



THE FRENCH ARMY OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS 1806-1812

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If there is one certainty about wargaming the Napoleonic Wars, it is that someone has to play the French!

This is a HUGE subject to cover, the uniforms of the Guard regiments alone is a subject in itself. For the moment this guide is starting off on a very general footing and covering only the line units that typically formed a french army of the period.

I welcome input and expertise from those more knowledgeable...

FRENCH INFANTRY 1806-1812

A Line infantry regiment consisted of 5 battalions, each of 6 companies of 140 men. Each battalion theoretically numbered 840, but campaign losses mean that this was rarely achieved and sustained

The uniform details described below are the regulation versions. There were many variations and exceptions as regiments were slow to adopt new uniform regulations or adopted distinctive styles. One of the great advantages of using 6mm figures is that many of these can be ignored as they are too small to see on the finished articles.

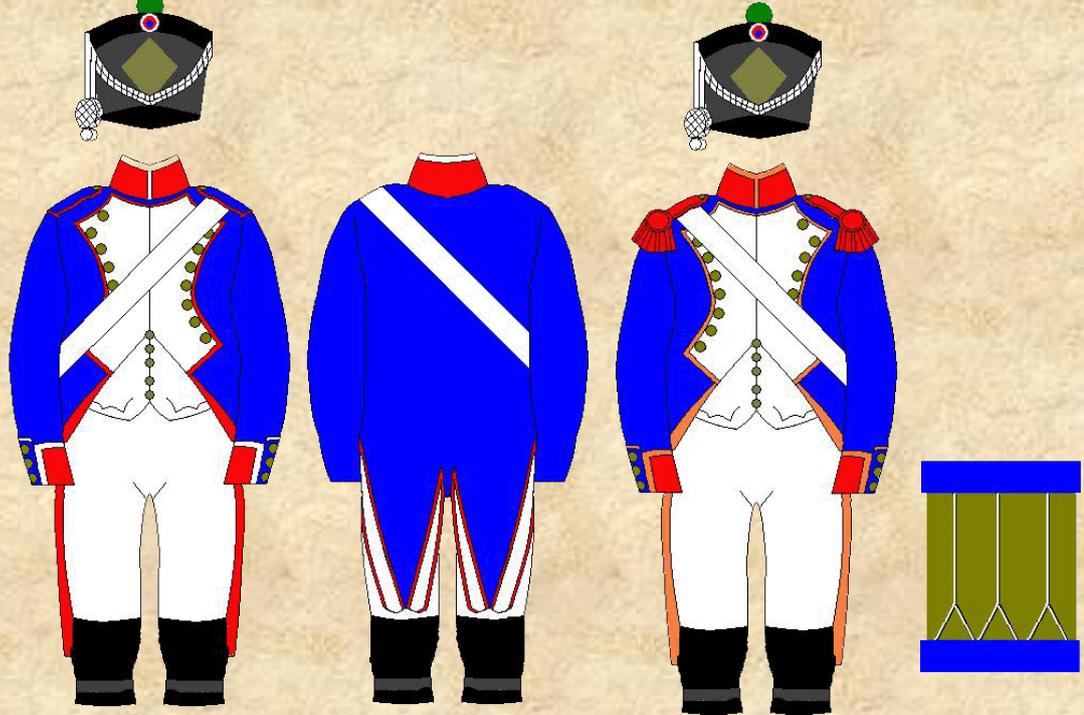
The coat was blue with red collar and cuffs with white piping. The turnbacks were white, piped red.

Waistcoats and breeches were white. Gaiters were black. Headgear consisted of a felt shako bearing a leather band on the top and an bottom, a brass diamond plate, a cockade, cords and coloured pompoms.

Four of the companies were designated as 'Fusiliers'. Their uniform was described above. Each of the four companies were differentiated by different coloured pompoms: 1st = Green, 2nd = Sky Blue, 3rd = Orange and 4th = Violet.

Equipment belts were white. The cartridge box was of black leather. The rucksack was brown cowhide with a grey greatcoat strapped to the top.

In principle, Drummers wore the same uniform, with tricolour, orange or yellow lace edging the facings and red 'wings' edged in white. Drums were brass with blue hoops and white belts and tensioners. A new livery was introduced in 1810, but was not in general wear until 1812. This was a green single breasted coat, red piped white collar and cuffs, green piped white shoulder straps and white turnbacks. A livery lace bearing the letter 'N', (aren't you glad that you are doing 6mm?), edged the coat, formed chevrons on the sleeve and was laced across the chest.



