

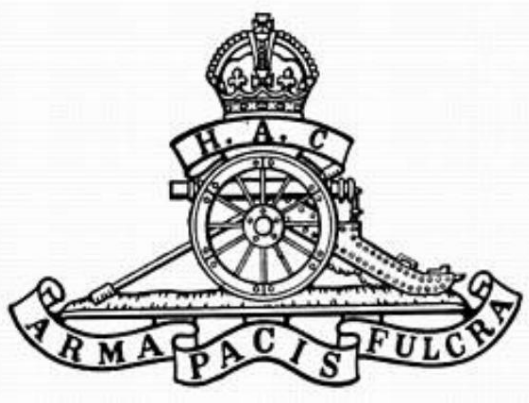
Honorable Artillery Company, 1914-1916

Introduction

The Honorable Artillery Company in every way occupies a special status in the English army and is considered the oldest of all units (established 1537). The unit consisted of both artillery and infantry and today is probably best known for providing the force of pikemen and musketeers that accompany the annual procession in London when the newly elected Lord Mayor greets the city's citizens.

Details can be found on the regiment's website, see [Honorable Artillery Company](#).

This article can be read in the context of the Senussi Uprising, and as background information for that of the regiment's batteries that took part in the suppression of the Senussi Uprising in 1915-16.



Regimental Badge

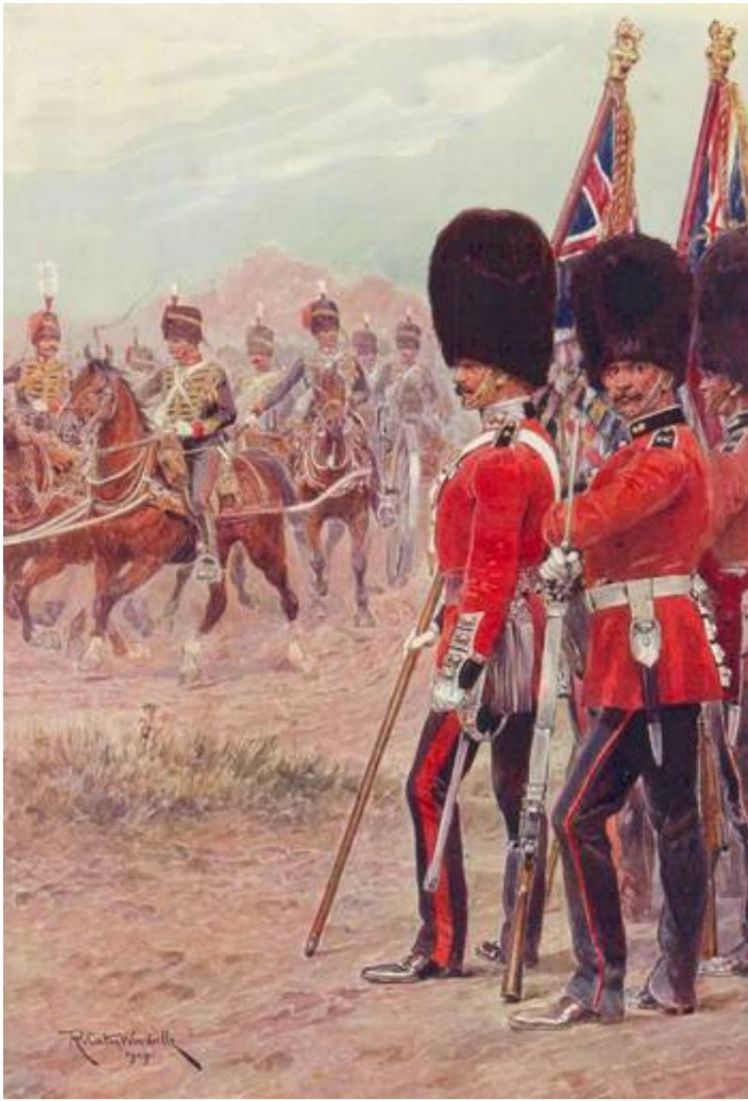
Honorable Artillery Company (Artillery).

From *Regimental Badges* by TJ Edwards, Gale & Polden Limited, 1951.

Honorable Artillery Company, 1914

In 1914 the Honorable Artillery Company consisted of:

- "A" (1st City of London Horse Artillery Battery) Honorable Artillery Company "B" (2nd City
- of London Horse Artillery Battery) Honorable Artillery Company 1st Battalion, Honorable
- Artillery Company.



The Honorable Artillery Company, c. 1911.
After drawing by Richard Caton Woodville.
From Source 1.

From 1860 the Honorable Artillery Company was part of the Volunteer Force, which in 1908 became the Territorial Force.

