

The pleasures attached to one of the lushest expeditions in Corps history were well-earned.

Col Heintl's name is synonymous with Corps history. Author of the comprehensive Soldiers of the Sea, considered the prime reference for Corps deeds, he retired in 1966 and is now in the Washington bureau of the Detroit News.



SAFARI TO SCOTLAND

By Col R. D. Heintl, Jr., USMC (Ret)

THE 1958 participation by U.S. Marines in the famed Scottish military tattoo at Edinburgh, followed by an encore visit to the Brussels exposition, was the first appearance of Marine ceremonial troops in Europe since the Paris Exposition of 1889.

The 1958 safari to Scotland and Belgium was also one of the lushest military junkets in the otherwise spartan history of Marine expeditions, but any Marine who participated will know that all the pleasures were well earned.

The story of the great Edinburgh-Brussels expedition really begins in 1956 with a little retired Scottish brigadier named Alasdair Maclean. Affectionately known among friends as "The Abominable Showman," Brigadier Maclean may well have

been one of the greatest impresarios since the late P. T. Barnum, with whom he shared many talents.

Brigadier Maclean was the man who, after World War II, brought the Edinburgh Tattoo to life. Using the magnificent background setting of Edinburgh Castle for his stage, with all the Kipling-esque resources of a British Army on which the sun had not set, the brigadier organized an annual military pageant, timed to coincide with the Edinburgh Festival of the Arts each summer. In a post-retirement decade, Brigadier Maclean became "Mr. Tattoo" himself, one of the world's foremost experts on military ceremonials and yielding to no living man in showmanship.

Though not militaristic, the British are one of the most military people ever to inhabit the earth, and the Tattoo drew (and draws) annual crowds in the hundreds of thousands. Each year, besides a domestic cast including highland pipers, guardsmen, Ghurkhas, Royal Marines, Horse Guards, and 400-piece massed military bands, a foreign unit is invited.

It was to scout the U. S. Marines for such an invitation that Brigadier Maclean came to the United States in 1956. Like all Scots, he was canny and cautious—doubly so in this instance because of an unfortunate appearance one previous year by what had been somewhat optimistically billed as "crack American ceremonial troops" provided by the U.S. European Command. The level of performance by these allegedly elite units had not been impressive and the brigadier was determined not to repeat the same mistake twice.

One visit to Eighth and Eye (then commanded by Colonel L. F. Chapman, Jr.) made Brigadier Maclean a true believer.

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So convinced was the brigadier that in short order, via the British Joint Services Mission, came an invitation, not to Edinburgh for the moment, but to another tattoo—the Bermuda International Tattoo (British and Canadians) for Spring 1957.

With a nod from the Commandant, a Bermuda Tattoo Detachment came into being, to be commanded by the writer, then a qualified English interpreter on the basis of a recent tour with the British at Fremington.

Bermuda was really like a Boston or New Haven try-out for a New York show, and, for once, the try-out went beautifully. With an Eighth and Eye drill platoon, the Parris Island Band, and a chunk of the Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps, it was impossible to miss.

Once Bermuda was behind, there was no doubt that Edinburgh lay ahead. The British—not over-given to enthusiasm—wanted Marines for Edinburgh in 1958 and wanted them very much, while every Marine who had been to Bermuda reciprocated the wish. Once again, there came an invitation—this time involving a trans-Atlantic trip of eight weeks, the establishment of Marines in a reopened British army post (Pennycook Barracks, between Edinburgh and Glasgow), and a blaze of glory in the August-September festival. Quite a detail.

Selling the Commandant was no problem. But with friends such as the Marine Corps discovered in the Pentagon, the project had no need for enemies.

First came the comptrollers: who was going to pay for the air-lift, for every mouth-full of troop rations (as if the Marines wouldn't have to be fed if they weren't in Edinburgh)? Every possible cost item except wear and tear on the band's wind instruments was piled onto the fiscal road-block.

Then from the other flank in came the Defense PAOs. If anybody was to go, it should be a *unified* detachment from *all* Services. In this arrangement, the Marine contribution could be the mess force.

(At this point, British eye-brows raised. Apparently the Pentagon hadn't read the invitation closely. The invited guests were Marines, and no other invitations, it seems, were being issued.)

When CINCEUR heard about it, he immediately said there was no need of bringing Marines, of all people, to Edinburgh. He was prepared to furnish "crack ceremonial troops" of his own. (Excedrin headache #141 for Brigadier Maclean at this point.)

Although the Marine Corps seemed (not a new sensation) to be losing the battle of the Pentagon, important gains—as so often happens in battles—were being scored elsewhere.

The British, no mean fixers and arrangers in their own long history, had moved in via diplo-

matic channels. Around the flanks of the comptrollers, the PAOs, and their allies, came a *really* deep envelopment—British Embassy to State USIA.

Historically the terrain of the State Department is familiar and friendly to Marines, and has never been more so than in the spring of 1958. State liked the idea, and USIA thought it was a rave. Meanwhile, good Navy friends in CNO had discovered that there were a couple of reserve VR squadrons that would have to spend the summer boring holes in the upper atmosphere anyhow, so why not between Andrews and Edinburgh?

And so the righteous cause prevailed. After all this bureaucratic infighting, shaping up the Edinburgh Tattoo Detachment (Provisional) seemed simple.

For the benefit of anybody who may have to do this again, I shall list the detachment's composition. Out of a mad scramble by every eligible Marine to swing aboard, we emerged with the following: four-squad ceremonial platoon (8th & Eye); 24-piece D&B (8th & Eye); post band, Parris Island (then correctly rated as the best field band in the Corps); H&S detachment (mess, medical, administrative, and whatnot) from Quantico. Every man jack, including the pot-wallopers, was a poster Marine that any recruiter would have welcomed on his most conspicuous A-sign. Every man had blues, so that for street parades and the like we could field a two-platoon company. The discipline, behavior and what (ahem) we now speak of as motivation were incredible.

(Here I shall break my originally intended rule of naming no names from such an outstanding detachment. Without Lieutenant Colonel Joe Feagan as exec, nothing could have succeeded; with and because of him, everything did.)

It would be easy to run on and recount the hours of triumph—nationwide appearances on BBC TV, performances for members of the Royal Family, Scottish girls swooning over Marine blues and medals. . . .

Or the crowning dividend of all, orders (our friends in State and USIA again) to fly to Brussels and form part of the American exhibition at the great Brussels Expo. . . . (Some would say that the single-handed Marine Corps performance in the historic Grand Place de Bruxelles was a tattoo in its own right and the biggest moment of the trip—anyway it was good enough for the Mayor of Brussels to ask for a repeat appearance the next weekend.)

But it is better to see yourself as others see you.

With that thought in mind, let this account close with an article about a street parade and a simple ceremony by the Marines which appeared ten years ago in *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh's great daily which the Scots venerate as the English do *The Times*.