

**1895 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE.**  
**THE COLOURS OF THE REGIMENT. By S. M. MILNE.**

**I.-43RD LIGHT INFANTRY.**

As early as the great civil war companies of foot soldiers were brought together and formed into regiments of infantry, one of the captains being entrusted with the position of colonel, another captain with that of lieutenant-colonel, and a third that of major (sergeant-major he was termed in those days). Each of these officers retained command of his company, though by reason of his higher rank, the colonel's company was eventually commanded by an officer termed captain-lieutenant. (*This state of things continued for a long time in the British Army—until 1803, in fact.*) Every company had its own standard or colour, differing in design from those carried by other companies. There were no regulations whatever in regard to these colours, but a kind of custom prevailed, which changed a little from time to time; thus, in the Stewart period, the national cross of St. George, on a white ground, or at least with a white fimbriated edge all round, formed a prominent part of all the colours, excepting that of the colonel's company, which was generally of some plain hue throughout, decorated with the colonel's coat-of-arms or crest.

During the reign of "William III., standards and colours were gradually reduced from one per company to only three for the regiment. Cannon states that at this period regiments were drawn up in three divisions, the pikemen in the centre, and the musketeers and grenadiers on each flank—three colours being carried so that each division might act independently if required. The general introduction of bayonets still further reduced the number of colours, so that by the end of Queen Anne's reign only two remained per regiment. The survivors were naturally the seniors, namely those of the colonel's and lieutenant-colonel's companies; this state of things existed until 1743.

It is doubtful if any colours of this period are now in existence; probably those of every regiment differed. We do, however, happen to know the pattern of the colours carried by the 10th Foot (Grove's Regiment) in 1726. In this case the senior (the colonel's) was white, with General Grove's crest and motto in the centre, a small "Union" (that of England and Scotland) in the upper corner nearest the spear-head. The second colour was simply the "Union" throughout, bearing no badge or distinction. The union of England and Scotland had taken place in 1707, the national flag then becoming the red St. George's cross, with its white fimbriated edge, placed upon the white saltire cross of St. Andrew, all on a blue ground. The records of the 43rd state that the regiment was raised on January 17th, 1741, and being found fit for service and complete, embarked for Minorca the next year. Its colours would be in accordance with the arrangement or custom just described, but what devices were placed upon them must remain a matter of uncertainty.

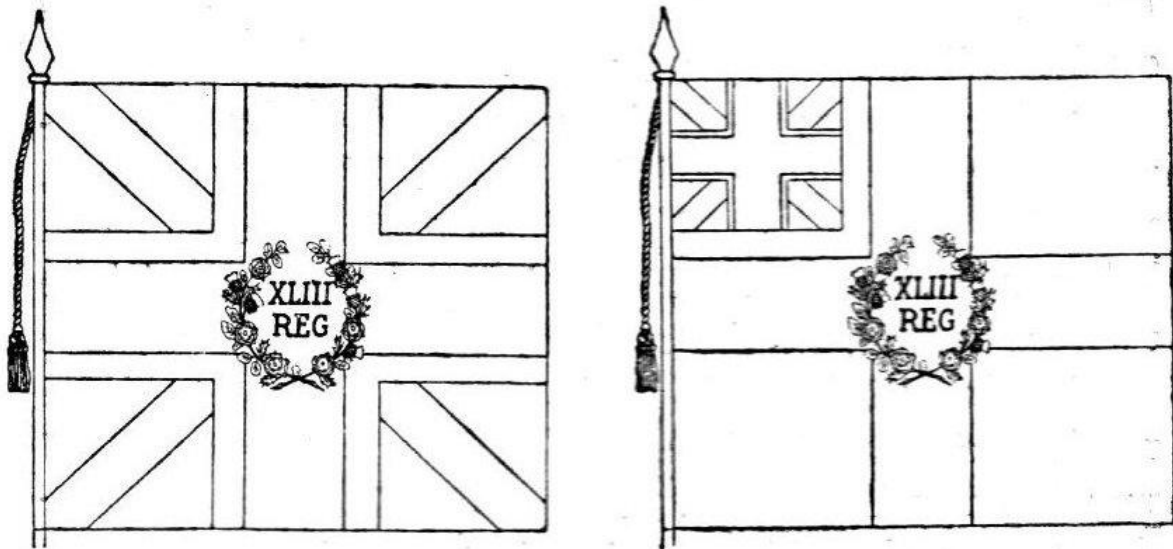
The semi-feudal distinctions which colonels had placed upon their flags had proceeded to such lengths (a similar display being unknown in foreign armies) that the authorities determined to subject colours to the strictest regulation, hence the Royal Warrant issued September 14th, 1743. Its principal feature consisted in the abolition of the old colonels' and lieutenant-colonels' colours, with their private heraldic devices, substituting for them two entirely new colours, one to be called the King's, the other the Regimental; the only ornamentation permitted being the regimental number within a "Union" wreath of roses and thistles. It is important to notice that this is the first authorisation of the regimental number on any portion of the equipments. The following portion of the Warrant refers to the colours of marching regiments:

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The Union Colour is the first stand of colours in all regiments, royal or not, except the Foot Guards. With them the King's Standard is the first, as a particular distinction. No colonel to put his arms, crest, device, or livery, on any part of the appointments of his regiment. The first colour of every marching regiment of foot is to be the great Union; the second colour is to be the colour of the facing of the regiment with the union in the upper canton, except those regiments faced with white or red, whose second colour is to be the red cross of St. George in a white field and a Union in the upper canton. In the centre of each colour is to be painted in gold Roman figures the number of the rank of the regiments, within a wreath of roses and thistles, on one stalk, except those regiments which are allowed to wear royal devices or ancient badges.

