



French infantry charge screaming at the British lines. In the centre is the Eagle which Sharpe and Harper capture.

spelt before anyone writes in) are beautiful, and the palace where Wellesley met Moore is still there to be found. Lisbon I scoured for things I could add to my collection but *Be Warned!* It is very expensive to

Facing page: *Not all the enemies are French; Sir Henry Simmerson 'whom God preserve or preferably not' and his lackey, Lieutenant Gibbons, who later... but you'd better read the book.*

buy those much-sought after souvenirs. The Peninsular War Gallery at the Castelo San Jorge was closed, much to my chagrin.

So — after the 'Officer' Mess' in Lisbon, the film ended as we began in a series of pistol and rifle shots, fired by me and recorded for sound dubbing purposes, full charges and unfailing ignition, for realism. Most of the firearms used in the film are full-fuctioning flintlock muzzle loaders, and in the

hands of an experienced muzzle loader proved no problem. Ten of the Ukrainian conscripts were trained to use the Brown Bess musket, loaded by them using paper cartridges, and they did extremely well — heart warming, in fact, and a precious memory I'll never forget. Four shots per minute? Easy!

As it says in the books, Sharpe and Harper will march again... it is a long road to Waterloo. **MI**

Men of the 'South Essex' Regiment prepare to withstand the onslaught.

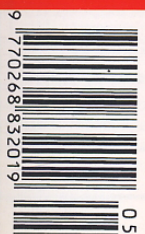


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THE 95TH (RIFLE) REGIMENT OF FOOT

KING JAMES' FOOT:

UNIFORMS AT SEDGEMOOR, 1685

ROBERT E. LEE

14th CENTURY CAVALRY WARFARE

US MEDICAL CORPS, 1857-87

PANZERGRENADIER DIVISION

'GROSSDEUTSCHLAND'

The 95th (Rifle) Regiment of Foot

NEIL LEONARD

WITH THE ARRIVAL of Richard Sharpe and Patrick Harper on our television screens this month, it seems appropriate to examine the origins of this famous regiment and others which would constitute the equally famous Light Division.

THIS IS THE first in a series of articles covering the Napoleonic Association's re-created 95th (Rifle) Regiment of Foot, a fairly small group of Napoleonic enthusiasts well noted for their discipline and authenticity of re-created uniforms, kit and equipment. For example, the rifles used by the group are individually hand crafted, each one taking well over six months to manufacture. As the Baker rifle is not on the production lists of the large commercial makers of period weapons, such as the British Brown Bess or Tower Musket and the French Charleville, the Baker rifle has had to be put together by members of the group themselves. This was achieved by first stripping down an original. Copies were then made in wood for the stock and butt, the brass parts were sand casted from moulds of the original parts, and painstakingly filed and polished. Finally, proof barrels were bought in, as were the steel ramrod and lock mechanisms needed to complete the task of reproducing the famed Baker rifles.

To begin with we will consider the development of the concept of the light infantryman and other light troops who, at the time of their arrival on the battlefield of continental Europe in the early 1740s, were thought to have brought about a major revolution in the military tactics of the time. We will then go on to consider the development in the British Army of the élite of all light troops, who were themselves also considered as something special, the 95th (Rifle) Regiment of Foot.

In the second part of the article we will take a detailed look at the famous Baker rifle itself, and consider the weapon from a technical point of view, its construction, performance, advantages and disadvantages, the loading and firing, the types of position that the rifleman would adopt when firing, and finally we will examine the equipment of the rifleman himself.

The history and development of rifled weapons seems to walk hand in hand with the history and development of light infantry tactics to which the rifle was to lend itself perfectly. It seems to have been



Charles Hamilton Smith's portrayal of a rifleman of the 95th and rifleman of the 60th Regiment; note the red facings on the soldier of the 60th.

made especially for the war of the outposts, or *petite guerre* as it was sometimes known.

