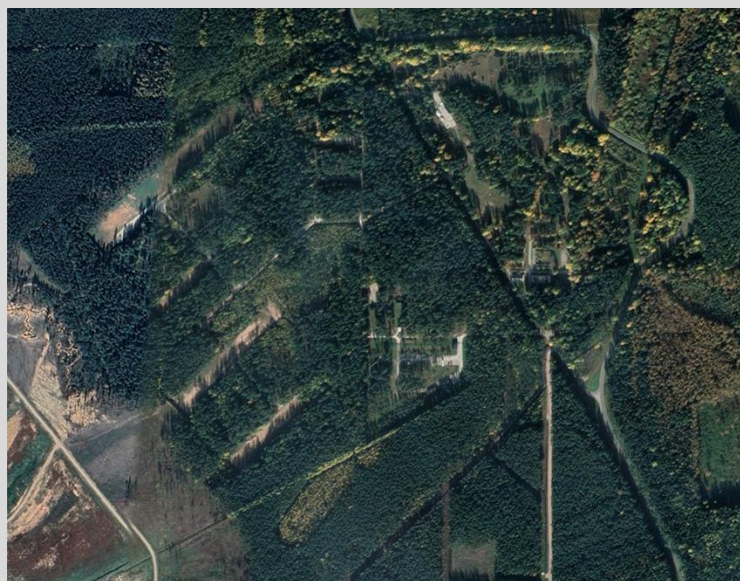
SS21

Inside the base were four silos where the missiles had been kept and about a hundred metres in front of them were the firing positions and there is no need to guess which direction they were facing. There was enough accommodation at the rear to house at least one battalion of infantry and when we got an opportunity to go through the woods in the surrounding areas it was impossible to keep count of the pre-dug positions for vehicles and troops. Back on the ranges we were taking the students through grouping and zeroing and moving on to a basic shoot at about 120 metres as this was as far as we could go or we would have been inside one of the silos. At the end of the range week we had knocked up an IBSR for them which they really enjoyed. During the ranges phase it was found out that one of students had been in the army a total of eight years and had fired no more than fifty rounds.

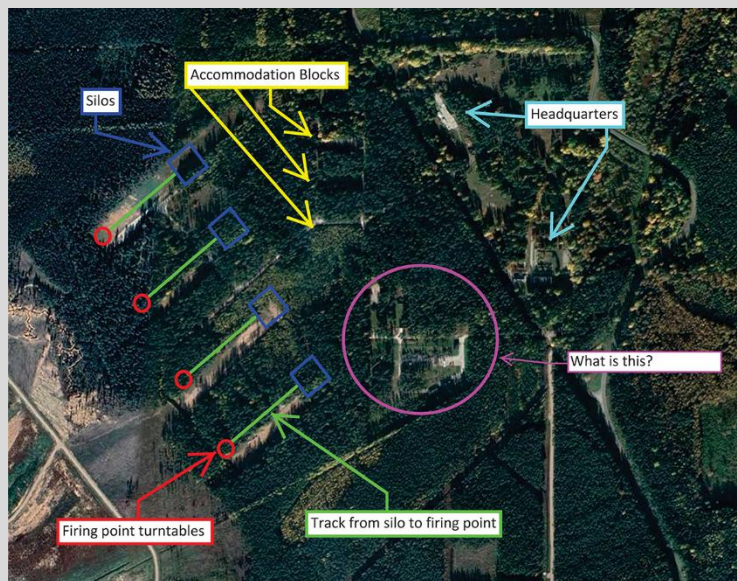
We tried to do fitness of some sort every day but this did not go down too well with the older students. However, most of them still put in a lot of effort. We moved to the tactics phase on week five and it did not take long to find out they certainly seemed to put far more effort into this side of the training. Again, we were restricted with what we could do mainly due to ammunition and training areas, we had about 2000 blank rounds and about 5000 ball for the duration of the course and no pyrotechnics whatsoever. In all we had three areas we could use for training including an old airfield, a disused fish farm and the missile base we had used as our ranges. Surprisingly none of these locations were marked on the old Soviet maps which dated back to 1949, with updates made 1977, 1989 and 1990.



Russian map. The highlighted area is the location of one of many the SS21 Missile Bases not marked on maps.



A satellite image of highlighted area in map above.



Explanation of the image to the left showing the missile base setup.

Starting off with harbours and patrolling techniques we found what we were teaching them was not much different to what they already knew. However, when we went into a bit of routine they did not think twice about getting stripped off to their underwear when it came to getting into their sleeping bag. Now that would have been interesting if anything had ever come of the Cold War. Logistics was another problem during exercises as this meant due to the feeding system in the camp one of us had to drive back to camp every mealtime which would lead to someone complaining we were using too much fuel. Food, wow, now there is another subject. It may sound like I am whinging here but no. It was a case of two choices, you either ate it or you did not because there was nothing else. I am not a person who likes fish at all but the head chef back in camp could produce more fish than Captain Birdseye on almost a daily basis. Needless to say you did not have to encourage the Estonians to eat it, in fact there were a few Oliver Twists amongst them.

As we worked our way through the tactics phase we were moving towards a final exercise where we were hoping to put in some good live firing at the end. We had conserved enough blank rounds to carry out a good bit of OBUA training and more than enough ball to carry out a section ambush followed the next day by a platoon ambush and on the final morning we carried out a very good defensive shoot from an old Soviet trench system which was the finale to the exercise.

That evening we were treated to a party by the students who, after a few beers, were very keen to find out our thoughts on the Estonian Army, the country and the people and did we really enjoy ourselves working with them. After much discussion and a few more beers we then had to head off to another feast, this time hosted by the staff from the camp and more questions to be answered.



Sgt Notman in the duty vehicle.



Sgt Notman in their accommodation.



Sgt Notman guarding the staff accommodation tent during the tactics phase.



Sgt Notman proving that the skin is waterproof.

The following morning there was a small parade and presentations were made to the best students on the course, we then received a few presents ourselves before we handed over a large presentation board with all the plaques of the individual regiments that were represented in the training team. We then proceeded straight to Tallinn to spend the last day in the capital and what a difference it was. This is where the majority of the money is being spent and it is there to see. All the new hotels, shops and cinemas etc. The place is getting modernised as much as possible just in case the Estonians greatest fear is ever to reoccur and that is the return of the Soviets. You only have to read some of the tourists brochures to realise what their biggest fear is and if you ever get the chance to visit look closely at the war memorials that are all over the country, the only years that get a mention are 1941 to 1944, the years of the Nazi occupation!

When we left Estonia the following morning we had certainly changed our thoughts on the place, the people and certainly the food. It was a strange experience at times but a lot was certainly taken away. We were invited by the British Embassy to attend a reception to celebrate Her Majesty's birthday and to attend the British athletics team visit to Tallinn but for various reasons we were unable to attend either event. If this training team is to return in the near future it certainly is a great opportunity for any SNCO or Officer who gets the chance to go and see how the other half used to live before it is fully Westernised. Yes, there were a few problems, however nothing that cannot be sorted with a little perseverance, patience and common sense. There are a few things that did puzzle me on my departure, "What happened to the missiles out of the silos and would the Estonians really have fought for the Soviets during the Cold War". A final point would be to go with your eyes open and remember the Aim of Battle Procedure.

Sergeant (at the time) Derek (Nolts) Malcolm Notman



**The student; Old Russians and the young Estonians.
Oh, and Sgt Notman in the middle.**

Royal Scots working hard for Charities

We know there are many Royals out there doing a fantastic job fundraising and collecting for charities. We would like to bring 3 of them to the forefront; Peter Fraser-Hopewell, Robert Conquer and Graham (Bas) Brash.

If you are doing any charity work then let's know what you have been up to or planning to do so we can get your achievements to a wider audience and help raise awareness of your cause and possibly help to increase your fundraising pot.

Peter Fraser-Hopewell Fundraising

A staunch Royal Scots fundraiser is Colonel Peter Fraser-Hopewell CMG, MBE. Peter has actively volunteered and supported "Combat Stress for veterans' Mental Health" since 2008 when he retired from the Army. Alongside this, he has raised lots of funds for the Royal British Legion, many of which have been mentioned in past editions of the Thistle.



Peter (right) receiving the "Volunteer of the Year 2022" from Chairman of Trustees Giles

During his service he saw, and experienced, a number of issues on operations and the impact this had on some serving personnel. Peter knows personally a number of ex-service personnel who continue to suffer from Mental Health issues connected to their service and in some instances up to 30 years after events.

Combat Stress delivers support nationwide focusing on the complex end of the Mental Health spectrum. As a volunteer, Peter provides support and guidance as the Combat Stress Area Representative in Essex and Suffolk. He is raising awareness of the charity and what it does, liaising with other veterans charities, representing the charity at events when requested and giving talks on veteran's mental health issues and what Combat Stress does to support and help them. In addition, Peter sits on the Combat Stress national Financial Awareness Committee which advises Trustees and has the CEO as a member. In 2022, Peter was awarded "Volunteer of the Year".



Peter at the rest stop Oxford Iconic 50 mile Sportive event.

For 2024, Peter set himself the task of raising funds through his Just Giving page with a number of challenging events, raising just over £2000. These were a mixture of running and cycling events between May and September 2024.

Great Bromley 10km race.
Oxford Town and Gown 10km race.
Ride London 100 mile cycle event.
Harwich Sprint Triathlon.
Brantham 5 mile race.
Oxford Iconic 50 mile bike Sportive.
Mayflower Half Marathon.

For 2025, Peter still has to finalise details for other events he plans to enter, however he has already registered for and will raise money by completing the following events;

Great Bromley 10km race - 13 April
Oxford Town and Gown 10km - 11 May
Harwich Sprint Triathlon - 8 June
Oxford Iconic 50 mile bike sportive - 22 June

Mr Ray (Halfchat) Thomson

Mental Health does not discriminate. No matter who you are or what you did; how strong or how fit you are; from logistics to Special Forces; from Privates to Generals. Please seek help; this is most definitely not a sign of weakness, in fact, it is sign of your strength of character. There are hundreds of veterans already asking for and being given the support and guidance they need and so rightly deserve.

Should you need any help or guidance please see or call "Combat Stress for veterans' Mental Health". Their details are below or scan a QR code.



Visit <https://combatstress.org.uk/>

There 24-hour Helpline 0800 138 1619 is available to all veterans and their families to seek confidential mental health advice and support. You can also text: 07537 173 683 or email: helpline@combatstress.org.uk

COMBATSTRESS
FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH



Peter crossing Tower Bridge, London to complete the Ride London 100 mile.

There are also fantastic online self-guided resources to help veterans with a variety of mental health difficulties, including: PTSD, depression, anxiety, anger, and alcohol and substance misuse. Guides are also available for veterans' families and employers of veterans.

Visit <https://selfhelp.combatstress.org.uk>





The Union Canal team. l to r: Mark Conlon (Edinburgh Airport Fire Service), Charlie Currie (Menzies Aviation Edinburgh Airport), Jason Rennie (Edinburgh Trams), Gary Fennell and Bas Brash.