A further warrant in 1751 gave the dimensions, namely, "Flag, six feet six inches flying, and six feet two inches on the pole; length of pike (spear and ferrule included) nine feet ten inches; length of cord and tassels, three feet; length of spear, four inches."

In order of precedence, the regiment, called after its Colonel, "Fowke's Regiment," received the number "Fifty-four," and the next stand of colours it received after the promulgation of the Warrant of 1743, would have had that number placed upon them; but in 1748, in consequence of the disbandment of some senior corps, the regiment received the number "Forty-three", consequently, allowing some years for the duration of the first stand, it is probable that the first colours received, subject to the new regulations, would have the time-honoured number "Forty-three" upon them.



COLOURS OF THE REGIMENT ACCORDING TO THE ROYAL WARRANTS OF 1743 AND 1751.

The accompanying illustration represents the colours according to the official drawings issued by Colonel Napier, the Adjutant-General in 1747; the regiment having white facings, a red St. George's Cross occupied, the centre of the regimental colour. Extreme plainness, characterised the design—just the regimental number, little else. (*The author of these notes has only met with one single colour bearing the central device, after the severe style authorised in Colonel Napier's instructions, namely, the regimental colour of the 9th Foot, made about 17-57, now deposited in the Chapel, Sandhurst. It forms the subject of an illustration in Colours and Standards of the Army, 1661-1881; Milne, 1893*)

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The regiment, after some years' garrison duty at Minorca, returned to Ireland in 1749, when probably new colours, as just described, would be given out; it again sailed for North America in 1757, serving at Quebec under Wolfe, and in the West Indies until 1764, returning home that year.

Some information on the subject of the duration of colours, and also the period when new ones were received, may be gathered from the "Inspection Returns." The earliest of these documents, preserved in the Public Record Office, referring to the regiment, dated Plymouth, April 20th, 1767, describes the officers' uniform, but does not mention the colours; next, that of May, 1768, Exeter, wherein the colours are described as, "in good condition"—evidently new since the regiment returned from Havannah; this is corroborated by the inspection report from Stirling, dated May 28th, 1770, wherein General Oughton describes the colours as being new in 1763. There is, probably, a mistake of a year here, as the regiment returned from active service in 1764, and it is scarcely likely to have received a new stand until it arrived home (as indeed was the usual custom). The new colours would only differ from the old ones in the central embroidery; the number, now as follows:

**REG**  
**XLIII**

would be embroidered upon the red silk of the flag centre, but within a yellow silk shield border of fantastic rococo design (then much in fashion), the whole surrounded by a wildly-spread and irregular wreath of roses and thistles. This stand only lasted some ten years. We gather from the Inspection Return, dated St. Alban's, March 4th, 1774, that new colours had just been given out. In design, they would very closely resemble those last described.

The regiment, embarking for North America in 1774, took part in most of the affairs and actions of the War of Independence, from the skirmish at Lexington to the surrender at Yorktown, 1781. It is not at all certain that the colours were present with the regiment on the latter occasion; they may have been left with the depot at New York. That some regiments did adopt this course, is almost beyond doubt; experience had proved over and over again that in the rough forest warfare of that contest colours became an encumbrance.

The remains of the regiment returned home early in 1783. At the inspection, Hilsea, August 2nd that year, General Lennox remarked in his report, "New colours had been received in July". Fashion in the central designs of colours had changed again—the wild discursiveness of the rococo period had given place to the more classical "Adams" style; regularity was now the principal object desired, and although the number was displayed as before:

**REG**  
**XLIII**

the yellow silk bordered shield became more rectangular, and had both sides corresponding; the wreath also, as to pattern, was precisely similar on both sides.

With a view to encourage recruiting, the regiment received orders, dated August 31st, 1782, to assume the title of "The Forty-third, or Monmouthshire Regiment of Foot," but beyond this designation appearing in the annual army list, nothing came of it for the present; county titles had no place on infantry colours until about 1816 or 1817.

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The regiment was inspected at Youghal 18th June, 1792, when the colours were reported upon as "in bad condition"; probably they required a little repairing, the regiment having been twice quartered in Dublin. The guard duties, in which the King's colours largely participated, always had a deteriorating effect upon that colour, in consequence of the numerous pieces which constituted the "Union" flag. These colours were taken to the West Indies towards the end of 1793. The outcome of that disastrous and deadly campaign may be gathered from a perusal of the regimental records—in two years the regiment disappeared, officers and men—the colours disappeared also.

A new 43rd was formed, and new colours given out at Portsmouth in the autumn of 1795. The ornamental design in the centre had become more severe in style, the number, now as follows,

**XLIII**  
**REG**

placed upon a heart, or heater-shaped shield, having a narrow yellow silk edging surrounded with a stiff and regular wreath, in accordance with the classical fashion then in vogue.

In 1797 the regiment was again sent to the West Indies, and once more disease reduced it, in a short three years, to a skeleton; what was left of it returning home in 1800.

The union with Ireland in 1801 necessitated a considerable alteration in the colours of the army. The Union flag itself received an additional cross, that of St. Patrick being added to the two already displayed upon it. The actual wording of the Order in Council is as follows:

The Union flag shall be azure, the crosses saltire of St. Andrew and St. Patrick quarterly, per saltire counter-changed, argent and gules, the latter fimbriated of the second, surmounted by the cross of St. George of the third, fimbriated as the saltire.

