

# THE PATTERN 1788 LIGHT DRAGOON SWORD

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

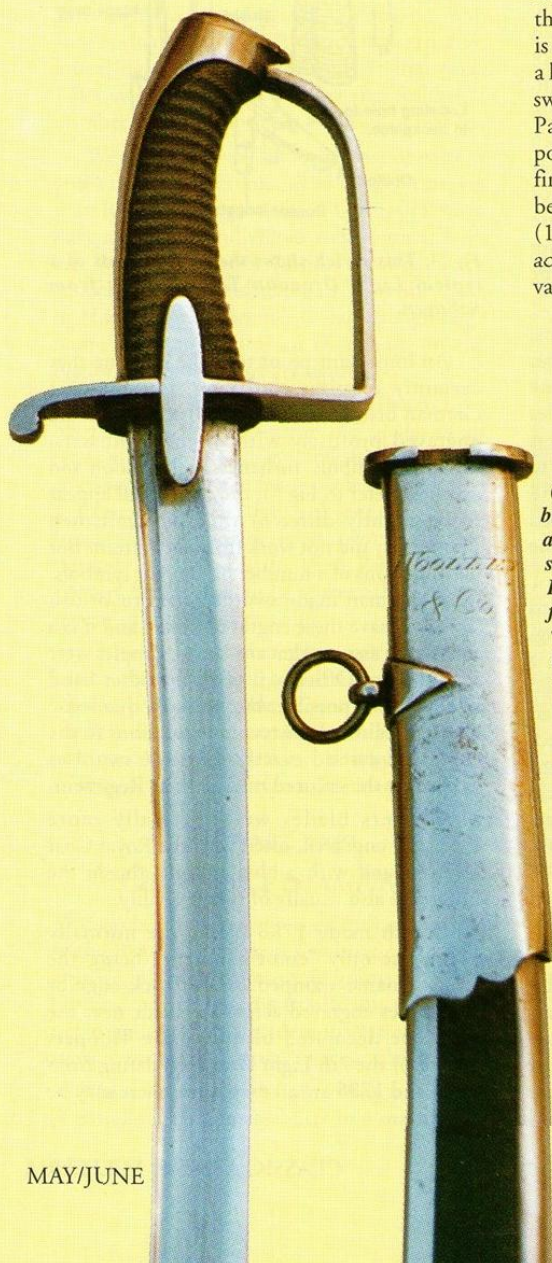
PRIOR TO 1788 a variety of cavalry sword patterns were in use, the heavy cavalry generally with straight bladed basket hilted swords while the light cavalry had shorter curved bladed swords with stirrup or simple cross hilts (see Figs 2 and 3 and Robson 1996 edition plate 1). The choice of sword type rested solely with the Colonels who were provided with Government allowances towards the cost of equipping their Regiments resulting in a total lack of uniformity.

Late in 1787 a Board of General Officers, set up to review the situation, ordered each Commanding Officer to provide the Adjutant General with a sword from his Regiment. Subsequently, in the March of 1788 the Board recommended the patterns of sword for future

issue to both Heavy and Light Cavalry. The blade dimensions were clearly specified; for the Light Cavalry the blade was to be 36ins long with a curvature of 1 and 3/4 ins at the centre, a breadth of 3/8 ins at the shoulder and to finish about 11 ins from the point. The remainder of the description was imprecise, in that the grip was to be 5 ins long (in fact most are to be found nearer 4 and 1/2 ins, a more practical length) and the hilts to be of the same form as those used by the Light Dragoons.

From this one assumes that the majority of pre-1788 Light Dragoon swords had stirrup hilts, i.e. as those illustrated in Figs 2 & 3, and attached generally to straight blades, though curved blades were also in use. The 1788 type of sword, as now ordered, had already been in extensive use in similar form in Continental Armies, with Austrian, Russian and Prussian Hussars in particular though generally with shorter blades of 32ins to 33ins. In "Swords of the American Revolution" by Neuman, there is a photograph of a straight bladed sword with a hilt identical to the hilts on post 1788 Runkel swords. (Similar to the sketch, Fig 3b). The Pattern 1788 Light Dragoon sword was positively identified some years ago (Fig 1); the first correctly captioned illustration probably being the sketch in "Sword, lance and bayonet" (1938...see page 49, Fig B). Though the accompanying text in the book is somewhat vague, interestingly there is reference to a report

of 1788 which states..."Colonels of Regiments may use British or German blades as they like"...This probably arose due to the high esteem in which German (Solingen) blades were held at this time; that they could be procured more cheaply was no doubt a significant factor! The book "Sword, lance and bayonet" was an attempt by C. Foulkes, at that time Master of the Tower Armouries, to correctly catalogue hitherto unidentified late 18th and 19th Century swords and other weapons, held in the Armouries. I am led to believe that up to at least 1975 there may have been only one 1788 Light Dragoon sword in the Tower Collection, that being a troopers sword of the 7th. Light Dragoons mistakenly referred to as an Officer's sword; this sword is discussed in more detail



*Fig.1. A workmanlike, well made, example of a 1788 Light Dragoon sword by Woolley & Co. (The sword is shown full length in Fig. 7c). The blade is the full recommended length of 36 ins. and the grip 4 and 1/2 ins. long. Note the panelled scabbard, also by Woolley; it is unusual to find British made scabbards of this type. Those not familiar with the picture, should refer to "Soldiers of the 10th. Light Dragoons" painted by George Stubbs in 1793 which shows a virtually identical sword with British type blade, held by a mounted trooper in the "carry swords" position. Of further interest in this painting it will be noticed that the scabbards of the standing dragoons are polished iron, thus indicating that not all 1788 scabbards were painted, though many obviously were, especially the more roughly made German examples.*

*Fig. 2. This is a well known type of sword immediately preceding the 1788 Pattern and is generally referred to as a "Light Dragoon sword c. 1780"; there are also a number of these in the Tower Armouries. The unfullered blade is 35 and 1/2 ins. long and stamped with a crown. The scabbard is missing, but contemporary prints show this would have been of leather with brass mounts and frog. The fishskin covered grip is 4 and 3/8 ins. long.*



later. I note that more examples of Pattern 1788 swords have since been acquired by the Armouries.

"British Military Swords" (1996) includes a correctly captioned photograph of a 1788 Light Dragoon sword instantly recognisable as of German manufacture, most likely by Runkel, Solingen. "Swords of the British Army" (1975 and 1996 editions) further confirms the Pattern with photographs and additional information. The author Brian Robson, interestingly suggests that the ambiguity and lack of detail in the Board's Specification for the Light Dragoon sword could well have been intentional to make it easier and less costly for the Regiments to convert or procure swords after 1788. Even if to some extent the exercise was thus compromised it was nonetheless a useful step towards standardisation.

### THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

As this sword pattern has already been identified and much previously published on it, a further discourse does need some justification; I hope to adequately explain this in the following sentences. Although swords exist that are now indisputably Pattern 1788 Light Dragoon swords; being identified from makers names, dimensions, general form and occasionally dates, many variants of the accepted Pattern also exist, in fact they seem endless! The principal aim of this writer is to discuss the subject in more detail aided by illustrations of

further examples; and there could indeed be a number of newer collectors and enthusiasts unaware of the vagaries of this pattern.

The opportunity is also taken to attempt to clear up ambiguities and misunderstandings that have arisen, especially in respect of the differences between Troopers and Officers swords, and for this reason a few typical examples of Officers swords will be included.

## CONSTRUCTION AND BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SWORD

Many surviving Pattern 1788 Troopers swords conform exactly to the recommended blade length of 36 ins, especially those from Solingen, but many, though obviously still 1788 swords can be shorter in blade length by up to 1 ins, no doubt a manufacturing "tolerance" as normal wear and sharpening would not alone account for this. It will also be noticed that a number of swords, generally by Woolley and Co, though ostensibly of standard design, have blades made as short as 32 and 1/2 ins, while others are found of both British and German manufacture with blades deliberately shortened to this length. Some of the former could have been swords in use before 1788 or conversely made nearer to 1796 when a new sword pattern with shorter blade was under consideration. The latter type were probably swords modified after 1796 in an attempt to make the 1788 swords conform more closely to the 1796 Regulations while stocks of the new 1796 Pattern were being built up. It could have been that some, or even all, such modifications may have been for Yeomanry use (i.e. batches for Troopers and "one-offs" for Officers). These variations and modifications, including alterations to hilts and scabbards, will be illustrated and described with examples.

There are also several distinct blade designs, especially in respect of the fullers. Some blades are bi-fullered with the fullers ending some distance from the point; other bi-fullered blades have the wide fuller running to the point, others have a single wide fuller only; also running to the point. Finally, not so common in 1788 swords, single fullered blades are encountered with the fuller ending some distance from the point as in the later 1796 pattern swords.

The grips are normally of smooth finished shaped wood, drilled through for the tang, bound with spaced turns of hemp to form a ribbed surface over which a water soaked covering (usually thin black leather on German hilts and fishskin on British hilts) is stretched, probably temporarily bound round with cord in the grooves till dry, then stitched at the back. The hilt is then finally assembled with the tang being riveted over the combined backpiece and pommel. Grip ferrules are rarely found on 1788 Troopers swords and the backpiece usually has a projecting nib which locates in a square hole in the base of the guard. (refer to Fig 4).

The metal hilt parts of Regular Cavalry Troopers swords were of iron; any using brass or other metals would have almost certainly been the purchase of a Yeomanry unit, or possibly of any Officer, or a weapon made prior to 1788.

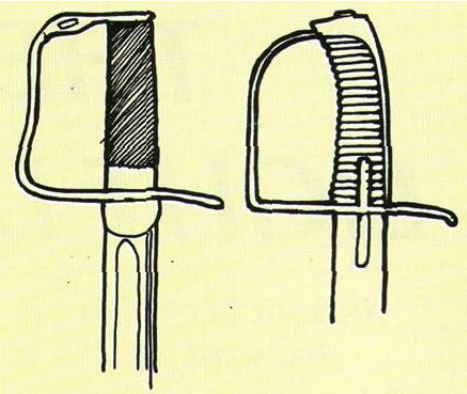


Fig. 3. The left hand sketch, Fig. 3a, is of another scarcer type of Light Dragoon sword c. 1780 of which there are also a number in the Tower Armouries, some of these being made by "Gill". The blade is straight and double fullered. The right hand sketch, Fig. 7b, is of another scarce pre-1788 sword type encountered, with a German "1788 type" hilt and blade virtually identical to that of Fig. 2.

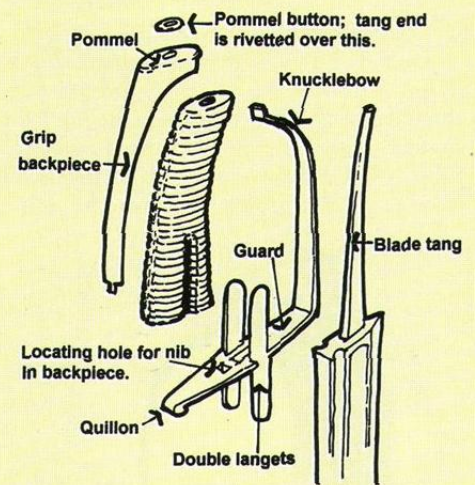


Fig. 4. This sketch shows the various parts of a typical Light Dragoon Troopers hilt from Solingen.

An important point to make and one that certainly requires clarifying, is that most German blades made for the British 1788 are engraved profusely with mounted hussars, cabalistic symbols, turbaned heads, moon and stars etc (refer to Fig 5); they would all appear to be slightly different thus the craftsmen presumably did not work from set patterns but permutations of a number of familiar symbols. Most German made swords issued to British Troopers have these engraved blades and it is a mistake to assume that any such examples were intended for Officers; it is on the other hand of course just possible, but unlikely, that some Officers followed the recommendations to the letter and carried exactly the same sword as carried by the enlisted men in their Regiment.

Officers blades were generally more delicately engraved, often with the Royal Coat of Arms and with a blue and gilt finish; the hilts were also usually of better quality.

British made 1788 blades are normally plain, the only "embellishment" being the maker's name stamped on the back edge or sometimes engraved across the blade near the hilt. The decorated blades of the Troopers swords of the 7th Light Dragoons dating from 1794 and 1795 are an exception; there may be others.



Fig. 5. German made 1788 Light Dragoon blades are usually profusely engraved, these being two typical examples.

