

Stirling Observer 10th June 1908

The Passing of the Stirling Volunteer Artillery

Last Social Function

What was probably the last parade of the Stirling Company of the 1st Fife Royal Garrison Artillery (Volunteers) took place on Saturday last. Orders having been received from headquarters that all clothing and equipment were to be returned to store, it was resolved to have a farewell supper in the Golden Lion Hotel.

This company has always played a prominent part in volunteering in Stirling, and much regret has been expressed that no place could be found for it in Mr. Haldane's Army scheme, at least as artillery. We understand, however, that there is a prospect of the Company being asked to form a Transport Company of the Army Service Corps.

The Artillery Company was originally formed in 1860, and was first entirely composed of railwaymen. The late Provost Murrie was the first captain, the lieutenants were Mr. Ash, station master, and Mr. Mackie, farmer.

The first sergt.-major was Mr. Holms, late locomotive superintendent N.B.R. The Company was then called 2nd Stirlingshire Artillery, and for some time drilled at the Railway Station with a wooden gun, which was made by the men themselves in the railway workshop, and which is still in the Butter Market.

The first inspection took place at Stirling Station on September 21, 1860, when the men were highly complimented by the inspecting officer. The first gun practice was fired at Grangemouth in October, 1861, with an old muzzle-loading 32 pounder.

The Company in these days elected their own N.C.O.'s and we find in July, 1861 they met and elected Sergeants Simpson, Sampson, Wilkinson, and McCulloch: Corporals Campbell, Dunn, [Dun] Mathie and Bell: and Bombadiers Young, Cameron, Veitch, and Lees.

The last named is the only man of the original members left in the town and was present on Saturday, hale and hearty. He was for many years Battery Sergt.-Major, and was at the 1860 and 1881 Reviews, and at the last Review as a veteran.

For many years the company had no instructor, but was drilled by the Master gunner at the Castle.

At the death of the Prince consort [14 December 1861] they manned the guns there and fired the minute guns.

The various officers in command of the Company have been Captain Murrie, Major J.T. Smith, Major J.T. Todd, and the present Colonel of the Brigade, R.C. Highet, and Lieutenants J.C. Muirhead and A. McGregor.

The company all along has been noted for the physique of its members, and for a good many years there has been none smaller than 5 feet 9 inches. Latterly the proportion of young men was much larger, yet the physique was much above the average Volunteer Companies.

At the annual camp at Kinghorn the Company always turned out well, and was generally, the strongest present. Last year it was the only Company

which at gun practice turned out complete with trained specialists of every kind.

In carbine shooting of late years it has not held its own so well, still it won the Brigade Cup on three occasions, viz., in 1886, 1894 and 1895.

The Company paraded nearly 70 strong on Saturday in the drill Hall, Butter Market, Broad Street, at 6.45 pm., and thereafter marched to the hotel by way of Broad Street, Bow Street and Baker Street, to music supplied by the trumpeters, their progress through the streets attracting the attention of crowds of people.

At the hotel Lieut. A. McGregor, commanding the Company, occupied the chair, and was supported on the right by Lieut.-Colonel Commandant R.C. Highet, C.S.M. John Dun, ex-C.S.M. Instructor J.G. Taylor, R.A.; ex-Sergeant J. Duthie, ex-B.S.M P. Lees, ex-C.S.M. -Inst. W. Lenton, R.A.; Sergt. John Simpson, and Sergt. Colin Lennox: and on his left by Lieut. R. Meiklejohn, Sergt. William Allan, C.S.M. Instructor A. Stewart, R.A.; Sergt. James Thomson, ex-Sergt. James Gray, and ex-Sergt. W. Stewart, Sergt. W. Somers acting as croupier. 74 of all ranks sat down to what proved to be an excellent repast, provided in the Messrs. Stevenson's first-class style, which left nothing to be desired.

Supper over, a lengthy programme was entered upon. Songs were given by the following members of the Company and friends :- Corpl. Wingate, Bomb. Duguid, Bomb. Muirhead, Gunner Harvie, Gunner Rogers, ex-Sergt. J. Gray, and Sergt. Skea (A. and S.H.), and Mr. D. Hill; string quaretette by the Artillery band (Sergt. Lennox, Bomb. Mackay, Gunner Somers, and Gunner Harvie.) Sergt. Lennox also contributed a trombone solo to fine effect.

During the evening the chairman called upon Colonel Highet to make a few remarks to his old Company, which he did in a very feeling manner, stating how sorry he felt that such a fine body of men should go a-begging for something to do, and he expressed a hope that even yet, at the eleventh hour, something might turn up for them.

He thereafter presented C.S.M. J. Dun, on behalf of the members, with a gold albert, in appreciation of his services as secretary to the Company for the long period of eighteen years, and a gold curb bracelet for Mrs. Dun.

C.S.M Dun feelingly replied, thanking his comrades for the very handsome gifts.

Sergt. W.Somers, in a neat speech, proposed Colonel Highet's health, and Sergt. Lennox that of the chairman. After singing "Auld Lang Syne," the Company were formed up into line in the ballroom, and the Last Post sounded by the trumpeters.

The following is a detailed list of those present at the supper, along with their length of service: -

Lieut.-Colonel R. C. Highet, 17 years

2nd Lieut. A. McGregor, 7 years (Yeomanry,6; Artillery, 1)

2nd Lieut. Robert Meiklejohn, 8 months

C.S.M. John Dun, 23 years 4 Months.

