

PART 2

The background to the Battle Honours



A drum shell emblazoned with the Battle Honours of the Queen's Westminister and Civil Service Rifles

Introduction

1. The claiming and awarding of Battle Honours is a two-way process. The relevant authority (War Office/ MOD) decides the dates, qualifications and the title of the Honours which may be claimed. These can be campaign honours, theatre honours, battle honours, or specific individual actions. The Regiments then submit their claims. The Honours awarded are published – and thereafter appear in Army Lists and other official documents.
2. When submitting claims, the services of each Battalion of a Regiment count as equal. Thus in Regiments which had many serving Battalions, the services of a single Battalion in a single battle or theatre are deemed to be held by the whole Regiment, even though the major part of the Regiment was serving elsewhere.
3. There is no time limit on making claims for Battle Honours. There are examples of claims being made, and granted, a hundred years after the event.
4. All Battle Honours, once awarded, can be carried forward to lineal descendant units or sub units. They may only be emblazoned on Colours if the descendant unit has Regimental or Battalion status. However, even sub units descending from Regiments or Battalions who are entitled to hold Battle Honours, are fully entitled to retain those Honours. If this did not happen it is probably an error of omission because of the complicated reorganisations which have occurred. It could also be because the descendent units did not appreciate that they were entitled to hold the relevant Honours without having to claim them.
5. The Honours most likely to be 'lost' are those which were won by militia, volunteer or territorial Battalions who subsequently changed their affiliation/linkage with their parent Regiment; or who re-rolled from infantry to another arm, which did not carry or display Battle Honours.
6. All Honours granted before The Great War, between the World Wars and after WW2, appear in bold type. This convention indicates that those Honours are entitled to be borne on the **Regimental Colour** (by those units which carry Colours) or on their appointments, such as pouch belt plates. For both World Wars, the arrangement is that up to ten Honours are selected (by the recipient Regiment) to be shown in bold type and these are borne on the **Sovereign's Colour**. The manner in which Regiments made this selection of World War Honours to be in bold type was very much left up to them. Clearly the most important actions for the Regiment tend to be selected. Some Regiments have chosen to select an honour to represent as far as possible the services of their different component Battalions. "Battle Honours may only be emblazoned on Colours of a Regimental/Battalion-sized unit, and one which has been granted succession rights as a Regiment or Battalion. Honours held by descendant sub-units may continue to be held and they would be able to be emblazoned on Colours should the sub-unit be resurrected to a Battalion sized unit." (Director General Personnel Headquarters Land Forces 18th October 2010).
7. On amalgamation, all the Honours awarded to antecedent Regiments are carried forward to the new Regiment without new claims having to be made. This in theory means that the ten bold type Honours for each World War have to be re-selected by the new Regiment.
8. If a unit is disbanded or placed in suspended animation (as opposed to amalgamated), the Regiment used to be shown in the Army List together with its Battle Honours. This custom has lapsed in recent years and many of these former Regiments are no longer shown in the Army List.
9. One London unit, the 8th City of London Battalion, The London Regiment (Post Office Rifles), had received the Battle Honour for '**Egypt 1882**'. This was the first honour ever awarded to a volunteer unit.
10. The Battle Honours for service in South Africa in the Boer War were awarded in 1905 and were carried forward to their descendant units in 1908. There were five separate Honours, '**South Africa 1900-1901**', '**South Africa 1902**', '**South Africa 1899-1902**', '**South Africa 1900**', and '**South Africa 1900-1902**.' The parent regular Regiment would also have received South Africa Honours covering the whole period 1899-1902, thus subsuming any South Africa Honours won by their volunteer units.

