

ROBERTSON'S RANT

The Newsletter of the Clan Donnachaidh Society—Mid-Atlantic Branch



RADFORD GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo

On October 12th, the clan van arrived on the campus of Radford University. **Robert Knight** and I soon had the van unloaded and everything hand carried to the tent site with help from the convener of Clan Donald and a university volunteer. We were set up and ready by 9:00am for the start of the 24th Annual Radford Highlanders Festival on Moffett Field. We had last been on the campus in 2013 after five years at the Bisset Park location. We were situated in the middle of a fairly empty clan row anchored by Clan Johnson on one end and Clan Donald at the other end. This allowed us to have plenty of open space on both sides to expand as I had brought the larger 12x12 clan tent.

Along with the arrival of our clan piper, **Ripley Williams**, from the Virginia Highlands Pipes and Drums, we welcomed our long time Grandfather Mountain branch convener **John Lentz** and many other local visitors this year.

We had five clan folk participate in the parade of clans. We formed up and waited by the entrance to the athletic field for the festival parade to arrive from town. We joined in alphabetically and marched behind the Virginia Highlands Pipes and Drums onto the athletic field and lined up with the other clans for the massed band performance. After passing the reviewing stand we returned to the tent to continue watching the athletic competitions. **Alex Duncan** was on the athletic field as an unofficial judge. An unexpected surprise was having **Katrina Courtright** competing on the athletic field wearing her ancient Duncan tartan. This was her second competitive event and she did well. We shall see her again at the clan tent and on the field at the Richmond Games.



Left to right: Jim Fargo, John Lentz, and Ripley Williams at the Radford Games.

Unfortunately, while there was a good turnout of clans and vendors, the Radford student population was largely missing as it was the Fall Break weekend and not Homecoming as in the past. I enjoyed having convener **John Lentz**, **Art Robertson** and **Robert Knight** at the tent to help greet visitors and assist in determining which clan(s) they were descendant from and which they could be eligible to join. It was a cool, cloudy (high-60s) day in a great setting. We look forward to being back on the Radford campus in 2020!

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 4

NOVEMBER 2019

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VICTORIA CROSS MEDALS

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

The Victoria Cross, the highest British military award for gallantry, was instituted by Queen Victoria in 1856. The decoration is a simple Maltese cross in bronze and is made from metal from the guns captured by British troops at the Battle of Sebastopol. On the obverse side are the words "For Valour" and on the reverse is the date of the act of bravery for which the award was given. The name of the recipient is on a clasp to which the cross is attached.

Based on surnames, nine clansmen were identified in the 1956 Clan Annual who had earned and been awarded the Victoria Cross. These were: Private Hugh McIver; Captain Oswald Austin Reid; Flight Lieutenant William Reid; Frederick Lord Roberts; Lance Corporal Charles Graham Robertson; Captain Clement Robertson; Private James Peter Robertson; Lt. Colonel James Forbes-Robertson; and Sergeant-Major William Robertson.

In addition, five more clansmen are included: Thomas R. Colyer-Fergusson, Frederick Dobson, Frederick Hobson, Frederick H. S. Roberts and Henry Howey Robson. As this list is based on surnames only, it does not include any additional clansmen that have descended through their maternal side.

References:

"Clan Donnachaidh Annual", Edinburgh, 1956, pp. 22-27.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

See the articles in the History section of the Clan Donnachaidh Mid-Atlantic Branch website at www.roberston.org that provide a brief outline of each of these brave clansmen who won the Victoria Cross and their citations as published in the London Gazette.

CEUD MILE FAILTE (100,000 WELCOMES)!

We'd like to welcome the following 6 new and returning members who joined or renewed since the last report:

Nancy Carnan

Raymond Duncan

Richard Fink

Morris Gordon

Bob Land

Howard Robertson



ALEXANDRIA SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS WALK

By Norman Dunkinson

The 48th annual Scottish Christmas Walk will be held in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, on Saturday, December 7, 2019. Please join us to march in the parade and for our annual luncheon at the Fish Market at 105 King Street. The parade begins at 11:00am at Wolfe and South Saint Asaph streets and ends at Market Square. As noted at the Campagna Center website (<http://www.campagnacenter.org/scottishwalkweekend/parade>), enjoy marching units filled with the magnificent tartans of Scottish Clans, the stirring sound of Scottish bagpipes and drums, Scottish dancers, reenactment groups, Scottie dogs, dignitaries, classic cars, Santa Claus, and much more. We hope to see you there!

