

# The Cameronians (SR) Organisation

“Careful Custodians of All that has been Entrusted to Us.”

# THE ROWEL & THISTLE



Published in 2023 to mark the 55th Anniversary of  
the Disbandment of the Regiment.



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# FOREWORD: KEEPING THE CAP BADGE VISIBLE

Following disbandment, the legacy business matters of the Regiment were conducted by a group of Trustees. The Regimental Trust was wound up in 2015 and all formal links with the Trust and the Regiment ended.

The Regimental Collection of artefacts and archives was placed in the ownership of South Lanarkshire Council (SLC), where to this day any questions regarding the Regiment, may be addressed. Cameronians and their families still wishing to take part in commemorative and other events continue so to do.

At present, the main vehicle for organising group events and activities is the Cameronians (SR) Organisation. This magazine has been published by the organisation to mark the 55th Anniversary of the Disbandment of the 1st Battalion of the Regiment.

It is the present-day successor to the Covenanter, the Cameronians' own, well-loved Regimental Magazine - the previous edition of which was published in 2018 to mark the occasion of 50th anniversary.

The new title has not been chosen lightly. The use of the cap badge as the publication's logo maintains a visual link with the proud Regiment that all of us hold dear. The title highlights two key parts of the badge: the central Rowel (also called the Douglas Star or mullet) and the surrounding wreath of Scottish thistles.

Richard Fowler penned an article in the Covenanter of 2004: *Thoughts inspired by looking at the Cap Badge of The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)*.

He wrote: "The Cap Badge of The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) consists of the five-pointed star, or mullet, of the Douglas Family, above a hunting horn with a lovers' knot; and the whole is surrounded by a wreath of thistles.



Looking at this one day, I was struck by the thought that not only was the Regiment formed by Covenanters - the Regimental Cap Badge contains a sermon in itself.

The star is a five-pointed star. There are five continents on this planet and the Regiment has served in each of them - Africa, America, Asia, Australasia and Europe.

Moreover, the star is a very important image in the Bible - for instance, a star shone over the Bethlehem stable where the infant Jesus was born, and in the Book of Revelation we learn that 'To him that overcometh I will give the Morning Star.'

The horn and lovers' knot are the symbols of light infantry regiments - the HLI had the same emblems in their badge, although they never went at Cameronian pace.

But the horn is a hunting horn, used to call the huntsmen together, and it is a reminder that God is calling His people to serve Him and we should answer His call.

The lovers' knot cannot be untied and symbolises for me the fact that God's love is always there for us - nothing can separate the Christian from the love of God.

The thistles indicate that The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) is a Scottish Regiment. There are ten thistles, one for each letter in the word 'Cameronian'. The thistle became the emblem of Scotland after the Scots won a night battle with the Danes. The Danes mounted an attack on the Scots under cover of darkness and in an attempt to make less noise a Danish soldier removed his footwear. However, the element of surprise was lost when he trod on a thistle. His resultant howl of pain alerted the Scots, who beat off the enemy.

To me, the thistles on the Cameronian cap badge are a reminder that God's protection is always there for us. He will always sustain us and he will never let us be tried beyond what we can endure.

In the last published edition of the Covenanter, the introductory article began with the concluding lines of a poem written by Leslie Dow, the Regiment's final Commanding Officer. He had composed it as a tribute to its first leader, William Cleland, that devout Covenanter and fearless soldier who had fallen at the Battle of Dunkeld in August 1869.

**'No old forgetful age will  
end our story,  
Death cuts our days,  
but could not stain our  
Glory.'**

This valedictory article considered that those two lines provided a fitting epitaph to the sad passing of the last battalion of the Cameronians.

The article concluded with the hope that, 'no matter how slender and seemingly forlorn it may be, that we Cameronians have not come to the end of our story, and that some day, and in some way, our regular Battalion might be restored'.

Time has proven that restoration was indeed a forlorn hope.

Nonetheless, some 55 years later the cap badge at least remains visible, thanks to the activities of family and friends of the Regiment and the heritage foundations laid by its Regimental Trustees.

Here's to:

**The Star that guides us!  
The bugle that calls us!  
The Ten Thistles for  
The Ten Commandments  
that bind us!**

*Douglas McCreath. Editor.*

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# SOME CAMERONIAN PLACES



Dunkeld Cathedral. The site of the Cameronian's first battle.



Former Cameronian Club, Holyrood Crescent, Glasgow



Cameronian Corner, Glasgow Cathedral



Stained glass window at Cameronian Corner





Disbandment Cairn, The Holm, Douglas



Obelisk commemorating the amalgamation of the 26 (Cameronians) and 90 (Perthshire Volunteers), North Inch, Perth.



Statue of Earl of Angus, Douglas



Cameronian War Memorial, Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow



# CAMERONIAN SUNDAY CONVENTICLES AT DOUGLAS 2017 & 2018 (50TH DISBANDMENT ANNIVERSARY)



Richard Cameron's Sword



Picquets posted, no enemies in sight, 2017



Lowering the flag, 2017



Castle Dangerous stands watch over the Service,  
2017



Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, 2018



Parading the Standard, 2018

# THE CAMERONIANS (SCOTTISH RIFLES): A BRIEF HISTORY

**T**he Cameronians were a unique part of Scottish history for over three hundred years. Their origins lie in the turbulent period of religious and political strife of the 1680s. Their end came with the defence cuts of the 1960s; their name erased from the Army List in 1995.

The original Cameronians were zealous Covenanters. Their devotion to the National Covenant (1638) and the Solemn League and Covenant (1643) meant that they would even do battle to defend their freedom to worship as they chose. Their heartland was in south west Scotland, in Clydesdale in particular. Galloway, Ayrshire and in Clydesdale in particular.

When their Ministers were ejected from their parishes the Covenanters followed them to the hills and worshipped at open air services which came to be called conventicles. As the threat from government forces increased the Covenanters began to carry weapons to their conventicles and to post armed pickets to keep a lookout. This tradition was carried on through war and in peace until the day the Cameronians were eventually disbanded.

The Regiment was formed in one day, 14 May 1689, 'without beat of drum'. They mustered on the holm, on the banks of the Douglas Water in South Lanarkshire. Their first Commanding Officer was William Cleland whilst their Colonel was the 19 year old Earl of Angus, son of the Marquis of Douglas. The Earl's magnificent statue overlooks the spot in Douglas to this day.

The Regiment took its name from Richard Cameron, 'The Lion of The Covenant'. originally a field preacher he was killed, a bounty on his head, at the battle of Airds Moss in 1680. Cleland had led the Covenanters in battle at Drumclog and Bothwell Brig. His sword, one of the treasures of the regiment, can still be seen today in the Regimental Museum in Hamilton. There too is the 'Bloody banner' carried by the Covenanters at both battles.

