

The Brunswick Stars of the 63rd and 96th Regiments by Brigadier-General H. C. E. Westropp

(Copy of an article that appears in the *Official History of the Manchester Regiment* by Colonel Wylly, 1925)

The Brunswick Star of the 63rd Regiment

The regimental tradition concerning the Brunswick Star is stated by the late Major J. Slack in his *History of the Regiment* to have been as follows: "A tradition was current among the old soldiers of the Regiment that they won the Star by their brilliant services in America from 1775 to 1781, when they frequently rode as mounted infantry under the celebrated cavalry leader Colonel Tarleton".

Extract from a letter from Earl Cornwallis to Colonel Tarleton, 10th November 1780: "The 63rd Regiment are well mounted for infantry, and may occasionally ride in your train: they behave vastly well". This was after the action at Fish-dam. One of the names the 63rd was known by was "The Green Horse" – from the colour of their facings.

The following is an extract from the short official History of *The Manchester Regiment*:

"The Regiment (63rd) was employed under Tarlton as mounted infantry – a portion was engaged at Blackstocks on the 20th November 1780, and was highly distinguished, but its loss was very severe. The men of the 63rd never lost, and always cherished, the tradition of its exploits as mounted infantry in America, and it is remarkable that the tradition was maintained, when no published Regimental Record existed, and when the Rank and File were far more illiterate than now".

The late Mr Milne's opinion of the Star was as follows: "As far as stars go, I really think your Regiment, the 63rd, was about the earliest to wear it upon the buttons, this pattern being worn by all officers and privates up to 1881. Indeed, only last week, I had a private soldier's button sent me from New York, a relic of the War of Independence, 1775-82, and it was a precisely similar design; as Regimental buttons were only ordered to be numbered in 1768, I think that it follows that this particular design, with Star, must have been used from that date until 1881 – a circumstance unequalled in the History of Regimental buttons".

The eight-pointed star has also appeared at various dates on the chaco, waist clasp and helmet.

The Brunswick Star of the 96th Regiment

The last Regiment raised and numbered "96" – the present 2nd Battalion Manchester Regiment – also wore the Brunswick Star as a badge. The Regimental tradition is that when re-raised in 1824 an officer, presumably Major-General J. Fuller, from the Coldstream Guards, who by the King's command raised the Regiment in Manchester on 25th January 1824 adopted the Brunswick Star as a badge.

The following short descriptions and dates are taken from copies made from original drawings for the plates cut for the Regiment by Messrs. Jennens & Co., of London. In 1912 I had several of these, and others reproduced exactly like the originals, which are now in a case in the Officers' Mess, 2nd Battalion Manchester Regiment.

From 1824 to 1828 the officer's chaco plate was an elliptical eight-pointed silver-cut Star with gilt edges. In the centre in silver was the number "96" surrounded by a gilt garter charged with the Royal motto, with small crown (gilt) above.

From 1824 to 1855 the breastplate on the officer's cross-belt was gilt and rectangular, with burnished edges. In its centre, a silver-cut eight-pointed Star, with small crown above – the same pattern as described above on the chaco plate of 1824.

From 1828 to 1844 the officer's chaco plate was a very large gilt eight-pointed Star and crown, the centre mount being a silver-cut eight-pointed Star of the same pattern as the 1824 officer's chaco plate.

From 1844 to 1855 the officer's chaco plate was an all-gilt eight-pointed Star, the points of the latter being cut longer and more defined, with large crown above (gilt).

There is added to this a note: "No particulars of special plate for Grenadier, or Light, Companies".

From 1855 to 1862 the chaco plate was all gilt as above, but the eight-pointed Star more nearly resembled the original pattern of 1824, with larger crown. This pattern with, apparently, a somewhat smaller Star, was used until 1870, and probably later, with "96" surrounded by a garter containing the Royal motto, and surmounted by a crown.

Messrs. Jennens have the drawing of an officer's helmet plate of 1882, an eight-pointed brass-gilt Star in centre, "96" under the Sphinx, and "Egypt" surrounded by garter with the Royal motto, with following note: "Die cut 1882. This plate was worn on the white helmet, no particulars of the date it went out of use". The Star (brass gilt) has been retained on the helmet of the Manchester Regiment.

From 1847 to 1855 it was used as a cap plate – a dull gilt eight-pointed Star, surmounted by a crown. In its centre, a dull gilt garter charged with the Royal motto in bright raised letters, enclosing "96" dull gilt, on a bright raised gilt ground, and the garter was surrounded by a bright gilt laurel wreath.

More recently, a small silver star, in its centre a Sphinx (silver) over "Egypt", surrounded by a gilt garter charged with "The Manchester Regiment", and surmounted by a gilt crown, has been worn on the forage and fatigue caps, and as a puggaree brooch, also on the lapels of the officer's mess jacket and as a collar-badge of the Field Service Dress Jacket. The Star is engraved on the mess plate, and used as the 96th and 2nd Battalion crests.