The development or concept of the rifle is thought to have evolved from a particular practice that many marksmen and hunters once employed; that of biting or chewing the rounded lead musket balls before ramming them down the barrels of their smoothbore hunting or fowling pieces. This practice was said to have a twofold effect: the first was to ensure that a wound made by such a ball, chewed or bitten in this manner, was sure to be much more severe than that from a mere spherical ball, giving a greater possibility of a kill. The second effect of this method, so it was claimed, was to make the ball spin through the air. This was thought to be caused by the effect of the air as it caught the irregular surface of the ball as the projectile forced its way through the barrel of the piece. It was said to make the

hunter's aim more true and increase the likelihood of hitting the target or prey.

The spinning effect of the ball and its tendency to make the hunter's aim more true was finally harnessed by the development of crude channels cut in the barrels of sporting and hunting guns. These channels were finally spiralled, this practice was the forerunner of the military rifle, although its use was initially confined to sporting or hunting weapons. Its use with the military was slowly realised, especially so with the British Army.

Rifling had the effect of increasing a gun's range and accuracy, but made it very slow to load. A smoothbore musket could fire three rounds in the space of one from a rifle which, with the very tight fitting of the ball and greased patch, often needed a small hammer or mallet to ram home. This reason, and the fact that rifle barrelled guns were

more expensive than their smoothbore counterparts, were probably why the major European powers were slow to adopt them. It is believed that the rifle first made its appearance in the eastern or central parts of the European continent, and slowly spread west. Britain being far to the west, was slow to catch on and develop its own rifles while they were in common use throughout the rest of the continent.

The military tactics of the early and mid-18th century, when the rifle was first making its appearance, were entirely based on the concept of the mass volley fire of large lines of musket armed infantry, discharging their volley at a similar line of infantry, armed with the same weapons. Thus the musket was the ideal weapon for use against such large bodies of opposing troops presenting such a huge target. The musket's fairly rapid rate of fire, even if not as accurate as the rifle's, was well suited to this form of warfare and was usually sure to find a mark. However, things were about to change. With the development of the new tactics of the irregular or light arm, not only the infantry were to find new roles, but also the cavalry and even the artillery were to be affected by the war of the outposts. With the development of formalised light infantry tactics, and further technical achievements, such as breech loading which was to increase the efficiency of the rifle further, the end was in sight for the musket.

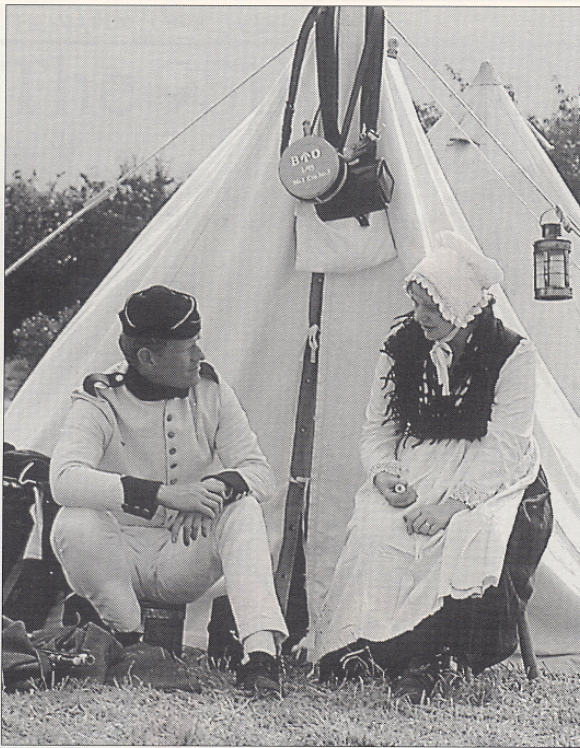
The development of light troops in Europe was to coincide with the death of Frederick William I of Prussia, and the coming to the throne of Frederick II (Frederick the Great) in 1740. His proclamation as King was to lead indirectly to some significant developments in light infantry tactics. The death of the Habsburg Emperor Charles VI in that very same year, and the wrangle over the succession of his daughter Maria Theresa to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire, sparked off the first and

Opposite:

A sergeant plunders a fallen Frenchman, while a rifleman takes aim, and a second rifleman loads in the kneeling position.