Within weeks of their formation The Cameronians saw action as regular soldiers at the battle of Dunkeld. There they showed their mettle with a staunch defence against a hugely superior number of rebel Highland troops, though it cost the life of the 28 years old Cleland. This fighting spirit was carried on in campaigns all over the world for the next 300 years.

From 1750 they, like all of the regiments of the line, were given a number and were thereafter known as the 26th Regiment of Foot, The Cameronians. As the 18th century drew to a close Britain faced the threat of War with the French. To counter this the government authorised the raising of a number of new regiments. Amongst them were the 90th (Perthshire Light Infantry).

In 1881 the 90th were brought together with the 26th of Foot to form what was to become known as The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles). The 90th Perthshire Volunteers were raised in 1794 and by the following year had seen action in France. They acquitted themselves so well throughout the Napoleonic Wars that, on their return from Canada in 1815, they were re-designated as Light Infantry. The 90th Perthshire Light Infantry (or the 'Perthshire Greybreeks', as they were known) served in the Crimean War 1854-1856. In 1857 they were in India where at the relief of Lucknow, one of the most famous operations in the Indian Mutiny.



After service in 1879 in South Africa during the Zulu War they were sent again to India and it was whilst there, in 1881, that they received news that they were to be given their new title: 2nd Battalion The The creation of the new regiment, The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), came about as a result of the 1881 Childers Reforms to the whole structure of the army. It was decided that all line regiments should consist of two regular battalions, one to serve at home whilst the other served abroad, usually in India. Both battalions gave up their standard red coats and adopted the rifle green with black buttons traditional for elite rifle regiments. Both battalions then served in South Africa and in India as well as at home.

In addition, the 1881 reforms, by re-designating various corps of county volunteers as volunteer battalions, laid the foundations for the Territorial Army.

The contribution of the Territorial Battalions to their country as well as to the regiment was enormous, especially in the two World Wars.

In the First World War, 27 Battalions were raised. Over 7,000 Cameronians lost their lives.

In World War II, the 6th, 7th, and 9th Battalions of the Territorial Force served in Europe; (the 6th and 7th with the 52nd (Lowland) Division; the 9th with the 15th (Scottish) Division).

Between the Wars the 1st battalion spent much of its time in India where it enjoyed outstanding sporting successes, not least at rifle shooting for which it had long been famous. At this time the 2nd Battalion was the 'home' half of the regular element.

In World War II the 1st Battalion spent the entire time in the Far East distinguishing itself in the defence of India and as part of the famous Chindits who outwitted and eventually out-fought the Japanese in Burma.

Meanwhile in 1939 the 2nd Battalion went to France with the BEF and after heavy fighting in Belgium was evacuated at Dunkirk. Later they went to the Middle East before joining Montgomery's Eighth Army for the invasion of Sicily and the battle for Italy.

The first of an ongoing series of post-war defence cuts came in 1945. The regiments which had been expanded to two regular battalions in 1881 were all reduced to one. By 1945 the 1st Battalion had been reduced by death and disease to little more than a cadre and it they who were disbanded, the 2nd battalion being re-designated the 1st.

The new 1st Battalion then saw service in Malaysia (against the communist terrorist), in Germany (as part of BAOR), in the Middle east (Oman - see below - and Jordan), Kenya (in the wake of the Mau Mau Uprising), Germany again, and finally, again on active service, on counter-terrorist operations in Aden in 1966/67.

With the third major round of cuts in 1967 it was announced that the 1st Battalion The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) was to disband, thus ending nearly three hundred years of service to the Crown. The disbandment parade, in the form of a Conventicle, took place on the holm at Douglas on 14 May 1968. Fittingly the salute was taken by the then Earl of Angus, the 14th Duke of Hamilton (1903-1973).

[The main source for this piece was the article by Philip R Grant first published with the 2006 Covenanter magazine]

# CAMERONIAN BATTALIONS IN ACTION IN WW2

On the outbreak of war in September, 1939, The Cameronians mobilised **6** active Battalions:

(i) Two Regular Battalions:

## **1st Battalion**

The 1st Battalion saw heavy fighting in the Burma retreat of 1942, and later in General Wingate's famous "Chindit" campaign in 1944.

## **2nd Battalion**

The 2nd Battalion was sent to France at the onset of hostilities, and subsequently took part in some of the heaviest fighting in the Dunkirk campaign. In the latter years of the war the 2nd Battalion served in Sicily, Italy and North-West Europe.

(ii) Four Territorial Battalions:

The 6th and 7th Battalions took part in North-West Europe with the British Liberation Army in 1944.

**6th Battalion:** The Headquarters of the 6th Cameronians was in Hamilton, and in the main it drew recruits from a wider area – Hamilton, Motherwell, Lanark and throughout the County of Lanarkshire.

**7th Battalion:** The 7th Battalion had its Headquarters at Coplaw Street, Glasgow and drew its recruits mainly from the city itself and its immediate suburbs.

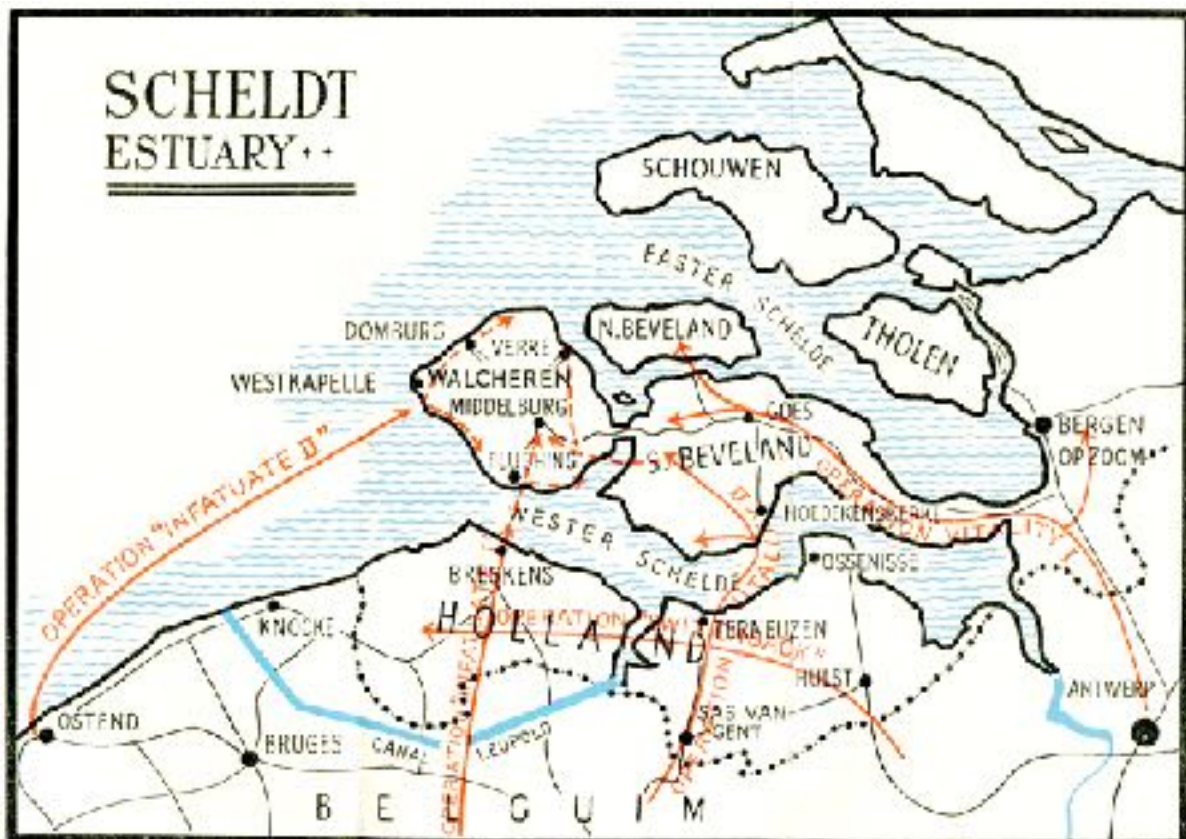
**9th Battalion:** 9th Battalion took part in the Normandy landings as part of the 46th (Highland) Infantry Brigade in the 15th (Scottish) Infantry Division in June 1944 and saw action in the North West Europe Campaign in late 1944 (including action at the Battle of Broekhuizen) and in 1945.

