

# King Edward's Horse (The King's Overseas Dominions Regiment)

## Introduction

The regiment was established in 1901 to gather defense-interested citizens from the colonies, primarily residing in London.

Originally, the regiment was part of the volunteer cavalry regiments (Yeomanry), but in 1913 was given the status of *Special Reserve*, whereby it became obliged - with 48 hours' notice - to make a squadron available to the Expeditionary Force.

## King Edward's Horse (The King's Overseas Dominions Regiment)



*King Edward's Horse (The King's Overseas Dominions Regiment).*  
From Source 3.

## Historical summary

### 1901

4th County of London Imperial Yeomanry (King's Colonials).

### 1905

The King's Colonials, Imperial Yeomanry.

### 1911

King Edward's Horse (The King's Overseas Dominions Regiment).

### 1913

The regiment receives the designation *Special Reserve Cavalry* in addition to its name.

### 1914

2nd King Edward's Horse (The King's Overseas Dominions Regiment) is created; the main regiment gets the designation 1st

**1924**

The regiment is disbanded.



*King Edward's Horse (The King's Overseas Dominions Regiment), officer i gallauniform, 1912.*

After drawing by RJ Marion in Source 2.

In 1901, the regiment consisted of four squadrons, each belonging to its own colony:

**Squadron Belongs Collar Badge**

1. Asia An elephant
2. Canada A beaver
3. Australia A kangaroo
4. South Africa An ostrich

In 1903 an attempt was made to establish a 5th Squadron (New Zealand), but this was unsuccessful, and the New Zealanders instead formed the 4th Platoon in the 4th Squadron.

The connection between geography and squadron ceased in 1909; the special squadron badges were officially phased out, but remained unofficially in use as an indication of the soldier's origin.

In the regimental badge, however, ribbons with the following names Australia, South Africa, India, New Zealand and Canada are retained.



*The King's Colonials, Imperial Yeomanry, i  
paradeuniform (dismounted review order), ca. 1905.  
From Source 2.*

## Uniforms

Like many of the volunteer cavalry regiments of the time, King Edward's Horse also exercised some imagination in order to have a dress and service uniform that did not look like everyone else's.

The khaki uniform as a parade uniform is also known from other volunteer regiments, but especially the design of the notices is special for King Edward's Horse.

The golden stackable, with the two red lids, was introduced in 1913. The headgear called a "*Sombrero Hat*" is also of a model peculiar to the regiment. Black cock feathers were worn in the sombrero; the officers' plumage somewhat larger than that of the crew.

The crew's uniform was reminiscent of the officer's version; instead of the officers' cartridge belt, the cartridge belt from the 1903 equipment was used, with 5 cartridge pouches.



*King Edward's Horse (The King's Overseas Dominions Regiment), in uniform and a sergeant from the 20th Hussars, c. 1908.*  
From Source 4.

For exit uniform, officer and crew wore a khaki colored cap, with red cap band and dark brown leather shade.

The three soldiers of the King Edward's Horse wear the 1st Squadron collar badges (an elephant).

## **For horse**

The parade uniform was mostly used when the force was on foot. Source 2, however, mentions a mounted command from King Edward's Horse - 2 officers and 12 men - who took part in the celebration of King George V's coronation in June 1911.



*King Edward's Horse, ca. 1913.*

Section of a contemporary postcard, reproduced in Source 4.

The uniform jacket and headgear are described as shown in this article, but the uniform trousers were the breeches of the field uniform.

The officers wore light breeches and light brown riding boots. The crew wore the breeches of the field uniform, which of course have been somewhat darker than the officers', as well as winder's and short (black) boots.

The officers carried their sabers drawn, and the crew their carbines in their right hands.

The horses' equipment is described as *Saddlery, Colonial Pattern*.

The picture is not a reproduction of the command from the celebration of King George V's coronation, but the only one I have seen of a mounted soldier from the regiment.

## Field uniform

The field uniform for officers and crew is stated to be the khaki colored Model 1902 uniform.

The following distinguishing features were worn on the field uniform:

- The regimental badge in the field cap; for the officers also, in a smaller version, as collar badges.
- On the shoulder pads the crew wore the abbreviated regimental name in brass letters - KEH over KODR

# Service during the First World War

<sup>1</sup>st and 2nd King Edward's Horse's service during the First World War is summarized, among other things, in King Edward's Horse på hjemmesiden *The Story of the British Army in the Great War of 1914-1918*.

The regimental ribbon bears witness to the action at Loos, Ypres 1917, Pilckem, Cambrai 1917, Lys, Estaires, Hazebrouck, Pursuit to Mons, France and Flanders 1915-16 '18, Italy 1917-18.

Here it should only be mentioned that <sup>nd</sup>2 King Edward's Horse (The King's Overseas Dominions Regiment) from February 1915 to the beginning of 1916 were part of The *Canadian Cavalry Brigade*, which from March 1915 to the beginning of 1916 was deployed on foot in France.

## Closing

In addition to King Edward's Horse, the following cavalry regiments also belonged to *the Special Reserve*.

- North Irish Horse
- South Irish Horse

## 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'* af Walter Richards, Virtue & Co., London (ca. 1911).
2. *King Edward's Horse* af R.J. Smith, Military Modelling, juli 1984.
3. *The Yeomanry Regiments* by Patrick Mileham, Canongate Academic, Edinburgh 1985 and 1994, ISBN 1-8984-136-4.
4. *The British Army of August 1914, An illustrated Directory* af Ray Westlake, Spelmount Limited, Tunbridge Wells, Kent 2005, ISBN 0-86227-207-7.
5. King Edward's Horse (The King's Overseas Dominions Regiment), fra Land Forces of Britain, The Empire and The Commonwealth.



*4th County of London Imperial Yeomanry (King's Colonials), manig i paradeuniform (review order), med kappe, ca. 1902.*  
From Source 2.

In the earliest version of the regiment's uniform, the feather bush was not as *dandy* as the later black cock feathers. The feathers in the crew's feather bush were, however, also in the later version, somewhat shorter than the officers'.

Per Finsted

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**To note:**

1) A more detailed discussion of the North Irish Horse can be seen in my review of the book *The North Irish Horse* by Richard Doherty.

2) A separate article on the South Irish Horse is in preparation.