

Men-at-Arms

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French Revolutionary Infantry 1789–1802



Terry Crowdy • Illustrated by Patrice Courcelle



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Editor's Note

In order to avoid studding the text with too many italics, the titles of French units are given here in Roman type but capitalised in the English manner, e.g. Demi-Brigade d'Infanterie Légère, etc.

FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY INFANTRY 1789-1802

ORGANISATIONAL REFORMS 1789-1800

National Guard Volunteer with *casque*, demonstrating typical campaign dress of the 1790s. The coat is in 'national' colours - blue with red collar, cuffs and cuff-flaps piped white; white lapels and lining, piped red. This man's trousers are shown as light brown with darker stripes.

FROM THE FALL of the Bastille to the start of the Napoleonic Empire, changing political ideologies and the growing needs of a nation at war provoked a series of wide-ranging reforms in the French army. Although a great many changes had been introduced since the end of the Seven Years' War (1756-63), the scale of the reorganisations in the 1790s was unprecedented. During that decade the common infantryman was transformed, from a distrusted instrument of feudal power to a symbol of national pride and citizenship. It was not, however, an easy transition.

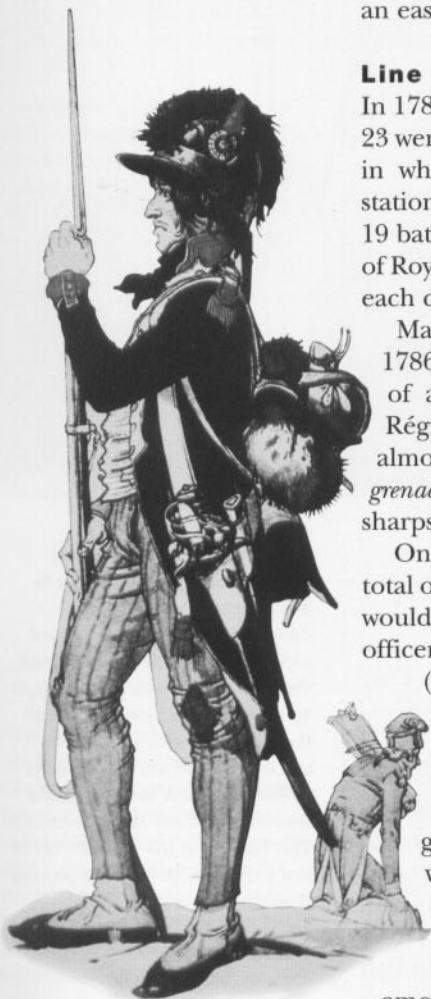
Line infantry in 1789

In 1789 there were 104 infantry regiments, of which 79 were French and 23 were foreign (11 Swiss, eight German, three Irish and one from Liège in what is now Belgium). More than half of these regiments were stationed in garrisons on the northern and north-eastern frontiers, with 19 battalions (just over 10,000 men) overseas in the colonies. The corps of Royal Artillery (ranked 64th) and the Provincial Troops (ranked 97th) each counted as one regiment.

Marshal de Ségur had set the organisation of the line regiments in 1786, with some slight modifications in 1788. Each regiment consisted of an *état-major* (regimental staff) and two battalions, except the Régiment du Roi (King's Regiment) with four. The battalions were almost identical, the only difference being in their élite company: *grenadiers* for the 1st Battalion and *chasseurs* (including six *carabinier* sharpshooters) for the 2nd.

On a war footing, each regiment would increase its strength from a total of 1,202 to 2,642 men. It would also form an auxiliary company that would remain in the depot; this company would include two or three officers, four sergeants and, according to the regulations, 83 *fusiliers* (chosen from among the regiment's malingersers...).

The *Troupes Provinciales* were a militia, consisting of 13 regiments of Royal Grenadiers, 14 provincial regiments and 78 garrison battalions. In wartime these troops constituted a reserve of 75,000 men that could replace the infantry regiments in town garrisons, and if necessary serve in the field. This *Milice* (militia) was recruited in the countryside from among unmarried male peasants between 18-40 years old, selected by a *tirage au sort* (lottery). Although in peacetime the *Milice* was assembled for just a few days annually, militia service was extremely unpopular among the peasantry.



Light infantry in 1789

The light infantry component of the king's army was created in 1784. The six *Chasseur* regiments were each composed of four squadrons of mounted *chasseurs à cheval* and four companies of light infantry, or *chasseurs à pied*. In 1788 the light infantry service was reformed, with 12 battalions of *chasseurs à pied* created and trained for 'services external and in advance' of the king's armies.

In order of seniority, the titles of the Chasseur battalions in 1788 were: Chasseurs Royaux du Dauphiné, Royaux de Provence, Royaux Corses, Corses, Cantabres, d'Auvergne, Bretons, des Vôges, des Cevénnes, du Gévaudan, des Ardennes and lastly du Roussillon. With the exception of Vôges, Cevénnes, Gévaudan and Ardennes, these battalions were recruited regionally; the Italian borders, Corsica and Pyrenees were considered particularly good recruiting grounds for light infantry. The whole branch had a combined strength of 4,500 men.

Each of the 12 battalions was commanded by a lieutenant-colonel, seconded by a major, the état-major being completed by a quartermaster-treasurer, an *adjutant*, surgeon-major, drum-major, 4 musicians, a master-tailor, a master-armourer and a master-cobbler. Each of the four companies had a strength of 6 officers and 102 men, including: a *capitaine-commandant*, a *capitaine en second*, a *lieutenant en premier*, a *lieutenant en second*, 2 *sous-lieutenants* (sub- or second-lieutenants), a sergeant-major, a *fourrier* (company quartermaster), 4 sergeants, 8 corporals, 8 *appointés* (chosen men), 2 drummers and 78 chasseurs. From this number, 12 *carabiniers* were to be selected as the company sharpshooters.

The Household regiments

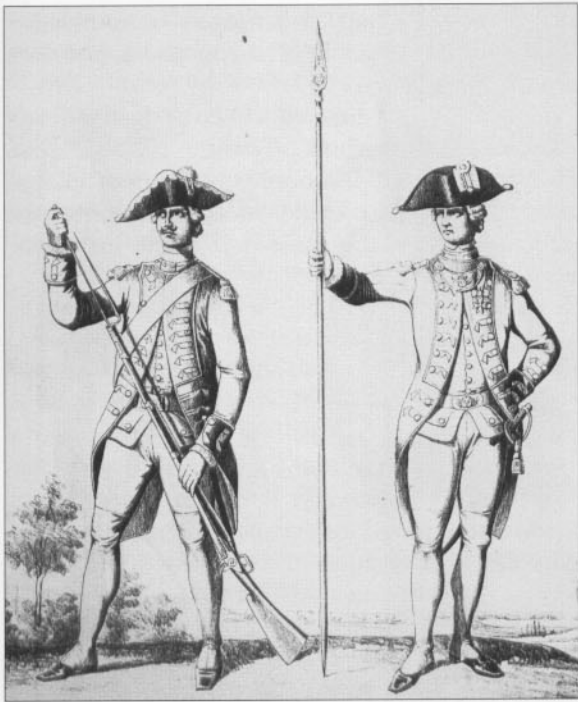
The king's household units, or *Maison Militaire du Roi*, consisted of 8,000 élite troops. These included the *Gardes du Corps du Roi* and two regiments that protected the palace exteriors – the French and Swiss Guards.

The *Gardes Suisses* had been raised on 1 January 1586. On 1 June 1767 the regiment was organised into four battalions and an *état-major* composed of 1 colonel, 1 lieutenant-colonel, 1 major, 4 *aides-major*, 5 *sous-aides-major*, 2 ensigns per battalion, 1 auditor general of Swiss Bands, 1 grand judge, 1 secretary-interpreter, 4 adjudants, 3 chaplains, 1 *maréchal* and 1 *aide-maréchal-des-logis* (responsible for the regiment's horses), 1 doctor, 4 surgeons, 1 drum-major, 1 commissary officer and 8 provosts.

The four battalions each had three fusilier companies, with 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 2 sous-lieutenants, 6 sergeants, 2 fourriers, 12 corporals, 12 appointés, 6 drummers and 132 fusiliers. In addition, each battalion had a company of grenadiers with 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 1 sous-lieutenant,



In common with the Gardes Françaises, the Swiss Guards always maintained four companies of troops on guard at Versailles. Unlike the French Guards, they would remain loyal to their adopted monarch until the end. Hat with white trim; red coat faced dark blue, with white loops and tassels; white smallclothes and accoutrements. The figures in the bottom left of the picture appear to be playing dice on a drumskin.



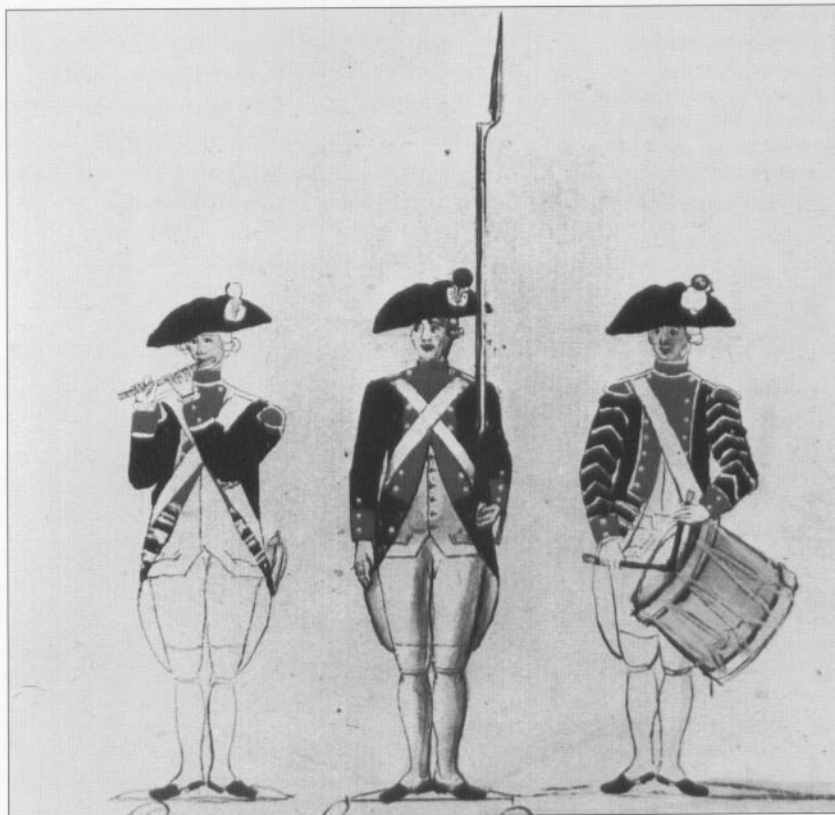
Gardes Françaises fusilier, and officer armed with an *esparton*. All officers in the Guards had been armed with these short pikes since 1690 – although by 1789 their use was usually reserved for parades and grand revues.

2 sergeants, 1 fourrier, 4 corporals, 4 appointés, 1 drummer and 40 grenadiers.

With a history dating back to the 1560s, the *Gardes Françaises* provided the largest contingent within the Household troops, with more than 3,600 men in six battalions. In addition to their palace duties, the Gardes Françaises were also responsible for maintaining public order in Paris. In 1789 the état-major of the Gardes Françaises included a colonel (who usually held the rank of Marshal of France), a lieutenant-colonel, a major, 4 *aide-majors*, 7 *sous-aide-majors*, 2 *sergents d'ordre* (senior NCOs), 4 *commissaires des guerres*, a *maréchal-des-logis* (with the rank of captain), a provost, clerk, secretary, chaplain and surgeon-major.

There were six grenadier and 24 fusilier companies divided equally between the six battalions (one plus four in each). Each grenadier company was 109 men strong, with 2 captains (normally ranking as colonels in the line), 2 lieutenants, 2 sous-lieutenants, a sergeant-major, a first-sergeant, 4 sergeants, a fourrier, 8 corporals, 1 surgeon, 3 drummers and 84 grenadiers. The fusilier companies included 132 officers and men: 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 2 sous-lieutenants, an ensign, a supernumerary

Fifer, fusilier and drummer of the Royal-Hesse Darmstadt, one of the *ancien régime's* eight German regiments: dark blue uniforms faced red and trimmed white. The musician wears the same uniform as the drummer, but without the livery along the length of the sleeves. The drum has a brass case with white hoops.



ensign, a sergeant-major, a first-sergeant, 4 sergeants, a fourrier, a corporal colour-bearer, a gunner corporal, 9 corporals, 3 gunners, a surgeon, 4 drummers and 100 fusiliers.

The Guards band, which had been formed after the Seven Years' War in 1764, was composed of 16 musicians including: 6 clarinetists, 1 flutist, 2 horn players, 1 trumpeter, 3 bassoonists, 1 'serpent' player, 1 bass drummer, and 1 cymbalist. These could be supplemented with around 50 depot instrumentalists, in the most part made up of the regiment's children, or *enfants du corps*.

REVOLUTION

The Gardes Françaises revolt

Between the Battle of Fontenoy (11 May 1745) and 29 October 1788, the Gardes Françaises had been commanded by the Duke de Biron. A Marshal of France, Biron had enjoyed an excellent relationship with the guardsmen whom he called 'his children'. With its officers only occasionally present, Biron had wielded day-to-day control of the regiment through his sergeants, a practice that bred close familiarity with the men.

In the words of one officer, after Biron's death in 1788 he was 'succeeded, but by no means replaced' by the Duke de Châtelet, who earned the reputation of a harsh disciplinarian and a petty tyrant. Convinced that the Guard should be run like a line regiment, Châtelet began stripping the unit of its many privileges, a measure that offended officers and NCOs alike.

In their public security function, guardsmen often came into close contact with the Parisian population. Many guardsmen were native Parisians themselves, with families in the capital, and more still had part-time civilian jobs to supplement their poor army pay. Through this frequent contact, revolutionary agents were able to target the Guard and foment the seeds of revolt.

As political events escalated in the spring and summer of 1789, Châtelet confined the Guard to barracks on 20 June. On 23 June a company of grenadiers sent to reinforce the garrison at Versailles refused to take their bread ration, declaring that the people would provide for them. Elsewhere, two companies of guardsmen absconded from barracks to attend a communal meal with civilians. All over the city, sergeants paying mess bills were turned away and told that money would not be taken from Paris' brave

Members of the Gardes Françaises fraternising with Parisian protesters. The elaborate nature of their uniforms is clearly shown, in particular the turndown collars on their coats: see Plate A. The central figure holds aloft a *bonnet de liberté* on his cane.

