



Shown above is the Clan Grant plant badge: the pine sprig.



The Clan Grant Society is a proud member of:

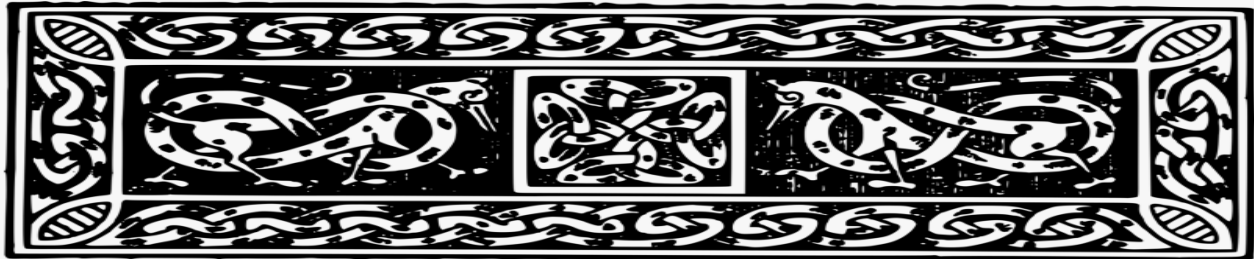


The purpose of this quarterly is to promote the interests of Clan Grant, the cultivation of a spirit of kin and fellowship, and social intercourse amongst the society's members. Further, *Craigellachie* shall serve as the official publication of the society and shall be the primary vehicle for giving the members official notice of meetings, elections, and Board and Officer actions.

From the Editor



We would like to recognize the outgoing Editor in Chief Ms. Beth Freeman for the years of hard work and dedication to the Clan and its Newsletter. She had done so while caring for her husband Tom and the countless duties a caretaker must fill to keep afloat. We salute her and her family for being so faithful and so diligent to keep Clan Grant connected and informed. If any would like to express thanks and well wishes, please send them to the clan via the contact at the end of the Newsletter and we will do our best to include it in our winter edition.



Craigellachie has a new Editor-in-Chief:

My name is Aaron Michael Grant, son of Michael Dennis Ralph Grant, son of Harold Arthur Grant. I have been appointed your new Editor in Chief. I have been involved in clan events since I was a young teen in upstate New York, and my family was instrumental in captivating my love for Clan Grant and everything Scottish. More personally, I am a Veteran Marine who saw combat in Iraq in 2003. I wrote an award-winning book about it: *Taking Baghdad: Victory in Iraq with the US Marines*. I am also a high school teacher and hold a master's in military history from Norwich University. I have been training for war and writing about it most of my life. I am 41 years old and have a wife and four children. I live in middle of nowhere South Dakota. I sincerely hope to fill the shoes of Ms. Freeman. Time will tell!



Your editor is also the South Dakota games commissioner.
I challenge you to volunteer your talents for the Clan.



From the President of Clan Grant USA

I thought I would share with you Ben Johnson's excellent article about Scotland's two flags:

The Two Flags of Scotland

By Ben Johnson



When Saint Andrew, one of the Apostles, was being crucified by the Romans in A.D. 60, it is said that he believed himself unworthy to be crucified on a cross like that of Christ, and so he met his end on a 'saltire', or X-shaped cross (St. Andrew's cross) which became his symbol.

Two separate legends help to explain the association between Saint Andrew and Scotland.

One story tells how in A.D. 345 Saint Regulus was instructed by an angel to take some relics (bones) of Saint Andrew to a far-off land. He eventually arrived in Fife on the northeast coast of Scotland, where he founded the settlement of St. Andrews. Yet another version recalls how in the 7th century, Saint Wilfrid brought the saint's relics home with him following a pilgrimage to Rome. The Pictish king, Angus MacFergus, subsequently had them installed at his new monastery of Saint Regulus at Kilrymont, later renamed St. Andrews.



And still yet another legend links the adoption of Saint Andrew's cross as Scotland's national flag. This recalls how, in 832, on the eve of a battle between a combined Picts and Scots army and an invading army of Angles led by King Aethelstan of East Anglia, Saint Andrew appeared to the Pictish king, Óengus II (Angus) and assured him of victory. The following morning a formation of clouds gathered against the backdrop of a clear blue sky, depicting a white saltire that was visible to both sides. The omen inspired the Picts and Scots to win a famous victory over the Angles of King Aethelstan and so the white cross on the blue background was adopted as the national flag of Scotland.

Following Robert Bruce's victory at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, the Declaration of Arbroath officially named Saint Andrew as the patron saint of Scotland. The saltire appears to have become the official national flag in 1385 when the Parliament of Scotland agreed that Scottish soldiers should wear the white cross as a distinguishing mark. In such times flags and banners were important to identify opposing forces in the heat of battle.