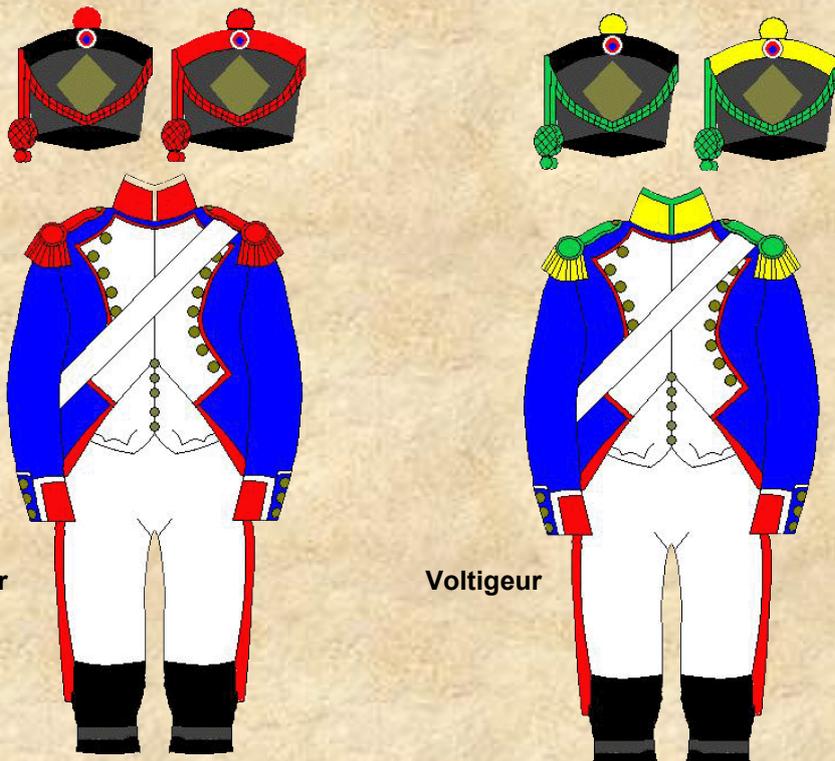
French Infantry - Front

French Infantry - Rear

Drummer

The Grenadier company wore the basic uniform, adding red epaulettes. Their shakos bore red cords and pompoms. Some also added red bands to this. Both grenadiers and voltiguers carried a hanger, (small sword) and this was carried by a white shoulder strap on the left hip.

Voltigeurs had a yellow collar, green or yellow epaulettes. Their shakos bore green or yellow pompoms, green cords and often top and bottom bands of yellow.

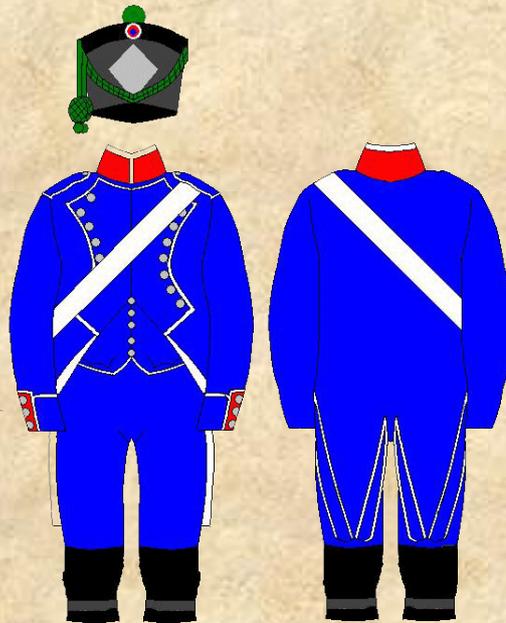


Grenadier

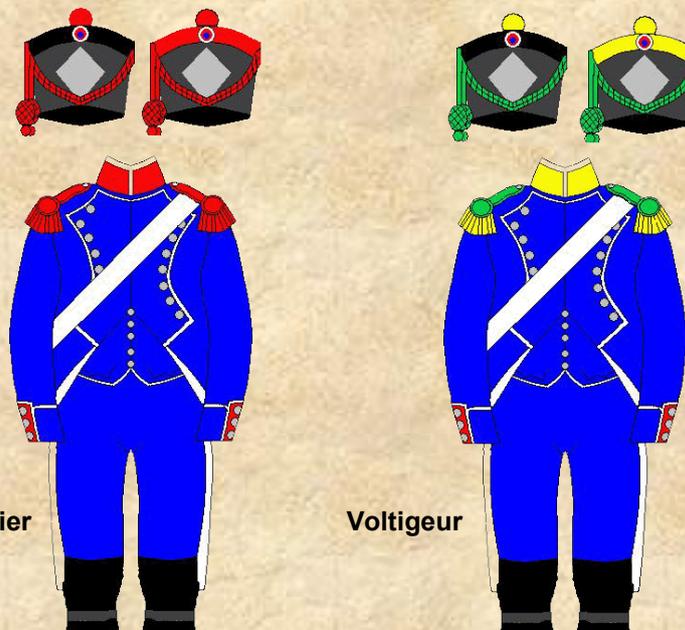
Voltigeur



Light Infantry regiments wore uniforms of the same cut and design as the line. Their coats were blue, with blue lapels, turnbacks and cuffs all piped white. Collars and cuff flaps were red piped white. Waistcoat and breeches were blue. The shako had a gilt plate and green cords.



As with the Line regiments, there were elite companies in the Lights. These were the Carabiniers and the Voltigeurs.



Carabinier

Voltigeur

Officers of both Light and Light regiments wore the same basic uniform as their men, adding a silver gorget. The bands on their shakos were gilt as were the cords. Pompoms were of company colour unless they were on the regimental staff, in which case they were white.



