



THE RUSSIAN ARMY OF THE NAPOLEONIC WAR, 1808-1815

The Russian army fought against both the French Republic and Empire surviving numerous defeats, setbacks and massive losses in the 1812 campaign to emerge as a major force in the campaigns of 1813 and 1814.

The regular army was huge and was supplemented on home soil by the vast numbers of 'Irregulars' including cossacks, partisans, various militia and asiatics. This guide currently only considers the regular army.

Attempting to model the Russian army of the Napoleonic wars is made more difficult by a number of changes in organisation and uniform that occurred during the period. As always sources can conflict over details of colours and styles, and new uniforms and equipment could take time to get through to the soldiers. These guides cover the core period 1808 to 1815.

RUSSIAN INFANTRY

A Line infantry regiment consisted of 3 battalions. Each battalion theoretically numbered 738 but campaign losses mean that this was rarely achieved and sustained. The third battalion was used as an undersrength depot formation.

The regimental grenadiers were normally separated and brigaded into composite grenadier battalions.

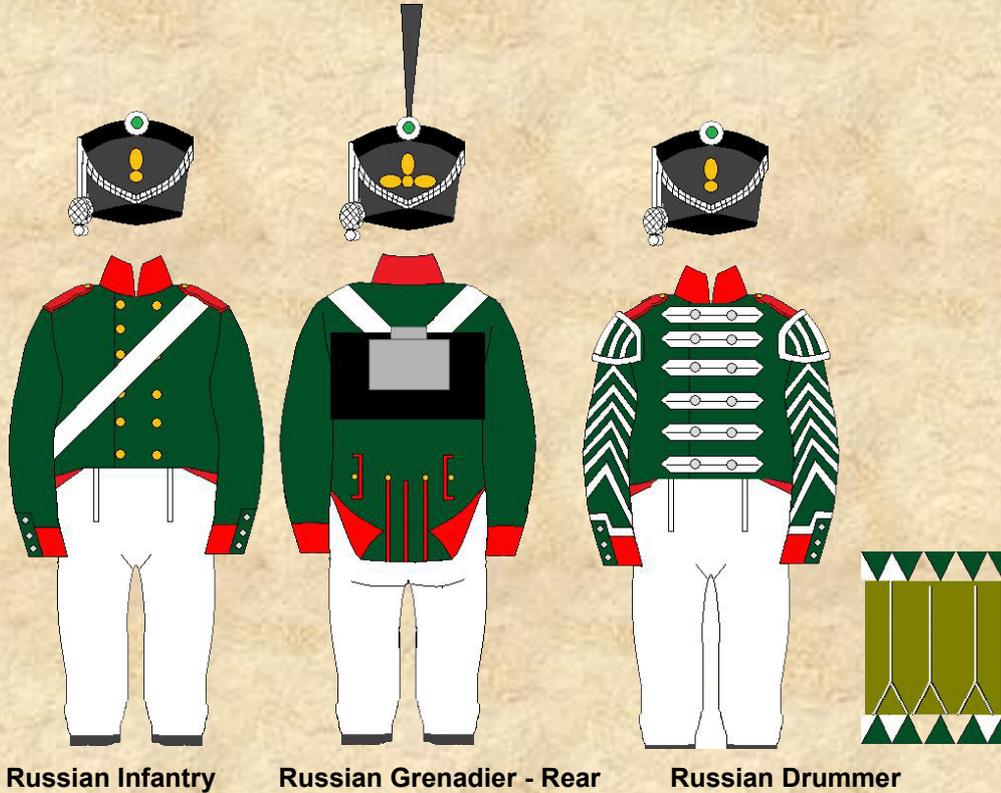
As well as Line there were Guard, Grenadier and Jaeger regiments.

For Line infantry, the dark green jacket had red collar, cuffs and turnbacks. The shoulder straps were coloured and used to show which Division the unit belonged to and its seniority within the formation. They were coloured red for the 1st regiment, white for the 2nd, yellow for the third, dark green for the 4th and light blue for the 5th. The divisional number was embroidered on the shoulder strap.

Legwear was white breeches or overalls with black gaiters. Straps were white leather for musketeers and grenadiers. The rucksack and cartridge box were black.

The 1808 pattern shako bore a single flamed grenade for line and jaeger units, a triple flamed version for grenadiers. The white cords were hooked over the pom-pom. These were white with green centre for 1st battalions, green with centre for 2nd and blue with white centre for third. Grenadiers had a tall thin plume. All these decorations were carried on the 'kiwer', which replaced the shako in 1812.

The greatcoat was carried rolled across the body held in place by equipment straps.



