

**Picking out Red Stars in the Sword Handle. Dave Eagle FRAS.**

Nestled between the constellations of Cassiopeia and Perseus lies a fuzzy patch that is easily visible to the naked eye. This is known as the Sword Handle in Perseus.

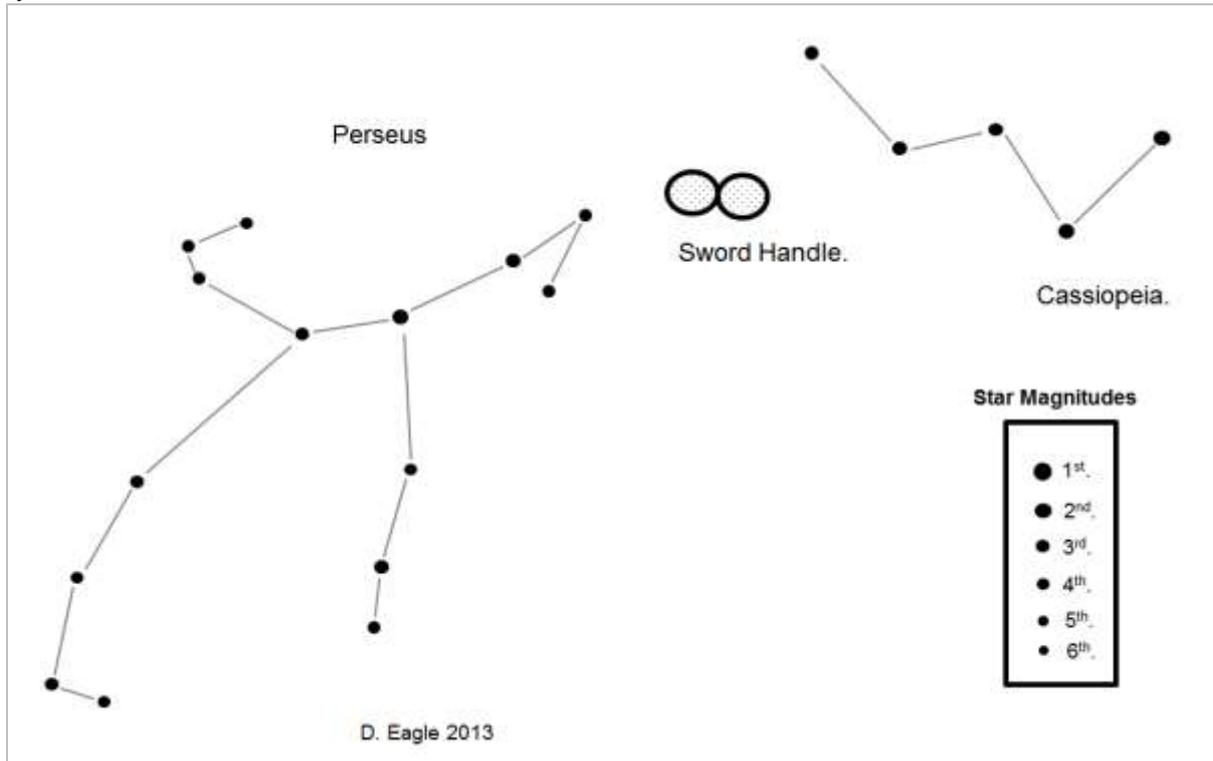


Fig 1. - Finder chart for the Sword Handle.

It is in fact two open clusters lying side-by-side, h and Chi Persei. In binoculars or a small telescope it is a beautiful field of stars, like diamonds spread onto a velvet cloth.

It is visible to the naked eye as a small smudgy patch, and shows up extremely well in binoculars. But let's investigate these clusters a little better. Use whatever telescope you have to look very carefully at the stars scattered around the field of view. Can you actually make out where one cluster ends and the other one begins? Keep scanning around and pay careful attention to the individual stars themselves. Did you take time to notice that there are a number of red stars scattered amongst all the other stars?

