

Summary of the Commonwealth Scottish Regiments

by Kim Stacy

Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and Anglo-Saxon communities in **India, Pakistan, Burma, Shanghai and Hong Kong - China, and Malaya, Singapore**, all raised units that were either Highland or Scottish in nature. There are possibly some regiments of Scottish motif in ex-British Africa such as Rhodesia who had a pipe band with the Royal Rhodesian Regiment prior to becoming (and possibly today) Zimbabwe. The main reference used is Major R. Money Barnes' *The Uniforms and History of the Scottish Regiments*, published in 1956, which unfortunately, does not go into the details of the WW2 service of the regiments below. Information is difficult to find on the military of these countries. The author requests that anyone with knowledge, submit their essay for inclusion in the next update of this ongoing project. Email Kim Stacy at :- rhq84@flash.net.

The *Canadian Commonwealth Scottish Regiments* are dealt with under *Scottish Regiments in North America*.

Australia

New South Wales Scottish Regiment (30th Bn.)

Royal New South Wales Regiment

The NSWSR was raised in **1885** as the N.S.W. Scottish Rifles and became part of the Union Volunteer Regiment in 1897. The Scottish Rifles became a separate regiment in 1901 as the 5th N.S.W. Infantry Regiment (Scottish Rifles) and formed into two battalions in 1903 and again known as the Scottish Rifles. In 1912, both battalions were drafted into the 16th and 25th Infantry and then four of the companies given to the 25th were split off to form the 26th Infantry and most likely served overseas during the Great War under these designations. After the War, the 26th went to the 2/1st Infantry and then changes title to the 2/30th Infantry. Come 1921, the 2/30th was amalgamated with the 2/4th and given the present title. The N.S.W. Scottish lay claim to 18 Battle Honours including: Suakin 1885, South Africa 1900-02, 2nd Somme, Passchendaele, and Egypt. They seem to have missed Gallipoli. In WW2, they took 59 Battle Honours in North Africa, Mediterranean, Greece, absmiddle East, and the Pacific Theatres. Affiliated with the RHR. Black Watch tartan.

Victorian Scottish Regiment (5th Bn.)

Royal Victorian Regiment

The VSR were raised in Melbourne in **1898** and were established as the 1st Battalion in 1903. In 1912, they were re-designated the 52nd (Hobson's Bay) Infantry and amalgamated with the 51st (Albert Park) Infantry to form the 2/5th Infantry at the end of the Great War. The 52nd was the overseas battalions that went for WW1 (similar to the Canadian overseas battalions). The VSR claim 31 Battle Honours to include: South Africa 1899-1900, Somme, Passchendaele, and Gallipoli. During WW2, they took 50

Honours in the Mediterranean, absmiddle East, North Africa, and Pacific Theatres. Affiliated with the Gordon Highlanders. Gordon tartan.

**Cameron Highlanders of Western Australia (16th Bn.)
Royal Western Australia Regiment**

The Camerons were raised in **1899** to keep order during the Gold Rush and formed as part of the 5th Battalion Reserve Volunteer Force and named the 5th (Goldfields) Battalion of Western Australian Infantry in 1901. The regimental number was changed to the 84th Infantry in 1912 and most likely went to Europe and the Dardanelles under that number. In 1918 they became the 2/2nd Pioneer Regiment and amalgamated with the 23rd Field Ambulance to form the 16th Battalion (Goldfields Regiment) and shortly thereafter linked with the 11th to be reformed as the 2/16th Battalion. In 1936, the Regiment was brought up to full strength and given its present title. The 16th claim 26 Battle Honours including: South Africa 1902, 2nd Somme, Passchendaele, and Gallipoli. During WW2, they took 47 Battle Honours in the Mediterranean, North Africa, absmiddle East, and Pacific Theatres. Cameron of Erracht tartan.

**South Australian Scottish Regiment (27th Bn.)
Royal South Australia Regiment**

The SASR was raised in **1912** from four companies of the 1st Bn. South Australian Infantry and designated the 74th (Boothby Bn.) and most likely saw service in WW1 under the number 74. In 1921 the 2/74th was amalgamated with the 5/27th (ex-75th Bn. from WW1) to form the 27th Bn. (South Australian Infantry). The Regiment became Scottish in 1938. The Regiment earned 20 Battle Honours to include: South Africa 1899-1902, 2nd Somme, Passchendaele, and Gallipoli. During the Second World War, they took 36 Battle Honours in the North Africa, and Pacific Theatres. Affiliated with the Seaforth and Camerons. MacKenzie tartan.

Byron Regiment (41st Bn.)

