

A photograph of a group of horses, likely at a show or event, with a dark blue overlay containing text. The horses are in a line, and the text is centered over the middle of the image. The background is a light, sandy or dusty ground.

# FROM RESTORATION TO THE 21ST CENTURY

## THE GUARDS: 1642–2008

This Timeline is a selective, not an exhaustive survey of seven regiments over 365 years. Battle Honours borne on the Colours, Standards and Drums are in bold type as are regiments' names when in a noteworthy context.

The English Civil Wars (also fought in Scotland and Ireland)

1642–51 The **Scots Guards** originated from a 1,500-strong regiment raised by the Marquess of Argyll to act as King Charles I's bodyguard while he campaigned in Ireland, although in the event he never went to that country.

1656 While the future King Charles II was in exile in Bruges in Flanders, a new regiment, the Royal Regiment of Guards, the forerunners of the **Grenadier Guards**, was formed under Lord Wentworth.

1660 **Restoration of the Monarchy.** Charles II greeted by General George Monck at Dover (May). Parliament passes Act disbanding the Cromwellian New Model Army.

1661 Creation of the standing British Army. Charles II signed a Royal Warrant for what has become known as 'the birth certificate of the British Army' on 26 January. Monck's Regiment (1,440 strong) enters royal service as the Lord General's Regiment of Foot Guards soon known as the **Coldstream Guards (14 February)**. **Scots Guards** reformed as a regiment of six companies (1662).

### 1656

1650 Monck's Regiment of Foot formed by Oliver Cromwell, later becoming the **Coldstream Guards** after the town on the Scottish border from which Monck and his troops began the 1660 march to London which led to the Restoration.

1650 Eighty loyal gentlemen led by Lord Gerrard of Brandon formed themselves into the King's Life Guard at the court of the exiled King Charles II in Bruges.

1660 The **Life Guards** founded between March 1660 and April 1661 as four Troops of Horse Guards each of about 160 men. The Troops' soldiers were all 'private gentlemen', some of whom had served in General Monck's Life Guard, and officers were the courtiers who had provided Charles II with a mounted bodyguard during his exile.

1661–2 The **Royal Dragoons (1st Dragoons)**, initially known as the Tangier Horse, raised 100-strong by King Charles II to form part of the garrison at Tangier in Morocco, which had been acquired on his marriage to Catherine of Braganza as part of her dowry. They became known as **The Royals**. **Tangier (1662–80)** later became the first British Army Battle Honour, for **The Royals, First Guards** and the **Coldstream**.



Above: Lieutenant and Lieutenant Colonel Randolph Egerton MP, the King's Troop of Horse Guards, by Jan Wyck, c.1672.

The **Royal Horse Guards** trace their origins to the New Model Army in 1650 but, at the Restoration in 1660, were re-officered with royalists under the Earl of Oxford, and renamed the Royal Regiment of Horse, later the Royal Horse Guards – (the 500 cavalymen popularly known as **The Blues** from the colour of uniform they had worn under the Commonwealth and continued to wear from 1661). Charles II commissioned Colonel John Russell to raise His Majesty's Foot Regiment of Guards (1,200 men) on 23 November. The new unit was amalgamated with Wentworth's in 1665 as the First Regiment of Foot Guards. Irish Regiment of Foot Guards raised in Dublin follow James II into exile in France 1691.



Above: King Charles II being led into London by The Life Guards prior to his coronation on 22 April 1661.

1664 Detachment of Coldstream Guards on sea service at capture of New Amsterdam (New York) from the Dutch.

Detachment of Foot Guards sent to restore order in the colony of Virginia.

1676-8 Three Troops of Horse Grenadier Guards (213 enlisted soldiers serving as mounted infantry) join The Life Guards and The Blues. First, Coldstream and Scots Guards form four foot grenadier companies each, that is soldiers trained to throw grenades.

1686 Scottish Regiment of Foot Guards (13 companies since 1666) brought on to the establishment of the English Army from that of Scotland.

1690 Battle of the Boyne. King William took a force that included The Life Guards, The Blues and The Royals (first two from Flanders) to Ireland to oppose the Jacobite Rebellion there. On 1 July he decisively defeated James II.

## 1695

1666 Soldiers from the King's Life Guard and the Foot Guards earn considerable praise for their assistance in fighting the Great Fire of London and in keeping order.

1685 **Battle of Sedgemoor.** The Life Guards, The Blues, The Royals and all the Foot Guards regiments were involved in suppressing the West Country rebellion by the Duke of Monmouth.

1689-97 **The Nine Years War.** King William III sent a force to Flanders under the command of the Earl of Marlborough. First occasion on which all five existing Guards regiments were on active service together against the French.

1695 Siege of Namur, Low Countries. The Foot Guards provided the assault troops and also gained their second battle honour (not awarded until 1910). Preceded by their grenadier companies, the two Guards brigades advanced across open country against the concentrated fire of the French defenders. On reaching the palisades they thrust their flintlocks through, fired one volley, and then stormed the defences. A Marshal of France was captured. The Guards brigades were commanded by Lord Cutts and afterwards he was appointed a 'Brigadier of the Guards', the first time this honour had been conferred.



Left: King William III and his army at the Siege of Namur, 1695, by Jan Wyck, c.1700. The King and his officers to the right, with columns of British and Dutch troops advancing on the town during the Nine Years War.

Excellence in Action

Right: Brigadier and Lieutenant Richard Gifford, 4th Troop of Horse Guards, c.1727.



Above: Lieutenant-General John Manners, Marquis of Granby, c.1763, by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The Marquis of Granby is shown here in his uniform as Master-General of the Ordnance, leaning on a 13-inch land service mortar.

**War of the Spanish Succession 1702–13.** Victory at **Blenheim (1702)**. The **First Guards** were the only Household troops to gain this Battle Honour. The same applies to **Ramillies (1704)** but the **Coldstream Guards** joined them in 1708 to form a Guards Brigade for Marlborough's two other great victories over the French at **Oudenarde (1708)** and **Malplaquet (1709)**.

1704

1707 **Act of Union.** Scottish elements of the Household troops were brought south.

1739 **War of Jenkins' Ear** (with Spain). 120 corporals and privates of Foot Guards made sergeants in six new Marine regiments.

1750 **Horse Guards building** re-designed by William Kent. It was occupied by the Guards and the Secretary at War and his staff.

## 1702

1702–13 **Defeat in Spain.** A composite Guards Battalion (200 **First Guards** and 400 **Coldstream Guards**) was sent to reinforce **Gibraltar** after it was captured in 1704. The battalion helped repel several attacks. However, in 1707 it was part of the entire British force compelled to surrender at the **Battle of Almanza**. The disaster was repeated in 1710 when another British force at **Brihuega** was besieged and finally surrendered with **The Royal Dragoons** and **1st Battalion of the Scottish Regiment of Foot Guards** among its number.

1712 In February the 2nd Battalion of the **Scottish Regiment of Foot Guards** was ordered from **Edinburgh** to **London**. The Regiment did not do duty in its native land again until 1911. It was officially given the title of **Third Regiment of Foot Guards**.

1742–8 **War of the Austrian Succession.** When Britain sent an expeditionary force to the Continent in 1742 it included a **Household Cavalry Brigade**, created for the first time, with **The Life Guards**, **The Blues**, and **The Royals**, but also a **Guards Brigade** (1st Battalions of all three Regiments of Foot Guards). The **Battle of Dettingen** (27 June 1743) was the last occasion on which a King of England, King George II, personally led his army into action. **The Household Cavalry Brigade** (Earl of Crawford) made several charges against the French Foot Guards and finally drove the enemy back against the river. During one charge by **The Life Guards**, Lord Crawford's trumpeter urged his comrades on with the notes of *Britons Strike Home*. Life Guards trumpeters still play a fanfare version today. The King was in the thick of the fighting and escorted by the **Gold Stick** and 36 men from **The Life Guards**. Two years later the **Foot Guards Brigade** won glory but not victory against their French equivalents at **Fontenoy** in Flanders.

1756–63 **The Seven Years War.** **The Blues** formed part of a Cavalry Brigade under Major General the Marquis of Granby, who had just become their Colonel. They were the only Guards present at the **Battle of Minden** on 1 August 1759, when six British line infantry battalions attacked and drove back 40 French battalions, supported by 60 squadrons of cavalry. **The Blues** and **The Royals** distinguished themselves at the **Battle of Warburg** on 31 July 1760. Granby lost his hat and wig during one charge and, because he was hatless and wigless when he later saluted Prince Ferdinand, **The Blues** have retained the custom of saluting their officers, even when bare headed, a custom unique in the Army today. Foot Guards battalions under Major Julius Caesar later campaigned in Germany in 1761–3.

