



# The Thistle

Journal of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment)

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The annual Royal Scots Regimental Trust Volunteers Lunch, Tuesday 16 December 2025 in The Royal Scots Club.  
George Lowder saying a few words of thanks to the volunteers for all their great work supporting The Trust.

## Foreword

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

Having been involved in Royal Scots governance since 2004 as a Trustee, and now Chair and President, I informed the Regimental Trustees, Trustees of The War Memorial Fund and the Association Office Bearers last year of my intention to stand down this coming Summer. I have also explained this intention to the recent Club and Association Annual General Meetings. I would happily have "staggered on" a bit longer, but I suspect the Charity Regulator would have taken the view that I had been involved and in post quite long enough. With 3 of our 4 pillars now part of the new Royal Scots Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) it would not be wise to get on the wrong side of the Regulator. It is the right time to hand over the reins, given that we are now well set for the 21st Century and all parts of our house are in good order. I am delighted that James Stevenson has been appointed as a Regimental and War Memorial Fund Trustee and that the War Memorial Fund Trustees unanimously elected James to succeed me as Chair when we last met on Thursday 26 March 2026. I hope that the Regimental Trustees will also elect James to succeed me as Chair of Regimental Trustees when we next meet on Friday 22 May 2026. Our revised Association Rules state that the Chair of the Regimental Trustees shall be the President of the Association, so we will continue with the principle of having one titular head of our 4 pillars, The Colonel of the Regiment in old money, providing leadership, coherence and coordination across the Regimental organisations. It is likely that the formal hand over/takeover will be at the end of July, with James in post by Saturday 1 August 2026. On current planning I will still be in Edinburgh and able to support events, parades and services.

## Governance – Regimental (SCIO) Trust

The Regimental Trust continues to weather the difficult geopolitical situation that we are all experiencing. I am hugely grateful to Alex Dockar for his meticulous day to day engagement with our Investment Managers, Evelyn Partners and to Nick Edwardson and Keith Oliver for their incisive scrutiny of performance. Alex has indicated that at some point later this year he will also stand down as a Trustee. Our plan is that Nick will take over the Financial Trustee lead and that Trustees will appoint Ross Hunter to the Board. Ross will be well known to most of you; he is to me, having been the Adjutant for most of my time commanding the 1st Battalion. Ross commanded a 4 SCOTS armoured infantry company in Germany and when he left the Army in 2012 he worked for Anderson Strathern, Barclays and abrdn, before establishing his own successful financial planning business, Juniper Financial Planning. Ross will assume the role of Communications lead from Nick and in time is a likely successor as Finance Trustee. Regimental Trustees will begin to turn their attention to plans for RS 400 in 2033. The Regimental Secretary will bring forward proposals for consideration by Trustees later this year and this should give us sufficient time to raise funds, sponsorship and plan. I continue to be in reasonably regular contact with the Commanding Officer of 1 RANGER. The unit is part of the RANGER Formation comprising 1, 2, 3 and 4 RANGER and is establishing its own Regimental Headquarters and fund, with its own Colonel of the RANGER Regiment. Inevitably the RANGER link to The Royal Regiment of Scotland will, over time, be further diluted, especially as SCOTS soldiers transfer to RANGER. The Royal Scots and KOSB link to 1 RANGER through the now "stood down" 1 SCOTS still exists as a matter of antecedent fact, but much of our property has been, or is being, returned and the golden thread is now rather thin. A key milestone on this path is the laying up of the 1 SCOTS Colours in the Cannongate Kirk on Sunday 11 October 2026. This will be preceded by a parade of the Colours from the Castle Esplanade to the Kirk, accompanied by SCOTS, RS and KOSB Guards. Please put this date in your diaries as we will wish to have a strong contingent on parade.

## The Association and Associating

Royal Scots commemoration and representation activity continues to be well supported by The Association, for which I am hugely grateful. We had an appropriate presence right across our former regimental recruiting area and in all the Freedom Burghs for Remembrance 2025 and I am confident that this will be achieved each November for the foreseeable future. Other reports in this edition cover the wide spectrum of Association activities. Please consult the forecast of events on the website to see what is coming up, including the summer party. Key events where it would be good to have a strong turnout in the coming months are the Gretna rail disaster service at Rosebank Cemetery on Saturday 23 May 2026 and Armed Forces Day on Saturday 27 June 2026. It is also good to see wider, less formal, associating. The A and B company smokers in the Cellar Bar of the Club were very well attended and great fun. It was encouraging to see old Royals who we have not seen for a while at these events as well as all the usual suspects. C Company is next on Friday 25 September 2026. Golf continues to engage large numbers, whether through The Royal Scots Golf Club or other events such as the Stewart Snedden or Loudon competitions. It was an inspired idea to name the trophies for the former in memory of other well-known Royals who are no longer with us. The Regimental Trust will continue to support associating and The Association.

## Museum and Heritage

I am sincerely grateful to Dickie Donovan and the Museum Committee for all their work, not least in representing us in the endeavour to develop and deliver a joint museum with SCOTS in the Castle. I have previously outlined the timeline for this, and the work is broadly on track. Trustees have confirmed that this remains our preferred course of action, mindful that we will lose the final element of public funding towards the cost of our Curator by April 2030. It has been confirmed that the current level of RS and SCOTS public funding will continue if we are in a true joint venture with SCOTS by then. This work will also determine how best to present our collection in a way that encourages engagement with the widest possible audience. If you are keen to get involved, please do let Dickie know. Outreach this year will be focused on the old drill hall in Peebles on Friday 10 July and a scaled down exhibition explaining the Gretna rail disaster in the drill hall in Dalmeny Street between 18 and 23 May 2026. I was delighted to attend the unveiling of Jock Wilson Smith's medals in the museum on 30 March 2026. A most fitting way to mark Jock's huge contribution to The Regiment and the museum itself.

## The Club

The Club is in good shape, largely thanks to the oversight, direction and guidance of Norman Soutar and his Board of Directors and of course Adrian and his team. We have repaid all the borrowing that was required to purchase 1A Dundas Street and extend and refurbish 34A Abercromby Place, giving us an annex of 7 en-suite rooms. The War Memorial Trustees have no plans to purchase further property in the foreseeable future. A total of 34 en-suite rooms and the current mix is ideal for the size of the business. Further scaling up would require a significant step change and considerable funding. For now, we are in a position to start to rebuild reserves that will provide protection against future uninsured shocks and in due course further Member benefits. Club membership is growing and slowly but surely getting a bit younger; however, we must not be complacent in this regard and keep the foot to the floor to continue to expand the membership. Norman has confirmed that he intends to stand down as Chair of the Board of Directors this year and recruiting is ongoing to select and appoint his successor. War Memorial Fund Trustees have reappointed Guy Richardson as Chair of the Members' Committee for a further 3 years. I have previously explained that Regimental and War Memorial Trustees have paused the work to bring the Club into the SCIO whilst we wait for clarity regarding proposed changes to Scots Charity Law that is expected to impact unincorporated organisations (the Club) and SCIOs (the other 3 pillars). As things currently stand our detailed analysis of all the factors suggest we should maintain the status quo. It will be interesting to see if changes to charity law alter this conclusion.

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. 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.

In closing I am particularly grateful to our Regimental Secretary, David Jack, without whom we would not have achieved the transformational improvements in governance and the coordination and coherence that we were aiming for. It has been a huge privilege to lead our organisation and its various pillars, thank you all for your support, I look forward to the next time our paths cross.

Yours aye

*George*

## Regimental Day – 28<sup>th</sup> March



Bronze statue of a WW2 Royal Scots soldier.

Today, 28<sup>th</sup> 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 is 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 – 28<sup>th</sup> 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 393rd anniversary of the formation of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). Today the Regimental Flag is flying at Edinburgh Castle.

### **Reply from HRH The Princess Royal**

"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 393rd Anniversary of the formation of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) at Edinburgh Castle on 28<sup>th</sup> March.

Anne".

Patron  
The Royal Scots Regimental Association

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack

### **Founding Day, The Royal Scots Club - 11 March**



**The Main Entrance to The Royal Scots Club.**

It was on this day in 1919 that a meeting was convened to discuss a proposal by Colonel The Lord Henry Scott, fourth son of the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Buccleuch and 8<sup>th</sup> Duke of Queensberry, and formerly Honorary Colonel of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion The Royal Scots, to establish an all ranks club to act as a living memorial to those Royal Scots who gave their lives during the Great War, rather than simply erect a stone monument. The Regiment had 35 battalions, 18 of which served on frontline active service and over 100,000 men served in the Regiment, of whom more than 11,000 did not return. At the ceremony on 10 August 1922 to formally open the Club on Abercromby Place and unveil the war memorial, HRH Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles, Colonel-in-Chief, said **"Let all who enter here see to it that the names of these heroes are honoured and handed down from generation to generation as examples of unselfish devotion worthy of the Regiment – worthy even of Scotland itself."** The Club has adapted over the years to economic pressures and changes in society, and the Club is in good shape and continues to uphold the founding object as a living war memorial. To mark this day, a message has been sent to the Patron of the Club, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, which is included below. As the custodians of this memorial, it is both a privilege and a solemn responsibility to ensure that it is maintained in perpetuity. We invite you to join us today in reflecting on the foresight of our predecessors in establishing the Club and the sacrifice of our forebears that has contributed to the freedom we enjoy today.

### **Message to HRH The Princess Royal**

**Founding Day – 11<sup>th</sup> March**

The Chair and all Members of The Royal Scots Club send their loyal greetings to Our Patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, on the occasion of the 107<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of The Royal Scots Club. We remain true to the founding object of the Club being a living memorial to those who fell in the Great War, and those who have given their lives on active service since.

### **Reply from HRH The Princess Royal**

"As Patron of The Royal Scots Club, I send my warm thanks and very best wishes to The Chair and all Members on the occasion of the 107<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of The Royal Scots Club on 11th March 2026.

Anne".

Patron  
The Royal Scots Club

Major Guy Richardson



The Royal Scots Family contingent gathered at the Le Paradis Massacre Memorial

The story of Le Paradis has been recorded in various publications, ranging from *Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard*, *The Thistle* and, most notably, *Hell in Paradise*. Annual commemorations are held in Le Paradis but there has been no memorial in the UK for those who gave their lives in the desperate last days of May 1940. Now, 85 years later, a memorial has been created and installed at the National Memorial Arboretum – soon to be known as the Royal British Legion Remembrance Gardens. The project was organised by the Le Paradis Commemoration Group based in Norwich, including a major fund-raising initiative, and it took approximately three years to come to fruition. The Royal Scots Regimental Trust made a significant contribution to the appeal fund, specifically to assist with maintenance of the memorial in perpetuity. The unveiling and dedication of the memorial was scheduled for Thursday 25 September 2025. The memorial is located among trees next to a path in the south-eastern part of the Arboretum and due to the restriction in the space only a limited number of people could attend the unveiling ceremony, but all attending were invited to join the Service of Remembrance in the Aspects Building.



David Jack and Lucy Delacombe at the Dinner in the Derby Conference Centre with Mike Pretsell piping.



David Jack providing context for the next day's events.



Anne Errington (I) and Leila Corbet.



Robina Nicholson.



David and Jane Beveridge.



John and Sheena Sands.

As most of The Royal Scots group had some distance to travel, accommodation was booked in the Derby Conference Centre, where we had dinner and a most convivial evening on Wednesday 24 September 2025. It was an opportunity to catch up with auld acquaintances, provide some context for the following day's events and enjoy some splendid entertainment by Mike Pretsell, our Association piper. The main events on 25 September 2025 were not scheduled until early afternoon, so we took the opportunity to visit some of the memorials in the Arboretum. It was a glorious autumn day with blue sky, sunshine and a pleasant temperature. We assembled at the Visitor Centre at 1030 and proceeded at a gentle stroll to the Le Paradis memorial. A brief account of the events of 25 – 27 May 1940 was provided to set the scene. We were delighted that Marie-Christine Broutelee, wife of a former Mayor of Lestrem, had made the journey from France to join us and she delivered a message from the community of Lestrem and Le Paradis. We then moved on to The Royal Scots memorial, where we paused to lay a wreath and remember all those who had served in the Regiment. Our final stop was at the Lisbon Maru memorial where we listened to a summary of the sinking of the ship on which 373 members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion were part of the group of 1,816 British prisoners of war. We then retired to the café for some lunch.



Lizzie Dickson and Brian de la Haye.



Lucy Delacombe and David Dickson.



HRH lays her wreath.



The new Le Paradis Massacre Memorial.



l to r: Monty Stuart-Monteith, Lucy Delacombe, Fiona Campbell, David Beveridge and Peter Fraser-Hopewell.



l to r: Brian de la Haye, Marie-Christine Broutelee, Lieutenant de Vaisseau Thierry Ferrus, representing the French Ambassador, David Dickson, James Finlay and David Jack.

The Le Paradis Massacre memorial was unveiled by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal. The Royal Scots were represented by Lieutenant Colonel Brian de la Haye, Jamie Colquhoun carrying the Association Standard, and Mike Pretsell playing the pipes. Following the dedication Mike Pretsell led The Princess Royal to the Aspects Building where a Remembrance Service was conducted. After the service, there was a reception at which four groups were presented to The Princess Royal. The Le Paradis Commemoration Group had kindly allocated one of these groups to The Royal Scots, which comprised: Lieutenant Colonel Brian de la Haye, Chair of the Southern Branch of the Association, Major David Dickson, son of the late Colonel Seton Dickson who had been wounded and evacuated just prior to the action at Le Paradis, Marie-Christine Broutelee, wife of a former Mayor of Lestrem, the community in which Le Paradis is situated, Anne Errington, daughter of the late Major John Errington who had been the Signals Officer in the Battalion at the time, Leila Corbet, also daughter of Major John Errington, Christopher Corbet, Elizabeth Roads, daughter of the late Major James Bruce MC, who had been Adjutant of the Battalion at the time, Robina Nicholson, daughter of the widow of the late Major Rodney Watson DSO MC, who was killed in action on 27 May 1940, Mrs Lucy Delacombe, widow of the late Major Christopher Delacombe, and Rab Johnstone, former Colour Sergeant in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

At the end of the formal proceedings, we returned to the Le Paradis Massacre memorial where Marie-Christine Broutelee laid a wreath on behalf of the people of Lestrem and Le Paradis and the Regimental Secretary laid a wreath on behalf of the Regiment. The memorial is a fitting and lasting tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice at Le Paradis and the vision and commitment of the Le Paradis Commemoration Group will provide this legacy for future generations.

**Lieutenant Colonel David Jack**



**The author at the Le Paradis Massacre Memorial.**



**Marie-Christine Broutelee, wife of a former Mayor of Lestrem.**



**Elizabeth Roads (l) with the Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire Professor Elizabeth Barnes CBE DL. Elizabeth is wearing MC group of medals belonging to her late father Major James Bruce MC.**



**HRH chatting with two attendees in the Aspect Building.**



**The Service of Remembrance in the Aspects Building.**

Editor's note: This article has also been published in the official Somme 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Journal.

*"I think tomorrow will see something important coming off".*  
– Corporal John Paul, *The Royal Scots*. 30<sup>th</sup> June 1916.

The Battle of the Somme is one of Britain's most well-known offensives, reaching the peak of its infamy within the first few hours of the months-long combat. The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Battalions of The Royal Scots all served at the frontlines of the Somme in the first month on the battle.

The 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Battalions, both raised in Edinburgh, were tasked with advancing in the first wave of attacks on 1 July 1916. The two Battalions suffered so greatly in the first month that they could not differentiate between those killed, wounded or missing. The war diaries simply state 628 casualties for the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion and 472 casualties for the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, nearly 60% of their respective total manpower.

### Corporal John Paul

Cpl Paul enlisted with the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion and his diary begins with his deployment in January 1916. Throughout the war he served with distinction, receiving the Belgium Order of Leopold II and being mentioned in despatches for his conduct in the field. By the end of the war, he had transferred to the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Royal Scots and received promotion to the rank of Sergeant. (MID London Gazette 8 July 1919, page 8579. The Belgium Order of Leopold II with Croix de Guerre, Chevalier London Gazette 24 October 1919, page 12997).

The following extracts from his diary detail his experience of the prelude to, and first month of, the Battle of the Somme. By taking his recollections alongside other contemporary accounts and modern research, we can contextualise his service and draw new appreciation for the experiences he and his fellow soldiers endured.

### Extracts from the Diary of 17718 Cpl John Paul

24.6.16 – "A bombardment of the German lines began this morning"

28.6.16 – "It is now 28<sup>th</sup> and bombardment has been going on all this time – sometimes quite quietly – sometimes so loudly that you have to shout to hear your own voice."

