

Gretna Rail Disaster remembered

On Saturday 25 May 2024, The Royal Scots Regimental Association will hold its annual Memorial Service at Rosebank Cemetery, Pilrig Street, to remember all those who lost their lives in the Gretna Rail Disaster in May 1915, the worst rail disaster in the country's history.

At approximately 6.49am on the morning of Saturday 22 May 1915 a troop-train carrying half (498 all ranks) of the 7th (Leith) Battalion, The Royal Scots (The Lothian Regiment) (7RS), who had been deployed to Gallipoli and were heading south, collided head on with a local passenger train.

The passenger train had been 'parked', facing north, on the south-bound main line at Quintinshill, just North of Gretna, to allow a following express to overtake it. The troop train overturned, mostly onto the neighbouring north-bound mainline track and, a minute later, the Glasgow-bound express ploughed into the wreckage causing the troop train to burst into flames.

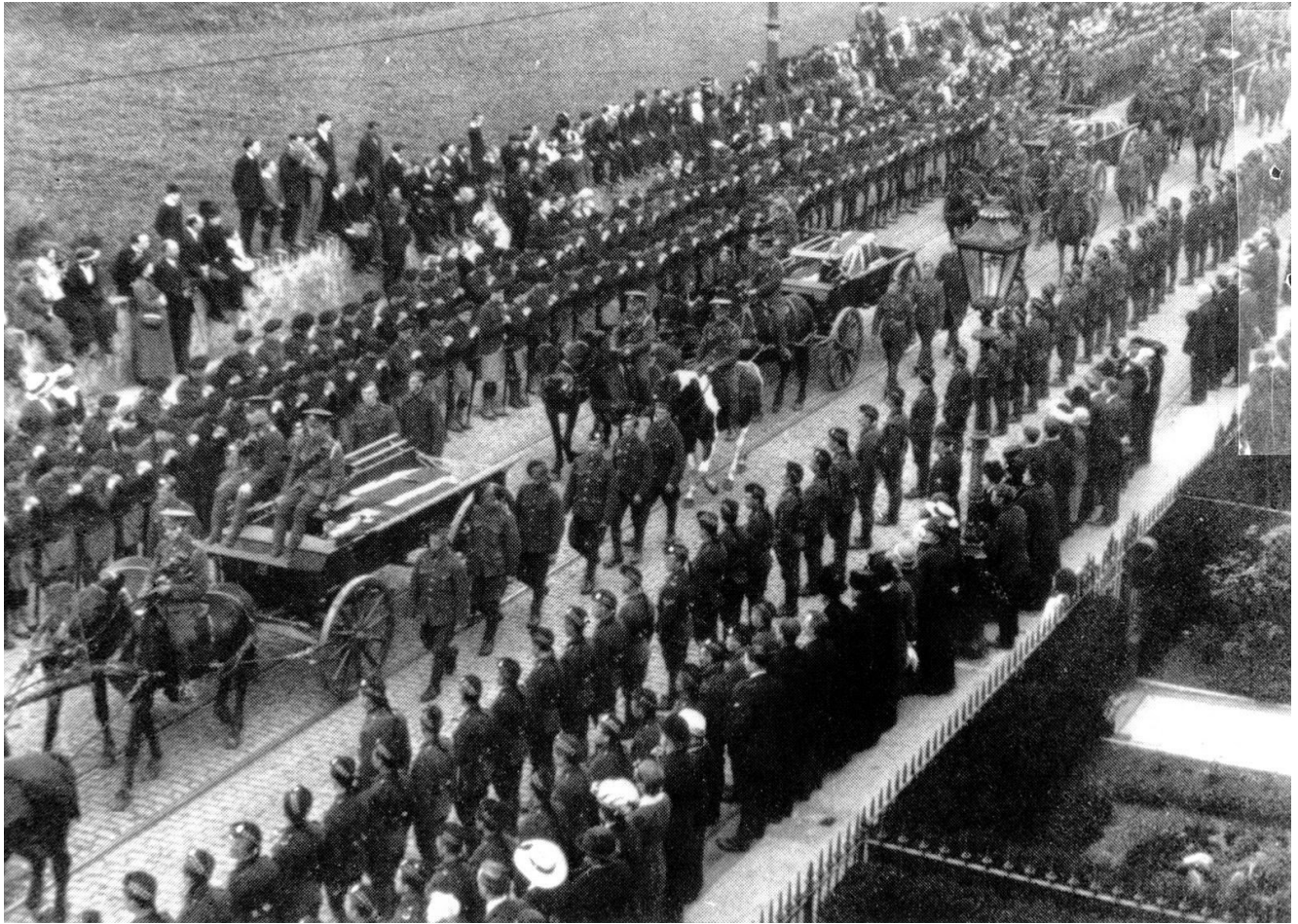
Three officers, 31 NCOs and 182 soldiers of 7th Battalion The Royal Scots, the driver and fireman on the troop-train, and 10 others, mostly from the express train, died and many more were

injured in what was the worst rail disaster in the country's history.

Led by their Pipe Band and the Association Standard Party, The Royal Scots Regimental Association will parade from the cemetery entrance on Pilrig Street at 10.45am on Saturday 25 May 2024. The service will be conducted by Rev Stephen Blakey, formerly padre of 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots, commencing at 10.55am at the Gretna Memorial which stands in the western corner of the cemetery. All are most welcome to attend.

Brigadier George Lowder, President of The Royal Scots Regimental Association, said: "Amidst all the sacrifices and loss of The First World War, the tragic loss of 216 Members of 7 RS in the Quintinshill Rail Disaster in the early morning of 22 May 2015 en route to embarking for Gallipoli was a huge blow to The Regiment, to Leith, and to Edinburgh.

"Leith marked their passing in a way that highlighted the close links between the Battalion and the Community. It was believed that every family in Leith was touched by the disaster and the Community continued to suffer as others injured in the crash subsequently died of their injuries. Our commemoration remembers not only those of 7RS who lost their lives but also the close tie between The Regiment and Leith that still endures today."



16. (7.16) The funeral procession of the 7th Battalion passing through Leith, 1915.