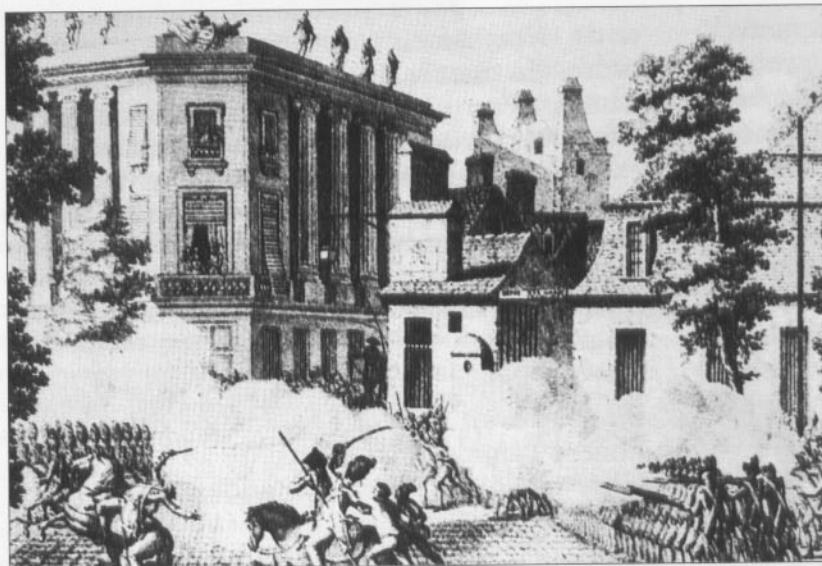
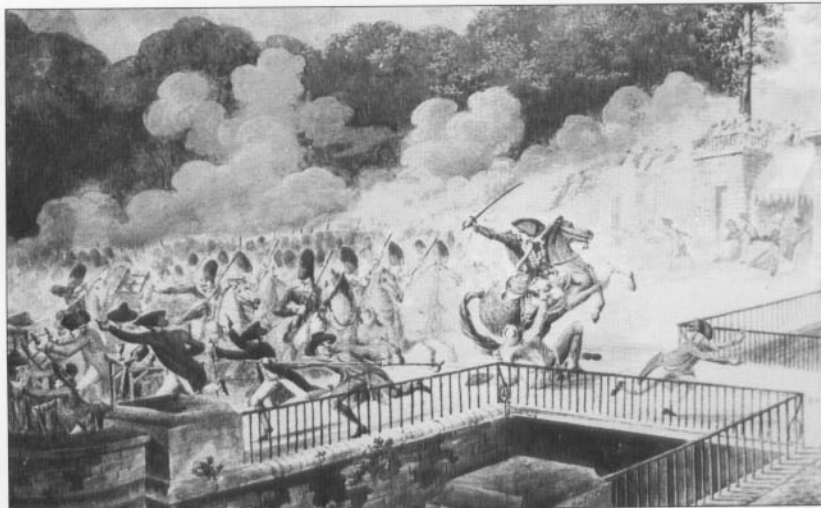


guardsmen. Although these acts were largely symbolic, it was rumoured that two companies of guardsmen had refused an order to open fire on supporters of the newly formed National Assembly.

Attention turned to nine guardsmen imprisoned at the Abbaye Saint-Germain. Petitions alleged that they had been incarcerated for refusing to fire on civilians (though according to one officer, the nine were simply guilty of theft and desertion). On 30 June the men were broken out of prison and lavished with attention at the Palais-Royal, the centre of revolutionary activity in the capital. Châtelet's response was to order the Guard out of Paris to a camp at St Denis, without their muskets. They refused to go. An open letter to Châtelet, purportedly from a Guard grenadier, summed up the growing discontent in the ranks. Although still devoted to his sovereign, the grenadier complained to Châtelet that 'before the death of Marshal Biron, which we now doubly regret, we did not know the treatment that you make us suffer. Do you think you will give us courage by degrading us? You treat brave men like they treat American Negroes.'

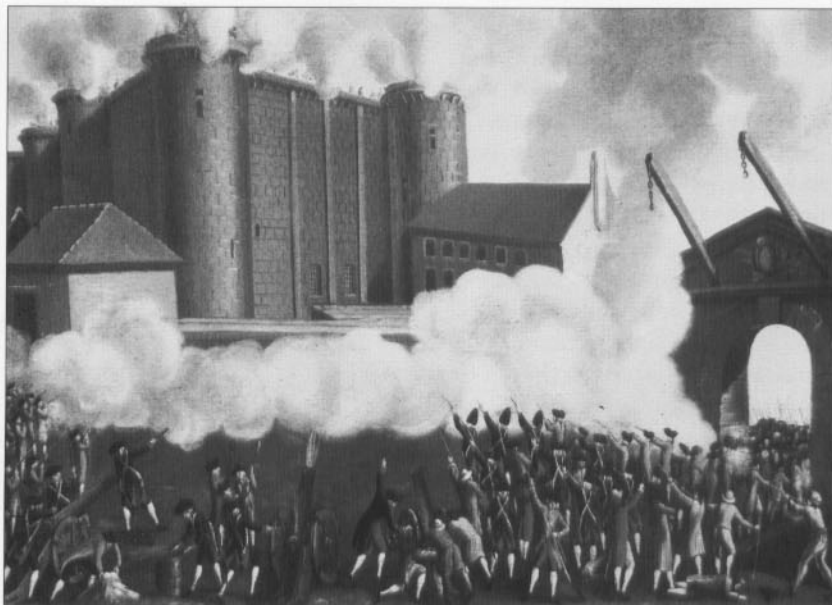
King Louis XVI's response to the growing insubordination was to call in foreign mercenaries under the Duke de Broglie to protect Versailles and surround Paris. Over the coming weeks, as political tensions increased and the foreign troops began taking up position, the solidarity between the Guard and the people of Paris was further cemented.

On 12 July a group of protesters made an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Châtelet, who had lately been obliged to move around the capital discreetly in disguise. With the capital plunged into anarchy, the cavalry regiment Royal-Allemand was sent to break up a protest at the Place Louis XV. In the resulting confusion a guardsman was shot dead. In retaliation, a battalion of the Gardes Françaises marched out of barracks with flags unfurled and drums beating, followed by a mob of angry civilians armed with pitchforks and clubs. In a short exchange



The German mercenary cavalry regiment Royal Allemand charges protesters in the Place Louis XV on 12 July 1789; and (below) in retaliation for the killing of a comrade, a battalion of Guardsmen (right foreground) opens fire on the Royal Allemand outside the Pépinière barracks. The front rank 'charge bayonets' as a defence against the horsemen while the middle and rear ranks fire.

Members of the Gardes Françaises join with armed civilians firing at the defenders of the Bastille. The artillery used was that seized at the Invalides – the Guard artillery did not arrive in time.



they killed two troopers and three horses. Suspecting an imminent attack by foreign troops on the capital, protesters began breaking into gun shops in a bid to seize weapons.

On 13 July, as guardsmen helped plunder weapons from the stores in the Hôtel Royal des Invalides, the *électeurs* of Paris called for the raising of a *Garde Bourgeoise* or Parisian militia to police the streets and confiscate weapons from the protesters. In another gross miscalculation, Châtelet ordered his guardsmen to accompany militiamen on patrol. That night the capital was awash with a volatile combination of armed civilians and wild rumours. Dispersed into small units away from their superiors, the guardsmen were caught up in the whirlwind of revolution.

14 July: the Bastille

On the morning of 14 July, guardsmen in barracks awoke to the rumour that their officers had tried to poison the soup. Then came the news that protesters were going to attack the Bastille. Sous-lieutenant de Maleissye described the chaos as his men went to support them: 'Arriving at barracks, I found the greatest disorder. The soldiers were taking up their weapons and throwing their belongings out of the windows. The gunners were harnessing their pieces... I found all the officers gathered in a first floor room. The soldiers were loading their weapons and appeared to want to fire on us. Two deputies per company came to ask the officers if they wanted to follow them – yes or no? The officers replied: "Our orders are to stay in barracks, we will not budge without new orders.'" Unable to control their men as they wheeled artillery in the direction of the Bastille, the officers fled for the safety of their homes.

The Château de Bastille, with its small garrison under the command of Marquis de Launey, was Louis XVI's last major foothold in the capital. Sensing the importance of this fortress, on 12 July the Duke de Broglie had reinforced the 80 *invalides* (soldier-pensioners) guarding the Bastille with 32 grenadiers commanded by Lieutenant Louis de Fluë of the Swiss Salis-Samade Regiment. On 14 July around 1,000 protesters

gathered outside the Bastille. After the *électeurs* tried to reason with De Launey, the crowd attacked and came under heavy fire from the professional soldiers. On duty at the nearby Hôtel de Ville police post were 36 grenadiers under Sergeant-Major Wargnier and Sergeant la Barthe, with 24 fusiliers under Sergeant de Richemont. After the first wounded began arriving at around 2.30pm, these guardsmen joined in the fray, supported by some light artillery taken from the Hôtel des Invalides.

After deciding not to blow up the fortress' considerable gunpowder stores, De Launey surrendered and lowered the drawbridge at around 5pm. Although only one Invalid had been killed on the ramparts, 98 protesters were killed or mortally wounded, with a further 73 injured. When the drawbridge came down De Launey was seized and dragged through the streets towards the Hôtel de Ville. On his way there he was beaten to death and decapitated, his severed head being placed on a pike and paraded through the streets as a grisly trophy. Dressed in grey working smocks (*sarraux*), the Swiss troops were mistaken for inmates of the prison and were able to make their escape. A massacre of the Invalids was only prevented by the intervention of Gardes Françaises who escorted them back to barracks.

On 15 July 1789, Colonel Châtelet and the entire officer corps of the Gardes Françaises resigned. The king permitted all the guardsmen and deserters who had taken part in the previous day's attack to join the Garde Bourgeoise. This body (which included 45 of the Guard's depot musicians) was officially recognised and placed under the command of the Marquis de Lafayette. On the night of 31 July, the last guardsmen on duty at Versailles deserted the palace and rejoined their comrades in the city, to popular acclaim. The Gardes Françaises were officially disbanded on 31 August 1789.

A burly guardsman defends survivors of the Bastille garrison from the impassioned mob on their way back to barracks. Accounts suggest that it was the Swiss regulars who first opened fire, while the *invalides* were largely responsible for forcing De Launey to lower the drawbridge.

The National Guard, 1789-90

In response to the civil unrest caused by a spate of poor harvests, local militias were formed in the provinces as early as January 1789. That summer a host of bourgeois militias were spontaneously raised across France, both in solidarity with the events in Paris and in reaction to that summer's '*Grande Peur*' ('great fear') – a series of rumours of crop-burning and banditry.

Unlike the *Milice*, service in the *Garde Nationale* – as it was increasingly called – was extremely prestigious. The members had to uniform and equip themselves at their own expense, so it was very much a middle class institution and often commanded by local nobles. This status was affirmed on 12 July 1790, when the National Assembly decreed that only 'active citizens' (those paying the equivalent of three days' labour in taxes) could be members of the Guard. However, after a law of November 1790, those non-active citizens already in service were permitted to stay.



A feature of Guard service was the Festival of the Federation, marking the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille on 14 July. In 1790 National Guard delegates from all over France convened in Paris with great pomp to mark the first anniversary and to reaffirm their civic oath. At this time, the Paris National Guard alone was a significant force, divided into two corps – one of infantry and one of cavalry. The infantry was organised into 60 battalions, each named after one of the capital's 60 districts. Each battalion was composed of five companies of 100 men each. The 60 battalions formed six divisions of ten battalions each, with a company of grenadiers and a company of chasseurs. The cavalry comprised eight companies of 100 *maîtres* (masters) each, forming four squadrons.

The Nancy mutiny, 1790

In a drive to make the army more proficient after the reverses of the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), discipline and conditions of service had become progressively harsher. As conditions worsened, the prospects of advancement diminished. Promotion through the ranks to the officer corps had always been difficult, but after 1781, in a bid to check the growing influence of the middle classes, officer commissions were reserved for the nobility. In the last years of the 1780s the morale and public esteem of the army reached its nadir.

Following the events at the Bastille, and no doubt influenced by the example of the Gardes Françaises, a wave of disobedience gripped the army, severely weakening the king's ability to stem the tide of revolution.

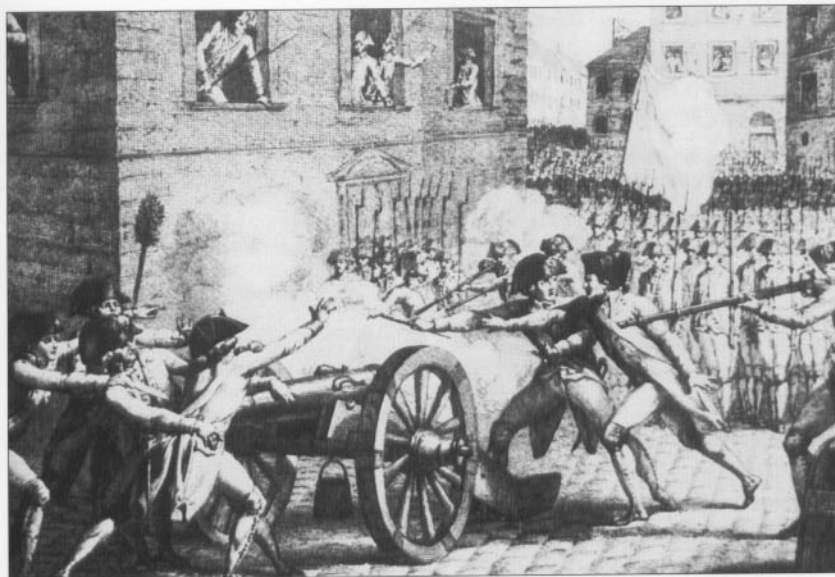
Soldiers began to form links with civilian popular societies and the National Guard to air their grievances. Many soldiers hoped that the Revolution would lead to military reforms, sweeping away the feudal nature of the army, and they were impatient for change.

The year 1790 was marked by an epidemic of mutinies and acts of disobedience by infantry regiments. At Metz the Régiment de Salm-Salm seized the regimental colours and pay chest, while the Régiment de Poitou imprisoned its lieutenant-colonel, and Bassigny drove away its colonel. Royal-Champagne revolted against its officers, and the regiments de Beauce and Normandie in garrison at Brest made pacts with Parisian revolutionaries. The Régiment de Languedoc quit its garrison at Montauban without orders, and the Régiment de Noailles refused the order to replace it. Other acts of insubordination were noted in the regiments de Royal Vaisseaux, La Couronne, Touraine and Vermandois; and there were also revolts among the troops overseas.

In an attempt to restore discipline, the National Assembly voted to abolish political associations in the army. This measure was ignored by the Régiment du Roi, which set up a committee with links to members of the

The National Confederation held to mark the first anniversary of Bastille day in 1790. The large tricolour flag with the ship emblem at the centre belongs to one of the Paris National Guard battalions. The National Guard officer on the right has white lapels, cuffs, cuff-flaps and turnbacks piped red, with a red collar and plume.





Stand-off at the Stainville Gate: during the Nancy mutiny of August 1790, Sous-lieutenant Désilles of the Régiment du Roi tried to prevent mutineers opening fire on government troops by standing in front of a 24-pdr cannon loaded with canister. Désilles was promptly shot four times, and the cannon was fired, killing around 60 government troops standing just 50 paces away.

punished: two soldiers were made to run the gauntlet while their comrades struck them across the back with their ramrods. This act led to the mutiny of both regiments and a cavalry regiment, Mestredes-camp.

Fearing that the mutiny would spread and leave the frontiers defenceless, the government decided to take a firm stand. On 18 August the Marquis de Bouillé marched on Nancy with 4,500 men. On 31 August he received a deputation from the mutineers and demanded that they release their officers, before each handing over four men who would be held accountable for the mutiny. When it appeared that these terms would be accepted, trouble flared up at the Stainville gate between Bouillé's advanced guard and some of the mutineers. Bouillé attacked, and after a three-hour battle with many casualties the mutiny was finally suppressed.

Being a Swiss regiment, Châteaueux's soldiers were dealt severe punishments under their own harsh penal code. The mutineers' ring-leader was broken on the wheel: a barbaric medieval survival, in which the victim was tied to a turning wheel and methodically beaten to death with iron bars. A further 22 were hanged, 41 were sentenced to 30 years as galley slaves, and 74 were imprisoned pending further inquest. Despite the government congratulating Bouillé, popular opinion swung in favour of the mutineers, or *Patriotes* as they were acclaimed by the militant Jacobins who were calling for Bouillé's head. In the meantime, the wave of revolts continued unchecked.

THE REFORMS OF 1791-92

As early as 1 October 1789, a military committee had been formed by the Constitutional Assembly to look at the pressing question of army reform; and on 1 January 1791 a series of reforms were enacted. The rank of officer was opened to all citizens, regardless of birth. Recruitment would henceforth come under the surveillance of local

Nancy National Guard, the Jacobin Party and other like-minded soldiers' committees. Matters came to a head in August 1790, when this committee demanded to audit all the regimental accounts since 1767. They arrested the quartermaster and confined their officers to barracks while they seized the pay chest. Also in garrison at Nancy was a Swiss regiment, Châteaueux, which made similar demands against their officers. This time the officers resisted and had the soldiers' representatives

municipal authorities; a code of military justice was introduced; and the management of regimental finances was reformed.