**10th Battalion:** At the outbreak of hostilities, the 9th and 10th Cameronians were in the 45th Infantry Brigade of the 15th (Scottish) Division. In December 1942 the 15th Division was re-organised. Some Battalions, including the 10th Cameronians, were transferred to reserve Divisions, and others brought in to replace them. From January 1943 the 10th ceased to be a Field Force Battalion. At the same time, the 9th Cameronians left the 45th Brigade to join the 46th (Highland) Infantry Brigade.

# THE BATTLE OF THE SCHELDT IN 1944

**B**y September 1944, it had become urgent to clear enemy strongholds from **both banks of the Scheldt Estuary** in order to open the port of Antwerp to Allied shipping, thus easing the challenge of supply lines stretching hundreds of miles from Normandy.

The supply problem was crucial. The huge Allied forces, which were then burning a million gallons of petrol a day alone, were still being provisioned, ammunitioned and fuelled by motor transport through Belgium, over broken roads and innumerable temporary bridges. If the Rhine were to be crossed and Germany defeated, the captured port of Antwerp - which had been taken with its dock facilities virtually intact - had to be brought into operation.



Map of the Scheldt Estuary

The plan for opening the Scheldt estuary involved four main operations:

- Clear the area north of Antwerp and secure access to South Beveland.
- Clear the southern shore of the Scheldt Estuary.
- Capture South Beveland.
- Capture Walcheren Island, which had been fortified into a powerful German stronghold.



## **The Arrival of the Cameronians**

On 20th October it was announced that the Cameronians, and the other regiments of the 156th and 157th Brigades of the 52nd (Lowland) Division were to carry out an amphibious operation at South Beveland and later to take part in the assault on the Island of Walcheren.

For some days before, the Canadian 4th Brigade had been advancing West along the narrow isthmus that joined South Beveland to the mainland. Owing to the very narrow front and the marshy ground on either side of the road progress had been slow and losses heavy.

The object of the 156th and 157th Brigades' operation was to speed up progress by drawing enemy troops from the advancing Canadians, and to occupy South Beveland. This, combined with the successful liberation of Walcheren, would open up the port of Antwerp to allied shipping.

## **The Baarland Landing**

The 52nd Lowland Division moved to Terneuzen on the south shore of the Scheldt on 23rd and 24th October. Here they were introduced to the amphibious craft, known as " (water) buffaloes". These American built vehicles could carry 30 fully armed men or 8 men and a small vehicle.

By the 24th October the Canadians had reached a stage in their advance west where they could debouch on to South Beveland.

To dislodge enemy rearguards from the line of the Beveland Canal, it was decided to assault the South Beveland Coast near Baarland. The amphibious assault "set sail" from Terneuzen before dawn on 25-26 October.

By nightfall a substantial bridgehead, about one mile and a half deep, had been secured.

## **The Advance from the Bridgehead**

The next phase of the operation was the capture of Ellewoutsdijk by the 7th Cameronians. This coastal village had a fort near the harbour and its early capture was important for supply purposes.

The 7th Cameronians, passing through the 6th Cameronians, commenced their advance on 27th October.

Strong opposition from the outskirts of Ellewoutsdijk was then encountered. By this time it was dark and it was decided to consolidate the ground gained and make preparations for an attack on the village early the next morning. Early on the morning of the 28th the Battalion, supported by all available artillery, captured and cleared the town.

On 29th October the 7th Cameronians extended their front north and after a brisk fight captured Ovezande. Their casualties had not been heavy, but among the wounded was Major M.V. Gray, Commanding "B" Company.

On the capture of Ellewoutsdijk it had been planned that the 6th Cameronians should immediately continue the advance west and capture a known enemy position about two miles along the coast.

The 6th commenced its forward move on the afternoon of 29th October. They got to within 350 yards of the enemy position and then encountered heavy flooding. This forced the Company to bunch on the available dry places, and it was then the enemy opened fire. Within a short space of time 10 men had been killed and 30 wounded. A considerable portion of the rest of the Battalion was still holding the original bridgehead and was not available to support the forward Company.

Accordingly, a carefully planned attack, supported by all available fire, was staged for the next day. When put into execution it was found that the enemy had withdrawn. The position was found to be a very strong one, consisting of a number of well-concealed pill-boxes, protected by mines, wire and inundations.

By 31 October South Beveland had been cleared of the enemy and the 6th and 7th Cameronians were moved forward to Nieuwdorp about three miles south of the Causeway.

While the above operations were taking place the Canadians had debouched from the isthmus and were fighting their way westwards across South Beveland to the Causeway across the Sloe Channel. With the 156th Brigade still engaged to the south, the 157th Brigade began passing through it, and by 30th October had joined up with the Canadian forces some two miles from the causeway leading to Walcheren. The Canadian 4th Brigade then put in a night attack, clearing the Causeway's eastern end.

In 1944, the Causeway, that linked the peninsula of South Beveland with the island of South Walcheren, spanned a muddy tidal creek. The part of the creek that ran southward to the Scheldt estuary was known as the Sloe Channel. The causeway was about 1,200 yards long, with a width of 40 yards at the top of the embankment. On this platform were a railway track, a foot and cycle path and a road and telegraph poles.

