**Cameronian Day – 14th May 1689**

Today, we commemorate the birth and distinguished service of Scotland’s only Rifle Regiment, The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles).

On 14th May 1689 in the turbulent times of the Covenanters, volunteers formed this Regiment under the Earl of Angus of the great house of Douglas in order to fight for religious freedom in the Lowlands. The regiment was placed in the service of King William III and on 21st August took part in the defeat of Dundee's Jacobite forces at the Battle of Dunkeld, a turning point in Dundee's Jacobite rising of that year.

The Regiment became the 26th of Foot and won many battle honours, including participating in the Duke of Marlborough’s victories of Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde and Malplaquet, the Napoleonic Wars at Egypt (1801) and Corunna (1809), then China (1840 – 2) and Abyssinia (1868).

In 1881, the Regiment was amalgamated with another fine Scottish Regiment, the 90th of Foot, The Perthshire Light Infantry, who had won honours in the Middle East at Mandora and Egypt (1801), in the West Indies at Martinique (1809) , Guadeloupe (1810), in the Crimean War at Sevastopol (1854-55), during the Indian Mutiny at Lucknow (1857) and twice in South Africa (1846 – 47) and (1877-79).

Two Regular, four Territorial Army (TA) and twelve War Service battalions served in both World Wars with distinction. 19 members of the Regiment earned Victoria Crosses for their acts of gallantry and, at one time, the Regiment had 13 serving generals.

On 14th May 1968, the last remaining Regular Battalion was disbanded at the place of its raising in a field outside the village of Douglas, where a memorial to the Regiment now stands. The King’s Own Scottish Borderers took over their traditional recruiting area of Lanarkshire, welcoming many Cameronians into their ranks.

The Cameronians had two distinct traditions, which emphasised their religious origins. The first was that all recruits on joining the Regiment were issued with a bible, which they were expected to read, learn and inwardly digest. Secondly, they were the only Regiment in the British Army allowed to attend Church Parade with weapons by their side and would post picquets (sentries) around all four points of the compass before the piquet officer reported all clear and their “Conventicle” could begin. This was in remembrance of the days when the early Covenanters had been forced to hold their religious meetings in secret for fear of being arrested or killed. The Cameronians took their name from Richard Cameron, a 17th century leader of militant Presbyterians, known as Covenanters, who resisted attempts by the Stuart monarchs to control the affairs of the Church of Scotland, acting through bishops.

Two TA Companies continued the tradition of holding the Conventicle at Douglas right up until the 1990’s, when they were disbanded.

The Collection of the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) can be found in the Low Parks Museum, Hamilton in Lanarkshire.

Today, the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland (The Royal Scots Borderers) wear the black hackle in their Tam-o-Shanter to commemorate this distinguished Scottish Regiment.

**Sources:**

KOSB Part One Orders notice

<http://www.cameronians.org>

Wikipedia

 

 