Russian Infantry

Russian Grenadier - Rear

Russian Drummer

There were fifty Jaeger regiments in 1812. They wore a similar uniform but with green collars, cuffs and turnbacks piped in red. Dark green breeches were worn in winter and all leather work was black.

Shoulder straps were sky blue except for those numbered 1 to 11, 13, 15 to 20, 23, 27 to 31 and 49 where they were yellow.



Jaeger in winter uniform and 1808 shako

Jaeger in summer uniform and 1812 kiwer



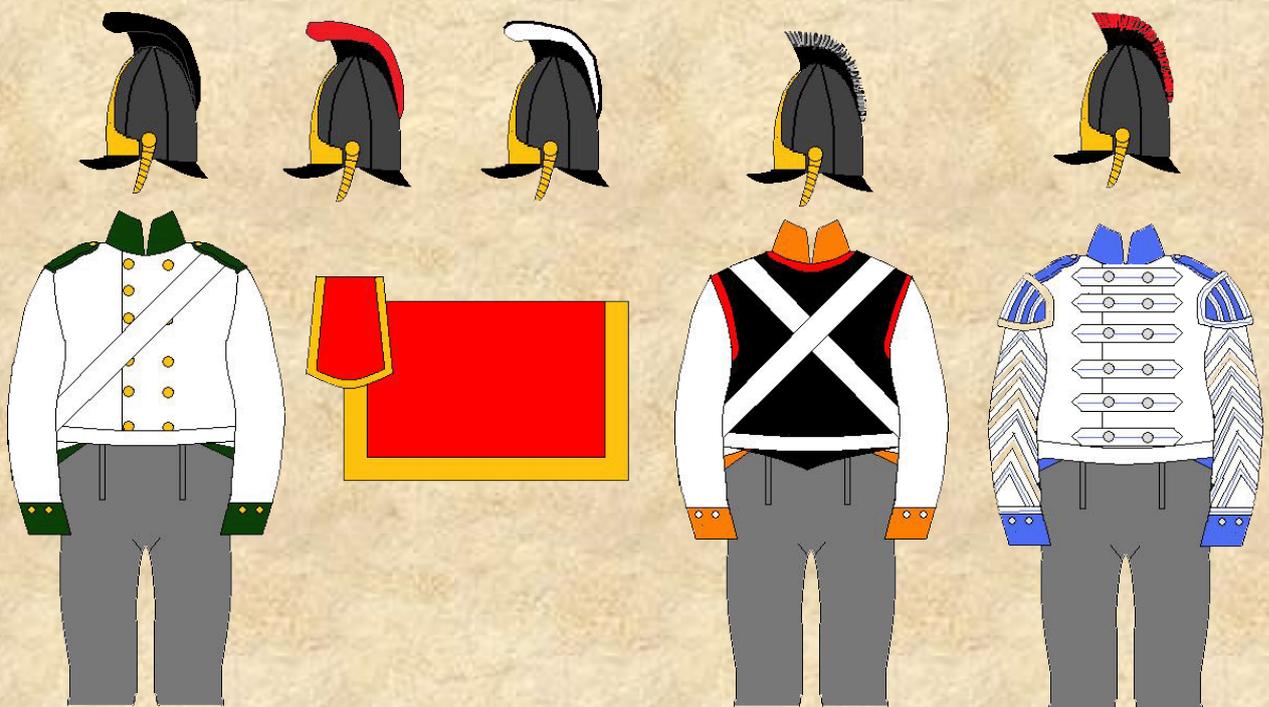
RUSSIAN CUIRASSIERS

There were twelve Cuirassier regiments in the Russian army. All wore a white jacket with cuffs, turnbacks and shoulder straps in regimental facing colours. Grey overalls were worn by all ranks and belts and straps were white leather. The Cuirass was not worn until 1812 when it was reissued. The cuirass itself consisted of a front and back plate. It was painted black and edged in red leather. The Czarina's and the Pskoff regiments had white metal cuirasses.

The tall, black leather helmet had a brass plate embossed with the Imperial eagle. It bore a black leather visor, and brass chin scales. Troopers had black rounded plumes, trumpeters, red and officers white with a black stripe on top. In 1808 these were replaced by a black flat plume for officers and men, with trumpeters retaining their red colour

Shabraques had square corners. They were edged in button colour. (white or yellow)

Trumpeters wore heavily laced coats with 'swallows nests' on the shoulders.



Trooper - Little Russia regiment. The helmets are the 1803 pattern with the rounded plume. From left to right there is a trooper's a trumpeter's and an officer's.

Trooper - Yekaterinoslav regiment, 1808 pattern helmet and 1812 cuirass.