### **The Battle for the Causeway**

By the time the Canadians and Lowlanders had completely linked up in South Beveland, all German troops save those who had been killed or taken prisoner had withdrawn into Walcheren, and all the attention of the German commander in Middelburg was naturally concentrated on denying the Allies the use of the causeway.

The railway track was torn up. The roads and paths and the embankment were heavily mined. All the guns, machine-guns and mortars at his disposal were trained to bear on the Causeway. At the Walcheren end (still visible today) were concrete fortifications.

When the attack over the Causeway was at its height - first launched by the Canadians, and then by the Lowlanders - observers on the higher ground at the western end of South Beveland were appalled to think that infantrymen must, and could, fight in such circumstances: so heavy thick and continuous was the barrage the Germans could lay down on that narrow strip of artificially-raised ground.

In these murderous conditions Highland Divisions of the Canadian Army did contrive to get some two-thirds of the way across the dam, but with heavy casualties. The Germans launched vicious counter-attacks and the fresh units that were put in to relieve the Canadian Highlanders and secure a bridge head for the 157th Brigade were forced to give ground.

When the 1st Battalion Glasgow Highlanders made to cross the Causeway on November 1st they could do nothing but relieve the Canadians and hang on like grim death to that part of the Causeway that had been captured.

This grim situation was relieved by two events. Firstly, rocket attacks by Typhoon aircraft on the concrete emplacements at the end of the Causeway shook the enemy and vastly encouraged the Highlanders. Secondly, a successful crossing of the sloe channel some two miles south of the Causeway - on top of the proceedings elsewhere - distracted the defenders of Causeway.

### **The Crossing of the Sloe Channel**

Where the crossing was made the Sloe Channel was, at the time, just a muddy and ambiguous creek. When the tide was in, the actual channel of salt water was about 300 yards broad. At low tide, however, this contracted to less than half, leaving on both sides stretches of grey and glutinous mud. Above the high water mark on the Walcheren side a salt marsh, green but treacherous, stretched more than 1,000 yards before firm ground could be reached.

Only foot soldiers without heavy equipment and personally conducted by sappers (pioneer or combat engineers) could ever have hoped to get across the channel.

When the decision to side-step the Causeway and create a diversion across the Sloe Channel was reached, pain-staking and courageous reconnaissance by sappers of The 202 Field Company led, against the odds, to the taping of a path for guidance of the assaulting troops.

In the meantime, another party of sappers, challenging death at every step, was clearing a particularly thick and vicious minefield at the point on the Beveland side that had been chosen as the point of embarkation.

In a night-time attack, elements of the 6th Cameronians crossed the Channel in assault boats, to then follow the taped ground across the marshes. Thereafter, folding boats were launched and chestnut fencing laid across the mud-flats to allow reinforcements and equipment over to secure the bridge head.

Although the initial assault had taken the Germans completely by surprise, they reacted very quickly and by day break strong opposition was encountered.

By the evening of the 3rd November a good bridgehead had been secured, which had a marked effect on the battle for the Causeway to the North.

Under continuous pressure from the bridgehead and the troops on the Causeway enemy resistance began to flag, and early on 4th November the 6th Cameronians joined up with troops of the 157th Infantry Brigade, who had pushed beyond the Causeway and gained a footing on Walcheren.



# RIFLEMAN KHAN AND THE BATTLE OF THE SCHELDT

A life-size, bronze statue of the dog who saved his Cameronian handler from drowning during the Battle of the Scheldt was unveiled in Strathaven on 7 November 2021.

The sculpture of Khan, a German Shepherd, and L/Cpl Jimmy Muldoon was erected on the Common Green. The dog was honoured with the title “Rifleman Khan” by then serving members of the 6th Battalion. Khan pulled his handler L/Cpl Muldoon from the waterway separating the Island of Walcheren from the Netherlands mainland. The rescue happened during the Battle of the Scheldt in 1944.

The bronze statue, created by John McKenna whose other works include the statue of Billy McNeill outside Celtic Park, shows the bond between the man and his dog. Mr McKenna said: "It's an incredible story and I am really honoured to have been part of the effort to have Khan and Jimmy immortalised. Thanks to photos of Khan and Jimmy I was able to capture the way they looked, but I hope I was also able to show their remarkable relationship." The unveiling ceremony was attended by representatives of the armed forces, local dignitaries and residents, including some of those who helped raise £60,000 to have the statue commissioned.



The bronze statue, created by John McKenna, seen here at Strathaven.

# THE 9TH BATTALION AND HILL 112 (THE BATTLE OF ODON, NORMANDY) 1944

**O**n 20 March 2023, six members of the Organisation attended the Scottish Premiere of the documentary film Hill 112, at the Dominion Cinema, Edinburgh, hosted by the Lord Provost, Robert Aldridge.

The film was followed by a discussion session with Annette Oliver, the Chair of the Hill 112 Memorial Foundation. She was joined by the film's maker Peter Williams, MBE.



The documentary tells the story of the pivotal battle that cost 7,000 British lives.

Today there is little about the high point on the gentle slopes of the Normandy landscape above Caen to hint at this having been the site of one of the bloodiest encounters of WW2.

Hill 112's strategic importance is underlined in the words of General Rommel: 'He who holds Hill 112 controls Normandy.'

In the wake of the D-Day Landings, British troops by taking and holding Hill 112, allowed US forces to strike south from the Cherbourg Peninsula and thereafter drive deep into the heart of France to achieve the first major breakthrough in the D-Day Campaign. The critical victory was won by men from the 43rd Wessex, the 53rd Welsh the 15th Scottish (including the 9th Cameronians) and the 11th Armoured Division who confronted six crack Panzer divisions.

Despite the ferocity of the campaign which lasted ten weeks, the exploits of the men who took Hill 112 have until now received scant attention. Peter William's comprehensive, realistic and emotionally-engaging production contributes greatly towards setting the record straight.

Many were seeing action for the first time and the fear is palpable.

One of the survivors, Tom Gore is interviewed in the film. He was only 19 when he was sent with the Cameronians to Hill 112.

"It was a lovely summer's day", he recalls. "When suddenly the shells started and we were caught out in the open. That worst shelling - they called it Bloody Sunday. You were young and you just had to stick it out as best you could as shells rained down and moaning minnies and snipers created bedlam."

The 15th Scottish Division suffered some of the worst casualty rates, losing around 2,500 men in Operation Epsom, the initial assault on Hill 112, where they held the summit for 18 bitterly-contested hours before being forced to retreat.

The Hill 112 Memorial Foundation funded the film. The Foundation continues the work of the late Albert Figgs, who was a Sergeant in the Royal Artillery. He sought to honour his colleagues by creating a memorial site, now known as the Hill of Peace.



Prior to viewing the documentary, those attending shared a curry in 'The Gurkha Restaurant' in Morningside. The owner served in the Gurkha Regiment.