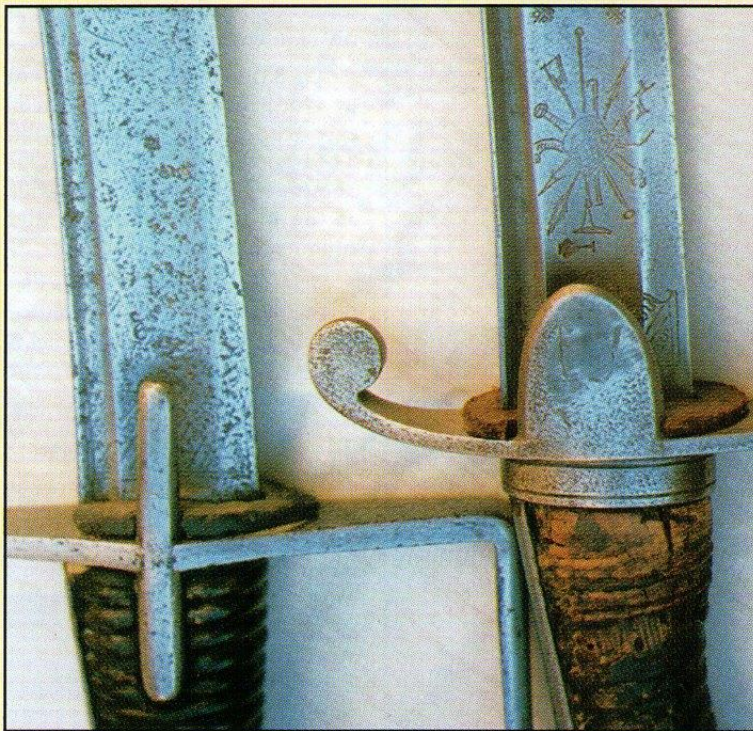


Fig. 6. Details of two German made blades for the 1788 Light Dragoon swords. Both are ordnance stamped, the left hand one (Fig. 6a) is stamped with crown over 6, though the blade is rather worn the stamp should be just visible. The other blade (Fig. 6b) is clearly stamped with crown over 1.

## THE MANUFACTURERS

The principal manufacturers of Pattern 1788 Light Dragoon swords were James Woolley, Thomas Gill and Samuel Harvey, all of Birmingham; Durs Egg of London and John Justus Runkel of Solingen in Germany. Surviving examples would suggest that most 1788 swords were by Woolley and Runkel, a number by Gill and very few by Egg or Harvey.

Woolley had one "favourite" sword pattern and a number of variant styles though this was mainly in the design of hilts. Gill appeared to have a standard individual style, with at least one minor variation. Runkel's swords were generally of one consistent pattern, while those by Harvey and Egg seem to be rare though Egg's name often appears as an overstamp on the blades of standard Runkel swords.

Runkel, born in Germany, appears to have been an importer of swords and blades of all types since at least 1783. He had his name engraved on Solingen made blades and became a naturalised British subject in 1796. Incidentally, his name is occasionally found stamped on later British 1796 Pattern Light Cavalry blades though he apparently does not appear in records after 1808.

There was much rivalry between the British cutlers with especial bitterness directed at Runkel, partly due to his being able to undercut the British prices. However, the Board brought parity to this aspect in due course by imposing an import levy on foreign made blades.

## TESTING AND ORDNANCE STAMPING

This has been covered at some depth in "Swords of the British Army" so a few brief comments only. In addition to recommending the 1788 Cavalry Sword Patterns the Board, following investigations and test demonstrations, took steps to standardise proof tests on blades.

These were to consist of striking on a piece of wood or bending the blade in a machine at

the rate of 2 ins per foot of blade length, these instructions being passed on to the Regiments. Swords passing the test were to be stamped with Government proof marks in the form of a crown over a number. In fact I have yet to see an ordnance marked British made 1788 blade, not to say they don't exist, though have occasionally seen the stampings on German made 1788 blades, two examples being illustrated in Fig 6. I can only assume that this was due to Regiments being generally supplied direct by the manufacturers and importers instead of through the Board of Ordnance.

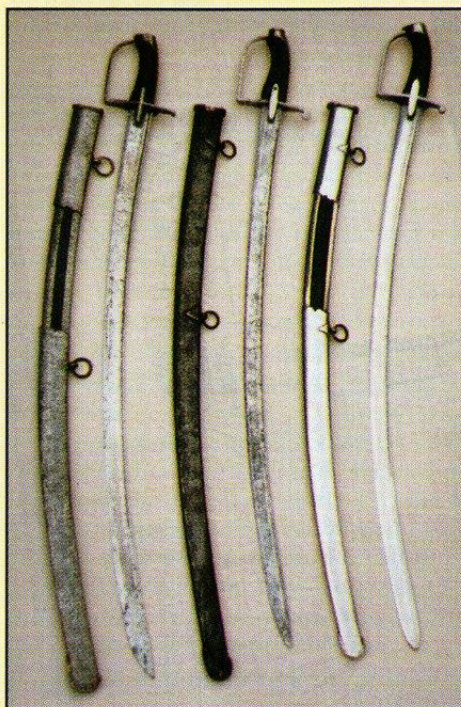


Fig. 7. Three 1788 Light Dragoon swords. The left hand example (Fig. 7a) is of normal German manufacture by Runkel of Solingen. The centre sword (Fig. 7b) is a "standard" British made sword by Woolley & Co of Birmingham. The right hand sword (Fig. 7c) is a scarcer variation by Woolley & Co. It is unusual to find panelled scabbards by this maker. (See Fig. 1. for hilt close-up.)

## TRAINING AND CAMPAIGN USE

Without further intensive research, I feel unqualified to comment much on this aspect though tuition must have been very much on the lines as set out later in 1796 in the "Rules and Regulations for the Sword Exercises of the Cavalry". That manual in fact depicts the 1788 Pattern sword in all plates except the detail sketch of a hilt which is a Pattern 1796, though without the regulations pattern ears to the grip. The faceted backpiece of the sword illustrated would indicate that the artist was provided with a 1796 style Officer's sword for the sketch.

The 1788 Light Dragoon sword probably saw little Active Service other than possibly with the 7th, 11th, 15th and 16th Light Dragoons in the Low Countries. Accounts, usually critical, of British Cavalry swords in use in that campaign seem to be directed at the cumbersome Heavy Cavalry swords.

However, to my mind, the Light Dragoon sword was a fine workmanlike weapon, no doubt formidable in well trained hands, but probably found too long to be fully effective in the "melee", hence the introduction of the shorter and more curved 1796 sword and the shortening of some 1788 blades.

## A CLOSE LOOK AT TYPICAL SURVIVING EXAMPLES

Having covered the general background of the

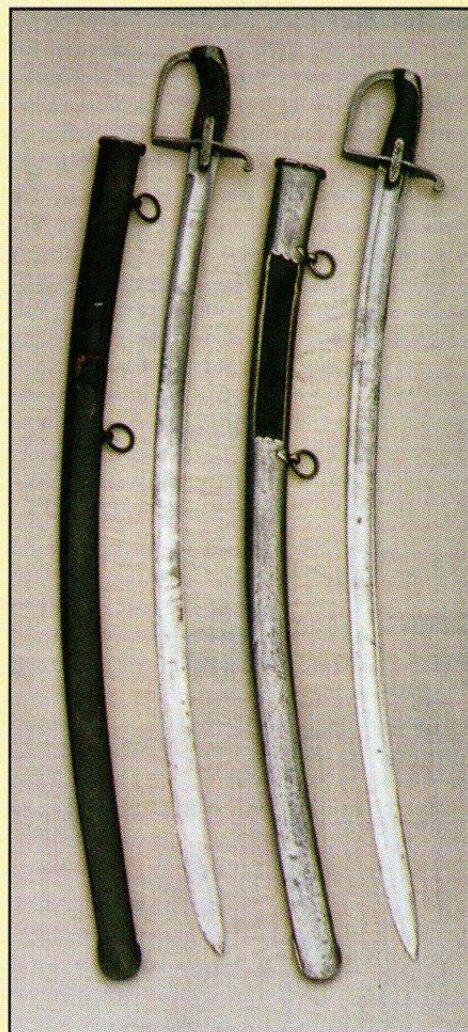


Fig. 8. The Left hand sword (Fig. 8a) is an example of Thomas Gill's "standard" pattern. The other troopers sword (Fig. 8b) is also a troopers sword by Gill, but would appear to be a scarcer variation.



