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(Seaforth and Camerons)  
Pipe Band**

Website: [www.cabarfeidh.com](http://www.cabarfeidh.com)

## **TUNE HISTORIES**

### **Cabar Feidh – Regimental March**

*Cabar Feidh* ('antlers of the stag') has been the coat of arms of the MacKenzies since the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. According to legend, King Alexander III, having been unhorsed while hunting in the Forest of Mar, was charged by an infuriated stag as it was pursued by the hounds. Colin Fitzgerald, Kintail, the Mackenzie Chief, ran to his aid with the shout "*Cuidich'n Righ*" (Help the King) and killed the stag. In gratitude, the King granted the use of a 'Stags head caboshed' (ie cut off at the neck) as the armorial bearings of the MacKenzies of Seaforth, together with the motto '*Cuidich'n Righ*'. To this day the Gaelic patronymic for the Chiefs of the Clan Mackenzie is *Cabar Feidh*.

The tune *Cabar Feidh* is one of the most stirring of all highland tunes and in its *ceol mor* form dates from ancient times. A popular Gaelic song *Cabar Feidh* dates from the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century and commemorates a cattle raid on the MacKenzie shielings in Assynt by Munro of Achany on behalf of the Earl of Sutherland. It is said that, for biting sarcasm and bitter invective, the words have few equals. *Cabar Feidh* was also well known throughout the Highlands as a round reel.

The tune has been played in the regiment from its earliest days, and the Earl of Seaforth's Highland Regiment used *Cabar Feidh* as the regimental charge. When the duty tunes became established in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the 72<sup>nd</sup> highlanders, and their successors the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Seaforth Highlanders, use it as the tune for dress for Parade as well as the Charge. In the Queen's Own Highlanders it remains one of the Regimental Marches which is used on several occasions among the duty tunes of the regiment.

### **The March of the Cameron Men – Regimental March - Retreat March On**

The tune and the words were composed by Mary Maxwell Campbell of Skerrington in 1829 when she was a girl of only 16. At the time she was travelling in the West Highlands with a member of the Lochiel family and was much impressed by the story of the Clan Cameron's key role in the Jacobite Rising of 1745. The words of the song describe the day when Prince Charlie, having landed at Loch nan Uamh, arrived at Glenfinnan on 19th August 1745 to find no sign of the Camerons and MacDonalds who had promised to meet him there. At length, after an anxious wait, the pipes were heard up Glen Finnan, and Lochiel was seen leading his Clan to the meeting place, the Cameron men having marched over the hill from Kinlocharkaig. They were joined by a further contingent from Lochielside and by the MacDonalds of Keppoch. Until Prince Charlie was assured of Lochiel's support, the standard of James III could not be raised, and so it was the March of the Cameron Men which started the '45 Rising.

As a quickstep march on the pipes, and as a march played by the military band, the tune was always popular in the 79th Cameron Highlanders in peace and war. In July 1915, during the desperate fighting for Hill 70 at Loos, Captain Philip Christison (later General Sir Philip Christison) encouraged a weary party of the 6th Camerons to attack once more by standing on the parapet and singing 'The March of the Cameron Men' in gaelic. In the Queen's Own Highlanders the tune is one of the Regimental Marches which is used on several occasions among the duty tunes of the regiment.

### **The 79<sup>th</sup>'s Farewell to Gibraltar – Leaving Station**

Rated among the best marches ever written for the pipes, 'The 79<sup>th</sup>'s Farewell to Gibraltar' was one of the early quicksteps written for troops on the march. It is also remarkable because, unlike so many military tunes whose origins have been forgotten, it can be dated exactly to June 1848 when the 79<sup>th</sup> Cameron Highlanders embarked for Canada after seven and a half years service in Gibraltar. As the ship approached St. Lawrence River estuary the usual fog caused by the Gulf Stream meeting the cold polar air gave the captain some concern. He asked if the pipers could assemble on deck and play together so the Pipe Major, John MacDonald, assembled the pipers and played 'The 79<sup>th</sup>'s Farewell to Gibraltar, which he had composed just a few weeks earlier. Pipe Major John MacDonald is also believed to be the composer of 'The Dornoch Links'.

