

THE IMPERIAL FRENCH ARMY OF THE FRANCO PRUSSIAN WAR

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General

There is a marked contrast between the state of dress of the two sides in the FPW. On the one hand the Imperial French army started the war with splendid uniforms which had more than a nod to the glories of the army of Napoleon I. The various Guard and special units such as the Zouaves added rich splashes of colour. However by the Republican era this martial elegance was discarded by the vast majority of the army and shortages of basic material saw the French army equipped in a wide range of styles.

By contrast, the Prussian troops were centrally equipped to a standard pattern of generally more sober cut and appearance. Having said that, the mounted arm retained some of its traditional splendour. Even the various allied contingents followed the Prussian pattern to a great degree with only odd exceptions appearing here and there. The one obvious exception that this uniformity was provided by the large Bavarian contingent whose blue coats bring welcome relief to the ranks of field grey.

This section is aimed directly at enabling someone to paint their 6mm army and get it on the table. It does not go into the minutiae of the subject, as this would be a huge work in itself, rather than a quick and handy reference. As we are also primarily concerned with painting small scale armies it does not consider those details that cannot easily be depicted on 6mm wargaming figures. The exact spacing of buttons, piping and variations on official practice are not considered.

These sections are primarily the work of volunteers who wish to share their knowledge and are prepared to put it on display for others to benefit. If you feel that you would like to cover an army or a period that does not appear in this section, or correct an error that has crept in, please [>>>contact us>>>](#). We'll provide basic uniform templates and advice.

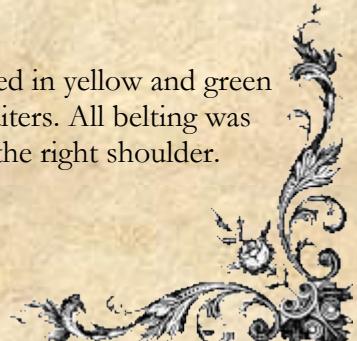
Line Infantry and Chasseurs

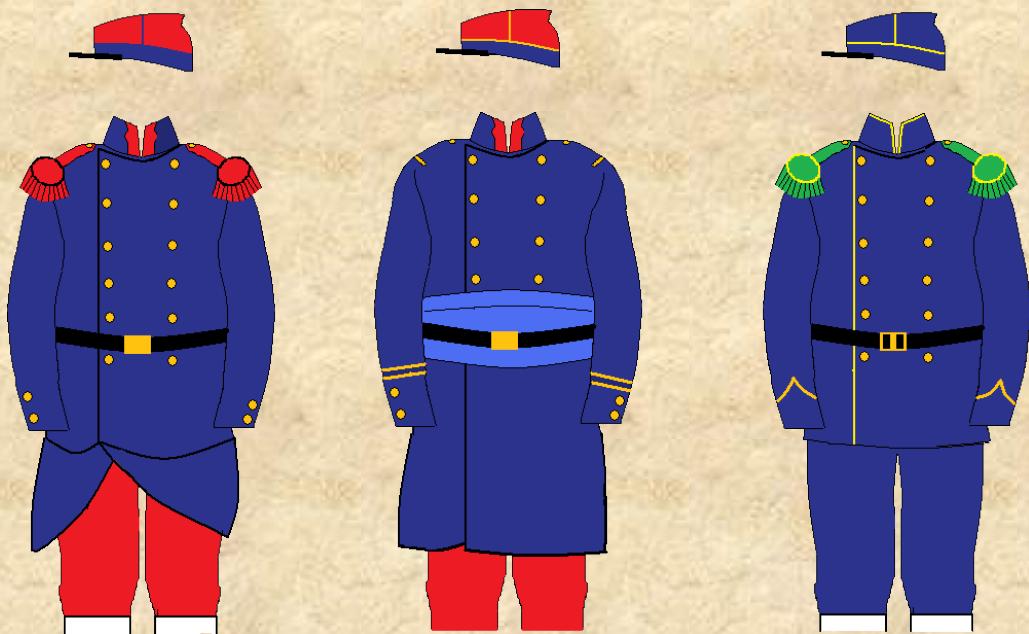
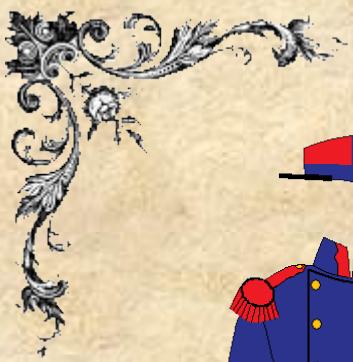
Although this guide will include details such as piping and button colours, one of the great advantages of using 6mm figures is that many of these can be ignored as they are too small to be seen on the finished articles.