It was further ordered " that the shamrock should be introduced into the ' Union' wreath." Although the colours in use had only seen some six years' service, they were replaced, and new ones made in accordance with the recent regulation. This may be gathered from the inspection returns: Guernsey, 1801, colours mentioned as received in 1795; Guernsey, 1802, General Dalrymple reports, "Colours good; in possession of the regiment at the last inspection," implying that new colours had been made, but that the old ones appeared on the occasion quoted; again, Guernsey, 1803, Major-General Doyle reports, "Colours new in 1802."

Numbers of colours were made at this period, all, or nearly all, of one pattern; the number and shield as last described, but the wreath very thin and plain, with two roses on each side, each branch of the wreath terminating in a rose-bud above the shield.

Nothing more about the colours appears in the inspection returns until April 23rd, 1807, Hythe, when they are reported upon as being in bad condition; the same report next year at Maldon. As these colours were in use until 1818, they must have been repaired and carried by the regiment (now the 1st Battalion) in the Corunna Campaign, 1808, and also in the Peninsular War from 1809 until 1814. It is very doubtful, however, if they were ever brought into action—an idea being prevalent that colours need not be used by light infantry corps on active service. The "Returns" clearly prove that at least three light infantry regiments serving in the Peninsula left their colours at home. Beyond doubt the 43rd took its colours to Spain, for at the inspection early in 1812 they are reported upon as being "in conformity with the King's regulations." In 1813, however, at Gallegos they were "not produced."

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A 2nd Battalion was raised in 1804, but does not appear to have received colours for a considerable period. In 1807 it had no colours; the same report also at the inspection, Hythe, May 5th, 1808. Within a few weeks, however, the battalion embarked for Spain, and fought at Vimiero and Corunna, probably without colours. During the remainder of its existence it acted as a recruiting Battalion for the 1st Battalion in the Peninsula. It did, however, eventually receive colours, which can be traced in the "Returns" from 1810 to 1816.

*(The battalion was disbanded April 1817, and the subsequent disposal of these colours is unknown. It appears, however, from information lately received by the editor of the Chronicle, that Sir Thomas Pearson, its last colonel, had a set of colours made towards the end of 1816, which he intended to have presented to the battalion, but its early disbandment prevented the design being carried out, and the colours are now in the hands of Major Barnett, of Costylost, Washaway, Cornwall.)*

At the conclusion of the war in the South of France, the 1st Battalion went to America, taking part in the attack on New Orleans, then back to Europe, just missed Waterloo, and afterwards formed part of the army of occupation in France. The old colours, carried about for eighteen years, had become much dilapidated, and were reported upon at the second half-yearly inspection, Clichy, 1815, as "completely worn out"; again 1817, "very bad, no steps have been taken by the colonel of the regiment to replace them." *(In the British army, until quite recently, the colonel provided the colours from his own purse.)* These rather free remarks appear to have had the desired effect, for next year new colours arrived, and were presented, as the following entry in the orderly room copy of the records testifies: "1818, July 23rd: The regiment this day assembled at the Place Verte, Valenciennes, when, after consecration by the Reverend Maurice Jones, the new colours were presented by Lady Blakeney in the presence of Major-General Sir James Kempt." Of the old ones, which had seen so much service, little would be left but a few fragments, and these cannot now be traced.

The newly presented colours are happily with us at the present time, being deposited in the museum of the Royal United Service Institution, Whitehall, together with nearly contemporary colours of the companion regiment, the 52nd. The illustration opposite does them full justice, and will serve to give the reader a good idea of their appearance and of the details of their ornamentation. To begin with, they were of altogether new pattern, as far as the central part was concerned; the county title, conferred so far back as 1782, appeared for the first time. In the centre on red silk:

