

Military resources in Special Collections

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QG HCOL025

The Wolfson Reading Room

Special Collections Centre

The University Library
University of Aberdeen
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Introduction

Many individuals, families and organisations have deposited their papers with the University and as a result, it has acquired an unrivalled collection of material, not solely relating to the history and culture of the north-east of Scotland but of national and international importance.

This factsheet highlights the wealth of military resources held in Special Collections prior to World War One and Two (please see separate factsheets). Of particular interest to researchers will be the material relating to the Boer war, the wars of Empire in Africa and India and the Napoleonic wars. For material relating to the Jacobites see separate factsheet.

The papers, which consist of diaries, journals, correspondence, maps/plans and photographs offer an insight into the major campaigns fought around the world but also the establishment of local militia and volunteer units in the north-east of Scotland.

Archival collections

University institutional papers

Military Education Committee minutes: two volumes covering period 1912-1948 (UNIVERSITY 895).

Family and estates papers

Many families have deposited their papers with the University. These archives are fantastically rich for local and regional politics, law enforcement, foreign trade, military service and colonial power.

Amongst the papers there is also significant material relating to militia and volunteer companies. The papers include official returns of numbers enlisted, muster rolls and lists of equipment.

Fraser, Major-General Alexander Mackenzie, commanding officer of the 78th Highlanders Regiment (Castle Fraser papers), including India and Egypt: 1758 - 1809 (MS 3470/6).

Fraser, Colonel Charles Mackenzie of Castle Fraser (Castle Fraser papers), India: 1792-1871 (MS 3470/8).

Fraser, Colonel Frederick Mackenzie of Inverallochy and Castle Fraser (Castle Fraser papers): 1831-1897 (MS 3470/9).

Fraser papers: Log of H.M.S. Scout, inscribed Hon. J.R. Drummond: 1842 (MS 3470/22/7).

Fraser papers: Ross-shire Militia and Aberdeenshire Volunteer Rifle Corps papers: 1814-1865 (MS 3470/20).

Fraser of Philorth: list of Leaders of Horse in Banff, commanded by the Laird of Philorth: c.1660 – 1669 (MS 2024).

Fraser of Philorth: minutes of two court-martials presided over by Lord Saltoun: 1807 and 1821 (MS 3004/462).

[Gordon, Lieutenant R], diary while serving with the British Expeditionary Force to China: 1841 – 1843 (MS 3004/V410).

Gordon, Thomas of Cairness, papers relating to service in the Greek War of Independence (Gordon of Cairness papers): 1821 - 1837 (MS 1160/21).

Inverness-shire militia, muster rolls (Earls of Fife papers): 1805 (MS 3175/2262 and MS 3175/2337).

Gordon, Charles Henry: papers relating to the Crimean War (Gordon of Cluny papers): 1854-1855 (MS 3600/7).

Kintore papers: Kincardineshire Volunteers, muster rolls, correspondence and circulars: 1859 - 1867 (MS 3064).

Kintore papers: Mearns militia and volunteers papers: 1794 - 1803: (MS 3064).

Ogilvie-Forbes, various family members in military service in India including Captain William Ogilvie and Dr Frederick Forbes: 19th century (MS 2740).

Ogilvie Forbes, Sir George, diplomat in Mexico (1927-1930), Vatican (1930-1932), Baghdad (1932-1935), Madrid (1935-1937) and Berlin (1937-1939). Including official correspondence and telegrams: 1920s – 1930s (MS 2740).

Napier, Robert Cornelis, first Baron Napier of Magdala (1810 - 1890), army officer (Yule family and Napier of Magdala papers): 19th century (MS 1162/2 and MS 1162/3).

Yule, Robert (1817 – 1857), soldier, 9th lancers, India (Yule family and Napier of Magdala papers): 1850s (MS 1162/1).

Organisation papers

Aberdeen Company of the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps: photographs: 1897 – 1934 (MS 1072).

Personal papers

Baird, John, 1st Viscount Stonehaven, diplomat and politician. Diaries of Baird from 1897 when he was in Sudan, from 1899 in Abyssinia, from 1900 as private secretary to Sir William Garstin, under-secretary for public works in Egypt and from 1902 – 1903 acting agent and consul-general in Abyssinia and political officer with the British East Africa and Abyssinia Frontier Survey. Also war diaries when he served with the intelligence corps in France: 1890s – 1915 (MS 3064).

Bulloch, John Malcolm, journalist; 19th century – 20th century, specifically relating to Gordon Highlanders (MS 3051).

Bulloch, John Malcolm, journalist: collected papers relating to Aberdeen Company of the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps and army barracks in Aberdeen: 1897 – 1934 (MS 1072). For more papers of Bulloch see Printed Collections section.

Chalmers, Alexander, chief engineer in the Royal Navy: 1843 - 1868 (MS 2884/1/2).

Chalmers, John, Lieutenant, Bengal Native Infantry and Assistant Commissioner for the Punjab: 1852 - 1862 (MS 2884/1/5).

Chalmers, Samuel, H.E.I.C. Artillery and telegrapher: 1849 – 1858 (MS 2884/1/3).

Chalmers, William, assistant military surgeon: 1853 - 1862 (MS 2884/1/4).

Davidson, Frederick W., Boer War letters: 1899-1900 (MS 3078).

