The Black Watch

Text by CHARLES GRANT
Colour plates by MICHAEL YOUENS
The Early Years

'A winding line from Dumbarton, upon the River Clyde, to Dunintra, upon the Firth of Dornoch, separates the Highlands from the Lowlands.'

From the towering bastion of Stirling Castle one may gaze northwards towards a tumbling sea of hills and mountains, of glens and foaming streams, the home of a proud and poetic people once described by Eric Linklater as 'the unpredictable dark Celt'. For century after century this rugged land saw wars and feuds, clan battles and every sort of internecine strife. But as time wore on, the more enlightened of the clan chiefs realised that some form of law-enforcement body was required in this country of hereditary jurisdiction, and it was decided that the warlike nature of the Highlanders could be put to some use if they themselves were to provide the force. It seems that it was the celebrated Duncan Forbes of Culloden who in 1739 suggested that infantry companies should be raised from certain of the clans, their task being to protect the populace, put down cattle-stealing, and guard against any possible Jacobite incursion from the Continent.

Accordingly, in the course of the following year, six Independent Companies were embodied – three large ones each of 110 men, and three lesser ones of 70 each. The first three came from the Fraser, Campbell and Grant clans, and were initially commanded by Lord Lovat, Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochnell and Grant of Ballindalloch respectively. In command of the smaller ones were Campbell of Finab, Campbell of Carrick and Munro of Calcairn.

The companies had many unique features. Most if not all of the private soldiers were 'gentlemen': they belonged to the upper rank of Highlanders (who all claimed relationship with their
clan chief, in any case) and the privilege of officially bearing arms drew a great many young men of quality into the ranks of the companies. It was no unusual thing, therefore, for a private man to be accompanied by a servant or two who would carry his baggage and arms when on the march, or otherwise assist when he was not on duty. At the outset the companies were truly independent, there being neither staff nor regimental organisation, and detachments were distributed at various strategic points through the Highlands.

It is quite impossible to say with certainty just how the title ‘Black Watch’ came about, but even at the earliest stage it was used to describe the companies. ‘Watch’ is possibly obvious — the function being to observe or watch the Highlands; but ‘Black’ is more obscure. The tartan as we know it now is a dark one, but the scarlet jacket and waistcoat should surely have counterbalanced the sombre shades of the tartan. ‘Black’ might have been a character description by Highlanders opposed to the companies and to what they were intended to do. But this is mere conjecture; we can only say that the name ‘Black Watch’ was quickly adopted for general use. When, in 1739, it was decided to organise the companies into a regiment of foot on the Regular Army establishment, the title followed the men when they were formed into the 43rd Regiment of Foot and, in May 1740, mustered in a field between Taybridge and Aberfeldy in Perthshire.

The first Colonel of the new regiment was the Earl of Crawford, and the roll of officers reflected the origins of the regiment — Grants, Campbells, Munros along with Macleans, Mackenzies and other famous clan names being included therein.

The uniform was a scarlet jacket and waistcoat with buff facings and white lace, tartan plaid of twelve yards plaied round the middle of the body, the upper part being fixed on the left shoulder, ready to be thrown loose and wrapped round both shoulders and firelock in rainy weather. At night the plaid served the purpose of a blanket, and was a sufficient covering for the Highlander. These were called belted plaids, from being kept tight to the body by a belt, and were worn on guards, reviews, and on all occasions when the men were in full dress . . . In the barracks, and when not on duty, the little kilt or philabeg was worn . . . The arms were a
musket, a bayonet and a large, basket-hilted broadsword. These were furnished by the Government: such of the men as chose to supply themselves with pistols and dirks were allowed to carry them, and some had targes after the fashion of the country.  

The tartan worn by the regiment has caused endless speculation and research. It was believed that, originally, each Independent Company wore its own clan tartan—although there is some doubt whether, in the early eighteenth century, there was such a thing. As the first Colonel—the exception in the respect that he was the sole Lowlander among the officers—had no clan tartan, it has been suggested that to meet the overall requirement for a tartan which had no clan bias, a new one was designed. However, a contributor to the July 1932 edition of the Red Hackle, the regimental magazine, produced evidence from original papers in the British Museum, that as early as 1727 a tartan was being made in Strathspey for the Grants forming an unofficial company, and that enough was being made to equip similar bodies in all other clans. There is also some evidence that a uniform tartan was in use in 1733, but the documents in question make no reference to the ‘sett’ or pattern of the tartan. The first historian of the regiment, Col. David Stewart of Garth, who served in the Black Watch from 1787 to 1804, states that ‘a new pattern’ was assumed. It would be surprising if a man who served so long in the regiment in those early days would be wrong in this matter, and one possible explanation was that, while it was indeed a ‘new tartan’ in so far as it had no clan connection, it had been brought into general use even before the formation of the regiment, and could in fact have been that used in 1733. A later Colonel—Lord John Murray, who took command in 1745—gave the regiment the Athole tartan for the ‘little kilt’, this differing from the sett as used for the belted plaid in that it had a narrow red stripe running through it. The pipers, according to Stewart of Garth, wore the ‘Stewart or Royal tartan’, which they do to this day.

The 43rd Foot, as it was named, remained just over a year near the place where they had been originally mustered. Their training was enthusiastically conducted by the Lieutenant-Colonel, Sir Robert Munro of Foulis, who was something of a character and who was to have a distinguished career in the regiment. In 1740 the Earl of Crawford was posted to the Life Guards, and Brig.-Gen. Lord Semphill became Colonel. In the same year, two privates from the regiment were sent to London, at the request of King George II who, in common with the vast majority of people in England, had never seen a Highlander. The two chosen men were presented to the King and ‘performed the broad sword exercise; and that of the Lochaber axe, or lance, before His Majesty, the Duke of Cumberland, Marshal Wade and a number of general officers, assembled for the purpose, in the Great Gallery at St James’s. They displayed so much dexterity and skill in the management of their weapons, as to give perfect satisfaction to His Majesty. Each got a gratuity of one guinea, which he gave to the porter at the Palace gate as they passed out’ (Westminster Gazette).  

Lord John Murray, Colonel of the Black Watch or Highland Regiment as it was then known, from 25 April 1745 to 18 May 1787. During his tenure the regiment received its more famous titles of 42nd and The Royal Highland Regiment. (By kind permission the ‘Red Hackle’).
In March 1743 the regiment was ordered south into England. They reached London on 29th and 30th April, and in May embarked for the Continent, to join the army under command of the Earl of Stair at grips with the French forces of Louis XV. They sailed from Gravesend to Ostend, whence they marched to Brussels, arriving on 1 June 1743; and thence to Liège to Hanau, where lay the army commanded by George II in person, who had just assumed command from the Earl of Stair. Throughout the ensuing twelve months or more the Highlanders saw no active service, but the year 1745 was to be an eventful one for the Black Watch and indeed for the regiment’s homeland.

Leading the powerful French forces in the Low Countries was the redoubtable Marshal Saxe, one of the greatest military figures of the century. He was opposed, after King George returned to England, by the Duke of Cumberland, at least the equal of the most unsuccessful general ever to have commanded British troops. Together with his Dutch allies and some Austrians, he marched at the beginning of May to relieve the fortress of Tournai from the siege with which Marshal Saxe had opened his campaign. Leaving a force to ‘mask’ Tournai, Saxe had drawn up his army in a superb defensive position some miles away. Forming the key point of an L-shaped defence line was the village of Fontenoy; several woods formed natural obstacles, redoubts were constructed by the French to add to the hazards faced by the attackers, and the whole front was liberally garnished with field-guns.

On 10th May when, in the manner of the time, the Allied army began its deliberate approach, it was seen that the planned start line for the attack could be reached only through the small village of Vezon. A mixed force of infantry and cavalry, including the Highlanders, was therefore detailed to clear the place. This was achieved with little trouble, the French falling back after a sharp exchange of musketry; and that was the Black Watch’s baptism of fire. Thereafter the regiment was posted on the extreme right of the Allied line, facing the wood of Barri, which formed the point d’apprui of the French left flank. The following morning the task of clearing the French from the wood was given to a certain Col. Ingoldsby, who was provided with a brigade consisting of the 12th and 13th Foot, a Hanoverian regiment, and the Highlanders. At 6.00 a.m. the brigade moved off, but a succession of quite inexplicable events halted it. Whether it was uncertainty on Ingoldsby’s part or confusion resulting from conflicting orders from his superiors, is not known (he was later acquitted at a court martial) but, despite the arrival of supporting artillery, he either could not or would not press home the attack. By 11.00 a.m. a Dutch attack on Fontenoy had failed, and the Highlanders were ordered to proceed from the right to the left flank to support them in a second assault. This was much more to their taste; off they went at
The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) officers’ badges and buttons. Approved War Office Pattern, 1937, and as worn today.

Left to right:
1. Officer’s Glengarry badge. Star, cross, and St Andrew and cross in silver, the St Andrew and cross being on a gilt, beaded oval.
2. Officer’s breastplate. A seeded gilt plate with burnished edges; the star, cross, and St Andrew and cross silver.
3. Officer’s waistplate. Gilt and silver as in breastplate.
4. Large and small buttons. The design is the Star of the Thistle with St Andrew and cross in the centre.
5. Collar badge of service dress.

the double led by Lieut.-Col. Sir Robert Munro, and stormed forward against the French positions about Fontenoy with tremendous spirit and élan. The French, protected by field fortifications and in considerable strength, were much shaken by this unusual attack launched by Highland furies armed – thanks to the granting of a request that this day they should fight with their native weapons – with broadsword and targe. Over the first line of entrenchments poured the Highlanders, but the French musketry was sustained and deadly and many of them fell and died before the fortifications. After a bitter struggle the Highlanders had to retreat, carrying with them the Lieutenant-Colonel, a man of such tremendous girth that he stuck in one of the entrenchments and barely escaped being made prisoner.

While the Black Watch was regrouping after this onslaught, there followed the tremendous episode when the solid mass of British and Hanoverian infantry – 16,000 strong – advanced into the heart of the French position, shattering the Gardes Francaises and many another distinguished regiment of the ancien régime, and retiring only after having been virtually decimated by musketry and gunfire and innumerable cavalry and infantry counter-attacks. The Highlanders and another battalion were detailed to cover the inevitable retreat, a difficult duty even though there was no sustained pursuit, and the regiment was singled out for special praise by Cumberland in his report of the battle.

