

Part 3: The Service Battalions and War-Raised Units

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1. General Remarks.

At the end of the Great War, His Majesty King George V instigated the award of a King's Colour to every Service, Young Soldiers, Graduated and Garrison battalion of the Army that had served overseas; and also to second and third line Territorial Force battalions, TF units serving as infantry and battalions of overseas troops also serving as infantry on active service. The details were promulgated in General Routine Orders and later in Army Council Instructions,ⁱ which described these Colours as "silk union flags" although it was stated in the GRO and the ACI that "His Majesty has been further pleased to command that these Flags, which will represent the King's Colour, are to be consecrated and are to be granted all the salutes and compliments authorised to be paid to Colours."ⁱⁱ In most cases, the battalions had been disbanded or reduced to cadre by the time of the actual presentation, so that the Colours were sent almost directly to their laying-up.

For the Royal Welch Fusiliers, this applied to the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 13th (1st North Wales Pals), 14th (Anglesey and Caernarvon Pals), 15th (1st London Welsh), 16th, 17th (2nd North Wales Pals), 19th (Bantam), 24th (Denbighshire Yeomanry), 25th (Montgomery & Welsh Horse Yeomanry) (Service) battalions; and the 1st, 2nd and 6th Garrison Battalions. In the centre of each Colour was a red roundel edged in gold bearing the regimental title and surmounted by a royal crown. In the centre of the roundel was the battalion numeral. Although the issue of these Colours pre-dated the award of battle honours for the war, some had honours or distinguishing marks on them as described below and all used the spelling "Welch" which was not officially approved until 1920.ⁱⁱⁱ

2. The Service Battalions.

The Colour of the 8th (Service) Battalion bore the numeral VIII in the centre of the roundel. It was presented at Wrexham Barracks on 9 August 1921 by Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Lloyd, Colonel of the Regiment, and laid up the same day in the Regimental Chapel in St Giles's Church, Wrexham at the same time as the 9th, 10th, 11th, 19th, and 26th (Service) Battalions and the three Garrison battalions.

The Colour of the 9th (Service) Battalion bore the numeral IX in the centre of the roundel. It was presented at Berteaucourt-les-Dames, about 20 kilometres north-west of Amiens, on 12 January 1919 by Major-General G.D. Jefferies, G.O.C. 19th Infantry Division,^{iv} before the final disbandment of the battalion on 8 June 1919 and laid up in the

Regimental Chapel in St Giles's Church, Wrexham, on 9 August 1921 at the same time as the 8th, 10th, 11th, 19th and 26th (Service) Battalions and the three Garrison battalions.



Figure 37: The Colour of the 9th (Service) Battalion and presentation of the Colour in France.

The Colour of the 10th (Service) Battalion bore the numeral X in the centre of the roundel. The battalion was one of those disbanded in February 1918 to make good shortages of manpower. The Colour was presented at Wrexham Barracks on 9 August 1921 by Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Lloyd, Colonel of the Regiment, and laid up the same day in the Regimental Chapel in St Giles's Church, Wrexham,^v at the same time as the 8th, 9th, 11th, 19th and 26th (Service) Battalions and the three Garrison battalions.

The Colour of the 11th (Service) Battalion bore the numeral XI in the centre of the roundel. It was presented at Wrexham Barracks on 9 August 1921 by Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Lloyd, Colonel of the Regiment,

and laid up the same day in the Regimental Chapel in St Giles's Church, Wrexham at the same time as the 8th, 9th, 10th, 19th and 26th (Service) Battalions and the three Garrison battalions.

The Colour of the 13th (1st North Wales) (Service) Battalion bore the numeral XIII on the pike, but not in the centre of the roundel. It was presented at Allonville, 6 kilometres north-east of Amiens by Major-General T. Astley Cubitt, G.O.C. 38th (Welsh) Division, on 16 January 1919 before the final disbandment of the battalion.^{vi} It was laid up with that of the 17th Battalion on 6 June 1919 at Trinity Church, Llandudno, recalling the origins of the battalion as North Wales Pals.

The Colour of the 14th (Service) Battalion bore no numeral and was a plain union as issued.^{vii} It was presented at Allonville, 6 kilometres north-east of Amiens by Major-General T. Astley Cubitt, G.O.C. 38th (Welsh) Division, on 16 January 1919 before the final disbandment of the battalion.^{viii} It was laid up on 31 May 1919 at Bangor Cathedral, where 250 men of the battalion were present,^{ix} recalling the origins of the battalion as Anglesey and Caernarvon Pals. It remained in Bangor Cathedral until it was removed by Major Merfyn Lloyd, in very poor condition, in July 2015 and taken into the Museum collections for conservation.

The Colour of the 15th (Service) Battalion was unusual in several respects. It bore the numeral XV in the top left-hand corner next to the pike; it bore the title "1st London Welsh" in the centre of the roundel; and it bore the Regiment's ten battle selected honours. The battalion was one of those disbanded in February 1918 to make good shortages of manpower. The Colour was presented at Wrexham Barracks on 9 August 1921 by Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Lloyd, Colonel of the Regiment and laid up in County Hall, London, on 25 October 1921 where 200 men of the

battalion were present.^x On the demise of the Greater London Council in 1985 it was removed to the Regimental Museum, where it remains.



Figure 38: The Colour of the 15th (1st London Welsh) (Service) Battalion.