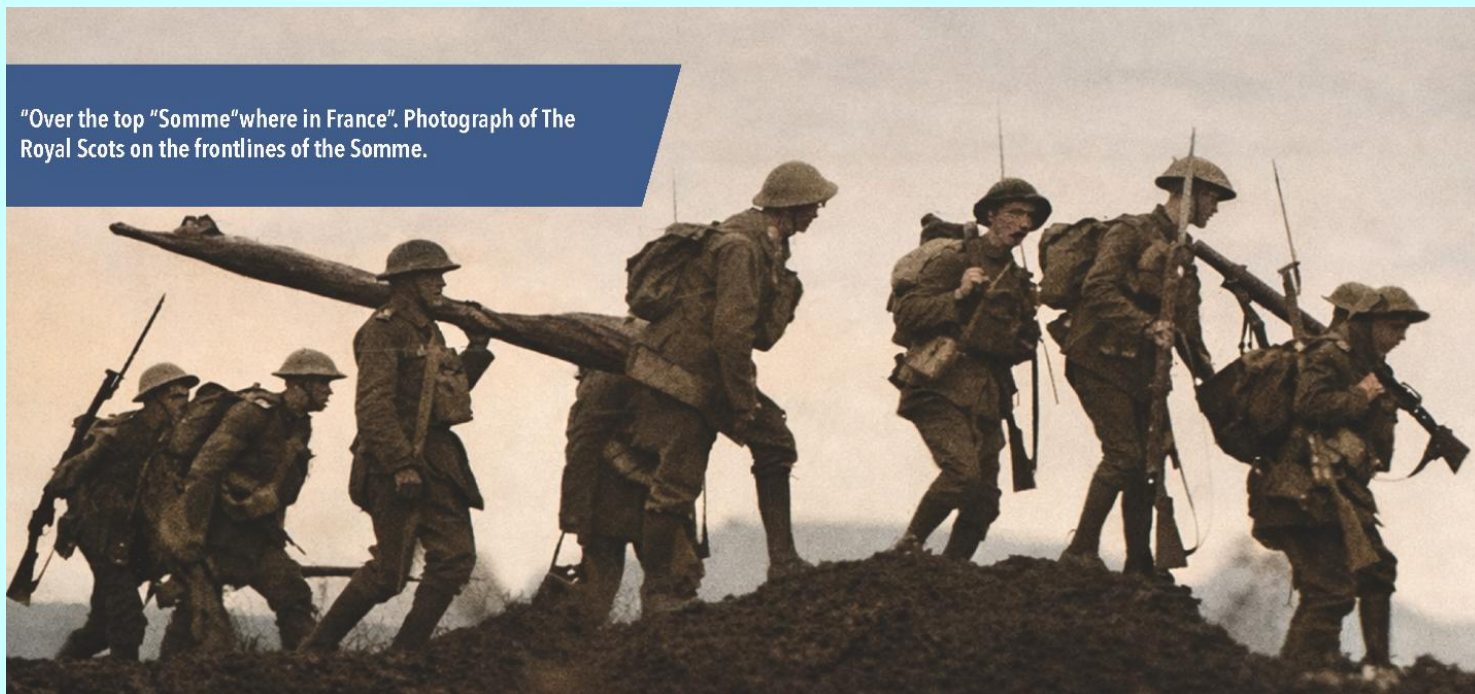
29.6.16 – "Our farm received 5 more gas (lachry) shells into it today. I have a piece of one of them, or a piece of shrapnel which come over at the same time. I was told off to fill up a shell hole (lachry) and by gum it smelt – just about turned me into a water tank – so much water poured out of my eyes and nose. I have a piece of copper driving band I found when filling the hole."

*The British Army prepared for The Somme with a week's worth of bombardment of the German lines. The goal was to overwhelm their forces and destroy their infrastructure and morale so that, when the time came, the British Forces could begin their slow march and simply walk across No Man's Land.*

*During this week, the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion were surprised to be defending their position when a German party attempted to launch an attack. The 'Lachry' shells refer to lachrymatory, also known as tear gas. With the initial assault of the Somme postponed, they spent their nights repairing the trenches in the rain and mud.*

30.6.16 – "I think tomorrow will see something important coming off."

"Over the top "Somme" where in France". Photograph of The Royal Scots on the frontlines of the Somme.



1.7.16 – "Yes – I was awakened at 6 am and with Captain Greif, the Staff Captain went up the trenches as far as the Brigade observation post. At 7.30 am the whole ground shook as if in an earthquake. All the while our guns kept snapping as hard as they could go. We had some French 75mm and they are beauties. They were firing a treat.

A minute after the first shake, another rumble came, shaking the ground again and then I could see our troops getting out of the trenches and walking across in the open. The Germans then opened fire with shrapnel and machine guns and for half an hour the sight was awesome. Smoke everywhere the thunder of guns was the only sound to be heard. Our troops steadily advancing in spite of the German fire, which, by the by as not nearly so heavy as I had expected. Something just over the horizon to the left was blazing furiously, set alight by our guns and spurts of white smoke and black smoke both in the air and on the ground – both German and British were appearing suddenly amongst the din. Fortunately, no enemy shell struck me and about 9 am or 9.20 am, Captain Greif and I retired to Bellevue Farm where we got our bicycles and cycled down to our temporary quarters at Dernancourt.

It is now past 3 pm and I will put down some facts here of the day's doings.

1. Brig Gen Cameron, 103 Brigade, was wounded in the very beginning of the battle.
2. I saw a party of German prisoners at Moulin Viviers at 11 am.
3. Our battalions are said to have taken the 5<sup>th</sup> line from the enemy.
4. It is rumoured that the 16<sup>th</sup> Royal Scots have almost reached Contalmaison.
5. The wounded have been passing through Dermancourt all morning. They have had five miles to walk, poor chaps. They are coming in thick, in fours and sixes. Feet, hands, bodies, necks wounds in all places all smeared with blood."

*At 7.30 am the first and second waves of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion advanced. It is reported Pipe Major David Anderson played the regimental march, Dumbarton's Drums, as he headed over to give heart to his fellow soldiers to advance into No Man's Land.*

*From the war diary, it was clear from the offset that smoke, gunfire and considerable loss of key personnel led to confusion across all ranks. Part of the 15<sup>th</sup> is recorded as consolidating considerably to the right of their main objective, becoming intermingled with the neighbouring 21st Division. As all but one of the officers in the first waves were killed; most information relayed came from the soldiers.*



**Soldiers being carried to safety by German prisoners.**

8.7.16 – "It is now the 8<sup>th</sup> July and our "bit" is over and we are back in a rest camp about 7 miles from the line. Our casualties were very heavy...Most of my chums have come through, although several of the old Scout platoon have been killed or are missing. I spent one night in Becourt Chateau waiting to guide our Brigade to where hot tea awaited them. I was waiting from 10 pm till 5 am as they were very late coming out. They were dirty and tired when they at last arrived, but they did justice to their tea, poor chaps. Our Brigade did very well and on the whole we are doing well on this front. All the fiercest fighting is being done at our corner. I hear we are going up the line again in a day or so."

*In the week between Cpl Paul's entries, the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion endured significant losses that left only 462 of 988 men remaining. Despite the week of attacks on the German trenches, the damage had not resulted in the significant reduction of the German defence, and the 15<sup>th</sup> entered the battlefield to be faced with artillery and machine-gun fire.*

*In an address to his home congregation, the padre of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Battalions, Reverend James Black, reflected:*

*"Well, the 15th and 16th used to have many disagreements. The 15<sup>th</sup> used to say, "Just the 16<sup>th</sup>", and the 16<sup>th</sup> used to say, "Just the 15<sup>th</sup>". There is not a word of that now. These two battalions are knit together, because they lived together and they died together and were heroes together."*

*Throughout the following weeks of the Somme, the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Battalions would continue to relieve each other on the front lines.*

23.7.16 – "Major General Ingouville Williams was killed in action yesterday and was buried at Warloy Cemetery in ceremony today at 4 pm."

*Maj Gen Williams was popular amongst the ranks and had been watching and encouraging the soldiers of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion the very morning he was killed. At his funeral, the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion furnished the firing party, and the band was provided from both the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Battalions.*

31.7.16 – "I spent all last night in a tent and had a cold sponge in the morning – we have just had dinner (2 pm) and we go up the line at 3 am. There are plenty of shells coming and going here. There's a big German shell away overhead to Albert just now – good luck to anyone in its way."



The Village of Flers, 1916. Many towns and villages along the frontlines of the Somme faced devastation in the wake of the intense bombardments.



Escorting of German prisoners from the trenches.

1.8.16 – “We have now arrived well into the German lines at BAZENTIN-LE-PETIT WOOD and by God it’s a hot place.

1. We were all half dead with exhaustion when we arrived – the sun was so hot, the water was no service, and warm at that and our packs were so enormous.
2. We had to carry great weights (so they seemed to us, although they were perhaps about 100 lbs each) for quarter of a mile across ground absolutely stinking with decaying corpses – we saw an occasional hand, foot, or even a whole body, sticking out of shellholes – and this did not help us much I can tell you.
3. Shells – shrapnel and H.E. (high explosives) – were landing freely around and this was another slight drawback.
4. When we reached our new Brigade headquarters we found they were in an old German trench, which had been well catted by our artillery some time previous. We dug up tons of old German uniforms and equipment of all sorts – there were 2 decent dugouts, but I am in a rather poor one as an office and as a sleeping place. I have an ordinary manhole in the side of the trench where you can lay your head and shoulders and leave out your feet for everyone to trample on passing up and down the trench. Occasionally while asleep, somebody comes around with the “wind up” as it is called and wakens you up and tells you to “stand to” – coming back perhaps an hour later, wakening you again and tells you to “stand down” – exceedingly awkward I can assure you.
5. With all these drawbacks it doesn’t seem to be so bad.”

*The war diary on the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, penned by Lt Col Rose, remarks that it was an incredibly trying march for the men, enduring the heat and shelling. Remarkably, they reported no casualties in the battalion this day. To make the trenches suitable for habitation, the men of the 15<sup>th</sup> spent the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of August clearing trenches, including recovering and burying the German dead. Lt Col Rose, now commanding officer of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, noted how the front trenches and no man’s land remained littered with bodies, with the smell infecting their area.*

### His Testimony

In reading Cpl Paul’s diary, the Battle of the Somme is stripped of abstraction and returned to the men who endured it. Personal recollections permit us access to those front lines in a way denied by the official accounts, seeing events unfold as they, for a moment, take time to process all they seen in the confines of a diary.

Paul’s understated tone is perhaps the most striking element of all, concluding July with “With all these drawbacks it doesn’t seem to be so bad.” The quiet resilience reflects a wider regimental spirit. As Reverend James Black observed, the rivalries between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Battalions faded in shared ordeal. Through Paul’s diary, we witness not only the confusion and cost of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916, but also the solidarity.



**"First request of all wounded "Give us a Fag Mate"". A soldier of The Royal Scots being tended to at The Somme.**

To contextualise these experiences is not intended to confirm casualty figures or trace the movement of lines. It gives a voice to the nameless who stood in the trenches, who endured the shells and smells and the sleepless nights of “stand to” and “stand down.” The Somme persists in Britain’s memory because of its scale, but it resonates because of men like John Paul who continued to write, observe, and endure as history unfolded around him.

Between the lines of his diary and The Somme, we find not only a record of battle, but a testament to human endurance; ordinary men meeting extraordinary violence with duty, comradeship, and the drive to move forward again.

*The full diary of Cpl Paul is available for viewing through The Royal Scots Regimental Museum: Diary of 17718 A/CQMS John Paul 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Scots Attached to 101<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade. January 1916 to 1919.*

**Ms Sophie Lenihan**  
Museum Curator

Fifteen members, including some of our ladies, sat down to lunch in The Royal Scots Club on Saturday 13 September 2025.



About to sit down in the Scott Room. l to r: Ian Smith, Michelle Smith, Peter Trainer, Richard McMullen, Frances Proctor, John Proctor, Tam McMullen, David Knox, Mhairi Blythe, Jim Blythe, Brian Higgins, David Nelson, Gerry Stryker, Tracey Kinsey and Ken Kinsey.

The table in the Scott Room was set in elegant fashion with Royal Cypher crockery and Club silver, the centrepiece being the flute that had been presented to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion by the Regimental Band as it was subsumed into the Lowland Brigade Band. Returned from Palace Barracks, it is now on permanent display in one of the silver cases in the Douglas Room.



Warmers into the bank in the Cocktail Lounge.



Rehearsal before lunch.



The Brass Section. Brian Higgins (l) and John Proctor.



David Nelson (l) and Tam McMullen share a joke.



Back row l to r: John Proctor, Ken Kinsey, Peter Trainer, Tam McMullen and Brian Higgins.  
Front row l to r: David Knox and David Nelson.

The fare was excellent and the service most attentive. We are very appreciative of the efforts of Club General Manager Adrian and his staff, especially Katherine the Events Manager and the Duty Manager of the day Georgia and her team.

Lunch was followed immediately by a musical interlude of *Dumbarton's Drums*, *Garb Of Old Gaul* and *Daughter Of The Regiment* played by an ensemble who had clearly not lost their touch. Hopefully, this will be a feature of future gatherings.

We were rather thinner on the ground than in 2023, due to a number of members having other commitments including holidays and family events. Next year's lunch is set for Saturday 12 September 2026, in the Douglas Room. We had experimented with holding a formal lunch every two years and an informal one in between but discussion around the table favoured a formal one annually, so that anyone missing out one year would be able to attend the next. 12 September 2026 should help maximum attendance after the summer holiday season and before we plunge into winter.



The Director makes an adjustment.



Reminiscing after lunch.



l to r: Gerry Stryker, Richard McMullen and Peter Trainer examining photographs of yesteryear.



"We're in that one".  
Tam McMullen (l) and John Proctor.

So, until we meet again, don't forget to use our very own War Memorial Club and to visit our Museum in the Castle. For the Club, simply turn up although, if for lunch or dinner in the Dining Room, book in beforehand at [info@royalscotsclub.com](mailto:info@royalscotsclub.com). For Museum visits, contact [museum@theroyalscots.co.uk](mailto:museum@theroyalscots.co.uk) giving as much notice as you can. Free access into the Castle for the purpose of visiting our Museum will be arranged for all old Royals and their families. Finally, keep checking the Guestbook, the Forecast of Events and the Events pages at [www.theroyalscots.co.uk](http://www.theroyalscots.co.uk).

Jim Blythe  
Band President 1987-89



Back row l to r: Jone Leweni, Pam Elliott, Peni Ravutia, Councillor John McMillian East Lothian Provost, Yvonne Douglas, Margaret Robertson, Paul Robertson and Epeli Qolikibua. Front row l to r: Tam Logan and Tam Douglas hold the Fijian War Clubs presented to them.

Fiji Day is a time of jubilation and pride for the island nation of Fiji, marking the country's independence from British colonial rule 55 years ago. This annual celebration on 10 October 2025 is a day filled with rich history, vibrant traditions, and a deep sense of cultural identity. The festivities offer a window into the Fijian way of life, with traditional ceremonies, performances, and community gatherings. Understanding the significance of Fiji Day and the various ways it is celebrated helps to appreciate the culture and heritage of this Pacific Island nation. This year's Fiji Day 2025 was marked with great pride and enthusiasm in the Royal British Legion in Prestonpans. The event, hosted by The Royal Scots Association and the vibrant Fijian diaspora. We were honoured to have Mr Tam Douglas and Mr Tam Logan as our honoured chief guests and also Councillor John McMillian, East Lothian Provost. The food, prepared by the families, was wonderful and the event was yet again a great success. The next Fiji Day will be held on Saturday 10 October 2026 at The Royal British Legion, Prestonpans. The Royal Scots Association, Fijian Branch would like to thank The Royal Scots Regimental Associations for their continued support and taking care of our families. Special thanks to the families and friends who came along to help support our Fiji Independence Day. See you again later this year.



**Fijian War Club.** Beyond the practical utility in warfare, Fijian war clubs hold profound cultural significance for the indigenous peoples of Fiji. They were often passed down through generations, serving as cherished heirlooms and symbols of ancestral pride. In addition to their role in warfare, war clubs also featured prominently in ceremonial rituals, traditional dances, and other cultural practices, reaffirming their status as symbols of Fijian identity and heritage.



The boys are ready to start mixing the traditional Fijian drink, Kava.

Mr Peni Ravuita



The Royal Scots Association, Fijian Branch and guests celebrating Fiji Day 2025.



Let the celebrations begin! Tam Douglas and Paul Robertson still have the moves.

## Highland/Lowland Brigade Club Clay Pigeon Shoot

Teams from the antecedent Regiments and SCOTS gathered at Auchterhouse for the annual Highland / Lowland Brigades Club Clay Pigeon Shoot on 18 September 2025. The Royal Scots were represented by David Dickson, David Simpson, Mike Onslow and John "Dickie" Donovan; they made up 2 of the 17 Teams. The QOHLDRS swamped the numbers and, sadly, the GORDONS and A&SH were not present. However, a solid showing of SCOTS reduced the average age by some many years. The two RS Teams were paired against the RHF A and the QOHLDRS C Teams - good banter was had – and given!

Eight stands covering everything from bouncing bunnies to small high flying and fast birds were presented for the general amusement of the many who have yet to get their eyes in at the start of the shooting season. The shooting was safe although not hugely accurate, but a shout out goes to Mike Onslow as joint best shot and to the 3 Ds (David Dickson, David Simpson and John Donovan) for keeping their humour as a few of the bunnies bounced by and high birds remained inexplicitly intact which resulted in solid showing in the middle of the pack.

As ever with the HLBC, the point of the event was not entirely focused on the competition - a most convivial lunch was enjoyed by all. Our thanks to the organisers for pulling this together and to all who showed up and made it a great day.



l to r: Maj David Dickson, Lt Col John Donovan, Lt Col Mike Onslow, Maj David Simpson.

Lieutenant Colonel Mike Onslow

## The Royal Scots Trophy – Winterfield Golf Club, Dunbar

A Royal Scots Trophy was introduced to Winterfield Golf Club, Dunbar in 2018 by Richard McMullen. The trophy was intended to commemorate the end of the First World War, coinciding with the centenary of that momentous occasion. The centenary also coincided with the passing of Richard's and his brother Tom's mother, Mary, who passed in away in 2018 having been predeceased by their father, Edward, in 2012; thus, the trophy is also dedicated in both of their memories. Richard and Tom were Royal Scots, both having served in the military band and as medics/stretchers in the seventies. Tom served from 1972 to 1978, playing percussion as a drummer, based in Tidworth, Cyprus, Kirknewton and Munster, Germany. Richard joined in 1974, playing the cornet, and served in Cyprus, Kirknewton, Munster and Redford until 1979. Tom went on to become a Registered Osteopath and Sports Injury Therapist, working with the Scottish Rugby squad for over 6 years as well as Motherwell FC, Dundee United FC and Boroughmuir RFC.



Tom and Richard McMullen with the trophy.



The Royal Scots Trophy.

Richard worked as a Fire Protection Engineer working at most of the Nuclear Power Stations in the UK for several years before taking up a position with Charles River Laboratories as an in-house security officer working there for 19 years. Both brothers remain loyal active members of the Royal British Legion (Scotland), Dunbar Branch, regularly attending the monthly Veterans' Breakfasts. The trophy is competed for annually as a four-ball Texas Scramble competition and takes place close to Remembrance Sunday in November, raising money for the Dunbar Royal British Legion (Scotland) Branch.

Lieutenant Colonel John Donovan MBE

## A Company Smoker 17 October 2025

A fantastic evening was had with 51 old friends from A Company gathering in the Underground Bar of The Royal Scots Club. A big thank you must go to David Jack and Tony Reid for organising this soirée (swaray). An excellent curry was provided courtesy of The Royal Scots Regimental Trust and draught beer prices in the cash bar were reduced courtesy of The Royal Scots Club.

Due to the success of the evening a B Company and C Company Smoker were planned. B Company held theirs on Friday 20 March 2026 and C Company's is all set for Friday 25 September 2026, starting at 7pm. All former members of C Company, including those attached, are welcome to attend this event.