In 1949 the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) were affiliated officially with 7th Gurkha Rifles and to mark the occasion the Regiment asked that the 7th Gurkhas should wear their tartan – the Douglas.

The Douglas tartan is worn to this day by soldiers of The Royal Gurkha Rifles.



# INTERNATIONAL LINKS: THE BEVRIJDINGSMUSEUM, NIEUWDORP.

**U**ntil now, there has been too little awareness and recognition, both nationally and internationally of the importance of this battle in which the 6th and 7th Battalions of the Cameronians played key roles. The largely forgotten Battle of the Scheldt was the longest and fiercest battle on Dutch territory.

In Nieuwdorp, The Bevrijdingsmuseum (Liberation Museum), and its three hectare theme park, depict the history of Zeeland during World War II.

Strategically, what was at stake in this assault was the opening-up of the port of Antwerp to shipping; which would make it possible to provide the Allied war effort with a crucial supply line and allow the stalled offensive in Western Europe to start moving again. The positive outcome of this operation was decisive in shaping the further course of the Second World War in Western Europe.

The concept of the Liberation Park is unique. Nowhere in Western Europe is there a similar layout. Set amongst the characteristic Zeeland elements of water, beach and dykes, the park illustrates the period of the 1939-1945 war and the Battle of the Scheldt in particular.



The unique and preserved noodkerk (emergency church) of Ellewoutsdijk was reconstructed and rebuilt in the park. This emergency church, after the destruction of the original by an artillery bombardment, was constructed from Nissen huts.

In addition, the Liberation Park features bunkers, a bailey bridge, roadblocks, a Sherman tank, 'Buffaloes' canvas boats and a wide range of other military equipment. Another unique feature is the Stillebos (silent wood), a place where there is room for contemplation and reflection.

There is a long established association, formal and informal, between the Regiment and the Museum. The role of Mr Davie McColl is worthy of special note. He (aided by others) has been working tirelessly to create a soon-to-be-opened, dedicated Cameronian Room.

An invitation was was extended to ‘friends of the Museum’ to attend its formal opening in October 2019.

The role of Mr Davie McColl is worthy of special note. He (aided by others) has been working tirelessly to create a soon-to-be-opened, dedicated Cameronian Room in the Museum.



Major Philip Grant and Rifleman Yarker (one of the last surviving WW2 veterans)



The cap badge clearly visible at the opening presentation



Mr D McCreath presented the campaign medals of his father - Lt. D.H. McCreath (7th Division).



At the event Major M. Sixsmith presented to the Museum his father's sword. Both were accepted by Kaas Traas, the Museum's founder and driving force.

**‘Learn from then for a peaceful future’ - quote from the Stiltebos (silent wood)**



# A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE



Donnie McKenzie (Chindit), Dunkeld, 2019



Dick Gilmour, Armed Forces Day, Glasgow, 2016



The National Memorial Arboretum Lichfield.



Lanimer Day. Lanark, 2016



75th Anniversary of VJ Day, Douglas



Cameronian Sunday, Douglas, 2010

# FROM THE ARCHIVES: LETTER FROM EDDIE CLARK IN THE CONVENANTER 2002

**O**n the 12th of May I was delighted to attend Cameronian Sunday at Douglas. As usual the event was very well organised. I was highly honoured at being selected to carry the huge bible to the high altar prior to the beginning of the service.



At the Regimental Plot - Westminster, 2002. L to R: Mr Alan Halliday, Major Philip Grant, Mr Bill Kennedy, Mr Tom Gore, Major Mike Sixsmith, Mr Eddie Clark. Coincidentally, Tom Gore (as a member of the 9th Bn.) is interviewed in the Hill 112 Foundation DVD.

However, I was again highly honoured, and stunned, when Jack Gibson outlined to the large congregation my work at Westminster Abbey in laying out regimental plot for the past two years. Then, to my astonishment, he made a presentation to me on behalf of the members of the organisation which left me quite speechless. Having now regained my speech; I wish to thank all members of the Cameronians (SR) and family members for the beautiful miniature whisky decanter and glasses bearing the regimental crest, these items I assure you will be treasured

...On Thursday 24th October I received official notification from The Royal British Legion that this year's opening of the Field of Remembrance would be attended by Her Majesty The Queen, who would be conducting a review of the regimental plots...As in years gone by the attendance once again at this moving and poignant occasion was vast. Despite this, the police did a first class security job, their efficiency on checking and searching people was accompanied by a terrific sense of humour.

...At approximately 11.20hrs Her Majesty The Queen arrived and a short service began, followed by the ritual two minutes silence. This completed, Her Majesty began her review and inspection of the regimental plots. On arrival at our Cameronian plot, Her Majesty stopped; and I reported to her that I was representing the regiment, whereupon she asked if I was responsible for, and the laying out of our plot, I answered in the affirmative. After a few seconds looking at the plot she remarked "Very Nice" and moved on.

*Eddie Clark*



# LONDON CALLING!

Ian Bilboe inherited Eddie Clark's role as custodian of the Cameronian plot in the Garden of Remembrance, Westminster.

He also acts as liaison with the British Legion for those wishing to take part in the Cenotaph Remembrance Day Parade; and still finds time to attend organisation-arranged parades and events.



Last minute adjustments before Royal Visit



HRH Prince Philip chats with Ian, 2016.



With Billy McNeill after a Service in Glasgow Cathedral, 2019.



With Davie McColl at Horse Guards 2022



# IN MEMORIAM 2015-2023

## 2015

Clifford, Richmond, Allan,  
Rifleman

## 2016

Willis, Jack, Piper

## 2017

Kettles, Reginald Lt-Col  
Mackay, Hugh, Col  
Beardsmore, William, Rifleman  
McCartney, Roy, Rifleman  
Finney, Alex, Rifleman  
Murray, Jim, Rifleman  
Telford, Ian Lt-Col  
Murray, Robert, Rifleman  
Kane, Jim, Rifleman  
Watters, Alan, Rifleman  
Wallace, Eddie, Sergeant  
Lucas, Dudley, Col.  
Clark, Eddie, Sergeant

## 2018

Russell, Andrew, Rifleman  
Lindsay Robert, Rifleman  
McNulty, Tony, CSM  
Roy, W  
Dickson, Walter, Rifleman  
Webster, John  
Hobbs, Sydney  
O'Donnel, Jim  
Millar, Mark  
Adams, Donald  
McTeer, George  
Welsh, J.D  
Fowler, Dick  
McCall, Robert  
McGuire, James  
Turlow, Arthur, CSM  
Millar, Bill, Sergeant  
Greig, Albert, Corporal  
Lynn, Sammy, Rifleman  
McKenzie, Donnie

