

**MILITIA CHIEFTAINS: PROFILING THE FOUNDERS OF
CANADA'S SCOTTISH MILITIA REGIMENTS**

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Following a downturn after the Napoleonic Wars, citizen soldiery experienced somewhat of a revival in the British Empire in the Victorian period. The successes of imperial troops in the Crimea and Indian Mutiny, coupled with the withdrawal of British soldiers from the dominions, meant that in Canada, the militia, “once envisioned as nothing more than an armed auxiliary to the British Army in North America, was increasingly called upon to act as a self-supporting field army.”¹ Cities, towns and communities across Canada responded to external threats from the USA and internal rebellions by forming companies or regiments of local militia.²

Of particular popularity in Canada was the establishment of regiments of militia that conformed to the Scottish military tradition.³ This was not a new phenomenon, with kilted highland companies and regiments taking part in several key engagements in the American War of Independence, the War of 1812, and in the 1837 Rebellion.⁴ While some historians have argued that military Scottishness across the Empire increased due to the prevalence from the 1880s of Scottish-oriented social and fraternal societies, with regards to Canada, this is too simplistic an interpretation.⁵ The first wave of permanent military Scottishness to appear in the dominion did so for a far more pragmatic reason than simply as an extension of Scottish associational culture. In the late 1870s a raft of Canadian militia regiments were either formed or converted using the image of the Highland soldier as a template. The catalyst for this move was the appointment of the Scottish Marquis of Lorne to the position of Governor General in 1878. Early founders of

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Canadian militia regiments were eager to curry favour with Lorne and his wife, Princess Louise, the daughter of Queen Victoria. Assuming imitation as the sincerest form of flattery, four militia units converted to become regiments of Highlanders during Lorne's four year tenure as Governor General.⁶ In the following thirty-five years, a further five regiments were established according to Scottish military traditions, created amid rises in the popularity of the Scottish soldier, imperial sentiment, an increase in the military budget of the Canadian government, and "a naive military enthusiasm" which arose in Canada following the dominion's participation in the Boer War.⁷

When the number of regiments which manifested a Scottish identity is compared to other national military traditions, the importance of the Scottish fact is evident. Despite the large percentage of the Canadian population, particularly in Quebec, who identified with French traditions, it was manifested in only seven regiments of militia, the majority of those formed in the 1860s. The Irish and Welsh diasporas contributed even less, with only two regiments of Irish militia and no Welsh representation on the militia list. Even then, only the 'right' sort of Irish immigrant was considered for inclusion in the regimental family. The 6th Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles and the 11th Irish Fusiliers of Canada both drew their officers and men solely from the Protestant communities of Vancouver. Indeed, the establishment of Scottish-themed regiments of militia across Canada and not just in particular regional communities is indicative of both the reach of the Scottish diaspora and of the popularity of the image of the Highland soldier.

The manifestations of military Scottishness which emerged in Canada from 1878 to 1914 were part of a wider process by which specifically highland Scottish military traditions were utilized by diasporic communities. As Ian Beckett noted, "just as Scots became regarded as a kind of quasi-martial class within the regular army, 'national' or 'ethnic' citizen corps of Scots appeared in most corners of the empire."⁸ At the outbreak of the First World War, regiments of volunteer militia based on Scottish military traditions existed in South Africa, including the Cape Town Highlanders and the Transvaal Scottish, in Australia as the Victoria Scottish, and in New Zealand as the Dunedin Highland Rifles, to

name but a few. Even diasporic communities in England bonded together to form the London, Liverpool and Tyneside Scottish regiments. As Hew Strachan asserted, ‘it was an identity that was created in the context of the Union and the empire.’⁹

It has been suggested that the large number of emigrants from Scotland may have played a part in the popularity of volunteering for the militia in the dominions.¹⁰ Volunteering certainly was popular in Scotland in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with Scotland providing “twice as many volunteers per head of male population of military age than any other part of Great Britain.”¹¹ When the Scottish emigrants created ethnic-oriented clubs, societies and organizations, volunteer regiments tended not to lag far behind, and were often created as a direct result of the organizations’ involvement.

The regiments they created manifested overt Scottish military traditions such as the wearing of tartan and the kilt, broadsword and dirk, and the formation of regimental pipe bands. The men who founded these regiments “appropriated the paraphernalia of the highland soldier as a universal symbol of Scotland.”¹² The founders used the image of highlanders as “magnificently exotic specimens who embodied the ‘true spirit of the soldier’, and whose past of unbridled violence had generated a ‘lust of fighting’ that was in their blood” as a platform on which to build their regiments.¹³

However, while the civic role and, following service in the First World War, military record of the regiments of Canadian Highlanders are well documented, the men who established the regiments have received little attention. This article seeks to redress the balance somewhat by profiling the founders of the six militia regiments which manifested Scottish military traditions in the most obvious manner. An examination of the backgrounds of these men in the areas of place of birth, ethnicity, social status, military expertise, religious denomination, and political orientation, can produce a clearer understanding of why these regiments came into being. This model also allows for comparisons to be made between the different groups of founders across Canada.

This article will focus on these particular regiments, in order of date of formation: the 5th Royal Scots Highlanders

(Montreal); the 48th Highlanders (Toronto); the 91st Canadian Highlanders (Hamilton); the 79th Cameron Highlanders (Winnipeg); the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders (Vancouver) and the 50th Gordon Highlanders (Victoria). The term “founder” describes any individual who was actively involved in the establishment of one of the six regiments of militia. In the case of the 5th Royal Scots Highlanders this means the six “Montreal Chieftains” who each raised a company of the regiment in 1862.¹⁴ For the 48th Highlanders, the founders were the thirty-one men who formed the ‘regimental standing committee’ on 6 August 1891 in Toronto.¹⁵ The founders of the 91st Canadian Highlanders were the seventeen men who, in 1902, “agitate[d] for the raising of another militia battalion for Hamilton, wearing the Highland uniform,”¹⁶ and those of the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders were the eighteen men who formed the regimental committee in Vancouver in May 1909.¹⁷ The fifty-one founders of the 79th Cameron Highlanders were identified in an article in the *Manitoba Free Press* of 27 March 1910, and similarly the twelve founders of the 50th Gordon Highlanders were identified from newspaper articles in the *Victoria Daily Colonist*.¹⁸

