

The Regiment, 1719 to Now.

Being a new ongoing column of the Newsletter, designed to better inculcate knowledge amongst 41sters of the Long and Glorious History of the 41st Regiment of Foot, later known as the Welch Regiment, and now, The Royal Regiment of Wales (24th/41st Foot).

Episode 1: The Basic Facts

The original name of the Regiment was “**Colonel Edmund Fielding’s Regiment of Invalids**”, raised in 1719 from out-pensioners of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, for garrison duty “at home”.

On July 1, 1751, the Regiment was numbered 41st and redesignated as **The 41st Regiment of Foot (or Invalids)**, with service confined mainly to the Portsmouth garrison, with detachments at Plymouth and Jersey.

On December 11 1787, the invalids character of the Regiment was abandoned, the outpensioners discharged, and , recategorised as a marching regiment of the line, younger men were recruited in preparation for active service “at home or abroad”. Name: **The 41st Regiment of Foot.**

By request of the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Sir Edmund Keynton Williams KCB KTS, the King by letter dated 25 February 1831 approved the regiment be styled **The 41st or The Welch Regiment of Infantry.**

At Sheffield in 1862 the Regiment received from Queen Victoria a white billygoat from the Royal herd as replacement for its mascot, a Russian goat picked up in the Crimea.

41st adopts NCO rank of “**Goat Major**”, whose duty is to ensure the mascot is presentable. Goat accompanies 41st virtually everywhere, Royal Regiment of Wales takes on 41st’ goat as mascot, RRW goat gets service medal for recent duty in Northern Ireland, is petted by Emperor of Japan on recent visit to U.K.

In 1881, **69th Foot is amalgamated** in to regiment as **2nd Battalion, 41st:** which brings that regiment’s proud history in to the fold.

By Army Order No. 56 of February 1920, Regiment wins long-standing war with War Office and gets official permission to spell “Welsh” as “Welch” - (not that NOT having official permission *ever* stopped the Regiment from so doing...).

On 11 June 1969, Amalgamation Parade in Cardiff Castle sees 24th and 41st joined to form **The Royal Regiment of Wales (24th/41st) Foot.** Last goat of Welch Regiment is retitled “Taffy 1” of the Royal Regiment of Wales, and enlisted on the Battalion Ration Register as “Gwilym Jenkins”.

Episode 2: The Regimental Insignia

THE REGIMENTAL MASCOT: yeah, yeah, it’s the goat...

COLOURS: the regiment had a Stand of Colours in 1747. The Regimental Colour (at that time, blue as per “facings” below) incorporated a crest which throughout the history of the 41st was unique to a non-Royal regiment of infantry. Known as the “Union Badge”, it consisted of a crowned garter enclosing on a red ground the rose and thistle.



The 41st Regiment of Foot Military Living History Group in 1999

The King's Colour of the Stand issued to the 41st in May 1773 survives and is displayed in the Regimental museum in Cardiff, Wales. The 1773 colours did not include the Union Badge in their heraldry - it was restored by Royal permission given in September 1824. By the War of 1812, the Regimental Colour resembled a White Ensign - illustrations of a 33rd Colour, which are seen in numerous books, are of the correct pattern. The Battle Honours "Detroit", "Queenstown", "Miami" and "Niagara", gained in defence of Upper Canada, were added to the colours in 1816. These Honours currently appear on the Regimental Colour of the Royal Regiment of Wales (and there was only enough room on the Regimental and Queen's Colours for a fraction of the combined battle honours of the 41st, 24th and 69th...). The Union Badge also appears in the upper right corner of the Regimental Colour.

FACINGS:

41st: to 1787: blue; 1787-1822: red; 1822-1969: white.

24th: green, except 1881-1905: white

69th: green (69th was originally raised as a 2nd battalion of the 24th)

Royal Regiment of Wales (24th/41st): green (same shade as on Welsh flag). Evidently, the scheme whereby "royal" regiments had blue facings has been abandoned.

REGIMENTAL MOTTO: "GWELL ANGAU NA CHYWILYDD" (Death Rather Than Dishonour)- adopted for the 41st by Lieut.-Col. Sir Edmund Keynton Williams in 1831. This is now also the motto of the Royal Regiment of Wales.

CAP BADGE: The cap badge of the RRW is the Prince of Wales's feathers inscribed *ICH DIEN* (I serve) - this design was used by the 41st since granted in 1831, at first for use on the Colours, then incorporated in to the design of a variety of regimental badges and insignia - an illustration shows it on an 1835 pattern shako plate.

COLLAR BADGE: RRW: a silver Wreath of Immortelles (commemorates 24th in Zulu War) surrounds a red Welsh dragon (from 41st). The 41st used the red dragon starting in 1881 as the centrepiece of the waist belt clasps worn by officers, and a collar badge for all ranks.

