

Two Hussars

(1) Charles Wood, Germany, 1813

JOHN MOLLO

This article and its sequel in our next issue represent a remarkable coincidence. Within weeks of one another two respected researchers, working independently and quite unknown to one another, submitted to 'MI' articles describing original detective work to which each had been led by chance encounters with two unrelated surviving relics of British hussar officers of the Napoleonic period. The subjects proved to have been two young subalterns of the 18th Hussars who, alone and far from their regiment, had actually served stirrup to stirrup on detached service with a German army in 1813. In this first article John Mollo describes his findings in the matter of a previously unrecorded British Staff uniform.

Some years ago a portrait miniature of a British hussar officer wearing the Waterloo Medal and the Prussian Order of Military Merit — the so-called *Pour le Mérite* — appeared in a London saleroom. The image of a young British officer wearing a much-coveted Prussian decoration was intriguing, to say the least; and some research seemed to be called for.

The sitter's uniform was that of the 10th Hussars; and sure enough a captain in that regiment, Charles Wood, had indeed been permitted by Royal Licence of 1 March 1815 to accept and wear the Prussian Order of Military Merit 'in testimony of the approbation of the King of Prussia, of the distinguished Military services rendered by him to the common cause, during the last campaign'. That the same officer served with the 10th Hussars during the Waterloo campaign, and was therefore eligible to receive the Waterloo Medal, seemed to clinch the identity of the miniature.

In the same sale, however, but not in the same lot and not acknowledged as being associated with it in any way, was a *papiermâché* snuff box with a

circular lid painted with the portrait of a young hussar officer in a rather curious uniform. I acquired this box; and on opening my new purchase found inside two black wax mourning seals (one bearing the arms of the Marquis of Londonderry, the other apparently belonging to the Marquis of Worcester); and a small piece of paper with the following handwritten inscription, apparently taken from a journal:

'Berlin 21 August 1813

I set for three hours for my picture on one of those painted snuff boxes before I left Berlin as ADC to a General of Hussars which I intend to send to my Father. I do not know what sort of thing it will be —

Charles Wood'

Here was further confirmation that the miniature and the snuff box, split up in the saleroom, were indeed from the same source.

The snuff box itself is made of black lacquered *papiermâché*, and measures 92 mm in diameter. The sitter is wearing a brown cylindrical fur busby with a light blue cloth bag falling to the right side; a small white-over-red plume in a gilt metal socket; gilt metal chinscales with lion's head bosses; and plaited



Berlin snuff box (actual size), August 1813, bearing on the lid a portrait of Capt. Charles Wood, 18th Hussars. (Author's collection)



Aide-de-camp to Sir Charles Stewart seen at Landeck, 22 August 1813; almost certainly Thomas Noel Harris, 18th Hussars. (Painted by the author after a sketch by Richard Knötel)

gold cap lines ending in flourishes and tassels. His dark blue hussar jacket has a scarlet collar edged with two rows of gold Russia braid and with a gold-embroidered 'Staff loop' on each side; the front of the jacket is trimmed with gold buttons and braid in the usual hussar fashion. His scarlet pelisse, trimmed with light grey fur and gold hussar braiding, has two unusual features: the use of gold toggles instead of buttons, and the two vertical lines of what looks like gold embroidery. The pouch belt is gold lace on blue cloth. A black stock, white collar points, a white waistcoat and shirt frill complete this elegant and doubtless expensive outfit.

The interesting thing is that we have only Charles Wood's word for it that this was the uniform of an 'ADC to a General Officer of Hussars', as apart from the busby, which has the light blue bag of the 18th Hussars, the rest of the uniform does not seem to have been recorded anywhere else.

Handwritten note found inside the Charles Wood snuff box, being apparently cut or copied from a page of a journal.

MISSION TO GERMANY

One is therefore led to ask, who was Charles Wood? Why was he in Berlin in August 1813, dressed in an apparently unofficial uniform? And what were the 'distinguished Military services' which he rendered to the King of Prussia, which earned him that monarch's 'approbation' and the award of the *Pour le Merite*?