Fig. 9. Close up of the two Gill swords to illustrate the hilt and scabbard details.

1788 Light Dragoon Sword, we now take a more detailed look at typical examples of the Pattern and some of its many variations.

Fig 7 (a) illustrates a standard 1788 Troopers sword from Solingen. With few exceptions, these German made swords had the name of the importer engraved in script, as this one, on the black back edge thus. "JJ Runkel, Solingen, though the spelling "Sohlingen" is more usual. This is usually in lower case script form though I note that on some Officer's swords upper case lettering is used. The blade is 36 ins long by 1 and 1/2 ins at the hilt and with one wide and one narrow fuller each side. The blade is engraved in the usual fashion with mounted hussar waving sword, turks head, bow and quiver of arrows, stand of arms, etc. The simple hilt has 1/4ins. wide double langets dovetailed and brazed into the guard, the pommel has the typical "Germanic" flat top and the grip has a thin leather covering. (Note that Troopers swords do not have wire binding to the grip, though neither do many Officer's swords).

The scabbard is formed on two stout wood strip liners which are mounted with a long iron chape and shorter locket connected by two angled iron strips, the assembly pinned together. The exposed sections of the wood liners are leather covered and the loose rings are secured to brazed on metal diamond shaped mounts. The brazing of seams and other joints is, as usual on German scabbards, finished roughly as the whole would have been originally black painted.

A more "important" example of this German made troopers pattern, complete with its panelled scabbard, was sold in the May 1992 Wallis & Wallis Special sale, lot 164. That sword being engraved with the usual Solingen motifs and mounted hussar, but also "17th. Light Dragoons". Those interested in referring to the catalogue illustration will note also the different scabbard ring mounts; an occasionally encountered minor variation to the usual

diamond shape and are smaller and just brazed and riveted to the scabbard back edge.

Fig. 7 (b). This is a standard Troopers sword by James Woolley. This maker normally stamps his name on the back edge of the blade, as on this example, "WOOLLEY & CO". The plain blade is 35 ins. long by 1 and 3/8 ins. at the hilt, with one wide and one narrow fuller each side; in characteristic fashion the wide fuller extends to the point. The slightly elliptical double langets have been (unusually) drilled for a rivet (now mysteriously missing) through the tang; this was quite likely a later modification after 1796.

The backpiece has the type of pommel referred to as a "turban roll" which is in effect a "trade mark" of Woolley. The scabbard is also typical of Woolley being in one piece, more slender than those by Runkel and with more of a taper. It has the usual diamond shaped patches for the loose rings, is fitted with wood liners, has "WOOLLEY & CO" engraved at the throat and traces of an original black finish.

Fig 7 (c). Another Trooper's sword by Woolley, again stamped "WOOLLEY & CO" on the back edge of the blade. (See also Fig. 1 for detail of hilt). The blade is identical to Fig 7(b) but 36 ins. long. The backpiece is unusual for a sword by Woolley having a "Germanic" flat pommel with pronounced beak, but which is surmounted with a large slightly domed washer for the tang riveting. The grip is fishskin covered.

This scabbard is another unusual feature for a British made sword, being of German type panelled construction; however the general form is typically that of Woolley's, and "WOOLLEY & CO" is engraved at the throat. I have seen two other examples of this scarcer sword design, though both without

scabbards; one being on display at the Household Cavalry Museum.

Fig 8 (a). This is a typical sword by Gill having "Gills Warranted" engraved across the blade at the hilt. The blade is otherwise plain and is 36ins. long by 1 and 1/4 ins. wide at the hilt, with a single fuller running to the point.

The design of the hilt knucklebow appears to be a feature peculiar to swords by Gill. The pommel is of flat "Germanic" form, the backpiece being secured to the grip by a square headed flush pin near the base; the grip covering is fishskin and the langets 5/8 th.ins. wide. The scabbard is of a design generally only found on 1788 swords by Gill having a rectangular, scalloped, cut-out in each side with a leather covering to the resulting exposed section of the wood liners. It retains most of its original black painted finish. I had considered this pattern rare, but several more, complete with correct scabbards with the usual cut-outs have appeared for sale

in recent years. Another good example (NAM 8507-54) is illustrated in "Swords of the British Army" (1996) on page 8.

Fig. 8 (b). This sword is a less typical variant of Gill's. There are no markings but the general form of sword and scabbard, especially the identical knucklebow to that of the previous sword, indicate Gill manufacture which is now confirmed by the appearance of a virtually identical sword, but with blade etched "Gills, Warranted", in a recent Wallis & Wallis sale. The similarities to the Gill "standard" pattern are the knucklebow, flat pommel, langets, fishskin grip, pinned backpiece and the blade dimensions of 36 ins. by 1 and 1/4 ins.

The differences are that the blade is bifullered, although the wide fuller also runs to the point; the flat pommel has the unusual and distinctive feature of sloping back and the scallops to the scabbard cut-outs also differ slightly.



Fig. 10. Another close up of the Gill hilts to show more clearly the form of knucklebow.

# 1788 Light Dragoon Swords

By JOHN D. MORGAN

## PART TWO

Part One was a general discussion on the background and introduction of the Pattern 1788 Light Dragoon Sword and closed with the illustrations and descriptions of some typical examples. The account now continues where it left off with a close examination of further swords of this type.

