Uniform case with portrait of General Otway (Colonel of the Regiment 1717-64) in the centre
THE ROYAL SUSSEX REGIMENT

1701—1966

Badge of the 3rd (Militia) Battalion

Badge of the 5th (Cinque Ports) Battalion

Above centre: Regimental cap badge

Left: Regimental collar badge

By kind permission of the Chichester District Council, the Museum of The Royal Sussex Regiment is housed in the Chichester District Museum. The illustrations in this booklet, with the exception of the two photographs of St. George's Chapel, are of exhibits in the Museum, which is open to the public from Tuesdays to Saturdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (5 p.m. in Winter).
Battle Honours


The Battle Honours emblazoned on the Colours are shown in heavy type.

Freedom Cities and Boroughs

THE STORY OF THE ROYAL SUSSEX REGIMENT

The Raising of the Regiment

The Regiment was raised in Belfast in 1701 by Arthur Chichester, 3rd Earl of Donegall who owned large estates in the North of Ireland. The Earl raised the Regiment at his own expense in return for which King William III gave permission for the officers and soldiers to wear orange facings on their uniforms as a special mark of his favour. It was a curious coincidence that the family name, Chichester, of the Regiment’s first Colonel should be the same as that of the City which was later to be its home. Apart from the Regiment’s seniority number “35” it was at first known as “The Belfast Regiment” or, more often, by the name of the Colonel.

The Wars of the Spanish Succession

War was declared against France in 1702 and the new Regiment was one of six which were placed on the establishment of the Navy for sea service. They were to serve not as marines but as land forces to make landings as required. A British fleet with the Regiment on board sailed for the coast of Spain and a landing was made near Cadiz. The expedition ultimately failed and a smaller force of which the Regiment was part sailed for the West Indies in order to attack the French and Spanish settlements in the Caribbean. However by the Autumn of 1703 the expedition had suffered so many casualties from yellow fever that it was forced to return home and the Regiment recruited.

It was probably during the long periods at sea that the custom of the officers of the Regiment drinking the Sovereign’s health sitting down was established.

There was not much time for recruiting as, early in 1704, the Regiment embarked for Spain where it was to remain for the next three years. During the winter it took part in the gallant defence of Gibraltar for which it was eventually awarded the battle-honour “Gibraltar 1704–5”. It lost its first Colonel, the Earl
of Donegall, who was killed in 1706 in the fighting at Barcelona although the Regiment itself was not present. In the Spring of 1707 it was at the disastrous Battle of Almansa where the Allies were defeated and the Regiment, in common with many others, was practically wiped out. The shattered remnants returned to Ireland where it was reconstituted. The Colours, which had been lost in the Battle, were amongst those recovered from a Church in Madrid three years later. Except for a seven-year tour in Minorca the Regiment remained in Ireland for the next forty-eight years.

Charles Otway was Colonel of the Regiment from 1717 to 1764. During this long period the Regiment was known as “Otway’s”. Shortly before his death he turned down an offer of £6,000 for the Colonelcy.

The Seven Years War

War with France was declared in the spring of 1756 and the Regiment sailed for North America. The following summer as garrison of Fort William Henry it was overwhelmed by a superior French force under General Montcalm and allowed to march out with the honours of war. However the French were unable to control their Indian allies and many members of the Regiment and their families were massacred—the story is told in Fenimore Cooper’s “The Last of the Mohicans”. In 1758 it was present at the capture of Louisburg on Cape Breton Island and in 1759 it fought on the right of the British line under General Wolfe at Quebec. It was after this famous battle that members of the Regiment picked up the white plumes worn by the Royal Roussillon Regiment of France, whom they had overwhelmed in the fighting, and stuck them in their own hats. The plume was later incorporated in the badge of the Regiment, and the battle commemorated annually. Honours for the capture of Havannah and Martinique were added before the Seven Years War ended in 1763.

The American War of Independence

The Regiment returned to North America for the War of Independence. It saw some tough
Left: Window displays covering the years 1701 to 1850.

Left: Further window displays covering the years 1850 to 1900 and 1914 to 1919.