Whilst its exact origin may have been lost in myth and legend, the flag of Scotland is generally regarded as one of the oldest national flags still in modern use. Not content with one flag however, Scotland also has a second unofficial national flag. This one generally appears by the thousands wherever and whenever the national sporting teams are competing and is commonly known as the Lion Rampant. The flag is actually the Royal Standard of the King or Queen of Scots, and it remains the personal banner of the monarch; as such its use is, strictly speaking, restricted.



It is thought that it was King Richard I of England “the Lion-Heart” late in the 12th century who first introduced a heraldic device showing a rampant lion, the king of beasts, rearing up with three of its clawed paws out-stretched as if in battle. This Lion Rampant was eventually adopted as the Scottish royal coat of arms and incorporated into the Great Seal of Scotland.

STAND FAST!

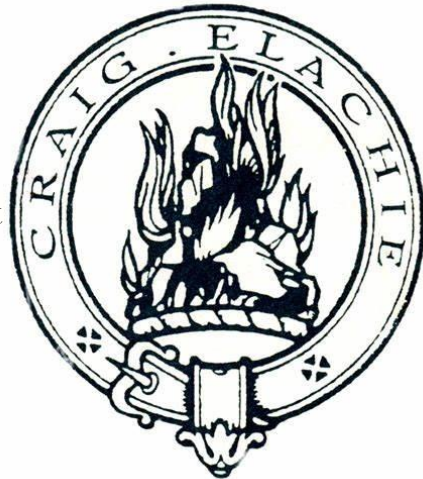
Dr. Bill Grant

President Clan Grant Society-USA

<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofScotland/>

A Clan Newsletter? Yes, your Clan is THAT awesome.

We are a great clan with a many Grant families in the their Scottish history or that When our society was embrace the following...



proud history. There are USA that do not know they are part of a clan. formed, we committed to

- Literature** - including publication of Scottish or Gaelic literature.
- Charitable** - such as helping Clansmen or dependents of Clansmen in distress.
- Historical** - especially as may be related to Clan Grant (or its various branches).

Ever heard of Ulysses S. Grant?

Educational - such as financial students, establishment of a or music, grants to schools or Clan Grant Educational and



assistance to deserving fellowship in Scottish literature colleges, and support of the Charitable Trust.

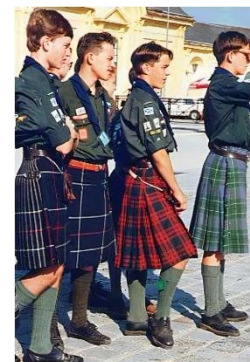
Cultural - such as encouraging dress traditions and customs, the United States, and supporting the Clan Grant Center in Scotland.

the perpetuation of Highland promoting Highland Games in

Social and Recreation - promoting friendship, goodwill, and clanship among members of the Clan.



You are the next Generation.





HEADS UP!

The **Clan Grant Society-USA General Meeting** is annually at the Stone Mountain Games in Atlanta, Georgia. We'd love to meet you.

SEEKING



TALENT

Clan Grant Society is looking for an **Assistant Webmaster** to help maintain our society website as well as being a backup for the current webmaster. Our website is currently hosted by GoDaddy and is using Drupal open-source software as the basis for our website. We are looking for a volunteer who has at least some basic knowledge of websites as we do not yet have a manual written containing the information necessary to train someone from scratch. However, this individual does not require specific knowledge of Drupal or GoDaddy. Please send an email to admin@clangrant-us.org expressing your interest and listing your experience.

Clan Grant is also seeking a genealogy enthusiast! This is a consultant-type volunteer position for someone with an interest in genealogy and does not require much in the way of experience or expertise although a basic understanding is helpful. The job entails maintaining our members-only Clan database, adding new Clan family trees from members and fielding questions from members looking into their own Grant Clan genealogy. The database, which has been formatted using Family Tree (a genealogy database program), is privately maintained on the Genealogist's personal computer; no public access is currently permitted. Lastly, the Genealogist should submit an article or two to the newsletter during the year. The position is not onerous and rarely requires little more than an hour or two here and there throughout the year. If you are interested, please contact **Dr. Bill Grant** at: academicdad@yahoo.com





The International Clan Gathering will be: AUGUST 3rd - 10th 2025 in Abernathy, SCOTLAND!

“The gathering will culminate in a Clan March & Banquet on the 10th at the Abernathy Highland Games.” - Tim Atkinson, Clan Gathering Chair.

Mark your calendars, **this will be the event of a lifetime**. You must go at least once; your editor has been there, and it is not to miss.

Celebrate your cultural heritage!

Notice all the knotwork?
Your ancestors mastered art like nowhere else in the world.
Show it to your children and watch them color it in.
Perhaps they will venture to create some of their own...

If they do, send them to your editor:
a.mg006@yahoo.com



POP QUIZ

Can you identify his tartan?



Better yet, who is he?