Trumpeter Glukhov regiment 1808



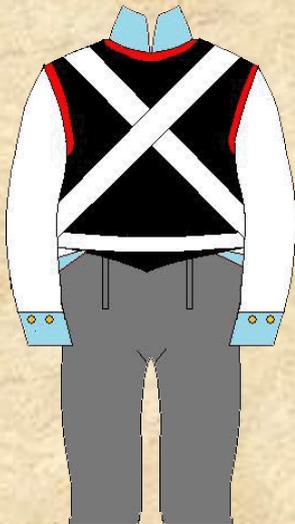
Chevalier Garde



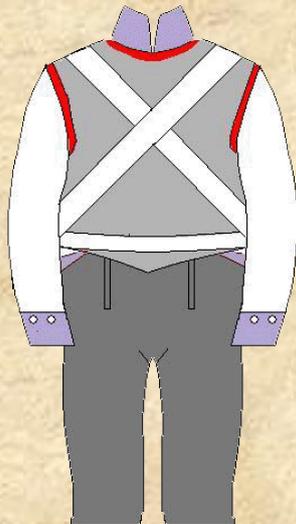
Horse Guard



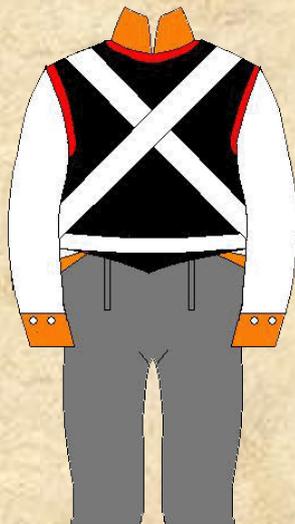
Lifeguard



Starodub



Czarina's



Ekaterinoslav



Pskoff



Glukhov



Astrachan



Military Order



Little Russia



Novgorod



RUSSIAN DRAGOONS

In 1808 there were thirty six Dragoon regiments in the Russian army. In 1812 these were reduced by half. Two regiments were converted to Cuirassiers, one to Hussars, seven to Lancers and eight to mounted rifles.

The jacket was green with cuffs and shoulder straps in regimental facing colour and turnbacks in red. Grey overalls were worn by all ranks and belts and straps were white leather.

The tall, black leather helmet had a brass plate embossed with the Imperial eagle. It bore a black leather visor, and brass chin scales. Troopers had black rounded plumes, trumpeters, red and officers white with a black stripe on top. In 1808 these were replaced by a black flat plume for officers and men, with trumpeters retaining their red colour

Shabraques had rounded corners. They were originally dark green edged in button colour (white or yellow). In 1808 the trim was changed to the regimental facing colour.

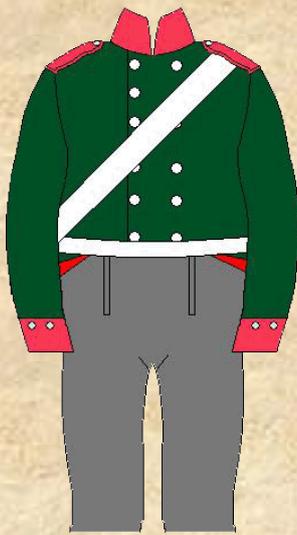
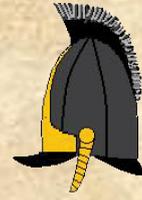
Trumpeters wore heavily laced coats with 'swallows nests' on the shoulders.

Officers wore similar uniforms, but with epaulettes.

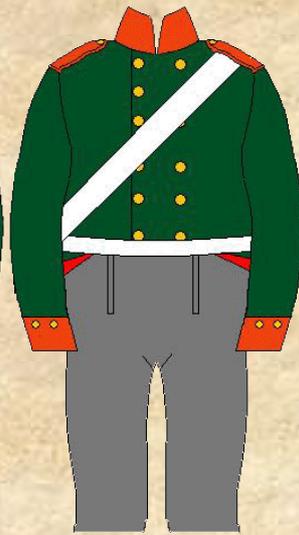


Trooper - Riga regiment, 1808 pattern helmet
Trumpeter Sevresk regiment 1808

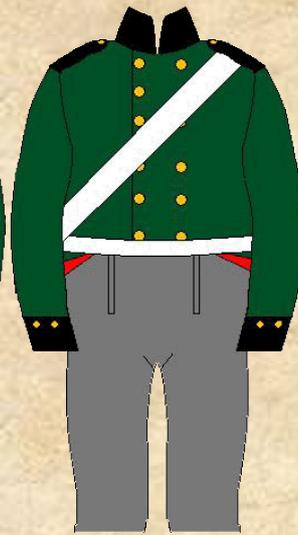
Trooper - Courland regiment. The helmets are the 1803 pattern with the rounded plume. From left to right there is a trooper's a trumpeter's and an officer's.



