



Fort Fraser Despatches, December 2016

The 78th spent Christmas of 1757 in Connecticut.



"pride in the heritage"



A bit of a refresher....

The aims of the modern 78th Fraser Highlanders are:

1. To preserve the memory of the Fraser Highlanders, their commanders, comrades-in-arms and their adversaries.
2. To research and support research on the British Army of the 18th century, especially Scottish regiments in foreign service and particularly the 78th Highland Regiment; their traditions, tactics, equipment, social and political backgrounds, etc.
3. To bring this information to life through the activities of Drill Companies throughout its garrisons, and through other activities of the garrison officers, such as at Highland Games, Tattoos, etc.
4. To foster in all members:
 - a) a sense of pride in the unit and of its traditions
 - b) a strong sense of honour, co-operation, good manners and discipline.
 - c) respect for the courage, military traditions and history of the French troops which fought the Frasers with valour and helped form the military traditions of North America.
5. To recruit Officers and Volunteer Sergeants in the Garrisons to take an active part in the life of the Regiment; financially, socially, and in historical study. Also to activate, where and when conditions are suitable, drill companies favouring youth.
6. To draw into association with the regimental family descendants of the original Fraser Highlanders.
7. To foster in all ranks of the Regiment a desire to serve their country and society in a manner befitting the courage and dedication of the men of the original Regiment.
8. To actively support the endeavours of our Armed Forces, whether Regular or Militia, and specifically, within the area of Garrison or Outpost influence, work toward the establishment and maintenance of a harmonious relationship between the military and the local community.



And...(excerpt from RHQ Members Handbook, 2006)

Dinners:

For centuries formal dinners have been a part of Officers' lives as a form of entertaining diplomats, Officers from other armies (sometimes even the enemy) and from other Regiments.

Dinners, as we know them now, follow a protocol which ensures that guests and officers feel comfortable, without too many surprises.

RSVP Courtesy:

Due to the fact that commitments of numbers to the caterer, ordering the number of meals and creating the seating plan are done well in advance of an event, Officers are expected to give sufficient notice concerning attendance.

Once a commitment is made, failure to cancel a reservation at least 48 hours in advance may still require payment.

There is no guarantee of a place to sit for reservations received after the PMC's register cut-off date for the event.

Mess Dinner:

Unless otherwise specified this is a formal Regimental dinner.

Traditionally this was a male Officer only event (i.e. no ladies) and follows the strictest protocol; today, female Officers and Regimental Ladies are welcomed to dinners.

It was rather a show-off event where the best silver, dinner service, trophies, etc. were displayed as well as the civility of all the Officers.

- Dress is formal, kilts or trews, black tie or business suits
- On arrival guests check the seating plan and assemble for drinks
- 15 minute call is played by Piper, ***a cue to finish drinks***
- Guests stand behind their seats until the head table arrives and the Grace is said
- guests will not leave their seat, for any reason, before the toast to the Queen, unless permission is received from the PMC.
- Port will be passed before the toasts. It is passed right to left and all should pour their own. It is not served across the table. (Some army messes have a tradition that it does not touch the table. 78th RHQ and the Black Watch follow neither, Garrisons may opt for either.)
- The PMC will stand and say "Mr. Vice, The Queen" and then say "Piper on parade" The Vice-PMC will stand and say "Ladies and Gentlemen, The Queen", all will stand, whereupon a few bars of the Royal anthem are played. then all repeat "The Queen" and drink the toast. A similar procedure precedes the Toast to the Regiment, etc.
- The PMC may ask the OC to say a few words, or make a short announcement before he adjourns the dinner.

(the Members Handbook is available upon request)

A Christmas Mess:

A commemoration of Scotland's patron saint combined with a garrison Christmas event. While the Feast of Saint Andrew is literally a religious designation, Fort Fraser has traditionally held a dinner in the mess and named it so.

This event is as much a "party" as a mess dinner, so the PMC relaxes mess protocol to a degree, and regimental Scarlets are not required dress. "Highland Evening Wear" is suggested, so we see Prince Charlie and Argyle jackets and the Kilt in great array. A Christmas decor is in evidence, and it is a Fort Fraser tradition that diners bring donations of food and toys for those less fortunate than we.

Proceeds from the evening's raffle are donated to the Union Gospel Mission to help feed their many "patrons".

In 2006, the Scottish Parliament passed the St. Andrew's Day Bank Holiday (Scotland) Act 2007 which designated the Day as an official bank holiday. If 30 November falls on a weekend, the next Monday is a bank holiday instead. Although it is a bank holiday, banks are not required to close and employers are not required to give their employees the day off as a holiday.

The University of St Andrews traditionally gives the day for all the students as a free holiday, but this is not a binding rule.

St Andrew's Day is an official flag day in Scotland. The Scottish Government's flag-flying regulations state that the Flag of Scotland (the Saltire or Saint Andrew's Cross) shall fly on all its buildings with a flagpole. Prior to 2002, the Scottish Government followed the UK Government's flag days and would only fly the Union Flag on St Andrew's Day. The regulations were updated to state that the Union Flag would be removed and replaced by the Saltire on buildings with only one flagpole

The flying of the Union Flag from Edinburgh Castle on all days, including St Andrew's Day causes anger among some Scottish National Party politicians who have argued that the Saltire should fly on 30 November instead.

However, the Union Flag is flown by the British Army at the Castle as it is an official British Army flag flying station.



The Battle of Ticonderoga: (Fort Carillon)

Dated at 08 July, 1758, a month after Amherst's force succeeded at Louisbourg, Maj. General James Abercromby attempted to take the French Fort Carillon on the tip of the Ticonderoga peninsula at the head of Lake Champlain.

The result was vastly different and resulted in "Britain's greatest humiliation of the war".

Abercromby presided over "the most formidable army yet seen in America", over 12,000 Regulars and Provincials, while Montcalm reported a force of "forty men of La Marine, thirty-six Canadians ready to go to war, and fourteen Indians".

Lord Howe, Pitt's choice as the expedition's 2IC, when in charge of an advance element was killed by a sniper in an action approaching the fort. "Granny" Abercromby, as he was known in the ranks, dithered and delayed afterward, and gave the French an opportunity to prepare, and on the morning of 08 July, Montcalm had mustered 3500 men, and the fort had been strengthened with impenetrable abatis. It would be up to Abercromby's plentiful artillery to clear the way – alas, he chose to leave the guns behind and after further delay ordered an infantry assault.

It was repulsed with the loss of nearly 2000 British soldiers.

The result is revealed in a report to Pitt; *"It was therefore judged necessary for the preservation of the remainder of so many brave men, and not to run the risk of the enemy's penetrating into His Majesty's dominions, which might have been the case if a total defeat had ensued, that we should make the best retreat possible"*.

By dawn on 09 July, "the largest English army ever assembled in America" was rowing for its life up Lake George, fearful of an enemy a quarter its size, which was not in pursuit!



Looking ahead:

- 26 Nov. – Feast of St. Andrew Mess
- 25 December – Merry Christmas!
- 20 January – USA Inauguration Day
- 28 January – Garrison Burns Supper



Be kind to one another – Santa is watching!