Charles Wood was the sixth son of Thomas Wood of Littleton, and was commissioned into the 32nd Regiment as ensign on 31 August 1809. He became a lieutenant in the 52nd on 7 March 1810, and a captain in the 68th on 17 September 1812. On 29 June 1813 he transferred to the 18th Hussars. On 12 November 1814 he was moved, still in the rank of captain, from the 18th to the 10th Hussars, when the officers of the former regiment were dispersed throughout the cavalry after the failure of their attempt to convict their commanding officer, Col. Quentin, of cowardice. Promoted major on 16 March 1815, Charles Wood fought with the 10th Hussars at Waterloo; and retired on half-pay in 1821.

Early in 1813 he was appointed to the staff of Maj. Gen. Sir Charles Stewart, later 3rd Marquis of Londonderry, as an aide-de-camp. In April 1813 Stewart was appointed British Minister to the Court of Berlin 'specially charged with the military superintendence' of the Prussian, Swedish, and Hanoverian armies, together with an auxiliary Russian corps, which were about to begin operations from the southern shores of the Baltic under the command of the Prince Royal of Sweden — the former French Marshal Bernadotte. Stewart's mission was essentially diplomatic, and he took with him a large personal staff which included two ADCs: Charles Wood, and a brother-

officer of the 18th Hussars, Thomas Noel Harris.

The general's mission involved a good deal of travelling (mostly in a carriage, with his King's German Legion Hussar orderly on the box) between Bernadotte's armies in the north, and Blücher's armies in the south, on the borders of modern Czechoslovakia. Tedious days of negotiation were interspersed with periods of relaxation at the Headquarters of the Allied Sovereigns, where there was a constant round of reviews, dinners, and enjoyable diversions.

All the same, Stewart and his staff managed to be well to the fore at most of the major engagements of the campaign. They were present at Lützen and Bautzen, and took part in Blücher's brilliant cavalry stroke at Haynau on 26 May 1813. During the unsuccessful attempt on the walls of Dresden on 26 August Stewart and one of his ADCs found themselves caught up in the French sortie, and only escaped by dashing through the mêlée in the failing light. At Kulm three days later Stewart received 'a severe wound in the thigh by the explosion of a shell shortly after the commencement of the action'.

Stewart was nevertheless sufficiently recovered by the battle of Leipzig (16–19 October) to take command of Blücher's reserve cavalry, and to capture a French battery at the head of the Brandenburg Hussars. Afterwards he paid tribute to 'the gallantry displayed and the efficient

assistance' received from his two aides. In 1814, during the closing battles of the Allied advance on Paris, Thomas Noel Harris was up front with a Cossack patrol when he 'discovered' a large French column, on which he was able to direct Blücher's troops. For these and other services Sir Charles Stewart was awarded the Swedish Order of the Sword, the Russian Order of St. George (4th Class), and the Prussian Orders of the Black Eagle and the Red Eagle. Charles Wood received the *Pour le Merite*, as did Thomas Noel Harris, who was also awarded the Russian Orders of St. Anne and St. Vladimir.

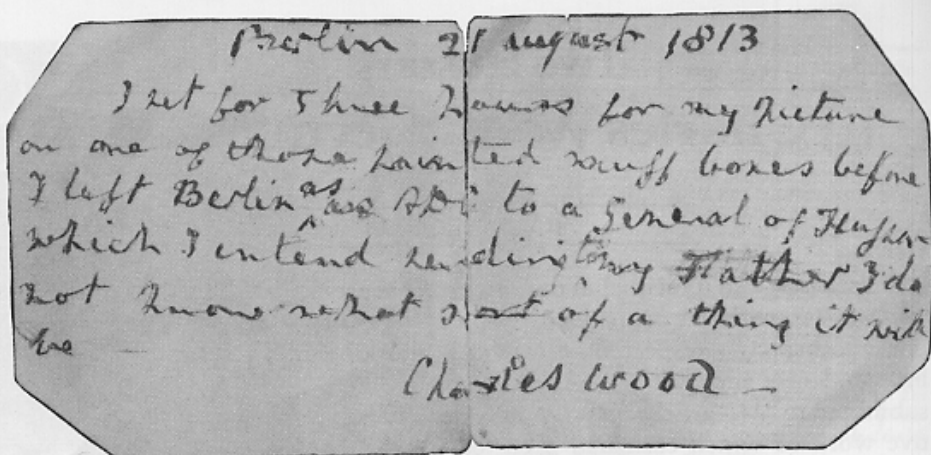
Sir Charles Stewart, at the age of 21 the lieutenant-colonel of the 18th Light Dragoons during the Dutch campaign of 1799, and later a veteran of the Peninsula who held both a hussar command and a staff appointment, was by nature a *beau sabreur*. Wellington, mindful of Stewart's defective sight and hearing — the results of a wound sustained in a 'cavalry affair' near Donauworth in 1796 — was obliged to frustrate Sir Charles's hunger for an active cavalry command. But although his mission to Germany could in no way be classed as such a command, Stewart clearly considered himself entitled to wear the elaborate uniform established for general officers of hussars. He had himself painted in this dress by Lawrence some time after 1 February 1813, when he was made a KB, and before his departure for Germany.

