

# THE RUSSIAN ARMY OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS 2 CAVALRY



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**Acknowledgements and Author's Note**

As noted in full in Part 1 of this study (MAA 185), phonetic translations of Russian proper names from the original Cyrillic script result in considerable variations. In this book the most common usage has been adopted, even if the resulting translation is not philologically perfect. English translations have been given where possible; e.g. 'White Russia' is preferred to the 'Bieloserk' found in some English-language works.

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PJH

# The Russian Army of the Napoleonic Wars (2)

## Russian Cavalry

The first title in the Men-at-Arms series concerning the Russian Army of the Napoleonic Wars (Infantry: MAA 185) covers the character and essence of the Czar's army, and many of those comments are equally relevant to the cavalry, in the recruitment, character and conditions of service. Russia possessed a vast force of cavalry, forming a greater percentage than that of most European armies. This stemmed partly from their service against the Turks (who had huge numbers of mounted troops) and partly from the fact that much Russian terrain was suitable for the manoeuvre of large bodies of cavalry. An estimate of 1805 gave a cavalry total of 3,316 rank-and-file in the Guard; 49,738 in the Line; and 2,189 officers and 98,211 irregular cavalry—though the 'College of War' in 1795 had estimated the irregulars at 77,484 enrolled men, and at least 100,000 more to be embodied in wartime. The cost to the Czar of maintaining a dragoon for a year was 35 roubles (12 for maintenance, 13 for clothing and ten for horse furniture), plus forage and rye-meal—an incredibly small sum when compared with the expenses of other armies: a 'military phenomenon', according to a British commentator.

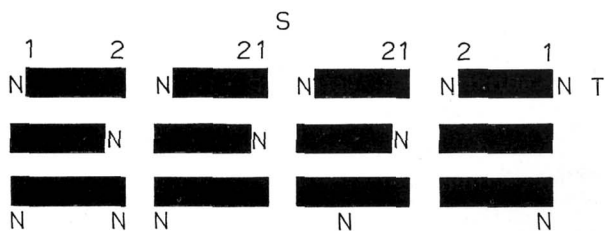
While the rank-and-file of the regular cavalry were generally as solid and reliable as their counterparts in the infantry, it seems that whereas infantry officers were reviled as being generally ignorant and idle, cavalry officers usually enjoyed a much higher reputation; the British observer Sir Robert Wilson noted that they attended their duty 'with great zeal and diligence'. (There were exceptions: 'no less than nine officers of Constantine's Uhlans simply ran away at Austerlitz.') Wilson noted that 'the vivacity of their cavalry, and the unquailing steadiness of their

infantry, make it a pleasure to command them in extremist difficulties'. However, 'vivacity' was not an appropriate description of Maj.Gen. Korff, commanding the 2nd Cavalry Corps in 1812: 'This good man cut a sad figure as a cavalry general. He was so enormously stout that he could only be lifted on to a horse with the greatest difficulty . . . he had so little liking for musketry and the roar of cannon that he always managed to organise a comfortable place of refuge'.

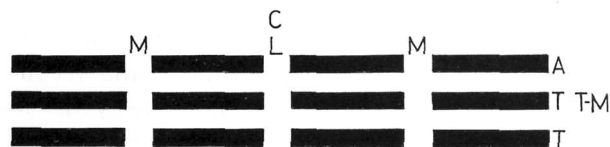
The inadequacies of such Russian officers led to the employment of an increasing number of foreign

**Russian cavalry c.1800: hussars (left and mounted), cuirassier (second from right) and dragoon (right). The central figure (back view) is a member of the Lifeguard wearing a *supreveste*, the straps of which are visible at the rear. (Engraving by L. Ebner)**





Cavalry squadron, arrayed in three ranks, with a frontage of four platoons. Key: S = squadron commander; 1 = platoon commander; 2 = platoon second in command; N = NCO; T = trumpeter.



Cavalry regiment of four squadrons in line, three ranks deep. Key: C = colonel; L = lieutenant-colonel; M = major; A = regimental ADC; T = trumpeter; T-M = trumpet-major. When the regimental commander (colonel-in-chief) was present, he stood ten paces in front of the colonel, with the commander's ADC slightly behind and to the commander's left.

officers. Typical of these was 'Captain Fritz', who left a memoir of his services: a Mecklenburg aristocrat, he had fought with the Prussian army at Auerstädt, briefly joined the Russian army, transferred to the Duke of Brunswick's 'Black Legion' in Austrian service, joined the British army and fought two campaigns in the Iberian Peninsula with the King's German Legion, returned to the Russian Elizabethgrad Hussars for the 1812 campaign, and finally rejoined the Prussian Army in 1813. Not only were foreign soldiers enlisted; a Russian colonel in 1812 was Captain Nesbit Willoughby, RN, a half-pay British sailor who had decided to spend his time more profitably with the Russian Army!

The quality of Russian cavalry horses invariably impressed foreign observers. Wilson said they were 'matchless for an union of size, strength, activity, and hardiness; whilst formed with the bulk of the British cart horse, they have so much blood as never to be coarse, and withal are so supple. . .'; and Stewart noted that 'The regular cavalry are undoubtedly very fine; the men gigantic; horses good; equipments superior, and in perfect condition. The light cavalry are less striking in point of horses and general appearance; but some of the hussars and lancers are good'.

## Organisation

Among the reforms instituted by Czar Alexander I was a general lightening of the cavalry; in 1803 the number of cuirassier regiments was reduced to six and the dragoons increased to 22, with eight hussar regiments; cuirassiers and dragoons had a field establishment of five squadrons, and hussars ten squadrons. From this period the cavalry was increased progressively: in 1805 there were six cuirassier, 30 dragoon, eight hussar, three Uhlan

(lancer) and one Tartar regiment, and seven new regiments were formed after Austerlitz. In 1812 this had increased to eight cuirassier, 36 dragoon, 11 hussar and five Uhlan regiments. Unit-strengths varied from the official establishment, so that (for example) squadrons in 1812 averaged around 125 men each. The Lifeguard was in addition to these.

The largest tactical formation was the Corps, usually around 3,000 or 4,000 men, comprising two divisions of three brigades each (two brigades for cuirassiers); in 1812 two divisions were exclusively cuirassier, but others commonly comprised two dragoon brigades and one of hussars, sometimes with an Uhlan regiment attached. Two or sometimes three regiments comprised a brigade, each regiment of five field squadrons, formed of ten half-squadrons of two platoons each. The additional depot squadrons of each regiment (which acted as a source of reinforcement) were reorganised as an active support force shortly before the war of 1812, so that from these units a further three cavalry divisions (12,412 men) were formed as part of the 'Supply Army'.

## Tactics

Cavalry tactics were governed by Czar Paul's *Code of Field Cavalry Service* (1796), with local modifications. This decreed that the usual formation for action was a line of two ranks, a third being thought to impede movement and to be dangerous when a horse fell. For the heavy and medium cavalry, emphasis was upon the charge with the sabre. Against cavalry, cuirassiers and dragoons increased speed gradually from walk to trot, and when 80 to 100 paces from the enemy a fanfare would sound, and the men would raise their sabres and fall upon the foe at full gallop. Against infantry, cavalry were advised to manoeuvre in small bodies to avoid

heavy losses from musketry. Hussars were intended as scouts and flank-guards, for raids and reconnaissance, and not to engage the enemy unless confident of victory, 'for less disgrace attaches to an hussar officer who retreats, than to one who gets embroiled with the enemy in unfavourable circumstances'.

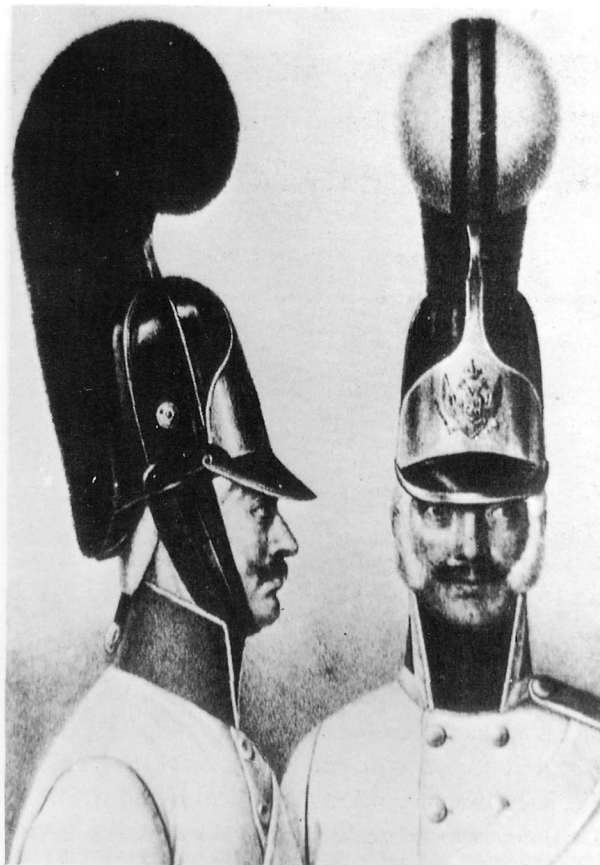
These regulations were replaced in 1812 by a *Preliminary Decree Concerning the Order of the Cavalry Service*. This recommended two methods of attack: either deployed in two ranks as before, or by a column of platoons, 'the best formation for every kind of movement'. Emphasis was upon the sabre, and throughout the cavalry carbines were withdrawn in 1812, leaving only the 'flankers' (16 men per squadron) armed with rifled carbines; these men fanned out in open order to guard the flanks of the charge. (Carbines were generally re-issued in 1814.) As before, the hussars performed similar duties, and were especially effective in the 1812 campaign; they harassed the flanks and rear of the *Grande Armée* like the cossacks, forming the nucleus of the bands of cossacks and peasants who harried Napoleon's army into extinction. The most renowned partisan leader, Denis Davidov, was himself an hussar.

Given the quality of mounts and personnel, if Russian commanders had been able to combine the cavalry in larger formations upon the battlefield, it might have become one of the most formidable forces in Europe.

## *Cuirassiers*

The cuirassiers were heavy cavalry, 'shock' troops *par excellence*. At the end of Paul's reign there were 13 regiments, reduced to six in 1803. To these regiments (Emperor, Empress, Military Order, Little Russia, Gluchov and Ekaterinoslav) were added the Astrakhan and Novgorod regiments in 1811, and in 1812 the Pskov and Starodub Dragoons were converted to cuirassiers; in April 1813 the Emperor Regt. was transferred to the Lifeguard.

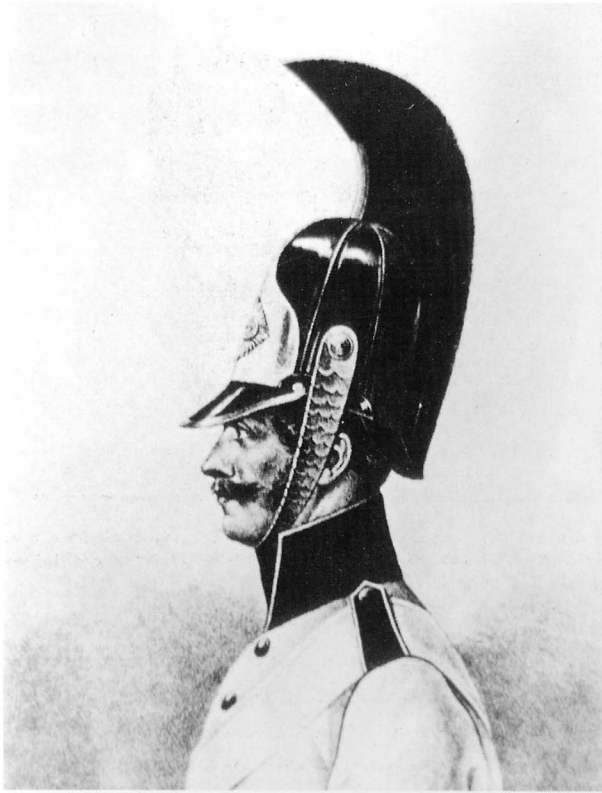
Organisation remained basically similar, with only minor adjustments. A regiment of five field squadrons comprised a colonel-in-chief, a colonel, lieutenant-colonel, two majors, two captains, seven staff officers, ten lieutenants, 17 cornets, five



**The 1803 cavalry helmet, worn here by cuirassiers: right, NCO with collar lace and white tip to the caterpillar crest, striped black/orange/black; left, trooper, with the lining lowered behind the chinstrap to protect the ears in cold weather. The jacket has the high, 'open' collar worn before 1812, exposing the black stock or neck-cloth. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**

sergeant-majors (*Vakhmistr*, a Russian version of the German *Wachtmeister*), ten cadets, five quartermasters, 50 NCOs, 660 troopers, 17 musicians, three religious staff (a priest and two altarboys), ten medical staff, five barbers, 32 craftsmen, one provost and 21 train wagon drivers. The regimental depot squadron consisted of a major, a captain, a staff officer, a lieutenant, a cornet, a sergeant-major, a quartermaster, ten NCOs, 102 troopers, two trumpeters, a barber and four craftsmen. (Unlike most armies, there was but a single NCO rank, equating with sergeants.) In 1812 cuirassier regiments raised a sixth, and ultimately a seventh squadron.

Until 1803 cuirassiers maintained an 18th-century appearance, with the bicorn hat as worn by dragoons. In that year a tall helmet of glazed black leather was adopted, with a black leather comb and front and rear peaks, the front bound with brass.



**The 1808 cavalry helmet: as before, but with the 'caterpillar' replaced by an upright horsehair mane. In this case the plate bears the star badge, and the jacket the black facings of the Military Order Cuirassiers. The queue has been removed; but the jacket still has the high, open collar. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**

turnbacks had a broad facing-coloured edge, and a white shoulder strap piped in the facing colour was worn on the left only (though some sources indicate facing-coloured shoulder straps, as worn later). White cloth loops at the rear of the waist held the belt in position; and there is evidence that at times the seam around the shoulder was ornamented with narrow, facing-coloured piping, but this is not indicated by all sources. Legwear consisted of white

**The cavalry undress uniform: a cuirassier trooper wearing the *bonnet de police* of French style, and the ordinary greatcoat; 1803-11. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**



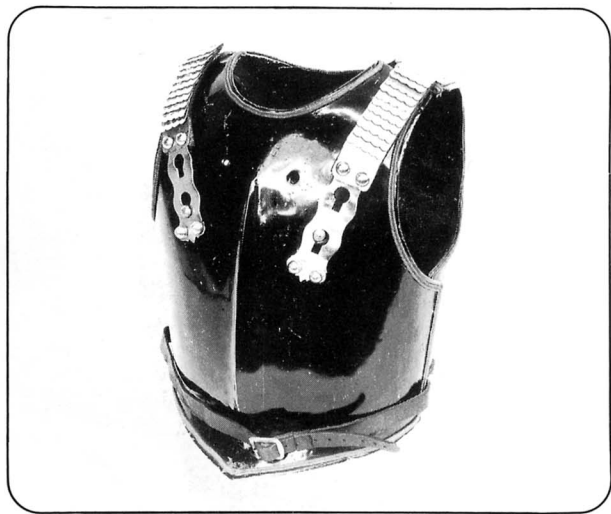
Two leather reinforcing-bars ran up each side, and above the ear an upturned leather flap diverted rainwater. A large brass front plate extended upwards to edge the front of the comb; the plate bore an embossed crowned imperial double-headed eagle (a star of St. George for the Military Order Regiment). At each side of the helmet was a circular brass boss, from which was suspended a black leather chinstrap; and in bad weather a fabric lining could be lowered beneath the chinstrap to protect the ears from cold. The comb was topped by a black 'caterpillar' crest. As with most Russian metalwork, the brasswork was a reddish-copper shade.