11. As already noted in Part 1, paragraph 16, none of the Volunteer Battalions or Volunteer Rifle Corps served as formed Battalions in the Boer War. However they sent substantial numbers of volunteers and this was deemed sufficient to grant South Africa Battle Honours to all the units which formed The London Regiment of 1908. The same applied to the Yeomanry. This precedent is very significant in the context of present day deployments when many London volunteers serve overseas.
12. The Battle Honours for The Great War were claimed separately by each of the separately numbered Battalions of The London Regiment, and not by the parent regular Regiment. These Honours were granted in 1924/25 and first appear in the Army List in 1925. They were to be shown as a group headed by the title 'The Great War'. At the time the Honours were granted each one of these Battalions was in fact part of a parent regular Regiment and had been so since 1st July 1916. Army List entries from the mid 1920s list each Battalion with its number and subsidiary title and then in brackets 'Forms part of...' followed by the name of the parent regular Regiment. The titles had been shortened to replace the word Battalion with Regiment, thus using the example of The King's Royal Rifle Corps, their five units are listed as:
 - 6th City of London Regiment (City of London Rifles)
 - 9th London Regiment (Queen Victoria's Rifles)
 - 11th London Regiment (Finsbury Rifles)
 - 12th London Regiment (Rangers)
 - 16th London Regiment (Queen's Westminster and Civil Service Rifles)
 - (being an amalgamation of the 15th and 16th London Regiments)
 - all of which have the following notation below their title:
'(Forms part of the Corps of The King's Royal Rifle Corps)'
13. The Honours won by all these units since 1st July 1916 are therefore equally part of the parent regular Regiment's heritage. These Honours do not have to be claimed. The Great War Battle Honours awarded for service before 1st July 1916 may not be considered to be part of the present regular Regiment's Honours but can justifiably be shown with the Honours of the parent regular Regiment who took on the whole heritage of these Territorial Force Battalions. There is plenty of precedent for this inheritance of the antecedent units' lineage and distinctions.
14. Those individual parts of the 1908 London Regiment which were subsequently re-rolled to artillery, engineers or signals were not granted Battle Honours for WW2 service since these arms of the service do not bear Battle Honours. They did however retain their South Africa and Great War Honours, and in some units such as the Yeomanry, they tend to be still displayed. But for many units, notably those which were re-rolled as Royal Artillery, these Honours have tended to fade away.
15. The parts of the 1908 London Regiment which served as infantry in WW2 were again all granted Battle Honours in their own name; in other words, separately identified from their parent regular infantry Regiment. However more of these component parts of The London Regiment were converted to other arms which did not bear Battle Honours, and the entries in The Army List through the 1950s-1970s showed these units with Honours for both World Wars. These Honours could be held by the original parent infantry Regiment.
16. The individual parts of The London Regiment continued to be shown in the Army List, but those which formed part of a parent regular infantry Regiment no longer show their Battle Honours. Their entries are shown as '16th London Regiment (The Queen's Westminsters) (Now forms part of The King's Royal Rifle Corps) (see column...)'. These units, and their Battle Honours, then appear under the parent regular Regiment's entry in the Army List.
17. For one or two London Regiments there is an additional entry which does indicate that all the Battle Honours won by the London units had been subsumed or included within those of the parent regular Regiment. Thus the entries for the 22nd and 24th London Regiment (The Queen's) both have two notes which read '(Now forms part of The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey))' and '[The honorary distinctions of this unit are amalgamated with those of The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey)]'

18. By the mid 1960's, when the brigading of regular infantry Regiments had taken place, the listing/recording of Battle Honours to London infantry Regiments was in one of three ways.
 - a. Some continued to be shown separately under their old London Regiment entry. Some continued to show their Battle Honours quite separately from those of their parent Regular Regiment. For example, The London Scottish Honours were not included with those of The Gordon Highlanders.
 - b. Some have been completely subsumed within their parent regular Regiments list. This occurred in The Queen's Regiment and continues today in The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires). This shows that all the Great War and Second World War Honours won by the two London Regiments affiliated to The Queen's (22nd and 24th London) have been taken into the parent regular Regiments list, with one minor exception which is the omission of the honour 'Pursuit to Mons' which both of these London Battalions had, but which seem to have been omitted from the last printed Army List. The 3rd (Volunteer) Battalion of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, which is not based in London, does have a separate Army List entry, but no Battle Honours are shown in this entry. The separate entry for The London Regiment in the last printed Army List of 2007 does not show any Battle Honours either; the succession rights of the London Regiment (1993) to allow their predecessor units' Honours to be emblazoned on their Colours has not yet been granted. This procedure was also followed by The Royal Fusiliers (City of London), The Royal Berkshire Regiment, and The Parachute Regiment, all of whom subsumed their London Regiment Battalion Honours into the parent regiment's list.
 - c. The third way was where the separately named Territorial Army Regiments, and all their Honours, are shown below and separately from the parent regular Regiment. Thus for the Royal Green Jackets, The King's Royal Rifle Corps, there were separate lists for Queen Victoria's Rifles, The King's Royal Rifle Corps (Territorial Army) and The Queen's Westminsters, The King's Royal Rifle Corps (Territorial Army). It should be noted that despite all being Rifle Regiments who do not carry Colours, the convention of bold type Honours for the Great War and the Second World War Honours continued to be used. The more recent Army List entries for The Royal Green Jackets show all the antecedent regular Regiments' Honours together, and these include some by not all of the Honours of the previous volunteer or territorial Battalions. The bold type convention has been adapted to select some of both earlier Honours as well as World War Honours (presumably those considered most significant) to be borne on appointments or pouch belt plates. The London units are not shown separately.

Summary of the Battle Honours situation for London Units

19. Thus the overall situation with regard to infantry units in Greater London as represented by component parts of The London Regiment of 1908 is likely to be:
 - a. Some South Africa and Great War Honours will still be recorded and kept by the descendant component sub-units of The London Regiment (1993). These are likely to be those borne by the most easily traceable lineal component parts of The London Regiment. For example, the companies designated as London Scottish and London Irish will have easily traced Honours from their antecedent units, the 14th and 18th Battalions of the old 1908 London Regiment. Similarly, the Green Jackets companies now part of 7th Battalion The Rifles will hold the Honours of the London Rifle Brigade, Queen Victoria's Rifles, The Rangers, and Queen's Westminster Rifles – the 5th, 9th, 12th, and 15th/16th Battalions of The London Regiment of 1908. All these will be recorded and emblazoned in Drill Halls but may not be shown in the Army List. All could be subsumed within the parent regular Regiment's entry.
 - b. All WW2 Honours are likely also be held by the Regular Army parent Regiment because at that time their Battalions were numbered as Territorial Army Battalions of the parent regular Regiment. Thus the Honours are in some cases replicated and held by the component sub-units of the London Regiment (1993).

