

# Middlesex Regiment

The **Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own)** was a line infantry regiment of the British Army in existence from 1881 until 1966. The regiment was formed, as the **(Duke of Cambridge's Own) Middlesex Regiment**, in 1881 as part of the Childers Reforms when the 57th (West Middlesex) and 77th (East Middlesex) Regiments of Foot were amalgamated with the county's militia and rifle volunteer units.

On 31 December 1966 the Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own) was amalgamated with the other regiments of the Home Counties Brigade, the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, the Queen's Own Buffs, The Royal Kent Regiment and the Royal Sussex Regiment to form the Queen's Regiment. The latter regiment was, however, short-lived and itself subject to a merger on 9 September 1992 with the Royal Hampshire Regiment to form the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires).

The Middlesex Regiment was one of the principal home counties based regiments with a long tradition. They inherited their nickname, the "Die-hards", from the 57th Regiment of Foot (West Middlesex), which later became the 1st Battalion, Middlesex Regiment. The 57th gained the name during the Peninsular War when, at the Battle of Albuera on 16 May 1811 their commander Colonel Inglis had his horse shot from under him, severely wounded and outnumbered by the French he called to his men "Die hard, 57th. Die hard!" "Albuera" was the principal battle honour on the Middlesex Regiment's colours.

## 1 Battalions

### 1.1 Formation

The regiment was formed on 1 July 1881 with two regular, two militia and four volunteer battalions:<sup>[1]</sup>

- 1st Battalion *formerly the 57th (West Middlesex) Regiment of Foot (raised 1755)*
- 2nd Battalion *formerly the 77th (East Middlesex) Regiment of Foot (The Duke of Cambridge's Own) (raised 1787)*
- 3rd Battalion *formerly the Royal Elthorne or 5th Middlesex Light Infantry Militia*
- 4th Battalion *formerly the Royal East Middlesex Militia*

- 1st Volunteer Battalion *formerly The 3rd Middlesex Volunteer Rifle Corps*
- 2nd Volunteer Battalion *formerly The 8th Middlesex (South West Middlesex) Volunteer Rifle Corps*
- 3rd Volunteer Battalion *formerly The 11th (Railway) Middlesex Volunteer Rifle Corps – transferred to Royal Fusiliers 1890*
- 4th Volunteer Battalion (3rd VB from 1890) *formerly the 17th Middlesex (North Middlesex) Volunteer Rifle Corps*

In 1900 the number of regular battalions was doubled with the formation of a new 3rd and 4th battalion, and the militia battalions were renumbered as 5th and 6th. In 1908, with the formation of the Territorial Force (TF), the 1st and 2nd Volunteer Battalions became the 7th and 8th Battalions, while the 3rd (formerly 4th) Volunteer Battalion transferred to the London Regiment, becoming the 19th Battalion (St Pancras). The 4th Volunteer Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps (formerly the 5th (West Middlesex) Volunteer Rifle Corps), joined the Middlesex Regiment as the 9th Battalion. The 10th Battalion was formed by a nucleus of 300 officers and men from the disbanded 2nd (South Middlesex) Volunteer Rifle Corps. The four TF battalions constituted the Middlesex Brigade in the Home Counties Division.<sup>[1][2][3][4][5]</sup>

### 1.2 Duke of Cambridge's Own

On formation in 1881 the regimental title was **The Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment)**

The regiment inherited the designation "*Duke of Cambridge's Own*" from the 77th Foot, to which regiment it had been awarded in 1876. The regiment was also permitted to bear the coronet and cypher of Prince George, Duke of Cambridge on its colours and badges.<sup>[6]</sup> The regiment had earlier been granted the plumes and motto of the Prince of Wales in 1810 for twenty years service in India.<sup>[7]</sup>

In 1921, in common with many other regiments, the regimental title was effectively reversed to **The Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own)**.<sup>[8]</sup>

The Duke was colonel-in-chief of the regiment from 1898 to his death in 1904.<sup>[9]</sup>

Its regimental marches were 'Sir Manley Power' and 'Paddy's Resource' (quick), and 'Caledonian' and 'Garb

of old Gaul' (slow).<sup>[10]</sup>

### 1.3 First World War



*J. J. De Salis, (1896-1915, aged 20). Lt. 8th Battalion DCO (Middlesex Regiment). Died of wounds received near Ypres on 13th September 1915.*

At the start of the First World War there were a number of First Line Battalions of the Middlesex Regiment and these were sent off to their war stations including the four territorial battalions: the 1/7th, 1/8th, 1/9th and 1/10th. However, there was a surplus of volunteers who had sought to enlist; these men had joined the Territorial Battalions, and although the War Office wanted them to transfer to the Regular Army or the New (Kitchener's Army), the majority elected to remain with the Territorial Battalions which had enlisted them. General Kitchener was not in favour of the Territorials although he and other critics were silenced after the Territorials fought so well with the BEF after Mons. It became obvious that the First Line battalions that had gone overseas would need reinforcements almost at once and the War Office gave permission to raise Second Line Territorial Battalions and in this way the 2/7th, 2/8th, 2/9th and 2/10th were formed. The 1/7th and 1/8th Bns served on the Western Front. The 1/9th and 1/10th Bns went to India with the Home Counties Division to relieve Regular troops, and spent most of the war there. However, late in 1917 the 1/9th Bn was assigned to the 18th Indian Division and served in the Mesopotamian Campaign in 1918. The 2/7th & 2/8th served with the Western Frontier Force. In due course the 4/8th Battalion was raised in June 1915. Additional war-



