



ELECTRICCANADIAN.COM  
AGRICULTURE & WILDLIFE  
ARTICLES  
BETH'S FAMILY TREE  
BOOKS  
BUSINESS  
CHILDREN'S STORIES  
CLANS & FAMILIES

CULTURE & LANGUAGE  
DONNA'S PAGE  
ELECTRICSCOTLAND.NET  
FAMOUS SCOTS  
FAMILY TREE  
FORUMS  
FOOD & DRINK  
GAMES

GAZETTEER  
GENEALOGY  
HISTORIC PLACES  
HISTORY  
HUMOR  
JOHN'S PAGE  
KIDS  
LIFESTYLE  
MUSIC

NEWSLETTER  
PICTURES  
POETRY  
POSTCARDS  
RELIGION  
ROBERT BURNS  
SCOTS IRISH  
SCOTS REGIMENTS  
SERVICES

SHOPPING  
SONGS  
SPORT  
SCOTS DIASPORA  
TARTANS  
TRAVEL  
TRIVIA  
VIDEOS  
WHAT'S NEW

HELP TERMS OF USE CONTACT US

## Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for February 21st, 2025

### Electric Scotland News

It appears to me that under Donald Trump America is turning friends into enemies. That is a real pity. In the case of Canada it is hardly the fault of Canadians that we have abundant natural resources of pretty well everything. It is natural that we should supply our neighbour with those and of course we would expect a reasonable return. This is what the Donald is calling subsidising Canada.

It appears that the Donald prefers Russia to Nato. So perhaps it is time that Canada buys Alaska and makes it a Province of Canada after all you have already to drive through Canada to get to Alaska. Makes a lot of sense really <grin>

-----  
When it comes to Ukraine we should remember that America said that if it gave up its nuclear arms America would protect it. So where is that promise now?

-----  
I do think the Donald's idea of going after the government departments of the US is great and already we can see trillions of wasteful spending being found. I think all countries should follow this example.

-----  
The Story this week is from "The Morayshire Roll of Honour". In actual fact the book is a real gem when it comes to exploring the Scots actions throughout history of our fighting progress and on to World War I which is where the book explores Morayshire's role in that war. People from all over the world came to fight in that war from America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, India and many other countries that had their ancestry in Morayshire.

But this Roll of Honour is a record of the activities of Moray men in every field of service, and a glance at the biographical details will show the great variety of channels through which natives of the county served their King and Country in the Great War. Moray has always been a prolific nursery for emigration and her sons came flocking to the standard from all parts of the world. They and their descendants fought in the ranks of the brave Canadians, the brilliant Australians, and the steadfast New Zealanders, and many gave up lucrative positions in foreign lands to join the home forces. There are few Morayshire families that have not got relatives in Canada, and often while reading of the heroic exploits of the Canadian forces did our hearts swell with pride, knowing full well that they were to a large extent the boys of our Scottish race fighting under another banner. Nor can we forget the noble parts played by our sturdy and gallant fishermen of the Moray Firth. They preferred to keep to their natural element, the sea, and their services in the Fleet, in the Royal Naval Reserve, and as mine-sweepers were grand and glorious. It seems incongruous somehow to think of fishermen as kilted Highlanders, but, when men were wanted, some of them had to join the Seaforths. They did not altogether relish so much

marching, but in time they became excellent soldiers of the line and it will not be forgotten that one of the Morayshire V.C.'s and a brilliant D.S.O. came from the coast town of Lossiemouth.

## Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland and world news stories that can affect Scotland and as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on search engines it becomes a good resource. I might also add that in a number of newspapers you will find many comments which can be just as interesting as the news story itself and of course you can also add your own comments if you wish which I do myself from time to time.

Here is what caught my eye this week...

It's time for someone else to take over our remote Scottish island farm  
If you're interested in taking over the farm, check out my mum's website where there are more details:  
[www.isleofauskerry.com](http://www.isleofauskerry.com)

Watch this at:

<https://youtu.be/eRQzzH7-2mM?si=EjxU84EdYd8CTVoC>

Minister sets up meeting over future of Scotland's churches

The Culture Secretary is due to meet with the Church of Scotland to discuss the future of Scotland's churches following the decline in building conditions at certain sites, The Herald can reveal.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/AIE5v#selection-1853.3-1853.200>

Trump's economy is already in trouble

Not all of it is his fault, but warning lights are flashing, and his policies aren't helping.

Read more at:

<https://www.noahpinion.blog/p/trumps-economy-is-already-in-trouble>

If you read this article you might also wish to read the next one as well as it covers what Europe needs to do with the US exiting the European zone.

Dancing in the street: Dozens perform Strip The Willow

Ceilidh dancing brought a section of one of Glasgow's busiest pedestrian streets to a standstill on Saturday.

Watch this at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/videos/c9vmw79mgyko>

Conrad Black: Put Canada on a (trade) war footing

We must teach the U.S. a lesson it will never forget

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/RGi9a>

Giant £110 billion gas field discovered under Lincolnshire

Natural gas found under Lincolnshire could supply the country's energy needs for seven years, a company has claimed.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c74mpylzmpeo>

Reform UK: Scottish Labour must see us as a threat

A spokesperson for Reform UK has told The Herald the Scottish Labour party must start taking them seriously ahead of the Scottish Parliament elections in 2026.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/mEL7z#selection-1837.3-1837.163>

Metal detectorists unearth 15th Century coin hoard

Two metal detectorists have unearthed a hoard of 15th Century coins in the Scottish Borders.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5y98w4leyqo>

Toronto plane crash footage analysed by aviation experts

On Monday afternoon a Delta Air Lines plane crashed as it came in to land at Toronto Pearson Airport in Canada, miraculously there were no fatalities.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/videos/c62k362dzzno>

Councils confirm tax hikes of up to 10%

A nationwide freeze ends in April meaning local authorities can increase the levy by however much they like.

Read more at:

<https://news.stv.tv/scotland/glasgow-edinburgh-fife-north-lanarkshire-and-borders-councils-set-to-announce-up-to-10-tax-hikes>

Fact-checking Trump claims about war in Ukraine

US President Donald Trump has appeared to accuse Ukraine of being responsible for the war with Russia, in a flurry of claims from his Mar-a-Lago mansion in Florida.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9814k2jlxko>

Fans right to be excited - 49ers can make Rangers great again

Break out the star-spangled banners and the Make Rangers Great Again baseball caps. What's the point in being a football fan if you can't get a little bit carried away?

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/ksfCp>

The Case for CANZUK in the Trump Era

I believe it is the opportune time for us all to be reminded that Canada's historic ties do not lie with the United States, but with its Commonwealth counterparts. For the past decade, CANZUK International has advocated for free trade between Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom and I believe that time has finally come.