Right: Colonel Charles Lennox afterwards 4th Duke of Richmond, Colonel of the Regiment from 1803 to 1819. This is a caricature in the uniform of 1789 from Kay's 'Edinburgh Portraits'.
The South African War display case showing a silver statuette of a mounted infantryman, medals and miniature Regimental Colours

Left: Uniforms and medals of Colonels of the Regiment and a portrait of Captain Alexander Shaw c. 1803
fighting against many who had been comrades only a few years earlier; at Bunker Hill, Brooklyn and White Plains. After garrison duties in New York City the Regiment took part in the capture of St. Lucia and remained in the Caribbean until returning home in 1785.

County Titles

In 1782 George III added county titles to infantry regiments in order to help recruiting and it became the 35th (or Dorsetshire) Regiment although the reason for the connection with Dorset is not known. The first real connection with Sussex came in 1787 when Charles Lennox, later to succeed his uncle and become 4th Duke of Richmond, joined the Regiment—Lennox not only recruited Sussex men for the Regiment from his family estates in the County but, in 1804, obtained Royal permission for the title “Sussex” to be transferred from the 25th Regiment of Foot, later to become the King’s Own Scottish Borderers, to the 35th.

War with France

Lennox was in command of the Regiment in 1794 in the West Indies where casualties from sickness were again far more numerous than those inflicted by the French. In 1799 a 2nd Battalion of the Regiment was formed, mainly of men of Sussex, and both Battalions went to serve in Holland under General Abercrombie. Ensign John Renton distinguished himself bysaving the Colours of the 1st Battalion from capture in hand-to-hand fighting at the Battle of Bergen. The following year the two Battalions played a prominent part in the capture of Malta from the French and the King’s Colour of the Regiment was the first British flag to be hoisted on the ramparts after the capture of the Island. This Colour is still preserved in the Garrison Headquarters at Fort St. Elmo and a fragment of it is in the Museum. The Regiment was also stationed in Malta in 1964 and it was a subaltern of the 35th, Lieutenant Thorpe, who lowered the Union Jack for the last time on the day on which the Island declared her independence.

The 1st Battalion remained in the Mediterranean and in 1806 distinguished itself at a resounding victory over the French at Maida in Italy. For many years the Battle Honour “Maida” was carried
on the crossbelt badges of the Regiment. The 2nd Battalion was with a reserve brigade at Waterloo and took part in the allied Victory March through Paris before being disbanded.

**A Royal Regiment**

After the Napoleonic Wars the Regiment served for another long period in the West Indies. It was highly commended for the help it gave to the inhabitants of Barbados after the hurricane of 1831 in which 2,500 were killed. On its return home in 1832 the Regiment was given the title “Royal” by King William IV in recognition of its outstanding achievements. As a result of this honour the old orange facings on the uniforms gave way to the blue facings of a ‘Royal’ Regiment. The background of the Regimental Colour was also changed from orange to blue. Perhaps this change of the colour of the facings was timely as the Regiment was due for another tour of duty in Ireland. This was followed by eleven years in Mauritius where it was commended by the Governor for its good conduct.

**The Indian Mutiny**

On the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny in 1857 the Regiment was in Burma. It immediately moved to Calcutta and helped to disarm six regiments of local infantry. It took part in various operations against mutinous Sepoy forces including the clearance of the Jugespore Jungle. After the Mutiny the Regiment provided an escort to the Governor General, Lord Canning, on his progress through India and Lady Canning presented new Colours at Meerut. The Regiment became linked with the 107th (Bengal Infantry) Regiment which had also given distinguished service in the Mutiny. The 107th had originally been raised by the Honourable East India Company in 1853 as the 3rd Bengal European Regiment and was transferred to the British Service after the Mutiny in company with all other European regiments of the East India Company’s private army. The badge was the Maltese Cross and the facing of the uniform was white. In 1873 a common depot was established at Chichester and in 1881 the two Regiments were reconstituted to form the 1st Battalion and the 2nd Battalion The Royal Sussex Regiment. Meanwhile the former had been on another tour in the West Indies.
The 1st Battalion went to Egypt in 1882 and formed part of the Nile Expedition which made a dramatic but vain attempt to save General Gordon in Khartoum. The 2nd Battalion was in India for the Black Mountain Expedition and for several punitive excursions against tribesmen on the North-West Frontier.

