Pete and Robbie: From Bearskin to Red Hackle

by Ensign Alec McGuckin

Two former Frasers have traded in their Brown Bess Muskets for the sleeker, and more accurate, C7 rifles of the Canadian Forces this past year. Peter Limeburner and Robert Kerr, both recent graduates of the squad, have joined the Black Watch as reserve soldiers and will be shipping off to Parliament Hill for the summer.

Both Peter and Robert, Pete and Robbie to their friends, joined the Squad in 2010 and had first-rate Fraser careers. Robbie, a piper, received the best piping trophy, just as Pete was named best drummer during his time with the Squad. Both started with the military as Black Watch Cadets. There, Robbie was appointed Cadet Pipe Major; Pete, his right-hand man, was Cadet Drum Major. Both intended to join the military as musicians with the Black Watch Regimental Pipes and Drums and both were sworn into the Canadian Forces Reserve last year.

Pete began his Basic Military Qualification (BMQ, or boot camp) course early in 2014, spending weekends sequestered in the Armoury on Bleury Street, training with another former Fraser, James Daniel Whyte, who has also joined the Black Watch. Whyte and Limeburner are reported to have performed well, despite having to finish their course with a cold, rainy weekend in the field.

Robbie, in contrast, might have better luck with the weather as he started his BMQ in late April. Robbie will complete an accelerated BMQ designed for recruits who will matriculate immediately to the Ceremonial Guard band. After graduation, he will join Pete for a summer of piping and guard mounts in the sweltering Ottawa heat.

Being chosen for Ceremonial Guard – or CG as it is known colloquially – is a competitive process: applicants are required to submit recommendations along with recordings of themselves playing challenging musical pieces on the pipes and drums. Once accepted, a member of the CG will find the work gruelling, says Alex Léger, another former Fraser who performed with CG for three summers. "But it's worth it. It's a lot of fun. It's a place where I forged a lot of lasting friendships, and I learned quite a bit about the military along the way."

We know that Robbie and Pete are no strangers to hard work – and they are all too familiar with long parades under an unforgiving sun. All that remains to be seen is if both are as good with a C7 as they were with the Brown Bess.

Despatches

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Despatches

of The Fort St. Helen Garrison of the 78th Fraser Highlanders

Major Claude Larocque, MOM, CD, Officer Commanding **May 2014**

OC' s Report

Hello everyone. This is my first OC's report! On behalf of the Garrison I would like to thank Peter Ferst for his three years at the helm of our organization and wish him all the best in his future endeavours. I know I can rely on him for guidance.

I would like to give an accounting of the issues which your command group has been dealing with during the long days of winter. For many of us, it was difficult dealing not only with the weather conditions, but also with other issues that fell into the command group's lap. This was a very busy winter as the events at the Fort forced us to regroup, to take stock of our organization, and to look at a new direction for the squad. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to LCol Bruce Bolton and Milady Francoise Lambert who have worked tirelessly and secured our equipment and other effects from the Fort. Everything is now stored at our headquarters at Maison Forget. I am pleased to report that we will be able to support a small squad for the upcoming season.

As your new commanding officer I will endeavour to stay the course in regard to squad activities. Our biggest challenge will be to raise the money needed to keep the squad alive and well provisioned and to meet any challenges the future may hold. To that end, I am most anxious to learn of any ideas that you might have to benefit the squad and the membership.

As you are all aware, our major fundraiser, the Fraser Fling, is slated for **FRIDAY,** June 13th at the Marché Bonsecours. I hope to see everyone there supporting our Garrison in this extremely important activity. I would like to add that if everyone can bring a guest or two we will exceed the amount that we expect to raise at this event.

In Memory of

HCol Joan Price WINSER

August 24, 1925 – May 19, 2014

The Regiment has lost one of our greatest supporters - Honorary Colonel Joan Price-Winser, who passed away on May 19th at the age of 88 years. The eldest daughter of the famous Price family of five boys, Joannie will always be remembered for her positive attitude towards life, concern for everyone around her and her dedicated involvement in many, many organizations, including the 78th Fraser Highlanders. As only our second female Honorary Colonel, she persuaded her friends to attend Garrison events or helped empty their pocket books for the Fraser cause.