Read more at:

<https://www.canzukinternational.com/2025/02/the-case-for-canzuk-in-the-trump-era.html>

Electric Canadian

A Daring Canadian Abolitionist  
By Fred Landon (1921) (pdf)

You can read about Alexander Milton Ross, M.D. at:  
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/Daring-Canadian-Abolitionis.pdf>

Christian Responsibility  
In the matter of Popular Amusements (pdf)

You can read this at:  
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/Religion/Christian-responsibility.pdf>

In the Wake of the War Canoe  
A Stirring record of forty years' successful labour, peril & adventure amongst the savage Indian Tribes of the Pacific Coast, and the Piratical Head-Hunting Haidas of the Queen Charlotte Islands, B.C. by the Venerable W. H. Collison, Archdeacon of Metlakahtla with an Introduction by the Lord Bishop of Derry with 24 illustrations & a map (1915) (pdf)

You can read this book at:  
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/warcanoe.pdf>

The World's Work  
Added volume 7 where they discuss New York which they are forecasting will be the financial capital of the world.

You can read this volume at:  
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/magazines/worldswork.htm>

The Anglo-American Magazine  
Added Volume 5 which continues the History of the War between Great Britain and the United States of America. Also an article on Cedar Rapids, Chess in Toronto, Remarks on the Southern States and their Constitution by a Canadian, A Lady's visit to the Gold Diggings of Australia, Lord Metcalfe, A Peak into the Rouel Tan-Pits, The First Grenadier of France, Paul Pry of the Upper Ottawa, Russia, The Garden, The Editor's Shanty, Blackwood on Upper Canada, Japan and the Japanese, A Student Tramp to Niagara Falls, The Cave of Eigg - A Legend of the Hebrides, Photographs of London Business, Facts for the Farmer, The Purser's Cabin, Cotton, Slaves and Slavery, Secretary's Tour from Ohio to New Brunswick, Annie Livingstone, The War in the East, Zelinda or the Converted One, etc.

You can read this volume at:  
<http://www.electriccanadian.com/magazines/angloamerican.htm>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 16th day of February 2025 - Ethics  
By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:  
<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26593-thoughts-on-a-sunday-mprning-the-16th-day-of-february-2025-ethics>

The Beaver Magazine  
Added Volume 4 No. 5 (pdf)

You can read this issue at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/The-Beaver-February-1924.pdf>

## Electric Scotland

Circuit Journeys

By the Late Lord Cockburn (1889) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/law/circuitjourneys00cockuoft.pdf>

Scotland Illustrated

In a series of views taken for this work by Messers T. Allom, W. H. Bartlett, and H. M'Culloch by William Beattie, M.D. in two volumes (1837)

You can read these volumes at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/scotlandillustrated.htm>

Scotland in the Time of Queen Mary

By P. Hume Brown, LL.D. (1904) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/scotlandintimeof00browuoft.pdf>

Early Christian Govan: the Historical Context

By Alan MacQuarrie, M.A., Ph.D. (pdf)

You can read this article at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/gazetteer/rschsv024p1macquarrie.pdf>

Rooted in Myth?

Scotland's Images from Late Modern Times to the Third Millennium by Marina Dossena, University of Bergamo (pdf)

You can read this article at:

[https://electricScotland.com/history/articles/Rooted\\_in\\_Myth\\_Scotlands\\_Images\\_from\\_Lat.pdf](https://electricScotland.com/history/articles/Rooted_in_Myth_Scotlands_Images_from_Lat.pdf)

Rhymes and Recollections of a Hand-Loom Weaver

By William Thom of Inverury (second edition) (1845)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/poetry/weaver.htm>

Winter

Or, The Causes, Appearances, and effects of the great seasonal repose of nature by R. Mudie (1837)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/nature/winter.htm>

Groundwater dynamics at the hillslope-riparian interface in a year with extreme winter rainfall

By B. Scheligaa, Tetzlaffa, G. Nuetzmannb, C. Soulsby (pdf)

You can read this article at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/articles/wellsinScotland.pdf>

The Highlands and the Lowlands of Scotland

Transference, Cultural Synecdoche and the Elusive Quest for Identity by Philippe Laplace (pdf)

You can read this article at:

[https://electricScotland.com/history/articles/The\\_Highlands\\_and\\_Lowlands\\_of\\_Scotland\\_T.pdf](https://electricScotland.com/history/articles/The_Highlands_and_Lowlands_of_Scotland_T.pdf)

The Political Histories of Modern Scotland

By Ewen A. Cameron (2018) (pdf)

You can read this at:

[https://electricScotland.com/history/articles/The\\_Political\\_Histories\\_of\\_Modern\\_Scotla.pdf](https://electricScotland.com/history/articles/The_Political_Histories_of_Modern_Scotla.pdf)

Scottish Society of Louisville

Got in a copy of their February 2025 newsletter which you can read at:

<https://electricScotland.com/familytree/newsletters/Louisville/index.htm>

Maurice Paterson

Rector of Moray House, A Memorial Biography by John Gunn, M.A., D.Sc., with an Introduction by the Right Hon. Viscount Finlay of Nairn, G.C.M.G. (1921) (pdf)

You can read about him at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/men/Maurice-Paterson.htm>

Niger

The Life of Mungo Park by Lewis Grassie Gibbon (1934) (pdf)

You can read about him at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/other/niger..pdf>

Recollections of a Tour made in Scotland A.D. 1803

By Dorothy Wordsworth (Third Edition). We already have a partial account of this but have now added the complete book.

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/articles/tour1803.htm>

Publications of the Clan Lindsay Society Vol. 1

Had volume 2 and have just discovered volume 1 which I've added to our Clan Lindsay page. (1901) (pdf)

You can get to this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/webclans/htol/lindsay.html>

Portraits in Miniature and other Essays

By Lytton Strachey (1933) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/lifestyle/Portraits-in-Miniature.pdf>

Narratives of Early Virginia 1606—1625

Edited by Lyon Gardiner Tyler, LL.D., Late President of the College of William and Mary (1907) (pdf)

You can read this at:

[https://electricScotland.com/history/america/south/narrativesofearlyvirginia1606\\_1625\\_lyon\\_16h4.pdf](https://electricScotland.com/history/america/south/narrativesofearlyvirginia1606_1625_lyon_16h4.pdf)

## Story

### The Morayshire Roll of Honour

A Biographical record of the men and women connected with the County who took part in the Great War 1914-1918 along with a foreword by William J. McKenzie, a native of the County, who also Edited and Printed this Volume (1921) (pdf)

“Wha for Scotland’s King and law  
Freedom’s sword will strongly draw?  
Freeman stand, or freeman fa’,  
Let him on wi’ me!”

SUCH was the spirit of the patriot Bruce; such was the spirit of Scotland in days of old; such is the modern spirit that made the heroes of the Great War! We would not have believed it so, unless it had been proved to the hilt that our countrymen of today are as ready to tread the paths of duty and of danger—to do or die in deeds of valour — as were their forefathers, who stand transfigured in our mind’s eye by the glory and the glamour of the past. These familiar lines from the greatest patriotic song ever written are the keynote that has always inspired the Scottish race.

History tells how often in the past have Scotsmen drawn “the Sword of Freedom,” and how, when convinced that the cause is just, they never hesitated to stand or to fall — never refused to follow wherever man could lead.