Place of Birth and Ethnicity of Founders

The Canadian census returns provide the places of birth for the 135 founders of the six militia regiments and enable an accurate picture to be drawn up of how many native born Scots were involved in the regiments’ creation. Table 1 shows that the number of native born Scots involved in the regiments’ creation varied from between 23-61 percent and the number of men born in Canada were between 22-70 percent. The high number of first generation Scottish emigrants involved in the creation of the Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver regiments suggests that Crawford’s assertion that the high number of Scottish emigrants to New Zealand brought an enthusiasm for volunteer soldiering also holds true for Canada. Yet the low figures of native born Scots in the 5th Royal Scots, the 50th Gordon Highlanders and the 91st Canadian Highlanders shows that being born in Scotland was not a prerequisite to found a Highland-themed regiment in the Canadian militia. In this, the Canadian-Scottish military experience seems to have parallels with that of the

Table 1: Place of Birth for the Founders of the Six Militia Regiments *

	No. of Founders	Scotland	Canada	Elsewhere	No Data
5th Royal Scots	6	2	2	1	1
48th Highlanders	31	15	13	0	3
50th Gordons	12	3	5	2	2
72nd Seaforths	18	11	4	1	2
79th Camerons	51	23	22	2	4
91st Highlanders	17	4	12	0	1

South African-Scottish, where “when toasts were exchanged in bars, the traditional Gaelic ‘Slainte Mhor’ were given by people who had never been within 7,000 miles of Oban.”¹⁹

When ethnicity rather than place of birth is examined the patterns change somewhat. The 1901 and 1911 Canadian census returns include a section in which the respondents self-reported their “racial or tribal origin.”²⁰ Analysis of this data is extremely valuable in this study as it allows us to view how the founders considered their own ethnicity.

Table 2: Ethnicity of the Founders of the Six Militia Regiments²¹

	# of Founders	Scottish	Other	No Data
5th Royal Scots	6	4	2	0
48th Highlanders	31	27	1	3
50th Gordons	12	8	4	0
72nd Seaforths	18	14	2	2
79th Camerons	51	45	2	4
91st Highlanders	17	12	4	1

When this data is examined, it becomes clear that 110 out of 135 of the founders, across all four regiments, identified themselves as being of “Scotch” racial origin. However, the ‘level’ of Scottishness is not recorded in the census data. It appears that only a direct line through the respondent’s father is counted. This leads

to possibly skewed results, but gives an interesting insight into the minds of those who founded the regiments. One such man claiming Scottish ethnicity was John Robert Grant, a founder of the 79th Cameron Highlanders of Canada. Grant was born in Ontario in 1844 and had emigrated to Winnipeg in 1874, the year after the city was founded. His obituary, from 1927, recalled him as “one of the best known of the Scottish-Canadian citizens of Winnipeg,” whose great-grandfather had fought with Prince Charles at Culloden and whose “branch of Clan Grant had been Canadians for over 200 years.”²² Clearly, then, Scottish heritage lived long in the memory. The formation of the regiments, then, was as much, if not more so, the brainchild of second and third generation Scots immigrants, who despite the potential for a mixed ancestral heritage, by and large chose to prioritize their Scottishness.

Yet, the data shows that ethnicities other than Scots were also involved in regimental creation. Across the regiments, seven men identified themselves as being of Irish heritage, seven of English heritage and one man as being Welsh. Certainly, in the case of Charles Wentworth Sarel, a founder of the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders, Scottish heritage was claimed despite the founder being born in London to English parents. Sarel did, however, have other Scottish connections: his children were educated at Dollar Academy in Clackmannanshire. His eldest son enlisted into the 16th Battalion (Canadian Scottish) of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, dying in April 1915 in the Second Battle of Ypres.

Scottish Associational Culture

It has been established that the majority of the founders of the Highland-influenced militia regiments felt Scottish in one way or another. One of the ways Scots-Canadians celebrated their Scottishness was through the establishment of “an array of clubs, societies and institutions, which regardless of their primary purpose, helped to preserve a distinctive Scottish identity within the adopted country of residence.”²³ These Scottish clubs and societies would be the driving force behind the establishment of five out of the six militia regiments.²⁴

Table 3: Scottish Societies Involved in the Establishment of the Six Regiments

Regiment	Scottish Societies Involved (Year of Formation)
5th Royal Scots (1862)	None
48th Highlanders (1891)	St. Andrew's Society (1836) Caledonian Society (1869) Sons of Scotland (1876) Gaelic Society (1887) Caithness Society (1877) Orkney and Shetland Society
50th Gordon Highlanders (1913)	Caledonian Society St Andrew's Society
72nd Seaforth Highlanders (1910)	Gaelic Society (1908) St. Andrew's Society (1887) Caledonian Society (1887)
79th Cameron Highlanders (1909)	St. Andrew's Society (1871) Highland Society Caithness Society Sons of Scotland (1876) Clan Stewart Society (1871) Scottish Amateur Athletic Ass. (1906)
91st Canadian Highlanders (1903)	Sons of Scotland (1876) St. Andrew's Society (1876)

