

## Royal Sussex Regiment Personalities

### **General Charles Lennox, 4th Duke of Richmond**

Born in Scotland in 1764, the son of General George Henry Gordon, Charles inherited the title of Richmond from his uncle the 3rd Duke on the 29th December 1806.

He was Commissioned into the 35th Regiment as a Captain on August 29th 1787, before transferring into the Coldstream Guards, returning to the 35th in 1789. In 1795, he achieved the rank of Colonel, rising to the rank of Lieutenant General in 1805.

His return to the 35th was caused by one of his great passions - duelling. Lennox was accused by the Frederick Duke of York, the second son of King George III of ".. certain expressions unworthy of a gentleman". Lennox could remember no such expressions and demanded a retraction from the Duke of York. When none was forthcoming, Lennox demanded satisfaction and the pair met on Wimbledon Common on May 26th 1789. After Lennox (an excellent shot) merely grazed the Royal head, the Duke refused to return fire declaring the affair at an end. He was, however, forced to leave the Coldstream Guards and as a consequence, returned to the 35th.



*1789 caricature of Lennox from Kay's 'Edinburgh Portraits'*

Within two months he arrived at Edinburgh Castle to join his Regiment - although not before wounding a Mr Theophilus Swift in yet another duel. The Castle was illuminated to celebrate his arrival. He organised a banquet and paid 10 guineas (to which his Officers added a further 10) for his men to enable them to drink his health.

In 1794, Lennox took the Regiment to the West Indies, where they fought the new French Revolutionary government on the islands of Martinique, Guadaloupe and St Lucia. In the Regiment, losses to disease (particularly yellow fever) by far outweighed those to enemy action. The following year, Lennox found himself in trouble again, this time over the appearance of him and his men. Stationed on Gibraltar under the martinet General O'Hara, Lennox and the 35th appeared on parade wearing black mourning crepe in respect for a member of the garrison

who had been killed in a duel with a member of the Royal Navy. O'Hara decided that such a practice was against Garrison Orders and, following "words", Lennox was sent back to England on leave. Returning to England in 1796, the Regiment spent the next three years in various garrisons including Hilsea, Leeds and Chester-le-street. At this time, Lennox's pay was increased (a Lieutenant Colonel of a Line Regiment being paid 15s. (75p) per day.

He served as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1807-13, and it was in this appointment that he worked closely with Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, who served as his Chief Secretary during 1807. Wellington however declined his services during the Peninsular War. Ironically, it was Charlotte, the Duchess, who made the name of Richmond associated with British military history.



*Charles Lennox, Colonel of The Regiment 1803-18*

In Brussels on the evening of June 15th 1815, at the Hotel la Reine de Suede, Charlotte held a ball for the Officers of the Army who would soon face Napoleon, when news came of the movement of the French Army. Captain Bowles of the Coldstream Guards wrote "The Duke of Wellington .... asked the Duke of Richmond if he had a good map. The Duke of Richmond said he had and took him into his dressing room. The Duke of Wellington shut the door, and said, 'Napoleon has humbugged me, he has gained twenty-four hours march on me'.

The Duke of Richmond said, 'What do you intend doing?' he answered, 'I have ordered the army to concentrate at Quatre Bras, but we shall not stop him there, and if so, I must fight him here' (at the same time passing his thumb nail over the position of Waterloo). The Duke of Richmond was to have had the command of the Reserve if it had been formed." The Regiment in fact formed part of the 4th Division of II Corps stationed at Hal - the only Allied troops to defend Brussels should Napoleon have broken through.

Despite Wellington reminding the Duke that, as the father of such a large family, he should not expose himself to the dangers of the battlefield, Lennox observed at least half of the Battle of Waterloo. In May 1818 he was appointed Governor-General of Upper Canada, and it was in this Province the following year that he was bitten on the hand whilst trying to separate a fight between his dog "Blucher" and a tame fox belonging to a soldier. Leaving Kingston for Montreal on August 20th, he died in agony of rabies on the 28th.