Perhaps, we required a demonstration to remind us that this spirit is not dead. We had lived so long in what was called “the piping times of peace,” that succeeding generations had beaten all the ancient swords into modern ploughshares. We plied the vocations of commerce and industry with an ardour implying that “getting on in the world” was the main purpose of life and nothing else could matter. We neglected, nay, almost despised the arts of war. The Volunteers were sneered at and their work regarded as a harmless recreation. Our Territorials, mostly youths were sarcastically referred to as “playing at soldiers.” We were proud of our glorious history and traditions, but thanked Heaven that we lived in more enlightened times when war was well-nigh impossible between the Great Powers of the earth, because our boasted civilisation was sure to substitute the “sweet reasonableness” of arbitration.

The Great Awakening came. At one swoop the house of cards we had built was felled to the ground. We felt stupefied: we were helpless. What saved us? The inborn spirit of our race. The latent fire burst forth in flame. It roused us from our lethargy. Those whom we thought modern degenerates were brave men in disguise. Little did we think that many of the ordinary men we met in daily life were heroes of the first order. They did not know it themselves. But Necessity arose, and Opportunity came. Our countrymen proved that Scotland stands where it did — the home of the brave: the land of the free.

Scotsmen claim no monopoly of merit or of bravery in the Great War, but in writing a Foreword to this Roll of Honour, I do claim that they have added lustre to their name, and, in the eyes of the world, established a reputation for daring, loyalty, and staying power that cannot be excelled. Their praise has been universal. Sir W. Beach Thomas, the war correspondent, wrote: “Whenever” the battle rages hottest there is the 51st. The French talk of it with almost religious fervour, and an American officer told me he had never dreamt of troops

facing such fire and such obstacles together. Not once or twice in this war I have heard officers say, Thank goodness, the 51st "are next to us!" Prince Arthur of Connaught when laying the foundation of the War Memorial at Dufftown, said, "I know well the history of the 51st Division and how gloriously it has not only maintained but enhanced the traditions of Scottish bravery, tenacity, and endurance."

The greatest compliment to their magnificent fighting qualities was paid to them by the Germans themselves, who regarded them as foes worthy of their steel, and ranked them as the finest "fighting unit of the British Army."

They were really the "Storm Troops" of the Allies, and it is known that in a German order giving a list of the regiments from whom they had most to fear, the "lads with the kilts," otherwise described as the "ladies from hell," were placed at the top!\*

This Roll of Honour is a testimony that in whatever Scotland did, the men of Moray took a noble and a worthy part. One fact stands to their credit and undying honour and should never be forgotten. At the time of the nation's need in the early days of the war the North of Scotland showed a higher percentage of voluntary enlistments in proportion to population than any other part of the United Kingdom. It is not derogatory to the great efforts of other localities to say that the "land beyond the Grampians" topped the list. Could anyone who knows the antecedents, of the race expect anything else? History bristles with facts about the fighting instincts of the Highlanders. Going back to remote times, theirs was the only Province of the British Isles which the Romans failed to conquer — unfortunately for the province, some would say. The Emperor Severus, we are told, lost an army of 50,000 in the attempt. Shaw in his famous "History of Moray" supplies the words of the Roman historian Tacitus as descriptive of the ancient inhabitants of Moray and particularly the Highlanders:—"This race possessed a sturdy frame of body, limbs well-knit, stern countenances and a great degree of courage. You could not so easily persuade them to till their lands, and observe the respective seasons of the year, as you might bring them to face their enemies, and give and take the most deadly wounds. For they even held it slothful and cowardly to acquire by the sweat of their brows, what they could possess by the shedding of their blood."

It will be of great interest to place on record the following official statement, kindly supplied to me by the War Office, showing the composition of the 51st Division during the late war as compiled from returns dated 1st July, 1917 :—

#### 51st (HIGHLAND) DIVISION, BRITISH ARMY IN FRANCE. INFANTRY.

152nd Infantry Brigade.

Headquarters.

1/5th Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders.

1/6th Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders.

1/6th Battalion, Gordon Highlanders.

1/8th Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

153rd Infantry Brigade.

Headquarters.

1/6th Battalion, Royal Highlanders.

1/7th Battalion, Royal Highlanders.



1/5th Battalion, Gordon Highlanders.  
1/7th Battalion, Gordon Highlanders.

154th Infantry Brigade.

Headquarters.

1/9th Battalion, Royal Scots Regiment.

1/4th Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders.

1/4th Battalion, Gordon Highlanders.

1/7th Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

1/8th Battalion, Royal Scots (P.) (Divisional Troops).

#### DIVISIONAL TROOPS.

1/1st Headquarters of Divisional Artillery.

255th (1/1st Highland Brigade), Royal Field Artillery.

256th (1/2nd Highland Brigade), Royal Field Artillery.

51st (Highland) Divisional Ammunition Column and Sub-Park.

1/1st Headquarters, Highland Divisional Royal Engineers.

400th (Highland) Field Company, Royal Engineers.

401st (Highland) Field Company, Royal Engineers.

404th (Highland) Field Company, Royal Engineers.

51st (Highland) Divisional Signal Company.

1/2nd Highland Field Ambulance.

1/3rd Highland Field Ambulance.

2/1st Highland Field Ambulance.

51st (Highland) Sanitary Section.

#### LINES OF COMMUNICATION.

1/1st Highland Casualty Clearing Station.

The Danes, after conquering the English, invaded Moray in 1008. They committed great ravages, and slaughtered many of the inhabitants. They prepared to settle down on the fertile plains of Moray, and sent to Denmark for their wives and children. But the hardy men of the North did not leave them long in possession. Within four years the Danes were defeated at Mortlach, and driven from the country, leaving their progeny behind, which, no doubt, accounts for the fair hair and blue eyes so often to be found in the north-east of Scotland.

The ancient Province of Moray extended from the Spey to the Beaulieu and from Lochaber to the Moray Firth. Here we had a country as varied as the races that inhabited it. The County of Moray, as we know it now, is often called the Lowlands. This puzzles strangers who regard the whole North of Scotland as the Highlands, but we get out of the difficulty by describing it as the Lowlands of the Highlands. Moray, being the richest and most fertile portion, was naturally the centre of gravitation for that region which by its remoteness and its system of clans preserved racial characteristics peculiarly its own. It was thus the nursery of a virile race blended with the fiery blood of the Picts, the Celts, and the Norse—the “Viking sea-kings” — a race which for ages lived independent of Scottish kings and government and whose chiefs of clans held their lands by no other tenure than a forcible possession. It was practically a huge armed camp in which all the inhabitants were trained to arms, ready to repel the predatory incursions of outsiders or to fight one another on the smallest provocation. The great men were allowed to build fortalices on their own land and exercise jurisdiction on the plea of preserving peace and order, evidence of which we see in those ruined towers and castles strewn all over the province, but the result was, the nobles and chiefs respected the authority of the Crown only if it was in accordance with their own desires — they became factious and ungovernable and insurrections and fighting were frequent in every corner. Highlanders from Badenoch and Lochaber made periodic forays to steal the cattle of the “Lowland” farmers; there were constant clan and family feuds that could only be wiped out in blood; some nobles had “the power of pit and gallows” and exercised it with such severity that many a man suffered in accordance with the supposed advice of the clansman’s wife to her husband: “Stand forth, Donald, and be hanged to please the Laird!”