The short-tailed, double-breasted white jacket had white lining and two rows of six buttons set closely on the breast. The high collar was cut open to reveal the stock, and the cuffs were of 'Swedish' or gauntlet pattern, with two buttons on the upper edge; collar and cuffs were in the facing colour, the collar at least usually piped white. The white

buckskin or goatskin breeches and long boots (lower than some worn earlier; a comment of 1799 states that ‘. . . the boots are so long that the officers could dispense with wearing pants’!). An alternative for campaign was grey or grey-brown overalls with leather lining and 18 wooden buttons covered with grey cloth on the outer seam, worn with short boots.

Despite their use in the latter years of Czar Paul, cuirassiers wore no cuirasses. Equipment was white leather, a belt 14.5cm wide over the right shoulder supporting a black leather pouch to accommodate 30 cartridges, bearing a brass circular plate embossed with the Imperial eagle (a star of St. George for the Military Order Regt., and a star of St. Andrew for Regts. Emperor and Empress). The belts usually had a stitched line a short distance from each edge. The waist belt was 10cm wide, worn over the jacket, and fastened with a rectangular brass buckle at the front, with slings for the sabre. This was a German-style *Pallasch*, a heavy, straight-bladed weapon 82cm in length, with brass half-basket hilt and eagle-head pommel, a leather grip bound with brass wire, and a leather scabbard with iron fittings (often so extensive that the scabbard appeared to be iron with leather inserts). Until 1816 the leatherwork on Russian scabbards was unstained, thus varying in colour with age from tan to near-black. The sword knot was of red leather with a tassel in the squadron colour: 1st, white; 2nd, light blue; 3rd, yellow; 4th, black; and 5th, green. A white leather carbine belt 14.5cm wide, with brass fittings, was worn until the withdrawal of carbines in 1812. The white leather gauntlets had short cuffs until 1812, and thereafter deep cuffs. Powdered queues, and moustaches, were worn by all enlisted ranks.

Officers’ uniforms were similar, of finer quality, with gilt or silver fittings, and the shoulder strap edged with metallic lace of the button colour. Their helmet crests were white with a black tip, the black separated from the white by an orange band (for generals, the crest was entirely white). They wore the universal Russian officers’ waist sash of silver with black and orange interwoven lines, knotted at the left side, from which two tassels were suspended; their sword knot was black with silver stitching, and a tassel of mixed black, silver and orange. Their equipment was white leather, the pouch bearing the Imperial cypher in the button colour; and legwear



**Cuirass, 1812: enamelled black overall, with iron shoulder scales with brass clasps at the end; note also the red fabric edging. (Wallis & Wallis)**

followed that of the rank and file. Their *Pallasch* had a gilded hilt and a disc at the intersection of the guard bars, bearing an embossed Imperial eagle; the scabbard was in the button colour.

NCOs had metallic lace edging to the front and lower edge of the collar and top of the cuffs; a black helmet crest with white tip, the white with a vertical orange stripe edged black; and an orange and black tassel on the sword knot. NCOs were not equipped with carbines, and so wore no carbine belt. Cadets or aspirant officers (an intermediate rank between NCO and officer) wore NCO uniform with a 15mm silver or gold lace around the shoulder strap. Both officers and NCOs carried canes as marks of rank.

In 1807 the queue was discontinued, canes discarded, and—as in the infantry—officers adopted lace epaulettes of the button colour, with a metal crescent, and a bullion fringe for field ranks. In 1808 the helmet received brass chinscales and a crest of black horsehair for all, officers retaining the ‘caterpillar’ type for parade dress until 1812. In 1809 other ranks adopted facing-coloured shoulder straps piped white on both shoulders, and NCO collar-lace was transferred to the front and upper edge. In that year a French-style sabre was introduced, with a straight, spear-pointed blade with double fullers, 87cm in length; a brass triple-bar guard (gilded for officers); a black leather grip, and an iron scabbard with two suspension rings. The carbine had been 121.5cm overall, with brass



**Cuirassiers, 1812-13.** This contemporary engraving shows typical campaign dress: note the horse-furniture (and the imperial 'A' brand on the horse's haunch, apparently a universal distinction); the circular cartridge-box badge embossed with an eagle, and the pistol ramrod affixed atop the box in Austrian style. The overalls appear to bear the double stripe introduced in 1814.

fittings, and was replaced by the 1809 pattern also with brass fittings, 128cm overall, with natural wood stock. The rifled carbine carried by 'flankers' was usually the 1803 pattern, 62.4cm overall, with brass fittings. Both had a bar affixed for suspension from the clip of the carbine belt.

In 1812 the jacket collar was reduced in height and closed, and cuirasses were issued, though complete equipping may not have been achieved

until 1813. Made of iron, the cuirass consisted of front and rear plates fastened together by a black leather waist strap with a brass buckle at the front, and on each shoulder iron-scaled straps affixed to the breast with brass plates. The cuirass was normally enamelled black, with shoulder scales either blackened or left natural iron (brass for officers), but variations existed: the Pskov Regt. wore French white metal cuirasses, or brass for officers, and at least the officers of the Empress Regt. also had white metal. Lining was in red cloth. Some sources state that Russian cuirasses were of German style, with no back plate; and though contemporary illustrations confirm the double plates, some cuirassiers *were* equipped with front plates only, as



the French Col. Combe noted at Borodino that 'they were armoured only on their chests, and so we could do great execution by thrusting at them as they fled'.

As throughout the army, officers' gold or silver lace was replaced in 1812 by yellow or white in the interests of economy. In common with the other cavalry, in 1814 a single-breasted jacket with facing-coloured piping on the front seam, and grey-brown overalls with double facing-coloured stripe and facing-coloured piping between, were introduced; but these changes post-dated Russia's active participation in the Napoleonic Wars.

Facing-colours and buttons were as Table 1 herewith.

**Table 1: Cuirassier regimental distinctions**

<i>Regt.</i>	<i>Facings</i>	<i>Buttons</i>
Emperor	light blue	white
Empress	'raspberry' (light crimson)	white
Military Order	black	yellow
Little Russia	dark green (medium green from 1812)	yellow
Gluchov	medium blue	white
Ekaterinoslav	orange	white
Astrakhan	yellow	white
Novgorod	pink	white
Pskov	raspberry	yellow
Starodub	light blue	yellow

Trumpeters wore ordinary uniform (never cuirasses), with scarlet crests upon both patterns of helmet. Their jackets had laced seams, chevrons on the sleeves, and usually loops on the breast (variations are shown), and on the facing-coloured 'swallows'-nest wings. This lace was usually mixed white and the facing colour, but the Military Order Regt. had black with two orange stripes, the colours of the Order of St. George. Trumpets were brass, with cords mixed white and the facing colour.

The saddle and harness were black leather with iron fittings. The square-cut shabraque and holster caps were facing-coloured (some sources indicate red shabraques for all), edged with lace of the button colour (gold or silver for officers), bearing in the rear corners of the shabraque and on the holster caps a crowned Imperial cypher ('A' over 'I') in the same colour. For Regts. Emperor and Empress, the

shabraque and holster cap device was a star of St. Andrew (a white eight-pointed star bearing a black eagle on a central orange disc). Pistol holsters were carried beneath the holster caps; at the rear of the saddle, a cylindrical grey or grey-brown portmanteau without decoration; and forward of this a grey or undyed fabric forage bag which was carried on campaign.

Undress uniform consisted of the ordinary jacket worn with a forage cap, initially shaped like a French *bonnet de police* in white cloth with facing-coloured trim and tassel trim in squadron colour. In 1811 this was replaced by a peakless cap with a white cloth top piped in the facing colour, and a facing-coloured band bearing the squadron number and a Cyrillic letter resembling 'з' (the initial letter of the word 'squadron') in yellow. Officers wore this cap with a peak; and, on campaign or for undress, a dark green double-breasted frock coat with epaulettes and facing-coloured piping on the front, upper edges of the collar and cuffs and skirt pockets. There also existed an undress *surtout* of ordinary colour, with a single row of eight buttons on the breast and a silver or gold aiguillette on the right shoulder, discontinued in 1809. For walking-out dress officers could wear the large bicorn hat, worn 'athwart', as described for the Lifeguard. The voluminous greatcoat was similar to that of the infantry, grey or grey-brown, with collar and shoulder straps either grey with facing-coloured piping, or entirely of the facing colour; the standing collar was closed after 1812; there was a series of vertical pleats on the upper back, and a single row of eight buttons on the breast. The cuffs were deep and could be folded down to protect the hands, and a pointed variety also seems to have existed.

## *Dragoons*

Under Czar Paul there were 11 dragoon regiments, a number increased by the conversion of seven cuirassier regiments in 1803. Five regiments were raised in 1803 (Borisoglievsk, Kourland, New Russia, Pereiaslav and White Russia); and in 1804 the dragoons followed the reorganisation of other units and adopted a five-squadron establishment. In 1806 the Arsamass, Dorpat, Finland, Iamburg,

Mitau, Niejine, Serpuchov and Tiraspol regiments were formed; and in 1807 the Jitomir and Livonia. The Korel Dragoons were raised in October 1809 but dissolved in 1810. Organisation of a regiment of five field squadrons was like that of cuirassiers, with the following differences: six lieutenants, five 2nd lieutenants, ensigns instead of cornets, 700 troopers, one less medical staff, seven extra craftsmen and four extra train drivers. The depot squadron was as the cuirassiers but with a 2nd lieutenant instead of a cornet, 128 troopers and one medical staff.

**Field officer, Cuirassiers, 1814. The bicorn hat was worn throughout the period in certain orders of dress, when the helmet was inappropriate; but the single-breasted jacket is that introduced in 1814, too late for use in Russia's active participation in the Napoleonic Wars. The fringed epaulettes indicate field rank. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**



Early dragoon uniform resembled that of the infantry: a full-skirted coat of light to medium green with collar and cuffs (and later lapels) in the regimental facing colour, with red turnbacks—the only major difference from the infantry pattern were cloth flaps at the rear of the waist, to hold the waist belt in place. Long cavalry boots were worn with white breeches in full dress, grey or grey-beige for ordinary dress. Headgear was the bicorn hat with the universal black and orange cockade (see Plate A1).

In 1803 the bicorn was replaced by the leather helmet, as for cuirassiers. The jacket assumed an identical cut to that of cuirassiers, in light green with red turnbacks and facing-coloured collar and 'gauntlet' cuffs; rank distinctions were as for cuirassiers. Legwear was as before, with shorter boots extending only to the knee; and on campaign, grey overalls with black leather reinforcement. Equipment was as for cuirassiers, but with the sabre carried from a frog instead of slings; NCOs' pouch belts were narrower than those of the troopers. The *Pallasch* had a lion-head pommel; the officers' version bore an embossed disc as for cuirassiers. The scabbard was leather, with a brass or iron throat and chape (both almost entirely covered by leather), with a brass or iron frog-hook. Sword knots were as for cuirassiers; officers had infantry sword knots. In 1806 the *Pallasch* was replaced by a French-style sabre like that adopted by cuirassiers in 1809, with an 87cm spear-pointed blade and triple-bar brass guard with black leather grip. The scabbard was leather with brass throat, chape and locket in the middle, with rings for suspension on slings; officers' fittings were gilt. The four regiments of the Caucasus 'Inspection' (Narva, Nijegorod, Taganrog and Vladimir) carried curved sabres in iron scabbards. All dragoons were equipped with a musket and bayonet, the musket 142cm in length with a walnut butt, brass fittings and dark red leather sling. It was carried on the saddle, with a muzzle boot at the lower right, the butt supported by a strap around the saddle pommel.

Harness was black leather with fittings of the button colour; the saddle of Hungarian style, with a rounded-ended shabraque (without holster caps) of the regimental colour edged in the button colour (later, green edged with the facing colour), with the crowned Imperial cypher on the rear corners. Grey

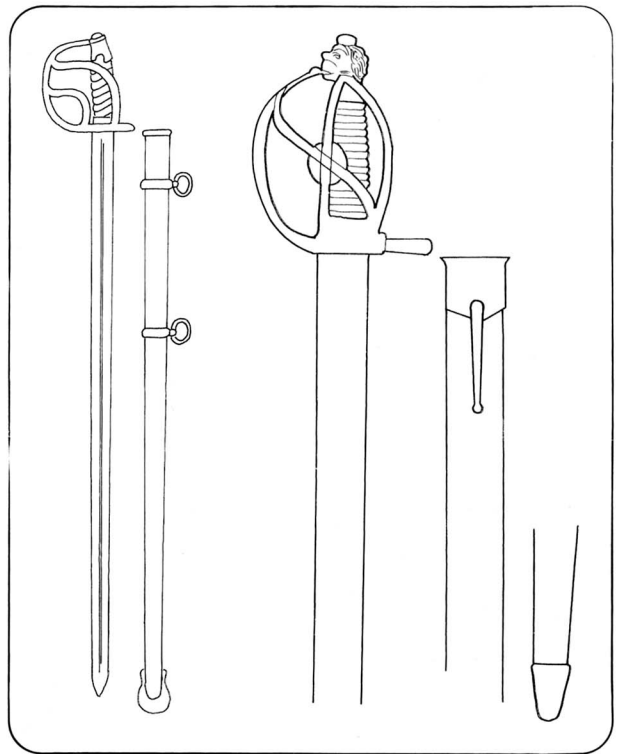
portmanteaux and forage bags were carried as by cuirassiers; and each squadron was equipped with 15 hatchets, eight shovels, four mattocks, six scythes and six copper kettles.

The greatcoat was grey or grey-brown with facing-coloured collar; the *bonnet de police* was coloured like the jacket, piped in the facing colour, with a tassel of this colour mixed with the squadron colour. In certain orders of dress officers retained the bicorn, with 'falling' feather plume of white with mixed black and orange base; officers of the Riga Regt. had two gold lace loops and gilt buttons on collar and cuffs. Trumpeters had red helmet-crests. 'swallows'-nest' wings, and laced jackets with chevrons on the sleeves; trumpets were brass with white cords.

In 1806 queues were abolished, and officers and NCOs ceased to carry canes in 1807, when officers adopted epaulettes like cuirassiers to replace the laced shoulder straps. At the end of 1807 the jackets changed to the dark green shade of the infantry, and in the following year the shabraques changed to dark green, trimmed in the facing colour. Also in 1808 the helmet crests were replaced by black horsehair (red for trumpeters), the earlier 'caterpillars' being retained by officers for parade dress until 1811.

The officers' frock coat was dark green with collar and cuffs of the facing colour, worn with dark green breeches. In 1809 NCOs' lace was altered as for cuirassiers. Grey overalls with black leather reinforcing and buttons on the outer seam remained the usual campaign wear, although in 1814 officers' overalls (and later other ranks) received a double stripe of facing colour; but like the single-breasted jacket of 1814, these were too late to be worn during the war (though the Elberfeld MS appears to show a Karkov Dragoon with a narrow orange stripe on his overalls). In 1814 the Kiev Regt. was awarded a semi-circular plaque reading 'For Distinction' for wear above the helmet plate.