That he had it with him on the Continent is confirmed by his report of a theft from his rooms in Paris in 1814, which specifically mentions the loss of his hussar jacket and his pelisse to which were attached his stars and foreign orders, some of them set in diamonds.

UNIFORM FOR HUSSAR GENERALS AND ADCs

The uniform for general officers of hussars seems to have evolved unofficially, probably at the instigation of the Duke of Cumberland, colonel of the 15th Hussars and a great devotee of all things Prussian, when the first hussar brigade was assembled at Ipswich in 1808. Lord Paget, colonel of the 7th Hussars and commander of the Hussar Brigade, seems to have followed suit, as there are contemporary drawings of each of them in such uniforms.

During the Corunna campaign, 1808–09, Paget was in overall command of the cavalry, and the Hussar Brigade was given to Sir John Slade — who was not a hussar at all, but came from the Royal Dragoons. Clearly Slade had not bothered to equip himself in hussar finery (though the story that the Prince of Wales, watching the hussars departing from Portsmouth, pressed his own hussar jacket and pelisse on Slade is apparently apocryphal). A painting by Ströhlhng at York House



of an officer in the uniform of a general officer of hussars is believed to depict Slade, probably painted on his return from Spain in 1809.

The earliest printed dress regulations covering generals, dated 23 December 1811, describe the hussar generals' uniform unhelpfully as 'the uniform which is established for them . . .'. As such, it consisted of a brown fur busby with scarlet bag, white-over-red plume, and gold lines; scarlet jacket with blue facings and gold braid and lace; blue pelisse with grey fur and gold braid and lace; and either white breeches and black boots or, for dress occasions, scarlet pantaloons and yellow boots. Details of ornamentation seem to have varied, but seem generally to have been in line with that adopted by the wearer's original regiment. The sabretache and pouch were scarlet with gold lace and embroidery, usually bearing a crown and crossed sword and baton, the sabretache having in addition a double reversed 'GR' cypher.

But if generals of hussars hastened to deck themselves out in special finery, what of their staffs? Judging by the groups of officers painted by Robert Dighton in 1808, the ADCs of the Hussar Brigade wore the normal dress of that appointment: namely, a cocked hat with white-over-red plume; a long scarlet coat with blue collar and cuffs, decorated with embroidered 'Staff loops' in gold for dress wear and with worked holes in undress; crimson sash, white breeches and black hussar boots. The 1811 regulations state that when ADCs were serving with cavalry they were to change the single gold epaulette on the left shoulder for an aiguillette on the right. In 1814 this was changed, so that ADCs to general officers commanding a force abroad now wore two gold epaulettes; and other ADCs one epaulette only, on the left when serving with cavalry, on the right when with infantry. Nowhere is there any mention of a special

dress for the staffs of general officers of hussars (apart from a vague reference to the staff of Sir Stapleton Cotton wearing hussar dress in 1813). Until, that is, we come to Stewart's mission to Germany in 1813 . . .

