

British Cavalry 1914 by T. Claudius

Introduction

The following is a resume in English of the article Engelsk Kavaleri 1914 - printed in Chakoten No. 1/1971 - by the late president of Chakoten Mr T. Claudius.

Composition

The cavalry of the British Expeditionary Force, sent to France in August 1914, had the following composition:

The Cavalry Division comprised the *1st*, *2nd*, *3rd* and *4th* *Cavalry Brigades* and one independent cavalry brigade (*5th* *Cavalry Brigade*).

Furthermore two hussar regiments for the infantry divisions (one squadron to each division) and three squadrons of the *North Irish Horse* as Army Troops.

A cavalry brigade: Headquarters, 3 cavalry regiments and 1 battery (6 guns, 12 ammunition wagons) Royal Horse Artillery. The guns were 13-pounders quick firing.

A cavalry regiment: Regimental headquarters, 3 squadrons and one machinegun section (2 machine guns). Strength: 550 all ranks.

A cavalry squadron: 159 sabres.

Uniforms



British and french cavalry 1914.

Khaki, peaked cap, khaki puttees, black boots. Officers wore a khaki jacket and beige riding breeches, brown riding boots and brown leather equipment.

Troopers wore a brown leather bandoleer with 5 ammunition pouches in front and 4 at the back (90 rounds). Waterbottle behind the left shoulder and a webbing haversack on the right hip, slung from the left shoulder. A rolled mackintosh cape was carried over the leather wallets in front of the saddle and a rolled khaki greatcoat at the rear.

Arms and Equipment

The 1908 pattern sword (for cutting only) in a steel scabbard on the left side of the saddle, the picketing-peg strapped to the scabbard. The short Lee-Enfield magazine rifle in a brown leather bucket on the right side of the saddle. The rifle was the same as for the infantry. Officers: The sword in a brown leather scabbard, the Webley Mk. VI revolver, calibre 11,5 mm. The N.C.O.s were armed as the troopers. The troopers of the lancer regiments were also armed with a steel pointed bamboo lance.

Actions

The British cavalry fought many rear guard actions - both mounted and dismounted - from Mons to the River Marne. At the Marne Battle the British cavalry was in front of the infantry divisions and caused some confusion among the train-columns of the German 1st Army.

Later in the war the cavalry fought as infantry in the trenches, however they never forgot they were cavalry - during the war they all kept their spurs strapped to their boots