



How "Tommy Atkins" travels—Wiltshires off to take part in Roberts' Campaign, S. Africa.  
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## **The Wiltshire Regiment**

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### **Return of the Battalion**

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#### **Welcome Home**

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#### **Reception at Devizes**

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#### **Enthusiasm at Swindon**

The 3rd (Militia) Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment has arrived home again. It reached Southampton last Wednesday evening on board the "Dominion," and disembarked at 9 o'clock yesterday morning, subsequently entraining in a special train to come to Devizes, the Depot Town, for disembodiment.

Here the Mayor (Alderman F. Randell) arranged for the public reception of the Battalion in the Market Place, as affording better facilities for the ceremony than the railway station. The ceremony took place at the Market Cross. From a platform here erected the Mayor, accompanied by the members of the Corporation and officials, presented an address to Colonel Sandford.

The address is handsomely illuminated, and bears the arms of the Borough with a Crown, and the crest of the Regiment. The Corporation seal is affixed by a watered silk ribbon, and the document is fastened with a military riband.

At the conclusion of the ceremony in the Market Place the Battalion marched to the Depot, where Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen presented the war medals.

Lord Methuen addressed the men and expressed his regret that the Duke of Connaught, who had always taken a great interest in the battalion, could not be present to undertake the duty, and Sir Evelyn Wood, who commanded that army corps, was also unable to be present. There were reasons which made it a great pleasure for him (Lord Methuen) to undertake the duty, for no man ever did so much to bring that regiment of militia into good repute as did his late father (applause). That the county should welcome back its militia it was the county of Wilts. and the town of Devizes (loud applause). In the time of peace no battalion had a better record for sobriety, discipline, and good conduct than the 3rd Battalion of the Wilts. Regiment when it was stationed at Devizes. They had not been to the front, but they had rendered equally good service to the Empire in guarding the Boer prisoners. He asked the county of Wilts. to do more than give the men a welcome home. He asked the inhabitants of the county, when the clamour of war had passed away, and when the discharged militia were seeking employment, to remember the men of the militia and the reserves who had left all connection with their work in order to help to unite the Empire (applause). He asked the

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people of the county, not now, but in five years time to be able to say that the reserves and militia were the men they had sought first to employ (loud applause). Lord Methuen then presented the medals to the officers and men.

The non-commissioned officers and men were each presented with a pipe, on which was engraved the arms of the Borough of Devizes, and a packet of tobacco.

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The Battalion sailed from Queenstown for St. Helena on the 20th June 1901, having been embodied in January, 1900, at the time when the Militia generally were called up on the departure of so many of the regular Battalions for the rest of the war. The colours of the Regiment are in St. James Church, Southbroom, where they were deposited immediately before the sailing of the Battalion.

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The Dominion brought home the largest number of reservists, viz: 50 officers and over 1500 men, consisting of drafts of the 3rd Royal Sussex, 3rd Wilts, Lancashire Fusiliers, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Somerset Light Infantry, Royal Irish Rifles, Hants. and Cheshire Regiment's and details of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Two deaths occurred during the voyage - Sergt. Cole and Private Butt, both of the Wiltshire Regiment, the former a Swindonian.

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### **Reception at Swindon**

Of the 511 men who came home, no less than 115 were for Swindon and district, and they were conveyed by special train from Devizes to the Railway Town last evening. Although there was no official reception at Swindon, a great deal of enthusiasm was displayed by the friends of the home coming soldiers. Anyone being in the vicinity of the G.W.R. Station last evening would quickly have recognised this fact. As early as half past seven a crowd began to assemble in the tunnel that leads to the up-platform. The number continued to increase, until the route to the platform was crowded with relatives and friends of the soldiers. The crowd waited patiently till 9-30pm., and still no signs of the long-expected train. Ten o'clock arrived, and the friends began to get impatient. Ten minutes later, however, the signal was given that the train was signalled, and a cheer went up. The train steamed into the station at a quarter past ten, and soon the soldiers were shaking hands with their friends, from whom they had been absent 15 months. The young fellows were looking well, but one and all agreed that they were down right glad they got back to Old England, and they did not want to go to St. Helena again, "I would not go for a thousand pounds!" said one emphatically.

Most of the soldiers had articles of various kinds which they had brought as mementoes of their stay at St. Helena. Some had brought home a parrot from Las Palmas as a present for their friends. All the men had the South African medal and many had been given them at Devizes.

About 100 of the men were Swindonians, two had to go to Kemble, and the remainder to Highworth and other places around Swindon.

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