**The American War of Independence.**

The force that set sail for America in 1776 included a composite **Guards Brigade** of 1,100 drawn from all three regiments. Almost immediately they helped capture New York. The **Guards Brigade** fought throughout the campaign, and was involved in most of the engagements of 1776–7, followed by two years of garrison duty in New York, before it was sent south to join Lieutenant General Lord Cornwallis in the Carolinas. At the Battle of Guildford Court House (15 March 1781) his tiny army, including 482 Guards, beat twice their number of Americans, but their 600-mile march ended in surrender at Yorktown, the last major battle of the War.

1776–83

**French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars 1793–1815**

In 1793 the **Foot Guards** formed six 'light [infantry] companies' from the 2nd Battalion in each Regiment. They wore a form of shako with a green plume, and became the **Left Flank** companies, while the grenadier company continued to hold the right flank. The **Foot Guards** were hurriedly formed into a **Guards Brigade** (1st Battalion of each regiment, with a fourth, or **Flank Battalion** formed from the grenadier and later the light companies). These 2,500 men sailed for Holland in February 1793 and

1793–1800

1788 The **Four Horse Guards Troops** and the **Horse Grenadiers** reformed as the **1st Life Guards** and **2nd Life Guards**, each of 320 men.

were the first British troops to engage the armies of Revolutionary France on the Continent. At **Lincelles** (18 August) near Lille these first three battalions totalling 1,100 under Major General Gerard Lake (**First Guards**) stormed a hilltop village incurring 181 casualties, taking it from 5,000 French who lost 670 men and their 12 guns. **The Blues** and **The Royals** excelled in cavalry charges at **Beaumont** and **Willems** the following spring but the allied Flanders campaign ended in winter retreat and failure (May 1795) as did a brief **First Guards** return to Holland in late 1799.

1800

1780 **The Gordon Riots.** After agitation against a pro-Catholic Bill caused riots in London by a crowd of up to 50,000 people, a **Guards Brigade** of 4 battalions camped in St James's Park. Guards were mounted on key points, while detachments patrolled the streets. The **Life Guards** guarded Parliament throughout and had to charge the crowd in Parliament Square. The week-long June riots were eventually put down once troops were given permission to open fire, and 285 rioters were killed. From then on the **Foot Guards** were called upon to provide a nightly picquet to guard the Bank of England, a duty which continued until 1973.

1793 Present officers' mess built at St James's Palace for the officers of the Household troops on guard duty there and at Horse Guards. Hyde Park Barracks built for whichever regiment of **The Life Guards** was responsible for carrying out policing duties in London.



Right: 'The return of the Grenadier to his wife and family', c.1798, depicting a Coldstream Guardsman of the grenadier company.



**The Egypt Campaign.** Bonaparte had conquered Egypt in 1798 and from June 1800 Lieutenant General Sir Ralph Abercromby assembled 16,000 troops to expel the French. One of his five brigades was formed by the Guards under command of the one-armed Major General Lord Ludlow (1st Battalion Coldstream Guards and 3rd Battalion Scots Guards). On 8 March 1801 they made a textbook and much rehearsed assault landing at Aboukir Bay in their boats under fire. The Guards repelled a French cavalry charge in the surf. On 21 March the army defeated a fierce French night attack at the Battle of Alexandria, Third Guards taking 186 casualties. After a siege, Alexandria fell on 2 September, with the surrender of 10,500 French veterans. In December Ludlow's Guards Brigade sailed for home after a triumphant campaign.

1801



Above: *The Battle of Alexandria, 21 March 1801. Oil on canvas after Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg.*

2nd Guards Brigade took part in a daring and highly successful expedition. **Copenhagen** was captured and the Danish fleet removed just ahead of Napoleon, who had had a similar idea.

1807



Above: *Lieutenant General Sir John Moore, KB dressed in Lieutenant General's coatee.*

## 1801

1804 New cavalry barracks for 496 soldiers were completed at Windsor and occupied by **The Blues** who were much favoured by King George III. He spent most of his time at Windsor Castle, and had his own Troop, frequently turning up for parades wearing the uniform of a Captain in the Regiment. He formed the Regiment's first Band, and personally presented them with a pair of solid silver kettle-drums still used today.

1808-14 **The Peninsular War.** As Lieutenant General Sir John Moore watched the 15,000 survivors of his ragged and dispirited army plod down the slope towards **Corunna** on 11 January 1809 he made comments since revered by the Guards (recorded by the Army historian Sir John Fortescue): 'A brigade caught the General's eye at a distance, for they were marching like soldiers. "Those must be the Guards," he said, and presently the two battalions of the **First Guards**, each of them still 800 strong, strode by in column of sections, with drums beating, the drum major twirling his staff at their head and the men keeping step as if in their own barrack yard ... The senior regiment of the British infantry had set an example to the whole army.'

**The Battle of Talavera, 28 July 1809.** The 2nd Guards Brigade, as part of 1st Division, was in the British centre, and after a severe artillery bombardment, they were attacked by at least 15,000 French infantry.

The British held their fire until the enemy were only 50 yards away, and then halted them with a volley. Before the French could recover, the whole division charged, and drove them back. The two Guards battalions each lost some 300 men of about 1,000. It became a **Battle Honour** for both the **Coldstream** and the **Third Guards**, and a special medal was struck for issue to 'meritorious officers'.

At **Barrosa**, 5 March 1811, outside Cadiz the 2nd Battalions of each Foot Guards Regiment, after 15 hours' marching, attacked uphill against fresh infantry and cavalry twice their number and drove them from a strong position. It was costly with the Guards losing one man in three in a battle that only lasted for an hour and a half. The sortie commander Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Graham later received a letter from the NCOs and private soldiers thanking him for 'the noble manner in which you prepared us... which made us forget the fatigues of 18 hours under arms

when the word was given for battle'. Barrosa was a worthy **Battle Honour** for which a gold medal was awarded.

By 1812 five Foot Guards Battalions were serving in the Peninsula and Wellington formed them into two Guards Brigades. A Household Brigade of Cavalry, consisting of both **The Life Guards** and **The Blues**, joined them, commanded by Colonel Sir Robert Hill of **The Blues**. The brigade came under the cavalry commander in Spain, Lieutenant General Sir Stapleton Cotton, later Lord Combermere, the name eventually given to the **Household Cavalry Barracks** at Windsor. It was the first time that Wellington found the **Household Cavalry** under his command, although **The Royals** had already charged to effect for him at **Fuentes D'Onor** (5 May 1811).



Above: *The Sortie from Bayonne. Coloured aquatint by T. Sutherland after W. Heath, 1815.*

1809 The 1st Guards Brigade (2,860 strong) was part of a big expedition to try and capture Antwerp but the attack stalled as 'Walcheren' miasmatic swamp fever decimated the force and, from September, the expedition was evacuated home

**Waterloo Campaign.** Wellington's army contained a **Household Cavalry Brigade** (Major General Lord Edward Somerset), part of the allied cavalry under Lieutenant General Lord Uxbridge, which consisted of **1st Life Guards, 2nd Life Guards, Royal Horse Guards (The Blues)** and 1st King's Dragoon Guards. **The Royals** were also present, in the Union Brigade. The **Foot Guards** provided 1st and 2nd Guards Brigades as the 4,000-strong 1st Division commanded by Major General Sir George Cooke (First Guards), the first such all-Guards infantry division. The action is covered later in the book

**The Blues** were elevated to the status of **Household Cavalry** by King George IV.

1820 **Cato Street Conspiracy.** A platoon from 2nd Battalion **Coldstream Guards** captured nine out of the ten conspirators planning to assassinate the Cabinet at dinner in 44 Grosvenor Square. The ten conspirators were then taken to the Tower of London by **The Life Guards**, the last occasion on which the **Household Cavalry** were to carry out this duty.

## 1828

After the French army was defeated at Vittoria, it retreated across the mountains into France. Wellington could not pursue until he had captured the coastal fortress of San Sebastian, which stood in his way. The siege was successful but took from July to September 1813 and resulted in heavy casualties, particularly in the Guards Battalions, whose volunteer assault party of 200 suffered no fewer than 160 casualties. San Sebastian finally stormed, Wellington thrust into France and both 1st and 2nd Guards Brigades joined in a series of bold river-crossing operations, over the Bidassoa, the Nivelle, the Nive, and the Adour; 2nd Guards Brigade distinguished itself on this last complex pontoon-bridge operation when six companies of Third Guards and two of Coldstream Guards crossed the river before dark, and held a precarious bridgehead all night, supported by Congreve rocket fire.

1813-4 **Antwerp.** A composite 3rd Guards Brigade from all three Regiments joined another attempted expedition against Antwerp. Again disaster struck due to an unsuccessful night storming attempt (8/9 March) on the fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom, which ended in the death or capture of two thirds of the 1,000 Guardsmen involved.

Napoleon abdicated for the first time (5 April).

The French commander of Bayonne refused to believe news of Napoleon's abdication and made a last, desperate sortie against the British, with 6,000 men at 3 am on 14 April. He was met mainly by 1st and 2nd Guards Brigades and after five hours fierce, confused fighting in the dark, the French were repulsed. The last action of the war had been fought, each side losing over 800 men. The Guards suffered 508 casualties. Afterwards, they set up their own military cemetery at Bayonne, which still exists today.

