

# LODGE HLI ROYAL HIGHLAND FUSILIERS NO: 1459



by Joseph (Gerry) McAuley (ex1RHF Signal Platoon 1958--64)

## Military Masonic Lodge 71st Regiment (H.L.I.) 1801--33

I will conclude this brief history of the Lodge with an interesting item concerning the old 71st. If the reader will forgive me I would like to give you a very brief history of the Regiment (HLI). The 71st was initially the 73rd (Highland) Foot, redesignated 71st Highlanders in 1786; in1808 it was given the infantry roll, and in 1810 it became known as the 71st Highland Light Infantry. In 1881 the Regiment amalgamated with the 74th Highlanders to become the 1st & 2nd H.L.I. the reason I mention this, is, while carrying out research on this project, I came across information suggesting that there was a Masonic Lodge active within the 71st in the early nineteenth-century. It was well known that a number of regiments had Masonic Lodges within their ranks at this time, so it was decided to pursue the rumour and it turned out to be a very interesting tale.

When I made enquires at the Grand Lodge of Scotland to see if there was any substance to the rumour, their reply stated that the 71st was issued a Charter on the 21st May 1759 and was declared dormant in 1809. It was re-issued to lodge Trafalgar No 223 Leith on 1st February 1808. The re-issue was in response to the "Secret Society Act" (see below}. This does not tie-in with the 71st HLI. The 71st mentioned is in fact the 71st Frazer Highlanders raised 1757---disbanded1767. These dates tie up with the Charter mentioned earlier.

On the 2nd April 1801 the 71st was issued a Warrant No 895 by the Grand Lodge of Ireland to hold Masonic meetings. The Regiment was stationed in Ireland at this time. The warrant was lost when the regiment took part in the seizure of Buenos Aires, this chapter in the history of the 71st is very interesting.

In 1805 the Highland Brigade comprising of the 71st, (Highland Light Infantry), 72nd (Seaforth Highlanders), and 93rd (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) sailed for Cape Town. On arrival they took part in a battle against the main Dutch force, which they defeated at Blueberghill. In the same year1806, a bizarre expedition was mounted at the instigation of Commodore Sir Home Popham from Cape Town; its aim was to attack the Spanish settlements in South America. The 71st along with some Calvary and Artillery, sailed with the Royal Navy to South America, the Spanish defenders fled and the city capitulated. A vast amount of treasure was captured and prize money was shared by the victors, but soon after, the Spanish raised a strong force and attacked the city. The British surrendered after a fierce battle, and the relief column, which had earlier captured Montevideo, was also captured. The Spanish treated them hospitably and repatriation terms were eventually agreed for them to return to Britain.

Throughout all the upheaval, the Lodge of the 71st lost their original Warrant and all their Masonic silver, regalia, and documents

On 5th May 1808 Lodge No: 895 of the 71st was issued with a duplicate Warrant (charter) and this stayed with the Lodge until it was handed back to Grand Lodge of Ireland on 17th November 1835, at the insistence of their Commanding Officer at that time. I have a copy of the letter which was sent to Grand Lodge of Ireland from the secretary of Lodge 895 (the copy is attached at the end of this article along with other letters to Grand Lodge from the secretary addressing the business of the Lodge).

Part of the letter states. "Although as soldiers we cheerfully comply with all orders given to us by our commander, still we lament that we found it his bounding duty to allow no secret society to exist in the regiment under his command". I also have a copy of the warrant from 1808.

The Lodge jewels were the next item that came to light during my research, so what happened to them after the battle in 1806? There is a story of a midshipman RN, when he was browsing in a Pawn Shop in Buenos Aires, found the jewels in their original case, bought them and presented them to the 71st. This happened towards the end of 1877.these jewels were marked. Lodge No 895 ---71st HLI. The regiment did not use the title HLI till 1810, we know, as previously stated that when they went missing the title was the 71st Highlanders.

