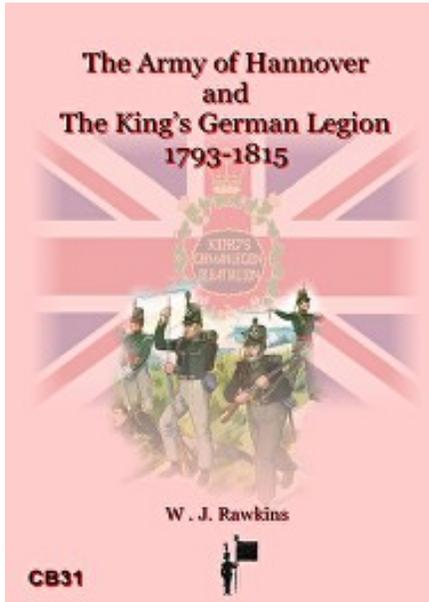


The Napoleon Series Reviews

Rawkins, William J. *The Army of Hanover and the King's German Legion 1793 – 1815*. History Bookman. 2017. E-Book. £4.5



This is the twentieth title in William Rawkins' [Armies and Uniforms of the Napoleonic Wars](#). Like his other books in the series, he provides a short history of the country, in this case the Electorate of Hanover, from 1786 to 1803. It would have been a short book, since the Electorate was dissolved in 1803 after the French invaded. With its dissolution, its army was disbanded. Many of officers and men fled to Great Britain, where they became the nucleus of the newly raised King's German Legion (KGL). Mr. Rawkins includes an overview of the KGL from its founding in 1803 to Waterloo. The final section of the book looks at the Hanoverian Army that was raised after the country was liberated from the French in 1813 through the Waterloo Campaign.

Although *The Army of Hanover and the King's German Legion* does provide the history of the country, its real focus is the organization, uniforms, and equipment of the various units of the three separate forces mentioned above. The book uses the same format for all the units. It tells how each unit was organized, providing its table of organization and authorized strength down to the company / troop / battery level. Then it goes into detail on the uniform and equipment. The amount of information on each unit is quite extensive. For example for the *Bataillon von Bennigsen* 1813, which became the *Feldbataillon Bennigsen* from 1813-1814, and eventually the Number 2 *Feldbataillon Verden* from 1814-1815, he writes:

The *Bataillon von Bennigsen* was raised in early 1813 under the sponsorship of General Count Levin August Gottlieb Theophil von Bennigsen, a Hanoverian noble in the service of Russia and commanding the Russian Army in Northern Germany and given to *Oberstleutnant* F. von Bennigsen to command. Although intended to be absorbed into the Russo-German Légion the battalion remained independent and was one of the first units of the newly formed Hanoverian army, as the *Feldbataillon Bennigsen*. With the re-organisation of the Hanoverian Army in 1814 most of the battalion was used to form the Nr.2 *Feldbataillon Verden*, with some men possibly the former Jäger element transferring to the NR.1 *Leichtes-Bataillon Bremen*. The battalion was completely armed and outfitted by British subvention equipment and uniforms and from the outset received a full complement of shakos which had originally been intended for British regiments in India and were

distinctive be being covered with white cloth and then painted. Most illustrations of the white shako depict the 1812 pattern false fronted cap and certainly these were issued to at least some of the companies in 1813 but the bulk of the hats provided are likely to have been of the earlier 'stovepipe' pattern. The shako was decorated with a brass oval plate with scalloped edging and a crown above and embossed with the entwined GR cipher. Some later illustrators have shown a plate with a garter and number below the cipher but these were in fact not prescribed until the regulations of June 1814 and probably not widely distributed to the Hanoverian infantry until 1816. [39] The decorations to the shako reflected the original intentions that the battalion should be designated light infantry, the cords were green and the short plume was initially green but was probably changed to white over red in 1814. The battalion was used to form the Nr.2 *Feldbataillon Verden*, in 1814 and received an issue of new conventional black pattern 1812 shakos, but as line infantry now wore white cords and a white over red plume.