1816-54 **The Long Peace.** For the Foot Guards this continued until the Crimea and for the **Household Cavalry** it lasted 67 years.



1826-8 1st Battalions **Grenadier** and **Scots Guards** served in a 5,000-strong expedition to Portugal to deter a feared Spanish invasion and support constitutional rule. King William IV renamed Third Guards the **Scots Fusilier Guards**.

Left: *Waterloo Medal 1815 awarded to Thomas Bird, 1st (or Royal) Dragoons.*

1834 Wellington Barracks completed. Home Secretary commended the Guards for fire-fighting efforts at the Houses of Parliament.

**Crimean War.** Queen Victoria forbade her Household Cavalry to leave the country but a Guards Brigade set sail in March 1854. Battle of the Alma (20 September 1854). The Colour Party of the Scots Fusilier Guards was almost surrounded but stood firm until the battalion could rally round it. Afterwards the Queen's Colour was found to have 12 bullet holes.

The Royals took part in the successful Heavy Cavalry Brigade charge at Balaklava.

1854-6 At the Battle of Inkerman the Russians heavily attacked positions held by 1st Guards Brigade. The succession of attacks was repulsed but the Guards lost 600 All Ranks out of 1,300. It was the last time any Regimental and Queen's Colours of the Guards were taken into battle.

1862-5 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards and 2nd Battalion Scots Fusilier Guards sent to Canada to protect the frontier during the American Civil War. They saw no fighting.

1865-70 New barracks were completed at Chelsea (sold in 2007) and at Shornecliffe in Kent. Both the Cavalry and Infantry barracks at Windsor were rebuilt, and the Foot Guards quarters at St John's Wood, Portman Street, and in Dublin were given up.



Above: The Battle of Inkerman, 5 November 1854.

## 1834

1838-42 2nd Battalions Grenadier and Coldstream Guards served in Canada helping quell a French-speaking revolt.

1856 Appointment authorized of a Major General commanding the Brigade of Guards (all Regiments of Foot Guards). He set up his headquarters in the Horse Guards building.

The Household Brigade Cricket Club was given permission to adopt the Royal racing colours of blue, red, blue for its tie. It is now the 'Brigade' tie, worn by all ranks, and the colours have been adopted as those of the Household Division.

1862 An official Guards journal, today called *The Guards Magazine*, was started.

1870 The Major General became responsible for the Home District (now London District), as well as commanding the Brigade of Guards.



Above: A group of survivors of the cavalry charge at Balaklava on 25 October 1854, taken on the 33rd Anniversary Dinner in 1887.





1877 Training organisation expanded by moving the Guards Depot from Warley in Essex to Caterham in Surrey where it was to remain until 1960.

**Egyptian War.** Queen Victoria was persuaded to permit a composite Household Cavalry regiment made up of three squadrons, one from each regiment (1st and 2nd Life Guards and Royal Horse Guards) to deploy to Egypt. Its 470 men made the famous moonlight charge at Kassassin. The Guards Brigade was commanded by the Duke of Connaught, son of Queen Victoria. Their first action was the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir where the rebel Egyptian Army was routed.

1882 The Guards took on a site at Pirbright near Woking in Surrey as a training and musketry area.

**First Sudan War** (attempted Relief of Khartoum). All three regiments of Household Cavalry and The Royals contributed 150 soldiers to the Heavy Camel Regiment (Colonel the Honourable Reginald Talbot, 1st Life Guards). The Foot Guards served in the 400-strong Guards and Royal Marines Camel Regiment (Colonel the Honourable Evelyn Boscawen, Coldstream Guards). The Camel Regiments had all now abandoned scarlet and blue for a khaki uniform, although Queen Victoria was unenthusiastic about her troops wearing 'a sort of *café-au-lait* shade'. On 28 January 1885 the desert expedition came within sight of Khartoum, only to learn that it had fallen two days before and General Gordon was dead.

1898 **The Battle of Omdurman.** Kitchener defeated Mahdi outside Khartoum. 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards take part.

## 1899

1880 Hyde Park Barracks were rebuilt and the first occupants were The Blues, who gave an Opening Ball, attended by the Prince and Princess of Wales, which cost every officer £70.

Below: *The Moonlight Charge at Kassassin by the Household Cavalry, 28 August 1882.*



1885 **Suakin.** Another Guards Brigade defeated a Mahdist army near the Red Sea. A New South Wales battalion was attached to the Brigade, the first time that Australian troops had fought as part of the British Army outside their own country.

1899-1902 **Second Boer or South African War.** When the small British garrisons in Kimberley, Mafeking and Ladysmith were besieged by the Boers, reinforcements were hurried out including two Guards formations. A Household Cavalry Composite Regiment joined 2nd Cavalry Division, while 1st Guards Brigade was also mobilised, and joined 1st Division commanded by Lord Methuen (Scots Guards). Battles of Belmont and Modder River. The Household Cavalry Composite Regiment was part of the force that relieved Kimberley. When the Boers moved on to their guerrilla warfare phase, more troops were sent out including two Guards battalions as part of 16th Brigade. Overall, seven Guards units served in the war. The Household Cavalry returned home in November 1900 and the Foot Guards formed two Guards Mounted Infantry Companies.

The Coldstream and Scots Guards were both directed to raise a 3rd Battalion.

Excellence in Action

Right: 1st Life Guards, forming a Sovereign's Escort, 1905.



1900 The Irish Guards formed 1 April by order of Queen Victoria 'to commemorate the bravery shown by the Irish Regiments during the operations in South Africa'.

1902 The Irish Guards acquired a Regimental mascot, the only one officially approved within the Household Division. He was an Irish wolfhound, given the name Brian Boru, after the famous warrior King of Ireland, who died in 1014.

1906 Household Cavalry Privates were renamed Troopers. When campaign medals were being issued for the South African War, King Edward VII noticed, when distributing them to the Household Cavalry that those for the men were inscribed with the rank of Private. This rank had held some significance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when members of The Life Guards were in fact 'Private Gentlemen' and were addressed as Mr. The rank was now applied throughout the Army, and the King considered that his personal troops should again have a distinctive title. He therefore decreed that men of the Household Cavalry should be called 'Troopers'.

1914 **First World War.** All the Guards elements in France and Flanders were involved in the opening British Expeditionary Force (BEF) battles of manoeuvre (**Retreat from Mons, the Marne and Aisne**). Trench warfare at the First Battle of Ypres, north-west Belgium prevented a German breakthrough to the Channel Ports, but by 12 November the 1st and 4th Guards Brigades were reduced to about 2,470 All Ranks out of about 8,500 All Ranks in August. The regiments of Household Cavalry initially fought as a 350-strong Composite Regiment but, with the expansion of the army, were later to field two complete cavalry regiments. At various times they acted as cavalry, infantry, cyclists, artillerymen and machine gunners.

1914 The Royals retained their horses from 1914-8 and fought at Ypres, Loos, Hohenzollern Redoubt and against the Hindenburg Line.

1900

1901 Queen Alexandra sent a personal gift of Shamrock to the Irish Guards, a tradition maintained ever since.

1905-6 When the new Liberal government came to power, its army cuts demanded disbandment of two Guards battalions; 3rd Battalion Scots Guards was disbanded the next year but 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards was saved at the last moment by a call for the battalion as reinforcements in Egypt and survived for another 50 years.

1913 While watching summer manoeuvres, King George V noticed that the Household Cavalry, wearing khaki for the first time in peacetime, had no badges for their new khaki caps. He offered his own Royal Cypher as the design, which was adopted.

1915 Formation of the Welsh Guards on 26 February by order of King George V. First King's Guard mounted 1 March. Formation of the Guards Division on 18 April. Created by Lord Kitchener in great secrecy, the Guards Division (1st, 2nd and 3rd Guards Brigades, each of four battalions of Foot Guards together with the usual Divisional Troops including a Pioneer Battalion, formed from 4th Battalion Coldstream Guards, and a Cyclist Company, manned by the Household Cavalry who also provided a Divisional Cavalry Squadron). The divisional sign and then adopted for the whole formation was the 'Eye'.

**Battle of Loos (September-October).** A grim battle that resulted in the Welsh Guards taking Hill 70 but casualties were so heavy that the whole division was then withdrawn.



Left: The Coldstream Guards Changing the Guard at St James's, c.1905.

**The Battle of the Somme  
(July–November)**

**Ginchy-Lesboeuifs.** The Guards Division was not committed until mid-September when ten tanks were allotted to it. For the only time in their history three **Coldstream Guards** battalions advanced together in line. Behind them, in the second wave, were both battalions of **Irish Guards**, also in action together for the first time. Steadily, the leading troops pressed forward but the divisions on both their flanks failed to keep pace. The tanks had not arrived on time and did little to help. Eventually the third objective was captured but the survivors were now totally

1916

unsupported, no reinforcements were available and they were forced to pull back and dig in. The cost to the division was 4,964 casualties in eight days, and the Prince of Wales's Company of the **Welsh Guards** was led back by a Lance Corporal.