The Passing of the Clan Chief

Sir James Patrick Trevor Grant of Grant, Baronet, 6th Lord Strathspey (1943-2023), was born in 1943, and unlike most of his immediate forebears, has lived in Scotland most of his adult life. He attended school in Greenwich, Connecticut, before returning to the United Kingdom, where he worked on several farms and spent two years at the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester, Gloucestershire. Lord Strathspey had farms near Inverness. In 1973, he obtained a posting at the Scottish Horticultural Research Institute at Invergowrie, Perthshire, where he worked for eighteen years. In 1991, he moved to the isle of Mull to provide assistance to his aging mother. Upon the death of his father in 1992, he became chief of the Clan Grant, 6th Lord Strathspey and Baronet of Nova Scotia. In recent years, Lord Strathspey has also taken an active interest in the Clan Grant societies worldwide and has visited the United States and Canada. In his retirement, he

purchased the Old Manse at Duthil, which is only a few meters from the traditional burial site of the Chiefs of Grant. Lord Strathspey spends his spare time on the restoration of the Old Manse and tending to his garden. Like his father, he has a wonderful sense of humor and relishes with enthusiasm the promotion of the Clan Grant societies worldwide. Lord Strathspey died May 16th 2023 at the age of 79.



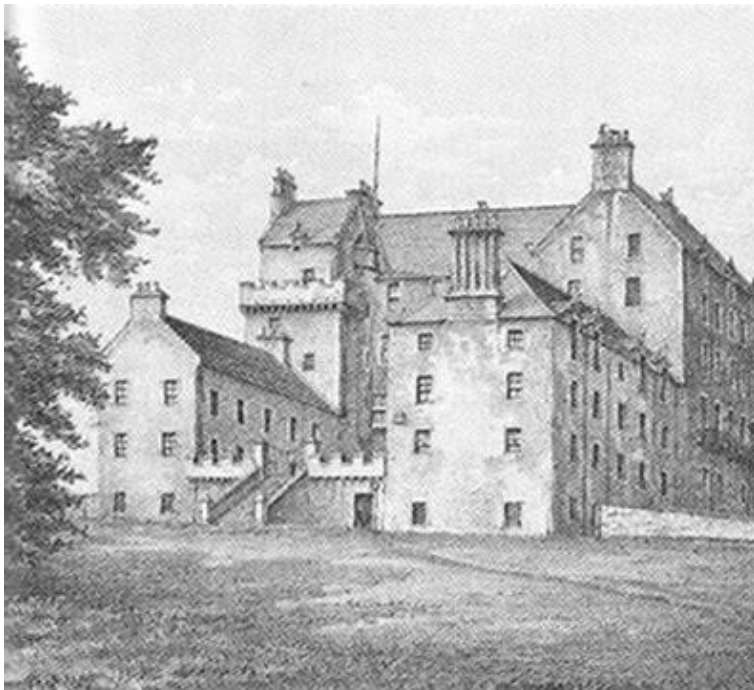
Reminiscing about Sir James



On his first visit to Scotland in July 2000, the editor had a chance to meet the Clan Chief. We were at an official clan gathering at Castle Grant and everyone was dressed to the nines. The night was young, and your editor danced with *every* young lady there. It was like a dream.

Suddenly, a hand reached out and pulled me toward the front table. The seventeen-year-old was yanked through the dancing throng and was brought before a character indeed. The teenager was introduced and immediately brought into Lord Strathspey's circle; shortly all became red in the face with laughter. The Clan Chief was of all things *whimsical*. Your editor wasn't sure what he expected from a Knight. He had never met a knight, or a lord for that matter. If there was nervousness it soon fled as the Chief beckoned a few of us into a dark stone hallway.

He took a few right turns and a few lefts. We were soon far away from the dance hall and could hear nothing but our breathing. The stone hallway of the castle was condensating; the teen ran his hand along beads of cold sweat upon the long, domed hall. Deeper and deeper, and a few more turns and the Chief stopped. The place looked like all the other corridors, but right where he stopped, he turned his hand backward and made a slight knock. Knock, Knock. He moved a little farther. Knock, Knock. He was clearly enjoying himself. Then the knock was different. Hollow. He then rapped a few times and looked at us staring. He didn't say a thing and made a quirky smile. Rap, Rap. Up, down, everywhere on a large space; all sounded hollow. He then nodded to us like a child being mischievous and pointed a finger tapping his temple. He loved every minute of it.



On the way back he got a little ahead of us and my uncle whispered to me, "he knows something." So did we. The rest of the night we discovered a great host, a few secrets, and quite a jokester. It didn't matter who you were, he treated everyone like family (we were) albeit distantly. What a host, what a man! Sir James, you will be sincerely missed.

A.M. Grant

New Clan Chief Confirmed



The Right Honorable
Sir Michael Grant of Grant,
Lord Strathspey

We can't wait to meet you at the Abernathy
Highland Games in 2025.

You have big shoes to fill!

