

**Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of  
The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896**

**REGIMENTAL UNIFORM.**

**By S. M. MILNE.**

**43RD Regiment.**—When raised in 1741, the Regiment, known by its colonel's name as Fowke's, but with precedency as 54th, appears to have had white facings, and, judging from an old work entitled, "The Cloathing of His Majesty's Household," etc., etc., wore the usual roomy red coat of the period, with voluminous skirts, white lapels and cuffs, bound and edged with white worsted lace about three-quarters of an inch wide, bearing a black star pattern. An excellent and correct coloured plate of a private of this date forms the frontispiece to Levinge's "Historical Records" of the Regiment.

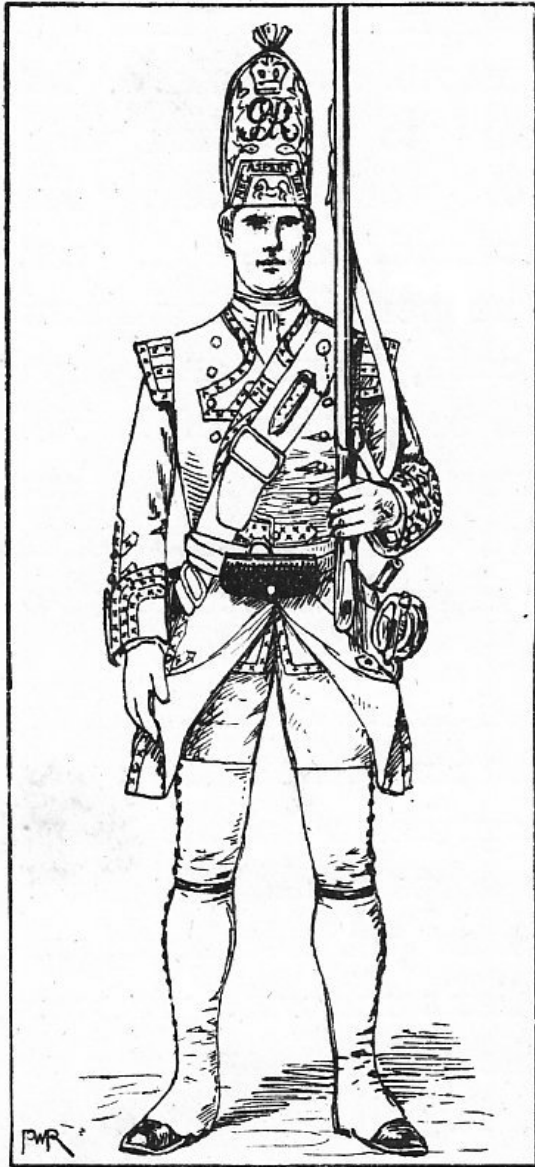
The various coloured or striped laces worn by different infantry regiments played an important part; they were the only means, in fact, together with the colour of the facings, by which one corps could be distinguished from another, numbers as yet not being displayed upon any part of the soldier's uniform. A board of General officers inspected the pattern, and also an actual sample of the clothing, in the interest of the soldier, assuring him of a coat and other garments as good as could be obtained for the sum of money usually laid out upon these articles; acting, without a doubt, as a gentle kind of check upon the colonel of the regiment, who provided everything out of a certain sum of money allocated to him for the purpose. This latter officer saved a little, where possible, out of this allowance, which, with his pay as colonel and captain of a company in the regiment, comprised his emoluments.

In the Round Tower, Windsor Castle, is to be found an oil picture of a grenadier of the Regiment by David Morier, an artist who executed a number of military pictures for the king, circa 1750-52.

The accompanying illustration represents a grenadier of the 43rd Regiment. The lace upon the coat is slightly different in pattern to that portrayed in Levinge's "Records; " the *black* (later confirmed as blue by the author in an article of 1901) stars remain, but a narrow red stripe is added on each side, making the effect more lively; its disposition also is altered upon the cuffs and pockets; small red cloth wings, to make the tall grenadier look bigger, appear upon the shoulders, ornamented with the last described pattern of lace. Upon the shoulder belt, immediately above the buckle, is the brass match case. Though called grenadiers, their occupation as such was gone; no hand grenade had been thrown for twenty years, still the match case was retained, emblematic of the grenadier's position in the regiment, and for that matter remained, simply an ornament, till quite the end of the century in most regiments, and very possibly did so in the 43rd.

Levinge's frontispiece shows the private soldier in his three-cornered cocked hat, bound with white worsted lace, the ordinary headdress of the battalion companies (sometimes described as the hat companies) for a very long period; but Morier's grenadier wears the special grenadier's cap, the front part, some sixteen inches high, of white cloth (the regimental facing), the lower part occupied by what was termed the nap, of red cloth bearing the "*White Horse*," the badge of the royal House of Hanover, and the motto *Nee aspera terrent*.

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GRENADIER, 43RD REGIMENT, 1751.

This badge was not peculiar to the Regiment, but was the special mark of distinction borne by the grenadiers of every infantry corps. In the centre of the white cloth front appeared the royal cipher in *black* (later confirmed as *blue* by the author in an article of 1901), crown above in yellow and red embroidery, and a small red and white tassel on the pointed top of the cap; the back was red, excepting a narrow band of white cloth round the base, upon which was embroidered a grenade with the Regimental number 43, its first and only appearance on the uniform.

In full marching order, a goatskin bag, holding the necessaries, was carried on the left side from a brown leather strap over the right shoulder, and above, over the same shoulder, was suspended a tin canteen or bottle; a plain canvas haversack balanced it on the right side. No greatcoat or cloak seems to have been worn in those days; we read that a few watch coats were served out for night duty. In the time of King George II soldiers were a hardy race, accustomed to the elements.

The uniform coat was voluminous, and of good cloth; when buttoned across the chest and the broad skirts unfastened, and allowed to hang down, it formed a good protection against the weather. The long-sleeved waistcoat, made out of the previous year's coat, was also a warm garment in itself.

Attention must now be turned to the 52nd Regiment, which was raised in 1755, and would doubtless be clothed much after the manner just described for the 43rd, substituting buff for the white facings of the latter regiment. As before stated, the private soldier's lace formed a most distinct feature in the uniform, but in the case of the 52nd there appears, unfortunately, to be no coloured representation of its uniform extant at this period, and it will be necessary to fall back upon such evidence as may be gathered from the annual Army Lists published by Millan. His issue for 1758, the earliest showing the colour of the uniform and the lace, gives for the 52nd Regiment "red faced with buff, yellow lace"; this continues, year by year, until 1765, when a startling variation occurs, "black facings, white lining, and lace" being given. Surely, in this case, the word black as applied to the facings must be a misprint or error. (*Whilst upon the subject of the early facings of the 52nd, it may be noticed that Trimmen, in his work The Regiments of the British Army, 1878, gives "black" as the facings of the Regiment from 1755 to 1767*)

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In the subsequent issues of 1767 and 1768, the facings are given as "buff, with white lining, and lace." (*Vide De Bosset's Synopsis of the Uniforms and Lace of the British Army, 1803; also Colonel Hamilton Smith's coloured sheet of the same, in his work, Military Costume of the Army, 1814*)

Regiments of infantry had received a number, simply to denote their rank of precedence, very early in the century, but it was used as little as possible, regiments being invariably designated by their colonel's name. It being found desirable to have an additional form of distinction beyond the facings and the varied patterns of regimental lace, a Warrant was issued, 21st September 1767, requiring that the number of the regiment should appear upon the buttons, hitherto quite plain.

Annual inspections by General Officers had been instituted as early as 1709, but the earliest "inspection return" of the 43rd which has been preserved is dated Plymouth, April 20th, 1767. The following year the Regiment was inspected by General Clavering at Exeter, May 21st. He reported that "the officers' uniforms" were new, faced and lapelled with white cloth, white "capotes (i.e. collars) and silver embroidered epaulettes, buttons numbered white waistcoats and breeches. Sergeants have sashes, black gaiters with white garters. A band of music mustered as effectives."

The Royal Warrant of December 19th, 1768, is full of detail on every point connected with the uniform of the infantry, both men and officers. The private soldiers' lace had become a matter of strict regulation. In the case of the 43rd the lace was white, with two stripes down each edge, one red, the other dark blue. A manuscript work is to be found in the Prince Consort's Library, Aldershot, giving a coloured representation of a grenadier of all the then existing regiments of infantry, dated 1768. The "blue" stripe observable in the 43rd man's lace appears really black, not blue. The official Army List for 1769 gives the various laces, and that of the 43rd is described as white, with a blue and red stripe, and so continued annually until 1784, when the blue stripe is described as black. At this point it may be mentioned that the private's lace of the 43rd retained these black and red stripes until ornamentally-coloured lace was abolished in 1836.

**52nd Lace.**—The 1769 Army List gives the private soldiers' lace as white, with a red worm and one orange stripe. In the lately-mentioned work at Aldershot, the "red worm" presents the appearance of a red speckle, or red dots, down one edge of the lace. This pattern continued for many years, but about the beginning of this century the lace was changed to the following pattern: A black stripe down one edge, and a stripe of yellow and one of red conjoined down the other edge.

*(By consulting the beautiful miniature of Captain Thorne, 43rd, which was taken about 1770 (vide p. 113), the reader will see the peculiar pattern of the silver embroidery upon the epaulette strap, and also the upper part of the coat with lapels and cape. The style of dressing the hair is worthy of note, as it must not be forgotten that changes took place in the fashion of the hair every decade)*

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CAPTAIN WILLIAM THORNE  
43rd REGIMENT 1764-1787

When the coloured laces were finally abolished in 1836, the pattern worn by the 52nd was quite different. From a tradesman's pattern book, now before the author of these notes, it seems to have been white worsted, slightly under half an inch wide; down one side a narrow buff stripe, and down the other two narrow red and white stripes, possibly of the pattern quaintly described in former days as "worms." Apologies are due to the reader for dwelling upon these details, but if he wishes to realise the appearance of the old private soldier's costume, he may be assured this striped lace played no unimportant part; indeed, by it, and by the varied colours of the facings, regiments were known without the necessity of examining the numbers upon the men's buttons, and so possessed a distinctiveness, regiment from regiment, to which we of this generation are strangers.

