

BRT A Guide for Drummers - Generalities

Napoleonic wars

It is obvious that the complexity of the drummer's role, his uniform and accrements as well as his duties and calls requires that a set of generalities is needed to facilitate a commonality of practice and appearance.

To do this I have looked at the regulations and the general accepted practices and put together this document that is designed to help guide the drummer and his group.

Please note that when I refer to Drummers it does include and mean, Fifers and Buglers as all were called drummers, {does not apply Rifle Regiments}.

CLOTHING –

Coat –

The drummers coat, its lace and facing colours will depend on each individual regiments specifics.

The coat is cut as per the normal soldier's coat, although the cloth was reputed to be of a better quality, the lace was in the early 19th c the choice of the Colonel of the Regiment and the amount of strips on the arm could vary.

The Barracks coat, usually white with the regiments facing colour was worn by all men and I would suggest also the drummers.



Shirts – Pants / Trousers - Shoes - As per regiment / line

Gaiters - As per regiment / line –

*Gaiters are worn outside the pants / trousers when on parade or for ceremonial and under the pants / trousers when on the field.

DRUMS –

Drums throughout the period were made of wood and measured 16'' x 16'' (there were no small or differing sizes issued)

*Brass drums came in late in the Napoleonic and Crimea period.

*there is and are smaller drums being used, these 14'' x 14'' may be best for smaller drummers, but no smaller as they look like and are toys.



Drum Sticks –

Drum sticks of the period are of a bulbous type with the buttons fairly big. * Not the modern type with small buttons.



Drum Cases (Bag) and Covers –

There is very scant evidence of a Drum Cover and or a Case.

There is a reference to a Drum Case that is made of Ticken, (a striped material used for mattresses etc, ticken also comes in a plain waxed type), I use a Drum Case and a Cover as it protects the drum while travelling, and also protects the heads from moisture.



Drum Heads –

Although Skin heads are the best and correct it is often the case that modern fibrous heads are used instead. These modern heads are often cheaper, one supplier www.drumlanduk.com sell a Fiberskyn that is a great natural looking head.



Drum Rope –

The rope used on the drum should have the appearance of a natural fibre, unfortunately most natural fibres will stretch too much for use on our drums so I recommend using an artificial Hemp rope, supplied by Flint Hire and Sales, (I am working on a way to whiten it). http://www.flints.co.uk/acatalog/Flints_Online__1m_1180.html



Drum Embellishments, Devices and Artwork –

The Drums being second only to the Colours were of significant beauty and pride; the devices were often but not always the same as the Regiments Colours. During the times the drums would have been painted with oils and would have been shellacked afterwards giving them the appearance of a high gloss finish.

*Remember we only have the remains of old drums so the colour and gloss would be well worn off.



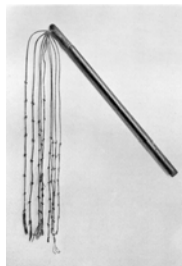
Cat 'O' Nine Tails -

Drummers of the period were often called on to administer punishment with the 'Cat' this piece of equipment was usually carried by the Drum major, but as all of us do not have one it would be the regiments drummer that carried it.

The 'Cat' itself was approximately the length of a drum stick with nine lengths of rope fixed to one end and having three or more knots tied in the rope. The bag for the 'Cat' was made of Green Baize.

The drummers were used to administer the punishment as they were believed to have the strength of wrist required, and would strike the prisoner with a figure of eight stroke.

*If it was deemed that the drummer was not applying himself he would have to take the punishment instead. Drummers did have to practise.



Swords -

There are two types of swords accepted for the drummer, the first was actually French, bought or captured and used by the drummer, and the issue one (pictured) 24'' long, the same as the Sgts sword. The sword had a white sword knot.

*The drummers sword was broken at the tip to show he was a non-combatant, but he could still defend himself and the Colours if need be.



French



British



HATS –

The drummer wears three types of head wear, the Bearskin (Canadian Black Bear), the Shako and the Forage hat.
The use of the Bearskin was generally ceremonial or for parade wear (there are however references to the Bearskin being worn in battle) and the Shako for field and general duties and the forage for general duties and barracks dress.
There are also the Scottish Regiments that wear the Highland Feather Bonnet and an example of a white goat skin (not sure what regiment).



The plume is as per the company the drummer is attached too, Green for Light, White for Grenadier, White and Red for Centre Companies (their may be variations eg: 42nd wear red over yellow)
The drummer also wears a metal badge of a drum on the back of his head gear, Bearskin and Shako only.
To view a guide to making a Bearskin - <http://brtdesignportfolio.com/88th/website/manuals.htm>



Hat Plate –

There are two types of plate for the Bearskin it has either a 1768 plate or the 1806 plate they are brass both with a black background.



There are two types of Shako plates both are brass.



Forage Hats –

There are two types of Forage hats or caps, the copy of the French Bonnet de police, and the Wedge cap.
*The pork pie commonly worn is for Cavalry and not for Infantry and was not produced for infantry until after the Napoleonic period.



Forage Hat



Bonnet de police

FIFES –

The British Fife is a six hole fife common for the period.
The British Fife case was made of brass and some examples show it to be ½ moon in shape while others are round.
The tassels on the Fife Case were coloured as per the Regiment, eg; the 2nd (Queens Royal) foot are Red Blue and Gold intertwined.



CAMP GEAR

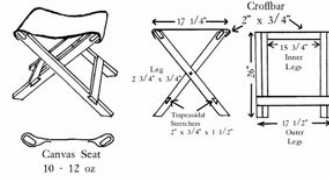
The Drummer and the important role that was put on him gave him a privileged position, he was paid more than the ordinary soldier, his gear was able to be carried in the camp carts and because of his position along side the officers, and his duty to parley with the enemy dictated that his appearance and domineer was to be impeccable.

He normally, if the duty drummer camped alongside the officer commanding, his tent may have had a carpet, he may have even had a bed and a small chest to hold his personals.



Bed 1809-1814

http://www.army.mod.uk/blackwatch/museum/artefacts_with_illustrations.htm



DRILL POSITIONS

line of advance