Also in September 1916 the **Household Cavalry** formed an infantry battalion called the **Household Battalion** (Lieutenant Colonel Wyndham Portal of 1st Life Guards) which suffered 438 fatalities until disbanded in February 1918.

On 21 March 1918 the Germans launched what Churchill described as 'without exception the greatest onslaught in the history of the world'. On a front of 54 miles, 64 German divisions advanced against 32 British divisions. The Allies were forced to withdraw over a wide front, and on 11 April Haig issued his dramatic Order of the Day: 'To all ranks of the British Army in France. With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight to the end.' At this crucial moment, the newly formed 1,800-strong **4th Guards Brigade** dug in to hold positions at the village of Vieux Berquin, near **Hazebrouck** road/railway junction, at all costs, for at that moment it was almost the only fighting formation between the Germans and the Channel coast. For two days, the Guards held on against overwhelming odds. It was the end of the brigade (1,283 casualties) but the Germans did not break through.

1918

Between March and May 1918 both Regiments of **Life Guards** gave up their horses and reformed as 1st and 2nd **Guards Machine Gun Battalions**. The **Blues** formed the 3rd **Guards Machine Gun Battalion**, reverting to their former identities and roles shortly after the Armistice.

**Hindenburg Line.** On 27 September 1918 the **Guards Division** had its final challenge, when it was ordered, as part of the BEF attack on the Hindenburg Line, to cross the Canal du Nord. All three brigades took part, and every objective was gained with 728 prisoners, 18 guns, 12 mortars and 143 machine guns for the loss of just over 1,000 casualties. The last success was the capture of Mauberge on 9 November and then at 1100 hours on 11 November, came the Armistice.

The private soldiers of the Brigade of Guards were given the title of 'Guardsmen' for their war service by the King on 22 November.

1919

**1917 Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) (July–October).** The **Guards Division** took part in the successful initial attack on 31 July 1917 and advanced two and half miles on a front of some 1,500 yards, capturing 632 German prisoners, a major achievement. However, the rain fell for the next four days and rendered the whole battlefield impassable. During this offensive the **Guards Division** advanced 6,000 yards capturing 1,180 Germans (excluding wounded able to walk) as well as 4 guns, 31 machine guns and 9 mortars but at a cost of 303 officers and 7,898 other ranks.

**Battle of Cambrai** (November–December) 2nd **Guards Brigade** was given six hours notice to capture Bournon Wood over unfamiliar ground against unknown enemy defences. Unknown to the planners the Germans had been preparing their own attack for the same day (27

November) and had ample reserves to hand. The 2nd **Guards Brigade** gained its objectives and fighting continued all day against seven German battalions, with positions being won and lost several times over. By day's end, 3rd **Battalion Grenadier Guards** and 1st **Battalion Coldstream Guards** had lost every officer and most non-commissioned officers, while 2nd **Battalion Irish Guards** had lost 320 All Ranks out of 400. Three days later the Germans launched a powerful counter-offensive but the **Guards Division**, resting after the earlier fighting, happened to be in their path. It had no artillery support, but 1st **Guards Brigade** checked the three-mile German advance, recapturing the village of Gouzeaucourt; the tank-assisted 3rd **Guards Brigade** regained **Quentin Ridge** with about 100 British guns lost earlier. Four hundred German prisoners were also taken.

**1919 Victory March of the Household Cavalry and the Guards Division** (22,000 strong) through City of London to Buckingham Palace on 22 March.

The **Irish Guards** sailed for Constantinople to join the international force stationed there to keep the Dardanelles open. When the situation became more tense 2nd Battalion **Grenadier Guards** and 3rd Battalion **Coldstream Guards** went out to reinforce them and formed 1st Guards Brigade but returned home in October 1923 after the new Turkish Republic was recognised.

1922-3 The two regiments of Life Guards were amalgamated to form **The Life Guards** (1st & 2nd) simplified to **The Life Guards** (1928).



Above: Grenadiers climbing a steep path to their forward positions in Italy.

1927-9 2nd Battalions **Coldstream Guards** and **Scots Guards** sent to Shanghai and Hong Kong to protect British interests during the Chinese Civil War.

1939-45 **Second World War.** The **Life Guards** and the **Royal Horse Guards** were reformed into 1st and 2nd **Household Cavalry Regiments** (1 HCR and 2 HCR).

**Home Front.** A detachment of **Household Cavalry** armoured cars was detailed to escort King George VI when he travelled in potentially dangerous areas.

The **Coldstream Guards** Holding Battalion provided a company to guard the Prime Minister at his country base at Chequers, Buckinghamshire, from September 1940 to July 1943 and the Coats Mission, which protected the Royal Family until January 1943. The **Grenadier Guards** provided the Windsor Castle Defence Company.

## 1926

1926 **Guards Battalions** played a key role in keeping food supplies moving in London during the General Strike.

1937-8 3rd Battalion **Coldstream Guards** and 1st Battalion **Irish Guards** sent from Egypt to Palestine to keep the peace between the Arabs and the Jews.

**The British Expeditionary Force (BEF)** deployed again to France from September 1939, under General Lord Gort VC (**Grenadier Guards**), including 1st and 7th **Guards Brigades**.

**24th Guards Brigade** (including 1st Battalions **Scots Guards** and **Irish Guards**) sent to Norway in April 1940.

On 21 May 1940 the **20th Guards Brigade** was ordered to move to France the same afternoon and within 36 hours was facing the German 2nd Panzer Division on the outskirts of **Boulogne** where 2nd Battalions of the **Irish** and **Welsh Guards** made a determined stand.

The BEF was evacuated at **Dunkirk**, the **Guards** played a crucial role in holding the perimeter, 2nd Battalion **Coldstream Guards** providing the final rearguard.

**North Africa 1940-3.** The 3rd Battalion **Coldstream Guards** were the only **Guards** Regiment involved when 'Wavell's Thirty Thousand' captured 133,000 Italian prisoners in the Western Desert. With the motorised 2nd Battalion **Scots Guards** the **Coldstreamers** formed what became 201st **Guards Brigade** fighting Rommel's Afrika Korps from 'Knightsbridge Box' and Rigel Ridge for 17 days in May-June 1942.

1 HCR was part of a truck-based force that relieved Habbaniya in Iraq, occupied **Baghdad** and then captured the **Palmyra** oasis just ahead of the Vichy French. In September 1941, having crossed the desert for the third time, the regiment occupied **Tehran**, just ahead of Britain's new allies, the Russians. As an armoured car regiment, 1 HCR fought the **Battle of El Alamein** (October-November 1942) under General Montgomery, as did **The Royals**.



Above: Winston Churchill inspecting Guard of Honour, Scots Guards, Potsdam Conference, 1945.

G (Foot Guards) Patrol of the Long Range Desert Group set up in December 1940 initially with 40 volunteers in 12 vehicles.

The Special Air Service (SAS) was formed in July 1941 in Egypt by the Scots Guards officer Second Lieutenant David Stirling with an initial 66 all ranks, including officers and NCOs from the Foot Guards who like Stirling had earlier volunteered for the Commandos. **Guards Armoured Division** formed in May 1941. When first assembled it consisted of 2 HCR (Reconnaissance Regiment), 5th Guards Armoured Brigade and 6th Guards Armoured Brigade (which left the division in October 1942). The divisional sign was a modified version of the 'Eye' used by the Guards Division in 1915–9. The new version was designed by the artist Rex Whistler, then serving in 2nd Battalion Welsh Guards.

**Longstop Hill.** On 22 December 1942, 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards were involved in an intense battle for three days to capture Longstop, in order to open the way for the British 6th Armoured Division to break out and capture Tunis.

By March 1943, there were nine Guards Battalions in three Guards Brigades (1st, 24th and 201st) fighting in North Africa. The Deputy Allied Supreme Commander was General Sir Harold Alexander (Irish Guards) and under him, Lieutenant General Oliver Leese (Coldstream Guards).

The Irish Guards Group captured the start line for Operation MARKET GARDEN and led the advance; the Grenadier Group took the Nijmegen Bridge (20 September). The Division fought on the German border and in Namur in December 1944; in the Reichswald battles in February 1945, and in the breakout across the Rhine from March, ending the campaign near Cuxhaven. 6th Guards Tank Brigade (4th Grenadiers, 4th Coldstream and 3rd Scots (Churchill tanks) seized the hill at Caumont (30 July) and fought alongside the Division in the Bocage; the Brigade fought on the Maas in October–November 1944, in the Reichswald, before advancing on Münster (March–April 1945) and ending the war near Kiel, on the Baltic.

Surrender of the southernmost Italian island of Lampedusa taken by a 95-man company of 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards.