In 1908 the infantry battalion was intended to become part of The London Regiment [1](#)), the common denominator for the Territorial Force infantry units in London, but the regiment did not want to give up its special status as the oldest unit in the British Army. The battalion was therefore only administratively attached to the 1st London Division.



Regimental badge

*Honorable Artillery
Company (Infantry).*
From *Regimental Badges*
by TJ Edwards,
Gale & Polden Limited, 1951.

The dress uniforms for the two riding batteries were equivalent to the Royal Horse Artillery, while the infantry battalion has basically the same uniforms as the Grenadier Guards.

The field uniforms were like the army's other khaki uniforms, Model 1908.

"A" and "B" Battery, Honorable Artillery Company

The batteries were mobilized in central London, at Armory House, and took their place in the wartime organization as part of the London Mounted Brigade and the South Eastern Mounted Brigade respectively.



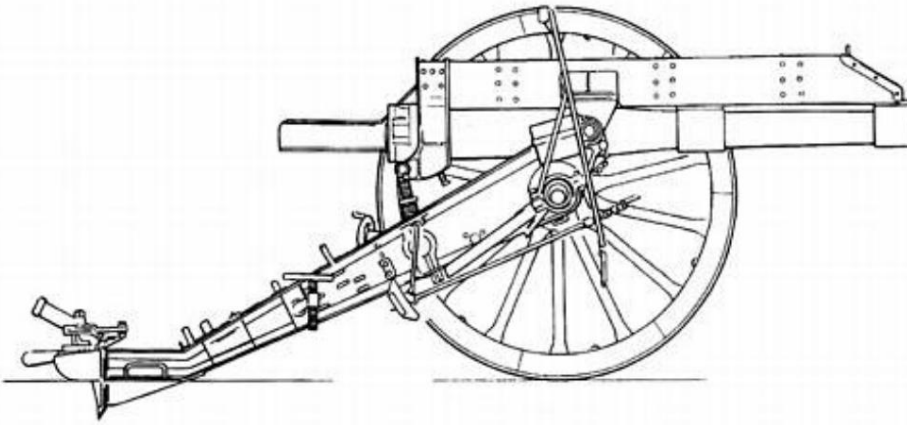
Honorable Artillery Company, Aldershot, c. 1910.

From a simultaneous postcard.

The batteries' personnel formed the core of a newly formed 2nd/A and 2nd/B Battery, which was filled up with newly arrived volunteers who signed up in large numbers.

The original batteries were then officially designated 1st/A and 1st/B Battery, but in practice retained the designations "A" and "B" Battery respectively.

Each battery consisted of 8 officers, 222 men and 230 horses, divided into two half-batteries (*sections*) and an ammunition column.



Carriage - BLC 15-pdr Field Gun Mk. 1.
From Source 7.

The batteries were equipped with 4 pcs. 15-pounder field guns, of the type designated *Erhardt 2*). —

The gun was a modernization of an older 15-pdr field gun and was part of the Territorial Force, as there were no funds for modern guns.

2nd Brigade, Royal Horse Artillery, Territorial Force, 1914-1915

The Artillery Division was sent to Egypt in 1915 with the 2nd Mounted Brigade and served in the Middle East for the rest of the war. The department consisted of the following units:

- 1st/A (1st City of London Horse Artillery Battery) Honorable Artillery Company 1st/B
- (2nd City of London Horse Artillery Battery) Honorable Artillery Company 1/1st
- Berkshire Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, Territorial Force 1/1st
- Nottinghamshire Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, Territorial Force

Aden, 1915-1916

A Turkish attempt in June 1915 to invade Aden from positions in Yemen (occupied by Turkey in 1872) led to

- 1st/B (2nd City of London Horse Artillery Battery) Honorable Artillery Company 1/1st
- Berkshire Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, Territorial Force

along with the Indian 28th Frontier Force Brigade (*Major-General Sir George Younghusband*) was sent to Aden.



B Battery, Honorable Artillery Company, in action at Sheik Othman, Aden, 1915.
From Source 2.

The force, drawn from the meager forces guarding the Suez Canal, was embarked from 14 July 1915; B The battery and parts of two of the battalions were transported aboard the S/S JAPANESE PRINCE. 3)

The batteries were accompanied by a common ammunition column, composed of half of each of the batteries' ammunition columns.

An excellent description of the fighting in Aden during the First World War can be found in the article *The British Campaign in Aden, 1914-1918* by Mark Connelly (*Journal of the Center for World War I Studies*, Volume 2, No. 1, March 2005).



A Sub-section, B Battery, Honorable Artillery Company, at Sheik Othman, 1915.
From Source 2.

The terrain in Aden made it necessary to mount wide iron rings on the wheels of the props, so that they did not sink into the desert sand. Similar devices were also used later on the Sinai Peninsula.

