

# British Army 1815. 42nd Royal Highland Regiment Battalion Company 'The Black Watch'.

The 42nd Royal Highland Regiment of Foot was formed in 1739 and was made up of clansmen loyal to the government. They policed the highlands wearing a dark green tartan, but after some highlanders revolted in the 1745 Jacobite rebellion, the British government outlawed the wearing of tartan except for those who joined the British Army. By the time of the battle of Waterloo, the regiment had fought in wars all over the world and had a proud history. Its regimental colour (flag) was dark blue as were the facings (cuffs and collars) of the uniforms. Only 'Royal' regiments had facings this colour. The battle of Quatre Bras was fought two days before Waterloo on the 16th June 1815. The French Commander was Marshal Ney and although he stopped Wellington from helping The Prussian army which was fighting Napoleon near by at 'Ligny' he did not manage to truly defeat the allies or get between the British and Prussian armies. In French 'Quatre Bras' means 'four arms', it was a crossroads. At the beginning of the battle the French outnumbered the British, Belgian, Dutch and German allies but as the day went by more Allied forces arrived. By the end of the day Wellington's army retreated but it was not beaten!

## The air filled with smoke from cannon and musket

The Colonel was the commander of the whole regiment at Quatre Bras Colonel Macara was wounded and whilst being carried away from the square was attacked and killed. The black watch considered this murder and in vengence would offer no mercy 2 days later at Waterloo.

The Ensign was usually a young officer who carried the colours into battle.

Highland regimental pipers played throughout battles, giving the regiment cheer in the worst of times.

The Colour Sergeant was an experienced Sergeant whose job it was to protect the Ensign and his flag. He was armed with a long spear called a spontoon.

The Captain gave orders to his men standing at the end of the line.

Under attack from cavalry infantry soldiers must try and form a square with bayonets pointing outwards, making a temporary fort. British soldiers usually formed squares four ranks deep on all sides. The first two ranks would kneel down with bayonets fixed and the back lines would stand behind firing at the attackers. The Officers and Colours stood in the centre and used drummers to make their orders heard. It was tricky to co-ordinate hundreds of men from a line to a square, especially in battlefields filled with smoke. At Quatre Bras, the Black Watch found themselves in a field of high crops, making the manoever even more difficult.

Drummers were often recruited as boys. They had to learn a lot of tunes and beats each one signaled a different order. Officers relied upon them to drum their orders to the men above the noise of battle. They wore special costumes to be easily seen amongst the other men and must stay close by their officer for instructions. But these costumes could also make them prime targets for enemy snipers!

### The Four Rank Deep square

4th rank 3rd rank  
2nd rank 1st rank

