

From "The History of the British Army"
Account of the First, or the Royal Regiment of Foot
Volume 1 No. 6 (for April 1812) p450-452

"The establishment and strength of this corps are as follow:

This regiment, which originally formed one large body, not consists of four battalions, all of which are commanded by the same colonel; in every respect, as to promotion, &c. they are considered as separate corps.

Each battalion has two lieutenant-colonels and two majors; the first of each have companies; 8 captains, 12 lieutenants, 8 ensigns, 1 adjutant, 1 quarter-master, 1 surgeon, 1 assistant surgeon, and 1 paymaster Then companies, each consisting of 5 serjeants, 5 corporals, and 55 private men: total non-commissioned and rank and file, 650. Three staff serjeants, and 22 drummers and fifers.

The full dress of the officers is very rich, scarlet faced blue, gold lace embroidered.

The uniform of the privates is red faced blue, or royal, white lace, with a blue double worm. The serjeants wear gold lace.

The price of commissions and the pay are the same is in all the other marching regiments."

From "Military Correspondence"

The first or royal regiment of foot
Volume 2 No. 8 (for June 1811) p139-41

"Sir, - I have regularly taken in your Military Chronicle, and have been highly gratified to observe its progressive improvement; and I congratulate the army and yourself on the important results that may eventually be expected from it. I, however, regret to see your histories of regiments deficient or inaccurate, and of which the generality of you readers are so very capable of judging. In respect to the first or royal regiment of foot, formerly called the Scotch Royals, to which I have the honour to belong, I take the liberty of submitting a few observations, which I do from no other motive than feeling strenuously friendly to your publication. -As to the antiquity of the regiment there can be no doubt, it is unquestionably the oldest in Europe; but as to its services before the present war you are greatly deficient. Unfortunately I have no some papers by me which would enable me to give you a detailed account to the present day; but his I will do if you convince me by the insertion of this letter that my correspondence is acceptable. Major James, in his Military Dictionary, relates an anecdote illustrative of its antiquity, when in France, before the year 1633, on which occasion they claimed the precedence of the regiment of Picardy, the oldest in the French king's service. He says, "The 1st or Royal Scotch called themselves Pontius Pilate's body guard, on account of the antiquity they boasted. Having had frequent arguments and disputes on the subject, when one of them observed, that in this his own regiment must be mistaken, for had the Royals done the duty at the sepulchre, the holy body never could have left the spot; implying, that the British sentinels would not have slept upon their posts, thought those of the regiment of Picardy did." I will now merely attempt to give you a slight sketch of the present establishment. The Royal Regiment has the proud satisfaction of being commanded by field marshal his royal highness the Duke of Kent; nor is there a regiment in the service so much indebted collectively and individually to its colonel, whose patronage and munificence are unbounded. There is hardly an officer whose interest and prospects his royal highness has

not on some occasion forwarded, or who is not under some personal obligation to his royal highness; nor is there one who feels more heartily the esprit de corps so likely to lead to great actions. There are, as you observe, four battalions; but you are not correct as to their strength, which varies; nor are they considered as separate corps in respect to promotion; on the contrary, the battalions are greatly increased, and the promotion has always gone generally in the regiment. The establishment at present consists of field-marshal the Duke of Kent, colonel; 6 lieutenant-colonels; 8 majors; 44 captains; 98 lieutenants; 34 ensigns; 4 adjutants; 4 paymasters; 4 quarter-masters; 4 surgeons; 8 assistant-surgeons, &c. There is also a band to each battalion, furnished and instructed at the expense of his royal highness. The first battalion is in the West Indies; the 2d in the East Indies; the 3d, or fighting battalion, is in Portugal where they form a part of Lord Wellington's light brigade; and the 4th, or recruiting battalion, is now at Stirling Castle, Scotland, and I believe is upwards of 1200 strong. The full dress of the officers, as you stated, is scarlet with blue facings, richly embroidered with gold. The undress is likewise very handsome but without lace; the buttons are highly raised, with the number of the regiment on a thistle, and the motto, "Nemo me impune lacessit," surrounded by the crown, and underneath "the royal." There are many other peculiarities in the regimental appointments. The sword and the breast-plate differ, and even the gorget although it is the same in every other regiment of infantry in the service: the sword is double-edged, the real Andrea Farara blade, and the thistle and motto on both sides of the pommel, and also on both sides of the gorget, and on the breast-plate the thistle with "the royal" under it; a staff epaulette with embroidered strap, but the subalterns wear fringe, as in all other regiments except the guards. And here, let me observe, if this objectionable regulation were intended as a matter of economy, it has been strangely mistaken, for a fringe epaulette is within a fraction as expensive as bullion, and the latter will wear longer than three of the former. The boots come up to the patella of the knee, and are without tassels. The hat is worn straight across, and the feather in the form of a sugar-loaf. The privates are clothes as you describe, but the serjeants do not wear lace.

J.A."