These details are posted on the RS Website on the "Upcoming Events" page. Alternatively you can scan the QR Code or click on this link. <https://www.theroyalscots.co.uk/upcoming-events/>



### Ray (Halfchat) Thomson



Some auld and bald A Company legends.



l to r: Larry Gilbert, Jimmy Campbell, Sandy Aitchison, Maxi MacDonald, Eddie Coen and Jonny Bristow.



l to r: George Lowder, Paul McAllister, John Lothian, Jimmy Gun and Sandy Aitchison.



l to r: Stan Thornton, Mark Sands, Norman Soutar and Gerry Stryker.



l to r: Mark Sands, David Jack and John Sands.

## B Company Smoker 20 March 2026

Following on from the very successful A Company Smoker back in October 2025, 35 members of B Company took over the reins of the Underground Bar with beer and banter flying in all directions. A few photographs of our time in Werl were passed around courtesy of David Dickson.

Once again many thanks must go to The Royal Scots Regimental Trust for organising the gathering and providing a delicious curry.

Ray (Halfchat) Thomson



Some young and handsome B Company legends.



I to r: Tam Logan, Raymy Myles and Jago Speirs.



I to r: Tony Reid, Mark Sands, Tam Logan and Stu Colquhoun.



I to r: Raymy Myles, Archie MacDonald, Mike Onslow, Tony Reid, Mark Sands and Stu Colquhoun.



I to r: Jockey Stewart, Tam Logan, Peter Whyte, Jago Speirs, Stu Marshall, Jone Leweni, Ray Thomson, John Murray and John Cooper.



I to r: David Jack, David Dickson, Matt Hovell and Nick Edwardson.



I to r: John Cooper, John Murray, Jago Speirs, Jockey Stewart, Raymy Myles, Gary Fennell, Stu Colquhoun and Tam Logan.

## Officers' Golf Match and Regimental Dinner

Once again, players gathered at Gullane No 3 Golf Course on the morning of the Officers' Regimental Dinner to compete for the annual Officers Golf trophy on Friday 31 October 2025.

A total of eleven players turned out on a glorious autumn morning to demonstrate their golfing prowess. The eventual winner with 37 Stableford Points was Kenny Douglas who had travelled from his home in Canada to be with us for the dinner; his win was all the more impressive as he battled both the course and his caddy, Derek Dobson who had travelled from Canada for the event as well, experiencing his first day on a golf course!

Other prize winners were: 2nd Place, Brian de la Hays (36), 3rd Place, Cliff McAuley (33), 4th Place, John Harbour RN (30), 5th Place Sandy Mack (29). Longest Drive – Sandy Mack, Nearest the Pin – Billy Young, Nearest the Pin in two, - Sandy Mack, Endeavour Award – David Dickson.



Standing l to r: Cliff McAuley, John Harbour, Sandy Mack, Matt Stevens. Billy Young, Derek Dobson, Kenny Douglas and Ross Hunter. Sitting l to r: David Dickson, Brian de la Hays, Stu Simpson and Dickie Coppard.



David Dickson prepares to give it some.



Warming Up. l to r: Billy Young, Cliff McAuley and Stu Simpson.



The gathering for the Officers' 2025 Regimental Dinner.

The annual Officers' Regimental Dinner was held in The Royal Scots Club on Friday 31 October 2025 and was attended by 47 officers, providing the opportunity to renew old acquaintances. Some had travelled from far and wide, particularly Charles Gibb coming from the USA and Kenny Douglas and Derek Dobson making the trek from Canada. It was also good to see representation from A Company 6 SCOTS, particularly young officers Michael Todd and James Robertson. We were also glad that former officers of HMS Edinburgh were able to attend, and we look forward to strengthening this bond in future years.



The dinner welcoming committee. l to r: Lt Col David Jack, Cpl Euan Jardine and Maj Jonny Bristow.

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.

Our guest this year was Mr Malcolm Copland, who received the Regimental Prize for his work as project officer for the addition to The Royal Scots Monument of a bronze figurehead of Queen Elizabeth II, which came to fruition with the unveiling in June 2025 which was reported in the last edition. He has also made a significant contribution to the cataloguing of items in the Club; there are over 850 items of silver, picture and other objects comprising Club property, Regimental property, and items on loan from the Museum and individuals. Malcolm is a retired engineer with considerable global project management experience in the oil and gas industry. He never served in the Regiment, or indeed the Armed Forces, but has been a member of the Club for many years and is a great supporter of military organisations and charities. We are most grateful to him for his contribution to the Regiment and Club.



Mr Malcolm Copland receives the Regimental Prize from Brig George Lowder.



Maj Kenny Douglas being presented the golf winners trophy by Brig George Lowder.

Eligibility for the dinner was extended last year to include those Regimental Trustees, Club Trustees and RSC Management Directors who had not served with the Regiment, as they are custodians of our heritage, and we were delighted that Neil Ellis joined us this year. Neil was appointed to the Board of Directors in December 2024 and brings a wealth of experience in the hospitality sector. Brig George Lowder provided the customary State of the Nation report, much of which was covered in the last edition or is included elsewhere in this edition, but in summary our Regimental institutions are in good shape. The evening concluded with the obligatory lusty rendition of The Gallant Royal Scots.

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

36 of the Trusts many volunteers gathered at The Royal Scots Club on Tuesday 16 December 2025 for the annual Royal Scots Regimental Trust Volunteers Lunch. George Lowder started the afternoon off with a few words of thanks recognising the important and valuable work the volunteers do for the Trust, after which a fantastic variety of very tasty fare, including a traditional Christmas dinner, was then served.



Sophie's little helpers. I to r: Anne Thomson-Melo, Marley Sandy, Sharon Beck (learning Officer), Alli Spark (SO2 Heritage SCOTS), Sam Workman, Sophie Lenihan (Museum Curator), Hilary Wight (Assistant Curator), Tali Wagner, Kevin Damer and Amy Elliott.

Many of the volunteers were 'auld Royals', but Sophie Lenihan (Museum Curator) has recruited a fantastic and valuable team of civilians doing a variety of vital work up in the Castle. These volunteers are involved in many things, from the digitisation of documents and photographs from the large archive held in the Museum to research on events and individuals who served in the Regiment.



No that way. No, it's that way. Is it? I'm sure is that way.  
I to r: Eck Wind and Paul Robertson.



I to r: David Jack, Allan Carswell, Nick Edwardson and Maili Gardiner.

We are always seeking more volunteers, whether this is conducting family and historic research, assisting with the Regiment's numerous memorials or helping to catalogue and research items in the Club. Anyone interested should get in touch with the Regimental Office on 0131 557 0405 or email [admin@theroyalscots.co.uk](mailto:admin@theroyalscots.co.uk)

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack



I to r: Eck Wind, Paul Robertson, Tam Logan, Stu Aitken, Peni Ravutia, Sheila Purves, Mark Doig, Dave Milne, Stu Marshall and Ray (Halfchat) Thomson.

This year, the East of Scotland Branch of The Royal Scots Regimental Association spearheaded the organisation of the Association's Annual Burns Night. In the spirit of collaboration, the Branch worked closely with the East Lothian Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club, ensuring the occasion was both enjoyable and memorable for everyone who attended.

The festivities took place at the Prestonpans Royal British Legion on Saturday 31 January 2026 and the event welcomed 87 guests including members, their families and friends. It served as an excellent opportunity for camaraderie, reflection and the celebration of Scottish heritage within the Armed Forces community and among their supporters.

The evening commenced with the traditional piping in of the haggis, followed by the "Address to a Haggis" delivered by Jim Blythe. Then Iain Colquhoun performed "Tam o' Shanter". Tam Douglas also provided a unique insight into the Haggis Vulgaris, adding further interest to the proceedings.



**"Address to a Haggis" by Jim Blythe.**

After the Bill 'O' Fare, Martin Gibson and East Lothian Provost Councillor John McMillan both spoke warmly in support of the two Branches. With lots of kind words Tom Logan, Chairman of East of Scotland Branch and the Breakfast Club, gave "The Toast to the Lassies, which was quickly followed by Mary Goodall's (RN) "Reply from the Lassies" just to clear up a few points!



**Mary Goodall's "Reply from the Lassies".**

Piper Adam Aitchison (R SIGNALS) performed a piping set, after which the Association Chairman Stu Marshall addressed the gathering with his "Dumfries Volunteer". The final Burns ritual of the evening was "Holy Willie's Prayer" recited by Iain Colquhoun. The night concluded with a selection of tunes from Jock Stewart on his harmonica, followed by all attendees joining in a rousing rendition of "Auld Lang Syne".



**The Top Table singing "Auld Lang Syne".  
I to r: Martin Gibson, Tam Logan, Pam Elliott, Jim Blythe and Morag Yule.**



**"Holy Willie's Prayer" recited by Iain Colquhoun.**



**Piper Adam Aitchison performing a set for the "Gathering".**



**Tam Douglas tells of the legend of Scotland's rarest mammal "Haggis Vulgaris".**

Special thanks were extended to all the helpers who assisted with setting up the hall. Appreciation was also given to the caterers for providing a first-class Burns Supper, as well as to the bar staff at the Royal British Legion for their support and assistance throughout the evening. Finally, heartfelt gratitude was expressed to everyone for attending and making the event a most enjoyable and successful evening.

**Mr Tam Logan**

## Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal's visit to Earl Haig Gardens 22 January 2026

Veterans Housing Scotland welcomed HRH The Princess Royal, who is the charity's patron, on her first visit to Earl Haig Gardens (EHG) in Edinburgh to meet some of their residents. During the visit, HRH met several of the beneficiaries who live in Earl Haig Gardens together with members of the maintenance team who upkeep the buildings, most of which are over 100 years old.

HRH was invited into Tam and Yvonne Douglas's home where they have lived for past 17 years. Tam served in the Royal Scots and recently received the British Empire Medal in the King's Birthday Honours 2025. Tam said; "This is the first veterans housing estate established after the end of WWI, and it's great living beside like-minded people. We really are a community that helps each other out in times of need and there is always someone you can rely on." Tam and Yvonne were thrilled to welcome their royal visitor. "What a privilege to have Her Royal Highness in our home. She chatted with us easily, was well informed and asked us some good questions. She's welcome back anytime! Yvonne said; "It's the people who make this place special. They all seem to understand what each other is going through. Many younger people are coming in now. We used to be the youngest!"



HRH chatting with Tam Douglas and his wife Yvonne inside their home.

Alongside Tam and Yvonne are Peter and Joyce Malone, who have been long term residents in EHG for the last 24 years. Peter also served in the Royal Scots and after passing his training at Berwick on Tweed he was posted to Tidworth. The Battalion moved to Aden in May 1964 and Germany in 1966. Other Royal Scots in EHG are George Jeffrey (National Service) and Archie Hunter.

To mark her visit, HRH planted a magnolia tree in the communal garden in front of the houses.



Peter and Joyce Malone at their front door in Earl Haig Gardens.

EHG is a housing development established in 1919 when Lord Salvesen, Chairman of the Scottish Veterans Garden City Association, laid the foundation stone. These 31 houses are built in the garden of Mayfield House, which formerly belonged to the Salvesen family and were opened on 1 October 1921 by Field Marshall Earl Haig.

Veterans Housing Scotland is the leading provider of homes for disabled veterans in Scotland and has a portfolio of 630 homes across Scotland. For more information click on or copy and paste the link or scan the QR code. <https://www.vhscot.org.uk/>



HRH planting the tree in Earl Haig Gardens.



Mr Ray (Halfchat) Thomson



The plaque placed alongside the tree planted by HRH.

## Outreach meets Remembrance

The Regimental practice of remembering the valour and sacrifice of 16 RS, MacCrae's Battalion, and all others killed in the Great War was acted out once again at the Heart of Midlothian Memorial Clock at Haymarket on Remembrance Sunday 2025.

Mark Doig and Jamie Colquhoun carried The Royal Scots Association Standards in heavy rain that prevented dipping them in salute all the way to the puddled paving stones by the Memorial. Ian Fair laid the RS Association wreath at the base of the clock and, later in the day, David Wallace laid another at the centre circle at Tynecastle before the match that afternoon.

It was also an opportunity to continue liaison with Museum Outreach partners. First with the home team at the Heart of Midlothian Museum at Tynecastle where we commemorated 16 RS and illustrated RS sporting prowess in 2024 over the anniversary of The Battle of The Somme, itself also being Hearts 150th Anniversary year. Later with Hibs historian Tom Wright who lays Hibs wreaths annually at Rosebank, Contalmaison and Haymarket, and who had provided much information that contributed to our Gretna 110 exhibition in May 2025 in the former 7 RS Drill Hall in Dalmeny Street.

Information on the design and construction of the Heart of Midlothian Memorial Clock can be found on page 7 of The Thistle, Volume 46, Winter 2024.

### Lieutenant Colonel Jim Blythe MBE



The Heart of Midlothian War Memorial Clock in Haymarket, Edinburgh.



The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) wreath.



A wreath from the Tynecastle Upper N stand in remembrance of 16 RS (McCrae's Battalion).



A wreath from the McCrae's Battalion Trust in remembrance of 16 RS (McCrae's Battalion).

## Remembrance

There was the full range of Remembrance events again this year, commencing with the opening of the Garden of Remembrance by the Scott Monument in Edinburgh on Monday 20 October 2025. This event is run by RBLs and was well attended as usual. The Royal Scots contingent headed down to The Royal Scots Monument afterwards for our own small service conducted by Rev Dr Iain May, at which we were joined by the Lord Provost. Last year we initiated a Veterans' Curry Lunch for any veteran who had attended the opening of the Garden of Remembrance, and we continued this event this year. The event was held in the Hepburn Suite in the Club and supported by the Club, providing lunch at no cost to those attending. Scottish regiments were well represented and there were also veterans from the Royal Engineers, the Royal Artillery, the Parachute Regiment, the Royal Logistics Corps and the Royal Air Force.

### Veterans Curry Lunch 20 October 2025

Photos Malcolm Ross



Veterans and their families gather in The Royal Scots Club.

The main Regimental Remembrance Service was held at Glencorse on Remembrance Saturday and was well attended, with many then taking the opportunity to catch up over a curry lunch. The RSM 2 SCOTS kindly gave permission for us to use the WO's and Sgts' Mess in the barracks for this event, and an excellent selection of curry was provided. The Regiment was well represented at the Cenotaph and the Veterans Parade, followed by the customary lunch at the East India Club. For the first time in many years wreaths were laid in all the Regiment's Freedom Burghs and we intend to continue this practice for as long as possible in addition to all the other locations where Royal Scots lay a wreath in their local community.

### Garden of Remembrance at the Scott Monument Princes Street Gardens Edinburgh Monday 20 October 2025



The Royal Scots Regimental Association Standard Bearer Tam Logan.



George Lowder (centre) with the Royals Scots wreath.



George Lowder laying the Regimental wreath.

## Remembrance at The Royal Scots Monument in Princes Street Gardens Monday 20 October 2025

Photos Malcolm Ross



Rev Dr Iain May leads the service at The Royal Scots Monument.



The Lord Provost, the Right Honourable Robert Aldridge laid a wreath on behalf of the people of the City of Edinburgh.

### The Opening of the Garden of Remembrance Westminster Abbey Thursday 6 November 2025

Her Majesty The Queen opened the Garden of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey by planting her memorial cross. She then went on a walk meeting many of the veterans that were on parade.



Colin Dougan represented the Regiment at the opening of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey where he took the opportunity to give a brief history of the Regiment to Her Majesty The Queen.



Her Majesty The Queen's cross of remembrance.



Rev Dr Iain May leads the service at the memorial garden at Glencorse.



The Royal Scots Memorial in Glencorse Barracks.



The Royal Scots Regiment Association Standard Bearers.  
l to r: Paul Robertson, Pam Elliott and Tam Logan.



Shirley Rimmer daughter of Peter Macfadyen about to lay The Royal Scots wreath.



Relaxing in the Warrant Officer's and Sergeants' Mess 2 SCOTS after the memorial service.

### Cenotaph London 9 November 2025

The gathering on Horse Guards Parade in Whitehall.



l to r: Danny Dempsey, Sandy Mack, James Finlay, Rab Dickson, Brian de la Haye and James Milne.



**I to r: Joe Vakacokalvalu, Jacob Rakuita, Stuart McDonald, Mike Cran, Ian Mackichan, Rob Dickson, Pete Kilgallon pushing Danny Dempsey, Sandy Mack, John Gillespie-Payne, Vic Lucas, Stuart Simpson, James Milne, James Finlay, Janice Pennycook pushing Margaret Moore, Colin Dougan, Peter Fraser-Hopewell, David Garforth-Bles. Margaret Moore's grandfather served in The Royal Scots in both First and second World Wars. She is with her daughter, Janice Pennycook.**

**Peebles 9 December 2025**



**I to r: Alex Docker, Neil Cameron and Nick Edwardson at the Peebles War Memorial in the public courtyard of Chambers Institute.**



Dave Dickson by the Inverness War Memorial next to the River Ness.



Tony Reid at the Kinghorn War Memorial.



Ronnie Cairns saluting the War Memorial on Lochleven Road, Lochore.

On Tuesday 11 November 2025 a few Royals laid wreaths in Palace Barracks, Northern Ireland.



Ian Laurie saluting after laying the wreath.



The Royal Scots Memorial Stone in Palace Barracks.

## Unveiling of the medals of Lt Col JL Wilson Smith OBE

The family of Lt Col Jock Wilson Smith has kindly loaned his medals to the Museum, and these are now on display. Jock was intimately involved in the design of the Museum in its current format and its redevelopment in 1990 – 1991 and it is therefore fitting that his medals are displayed in environment he did so much to create and about which he was so passionate. An example of this is the photograph of his grandfather, Ensign John Wilson Smith, taken in 1861, which is earliest known photograph of a Royal Scots officer and is included in the Museum display.

His medals are an interesting set as it is believed that he was the only member of the Regiment to hold every medal for the campaigns in which the Regiments was involved from the end of the Second World War up to Operation BANNER in Northern Ireland, for which the GSM 1962 with Clasp Northern Ireland was awarded. Due to an error at the Medal Office, he was also issued a second GSM 1918 – 1962 with Clasp Palestine 1945 – 1948. This medal was loaned to a soldier, and it then went missing and was only recovered 40 years later when a medal collector returned it to Jock. Despite notifying the Medal Office of this error he was permitted to retain the medal. Jock's three daughters Susan, Jane and Caroline, accompanied by other family members, visited the Museum on Monday 30 March 2026 for an unveiling ceremony. After a welcome and introduction by Sophie Lenihan, the curator, Colonel Robert Watson spoke about Jock, his medals and his contribution to the Museum. Susan and Charlie (Caroline's son and a serving Royal Navy officer) then unveiled the medals.