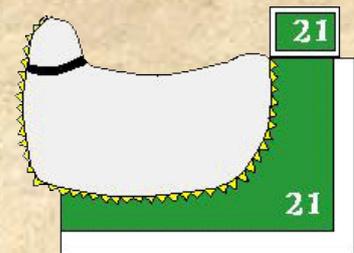
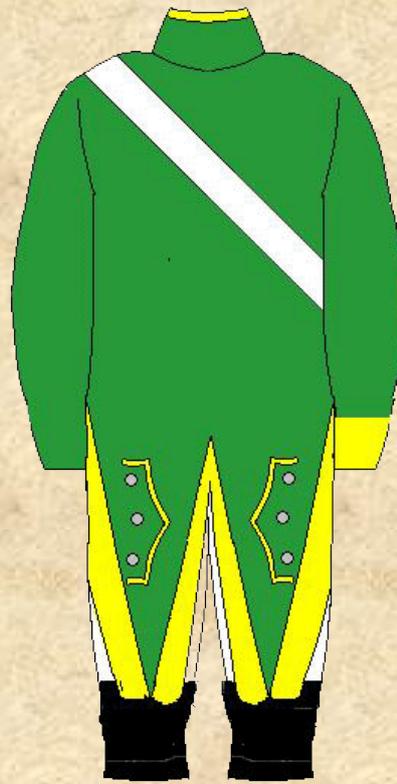
FRENCH DRAGOONS 1806-1812

A Dragoon regiment consisted of 4 Squadrons, each of 2 companies of 100 men. Each regiment theoretically numbered 800

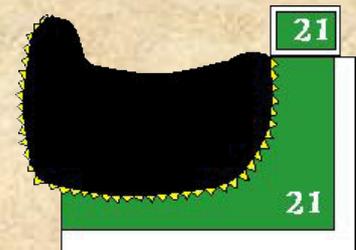
The coat was green with lapels and turnbacks in regimental facing colour. The collars, cuffs, and piping edging the lapels were also in the facing colour. Waistcoats and breeches were white. Boots were black. The helmet was brass with a sealskin 'turban' black leather visor, and brass chin scales.

Trumpeters wore reversed colours, sometimes edged with white lace and rode white or grey horses.

Officers wore similar uniforms, but had a leopard skin turban on their helmets.

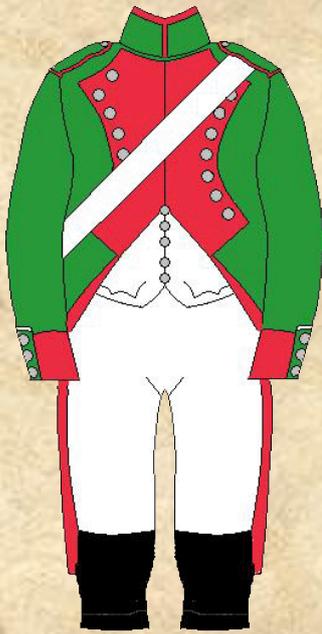


TROOPERS

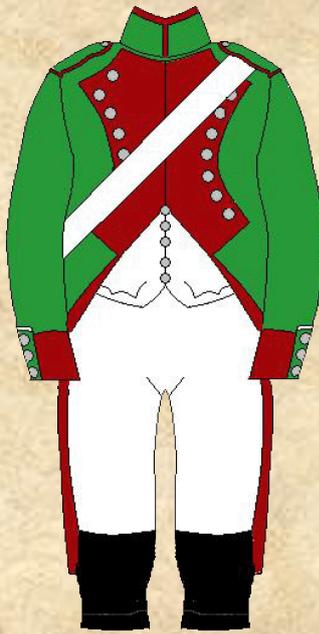


MUSICIANS

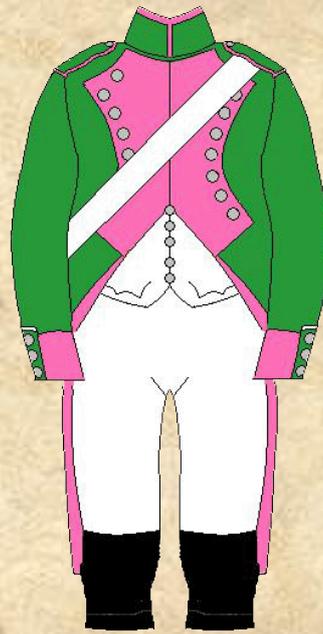
Regiments 1 to 6 had scarlet facings. Regiments 7 to 12 had crimson facings. Regiments 13 to 18 had dark pink facings. Regiments 19 to 24 had yellow facings and regiments 25 to 30 had orange facings.



