



HISTORIC SCOTLAND
ALBA AOSMHOR

FORT GEORGE

LARGE PRINT AUDIO GUIDE SCRIPT



99 Instructions

Bagpipe Music

Female Narrator:

Hello and welcome to Fort George, one of the most outstanding fortifications in Europe. Please step outside the Visitor Centre, and find a comfortable place to stand while I briefly explain how this audioguide works.

If you look at your orientation leaflet, you'll notice that some of the buildings and fortifications are marked with a number and an audioguide symbol. These are our audiostops. Whenever you reach one of these points of interest, just key in the appropriate number and the commentary will start automatically. At most of these stops, you'll find a red marker, like the one you see in front of the bridge – we suggest you start each commentary when you've reached the marker.

Male Narrator:

If you want to pause a commentary, you can do so at any time by pressing the red button – it will resume if you press the green button. The two arrow buttons allow you to rewind and fast-forward a commentary and the volume controls are marked with a yellow loudspeaker.

Female Voice:

Fort George was so well-designed it is still used by the Army today, so please watch out for moving vehicles as you walk around. We have tried to alter this historic site as little as possible, so there are also some unguarded steep drops. Please take care when walking along the tops of the defences and keep an eye on young children.

Male Voice:

You can follow this tour in any order you like. However, to begin your visit, we'd like to suggest a specific introductory route that will show you the Fort's most important architectural features and introduce you to its remarkable history.

Female Narrator:

And if you're ready to start now, please press 100 to hear a short introduction.

1 Introduction

Male Narrator:

Before we go to our first stop, allow me to give you a few words of introduction.

SFX: Drum Rolls (fade out during first sentence, as SFX of wind and battle fade up)

250 years ago, just five miles from where you're standing, the last ever battle on British soil was fought. On the windswept moor of what is today Culloden, a Highland army confronted British soldiers loyal to the Protestant King George II. The mainly Catholic Highlanders, led by Bonnie Prince Charlie, were trying to overthrow the ruling monarchy to establish their own king. The Battle of Culloden lasted less than an hour and the King's forces won the day. But George II was determined to make sure that such a threat would never be possible again. The reprisals in the Highlands were severe. Men were hunted down and killed or imprisoned. Land and weapons were confiscated and the government even banned the playing of the bagpipes and the wearing of the Highland dress. And they took another decision: they would build an indestructible garrison fortress - Fort George. In 1748 the first stone was laid.

The best place to start your tour is just round to your left if you stand with your back to the Visitor centre. This part of the Fort is known as the Ravelin. *(short pause)*. From there you'll have a splendid view across the Fort's surroundings which will help you understand just how well Fort George was suited to its role as a military defence.

2 Ravelin

Male Narrator:

This fortified, triangular area is known as the Ravelin – it's a defensive island on the outer edge of the Fort. *(Pause)*

At its outer corner stands what looks for all the world like a pepper pot. This is a sentry box. Let's walk up to it. *(Short pause)* The view from here is superb – just imagine an enemy trying to approach the Fort from this landward side – you'd be able to see him for miles *(SFX: Wind over a plain)*. To make certain of this, no trees or buildings were tolerated within the 'kings land', that is up to the buildings you see half a mile away. In front of you lies a red brick wall – a clipped grassy bank slopes away behind it. This is the glacis. When the Fort was built, this area was cleared to ensure that the sentries could see an enemy approach. The fact that the land has a slight incline also means that there are no obstacles in the line of fire – you could easily fire far into the distance without anything getting in the way. *(SFX: Rapid musket shots)*

The red brick wall itself is the parapet of the zigzag line of defence, running right across the land ward side of the Fort, called the Covered Way. Here, infantrymen armed with muskets and small trench mortars would have defended the Fort during an attack. To offer extra protection, the wall would originally have had a tall, sharpened fence or palisade, running along its entire length.

But this was not the Ravelin's only line of defence. Immediately beneath you lies the outer ditch – if you turn your back to the sentry box, you'll see it on either side of you, with, on the left, a drawbridge. This is the bridge by which you entered the Fort and it would have been raised if the Fort were under threat.

You also see water on either side of you. Fort George is built on a promontory. This might suggest that it was designed to defend the land from attacks from the sea. However, the opposite is true: Fort George was originally built primarily to safeguard its garrison against a landward attack. A landward attack that, in 1748, seemed imminent and ominous.

Our next stop is the main bridge. While walking there, you may want to hear more about the danger against which Fort George was meant to safeguard. To do so, press the green button.

330 Historical Background

Male Narrator:

The battle of Culloden may have ended with a victory for the King, but the threat of further uprisings in the Highlands seemed far from over. This threat came from the supporters of the exiled Catholic monarchy, the so-called Jacobites – Culloden hadn't been the first time they'd tried to overthrow the reigning Protestant monarchy, and, many feared, wouldn't be the last. Many Jacobites came from the clans of the Highlands and it was these forces that Fort George was built to defend against.