REGIMENTAL MARCHES: Regimental Marches were formally approved for all regiments in 1882. All marches of the constituent regiments (24th, 41st, 69th) have been adopted by the Royal Regiment of Wales, although the primary quick march is “Men of Harlech” (quick march of the 24th, slow march (different tempo, obviously...) of the 41st) and the slow march is “Scipio”(adopted in 1969 - no association with prior units). 41st’s former quick march was “Ap Shenkin”. RRW Vesper Hymns are associated from the 41st during its First Afghan War (1842) period... “Sun of My Soul”, “Spanish Chant”, and “Vesper Hymn”.

In 1812, the 41st was short of most of the regalia & traditions outlined above, most of which celebrate the Welsh connection established after our time period. Nevertheless, it is also interesting to note that the 41st came out rather well in terms of its regalia being adopted by the new RRW: from goat to motto to cap badge.

Episode 3: The Early Days: Campaigns of the 41st, Part 1

The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 brought the inevitable Parliamentary clamour for the reduction of the army. Twenty-two regiments were immediately disbanded, and the rest pruned down to 37 NCO’s & men per company. Then, in 1715, the Stuart banner was raised in Scotland on behalf of the “Old Pretender” (“James III”) and Parliament had reason to regret its recent actions. While several new regiments were raised, another expedient resorted to was to raise independent companies by re-employing some of the Out-Pensioners of the Chelsea Royal Hospital who, while not fit for active service, were reckoned capable of performing the undemanding duties of garrison troops. Plus, the cheap government bastards didn’t have to pay them their hard-earned pensions while they were back on “active” duty.

On the suppression of the “15” the scheme seemed to have proved itself. In 1719, a regiment of “Invalids” was approved and on 11 March Colonel Edmund Fielding was ordered to raise 10 companies. An “invalid” was simply a pensioner, whether disabled or not. Fielding’s men were all veterans of Marlborough’s campaigns, and it only took five days to form 3 complete companies who took over garrison duties at Portsmouth from the Foot Guards.

Many years of garrison duty followed. Until 1743, the Regiment was known as Fielding’s. From 1743 to 1751, it was known as Wardour’s. In that year, the Regiment was numbered as the 41st.

In 1787, the decision was taken to turn the Regiment in to a regular “marching regiment of the line.” In effect, the regiment was born anew, as almost the complete existing complement was discharged on Christmas Day, 1787.

In January 1788, an 18-year old foppish aristocrat was posted in as a Lieutenant. The 41st saw little of the future Duke of Wellington, however - shortly after joining he was sent on staff duty with the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in Dublin Castle, where no doubt he spent his time licking - well, you get the idea. Six months later he joined another unit on his purchased climb to the top of the regimental commission system that would see him in India commanding the 33rd (another famous red-faced regiment, I’ve heard) and about to kick some towel-head butts before he had even hit the ripe old age of 30. Still, the 41st is one of a handful of infantry regiments that can claim Wellington as a member. He no doubt learnt everything he needed to know while with the 41st! None of the other

War of 1812 units we interact with had this distinction! So they can turn green with envy and sod themselves!!!

Episode 4: The Shooting Starts...

In 1793 the Regiment embarked for overseas service in the West Indies. From 1794 to 1796, the 41st were engaged in suppressing a French-backed rebellion in the West Indies. Action was seen at the capture of Martinique, St. Lucia, and Guadeloupe. Casualties were suffered more from sickness than enemy action. During two years on San Domingo, the 41st were virtually destroyed by yellow fever, typhus, malaria, and other tropical diseases. A total of 754 rank and file were lost.

Recent research has analyzed medical reports from the West Indies and made a strong case that many soldiers died, not from tropical disease, but the cheap rot-gut rum obtained by parsimonious commissary officers for use by the *scum* - errr, I meant to say "*rank and file*". Lead poisoning from improper "Ozark-style" stills was also apparently a factor. As usual, "our army" was consistently trying to do things on the cheap... some things never change!

When the regiment was pulled back to Portsmouth in October of 1796, only the surviving officers and NCO's were taken. The remnants of the rank and file were transferred in to the 17th Foot. One speculates that few of them ever saw Britain again.

One of the 41st's officers in this interlude was Lieutenant Colonel Coote Manningham, whose name is now remembered mainly as the founding Colonel of the Experimental Corps of Riflemen in 1800 - which later became the 95th, then the Rifle Brigade, and is now The Royal Greenjackets. Yet another ex-41ster who made good...

One of the officers who made it back to Britain was Adam Muir - who rose from the ranks to important commands with the Regiment and the Right Division in the War of 1812.

The Regiment was eventually transferred to Ireland, and embarked from there for Canada in August 1799.

Episode 5: We Catch up on the 24th & 69th to 1782

The 24th was initially raised by a Commission dated 8 March 1689 from King William III to Sir Edward Dering. Its first muster took place on 28 March, and by August 1689 it was sent to Ireland, where three years of campaigning saw the regiment suffer "great hardship & sickness" but having the no-doubt great satisfaction of beating the bog-trotting Catholic forces of King James & their Frenchie allies.

