



Lieutenant-Colonel Norcott and The Equipment of the Regiment, 1816

By Ben Townsend

Norcott's Memorandum.

In July 1816, just over a year after Waterloo, Colonel Amos Norcott of the newly re-named Rifle Brigade submitted a memorandum to Horse Guards containing his views on the equipment of the 95th Rifles over the war years, and suggesting some improvements to be made. The Adjutant General forwarded this memo to Colonel Sir AF Barnard of the Rifle Brigade for consideration and comments. Neither the original memo or Barnard's response has yet been found, but a typewritten copy taken from Barnard's papers was made for the use of the rifle Brigade in the 1930s. Two versions of this typewritten copy still exist in the Winchester museum of the Rifles. The first, slightly abridged version was reproduced in the 1933 Rifle Brigade Chronicle and has been available there ever since, although very little of its information has been properly used by historians. The longer version contains more minute detail on equipment that might have been thought of little interest to non-specialists, but is of paramount interest to us. It also contains several snippets of information that were left out in the 1930s as being perhaps detrimental to the traditions of the Regiment, but which I believe are not so. I have attached a full copy of this second document to the end of this article for those who are interested in comparing it to the more commonly accessed version contained in The Rifle Brigade Chronicles.

It would appear that Horse Guards did not action Norcott's suggested changes, as the usual post-war economies were already in progress, and the reduction of the establishment meant that new issues of equipment were unlikely, however well-considered they might be. DeWitt provides evidence that the Rifles were still asking for the re-introduction of the flask in the 1820s¹. The primary interest of this document today lies in the record of what equipment and accoutrements the 95th Rifles used in the Peninsula and how they used it. As we will see, Norcott's observations, borne of experience, are sometimes at odds with the cherished portrayal of the 95th Rifle Man. The misapprehension that the horn magazine was used to load with when using loose ball is demolished, in fact he makes it clear that the Rifles ceased to carry the horn following the Campaign of Sir John Moore in Spain of 1809. Norcott also disproves the myth of the first British Infantry Rifle as some kind of super weapon, recording instead, that as used post 1809 with cartridge rather than loose patched ball, it was actually inferior to Brown Bess.



Description of Norcott's service².

In 1816 Lieutenant-Colonel Norcott, the future Major-General Norcott, was already looking back on a distinguished service career. He had served with the 33rd Foot in the Low Countries, 1794-5, the capture of the Dutch fleet at Saldanha Bay, Expedition to Manila, 1797, and transferred to the Rifle Corps in 1802, serving with them at Buenos Ayres, 1807, Sweden, 1809, and the Corunna Campaign, the Walcheren Expedition, Peninsula and Waterloo.

Norcott was in an excellent position to comment on the equipment of the regiment, having served as Brigade-Major to Major-General Ramsey virtually since its inception. He led the assault on Buenos Ayres on July 5th 1807, commanding the advance guard of General Craufurd's column of attack and was made prisoner with Craufurd. He returned to England in 1808, and sailed with the force under Sir John Moore, serving throughout that campaign and at the Battle of Corunna. He commanded part of the 95th in the expedition to the Scheldt, and served during the siege of Flushing in 1809. In 1810 he received the brevet of Lieut-Colonel. He embarked with the remnants of the 2nd Battalion for Cadiz in 1810 and remained there 'til the siege was raised in 1812, commanding part of the Rifles in the battle of Barrosa, before re-joining the reconstituted other elements of the 2/95th with Wellington's army at Madrid. He commanded the 2/95th through all the operations on the Nive and before Bayonne in 1813. He was seriously wounded at Tarbes in March, 1814, but rejoined the Regiment near Toulouse two months later. He commanded the 2/95th at Waterloo where he was carried from the field badly wounded, but again re-joined swiftly in September and continued in command of the 95th until the army evacuated Paris in November 1815. It should be noted that according to Colonel Smith, brother of Sir Harry Smith, the 2/95th held the place of honour leading the army into Paris for the occupation of 1815.



Major General Sir Amos Norcott C.B. K.C.H.
Served in Rifles, 1802-1830

As can be seen, Norcott was with the Regiment from its formation and was on active service with the 95th throughout the ensuing campaigns of the Napoleonic period. His information can be expected to be accurate. Where he describes alterations or exceptions to kit he states clearly whether these were adopted at Company, Battalion or Regimental level.