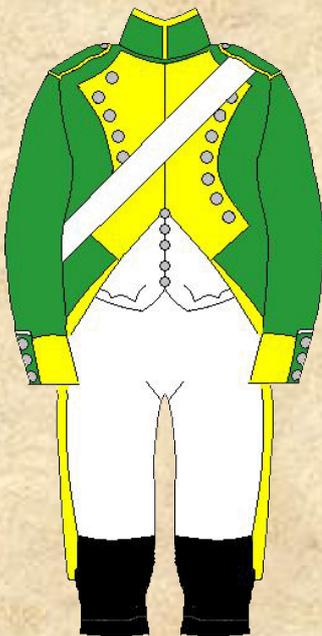
Regiments 1 to 6



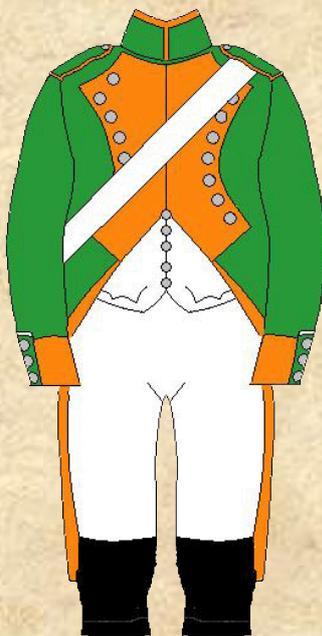
Regiments 7 to 12



Regiments 13 to 18



Regiments 19 to 24



Regiments 25 to 30



FRENCH CUIRASSIERS 1806-1812

A Cuirassier regiment consisted of 4 Squadrons, each of 2 companies of 100 men. Each regiment theoretically numbered 800. In 1806 there were 12 regiments in being, with a 13th regiment created in 1808 for service in the Peninsula, and a 14th being added by incorporating the Dutch cuirassiers.

The coat was blue with lapels and turn backs in regimental facing colour and bearing fringed red epaulettes. The collars, cuffs, and piping edging the lapels were also in the facing colour, although it seems that the 3rs, 5th, 8th and 11th regiments had blue collars. Consistency was not a strong point of Napoleonic uniforms! Waistcoats were white, breeches were buff and boots were black. The helmet was polished steel with brass comb, black 'mane', black cow hide 'turban' black leather visor, and brass chin scales.

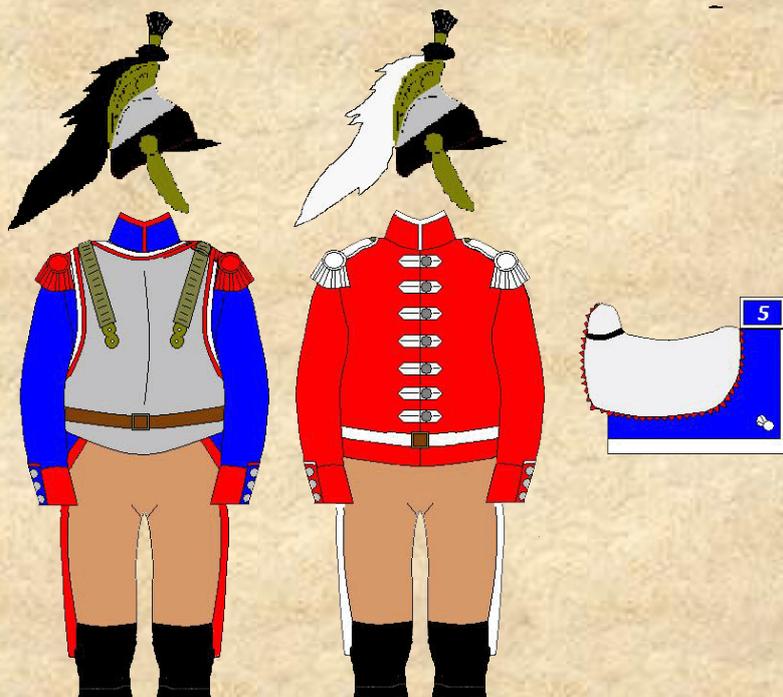
The cuirass had front and back plates of polished steel, leather straps with brass fittings, and was lined with red. A small black cartridge box on a white belt was worn over the cuirass.

Cuirassiers were mounted on blacks or dark bays where possible.

Officers wore similar uniforms, but had a leopard skin turban on their helmets.

Trumpeters wore either reversed colours, sometimes edged with white lace, or blue with facing colour piped in silver, and rode white or grey horses. Their helmet manes were red or white. From 1812 trumpeters adopted the green imperial livery with turnbacks etc in facing colour. They did not wear a cuirass.

Horse furniture was square edged shabraque, edged in white, bearing a grenade in the corner. Sheepskins were white edged in red.

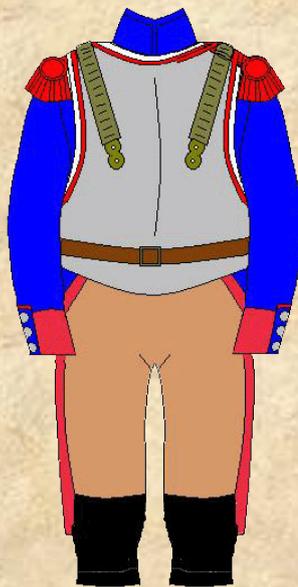




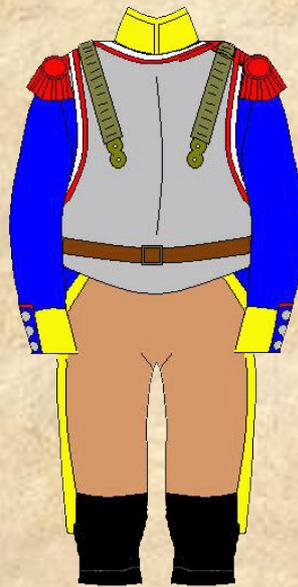
From 1803 to 1810, the 1st to 6th regiments had scarlet turnbacks, collars, and lapels, the 7th to 12th, yellow. The 3rd, 5th, 8th and 11th had blue collars, the rest collars in facing colour.