In 1812 all regiments formed a sixth field squadron, which adopted red as its distinctive colour; when seventh squadrons were formed, they took red piped white. These increases resulted from the absorption of reserve squadrons formed from regimental depots prior to the 1812 campaign. In November 1812 the list of dragoon regiments was halved by the conversion of 18 regiments: the Pskov



*Left*—Cuirassier Pallasch, 1809 pattern. Steel or brass triple bar hilt, leather grip bound with brass wire; spear pointed blade 87cm overall with double fuller. Very similar to the 1806 dragoon Pallasch, but for the scabbard: iron for cuirassiers, leather with brass lockets and chape for dragoons.

*Right*—Dragoon Pallasch of the pattern carried before 1806: brass half-basket hilt with intersecting bars; officers' sabres had gilded hilts and an embossed double eagle upon the disc at the junction of the bars. Leather grip bound with brass wire; double-edged blade without fullers, 82cm overall. Brown leather scabbard with brass throat, chape and suspension hook.

and Starodub to cuirassiers; the Arsamass, Dorpat, Livonia, Niejine, Pereiaslav, Sieversk, Tchernigov and Tiraspol to Mounted Jägers; the Iamburg, Jitomir, Orenburg, Serpuchov, Siberia, Taganrog and Vladimir to Uhlands; and the Irkhutsk to Hussars.

Facing colours were as follows; regiments marked \* had green collars piped in the facing colour, and 'W' or 'Y' indicates white or yellow buttons: Regts. Riga (Y), Starodub (W), Tiraspol\* (Y) and Iamburg\* (W): red  
Karkov (Y), Sieversk (W): orange  
Tver (Y), Tchernigov (W): ultramarine  
St. Petersburg (Y), Moscow (W): pink  
Smolensk (Y), Kinburn (W), Serpuchov\* (Y), Dorpat\* (W): yellow



**Dragoon kettle drummers, c.1800. Kettle drummers' uniform resembled that of trumpeters, but in the earlier period bore additional lace. Note the lace 'crenellations' on the shoulders instead of the later wings. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**

Pskov (Y), Kargopol (W): dark orange  
 Vladimir\* (Y), Nijegorod (W): buff (also described as light yellow and latterly white)  
 Taganrog\* (Y), Narva (W): grey (pink by 1812)  
 Orenburg (Y), Ingermanland (W): black  
 Irkhutsk (Y), Siberia (W): white  
 Kazan (Y), Kiev (W): raspberry  
 Kurland (Y), New Russia (W), Niejine\* (Y), Arsamass\* (W): turquoise  
 Borisoglievsk\* (Y), Pereiaslav (W): violet or light crimson  
 Livonia (Y), Jitomir (W): red piped white  
 Finland (Y), Mitau (W): white piped red.

## *Hussars*

By 1784 the once sizeable hussar arm had declined to a single squadron, but Czar Paul increased the single regiment existing at his accession to one Guard and eight Line regiments. To these eight regiments (Akhtyrsk, Alexandria, Elizabethgrad, Isum, Mariupol, Olviopol, Pavlograd and Soum) two newly-raised regiments were added in 1803, the White Russia and Odessa, the latter being converted to Uhlans in 1805. The Grodno Hussars

were raised in August 1805 and the Loubny in 1807. Organisation for each regiment of ten field squadrons (in two 'battalions') comprised a colonel-in-chief, a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel, two majors, eight captains, seven staff officers, 20 lieutenants, five sergeant majors, 20 cadets, ten quartermasters, 90 NCOs, 1,320 troopers, 21 musicians, three religious staff, 17 medical staff, ten barbers, 28 train personnel, 55 craftsmen and two provosts. Each regiment's two depot squadrons consisted of a major, a captain, a staff officer, two lieutenants, a quartermaster, ten NCOs, 204 troopers, two trumpeters, two medical staff, two barbers and six craftsmen. (By late 1812 regiments mustered six field and one depot squadron.)

The early hussar uniform included the traditional braided dolman, furred pelisse, tight breeches, and either a fur busby or a mirliton cap, these being replaced by the shako in 1803. Moustaches were worn, as were 'cadenettes' or plaits from the temples—important factors in maintaining *esprit de corps*, as the Russian-born

**NCO and trooper, Dragoons, c.1800. These men wear the labelled version of the coat (of infantry style). Note the width of the cartridge box belt; and the NCO lace on the pocket flap as well as the collar and cuffs. The NCO wears a light-bladed 'smallsword', carried by officers and NCOs in undress. Note also the length of the trooper's queue. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**





**Dragoon officer of the Taganrog Regt., who is distinguished from those of most other regiments by his sabre, the curved light cavalry pattern being carried by the dragoons of the Caucasus Inspection. The bicorn was retained in certain orders of dress even after the adoption of the helmet in 1803; the plume is in the usual colouring for officers, white with black and orange base. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**

Pomeranian staff officer Friedrich von Schubert reported: 'They still wore their hair in innumerable plaits and tied in a pigtail at the back; and every regiment had its particular colour and its nickname . . . The troopers were very proud of these, and when their hair style and colour were taken away, half their valour and self-respect went too. From that moment they were no better than dragoons'.

The pelisse and dolman had three rows of buttons, smaller on the dolman and the outer rows of the pelisse, and loops of braid; the pelisse had white lambskin edging. Red or red-brown leather patches were frequently sewn on to reinforce the elbows. The collar and pointed cuffs of the dolman were facing-coloured, edged with braid, of which the design seems to have varied, some sources indicating small trefoils at the point of the cuff. The rear seams of both dolman and pelisse were also trimmed with braid. White breeches with black-tasselled Hessian boots were worn in full dress, and grey or grey-brown overalls on campaign, usually with buttons on the outer seam. The 1803 shako was like that of the infantry: widening slightly towards the top, of black felt with a glazed leather peak, it had a lace upper band, and the national cockade on the front connected by a lace loop to a pompon at the upper edge. A length of braided cord was wrapped around the upper edge of the cap, usually three times, with 'raquettes' and tassels hanging at the right. A white 'falling' plume was worn in full dress. The pompon and cords were white for a regiment's 1st Battalion and red for the 2nd, though variations are recorded such as the mixed red and white cords of the Isum, matching their braid at the early period. The sash was usually of the pelisse colour with barrels of braid colour, though again variations are recorded, such as the blue sash with yellow barrels of the Akhtyrsk.

Hussars carried curved sabres with brass or iron stirrup hilts (gilt for officers), with black leather grips bound with brass wire; the scabbard was leather with a steel or brass chape and throat and with suspension rings, the fittings so large that (being pierced) the scabbard appeared to be made of metal with leather inserts. The waist belt and slings were dark red leather, the reverse of the sabretache usually fawn or brown leather; the face was usually of the dolman colour, edged with lace and bearing the crowned Imperial cypher ('A' over

'1'). A leather pouch was worn on a dark red leather belt over the right shoulder; the carbine belt over the left shoulder was white with iron fittings. Harness was black leather, the Hungarian saddle having a shabraque with rounded front corners and pointed rear, with vandyck edging and bearing a crowned Imperial cypher in the rear corners. At the rear of the saddle was a grey portmanteau, as for cuirassiers.

Officers had metallic braid; grey fur on the pelisse; often metal pouches bearing an eagle, on lace-covered belts; sashes of mixed silver, black and orange with silver barrels; and more elaborate embroidery on the sabretache. Some officers' shakos had small, gilt double-eagle badges on either side, and looped gilt chains suspended around the cap; their plumes were white with a base of mixed black and orange feathers. NCOs had the usual collar- and cuff-lace; black fur on the pelisse; the shako pompon quartered in white (sides) and black-and-orange (top and bottom), and a white plume with an orange and black tip. Trumpeters had red plumes, 'swallows'-nest' wings and trumpet cords in the lace colour. The Isum Regt. was awarded silver trumpets for capturing a standard, and rescuing Barclay de Tolly at Eylau.

Uniform distinctions in 1805 were as Table 2. Exceptions to the rule that sabretaches were of the

dolman colour were: Soum, turquoise; Elizabethgrad, red; Isum, yellow; with lace of the braid-colour except: Isum, yellow; White Russia, white.

In 1807 the cane was abolished and at the end of that year mixed braid was replaced by solid colours, and cords became white instead of battalion-coloured. In 1809 officers' metallic braid was restricted to full dress, and in common with the rest of the army discontinued altogether in 1812 for reasons of economy, though some officers preferred finer silk braid instead of wool. In 1809 a new shako was adopted, as in the infantry, with leather reinforcing but unaltered plume and cockade; the pompon took the colour of the braid.

In the same year new colours were adopted (see Table 3), which remained current for the rest of the period; (W) or (Y) indicates white or yellow buttons and braid.

Uniform variations are recorded, probably resulting from delays in introduction of new patterns as well as from strictures of supply. For example, as late as 1812 the Elizabethgrad wore either red facings or lace ('Capt. Fritz' noted that year that the dust lay so thick upon his uniform that it concealed the red; whilst the Elberfeld MS shows red braid in 1814, with the old red shako cords and pompon as well).

The 1809 sabre had a curved blade as before, but

**Table 2: Hussar regimental distinctions, 1805**

<i>Regt.</i>	<i>Dolman</i>	<i>Pelisse</i>	<i>Collar/Cuffs</i>	<i>Buttons/Braid</i>	<i>Shabraque/Vandyck</i>
Soum	straw yellow	turquoise	turquoise	white	white/white piped turquoise
Elizabethgrad	straw yellow	straw yellow	red	yellow	red/yellow
Pavlograd	dark green	turquoise	turquoise	yellow	turquoise/yellow piped dark green
Mariupol	white	dark blue	yellow	yellow	blue/yellow
Alexandria	black	black	red	white	black/white
Olviopol	dark green	dark green	dark green	white	dark green/white
Isum	red	dark blue	dark blue	yellow/white	dark blue/yellow (or, dark blue/red, piped white)
Akhtyrsk	chestnut	chestnut	yellow	yellow	chestnut/yellow-
White Russia	dark blue	dark blue	red	white/mixed red-&-white	dark blue/white

**Table 3: Hussar regimental distinctions, 1809**

<i>Regt.</i>	<i>Dolman</i>	<i>Pelisse</i>	<i>Breeches</i>	<i>Collar/ Cuffs</i>	<i>Sabretache/Lace</i>	<i>Shabraque/Vandyck</i>
Soum (W)	grey	grey	red	red	red/white	grey/red
Pavlograd (Y)	dk green	turquoise	dk green	turquoise	dk green/red	dk green/red
Elizabethgrad (Y)	grey	grey	dk green	grey	dk green/yellow	dk green/yellow
Mariupol (Y)	dk blue	dk blue	dk blue	yellow	dk blue/yellow	dk blue/yellow
Alexandria (W)	black	black	black	red	black/red	black/red
Olviopol (W)	dk green	dk green	red	red	dk green/red	dk green/red
Isum (W)	red	dk blue	dk blue	dk blue	red/white	dk blue/white
Akhtyrsk (Y)	chestnut	chestnut	dk blue	yellow	chestnut/yellow	dk blue/yellow
White Russia (W)	dk blue	red	dk blue	red	red/white	dk blue/white
Grodno (W)	dk blue	dk blue	dk blue	lt blue	dk blue/lt blue	dk blue/lt blue
Loubny (W)	dk blue	dk blue	dk blue	yellow	dk blue/white	dk blue/white

a brass or iron triple-bar guard and leather grip, and iron scabbard with two rings; but probably the earlier stirrup-hilted sabre remained in use for some time.

In 1810 the plume became narrower and shorter; and in 1812 the scuttle-shaped *kiwer* shako was introduced, as for the infantry, with pompon and cords of the braid colour, though older red or white cords apparently continued in use. Indeed, the older shako seems to have been worn by some units throughout the period: the Elberfeld MS of 1814 shows the old cap worn by the Elizabethgrad, Isum and Pavlograd, with red cords and pompon, with an Isum soldier wearing dark blue overalls piped red.

In 1812 the Irkhutsk Regt. was formed from the Irkhutsk Dragoons—which had suffered severely in action and was re-established by the absorption of Saltikoff's Hussars—the Irkhutsk Regt. retaining their uniform (as Plate G3).

In 1813 a curved scroll bearing 'For Distinction' in the button colour, for wear on the shako, was awarded to the Akhtyrsk, Alexandria, Mariupol and White Russia, and in 1814 to the Elizabethgrad, Isum, Loubny, Pavlograd and Soum.

Lances were carried in 1812, probably by the front rank of squadrons, although whether they were a universal issue is unknown; red-and-white or blue-and-white pennons were probably most common, though light blue over white are shown

for the Pavlograd, and red over dark blue for the Isum.

## *Uhlans*

Before 1803 the Russian army had no lancer regiments as such, but in that year the existing 'Light Horse' regiments (Polish and Lithuanian Tartars) were converted, the latter being divided into regiments of Lithuanian Horse and Tartar Horse, each of five squadrons; the Polish regiment remained at ten squadrons. In 1805 the Odessa Hussars were converted to Grand Duke Constantine's Uhlans, being issued with lances in 1805 to conform to the equipment of the other regiments. In August 1807 the Tchougouiev Cossacks became Uhlans, and the Volhynie Horse was raised. In 1809 Constantine's was transferred to the Lifeguard; and in 1812 six dragoon regiments were converted to Uhlans. In 1809 establishment was fixed at ten field and one depot squadron for all; in 1815 the Jitomir was re-titled the Borisoglievsk. Organisation in 1812 for a regiment of ten field squadrons comprised a colonel-in-chief, a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel, four majors, six captains, 17 staff officers, 20 lieutenants, 34 cornets, ten sergeant majors, 20 cadets, ten quartermasters, 80 NCOs, 160 flankers, 1,160 lancers, 21 musicians, three religious staff, 17 medical staff, ten barbers, 65

craftsmen, two provosts and 27 train wagon drivers. Flankers were armed with carbines, as for the other cavalry. (The Polish Regt. was slightly different in composition, being formed originally upon the

**Dragoon NCO, shown here with the bicorn in place of the 1803 helmet. Illustrated here is the cuff- and collar-lace; the short gauntlets, revealing the upper edge of the cuffs; and the large disc at the intersection of the guard-bars of the *Pallasch* hilt. Note also the cane, suspended by its cord from the jacket. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**



‘Tovarich’ system in traditional Polish style, originally gentry-lancers with servant-attendants, having instead 720 ‘Tovariches’ [lancers] and 600 flankers. From 1803 both front and rear ranks—originally ‘Tovariches’ and servants respectively—were both styled as ‘Tovariches’.)

Uhlan uniform was in Polish style, the earlier fur-edged *konfederatka* being replaced by a true *czapka* with square cloth top, leather base and peak, white plume rising from a pompon, leather chinstrap, and cords suspended from the right corner and looping around the wearer’s neck. The jacket was a dark blue *kurtka* with short tails, plastron-style lapels, pointed cuffs, and piping on the rear seams in the ‘raspberry’ facing-colour common to all regiments. In 1803 the overalls were dark blue with double raspberry stripe; buttons were white, and fringed white epaulettes were worn on both shoulders. A dark blue cloth girdle with raspberry edge was worn by all except officers, who had the usual sash of rank. The shoulder belt was white leather, the waist belt and sword slings red; the sabre was like that of hussars, and the lance had a red shaft and swallow-tailed pennon. Harness was as for hussars, but the shabraque had rounded ends like the dragoon pattern, bearing the crowned Imperial cypher in the rear corners. NCOs had silver lace on collar and cuffs, canes, quartered pompon and white plume with a mixed black and orange tip (the latter omitted by Viskovatov). Officers had silver epaulettes, white plume with black and orange base, and silver lace edging to the shabraque-edging. Trumpeters had a red plume, white lace and ‘swallows’-nest’ wings beneath the epaulettes.