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Norcott and the Powder Horn.

Norcott describes the horn used upon the establishment of the Corps, for a complete description, see the transcription at the end of this article. He describes the method of discharge (by spring), and the size of the horns (fifty to sixty rounds). He notes that the Sergeants were equipped with smaller horns and pouches than the men.

Norcott makes it clear that the powder horn *was a magazine* and that it was not intended for the men to load from the horn, but from the flask. The horn was used to replenish the flask as necessary. There was presumably no separate measuring cup as is sometimes postulated. More likely it had no measure fitted to it as Norcott does not describe any separate charge measuring device and the purpose of the horn does not appear to require it. In 1809 the 5/60th, another Rifle armed unit, were complaining to Horse Guards that their horns were useless, “having no measure fitted to them”³.

Powder chargers *were* issued as part of the box implements equipment with the musket bore Infantry Rifles from 1810, according to DeWitt Bailey⁴. Since these rifles went to militia or volunteer units and not the 95th in the Peninsula, where it appears the carbine bore was preferred, we need not consider them here.

It appears that the 5/60th *was* still using the powder horn to load with at this time. In June 1809, after the 95th Rifles had stopped carrying the powder horn altogether, they were asking Horse guards for, “Powder-flasks of same description as those in possession of the 95th regiment”⁵.

Norcott goes on to say that the powder horn proved a liability on active service, and that following the campaign in Spain under Sir John Moore, “it was found advisable to discontinue their use”. He regrets the decision to adopt solely cartridge as opposed to using mainly the horn, but he repeatedly urges the re-introduction of the horn, making it clear that up until the point he is writing (1816), the horn has not been re-introduced. Pointedly he remarks that an Infantry Rifle using cartridge is less effective than an ordinary musket, a statement that goes some way towards re-assessing the ‘super weapon’ status of the ‘Baker’ rifle.

When suggesting the horn be again adopted, he relates some alterations made to the horn by the, “greater part of the second battalion’ in 1808-09.

Apparently the all too commonly failing mouthpiece and spring were replaced with a cork on a piece of waxed string, and the entirety was closely clad in leather.

A first, poor attempt at recreating this horn by me appears below, with a wooden rather than cork plug.



Apologies for the quality of above picture of a horn recently sold at auction and displaying leather cover and dice cup-like cover. I would welcome better pictures of horns like these.

Supporting evidence for the lack of a horn post-1809 comes from accoutrement returns that indicate the flask was retained where possible, but, unlike in the earlier returns, the horn makes no appearance. An inspection return of 8th April 1806 for the 2/95th at Hailsham⁶ shows 820 rifles with:

Pouches and belts
Sword belts
Slings
Lock caps (804)
Powder horns (691)
Powder flasks (880)
Tin and wood boxes (819)
Ball bags (825)
Bullet moulds (882)

From 1807 a printed return form is used for Arms and Accoutrements throughout the army, and no provision is made for listing the special accoutrements of the Rifle regiments; although a few handwritten reports⁷ from the field exist in which the powder horn is conspicuous by its absence eg.

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Alameda 3 Feb 1813, 1/95th:
643 rifles, Powder flasks 239 good, 99 bad, 104 wanting.

Ospeya, 6 Feb, 1813 3/95th:
382 rifles, Powder Flasks 191 good, 15 bad, 176 wanting; lock covers 305.

Further corroboration can be found in 95th memoirs. Compare for example the account by William Green on the Corunna retreat, (1808-9) "But we then had enough to carry; fifty round of ball cartridge; thirty loose balls in our waist belt; and a flask, and a horn of powder; and rifle, and sword; the two weighing 14 pounds"⁸, with that of Edward Costello who describes the regulation 'heavy marching order' kit carried by Riflemen at the time of the forced march on Talavera (1809). I expect everyone is familiar with this list that appears in every secondary source history of the rifles. He describes all accoutrements and impedimenta, viz: ball-bag, cartridge pouch and powder flask, but **not** a powder horn⁹.