The Regiment was still stationed in Ireland when "Marlborough's Wars" broke out in 1701, whereupon in June of 1701, it embarked from Cork for the mainland.

In February of 1702 John Churchill, future Duke of Marlborough, became its Colonel, but he was probably too busy running the whole army to be very involved in the activities of the Regiment, known now as "Churchill's" (numbers not assigned until 1751, see below).

The Regiment served at Blenheim in 1704 (FIRST Battle Honour now inherited by RRW), then Ramilies 1706, Ouedenarde 1708, and Malplaquet 1709 (Battle Honours 2, 3 & 4).

At the end of the campaign, it was back to Ireland for many tedious years of garrison duty, safely out of sight of the mainland British public, who would have no doubt howled for its dissolution otherwise.

In 1740, the Regiment formed part of a disastrous expedition to attack Cartagena in the West Indies. When it arrived back at Plymouth in December 1742, it had lost 10 officers and 781 other ranks - most to sickness, but a large number in combat too. Thanks to inept leadership, they had been beaten by... *Spaniards!*

In 1745, the Regiment was sent to Scotland, arriving too late for Culloden but playing a role in the “mopping up” operations and road building activities that were designed to ensure the Highlands would not be a “problem” again.

In 1751, a Royal Warrant assigned numbers: we got “41”, the “24th” obviously got “24”... [*sorry lads, but not all our members are the brightest... never hurts to be thorough!*].

In 1752, the 24th was sent to be part of the garrison of Minorca in the Mediterranean.

In 1756, the French besieged the island fortress, and after the full panoply of an 18th Century formal siege, eventually compelled the garrison to surrender, with grant of a free passage to Gibraltar in French transports showing the garrison had acquitted itself well. By the by, Admiral Byng, commander of a fleet that had tried to raise the siege, was courtmartialled and shot for his failure.

Upon arriving in Gibraltar, the 24th discovered they now had a 2nd Battalion, which had been raised earlier that year & was stationed in England.

In 1758, the 2nd Battalion 24th became the 69th Regiment of Foot [and of course, the 69th eventually became the 2nd battalion 41st... ironic, ain't it??? Destiny's hand?]

In 1760 the 24th was sent to Germany to help out Frederick the Great's Prussians.

Operating in the west and fighting the Frenchies [what fun!] the 24th participated in battles at Corbach and Warburg in July of 1760.

1761 was a big year for both the 24th and the 69th.

In the campaigning in Germany, the 24th participated on 15 July in a major battle at Vellinghausen that was a notable victory, although no Battle Honour has ever been granted for it.

Meanwhile, the 69th participated in the combined operations attack on Belleisle, an island off the French coast near Brest. In the final assault on the fortress, Captain Benjamin Bromhead (ancestor of Bromhead of Rorke's Drift, and Bromhead who is currently Colonel of the RRW) particularly distinguished himself leading three bayonet attacks on French positions. Conclusion: Bromhead family has a gene that makes its members very brave, or... very nuts? As for the Regiment, Battle Honour Awarded - #5 of the RRW.

1762 saw the 24th posted to garrison duty in Gibraltar, while the 69th got to participate in yet another amphibious operation, this time against the French island of Martinique in the West Indies (Battle Honour awarded - #6).

1769 saw the 24th sent to Ireland.

In 1776, the 24th was sent to Canada, where it eventually formed part of Burgoyne's disastrous expedition which ended in surrender on October 17, 1777.

In 1782, the 69th was deployed as marines in the fleet of Admiral Rodney at his victory at the Battle of the Saintes in the West Indies - Battle Honour #7, plus the unique honour

of being granted the right to display a Naval Crown superscribed “12 April 1782” on the regimental colour: a tradition naturally continued on the Regimental Colour of the RRW. On the 31st of August, 1782, by Royal Warrant, the 24th took on the territorial designation of “2nd Warwickshire” and the 69th got “South Lincolnshire”. Neither regiment had any particular attachment to either of these territories, up to that point. Given that they both ended up in Wales, the attachment formed in 1782 was obviously not very strong! As for the 41st, we were still not a “marching” regiment and would have to wait until 1831 to get the territorial designation of “WelCh”. The 41st was one of 5 regiments to not get a territorial designation in 1782.

Episode 5: We Catch up on the 24th & 69th to 1815

The 69th In the Napoleonic Wars:

A detachment of one Lieutenant & 63 other ranks of the 69th were acting as marines on the British fleet that engaged the Spaniards off Cape St. Vincent in February of 1797, serving under Captain Horatio Nelson in the action in which Nelson captured 2 Spanish first-rate ships of the line, the 2nd by boarding from the 1st! Although only a small detachment were involved in this glorious exploit, the Regiment applied for a Battle Honour in 1880, which was refused by the War Office. However, the matter was not dropped, and in 1891, Queen Victoria overruled the earlier denial. The Welch Regiment (and now the RRW) is the only infantry regiment to have two naval Battle Honours as a result.