She was always showed great interest when in the presence of the young people of the squad and they reciprocated, despite the age difference. Our memory of her will always be that of the lady that got things done with a joyful smile enjoying every bit of everyday of her life.

Ensign Kevin Douglas BATTY

1972 - 2014

Ensign Michael Trevor CARTWRIGHT

May 7, 1937 – December 21, 2013

78th Annual Curling February 2014

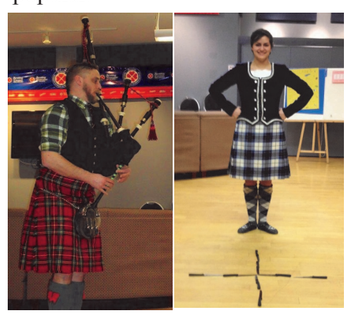
by Captain R. Paul Goodman

This year's annual event was held in the indoor comfort of the St. Lambert Curling Club as arranged by the distinguished veteran of both the club and the 78th –Okill Stuart. A fine bit of organizing with the first class rink, a large glass window from behind which couch potatoes and other non-participants watched the thrilling action on the ice, and a conveniently situated bar to wet the whistle or recharge the participants before the next match.

An open year due to the non-participation of the Hutchinson clan, this was a particularly fierce year for the teams vying to win the coveted award and have their names engraved for immortality.

Little separated the winning team from the others but when the smoke had cleared from the curling battlefield Major Earl Chapman's team (M. Gadue, C. Johnson & P. Goodman) emerged victorious. It appeared that the more than thirty Fraser attendees had good company, sport, and victuals consisting of a fine "soldier's supper".

Two squad members, Josh Lord & Marie-Ève Valiquette, provided the after-dinner entertainment, the former on the pipes and the latter with some fine dancing including a sword dance sans swords. Luckily our own Lieutenant Colonel Bolton had plenty of energy after curling to delight the company with his wide selection of piping tunes from the traditional to the popular.



This event is a fine example of a casual, afternoon and early evening social event organized by our garrison -- really something for all. If you have never attended I guarantee a splendid time with lots of good social cheer & plenty of kilts in view. A real Quebec Scottish shindig; mark it on your calendar for next year!

PMC's Corner

by Capt-Lt Michael Gadue, PMC

As your humble servant I serve as the President of the Mess Committee (PMC), and am charged with victualing. On the downside, I become the lightning rod for that which has gone awry, and on a happier note, am pleased to receive compliments for that which is tastefully done.

In this instalment I thought it might be useful to look at a historic Scottish dinner put on for high princes and dignitaries in 1781 when the Imperial Black Watch entertained George III's son, Prince William Henry, in New York City toward the end of the American Revolution.

The sumptuous dinner contained a variety of foods of the day, but also several uniquely Scottish dishes, upon which I will focus. The menu that formed the Scottish princely repast included the following: "Sheep head broth, 'cocky licky', a Haggis &ca".

And the recipes you might ask?

Sheep head broth is, of course, a Scottish broth that substitutes a sheep's head for the often found winter broth of mutton and vegetables. Cooked with onion, leek, peas, parsley, and carrots, these are usually removed to give an unthickened liquid "finished dish", easy on the palate, yet substantive and light.

"Cocky licky' is both traditional Scottish and Canadian. Otherwise known as "Cock-a-leekie soup" in formal culinary parlance, it is chicken stock, fortified by leeks and barley, sometimes garnished with prunes. I am told that prunes were added because historically the boiled fowls were often scrawny things, not terribly nutritious in their diets, and so a prune vitamin fortifier was added. Soups are a more recent culinary invention than broths, and contain all the stuff added, those vegetables used as a preliminary to prepare the palette for that which follows.

Haggis &ca of course refers to the haggis which is a savory pudding of minced meat, sheep's heart, liver and lungs, minced with onion, oatmeal, suet, and spices, in the nature of a sausage. It has many guarded recipes of preparation.

One wonders why all the Scottish fare would seem to be in the nature of "soup, broth or pudding", and after diligent research I have learned the reasons: Scottish hospitality is legendary; Scottish Highland weather was/is harsh; Scottish miladies always strove to serve ready cuisine that gave both impression and fact of being long in the preparation, and well considered. What more representative of hearth and home than warm, re-invigorating comfort food?