Jock's family in front of his medals. l to r: Scott Holmes, Jane Holmes, Susan Reader-Harris, Michael Reader-Harris, Charlie Faed and Caroline Faed.

### Lieutenant Colonel David Jack



A photograph of Jock's grandfather, Ensign John Wilson Smith, taken in 1861, which is earliest known photograph of a Royal Scots officer.



Top row l to r: Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE Military), 1939-45 War Medal, General Service Medal (1918-62) with clasps 'Palestine 1945-48', 'Cyprus', 'Canal Zone', Korea Medal, United Nations Medal with clasp 'Korea' and General Service Medal 1962 with clasps 'Radfan', 'South Arabia', 'Northern Ireland'.

Bottom left: General Service Medal 1918-62 with clasp 'Palestine 1945-68'. This was a duplicate issued in error.

Bottom right: The Royal Scots 350th Anniversary commemorative medal.

**Jack Turner Nicholson DCM, MM, TD\***

Combining my interest in collecting and researching gallantry medals and being able to delve into the archive of our Regimental Journal "The Thistle", I came across a "grey" man who was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM), Military Medal (MM), and Territorial Efficiency Decoration (TD) with second award clasp/bar(\*). My interest was now aroused as most multiple gallantry awards were from WW1 but the entry dates in the Thistle suggested WW2. Now the digging on Jack Turner Nicholson began in earnest.

I started my search in the London Gazette for his DCM and MM, which in turn gave me his full name and regimental number of 3056933. Jack was awarded the MM 14 September 1943 in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in the Middle East and the DCM 04 January 1945 in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in the field. One of the entries in the London Gazette listed him as living in Peebles and both entries had him as The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). As no Royal Scots were deployed to the Middle East until February 1945 when 2 RS moved from Italy to Palestine, I had a feeling there was something more to this.

The next stop was the National Archives in search of his citations for his awards. Well that opened up the world of the newly formed Special Forces; The Special Boat Squadron (SBS) and The Special Air Service (SAS).

Jack was born in Innerleithen on 28 September 1919. A few months later his family move to Peebles where he later attended Halyrude and Kingsland Schools. After the sudden death of his father, Jack left school and started work with D Ballantyne Bros & Co Ltd on 03 July 1934. Ballantyne's was one of the largest woollen manufacturing companies in the Borders and turned out WTD (MOD) specification tartan cloth for the Scottish regiments. Jack enlisted into 8 RS on 26 May 1939 and was called up for active service just before the commencement of World War II. Sadly, the last Thistle published was October 1939 so nothing is mentioned in them for WW2.

It is said Jack volunteered for the newly formed Paratroopers but he is listed under 7 Commando and started training in Felixstowe in July 1940. In October 1940 they moved to the Isle of Arran, Scotland for boat training which was done on the shores of Sannox. This is where 1st SBS did their boat training. Jack then completed his parachute training at Kabrit, Egypt when they moved to the Middle East. Jack also took part in and completed training with the mountain wing, snow school doing skiing and mountain patrolling, at the end of which he was recommended for the Leaders Course.

Once training was over, Jack saw much action in North Africa, always in small raiding parties attacking both from land and sea with the 1st SBS. This sort of action continued in Albania, Greece, and on the islands in the Aegean Sea and on Crete. For his actions, he was awarded the MM and later the DCM.



D Ballantyne Brothers and Co Ltd, Waverley Mills, Morningside, Innerleithen.

5501. Wt. 48807/405. 60M. 2/12. W.Y.L.P. Gp. 856. Form W.3121/6. Army Form W.3121

Brigade \_\_\_\_\_ Division \_\_\_\_\_ Corps \_\_\_\_\_

Schedule No. \_\_\_\_\_ Unit Special Boat Squadron, Raiding Forces, Middle East Brigade \_\_\_\_\_

Rank and Army or Personal No. WS/Serjeant 3056933 Royal Scots Division \_\_\_\_\_

Name Jack NICHOLSON Corps MS 299

Date recommendation passed forward \_\_\_\_\_ Received \_\_\_\_\_

**MOST SECRET**

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
This NCO, with 1882893 Cpl GREAVES, S, RE, was entirely responsible for planning and carrying out the attack on KASTELLI PEDIADA aerodrome from the East on the night 4th July 1943. In spite of considerable opposition they successfully entered the aerodrome. Although fired on by sentries on three occasions they continued with the attack and destroyed five aircraft and two petrol dumps, withdrawing only when lorry loads of reinforcements prevented further action. Throughout the duration of the operation, the conduct of this NCO was of the highest order.	Captain D.G.C. Sutherland MC, Commanding Special Boat Squadron, Raiding Forces, Middle East.	Immediate MM <i>[Signature]</i> General, Commander-in-Chief, Middle East Forces. <i>[Signature]</i> Lt-Gen C.G.S. 21 Jul 43.	
(It is requested that details of the above operations should not be published owing to their secrecy)	<i>[Signature]</i> Captain 14202		

Awarded MM  
16. 14. 9. 43.

**X SECRET X**

Jack's Military Medal Citation for Operation ALBUMEN.

**MOST SECRET**

(ASST) W. 120,000 of 41 H J R & L. L. Gp 745 Form W. 3121/6  
**1st Special Boat Squadron Raiding Forces MEF.**

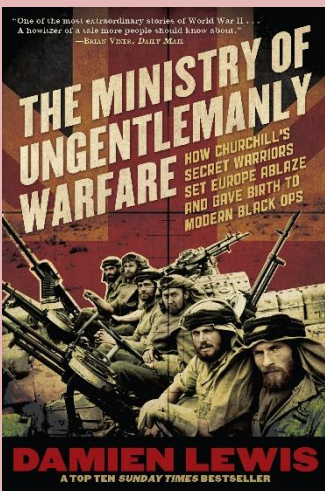
Date recommendation passed forward

Brigade	Division	Corps	Received	Passed
Schedule No. _____ (To be left blank)	Unit <b>R. Scots.</b>		Brigade _____	Division <b>426</b>
Army No. and Rank <b>3056933 Sgt.</b>			Corps _____	Army _____
Name <b>NICHOLSON Jack Turner (MC)</b> (Christian name must be stated)			<b>16 4-1-45</b>	

Action for which commended (Detailed place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
<p>For gallantry and devotion to duty during Operations on the islands of SANTORIN and PAROS. This Sgt. was the senior NCO of the SBS Patrol which attacked the garrison at SANTORIN on the night 23 April 1944. Together with one Officer and ten other ranks he entered the building occupied by approximately 30 of the enemy, an intense close quarter engagement followed. Under Sgt. NICHOLSON's direction the doors of the living quarters were kicked in and grenades thrown into each room, followed by fire from SMG and Bren. The enemy replied vigorously, killing two of the SBS. Arcused by the noise, an enemy patrol arrived on the scene and commenced firing from the street through the main entrance of the building, causing further casualties. They were, however, driven off by Sgt. NICHOLSON with a Bren. The attack was continued until this NCO had established that all the occupants of the building were either killed or wounded. The Patrol then withdrew, covered by Sgt. NICHOLSON who again neutralised enemy fire from close range. On the night 16/17 May 1944 this NCO was ordered, together with two men, to attack the house in PAROS Town occupied by the Garrison Commander and two GERMAN O.Rs. Although the general alarm had been given, and all the enemy in the vicinity were standing to, he carried out his task killing the O.Rs. and capturing the Officer. On the way back to the RV however, and whilst still in the town, they were engaged by an enemy patrol, and the GERMAN Officer was wounded in the neck. Later, a number of hand grenades were thrown at the party and the Officer killed. Sgt. NICHOLSON therefore left the Officer and returned to the RV with his men. On both these occasions and previously, during the attempted invasion of SIMI in Oct 1942, the coolness, example, and personal disregard of danger of this NCO was of the highest order.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Major D.G. C. SUTHERLAND MC  <i>D.G. C. Sutherland</i>            Remaining "S" Detachment, 1/SBS.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Major D.G. C. SUTHERLAND MC.  <i>D.G. C. Sutherland</i>            Remaining "S" Detachment, 1/SBS.</p>	<p>Immediate DCM</p> <p>Immediate DCM</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>W. J. P. G. et.</i></p> <p>General, Commander-in-Chief, Middle East Forces.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">26/8/44</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A 371</p>

**Jack's Distinguished Conduct Medal Citation.**

In true Special Forces fashion, Jack never spoke of his adventure so I had to shift through many a SBS/SAS book to find out what he had taken part in. Due to their size I cannot extract what is written in the books but I think you will get the picture of what Jack was up to just from his citations. Below is a list of books which I do recommend for further reading as Jack is mentioned often, not only



in action but also as a trainer. Jack is mentioned as Anders Lassen's 2IC. Major Anders Frederik Emil Victor Schau Lassen, VC, MC & Two Bars(\*\*) (22 September 1920 – 9 April 1945) was a Danish military officer who was awarded the Victoria Cross during the Second World War. Serving in the British Army, he was posthumously awarded the VC for his actions during Operation ROAST on 8 April 1945 at Lake Comacchio in Italy in the final weeks of the Italian campaign. I strongly suggest a Google search of "Anders Lassen, VC". There is much information on the web for him and a few great YouTube documentaries on him. The one I looked at was at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fudnity7uk0> or scan the QR Code.

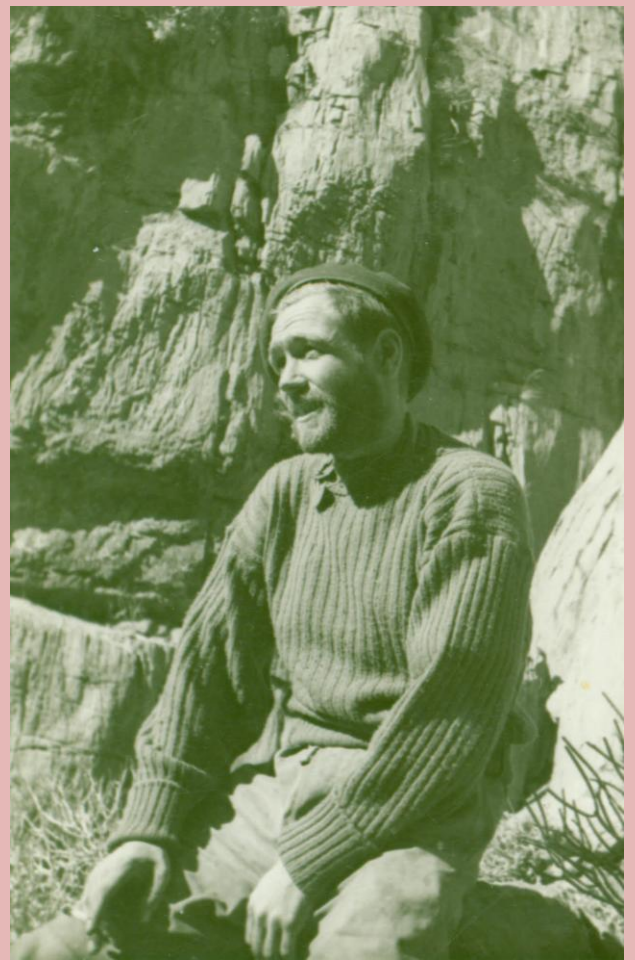


The best book I have found regarding information of Jack's unbelievable deeds is The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare by Damien Lewis. Others are;

- He Who Dares by David Sutherland – Jack mentioned pages 100, 101, 105, 106, 145; Aegean raids pages 133, 138, 140, 142; Post war dinners pages 174, 175.
- The Invisible Warriors by James D Ladd – Jack mentioned page 70.
- The SBS by Philip Warner – Jack mentioned pages 46, 47.
- Anders Lassen, VC by Suzanne Lassen.
- Anders Lassen, VC, MC\*\*, of the SAS By Mike Langley.
- Special Forces Hero: Anders Lassen VC MC\*\* by Thomas Harder.



Sgt Nicholson date and location unknown. A tireless Scot, who became Andy Lassen's right-hand man. He was once cautioned by his CO to; "Keep an eye on Lassen. Restrain him." As if that were ever possible!



Sgt Jack Nicholson date and location unknown.  
A Scot who accompanied Lassen on nearly all his raids.



Nicholson rear 2<sup>nd</sup> from left. Date and location unknown.



**Sgt Jack Nicholson directly under gun barrel and having a bad hair day. On a Motor Torpedo Boat after the return from a successful mission, with half of them dressed in captured German uniform.**

Jack came home on leave at the end of the European war and then prepared to go out to the Far East, but before this could happen the war in the Far East came to an end. On 07 June 1946 Jack became Class Z (T) Army Reserve. As such, he returned to D Ballantyne Bros & Co Ltd where he continued to work until his retirement in 1984, during the latter years as Mill house Foreman.

Back in Peebles Jack was selected as "Cornet" in 1947 with his "Lass" being Miss Mary Murray, whom he later married. The Cornet of Peebles is the leader of the Peebles Beltane Festival's ceremonies and the town's standard-bearer during the annual riding of the marches. The Cornet leads the cavalcade around the traditional route, accompanied by the three previous Cornets and their Lasses. The Cornet is installed in a ceremony that takes place in front of a dais by the Old Parish Church. The previous year's Cornet hands back the Burgh Standard to the new Cornet.

Army Order 69 of 1946 saw Jack being awarded Efficiency Medal (Territorial). This medal was normally issued for 12 years service but war service counted as double. Jack however could not stay away from the Army for too long and being officially discharged from the Army Reserve on 20 July 1947 he re-enlisted with re-formed 8 RS the very next day. In January 1946 the publication of The Thistle restarted and it was from here I could pick up Jack's career. Jack was CSM of Support (Peebles) Company 8 RS in February 1948 and formed part of the Guards of Honour for the visit by the Colonel-in-Chief Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal (Princess Mary). Jack was also one of those selected to represent the Battalion for the Territorial Army Review by His Majesty the King, George VI in Hyde Park, London on 31 October 1948. For a short video of the Review please go to <https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/120108/> or scan the QR code.



## WAR HERO WILL BE CORNET



Ex-Commando Jack Nicholson, D.C.M., M.M., chosen as Cornet-elect for the forthcoming March-Riding ceremonies at Peebles, photographed with his fiancée, Miss Mary Murray, who will be the Cornet's Lass.

Edinburgh Evening News 28 April 1947.

On 11 April 1949, Jack was commissioned 2Lt with a new number of 402308 and promoted to Lt on 1 November 1949. Still a very active man Jack was involved locally in Rugby 7's and within 8 RS, the Tug of War team and Battalion shooting team. Jack was selected as the officer to receive the new Kings Colour at a ceremony at Glencorse Barracks on 23 September 1950, being presented the Kings Colour by the Colonel-in-Chief Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal.



Walkerburn Squad Peebles 7s Team, 7 May 1949.

Back row l to r: Jack Nicholson, David (Buck) Jones, Jimmy Robb and Sandy Forbes. Front row l to r: Donald Swanson, Noel Smith and Bob Kelly.

Jack married Miss Mary Murray in 1951 who was his "Lass" when he was selected as "Cornet" in 1947. Mary was a competent linguist and worked as a typist and interpreter for the firm of Lowe, Donald & Co for many years. In 1952 Jack won the Beltane Bell race which is one of the oldest horse race meetings in the country. Mary was later selected as Crowning Lady for the Peebles Beltane Festival in 1959. Jack and Mary lived at 1 Connor Street in Peebles but later moved to a house on Edinburgh Road.

Jack was promoted Capt on 3 February 1954 and became Support Company Commander in 1956. The caricature, left, of Capt Jack Nicholson DCM MM, was done at Fylingdales Camp 1958 (near Scarborough) and it was extracted from a group of caricatures called 'Bos Impressions' 8<sup>TH</sup> Lothian's and Peeblesshire Battalion. On 20 May 1958 Jack was promoted to Major and a year later he was awarded yet another medal on 13 November 1959, the Territorial Efficiency Decoration (TD) and then the 1<sup>st</sup> clasp to that decoration on 12 November 1965.



(C.S. 20)

**APPLICATION FOR ISSUE OF CAMPAIGN STARS AND MEDALS, Ex-Army Personnel**  
WRITE IN INK IN BLOCK CAPITALS

I desire Campaign Stars and Medals, as shown below, awarded to me (or to the late)

Number <b>3056933</b>	Christian or First names <b>JACK TURNER.</b>	Surname of Officer, soldier or auxiliary <b>NICHOLSON.</b>
Class of Release or Discharge and Date <b>CLASS. A. 40.</b>	Age and Service Group No. <b>26</b>	Rank <b>G.S.M.</b>
Last Regiment or Corps according to cap badge worn (R.A. to state Branch; Home Guard to insert H.G. with County and Battalion number) <b>No. 1 IND. Coy THE ROYAL SCOTS.</b>		
to be addressed to me as follows:—(State Rank, Title, Mr., Mrs. or Miss)		
(Name) <b>MR. J. T. NICHOLSON.</b>		
(Full Postal Address, with Post Town and County — or Postal District and Number — if appropriate) <b>1 GONNOR ST PEEBLES SCOTLAND</b>		

STARS/CLASPS  
**A. 56/9/48**  
MEDALS ISSUED

Strike out items which were NOT awarded	
<b>STARS</b>	
1939-45	PACIFIC
ATLANTIC	BURMA
AIR CREW	ITALY
EUROPE	FRANCE & GERMANY
AFRICA <b>8</b>	
<b>MEDALS</b>	
DEFENCE	WAR <b>5-1</b>

**NOTE—YOUR STARS or MEDALS may not be issued for SEVERAL MONTHS**

If you should change your permanent address before receiving them, send a postcard at once to War Office marked "Medals: New Address" and showing (i) the new address and (ii) No., name and last Regiment or Corps.

Signature of Applicant: *Nicholson.* If claiming as legatee or next-of-kin, state relationship to deceased.

Jack's WW2 Medal Issue Card confirming his WW2 campaign medals.



Jack's grave marker.



SAS Wings.