Regimental structure was also modified. Commanded by a colonel, the regiment would have two battalions each commanded by a lieutenant-colonel. The major and major-en-second were replaced by two *adjutant-majors* with the rank of lieutenant, rising to captain after holding the post for two years. The rank of 'cadet-gentleman' was abolished, and the captains and lieutenants *en-second* were suppressed. The battalions each had eight fusilier companies instead of four, with an élite company of grenadiers; the 2nd Battalion's chasseur company was disbanded.

The most dramatic change saw the regiments losing their traditional titles. Henceforth regiments would be of equal status, numbered according to the existing ranking. The 11 Swiss regiments were exempt from this reform and retained the proprietary name of their colonel. In practice the traditional titles were not forgotten entirely, with the prefix *ci-devant* ('former') often employed before the old title.

The 12 light infantry battalions were reorganised on 1 April 1791. The battalion's état-major included 2 lieutenant-colonels, 1 adjutant-major, 1 quartermaster-treasurer, 1 adjutant, 1 surgeon-major, 1 drum-major, 4 musicians, 1 master-tailor, 1 master-armourer and 1 master-cobbler. The newly appointed adjutant-major was 'responsible to the superior officers for all the details of instruction, manoeuvre, discipline and police of the battalion – chosen from among the lieutenants or sous-lieutenants at the choice of the commanding lieutenant-colonel'. The eight companies each contained a peacetime complement of 1 captain, 1 lieutenant, 1 sous-lieutenant, 1 sergeant-major, 2 sergeants, 1 caporal-fourrier, 4 corporals, 4 appointés, 1 drummer, 6 carabiniers and 4 chasseurs – in all, 59 men.

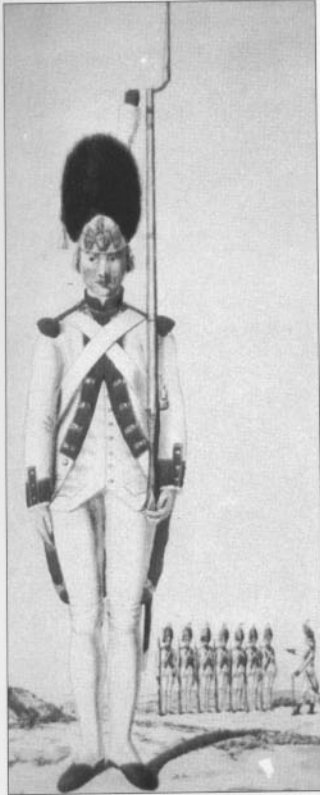
These reforms were enacted between April and May 1791, giving the infantry a combined 'paper' strength of 90,703 men. This figure was broken down into 82 regiments with two battalions (84,378 men), 12 foreign regiments (12,848 men), 1 regiment of Swiss Guards (2,330), 11 Swiss Regiments (11,429) and 12 battalions of light infantry (5,414).

On 20 June 1791 the royal family secretly left Paris, hoping to reach the Luxembourg border and the safety of Austrian troops garrisoned there. Their coach was intercepted and the king was brought back to Paris in disgrace. During the flight, the Régiment de Nassau had protected part of the route; when this regiment later arrived at

Table 1: Former titles of regiments, 1791

1er du Colonel-général	52e de la Fère
2e de Picardie	53e d'Alsace (German)
3e de Piémont	54e Royal Roussillon
4e de Provence	55e de Condé
5e de Navarre	56e de Bourbon
6e d'Armagnac	57e de Beauvoisis
7e de Champagne	58e de Rouergue
8e d'Austrasie	59e de Bourgogne
9e de Normandie	60e Royal la Marine
10e de Neustrie	61e de Vermandois
11e de la Marine	62e de Salm Salm (Ger.)
12e d'Auxerrois	63e Ernest (Swiss)
13e de Bourbonnais	64e Salis Samade (Swiss)
14e de Forès	65e Sonnemberg
15e de Béarn	66e Castella
16e d'Agénois	67e de Languedoc
17e d'Auvergne	68e de Beauce
18e Royal-Auvergne	69e Vigier (Swiss)
19e de Flandre	70e de Médoc
20e de Cambrésis	71e de Vivarais
21e de Guyenne	72e de Vexin
22e de Viennois	73e Royal-Comtois
23e Royal	74e de Beaujolais
24e de Brie	75e de Monsieur
25e de Poitou	76e Châteaueux (Swiss)
26e de Bresse	77e de la Marck (Ger.)
27e Lyonnais	78e de Penthièvre
28e du Maine	79e de Boulonnois
29e Dauphin	80e d'Angoumois
30e du Perche	81e de Conti
31e d'Aunis	82e de Saintonge
32e de Bassigny	83e de Foix
33e de Touraine	84e de Rohan-Soubise
34e d'Angoulême	85e Diesbach (Swiss)
35e d'Aquitaine	86e Courten (Swiss)
36e d'Anjou	87e de Dillon (Irish)
37e Maréchal de Turenne	88e de Berwick (Irish)
38e de Dauphiné	89e Royal Suédois (Ger.)
39e de l'Isle de France	90e de Chartres
40e de Soissonnais	91e de Barrois
41e de la Reine	92e de Walsh (Irish)
42e du Limousin	93e d'Enghien
43e Royal-Vaisseux	94e Royal Hesse-Darmstad (Ger.)
44e d'Orléans	95e Salis Grisons (Swiss)
45e de la Couronne	96e de Nassau (Ger.)
46e de Bretagne	97e de Steiner (Swiss)
47e de Lorraine	98e de Bouillon (Ger.)
48e d'Artois	99e Royal Deux-Ponts (Ger.)
49e de Vintimille	100e Reinach (Swiss)
50e de Hainaut	101e Royal Liégeois (Liège)
51e de la Sarre	

OPPOSITE **A National Guard Volunteer making a tearful departure for the frontier in 1791, from what is obviously a well-to-do bourgeois home.**



Grenadier of the Régiment du Colonel-Général (later, 1er). The red lapels, collar and cuffs are piped and edged in yellow; the plume on the bearskin is white with a red tip.

Sedan to form its garrison, the inhabitants refused to receive them. The citizens of Sarrelouis went a stage further, threatening to open fire with canister if the regiment came within range of the city's guns. When it finally arrived in Metz, a duel between a Nassau grenadier and one from the Régiment de Condé developed into a pitched battle between the two units. Finally a number of Frenchmen serving in the regiment quit the ranks and cut off their uniform buttons in disgust, declaring that they no longer wanted to serve in a regiment classed as foreign.

Following these events, the 12 foreign regiments were assimilated into the French army proper on 21 July 1791. However, the 11 Swiss regiments continued to retain their traditional titles and codes of law – on paper, at least. In reality the Swiss regiments barely existed by then, as large numbers of officers and men had already left France.

The National Guard replaces the Militia

With the prospect of war increasing daily, the government debated how the army would attain an additional 274 recruits per battalion to reach a wartime footing. With a marked increase in the desertion rate, and the poor conditions of service publicised by the mutinies and revolts, the increasingly unpopular army was unable to meet even its peacetime complement. Politicians were reluctant to resort to the traditional solution of calling up the Militia, which was hated by the peasantry. A new solution needed to be found.

On 28 January 1791, Alexandre Lameth called for a force of 100,000 reservists who would sign up for three years, living and working at home, but required to report for service during wartime. This idea was adopted by the government, but proved somewhat utopian, as only 25,000 men enlisted. Despite this failure, the Milice was disbanded on 4 March 1791. Although the measure was a popular one, France was now left without a contingency plan for calling up reserves.

On 11–13 June 1791 the National Assembly decided to use the National Guard to provide a new wartime reserve, holding about 5 per cent of their number ready for service on the frontiers. On 21 June the National Assembly learned of the king's attempt to flee France and his capture at Varennes. Fearing foreign intervention in support of Louis XVI, on 3 July a decree ordered the mobilisation of 45 battalions (26,000 men) of *Gardes Nationales Volontaires*. On 28 July a new decree called for this figure to be increased to 97,000 men. By 17 August there were up to 101,000 volunteers from the National Guard ready for service.

On 4 August 1791 a decree set the organisation of the National Guardsmen who volunteered to defend the frontiers. They were divided by the *Commissaires des Départements* into corps of 568 men, each destined to form a battalion. Each battalion would be composed of nine 63-man companies of fusiliers and one company of





Soldier from the Troupes Provinciales in the 1791 uniform, and (right) a man from a Chasseur battalion, in the 1786 light infantry uniform with a 1791 casque. See Plate D; the coat is green faced and lined yellow, and note also the short gaiters cut to resemble hussar boots.



RIGHT National Guard Volunteer officer swearing an oath on the French Constitution, which opens with the 'declaration of the rights of man and the citizen'. The officer's white lapels and turnbacks and blue pocket flaps are piped in red; his red collar, cuffs and cuff-flaps are piped in white. A tuft in vertical sections of red, blue and white rises from the tricolour cockade on his *chapeau*.

grenadiers. Each company was to have 1 captain, 1 lieutenant, 1 sous-lieutenant, 1 sergeant-major (who also performed the role of fourrier), 2 sergeants, 4 corporals, 52 men and a drummer. The battalion staff consisted of 2 lieutenant-colonels, 1 adjudant-major, 1 adjudant-sous-officier, 1 quarter-master and 1 armourer. The total strength of each battalion was therefore 574 men. Each company was able to elect its own officers and NCOs by a majority vote, and the battalion elected its lieutenant-colonels and quartermaster in the same way. However, the adjudant-major and the adjudant-sous-officier responsible for discipline and policing the battalion were taken from line regiments.

The remainder of the National Guard was also reorganised that September. Drawn from districts and cantons (towns with over 50,000 souls were classed as districts), each battalion would have four companies of fusiliers and a company of 80 grenadiers. The effective strength of the fusilier companies was not defined, but each company would be made up of men from the nearest cantons or the same quarters of a city. When united, eight to ten battalions from the same district would form a *légion*. Each canton would also raise a company of *vétérans* aged over 60, and a company of young citizens below the age of 18. Each district would raise two companies of mounted *Gardes Nationales à Cheval*; and where artillery was available in towns, two guns would be attached to each battalion.

The 1792 reforms

On 23 January 1792, after much debate in the National Assembly, it was decided that despite the regular army being short of 51,000 men, the National Guard Volunteers would not act directly as their reserve. To the government's dismay, disobedience had continued long after Nancy. The Régiment d'Auvergne had driven away its officers and refused to obey any commands. The 17th and 18th regiments had openly insulted their officers; while the 2nd Battalion of the 68th Regiment (ex-Beauce) 'gave proofs of its insubordination' on the way back from the Americas.

With their authority badly undermined by rebellious troops, the aristocratic officers had begun to quit the army in droves. On 25 July 1791 the National Assembly had been forced to issue a general amnesty for all acts of indiscipline in order to draw a line under the mutinies. In future, force would be used against regiments in revolt. The death sentence would apply to officers and NCOs, while seditious soldiers would be sentenced to 20 years in irons. Even this measure did not prevent further acts of insubordination, causing almost all the officers of the 40th Regiment (ex-Soissonnais) to abandon their posts on 26 January 1792. The politicians feared that the disease gripping the regulars would contaminate the National Guard battalions. Therefore even a motion calling for regular and volunteer battalions to be brigaded together *en lieu* of being fully amalgamated was rejected; the volunteer battalions would fight as units in their own right.

By the time war was declared against the threatening Austro-Prussian alliance on 20 April 1792, there were a total of 105 line regiments. In addition to the 101 regiments existing from the reforms of early 1791, the 102nd, 103rd and 104th regiments were formed in September 1791 from elements of the Paris National Guard, mostly former Gardes Françaises. The 105th was formed from the debris of the Régiment du Roi, which had been disbanded after the infamous Nancy mutiny on 12 December 1790. At the time there were also several colonial regiments: 106th (Le Cap Français), 107th (Pondichéry, in India), 108th (Île de France), 109th (Guadeloupe et Martinique), 110th (Port au Prince) and 111th (Ile de Bourbon).

There were also 14 battalions of Chasseurs in French service at the opening of hostilities – the two additional battalions had been raised on 3 August 1791 from the Paris National Guard, again mainly from ex-Gardes Françaises. On 24 April 1792 the Chasseur battalions were increased to nine companies each when the carabinier sections were formed into a distinct élite company.

The Swiss Guards finally fell victim to the Revolution when they attempted to defend the



Chaos at the Tuileries, 10 August 1792, after the Swiss Guard fire on rioters. Red-coated guardsmen trade fire with National Guard from the palace windows; close to the building, on the right, pike-wielding citizens can be seen entering the fray.

National Guard grenadiers escort King Louis XVI and Queen Marie-Antoinette from the Tuileries to safety on 10 August 1792.



Tuileries Palace on 10 August 1792 from an angry mob calling for the abolition of the monarchy. As the king sought shelter at the National Assembly, around 900 Swiss Guards opened fire on the protesters, who stormed the palace and massacred the defenders, mutilating and burning their bodies. As a result of this event the remaining elements of the Swiss regiments were disbanded on 20 August. The Assembly suspended the monarchy; and France was proclaimed a republic on 22 September. Of the surviving Swiss guardsmen, around 300 joined the equally ill-fated Légion Germanique (see Plate E3).

Volunteers and irregulars

In response to the declaration of war the government called up another 45 battalions of volunteers on 5 May. Additionally, the strength of each of the volunteer battalions raised in 1791 was increased from 574 to 800 men. On 20 July, after *la Patrie* had been declared in danger, the order went out for a further 42 battalions to be raised. This call was answered enthusiastically, and more than 275 new battalions were raised. In addition there were 31 reserve battalions, 8 coastal defence battalions and a host of other *ad hoc* battalions, not to mention 5,000 troops provided by the colonies.

On 8 June, 20,000 *fédérés* (federates) were called up from units of the National Guard across the country to defend the capital from attack. These men were supposed to be the élite of the regional National Guard, and were housed in a camp to the north of Paris. However, on 30 July, 500 *fédérés* from Marseilles appeared – allegedly with some escaped jailbirds from the prisons of Genoa and Livorno in their ranks – and events soon took a turn for the worse. Along with their Breton comrades, the *fédérés*

from Marseilles took part in the storm of the Tuileries and the massacre of Swiss Guards on 10 August, and also in the infamous ‘September massacres’ of priests and suspected Royalists. When some of the *fédérés* were eventually sent to the front, they took advantage of a retreat to pillage magazines at Châlons and to assassinate the lieutenant-colonel of the 72e Régiment de Ligne. They then fell back on Paris, spreading panic as they went, and denouncing the generals whom they accused of betraying them.

More successful was the government’s bid to increase the number of light troops in the field. On 17 April 1792 the National Assembly decreed the formation of six ‘legions’ dedicated for service in the advanced guard. The government intended that each of these legions was to be composed of two battalions of light infantry, a regiment of mounted Chasseurs à cheval and a *division* of 30 specialist pioneers. The foot battalions would have eight companies of chasseurs and one of carabiniers, the latter made up of the best marksmen.

In addition to this, on 28 May 1792 three more *légions* were ordered for service with the armies of

Volunteers from the 5e Bataillon de l’Ain. Their coats are casually half unfastened, and they wear civilian cravats instead of regulation military collars.



Generals Luckner, Lafayette and Kellermann. On 7 July a fourth was created at Antibes, comprising 18 light infantry companies and four companies of light horse. This formation, first titled the Légion du Midi, was soon renamed the Légion des Alpes.

