

Lieutenant General AJN Graham CB CBE



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1st March 2014

Gentlemen, Ladies,

'HAUL DOWN' AND THANKS

I handed over on 28th February to Major General James Cowan as Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. I wish him well in his tenure; it is a wonderful job.

I need to thank the very many people who have helped, encouraged and supported the Regiment over the past 8 years. Most particularly I must thank all those who have served on the Regimental Council or as Regimental Trustees, the Deputy, Representative and Honorary Colonels, the Regimental Headquarters team in Edinburgh and elsewhere, the Regimental Lieutenant Colonels, commanding officers, Officers' and Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' messes, the APC and the leaders of the antecedent Regimental communities. They/you have all have played a crucial part in helping to ensure that we developed in a considered and positive fashion which has us all pointing in broadly the same direction. Even a casual reader of the Regimental Journal will get a clear feeling that this is an organisation which is justifiably confident in its ability, character and quality, and in the ability, character and quality of its people. There is firm rock on which to build.

Relieving Major General Euan Loudon in 2007 was an enormous privilege. He and Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin had ridden the breakers of the Regiment's 'birth' and had done the 'hard yards' needed to set the Regiment off on a true course. I was lucky to inherit that foundation and to help the Regiment develop on a broad front while participating with distinction in two campaigns, at a cost of 21 officers and soldiers killed in action. *Ne obliviscaris*.

I anticipate that the discussions of the next two years will focus on recruiting, or more particularly on Scotland's ability to recruit infantrymen to the extraordinary but disproportionate scale that it has done for more than 200 years, and on the downdraft from the result of the September referendum. Whichever way the vote goes the relationship between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom will be altered in subtle or stark ways. These will therefore be challenging times so the part that the Colonel and Deputy Colonels, Council members, Trustees and the antecedent regiments play in supporting, representing and advocating the Regiment and presenting a cohesive and coherent front will be crucial.

I am very proud to have been a part of the Regiment as it approaches its eighth birthday (almost as long as the two World Wars combined). The change in 2006 was not easy, and neither popular nor palatable for many. I have had my fair share of 'advice' over the past 7 years, and I am very grateful to everyone who has taken the trouble to offer an opinion; but most particularly to those who have also given their time and energy to the needs of the Regiment and, more broadly, to seeing to the needs of Scottish infantryman in whichever Regiment they served, whenever and wherever they served.

I know that everyone will support General James, the Regimental Headquarters team, the Council and, above all, the serving men who do what Scottish Infantry Regiments of the Line have done for almost 4 centuries in service of Monarch and Country, that is to say to soldier with style, great courage, complete attention to the needs of the Jocks, and unmatched commitment, determination and pride in their Regiment.

Yours
Alistair
Alistair

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