As mentioned, there are many Royals out there doing massive amounts for charity. However, I would just like to mention my auld 5 Platoon pal Graham (Bas) Brash for all the fantastic work he has done and still doing for charity. Bas is a very modest man and he does not do this for recognition, in fact, he wants to ensure that all those who support and accompany him in what he does should be the ones mentioned.

I am sure everyone knows Bas but just in case you don't I have put a wee famous photo of him in the Gulf. Yes, you know him now!



Graham (Bas) Brash, Gulf 1991.

Bas has been involved in charity work for some time now and the first mention I could find of this great work was in the November 1997 Thistle. At the time Bas was still recovering from an injury he sustained while doing the Charity Marathon for HRH's Save the Children Fund where he raised £700.

In recent years Bas has been raising money for various charities with the latest being "Who Dares Cares". It was back in early May 2024 when Bas, aged 63 (sorry pal), did a 32½ mile walk along the Union Canal raising a massive total of **£6159.51**. As I mentioned before, humble Bas however was only interested in talking about the people who had donated, walked with him and supported him. He also made a mention of a special lady Carrie Toman who volunteered to be one of Bas's walking partners. But, unknown to Bas at the time, Carrie was battling her own illness, which sadly took her life at the end of April 2024. Bas has a stalwart supporter in the name of Gerry Stryker and his wee dug Hamish. Gerry has worn many hats in support of Bas's fund raising efforts; duty driver, medic, photographer, master chef and NAAFI manager to name a few. Bas cannot thank you enough Gerry.

At the end of May 2024, Bas presented his £6159.51 cheque to co-founder of Who Dares Cares, Colin Maclachlan. Unbeknown to Bas, Colin had his own presentation to do when he presented a statue to Bas for "Outstanding Service and Support to Who Dares Cares". Although Bas will never admit this, he was very emotional and even cried during that presentation.



Colin Maclachlan (left) receives the cheque for £6159.51 from Bas Brash.



Colin Maclachlan presents the statue to Bas Brash.

Bas has not and I am sure never will stop supporting charities. In September 2024, it was the Kilted Walk and in October he was invited to the 2/52 Lowland Reunion where all the money raised from their raffle was given to Bas for the Who Dares Cares charity.

For the Kilt Walk Bas was again recognised for "Outstanding Service and Support for Veterans" being given a "Boots and TOS" presentation.

Bas is already planning his next fund raising event in 2025 for Who Dares Cares. A 40 mile walk from his house in Livingston to an area in the Pentland Hills and back. Keep an eye on his Facebook page for details.

Bas, I am not sorry for bringing you to the attention of the Royal Scots family. Everyone else is recognising what you are achieving so why not us!

It is simple Bas; as Gen Strudwick would say; "you are a **Gladiator**".

Mr Ray (Halfchat) Thomson



The Kilt Walk team l to r: Councillor Richard Nelson, Bas Brash, George Ross (KOSB) and Sandy Alexander (Civic).



Graham's presentation for the Kilt Walk.



For further information on what Bas has done and the future fund raising events he is planning to do then please check out his Facebook page by visiting the link below or scan the QR code to the left.
<https://www.facebook.com/graham.brash.5>



For further information on Who Dares Cares click on the link below or scan the QR code to the left.
<https://www.who-dares-cares.com/>



Robert Conquer, “Overwhelmed” by gift donations

An article was spotted in the East Lothian Courier recently bringing to light another Royal Scots kind-hearted hard work for charity. This time, collecting Christmas gifts for disadvantaged children in the East Lothian area.

Rab from Musselburgh joined the Royals in 1978 and served 9 years. Now he helps to run the Musselburgh and District Veterans Club at the Hollies Community Hub in Musselburgh. Between him, the Veterans Club and his dominoes team in the Auld Brig Tavern in Musselburgh, they asked customers, friends and acquaintances to donate toys and games which will be given to families via the Wallyford Livingroom Church and Musselburgh Baptist Church.



Some of the Christmas gifts which were kindly donated at the Auld Brig Tavern.

Rab was “overwhelmed” by the support and response. Over 70 toys and games were donated and handed over to the Churches to pass onto the children.

Well done Rab and keep up the good work.

Mr Ray (Halfchat) Thomson



l to r: Rev Andrew Agnew, of Wallyford Livingroom Church, Irene Hughes, from the Musselburgh and District Veterans Club and Robert Conquer with some of the donations.

Curling Report 2025

Royal Scot Curlers have provided the backbone to the Lowland Brigade Curling Club again this year and swept their way to victory in the Low Road competition at the Highland/ Lowland Brigade Curling Club (HLBCC) annual Bonspiel in Perth this March. This is the first time for a very long while that a Royal Scot Team has been anything but the Bridesmaid and I am most appreciative of the efforts of all those who supported the cause throughout the season.

The Lowlanders played in various inter Regimental matches which provided a mixed bag of results with losses against the Argylls and The Highlanders and a most welcomed victory against The Black Watch. Towards the latter half of the season, team members supported the wider HLBCC campaign with successes against The New Club (7 stones clear over 2 rinks) and The Royal Company of Archers (21 stones clear over 4 rinks); all in all, a number of successful outings which have demonstrated our increasing competitiveness.

Our regular attenders have been David Dickson, Mike Onslow, John ‘Dickie’ Donovan and Gordon Rae with less frequent participation from Brian de la Haye, Mike Cran, Matt Hovell and Malcolm Hill. We have also benefitted from a couple of ringers over the last couple of months (one from Kinross and 2 from Blairdrummond); all of whom have been most welcomed and have said how much they enjoyed the curling and subsequent lunches.

There is always space for new members or those wishing to return to the ice. If you are interested please notify the Regimental Secretary on RegtSec@theroyalscots.co.uk, who will inform Mike Onslow, Convener for the LBCC.

Good Game and I hope you enjoy the photographic evidence of the team relishing their Low Road victory at the HLBCC Bonspiel in Perth on 21 March 2025.



l to r: Mike Cran, Gordon Rae, Mike Onslow and Brian de la Haye.

Lieutenant Colonel Mike Onslow

From the "Dandy Ninth" to Down Under: Military collector donates collection to The Royal Scots Museum

A donation to the Museum was made by Mr James Rogers on 19 December 2024 during the Chairman's Cocktails, being accepted by Lt Col David Jack and Brig George Lowder MBE.



l to r: David Jack, James Rogers and George Lowder.

The items donated are;

A group of 4 medals consisting of a 1915 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal and Territorial Efficiency Medal awarded to 350017 Sjt Peter Grant. Peter was born in East Linton, East Lothian. He was a pre-war Territorial and an original member of the "Dandy Ninth" 9th (Highlanders) Bn The Royal Scots. He had an early regimental number of 133 and was at onetime the Pioneer Serjeant. He was killed in action on the 24 March 1918, sadly the same day as his brother Duncan of the 17th Bn The Royal Fusiliers. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial.



A group of 3 medals consisting of a 1915 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal to 250049 (1139) Private Alexander Milne 5th Bn The Royal Scots along with his original ID disc. Andrew was a pre-war Territorial residing at 8 Kirkwood Place, Edinburgh. Alexander served between 8 June 1910 and 16 August 1918 when he was discharged due to his wounds. He was also admitted to hospital on 19 September 1916 with Shell Shock when he was attached to 5th Bn The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles).



A WW1 Military Medal (MM) awarded to 375005 Sjt Alexander McHattie 2nd Bn The Royal Scots. Alexander was from Bo'ness and was a pre-war Territorial with the 10th Cyclist Bn The Royal Scots, he volunteered for Imperial Service in 1914, however he was not sent overseas until 1917, to the 2nd Bn The Royal Scots serving in France.



A framed Memorial Plaque to Andrew Burn Hoy. Andrew was born in Edinburgh on 27 January 1894 and was educated at Cannonmills School Andrew. He attested at Glencorse Barracks for the 5th Bn The Royal Scots Territorial Force on 15 April 1909. Hoy arrived at Alexandria on 2 April 1915 and landed with the 5th Bn The Royal Scots at 'W' Beach on the Gallipoli Peninsula on 25 April 1915 and was wounded in action



and then evacuated. Appointed to a commission with the 1/4th (Reserve) Bn The Royal Scots on 26 July 1917. Hoy died of wounds received in action at No 57 Casualty Clearing Station on 2 June 1918 whilst serving with the 4th Bn The Royal Scots in France as a Lieutenant. He is commemorated at Aubigny Communal Cemetery. Andrew was the son of Charles and Elizabeth Hoy of 10 East London Street, Edinburgh. With the plaque is a framed photograph of the Sergeants' Mess, 5th (Imperial Service) Bn The Royal Scots with all members being named which includes Lance Sergeant A Hoy third from the left in the second row.



Mr James Rogers is originally from Lancashire and, after studying at Liverpool University, joined the Army in 1987. He joined the Royal Artillery and subsequently transferred to the Australian Army in 2006, serving in the Royal Australian Army Education Corps. He is an avid military historian and medal collector and believes that medals and artefacts should be returned to families or regimental museums wherever possible. James is a member of The Royal Scots Club, having been attracted by the 'objects' of the Club as a living war memorial.

OBJECTS: The Club has been instituted:-

As a tribute to Royal Scots who fell in the Great War (1914-1919).

As a tribute to Royal Scots who fell in all other conflicts.

As a rallying place for all Royal Scots.

As a centre from which all schemes can be worked for the benefit of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) and such regiments of which The Royal Scots may in the future form part, including, without prejudice to the foregoing generality, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

To promote the heritage of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment).

Mr Ray (Halfchat) Thomson



The Camerons at Camerone

In April of 2023 and 2024 former Sergeant Neil Cameron visited his son Caporal Finn Cameron at Nîmes and Castelnaudary respectively. In 2024 they were joined by former Sergeant Stan Thornton. The visits allowed Neil Cameron to see his son parade for "Camerone Day" which is held by all units of the French Foreign Legion on the 30 April. The day commemorates the Battle of Camerone, which was fought on the 30 April 1863 at Camarone, Veracruz, Mexico.

Sixty five Legionnaires commanded by Captain Jean Danjou were attacked in the open by a force of approximately 3,000 Mexican Infantry and Cavalry. Forming a square, they repulsed an initial attack and conducted a fighting withdrawal to a nearby walled hacienda. Danjou refused more than one offer to surrender from the Mexican forces and made his men swear on his prosthetic wooden hand that they would fight to the death. Danjou was killed during the action but his men stayed true to their oath and fought on.

About 1800 Hrs, having fought since about 0700 Hrs, there were five Legionnaires including Lieutenant Maudet, Caporal Phillipe Maine and Fusilier Victor Catteau left standing. Out of ammunition, the five fixed bayonets and charged. Two were killed instantly and fusilier Catteau died throwing himself in front of Lt. Maudet. Surrounded once more they were called upon to surrender. Caporal Maine stated that they would do so only on the condition that they be allowed to keep their weapons and equipment and that Lt Maudet's wounds be treated. To which the Mexican commander agreed. (Source: Ryan, James W, 1996, Camerone, The French Foreign Legion's greatest battle, Westport: Praeger Publishers).