In the time of King Malcom IV. (1153-1165), the Moraviensis or people of Moray were, in the words of Buchanan, of such “a turbulent and unpeaceable disposition” that when the King sought to reduce them, they hanged his heralds and chased his army over the Grampian Mountains. Peace was not restored until it was agreed that some of the turbulent families should be removed out of Moray into southern counties where lands were assigned to them, and in their places some of the southrons were transplanted into Moray — an arrangement that was responsible for those isolated instances of northern names being found in the South and southern names in the North.

There are many incidents of personal bravery, loyalty to clanship, utter disregard of life, and tenacity to causes, even though mistaken, that will always fire the imagination as the most marvellous the world has known. Take for instance, the exploits of the Clan Chattan, who inhabited the higher portion of the Ancient Province of Moray. They were attacked at Ruthven by 400 Camerons, yet, because Mackintosh the Captain did not give command of the right wing in battle to Cluny Macpherson who claimed to be chief of the Clan Chattan, but to the other branch, the Davidsons of Invernahavon, the Macphersons stood aside as spectators of the fight until nearly all the Mackintoshes and Davidsons had been killed. On seeing this, family ties prevailed, and they rushed in upon the Camerons and slaughtered them so that scarcely a man escaped. It was this fight which gave rise to the most extraordinary of all gladiatorial combats that took place on the Inch of Perth in 1396 in presence of the King and Scottish nobility. The combatants were the Macphersons and the Davidsons, who were invited by the King to settle their quarrel by choosing thirty a side and fighting to the death. This they did. It was not a kingly spectacle, for only a few men survived. There were other occasions in which the combatants practically decimated one another, notably the terrible conflict in 1454 between the Mackintoshes and the Munroes, all about a cattle raid, and in 1544 the great fight between 500 of the Clan Ranald and 300 Frasers in which only ten of the former and four of the latter remained alive.

Though a digression, it is interesting to recall those historical facts to prove the antecedents of our Moray race and the inherent martial spirit that has inspired it from remote ages down, we claim, to the present day. For long we lived in an atmosphere of peace that lulled our fighting instincts to sleep. We began to doubt if they existed. But when the Great War came the men of Moray, stirred by a just cause and fortified with that pride of race which ever impels to daring deeds, proved themselves worthy,

And their martial blood descended from brave sires of long ago. Though dormant, now up-rises with a rush and bids them go.

The last battle on British soil was fought within the province of Moray on Culloden Moor. It sealed Prince Charlie's fate and the inhabitants began to devote themselves to peaceful pursuits until the time of the Napoleonic wars when the threatened invasion by the French roused them, and in 1804 the first Volunteers or Fencibles were formed. From these, drafts were made to keep the armies in the field, but subsequently, though many joined the ranks as professional soldiers, military training fell into abeyance and was not resuscitated until after the Crimean War, when in 1859 owing to a feeling of uneasiness about the state of National Defence a movement was started in Elgin to establish a Volunteer Rifle Corps. Leading men of the County took up the movement with enthusiasm, but were discouraged by local ridicule on the one hand, and a stingy Government on the other. As showing how a frivolous remark may stick, the saying of an Elgin doctor at a public meeting then held, has many a time been quoted up till the present day, that "if the French landed in the Moray Firth the Volunteer Rifle Corps would be the first up the Glen of Rothes!" The Government began by doling out one rifle to every four men and insisted that they should provide their own uniforms, one result of which was that the Volunteers throughout the Kingdom became a laughing stock owing to the wondrous varieties and colours of their costumes.

Despite all difficulties, however, four companies were formed in Morayshire in 1860 — one at Forres, two in Elgin and one at Rothes — and after most strenuous drilling by day and by night, they were enabled to make their first public appearance at the Royal Review in Edinburgh held on 7th August of the same year, when Queen Victoria for the first time inspected her Scottish Volunteer Army, 22,000 strong. The Morayshire Rifles mustered 240 men. They were attached to the 3rd Battalion of the First Division, and were commanded by Major Sir A. P. Gordon Cumming. The officers of the four companies were Captains F. C. MacKenzie, James Johnston, William Culbard, and John Grant — stalwarts who in after years did such great service to the interests of volunteering in Moray. It was no easy matter to provide the outfits, which cost £2 7s. 11d. per man, but such was the enthusiasm, it is recorded, that the Elgin City Band unable to buy side-arms borrowed the local policemen's batons and marched past the Queen, playing in grand style!

Such was the inception of modern military training as we have known it in Moray. From that time onward the Volunteer movement developed and passed through its various phases, kept together by the aid of shooting competitions and social gatherings such as annual Balls for the members and their friends—on the same alluring principle as the Sunday School treats! If the truth be told, the Volunteers for many years were not taken seriously by the public, nor even by themselves, greatly owing to the general belief that in the new and enlightened world the possibility of their being ever engaged in actual warfare was a remote contingency. They were subjected to unmeasured chaff and it is to be feared that often the public attitude was similar to that of the old minister in a country parish, who, feeling annoyed at the sensation caused in his church by the noisy and late entry of a young volunteer clad in his new uniform, angrily exclaimed: "Sit doon, man, sit doon, an' we'll see yer new breeks whan the kirk gangs oot!"

\*The old colours of the local Militia were presented to the safe keeping of the Elgin Town Council by the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, in 1920.

fThe first meeting was held at Elgin on 20th June, 1859, under the presidency of Provost James Grant, when it was moved by Mr. James Jameson, solicitor, seconded by Mr. Alexander McKenzie, bank agent, and unanimously agreed to, that it was "desirable that a Rifle Corps be raised by voluntary enrolment for the city and district of Elgin, in terms of the circular from the Secretary of War."

From 1880 onwards when the Volunteers were consolidated into a single corps with headquarters in Elgin and the nine companies styled the 1st Elginshire Rifle Volunteer Corps, the Battalion on all great occasions was able to muster full strength, over 1,000 efficient, and was often referred to as a model for other counties in Scotland to follow. Its history is a long record of the usual functions — inspections, camps, royal reviews, guards of honour, route marches, &c. In 1885 its designation was changed to the 3rd Volunteer Battalion Seaforth Highlanders after which it donned tartan trews and kilt jackets and assembled at brigade camps as a

part of The Highland Brigade. It was not until 1899 at Gordon Castle Camp that the Volunteers were arrayed in MacKenzie tartan kilts and became full-fledged Highlanders!

In 1900 the South African War took an alarming turn; it was then realised that the Volunteers were a serious fighting force. In response to the call of the authorities 223 members of the Morayshire Battalion volunteered for active service and 213 for garrison duty, and in due time three Service Companies successively embarked for South Africa and took an honourable part in that campaign. In after years under the Territorial system the battalion became known as the 6th Seaforth Highlanders. Such in brief outline is the history of the county regiment up till the eventful year of 1914 when the Great Test came.