On 23 and 24 April 1960 Jack and his Company, now called Peebles Company, took part in one of the biggest Territorial exercises to take place in Scotland; Exercise LONG HOP. Jack loved the life in the Territorial Army. On many occasions at Christmas, he would become Santa Claus and ensure that all the children of his officers and men received a present. He was still a keen marksman taking part in many competitions and winning a few like the BREN Gun Pairs Cup in 1962.

Jack eventually downed his military tools on 1 April 1967, moving to the Regular Army Reserve of Officers. He took up golf, eventually becoming Captain of the Club during the years 1976-78. Unfortunately, he had to give up playing soon after his retirement, due to back trouble. Jack was always busy, being a member Callants Club when it was founded in 1935 and after the end of the War he became a member of the British Legion. He was also a member of the Peebles March Riding and Beltane Queen Festival Committee, acting as Chairman from 1954 to 1958, and he was elected a Life Member in 1972. Jack was a founder member of the Peebles Rugby Social Club, and a member of the Peebles Guildry Corporation. Jack broke his right femur in April 1990 but unfortunately the bones did not knit together and he finally had a total hip replacement. 1997 would have been Jack's golden jubilee year when he was selected as "Cornet", but sadly he passed away in April after a lengthy period of ill health. He is buried in Peebles and sadly, Jack and Mary had no children.



Maj JT Nicholson DCM MM TD.  
Taken from an Officers group photo.  
Annual Camp, Devizes, Wiltshire.  
16 to 30 May 1964.

Jack's medals are not held in the museum and their location is not known but as you can see below they certainly were a fine group that he was awarded and I am sure he wore with immense pride. Jack was also awarded his SAS wings. According to David Stirling himself, "I decided that on completion of parachute training our recruits could wear the wings in the conventional manner on the shoulder. Those officers and soldiers who had completed three successful operations could wear the wings on their breasts. It added to the sense of pride and belonging, which I thought so important to a special unit. It was a highly prized medal in its own right."



Top row l to r: Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM), Military Medal (MM), 1939-45 Star, Africa Star with 8<sup>th</sup> Army Clasp and Italy Star.  
Bottom row l to r: Defence Medal, War Medal, Territorial Efficiency Decoration (TD) with one clasp and Efficiency Medal (Territorial).

Jack's life was a little unknown and to a point, it still is but I must mention a group of enthusiasts who help greatly. So before finishing this article on a gallant, modest, amusing and engaging man, Major Jack Turner Nicholson DCM MM TD\*, I would like to thank the Peebles Callants namely Hendry White, Robert Veitch and Douglas Wright. Others who greatly assisted; John Purves, David Jack, Jim Blythe, Tom Gordon, George Gilchrist and finally a (she will understand).

**To sum up Jack:** It was said by ex-Royal, George Gilchrist, who worked for Jack at D Ballantyne Bros & Co Ltd, that before George enlisted he was encouraged by Jack's, "They'll no have ye!". When George was serving he came back to see Jack and was greeted with "So ye got in! Weel, they'll likely no keep ye lang!" (All of these exchanges in joshing fun, George says.)

Ray (Halfchat) Thomson

## The British Empire Medal (BEM) – Part 1

The latest award of the BEM to Tam Douglas in recognition of his outstanding work and commitment for services to veterans in Scotland as the Support Manager, Royal British Legion Scotland got me thinking. I remembered that my instructor and mentor on my JNCO Cadre, Cliff (CJ) Mason, had one. Then Mick Durkin joined B Coy as CSM and he had one. And to top it off B Coy had three BEM awardees at one stage; Mick Durkin, John Smith and CJ Mason. See the Thistle, May 1986 page 121. So, what other Royals and members of the Regimental Family have been awarded this medal? Let my research begin! After many days of trawling through the London Gazette, Find My Past, Ancestry, Fold 3, the Imperial War Museum, the National Archives and many a medal book, this is what I found.

The origins of the BEM stem from The Medal of the Order of The British Empire that was instituted in June 1917. It originally consisted of a Civil Division only, but a Military Division was added in December 1918 made distinguishable by a centre stripe in the medal ribbon. It was discontinued in 1922 when two new medals were instituted in December 1922; The Empire Gallantry Medal (EGM) and The British Empire Medal (BEM), both of which have a Civil and Military Division.

The EGM, officially known as The Medal of the Order of The British Empire for Gallantry, was awarded for specific acts of gallantry. A silver laurel branch was added to the ribbon in 1933, with a small one for wear on the ribbon alone. This was discontinued on the institution of the George Cross in September 1940. Those awarded the EGM were able to exchange their medal for the George Cross although a few decided to keep their EGM.

The BEM, formally titled as The Medal of the Order of The British Empire for Meritorious Service. It was awarded for Meritorious Service although for some years, mainly during WW2, it was issued as a third grade bravery award that did not reach the level for a George Cross or George Medal. The BEM can still be worn if the recipient is promoted within the Order of The British Empire to a MBE or OBE. Awards for gallantry to the BEM was instituted in December 1957 but ceased in 1974 with the introduction of the Queen's Gallantry Medal. Those awarded for gallantry wore a crossed silver oak leaf emblem on the medal ribbon. This gallantry emblem was also used to recognise gallantry to those appointed MBE, OBE and CBE. However, my research could not conclude if a small silver gallantry emblem should be worn on the ribbon when the ribbon is worn alone? Due to the British honours system review in 1993, no awards were made to British subjects until 2012 when the medal was reinstated for Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee.



The Medal of the Order of The British Empire 1917 to 1922.



The Empire Gallantry Medal.

The British Empire Medal. l: Medal observe with Gallantry emblem. c: observe with second award bar. r: medal reverse.



Civil from 1922 to 1937.

Military from 1922 to 1937.

Civil from 1937 to present.

Military from 1937 to present.

Rosette to denote 2nd award.

The BEM is made of silver and 36mm in diameter. The medal is suspended from a bar decorated with oak leaves. The obverse of the medal shows the seated figure of Britannia, her left hand resting on a shield and her right holding a trident, with a blazing sun in the upper right. The words 'FOR GOD AND THE EMPIRE' inscribed round the upper part of the circumference, and the words 'FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE' in the exergue. (The EGM had the inscription 'FOR GALLANTRY'). On the reverse is the Royal Cypher of the monarch, at the time of issue, surmounted by a crown with the words: 'INSTITUTED BY KING GEORGE V' within a border of four heraldic lions. The medal is worn suspended from its own specific ribbon to indicate a Civil or Military award; from 1922 to 1937 the Civil ribbon was purple with the Military ribbon having a narrow central red stripe. After 1937 the Civil ribbon changed to rose-pink with pearl-grey edges and the Military ribbon to rose-pink with pearl-grey edges and a pearl-grey central stripe. Recipients of the BEM are entitled to use the post-nominal letters "BEM" and the medal has the recipient's name on the rim. For second and subsequent awards of the BEM a silver bar decorated with oak leaves was introduced in March 1941 and a small silver rosette is worn on the ribbon for each subsequent award, when the ribbon is worn alone.

Members of The Royal Scots and our Regimental Family awarded these medals so far are; one Medal of the Order of The British Empire and 31 BEM's. Their names and London Gazette details are listed on the page opposite. I have endeavoured to ensure the list is complete, but before going to print, another member of our Regimental Family awarded the BEM was brought to my attention and added to the list. Further editions of The Thistle will record all the information, photos and citations found for each recipient.

Mr Ray (Halfchat) Thomson

**8949 Miss (Forewoman Cook) Mary Dustan**, Queen Mary's Auxiliary Army Corps. (Served at the Depot Royal Scots, Glencorse 1914-1919).

**The Medal of the Order of The British Empire** London Gazette 23 January 1920 page 967 in recognition of valuable services rendered in connection with the War. Military Division.

After WW1 Mary joined the staff of The Royal Scots Club and served until 1956.



**When the Civil Division BEM is presented to a lady the ribbon is made into a bow.**

**3589460 Colour Sergeant James Milburn Wood DCM**, 4th/5th Battalion (Queen's Edinburgh) (52nd Searchlight Regiment) The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment), Territorial Army.

BEM London Gazette 8 June 1939 page 3872 for Meritorious Service. Military Division. DCM London Gazette 6 September 1915 page 8866.

**3050802 Sergeant John Clifford Brown**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 13 January 1942 page 231 in recognition of gallant conduct in carrying out hazardous work in a very brave manner. Military Division.

**3062045 Private James Callander Wilson**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 18 August 1942 page 3601 in recognition of gallant conduct in carrying out hazardous work in a very brave manner. Military Division.

**3056383 Private Samuel Anderson**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 10 March 1944 page 1151 in recognition of gallant conduct in carrying out hazardous work in a very brave manner. Military Division.

**3058530 Corporal William Watson**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 10 March 1944 page 1151 in recognition of gallant conduct in carrying out hazardous work in a very brave manner. Military Division.

**310689 Sergeant John Hatcher**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 14 June 1945 page 2963. Military Division.

**3056642 Sergeant John William Fraser**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 24 January 1946 page 627 in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in North West Europe. Military Division.

**7662913 Sergeant Harold William Govan**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 23 May 1946 page 2502, in recognition of distinguished services in South East Asia. Military Division.

**3136139 Warrant Officer Class II (acting) James Moffet Greenshields**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 13 June 1946 page 2800. Military Division.

**3054368 Corporal John Hamilton Williamson**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 28 November 1946 page 5830, in recognition of valuable services rendered by the undermentioned repatriated prisoners of war during their captivity. Military Division.

**3062624 Colour Sergeant Thomas Pennycook**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 1 January 1949 page 26. Military Division.

**3044245 Sergeant (Pipe Major) George Sinclair Forsyth**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 05 June 1952 page 3034. Military Division.

**20634 Sergeant William Brock MM**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). Territorial Army.

BEM London Gazette 02 January 1956 page 28. Military Division. MM London Gazette 17 June 1919 page 7659 11 RS.

**23102933 Private Francis Mahon**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 13 Jun 1957 page 3417. In recognition of distinguished services in the Operations in the Near East (Suez), October-December, 1956. Military Division.

**3645797 Colour Sergeant John Milne Keppie**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). Territorial Army. BEM London Gazette 12 June 1958 page 3539. Military Division.

**Mr Arthur Goodman Jack**, Storeman Grade B, Edinburgh Castle, Ministry of Defence (Curator of The Regimental Museum). BEM London Gazette 12 June 1971 page 5982. Civil Division.

**23959750 Corporal Alexander McIntosh**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 9 March 1971 page 1991. **For Gallantry**. Military Division.

**Mr Archibald Nelson Young Shaw**, Chief Steward II, Officers' Mess, Glencorse, Ministry of Defence. (Officers' Mess Depot Royal Scots). BEM London Gazette 01 January 1973 page 26. Civil Division.

**Mr John (Jack) Archibald**, lately Head Attendant, National Galleries of Scotland. BEM London Gazette 15 June 1974 page 6817. Civil Division. Jack was a WO1 taking part in the RS 300. He also attended the RS 350 parade.

**24019548 Corporal Michael Durkin**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 01 January 1975 page 24. Military Division.

**23539739 Colour Sergeant Ian Alexander Ramsey Erskine**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 14 June 1975 page 7391. Military Division.

**24111323 Sergeant James Gallacher**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 12 Apr 1983 page 4958 in recognition of meritorious service in Northern Ireland during the period 1st August 1982 to 31st October 1982. Military Division. London Gazette 21 Jun 1983 page 8198. A correction of surname.

**24438279 Corporal Clifford John Mason**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 18 Oct 1983 page 13652, in recognition of meritorious service in Northern Ireland during the period 01 February 1983 to 30 April 1983. Military Division.

**24150090 Sergeant Thomas Fisher**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 16 Jun 1984 page B20. Military Division.

**24107566 Sergeant acting Colour Sergeant John Smith**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 15 June 1985 page B20. Military Division.

**24026197 Colour Sergeant Robert Irvine**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) (now discharged). BEM London Gazette 31 December 1986 page 18. Military Division.

**24074297 Colour Sergeant Alexander Ferguson**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 28 December 1990 page 19. Military Division.

**24233452 Colour Sergeant (Pipe Major) Thomas Drysdale Cornwall**, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment). BEM London Gazette 30 December 1992 page 20. Military Division.

**Mrs Patricia Wagstaff**, For services to charity, Volunteer, Sobell House Hospice, Oxford. (Patricia is the widow of Maj Walter (Peter) Wagstaff). BEM London Gazette 29 December 2012 page N33. Civil Division.

**The Reverend Robert Alan Knox**, For services to the Royal British Legion and the community in Londonderry. (Alan was Padre of 1 RS 1980 to 1985). BEM London Gazette 31 December 2015 page N31. Civil Division.

**Mr Thomas Douglas**, Community Support Manager, Royal British Legion Scotland, for services to veterans in Scotland. BEM London Gazette 14 June 2025 page B31. Civil Division.



Andy Kay with the sword ready to cut the Ceremonial Montgomery Cheddar.

For a second successive year, one of The Royal Scots In-Pensioners has been accorded the honour of cutting the cheese at the annual Ceremony of the Christmas Cheeses at The Royal Hospital Chelsea. Following in the footsteps of Vic Lucas in 2024, Andy Kay was selected for this prestigious task last year. The history of the ceremony was described in *The Thistle* Vol 46 Winter 2024/25, so will not be repeated here, other than to note the continued support of Dairy UK that makes the event possible.



Andy Kay (r) cutting the Ceremonial Montgomery Cheddar with Chair of Dairy UK Mr Paul Vernon.

Andy has been an In-Pensioner since January 2022 and has fully embraced life in the Hospital. He has taken advantage of the many opportunities offered by the Hospital and has been a great ambassador for the Pensioners. He has been involved in many aspects of community life in the Hospital, assisting with the compilation and production of the Hospital journal, *The Tricorn*, and volunteering at the museum there. It is good that The Royal Scots is so well represented by active In-Pensioners who maintain the highest traditions of the Regiment within the Hospital.

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack

### Canadian Scottish Regiment – Renaming of Regimental Headquarters



The renamed General Sir Arthur Currie Armoury.

An alliance with the Canadian Scottish Regiment was approved by King George V in December 1926 (see *The Thistle* Jan 1927 and Apr 1927) and a close relationship developed between the two regiments. Although the alliance was transferred to The Royal Regiment of Scotland in 2006 links are still maintained with the Regiment and the Association. Whilst we have not reported on activities in the Canadian Scottish Regiment for some time, recent activities and events warrant recording here. The headquarters of the Regiment is located in the Armoury on Bay Street, Victoria, British Columbia. Formerly known as the Bay Street Armoury, it was renamed as the General Sir Arthur Currie Armoury on 5 December 2025, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Arthur Currie.



**Ceremonial Party. l to r: CWO Lisa Kachanoski, RSM 5th Field Regt, HCol John Ducker, 5th Field Regt, LCol Ian Watt, CO 5th Field Regt, Sgt Arthur Currie, 16 Wing Borden, LCol Slade Lerch, CO The Canadian Scottish Regiment, HCol Alan Lowe, The Canadian Scottish Regiment, Captain Kevin Whiteside, Commander CFB Esquimalt and CWO Jesse Macleod, RSM The Canadian Scottish Regiment.**

General Sir Arthur Currie GCMG KCB was one of the finest Canadian military commanders of his generation and commanded the Canadian Corps in France during the First World War. He began his career as a teacher before selling insurance and investing in real estate. He joined the militia in 1897 as a gunner in the 5<sup>th</sup> (British Columbia), Field Artillery Regiment. He was commissioned in 1900 and rose to command the regiment from 1908 to 1913. In 1913 he was invited to become the first commanding officer of the 50<sup>th</sup> Regiment Gordon Highlanders of Canada. This regiment formed part of the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Canadian Scottish), Canadian Expeditionary Force in the First World War, which subsequently became The Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's). He was influential in the design of the armoury on Bay Street, Victoria, which was built in 1913 for the 50<sup>th</sup> Gordon Highlanders.

Currie did not remain with the 50<sup>th</sup> Gordon Highlanders for long; in September 1914 he assumed command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division. After a period of training in UK, the brigade moved to France in February 1915 and saw action in the second Battle of Ypres in April 1915. It was also at Ypres that the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Scottish earned their first battle honour. The steadfastness of the Canadian defence at Ypres prevented the Germans from outflanking the Allies. Marshall Ferdinand Foch, later Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies, described it as "the greatest act of the war", while General Sir John French, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force, declared that "the Canadians saved the Empire that day." Currie was promoted to major general and took command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division. He believed victory was not won by chance or courage alone, but by careful planning, rehearsed execution, and deep respect for the lives of the soldiers under his command. "Good planning and intelligent use of artillery win battles — not bravado." Currie was influential in revising tactics after some of the costliest battles of 1916 and these were implemented in April 1917 at the Battle of Vimy Ridge, which came to define Canadian contribution on the Western Front. Following this action, he was promoted to lieutenant general and took command of 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Corps in June 1917, which he led until the end of the war, including at the Battle of Passchendaele. He retired from the Army in 1920 and was appointed Principal and Vice-Chancellor of McGill University, a position he held until his death in 1933.

It has taken the Canadian Scottish Regiment many years of campaigning to secure approval for the renaming in his honour of the Armoury he had designed 112 years ago. Thus, on 5 December 2025 a ceremony was held at the newly renamed General Sir Arthur Currie Armoury to mark this auspicious day.

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack



**General Sir Arthur Currie GCMG KCB.**



**Whisky Galore!**

Although our affiliation with the CScotR moved to The Royal Regiment of Scotland (SCOTS) in 2006 we still stay in touch. The last visit was in October 2012 when a party of Royal Scots attended the CScotR Centennial in Victoria on Vancouver Island. See The Thistle Vol 28, No 12 Winter 2012-13. During this event, bottles of CScotR Centennial Whisky were presented to all the CScotR Second World War veterans with one of those bottles making its way to The Royals table. The party agreed that this bottle was far too important to be opened and it was suggested that it should be displayed in the RS Museum. Lt Col Jim Blythe MBE was given the honour to

ensure its safe passage home where it was duly displayed in the Museum. It joined other treasured gifts from CScotR, including the carved First Nations mask, a silver plaque depicting 'Wallace' (Regimental Mascot) who had spent the War billeted at Glencorse and, most importantly, the splendid totem pole that was presented to the Royal Scots Club by CScotR members en route to the liberation of North West Europe.