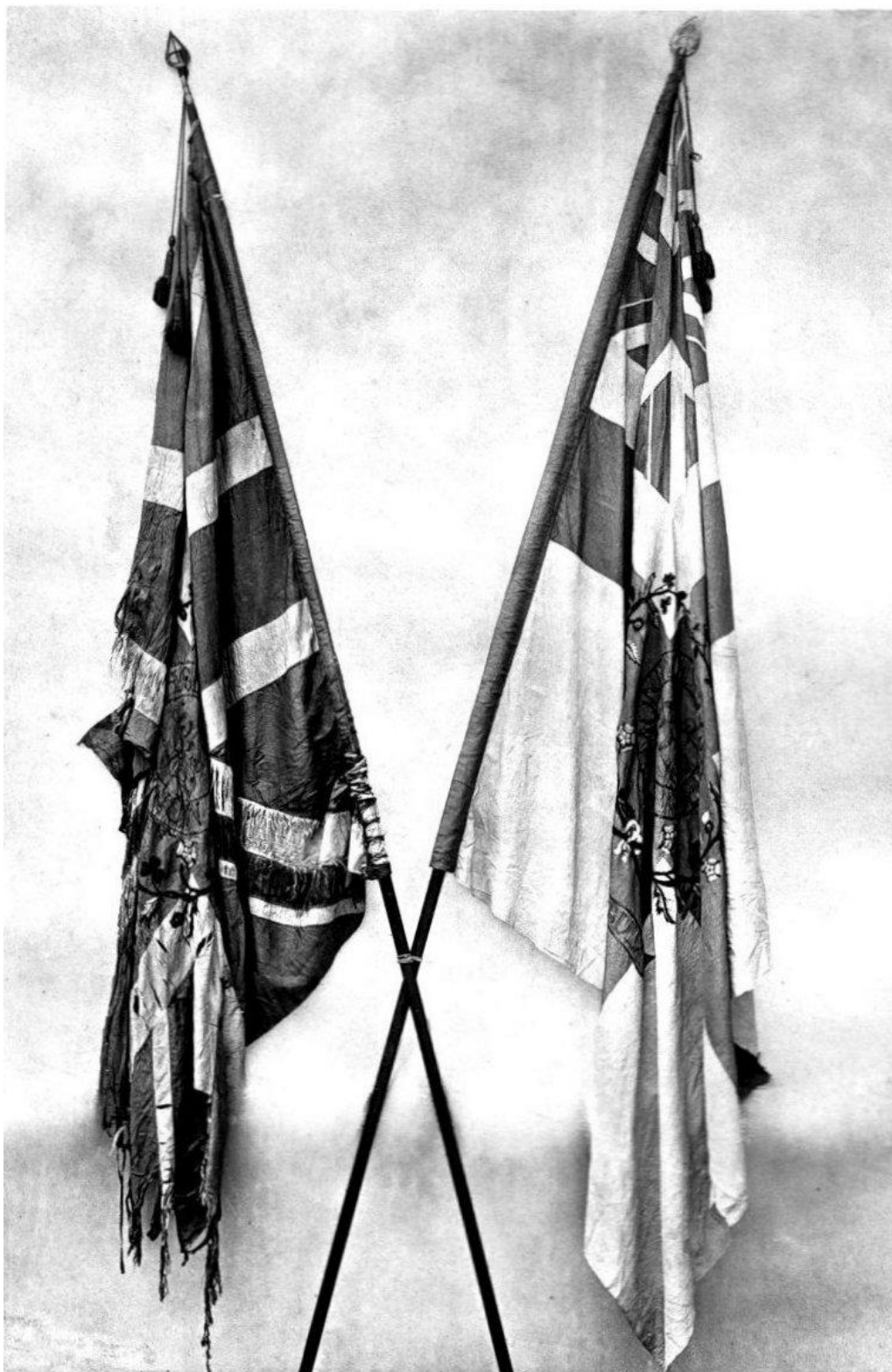
**43**

**REG**

(Arabian numerals taking the place of the duly authorised Roman letters for no apparent reason); the red silk girdle without buckle, bearing "Monmouthshire" embroidered in gold, the whole surrounded by a scanty "Union" wreath, as in the 1801 stand, but the two upper arms of the wreath, ending in the familiar rose buds, crossed and interlaced, the crossed stalks at the bottom tied with ribbon. One highly important addition must not be overlooked; below the wreath, upon both colours, was placed the motto "Peninsula," on a red silk label. This, the first battle honour granted to the regiment, was authorised to be borne upon the colours and appointments in April 1815, in common with other regiments that had served through the Peninsular campaigns. On the 7th March 1821, ten more battles were authorised to be displayed upon the colours, ("Vimiero," "Busaco," "Fuentes d'Onoro," "Ciudad Rodrigo," "Badajoz," "Salamanca," "Vittoria," "Nivelle," "Nive," "Toulouse.") and on the 22nd, yet another, "Corunna." It was usual to place these honours upon scrolls, and attach them to the colours at once, provided the silk was in condition to bear the extra weight, but for some reason these additional honours were never placed upon the 1818 colours, as a glance at the illustration will prove.



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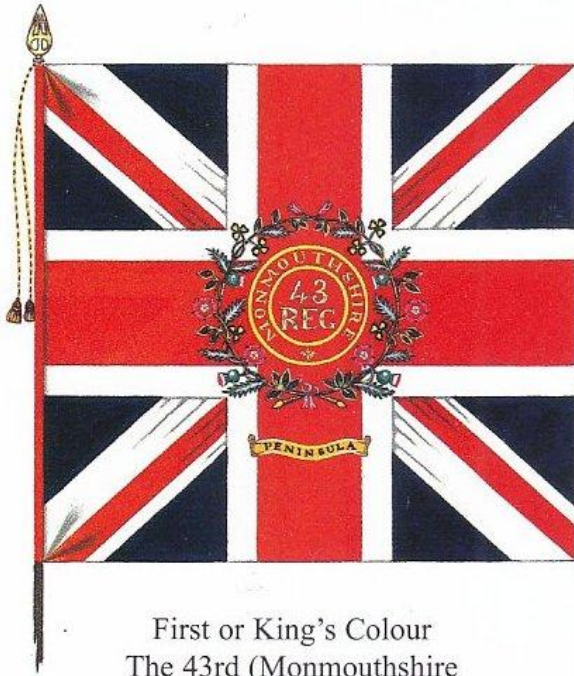


*Woodbury-Gravur*

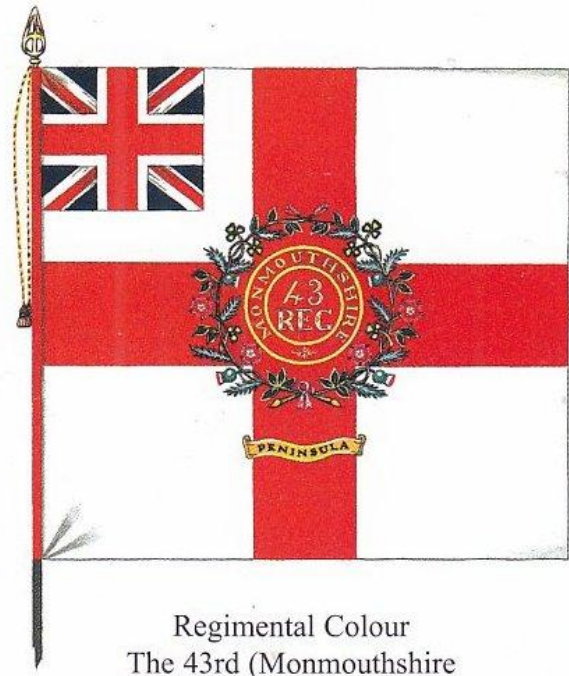
**THE COLOURS OF THE 43<sup>RD</sup> LIGHT INFANTRY.**