The Declaration of War with Germany on the 4th August, 1914, fell like a bomb-shell on an astonished world. The people were awe-struck; their comfortable notions of universal peace were torn up by the roots: their minds seemed paralysed not so much with fear as with the dread of terrible possibilities. The prayer, "Oh, Lord! give us peace in our time" was unanswered: the time of peril had come. And we were not prepared. The utter helplessness of our position through lack of military training was borne bitterly home to us: Volunteers now merged into Territorials, who had been treated with such indifference in the past, had, at last, "come to their own" and suddenly sprang into favour as a force of front-rank importance. We had confidence in our race and were proud of its glorious traditions but the thought ever recurred. How could our young men, accustomed to peaceful pursuits and untried in arms face the trained millions of Germany? But our young men had no illusions. They saw the path of duty clearly and followed it, not with sad and woeful countenances, but in that cheerful, sprightly spirit of sport and even mirth, that soon made the British "Tommy" the wonder of the world.

In Moray it was indeed an eventful Tuesday (4th of August), when the message reached Elgin about 5 p.m. to "Mobilize." Immediate action was taken. Outlying companies were warned by phone and telegraph, and so complete were the arrangements of the Battalion Headquarters that an advance half Battalion of the 6th Seaforths assembled at Elgin at 11 a.m. next day in readiness to proceed to its war station, which on that occasion was the Cromarty Defences. The other half Battalion, consisting of some of the outlying companies, proceeded by special train the following day. The Squadron of the Scottish Horse Yeomanry belonging to the locality, also assembled at Elgin. They were given a little more time to complete their arrangements and get the necessary number of horses collected before being despatched by special train to Scone. One gratifying feature of the assembly of the 6th Seaforths was that there were no absentees. Every man was accounted for, and in a good many cases where men had completed their time and handed in their uniform they hurried back to Headquarters demanding its return. There was no lack of enthusiasm and well do we remember those two days at Elgin Station where so many of the townfolk assembled to see the "boys" go off. The young soldiers, many of them mere youths, in contrast to the weeping mothers and friends they left behind, kept up a brave show full of hope and even hilarity. Alas! poor boys, little did they think that when the trial and stress of the War was over, so many of that noble band of nearly 1,000 Seaforths would never return!

Their stay at Invergordon was short and they removed to their training station at Bedford. Their regular Adjutant was recalled to his regiment and the sergeant-instructors with the exception of one, were posted elsewhere. But this only served to put the Officers and N.C.O.'s more on their mettle. Everyone went to work with a will, and training proceeded with the greatest keenness. After a while, all ranks became impatient for the order to cross over, to take part in the great events of the time. They were afraid the war would be finished before they could get a chance of showing their worth. And when the order did eventually come, it was received with manifestations of delight, that henceforth they were to be part of the great field service army.

They crossed to France without mishap. The officer in command was Lieut.-Col. T. G. Maclaren, who was shortly afterwards invalided home. He was succeeded by Lieut.-Col. J. Grant Smith, who through the various grades had long been attached to the Strathspey company, and was always an enthusiastic Volunteer. After a few days in billets at Robecq the Battalion went into trenches for the first time at Richebourg. The first company to take up position went over in the open ground at three o'clock in the afternoon (there were no communication trenches in those days) under Major Gair, and the other companies followed at short intervals. Such was the

beginning of their actual warfare, and in the words of that officer (now Lt.-Col. Gair, O.B.E.) whose long military experience was invaluable in the early organisation and leadership of the Battalion — “Right well did the Morayshire lads behave from that time onwards till the conclusion of the campaign.”

Meanwhile, a new Reserve Battalion, styled the 2/6th Seaforth Highlanders, was formed, under Lieut.-Col. W. Rose Black, to receive all ranks unfit for service abroad, to train recruits and act as a feeder to replace casualties in the Service Unit. In January, 1915, instructions were issued to form a third line for the purpose of feeding the first and second lines. This was accomplished and the 3/6th Seaforth Highlanders were trained first at Elgin West End School and next at Ripon, under the command of Major C. E. Johnston, who afterwards bravely fell in France during the great German offensive of March, 1918. Later on, the 2/6th was amalgamated with the 2/5th Seaforths (Sutherland and Caithness) and the same happened to the 3/6th and the third lines of the 4th (Ross-shire) and the 5th (Sutherland and Caithness) which were formed into a training battalion for the Seaforths' Territorial Battalions in France. In this way the machinery was completed. None of the reserve battalions of the Seaforths went out as independent units, but during their existence they were used to provide reinforcements for their respective service battalions at the front.

The strength of the 1/6th or service Battalion at embarkation on 1st May, 1915, was 965; the number enlisted during the war was 4,076: the total number of men who passed through the 6th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders was 4,888. These figures include the Battalion which served abroad, the second line Battalion that remained in this country, and the third reserve Battalion, which furnished drafts for the overseas unit. Of course, the men enlisted did not all belong to the county. After landing, the Battalion served in France throughout the whole time of the War, taking its full share of hardship and danger as the large number of casualties reveals, and contributing to the record of daring and reliability that has earned universal fame for the Seaforths as one of the best fighting regiments of the line. The official records show that the actual number of men who were killed in action, died of wounds, or died of sickness, within the Battalion, was 50 officers, and 1,113 warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and men—a number one-fifth greater than the original strength of the 1/6th Battalion on embarkation. This remarkable fact is more eloquent than words.

In the late War the doings of individual regiments have been veiled by that secrecy deemed advisable by the military authorities, and it is difficult to obtain information regarding exploits collective and personal that would have been of intense interest to present and future generations. The officers and personnel of the Battalions changed many times during the War and it is impossible for one officer to speak from personal experience for the whole period. But the following Memorandum which has been kindly supplied to me by Lieut.-Col. J. Grant Smith, D.S.O., who has had it amplified and verified by several officers serving with the Battalion at the different periods under review, will place on record the special engagements in which the 6th Seaforth Highlanders took part. It is not a complete history or diary of the Battalion's experiences, but the engagements and incidents here mentioned are regarded as the most important:—

The 6th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders was mobilised on the 4th August, 1914, arrived in France on 1st May, 1915, and served with the 51st Division until the Armistice. The Cadre returned to Elgin on the 16th April, 1919.

Festubert: June, 1915.

The Battalion, under Lieut.-Col. J. Grant Smith (awarded the D.S.O. a year later) took part in its first engagement after a few days' experience in the trenches. In those early days, there was a shortage of shells, and casualties were heavy.

Labyrinthe: March to July, 1915.

The Battalion took over the Labyrinthe from the French. This sector was really a Boche minefield, and, though enemy mines were blown up practically every night, and repeated attacks had to be repulsed, they never lost a single trench.

Somme: July, 1916. High Wood.

The Battalion was not heavily engaged in these operations.

Armentieres: 15th September, 1916.

There was a highly successful raid, which was then described as the best infantry raid that had taken place in France.

Beaumont Hamel: 13th November, 1916.

At Beaumont Hamel the 51st Division scored a conspicuous success as pioneers of the "leap frog" system of attack. Beaumont Hamel was reckoned to be impregnable. Second Lieut. Edwards, Lossiemouth (afterwards killed) won the D.S.O., captured a German Regimental Commander and his Staff, and some 400 men. Details of his exploits were recorded in the "Times" and other newspapers about this date.