As an additional mark of favour, the men were asked if there were any special requests they might like to make. Unanimously they expressed the desire that two of their comrades, under sentence of flogging for allowing some prisoners to escape, should have the punishment remitted. Another incident is worth recording. On the morning of the battle, when the Highlanders paraded, the commanding officer saw the regimental minister standing in the ranks with drawn broadsword. This was Adam Ferguson, later Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, who was threatened upon the spot with the loss of his commission if he did not at once return to his
more orthodox duties. 'Damn my commission!' retorted the bellicose prelate and marched off to battle with his men. Their first engagement cost the regiment dearly, over 30 officers and men killed and nearly 90 wounded – not as serious as the casualties of some other regiments taking part, but bad enough.

However, important events were elsewhere taking place, for on 25 July 1745 Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Chevalier – or Young Pretender, depending upon the point of view – landed on Scottish soil in the western Highlands and on 19th August raised the Stuart standard at Glenfinnan. Within a few weeks he had occupied Edinburgh and routed Sir John Cope’s force at Prestonpans. A large part of the British army in Flanders was given immediate orders to return, among them the 43rd Foot. Happily for the Highlanders they were not destined to clash with the Jacobites, an occurrence which would certainly have strained the loyalty of many, but were posted to join a force in Kent to repel any possible invasion from France. In the meantime, however, three new companies had been formed for the regiment, one of which was involved in the defeat at Prestonpans and captured to a man. But the last hopes of the exiled Stuarts soon went down to destruction in the wind and rain of Culloden on 16 April 1746. The Black Watch was again available for foreign service. Later that year it took part in an abortive descent on the French coast, and was then posted to Ireland. It remained there until February 1747, was then again posted to the Low Countries, but after seeing little service was returned to Ireland for garrison duty.

During 1749 it underwent a metamorphosis. On the reduction of the 42nd Foot – known as Ogilthorpe’s Regiment – the Highlanders moved up one place in the numerical list, becoming the familiarly known 42nd Regiment of Foot. This change was ratified by royal warrant of 1 July 1751. The dress was confirmed as the scarlet jacket with buff lining and facings, although the national dress of kilt and plaid was not mentioned in the warrant, presumably because the composers of the document were unfamiliar with the detail of Highland dress. The Grenadier Company – formed from the biggest and strongest men in the regiment – was to wear a bearskin cap with the King’s cipher and crown on a red ground on the turn-up. Two colours were carried – the King’s, which was the Union flag, and the regimental colour which was of buff with the regimental number in the centre and the small Union in the upper canton.

During the years of garrison duty in Ireland, little of event took place. It was recorded that the regiment was notable for its sobriety, and behaviour was generally such that courts martial were few and far between. The stay in Ireland lasted until war was declared against France in May 1756, thus regularising the unofficial strife which had been raging in North America for upwards of two years. At once an army was assembled under the command of Lieut.-Gen. Abercromby, and landed in New York in June 1756. Reinforcements brought the number up considerably, and overall command was given to the Earl of Loudon. In command of the French in Canada was the astute general the Marquis de Montcalm, who excelled in carrying out the sort of petite guerre that caused the maximum trouble to the British troops – the war of raids, skirmishes and ambushes. Their aptitude in this sort of fighting may have been the reason why the Highlanders remained at Albany, in New York State, throughout 1756 and the early part of 1757, undergoing intensive training in forest fighting and irregular warfare. They had been augmented by the arrival of recruits from Scotland and now numbered some 1,300 men.

The following year Abercromby became Commander-in-Chief vice Lord Loudon who returned to England. An operation was mounted against Fort Ticonderoga, with the 42nd included in a force of some 15,000 men. The fort stood on a narrow stretch of ground between Lake George and Lake Champlain, protected both by nature and by human artifice, surrounded by high field fortifications where it was not encompassed by a treacherous morass. The French garrison numbered 5,000 men, a large portion being regular troops. On 7th July Abercromby’s army approached and, receiving intelligence that reinforcements for the garrison were rapidly approaching, it was decided to assault the place at once. The attack was launched by four infantry regiments, with the 42nd as one of the supporting units, but they could make no headway against a
The Highland Regiment, by this time promoted to the 42nd Regiment of Foot, attacking Fort Ticonderoga in North America on 7 July 1758, during the Seven Years War which lasted from 1756 to 1763

Inscribed powder-horn of the North American Seven Years War period, 1756-63
lofty, well-constructed breastwork, reinforced with sharpened trunks of trees and thorny branches. At this point the Highlanders rushed forward with the broadsword, apparently of their own volition, slashing and hacking their way up over the obstructions. But they fell in swathes from the close-range musketry of the French. Time and again the Highlanders surged forward in an attempt to carry the defences, but to no avail. Only a handful of men penetrated the dense screen, to be cut down at once by the defenders. So desperate were the maddened Highlanders to cross the defences and avenge their fallen comrades that it required orders thrice repeated from the General before Lieut.-Col. Grant, in command, could prevail on his men to retire.

After this most bloody repulse, Abercromby’s troops retreated in good order, but the losses had been crippling. Of the 42nd, 314 officers and men had been killed and 333 wounded, roughly half the strength of the regiment. Despite its shattered condition the 42nd was deputed to cover the withdrawal, but fortunately pursuit was negligible. The regiment was really in no state to have beaten off a determined attack.

That its behaviour at Fort Ticonderoga had been of a near superhuman order was acknowledged by the King, who made the regiment a ‘Royal’ one. More immediately important was the sending from Scotland of three additional companies raised in the year 1758, and the formation in Perth the same year of a second battalion. While awaiting their replacements the 1st Battalion was not employed on active service, but the 2nd Battalion had not long to wait before being ‘blooded’. They embarked for the West Indies, arriving off Martinique on 14 January 1759. There was hard fighting against the French occupation forces and heavy losses from sickness; the change to the rigours of a tropical climate was especially severe for the Highlanders, coming more or less straight from their Scottish hills. When the fighting ended with the French capitulation on 1st May, the battalion found it had suffered the loss of over 100 men, killed or died of wounds or disease.

It was not long before both battalions of what was now the 42nd (Royal Highland) Regiment – rejoicing in a change of facing colour from buff to blue, the royal colour – were united. They formed part of a large force under a new Commander-in-Chief, Gen. Amherst, numbering over 14,000 men assembled at Fort Edward in June 1759. The campaign was largely uneventful, for when the entire forces moved on the notorious Fort Ticonderoga, the French set fire to the place and abandoned it. After some further desultory manoeuvres and various amphibious operations on Lake Champlain the army went into winter quarters.

1760 was notable for the capture of Montreal from the French. The 42nd was in the army under General Amherst which mustered at Fort Oswego at the beginning of August, and its 1st Battalion was in the advanced guard which first marched across country, then proceeded down the St Lawrence by boat. The army disembarked on 6th September only a few miles above Montreal, having lost several men while negotiating the river’s dangerous rapids. Two other converging forces united around the city immediately afterwards and the French commander, recognising the futility of resistance, surrendered.

After a well-earned rest the two battalions of the 42nd sailed for Barbados in October 1761, to join an expedition against Martinique. Stiff
fighting culminated in the city’s capitulation and the winning of all the Windward Islands. This cost the Highlanders 15 killed and 86 wounded, but they were building up a reputation as fierce fighters. A journal of the time describes an incident in the Martinique fighting: ‘The Highlanders, drawing their swords, rushed forward like furies.’

Upon the declaration of war with Spain an attempt was made against Havana, capital of Cuba and the centre of the Spanish West Indian empire. A large fleet and armament were prepared for this enterprise, and Lord Albemarle was in command of the land forces which included both battalions of the Royal Highlanders. The fleet sighted Havana on 6 June 1762 and disembarkation began the following day. Then began a dreadful and most arduous siege. The objective was initially the fortress known as the Moro, with sickness and mortality rates rising steeply during the forty days of the siege. The place was eventually mined and the following assault, led by Lieut.-Col. Grant of the 42nd, was a triumph. The city surrendered on 19th August, nine weeks after the first landing. The 42nd lost comparatively few to enemy action, but illness exacted what was by now a familiar toll to troops in the West Indies, over 80 fatalities from this cause. Indeed, it seems that the overall losses of the regiment over the previous years must have been very considerable, for before leaving Cuba the two battalions, evidently much reduced, were amalgamated into one.

Immediately after the successful siege of Moro, this one battalion embarked for New York. Arriving in October, they returned to their familiar quarters in Albany. They remained there until the summer of the following year when they were detailed to join a force under the command of the famous Indian fighter, Col. Bouquet, whose aim it was to relieve Fort Pitt, under attack by a confederation of Indian nations. In this expedition their forest training was put to constant use. On one occasion, while escorting a convoy of provisions through dense woods in Bushy Run, in south-western Pennsylvania, they were ambushed by Indians in such numbers that they were hard pressed. However, the Indians were lured by a feigned withdrawal into pressing home an attack instead of adhering to their normal skirmishing
tactics. The Highlanders promptly turned and confronted them, and the broadsword proved more than a match for the tomahawk. But this close fighting was particularly deadly, and the Highlanders in this brief encounter lost 29 killed and 36 wounded. Fort Pitt was relieved soon after, and the survivors were able to recuperate there.

The Highlanders garrisoned Fort Pitt until 1767, when they left Philadelphia for Ireland. On their arrival at Cork an intensive recruiting campaign was mounted immediately, and by the following year the strength was up to establishment. During the regiment’s sojourn in Ireland, an uneventful period, certain improvements were made to the uniform. White waistcoats were supplied to take the place of the old red ones, and the Colonel personally provided the men with new white sporrans, thus considerably brightening the uniform. The sergeants were provided with carbines to replace the massive Lochaber axe. At length in 1775, after an absence of thirty-two years, the regiment came back to Scotland, the first time it had set foot on its native soil since, as the old 43rd, it had marched south to London and the Continent.