## 1961

**Monte Camino, 7–14 November 1943.** 6th Battalion Grenadier Guards and F Company Scots Guards were joined by the Coldstream Guards took over for the next three days, and on the 14th, the mountain was evacuated completely. It was finally captured three weeks later as a result of a Corps attack including 201st Guards Brigade.

**Italy 1943–5.** 201st Guards Brigade landed at Salerno near Naples on 9 September amid heavy fighting, the first Guards units to set foot on mainland Europe since Dunkirk.

The Guards Armoured Division, comprising 2nd (Armoured) Grenadiers, 1st Coldstream and 2nd Irish Guards (Sherman tanks); 2nd Welsh Guards (armoured reconnaissance); 1st Grenadiers, 5th Coldstream, X Company Scots, and 1st Welsh Guards (infantry) landed in Normandy in June 1944. They fought South of Caen (Operation GOODWOOD) and in the Bocage towards Vire (July–August) before leading the breakout across the Seine in September, in Regimental Groupings. 2nd Welsh Guards won the race to Brussels (3 September).

**Medjez Plain battle honour** including Djebel Bou Aoukaz 27–8 April 1943 or 'The Bou'. 24th Guards Brigade (5th Battalion Grenadier Guards, 1st Battalion Irish Guards and 1st Battalion Scots Guards).

All three Guards Brigades were present when both Tunis and Bizerta were captured and all Axis forces in North Africa surrendered by 16 May.

**1945–65 Farewell to Empire.** 1st Guards Brigade served in Palestine (1945–8); 2nd Guards Brigade in Malaya (1948–51, the Emergency continued to 1960); and the Household Cavalry and Guards Battalions served variously in Cyprus 1955–9; Suez 1956; Kenya 1959–62; Bahrain and Kuwait 1961; 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards in British Southern Cameroons Southern Cameroon 1961; British Guiana 1962 and Mauritius 1965.

Right: Members of the 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders supported by tanks of the Guards Brigade during the capture of Kleve, 11 Feb 1945.







*Left: A bearer party of the Queen's Company 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards carry the union jack-draped coffin of Sir Winston Churchill up the steps of St Paul's Cathedral.*

**1964-7** **Insurgency in Aden.** 1st and 2nd Battalions Coldstream Guards and then 1st Battalions Irish and Welsh Guards served in the Radfan and Aden State, South Arabia.

The name Household Brigade changed to the Household Division.

**1967** B Squadron of The Life Guards and the Guards Parachute Company helped quell race riots in Hong Kong.

**1982** **The Falklands War.** Both the 2nd Battalion of the Scots Guards and the 1st Battalion of the Welsh Guards – as well as an armoured recon troop and The Blues and Royals – were committed and served in 5th Infantry Brigade.

The Life Guards and The Blues and Royals form a 'union' consisting of the Household Cavalry Regiment and Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment.

Three Foot Guards 2nd Battalions disbanded.

**1993-5** 1st Bn Coldstream Guards served in Bosnia in UNPROFOR.

NATO intervention in Bosnia. Household Cavalry Regiment and 1st Bn Grenadier Guards deploy.

## 1964

**1965** Sir Winston Churchill's Funeral (2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards bearer party). G Squadron of the Special Air Service created, consisting of officers and Guardsmen of the Household Brigade.

**1969** **Northern Ireland Troubles** began: a Squadron of The Life Guards, together with 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards were among the first reinforcements. Numerous tours of duty followed.

**1969** The Royal Horse Guards (The Blues) and the Royal Dragoons (1st Dragoons) amalgamated to create The Blues and Royals on 29 March.

**1990-1** **The Gulf War.** The Life Guards deployed to the Gulf on Operation GRANBY. One Challenger tank squadron took part in the 100-hour ground assault into Iraq.

Because of the confused build-up to the War by February 1991 some 500 Grenadiers were dispersed among 14 different units. 1st Battalions Coldstream and Scots Guards, the Scots Guards Band and other Guardsmen served in Op Granby.

**1997** Diana, Princess of Wales's funeral (Welsh Guards bearer party).

*Right: Pristina, 13 June 1999. After months of conflict, ethnic Albanians slowly emerge to greet Four Company, Irish Guards.*





Left: 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards in the First Gulf War, February 1991.

**1999** - **Kosovo.** The Irish Guards Battle Group (including D Squadron Household Cavalry Regiment) were the first NATO troops to reach the capital, Pristina, where they were rapturously welcomed.

**2002** - Irish Guardsmen form the bearer party for Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's funeral.

**2004** - The Welsh Guards and 1st Battalion Scots Guards deployed to Basra in Iraq (Al Amarah).

**2006** - Welsh Guards operational tour to Bosnia to disarm the local population.

The Coldstream Guards deployed to Iraq on Operation TELIC 6 and lost two soldiers to roadside bombs.

## 2008

**2001** - **War in Afghanistan**  
D Sqn Household Cavalry with 3 Para June–October.

Below: Household Cavalry, Afghanistan, troop protection for bridge building, early in the morning.

**2003** - **Invasion and occupation of Iraq** (Operation TELIC). A troop from D Squadron Household Cavalry Regiment was involved in a 'friendly fire' incident from American aircraft. Trooper Christopher Finney RHG/D was awarded the George Cross for his actions. Irish Guards Battle Group in Operation TELIC 1 lost two soldiers killed in action and won three MCs during the British capture of Basra 6–7 April.

**2005** - 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards operational tour in Bosnia included disarming the civilian population to counter organised crime. It then became part of EUFOR, the first British regiment to serve under the European banner.

**2007** - D Squadron Household Cavalry Regiment posted to Helmand Province, Afghanistan with their Scimitar tracked vehicles.

The 1st Bn Grenadier Guards posted to Helmand Province in Afghanistan.

1st Bn Coldstream Guards deployed to Helmand Province, with a company of 1st Bn Scots Guards, who also had companies deployed in Iraq and the Falkland Islands.

The 1st Bn Irish Guards and B Squadron Household Cavalry Regiment (a brigade reconnaissance force) posted to Basra in Iraq on Operation TELIC 10.

The 1st Bn Welsh Guards ended the British military presence in Bosnia on 24 March.

The Queen opened the new Household Cavalry Museum in June on Horse Guards marked by a historical pageant.



## THE CRIMEAN WAR, SOUTH RUSSIA 1854–6

Colonel Oliver Lindsay

By 1 March 1854 three Guards Battalions, thirsting for military glory and filled with excitement, had left England en route for the Crimea to fight the Russians. The war arose from a dispute between Russia and Turkey. Neither the British nor French wanted the ambitious Tsar Nicholas I to gain a southern capital or new harbours in the Black Sea at the expense of the declining Ottoman Turkish Empire. 'A sense of uneasiness prevailed' wrote Captain (later General Sir George) Higginson, (Adjutant, 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards). 'To meet the dangers of war, there was no improvement in our weapons, no increase of artillery, no accumulation of stores. Our fighting force was practically incapable of undertaking any service out of Great Britain beyond the maintenance of the Indian reliefs and Colonial garrisons.' Higginson might have added that there was virtually no land transport, no reserves nor any adequate medical service.

On the other hand, 9,000 men of all arms had started training together at Chobham, Surrey – the first gathering of troops since the peace of 1815. All those chosen for the Crimea had at least seven years service and were 'worthy representatives in physique and bearing'. The outcome would depend, as usual, on the fighting quality of the British troops.

On 20 September the first of the momentous Crimean battles took place on the heights beyond the River Alma to the north of the Anglo-French objective – the Russian naval base at Sevastopol. The Guards Brigade consisted of 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards and 1st Battalions Coldstream and Scots Fusilier Guards. Each battalion had been reduced by sickness, largely cholera, from 1,000 to about 800 men. The Guards and the kilted Highland Brigade were on the left rear, commanded by the inexperienced Duke of Cambridge, Queen Victoria's cousin. To their front, the Light [Infantry] Division with great gallantry reached the heights but suffered heavily from dug-in Russian cannon before being forced back by immense Russian columns.

Having crossed the River Alma, the three Guards Commanding Officers ordered their leading files to halt to enable the men at the rear to close up. Such was the crisis, however, that the Scots Fusilier Guards were ordered to advance upon the Russians' Great Redoubt immediately to support the hard-pressed Light Division. 'The Battalion was tremendously shaken by the Russian fire, especially from grape shot and canister which came in a regular hurricane,' wrote Lieutenant Robert Lindsay. 'The left wing suffered severely. The Russians, seeing the prospect of victory, sprang out of their earthworks and rushed forward to capture our Colours.' The







*Left: The 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards departing for the Crimea, February 1854.*

*Below left: The Battle of the Alma, 20 September 1854. The 7th Royal Fusiliers and the Coldstream Guards attack Russian-held heights.*



Duke of Cambridge later wrote to Lindsay's father: 'I watched your son with the Queen's Colour. I thought him gone; the Colour fell and he disappeared under it. But he raised it again and waved it over his head.'