Arras: 9TH April, 1917.

At Arras, on the 9th April, 1917, the Battalion attacked at Roclincourt. All objectives were reached up to time, and they had a big say in the taking of Vimy Ridge.

Taking of the Chemical Works at Roeux: 16th May, 1917.

Second-Lieut. J. Bliss, Forres, (afterwards killed), after being twice wounded, left the dressing station on hearing of the battle arrangements, and took the Chemical Works with a "scratch" Company.

Ypres—Passchendaele: 31st July, 1917.

The Battalion reached all objectives the first day. Sergt. Alexr. Edwards, of Lossiemouth, won the V.C., and it is said that the deed for which the V.C. was awarded was reckoned to be the least of his accomplishments during the operation. He was three times wounded, was reported missing in March, 1918, and was not afterwards traced.

1st Battle of Cambrai: 20th to 23rd November, 1917.

The Battalion, under the personal leadership of Lieut.-Col. S. Macdonald, D.S.O., in co-operation with Tanks, took FlesquiereS on the second day of attack, and Col. Macdonald was awarded a Bar to his D.S.O. On the 30th November, 1917, the Battalion took part in the withdrawal after the German success of that day.

2nd Battle of Cambrai: 21st March, 1918.

On 21st March, 1918, a stand was made by the Battalion on the Beaumetz-Morchies Trench line. This stand was made at a critical time in the German offensive. It was of great value, and earned the praise of the highest authorities. Here, Major C. E. Johnston, Elgin, commanded, and was seen to fall at the head of his troops. He was awarded the D.S.O., was reported missing, and is now presumed killed.

Lys: April, 1918.

During this month, the Germans were making a rapid advance, and the Battalion moved with the Division north from the Somme to the River Lys, where they consolidated the broken Portuguese line at Robecq, and succeeded in bringing the German advance to a standstill. Many of the members of the Battalion were familiar

with the neighbourhood of Robecq as it was the first village in which they were billeted on their arrival in France three years previously. It was then a peaceful village, surrounded by orchards with apple blossom, but in 1918, it was a smoking mass of ruins. Major C. E. Fysh won the D.S.O. here; he had previously been awarded the M.C. and bar. He was afterwards killed in action at Chaumuzy, on 25th July, 1918. Lieut.-Col. S. Macdonald was wounded here. During the operations from July, 1918, till the Armistice in November, many acts of personal gallantry on the part of the young Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Col. John E. Laurie, are recorded. He won the D.S.O. and Bar, Legion of Honour, and a Brevet Majority.

Reims: July, 1918.

The Division was sent south to support the French, and the Battalion attacked on the right base of the salient at Reims, and assisted the French in their initial offensive of the last phase of the War. The men of the Battalion were very proud of the effusive gratitude of the French for their conduct at Reims, and they had always been on the most friendly terms with the French troops and civilians. They had previously relieved French battalions on two occasions, viz:— At Thiepval Wood in July, 1915, and at The Labyrinths, in March, 1916.

Arras and Eastward: August to October, 1918.

The Battalion took part in some hard fighting in the final phase. Commencing from the vicinity of Roeux and Fampoux, they continued with short rests in the final “push” up to the village of Famars near Valenciennes, where the Battalion fired its parting shot at the Boche. They were relieved at Famars on the 28th October, 1918. On the 11th November, 1918, when the Armistice was declared, the Battalion was at Thun St. Martin near Cambrai.

Casualties of the 6th Seaforth Highlanders.

The following statement is unique and will be commented on in every home in Morayshire. I am enabled to give it by the kind co-operation of Col. J. Grant Smith, who has been assisted in its compilation by Capt. A. H. Macdonald, M.C., Forres. It is a list of the casualties sustained by the Battalion during the War, and also gives in detail the principal engagements and periods of duty in the line. This statement has been prepared from the Official Casualty Lists and from the War Diaries now in possession of the Record Office at Perth. The total of fatal casualties and their allocation between the various periods may be regarded as accurate: the casualties of wounded are only approximately correct as there are no records of officers and men who were wounded and remained at duty or who were wounded and remained in France. It reveals more strikingly than words can express what a terrible toll was taken of our brave county regiment. Total killed and wounded, 160 officers and 3,765 men: strength at embarkation 965; number who enlisted during the war 4,076. Truly, the 6th Seaforth Highlanders were not spared. They were a real “fighting regiment” that will live in history as a leading unit of those famous Storm-troops of the 51st. These figures make us marvel, not so much at the casualties, as at the few who escaped death or wounds. It will be noticed that on two different occasions, at Arras and during the final advance, about one-half of the ordinary strength of the battalion was killed or wounded:

So far, I have confined this historical narrative to the 6th Seaforths, representing as they did, almost the only evidence of militarism in modern Moray since the early days of volunteering down to the present time. Throughout all those peaceful years of indifference and often derision this county battalion in its various phases has been the nucleus that kept alive whatever interest survived in military training, and fostered that ancient spirit of our forefathers which, when the dread hour came, “stirred our patriot embers into flame of ardent glow.”

What of the men of the Seaforth line?—they never yet said “Nay” — Worthy the Clan whose name they bear, and its slogan “Caber-feidh” — They always stood when called to stand: they ne'er refused to go Where hell-fire raged, and bayonets gleamed, to meet the deadly foe.

But this Roll of Honour is a record of the activities of Moray men in every field of service, and a glance at the biographical details will show the great variety of channels through which natives of the county served their King and Country in the Great War. Moray has always been a prolific nursery for emigration and her sons came flocking to the standard from all parts of the world. They and their descendants fought in the ranks of the brave Canadians, the brilliant Australians, and the steadfast New Zealanders, and many gave up lucrative positions in foreign lands to join the home forces. There are few Morayshire families that have not got relatives in Canada, and often while reading of the heroic exploits of the Canadian forces did our hearts swell with pride, knowing full well that they were to a large extent the boys of our Scottish race fighting under another banner. Nor can we forget the noble parts played by our sturdy and gallant fishermen of the Moray Firth. They preferred to keep to their natural element, the sea, and their services in the Fleet, in the Royal Naval Reserve, and as mine-sweepers were grand and glorious. It seems incongruous somehow to think of fishermen as kilted Highlanders, but, when men were wanted, some of them had to join the Seaforths. They did not altogether relish so much marching, but in time they became excellent soldiers of the line and it will not be forgotten that one of the Morayshire V.C.'s and a brilliant D.S.O. came from the coast town of Lossiemouth.