REIGN OF KING DAVID (1124-1153)

A Continuation of the “Royal House of Dunkeld” Article Series by James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

King David I of Scotland was born about 1080 and was Prince of Cumbria from 1113 to 1124. He was the youngest son of Malcolm Canmore and Margaret. On the death of his brother Alexander I, he was crowned at Scone.

David received backing from his brother-in-law, King Henry I of England in his fights against King Alexander’s illegitimate son and then against his own nephew to keep the throne. In 1130, David’s nephew, Mael Coluim mac Alaxandair (Malcolm son of Alexander), and King Oengus of Moray rebelled and a battle was fought at Stracathro. Oengus was killed and in 1134, Mael Coluim was captured and imprisoned. To pacify Moray, David appointed another nephew, William fitz Duncan to control the area and incorporated it within the kingdom of Scots.

After the death of King Henry in December 1135, David supported the claims of Henry’s daughter and his own niece, Empress Matilda to rule England. This led to conflict with King Stephen of England. The Battle of the Standard, fought at Cowton Moor in Yorkshire in August 1138 against King Stephen’s forces was a serious defeat for the Scots. Among those fighting for the English against the Scots were ancestors of both Robert the Bruce and John Balliol.

About 1127, King David appointed a bishop and canons to the monastery at Dunkeld and the celtic churchman were removed. Earl Madach witnessed charters by King David to the Church of Dunfermline in 1124-1127, two charters to the monks of Coldingham in 1140 and another to Melrose Abbey in 1142.

David was instrumental in the foundation of royal burghs and regional markets to promote commerce; the foundation of new monasteries; and continued the ‘Normanization’ of the Scottish government by encouraging Norman nobles from England to become the leaders of a new feudal aristocracy.

In 1152, Earl Madach, the first celtic earl of Atholl died. King David bestowed the earldom on his cousin, Malcolm, grandson of Malcolm Canmore whose father was Malcolm, the second son from Canmore’s first marriage. This second Earl Malcolm witnessed a charter by King David to the monks of Deer before 1153.

That same year, David’s only son and heir Prince Henry died. David designated the eldest of his three grandsons Malcolm to be his successor. After his death in May 1153 and burial at Dunfermline Abbey, his oldest grandson became, King Malcolm IV.

References:

Bingham, Caroline, “Kings and Queens of Scotland”, New York, 1976, pp. 21-25,150.

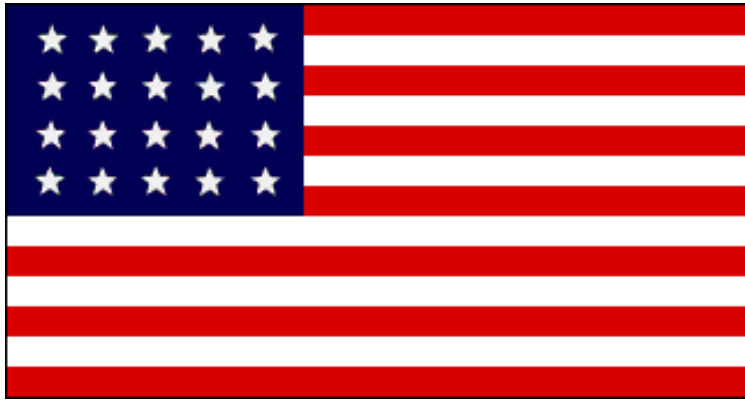
Cowan, Samuel, “Three Celtic Earldoms”, Edinburgh, 1909, 14-15.

Robertson, James A. “The Earldom of Atholl”, privately printed, 1860, pp.15-16.



King David I of Scotland, at left.

ROBERTSON'S RANT



SAMUEL CHESTER REID (1783-1861)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Samuel Chester Reid was born in 1783, the son of John Reid, a Scottish lieutenant in the Royal Navy. His father was captured during a naval expedition against New London, CT in 1780. Young Reid began his naval career as a powder monkey in the US Navy and during the War of 1812 was made captain of a privateer, 'General Armstrong'. On September 28 1814 at the battle of Fayall in the Azores, he was attacked by a squadron of three British ships with 136 guns and 2,000 men. With a crew of 90 men and 7 guns, Reid beat off several attacks before having to scuttle his ship to avoid its capture. Reid's defense had delayed the British expedition against New Orleans for ten days, allowing General Andrew Jackson to arrive at New Orleans before the British landed. Captain Reid was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions.