With their flanks undefended and confusion caused by an order 'Fusiliers, retire', the Battalion halted, unaware that the order was probably intended for the 7th Fusiliers nearby. At this critical moment the Grenadier and Coldstream Battalions overtook the Scots Fusilier Guards 'advancing in perfect order', firing as they went. Even so, Lindsay believed that he was the first to gain the earthworks, 'planting the Standard on the Russian Redoubt'. By now his Colour was 'shot through in a dozen places and the Colour staff was cut in two'. Two of the six-man Colour Party had been killed.

The Russians were faced with a new threat. The French advance, close to the sea, helped by fire from the combined Allied fleets, had reached the high ground largely unopposed. The Highlanders and the British artillery were particularly effective. 'The Russian columns suddenly turned and fled. Bounding over the parapet our Grenadiers flung themselves on the remaining Russians', wrote Higginson. It was a glorious victory but the Guards Brigade had lost 41 dead and 345 wounded of whom many subsequently died.

Lord Raglan (Colonel of The Blues and formerly Grenadier Guards) commanding the British Army found his French colleagues strongly opposed to an immediate attack upon Sevastopol's north side. They decided therefore to transfer all their forces by an easterly flank march to the south, thereby hoping to make use of the harbour at Balaclava which was on the peninsula's southern shore. This they did.

In more open country near Balaclava the Cavalry Division, consisting of the Heavy and Light Brigades, had the opportunity to participate in the fighting. (Queen Victoria had earlier made it plain that she did not wish her Household Cavalry to go to the Crimea.) The Royal Dragoons had sailed on 26 September but had run into an appalling storm in the Black Sea. 'The whole of the stabling broke adrift and the horses were dashed from one side to the other', wrote Sergeant Major Cruse to his wife. The Commanding Officer reported that 'on that fearful night the Regiment lost more horses than at Waterloo. Total loss 150.' Fortunately he mounted his second squadron when the Light Brigade sent them 75 horses.

On 25 October the Russians captured the redoubts held by the Turks on the Causeway Heights, almost two miles north of Balaclava, and then turned south. They were held off by the 93rd Highlanders, dubbed 'the thin red line', which hardly suffered a casualty.

The Royals participated in the Heavy Cavalry Brigade's 20-minute long charge, careering into the Cossacks' right flank, breaking their lines. The Royals and Scots Greys then witnessed the Light Brigade's epic charge and 41 per cent loss in men before being sent to cover the Light Brigade's withdrawal. Both the Royals and Greys received heavy casualties 'A more terrible fire was never heard ... the shot and shell and bullets came down on us like hail.'

*Below: Tableau of Lieutenants Lindsay and Thistlethwayte with the Colours of the Scots Guards. They fought valiantly and managed to stop the Colours being captured by the Russian forces. For this act of heroism two of the three men were awarded the Victoria Cross.*

*Below left: Major-General (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Charles Ashe Windham, Coldstream Guards, standing in front of the Redan, Sebastopol, c.1855.*



On 16 October many battalions besieging Sevastopol had formed a small body of sharpshooters, each consisting of an NCO and nine men: 'Good shots, volunteers preferred.' Private William Stanlake (Coldstream Guards) quickly distinguished himself by crawling within six yards of a Russian sentry, preventing him from raising the alarm and thereby enabling others to pounce on the picket and bear their knapsacks and arms back to camp.

On the 26th the Russians made a powerful reconnaissance in force towards the left flank of the Guards Brigade. Captain Gerald Goodlake, another Coldstreamer, commanded all 30 of the Guards sharpshooters. He deployed his men with such success that 38 Russians were killed and three taken prisoner. 'Most exciting,' he wrote. 'I and a sergeant were nearly caught in a cave but we made a bolt for it and got off with a bullet through my coat and he got shot in the arm.' The Guards sharpshooters roamed beyond the 1st Division's boundaries killing Russians wherever possible.

By early November 1854, the strength of the three Guards Battalions besieging Sevastopol had dropped from almost 3,000 to 1,360 since leaving England some eight months previously. 'It was my duty to parade the reliefs for the outposts in the trenches between three and four in the morning, and the sight of our gaunt Grenadiers, dimly illuminated by the light of the lantern, filled me with much admiration as foreboding. Not a man faltered, although in many cases their feet protruded from their worn-out boots, and the ragged trouser was tied around the ankles with string, while hollowed cheeks told a story of suffering and endurance,' recorded Captain Higginson, the Battalion's Adjutant.

The night of 4 November was miserably cold; sleety rain fell incessantly. The 'off duty' soldiers huddled together as closely as possible in their tents.

Little did they know that General Soimonov was planning to break out of Sevastopol marching south-east with 19,000 men and 38 guns, while General Paulov with 21,000 and 96 guns was approaching the Allies from the undefended ground in the north east. As soon as the junction was affected, General Dannenberg was to attack the right of the Allies, rolling them up in a southerly direction. In the meanwhile Prince Peter Gorchakov in the south east was to pin down the French Corps. The Russians were then to sweep the Allies invaders into the sea.

The troops available to meet their extraordinary challenge consisted of the British 2nd Division, 3,000 strong with 12 guns, and the Guards Brigade – the only men Lord Raglan could spare for the defence of his extremely vulnerable eastern flank.

At 2 am on the 5th the most forward sentries heard the tolling of Sevastopol's church bells. The faint sounds of distant chanting arose in the thick air. 'It was Sunday morning and the Russians were singing Matins. There's nothing in it. All is well,' the sentries believed.

Shortly before dawn Major Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar was in the process of relieving his Grenadier Company with another one when he became aware of the approaching Russians. He advanced against their flank in skirmish order and opened such a heavy fire that the Russians gave ground.

General Soimonov sent forward an overwhelming 12 battalions to attack Home Ridge where they were initially repelled by troops of the 2nd Division. Soimonov himself was shot dead by British sharpshooters. More columns of Russians then advanced.

The Duke of Cambridge brought up 3rd Battalion Grenadiers and 1st Battalion Scots Fusilier Guards, leaving only the Coldstream to support





Left: Study of a wounded Guardsman, Crimea, c.1854.

the picquets overlooking the valley to the east and to deter the Russian cavalry beyond.

The Battle of Inkerman which followed was fought in a fog which made cohesion and control very difficult for both sides. It was the day for regimental officers and their men fighting independently, rather than for grand manoeuvres by the High Command. It was one of the hardest and most gruelling battles the three Regiments have ever fought.

Desperate fighting, dominated by the bayonets of the Grenadiers and Scots Fusilier Guards, centred round the taking and retaking of the cannonless Sandbag Battery. At one point Lieutenant Sir Charles Russell jumped into the Battery waving his revolver shouting 'Come on my lads, who will follow me?' His men did so, advancing with a second Grenadier officer, Captain the Honourable Henry Percy. Beyond the Battery in the mist most of them were cut off having charged too far. Nearly surrounded and without ammunition they were in extreme danger. Fortunately Percy, although wounded, extracted 50 men from different regiments, leading them back to safety where ammunition was obtained and they could resume the onslaught.

The Coldstream were then brought forward, being received with cheers by the Grenadiers and Scots Fusilier Guards on their left. 'Thus, a black thread of about 1,300 Guardsmen was drawn across the ridge ... the vital ground was thinly edged by the *Tria Juncta in Uno* [Three Joined in One] ranged two deep with The Duke of Cambridge in command', recorded the Coldstream history.

Around the Sandbag Battery, the bodies of the dead and dying soon strewed the ground like slaughtered animals, in some places three deep. The only Colours carried that day were those of 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards. Passed from hand to hand, regardless of rank, they were the rallying point. More than once from the lips of a Guardsman came the shout, 'Hold up the Colours!', fearing, no doubt, that in the mist and smoke they might lose sight or touch of these honoured emblems, which they were determined to preserve, or die in their defence. Fortunately, the Russian columns were sternly repulsed and faded from the field when the French reinforcements arrived.

The Crimean winter now closed in: a terrible storm lashed the Crimean coast sinking 21 Allied ships. As the snow, frost and icy winds swept over the inadequate tents, cholera, dysentery and scurvy killed many: Lord Raglan himself was to succumb to the strain of operations in June 1855. Fortunately general conditions improved during 1855, although the deadly siege of Sevastopol dragged on until 8 September when the Russians abandoned the southern half of the city, following the French capture of the key strongpoint within the city walls. Both sides claimed victory; six months later the peace treaty was signed in Paris.

The war ushered in welcome changes – field hospitals, the electric telegraph, the Enfield rifle and the use of railways to move wounded and supplies. Training was made more realistic.

The French had 96,000 dead, the British 23,000, the Russians an estimated 450,000. The Guards had 425 killed and 972 wounded while 1,793 had died of sickness. They had won 13 Victoria Crosses among whom were Russell and Percy of the Grenadiers, Stanlake and Goodlake of the Coldstream and Lindsay of the Scots Fusilier Guards. All 13 VCs were presented by Queen Victoria.