On 13 July the Légion Franche Étranger came into service with 2,822 men, this title succeeding that of the Légion Batave, which had been organised by General Rochambeau on 1 May. On the same day the Légion du Rhin was raised, followed by the Légion des Allobroges created at Grenoble on 13 August. On 4 September a Légion Germanique was formed, swiftly followed by the Légion Américain on the 7th, the Légion des Pyrénées on the 16th and the Légion de Rosenthal on 21 September in Alsace.

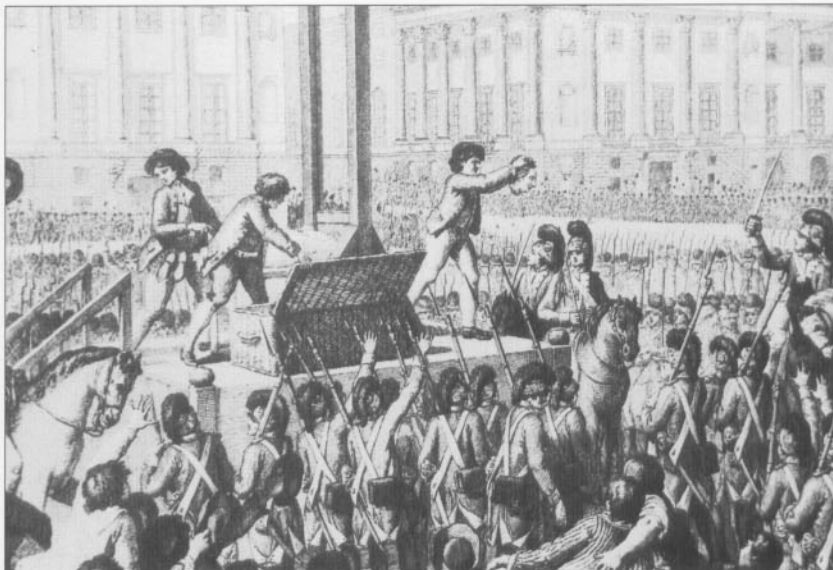
To provide reinforcements for these legions, 54 *compagnies franches* ('free companies') were created on 28 May. The appeal for volunteers to join these 150-man independent units was so popular that by the end of September 1792 no fewer than 140 companies were in existence. Some of these united to form complete battalions, such as the Corps Franc de Monk formed on 8 September, the Bataillon des Chasseurs Belges formed at Lille, and the Bataillon des Chasseurs de la Meuse formed at Sedan. By 20 September, the irregular troops had a theoretical strength of 12 legions (17 battalions with 20,528 men), 8 free battalions (4,800 men), 1 free corps (400 men) and 140 free companies (19,760 men), giving an overall total of 45,488 men. By the end of the year, this figure had risen to 73,616 men.

1793: the levée, and Dubois-Crancé's restructuring plan

In the winter of 1792/93 the victorious French army in Belgium found itself in a precarious position. There were shortages of 30,000 pairs of shoes, 25,000 blankets and enough camping equipment for 40,000 men. Bread, meat and forage had become scarce, and there were frequent clashes with the Belgian population who bore the brunt of the soldiers' frustrations. The misery and hardship hit the volunteer battalions very hard. Under the terms of their engagement the volunteers could resign from the army on 1 December providing that they had given two months' notice to their captain. Therefore, having seen off the immediate threat of invasion, in December 1792 as



Examples of the special uniforms worn by irregular light infantry. The figure on the right, in green with black accoutrements, is armed with a rifled carbine – he carries a mallet suspended from his cross belt for hammering balls down the barrel. The principal tactic of the legions was to take the war into enemy territory, devastating supply trains and mounting lightning raids.



The execution of Louis XVI on 21 January 1793. The revolutionary vogue of wearing short jackets 'à la Carmagnole', as demonstrated by the executioners, would have an influence on military fashion.

volunteers. The regular regiments had still been unable to recruit enough men, let alone replace the casualties sustained on campaign. Worryingly, infantrymen continued to desert their units in order to join volunteer battalions where the men enjoyed better conditions and a higher rate of pay than the regulars.

After executing King Louis XVI on 21 January 1793, Republican France found itself with enemies on every border. The understrength armies faced the combined might of Austria, Prussia, the German states, Holland, England, Spain, Portugal, Sardinia, Naples and the Vatican States. To defend the frontiers against these enemies the government calculated that it would need 502,800 men.

On 7 February 1793, Edmond Dubois-Crancé presented a Defence Committee report to the National Convention that included a proposed restructuring of the army. He declared that on 1 December the line army was 34,122 men short of its complement, while the average strength of volunteer battalions was only 559 men per battalion rather than the 800 decreed. This calculation was made before the 60,000 volunteers had gone home; after the harsh winter, Dubois-Crancé calculated that the line battalions would now be 40,000 men short. As grenadier companies were almost always detached from their parent unit, Dubois Crancé feared that some battalions would go into action critically depleted. He explained that it was only with battalions over 750 men strong that the tactics and manoeuvres of the day could successfully be realised.

To complete the battalions, Dubois-Crancé noted that the government was preparing a levy of 300,000 men. If all the existing battalions were successfully brought up to strength, Dubois-Crancé pointed out that the army would have over 800,000 men under arms. Unless the number of battalions was reduced by half, the cost of maintaining such an army would send government expenditure spiralling completely out of control. He argued that the line battalions were the most complete, the men better trained and more ready to fulfil 'the obligations of service' than in the volunteer battalions. It was widely

many as 60,000 volunteers headed for home.

On 13 December 1792 the Convention was forced to act, declaring 'to all citizen soldiers that the Republic still has need of their services and invites them not to quit their flags'. To reinforce this plea town halls were asked to publish lists, which in effect would shame the volunteers into returning to their units.

The regular army, although it had acquitted itself well in action, fared little better than the

recognised that in most cases the volunteer battalions had much to learn from the regular officers, quartermasters and sergeant-majors, who were well versed in accounting and running efficient councils of administration. In order that the regulars could 'give examples of instruction and discipline' to the volunteers, he proposed incorporating two battalions of volunteers into one battalion of regulars, creating an entirely new corps called a *demi-brigade*.

To present this concept in a way that was palatable to even the most extreme members of the government, Dubois-Crancé emphasised that his proposal would effectively spell the end of several centuries of Royalist regimental tradition, and create a new national army enthused with the patriotic spirit of the volunteers.

The draft organisation called for 198 demi-brigades, each with 2,437 men and six 4-pounder cannon, giving the line army a total strength of 477,622 men with 1,176 field guns. The 1er Demi-Brigade would be created from the 1st Battalion of the former 1er Régiment and two battalions of volunteers (the nearest in the field, and if possible from troops of the same *Département*). The 2e Demi-Brigade would be created around the 2nd Battalion, former 1er Régiment, the third around the 1st Battalion, former 2e Régiment, and so on. Despite some opposition, on 21 February Dubois-Crancé's arguments prevailed, and the amalgamation was agreed in principle. However, with a new campaign season fast approaching and the country surrounded by enemies, the Committee of Public Safety postponed the implementation of the reforms.

On 24 February the government announced the levy of 300,000 bachelors or childless widowers between the ages of 18 and 40 to bring the existing battalions up to full strength. This levy employed the somewhat contradictory principle of 'voluntary conscription', which meant that in areas where the number of volunteers did not meet the quotas, the authorities would resort to drawing lots. This process was an unfortunate reminder of the despised selection process used by the old *Milice*, and led to widespread resentment and even civil war in western France. It was little surprise that the levy failed to meet its target, with just 150,000 men coming forward, of whom many were found unfit for service.

As the requisitioned men were collected, trained and formed into provisional battalions during summer 1793, the government clarified the future composition of the new demi-brigades on 12 August. Each would have an *état-major* composed of 1 *chef de brigade*, 3 *chefs de bataillon* (battalion commanders), 1 quartermaster-treasurer, 1 adjudant-major, 1 surgeon-major and 2 aides, 3 adjudant-sous-officiers, 1 drum-major, 1 drum-corporal, 8 musicians (including a leader), 1 master-tailor, 1 master-cobbler, and 3 master-armourers. Each of the three battalions would have one company of grenadiers and eight of fusiliers. Each company would have 1 captain, 1 lieutenant, 1 sous-lieutenant, 1 sergeant-major,

The massive influx of volunteers in 1792 stretched uniform supply to the limits. Once in the field there were few means of troops being re-uniformed, forcing many to adopt items of civilian clothing. In addition to the wide variety of footwear and hats displayed here, the figures show how hair was increasingly left undressed.





Armed with a pike, 'the true weapon of the sovereign people', a *sans-culotte* sits with a grenadier regular and a volunteer. The pikeman wears a Phrygian cap, the symbol of liberty. Although an excellent propaganda tool, pikes were never seriously employed as a battlefield weapon.

step of declaring a *levée en masse*. 'From this moment, until the enemy has been pursued from the territory of the Republic, all Frenchmen are in a state of permanent requisition for military service.' All unmarried, childless males between 18 and 25 years were ordered to the frontiers with very few exceptions, bringing at least an additional 300,000 men into service.

1793-94: AMALGAMATION

On 22 November 1793, the Convention decreed that the new levies would only be used to complete the strength of infantry battalions formed before 1 March that year. The newly elected officers and NCOs of the provisional battalions were to be incorporated into the existing cadres 'without regard to the rank they have occupied provisionally', and the standard practice of volunteers electing their officers was henceforth discontinued. Anyone not conforming to this law would be denounced as a *suspect*, arrested and sentenced accordingly. With France terrorised by the guillotine, the government clarified their intent on 21 December, declaring that anyone refusing to be incorporated would be deemed a conspirator and punished by death.

As the process of incorporation continued, the Committee of Public Safety ordered the immediate *embrigadement* of volunteer and ex-royal army battalions on 8 January 1794. In addition to the 198 demi-brigades *de bataille*, 15 provisional demi-brigades were ordered, to be composed of the surplus volunteer battalions. On 28 January, Dubois-Crancé obtained a separate decree ordering the amalgamation of the Chasseur battalions and *corps francs*. During 1793 the government had increased the number of Chasseur battalions from 14 to 22. The newcomers were four battalions formed in Corsica on 5 February 1793; the 19e Légère, created from the Corps de Dutruy on 26 February; the 20e Légère, created on 4 March from the Chasseurs du Midi; the 21e Légère, from

2 sergeants, 1 caporal-fourrier, 4 corporals, 4 appointés, 2 drummers, and either 48 grenadiers or 74 fusiliers. Finally, to ensure that the parent battalions were broken up completely, the 27 companies were reallocated by seniority of the captain as follows:

1st Bn: 1st grenadier captain, 1st, 13th, 4th, 16th, 7th, 19th, 10th, 22nd fusilier captains

2nd Bn: 2nd grenadier captain, 2nd, 14th, 5th, 17th, 8th, 20th, 11th, 23rd fusilier captains

3rd Bn: 3rd grenadier captain, 3rd, 15th, 6th, 18th, 9th, 21st, 12th, 24th fusilier captains.

This pattern ensured that the most experienced captains were evenly distributed throughout the three battalions. Once reorganised, company strength would then be equalised, causing integration among even the lowest ranks.

In a second attempt to complete the battalions before the amalgamation commenced, on 23 August 1793 the Convention took the draconian

the Corps de Muller on 3 May; and finally the 22e Légère, from the Infanterie de Rosenthal on 4 June 1793.

By August 1793 the process of amalgamating the volunteer 'free companies' had begun, with 14 Légions (34 battalions), 49 free battalions and 175 free companies, totalling 87,048 men. The amalgamation of these battalions with the Chasseur battalions started after 21 January 1794. By 1 May, just nine legions, 55 free battalions and 74 free companies had yet to be incorporated.

On 25 April 1794 each demi-brigade was ordered to form an artillery company of 2 captains, 3 lieutenants, 6 sous-officiers (sergeants), 1 caporal-fourrier, 5 corporals, 75 gunners and 1 drummer, serving six 4-pdr cannon. This measure was not extended to the Light infantry demi-brigades, which would remain without artillery.

At the start of the 1794 campaign season France's 11 field armies had reached the unprecedented strength of 750,000 men. Modern studies have revealed that of this number around 37 per cent had not seen action; 15 per cent were the recruits of 1793 who had seen some action; 23 per cent were volunteers from 1792; 5 per cent were volunteers from 1791; and 18 per cent, soldiers of the former royal army. It is estimated that in total only 5 per cent of soldiers in 1794 had seen any military service before the Revolution in 1789.

Further reorganisations, 1796-99

Inevitably, such a huge wartime reorganisation did not go entirely smoothly. In total 205 *demi-brigades de bataille* and 35 *demi-brigades légère* were formed in the period up to October 1795, but many of these came nowhere near reaching full strength, and many battalions avoided the reforms altogether. With the end of the National Convention on 26 October 1795, the incoming government of five Directors decided to rationalise these discrepancies by what amounted to a second amalgamation.

On 1 November 1795, it ordered that the line infantry would comprise 323,000 men organised into 100 *demi-brigades de ligne*, each composed of three battalions, these being subdivided into eight companies of fusiliers and one of grenadiers. On 8 January 1796, 30 *demi-brigades d'infanterie légère* totalling 96,960 men were ordered to be formed.

On 13 January 1796 the generals in the field received orders to begin the reorganisation of their infantry into a set number of the new demi-brigades:

Army of the Sambre and Meuse: 21 line & 5 light demi-brigades

Army of the West: 16 line & 6 light demi-brigades

Army of the Alps: 4 line & 4 light demi-brigades

Army of the Interior: 14 line & 2 light demi-brigades

Army of the Rhine and Moselle: 21 line & 5 light demi-brigades

A regular in white, in this case piped light blue, and a National Guardsman, in blue with white lapels piped red and red collar and cuffs. The *embrigadement* of the former royal army, the National Guard Volunteers and the levies of 1793 created a national army, with a single organisation, pay scale, code of discipline and uniform.





A mounted infantry officer (his sleeve has been ripped open at the seam) gives directions to his bedraggled men: see Plates F & G. The laden figure with the *bonnet de police* is depicted wearing sky-blue socks with black stripes, and red shoe-tongues. His companion has his coat open over black small-clothes, and wears a crimson scarf loosely about his neck.

Army of Italy: 12 line & 6 light demi-brigades
 Army of the North: 12 line & 2 light demi-brigades

The reconstituted demi-brigades then drew lots at random to find out which number they would receive (e.g., the 131e Demi-Brigade became the 1er DB on 13 February 1796). On 18 January the number of line demi-brigades was increased to 110. In October 1798 the auxiliary companies were re-formed, each forming a depot under the command of the *capitaine d'habillement* (clothing officer). A final change to the demi-brigades came on 9 September 1799, fixing the number of line units at 100. Each demi-brigade totalled 3,231 men, in three battalions, with an additional six-company garrison battalion; each of the three 'war' battalions was composed of eight companies of fusiliers and one of grenadiers. The *état-major* included a chef de brigade, 4 chefs de bataillons, 4 adjudants-majors, 4 adjudants sous-officiers, 1 quarter-master, 1 *vaguemestre* (post-master), 3 medical officers, 1 drum-major, 1 drum-corporal, 8 musicians, 4 master-craftsmen (1 master-tailor, 1 master-cobbler, 1 master-gaiter maker, and 1 master-armourer). Each company had a captain, a lieutenant, a sous-lieutenant, a sergeant-major, 4 sergeants, a fourrier, 8 corporals, 2 drummers and 104 fusiliers or 64 grenadiers.

1799: the Auxiliary Battalions

With the establishment of the army apparently resolved, only the question of recruitment remained. On 18 August 1798 discussion began on how to introduce a fair and egalitarian system; and on 5 September, General Jourdan's conscription law was adopted. This declared that all Frenchmen had a duty to protect the homeland, and that men between the ages of 18 and 30 years could volunteer for a term of service, of four years in peacetime or for the duration of a war. However, all young men between the ages of 20 and 25 were now liable for military conscription. The potential conscripts were divided into five annual classes. The first class included all those aged 20 on the first day of the Republican calendar (1 Vendémiaire, 22 September); the second class, those aged 21, and so on.