This action began the Legion's "Last round, last man" mystique and Captain Danjou's prosthetic hand is the modern Legion's most venerated object, being held in the museum at Aubagne. Every year on the anniversary of the battle it is paraded and carrying it is a signal honour to the Legionnaire selected.



Captain Danjou's prosthetic hand.



The famous Kepi Blanc.

Finn joined the French Foreign Legion at Fort de Nogent in Paris, in June 2019 where having passed the initial selection tests he was sent to the selection centre at Aubagne. That hurdle over louped (jumped over) Finn went to at Castelnaudary and completed his phase one training, including the infamous "Farm" (La Ferme). The Farm is a series of old farm buildings near Castelnaudary, which were commandeered by the French Army and used by the Legion for phase one tactical training. The training is infamous for being conducted under a regime of harsh physical and mental strain and it is the phase of basic training all recruits dread. It includes PT, basic infantry tactics, French language instruction and "Bull". It is here that the "Engage Volontaire" (Engaged Volunteer) learns to press his uniform and create locker layouts with beds made legion style (no bed blocks but equally difficult to achieve to the standards of the Caporaux - Corporals). In addition, there are route marches of increasing weight being carried and distance. If this was not enough, there are numerous songs to be learned including perhaps the most famous "Le Boudin". It is culminated by the Kepi Blanc March of 60 km conducted over two days on mountainous terrain carrying a bergen, webbing and weapon weighing 30 kg or 66 lbs. If passed the successful recruit has earned the right to wear the famous Kepi Blanc, but they still has a long way to go before being a fully trained Legionnaire.

Given the diverse nature of roles carried out by the Legion; Para troops, armoured cavalry (wheeled), engineers, armoured infantry (wheeled) along with others, phase two trade training is conducted by the various units and Finn volunteered for the 2e Regiment Etranger D'Infanterie or 2REI, (2nd Foreign Infantry Regiment), known to its soldiers phonetically as "Dooray".



Eric (Stan) Thornton (left) and Finn Cameron, Carcassonne 2024.

That completed he joined 3eme Compagnie, and whilst very much still a "Commando" or "Duck" in the Royals, he was at least no longer the lowest of the low. During his service, after a period as a rifleman/dismount in a VBMR Griffon, he qualified as a combat medic and was taught to drive.

Following a course at Castelnaudary he was promoted Caporal in October 2021. Most of his service was spent with 2REI but the last six months were back at Castelnaudary providing medical support to the recruits under training. He completed two tours of active duty, Op Sentinel (anti terrorist duties) in Marseilles and a tour of Djibouti. Wanting to see what else was on offer in the world he decided not to renew his contract and was honourably discharged at Aubagne in June 2024.



Caporal Cameron's final photograph as a Legionnaire in front of the "Monument aux morts de la Legion Etrangere" at Aubagne 2024.

Of the two parades witnessed, the author must state a preference for 2023 (sorry Stan). Nîmes was basking in Mediterranean sunshine. The parade being held on a Sunday allowed 2REI to extend the holiday over the weekend with the barracks being open to the public with displays of vehicles and equipment amongst other events. Following the parade there was a food stall manned by the Caporal Chefs, sporting events, Miss Kepi Blanc (first prize 500 euros and the eponymous kepi) and BEER.

I was particularly impressed by the weapons pod on the VBMR Griffon, a .50 calibre machine gun with times twenty magnification infrared and night sight capability, all at the touch of a thumb toggle providing elevation and deflection with ease. Having hand cranked the turret of a CVR(T) I was suitably impressed.



Finn (left) and Neil Cameron in front of the HQ building Castelnaudary 2024.



VBMR Griffon (Véhicule Blindé Multi-Rôle or Multirole Armoured Vehicle).



CVR(T) or Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked).



Finn Cameron in front of the 3eme Compagnie arms kote 2023.



Monument aux morts de la Legion Etrangere" at Aubagne.

French money and technology run amok (to paraphrase Dykes MacKinnon). In 2024 at Castelnaudary the weather was not so kind, being best described as "Drieich" and due to the parade being held on a Tuesday we missed the open day the following weekend, c'est la guerre.

Paternal pride (of which there is much) aside, it was fascinating to see another military unit close up and enjoy their pageantry and traditions. Having visited Nimes twice (first visit not on Camerone day) and Castelnaudary once I will have to find somewhere new for my foreign holiday next year now that Finn has joined the ranks of "Les Anciens" (The Elders).

Mr Neil Cameron

Regimental Day 28th March



Pikeman, Hepburn's Regiment, 1633

Today, 28 March, the Regimental Flag is flying at Edinburgh Castle to mark this day in 1633 when King Charles I granted a Royal Warrant to Sir John Hepburn to raise a regiment for service initially overseas but ultimately for Crown and Country.

The Regiment, initially known as Hepburn's Regiment, subsequently The Royal Regiment of Foot and The First Regiment of Foot and latterly The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment), served continuously and unamalgamated for 373 years until 28 March 2006, declaring allegiance to 17 Monarchs during that period, from King Charles I to Queen Elizabeth II. To mark this day, a message has been sent to the Patron of the Regimental Association, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal. This message are included below.

We are proud that our history and heritage is maintained and promoted by The Royal Scots Museum in the Castle, the Regimental Association, and The Royal Scots Club. Nemo me impune lacessit.



Message to HRH The Princess Royal

Regimental Day – 28th March

The President and all Members of the Royal Scots Regimental Association send their loyal greetings and best wishes to our Patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, on the occasion of the 392nd anniversary of the formation of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). Today the Regimental Flag is flying at Edinburgh Castle.

Message from HRH

"As Patron of The Royal Scots Regimental Association, I send my warm thanks and very best wishes to the President and all Members on the occasion of the 392nd Anniversary of the formation of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) at Edinburgh Castle on 28th March.

Anne".

Patron
The Royal Scots Regimental Association



CHELSEA
PENSIONERS



Part 1, Model Chelsea Pensioners

In mid 2024 I was contacted by Lt Col Brian de la Haye OBE asking me the ranks of the Royal Scot In-Pensioners and the medals they had. No indication of why, I would find out in due course. Well time ran its course and at Remembrance Sunday in the East India Club, Colonel Edward Cowan presented models of the 3 Pensioners, WO1 Victor Lucas, WO2 Danny Dempsey and CSgt Andy Kay. The models are on a plinth with the badge of the Regiment, Badge of the Royal Hospital, the RS staff cap badge and the coat of arms of Colonel Careless; the officer who helped Charles II escape after the Battle of Worcester and who is an antecedent of Colonel Cowan.



WO1 Victor Lucas



The 'Model' Pensioners



WO2 Danny Dempsey

To say we were surprised is understating this but we all really appreciated the gift. The figures are dressed formally in Scarlet coats and Tricornes with white gloves, as we would be dressed for parades such as Remembrance Day or whenever Royalty is present. These now have a spot specially in each of our berths.

IP Andy Kay

Part 2, Remembrance Day in Paris Les Invalides



The North front view of Les Invalides. Hardouin-Mansart's Dome, behind it, stands above Bruant's pedimented central block.

Each year the Royal British Legion (RBL) Paris Branch invites the Royal Hospital Chelsea to send two IPs and a Member of Staff to join them in their annual Remembrance Day Service and witness the French Armistice Day Parade. This year the IPs were Victor Lucas and Mike Thomas accompanied by Lt Col (Retd) DeDe Watts. Travel was by EuroStar train so early on Sunday 11 November 2024 the three set off for St Pancras Station and on to the very comfortable 2½ hour journey. Arriving at Gard du Nord in Paris we were met by representatives of the RBL and staff from the Defence Attaché's Office. Our first task was to join members of the Paris Branch go round Gard du Nord station, with an interpreter, selling Poppies. Many of the people there, of all nationalities, asked who we were and what we were selling the Poppies for. It was a privilege to explain who we were and the reasons for wearing the poppy.

From the station we were driven to Hotel des Invalides, better known as Les Invalides. This magnificent historical former palace in the centre of Paris is the building that Sir Christopher Wren chose to imitate when designing the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Though Les Invalides is much larger and has many more functions, including the French Army Museum, a Cathedral, national institute for disabled veterans and various offices, it caters for far less patients than our own beloved RHC. It is also the site of Napoleon Bonaparte's tomb. We were met by the Chef de Bataillon Major Yann Croizier, note not a cook! Shown to our rooms, these were somewhat similar to RHC but designed more as hospital rooms. We were very well looked after by the staff of Les Invalides.

The evening saw us with some free time and we went out to look around the area and just happened to find a nice bar to taste the local brew and have a well-earned meal.



I to r: The Prime Minister, IP's Mike Thomas and Vic Lucas

We were then whisked away back to Les Invalides for a lovely lunch with our hosts and two patients. It was very interesting discussing the many differences between our two organisations and they were surprised to hear that we are all veterans (Les Invalides patients are mostly still serving), we are all Army veterans (Les Invalides are tri service, police and emergency services), Les Invalides can cater for no more than 70 patients (we can house up to 310!).

Next was the RBL Service of Remembrance in the Cathédrale Saint-Louis-des-Invalides in the presence of the British Ambassador, Her Excellency Dame Menna Rawlings DCMG, CVO and then back to her residence for a reception. During this day we would attend the French Commemorations at, then lunch with senior staff and residents followed by the RBL Service in the Cathedral at Les Invalides. Once completed we moved to the British Embassy where we attended a drinks reception.

After a very long day, and a good night's sleep, we had breakfast (of sorts?) brought to our rooms in Les Invalides before being collected and driven back to Gard du Nord station for our return journey to London. We were thrilled to find out that the very kind UK Border Control team working in Paris had organised an upgrade to First Class so our return to UK was done in some style!

This trip is extremely worthwhile and meaningful and I would recommend this to any Chelsea Pensioner. We were hosted fantastically, met lots of new friends and you will get a lot from taking part in this and representing the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

IP Victor Lucas

Monday 12 November saw us up early and collected and driven to the British Ambassador's residence for breakfast. We were also fortunate to meet with our Prime Minister, The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP who was in Paris to mark the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of Paris, and the first time that a British Prime Minister has visited during the Armistice Day Parade since Sir Winston Churchill.

After breakfast we were driven to L'Arc de Triomphe to attend the televised Armistice Day Parade. We were honoured by being seated directly underneath the L'Arc alongside the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to witness the solemn laying of wreaths by Prime Minister Starmer and President Macron and a host of senior military, federal and civil dignitaries. We were also very fortunate to be seated alongside a contingent of patients from Les Invalides where Lt Col (Retd) DeDe Watts presented each of them, and their staff, with a poppy and a commemorative 2024 poppy pin. After the formalities of the service and parade we spoke to the Prime Minister a second time and then presented to President Emmanuelle Macron.