The site chosen was perfect – it was, first of all, big enough for an extravagant artillery fortification and a large garrison. And it was empty. In 1748, only a small fishing hut stood on this site. Being on a promontory, it also gave easy access from the sea, and, although overlooked by higher ground, it was beyond effective range for 18th century guns.

Our next stop is the bridge leading to the main Fort. Enter number 3 once you've stepped onto the bridge.

3 Principal Bridge

Male Narrator:

You should now be standing on the bridge, facing the main Fort. Before you lies the Fort's inner line of defence. If you look up, you'll see that there are sentry boxes all along the rampart from where your every move could be watched, and heavy guns are pointing at you.

This bridge spans the principal or inner ditch. In emergencies, this ditch was intended to be flooded. If you look to your right, to the far end of the ditch, you'll see a small door in the wall – this is the sluice originally intended to let water in. *SFX of gate opening and water streaming in* A great plan, but in practice it only worked at high tide.

Let's now walk towards the main gate - the Fort's official approach - and its lavishly coloured and gilded coat of arms.

Stately 18th century music

The brightly coloured arms above you are those of King George II in whose reign this Fort was begun. In the top left corner, you can see the arms of Scotland and England – the standing, or rampant, lion of Scotland and the three lions of England. These are followed by – clockwise – three French fleur de lys, the arms of Hanover, the German principality George II's family originally came from, and the Irish harp. The inclusion of the arms of France may seem surprising, but, in fact, the English monarchs only officially abandoned their claim to the French throne in 1801.

At beginning of next sentence music fades into military drum rolls

This lavish element of decoration is in stark contrast to the severe architecture of the Fort. (*Drum rolls fade out*) The gate is flanked on either side by a length of wall leading to a bastion at either end. Bastions are angular projections from the wall, placed so as to ensure that their guns can cover all possible approaches. The bastion on the left is the Prince of Wales' bastion. All the bastions here at Fort George were named after the King's relatives or close political allies, and the one on your right is the Duke of Cumberland's bastion, named after George II's younger son who led his father's victorious army at Culloden. Later on you'll have the chance to look at these bastions in more detail.

Now walk on through the principal gate, but stop just before you get back into the open. Our next stop is on the left inside the principal gate. It's the Soldier's Guardroom. This is number 4 – enter that number once you've entered the room.

4 Guardrooms

Male Narrator:

This room shows how a guardroom of the 1880s would have looked.

Male Voice:

Oh - Hello there. Excuse me. I'm just snatching a couple of minutes break from the guard duty to warm myself. I'm froze. My name is Sandy Duffus, private in the Seaforth Highlanders- the regiment at the Fort. Suits us fine. Now this is the main guardroom of the Fort – hence there's enlisted men only here, and over the road is the officers. Guard duty isn't so bad really. Makes a change. But we're on call 24 hours, night and day – and that's why we have beds. Apparently in the old days, there used to be a long bed which used to run the full length of the wall, or so I'm told. Must be bloody uncomfortable. Mind you, it still is. We've to sleep fully dressed in our full kit, except for our watch coats. Which we're only allowed to wear when the duty officer says so. Well, have a nice look around the Fort. Cheerioh.

Male Narrator:

A soldier on guard did a watch of eight hours. If it was your turn, you'd simply take your blanket, coat and musket from your barrackroom and make your way here to the guardhouse where you would sleep and eat between sentry duties. In times of peace, being on sentry duty did not primarily mean protecting the Fort against outside enemies. In 1808 the Standing Orders required the soldier at the guardhouse door

Male Voice (authoritative):

not to suffer people to wash at pumps, nor to allow (...) idle people to play about them or any dirty water to be emptied near them.

He is to keep people from walking on the grass path excepting officers and their families.

Male Narrator:

Anyone caught committing an offence would immediately have been transferred to the Fort's prison, commonly known as the Black Hole.

Being on guard must, ultimately, have been a rather boring experience. As you leave the guardroom - take a look at the wall immediately to the left-hand side of the guardroom door. You can see deep vertical marks in the stone. These are marks left by bayonets – in idle moments, soldiers standing on guard would have used this stone to sharpen their knives and bayonets.

Opposite the soldier's guardroom, you'll find the officer's guardroom. Even on guard duty, officers and men had separate quarters. Pop your head into this room – a small exhibition provides additional orientation material on the Fort. We'll then continue with the large expanse of grass, known as the Parade. The best place to start this commentary is just inside the gate, overlooking the Parade.

5 Parade

Male Narrator:

Looking over the Parade ground to the imposing symmetrical design of the buildings beyond, we get an impression of the perfect condition of Fort George. Fort George is unique in that both its fortifications and its interior buildings have been perfectly preserved.