All those eligible for service would be entered onto a register in their local town hall. A ballot would draw the number required for military service, with a portion of men kept on a reserve list to replace those failing the medical examination. The first ballot would be drawn from the youngest class – the 20-year-olds; if more men were required, each class would be balloted in turn until the required number was attained. On 28 September 1798 the government called up 200,000 conscripts.

The following year opened badly for France, in particular in the Italian theatre of operations. The government's response was to call up all five classes of conscripts; but when deciding how best to employ them, the authorities displayed a moth-like tendency to repeat past

mistakes. Rather than using the conscripts to reinforce existing demi-brigades, on 28 June 1799 it was decided as a matter of urgency that they would be used to form *bataillons auxiliaires* that would operate independently from the demi-brigades.

As each Département collected its conscripts, it was to equip, arm and uniform them before forming them into battalions. Each battalion would have 1 grenadier, 1 chasseur and 8 fusilier companies. The grenadiers would be formed of the tallest men, while the chasseurs were selected 'from among those judged most proper for that service'. Each company would have a captain, a lieutenant, a sous-lieutenant, 1 sergent-major, 4 sergeants, 1 caporal-fourrier, 8 corporals, 2 drummers and 152 men. Each battalion staff included 1 chef de bataillon, 1 quartermaster-treasurer, 1 adjudant-major, 1 surgeon-major, 1 adjudant-sous-officier, 1 drum-major, 1 master-tailor, 1 master-cobbler and 1 master-armourer.

The battalions were to have a regional identity. Each would have a flag in the national colours with the name of their Département on it, and the number of the battalion, if more than one had been formed. Wherever possible the government would choose local officers from retired or supernumerary officers wanting to return to action. Half of the NCOs would be selected from retired soldiers and the remainder from the conscripts themselves. Any surplus conscripts were to be formed into companies and pooled together with troops from neighbouring Départements. The western Départements affected by the civil war (Sarthe, Orne, Mayenne, Ille-et-Vilaine, Morbihan, Loire-Inférieure and Maine-et-Loire) were ordered to form 'free companies' instead of auxiliary battalions. These companies were ordered to guard the coasts, man the batteries and maintain the peace.

When Dubois-Crancé was named Minister of War on 13 September 1799 he found the army in a deplorable state. Soldiers in the field were practically naked, shoeless, without weapons, bread or pay, and were living on local requisitions. The factories were deserted, the hospitals devoid of everything, and corruption was rife. Dubois-Crancé was amazed that a musket could be bought and sold as many as five times before being placed in the hands of a soldier – many people were profiteering from this war. Having argued since 1789 for the establishment of a single national army, he saw the auxiliary battalions simply as a source of reinforcements for the demi-brigades. However, the law restricted him from directly incorporating these battalions into existing units, as had happened after the *levée en masse* in 1793. To get round this he told the Directorate that he wanted to attach the conscript battalions to the demi-brigades to form their

The Consular Period after 1799 saw something of a return to pre-Revolutionary smartness: see Plate H. This chasseur has powdered hair and wears a neck stock. He carries his *fusil* at '*l'arme à volonté*', the favoured grip of battlefield skirmishers.



fourth 'garrison' battalion. He would then have all the infirm and wounded soldiers transferred to the depot, while the conscripts were transferred into the three field battalions, retaining their existing ranks.

Dubois-Crancé did not stay in office long enough to see his plans bear fruit. Following General Bonaparte's 'Brumaire' *coup d'état*, General Berthier took over the War Ministry on 11 November 1799. With power now centralised in Bonaparte's hands, Berthier was able quickly to force through military reforms with an authority that Dubois-Crancé had never enjoyed. The auxiliary battalions were incorporated into the demi-brigades by the law of 24 January 1800, a measure that became effective on 20 February.

An example of the auxiliary battalions is recorded in the memoirs of Captain Coignet. Conscripted in 1799, Coignet joined the Bataillon Auxiliaire de Seine-et-Marne formed on 3 September at Fontainebleau, which found itself incorporated into the 96e Demi-Brigade after the Brumaire coup. Although the grenadiers and fusiliers went into the 96e DB, the chasseur company was separated and sent to the 9e Légère. The records of the 9e Légère show that along with the chasseurs of the Seine-et-Marne they received the chasseurs from the battalions of the Seine (formed 15 August 1799), Seine-et-Oise (29 August), Eure-et-Loire (8 December), Oise (29 September), Nord (4 August) and Moselle (10 September 1799).

UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT, 1791-1802

In the course of the reforms that followed the Seven Years' War, infantry uniforms had to a large extent been standardised. The coat adopted for French infantry regiments went through several changes, but the royal order of 21 February 1779 adopted a white, long-tailed coat. The 1779 pattern was further clarified by the detailed uniform regulations of 1 October 1786. This last regulation provided the basis for the uniform worn by Line infantry for most of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

Line infantry uniforms, 1791

On 1 April 1791 a new instruction made slight modifications to the design of the coat. To identify the individual regiments, seven distinctive colours were allocated, one each to seven series of 12 regiments. Each regiment in the series was distinguished by a combination of distinctive colour, button type and pocket flap positioning. The seven distinctive colours were applied in various combinations to the lapels, collar and cuff flap or cuffs (see Table 2). If the distinctive colour was not applied, then the material was white edged with piping in the appropriate colour.

The coat had white turnbacks decorated with a *fleur de lys* (lily flower) in the distinctive colour, and with a grenade for the grenadiers. The lapels were decorated on each side with seven small buttons placed, except the highest, at equal distance. There were three large buttons beneath the right lapel that were purely decorative. The three-pointed pocket flaps were also purely ornamental, placed horizontally or vertically, piped in the distinctive colour and decorated with three

(continued on page 33)



SUMMER 1789

1: Militiaman, Gardes Bourgeoises

2: Parisian rioter

3: Grenadier, Gardes Françaises



NATIONAL GUARDS, 1789-91

- 1: Marquis de Lafayette**
- 2: Grenadier officer, Paris Guard**
- 3: Fusilier, Paris National Guard**
- 4: Standard-bearer, Paris National Guard**



F. Loucheffé

LINE INFANTRY, 1791

1: Fusilier, 70e Régiment

2: Field officer, 2e Régiment

3: Drummer, 35e Régiment

LIGHT INFANTRY, 1791

1: Chasseur-Carabinier, 8e Bataillon

2: Corporal, 7e Bataillon

3: Captain, 1er Bataillon

4: Chasseur-Carabinier, 11e Bataillon

3



VOLUNTEERS AND IRREGULARS

1: National Guard Volunteer, 1791

2: Chasseur, Légion Allobroges, 1793

3: Chasseur, Légion Germanique, 1793

4: Chasseur, Compagnie Franche de l'Égalité, 1793



F. Loucaffe



REPUBLICAN DEMI-BRIGADES

1a, 1b, 1c: Typical flags -
see commentary for details

2: Drummer

3: Grenadier, 1794-96

F. Loupelle



DIRECTORY PERIOD

1: Fusilier, Vendée, 1794

2: Standard-bearer, Light Infantry

3: Chasseur, 1er Légion des Francs, 1797

4: Chasseur, 2e Légion de Francs; Wales, 1797

F. Loupcelle



1

2

3

CONSULATE PERIOD
1: Infantry conscript, 1800
2: Line infantry officer, 1800
3: Carabinier, 9e Légère, 1800

large uniform buttons. The cuff had a cuff-flap with three buttonholes fastened by three small uniform buttons. The fusilier shoulder straps were made from the same material as the coat, piped in the distinctive colour; they were sewn onto the shoulder near the seam of the sleeve and fixed nearer the collar by a small button. Since 17 March 1788, grenadiers had worn red, fringed epaulettes. The large or small uniform buttons carried the number of the regiment, surrounded by a clasp. The drummers wore a blue coat with chevrons in the royal livery; musicians wore the same uniform as drummers but without the livery.

In addition to the white coat, infantrymen wore a sleeved white waistcoat made from the same material. The short collar and cuffs of this waistcoat were in the regiment's distinctive colour. The uniform was completed with white breeches and long over-the-knee gaiters, held in place by garter buckles worn below the knee.

The infantry adopted a *casque* made from a leather skullcap and visor with a thin brass band to protect the head from sabre cuts. For decoration the *casque* had a bearskin crest and a calfskin headband painted to look like leopardskin. A leather plume-holder held a white plume tipped in the distinctive colour for parades, or a round woollen *houppes* (tuft) for day-to-day service. A tricolour cockade (ordered on 27 May 1790 and introduced during June 1790) was fixed below the plume holder. The *bonnet de police* (forage cap) was cut *à la dragonne*, i.e. with a long triangular *flamme*, and a rounded shield on the front bearing a *fleur de lys* in the distinctive colour.

Foreign regiments

Until they were integrated into the French army proper (see Table 3), the uniform distinctions of the 12 foreign regiments were applied as follows:
 53e (Alsace): Sky-blue coat; scarlet lapels, collar, cuff-flaps and cuffs; white buttons, vertical pockets.

62e (Salm Salm): Sky-blue coat, collar and cuff-flaps; scarlet lapels and cuffs; white buttons, vertical pockets.

77e (La Marck): Sky-blue coat; scarlet lapels, collar, cuff-flaps and cuffs; white buttons, vertical pockets.

87e (Dillon): Red coat; black lapels, collar, cuff-flaps and cuffs; yellow buttons, vertical pockets.

88e (Berwick): Red coat, collar and cuff-flaps; black lapels and cuffs; yellow buttons, vertical pockets.

89e (Royal Suédois): Sky-blue coat; scarlet lapels, collar, cuff-flaps and cuffs; white buttons, vertical pockets.

92e (Walsh): Red coat and cuffs; black lapels, collar and cuff-flaps; yellow buttons, horizontal pockets.

94e (Hesse-Darmstadt): Sky-blue coat, collar and cuff-flaps; scarlet lapels and cuffs; white buttons, horizontal pockets.

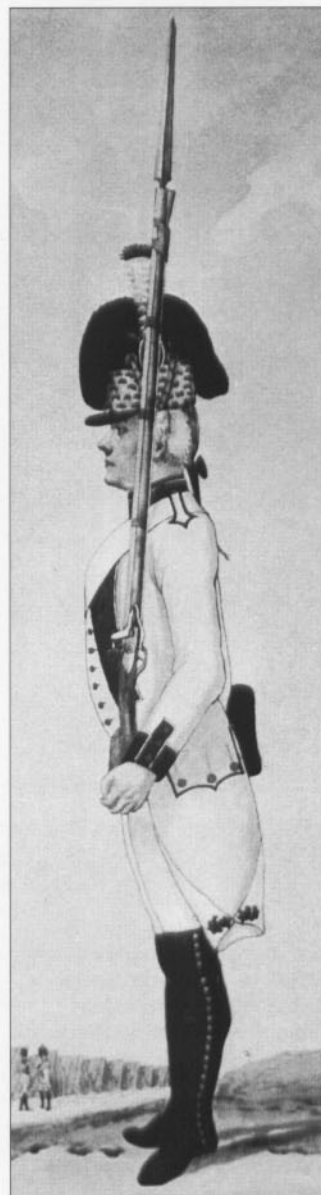
96e (Nassau): Sky-blue coat and cuffs; scarlet lapels, collar and cuff-flaps; white buttons, horizontal pockets.

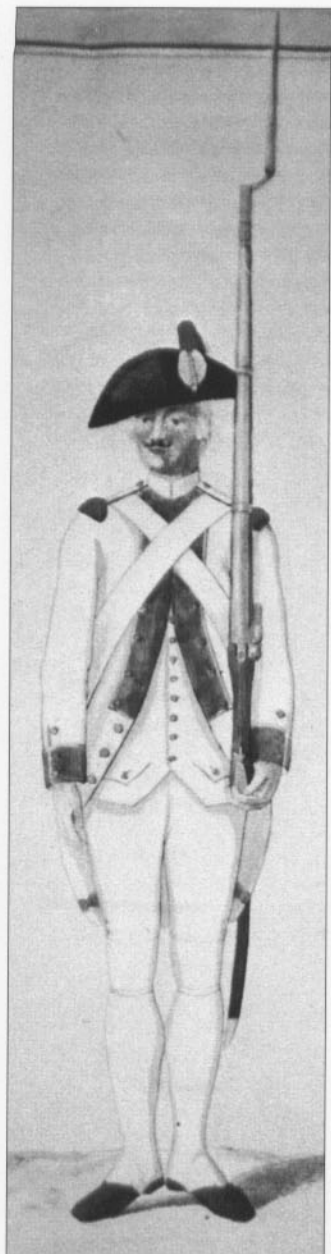
98e (Bouillon): Sky-blue coat; black lapels, collar, cuff-flaps and cuffs; white buttons, horizontal pockets.

99e (Royal Deux-Ponts): Sky-blue coat, collar and cuff-flaps; black lapels and black cuffs; white buttons, horizontal pockets.

101e (Royal Liégeois): Sky-blue coat and cuffs; black lapels, collar and cuff-flaps; white buttons, horizontal pockets.

An infantryman in the 1791 uniform: see Plate C. In this case the distinctive colour of this series of regiments faces the lapels, collar, cuffs and cuff-flaps, piped in white, while the horizontal pockets and 'duck-foot' shoulder straps are piped in the facing colour. The tip of the white plume and the lily flower turnback ornaments are also in the facing colour; the uniform buttons are yellow; the gaiters are black, and the *casque* has the turban painted to resemble leopardskin.





A grenadier wearing the *chapeau*, 1791, but identified by his red fringed epaulettes; the hat tuft is also red. The three buttons showing below his right lapel were retained from the 1786 pattern coat, but the corresponding buttonholes below the left lapel were omitted. The buttons on the sleeved waistcoat are the same type as those on the cuffs and lapels. The facing colour has not been applied to the collar, which remains white.

The 1 April 1791 regulation stipulated that the Swiss regiments should attach red cuff-flaps to their coats, but it appears that this alteration never took place. The few Swiss troops remaining in France at this time would have continued to wear their 1786 uniforms, including the *chapeau*. These coats had white turnbacks, with piping on the shoulder straps and pocket flaps, and the turnback ornaments in the same colour as the lapel. The distinctions were:

63e Ernest: Black lapels and cuffs; red collar; white piping; horizontal pockets.

64e Salis Samade: Lemon-yellow lapels and cuffs; red collar; horizontal pockets.

65e Sonnemberg: Sky-blue collar, lapels and cuffs; vertical pockets.

66e Castella: Blue collar, lapels and cuffs; white piping; horizontal pockets.

69e Vigier: Chamois lapels and cuffs; red collar; horizontal pockets.

76e Châteauvieux: Yellow lapels and cuffs; red collar; white piping; horizontal pockets.

85e Diesbach: Sky-blue lapels, collar and cuffs; white piping; horizontal pockets.

86e Courten: Blue lapels and cuffs; red collar; white piping; horizontal pockets.

95e Salis Grisons: Blue lapels and cuffs; red collar; horizontal pockets.

97e Steiner: Blue lapels, collar and cuffs; horizontal pockets.

100e Reinach: White lapels, collar and cuffs; horizontal pockets.

All the uniform buttons of the Swiss regiments were white metal without any stamped numbers.

National Guard uniforms

The coat worn by the National Guard in Paris was similar in cut to the standard infantry coat (*habit*), but instead of being white it was *bleu-de-roi* ('king's blue'), lined white, with a red collar, and white lapels and cuffs piped in red. The yellow metal buttons were stamped with a ship (an ancient badge of the city), fleur-de-lys symbols and the number of the division and battalion. The tail turnbacks were decorated with a red cloth badge in the shape of a ship.