Indeed, the in-utility of these horns was not a new phenomenon, in Don Troiani's *Soldiers in America 1754-1865*, Stackpole 1998, he notes that, "The horn was frequently left in store during the Revolutionary War by seasoned light troops, being viewed as an inconvenience, and its issue was rescinded in 1784."¹⁰

Norcott and the Powder Flask.

At some point between the inception of the Corps and 1803, when it appears on returns, the Rifle Men started to carry a small copper flask for the purpose of loading. The first inspection return for the Rifle Corps¹¹ so far located (Shorncliffe, 23rd Dec. 1803) describes the accoutrements then held by rank and file as:

Pouches and belts

Sword belts

Slings

Lock caps (340)

Powder horns (336)

Powder flasks (329)

Ball bags (330)

Norcott describes the flask and notes that it held 30 rounds. In the letter of the 5/60th mentioned above, they say 40 rounds. It was carried in "a pocket made on the left breast of the jacket, or "in the breast". He suggests that if the Rifle were ever to adopt the powder horn for use again, "the copper flask is absolutely necessary for the Soldier to load with". He then suggests various improvements to be made to the flask and the method of carrying it, noting

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that the companies under his command at Cadiz (two composite companies of the 2/95th being all those fit for service post-Walcheren) ¹² were equipped with a leather carrying case similar to the ball bag and carried on the left side of the bayonet belt. These were issued and paid for at company level. He recommends them and we can infer from his remarks that these companies continued to wear them after Cadiz.

The flask may have been covered in leather like those issued to the Percy Tenantry, from the collection of Marc Harding



Or in copper, as seen in the British Army's Warminster Small Arms Collection.

It appears from the accoutrement returns reproduced above, that, where it was serviceable, the copper flask was retained after the magazine horn was discarded. As late as 1820, flasks were being ordered for Tower stores, presumably for militia¹³. This may have been owing to its usefulness for

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renewing priming after a flash in the pan. It is occasionally stated that the flask was a vehicle for priming powder, however priming powder as a separate form of powder for infantry in the early C19th did not exist. The common use of priming horns and finer granulations of powder for priming were developments of the mid to late 19th century.¹⁴

Norcott on Cartridge pouches.

Norcott records two types of cartridge pouch successively used by the 95th Rifles. The first carried twelve cartridges in a wooden frame, “for use on the outposts at night, in the event of attack in dark, or bad weather”, and a tin compartment in two parts to carry loose ball in greased rags- presumably about 30 balls to supplement the thirty in the ball bag, the intention being to use the pouch as a magazine and the ball bag for expenditure. The spare flints, and tools were carried, “in a small leather bag with a running string” attached to the body of the pouch. Norcott comments that this pouch is well adapted for the (discontinued) practice of loading from loose powder and ball.

The second pouch, “presently in use” when he writes (1816) is similar but inferior, holding a mere fifty-two rounds of cartridge which he considers too little. In suggesting improvements he makes some interesting critical remarks on the packages in which cartridge was dispensed, and the manner in which these packages were accessed by the Rifle Men, “when cartridges are made up, and placed in packages, as now done, much time is lost, and ammunition wasted, for when the Soldier goes into action, he has to take one of these parcels out of his Pouch, unfasten it, and then replace the Cartridges from whence he took it; it generally occurs afterwards when they are all together in this manner, that he pulls out two or three at a time in place of one when going to load; and this is often done without his knowing it; even if he did, they would not be pick’d up. I have frequently seen the men after untying the parcels of ammunition, place them on the ground, in order to have them more at hand than when in the pouch, and I have as often seen them obliged to quit their station, and in so doing the ammunition has been lost”.

Norcott on Ball bags.

Norcott describes the Ball bag and recommends no changes. His description tallies with those preserved at Alnwick castle and described as being issued to the Percy Tenantry Rifle volunteers. Two reproductions of the Ball bag described by Norcott are shown below, one by the noted accoutrementist Sean Phillips and one by Paul Durrant of the 2/95th re-enactment group.



Norcott on the Sword-bayonet.