In fact, I am told that the term "comfort food" comes from an old Scottish Gaelicism referring to "A Lord well sated". That shall be my continuing goal as PMC, to make you all 'comfortable' in your repasts.

The Sporran as Lunch Basket, and Other Tales.

by Capt-Lt Michael Gadue, PMC

Thus far, your PMC has written, some would say doggerel, on the culinary side of Frasers and Scots, addressing their cutlery (knives, forks, dirks), the quality of fare before and after enlistment, and traditional Haggis, 'smoothed' by Drambuie. In this instalment, I want to look at the individual commissary system extant for every Highland infantryman on the move- his *sporran molash,* sporran, or lunch basket.

The sporran is and was "a hanging frontal pouch" that is associated with short term storage and access, as well as being used for carrying small personal items. Its nature was always personal to the wearer, rather than being 'standard issue', or of common construction. At the time of the Regiment's presence in Canada (1757-1763) , various badgers, otters, and the occasional deer were asked to voluntarily serve as a part of, or be in the 'lunch basket'. Because the sporran as purse often carried a variety of items to include tobacco, and occasionally a 'food ball' composed of oats, honey, and berries, it was not uncommon that the contents of sporran would become somewhat mixed together and rolled into one.

In any era, soldiers in the field are acknowledged to be masters of combining the most practical solutions to maximizing their pleasure with the least work, and so lunch for a Fraser, often combined sustenance with a hint of an after dinner smoke, snuff, or chew, all in the same bite. In fact, most readers will be aware that to commemorate the extreme pleasure that most Highlanders felt in relaxing in good company after a meal well taken, they often had recourse to a pinch of snuff. Eighteenth and nineteenth century carved wooden figures show Highlanders in their traditional dress, taking a pinch of snuff and, you read it here first, likely taken from their sporran, when they were stationed or operating in the field.

The casual reader will note that the well-to-do or officer types often had a snuff mall, or mill, composed of a small horn to contain their snuff, but for our hearty, Highland Infantry types, no such foppery was necessary!

However, never underestimate the abilities and resourcefulness of an infantryman. Though some Highlanders were unsophisticated lads from farm or field, when it came to creating an atmosphere of refined elegance and dignity surrounding their luncheon repast, all Frasers wore the red and white, crisscrossed pattern, hose and stockings. And why do you suppose that was?

Well of course, because the stockings provided a touch of the domestic satisfaction and elegance that accompanied a picnic meal, that later was memorialized in the ubiquitous red-checked, picnic tablecloth, spread to welcome all to a picnic outing. So the next time you are out on a picnic, or have occasion to see a red-checked tablecloth,, remember with kindness and appreciation, that most good things truly stem from Fraser Highlanders.

Slainte

“Les gens sans culottes”: Point Levi, Quebec, September 1759

by Major Earl Chapman

A few weeks after the fall of Quebec, Lieutenant John Knox (43rd Foot) recorded an incident which concerned a detachment of Fraser’s Highlanders, then stationed at Point Levi (today’s Lévis, Quebec). As background, large guards would have been posted at the Point to safeguard the British artillery batteries which had caused so much destruction to the town of Quebec over the previous months. On 28 September 1759, Knox wrote:

“Some of the female inhabitants of Point Levi having preferred a complaint against the soldiers incamped [sic] in that quarter, of their being robbed, and otherwise much abused by them, the several detachments [of the guard] were ordered out, that the women might pitch upon [point out] the particular aggressors; and being conducted to the right of the marines for that purpose, the complainants instantly cried out,

These were not the soldiers who plundered and maltreated us, for they were – *‘les gens sans culottes:’* meaning the Highlanders, which being reported to Colonel Fraser, he immediately ordered the delinquents to be discovered, tried, and punished.” Based on Knox’s statement, it would appear that the guard were drawn up, likely at the lines of their encampment, and that the women were taken to the marine detachment first, being considered (by the British command) as the most likely suspects. However, the women instantly cried out that the marines were not the soldiers who had “plundered and mistreated them,” but rather the “people without breeches” who were responsible! So much for the gentlemanly behaviour of the Highland Soldiers as reported by David Stewart of Garth and others.