The officers' costume, 43rd Regiment: Scarlet coats lapped to the waist with white cloth lapels, three inches wide, fastened back by silver buttons (having the Regimental number), and placed at equal distances; the cape or collar of white cloth turned down, and fastened by one buttonhole to the top button of the lapels. Small round white cuffs, three inches and a half deep, having four buttons and buttonholes; cross pockets in line with the waist, having four buttons; skirts lined and turned back white. The epaulette strap of red cloth embroidered with silver.

Officers of the grenadier company wore a silver epaulette and fringe on each shoulder (they had an extra shoulder belt for the pouch which they carried); battalion officers one on the right shoulder only; white waistcoat and breeches, black linen gaiters with black buttons; crimson silk sash, tied round the waist (until recently worn over the shoulder); a silver gorget with the king's arms engraved thereon, fastened to the neck with white, or probably crimson, silk rosettes and ribbons; hats laced with silver, and the usual black cockade. Grenadier officers wore black bearskin caps like those of the men, but with the king's crest in gilt upon the black metal; they carried fusils (short muskets), and had white shoulder belts and pouches.

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Battalion officers carried the espontoon, a light steel-headed pike with a small crossbar below the blade, seven feet in length, used with graceful effect in the salute. Sergeants had buttons of white metal, and narrow loops of plain white tape; hats laced with silver, silk shoulder knots, and crimson and white worsted sashes; they carried swords from a shoulder belt and also halberds, the latter a light ornamental kind of battle-axe with a long shaft.

The private soldiers were dressed very much as in the illustration overleaf, which, however, represents a grenadier of the 52nd, taken from the work in the Prince Consort's Library, Aldershot. The battalion companies wore hats, and, of course, neither match cases upon the shoulder belt nor wings upon the: shoulders. Early in 1768 the cloth grenadier cap, with its quaint embroidery, had been abolished, and a new one of bearskin introduced, having in front the badge of the king's crest (lion and crown) in white metal upon a black ground. This cap plate was common to all grenadiers.



GRENADIER, 52ND REGIMENT, 1768.

Looking to the illustration of the grenadier, 52nd, 1768, it will be noticed that the coat has become a much closer fitting garment, a turned-down collar, or cape, has appeared, the lapels across the chest very much smaller than before, serving little more than to show off the lace-looped buttonholes on them.

The costume of the officers of the 52nd at this period may be taken as similar to that just described for the 43rd, excepting that buff replaced the white in the facings, and that the waistcoats and breeches were buff also. The pattern of the silver epaulette strap cannot be known until some portrait or miniature, executed at the time, comes to light. The inspection returns of the 52nd Regiment for this part of the century, which might have given some information, are unfortunately missing.

Officers of many infantry regiments wore a considerable amount of gold or silver lace upon their coats, but the officers of the 43rd and 52nd were dressed well, doubtless, but, at the same time, with a certain amount of plainness always characteristic of the two Regiments.

In the report by General Oughton, resulting from the inspection of the 43rd at Stirling, May 28th, 1770, reference is made to the band, which is stated to be "good and genteely dressed." Again at Port William, June 3rd, 1772, the "Duke of Argyll makes mention of the Light Company, which appears to have been lately raised, and armed with the "new short arms"—lighter muskets, in fact. As in the case of the same companies in other regiments, the men would have short red jackets, red waistcoats, short gaiters, and a leather cap, almost a skull cap, having a large round peak straight up in front; officers and sergeants carrying fusils and wearing pouches. This necessitated another silver epaulette upon the left shoulder of the officers to confine this extra belt, officers of the grenadier company also wearing two for the same reason.

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The 52nd was stationed in Canada at this time, and although its inspection returns are not forthcoming, yet it may be taken for granted that it in turn would also have a Light Company.

Shortly before the American War of Independence, cross belts were introduced for infantry regiments— that is, the bayonet belt removed from the waist to the shoulder, and a brass breast-plate (probably oval in shape, with the regimental number engraved thereon), affixed to the latter. Officers' swords were also suspended from a white or buff belt, over the right shoulder. At first a simple buckle and tip was the only ornament in front, but gradually small oval breastplates of silver came into use, for the two Regiments. No evidence, so far, is forthcoming as to the particular design upon these plates. Both Regiments were encamped for some time in the vicinity of New York, and many relics have been from time to time exhumed; amongst other things, the button of a private soldier of the 43rd has lately been found—vide accompanying illustration. Being made of pewter, it appears to have escaped the ravages of time better than the more fragile silver buttons of the officers, which were simply thin sheets of silver laid upon bone, and fastened by two crossed pieces of catgut to the cloth of the coat.



PRIVATE SOLDIERS BUTTON, 43rd REGIMENT, 1778.

In April 1786, battalion officers were ordered to discontinue the use of espartoos; the same order directed officers to wear gaiters like those worn by the men, on all duties except on the march, when high boots might be worn. Regiments having adopted various and independent modes of dressing the hair, His Majesty was pleased to direct that officers and men in general, when under arms or on duty (the Grenadier and Light Companies, when they wear their caps, excepted), were, for the future, to wear the hair clubbed. The non commissioned officers and men to have a small piece of black polished leather, by way of ornament, upon the club. The whole to wear black leather stocks.

The 43rd was inspected at Windsor, May 12th, 1787, by General Osborne. After remarking that there was a good band of music, he continued, "The men's sleeves have two buttons, and the hats with a *pinge* under the button; the dress plain and soldier-like."

By an order dated December 10th, 1791, effective Field Officers were directed to wear two epaulettes (up to this period they had only worn one), and the officers of the flank companies, who had two, were ordered to wear, as a distinguishing mark, a grenade or bugle horn embroidered upon each.

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Officer, 52nd Regiment,  
1792

In 1792 the halberds, so long carried by the sergeants, were laid aside and pikes substituted; they had a plain spear head, with a steel crossbar just below; the sergeants of the Light Company, however, retained their fusils. Very shortly afterwards the officers of the grenadier and light companies (often designated the flank companies) were ordered to discontinue the use of fusils, together with the cross pouch belt, the sword to be their only weapon. They still retained the two epaulettes, some few years after to be exchanged for wings.

In 1792-1793 the officers' uniform of the 43rd was remarkably neat. A black three-cornered cocked hat, with the Hanoverian cockade of black silk on the left side, looped down with silver lace and silver regimental button; the scarlet coat with plain white cuffs, collar, and lapels, fastened below the throat, but exposing the white waistcoat; white breeches and black gaiters to the knee; the collar higher than formerly, standing well up, in fact; the silver button, fixed originally to fasten it down to the lapel (hence the old name cape) still remains with its white silk (imitation) buttonhole, but only as an ornament; the silver gorget with crimson rosettes and ribbons still worn—indeed, its constant use rigorously insisted upon; sash of crimson silk tied on the left side.

*(The gorget, an ornament half moon in shape, worn just below the collar had been the distinctive mark of officer's rank since the time of Queen Anne. The officers of both regiments wore it in silver up to 1795, when it was ordered to be of gilt metal for all regiments of infantry. Finally abolished in 1830.)*

Private soldiers' uniform of this date was extremely like that of the officers in cut and shape, with loops of regimental lace, before described, to all the buttonholes.

The 52nd was now serving in India, and may possibly have worn a costume more adapted to the climate, but any officers and men at home would wear the same dress as described for the 43rd, substituting buff for white facings, waistcoats, breeches, and belts.

The Regimental Standing Orders of the 43rd Regiment, dated 1795, have been printed in the issue of the chronicle for 1894. That part referring to officers' dress is given at considerable length, and affords valuable information concerning details of uniform at this period, The following extract is important: "The gorget is to be hung by crimson roses of the colour of the sash to the buttons of the collar, and as high as the upper part of the lapels."

A considerable amount of laxity prevailed at this time, as to the colour of the gorget rosettes and ribbons. An order, however, was issued May 4th, 1796, which directed the gorget to be gilt with gold, with the king's cipher and crown over it, engraved on the middle; and to be worn with a riband and tuft or rosette at each end, of the colour of the facing of the regimental clothing respectively." Now with regard to the second part of the paragraph, which directs the gorget to be fastened to the "buttons of the collar."

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It must be borne in mind that some two or three years before the date of these Standing Orders, the collar had been made upright and the button placed at the back, instead of the front of the now imitation buttonhole or cord, consequently it would be inconvenient to fasten the ribbon there. In 1792-1793 some very carefully-executed coloured engravings by Edward Dayes were published, representing officers of the Guards, and of the nine senior regiments of foot. In every case the ribbons of the gorget are fastened to the top button of the lapel, and not to the collar or collar button. The most reasonable solution is that the officers of the 43rd fastened the ribbons of the gorget to the top button of the lapels, as everybody else did; the Standing Orders being, on this point, nearly three years out of date. As an exemplification, if the reader will compare the portrait of Captain Thorne, 43rd, (*above*), with the above illustration of an Officer of the 52nd Regiment in the ordinary costume of 1792, he will find that with the former the collar, or cape, may be buttoned down to the top button of the lapel if required, whereas in the latter case the collar button and cord appear to serve no other purpose than that of ornamentation, the gorget itself being attached to the top button of the lapels.

It so happens that in Captain Thorne's portrait no gorget is worn, but if it had appeared, it must have been fastened to the top buttons of the lapels, there being nothing on the collar which would lend itself for that purpose.

