

**THE HISTORY OF THE OLD 2/4th
(CITY OF LONDON) BATTALION
THE LONDON REGIMENT ROYAL
FUSILIERS**



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR ARCHIBALD PARIS, K.C.B.

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FOREWORD

IN the History of the 2/4th Battalion no attempt has been made at literary effect. It simply describes the story of one of our Battalions, raised at the beginning of the War and broken up after nearly two years' service, owing to the exigencies of the Campaign.

The 2/4th may without demur be described as a very happy Battalion, for, although discipline was strict and a high degree of efficiency was aimed at, it is our proud boast that not a single Court Martial was ever held on any man belonging to the Battalion.

While every care has been taken to give a correct account of each man's service, mistakes must necessarily have occurred in its preparation; it is hoped that any detail wanting or incorrectly recorded will be attributed to the unavoidable errors that must take place in dealing with the information forwarded for such a large number of men. The official returns were not available for reference.

The thanks of the Battalion are due to Capt. F. W. WALKER, D.S.O., for editing the letterpress, and to Capt. F. C. J. READ for that of the personal services of each man.

That this history has been illustrated by maps and photographs is due to the kindness of Capt. G. NOEL HUNTER, 2/2 London, who has not only superintended their reproduction by the Sun Engraving Company, but has borne the whole of the expenses connected therewith.

THE HISTORY OF THE FOURTH (CITY OF LONDON) BATTALION THE LONDON REGIMENT (ROYAL FUSILIERS).

THE TOWER HAMLETS was represented as a military body as far back as 1643, when the Tower Hamlets Regiment of Trained Bands took part in a muster held on the 26th September, 1643, during the absence from London of certain other of the Trained Bands at the Parliamentary Wars.

The Tower Hamlets Regiment on the day of the muster consisted of 849 Muskets, 385 Pikes, and 70 Officers, making a total of 1,304, with 7 Ensigns or Colours. The Commanding Officer was the Lieutenant of the Tower, and the Regiment was recruited within the limits of the "Hamlets" belonging to the Tower.

The London Trained Bands were re-organised as Volunteers in 1794.

In 1860 the Tower Hamlets Rifle Volunteer Corps was raised, and this consisted of 12 Rifle Corps, which were numbered 1-12.

In 1868 the 2nd and 4th Corps amalgamated, and were afterwards known as the 1st Corps, and the title of "The Tower Hamlets Rifle Volunteer Brigade" assumed.

The uniform was grey, with red and blue braidings, and the head-dress was a demi-shako, with "Cheese-cutter" peak.

In 1874 the 6th Tower Hamlets Rifle Volunteer Corps (The North-East London Rifles) were incorporated with the 1st Corps, and the regiment known as The Tower Hamlets Rifle Volunteer Brigade was complete.

The United Corps consisted of 16 Companies, with two Lieutenant-Colonels and the usual number of Officers. Lieutenant-Colonel J. HOLT was Commanding Officer, and Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. MAPLESON was junior Lieutenant-Colonel.

The Headquarters of the Brigade were at 112, Shaftesbury Street, Hoxton.

At the latter end of 1874, the War Office reduced the

establishment to 12 Companies, and on October 31st, 1874, the four Companies returning the lowest percentage of efficient were transferred to other Companies.

The Regimental Badge was the White Tower of the Tower of London.

The uniform was changed to scarlet on the 14th November, 1874, when it was notified in Orders that the new scarlet uniforms had been approved by the War Office.

In undress, the Officers wore black frockcoats, very similar to the Guards, black trousers with an oak leaf pattern braid stripe, and cap with peak. The Officers' Mess uniform, when the Battalion was in grey, was a black jacket with rolled collar, red open waistcoat, black trousers with oak leaf braid stripe. This was changed to scarlet jacket, fastened at the collar, and blue waistcoat. A rolled collar jacket was adopted in 1897.

In July, 1894, the Glengarry cap worn in undress was replaced by the field service cap, which has been altered to meet the various changes from time to time.

In 1877 the localization scheme underwent revision, and the T.H.R.V.B. became a Volunteer Battalion of the Rifle Brigade. For purposes of drill and discipline, however, it—with the other Metropolitan Corps—formed part of a Volunteer Brigade, under the Colonel commanding the Scots Guards, as Brigadier. In 1889 it was transferred to the Grenadier Guards, and formed one of the Battalions of the East London Volunteer Infantry Brigade. In 1902, the Brigades were re-arranged, and the Battalion was posted to the 2nd London Volunteer Infantry Brigade, under the Irish Guards.

Colonel MELIOR, who had been appointed Honorary Colonel, 20th February, 1867, having died in June, 1886, Colonel G. H. MONCRIEFF, formally commanding the Scots Guards, now Lieutenant-General, was gazetted Honorary Colonel 24th July, 1886.