## 2019

McMillan, John, Rifleman  
Shearer, George

Yarker, John, Rifleman  
Dyet, Archie  
Sinclair, Thomas  
McLeod, Duncan WO2  
Leadbetter, Mrs G  
Murray, Mr J  
Boyd, Willie Bidey  
Kirkland, R  
Dick Gilmour, Colour Sergeant  
Grant, Rory, Lt  
Grant, J, Corporal  
Anderson, James, Corporal

## 2020

Nimmo, William  
Al Said, Qaboos bin Said, Officer  
Noble, Rifleman  
Marr, George Reid, Sergeant  
Scott, Ian, Rifleman  
Gilbert, R.J, Rifleman  
Kerr, Jim, Rifleman  
McConkey, Matthew, Rifleman  
Crawford, Willie  
Mattison, Ronald William,  
Rifleman  
Thomas Oldham, Rifleman  
Ronald William, Rifleman  
Johnstone, Joseph, Rifleman  
MacDonald, Maxi, Bugle Major  
Bennett, George, Rifleman,

## 2021

Rae, Wullie, Rifleman  
McSporran, Duncan, Rifleman  
Mannion, David, Rifleman  
Haddow, Bill, Major  
Kelly, Raymond, Rifleman  
Carson, Joe, Rifleman  
Brodie, Jock, Rifleman  
Schoneville, Peter, Sergeant  
Dell, Rab, Rifleman  
Aird, J., Rifleman  
Forsyth, Ian, Sergeant  
McKenzie, Donnie

## 2022

Simpson, Alex, Corporal  
Kilbride, Roddy, Sergeant  
Hunter, Bill, WO2

Haynes, D.S, Col,  
Pettit, C, Captain  
Robertson, P.T, Rifleman  
Finlay, A  
Henderson, John, Rifleman  
Holland, Ronald, Rifleman  
Murray, Jim, Corporal  
McColl, Edward, Rifleman  
Stewart, Matt, Rifleman  
Farrel, Jim, Rifleman  
Bogan, Jim, Rifleman

## 2023

Boyd, Bill, Corporal  
McGraw, Alan, Rifleman

\*This database is currently  
under construction.

Any omissions and/or  
corrections should be  
intimated to the Minute  
Secretary, Douglas McCreath.

Email:  
douglas.mccreath@gmail.com

# THE TRAVEL CLUB

The Travel Club is a semi-autonomous section of the organisation. It arranges Cameronian related visits both at home and abroad. In 2022, twelve members of the Organisation travelled to Normandy.



Front Row: (Left to right): Willie Miller, Tom Brydson, Archie Robertson, Richard McKnight, Joe McDonald, Jimmy, Molloy, Linda McDonald.  
Back Row (Left to right): Charlie Todd, Aaron Clark, Douglas McCreath, Chris Donald, Adrian Smith.

The Travel Club visited a number of war cemeteries where Cameronians are interred, as well as the graveyards of other allied servicemen. At a number of the war grave sites, a short ceremony was conducted involving lowering the standard (during which the Last Post was played, raising the standard (accompanied by Reveille), a short address and a prayer, ending with Binyon's lines and a wreath laying. Battlefield sites, beaches, memorials and museums were also visited including:

- The British Normandy Memorial
- Caumont L'Evente Commune Cemetery
- St Charles de Percy War Cemetery
- Hill 112
- Pegasus Bridge Museum
- 15th Scottish Division Memorial (Tourville sur Odon)



St Charles de Percy War Cemetery



Caumont L'Evente is a small town and commune close to Caen and Bayeux. It contains one single Cameronian Grave - that of Rifleman Tom Dear. The service for Rifleman Dear was particularly poignant given his solitary interment in such a relatively isolated place.

# THE CAMERONIAN MUSEUM, REGIMENTAL COLLECTION AND HISTORY

**T**he Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) opened its first museum in 1931; however the Regiment had been collecting objects since its formation in 1689. Its museum collection reflects the regiment's 300 years of service around the world, with objects from the early covenanting days right up until disbandment in 1968.

Hamilton District Council began caring for the collection on behalf of the Regimental Trustees in 1985.

It was formally transferred to South Lanarkshire Council in 2005 and is the only Scottish military collection in local authority care.

South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture now manage the museum collection on behalf of South Lanarkshire Council.

The Museum ensures that the collection continues to grow and develop; working behind the scenes to care for, conserve and digitise it to help make sure that the story of The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) is preserved for generations to continue.

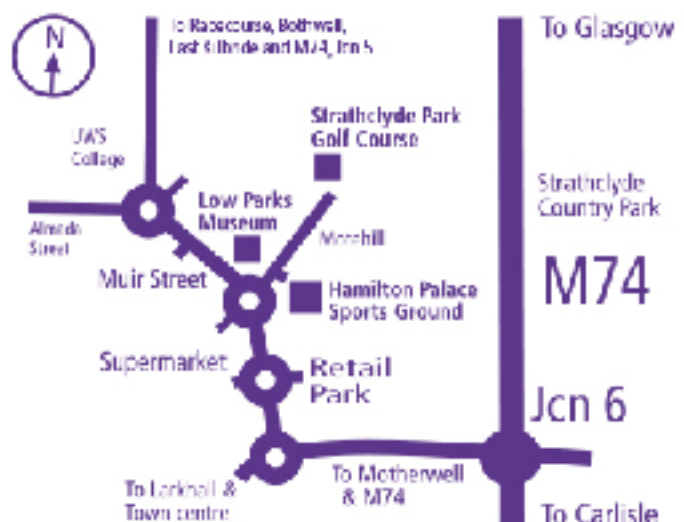
A selection of objects from the collection is on permanent display at the Museum.

Low Parks Museum,  
29 Muir Street  
Hamilton ML3 6BJ

Enquiries should be directed to the Museum at the above address. Telephone: 01698 452382



Low Parks Museum, Hamilton



Directions to the Low Parks Museum from the M74

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE REGIMENT

## **Q. When was the Regiment formed?**

- A. The Regiment was formed on, 14 May 1689. It mustered on the banks of the Douglas Water in South Lanarkshire. Its first Commanding Officer was William Cleland, whilst its first ?

## **Q. Who was the Cameronians First Colonel?**

- A. Although officially the regiment was named after its first colonel The Earl of Angus, it soon became popularly known as The Cameronians. The Colonel was the 19 year old Earl of Angus, son of the Marquis of Douglas. The Earl's magnificent statue overlooks the spot in Douglas to this day.

## **Q. Where does the name 'Cameronian' come from?**

- A. The Regiment took its name from Richard Cameron, 'The Lion of the Covenant'.

## **Q. (i) Why was every new recruit to the Regiment issued with a Bible? (ii) Why was Regimental head-gear not removed in Church? (iii) Why did the Regiment mount armed guards at the doors of the Church during religious services?**

- A. Answers to all three parts of the above question relate to the Regiment's covenanting origins. The original Cameronians were zealous Covenanters.

