

# 22nd Dragoons

The **22nd Dragoons** was the title held by four separate Cavalry regiments of the British Army raised and disbanded between 1716 and 1945. The last regiment of this name existed during the Second World War, from 1 December 1940 until 30 November 1945.

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## History

The first regiment to bear the title **22nd Dragoons** was raised in 1716. Also known as **Viscount Mountjoy's Regiment of Dragoons**, it appeared on the Army List on 16 February 1716, but was disbanded in 1718.<sup>[1]</sup> In 1779, John, Lord Sheffield raised a light dragoon regiment that was styled **22nd (Light) Dragoons**, but this was disbanded in 1783.<sup>[2]</sup> On 24 February 1794, William, Viscount Feilding raised the next regiment to use the title 22nd (Light) Dragoons; this regiment lasted slightly longer, being disbanded in 1802 with the onset of peace. However, the 25th Dragoons (raised for service in India by F E Gwyn on 9 March 1794) was renumbered 22nd (Light) Dragoons in that year. This 22nd (Light) Dragoons regiment served throughout the Napoleonic Wars, which began in 1803. The regiment served in India , where it remained until 1813. During this period it participated in the British Invasion of Java (1811). The regiment was disbanded in 1820.

On 1 December 1940, the regiment was restored to the Army List. The new 22nd Dragoons was formed from cadres taken from the 4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards and 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards. The cap badge initially assigned to the regiment was simple.<sup>[3]</sup> Later, its regimental crest, used on the headstones of the regiment's dead, combined the 4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards' Star of St Patrick with Enniskillen Castle to represent the 5th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards - the 4th/7th and Inniskillings are now amalgamated as the Royal Dragoon Guards and have adopted a cap badge that is very similar to this. The regiment was assigned to 29th Armoured Brigade in 11th Armoured Division, but later was transferred to 30th Armoured Brigade in the same division. This changeover was due to the regimental loyalties of the brigade commanders. In 1942, 30 Armoured Brigade was transferred to 42nd Armoured Division before finally joining 79th Armoured Division in 1943.

All three regiments of the 30th Armoured Brigade were re-equipped with Sherman Crab Flail Tanks - M4 Sherman tanks modified by attaching a large jib, covered in chains, to the front of the vehicle. The idea being that the tanks would clear a path through a minefield by slowly driving along flogging the ground ahead of them and, hopefully, exploding the mines; to be effective, the tanks had to drive at no more than

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22nd Dragoons cap badge ca 1941

<b>Active</b>	1716–1718, 1779–1783, 1794–1802, 1940–1945
<b>Country</b>	<span><span></span></span> United Kingdom
<b>Branch</b>	<span><span></span></span> British Army
<b>Type</b>	<u>Cavalry</u>



Sherman Crabs of 30th Armoured Brigade, 1944.

one and half miles per hour. Tank units thus equipped were not generally used as entire regiments, rather they were split up into troop or squadron-sized formations in support of organised set piece attacks.

As such, the regiment came ashore in the first wave of the Operation Overlord landings on the morning of 6 June 1944, with A Squadron, reinforced by two troops of C Squadron and supported by two troops of the Westminster Dragoons, landing on Sword Beach and B Squadron landing on Juno Beach. Later in the day, the final two troops of C Squadron landed on Juno, where they remained for several days on beach clearance duties. Once the beaches were cleared, the regiment saw sporadic action in the fighting through Belgium and the Netherlands into Germany, where they were at the end of the war; the regiment was disbanded in Germany on 30 November 1945. The regiment was awarded ten battle honours for operations in the North West Europe

Theatre.

## Battle honours

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- *Second World War*: Normandy Landing, Odon, Caen, Falaise, Le Havre, Lower Maas, Venlo Pocket, Reichswald, Rhine, North-West Europe 1944–45

## Notes

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1. Frederick's Lineage Book of British Land Forces 1660–1978, p. 365
2. Frederick, p. 360
3. Anon, *Cap badges*.

## References

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- Anon, *Regimental Badges and Service Caps*, London: George Philip & Sons, 1941.
- "22nd Dragoons" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080118043511/http://www.regiments.org/regiments/uk/cav/D22.htm>). regiments.org. Archived from the original (<http://www.regiments.org/regiments/uk/cav/D22.htm>) on 18 January 2008.

## Further reading

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- *XXII Dragoons 1760–1945: The Story of a Regiment* by Raymond Birt,
- *Achtung! Minen!* by Ian Hammerton, *The Story of 79th Armoured Division* by Anon.,
- *79th Armoured Division Hobo's Funnies* by Nigel Duncan,
- *Vanguard of Victory - The 79th Armoured Division* by David Fletcher,
- *British Tanks in Normandy* by Ludovic Fortin.
- *Lineage Book of British Land Forces 1660–1978* by Dr J B M Frederick
- *Normandy 1944: The Road to Victory* by Richard Doherty (dedicated to the memory of Tpr Leonard Kemp, 22nd Dragoons)
- *A Free Trip to Normandy: With the 22nd Dragoons* by Terry Carroll <sup>[1]</sup>

1. Carroll, Terry. "A Free Trip to Normandy: With the 22nd Dragoons" (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/43/a2414143.shtml>). *WW2 People's War*. bbc.co.uk. Retrieved 17 January 2020.
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