



## Fort Fraser Despatches, June 2017

*“pride in the heritage”*



### **The 78th Highland Regiment**

Raised in Inverness-shire in January 1757 by Hon. Simon Fraser, Master of Lovat

82 Officers, 65 Sergeants

30 Pipers and Drummers

1365 Other Ranks

distinguished in action at:

**SEIGE of LOUISBOURG, June - July 1758**

**BATTLES for QUEBEC Sept. 1759 - August 1760**

**CAPTURE of MONTREAL September 1760**

**BATTLE for ST. JOHN'S, September 1761**

quartered in Québec and Nova Scotia, 1759 - 63

**Disbanded in Canada December, 1763**

Re-raised in Montreal in 1966 as

**The 78th Fraser Highlanders**

Clan Motto “Je Suis Prest” (Fraser of Lovat)

Pipes: “Lord Lovat’s Lament”

## Lord Lovat's No. 4 Commando, 1940-45:

After the disaster (or miracle) of Dunkirk in 1940, a number of independent companies were formed from volunteers. These were intended primarily for guerrilla attacks on the Germans in Norway, but were also used in minor amphibious operations and raids.



All who joined the Commandos were volunteers from almost every regiment and corps of the British Army. To be selected, they had to be extremely fit and capable of accepting the strictest discipline and have great mental and physical determination.

The Commando leaders were selected by the War Office and a call went out to all units in Britain for volunteers who had to meet very high standards of training, intelligence and aggressiveness. The Commando leaders were allowed to select their own Officers and men from the pool of volunteers. Each Commando unit consisted of a lieutenant colonel, a major, 10 captains, 24 lieutenants, two warrant officers, 81 corporals, 22 lance corporals and 250 private soldiers.

No. 4 Commando measured up to Winston Churchill's description of having "the canine virtues of vigilance, fidelity, courage and the love of the chase." They wore the normal battle dress and trousers with modifications for their varied tasks, such as special boots and the Wilkinson dagger. They all wore the green beret, but there was no Commando cap badge; each man wore the badge of his parent unit.



Lieutenant Colonel Lord Lovat was appointed to command No. 4 Commando and immediately set to work to raise this unit and set the very highest standard of training. As 24th Chief of Clan Fraser of Lovat who had had service in the Scots Guards and the Lovat Scouts, he had every virtue for leadership, discipline and training.

## Lovat's No.4 Commando at Dieppe:

On 19 August 1942, the following communiqué was heard, transmitted by the BBC at 0700 hours: *“a raid was launched in the early hours of today on the Dieppe area of enemy occupied France. This raid required assault landings at five different places on the coast:*

a) The large Hess battery at Varengeville by No. 4 Commando, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lord Lovat

(b) At Pourville the South Saskatchewan Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel C.C.I. Mewitt

(c) At Puy the Royal Regiment of Canada, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel D.E. Catto

(d) The Battery at Berneval by No. 3 Commando, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel J.F. Durnford Slater

(e) The main attack, half an hour later by the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (Lieutenant Colonel R. R. Labatt); the Essex Scottish (Lieutenant Colonel F. K. Jasperson); 14th Canadian Army Tank Regiment (Lieutenant Colonel J. G. Andrews); all in the first wave of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division assault on the port of Dieppe.

Without the destruction of the batteries at Varengeville and at Berneval, the main raid would have been almost impossible. Lord Lovat's No. 4 Commando assault, on the extreme right flank went precisely according to plan; landing on "Orange I" Beach at Varengeville and "Orange H" beach near Quiberville. It was a classic example of the use of well trained infantrymen, fire and movement, the killing power of infantry weapons in the attack, thoroughness in training, planning and execution.

It was an episode in a major raid in which the brunt of the fighting was borne by the Canadian forces.

Waterloo is said to have been won on the playing fields of Eton; it is certainly true to say that this operation of Lord Lovat's Commando was won on the training fields of Scotland.



**Commando Monument at Spean bridge, Scotland**



"The Founders":



Master  
Lovat



Brigadier Simon Fraser Lord Lovat

General the Hon. Simon Fraser  
of  
(1757)



Col. J. Ralph Harper

Pictured above are the men responsible for The 78th Fraser Highlanders. In her preface to the Second Edition of Col. Harper's book, "The Fraser "Highlanders", Hon. Col. Mrs. Liliane Stewart reminded us of "the prime objective established by these three leaders; **that of passing onto our youth this important page of history and respect for our common military heritage.**"

And Col. Harper instructed "now that the 78th Fraser Highlanders have been reborn, it is up to them to maintain the discipline and reputation of their forefathers."

*Let us then reassert Fort Fraser's energies to honour these instructions!*

*"Je Suis Prest"*



The Fort Fraser Scotland Tour, 03 - 17 June:



**07 June – our Fort Fraser tour at Sir John A's cairn at Rogart, about 10 miles NE of Beaulieu.  
We toasted with a wee dram and a lusty version of O' Canada**



**The cairn is built of stones from Sir John's grandparents' cottage.**

Outstanding luncheon at The Lovat Arms Hotel, Beaulieu, where a rare mounted set of 78<sup>th</sup> medals was presented for Lord Lovat. William “Willy” Fraser received the medals on Lord Lovat’s behalf.

The limited edition medals were a gift from Capt. Don Cochrane, a long serving member of Fort Fraser and Fort Victoria.

What a treat it was to again meet with Ann Fraser and chat about previous visits. Anne has photo albums showing our 1997 parade in Beaulieu led by the late Lt. Col Bernie Finestone and the venerable Lt. Col Ochill Stewart.



THE BATTLE  
OF CULLODEN  
WAS FOUGHT ON THIS MOOR  
16<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 1746.  
THE GRAVES OF THE  
GALLANT HIGHLANDERS  
WHO FOUGHT FOR  
SCOTLAND & PRINCE CHARLIE,  
ARE MARKED BY THE NAMES  
OF THEIR CLANS.

We toured the Culloden Battlefield site and visited Fort George – both important and memorable places.

The tour wound through the Highlands from a night in Stirling, another in Pitlochry and Blair Castle where we met the Atholl Highlanders archivist and viewed their exhibits; a most pleasant visit at the Edradour distillery, shopping at the House of Bruar, and on to 3 nights in Inverness.



**At Blair Castle, home to Atholl Highlanders**

Then overnight at Fort William and Glenfinnan.



**Prince Charles' landing place at Glenfinnan on Loch Shiel**

And on to a lunch stop in Oban and a visit to the Glen Coe centre, quick stop at Luss on the bonny bonny banks o' Loch Lomond, thence to 3 nights in Edinburgh and 4 nights in Glasgow.

We organised the trip through Nigel Cole at **CatsWhiskers Tours in Glasgow** - [www.catswhiskerstours.co.uk](http://www.catswhiskerstours.co.uk) - we highly recommend their services – our tour went without a hitch.

At Wardlaw near Beaulieu, officials are 99% certain the crypt contains the remains of the 11<sup>th</sup> Lord Lovat – the Old Fox.

Ever curious, Fort Fraser's grave experts opened the vault to investigate:



At this point your author rapidly departed the scene .....

Truly a Grand Tour, thoroughly enjoyed by all 24 participants.



**Fort Fraser Garrison  
Vancouver, BC**