Although the majority of National Guard units copied the Paris guards' *bleu-de-roi* coat there were some local variations recorded in 1790. In Castelnaudry (Languedoc), for instance, the Guard adopted a white-collared red coat, with sky-blue cuffs and lapels. In Delles a dark green coat with chamois collar, cuffs, waistcoat and breeches were worn; while a sky-blue *habit* with scarlet cuffs was worn at Lure in the Franche-Compté. The Guard at Marsal in Lorraine also wore a green coat; but the citizen guardsmen of Altkirch in Alsace had no uniform at all, and wore their civilian clothes at drill exercises and on parade.

In September 1791 the uniform in the national colours was standardised, but not made obligatory for those in the countryside. The company of *vétérans* wore this standard uniform, distinguished with a white sash and a '*chapeau à la Henri IV*'. The Veterans were armed with an *esponon*, a half-pike 6 to 7 feet long, as traditionally carried by officers in the royal army.

The 1791 'national uniform'

When the units of National Guard Volunteers were sent to the frontier they wore the uniform decreed by the National Assembly on 27 July 1791. The coat or *habit national* was made in the same blue cloth as the Paris National Guard, with scarlet cuffs and collar piped white, white lapels and turnbacks piped scarlet. The volunteers would wear a three-cornered *chapeau*, although some units were issued infantry *casques*.

On 21 September 1792, all symbols of royalty were abolished by the new Republican government. The fleur-de-lys badges were removed, as was the king's livery lace worn by drummers. On 29 August 1793 it was decided that all troops would adopt the volunteers' *habit national*. Despite officers being warned that they would be cashiered if they disobeyed this command, the new uniform was by no means adopted immediately. Laval, the commander of the 55e Régiment, recorded on 19 November 1793: 'Since the month of July last, this regiment is perhaps the only to change from white, that colour devoted to the aristocracy, to the tricolour uniform. This regiment is entirely dressed in the National Colours.'

The next most significant change to the Line's uniform came as the casque gradually fell out of favour and was replaced by the volunteer-style chapeau. Casques continued to be manufactured as late as 1795, and it was only in 1799 that their use was finally prohibited.

The Auxiliary Battalions of conscripts wore a uniform identical to the Line demi-brigades. Each man was to be provided with a habit, waistcoat, two pairs of breeches, a bonnet de police, chapeau, three shirts, two white collars, one black collar, two pairs of shoes, three pairs of gaiters (one white canvas, one grey canvas, one black-tarred), two handkerchiefs, two pairs of socks, one collar buckle, one pair of shoe buckles, two pairs of garter buckles, two cockades, a button pull, an awl, a ball extractor, a vent pick, a screwdriver, a hide haversack and a cloth 'distribution sack' (ration bag).

Light infantry uniforms, 1784-1801

The provisional regulation of 10 August 1784 described a uniform for both foot and mounted Chasseurs almost identical to that worn by the infantry since the regulation of 21 February 1779.

The long-tailed coat or *habit* was of dark green *drap* (woollen cloth), with a chamois *veste* (sleeved waistcoat) and *culottes* (breeches). Each regiment had a distinctive colour for the coat lapels and cuffs. The white metal buttons were stamped with a *cors-de-chasse* (hunting horn) insignia, with the regimental number in the centre. An epaulette with a white fringe and background, with a lozenge design in the regimental colour, was worn on the left shoulder only. On the right shoulder

Table 2: Regimental distinctions, 1 April 1791

Black	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Violet	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Pink	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
Sky blue	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
Crimson	49	50	51	52	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61
Scarlet	67	68	70	71	72	73	74	75	78	79	80	81
Royal Blue	82	83	84	90	91	93	102					
Lapels	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Collar	X		X	X		X	X		X	X		X
Cuffs	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Cuff flaps	X		X	X		X	X		X	X		X
Pockets	Vertical						Horizontal					
Button colour	Yellow			White			Yellow			White		

Regiments could be identified by distinctive combinations of coloured features on the coat, and the number displayed on the buttons. For example, the 16e Régiment had lapels, collar, cuff-flaps and cuffs in the unit's distinctive colour (violet), with the false pockets cut vertically; its uniform buttons were white metal. Where the distinctive colour was absent (e.g. from the cuffs of the 3e Régiment, etc.), the material was white, piped in the facing colour. (Note: The 1er and 2e were exceptions to this series, having long pockets.)

Uniform modifications of 15 January 1792, taking into account the incorporation of the 12 foreign regiments in mid-1791. The first four series (regiments 1-48) remained as shown in Table 2.

Table 3: Uniform modifications, 15 January 1792

Crimson	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
Scarlet	61	62	67	68	70	71	72	73	74	75	77	78
Royal blue	79	80	81	82	83	84	87	88	89	90	91	92
Dark green	93	94	96	98	99	101	102	103	104	105	106	107
Light green	108	109	110	111								
Lapels	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Collar	X		X	X		X	X		X	X		X
Cuffs	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X	
Cuff flaps	X		X	X		X	X		X	X		X
Pockets	Vertical						Horizontal					
Button colour	Yellow			White			Yellow			White		

was a fringeless *contre-epaulette* of the same dark green cloth as the coat. The regimental distinctions were as follows:

Chasseurs des Alpes: Scarlet; button number '1'

Chasseurs des Pyrénées: Crimson; '2'

Chasseurs des Vosges: Lemon-yellow; '3'

Chasseurs des Cévennes: Chamois; '4'

Chasseurs du Gévaudan: Pale orange; '5'

Chasseurs des Ardennes: Dark green; '6'

The men wore a white neck collar and a pair of long infantry-style gaiters, which were worn with garters and buckles. They had a pair of white gaiters for parade and two black pairs for other duties. The headdress was a felt bicorn hat, decorated with a tuft of green wool worn over a white cockade. Their equipment consisted of a *giberne* (cartridge box) on a strap and a belt for carrying the sabre, which was worn by both NCOs and chasseurs alike. The uniform was completed with a calfskin haversack and a cloth 'distribution sack'. As in Line units, the drummers wore a blue habit with cuffs and lapels in the regiment's distinctive colour; the sleeves and edgings were decorated with the king's livery.

As a portent of the Revolutionary egalitarian spirit to come, the ordinance stated that 'the clothing of the officers shall be perfectly uniform to that of the chasseurs of their regiment and shall not differ other than by the quality of the cloths, as well as by that of the buttons which shall be silvered'.

On 1 October 1786 a far more detailed regulation replaced the 1784 provisions. The implementation of this regulation was slow, since coats,

for example, had a life span of three years. The most noticeable changes were that the breeches were replaced with a trouser-style garment cut just 4 inches above the ankle. The external seams of this *pantalon* were open from the base up to the level where the garter strap had previously been worn, and were closed by six small buttons. The colour of the trousers and waistcoat was changed from chamois to dark green. The new gaiters were entirely different from the infantry model: they were cut to resemble hussar boots, and were closed by ten small buttons, with a double button-hole at the top which fastened the gaiter to one of the trouser leg buttons.

The habit was lined in the distinctive colour of the regiment and the turnbacks were decorated with a *cors-de-chasse* emblem made from the same material as the coat. The neck collar was black. The men's hair was to be tied into a *queue* (pigtail) covered with a ribbon of black wool, trimmed by a leather rosette. The hair around the face was to be cut in the style called '*à l'avant-garde*', i.e. short at the sides and like a brush on top.

The headgear was a felt bicorn hat trimmed with a border of black wool 9 *lignes* (2cm) wide. In time of war an iron skull-piece was to be fitted on the outside of the hat for protection against sword

Two young National Guard grenadiers in a Paris café. Their red plumes are tipped in blue.



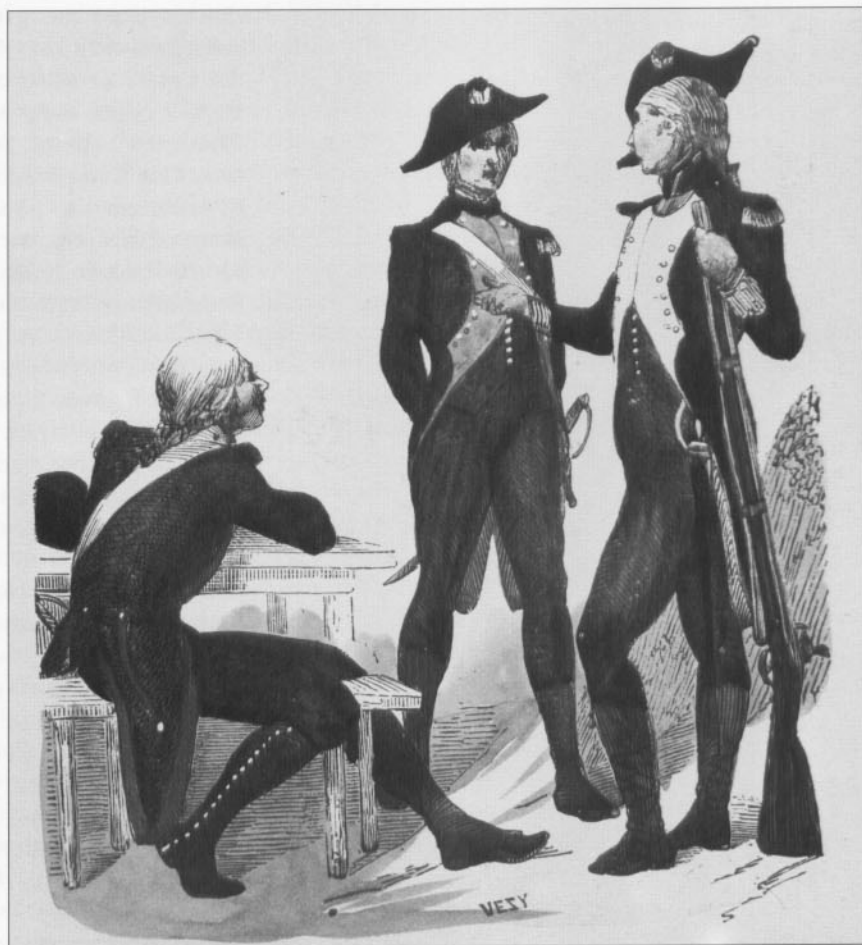
cuts. The men would also be issued with a *bonnet de police* cut in the dragoon style and made from the scraps of material from old coats. A flat, round, woollen 'lentil' worn above the cockade would distinguish each company: 1st scarlet, 2nd sky-blue, 3rd pink, 4th daffodil-yellow, and the *état-major*, white.

The officers' uniform again differed only in the quality of cloth used, which the regulation stated should be 'from Elboeuf or manufactures of identical type'. The officers' hats were bordered with a black silk tape, 5 *lignes* (c11mm) wide, without plumes or feathers, absolutely identical to those of the *chasseurs*; they were trimmed above the cockade with a goat-hair lentil in the colour assigned to their company. *Chasseur* officers wore green cloaks, with the collar edged by a silver lace 1 *pouce* (2.7cm) wide, faced in serge of the regiment's distinctive colour. In place of gaiters the officers now wore hussar-style Hungarian boots. In common with the Line infantry, *Chasseur* officers were ordered to carry a musket and a sabre as well as a *giberne* (cartridge box), but the inspection records of the *Chasseurs des Cévennes* show that this practice was ignored by that unit at least. The sabre was decorated with a knot or cord mixed with threads of gold and 'fire coloured' silk. When on duty, all *Chasseur à pied* officers, including those of the *état-major*, were to wear a gilded copper *hausse-col* (gorget) ornamented with a silver medallion in the middle bearing the king's arms.

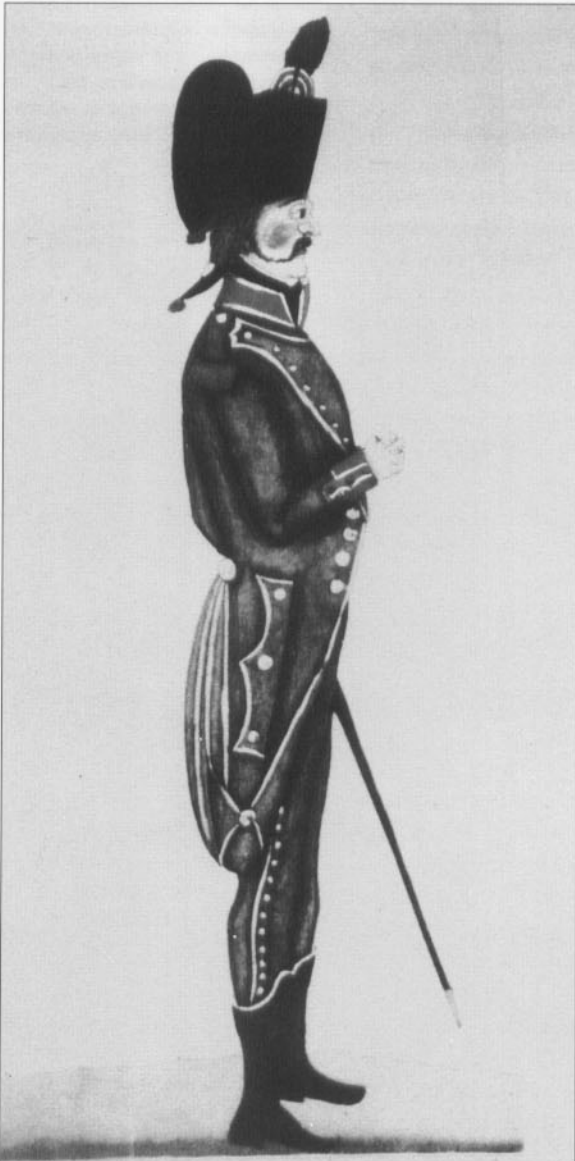
The ordinance of 1 November 1789 introduced some additional modifications. The green habit had white piping and yellow metal buttons. The coat's turnbacks and the edging on the shoulder straps were in the distinctive colour. The *veste* and *culottes* were white, as in the Line infantry. Drummers wore a habit in the distinctive colour, edged in the king's livery. Then, on 27 May 1790, the *Chasseur* battalions adopted the tricolour cockade.

On 24 April 1791 came another provisional instruction on the *Chasseur* uniform. Each battalion had white metal buttons with the relevant number inside a stamped *cor-de-chasse*. Twelve small uniform buttons fastened the

Green-uniformed *Chasseurs à pied* in 1787. The figure on the right is an officer, identified by the gilded gorget (*hausse-col*) below his collar. He carries his *épée* from a belt underneath the waistcoat and wears boots instead of short gaiters. Like their men, *ancien régime* infantry officers were officially required to carry muskets.



Although this light infantry figure appears to be an off-duty officer, he is shown wearing a simple chasseur's green epaulettes on his blue coat with red collar, cuffs and cuff-flaps piped white. The three-pointed cuff flaps and four buttons below the lapel are a variation on the standard uniform design. The picture clearly shows the vertical false tail pockets; and demonstrates the fashionable light cavalry-style practice of wearing button-seamed trousers.



waistcoat. The cuff received a flap with three buttons. The distinctions were as follows:

- 1e: Scarlet, applied to collar, cuffs and cuff-flaps.
- 2e: Scarlet, cuffs only
- 3e: Scarlet, collar and cuff-flaps only
- 4e: Daffodil-yellow, collar, cuffs and cuff-flaps
- 5e: Daffodil-yellow, cuffs only
- 6e: Daffodil-yellow, collar and cuff-flaps only
- 7e: Pink, collar, cuffs and cuff-flaps
- 8e: Pink, cuffs only
- 9e: Pink, collar and cuff-flaps only
- 10e: Crimson, collar, cuffs and cuff-flaps
- 11e: Crimson, cuffs only
- 12e: Crimson, collar and cuff-flaps only

When the 13th and 14th battalions were created, they formed a fifth series:

- 13e: White, collar, cuffs and cuff-flaps
- 14e: White, cuffs only.

