

Banners from the King's African Rifles

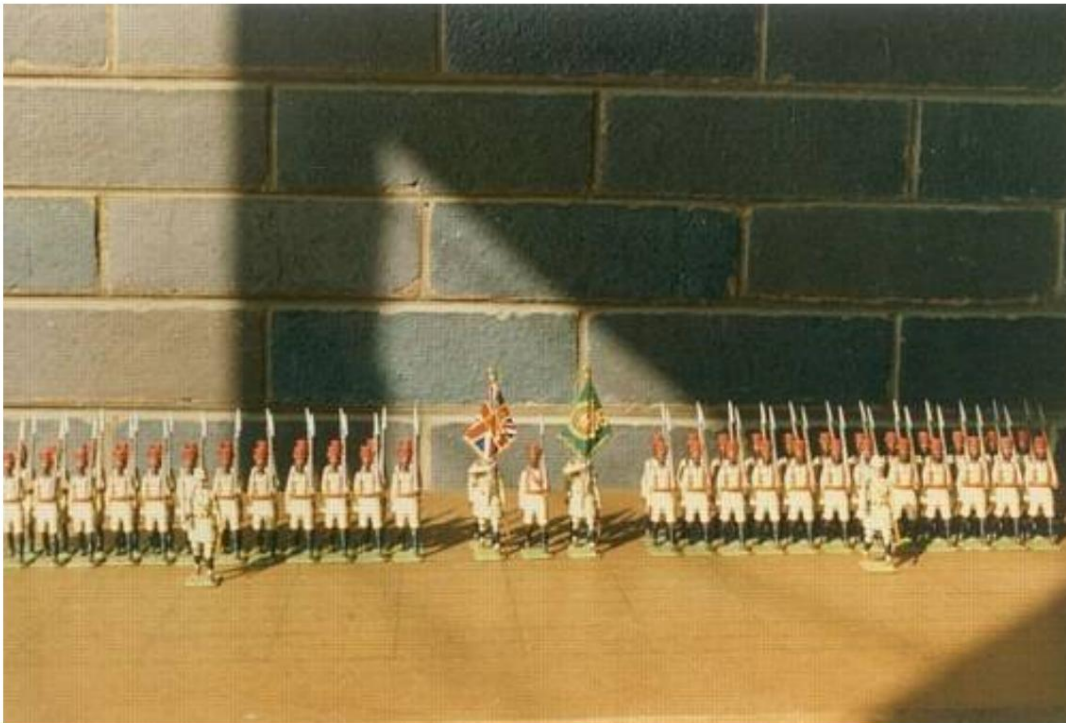
Introduction

Inspired by Per Finsted's two articles "Britains Figures - King`s African Rifles" and "About The King`s African Rifles" both published in January 2005, I have felt like writing about King`s African Rifles (KAR) tabs.

Since I collect Britains figures, in order to also produce figures myself, I have chosen to make the figures that Britains did not produce. Against this background, there was a natural need to produce an officer and standard bearer for KAR.

Considerations and investigations

As *the Rifles* are part of the regimental name, and English Hunter regiments are not assigned a flag, did the KAR have flags at all?

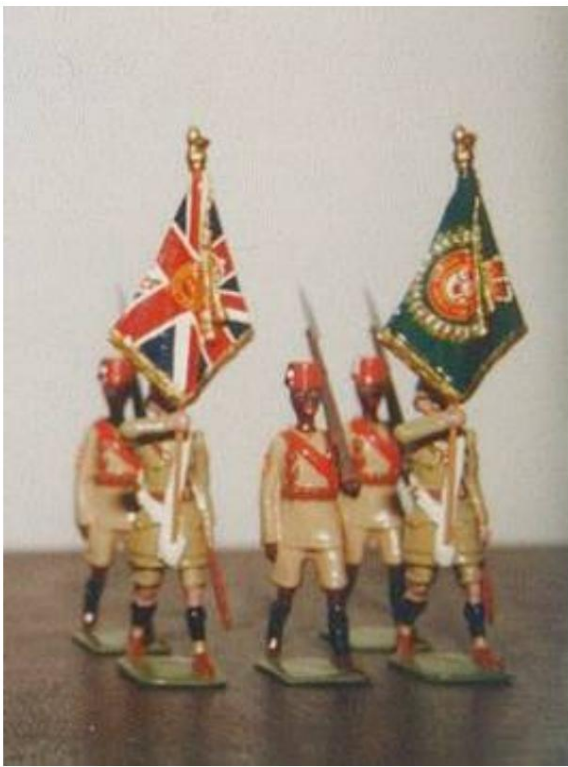


After many and long discussions, the following questions remained:

If they had tabs, what did they look like?