Sergt. John Simpson, 27 years 3 months

Sergt.. William Somers, 23 years 4 months

Sergt.. Colin Lennox., 23 years 4 months

Sergt. James Thomson, 22 years 4 months

Sergt. William Allan, 20 Years 3 months

Corpl. T. Lees, 16 years 6 months

Corprl. John Donaldson, 14 years 3 months
Corprl. John Wingate, 14 years 3 months
Corprl. James Rawding, 11 years 5 months
Bomb. J. Anderson, 14 years 8 months
Bomb. G Bisset Crockart, 11 years 4 months
Bomb. George McKay, 10 years 4 Months
Bomb. J. Milne, 10 years 3 months
Bomb. J. Duguid, 9 years 6 months
Bomb. Thomas Carson, p years 6 months
Bomb. C. Bayne, 8 years 6 months
Bomb. James Wilkie, 7 years 3months
Bomb. J. Muirhead 7 years 4 months
Bomb. G. Watters, 6 years 4 months
Bomb. J. Hogg, 2 years 3 months
Bomb. Trumpeter John Munnoch, 4 years 8 months
Trumpeter Robert Simpson, 1 year 5 months
Trumpeter Arch. Blair, 1 year 2 months
Trumpeter Robert Milne, 7 months
Gunner James Milgrew, 20 years
Gunner E. Monteath, 10 years 3 months
Gunner David Jenkins, 6 years 4 months
Gunner John Cattanach, 5 years 5 months
Gunner N. Scully, 5 years 5 months
Gunner Robert Robertson, 5years 5 months
Gunner Thomas Hislop, 4 years 5 months
Gunner Alex. Rodgers, 4 years 3 months
Gunner A. Henderson, 4 years 3 months
Gunner George Neale, 3 years 3 months
Gunner William Harvey, 3 years 3 months
Gunner John Miller, 2 years 8 months
Gunner Henry Gray, 2 years 7 months
Gunner John Buchannan, 2 years 7 months
Gunner William Somers, 2 years 4 months
Gunner Robert Donaldson, 2 years 4 months
Gunner William Watchman, 1 year 8 months
Gunner William Roberts, 1 year 5 months
Gunner George Ritchie, 1 year 4 months
Gunner R Starkey, 1 year 2 months
Gunner R Sprowl, 1 year 2 months
Gunner Alex. Thomson, 10 months
Gunner Robert M. Angus, 9 months
Gunner James Baird, 9 months
Gunner James Glen, 9 months
Gunner R Angus, 9 months
Gunner John Brown, 9 months
Gunner Hugh McLaren, 8 months
Gunner Hugh McLaren, 8months
Gunner Robert Hardie, 8 months
Gunner Robert Blyth, 7 months
Gunner John Lannagan, 7 months
Gunner Charles Gilchrist, 6 months
Gunner Robert Hogg, 6 months

Gunner J Bates, 1 year 6 months
Gunner Wm. Johnstone, 4 months
The undermentioned former members were also present: -
C.S.M. Inst. W. Lenton, R.A. 15 years
C.S.M. Inst. J G Taylor, R.A. 4 years
R.S.M. P Lees, 28 Years
Sergt. J Duthie, 29 Years
Sergt. J Gray, 25 Years
Sergt. W. Stewart, 20 years
Corpl. J Milne, 20 years
Bomb. J Docherty, 20 years

The following were prevented from being present: -

Corpl. Robert Fraser, 15 years 5 months
Gunner J. McGregor, 5 years 5 months
Gunner D Ritchie, 5 years 5 months
Gunner R McDonald, 4 years 7 months
Gunner J Paterson, 3 years 3 months
Gunner M Imrie, 8 years 1 month
Gunner W Miller, 8 years 1 month
Gunner T Malley, 2 years 4 months
Gunner A Troup, 2 years 4 months
Gunner C Campbell, 1 year 5 months
Gunner R Philip, 10 months

From the above list of members still serving, it will be seen that the whole sergeants hold the long-service medal, a record which will take a good deal of beating. Corpl. T Lees, who has sixteen years service, is now entitled to the long-service medal, an army order to that effect being issued recently.

The gold albert with seal and bracelet were supplied through Messrs Virtue & Co., Murray Place. The inscription on the seal was as follows: -

"Presented to C.S.M. John Dun by members of No. 13 Company, 1st Fife R.G.A. (Vols,) 6th June 1908"



Fifty Years Ago: 13th Battery Won Shooting Trophy



The photograph reproduced above will recall to many the days of the old Artillery Company (13th Battery) in Stirling. It was taken in 1894, and was brought to us for reproduction by Mr Thomas G. Lees following a paragraph printed under the heading "Fifty Years ago" in the "Sentinel" recently. The occasion was the winning of the Brigade Cup, the Stirling representatives showing that they were quite as expert with the carbine as with the artillery weapon.

We append some notes on the members of the team. No. 1 in the rear rank is John M'Andrew, several members of whose family were victims of the Clydebank blitz; No. 2 is Robert Oswald, master slater and town firemaster; No. 3 is John Dun, 37 Barnton Street, former stationery traveller; No. 4 is John Duthie, who was a smith in Thomson's coachwork; No. 5 is William Somers, master joiner; and No. 6 is — M'Intyre, who was employed in Cambusbarrow Mill.

In the middle row are the officers of the Company—Captain Todd, stockbroker, and Lieut. Dr Highet (who died in London about a year and a half ago). On the right of Captain Todd is C.S.M. William Milne, master slater, who died in 1902, and on the left of Lieut. Highet is Sergt-Major Lenton, who is wearing the Afghan and long service medals. Between the two officers is Alex. Galloway, who was also a Cambusbarrow Mill employee.

Those in the front rank, from left to right, are Peter Watson, Hugh Crawford (who was a smith with Graham & Morton before going to Canada, where he died), Thomas G. Lees, retired cemetery superintendent, and John Simpson, painter.