### **Pibroch of Donuil Dubh – March Past**

As a pipe tune and song the Pibroch of Donuil Dubh is well over 500 years old, and so its origins are obscure. It has strong historical associations with Clan Cameron and Clan Donald. In Clan Cameron history it is named from Donald Dubh, traditionally the 11<sup>th</sup> Chief, who led the clan from about 1400 to 1460. Under his leadership the confederation of Lochaber tribes emerged as an organised clan, and from him the Cameron chiefs to this day inherit the well known patronymic '*MacDhomhnuill Dhubh*' or 'Son of Black Donald'. There is evidence that the tune evolved from ceol mor by the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century, for a Scots fiddle version was published by James Oswald in 1760. In 1816 Sir Walter Scott later wrote the stirring words for the song included by Alexander Campbell in his 'Albyn's Anthology', and Campbell is said to have based the tune for the song on Captain Neil MacLeod of Gesto's *canntaireachd*. Later in the century, as military pipers began to adopt popular airs into 'quickstep marches' for playing on the march, the tune emerged as a 6/8 march. The Pibroch of Donuil Dubh was the March Past of both the 79<sup>th</sup> Cameron highlanders and the 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs). There were obvious historical reasons for its choice by the 79<sup>th</sup>, but the reason for its use by the 78<sup>th</sup> has been forgotten, although it was in use in 1860. When the Seaforth Highlanders standardised the duty tunes of the former 72<sup>nd</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> in 1912, the Pibroch of Donuil Dubh was selected as the regimental March Past. When the Seaforth Highlanders and The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders were amalgamated in 1961, it duly became the March Past of the Queen's Own Highlanders. The *ceol mor* version of the tune is included in the Cabar Feidh Collection.

### **The Dornoch links – A Company**

The tune is attributed to Pipe Major John MacDonald of the 79<sup>th</sup> Cameron Highlanders who wrote the famous 'The 79<sup>th</sup> Farewell to Gibraltar'. Dornoch is the County Town of Sutherland and its famous golf links date back at least to 1616. The soldiers words to the second part, which were also sung to 'Blythe and Merry was She', a duty tune played in the 72<sup>nd</sup> and 79<sup>th</sup>, were:

'Hey Jock are ye glad ye 'listed?  
Hey Jockie are ye fou' the noo?  
Hey Jock, are ye glad ye 'listed?  
How do ye like the sodgers noo?

### **The Highland brigade at Tel-el-Kebir – B Company**

In 1882 an expeditionary force commanded by general Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent to Egypt to counter the revolt of Arabi Pasha and the Egyptian Army. Having landed at Ismailia, the British force marched on the Egyptians who held a strong position at Tel-el-Kebir. On 12<sup>th</sup> September 1882, after a careful night march, the British attacked at dawn and achieved complete surprise.

The Highland Brigade, consisting of the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn The Black Watch, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn The Highland Light Infantry, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn The Gordon Highlanders, and 1<sup>st</sup> Bn The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders were the first to encounter the enemy defences, and they had to clear some stiff opposition before the Egyptian Army ran away.

Meanwhile the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn Seaforth Highlanders, who formed part of the Indian Contingent commanded by Major general Sir Herbert MacPherson VC, late 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, had assaulted with equal success on the left flank.

### **The Brown Haired Maiden – C Company**

The well known song 'Ho Ro My Nut Brown Maiden' was a popular tune in both the Seaforth Highlanders and The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders. It was played by the 1<sup>st</sup> Camerons as they left Aldershot for France in September 1939. The setting played was collected by Lieutenant Colonel DJS Murray.