Fig.11(a). This shows a scaled down version of the sword in Fig. 7(b). The plain bi-fullered blade is stamped "WOOLLEY & CO" on the back edge and has not been shortened though only 32 and 1/2 ins. long; the width at the hilt is 1 and 3/8th ins. The hilt is identical to Fig. 7(b) though more constricted between knucklebow and grip. The scabbard is of the normal "Woolley" design but made to suit the shorter blade. I have seen a number of swords of this type with blades measuring from 32 and 1/2 ins. to 33 ins. Fig 11(b) shows a Regulation 1796 Pattern Light Cavalry sword as an interesting comparison. Fig 11(c). This is of another scarcer variation by James Woolley having the usual "turban roll" pommel, elliptical double langets and fishskin grip, but fitted with a knucklebow more of 1796 pattern, though without a sword knot slit. This example also serves to illustrate a commonly encountered modification, that being the shortening of the blade to about 32 and 1/2 ins. This alteration was probably carried out to many 1788 swords after 1796 to make them conform more closely to the new pattern; the improved sword exercises may have made this desirable. The standard scabbard, engraved "WOOLLEY & CO" at the throat, in common with other examples of blade shortening, has not been shortened. Another example of blade shortening is illustrated in "Swords of the British Army" (1996), page 75, Plate 46. I looked at that sword and scabbard (NAM 6005-22) some years ago and noted that the Woolley made scabbard, possibly from another sword, is engraved with a troop number and letter; A39. The sword is basically a standard troopers sword by Runkel, the 16th Light Dragoons therefore being one of the apparently few to Regimentally mark their trooper's swords. I regret feeling the necessity to disagree with the previous description of "Officer's" for this sword.

Fig.12 illustrates interesting trooper's swords of the 7th Light Dragoons, all by James Woolley. They are usefully dated, 1794 and 1795, which still puts them comfortably in the "1788 bracket". I have also seen a number of other dated Woolley blades, usually 1793 as the example in Fig. 14(c), but none earlier. These late datings infer that



many Regiments were issued with the sword late in its official life or perhaps not at all.

Fig.12(a). This sword is identical to Inv.No.1X 378 in the Tower Armouries which is illustrated in the 1975 edition of "Swords of the British Army", plates 56 & 57. These swords have 35 and 1/2 ins. bi-fullered blades with the wide fuller running to the point but, unusually for British made Trooper's swords, the blades are (finely) engraved. On one side is a Crown, "GR" and "WOOLLEY & CO, 1795", the other side is engraved with a Crown and "QQ, 7LD". The hilts could be easily confused with hilts used on some Officer's swords, for example the hilt in Fig. 13. which has been deliberately included to illustrate this point. The half langets and the reeded ferrule are usually features of Officer's swords, although I have seen the minor variation of a "standard" Runkel trooper's sword fitted with a plain ferrule to the grip.

However, the sword in Fig. 12(a) is without doubt a Trooper's sword, and made in some quantity, the hilt and scabbard of this example being engraved "C4". The Tower sword is similarly engraved "D42" on the knucklebow and "A23" on the scabbard thus indicating issue to at least three troops.

An uncertain feature of these swords is the small rectangular slot through the grip and tang. Some consider it for a sword knot, others a means of better securing the grip with a pin or wedge, perhaps finished with an escutcheon, (of a valuable metal since removed?). I have seen several more of these swords in better condition still with the fishskin covering to the grip; surprisingly the slot is still there! this does tend to support the sword knot theory.

It could be that the 1796 Light Cavalry hilt pattern evolved directly from this 1795 hilt?

Fig. 12(b). This illustrates another 1788 sword made for the Light Dragoons in 1794 and appears to be almost identical to the short pattern sword by Woolley & Co (Fig.11a), having a 33 ins. bi-fullered blade with the wide fuller running to the point and with a Woolley scabbard made to fit. Unfortunately, without being able to examine the sword more closely I cannot be absolutely certain that the blade has not been shortened. An important feature though is the similarity to the markings

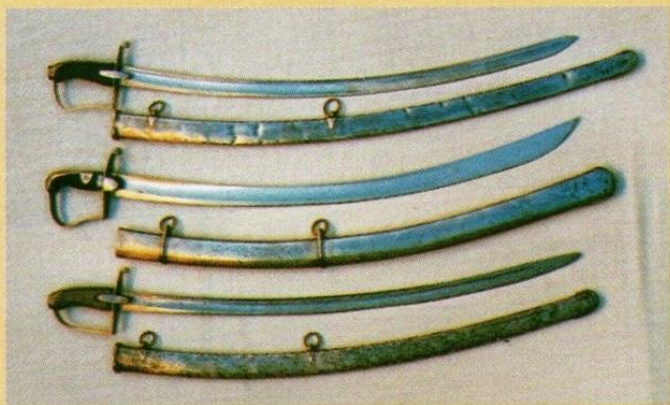


Fig. 11. The left hand sword is a slightly scaled down version of the normal Woolley troopers sword. A Regulation Pattern ordnance stamped 1796 pattern Light Cavalry troopers sword, centre is included as a comparison. The right hand sword is another basically standard sword by Woolley but having a scarcer knucklebow shape akin to the 1796 type but too narrow for a slot for the sword knot. The blade has been shortened by about 2 1/2 ins.

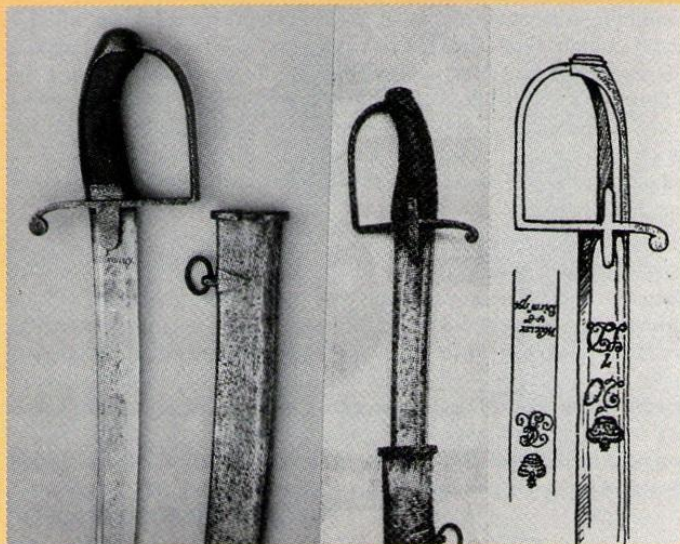


Fig. 12. Three examples of troopers swords by Woolley & Co for the 7th Light Dragoons. The left hand sword (fig. 12a) is dated 1795 with blade also engraved Queens Own 7LD. The centre sword (fig. 12b) is another example made for the 7th Light Dragoons in 1794 with blade engraved as fig. 12a. The third sword (fig. 12c) is a sketch from Barrett's History of the 7th Light Dragoons of a 7th LD sword dated 1794 which once hung in the Officers Mess. (fig. 12b courtesy Wallis & Wallis).

of the sword in Fig.12(a). The blade is decorated in the same manner, and the hilt and scabbard engraved "B 53".