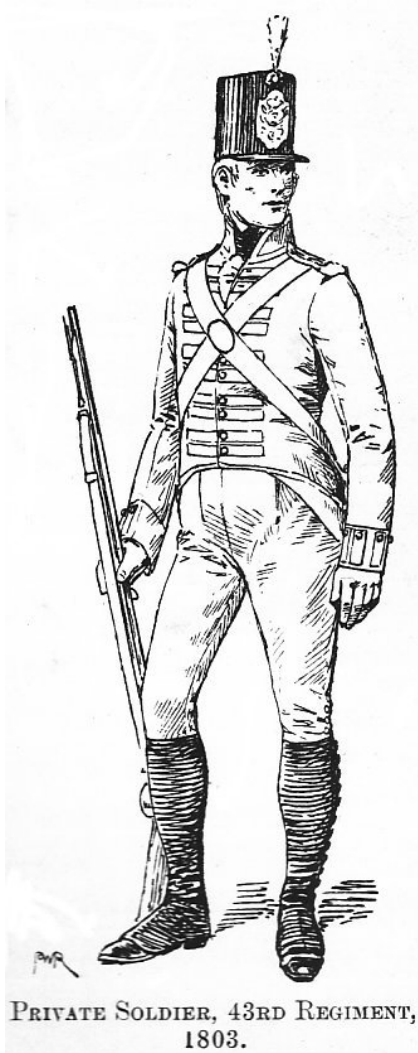
Towards the end of the century, the coats for all ranks were fastened down to the waist, completely hiding the waistcoat. The "Warrant of 1796 directed that for officers the lapels were to be continued down to the waist, and to be made either to button over 'occasionally (making what would now be termed a double-breasted' coat) or to fasten close, with hooks and eyes, all the way to the bottom, in which case the white lapel, with its white silk buttonholes, would show when buttoned back. The stand-up collar was now very high and roomy, to admit the large black neckcloth coming into fashion. It is possible that the custom in the 43rd and 52nd, of the buttons of the officers and the lace loops and buttons of the men being worn upon the coat in pairs, instead of being put on at equal distances, may date from this time; certainly they were so worn in the present century, up to 1855.

The jacket for the rank and file was single-breasted, having ten buttons and loops of regimental lace (different patterns in the two Regiments, as before described) down the front, arranged in pairs; the lace serving no other purpose than that of ornament. The old white woollen waistcoat, with sleeves, became, practically, the shell jacket worn for undress or fatigue duties, though still, and for many years afterwards, called the "waistcoat." Horse Guards Warrant, dated April 22nd, 1799, directed officers and men of infantry regiments (except the flank companies) to wear their hair queued, to be tied a little below the upper part of the collar of the coat, and to be ten inches in length, including one inch of hair to appear below the binding.

The cocked hat worn by the men was discontinued in 1800, a cylindrical shako taking its place, ornamented with an oblong brass plate bearing the king's crest, and a red and white tuft fixed in front rising from a black leather cockade. The officers retained their cocked hats, which they wore sometimes even with the shoulders, and at other times fore and aft.



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The annexed illustration represents a private soldier of the 43rd early in the year 1803, showing the lately-introduced felt shako, and the arrangement of the lace loops upon the coat. The reader must imagine for himself the effect of this regimental lace, white with red and black stripes. It goes all round the collar, the shoulder straps (terminating in small white tufts), and the bottom of the coat, also the skirts, with loops round the pocket buttons; a triangle of this lace was also placed between the two buttons in the small of the back. The chest and cuff loops in pairs. White cloth collar, shoulder straps, cuffs and breeches; black gaiters reaching now only to the knee. The 52nd, also at home, having lately returned from India, had precisely similar uniform, excepting that the facings and breeches were of buff cloth, and the lace of the 52nd Regimental pattern then in use, namely, white with a black stripe on one edge, and two, red and yellow conjoined, on the other edge; all loops by pairs.

Chevrons, to be worn upon the arm by non-commissioned officers, had been introduced in 1802 sergeant-majors to have four, sergeants three, and corporals two.

The first wore silver lace, the second plain white tape lace, and the third the striped Regimental lace. The staff-sergeants always wore silver lace, and continued to do so, in both Regiments, until the abolition of the coatee in 1855.

In January 1803 the 52nd was converted into a Light Infantry corps, and in July the 43rd likewise received the honour. This change necessitated some alterations in the costume of officers and men. Light companies of infantry regiments had always worn a different dress, short-tailed jackets and a cap of some kind, and now the officers and men of the two Regiments adopted very short light infantry jackets, and the officers shakos—a considerable change as far as the officers were concerned, those of Line infantry regiments still adhering to the long-tailed coat and the huge cocked hat lately described. This state of things only lasted until 1811, when the latter disappeared, and was replaced by a light felt shako; short jackets also, and curved Light Infantry sabres, came into very general use upon active service, consequently from that date until perhaps 1816 there was no very great difference between Light Infantry corps and Line regiments when upon active service, or when at home liable for active service, a condition of things common to the whole army long before the conclusion of the Peninsular War.

Both Regiments were now fully equipped as Light Infantry. If the reader is curious to know some of the details of an Officer's kit, he will find them described in the letters and papers of Ensign Charles Booth, who joined the 52nd in 1805. It appears he bought "Regimental jackets, four silver epaulettes for two coats costing £9 (one was the regulation Light Infantry jacket with silver curb chain wings, the other probably the full-dress long-tailed coat with silver epaulettes).

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He also bought pantaloons, buff breeches, gaiters, Regimental waistcoat, buff sword knot, and a good sabre, different from the Line, costing £4 " (the late Chaplain-General, the Rev. G. H. Gleig, informed the writer that, to the best of his recollection, the officers of the 52nd wore a silver-mounted Light Infantry sabre in the Peninsula; hence, possibly, the considerable cost of this weapon). Also "a Regimental" cap, feather, and bugle costing £2 3s. 6d., one coloured "cap to drill in, bugles for my coat" (he refers here to the two small silver embroidered bugles at the bottom of the skirts of his Light Infantry jacket), "silver breast-plate, £1 7s." (the annexed illustration represents the silver breast-plate in question, worn by the Officers until about 1825), "spyglass and compass, £3 ;" and finally, "Regimental queue and curling irons, 5s." The queue was indispensable in the days of pigtails; not, however, until 1808 did the welcome order come to dispense with it, when, to the joy of the army at large, this troublesome appendage was abolished. By the same Warrant the hair was ordered to be cut short in the neck, and a small sponge added to the rest of the soldier's numerous necessaries, "for the purpose of frequently washing his head."



OFFICER'S SILVER BREAST-PLATE,  
52ND REGIMENT, 1804-1825.



OFFICER'S SILVER BUTTON,  
43RD REGIMENT, 1800-1808.

The silver buttons worn by the officers of the 43rd from the commencement of the century until the Peninsular War period were of the pattern as in accompanying illustration. About 1808 another pattern was introduced, a stringed bugle with "43" in centre and crown over, convex in shape, the former one having been quite flat.

Costume of the two Regiments during the Peninsular War and the period of the Waterloo campaign: The private soldiers' coat was an easy-fitting garment, laced much as last described in 1804, hut, as became Light Infantrymen, wings were worn upon the shoulders (for example of the shape of these wings see the illustration representing a private of the 52nd, 1815); the shako tapering slightly from the bottom, with a short green worsted plume in front, and small brass bugle; an oilskin covering was generally used on service. The officers of the 43rd wore the black felt shako, very like that of the men, having a green feather and silver bugle in front; a scarlet double-breasted easy jacket with short tails turned back white, thereon two silver embroidered bugles, each shoulder having silver curb chain wings, with silver bullion fringe.

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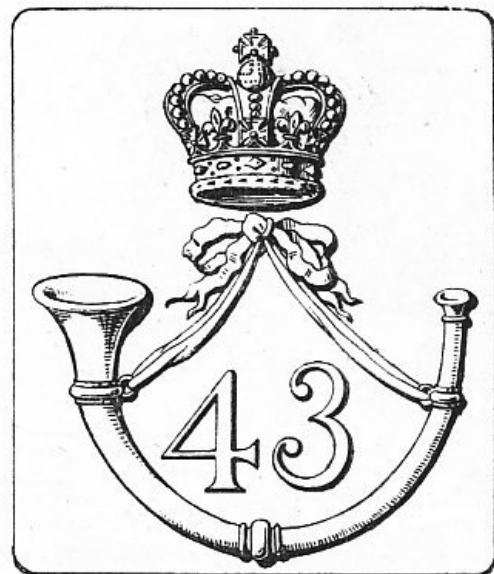


LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHARLES MACLEOD  
KILLED IN COMMAND OF THE 43RD LIGHT INFANTRY  
AT THE STORMING OF BADAJOZ  
6TH APRIL 1812

The portrait of Lieut.-Colonel Macleod (chronicle, 1895), exemplifies this dress; being a Field Officer he wore silver epaulettes over the wings, a curious custom which continued until 1829. A colonel had an embroidered gold crown and a gold star upon the epaulette strap; lieutenant-colonels and majors, crowns or stars respectively.



GENERAL SIR JAMES FERGUSSON, G.C.B.



PATTERN OF OFFICER'S BREAST-PLATE,  
43RD REGIMENT, 1804-1855.

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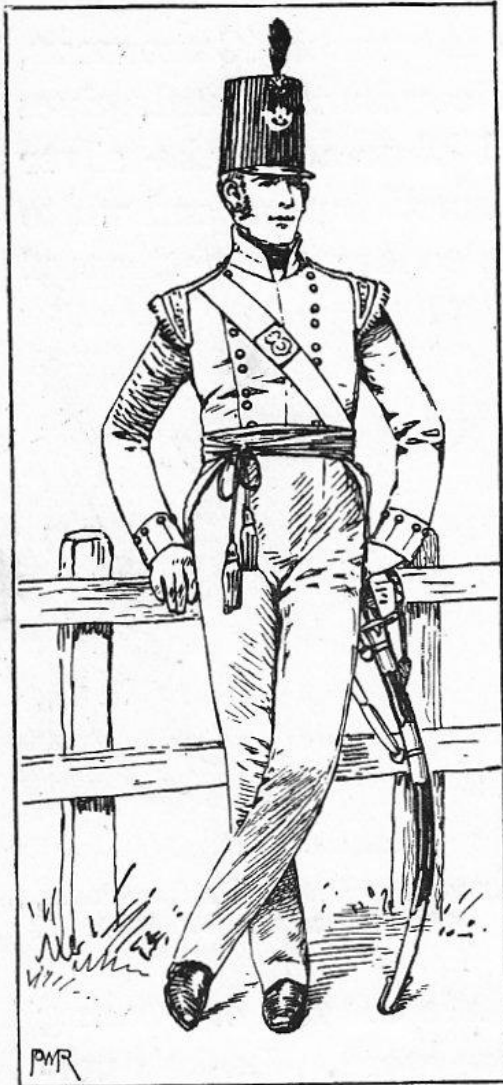
The fine portrait of Sir James Fergusson (chronicle, 1895), as a subaltern officer in the 43rd, gives excellent details of the method of wearing the silver buttons upon the coat, also the small button and white silk imitation buttonhole on the collar; the pattern of the silver breast-plate is very distinct, and noticeable, moreover, from the fact that there is no crown over the bugle; if correctly delineated by the artist, it must be a very early pattern, it being generally understood that the officers' silver breast-plate, in use up to 1831, was of the accompanying design. Fergusson never obtained Field rank in the Regiment; the presence of epaulettes may, just possibly, denote the full or evening dress, when these appendages were worn.