Moscow



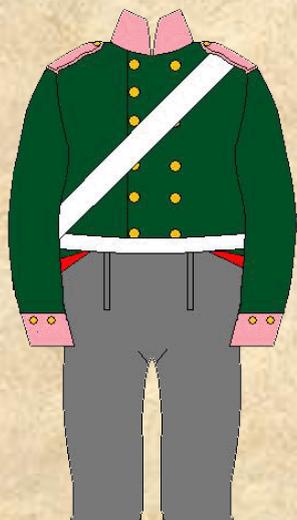
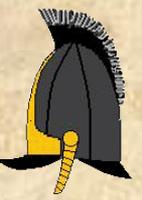
Pskov



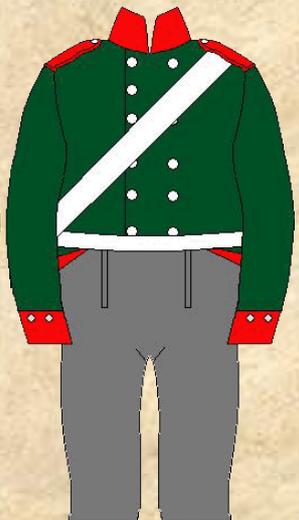
Ingermanland



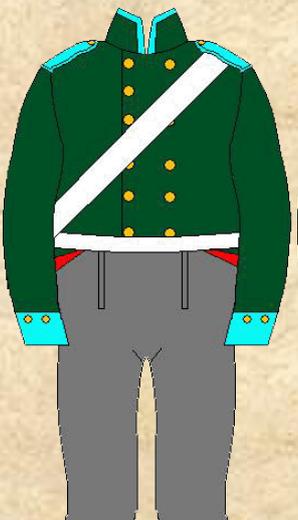
Kargapol



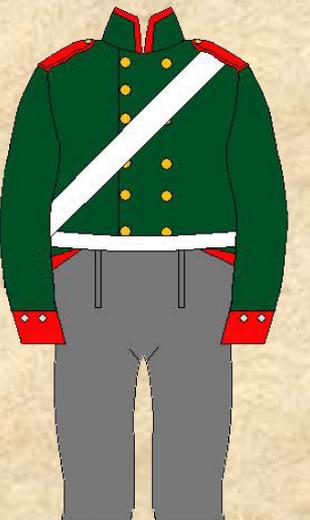
Siberia



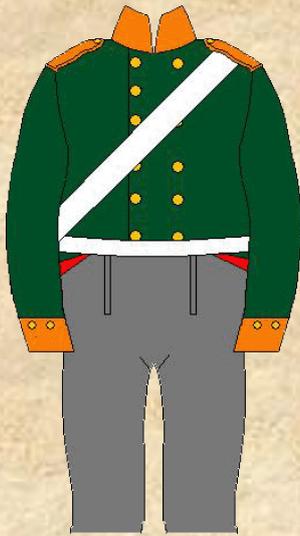
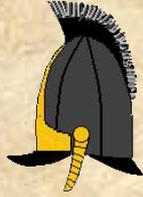
Orenburg



