Common Cause: Commonwealth Scots and the Great War

Abstract

Emigration has been an ever-present theme in the story of Scotland. In 1914, as the world prepared for war, thousands of men enlisted in Scotland for military service, and across the British empire and beyond thousands more of Scottish birth and descent joined up. As optimism gave way to the grim reality of years of conflict, the human cost of fighting became a foundation of national consciousness in the countries where Scottish people had made new lives - Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and elsewhere.

Based on the exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland (11 July to 12 October 2014) Common Cause explores the relationship between Scottish military traditions and the emerging national identities of the British Commonwealth.

- Taken from book jacket
This year marks the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War on Monday 4 August. The Common Cause: Commonwealth Scots and the Great War exhibition takes place until 12 October, showcasing objects, newsreel footage and photography from countries where Scots had travelled to embrace new lives and other cultures. Piper Richardson’s pipes. Image: John Yanyshyn Photography. A tragic but key chapter in Scotland’s history, Commonwealth Scots and the Great War is a compelling exploration of Scottish identity during the war. A poignant experience for anyone looking to gain a deeper appreciation for the role of Commonwealth countries during the conflict, the link between emigration and the war effort is truly captivating. Stuart Allan and David Forsyth, (2014) Common Cause: Commonwealth Scots and the Great War, NMS: Edinburgh. Stuart Allan (2007) Commando Country, NMS: Edinburgh. Stuart Allan and Allan Carswell, (2004) The Thin Red Line: War, Empire and Visions of Scotland, NMS: Edinburgh. Articles and book chapters. Stuart Allan (2015) “Beating retreat: the Scottish military tradition in decline” in Bryan S. Glass and John M. MacKenzie (eds.) The programme also includes the Common Cause: Commonwealth Scots and the Great War exhibition, which will be held at the National Museum of Scotland between 11 July and 12 October 2014. Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop said: "We must never forget the impact World War One had on our country, our families and our communities. "These exhibitions will give people across Scotland the opportunity to learn about how World War One changed Scotland and the wider world forever. "It is especially important that the younger generation are able to learn about these life-changing events and tha