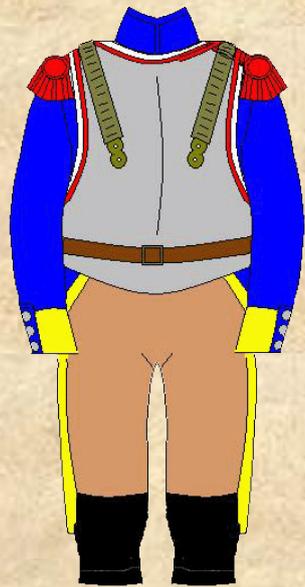
**1st, 2nd, 4th, and 6th
Regiments**



**3rd and 5th
Regiments**

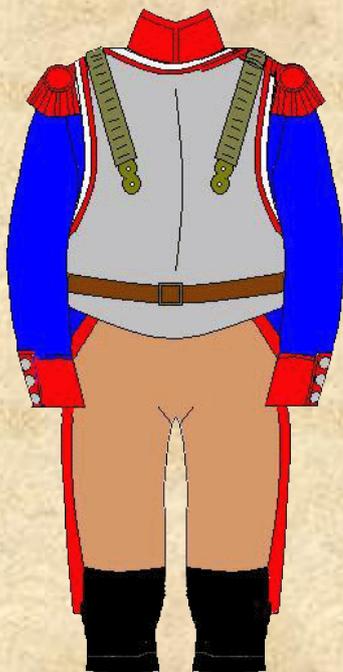


**7th, 9th, 10th and 12
Regiments**

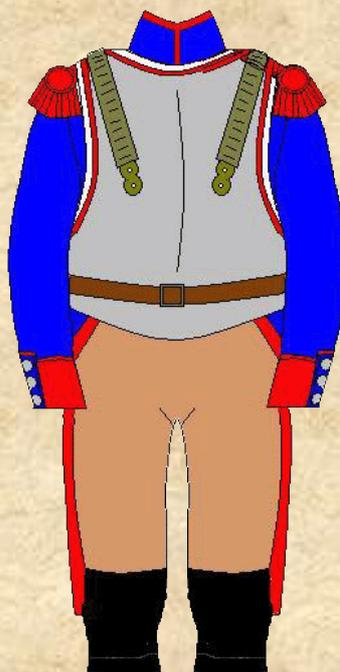


**8th and 11th
Regiments**

In 1810 the regulations were changed. Regiments 1 to 3 had scarlet facings. Regiments 4 to 6 had orange facings. Regiments 7 to 9 had yellow facings, and Regiments 10 to 12 had pink facings. Each sub group had variations of the use of the facing colour to distinguish regiments one from another.