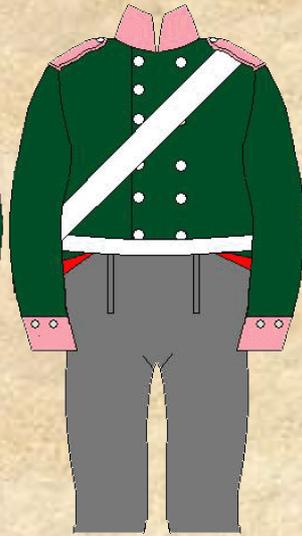
Irkutsk



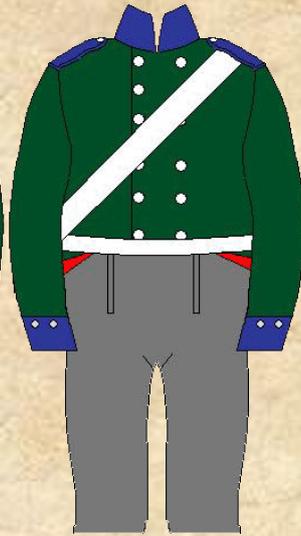
Courland



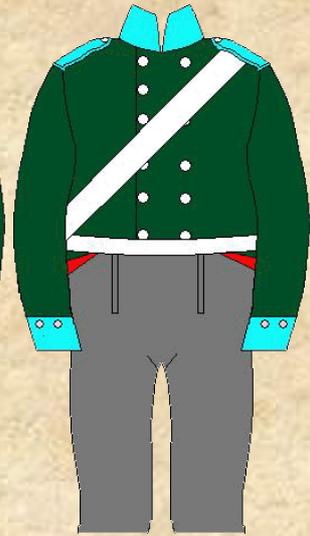
Kharkov



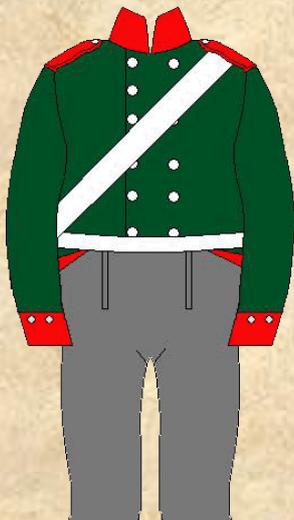
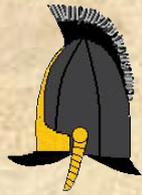
Kiev



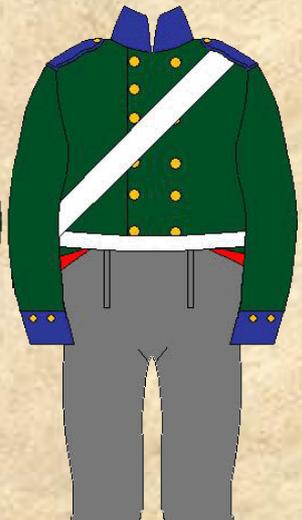
Chernigov



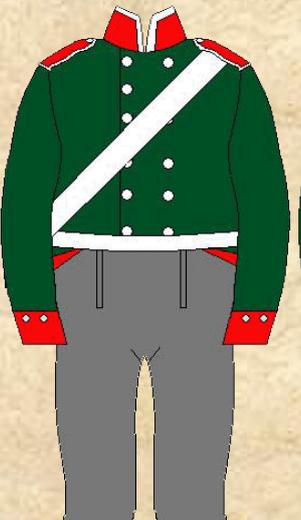
New Russia



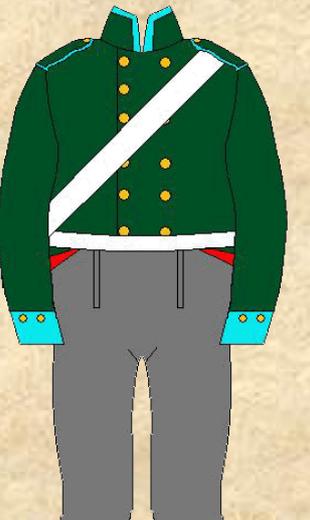
Starodub



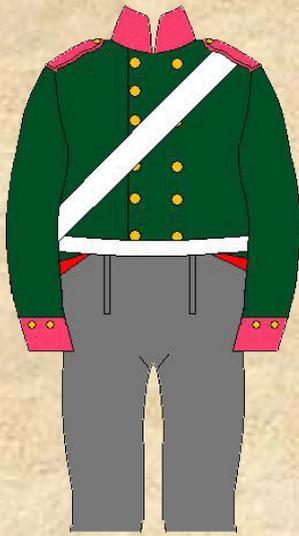
Tver



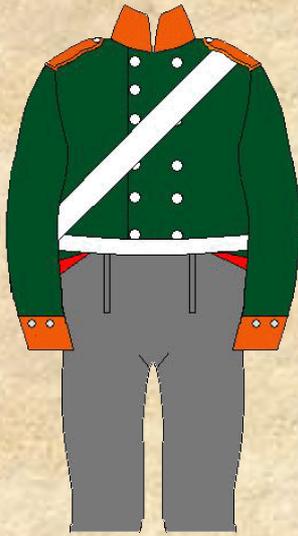
Zhitomor



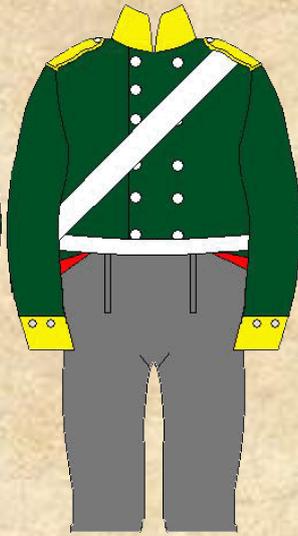
Arzamas



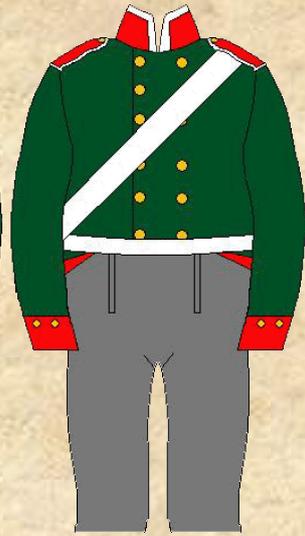
St Petersburg



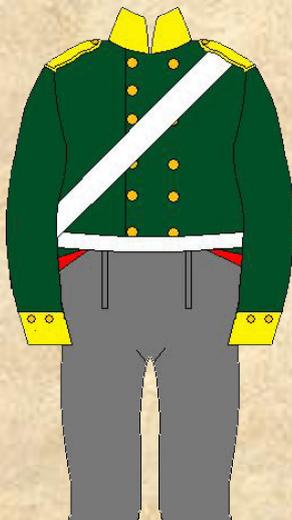
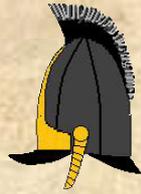
Severks