The main body of the 69th had been sent to the West Indies in 1796, arriving in St. Domingo not long after the 41st had left. They were evacuated in 1798, after suffering even heavier casualties to sickness than the 41st had: 25 officers and 897 other ranks.

In July of 1803, a 2nd Battalion was raised.

In 1805, **the 1st Battalion** was sent to the Far East, arriving at Madras in July, where it commenced operations associated with the Mahratta Wars. In November of 1805, the Commander in Chief Madras abolished aspects of the Sepoy equipment: their “joys” (right to wear facial hair, ear rings, caste marks, etc.) and ordered they adopt standard headgear.

In May of 1806, at the important station of **Vellore**, a battalion of Madras Native Infantry refused to accept new shakos as head gear. All NCO’s in the battalion were reduced to the ranks, and “ringleaders” were given 900 lashes and discharged. As it happened, 4 sons of Tippu Sultan of Mysore were incarcerated at Vellore. The situation was a powderkeg, as 4 companies of the 69th arrived to provide the European component of the garrison .

On the night of July 9/10, the entire Sepoy contingent of the garrison mutinied, hoisting the green flag of Mysore. The elements of the 69th present were caught off-guard and many small detachments were simply massacred. 15 soldiers in the station hospital were taken out to the parade ground and hacked to bits by the mutineers in full view of the remaining soldiers, who had holed up in a barracks with little ammunition over the night. It was a tight spot to be in!

Fortunately, by incredible heroics and the timely arrival of reinforcements, the 69th not only held out but participated in nipping this precursor of the Great Mutiny of the 1850’s

in the bud. You don't want to know the details of what was done to the captured mutineers... Thus ended one of the more notorious incidents in the history of British India. While the gallantry of the 69th was widely feted, no battle honour could be awarded...

In 1810, the battalion participated in **the capture of Bourbon** island (Battle Honour awarded) and then in 1811, the main French island base in the Indian Ocean, **Mauritius**. They then campaigned in **Java** (Battle Honour awarded), which was captured from the Dutch. The battalion was still in the Far East as the Napoleonic Wars came to a close. Overall, the 69th was awarded **the Battle Honour "India"** for all this campaigning. Meanwhile, **the 2/69th** saw little action, until the Waterloo campaign. On June 16, at **Quatre Bras**, the 2/69th was the victim of the incompetence of the Prince of Orange, who ordered it in to line at the wrong moment, resulting in the battalion being overrun and taking heavy casualties in the resulting French cavalry attack. However, the Battalion was able to regroup and participated very fully in the Battle of **Waterloo** (Battle Honour awarded) June 18. The Battalion entered Paris on 24 July 1815. The 41st arrived in Paris shortly thereafter, having missed all the "fun". The 2nd/69th was reduced in October 1816, and most of its men sent to join the 1st (and now only) battalion in Madras.

The 24th In the Napoleonic Wars

The 24th first got in to action as part of Sir Ralph Abercromby's army which drove the French out of **Egypt** in 1801. The 24th received its "Sphinx" emblem as a result, tho' one is left to wonder why, as total casualties in action amounted to 4 wounded! Battle Honour "Egypt" was awarded.

In September of 1804, a 2nd Battalion was raised.

In 1806, **the 1st Battalion** participated in the capture of **Cape Town** from the Dutch (Battle Honour awarded), then ended up in India for the balance of the Napoleonic period. In 1814, it was involved in the 1st **Nepal War**, fighting Gurkhas. This, needless to say, was not fun - the hill fort of Kalunga had a Gurkha garrison of 600 men, was besieged by a British/Indian force outnumbering it by 6 to one for a month. When they surrendered, out of ammunition and food, only 60 Gurkhas were left, but British casualties were 31 officers (including the commanding general) and 750 rank and file. To quote Brereton, "it was here that British regard for these valiant little hillmen was born; after the campaign a small obelisk was erected, with the inscription: "They fought in the conflict like men, and in the intervals of actual conflict showed us a liberal courtesy'. Of course, there are still Gurkas in the British Army and in the intervening 195 years, there has never been occasion to question this initial assessment. Meanwhile, the **2/24th** had fought its way from Lisbon to Toulouse under Wellington. Landing at Lisbon in April of 1809, it played an important role at **Talavera** July 27/28 (Battle Honour awarded). It was at **Busaco** in 1810 (Battle Honour), **Fuentes d'Onor** in 1811 (Battle Honour), and **Salamanca** in 1812 (Battle Honour). The regiment played an honourable part in the unsuccessful **Siege of Burgos** in Sept/Oct. of 1812, by which point it had suffered so many casualties that it was formed, along with the 58th Regiment, in to 'The Third Provisional Battalion' in December of 1812.

