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978-1-108-05421-8 - History of the King's German Legion: Volume 1  
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# History of the King's German Legion

VOLUME 1

NORTH LUDLOW BEAMISH



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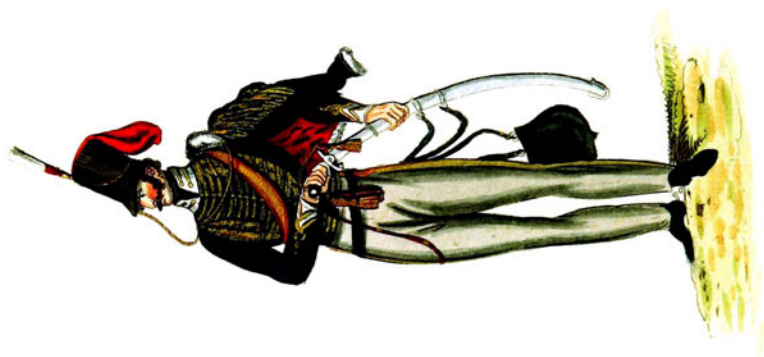
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FIRST HUSSARS.



SECOND HUSSARS.

Plate 1.

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# HISTORY

OF THE

## KING'S GERMAN LEGION,

BY

N. LUDLOW BEAMISH, F.R.S.

LATE MAJOR UNATTACHED.

“Hah! Du vielleicht? mein alter Kriegsgefährte, mit dem ich einst meinen letzten Bissen theilte, als uns Alles mangelte—oder Du, dem ich in der Schlacht vom Tumibamba das Leben rettete?—oder Du, dessen Sohn ich befreite, als eben die Feinde ihn niederhauen wollten?”—KOTZEBUE.

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TO HIS EXCELLENCY  
GENERAL CHARLES COUNT VON ALTEN,  
G.C.B. AND G.C.H.  
ETC. ETC. ETC.

To your Excellency as the most distinguished of those expatriated  
Hanoverian soldiers who shared with their brethren of Britain the  
laurels torn from the common enemy, this record of their services

Is inscribed by

Your Excellency's faithful servant,

N. LUDLOW BEAMISH.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE claims of the king's German legion to the notice of the historian are founded upon the distinguished services of that corps in the British army, during the whole extent of a period marked by the greatest exertions which England has ever made, and the most brilliant victories which her arms have ever achieved.

Deprived, by a tissue of untoward circumstances, of the means of redressing, in the ranks of her national armies, the wrongs which their country had sustained, the disbanded Hanoverian military sought that object in those of Britain, and sacrificing the ties of home and kindred to the more exalted feeling of national honour, became voluntary exiles in another land, and fought for the recovery of their own, under the banners of England.

The commencement and termination of the late

war are coincident with similar periods in the history of the king's German legion. Throughout the whole of the peninsular campaigns they bore an active part, and few of those memorable engagements, whose names now stand commemorative of British valour, have not been honourably shared in by some part of the corps.

Such are the pretensions of the German legion to a place in history. It will now be right to shew the authenticity of the work which professes to record their services.

A few years after the reduction of the king's German legion in 1816, three distinguished members of the corps, whose long and conspicuous services had given them a personal knowledge of events well calculated to effect their object, determined upon writing a history of the legion, and the work was actually commenced. These officers had, however, proceeded but a short way towards the completion of their task, when, for various reasons, they were led to discontinue it. This circumstance was, several years after, mentioned to me by a zealous and gallant member of the late corps, who at the same time proposed that I should continue and complete the work, which, on his

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promising to provide me with the necessary materials, I undertook to attempt.

To this officer,\* therefore, and to the distinguished individuals alluded to,† who, upon my intentions being made known to them, liberally placed the result of their labours at my disposal, are the public indebted for the documents which form the basis of this history. A residence of more than twelve months in Hanover enabled me to add to these, other important documents, and the same occasion afforded me the advantage of personally communicating with many of the principal actors in the scenes which are here described.

To the gracious interposition of his royal highness the duke of Cambridge I am indebted for having obtained access to the Archives of the Hanoverian Guelphic Order, from which authentic source all accounts of the individual achievements of the non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the corps have been taken.

\* Captain Christoph Heise, K.H. Royal Hanoverian Rifle-Guards.

† Major-general sir George Julius Hartmann, K.C.B. and K.C.H. Royal Hanoverian Artillery.

Colonel George Baring, K.C.H. Royal Hanoverian Grenadier Guards.

Colonel Ernest von Linsingen, K.C.H. Adjutant-general to the Hanoverian Cavalry.

The principal returns have been specially prepared for the work by captain Lewis Benne, formerly attached to the staff of the king's German legion, and now to that of his royal highness the duke of Cambridge. The original illustrations of the different uniforms were drawn by captain count Castell, of the third Hanoverian hussars.

Thus provided, it only remained for me to collate the several manuscripts, investigate the doubtful points, and unite the whole into an historical form.

Those who have attempted the compilation of history will readily believe that one part of this duty, namely, the investigation of facts, has not been unattended with difficulty. The frequent discrepancy between statements respecting the king's German legion in the several works on the Peninsular war, which have appeared in this country, and those that were furnished to me in manuscript by the officers of the corps, rendered it, in this case, peculiarly embarrassing; and I have been, in many instances, reluctantly obliged to reject the authority of standard works, whose authors, however correct in their relation of all matters connected with British regiments, have evidently been unprovided with that information which could alone

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enable them to be equally accurate with regard to the German legion. On these grounds a special account of the operations of the German troops during the late war may be allowed to claim an interest distinct from that which has been excited by the annals of the British army in general, during that period.