In Toronto, the officers of the Gaelic Society sent invitations to the other Scottish-specific clubs and societies to consider “the question of the formation of a highland regiment (to wear the kilt) in Toronto.”²⁵ In 1903, the 91st Canadian Highlanders were formed by a group of Hamilton Scots who gathered “letters promising [the] support of the various Scottish societies of the city.”²⁶ It was a similar story in Victoria, Vancouver and in Winnipeg, where all fifty-one founders of the 79th Cameron Highlanders of Canada represented one or more Scottish-oriented society. Indeed, one of the delegates, Donald MacLeod Telford, was President of the Highland Society, Honorary President of the Caithness Society, a Chieftain of the Scottish Clans of Winnipeg, and a President of the St Andrew’s Society.²⁷ Telford was born in Wick, Caithness in 1845 and had emigrated to Ontario in 1867 before moving west to Winnipeg in 1881. In Manitoba, Telford quickly became “loyal to the institutions of his adopted country”²⁸ while “his enthusiasm for auld Scotia made him an effective worker in the transplanting of Scottish traditions to his new home land.”²⁹ Telford’s example, and that of a number of the founders, shows that the Scottish societies “were not independent groups operating in isolation from a wider ethnic community.”³⁰ The prevalence of multiple club membership and the numerous instances when Scottish societies came together for a specific purpose, not least the creation of Highland regiments, shows that in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Canada there existed a network of Scots and their descendants who were forging “a Scottish national identity ‘from away.’”³¹

In Victoria, Arthur Currie, a founder and first commanding officer of the 50th Gordon Highlanders, was made a member of the St. Andrew’s and Caledonian Societies in late 1913, around the time he assumed command of the new Highland regiment. Despite his lack of Scottish background or even distant ethnicity, Currie was still asked to respond to the toast of the Gordon Highlanders given at the Caledonian Society’s St. Andrew’s Day dinner on 30 November.³² Currie’s acceptance into the wider Scottish family in Victoria shows that the inclusive nature of Scottishness mentioned by Elizabeth Buettner with respect to India was also prevalent in

Canada at the same time. The offer of Scottishness was extended to the founders of the regiments and incorporated men with no Scottish ties, who later assumed “Scottish” identities through joining Highland regiments.³³

The role of the Scottish societies in the raising of the regiments was not confined to ideological support. In many cases, the actual cost of establishing the unit was borne by the founders. At a meeting of the founders of the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders in Vancouver in 1910, James Macdonnell “offered his services as Chairman of a Committee to collect subscriptions for the outfitting of the proposed Highland regiment.”³⁴ The committee was successful, raising \$25,000 for the regiment “with the co-operation of the Scottish societies.”³⁵ It was a similar story in Winnipeg. William Grassie reported to the *Winnipeg Free Press* that the officers were doing nobly in raising the \$25,000 they needed to raise the 79th Cameron Highlanders, “but it will require an heroic effort on the part of Scottish citizens to assist in putting this corps on a sound financial basis.”³⁶ This was an enormous sum of money, the equivalent to over \$580,000 in 2013. The Scots of Winnipeg and Vancouver rallied to the call, one in particular doing sterling service for the 79th Camerons. Lieutenant Colonel Robert McDonnell Thomson, a future commanding officer of both the 79th Cameron Highlanders and the 43rd (Cameron Highlanders of Canada) Battalion of the CEF, donated \$2,500 of his own money in order to buy uniforms and equipment for the militia battalion.³⁷

It is clear, then, that Scottish clubs, societies, organizations and institutions were instrumental in the creation of Highland regiments in the Canadian militia in the first fifteen years of the twentieth century. The large number of regimental founders who were members of these societies, particularly in the cases of the 48th Highlanders and 79th Cameron Highlanders, is testimony to this importance. Scottish society membership was not only open to native-born Scots but was multi-generational, encompassing their descendants too. The constitution of the St. Andrew’s Society of Toronto, written in 1835, describes its membership criteria as “Scotchmen, and the Children, Grand Children, and great-Grand Children, of Natives of Scotland, shall be admitted as resident Members of the Society, [and] all resident Members [are] to be

considered as natives of Scotland.”³⁸ So, not only were descendants of Scots invited to join, but they were then deemed to be as “Scottish” as native-born Scots. Membership of a Scottish society was clearly a way in which some Canadian-born men of Scottish descent could reinforce their Scottish identity. That Scottish identity was manifested in the celebration of overtly Scottish cultural icons such as Burns Suppers, St. Andrew’s Night Celebrations, Highland Games and Scottish sports such as shinty and curling. The introduction of pipe bands and Scottish music to the celebrations tied “Scottish games with the patriotic sense of Empire” and became a “potent symbol connecting the games with late Victorian militarism.”³⁹ When it was realized that Highland army regiments could be replicated in a colonial setting, this above all tied the Scottish in Canada and their descendants to the martial power of Scotland, and used one of Scotland’s most successful exports, the image of the Highland soldier, to reinforce their own Scottish identity. The numerous Scottish-specific clubs and societies were already the focal point of the Scottish communities and it was unsurprising that they took the lead in establishing Highland regiments in their Canadian homes.

Social Status

In recent studies, the role of the Scottish societies has been examined from a different angle, one which is particularly relevant to the raising of the Highland regiments of the Canadian militia. Michael Vance argues that “nineteenth and early twentieth-century Canadian celebrations of Scottish culture are best understood in terms of exercise of power and influence.”⁴⁰ If this was the case, then it would follow that a large number of the members of the various St. Andrews, Caledonian and other benevolent societies would be men of wealth and good standing in their communities. As a large number of the founders of the four militia regiments were members of Scottish societies across Canada, this presents an excellent example to examine whether Vance’s theory holds true, and whether the establishment of the regiments were an extension of this exercise of power and influence.

While the majority of early Scottish societies in Canada were established with philanthropy as their outward driving force, it

has been said that “these acts of charity . . . can also be viewed as reinforcing elite control.”⁴¹ Certainly, that charity was qualified: only Scots or their descendants could apply for the various forms of relief offered and, in many cases, the organizations only “wanted to help the ‘good poor.’”⁴² Often, only those who were deemed deserving members of the Scots community were given financial handouts and even then only after close scrutiny from a panel consisting of members of the assisting society.