The next piece of information comes from an article in "The Freemason" dated 19th April 1924 page 583:

"Bro Admiral A F Foley was surprised on entering a chapel in the vicinity of Buenos Aires to discover that the decorations on the altar were the silver insignia of a Masonic lodge. He was informed by the priest that the jewels had been taken from British troops in 1806. Upon investigation, the Admiral found that these articles belonged to the Regimental Lodge attached to the 71st Regiment. He purchased them from the priest and has now restored them to the Corps to which they formerly belonged".

They were mounted in a glass case and hung in the ante-room of the Officers Mess. One would have thought that the jewels had found a safe home, and they did until 1911. On the night of the 9th or 10th March that year there was a robbery at the Officers Mess; taken were the Regimental Masonic jewels, inscribed "Regimental Lodge of the 71st Highlanders, 1806, Lodge No: 895. Lost at Buenos Aires in 1806, restored in 1875". All endeavours to find them have failed. The robbery was carried out in Lucknow, India; the Regiment being stationed there at that time. Up to the present day there is still no sign of the jewels. (For a complete list of other items stolen see HLI Chronicle Vol XI No: 3rd July 1911).

In the Church of Santo Domingo one of their much prized trophies is the flag of the 71st Highland Regiment of Foot captured by the Argentines in 1806. Also in the Museum of Santo Domingo there are uniforms, arms and documents taken after the battle.

Below is a copy of an inscription written on the back of a Masonic Summons found amongst the documents captured at Buenos Aires.

COPY OF A SUMMONS IN THE MUSEO HISTORICO, BUENOS AIRES	
71st Highlanders Lodge No: 895	
Brother:	
You are requested to attend your Lodge on the of	
Secretary	

On the back of this Summons the following is written in pencil:-"unpatriotico pero mal rimado soneto".

Epitafio al Regimiento 71 Acqui yace el famoso Regimiento nombardo del Ingles 71 Jamas vencido de enemigo alquno y que en lides mil salio con lucimiento Aqui yace postrado su ardimiento. A la fuerza y valor de unos soldados Que sin brillo, sin lustre y desastrados Abatieron su orgullo en un momento Llorara Inglaterra esta desgracia Sirviendo de escarmiento a su osadia El saber ha perdido por audacia cerca de dos mil hombres Que mania intentar dominar su ineficacia Del espanol su brio y valentia.

The following is a free translation:-"A patriotic but badly rhyming sonnet"

Epitaph to the 71st Regiment Here lies the famous regiment Called by the English the 71st. Never defeated by any enemy, and from a thousand encounters emerged with splendour! Hear their valour lies prostrate before the strength and courage of A few shabby and tattered soldiers who humbled their pride in an instant. England will mourn this misfortune, and the knowledge that she has lost nearly two thousand men by her temerity will serve as a warning to her boldness. What madness to attempt to dominate the mettle and gallantry of the Spaniard with her inefficiency. The question still remains, why did the Commanding Officer order the Lodge to hand back its Charter? In the early 19th Century the political climate in the Americas was extremely volatile. The Regiment had just returned from Canada in 1834 where they were kept busy with the mainly French population and a few engagements with the Americans, who were expanding their country with aggressive force. The Regiment was due to return to Canada in 1838 because of the continued unrest in the Province, the Commanding Officer probably didn't like the idea of a Masonic Lodge within his Ranks.

There is also another explanation which came to light courtesy of 'The Irish News Belfast Friday 3rd September 2001' - Secret organisations such as the Royal Arch Purple and the Black Preceptory which were perceived as a hybrid of Freemasonry are in fact, part of the Grand Orange Lodge. This organisation was very much part of the British Armed Forces in the 18th and 19th century after it was formed in 1795.

In 1827 the Duke of Cumberland had become overall Grand Master. By 1836 he had dissolved all military lodges within HM Forces and resigned his position as Grand Master, due to the embarrassing position in which he was placed by the subversive discipline of military Orangemen against the chain of command. This was a response to the Catholic Emancipation Law passed in 1829 to which the Grand Orange Lodge reacted with anger, saying it was a bad law. Later in 1832 "The Party Processions Act" was passed, which outlawed Orange Demonstrations, they rebelled against this Act by holding unlawful Parades, by this time the Orange Order was facing hostility from the Governing Classes. (Notes taken from "The History of Ulster" by Jonathan Bardon, Pages 252--253 --254 gives a full report on the situation).