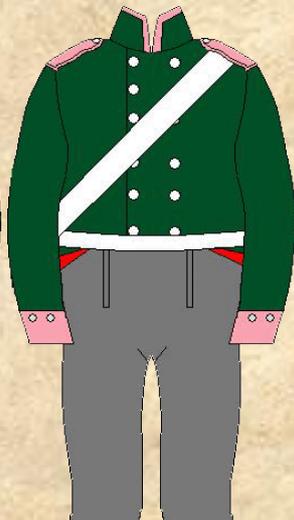
Kinburn



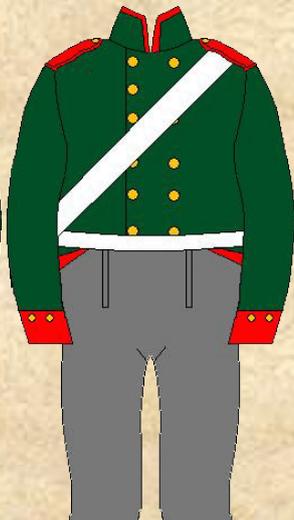
Livonia



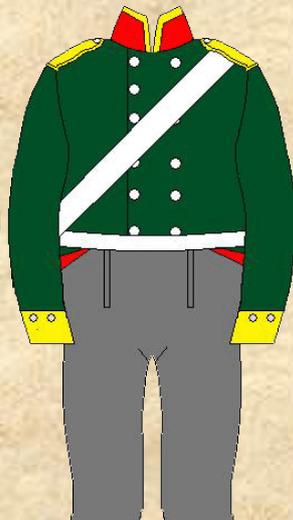
Smolensk



Pereyaslav



Tirasol



Dorpat



RUSSIAN HUSSARS

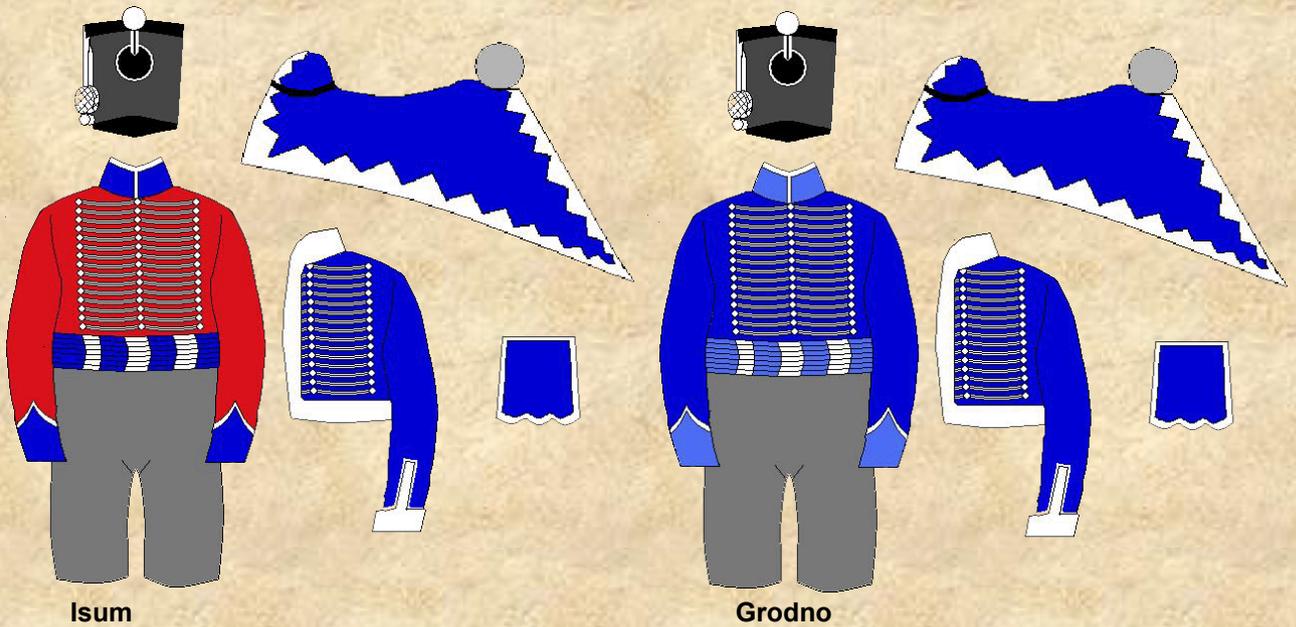
There were a total of eleven line regiments of Hussars.