The Byron's were formed in **1914** as the 12th Infantry and most likely served in WW1 as that number. In 1918, they were amalgamated with the 16th Field Ambulance to form the 41st Battalion and were given their present title in 1927. It is not known exactly when they took the Scottish motif. Their uniform (1950's) consisted of bonnet, Sutherland tartan kilts. The Bryon's claim 15 Battle Honours including second Somme.

**Queensland Cameron Highlanders (61st Bn.)
Royal Queensland Regiment**

The author is not sure at this time if these are the same regiment. The R.Q.R. is allied with the KOSB

and RHR and took Battle Honours for South Africa 1899-1902, 33 for WW1 including Gallipoli, and 48 for WW2 in North Africa, Middle East, and Pacific Theatres. The QCH served in north Queensland to defend against a possible Japanese landing in 1942.

Royal Australian Regiment (9 battalions)

The 3rd Battalion is allied with the Scots Guards. This Regiment has 12 Battle Honours for Korea and the 3rd won the U.S. Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation for Kapyong, Korea, 1951. The 6th won the same for Vietnam.

Other Regiments

The following Units have affiliations with UK regiments: 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers - Fife and Forfar Yeomanry/Scottish Horse (TA). 12th/16th Hunter River Lancers - 16th/5th Queens Royal Lancers. Pacific Island Regiment - 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles.

New Zealand

Some Highland volunteer companies were formed in the 1860s but little is known about them to date. There was a resurgence in Highland units around the turn of the century and most were disbanded by 1911 when the active members were transferred to the Territorial Force. Most of what follows was supplied by Phil Lascelles of the *New Zealand Military Historical Society* and from Corbett's *Regimental Badges of New Zealand*.

Caledonian Rangers (Wanganui) Rifle Volunteers

The Rangers were raised in **1863** and formed the 4th company of the Wanganui Rifle Volunteer battalion and disbanded in 1866.

Dunedin Rifle Volunteers

The Dunedin Rifles formed as No.2 (Scottish) Company in **1863** and wore scarlet Coats and blue trousers. They disbanded in 1874.

Dunedin Highland Rifle Volunteers

The Dunedin Highlanders formed in **1865** and took to the Black Watch tartan. They did not muster to full strength and were disbanded (possibly the fate of many of these NZ corps. *Ed*) later that year. Reformed in 1866 as No.1 Company, Dunedin Highland Rifle Volunteers and moved back to battalion when they amalgamated with the Dunedin Highland Brigade of Volunteers. This unit was amalgamated into the Otago Rifles as "E" Company in 1898 and then known as "C" Company in 1904.

Thames Scottish Rifle Volunteers

The Thames Scottish formed in **1871** as a company of the Thames Rifle Rangers. Formed a second company in 1878 and amalgamated as one corps titled the Thames Scottish Battalion that same year. Uniform was kilt, red coat and helmet.

Auckland Scottish Rifle Volunteers

The Auckland Scottish Rifles were raised in **1871** and disbanded circa 1882.

Wellington Highland Rifle Volunteers and Wellington Scottish Rifle Volunteers

The Wellington Highlanders formed in **1871** and took the Black Watch Tartan. Renamed the Wellington Scottish in 1874 and disbanded in 1875. The Scottish was mounted for a short period of time before disbanding. This Corps was reformed as infantry in 1900 as the Wellington Highlanders with full dress Seaforth Highlanders uniform.

Invercargill Highland Rifle Volunteers

Formed in **1873** and short thereafter disbanded when they only paraded 17 men.

Canterbury Scottish Rifle Volunteers

The Canterbury Scottish were raised in **1885** and kilted in Gordon tartan and red doublet. They disbanded in 1893.

Canterbury Highland Rifle Volunteers

The Canterbury Highlanders was raised in **1900** and donned the Gordon tartan. They served as "J" Company, North Canterbury Battalion in 1901 and were re-designated as "D" Company, 2nd Battalion,

North Canterbury Rifles in 1903. They saw action with the Canterbury Battalion at Gallipoli.

Wanganui Highland Rifles (Volunteers)

Formed in **1900** and uniformed in khaki with full dress uniform the same as the Gordons. Amalgamated into the 2nd Wellington (West Coast) Rifles as "F" Company in 1901. Gordon tartan.

Scottish Horse (Waipu) Mounted Rifle Volunteers

Formed in **1900**.

Auckland Highland Rifle Volunteers

The AHRs were raised in **1909** and adopted the Black Watch tartan.

Christchurch Highlanders (Volunteers)

Gordon tartan. Nothing else known at this time.