Line Infantry wore a dark blue, double-breasted greatcoat, which was habitually worn with the front tails fastened back. Red fringed epaulettes were worn and the collar had red tabs on the leading edges. Trousers were red, tucked into white gaiters. All belting was of black leather. An off white 'bread bag' was slung by a white strap across the right shoulder. Headgear was a red-topped kepi.

Officers wore a similar uniform without the epaulettes, turnbacks and gaiters. A light blue waist sash was worn and rank was indicated by various numbers of gold braid stripes around the lower sleeve and on the kepi.

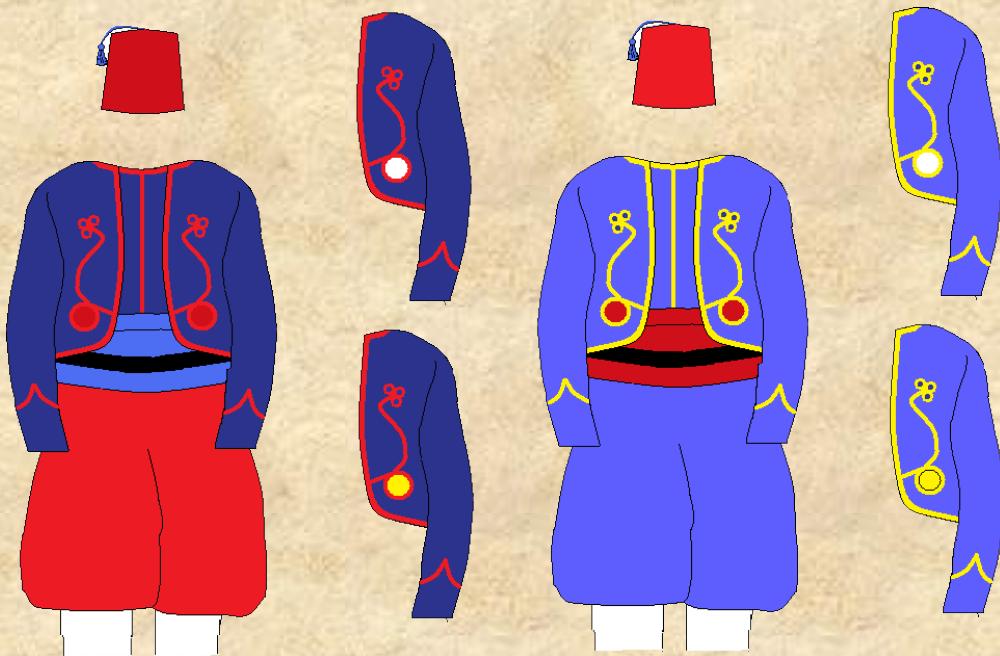
Chasseurs wore a dark blue, thigh length tunic. The collar and cuffs were piped in yellow and green fringed epaulettes were worn. Trousers were dark blue, tucked into white gaiters. All belting was of black leather. An off white 'bread bag' was slung by a white strap across the right shoulder. Headgear was a dark blue kepi, piped in yellow.





