

## The Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry



The Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry was a British Army regiment that existed from 1798 to 1992. The regiment sent mounted infantry for service in the Second Boer War as the Imperial Yeomanry, between 1900 and 1902, and also saw action during the First and Second World Wars. Its lineage is maintained by B (Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry) Squadron, the Queen's Own Yeomanry.

### History

#### *Formation and early history*

The unit has its origins in the various troops of light horse raised in the eighteenth century in the county of Lancaster, the earliest of which was the Bolton Light Horse formed in 1798. In June 1828, the Lancashire Corps of Yeomanry Cavalry assembled and by special act, the King, William IV, granted the title Duke of Lancaster's Corps of Yeomanry Cavalry in 1834: the Sovereign, as the Duke of Lancaster, has traditionally continued to serve as Colonel-in-Chief.

#### *Second Boer War*

The Yeomanry was not intended to serve overseas, but due to the string of defeats during Black Week in December 1899, the British government realized they were going to need more troops than just the regular army. A Royal Warrant was issued on 24 December 1899 to allow volunteer forces to serve in the Second Boer War. The Royal Warrant asked standing Yeomanry regiments to provide service companies of approximately 115 men each for the Imperial Yeomanry. With the Lancashire Hussars, the regiment co-sponsored the 32nd (Lancashire) Company for the 2nd Battalion and the 23rd (Duke of Lancaster's Own) Company for the 8th Battalion in 1900. The regiment was based at Lancaster House at Whalley Road in Manchester at this time.

#### *First World War*

In accordance with the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act 1907 (7 Edw. 7, c.9), which brought the Territorial Force into being, the TF was intended to be a home defence force for service during wartime and members could not be compelled to serve outside the country. However, on the outbreak of war on 4 August 1914, many members volunteered for Imperial Service. Therefore, TF units were split in August and September 1914 into 1st Line (liable for overseas service) and 2nd Line (home service for those unable or unwilling to serve overseas) units. Later, a 3rd Line was formed to act as a reserve, providing trained replacements for the 1st and 2nd Line regiments.

#### *1/1st Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry*

Formed in August 1914, in Manchester, the regiment became part of the Welsh Border Mounted Brigade.[4] It was then split up with RHQ and 'C' Squadron joining the 23rd Division in April 1915, after being briefly attached to the 1st Cavalry Division in late April to early May 1916.[4] 'A' Squadron joined the East Lancashire Division; then it moved to the 53rd Division while in Egypt on 29 January 1917, and moved to XXI Corps Cavalry in Palestine in August 1917 [4] 'D' Squadron joined the 14th Division.

On 14 May 1916, all the units except 'A' Squadron reformed in France, where together with 'C' Squadron of the Surrey Yeomanry, they formed III Corps Cavalry.[4] On 24 July 1917 they were dismounted and became G.H.Q troops.

On 24 September 1917, after infantry training, the regiment joined a battalion of the Manchester Regiment, which was redesignated 12th (Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry) Bn, the Manchester Regiment.

### 2/1st Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry

The 2nd Line regiment was formed in September 1914. By July 1915, it was under the command of the 2/1st Western Mounted Brigade (along with the 2/1st Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry and the 2/1st Lancashire Hussars and in March 1916 was at Cupar, Fife. On 31 March 1916, the remaining Mounted Brigades were numbered in a single sequence and the brigade became 21st Mounted Brigade, still at Cupar under Scottish Command.

In July 1916, there was a major reorganization of 2nd Line yeomanry units in the United Kingdom. All but 12 regiments were converted to cyclists and as a consequence the regiment was dismounted and the brigade converted to 14th Cyclist Brigade. Further reorganization in October and November 1916 saw the brigade redesignated as 10th Cyclist Brigade in October 1916, still at Cupar.

By January 1918, 10th Cyclist Brigade had moved to Lincolnshire with the regiment at Alford and Skegness.[9] About May 1918 the brigade moved to Ireland and the regiment was stationed at Tralee, County Kerry. There were no further changes before the end of the war.

### 3/1st Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry

The 3rd Line regiment was formed in 1915 and in the summer it was affiliated to a Reserve Cavalry Regiment at The Curragh. In the summer of 1916 it was affiliated to 10th Reserve Cavalry Regiment, also at The Curragh. It was absorbed by the 6th Reserve Cavalry Regiment at Tidworth in early 1917.

### Between the wars

Post war, a commission was set up to consider the shape of the Territorial Force (Territorial Army from 1 October 1921). The experience of the First World War made it clear that cavalry was surfeit. The commission decided that only the 14 most senior regiments were to be retained as cavalry (though the Lovat Scouts and the Scottish Horse were also to remain mounted as "scouts"). Eight regiments were converted to Armoured Car Companies of the Royal Tank Corps (RTC), one was reduced to a battery in another regiment, one was absorbed into a local infantry battalion, one became a signals regiment and two were disbanded. The remaining 25 regiments were converted to brigades of the Royal Field Artillery between 1920 and 1922. As the 12th most senior regiment in the order of precedence, the regiment was retained as horsed cavalry.

### Second World War

During the Second World War, the regiment was mobilised as horsed cavalry; but, in 1940, it converted into and formed the 77th Medium and 78th Medium Regiments of Royal Artillery. The 78th went on to serve in Palestine, Syria and Italy as part of 6th Army Group Royal Artillery (6 AGRA).

The 77th remained in Northern Ireland until early 1944, when it prepared for the invasion of Europe. Landing in Normandy on D Day plus 6, it was attached to 8 AGRA and fought for the Odon Bridgehead and in the battle of the Falaise Gap. It also provided support for the Arnhem Operation Market Garden in September 1944.

### Post war

In 1947, the Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry was reformed as an armoured regiment. Its role changed to reconnaissance in 1956, when it was equipped with armoured cars, but on 1 April 1967, it combined with the 40th/41st Royal Tank Regiment. Two years later, the combined regiment was reduced to a cadre until 1971, when it was reformed as an infantry unit. On 1 April 1983, it rejoined the Royal Armoured Corps as a home defence reconnaissance unit, being equipped with Land Rovers.

The regiment was disbanded as a result of the Options for Change on 1 November 1992 and its units amalgamated with those of The Queen's Own Mercian Yeomanry to form The Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry. Following the disbanding of the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry in 2014, the regiment's lineage is maintained by B (Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry) Squadron, the Queen's Own Yeomanry.

### Battle honours

The Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry was awarded the following battle honours (honours in italics are emblazoned on the regimental colours)

#### Second Boer War

- South Africa 1900–02

#### First World War

- *Somme 1916 '18*,
- *Albert 1916 '18*
- *Ypres 1917*
- *Passchendaele*
- *St. Quentin*
- *Bapaume 1918*
- *Amiens*
- *Hindenburg Line*
- *Épehy*
- *Cambrai 1918*
- *Selle*
- *Sambre*
- *France and Flanders 1915–18*

**Second World War** The Royal Artillery was present in nearly all battles and would have earned most of the honours awarded to cavalry and infantry regiments. In 1833, William IV awarded the motto Ubique (meaning "everywhere") in place of all battle honours.

Honorary Distinction: Badge of the Royal Regiment of Artillery with year-dates "1944–45" and two scrolls: "North-West Europe" and "Italy"

#### Honorary Colonels

- 1896–1912 Francis Egerton, 3rd Earl of Ellesmere