I to r: IP's Vic Lucas and Mike Thomas at L'Arc de Triomphe

Part 3, RHC Christmas Traditions

Ceremony of the Christmas Cheeses

On Wednesday 05 December 2024 the first of the year's Christmas festivities was the annual 'Ceremony of the Christmas Cheeses', where Cheesemakers from across the UK donate some of their finest products so there is 1 kilo of cheese for every In-Pensioner, some 330 kg of a variety of cheeses. This tradition is a unique and historical event dating back over 300 years. Originating from a local cheesemonger's gift to the 'Red Breasts of Chelsea,' this ceremony has been upheld with the support of Dairy UK since 1959. Part of the event is the ceremonial 'cutting of the cheese' where an IP is selected to cut the 24 kg Ceremonial Montgomery Cheddar cheese. This year the pensioner selected was Victor Lucas (a very busy person!). Commenting, Mr Vernon, the Chair of Dairy UK said: "As our trusted friends of many years, we're grateful to the Royal Hospital for their continued support of the Cheese Ceremony and their unwavering love of British cheese. My hope is that the veterans at the Royal Hospital deservedly enjoy these exceptional cheeses this Christmas season; whether melted in a sandwich, stirred into pasta, tucked into a pie, grated on a baked potato, or simply enjoyed in all their natural, unadulterated glory." As part of this continued tradition, In-Pensioners are also treated to vintage ale, donated by Asahi UK and Fuller's Griffin Brewery, who continue their long-standing support of this tradition. Entertaining the guests was fellow Chelsea Pensioner Roy Palmer with a poem giving tribute to the history of the event and giving thanks to the industry for its revival, alongside Faith Tucker, a classically trained singer and former Britain's Got Talent star.



I to r: The Hospital Governor General Sir Adrian Bradshaw KCB OBE DL, IP Victor Lucas and the Chair of Dairy UK Mr Paul Vernon.

The Stirring of the Christmas Pudding

Another tradition is 'The Stirring of the Christmas Pudding'. In-Pensioners and staff gather to add ingredients such as eggs, currants, apples, lots of alcohol (No smoking while eating the pudding!) and flour into a giant mixing bowl. The Chaplain then blesses these ingredients before they are mixed, and the pudding is later prepared in the Royal Hospital kitchen.



How catering hygiene has changed over the years.

If you would like to see how 'The Stirring of the Christmas Pudding' was done in 1939 then go to

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rw77b82ZqME> or scan the QR code.



An impressive mixture and a generous serving of brandy, sherry and port.



IP Andy Kay preparing to pour in beer and fruit.

IP Andy Kay

Not Forgotten. Paying Respects to Royals at the Basra Memorial and Cemetery and the Baghdad Cemetery

Being Defence Attaché Iraq, I have been given an unique opportunity to pay my respects to those Royals buried and remembered in Iraq. During my tour, I have managed to visit all 19 sites but two, one which is a lone grave in Karbala and the CWGC cemetery in Maysan Province.

My most recent visits were to the Basra and Baghdad memorial and cemeteries. The Basra Cemetery which is in the city of Basra itself and the Basra Memorial some 30 km West into the desert. Sadly, the Basra Cemetery gravestones are now missing.



Brig GC Wearmouth at the Basra Memorial site.



Brig GC Wearmouth standing by the names of Royal Scots remembered at the Basra Memorial.



Brig GC Wearmouth lays a wreath at the Basra Memorial.



Brig GC Wearmouth salutes the column after laying a wreath at the site of the Basra Cemetery. The missing gravestones should be where the empty wasteland is behind the column up to the building in the background.

During my Baghdad visit I found 3 graves of Royal Scots who are remembered in Baghdad's North Gate War Cemetery which is about 1 km East of the Sarafiya Bridge in Baghdad. They are not the only Royal Scots who were killed or died as part of the Mesopotamian Campaign and there are over 54000 war dead in the cemetery, the largest number in any country outside Europe.

Some graves were moved from other sites, including Sgt C Reid's (1st Bn) from 'Angora' which might be reference to Ankara. Apparently Ankara was called Angora by some until 1930. Reid's body is not with his gravestone and there are many other gravestones in the Baghdad North Gate War Cemetery which carry a similar marking, their remains elsewhere and now no longer known. Reid was from Nicholson Street, Edinburgh.

Sadly a high number of PoWs died in Anatolian camps after the fall of Kut in 1916. Conditions on the march into captivity were brutal as was the treatment handed out by some Ottomans and conditions in those camps was often dire. Of the c8000 British and Indian Army troops who were captured, the survival rates were comparatively very poor.



The entrance Baghdad's North Gate War Cemetery.



Inside Baghdad's North Gate War Cemetery.

It looks like Private J Lindsay (7th Bn) died on the march into captivity or in an Ottoman camp having been captured at Kut. Lindsay is buried in a part of the North Gate War Cemetery given over to those officers and men who suffered this fate. You will see on his gravestone that he is 'buried near this spot' as are all the many who are remembered in this part of the cemetery.

The final Royal I could find is Private T Rutherford, also buried in the 'Kut section'. Like Sgt Reid, recorded as 1st Bn.



Wreath laid on Sgt Reid's grave.



Pte Lindsay's head stone.



Brig GC Wearmouth laid a wreath on Pte Rutherford's grave.

Many regiments served in the Mesopotamian campaign including some 'Jock' regiments such as the Black Watch, Seaforth Highlanders and Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Although a Royal Scots battalion did not, a few Royals were attached to other units and Headquarters.

The general state of the CWGC sites in Iraq is variable. Some like Habbaniya and Kut are in pretty decent order. Others, like North Gate need a combination of improved security, some ground work and replacement stones (weather damage versus wilful destruction). Basra is in very poor state with all the gravestones now missing through a combination of wilful damage, weathering and nature of the soil. It is also suffering from land encroachment. As for Mosul, it was deliberately destroyed by The Islamic State (IS) and, having visited, now represents a symbolic opportunity (and one that is affordable now) for CWGC to restore. Until January 2025 the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel advice (TA) prevented CWGC from being here with anything more than local caretakers who are charged with tidiness, not full structural restoration. I hope that will start to change given the more nuanced TA now in place. There is certainly a motivated CWGC Area Director keen to get properly back into Iraq. Inevitably, each site will have to go on its own journey, and the scale of the challenge means that it will be an evolution, not immediate change. And while the security situation has improved, challenges remain. Elections in late 2025 are another waymark in the stability story of this wonderful country where we have a rich history, but also a modern, forward looking bilateral relationship.

Brigadier Graeme Wearmouth OBE

Memorial at Roslin

We reported in Vol 42 (Winter 2022) the rededication on 17 November 2022 of the grave of LCpl Brunton Smith, 8th Battalion The Royal Scots, who had been killed in action on 24 March 1918. Following that rededication service, his grandsons, Brunton Hunter and Malcolm Clague, decided that he should be remembered in his home town of Roslin. They assembled his medals, some other items and the Union Flag presented to the family on 17 November 2022 and created a framed display which was presented to the Roslin branch of Legion Scotland on 10 November 2024.



For further information on this article please scan the QR code or go to <https://www.legionscotland.org.uk/News/new-memorial-for-royal-scots-soldier-at-roslin>

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack



Photo – l to r: Angela Hunter, Brunton Hunter, Angela Hunter, Sandra Clague and Malcolm Clague.

Sighting Report - When, Where, Who and What they are doing?

Come on all, don't be forgotten. If you have a wee get together, a chance meeting or even a planned meeting with old Royals then send in a photo or two with a few lines of what you were up to for the "Sighting Report". Kindly send them to admin@theroyalscots.co.uk with the subject heading clearly marked as **SIGHTING REPORT – Possible Article**. Please use high resolution photographs where possible and don't forget to put the names of those in the photo.



Derek (Nolts) Notman (left) and Ray (Halfchat) Thomson.

Sighting Report – Tiso's Glasgow, Sniper Cadre Duo

Derek (Nolts) Notman and Ray (Halfchat) Thomson met up for a "fat boy" breakfast and a 3 hour blether on Thursday 13 February 2025. They remembered the time they were both on the Battalion Sniper Cadre in the Falkland Islands in 1984. They were based in Fox Bay for the theory side and then went to Blue Mountain for the practical side. Pure "Baltic". Nolts and Halfchat normally meet up every 6 months or so for a wee catch up. Next time they meet, they will put a notice on the RS website just in case anyone wants to join us.

Sighting Report - The Scotsman Lounge Gathering

A wee Royal Scots family gathered today, Saturday 2 November 2024, at The Scotsman Lounge in Edinburgh to meet up with Debz McGowan. Debz worked in the NAAFI in Werl Germany 1988 and married Jimmy Bennett in 1989. Sadly, Jimmy passed away 7 September 2018. A few handsome faces turned out to meet Debz who said she was really scared, nervous and excited all rolled into one. She travelled all the way from Cornwall by train and was met by Bas Brash. Debz has bumped into a few Royals since leaving Inverness in 1993 and even tried to make a reunion but COVID scuttled her travel plans. Grant McCulloch also turned up but not in the photos.



The Scotsman Lounge Edinburgh. l to r: Raymy Myles, Mick McCann, Debz McGowan, Bas Brash, Ross Stanley. Unknown person front centre, he just appeared.



Kev Scoobie Keane and Debz McGowan outside The Scotsman.



The Scotsman Lounge. l to r: Kev Scoobie Keane, John Gunnand Ian Black.



The Scotsman Lounge. l to r: Mick McCann (sleeping), Ian Scott Malvenan, Ross Stanley (hat on), Debz McGowan and Bas Brash. Unknown person front centre, he just appeared.

Sighting Report - Ratho Park Golf Club Gathering

A group of passionate golfers got together on 21 December 2024 at Ratho Park Golf Club, Edinburgh. They say it was just a Christmas round but we all know they are getting in some needed practice to try and secure the top dog position at the next Stewart Snedden Memorial Golf on 30 May 2025.



l to r; Mark Renton, Stu Simpson, Jimmy Gunn (on tip toes), Eck Wind, Spike Mulligan, Larry Gilbert and John Lothian.

The Royal Scots Regimental Trust Volunteers Lunch

35 of the Trusts many volunteers gathered at The Royal Scots Club on Wednesday 11 December 2024 for the annual Royal Scots Regimental Trust Volunteers Lunch. George Lowder started the afternoon off with a few words of thanks and



recognising the important and valuable work the volunteers do for the Trust, after which a fantastic variety of tasty fare, including the traditional Christmas dinner, was then served.



Many of the volunteers were 'auld Royals', with some of them meeting up for the first time in 31 years. It is true to say, many a sandbag was deployed and many a tilley lamp was swung in different directions, as the banter started to fly.



Another important group of volunteers are those working with Sophie Lenihan (Museum Curator) up in the Castle doing a variety of vital work that Sophie would never find the time to complete. Volunteers are heavily involved in the digitisation of the many documents and photographs from the massive archive held in the Castle.



Sophie is in need of volunteers to help scan photographs and documents to help build a digital and online record. This task will have to be worked on at the Museum Office in the Castle. Free parking on the Esplanade can be arranged if required.

If you can spare some time and can come to the Castle then please contact Regimental Office on 0131 557 0405 or admin@theroyalscots.co.uk

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack

Dandy Ninth Memorabilia

The photograph below is of the Crichton family; Mr Alec Crichton and his seven sons, all of whom served in 9 RS in WW1.