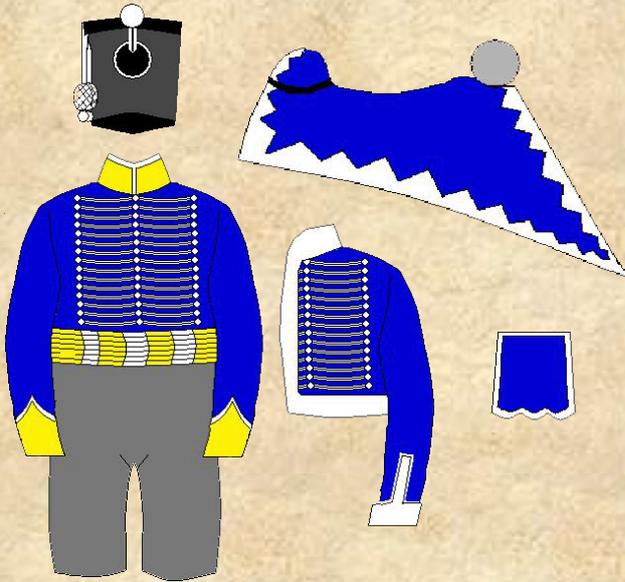
Hussars wore a short jacket called a 'dolman' and an over jacket trimmed with fur, called a 'pelisse'. The pelisse was often worn slung over the left shoulder. A 'barrel-sash' was worn around the waist and the ensemble was finished off with tight breeches and boots. Both the dolman and pelisse were elaborately decorated with many rows of cord loops. Hanging from the left was the 'sabretache' - a decorated pouch.

The shabraque was the same colour as the dolman and edged in lacing colour

Headgear was a shako with cords, replaced by the kiwer in 1812.

Each regiment had different colour combinations of dolman, pelisse, breeches and facing colour making them extremely colourful regiments.

