

The Queen's Royal Irish Hussars

The Queen's Royal Irish Hussars were formed on 24th October 1958 by the amalgamation of the 4th Queen's Own Hussars and the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars. The amalgamation date was significant in that it was the 104th anniversary of the most famous action shared by the two Regiments - indeed the most famous cavalry action in the history of the British Army - the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava. At the amalgamation parade at Hohne in Germany the Colonel in Chief Prince Philip presented the Regiment with a new Guidon.

Serving in Germany for the next three years as part of 7th Armoured Brigade, in June 1961 it embarked for England to prepare for service in Aden. In October it played an operational role against dissidents - a role which it was to take for 12 months before embarking on the SS Oxfordshire for service in Malaysia. Members of the Regiment saw service on jungle operations during the Indonesian confrontation in Brunei and Sarawak, and in Singapore as part of the Internal Security Forces.

Between 1964-68, the QRIH was stationed in Wolfenbuttel patrolling the West/East German Border. Returning to England, the Regiment converted from and armoured Car role to that of and armoured regiment taking up the position of Royal Armoured Corps Centre Regiment. In 1970 it returned to Germany newly equipped with Chieftain tanks.



The QRIH reach The Basra Road 1991

Returning from Paderborn to England in 1979, the Regiment was based at Tidworth. C Squadron provided the Demonstration Squadron for the School of Infantry at Warminster. The remaining Squadrons performed a variety of roles including a United Nations Armoured Car Squadron patrolling the divided island of Cyprus and a small party to monitor the ceasefire arrangements in Rhodesia. In May 1985, Prince Philip presented a new Guidon as part of the tercentenary celebrations in Germany.

Newly equipped with Challenger tanks, the QRIH formed part of the 7th Armoured Division sent to the Gulf as part of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

The 4th Queen's Own Hussars



The cap badge of The 4th Queen's Own Hussars

The 4th Queen's Own Hussars were raised in 1685 when they were known by their Colonel's name - Berkeley's Dragoons or as Princess Anne of Denmark's Regiment of Dragoons. They served with distinction throughout the 18th Century, against Jacobite rebels and in the Wars of the Spanish and Austrian Successions. Its first Battle Honour was at Dettingen (27th June 1742). It was in this battle that Irishman George Daraugh (a dyer of Capel Street, Dublin) serving with Rich's Dragoons, as the Regiment was then known, attacked a French Officer who had carried off one of Rich's standards. He cut the Frenchman and returned to the British lines with the Standard. This was the last battle at which a British King (George II) was present as Commander; he Commissioned Daraugh and presented him with a purse of guineas.

During the Napoleonic Wars the 4th (or Queen's Own Dragoons) served with distinction under Wellington in the Spanish Peninsular. It arrived at Lisbon on April 25th 1809 with a strength of 29 Officers, 37 Sergeants and 674 Other Ranks. Its first action was at Talavera (July 27/28th 1809). Present at a number of actions including Busaco, the Lines of Torres Vedras, Albuhera, Usagre and Ciudad Rodrigo. On July 22nd 1812 at Salamanca, led by their Colonel Lord Edward Somerset, the 4th charged as part of Le Marchant's Brigade helping give Wellington his greatest victory in Spain. After action at Vittoria (June 21st 1813), the Regiment entered France itself, being present at the last battle of the War at Toulouse (April 20th 1814). It marched north to Calais, arriving in England on July 20th 1814.

In 1821, the Regiment - by then known as the 4th (Queen's Own) Light Dragoons set sail for India where it would pass the next 20 years. In 1839 it was present at the capture of the citadel of Ghuznee in Afghanistan (on the Guidon it

is always spelt with "ff" to avoid confusion with the 1879-80 Battle Honour. Sailing for the Crimea under its Colonel, Lord George Paget, the 4th landed at Constantinople in May 1854, and witnessed the Battles of Alma and Inkerman as well as the Siege of Sevastopol. It was as part of the famous Charge of the Light Brigade that the Regiment won lasting fame and, for one of its members, the Victoria Cross.

The Regiment served both at home and in India until the outbreak of the First World War. In India in 1896 the newly commissioned Winston Churchill wrote of the style in which the Regiment's Officers lived that "princes could live no better than we". In fact the expense of life as a Cavalry Officer meant that Churchill's father wanted his son to serve in an Infantry Regiment rather than the Cavalry.

During the Great War the 4th served in France. In 1915 they renewed their association with the 8th Hussars when, at Curragh Camp in County Kildare the Depot Squadrons of both Regiments amalgamated to form the 10th Reserve Cavalry Regiment.