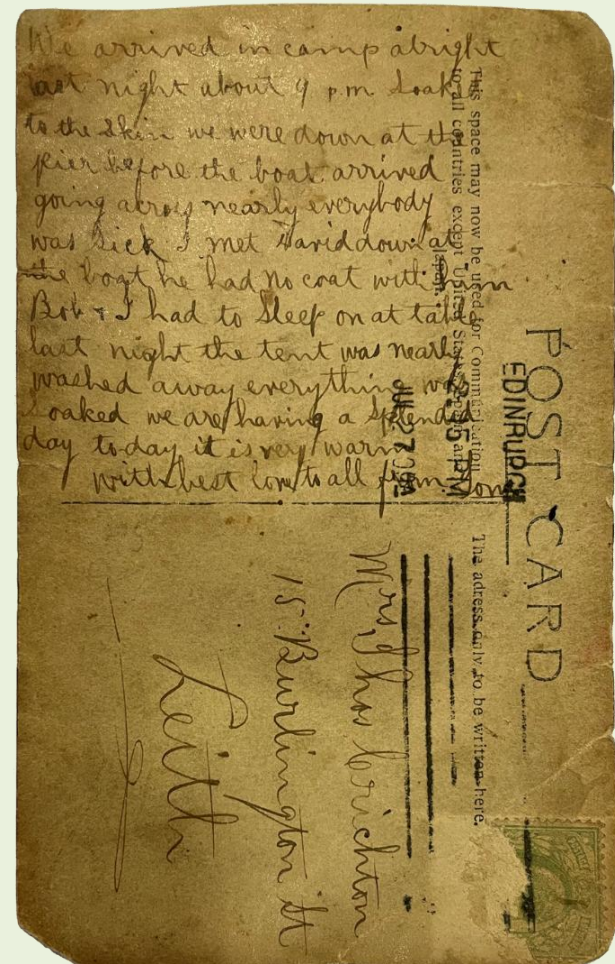


l to r: James, Thomas, William, Robert, Alec, Sandie, John and David.

The photograph given to Mary Watt, daughter of Thomas, who was killed on 14 March 1915 and is commemorated on the Menin Gate in Ypres. Mary was the grandmother of the wife of Michael Connolly, who served with 1 RS Regimental Band 1960 – 1967.



Front of postcard sent to Mrs Crichton. Men of 9 RS.



Back of postcard sent to Mrs Crichton.



Relatives at the screening of the film in the RS Club.

Film

The film *The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru* has been many years in the making and we were fortunate to be able to hold a preview in The Royal Scots Club on 19 August 2023 and a report was published in *The Thistle* Summer 2023 Vol 43. Following reviews, the producer, Fang Li, made some minor changes to the film and completed it.

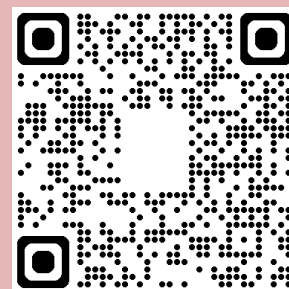
The world premiere of film was the opening feature on 14 June 2024 at the Shanghai International Film Festival and it received wide acclaim. It has taken some time, however, for Fang Li to secure a premiere and general release in the UK. Nevertheless, his performance has finally borne fruit and the UK premiere was held in the Regent Street Cinema, London on 17 March 2025. It was well attended and The Royal Scots Regimental Trust was represented by Monty and Susanna Stuart-Monteith.

We had the privilege of being offered the opportunity to screen the film to raise funds for charity in advance of the UK premiere. 121 people attended this event in The Royal Scots Club on 27 February 2025, many of whom were relatives of victims and survivors of the tragedy. A total of £1,218 was raised for the Lisbon Maru Memorial Association (LiMMA).

Association

The Lisbon Maru Memorial Association is now well established. Details on background, purposes of the Association and how to join can be found on the LiMMA website at <https://www.lisbonmaru.org.uk/page/Limma> or scan the QR Code.

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack



Lisbon Maru - The Unveiling of the Memorial in Zhoushan

Mr Dennis Morley (2 RS) was the last survivor of the sinking of the Lisbon Maru. He died peacefully in 2021 at the age of 101. After the Lisbon Maru sank, he was picked up by a Japanese naval ship, but he has always been very clear that he owes his survival to the Chinese fishermen of Zhoushan. In rescuing 384 British prisoners of war their intervention also caused the Japanese Army to abandon their policy of slaughtering the men in the water and instead to start picking up survivors. He said of these brave fishermen; "They don't know it, but they saved a hell of a lot more lives than they thought they saved". After Dennis died, his daughter, Mrs Denise Wynne, wrote to President Xi Jinping of China explaining that her father's dying wish was for a memorial to be erected in China to honour the courage of the Zhoushan fishermen. In August 2022 the Chinese Ambassador in London, Zheng Zeguang, travelled to Mrs Wynne's home in the West Country to hand over in person President Xi's reply, which said that a suitable memorial would be built.



The unveiling of the memorial at the site of the rescue in East China's Zhejiang province. Photo unknown.

On Thursday 6 December 2024 this memorial dedicated to Chinese fishermen who saved hundreds of British prisoners of war (POWs) during the Lisbon Maru incident 82 years ago was unveiled in a local ceremony at the site of the rescue in East China's Zhejiang Province. Designed and made by the China Academy of Art the memorial is a thoughtful and sensitive work, honouring the courage of the Zhoushan fishermen and stressing the importance of friendship between Chinese and British people. The memorial measures 4.5 meters in length, 1.8 meters in height and 1.7 meters in width. It weighs approximately 1 tonne and is made of naval bronze. On the left side of the memorial, inscriptions in both Chinese and English read, "Memorial for Dongji Fishermen's Rescue of British Prisoners of War," and, "Love knows no boundary; Friendship transcends time," alongside a detailed account of the event. To the right of the tributes is a depiction of the arms of the rescuer and the rescued, and the background is frozen at the moment when the wind roared and the waves howled, before the fishermen pulled the drowning people out of the sea.



The memorial dedicated to the bravery of the Chinese fishermen. Photo Xinhua.

Time goes back to the first scene described in the monument - in 1942, local fishermen bravely rescued British prisoners of war from the "Lisbon Maru" on Qingbang Island. This touching deed has become a historical story that forged a deep friendship between the peoples of China and Britain. Today, the rescuers are no longer alive, but their descendants are still telling this history.

"I hope more people learn about this chapter of history and remember those who made sacrifices for peace," said Wu Buwei, a descendant of one of the heroic fishermen.

"My grandfather said that he pulled three people out of the sea and took them home first. Later, when the Japanese Army came to search, they had no choice but to hide the people in the Children's Cave at the northern end of Nandiwan on Qingbang Island. My aunt sent them clothes and food for several days." said Weng Maoliang, a descendant of the rescuer.

On that day, Chen Ruiju, a 69-year-old descendant of the rescuers, recreated the historical moment she had heard from her elders: "Arms linked together for strength. My father and father-in-law pulled them from the sea onto the boat, onto the shore, and then back home in this way."

After the dedication ceremony, the crowd dispersed. Many descendants of the rescuers touched the carved arm on the monument and read the Chinese characters on it: "On 1 October 1942, the Japanese vessel Lisbon Maru carrying more than 1800 British prisoners of war was torpedoed off the Dongji Islands. On the following day, local fishermen risked their lives to save 384 British prisoners from the raging sea. May the friendship forged between the Chinese and British people is the fight against fascism shine forever."

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Following this local ceremony there is to be a formal unveiling ceremony in 2025 which will be the official inauguration of the memorial.

Major Brian Finch
Late Middlesex Regiment



Denise Wynn revealed her emotions about a Chinese memorial finally being built in honour of her father and other British POWs. Photo CCTV.

For further information visit the websites below by clicking on the the links or scanning the QR Codes.

<https://www.chinanews.com.cn/gn/2024/12-05/10331449.shtml>

<https://www.itv.com/news/2024-12-13/how-a-chinese-filmmaker-brought-a-forgotten-british-wwii-tragedy-back-to-life>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHdzJm9bm0>



Remembering the tragic loss of Corporal William Bell and Private Richard Cummings 30 years on

It was on the 22 November 1994 that Corporal William Bell and Private Richard Cummings lost their lives in a road accident. They had completed the first part of the Battalion exercise in Otterburn and were en route to the second phase that was scheduled to take place on the Isle of Skye when the Land Rover in which they were travelling was involved in a head-on collision with a lorry on the A9 just south of Dalwhinnie. Tragically both were killed instantly. Maj Guy Richardson had been their company commander at time and suggested that a small memorial service should be held to mark the 30th anniversary. A memorial cairn had been dedicated in August 1995, but it is difficult to locate and this service provided an opportunity to check the cairn and record its location and notes on how to find it.

A small group gathered at the cairn at 1300 on Fri 22 November 2024 to remember William Bell and Richard Cummings. It was a cold day with snow covering the area, but there was some sunshine. Once the area had been cleared of undergrowth and some snow, a short service was conducted by Rev Dr David Coulter, who had been the Battalion Padre at the time of the accident and who had conducted the dedication in 1995. Although the cairn is very close to the A9, it is below the level of the road and the view to the west was stunning and provided a suitable place to reflect on the lives of William and Richard. After the service the group retired to the cafe at the Dalwhinnie distillery for coffee and a wee dram to toast absent friends.

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack



The memorial was in need of some TLC.



A wreath and cross were laid at the memorial.



Guy Richardson (left) and Rev Dr David Coulter at the memorial.

Location and directions to the memorial.