The coat was of the basic British pattern and was single breasted and closed with ten pewter buttons in five sets of two, each with a 'double-headed' lace loop of white wool with a fine green 'worm' or thread through the length. The buttons were pewter and either flat or domed and stamped with the initials GR below a royal crown. The collar was upright and open at the throat to expose the black stock worn beneath and was grass green trimmed with white tape at the upper, lower and leading edges. The cuffs were plain pointed pattern and grass green piped white at the upper and trailing edges. The turnbacks and coat lining was white and the enlisted men had horizontal pockets with three points and two pairs of pewter buttons. Access to the pockets was via a slit at the upper edge and the inner lining. There were two buttons and a triangle of white lace at the point where the coat seams joined above the vent, or 'tommy' in the tails. The coat had plain round tipped shoulder-straps of grass green piped white. The 1814 Dress warrant made slight changes to the coat which do appear to have been effected by 1815. The cuffs were now changed to the pattern for line infantry, squared pattern and grass green decorated with four vertical batons in pairs of battalion pattern lace with a button at the upper tip. The centre companies are now depicted with grass-green shoulder-straps edged with white lace and with a white wool 'tuft' at the outer tip. The strap could be either square edged with a pointed inner tip or more commonly bastion tipped.¹

Mr. Rawkins takes another two pages to describe the rest of the uniform and equipment worn by the privates, the non-commissioned officers, musicians, and the officers. He does this for every infantry battalion and cavalry regiment, plus the artillery.

An examination of the Table of Contents provides the scope of the book.

The Army Of Hanover 1786-1803

¹ Pages 264 - 265

The Regular Infantry
Regimental Auxiliaries
The *Landregimenter*
The *Garnison-Regimenter*
Infantry Colours 1786-1802
The Cavalry
Cavalry Standards
The *Feldartillerie-Regiment*
The *Artillerietrain*
The *Ingenieurs-Corps*
General Officers and Staff

The Kings German Legion 1803-1815

The Line Infantry Battalions
The Line Infantry Colours
The Light Infantry Battalions
The King's German Dragoons 1803-1813
The King's German Light Dragoons 1813-1816
The King's German Legion Hussar Regiments
The King's German Artillery
 Foot Artillery
 Horse Artillery
 Driver Corps
The King's German Corps of Engineers

The New Hanoverian Army 1813-1816

The Infantry 1813-1815
The Landwehr 1814-1815
The Infantry Flags 1813-1815
The Cavalry
The Artillery

As with all the books in the [Armies and Uniforms of the Napoleonic Wars](#), *The Army of Hanover and the King's German Legion* is heavily illustrated, mostly by contemporary artists of the era. They include: Johann Ronneberg, Henri Boisselier, Ludwig Scharf, Richard Knötel, Friedrich Schirmer, Winand Aerts, Louis Braun, Von Röder, Saloman Pinhas, Georg Schäfer, Johann Adam Klein, Peter Bunde, André Jouineau, P. F. Koch, Jean-Pierre Perconte, Carl Ernst, Michael Roffe, and Charles Hamilton Smith.

There are 183 color and 8 black & white images in the book. Of these 39 are full page! Furthermore, almost half the illustrations are multi-figure, showing the uniforms of the various units. For example in the section on Hanoverian infantry prior to 1803, there is this print by Johan Ronneberg showing the uniforms of different cavalry regiments:



Johann Gottlieb Ferdinand Rönnenberg 1791
From prints in the author's collection

Mr. Rawkins' books are also noted for their uniform schematics that show the uniforms, headgear, and equipment of each regiment. For example in the section on the Hanoverian Army of 1813 – 1815, he has the following for nine of the infantry battalions:



THE ARMY OF HANOVER 1813-1815

WJR'14

The Army of Hanover and the King's German Legion also has detailed information on the flags that the army carried. They were originally done in black and white in the late 1970s, but were misplaced and never published until now. They are now in color. There are 18 of these prints, most showing more than one flag. This a sample of the colors of the Leibregiment Cavalry Regiment in 1803.



Reiter-Regiment Nr. 1
'Leibregiment'
Leibstandarte

I am a big fan of the Mr. Rawkins work but I was a little skeptical about this title at first. The real question in my mind was how much new information can he deliver on the King's German Legion? I was very surprised by its contents. There was quite a bit on the KGL that I had not seen before, while the information on the Hanoverian Army, especially prior to its disbanding in 1803, is invaluable! This volume will be of great use for those interested in the Hanoverians and especially to wargamers who are looking for uniform information. The information on on the flags is worth the price alone! Highly recommended.

The Army of Hanover and the King's German Legion can be bought directly from [The History Book Man](#). The e-Book is usually delivered within 24 hours.

Reviewed by [Robert Burnham](#)

Placed on the Napoleon Series: August 2018