

MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE QUEEN'S OWN HIGHLANDERS REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION
(INCORPORATING THE SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS)
HELD IN THE SEAFORTH CLUB NAIRN ON FRIDAY 16th JULY 2010

Present

Major General A P Grant Peterkin CB OBE	President
Brigadier N J Ridley OBE	Chairman & Trustee
Lieutenant Colonel C E Gilmour MBE DL	Trustee
Lieutenant Colonel I J Murray DL	Trustee
Major A F Blincow MBE	Association Treasurer & Treasurer Highland Branch
Mr D E Loftus	Association Secretary, Trustee & Secretary Southern Branch
Mr P Finlayson	Trustee
Mr W Gardner	Secretary Aberdeen & North East Branch
Major G Givens	Chairman Edinburgh Branch
Major R Haugh	Chairman Aberdeen Branch
Captain T Lewis	Chairman Northern Ireland Branch
Mr G R MacDonald MBE	Secretary Caithness Branch
Mr G Monaghan	Chairman Strathclyde Branch
Mr D M Oag	Caithness Branch
Mr A Paterson	Chairman Caithness Branch
Lt Col R Towns	Chairman Highland Branch
Pipe Major A A Venters	Association Pipe Band

Welcome

The Chairman extended a welcome to all present and thanked them for attending the Meeting. A special welcome was extended to the representatives from the Seaforth Branches joining with those of The Queen's Own Highlanders for the first time as they integrate, through Incorporation. He said the time was opportune to "march forwards", as had been discussed by both sets of Trustees, and that there were financial benefits in bringing the Associations together.

Apologies

Major General J C O H Hopkinson CB	Vice President
Colonel A S Duncan	Chairman Southern Branch
Mr D Carruthers	Secretary Edinburgh
Major J C MacLellan	Chairman Western Isles Branch
Mr D MacLeod	Secretary Western Isles Branch
Mr D Terron	Highland Branch

Obituaries

The Chairman asked everyone to stand in memory of those who had died in the last year and whose names had been notified to the Association. These were read out.

Mr W T B Baff	Queen's Own Highlanders
Mr A D Beaton	Seaforth Highlanders
Mr G A Brown	Queen's Own Highlanders
Mrs M Buchanan	Seaforth Highlanders
Major G Burns	Queen's Own Highlanders
Mr E Campbell	Seaforth Highlanders
Mr A Coltman	Seaforth Highlanders
Captain A M Curle	Seaforth Highlanders
Sgt A A Duncan	Queen's Own Highlanders
CSgt R E Foss	Seaforth Highlanders & Queen's Own Highlanders
Lt Col I M Fraser OBE	Seaforth Highlanders & Queen's Own Highlanders
Mr J Gardiner	Queen's Own Highlanders
Mr D Henderson	Seaforth Highlanders
Maj R G Holmes MBE MM	Queen's Own Highlanders
Mr I Kelly	Queen's Own Highlanders
Mrs M MacAulay	Queen's Own Highlanders
Mr D MacKay	Seaforth Highlanders

Mr D MacKenzie	Seaforth Highlanders
Mr DL MacLeod	Queen's Own Highlanders
Mr D MacLennan	Seaforth Highlanders
Mr G McCrum	Queen's Own Highlanders
Mr D McFarland	Seaforth Highlanders
Mr L R Marsh	Seaforth Highlanders
Mr G E Parker	Seaforth Highlanders
Sgt D B Paterson	Seaforth Highlanders
Maj G J F T Rippingall	Seaforth Highlanders
Maj Gen I A Robertson	Seaforth Highlanders & Queen's Own Highlanders
CB MBE DL	
Mr R Scott	Queen's Own Highlanders
Mrs M Topping	Queen's Own Highlanders
Mr T Tulloch	Seaforth Highlanders
Mrs J Wattam	Seaforth Highlanders

387 **Minutes of the Previous Meetings**

The Minutes of the final independent Annual General Meetings of The Queen's Own and Seaforth Highlanders on 17th July and 28th August 2009 had been circulated.

George MacDonald proposed and Lt Col Bobby Towns seconded that the Minutes of The Queen's Own Highlanders Meeting be accepted as an accurate record. This was agreed nem co.

Jimmy Fraser proposed and Captain Eric Munro seconded that the Minutes of The Seaforth Highlanders Meeting be accepted as an accurate record. This was agreed nem co.

388 **Matters Arising from the Previous Meetings**

a **Report back from the Gathering in Northern Ireland 11th – 13th September 2009 to mark the 30th Anniversary of Warrenpoint with a Memorial Service and to see the changes in NI post Op Banner.**

Captain Tim Lewis provided a written report:

In spite of this week's well publicised events, Northern Ireland is a place that has changed almost beyond recognition and it is easy to forget that many Queen's Own Highlanders made a contribution toward the ultimate creation of a stable society, of course in some cases, laying down their lives.

The 30th Anniversary of Warrenpoint this year was felt to be a fitting moment in which to commemorate those that we lost throughout the conflict and to allow members to witness for themselves the physical transformation of the Province.

Based at Ballykinler Training Centre, much of the team gathered on the Friday evening. The location added a certain gravitas and poignancy with the resident Battalion 2 Rifles soon to have returned from Afghanistan having lost 13 of their own.

There were 3 key events during the weekend, the first of which was a Service of Remembrance at the Memorial Garden at Palace Barracks. Later in the day a service was held at the site of the gatehouse at Narrow Water, Warrenpoint and the next day a final commemoration at St Martin's in the Mourne, Ballykinler in which the Queen's Own Highlanders memorial window is located. As a regimental veteran in his own right, it was wonderful to have had the leadership, empathy and strength of Reverend Dr David Coulter who conducted the services in a way that gave great comfort to all. He reminded us of the need to remember but also to move on and look forward; an important message for all who serve in whatever theatre.