But happily, Knox went on to write: “It is with pleasure I record it, for the honour of that corps [Fraser’s Highlanders], that this is the only instance they have given of any irregularity, in the whole course of their service in Canada; their men being always remarkably sober, steady, and orderly.”

The editor of Knox’s *Journal*, Arthur Doughty, added the following footnote: “We have been unable to trace the names of the Highlanders here referred to.”

Robbie Burns Night

Last Saturday the Dorval Royal Canadian Legion Branch 245 with the 78th Fraser Highlanders Fort St. Helen's Garrison, and some 100 lads and lassies celebrated the life and works of Robbie Burns with a supper in honour of the famous Scottish poet.

Dick Nieuwendyk
Special
Times

The evening started with a welcome by the MC for the event, Lt. Rick Cartmel, 78th Fraser Highlanders and Chairman of Dorval Branch 245, followed by the "piping in" and introduction of the head table guests. Sylvain Jette was the Lead piper and coordinator for the Black Watch Royal Highland Regiment Band. Special Guests of Honour were: Lcol (Retd) Okill Stuart of the 78th Fraser Highlanders, WWII veteran Gunner of the Royal Canadian Artillery, who landed on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, and Frank Conlon, WWII Veteran Royal Canadian Navy, who served on a destroyer during the war in the Atlantic, and Jake Watson, Royal Canadian Air Force Halifax Bommer Pilot and prisoner of war for three years by the Nazis. These three gentlemen are over 90 years of age. Other guests at the head table included Bill Bray, President of Dorval Branch 245, Linda Bray, Claude Valiquet, representing the City of Dorval, Christine Valiquet, Theresa Killen, and Sylvia Stuart.

Bass drummer for the Black Watch (RHR) Band, Bob Labreche recited Burns's famous "Address to a Haggis" and cut open the haggis, imported from Maxville, Ontario, to be served - drizzled with Drambuie - as part of the main course.

After dinner entertainment featured the Montreal Highland Dancers with the Black Watch Pipe Band the 78th Fraser Highlanders Montreal Garrison and Belfast Andy and his Irish Band. Rick Cartmel gave a speech, remembering Robert Burns' life and work. Toasts were made to the Queen, Fraser Branch 245, Robbie Burns, and to the Lassies.
"Auld Lang Syne", a song written by Burns, was sung and the evening ended with music and dancing.

For more photos visit www.mtltimes.ca
Event photos: ©Dick Nieuwendyk - 514-616-2009

Liliane Stewart: A Fraser

by LCol Bruce D. Bolton

From the earliest days of the Frasers, Liliane Stewart and David Stewart were there. They both cared greatly about Canadian history, and the Frasers and the Compagnie Franche de la Marine were embodiments of that history. But it was more than just history; the Frasers, the Franche, the museum were a family. Mr. and Mrs. Stewart fondly referred to the FH and CFM as “our boys.”

Mrs. Stewart died on May 3rd, after fighting a long battle with respiratory illness. Since her death, there have been many complimentary things said about her, about her generosity, grace, and kindness. These things were all true, and they all deserved to be highlighted. But what always impressed me most about Mrs. Stewart was that, despite her wealth and stature in the community, she was very approachable. Any Fraser who worked when she was around knew she would go out of her way to talk to “her boys”. She didn’t do this simply to be polite, but because she genuinely cared about the members of the Squad, and cared about what we thought. She cared about young people and she recognized their importance. It made her a wonderful person, and an excellent patron of the squad.

The link between the Frasers and the Stewarts goes back to the inception of the student squad in 1966. Wherever Mr. and Mrs. Stewart went, it seemed that a Fraser did too. Events, speeches, dinners, were all brightened by the scarlet of the Fraser uniform. When Mrs. Stewart went to Bishop’s College to meet Prince Philip in the 1980s, it was a Fraser who drove her. She enjoyed his company so much that he became her *de facto* Fraser driver during events that summer. When she was ill, confined to her apartment in her last years, that same Fraser came to visit her, years after having left the squad.