The stay in Scotland was a short one, for in 1776 the War of American Independence broke out and on 1st May the Black Watch sailed from Greenock for ‘the Americas’ once again. They landed on Staten Island in New York Harbour on 5th August. There was an immediate reorganiza-

sation, the flank companies being drafted into combined grenadier and light infantry battalions respectively, while the other companies were formed into two small provisional battalions, one under Maj. William Murray, the other under Maj. Grant of Rothiemurchus; the whole regiment being under the command of Lieut.-Col. Stirling. There was some discontent in the regiment at the withdrawal from use of both pistols and broadswords, the theory being that they were not suitable for forest fighting.

Col. Stirling was eager to teach his men the elements of close-country fighting, and the Highlanders rapidly absorbed the instruction. Even so the Americans, many of whom had been born and brought up in the forests, had great advantages. In several actions the initial advantage was to the British but, due mainly to lack of enterprise and decisiveness on the part of the high command, the victories were not exploited. The 42nd was active in all these engagements. At White Plains, New York State, on 10th October, a large concentration of Americans awaited them. The Black Watch, taking part in an attack which was designed as a feint, went about the task with so much vigour that they stormed a steep precipice and assailed an American force with such violence that it laid down its arms on the spot.

On 10th May at Pisquata, after spending a severe winter in quarters, they were attacked by a strong body of 2,000 Americans. Despite the disadvantage of being completely surprised (the
Highlanders' training was somewhat at fault here) they fought back and managed to drive the enemy off. During that summer they were present at the victory of Brandywine, where the battalion companies were in reserve throughout the battle, although the flank companies which were engaged suffered considerably.

It seemed the war was going to drag on interminably. Little occurred in 1778 except for a raid by some Highlanders and other troops on the harbour at New Plymouth, to destroy an assembly of privateers. The operation was a complete success, the stores at the harbour and many vessels being destroyed. This was doubtless the reason for the 42nd being selected for a similar task in April 1779 when the target was Portsmouth in Virginia. In October the regiment was back in Greenwich, New York.

It was again a bitterly cold winter and the Highlanders were probably glad to join Sir Henry Clinton's army before Charleston, South Carolina, on 18th April. The garrison surrendered about a month later, whereupon the regiment returned to New York and remained there until 1782. In that year the war ended and America achieved her hard-won independence. Immediate reductions were the order of the day, and the establishment of the 42nd was reduced to eight companies of 50 men each, the officers of the ninth and tenth companies being retained as supernumeries to fill places in the first eight as vacancies occurred. The eight-company establishment did not last for long, for two new ones were added in 1787.

The regiment suffered a sad loss in May 1787 on the death of its Colonel. Lord John Murray had commanded it for forty-two years, and at the time of his death he was the senior officer of the army. His successor as Colonel was Sir Hector Munro.

In 1789 the regiment left America. Arriving at Portsmouth, they wintered at Tynemouth Barracks and, in May 1790, marched through Berwick and Edinburgh to Glasgow, back to a welcome from 'their ain folk'.
For the next four years the regiment enjoyed the benefits of a home posting. But it was a mixed blessing as, for a considerable part of the time, the Highlanders were employed in aiding the civil powers to quell various disturbances in parts of their own country. First, it was fellow Highlanders who were the cause of the military action, agitating against the iniquitous system of ‘clearances’ which was transforming huge tracts of populated areas of the Highlands into sheep pasture, and which encouraged the consequent disastrous depopulation of northern Scotland. Next, it was in the Lowlands that the regiment found itself putting down civil action.

Such distasteful duties ended when war was declared against Revolutionary France in 1794, and late that year the 42nd joined an expedition to the Low Countries. Hardly had the regiment joined the army there when it was ordered to return to England to join a force destined to act against the French in the West Indies. This operation did not materialise, however, and after spending some time in the Channel Islands the Highlanders returned to Ostend to form part of the force under Lord Moira. This force at once joined the main army led by the Duke of York, command of the brigade comprising the 42nd and the Guards being given to Lieut.-Gen. Abercromby. After considerable skirmishing with the enemy the 42nd was present at the Battle of Geldermalsen in January 1795. The regiment did not suffer greatly, but French pressure was everywhere very severe and their forces were rapidly increasing in strength. The coming of winter added to the privations the British troops were suffering, and finally a general retreat was ordered. After all sorts of vicissitudes the troops reached Bremen at the beginning of April, and on the 14th of the month sailed for England. The losses suffered by the 42nd during this ill-starred and badly managed campaign were slight, only 25 being killed or perishing from disease.

On its return the regiment was brought up to strength from drafts supplied by other Highland units, raised the previous year and now disbanded; and it was detailed to join a very large expedition against the French in the West Indies. This undertaking was frustrated by a spell of the most appalling weather then known. Several starts were made, but many ships were sunk or went astray in storms. Finally five companies of the Highlanders under Lieut.-Col. Dickson arrived at Gibraltar, while the other five reached Barbados on 9 February 1796. It was decided to make an assault on the island of St Lucia and, after some very sharp fighting, the regiment was sent from St Lucia to St Vincent. The 42nd was part of the invasion force which landed on 8th June and attacked the enemy two days later. There followed a period of very bitter fighting in the rough and broken interior of the island, with heavy casualties and, as always in the West Indies, mortality from disease staggeringly high.

The next island to be attacked was Trinidad, which surrendered without trouble; and from there another body of troops, again including the Royal Highlanders, was dispatched to Puerto Rico. But the defences of this place proved too strong for the modest army which had been sent, and it had to re-embark. The Highlanders returned to Martinique and thence back to England, but they left home shores almost at once to join the other five companies still serving on Gibraltar.

The regiment, some 1,100 strong, took part in the expedition to Minorca which sailed from the Rock on 24 October 1797, reached the island on 6th November and landed almost unopposed. Citadella, the principal fortress, was invested on 14th November and surrendered the following day.
The resulting possession of Minorca was considered to be of the greatest strategic importance, for it was planned to use it as an assembly base for an army to act in the Mediterranean theatre of operations. The first enterprise was the relief of Genoa, but it started too late and Genoa surrendered to the French before the relief arrived.

On 2 October 1800 another operation was mounted, this time against the Spanish port of Cadiz. This, too, was abortive, the attackers being hurriedly withdrawn when it was discovered that plague was raging in the city. Back went the fleet to Gibraltar, and there it was given a new destination – Egypt. Shortly before Christmas anchor was raised and, after pausing at a Turkish port in Greece, the fleet arrived off the Egyptian coast on 1 March 1801. Carrying the 42nd as part of the reserve, the great array of ships anchored in Aboukir Bay, ready for the perilous task of landing on a hostile shore in the face of a numerous and determined enemy.

At 2.00 a.m. on 8th March the first stages of the landing were begun. The troops took to the boats, with the 42nd in the centre of those carrying the first wave. This was a hazardous and difficult operation to be carried out in almost total darkness, but although several landing craft went astray and were late in assuming proper station, the component parts of the entire landing flotilla were finally in their correct places. At long last, about 9.00 a.m., the vessels started to move towards the beaches, immediately coming under long-range fire from the French batteries and, as they came nearer, being swept by volleys of musketry. Nevertheless the landing went ahead, and soon the Highlanders were pressing up steep and sandy slopes, crowned by men and guns. Up they went with a characteristic rush and yell, driving the French back with the bayonet, and following this up by hurling back a cavalry counter-attack. Everywhere the enemy recoiled in confusion and this most dangerous of all military operations was a complete success. However, as might have been expected in such circumstances, losses were heavy, and of the 42nd nearly 200 of all ranks were killed and wounded.
The next few days were devoted to the build-up of the beachhead. Many fresh troops and quantities of supplies were ferried ashore, and on 13th March the army was ready to move forward. At first the French resisted the advance, but then changed their plan and retreated to their defences at Alexandria. At once Gen. Abercromby decided to force their lines by a coup de main, but the French position was exceedingly strong. The first forward move by the British was met by an intense fire which caused very heavy losses and an eventual retreat.

The decisive battle, however, was daily expected and not to be long delayed. The opposing armies faced each other for a week, the British standing to arms at 3.00 a.m. every day until finally on 21 March 1801, the desert exploded with all the sound and fury of battle. The 42nd was posted on the right of the British line, not far from an ancient ruined palace, when the French advanced and attacked. Just before this – it was still very dark – the left wing of the 42nd had been detached some distance forward of the right wing and there was an interval of about 200 yards between the two sections. The French took advantage of this to carry out a most astute maneuvre, sending a strong column of infantry in the utmost silence to infiltrate between the two separated wings of the Highlanders. This was detected, however, and the right wing went for the intruders with the bayonet, while the left wing, facing about, likewise charged home. The French put up a terrific fight but were driven into the ruins of the palace, followed by the 42nd in full chase.

The French attack was now general all along the line, and the Highlanders were withdrawn from the fighting in the ruins and formed up to support and extend the main front line. It was now almost daylight, and under the eye of Gen. Abercromby the Highlanders charged yet again, driving the French back across the sand. But before they could draw breath, squadrons of enemy cavalry came hurtling down upon them. They were scarcely able to get into line, let alone form square to repel cavalry, but met the French horsemen with a hail of musket balls. But after
another infantry assault the regiment was in a parlous state, much reduced in strength and their ammunition almost exhausted.

Fortunately at this juncture a fresh brigade of infantry came up to support the exhausted Highlanders and the moment of peril passed. Still the enemy came on to the attack, but at this point the Highlanders and their supporting units were in command of the situation. By about 8.00 a.m. the enemy had everywhere been flung back, although their heavy artillery was still active, the round shot tearing great gaps all along the British ranks. This was particularly serious for the Highlanders, who were in a very exposed position without cover of any kind. However, as the morning wore on, the French made a general retreat and by 10.00 a.m. they were back in their positions in front of Alexandria.

The victory had cost the life of the 42nd’s Commander-in-Chief, the gallant Abercromby, who was wounded by a musket ball and died on board ship some days later. The Highlanders’ losses were 54 killed and 261 wounded.

Though soundly defeated in the battle, the French were still a formidable force. But the end was inevitable: first Cairo was taken, and then Gen. Menou, the French commander in Alexandria, signed a capitulation on 2nd September. The Egyptian campaign was over. To the Highlanders it was the occasion of their receiving the Sphinx and the word ‘Egypt’ for their colours.

The regiment was one of the first to return to Britain, arriving in December 1801 and forthwith taking up garrison duties at Winchester.