Norcott notes that the bayonet, “has been lately substituted to fix on the Rifle in place of the Sword” (for the Waterloo campaign where some elements of the 95th carried both, although presumably not the two companies of the 3/95th who were ragged not having had a kit re-issue for two years according to Thomas Knight)¹⁵. He suggests it be abolished as surplus to requirements, and cumbersome. Norcott and the men under him appear to consider the sword more a camp implement than a weapon, and inferior for that purpose to the felling axes carried by the 95th, “in preference to either sword or bill-hook”.

Norcott on lock covers,

Two lock covers are mentioned, but only loosely described. The ‘Green book’ or Regulations of the Rifle Corps, Egerton, 1801 mentions lock caps several times with no more information, for instance,

Part 1, article 10

Lists of arms and appointments of the Rifle Man.

" His arms will be, Rifle, sword, accoutrements including rifle-sling, picker, turnkey, worm-screw, lock-cap, muzzle-stopper, and oiled rag".¹⁶

And, hinting at the method of attachment,

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Part One, Article 50

".. his rifle to be fixed in the stand, barrel outwards, cock let down, and lock cap always on, loosely tied".¹⁷

Norcott says that the new issue lock cap is inferior to the old, and is perhaps referring to this innovation, from a General order to the army dated Quinta, 11 June 1811,

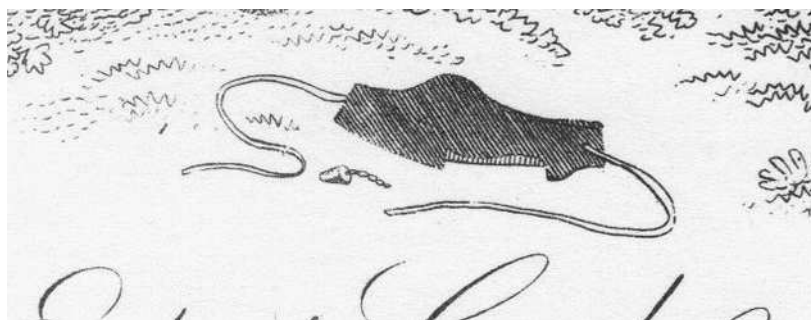
"The C-in-C having sent to this country a new invented cover for musket and rifle locks, of which he has directed the experiment might be tried by the troops in this country, ten of them will be delivered to each of the following regiments upon application to the commissary general; and the adjutant General will send to those regiments a paper describing the mode in which the soldier will be able to prime and fire his musket when it may be desirable to keep the lock covered from the weather.

List of Regiments: Coldstream Guards, 3rd Guards, 92d, 95th for rifles, 43d, 45th 40th, 61st, Chasseurs Britannique".¹⁸

And again from The Times, 18 October 1811 (as quoted in '*In Times gone by*', The Adjutant, Oct 2007)

"A musket-lock cover has been invented by an Officer of the Royal Marines, which affords a complete preservation of the priming for many hours under the heaviest rain: and possesses other advantages superior to any contrivance of the kind hitherto adopted. It has met with the approbation of all the Officers who have seen it tried, and 4000 are now preparing, at the expense of the Government, to be sent out to Portugal, for the use of the light troops of Lord Wellington's army".¹⁹

The lock covers may have resembled one pictured on the ground in front of a Rifleman in the frontispiece of *Scloppetaria*,²⁰



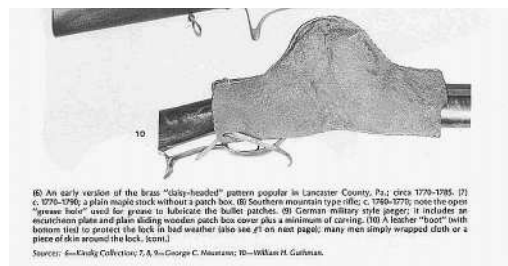
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Which is similar to this example,



(B) An early version of the brass "slopy-headed" pattern popular in Lancaster County, Pa; circa 1770-1785. (7) c. 1770-1780; a plain maple stock without a patch box. (8) Southern mountain type rifle; c. 1760-1770; note the open "grease hole" used for grease to lubricate the bullet patches. (9) German military style jagger; it includes an engravings plate and glass sliding wooden patch box cover plus a mechanism of carving. (10) A leather "boot" (with bottom tied) to protect the lock in bad weather (also see #1 on next page); many men simply wrapped cloth or a piece of skin around the lock. (cont.)

