

The Royal Aberdeenshire Highlanders

marching air

Alexander Walker

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of six staves. The first staff is in treble clef, while the remaining five are in bass clef. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and includes several trills (tr.) and slurs. Chord symbols (C, F, G, Dmin) are placed above the notes to indicate the harmonic structure. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

ROYAL ABERDEENSHIRE HIGHLANDERS, THE.

Walker: *A Collection of Strathspeys, Reels, Marches, &c.*, 1866; No. 68, pg. 24.

Scottish, March (4/4 time). C Major, AB.

i. Carl MacKenzie, LP, 1977. ii. Allie Bennett, CD, 2013

Having disbanded the Clan armies after the Jacobite Rebellions, various Militias were raised by the Government to provide security at home but also augment the standing army if required. Many were raised by the great landowners and others were related to the area the soldiers came from. The Aberdeen Militia were gradually reformed over time and eventually became the Gordon Highlanders.

The following is the time line of the Aberdeen Militia development

1798 The 6th North British Militia (Or the Aberdeen Militia)

1803 to 1855 the title was the Aberdeenshire or 55th Regiment of Militia.

Between 1834 and 1855 no formal training took place, indeed the militia was in a deplorable state, existing on paper only.

1855 the Scottish Militia was embodied and recruiting of officers and rank and file took place.

1882 the regiment became the 3rd Battalion the Gordon Highlanders.'

More information about the militia is in the section about the tune '*Capt. Charles Leith Hay*'

Another of the captains in the Royal Aberdeenshire Highlanders in Alexander's time was Capt. W. S. Gilbert. This is none other than the librettist of the Gilbert and Sullivan duo who wrote operettas including '*The Mikado*' and '*The Pirates of Penzance*'. In 1865 Gilbert was transferred from the West Yorks Militia to the Aberdeen Militia. There he worked his way up to the rank of Captain and was promoted to Major on his retirement in 1878. He regularly attended camps in Aberdeenshire and is noted in the papers as Captain, along with Captain Leith Hay who he obviously knew well



Royal Aberdeenshire Highlanders 1858 – Dublin Barracks
 Capt W Leith Hay 3rd left back row

Below is a record of a gathering of the Aberdeenshire Highlanders. Note the presence of both Capt. Leith Hay and Capt. Gilbert.

THE ROYAL ABERDEENSHIRE HIGHLANDERS.

THE inspection of the Aberdeenshire Militia by Lieutenant-Colonel Boldero took place on the Links on Saturday, and at the King Street Barracks on Monday. The battalion was on Saturday formed into eight companies, and after having received the inspecting officer with a general salute, the men were exercised in brigade, company, and light infantry drill, during the progress of which the abilities of the officers were duly tested by one after another being required to take some prominent command. The marching past was executed in a splendid manner, and altogether the manoeuvres gone through were performed very creditably.

On Monday, the battalion was inspected by companies, and Colonel Boldero also examined the accoutrements and

arms of the men. Then followed the inspection of the recruits entered since last training, and the Militia Reserve. The latter number 114, and are liable to be called out on service and sent to any part of the world. Col. Boldero also examined the books of the regiment, the barrack rooms, dinners, and hospital. The whole staff of officers of the battalion were present on both occasions, and the parade state showed a total strength of 687. The staff comprise—Lieut.-Colonel Erskine, Commandant; Majors Innes and Ramsay; Captain and Adjutant Keen; Captains Turner, M'Farlane, Campbell, Leith Hay, Abercrombie, and Gilbert; Lieutenant Hunter; Quartermaster Hutcheon; and Staff-Surgeons Morrison and M'Quibban.

Wednesday 21 July 1869

Alexander Walker Connection

The Strathdon where Alexander Walker lived had a strong connection with the Aberdeenshire Highlanders. It is reported that almost all the tenants on the estate of John Forbes, Esq. of Newe, (Uncle of Sir Charles Forbes) had enrolled in the Militia themselves to serve as volunteers in the defence of their King and country.

In 1863 the Royal Gazette reported that Charles John Forbes, (son of Sir Charles) was to be Lieutenant in the Royal Aberdeenshire Highlanders. A friend of the family Capt Leith Hay, was also in the Highlanders and many of the officers attended the Highland games.