In July 1856 the Queen addressed the three Battalions at Aldershot and 'quite broke down and burst into tears when she talked of the fellows that were not there to receive her thanks'. Her Majesty took a very deep personal interest in all those who had served in the Crimea.

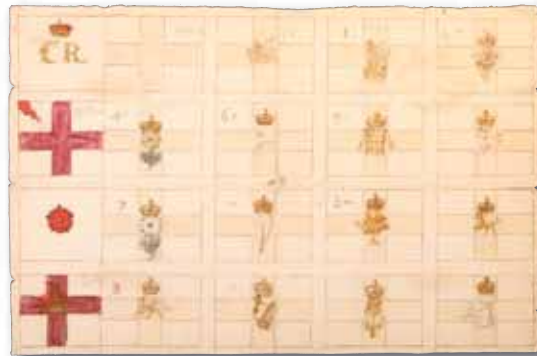
Nevertheless 1,000 men of the Guards Brigade were quickly discharged without pension or gratuity. 'Many of those good fellows were soon wandering penniless and without employment throughout the country', recorded Higginson. It was a sorry ending to a campaign in which the Guards had won such distinction at Alma and Inkerman.

The Household Division today can be proud of the great endeavours of their Regiments involved in the titanic struggle in the Crimea almost 150 years ago.

## TREASURES AND ARTEFACTS

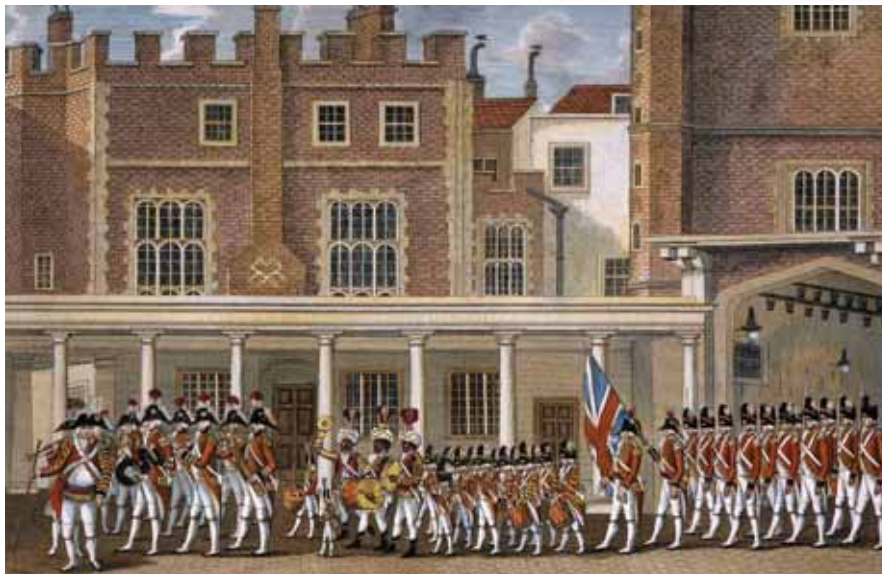
There are two museums dedicated to the regiments of the Household Division. The Guards Museum was opened in 1988 in Wellington Barracks off Birdcage Walk near Buckingham Palace and it covers the history of the five regiments of Foot Guards. The new Household Cavalry museum was opened in June 2007 by Her Majesty the Queen on Horse Guards. The entrance is a few paces from where the Queen's Life Guard changes each day, and allows visitors to see the horses in their stables and the men preparing for their duties.

Over the years the regiments of the Household Division have amassed substantial collections of military items many of which have never been displayed. Pictures and regimental silver will usually find a home in the Officers' Mess or the Warrant Officers' and Non-Commissioned Officers' mess but there are many other treasures that would otherwise be consigned to a store room.



Above: The original watercolour designed for Charles II. On being shown the designs, Charles II didn't like the original CR cipher and amended that design in his own hand to become a reversed C.

Left: Guard mount at St James's Palace, 1770s. Although drummers were often recruited as young as eight years old they were dressed largely in the same way as the Grenadier company and exaggerated the great height of the Grenadiers who would have been the tallest men in the regiment. In addition to their musical skills they were also the administrators of punishment with the cat o' nine tails.



In the Guards Museum the collection of weapons, paintings, uniforms and memorabilia includes personal items, not only of the Dukes of Marlborough and Wellington, but also of the equally heroic men who served them. There are the tattered colours carried at Waterloo, bloodstained uniforms worn in the Crimea, together with superb collections of regimental silver by masters such as Paul Storr and Benjamin Smith. There is also a wonderful display of the Orders and Decorations of the two Dukes of Cambridge designed by the world's greatest craftsmen at the time. In the Household Cavalry Museum, the exhibition includes silver kettle drums, presented to The Blues by George III and Boer War medals awarded to a horse.



*Right: Sergeant J. Skinner was a member of the King's Company of the First Guards who was awarded a medal for distinguished conduct for despoiling 12 French guns in Fort Batz at the entrance to the River Scheldt, 1809. The army did not award medals for bravery at that time and they were generally provided at the expense of the commanding officers or senior officers who felt such an award was justified. There is a sad end to this story, after Skinner was promoted to recruiting sergeant. He altered a cheque from £5 to £15 and was flogged and reduced to the ranks.*



*Left: The Duke of York vase. This centrepiece was made as a presentation piece for the Duke of York, made famous by the rhyme of the Grand Old Duke of York. When he left the Coldstream Guards he was promoted from the Coldstream to the Grenadiers as Colonel and this was given to him by the officers of the Regiment. It was made by one of the great smiths of the time, a Benjamin Smith. On the Duke of York's death in 1827 he was reputed to have owed 3 million pounds sterling, and it was sold. It was bought by the Cambridge family. The Duchess of Cambridge decided that it was not quite large enough and had a second plinth made.*



*Left: Thomas Needham coat. This is a Third Guards coat, which predates the regulation for the spacing of buttons. The silver gilt buttons are made on a horn backing. Each coat would have been made individually and embroidered to the size of the man.*

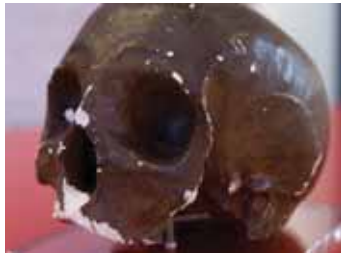




Excellence in Action



Above: Known as the Honorary Distinctions and often referred to as the battle honours of the regiment, they are a representation of the State Colour of the Scots Guards, which is only carried when members of the Royal Family or visiting heads of state are on parade. It has the collar of the order of the thistle, surrounding the badge of the thistle; the royal crown, Egypt and the Sphinx, representing the battle against Napoleon in 1801; and going as far as 1885, when the colour was presented by Queen Victoria, and therefore later battle honours do not appear on this particular Colour.



Above: Cast of the skull of Corporal John Shaw, of the 2nd Life Guards. Shaw achieved fame for his heroic actions at the Battle of Waterloo. His body was buried on the battlefield, but his skull was recovered and returned.



Left: Gold Stick, inscribed with the Royal cipher of King William IV, carried by Earl Cathcart, Colonel of the 2nd Life Guards 1797 to 1843. The most senior officers of the Household Cavalry have been responsible for the personal safety of the Monarch at all times. This privileged position is symbolised by the carrying of a gold-headed staff by the Colonels of The Life Guards and The Blues and Royals. These officers are referred to as the Gold Stick and take turns to attend on The Queen – though now only on ceremonial occasions.



Left: Private Gentleman's Sword 1660 to 1688, The Life Guards. On his return from exile, Charles II created a new bodyguard made up of 500 'private gentlemen' who all paid for the privilege of guarding the King. This sword was used for both active service and ceremonial occasions. The relief design on the hand-guard shows a key moment during the English Civil Wars, with a representation of the oak tree in which Charles sheltered after the Battle of Worcester, with an angel protecting him from the searching Parliamentarians who are depicted with devils' tails.

Above: Artificial leg of Lord Uxbridge (1st Marquis of Anglesey). Lord Uxbridge commanded the cavalry at Waterloo and was badly wounded towards the end of the battle. He was beside Wellington when he was struck by a grape shot on the right knee, which shattered the joint. 'By God sir', he is supposed to have said to Wellington, 'I have lost my leg.' 'By God, sir, so you have,' Wellington is alleged to have replied, reflecting his intense dislike of the man who had eloped with his sister-in-law. Later that same night his leg was amputated above the knee yet he made a remarkable and complete recovery. He commissioned a limb maker to design an artificial leg that was articulated at the joints, which became known as the Anglesey Leg and was patented.