Fig. 12(c). This is a sketch from Barrett's "History of the 7th. Hussars" of a sword once hung in the Officer's mess but apparently long since disappeared. This appears identical to the previous sword and dated 1794. Barrett refers to this mistakenly as an Officer's sword. From a full length sketch in the book the blade looks to be, compared with adjacent swords, about 33 ins. long.

Assuming the swords were gradually issued to the Regiment, we can see so far that "B" troop, and presumably others, were issued with the turban pommelled sword during 1794 (with original short, or later shortened, blade?) with "A", "C" and "D" troops, and the remainder, receiving theirs during 1795.

Fig. 13. This is the Officer's sword by Woolley & Co referred to earlier and which is very similar to the 7th Light Dragoon's swords dated 1795., also made by Woolley.

Fig. 14. Shows three modified 1788 Trooper's swords.

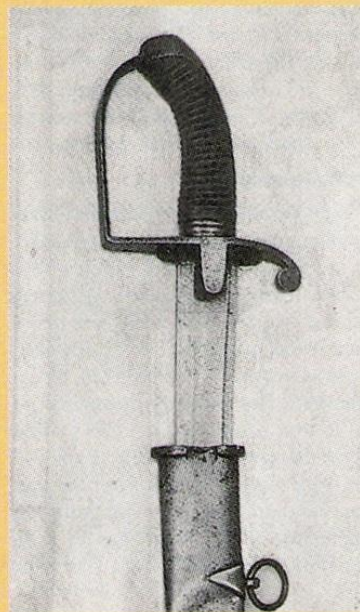
Fig. 14 (a). The left hand sword illustrated was a standard Runkel, Solingen made sword which has presumably been altered after c.1796 to bring it closer in form to the later 1796 Pattern, though surprisingly without shortening the blade which is still a good 36ins. long. Runkel's name has been erased from the back edge and over stamped "EGG"; "Sohlingen" remains. This over stamping by Egg is often seen on Solingen swords which otherwise appear unaltered; I can only conjecture why they were over stamped, perhaps someone else can help here?

However it is absolutely clear that Egg altered a significant quantity of the example under discussion. To avoid any mix-up of handmade parts and so as not to hinder the production process all swords being altered were stamped with a small number on the pommel, under the guard, on the blade back and on the scabbard mouthpiece before completely dismantling. The grip was probably marked on the back after removal. As there is no visible sign of a join I am certain the knucklebow was simply reshaped and swaged to increase the length by about 0.5mm and at the same time widened a little to allow the cutting of a sword knot slit. The sword was reassembled, and to complete the job a hole was drilled through

the upper langets, grip and tang and neatly rivetted; emulating the rivetting of the ears of the later 1796 pattern hilt.

The number appearing on the main parts is a "2", it is interesting that an identical sword was sold recently at Wallis & Wallis Sale 421, Lot 1150. That sword is numbered "32" of the series in the same way, although the number is worn off the pommel. Therefore at least thirty two were thus altered.

Fig. 14(b). This illustration is of, what was, another standard German made 1788 Troopers sword but again altered, though more drastically than the previous one, presumably after 1796. The engraved bi-fullered and ordnance stamped blade has been shortened to 33 and 3/4 ins. and refitted with a 1796 "type" hilt. The form of the hilt would suggest it was a "one-off" for an Officer, indeed some other conversions seen give the same impression. The article by Richard Dellar in "Classic Arms", March 1996 supports this by illustrating a conversion of a Runkel 1788 sword for a named Yeomanry Officer. With the example he illustrates, I note that only the blade has been altered, by shortening, although a new later pattern scabbard has been made up for the sword. For those interested, he also illustrates a standard Runkel with panelled scabbard which is an example of one of those apparently unaltered but over stamped "EGG".

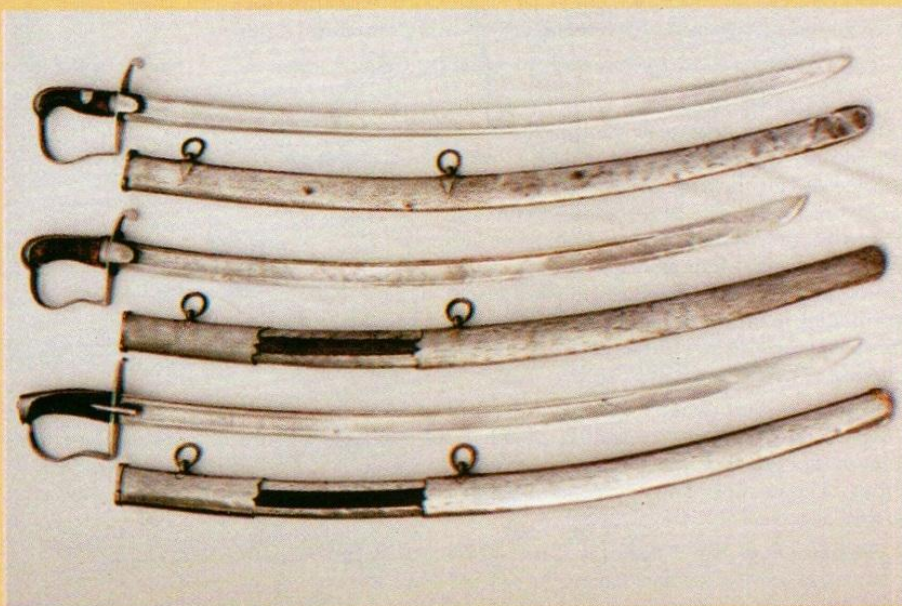


The sword in Fig.14(b) still retains its full length German scabbard though the mouthpiece is altered to accommodate the wider 1796 type langets. I have seen other panelled scabbards shortened by reducing the length of the centre section, an easy alteration which I am surprised was not done in this instance.

Fig. 14(c). This illustrates another conversion of which similar examples survive. This alteration is to a standard 1788 Troopers sword stamped on the back of the plain single fullered

Fig. 13. 1788 Light Dragoon Officers sword by Woolley & Co. Note the similarity to the troopers sword, in fig. 12a. (Courtesy Wallis & Wallis).

Fig. 14. The left hand sword (fig. 14a) shows the partial hilt conversion to a standard 1788 troopers sword by Runkel. The centre sword (fig. 14b) is another conversion of a standard 1788 German made sword; the blade of this example is ordnance stamped. The right hand sword, fig. 14c. is another hilt conversion to a standard sword by Woolley & Co. The blade is dated 1793.