Sources: 6—Kasky Collection; 7, 9—George C. Meierman; 10—William H. Guthman.

"A leather boot (with bottom ties) to protect the lock from bad weather".²¹
Collection of William H. Guthman

Concluding Remarks,

Colonel Norcott left an invaluable record of some of the accoutrements and methods of Riflemen of the 95th. His detailed information, sometimes pedantically thorough, sometimes leaving tantalising gaps, sheds much needed light on these heroes of the immortal Light Division, and if his remarks on Ezekiel Baker's Rifle show that this excellent weapon was partially disabled by the exigencies of the service; then this shows only to highlight more clearly that the exploits of the men of the 95th were due to their training at the hands of McKenzie and his ilk, and to the splendid spirit of the Officers and men themselves.

Below is reproduced the entire text of Norcott as so far found. This is reproduced here by the kind permission of the Winchester Regimental Museum of the Rifles, without whose assistance and vigilance none of this article would have been possible. Thank you especially to Christine Pullen and Major Gray of that institution, and to the 2/95th re-enactment group who all had a hand in clarifying various points to me, and whose excellent reproductions continue to inspire.

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The Letter.

Horse Guards
19th July, 1816

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to you a memorandum which has been received from Lieutenant-Colonel Norcott of the Rifle Brigade, containing observations in respect to the equipment of the Corps with various suggestions for its improvement; and it appearing to the commander-in-chief that in the event of any alterations of the nature proposed being ultimately decided upon that the present is a favourable period for their adoption. I have it in command to request that you will transmit to me, by an early opportunity, a full and detailed Report of your opinion upon the description of equipment at present in use by the Rifle Brigade, and whether the alterations suggested in the enclosure, or any part of them, appear to you of that nature as to render their adoption expedient.

You will be pleased to return the Enclosure with your reports.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your very obedient Humble Servant,

(SIGNED) Hazlebrook,

A.G.

Description of the large Powder Horn or Magazine.

Upon the Establishment of the Corps, each soldier carried a large Cow Horn slung from two rings by a Green Cord; which passing through leather loops on the Pouch Belt, confined it to the waist about an inch or more above the Pouch.

The bottom of this horn was made of wood, covered, and mounted with brass; the Mouth piece was fitted with a spring such as is usually fixed to a Shot belt. The horns varied a little in size, but generally contained from fifty to sixty rounds of powder.

The sergeants being equipped with smaller Pouches than the men, were furnished with a horn corresponding in size, containing about twenty-five rounds of Powder.

Of The Small Copper Powder flask.

Each Non-Commissioned Officer and Soldier was also supplied with this flask, generally holding Thirty rounds of Powder. A Green Cord fastened it to

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two rings, "which were fix'd to the mounting upon the neck of the flask," and was slung around the Soldier's Collar. The flask was sometimes carried in a pocket made on the left breast of the Jacket, and at others hung by his Side. The mouthpiece screwed on the orifice, and the measure of powder was thus supplied by pulling back the spring and tilting the flask. The soldier loaded from this flask and it was replenished from the Magazine horn as required.

Of The First Pouch Issued To The Corps.

The Shape was an oblong with the top perfectly flat, side leathers united with the front, thus forming a complete case as a guard against weather. The Spare Flints were carried in a small leather bag with a running string, and this was attached to the body of the Pouch under the cover of it.

The interior consisted of a Tin Case divided into two equal parts, and a wooden frame with holes for twelve cartridges. The loose Balls covered with greased rags were kept in the tin compartments, and the Ball Cartridges in the wooden holes.

These latter were intended for use on the outposts at night, in the event of attack in dark, or bad weather, being then more easy to load with, than loose Powder and Ball.

Of The Pouch at Present In Use.

It differs from the Former one in no respect as to interior. The form is an oblong curved, in order to sit close to the back of the Waist; it has no side guard against bad weather, and the place in which the spare flints are placed is unequal to hold them securely, being too small and without any running string to close it.

Of The Ball Bag.