Distinctions in 1805 were as Table 4. Grand Duke Constantine’s had scarlet facings, epaulettes of mixed red and yellow, yellow buttons, and yellow loops on the collar and cuffs; officers had gold lace, gold-laced belts and *czapka*-cords of silver, black and orange. Their lances had black shafts and red over white pennons. The Volhynie had raspberry facings and white buttons. In 1807 all regiments adopted black lance shafts, and the rank and file, fringeless cloth epaulettes; as in other arms, NCOs’ collar lace was altered in 1809. By 1808 some pennons were solid-coloured and others halved as before, but with alternately-coloured narrow stripes in the middle. Designs were: Polish, 1st Bn. dark blue, 2nd dark blue/raspberry; Tartar, 1st rasp-



**Table 4: Uhlan regimental distinctions, 1805**

<i>Regt.</i>	<i>Collar</i>	<i>Czapka</i>	<i>Shabraque</i>	<i>Pennon</i>
Lithuanian	dark blue piped raspberry	white, raspberry cords	dark blue edged raspberry	raspberry over blue
Tartar	as above	raspberry, white cords	as above	as above
Polish	raspberry piped dark blue	dark blue, white cords	raspberry edged dark blue	blue over raspberry

berry, 2nd raspberry/white; Lithuanian, 1st white, 2nd white/blue; Volhynie, 1st yellow/white, 2nd yellow/raspberry; Tchougouiev, 1st red, 2nd red/blue. Collars were lowered and closed and plumes became thinner in 1812.

In 1812–13 the expanded lancer arm was uniformed as in Table 5. The *czapka* had a black leather top and semi-circular rear section resembling an upturned peak; brass chinscales; cords and pompon button-coloured (the Lithuanian had raspberry pompons, their NCOs having a cross of

mixed white and orange lace upon it); officers' *czapkas* had silver fittings and button-coloured lace, and silver cords. The *kurtka* had facing-coloured cuffs, lapels and piping, dark blue turnbacks piped in the facing colour, and fringeless cloth epaulettes in the button colour. Dark blue trousers had two facing-coloured stripes and a similar piping between; on 1 January 1812 the black leather 'booting' on the trousers was discontinued. Equipment was now white leather; the dark blue shabraque had facing-coloured trim for all (includ-

**Table 5: Uhlan regimental distinctions, 1812–13**

<i>Regt.</i>	<i>Collar/Piping</i>	<i>Czapka/Piping</i>	<i>Facings</i>	<i>Buttons/ Epaulettes</i>	<i>Pennon</i>
Lithuanian	dk blue/raspberry	white/raspberry	raspberry	white	white/blue
Tartar	dk blue/raspberry	raspberry/white	raspberry	white	raspberry/ white
Polish	raspberry/dk blue	dk blue/raspberry	raspberry	white	blue/ raspberry
Volhynie	dk blue	dk blue/yellow	red	yellow	yellow/ raspberry
Tchougouiev	red	red/white	red	white	red/dk blue
Orenburg	raspberry	raspberry/yellow	raspberry	yellow	blue/ raspberry
Jitomir	red	blue/white	red	white	yellow/blue
Vladimir	blue	blue/yellow	red	yellow	yellow/blue
Taganrog	blue	white/red	red	yellow	yellow/red
Serpuchov	blue	red/yellow	red	yellow	blue/red
Siberia	red	white/red	red	white	yellow/white
Iamburg	raspberry	white/red	raspberry	yellow	white/ raspberry



**Dragoons in greatcoats, 1803-06. This illustrates the ordinary single-breasted greatcoat; note the pleats running down the upper back. The *Pallasch* is suspended from a frog; and the cartridge box bears a circular brass plate embossed with a double eagle. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**

ing officers). The greatcoat was grey-brown for the rank and file and silver-grey for officers, with facing-coloured shoulder straps and collar patch, the collar and seams piped in the facing colour.

Trumpeters' uniforms were laced as before, with red plume; trumpets were brass, though the Tartar and Volhynie regiments were awarded silver 'trumpets of St. George' in August 1813 and November 1814 respectively; cords were black and orange, mixed with white for trumpet-majors.

Among recorded uniform variations are blue/raspberry pennons for the Iamburg, and quartered pennons for the Serpuchov, Taganrog and Vladimir. In campaign dress, grey overalls could be worn and the facing-coloured plastron

removed or buttoned over. Officers' laced pouch belts and sword belts were officially replaced by white leather in 1812, but it is likely that the previous patterns remained in use, having silver plates and 'pickers' attached to silver chains. Officers' pompons were of the usual pattern, silver with the Imperial cypher in the centre.

## *Mounted Jägers (or Chasseurs)*

Following the disbanding of the existing regiments by Czar Paul, Russia possessed no Mounted Jägers (Chasseurs) until the conversion of eight dragoon regiments on 10 November 1812, each regiment to have six field and one depot squadron.

The uniform comprised a short-tailed, double-breasted dark green jacket with closed collar and pointed cuffs, the cuffs and shoulder straps in the facing colour, the collar and turnbacks green piped in the facing; white metal buttons, and white belts. The 1812 *kiwer* had the universal black and orange cockade with white loop, dark green cords and pompon, and white full-dress plume. Overalls were dark green with a double facing-coloured stripe and piping between; the light cavalry sabre had a triple-bar hilt, iron scabbard and red knot. Harness was as for hussars, the dark green shabraque having rounded corners and bearing a facing-coloured edge and Imperial cypher in the rear corners. Officers had a black and orange base to the plume; silver shako cords and pompon; silver cypher on the shabraque (but facing-coloured edge); silver-laced pouch belt (the pouch bearing a silver eagle), and the universal sash. NCOs had the usual lace, quartered pompon, and black and orange plume-tip; trumpeters had red plumes and white lace like the dragoons. Greatcoats were grey with facing-coloured collar. Facing colours were: Regt. Arsamass, blue; Dorpat, pink; Livonia, red; Niejine, light blue; Pereiaslav, raspberry; Sieversk, orange; Tchernigov, ultramarine; and Tiraspol, yellow. In August 1814 the Livonia was awarded a shako-scroll 'For Distinction'.

# The Lifeguard

Ignoring the existing Chevalier-Garde of his mother, upon his accession Czar Paul formed his own bodyguard squadron; and, after once disbanding it, re-created the unit in 1799, and enlarged it in March 1800 to three squadrons. From that date the Chevalier-Garde ceased to be the ceremonial bodyguard it had been since the days of Peter the Great, and became an active cuirassier regiment. The Chevalier-Garde was the senior Lifeguard corps; other cavalry units were the Horse Guards, the Lifeguard Hussars and Lifeguard Cossacks. The latter two corps were formed by Paul from his mother's Lifeguard Hussars and his own Gatchina hussar and cossack regiments; originally styled the 'Life-Hussar Cossack Regiment', it was split into separate regiments after only one month. Each Lifeguard regiment had four squadrons, the Hussars increasing to five in 1802 and the remainder in 1805. In 1809 the Grand Duke Constantine's Uhlans passed into the Lifeguard, being divided to form the Lifeguard Dragoons and Lifeguard Uhlans. In 1811 another cossack unit, the Black Sea *sotnia* (squadron) was formed, and in that year the Lifeguard cavalry was divided into brigades:

*Guard Cavalry Division:* 1st Bde.: Dragoons, Uhlans  
2nd Bde.: Hussars, Cossacks

*1st Cuirassier Division:* 1st Bde.: Chevalier-Garde,  
Horse Guards

In 1812 all regiments were increased to six field and one depot squadron. During the campaign of that year two provisional units were raised: the Guard Converged Regiment from the depot squadrons of the Guard Hussars, Dragoons and Cossacks; and the Guard Converged Cuirassiers from the Chevalier-Garde and Emperor and Empress (Line) Cuirassiers. In May 1813 the Emperor Cuirassiers passed into the Guard as the Lifeguard Cuirassiers; and in April 1814 a Lifeguard Mounted Jäger regiment was raised, which ultimately became the Lifeguard Dragoons when the existing Dragoons were re-styled as Lifeguard Horse Grenadiers. Divisional organisation in 1814 was:

*1st Cuirassier Div.:* 1st Bde.: Chevalier-Garde,  
Horse Guards

2nd Bde.: Lifeguard &  
Empress Cuirassiers

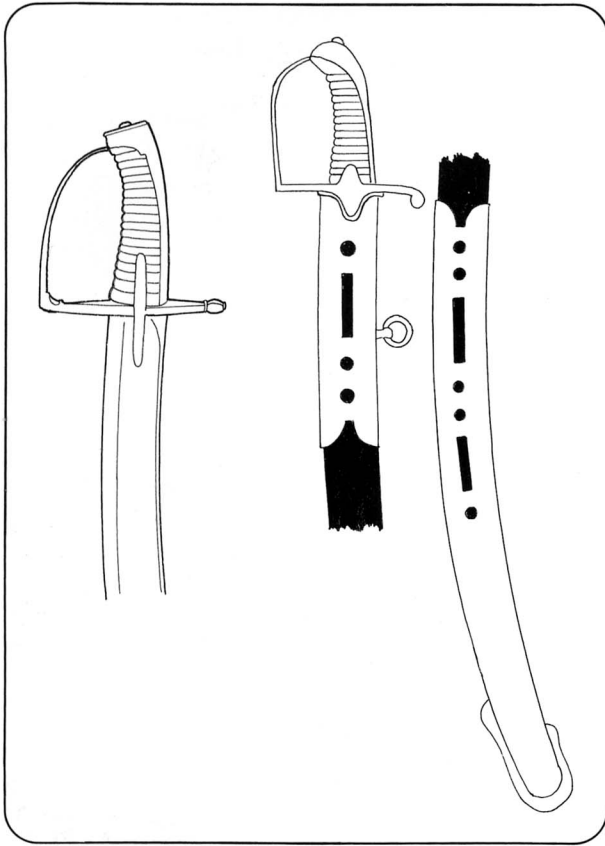
*Lifeguard Light  
Cavalry Div.:*

1st Bde.: Hussars, Mounted  
Jägers, Cossacks

For Lifeguard cavalry, organisation for five squadrons was: a colonel-in-chief, a regimental commander (a general), five colonels, five captains, five staff captains, ten lieutenants, ten cornets (ensigns for Dragoons), five sergeant majors, ten cadets, five quartermasters, 60 NCOs (80 for Dragoons and Uhlans), 660 troopers, 15 trumpeters, one trumpet major, 25 musicians (plus kettle drummer for Chevalier-Garde, Horse Guards and Dragoons), five staff officers, three religious staff, nine medical staff, five barbers, a riding master, 32 craftsmen (33 for Chevalier-Garde, 29 for Hussars), a provost, a wagon-master and 22 train personnel (17 for Uhlans, 16 for Hussars).

**Hussar officer and trumpet-major, 1803-06. Note the officer's metal-flapped pouch bearing an eagle, and the lace on the rear seams of the dolman and pelisse. The trumpet-major's uniform combines elements of musicians' and NCOs' distinctions: laced collar and cuffs and the musicians' red plume with NCOs' black and orange tip, and quartered pompon. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**





*Left*—Hussar sabre, late 18th century. Slightly curved blade 88cm long; black leather grip; guard of either iron or brass. This pattern was supplanted by that of 1809, but probably remained in service with some regiments throughout the period.

*Right*—Hussar sabre of the pre-1809 pattern, showing the design of the metal locket and chape, pierced with rectangles and circles to reveal the leather underneath.

horse furniture bore the star in white in the rear shabraque corners and holster caps; the lace edging was yellow with a central black stripe on shabraque and holster caps. Officers had silver lace, and their shabraque stars were silver with an orange central disc surrounded by a blue strap.

Two varieties of greatcoat were used: in winter, a single-breasted grey coat with black collar and shoulder straps; another 'stable-dress greatcoat' was white, double-breasted, with a short shoulder cape and the same deep cuffs as the former. The *bonnet de police* was white with a black lower section and red piping, and a mixed red and white tassel with circlet of squadron colour. In walking-out dress NCOs retained the bicorn, with a black and orange cockade and white loop, and white feathering along the upper edge. Officers' undress comprised a bicorn with silver loop and corner-tassels, and a 'falling' white plume with yellow base; dark green single-breasted *surtout* with black piping, silver buttons and epaulettes; dark green breeches; a sword suspended from a frog on a waist belt under the *surtout*; and a black shabraque with silver lace edging, bearing a silver knot device on the rear corners and holster caps. Undress for special occasions consisted of the same hat; a double-breasted scarlet coatee with black facings piped white, with silver buttons, loops and epaulettes as on the dress jacket; and white breeches.

The cuirassiers' uniform-changes affected equally the Chevalier-Garde; in 1808 the caterpillar helmet crest was replaced by horsehair, the previous pattern being retained by officers in parade dress until 1812. Black cuirasses were adopted in 1812, and lower, closed collars. As for the Line, carbines were withdrawn from all except flankers from 1812 to 1814. The 1811 forage cap was white with a black band; after 1813 the greatcoat had a grey collar piped red, and black shoulder straps. The *Pallasch* carried before the issue of the 1809 sabre was like that of the Line, but the half-basket hilt included a huge, crowned, double eagle device.

Like the Lifeguard infantry, the cavalry was the élite of the army: as Londonderry noted, 'There is . . . a wide difference between the staple of the Russian Army and the Emperor's guards. The latter are very select . . . nothing, indeed, can be superior . . . The cuirassiers are equally large and stout: the discipline and well-dressed state of these men are very imposing'.

Uniforms of the Lifeguard units were based on those of the equivalent Line formations, as follows; except where stated otherwise, uniforms were of Line pattern in all respects.

### **Chevalier-Garde**

This most prestigious of all Russian regiments wore a white cuirassier uniform with scarlet facings, white piping on collar and cuffs, and the 'guard loops' or *pellitzi* on the collar and cuffs—a distinction originally of a point-ended red bar with yellow lace edges and crosses, and later in the more usual German style of a yellow bar with projections at each end. The helmet plate and pouch bore the star of St. Andrew; buttons were white. The scarlet

Trumpeters had red helmet crests, facing-coloured wings, and lace on the seams, wings, sleeves (six chevrons until 1812, eight thereafter) and breast (pointed loops); until 1812 the lace was red with yellow crosses, and after 1812 yellow with a red stripe. Silver trumpets had red and yellow cords. Kettle drummers (abolished from Line regiments in 1811) were dressed like trumpeters, their drums being silver with red velvet banners edged with a gold fringe and bearing alternate stars of St. Andrew (as on officers' housings) and gold, crowned Imperial cyphers.

Horses were organised into the following squadron colours:

Sqn.	1808	1810	1812
1st	bay, grey	bay	bay
2nd	chestnut, auburn	dark	chestnut
3rd	chestnut, grey, auburn	chestnut, brown	grey
4th	as 3rd	grey, dark	black
5th	bay, grey	dk brown, black	bay

### Horse Guards

The Horse Guards were equipped as the Chevalier-Garde, with the following differences: red facings without white piping; yellow buttons; dark blue shabraque, with an edge of yellow and a red central stripe. Officers' undress coatees had gold loops and blue collar, cuffs and turnbacks; the green undress coatee had scarlet piping on collar, cuffs and turnbacks. The *bonnet de police* had a red lower band, and the 1811 pattern also had a red band. Greatcoats had red shoulder straps and grey collars piped red.