Lieutenant-Colonel J. HOLT resigned the command of the Battalion on the 30th June, 1876, and Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. MAPLESON assumed command.

On 2nd November, 1888, Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. MAPLESON retired from the command of the Battalion, and Lieutenant-Colonel C. WIGRAM took over the command.

On 22nd November, 1890, Colonel WIGRAM retired, and Colonel E. T. RODNEY WILDE succeeded to the command.

Major VICKERS DUNFEE was gazetted Lieutenant-Colonel on 2nd January, 1901.

Regulations were made in 1896 that Commanding Officers should hold command for four years only, all those then serving being considered as having been appointed in 1896. Colonel Wilde's term of command thus expired in November, 1900, when it was extended for a further two years, to 22nd November, 1902.

Colonel VICKERS DUNFEE was gazetted to command the Battalion on 4th February, 1903; he resigned on 3rd November, 1908.

In the Battalion Orders of the 23rd December, 1899, Volunteers were called for the City of London Volunteers, and the Battalion supplied 1 officer and 38 rank and file.

Two officers and 61 rank and file from the Battalion were also attached to other units in South Africa.

CHANGE OF DESIGNATION.

D.O., No. 105, 8th May, 1903.

It is notified for information that His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve of the 1st Tower Hamlets Volunteer Rifle Corps being in future designated the 4th Volunteer Battalion, the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment).

Authority: War Office Letter, No. V/10/94/238, dated 30/4/1903.

THE TOWER HAMLETS RIFLE VOLUNTEER BRIGADE consequently ceased on 7th May, 1903, from which date it was known as THE FOURTH VOLUNTEER BATTALION, THE ROYAL FUSILIERS (CITY OF LONDON REGIMENT).

In January, 1904, the following Order was issued by the Army Council:

HONORARY DISTINCTIONS.

His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve of the following Corps being permitted, in recognition of services rendered during the South African War, 1899-1902, to bear upon their appointments the words specified in each case:

4th V.B. The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)
South Africa, 1900.

These words now appear on the drums and colours

On 30th March, 1908, an ever memorable meeting was held at the Headquarters in Shaftesbury Street to celebrate the close of the Volunteer Force, and consequently the end of the Fourth Volunteer Battalion the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment).

The strength of the Battalion was :

Officers	..	..	..	..	47
Sergeants	..	..	..	..	71
Rank and File	..	..	..	..	1,230
Total					1,348

The Territorial Army came into existence on 1st April, 1908, being formed from the old Volunteer Force, which had existed for nearly 50 years.

The Fourth (City of London) Battalion The London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers) was the title finally given, after several changes, to the organisation formerly known as the Fourth Volunteer Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment).

The Battalion was fortunate in keeping its number of "Fourth" and retaining the same Headquarters with its old historic associations.

On 30th September, 1908, the strength of the Territorial Regiment, including transfers and recruits, was :

Officers	..	..	..	..	32
N.C.O's. and Men	..	..	..	..	452

Many men transferred to the A.S.C. and R.A.M.C. and other mounted units then being formed.

On November 1st, 1908, Lieutenant-Colonel and Hon. Colonel VICKERS DUNFEE (Captain, Reserve of Officers) retired on completion of his period of service in command of the Battalion.

Colonel Vickers Dunfee, who had ably commanded the Battalion from February 14th, 1903, had carried out all the arrangements necessary on the change of designation to the 4th Volunteer Battalion Royal Fusiliers, and greatly increased the strength of the Battalion. He remained to give a satisfactory start to the Territorial Regiment.

Colonel Vickers Dunfee was a Military Member of the City of London Territorial Force Association.

Major HARRY DADE was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel on November 1st, 1908, and to command the Battalion



Dec 1914

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR D. MERCER, K.C.B.
Adjutant-General, Royal Marines



MRS. VICKERS DUNFEE



COLONEL VICKERS DUNFEE



MAJOR VICTOR H. SEYD

On June 19th, 1909, a representative detachment of the Battalion attended at Windsor to receive Colours at the hands of His late Majesty King Edward VII. These Colours are highly prized by every member of the Battalion.

FORMATION OF THE 2/4TH (CITY OF LONDON) BATTALION THE LONDON REGIMENT (ROYAL FUSILIERS).

On August 2nd, 1914, the 4th (City of London) Battalion the London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers) went into Camp at Wareham, in Hampshire, for its annual training, and arrived there at 2 p.m.

At 3 p.m. the same afternoon orders were received for the Battalion to return at once to Headquarters, 112, Shaftesbury Street, London.

With great promptitude the Battalion re-entrained, and eventually arrived at its Headquarters shortly after 1.30 a.m. on August 3rd.

The Battalion left London again at very short notice, and took up guard duties on a section of the London and South Western Railway, from Waterloo to Bentley Station, at 2 a.m. on August 4th.