Like the Line infantry, the Chasseurs adopted the leather casque headgear, with a white plume tipped in the distinctive colour. The carabiniers adopted scarlet epaulettes and a bearskin, slightly shorter than the grenadiers without plaque or visor, but with a scarlet plume. In ordinary dress the carabiniers wore the felt chapeau. Officers wore a green overcoat and, in keeping with the Chasseurs à cheval, probably wore a green *surtout* jacket for non-parade dress.

Although the government provided the main items of uniform, each man would be responsible for the following items, paying through deductions from his wages: 3 *chemises* (shirts), 1 white collar, 1 black collar, 1 collar buckle, 2 handkerchiefs, 2 pairs of cotton hose, 1 pair of grey woollen hose, 2 pairs of shoes, 1 pair of shoe buckles, 1 pair of garter buckles, 1 pair of grey canvas gaiters, 1 pair of black gaiters faced with canvas, 1 night cap, 1 bag with powder and puff, 2 combs, 1 clothes brush, 2 shoe brushes, 1 copper brush, 1 *trousse garnie* (a bag with a razor, leather, yarn and needles), 1 linen bag for 'distributions', 1 hide haversack, 2 cockades, 1 queue (pigtail) ribbon, 1 button pull, 1 awl, 1 *tire-bourre* (musket ball extractor), 1 vent pick, 1 screwdriver and 1 account book.

The law of 21 February 1793 stated that the future light infantry demi-brigades would be dressed in a blue coat of infantry cut. The National Convention's decree of 7 September 1793 clarified this law. The coat would have pointed lapels, a scarlet collar and cuff-flaps, white piping and yellow metal buttons. This

uniform also reaffirmed the light infantry's traditional affinity with light cavalry fashions by readopting Hungarian-style breeches and half-gaiters. The uniform was completed by a green leather casque.

Although the decree originally called for a long-tailed coat, another style became increasingly common. This short-tailed coat had first become the vogue among chasseurs in the volunteer companies, *légions* and free corps formed since 1792. Its design was based on the *Carmagnole* jacket, which had originated in the town of Carmagnola in Piedmont, Italy. The working classes wore this garment with very short turnbacks rather than the traditional, cumbersome long-tailed coat. This style, and its cousin the *veste à la Marseillaise*, became fashionable amongst French Jacobin revolutionaries, and so may have been adopted by the free-wheeling irregulars as both a patriotic gesture and a means of further distinguishing themselves from the regular army. Perhaps more significantly, short-tailed coats had already been adopted by light troops of a number of rival nations. The British had cut down their red coats during the American Revolution. German Jägers also adopted the shorter coat, being influenced by the costume of Hungarian/Balkan irregulars. Brabant rebels in Austrian-ruled Belgium also adopted this 'Hungarian' coat in 1790; and after losing Belgium to the French, the Austrians equipped their own local *Freikorps* with captured Brabant coats.¹

Despite the order to adopt the blue national uniform, it would seem that the old green coats did not disappear immediately. Due to supply problems and the three-year lifespan of a coat, a number of green coats would have remained in circulation well into 1794. There was also perhaps a more practical reason for light infantry not wanting to lose their green coats. A report by the War Committee to the National Convention on 2 March 1794 stated that the nature of service of light infantry (i.e. advanced-guard missions) did not lend itself to wearing a uniform in the national colours. The report suggested a different uniform for chasseurs, consisting of a natural green *Carmagnole* jacket with a scarlet collar and sky-blue cuffs, which was different enough from the old royal uniform to be acceptable to the Republican government.

In practice it was the short-tailed coat in the national blue that was universally adopted, and remained in service until the introduction of the Bardin regulations in 1812. Contemporary illustrations show a bewildering mixture of long- and short-tailed coats, and a not insignificant trend towards wearing light cavalry-style overalls.

Styles of headgear also changed dramatically, again with an increasing tendency to follow light cavalry fashions. As in the Line, the casque was replaced by the volunteer-style chapeau, somewhat larger than the one worn in the days of the royal army. This was then replaced with the shako by some units. On 26 October 1801 this trend was officially recognised when light infantry officially adopted a shako 17.8cm high, with a detachable visor, and a plume worn over the cockade on the left hand side.

General Mortier gave a detailed description of the uniform worn immediately prior to the Imperial period in the often-quoted inspection of the 9e Légère in 1802. Having praised the unit for its fine conduct in war, he went on to point out some of the many irregularities he noticed in the appearance of the troops: 'Although the turnout is generally

¹ See MAA 299, *Austrian Auxiliary Troops 1792-1816*, p.17 & Plate D1



German depiction of a heavily laden French soldier, with checkered trousers, a red sash and a yellow cravat. The equipment shown includes everything from a coffee pot to a beer stein. In between sausages, game and hams can be seen ladles, pans and a cauldron, with what appears to be a regulation marmite strapped on top. He carries two loaves on a stick. Clearly the picture is bemoaning the French troops' almost complete reliance on local 'requisitions'.

good, the inspector general would like to see more uniformity. The officers are not all hatted in the same manner. They wear their hat indifferently over one or the other eyebrow; all the boots are not uniform and do not carefully conform. Many of the officers carry their belt buckle over the waistcoat, despite the reservation of this right to senior officers.

'Some of the NCOs place their chevrons incorrectly on the sleeves of their coats; the corporals wear them in red wool instead of yellow. The sergeant-majors and *fourriers* are not all armed with a musket – they should be so.

'The hair of the NCOs, carabiniers and chasseurs is not evenly cut at the face and at the *queue*, which is not held with a pin as directed by regulation.

'There are many dirty collars and neckerchiefs in loud colours, and a few have a narrow beard along the line of the jaw. The epaulettes of the carabiniers and chasseurs are placed too far back; they should be centred equally on the shoulder.

'The *habit-vestes* are generally badly beaten and brushed. They are too narrow at the breast and the sleeves are a little short, as are the collars.

'The *pantalons à l'infanterie légère* being only tolerated, [they] must be closed by a seam on the outside instead of being closed by buttons; this fashion has been adopted for the stable trousers of the hussars, [but] they are not to be considered as parade dress for the light infantry.

'Some men carry their cross belts too long, which prevents them properly crossing on the breast and obliges the soldier to bend backwards when reaching for a cartridge, as well as causing the sabre to cross between the legs on fast marches.'

Weapons and equipment

The principal armament of the French army was the single-shot, smooth-bore Model 1777 *fusil d'infanterie* (infantry musket), which served throughout the Revolutionary and Empire periods with only a minor modification made to the system in 1802 (Year IX). It was of 17.5mm calibre (0.68in) and weighed 4.375kg (9.6lbs). The lead ball weighed approximately 27 grammes (0.95oz), and was propelled by a 12.5g (0.44oz) charge of black powder. It was lethal up to 240m (though not accurate enough to hit a man-sized target at more than about a quarter of that distance), and could wound at 600 metres. In perfect conditions a soldier could expect to load and fire an average of three times a minute. However, with a misfire rate of one in every six or seven shots, the musket was all but useless in wet weather, when the soldier was forced to rely on a 46.5cm (18in) steel bayonet for protection.

In addition to the musket, NCOs, grenadiers, chasseurs, drummers and musicians carried a *sabre-briquet*, which served as a hatchet on campaign. The infantry cartridge box was made from hard, blackened cow leather with a wooden box inside, divided into two compartments

Carabinier of the Consular period. The principal uniform details include the early pattern shako with red top band, plume and cords; a double-breasted waistcoat with brass uniform buttons; a red collar piped in white, and red epaulettes; pointed blue cuffs piped with white; and, unusually for a short *habit-veste*, three brass uniform buttons below the right lapel. The trousers have a red side-stripe, while the *dragonne* (sword knot), gaiter piping and tassels are also red. The soldier appears to be armed with a carbine rather than the usual 'five-foot clarinet' (musket). Note also that his hair is powdered but he wears a dark moustache.



each large enough to hold a packet of 15 cartridges. Between the two compartments was a block with six holes drilled into it, which held an additional five cartridges and a phial of oil. The giberne incorporated a small leather purse in which was placed spare flints, a wooden practice flint, an oily rag and the musket ball extractor tool. The NCO's giberne was slightly smaller and did not have the block separating the two cartridge compartments.

Soldiers also had to carry their camp utensils, in bags or on leather straps. For every 12 men there were 2 *marmites* (cooking pots), whose lids were also used as frying pans; 2 *gamelles* (communal eating dishes), 2 *grand-bidons* (large water cans), 2 shovels, 2 pickaxes, 2 axes and 2 billhooks with their cases and straps. Each man would carry a *petit-bidon* (small water can). There would also be another three *petit-bidons* per company, containing vinegar used for softening drinking water, which were carried by the sergeants.

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THE PLATES

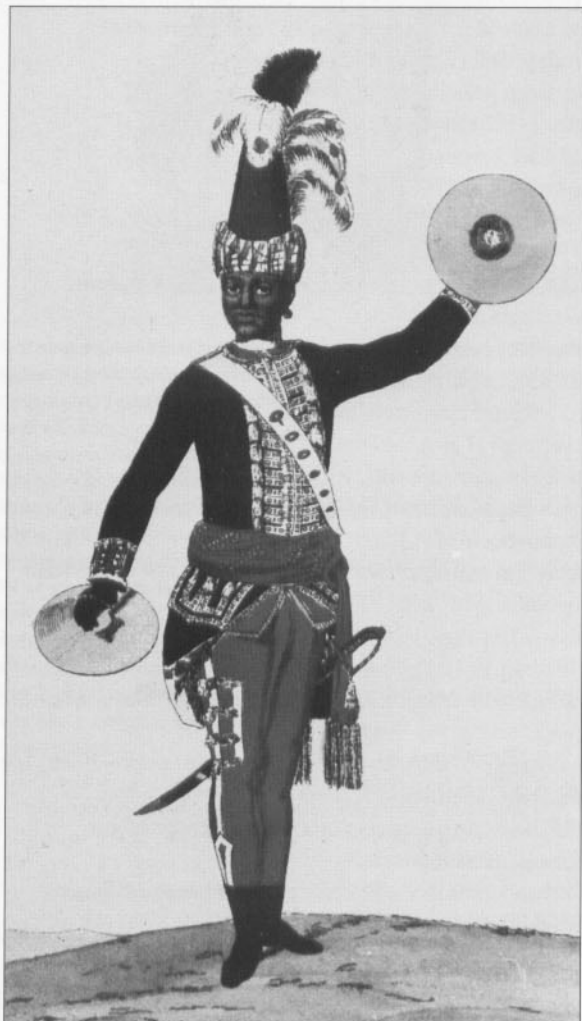
A: SUMMER 1789

A1: Militiaman, Parisian Garde Bourgeoise

When the Parisian militia was formed on 13 July 1789 it was armed with muskets taken from the Hôtel de Ville. The committee of Electors ordered that they wear a red and blue cockade (the colours of Paris' medieval coat of arms) to distinguish them from the protesters they were charged with policing. The militia's red and blue cockade was worn until the end of July, when the tricolour cockade was adopted.

A2: Parisian rioter

On 12 July the revolutionary Camille Desmoulins encouraged fellow protesters at the Palais Royal to adopt a green cockade as a symbol of hope. However, the protesters' green was also the livery of the despised Count of Artois, the king's reactionary brother. On the night of 13 July the protesters therefore adopted a cockade similar to that worn by the militia, but with white added to the blue and red to distinguish between them. Other recorded variations being worn in the various city districts included combinations of green and white, or blue and white. An officer of the



Guards, de Maleissye, recalled a green and red combination associated with the ex-finance minister, Necker: 'This was the day, 14 July, that the tricolour cockade was displayed; at eight o'clock in the morning it was green and red, the colours of Necker; at ten o'clock this cockade was proscribed and the tricolour of Orléans was adopted.'

On 17 July, King Louis XVI was presented with and wore a tricolour cockade for the first time. The tricolour cockade's popularity continued to spread, until by October 1789 it was recognised as a national symbol. Politicians explained that the three colours symbolised the reconciliation of the king (white) with the city of Paris, whose coat of arms was blue and red. Perhaps not entirely coincidentally, these colours were also closely associated with the king, blue and red being the monarch's personal colours.

A3: Grenadier, Gardes Françaises

The French Guards' characteristic 'king's blue' coat with red lining and cuffs was first introduced in 1685. The French Guards were recruited from among French nationals only, with a minimum height of 1.73m (5ft 8ins) compared with 1.68m (5ft 6ins) in Line regiments. Enlistments were for a minimum of eight years.

B: NATIONAL GUARDS, 1789-91

B1: Marquis de Lafayette

He is seen here in the uniform of commander of the Paris Guard (the Garde Bourgeoise, which by now contained many former members of the Gardes Françaises). Having gained celebrity while serving in the American Revolution, Lafayette (1757-1834) was elected to the Estates General in 1789. Taking a prominent part in its proceedings, on 11 July he presented a declaration of rights, modelled on Jefferson's Declaration of Independence of 1776; two days later he was made vice-president of the National Assembly. On 15 July, Lafayette was the popular choice as colonel-general of the Paris Guard.

As an aristocrat and a general in the royal army Lafayette was always regarded with suspicion by revolutionary extremists, however. His fall from grace began on 17 July 1791 when he ordered the National Guard to fire on protesters calling for the king's removal on the Champ de Mars. After a short spell in retirement Lafayette was placed in command of the Armée des Ardennes. With one eye on events in Paris, he attempted to use his army to restore the constitutional monarchy after the attack on the Tuileries (10 August). His army refused to follow him, and Lafayette was forced to seek refuge with France's enemies. He was imprisoned, first by Prussia, then Austria. He was not allowed to return to France until 1799.

B2: Grenadier officer, Paris Guard

Note the tricolour cockade, with its additional outer ring of white; and the cap plate bearing cartouches and trophies arranged beneath a Phrygian cap. In addition to the 'national colours', other symbols and mottos on banners and even weapons were used to convey political messages. The Phrygian cap symbolised Liberty, the lion Strength, the dog Fidelity, a beehive and bees the Labour of Patriots, and the

Gardes Françaises cymbalist. This lavish uniform, with red breeches and sash, is decorated with a crimson-over-white *petite livrée*. The design of the pearl-decorated turban was apparently inspired by 'gallant Indians'.

Cockerel, Vigilance. Badges were emblazoned with mottoes including the words 'Nation', 'Liberty' and 'Law'.

B3: Fusilier, Paris National Guard

From the storming of the Bastille until 1795 the National Guard was the only effective police force in the capital. As more and more guardsmen marched off to the defence of the frontiers, by 1793 the Parisian Guard had become little more than a body of armed *sans-culottes*. At the advent of the Directorate in 1795 the army resumed its traditional role of policing the capital.

B4: Standard-bearer, Paris National Guard

The flag-bearer of the Paris National Guard from the St Roch district. The upper red canton displayed diagonally in yellow/gold the motto '*INTRÉPIDITÉ ET PERSÉVÉRANCE*' ('Boldness and Perseverance'), and the lower red canton '*NOTRE UNION FAIT NOTRE FORCE*' ('Our unity is our strength'). He also wears a sash in Bourbon white to show continued support for the idea of a constitutional monarchy, despite the revolutionary events taking place.

C: LINE INFANTRY, 1791

C1: Fusilier, 70e Régiment

A soldier of the 70e (ex-Médoc) showing the modifications to the 1786 regulations introduced on 1 April 1791 – see Table 2. Although unit morale naturally suffered during the mutinies and political upheavals, the royal army's long traditions were not entirely forgotten during the Revolutionary Wars. Although the 1791 regulations had discarded their former titles, regiments went into battle remembering their former traditions. At Jemappes the colonel of the 5e Régiment (ex-Navarre) gave the old regimental cry: '*En avant, Navarre – Sans peur!*' ('Forwards, Navarre – Without fear!') before leading them into an attack. This was echoed by the 17e Régiment, with the cry of '*Toujours Auvergne – Sans tache!*' ('Auvergne forever – Unstained!').

