

Part 4: The Territorial and Volunteer Battalions

By Lieutenant General J. P. Riley CB DSO PhD MA FRHistS

1. General Remarks.

Before 1881, the various bodies of volunteers that had been raised during the Napoleonic Wars and that had persisted throughout the 19th Century as unpaid associations, were for the first time placed on an organised basis by the War Office. These bodies and their Colours are not recorded here since their affiliation was local, not regimental; details of these regiments and their Colours are in Geddes, Part III, page 212 *et seq.* Even so, they retained a distinct identity from the militia, for they represented a very different military tradition. Until the Great War, the Volunteers remained an object of suspicion from the regular army and the militia; in the Royal Welch Fusiliers their officers were refused permission to wear the Flash and were derided as “dog-shooters”. With the formation of the Territorial Force in 1908, the 1st (Volunteer) Battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers became the 4th (Denbighshire) Battalion (TF); the 2nd (Volunteer Battalion) became the 5th (Flintshire) Battalion (TF); and the 3rd (Volunteer) Battalion became the 6th (Caernarvonshire and Anglesey) Battalion (TF). The 5th (Volunteer) Battalion of the South Wales Borderers was transferred to the Royal Welch Fusiliers and became the 7th (Merioneth and Montgomery) Battalion (TF).

As Volunteers, these battalions had carried no Colours, however once the TF had been formed, Colours were authorised once again the separate tradition denied them the battle honours earned by the regular battalions of the Regiment, which had been granted to the militia. The only battle honours authorised to the TF at this point were those specifically earned as Volunteer units, in particular “South Africa” for those units that had served in the Anglo-Boer War, or who like the Militia battalions of the Regiment, had provided reinforcements for the regular army.

After the Great War, in 1921, the TF became the Territorial Army and in 1925 its battalions were granted the privilege of bearing all the regimental battle honours and the Flash, in recognition of their war service which had earned many of the honours awarded. Thus for the first time, the Volunteers had the same status as the rest of their regiments. The King’s Colours were therefore emblazoned with the union wreath and the same ten battle honours as the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions; a golden wreath of laurel was added to the Regimental Colours, emblazoned with the pre-1914 battle honours of the Regiment. After the Second World War, the TA battalions’ Colours were again emblazoned with all the regimental honours, those in France and Germany 1944 – 1945 having been exclusively earned by them.

With the reorganisation of the TA between 1967 and 1971, those Territorial Army battalions that survived were once more designated "Volunteers". The practice of conforming their Colours to those of the regular army was continued.

2. The 4th (Denbighshire) Battalion .

The battalion received its first stand of Colours, the gift of the ladies of Denbysire, with the 5th and 7th Battalions from H.M. King Edward VII at Windsor on 19 June 1909. These Colours conformed to the Regulations of 1881, modified in 1900, three feet nine inches flying and three feet on the pike. The King's Colour was the Union with a red roundel in the centre bearing the title "4th (DENBIGHSHIRE) BATTALION, surrounded by a gold-bordered red strap with the regimental title "THE ROYAL WELSH FUSILIERS" and surmounted by a King's crown. The Regimental Colour was a blue sheet with the rising sun in the top left and bottom right corners, the red dragon on a white ground in the top right corner and the white horse of Hannover with the motto "NEC ASPERA TERRENT" in the bottom left corner. Also in the top left corner, below the rising sun, was the roman numeral IV. In the centre of the Colour was a red roundel bearing the coronet, plumes and motto of the Prince of Wales, surrounded by a gold-bordered red strap with the regimental title "THE ROYAL WELSH FUSILIERS" and surmounted by a King's crown. This was in turn surrounded by a union wreath with, across its base, the title "DENBIGHSHIRE BATTALION" on a gold scroll. Below this was the battle honour "SOUTH AFRICA 1900 - 1902". After the Great War, these Colours were re-emblazoned as already described. These Colours were laid up on 7 November 1954 in St Giles's Church, Wrexham, where they remain.

The battalion's second stand of Colours was presented on 23 July 1954 by H.M. Queen Elizabeth II, Colonel-in-Chief, along with those of the 1st and 2nd Battalions. By this time, the battalion was the Regiment's only TA battalion, representing all of North and mid Wales rather than just Denbighshire. These Colours conformed in all respects to those of the 1st Battalion, except for the distinguishing numeral IV. These Colours remained with the Welsh Volunteers and the 3rd (Volunteer) Battalion until they were laid up on 5 September 1976 in St Giles's Church, Wrexham, where they remain.

3. The 5th (Flintshire) Battalion.

The battalion received its only stand of Colours with the 4th and 7th Battalions from H.M. King Edward VII at Windsor on 19 June 1909. These Colours were identical to those of the 4th Battalion except for the distinguishing numeral and title. The battalion was converted to the anti-tank role and re-badged to the Royal Artillery in 1938; it therefore ceased

to carry Colours. The Colours remained with the unit until they were laid upon 12 March 1967 at St Asaph Cathedral, where they remain.

4. The 6th (Caernarvonshire and Anglesey) Battalion.

The battalion received its first stand of Colours at Abergavenny from the Lord Lieutenant and Honorary Colonel of the Battalion, Colonel J.E. Greaves. These Colours were identical to those of the 4th Battalion except for the distinguishing numeral and title. These Colours were taken out of service in 1939 but not laid up until 25 July 1959 when they were deposited in St Cybi's Church, Holyhead, Anglesey.