In May 1802, soon after a review at Ashford in Kent by King George III, the 42nd marched to Edinburgh, but stayed only a short while before moving by sea to Harwich and on to a camp in Essex. The following year a second battalion was again raised for the regiment, this time at Fort George, where the final muster produced a very strong battalion of over 1,300 men. The 2nd Battalion joined the first in Essex and both remained there until September 1805 when the 1st Battalion was sent to reinforce the garrison at Gibraltar.
mountainous country of Galicia. With morale deteriorating daily, and with completely inadequate provisions, it was rather surprising that any troops remained in formation. Finally, after privations rivaling those experienced by the French in their retreat from Moscow a few years later, the British reached Corunna and turned to meet the pursuing French.

Moore drew out his army in an S-shaped line around the town and suburbs. Bentinck's brigade of three regiments, one of them the 42nd, was posted where the Commander-in-Chief anticipated the greatest weight of the French attack would fall. And so it did. At an early stage the troops came under a furious artillery barrage. Characteristically Moore was at the danger-point himself, and when he saw a chance to strike the advancing French infantry he ordered the 42nd to charge. The Highlanders rushed down the slope, and after one quick and deadly volley they were at grips with the bayonet. Before the fury of the charge the French fell back but, like the fine soldiers they were, they rallied and held the High-

1808 saw the beginning of the long and bloody series of campaigns which ended in the expulsion of the French invaders from the Iberian Peninsula. After Sir Arthur Wellesley's victory at Vimeiro, the 1st Battalion of the Highlanders came up from Gibraltar to join the British Army under the command of Sir John Moore in Portugal. The initial aim was for the British forces to unite with the Spanish armies in the field, but on his move towards Salamanca, the first point of concentration, Moore and his men found nothing of the Spanish troops who were supposed to join them. On the contrary, from every side came news of the destruction or dispersal of British forces.

Moore determined to maintain his advance. On 21st December he was met by the supporting force of Sir David Baird, thus bringing his army to a grand total of over 28,000 men. But on the 23rd Moore arrived at Sahagun, to learn that Napoleon himself with 40,000 men was in full march from Madrid. The inevitable retreat began on 24th December, and bitter medicine it was to the troops. When the order was communicated to the 42nd, the ground was littered with muskets the Highlanders had flung down in disgust. In many regiments discipline completely disappeared; and in dreadful winter conditions of snow and blizzard the army retreated 250 miles through the
landers halfway down the slope. The Highlanders took up a position behind some straggling and ruinous walls. To and fro swayed the fighting, and so intense was the musketry that the 42nd's ammunition was soon nearly exhausted. But Moore was again on hand; he reassured the Highlanders, and reminded them that they still had their bayonets. It was shortly after this, when watching the Guards coming up to support the Highlanders, that a round shot struck him, dashing him mortally wounded from his horse. As darkness approached, support had again to be given from the Guards as the shortage of ammunition continued. But at night the French fell back, and did not hinder the British evacuation. Having suffered over 200 casualties in the battle, the 42nd arrived back in England, and were sent to Shorncliffe.

During the following summer the regiment took part in the ill-famed expedition to Walcheren in Holland, where, in six weeks, it suffered so heavily from the dreaded 'Walcheren fever' that it returned to this country reduced to some 200 fit men, hardly having been in action. It returned to Edinburgh for much-needed recruiting.

Meantime the 2nd Battalion, which had been stationed in Ireland since 1805, had been sent to Portugal to join Wellington's army. It had taken part in many famous battles, including Busaco on 27 September 1810, when Massena's troops assaulted the ridge held by the British infantry; garrisoned the lines of Torres Vedras which had proved the high-water mark of the French invasion of the Peninsula; and had withstood the French cavalry at Fuentes de Onoro. There the situation was described by the historian Napier in the words, 'there was not in the war a more dangerous situation'.

In May 1812 the 1st Battalion came out from Britain to amalgamate with the 2nd and the cadre of the 2nd returned home, leaving the 1st with a strength of over 1,100 men.

Two months later, in the heat of July, was fought the Battle of Salamanca. After several days of marching and countermarching the British and French armies, commanded by Wellington and Marmont respectively, finally clashed, and '40,000 men were beaten in forty minutes'. Wellington, with his eagle eye for a situation, saw that Marmont's army had become over-extended, and at once flung his army at the weakest part of the French. The British cavalry excelled itself and the infantry, including the 42nd, fought stoutly against a bitter defence. The French were unable to recover from the initial disadvantage and the battle became a total rout. Marmont was wounded, his successor likewise, and no fewer than 7,000 prisoners and two of the famous eagles were taken.

Wellington's next operation was less successful. After a triumphal entry into Madrid on 12th August, the British Army marched north and in September laid siege to the castle of Burgos. The place was more or less in ruins, but the French garrison had put in a great deal of work on strengthening the defences, including an important hornwork which would have to be taken before any assault on the castle. At dusk on the 19th the attack was mounted, the columns including the 42nd. After heavy losses the attacking troops were thrown back, save at one point where an entrance was made and the hornwork quickly captured thereafter. The assault cost the Highlanders nearly 300 in killed and wounded. Batteries were then erected to bombard the castle, but there was a lack of heavy siege guns. When three successive assaults, mounted after the explosion of mines, had been repulsed, and Wellington heard that strong French reinforcements were coming up, he decided to raise the siege. The operation had lasted thirty-three fruitless days.

The retreat from Burgos seems to have demoralised the army, and discipline went almost completely by the board. Wellington did not improve matters by issuing an order blaming — unjustly, as many thought — the regimental officers for want of order in their units.

After a winter spent quietly on the Portuguese frontier, the spring of 1813 saw the army on the move again. This time Burgos had been evacuated and blown up by the French, and everywhere the movements of the British and their allies were directed towards France. On 21st June Wellington clashed at Vittoria with the French under Marshal Jourdan and Joseph Bonaparte. In the great battle which followed, the 42nd fought in Sir Thomas Graham's brigade, which saw sharp fighting and only just failed to cut French communications
with Bayonne. In the ensuing weeks the British battled their way through the passes of the Pyrenees and entered France on 7 October 1813. At the fighting at Nivelle on 10th November the 42nd lost some thirty men.

After this there was a period of inactivity when winter put an end to active campaigning, but on 27 February 1814 Wellington went into action against the French, now under Marshal Soult, at Orthez. After a desperately fought engagement the enemy made a hasty retreat. The end of the Peninsular campaign was in sight, and after more severe fighting the climax was reached when the British Army stood before Toulouse.

On 10th April the attack was launched with the 42nd on the enemy's right. As they moved forward across a ploughed field they were met by a hurricane of fire followed by a charge of French infantry down a hillside. The Highlanders were able to drive them back over the crest and, after an interval for re-forming, the 42nd led the attack on a line of redoubts. Fire was extremely concentrated, and out of the 500 men who had paraded before the battle scarcely 100 reached the objective redoubt. There they discovered the enemy had fled. The fighting had been so severe that the colours had been held in succession by three different officers, and at the end were carried by a sergeant. The redoubt was still suffering the fire of both sides, many British troops being unaware that it had been taken. After a final unsuccessful French counter-attack the enemy fell back into Toulouse. The day's fighting had told heavily on the Highlanders, 54 killed and 267 wounded.

On the following day Toulouse was entered and within a week the French armies in the south had surrendered. The Highlanders were sent home, this time to Ireland, where they were reinforced by the men of the 2nd Battalion, previously sent home from the Peninsula, and now disbanded at Aberdeen. The regiment was again a single battalion.
On 1 March 1815 Napoleon landed in France from Elba; by 20th May he was in Paris. The pipes of war were again sounding for the 42nd, and yet again the regiment found itself in the Low Countries, initially stationed at Brussels.

On 13th June Wellington wrote from Brussels that it was unlikely there would be any immediate action from Bonaparte. But two days later the French, in great strength, crossed the frontier and flung themselves upon the Allies, who were widely dispersed and far from their concentration points. Wellington’s reconnaissance was faulty and he was late in receiving definite knowledge of the French onslaught. Then it was ‘bundle and go’ for the troops of the Allied army, a heterogeneous mixture of British, Belgians, Brunswickers and many others.

Brigaded with the 1st, 44th and 92nd Regiments under Sir Denis Pack, the 42nd marched from Brussels at 4.00 a.m. on 16th June, with pipes playing and drums beating. By early afternoon Picton’s division, to which the brigade belonged, arrived at Quatre Bras in time to provide valuable assistance to the Prince of Orange, whose men were under attack by Marshal Ney. On the arrival of the British the French batteries redoubled their fire and Wellington, who had now assumed overall command on the field, directed Picton to place his two brigades along the road leading from Quatre Bras to Namur. At this time the French greatly outnumbered the British, and Wellington, whose right was threatening to give way, ordered

‘The Black Watch at Bay’ painting by W. B. Wollen, R.I.
The regiment repelling the charge of the French cavalry at Quatre Bras – prelude to Waterloo – in June 1815
Picton’s division to attack in order to relieve the pressure on the opposite flank. The French skirmishers who had been firing upon the British retired precipitately, but their scattered musketry was replaced by destructive volleys from the main bodies of the French. Nevertheless, the British troops pressed rapidly forward, the 42nd under Lieut.-Col. Sir Robert Macara being well to the fore.

Meantime, a strong force of French light cavalry had ridden well past the 42nd’s line to an objective behind them and, on being repelled, came thundering back on the rear of the Highlanders. Posted as they were in a field of nearly chest-high wheat, the Highlanders’ vision was limited, and they took the cavalry to be an Allied regiment. As soon as they had been recognised for what they were, the 42nd immediately set about forming square, the flank companies running in to make up what was normally the rear face, but which on this occasion was that actually opposed to the enemy. The flank company men and the French cavalry collided just as the former were reaching the half-formed square, and many of them carried on into the centre, Highlanders and lancers mixed together in confusion. The moment was one of extreme peril, but the 42nd’s discipline was of the best and the men were unshaken. The French who had charged into the centre of the square were hemmed in and all were either shot or bayoneted, but the fight was a desperate one and the lances of the French caused tremendous havoc. Lieut.-Col. Macara was slain by a lance-thrust, and within a few minutes the command changed three times as officers were wounded, the last being Maj. Campbell, who had charge of the battalion for the remainder of the campaign.