This article is made of leather with a running leather string to close it at the mouth; it has a cover which lays over the mouth about an inch or more all round, fastening with a round leather button to the body of the bag. This bag is fastened to the Waist, or Bayonet belt, by two pieces of leather attached to the inside of it through which the belt passes; it is fix'd on the right side. The intention of the Ball Bag is to contain a certain proportion of loose greased Balls, which are more at hand for loading than if taken from the Pouch. These balls when expended are replaced by others from the Magazine in the Pouch.

Observations on the Large Horn or Magazine, and On The Small Copper Flask, With suggestions For Their improvement.

The first campaign in the Peninsula and the Service of the Corps upon the various Expeditions it has been employed on, most clearly proved to the

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Officers, and Soldiers, that the repair of these Articles could not be kept up; that men, who had them in an incomplete state, were perfectly useless to the Service, and that accidents were continually liable to happen from the quantity of loose powder about the person of the soldier with the mouthpiece of his horn lost or damaged.

The mounting of these Horns was worked upon false principles, and deficient in strength for the use required. The Mouth Pieces, and Springs were continually out of order from a general want of care on the part of the Soldier, who was not always particular in handling articles of such nice construction; from accidents, and bad weather. It was found extremely difficult, and expensive, and in many instances impossible to replace, and repair them; owing to the local situation of the Corps, the want of proper materials at hand, and of workmen. Under every circumstance that then existed it was found advisable to discontinue their use, and supply the Corps with Ball Cartridge Ammunition.

The efficiency of the Rifle has been ever since most inferior, even to a Musquet. It is not necessary for me to enter into a detail of the comparative merits of a Rifle loaded, and fired with loose powder and Ball, and one with Ball Cartridge. I conceive the use of loose powder and Ball to be the only proper ammunition for, and true manner of giving to a Rifle its destructive qualities, I would suggest that the large Cow Horn, or Powder Magazine, be re-established as a part of the equipment of the Corps, and prepared in the following manner in place of the principle upon which it was before constructed upon.

I Propose to have the Cow Horn exactly as heretofore, with a wooden bottom, covered and mounted with brass, but extending at least one Inch over the edges, with two strong brass rings rivitted upon it.

In place of the Mouth piece and Spring, I would have nothing more than a Cork Plug, secured to the neck of the horn by a string wax'd string. The whole of the horn to be covered with black leather sewed tightly round, having a cover (all in one) over the Plug and fastening to a leather button. The second ring is on the neck. The price of this Horn will be infinitely less than before, and it will require neither expence or trouble, to be kept complete in any situation in which the Corps may be placed; and in regard to the Preservation of the Powder, and the prevention of accidents, the proposed plan is unquestionably more favourable. I adopted it with the Companies of the Regiment I had occasionally under my Command, in every instance wherein the original horn was rendered incomplete, by the loss of the mouthpiece, and spring, or by damage, and could not be repaired. I was never apprehensive of an accident, nor did a single one ever occur. The greater part of the horns of the Second Battalion were fitted up in the proposed manner, during the Campaign in Spain under Sir J. Moore, and as it never fired a shot during the retreat to Corunna a good opportunity presented itself of ascertaining the

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superiority of the new plan, over the old one, for upon the arrival of the Regt in its quarters in England, these horns were completely full of Powder, perfectly dry, and in service order, whereas with the others, the greater part of it was either damp, or had been lost through the Mouth piece, and Spring, which after a little wear always admitted the powder to pass through.

If the Magazine Horn should be adopted, the small Copper Flask is absolutely necessary for the Soldier to load with.

I would therefore suggest its being again substituted, but upon the following improved principles. The mounting should be considerably deeper, and stronger, than before, so as to leave no chance of its loosening or being bruised by use. I would further secure the mounting by fixing a brass circle round the exterior of the mounting upon which the rings should be fix'd, thro' which the Cord passes by which it is carried. The rings were fix'd upon the old flask in such a manner that after a short use of it, the powder came out continually.

In order the more effectually to prevent the Mouth piece and Spring from accident, and rust, I would propose, in place of carrying this small Copper Flask in a pocket of the soldier's jacket, or in his Breast, by which the article was continually liable to injure and accidents to happen, to have a leather case for it fix'd to the Waist belt on the left side, and made upon the same principles that the present ball Bag is constructed upon.

