



Section 3: British Artillery in the Netherlands, 1794

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This series of articles is intended to build on Francis Duncan's account²⁰³ of the Royal Artillery in the Duke of York's campaign, which is particularly focussed on the early history of the expedition in 1793 and early 1794. These articles will reproduce a number of letters and returns relating to the artillery, draws on the Muster Rolls of both the Royal Regiment of Artillery and the Royal Regiment of Artillery in Ireland and looks at evidence available to us in the courts martial records available at the National Archives in Kew.

This particular article will focus particularly on arguably the forgotten man of the Duke of York's artillery command – Lieutenant-Colonel John Stewart.

When researching my book "Wellington's First Battle", I came across a letter in the National Archives written by Lt. Colonel John Stewart of the Royal Artillery and this letter sparked a broader interest in the artillery that fought for the Duke of York in 1794. Lt. Colonel John Stewart was the artillery commander of Lord Moira's force before this force joined the Duke of York's Army in the Austrian Netherlands and the United Provinces.

Organisation of the Royal Artillery in 1794

Three of the ten marching companies of the 1st Battalion Royal Regiment of Artillery, three of the ten marching companies of the 4th Battalion Royal Regiment of Artillery and three of the twelve marching companies of the Royal Regiment of Artillery in Ireland²⁰⁴, make up the artillery force with the Duke of York in September 1794. At this time, each company of the Royal Regiment of Artillery had an establishment of 131 men of all ranks; comprising –

- 1 captain,
- 1 captain-lieutenant,
- 2 first lieutenants,
- 1 second lieutenant,
- 4 serjeants and 1 serjeant-conductor,
- 4 corporals and 6 bombardiers,
- 90 gunners and 15 drivers,
- 3 drummers and 3 non-effectives.²⁰⁵

Providing enough horses and drivers was a significant issue for the Board of Ordnance, which undoubtedly inhibited the performance of the artillery in the Duke of York's army.^{206,207}

²⁰³ F. Duncan, *History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery*, 1879, volume 2, p.54-66

²⁰⁴ J.J. Crooks, *History of the Royal Irish Artillery*, p.279; 20 marching companies by October 1794, see p.282

²⁰⁵ J. Kane, *List of the Officers of the Royal Regiment of Artillery*, 1815, p.85 (January 1794 establishment)

²⁰⁶ J.W. Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, Vol 4, Pt 1, p. 299

²⁰⁷ British Library, Don Papers Vol.1, Add. MSS 46702, p.28 Nesbitt Balfour's letter to Craig – 2nd October 1794



SOJ-4(13)

Lieutenant Colonel John Stewart

By Garry Wills of Caseshot Publishing

John Stewart's Early Career

John Stewart joined the Royal Artillery as a Mattross²⁰⁸ (a gun labourer equivalent to a private soldier) on the 7th December 1747, having been recruited in Scotland by Colonel William Belford.²⁰⁹ At this point in his life Stewart signed himself as Steuart. From January to March 1748, Stewart was with Captain John Skeddy's "Detachment of Recruits" in Flanders, as the War of the Austrian Succession rumbled to a conclusion.²¹⁰ From April, Stewart was in Captain John Chalmers' company, still in Flanders.²¹¹ By 1753, Stewart was a Gunner in Captain John Skeddy's company based at Woolwich, and signing his name as Stewart.²¹² He was commissioned in 1756, as Lieutenant Fireworker.