I have just received another piece of information in an extract from "The Red Hackle Oct 1948" courtesy of Maj Ronnie Proctor retired, after he read my article on Lodge895, he sent me this information. "Previous to Queen Victoria ascending the throne, the Society of Orangemen had hundreds of lodges throughout the North of Ireland, in England and in Military Regiments, with the Duke of Cumberland as their Grand Master. A few years before the death of William IV, a conspiracy was discovered in the Orange Lodges attached to Military Regiments to put the Duke of Cumberland on the Throne instead of Queen Victoria. As a result of this discovery the Government Suppressed the Orange Society and thereby Squashed the Conspiracy. When Queen Victoria ascended the Throne in 1837 a Whig Government was in power, with a Whig Viceroy in the ascendancy in Ireland.

This government was most unfriendly to Freemasonry, and bearing in mind the aforesaid conspiracy-and not making any distinction between Orangemen and Freemasons-the Whig Government in Ireland directed the Commanding Officer of Forces in Ireland not to allow any Lodges of Freemasons to be attached to Regiments whilst working in the country (Ireland). If the 42nd (Black Watch) had been quartered anywhere else than in Ireland, this would not have Happened" (The 42nd handed back their Charter on the 6th August 1840).

The 71st were stationed in Edinburgh when they handed back their Charter. (I have a copy of the original letter to G Lof I from the Lodge secretary, its on view within this history) So it looks like all Regiments received the order to disband Freemason Lodges in their ranks no mater where they were stationed.

It took a while before I could verify the above statements but if you read the report of 1835 House of Commons Select Committee Investigation, and also the book "The Billy Boys" by William Marshall, you will get the verification to the above statement on the Orange Order in Ireland at that time.

Now we know why the CO of the HLI asked the Lodge to hand back their Charter to Grand Lodge of Ireland. But if, as stated, all this was going on then the powers that be probably thought that lodges, no matter what their make up, had no place in the Armed Forces where they could be deemed "prejudicial to Military Discipline".

The Secret Societies Act has been referred to in this short history, so, the following is an explanation of the Act and how it was used by Grand Lodge Scotland to their advantage. The Act was quite favourable to Masons as paragraphs V and V1 will testify. The full title of the Act: C.A.P. LXX1X.-An act for the more efficient suppression of societies established for seditious and treasonable purposes; and for better preventing treasonable and seditious practices.

<u>V.</u> And whereas certain societies have long been accustomed to be holding in this kingdom under the denomination of Lodges of Free Masonry, the meetings whereof have been in great measure directed to charitable purposes, be it therefore enacted. That nothing in this act shall extend to the meetings of any such society or lodge which shall, before the passing of this act, have been usually Holden under the said denomination and in conformity to the rules prevailing among the said societies of free masons.....

<u>V1.</u> Provided always, that this Exemption shall not extend to any such society, unless two of the members composing the same shall certify upon Oath, (which oath any Justice of the Peace or other Magistrate is hereby empowered to administrate) that such a society or lodge has, and in conformity to the rules prevailing among the Societies or Lodges of Free Masons in this Kingdom; which Certificate, duly attested by the Magistrate before before whom the same shall be sworn, and subscribed by the person so certifying, shall, within the Space of two Calendar months after the passing of this Act, be deposited with the Clerk of the Peace for the County, Stewartry, Riding, Division, Shire, or Place, where such Society or Lodge hath been usually held: Provided also, That this Exemption shall not extend to any such Society or Lodge unless the name or Denomination thereof, and the usual Place or Places, and the Time or Times of its Meeting and the Names and Descriptions of all and every the Members thereof, be registered with such Clerk of the Peace as aforesaid, within two Months after the passing of this Act, and also on or before the Twenty-fifth day of March in every succeeding Year.