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Front view of the undress uniform of the 95th Regiment, consisting of white breeches, off-white undress tunic and black undress cap piped in white with a white metal '95' on the front.

second Silesian Wars — which are often grouped together and known as the Wars of the Austrian Succession — in which Frederick attempted to seize Austrian Silesia for Prussia.

At first Frederick's Silesian campaign went very well, his highly trained and superbly drilled Prussians sweeping aside all resistance before them, encountering little or no opposition. Losses were minimal and Silesia soon fell into his hands, apart from some garrison towns which still kept up a stubborn resistance. By the end of January 1741, the vast majority of Austrian Silesia was under Prussian control, at which point a further threat appeared on Austria's borders with the French and Bavarian armies massing their forces for a share of the spoils, via an invasion of Bohemia. Things were indeed going well for Frederick.

However, the Austrians soon started to infiltrate the lines of communication and the rear of the Prussian armies with masses of irregular infantry and cavalry formations. They occupied roads, woods, villages, hilly

and rough areas of terrain, the natural choice of the guerrilla or irregular. These partisan irregulars were to completely disrupt the rest of Frederick's campaign, by attacking small garrisons, ambushing convoys and supply trains and cutting off small detachments; they seemed to be able to strike at will and with great effect.

These troops were the Croat Pandors and Hungarian Magyar irregulars from the fringes of the huge Austrian empire. They were ruthless and merciless, grossly ill-disciplined and would massacre all who fell into their hands; even women and wounded soldiers were not spared... They were, however, the eyes and ears of the Austrian army, and would report every movement that the Prussians were to make. Whole garrisons could be tied down for weeks, every move the Prussians made, concentrations of troops, supplies, the movement of artillery pieces, cavalry, and infantry were all known to the Austrians. And as the Austrian regular field army made its preparations to re-enter Silesia, the irregulars were to cover the advance so successfully that the Prussians were completely ignorant of it when the attack finally came.

The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Silesian wars (the 3rd more commonly known as the Seven Years' War), were to see the first adoption of the new light tac-

tics, not only for the infantry, but also for the cavalry in the form of the Hussar, and for the artillery in the form of the new flying batteries or galloping guns. Light tactics were really nothing new, they were known to the Romans, but in an age when the musket and steady line of infantry dominated the battlefield, they were a significant redevelopment of old tactics in a new age, and caused a complete revolution in terms of military thinking. Soon all the major European powers were to develop their own light troops in all their forms, to which the rifle with its greater accuracy and range was to be ideally suited.

The development of the British light infantry arm seems to have been a fairly slow process, with a good start having been made in the French and Indian wars in the American colonies, followed by a lapse, only to be re-started again in the American War of Independence, followed by yet another period of underdevelopment until a final revival at the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars with France. By this time it had been perceived that Britain was severely retarded in terms of a light infantry arm, compared to the French, who had used their chasseurs and tirailleurs to great effect in the campaigns in the Low Countries of the 1790s.

While the British had largely forgotten the invaluable lessons of the French and Indian wars and those of the War of Independence, the French, Prussians, Austrians

and the other European countries had not. They had raised large formations of light infantry units, in some cases exclusively recruited from the ranks of hunters, gamekeepers, foresters and marksmen who were already expert shots. They wore the dark shades of the forest, the greens, greys and black colours which were to be an early form of camouflage. Used to communicating over long distances, over broken and wooded terrain, they used the hunting horn not only for the swift transmission of orders to a scattered formation, but also as a symbol and badge of the light infantry, an emblem which is still used to this day.

During the wars in the American colonies the British did use light infantry tactics to great effect, particularly with famous formations of light troops such as Colonel Robert Rogers' Rangers, skilled backwoodsmen who could fight the French and Indians on their own terms, acting as irregular scouts and excellent light infantrymen. At the close of the

Another Charles Hamilton Smith portrait of King's German Legion troops. The central figure is from a line company rather than a sharpshooter company, which we can tell from the fact that he carries a Brown Bess and socket bayonet rather than a Baker rifle and sword bayonet. All centre companies of the two KGL battalions were clad as riflemen, but only the sharpshooter companies were armed with rifles.