**The South African War**

The 1st Battalion served in the South African War and was reinforced by the Militia and by three successive companies formed from the Volunteer units of the Regiment. This was the first time that the Volunteers, later to be formed into the Territorial Army, had served overseas. Visitors to the Museum will see a large silver statuette of a mounted infantryman of the Regiment as, towards the end of the War, members of the Battalion were mounted and formed into mobile columns to round up the Boer Commandos.

In 1908 the Territorial Army was formed out of the Volunteers, the 4th Battalion in West Sussex and the 5th (Cinque Ports) Battalion in East Sussex—the latter had medieval origins carried down through the Cinque Ports Volunteers which had been raised by William Pitt to meet Napoleon's projected invasion in 1803. Both the Territorial Battalions were to distinguish themselves in the two world wars.

**The 1914–1918 War**

During the 1914–18 War the Regiment expanded to no less than 23 Battalions. The 1st Battalion remained on the North-West Frontier and in India throughout the War, in spite of ceaseless protests. The 2nd Battalion crossed the Channel with the 1st Division in August 1914. It remained in France for the four years of hostilities and lost 1,723 officers and men killed in action. The 3rd (Militia) Battalion formed a transit and reinforcement depot at the port of Newhaven. The 4th Battalion went to Gallipoli, Egypt, Palestine and the Western Front. The 5th (Cinque Ports) Battalion received heavy casualties while brigaded with the 2nd Battalion at Aubers Ridge in 1915 and later went to the Italian Front. The
Service Battalions which went to France also bore their share of the fighting particularly the 7th, 8th, 9th and the three Southdown Battalions. One of the latter also went to Russia after the War. The Sussex Yeomanry were dismounted and fought as the 16th Battalion of the Regiment in Palestine and later on the Western Front—Victoria Crosses were awarded to Sergeant Wells and Lt-Col. Johnson of the 2nd, Lieut. McNair of the 9th and CSM Carter of the 12th Battalions. The names of the 6,800 members of the Regiment who lost their lives are recorded on memorial panels in the Regimental Chapel of St. George in Chichester Cathedral.

Between the wars the 1st Battalion served on the Rhine, in Ireland, at home, where in 1932 it performed public duties in London, and in 1936 it went to Palestine to keep the peace. The 2nd Battalion went all over the world to the West Indies, Malta, Chanak for a confrontation with the Turks, Singapore, India where it had to deal with a serious riot in Karachi and in 1939 to Belfast.

The 1939–1945 War

The 2nd Battalion joined the 4th and 5th Battalions in England to form a Royal Sussex Brigade which went to France in the Spring of 1940. After Dunkirk the Brigade was re-formed and in 1942 went out to North Africa via the Cape. It fought at Alam Halfa and at El Alamein. Afterwards the 10th Parachute Battalion was formed from the 2nd Battalion and a reconstituted 2nd Battalion and 4/5 Battalion went to Iraq and Persia where they remained for the rest of the War. It was while serving with the 10th Parachute Battalion at Arnhem in 1944 that a Royal Sussex Officer, Captain Queripel, was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross.

The 1st Battalion was in Egypt at the outbreak of war and in October 1940 it joined the 4th Indian Division with which it was to serve with distinction until July 1945. After a short period in the desert it moved South for the overthrust of the Italians in Eritrea and Abyssinia which was successfully achieved by April 1941. Back in the Western Desert it fought with distinction particularly at Sidi Omar in November 1941. It took a prominent part in the pursuit of the Germans to Tunisia where General von Arnim himself surrendered to it. In Italy the Battalion came through the bitter fighting at Cassino with great credit. In November 1944 it was sent to Greece where it helped to quell strife among the Greeks. After peace in Europe the Battalion served in Austria, Italy, Palestine and Egypt.

