

Simon Joseph, 16th. Lord Lovat and 22nd. Chief of Clan Fraser of Lovat raised the Lovat Scouts Regiment in 1899 to fight in the South African War. The Frasers were of Norman origin and settled in Scotland in the 12th Century. Sir Alexander Fraser married Mary, the sister of Robert The Bruce, King of Scots. His brother, the first Simon Fraser, was executed by order of King Edward the 1st of England for his participation in the War of Succession. From this heroic family member the Fraser's claim direct descent.

The name in the Gaelic (Scots/Celts) is MacShimidh, meaning son of Simon. The Family home is the beautiful Beaufort Castle near Beaulieu in Invernesshire. The Lovat Scouts were raised by Simon Joseph, Lord Lovat, in 1899, three months after The Boer War in South Africa was declared. Men from the area were recruited into the Regiment and with their experience in the rugged mountains and moorland around Beaulieu and the surrounding district, many of the men being gamekeepers, ghillies, stalkers, estate workers etc., made ideal soldiers for fighting the Boers, many of whom had similar skills in the wilds of South Africa.

The Lovat Scouts had fought in The 1st World War at Gallipoli against the Turks in the Dardanelles, along with other British, French, Australian and New Zealand regiments. The Allies were forced to withdraw as the Turkish Forces held the heights and used heavy fire power which devastated the attacking forces. The withdrawal was covered by the Lovat Scouts and the famous Gurkha regiment from Nepal. The Gurkhas were one of the elite forces in the British Army, and are famous for their bravery in battle. There were many other fierce engagements in Egypt and Macedonia etc. which cost many Allied lives.

The story now moves to the year 1939 and the 2nd World War against Nazi Germany. Amongst the many regiments mobilised again to fight, were the Lovat Scouts. Some men from the Brechin area had served in World War 1, and three men from Brechin served in the Lovat Scouts. They were, Jack Souttar Walker; David Burnette, and Robert Graham. The men started their military training at Redford Barracks, Edinburgh as new recruits for basic military training. They were then moved to Thurso in the far North of Scotland, from where they embarked on a Troopship and sailed North for 275 miles and disembarked at the Faeroe Islands nearly midway between Iceland and the Arctic Circle, obviously to become acclimatised to the rigours of colder weather conditions and in the future to participate in Winter Warfare, as they now had shoulder titles on their uniform with the word "Mountain".



*Trooper Jack Walker (back right) and friends*

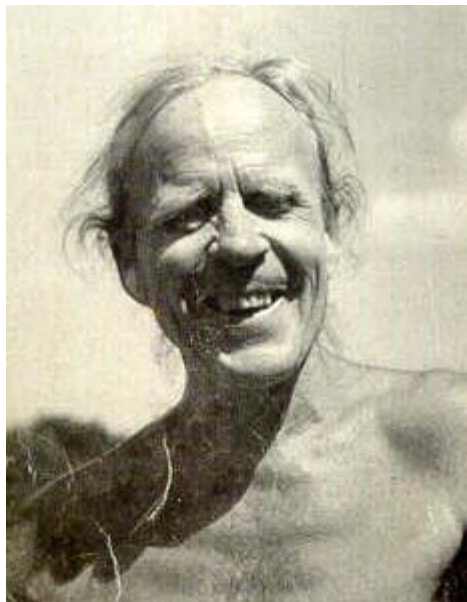
Many Lovat Scouts were also Gaelic speakers and ideal to be trained as Radio Operators, the Germans and their Allies being unable to understand the language. The men of the regiment were brought to a high standard of fitness during training in the Faeroe Islands with long marches over difficult terrain, steep climbs and boat manoeuvres etc. Training was hard but the Faeroese people welcomed them and were very good to the soldiers. Dances and Social Evenings were held, as were Sporting Competitions. The annual Grindebo Festival when the great Whales came near the Islands and were driven towards the bays and harbours by men in boats from the Islands and were killed for their meat and blubber etc. This traditional Festival was also participated in by some Lovat Scout Officers. My collection of "FanFaeroe" magazines has illustrations of the hunting of the great whales. The language was a problem at first as the Faeroese people spoke mainly in the Norse dialect, but the Scouts soon became familiar with it due to the many dances and other events organised for them. Some of the Lovat Scouts met and married girls from the Faeroe Islands, who

returned to Scotland with them.