### Lifeguard Cuirassiers

The Lifeguard Cuirassiers retained the uniform of the Emperor Regt., their helmets receiving the 'Guard star' in 1814. *Pettitzi* were white; the sky blue shabraques and holster caps received 'Guard' lace, white with a sky blue stripe. Trumpeters kept their previous white lace with a sky blue stripe; trumpets were brass with sky blue and white cords. The forage cap had a sky blue band, and the greatcoats had sky blue piping and shoulder straps, and a sky blue point-ended collar patch with a button at the point.



**Aleksandrov, a twice-decorated officer of the Mariupol Hussars, whose uniform is shown in this engraving. Aleksandrov was the most unusual officer in the Russian army, as 'he' was in fact a girl—Nadezhda Durova, aged 29 when she was wounded at Borodino. She remained undiscovered even when serving as Kutuzov's orderly! Illustrated here is the officers' shako pompon, of metallic braid bearing the Imperial cypher in the centre.**

### Lifeguard Dragons

See text to Plate D3.

### Lifeguard Hussars

The Lifeguard Hussars' early uniform is shown in Plate A2. Thereafter it resembled that of the Line hussars: dark blue dolman with red collar and cuffs, red pelisse with white fur for other ranks, brown for NCOs and black for officers; yellow braid and buttons; and red sash with yellow barrels. The red sabretache had yellow lace; the shabraque was dark blue with yellow vandyck piped red, bearing a mixed red and yellow braid Imperial cypher in the rear corners. The shako had a white plume, red pompon and mixed red and yellow cords. In full dress officers wore a leopardskin pelt instead of a



**Officer, Lifeguard Hussars, 1815.** Though post-dating Russia's active participation in the Napoleonic Wars by a few months, this contemporary print depicts the rear of the hussar uniform: note the wide lace ornamenting the rear seams of the dolman. The shako is the tall cap of French pattern which replaced the distinctive but short-lived 1812 *kiwer*.

pelisse, edged yellow and lined red, with red ears on the head and silver claws. Their red sabretache had a gold lace edge, and a gold crowned cypher and green palm-branches in the centre; their shabraque was dark blue edged with wavy gold lace, and a gold cypher. The pouch belt was red leather, with gold lace edged with blue silk. In 1809 the white breeches were replaced by dark blue with a yellow stripe (gold for officers) in full dress; the dolman changed to red with blue facings, and the sash to blue with yellow barrels; the shako was given a brass double eagle plate, a yellow pompon with a red centre and a narrow white plume. NCOs' plumes retained the usual black and orange tip, but officers' plumes were white, and cords silver. In 1810 the other ranks' shako cords became yellow, and the

plume narrower, and in 1812 the concave-topped *kiwer* was adopted.

### **Lifeguard Mounted Jägers**

The Lifeguard Mounted Jägers wore a uniform like the Line, with red facings, silver eagle shako plate, green plume, white cords and pompon, and the star of St. Andrew on their accoutrements. *Pellitzi* were white with a red stripe; trumpeters' lace, yellow with a red stripe. Shabraques were red, edged with white lace with a central green stripe, and with red and white cyphers in the rear corners; for officers edging was silver with a green stripe, and a silver star of St. Andrew was carried in the rear corners.

### **Lifeguard Uhlans**

The Lifeguard Uhlans originally wore the uniform of Constantine's. By 1812 it consisted of a red *czapka* (blue earlier) with a white plume, brass eagle plate, mixed red and yellow piping and cords and a yellow pompon (red in 1813). Facings were red, the buttons and *pellitzi* yellow (a single loop upon the cuff) and epaulettes red and yellow. They had white leather equipment, but red sword belts; the shabraque had yellow lace with a central red stripe, and red and yellow cyphers. Officers had silver cap cords, gold epaulettes and lace, a gold-laced pouch belt with silver fittings, and shabraques with a gold lace edge with a central red stripe and gold cyphers. Trumpeters had yellow lace and a red plume, and silver 'St. George' trumpets with black and orange cords. The lance pennon was the usual pattern, yellow over white.

### **Lifeguard Cossacks**

The original uniform was that shown in Plate A3, later becoming more formalised, so that by 1812 it included a cylindrical black fur busby with red bag, yellow cords, and a white plume at the left; a tail-less demi-kaftan in summer, in scarlet with yellow fringeless epaulettes and yellow *pellitzi* with a red stripe adopted in 1809, fastened without buttons; a narrow white girdle (the usual sash for officers), and baggy dark blue trousers. In winter a long-skirted dark blue kaftan was worn, with the same lace and epaulettes. Equipment and pouches were red leather; the curved hussar sabre had a red knot with a squadron-coloured tassel as usual. Greatcoats were grey-brown with red collars and shoulder

straps. In 1812 a peakless forage cap of the usual form was adopted, red with dark blue band and piping, and yellow squadron identification on the front. The 'Tartar' saddle with a black harness had a rectangular scarlet shabraque with white lace; the lances had red shafts. NCOs had canes, and a black-and-orange tip to the plume until 1809, when silver rank-lace was adopted in addition; trumpeters had red plumes and yellow lace in the usual fashion. Officers' uniforms are covered by Plate G2.

## *Opolchenie and Foreign Corps'*

As for the infantry *opolchenie* (militia), cavalry units were formed in July 1812 as a series of 'cossack' (i.e. mounted) militia regiments, the following numbers for various provinces: Moscow, two regiments; Tver, one; Jaroslav, one; Kaluga, one; Little Russia, nine; Orenburg, 24; Don, 26; Poltava, nine; Riazan, two; Tula, two; St. Petersburg, two; and Simbirsk, one. All were disbanded in 1813–14, excluding the Poltava cossacks which existed until 1816. Examples of uniform are shown in Plates G3, G4 and H2.

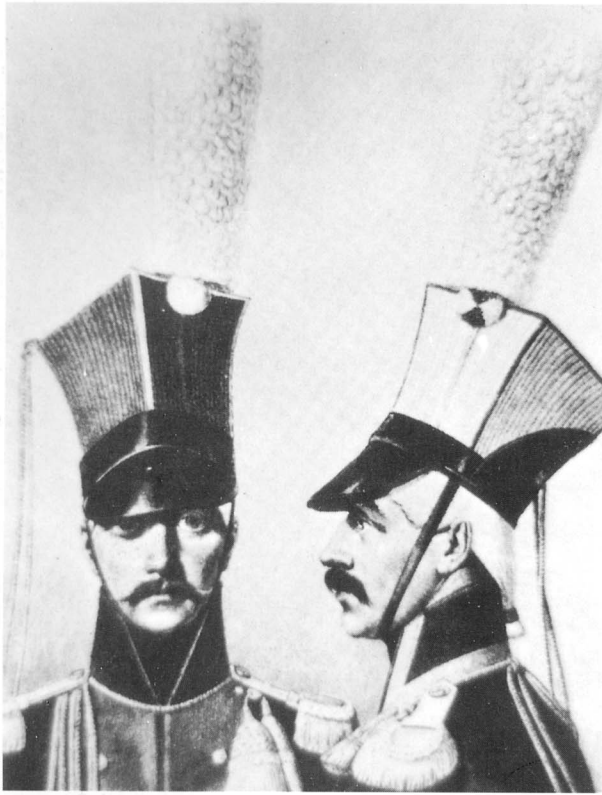
The Russian army's 'foreign' units wore variations of regulation uniform. The *Armée de Condé* included two cavalry regiments: the *Régiment Noble à Cheval de Berry* wore a bicorn with a universal cockade, black plume with an orange base; dark green coat with straw yellow lining, breeches and waistcoat, black folding collar, cuffs, lapels and shoulder straps, yellow lace loops and buttons, a gold aiguillette on the right; high boots, white equipment, and black sword knot with a tassel coloured white, orange, black, blue and green respectively for the 1st–5th Squadrons. The black shabraque had a yellow lace border. NCOs had gold lace, and black plumes with a yellow base; officers had white plumes, gold lace, and the universal sash. Trumpeters had a red feathered edge to the hat, black wings, the usual lace (white, edged black), and white, green and black trumpet cords. The *Dragons d'Enghien* had a similar uniform, but minus lapels, and with six button loops on the breast, white lace with a green centre, white buttons



**Officer, Lithuanian Tartars, 1801–03. This early version of the Uhlan uniform includes the *konfederatka*, the peakless version of the *czapka*. Dark blue uniform with crimson facings and trouser-stripes, silver buttons and epaulettes; dark blue shabraque with crimson trim, the edging piped in silver. Note the glazed leather false boots on the overalls. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**

and silver aiguillette; officers' lace was silver, and trumpeters' lace white with green crosses.

The Russo–German Legion formed in 1812 from German prisoners of war included two hussar regiments by 1813, whose uniform is shown in the Elberfeld MS. The *1st Regt.* had the 1812 *kiwer* with universal cockade, red pompon with white centre, brass chinscales and white cords; dark green dolman and pelisse with yellow braid, red facings and white fur; grey overalls with black reinforcing; red sash with yellow barrels; and black leather equipment. The *2nd Regt.* had a similar shako with a drooping white plume, black dolman and pelisse with black braid, sky blue facings and brown fur, sky blue sash (including barrels) and black overalls.



The early Uhlan *czapka* with a lower leather band; this increased in depth in later years. The NCO (right) wears the rank distinctions of collar lace and quartered pompon; but the orange and black plume tip is not shown. (Engraving after Viskovatov)

## Cossacks

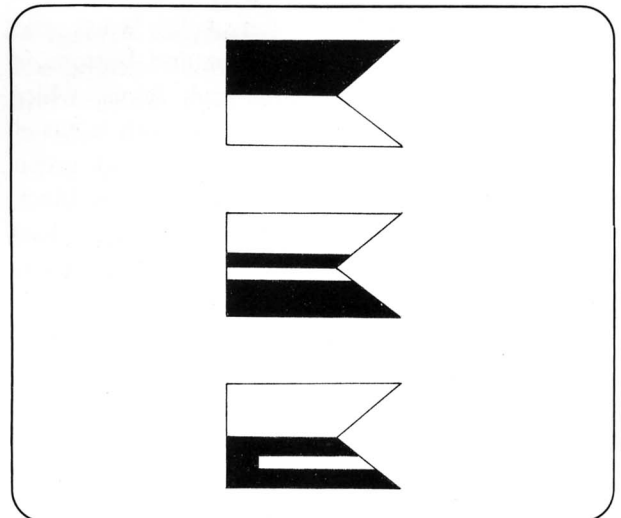
The Cossacks were Russia's unique (and almost inexhaustibly vast) horde of irregular cavalry, whose value as skirmishers, raiders and scouts was incalculable. Rapacious and merciless, their reputation was such that their cry 'hurrah!' could throw whole columns into panic, whilst their harrying tactics had immense effect in destroying the *Grande Armée* in 1812.

Descendants of outlaws settled in southern Russia; they were commanded by their tribal chiefs (*atamans*), organised according to their *voisko* (territory) into *sotnias* (squadrons) and thence into regiments. Riding rough ponies, their endurance was legendary, as Sir Robert Ker Porter wrote: 'The men are robust and fit for service; their horses appear completely the reverse: mean in shape, and slouching in motion, every limb speaks of langour, and every moment you expect to see them drop down dead under their heavy burthen: but so false are these shows, that there is not a more hardy animal existing; it will travel incalculable journeys,

and remain exposed to the heat or cold, day and night, without manifesting any sense of inconvenience'. Sir Robert Wilson noted that they could travel seemingly endless distances at five miles per hour, 'or, in his speed, dispute the race with the swiftest'; 'there is no cavalry more serviceable or formidable if suitably directed'. Each man was obliged to maintain his own mount, and each had spare horses; and as they were embodied only in wartime, they provided a vast resource but 'do not put us to the useless expense of maintaining them in peace'.

Their irregular tactics had critics; Dumouçeau said that although they made a frightful noise, 'if you keep up a bold front and are not intimidated . . . they will not press home the attack, but stop dead or fall back . . . They never hold their ground or risk personal combat unless they have odds in their favour of several to one'. Yet, wrote Wilson, when the cossacks charged (never in formation, but in a 'swarm'), with a yell 'more frightful and terrific than the war-whoop of the Canadian savages',

Lance pennon designs. Top: 'halved' style of early Uhlan corps, hussars and some cossacks (for the Ukranian Cossacks, facing colour over white for all except the 4th Regt., who had white facings; their pennons were blue over white). Centre: later Uhlan pattern, with alternately-coloured central stripes. Bottom: Siberian Cossacks' pattern, of white top and stripe and coloured lower portion.





- 1: NCO, Ni jegorod Dragoons, c. 1799  
2: NCO, Lifeguard Hussars, 1799  
3: Trooper, Lifeguard Ural Cossack Sotnia, 1799  
4: Cossack, 1799



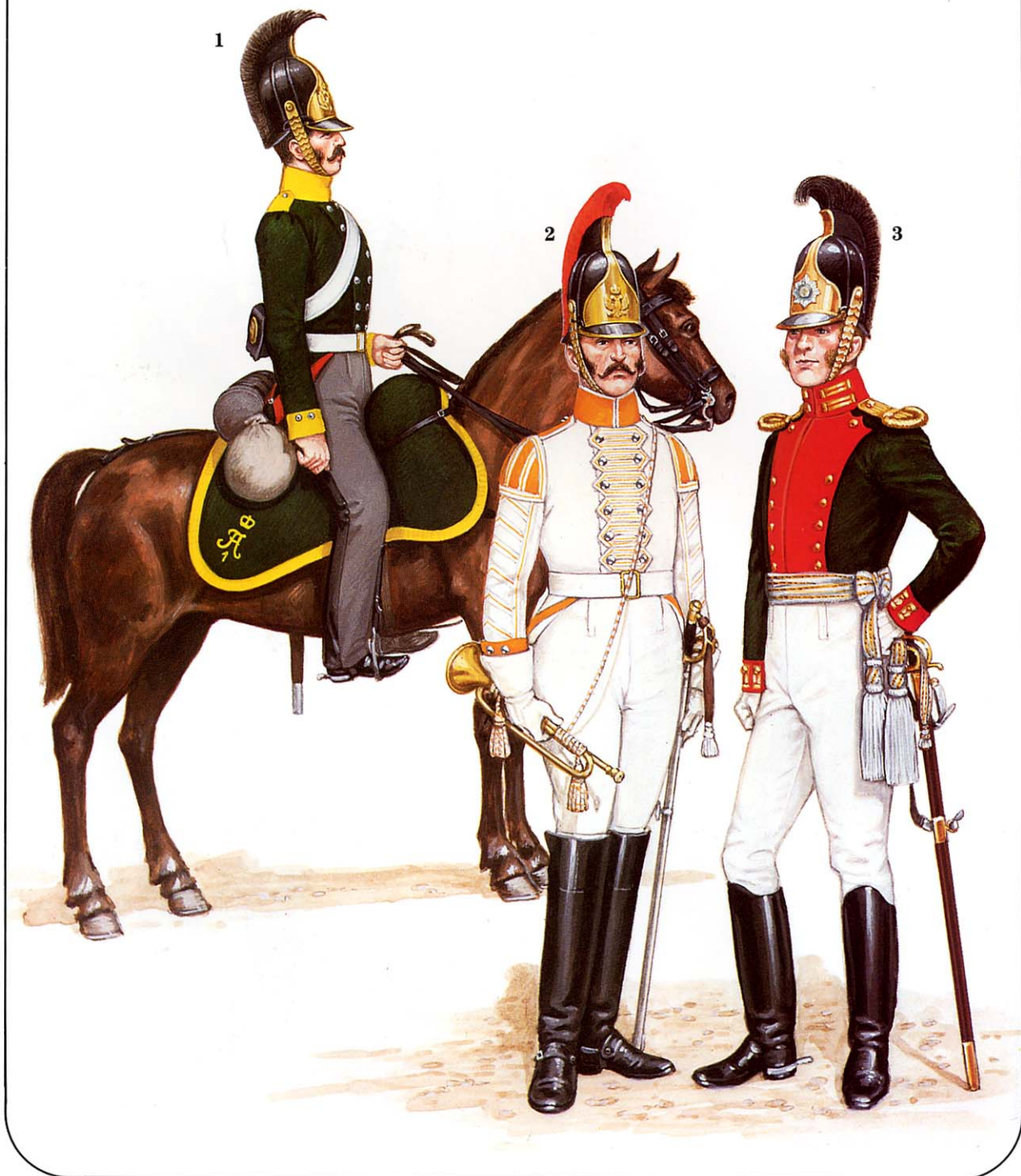
- 1: Trooper, Chevalier-Garde, full dress, 1805  
2: NCO, Little Russia Cuirassiers, full dress, 1805  
3: Officer, Smolensk Dragoons, full dress, 1805



