

Two Volunteer and Local Militia Colours of the Napoleonic War Period

In 1854 the will of Henry Allington of Bayley Hall, Hertford, bequeathed to the Hertford Borough Council five flags of the Napoleonic period (1799 - 1815) which had belonged to Volunteer and local Militia units in the area. The Colours are the only known complete set of Colours for Hertfordshire Units at the time of the Napoleonic Wars. All Saints owns two of these flags: the Flag of the Tottenham Armed Association (later becoming the Hertford Volunteers colour) and the Union Flag.

Where the Colours were housed between 1845 and 1980 has not been established, but they could have been hanging in the Committee Room at the Shire Hall. After 1980, they were stored at Hertford Castle and rolled on their poles until funds were raised in 1985-86 for conservation and display. The colours were then kept at the Hertford Museum until September 2018 when they moved to All Saints' Church.

The Colours are made of silk and were netted in 1910 to preserve them (at a cost of £9)

The Tottenham Volunteers - Flag of the Tottenham Armed Association (on right pole)

A pieced union flag made from single layers of red, white and blue silk, with a wreath and central emblem painted on both faces.

Dimensions: Pole sleeve edge 173 cm x upper edge 195 cm.

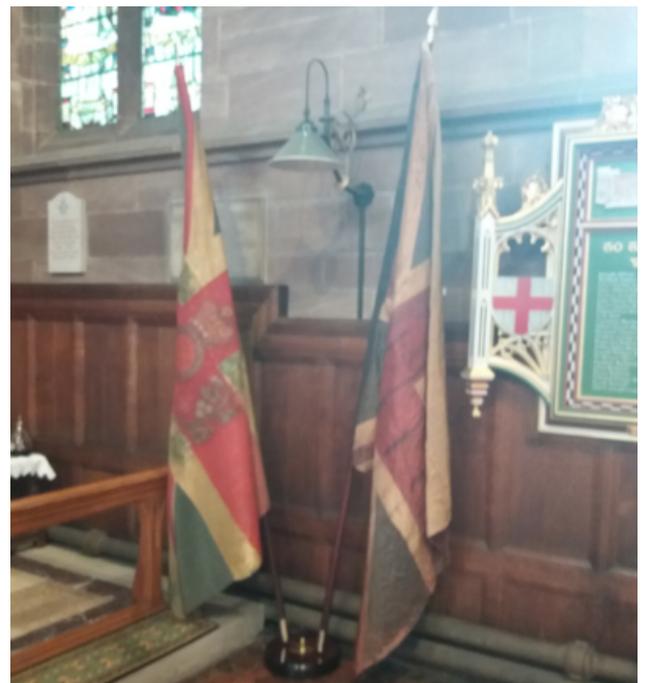
This appears to be the oldest colour from the set. It was originally the King's Colour of the Tottenham Volunteers which existed from 1798-1802. This Unit appears to have been disbanded then and did become a regiment of volunteers as was the case with many armed associations.

The Hertford Volunteers were re-formed in September 1803 and it is believed that the Tottenham Colour was brought in (perhaps by the manufacturers) and made over for Hertford use simply by changing the name.

A study of the conserved Colour reveals that both 'Tottenham' and 'Hertford' have been painted on it at different periods.

Another puzzle is whether the St Patrick's flag and shamrock motifs were added to the flag following the Act of Union with Ireland in 1801. Certainly, it does seem that the shamrocks were added to, and sometimes over, the roses and thistles in the wreath.

In November 1985 the Trusthouse Forte Community Chest made a grant of £1,000 to Hertford Town Council for the conservation of this Colour. The work was undertaken by Nanette Muir of the Textile Conservation Unit at the National Maritime Museum.



The Union Flag (on left pole)

A pieced, union flag of single layers of red, blue and gold/ivory silk. The flag has a blue silk pole sleeve.

Dimensions: 181cm wide x 151cm height.

This is the King's Colour which partnered the Regimental Colour bearing the name of the Hoddesdon and Stanstead Volunteers. This Colour was restored in 1991.