

THE COLOURS AND BATTLE HONOURS

The Colours

For centuries flags and standards of various types were carried in battle so that the soldiers involved could quickly identify a rallying point in a confused situation. By the middle of the 18th Century the government was exercising more centralised control over the armed forces, and this included standardised Colours in infantry regiments: the 'King's (or Queen's) Colour' was to be based on the Union Flag while the 'Regimental Colour' was to be of specific regimental design.

As the conditions of warfare changed, Colours were no longer carried into battle. Instead they became, and remain, formal and much respected symbols of the regiment.

At present (31 December 2013), the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Royal Anglian Regiment carry identical Colours (apart from the number of the Battalion) which were presented by Her Royal Highness The Princess Margaret at Duxford on 29 April 1995. The 3rd Battalion carries a similar set of Colours originally presented to the former 6th Battalion by Princess Margaret at Bury St Edmunds on 24 June 1979, and in addition has custody of a set of Colours presented to the former 7th Battalion by Her Royal Highness Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, at Leicester on 20 April 1980.

New Colours are to be presented to all 3 battalions by His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester at Duxford on 31 August 2014, and photographs of a pair of those new Colours are included here. Subsequently all 4 sets of old Colours will be formally laid up in suitable locations.

Battle Honours

In the late 18th Century regiments began to receive official approval to display the names of important battles in which they had taken part on their Colours, drums and uniforms. These came to be called 'battle honours'. Permission to display them remains strictly controlled.

The Royal Anglian Regiment itself has not yet been awarded any battle honours, but is the proud custodian of those won by its predecessors. The total number of such honours was 344 (75 before 1914, 124 for World War One, 143 for World War Two, and 2 for the Korean War). For reasons of space only a limited number, chosen by the Regiment as being those of greatest Regimental significance, are emblazoned on the Colours, as follows:

The Queen's Colour (41 honours from the two World Wars)

Mons	Normandy Landing
Le Cateau	Brioux Bridgehead
Marne, 1914	Venraij
Aisne, 1914,'18	North-West Europe, 1940,'44-45
Ypres, 1914,'15,'17,'18	Tobruk, 1941
Neuve Chapelle	Defence of Alamein Line
Loos	North Africa, 1940-43
Somme, 1916,'18	Villa Grande
Arras, 1917,'18	Salerno
Cambrai, 1917,'18	Anzio
France and Flanders, 1914-18	Cassino I-II
Macedonia, 1915-18	Gothic Line
Gallipoli, 1915-16	Italy, 1943-45
Gaza	Crete
Palestine, 1917-18	Singapore Island
Shaiba	Malaya, 1941-42
Mesopotamia, 1914-18	Yu
St. Omer-La Bassée	Ngakyedauk Pass
Dunkirk, 1940	Imphal

Kohima
Chindits, 1944

Burma, 1943-45

The Regimental Colour (45 honours from other conflicts)

Namur, 1695
Blenheim
Ramillies
Oudenarde
Malplaquet
Dettingen
Louisburg
Minden
Quebec, 1759
Martinique, 1762,'94
Havannah
Seringapatam
Corunna
Talavera
Albuhera
Badajoz
Salamanca
Vittoria
Peninsula
Bladensburg
Waterloo
Ava
Ghuznee, 1839

Khelat
Cabool, 1842,'79
Moodkee
Ferozeshah
Sobraon
New Zealand
Goojerat
Punjaub
South Africa, 1851-53,'79
Inkerman
Sevastopol
Lucknow
Taku Forts
Afghanistan, 1878-80
Nile, 1884-85
Tirah
Atbara
Khartoum
Defence of Ladysmith
Paardeberg
South Africa, 1899-1902
Korea, 1951-52

It should be noted that some of the above are actually 'combined' battle honours, for example 'South Africa, 1851-53,'79' is a combination of 'South Africa, 1851-2-3' awarded to the Suffolk Regiment (but not until 1882) and 'South Africa, 1879' awarded to the 58th (Rutlandshire) Regiment (in 1881). Likewise 'Cabool, 1842,'79' represents 'Cabool, 1842' awarded to the 9th (East Norfolk) Regiment (in 1844) and 'Kabul, 1879' awarded to the same regiment (in 1881). Commas which are properly included in battle honours, as in the list above, are usually left out on emblazoning, for reasons of space.

The 'Honours' section of the Regimental Museum at Duxford includes an interactive display giving full details of all battle honours inherited by the Regiment.

Until about 1980 it was customary for the Army List to show, at the start of the list of World War One battle honours for each regiment, the number of battalions of that regiment which took part in that war. As this history is being published in the year which marks the 100th Anniversary of the start of World War One as well as the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the Royal Anglian Regiment it is worth noting that its regular and territorial predecessors provided no fewer than 150 battalions for service in 1914-18, a very significant contribution.