**1818-1827.**

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First or King's Colour  
The 43rd (Monmouthshire  
Light Infantry) Regiment  
1818-1827



Regimental Colour  
The 43rd (Monmouthshire  
Light Infantry) Regiment  
1818-1827

On the occasion of the half yearly inspection at Gibraltar, December 11th, 1826, the following entry occurs, "New colours have been received, and will be presented in a few days." An eye witness relates that, "the new stand was presented by Mrs. Haverfield, the wife of the commanding officer on the Alameda, 6th January, 1827, rather hurriedly, as the regiment was to embark next day for Portugal." These colours were retired in 1847, and, as was customary, handed over to the custody of the colonel of the regiment, Lieut.-General the Honourable Sir Hercules Pakenham, K.C.B. They are now in the possession of his son, the Reverend Arthur H. Pakenham, who has kindly given every facility for examination, enabling a correct description to be rendered. The centre badge like that on the 1818 colours, the wreath a little fuller in leaf; perhaps the great distinction lies in the fact that the authorised battle honours are displayed, for the first time, upon blue silk scrolls or labels; in the case of the Regimental colour, four on the left side, under the small "Union"; on the opposite side six, one also above, and one below the wreath, making twelve in all. "When it is borne in mind that both colours displayed all these devices and honours, it may be readily understood that an imposing appearance was presented.

In January, 1844, a Royal Warrant was issued, discontinuing the practice of placing any regimental record or device upon the Royal colours, more than the number of the regiment, surmounted by the imperial crown." This very much impoverished the appearance of the Queen's colour, but the new rule did not affect the colours of the 43rd until the next set was made—presented to the regiment on Southsea Common, March 22nd, 1847, by Lady Pakenham. These colours were in use for a very long period (the regiment doubtless very loth to part with them), but in 1887 the remains were deposited in the Church, Monmouth; little more of them can now be seen but the pole of the Queen's, and a few shreds of the Regimental colour. According to the lately mentioned regulation, only the number in Roman characters and Crown would appear upon the Queen's colour, but the Regimental colour, when new, would be, like several others made at this date, of a very ornamental appearance; the usual red girdle, thereon "Monmouthshire," within the girdle the Regimental number in Roman letters (as on the Queen's colour), the whole surrounded with a very handsome wreath surmounted with the crown; the twelve battle scrolls on blue labels, ranged on each side only.



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In 1855, colours were slightly reduced in size; again 1858, the size was still further reduced to four feet six inches flying, and four feet on the pole; a silk and gold fringe border introduced, and the ancient spear-head abolished; a gilt crown and lion (the crest of England) taking its place. All these changes did not affect the colours of the regiment, which were carried at its head until 1887—a period some six years after the introduction of the territorial system, which amalgamated the 43rd with its old companion, the 52nd, and blended the honours of both regiments.

The new colours received by the regiment (now the 1st Battalion, Oxfordshire Light Infantry) in 1887, were in accordance with the regulations of 1881, excepting that the old number was missing; the change, so far as the regiment was concerned, was not so great as in some others. The white ensign with the red cross (always used by those regiments having white facings) was not so very unlike the previous colours borne by the regiment, plus the honours of the 52nd, which were added.

It only remains to mention that "New Zealand" was authorised, June, 1870, for the services rendered by the regiment in the seven campaigns of 186-1-65; "Quebec, 1759" as a somewhat tardy acknowledgment of its services under the immortal Wolfe, authorised 1882; and in the same year, "South Africa, 1851-3," for its services in that Colony.





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**II.-52ND LIGHT INFANTRY.**

Raised in 1755 as the 54th Foot; two years afterwards, in consequence of the disbandment of some senior corps, it received its honoured number Fifty-two. Like every other regiment, it would receive a pair of colours very soon after its formation. In those days, indeed, so important a part did colours play in the field manoeuvres of an infantry regiment, that none could be considered complete without them. Shortly before this date, the colours of the army had become subject to strict regulation, two colours only being used, the first the King's, the second the Regimental. According to the Royal Warrant of September, 1743, the King's colour was the "Union" throughout, that is, the red cross of St. George with a white fimbriated edging placed upon the white cross of St. Andrew on a blue ground; the other, the Regimental colour, of buff silk (the hue of the regimental facing) with a small "Union" in the upper corner next the spear-head. The centre of both colours displaying the regimental number surrounded with a "Union" wreath of roses and thistles, the badges of England and Scotland.

It almost amounts to certainty, that the earliest colours borne by the regiment, would display the first number "54," and equally certain that the new number would replace the former as soon after 1757 as the change could be made, with due regard to the interests of the colonel, who provided the colours at his own expense.

Much information may be gathered, regarding the dates when colours were given out, from the "Inspection Returns" preserved in the Public Record Office, but unfortunately, the earliest to be found there having reference to the 52nd, is dated 1779, therefore, as a conjecture, it is quite possible these colours would be carried by the regiment to North America in 1765, taking part in the War of Independence with its fluctuating fortunes, and brought back, as may be surmised, much war-worn in the year 1778.