- 1: NCO, White Russia Hussars, full dress, 1805
- 2: Officer, Pavlograd Hussars, 1807
- 3: Trooper, Soum Hussars, 1805-07
- 4: Trumpeter, Lithuanian Uhlands, 1805



- 1: Trooper, Kinburn Dragoons, campaign, 1813  
2: Trumpeter, Ekaterinoslav Cuirassiers, 1812  
3: Officer, Lifeguard Dragoons, 1812



- 1: Officer, Chevalier-Garde, campaign, 1812  
2: Trooper, Novgorod Cuirassiers, campaign, 1813  
3: Trooper, Pskov Cuirassiers, winter 1813  
4: Trooper, Gluchov Cuirassiers, undress, 1812



- 1: Trooper, Pavlograd Hussars, 1812  
2: Trooper, Lithuanian Uhlands, 1812  
3: NCO, Tiraspol Mounted Jägers, 1813



- 1: Trooper, Lifeguard Hussars, full dress, 1812
- 2: Officer, Lifeguard Cossacks, campaign, 1812
- 3: Trooper, Duke of Saltikoff's Hussars, 1812
- 4: Trooper, Novgorod opolchenie, 1812



- 1: Don Cossack, campaign, 1812-14
- 2: Trooper, 1st St. Petersburg 'Cossacks', 1812
- 3: Bashkir, 1812-14
- 4: Ural Cossack, campaign, 1812-14





‘terror preceded his charge’; and the lance, the ‘toy of his infancy’, he wielded ‘with the address and freedom that the best swordsmen in Europe would use his weapon’.

In his personality, the cossack had admirers: the Prussian Col. von Boyen saw him as ‘the child of nature’: ‘In unspoiled human nature there is a heart of gold, beside which our own culture appears to me like mere silver’. The cossack was devoted to his officers, Czar and religion; but even Wilson admitted that once in a foreign land he became ‘the lawless Scythian, respecting no property or rights’, and often ‘more fatal to friends than foes’. Loot appeared their prime concern; in Germany a new prayer was invented: ‘*De Cossaquibus, Domine, libera nos!*’. The British officer Thomas Austin, who served with them, thought them ‘a cruel horde of plunderers, preying alike on friends and foes’, ‘never restrained in their actions by an inconvenient sense of moral obligations’; in fact a cossack officer warned him to conceal his bullion epaulettes, as the cossacks would murder him to possess them! A report of 1813 describes them as ‘terrible and unsparing . . . In their living, the Cossacks are very gross, and commit great excesses in drinking. The quantity of spirits they swallow without intoxication is truly astonishing’. The British officer R. B. James thought them ‘great gluttons—and greater drunkards—although scarce able to stand, when once mounted, they seldom fail in their duty’. Above all, they were resourceful, capable of ‘extricating themselves out of difficulties on all emergencies . . . For want of artillerymen they themselves served the artillery . . . nothing stops these warriors’.

Several sources describe the ‘regulation’ uniform of the various *voiskos*, but in practice it appears that these were not often seen in the field, as contemporary pictures show every variety from regulation dress to totally ‘tribal’ costume. Wilson described a typical uniform: ‘His dress is simple; a blue jacket (with a white frog on the cuff or cape), fastened with hooks; a pair of loose trousers, plaited so as to cover and conceal the opening in front; a pair of short boots, a black cap made of the unborn lamb, from which depends a red pandour sack, a plume on the side of the cap, or, what is more common, except in the Attaman’s [sic] regiment, merely a cloth cap with a kind of sack hanging



**Officer, Lifeguard Hussars, full dress, 1798. Note here the busby; the double eagle device on the sabretache; and the leopardskin pelt worn for parade instead of a pelisse. Colouring as Plate A2. The knotted and tasselled harness decoration was used only for parade. The shabraque bears the Cyrillic initial of Czar Paul. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**

behind, in which he stuffs his provisions or other articles—and a white or black hair Circassian short cloak’. Porter added that red facings and trouser stripes were common; and ‘a broad leather belt, containing cartridges, and to which is suspended a light sabre, confines their waists. Their principal weapons are a pike about eight feet long, and a pair of pistols. A black belt crosses their left shoulder, to which is attached a sort of tin cartouch box, holding ammunition, and surmounted with a ramrod. An uncouth saddle is bound on the horse, somewhat like a doubled pillow, under which is a square piece of oil cloth painted in various colours’. Wilson added that they used snaffle bridles, so that their horses could graze without having to remove the harnesses.

A report of 1813 stated: ‘It is a rare thing indeed to see the Cossacks in their uniform . . . he has indeed



**Officer, Lifeguard Hussars, full dress, 1801. This shows the French-style cloth mirliton cap worn briefly by hussars from 1801 to the introduction of the shako in 1803. (Engraving after Viskovatov)**

been an unfortunate warrior that is not decked in a suit of French Imperial uniform. The quantity of clothes they carry, thus procured, is astonishing, and suffers no increase or diminution according to the season. It is the state of the war, not of the weather, that regulates the wardrobe of the Cossack'. James wrote that 'some of them appear like Hamlet's grave-digger when taking off their coats—generally four or five; one over the other according to size . . . such a motley crew! They looked like a gang of robbers; at the head of this regiment was a fellow with a big drum—stolen. . .'

Nevertheless, they could appear impressive; Countess Schwerin described the 'splendid Don Cossacks, the humblest of whom looks like a princeling . . . each had two swords, one of which is curved, two pistols, a dagger, a pike, and finally the much dreaded knout. Their first task was always to clean all these weapons, and then used the same oil to smalm down their hair'. (Older cossacks, it was

said, preferred beards, and the younger ones moustaches.) The knout was a whip with an iron-weighted end, generally carried looped around the wrist; and though some 'native' weapons would be used, Austin said that those he met were all most proud of their Birmingham-made sabres!

The regulation uniform of the various *voiskos* was as follows:

**Don Cossacks** (80 regiments—*pulk*—of 500 men each, each of five *sotnias*, the *Ataman pulk* increased to ten—1,000 men—in wartime.) Dark blue long kaftans in winter and short jackets in summer, piped red; facings and trouser stripes chosen by regimental commanders: Ataman regt. had light blue, which was retained even after red facings became universal in 1812. Busby with red bag. Officers had white plumes with black and orange bases, and silver, black and orange cords, and from 1805 silver embroidery on collar and cuffs; universal sash; plumes changed from feather to horsehair in 1809, with silver shoulder cords, replaced by epaulettes in 1814. NCOs had white plumes with black and orange tips, and latterly silver lace. Red lances without pennons.

**Black Sea Cossacks** (Ten mounted and ten foot regiments, each of five *sotnias*.) No regulation uniform: short jackets with false sleeves, baggy trousers and 'native' weapons; common to have a shaven head, or a scalp-lock at the front, and a long moustache. Four Tartar regiments (each five *sotnias*) raised 1808, described by James: '. . . not such good enterprizing soldiers. They were ugly beyond everything—broad low foreheads—small round black eyes like the Chinese—high cheek bones, large mouths—black teeth—pug noses—small chins—and a beautiful copper complexion . . . armed with bows and arrows—Bless their ugly faces. . .'

**Bug Cossacks** (Raised 1803: three *pulks* of five *sotnias* each.) Black busby with white plume and black base, mixed blue and white cords; blue *kurтка* with white cuff piping, collar, shoulder strap piping, buttons and girdle; blue overalls with white stripes; black leather belts, with pistol holster on each side of waist belt; dark blue shabraque edged white. Lance pennon white over dark blue. Officers had silver shoulder cords, cuff- and collar-embroidery, and silver-laced pouch belt and shabraque.

**Orenburg Cossacks** (One regiment of ten

*sotnias*.) As Don Cossacks, but raspberry facings and raspberry and white pennons.

**Siberian Cossacks** (Reorganised 1808 into ten *pulks* of five *sotnias* each.) As Don Cossacks, with red facings, sky blue girdle; Mongol saddles. Officers had gold-laced uniforms and silver collar- and cuff-embroidery after 1809. Lance pennons all had white tops and stripes and coloured bottoms: 1st regt., light green; 2nd, light blue; 3rd, yellow; 4th, dark blue; 5th, raspberry; 6th, chestnut; 7th, orange; 8th, red; 9th, violet; 10th, dark green. 'Regular' uniform adopted 1812: black cylindrical shako with brass chinscales, white cords, white pompon with red centre; dark blue *kurtka* without lapels, fastened with hooks and eyes, red piping on collar, pointed cuffs, shoulder straps and turnbacks; blue Uhlan girdle, edged red; blue overalls with a red stripe, or grey on campaign. Officers had usual

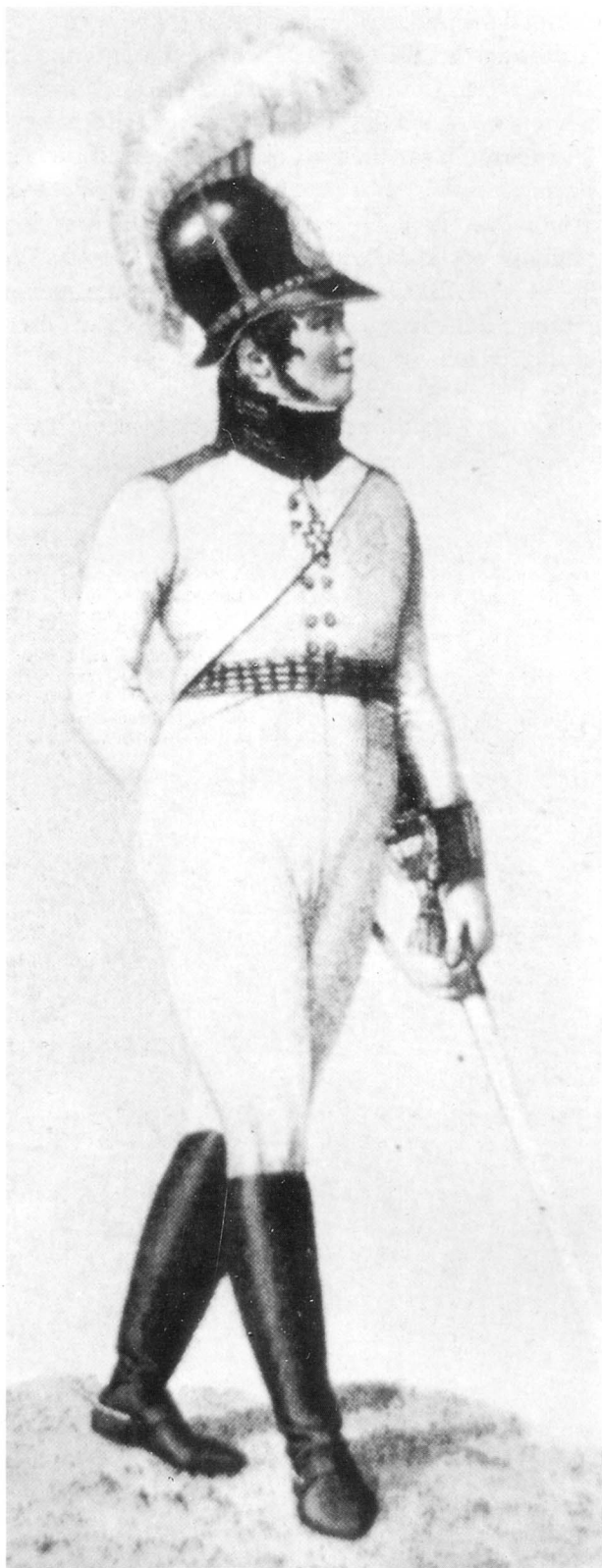
distinctions and gold epaulettes.

**Tchougouiev Cossacks** (Became Uhlans 1808.) Dark green kaftan, red *kurtka* faced dark green, white loops on collar and cuffs (silver for officers).

**Ukranian Cossacks** (Four *pulks* raised 1812.) Facings raspberry for 1st; 2nd, scarlet; 3rd, sky blue; 4th, white. Busby with facing-coloured bag, no plume or cords; dark blue tail-less jacket closed with hooks and eyes, facing-coloured shoulder strap piping, collar and cuffs; facing-coloured Uhlan girdle edged blue; grey overalls with facing-coloured stripe; black leather belts with pistol holster at waist; lance pennon facing colour over white; grey blanket instead of shabraque. NCOs

**Russian troops in France, 1814-15. Second left is a Lifeguard heavy cavalry officer, and second right is an officer wearing the undress frock coat and *furashka* (forage cap). Extreme left is a Pavlov grenadier. (Contemporary engraving)**





had gold rank-lace and carried lances like the troopers, unlike most regiments. Officers had black fur peaked shakos with silver cords and metal chinscales, facing-coloured bag; blue single-breasted *kurtka* coloured as for other ranks, with epaulettes; usual rank distinctions; hussar-style dark blue shabraque with facing-coloured edge and metallic lace cypher in rear corners; metal fittings yellow for first two regiments and white for the others. 16 flankers per *sotnia* had rifled carbines.

**Ural Cossacks** (Organised 1805, ten *pulks* of five *sotnias* each.) Raspberry kaftan with white lace and tall cap (as Plate A3); sky blue breeches with a white stripe; raspberry shabraque with white lace; officers had gold-laced kaftans over sky blue jackets, jacket and trousers silver-laced. Uniformed as Don Cossacks after 1806, with raspberry facings; dark blue girdle; dark blue shabraque trimmed raspberry; officers had raspberry girdles, silver shoulder cords and embroidery on facings.

**Others** Among other 'tribesmen', the most spectacular were the Circassians, who resembled medieval warriors in ancient armour. Countess Kielmannsegge described some who formed the bodyguard of a Caucasian prince, who 'wore coats of chain mail, each of which was valued at 1,000 sheepskins. The Chinese Tartars wore Chinese clothes . . . an Armenian prince . . . appeared wearing black Cossack clothes. Two locks of raven black hair fell down onto his temples from under his black cap. His equally black horse carried bridle and saddle set with brightly coloured precious stones. Behind him rode five horsemen carrying little black flags, followed by his regiment . . .'

The Bashkirs and Kalmucks were even more bizarre—Asiatic tribesmen, some of whom carried only bows and arrows: see Plate H3. Most wore native dress, though two regiments raised in the Caucasus in 1803 and 1811 were uniformed like the Don Cossacks, except for the head-dress, a yellow *konfederatka* (low, peak-less *czapka*) with a black fur base and silver cords for officers, who had embroidered collar and cuffs and silver plaited shoulder cords (epaulettes in 1814). These units

**Grand Duke Constantine as colonel of the Chevalier-Garde, showing the white helmet-crest of generals when wearing regimental uniform; and note how close the buttons are set upon the breast of the jacket. (Engraving after E. S. Henne).**

were properly equipped, including red lances without pennons, not bows and arrows; shabraques were plain dark blue, with silver lace for officers from 1814.