As before mentioned, the local Squadron of the Scottish Horse assembled at Elgin on the outbreak of war to prepare for proceeding to their station. For some years previously this mounted Corps had gone into camp in Perthshire for their annual training under the Marquis of Tullibardine. They were a fit, active body of yeomanry, many of them farmers' sons and well accustomed to horses. It was no light task to equip the squadron on such short notice, and the best light horses in the county and neighbourhood were requisitioned for that purpose. In a short time, however, they were able to depart to Scone and proceeded afterwards to York and other places in England to undergo training. But it was early seen that mounted troops were not to play a prominent part in this War, and greatly to their disappointment the Scottish Horse had to part with their horses in August, 1915, and were packed off with their saddles to Egypt and the Gallipoli Peninsula, where they served as a Brigade of three regiments under the command of Brigadier Lord Tullibardine. In Gallipoli they took part in several engagements, and the Scottish Horse was the last Brigade to leave Suvla Bay. The Moray Squadron numbered 120 to 130 all told when they went to Gallipoli but when they left for Egypt in December, 1915, the number had been reduced to between twenty and thirty officers and men. After a short rest at Alexandria they were transferred to Cairo for three months and afterwards to the Suez Canal Defence, where they were stationed about six months. While there they were incorporated with an Infantry Battalion, the 13th Black Watch, with permission to wear the Atholl bonnet and Scottish Horse numerals. After a short period of infantry training they were despatched to Salonica where they remained from March, 1918, until their removal to France when they formed part of the 50th Division under the command of General Jackson. During the final push and advance, the Battalion took part in the stiffest engagements, including the taking of Le-Cateau in which they suffered great loss. But this was recognised as such a fine performance that it is well to record the high praise they received from that great fighting Corps Commander, Lord Rawlinson, in the following personal note to their leader, Tullibardine, now Duke of Atholl:—

“Yesterday I had occasion to visit your splendid Battalion of Scottish Horse, ‘13th Royal Highlanders,’ in the 50th Division in order to compliment them on their fine attack and capture of Le-Cateau station on the 18th inst. They were looking magnificent and I was glad to hear that a draft was on its way to join them so as to replace their losses.

“The attack of the station was a very fine performance and less determined troops would hardly have succeeded. I went over the ground myself the other day and so struck was I with the strength of the hostile position and the great gallantry displayed by the Scottish Horse in the capture of it, that I went personally to the Battalion to thank them, for they deserved it. I cannot often find time to do this, but Scotland has done so much towards winning this War that I always do what I can to show them how much we appreciate their services.”

The fact that the highest percentage of voluntary enlistments early in the war, was credited to the North of Scotland, is due I have claimed, to the antecedents and fighting instincts of the race. It is to the undying honour of Morayshire that in 1914, with a battalion of infantry over 1,000 strong and a squadron of yeomanry of 140, it



furnished, as was freely mentioned at the time more men for the local forces in proportion to its population than any other county in Great Britain. We can make a further claim which, substantiated by figures, proves that the sons of Moray were heroes in the fight. The number of decorations awarded to Morayshire greatly exceeds the average for the United Kingdom. I am indebted to Mr. John B. Mair, M.V.O., O.B.E., Chief Constable of the County, for the following list of decorations awarded to Morayshire men and women, which he has compiled from the returns :—

Victoria Cross

2

Distinguished Service Order

14

Bar to D.S.O.

1

Military Cross . . . . .

60

Bar to M.C.

8

D.C.M. and D.S.M.

69

Bar to D.C.M.

3

Military Medal

209

Bar to M.M.

21

Foreign Decorations

37

O.B.E.

3

M.B.E.

Mentioned in Despatches (from 1 to 5 times)

125

Distinguished Flying Medal

1

Mons and Gallipoli Stars

181 & 736

It would be a fascinating task to record instances of personal heroism that would live in the minds of future generations. But the policy of secrecy pursued in the Great War was responsible for hiding such incidents from public knowledge, and it would be invidious to attempt to lift that veil even though we could appraise the relative distinction of the many deeds of bravery. It has been written, "The world knows nothing of its greatest men," and the same may be said of our brave soldiers. Those who received decorations do not comprise all "the heroes of the fight." Many men, equally deserving, have been left unrecognised because their daring deeds were not made known, or their claims not put forward by superior officers. It is well that the public should understand this, and in perusing this Roll of Honour, think of the soldiers of our county as one undivided unit of devotion to duty, where the honour of one is the glory of all.

But we must not fail to mention the outstanding fact which all Moray men will regard with pride that two natives of the county were awarded the greatest military distinction of all — the Victoria Cross, and a third was recommended for the same honour but got the D.S.O. instead. It is fitting that their photographs appear in the Roll of Honour. Alas! they have paid the penalty, but the record of their fearless bravery will endure.

Sergeant Alexander Edwards was the son of a Lossiemouth fisherman. He joined the regiment of his native county, the 6th Seaforths, on 1st September, 1914, and after training, proved himself a most capable soldier, always ready to volunteer for any dangerous work and to carry it through with cool judgment. He won the V.C. by a deed described as of "most conspicuous bravery in attack, when having located a hostile machine gun in a wood, he, with great dash and courage, led some men against it, killed all the team, and captured the gun. Later, though wounded, he crawled out, and killed, single-handed, a sniper who was causing casualties. Again, when only one officer was left, he led forth his company regardless of his wound and captured an objective of great importance." Truly, Edwards was a sterling soldier — brave as a lion. Not once but repeatedly did he go forth to take the greatest risk and it is officially stated "although twice wounded on the following day this very gallant N.C.O. maintained throughout, a complete disregard for personal safety and his high example of coolness and determination engendered a fine fighting spirit in his men."

Sergeant Edwards was publicly presented with a gold watch and a purse with War Bonds by the inhabitants of his native Lossiemouth on 4th October, 1917. He returned to France, and was reported wounded and missing after 25th March, 1918.

The other V.C. winner was Corporal William Anderson, a native of Dallas, whose parents once resided at Forres. He had served seven years in the Army in Egypt and India and when war broke out was called up as a Reservist, attached to the 2nd Battalion (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own) Yorkshire Regiment. A glance at his photograph will reveal an exceptionally fine-looking young man with clear-cut features and fearless eyes—a bright, alert personality. This is borne out by the decisive action which won him the V.C. He was awarded the coveted trophy for most conspicuous bravery at the great battle of Neuve Chapelle on 12th March, 1915, when

he "led" three men with bombs against a large party of the enemy who had entered our trenches, and by his prompt and determined action saved, what might otherwise have become, a serious situation. Corporal Anderson first threw his own bombs, then those in possession of his three men (who had been wounded) amongst the Germans, after which he opened rapid rifle fire upon them with great effect, notwithstanding that he was at the time quite alone." Truly a lion-hearted Moray man of whom we should all feel proud — this true Scotsman, so prompt in action and resource, so exciting the admiration of the English regiment to which he was attached, that he was thought worthy of being entered on the inner Roll of Heroes even after his death. The V.C. was a posthumous award, for after Neuve Chapelle he was reported wounded and missing, and though his relatives hoped he had been taken prisoner and might return, that hope has not been realised.

