

The Colours of the 55th Westmorland Regiment

The following Colours were restored in 1989 by the Royal School of Church Needlework. The necessary £15,000 was raised by an Appeal Committee:

The Rev. Canon John Hodgkinson (Chairman), Colonel T H H Hodgson, DSO, MC, TD Vice-Lieutenant of Cumbria, E Mitchell Esq (Chairman Kings Own Border Regt. Ass.), Captain R W Hind TD, J Noble Esq MBE, Sir John Burgess OBE, DL, JP, James Cropper Esq BA, FCA, Group Captain B J Leonard, Major G A Tomlinson TD.

The Colours of 1785-1801 are painted on silk and bear the honours St. Lucia, Brandywine-Egmont. Lord Archibald Campbell recovered the Colours from a pawn shop in 1888 and returned them to the Regiment. The King's Colour was used during the latter part of the century, probably from 1786 – 1801.

The Colours of 1801- 1815 were presented by Colonel Donald MacDonald in Guernsey 4th June 1801 to commemorate the union with Ireland. The Regimental Colour is Kendal Green, the rose, thistle and shamrock in the centre, surrounded by the scroll *For our God, our King and Country*. At the storming of the fortress of Bergen op Zoom in 1814 many of the English troops were captured. Rather than hand over the colours to the French, Ensigns Goodall and Ring wrapped them round their bodies, and later, returned them to the Regiment.

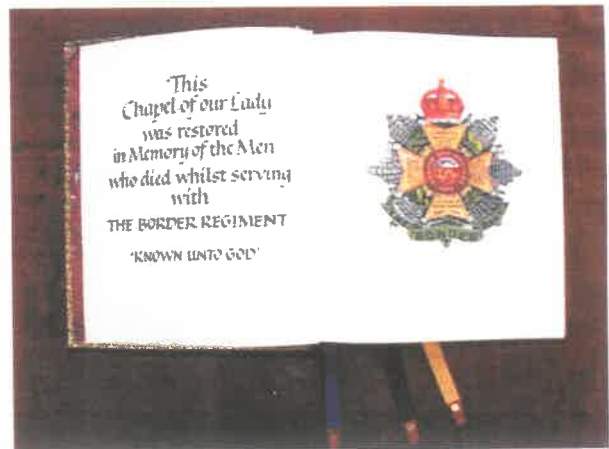


The Colours of 1815-1850 were presented at Harwich and carried throughout the First China War of 1842. They are embroidered and not painted.

The Imperial Chinese Standard was captured at Chusan in 1842 and its emblem of the Chinese dragon was awarded as a Battle Honour of the 55th (Westmorland) Regiment and worn on the Regimental Colour. The Dragon is part of the insignia of the Border Regiment and its successors.

Border Regiment Memorial Book

This book contains the names of all those in the Kendal area who fell in the two world wars and subsequent conflicts. It is in an oak case in the Bellingham Chapel, also known as the Border Regiment Chapel. The Regimental Colours are housed in this chapel where the windows have the crests of the Westmorland and Border Regiments, and there is an altar frontal with the Border Regiment Crest.



Laying Up of the Colours in 1939 And Retrieval in 1947

A letter by the Rev. Bertram Jones, Parish Magazine November 1947

I stood in the pulpit of Kendal Parish Church on Sunday morning, 3rd September 1939, knowing that war was about to be proclaimed with Germany. The day before, the evacuees had begun to arrive. The black out had begun, and the Parish Hall was prepared for the reception of the troops. I had only been in Kendal three months. I had only begun to know the people; all my plans for the future were shattered. An era was passing.

On 5th September I called upon Lieut.-Colonel Tomlinson, commanding the 4th Battalion Border Regiment. T.A. and received permission to visit the men in their billets and to conduct after-breakfast prayers at 7-15 a.m. on Wednesdays in the Parish Hall, and on Fridays in the Organ Works. We also made arrangements for laying up the Colours in the Parish Church.

It rained all day on Sunday 10th September 1939 but the 4th Battalion paraded for the 11-30 a.m. service, 500 strong, and in a crowded church laid up the Colours. We wondered how long we would have them in our keeping. The Prime Minister had spoken of being prepared for a three years' war.

On Wednesday, 13th September, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. I attended a concert for the troops in the Parish Hall. It was a jolly evening, and little did I think that the young officer who conjured so brilliantly would be a prisoner in German hands within a year,

On Sunday, 17th September the 4th Battalion paraded for Church with 425 officers and men. That morning there were 1,411 coins in the collection. On 24th September the parade only numbered 10 officers and men, as the Battalion was busy preparing to leave Kendal. At 9,00 am, on Thursday, 28th September the 4th Battalion entrained at Kendal Station for Berwick-on-Tweed. Vast crowds lined the station approaches in glorious weather, but I felt terribly lonely as the long troop train pulled out, just a civilian padre wondering what the future had in store for us,