The Act was brought in mainly through fear, due to the political climate at that time. This was the Period when the influence of the French Revolution helped to create a number of radical movements which were springing up all over Britain, namely, United Englishmen, United Scotsmen, United Irishmen, United Britons, and the London Corresponding Society, and some of these societies were using the same premises as the Freemasons.

What the Grand Lodge of Scotland did to keep Lodges under its jurisdiction in order was to issue its own certificate to comply with the Act; no Lodge could function without this certificate. The Act was repealed by Parliament in the 1970s, but before that the swearing of the Oath before a Magistrate, before obtaining the certificate was gradually fazed out. When the last certificate obtained in this manner was issued we do not know. The last time Lodge HLI, swore the Oath was in 1953, I have a copy of the certificate, but there is no record of which two senior Office Bearers took the Oath.

With the introduction of the Act there was a problem of issuing new Charters, Grand Lodge resolved the problem by re-issuing dormant Charters, hence the 71st(Frazer Highlanders) Charter No: 79 was re-issued to Lodge Trafalgar in Leith where it remains to this day.

Hear was I thinking this was the end of Masonic tradition in the Regiment, then Sandy at R H Q, drew my attention to H L I, Chronicle, No 12, October 1895, and the letters contained therein. I will copy the letters below, the question is, Lodge 895 handed back their Charter in November 1835, and here we have a reference to an other Lodge, (Knights Templar) I.O.G.T.-The "Assaye" Lodge, No 75. this Lodge may have nothing to do with the Regiment although there are some remarks which seem to contradict my thoughts on the matter. What I will do is copy out the letters in question, and then try and find out more. also mentioned was the I.O.G.T.-Hamilton "Military" Lodge No 560, and " Garfield" Lodge, Glasgow.

I acquired this little snippet of information from the "Glasgow Herald" (this day 200 years ago). It was said that more than 200 men, principally of the 71st Highland Regiment, had been induced to remain in South America on the Evacuation of that country by our troops. We are now informed that not more than 80 men remained there. It left me wondering if this was the start of Masonry in S/A.

I hope I have solved the mystery of our long forgotten Lodge in the 71st (895), but somehow I don't think so.

J G McAuley PM Secretary Lodge HLI/RHF 1459 By the Right Worshipful and Right Honorable Archard

APXX APX

Grand Master of all the Lodges of Free Masons in the Kingdom of IRELAND, the Master Deputy Grand Master Obvorshipfull 100 Handle John Lord Buren Hulchinson 2 Grand Wardens.

Schn Scarth A sutherland & Seorge Sutherland BROTHERS

in the deventy list thegement of about of such Persons who, by their Knowledge and Skill in MASONRY, may contribute to the Well-being and Advancement thereof ;---We therefore, a duly weighing the Premises, and having nothing more at Heart than the Prosperity and true Advancement of MASONRY, and reposing special Trustend Confidence in our trusty and well-beloved Brothers, the said John Hearth A Suthersland + Parge Sotherland of whose Abilities and Knowledge in Masonry Watare satisfied, do by these Presents, of our certain Knowledge and mere. Motion, nominate, create, authorize and constitute the said John slearth . A Sutherland Songe Autherland to be Master and Wardens of a Lodge of Fair and Accurrun Massing to be held by them and their Successors, lawfully admitted in the said Lodge, for Ever. And We do hereby give and grant unto the said form Scarth A dietherland + Terrie Methorizad and their Successors, full Power and lawful Authority, from time to time, to proceed to Election of a new Master and Wardens, to make such Laws, Rules and Orders, as they from time to time, shall think proper and convenient for the well-being and ordering to said Lodge ; reserving to Outselves and our Successors, Grand Masters or Grand Wardens of IRELAND, the sole Right of Deciding all Differences which shall be brought the Appeal before Us, and our Specessors, Grand Masters or Grand Wardens of Ingrash

in culturing whereof we have hereunto set our Hands and Seal of Office this every . Day of Alayer in the Year of Our LDRD GOD 1828, and in the Year of Masonry 58028.

ENTERED BY ME.