Sergeant Harry Wells, 2nd Battalion, winning his Victoria Cross at the Battle of Loos, 1915. An oil painting by Ernest Ibbetson.
Left: Her Majesty Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, Colonel-in-Chief, accompanied by Brigadier J. B. Ashworth, Colonel of the Regiment, inspecting the 1st Battalion at Canterbury in 1966

Right: Sir Winston Churchill in the uniform of Honorary Colonel 5th (Cinque Ports) Battalion with General Sir Lashmer Whistler, later Colonel of the Regiment, at the Rhine crossing in 1944

A soldier of the Regiment in battle order 1966. A watercolour by C. C. Stadden
The 9th Battalion fought in the Arakan early in 1944. Later it was airlifted to Myitkyina and fought its way south. At Pinwe it successfully defended itself against a suicide attack by the Japanese and the Battalion reached Mandalay in April 1945.

On 13th September 1948 at a ceremony at Chichester the 1st and 2nd Battalions were amalgamated into one Battalion called the 1st Battalion and the 4th and 5th Battalions were amalgamated into the 4/5th (Cinque Ports) Battalion, Territorial Army.

The 1st Battalion subsequently served in Egypt, Jordan, Germany, Korea where it was the last British Battalion, Gibraltar, Belfast, Malta and in Aden from where it carried out operations against dissident tribesmen in the Radfan Mountains. While at home in 1963 it performed public duties in London. In 1953 the Regiment was greatly honoured by the appointment of Her Majesty Queen Juliana of the Netherlands as Colonel-in-Chief thus continuing its link with the House of Orange. Her Majesty took the salute at a special parade held at Tidworth the following year.

The regard for the County Regiment shown by the people of Sussex after its service in the two World Wars is reflected in the number of freedom scrolls to be seen in the Museum. These scrolls record the presentation to the Regiment of the honorary freedom of Brighton, Hastings (to the 5th Battalion), Chichester, Eastbourne, Lewes, Arundel, Hove and Worthing and also of the City of Belfast.

The Formation of the Queen’s Regiment

In June 1966 at Canterbury Her Majesty Queen Juliana made her last visit to the Royal Sussex Regiment as on the 31st December of the same year it became part of the newly formed Queen’s Regiment of which Her Majesty became an Allied Colonel-in-Chief in company with His late Majesty King Frederick of Denmark. The other Regiments forming the Queen’s Regiment were The Queen’s Royal Surrey Regiment, The Queen’s Own Buffs The Royal Kent Regiment and The Middlesex Regiment. The 4/5th (Cinque Ports) Battalion The Royal Sussex Regiment (TA) was disbanded in March 1967 on the formation of Territorial and Army Volunteer units of the Queen’s Regiment. All Battalions of the Queen’s Regiment carry on the most cherished customs and traditions of the former Regiments from which they are descended.
Regimental Marches

The 1st Battalion march was “The Royal Sussex” which is believed to have been taken from a French tune. The origin of the slow march is not known. The 2nd Battalion March was “The Lass of Richmond Hill”. After the amalgamation of the 1st and 2nd Battalions in 1948 the two marches were combined in a single score.

The 5th (Cinque Ports) Battalion march was “Let the Hills Resound” which was later adopted by the 4th/5th (Cinque Ports) Battalion. The Regimental marching song “Sussex by the Sea” was written for the Regiment by Mr. W. Ward-Higgs of Bognor in 1907. When his favourite sister-in-law had become engaged to Captain Waithman of the 2nd Battalion, he immediately set about composing a song for them and produced “Sussex by the Sea”.

Colonels of the Regiment

Major-Gen. Arthur Chichester, Earl of Donegall (1701)
Lt.-Gen. Richard Gorges (1706)
Gen. Charles Otway (1717)
Gen. Henry Fletcher (1764)
Gen. Charles Lennox, Duke of Richmond, K.G. (1803)
Gen. Sir John Oswald, G.C.B., G.C.M.G. (1819)
Gen. Sir George Henry Frederick Berkeley, K.C.B. (1845)

Gen. Simcoe Baynes (1863)
Gen. Henry Renny, C.S.I. (1875)
Gen. William Lennox Ingall, C.B. (1885)
Lt.-Gen. Sir George Samuel Young, K.C.B. (1898)
Gen. Sir John Davis, K.C.B. (1900)
Lt.-Gen. Sir Henry Francis Williams, K.C.B. (1901)

