

BUSHY RUN BATTLEFIELD

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

42ND ROYAL HIGHLAND REGIMENT

“THE BLACK WATCH”

The Black Watch, noted for the bravery, loyalty, and reliability of its soldiers over the past two and a half centuries, traces its history to the aftermath of the 1st Jacobite Rebellion in 1715. Torn between hatred of the English monarch and desires for peace, the people of the Scottish Highlands brewed with inter-clan hostilities. In hopes of quelling the violence, six independent companies were formed. Known as the Highland Watch, these men acted as a police unit and patrolled the countryside. The men soon became known as The Black Watch due to the “watch” they maintained over the Highlands and the dark tartan which they wore.



“Warriors” by Robert Griffing

In 1739 King George II of Great Britain authorized the formation of a Regiment of

Foot out of the six companies popularly known as The Black Watch. Recruits for the new regiment, originally numbered the 43rd, were noted for the very short amount of time they took to become recognized as distinguished, battle-worthy soldiers. Fierce with pride in themselves and their homeland, these Scottish soldiers forged an honorable name for themselves in the British Army. Prior to being renumbered the 42nd Highland Regiment in 1749, soldiers of The Black Watch distinguished themselves during the War of the Austrian Succession in Flanders, and later for their services in Ireland. The regiment soon earned designation as the 42nd ‘Royal’ Highland Regiment.



“NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSIT”

No One Attacks Me With Impunity

Regimental motto

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“Major Grant’s Piper” by Robert Griffing

In 1756, shortly after the outbreak of war between Great Britain and France, The Black Watch was sent to New York. After drilling and training for North American warfare, soldiers of the 42nd participated in a rigorous series of battles which further tested their skills as an elite fighting force. Between 1758 and 1762 these men would witness the horrors of war, including defeat at the hands of Montcalm’s French at Ticonderoga and the loss of their comrades to sickness and disease acquired in the muggy, mosquito-infested terrain of the West Indies.

Though plagued at times by the worst that war had to offer, soldiers of the 42nd Royal Highland Regiment have more often been remembered for victory. Serving under General Amherst, The Black Watch received the surrender of Montreal and witnessed the defeated French giving control of North America to Great Britain. Perhaps more importantly, however, was the courage and valor displayed by The Black Watch under Colonel Henry Bouquet when British forces routed an ambush party of Native Americans during Pontiac’s War. This action saved Fort Pitt, the second largest British fort in North America.

Victory at Bushy Run effectively ended Pontiac’s War and preserved the British presence west of the Allegheny Mountains. The Black Watch remained with Colonel Bouquet at Fort Pitt and joined him on an expedition against the Ohio Indians in 1764 to liberate captives taken by the Native Americans during the uprising.