AN UNPUBLISHED KNÖTEL SKETCH

Many years ago the late C. C. P. Lawson was sent a small sketch by Richard Knötel; it was obviously based on something he had seen in Germany, but unfortunately any notes which may have accompanied it have not, to my knowledge, survived. However, it shows a British staff officer wearing a red undress coat of the pattern established for ADCs, with a single gold aiguillette on the right shoulder. This is what one would expect; but there are two unusual features. He wears a dark blue 'pork pie' forage cap with a silver lace band, as worn by cavalry officers; and a crimson and gold hussar barrel sash. The drawing is dated 'Landeck, 22 August 1813'.

Clearly, this officer must be one of Stewart's two aides

wearing his 18th Hussars forage cap and barrel sash in conjunction with normal ADC's dress. On 16 August 1813 Sir Charles is known to have moved from the Prussian headquarters at Landeck to Prague; so Landeck, which I confess to being unable to discover on a modern map, cannot be more than a day's ride — 20 to 30 miles — from Prague. Returning to the snuff box, we recall that Charles Wood was in Berlin on 21 August; it is thus impossible for him to have been sketched at Landeck only a day later, and the Knötel drawing must therefore show Thomas Harris.

We now have evidence that one or both of these two young officers had both the normal uniform for ADCs as laid down in the 1811 regulations, though worn with hussar regimental forage cap and sash; and also a dress uniform of a totally unrecorded pattern, depicted in the snuff box portrait of Charles Wood as worn with the regimental fur cap of the 18th Hussars. The only remaining question is whether the dress uniform had been established by

custom for some years; or whether it was a *tenue de fantaisie*, provided at the instigation and perhaps at the expense of Sir Charles Stewart so that his staff should not let him down in the glittering surroundings of the Allied headquarters?

That this uniform was at least common to both ADCs is confirmed by an article in the Spring 1987 number of *JSAHR* by D. H. Tomback, on a presentation sword given to Harris by the so-far unidentified Edward Solly, 'In commemoration of their fellowship at the memorable battle of Leipzig of the 18th and 19th October 1813'. Mr. Tomback includes two black-and-white portraits of Harris apparently taken from his memoirs, published privately in 1890. In one of these the pose and uniform are so similar to the portrait of Charles Wood that one is led to the tantalising conclusion that both Wood and Harris patronised the same Berlin snuff box manufacturer; and that somewhere a second box may still exist. **MI**

Bibliography

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I am indebted to Mr. W. Y. Carman for drawing my attention to his interesting article on General Officers of Hussars in *Army and Navy Modelworld*, May 1986.

To be continued: Part 2 of this article will describe in more detail the career of Thomas Noel Harris, and will be illustrated with specially commissioned colour photographs of a surviving coat worn by him when wounded at Waterloo.

Maj. Gen. Sir Charles Stewart, in the uniform of a general officer of hussars, painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence at some time after 1 February 1813, when Stewart was made KB, and before his departure for Germany in April that year. (National Army Museum)



Two Hussars

(2) Thomas Noel Harris, Brigade Major, 1815

PHILIP J. HAYTHORNTHTWAITE

Rare uniforms abound in public and private collections; yet the majority have no discernible history. But very rarely there appears an item which, because of historical association, can truly be described as a national treasure; one such is illustrated here, never before published. A number of garments exist which purport to have been worn at the Battle of Waterloo, but few are so undeniably authentic as the coat of Captain Thomas Noel Harris, which remains exactly as it was removed from the wearer on 19 June 1815 in a makeshift surgery in the ruins of the chateau of Hougoumont.

The survival of what is now one of the most important relics of the Napoleonic Wars, considering the circumstances in which it was last worn, is remarkable. For its preservation posterity is indebted to the Harris family, who originally conserved the bloodstained relic; and to its successive owners, including the renowned authority John B. Hayward, who passed on the garment to its present custodian, Alan Harrison. Without the care of all these, a priceless relic would have been lost; and the present author is especially grateful to Alan Harrison, who allowed the coat to be examined and published.