Bagpipe Music – SFX: Military Drill

This Parade has always been used for ceremonial drill and it is still used today by whichever regiment is in residence. However such ceremonies are now rare. Regular drills are carried out in the barrack square, further down the central path.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the prestigious Georgian buildings in front of you were the residences of high-ranking officers and the fort's permanent staff. The two buildings on either side of the central path and the buildings above the open-fronted arcades, provided rooms for the fort's gunners and the senior staff officers, such as the surgeon and the chaplain. For much of the fort's life, the gunners were made up from the Companies of Invalid soldiers. These were artillerymen injured during Foreign Service, but fit enough to man home guns in peacetime. While the infantry regiments marched in and marched out, the gunners and the senior officers all remained here for long periods of time. And some of these officers had their wives, children and servants living with them. A fort as remote as Fort George was, after all, a small town in its own right, and behind the severe facades everyday life continued. *(SFX: Mingling of Voices (including female voices), clinking of teacups, harp playing)*

The buildings are flanked, on either side, by particularly fine three-storey houses. These held the Fort's most prestigious accommodation. The house on the far right provided homes for the Lieutenant Governor and for the Fort Major. The latter was usually the most senior officer permanently resident in the fort.

The identical building on the far left was originally the Governor's house. Becoming a fort's governor was an honorary appointment – and the first person to be awarded this honour at Fort George was Major General William Skinner, the military engineer responsible for its design.

Fort George stands today as a monument to William Skinner, and the family responsible for much of its architecture, the Adam family.

From now on, you'll have the opportunity to explore the Fort as you wish and listen to the commentaries in any order you like. Remember that for most of these commentaries the best place to start is in front of the red marker. At the end of your tour, I'd like to invite you back to the Parade ground where we will take a look at the plaque commemorating the First World War that you see on this side of the gate.

But before you set off – or while you do so – press the green button to hear more about the exceptional men who designed and built Fort George.

170 Skinner and the Adams

Male Narrator:

When, after the battle of Culloden, it was decided to build a new, indestructible garrison fortress, no risks were taken with the appointment of its chief engineer. Major-General William Skinner was among the most experienced military engineers of his time. Fort George was not innovative, but Skinner was a master in adapting the natural conditions of the land to his defensive purposes. Using all of his art and experience, he took a barren promontory of shingle and made it into a formidable – and large - arrow-shaped fort; the buildings you'll see today could house – and shelter - up to 1600 soldiers. On either side of the Parade, you can see a row of long, low buildings within the fort walls. These are the casemates. They were intended for use as stores in peacetime and as bomb-proof barracks during a siege. The entire garrison would have been able to shelter in here during bombardment, with up to 40 men in each casemate.

Some of the casemates on the North side are open to the public. There are two unaltered casemates well worth a visit, the camp cinema shows newsreels about army life and you can visit small exhibitions recounting the conditions of life for a soldier in the 18th and 19th centuries and remembering the engineers and architects of the Fort.

William Skinner's designs were carried out by an eminent family of Scottish architects, the Adam family. In 1747 the building contract for Fort George had been agreed with William Adam, Master Mason to the Board of Ordnance in Scotland – but he died before work could start. His eldest son John inherited the post. Supported by his two brothers, Robert and James, John Adam dedicated a large part of his life to overseeing the building of Fort

George. However, it is his brother Robert's association with the Fort that is perhaps the most interesting to us.

Generally regarded as Scotland's greatest architect, Robert Adam is not known for his military buildings, but for elegant neo-classical structures such as those in Edinburgh's New Town, and his sumptuous interiors such as that of Kenwood House in London. But, in a way, Fort George was one of the building blocks of this success. With the considerable amount of money Robert made on Fort George he financed his European Tour, the educational journey that was to influence his architectural style in years to come.

However, Fort George is not just a perfect example of 18th century military architecture. It is also a living structure – and its historical buildings help us to understand the lives of soldiers and officers through the ages.

6 Black Hole or Prison

Male Narrator:

This was the Fort's prison, the Black Hole as it was known. Today, the white walls may make it seem light – but notice that there are no windows – when the door was closed, this was indeed a 'black hole'. Many soldiers could be incarcerated here at the same time. Just imagine the darkness, the lack of space, the stench. And the boredom. On one of the walls, you can see some graffiti – a witness to the attempt of one of the prison's inmates to pass the time.

Male Voice (David Abernethy):

DAVID ABERNETHY, REGIMENT, 60 DAYS FOR
DRUNK ON GUARD

Male Narrator:

60 days in a dark hole! Being drunk on guard was not an uncommon offence - most offences were indeed of a disciplinary rather than a criminal nature.

Male Voice (speaking quickly - fading in and out in mono, alternating right and left headphones):

"A shot was fired in one of the barrack rooms; the offender must be found out and confined in the Black Hole."

"George Innes and Andrew Hope to be confined to the Black Hole for a week, and to be fed on bread and water, for repeated bad behaviours and disobedience of orders."

"James Edwards confined for striking a man in the ranks under arms"

"Archibald Bruce confined for unsoldier-like and bad behaviour, and out of barracks all night"

“George Innes confined for making away with part of bank note entrusted to him, and for being out of barracks all night”

“Colin McLeod to be confined in the Black Hole and fed on bread and water for disobeying Lieutenant Clarke’s order and behaving in a manner that deserves the most severe punishment. His conduct is a disgrace to the regiment.”