An examination of the occupations of the 135 founders, taken from the Canadian census collections, gives an indication of their social class and influence. I have divided the occupations of the founders into nine groups: unemployed, unskilled workers, skilled workers, agricultural workers, clerical and sales workers, managers, merchants, professionals, and gentlemen. As Table 4 shows, in each of the regiments the majority of the founders were classed as being in the managerial, merchant, and professional classes. The data shows that of the 135 founders, none were unskilled workers and only four worked in skilled occupations such as carpenters, bakers and tailors. Indeed, only twenty-six of the founders whose occupations can be ascertained worked in occupations ranked under managerial level and nine of those were farmers, mainly in Manitoba, who almost certainly owned their own land. Eighty-three percent of the founders of the 5th Royal Scots, 80 percent of the founders of the 48th Highlanders and 50th Gordon Highlanders, 69 percent of the founders of the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders, 59 percent of those who founded the 79th Cameron Highlanders, and 87.5 percent of the founders of the 91st Canadian Highlanders were part of the established Canadian middle and upper classes.

So, the majority of the founders of the regiments were, indeed, members of the Canadian social elite and exerted their influence in deciding who among their communities received poor relief. Indeed, a list of the founders of these four regiments reads as a veritable ‘who’s who’ of late Victorian and Edwardian Canadian society. The founders of the 79th Cameron Highlanders count among their number men of influence such as Sir Hugh John MacDonald, son of the first prime minister of Canada; Sir Daniel Macmillan, the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba from 1900 to

Table 4: Occupations of the Founders

	No. of Founders	No data	Skilled	Agricult.	Clerical/Sales
5th Royal Scots	6	1	0	0	0
48th Highlanders	31	6	0	0	4
50th Gordons	12	2	1	0	0
72nd Seaforths	18	3	1	1	1
79th Camerons	51	4	1	8	6
91st Highlanders	17	1	1	0	2
Total	135	16	4	9	13
		Managerial	Merchant	Profess.	Gentlemen
5th Royal Scots		0	4	1	0
48th Highlanders		10	6	5	0
50th Gordons		4	0	4	1
72nd Seaforths		0	6	6	0
79th Camerons		14	10	8	0
91st Highlanders		0	6	6	1
Total		28	32	30	2

1911; and Sir William Methven Whyte, the Vice-President of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The 50th Gordon Highlanders were created and administered by such luminaries as Israel Wood Powell, the founder of the University of British Columbia and George Milne, a director of the National Life Assurance Company of Canada. In Vancouver, the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders counted among their creators men of “financial standing” and “public spirit” such as Dr Simon Tunstall, a past president of the Canadian Medical Association and College of Physicians; Guy Hamilton Kirkpatrick, son of Sir George Kirkpatrick, former Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons; and Henry Ogle Bell-Irving, a salmon-canning magnate from the Scottish borders who made a fortune in British Columbia.⁴³ The 91st Canadian Highlanders founders were largely drawn from the upper echelons of Hamilton society and counted among their number William Alexander Logie, later Major General in the First World War and grandson of the founder of Queen’s University.

The power and influence these men could exert was clearly huge. Yet for them their membership of the Scottish societies had a dual focus. In the first instance, it provided them, both native-born Scots and those who were descendants, with a platform on which to celebrate their Scottishness through the commemoration of national holidays, events and heroes, while simultaneously reinforcing Scottish identity. Second, the St. Andrew’s, Caledonian and other fraternal societies served these men as a meeting place of minds and where business was conducted at the highest level. As Bourbeau notes: “they were forming a strong network, a community of powerful and influential men who considered themselves as such and established a social and spatial distance between themselves and the rest of society.”⁴⁴ As this distance between the members of the Scottish societies and the rest of Canadian society grew so did the level of power and influence they could exert.

In this context, the establishment of Highland regiments seems to be a prime example of the “Scottish bourgeoisie” in Canada displaying their power. Vance contends that the Scottish societies sought to “link themselves with patriotism and the British Empire” which is “seen most clearly in the establishment of

Highland Games in Canada.”⁴⁵ While Highland games are undoubtedly important, I would take this further, and suggest that the formation of militia regiments based upon, and often carbon copies of, the Highland regiments in the British Army is a clearer indication of patriotic links with imperial Britain. The establishment of these regiments is an example of some Scots-Canadians of significant influence and wealth “demonstrat[ing] power and loyalty in a broader imperial context.”⁴⁶

Military Experience

While participation in Scottish associational culture was the vehicle by which the six militia regiments were founded, a further factor in choosing to become involved in the foundation process was military experience, although it was by no means a prerequisite. Among the founders of the 5th Royal Scots of Canada, Havilland LeMesurier Routh alone had seen militia service, with the Montreal Rifle Battalion in the 1840s. In the case of the 48th Highlanders of Toronto, Dr James Thorburn had previously served as the Surgeon Major of the Queen’s Own Rifles and Wilbur Henderson was a captain in the 34th Militia Regiment at the time of the regiment’s formation. The founder who was chosen to become the 48th Highlanders first commanding officer was James Irvine Davidson. A native of Aberdeenshire, Davidson had served in diverse volunteer militia units such as the 7th Aberdeenshire Rifle Corps, the London Scottish, the Uxbridge Yeomanry, and the 10th Royal Regiment of Toronto Volunteers.⁴⁷

In Victoria, Israel Wood Powell, one of the main founders of the 50th Gordon Highlanders, had a history of militia organization. Shortly after arriving in Victoria from Montreal in 1860, Powell was involved in the formation of the Victoria Volunteer Rifle Corps, and soon reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.⁴⁸ Once permission had been secured for establishing the regiment three of the founders—Powell, George Milne and Peter Riddell—sought out experienced army officers to continue the founding process and staff the regiment. Arthur Currie, a real estate broker, was the commanding officer of the 5th Canadian Garrison Artillery and was joined in the early days of the regiment by David Donald, a former member of the 2nd Lanarkshire

Volunteers who had seen active service as a medical officer in the British Army in the Somaliland Expedition of 1898 and in Uganda from 1900 to 1901.⁴⁹ Following Currie from the 5th Canadian Garrison Artillery was Englishman, Captain Robert Percy Clark. Clark had seen service with the Volunteer Battalion and later Volunteer Service Company of the Royal Fusiliers and later had joined the Rand Rifles in South Africa.⁵⁰ As a Boer War veteran, Clark was an ideal choice for the position of adjutant of the 50th Gordon Highlanders.

