



The Seaforth Highlanders

The Regiment was officially formed in 1881 when the 78th and the 72nd Regiments of Foot were amalgamated as part of the Childers Reforms; however it can trace its history back a further 103 years prior to this date.

The 78th was first raised in 1778 by Kenneth Mackenzie in gratitude to King George III for restoring the family title of 'Earl of Seaforth' to him, after it had been removed following the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715. In 1782 the Regiment embarked on its first major foreign service to assist the East India Company against the aggressions of the Sultan of Mysore in India during the Second Mahratta War (1803-05). In 1786 the naming convention was simplified with all British Regiments assigned a ranked number of precedence (instead of naming after the present colonel) therefore the Regiment became the 72nd (Highland) Regiment of Foot.

In 1805 the Regiment was deployed to capture the Cape of Good Hope from the Dutch and then remained garrisoned in Cape Town until 1810 when it helped to capture Mauritius from the French. Until 1822 the Regiment was either in India or South Africa. In 1823 the 72nd was awarded the title of 'Duke of Albany's Own Highlanders' (possibly after the Commander-in-Chief Prince Frederick, Duke of York and Albany and heir presumptive to his elder brother King George IV). The Regiment once again served for 10 years in South Africa from 1828 fighting during the Cape Frontier Wars (1811-1858) when the native Xhosa tribes became armed and rebelled against continuing European rule. The 72nd also served in The Crimean War (1855), The Indian Rebellion (1858), and The 2nd Afghan War (1878-1880).

The 78th was raised by Francis Mackenzie, 1st Baron Seaforth (grandson of Kenneth Mackenzie, 4th Earl of Seaforth) in 1793 and named the 78th Ross-shire Buffs. The Regiment saw its first action in the Netherlands during the French Revolutionary War fighting at Nijmegen.

In 1881 both Regiments were amalgamated as part of the Childers Reforms to become The Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs, The Duke of Albany's). The Childers Reforms restructured the British army infantry Regiments into a network of multi-battalion Regiments each having two regular and two militia battalions. The newly formed Regiment went on to serve in various foreign campaigns including; the Anglo-Egyptian War (1882), Tel El Kebir (1882), the Chitral Expedition 1895, the Second Sudan War (1896 – 98) fighting at the Battle

of Atbara and the Battle of Khartoum, The Second Boer War 1899 – 1902 fighting at The Battle of Paardeberg and two World Wars.

In 1961 The Seaforth Highlanders and the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders merged to form the Queen's Own Highlanders. In 1994 the Queens Own Highlanders was further merged with the Gordon Highlanders to form The Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons). In 2006 the Regiment once again amalgamated, with The Royal Scots Borderers, The Royal Highland Fusiliers, The Black Watch, and The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders to form the Royal Regiment of Scotland.

Since 1815 the balance of power in Europe had been maintained by a series of treaties. In 1888 Wilhelm II was crowned 'German Emperor and King of Prussia' and moved from a policy of maintaining the status quo to a more aggressive position. He did not renew a treaty with Russia, aligned Germany with the declining Austro-Hungarian Empire and started to build a Navy rivalling that of Britain. These actions greatly concerned Germany's neighbours, who quickly forged new treaties and alliances in the event of war. On 28th June 1914 Franz Ferdinand the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne was assassinated by the Bosnian-Serb nationalist group Young Bosnia who wanted pan-Serbian independence. Franz Joseph's the Austro-Hungarian Emperor (with the backing of Germany) responded aggressively, presenting Serbia with an intentionally unacceptable ultimatum, to provoke Serbia into war. Serbia agreed to 8 of the 10 terms and on the 28th July 1914 the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war on Serbia, producing a cascade effect across Europe. Russia bound by treaty to Serbia declared war with Austro-Hungary, Germany declared war with Russia and France declared war with Germany. Germany's army crossed into neutral Belgium in order to reach Paris, forcing Britain to declare war with Germany (due to the Treaty of London (1839) whereby Britain agreed to defend Belgium in the event of invasion). By the 4th August 1914 Britain and much of Europe were pulled into a war which would last 1,566 days, cost 8,528,831 lives and 28,938,073 casualties or missing on both sides.

The Regiment raised a total of 17 Battalions during the course of the First World War. The 2nd Battalion was sent to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and all service battalions fought in most theatres of operations, receiving 60 Battle Honours and 7 Victoria Crosses losing 8,830 men during the course of the war.