After the War of 1812, Reid became the harbor master for New York City. While serving there, he devised a signal code for US vessels and devised a method of rapid signaling by land which permitted messages to go from New York to New Orleans in two hours.

By 1818 there were twenty states in the Union and according to the second Flag Act of 1794, a stripe and star had to be added for each state. It was impractical to continue adding stripes as more states were admitted. To solve this problem, a Congressional Committee headed by New York's Congressman Peter Wendover was convened and in early 1818 submitted a report to Congress. Wendover heard arguments against increasing the number of stripes as each new state was added to the union as it would make the stripes narrower and narrower. He sought advice from his friend, Reid. It was Reid's view that the 13-stripe flag should honor the original thirteen Colonies and that later states should be honored by adding a star in the blue canton.

This design was Wendover's committee recommendation to Congress. On April 4 1818, President James Monroe signed into law the Flag Act of 1818.

References:

Sedeon, Margaret, "Star-Spangled Banner", *National Geographic*, pp 51-52.

Wikipedia searches.



Samuel Reid

Samuel Chester Reid.

SCOTS HUMOR

Courtesy of Andrew Fargo

Parting Golf Shot

An Englishman and a Scot were playing a round of golf. As they were walking down the 16th fairway at St. Andrews, a funeral procession went by the golf course. Angus Robertson was just about to play his 3-iron, but he stopped, took off his hat and bowed his head while the procession passed. Then he lined up and hit a beautiful shot to the green.

The Englishman said, "You're really a very sensitive person, noticing that funeral and everything."

Old Angus replied, "Aye, well – we would have been married 45 years tomorrow."



Ligonier Highland Festival. Left to Right: Evan Duncan, Sam Kistler, Patrick Due, Laura Wyette, Heather Due, and Tom Due.

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LAWRENCE BRUCE ROBERTSON (1885-1923) OSWALD HOPE ROBERTSON (1886-1966)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

At the beginning of World War I in 1914, Canadian surgeons serving in the Canadian Army Medical Corps arrived in France to help the British Army in the management of the large number of casualties. At the time the only method for blood transfusions was to transfuse blood directly from one person to another without regard to blood type. Despite the discovery of blood types by Karl Landsteiner in 1900, compatibility testing was basically unknown and often considered unnecessary. Complications due to blood clotting were not solved until Americans (Payton Rous and J.R. Turner, Jr.) developed the process of combining sodium citrate and dextrose with collected whole blood thus preserving it for up to one month.

The first battlefield demonstration of transfusing whole blood by the syringe method from a comrade or nearby soldier to the injured soldier was by Canadian surgeon Major Lawrence Bruce Robertson in October 1915 showing that the direct transfusion of uncrossmatched blood from the veins of a donor to a patient could save the lives of many wartime casualties, even if some died of acute hemolytic reactions. His 1916 article in the British Medical Journal helped convince the British authorities to accept the practice of blood transfusion. He set up his blood transfusion apparatus at a Casualty Clearing Station in France in 1917. Following the war, he returned to Toronto and became an orthopedic surgeon at a military hospital until his death in 1923 from pneumonia leaving a wife and two children.

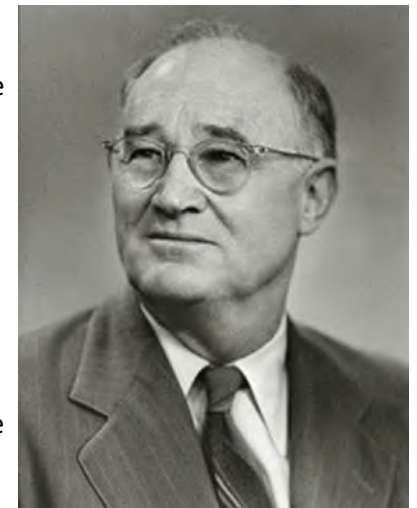


[Lawrence Bruce Robertson.](#)

The 1917 arrival of American forces in France reinforced the merits and value of blood transfusions in saving allied lives. Captain Oswald Hope Robertson, a British born medical scientist was a US Army Reserve doctor. While consulting with the British army he recognized the need to stockpile blood before casualties occurred. He pioneered the idea of establishing blood banks at the 'blood depots' he established in 1917 during his service in France with the US Army Medical Corps. He collected and stored syphilis-tested sodium-citrated (to prevent clotting) whole blood from already group typed 'O' universal donors in bulk and had it ready (stored in ice chests) in bottles before projected major combat actions. These were the first blood banks on the western front.