By this plan the flask would be always preserved from injury and bad weather, accidents much less likely to occur, and it would be carried in the most safe and easy manner

The two companies of the Regiment which I commanded at the Siege of Cadiz furnished these leather cases at their own expense, for the copper flask. They were always in Service order, and the powder complete, and in perfect good order. They were highly approved of by all the Corps when these companies joined the army near Madrid in 1812.

The expence of what I suggest for the improvement of this flask and for the leather case to contain it, would be very trifling, and the Colonel would in the end benefit very materially by its adoption.

Observations on the Pouch and Plan for its Improvement.

The pouch at present in use with the Corps, altho' exactly similar to the old one, as to the interior, is yet very deficient to it in other respects. It has no side guards or case against bad weather, nor is the place attached to the body of it, equal to hold the required number of spare flints, or to secure them from falling out. The pouch cannot contain, without the risk of bruising the cartridges in the paper packages as now made up, more than four parcels of ten each; and the wooden holes, twelve, thus making in the whole, fifty-two rounds, a number infinitely too small for Riflemen to have in their possession.; it is neither equal to the preservation of ammunition as the edges

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of the tin box injures it much, and the propensity of that metal to rust when damp is also unfavourable to the Powder.

Should the magazine horn and copper flask be again introduced into the Corps, with loose balls, the very best pouch it can have is the original one the regiment was furnished with. It is perfect in every respect for the use intended. If however the Corps is destined to use ball cartridge only, neither of the pouches treated of, are calculated for the preservation of that sort of ammunition, inasmuch as relates to its being contained in tin compartments. I would therefore suggest under this latter supposition, that the Pouches be furnished with two wooden frames containing holes for thirty rounds each and placed one above the other in the pouch; I would give the preference to this latter plan for the whole army; as I know from experience, and I have no doubt, but that most Officers will agree in opinion with me, that, when cartridges are made up, and placed in packages, as now done, much time is lost, and ammunition wasted, for when the Soldier goes into action, he has to take one of these parcels out of his Pouch, unfasten it, and then replace the Cartridges from whence he took it; it generally occurs afterwards when they are all together in this manner, that he pulls out two or three at a time in place of one when going to load; and this is often done without his knowing it; even if he did, they would not be pick'd up. I have frequently seen the men after untying the parcels of ammunition, place them on the ground, in order to have them more at hand than when in the pouch, and I have as often seen them obliged to quit their station, and in so doing the ammunition has been lost. To obviate this loss of time and waste of powder and Ball, the proposed pouch will be found to answer most effectually. It will preserve the Cartridges in better form for loading, and prevent their being damaged as they generally are from being packed in parcels, and squeezed together in the Pouch. It is well known that ammunition placed in separate wooden holes in a Pouch, is much less liable to injure by damp than a number of Cartridges pack'd together in a paper and kept in a Pouch solely of leather in the interior.

Observations On The Sword .

As the bayonet has been lately substituted to fix on the Rifle in place of the Sword, I would suggest that it be abolished altogether; the soldier has no use for both. It was always a preventative to his easy marching from the manner in which it was slung, and is very heavy. If it be said that it must be of use upon service in order to cut wood or to hut, I can testify that the Light Division in Spain carried small felling axes, purchased by the captains for the men at the particular request of the latter, which they carried on all occasions by squads, and used them in preference to either sword or billhook. They secured more wood with these axes in to hours than the Division could have done in two days with the other articles; indeed, I scarcely ever knew the Soldier use his sword, but for the purpose of dividing the meat, or for clearing ground to lay on. They were so persuaded of the utility of the felling axe, that it rarely occurred it was either neglected or lost, and it is a well known fact that from

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the use of this article the Light Division was always huttet, and had cook'd its provisions, before another one had scarcely started on either. The late General Craufurd praised it most strongly, and recommended its being kept up in all situations. The Corps composing the Light Divison in Spain continued ever afterwards to carry these axes.

Last Notes .

The ball bag is so perfect that it is impossible to improve upon it.

The original lock cap is by far the best article of the two kinds that the Corps have used.