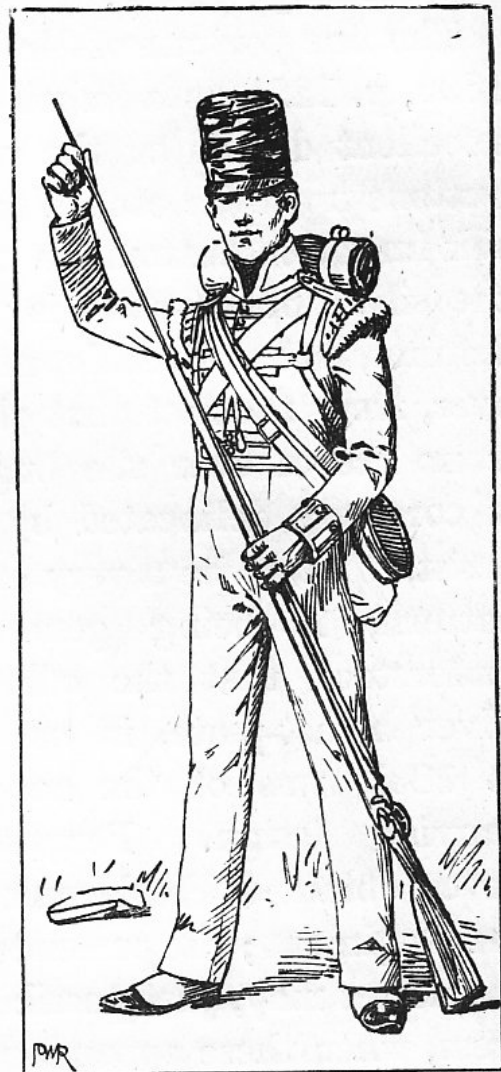
ENSIGN WILLIAM LEEKE  
52ND LIGHT INFANTRY  
WHO CARRIED THE REGIMENTAL COLOUR AT THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

Leeke's portrait (chronicle, 1895) shows this full-dress coat as worn in the 52nd and also 43rd, with the two epaulettes; the latter must have caused confusion at times, because in Line regiments of infantry, Field Officers alone wore two, other officers wearing one only, upon the right shoulder. With this coat, without sash, was worn a straight dress sword, the belt not visible; lapels buttoned back, white breeches, silk stockings, and silver shoe buckles; a cocked hat also formed part of the outfit. For ordinary duties the officers of both Regiments carried a curved Light Infantry sabre, with black leather sheath, suspended by slings from the white shoulder belt; sash of crimson silk, twice round the waist, tied with cords and tassels on the right side.

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OFFICER, 52ND REGIMENT, 1815.



PRIVATE SOLDIER, 52ND REGIMENT, 1815.

No miniatures or portraits of officers of the 52nd in Regimental uniform of this period have so far appeared in the chronicle, but it may be assumed that the uniforms of officers and men are represented in the accompanying plate of an officer and private, 1815.

The facings buff, also the skirt linings, the officer's sword with silver mountings and black cord sword knot with acorn end.

The shape and appearance of the private soldier's wings may be noticed, the lace on his coat as before described, the trousers roomy and of grey cloth (they had been worn, together with short cloth gaiters, all through the war in the Peninsula). Sergeants had the same jacket as the men, but of finer cloth, laced with plain white tape, chevrons of the same on both arms; wings a little neater than those worn by the private soldiers; a sash of crimson worsted, striped with the colour of the Regimental facing, round the waist, and the sword suspended in a frog from a white shoulder belt; a light pouch hung on the right side, a light fusil being carried instead of the pike. The sergeant-major wore narrow silver lace on his coat and small silver laced wings. The dress of the buglers of both Regiments is not known with certainty, but if corresponding with that known to have been worn by another Light Infantry regiment at the time, the coat would be of red cloth, profusely laced all over, including the back, side, arm and skirt seams, with the Regimental lace, in two widths, broad and narrow.

**Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of  
The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896**

The silver buttons worn by the officers of the 52nd from the time the Regiment was made Light Infantry, and, possibly enough, even before that event took place, were of the annexed design. The bugle never appeared upon the buttons as long as the Regiment was numbered 52



Pattern of officer's button, 52nd Regiment, 1804-1855.

This pattern was actually used until 1855. Almost the same may be said as regards the breast-plate—excepting for a very short time about 1830, the bugle was absent from this Regimental ornament altogether.

**In 1816** the neat serviceable felt cap was laid aside, and a broad-topped heavy shako introduced, its shape copied from the headdress worn by the foreign troops met with during the occupation of France, after Waterloo. It was eleven inches in diameter at the top, seven and a half inches deep, and, in the case of the 43rd and 52nd, had an upright green feather, twelve inches high, and a small brass bugle in front. The officers' shako had silver lace, two inches wide, round the top, with a silver three-quarter inch lace round the bottom, silver chin scales and black cap-lines; in front, immediately below the high feather, appeared the Hanoverian black cockade (an oval boss of black cord), and below it a small silver bugle.

**1819.**—All regiments having buff facings were ordered to adopt white breeches and coat linings. This regulation affected the 52nd, because both officers and men wore buff breeches with black gaiters, the latter just coming up to the knee. The old curved sabre was also abolished, a new and almost straight regulation sword taking its place, suspended in a frog from the officer's white shoulder belt; mounted officers were required to wear it in slings from the same. A year afterwards the short-tailed jackets, the especial mark of Light Infantry, were discontinued for all ranks; henceforth, until 1855, long-tailed coats were worn.

**In 1822** the historic breeches and leggings themselves disappeared, and trousers, grey or white, according to the season, were invariably worn. According to Marcuard the long green feather worn by the 43rd had become shortened into a kind of oval pompon of dark green worsted; probably the 52nd followed suit soon after.

**In 1826** the shape of the private soldier's coat was altered; the chest loops of Regimental striped lace (still worn by the 43rd and 52nd by pairs across the front of the coat) were made broader at the top than at the bottom, tapering downwards, and the lace was taken off the skirts.

For a good example of this new coat refer to a plate in the chronicle, 1895 (*below*), private of the 43rd, 1826, which really gives a good illustration of a private soldier's dress at this period; the coloured stripes upon the lace are just discernible, and the white worsted wings as then worn, larger than formerly.

Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of  
The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896



*Collotype.*

PRIVATE, 43RD LIGHT INFANTRY.  
1815.

*(From an old Drawing by LIEUT. NICHOLAS CONDY.)*



*Woolley-Granger.*

LIEUT.-COLONEL HENRY BOOTH, K.H.



*Collotype.*

LIEUTENANT JONATHAN ALDERSON,

43RD LIGHT INFANTRY.

1828-1834.

## Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896

The portraits of Lieut.-Colonel Booth and Lieut. Alderson, both of the 43rd, in the chronicle (frontispiece, 1894, Chronicle and 1895), are most valuable evidences of officers' uniform of this Regiment just before the great changes made in 1829, when so many little Regimental distinctions were done away with, to which reference will be made in due course. Lieut.-Colonel Booth is in Field Officer's uniform, and Lieut. Alderson in that of a subaltern; the shako of the former is very much as last described, the pattern of the silver lace round the top being that known as "Austrian wave"; the black plume of cock's feathers is probably a full-dress affair, Lieut. Alderson's green tuft, regulation. The lapels of the former are buttoned back, showing white cloth facing with the white silk buttonholes, whilst Alderson's coat is simply buttoned across—the ordinary everyday and also parade dress. The position of Colonel Booth's epaulettes, as worn over his wings, is well shown, so that nothing remains to add excepting that the epaulette strap is of silver curb chain, like the wing. The silver button and white silk buttonhole still survive upon the collar and cuffs, shortly to be abolished in the dress coat. Blue-grey trousers were worn now in full dress, with silver stripes down the side seams.

The officers' silver breast-plate, with its simple bugle, "43," and crown, remains as before, but there is evidence to prove that about 1829, though the plate remained silver, the raised ornaments were in gilt metal.



WILLIAM CONSIDINE.

The portrait of Colonel Considine, 43rd, frontispiece of this (1896) volume, shows the large-topped cloth forage cap worn by officers in 1827, and the regulation sword (or rather the handle) introduced, as we have seen, in 1819; also the double curb chain silver wing, with gilt bugle in centre of the pattern, then and for some years worn by captains and subaltern officers.



**Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of  
The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896**

Officers of the 52nd wore much the same uniform, substituting buff facings for white, with, however, sundry Regimental peculiarities; thus the broad silver lace round the top of the shako was "oak brocade" pattern, so old lacemen's books testify. The same authority informs us that the pattern of the silver trouser lace was one and three-quarter inch "ESS," a curious name, but really the pattern was very similar to a succession of capital letters S. Officers' silver wings were of the same pattern as those worn in the 43rd. One thing should be mentioned—the silver breast-plate as worn during the Waterloo period, illustrated in the text, has given way to a new design, also in silver, the shape as last, but in the centre an oval girdle with the words "Oxfordshire Regt." thereon; outside this girdle a laurel wreath, and above it a crown; within the girdle a stringed bugle under the Regimental number in Roman characters. The silver waist belt-plate worn by Field Officers and also by other officers in undress was of a similar design.

