



**The dress of the Rifle Corps 1801
As found in the so-called Green Book, or, Regulations for the Rifle Corps
(As reproduced in the Rifle Brigade Chronicle 1897 pp 26-112)**

Original copies of the “ Regulations for the Rifle Corps, formed at Blatchinton Barracks under the Command of Colonel Manningham, August 25th 1800”, published in 1801, are exceedingly rare. There was a reprint authorised by the RB in 1860 and another issued by Verner in the 1890s. This text is taken from the 1801 first edition.

It is generally understood that Lt . General Hon Sir William Stewart, GCB, who in 1801 was the Lt. Colonel of the Corps, took an active part in the production of these Regulations. Sir William Cope, in describing the share of Stewart in the formation of the Regiment, says, “He now set himself vigorously to organise and discipline the Corps thus formed at his suggestions. The Standing Orders of the Regiment, which, though issued of course in Manningham’s name, were probably principally compiled by Stewart”.

Introduction.

The following extracts are concerned with the uniform and other clothing of the Regiment as laid down in The Green Book at its inception in 1801. The Green book was so-called to distinguish it from The Red Book (King’s regulations), the 1802 edition of which also contains a guide to the Clothing of the Regiment and will form part of this series of articles. As with the other articles in this series on uniform, they are an (early) part of the jigsaw composed of documents and images, and not to be considered as in any way a canonical guide to the uniform of the 95th (Rifle) Regt during its service in the Peninsula. Note the references to Regimental cap and Infantry Rifle, rather than Baker Rifle and Shako. These are anachronisms and the use of them is inappropriate except when dealing with members of the public or other un-informed units. No Rifle Man of the period would have referred to his Rifle as a ‘Baker’ or his cap as a ‘shako’ (Thanks to Master Taylor Serjeant Gower for driving this point home to me).

Part the First

Article III The interior Discipline and Economy of Companies.

“Every man of a mess... is to cook in turn.. ..Each Company will also have as many cooking frocks as there are cooks employed”.

Article X. The general Appearance, Conduct, and Dress of the Corps.

“A General attention to Dress, and to an outward appearance of cleanliness, and Comfort, is a part of the military system, which every Officer who commands a regiment, and knows how Soldiers, or mankind indeed are composed, will ever think most worthy of being observed. With regards to Dress, as with almost everything else,

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which embraces the well-being and good formation of a corps, uniformity and one given rule to adhere to has ever been by experience proved to be the best and most secure mode of attaining the object aimed at. The object to be wished for in an Officer's dressing uniformly, and with smartness, is, first the inspiring of the soldier with respect for his appearance as a man, and for his superiority over him as his Officer; both of which must be the case, when the dress, as regulated by his Majesty, is the only one in which an Officer appears before those subordinate to him; and next, because caprice is endless, and when once admitted may lead to any extent whatever. In the Soldier's dressing well, and with smartness, the principal object is first cleanliness, (and cleanliness is at all times health) and afterwards a certain degree of self-pride, which being well dressed gives every Soldier, and which self-pride should be encouraged, for it will in the end make him a better man.

The Officer's regimental dress is of two kinds; the full dress, and parade or service dress; the former consists in long coat, white breeches and black top boots, or regimental pantaloons and half-boots, hat cocked, picque front and rear; green feather and regimental cockade; coat hooked through the shirt under the stock, and about six inches of shirt-frill appearing; the stock black polished leather, high necked and bound with velvet, or black silk plaited; the uniform sash worn over the sword belt; regimental gloves and cane. The sash is never to be worn with shoes. The hair queued and powdered. It is optional with Officers to provide themselves with the full dress, it being solely necessary for attendance at court.

The parade or service dress will consist of regimental jacket, waistcoat and pantaloons of the same cloth; half-boots, not three-quarter boots, picqued, bound with black cord, and a tassel in front: the same stock as before specified; the waistcoat to be hooked at the top, or the jacket to be so, as Officers may choose, through the frill of the shirt, leaving about six inches exposed. Hussar sash, and sword, as before. Regimental helmet. The field Officers and adjutant will be at all times distinguished by spurs of a uniform make, and wear a longer half-boot; their horses will also be caparisoned after a regimental manner to be agreed upon; the hair always queued according to The Commander in Chief's order; powder, side hair foe two inches below the ear, and moustaches to be worn by those who choose on service. The regimental great coat of a grey colour, after the plan in the Quarter Master's possession.

When the regiment parades without arms, all Officers will wear their regimental canes and gloves as also the full dress by those who choose; Serjeants will also then do the same; all Officers and Serjeants who are on orderly duty will also observe the same: no sword is ever to be drawn with a cane in hand.

For the convenience of Officers and Soldiers, and to enable the regiment to exercise at all pastimes of activity, as well as to preserve the regimental dress in the highest order for duty and parades; the Colonel permits an undress to be established, which for the same reasons as were given before, is to preserve the same principle of uniformity; it is to be worn on ship-board whenever the regiment embarks. The Officers' undress will consist of a white duffel jacket, edged with green, white single breasted waistcoat, and loose white dimity trowsers, reaching to within an inch or two of the ankle; the soldiers' dress will consist in white flannel jacket, green cape and cuff, the regimental waistcoat, and Russia duck trowsers. Patterns of both dresses to be



kept at all times in the Quarter Master's store. The regimental helmets by Officers, and foraging caps by the Men, to be worn with the undress, as also the stocks; the regimental pantaloons may be worn by the officers without the trowsers, but the trowsers are invariably to be worn by the non-commissioned Officers and Men, either by themselves, or drawn over the pantaloons.