On the occasion of the earliest recorded inspection, which took place at Dartford, September 29th, 1779, the inspecting officer remarked that the colours "are in good condition, and in conformity with His Majesty's regulations." They were evidently quite new, indeed, subsequent inspection returns, namely, those at Rye, October 10th, 1781, by General Gage, and Chatham, September 4th, 1782, by General Calcraft, confirm this; in both cases the colours reported upon as "new in 1779." The general effect of this new stand of colours (coming under the "Warrants of 1743-51, confirmed by that of 1768) was generally the same as the former set, but following the dictates of fashion, the simplicity of the central embroidery of the old stand had vanished. The regimental number (now Latinised),

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**REG**

was placed upon a red silk shield, nearly oval in shape, edged with a narrow floriated border of yellow silk, presenting a bold effect upon the buff silk of the regimental flag, surrounded in turn by a handsomely embroidered "Union" wreath of roses and thistles, spreading over a large portion of the central part, fully two feet in width. The fact that this red silk shield was placed in the centre of the red cross of St. George, deprived the King's colour of the brilliant appearance presented by its companion.

The regiment embarked for India in 1783; its services there are well described by Moorsom, but not a word can be heard of the colours, for though the regiment was doubtless inspected from time to time, no official reports, whilst on its fifteen years' tour of Indian duty, can be found. The colours were doubtless brought back to England with the regiment in 1798; Moorsom states that it arrived at Chatham, August 7th, that year.

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Subsequent Inspection Returns, viz. Horsham, December 5th, 1709, by Major-General Whyte, and Chelmsford, March 8th, 1800, give the date of the presentation of a new stand as August 8th, 1798, consequently, little time must have been lost; the new stand evidently awaited the arrival of the regiment.

Most fortunately, correct drawings of these 1798 colours happen to have been preserved—the illustration on the next page being taken from the archives in the Herald's College. As they are of historic interest—being carried by the regiment in the Peninsular "War and at "Waterloo, a remarkably long and eventful service—it may be well to devote more than ordinary attention to them. In the first place, the illustration represents the colours as they appeared when first presented in August 1798; the " Union" bears the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew only, and the wreath, roses and thistles; the central shields, in red silk, are of handsome design, that on the King's colour bearing, as a distinction, the crown over the number. In this state, as depicted in the illustration, they remained until the Union with Ireland in 1801.

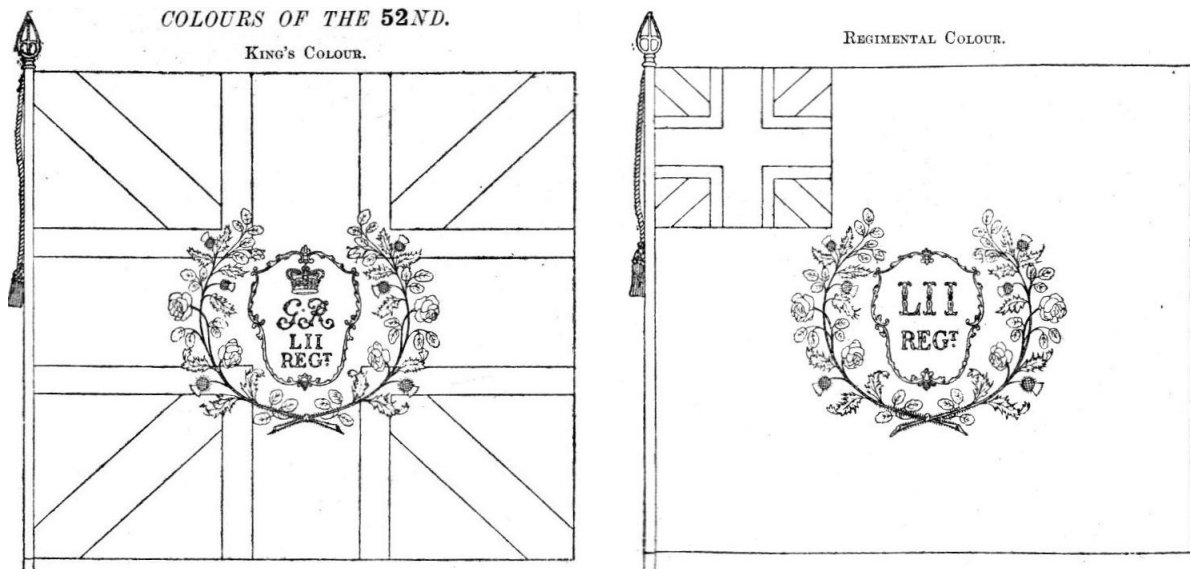
The embodiment of the cross of St. Patrick upon the "Union" colour, and the introduction of the Irish badge of the "Shamrocks" into the wreath (to be displayed there upon equal terms with the old established roses and thistles), necessitated a change in the colours of the army.

Stands of colours in accordance with the new regulations were, in most cases, given out, but occasionally, when they were almost new and the silk in good condition, existing colours were altered; the King's colour, the great "Union," taken to pieces, and the cross of St. Patrick added; the space occupied by the wreath, and central ornaments not being interfered with, nothing more being required than to introduce the Shamrock into the embroidery of the wreath. It had to be pushed in somewhere, and its intrusion was in all cases manifest. Several such altered colours are still in existence, and show the additions very distinctly. The colours of the 52nd being comparatively new, and, by inference, of good materials, were adapted to the new regulations in the manner described.

Some years afterwards, namely, in 1807, the newly appointed inspector of regimental colours sent out a circular asking for drawings and details of such colours as were then in use by infantry regiments. In reply, Colonel Wade sent the before mentioned drawings of the colours, then borne by the 1st Battalion 52nd. Writing from Melazzo, Sicily, 27th July, 1807, he says, "The regiment have only had two pairs of colours within the last twenty-seven years—the last received in 1798 after return from India; with respect to the deviation you will perceive in the King's colour, I cannot inform you by whose authority it was done." The gallant officer's last paragraph evidently refers to the difference of the badges upon the central shields, noticeable in the accompanying illustration.