The battalion received its second stand of Colours on 6 August 1939 at Caernarfon Castle. They were presented by Sir Richard Williams-Bulkeley, Lord Lieutenant of Anglesey, who served as Lord Lieutenant from 30 November 1896 until 7 July 1942. These Colours were of the same design as the previous stand, with the addition of the regiment's battle honours as already described and are shown below. These Colours remained with the battalion until it was converted to the anti-aircraft role and re-badged to the Royal Artillery in 1947; it therefore ceased to carry Colours. The Colours remained with the unit until they were deposited in the Eagle Tower of Caernarfon Castle on 21 February 1951. Here they formed part of the regimental memorial to H.M. King George VI and were moved to the Chamberlain Tower in 1978.

Figure 40: the Regimental Colour of the 6th Battalion in 1939.



5. The 7th (Merioneth and Montgomeryshire) Battalion.

The battalion received its only stand of Colours, with the 4th and 5th Battalions from H.M. King Edward VII at Windsor on 19 June 1909. The King's Colour was the gift of a former Commanding Officer, Colonel Sir E.V. Pryce-Jones and the Regimental Colour was the gift of the counties of Montgomery and Merioneth. These Colours were identical to those of the 4th Battalion except for the distinguishing numeral and title, and are shown below. The regimental battle honours were added after the Great War as already described.

Figure 41: the Regimental Colour of the 7th Battalion in 1909.



These Colours remained with the battalion until it was converted to the anti-aircraft role and re-badged to the Royal Artillery in 1947;ⁱⁱ it therefore ceased to carry Colours. The Colours were laid up on 1 September 1951 in St David's Church, Newtown. Following the closure of the church, the Comrades Association, with the assistance of Lieutenant-General Jonathon Riley and Colonel Philip Eyton-Jones – the latter being Chairman of the St Asaph Diocesan Advisory Committee – arranged for the re-location of the Colours to St Nicholas's Church, Montgomery. Here they were framed but not glazed and hung in the Herbert Chapel alongside the Town War Memorial as shown in photograph below. The Colours were installed in a quiet ceremony without re-dedication on 17th September 2011.

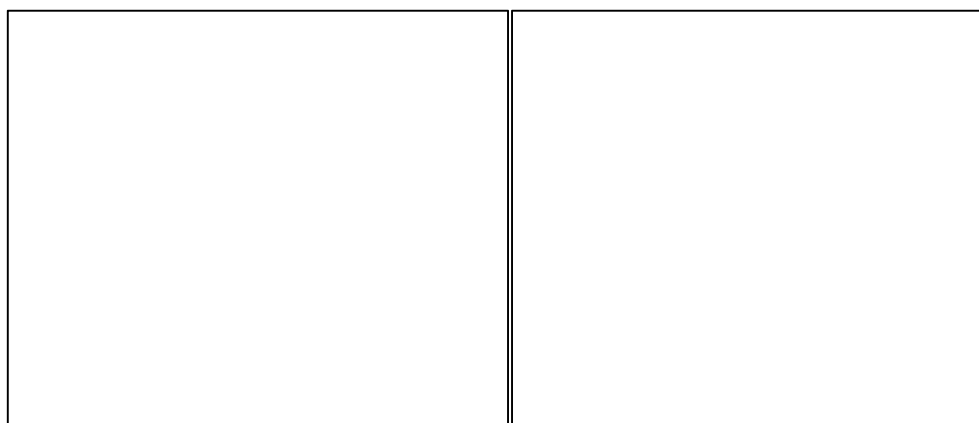
Figure42: the 7th Battalion Colours in Montgomery Church.ⁱⁱⁱ



6. The 6th/7th Battalion.

The battalion was formed in 1956 from a short-lived unit named 446 (Royal Welch) Airborne Regt RA TA, itself formed in 1955 by the amalgamation of the two anti-aircraft artillery regiments which had previously served as 6th and 7th RWF.^{iv} The battalion received its only stand of Colours from Colonel W.H. Wynne Finch MC, Lord Lieutenant of Caernarvonshire, at Caernarfon Castle on 5 July 1958. These Colours were identical to those of the 1st Battalion except for the distinguishing numeral VI/VII. The battalion was reduced to cadre in 1969 but also contributed a company to the Welsh Volunteers; this subsequently formed part of 3 RWF. The Colours remained with the Caernarfon Company of the Welsh Volunteers and then with 3 RWF until they were laid up on 15 October 1977 in Bangor Cathedral, where they remain.

Figure 43: the Colours of the 6th/7th Battalion (TA).^v



7. The 3rd (Volunteer) Battalion.

The battalion was formed in 1971 and received its only stand of Colours from H.M. Queen Elizabeth II, Colonel-in-Chief, with the 1st Battalion at Caernarfon Castle on 7 November 1975. These Colours were identical to those of the 1st Battalion except for the distinguishing numeral III. The battalion was reduced to two companies in 1999 and formed part of the Royal Welsh Regiment. The Colours remained in service with that battalion until it received its Colours from H.R.H. the Prince of Wales on 5 July 2003 at Cardiff Castle. The 3 RWF colours were then returned to the Royal Welch Fusiliers and they were laid up in St Giles's Church during the Comrades' reunion service on 4 September 2005. Climbers from the Army Youth Team placed them in the most easterly position of the row of colours in the Regimental Chapel, at the pillars practically over the Chapel's altar. Nothing appeared in *Y Ddraig Goch* about the ceremony, because, as there was no 2006 journal, the final February 2007 issue understandably mentioned only the 2006 Comrades' reunion.^{vi}

ⁱ *Regimental Records, vol VI.*

ⁱⁱ *Regimental Records, vol VI.*

ⁱⁱⁱ Photograph provided by Lt Col Philip Eyton-Jones TD DL

^{iv} *Regimental Records, vol VI.*

^v Taken from the Presentation programme, supplied by Lt Col Richard Sinnett.

^{vi} Information provided by Lt Col Richard Sinnett and Major Robert Lake.