13th Light Infantry Woolwork

Sold



REF: 83272

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Height: 53 cm (20.9")

Width: 57 cm (22.4")

Depth: 2 cm (0.8")

Description

A Regimental Woolwork picture by J. Dight of the 13th Regiment of Foot (Somerset Light Infantry).

The regimental badge is shown to the top of the picture with their number 13 over the bugle and below the mural crown, awarded for their defence of Jellalabad in 1841-42 during the First Afghan War. The Sphinx battle honour shown to the centre of the picture was awarded to the 13th for their action against the French at Alexandria in 1801.

The 2nd Battalion of the 13th Light Infantry had left Malta for India in 1878 whilst the 1st Battalion returned to England in 1879, after their involvement in the Zulu War. In India the 2nd were stationed first at Bellary and Bangalore before moving to Kamptee in 1879, where they stayed until 1883. The scroll to the bottom of the picture notes East India to the left with the soldier's name to the centre and 1880 Kamptee to the right.

This woolwork was probably worked from a template given to enlisted men by the army. It was thought that if soldiers had something to occupy their free time they would be less likely to gamble or get drunk. It would also provide the maker with a souvenir of their time and encourage loyalty to their regiment.

Naturally some soldiers were more skilled than others at woolwork and so, although you may see the same design, there can be a wide range in quality. J. Dight was skilful in his work and the colours still have a vibrancy. I particularly like the soldier's moustaches which are as long as their bayonets. The woolwork is in a period maple frame which may well be the original but the gilt slip is a replacement.

The picture is dated 1880 which ties in with the movements of the 2nd Battalion. The date is also confirmed by the regimental number on the bugle. With The Childers Reforms the regiment name changed to Prince Albert's Light Infantry on the 1st of July 1881. After this date you would expect to see PA on the bugle rather than 13. Dated 1880.

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