If you didn't see these initially, look again and they will certainly pop out at you once you know this fact and you do start being more aware that they exist and take the time to take it all in.

As with most observing, the first view you get isn't always the most you will see. It takes a little time to see everything. The more you observe, the more you see. Once you have found your objects, spend a little time to take the view in. Don't tick it off the list and rush on, spend time to really get to know the objects.

And don't forget that it is always well worthwhile going back time and time again to familiar objects to see if you can see just that little bit more.

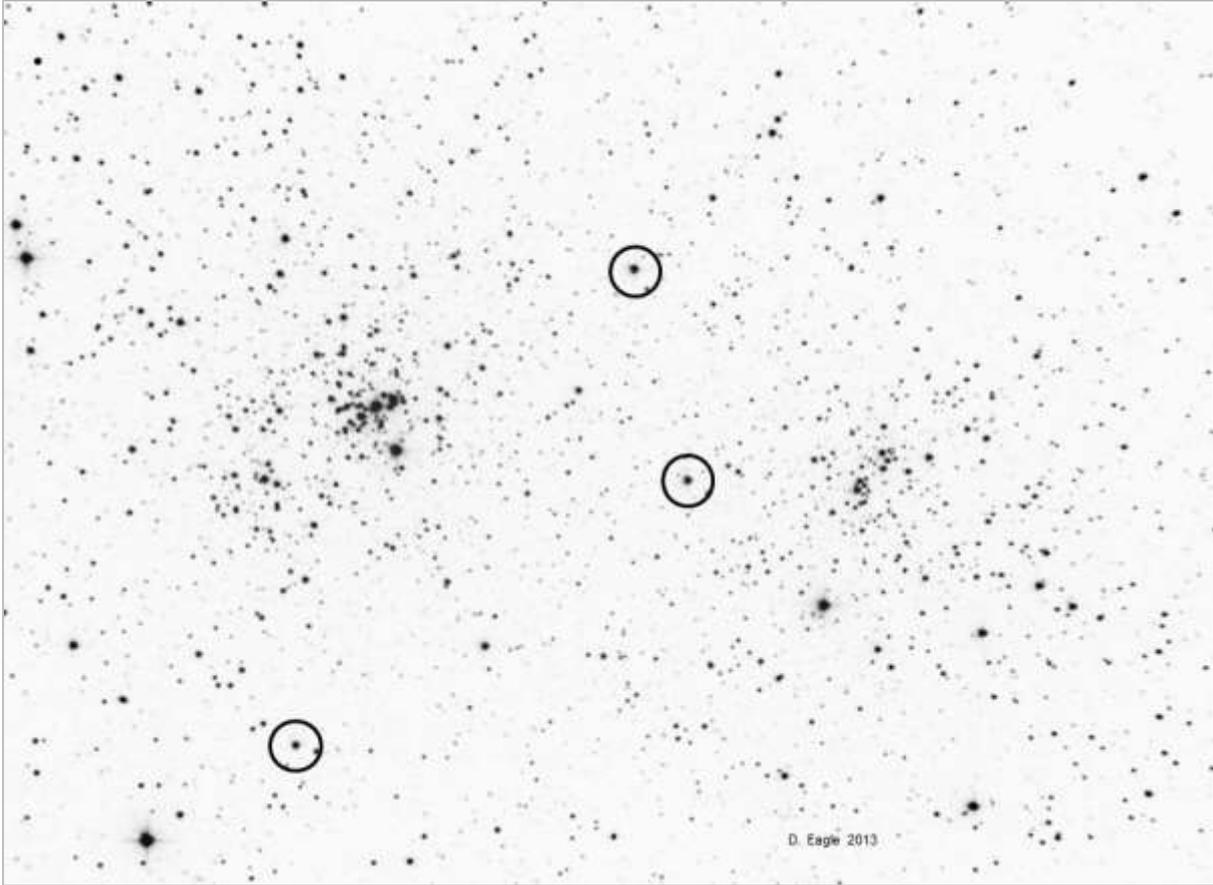


Fig 2. Three red stars located within the double star cluster. Can you find any others?

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