Although Mrs. Stewart and Mr. Stewart have now both died, they left behind a proud legacy of philanthropy and generosity. The Frasers are a unique part of that legacy. The garrison and the squad have lost an outstanding Fraser supporter.

Update on Changes

by LCol Bruce D. Bolton

By now you have certainly received our most recent update and as a result, you know that change is afoot.

The Stewart Museum closed for repairs in 2009. When it reopened, attendance was very low. On 1 July 2013, the David M. Stewart Museum merged with the McCord Museum.

The result of that merger is a much larger museum, one with a world-class collection. As often happens when two sizable organizations marry, decisions needed to be made about how the new museum would be funded. After a brief study determined that the troops weren’t a cost-effective draw to the Museum, the McCord-Stewart regretfully ended the program that had kept the Frasers and Compagnie Franche de la Marine employed for the last fifty-seven years.

Let me state here: the future of the Frasers was never in jeopardy. As we mentioned before, the Fort St. Helen’s Garrison was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in 1992. We have applied for full charitable status and in the coming months we will take care of all the legal details to be ready for this summer. We’re prepared to carry on – to meet this new challenge.

I, for one, am invigorated. My involvement in this Regiment dates back to its earliest days. I saw it begin as a small program and grow, progressively, into a group so talented that they were able to perform in front of the Queen.

While I am disappointed with the museum’s decision to end the summer program, I’m also excited for the opportunity it provides us.

Organizations, like organisms, need to change to survive. Our time at the Fort is now finished. It’s time to grow as an institution, to parade in new places, for new people, in new ways. Our goal will forever remain the same: we bring history alive. We strive to educate the public about our rich past, about our rich culture. We do this so that, going forward, we remember the role that the Scots played in forming this city, province, and country. In this way we are guardians of the past and our mandate extends far beyond the walls of a fort.

We will continue our work, with a steely eye cast on the future. This is a chance to grow, to improve, and to renew our solemn pledge that the story of the 78th Fraser Highlanders Regiment will not be lost to the history books. It will be relived, by our students, for countless summers to come.

D-DAY
"THE LONGEST DAY"
JUNE 6¹¹, 1944.

BY OKILL STUART
D DAY RANK BOMBARDIER
SERVING AS GUN POSITION OFFICER'S ASSISTANT

There are certain events in life, though diluted with time, which stand paramount in one's mind even after more than half a century — 70 years to be precise. One of the most important dates in military history occurred on the 6th of June, 1944, for it was the beginning of the end of Nazi Germany's domination of Europe. It was the second successful cross-channel invasion ever attempted — the first ever being the Battle of Hastings, 1066. That one, of course, went in the opposite direction A combined operation of land, sea and air forces comprised the greatest armada ever assembled. Two artificial harbours known as "mulberries" had been designed. A pipeline, "Pluto", was ready to carry oil under the channel. Immense forces had been assembled: 1,200 fighting ships, 4,000 assault craft, 1,600 merchant vessels, 13,000 aircraft, and allied armies of more than 3.5 million men.

Two American divisions, two British divisions and the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division, of which I was a member, spearheaded the assault on the Normandy beaches. It is safe to say we Canadians from the generals down were well trained — but green. Nevertheless we were resolute.

We slipped out of the old docks at Southampton at noon on June 5. At two, when all the craft had cleared the boom between the Isle of Wight and the mainland, the signal was given to open sealed orders. It was not until then that it was truly known that the long awaited D-Day had arrived. While maps were studied, the seas began to swell. There was a special issue of Allied French franc invasion money guaranteed by the Bank of England which quickly came into play with dice and poker games during the crossing. This form of entertainment was interrupted with trips to the gunwales to relieve queasy stomachs. However, in France, it was quickly learned that the only accepted form of currency was in the way of cigarettes! Cigarettes, apparently, were not harmful to your health in those days!

At about six o'clock on June 6, as dawn approached, I looked out and saw more ships of every imaginable shape and size than I had ever thought existed. It seemed one could walk back across the channel, hopping from vessel to vessel just like using stones at low water in a salmon stream.

I was with the 14th Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery, in the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division, approaching Juno Beach at Bernières-sur-Mer on the road to Caen in Normandy.