In 1758, although in Captain Charles Brome's company of the 2nd Battalion, Stewart was detached to America, during the French and Indian War, as a Lieutenant Miner in Lieutenant Fleming Martin's "Detachment of Miners", stationed in Albany (January to March). In April, Stewart was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant and was then stationed in New York (April), Sandy Hook (May) and Gabaron's Bay (June).²¹³

In 1768, now a Captain-Lieutenant, Stewart was back at Woolwich, serving in Captain Thomas Howdell's company of the 3rd Battalion, which he commanded during Howdell's absence on Minorca.²¹⁴

During the American War of Independence Stewart, then a Captain, led a company under General Howe's command. We have records of Stewart serving at the battle of Germantown, 4th October 1777, leading troops armed with some light 12 pounders and on Province Island during the attack on Mud Island, November 1777.²¹⁵

The Duke of York's Artillery Commanders

In the second half of 1794 the three senior artillery commanders with the Duke of York were Sir William Congreve, John Stewart and William Orchard Huddleston, whose careers have been summarised by Kane;^{216,217}

²⁰⁸ This rank is spelt both as Matross and Mattross in contemporary documents, eg National Archives, Kew, WO10/34 Mattross recruitment certificate for Caleb Fox.

²⁰⁹ National Archives, Kew, WO10/34 – list of recruits mustered in February 1747/8

²¹⁰ National Archives, Kew, WO10/34/6239 – paylist of companies in Flanders, January to March 1748

²¹¹ National Archives, Kew, WO10/34/6243 – paylist of companies in Flanders, April to June 1748

²¹² National Archives, Kew, WO10/44 – Muster rolls, Captain Skeddy's company January to June 1753

²¹³ National Archives, Kew, WO10/64 – Muster rolls, Lt Martin's detachment of Miners, January to June 1758

²¹⁴ National Archives, Kew, WO10/113 – Muster rolls, Captain Howdell's company January and June 1768

²¹⁵ F.A. Whinyates, *The Services of Lieut.-Colonel Francis Downman RA in France, North America, and the West Indies between the years 1758 & 1784*, (1898), p. 39 & 49

²¹⁶ J. Kane, *List of the Officers of the Royal Regiment of Artillery*, 1815, p.4

²¹⁷ J.A. Browne, *England's Artillerymen*, 1865, p.37

| | John Stewart | Sir William Congreve | William Orchard Huddleston |
|----------------------------|--------------|---|----------------------------|
| Private | January 1748 | never | never |
| Gentleman Cadet | never | 01/03/1755 | 12/05/1756 |
| Lt-Fireworker | 12/05/1756 | 04/02/1757 | 08/06/1757 |
| 2 nd Lieutenant | 19/04/1758 | 01/01/1759 | 10/09/1759 |
| 1 st Lieutenant | 15/08/1760 | 19/06/1761 | 10/03/1762 |
| Capt Lieutenant | 20/12/1765 | 28/05/1764 | 12/04/1768 |
| Captain | 25/04/1777 | 18/12/1777 | 07/07/1779 |
| Major | 01/12/1782 | 10/07/1785 | 12/03/1790 |
| Lt. Colonel | 25/09/1793 | 25/09/1793* | 05/12/1793 |
| | | *Congreve had Army rank of Lt Colonel from 21/08/1793 | |

Note however that both Stewart and Congreve are listed as “2nd Lieutenant Colonels” in the 1794 Army List²¹⁸, both with the seniority date of 13th February 1786, while Huddleston is listed as a “1st Major”. Of these three men Stewart was arguably the more experienced and had equal seniority in the Regiment but Congreve commanded, at the request of the Duke of York, by virtue of his more senior Army Rank.²¹⁹

Consequently Sir William Congreve had served with the Duke of York’s Army in Flanders since May 1793.²²⁰ Huddleston appears to have commanded the reserve artillery of the British contingent.^{221,222}

Lieutenant Colonel Stewart’s subsequent career

Stewart was promoted to Colonel on the 25th April 1796. Stewart was then, in 1800 given the local rank of Brigadier General at Gibraltar only, where records show he served throughout the years 1800 and 1801.²²³ Ultimately Stewart became a Major General on January 1st 1801. Stewart was also appointed Colonel Commandant of the 7th Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Artillery (1803), which had been raised from the Royal Irish Artillery upon its amalgamation with the Royal Artillery in 1801, succeeding the founding commander of the Royal Irish Artillery, Lt. General Straton.²²⁴ Following a successful career approaching some 60 years in duration, John Stewart died in Southampton, on 12th January 1807.^{225,226}

Concluding Remarks

John Stewart’s letters provide a useful insight into the artillery arm that the Duke of York led in Flanders and Holland in 1793-1795, but also serve to remind us of another little known officer who not only fought in the campaigns against Revolutionary France, but also the major campaigns of the British Army since 1748.