To remember 'Wallace', The Canadian Scottish Regiment Heritage Foundation (CScotR HF) are now introducing "Wallace's Own" – The New Canadian Scottish Regimental Whisky.

To quote from Robert Dodds, President, Canadian Scottish Regiment Heritage Foundation email. "We're thrilled to share the success of our recent whisky tasting event, held to select the next official whisky for the Canadian Scottish Regiment. With over 25 enthusiastic participants sampling six exceptional whiskies from Macaloney's Island Distillery, the evening was a resounding success.

After much deliberation and enjoyment, the chosen whisky is the Classic Red Wine Barrel – a rich, distinctive spirit that will proudly carry the name "Wallace's Own", in honour of our beloved regimental mascot, Wallace. This bottling celebrates the legacy and spirit of the Regiment."

We are in discussion with Robert about the possibility of getting a few bottles. However as the CScotR HF are not an authorised dealer, they cannot export the whisky to Scotland. However, Robert is planning to visit Scotland in the autumn so it may be possible for him to bring a few bottles with them as their personal allowance. Details to follow. A bottle will cost CAD\$99.00 that at the current exchange rate is £54. Anyone interested in securing a bottle should email the Regimental Secretary at [RegtSec@theroyalscots.co.uk](mailto:RegtSec@theroyalscots.co.uk). Kindly note that availability and cost are still to be confirmed.



The front and back of the bottle of whisky brought back from Canada to the museum in 2012.

**The CScotR Mascot 'Wallace'**

Wallace was the famous St. Bernard mascot for The Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's) during World War II, known for being smuggled aboard a troop ship to England in 1941. Named after Pipe Major Alexander Wallace, this mascot, and his successors, served as a beloved morale booster from 1939 to 1950 and beyond, becoming a cherished part of the regiment's history. There is even a pipe tune named for them both.



Unidentified piper with the mascot 'Wallace' of the 1st Battalion, Canadian Scottish Regiment, England, on 10 June 1943.



The new whisky 'Wallace's Own'.

Wallace I (1939–1950) was only a year old when he joined the 1st Battalion at Macaulay Point in 1939. To get him overseas the troops chloroformed him and hid him on the troopship Stratheden. Despite a search, he was not found. However, Wallace was discovered when he went ashore upon arrival in Scotland and he was quarantined for six months. After that, he stayed with the Battalion until D Day when Wallace then stayed with The Royal Scots at Edinburgh Castle and Glencorse Barracks. The Thistle, January 1946, pages 31 to 34 gives an account of the CScotR. After the war, Wallace was reunited with the CScotR and returned to Canada in 1946, leading the parade from the Canadian Pacific Railway dock to the Bay Street Armoury in Victoria, BC. Sadly, Wallace died in November 1950 and he was cremated with his ashes being placed in the Officers' Mess along with an oil painting of him presented to the Battalion by Her Royal Highness, Princess Mary.



Wallace being fed by his Royal Scots carer, Piper "Wee Andy" McGeorge, at a ceremonial dinner at the Mansion House attended by HRH the Princess Royal, London 6 December 1945.



The CScotR, Pipe Band in 1945 (showing the Pipers' Red Lennox Tartan), marching through London to the Mansion House, escorted by mascot Wallace I, under the direction of Pipe Major Archie McMillan.

The tradition of having a mascot holding the name Wallace continues to this day. The latest, Wallace VII, was presented with dog tag number 16 by Victoria Mayor Marianne Alto in 2024. Past dogs have been St. Bernards. The current Wallace is a Great Pyrenees/Sarplaninac cross. Over time, the City of Victoria changed his dog tag number. The number 16 was chosen to recognize the regiment's perpetuation of 16th Battalion CScotR of the Canadian Expeditionary Force from the First World War.

The Wallaces of the CScotR; Wallace I 1939 – 1950, Wallace II 23 May 1969 – 1 October 1971, Wallace III 13 January 1972 – 23 February 1982, Wallace IV 24 September 1989 – 22 May 1991, Wallace V 4 September 1991 – 6 June 1998, Wallace VI 2002 – 2011 and Wallace VII 2024 – Present.

**Mr Ray (Halfchat) Thomson**



November 2007 Wallace VI who died in 2011.



Victoria Mayor Marianne Alto presented a dog tag to Wallace VII of the Canadian Scottish Regiment. l to r: Lt Col David Proctor, Sgt Jesse Hunt and Hon Lt Col Alan Lowe. Photo Darren Stone, Times Colonist.

After many years of being the bridesmaid, The Royal Scots curling team might now consider themselves to be the maid of honour; not quite the bride we'd want to be but we're moving up the Highland/Lowland Brigade Curling Club (HLBCC) pecking order!

The campaign this year started well. We came together with the RHF and KOSB curlers to form The Lowlanders in the inter-Regimental league with a convincing win over the A&SH in early January. It is reported by some that it is better to be lucky than skilled, and this was certainly the case for this match... despite the Argyll's best efforts, stones delivered by Brian de la Haye proved to be both accurate and set conditions for Mike Onslow, as skip, to rack up a 20-11 victory.

Sadly, the Highlanders pipped us by 11-6 in Perth at the end of January in what was not quite as close a match as we'd hoped for – it seems as though Mike's mojo had temporarily failed to turn up. The match against the Black Watch in mid-February had the Lowlanders back on form and, prior to an excellent lunch at Balhousie Castle, we were able to escape with a 13-10 victory. When all the other matches were completed, we were delighted that we'd come second in the league – pipped by the Highlanders by a single stone.

The HLBCC then went on to play The New Club at Murrayfield (a close win) and then The Royal Company of Archers in Kinross (a more conclusive win) before meeting in Perth for the Club's annual Bonspeil at the end of March. Hopes were high and, as is customary, we reverted to Regimental rinks; David Dickson was lead, Gordon Rae second, Brian de la Haye third and Mike Onslow skipped the RS Team. We also had Mike Cran and John 'Dickie' Donovan assisting two KOSB curlers in the SCOTS rink. The first RS match against the BW A Team didn't go to plan in the first end with a 4 stone deficit and, just as we were about to recover in the second end, their skip managed to place his last stone on the button thereby depriving us of a 4 stone win. The third and fourth ends were won by the RS team, but it wasn't enough to turn the tables. This meant that we were relegated to the Low Road competition which, after victories against The Highlanders B and the BW B teams, we won (again!) and, on consolidated score, meant that we came second overall. Congratulations to the Argylls who won the High Road competition for the first time in many years.

Regimental curlers were drawn from Mike Onslow, Brian de la Haye, Gordon Rae, David Dickson, Mike Cran, Dickie Donovan and Matt Hovell with well-intentioned offers of support from Malcolm Hill and Matt Stevens. Many thanks to those who commit to coming along, some of whom travel considerable distances, and it is hoped that those interested in curling will get in touch (through David Jack in the Regimental Office please) and offer their service.

After many years of being 'also rans', it looks as though Regimental curlers are on the up and here's to, finally, being the bride next season (perhaps!).

Lieutenant Colonel Mike Onslow



The RS Curlers – with Brian holding the Chocolate-ware prize!  
l to r: Dickie Donovan, Mike Onslow, Gordon Rae, David Dickson, Mike Cran and Brian de la Haye.

Kohima visit



Malcolm Warrack and Cate Walls at The Royal Scots memorial in Kohima.

Malcolm Warrack and Cate Walls, son and daughter of the late Lt Col Morren Warrack made a trip to eastern India in October 2025 and visited The Royal Scots memorial at Kohima. Lt Col Morren Warrack served in the 1st Battalion in India and Burma 1943 – 1945 and specifically at Kohima. He was also one of the instigators of The Royal Scots Memorial Garden at Lauriston Castle Estate in Edinburgh, which has become the focus for Regimental remembrance of service in the Far East. While on their visit, Malcolm and Cate met up with Eililo Enzung and her husband Sashimeren Imsong, native Nagas who had lived in Edinburgh but have now returned to Nagaland, the area in which Kohima is located. They attended the VJ Day memorial service at Lauriston Castle on 16 Aug 2025 (see page 7 of *The Thistle* Vol 47 Summer 2025). It takes some detailed planning and considerable effort to make the journey to Kohima, so it is not often that the memorial is visited. Many buildings have been erected in the vicinity, so the

memorial is no longer surrounded by open countryside, but it remains in good condition. Despite careful selection of the dates of the visit, an extended monsoon season meant that much of the visit was conducted in heavy rain. Nevertheless, Malcolm and Cate enjoyed much local hospitality and beautiful scenery.

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack

## Royal Scots, Then and Now

We have started this new article to ensure that we who served in The Royal Scots are remembered in perpetuity. So come and join us. All you need to do is send a hi-res photo of your handsome self when you were in training and a most recent one of yourself, if possible, as smart as the day you Passed Out. Then send them to [photos1633@gmail.com](mailto:photos1633@gmail.com) along with a small write up similar to the ones below.

### Ray (Halfchat) Thomson

Ray joined the Royals on 21 July 1981 and served with B Coy and then A Coy from late 1991. He did 2 tours in Northern Ireland and a posting as a Training Corporal at JIB Ouston. He also took part in the Royal Guard in 1983, the Falklands 1984 and the Gulf 1991. Ray transferred to the REME in January 1994, serving with their Guadeloupe Training Company SEME twice in Bordon, HQ REME TA in Bordon, 1 Bn REME in Osnabruck and finally as RQMS at 4 Bn REME back in Bordon. He completed his regular service in July 2005 and then held a NRPS post at HQ REME TA until June 2006 when he moved into facilities management within schools. He also did a few years with the CCF. Ray retired in March 2021 at the tender age of 56. He resides on the West Coast of Scotland with his partner of 20 years Linda and their 3<sup>rd</sup> rescue Husky, Ember. Ray volunteers for The Royal Scots Regimental Trust conducting research and compiling The Thistle. He also helps with the administration for the Stewart Snedden Memorial Golf.



Then - June 1982



Now - November 2025

### Colin (Maxi) MacDonald

Maxi joined August 1978 and finished regular service July 2001. He completed a two year tour, 4 x 6 month tours and a 3 year tour with 3 RIR, 2 SG in Northern Ireland and a posting with 24 CTT in Edinburgh. Maxi also went to the Falklands and took part in Gulf War. He completed his service as a CSgt and then took up work for a furniture company for 4 years and left as their supervisor to join a company that specialised in emergency oil clean ups and industrial oil tank cleaning until present day. Maxi has been married for 42 years to Kim and they have a son Colin and two daughters Carly and Maxine who are all married. He has 5 grandchildren with a 6<sup>th</sup> due at Christmas. Maxi and Kim have lived in Northern Ireland for 27 years along with their Saint Bernard, Bonnie. Maxi is a strong supporter of the Royals and continues his ties as the Chairman of the Northern Ireland Branch of the RS Association. Maxi is often seen on regular pilgrimages with a group of his 'Band of Brothers' from the Regiment.



Then - Dec 1978



Now - November 2025

### Scott (Gillie) Gillies

After training at SID Bridge of Don, Scott joined 4 Pl, B Coy in Werl in July 1985. Later he moved to the Mortar Pl doing a tour of Belfast and Op Granby where he was awarded a 1st Armoured Division Commanders Commendation. In 1992 he deployed to Bessbrook Mill as a medic and stayed with A Coy until moving to C Coy in 1995 for 2 years. Scott returned to the Medical Section full time until 2001 when he moved to the Training Wing until 2006. During this time he still worked as a medic on Op Tours to Bosnia and Iraq in 2003, where he was awarded Commander Joint Chiefs Commendation. On the formation of the SCOTS in 2006 Scott moved to Fallingbostal with 4 SCOTS (Hldrs) where in 2008 he deployed to Afghanistan. Scott left the forces as a Cpl in 2011 and worked in security in Afghanistan and Iraq until 2020. He is now employed as an ambulance technician in the Scottish Borders where he lives with his wife of 33 years, Susan.



Then - June 1985



Now - November 2025

### Dave (Wolfman) Dickson

Dave joined in April 1970 and went to A Coy in Drumahoe for the start of 9 Op Banner tours. He has served in Tidworth, Norway, Greece, Cyprus and Germany twice in Munster and then Werl. Dave was posted to the Support Weapons Wing (SWW) at Netheravon as a Milan Instructor. In June 1994 he finished his service as CSM Support Company in Fort George. Dave is married to Janet and they have two grown up children Suzanne and David. He is now retired having worked for a local council and later as a Police Dispatcher with Police Scotland for 15 years. Dave did however go back into the services for 5 years as a RAF Regiment Flight Sergeant (Auxiliary) which he said; "Was fun!" He is now in charge of very important and challenging tasks of planning and booking holidays and being a grandparent to Aidan, who calls Dave "Ga Ga". Dave is a keen "Munro Bagger" with 182 under his belt and 100 to go, knees allowing.



Then - 1970



Now - November 2025

## 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](mailto: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.

### Sighting Report – Tiso's Glasgow

A gathering of four auld Royals took place at Tiso's in Glasgow on Wednesday 17 September 2025 for a "slim athletic breakfast", yeah right! The banter was flying in every direction from Op Tours to being the enemy for the Royal Marines Commando potential officers doing there training on the Isle of Skye. This is where B Company 1 RS destroyed their Comacchio Company. The Royal Marines did not like that one bit with many a Green Beret rolling. Nolts and Halfchat normally meet up every 6 months or so for a wee catch up. Again, they will put a notice on the RS website on the Guestbook page should anyone else wish to join them.



l to r: Col Martin Gibson, Ray (Halfchat) Thomson, Derek (Nolts) Notman and John (Rossco) Ross.

### Sighting Report – The Royal Scots Club

Saturday 11 October 2025 saw the RP 25 (Rat Pack) at the Royal Scots Club. These crooners gather often for a bit of top quality tucker, vino and a fantastic craic. They also celebrated the "significant" birthdays of Willie and Paul. Those who attended would like to pass on their huge thanks to Big John Lothian who always makes a top job of squaring things away. They are also looking forward to seeing each other for some Christmas Shopping. Happy birthday gents.



l to r: John Lothian, Jimmy Gunn, Sandy Craig, Malky Fearon, Stu Simpson, Paul McAllister, Willie Love, Dinger Bell, Graham Hightet, Hank Turnbull and Alan Gold.  
MIA Sandy Aitchison away on Op Bronze (St Lucia).

## Sighting Report – Castlerock Golf Club

In November 2025 on a crisp but very sunny day, some of Brian Mercer's friends gathered to celebrate his significant birthday with a wee round of golf and some food and drink at Castlerock Golf Club on the northern coast of Northern Ireland near Coleraine. Happy birthday Brian. To see a small video of Brian's celebration on Facebook then copy and paste or click on the link below.

<https://www.facebook.com/612353872/videos/pcb.10162016489883873/4184503615150608>



A young Brian Mercer ready for a round... of golf or Guinness?



l to r: Brian Mercer, Brian's good friend Adam McGreevy and Graham Hight.



l to r: Brian Mercer and Graham Hight.



l to r: Brian Mercer, Graham Hight and Adam McGreevy Captain of Edenmore GC.

## Sighting Report – Gogarburn Golf Club



l to r: Larry Gilbert, Eck Wind and Ginge Vevers getting in much needed practice on Saturday 13 December 2025.

## Sighting Report – Klondyke Garden Centre



Charlie MacVicar (left) bumped in to a Royal Scot's legend in Falkirk. It was great to have a few moments with Mark Sands and his good lady on Saturday 15 December 2026.

## Sighting Report – Northern Ireland Association Branch Christmas Party 2025

On the 13 December 2025 a Christmas Party was held at Royal British Legion Newtownards. A great night was had and all who attended would like to thank Colin (Maxi) and Kim MacDonald and the committee for organising things. OUTSTANDING. Some other Association Members travelled across the water to join them. Anything for a free party... Stu and Tam!



Standing l to r: Graham Hight, Colin Timms, Ben Taylor, Kenny Boyle, Brian (Beed) Mercer, Billy (Doc) Halliday, Stephen (Stevie Dee) Dawson, Stewart Guthrie, George Higgins, Winston Lyn, John Friend, Ian Laurie and Derek (Dusty) Miller.  
Kneeling position, Tank Action! l to r: Colin (Maxi) MacDonald, Tam Logan, Stevie Brown and Stu Marshall.

## Sighting Report – The Thistle Lodge Northfield Birmingham

On Saturday 3 January 2026 at The Thistle Lodge Northfield Birmingham a few auld Royals took part in a very early Burns Night.



l to r: Graham Hight, Cammy Craig, Sandy Craig Snr, Sandy Craig Jnr (ex C Company) and Stu Simpson.

## Memory Lane

Come and join us to bring back some memories of when we served. All you need to do is send a hi-res photo of yourself or group along with names, location and when, to [photos1633@gmail.com](mailto:photos1633@gmail.com).

Pre Brecon Cadre, Glen Trool Galloway, November 1984.



Back row l to r: Derek (Nolts) Notman, John McGurk, Cliff Mason and Mac (Scarecrow) McDonald.  
Front row l to r: Willie (Popey) Malloy and Hamish McPherson.

## Royal Scots Officers at the Pyramids

The exact date of the photograph is not known but it was probably taken during the period from July 1954 to May 1955 while the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was based in the Canal Zone. It looks like a Support Company reconnaissance as The Thistle November 1954 page 34 records that Capt Pirie was OC Atk Pl, Lt Richardson was OC Mor Pl and Lt Stisted was OC MG Pl. The Thistle November 1955 page 169 has photo of A Coy taken in same location which is about 50m to the East of the Valley Temple of Khafre looking West.



l to r: Lt (later Brig) Nigel Stisted, Lt (later Lt Gen Sir Robert) Bob Richardson, and Capt (later Maj) Pat Pirie.

## National Memorial Arboretum – Name change

From September 2026 the National Memorial Arboretum will be known as the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens. There are three memorials of particular significance to the Regiment – The Royal Scots memorial (red arrow on map), the Lisbon Maru memorial (purple arrow on map) and the Le Paradis Massacre memorial (blue arrow on map).



The Royal Scots memorial.



Croxall Road,  
Alrewas,  
Staffordshire  
DE13 7AR  
What3Words [///browsers.skews.fermented](https://www.what3words.com/)



## Summary of Commissioned work for The Royal Scots (2019–2025)

The Royal Scots YouTube channel contains 71 videos which can be accessed by scanning the QR to the left or clicking the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/@royalscots1894/videos>

These cover a range of campaigns and events from World War One to the present day and include archive material and oral history. A list of those items commissioned in the period 2019 - 2025 are shown below.