\* \* \*

## Standards

Heavy and medium cavalry carried rectangular standards in a similar fashion to those of the infantry, with one 'white' standard and a number of 'coloured' standards per regiment. The 1797 pattern was replaced in 1803 and again in 1814, and honour-standards 'of St. George' were awarded to deserving regiments from 1806. The Chevalier-Garde carried three standards of 'vexillum' type; the Horse Guards, Line-pattern standards, originally one white and nine coloured, and from 1807 one white and five coloured. The Lifeguard Cossacks carried swallow-tailed guidons, similar to those of ordinary cossack formations, for whom a wide variety of guidons and standards are recorded, probably depending upon the taste of the individual commander. Light cavalry did not carry standards, though the Pavlograd Hussars did, as a mark of special favour; and the Lithuanian and Polish Uhlans had guidons. Details are too extensive to be covered here, but may be found in the companion Men-at-Arms title, MAA78 *Flags of the Napoleonic Wars (2)* (Terence Wise, Osprey 1978).

## The Plates

A1: NCO, *Nijegorod Dragoons, c.1799*

The early dragoon uniform of 18th-century style included a full-skirted coat like that of the infantry, long boots, and a bicorn hat bearing the universal black and orange cockade. The coat was a shade of light green quite distinct from the dark green of the infantry. In this case the skirt lining and turnbacks are buff, though the infantry style was also copied, with scarlet lining. NCO distinctions are the silver lace on collar, cuffs and horizontal pocket flaps, the silver shoulder knot, and cane. Note the hairstyle without sideburns, with the hair rolled over the ear:

only officers were clean-shaven. The sabre is suspended from a frog.

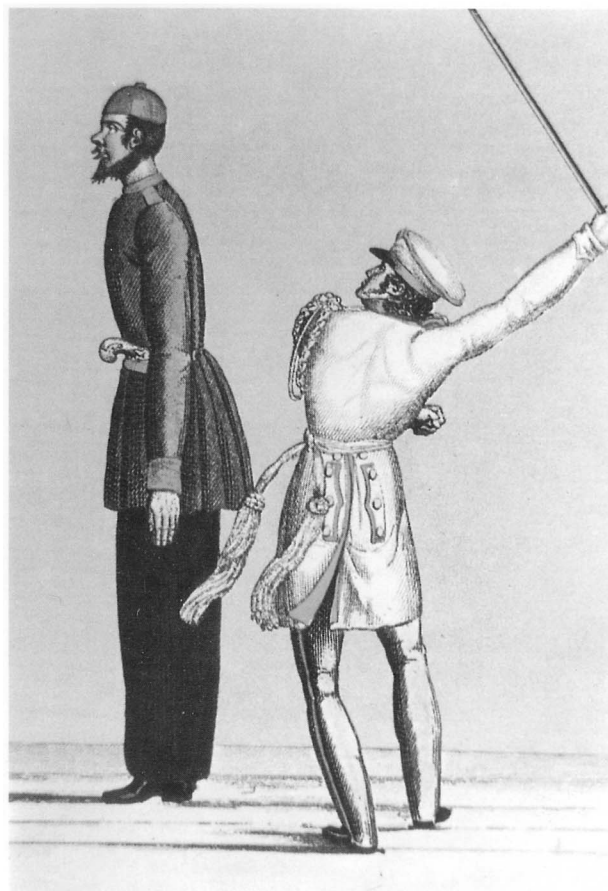
A2: NCO, *Lifeguard Hussars, 1799*

The early hussar uniform included a fur busby or cloth mirliton cap, and the traditional hussar items: braided dolman, fur-edged pelisse, tight breeches and sabretache, here in the red and green colouring of the Lifeguard regiment. The unusual parti-coloured legwear was copied from that of Frederick the Great's hussars.

A3: Trooper, *Lifeguard Ural Cossack Sotnia, 1799*

Originally part of Czar Paul's private army at

**Russian discipline; a cartoon of c.1814 which shows an officer (of cuirassiers?) wearing a red-trimmed white frock coat and *furashka*, chastising a cossack—a telling comment on the severity of corporal punishment usual in the Russian army. White uniforms favoured by Russian officers could prove fatal; Segur recounts how, on the day before Austerlitz, the commander of Napoleon's escort, Capt. Daumesnil, borrowed a carbine and dropped a Russian officer 'who had drawn our attention by the startling whiteness of his uniform'.**



Gatchina, the Lifeguard Ural Cossacks in 1798 wore a uniform based on 'native' dress: raspberry kaftan and baggy trousers, with white lace, and the tall raspberry cloth cap with fur headband. They were armed with a curved sabre, lance and carbine, with black leather equipment but white carbine belt.

*A4: Cossack, 1799*

The cossacks employed in the early campaigns seem to have had no 'uniform' whatever; this is a typical example taken from paintings of the Russian army in Switzerland in 1799 by von Kobell, showing 'native' dress (with which broadly-checked trousers seem to have been popular). According to a contemporary report, the 'notorious Ural cossacks

**The traditional image of the cossack: a trooper wearing a demi-kaftan, the classic, baggy cossack trousers and a peakless cloth cap, armed with a lance, numerous pistols and a 'native' sabre, and mounted upon a typical rough pony. (Engraving after Horace Vernet)**

are, in fact, farmers drawn from the fields by the promise of booty. They are not uniformed, but wear multicoloured peasant clothes . . . they are the best-armed troops in Europe. Each carries a Damascus blade and English pistols'. Cossacks seem to have festooned themselves with weapons, ordinary sabres and the native sword or *shashqua*, as shown here, and doubtless 'native' pistols were also carried.

*B1: Trooper, Chevalier-Garde, full dress, 1805*

In the reign of Czar Paul the Chevalier-Garde had worn white cuirassier uniform with bicorn and scarlet *supreveste* (tabard) with silver edging, bearing a large silver Maltese cross (Paul proclaiming himself Grand Master of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in 1799); but under Alexander their uniform was that of Line cuirassiers, distinguished by *pellitzi* lace and 'Guard star' device. Its membership was exclusive, being 'composed of the most brilliant young men of the Russian nobility', according to Marbot. Their boasting of social





superiority enraged the French, so that at Austerlitz Napoleon's *Grenadiers à Cheval* 'skewered them with their enormous swords and cried out, "Here's something for the St. Petersburg ladies to cry about!"' The scene of this combat was the most terrible sight of the battle, the Chevalier-Garde lying dead in a solid rank.

*B2: NCO, Little Russia Cuirassiers, full dress, 1805*  
 This typical cuirassier uniform includes standard NCO distinctions: the front of the helmet crest white with a vertical orange stripe edged black, lace on the collar and cuffs (including down the rear opening of the 'gauntlet' cuffs); and a cane, carried as a badge of rank and frequently suspended from a button on the jacket. Not being armed with carbines, NCOs wore the pouch belt over the left shoulder, with the pouch at the right rear. Though regulations specified that NCOs' sword knots were to be like those of the rank and file but with a black and orange tassel, some sources suggest the use of squadron colours. Though hair powder was worn

**Cossacks, c.1812-14: a contemporary engraving showing 'uniformed' troopers wearing the cylindrical cloth peaked cap which resembled a shako. The cart with its characteristic yoke was typical of the mass of baggage which accompanied every Russian army; the carter carries a short cossack knout.**

for full dress (on sideburns as well as queue), its use had declined even before the abolition of the queue.

*B3: Officer, Smolensk Dragoons, full dress, 1805*  
 This illustrates the 1803-pattern dragoon uniform, with the double-breasted jacket with standing collar of the same light green shade as before. The helmet has the officers' version of the crest, and the jacket a laced shoulder strap. The sash is the universal type; and note the low riding boots, not the 'topped' variety of cuirassiers. Officers were clean-shaven, but still wore a queue; one observer noted that even among the aristocracy, the hair was 'universally in a state not to be described, and their bodies are only divested of vermin when they frequent the bath . . . the Russian Peasant, and the Russian Prince, are the same; they are all equally barbarous'—a somewhat jaundiced view!

Matvei Ivanovich Platov (1751–1818), the legendary *hetman* (general) of the Don Cossacks. In this print he wears an embroidered kaftan and carries an ancient mace as a staff of office. A colourful and popular figure, he was noted for his uniforms (even creating a female fashion known in Britain as a 'Platoff [sic] cap'); at his reception at the Guildhall in London in June 1814 he wore a diamond-encrusted plume which at that time was said to be worth £10,000. (Engraving by Godby after Orlovski)

*C1: NCO, White Russia Hussars, full dress, 1805*

This uniform includes the NCO distinctions of laced collar and cuffs, quartered pompon, coloured plume-tip, and cane; the sword knot was dark red leather with an orange, white and black tassel. Note







**Platov and his escort, 1812: a typical group of cossacks in semi-'native' dress. Platov is the mounted officer to the right of the standard. A party of French stragglers is attacked in the background. (Aquatint after Gottfried Schadow).**

the 'cadenettes', plaits of hair hanging from the temples.

*C2: Officer, Pavlograd Hussars, 1807*

The officers' variant of the 1803 shako shown here includes gilt chains suspended from gilt double-eagle badges at each side, and a silver pompon below the plume. Other rank-distinctions include metallic lace, sash, and laced pouch belt. Though not compelled to wear moustaches, it appears from contemporary illustrations that many hussar officers did. Light grey pelisse fur was the distinction of officers, but it is possible that regimental variations existed, as one (unproven) suggestion has the Elizabethgrad and White Russia wearing black fur.

*C3: Trooper, Soum Hussars, 1805-07*

This 'campaign' uniform includes the shako with the plume removed, although a hallmark of Russian campaign dress throughout the period was

the wearing of cords as in full dress. The hussar illustrated has service overalls, but still has the pelisse 'slung': on campaign it could be worn as a jacket, over or instead of the dolman. He carries a short-barrelled carbine; Russian equipment was so varied at this period that 11 varieties of carbine and rifle were in use in 1812.

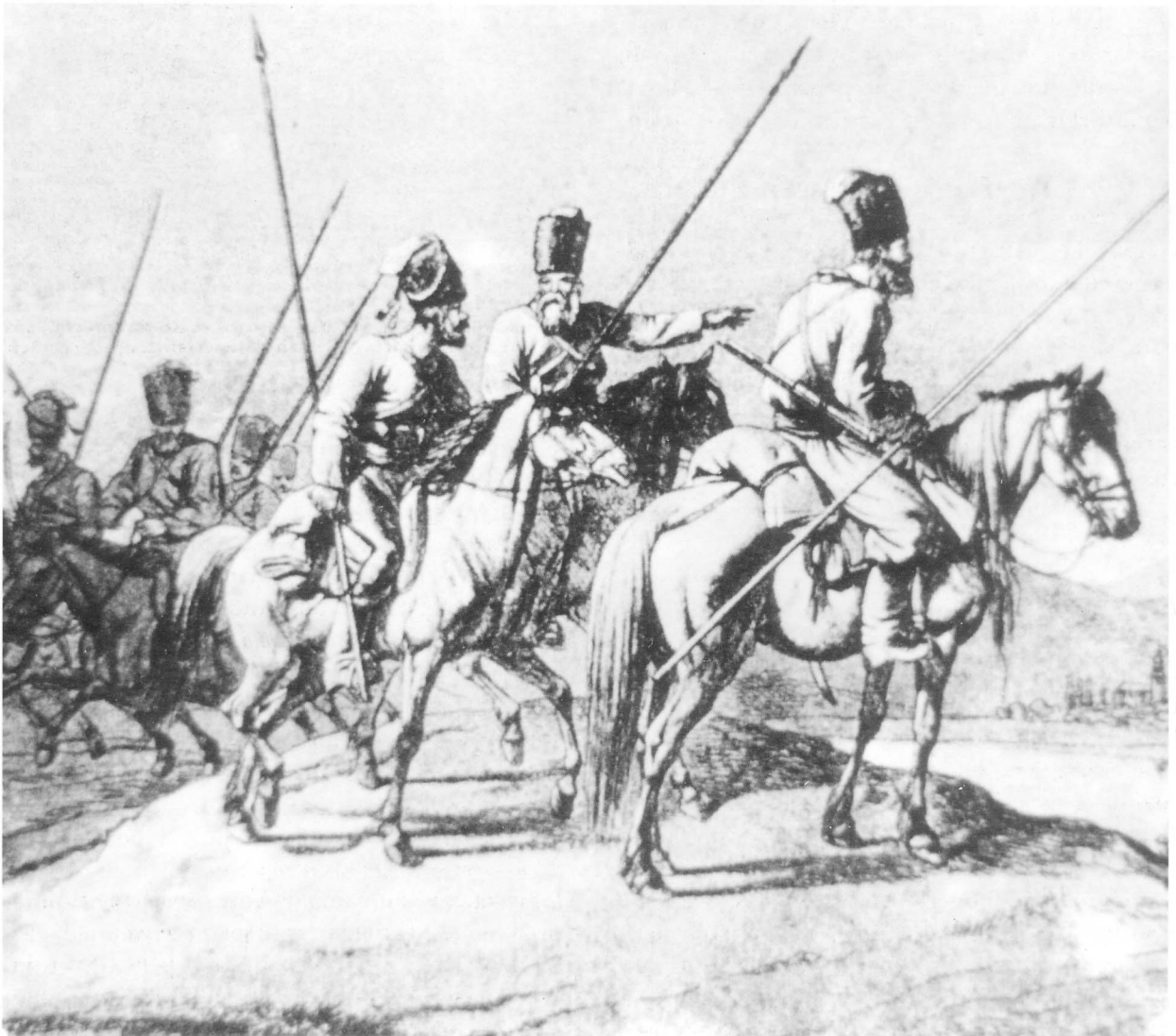
*C4: Trumpeter, Lithuanian Uhlan, 1805*

This depicts the distinctions of trumpeters: red plume (which for NCOs had the usual black and orange tip), 'swallows'-nest' wings and lace; trumpet-majors had the usual NCO lace on collar and cuffs. The earlier pattern of trousers had black leather reinforcement resembling a boot on the lower leg; the girdle shown here is the usual pattern, though some sources suggest a narrow blue outer edge in addition. Black and orange trumpet cords were normally reserved for regiments with 'trumpets of St. George', but are also suggested for other units, although these may have been unlikely.

*D1: Trooper, Kinburn Dragoons, campaign dress, 1813*  
Shown here are the later alterations to dragoon uniform: the helmet with upright horsehair crest, the jacket and shabraque of the darker green introduced in 1807, the former with a lower, closed collar. The trooper illustrated has no carbine belt, the musket having been withdrawn for a short time (though rifled carbines were retained by flankers). The overalls had black leather reinforcement which extended around the rear of the leg, but without buttons on the outer seam. Sword knots were dark red with squadron-coloured tassels.

**Cossack scouts, c.1812; a contemporary engraving showing the typical appearance of cossack horsemen.**

*D2: Trumpeter, Ekaterinoslav Cuirassiers, 1812*  
On both patterns of helmet trumpeters wore a scarlet crest. Their uniform included facing-coloured wings and regimental lace (usually white with interwoven facing-coloured line), though variations in the arrangement of this lace are recorded; on rare occasions the loops on the breast are omitted, though this may be in error. Trumpeters never wore the cuirass, a traditional practice representing their original non-combatant rôle. Trumpet-majors wore this uniform with the usual NCO distinctions. Prior to 1811, cavalry regiments possessed kettledrummers, but in December of that year they were discontinued for all except the Lifeguard heavy cavalry.