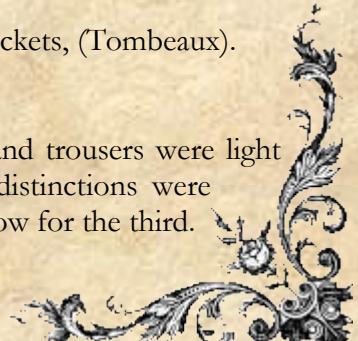
Zouaves

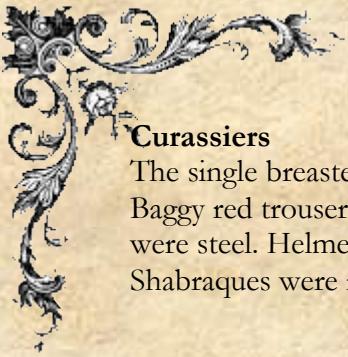
Based on North African dress, the Zoauve uniform was flamboyant and distinctive. They wore a dark blue, decorated short jacket. Trousers were red, very baggy and tucked into white gaiters. All belting was of black leather. An off white 'bread bag' was slung by a white strap across the right shoulder. Headgear was a red fez which could have a white turban wrapped around it. A light blue girdle completed the colourful outfit. The three regiments were distinguished by the colour of the false pockets in the jacket. Officers wore similar uniforms to Line infantry, but adopted the baggier trousers.



The only distinction between the three Zoauve Regiments were the false pockets, (Tombeaux). Red for the 1st regiment, white for the 2nd and yellow for the third

Uniforms for the North African Turcos were of similar cut. The Jacket and trousers were light blue, the girdle red and the piping yellow. Once again the regimental distinctions were marked by the Tombeaux; Red for the 1st regiment, white for the 2nd and yellow for the third.





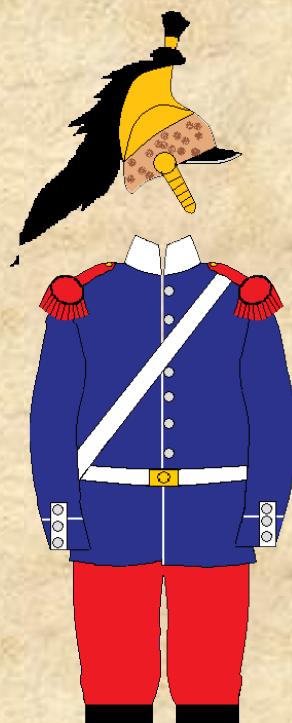
Curassiers

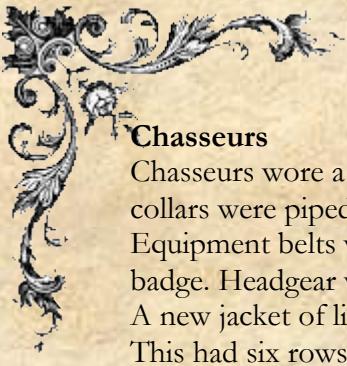
The single breasted tunic was dark blue with red collars, cuff flaps and scarlet fringed epaulettes. Baggy red trousers were tucked into black knee boots. Equipment belts were white leather. Scabbards were steel. Helmets and cuirasses were polished steel with brass fittings and a black horse hair plume. Shabraques were replaced by small blankets on campaign.



Dragoons

The single breasted tunic was dark blue with white collars and cuff flaps and scarlet fringed epaulettes. Baggy red trousers were tucked into black knee boots. Equipment belts were white leather. Scabbards were steel. Helmets were brass with a 'leopard skin' turban and a black horse hair plume. Shabraques were replaced by small blankets on campaign.



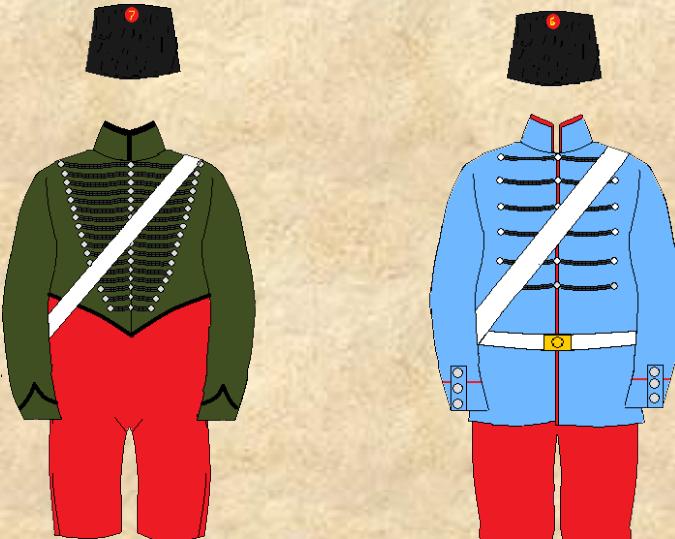


Chasseurs

Chasseurs wore a short dark green jacket with 18 rows of black braid across the front. The cuffs and collars were piped in black. All ranks wore red breeches and black knee boots.