1st Armoured Car Regiment (New Zealand Scottish)

Raised in **1939** in preparation for WW2 as the N.Z. Scottish Regiment in two battalions for the Territorial Force. Only men of proven Scottish birth or descent were enlisted. In 1942, the 1st Battalion was sent to New Caledonia to the 15th Brigade, 3rd N.Z. Division. In 1943, the Brigade was disbanded and the Regiment was broken up and the men sent to the Ruahine Regiment as drafts. Many of the men from this group saw service in North Africa and Italy. The Regiment was reformed in 1949 under the above title. The N.Z.S. inherited the Battle Honours from the 2nd N.Z. Divisional Cavalry 2NZEF, 44 in all to include: Greece 1941, Tobruk, El Alamein, Cassino, Italy 1943-45. Black Watch tartan.

South Africa

Queenstown Rifle Volunteers

The Queenstown Rifles were raised as an independent Scottish company in **1860** and were associated with the First City Regiment in 1903. Disbanded in 1913.

Kaffrarian Rifles

The Kaffrarian Rifles were formed in **1860** as an independent Scottish company, possibly for the Duke of Edinburgh's visit and then appear to have been inactive. They appear to have been re-activated in 1903 and possibly associated with another regiment? MacKenzie tartan. They were disbanded in 1913. A new report (11/98) has them still active with the SA Infantry with HQ in East London.

Prince Alfred's Own Cape Town Cavalry

Formed sometime around **1861** and served mostly ceremonial duty until disbanded circa 1889. Their dragoon helmets had the star of the Order of the Thistle on the plate. Somehow, associated with Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh who visited S.A. in 1860 and again in 1889.

Prince Alfred's Guard

Raised in 1856, and formed a Scottish company (No.5) in **1874**. Cameron tartan. Scottish company reorganised in 1903, ceased to exist in 1913. This unit is reported as still active as part of the SA Armoured Corps with HQ in Port Elizabeth City.

Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles

Raised in 1855 and formed an independent Scottish company in **1882**. They were attached to the Cape Town Highlanders in 1885. In 1961 they were renamed the Cape Town rifles (Dukes) with HQ in Cape Town.

Queen's Own Cape Town Highlanders

Formed in **1885** as the Cape Town Highlanders (with the Scottish Company of the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Volunteer Rifles, formed 1882) and served in the Boer War. Renamed the Duke of Connaught and Strathearn's Own Cape Town Highlanders in 1906 and provided drafts for the 4th S. A. Rifles (S. A. Scottish) along with the Transvaal Scottish during the Great War. Gordon tartan. Served in Senussi Campaign in North Africa and then went to France and won 15 Battle Honours including: 1st Somme and Ypres. During WW2, the CTH were part of the 1st South African Division and served in the Western Desert of North Africa. Combined with the First City (above) in 1943 fought up Italy, and were awarded the present title in 1947. During WW2, they earned 20 Battle Honours including: S.W. Africa 1915, El Alamein, and Casino. Early Honours included: Bechuanaland 1897, South Africa 1899-1902, and Southwest Africa 1915. Served in Angola in 1976 and then for 23 years in the border war with S.W.

Africa (Nambia). Still in service today.

Royal Durban Light Infantry

The Durban Light Infantry raised the Caledonian Company in **1890** and shortly there after were attached to the Natal Royal Rifles as the left half battalion. Black Watch tartan. The Natal Royal Rifles is today the RDLI.

Kimberly Scots Volunteers

The Kilmerly Scots were raised in **1890** and amalgamated with the Victoria Rifles to form the Kimberly Rifles. Gordon tartan. Reported to being active as late as 1956.

Witwatersrand Rifles

Raised in **1899** as the Railway Pioneer Regiment. Reorganised as the Witwatersrand Rifles in 1903 with a detachment servicing with the Natal Rangers in the Zulu Rebellion. They absorbed the Transvaal Light Infantry in 1907 and were the first regiment to go on active duty during WW1. After chasing the Germans around Southwest Africa in 1915, supplied drafts for the 3rd, 7th, and 8th South African Infantry regiments. The Regiment saw extensive service in Italy and was amalgamated with the De La Rey Regiment (possibly due to casualties). A 2nd battalion was raised and saw service in the absmiddle-East. Appears to have raised 9 battalions during WW2. They have the Battle Honour for Southwest Africa 1914-15 and the Honours for WW2 are not published in Barne's book (1956). Douglas tartan.

1st Field Ambulance (Natal) and Natal Mounted Rifles

Neither are Scottish in dress but both flash a MacKenzie tartan square behind their badge. The 1st Ambulance was part of the S.A. Medical Corps and adopted the flash in honour of its first commander, Captain Archibald MacKenzie who was with the unit when raised in **1899**. The Natal Mounted Rifles had its own pipe band. A new report (11/98) suggest that they are now the 1st Medical Battalion Group (Citizen Force), a Territorial medical unit HQ in Durban. Has cherry glangarry, possibly MacKenzie tartan kilt.