*D3: Officer, Lifeguard Dragoons, 1812*

The Lifeguard Dragoons wore a uniform like their Line equivalent, with scarlet facings, but uniquely had scarlet lapels. They had yellow *pellitzi*; a star of St. Andrew on the helmet plate (officers' stars were silver with a coloured enamel centre); and dragoon shabraques of dark green with yellow edging with a central red stripe, bearing a crowned Imperial cypher in the rear corners (for officers, with gold edge and bearing a silver Guard star). In 1814 the grey service overalls received a double red stripe and piping.

*E1: Officer, Chevalier-Garde, campaign dress, 1812*

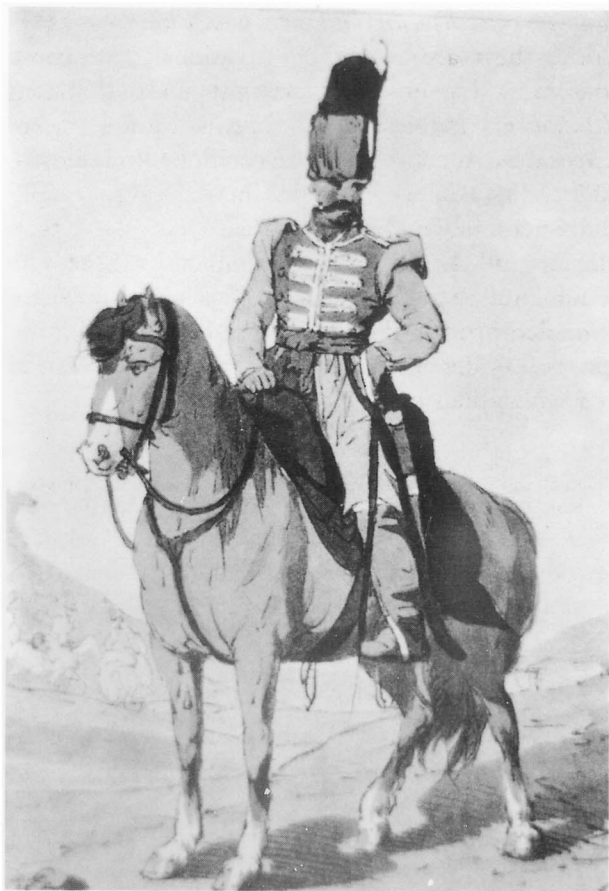
An alternative to the white jacket was the dark green, double-breasted frock coat with black facings piped scarlet, worn here with grey service overalls and the ordinary helmet. The pouch belt was similar to that worn by most cavalry officers, in this case with orange edges; the pouch bore the usual 'Guard star'.

*E2: Trooper, Novgorod Cuirassiers, campaign dress, 1813*

This depicts cuirassier uniform after the issue of the cuirass. The campaign overalls are unlikely to have replaced completely the white breeches and long boots; indeed, some doubt exists over the exact pattern of overall used at this time, some being shown with leather reinforcing (which appears to have extended around the rear of the leg) and some without; the pattern introduced in 1814 had facing-coloured stripes. Only one shoulder belt is shown here, the carbine having been withdrawn temporarily for all except flankers.

*E3: Trooper, Pskov Cuirassiers, winter campaign dress, 1813*

On campaign in bad weather it was possible to wear the cuirass over the greatcoat, with equipment atop both. This shows the later greatcoat with lower, closed collar, matching that of the 1812 jacket. The coat has collar and shoulder straps in the raspberry facing of the Pskov; alternatively, grey with facing-coloured piping could be used. The Pskov (converted to cuirassiers in 1812) was unique in wearing French-style cuirasses (perhaps even captured from the French) in polished iron, and brass or copper for officers, instead of the usual black-enamelled variety. This trooper wears bree-



**Cossack officer, 1804, wearing a knee-length kaftan and tall cloth cap; the knout hangs from his left wrist. (Engraving after J. A. Atkinson)**

ches and long boots in place of the overalls and short boots also worn on campaign.

*E4: Trooper, Gluchov Cuirassiers, undress, 1812*

The undress uniform shown here consists of the ordinary jacket, overalls and the 1811-pattern peakless forage cap or *furashka*, which replaced the earlier *bonnet de police* style. It had a facing-coloured band and piping, with a numeral and the Cyrillic initial for 'squadron'; officers appear on occasion to have worn the ordinary soldier's *furashka*, generally with a peak.

*F1: Trooper, Pavlograd Hussars, 1812*

This trooper wears campaign dress, with plume and pelisse removed (the latter despite the weather: the Elberfeld MS shows hussars minus pelisse even in the winter of 1813–14). Note the 1812 *kiver*, and campaign overalls with very deep leather booting

and a heart-shaped leather patch on the knees (some sources show a small number of buttons on the seam). The horse furniture is typical of that used by hussars throughout the period. Lances were carried by some hussars; at Borodino, for example, the Akhtyrka were noted for being especially proficient with the weapon against the Saxon cavalry in the fight around Semenovskaya. The Pavlograd won great fame in 1805 for delaying Napoleon's advance for a whole day, receiving the unprecedented distinction of carrying a standard as a reward.

*F2: Trooper, Lithuanian Uhlan, 1812*

This depicts the later Uhlan uniform, the overalls now without the leather 'booting'. The *czapka's* leather lower portion appears to have increased over the years, early examples having a narrower

**Cossack trooper, c.1800; a naïve contemporary engraving showing a fur-trimmed kaftan, tall cloth cap and unusually-decorative horse furniture.**



leather band below the cloth top. In Polish fashion all ranks wore moustaches, though queues were discontinued at the same time as for the remainder of the army. The girdle was dark blue with two facing-coloured stripes, sometimes depicted as having a blue outer edge in addition. The Elberfeld MS shows what is apparently a member of the Polish Regt. in 1814 wearing a *czapka* with the plume removed for campaign dress, and with the old fringed epaulettes still in use, despite the authorisation of the fringeless type depicted here.

*F3: NCO, Tiraspol Mounted Jägers*

The newly-formed Mounted Jägers wore a dragoon-style uniform but with pointed cuffs (with a button at the point), with, in this case, the usual NCO distinctions of laced collar and cuffs, coloured plume-tip, and coloured tassel on the sword knot. The Tiraspol Regt. was one dragoon unit which changed its facing-colour upon conversion, although the majority retained their previous colouring.

*G1: Trooper, Lifeguard Hussars, full dress, 1812*

The uniform of the Lifeguard Hussars resembled that of the Line regiments, with the addition of the eagle shako-plate indicative of Guard status. The dolman (here in its post-1809 colouring) had more elaborate braiding to the cuffs (even more elaborate for officers); but in 1814 the cuffs adopted a rounded form and were piped in red, when the grey service overalls received a double red stripe and piping. The black pouch had a gilt 'Guard star' badge; officers' belts were red, with gold lace edge, and bearing a gilt plate, chains and 'pickers', but a more elaborate version was worn in full dress.

*G2: Officer, Lifeguard Cossacks, campaign dress, 1812*

Officers of the Lifeguard Cossacks wore a similar uniform to the rank and file, with the usual rank distinctions. Their busby had silver cords and white plumes with black and orange bases; the scarlet demi-kaftan had embroidered silver loops instead of the usual *petlitzi*, and silver epaulettes, and similar distinctions were worn upon the long, dark blue winter kaftan. The forage cap or *furashka* was like that of the troopers, but with a peak and lacking squadron insignia. Equipment was black leather, the pouch belt, covered with silver lace, supporting

a black leather pouch with blue velvet flap, edged silver, bearing a silver star; from December 1813 the pouch was silver, bearing a gilt double eagle. Silver chains and a blue-enamelled silver oval bearing an Imperial cypher were attached to the belt, though plain white leather belts were probably also worn on service. The 1809 light cavalry sabre had a gilded hilt and a black sword knot stitched with silver, and with a silver, black and orange tassel. The scarlet shabraque was silver-laced; and the greatcoat silver-grey, with a deep cape and scarlet collar.

*G3: Trooper, Duke of Saltikoff's Hussars, campaign dress, 1812*

Saltikoff's Hussars were a Moscow *opolchenie* unit, uniformed as Line hussars and taken into the regular army as the Irkhutsk Hussars. They wore the 1812 *kiwer* with white plume and yellow pompon, with the *opolchenie* cross badge above the crowned Imperial cypher in brass; a black dolman and pelisse with raspberry facings and breeches and yellow lace, yellow sash with black barrels, and a black sabretache with yellow lace. The shabraque was black with raspberry vandyck piped yellow, with a yellow cypher. This figure wears a common campaign style, the pelisse used as a jacket. The ordinary Moscow *opolchenie* cavalry wore the same uniform as the infantry (see MAA 185, Plate G3), but with a pistol or cavalry musket, and a sabre instead of an axe. Another *opolchenie* corps with proper uniform was the Skarjinsky Squadron, which wore a black fur busby with blue bag and white cords, white jacket with blue cuffs and lapels, blue collar piped white, white buttons and shoulder straps, white Uhlan girdle edged blue, blue overalls with a white stripe, black leather belts, and a rectangular blue shabraque edged white.

*G4: Trooper, Novgorod opolchenie, 1812*

The mounted elements of the Novgorod *opolchenie* wore a simple uniform consisting of a red *czapka* with grey band and the usual cross-over-cypher badge of the militia, grey frock coat and trousers with a red stripe, and were armed with sabres. The rectangular grey shabraque was edged red, with a red crowned cypher in the rear corners. Such units, aided by cossack and hussar detachments, formed the partisan bands which harried the *Grande Armée*



**Circassian, c.1812, wearing medieval dress of a mail coat, mail coif underneath his helmet, and plate armour on the forearms. The short-sleeved coat shown in this print is red with silver lace edging, and the trousers dark blue.**

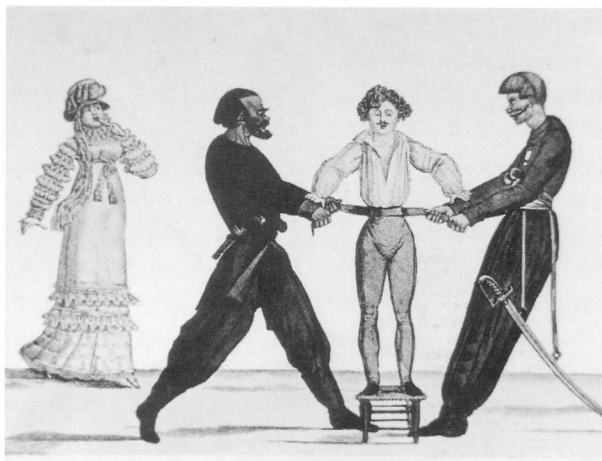
without mercy, and (with disorderly bands of peasants) were responsible for most of the atrocities of the campaign. Even Kutuzov stood in awe of some of them, such as the partisan leader Capt. Figner: 'An unusual man. I have never before seen such a noble spirit. He is fanatically brave and patriotic, and God knows what he would not undertake'.

*H1: Don cossack, campaign dress, 1812-14*

This typical cossack wears the blue cloth cap with facing-coloured band which was common, with or without peak, in the later period; sometimes it resembled a soft cloth shako. The tail-less jacket is the summer 'demi-kaftan'; the winter version resembled a frock coat. This man wears a leather girdle into which pistols would be tucked.

*H2: Trooper, 1st St. Petersburg 'Cossacks', 1812*

Two regiments of St. Petersburg *opolchenie* existed, both properly uniformed. The 1st wore peaked fur



**Lady Burgersh wrote that there was a coquetterie about most Russian regiments, evident in this cartoon in which two cossacks adjust an officer's corsetry to enable him to fit into his tight uniform!**

shakos with white metal death's-head badge, white cords and plume; black frock coat or *literwka*, with blue collar and cuffs, white shoulder straps, buttons and braid; black overalls with a white stripe, a blue sash with white barrels, black belts, and a blue over white lance pennon. The black shabraque was dragoon style, with blue edging and a cypher; officers had silver lace and epaulettes and a silver-laced pouch belt. The 2nd Regt. wore similar uniform, the dark blue coat with raspberry pointed cuffs and collar, and no braid; dark blue overalls with a raspberry stripe; the same shako but with a crowned Imperial cypher on the front; and a plain blue girdle. Officers had black braid on the coat in the style of the 1st Regt., and a raspberry sash with silver barrels. The shabraque was blue with a raspberry edge and cypher. Lances were not carried.

### H3: Bashkir, 1812–14

This shows a typical oriental 'native' dress, of which many different varieties existed. Marbot thought them 'the least dangerous troops in the world', their only tactic an unformed advance 'helter-skelter like a flock of sheep', firing their arrows in a parabola so as not to hit their comrades in front. Though Marbot was himself hit in the leg by 'this ridiculous weapon'—a four-foot arrow—he claimed that they inflicted little damage, and were ineffective as many

had neither lance nor sword. Because of their bows, the French ridiculed them with the nickname *les Amours* or *les Cupidons du Nord*, i.e. Cupids!

### H4: Ural Cossack, campaign dress, 1812–14

This 'semi-uniform' appearance is based on the Elberfeld MS, with native-style variations on the winter-dress full-length kaftan. The native trousers are apparently of unbleached fabric; and the sabre is also non-regulation, with a mameluke-style hilt.

### Sources

Few of the major sources on the Russian army of the Napoleonic Wars are available in English. The most significant is *Historical Description of the Uniforms and Armaments of the Russian Army* (A. V. Viskovatov, St. Petersburg 1844–56), with superb engravings. Other major works include *L'Armée Russe sous le Tsar Alexandre 1er de 1805 à 1815* (A. Krijitsky & M. Gayda, Paris 1955), and *L'Armée Russe* (W. Zweguntzow, Paris 1973). *The Russian Army 1800–1815* (G. Nafziger, Cambridge, Ontario 1983) is especially useful for establishments and manoeuvres. Also of interest are *Uniforms of the Imperial Russian Army* (B. & J. Mollo, Poole 1979); *The Russian Army 1812–13* (C. W. Hansen, Copenhagen 1977) (this author's companion *The Russian Army 1805* was published in the Danish periodical *Chakoten*, 1985); *The Imperial Russian Army 1805–15* (W. H. Murray, New York 1965); *Russian Military Swords 1801–1917* (E. Mollo, London 1969); *Uniforms of the Retreat from Moscow* (P. J. Haythornthwaite, Poole 1976). Apart from the source listed earlier, flags are covered by *Drapeaux et Etandards de l'Armée Russe, XVIe Siècle à 1914* (W. Zweguntzow, Paris 1964) and the paper by Lt.Cmdr. R. O. Morris in issue 36 of *Tradition*. Among many useful campaign histories, the most modern are *Austerlitz* (C. Duffy, London 1977), *Borodino and the War of 1812* (C. Duffy, London 1972), *1812* (A. Brett-James, London 1966) and *Europe against Napoleon* (A. Brett-James, London 1970). Wilson's reports are found in *Brief Remarks on the Character and Composition of the Russian Army* (London 1810), *Narrative of Events during the Invasion of Russia* (London 1860) and in *General Wilson's Journal* (ed. A. Brett-James, London 1964). The background to the era is covered in *Russia in War and Peace* (A. Palmer, London 1972).



**Bashkir, c.1812.** A typical view of these Asiatic horsemen, armed with bow and arrows and wearing a Mongolian-style fur-edged cap. Suspended at the left side is the bow-case. (Print after Gottfried Schadow)