* * *

Thomas Noel Harris was born on 9 October 1783, son of the Rev. Hamlyn Harris, vicar of Exton, near Oakham, and later rector of Whitwell (Rutland) and vicar of Campden (Gloucester-

shire). Thomas was educated at Uppingham, and in February 1801 was commissioned ensign in the 87th Foot. He became a lieutenant in the 52nd in 1802, in the 25th Foot in 1804, and in the 18th Light Dragoons in 1805, in which regiment he became a captain. In 1808 he exchanged to the 7th Fusiliers, and later in the same year to the 1st Dragoons; but, after a few days on the roll of that regiment, he sold his commission at his father's wish following the death of Thomas's only brother, Henry. An officer in the service of the East India Company, Henry had been captured and murdered by hostiles in Burma, 'in circumstances of peculiar atrocity', being flayed alive.

ADC IN GERMANY

In 1811 the lure of a military career proved too strong, and Rev. Harris procured for his son a cornetcy in the 13th Light Dragoons, from which he returned to his old regiment, the 18th Light Dragoons (Hussars). In the Peninsular War he served at Fuentes de Oñoro, Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos as Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General, being twice wounded: once by a sabre-cut on the forehead, and at Badajos, where his knee was hit by a stone splinter.

In 1813, as ADC to Sir



Charles Stewart (British representative with the Allied armies in Germany) he was attached to Bernadotte's HQ, and was present at Grossbeeren, Dennewitz and Leipzig; and from the entry into France he served with Blücher's headquarters. (His fellow ADC Charles Wood was the subject of John Mollo's preceding article in 'MI' No.8.) 'Most active and intrepid in all his duties' (according to Stewart), he served with St. Priest at Rheims (where he charged with the Prussian cavalry); and was the first Allied officer to report the presence of the French at La Fère-Champenoise, discovered whilst scouting with a Cossack patrol. Harris was selected for the honour of bearing to England the despatch announcing the fall of Paris — an honour which almost cost his life. After evading the French, he was attacked by Cossacks who

mistook him for a French officer; his 'military collar' turned a slash against his neck, and his hat was cut to pieces before his Russian escort intervened (resulting in his arrival in London wearing 'a common Dragoon's foraging cap').

As the bearer of the despatch Harris became a celebrity, meeting the Prince Regent and dining with Lord Liverpool, and being reported widely in the press; but he soon afterwards rejoined Stewart. For his services he received the Prussian *Pour le Mérite* (a singular distinction for an Englishman), and the Orders of St. Vladimir and St. Anne of Russia. He was promoted to a company in the York Chasseurs; and then to the 36th Foot, serving as ADC in Ireland until the renewal of hostilities, when on 1 April 1815 he was appointed Brigade Major to Sir Hussey Vivian's Hussar Brigade

Portrait of Harris wearing what appears to be the unrecorded uniform of an ADC to a general of hussars — note 'Staff loop' on collar, and compare with snuffbox portrait of Capt. Charles Wood published in the first part of this serial article, 'MI' No.8 p.41. The colouring of this engraving appears to be identical to that in the Wood portrait. This likeness is dated by his family to 'about 1809', but it is almost certainly contemporary with his posting to Germany in 1813.

(10th, 18th and 1st King's German Legion Hussars).

WITH VIVIAN AT WATERLOO

A Brigade Major (or 'Major of Brigade') was the only full-time staff officer serving at brigade level, the liaison between brigade commander and general headquarters — an indispensable function filled by a captain or major:

'The detail of the Duty of the Brigade rests entirely on the Brigade Major. He is considered an Officer attached to the Brigade, not personally to the Officer commanding it. His Station on a March is in front of the leading Regiment of the Brigade; he is to encamp in the rear of the centre of the Brigade. The Brigade Major...is to be constantly in the Lines of the Camp of the Brigade. Majors of Brigade...are, as soon as possible, to notify their General's Quarters at Head Quarters. It is the business of the Brigade Major to call in the Guards belonging to the Brigade previous to March. No Officer under the Rank of a General Officer, unless he commands the Brigade (the Adjutant General excepted), has any right to give Directions to the Major of Brigade on the general Parade, or to interfere with any Party he is parading, till the Major of Brigade delivers it over to the Officer who is to command it⁽¹⁾.

These duties were as dangerous as they were important, as proved at Waterloo. Out of 14 Brigade Majors present at the battle, only six came through unscathed⁽²⁾, a casualty-rate of 57%, far higher than for regimental duty in all but extreme cases (at Waterloo, for example, the 1/27th Foot had only three unscathed officers out of 19, a casualty-rate of over 84%).