### **'The Bugle Horn' – D Company**

Until 1862 a regiment included a Grenadier Company which formed the right of line on parade, and a Light Infantry Company which stood on the left of the line. 'The light Bobs' were the scouts and sharpshooters, the equivalent of the modern Reconnaissance Platoon, and were distinguished by wearing green hackles in their feather bonnets and by the device of a bugle above their cap badges. Bugle calls had been developed by the light Infantry as a more effective way of communication on the battlefield than the drum. D Company is the junior rifle company, is therefore positioned on parade on the left of the line. The 'Bugle Horn', their Company March, is a reminder of their former role as the light Infantry Company.

### **The 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division at Wadi Akarit – Support Company**

The North African Campaign of the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division began with the major victory of El Alamein in October 1942, and finished with the hard won battle of Wadi Akarit in April 1943. The part played by the Regiment at Wadi Akarit was of great distinction. 152 Highland Brigade, consisting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Battalions Seaforth Highlanders and the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders had the task of capturing the Djebel Roumana and then holding it against a series of desperate German counter attacks. It was rated as the fiercest fighting that the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division experienced in the campaign, and the attack by the Seaforth and Camerons was described by military observers as 'one of the greatest heroic achievements of the war'. At the end of the North African campaign, as the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division rested and prepared for the invasion of Sicily, a Divisional piping competition was held. The winner of the prize for composition was LCpl W. MacDonald, a piper in the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Seaforth Highlanders whose tune was named 'The 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division at Wadi Akarit'. 'Black Will', as he was nicknamed in Sutherland, was a well known character in the Seaforth. He was an accomplished fiddle player and piper.

### **Over the Chindwin – Headquarter Company**

In 1944 the 1st Battalion the Seaforth Highlanders and the 1st battalion the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders took part in the bitter jungle campaign on the Indian-Burmese border which defeated the Japanese attempt to invade India. The success of the 1st Seaforth at Imphal, and of the 1<sup>st</sup> Camerons at Kohima each earned the Regiment Battle Honours of the greatest distinction. By the end of 1944 the 2nd Division had reached the River Chindwin, the Western tributary of the Irrawaddy, the main river of Burma. The 1<sup>st</sup> Camerons celebrated Christmas 1944 having crossed over the Chindwin. Pipe Major Evan MacRae of the 1st Camerons composed this tune to mark the event. First appointed Pipe Major of the 1st Camerons during the Burma Campaign, he was to hold the appointment for 13 years after the war, the longest term ever held by a Pipe Major of the 79th.

The tune was selected in 1989 as HQ Company March to commemorate the service of the 1<sup>st</sup> Seaforth and the 1st Camerons in the Burma Campaign. It replaced 'Farewell to the Creeks' which had been chosen at the time of amalgamation.

### **The Point of War – General Salute**

The Point of War, which was also played at the start of the Long Reveille and Retreat, is a survival from the old drum and fife beatings, the 'Scotch Duty' and the 'English Duty' which existed separately until 1816 when they were combined in the interests of uniformity in the Army. The 'Military Discipline' of 1759 gives details of the ceremony of trooping the Colour, and at the stage when the Ensigns receive the Colours '... the Captain gives the Word of Command "Present your Arms", upon which the Grenadiers present the arms and the Drummers beat a point of war ...'

The Point of War, as a drum beating, was therefore a compliment to the Colours of the regiment. The tradition remains unchanged today in that, when the Regimental Colour is accorded a general Salute, it is still accompanied by The Point of War.

The evolution from a fife to a pipe tune dates from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century when the pipes replaced fifes on parade, but continued to play the old fife music.

### **Dark Lowers the Night – Retreat March**

The custom of using a standard pipe tune at retreat comes from the Seaforth Highlanders who used 'I hae a wife o' my ain', an old tune with words by Robert Burns. 'Dark lowers the Night' was selected as the retreat tune for the Queen's Own Highlanders.

### **The Sands of Kuwait**

Written by LCpl Gordon MacKenzie to mark the Queen's Own Highlanders operational deployment - Gulf War 1991.

Jim  
Cabar Feidh Gu Brath