In the Second World War the 4th and 8th served together again when they fought in the Battle of Alam el Halfa in the Western Desert. In 1941, it took part in the defence of Greece, during which it was involved in a series of rearguard actions covering the withdrawal from the Yugoslav border to the Southern Beaches. Two Officers and 14 Other Ranks were killed in the fighting and a further 14 Other Ranks were drowned in the subsequent evacuation. After re-forming in Cairo the 4th again fought in North Africa before landing in Italy. The 4th Hussars ended the War as a regiment of Armoured Infantry Carriers being equipped with Sherman tanks modified to carry troops known as "Kangaroos".

The Regiment spent the years between the end of the War and Amalgamation in Austria, Italy, Germany before serving as an armoured car regiment in Malaya from 1948-51 combating terrorism.

The 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars



The cap badge of The 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars

In 1693, Colonel Conyngham raised a Regiment of Dragoons in Ireland. The first action they took part in was against the Spanish at Almenara in 1710. During the fighting the Regiment "overthrew a corps of Spanish cavalry and the Dragoons equipped themselves with the cross-belts of their fallen foe". This audacious action gave the Regiment the nickname of the "Crossbelt Dragoons".

After service in England against the Jacobite rebels, the 8th Light Dragoons were sent to Flanders in 1794 to fight the French. After a short spell in England, during which they marched on foot from Manchester to Portsmouth, they embarked on a 90 day voyage to the Cape in South Africa where they spent five years keeping order among the Boers and other peoples. Moving north to Egypt in 1801, the 8th helped rid the country of what was left of Napoleon's expeditionary force. Spending the next 20 years in India taking part in the Mahratta and Nepalese Wars during which they won their first Battle Honour at Laswaree (November 1st 1803). At this battle, their Colonel Thomas Pakenham Vandeleur was killed because of the colour of his horse. All the 8th Light Dragoons were mounted on grey arabs, Vandeleur was an obvious target on his black charger, and was killed by an enemy cannon ball.

In 1822 the 8th received orders that they were to be uniformed, armed and equipped as a Hussar Regiment. Service in England followed with Squadrons serving in a variety of locations from Brighton to Ballincollig, Norwich to Newcastle. They passed three tours in Ireland including acting as escort to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert on their first visit to Dublin in 1849. Following the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade, the Regiment was sent to India to help quell the Mutiny.

On June 17th 1858 at Gwalior, a Squadron charged and routed several hundred rebel horsemen. They later attacked a large force of infantry and cavalry who were attempting to flee the city. In this attack the rebel cavalry leader the Rani of Jhansi was killed by an Hussar. Four Victoria Crosses were awarded for this action. The Regiment spent the rest of the Mutiny in operations across central India. Between landing and the end of the Mutiny, one Squadron of the 8th marched 3,365 miles and changed horses twice. They were awarded the Battle Honour "Afghanistan 1879-80" for service in that troubled aprt of the Empire, during which time it is estimated that 25% of the Regiment were ill at any one time with malaria. The last Imperial campaign of the 19th century was against the Boers with a force of 600 men including reservists and 500 horses.

Arriving in France from India in 1914, the 8th spent the whole war on the Western Front. They took part in what would be the Regiment's last mounted charge at Villiers-Faucon when B & D Squadrons, supported by a howitzer battery and two armoured cars, attacked a heavily defended German position. B Squadron charged then attacked on foot (the armoured cars were quickly put out of action) and drew then enemy's fire. D Squadron charged and quickly captured the village with few casualties. The Squadron Commander, Major Van der Byl was awarded the DSO for the action. Over the next twenty years, the 8th were posted to Iraq, Germany and England before being sent to Egypt in 1934. The last mounted parade of the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars was held on November 11th 1935 at Abbassia Barracks, Cairo.

Following service in Palestine, the 8th became one of the founders of the 7th Armoured Division - "The Desert Rats". They fought in the Western Desert from the outbreak of war until after El Alamein when it was sent to Cyprus for re-organisation.

It landed in Normandy on D Day + 2 (8th June 1944) and fought to Hamburg as part of 7th Armoured Division once more. Returning to England in 1947, the Regiment would form part of the United Nations force sent to Korea in 1950. Equipped with Centurion tanks, they took part in many actions from Pyongyang to the fighting around Seoul and Kowant-San. It was awarded a Battle Honour for covering the retreat of the Northumberland Fusiliers, the Glosters and the Belgians at the Battle of the Imjin (April 1951). The 8th returned to Luneberg in Germany in 1952 where they were to remain until Amalgamation in 1958.