Major General Seymour Monro gave a moving and fascinating personal recollection of his own experience of the Warrenpoint incident and linked this with what was actually going on at Narrow Water at the time. It was an education to many in the Battalion at the time who were busy with their own tasks and were unable to get detailed information.

On the Sunday morning at Ballykinler, Brigadier Nick Ridley gave us a timely reminder that PIRA did not get it all their own way and that there were significant successes for the Battalion on that South Armagh tour. He also told us about some of the key events later on which helped to move

the violence to an ultimate conclusion.

The turnout for the event was outstanding with all ranks represented from a wide geographical area as far afield as Iraq. Old battles were refought not just from Northern Ireland but throughout the short life of the Queen's Own Highlanders and memories were enriched. One got the sense that those who came gained much.

It was however, particularly special to have been able to welcome Anne Blair, Ritchie Turner and Keith Lang who added much by being with us. We hope that they too gained something for being with us.

Commemoration, difficult memories and the need to celebrate the positive outcomes is a difficult balance to achieve but it was clear from the response of those that attended that we managed to achieve this.

And so it is time to move on, but spare a thought as we do for those we lost along the way.

LCpl W McIntyre

Pte J Hesketh

Pte M Carnie

LCpl D Wares

LCpl D Lang

Lt Col DNA Blair

Pte A Mc Millan

LCpl R Turner

"As long as mist hangs o'er the mountains
And water runs in the glens
The Deeds of the Brave will be remembered"

Caber Feidh gu Brath

The Chairman then invited Gordon George (Treasurer – Northern Ireland Branch) to add any comments. He reinforced Tim Lewis' comments and said it had been a good weekend but regrettably the Northern Ireland Branch had made a decision to close with the Memorial Service and weekend being the last event held.

A great deal of effort had gone into the planning and execution of the weekend and the Chairman asked Gordon George to convey the thanks of all concerned to those involved. Whilst it was unfortunate that the Branch was closing the Chairman said he fully understood the reason for the closure.

A discussion took place as to where the balance of funds in the NI Branch account should go. It was agreed that they should go into the General Account of the Association as it was the Association that had provided the original funding when the Branch started.

b Plans for the Gathering in 2011 to mark the 50th Anniversary of the formation of The Queen's Own Highlanders on 7th February 1961.

Lt Col Bobby Towns was invited, by the Chairman, to address the Meeting and report on the planning so far.

Bobby started by saying there was uncertainty over the future of Cameron Barracks and who would be responsible for running it. One of the more likely outcomes would be that the Highland TA and Cadets would take over the Barracks. He said that from about 17th June to 1st week in August the Barracks were used extensively by various Units. It was therefore proposed that the weekend for the Gathering be Saturday 11th & Sunday 12th June 2011.

The proposed programme is:

Saturday 11th

1400 hrs Form Up and Parade in Cameron Barracks

1800 hrs Meal
Beating of Retreat
Ceilidh

Gordon
George/
Frank
Blinchow

Sunday 12th

1100 hrs Church Service – Fort George

Lunch – Cameron Barracks
Beating of Retreat

The main focus of the weekend whilst marking the 50th Anniversary of the formation of The Queen's Own Highlanders would be to provide an opportunity to meet up and chat with old faces.

Projected costings had been made on 800 attending.

The hire of marquees would be in the region of £10,000.00 and feeding costs would depend on the quality of the meals. Ancillary costs for cleaners, portaloos, St John Ambulance etc needed to be taken into consideration and were not insignificant.

The Chairman reported that the Trustees had agreed to underwrite the Gathering to the sum of £25,000.00.

It was not possible to give an individual cost figure at the Meeting but the recommendation was that a cost per head be agreed by September 2010.

Questions were invited. One was that as the Seaforth Highlanders had traditionally held their annual meeting in Nairn would it be possible for a bus/es to be provided to get them to Cameron Barracks? This was agreed.

It was confirmed that the Annual General Meeting would be held over the weekend.

A suggestion was made that if a major Raffle were held over the weekend that the profit from the same should be applied to the cost of the weekend rather than donated to a charity.

Hamish MacPherson referred to a previous Gathering when the Bar had made a profit of £1,700.00 over the weekend. He asked would it be possible to run the Bar ourselves and retain the profit on this occasion. Bobby Towns said he would look into it.

It was emphasised that the suggested programme was not "set in stone" and any suggestions should be sent to Bobby Towns.

The Chairman thanked Bobby Towns for his input and for the work of those involved in the planning of the Gathering. He asked everyone to put the word around the Branches as it was likely to be the last time a major Gathering of this nature took place.

The Association Pipes and Drums

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The Chairman invited Lt Col Colin Gilmour – Chairman of the Association Pipes and Drums Committee to address the Meeting on the progress of the Appeal to raise funds for the Pipes and Drums.

Colin said that Andy Venters should be thanked for all the work he has put into the Pipes and Drums with the resulting success and profile achieved.

3 years ago the Pipes and Drums needed money. They had no proper uniform, their equipment was run down and as a result there was little to attract people to join. Many potential players went to other bands who had better equipment and were financially secure.

Brigadier Nick Ridley – as Chairman of the Association – wrote an Appeal Letter to all ex-Officers of the Regiment as well as other approaches being made.

£5,000.00 was received from The Inverness Common Good Fund for which the Pipes and Drums would be required to play twice a year at City Council/Community events.

An individual had committed £3,000.00 over 3 years and a number of "One Off" and Standing Orders had helped to provide a substantial fund.

A Committee for the Pipes and Drums had been formed:

Lt Col Gilmour, Chairman; Captain Rose, Secretary; Maj Blincow, Treasurer; Lt Col Towns; Major Balfour and Major Stout.

and a Constitution drawn up.