WE WANT YOU

to be
ONE OF US!



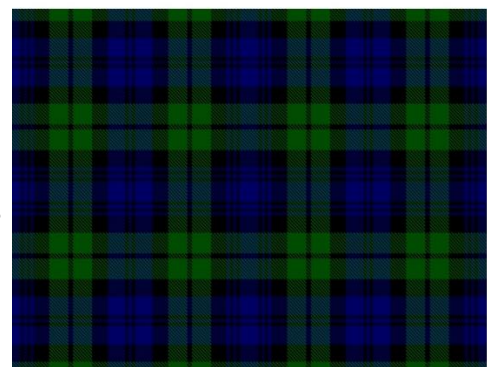
Here are allied families and septs of Clan Grant:

Allan, Allen, Bisset(t), Bowie, Buie, Gilroy, MaccAllan,
M(a)cgilroy, M(a)cilroy, McKerran, M(a)cKiaran, M(a)cKessock,
Pratt, Suttie.



Clan Grant Tartan - Plate XIX
by James Grant, Edinburgh - 1886

Official Clan Tartans



Grant Hunting Tartan - Black Watch
42nd Highland Regiment - 1725

Greetings from the Traveling Grants!

Bob and I have recently returned from the wilds of Scotland (Ireland, England, and France as well) on a **wonderful** once-in-a-lifetime trip, and we wanted to share the excitement of our time in Grant country with Clan Grant.



We began our visit by flying into Inverness Airport, a small facility, but we met great people. Our tour guide David Nisbet met us there, and right away we felt at ease and right at home. First, we stopped at Ft. George, home of the Black Watch, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, near Ardersier built in 1746. There is so much Grant history in this place! The museum exhibit for Sir Patrick Grant, with all his medals and awards, was very impressive. We toured the entire fort and saw the Grant name on many historical artifacts. What a rich heritage these brave soldiers have given us! David is an army veteran, so we truly got a behind-the-scenes look into the local military history.



Next, we went past Moray Firth on the way to the Culloden Battlefield. David explained the different areas of the battlefield and showed us the only remaining original structure on the grounds: a thatched-roof stone cottage. There is an excellent museum, café, and gift shop as well. One of the steppingstones was dedicated to John Grant of Glen Moriston. It was a memorable place because Grants fought on both sides in the Battle of Culloden.



At long last, we arrived in Grantown-on-Spey. There are two excellent hotels in this small, easily walkable town called the Garth Hotel, and The Grant Arms. We stayed at the Garth Hotel (built by James Grant) because the Grant Arms was fully booked. Another great option that we discovered after we had finalized plans was the bed-and-breakfast owned by our tour guide, “Haus Alba.” David is multi-talented, and he often leads whisky tours in the area. We found out that he has a wealth of knowledge about Grant history and knows **great** places to sightsee.



During our short stay, we visited the Grantown Museum, Castle Grant, the Strathspey Rail Steam Train, and the Clan Grant Centre (also known as Duthil Kirk). We even spotted our Clan Grant USA Stone Mountain Games group photo while there! Muckrach Castle, Spey Bridge over the River Spey, Aberlour, Ballindalloch Castle, the Johnny Walker Distillery (and highland cows), Craigellachie Bridge, the Knockando Woolen Mill, the Royal British Legion Scotland (We had a lovely teatime with a couple of incredible gentlemen!) Lochindorb Castle, Dulsie Bridge, Ruthven, and the harbor at Nairn. Whew! We saw so much in three days!

The best souvenirs we brought back were the kind smiles at the Garth Hotel, the gorgeous surroundings and scenery, the deep and honorable Clan Grant history, and the innate belonging to home and brotherhood with David and everyone we met. What a trip! We hope everyone will have the chance to travel to Grantown and follow in the footsteps of our illustrious Clan Grant one day.

- Mr. Robert Grant (Clan Chaplain) & Mrs. Mary Grant



Interested in a tour guide for your next Scotland visit?
Robert and his wife highly recommend:

David Nisbet: <https://albawhiskytours.com/> & <https://haus-alba.co.uk/>

John Halliday of Strathspey Tours: www.strathspeytours.com





ORDER FORM

Fill out this order form include your check and mail to:

Clan Grant Society-USA
6640 Arena Road
Ozark, AR 72949

ITEM	PRICE PER UNIT	NUMBER of UNITS	TOTAL
Donations			
Clan Grant Center Fund	10.00		
Clan Grant Games Support	50.00		
Donate to our Society Scholarship Fund	10.00		
Books*			
History of Clan Grant	35.00		
The Birth of the Modern Highlands	30.00		
Flags and Banners*			
Clan Grant Society - USA 3x5 Flag	65.00		
Total			

*Includes free shipping

Enclosed, check for \$_____

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____



THANK YOU!