It would be of great interest to this author to find other material relating to the life and service of Major General John Stewart.

²¹⁸ *The Army List* 1794, p.211

²¹⁹ J. Kane, *List of the Officers of the Royal Regiment of Artillery*, 1815, p.4

²²⁰ F. Duncan, *History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery*, 1879, volume 2, p.57

²²¹ Louis von Sichart, *Geschichte der Königlich-Hannoverschen Armee*, vol 4, 1780-1803, 1871, p.505

²²² National Archives, Kew, WO71/167, Captain Wilson’s court martial

²²³ William Cobbett, *The Parliamentary Debates*, from the year 1803 to the present day, 1812, vol.1, p.1152

²²⁴ F. Duncan, *History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery*, 1879, vol 1, p.163

²²⁵ J. Kane, *List of the Officers of the Royal Regiment of Artillery*, 1815, p.4

²²⁶ J.A. Browne, *England’s Artillerymen*, 1865, p.37



SOJ-4(14)
Lt. Col. John Stewart's Return of May 1794²²⁷

By Garry Wills of Caseshot Publishing

This Return demonstrates the detail of the ordnance, wagons, ammunition and horses allocated to Earl Moira's expedition;

"Return of the Number of Horses required to transport the Artillery now Embarked with a Service Proportion of Ammunition for the Expedition under the Command of the Earl of Moira, Portsmouth, 17th May 1794.

| | <i>Ordnance No. of Horses</i> | <i>Waggon No. of horses</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Eight 24 pounders, 15 horses each.</i> | 120 | | 120 |
| <i>Ten Waggon for Ditto for 40 Rounds) 3horses each</i> | | 30 | 30 |
| <i>Four med^m 12 pounders, 7 horses each.</i> | 28 | | 28 |
| <i>8 Waggon for ditto (100 rounds) 4 horses each</i> | | 32 | 32 |
| <i>Six heavy 6 pounders, 5 horses each.</i> | 30 | | 30 |
| <i>Four Waggon for D^o.(100 rounds) 3 horses each</i> | | 12 | 12 |
| <i>Sixteen light six Pounders, 3 horses each</i> | 48 | | 48 |
| <i>Eight Waggon for D^o.(100 rounds) 3 horses each</i> | | 24 | 24 |
| <i>Ten French 4 pounders, 3 horses each</i> | 30 | | 30 |
| <i>Seven Waggon for D^o.(100 rounds) 3 horses each</i> | | 21 | 21 |
| <i>2 Curricl 3 Pounders, 2 horses each</i> | 4 | | 4 |
| <i>One Waggon for D^o.(100 rounds) 3 horses</i> | | 3 | 3 |
| <i>One 8 Inch Howitzer, 5 horses</i> | 5 | | 5 |
| <i>Two Waggon for D^o.(50 rounds) 3 horses each</i> | | 6 | 6 |
| <i>Six 5½ Inch Howitzers, 3 horses each</i> | 18 | | 18 |
| <i>Six Waggon for D^o.(50 rounds) 3 horses each</i> | | 18 | 18 |
| <i>Three 8 Inch Mortars with their stores, }</i> | | | |
| <i>(50 rounds each) 8 Waggon, 3 horses each }</i> | | 24 | 24 |
| <i>Six 5½ Inch Mortars with stores for 50 rounds }</i> | | | |
| <i>Each, 6 Waggon, 3 horses each }</i> | | 18 | 18 |
| <i>For the above ordnance & Ammunition Waggon</i> | | | |
| <i>Total</i> | 283 | 188 | 471 |
| | <i>Ordnance No. of Horses</i> | <i>Waggon No. of Horses</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| <i>Number of Horses brought over</i> | 283 | 188 | 471 |
| <i>Number of Horses required for Guns and Howitzers }</i> | | | |
| <i>Expected from Ostend, viz }</i> | | | |
| <i>Eight french 8 pounders (weight not known) }</i> | | | |
| <i>suppose 5 horses each. }</i> | 40 | | 40 |
| <i>Eight Waggon for D^o.(100 rounds) 3 horses each</i> | | 24 | 24 |
| <i>Four French 6 Inch Howitzers, 3 horses Each.</i> | 12 | | 12 |
| <i>Four Waggon for D^o.(50 rounds) 3 horses each</i> | | 12 | 12 |
| <i>For the above services Total</i> | 335 | 224 | 554 |