Male Narrator:

It’s not hard to believe that some of these offences were borne out of sheer boredom. The life of a soldier in the 18th and 19th centuries had few diversions and many hours were spent just doing nothing. And unlike David Abernethy, few of the soldiers of the time would have been able to read and write.

7 Prince of Wales' Bastion

Female Narrator:

From here, you'll have a wonderful view, but please remember to keep back from the inner edge and not to climb onto the defences or the cannons. We'll start our exploration of this area in front of the information panel, to the left of the red marker. *(Pause)*

Male Narrator:

From here, you can overlook the principal ditch. On the right, you can see the triangular island, or Ravelin, and beyond it the out-works we looked at from there. The visitor centre just in front of you was originally the Ravelin's guardhouse. It once had a long shelf bed along the full length of the main room and served the men who guarded the entrance. But the soldiers defending the Ravelin would not have been trapped there in case of an attack – if you look back into the ditch, under the bridge, you can see, on either side, steps. When, in case of danger, the bridge was raised, these steps allowed soldiers defending the Ravelin to enter the Fort via the ditch. Soldiers from the fort could also supply re-enforcement for the men on the Ravelin. On the left-hand side, you can see the entrance door, right beneath the main entrance gate.

This is one of the Fort's six bastions. All the bastions are angular in shape. This enables the defenders to see all the way along the wall between this and the next bastion so that there are no blind spots for enemy engineers to get to work undermining the walls.

There are quite a number of guns positioned here. In fact, you're having the exact view a gunner defending the Fort would have had. The Prince of Wales Bastion has not changed since it was built, and you can still see the gun

positions for heavy guns, originally 32 pounders looking out over the land and over the sea, while the smaller guns, a mix of 9 and 6 pounders cover the principal ditch and the Ravelin Ditch.

If you walk from here to the Duke of Cumberland's bastion, you will pass a heavy 13-inch mortar over the principal gate, capable of firing over two kilometres. This gun, like most of the guns in the fort today is not part of the original armament, withdrawn in 1881. The guns and mortars you see today are a mixture of replica and original guns from elsewhere, but they help convey an impression of the Fort's firepower.

8 Duke of Cumberland's Bastion

Male Narrator:

Let's start by walking towards the outermost point of this bastion – where you can see the large gun mounted on a wooden carriage. It's quite a way - and there's a reason for this. The walls surrounding the Fort may seem imposing, but it is actually the weight of the earth beneath your feet that matters - a cannonball would easily break through the walls, but its energy would be soaked-up and halted by the enormous expanse of earth that forms this plateau.

You may remember that Fort George was built primarily to defend against a landward attack, so you may be surprised to notice that some of the heavy guns here are pointing out to sea. By 1859, the threat came no longer from the Highlands, but from a feared French naval attack. As a result, Fort George, which protected the narrow channel in the Moray Firth leading to Inverness, was remodelled and rearmed with the latest guns as a coastal defence battery, and the seaward defences became the chief armament. In the event, the Fort was never tested and the guns were removed in 1881.

You may by now have reached the big gun on the angle of the bastion, mounted on a wooden carriage. This is a very rare 64-pounder Armstrong Mark I rifled gun of 1865. This gun was recently brought from Dingwall, further north of here, and is only slightly later than the gun that occupied this battery in earnest from 1862. They were similar to look at, but the inside of the barrel of the original 68-pounders was smooth. The original gun would have been able to fire shot and 10-inch shells over 2000 meters accurately.

In the wall to either side of this gun, you'll see little wooden doors. These are the recesses where the shells and shot were stored, and down the steps to your left, was a small magazine where gun powder was kept.

9 Governor's House

Male Narrator:

This building, originally where the Fort's Governor lived, is now the Officers' Mess. This means that, unfortunately, we won't be able to go inside. But let's go back in time for a moment, and imagine what life at the Fort would have been like in the 18th century.

Music in the background

On the 28th August 1773, two famous travellers, Samuel Johnson, the creator of the first English dictionary, and his friend, the author James Boswell, arrived at Fort George (*SFX: Coach arriving*). Johnson and Boswell had been visiting the Minister of nearby Cawdor Church. A friend of the minister had provided them with a letter of introduction to the Fort's Master of Stores. (*SFX: people getting of the coach – murmured greetings*)

Although the Fort had only been completed four years earlier, the garrison had already settled into a comfortable peacetime routine and Johnson and Boswell were invited to dinner by the Deputy Governor, Sir Eyre Coote. As was common, the Governor himself was not in residence. Although well paid, the post of Governor was honorary and the Governor was not expected to live in the fort for any substantial amount of time.

The dinner party was a success. As Boswell recounted later:

Male Voice (Boswell):

I, for a little while, fancied myself a military man, and it pleased me. We [found] Sir Eyre Coote (...) a most gentleman-like man. His lady is a most agreeable woman, with an uncommonly mild and sweet tone of voice... We

had a dinner of two complete courses, variety of wine and the regimental band of musick playing in the Square, after it. I enjoyed the day very much. We were quite easy and cheerful. Dr Johnson said: 'I shall always remember this fort with gratitude'.