As such, the battalion participated in the 1813 campaign: Battle of **Vittoria** 23 June (Battle Honour), actions in the **Pyrenees** passes in August (Battle Honour "Pyrenees"),

and in the crossing of the **Nivelle** River in to southern France in November (Battle Honour “Nivelle”). Its last action was the Battle of **Orthes**, 27 February 1814 (Battle Honour).

For its services, it earned the general **battle honour “Peninsula”**. The 2/24th was disbanded at Ramsgate on the 24th of November 1814.

All in all, between its constituent predecessor battalions (1st & 2nd 24th, 1st & 2nd 41st, & 1st & 2nd 69th), the Royal Regiment of Wales has almost every major Battle Honour awarded in the period 1792-1815; and many unique Honours, such as St. Vincent, Detroit, and Miami.

Episode 6: The 41st: Waterloo to the Crimea

As the Battle of Waterloo was being fought on June 18, 1815, the 41st was being rushed to Belgium to reinforce Wellington’s army. They somehow managed to “make do” without us, however. The 41st spent a short time in Paris under Wellington’s command, but when peace was finalized and regiments were officially designated to be part of the Army of Occupation, the 41st was withdrawn for home service in Ireland and Scotland. Hopefully, the snippets of French gutter-talk our lads no doubt picked up during their times of service in French-Canadian areas came in handy when dealing with the “lower orders” in Paris. They would not hear French on any regular basis for a long time thereafter - not until the Crimean War, in fact. So this episode could have been titled “Frenchless at Last” or something to that effect.

In 1822, the facing colour of the Regiment was changed to White, at the request of its then Colonel, Major General Sir Edward Stopford. Reasons for this request are not noted in the Regimental History.

Anyway, in 1822, the regiment was posted for service in India, and they arrived in Madras in July of that year. One hopes they developed a taste for curried foods, because this posting would last a long time!

In February, 1824, war broke out with Burma, and an expeditionary force of 10,600 men, including the 41st, sailed from Madras, reaching the mouth of the Irrawaddy on the 10th of May. The 41st, under Lt. Col. Henry Godwin, numbered 27 officers and 692 other ranks.

On the 11 May, Rangoon was occupied.

On the 10th of June, Major Peter Chambers (he of extensive War of 1812 experience) and 450 men of the 41st “carried” a stockade. Chambers, in leading the assault, suffered a spear thrust in the face.

However, the main casualties of the 41st in Burma were caused by sickness - by March of 1825, 176 men had been lost to various tropical diseases.

In February of 1826, the 41st were in the center of the attack that captured Pagan (along with a draft of men of the 69th regiment, destined to become the 2nd Battalion of the Welch Regiment). As a result of the capture of Pagan, which was the Burmese capital, peace was signed on February 25.

The regiment arrived back in Madras in July of 1826. Total casualties: 18 KIA, 223 dead from disease. The Battle Honour “**AVA**” was awarded.

In April of 1827, Peter Chambers was promoted Lt. Colonel and placed in command of the Regiment. Four months later, he died of cholera

In 1831, the 41st was still in garrison at Madras. On February 25, the regiment received the name “WelCh”. Regimental historians have not really figured out why. In the 112+ years of its prior existence, the Regiment had never set foot in Wales (except for maybe recruiting parties). However, Lt. Colonel Sir Edmund Keynton Williams was in command of the Regiment for the period 1827 to 1837, and... he was Welsh... The 23rd was the only “Welsh” regiment at that time, and the 41st was one of the only regiments without a county designation. So the theory goes that when Sir Edmund asked for permission, it was granted...

On December 19, 1831, permission was received to use the Prince of Wales’ Arms on Regimental regalia, and the motto “Gwell angau neu Chwilydd” was adopted. This was translated as “Rather Death than Dishonour” although a more literal translation of what the Welsh words mean was “Better Death or Shame”. Yeah, you read that right: it seems the word “neu” means “or”, what they wanted was “na” for “not”: so it would have translated as “Better Death not Shame”. As Brereton remarks, this “dreadful blunder” was not rectified until 1895, when “na” replaced “neu”...

Of course, what the overwhelmingly not-welsh soldiers of 1831 thought of all this is probably not printable. Anyone know how to actually PRONOUNCE the corrected motto?!?

Incidentally, it must be admitted that almost certainly, the permission was granted to call the regiment the WelSh regiment, not the WelCh... but, perhaps because the 23rd Royal Welch Fusiliers spelt it with a “c”, the WelCh decided they would too. And eventually won perhaps their most notable victory on this point - after all, it is easier to face a horde of Afghan tribesmen than the bureaucrats at Whitehall!!! No battle honour, unfortunately...