In Vancouver, the founders had similar military experience. When the regiment was being established, its Scottish nature attracted four officers from the 6th Duke of Connaught's Own Rifles, another Vancouver militia regiment. Major Duff Stuart, Captain Archibald Rowan, Captain John Tait, and Lieutenant James Sclater were all born in Scotland and transferred to the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders, bringing with them valuable experience of the workings of the Canadian militia. One of the earliest founders of the Canadian Seaforths was Lieutenant Guy Kirkpatrick, a twelve-year veteran of Lord Strathcona's Horse and the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles cavalry regiments, who had been on active operations in South Africa.⁵¹ Another founder of the regiment was Lieutenant Colonel Robert Leckie, a colleague of Kirkpatrick in the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles, and veteran of the Mad Mullah's War and the Somaliland Expedition of 1904 to 1906.⁵²

The founders of the 79th Cameron Highlanders in Winnipeg also had a large number of men with military experience, including some who had seen active service in Canada. Sir Daniel Macmillan, later Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, had early ambitions of being a career soldier. Macmillan served on the Niagara Frontier in 1864, in the Fenian Raid of 1866, and came west in 1870 with the Wolesley Expedition during the Red River Rebellion. After settling in Winnipeg, Macmillan joined the 95th Winnipeg Rifles of the Canadian militia, fought in the North-West Rebellion of 1885, and became that regiment's commanding officer in 1887.⁵³ Also migrating west with the Wolesley Expedition was Sir Hugh John Macdonald who served as a private soldier in the

16th Company of the 1st Ontario Rifles before becoming a founder member of the 95th Winnipeg Rifles in 1885.⁵⁴

The 91st Canadian Highlanders in Hamilton, Ontario also had a number of ex-military men as part of their founding committee. The main instigator of the regiment, William Alexander Logie, had served in the 13th Royal Hamilton Regiment of Canadian militia since 1893, and Edwin Adolphus Dalley had served in the same regiment in the Fenian Raids of 1866.

The formation of militia regiments also created opportunities for military-minded founders to gain advancement by obtaining commissions in their regiments. Peter Riddell, founder of the 50th Gordons, was appointed Honorary Quartermaster of the new regiment, the same position that Duncan Campbell MacGregor assumed in the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders. Sir Douglas Colin Cameron was appointed Honorary Lieutenant Colonel of the 79th Cameron Highlanders to which he had contributed significant time and money. The 91st Canadian Highlanders, of all the regiments, are the best example of career advancement. An examination of the Canadian Militia and Defence Force List for October 1904, a year after the formation of the regiment, reveals five of the founders in operational positions with the 91st Highlanders. William Logie was appointed Lieutenant Colonel; James Moodie was appointed Honorary Lieutenant Colonel; James Chisholm took over the role of paymaster, and Walter Stewart and Roy Moodie were serving as Lieutenants.⁵⁵ Indeed this form of social advancement has been suggested as a reason for the formation of the regiments.⁵⁶ As James Wood has noted,

social activities, public displays, and other spectacles seem to have occupied an inordinate amount of time, unless one considers the value of these activities in establishing links with the wider community and fostering recruitment. Examples of these occasions include reviews by imperial visitors, annual inspections, the hosting of visits by regiments of other cities, and parades whenever the occasion warranted one, including civic holidays, the Queen's birthday, or Sunday Church Services.⁵⁷

Religious Denomination

Analysis of the Canadian census collections gives an indication of the religion of the 135 founders. Primarily, all of the founders were Christians and were split into six groups: Presbyterians, Anglicans, Methodists, Unitarians, Baptists and Roman Catholics. There was only one founder who identified with the Roman Catholic religion: James Alexander Macdonnell of the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders.

In all the regiments except the 50th Gordon Highlanders, Presbyterianism was the dominant religion. In that regiment, a number of the founders, such as Arthur Currie, Robert Clark and Garnet Hughes were recruited for their military abilities rather than their ethnic or imagined Scottishness, which led to an increase in the number of founders who adhered to other religions. The data in Table 5 goes some way to agreeing with Hinson's analysis of the Scots in Toronto where "being Presbyterian and Scottish went hand in hand."⁵⁸ Church attendance among Presbyterians was high and "in terms of how Scottish culture was represented . . . adherence to the Presbyterian church must be considered one of the primary means."⁵⁹

Each of the regiments sought to recruit a Presbyterian minister to act as the regimental chaplain. The chaplain ministered to the troops as needed and held regular services at their churches in each of the cities. A further example of the chaplain's role was to consecrate the regimental colours at their presentation ceremonies. The colours, the very fabric of the regiment, were blessed in the Presbyterian faith. Indeed, following the return of the regiment to Winnipeg in 1919 the colours of the 43rd Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force (Cameron Highlanders of Canada) were presented to St Stephen's Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg who declared that "they will be placed in position on the wall immediately behind the pulpit and will be guarded with the greatest care and veneration."⁶⁰

The Scottish societies tended to highlight "distinct elements of the Scottish culture and history—the Scottish education system and Presbyterian culture, for instance—and that gave the members a sense of uniqueness, a sense of belonging to a community sharing a common past."⁶¹ This adherence to the religion of Scotland, both

Table 5: Religion of the Founders of the Six Regiments

	Presbyterian	Anglican	Methodist	Baptist	Unitarian	Roman Catholic	Unknown
5th Royals	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
48th Highlanders	23	1	2	0	1	0	6
50th Gordons	4	5	1	0	0	0	2
72nd Seaforths	11	3	0	1	0	1	2
79th Camerons	38	4	3	1	0	0	5
91st Highlanders	9	1	5	1	0	0	1

for native born Scots and Scots-Canadians, reinforced their sense of Scottish identity in the same way as the clubs and societies, by grouping them together with like-minded individuals who held the same values. In this case, those values were education and piety which in turn would lead to “success and fulfillment” in life.⁶²

Those last values were immortalized in literature by Ralph Connor in his works *Glengarry Schooldays* and *The Man from Glengarry*. Connor was better known to the citizens of Winnipeg as Dr. Charles William Gordon, the minister of the St. Stephen’s Presbyterian Church. In addition to his literary career, Connor also gave the first church service in May 1910 to the 79th Cameron Highlanders, and continued to act as their chaplain until the outbreak of war.⁶³ In 1915, Connor travelled to Britain as chaplain of the 43rd Cameron Highlanders of Canada (CEF) and was a later moderator of the Canadian Presbyterian General Assembly.