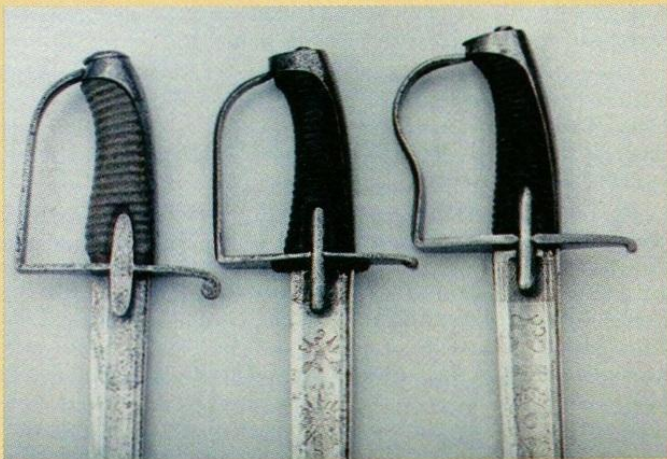


Fig. 15. Close-up of typical 1788 troopers hilts. In sequence, the left hand hilt belongs to the sword in fig. 11a, the centre one to fig. 7a and the right one to fig. 14a.

blade. "WOOLLEY & CO 1793". The 1788 hilt has been completely replaced by one of 1796 form. As the ears on the backpiece are slightly smaller than normal, and the grip ferrule is reeded, this was probably a conversion for a Yeomanry Trooper; I would in any case also expect the blade of a Regular Cavalry issue after 1796 to have an inspection stamp. As in other similar swords it is puzzling why the blade was not shortened. The scabbard has had the mouthpiece altered for the 1796 langets.

Fig. 15. Close-up of three troopers sword hilts.

Fig. 16. This photograph is of a 1788 Trooper's sword hilted similarly to the previous example but having an engraved Solingen made Runkel blade also still at its original length, in this case, of 35 and 1/2 ins. This sword featured in an article in "Classic Arms" a few years ago being described by the author as a "transitional sword". This could well be so, though possibly only in the sense that it was made from new parts near, or after 1796 and probably made use of a new, previously unhilted, blade; one of many imported loose by Runkel. But, here again one has to consider why, if converted after 1796 and fitted with a 1796 pattern trooper's hilt, the blade has not been shortened? However, I am still inclined to think that all the examples fitted with 1796 bow shaped stirrup hilts were converted or made up after that date; though we will doubtless never know for sure. An interesting feature of this sword was its 1788 Woolley scabbard, apparently now missing, being fitted with a 1796 type throat plate.

Fig. 17(a) Shows an Officer's sword of a consistent design used by some Officers of both Regular and Yeomanry Cavalry during this period; the pattern thought to have been introduced c.1790. Most grips though are of solid chequered ebony rather than the more elaborate example pictured here.

Officer's swords otherwise appear to be as varied as the trooper's weapons though usually readily recognisable by their more refined finish.

Figs. 17 (b&c). Illustrated are two of a variety of Officer's styles.

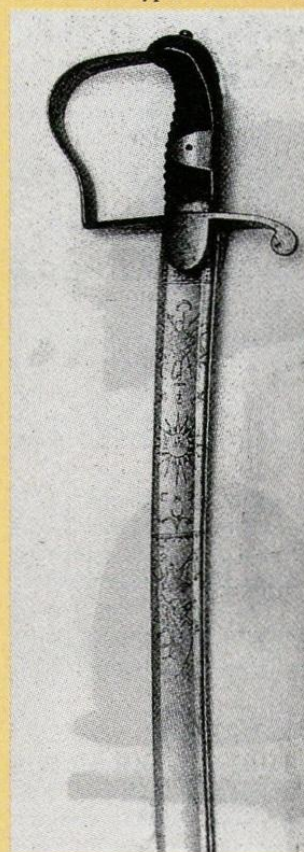
The sword depicted by Fig. 17(b). has distinct Officer's features; delicate single langets, reeded grip ferrule, faceted backpiece and hole in the knucklebow for the ring (missing) for attaching the sword knot. The blade is bi-fullered and engraved as the standard trooper's blades, but with traces of original blue and gilt. (It is worth mentioning that some Runkel Trooper's blades have gilding in the engraving grooves). The blade back is engraved "R.SOHLINGEN" in upper case lettering as Officer's swords often are.

Fig.17(c). This example also has a standard trooper's type, engraved, bi-fullered blade by Runkel. The grip is of ribbed wood with a reeded ferrule. This example shows the occasional use of double langets on an Officer's sword.

The sword in Fig. 17(d) is at first sight a Troopers sword by Woolley having turban roll pommel, double langets and ferrule but, on

examining it more closely, we see it has the more turned down "officer's style" quillon, finely detailed and expensive housings on the scabbard for the langets and high quality engraving to the blade including the Royal Arms. The blade is an import from Solingen, hilted by Woolley, with "RUNKEL, SOLINGEN" engraved in upper case deeply into the blade back edge. The blade also has traces of gilt and was no doubt once blued as well. This sword was certainly made for an Officer and thus yet another ambiguity.

The 1788 sword had a relatively short Official life, though would have continued in use for some time after the introduction of the 1796 Pattern. Many of the conversions would have been carried out during this overlapping period and probably mostly for the Yeomanry. The number of surviving unaltered swords suggest the Yeomanry Cavalry must have been generally content with the 35 to 36 ins. long blade. Most British 1788 Light Dragoon Trooper's Swords are clearly marked with the makers names though there are exceptions; for example the variant example by Gill (see fig.8). Thus care must be taken when acquiring swords of this type; for instance, the writer was interested in what appeared

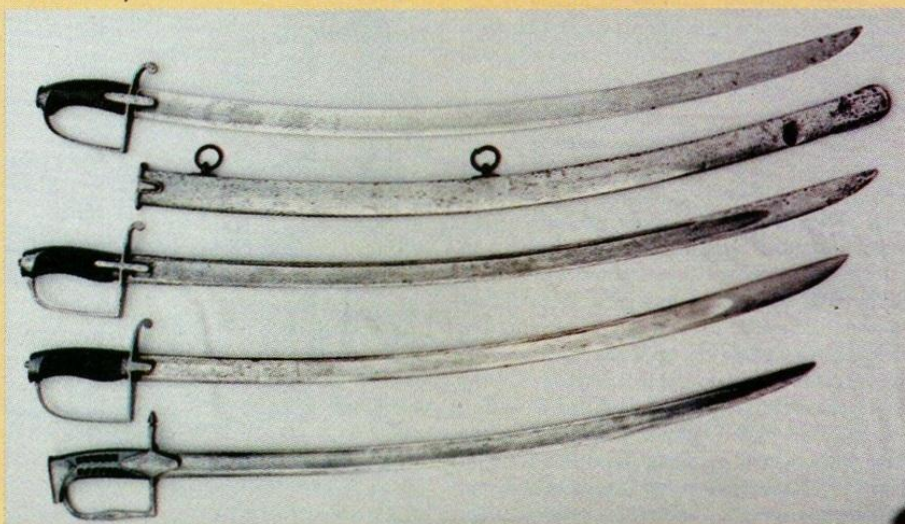


to be a Light Dragoon Officers sword some years ago only to find on closer examination that the blade was etched with an Austrian monogram! One discovers many other variations of detail; whether these are "one-offs", or limited batches of swords or the result of repairs is not always clear. The writer recalls examining a trooper's sword with a very fine single fullered etched blade; was this an Officer's purchase or an Other Ranks sword in an expensively equipped Yeomanry Regiment? Etching is rarely seen on 1788 swords anyway.