Lt.-Gen. Sir William Freeman Kelly, K.C.B. (1903)
Major-Gen. James Charles Young, C.B. (1914)
Brig. Richard Maule Birkett, D.S.O. (1941)
Brig. Thomas Francis Vere Foster, C.B.E., M.C. (1942)
St. George’s Chapel in Chichester Cathedral

St. George’s Chapel in Chichester Cathedral has been The Memorial Chapel of The Royal Sussex Regiment since 1921. Originally the Chapel was one of two chantry chapels which were added to the South side of the Cathedral early in the thirteenth century and it has been associated with the citizens of Chichester from its early days. King Stephen confirmed the privileges enjoyed by the ancient merchants’ guild of Chichester during the three previous reigns and later in 1368 this merchants’ guild was reconstituted as the Guild of St. George. The Mayor of Chichester was head of the Guild and most of the influential citizens were members. The objects of the Guild were religious and charitable and the Mayor and Corporation of Chichester used to attend a service in the Chapel on Saint George’s Day. However in 1547 the Guild was suppressed and two years later the lands of the Guild were sold to the City of Chichester for £100. The altar in the Chapel was removed and the wall separating the Chapel from the adjoining one was removed. For nearly four hundred years Saint George’s Chapel remained a chapel in name only.

On 11th November 1921 the Chapel was rededicated as the Memorial Chapel of The Royal Sussex Regiment. The Regiment restored the Chapel and replaced the wall separating it from the adjoining chapel. The names of the 6,800 All Ranks of the Regiment who fell in the 1914–18 War have been recorded on encased panels, which are fixed to the South and West walls of the Chapel. The names of the 1,024 who fell in the 1939–45 War have been recorded in a Memorial Book beside the altar. Many of the old Colours of the Regiment have been laid up in the Chapel. They include the Colours of the 1st Battalion which were carried from 1859 to 1928 and from 1954 to 1966, those of the 2nd Battalion which were carried from 1865 to 1924 and from 1924 to 1948 and those of the 4th/5th (Cinque Ports) Battalion from 1960 to 1967. In addition a guidon of the Sussex Yeomanry hangs over the panel containing the names of the Sussex Yeomanry who fell in the two World Wars.

The old associations between the City of Chichester and the Chapel have been revived. The Mayor attends the annual Regimental Memorial Service which is held in the Chapel on Saint George’s Day and in 1951 on the occasion of the admission of the Regiment to the honorary Freedom of the City, the Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens of Chichester presented the Regiment with an altar cross for the Chapel.
The Victoria Cross

Lieutenant-Colonel John Carstairs McNeill, 107th Regiment of Foot (later 2nd Battalion). For gallantry during the New Zealand Campaign, 30th March 1864. Sergeant Harry Wells, 2nd Battalion. For leading his platoon forward after its officer and most of its men had fallen at the Battle of Loos, 25th September 1915. Posthumous award. Lieutenant Eric Archibald McNair, 9th Battalion. For gallant leadership in driving off an attack after the Germans had exploded a mine under his platoon position near Hooge in Belgium, 14th February 1916. Company Sergeant Major Nelson Victor Carter, 12th Battalion. For penetrating the enemy’s defences in the face of intense fire, for successful bombing and for rescuing wounded at Richebourg l’Avoué in France, 30th June 1916. Posthumous award. Lieutenant-Colonel D. G. Johnson DSO MC 2nd Battalion (from South Wales Borderers). For his gallant leadership of the Battalion at the crossing of the Sambre Canal, East of Catillon, 4th November 1918. Captain Lionel Ernest Queripel, Royal Sussex Regiment (attached to The Parachute Regiment). For outstanding gallantry and leadership at Arnhem, 19th September 1944. Posthumous award.

The Royal Sussex Regimental Association: The Association exists to provide welfare and promote comrade-ship of members of the former Royal Sussex Regiment. There are branches of the Association in London and throughout Sussex. Further details of the Association and of membership may be obtained from Headquarters, the Royal Sussex Regimental Association, Roussillon Barracks, Chichester.


Right: Two views of St. George’s Chapel in Chichester Cathedral, the Memorial Chapel of the Royal Sussex Regiment

Back cover: Uniforms of the Regiment—1742. A watercolour by R. Simkin