

The 24th (2nd Warwickshire) Regiment of Foot

The Colours - Anglo-Zulu war 1879

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1st Battalion 24th Regiment

Each battalion in the British Army has two Colours, a Sovereign's (or Queen's) Colour and a Regimental Colour. Events surrounding the 1866 Colours of 1st Battalion during the Anglo-Zulu campaign were as follows:

When the advance was made to the Buffalo River, the Regimental Colour was left at Camp Helpmekeer with G Company of the Battalion. On 22nd January 1879, the Queen's Colour was at Isandlwana and the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel HB Pulleine, when all seemed lost ordered Lieutenants Melvill (Adjutant) and Coghill to save the Colour. Both officers gave their lives trying to save this Colour from the Zulus. On 4th February 1879 the Queen's Colour was found in the Buffalo River and restored to the 1st Battalion.

This Colour was taken and presented to HM Queen Victoria at Osborne House on 28th July 1880, where she attached the Wreath of Immortelles (dried flowers) to the pike. On 15th December 1880, a letter was received via Army Headquarters at Horse Guards from HM Queen Victoria granting that a silver wreath, in memory of the immortal defence of Rorke's Drift and the gallantry of Lieutenants Melvill and Coghill, was to be borne on the Queen's Colour pike of both battalions for ever-more.

After the presentation of new Colours to the 1st Battalion South Wales Borderers in Hong Kong in 1933, the 1866 (Anglo-Zulu war) Colours were laid up in Brecon Cathedral on Easter Day, 1st April 1934, where they are today.

2nd Battalion 24th Regiment

The 1859 Colours were with the 2nd Battalion during the 1878 Frontier Wars in South Africa and then later in the year went to Natal with the Battalion where it formed part of the No 3 Column, along with the 1st Battalion. Unlike the 1st Battalion, 2nd Battalion had both Colours with them when the column advanced across the Buffalo River to Isandlwana. When on 22nd January 1879, the column advanced out of the camp on reconnaissance with Lord Chelmsford, the Colours were left behind in the Isandlwana camp with G Company 2/24th. After the battle, all that were found was a pike, a crown and Colour case (it cannot be assumed that these pieces related to the same Colour). The pike was found in a kraal two miles from Isandlwana on the 21st May 1879. The crown was found by a wood cutting party in a farm house on the Natal side of the buffalo, four miles from Rorke's Drift in March 1879 and the case was found about 1,200 yards from the camp in a bed of the stream.

The surviving pike and crown were trooped at the presentation of new Colours to 2nd Battalion in Gibraltar in August 1880. The relics were subsequently presented to HM Queen Victoria by Major CJ Bromhead on 15th March 1881 and were later placed in the Armoury at Windsor Castle. They remained there until 25th July 1923, when HM King George V returned them to the Regiment for safe-keeping. The relics of the 1859 Colours were re-dedicated on Sunday 20th April 1924 when they were placed in the Regimental Chapel in Brecon Cathedral.

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Colours of The Regiment - 24th Regiment, The South Wales Borderers and The Monmouthshire Regiment - The Havard Chapel, Brecon Cathedral

1 Queen's Colour 24th Foot 1850-1868	1 Regimental Colour 24th Foot 1825-1868 (Saved after Chillianwallah 1849)	Altar	2 King's Colour 24th Foot 1812-1825 (Fleming Colours)	2 Regimental Colour 24th Foot 1812-1825 (Fleming Colours)
3 Regimental Colour King's Colour	3rd Battalion, Monmouthshire Regiment TF 1909-1966		7 1st Battalion, South Wales Borderers 1933-1958	King's Colour with silver wreath Regimental Colour
4 Regimental Colour King's Colour	Brecknockshire Battalion, South Wales Borderers TF 1909-1966		8 1st Battalion, South Wales Borderers 1866-1933	Queen's Colour with silver wreath (saved after Isandlwana 1879) Regimental Colour
5 Regimental Colour Queen's Colour	3rd (Militia) Battalion, South Wales Borderers 1884-1919		9 Pike of a Colour of 2nd Battalion, 24th Foot lost at Isandlwana 1879	2nd/24th Colour Pike 10 Original Wreath of Immortelles
6 Regimental Colour Queen's Colour with silver wreath	2nd Battalion, South Wales Borderers 1880-1947		11 1st Battalion, South Wales Borderers 1958-1969	Queen's Colour with silver wreath Regimental Colour

On pillar in corner

King's Colours
12th (Service) Battalion
51st (Graduated) Battalion
52nd (Graduated) Battalion
53rd (Graduated) Battalion

On central pillar

King's Colours
8th (Service) Battalion
11th (Service) Battalion

On pillar in corner

King's Colours
4th (Service) Battalion
5th (Pioneer) Battalion
6th (Pioneer) Battalion
7th (Service) Battalion

The King's Colour of the 10th (Service) Battalion (1st Gwent), South Wales Borderers was laid up in the Parish Church, Ebbw Vale in memory of CSM John Henry Williams VC DCM MM but is now in store in the Regimental Museum at Brecon.