Those latterly issued with sponge above and below, to prevent the water from running down the barrel, and on to the lock, have never been found to answer. On the contrary, the sponge collected the water and from the action of the rifle against the shoulder, or the hand, of the soldier, generally caused more water to pass, than would have done without it.

(Sgd) A. Norcott, Lt Colonel.
Major. Rifle Brigade

" Guarda D'Abrantes
June 14th, 1809

Sir,

I beg leave to state to you, for the information of His Royal Highness the C-in-C, that the powderhorns with which the 5th battalion 60th regiment is supplied, have, by experience, been found to be ill-adapted to the service, and by their construction have not only occasioned much loss of powder, and subjected the Colonel to great expenses in repairs, but have proved after all to be entirely useless, being too large and having no measure fitted to them. They have been furnished by Messrs Beseley and Reise of Parliament Street, London, after patterns delibvered to them, but experience having now shown their inutility, I beg leave to suggest the propriety of providing the battalion with powder-flasks of same description as those in possession of the 95th Regiment, large enough to contain forty rounds of fine-grain powder at five drachms each round, including the priming, with proper measures adapted to them for different distances..

To the Adjt-General of Forces

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Horse Guards, London"

Quoted in Rigaud, op. cit.24, according to De Witt Bailey, British Military Flintlock rifles, p.149

- 1 p.148 British Military Flintlock Rifles 1740-1840, De Witt Bailey, Andrew Mowbray, 2002
- 2 pp. 82-85 Rifle Brigade Chronicle 1892. Further information from Rifle Green in the Peninsula, vol 1, Caldwell and Cooper, Bugle Horn Publications, 1998
- 3 p.37 Swift and Bold, Rigaud, Leonaur 2008
- 4 p.149 British Military Flintlock Rifles 1740-1840, De Witt Bailey, Andrew Mowbray, 2002
- 5 p.38 Swift and Bold, Rigaud, Leonaur 2008
- 6 p.146 British Military Flintlock Rifles 1740-1840, De Witt Bailey, Andrew Mowbray, 2002
- 7 p.146 ibid
- 8 p. 14 Where Duty calls me, The experiences of William Green in the Napoleonic Wars, ed J and D Teague, Synjon 1975
- 9 Costello in July 1809, Portugal.
"Knapsack and straps, two shirts, two pairs of stockings, one pair of shoes, ditto soles and heels, three brushes, box of blacking, razor, soap-box and strap, and also at the time an extra pair of trousers; a mess-tin, centre-tin and lid, haversack and canteen, greatcoat and blanket, a powder-flask filled, a ball-bag containing thirty loose balls, a small wooden mallet used to hammer the ball into the muzzle of our rifles; belt and pouch, the latter containing fifty rounds of ammunition, sword belt and rifle, besides other odds and ends that at all times are required for a service soldier. Each squad had also to carry four bill-hooks that weighed six pounds each, so that every other day, each man had to carry it; thus we were equipped with from 70 to 80 pounds weight.."
- 10 p.45 Don Troiani's Soldiers in America 1754-1865, Stackpole 1998
- 11 WO 27/87
- 12 p.132 Rifle Green in the Peninsula, vol 2, Caldwell and Cooper, Bugle Horn Publications, 2006
- 13 p.148 British Military Flintlock Rifles 1740-1840, De Witt Bailey, Andrew Mowbray, 2002
- 14 For more information on priming powder see
http://www.flintriflesmith.com/Wr...ch/Published/priming_horns_m_b.htm
- 15 p.25-26 The Reminiscences of Thomas Knight of the 95th, Leonaur, 2007
- 16 The 'Green book' or Regulations of the Rifle Corps, Egerton, 1801, reproduced in The Rifle Brigade Chronicles

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- 17 Ibid
- 18 p.109 General orders, Spain and Portugal Jan 1st-Dec31st 1811, vol III, Egerton, 1812
- 19 (as quoted in '*In Times gone by*', The Adjutant, Oct 2007)
- 20 Scloppetaria, A Corporal of Riflemen, Richmond Publishing 1971
- 21 p.235, Collectors' Illustrated Encyclopaedia of The American Revolution, Neumann and Kravic, Castle Books, 1977

(Original Signed:)

Complied by:

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Rifleman
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