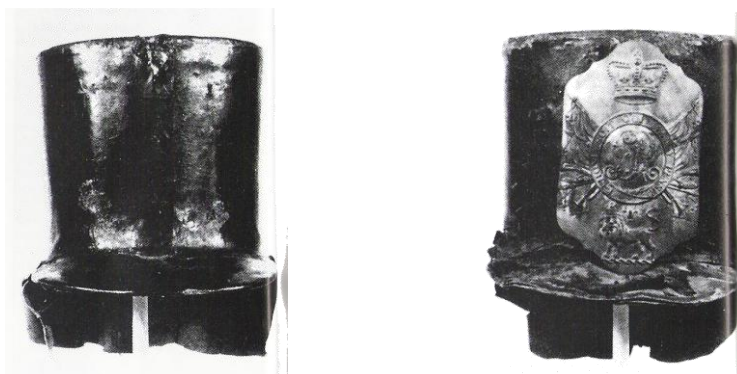




The Regimental Cap {Shako}

Part 1

The Regimental cap or shako replaced the “cocked hat {tricorn}” around 1800. In the 1802 Clothing Regulations state “*Caps made of Felt and Leather with a Brass Plates, Cockade and Tuft (conformable to a Pattern left at the Controller Office for Army Accounts) to be Worn, instead of Hats, by the Non-Commissioned Officers, Drummers, Fifers and Privates of the Guards and be every Description of Corps of Infantry, excepting the Highland Corps, who are, when in Europe, N. America, to continue to wear the Highland Bonnet, but when in the East and West Indies, are to wear the Felt Caps similar to other Regiments*”. Though some early examples appeared to have been from made from lacquered canvas or leather. By 1806 only a felt cap was referred to in any documents.



Two views of the lacquered or leather caps {National Army Museum}



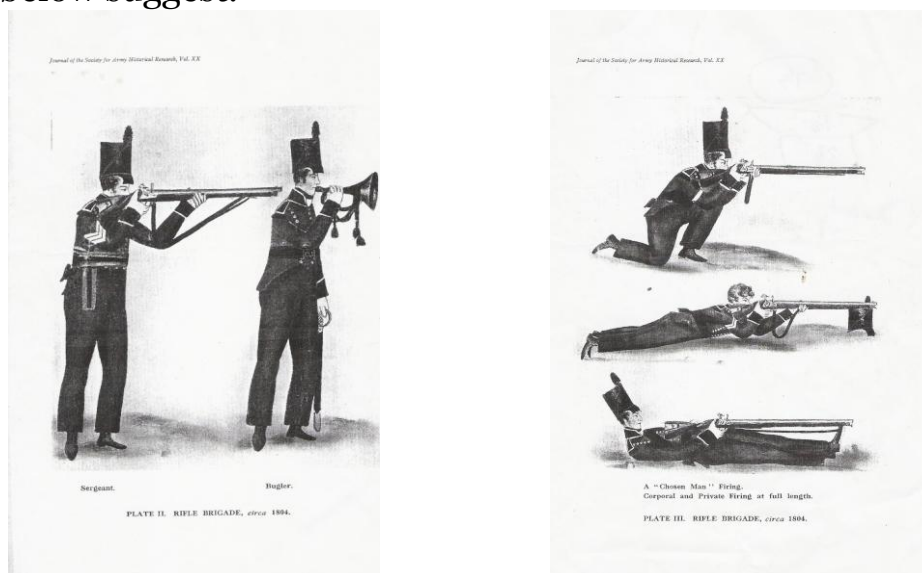
Two serving examples of the felt cap {left Private Collection, right RGJ Museum}

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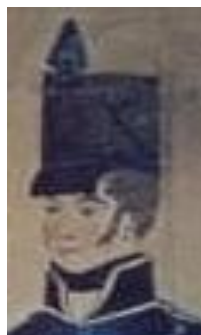
The 2nd Battalion 95th (Rifle) Regiment of Foot Re-enactment Group.
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No dimensions are given in the 1802 Regs but serving examples all seem to be about 7-8 inches tall with an approx 7-inch diameter top. Known also a “stovepipe” as for from the profile the sides were almost parallel. The caps were made from a single piece of felt drawn over a cylindrical block. There are some examples of Officers private purchase caps where they have a separate top. Inside the caps was a leather foul weather flap which when folded down would give some protection against rain or sun on the neck. Also a linen liner with a draw sting which help give a better fit. This cap was the standard cap throughout the Infantry. On the 17th April 1809 a new Warrant order was issued for Riflemen stating that *“Alterations in the peaks of the caps of the Rifle corps has been approved, and that they are in future to be square instead of round, as has hitherto been the case”* [WO3/47,474-5; 17-04-09, Adjutant General]. Although they may have had square peak earlier than 1809 as the images below suggest.



Images from about 1804 showing the square peak



A period image of a Rifleman and his young lady {date unknown} showing the square peak and as with the image above no cap badge is present.



The Hamilton-Smith 1813 published image of the Riflemen of the 5/60th and 95th. Also note their caps have a chinstrap.

"Lieut.- Generals of Divisions will immediately give orders that proper means are taken for securing the soldiers' caps by fixing tapes so that they may be tied under the chin to prevent them falling of" Dated about 1809.

The 95th followed the 1802 Regs by having a green tuft and a black cockade with a regimental button in its centre, *"The Tufts worn by the Battalion to be White with a Red Bottom, by the Grenadiers to be all White and by the Light Infantry to be dark Green. The Whole to wear the Button of their Respective Regiments in the Centre of the Cockade"*.

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Other cap furniture the 1802 Regs states; “*The Rifle Corps not to wear the Brass Fronting on their Caps, but in Lieu to have a Bugle & Crown with a Green Cord round the Cap*”. The 2nd 95th Rifles Re-enactment Group uses a green cord platted in the style that was used during the period. For the cap badge no known examples exist. Period images tend to contradict the 1802 Regs, either not having showing any cap badge or just a bugle horn. Very few show a bugle horn and crown. The cap badge used by the 2nd 95th Rifles re-enactment group is just a bugle horn, though we have left a space between the bugle horn and cockade to insert a crown if more evidence comes to light. Our cap badge is copied from an original bugle horn from the period; this example was found in America on a known British camp site used during the 1812 War near Washington. Several of the badges we recovered from this site, also one was found on the New Orleans battlefield and some in Canada. There is also an example in held by the NAM. Similar badges have also been found in Spain and France. Though we cannot say for certain that this cap badge was used by the 95th Rifles but we can say it’s a Georgian British Army Bugle Horn, where many other Rifle and Light Infantry Re-enactment Groups use either a made up or Victorian badge.



An original Bugle Horn Badge and a Reproduction one
We would like to thank James Kochan for producing and supplying these cap badges.

Here is the current Regimental Cap we use in the 2nd 95th Rifles. As we portray the Rifles from 1809 we have adopted the square peak, also note the green band around the base of the cap. This shows up in period images and on serving examples.



A nice shiny new Regimental Cap



A somewhat battered one {alas mine!}

Serjt Dave