*Left: When the First World War started Guards officers in their traditional way were not dressed quite like anybody else and the khaki caps of their service dress had elaborate gold lace peaks. Early on they lost so many officers in a short space of time, it became obvious that snipers were picking them up simply because of their caps. One commanding officer, not wishing to send his officers into battle without head dress, ordered all his officers to wear their caps back to front.*

*Right: The Irish Guards are the only regiment in the Household Division to have a mascot. The first one was Brian Boru (named after one of the Kings of Ireland). This picture was taken outside the Tower of London where they were stationed at the time. He was handled by a boy drummer and the drum major was responsible for them both. Below is a ceremonial collar worn by the mascots.*



*Left: Queen's South Africa Medal of 'Freddy' of the 2nd Life Guards, 1903. Freddy was the only horse to return to England from the Boer War in 1900. He took part in every action in which the Regiment was engaged and covered 1,780 miles. Freddy became the lead horse in the Household Cavalry Musical Ride and was introduced to Queen Alexandra at the Royal Tournament. She asked why he had no campaign medal, and immediately demanded that he be awarded one.*

*Far Left: Military Cross 2006, awarded to Corporal of Horse Michael John Flynn of The Blues and Royals. During an ambush in Afghanistan, Flynn came to the aid of a vehicle that had been destroyed. In his attempt to identify survivors, his own vehicle was disabled and he co-ordinated the withdrawal of his men to safety under heavy enemy fire. He then helped a fellow crewman from a second burning armoured vehicle. Throughout the incident Flynn showed exceptional courage in the face of overwhelming enemy fire.*



*Left: The Zetland Trophy, 1874. When Lord Zetland left The Blues in 1874, he failed to give the customary leaving present to the officers' mess. When he was asked about this omission, the wealthy Zetland casually remarked, 'Oh, buy a piece of silver and put it on my bill'. The officers took him at his word and duly commissioned an enormous table centrepiece. It took four men to lift it and it cost the then astronomical sum of £1,000. The base of the trophy has four mounted horsemen with a central column depicting The Blues at the Battle of Waterloo. A figure of Mars, the god of war, stands on top holding a spear and shield.*

*The Editor and publishers wish to express their thanks to The Guards Museum and The Household Cavalry Museum for information and assistance provided in this section.*



## THE GUARDS CHAPEL

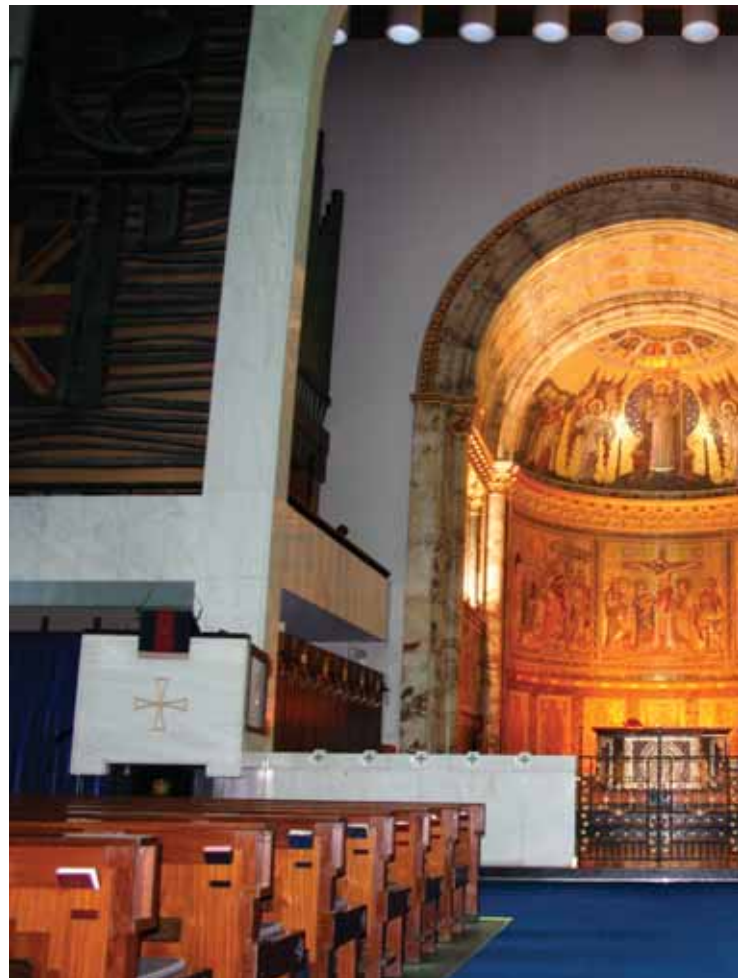
The Royal Military Chapel, Wellington Barracks, more usually known as the Guards Chapel is the spiritual home of the Household Division. When the first chapel was opened in 1838 it was a plain rectangular building with a double tier of galleries on three sides to enable as many Guardsmen as possible to attend Divine Service. Over the years the Chapel's decoration became increasingly elaborate.

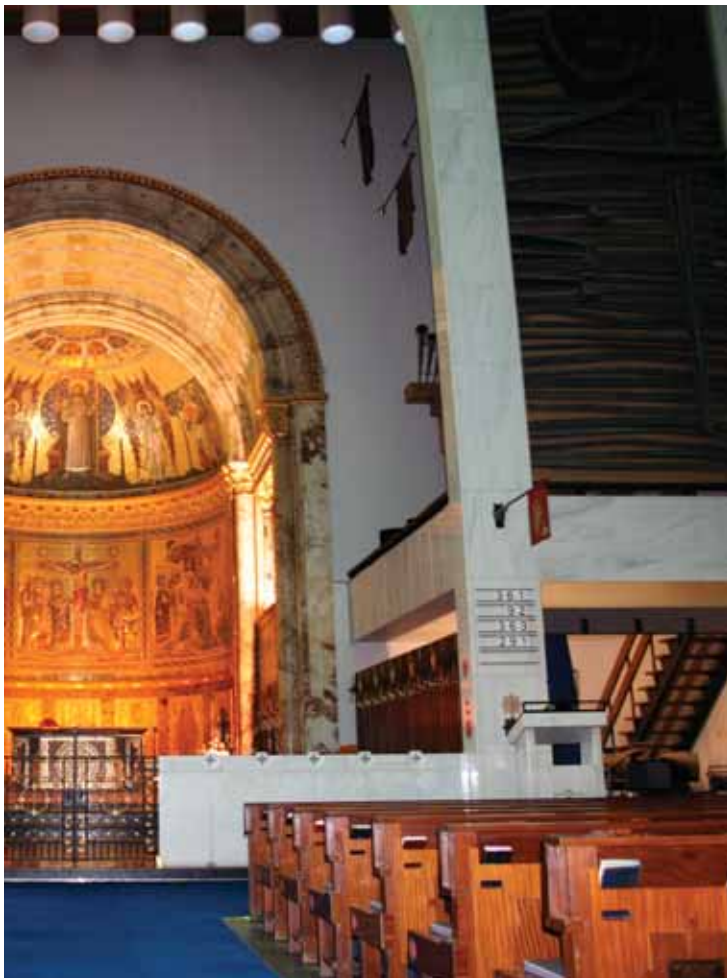
On Sunday 18 June 1944 the Chapel was hit by a German V1 flying bomb at 11.10am during Morning Service. No fewer than 121 worshippers and Musicians, including the officiating Chaplain, were killed. Another 141 were seriously injured. The cross and six candlesticks on the altar remained standing and the candles continued to burn throughout the incident. They are all still used for Sunday services.

The Apse, with its splendid mosaics, also survived the bombing, as did the font. After the war, a hut was erected within the ruined walls. Services resumed on Christmas Day 1945. In 1956 the Household Brigade War Memorial Cloister, designed by H.S. Goodhart-Rendel, was built between Birdcage Walk and the Chapel. It houses the regimental Rolls of Honour and leads to the Household Brigade Cenotaph.



*Bottom left: The 'Mareth Cross': the memorial to the fallen of 6th Battalion Grenadier Guards at the Battle of Mareth, Tunisia, 14–15 March 1943.*





In 1963 the new Chapel, designed by the architect Bruce George with a capacity of more than 400, was completed. It incorporates the Apse from the previous building and the War Memorial Cloister.

The mosaics in the Apse show, from left to right, Christ on the way to the Crucifixion and the Deposition of Christ from the Cross. Above these mosaics appears the story of Easter. The Risen Christ stands in front of the Empty Tomb, flanked by Angels holding symbols of the Passion. On the left appear Mary and the women on the way to the Tomb. On the right St John the Divine and St Peter are making the same journey.

On the south side of the Chapel there are six small chapels, one for the two regiments of Household Cavalry and one each for the five regiments of Foot Guards. The regimental badges and battle honours are worked into the stonework. The Chapel contains Standards of the Household Cavalry and Colours of the Foot Guards, the earliest of which date from 1770.

In the south-west corner of the Chapel are memorials to those who died in 1982 in the Falklands Islands War and the Irish Republican Army attack on The Queen's Life Guard. The west walls of the Chapel bear the names of all whose memorials were destroyed when the chapel was bombed in 1944.

Every Sunday there is a service at 11 am, at which the choir of the Guards Chapel and one of the Bands of the Household Division perform. The Chapel also hosts a variety of other events such as weddings and memorial services for past and present members of the Household Division.