These colours were taken to the Peninsula, serving at Corunna, Busaco, and the numerous actions in which the regiment took a distinguished part. It is not quite certain if they were carried at the head of the regiment in the campaigns of 1813 and 1814,<sup>2</sup> certainly they were with the regimental head-quarters in 1812. At the first half-yearly inspection that year, they were reported upon as being "in bad condition"—no wonder, considering their age—nevertheless, the veterans survived to witness the defeat of the Imperial Guard at Waterloo.

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*Presented August 8th 1798:*

*Altered to suit the requirements necessitated by the Union with Ireland, 1801;  
carried at WATERLOO and finally retired 1818.*

To go back a few years: A second battalion was added to the regiment in 1799; it served with the first at Ferrol, and was inspected at Horsham in December that year, when it appears to have had no colours, but at the succeeding inspection, Ashford, October 12th, 1801, it had colours, for they were reported upon as "in good condition." In January 1803, it was detached from the regiment, and numbered "96."

Another 2nd Battalion was raised in 1804, but for some reason did not receive colours for many years. "When inspected at Sliorncliffe, April 17th, 1807, the inspecting officer reported "no colours." Shortly after this it embarked for Portugal, serving at Vimiera and in the retreat to Corunna. In 1810 the battalion, then in England, was reported upon as "not having colours, nor the sergeants pikes." It joined the first battalion in Spain in 1811, but whether it had colours or not, must remain uncertain. Returning to England, at the next inspection, 1812, it had colours, for they are described as "good"; the same remark at both the following inspections in 1813. The battalion subsequently served in Flanders, 1814, and was finally reduced at Canterbury, May, 1816. Its colours cannot now be traced.

To return to the 1st Battalion, after its return from the Peninsula, the old colours were reported upon at Chatham as being "in bad condition," and in that state they were taken to the Netherlands in 1815, and headed the regiment at Waterloo. The Reverend W. Leeke, who, as ensign, carried the regimental colour on the 18th of June, describes the colours as being "little more than bare poles." His interesting work (*Leeke's History of Lord Seaton's Regiment at the Battle of Waterloo.*) contains much graphic detail about the disposition and fortunes of the colours on that eventful day; he relates how Ensign Nettles, carrying the King's colour, was killed towards the close of the battle; the colour, in some unaccountable way, being overlooked, and found next morning under his body by a sergeant of Captain Mercer's troop of horse artillery. As a fitting termination to their long career, the colours entered Paris at the head of the regiment. To quote Leeke's words, "I am sure it was the proudest moment of my life, when I found myself riding down the Champs Elysees, bearing in triumph into the enemy's capital that same 52nd Regimental colour which I had had the honour of carrying to victory on the glorious day of Waterloo."



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Until the end of 1818, the 1st Battalion (more correctly speaking, "the regiment," now that the 2nd Battalion has been disbanded) formed part of the army of occupation, and was the last of the British army to quit France.



First or King's Colour  
The 52nd (Oxfordshire Light Infantry)  
Regiment  
c.1815



Regimental Colour  
The 52nd (Oxfordshire Light Infantry)  
Regiment  
c.1815



*ENSIGN WILLIAM LEEKE*  
*52ND LIGHT INFANTRY*  
*WHO CARRIED THE REGIMENTAL COLOUR AT THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO*

**1895 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE.**  
**THE COLOURS OF THE REGIMENT. By S. M. MILNE.**

Leeke's bare poles still had to do duty, but in Sir Denis Pack's report upon the inspection, May 15th, 1818, he describes the colours as "new." There appears, unfortunately, to be no record of the date or of the manner of presentation. The central embroidery upon these new colours formed a complete contrast to that upon the old 1798 set, perhaps the chief distinguishing point being the appearance of the county title (for the first time, although, as we have seen in connection with the 43rd, it had been allotted to the regiment so far back as 1782.) "Oxfordshire" in gold embroidery upon a red silk girdle (without buckle or tip) occupying the centre; within this girdle, on red silk,