The batteries served in Aden until September 1915.

Western Frontier Force, 1915-16

Initially, the batteries were deployed in the defense of the Suez Canal. In November/December 1915, two of the batteries - as independent batteries - were part of the Western Frontier Force, which was set up to put down the Senussi Uprising:

- 1/1st Nottinghamshire Battery (from November 1915) (*Major Sir Joe Laycock*) 1st/
- A Honorable Artillery Company (from December 1915) (*Major OL Eugster*)



A Battery crossing the Wadi Ghuzze, 1917 (at Gaza).
From Source 2.

1st Brigade, Royal Horse Artillery, Territorial Force

The two batteries of the Honorable Artillery Company formed from 1916 the 1st Brigade, Royal Horse Artillery, Territorial Force:

- 1st/A (1st City of London Horse Artillery Battery) Honorable Artillery Company 1st/B (2nd
- City of London Horse Artillery Battery) Honorable Artillery Company.

It was not until March 1916, before the Sinai Peninsula campaign, that A Battery was equipped with modern field guns, the 18-pdr Mk 1, whereby it was finally considered a unit on an equal footing with the regular army batteries.



B Sub-section, B Battery, Honorable Artillery Company, in action at Gaza, 1917.
From Source 2.

B Battery's guns were changed in May 1916, apparently, or perhaps only initially, to 13-pdr Mk 1 field guns. (Source 2)

The pamphlet is an 18-pdr Mk 1 of the same type as those that went to A Battery.

In the Middle East it became common to also equip the mounted batteries with 18-pounder guns, while on the Western Front the 13-pounder gun, which had been developed especially for the mounted artillery, was retained.

Closing

Sources 8 and 9 provide an overview of the batteries, including their second bid, during the First World War.

The history of the infantry battalion (Western Front) is told in the Honorable Artillery Company (The Long, Long Trail). The regiment fielded from November 1916 a heavy battery - 309th (Honorable Artillery Company) Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery - equipped with 6-inch guns [4](#).

Sources

1. *His Majesty's Territorial Army - A descriptive account of the yeomanry, artillery, engineers and infantry with the army service and medical corps, comprising the 'King's Imperial Army of the Second Line'* by Walter Richards, Virtue & Co., London (ca. .1911).
2. *Honorable Artillery Company in The Great War 1914-1919* by Major G. Goold Walker (ed.), Seeley, Service & Co. Ltd., London 1930.
3. *The Volunteer Artillery 1859-1908* by Norman EH Litchfield and Ray Westlake, Sherwood Press, Nottingham 1982, ISBN 0-9508205-0-3.
4. *The Territorial Artillery 1908-1988* by Norman EH Litchfield, Privately Published, Derby 1992, ISBN 0-9508205-2-0.
5. *History of the Great War, Military Operations Egypt & Palestine, Volume I, From the outbreak of war with Germany to June 1917* by Lieutenant General Sir George Macmunn and Captain Cyril Falls, HMSO, London 1927.
6. *History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery - Forgotten Fronts and Home Base, 1914-18* by Sir Martin Farndale, Royal Artillery Institution, London 1988, ISBN 1-870114-05-1.
7. *Early British Quick Firing Artillery (Field and Horse)* by Len Trawin, Nexus Special Interests,

Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, ISBN1-85486-154-9.

8. Royal Horse Artillery (Wartime Memories Project)

9. RHA Batteries (The Long, Long Trail).



Pikes from the Honorable Artillery Company escort the motorcade with the Lord Mayor of London.

Postscript - The Lord Mayor's Show

The year the photos were taken has been lost, but it could be 1988, when I saw the procession for the first time. Connoisseurs of London's lord mayors may be able to identify the year more closely.

It was quite impressive to see these pikemen and musketeers in reality, and were it not for the modern surroundings, you would think you were in the 17th century.



Musketeers of the Honorable Artillery Company.

The Company of Pikemen and Musketeers of the Honorable Artillery Company was (re)established in 1925, and by royal decree of 1955 is authorized to parade with a force of 63 men.

This force had to correspond to approximately company size according to the regulations from 1647, which are exercised according to.

See also Honorable Artillery Company, from which the above information is derived.

Per Finsted

Notes:

1) See my article About The London Regiment, Territorial Force, c. 1914.

2) See On the Divisional Artillery of the 1st and 2nd London Divisions, Territorial Force, 1914.

3) The ship belonged to the Prince Line steamship company; data appears from S/S JAPANESE PRINCE (Red Duster).

4) The history of the battery is described in *London Gunners, The Storey of The HAC Siege Battery in Action* by Major WR Kingham, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London 1919. Republished by Naval & Military Press in 2003. Part of the story is also reproduced in Source 2.