Speaking of Afghans, in 1842 the Regiment formed part of an “Army of Retribution” which launched a two-pronged attack on Afghanistan. The event being “revenged” was the destruction of the “Army of the Indus” which had been occupying Kabul, and was totally destroyed in an infamous retreat in November of 1841 (the final element of the army, being the remnants of the 44th, were overwhelmed at Gadamack as depicted in a famous painting). Only a single man reached safety.

Included in General Nott’s Column, based in Kandahar, a wing of the 41st first saw action on 28 March at Haikulzi, the only “desperate” engagement the 41st saw in the campaign. Because only a wing was present, no battle honour was awarded. Most of the Regiment’s remaining actions were relatively bloodless, during the campaign the regiment lost 2 officers killed and 117 other ranks killed and wounded - most casualties came from the fact the Regiment marched over 2000 miles over some of the most inhospitable terrain on earth during its hot and dry season, whilst wearing its woolen uniforms... its services in the arduous campaign gained the Battle Honours “**Candahar**”, “**Ghuznee**” and “**Cabool**”.

In 1843, the Regiment returned to the UK and actually served in garrison in southern Wales for a short period of time. In 1845, it shifted to the Irish garrison, where it remained until 1851. Hey, Potato Famine time! What fun!

The next posting was the Mediterranean, where until 1853, the Regiment formed the garrison of the Ionian Islands. This service undoubtedly help acclimatize the Regiment for its next posting, service in the Crimea...

EPISODE 8: Of Sikhs and Such *[in corrected chronological order, Episode 8 came before episode 7...]*

The 24th Foot are notable in the annals of the British Army for their participation in several “glorious” disasters. Most know of the Isandlwana/Rorke’s Drift fighting on January 22 1879 in the Zulu War but the 24th also participated in a similar episode - again in January - in 1849: the Battle of Chilianwala in the Second Sikh War.

The 24th had been posted to India in May of 1846. In October of 1848 the 2nd Sikh War broke out. The Sikhs were a warrior people and had built up a very large army of men well equipped and trained in the latest “western” techniques of war - they formed in many respects the most redoubtable opponents the British would meet in India.

Joining an army of 13,000 men under General Gough, the 24th participated in an advance in to Sikh territory (the Punjab) which commenced on 10 January 1849. Gough was 70 years old & had a reputation of being an almost beserk “fighting general”.

On the 13 January, the British and Indian troops of Gough’s army reached the village of Chilianwala and set up camp. Unbeknownst to anyone in the army, five hundred yards across an open plain to their north, a Sikh army of 30,000 infantry and cavalry, with 62 artillery pieces, was waiting for them, under cover in thick scrub jungle. Gough sent out no patrols, the battle actually started as Sikh artillery interrupted the British army’s lunch preparations! An inconclusive artillery duel followed, then Gough ordered an advance across the plain and in to the scrub jungle. This produced a confused series of individual engagements as not just the regiments of his force lost touch with each other, but individual companies within regiments lost touch with those on their flanks.

The 24th had been ordered to advance with the bayonet only, which they did. They outstripped their supports and ran straight in to close-range grape and canister fire.

When the dust settled, the 24th had single-handedly broken the Sikh line, but at terrible cost. Out of 31 officers and 1065 other ranks present at the battle, 13 officers were dead and 9 wounded, and 255 other ranks were killed and 278 wounded - a casualty rate of nearly 50%.

The “victory” proved to not be very decisive (although a number of excellent battle paintings resulted, most focussing on the suicidal heroics of the 24th). There was a storm of outrage against Gough’s ineptitude.

However, before he could be recalled in disgrace, he managed to win the decisive battle of the war on 21 February 1849 at Gujrat. On March 14, the Sikhs surrendered and the Punjab became British territory. The 24th brought the battle honours “**Chillianwallah**”, “**Goojerat**”, and “**Punjaub**” to the Colours of the Royal Regiment of Wales, as a result. The Sikhs proved loyal subjects of the Crown until India gained its independence in 1947 - even fighting on the British side during the Indian Mutiny less than 10 years after Chilianwala...

Episode 7: 41st in The Crimea

On 28 March 1854 war was declared by Britain and France on Russia. The 41st, stationed at Malta, numbered 30 officers and 863 rank & file. They had just received

issue of the new Minie rifle - still a muzzle-loader, but much more accurate because of its rifling, while the ingenious design of the bullet enabled it to be loaded as easily as a smoothbore musket.

The 41st were brigaded with the 47th and our old companions of the War of 1812, the 49th, and formed one of two brigades of the 2nd Division. In June, the army was concentrated around the Bulgarian port of Varna on the Black Sea. But by then, the Turks had fought the Russians to a standstill on the Danube front - there appeared to be nothing for the Allies to do! A quick decision was taken to capture the Russian naval base at Sevastopol on the Crimean Peninsula, so as to teach the Russian Bear a lesson.

On 14 September, the Allied army landed at Kalamita Bay - some fifty miles north of Sevastopol and separated from same by a totally unknown stretch of terrain. The size of Russian forces in the Crimea was also unknown, estimates varying from 45,000 to as high as 140,000. The allied army numbered 64,000.