We have Clan Grant note cards! The note cards come in two package sizes of 5 cards and 10 cards. with envelopes. The 5-card size is \$7 including shipping. The 10-card size is \$10 including shipping. **All proceeds go to the Greg Grant memorial scholarship funds** for Clan Grant Society members and their children. Mail a check with your name and address and quantity ordered to Karen Cook, Clan Grant Treasurer.

Clan Grant Elected Officers - USA

Our Command Structure - Don't be afraid to reach out! We are constantly seeking talent.

OFFICE	OFFICER	ADDRESS	E-MAIL	PHONE
President	Dr. Bill Grant	3102 Santa Lydia Mission, TX 78572	academicdad@yahoo.com	757-617-1652
Vice President	Paul D. Grant	14650 Kogan Dr. Woodbridge, VA 22193	paulwhenhome@gmail.com	703-593-2864
Secretary	Lena Grant	3102 Santa Lydia Mission, TX 78572	lenagrants@gmail.com	757-617-1652
Treasurer	Karen Cook	6640 Arena Rd, Ozark AR 72949-2481	kjc429@gmail.com	479-466-3582
Member at Large	Stephen Grant	1001 Hurstdale Ave, Cardiff by the Sea, CA 92007	grantsna@cox.net	760-207-2389
Member at Large	Jeniphrr Grant	36206 Allen Rd. S Roy, WA 98580	jeniphrr@yahoo.com	609-864-4615
Member at Large	Jim Grant	PO Box 248, Odessa DE 19730-0248	uncle.duck@verizon.net	302-378-9090



Clan Grant Appointed Officers - USA

Assistant Secretary, Judith Parsons
judi@parsonage.net 434-973-5409

Chaplain, Robert C. Grant
Rgrant9094@aol.com 770-380-4537

Genealogist, David J. Grant
Deacon32@wowway.com

Acting Quartermaster, Bill Grant
academicdad@yahoo.com 757-617-1652

Membership Secretary, Rand Allen
rballan@protomail.com 619-540-3846

Webmaster, Jeff Click
jclick@msn.com 360-635-4312

Clan Piper, Edward A. Grant-Smith
cgaceltic@glasgow-ky.com 270-479-0062

Clan Minstrel, Colin Grant-Adams
Edasmith1960@charter.net, 731-363-5897

Craig Ellachie Editor, SSGT A.M. Grant
a.mg006@yahoo.com

LOOKING FOR **CLAN GRANT** in your STATE?

LOCATION - STATE	POINT of CONTACT	E-MAIL	PHONE
Fairhill, Maryland	Richard Grant	richardpgrant@comcast.net	856-582-4653
Mid-Maryland	R. Steven Grant		410-255-6841
Ligonier, Pennsylvania	Will Kenyon	willkenyon@aol.com	814-571-7570
Greenville, South Carolina	Fred Wood	fred@bmc-control.com	864-498-0296
Loon Mtn, Vermont	Lysle Grant	odengrant@msn.com	603-330-0155
Stone Mtn, Georgia Blairsville, Georgia	Gary Grant	garym_grant@yahoo.com	770-585-9346
Orange County, Ventura, California	Rand Allen	rballan@san.rr.com	858-454-3845
Scottish Games, Virginia	Paul Grant	paulwhenhome@gmail.com	703-593-2864
Moab, Utah	Robert Grant	bob_grant@comcast.net	801-631-6790
Salado, Arlington San Antonio, Texas	Carl Allen	pastorcarl07@gmail.com	214-918-4458
Grandfather Mtn, North Carolina	Pruitt Allen	pruityyallen@hotmail.com	240-271-2389
Upper East Tennessee Celtic Society	George James	tubageorge@hotmail.com	830-460-0628
South Dakota	Aaron Grant	a.mg006@yahoo.com	585-404-1036

A list of Clan Grant Commissioners is available at our website: www.clangrant-us.org



Have a story to tell and want it to be in our newsletter?

Contact the editor at: a.mg006@yahoo.com

IT'S GREAT to be a GRANT!

Every Grant is Family.

Balvenie Doublewood

Single Malt Scotch Whisky



Simply the best.

Did you know Balvenie is made by Grant's distillery in Scotland?

Visiting the Grant's distillery in Scotland, not one of us emerged without a red, smiling face.

So. Many. Samples.

We were shocked to taste scotch whisky ice cream. Yes, *scotch ice cream*. It was like soft italian ice with a major kick. Since our visit decades ago, Grant's has really stepped it up.



Fact: every scot likes scotch



Question: why is Scotland the best place to make whisky?

Why is Walkers the best?