Casualties from musketry and gunfire had already been very heavy, and very many more men had fallen in the struggle with the cavalry. So shattered were the 42nd and its neighbouring regiment, the 44th, that both were ordered to form a single square and were posted on a low ridge near at hand, but further cavalry attacks were launched upon them. The French horsemen were met by a tremendous fire from the muskets of the united 42nd and 44th at point-blank range, but they courageously pressed on and the area was
engulfed in a sea of cavalry. No sooner had one attack been beaten off than another came charging down.

Realising that he had no hope of cavalry support, Picton united two of his foot regiments, the 1st Royals and the 28th, and led them in person to the relief of Pack’s attenuated regiments. There followed further confused fighting, charges and counter-charges, but despite all their efforts the French cavalry failed to ride down the square. Finally the French fell back from the appalling confusion to re-form, and this afforded an opportunity for the French guns to sweep the squares with round shot. French light infantry also crept forward to fire on the squares with their muskets. The British ammunition position was now desperate. Sir Denis Pack asked for support from fresh troops just arriving on the battlefield, and some Hanoverian battalions were directed forward.

Elsewhere, other newly arrived British troops had begun a steady advance, recapturing all the ground previously lost to the French during the day. After sunset the fighting ended, with Ney finally realising the impossibility of success and withdrawing his forces to a defensive line.

The murderous nature of the fighting at Quatre Bras had been almost without precedent. Not far short of 300 officers and men had been killed or wounded and never was a regiment more deserving of being singled out for praise than was the 42nd in Wellington’s report.

Two days later, on the morning of 18th June after a night of torrential rain and thunderstorms, Wellington’s army lay along the ridge of Mont St Jean, awaiting the attack of the French forces assembled across the valley to their front: this was the day of Waterloo, destined to determine the fate of Europe for a century. Among the regiments, near broken from the fighting at Quatre Bras, was the 42nd. With the remnants of Pack’s greatly reduced brigade they took up a position in line of battalion columns some distance to the north-east of the farm of La Haye Sainte, the centre of the Allied position. The battle opened at about 11.30 a.m. when the British at Hougoumont, on the right of the line, came under attack; but it was not until early afternoon that the French made a major thrust against Wellington’s left centre. First, clouds of sharpshooters moved up the slopes towards the British lines, and soon musket balls were whistling through the ranks of the Highlanders. Immediately after came the massive French columns of assault. Picton deployed his two brigades, Pack’s and Kempt’s, to meet the attack – at the most 3,000 against the 12,000 of the enemy. The main brunt of the fighting fell to Kempt’s brigade, who held on most gallantly until the British heavy cavalry intervened, and the enemy were flung back down the slope. Then came a great French cavalry attack, thousands of horsemen flooding up the slopes in an attempt to break down the infantry squares. Between the cavalry attacks the infantry were assailed by round shot and the fire of infantry skirmishers.

Finally, the farm of La Haye Sainte was seized by the French in another infantry attack. But their utter exhaustion and lack of reserves prevented any substantial exploitation of this success. At the climax of the battle the final attack, that by the Imperial Guard, was repulsed, and at once the French were everywhere in retreat. The battle was won.

The 42nd was not as heavily engaged as at Quatre Bras, but its 50 killed and wounded was a high enough total considering the casualties of the fighting two days before.

Following Waterloo, the 42nd joined in the general Allied advance to Paris, and after some months there returned home at the end of 1815 for a period of about ten years’ peace-time soldiering.
Now began a lengthy period of inactivity for the 42nd, a period spent partly at home and partly at Gibraltar, where it remained some six years. There were also brief spells at Malta and in the Ionian islands. As always in peace-time, considerable attention was given to uniform detail. The first half of the nineteenth century was the era when military uniforms were at their most gorgeous, and correspondingly at their most impractical.

Officers' uniforms in particular were nothing short of magnificent with much gold lace, heavy bullion epaulettes for the shoulders, and white 'gaiters' or spats — all contributing to the splendour of the Highlanders on parade. True, the old uniform had become considerably debased, the plaid being replaced by a species of tartan 'shawl' pinned to the shoulder, to the disgust of many. In 1842 a 2nd, or Reserve, Battalion was raised, bringing the regiment's strength up to twelve companies, and numbering about 1,200 rank and file.

In 1854, on the outbreak of war with Russia, the 42nd sailed for the Middle East under the command of Col. A. D. Cameron. On landing at Scutari they were drafted into the Highland Brigade with two other famous Highland regiments, the 79th and the 93rd. Commanded by the famous Sir Colin Campbell, this was the beginning of a unit which was to make history on many occasions. Events moved rapidly; after landing in the Crimea, the 42nd marched for Sebastopol and on 20th September was present when the British Army met the Russians in the Battle of the Alma.

The French and British forces were intended to manoeuvre in concert, but a gap opened between them and the bulk of the Russian army was directed at the British. The Russian commander, however, did not take advantage of the favourable situation and the British troops began the crossing of the Alma River. On the left was the Highland brigade, marching in echelon of regiments, the 42nd in the lead, with the Guards brigade close by, all advancing towards the very strong position held by the 3,000 men of the Russian infantry. Led by the brigade commander himself, and firing as they marched, the 800 Highlanders moved steadily onwards, a determined line of dark tartan, red coats and high feathered bonnets. They advanced up the last few yards of the slope, colours waving and bayonets glittering, and straight into the Russian ranks. The Russians fell back almost immediately and left the field to the Highlanders.

History relates that the brigade commander, Sir Colin Campbell, asked official permission to wear the Highland bonnet during the remainder of the campaign. Permission was granted, and the bonnet carried a special 'hackle', the upper third red for the 42nd, and the lower two-thirds white for the 79th and 93rd. When Sir Colin arrived for
the presentation on the battlefield of the Alma he was greeted with such a storm of cheers that the entire British Army wondered what was afoot in the Highland Brigade.

The 42nd did not play an active part at Balaklava. Afterwards, Sir Colin Campbell took over command of all the forces about the place, and his place as commander of the Highland Brigade was taken by Col. Cameron of the 42nd. The regiment was engaged in the siege operations against Sebastopol, and was detailed to form part of the reserve for the assault on that part of the fortifications known as the Redan, giving cover to the troops flung back from the unsuccessful assault. It was on 9th September that a sergeant of the 42nd, surprised by the silence of the normally noisy Russian encampment, ventured carefully forward on a little personal reconnaissance, to find that the Redan had been completely evacuated. When Sebastopol itself had fallen, the 42nd remained at Kamara until the end of hostilities. It then returned to England and, after being reviewed by Queen Victoria, went into garrison at Dover. The casualties suffered in the Crimea had been principally due to illness, only 39 officers and men having been killed in action, as opposed to the 227 who had died of wounds and disease.

Hardly had the regiment settled down when it

Hair sporran worn during Crimean period, 1853–6

Left to right:
rank and file; officer’s dress; parade pattern.
The rank and file sporran (left) with round top, five black tassels and long hair, replaced the earlier six-tasselled square sporran.

The officer’s dress sporran (centre) with round, wide, gold-lace-bound top and regimental number on a gilt shield below, replaced the square-topped pattern of the early 1820s. The white goats’ hair is longer, the six gold-lace tassels wider apart, and there was generally a small pocket behind.
All ranks wore the sporran on service in the Crimea.
British were before the town with some 25,000 men. The fighting raged most fiercely on the following day, with the 42nd and 93rd driving the enemy from strong defensive works in front of the Martiniere, and clearing them from a further line of defences. One party of the 42nd, under Lieut. Farquharson, stormed a particularly formidable bastion, putting the Indian garrison to flight and spiking two guns in the process. For this feat of arms he was awarded the Victoria Cross. The rebels were overwhelmed, their defensive works captured all along the line, and Lucknow was again entirely occupied by British troops.

The next task for the 42nd was to participate in the pacification of Rohilkhand province. Two columns of troops were employed to sweep forward separately and link up at the provincial capital, Bareilly. On the march, the column of which the 42nd was a part was held up by a jungle fort at Rhooyah which refused to surrender. The general commanding the column was sufficiently ill-advised to order a frontal attack without having made adequate reconnaissance. Four companies of the Highlanders were involved and 45 were killed or wounded after persistent attacks had failed to carry the place. These losses were incurred uselessly, for during the following night the fort was evacuated. But so fiercely had the 42nd pressed the attacks that no less than three Victoria Crosses were awarded to the regiment.

The advance continued, and on 5th May the columns were in front of Bareilly. Before the troops could deploy properly they were ferociously attacked by a body of Moslem soldiers who drove back by sheer impetus a regiment of loyal Punjabis on to the 42nd. Soon the nearly berserk attackers swept round the flanks of the 42nd and flung themselves at the regiment's rear. During the mêlée the Colonel was dragged from his horse and would have been cut to pieces but for Col.-Sgt. Gardner who accounted for two of the Indians with the bayonet, saving the Colonel's life and receiving the Victoria Cross for his bravery.

Some considerable fighting still occurred during the rest of the Mutiny campaign, and on one notable occasion – 15 January 1859 – a party of 40 of the regiment held off 2,000 mutineers during an entire day, gaining two further Victoria Crosses.
On New Year's Day 1861 new colours were presented to the regiment at Bareilly; and on 12th September of the same year the old and treasured name was restored by order of Queen Victoria, and the regiment's full title was now the 42nd Royal Highlanders (The Black Watch). In September 1862 a new Colonel of the Regiment was appointed – Maj.-Gen. Sir Duncan Cameron, who had led the 42nd up the shot-swept slopes of the Alma.

Finally, after ten years in India, the 42nd came home in March 1868 and was quartered in Edinburgh Castle. Thirty-two years had passed since it was last in the capital of Scotland, and its march through the city was made to the accompaniment of the thunderous cheers of the citizens echoing from the gaunt and grey hulk of the castle rock.