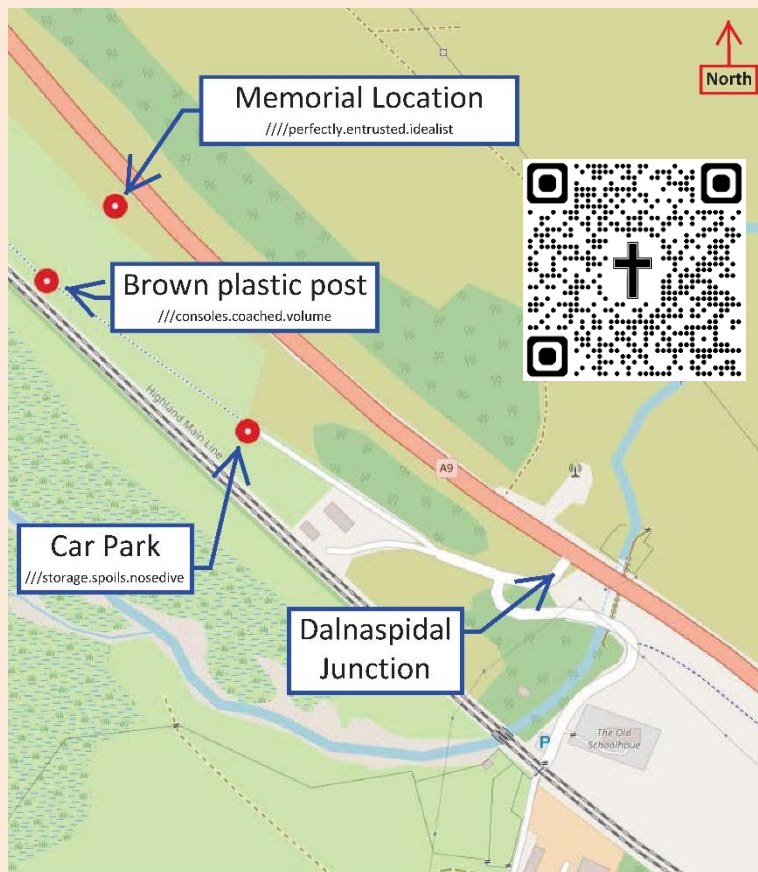
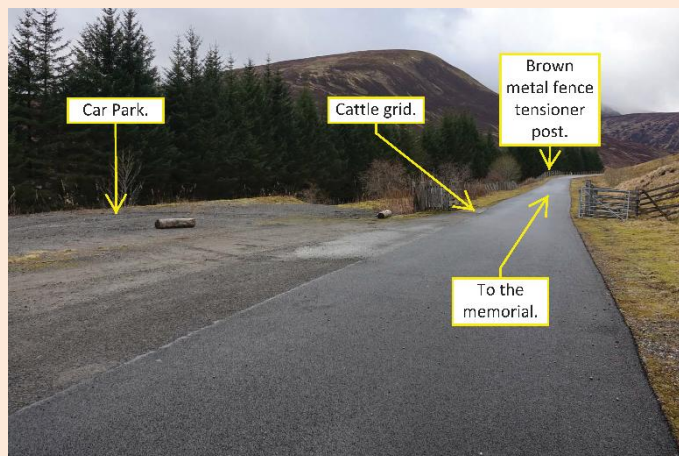
The memorial is located by Dalnaspidal just off the A9 which is about 30 miles north of Pitlochry and 34 miles south of Aviemore.

If you wish to visit the memorial cairn please **DO NOT** try to park on the A9 or approach the memorial on foot along the A9. This is far too dangerous.

When you have turned off the A9 at the Dalnaspidal junction take **all** the roads/tracks to the right which is the National Cycle Route 7. You will pass a house on your left and just before a cattle grid/fence line you will see a car park on your left.

Car park location on what3words is - [///storage.spoils.nosedive](https://www.what3words.com/storage.spoils.nosedive). Copy the link below or scan the QR code on the map to the right.

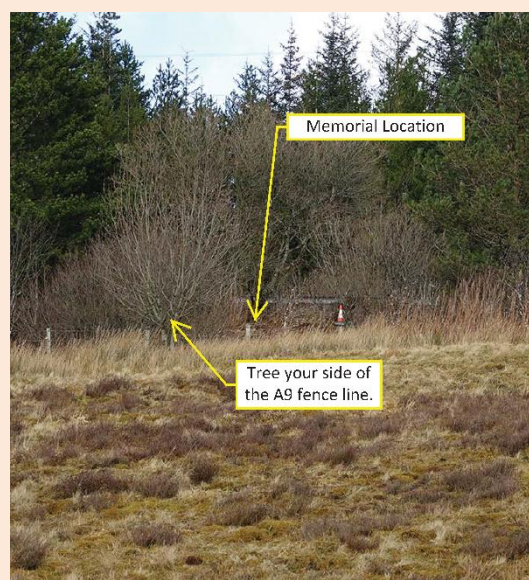
<https://www.what3words.com/storage.spoils.nosedive>



Once you have parked up, head over the cattle grid and follow the track down about 200m. Before the track bends to the right, you will see on the fence line to your left a brown metal fence tensioner post about 1 metre high next to one of the wooden fence posts. 5 fence posts after that you will see a brown ½ metre high brown plastic post (**Brown Post location** - [///consoles.coached.volume](https://www.what3words.com/consoles.coached.volume)), again next to a wooden fence post. This is where you need to turn right 90 degrees and head up the hill to the A9 fence line. Please note the ground can be boggy and very uneven underfoot.

Note; You have gone too far along the track if you come across a 1½ metre high white(ish) post with a cycling sign on it saying, "you can do it".

When you look up to the top of the hill to your right, you will see a small tree on your side of the A9 fence line. The memorial is just to the right of that tree and over the fence. (**Memorial location** - [///perfectly.entrusted.idealst](https://www.what3words.com/perfectly.entrusted.idealst)). Someone has put a cone on the fence just to the right of the memorial but I don't think that will be there for long before someone takes and shouts, "join the Scotto".



Visit to the Nederweert CWGC Cemetery November 2024

In order to commemorate the 20 soldiers from 8 Battalion The Royal Scots who were killed between late 1944 and early 1945 and now rest in the Nederweert Cemetery, the nephews of one of the soldiers, Pte Douglas Alexander Langham, visited the cemetery in order to honour all the soldiers interred there. This year the organisers invited the daughter of LCpl Eric Harden VC, a medic attached to 45 Cdo RM, who is also interred here, to be the guest of honour. She made a beautiful speech saying how all the men buried here left loving homes hoping to get back; they didn't but now they have a new home here in Nederweert where she knows that they are both loved and honoured by the citizens of Nederweert.

The event, and similar occasions throughout the year, are organised by the Adoption Graves Foundation of the Nederweert War Cemetery, which is approved and supported by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. At the centre of the Foundation's work is the recognition of the sacrifice made by those allied servicemen who fought "for the liberation of the region around the municipality of Nederweert from September 1944 to February 1945". People around the municipality of Nederweert are encouraged to adopt the war grave of a Commonwealth serviceman buried in the local British Military Cemetery and all of the graves have been adopted.

The 20 fallen heroes from the Royal Scots, all from the 8th Battalion, who are interred at the cemetery have each been "adopted" by a local citizen. This year each of these soldiers was remembered by the placing of crosses, with the regimental badge attached, over the poppy, on their grave by Les and Douglas Langham (the latter was named after his uncle). The adopters and the committee also added a photo (where possible) along with a Union Flag to each grave of the 363 soldiers, marines or airmen buried at the cemetery.



The nephews of Pte Douglas Alexander Langham laid a wreath from the Regimental Association on the Cenotaph on behalf the Regiment.



A line of thirteen 8 RS Graves. (l to r): Pte's DA Langham, J Lamarra, AB Harkness, JW Hodkin, EW Dadswell, MP Attwood, R Browne, T Gamsby, SA Lines, R Ridley, W Stewart, A Chetham and LCpl S Anderson.

As well as the line of thirteen graves there are also seven other individual graves on the site. They are: Capt FMW Edie, Lt TE Hugo, Pte's P Moran, CCF Potter, AS Smith, CP Claydon and A Hope.

Captain Doug Langham Late Intelligence Corps



The grave of Pte's Douglas Alexander Langham (left) who was killed and buried alongside his mate, John Lamarra (right) on the 2nd November 1944.

The Royal Scots Regimental Trust SCIO

The process of governance streamlining has taken a number of years, but is now complete. The Royal Scots Regimental Trust SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) is a new charity, registered as a charity in Scotland with the registration number SC052009, and incorporates three of our Regimental Pillars – Benevolence & Welfare, Museum & Heritage, and the Association. There is one set of Trustees for the Trust and each Trustee has specific responsibilities. The Museum & Heritage functions are directed by the Museum & Heritage Committee, while the Association retains the Office Bearers; all of whom report to the Trustees.

Trustees

Brig George Lowder MBE	Chair
Maj Gen Bob Bruce CBE DSO	Vice Chair
Maj Norman Soutar MC	Club
Lt Col John Donovan MBE	Museum, Benevolence
Capt Alex Dockar	Finance
Capt Nick Edwardson	Communications
Maj Stu Marshall	Association
Mrs Jandy Stevenson	Governance
Mr Keith Oliver OBE WS	Legal
Mr Allan Carswell	Museum

Museum & Heritage Committee

Lt Col John Donovan MBE	Chair
Brig George Lowder MBE	
Col Martin Gibson OBE DL	
Lt Col Gordon Rae	
Mr Allan Carswell	
Lt Col David Goodacre OBE	Treasurer
Mrs Cathy Tucker	
Lt Col David Jack	Secretary

Regimental Association

Brig George Lowder MBE	President
Maj Stu Marshall	Chair
Mr Paul Robertson	Vice Chair
Mr David Milne	Secretary
Mr Jamie Colquhoun	Treasurer

Deaths

Mr Terry Douglas	28 Sep 2024 1 RS
Mr Brian McCann	21 Oct 2024 1 RS
Mr Allan Hunter	21 Oct 2024 1 RS
Sir John William Frederic Nott KCB	06 Nov 2024 1 RS
Mr Eric Edwards	21 Nov 2024 8 RS
Mr George (Chick) Clyde	01 Dec 2024 1 RS
Maj Steve Simson	14 Dec 2024 1 RS
Mr Joseph (Joe) Burt Hunter Nicol	18 Dec 2024 1 RS

Mr Robert (Rob) Rutherford Hunter	25 Dec 2024 1 RS
Mr William Vernon	30 Dec 2024 1 RS
Mr Andy Fitzpatrick	14 Jan 2025 1 RS
Mr Barry Doull	25 Jan 2025 1 RS
Mr Jade Hastie	27 Jan 2025 1 RS
Maj Tam Buchanan	23 Feb 2025 1 RS
Maj Robin Somervell Salvesen	10 Mar 2025 7/9 RS
Mr Dougie Gunn	20 Mar 2025 1 RS
Mr Patrick Inglis	25 Mar 2025 1 RS

Gordon Campbell, towering figure in the world of Scottish and Breton piping

Published in the Scotsman, 21 January 2025.

Lieutenant PM Gordon Campbell, piper, composer and bagpipe instructor. Born: 20 May 1957 in Leith. Died: 1 January 2025, aged 67.

Gordon Campbell, a towering figure in the world of Scottish and Breton piping, passed away peacefully on New Year's Day, leaving behind a rich legacy of music, teaching, and cultural exchange.

Born in Leith in 1957 and raised in Hamilton, Gordon came from a long family line of Scottish bagpipers. Piping was in his blood, and he was to dedicate his whole life to its music and to helping hundreds of young people find their way within the art form. And all who met him will testify to the fact that everything he did was laced with humour, fun and cutting wit: when Gordon was around, the craic was mighty!

On graduating from the University of Aberdeen, Gordon worked briefly in Pitlochry and joined the local pipe band there. The Vale of Atholl, led by his friend and fellow Aberdeen graduate, Ian Duncan, was rising rapidly through the competition grades at the time. Gordon played a key role in helping the Vale establish itself as one of the top three bands in the world, becoming both Scottish and European champions in the mid-1980s.

And pipe bands remained one of his great passions thereafter: he served as pipe major of a number of bands through his career, including the Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt OTC, the 2/52 Lowland and 71 Royal Engineers TA Regiment, the Links of Forth, the City of Edinburgh Schools Pipe Band, and of course, the legendary Scottish Gas Caledonian Pipe band.



Gordon taught hundreds of bagpipe players in Scotland and abroad. Here he is playing at Murrayfield Stadium in 2004.



Gordon as a 2Lt with the CCF.