German aircraft carried out frequent attacks on the islands. On February 21st., 1941, two Heinkel Bombers attacked the town of Thorshaven, the targets being oil tanks and shipping. One plane was damaged by gunfire and flew back in the direction of Norway. The other Luftwaffe plane scored a direct hit on the armed ship Lincoln City, which sank. Lovat Scouts B Squadron returned fire with every Bren Gun they had and being crippled, the plane flew off and crashed in a fjord and sank. Four German airmen came ashore in a rubber dinghy and were disarmed and imprisoned. Over 60 Faeroese fishermen were killed in the period 1940-1941 as a result of attacks by German planes. The training in the Faeroe Islands finally came to an end and on a long, light summer evening at 22.45 hrs. on 10th. June 1942, the Troopship "Lady of Mann", escorted by ships of The Royal Navy, moved from Thorshaven via Nolso Fjord with thousands of Faeroese people waving "Goodbye", and the Lovat Scouts Pipers and Drummers playing, "Happy We Have Been Together". Hooters from ships large and small sounded "Farewell", and the Troopship sailed at full speed for Scotland. Some Faroe girls who had married Scouts accompanied their husbands, and there were many broken hearts on ship and shore. A Lovat Scout or any of his Family Members are still made very welcome by the kindly people of Faeroe. In the Faeroe, the people still say that "The Lovat Scouts were the best "Foriegners" they had ever known".

After landing in Scotland the Scouts spent a period in Nairn and in July 1942 moved South to The School of Mountain Warfare in the Cairngorms near Braemar. They also provided the Royal Guard at and around Balmoral Castle while King George VI, and Queen Elizabeth and the Royal Children were on their annual Holiday in their favourite retreat on the large [Balmoral Estate](#) with its lovely rivers, forests and mountains. Next, the Regiment encamped and trained in Rock Climbing and Mountain Warfare at Glen Clunie, between Braemar and The Devils Elbow.

In October 1942, from the Tented Camp at Glen Clunie, Braemar, Scotland, the Lovat Scouts moved South to North Wales to the School of Mountain Warfare to perfect their skills in Rock Climbing etc., under a Staff of experienced , skilled Climbers. They were encamped at Bangor and Plas Llanfair and Bedagclert below Mount Snowdon. Every man in the Regiment had to be proficient in Rock Climbing. There were 64 Lovat Scouts trained as Snipers with Rifles fitted with Telescopic Sites. Others were armed with Thomson sub-machine guns. An exceptionally high medical grade of A1, Plus was required and a number of Officers and men were graded out and replaced by volunteers from other regiments. Amongst the new Officers were [Lieutenant W. S. Scroggie](#) and G. Tingulstad (Norwegian Special Forces) and Captain John Rowntree an exceptionally excellent and supremely fit Medical Officer. The Lovat scouts were trained in all aspects of Rock Climbing and Mountaineering to increase its Striking Power, and to Move Distances at Speed over various types of Terrain. Also to Seize High Ground and Penetrate, Hold and Make Reconnaissance Patrols behind Enemy Lines.



*Syd Scroggie, just a few years ago*

Their next move was to Canada. After embarkation leave at home, which we were not informed of at the time, the Lovat Scouts Mountain Warfare Regiment sailed from Liverpool, across the Atlantic Ocean aboard the former Passenger Liner, Mauretania on 28th. December 1943 and landed at New York Harbour on 6th. January, 1944. The men from Scotland were amazed at the size of the great city which was all lit up. They were moved to Grand Central Station during a snow storm, where they were welcomed by beautifully dressed ladies of The American Red Cross, who handed them gifts of newspapers, magazines, chocolates, cigarettes, men's toiletries of cologne etc., and many gifts which had been given by the people of New York. The welcome given to the Lovat Scouts from Scotland was tremendous. They were also entertained by musicians and other Artistes. Next, the Regiment were on board two special trains and began their journey of over 2,500 miles to Jasper National Park in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Four days later, on January 10th. the Lovat Scouts saw the Canadian Rockies from a great distance with the seemingly endless horizon of white snow covered mountain peaks. Snow was lying as far as the eye could see and nothing back in Scotland or Wales could compare with this magnificent and impressive sight. Later that day, the men from Scotland stood at their Camp at Jasper National Park and gazed at the wonderful panorama of mountains from their new camp and their thoughts dwelled on the rugged beauty and grandeur of the massive peaks. The scene was astounding and naturally they compared them with the mountains of their Scottish homeland. That same evening they were in the Log Cabins of Jasper National Park with stoves heated by burning logs and enjoying the comfort and warmth. The temperature outside was well below zero.