For the next few years the regiment was engaged on fairly minor and sporadic operations. The first was the Gold Coast campaign of 1874 against the Ashantis, with the dangerous march to the Ashanti capital of Kumasi. When the 42nd reached the city after fighting its way through numerous ambushes and attacks, King Kofi fled into the jungle. The 42nd returned to Portsmouth the same year, and after sundry other travels abroad came home again in 1881. This was the year in which the old system of regimental numbers was abolished, and a two-battalion system introduced, each regiment having two battalions which served alternately at home and abroad. To this end the 42nd Regiment was abolished as such, as was the 73rd (which had begun its existence as a second battalion of the 42nd) and the two became respectively the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders). The old dark tartan was worn by both battalions. The regimental depot was located at Perth, and so the regiment as we know it today was formed.

It did not have long to wait for action: in 1882 the 1st Battalion went to Egypt to take part in the fighting against Arabi Pasha, the leader of the Egyptian revolt against Turkey. In September the Egyptians were ensconced in the lines of Tel-el-Kebir, against which the British marched at night over the desert. Just before dawn the Black Watch, in the leading elements of the Highland Brigade, was across the defensive ditch and pouring over the field fortifications. In less than half an hour the enemy was in flight.

There followed several battles along the course of the Nile and further south in the Sudan and, in 1884, the Black Watch took part in the fierce Battle of El Telb against a superior force of dervishes. The battalion was also at Tamai where the dervishes broke an imperfectly formed square of which the Black Watch was a part. These formidable fighters were driven off only at a cost to the Highlanders of nearly 90 killed and wounded.

After further fighting, including the Battle of Abou Klea, the battalion returned to Malta, and three years later was moved to Gibraltar. In 1896 it was transferred to India where it was to stay for five years.

Meantime the 2nd Battalion had been serving in Britain for twenty years when the Boer War broke out in 1889. It was at once incorporated into the brigade commanded by Maj.-Gen. Andrew Wauchope, an old officer of the regiment, which left Aldershot on 22nd October and arrived at Cape Town on 14th November. On 10th December the brigade advanced against the 2oo-foot-high Magersfontein Ridge. The march was made at night, in utter silence, and through a
Succeeding Wauchope in command of the brigade was the famous Maj.-Gen. Sir Hector MacDonald, whose military career had started as a private soldier in the Gordon Highlanders. But the high command had apparently learned nothing from the disaster of Magersfontein. After a forced march from the Modder River and some stiff fighting at Kookoosberg Drift, the battalion took part in the attack against the Boer Army commanded by Cronje at Paardeberg Drift, and once again it was decided to make a frontal attack against the Boer positions. Again the assaulting troops simply withered away in the face of devastating rifle fire; but although the frontal attack was a failure the Boers were pinned down, and after a week of bombardment from the British guns they surrendered on 27th February.

There was still much fighting and mopping up to be done. After an action at Poplar Grove the Black Watch marched into Bloemfontein, capital of the Orange Free State; and then, after an epic march of 380 miles in 37 days, the Highlanders reached Pretoria. Now it was simply a question of
In the mighty conflict of the First World War the story of the Black Watch has a relatively tiny part, although no less than twenty-five battalions of the regiment saw service. Here we have space to tell only the story of the regular battalions, the 1st and 2nd, reluctantly omitting the territorial and service battalions.

At the outbreak of war on 4 August 1914 the 1st Battalion was at Aldershot. It was fully mobilised by 8th August, and on the 14th landed in France at Le Havre. Sent forward at once, it was in the long and grim retreat from Mons, day-long marches under intense pressure from the pursuing Germans. At long last the withdrawal ended and the tide turned at the Battle of the Marne. After the Marne the boot was on the other foot and the Germans fell back to the Aisne. This became the scene of a violent and confused battle, in which the commanding officer of the battalion was killed along with many another Highlander. Following the battle came the ‘digging-in’ and the beginning of the long, miserable years of trench warfare which were to cost so much in lives.

The First Battle of Ypres was fought in November when the Germans committed themselves to mass attacks on the British trenches, some manned by the battalion. Here and there the British lines were forced back, but held on doggedly, and on the 13th the Black Watch was withdrawn after eighteen days of continuous fighting. There followed a month of rest, during which time...
replacements arrived to fill the gaps left by the heavy casualties, which in the few months of fighting amounted to 29 officers and 478 other ranks killed and wounded.

In January 1915 the 2nd Battalion arrived from India, where it had been based on the old station at Bareilly. It came into the firing line for the Battle of Givenchy, in which the 1st Battalion also took part. This was the beginning of a year of attrition, continuous fighting, artillery bombardments followed by infantry attacks, and death from the 1st Battalion. The 2nd had a similar experience, their losses being 270 out of the 450 engaged in the battle.

After this fighting the battalion was constantly moved about until the autumn offensive, when they were involved in the great Battle of Loos. Losses were so heavy that they had to withdraw to await the arrival of replacements.

Throughout the year the techniques of trench warfare had become more and more sophisticated, both sides devoting all their ingenuity to their improvement. Casualties came in a steady stream, and battalions were continually being moved from trench to trench with spells of relief behind the lines.

All through 1915 the 2nd Battalion had hardly been out of action, and had lost no less than 350 killed and 1,080 wounded. Towards the end of the year it was drawn back out of the line, and on 5th December it sailed from Marseilles, arriving at Basra for service in Mesopotamia on the last day of the year.

For the 1st Battalion it was to be another year of the trenches – raids, barrages, rain and mud: and in July the Battle of the Somme, which lasted throughout the summer and was utterly fruitless. Hand-to-hand fighting and bombing attacks from trench to trench persisted until the battle finally ground to a halt. Casualties had been enormous, but fortunately the winter that followed was comparatively uneventful. It was spent in such a desolation that any movement was next to impossible.

In March 1917 the Germans withdrew to their long-prepared positions along the Hindenburg Line. With spring there was another offensive and the Messines Ridges was stormed. In June the 1st Battalion was near Dunkirk, where the trenches were dug in the shifting sands of the dunes, and concrete pillboxes took the place of dugouts. In July came the Third Battle of Ypres, and later it was the mud of Passchendaele.

Throughout the autumn of 1917 rain and bad weather persisted. In December the battalion was in the Houthulst Forest area, where the defences consisted of posts manned by three or four men with sometimes hundreds of yards between posts, sometimes less.

At the beginning of 1918 weather conditions

---

‘In Action – The Great War 1915’ painting by H. Chartier

always a constant companion. Both battalions were at Aubers Ridge on 9th May when the barrage before the infantry attack was wrongly supposed to have destroyed the German barbed wire. For what was probably the last occasion in the war (as gas-masks were worn subsequently) the Highlanders advanced to the sound of the pipes. They marched directly into concentrated machine-gun fire and suffered dreadful casualties, but alone of the assaulting troops they reached their objective. Fourteen officers and 462 other ranks were reported killed, wounded and missing.
Officer’s dirk pre-1881:
1 in scabbard;
2 side view;
3 unsheathed showing battle honours on blade

Officer’s dirk belt of Crimean period (1853-5)
were as bad as ever, and battalions in the line were relieved every three or four days. With the war apparently approaching some sort of climax, the desire for identification of enemy units became more and more urgent, and consequently trench raids were more frequent. In March the German offensive opened that was designed to break the Allied front. On 8th April the 1st Battalion was transferred to a position near Béthune, and on the 16th went into line at Givenchy, where the defences had been greatly strengthened. On 17th April a tremendous bombardment opened on the British lines, and on the following day the storm broke on the 1st Battalion. The line held firm, despite the violence of the assault, and was stabilised by the night of the 21st, when the battalion was relieved. Forty-nine officers and men of the Black Watch had been killed, 74 were wounded, and 258 missing.

In May the remnants of the battalion were again in the line. During the summer the Germans were slowly pushed back again to the Hindenburg Line, and on 29th September the 1st Battalion drove through and captured hundreds of German prisoners and vast quantities of guns and ammunition. It was then launched into Germany in pursuit.

While the 1st Battalion had been enduring the rigours of trench warfare, the 2nd had fought its way through Mesopotamia. Engaged at the Battle of the Wadi in January 1916, it was reduced to some 250 men, but nevertheless was on the attack again at Hanna. In advancing across a bullet-swept area against well-held positions in broad daylight, it again suffered heavy casualties. By this time only 99 officers and other ranks were left of the 900-strong battalion which had arrived at Basra.

The losses had been so heavy that the 1st Battalion and the 1st Battalion Seaforth Highlanders were amalgamated into a single Highland Battalion, and fought as such until the relief of Kut. At Sannaiyat on 22nd April it was in action, and further casualties reduced it to a mere skeleton. Kut surrendered to the Turks on 29th April and the fighting had been in vain.

On 12th July the Highland Battalion was dissolved, its components re-forming again into their own battalions. That of the Black Watch numbered only 15 officers and 226 other ranks. As the months passed, however, its strength was built up with the arrival of drafts from home.

In December the advance on Baghdad began. The Turks were by now in retreat, and patrols of the Black Watch were the first British troops to enter the city. North of Baghdad there was severe fighting at Istbulat. The Turks were strongly placed in some old fortifications, but in the face of heavy fire the Highlanders dashed forward and cleared them. They lost 10 officers and 173 other ranks in killed and wounded in the action.

From Mesopotamia the battalion was sent to Palestine where Jerusalem had been captured, and took part in the general advance. On 19th September 1918 the Highlanders were at the Battle of Megiddo where the enemy was broken completely. After the battle the advance continued rapidly, the 2nd Battalion following up the retreating Turks towards Haifa and then on to Beirut. At Tripoli on the Mediterranean word was received of the enemy surrender. The war was over.

1939-1952

The Second World War was as different from the First as was the First from any previous wars. No longer were troops employed in the field in enormous masses; many more were required to maintain the sinews of war, and the relatively new element of the air became almost paramount. But as always, the 'queen of battles' played a large part, and of the infantry none more so than the
Black Watch (the Royal Highland Regiment), this having been the regiment's official title since 1937.

In keeping with the new concept of war, relatively few battalions of the regiment were involved, although some were to travel even further than their predecessors had done. Even so, it is possible to give only the briefest details of their varied stories, although this time we shall include those which started as territorial battalions. They played their own tremendous part in the struggle.

At the outset there were the two regular battalions, of which the 1st was stationed at Dover and the 2nd in Palestine. First to move was the former which, very soon after the outbreak of war, was transferred to France and to quarters at Lens, where it remained for some months except for a spell in the forward line in the Saar at the end of December 1939. In January the 51st Highland Division, including the two territorial battalions of the Black Watch, the 4th and the 6th, landed in France. According to army policy, the 6th was replaced in the division by the 1st, the 6th taking its place in the 4th Division.