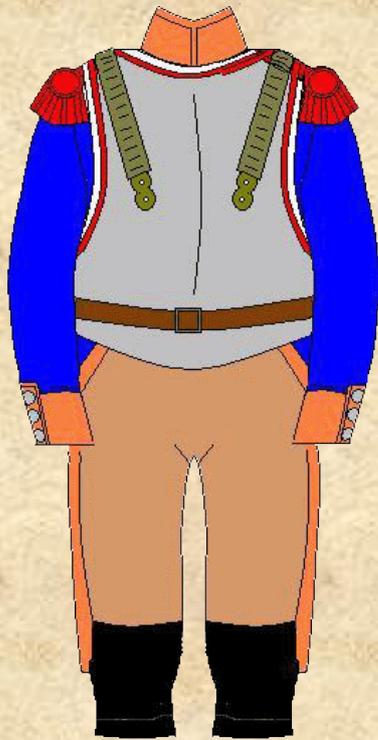
1st Regiment



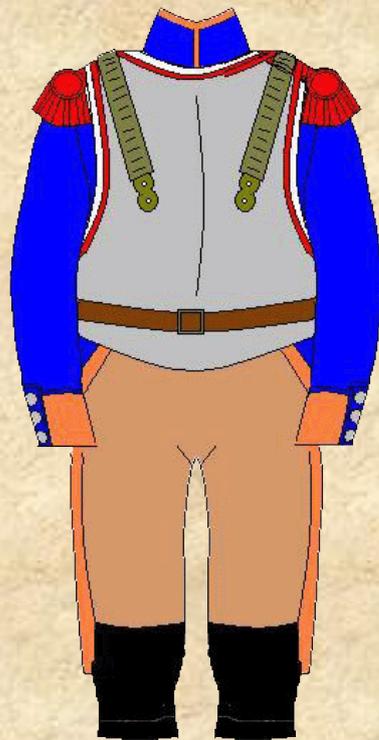
2nd Regiment



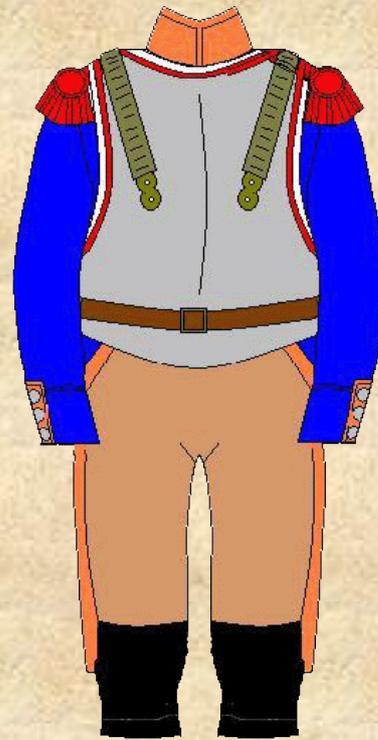
3rd Regiment



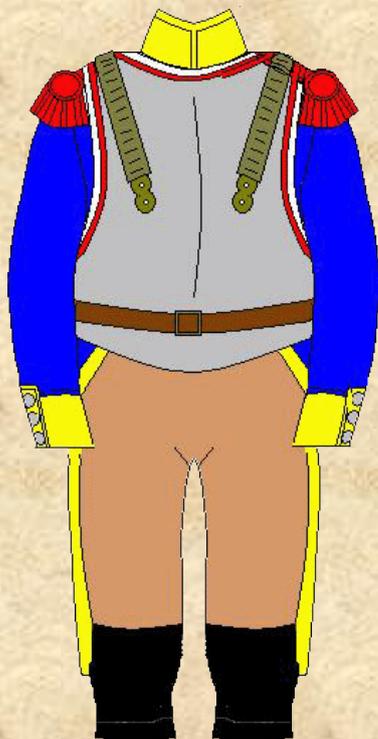
4th Regiment



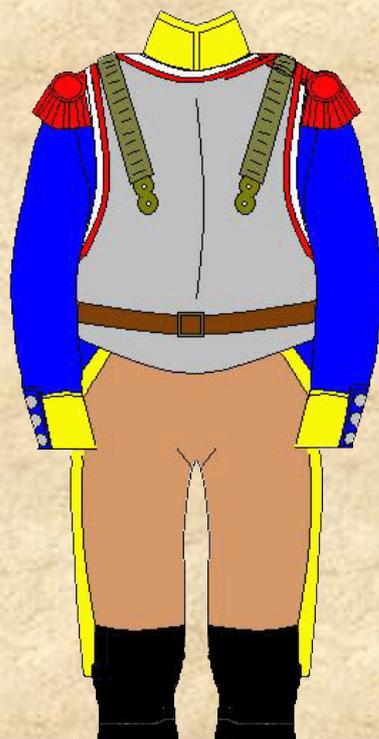
5th Regiment



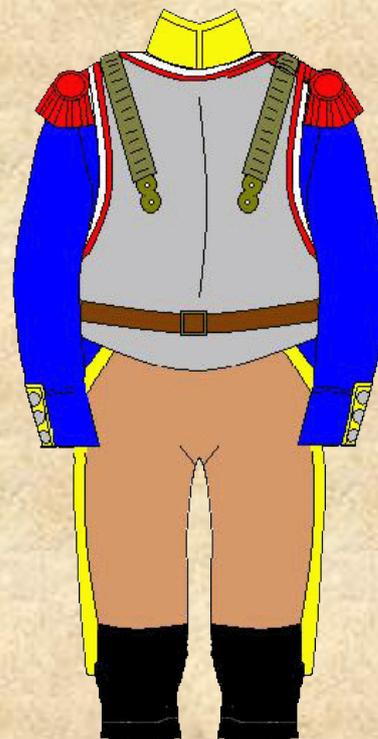
6th Regiment



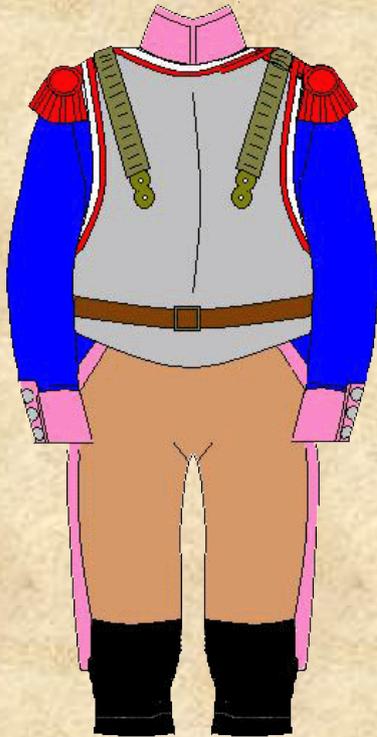
7th Regiment



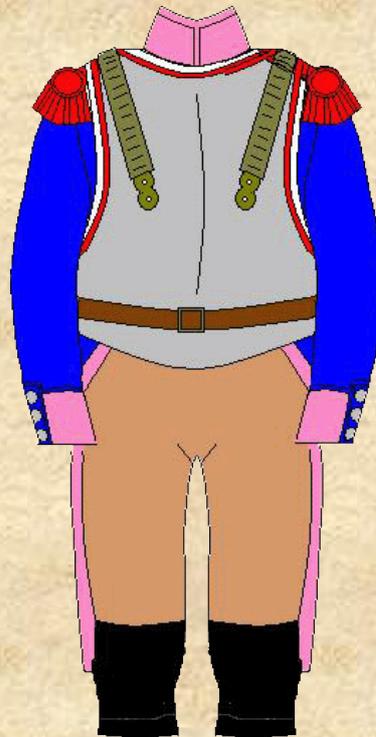
8th Regiment



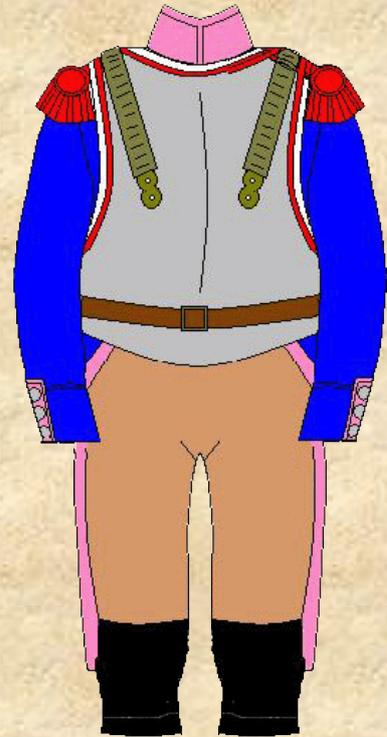
9th Regiment



10th Regiment



11th Regiment



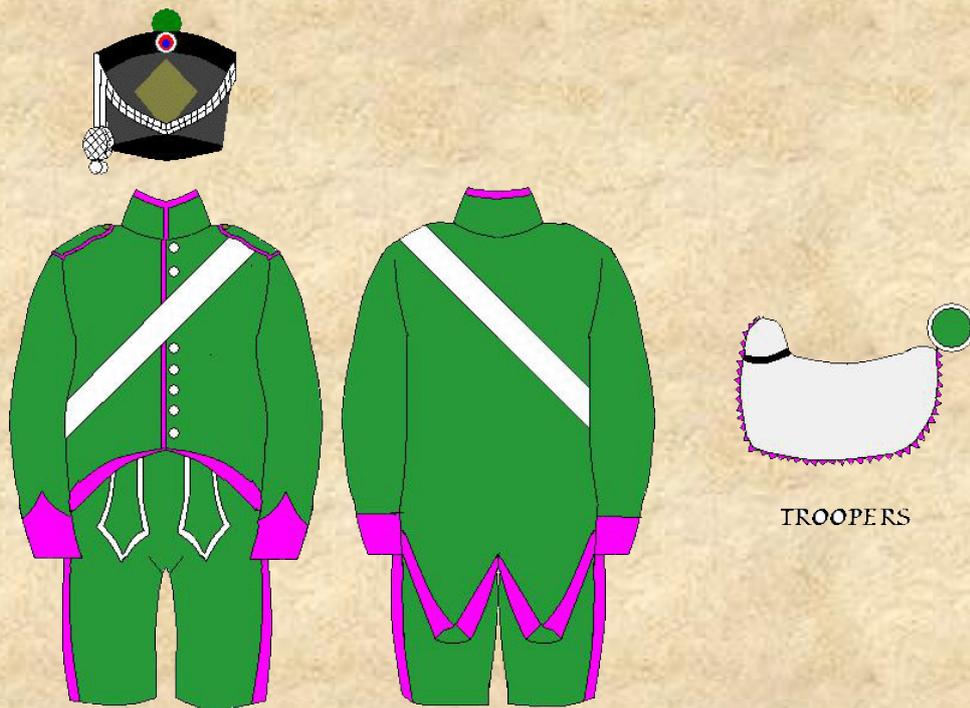
12th Regiment



FRENCH CHASSEURS 1806-1812

A Chasseur regiment consisted of 4 Squadrons, each of 2 companies of 100 men. Each regiment theoretically numbered 800

The coat style varied widely, but was always green. The example depicted shows the single breasted 'Kinski' version. Breeches were green with white braid. The shako was worn from 1806 onwards.



Trumpeters usually wore reversed colours. It is hard to generalise about the uniforms of the Chasseurs as they varied greatly between regiments and over time

Regiments 1, to 3 had scarlet facings.

Regiments 4 to 6 had yellow facings.

Regiments 7 to 9 had pink facings.

Regiments 10 to 12 had crimson facings.

Regiments 13 to 15 had orange facings.

Regiments 16 to 18 had light blue facings

Regiments 19 and 20 had orange facings



Regiments 21 to 24 had red-orange facings

Regiments 25 to 27 had pink-red facings.

Regiment 28 had amaranth facings.