10 Lieutenant Governor's and Fort Major's house

Male Narrator:

This house was the residence of the Lieutenant Governor, the senior officer who lived permanently in the garrison. It was a large and elegant residence on three floors, with a courtyard and stables at the back and all amenities that one would have expected in an aristocratic town house of the day. In the left-hand part of this building the Fort Major had his quarters, slightly smaller but no less comfortable.

Female Voice:

Today this building houses the Regimental Museum of the Queen's Own Highlanders, the regiment that was formed when the Seaforth Highlanders and the Cameron Highlanders were amalgamated in 1964. The history of Fort George is intimately linked with the Seaforth Highlanders whose depot it was between 1881 and 1964, and you are very welcome to go round the museum. It is open daily from 10 to 6 from April to September, and weekdays from 10 to 4 between October and March.

Male Narrator:

If you'd like to hear more about the Seaforth Highlanders and their role in preserving the Fort as you see it today, press the green button now.

210: The Seaforth Highlanders

Male Narrator:

In 1881 the British infantry regiments, which so far had not had permanent barracks, were allotted depots close to their recruiting areas. The Seaforth Highlanders were stationed at Fort George. They had just been formed as an amalgamation of the 72nd Duke of Albany's Own Highlanders, originally raised in 1778 by the last Earl of Seaforth, and the 78th Highlanders, also raised by the Seaforth family as the Ross-shire Buffs in 1793.

Both regiments had an impressive record, having served in India, South Africa, the Crimea, Java, Italy, and during the Afghanistan Campaign. After 1881, The Seaforth Highlanders also fought in Egypt, the Sudan, South Africa and the North West Frontier of India, as well as in the First and Second World War.

The stationing of the Seaforth Highlanders at Fort George was, in a way, a blessing for the Fort. As a depot rather than a defence structure, the fortifications did not have to undergo substantial changes, and the Seaforth Highlanders, proud of their unique depot, resisted change whenever possible. Some alterations inside the buildings were necessary, but the Fort you see today is to a large extent as it was in the 18th century.

Following Army reorganisation in the 1960s, the Seaforth Highlanders were amalgamated with the Cameron Highlanders, and these newly formed Queen's Own Highlanders marched out of the fort in 1964. Today, they have amalgamated once again, this time with another fine highland regiment, the Gordon Highlanders. The combined force is now simply known as the Highlanders. Their regimental headquarters is at Cameron Barracks in

Inverness. But their relationship with the Fort remains strong.

Male Voice:

For most of the world there are the Ten Commandments and people are content with them, but for the Seaforth Highlanders there is also The Eleventh Commandment – THOU SHALT LOVE FORT GEORGE.

11 Point Battery

Female Narrator:

This is a wonderful vantage point to take in the view of the Moray Firth and, with a bit of luck, you'll even see dolphins. But do remember to be careful and don't climb onto the defences. *(Pause)* We'll start our tour of this area at one of the guns. Starting at the red marker, walk over to the gun on the left. *(Pause)*

Male Narrator:

If you look through the slot in the wall by that gun, you'll be able to appreciate how Fort George could control the narrow shipping lane from the North Sea to Inverness. Point Battery, where we're standing now, was intended to defend this mile wide channel between the Fort and Chanonry Point, the promontory with the lighthouse you can see if you're standing on the left of the gun. This was to become particularly important when, in the 1860s, a French attack was feared imminent. As a consequence, this side of the Fort was rearmed.

Let's direct our attention to the gun now. This gun, or more specifically the carriage on which it's mounted, holds clues to an interesting development in military technology. It dates from the early 19th century. The wooden carriage allows the gun to be run backwards and forwards to enable the gunners to load the gunpowder and shot down the barrel, but it's also an important instrument in determining the range and trajectory of fire. The gun can be raised or lowered. It can't, however, be moved from left to right – in other words its horizontal field of fire cannot be changed, and guns on carriages like this one could only be fired in a fixed line. When the Fort was built, this would not have posed a problem. The slower eighteenth century ships would have been an easy target even for a static gun like this one. But as the engineering of ships changed,

military technology had to change as well. If you now go to the next gun, on the right, you'll be able to see how. This gun, dating from about 30 years later, is mounted on a traversing carriage. It can be moved on the iron rails and so its field of fire can be changed, making it more effective against the rather swifter ships of the 19th century.

SFX: gun shot – hitting the target

Today, however, Point Battery is most famous as an excellent spot for dolphin watching. Bottlenosed dolphins are regularly spotted here between March and early September.

12 Garrison Chapel

Male Narrator:

Entering the garrison chapel you find yourself in a light, airy building. Its design is austere and pure.

You may have noticed the large pulpit on the left. It's an unusual three-decker pulpit, designed to be used by three different people: the minister at the top, the lesson reader in the middle and the precentor who led the singing in the lower box.

There's a lovely detail that turns this chapel into a very Scottish building: if you look at the central window behind the altar, towards the top right-hand panel you'll see an angel - possibly the only bagpipe playing angel in Christendom.