Thomas Noel Harris was one who attended the Duchess of Richmond's ball in Brussels on the eve of Quatre Bras, wearing the uniform shown here; handsome and

distinguished, he apparently cut a dashing figure. He was in high spirits before Waterloo, emptying part of his canteen over his cousin, Lt. John Clement Wallington, 10th Hussars, to 'baptise' him as a soldier!

During the battle Harris was under fire for much of the day, having two horses shot from under him; but was unhurt until the final advance. Sgt. Matthew Colgan, 'coverer' of Capt. George Luard, who commanded the centre squadron of the 18th Hussars, recalled how the regiment sat chafing with inaction under a galling fire, until Harris rode up and exclaimed: '18th! You are about to charge: the General trusts to past experience that you will act as soldiers, and I know you will, 18th!' (Harris knew, and was known by the regiment from his service in it).

He then led a squadron in the charge of Vivian's brigade from the Mont St. Jean ridge through the centre of the French position. As he charged a body of infantry, Harris was struck by a musket ball which pierced his right side, and by a grapeshot which shattered

his right arm. It is reasonable to suppose that the units he attacked were part of the Imperial Guard and covering artillery which were retiring: the 2/1st and 2/2nd *Chasseurs à Pied* and 2/2nd *Grenadiers à Pied*. The ball which struck Harris probably came from the 2/1st *Chasseurs*, the nearest unit.

AMPUTATION AT HOUGOUMONT

The injuries were severe, as is obvious from the amount of blood which stains the coat today. However, Harris somehow survived the ordeal of lying out all night on the field, and was found early next morning by his cousin Clement Wallington and Sir Hussey Vivian, who had set out to look for him. Unable to speak, Harris attracted their attention by a low whistle. They carried him to the nearest dressing station at Hougomont, where his coat was cut off, the sleeve being slit up through the shoulder and the collar. His right arm was amputated immediately: an operation he bore with fortitude, even remarking to the surgeon as the limb was carried away that, as he had

been acquainted with it so long, he wished to shake hands with the severed arm 'once more before parting'!

From Hougomont he was taken to Brussels in a cart (Wallington supporting Harris's head on his knees to alleviate the worst of the jolting); and was billeted in the house of a Belgian lady. 'It is, indeed, a blessing to have such a nurse as I have; she has scarcely ever left my room', he wrote ten days later. Though he mistakenly reported that 'the ball is out of my body', it was apparently thought too dangerous to extract, and was the cause of considerable suffering in later years. As soon as he was able, Harris rejoined his brigade in Paris, where Blücher (his friend from 1813-14) was shocked by his appearance. Embracing him, the old Prussian remarked, 'Ach, mein lieber Harris, I do complain you much', in characteristically bad English. So highly did he regard Harris that Blücher gave him a portrait, a lock of hair, three feathers from his hat, and even the gold ring which he often wore.

HARRIS IN LATER LIFE

Despite his injuries, Harris remained remarkably active: a superb carriage driver, he continued to hunt regularly, and to shoot left-handed with light guns; and even saved himself from drowning by swimming two miles to Portsmouth after his yacht sank. He was a renowned raconteur with a fund of anecdotes; and continued to



Portrait of Harris painted in about 1838, apparently in his old 18th Hussars uniform, with a mameluke-hilted sabre. Among his decorations can be made out (low, central) the blue-enamelled Pour le Mérite, which he wore in later life when travelling on the Continent, attracting salutes from every Prussian soldier he passed! The very plain forage cap is unusual for a formal portrait; and we recall that he was described in the Morning Chronicle of 6 April 1814 as wearing 'a white foraging cap' when delivering his famous despatch announcing the fall of Paris. Who knows: perhaps he acquired a taste for such headgear, as a kind of personal affectation?

(1) Superior numerals refer to the notes at the end of this article.