### WWII veteran interviews and heritage film (2019–2020)

01 Scottish Soldiers- World War 2 Memories. 44 mins.

[01 Scottish Soldiers- World War 2 Memories](#)



### Royal Scots 350th Anniversary “40 Years On” – archival film loop and social media edit (2023) (Inc. Rob Wainwright)

07 Scottish Soldiers’ Reflections at Remembrance. 72 mins.

[07 Scottish Soldiers’ Reflections at Remembrance](#)



### Post-WWII Regimental Memories Film – filming, edit, and final master (2019–2020)

02 THE ROYAL SCOTS: Scottish Soldiers- Regimental Memories 1945 to 2006. 58 mins.

[Post-WWII Regimental Memories Film](#)



### World War II Memories – re-edit and new short film version (2025)

08 The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment), VE 80<sup>th</sup>. 5 mins.

[08 The Royal Scots \(The Royal Regiment\), VE 80<sup>th</sup>](#)

### VJ Day Wreath-Laying Ceremony Film (2020)

03 VJ Day 15th August 2020. 12 mins.

[03 VJ Day 15th August 2020](#)



### VJ Day 80th Anniversary Film – archive-led documentary edit with narration (2025)

09 VJ Day 2025 - For Your Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today. 12 mins.

[09 VJ Day 2025 - For Your Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today](#)



### Le Paradis Story (2020) Recording and Editing of Ian Johnson's Le Paradis Story – ONLINE (Covid)

04 The Royal Scots, The Untold Dunkirk Story Virtual 80th Anniversary Commemorative Service. 35 mins.

[04 The Royal Scots, The Untold Dunkirk Story](#)

### St Andrew's Day Regimental Gathering – filming, live stream, and highlight film

05 RS St Andrews Day 2021. 8 mins.

[05 RS St Andrews Day 2021](#)



### Quintinshill Rail Disaster – 110th Anniversary Film (2025)

10 Leith Darkest Dawn - The Royal Scots. 12 mins.

[10 Leith Darkest Dawn - The Royal Scots](#)



### Remembrance Event, Dalkeith – stills photography and image processing (2023)

06 Still Photos of event

[06 Still Photos of event](#)

### Gretna 110 / Leith Commemorative Event Film (2025)

11 22 May 1915 Lest We Forget. 12 mins.

[11 22 May 1915 Lest We Forget](#)



## 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 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 Docker	Finance
Capt Nick Edwardson	Communications
Maj Stu Marshall	Association
Mr Keith Oliver OBE WS	Legal
Mr Allan Carswell	Museum
Brig James Stevenson MBE	

### Museum & Heritage Committee

Lt Col John Donovan MBE	Chair
Brig George Lowder MBE	
Lt Col Gordon Rae	
Mr Allan Carswell	
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
Lt Col David Jack	Treasurer



## Memorial Service for Tam Haggerty

There was a memorial service for Tam Haggerty on 3 March 2026, the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in Iraq as the land campaign in the Gulf War 1991 drew to a close. Tam was a WARRIOR driver in A Company. Family and friends gathered at the Parkhead Congregational Church and then at the local Royal British Legion branch to remember Tam and share stories about his early life, his service in The Royal Scots and the pranks he enjoyed.

The service was conducted by Rev Stephen Blakey, who had been the Battalion Padre at the time, Brig George Lowder, who had been Adjutant, Maj Gen Bob Bruce, who had been 2IC A Company, Henry Angus, a Platoon Commander in A Company, Maj Sandy Mack, his section commander, and other members of A Company and the Battalion.

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack

## Deaths

Mr Joe Ellwand	16 Aug 2025 1 RS	Alan (Ali) Tulloch	19 Jan 2026 1 RS/SCOTS
Mr Ian Ness Richardson	3 Oct 2025 1 RS	Maj Richard Dickson TD	26 Jan 2026 1 RS
Mr Kenneth MacLeod	23 Oct 2025 1 RS	Mr Ander (Sammy) Salmond	6 Feb 2026 1 RS
Mr Eric Wilson	2 Nov 2025 1 RS	Mr Ernest Hunter Woodburn	22 Feb 2026 1 RS (NS)
Mr John Busby	30 Nov 2025 1 RS	Mr William Lawrie	25 Feb 2026 1 RS
Mr Tam Simpson	19 Dec 2025 1 RS	Mr James Porteous	1 Mar 2026 1 RS
Mr Bill (Scoobie) Black	24 Dec 2025 1 RS	Mr Derek Ferguson	26 March 2026

## A Tribute to Lieutenant Colonel John (Jock) Logan Wilson Smith OBE

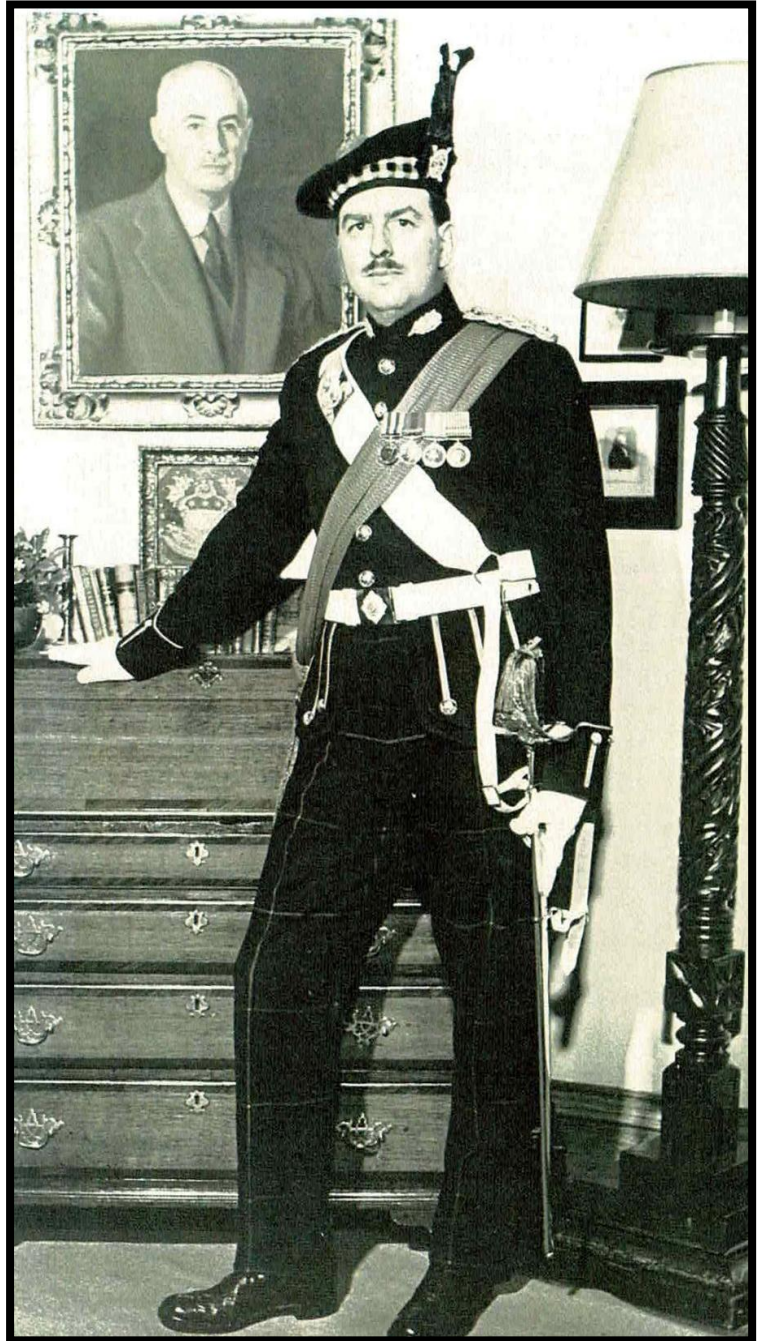
4 July 1927 – 3 September 2025

This tribute was delivered by Major Guy Richardson at the memorial service for Lieutenant Colonel Jock Wilson Smith on Friday 31 October 2025 at Bonkyl Church.

Good afternoon, I have known the Wilson Smith family for over 50 years. My late parents were great friends of Jock and Anne, with my father having been a fellow Royal Scots officer. It is an immense privilege that I have been asked to pay tribute to Jock today. In putting this together, I have engaged with many Royal Scots officers & soldiers. I have also turned to a very detailed (obviously!) book that Jock wrote called the *Cumledge Chronicle*. This history of a family and a home over several centuries was written to ensure that the family history and the story of Cumledge will not be lost to posterity. It will perhaps not surprise you to know that Jock had also written his own 'eulogy' which was characteristically modest (still detailed though) – now incorporated into what I would like to share with you today.

I will be referencing *Cumledge House* quite a bit so here is a short background. This is the ancestral home to the Wilson Smith family with the current generation, Jane and Scott, moving there in 1999. They are the sixth generation to live there. Rather unusually, the house has a 140-foot suspension bridge over Cumledge Burn, opened in 1952. I personally recall circa mid-seventies swinging across the beams under the bridge and encouraging Caroline to join me only for her mother fortunately to intervene!

John Logan Wilson Smith, or Jock as he was known, was born 4 July 1927, American Independence Day, in Poplar Cottage, Harrow. He was christened John but always called Jock to differentiate him from his mother's brother's son. He always said this was very useful, as all official documents – birth certificate, passport, council tax and official records named him John, so when letters arrived addressed to "Dear John", he knew what to do! The early years saw him live in Harrow and Whiteparish and Jock recalls spending his school holidays in Alderstone House, just outside of Whiteparish. It was in this house, with its commanding views, that he spent his school holidays during the 1939-45 War and remembered watching the Battle of Britain dog fights with vapour trails and the occasional sound of gunfire. 1940 saw Jock attending Wellington College, describing wartime at school thus; "The air raid siren sounded at 7.30pm and as usual we made our way to the shelters. The Anderson shelters had rough wooden bunks on which we placed lilos, which always quickly became punctured from the wood splinters." He went on, "Conditions in wartime were austere, and many of the best masters had been called up for the war. Land work occupied at least one afternoon a week, when we had to clear jungle for areas to grow vegetables."



Jock, July 1956

From school, Jock was called up for National Service in Apr 1945. Private Wilson Smith went to the training battalion in Deepcut, near Camberley, Surrey, where he carried out 6 months basic training before being badged as a private in The Royal Scots. Officer assessment training followed and he was posted, against his will, to the Officer Training School in Bangalore, India. He had never wanted to join the Indian Army, so did not attempt to learn Urdu and deliberately failed the exam. In consequence, on passing out in 1946, Jock was commissioned into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion The Royal Scots, then in Palestine. Postings followed in Nigeria, Korea, Cyprus, Elgin, Shrewsbury, Berlin, Camberley, Tidworth, Aden, Northern Ireland, Osnabruck and London. He attended the staff college, Camberley in 1960 and the Joint Services Staff College in 1965. In 1977 Jock resigned his commission after 31 years' service.

Reflecting on such a wonderful career there are of course many highlights. Jock was awarded every available campaign medal for those campaigns in which The Royal Scots served from 1945 to 1969. He was appointed OBE in the 1976 Queen's Birthday Honours List for his work in Whitehall, where he formed a new branch called General Staff (Operational Requirements)10! This was to deal with all urgent operational requirements for internal security and counter insurgency equipment. Quick story...at one stage in this role a dog deterrent was required to prevent dogs from sniffing around soldiers lying up in ambush, thus revealing their position. Jock remembered visiting the Chemical Defence Establishment in Porton, which had devised a nasty deterrent smell in spray can form. Jock and one other were invited to smell it. Jock's colleague took one sniff and keeled right over, then it was his turn. He took a gentle sniff....nothing; a larger sniff....still nothing. It had no effect on him. But returning to London about an hour later he felt extremely ill indeed!

I would like to share with you what people have said and recall of Jock's time in the Army and in all cases I have let their words tell the story:

- BAOR days in the late 60s, when he was second in command: at the end of the big exercises, he would go around with a sandbag collecting in the tins of compo rations that soldiers were throwing away. I believe mixed fruit pudding was one of his favourites. I wonder if it was served up at his dinner parties!
- Same theme...whilst on training at Soltau, some guys in the engineers welded a tin of mixed fruit pudding to the top of an APC where he could find it – which he did, and they watched in glee as he attempted to take it.
- A loyal Royal through and through, he was a stickler for detail, always willing to help and support others, particularly younger soldiers and officers as they progressed in their careers. He had a vast knowledge of Regimental history.
- Scottish Country Dancing – a swooping marshaller of young officers.

In 1977, on his 50th birthday, Jock became a civil servant, initially as the Assistant Regimental Secretary at the Regimental Headquarters in Edinburgh Castle – a job that brought him back to Scotland and able to travel to his beloved family home, Cumledge House. Soon promoted to Regimental Secretary, he said of the role, "I gained much job satisfaction from this work which varied daily. This could vary from a query on Pikeman's Dress in 1633, to planning five years ahead the programme for the Regiments 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1983." This latter event was, without doubt, one Jock's biggest projects, with many events spanning the year, from tree planting to Royal Parades at the palace of Holyrood house with the Queen in attendance. One of the smaller but very impactful initiatives Jock led on was creating a 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Medal that was presented to all serving Royal Scots at the time, 539 of them, no matter where in the world they were. Each medal had their rank and name engraved on it. To this day, Royals wear the medal with pride, often in the inside of their jackets on the left – I'm currently wearing my father's medal on the inside right being his medal not mine! Jock also undertook fundraising for, and the redevelopment of, The Royal Scots Regimental Museum. This remains a legacy of the wonderful work he did. Subsequently, Jock also assisted in the redevelopment of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards Museum in Edinburgh Castle. Other appointments included Chairman of the Royal Scots Association, Director of the Regimental Museum and Shop, Trustee of the Royal Scots Club, and Chairman of SSAFA / Forces Help Society Edinburgh and Midlothian Branch.

Of his retirement at the age of 65 in 1992 Jock reflected, "It was with considerable sadness that I had to retire. It had been 15 years of the most rewarding, interesting and challenging work." My late father wrote at the time, "It's difficult to know how to thank you for everything you have done as the Regimental Secretary. There's simply no way to appreciate the depth and width of your knowledge of Regimental affairs unless one is Colonel – nor is there any way of knowing how hard you work and what a tremendous, detailed grasp you have of so many subjects unless you are Colonel. You are never content to sit back and rest on your laurels but are always looking for new ideas and taking initiatives for the benefit of the Regiment and those who serve in it, as well as those who have retired. Your selfless devotion to the job, loyalty, cheerfulness and all-round ability are simply outstanding."

Of his time as Regimental Secretary others said:

- He used to drive his wee delivery van up the Esplanade with the ventilator on the roof of the van whirling away. I am guessing he would be flogging his veggies to the Officers Mess to make a bob or two.
- He used to invite the Regiment to take one of his trees for the soldiers' dining hall at Christmas. We would send a well-chosen team to Duns, and they would return with a magnificent specimen. This symbolised his generosity, passion, and strength; and it helps to explain why he was loved and respected by so many.
- When my cap badge was damaged, and I could no longer wear it. I approached Jock for one that he might have in the stores. He very kindly gave me his own silver officer's cap badge - I still have it today and wear it with pride at Remembrance.

Following retirement, Jock and Anne set about continuing the upgrade of Cumledge House and the estate, building a retirement home and enjoying his hobbies of forestry, shooting and curling.

In April 1961 Jock married Anne Corsar, an Edinburgh girl born and bred, educated at St Leonards school in St Andrews. They had 53 wonderful years together before Anne's untimely passing in 2014. They raised three daughters, Susan, Caroline and Jane, of whom he was endlessly proud, and in time his family grew to include 8 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. He loved nothing more than sharing news of them all, (every new job, every wedding, every achievement), with his friends and the Regimental Family in his annual 'Christmas Newsletter'. His pride in them shone through, not just for what they'd done, but for who they were. It is clear that through his long life, Jock never lost sight of the family motto, *Res non verba – Deeds not words*.

In closing I would like to read a poem that seems fitting. Jock had used this to 'sign off' one of his more recent 'Christmas Newsletters'...

*I dreamed death came the other night, and heaven's gate swung wide.  
An angel with a halo bright then ushered me inside,  
And there to my astonishment were folks I'd judged and labelled  
As "quite unfit", "of little worth" and "spiritually disabled".  
Indignant words rose to my lips but never were set free,  
For every face showed stunned surprise; no one expected me.*

Major Guy Richardson

## Sergeant (Drum Major) William (Bill or Scoobie) Black

26 June 1952 – 24 December 2025

William Black, known to family and friends as Bill, was born in Edinburgh on 26 Jun 1952 and grew up in Prestonpans. He enlisted in the Army on 27 August 1968 as a junior soldier and in 1971 joined 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Scots, where he was known affectionately as Scoobie. During 26 years of service he was stationed in many places in the UK including Tidworth, Kirknewton, Redford Barracks in Edinburgh, Ballykinler in Northern Ireland, and he deployed on 5 short tours in Belfast and South Armagh in Northern Ireland. He also served in Cyprus, Munster and Werl in Germany, the Falkland Islands, the Gulf during Operation GRANBY which included Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq, and finally Fort George near Inverness, where he was Drum Major.

His Pipe Band journey also took him to many places including most of Europe and across the pond a few times to the USA. He had many highlights within the Pipe Band including a trip to Las Vegas for a month where he and the band performed at the Hilton Hotel alongside Glen Campbell (of Rhinestone Cowboy fame). He performed with the band at the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall on a couple of occasions. Scoobie not only performed as a drummer at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo but also marched proudly in front of the massed Pipes & Drums as Senior Drum Major at the Tattoo and at Beating Retreat with the Scottish Division bands on Horse Guards Parade in London. In all Scoobie had a highly successful military career which included time as an instructor at the Scottish Division School of Music where he passed on his vast knowledge to aspiring drummers within the military system. He also spent time as Drum Major of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. He completed his military career came at Fort George, Inverness on 25 June 1994.