They settled down for their first night at Jasper and enjoyed the luxury, after the years of training and living in mountain tents and huts. They never knew of the severe training and conditions awaiting them on The Canadian Rocky Mountains and Glaciers and Snowfields. Each Private soldier of the regiment was addressed as "Mountaineer", after having been issued with their White, Arctic, Mountain Warfare Clothing, and their rifles, Tommy Guns, (Thomson Sub Machine Guns), White Backs and other equipment Their first training was in skiing and climbing in Arctic conditions at great heights and also around the frozen lakes and valleys dressed in battle uniforms which blended with the white terrain. The Training Programme was under the direction of the famous mountaineer Frank Smythe of Alpine and Himalayan fame, including Mount Everest. Wing Commander Smythe for some time held the record of the highest ascent of Mount Everest. He commanded a group of instructors in his squad, including, Pat Baird, Tom Peacock and a team of over forty men well qualified as Mountain Climbing Ski Instructors, some of whom were French Canadians and Red Indians and Mountain Trappers. All Administration Staff including Cooks and Supply Personnel were provided by the Canadian Government. Every man in the Lovat Scouts had to qualify in Mountain/Ski Warfare.

During the hard training there were many accidents even after the hard training in Scotland and Wales. Many of the men in the Lovat Scouts had accidents, including broken limbs, during the early stages of training and some were in pain from overstretched muscles and joints. According to the writings of M. Leslie Mellville, plasters and potions were in great demand. There was a Special Cure available at the Jasper Drug Store which was available and named "King of Pain", sold by Doreen of the Jasper Drug Store. The Store also sold many other goods including Ice Cream and Ice Sticks, Milk shakes etc. I wonder if the Store is still there, or the Picture Postcard and Souvenir Shop. Does anyone remember Doreen ?. At Jasper Railway Station an old Red Indian man sold various postcards and Souvenirs etc. I have many Postcards and Photographs which our Jack sent home, and many Souvenirs of Jasper before the Lovat Scouts left for Scotland there was a fire in the cabin where they had their Presents and Souvenirs etc. stored. The Ladies of Jasper and District replaced the presents with many more than had been destroyed. I have Jack's Regimental Badges and medals etc. in a frame above where I am typing here now, and there is also a large Lovat Scouts Ski Badge beautifully made from cloth and coloured. There are photos of the Military Funeral of Corporal Collie of the Lovat Scouts who lost his life as a result of a snow avalanche. Corporal Collie is buried in Jasper Cemetery.

Eric Jr. and I were at Arrezzo Military Cemetery in April 2001 and we took pictures of Lovat Scouts and Ghurka Mountain Troops graves there in Tuscany, Italy. Some Ghurka Mountain Troops were only 16 years of age when they died during the War. Our Jack is buried beside other Lovat Scouts.

The Scouts went through hard Winter training, which included Snow Climbing, Glacier Ice Work, Living in Snow Holes and all aspects of Winter Warfare were taught and had to be mastered. Over 30 miles a day on snow shoes or skis carrying 60 pound Packs plus weapons e.g. Tommy Guns, Rifles, Ammunition, and Mortars in all weather and terrain conditions.

Jack came back on his last official leave from Canada and said he had thought of going back to Alberta after the War. Unfortunately he was wounded in Northern Italy, having three bullets through his stomach and back. He knew he was dying and told his Officer "Tell the Family in Brechin Not to Worry". He died after 15 hours.

Wing Commander Frank Smythe who was in charge of the training in and around Jasper said; "I believe that The Lovat Scouts are now the toughest and hardest Battalion in the British Army". The Regiment left Jasper on 22, April 1944 and embarked for home At Halifax, Nova Scotia, on 22nd April. The voyage to Liverpool on the "Andes" took one week. They went to Aberdeen by train and were given a short Embarkation Leave and after further training made ready to go overseas and fight in a hard campaign in Northern Italy. After Italy, the Regiment fought in Greece, Austria and Germany.

Our thanks for the kindness which the Canadian people of Jasper, Calgary, and all over Alberta and British Columbia, gave to the Lovat Scouts, never has and never shall, be forgotten.