It was thanks to these two men (and others) whose parents had emigrated to Canada and USA that so many allied soldiers survived their injuries. The Royal Army Medical Corps adopted transfusion and declared it the most important medical advance of the war.

Captain Oswald Robertson became known as 'the first blood banker'. To honor his achievements, the Robertson Blood Center at Fort Hood Texas was named for him. He died in 1966.



[Oswald Hope Robertson.](#)

References:

Wikipedia – various sites

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON OF LAWERS

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Archibald Robertson was the eldest son of William and Caroline Robertson, a cabinet maker. William and his son Archibald were descendants of John Robertson of Muirton, second son of Alexander Robertson of Struan (5th chief) from his second marriage on April 24, 1504 to Elizabeth Stewart, daughter of the then Earl of Atholl.

From 1759 to 1783, Robertson was stationed in both the West Indies and North America. During part of the American Revolution (1775-1780), he was stationed in New England and his sketches of potential battlefield sites and landscapes around Boston and New York along with his diaries (1762-1780) were later published.

An oil painting by George Romney shows him in 1782 as a Major in the red uniform and black velvet facings of the Corps of Royal Engineers. The painting's background shows his involvement in the capture of Havana Harbor, Cuba by the British in 1762. The painting is in the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, Florida.

The Strathspey reel bagpipe tune "Colonel Archibald Robertson of Lawers" is named for him.

Archibald Robertson rose to the rank of Major General in 1805 before his retirement and lived at Lawers till his passing. On the death of Archibald's wife Catherine, the estate of Lawers passed to his two younger sisters and was last inherited by his sister's daughter, Mrs. William B. Robertson-Williamson. She sold the estate which was about half way down the northern bank of Loch Tay from Kenmore. The estate was acquired by the Campbells of Breadalbane in 1840.

References:

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

Robertson, James, "The Chiefs of Clan Donnachaidh 1275-1749", Perth, 1929, pp. 47-48.



Archibald Robertson of Lawers.

HMS DUNCAN

By Jim Fargo

The current Her Majesty's Ship Duncan is the sixth and last of the Daring-class air-defense destroyers built for the Royal Navy. Launched on October 11, 2010, she is named after Admiral Lord Adam Duncan, 1st Viscount of Camperdown, (1731-1804) who defeated the Dutch fleet at the Battle of Camperdown on October 11, 1797.



HMS Duncan is currently deployed near the Strait of Hormuz to escort and protect British flagged vessels in the Persian Gulf. She joined the frigate HMS Montrose in helping protect merchant shipping in the area.

HMS Duncan is the seventh Royal Navy ship to be named in honor of our clansman.

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RICHMOND GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo

This year's Central Virginia Highland Games & Celtic Festival was held at the Richmond Raceway Complex on October 25th-26th. We were situated beside House of Gordon so we had our usual joint four tent setup for the weekend. As the tents are provided by the sponsors, President Sam, Robert Knight and I only had to set up our displays to be ready for visitors.

Our combined Donnachaidh Diner/Gordon Grill team (headed by master chef **Dave Todd**) was again the place to be throughout the day. Thanks to everyone (from both clans!) for bringing various foods and beverages to help stock our Diner/Grill on both days.

Saturday's weather was a nice calm sunny Fall day. The massed bands gave a wonderful performance at noon on the athletic field. The Diner/Grill began serving after the band performance and before the clan parade at 2:00pm. All the clans formed up and marched onto the athletic field. Our Donnachaidh contingent of fifteen roared the clan war cry "Fierce When Roused" as we entered the field.