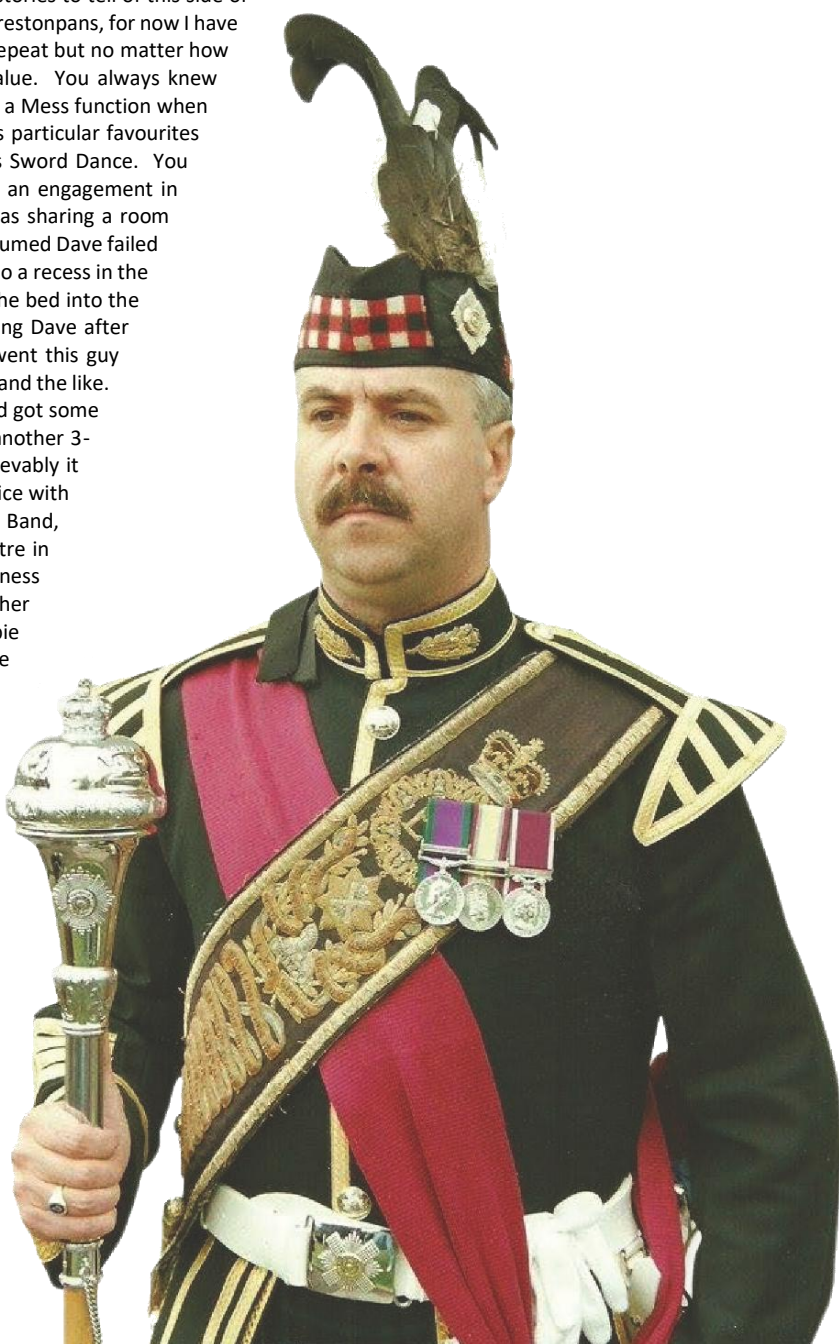
Scooby continued his pipe band & drumming love affair after his Military career came to an end he played with numerous pipe bands including: Prestonpans Royal British Legion, Drambuie, Penicuik & District, and Newtongrange. Whilst with Prestonpans the Drum Corps became Grade 3 World Champions; and while with Penicuik they won the best Drum Corps at the World Championships of 2000 in Grade 4B and in that season they were placed in every major championship, which merited the award of Champion of Champions Drum Corps. Many other trophies and prizes were won with other pipe bands. Scoobie then joined the Judging Panel and judged at all grades at competitions, travelling the length and breadth of the country in that capacity.

I have many happy memories of our time together and I think it's safe to say that in the nicest possible way he was rather a "Cheeky Chappie". There will be many stories to tell of this side of Scoobie and I look forward to hearing more of them later in Legion at Prestonpans, for now I have some that I'll share here. Scoobie's funnies and jokes were often on repeat but no matter how many times you heard the story or joke it never lost its comedic value. You always knew Scoobie was on the bus be that returning from a Band engagement or a Mess function when a rendition of "One day in Gay Paree" would ring out. Another of his particular favourites was to display his Highland Dancing skills, especially with his famous Sword Dance. You were never safe from his antics as Dave Busby will testify; when on an engagement in Munich making a recording with the Les Humphries Singers, Dave was sharing a room with Scoobie and after a night out during which a few drinks were consumed Dave failed to get up for breakfast. Dave's bed was one of those that folded up into a recess in the wall partition. Scooby decided upon failing to wake Dave up to fold the bed into the wall recess and proceed to head off to the dining room, only releasing Dave after breakfast. During a big NATO exercise in Greece, everywhere you went this guy came round in a 3-wheeler with a fridge selling cold drinks, ice creams and the like. Scoobie convinced him that a field bandage was a packet of coffee and got some cans of orange from him. Two days later and about 40 miles away, another 3-wheeler turned up and Scoobie joined the queue for a drink. Unbelievably it was the same guy and he berated Scoobie in his best Greek swears with the field bandage in his hand. While playing with the Drambuie Pipe Band, they were performing at the Royal Variety Show at the Festival Theatre in Edinburgh and the other band members were aware of Scoobie's fondness for a practical joke. After rehearsals they managed to convince none other than Donny Osmond to approach Scoobie and ask ... "Are you Scoobie Black? ...my mum is a huge fan of yours". His (Scoobie's) face was quite the picture. In 1974 whilst based in Cyprus Scoobie and Doc Halliday were to spend time as bugler/drummer and piper aboard HMS Abdiel which was on Suez Canal clearance duties. During this period, they spent some time with a Canadian Unit in Ismalia on the West Bank of the Suez Canal and were accommodated within the Officers Mess tented area. They were assigned an Arab orderly by the name of Abdul, whom Scoobie would teach the intricacies of the Scottish language. On a final duty of performing on a CO's passing-out parade, Abdul requested permission to sing the Scottish National Anthem that Scoobie had taught him and his colleagues. It was at this point Abdul and his buddies started to belt out a rendition of ... "Hey wee man with the big stick in your hand".

Although we lived at opposite ends of the country we kept in touch regularly by telephoning each other. We also met up at Pipe Band Oldies gatherings and at RS Reunions where again we'd have the Pipe Band oldies table. Throughout the Pipe Band Competition Season, I'd phone to see if he was judging at a particular competition and would go to meet up if I could. Scoobie was an excellent drummer, a great man and a great friend and he will be sorely missed by many. May you rest in eternal peace my old and trusted friend and as we say in our military way  
Until the Re-org ..... UTR.

Based on the eulogy at the funeral.

Mr Tam Cornwall



## 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](mailto:admin@theroyalscots.co.uk)

## Readers articles invitation – “Jock” anory

We would like to invite you 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, supporting it with a photograph/s with name/s.

Please send them to [admin@theroyalscots.co.uk](mailto:admin@theroyalscots.co.uk)

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

## Summer Edition of the Thistle

The Summer 2026 edition of the Thistle (Vol 49) will cover events during the period 1 April to 31 August 2026. We aim to publish this edition by 14 October 2026. All items for inclusion should be submitted to the Regimental Office via [admin@theroyalscots.co.uk](mailto:admin@theroyalscots.co.uk) no later than 5 September 2026, 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. **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](mailto:admin@theroyalscots.co.uk)

## Association Details

### Edinburgh Branch

Suspended animation

### The Royal Scots Association Pipe Band

Contact: Torquil Corkerton  
[torquil@corkerton.com](mailto:torquil@corkerton.com) or  
[contact@royalscotspipeband.org.uk](mailto:contact@royalscotspipeband.org.uk)

### East of Scotland Branch

LContact: Jamie Colquhoun  
[Jamiecolquhoun@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Jamiecolquhoun@hotmail.co.uk)

### Northern Ireland Branch

Contact: David McKendrick  
[davidsmck1@sky.com](mailto:davidsmck1@sky.com)

### Southern Branch

Contact: Monty Stuart-Monteith  
[monty@shawsequestrian.com](mailto:monty@shawsequestrian.com)

### Central Scotland Branch

Contact: David Milne  
[david.milne3343@live.co.uk](mailto:david.milne3343@live.co.uk)

### Fijian Branch

Contact: Peni Ravutia  
[bogiravutia0506@gmail.com](mailto:bogiravutia0506@gmail.com)

Details of Branch meetings are published on the Forecast of Events.

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](mailto:admin@theroyalscots.co.uk)

## Royal Scots Golf Club Details

**President:** Andy Stewart  
**Captain:** David Morris

**Vice Captain:** Paul McAllister  
**Secretary:** Andy Shearer  
**Treasurer:** Bobby Gill

**Match and Handicap Secretary:** Douglas Ogilvie  
**Contact:** Andy Shearer  
**Email:** [andyshearer1962@gmail.com](mailto:andyshearer1962@gmail.com)

## Notes on serving Royals and the Regimental Family

Brig	Graeme	Wearmouth OBE	DA Ryiadh
Brig	Nick	Wight-Boycott OBE	RMAS
Col	Piers	Strudwick OBE	MOD
Col	Frank	Reeves OBE	MOD
Col	Ross	Brookfield	APC
Lt Col	Matty	Hayton	Cabinet Office
Lt Col	Jeremy	Giles MBE	Army HQ
Lt Col	Toby	Bunney INT CORPS	Army HQ
Lt Col	Andy	Lumley	UN South Sudan
Maj	Tam	Lindsay	4 SCOTS
Maj	Zander	Russell	RHQ SCOTS
Maj	Dean	Fraser	1 RANGER
Maj	Stephen	Dawson	1 RANGER
Capt	Steven	Gibson	Balaklava Company, 5 SCOTS

Capt	Steven	Paterson	2 SCOTS
Capt	Andy	McLellan	4 SCOTS
W02	David	Williamson	7 SCOTS
CSgt	Steven	Gibb	NIGUS
SSgt	Ray	Basalaia INT CORPS	Aberdeen UOTC
Cpl	Euan	Jardine	Pipe Sgt, SCOTS DG
Cpl	Viliame	Kama	1 RANGER
Cpl	Joeli	Raduva	2 SCOTS
Cpl	Steven	Thomas	1 RANGER
AS1	Thomas	Shute RAF	RAF Lossiemouth

We have endeavoured to ensure that we have recorded all those currently serving in the Regular Army, but we are keen to know if there is anyone who has been missed.

## 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 below to visit the page.



## Laying Up of 1 SCOTS Colours

1 SCOTS Colours will be laid up in the Canongate Kirk on Sunday 11 October 2026. The Colours will be marched from the Castle Esplanade to the Kirk, escorted by SCOTS, RS and KOSB Guards. We are seeking to muster a strong contingent for the RS Guard. Please mark this event in your diary. Further details will be circulated in due course.

Lieutenant Colonel David Jack



Day/Month	Event	Time	Remarks
<b>May 2026</b>			
Fri 1	Association East of Scotland Branch meeting	1900	RBL Prestonpans
Tue 5	RSRT Executive Committee meeting	1200	The Royal Scots Club
Sun 10	Association Quarterly General Committee meeting	0930	The Royal Scots Club
Sun 10	Association Central Branch meeting	1400	Hillcroft Hotel, Whitburn
Fri 15	RSGC Spring Meeting – Cook Cup	1130	Greenburn GC, Fauldhouse
Sat 16	Association Fijian Branch meeting	1900	The Royal Scots Club
Mon 18 – Sat 23	RS Museum Pop-up Exhibition Greta 111	1000 – 1630	Out of the Blue Drill Hall, 36 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh, EH6 8RG
Wed 20	RSC Members' Committee meeting	1700	The Royal Scots Club
Fri 22	RSRT Trustees' meeting	1200	The Royal Scots Club
Sat 23	111 <sup>th</sup> Greta Memorial Service	1030	Rosebank Cemetery
Sun 24	Fallen Comrades Golf Match	0800	Shaw Park Golf Club, Alloa
Wed 27	Le Paradis Memorial Service	1700	Norwich Cathedral
Fri 29	Stewart Snedden Memorial Golf Match	0700	Liberton Golf Club
Sat 30	Le Paradis Commemoration		Le Paradis, France
<b>June 2026</b>			
Tue 2	RSC Management Ltd Board meeting	1000	The Royal Scots Club
Tue 2	Royal Hospital Chelsea Founder's Day (Governor's Review)	1000	RH Chelsea
Wed 2	Association NI Branch meeting	2000	RBL Newtownards
Sun 7	Association Central Branch meeting	1400	Hillcroft Hotel, Whitburn
Tue 16	Riding of the Marches Linlithgow		Linlithgow
Fri 26	RSGC Summer Meet – Dodds Decanter	1200	Muskelburgh GC
Fri 26	Association East of Scotland Branch meeting	1900	RBL Prestonpans
Sat 27	Gallipoli Memorial Service	1030	St Giles's Cathedral
Sat 27	Armed Forces Day	1000	Edinburgh
Sun 29 – Fri 4 Jul	McCrae's Bn Trust visit to the Somme		Contalmaison, France
<b>July 2026</b>			
Sun 5	Association Central Branch meeting	1400	Hillcroft Hotel, Whitburn
Fri 10	RSGC Pikeman	1130	Harburn GC
Sat 11	Association Fijian Branch meeting	1900	The Royal Scots Club
Wed 22	RSC Members' Committee meeting	1700	The Royal Scots Club
Fri 24	RSGC Awayday outing – Ian Scott Rosebowl	1200	Milnathort GC
Sat 25	Korean War Memorial Service	1030	The Scottish Korean War Memorial, Witch Craig Park
Tue 28	RSC Management Ltd Board meeting	1000	The Royal Scots Club
Thu 30	RSC WMF Trustees meeting	1200	The Royal Scots Club
<b>August 2026</b>			
Sun 2	Association Quarterly General Committee meeting	0930	The Royal Scots Club
Wed 5	Association NI Branch meeting	2000	RBL Newtownards
Sun 9	Association Central Branch meeting	1400	Hillcroft Hotel, Whitburn
Fri 14	RSGC Autumn Meet – Adam Lothian Putter	1115	Royal Musselburgh GC
Sat 15	VJ Day Memorial Service	1030	Lauriston Castle
Tue 25	Museum & Heritage Committee meeting	1500	The Royal Scots Club
Fri 28	Louden Trophy Golf Match	1000	Castle Park GC, Gifford
Fri 28	Association East of Scotland Branch meeting	1900	RBL Prestonpans
Sat 29	Association Annual Reunion – Joint Summer Party	1900	RBL Prestonpans
<b>September 2026</b>			
Sat 5	Association Fijian Branch meeting	1900	The Royal Scots Club
Sun 6	Association Central Branch meeting	1400	Hillcroft Hotel, Whitburn
Sat 12	NI Veterans Association Memorial Service		NMA
Sat 12	Regimental Band Reunion Lunch	1230	The Royal Scots Club
Tue 15	RSC Members' Committee meeting	1700	The Royal Scots Club
Tue 22	RSRT Executive Committee meeting	1200	The Royal Scots Club
Fri 25	RSGC Closing Meet – President's Cup	1230	Kilspindie GC, Aberlady
Fri 25 Sep	C Coy Smoker	1900	The Royal Scots Club
<b>October 2026</b>			
Fri 2	LISBON MARU Memorial Service	1200	National Memorial Arboretum
Sun 4	Association Central Branch meeting	1400	Hillcroft Hotel, Whitburn
Sun 7	Association NI Branch meeting	2000	RBL Newtownards
Sat 10	Fiji Day celebrations	1200	RBL Prestonpans
Sun 11	Laying up of 1 SCOTS Colours	1000	Canongate Kirk
Sat 17	Nagpore Dinner	1900	The Royal Scots Club
Mon 19	Opening of the Garden of Remembrance, Princes Street Gardens	1030	Princes Street Gardens
Mon 19	Remembrance Service at Royal Scots Monument	1200	RS Monument
Tue 20	RSC Management Ltd Board meeting	1000	The Royal Scots Club
Fri 23	RSRT Trustees' meeting	1200	The Royal Scots Club
Tue 27	RSC WMF Trustees meeting	1200	The Royal Scots Club
Fri 30	Officers' Golf Match	0800	TBC
Fri 30	Officers' Regimental Dinner	1900	The Royal Scots Club
Fri 30	Association East of Scotland Branch meeting	1900	RBL Prestonpans
Sat 31	Association Fijian Branch meeting	1900	The Royal Scots Club
<b>November 2026</b>			
Sun 1	Association Quarterly General Committee meeting	0930	The Royal Scots Club
Thu 5	Opening of the Field of Remembrance Westminster	1030	Southern Branch
Sat 7	Remembrance Service at Glencorse Gates	1045	Glencorse Barracks
Sat 7	Regimental planting of crosses at the Field of Remembrance, Westminster, followed by a Remembrance Service in the Abbey Cloisters	1800	Southern Branch
	Cenotaph	1030	
Sun 8	Remembrance Sunday	1045	City Chambers, Canongate Kirk, Haymarket, Haddington, Linlithgow, Musselburgh, Peebles, Penicuik, Prestonpans and Whitburn.
	The Royal Scots Club	1200	
Wed 11	Remembrance Service at the Scottish National War Memorial	1045	The Castle
Tue 17	RSRT Executive Committee meeting	1200	The Royal Scots Club
Tue 24	RSC Members' Committee meeting	1700	The Royal Scots Club
Sat 28	Association East of Scotland Branch St Andrew's Night	1900	RBL Prestonpans
<b>December 2026</b>			
Wed 2	Association NI Branch meeting	2000	RBL Newtownards
Sat 5	Association Fijian Branch meeting	1900	The Royal Scots Club
Sun 6	Association Central Branch meeting	1400	Hillcroft Hotel, Whitburn
Tue 8	RSC Management Ltd Board meeting	1000	The Royal Scots Club
Tue 8	RSC Trustees and Directors Christmas Lunch	1230	The Royal Scots Club
Thu 10	RSC WMF Trustees meeting	1200	The Royal Scots Club
Tue 15	RSRT Volunteers Christmas Lunch	1230	The Royal Scots Club
Fri 18	Regimental Office closes for the Festive period		
Fri 18	Regimental Museum closes for the Festive period		