Presbyterianism led the Scots to “plant among the nations of the future the seeds of learning, of true religion, and manly national character.”⁶⁴ One of these nations of the future was Canada, and the establishment of regiments of soldiers dressed as Scots and acting as Scots was the very embodiment of masculine national character.

Political Affiliation

The Scots have had a long and enduring effect on the politics of Canada. Evans shows that “politically articulate Scots made their appearance in the British colonies which are today Canada towards the end of the eighteenth century.”⁶⁵ In the period immediately after the confederation of Canada in 1867, Scots headed the new national government, first through Conservative John A. MacDonal, and then Liberal Alexander Mackenzie, despite Scots making up only 16 percent of the Canadian population.⁶⁶ Indeed, this shows that there was no one Scottish political affiliation. They existed in different parts of Canada as Liberals and Conservatives. Evans shows that religion was a strong determinant of which political party Scotsmen in Canada would follow: typically Scots who conformed to the Presbyterian and Anglican faiths were more

conservative than those of secessionist churches who tended to be more liberal.⁶⁷

Iarocci has noted that in the pre-1914 period “Canada’s military was indeed heavily politicised, with entire regiments often identified as Liberal or Conservative bastions.”⁶⁸ Indeed, O’Brien has suggested that “local units were ‘political machines’ . . . with even minor appointments being doled out as political patronage.”⁶⁹ The political leanings of twenty of the founders of the six militia regiments are known. Of those, fifteen were members of the Liberal Party and five members of the Conservatives, with the latter grouped solely into the founders of the 48th Highlanders and 79th Cameron Highlanders. Indeed, several of the founders took very active roles in local and national liberal politics. Sir Daniel MacMillan and Sir Douglas Colin Cameron, both founders of the 79th Cameron Highlanders, controlled the governorship of Manitoba for the Liberals from 1900 to 1916. William Hallyburton, also of the 79th Cameron Highlanders, was for twenty-five years a member of the Manitoba Liberal Executive Committee and was the secretary of the Scottish Home Rule Association. George Lawson Milne, a founder of the 50th Gordon Highlanders, was also president of the Victoria Liberal Association, and many other founders of each of the regiments were members of local assemblies and legislatures.

The Conservatives who founded the Highland regiments were equally prominent in the Canadian political sphere. Of the three who have been identified as having contributed to the founding of the 79th Cameron Highlanders, one, prominent Winnipeg lawyer Sir Hugh John Macdonald, was the son of the first Conservative prime minister of a united Canada. Sir Hugh was appointed a minister in the short-lived Conservative government of Sir Charles Tupper, in no small part due to the efforts of Tupper’s son, James, who was also Sir Hugh’s partner in law in Winnipeg.⁷⁰ Another Conservative was Thomas William Taylor, who was mayor of Winnipeg from 1893 to 1894 and who served in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly from 1900 to 1914.⁷¹

Largely, the Scots in Canada viewed themselves as part of the greater British Empire. They maintained, argues Morris, “what can only be described as an apolitical loyalism,” paying their

“respect to the powers that be and avoid[ing] any radicalism.”⁷² Many of the founders, such as Henry Bell-Irving of the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders, could best be classed as “imperialists;” Macdonald asserts that “Henry Bell-Irving was both a Briton and a Scot but not, in any discernible way, a Canadian.”⁷³ This feeling of imperial Britishness in Canada served to promote the establishment of militia regiments in the first years of the twentieth century. The feeling of Scottishness meant that when Scots founded the regiments they drew on the martial tradition of their ancestors. As Edward Spiers has asserted, “Highland imagery had become emblematic of a Scottish cultural and national identity, intertwined with a British identity and wedded to an imperial cause.”⁷⁴

Conclusion

This article has attempted to refocus the debate on Scottish diasporic units in Canada onto the individuals who formed the regiments. While the number of native-born Scots who were involved in the regiments’ creation fluctuated between 23-61 percent of the total number, those founders who identified themselves as of “Scotch” racial origin were consistently in the majority, often overwhelmingly so. Yet Scottish heritage was by no means a prerequisite for involvement in the formation of Scottish military formations abroad. The inclusive nature of Scottishness in the imperial context meant that other nationalities could assume Scottish identities through their participation in Scottish associational culture and, by extension, the formation of the regiments.

Scottish-focused associations took the lead in establishing the regiments after the rise in popularity of organized Scottishness in the 1880s. This rise coincided with increases in the popular image of the Highland soldier and of military spending in Canada, and in the first decade of the twentieth century, increases in international diplomatic tension. However, in Canada, these reasons for the formation of Scottish-themed regiments are tempered with a pragmatism not seen elsewhere in the dominions. The wave of manifestations of Scottish military traditions following the appointment of the Marquis of Lorne to the position of governor general in 1878 suggests that, at least in part in the early

years, Scottish formations were formed to curry favour with establishment figures.