Muted Organ Music

Above the arch of the chancel a Latin inscription gives us the date of the building. It translates as: 'George III, by the grace of God King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, 1767'. Building of the Fort started in 1748, but the original plans did not include a chapel. Such was the urgency after Culloden that Major General Skinner, the chief engineer, only included essential military buildings. It is the one major change that he made to his designs and the chapel was built, almost certainly to a design by the Scottish architect Robert Adam, as the last building in the Fort. In the intervening period George III had succeeded George II to the throne.

Only with the building of the chapel, however, was the Fort really complete, a little town on its own. The Church played an important part in military discipline and Sunday service was compulsory under Army regulations. At the

time, there were no seats downstairs – but even so, more than one service might have been necessary when all 1,600 soldiers were in barracks.

The Chapel has been in constant use ever since. The flags in the apse are regimental colours brought back after campaigns. Their condition hints at their age, but if you look around the church, you'll see other flags that are clearly more recent. Fort George has seen many regiments and this tradition continues today. If you'd like to hear more about the regimental system of the British army, press the green button now. Feel free to take a seat while you listen to this commentary.

300 Regimental System of the Army

Male Narrator:

The British Army is divided into regiments, a system that grew out of the rising professionalisation of the army in the 17th century. By 1660 each regiment of foot consisted of approximately 1,000 men, divided into ten companies. But the division of the Army into different regiments is more than just an organisational matter. Indeed, loyalty to a specific regiment is a peculiar characteristic of the British army. Each regiment is regarded as a family and the safeguard of their values and traditions is important, and nowhere more so than amongst the very strong highland regiments. Regimental cap badges, for example, typically recall a significant event in the regiment's history.

In the 18th century most regiments were accorded a territorial area. This added to the strong geographical identity of many regiments and often reflected their existing recruiting area. The Seaforth Highlanders, for example, had strong links with the region around Inverness and so it seemed a natural choice that, when the regiments were given permanent barracks, Fort George became their depot.

Notwithstanding the historical tension between the Highlands and the Government, a tension to which the building of Fort George bears witness, Highland regiments have played an important role in the British army in the last 250 years. They became respected as among the most loyal fighting men in the British army and discipline was rarely a problem – at least as long as the soldiers were led by Highland officers. In the last quarter of the 18th century, 20 Highland regiments were embodied into the British Army, most of which survived to form the core of the Scots regiments of today.

13 Barrack Square

Male Narrator:

You've probably already visited the Parade, the vast expanse of grass by the main gate, where ceremonial drill is carried out. This, less impressive, but nonetheless large square is the barrack square where normal drill is held. It's surrounded by the barracks, the buildings in which the soldiers lived and still live. The buildings at Fort George originally provided accommodation for two infantry battalions or 1,600 men!

If you have a closer look at the buildings at either end of the square, you'll notice that they both have a date – 1757 and 1763 – a reminder of how long it took to complete the Fort. Building had started in 1748. You'll also notice that some of the windows have larger panes of glass – these point to the difference in accommodation among the ranks. The buildings with the larger areas of glass held officers' rooms.

Accommodation for officers and men varied greatly. Whereas the men had to share a room, most of the officers, even the junior officers had a room and closet of their own and the more senior, field officers, had two or more rooms. These are mostly located in the central and end pavilions of these ranges of barracks. Just look for the window panes.

Life in barracks has changed over the ages. Immediately after Culloden, the soldiers faced a hostile country, and much of their job was to enforce the strict rules imposed by the Government that were designed to subdue the population. Even the playing of the bagpipe had become illegal. By 1795, however, a soldier was more likely to spend hours drilling in the barrack-square or marching from place to place rather than training to fight or use their

weapons. And all of this is very different from the highly technical jobs carried out by a modern soldier.

Today, soldiers are as likely to be found in fitness training or on the firing range, learning how to use ever more specialised weaponry, than drilling in the square. Their time spent at Fort George is now in preparation for some distant theatre of war – or indeed peace, since peacekeeping forces have taken soldiers across the globe.

14 Provision Store and Bakery / Provision Store and Brewery

Male Narrator:

Find a place to stand in front of the two buildings so that you can see the clock over the arch. (*Pause*)

The Fort was entirely self-sufficient, and these buildings used to hold and provide the provisions for the Fort and for the garrisons that went from here to staff the military posts across the highlands in the years after Culloden.

The building on the left-hand side of the archway held a large storehouse – oatmeal and grain were kept on the first floor. Typically for a fort in Scotland, oat was an important part of the ration – although a rather unusual one for those regiments sent here from England.

But there was also bread - baked daily, in three large ovens at the back of this building, and the baker himself lived here.

To the right of the archway, the North wing of the building was formerly the brewery. In the 19th century the brewery was removed to provide better prison accommodation. A look at the bars behind the windows and the heavy door will tell you that this is a purpose it still serves, so don't loiter too long! The brew house provided so-called 'small' or weak beer as well as regular ale for the Fort's sutlery or inn. Beer was an important part of the diet and small beer was:

Male voice (authoritative)

delivered to the Companies every morning immediately after exercise, by which the Men will have the benefit of it for breakfast and dinner.

