

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Na 'Bedford Highlanders'(1)

*A special programme, in the form of a "letter", designed for Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 927. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 623 corresponds to Litir 927.*

Tha sinn air a bhith a' cuimhneachadh a' Chiad Chogaidh thar nan trì bliadhna a dh'fhalbh, oir **tha ceud bliadhna air a dhol seachad bhon uairsin**. Am measg nan ceanglaichean iongantach a chaidh a thogail anns a' chogadh, bha fear eadar mìltean de shaighdearan Gàidhealach agus Bedford ann an Sasainn. Tha na saighdearan air an cuimhneachadh mar 'The Bedford Highlanders'.

Bhuineadh na saighdearan don *Highland Division*, agus bha iad air an tarraing às na Gòrdanaich, na Sìophortaich, Rèisimeid Earra-Ghàidheal is Chataibh agus na Camshronaich. Chaidh iad ann an toiseach anns an Lùnastal naoi ceud deug is ceithir-deug (1914). Bha iad ann airson costa ceann a deas Shasainn a dhìon. Ach tro thìde, dh'atharraich an t-amas aca. Anns a' Chèitean naoi ceud deug is còig-deug (1915), dh'fhalbh iad chun na Frainge airson a dhol an sàs anns an t-sabaid anns na trainnsichean.

Chaidh iad a Bhedford air còrr is seasgad trèana. Taobh a-staigh dà latha, ràinig seachd mìle deug duine à ceann a tuath na h-Alba am baile. Chan fhaca Bedford a leithid riamh. Dh'fhaighnich boireannach de shaighdear cò às a bha iad agus fhreagair e, 'Ross-shire'. Cha robh i eòlach air a' chainnt aige agus chuala i 'Russia'. Chaidh fathann timcheall gur ann às an Ruis a bha iad!

Ach, **dhaibhsan** a bha eòlach air Alba, cha robh mì-chinnt ann. Bha fèilidhean air na saighdearan. Bha pìobairean a' seinn am pìoban mòra. Bha cuid mhath de na saighdearan a' fuireach còmhla ri teaghlaichean anns na dachannan aca, agus fhuair an dà shluagh air adhart gu math. Bha na goireasan dachaigh ùr do chuid às a' Ghàidhealtachd – uisge – fuar agus teth – a' ruith à tapaichean, agus gas airson còcaireachd. Cha robh sgeul air tobraichean no teintean mònach!

Tha làrach-lìn ann air a bheil 'The Bedford Highlanders' agus 's fhiach a choimhead oirre. Tha dealbhan iongantach oirre de shaighdearan Gàidhealach ann am Bedford aig an àm sin.

Bha iad an sàs ann an trèanadh is deisealachadh airson a' chogaidh. Bha iad a' drileadh. Dh'ionnsaich iad sgilean gunna is sabaid, chladhaich iad trainnsichean mar a bhitheadh thall sa Bheilg no san Fhraing, agus dh'ionnsaich feadhainn mu theicneòlas ùr – mar a chuireadh iad loidhnichean fòn an sàs. Bha na pàircean làn shaighdearan, each agus leth-asalan.

Nuair a thàinig Oidhche Challainn, bha iomagain air muinntir a' bhaile mun dol a-mach aig na saighdearan. Am biodh iad fo smùid agus mì-rian? Chaidh fathann timcheall gun robh iad a' dol a chur fèileadh beag air an iomhaigh de John Bunyan

anns a' bhaile! Aig a' cheann thall, cha robh trioblaid ann. Bha dannsadh ann agus seinn ach cha robh e mì-rianail. Agus cha d' fhuair Bunyan fèileadh air!

Aig àm na Càisge, bha geamannan Gàidhealach ann. Ghabh mìle is ceithir cheud duine àite sna farpaisean agus bha ceithir mìle deug neach-amhairc a' coimhead orra.

Agus chan ann a-mhàin à ceann a tuath na h-Alba a bha na saighdearan. Thàinig feadhainn, a bh' air am beò-ghlacadh le fèin-ghiùlan nan Gàidheal, às an sgìre fhèin, agus feadhainn à Lunnainn. Ach bha aon duilgheadas mòr ann agus b' e sin galar. Innsidh mi dhuibh mu dheidhinn sin anns an ath Litir.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Bhuineadh [do]: *belonged [to]*; trainnsichean: *trenches*; fèilidhean: *kilts*; deisealachadh: *preparing*; leth-asal: *mule*; Oidhche Challainn: *Hogmanay*; àm na Càisge: *Easter time*; galar: *disease*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** Tha sinn air a bhith a' cuimhneachadh a' Chiad Chogaidh: *we have been remembering the First [World] War*; am measg nan ceanglaichean iongantach a chaidh a thogail: *among the surprising links that were built*; na Gòrdanaich, na Sìophortaich, Rèisimeid Earra-Ghàidheal is Chataibh agus na Camshronaich: *the Gordon Highlanders, the Seaforth Highlanders, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the Cameron Highlanders*; airson costa ceann a deas Shasainn a dhìon: *to defend the southern coast of England*; chaidh fathann timcheall gur ann às an Ruis a bha iad: *a rumour went around that they were from Russia*; bha pìobairean a' seinn am pìoban mòra: *pipers were playing their Highland pipes*; fhuair an dà shluagh air adhart gu math: *the two peoples got on well*; bha na goireasan dachaigh ùr do chuid: *the domestic facilities were new for some*; cha robh sgeul air tobraichean no teintean mònach: *there was no sign of wells or peat fires*; 's fhiach a choimhead oirre: *it's worth looking at*; chladhaich iad trainnsichean mar a bhitheadh thall sa Bheilg no san Fhraing: *they dug trenches as they would over in Belgium or France*; dh'ionnsaich feadhainn mu theicneòlas ùr: *some learned about a new technology*; mar a chuireadh iad loidhnichean fòn an sàs: *how they would establish telephone lines*; am biodh iad fo smùid agus mì-rian?: *would they be drunk and disorderly?*; a' dol a chur fèileadh beag air an iomhaigh de John Bunyan: *going to put a kilt on the statue of John Bunyan*; a bh' air am beò-ghlacadh le fèin-ghiùlan nan Gàidheal: *who were captivated by how the Gaels disported themselves*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** **dhaibhsan** a bha eòlach air Alba: *for those who knew Scotland. The preposition 'do' will often stand for the English preposition 'for', and here is an example. It can be neatly used in this idiom in the form of a prepositional pronoun. Here are some other examples: dhuibhse a dh'aidicheas ur ciont 'for those of you who admit your guilt'; dhuinne a tha a' creidsinn ann an deamocrasaidh ... 'for those of us who believe in democracy ...'; dhaibhsan a tha taiceil do thràilleachd, canaidh mi seo ... 'to those who support slavery, I'll say this ...*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** **tha ceud bliadhna air a dhol seachad bhon uairsin:** *a hundred years have gone by since then.*

Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoinachadh le MG ALBA