The 'phony war' ended with the thunderclap of the German blitzkrieg and the retreat to Dunkirk. The 6th Battalion was in Flanders – scene of so many old battles – and fought a desperately hard rearguard action, doing without sleep and food, all the way back to the Channel. Most of the men were able to make their way to Dunkirk through the intense confusion about the shrinking perimeter of the evacuation area.

While the retreat and evacuation were proceeding the Highland Division, including the 1st and 4th Battalions, was in the Saar. An attempt was made to move it to rejoin the main British Army, but the manœuvre was begun too late and the division was driven back by relentless battering as far as the tiny Channel port of St Valéry. There it was surrounded by German armour and without hope of relief or evacuation. Gen. Fortune, commanding the division, had no alternative but to surrender. Fortunately the 4th Battalion had been
sent well ahead and was evacuated from Cher-
bourg on 15th June. But after only forty-eight
hours' leave it was en route for Gibraltar where it
remained for the rest of the war.

The 2nd Battalion had been moved from
Palestine to British Somaliland, and when, after
bitter fighting, the Protectorate was evacuated the
battalion was moved to Crete. It was holding
defensive positions around Heraklion airfield in
May 1941 when there came a tremendous attack
by German bombers, the prelude to airborne
invasion. Ten days were spent fighting against
the crack German paratroopers before it was decided
by the command that the island should be
abandoned. Only 2 officers and 15 men had been
lost during the fighting but, sadly, over 200
perished as the vessels transporting them to
Alexandria were attacked by German bombers.

Soon after, the battalion was put into Tobruk
which had been under siege for months. This was
followed by one of the most fiercely fought battles
in the career of the regiment, a break-out planned
to link up with the Eighth Army coming from
Egypt. Considerable tank support should have
been on hand, but the movement failed to co-
ordinate and the battalion had to attack without
any such assistance. Over 600 Highlanders
advanced through machine-gun fire from well-
sited German positions round the fortress, but at
the end, to consolidate the ground won, there
remained but 8 officers and 160 other ranks. In
December some 70 replacements arrived, and at
the turn of the year the battalion was relieved, to
proceed first to Syria and then to Bombay, whence
it was diverted after the fall of Burma, the original
destination.

Back at home the 51st Highland Division had
been reborn after the St Valéry debacle, in its
ranks the 1st, 5th and 7th Battalions of the Black
Watch. After intensive training the division sailed
round the Cape and arrived in Egypt in August
1942. The story of El Alamein has been told many
times, and it suffices to say that the Black Watch –
all three battalions – played a heroic role in the
victory and in the hectic pursuit which finally
drove the Germans from North Africa.

There followed a great deal of amphibious
training, and on 10th July the Black Watch landed
in Sicily. By the following month, after stiff
fighting at Vizzini and Genbini, the enemy troops
were driven from the island. Six weeks later the
Highland Division sailed for home, leaving only the
6th Battalion behind in Italy. It had fought
in Tunisia, suffering severely at Sidi Medienne,
and moved into Italy in March 1944. The moun-
tain training it had gone through some time previ-
ously stood it in good stead in crags and peaks
around Cassino. After the fall of the mountain
fortress the battalion fought its way northwards
until withdrawn from the line and transferred to
Greece for counter-insurgency duties in December
1944.

In Britain the army of invasion was steadily
preparing for D-Day, and the southern counties of

Regimental officer's 'agian dhu' pre-1881. The 'agian dhu'
was introduced for officers about 1840, the 42nd being one
of the first regiments to adopt it; but, unlike other regi-
ments, the 42nd have always worn it only with the long
hose and never on parade

England were jammed with troops, transport,
guns and tanks. First of the Black Watch batta-
lions to set foot on the Continent was the 5th,
which landed on the Normandy beaches on the
afternoon of D-Day, and soon after was fighting
at Breville, north-east of Caen. On 9th June the
1st and 7th Battalions sailed from Tilbury with the
51st Highland Division, and all three battalions
were in action when the breakout from Caen took
place. There followed the confusion of the Falaise
operation, but the enemy was in full retreat,
leaving masses of equipment and transport every-
where. The Seine was crossed on the last day of
August, and on 2 September 1944 the Highland
Division returned to the town whose name was
engraved on the memory of every Highland soldier – St Valéry. On the following day the massed pipes and drums of the division played retreat in the grounds of the château. It was a poignant experience, above all for those very few who had been at the surrender and later escaped.

After turning back to winkle out the German garrison at Le Havre – an operation in which the 5th and 7th Battalions were engaged – the Highland Division moved eastwards. Subsequently it was Dunkirk which had to be dealt with, this time by the 1st and 7th Battalions. This was really a siege operation, and the Black Watch was relieved in October to take part in the final push intended to crush German resistance. Before this materialised, however, the Black Watch had to assist in countering the German thrust through the Ardennes – the Battle of the Bulge. Following this came three weeks of fighting in the Reichswald Forest through which ran the fortification of the Siegfried Line. Deliberate enemy flooding had turned the country into a swamp, but on 8 February 1945, under the cover of 1,000 pieces of artillery, the 1st and 7th Battalions led the assault. The 1st Battalion became the first British unit to enter German territory. Then came the crossing of the Rhine in Buffaloes – heavy armoured amphibious vehicles – by all three battalions on the night of 22nd March. Under the cover of an enormous artificial smoke cloud the breakthrough was achieved, only with considerable casualties. It was the last great battle, and when the end came the Black Watch battalions were advancing steadily across the plains of northern Germany.

Far away, almost on the other side of the world, the 2nd Battalion was engaged in the jungles of Burma as part of the Chindit force. Disease exacted a dreadful toll and conditions were the worst the regiment had endured in 200 years. Rain and storms prevented supplies being flown in to the men in the isolated Chindit columns, separated from each other by hundreds of miles of jungle, and the Japanese were a vigilant, cunning and cruel enemy. After months of intense fighting the men of the columns were flown back to India to recover from their ordeal, and to await the end of the war.

In a way, this really came for the Black Watch on 7 July 1948, when the 1st and 2nd Battalions were amalgamated into one at Duisberg in Germany, in pursuance of a decree that all infantry regiments should consist of one battalion only. Thus was formed the Black Watch as it is today.

It may be appropriate to end this all too short history of the Black Watch with an account of how the regiment added its most recent battle honour to its list.

In 1952 the Black Watch sailed on the most distant mission it had yet undertaken, to join the Commonwealth Division playing its part in the Korean War in which the Chinese had already intervened so massively. In November the Black Watch was moved into the firing line, relieving a hard-pressed unit of the American Marine Corps, on a hill dignified with the rather sinister name of The Hook, which projected as a kind of salient into the enemy lines. The defences were in a pretty poor state from previous heavy artillery fire, and almost as soon as the regiment took up its position the bombardment broke out with renewed fury. And even before the shells had ceased to fall, waves of Chinese, their bugles blaring, surged forward against the hill and poured over the defences, where the Highlanders fought them off with bayonet and rifle-butt. Supporting fire came crashing down on Highlanders and Chinese alike, and for hours the hand-to-hand fighting con-
tinued in the half-ruined trenches and gun emplacements. After the Chinese had retreated once, they launched another attack but again were sent back down the slopes of The Hook. Fighting lasted all through the night, and after a third attack had been repulsed, dawn broke over the hill to find it still in Black Watch hands, and 100 Chinese dead lay around the barbed wire entanglements. The regiment, too, had suffered, losing 16 killed and 76 wounded, but The Hook had been held and the Black Watch had won a new battle honour.

It was an action well worthy of ending this proud story, which can be most fittingly linked with the others with which the history of the Black Watch is punctuated, names like Fontenoy, Ticonderoga, Corunna, the Alma and Loos – each a milestone in the long and glorious march made by the regiment since the day the Highlanders faced towards the south in far-off 1743.

NOTES

2. Colonel David Stewart: *Sketches, etc., of the Highlanders of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1822).
3. The broadsword is what is termed today the claymore. The original claymore was a tremendous two-handed sword, 5 feet or more in length. As far as is known, it was not used in the eighteenth century.
5. The Highlanders, in common with other line infantry regiments, wore red coats; they were not scarlet, the red for the rank and file being more of a brick-red colour. The coats of the officers, being of finer material, may have approached the colour scarlet as we know it.
6. A second battalion had been raised in Scotland for the 42nd in 1779, being immediately sent out to India where, in 1786, it was re-formed as a separate regiment of foot – the 73rd – and given green facings instead of the blue originally worn.
7. The hackle is the tuft of feathers worn behind the bonnet badge. The Black Watch is the only Highland regiment to have a red hackle. The Black Watch’s hackle has a most debatable origin, and some doubt can be cast on the tradition that it was won as a result of some dramatic action during the Revolutionary Wars. The regiment has officially worn the red hackle since early in the nineteenth century.

GLOSSARY

**Sett** The pattern of a tartan
**point d’appui** strongpoint
**targe** a small Highland shield
**hornwork** projecting part of a system of fortifications
**coup de main** surprise attack
**salient** any part of a continuous military line which projects towards the enemy
The Plates

A1 Private, 1742
There is no pictorial evidence of the uniform of the Independent Highland Companies from which the Black Watch was formed, but this plate shows a 'private man' from the officially issued *Representation of Clothing* of 1742. The Highlander is in full panoply – musket, broadsword (or claymore as it is now known), dirk, and steel Highland pistol on a narrow crossbelt on the chest (sometimes two would be worn). The man has the original 'belted plaid' (*breacan-an-fheilidh*) – the kilt and plaid in one piece of material. To put this on, the man laid the plaid on the ground, lay upon it himself, belted it round his waist, then, having stood up, pinned one of the loose ends to the left shoulder. When unbelted the entire garment could be used as a blanket.