This is not to neglect the importance of the role of Scottish clubs, societies and organizations in the establishment of highland regiments in the Canadian militia. These societies took a front seat not only in organizing the regiments but also in fundraising, recruitment and the selection of officers. The society-regimental relationship was mutually beneficial: the regiments received support and the founders enhanced their social status and prestige, in several cases by taking appointments as regimental officers or honorary colonels. Membership of the societies, and thus taking part in the formation of the regiments, can also be seen as a display of power. The founders had, through the Scottish societies, a platform on which to celebrate their Scottishness and as the visibility of Scottish imperial regiments increased, the founders in Canada sought a military outlet for their own Scottishness. While Vance has suggested that the Scottish societies sought a link to patriotism and empire through the establishments of highland games, I would contend that the establishment of regiments based on, and often copies of, imperial Highland regiments is a clearer indication of both aspects.

NOTES

¹ James A. Wood, "Canada," in *Citizen Soldiers and the British Empire, 1837-1902* ed. Ian F. W. Beckett, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), 80. Wood is, perhaps, the leading expert on the history of citizen soldiering in Canada in the pre-1914 period. His book, *Militia Myths: Ideas of the Canadian Citizen Soldier, 1896-1921* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011) is a comprehensive study of the militia in that period, and his article "Social Club or Martial Pursuit?: The BC Militia before the First World War" *BC Studies* 173 (Spring 2012): 41-68, gave particularly useful background information for this article.

² In 1859 between the formation of the 1st Canadian Grenadier Guards in Montreal and the formation of the 81st Hants Regiment in Windsor, Nova Scotia in 1914, a total of 98 regiments of militia were added to the Canadian militia list, and a further 14 regiments reconstituted following disbanding.

³ For brief academic studies into the Scottish military tradition in Canada see George Stanley, "The Scottish Tradition," in *The Scottish Tradition in Canada*, ed. W. Stanford Reid (Ottawa: McClelland & Stewart, 1976); H. Klepak, "A Man's A Man Because of That: The Scots in the Canadian Military Experience," in *A Kingdom of the Mind: How the Scots Helped Make Canada*, ed. Peter E. Rider and Heather McNabb (Montreal & Kingston: Queen's-McGill University Press, 2006); and Wendy Ugolini, "Scottish Commonwealth Regiments," in *A Military History of Scotland*, ed. Edward M. Spiers, Jeremy A. Crang, and Matthew Strickland (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2012), for a study of the Scottish military diaspora as a whole.

⁴ The 84th Royal Highland Emigrants were the first organized body of militia to identify with Scottish military traditions in Canada. Formed for service in the American War of Independence largely from disbanded members of Fraser's and Montgomery's Highlanders and the Black Watch, the Royal Highland Emigrants were commanded by a former Jacobite, Allan MacLean of Torloisk. In the 1837 Rebellion, the Montreal Light Infantry mustered a Highland Company which manifested a Scottish military identity through tartan stripes on their uniform trousers.

⁵ Jonathan Hyslop, "Cape Town Highlanders, Transvaal Scottish: Military Scottishness and Social Power in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century South Africa," *South African Historical Journal* 47, 1 (2002): 96-114; Wendy Ugolini, "Scottish Commonwealth Regiments," 485 have both expressed this view.

⁶ In 1878, the 78th Colchester, Hants and Pictou Regiment added 'Highlanders' to their name; the 94th Victoria Provisional Infantry Regiment was renamed the Victoria Highland Infantry in 1879, and later became the 94th Victoria Argyll Highlanders; and the 20th Halton Regiment converted into the 20th Halton Lorne Rifles in 1881. In 1884 the 5th Royal Fusiliers, which already had two Highland companies in its ranks, converted to become a full regiment of Highlanders, known first as the 5th Royal Scots of Canada, later the 5th Royal Scots Highlanders of Canada, and lastly as the 5th Royal Highlanders.

⁷ Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1985), 116-7.

⁸ Ian F. W. Beckett, "Introduction," in *Citizen Soldiers*, 14.

⁹ Hew Strachan, "Scotland's Military Identity," *Scottish Historical Review* 85 (2006), 330.

¹⁰ John Crawford, "New Zealand," in *Citizen Soldiers*, 129-30.

¹¹ Beckett, "Introduction," 31.

¹² Strachan, "Scotland's Military Identity," 327.

¹³ Heather Streets, "Identity in the Highland Regiments in the Nineteenth Century: Soldier, Region, Nation," in *Fighting for Identity: Scottish Military Experience, c.1550-1900*, ed. Steve Murdoch and Andrew MacKillop (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 219.

¹⁴ Paul Hutchison, *Canada's Black Watch: The First Hundred Years, 1862-1962* (Montreal: Royal Highlanders of Canada Association, 1962), 9.

¹⁵ Alexander Fraser, *The 48th Highlanders of Toronto* (Toronto: E L Ruddy, 1900), 33.

¹⁶ Lt. Col. Walter A Bruce, Lt. Col. William R. Turnbull, and Lt. Col. James Chisholm, *Historical Records of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders of Canada* (Hamilton: Robert Duncan & Company, 1928), 6-7.

¹⁷ Bernard McEvoy and Captain A. H. Finlay, *History of the 72nd Canadian Infantry Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders of Canada* (Vancouver: Cowan & Brookhouse, 1920), 1-2.

¹⁸ "Formal Organisation of the 79th Cameron Highlanders," *Manitoba Free Press*, 27 March 1910; "Field Officers of the Gordon Highlanders," *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 26 October 1913; "P. J. Riddell given Appointment in New Local Military Organisation," *Victoria Daily Colonist* 2 November 1913; "Colonel Currie Addresses the Caledonian Society," *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 26 November 1913.

¹⁹ Tim Newark, *Highlander: The History of the Legendary Highland Soldier* (London: Constable, 2009) 114-5, quoted in Ugolini, "Scottish Commonwealth Regiments," 489.

²⁰ *Census of Canada, 1851-1911*.

²¹ *Census of Canada, 1851-1911*.

²² "Obituary of John Robert Grant," *Manitoba Free Press*, 20 December 1927, 4.

²³ W. Stanford Reid, "The Scottish Background," in *The Scottish Tradition in Canada*, ed. W. Stanford Reid (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976), 12.