²²⁷ National Archives, Kew, WO1/175 p.645

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Number of Horses wanted, } Exclusive of the above. }</i> | |
| <i>For four Forge Carts, 2 Horses each</i> | 8 |
| <i>Six Pontonns, 7 horses each</i> | 42 |
| <i>Two Sling Carts, 2 horses each</i> | 4 |
| <i>For Triangular Gin, 1 Waggon, 3 horses</i> | 3 |
| <i>For the Camp Equipage & the Baggage of } The Royal British & Irish Artillery, }</i> | 72 |
| <i>Civil and Military, 24 Waggonns }</i> | |
| <i>Total</i> | 688 |

Beside the above numbers, no provision is made for the carrying the remaining ordnance stores, Gunpowder [illeg tuti]

And the Ball Cartridges for the army.

*N.B. It will require above 180 Waggonns, for the Ball Cartridges only. * 540 Horses*

*Signed/ John Stewart
Lt. Col. R.R. of Artillery”*

A previous memorandum dated 29th November 1793 shows that each team of 5 horses was allocated 2 drivers and each team of 3 horses was allocated 1 driver.²²⁸

This allocation of artillery, 62 guns, was associated with an infantry force of 10 battalions; the 19th, 27th, 28th, 40th, 42nd, 54th, 57th, 59th, 87th & 89th Regiments of Foot (NB; the embarkation return dated the 19th June 1794 does not include the 3rd and 63rd Foot mentioned by Fortescue²²⁹, 6424 men of all ranks. Of these guns some 20 would have been the battalion guns²³⁰ but the heavy guns were to replace those lost at Turcoing.²³¹ The 10 French 4 pounders were associated with the French Émigré forces which were part of Lord Moira’s expedition. Taken as a whole, the table affirms the use of single draught limbers. Of particular note is the mention of two curricule 3 pounder guns, which are presumably the so-called “galloper gun” as used during the American War of Independence, usually considered to have been abandoned by this time.²³² It is also worthy of note that the numbers of horses required for each gun is different to the number given by Congreve in 1795.²³³

²²⁸ National Archives, Kew, WO1/174 p.137

²²⁹ J.W. Fortescue, History of the British Army, Vol4, Pt1, p.282

²³⁰ National Archives, Kew, WO1/175/p.793

²³¹ J.W. Fortescue, History of the British Army, Vol4, Pt1, p.299

²³² A.L. Dawson, P.L. Dawson & S. Summerfield, Napoleonic Artillery, 2005, p.118

²³³ A.L. Dawson, P.L. Dawson & S. Summerfield, Napoleonic Artillery, 2005, p.216



SOJ-4(15) Embarkation return of Earl Moira's Force at Southampton 19th June 1794²³⁴