The Appeal meant that significant improvements had been made to the appearance of the Pipes and Drums on Parade as well as their kit. 25 kilts had been purchased along with Piper Green Lovat Hose, a standard tie, Bag Covers, 2 side drums, 2 tenor drums, a bass drum and 20 chanters.

The Pipes and Drums were adjudicated to be the Best Band on Parade at the Forres Games taking the prize for the same.

Thanks were expressed to Andy Venters for all his efforts and it was agreed that good kit helped to make them look smart on parade,

Visit to 4th Battalion Royal Regiment of Scotland

The Chairman referred to communications between the Association and the Commanding Officer of 4th Bn RRS. The operational commitments of the Battalion make it impossible for them to host any visit in the immediate future.

Website

Seoras MacIntosh said he was happy with the way things are working on the site.

It was suggested at Major Frank Blincow write a "front page" with a link to the Association

It was reported that there had been 3,800 "hits" in the previous month and an assurance given that there would be no "bad naming" or scurrilous comments allowed.

It was stated that Dave Teron is spaying £75.00 pa for the hosting of the website which he still owns.

A suggestion of a means to generate income was to charge businesses or individuals £25.00 to have a link from the website.

New Business

Seaforth Club Membership

A query had been made concerning the status of membership of the Club. It was clarified that membership of the Club is not related to the Association but if ex Seaforth or Queen's Own Highlanders continue to pay their subscription as in the past then both the rights and appurtenances to attend all Seaforth and Queen's Own Highlanders events and branches remains the same.

Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2010

These had been circulated with additional copies being available and were presented by the Honorary Treasurer, Major Frank Blincow.

Major Blincow drew attention to page 18 of the accounts and the breakdown of income and expenditure.

The Income and Expenditure for the year showed a surplus of £3,400 although most of this was the Pipes and Drums. Overall the Balance Sheet showed a loss of £66,000 which was mainly due to the re-valuation of the Associations investments.

It was agreed that Branches, with the exception of the Highland Branch, receive £300 each whilst the Highland Branch receive £600.

Branch Reports

Frank
Blincow

These have been circulated and were taken as read.

Association Pipes and Drums (The Queen's Own Highlanders)

General

1. The past year has been a busy one for the Pipes and Drums, with a number of engagements and the kitting out with new items of dress and equipment. A Support Committee has been set up with its own constitution and this met for the first time on 6th April 2010.
2. Sadly Major George Burns, who had been president of the Pipes and Drums for several years, and had done so much for it, died in January 2010. He is remembered for all his work and devotion to the band.

Support Committee.

2. This Committee was set up by delegated authority of the Trustees of the Queen's Own Highlanders Regimental Association, with the following aims: to assist with fundraising for the Pipes and Drums; to ensure that funds raised are spent wisely; to raise the profile of the Pipes and Drums in the Highlands; to provide feedback to those who have donated funds; to provide other support as requested by the Pipe Major.

3. Currently the committee is made up of the following: Lt Col Gilmour, Chairman; Lt Col Towns; Major Balfour; Major Stout; Maj Blincow, Treasurer; Captain Rose, Secretary.

Engagements 2009 - 2010

4. Engagements during 2009 included Falcon Square Inverness and Veterans Day and Remembrance Day in Inverness. 2010 will see the band playing at Forres Games on 10th July, the Armed Forces Day parade and Inverness Highland Games on 24th July; Inverness Tattoo on 30th July, Moy Highland Game Fair on 7th August; the Cameron Highlanders Gathering on 21st August; and outside Inverness Town house on 1st September, the evening prior to the Northern Meeting Piping competition.

5. Currently there are just over fifty members on the Pipes and Drums' books, including two females, with a typical parade turnout of 12 to 16 pipers, plus drum corps.

Dress and Equipment.

6. A key development during the past few months has been to ensure all those on parade are uniformly dressed. To this end 25 new kilts have been made, plus standard green Lovat hose, ties, and bag covers. The new uniform has made a marked difference to the appearance of the band on parade.

7. In addition to the new dress items, the Steering Committee approved the purchase of 4 new side drums, 2 tenor and one bass drum, plus 20 new pipe chanter.

Finance.

8. The purchase of these new dress items and equipment was only made possible by donations by individuals, plus a very generous donation of £5,000 by the City of Inverness from their Common Good Fund. During 2009, following an appeal initiated by Brigadier Ridley, regimental members had either made one-off donations or were now donating by annual standing order. The latter will bring in £800 per year.

9. The recent outlay for dress and equipment has been substantial, but it was much needed, indeed essential, to put the band on a sound professional footing.

Pipe Major

10. Finally Pipe Major Andy Venters must be thanked for all his work, devotion and time spent in running the Pipes and Drums and especially for raising its profile within the Highlands.

From The Pipe Major:

The Pipes and Drums have quite a busy programme this year starting with Saturday the 10th July at the Forres Games, we then take part in the Armed Forces Day on 24th July followed by Inverness Games on the same day. The next engagement is the last night of the Inverness

Tattoo, Saturday 31st July. The 7th August takes us to the Moy Fair and the 21st August the Cameron Gathering. As yet we have no date for the Queen's Own Highlanders lunch. The Pipes and Drums are now looking resplendent in their new kilts and also now have a new set of Drums and new Pipe Chanters. The final engagement is to play at a reception being held in the Town House which is to bring the Northern Meeting Piping Competition to the forefront of the Inverness Calendar. The Pipes and Drums would like to thank all the Officers and the Town Council for there generous contributions to the Band Fund.

Aberdeen and North East Branch (The Queen's Own Highlanders)

The Branch Annual General Meeting took place on Thursday 27th May 2010 at the 22 Club, 551/2 Rose Street, Aberdeen. 7 members were present.

The past year has seen Branch members attending the following functions, 6 members attending the Annual Dinner of The Gordon Highlanders Regimental Association, Aberdeen Branch.