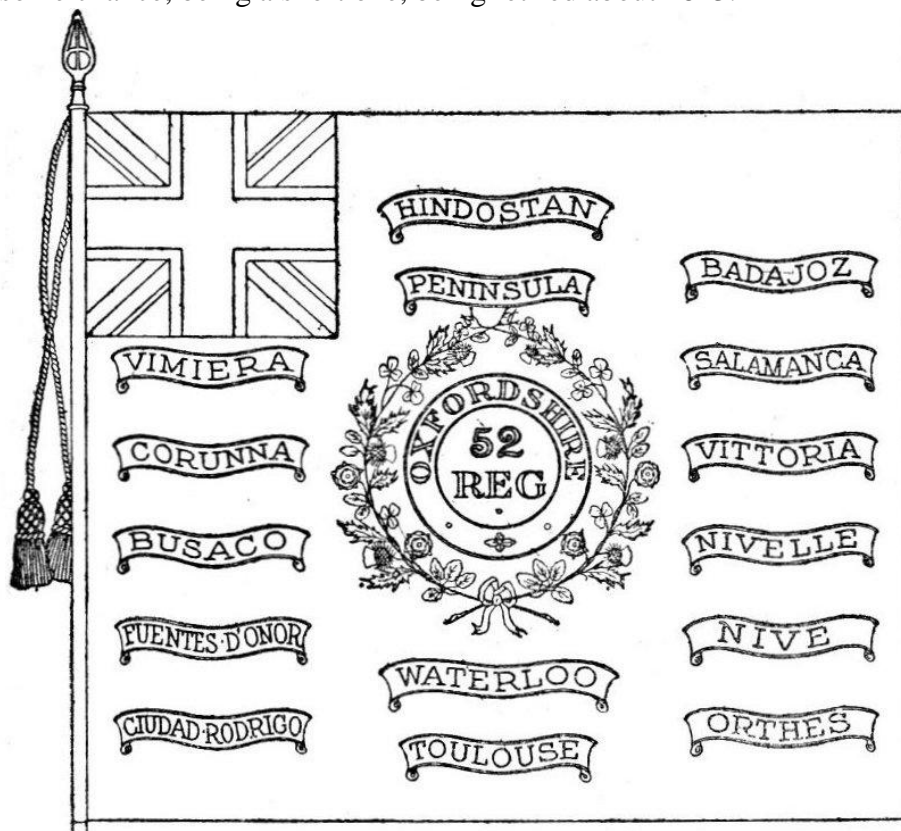
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the number in Arabian numerals (*Classical details, of all kinds, were just now out of fashion.*) be it remarked, contrary to the regulations, which prescribed "Roman figures," the whole surrounded by a rather stiffly-designed wreath of roses, thistles, and shamrocks, each end terminating in a rose-bud interlaced, exactly like the centre of the next (1824) stand. One very important addition must be mentioned, namely, two scrolls or labels of red silk, edged yellow, placed one above and one below the wreath, bearing the words, "Peninsula," "Waterloo." These distinctions having been conferred upon the regiment in 1814 and 1815.

In March 1821, the following honours were further granted to the regiment, to be borne upon its colours and appointments, "Hindustan," "Vimiera," "Corunna," "Busaco," "Fuentes d'Onor," "Ciudad Rodrigo," "Badajoz," "Salamanca," "Vittoria," "Nivelle," "Nive," "Orthes," "Toulouse," making a grand total of fifteen battle honours—the largest number granted at the time to any corps, save one, the "Rifle Brigade."

It was customary to attach scrolls bearing these distinctions to the colours as they were from time to time authorised, but it is doubtful if they were ever so placed upon the 1818 stand—its life, by some chance, being a short one, being retired about 1823.



REGIMENTAL COLOUR PRESENTED 1823, RETIRED 1852.

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There is no evidence in the Regimental Records that new colours were presented at this date, the inspection returns throw no light on the subject, simply reporting "colours good" all through 1820 to 1825, and forward; but that colours were presented or given out in 1823 is placed beyond all doubt. On the occasion of the inspection at Limerick, May 7th, 1851, Major-General Napier remarks, "The colours very much tattered and torn, and require to be replaced; they were presented to the regiment in 1823." A possible explanation may be that the 1818 colours were not of sufficiently strong materials to carry the numerous battle scrolls (*The fifteen scrolls would be attached, in duplicate, one on either side of the flag, making a total of thirty—a considerable weight*); be this as it may, the 1823 colours were made and given to the regiment probably just before it embarked that year at Cork for its tour of duty in North America. The accompanying illustration (*above*) represents the Regimental colour, the King's colour having precisely similar devices. A full description is scarcely necessary, as both colours are now deposited in the museum of the Royal United Service Institution, formerly the banqueting hall of the Royal Palace of Whitehall.

New colours were presented at Dublin in 1852 by the commanding officer, Lieut.-Colonel Forester, in the absence of Lady Maclaine, the wife of Lieut.-General Sir Archibald Maclaine, K.C.B., the colonel of the regiment.

Although they were the same size as before (the dimensions indeed had not altered from the date of the first regulations), still the general appearance was different. The Queen's colour, in accordance with the Warrant of 1844, bore no devices beyond the number in the centre in Roman characters, surmounted by the crown. Upon the Regimental colour, on the other hand, was concentrated the whole of the distinctions gained by the regiment. The number, in Roman characters on red silk, occupied the centre within a girdle displaying "Oxfordshire," above this a crown; the girdle, but not the crown, surrounded by a closely embroidered "Union" wreath, tied at the bottom with ribbon. The fifteen battle honours placed upon blue silk scrolls, seven each side, and one in the centre below the wreath.

These colours were taken to India, 1853, partaking in the Mutiny campaign and siege of Delhi, returned home with the regiment in 1865, and finally retired at Malta in 1868, a new set of colours being then taken into use without any presentation ceremony. (*They were presented to Lord Seaton (son of the Field Marshal), and are still (1895) in the possession of his family.*)

They, however, came under the new regulations of 1868, (*A previous Warrant in 1858 first introduced these fringed colours; they were then ordered to be four feet six inches flying, and four feet on the pole.*) which prescribed the following dimensions: Three feet nine inches flying, and three feet on the pole, edged all round with gold fringe, the pole surmounted with a gilt crown and lion, the crest of England, instead of the old historic spear-head which had done duty so long. The devices on these colours are very much like those lately described on the 1852 stand. One additional battle honour, "Delhi," had been authorised soon after the conclusion of the Mutiny campaign and appeared on the Regimental colour, there being now sixteen battles placed eight on each side of the central wreath. "Mysore" was granted to the regiment in March 1889 "in consideration of the services rendered during the campaigns in Southern India, 1790-1792."

These latter colours are still (1895) carried by the 52nd, now the 2nd Battalion Oxfordshire Light Infantry.



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Royal Colour  
The 52nd (Oxfordshire Light Infantry)  
Regiment  
1868-1954



Regimental Colour  
The 52nd (Oxfordshire Light Infantry)  
Regiment  
1868-1954