Coat tails of the officers of both Regiments, now worn long and with white turnbacks, had silver embroidered bugles as skirt ornaments. Originally the wide flowing skirts were fastened back at the bottom with a button, but when, towards the end of last century, skirts diminished very much in size, the turnbacks were permanent features, and in or about 1804 the buttons were replaced by elaborately embroidered gold or silver ornaments, affording a field of display for Regimental distinctions, and so continued until the abolition of the tailed coatee in 1855.

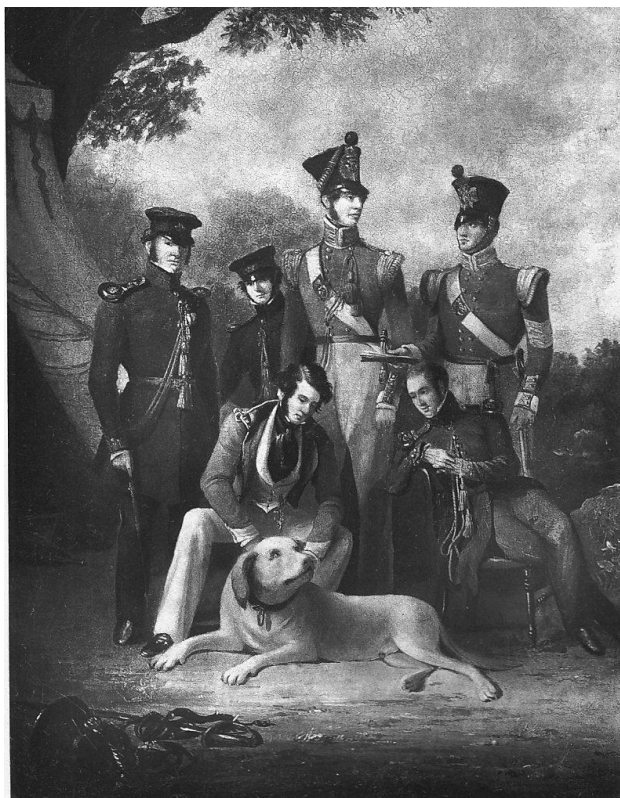
Dress of The Regimental staff officers, about 1828, was as follows: The Paymaster, Quartermaster, Surgeon, and Assistant Surgeon wore single-breasted scarlet coats, with red cords stretching across the chest to the waist from each coat button; collars and cuffs as combatant officers, black leather sword belt under the coat; no wings or sash. All these staff officers wore cocked hats, the Paymaster and Quartermaster with silver loops and tassels, the former without any, feather, the latter having a green one. Surgeons, plain black silk loops, without any feather.

About this time a blue greatcoat, otherwise frock coat, was authorised for undress, the crimson sash and the sword suspended in a frog from a black waistbelt. The dress regulations ordered that this coat was to be of blue cloth, single-breasted, with Regimental buttons and a Prussian collar, perfectly plain. From a question which arose at a General Officer's inspection many years afterwards, there can be no doubt that Colonel Haverfield, at this time commanding the 43rd, permitted the officers of that Regiment to wear a silver Regimental button and a black cord loop or imitation buttonhole upon each side of the collar, and four buttons and loops upon the cuffs of this frock coat; an exact copy, in fact, of what was then worn upon the collar and cuffs of the scarlet coat. Tradition holds that a similar innovation was adopted by the officers of the 52nd.

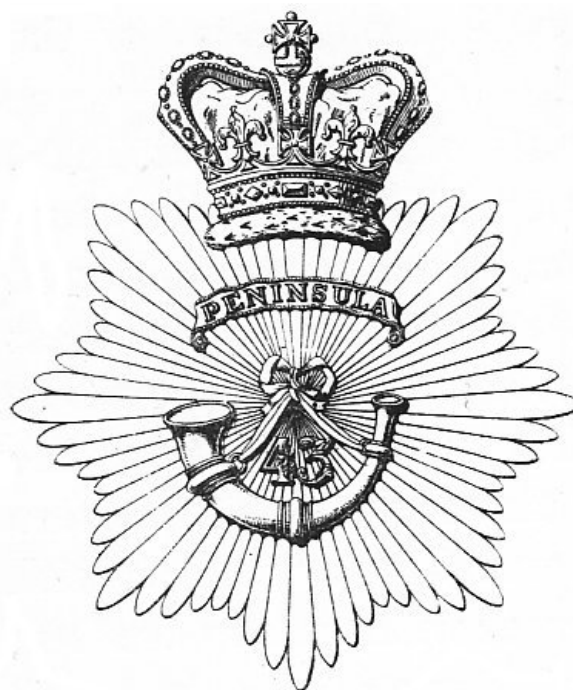
In December 1828 a change was made in the shakos of infantry officers—the lace stripped off, the height reduced to six inches, and the time-honoured black cockade of the House of Hanover removed, much to the surprise of those interested in such matters.

*(A brass star plate, with crown over, of somewhat similar design but slightly less in size, came into use for the rank and file. These large star plates continued to be worn until 1845, and may be seen in the group of 43rd officers and sergeant illustrated in the chronicle, 1895, (below))*

Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of  
The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896



43rd Officers and Serjeant.



OFFICER'S SHAKO-PLATE, 43RD REGIMENT,  
1829-1845.

The only ornament in front of this headdress was a universal gilt shako-plate, star shaped, with crown over, about five inches high. Regiments were permitted to place whatever ornament they thought fit or might select in the centre of this plate. The officers of the 43rd adopted a silver stringed bugle, with "43" in the centre, surmounted by a silver scroll or label bearing the word "Peninsula." This cap-plate is represented in the annexed illustration. It is believed that a very similar star was also adopted by the officers of the 52nd Regiment. Following the Prussian example, officers were authorised to wear gold cap-lines, having a heavily braided festoon in front, terminating in two gold tassels, looped up in front to one of the coat buttons.

A very important change was now impending as regards the cut and fashion of officers' coats. To such an extent had the practice of wearing a superabundance of lace grown in some regiments (but not, as we have seen, in the 43rd or 52nd), that the authorities determined to introduce a universal pattern coat, or coatee, as it was often termed, for infantry officers; hence the Warrant of February 1829, authorising the well-known double-breasted coatee, which remained, with scarcely any alteration, the dress of officers until 1855.

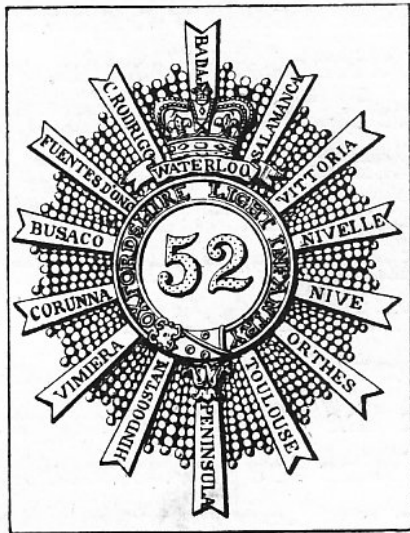
This regulation coatee for the officers of the 43rd had two rows of silver buttons, by pairs, down the front; a white collar, Prussian shaped—i.e., cut square and hooked up the front, on each side two loops of silver lace with two Regimental buttons behind, completely covering the front part of the collar under the chin; white cuffs, with a scarlet slash up the arm, thereon four silver loops and buttons by pairs; white turnbacks to the skirts, the extremities ornamented with small silver embroidered bugles, crown over; scarlet slashed pockets in the skirts, placed obliquely, with four silver laced loops and buttons, also by pairs.

**Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of  
The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896**

The coatee of the 52nd officers was precisely similar to the above, with buff collar and cuff; it had, however, a narrow buff edging round the oblique pocket slash in the skirts; the skirt ornaments being silver embroidered bugles with double curl bows on buff cloth. Silver wings, for both Regiments were of the new regulation pattern, three silver curb chains on the strap and wing parts, with gilt metal bugles on the former. Field Officers wore epaulettes only, silver vellum strap with narrow silk stripes of the Regimental facing, silver plated crescent and bullion fringe; gold embroidered badges of rank, crowns or stars upon the strap.

With regard to the silver lace upon the coat, nothing of the kind had been hitherto worn by the officers of either Regiment, consequently it became necessary to choose a pattern. As showing that there must have been a close connection between these two Regiments of Peninsular fame, the same pattern was chosen by both, notwithstanding the fact that there were many other varieties in the field. The pattern adopted was that known as silver "French check."

**1830.**—The white cloth or flannel fatigue jacket worn by the rank and file was abolished and a red one adopted. The recently introduced cap-lines evidently found little favour; they were also abolished, together with the gorget, by the Warrant of 1830, upon the accession of William IV. Musicians were ordered to be dressed in white, and, lastly, the use of gold lace to be confined to the officers of the Regular Army only. This latter order affected considerably the officers' uniform of both Regiments, as the whole of the silver lace and silver ornaments were changed to gold. The breast-plate worn by the officers of the 43rd was now of bright gilt, with the old-established bugle, crown, and Regimental number in raised silver.



OFFICER'S BREAST-PLATE,  
52ND REGIMENT, 1831-1855.

The officers of the 52nd, however, adopted a handsome breast-plate of new design, as in the accompanying illustration—the plate bright gilt, centre with girdle, Regimental number, and crown also gilt, star and star rays silver, the latter bearing the names of battle honours granted to the Regiment, to be borne upon its colours and appointments. Staff-sergeants continued to wear their silver lace, and did so until the disappearance of the coatee itself in 1855.

By circular memo, 30th April 1832, Field Officers of infantry were ordered to discontinue the shoulder belt (with breast-plate) and slings for the sword, a white leather waist-belt, fastened with a gilt plate in front, being substituted; they were directed to wear in future a brass scabbard. Adjutants to wear a steel scabbard and to retain the old method of carrying the sword.