On Remembrance Sunday, 8th November 2009, parades were attended at Aberdeen City Cenotaph by the Branch Secretary. Mr Stewart Fowlie laid a wreath on behalf of The Queen's Own Highlanders Association and later the Branch Secretary, Bill Gardner, laid a wreath on behalf of the Seaforth Highlanders at the cenotaph in Tarland.

8 Branch Members, 4 Cameron Highlanders, 2 Seaforth Highlanders and 2 Queen's Own Highlanders, attended the Armed Forces Day Parade on Saturday 26th June 2010. As usual there were many members of the Regiments standing on the pavement spectating. This was an excellent Parade with over 1000 people on parade including members of the Armed Forces and members of the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force Associations throughout Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The Sea, Army and Air Cadets were also on parade with many other youth organisations. After the Parade a Beating of Retreat was held at Bridge of Don Barracks with a buffet and bar being available.

On May 22nd 6 Branch Members attended the 70th birthday party of the Branch Secretary, Bill Gardner, at the Victory Hall, Aboyne along with 60 other guests. Entertainment was provided by the Alexander Brothers and Paul Anderson with a good time being had by all.

The Aberdeen Branch has now closed down for the Summer Holidays and will re-start on Thursday 30th September 2010.

Caithness Branch (The Queen's Own Highlanders)

At the Annual General Meeting on 28th May 2010 the Chairman asked all present to be up standing in a silent tribute to fallen comrades and on this occasion especially to remember recent fatalities that have occurred in battle zones throughout the world. He then welcomed all attending and expressed his delight at once again the number present was on par with the previous year.

The treasurer's report was given by George MacDonald, who gave a full account of all financial activities spread over the recent past year, he presented and went over the Audited Annual Report and answered questions. The statement of accounts and the schedule of grants to members were unanimously agreed. The signed Independent Examiner's Report was adopted unanimously on a proposer and seconder motion.

The secretary then said over the years our membership has remained fairly steady and at the close of March 2010 we had 57 fully paid up members, one short of the previous year even with a number of obituaries since and he went onto to intimate that since the year end we had secured one new member so all been well he hoped to end next year with 58 members once again.

When the election of Office Bearers & committee members took place, a suggestion from the floor, that the Status Quo should remain in place for another year, was proposed and seconded, for the Office Bearers and Committee to remain intact and this was unanimously agreed.

At the August meeting the Chairman and Secretary updated the Branch on various items that had come up at the QOHLDRS R A Annual General Meeting in July. The BBC were making a new TV series about looking at the way fatherhood has changed over the course of the last century and would appreciate if some of the Second World War veterans would be willing to speak to them on the subject. The

Elizabeth Cross and Memorial Scroll that Her Majesty The Queen had given her approval for on 30th January 2009. Other points brought out included the incorporation of the Seaforth Highlanders Association assets with those of the QOHLdrs. The relevant document, had been seen by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and was approved, thus allowing the merger to go ahead. The Northern Ireland Veterans Association asked that details be circulated of their Memorial Service to be held at the National Arboretum on 12th September 2009. It was pointed out that several members of the QOHLDRS RA would be in Northern Ireland on that weekend for our own commemoration of the attack at Warren point in 1979. Plans for the presentation of colours to all Scots battalions in 2011, possibly during the Royal Week in Edinburgh. Robert J S Forbes was due an Association Medal for his work on the Branch committee over the previous five years but was unable to attend the QOHRA annual meeting due to work commitments. The Branch Chairman accepted the medal on his behalf and presented it to Robert at this point in the meeting where upon he thanked the Chairman and indeed the Branch for this honour.

The Remembrance Sunday parades were well attended and congratulations to both Wick and Thurso members upon their turnout and presentation while laying the QOHLdrs Poppy Wreaths at the War Memorials. The proposed games night with members of the local TA was put off meantime, due to various other engagements on the suggested dates. However a very successful and enjoyable games night was held on the 5th March 2010 organised by WO2 Robert Forbes of the local TA and a member of the QOH branch. The secretary had arranged transport from Thurso via Halkirk and Watten for members to attend and on this very jolly occasion the old guys defeated the much younger TA members.

On the 12th December 2009 a Dinner Dance run by the Francis Street Social Club in Wick and approximately two dozen members mixed with several other organisations for a very enjoyable dinner dance in which both the food, the music and dancing was exactly what was required to keep the branch together as a whole and was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

At the January Branch meeting David Oag spoke of his pride at being chosen to represent Caithness at the recent Armistice Day service held in Westminster Abbey which marked the passing over last year, of the last three remaining veterans from the First World War. David said they had laid poppies in the Garden of Remembrance outside the Abbey and also at the fountain in Trafalgar Square. Both himself and Margaret had thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

At the last branch meeting in March before the financial year end the treasurer informed members that once again we had been successful in retaining 57 members for another year. A discussion then took place on what the future fee should be but after some considerable time it was unanimously agreed not to raise the fee for this coming year.

Edinburgh Branch (The Queen's Own Highlanders)

The Edinburgh Branch has had another successful year. Our functions continue to be well attended and a number of new members have gradually been joining the Branch.

This year the Branch purchased their own Standard in preparation for future Armed Forces Parades and the Branch must thank Seoras McIntosh for making the arrangements, for what turned out to be a very fine piece of workmanship.

The following reports are from events organised by the Branch members and are in chronological order:

Branch AGM held at Leith Ex-Servicemen's Club on the 4th October 2009

The meeting opened at 13.30 hrs with a minutes silence to remember those members of the Regimental Family who had passed away over the last year. There were 27 members present and 11 apologies.