1750s specially trained light companies were added to each battalion of line infantry, but this practice seems to have been largely discontinued by the close of the Seven Years' War in 1763.

With the coming of the American War of Independence in 1775, the neglect of the British light infantry was to result in a great shortage of trained light troops to meet the threat posed by the rebels. This shortage, however, was not to last as the army in the colonies quickly developed further regiments of Rangers and light infantry.

Highly skilled units of light infantry were developed during the war in the colonies but again, as at the end of the Seven Years' War, when Britain lost the war in America, the light arm was again left in a state of neglect. By the time of the French Revolutionary Wars of the 1790s, Britain was again left without an effective light infantry force. Although some units were officially termed 'light', the skills they had learned during the conflict in the colonies were no longer practised, so they were light infantry in name only.

The Duke of York, upon the retirement of Lord Amhurst in 1795, was appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the British Army. He had already had first-hand experience of the French chasseurs and tirailleurs during the campaigns in the Low Countries, and it was his keen interest in the light infantry arm that led to the establishment and setting up of the Experimental Corps of Riflemen.

The Duke of York's army reforms were fairly widespread but, in so far as the light infantry are concerned, they led to the publication of the 'Regulations for the Exercise of Riflemen and Light Infantry' and the setting up of a widespread study into the usefulness of the light infantry arm.

The only trained light unit at the time of the Duke's study was the 5th Battalion of the 60th Regiment. Eventually this was to be followed by the conversion of the 52nd Regiment to light status, quickly followed by the 43rd Regiment, the 51st, the 68th, the 71st, and the 85th and the 90th Regiments: troops who were to form the backbone of the famous Light Division in later years.

The Experimental Corps of Riflemen was not the only British formation to be armed with the rifle, as we shall see later. However, they are per-



haps the most famed of all. The Corps began its life early in the year 1800 as a direct result of the Duke of York's study into their viability and his far-reaching reforms. They were commanded and formed by Colonel Coothe Manningham and Lieutenant Colonel William Stuart, because of the practical experience both of these officers had had of leading light troops in the West Indies. The men were drawn

Private of the North Yorks Militia circa 1814. These were said to have been the first rifle-armed troops in the British Army, being formed in 1796.

from detachments from a total of 13 different regiments from the regular army with the addition of some recruits from the Fencible regiments.

The Experimental Corps was clad in dark or what is now known as rifle green, given

Key to colour photos overleaf.

Page 18, top left:

Note here the rank distinction of the chosen man, or lance corporal as he would be known today; he wears a band of white worsted lace which encompasses his right arm.

Top right:

The 95th were not the only British troops to be armed with the Baker rifle. The sharpshooter companies of the King's German Legion were also armed with the rifle; the remainder being armed with the smooth-bore. This sergeant of the 2nd Light Battalion KGL differs slightly in dress from the riflemen of the 95th, in that he wears the grey overalls instead of the green of the 95th, the green tufted ball on his shako which is slightly more tapered than that of the 95th, which also has a chin strap. Note also the tufted wings worn on the shoulders of his tunic.

Bottom left:

Rear view of the 95th Rifles' officer. The dolman worn by this officer is of the less elaborate starburst type, an example of which survives in the Rifle Brigade Museum in Winchester.

Bottom right:

Riflemen skirmishing in pairs; one man covers whilst the other loads.

Page 19, top left:

Officer of the 95th Rifles.

Page 19, top right:

Officer of the 95th Rifles peers through a brass telescope.

Page 19, bottom left:

As above.

Page 19, bottom right:

Frontal view of an officer of the 95th Rifles. Note the shako with its distinctive upturned peak. The uniform is in rifle green with black velvet collar and cuffs. The buttons are of silver, of the ball and half type. The rest of the appointments are in silver with black leather accoutrements. The sash is in the typical light infantry style and he wears a cut feather plume rather than the worsted tuft of the rank and file.

black leather accoutrements instead of the traditional buff leather equipment, which needed to be constantly whitened with pipeclay. In addition to this they were issued with the new Baker rifle, made by Ezekiel Baker of Whitechapel. Instead of the usual 17-inch bayonet, it was issued with a 24-inch sword bayonet. MI

To be continued