Their devotion to the National Covenant (1638) and the Solemn League and Covenant (1643) meant that they would even do battle to defend their freedom to worship as they chose. Their heartland was in south west Scotland,

in Galloway, Ayrshire, and in Clydesdale in particular. When the crown ejected ministers from their parishes for refusing to submit to the rule of bishops, the Covenanters followed them to the hills and worshiped at open air services which came to be called conventicles.

As the threat from government forces increased the Covenanters began to carry weapons to their conventicles and to post armed pickets to keep a lookout. This tradition was carried on until disbandment in 1968.

A number of ministers stopped preaching in the fields as they saw it as too dangerous for both them and the people. Richard Cameron however saw it as his duty to preach the gospel no matter what might happen.

Eventually government troops caught up with him and, following a fierce battle at Airds Moss in 1680, the dragoons won and Cameron and his brother Michael lay dead.

## **Q. What is on the Regimental Cap Badge?**

- A. The distinctive cap badge of the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) incorporates one of the oldest insignia in Scottish Heraldry: the Douglas Star or Rowel (the wheel of a spur). Below the star is a bugle and ribbon, signifying a Light Infantry or Rifle Regiment. They are surrounded by a wreath of thistles.

## **Q. Why were the numbers 26 and 90 on the Regimental Standard?**

- A. In 1881, as part of the Childers Reforms, it was decided that every Line Regiment in the Army was to have two



regular battalions. As a result a new Regiment was created - The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles). The 26 Regiment of Foot was to become the 1st Battalion; the 90th Perthshire Light Infantry (originally the 90th Perthshire Volunteers) was amalgamated with The Cameronians to become its 2nd Battalion.

**Q. When did the Regiment start wearing the Douglas Tartan?**

- A. From 1890, the full dress and No.1 uniform of the Regiment was a rifle green doublet and glengarry with Douglas tartan trews.

**Q. What was the marching pace of the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)?**

- A. The Regiment's Marching rate was 140 paces per minute. The 'normal' regimental marching rate is 120 paces per minute.

The following anecdote demonstrates the differential impact of these two rates.

"During the autumn and winter of 1940-41 the 7th Battalion of Cameronians (SR) was stationed in Bridge of Allan, and the Home Guard was invited to join them in a Church Parade and March past. Consistent with the Covenanting ancestry of the Cameronians, sentries were posted at the doors and the Riflemen carried their weapons into Church with them. After the service the salute was taken outside the Royal Hotel, on the village main street. All very impressive until it is remembered that the Cameronians was a Rifle Regiment which marched at 140 paces to the minute instead of the normal infantryman's 120. The Band played the Regimental march, the Riflemen with rifles at the trail stepped briskly along, and the poor old Home Guard, rifles at the slope, did their utmost to keep up with the fast-disappearing Cameronians."

**Q. Are there particular Cameronian Pipe Tunes?**

- A. In the present context, the names of two marches are of interest:

- Gathering of the Grahams
- The Black Bear

The Gathering of The Grahams was an appropriate title for the Regimental March of the Second Cameronians, since its precursor was raised in 1794 by Thomas Graham, Laird of Balgowan, the victor of Barrosa and Wellington's second-in-command in the Peninsular War. As outlined above, the regiment of his creation became the Second Battalion of the Cameronians.

The Black Bear. Neither the source of the tune nor its title seem to be known. Joe Wilson in the Piping Times of May 2008, however, has a theory.

The Scots word for barley is 'bere' and, in 18th and 19th century documents, it is usually spelt thus, but pronounced 'beer'). An old popular variety of this grain had black beads on the heads and was known as 'the black bere'. There seems little doubt that the word 'beer', meaning ale, comes from 'bere' meaning barley. Should the tune then be called The Black Beer (i.e. porter or stout)?

It used to be customary, in some regiments, for the pipers to play this tune when entering the barracks after a route march or a day's manoeuvres. At a certain point, the whole battalion gave a great roar, possibly in anticipation of foaming pints in the mess. Wilson thinks that a joyful, rollicking march such as this is more likely to be associated with 'reamin swats' (freshly brewed weak beer) than with an animal which has been extinct in Scotland for a thousand years and more.

Perhaps there is a bandsman out there who knows the answer.

# PARADES AND EVENTS IN 2023

## ANNUAL

**Sunday 5th March 2023**

ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF NEUVE CHAPELLE, GLASGOW CATHEDRAL

**Sunday 14th May 2023**

COMMEMORATION CONVENTICLE, DOUGLAS

**Thursday 8th June 2023**

LANIMER DAY PARADE, LANARK

**Saturday 1st July 2023**

COVENANTERS PRISON, EDINBURGH (CANCELLED)

**Sunday 20th August 2023**

ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF DUNKELD, DUNKELD CATHEDRAL

## SPECIAL

**Saturday 6th May 2023**

VICTORY IN EUROPE PARADE, KNIGHTSWOOD, GLASGOW

**Sunday 7th May 2023**

KING'S CORONATION PARADE, GEORGE SQUARE, GLASGOW

**Saturday 17th June 2023**

CEREMONY TO BESTOW FREEDOM OF SOUTH LANARK UPON ROYAL REGIMENT OF SCOTLAND, HAMILTON



# APPENDIX 1: A FICTIONALISED ACCOUNT OF THE SLOE CROSSING



It was good that Khan's story was used in this boys' comic some 20 years after the event. However the illustrator of this piece about Rifleman Khan has mistakenly used craft that look more like American 2 ton amphibious 'DUKQs than the flimsy canvas vessels actually used by the 6th Bn. Cameronians.

# APPENDIX 2: FINDING MY GRANDFATHER'S REGIMENTAL FOOTPRINT

Written by Euan McCreath

## Our First Visit to Zeeland in April 2016

My grand-father served in the 7th Cameronians - a constituent regiment of the 156th Brigade of the 52nd (Lowland) Division. Enlisted as a Rifleman, he was later commissioned.

Like many of his generation he rarely spoke of his wartime experiences and, it is only recently that easily accessible accounts of the Scheldt campaign have become available; which can be easily accessed on the internet.

Information gathered from the Brigadier Barclay's History of the Cameronians (1933-1946) and George Blake's History of the 52nd Lowland Division gave us a broad overview of the actions which led to the liberation of Zeeland. Some on-line research gave me some ideas about specific sites to visit, including the 52nd Lowland Memorial at Sloedam and the Museum at Nieuwdorp.

At the Museum were given a hearty welcome from Steff Traas and his father, Kaas - the driving force behind the Museum. Not only were we given access to the Museum itself, but we were also allowed behind the scenes to the workshops and the emerging Liberation Park. There we met some of the hundred or so museum volunteers, including Maarten van Veer.