Another incident should be mentioned, because it was announced in mostly all newspapers at the time as one of the most singular instances of courage and coolness that had been known in the War. It was not then stated who was the hero of this episode, but afterwards it became known that the young officer was a Morayshire man and a native of Lossiemouth — Lieut. George E. Edwards of the 6th Seaforths. This officer was awarded the D.S.O. on 13th February, 1917, for "conspicuous gallantry in action." Accompanied by a few men he advanced through our barrage and held the entrance of a cave in which there were about 400 Germans. With rare effrontery and courage he called in a loud voice for their instant surrender, and the enemy, thinking he was well-supported, regarded themselves as his prisoners. But after a little while it became evident to the German officers that this young fellow was acting on his own account and had no supports, so they turned the tables upon him and suggested that he should become their prisoner instead! So Edwards seeing no help near was compelled to surrender to them. Later on, however, supports appeared when the tables were turned again and Lieut. Edwards secured his prisoners and he himself proudly marched twelve of them, including their Battalion Commander, back to Battalion Headquarters. This cool and daring action reads like a page of romantic history and well might the official notice state "he set a splendid example of courage and determination throughout." Lieut. Edwards had enlisted early in the war as a private but his fine military qualities soon won recognition and in March, 1916, he received a Commission on the field. He performed other acts of valour and was mentioned in Sir Douglas Haig's despatch of 9th April, 1917, but was subsequently killed. Lieut.-Col. Graham, M.C., who was for some time in command of the 6th Seaforths at a meeting of the Moray and Banffshire Society in Glasgow, has paid a high tribute to the memory of this brave man. He said that "but for the bravery of Lieut. G. E. Edwards, Lossiemouth, the 51st Division would probably have failed in November, 1916, to take Beaumont Hamel. In the whole of the records of the late war, where acts of great bravery were so common, he did not believe there was a braver action than that of the late Lieut. Edwards. He had been recommended for the Victoria Cross, but for some reason unknown to him the lesser honour of the D.S.O. was all that was conferred, an honour which he regretted to say that brave officer did not live to enjoy."

So, those three heroic men responsible for such outstanding feats of bravery, laid down their lives for their country, but their memory will be enshrined in this Roll of Honour, as it will be in the hearts of all true men of Moray throughout the rolling years.

It is desirable to place on record the means by which this volume has been compiled. At a meeting of Representatives appointed by the County Council of Morayshire and the Town Councils of the Burghs within the County, held at Elgin on 25th November, 1918, it was resolved to prepare a Roll of Honour for Morayshire "so that future generations might know the part that the County had borne in the War." A circular asking for personal details was issued, signed by the Convener of the County, Mr. G. R. Mackessack, and the County Clerk, Mr. E. D. Jameson, and it was arranged:—

That the proposed Roll of Honour should not supersede in any way or interfere with County, Parish, or other Memorials.

That the Roll of Honour should be as comprehensive as possible, and should include:—

(a) Persons born in Morayshire, whether enlisted through a local, imperial, or colonial Force.

(b) Persons born elsewhere, but who had settled in Morayshire prior to the outbreak of the War, or prior to their joining up.

(c) Persons who at any time were long connected with the County, but had since left the County and enlisted elsewhere.

That the Roll of Honour should consist essentially of all persons who had trained for service and gone abroad, including Labour Battalions and Nurses — special cases to be specially dealt with — but that a Supplementary List might be made up of those with approved service at home, including V.A.D. Nurses, but excluding Volunteers and National Guards.

It was resolved to ask Mr. John B. Mair, Chief Constable, with the aid of the Constabulary and Special Constables, to collect the necessary particulars. Mr. Mair in a letter to his officers throughout the county said he “considered it an honour to be entrusted with this work” and hoped that each member of the force would give his time and attention to make this Roll of Honour as complete as possible. Officers in charge of stations were required to divide their beats into small sub-areas and by the co-operation of special constables arrange for the delivery and collection of the forms. These were filled in and returned by the end of February, 1919. By this organisation all the households of the county have been reached and the details verified by officers on the spot. Mr. Mair carried through the work with rare enthusiasm and devotion to detail, and it has been a labour of love to him and his assistants to endeavour to make the returns complete, for the honour of the County. It is with pleasure that I put on record the services that Mr. Mair has given so willingly to the compilation of this Roll. Some omissions may unwittingly have been made, and it has been difficult to get at others whose friends have left the county, but the precaution was taken to send proofs of the Roll to lie in each burgh and parish for examination by anyone interested, so that residents of the county must blame themselves if any of their friends have suffered through error or omission. In all, more than 7,500 forms have been dealt with, and it has been no light task to edit the information they conveyed and put it into concise and consecutive order as a brief biography of each person, alphabetically arranged. To produce such a large and unique volume at the nominal price charged for it was impossible. But appeals were made to the public and subscription lists opened throughout the county which met with a liberal response. This has enabled the Committee to achieve their aim and offer the Roll of Honour at such a price, that no family, however poor, may be unable to obtain a copy.

Our brave boys of Moray though reared in peace, did not flinch when the dread call of duty came. They went forth to battle, like tried warriors, proud of the race they sprang from, determined to uphold its traditions, anxious to live for home and country but ready to die, standing shoulder to shoulder in support of one ideal, without distinction of birth or station. “Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just,” and it cannot be doubted that this firm conviction buoyed up many a faltering spirit in the face of danger and of death. We try to analyse the feelings of the living: we are apt to overlook the thoughts of the dying. We may surmise, but little do we know the feelings and the agonies of many a poor fellow as he lay wounded on a foreign battle-field, far from home and kin — many a devoted mother’s son, of whom the only legend that remains is a little wooden cross “Somewhere in France.” But his fellows who saw their comrades fall must have known something of all this. Yet they never gave in. They developed a cool, imperturbable spirit that did not pale before a probable fate. A distinguished General recently said “Forty-eight hours ago I was motoring across the Somme battlefield when I saw an old post lying at the foot of a trench. Everything else in that shattered region had disappeared but the inscription it bore strangely enough survived — ‘All pessimists will be shot.’ It was this spirit of cheerful devotion and confidence that made it possible for our countrymen to face every trial, and emerge victorious in the end. And as they fought side by side on the field of battle, what could be more fitting than that their names should stand side by side without precedence of rank or position — the living and the dead — in the Roll of Honour? There are other local Memorials—monuments of stone erected in public places — testimonies of our county’s gratitude — but I venture to say that no memorial will be more prized than this Roll of Honour, which brings a personal touch within the homes of the County that could not be so well supplied by any other means. It is the practical outcome of an excellent idea that does credit to those who conceived it. We all remember the familiar

device which did service so often during the period of enlistment. It represented the little boy in after years asking of his father, "And what did you do, Daddie, in the Great War?" The answer is here supplied. Each man who responded to his country's call can simply point to his name in the Morayshire Roll of Honour—a silent yet eloquent testimony to his own and his children's children.

Grateful Moray! Grateful Moray!  
Can you e'er forget their deeds?

No — we never shall forget them — the men who fought and won —  
As soon expect that mother's heart could e'er forget her son!  
The heroes died that we might live—and we live in Freedom's name  
To crown them with the laurel leaves of their immortal fame;  
Their names inscribed on Honour's Roll, these pages now adorn,  
They shall be read with pride by kin, and generations yet unborn!

Nether Birnie, near Elgin, 1921.  
William J. McKenzie.

You can read the whole book at:  
<https://electricScotland.com/history/moray/morayshirerollof1921mora.pdf>

END.

Weekend is almost here and hope it's a good one for you.

Alastair

PS Our newsletter archives can always be found at:  
<https://electricScotland.com/newsletter/index.htm>