Major Givens reported that the Branch remained very active with a number of successful events taking place over the previous year: ie Representation at the 2008 Remembrance Services; a Christmas Dance at The Royal Navy Club; a well attended Amalgamation Dinner at Leith Ex-Servicemen's Club; an enjoyable Summer Dance at the Royal Navy Club; an excellent attendance at the Armed Forces Day Parade in Edinburgh; and good representation at the memorial week-end in Northern Ireland. John Meikle gave the Treasurers Report and Major

Givens thanked him for administering the Branch funds over the previous year. Mr Meikle then proposed the annual Christmas Gift for the widows be increased to £25.00. This was seconded by Eddie Maley, and after a show of hands, the proposition was passed.

Major Givens reported that he and Danny Carruthers had attended the Regimental AGM at Nairn in July and briefed everyone on what had been discussed. He went on to outline the arrangements for the annual Remembrance services and on functions planned for the coming year. Following this there was a presentation of bars to their Association Medallions to John Meikle and John Gilchrist.

Major Givens went on to announce that Frank Scott, John Donlevy, and Mick Bell had decided to stand down as Committee Members and thanked them for all their hard work and support over the years. Danny Carruthers proposed that Sandy Dewar and Johnny Meechan join the Branch Committee. John Meikle seconded this proposition, and after a show of hands, the proposition was carried.

Danny Carruthers reported that he had secured the use of the Association Standard for the 2010 Edinburgh Armed Forces Day Parade and that Bobby Munro had volunteered to carry it. This led to a discussion about purchasing a standard for the exclusive use of the Edinburgh Branch and Major Givens was asked to explore the issue. Major Givens then distributed a number of copies of the revised Association Constitution and there being no other business to discuss, the Meeting closed and members joined the families for a Curry Lunch.

Remembrance Parades

A wreath was laid by John Meikle at the Garden of Remembrance in Princes Street Gardens on the 2nd November and two wreaths were laid at Edinburgh City Chambers on the 8th November by George Givens and Bobby Munro for the Queen's Own Highlanders and Seaforth Highlanders respectively. After the main service on Sunday the 8th November our members were invited to Leith Ex-Servicemen's Club by the Royal Scots Regimental Association for a lunch and entertainment. The Branch will be returning the favour this year by inviting the Royal Scots to a similar event.

Christmas Dance at Leith Ex-Servicemen's Club -Saturday 12th December 2009

The Christmas Dance proved to be another big success for the Branch with an excellent turnout of 90 Association members and their guests. The Kool Kats, a local club act all the way from sunny Bo'Ness, provided the music and managed to encourage everyone on to the dance floor to jive the night away. Thankfully all those members with hip replacements survived the night and no injuries were reported!

Apart from all the usual stalwarts living in the local Lothian and Fife areas we had plenty of other Association members attending from farther afield. Namely: from the Highlands, Peter Finlayson, Norman and Jane Robertson, & Archie and Rena MacKinnon – from Coupar Angus, George and Jeanette Taylor – from Newcastle, Glen and Ingrid Lawson & Sandy Goodwin and Linda - from Liverpool, Jimmy and Sue Ryan - from Glasgow, Tam and Liz Balloch & Duncan MacLeod - & finally Stevie and Frances Byers from Gairlochhead. There were also two new members – Stephen Ord (son of Sammy) and Jim Elliot.

The Branch had a bumper raffle and Bobby Munro and George Givens organised a very slick raffle despite Bobby's colour blindness! (Next year's raffle will consist of two colours of tickets – black and white!) Peter Findlayson drew out the prizes and at the end of the draw all those members who generously donated the prizes for the raffle were thanked.

Bobby Munro organised a charity Pitch and Toss on behalf of Friends of the Beatson and raised an impressive £185.00, which was topped up by various individuals to £200.00. Anne-Marie and Jimmy Cummings kindly donated a boxed whisky and glass set as a prize for the competition.

Danny Carruthers received excellent feedback about the night and hopefully we managed to get everyone into the festive spirit for Christmas.

Amalgamation Dinner at Leith Ex-Servicemen's Club - Saturday 6th February 2010

The 2010 Amalgamation Dinner managed to surpass the previous years large turnout with an even bigger number of attendees sitting down to the meal ie just short of one hundred members, their wives and guests – enough to fill the club's function room and keep the staff fully occupied!

George Givens, the Branch Chairman, welcomed everyone and gave a special mention to Lillian Duffus and Barbara McGraw who had both travelled down from Inverness especially for the dinner, and also to Jimmy Cummings, on his return to the fold after his recent illness. George commented that it was good to see so many people wearing regimental tartan, despite the sound of straining kilt straps and popping buttons!

Reverend Matthew Robertson, the Battalion's Padre in Edinburgh, Sharjah, and Osnabruck said a special Grace composed for the evening. Once again Matthew delivered the Grace in verse - as always an excellent start to the evening and a great ice breaker.

Angus Lutton and Jamie MacLean, a couple of young fifteen year old pipers from Edinburgh Academy, resplendent in Queen's Own Highlander No 1 dress and regimental head dress, played two sets of pipe tunes during the evening. They received warm applause after each set and everyone remarked on the very high standard of their playing and the number of tunes in their repertoire.

Ritchie Turner was the guest of honour for the evening and started off by proposing a toast to the Queen's Own Highlanders. He then proposed a further toast to the young jocks of the 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland (The Highlanders) who were ably following in the footsteps of their predecessor regiments

Ritchie then went on to recount that in February 1961 he was witnessing the amalgamation of the two battalions from a whole different perspective from everyone else in the regiment ie as a guest of the Commanding Officer in the Caber Feidh Hotel! He went on to recall how he managed to turn his fortunes around after his brief holiday in Colchester and went on to advance his career in the army, just as the new regiment was also developing to become one to the finest battalions in the British Army. Ritchie's tales of his escapades throughout the years mirrored the Battalions progress through its first twenty two years (plus a bit extra for jail time!).