- c. For Great War Honours, the situation is more difficult. For some, where the linkage of the parent regular Regiment was very close, the Honours may have been subsumed within their own list. For others, unless easily identified as part of the present day London Regiment, they may have been 'lost'.
20. Returning to the example of The King's Royal Rifle Corps, they had three named Territorial Army units in WW2, each having two Battalions. These were:

1908 London Regiment Battalion	Subsidiary Title	1941 Battalion of The King's Royal Rifle Corps
9	Queen's Victoria Rifles	7 th and 8 th
12	The Rangers	9 th and 10 th
15 and 16	The Queen's Westminsters	11 th and 12 th

All their Honours were shown in The Army List under The King's Royal Rifle Corps. Two of these Honours, Greece 1941 and Crete, were awarded only because of the service of one Territorial Army Battalion (9th Battalion, The Rangers). No other part of The King's Royal Rifle Corps served there.

21. The situation for The Great War is different. The King's Royal Rifle Corps Honours cover the Western Front, Italy and Salonika, but some of their London Regiment's Battalions also served in the Middle East (Gallipoli, Egypt, Palestine and Macedonia) and their Honours are not included in their parent regular Regiment's list.
22. The theatres in which these units served are given below. Many of the France/Flanders Honours will already have been awarded to the parent regular Regiment. None of the Macedonia, Egypt, Gallipoli or Palestine Honours have been carried forward by the parent regular Regiment:

1908 London Regiment Battalion	Subsidiary Title	Served in
6	City of London Rifles	France/Flanders
9	Queen Victoria's Rifles	France/Flanders
12	The Rangers	France/Flanders
11	Finsbury Rifles	France/Flanders
		Egypt/Gallipoli/Palestine
15	Prince of Wales's Own Civil Service Rifles	France/Flanders
		Macedonia/Palestine
16	Queen's Westminster Rifles	France/Flanders
		Macedonia/Palestine

23. Thus for The Great War, all the relevant Battle Honours won by these units after 1st July 1916 were also entitled, without any claim being made, to be held by the parent Regiment, The King's Royal Rifle Corps. The pre-1st July 1916 Honours can also be held by the parent regular Regiment as guardians of the heritage of all their Volunteer or Territorial Army units.
24. The use of the example from The King's Royal Rifle Corps is to illustrate the current anomalies. These will occur with The Rifle Brigade's London Battalions, and perhaps also with those of The Queen's, Royal Fusiliers, Middlesex, Royal Berkshire and others. All descendant units of those regular Regiments are entitled to hold the Battle Honours of their post-July 1916 London Regiment Battle Honours, and should also hold their pre-1st July 1916 Battle Honours.
25. A large number of those Honours may also be entitled to be held by the component sub-units of The London Regiment (1993), but not emblazoned on their Colours. In addition to the more easily traceable antecedent units, there are a number of other 1908 Battalions of The London Regiment who have a lineal descent to The London Regiment of today. Their Battle Honours should be held by The London Regiment of today, as well as by the parent regular Regiment.

Listings of Battle Honours in the Lineage Lists

26. The pre-Great War (Egypt, South Africa) Honours in bold type are those which were traditionally borne on the Regimental Colours.
27. The Great War Honours in bold type are those chosen by the Regiment to be borne on the Sovereign's Colour. The Army Order 470 of 16th December 1922 laid down that ten Great War Honours would be selected to be added to those borne on the Regimental Colours. This was amended within a month to allow these Honours to be borne on the Sovereign's Colour. It was noted that the Honours chosen would be the same for all units comprising the Regiment concerned.
28. For WW2 a similar order was made allowing ten Honours to be borne on the Sovereign's Colour (or appointments). These again are shown in bold type.
29. The awarding of the Great War Honours was made in 1924/25, by which time some Regiments had already amalgamated. The choice of ten selected Honours may not have been the same for each of the previous Regiments, but on amalgamation they were required to select a new ten Honours. For The London Regiment this affected the 7th and 8th London Regiment; and the 15th and 16th.
30. The WW2 Honours were not granted until more than ten years after the end of the war (1957/58).
31. Some Honours which appear in early Army Lists for some reason are not shown in later lists. This appears to be the case for the 5th (City of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (London Rifle Brigade). These Honours are shown in the Part 3 with []. For those added later, they are shown in the Part 3 with ().
32. After WW2 two London Regiments were awarded honorary distinctions for their war service, even though they served in an arm of the service to which Battle Honours are not customarily awarded. When they were subsequently converted back to a role which carried Standards, Guidons, Colours, or displayed Honours on Regimental Appointments, they were able to display these honorary distinctions. These distinctions were:

The City of London Yeomanry (Rough Riders)

A Royal Artillery Badge with year dates '1942-1945' with two scrolls 'North Africa', 'Italy'.

The 23rd London Regiment

A Royal Tank Regiment badge with year dates '1941-1945', with three scrolls 'North West Europe', 'North Africa', 'Italy'.