In the Word at Hills Count Later of Index 1

DUPLICATE WADDOT ISCUED TO THEF ON SHA MAY 1808

No. 805

Revised

843 Juni 1822 Jublen 21th June 18.2.2 & Brother tig time is army a Return of Hicey for the aniung Helf year communy 25 Jack by Brother brighton will call low you with the Letter The will be able to andered any infuny you may be readed to make .... am for Ha mast - abs - here aur irwant in alexa Loca 195 " Junham Et A . 4 7.4 35 april

#### 895 June 1822 Dublin 24th June 1822.

Sir & Brother

I beg leave to army a return of Officers for the ensuing Half Year commencing 25 July and also a annual list of the Brethren of Lodge 895.

A Brother Crighton will call on you with this Letter he will be able to answere any enquiry you may be pleased to make

I am Sir & Br

Your most-obt-Humble Servant A Sinclair Sec Lodge895

Mr--Graham E W

D-GS

3 Mapel St Dublin

(this is the best translation available due to the condition of the letter)

hardy election officery -3. Augus Boat Harthipful master, . Themas Crughton Pall- master -A sthe Annew Senior Harden & Home Carmichael Junior Had. Robert Mours Suno bearing Alex Mongrey Junior Lee aline Buchaw Preasure Alex Standar Scoulary James Honel C. Sigler annual List of Butting Broth William flanke Y Thomas Congelan + Home Forester Videni Afrew ~ Pilor Campbell · John Buchon ) 1 Iday stever -~ Her. Freeds west 1 Willow Carmichaei James Bram v ges higherson V Aure Jaffrey V Aug - Similair " Rout mumo ~ this then yis . Shawed farming V D'any Flavell V. James Shewertrolling Hanan 1. Arche Sondans 1 Thanks Frager half yearly consideration

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### Dualy elected Officers Br Angus Cook-----R W M Br Thomas Crighton----Past Master

Br John Agnew WSW Br Wm Carmichael WJW. "Robert Munro SD "Alex Menzies JD John Buchan Treasurer "Alex Sinclair Secretary Br James Flavell Tyler

#### **Annual List of Brothers**

Br Thomas Craighton *	Br William Clarke
" John Agnew *	" Wm Forester
" John Buchan *	" Peter Campbell
" Angus Cook *	" John Oliver
" William Carmichael *	" Wm Beardsworth
" Geo McPherson	" James Brown ?????
" Alex Sinclair *	" Robert Munro *
" James Flavell *	" Thomas Cummings
" John Fansw ????	" James Stewart
" Thomas Fraser	" Archie Sinclair

?? No Br has secured the 3rd Degree since last Half Yearly Communication

1822 9 feb in hand	1. 2. 8 1/2
22 FebPost	0. 1. 4
I C	2.2
?????1822	5. 5.
?????????????????	10. 1019. 9

\* denotes Office Bearers

? " " Names i can not recognise

C la The Jught Morshend Master of the prasid Mour'. Setge of Justian 1 Munimilist filbert Jime of forge 895- 71= Jug - More byine in culse in America. Christoley ligs your Wortheys to took to him as his frand Ladge sustigacte is lost - to be favories with another Apour Manarilist is a Cating of cottand and having ". Sabound under haver setimets for the Inarce -1-14 Menthes is advised by Jurgions to go to Suis Matiluc and hopes I with htak. into Learnous Consideration and 1 20 Ofour Mimorstest will Ever Gray Townson HSN=18-9. Strie 5" Junit - 1827 for191895

To the Right Worshipful Master the Grand Lodge of Ireland

Your

Memorielist Gilbert Phrie of Lodge 895--71st Reg-- Now lying in Quebec in America, humbeley (humbly) begs your Worships to look to him as his Grand Lodge certificate is lost-----to be favoured with another.