Following a spell in the Civil Service, Gordon decided to take the plunge into full-time teaching and so began many years of dedicated service to music education across Edinburgh and the surrounding area. At Fettes College in the early 1980s, at Glenalmond College, as Master of Piping and Drumming at Merchiston Castle School and lieutenant in the Combined Cadet Forces for over 30 years, Gordon established the reputation of now well-known schools' and youth pipe bands.

He mentored countless students, many of whom have carried his teachings around the globe. His philosophy was simple yet highly effective: provide a thorough grounding in the basics, demand precision and discipline in their technique, encourage them to open their ears to many forms of traditional music, then once he felt they were ready, allow them to search for their own path. Even through his final illness, his passion for passing it all on remained undiminished: he was still teaching his chanter students at St. Mary's School Melrose, in the Scottish Borders, just a month before his passing.

Early in his adult life, Gordon discovered the music, culture and people of Brittany – and they discovered him! He made many lifelong friends there amongst the key figures of Breton music, such as Erwan Ropars. That other Celtic nation not only became his second home but also his family, through his marriage with Aude and their three Breton-Scottish children.

Like Scotland, Brittany has a rich and proud piping heritage, including its own unique form of "pipe band", the Bagad. The Breton approach to music is adventurous, energetic and fun-filled, rooted in the nation's dance traditions, and Gordon fell in love with it immediately. He forged deep and lasting connections with many bagadou, including Guingamp, Quimper, St Malo and Auray, and mentored several renowned Breton musicians such as Ronan Le Bars.

Always keen to share his love of both cultures, he led his Scottish students on visits to the major Celtic gatherings in the likes of the Interceltic Festival in Lorient and the Festival de Cornouaille in Quimper. Indeed, he was a proud ambassador for piping and traditional music of all kinds, and represented Scotland at events as far apart as Russia, Canada and Indonesia.

Gordon was also a composer of over a hundred pipe tunes, which are currently being catalogued by his friend and fellow piper, Allan MacDonald. A full publication would be a fitting tribute to his legacy, and would allow pipers the world over to hear and play his tunes, and to share in a little of his humour when perusing their titles – look out for "The Bee in the Knickers"!

Beyond music, Gordon was never short of an enthusiastically shared opinion on all manner of topics, politics chief among them. He loved to debate long into the night, arguing with his florid language and deep voice, quietly smoking his legendary pipe.

As a lifelong and passionate supporter of Scottish independence, he was deeply disappointed at the result of the referendum in 2014, yet optimistic about the future direction his nation might take in that regard. And disappointment followed him in other ways, too – he was a lifelong supporter of Heart of Midlothian Football Club! His favourite team in Brittany, Guingamp, perhaps brought him a little more cheer!

Gordon Campbell made friends wherever he went, and his unrelenting commitment to teaching allowed hundreds of others to make his musical passion theirs too. He will be deeply missed and fondly remembered as a rigorous teacher, a generous mentor, and a vibrant force in the piping world. Passed away too early, Gordon is survived by his Scottish and Breton families, by his wife, Aude, by his dear children, and of course by the many students and friends who will perpetuate his legacy by sharing his melodies, his life ethos and his jokes.

A memorial service and funeral was held at the Borders Crematorium in Melrose on Friday 24 January at 4pm, followed by a celebration of his life at the Royal British Legion in Galashiels.

Gary West

After note: Gordon was also one of the founding and active members of the Royal Scots Association Pipe Band back in the late 1990's / early 2000's.

Stevie Simson

Stevie Simson was a great soldier, a truly loyal Royal and a very good friend to all of us.

My first recollection of him was very soon after joining 1 RS in Osnabruck in 1969 while Stevie was RSM. We met on a corner of the square in Mercer Barracks and he greeted me with a salute and a handshake, and made me feel most welcome. Quite soon after that, he joined Bob Richardson, then CO and others in the recce party for the very first Northern Ireland tour, and briefed the Battalion on what to expect once we eventually deployed there. On the day that we all paraded to replace the temporary Lowland Brigade badges in our Glengarries with our own very special Royal Scots badges, I remember feeling very proud. With so much more Royal Scots service, I couldn't begin to imagine just how much more proud Stevie must have been.

The years passed and our paths crossed at intervals, including in Belize while Stevie was QM to 1 RHF while I too was deployed there. Stevie was always very encouraging to me – it was something about the Airborne fraternity. We next served together in 1 RS in Ballykinler. As QM, Stevie had all aspects of administration totally buttoned-up by nine o'clock every morning, whereafter he would be at the swimming pool, teaching young soldiers to swim. In this role, he would often be seen wearing an APTC track suit top, P Company style, with his Parachute Regiment wings on the sleeve and those of the other armies' airborne forces with which he had qualified.

On the Battalion's return to Kirknewton, Stevie inadvertently set me on a path to Buckingham Palace. The Adjutant General of the day, ultimately in charge of career development, visited and Patrick Cardwell Moore, then commanding, told me that he would introduce me with a view to getting me "a top flight Grade 2 staff appointment". The officers dully assembled to await the great man's arrival. He was running late and Stevie commented to me that someone needs to tell the general as much. Thinking nothing of it, I said to Stevie, "Tell him yourself then!" The general arrived, Patrick introduced him to Stevie and to me, whereupon Stevie duly told the general in no uncertain terms, following up with, "He put me up to it", pointing at me. Thus ended Patrick's mainstream staff appointment scheme and I carried on happily commanding C Company. A few weeks later, I got a phone call from HQDSF, "We've got a wee job for you" Well, it wasn't wee; it wasn't mainstream; it didn't involve much staff work; and I must have done it OK because Stevie's admonishment of the Adjutant General's timekeeping ended up with an appointment with The Queen.

The last time I was on parade with Stevie, many years after the parade in Osnabruck when we were returned our cap badges, was on Armed Forces Day a few years ago. The RS Association had paraded at the Right of the Line in Charlotte Square to march along George Street to St Andrew Square. Stevie and Christel were already in the gardens there, where Stevie saluted us as the Association marched in. It was a moment that all of us on parade that day will always remember, along with his invariable exhortation, "Once a Royal, always a Royal!"

Jim Blythe



Stevie and Christel Simson at Armed Forces Day 2022.

Allan (William Allan) Hunter

Allan Hunter was born 24 December 1962 in Glasgow and educated at Chryston High School.

Before joining the Army, Allan worked for the Black and White distillery at the Stepps in Glasgow and as a retained firefighter.

He signed up and started his training at Glencorse in March 1984. In October 1984 he joined 1 RS in Kirknewton and was posted to A Coy. The Battalion at the time were very busy training for their new Mechanised Role in Werl, Germany.

Allan served in Werl, Belfast 1988, Glencorse as a Trg Cpl 1990/2 and South Armagh 1992/3. In June 1985 he married Gwen. In 1994 Allan left the Army to pursue a career in retail management but had to retire in 2024 due to illness. Sadly Allan passed away on 21 October 2024 in a Marie Curie Hospice. He still had his large cheeky beaming smile right to the end.

Allan was never much of a sportsman but did enjoy cycling when he left the Army.

Allan is survived by Gwen, daughter Stacey and son David, and two grandchildren Calum and Lucy.

Mr Derek Notman



Allan with Mr Bean.

Robin Salvesen, senior executive at Christian Salvesen, shipping industrialist who was devoted to public service and family. Born 4 May 1935 in Edinburgh. Died 10 March 2025 in Haddington.

Robin Salvesen, who has died at the age of 89, was a shipping industrialist and fourth-generation scion of the Scots-Norwegian Christian Salvesen family business. A quietly spoken, courteous man, he was Vice Lord Lieutenant of East Lothian, a kirk elder, a Territorial Army major with the Royal Scots, a Conservative local councillor, a keen market gardener and a record 82-prize-winning bowman with The Royal Company of Archers, the monarch's bodyguard in Scotland.

For 25 years he was Consul General for Denmark in Edinburgh and Leith, for which he was created Knight First Class of the Order of the Dannebrog (the Danish flag). Other awards include the Scouting Silver Acorn and being named a 'Pillar of Leith' alongside businessman Sir Tom Farmer and Hibs legend Pat Stanton.

Salvesen was the father of seven children and 19 grandchildren. His dedication to public service, shared with his wife Sari, saw them entertain a hugely diverse mix of contacts at Eaglescairn, the family home near Haddington.



Robin Salvesen was a member of The Royal Company of Archers and a 'Pillar of Leith'.

An engineer by training, Salvesen held several senior executive and board positions in Christian Salvesen, the Leith-based firm founded in 1872 by his Norwegian great-grandfather Salve Christian Frederik Salvesen. Originally shipbrokers, the firm switched focus to become the world's largest whaling business. From 1909 to 1963, it made its fortune in Antarctic waters from a base at Leith Harbour on South Georgia, 800 miles south-east of the Falklands.

The mainstay of Salvesen's career was his leadership of Christian Salvesen's marine division, latterly focused on UK coastal transport. His knowledge, experience, and interpersonal skills found many outlets: negotiating the dockers' disputes of the 1970s and 80s, helping adapt the fleet for the North Sea oil industry and helping pioneer company shipbuilding at the Sumitomo yard near Tokyo. During Salvesen's career, much of it under the leadership of his cousin Max Harper Gow, Christian Salvesen became one of the largest family-owned businesses in the UK before floating on the stock exchange in 1985. The firm innovated aggressively, especially in cold storage, power generation and logistics. For decades, its giant white lorries seemed ubiquitous on roads across Britain and Europe. In 2007, the name disappeared following a merger with a French rival.

Outside the business, from which he retired as a non-executive director in 2002, Salvesen held many positions related to seafaring, including the General Council of British Shipping, Lloyds Register of Shipping, the Glasgow College of Nautical Studies and the Lights Advisory Committee, which deals with lighthouses and navigation buoys.

Robin Salvesen was born in Edinburgh in 1935 and brought up in Bonnington House near Kirknewton, now the home of Jupiter Artland. He was educated at Cargilfield and Fettes, where he played in an undefeated rugby first XV. He served in the 5th Battalion Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment during National Service. His posting was to Ibadan, 75 miles north-east of Lagos. Among his trials in this hot and mosquito-ridden posting was overseeing the transfer of his company from Lagos back to barracks on bumpy roads in three-ton trucks full of soldiers, wives, children, cockerels and other livestock. In 1956, he went up to University College, Oxford, where he met Sari (née Clarke). The open house offered to students at Oxford's Iona Society by Rev Raymond Bailey and his wife Mary inspired their own approach. Their son-in-law, the Rev Keith Ross, holds up their ecumenical partnership as an inspiration to practically minded Christians.

In his 2003 memoir *Ship's Husband*, Salvesen describes how, when he joined in 1959, he had to learn the business from the bottom up. He was dispatched as an engineer on six-month trading voyages. The first was on the giant whaling factory ship *Southern Venturer* en route from Norway to South Georgia. It was an arduous but exciting apprenticeship in icy, gale-tossed waters amid oil, whale blood and blubber. On one occasion, the engines were stilled while the ship's surgeon successfully removed a speck of metal from his eye with an improvised instrument. Otherwise, the family name afforded him no special privileges. One often-told story has it that, introducing himself to the foreman: "I'm Robin Salvesen," got the answer, "Aren't we all. Now what's your name?"