Monument Sloedam



The workshop beside the Museum at Nieuwdorp



## The Monument at Baarland

Later we went in search of the 'Cameronian Pub' in Baarland. It was closed though we were fortunate to meet Corrie and Arjaan Elenbaas, who lived nearby. We were invited for coffee at their home.

My Dad had a good chat about their links with Cameronian veterans (some of the ex 156 Brigade Association members, we discovered, had been involved in the committee responsible for the setting up of the memorial at Baarland).

Later Arjaan took us to the Baarland Monument - at the spot where the Cameronians landed on South Beveland.

We had a great time - fun but also educational - and resolved to return again at the earliest opportunity to uncover more of my grandfather's wartime journey, and to play our part in keeping the flame of Dutch-Scottish friendship burning bright.



Cameronians and other ex-156 Brigade members at a Memorial Service at Sloedam



Corrie and Arjaan Elenbaas



The Baarland Monument  
- at the spot where the  
Cameronians landed on  
South Beveland.

# APPENDIX 3: THE DUTCH DO NOT FORGET: A SOLDIER'S RETURN 37 YEARS LATER

Sammy wrote a book of reminiscences: *The Dutch Do Not Forget: A Soldier's Return 37 Years Later*. In his book there is a moving poem about the crossing of the Sloedam.

The night was dark, the weather cold,  
We marched along to sights untold,  
As silent feet marched through the night,  
And determined men prepared to fight.

We reached a barn, our rendezvous,  
Were then split, our jobs to do,  
With 'B' on the left and 'A' on the right,  
We followed the tape and over the dyke.

Then into boats to cross the stream,  
A hundred yards, but miles they seem,  
We crossed the waters so black it stank,  
And landed on a wet and muddy bank.

Up to our knees, some to the chest,  
We fought all day without a rest.  
And the wounded died on the spot the fell.  
But the rest fought on through a living hell,  
And gave use of the great causeway.

And the proud 51st hard and gory,  
Are beat to a frazzle in the ways of Glory

And though it cost us many lives,  
Heart-broken mothers and mournful wives,  
They like heroes our courage grand,  
And pulled our weight like a well trained band.  
And played or part man to man,  
And did our job to free Holland.

But some of the boys who fought so well,  
Have a new grave on that muddy hell.

And praise those boys are due,  
To put into words no man can do,  
And though our hearts are heavy and sore,  
The name will live for evermore.  
A well-trained band no man reckoned,  
Good luck, God bless the Fifty Second

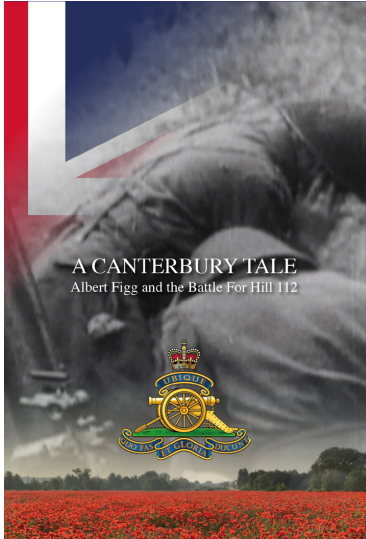


Samuel Corbett Blackwood  
(1922-2016)

I had the pleasure of meeting Sammy towards the end of his life when he was resident in a home in Auchinleck.

Does anyone have anymore information on Sammy and the battalion he was part of?

# THE HILL 112 MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



APPEAL PATRON HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS  
THE EARL OF WESSEX KG GCVO

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Tel: 07540 374683  
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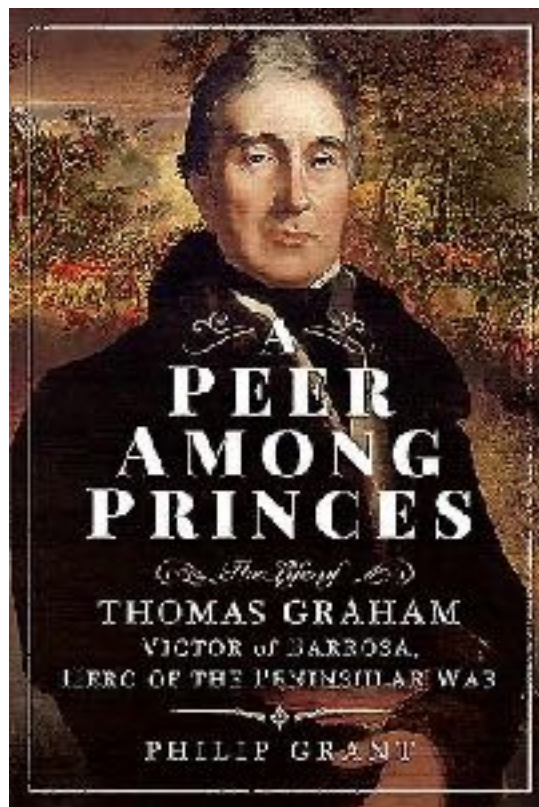
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# A PEER AMONG PRINCES

## THE LIFE OF THOMAS GRAHAM, VICTOR OF BAROSSA, HERO OF THE PENINSULA WAR



This authoritative biography chronicles the life and achievements of the Victorian era politician and hero of the Napoleonic Wars.

Sir Thomas Graham, Lord Lynedoch, is best known for his exceptional military career during the Napoleonic Wars. In the struggle for the Iberian Peninsula, he won a major victory at the Battle of Barrosa, conducted the siege of San Sebastian, and acted as the Duke of Wellington's second in command. But Graham was much more than a soldier. An innovative Scottish landowner, politician, sportsman, and traveler, he was a remarkable man of his age. In *A Peer Among Princes*, Philip Grant does justice to his life and reputation.

Lord Lynedoch only took up his military career in 1792 when he was outraged by the violation of his wife's coffin by French revolutionaries. Determined to fight them, he raised his own regiment and soon establishing himself as an outstanding leader and field commander. He saw action at Toulon, made a daring escape from the siege of Mantua, served in Malta and Egypt and with Sir John Moore during the Corunna campaign. With quotes from Graham's vivid letters and diaries, Grant weaves an absorbing and detailed narrative of his long and varied life.

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EDDIE CLARK - FULL LETTER



CAMERONIANS IN ACTION: WW1 BATTLE OF NEUVE CHAPELLE 1915



THE PDSA "DICKIN" MEDAL FOR A BRAVE DOG



BATTALIONS IN ACTION - INCLUDING WW1



FINDING MY GRANDFATHER'S REGIMENTAL FOOTPRINT - FULL ARTICLE

*Any man should be proud to say -  
"I served in The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)"*

# The Cameronians (SR) Organisation

“Careful Custodians of All that has been Entrusted to Us.”

## THE ROWEL & THISTLE



2023