Marching south along the coast, the Allies blundered in to a Russian position based on rugged heights on the far side of the **Alma** River. A frontal assault followed. The result for the 41st was 4 killed and 23 wounded and a **BATTLE HONOUR**. We got off cheaply on this one.

The next action for the 41st occurred on October 26 - the day after the Battle of Balaclava (Charge of the Light Brigade, The Thin Red Line incident, etc.). October 26 saw a large skirmish with the Russians known as the **Battle of Little Inkerman**. This was basically a probe by the Russians of the extreme right of the Allied siege lines around Sevastopol, and turned out to be a precursor for the main Battle of Inkerman a few days later.

Little Inkerman's main claim to fame for the 41st is that it was the occasion for the **first award** to a member of the Regiment of a small piece of bronze which has since become the most coveted of awards for gallantry - the **Victoria Cross**.

After 6 battalions of Russians had been driven back by artillery fire, 4 companies of the 41st & 4 of the 47th were launched in pursuit. **Sergeant Ambrose Madden** led a party that captured one Russian officer and 14 men, Madden personally taking three of them.

Within 10 days of Little Inkerman, the Regiment was to gain its 2nd V.C. and the first of numerous DCM's (Distinguished Conduct Medal: #2 in the Commonwealth).

The dawn of the **Battle of Inkerman** (November 5, 1854) found the 41st in the most advanced defences of the extreme right flank of the British position before Sevastopol, as 40,000 Russians prepared to attack through thick morning mist which restricted visibility to a few yards, in a terrain composed of a maze of ravines, gullies, and rocky outcrops. In the initial assault, **Captain Hugh Rowlands** won the V.C. by rescuing the Colonel of the 47th from capture.

By 7.30 a.m., the 41st, joined by 4 companies of the 49th (about 700 men in total) found themselves attempting to defend the Sandbag Battery position from an assault by 4,000+ Russians. Brigadier Adams (49th) ordered his force to charge. In the ensuing melee, all organized formation was lost, to the company level and below. The 41st spent the rest of that long day fighting a series of desperate "small group" actions, the nature of which is the reason Inkerman is known in the history of the British army as "**the soldier's battle**".

In one such encounter, a group came upon the Russian 41st Regiment, and captured 3 Russian drums, which are now in the Regimental Museum. In another, **Private Patrick Hurley** won a DCM by saving the desperately-wounded commander of the 41st (who died later of wounds, however) while in yet a third, **Sergeant Daniel Ford** won a DCM by saving the Regimental Colours.

Casualties for the day totaled 5 officers & 34 other ranks killed (out of 43 and 589 in the total Allied force), while 6 officers & 91 men were wounded (out of 100 and 1,1778). Russian casualties were considerably heavier. **BATTLE HONOUR “INKERMAN” awarded.**

The 41st then got to struggle through the Crimean winter, under conditions which actually caused nearly as many casualties as their engagements. Siege duty was both hazardous and boring and consumed many months of effort.

On September 8 1855 the 41st took part in the **2nd assault on the Redan** (the Redan was a major feature of the fortifications of Sevastopol). The assault failed and the 41st lost more men than they did during Inkerman - officers: 3 & 6; men: 35 & 125 (killed & wounded, respectively). The French succeeded in capturing a key feature known as the Malakoff, and the Russians abandoned the city that night.

The war then dragged on to a desultory conclusion, with peace signed March 30, 1856.

In total, the 41st lost 10 officers and 145 other ranks killed, 15 officers and 436 men wounded, and 3 officers and 391 died of disease. 16 men were reported missing, presumed dead. Total losses: 1,016. In addition to the **2 V.C.’s**, a total of **16 DCM’s** were awarded, and **three battle honours: Alma, Inkerman, and Sevastopol.**

The 41st arrived in Britain in July of 1856, complete with captured Russian drums and... a goat mascot; who caught Queen Victoria’s eye when she reviewed the Regiment at Aldershot on July 29.

Casualties in the Crimean War were comparable to what the 41st suffered in the War of 1812, but... the sacrifices of the 41st in the Crimea were made better known to the British public, and the Regiment’s Welsh connection, goat mascot, etc., certainly started to catch the public’s imagination. Not really fair to our heroes of the War of 1812 - but such is the fickleness of fame! At least “our boys” got **4** battle honours for the Colours!

EPISODE 9: More Victorian Stuff - sort of...

After the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the 69th remained in India until February 1826, involved in service expanding and consolidating British influence, and in particular, service in the Mahratta War 1817-20. The Regiment was awarded the Battle Honour “**INDIA**” in recognition of its extensive services.

The Regiment served garrison duty in England until 1831, then the West Indies and Demerara, South America (1831-38), Nova Scotia (1839-42) and then England until 1847.