**January 1833.**—A narrow red welt was introduced down the sides of the dark Oxford mixture winter trousers, which had replaced those of the old bluish-grey mixture a year or two before.

**In 1834** the officers' dark green forage cap, with very broad crown and band of white cloth (or buff in the 52nd), was superseded by one rather smaller in the crown, having a black silk oak-leaf pattern band, gold embroidered bugle with Regimental number in front.

## Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896

At the same time a gold and crimson shoulder cord worn upon the officers' single-breasted blue frock coat was discontinued, and shoulder straps of blue cloth, laced round with Regimental lace terminating in gilt metal crescents, introduced. The sword was worn hr a frog suspended from a black waistbelt, over the crimson sash, the long tassel ends looped up to the top buttons of the coat, forming altogether a handsome and effective undress uniform.

If the reader wishes to realise the appearance of the different uniforms worn by officers of the 43rd at this period, he cannot do better than consult an illustration in the chronicle for 1895, (*43rd Officers and Serjeant group above*)

There can be seen an officer in full dress, in undress blue frock with forage cap, also in scarlet shell jacket, worn open; the latter possibly a summer costume, the Regiment being stationed in Canada. This jacket, with gold shoulder cord, had been authorised some time, but it was not permitted to be worn at mess, at least in the United Kingdom, where officers were compelled to sit down to dinner every night in tightly buttoned scarlet coatee with wings, and sash round the waist. The staff-sergeants' wings, collar, and cuff lace, not quite so rich as in the officers' case, are of silver lace. No whistles or chains are to be seen upon the shoulder belts of officers or staff-sergeant, a singular departure from the regulations, shared also by the 52nd Regiment. Whistles and chains were worn by other Light Infantry regiments, and by the officers and sergeants of the Light Companies of Line regiments, but, from what can be gathered, neither of the two Regiments ever wore them. As far as the sergeants were concerned they were in store, but not issued. A close scrutiny of this illustration reveals the fact that the collar of the blue frock coat has on each side a Regimental button and cord loop, also four buttons and cord upon the cuff. The dress regulations for 1834 prescribe perfectly plain collar and cuffs. (Later on we shall find this the cause of some trouble.) The 43rd Regiment still adhered to the same pattern of button—the stringed bugle, with number in the centre and crown over, as annexed plate.



Pattern of Officer's button, 43rd Regiment, 1808-1855.

**1839.**—A large universal pattern brass shako-plate worn by the rank and file abolished, its place taken by a round brass plate, three inches in diameter, surmounted by a crown, the Regimental number, raised, in the centre below a bugle; this continued (although the shape of the shako itself changed) until 1855.

A new shako for the infantry (sometimes called the Albert hat), was authorised in 1844, six and three-quarter inches high, a quarter of an inch less in diameter at the top than the bottom, considerably altering the appearance of the headdress.



OFFICER'S SHAKO-PLATE,  
52ND REGIMENT, 1845-1855.

The men retained the round shako-plate lately described; the round dark green ball tuft was continued for all ranks, but the officers lost the large and handsome gilt star plate, with silver bugle and ornaments, worn since 1829, a smaller one, altogether of gilt metal, being substituted. The accompanying illustration represents that authorised to be worn by the officers of the 52nd; fourteen battle honours granted to the Regiment appear upon the star rays and below the bugle. Officers of the 43rd had a similar sized star plate, of almost identical design, but with a rather different arrangement of the twelve battle honours carried by that Regiment.

**Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of  
The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896**

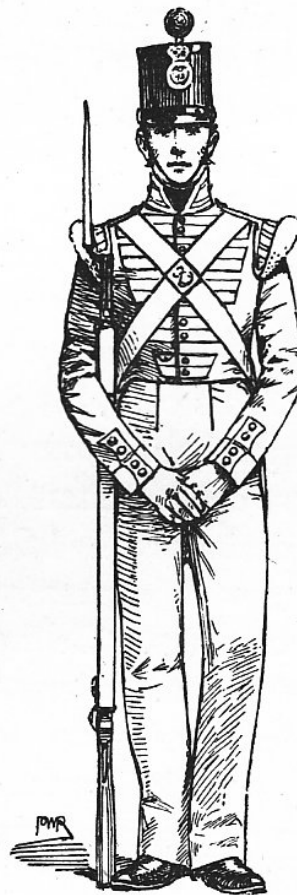
When the 43rd was inspected at Halifax, N.S., in 1845, the Inspecting Officer remarked that "the officers invariably appear at mess in proper uniform," meaning that, in accordance with a recent very stringent order, no mess costume was to be worn, even in the colonies, solely the uniform scarlet coatee, with wings and sash.

The next Regimental distinction to be lost was the button and cord upon the collar of the blue frock coat lately mentioned. When the 43rd was inspected at Templemore, June 1st, 1848, by Major-General T. E. Napier, O.B., the latter was pleased to remark: "The officers' frock coat has slashed sleeves, with buttons and loops round the cuff, and a loop and button on the collar, which I have ordered to be discontinued." Lieut.-Colonel Forlong states that the blue frock coat, as now worn, is precisely the same in every respect as established when the blue frock coat was first introduced into the army, when the Regiment was commanded by Colonel Haverfield." The officers had not very long to mourn the loss of the old-established loop and button, for the blue coat itself was abolished six months afterwards, its place being taken by a scarlet shell jacket, with perfectly plain collar and cuffs of Regimental facing, and gold shoulder cords, in which garment an officer had to disport himself all day, until it was time to get into the tight coatee for dinner. A black patent leather waistbelt, with sword slings, was ordered to be worn with the new jacket, and a greatcoat of grey cloth took the place of the cloak hitherto worn.

The illustration herewith represents an officer and private of the 43rd in 1850, in the last of the old-fashioned tailed coats and white tape lace, not to mention the heavy so-called Albert hat. Still, the tall, well set-up soldiers, showing off the varied uniforms of different ranks in a Regiment of Foot at this time, combined to produce an effect to which we are utter strangers.



OFFICER, 43RD REGIMENT, 1850.



PRIVATE SOLDIER, 43RD REGIMENT, 1850.

## Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896

Let us endeavour to picture to ourselves the 43rd marching to a full-dress parade. First come the pioneers (ordinary private soldiers), laden with the implements of their calling—spades, picks, hatchets, and so forth - girt with long brown leather aprons, the right corner looped up. Next the band, headed by the bugle-major, the latter in red coat with white facings, laced with silver, handsome silver wings upon his shoulders, with crimson sash, cords, and tassels looped up to the coat buttons; upon each arm four silver chevrons, with bugle above, the badge of his rank; staff-sergeant's sword in slings from a white shoulder belt bearing the Regimental breast-plate. Bandsmen in neat white double-breasted coats, having red collars, cuffs, and huge red wings, the same shape as those worn by private soldiers; long straight brass-scabbarded dress swords, with brass crusader hilt, carried in a frog from white shoulder belts, with Regimental breast-plate. In rear of the band marches the band-sergeant, himself an object of sartorial interest by reason of his handsome dress; his neat double-breasted white coat, red collar and cuffs, laced as an officer, but in silver, with rich silver wings, and the silver chevrons of his rank on both arms; his crimson sash, cords, and tassels well set off by the white cloth of his coat, his sword of Officer's pattern in white sling waistbelt, altogether mark him out, so many think, the best dressed man in the corps.

The whole Regiment wear dark green ball tufts in the shako, and black trousers with a narrow red welt; in summer all have white trousers. Behind the band come the buglers in red coats, laced across the chest in double loops, also up the back seams and coat tails, collar, cuffs, and wing straps, with the Regimental buglers' lace of the following pattern: "White worsted, rather more than half an inch in width, a black stripe between two others of yellow down the centre, and two narrow red stripes down the outer edges. This pattern quite peculiar to the Regiment; no one knows its history, or how long it had been worn. But the buglers are not done with yet; it remains to add that their large overhanging wings were of white worsted, but sprinkled all over with patches of red, yellow, and black, whilst between the buttons, on the back of the coat, nearly hidden by belts and accoutrements, stretched what is known as the buglers' fringe, of worsted some three inches deep, coloured red, white, black, and yellow alternately; a relic of some barbaric splendour, its origin too far back to trace successfully. Then follows the Regiment, officers resplendent in scarlet and gold, the men a red and white mass. A brave show;—mostly buried in the merciless changes of uniform during the approaching Crimean epoch.

The above details were chiefly communicated to the writer by an eye-witness. Unfortunately, the information as regards the 52nd at this period is not quite so minute. There can be no doubt that a very similar appearance was presented by the band of the latter Regiment—the coat white, the facings red—but the large wings were plain white, and the shakos had drooping horsehair plumes of dark green. In undress, the bandsmen wore white shell jackets, piped on the front and back seams with red, also red collars and cuffs; the round forage cap, white cloth, edged with red piping, and worn perfectly straight on the head—an old custom in both Regiments. The buglers of the 52nd had the same amount of lace, and distributed on the coat in the same manner as those of the 43rd just described, but of quite another pattern, namely, white worsted with two red stripes down the outer edges only. The buglers' fringe behind followed the colours of the lace, and was red-and white; the, large wings white with red patches. As far as can be ascertained, the 43rd Regiment always had a corps of pioneers, but the 52nd, for some unexplained reason, never had any. Inspection, Limerick, May 7th, 1852, 52nd Regiment, Major-General Napier remarks: "There are no pioneers attached to the Regiment, and Major Forester informs me that for many years there have been none, if, indeed, there ever were; there are no pioneers' appointments in store."

**Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of  
The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896**

**1855.**—Frock coats or tunics were introduced, and the coat tails of the army disappeared. The first issue of the tunic was double-breasted, with rounded collars and brass buttons for the men, placed at equal distances instead of in pairs; no lace used, excepting a little white tape, diamond shape, round the buttons of the cuffs and skirts; the coat edging piped all round with white cloth; dark trousers, having a red welt; the shako smaller and lighter; officers' and sergeants' sashes worn over the left and right shoulders respectively, instead of round the waist. The bandsmen also dressed in these tunics, but of white cloth, with red facings and wings; buglers the same white tunics ornamented with the distinctive Regimental buglers' lace, to strengthen the appearance of the "music," it was understood.