Male Narrator:

Soldiers drew their rations each morning from these store rooms. They then prepared their own meals over the fires in their barrack rooms. Meat was issued irregularly, some regiments allowing their men to buy what they could afford from local traders. But few of the recruits had eaten much meat at home, and so it tended to make them ill.

Behind you is the only building added to the Fort since Major General Skinner's time – it was built in 1934 as the Seaforth's Regimental Institute. Beyond it you can see two long storehouses, originally used for storing small arms and equipment - the one on the left is now the rank and file mess.

15 Historic Barrack-Rooms

Female Narrator:

We're about to enter the historic barrack-rooms, but please be careful as there is a low ceiling leading in. In this building three rooms have been recreated to show how soldiers and officers at Fort George would have lived in the past.

Let's start with the room on the left-hand side of the door you came in through, Room 1.

We're standing in a soldier's barrack room as it would have looked in the year 1780, shortly after the Fort was fully operational. Private John Anderson, a raw recruit, cleans his musket while another soldier's wife cleans out the grate. The ever increasing size of the British army in the 18th century put enormous pressure on the few barracks then available. The men slept two to a bed, eight to a room. In those days there were no communal messing, toilet or recreational facilities. The men drew their rations from the provision stores and cooked for themselves. One in a hundred men was allowed to 'marry on the strength', with his wife and children living in and receiving half rations in exchange for doing domestic chores. The only privacy they had was a blanket shutting off their corner of the barrack room.

Male Narrator:

This room may seem small and uncomfortable to us, but actually, in the 18th century, it was among the most comfortable accommodation a soldier could expect. Most troops lived in tents or were billeted in taverns or stables. Proper barracks were still the exception, and Fort George was clearly ahead of its time.

However, there *was* room for improvement – if you now walk towards Room 3 on the opposite side of the corridor, you'll see how things had changed, 100 years on.

We're in a soldier's barracks room in the year 1868. Private George Moffat, recently enlisted in the Cameron Highlanders is reading a letter from his sister in Edinburgh. The contrast between this room and the rank and file room across the corridor is striking. By this date married quarters had been acknowledged by the army authorities as a necessity. So too had the requirement for communal messing, toilet and recreational facilities outwith the barrack rooms. As a result the amount of space per man is almost doubled and the atmosphere within the room greatly improved. There are now just five men to the room, sleeping in single beds. The close of the 19th century saw official recognition of the needs of the rank and file. Schools were established for soldiers and their offspring, libraries and day rooms were introduced into barracks, saving schemes were set up and sports facilities were provided. The rank and file soldier was encouraged to do anything but be idle and drink.

Male Narrator:

So this is how common soldiers would have lived. But what about officers? Walk over to the last room. We're going back in time again – this room is chronologically *between* the two rooms we've just seen.

This is a senior officer's quarters in the year 1813, at the height of the Napoleonic Wars. Major Andrew Coghlan, the Commanding Officer here at the Fort, is seen at his desk writing out the orders for the following day. Major Coghlan's room stands in marked contrast to the barrack rooms of the rank and file. It's distinctly more spacious and lighter, with larger window panes and other little flourishes like window shutters and a window seat, a

mantelpiece and wood-panelled doorway. The room though isn't luxurious – the life of an officer was as uncertain as that of his men and his pay barely sufficient to keep him in the manner expected of him by his regiment. All he possessed had to be capable of being transported from campaign to campaign – hence the travelling chest and trunk.

Male Narrator:

Nowadays, soldiers sleep three to a room, in barrack rooms originally designed for eight, and all of the married quarters are outside the Fort. Soldiers also no longer prepare their own food. It has, since the 19th century, been supplied in a separate mess. But their job remains the same, to risk their lives in defence of their country...

16 Grand Magazine

Male Narrator:

You're now entering what was once the most dangerous area of the Fort. The larger building on the right is the Grand Magazine and it was here that the Fort's supply of gunpowder was kept. You may have noticed that this area is separated from the rest of the Fort by a wall. This is the aptly named blast wall, designed to protect the barracks by directing the blast upwards should the magazine explode.

The smaller building attached to the left-hand side of the Grand Magazine is the cooperage – where the barrels for the gunpowder were received and repaired. But we are going to have a look at the Grand Magazine itself.

So let's enter the main building. When you're standing just inside the entrance to the Grand Magazine, press the green button.

241 Grand Magazine – contd.

Male Narrator:

In order to be allowed to enter the magazine, you had to change your clothes – felt jackets, like the ones hanging next to the door, had to be worn, and boots had to be changed or covered. All this was meant to prevent sparks. If you look at the door leading into the magazine, you'll see that it is made of wood. This may not seem significant, but once you're inside the building you'll notice that actually *almost everything* is made of wood, even the pegs securing the floor. Indeed, the only metal you'll see here today is either copper or has been added much later. No iron was permitted in order to reduce the risk of sparking.

