**MINDEN DAY 2020**

As President of The King’s Own Scottish Borderers Association, it is my great pleasure to send you all my warmest greetings on Minden Day 2020, which marks the 261st anniversary of the momentous battle in 1759, which saw the conclusion of the Seven Years’ War. The full Minden Address, with its account of this decisive battle where the British Infantry – the 25th of Foot amongst them – won immortal glory, can be found elsewhere on the website.

Minden Day 2020 is, of course, not as we hoped. It is extremely disappointing that, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions, we cannot all gather as we traditionally do in the Barracks at Berwick upon Tweed to commemorate and celebrate our Regimental Day in the normal style. It is particularly so this year, as we were due to be on parade on 1st August for the first time for several years. However, thanks to the imagination and initiative of members of the Association, small groups will be gathering on the day, appropriately dressed and appropriately ‘distanced’, with a rose in their glengarries, to mark the events of 1759. I am extremely grateful to everyone for their forbearance with the current situation, and their collective determination not to let the day slip by without proper note. I am delighted that our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, has once again sent us her Minden Greetings, which can be read on the website. I take this opportunity to wish her, on all our behalfs, a very happy 70th birthday - which falls on 15th August, which happens also to be VJ Day.

I would usually take this opportunity to briefly update everyone present on current Association issues, so I will try to do so as best I can through the written word.

2020 has been notable for a number of reasons. It has, most importantly, seen the 75th anniversary of VE Day, when our 1st, 4th, 5th and 6th Battalions were in Europe having played a full part in bringing the war to its conclusion on the continent. And, shortly after Minden day, the same anniversary will occur for VJ Day, and we will remember the 2nd Battalion, who had fought so gallantly in the Burma campaign. It was a great shame that it has not been possible to mark these historic events in the manner in which was intended, but this does not diminish either their importance or the bravery and commitment of all those Borderers who fought in all the campaigns of that global conflict, and of their families.

2020 also sees the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War - of which more next year when we note the anniversary of the 1st Battalion’s deployment to that conflict – and, closer to home in both time and space, the 50th anniversary of the 1st Battalion’s first deployment to Northern Ireland on Op BANNER. We hope very much to mark this with the unveiling of a memorial stone in the Garden of Remembrance in Palace Barracks, Holywood, in September; this stone will commemorate all those Borderers who fell while serving in the Province over the period 1970 – 2006, and it is fitting that we should install and dedicate it this year.

Time takes its toll too, and we have, as always, said a sad farewell to several Borderers over the year; I will not attempt to list them all, but I will highlight Peter Hogg, Barney Henderson, Donald Fairgrieve and Paddy Dickson; we remember them, and all Borderers who we have lost this year, with pride and affection. The tireless work of Donald in the Keep Our Scottish Battalions movement in the early 1990s, which ensured the 1st Battalion’s survival from planned cuts, is of particular note, while he was an equally tireless volunteer for many years in the museum.

2020 has also seen the retirement of our Museum Assistant, Ian Martin, after many years’ service. Ian has been a stalwart of our staff, and has seen many changes in the RHQ and HHQ team in his tenure. He maintained and improved the museum and its displays, ensuring that our unrivalled collection is shown to best effect, and he has been at the forefront of developing our research capacity, and many families have benefited from his encyclopaedic knowledge of our regimental history and the archive to find out more about the service of their fathers, grandfathers and other relatives. We wish him all the best in his well-earned retirement, and look forward to continuing our relationship into the future.

Talking of futures, work – inevitably constrained and delayed by Covid 19 – continues to examine the future of The Barracks and our place in it, and I will update the Association as and when there is something substantive to report. I hope to be able to do so at our AGM, scheduled to be held on Berwick on Saturday 17 October, but this may be subject to guidelines from the Government; we will keep this under close review.

The Association – your Association – is in good health and good hands, and I pay tribute to the Trustees, the Branches, Major Lance Thornton in the Association HQ, our loyal volunteers, and all who keep it functioning so smoothly for the benefit of our members and all those passionate about our Regiment and our heritage. I urge you all to continue to support what we do in every way possible, be it attending events, paying your subscription, volunteering at the museum, or just staying in touch through our website or other social media. We are all immensely proud of our Regiment and its 331 years, and are equally proud to proclaim:

‘Once a Borderer, Always a Borderer’!

A happy Minden Day to you all. Wear your rose with pride wherever you are, and send us a photo! I look forward to welcoming you all to The Barracks for Minden Day 2021.

Colonel Angus Loudon MBE OStJ

President