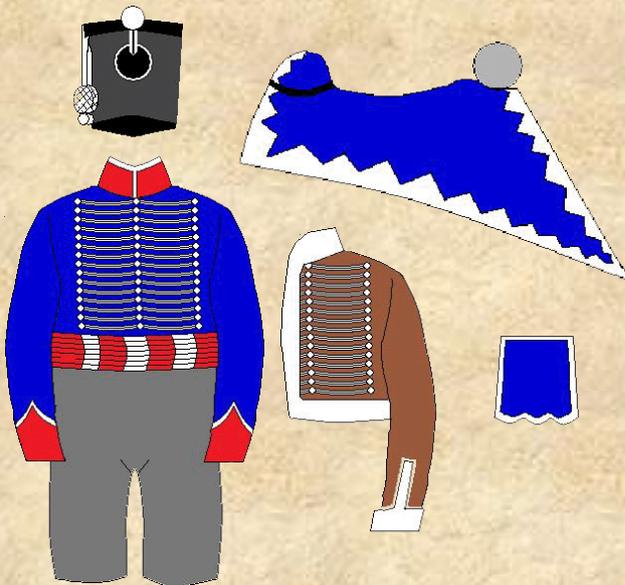




Lubenski



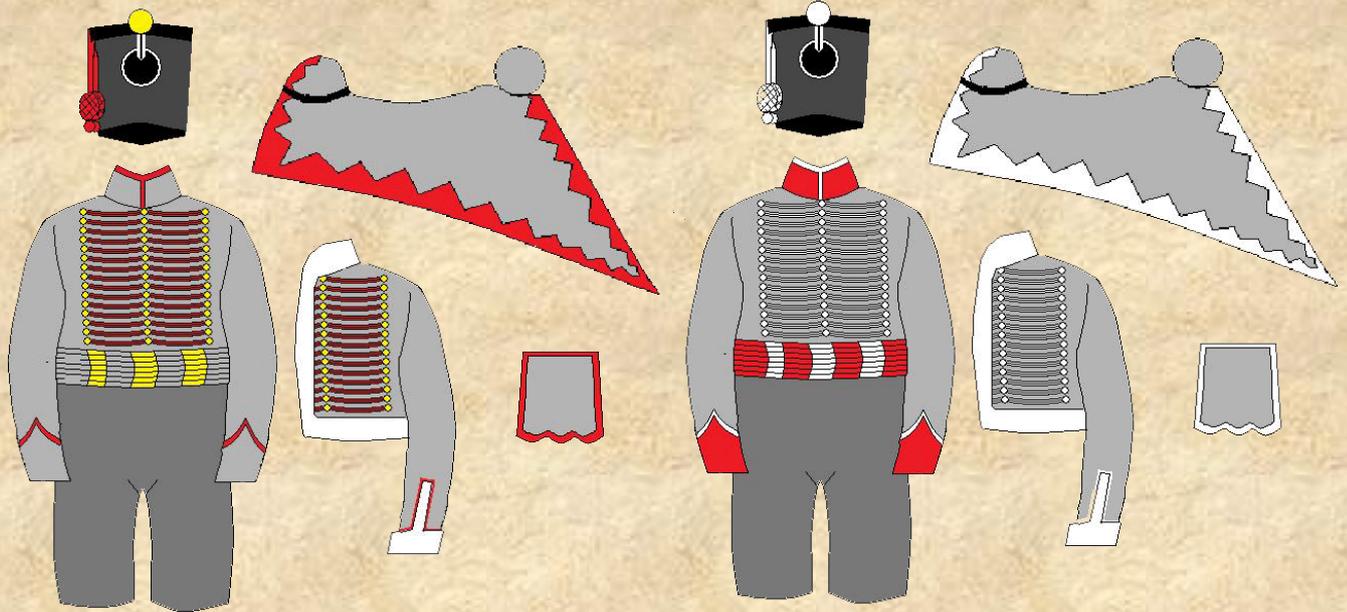
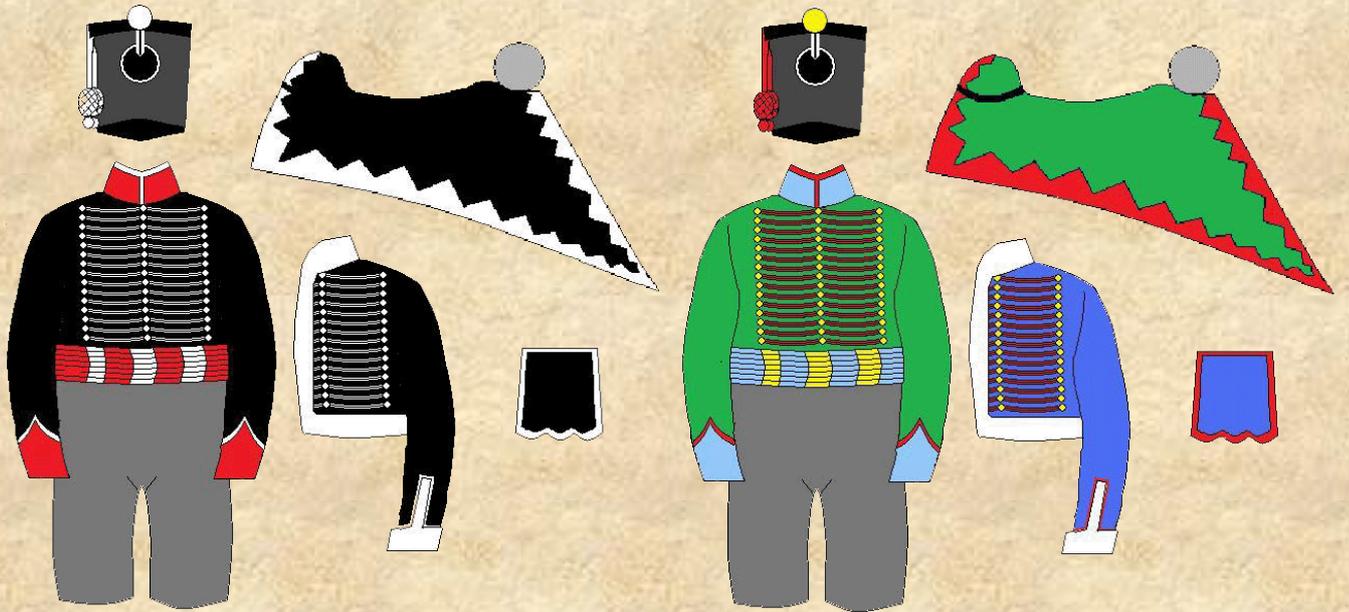
Mariupol



Bieloserk



Akhtyrka



Elisavetgrad

Sumski



Ołwiopl



FOOT ARTILLERY

This was very similar uniform to that of the Line Infantry, namely a green coat, with black cuffs, collar, shoulder straps and turnbacks. The shako had red cords and pom-pom. Like the infantry, the kiwer replaced the shako in 1812, but decorations remained the same.

Equipment belts were white. Artillery carriages and limbers were dark green.