Scottish Horse

Barnes states the Scottish Horse were most likely connected with the same Yeomanry regiment in Scotland. Raised circa **1901** and were based in Johannesburg in two regiments which were then

disbanded after the Boer War. A third regiment of horse is reported to have been raised in 1902 from veterans of the War and then disbanded in 1908.

Transvaal Scottish

Raised in **1902** as the Transvaal Scottish Volunteer Regiment and sent a detachment to the Natal Rangers for action in the Zulu Rebellion. A second battalion was raised in 1914 but soon thereafter disbanded, no doubt, to supply drafts for other regiments such as the S.A. Scottish. The Regiment served in the Rand Revolt of 1922 and took 77 casualties. A 2nd Bn. was formed in 1936 and a 3rd in 1939. The 2nd and 3rd Bns were taken in North Africa (Tobruk) and the 1st decimated and then drafted into the Duke's Scottish Royal Light Infantry. Rebuilt after the War as motorised infantry and condensed to one battalion in 1954. The Battle Honour for Southwest Africa is the only one recorded as the "official" WW2 Honours are not known as of the 1956 date of Barne's book. Murray of Atholl tartan, pipers wore Murray of Tullibardine.

First City

First City claims establishment to the Grahamstown Volunteers who were in service before 1835. Officially, the First City was established in 1875 and mounted for service during the Boer War. In **1903**, an independent Highland company was formed but lost in 1913 with the amalgamation with the Queenstown Rifle Volunteers to form the First Eastern Rifles. In 1915-1919, the regiment was drafted into the other units. First City was restored in 1924 and in 1943, amalgamated with the Cape Town Highlanders for overseas duty. The First City reverted back to independent status in 1946. The First City claims 17 Battle Honours for service in the tribal wars, Boer War 1899-1902, and in S.W. Africa during WW1. Barnes states: "The Scottish connection dates back to 1875, but, owing to questions of finance, it has not always worn highland dress. It was for this reason that the Highland Company was not formed until 1903 and after the 1914-18 War, ordinary uniform was worn until, in 1935, the whole regiment was re-equipped with Highland dress." Graham of Montrose tartan.

4th S.A. Infantry (South African Scottish)

The S.A. Scottish were raised in **1915** as the Scottish battalion of the South African Infantry Brigade for service in Europe and then disbanded in 1919. They earned 15 Battle Honours to include: 1st Somme, Ypres 1917, and Flanders 1916-18. Murray of Atholl tartan.

1st Anti-Tank Regiment, S.A. Artillery (Pretoria Highlanders)

The Pretoria Highlanders were raised in **1939** as a volunteer service battalion and served in Madagascar and the middle East from 1943-44. They were drafted into other units shortly there after. Known as the

"Jacaranda Jocks". A second battalion (?) was embodied as the 1st Anti-Tank Regiment in 1940 and served in East Africa circa 1940-41. In 1946, both units were embodied under the title above. Hunting Stewart tartan.

Duke's Scottish Rand Light Infantry

Formed circa **1940** from the amalgamation of the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles, the Rand Light Infantry and the remnants of the Transvaal Scottish for service in WW2. All of the units reverted back after the War.

India

Calcutta Scottish

The Calcutta Scottish Volunteers were raised in **1914** as part of the Commonwealth mobilisation. Titled the Calcutta Scottish in 1917, and by 1920 the Calcutta Scottish (Army Auxiliary Force, India). Hunting Stewart tartan. Their service in WW2 is unknown at this time and they disbanded in 1947 upon India's independence.

Bombay Volunteer Rifles

The Bombay Volunteers raised a Highland company in **1914** and disbanded in 1922. Hunting Stewart tartan.

Burma

Rangoon Volunteer Rifles

The Rangoon Volunteers raised a Highland company in **1914**. Hunting Stewart tartan.

China

Shanghai Volunteer Corps

The Shanghai Volunteers raised a Highland company in **1914** which probably disbanded shortly after WW1. Hunting Stewart tartan.

Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Force

The Hong Kong VDF raised a Scottish company circa **1914** and then possibly again in 1939. Gordon tartan. Did not survive the Second World War.

Malaya

The 2nd Selangor Battalion Federated Malay States Volunteer Force raised one Scottish platoon, but not known when. Hunting Stewart tartan. Possibly after independence?

Singapore

Singapore Volunteer Corps

A Scottish company was raised, probably during **WW2**, but no doubt, before independence. Hunting Stewart tartan.