

Chairman's Christmas Message

Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of our Regiment. It is a time for celebration and we are planning the grandest of celebrations. On the weekend of the 11th and 12th June 2011 we will be holding, in Cameron Barracks, what is likely to be our last major Regimental Gathering. Plans are well advanced, with bands, march pasts of us old soldiers, caterers, drinks, tents etc. We are hoping that you will all manage to come and remember, relive and reflect on times gone by in the Far East, Germany, Berlin, Edinburgh, Sharjah, Belize, Hongkong, Falklands and of course Ireland. If the weather is kind it will be a great occasion. Furthermore, for the first time we will be setting up a Queen's Own Highlander tent at the Moy Games (Friday 11th and Saturday 12th August 2011) where those who are there can gather and meet for a drink. Put these dates in your diary and come and make this Gathering in June the one we will remember above all others. Further details will appear on this website early next year.

But Christmas is not only a time for looking forward, it is also a time for reflection. As I look back on my time in the regiment I think how fortunate I was that I joined my grandfather's regiment, shortly to become the Queen's Own Highlanders, a regiment formed from two of Scotland's greatest regiments and from which the best was taken and then skilfully forged into an even better regiment – a regiment which quickly earned itself a reputation that was revered and envied throughout the British Army. Our regiment rapidly set the gold standard for the Infantry. I remember, in the 1970s, a Director of Infantry announcing to his American audience when asked if the regimental system consistently produced a top regiment, saying yes, the Queen's Own Highlanders. And we soldiers were part of this elite. Some will say it was a great privilege to have served with the finest of the army's infantry units throughout our service and while that may be true it was the character and professionalism of all of those who served in the battalion that earned us that reputation. So, this Christmas look back with pride on the part you played in setting the name of the Queen's Own Highlanders above all others – a name that, in military circles, is still revered. It is something you should be very proud of.

Have a good Christmas and I look forward to seeing you all in June next year.

Nick Ridley