

THE LONDON REGIMENT 1993 TO 2022

by Clive Elderton



The first badge issued worn on the beret.

Top Left: Officer's and Warrant Officer's No 1 Dress Cap stars; Officer's Service Dress Cap star, Officer's Beret Star. Bottom Row: Sergeant's Service Dress Cap star and Other Ranks' Service Dress Cap star.

As a consequence of the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and end of the Cold War, it was concluded that the likelihood of western Europe being invaded by the Soviet Armed Forces had receded such that the British Armed Forces could be reduced by around 18% (the so-called peace dividend). This was articulated in 1991 in a paper entitled Options for Change. One consequence was authority being given for the formation of a new Regiment within the, then, Queen's Division of infantry. It was further directed that the new Regiment would be formed by extracting existing sub-units from their parent units and grouping them together in a new unit called The London Regiment which took its title from that given to the Territorial Force infantry of London in 1908. Although all sub-units in the new Regiment could, to some extent, trace their links back to The London Regiment of 1908 only in the case of the London Scottish and London Irish were these links undiluted. The Formation Parade of The London Regiment was held at The Duke of York's Headquarters, Chelsea, on 25th July 1993.

On formation the London Regiment was authorised four Rifles Companies plus a Headquarter Company. The Rifle Companies were drawn from B (Albuhera) Company of 8th City of London Battalion The Queen's Fusiliers, a part of the Queen's Regiment,¹ G (London Scottish) Company 1/51st Highland Volunteers and D (London Irish Rifles) Company 4th Bn The Royal Irish Rangers. Subsequently, in November 1998, the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) led to the disbandment of the 4th (Volunteer) Bn The Royal Green Jackets and their Headquarters and F and G Rifle Companies were transferred to The London Regiment. Then in 2006 The London Regiment was transferred from the Queen's Division and assimilated into the Guards Division. The following year F and G Companies left the Londons to become part of the 7th Bn The



The Earl of Wessex and Forfar KG GCVO CD ADC Colonel The London Guards .PA Images.

Rifles. Then in 2013, as a consequence of the Army 2020 Report, D (London Irish Rifles) Company was then merged into Headquarter Company of the Londons which was then retitled D Company.

At the end of 2016, in accordance with Army 2020 (Refined), B (Queen's Regiment)

Company was subsumed by the new 4th Bn PWRR and C (City of London Fusiliers) Company returned to 5th Bn RRF. Concurrently F Company 7th Bn The Rifles returned to the Londons and at the same time the Londons were re-subordinated from 11 Infantry Brigade to London District and a new G (Guards) Company was raised. At that time the only outward sign that the Regiment had any association with the Guards was the wearing of the Household Division TRF. As a four rifle company, Light Infantry Army Reserve battalion, under the operational command of the GOC London District, the role of the London Regiment was to support the Foot Guards battalions in 1(UK) Armoured Division and the wider Household Division.

Since formation, every member of the London Regiment had worn the uniform and insignia of their parent cap badge which, as can be seen, led to a bewildering variety of uniforms and cap badges being worn by members of the Regiment in it's short life. With the formation of G (Guards) Company the question arose as to what cap badge they should wear and, consequently, in October 2018 the Army Dress Committee approved the design of a cap star to be worn by G (Guards) Company and this was subsequently approved by our late Sovereign.

Finally, as a consequence of the Future Soldier Paper published in November 2021, it was directed that with effect from 1st May 2022 The London Regiment be re-titled The 1st Bn The London Guards (1 LONDON GDS) with each Rifle Company, for all intents and purposes, embedded into the four most senior Foot Guards regiments. The Rifle Companies of 1st London Guards now provide what is in effect a 'Reserve' company for their parent Guards Regiment and as such now wear the cap badge and associated uniform of their parent regiment and follow their traditions. The Rifle Companies are embedded as follows:

- A (London Scottish) Company to G (Messines) Company Scots Guards.
- HQ (London Irish Rifles) Company to Number 15 (Loos) Company Irish Guards.
- F (Rifles) Company to Number 17 Company Coldstream Guards.
- G (Guards) Company to Ypres Company Grenadier Guards.

The London Guards is not a regiment in the true sense but is simply a convenient grouping of the reserve companies for the four senior Regiments of Foot Guards with an RHQ which is solely responsible for the reservist elements of administration and training. The new London Guards cap badge, which is very similar to the London Regiment cap star, is worn by the Colonel, currently The Earl of Wessex and Forfar KG GCVO CD ADC, the Lieutenant Colonel, Brigadier Marc Overton TD VR, and the Commanding Officer. Their bespoke uniform is the standard Foot Guards Tunic with the London Guards stars on the collar and the buttons of all five regiments of Foot Guards (Grenadiers, Coldstream, Scots, Irish and Welsh Guards) single spaced on both the front (x8) and cuffs (x5) of the tunic.

NOTE:

1 On becoming part of the London Regiment they changed their title to B (Queens Regiment) Company adopting the PWRR cap badge but it was only the officers who, for a period of two months, actually served under a PWRR cap badge due to a misinterpretation of the regulations for posting to a new regiment.