The Colour of the 16th (Service) Battalion bore no numeral and was a plain union as issued.^{xi} It was presented at Allonville, 6 kilometres north-east of Amiens by Major-General T.A. Cubitt, G.O.C. 38th (Welsh) Division, on 16 January 1919 before the final disbandment of the battalion.^{xii} It was laid up on 4 June 1919 at St Asaph Cathedral.

The Colour of the 17th (2nd North Wales) (Service) Battalion was a plain union as issued;^{xiii} it bore the numeral XVII painted on the pike but not on the Colour. It was presented at Allonville, 6 kilometres north-east of Amiens by Major-General T.A. Cubitt, G.O.C. 38th (Welsh) Division, on 16 January 1919 before the final disbandment of the battalion.^{xiv} It was laid

up with that of the 10th Battalion on 6 June 1919 at Trinity Church, Llandudno.

The Colour of the 19th (Bantam) Battalion bore no numeral and was a plain union as issued.^{xv} It was presented at Wrexham Barracks on 9 August 1921 by Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Lloyd, Colonel of the Regiment, and laid up the same day in the Regimental Chapel in St Giles's Church, Wrexham at the same time as the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 26th (Service) Battalions and the three Garrison battalions.

The Colour of the 24th (Denbighshire Yeomanry) Battalion bore no numeral. It was presented at Hondeghem, 20 kilometres east of St Omer by Brigadier-General the Hon L.J.P Butler Commanding 94 (Yeomanry) Brigade, at Hondeghem Staging Camp, south of Cassel, France on 19 February 1919,^{xvi} at the same time as that of the 26th Battalion, before the final disbandment of the battalion. The subsequent fate and current whereabouts of this Colour are not known, in spite of extensive enquiries.

The Colour of the 25th (Montgomery & Welsh Horse Yeomanry) Battalion bore the title Montgomery & Welsh Horse Yeomanry inside the roundel in place of a numeral, with XXV in the top left corner next to the pike; it also, like the 15th, bore the ten selected Great War battle honours. There are no details available of any presentation before the final disbandment of the battalion on 29 June 1919;^{xvii} indeed it seems that no such presentation occurred for the account of the laying-up on 25 September 1920 in St Mary's Church, Welshpool, said that "The King's Colours of the Yeomanry and Welsh Horse, as the 25th Royal Welsh Fusiliers, have remained at the War Office till sent down to Welshpool as the headquarters of the combined regiments, to be laid up with the guidon."^{xviii}

The Colour of the 26th (Service) Battalion – originally the 4th (Garrison) Battalion, bore no numeral and was a plain union as issued. It was presented at Hondeghem, 20 kilometres east of St Omer by Major-General N.M. Smyth, G.O.C. 59th (2nd North Midland) Division, at Hondeghem Staging Camp, on 17 January 1919 along with the 24th Battalion, before the final disbandment of the battalion. It was laid up on 9 August 1921 in the Regimental Chapel in St Giles's Church, Wrexham at the same time as the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 19th (Service) Battalions and the three Garrison battalions.

3. The Garrison Battalions

The Colours of the three Garrison battalions were all Union flags. Only the 1st had its title in the centre of a red roundel surmounted by a royal crown, with the regimental title on the roundel. The 2nd and 6th were

plain unions, as issued. All three Colours were presented at Wrexham Barracks on 9 August 1921 by Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Lloyd, Colonel of the Regiment, and laid up the same day in the Regimental Chapel in St Giles's Church, Wrexham at the same time as the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th 19th and 26th (Service) Battalions.



Figure 39: The Colour of the 1st Garrison Battalion.

ⁱ ACI 444 dated 21 July 1919; General Routine Order (GRO) 5734 of 1918.

ⁱⁱ For more details see James D. Geddes, *Colours of British Regiments, Volume II*, (privately published, 2000), p 69 – 73.

ⁱⁱⁱ Army Order 56 of 1920.

^{iv} "The 9th (Service) battalion in the War. A Short History" in *The Cheshire Observer*, 18 October 1930.

^v Lieutenant-Colonel F.N. Burton and Lieutenant A.P. Comyns (ed) *The War Diary (1914 – 1918) of 10th (Service) Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers* (Plymouth, 1926), p 98.

^{vi} Lieutenant-Colonel J.E. Munby (ed) *A History of the 38th (Welsh) Division* (London, 1920), p 84.

^{vii} Geddes, p 117.

^{viii} Lieutenant-Colonel J.E. Munby (ed) *A History of the 38th (Welsh) Division* (London, 1920), p 84.

^{ix} 14th (Service) Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers War Diary (RWF Museum).

^x *A Concise History of the 15th R.W.F. (1st London Welsh)* (15h RWF Association, London, 1925), p 15.

^{xi} Geddes, p 118.

^{xii} Lieutenant-Colonel J.E. Munby (ed) *A History of the 38th (Welsh) Division* (London, 1920), p 84.

^{xiii} Geddes, p 118.

^{xiv} Lieutenant-Colonel J.E. Munby (ed) *A History of the 38th (Welsh) Division* (London, 1920), p 84.

^{xv} Geddes, p 118.

^{xvi} Geddes p 118.

^{xvii} Bryn Owen *Owen Roscomyl and the Welsh Horse* (Caernarfon, 1990), p 35.

^{xviii} *County Times*, 25 September 1920.