

EDINBURGH BRANCH AMALGAMATION DINNER
11th FEBRUARY 2012

The 2012 celebrations to mark the 51st Anniversary of the formation of the Regiment started in good style with over one hundred members, partners, and friends of the branch turning up for a celebration dinner at Leith Ex-Servicemen's Club. Unfortunately we were oversubscribed and for the first time ever had to turn people away! This is something we will need to think about for future dinners, but a decision that had to be made due to capacity issues with the catering facilities. On a positive note however, it does show that the Branch is thriving and attracting new members all the time.

George Givens, the Branch Chairman, welcomed all regular attenders and gave a special welcome to those travelling from further afield ie Seoras McIntosh and Ian MacKenzie from the Highlands and Dave (Big Hendo) Henderson and his wife Linda from the south. The Branch had additionally invited two guests from the Royal Scots Regimental Association (Jimmy Ovens and Jimmy Laws) and the Garrison RSM, Graham White of the Scots Guards. Hidden in the crowd were also a couple of old faces who will hopefully return for future functions – Dick Barker, accompanied by his wife Sharon and Alan Stewart (zero zero to everyone who knew him in the Battalion)

The Chairman's words of welcome was followed by a minutes silence to remember Absent Friends, in particular those members of the Regimental Family who had sadly passed away since the last Amalgamation Dinner.

George Givens went on to explain that Dougie Shepherd, who was supposed to say Grace had sadly dislocated his hip and was at home recuperating. Fortunately Dougie had an understudy who went on to recite the Grace (in verse) that Dougie had specially prepared for the evening. It was indeed remarkable what a bit of makeup did to transform (Padre) Eddy Maley into Dougie Shepherd – so much so that hardly anyone noticed the difference!

The Grace, of course went down very well and hit all the right notes for the start of what proved to be an excellent evening (thank you Dougie for preparing it, Eddy for delivering it, and General Seymour for taking it in good spirit).

As usual, Eleanor and the staff of the club provided a very tasty and filling four course meal and looked after us extremely very well. Meanwhile, members of the committee flitted from table to table giving their impressions of wine waiters who knew what they were doing!

After the customary comfort break, the second half of the evening started with an excellent performance from two pipers and a drummer from Edinburgh Academy. As usual, the young lads, all under the age of eighteen, produced an excellent repertoire of tunes starting with Caber Feidh and ending with the March of the Cameron Men.

The senior piper then came back and was thanked by our Guest of Honour, Major General Seymour Monro for an extremely polished performance. The General noted that the school's Pipe Major, Michael Gray, had started off in his company as a young private soldier and it was the General who had taught him everything he knew!

At this stage George Givens informed the assembled company that it was customary in the Regiment for the piper to give the Regimental Toast in Gaelic but as Edinburgh Academy didn't include this in their curriculum, he called upon Bobby Munro to do the necessary business. To the surprise and astonishment of those sceptics in the company, Bobby gave a flawless rendition of the toast. However, after the young piper was applauded out of the room George asked Norman

Robertson, a native of Skye and a fluent Gaelic speaker, to mark Bobby out of ten for interpretation, pronunciation, and use of the Gaelic language. In true Len Goodman fashion Bobby was given a severnnn!

After the Loyal Toast was given, George went on to introduce the Guest of Honour for the evening, Major General Seymour Monro. General Seymour had started off as a young Platoon Commander in Delta Company in 1970 and proceeded to rise through the commissioned ranks, having filled most of the key Battalion posts en route to becoming Commanding Officer and taking the Battalion to West Belfast and the first Gulf War. He was therefore in a perfect position to recount some extremely funny stories of twenty plus years of personal reminiscences of battalion life. His tales, linked to mentions of regimental characters, brought back long forgotten memories to many of the assembled company (and too incriminating to commit to paper!). To finish off a very entertaining talk, General Seymour proposed a Toast to the Queen's Own Highlanders, to which there was an enthusiastic response from the assembled company.

The floor was then handed over to Lieutenant Colonel Charlie Millar, who reminded everyone that the spirit of the regiment lived on in the young soldiers of the 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, which had recently returned from a successful tour in Afghanistan in November. The proposed toast was therefore "The Highlanders".

General Seymour then drew out tickets for the raffle before Dave Lewis, a local entertainer, proceeded to entice everyone on to the dance floor.

All in all, a very successful and enjoyable evening was had judging by the positive feedback being received. Photographs of the evening can be found in the Photo section in this website.

Finally a big thank you must go to General Seymour for his tales of times gone by, to the Committee for making the evening go so smoothly, for Leith Ex-Servicemen's Club for their hospitality, to Bobby Munro for the Regimental Toast in Gaelic, and for all those members who donated a record number of prizes for the raffle.

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Branch Forecast of Events:

Saturday 23 rd June 2012	Branch Summer Dance
Saturday 30 th June 2012	Armed Forces Day (parade down the Royal Mile)
Sunday 14 th October 2012	Branch AGM
Saturday 15 th December 2012	Branch Christmas Dance