If, notwithstanding my efforts to be correct, some inaccuracies should have evaded my examination, I trust they will be attributed rather to that impenetrable veil with which truth is so often found encompassed, than to a want of diligence in prosecuting the inquiry; and that, if that extreme minuteness of detail, which in the history of a separate corps may, perhaps, be expected, be not invariably found, the words of the conscientious Barthelemy will be accepted in justification of such deficiencies:—" J'ai mieux aimé supprimer certains faits, que de ne les établir que sur des conjectures."\*

Having found, during my residence in Hanover, that a difference of opinion existed there, both with regard to the comparative merits of the king's German legion in the British army, and with regard

\* Mémoires sur Anacharsis.

to the manner in which the corps was disposed of after it had been placed under the Hanoverian government; feeling also that my own judgement was not unbiassed on these questions, I have studiously avoided entering upon them. The encouragement of party feeling is not the object of this work, and I have preferred leaving my readers, unschooled, to the simplicity of facts, to influencing their judgements with the prejudices of a partizan.

LONDON, June, 1832.



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*List of the printed works and manuscripts to which reference is made in this Volume.*

## PRINTED WORKS.

- No. 1. Darstellung der Lage worin sich das Hannöwerische militair in den Monathen May, Juny, und July, 1803, befand. 1 heft 8vo. 1803.
2. Historische Berichtigungen des öffentlichen Urtheils über die durch die Französische Occupation des Kurfürstenthums Hamover daselbst veranlassten Militairischen Maasregeln. 2 heft 8vo. Niedersachsen, 1803.
3. Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung, Nos. 55 and 57, Halle, 1804.
4. History of the reign of Geo. III., by Robert Bisset, L.L.D. 6 vol. 8vo. London, 1820.
5. The siege of Copenhagen; or, Documents comprehending an Official Detail of the Bombardment of that City, together with a Danish Narrative of the dreadful calamities suffered by the inhabitants in consequence thereof; the whole compiled from original British and Danish papers. By an Officer from Copenhagen. To which is prefixed an historical account of the City of Copenhagen. 1 vol. 12mo. London, 1808.
6. Bulletins of the Campaigns of the British troops, from 1807 to 1811, compiled from the London Gazettes.
7. History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France, from the year 1807 to the year 1814. By W. F. P. Napier, C.B. colonel H.P. forty-third regiment, and member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Military Sciences. Vols. 1, 2, and 3, London, 1828, 1829, and 1830.
8. Narrative of the Peninsular war from 1808 to 1813 by lieutenant-general Charles William Vane, marquess of Londonderry, G.C.B. and G.C.H. colonel of the tenth royal hussars, 2 vol. 8vo. London, 1829.
9. Letters from Flushing, containing an account of the expedition to Walcheren, Beveland, and the mouth of the Scheldt, under the command of the Earl of Chatham, with a topographical and statistical account of the Islands of Walcheren and Beveland. By an Officer of the eighty-first regiment. 1 vol. 8vo. London, 1809.
10. A short narrative of the late campaign of the British army, under the orders of the right honourable the earl of Chatham, K.G. with preliminary remarks on the topography and channels of Zealand, 1 vol. 8vo. London, 1810.

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- No. 11. Further strictures on those parts of colonel Napier's History of the Peninsular war, which relate to the military opinions and conduct of general lord viscount Beresford, to which is added a report of the operations in the Alemtejo and Spanish Estremadura, during the campaign of 1811, by major-general sir Benjamin d'Urban, 1 vol. 8vo. London, 1832.

## MANUSCRIPTS.

## GERMAN.

- No. 1. Narrative of general Frederick von der Decken, G.C.H. Master-general of the Hanoverian ordnance, formerly lieutenant-general and colonel-commandant of the artillery, late king's German legion.
2. Narrative of colonel Ernest von Linsingen, K.C.H. adjutant-general to the Hanoverian cavalry, formerly captain in the first hussars, and major half-pay third hussars, late king's German legion.
3. Journal of colonel Ernest von Linsingen, K.C.H. &c. &c. &c.
4. Correspondence of colonel Ernest von Linsingen, K.C.H. &c. &c. &c.
5. Narrative of colonel George Krauchenberg, K.C.H. inspector of the Hanoverian cavalry, formerly captain in the first hussars, and major half-pay third hussars, late king's German legion.
6. Narrative of sir Lewis Moeller, K.C.H. privy councillor of legation to the Hanoverian mission in London, and secretary to the royal Hanoverian Guelphic order.
7. Journal of the first light battalion, late king's German legion.
8. Narrative of colonel George Baring, K.C.H. commanding the first brigade of Hanoverian infantry, formerly captain in the first light battalion, and major half-pay second light battalion, late king's German legion.
9. Narrative of major-general sir George Julius Hartmann, K.C.B. and K.C.H. of the Hanoverian artillery, lieutenant-colonel late king's German artillery.
10. Journal of major Rautenberg, K.H. formerly captain in the first light battalion, and captain half-pay veteran battalion, late king's German legion.
11. Journal of the second regiment of hussars, late king's German legion.
12. Journal of the third regiment of hussars, late king's German legion.
13. Journal of major Heinemann, K.H. captain half-pay fifth line battalion, late king's German legion.