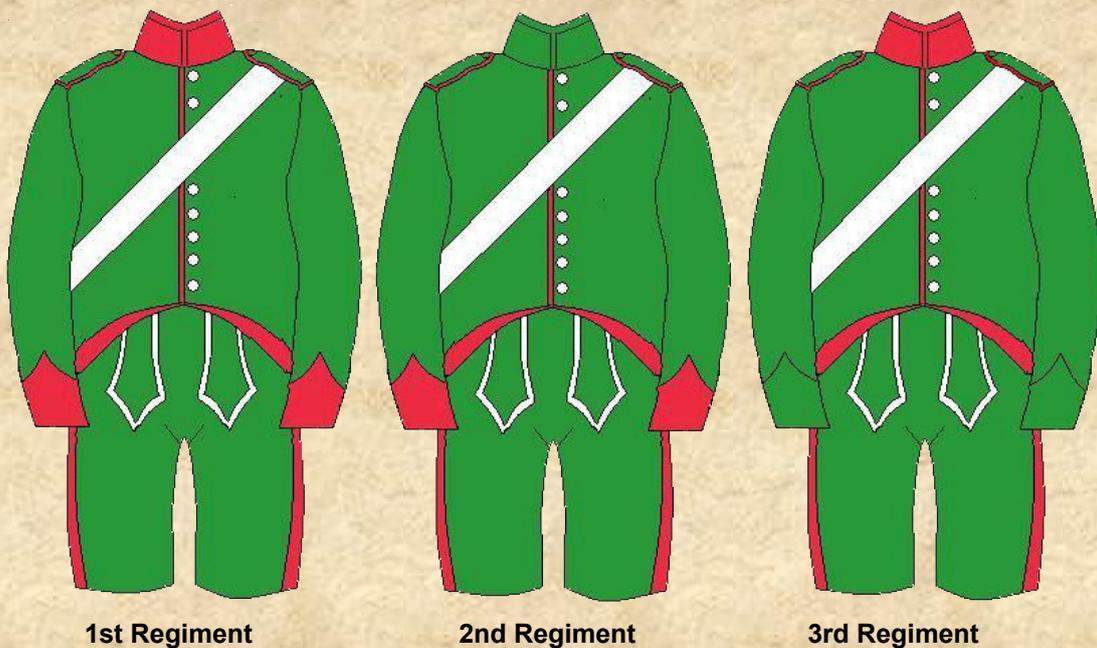
In general, each group of three regiments was distinguished from one another by different combinations of facing colours on the collar and cuffs. The example shown is that of the 1st to 3rd regiments.

The first regiment in the group has scarlet collar and cuffs

The second regiment in the group has a green collar and scarlet cuffs

The third regiment in the group has a scarlet colour and green cuffs.

As with everything to do with the Chasseurs a Cheval, this practice was subject to change and not always followed when changing from one uniform design to another.

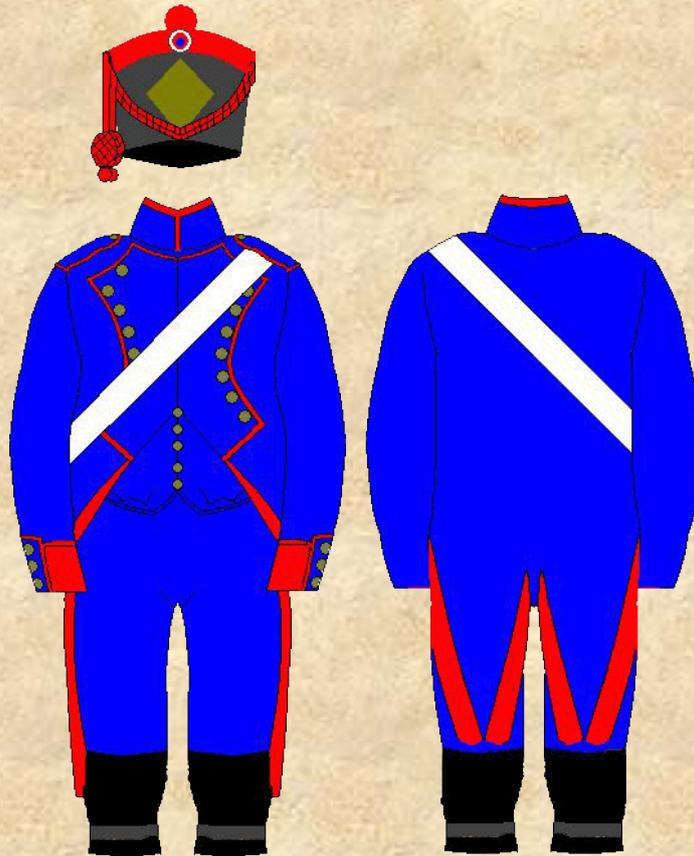


Housings were of white sheepskin edged with the facing colour, valises green with white lace.



FRENCH FOOT ARTILLERY 1806-1812

The uniform was very similar to that of the Line Infantry, namely a blue coat, with blue lapels piped in red. Cuff flaps, collars, shoulder straps and turnbacks were blue, again piped in red. Waistcoat and breeches were blue with black gaiters. The shako had red top band, cords and pom-pom. Equipment belts were white.



Artillery carriages and limbers were olive green.