These guard duties were carried out until August 31st, when the Battalion received orders to return to its Depôt and to be prepared to proceed overseas.

The Battalion left Shaftesbury Street at 1.30 a.m. on September 5th, and embarked for Malta.

A few hours before the Battalion left London, four officers were detailed by the War Office to remain at Headquarters to raise, train and equip a Reserve Battalion. The officers selected for this duty were Capt. E. H. STILLWELL, Capt. W. H. HAMILTON, Lieut. H. G. STANHAM, and Lieut. H. B. PARKHOUSE; these officers, together with N.C.O's., formed the nucleus of the 4th Reserve Battalion, which was afterwards called the 2/4 (CITY OF LONDON) BATTALION THE LONDON REGIMENT (ROYAL FUSILIERS).

The duties devolved upon the officers left behind were such that it was necessary at once to organise their work. Capt. Stillwell took command as Senior Officer, Capt. Hamilton acted as Adjutant, Lieut. Stanham assisted Capt. Stillwell in training and organising the men, and Lieut. Parkhouse managed the canteen and other similar matters.

At the end of the first week 250 men had been enrolled in the new Battalion.

Recruits continued to flow in, and by September 15th (*i.e.*, a fortnight after the original Battalion had left for overseas) the numbers had increased to 500 men.

At this period it was found that the work to be done in training was impossible at the *Depôt* in Shaftesbury Street, and therefore the Executive sought to obtain larger premises and parade ground. After some preliminaries, the Authorities arranged that they should take over temporary quarters at Folly Farm, Hadley Wood.

It was also obvious that the four Officers already mentioned were inadequate in numbers to perform the work which had devolved upon them, and therefore they sought the guidance of friends and the assistance of the Territorial Association. The Association instructed them to carry on until 750 men had been raised and then doubtless a Colonel would be appointed.

When over 600 men had been enrolled, Capt. Stillwell and his brother officers felt that it was a pressing need to obtain the assistance of a Colonel and other officers as it was physically impossible to cope with the necessary work.

A friend, who knew that Colonel Vickers Dunfee had in previous years held the command of the Battalion, advised Capt. Stillwell to approach him and ask for his assistance and advice. Colonel Dunfee gave Capt. Stillwell a very sympathetic hearing, with an assurance that he would consider the matter and let him know what he thought was the best course to pursue.

The following announcements appeared in the *London Gazette* :

4TH (CITY OF LONDON) BATTALION LONDON REGIMENT
(ROYAL FUSILIERS).

Lieut.-Col. and Hon. Col. Vickers Dunfee, Retired List (late of this Battalion) to be Lieut.-Col. with the Hon. rank of Col. (Temp.) September 6th, 1914.

Hon. Lieut. Edwin V. Wellby (late Lieut.-Col. 4th V.B. Royal Fusiliers, City of London Regt.) to be Capt. and Adjutant, October 6th, 1914.

Colonel VICKERS DUNFEE, V.D., took over command of the 2/4 (City of London) Battalion The London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers), and Capt. E. V. WELLBY was his Adjutant.

Colonel Vickers Dunfee, who is a member of the Court of Common Council of the City of London, commenced his military career many years ago as a Lieutenant in the well-known Royal London Militia, with which he served during two or three of its annual trainings; he then resigned to take up a commission in the Tower Hamlets Rifle Volunteer Brigade. He was gazetted Lieutenant, September 6th, 1884; Captain, August 3rd, 1889; Major, December 15th, 1897; Lieut.-Col., January 2nd, 1901.

THE 2/4TH (CITY OF LONDON) BATTALION THE LONDON REGIMENT (ROYAL FUSILIERS)

September 23rd, 1914.

At 9 a.m., the Battalion, then about 500 strong, after having been inspected by the Lord Mayor, Sir T. VANSITTART BOWATER, left the Depot and marched to Folly Farm, New Barnet. Here the men were accommodated in marquees, and the officers were quartered in the farm buildings.

By the kind permission of the Corporation of London a Recruiting Depot was opened at the Guildhall. A special poster, in which the British, French, Russian, Belgian, and Japanese Flags were displayed in colours, was posted throughout the City, and recruits of a splendid type joined up.

September 24th, 1914.

Training was commenced at once. Reveille was sounded at 6 a.m., a two-miles' run or march, then breakfast; drill, bathing parades, musketry instruction and miniature range occupied the mornings, with squad and platoon drill in the afternoons. An occasional night march finished a useful day's training.

A grant of £100 was made by the Corporation of London to the Battalion for expenses incidental to the establishment of the Camp.

Sir HOMEWOOD CRAWFORD presented the Regimental drum to the Band, and Mr. F. J. DICKINS presented the side-drums.

The Vintry Ward Club and many kind friends subscribed to cover the initial expenses of forming the Battalion.