Your memorielist is a native of Scotland and having laboured under heavy sickness for the Space of 14 months is advised by Surgeons to go to his Natitive (home) and hopes i will be-take into serious consideration and if so Your memorielist will

Townsend H No 18 5th September 1827 Ever Pray G Phrie Lodge 895

00 Dublin, by the Grand Delinburgh faithe 1% Sing & Brother We have the pleasure of acknowling the receipt of your letter of the god June last we delayed writing from hime to time on hopes of being able to Land you as tales factory an answer as popula but now - we deeply and Sincerely regret that we are Compelled to enclose our ole and long respected Harran to your address to be delivered to the officer of the frand Lotige Although as Soldiers we cheerfully Camply with all orders given to us by seen Commander the we lament that helfound it his boundon duty to allow to Secret Society to legist on the Regiment under his former In Cider le Satisfy every one that we have deliver our Harrand when reduced we beg lave to rege hat you will here as time on achurchdging its receifed that date if its arinal in Dublin - More will also us by making as sware how we can bed tatthe with hand - Lating - love der po use in Sanding as the p aluded to a your last as there are some of the of the Haiting for your linder & Reacht for the Warner We have the honor to Rive of l Sir & Brothin Chur buy thetent

Edinburgh Castle 17 Nov 1835

Sir & Brother

We have the pleasure of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 9th June last. we delayed writing from time to time in hope of being able to send you as satisfactory an answer as possible, but now we deeply and sincerely regret that we are compelled to enclose our old and long respected Warrant to your address, to be delivered to the Officers of the Grand Lodge. Although as soldiers we cheerfully Comply with all orders given to us by our Commander, still we lament that we found it his bounden duty to allow no "Secret Society" to exist in the Regiment under his command.

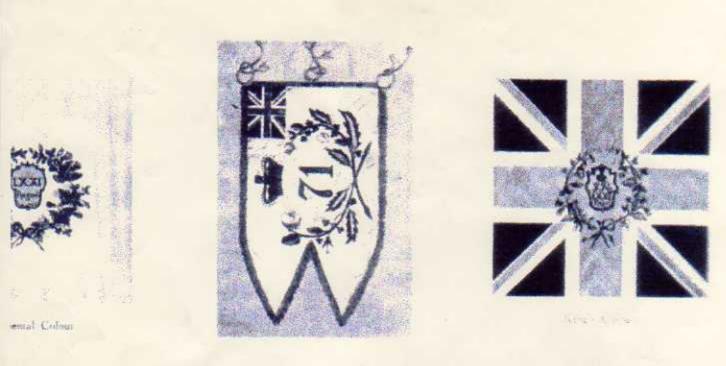
In order to satisfy everyone we have delivered our Warrant when ordered, we beg leave to request that you will lose no time in acknowledging its receipt and the date of its arrival in Dublin-- You will also favour us by making us aware how we can best settle with the Grand Lodge. We see no use in sending us the Certificate alluded to in your last, as there are none of those they were for now forthcoming. Some of them however, are leaving, may hereafter apply for them if so they will of course pay for them themselves, as we are entirely without funds.

> Waiting for your answer & receipt for the Warrant We have the honour to remain Sir & Brother Your very obedient Humble Servant William P------Sargt 71st Reg

To Mr John Fowler D,G,S, Grand Lodge of Ireland. Commercial Building Collage green Dublin.

Annual Dertificate for year ending December 31 # 1953. The Grand Lodge of Scotland OF ANCIENS, FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS. Kereby Certifies that the Lodge The Highland Light Infantry (City of Glasgow) No 1459 has complied with the whole requisites of the Act of Parliament entitled An Act for the more effectual suppression of Societies established for seditions and treasonable purposes," &c, &c, and also with the Resolutions of the Grand Lodge of 5th August, 1799. The said Lodge therefore is entitled, and the Grand Lodge of Scotland authorises it to exercise the whole powers and functions of Treomasonry in terms of and conform with its Charter of Constitution and Erection! Given under my hand and the Seal of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, and by the authority of the Grand Lodge, this first day of January One thousand Nine hundred and Fifty three years.





Par Batter

The 71st Colours and Pipe Banner captured in 1806 as they looked in the 19th century.



olour as displayed in the National Historical seum, Buenos Ayres, in 1997.



The 71st Regimental Colour in 1997.