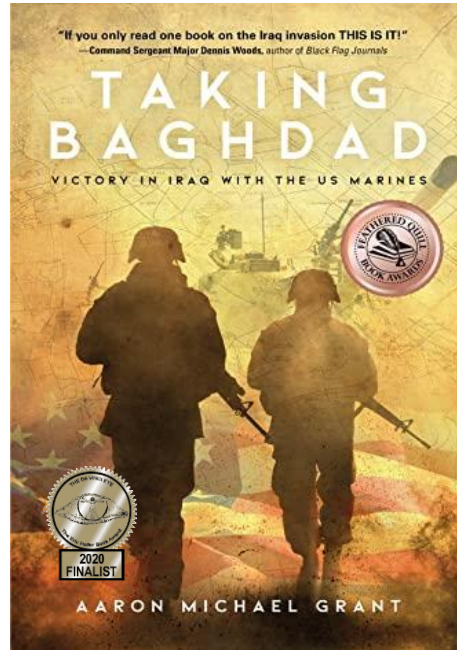


Because it uses the
Clan Grant Tartan!
and
So. Much. Butter.

Bookwatch

The editor would be remiss if he didn't mention...

...the only history of the Iraq war written by a marine that served in the war.



...proud recipient of three awards for literary excellence.

Taking Baghdad

Aaron Michael Grant

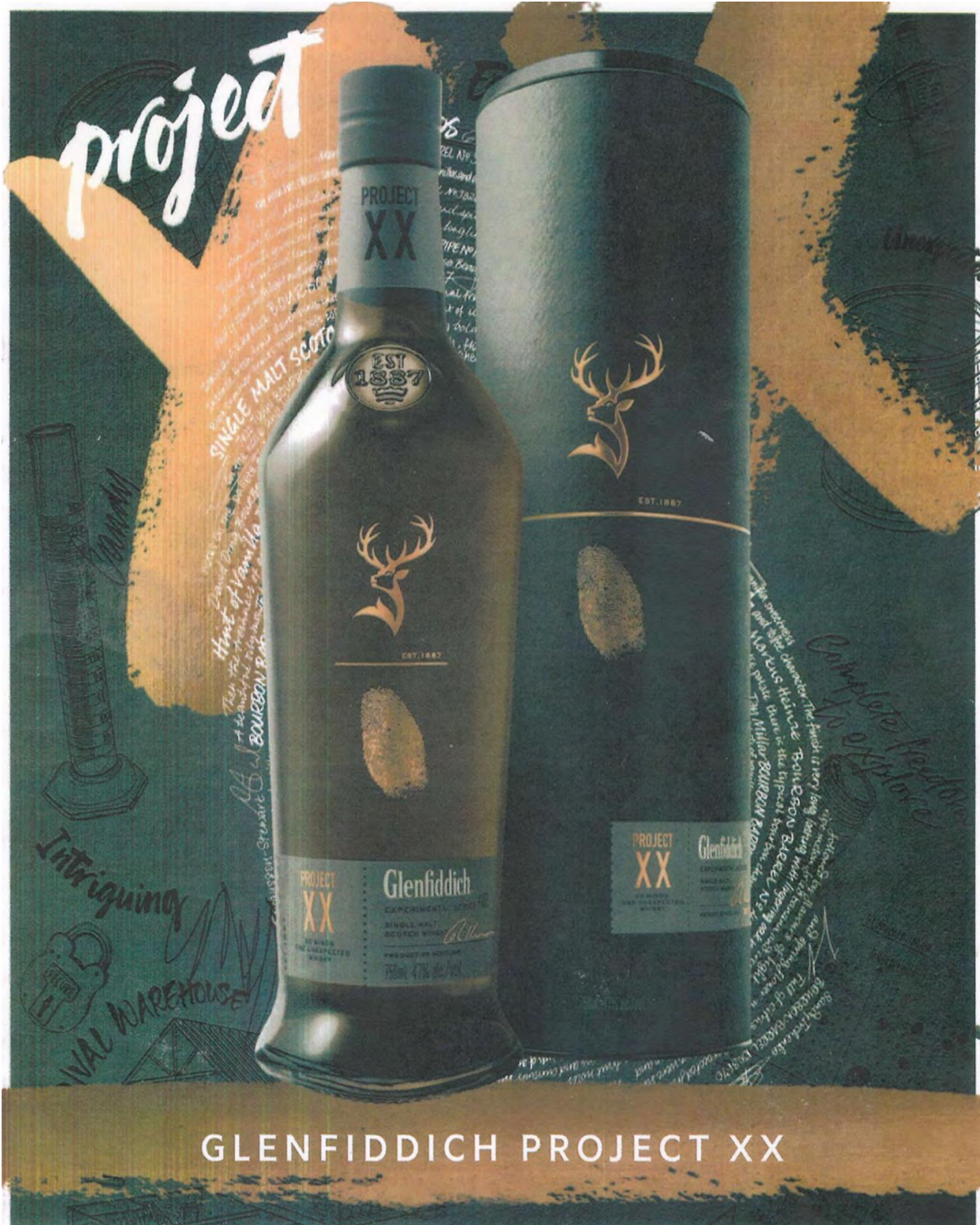
“TAKING BAGHDAD is a **MUST READ** for those who truly want to know what the war was like and all that that entailed - the good, the bad, and the ugly.”