Due to family commitments, I was unable to return on Sunday, but President **Sam Kistler** and **Robert Knight** were there to operate the clan tent. It was another cool sunny day after a morning rain, but because of gusty winds the flags stayed furled. Sam was our only participant in Sunday's clan parade. An afternoon high point was the non-staked down vendor tent that became airborne and sailed over a part of the Gordon tent before landing right side up in the athletic field! Fortunately no one was in the way.

We had a steady stream of long time members plus potential clanfolk and other visitors coming by the tent both days. We welcome three new members: **Nancy Carnan**, **Richard Fink** and **Ray Robertson**. Several branch members also renewed: **Morris Gordon** and **Bob Land**.

This is the last festival of our Mid-Atlantic games season and is one of the best. Definitely recommend that you add this two day festival to your calendar for October 23rd-24th, 2020!

Perthshire—August
2003. Photo by
Norman Dunkinson.



WILLIAM ROY (1726-1790)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

William Roy was born in Carluke, Lancastershire, Scotland in 1726. His father was factor in the service of Gordons/Hamiltons estate of Hallcraig. Trained to become a civilian surveyor, one of his first tasks from the Board of Ordnance was to make an official map of Culloden soon after the battle.

In 1747, King George II commissioned a military survey of the highlands to facilitate the subjugation of the clans. Under the command of the Duke of Cumberland, William Roy was appointed an Assistant to the Quartermaster and provided with six soldiers to survey alongside five other teams. The survey of the highlands was completed in 1752 and the lowlands were finished by 1755. With the outbreak of the Seven Years War with France, Roy was commissioned both as a lieutenant in the 53rd Regiment of Foot and as an ensign under the Board of Ordnance in the Royal Corps of Engineers.

Ben Lawers is the highest peak in Perthshire at 3,983 feet (1,214 meters) and is located south of Loch Rannoch and north of Loch Tay in the Loch Rannoch and Glen Lyon National Scenic Area. It is the tenth highest Munro in Scotland. A 'Munro' is defined as being a mountain or peak over 3,000 feet (914.4 meters) in height. Long thought to be over 4,000 feet in height, a survey of Ben Lawers on September 17, 1776 by William Roy found it to be short by 17 feet. In 1878 a group of men led by Malcolm Ferguson built a six meter high cairn on the top in the hope of bringing the summit above the "magic" figure of 4,000 feet (1,219.2 meters). Unfortunately, the Ordnance Survey ignored the effort and described the cairn as an artificial structure that was not truly part of the mountain.

William Roy attained the rank of Major-General in 1781. Roy's greatest legacy was his groundwork in the preparation of the Ordnance Survey maps we now use which commenced a year after his death and over the next sixty years eventually covered the entirety of Great Britain.

Postscript: The 1995 movie "The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain" starred Hugh Grant as an English cartographer. The movie describes a similar event in Wales where the local inhabitants raise a hill by 16 feet to qualify the local hill as a mountain. This movie may have been inspired by the real event above.

References:

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

Scone Palace,
Perthshire—August
2003. Photo by
Norman Dunkinson.



William Roy.



**CLAN DONNACHAIDH SOCIETY
MID-ATLANTIC BRANCH**

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The Clan Donnachaidh Society is a world-wide organization dedicated to the preservation of our Highland heritage. Membership is open to those persons bearing recognized sept surnames and their descendants and spouses.

Membership in the parent Clan Donnachaidh Society in Scotland includes a subscription to the Clan Donnachaidh Annual.

Membership in the Mid-Atlantic Branch of the Clan Donnachaidh Society includes a subscription to the Branch newsletter, Robertson's Rant, published quarterly and containing listings of Highland Games and Celtic Festivals throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, Game and Festival reports, historical and biographical articles, and news items of interest to Donnachaidhs everywhere. Membership also includes an open invitation to join your fellow society members at the Clan Donnachaidh Tent and Diner at numerous Games and Festivals, and at other activities including the annual Scottish Christmas Walk and Clan Donnachaidh luncheon in the Old Town section of Alexandria, Virginia, in early December.

Parent Society membership dues are \$25.00 per year (individual) and \$35.00 per year (family = two persons/same address). Mid-Atlantic Branch membership dues are \$20.00 per year (individual).

Traquair
House, the
Oldest
Inhabited
House in
Scotland—
August 2005.
Photo by
Norman
Dunkinson.