²⁴ That the 5th Royal Scots were not established by a Scottish society suggests that Jonathan Hyslop's assertion that the 'new phenomenon of Caledonian Societies' which originated in the 1880s were responsible for the creation of highland-themed regiments (albeit in South Africa), holds true across the Empire.

²⁵ Fraser, *48th Highlanders*, 29.

²⁶ Bruce, Turnbull, and Chisholm, *Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada*, 8.

- ²⁷ Frank H. Schofield, *The Story of Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Clarke, 1913), 646-7.
- ²⁸ Schofield, *The Story of Manitoba*, 647.
- ²⁹ "Donald MacLeod Telford Passes," *Manitoba Free Press* 20 April 1929, 7.
- ³⁰ Tanja Bueltmann, Andrew Hinson and Graeme Morton, "Introduction," in *Ties of Blood, Kin and Country: Scottish Associational Culture in the Diaspora*, edited by Tanja Bueltmann, Andrew Hinson and Graeme Morton (Guelph: Centre for Scottish Studies, 2009), 4.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ³² "How the Fiftieth Gordon Highlanders Began," *The Brazier*, 6 June 1964.
- ³³ Elizabeth Buettner, "Haggis in the Raj: Public and Private Celebrations of Scottishness in late imperial India," *Scottish Historical Review* 81, no.2 (2002): 217.
- ³⁴ McEvoy and Findlay, *Seaforth Highlanders of Canada*, 3.
- ³⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Robert G. E. Leckie in McEvoy and Findlay, *Seaforth Highlanders of Canada*, 4.
- ³⁶ "Formal Organisation of the 79th Cameron Highlanders," *Manitoba Free Press*, 27 March 1910, 4.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ³⁸ St Andrew's Society of Toronto, *Constitution of the St Andrew's Society of the City of Toronto and Home District of Upper Canada, with a list of its officers* (Toronto: St Andrew's Society of Toronto, 1835), 1.
- ³⁹ Michael Vance, "Organised Scottishness," in *Transatlantic Scots*, ed. Celeste Ray (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 103.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 97.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 101.
- ⁴² Catherine Bourbeau, "The St Andrew's Society of Montreal: Philanthropy and Power," in *Ties of Blood, Kin and Country*, 76.
- ⁴³ McEvoy and Finlay, *Seaforth Highlanders of Canada*, 2-4.
- ⁴⁴ Bourbeau, "The St Andrew's Society of Montreal," 72.
- ⁴⁵ Vance, "Organised Scottishness," 103.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ Fraser, *48th Highlanders*, 38-9.
- ⁴⁸ J. Lutz, "Israel Wood Powell," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?id_nbr=7654 (accessed 5 August 2014).
- ⁴⁹ LAC, First World War Attestation Forms, "David Donald," RG150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 2581-11.

⁵⁰ LAC, "Robert Percy Clark," RG150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 1761-3.

⁵¹ LAC, "Guy Kirkpatrick," RG150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 5204-12.

⁵² LAC, "Robert Leckie," RG150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 5508-20.

⁵³ Schofield, *The Story of Manitoba*, Vol. 2 (Winnipeg, Clarke, 1913), 66.

⁵⁴ H. J. Guest, "Sir Hugh John Macdonald," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?BioId=42390> (accessed 5 August 2014).

⁵⁵ Canadian Militia and Defence Force List, October 1904, http://search.ancestry.com/browse/view.aspx?dbid=1916&iid=31375_188864-00725&rc=174,800,277,828&pid=49335&ssrc=&fn=&ln=logie&st=g (accessed 5 August 2014).

⁵⁶ Wood, "Social Club or Martial Pursuit," 49.

⁵⁷ Wood, "Canada," 86.

⁵⁸ A. Hinson, "A Hub of Community: The Presbyterian Church in Toronto and its role among the city's Scots," in *Ties of Blood, Kin and Countrie*, 119-20.

⁵⁹ Hinson, 120.

⁶⁰ University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collection Department, Charles William Gordon (Ralph Connor) Fonds, "Cameron's Colours now at St Stephen's," MSS 56, Box 21, Folder 4.

⁶¹ Bourbeau, "The St Andrew's Society of Montreal," 77.

⁶² Marjory Harper, "Transplanted Identities," *Ties of Blood, Kin and Countrie*, 27.

⁶³ "First Church Service for Winnipeg Camerons," *Manitoba Free Press*, 30 May 1910, 5.

⁶⁴ R. J. Morris, "The Enlightenment and the Thistle: The Scottish Contribution to Associational Culture in Canada," in *Ties of Blood, Kin and Countrie: Scottish Associational Culture in the Diaspora*, edited by Tanja Bueltmann, Andrew Hinson and Graeme Morton (Guelph: Centre for Scottish Studies, 2008), 52.

⁶⁵ A. Margaret MacLaren Evans, "The Scot as Politician," in *The Scottish Tradition in Canada*, 273.

⁶⁶ Evans, 291.

⁶⁷ Evans, 277.

⁶⁸ Andrew Iarocci, *Shoestring Soldiers: The First Canadian Division at War 1914-1915* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 21.

⁶⁹ Mike O'Brien, "Manhood and the Militia Myth: Masculinity, Class and Militarism in Ontario, 1902-1914," *Labour/Le Travail* 42 (Fall 1998), 123.

⁷⁰ Hal J. Guest, "Sir Hugh John Macdonald," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=8255 (accessed 5 August 2014).

⁷¹ Schofield, *The Story of Manitoba*, 165-6.

⁷² R. J. Morris, "The Enlightenment and the Thistle," 54.

⁷³ R. Macdonald, "He Thought he was the Boss of Everything: Masculinity and Power in a Vancouver Family," located at http://www.bell-irving.com/B-I_History.asp (accessed 5 August 2014).

⁷⁴ Edward Spiers, "Highland Soldier: Imperial Impact and Image," *Northern Scotland* 1 (2010), 84.