Over 60 years at Eaglescairn, the Salvesens welcomed Territorial Army training camps, Training for Ministry weekends, overseas business colleagues, scout groups, church groups and teenage reel parties, where Sgt Ash of the TA policed the drinks table.

In later life, he was an active elder at St Mary's, Haddington, valuing his visits to the 15-30 homes of his 'district'. Other good causes included King George's Fund for Sailors (now Seafarers UK), the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland and contributing to improved conditions at Scots Veteran Residences. An honour guard of the High Constables of Leith attended his funeral.

Salvesen loved to be outside, whether in the market garden, at archery matches, shooting, walking the dog, fishing, family croquet, tennis, golf or playing with the children. In his final years, he enjoyed sitting in the sun watching the cows in the field, birds passing and trees swaying in the breeze.

Robin Salvesen is survived by Sari, his four daughters and two sons. His youngest son Iver died in 2016, aged 47, of heart failure while carrying out voluntary work in Tanzania. His younger brother Alastair, also a prominent Scots businessman and generous philanthropist, predeceased him by three months.

Colin Donald

Donations and Legacies

Until 2006 the Regiment received a relatively healthy income, mainly from the One Day's Pay Scheme, to which the majority of officers and soldiers contributed, and had limited expenses as the Regimental Headquarters was funded by the MoD. Since then the balance has shifted; there is additional expenditure in maintaining a Regimental Office and income is greatly diminished and will reduce further in 2030 when MoD ceases the provision of funding for the Museum Curator. While sufficient funds exist to support Benevolence and Association activity in the short to medium term, and this activity is expected to diminish over time, securing the display of the Regimental Collection as part of The Royal Scots enduring legacy will require funds that currently exceed those held by the Regiment. Donations to the Regimental Trust to support Benevolence, Heritage or Association activities are always greatly appreciated. Donations can be made monthly or annually by standing order or as single donations. Legacies from wills will also be greatly appreciated.

With the creation of a new charity as part of our governance streamlining process we now have new bank accounts. Further details can be obtained from the Regimental Office on 0131 557 0405 or admin@theroyalscots.co.uk

Readers articles invitation – “Jock”anory

We would like to invite you, “The Royal Scots Family”, to submit articles to your journal, The Thistle. Write a story of some event, a good time had or something funny you were involved in. If possible, support it with a photograph/s with name/s.

Please send them to admin@theroyalscots.co.uk

Kindly put **THISTLE ARTICLE** in the email subject heading.

Summer Edition of the Thistle

The Summer 2025 edition of the Thistle (Vol 47) will cover events during the period 1 April to 1 October 2025. We aim to publish this edition by 15 October 2025. All items for inclusion should be submitted to the Regimental Office via admin@theroyalscots.co.uk no later than 5 September 2025, although it would be appreciated if contributions are submitted as soon as possible after events have occurred rather than leaving it to the last minute. **All photographs should be submitted in high resolution and accompanied by a caption, which includes names of all people in the photograph.**

Kindly put **THISTLE ARTICLE** in the email subject heading.

Volunteers Required

The activities of the Regiment rely heavily on volunteers, whether organising and running the Association, assisting with the administration of the Regimental Trust, or helping at the Museum either routinely or for specific projects. We are seeking more volunteers; tasks will be matched to skills and experience but we are particularly seeking assistance with communications managing social media platforms and the website, photography, compiling The Thistle, historical research in the Museum archives and assisting with Museum events and projects. Anyone interested is requested to get in touch with the Regimental Office on 0131 557 0405 or admin@theroyalscots.co.uk

Royal Scots Golf Club Details

President: Jimmy McConnell

Captain: Arthur Frame

Vice Captain: Zander Russel

Secretary: David Morris

Contact: bampops1@gmail.com

Forecast of Events

The Forecast of Events is published on the Regimental website and updated at the beginning of each month. Details of specific events can be found on the Regimental website on the Upcoming Events page at <https://www.theroyalscots.co.uk/forecast-of-events/> or scan the QR Code to visit the page.

VJ Commemoration

2025 is the 80th anniversary of VJ Day, which marked the end of hostilities in the Far East in the Second World War. The Royal Scots Regimental Trust will mark this occasion with a memorial service on Saturday 16 August 2025 at The Royal Scots Memorial Garden at Lauriston Castle, 2 Cramond Road South, Edinburgh EH4 6AD. Those wishing to attend should assemble directly in front of Lauriston Castle at 1030. The parade will form up at 1040 and march behind The Royal Scots Association Pipe Band and The Royal Scots Association Standards the short distance to The Royal Scots Memorial Garden. The service will commence at 1050 and will last for approximately 20 minutes. Due to other events at Lauriston Castle on that day parking will be extremely limited, so those attending are advised to use public transport or park in the surrounding area and allow plenty of time.

Some other specific events for 2025 are listed below.

Association Details

President: Brig George Lowder MBE

Chairman: Maj Stu Marshall

Vice Chairman: Mr Paul Robertson

Secretary: Mr David Milne

Treasurer: Mr Peni Ravutia

Highland Branch

First Sunday of the month at 6.00pm at Raigmore Recreation Rooms, Inverness

Contact: Derrick Cameron
derrick1974@hotmail.com

Edinburgh Branch

Suspended animation

The Royal Scots Association Pipe Band

Contact: Torquil Corkerton
torquil@corkerton.com or contact@royalscotspipeband.org.uk

East of Scotland Branch

Last Saturday of the month at 7.30pm at RBL Prestonpans

Contact: Jamie Colquhoun
Jamiecolquhoun@hotmail.co.uk

Northern Ireland Branch

First Tuesday of the month at RBL Ards

Contact: David McKendrick
davidsmck1@sky.com

Southern Branch

No regular branch meetings, but events organised throughout the year.

Contact: Monty Stuart-Monteith
monty@shawsequestrian.com

Central Scotland Branch

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

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

Fijian Branch

Quarterly Meetings

Contact: Peni Ravutia
bogiravutia0506@gmail.com

For more information contact:

The Royal Scots Regimental Office

The Royal Scots Club

29 - 31 Abercromby Place

Edinburgh EH3 6QE

Tel: 0131 557 0405

Email: admin@theroyalscots.co.uk



Day/Month	Event	Time	Remarks
Jun 2025			
Tue 3	Royal Hospital Chelsea Founder's Day (Governor's Review)	1000	RH Chelsea
Sat 7	Unveiling of addition to RS Monument	1600	Princes Street Gardens
Sat 7	Beating Retreat	1800	Royal Scots Club
Tue 17	Riding of the Marches Linlithgow		Linlithgow
Sat 22 (TBC)	Gallipoli Memorial Service	1030	St Giles's Cathedral
Sat 28	Armed Forces Day	1000	Edinburgh
Sun 29 – Fri 4 Jul	McCrae's Battalion Trust visit to the Somme		Contalmaison, France
Jul 2025			
Tue 22	RS Club Members' Committee Meeting	1700	Royal Scots Club
Sat 26	Korean War Memorial Service	1030	The Scottish Korean War Memorial, Witch Craig Park
Tue 29	RSC Management Ltd Board Meeting	1000	Royal Scots Club
Thu 31	RSWMF Trustees' Meeting	1200	Royal Scots Club
Aug 2025			
Sun 3	Association Quarterly General Committee Meeting	0930	Royal Scots Club
Sat 16	VJ Day Memorial Service	1030	Lauriston Castle
Tue 26	Museum Committee Meeting	1500	Royal Scots Club
Sat 30	Association Summer Party	1900	RBL Prestonpans
Sep 2025			
Sat 13	Regimental Band Reunion Lunch	1230	Royal Scots Club
Sat 13 (TBC)	NI Veterans Association Memorial Service		National Memorial Arboretum
Thu 18	RS Club Members' Committee Meeting	1700	Royal Scots Club
Tue 23	RSRT Executive Committee Meeting	1200	Royal Scots Club
Late Sep	Dedication of Le Paradis Memorial	TBC	National Memorial Arboretum
Oct 2025			
Thu 2	LISBON MARU Memorial Service	1200	National Memorial Arboretum
Sat 4	Association Autumn Dinner Night	1900	Royal Scots Club
Sat 11	Fiji Day celebrations	1200	TBC
Mon 20	Opening of the Garden of Remembrance, Princes Street Gardens	1030	Princes Street Gardens
Mon 20	Remembrance Service at Royal Scots Monument	1200	RS Monument
Tue 21	RSC Management Ltd Board Meeting	1000	Royal Scots Club
Fri 24	RSRT Trustees Meeting	1200	Royal Scots Club
Tue 28	RSWMF Trustees' Meeting	1200	Royal Scots Club
Fri 31	Officers' Golf Match		TBC
Fri 31	Officers' Regimental Dinner	1900	Royal Scots Club
Nov 2025			
Sun 2	Association Quarterly General Committee Meeting	0930	Royal Scots Club
Thu 6	Opening of the Field of Remembrance Westminster	1030	Southern Branch
Sat 8	Remembrance Service at Glencorse Gates	1045	Glencorse Barracks
Sat 8	Regimental planting of crosses at the Field of Remembrance, Westminster, followed by a Remembrance Service in the Abbey Cloisters	1800	Southern Branch
Sun 9	Remembrance Sunday		
	Cenotaph	1030	
	City Chambers	1045	
	Canongate Kirk	1045	
	The Royal Scots Club	1200	
	Haymarket	1045	
	Peebles	1045	
	Whitburn	1045	
	Prestonpans	1045	
	Linlithgow	1045	
Tue 11	Remembrance Service at the Scottish National War Memorial	1045	The Castle
Tue 18	RSRT Executive Committee Meeting	1200	Royal Scots Club
Tue 25	RS Club Members' Committee Meeting	1700	Royal Scots Club
Sun 30 (TBC)	St Andrew's Day Service	TBC	St Cuthbert's Church
Dec 2025			
Tue 9	RSC Management Ltd Board Meeting	1000	Royal Scots Club
Tue 9	RS Club Trustees and Directors Christmas Lunch	1230	Royal Scots Club
Thu 11	RSWMF Trustees meeting	1200	Royal Scots Club
Tue 16	RSRT Volunteers Christmas Lunch	1230	Royal Scots Club
Fri 19	Regimental Office closes for the Festive period		
Fri 19	Regimental Museum closes for the Festive period		
Jan 2026			
Mon 5	Regimental Office reopens		
Mon 5	Regimental Museum reopens		
Sat 31	Association Burns' Night	1900	Prestonpans RBL
Feb 2026			
Sun 1	Association Quarterly General Committee Meeting	1000	Royal Scots Club
Tue 24	RSRT Executive Committee Meeting	1200	Royal Scots Club
Fri 27	Association AGM	1900	Royal Scots Club
Mar 2026			
Sat 28	The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) Regimental Day		393 rd anniversary
Sat 28	The Royal Regiment of Scotland Formation Day		
Sun 29	Laying up of 1 SCOTS Colours		Canongate Kirk