To conclude this discourse some sketches are included of a few details encountered over the years. Fig. 20(a). This is a typical sword of a similar type to the 1788, but dating from the mid-18th. Century and clearly Prussian due to the engraved eagle and "POTSDAM". Note the pin at the base of the grip backpiece which is a later feature of hilts by "GILL"; without such markings some

Fig. 16. This is another example of a German made troopers sword fitted with later pattern hilt. (Courtesy Wallis & Wallis.

Fig. 17. Typical Officers swords of this period, figs. 17a, b, c and d.



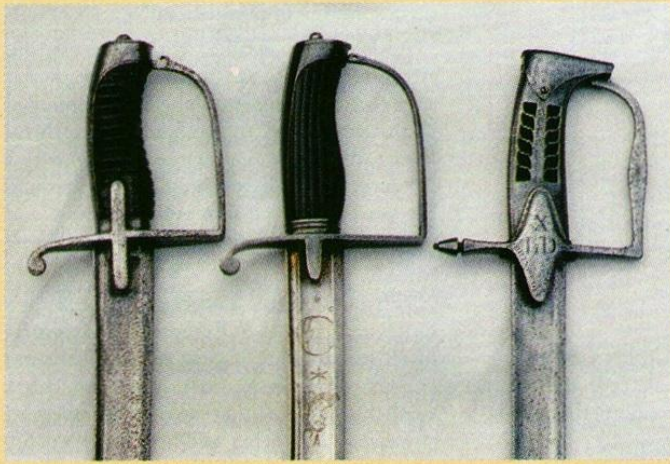


Fig. 18. Close up of three of the Officers hilts in fig. 17. The right hand hilt is engraved to the 10th Light Dragoons.

uncertainty might well have arisen in positive identification. However, the blades of Continental Cavalry swords of this era do appear to be shorter than the 1788 by about 4ins.

Fig.20(b). The blade of this sword is engraved "Osborne"; at least one similar sword exists stamped "EGG". The hilt shown is virtually identical to the Austrian Hussars hilt illustrated in "Swords & Daggers", plate 172, though the hilt of the latter is in brass. Note the unusual sword knot position in the guards of both hilts; apart from the differing metals used it could be that this example in iron is a direct copy of the Austrian brass hilt. Henry Osborne is recorded as having been in business at Brookhouse, Birmingham, from 1785 to 1797 and although he may well have made 1788 Light Dragoon Troopers swords, this is the only one I recall having seen.



Fig. 20(c). This is a 1796 hilt similar to Fig.14(b), obviously another conversion and also mounted on a Runkel blade, but having a sword knot bar fixed to the grip ferrule. This feature is occasionally seen on Pattern 1796 Officers swords.

Fig. 20(d). This shows the unusual loops on the scabbard to sword (20(b), I have also seen similar loops on a scabbard by Woolley. It is interesting to observe that fixed loops were introduced

much later with the 1882 pattern scabbard mainly to prevent rattling, perhaps these were for the same purpose?

Fig.20(e). This is ostensibly an Austrian scabbard (see fig. 173 in Wagner) having the throat mounted on a sleeve which is slipped over the scabbard mouth and screw fixed at the back; but the blade of this sword has a British Ordnance stamp. I examined the sword some years ago but noticed it passed through the Autumn 1988 Wallis & Wallis Special Sale. As with the known Austrian scabbards, the loose rings are attached to bands; this feature is very occasionally found on 1788 scabbards.

Fig. 20(f). This shows the standard type of scabbard loose ring mount

for both Runkel and British swords.

Fig.20(g). This scabbard, made by Woolley & Co, has a scarcer variant mount sometimes even smaller than this. See Fig.19 for an example of the very small type which is brazed, and probably rivetted, to the back face of the scabbard.

## Acknowledgements

In producing this Article I am conscious of the debt owed to Brian Robson and the late Geoff R. Worrall for their earlier published research.

However, this discourse while building on that material, also attempts to point out and correct what this writer considers to be a few past minor errors of detail and it is hoped that those readers interested in this sword pattern will consider the effort worthwhile. Although it is now some 12 years ago since we corresponded, thanks are due to Nicola Moyle, then assistant curator at the Royal Armouries and Major J.S. Knight of the Queens Own Hussars, Home Headquarters, for helpful information received. Lastly, I am grateful to Messrs. Wallis and Wallis for allowing me to publish the photographs in Figs. 12b, 13 and 16.

All other photographs are of swords in my possession; incidentally the swords shown by Figs. 2, 12a and 14a were acquired from Wallis & Wallis some years ago.

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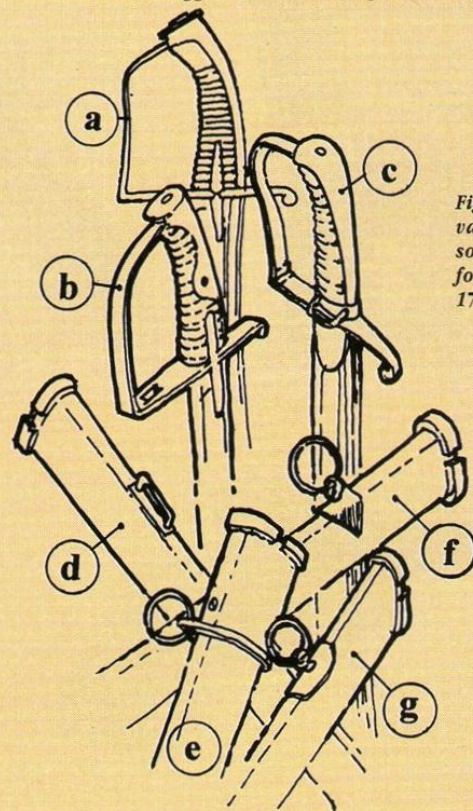


Fig. 20. Sketches of various features, some less usual, found on Pattern 1788 swords.

Fig. 19. Close up of the hilt of the Officers sword in Fig. 17d. Although having the basic characteristics of a troopers sword it was undoubtedly made for an officer as the text explains. Blade by RUNKEL, Soblingen; hilt and scabbard by Woolley.