Bernières Station—German prisoners

As Canadians, we can be proud of the fact that we made the deepest penetration of any forces on that first day. The success of the day was made possible by the fact that neither the U-boats nor the German air force was able to offer anything other than minimum interference. Being a subordinate and barely out of my teens at the time, I knew little other than my own particular job, plotting guns and targets "like a goldfish in a jar", with a self-propelled field artillery regiment. For the first time I saw floating tanks, many of which capsized in the rough seas. There were barges with tiers of rockets going "swish, swish, swish" as they approached the coast. When you heard "chug, chug, chug" you found it to he the noise of the 16-inch shell from a battleship, so far to the rear that you could not see it. Something different was happening everywhere — all with a bang!

On the way in our landing craft, we were given the task of firing a barrage in front of the infantry as they were assaulting the beaches, a somewhat tricky operation from a craft bobbing up and down in rough seas. In

Drowned survey vehicule on beach at Bernières-sur-Mer

anticipation of the possibility of a counter-attack after going ashore, all vehicles had a string of land mines tied around their perimeters. It did not take long to come to the conclusion that it was safer to take our chances with a counter-attack than to be blown to pieces with these mines being set off by stray shrapnel. So without authority, mines were dumped overboard while we were still in deep water. We had our anxious moment though. The forward engineers had cleared the beaches of mines, or so we believed.

Run in to beach taken from the bridge of an LCT and showing the SP guns in the bow. June 6, 1944

Our particular landing craft hit a mine and the ramp was blown off. It sank in about six feet of water. The first vehicle off was an infantry "Bren gun" carrier with temporary elevated sides for the possibility of landing in such deep water. It, too, met with the fate of being blown out of the water. I was in the following vehicle, a command tank, telling myself that lightning did not strike thrice.

"Some time ago, there was an article in the press where a friend was being interviewed, bragging how his company of engineers had cleared the beaches of mines ahead of us.
I have since had a few words with him! I can remember turning to the chap next to me at the time remarking, You know — a fellow could get killed around here!" At 9:30 a.m. our guns touched down. By this time the beach was under heavy enemy shell and machine gun fire. As well, we had to contend with strafing from a few low-flying German aircraft. The one exit from the beaches was clogged with traffic, so it took a good hour to enter the town.

The beach was just plain hell, with a host of dead and dying together with a multitude of enemy prisoners under the sea wall. One of the batteries, when entering its first gun position, was welcomed by a German 88mm gun over open sights. Lacking our vision, these self-propelled guns still had a string of mines around their perimeters. This resulted in several explosions and many casualties. By and large, the air was ours by day and the Germans' by night. For the first few days, as soon as darkness fell, German planes flew over and searchlights came on in the beach area. Tracer bullets from ack-ack guns lit up the sky followed by ammo dumps exploding — a better show than on any Canada Day!

We all know that "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy". At about 10:30 on the morning of June 6, our tank sat in the traffic jam of Bernières-sur-Mer. We were approached by an adventurous elderly couple with bottle and glass in hand. Through obvious sign language a glass of Calvados was offered and accepted as I sat in the turret of a Sherman tank. Subsequent signs resulted in similar libations passed to the rest of the crew. The strength of the Calvados took our breath away and cancelled communication for quite a spell.

By the evening of June 6, 156,000 Allied soldiers had been landed ashore. Two days later I finally had my first sleep, the only time in my life I slept standing up in a hole in the ground. It was not until about six weeks after the initial landing that help in the way of spare parts arrived. In the interim, one had to just put up with things like toothache and when the dentists finally showed up, they acted "as the veterans", announcing that this was war so instead of filling teeth, they yanked them out! Without cooks we tried to survive on K-rations, a do-it-yourself eating kit in a wooden box. We made do on dehydrated food and the cigarettes known as "coffin coughers." As you can imagine, it was not just the Germans with which we had to contend.

The good things we remember; the other side of the war we have long since put out of our minds. And I might add, any soldier who claims he was not regularly frightened out of his wits is suffering from an over half-century lapse of memory.

We answered the call and did our duty, and we must never forget those who did not come back.

"D DAY" Plus 3—81st Battery Command Post—14th Cdn Fd Reg't
Second from the left—Bder Okill Stuart