Equipment belts were white leather. Scabbards were steel. Sabretaches were black with a bronze eagle badge. Headgear was a black fur busby.

A new jacket of light blue was introduced in 1870, but only worn by the 1st, 6th and 9th regiments. This had six rows of black braid across the front with the cuffs and collar piped in red.



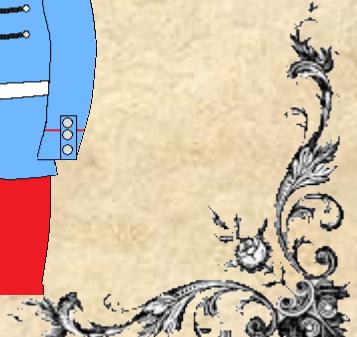
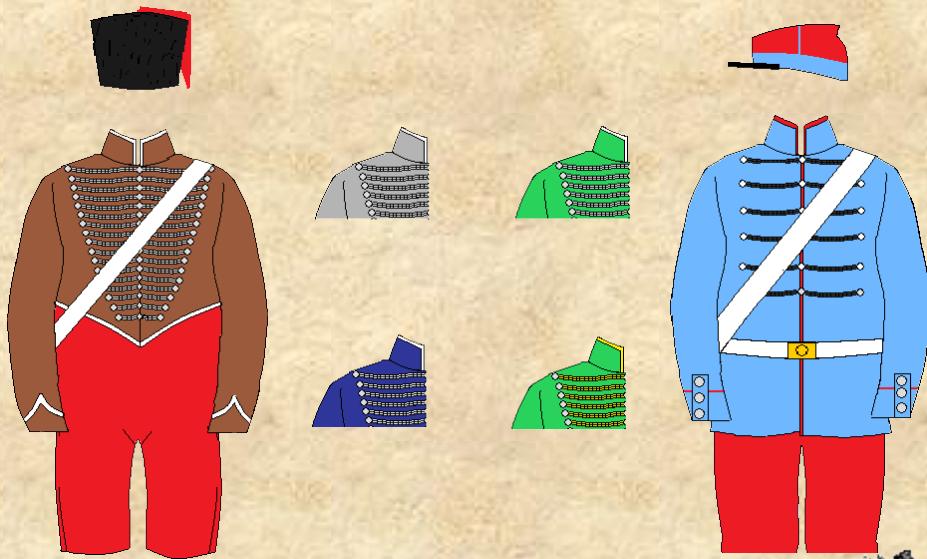
Hussars

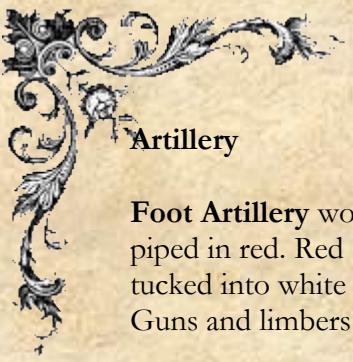
Hussars wore a jacket in regimental colour with 18 rows of braid across the front - white for regiments 1 to 6, yellow for 7 and 8. The collars were red. All ranks wore red breeches and black knee boots.

Equipment belts were white leather. Scabbards were steel. Sabretaches were black with a bronze eagle badge. Headgear was a black fur busby with a red bag.

The 2nd regiment wore a brown dolman, the 3rd and 4th silver grey, the 5th dark blue and the 6th and 7th light green.

A new jacket of light blue was introduced in 1870, but only worn by the 1st and 8th regiments. This had six rows of white braid across the front with the cuffs and collar piped in white. Headgear for the new uniform was light blue kepi with a red top and this was worn with the old uniform by some units.





Artillery

Foot Artillery wore a dark blue, thigh length tunic. The collar had a red patch and the cuffs were piped in red. Red fringed epaulettes were worn. Trousers were dark blue with red outside seam, tucked into white gaiters. All belting was of white leather. Headgear was a dark blue kepi, piped in red. Guns and limbers were painted olive green.