The white waistcoat is to be always worn by the officers, and never the regimental one in undress,

The Regimental undress may be worn at all times when the Officer or Soldier is not on parade, or on any description of duty, whether it be regimental or company's duty, on all which occasions the established uniform of the Corps will alone be worn.

Company's and hospital Orderlies and Cooks, and all men on fatigue, not Serjeants, will wear the undress, and any soldier found with his regimentals on, doing such duties, will be confined and punished.

Whenever a Non-commissioned Officer, Bugler, or private rifleman goes on any duty with arms for 24 hours, he is to have his trowsers wrapped up in his watch-coat, which he is also to put on after sunset, and wear till the sun rises. In a Rifle Corps, the watch-coat is to be worn over all accoutrements, contrary to the usual custom, in order to preserve arms and ammunition more effectually from the effect of the weather. The foraging cap to be made of black cloth, edged and lettered white, to be worn in a leather case above the pouch; they are to be at all times worn from taptoe to sun-rise, and then neatly returned to their cases.

No Officer or Soldier is to be ever seen, beyond the barrack-yard, or his immediate encampment, irregularly dressed or without side-arms, when in regimentals; nor are the distinguishing dresses, which have been here detailed with every degree of precision, to be either mistaken or deviated from. The distinguishing mark of duty for all Officers and Serjeants will be the pistol-pouch and cross-belt. This regards Orderlies of Companies as well as of the Regiment. The canes of the Serjeants will be worn on the left side, suspended to the button from the top, when under arms; nor are they ever to be without them in regimental dress. The regiment will wear watch-coats on evening parades; this regards the rank and file, and Buglers; they are to be slung under the pouch-belt.

The Senior or Commanding Officer on all parades is answerable to the Colonel, that the strict rules of dress are complied with; nor is he to permit any Officer or Soldier to remain on parade, who is not dressed according to the uniform regulated by His Majesty's orders.

The necessaries which a Rifleman is to be furnished with, and kept complete in, at the close of every muster, are as follows:

His regimental suit, watch-coat and straps, pack and cap.

His undress jacket and trowsers.

Three white shirts, and four turn-overs.

Two pairs of good shoes.

Two ditto of socks.

A queue, comb, razor, clothes-brush, and shoe-brush.

Buff-stick, button-stick, heel and black-ball, and piece of soap.

His arms will be,



Rifle, sword, accoutrements including rifle-sling, picker, turnkey, worm-screw, lock-cap, muzzle-stopper, and oiled rag.”

Part the Second

Article I Married Soldiers and their Families.

“All boys after the age of five years will be dressed uniformly, out of the means hereafter to be arranged”.

Article II Care of Arms and Target practice.

“As a distinction, at once honourable and useful, the Colonel will direct that all marksmen, or soldiers of the third class, shall wear a small green cockade in front of the cap, immediately above the black leather one”.

“Any rifleman.. (of the 2nd class will) ..wear the small white cockade”.

Article VI Rewards for Merit. –Punishment for Crimes.

“With regard to exterior marks of distinction, as a reward for good conduct, and as an encouragement for merit, they must be given with a sparing and careful hand, in order that their real value must be felt; until the corps has been for some time permanently established, no exterior marks of distinction can be given, excepting to such well-behaved Non-commissioned officers and private Riflemen, as are promoted to a rank higher than their actual situation on the establishment; as, for instance, acting Serjeant-major, Serjeants, Corporals and the chosen men; as a distinction at once both honourable, and implying authority, all Non-commissioned officers acting in a superior rank will wear, in lieu of the customary V, or arrow, a sword on the right arm; in the instance of the Serjeant-Major it will be in lace, and in all others in white cloth; chosen men will be distinguished by a ring of white cloth on the right arm.”

“For distinguished marks of courage, and for voluntary acts of generosity towards either an enemy, or those who are in an enemy’s country, it is his (the Colonels) intention that two medals of honour shall be distributed as the reward- A brass medal; and a silver one; the model will hereafter be agreed upon....

...All medals will be worn on the left breast, suspended about four inches by a green and white ribband..”

“Confinement to barracks or quarters with disgrace, differs from the former (without disgrace) in this, that every private Rifleman and Bugler so confined, is to be taken by the Serjeant of the squad he belongs to, to the Taylor’s workshop, there have his cot turned, and the letter C sewed on his right arm in distinguishing cloth..”

“When a private or Bugler is ordered to the black-hole, the serjeant of his squad is to take him, with his undress jacket turned, to the Master Taylor, who is to sew the letter C, in black cloth, on the back of his jacket”.

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Article VII, General Regulations,

“All servants’ undress jackets will have the letter S in green cloth, sewn on the left arm. The dress which is to be worn by servants will be invariably according to the pattern in the Quarter Master’s possession, and will consist of a lead colour jacket, with light green cape and cuff, waistcoat and pantaloons of the same cloth as the jacket. The regimental buttons will alone be worn; the hair, half-leggings and stock to be also worn regimentally; no cravats or neck-cloth will be permitted. The hat will be glazed, with black and green cockade and a small band of lace”.