If so, which color(s)?

I had seen the picture that Per Finsted used in his article. Here you can see the tab and the background color appears green. This color also has some relevance (hunter green), referring to the regimental title, and yet - *King's* is also included, which in the context of a banner indicates a blue flag cloth.



The picture on the right is a close-up of the flag guard in the picture above. The tab here seems to be blue?

Just to add one more loose end, at one point I had seen an excerpt from the film from Queen Elisabeth II's coronation in 1953. Here I was almost certain to have seen KAR's flag with a green background.

It brightens...

I then fiddled around for a long time with a conviction about green, but... I then visited the Garrison Library and found here a very thick book entitled King African Rifles (Source 1) where pages 461 and 462 give the answers.

In 1919 Brigadier-General Llewellyn inquired whether the War Office would take the question of flags for the KAR under consideration.

He justified the inquiry with the fact that KAR had in reality never been a hunting regiment (*rifle regiment*), which traditionally had special tasks - reconnaissance, patrol duty, etc. KAR had tasks that can be compared with the other infantry regiments.

The brigadier general suggested that only the four oldest battalions should have banners, each with its own design and color choice. He suggested the following color combinations:

1st King's African Rifles: Green on black

2nd King's African Rifles: Gold on black

3rd King's African Rifles: Yellow on red

4th King's African Rifles: Gold on green

Now I was happy. 4 KAR was the one I had seen, but NO - read now: The War Office accepted the proposal, but decided that all six KAR battalions should have banners. The tabs were to be prepared according to the following design:

King's Colour:

Union Jack edged with fringes of gold, and in the center a red circle surmounted by a crown; in the circle a gold inscription "The King's African Rifles" and also in the circle the battalion's number.

Regimental Colour: On

a royal blue background a red circle and crown with the same inscription as on the King's Colour, this surrounded by oak leaves (*Union Wreath*).

In the center of the circle a seated lion (*a lion sejant*).

In the upper quarter of the flag cloth against the pole (*dexter canton*) the battalion's number embroidered in gold Roman numerals.



The following *battle honors* were awarded to all battalions: *Ashanti 1900, Somaliland 1901-1904, Kilimanjaro, Narungombe, Nyangao and East Africa 1914-1918.*

On the *Flags of the World, King's African Rifles (Kenya)* website, I confirmed that the above was also described there. So the background color must be BLUE.

This image from the Osprey book *Armies in East Africa 1914-1918* (Source 2). See also Per Finsted's article "About The King's African Rifles".

As the inquiry was first made to the War Office in 1919 the picture is probably from sometime in the 1920s.

What is very interesting is that the standard bearer with the Regimental Color is one of the Sudanese officers who still served in the KAR. It is 4 KAR's banners, which is evident from the Roman numeral on the Regimental Colour.

Here was the inspiration to make the banners for Britain's set 225, which I had running without banners and officers.



My own project

I started the project and acquired casts of Britain's naval officer in troop uniform, as well as various arms and plumes and not least heads. The purchase was made by the English company Soldier Pac.

The work then consisted of soldering, filing and painting.

This and the next picture show the result.

As you can see, I have chosen a somewhat darker uniform color than the one shown in the picture from the Osprey book.

The reason for this is that quite a few years ago, when I started collecting Britains figures again, I was offered a set of repainted figures that I had actually traded away sometime in the mid-sixties after removing the original paint. Later I also got some in the original color.

But since the distinguished Sergeant was now in a dark uniform, I chose to show the figures in one

" uniform, before many washes. new

Closing



I hope this little story can show how to use information you come across in your journey.

I also hope that it can give you others inspiration.

Sources

1. *The King's African Rifles. A Study in the Military History of East and Central Africa, 1890-1945* af H. Moyse-Bartlett, Gale & Polden Ltd, Aldershot 1956.
2. *Armies in East-Africa 1914. 18* af Peter Abbot, Men-at-Arms Nr. 379, Osprey Publishing, London 2002, ISBN 1-84176-489-2.

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