The magazine would have been stacked from floor to ceiling with gun powder barrels, exactly like those you see here today, which are, however, empty. There had to be sufficient to supply for the 60 guns that bristled from the walls of the Fort when it was first built. This was an enormous treasure, but it presented a real danger as well. The building had to be well-protected. This is the most remote and well-defended area of the fort and the building is very low so it can't be spotted from the outside and was therefore difficult to target. It also has a vaulted ceiling, specifically designed to minimise the impact of a direct hit from a mortar bomb.

The treasure that needs to be protected here today, however, is a very different one. You may have already noticed the large array of arms in the far left corner of this room. *Pause* This is the Seafield Collection of Arms, so called because it comes from the estate of the Dowager Countess of Seafield, a descendent of Sir James Grant, who purchased the equipment in the late eighteenth century. It is absolutely unique – nowhere else will you be able to see an almost complete range of weapons and

equipment needed for a company of men. If you'd like to hear more about this outstanding collection of arms, press the green button.

17 The Seafield Collection of Arms

Male Narrator:

This collection of weapons and other equipment represents roughly what would have been needed for a company. In the 18th century, that company would have consisted of approximately sixty men.

The muskets in the centre of the display are India-pattern muskets complete with bayonets. This was the standard gun issued from 1794. Muskets were, however, in short supply, and pikes, like the ones you can see standing between the guns, were issued to the companies serving within Scotland as an economy measure. However, the impressive stand of muskets and pikes is not the main treasure of the collection. Generally speaking, weapons have survived in reasonable numbers, but it's the more ordinary, everyday items that tend to disappear. If you move to the long side of the display case, towards the far end (*Pause*) you can see a large array of ammunition pouches (*Pause*), eight different patterns of brass shoe-buckles (*Pause*) and knapsacks, by far the largest collection in existence today.

Even though the Seafield Collection represents the weaponry and small equipment for several companies, what you see here does not come from one regiment alone. It has been assembled from four different regiments. All four regiments, however, were raised by Sir James Grant during the wars with France between 1793 and 1804. One of them is the Strathspey Fencible Regiment, and if you look closely, you'll see that some of the pikes have Strathspey written just below the head. *Pause*. This and the volunteer regiments who used this equipment were raised during the Napoleonic Wars and they were intended for home defence, at a time when the threat of invasion from France was considered very real.

In addition, Grant also raised a regular infantry regiment, the 97th Regiment, in 1794.

To continue your tour now, press the green button.

242 Magazine – continued

Female Narrator:

Now look at the wall opposite the Seafield Collection. There's a door there, and on it you will notice an inscription reading: '2672 barrels or cases'. This is the amount of gunpowder the magazine could have held – enough to blow up half the Fort. The outside door is lined with copper. Again, this was a measure to prevent sparking.

Now return and go back out the door you came through and once outside turn and face towards the building.
(Pause)

Male Narrator:

To either side of the door, you'll be able to see small openings with a copper shutter. Feel free to open them – but please do so carefully. This is an air vent and it was vital to provide a flow of air to keep the powder dry. Windows would have been far too dangerous in a gunpowder store. The Grand Magazine must have been an exceptionally dark place; all naked flames were forbidden, so the only way to let light in was by leaving the doors open or by using specially protected lanterns.

18 Conclusion (WWI memorial)

Male Narrator:

You should now be standing beneath a plaque commemorating the Seaforth Highlanders who lost their lives during the First World War. Nearly 50,000 men served in the Seaforth Highlanders during that time and 8,432 died. Over the centuries, many soldiers have left Fort George to fight – but the Fort itself has had a remarkably peaceful history. When, in 1748, the first stone for a new, indestructible, garrison was laid, the fear of a Highland uprising was still very much alive. But the battle of Culloden had in fact been the death-knell for the Jacobite cause and the return of the Stewart dynasty to the throne of Great Britain. By 1780 the Reverend Charles Cordiner could write:

Male Voice (Reverend Charles Cordiner) (spiteful):

By the change of events (...), [the Fort] appears a mere useless memorial of the state of that turbulent period.

Male Narrator:

For many years, this spectre of uselessness would haunt Fort George and many new roles were envisaged for what seemed now an obsolete defence structure.

From 1798 to 1802 the Fort served as a prison for the leaders of the United Irish Revolution and in 1835, it was again briefly considered as a state prison. Shortly before that, it had even been envisaged as a possible place of exile for Napoleon.

But none of these threats materialised, and Fort George was destined to play a different part. It found new roles as a depot and eventually a training camp for soldiers. And, of course, it became a point of call for countless visitors, the most perfectly preserved time-capsule of eighteenth-

century military engineering. To end with the 18th century English writer Samuel Johnson

Male Voice (Samuel Johnson):

Fort George, the most regular fortification in the island, well deserves the notice of a traveller.

Female Narrator:

We hope you've enjoyed your visit. And if you have, you may want to buy a souvenir guidebook or ask about becoming a Friend of Historic Scotland. Please also return your audioguide to the Visitor Centre in the Ravelin Guardhouse. Thank you for listening. Goodbye.

Male Narrator:

Goodbye.