“I couldn't put the book down. I FELT LIKE I WAS BACK IN IRAQ while reading it.”

“I COULDN'T STOP READING. I fell asleep. I awoke early. I read it again.”

Just photo this QR code:





The Clan Grant Society - USA wishes for Grant and Sons LTD Distillery to know how much their support of Criagellachie, the publication of the Clan Grant Society - USA is appreciated. We thank you for your sponsorship!

Clan Grant Society Membership Application

New Renewal Membership # _____
 Name _____ DOB _____
 2nd Adult [If family membership] _____ DOB _____
 Street _____ APT _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____
 Email _____
 2nd Adult Email [If family membership] _____

To save money we send our *Craigellachie Newsletter* by Email.

Check here if you want to receive a paper copy (additional fees may apply)

Dues (please circle)

Individual (single voting adult): **\$20 1-yr** **\$40 2-yr** **\$55 3-yr** **\$400 Life Member**

Family (Two voting adults, same address): **\$35 1-yr** **\$70 2-yr** **\$100 30yr** **\$700 Life Member**

NOTE: Membership runs from January 1st through December 31st. New members joining after June 30th will pay half of the listed amount for the current year of membership, and the full amount upon renewal the following January.

Donations

Clan Grant Center Fund: \$ _____

Scholarship Fund: \$ _____

Total: \$ _____ Check#: _____

Make all checks payable to: Clan Grant Society

Mail to: Rand Allen, 6102 Calle Vera Cruz, La Jolla, CA 92037

The Old Man's Mine

A Scottish Christmas Story

Chapter 1 of 2



Mines from WWII commonly wash up on Scottish Shores

When he got out of his bed, the cold of the North Sea cottage invaded everything. When the wool was pulled off, the warm bed chilled, and he had to move fast. With the customary sigh he began his day covered from head to toe. Not just when he went to sleep, but all the time. Head with the ever-present beanie (even when sleeping), toes with a double pair of wool socks (also when sleeping), underclothes from the wool under-sweater to the wool over-sweater, and lastly his inside tweed jacket. And shoes, always shoes for the tamped earth below that reminded him he was alive.

The frigid ocean assaulted the rocks outside and instantly froze, and the sealed cottage just a stones-throw away puffed its first morning fire. Though outside was a salty wasteland, inside the old man stoked the life-giving peat in a giant stone chimney. Peat: shit. Shit: peat. He ignited the shit-fire and squatted over it for warmth. Coal was added carefully until a big piece could be tossed in. Ten minutes. Done. With little care a big lump would last all day. He lit his pipe, too. The nicotine helped a lot, as did the coffee, as did the soup and scones. He didn't even hear the unexpected knock over his morning routine.

Nothing happened on the North Sea. That's the way he liked it. The local Scots talked small and drank deep, and no one went out early if they could help it. Too cold. Too much to do just to keep warm. To be independent was in his nature, as was his neighbor far away, as was his, and so on. Every stone cottage ignited in the way they could afford, and everyone minded his business.

The cat jumped down from the pots and they all clattered down. Thump, thump. Knock. Smash. He fixed the mess and didn't hear the knock yet again. His only roommate at least didn't speak, and jumping off things was her only vice. He tolerated her need for warmth when she jumped into his lap. In his simple winged-back chair, on his simple well-used table, he spread his fodder and obliged his cat. He liked learning nothing in the newspaper, he liked his huge shelf of books, and he liked that no one important knew he was there; those people never appreciated him anyway. Silence. The wind and crashing waves outside was all he ever expected, and he liked it that way.

Knock. Knock. Thud. Persistent, yet distant. He gaped at his cat. Nothing. He looked around. The noise wasn't normal. It couldn't have been the door. It was never the door. The one-room stone cottage sometimes had mice. Yes. That was it. Mice.

He jumped when he heard it again. He whipped around. Even the cat was looking at the door. The ice seal on the oak door cracked open releasing all the heat in the room. He grabbed his stick.

After an hour he puffed the courage to take out his Rodney: the stout, reliable boat that handled the sea so well. He didn't have to fish, but he did anyway. He brought a stash of money all those years ago to the cottage, so he never had to worry. Fishing bided time, and he had time. Maybe he would get lucky and capsize. Maybe he'd

catch cold back on shore and die later. Maybe then he'd decide his time in the north was over. Maybe he'd go back to that 'family'; that life. Maybe all that. Maybe not. Donning his canvas parka, he thought of those days in the green, temperate south. The few days that were good. No. Most were bad. They never appreciated him.

The fisherman's boots ground the sand cautiously to the serf. The stick was tight in a burly hand that wasn't used to surprises. Down to the gravel and bedrock he extended the stick and gave it a poke. In the presence of a predator, his eyes were wide. He had a visitor indeed.