A2 Grenadier, 1758
This is about the time of Ticonderoga. Originally the grenadiers were the men who hurled the rudimentary grenades, and they wore the tall grenadier cap which would not obstruct their overarm throwing action. Long after the disuse of this grenade the biggest and strongest men of the regiment were grouped together in a single company of 'grenadiers' to form a kind of *élite*, and they retained the grenadier headgear of various styles. That of the 42nd is of fur with an ornamental front plate. The tunic has the white lace with thin red lines, never to be seen again because after Ticonderoga the facing colour was changed to blue, the royal colour, in appreciation of the regiment's conduct at that battle. The belted plaid has gone, and the grenadier is wearing the 'little kilt'.

A3 Piper, 1745
Pipers were not part of the official establishment of a Highland regiment and would not be for many years, but from the outset they formed an essential part of it. This piper's belted plaid is of the Royal Stewart tartan, still worn today by Black Watch pipers. He wears the claymore, for in action he was wont to cast his pipes aside and draw his weapon. At this period pipes were of the two-drone type; the three-drone type used today was already in existence, but apparently not in general use. No reason can be given for the colours and design of the pipe banner, which is copied from a contemporaneous source.

B1 Officer, 1760
The coat has long blue lapels laced with gold, and the gold shoulder knot indicates the rank. This officer wears the recently awarded blue facings of a 'Royal' regiment. The bonnet is blue, flat, ornamented with red band and tuft of blue feathers. The belted plaid was still worn.

B2 Officer, 1790
The bonnet is now rather higher, shaped and has a diced band. Its tuft of feathers has grown larger. The coat collar is now a stand-up one, and the blue facings are ornamented with square-ended loops. The sporran is probably of spotted seal fur. The belted plaid has been replaced by the little kilt, that is to say the lower half of the older garment. This is pleated at the rear and the pleats stitched together, like the present-day Highland kilt. The separate piece of material attached to the belt below the coat, and to the left shoulder at the rear, is a half-plaid.

B3 Corporal, 1808
This aggressive-looking type has the uniform immediately preceding the regiment's involvement in the Peninsular War. During the years in Spain the uniform was subjected to drastic alterations, and with the paucity of supplies the dress became
sadly mutilated. However, it is believed that, alone of the Highland regiments, the Black Watch managed to preserve the wearing of the kilt in reasonably good order.

C1 Private, 1815
He belongs to one of the battalion companies (i.e. not including the grenadier or the light company). The detachable peak to the bonnet and the grey gaiters were adopted during the Peninsular War. The uniform coat is ornamented with bastion loops (pointed ends) on the buttonholes. Grey blanket rolled on top of knapsack; haversack of rough fustian material worn with water canteen on left side. The flintlock musket would be one of the varieties of the Brown Bess.

C2 Sergeant, 1815
This sergeant of a battalion company wears the ‘hummel’ bonnet with ostrich feathers and a detachable peak tied on with tapes hanging down at the back. No sporrans were worn on active service. By this time there was a thin black edging to the pattern of the hose. Sergeants carried the half-pike as well as the claymore, and like the officers wore a crimson sash with a blue stripe, the ‘facing colour’ over the left shoulder.

C3 Officer, 1835
Dress regulations first appeared in 1822, but for many years there was little adherence to them. This uniform is of a period of peace when more attention was paid to the minutiae of dress than to its practical use in action. The shoulder wings do not indicate membership of a flank company for all Black Watch officers wore them at this time. No plaid of any kind is worn.

D1 Officer, 1844
The peak of sartorial magnificence was reached at about this time. The officer’s full-dress uniform is most liberally ornamented with gold lace. The sporran is of goat hair with the top of gold vellum lace, not the metal of later years. Buttons were gilt.

D2 Sergeant, 1844
White hair sporran with black tassels, blue collar with large bastion loop. Since 1836 sergeants did not wear lace loops on the front of the jacket as did the privates. Collar, shoulder-straps and cuffs are blue, the last with a red slash and three loops. The buttons were of pewter with ‘42’ embossed thereon.

D3 Private, 1882
During the Egyptian campaign the sole concession to the climate was the adoption of the tropical helmet — ornamented of course with the red hackle. This is about the last use in the field of the red coat, for khaki was adopted for the Boer War. The method of carrying the equipment has changed, and all straps are white with brass buckles. The haversack strap goes over the right shoulder. The rifle is the Martini Henry of 1871.

E1 Officer, 1895
This version of full dress persisted up to the outbreak of the First World War. The collar is lower than before; the hair sporran has black tassels, and there is a chinstrap to the head-dress. The silver sphinx is worn on the cockade, from which rises the red hackle. The claymore in its steel scabbard hangs from long slings attached to the white crossbelt.

E2 Corporal, 1899
Field service order at the outbreak of the Boer War. This was the first occasion when the regiment went into action without their red coats; and indeed in the following year a khaki apron concealed kilt and sporran. The pith helmet is ornamented with the cherished red hackle. The equipment is the Slade Wallace type just introduced. Rank stripes are of worsted lace.

E3 Drummer, 1895
Shoulder wings are ornamented with regimental lace, and the dirk is worn. There is no sporran or drum apron on this figure. If a sporran is worn it is usually shifted on its strap round to the side to avoid getting in the way of the instrument. The drum is supported by a wide white belt.

F1 Private, 1900
Rank and file full dress, with white valise equipment. A black valise is worn low on the back, the overcoat on the shoulders, and a mess-tin between the two. He is wearing the Egyptian campaign medal and the Khedive’s Star. The rifle is an 1895 Lee Enfield.

F2 Sergeant, 1916
Service dress with 1908 web infantry equipment consisting of waistbelt, bayonet frog, cartridge carriers, two braces, haversack and water-bottle. A steel helmet is worn, and a khaki apron covers the kilt.
F3 Piper, 1900
The piper is wearing the traditional full dress with Royal Stewart tartan and long piper’s plaid worn diagonally round the body, with the free end spread over the left shoulder and kept in position with a large plaid brooch. Pipe-ribbons and bag are also of the Royal Stewart tartan. The doublet, or uniform coat, is dark green. The sporran has a gilt top, and a dirk is worn.

G1 Officer, 1921
Full dress with fringed half-plaid held in position with elaborate regimental brooch. The sporran tassels and cantle are of gold bullion, and there is gold lace on cuffs and collar. The kilt bears Black Watch rosettes.

G2 Pipe Major, 1952
Full dress, as would be worn at the Edinburgh tattoo. All lace and ornaments are silver except for the sporran top which is gilt. Shoulder wings blue, silver-laced as are the collar and cuffs. The crossbelt is very elaborate and highly decorated with silver regimental badges.

G3 Private, 1921
Full dress of the period, with nothing very note-worthy to indicate. The sporran is of white hair with black tassels. The rifle is still the Lee Enfield model introduced in 1902.

H1 Corporal, 1969
Present-day No. 1 dress – the nearest approach we are likely to see to the ancient glory of full dress. Green doublet or tunic, white lace, buttons arranged singly, white leather sporran, and the traditional square-fronted spats which are unique to the Black Watch. The rifle is the standard self-loading type.

H2 Officer, 1970
Present-day No. 1 dress with white leather sporran. The ceremonial steel claymore scabbard is held in the left hand to avoid its dragging on the ground owing to the length of the supporting belts. There are the characteristic square-fronted spats, and large green rosettes on the kilt. The crimson sash runs from the left shoulder.

H3 Private, 1968
As he would appear on guard duty at Edinburgh Castle. He wears the hair sporran introduced in July of that year, with white webbing. He has been awarded the United Nations medal for service in Cyprus.
Men-at-Arms Series

TITLES ALREADY PUBLISHED

THE STONEWALL BRIGADE John Selby
FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION Martin Windrow
FOOT GRENADEIRER OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD Charles Grant
THE IRON BRIGADE John Selby
CHASSEURS OF THE GUARD Peter Young
WAFFEN-SS Martin Windrow
THE COLDSTREAM GUARDS Charles Grant
U.S. CAVALRY John Selby
THE ARAB LEGION Peter Young
ROYAL SCOTS GREYS Charles Grant
ARGLYLL AND SUTHERLAND HIGHLANDERS William McEwane
THE CONNAUGHT RANGERS Alan Shepherl
30TH PUNJABIS James Laxford
GEORGE WASHINGTON’S ARMY Peter Young
THE BUFFS Gregory Blaxland
LUFTWAFFE AIRBORNE AND FIELD UNITS Martin Windrow
THE SOVIET ARMY Albert Seaton
U.S. MARINE CORPS John Selby
THE COSSACKS Albert Seaton
BLÜCHER’S ARMY Peter Young
THE ROYAL ARTILLERY W.Y. Carman
THE PANZER DIVISIONS Martin Windrow
JAPANESE ARMY OF WORLD WAR II Philip Warner
THE RUSSIAN ARMY OF THE CRIMEA Albert Seaton
MONTCALM’S ARMY Martin Windrow
THE RUSSIAN ARMY OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS Albert Seaton

FUTURE TITLES INCLUDE

THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR ARMIES Peter Young
WELLINGTON’S PENINSULAR ARMY James Laxford
AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN ARMY OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS Albert Seaton
THE BLACK BRUNSWICKERS Otto von Pioka
AMERICAN PROVINCIAL CORPS Philip Katcher
FREDDIECK THE GREAT’S ARMY Albert Seaton
THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN ARMY OF THE SEVEN YEARS WAR Albert Seaton
WOLFE’S ARMY Gerald Embleton
THE ROMAN IMPERIAL ARMY Michael Sinkins
THE GERMAN ARMY OF THE NEW EMPIRE 1870-1888 Albert Seaton

CHARLES GRANT has had a lifelong interest in militaria and is a passionate war-gamer. He has written for many military publications including the Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research; is editor of Slingshot, the journal of the Society of Ancients; and is a regular contributor to Tradition. He has had two books published on modern and eighteenth-century war-gaming. Scottish-born, and a retired officer of the Special Branch, Scotland Yard, he is married with two children and now lives in Kent.

ISBN 0 85045 053 5
1 Private 1742
2 Grenadier, 1758
3 Piper, 1745
1 Officer, 1760
2 Officer, 1790
3 Corporal, 1808
1 Officer, 1844
2 Sergeant, 1844
3 Private, 1882
1 Officer, 1895
2 Corporal 1899
3 Drummer, 1895
1 Private 1900
2 Sergeant, 1916
3 Piper, 1900
1 Corporal, 1969
2 Officer, 1969
3 Private, 1968