*G. R. De Salis (1898-1917, aged 19), Lt. Middlesex (DCO) Regiment, 8th Batt. Killed in his trench by a bursting shell, Wancourt, France, 21.6.1917.*

formed "service" battalions were the 11th to 34th and 51st to 53rd.<sup>[11]</sup>

In October 1966 the regiment paid a then record sum of £900 for the Victoria Cross awarded to Private Robert Edward Ryder for bravery during the Battle of the Somme.<sup>[12]</sup>

### 1.4 Inter-war period

In the early 1920s the 3rd and 4th battalions were disbanded, leaving two regular battalions. The 7th and 8th territorial battalions continued in existence, while the 9th was converted to a searchlight unit, transferring to the Royal Artillery in 1940 as 60th (Middlesex) Searchlight Regiment,<sup>[2][13][14]</sup> and the 10th became a unit of the Royal Signals.<sup>[3][15]</sup> In 1916, the Post Office Rifles, Princess Louise's Kensington Regiment and 19th London Regiment (St Pancras) had been attached to the Middlesex Regiment from the territorial London Regiment, but retained their original titles and distinctions. In 1935 the Post Office Rifles and 19th Londons became searchlight regiments, and in 1937 The Kensingtons formally became a territorial battalion of the Middlesex Regiment.<sup>[1][16]</sup>





Temporary cross for G. R. De Salis, killed Wancourt, June 1917.

## 1.5 Second World War



Vickers Gun teams

In 1938 the two territorial battalions formed duplicates, thus forming the 1/7th, 2/7th, 1/8th and 2/8th battalions. Before **World War II** the Middlesex Regiment was chosen as one of four other infantry regiments to be converted to a machine gun regiment. The 1/7th Battalion served with the 51st (Highland) Infantry Division. In 1943, the 1/8th officially became the 8th Battalion as part of the MG Battalion attached to the 43rd (Wessex) Infantry Division during the Normandy Campaign during which they fought in the Battle for Caen.

## 1.6 Post-war to amalgamation

The regiment was reduced to a single regular battalion (the 1st) in 1948, and two territorial battalions (the 7th and 8th). The Kensington Regiment amalgamated with the Middlesex Yeomanry to form the 31st (Greater London) Signal Regiment (V).<sup>[16]</sup>

In 1948, the 1st battalion became part of the Home Counties Brigade, along with the regular battalions of other regiments in southeast England.

From August 1950 to April 1951, the 1st battalion saw action in the Korean War as part of 27th British Commonwealth Brigade, being one of the first British units to be deployed there.

In 1961 the Territorial Army was reduced in size and a new 5th Battalion was formed by the amalgamation of the 7th and 8th with the 571st Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery (the successor to the 9th Battalion).

In 1966 the four battalions of the Home Counties Brigade became a "large regiment", The Queen's Regiment. Accordingly, the 1st Battalion was redesignated as 4th Battalion the Queen's Regiment (Middlesex) with the other regular battalions being formed by the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, Queen's Own Buffs and Royal Sussex Regiment. The 5th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment was disbanded in 1967, forming parts of the 5th (Volunteer) Battalion and 10th (Territorial) Battalions of the Queen's. The Regimental Traditions are now upheld by the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment since 1992 until present day.

## 2 See also

## 3 References

- [1] Middlesex Regiment at Regiments.org
- [2] 9th Middlesex at Regiments.org
- [3] 10th Middlesex at Regiments.org
- [4] Ray Westlake, *Tracing the Rifle Volunteers*, Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2010, ISBN 978-1-84884-211-3.

- [5] Maj A.F. Becke, *History of the Great War: Order of Battle of Divisions, Part 2a: The Territorial Force Mounted Divisions and the 1st-Line Territorial Force Divisions (42–56)*, London: HM Stationery Office, 1935/Uckfield: Naval & Military Press, 2007, ISBN 1-847347-39-8.
- [6] Ian Sumner, *British Colours and Standards 1747 - 1881 (2) - Infantry*, Oxford, 2001
- [7] Regimental History - The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
- [8] Army Order 509/1920, in effect January 1, 1921
- [9] H.R.H. Prince George Duke of Cambridge 1819-1904 (regiments.org)
- [10] The Handbook of British Regiments - Christopher Chant - Google Books
- [11] Everard Wyrall, *The Die-Hards in the Great War*, 2 Vols, London: Harrisons, 1926 & 1930/Uckfield: Naval & Military Press, 2002, ISBN 978-1-84342-373-7
- [12] *£1700 World Record...*;The Times; 22 Jan 1969; pg 12 col F
- [13] 2 AA Division 1939 at British Military History
- [14] Norman E.H. Litchfield, *The Territorial Artillery 1908–1988 (Their Lineage, Uniforms and Badges)*, Nottingham: Sherwood Press, 1992, ISBN 0-9508205-2-0.
- [15] Cliff Lord & Graham Watson, *Royal Corps of Signals: Unit Histories of the Corps (1920–2001) and its Antecedents*, Solihull: Helion, 2003, ISBN 1-874622-92-2.
- [16] Regimental history

## 4 External links

- Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own - National Army Museum
- Land Forces of Britain, The Empire and Commonwealth (Regiments.org)
- British Military History

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