It was a mine. Six feet around and wicked with spikes all over; it was huge mine! It must have washed up last night covered in seaweed and junk from the sea! Rolling with the serf, it knocked the bedrock when it moved, crawling closer to his home with each wave. Maybe he shouldn't poke it again. No. He had to! He was all at once surprised and horrified, aghast and giddy. Giddy like a Christmas morning child. This is what God had planned all along. One of the mines they planted in World War Two would finally take the old man out. Of all things! Not the cold. Not the loneliness. Not the cat tripping him up to snap his neck. A mine!

He backed up to his beached Rodney and sat down. For an hour he watched it, lolling to a complete stop not a hundred yards from the house. It found the gravel and settled in for the long haul. A permanent guest.

He was wise enough to know that they were engineered to explode when a ship hit them. Those eight inch rigid spikes would have to be depressed hard to set it off. Only a ship could do that, but it was impossible to know really. There were spikes he could not see below it now, and he knew that bedrock was below that. It could go off at any time. Yes, it was probably thirty years old, but that wouldn't stop it. Nothing could stop it.

That made him happy. He had a twisted fatalism about everything lately, and this was perfect. He probably got it in the Army way back; from fighting Nazis where every day he could have been killed. He coped with it like all the other guys did, laughing it off, accepting fate because there was nothing any of them could do about it anyway. Fate. This was going to be fun.

Immediately he scurried off to the pub, to the store, the church, the town square and became famous. The crowd he gathered was impressive, even for the small nowhere-town in Scotland. Yes, it was cold, but the people came out anyway. And

kids! There were kids here?! They came to the beach like a family reunion to see the visitor. And there it was: big, ugly, ominous. Any fear of it quickly subsided, and even moms let the kids poke it. The adults circled it talking about the Nazis and poked it. Everyone did. And, before long, the weeds and trash were cleared. And, before long, the old man saw the visitors getting cold.

Now, the old man was not an entertainer, but his stone cottage was warm and big enough, so he invited them in. It would not do to let them all go home along the frozen beach without giving them a chance to warm up. The first in were the girls and boys. There were only a few, but they were intensely interested in all of it. Like stepping into another world, it was as if they never saw a tamped earth floor. Few in Scotland still lived in these old cottages, and it was like stepping back in time. The adults followed and he found, as best he could, places for them to sit. They were equally interested.

The old man was interesting indeed. As he went to the big soup pot that was always boiling, the adults tried to keep the kids in check, but they eventually gave up. The walls were covered in books. Planks of well-used books. The quaint table had his pipe, and the kids passed it around in fun. That pleased him. The cat took off when they came near, and that pleased him, too. He produced bowls for the mystery soup and made as much coffee as he could, and it didn't take long for the moms to jump in. All of the sudden the place was warm like Christmas. Laughing, and the stories, oh the stories. One of the kids glided her hand along the old Nazi medals dangling, "where did you get these?" As soon as she asked, the whole room went quiet.

"I got those out of a tank thirty years ago."

"You were in the war?"

A mom tried to stop her. "Honey, don't be nosy."

"Yes, I was." He saw the kids, especially the girl, lock their attention upon the relics and he said, "They belonged to a German soldier. Now they are mine."

There was a great appreciation for him that he could instantly feel, and it felt good. He never got this from those other people...that 'family'; and here were strangers treating him better than the others ever did. The moms were washing up, some were even cleaning, much to his protest, and the dads found a new association in the old man they would have never have known otherwise. His eyes grew dim and he almost didn't hear the questions, or his answers, when the kids and adults spoke. Yes, he

was there, but he was not present. It was happiness for a precious hour, then a hint of sadness when the same girl asked if he had kids. She *was* nosy, but it was nothing. “Here,” he pointed to a picture in a dark corner, and she squinted to see it. He went and took it down, and realizing the dust upon it, he wiped it with his sleeve. The kids and grown-ups took a look and remarked on the handsome one, and the redhead kids with him.

“They look nice,” the girl said.

Then, he became conscious of the people, the looks, the useless conversation. Even the last hour of great company was wearing on him. He saw some of the moms whispering and he didn’t like that. His perfect, secluded cottage was too full. It was too much. It was most welcome when they began to file out the door thanking him for his hospitality. Out past the mine they waved after him, and the girl left last.

“Thank you. Love you. Bye!”

And that was it. He sealed the door and put his head against it sighing. Kids. The cat was still hiding, and he was going to hide too. No fishing today. Too much for today. He shook his body in a fit, shivering off a chill, and for the first time he really noticed the room. The whole place was even cleaner than he normally kept it. It unhinged him. Moms. They had not only cleaned up the bowls, but dusted everything, centered the few carpets, and somehow got into his food stores and started making something in the fireplace. He approached the tin and saw fresh bread! He didn’t even know he had yeast to make bread!

Can’t wait until the next issue to find out what happens? Read the rest here:

<https://vocal.media/families/the-old-man-s-mine>