The Regiment was in Malta from 1847 to 1851, then the West Indies until 1857. Within six months, they were shipped to Burma, being the first Regiment sent to the Far East via the overland route through Egypt.

1864-67: back in England. In 1867, sent to Canada. In 1870, the 69th routed a Fenian incursion on the US-Canada border, earning battalion members the Canada General

Service Medal. Later that year, the Regiment was sent to Bermuda, then in 1873, to the Gibraltar garrison.

In 1878 the Regiment returned to England, where in July 1881, it was redesignated as the 2nd Battalion, the Welch Regiment.

Episode 10: The Welch Regiment, 1857-1881 (lifted almost verbatim from Regiment Magazine...)

The Crimean War had, as reported in an earlier episode, been lots of fun for the lads. After recuperating in England, at Portsmouth in 1857 the 41st embarked for the West Indies to serve in garrison at Trinidad and Barbados and Jamaica until April 1860. Sent back home, they were in Sheffield in 1862 when the Regiment received from the Queen a white billygoat from the Royal herd as replacement for its Russian goat which had died in the West Indies.

In Ireland until 1865, the Regiment then embarked for India, where it served until 1874, then spending a year in the Aden garrison, returning to the UK in March 1875.

Service then included some time in Pembrokeshire (the south-west tip of Wales), then in 1880, 7 months in the Gibraltar garrison. The Regiment was then sent to Natal (just after Rorke's Drift etc.). This is where the Regiment was stationed when, in July 1881, it was united with the 69th to form the 1st and 2nd battalions, The Welch Regiment. The reorganization saw the shifting of one militia regiment (Royal Glamorgan Light Infantry Militia) and 4 South Wales Rifle Volunteer Corps, all of whom became affiliated as Volunteer Battalions of the Regiment as well.

A new Regimental Depot was established at the then recently completed Maindy Barracks in Cardiff.

The 41st had thus well and truly migrated to Wales & become a Welsh unit by this time. Our Regimental Museum is, of course, now in Cardiff Castle, which is where we must all aspire to journey at some point in order to see such goodies as the 4th U.S. Infantry's Colors (captured at Detroit, August 18, 1812), Russian drums captured at Inkerman in the Crimean War, etc., etc.

WELCH Pride: The Goat Mascot

from page 475-76, Brereton, *A History of the Royal Regiment of Wales* (1989)

"...One story goes that while that Regiment (41st) was serving in the 1st Afghan War of 1842 they adopted one of the tribesmen's goats as a pet, and it marched with them to Kabul. But there is not a shred of evidence to support this assertion.

We are on much firmer ground when we reach the Crimean War of 1854-56 in which the 41st were engaged. Indefatigable researching by Lieutenant Bryn Owen, R.N., Curator of The Welch Regiment Museum, unearthed a photograph, probably one of Roger Fenton's (the earliest official war photographer), showing a group of 41st officers posing outside their Mess hut at Sebastopol in the winter of 1855-56. In front of the group a goat kneels to consume some offering from a bowl. There are two stories about how this "Russian goat" was acquired.

The first says that it was picked up by a Sergeant Major and brought home with the 41st to Aldershot, where it was paraded before Queen Victoria (committing lese-majeste by butting her).

The second, more romantic, alleges that one of the Irish soldiers acquired a small goat kid with which he intended to supplement his meagre rations. He was on sentry duty at the time and tucked the live kid under his greatcoat. During the night he fell asleep, to be suddenly awakened by the agitated bleating of the animal. As he came to, he espied a Russian patrol advancing and was able to warn the forward picquet, who drove off the enemy. Thus, like the Roman geese, the goat had averted disaster. Later, when the Adjutant inspected the animal he enquired whether it was a billy or a nanny. "Sorr, he be a he", replied the Irishman, whereupon the Adjutant ordered that it should be kept as a pet, and named "Hebe".

In the 1920s a battered and faded old painting of a goat was discovered among some rubbish in the Museum store at Maindy Barracks, Cardiff. On the back someone had scribbled 'Hebe'. An old lithograph depicting the 41st camp at Dover Heights in 1857 clearly shows a goat. Whether all these are one and the same animal is problematical: the goat shown in the photograph at Sebastopol [which is reproduced in Brereton's book] could scarcely be the Irish soldier's kid, Hebe, for it is obviously fully grown, and not even the burliest Irishman could have concealed it under his greatcoat.

While it seems most probable that The Welch Regiment's original goat mascot was certainly acquired in the Crimea, the whole question is further confused by three silver teapots formerly held in the Officers' Mess and now in the Museum at Cardiff. The earliest, dating from 1846, is crowned with a statue of a small couchant goat; the next (1847) has a larger specimen; and the third, presented to the Mess in 1848, is adorned with a very fine animal indeed, with lengthy horns. Obviously, the goat appears to have become a Regimental emblem, if not a mascot, long before the Crimea, which might lend credence to the Afghan theory."

- Jim Yaworsky