The year following, with the next issue of clothing, the tunic was single-breasted, and the buglers' coats changed back to red.

Officer's rank was now distinguished by the amount of gold lace worn, and by crowns and stars upon the collar. A captain had an edging of gold lace (French check pattern for both Regiments, as before) round the top of the white or buff collar and cuffs; four loops of lace, diamond shape, round the buttons on the cuff slash; the same loops round the skirt buttons, and a crown and star, indicative of his rank, on the collar. Lieutenant and ensign, a crown or star only. Field Officers had additional lace on the bottom of the collar, round the cuffs and cuff slash, and on the skirts behind; colonels, a crown and star on the collar; lieutenant-colonels and majors, crowns or stars respectively. A double-breasted blue frock coat was adopted for undress, with gilt Regimental buttons, and a plain stand-up collar, field officers alone wearing badges of rank thereon; the crimson silk sash worn over the left shoulder, and the sword carried in a white sling waistbelt, fastened with a gilt -union locket bearing the Regimental number and title.



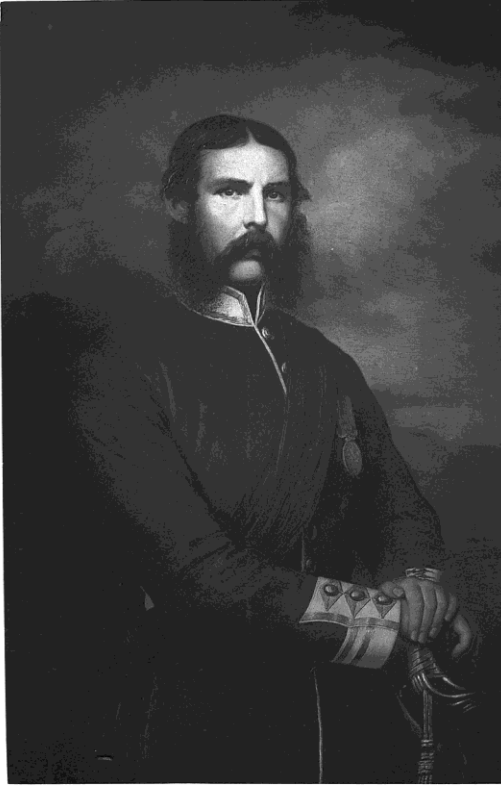
Officer's buttons, in use 1856-1881.

The above patterns of gilt buttons were introduced for the two Regiments, and remained in use until 1881; both designs were very much alike, the chief difference being the scalloped border surrounding the buttons of the 52nd Regiment.

A new shako was adopted of black beaver, smaller at the top than before, and considerably lighter; in front a small gilt star with crown over, black patent leather in the centre, with a small silver bugle, without strings, and the number 43 within the bugle. Probably the 52nd had one of similar design.

The shako plate worn by the men was of brass, the same pattern, but with the Regimental number only in the centre. Lieutenant-colonels' and majors' shakos distinguished by two rows and one row of gold lace round the top. All ranks had a long drooping plume of dark green horsehair. The staff-sergeants lost their silver lace, so long worn, and adopted gold lace chevrons, and gold lace round the top of the collar, the cuff, and skirt buttons. The rank and file also had, by this time, quite discarded the old cross belts, and were fully equipped with the single shoulder belt for the pouch, and the waistbelt, with brass union locket for the bayonet.

Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of  
The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896



The portrait of Lieut.-Colonel Booth, 43rd (*left*), shows a major's tunic of this period—a loose wrapper-like garment in the eyes of those accustomed to the neat, well-fitting coatee with its rich gold lace and wings, but the disposition of the narrow, strictly regulation gold lace has something to do with the rather meagre effect. The star badge of rank is just visible upon the collar.

In a short time, however, improvements were made in the tunic, as the reader may perceive if he will take the trouble to consult two illustrations in the chronicle for 1894, (*below*) representing groups taken at the Depots of both Regiments, 1861-62.

COLONEL H. J. P. BOOTH, C.B.  
43RD LIGHT INFANTRY.



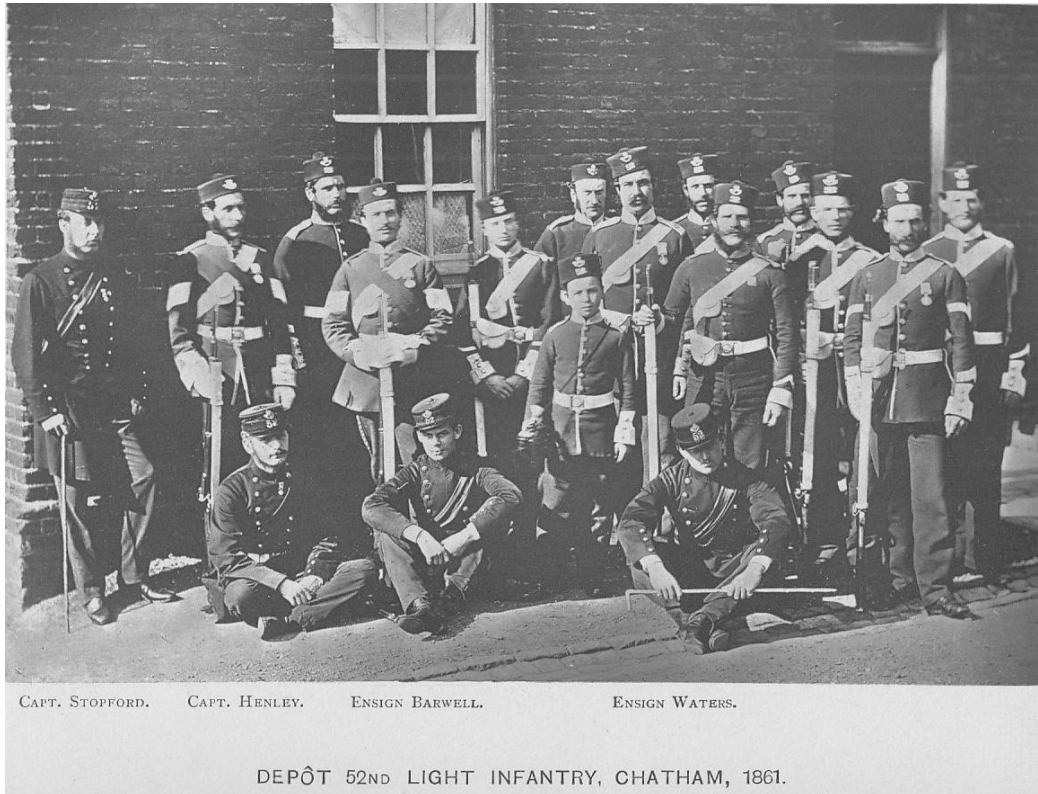
LIEUT. BERNERS. ENSIGN MONEY.

ENSIGN HAMMICK. LIEUT. BATEMAN.

DEPÔT 43RD LIGHT INFANTRY, CHATHAM, 1861.



**Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of  
The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896**



These groups, representing nearly all ranks, officers, full and undress, non-commissioned officers, rank and file, and a bugler, the forage cap worn by the men cannot fail to attract attention. It is a reduced variety of the old Kilmarnock bonnet cap, so long a very distinctive mark of the British soldier in undress. Note that it is set squarely upon the head, carefully avoiding any spirit of rakishness, and let the reader understand that this was an old custom strictly adhered to by the men of the two Regiments; part and parcel of the inborn idea that simplicity of costume, together with the absence of what, for want of a better term, may be called military swagger, was sufficient mark of distinction for the members of the two oldest Light Infantry regiments. The officers' sword knots, it will be observed, are of black leather. The amount of buglers' lace worn now upon the tunics of buglers (shown in one of these plates) is not by any means so large as it was in the old coatee days lately described, none appearing on the chest; the large parti-coloured wings, too, have disappeared. In other Light Infantry regiments, sergeants invariably wore whistles and chains upon their shoulder belts, but with the 43rd and 52nd this was not the case, although it is generally believed that they were served out, but kept in store, as we have already said.

**1862.**—A lighter shako of cloth authorised, having a much smaller plume. The officers' star-plate smaller than the last, with a garter, and the "Garter" motto; within it a bugle with Regimental number under the knot or bow of the strings. At the end of this volume are some illustrations reproduced from photographs taken in India, 1864, of staff-sergeants, sergeants, rank and file, and bandsmen of the 52nd Regiment. The various details of uniform of these grades are very clear. A word must be said about the bandsmen, for they are dressed according to the regulation of the time, in white tunics, with red collar and cuffs, and with red wings, laced with plain white tape lace. If information received by the writer is correct, these wings were dispensed with before 1867, and plain red shoulder straps with Regimental number substituted.

**Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of  
The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896**

**1866.**—The Regimental buglers' lace discontinued, and with it disappeared the peculiar coloured fringe, mentioned before as having been worn between the two buttons on the back. A universal pattern for the whole army adopted—white, with small red crowns.

The officers' blue frock coat was discontinued April 1867, replaced by a blue patrol jacket; steel scabbards took the place of those covered with black leather and gilt mountings so long in use. The writer of these notes is informed by an officer of the 52nd, serving at the time, that a small black button and cord loop was placed upon the collar of the patrol jacket worn by the officers of that Regiment.

At this time the bands of both Regiments wore the white tunic piped with red, the 43rd, rather launching out beyond the regulation, having red collars and wings piped with white; on the latter a white embroidered bugle ornament and Regimental number; white cuff with red braid, Hussar style; the back seams of the tunic ornamented with red double braid in similar fashion; black band pouches, with black shoulder straps worn, also black waist belt, carrying a black-sheathed curved sabre. The 52nd band, however, dressed in accordance with the regulations—white tunic piped red, red collar and cuffs, the latter slashed, having white tape diamond-shaped loops round the buttons, as worn by the rank and file; plain red shoulder straps (no wings) with the Regimental number only. In undress the 52nd bandsmen wore a small round white cap piped red, whilst those of the 43rd appeared in a neat round cap of black cloth, in both bands following the Regimental custom of wearing them perfectly straight and square on the head.