Farquhar, Sir Arthur, Post-captain, log book of HMS Desiree: 1812 – 1844 (MS 2769/II/49).

Farquhar, Sir Arthur, Post-Captain, H.M.S. Blanche, West Indies, volume of memos and orders: 1832 – 1843 (MS 2769/II/119).

Fraser, Edward, of Gortuleg, Officer in the East India Company's Madras European Regiment. Diary: 1802 – 1807 (MS 3864).

Gordon, Lord Adam, politician and commander of H.M. forces in Scotland: correspondence with Henry Dundas, politician and others: 1783 – 1795 (MS 966).

Grant, James, Senior Sergeant Major, Bengal Sappers and Miners, Afghanistan and India: 1877 – 1883 (MS 3272).

Mackie, Adam, soldier, Sudan, Egypt, Cyprus: 1885 (MS 3018).

Murray, Lieutenant W., correspondence relating to 2nd Battalion of 25th Regiment, Native Infantry, India: 1810 – 1813 (MS 2769/II/68).

Ogston, Sir Alexander, surgeon and bacteriologist. Two journals, with two accompanying photograph albums, documenting his experiences during the Sudan campaign, Boer War and World War One: 1881 - 1917 (MS 3850).

Ross, Robert, sergeant, 1st Company Artillery Invalids: journal including military service in East Indies and India: 1800 – 1840 (MS 2858).

Wilson, Robert, physician and traveller. Volume containing accounts of surgical cases treated by Wilson on voyages with the East India Company: early 19th century (MS 430). Also, treatise entitled 'On the Preservation of Health on board the Honourable East India Company Ships': early 19th century (MS 431).

Other relevant collections

'The Officers of Honour appertaining to the Army Royal': an outline and explanation of the duties of senior army officers: 16th century (MS 210).

'The Oeconomy of the British Hospital in the Low Countries in all its branches' guidebook: c.1748 (MS 2416).

Ecoles militaires de France, 1786 (MS 2600).

NHS Grampian Archives

The archive dates from the founding of Aberdeen Infirmary in 1739 and contains substantial material relating to hospital provision, notably general and specialist hospitals, cottage hospitals and asylums.

The records of the hospitals show that in 1767 the Infirmary contracted with the War Office to maintain a ward for soldiers stationed in the area who became ill or were injured (see relevant minutes and financial records (GRHB 1/1 and GRHB 1/2).

This lasted until the 1820s and details of military admissions can be found in the hospital's relevant admission registers and case books (GRHB 1/3 and GRHB 1/4).

During the Boer War, the War Office approached several hospitals to ask if beds could be set aside for returning invalided soldiers.

Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (GRHB 1/1/22), Chalmers' Hospital in Banff (GRHB 30 relevant minutes) and the Leancoil Hospital in Forres (GRHB 18 relevant minutes) all offered beds.

Medico-Chirurgical Society

The Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society was founded in 1789 in response to the lack of medical teaching offered by both King's and Marischal Colleges. Its members, including such figures as Sir Alexander Ogston, Professor Matthew Hay, Sir Ashley Mackintosh and Sir James McGrigor,

contributed to the development of medical teaching and practice in Aberdeen and beyond in profound ways. Of particular relevance here please see papers of Sir James McGrigor who served during the Peninsular War and in India and Egypt, and was a pioneer of field hospitals and ambulances (AMCS/4/1).

For more information see the website but please note that although the catalogue is available via the University, the papers are held by the Medico-Chirurgical Society.

Printed collections

The Local Collection, accessible via The Wolfson Reading Room, contains relevant printed material such as:

Bulloch, John Malcolm, *The Gordon Highlanders* (London, 1903-10). Four volumes of newspaper cuttings/articles concerning the Gordon Highlanders.

The printed collections also hold long runs of published military lists (e.g. army, Indian army, naval and some air force): 18th century – 20th century. There are also named collections of relevance:

The MacBean Jacobite and Stuart Collections

The collection was donated to Aberdeen by the New York businessman William MacBean, and is a resource of international importance. Some 3,500 books and 1,000 pamphlets, as well as numerous contemporary engravings and maps cover many aspects of the histories of the Stuarts and the Jacobite risings. Some are held in no other collection in the UK, and some are unique, with the collection also being added to continually. The MacBean Collection also includes later, 19th century, retrospective and romantic depictions of Jacobite history, as well as some two dozen manuscript items.

See also *Mabel Allardyce, Aberdeen University Library MacBean Collection* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1949).

A further resource is *Drawn Sword: Engravings and Woodcuts from the MacBean Jacobite and Stuart Collection*. This is an online resource providing access to the c.1300 loose engravings and woodcuts, including portraits, topographical subjects and historical incidents.

Access

Materials are available upon request for consultation in the Reading Room. Please search online catalogues to identify individual items.

Further reading

For further reading please also see the studies of a number of manuscripts, printed books and

collections in the journals *Aberdeen University Library Bulletin*, *Aberdeen University Review* and *Northern Scotland*.

A number of the above papers were highlighted in: Beavan, Iain; Davidson, Peter; Stevenson, Jane. *Library and archive collections of the University of Aberdeen: an introduction and description*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press with the University of Aberdeen, 2011).

Bulloch, John Malcolm *Territorial Soldiering in the north-east of Scotland 1759 – 1814* (Aberdeen 1914).