After the speeches Mike "Dinger" Bell and Johnny Meechan cracked on with the raffle and George Givens gave a big thank you to all those members who generously donated the prizes and to Doris Anderson and Sue Ryan for selling the raffle tickets.

Armed Forces Day Parade – Edinburgh – 26th June 2010

Since its inception a short time ago the Armed Forces Day in Edinburgh has become a popular and well attended event. The Castle Esplanade on the 26th June was therefore completely filled with many servicemen and women from the both the regular, reserve forces, cadets, and various Regimental Associations.

It was therefore with some pride that members of the Edinburgh Branch of the Association, as well as comrades from the Seaforth Highlanders & Cameron Highlanders, formed a forty-strong marching contingent. Bobby Munro was made the honorary contingent sergeant major and organised everyone into three ranks (Bobby was the only one who still had a pace stick so we thought he should get the job!). The Association Standard was carried by George Taylor and the new and recently acquired Branch Standard was carried by John Meikle. Eddie Maley, as one would expect, took on the job of right marker for the Branch. Every one of our marching contingent was wearing either regimental head dress or kilts or tartan trews - the Highlanders therefore stood out from the remainder of the Associations on parade and were the second largest Association contingent (after the Royal Scots, who after all are an Edinburgh regiment!).

Once the One O'clock Gun was fired, the parade stepped off to the music of a Military Band and made its way down the Royal Mile to the cheers and applause of the crowd. The spectators completely filled the pavements and it was particularly heartening for everyone on parade to be made aware of the enormous pride that so many members of the general public have for their Armed Forces.

The parade route followed the Royal Mile and an eyes right was given opposite the City Chambers to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and the Chief of the General Staff. The parade then marched into Cockburn Street, down to the Mound, and eventually into Princes Street Gardens where everyone fell out and made their way to the beer tents, displays, and Ceilidh Band especially laid on for the occasion.

It should be noted at this stage that Edinburgh has been chosen to host the 2011 National Armed

Forces Day Parade and therefore next year will be a much grander affair – Association members are therefore encouraged to dust off their regimental head dress, start practicing their drill, and put the date into their diaries!

Summer Dance 2010 – Held at Leith Ex-Servicemen’s Club on Saturday 26th June 2010

Despite being down on numbers from the previous year, the Summer Dance was well attended with 65 members, their wives, family, and friends. As usual, many of the stalwarts from the Edinburgh Branch turned up to support the Branch and enjoy themselves, together with familiar faces from the south – notably Sammy and Dot Ord, together with their daughters, Donna and Debbie. It was also nice to see Woody (ex-Sergeants Mess Barman) for the first time at the Branch and George Givens’s son Richard, a serving officer with 4 Scots (The Highlanders).

The entertainment on the night was provided by a very talented group called The All Stars, who presented some quick change routines featuring Elvis, Cher, Shania Twain, and the Blues Brothers. The group entertained everyone for the whole night and succeeded in getting George Givens to participate in their Blues Brothers routine, pork pie hat, sunglasses and all!

After the buffet Bobby Munro and Johnny Meechan organised the raffle. To keep the raffle above board, and to ensure there were no fiddles taking place, Sammy Ord was asked to make the first draw for prizes, but was subsequently sacked by Bobby! Funnily enough, members of Sammy’s family eventually ended up winning four of the prizes! We are still trying to work out how Sammy did it!

London Branch (The Seaforth Highlanders)

The Branch meets on the first Friday of each alternate month (ie: February, April etc) in the afternoon at the Union Jack Club. Sadly, the numbers attending the meetings are depleted compared with years past due to ageing, infirmity, distance to travel, but the members keep in contact and are in good heart and are resolved to keep the Branch going so long as it is all possible.

On Thursday, 5th November, 2009 our members attended the opening of the Field of Remembrance by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. Jimmy Fraser stood in front of our plot flanked by the Gordon Highlanders and the Queen’s Own Highlanders. In reviewing the Field, and speaking to us, the Highlanders, His Royal Highness was most gracious.

On the following Saturday, 10th, in the afternoon, a small number visited the Field and paid respects to our departed comrades.

On Saturday, 28th November, 2009 in the afternoon at the Union Jack Club we held our reunion lunch. Our members were honoured to welcome Willem Braam and his charming wife, Marianne, from Holland, firm friends, and Seaforth Associates, made by the late Lennie Jeans, a friendship we maintain. Also attended were guests from the Notts Branch and a number of good, old friends. All enjoyed a good meal (the fare was first class) and a very pleasant afternoon. A young piper attended. “The Flowers of the Forest” was played and the traditional minutes silence for departed comrades was observed.

We are now in liaison with the Southern Branch of The Queen’s Own Highlanders. On Saturday, 6th March, 2010 we attended their dinner at The Royal Military School of Music, Twickenham. It was a splendid evening among the officers and old soldiers of both regiments.

Our April meeting was arranged for Wednesday, 7th, in order to accommodate our Canadian guests of the Seaforths of Canada from Vancouver. In that city they have a huge military establishment called the Seaforth Armoury, a prominent feature of the tourist itinerary. Whenever any of us visited Vancouver, they have made us most welcome there. Jimmy Fraser and his wife Dilys, had the good fortune of visiting there last July (2009) and were royally entertained. The Armoury was established in 1910 so that this year they are celebrating their centenary. In April retired Colonel John Appleby and his wife Judy were visiting this country in connection with their centenary celebrations, and we were honoured to entertain them as our guests on April 7th. It was an enjoyable, friendly occasion. John Appleby addressed the meeting and presented the Branch with a “Seaforths of Canada” plaque, which we have presented to the Union Jack Club for display.