**1868.**—The slashed tunic cuff discontinued, pointed cuffs introduced. For levees, etc., officers authorised to wear a gold and crimson sash, gold-laced trousers, and sword belt; the shako ornamented with gold cord, and the star replaced by a universal pattern gilt plate, consisting of crown above a garter, all within a raised laurel wreath, the centre occupied by the Regimental number within a stringed bugle. The dark green horsehair plume was continued, but reduced to the smallest dimensions.

A great variety of mess dresses prevailed in the army; at length, in 1872, a regulation mess jacket and waistcoat were authorised. About 1873 white clothing for the band was discontinued, and, soon after, loose scarlet frocks took the place of the old shell jacket, originally a sleeved waistcoat. A year afterwards, the Glengarry replaced the old. Kilmarnock forage cap, and, as foreshadowing coming changes, the Regimental button, worn by the rank and file, was replaced by a universal pattern army button.

It is now necessary to touch upon a matter of little importance to the army, but one which considerably exercised the minds of the officers of both Regiments. It appears that it had long been the custom in the 43rd and 52nd to show a white collar above the uniform coat, generally since about 1830 with the undress uniform only. It was repeatedly objected to by the authorities, but the officers, wherever and whenever possible, clung to this their ancient mark of distinction, the one thing that divided them in so prominent a manner from other infantry regiments. An agitation began with a view to obtain its legitimate authorisation. Much pressure of one kind and another was brought to bear upon the powers, with the ultimate result that the following authorisation was received, very much to the satisfaction of the 43rd, and also to the Officers of the 52nd Regiment, to whom a similar letter was forwarded:—

**Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of  
The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896**

Horse Guards,  
5th January 1875.

My Lord,

The Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, having had under consideration the subject of shirt collars being worn with the undress uniform of the Officers of the 43rd Regiment, I have the honour to acquaint you that His Royal Highness authorises this practice being continued by the Officers of the above Corps, and I am to request that your Lordship will be pleased to issue orders accordingly.

I have, etc., etc.,

H. H. Clifford, A.A.G.

General the Lord Napier of Magdala, G.C.B., G. C.S.I., etc.

True, the above authorisation only applied to the patrol jacket, but it was a great point gained.

Soon after this, both Regiments adopted a dark green or black ball tuft in the shako, in place of the small horsehair plume.

**1880.**—The helmet introduced, also a round undress forage cap of dark green cloth for officers, having a gold-embroidered drooping peak; the gold bugle, with Regimental number, however, retained; badges of rank removed from the collar, and displayed, in the case of the tunic and mess jacket, upon gold cord shoulder straps; with the patrol jacket, upon blue cloth shoulder straps.

**1881** signalled that great change, the introduction of the territorial system, and our two Regiments, no strangers to one another, were amalgamated. "White facings were ordered to be worn by all English regiments, consequently the old buff of the 52nd became a thing of the past, together with the historic numbers of both Regiments; the new title, "Oxfordshire Light Infantry," being substituted upon the appointments.

Officers' gold lace upon the tunic was changed from "French check" to "rose" pattern; the latter universal for all English regiments.

Considerable latitude was allowed in the choice of territorial badges to be placed upon the helmet plate, waistbelt plate, and upon the collars of officers and men. The collars of the officers were just now bare of ornaments, in consequence of the removal of the badges of rank to the shoulder cords, Rumour has it that a gold embroidered ox was suggested, but this did not find favour, and the animal was sent back to his lair in the centre of the city arms of Oxford. Ultimately, the old collar ornament so often mentioned in these notes, the so-called gorget button and cord loop, was fixed upon, and duly authorised. The dress regulations describe it as an edgeless button, with the following device: Within a laurel wreath a bugle with strings, above the bugle the crown, below the wreath "Oxfordshire." A piece of gold Russia braid two and a half inches long was attached to the button. Contrary to the usage in other regiments, the rank and file had no collar ornament. "The men of the 43rd and 52nd always had an aversion to the over-display of bugles; they considered that it was "known that they were the original Light Infantry regiments, and it was unnecessary to advertise the matter," so writes an officer now serving.

## Extracted from the Regimental Chronicle of The Oxfordshire Light Infantry 1896

According to the new dress regulations, officers' sword knots were to be gold, with acorn head for dress, and white leather for undress; such had been the regulation for years, but the officers of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry continued to wear the black leather sword knots which both Regiments had worn, on and off, for more than half a century; always believed to be a relic of Peninsular times. The 52nd pattern differed slightly from that worn by the 43rd; the former was a flat thong with acorn end, the latter round leather, lanyard pattern, with a leather fringed tassel.

Very frequent mention is made in these notes of the peculiar collar badge worn by the officers, duly authorised after the amalgamation in 1881. Being solely confined to the Regiment, at all events after 1829, it may not unreasonably be considered a mark of distinction, more especially as it is not new, but, in one form or another, has been worn by officers of the 43rd and 52nd for well-nigh a century. Officers invariably call it the gorget button, and for want of a better name that may pass, their authority undoubtedly being the fact that the button upon the collar is so termed in the Regimental Standing Orders of the 43rd Regiment, dated 1795. If we again refer to the portrait of Captain Thorne we find that no button was worn upon the coat collar in 1770 or thereabouts; nothing but a plain buttonhole appears, which was used for the purpose of buttoning the collar, or cape, as it was then termed, to the top button of the lapel. When the gorget was worn it was fastened by silk rosettes and loops to this button, or at times suspended by a ribbon worn round the neck. About 1785 a slight change of fashion took place; the top of the lapel was cut longer, terminating in a buttonhole, which was used for the purpose of buttoning on to a button placed at the extremity of the collar. About 1792 another change took place; the collar itself was made deeper and to stand up.

So accustomed had the eye (possibly the eye of a tailor) become to see a button somewhere upon the collar, that a Regimental button and imitation buttonhole of silk—a narrow cord as it were—was placed there, but with this important alteration, namely, that the button was fixed at the opposite end of the cord nearest the back of the neck; emphasising the fact that the button and cord were now simply ornamental and nothing else, and as ornaments only they have remained to this day.

Upon the officers' Light Infantry jacket and the long-tailed dress or levee coat, the button and cord was worn until about 1820, and afterwards upon the regulation scarlet coat until 1829. A few years before the latter date, a blue frock coat was introduced as an undress garment, perfectly plain in every respect, but Lieut.-Colonel Haverfield, then commanding the 43rd (vide inspection returns) placed upon the collar of this coat the silver Regimental button and cord loop (the latter, as befitting the colour of the coat, in dark blue or black silk), which was, and had been, worn upon the collar of the red uniform coat or jacket for so long a period. No reasons are forthcoming for this contravention of the dress regulation, but we shall not be far wrong in guessing that it was from a desire to perpetuate an old Regimental ornament, and, if possible, increase the already sufficient esprit de corps of his Regiment. This button and cord is noticeable in the illustration of a group of officers (*43rd Officers and Serjeant group*). With the introduction of the new dress coatee of 1829, the loop and button disappeared, its place being taken by two double loops of silver lace, two years after changed to gold lace; but the old device remained upon the blue undress frock coat until peremptorily ordered to be taken off in 1848 by the inspecting General. Judging from forthcoming evidence, this would appear to be the termination of its history, as far as the 43rd is concerned.

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With the 52nd circumstances were rather different. The button and cord was worn upon the collar of the red jacket and long-tailed coat up to 1829, under precisely similar conditions as related in connection with the 43rd. Although no official evidence exists, there is a very strong tradition in the 52nd Regiment that the button and cord was worn upon the collar of the undress blue frock coat at the same time, and just about as long as the officers of the 43rd wore it, allowing that the garment in question was itself abolished only a few months after the latter Regiment was ordered to discontinue the button and cord. Officers' badges of rank occupied the collar of the tunic introduced in 1855, but, beyond question, the button and cord was continued upon the collar of the mess jacket, and also upon the serge frock worn in India; it certainly was worn upon the blue patrol jacket in the "seventies" in the form of a black button and cord.

Finally, when badges of rank were taken off the tunic collar and placed upon the shoulder straps in 1880, it was naturally chosen as the new collar badge, and upon the introduction of the territorial system and consequent amalgamation of the two Regiments the following year, it was adopted as a distinction to which each Regiment had a just claim, and duly authorised as the officers' collar badge of the two Battalions of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry. Not very long afterwards it was permitted to be worn upon the collar of the patrol jacket also.

**ERRATA**

**1901 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE - OCCASIONAL NOTES:-**

Mr S. M. Milne, who, it will be remembered, kindly contributed an article on Regimental Uniforms in the chronicle, 1896, sends us the following : — "With regard to the early laces and appointments of the Officers of the 43rd Regiment, I stated in my article, chronicle, 1896, that the Inspection Return, Exeter, April 20th, 1767, was the oldest preserved. This is an error; an older Inspection Return has been found, dated Chatham, October 2nd, 1764. Taken together, these Returns are distinctly important, for the latter shows that the Officers' lace and appointments were at that time gold, whereas the Return of 1767 gives silver embroidered epaulettes and silver buttons; furthermore, the Officers' uniforms were described as 'quite new.' This proves that, during the interval (i.e., between 1764 and 1767), the Officers' appointments of the 43rd Regiment were changed from gold to silver. Again, in the same article it was mentioned that black stars ornamented the private soldiers' lace in 1742 and 1751. A very close observation, in a good light, of the picture at "Windsor Castle, reveals the fact that a full blue (and not a black) shade is the proper colour of these stars. The same applies to the colour of the Royal cipher 'G.R.' upon the white cloth fronts of the Grenadier caps, which may be taken to be full blue, and not black. The small tassel at the top of the cap should be blue and white, not red and white."