By Garry Wills of Caseshot Publishing

Earl Moira's force left for Holland with the following artillery force,

| | Royal Artillery | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------|----------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|---------|-------|-------|----------|--|--|
| | Lt Col | Captains | Captain-Lts | 1 st Lts | 2 nd Lts | Surgeons | Seijeants | Corporals | Drummers | Bombardiers | Gunners | Total | Women | Children | | |
| British | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | - | 1 | 3 | 2 | - | 9 | 91 | 112 | - | - | | |
| Irish | | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 146 | 178 | - | - | | |
| Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 16 | 237 | 290 | - | - | | |

This return does not show the 114 serjeant-conductors and gunner-drivers mentioned by Duncan²³⁵, although Fortescue states that Lord Moira arrived without any artillery drivers²³⁶. The return represents less than 6 artillerymen of all ranks for each British gun, but it does not include the contingent brought by Lieutenant Robert Crawford, which left Cork on the 17th June but appears to have still been in England until late July.²³⁷

²³⁴ National Archives, Kew, WO1/175/p.794

²³⁵ F. Duncan, History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, Vol 2, p.58

²³⁶ J.W. Fortescue, History of the British Army, Vol 4, Pt 1, p. 299

²³⁷ J.J. Crooks, History of the Royal Irish Regiment of Artillery, 1914, p. 276; J. Philippart, The Royal Military Calendar, 1820, Vol. 5, p.391; National Archives, Kew, WO46/24/p.94



SOJ-4(16)
Lt. Col. John Stewart's Letter of October 1794²³⁸

By Garry Wills of Caseshot Publishing

"Artillery Park near Arnhem
28th October 1794

In the present dispersed situation of the Army and with the constant Expenditure of Ammunition it being impossible to ascertain exactly what quantity of ammunition it might be proper to demand from England in order to supply that Expenditure, it is submitted whether the following might not be demanded as a proportion immediately wanted for the guns now in the Field.

Table with 2 columns: Description of gun types and rounds per case, and Rounds. Includes items like 12 Twelve pounders, 8 Heavy 6 pounders, etc.

In the above proportion there is no demand made for the Guns to replace those of the 37th Regiment
(Signed) John Stewart
Lt. Col. R.R. Artillery

His Royal Highness
The Duke of York
Commander in Chief

The allocation of caseshot is interesting in that it is a significantly higher proportion for the 12 pounders and heavy 6 pounders than that suggested by Adye, who recommends no more than 20% for these guns, and even the light 6 pounders are being allocated 20% more caseshot than recommended by Adye.²³⁹

The 4 2/5-in Shells are common shell fired by the long guns as referred to by Dawson et al, and are present in quite large numbers, 15% of the total.²⁴⁰

This list suggests that some of the 5 1/2 inch Howitzers were used as Battalion Guns, as there are only 40 light six pounders for the 28 battalions present with the army which would require more than 50 guns between them. Thus, Arthur Wesley and the 33rd Regiment of Foot are reported, by Major General David Dundas, as being supported by 2 howitzers at Geldermalsen on 4th January 1795. On the other hand the two curricule 3-pdr guns, from Stewart's pre-embarkation return of May 1794, are not included in this list, although Dundas also reports that 2 curricule guns were with the cavalry at Meteren near Geldermalsen.²⁴¹ This cavalry picquet was most likely drawn from the British 11th Light Dragoons, who were stationed at Geldermalsen.²⁴² (Other candidates include the Uhlans Britannique who were nearby at Buren and charged across the frozen Waal that day.²⁴³)

238 National Archives, Kew, WO1/170 p.869

239 R.W. Adye, The Bombardier and Pocket Gunner, 1802, p.11

240 A.L. Dawson, P.L. Dawson & S. Summerfield, Napoleonic Artillery, 2005, p.248

241 R.N.W. Thomas, in The International History Review, Vol. 11, No.1 February 1989, p. 21

242 The Scots Magazine and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany, Volume 74, Part 1, 1812, p.185; Historical Records of the 11th or Prince Albert's Own Hussars, 1843, p.28; The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine, 1829, part 2, p.522-3

243 Robert W Gould, Mercenaries of the Napoleonic Wars, 1995, p.27