The collar of Harris's Waterloo coat, right side, from rear, showing the cut made when the garment was removed at Hougoumont; the collar embroidery, 'tassel' to the rear; and the stitching for the aiguillette on the right shoulder, which was no doubt removed before the coat was cut.

friends to celebrate the anniversary of Waterloo. On 23 March 1860, after a period of ill-health, Sir Thomas Noel Harris, KH, died, and was buried amid four yew trees in the churchyard of Ham. A stained glass window in St. Lawrence's Church, Isle of Thanet, commemorated this gallant officer, who 'served and bled for his country in the glorious campaigns...'

THE UNIFORM

All staff officers wore uniform of a similar style: a scarlet long-tailed coat with white turnbacks and lining, dark blue facings and (usually) gold lace. There existed a wide variety of rank and departmental variations, quite apart from non-regulation garments which resulted from personal idiosyncrasy. There were two types of each uniform: 'laced' (with embroidered decorations) or 'plain', with thread loops instead of metallic embroidery, the latter the preferred wear on campaign. There existed a tradition in the Harris family that Thomas was called away from the Duchess of Richmond's ball in such haste that 'no time was afforded to change the red, swallow-tailed Court dress coat...for his usual regimental uniform'¹⁰. Such statements are often encountered in relation to the ball; but in Harris's case it is certainly false, for the uniform he wore at Waterloo (and doubtless at the ball) was his ordinary, 'plain' coat.

Majors of Brigade and Aides-de-Camp were ordered to wear single-breasted coats with nine buttons on the breast, and three (two over one) on each cuff and skirt — though eight buttons on the breast, in pairs, seems to have been at least as common. Two patterns of cuff seem to have existed: the

Recently re-united with the Harris coat is this Waterloo Medal, with replacement suspension bar. It was awarded to Sgt. Matthew Colgan, 18th Hussars, who presented it to his old captain before his death — a touching token of respect, since this was doubtless Colgan's most valued possession.



type worn by Harris with V-shaped upper edge, perhaps for cavalry appointments; and another with square-cut upper edge following infantry style.

The embroidered loops were of foliate design with a 'tassel' at the outer end, described in a tailor's pattern as 'saw edges and ruff purl loops through the centre, and gold tassels at the end'¹¹. A later pattern mentions an ADC's coat with ten loops, in pairs. For the 'plain' coat, only the loops upon the collar and cuffs were of metallic embroidery; the remainder were of thread 'twist'.

The epaulettes worn with these coats varied with branch and date, and even for officers of field rank (usually signified by two epaulettes), Majors of Brigade and ADCs wore only one. In 1799 Majors of Brigade and ADCs of infantry were ordered to wear one epaulette, on the right shoulder, and cavalry were ordered to remove the epaulette and wear instead an

aiguillette on the right shoulder; but on 16 December 1814 the aiguillette was removed and the single epaulette on the left shoulder was restored. (According to contemporary pictures, the aiguillette was simpler than that of general officers, having a plaited shoulder strap but unplaited hanging cords.) For Majors of Brigade and ADCs the buttons were plain and polished (those on Harris's coat were made by Bushey of St. Martin's Lane); the only difference between the two appointments was that ADCs wore gold embroidery, and Majors of Brigade silver.

Typical of the unofficial variations which existed is the fact that Harris's coat, though of the prescribed Brigade Major's style with gilt buttons and silver embroidery, was some six months out of date at the time of Waterloo. There are marks on the right shoulder which indicate clearly that an aiguillette was worn, not the epaulette on the left which had replaced the aiguillette

officially in December 1814. This can hardly be explained by Harris rushing to join the army in the Netherlands with his old ADC uniform, for in that case the embroidery would have been gold. His Brigade Major's coat must have been new for the 1815 campaign, yet retained the outdated aiguillette of cavalry appointment. As the aiguillette was stitched to the shoulder (not affixed by laces like an epaulette), with cords looping around onto the breast, it would obviously impair the removal of the coat by the surgeon; so it is almost certain that the aiguillette was cut off at the dressing-station at Hougoumont, and never seen again.

With this uniform was worn the ordinary bicorne hat, and either breeches and Hessian boots or overalls, with the universal crimson waist-sash of rank and a waist-belt supporting a sword, which in Harris's case may well have been the 'mameluke' sabre carried during his service in the 18th Hussars. **MI**

Notes

(1) *General Regulations and Orders for the Army*, 1811, p.27.