C2: Line Infantry officer

A field officer – note fringed epaulettes on both shoulders – of the 2e Régiment (ex-Picardie). On 14 July 1789 there were over 6,280 infantry officers in the army; by 1793 around 4,000 had either emigrated or resigned. This movement opened the way for an unprecedented level of promotions, both among the remaining officers and, most significantly, from among ambitious NCOs. From 15 October 1791 citizens between the ages of 16 to 20 with good morals and conduct, who were able to present certificates of *civisme* (public-spiritedness) from their municipalities, were considered suitable for vacant *sous-lieutenant* posts. To give just one example of these promotions: in the 55e Régiment (ex-Condé), 22 officers emigrated and 11 died or retired in 1789–90. These were replaced by 31 officers from other corps, who in turn lost 16 to emigration and a further eight to other causes. The NCOs provided 11 officers, with the remaining 13 posts filled by ordinary soldiers or volunteers, including a lawyer, four students, two clerks, and Citizen George, who had taken part in the arrest of King Louis XVI at Varennes in 1791.

C3: Line Infantry drummer

A drummer of the 35e Régiment (ex-Aquitaine), still wearing a coat embellished with the king's 'livery' lace. Its adoption after the Seven Years' War, in place of the proprietary colonels' individual colours, had been part of the



In a fit of patriotism, this National Guard officer sports a pair of trouser-gaiters horizontally striped in red/white/blue. To complete the flamboyant ensemble, his habit and veste are decorated with gold and crimson edging, the coat with a collar and cuffs to match.

attempt to 'nationalise' the French army. However, after the king's abortive flight and fall from grace all symbols of monarchy were abolished, including this livery. From this point onward there are examples of drummers wearing either tricolour lacing or plain infantry coats.

D: LIGHT INFANTRY, 1791

D1: Chasseur-Carabinier, 8e Bataillon, with carbine

Note the yellow facings of this battalion. According to the 1788 ordinance, in lieu of a grenadier company, each battalion of *chasseurs à pied* would select 12 *chasseur-carabiniers* per company. Unlike grenadiers in the Line regiments, who were selected for a combination of their imposing bearing and bravery, these *chasseur-carabiniers* would be chosen 'without a single regard for their height, from among the best soldiers in the battalion, giving equal preference to the most skilful shots and never admitting recruits'. Note the rifled carbine with its large socket sword-bayonet, powder horn, hammer, and ramrod carried on a leather strap – see also D4 below.

D2: Corporal of Chasseurs, 7e Bataillon

Note the pink battalion facings; and the distinctions on his headgear – a cockade, a spherical blue company pompon, and a hunting horn badge. Since 1789, white waistcoats and breeches had been introduced, but these were replaced in turn by green, without official regulations. Corporals wore double stripes made from a cloth tape 23mm wide, with a woven-in chequerboard pattern with a double line running down each edge. The stripes were attached to the sleeves 20mm above the cuff at the front seam and 95mm above the cuff at the back seam. With double stripes, the second stripe was placed above the first with 14mm spacing between



them. The stripes were usually backed in red cloth to aid visibility. Sergeants were distinguished by a single silver stripe on each forearm (two for a sergeant-major), and epaulettes with mixed green and silver fringes. The *caporal-fourrier* wore corporal's stripes on the forearm with a sergeant's silver *galon* on the upper arm. *Adjudants* were identified by a green and silver fringed epaulette on the left shoulder only, with two silver bands running the length of the strap; on the right shoulder they wore a green *contre-epaulette*.

D3: Captain

This officer of the 1er Bataillon displays its red facings, and wears a *chapeau* in place of a *casque*, 'Souvaroff' boots and tight breeches. Both Line and Light infantry captains were allocated three horses – one for himself, one for his orderly and one for his equipment. Subaltern officers were also mounted, but had to share a bat-horse.

D4: Chasseur-Carabinier, 11e Bataillon

The battalion is identified by the crimson facings. Although they were officially armed with the standard *fusil d'infanterie*, there was a move to equip *chasseurs-carabiniers* with the more accurate rifled carbine. On 14 April 1789 two *Écoles des Chasseurs-Carabiniers* were established under the direction of the Duke de Guines to school soldiers in the art of firing German carbines. Each infantry regiment and battalion of *Chasseurs* was to send a sergeant and three men chosen from among the best marksmen, who would return to their respective corps in September and pass on the instruction they had received. The school at Arras, commanded by the Chevalier de Bachmann, lieutenant-colonel of the Swiss regiment Salis-Samande, lasted between 27 June and 24 August. The second school, at Neuf-Brisach, commanded by the Marquis de Deux-Ponts (colonel of the regiment bearing the same name) began on 27 June and ended on 10 September. At Neuf-Brisach the marquis exhibited some favouritism towards his own men, who scored the largest number of hits. It is also recorded that the leading marksman early on (not a soldier from Deux-Ponts) was accidentally shot dead half way through the course...

E: VOLUNTEERS AND IRREGULARS

E1: National Guard Volunteer

Volunteer wearing a special coat with red facings and piping, over a red waistcoat. Although well supplied before leaving for the frontier, the rigours of campaign soon took a toll on the volunteers' uniforms. The system of resupply was at best sporadic, and always open to abuse by unscrupulous contractors and profiteers. On 12 December 1792, Adjudant-Général Lacuée in Toulouse wrote that the '...troops are in a real state of dilapidation'. The replacement uniforms he received were of very poor quality, especially the gaiters, which he described as 'defective'. He also asked for 40,000 new weapons, the ones that had been issued to the troops being in very poor condition. To further highlight the poor quality of the uniforms arriving at the front, in January 1793 the National Convention was presented with a shabby

This soldier intends to survive the winter with the help of a grey woolen hat and mittens. A blanket – in natural off-white with red stripes – suffices in place of a greatcoat; he wears short red trousers over a longer, buttoned pair in blue and white stripes, while shoes and gaiters have been replaced with sturdy wooden clogs.

canvas-lined greatcoat and socks that would only survive a single wearing. The volunteers' inability to resupply in the field was one of the principal concerns behind the amalgamation proposals.

E2: Chasseur, Légion Allobroges, 1793

On 31 May 1793 the Légion Allobroges comprised a battalion of carabiniers (7 companies), a battalion of chasseurs (7 companies), 3 companies of dragoons and an artillery company. Bonaparte mentioned the legion in his pamphlet *'The Supper of Beaucaire'* dated 29 July 1793: 'The Allobroges! ...Who do you think they are? Africans or the inhabitants of Siberia? Not at all: they are your compatriots from Provence, the Dauphinois and Savoy... These soldiers you call brigands are our best troops and most disciplined battalions: their reputation is above all slander.' The legion saw action at the siege of Toulon in 1793, and fought the Spanish in the Eastern Pyrenees (1794-95). It was joined by the 4e Bataillon de Volontaires Nationaux des Chasseurs de Montagne, to make up the 4e Demi-Brigade Légère, which was more commonly known as the 'Demi-Brigade Allobroge'. During Bonaparte's first Italian campaign (1796-97) the unit became the 27e Demi-Brigade Légère.

An officer in campaign overalls (right foreground) directs a mixed group of wounded French soldiers to the rear. The wear and tear to the men's headgear is obvious - almost all of the *chapeaux* sag around the wearers' ears. At centre foreground one man is wearing a *bonnet de police* (forage cap). The figure in the *casque* is a cavalry trooper from the *Chasseurs à cheval*.

E3: Chasseur, Légion Germanique, 1793

On 20 April 1792 the government passed a decree encouraging foreigners to fight under the tricolour flag. In response, the Légion Germanique was raised in Paris in December 1792. With a theoretical total of 2,500 men, under the initial name of Légion des Germains, it was organised into 4 squadrons of Cuirassiers Legers, 4 squadrons of Dragons-piquiers, 1 battalion of Arquebusiers in 4 companies of 120 men, 2 battalions of Chasseurs à pied each with 4 companies of 120 men, and an artillery company with 158 men. Under the orders of Colonel Dambach, the Légion Germanique left Paris for Fontainebleau in December 1792, providing a number of detachments to guard the highways. At this time actual strength was no more than 1,200 men, including 400 detached and 300 illegally absent.

The legion received the order to join the Armée du Nord, but on arrival found its loyalty under suspicion: its ranks included 300 Swiss Guardsmen who had survived the Tuileries massacre of 10 August. On the insistence of General Leygonier it was sent to join the Armée du Pyrénées; but on the way to the Spanish border it was re-directed to the city of Tours to help fight the rebellion in the West. Many of the officers became rivals and ambition spilled over, with Colonel Dambach and 20 officers being denounced and imprisoned by their supposed comrades. Unable to shake off suspicions over its loyalty, the unit changed its name to the Légion de la Fraternité.

It was then engaged against the increasingly successful insurrectionary Royalist and Catholic army. On 27 May the commander of the Cuirassiers Légers fell during an ambush, and on 9 June the Cuirassiers Légers were heavily engaged



during the loss of Saumur: of the 110 men engaged, 80 were killed and the others wounded or dismounted. The majority of the legion soon went over to the rebels, but not before pillaging the pay chest. Under the name *Vengeurs de la Couronne* ('avengers of the crown'), the company formed by the former Swiss Guardsmen was finally massacred by the hussars of the *Légion du Nord* at the battle of Châtillon. In June 1793, the debris of the *Légion de la Fraternité's* infantry was incorporated into the *22e Demi-Brigade Légère*.

E4: Chasseur, Compagnie Franche de l'Égalité, 1793

This 'free company' was a Parisian unit that saw action during the annexation of the 'Provinces Belges' (later Belgium). This move allowed the French to threaten both the English Channel coast and the frontier with Germany. The provinces were then annexed to France, forming six new *Départements*. Note the buff waistcoat piped red at the edges, and the matching breeches with red quatrefoil thigh knots.

F: REPUBLICAN DEMI-BRIGADES

F1: Infantry flags

A selection of the standards typically carried by French infantry units. The tricolour patterns followed no single rule, with even individual battalions receiving their own variations. The obverse of the flag always bore the device '*RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE*' and the reverse '*DISCIPLINE ET SOUMISSION* [or *OBÉISSANCE*] *AUX LOIS MILITAIRES*'. The examples illustrated are:



F1a: 21e DB, obverse, with typical republican symbols.

F1b: 104e DB, obverse – the Liberty cap in solid red is unusual.

F1c: 106e DB, reverse.

F2: Drummer

A typical drummer boy as shown in a contemporary German print. Coats in various shades of blue or even grey were frequently seen due to shortages of dark blue cloth. The exact meaning of the white chevron on his upper sleeves is unknown, but was probably the distinction of a first class soldier/chosen man.

F3: Grenadier, 1794–96

Although troops often resorted to wearing civilian clothes from necessity, there was also a political angle to these uniform irregularities. Garments in tricolour patterns were an obvious statement of revolutionary patriotism, and full-length trousers worn in place of knee breeches would identify the wearer with revolutionary *sans-culottes*. To exhibit unkemptness was to reject the formality and neatness of the *ancien régime*.

G: DIRECTORY PERIOD

G1: Fusilier, Vendée, 1794

The Royalist and Catholic insurgents in the Vendée tied down as many as 200,000 Republican troops at the height of the civil war in the West. With France gripped by *La Terreur*, the government's policy towards the insurrectionists was one of extermination. Men, women and children, villages, crops and livestock were put to sword and flame in this brutal campaign.

G2: Light infantry standard-bearer

Standard-bearers were selected from among the battalion's sergeant-majors. At this time the light infantry demi-brigades were amalgamations of many small provincial volunteer units, many of whom had kept their own flags – in this case, that of the *Volontaires du Var*. This figure shows an example of the 'national blue' long-tailed coat adopted by some *Chasseur* units after 1793. Although the rank and file of most light infantry battalions would eventually adopt the short-tailed *habit-veste* by the end of the decade, most officers retained the long-tailed coat.

G3: Chasseur, 1er Légion des Francs, 1797

Preparing for the expedition to Ireland in 1796, General Hoche formed the *1er Légion des Francs* by taking selected men from existing units. Described as 'true devils incarnate', the *légionnaires* were dressed in captured British coats

In his arguments for amalgamation, Dubois-Crancé pointed out that although the government had an annual military budget topping 300 million francs, frontline troops went without even the most basic items of uniform. The figure in the middle of this group has badly torn trousers and resorts to wearing an improvised cloak for protection against the elements. His comrade (right) appears to have 'liberated' a piece of altar cloth for the same purpose. In common with many contemporary prints, the officer (left) is shown carrying a soldier's knapsack on campaign. He also wears a black leather sabre belt. Supplying decent quality footwear was a continual problem: One stopgap method used in November 1793 was to threaten the aristocrats of Strasbourg with the guillotine unless they supplied 10,000 shoes overnight.

which had been recut like light infantry uniforms and dyed dark brown (thus the nickname 'the Black Legion') with sky-blue facings and breeches; note also the distinctive hat, termed a '*chapeau à la Henri IV*'. Caught in a storm, the expedition never landed, but still lost some 500 dead from drowning. Survivors were sent to the eastern frontier and the Army of the Sambre-et-Meuse. In 1798 they were sent to Switzerland, where the infantry were formed into the 14e Légère; and in 1800 the former légionnaires were used in the advanced guards of three different divisions.

G4: Chasseur, 2e Légion de Francs; Wales, 1797

On 22 February 1797 a French force landed on the Welsh coast near the port of Fishguard to divert attention from a planned expedition to Ireland. The force had intended to march on Liverpool, raising insurrection, plundering public stores and mansions as it went. Commanded by the Irish-American Colonel Tate (who could not speak French), the expedition was ill-fated from the start and surrendered to the militia after just two days, causing little damage.

The 1,200 troops chosen for this mission were ex-soldiers condemned to prisons and galleys: 'The men in this expedition ought to be, as far as possible, young, robust, and daring, with minds open to the lure of booty... They should know how to carry terror and death into the midst of their enemies... In this corps might be incorporated men sentenced to prison or the galleys, if they are known to have the physical and moral qualities necessary.'

Well armed with muskets and grenades, this unit too was given uniforms made from red British cloth taken from the Royalist troops killed and captured at Quiberon Bay, dyed dark brown. Local eyewitnesses recalled that the half-starved, poorly dressed Frenchmen wore black leather caps with black horsehair brushed down one side.



H: CONSULATE PERIOD

H1: Infantry conscript, 1800

A typical conscript of the early Consulate period. Due to shortage of money in the Republic's coffers, many conscripts found themselves well armed and equipped but without uniforms. After each battle corpses were stripped of everything that could be recycled and reissued to uniform new troops. In his 1801 painting of Marengo, the soldier-artist Baron Lejeune shows a similarly dressed conscript – Georges Amptil of the 30e Demi-Brigade – presenting the commander-in-chief, General Berthier, with an Austrian standard that he had captured during the evening counter-attack.

H2: Officer, 1800

Line infantry officer in typical cold weather campaign dress, including a greatcoat and 'English-style' boots, and carrying a sabre in place of the standard épée. In battle, officers on foot were less vulnerable to musketry as they stood behind the three ranks during firing. Although mounted senior officers enjoyed better visibility they ran a greater risk. Defending the Marengo farmhouse from an attack by Austrian grenadiers, Général de Brigade Olivier Rivaud recorded that in the space of 15 minutes half his line officers and all his mounted officers and staff were killed or wounded (himself included).

Sergeant, 107e Demi-Brigade, in 1801, wearing *tenuë de ville* ('town dress'). His gaiters are removed when off duty, but he retains his sidearm at all times. The long sideburns and the high stock wound up to the base of the chin were fashionable at this time.

H3: Carabinier, 9e Régiment d'Infanterie Légère, 1800

In his painting of Marengo, Lejeune portrayed carabiniers of the 9e Légère wearing a shako with red bands and a horsehair plume. He also showed them wearing the *Pantalons à l'infanterie légère* with a red stripe down a buttoned outer seam, as mentioned in General Mortier's 1802 inspection report.

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