On Friday, 18th June, 2010, two of our members attended the Royal Hospital Chelsea at the

invitation of the French Ambassador, for their Anniversary celebration of the speech to the French people by General de Gaulle on 18th June, 1940. It was a wonderful, moving ceremony and it was a privilege to spend the morning and early afternoon among the veteran servicemen, French and British. HRH The Prince of Wales was in attendance. A sumptuous buffet was provided attended by senior serving and retired British officers.

We are now working on our next reunion lunch, a function we hope to continue.

Nairn Branch (The Seaforth Highlanders)

The Nairn Branch continues to do reasonable well considering that our members are getting older as the years roll on: we look forward to joining the young chaps following this incorporation of the Regimental Associations.

This year saw the Nairn Branch lose two of its most senior and respected members with the death of our Honorary President, General Ian Robertson and our Chairman Colonel Ian Fraser. Both of these Officers were staunch Seaforth Highlanders and true friends of the broader Regiment.

The Nairn Branch continues to look out for new members and at this minute in time our membership stands at 17 members. Apart from a £2.00 annual membership fee our fund raising effort is by an annual tombola evening, which usually generates enough cash to pay any Christmas Welfare Grants without financial help from RHQ. We are extremely grateful to the Committee and band of loyal lady supporters who run this tombola event on our behalf, and to the people who donate the prizes.

Last Christmas we identified 11 people who were given a Christmas Grant of £30.00 each.

We warmly welcome Lt Col Bob Towns as our new Chairman,; Colonel Towns has graciously agreed to become our Chairman in place of Colonel Ian.

Our Committee are very active although we now only meet every 3 months, however the Committee are determined to soldier on as the Nairn Branch as long as we can and now look forward to being part of this new Association.

We are indebted to Major Frank Blincow and RHQ for the help we receive from them and we look forward to working closely with David Loftus. We are also grateful to the Management Committee and members of the Seaforth Club for their continuing support.

Northern Ireland Branch (The Queen's Own Highlanders)

The Regimental Gathering was well attended and represented from across the Regimental family and very well received by those who attended.

David Coulter's message was that whilst commemoration is vital and relevant, it is also time to move on and look to the future.

What made the Northern Ireland Branch special was the marking of those that were lost in Northern Ireland and year after year, a service was held at Ballykinler and wreaths laid at both Narrow Water and St Martin's in the Mourne.

However, it has not been possible to stimulate the interest of members in Northern Ireland to participate in an active Branch and attendances have been negligible for several years.

It has been decided after consultation with members in NI to propose to the Regimental Association that the Northern Ireland Branch be wound up and the activities and membership fall within the Highland Branch. It is requested that the surplus funds be transferred to support the Branch going forward.

We thank the Association and Officers and the Secretary and in particular, Major Frank Blincow, for their unstinting support and look forward to supporting the 50th Anniversary Gathering and future events.

Notts Branch (The Seaforth Highlanders)

Greetings from The Nottinghamshire Branch. We continue to hold our monthly meetings at Pleasley Miners Welfare on the 2nd Friday of the month. Anyone who has served in the Regimental family and who lives in the area or is passing through is more than welcome to come along; we would be delighted to see you. Meetings are held every 2 months and the dates for 2010/11 are; 13th August 10, 8th October 10, 10th December 10, 11th February 11, 8th April 11 and 10th June 11 (AGM).

Unfortunately during the year we lost Dougie Askew (Seaforth) in Nov 2009, Bill Simpson (Cameron) in Feb 2010 and Jack Gough (Seaforth) in May 2010.

We have had two new members join the Branch Jim Riddell and Don Wilson both who served as Cameron and then Queen's Own Highlanders.

We had a very successful Annual Dinner in April which was held in the Masonic Hall, Mansfield. 101 members and guests attended. The toast to the Regiment and the Association was given by Ian Collins. The meal was superb and the Pipes and Drums display was magnificent. We also had a very good Disco and an excellent night was had by all.

Our Pipes and Drums have now picked up on recruitment and have a few more learners attending, we now have 19 Pipers and 6 Drummers. They practice every Thursday evening in the Verney Institute, Pleasley. They led the Mansfield Remembrance Parade again this year, and also led the Parade on 13th December 2009 in Mansfield to raise money to erect a memorial to 'Mansfield Heroes' for those who have lost their life in service for their Country since World War 2.

Thanks to all those are looking after our interests and especially to Seoras and Dave whose excellent Regimental Website keeps all informed and this means those of us at branch level can pass on information to those who are not on the internet via meetings and by telephone.

Ross-Shire Branch (The Seaforth Highlanders)

The Branch Membership remains solid despite the loss of some our most prominent members. Our Chairman of some 27 years Mr Duncan MacKenzie passed away in January 2010. Duncan who like many others of our oldest members joined the 4th Seaforths as a volunteer prior to the War and was sent to France as part of the 51st Division and was captured at St Valery. He had given the Branch sterling service over a period of 27 years and is sadly missed.

At this date our Vice Chairman has been in hospital over an extended period and Ian MacLeod has now been elected Chairman. Ian served the Branch as Secretary over many years.

The branch has been well represented at many local parades in Dingwall mainly organised by The Royal British Legion with whom we have a very close relationship

A very successful Annual Branch Dinner was attended by over 100 members. The main addresses were given by Lt Col Gilmour MBE DL Seaforths and by Maj M Gibson MBE of the Highlanders.

Some 30 Christmas Grants along with Regimental Association Christmas Cards were as usual sent to veterans and widows and were much appreciated

The Branch now looks forward to being part of The Queen's Own Highlanders Regimental Association (Incorporating the Seaforth Highlanders Regimental Association) and we hope it will be a long happy and successful Association.

Southern Branch (The Queen's Own Highlanders)

Sadly during the year one of our members, Gerry McCrum (Ex Sergeant in the Military Band), died. Gerry's military instrument was the clarinet but he was probably better known in the Battalion for his role in the Dance Band and Pop Group ensembles.