(2) Major Michael Childers, 11th Light Dragoons; Capt. Walter Crofton, 54th Foot, killed; Capt. Charles Eeles, 95th Foot, killed; Capt. Gottfried von Einem, King's German Legion; Capt. James Gunthorpe, 1st Foot Guards; Capt. Thomas Noel Harris, wounded; Capt. Stephen Holmes, 78th Foot; Major Thomas Hunter-Blair, 91st Foot, wounded; Capt. Charles Jones, 15th Hussars; Major Thomas Reynolds, 2nd Dragoons, killed; Capt. George Richter, 1st Ceylon Regt.; Major Harry G.W. Smith, 95th Foot, wounded; Brevet-Major Charles Smyth, 95th Foot, killed; Capt. William Stothert, 3rd Foot Guards, killed.

(3) Harris (see source list) p.37.

(4) Pattern-book of Messrs. Herbert, quoted SAHR (see source list) p.105.

Sources

Harris's career is detailed in *Brigadier's Memoir of the late Lt. Col. Sir Thomas Noel Harris, K.H.* (Clement B. Harris, London, 1893); this article has been written with the use of a presentation copy with additional MS annotations by the author. Uniform details are covered most fully in *The Staff Uniform of the British Army 1767-1855* (Maj. N.P. Dawnay, *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. XXXI, 1953, esp. pp.98-105).



Below:

Turnback design in detail: silver embroidery on blue patch. The staining at the bottom of the skirt is more blood.



Below:

The undamaged left sleeve, showing cuff embroidery and two of the 'twist' loops.



practice his doubtless intensely irritating trick of unhorsing people by putting his hand under their foot and tipping them out of the saddle.

He may best be judged, however, by the affection he inspired among his acquaintances. Matthew Colgan of the 18th Hussars was devoted to his old captain, who apparently gave the ex-sergeant financial help at a critical time; in return, before his death, Colgan sent Harris his Waterloo Medal.

Harris was granted a pension of £200 p.a. in respect of his incapacity through injury; and received from Hussey Vivian, on behalf of the brigade, a two-handled gold loving cup 2¾ lb. in weight, engraved: 'Presented, 6th October, 1815, To Captain Thomas Noel Harris, Brigade Major to the Hussars, By a Few Friends, As a Mark of the Respect and Admiration they entertain for his Gallantry during the most glorious Campaigns in which Great Britain ever was engaged'.

In October 1815 he was appointed to a troop in the King's Dragoon Guards, but

filled the remainder of his career in staff duties both in Britain and abroad. He served in Canada in the 1820s; and finally retired in 1838 after a spell as Chief Magistrate in Gibraltar. A Deputy Lieutenant for the county of Kent, he lived in retirement near Sandwich; and was knighted in 1841.

Thrice married, he lived to see a son killed in a naval accident; a stepson killed with the 17th Lancers in the

Charge of the Light Brigade; a stepson serving with the King's Dragoon Guards in the Indian Mutiny; two grandsons fighting in the Crimea (one of whom was to reach the rank of major-

general); a third become a commander, RN; and — with the greatest satisfaction — his grandson Hamlyn commissioned into the 18th Hussars.

The bullet lodged near his

spine caused distress in later years, though his humour and capacity for the enjoyment of life remained unimpaired. Even in old age, 'he was upright, and well built... and was as handsome an old man as I ever saw, and certainly the best-tempered, under sufferings he found it impossible to conceal'. On 18 June every year he gathered his relatives and



Left:

Harris's Waterloo coat; rear. The exit-hole of the grapeshot which smashed his right arm is visible at the rear of the right sleeve. Even on scarlet cloth, the massive bloodstaining can be made out by the differing shades of red. Note the horizontal lines of 'twist' embroidery uniting the upper skirt loops in the rear of the waist.

Right:

Harris's Waterloo coat; front. The garment still shows mud-stains from his night lying out on the battlefield, and a large degree of bloodstaining is also evident. The bullet wound is visible on the right side, level with the fifth button. The collar is distorted due to being cut through on the right side, completing the cut up the sleeve and through the shoulder to allow the coat to be removed in the dressing station at Hougoumont.