The Branch held a belated Amalgamation Dinner in the Warrant Officers', Sergeants' and Students' Mess (by kind permission of the Regimental Sergeant Major Danny Gibson CG). Attendance was a little thin on the ground and thinner than we would have hoped. Peter Mallas had booked to attend but was unable to attend with his party due to being unwell. We were pleased to have with us Jimmy and Dilys Fraser, Jimmy being a member of the Seaforth Association (London Branch), with us and we look forward to developing links between our two Branches.

The Branch has continued to provide representation at various events and activities and is pleased to be able to do this on behalf of the Association.

We see one of our important aspects being the ongoing contact with members outside of our meetings to try and ensure we continue to provide welfare and benevolent support to those who require it as soon as possible by being made aware of the individual's situation and needs.

It is intended that we may be able to have a gathering in September, for which Robbie Gow, the Branch Treasurer, is researching potential venues, and then in February 2011 we hope to have our Annual Amalgamation Dinner.

Strathclyde Branch (The Queen's Own Highlanders)

After a long and protracted period of personal issues the Branch now has access to our bank account and monies have started to be paid in and of course paid out. Memberships are coming in and another letter after the AGM should hopefully produce some more up to date payments. Despite a number of letters being sent out asking if anyone would participate in social functions or join a social committee all I have in reply is non takers and letters requesting just to be kept up to date with any happenings within the Association. We will continue to work towards increasing Branch number over the coming months as a matter of priority.

There are a small number of members who would always attended social evenings and it would probably be better if this was tied in to the Edinburgh Branch who have established venues and nights on their calendar. I will try and arrange mailings to inform members when these nights are taking place and to contact those responsible should they wish to attend.

The web site www.gohldrs.co.uk continues to generate much interest with lots of e-mails regarding histories of family members. Of particular interest was the history of Gibraltar and the involvement of a Cameron Highlander (Article, Garrison of Gibraltar PTIII 1871-1945, will appear in the Gibraltar Heritage Journal) Battalion who did not appear to leave the place. After much searching we established that in fact the regiment was disbanded while serving in Gibraltar so "never actually left it". Vincent Power's article will appear at the end of the year.

With a lot of the problems behind us it is hoped we can move on and build on the members we currently have.

MEUR nan EILEAN SIAR (Western Isles Branch) (The Queen's Own Highlanders)

There is not much to report from the Western Isles, as it has been a relatively quiet period for us, our AGM was held on the 29th May 2010 at the Drill Hall Stornoway, all the usual stalwarts attended plus a few others attending for the first time, we hope it was an enjoyable and memorable experience for you all. The Chair gave his report in his usual professional manner; he also indicated that he would not be seeking re-election. The Branch wishes to thank him for all his hard work and professionalism in carrying out his duties from the inception of the Branch. The secretary indicated that the state of returns was improving and that membership stood at 42, the treasurer indicated that the account was healthy.

Appointments were as follows: **Chair – Sheriff Colin Scott MacKenzie**
 Vice Chair – Mr J R H Brown
 Secretary – Mr Donnie MacLeod
 Treasurer – Mr John MacIver

Some branch members recently took part in flag raising and lowering ceremonies to celebrate Armed Forces Week, members also took part in the parade through Stornoway. The Branch is now busy planning for an Assay Day dinner in September, it is hoped that a large number of members will attend; branch members will also be involved in the Remembrance services throughout the Islands and the main parade in Stornoway on the Sunday.

Award of Medallions

The following were eligible for Medallions or Bars to the same. These were presented by The Chairman to those present at the Meeting. Those not present at the Meeting would be presented through their Branches.

Gold Medallions

Nil

Gold Bars

Mr P Finlayson

2004 - 2010

Highland Branch

	<p>PM A Venters 2004 – 2010 Highland Branch Major R I H Haugh 2005 – 2010 Aberdeen & North East Branch Mr W Gardner 2005 – 2010 Aberdeen & North East Branch Mr G Monaghan 2005 – 2010 Strathclyde Branch</p> <p>Silver Bars</p> <p>Mr S G C Fowlie 2005 – 2010 Aberdeen & North East Branch Mr F Gibb 2005 – 2010 Aberdeen & North East Branch Mr K G Pirie 2005 – 2010 Aberdeen & North East Branch Mr G Fraser 2005 – 2010 Aberdeen & North East Branch Mr D Penman 2005 – 2010 Aberdeen & North East Branch Mr J Manson 2005 – 2010 Caithness Branch Mr C Thorpe 2004 – 2009 Highland Branch Mr L Young 2004 – 2009 Highland Branch</p> <p>Caithness Branch raised a query concerning a member of their Branch, Mr D Forbes, who should have received a Silver Medallion.</p> <p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>The Elizabeth Cross: is a newly introduced national award for the families of those who die on operations in a “medal earning theatre, or as a result of terrorism” in recognition of their loss and sacrifice. The Queen had given her approval of the whole scheme on January 30th 2009 and the award will retrospectively recognise deaths from January 1st 1948. Further information and guidance on how to apply was available at the meeting.</p> <p>Comment was made and a discussion followed on the difficulty of Association Branches accessing and using the facilities of Military Sites.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Chairman write to the Minister seeking better and more favourable use of the Military facilities. Landmark run Cameron Barracks and it had been the experience of those who had held events that they charge for every facility used as well as the venue itself. The Cameron Association had used Cameron Barracks and the Convenor was challenging the fees levied by writing to the various military authorities.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Edinburgh Branch said they had not attempted accessing Military locations due to the charges raised but they had researched the area to find venues charging less. He said they had found Ex Servicemen’s Associations/Clubs very helpful.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed.</p> <p>Date of Next Meeting; 11th Jun 2011 – before the Gathering.</p>	
393		Frank Blincow
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