

# PRUSSIAN LIGHT INFANTRY 1792-1815



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# Prussian Light Infantry 1792-1815

## *The Historical Background*

Historians and popular writers alike in the English-speaking world tend, as a whole, to misunderstand all aspects of the armed forces and history of Brandenburg-Prussia. Of all the myths they have created, perhaps those on the subject of the light infantry of the Napoleonic Wars have gained the most acceptance, even if they are as unfounded as all the others. One of the objects of this small work is to attempt to show that there is little truth in these stories of 'inflexible' and 'out-moded' tactics in the army prior to 1807, as well as putting the so-called 'new' tactics of the army of 1812-1815 in their proper context.

It is a commonly held view that it was the experience of the French Revolution, and especially the campaign of 1806, which forced the Brandenburg-Prussian army rather reluctantly to adopt skirmisher tactics in order to counter those of the French army. But the fact of the matter is that the light infantry branch was founded in the reign of Frederick the Great (1740-1786) and continued to develop from then onwards. It was the light troops of the Austrian army, the Croatian border soldiers, which so impressed Frederick in the Seven Years War that he considered it necessary to create an effective counter-force. Further experience in the War of the Bavarian Succession (1778-1779) underlined this; three so-called 'Free Regiments' of light infantry were founded, and the corps of rifle-armed 'Foot Jaeger' already in existence was strengthened to ten companies. In 1787 the 'Free Regiments' were converted into the Fusilier Battalions, which are discussed below.

Initially, there was a degree of reluctance amongst certain sections of the army towards this formation of light infantry. To an extent this was understandable. The 'Free Battalions' of the Seven Years War had been regarded as ill-disciplined

rogues prone to looting and desertion and, as few self-respecting aristocrats wanted to serve in their ranks, they tended to be officered by men of non-noble birth, thus adding to the contempt with which some regarded them. However, the Fusilier Battalions formed from them came to be regarded as élite formations, being well-trained, disciplined and carefully selected men led by young, fit and intelligent officers. The rifle-armed light troops, the Jaeger, were always a crack formation, their professionalism being rewarded with generosity and privileges which the Line did not enjoy. This body,

**The many different 'Free Corps' which were raised under Frederick the Great, and which were the forerunners of the Prussian light units, were regarded as little better than thieves and vagabonds. The general reputation which they enjoyed is epitomised in this Adolf von Menzel drawing of a chaplain rebuking looters of Von Shorny's and Von Kleist's corps, without noticeable effect.**







**Foot Jaeger, 1773—from Gumtau's 'Die Jaeger und Schuetzen des Preussischen Heeres' (3 vols., Berlin, 1834-38), where it is captioned 'Buechsenjaeger' ('Rifleman'). The black hat has a yellow tuft; the coat is green with red facings, yellow buttons and cords; the shirt and stock are white and black, the waistcoat green, the breeches buff, and the cartridge box and gaiters black.**

too, was founded by Frederick, initially to serve as guides and to carry out patrols. They grew in size from a small detachment to a full regiment by 1806. Recruited from huntsmen and foresters, they were experienced marksmen skilled in the use of their more accurate weapons, and were natural light infantrymen adept at concealment in wooded terrain. They often used their own weapons rather

than those issued by the army, and were clothed in the traditional huntsman's green. The contrast between this body and the 'Free Battalions' was sharp, yet these two groups were the roots of the light infantry formations of the Napoleonic Wars.

At first the light infantry were a body distinct and separate from the Line, having, indeed, a different function. However, as the 18th century drew to a close the trend was increasingly towards the evolution of the 'universal infantryman'—the soldier capable of operating in both open and close order. A noteworthy step on this path was the introduction of ten rifle-armed 'Schuetzen' to each Line company from 3 March 1787, that is, before the French Revolution. They were selected men who were eventually to become NCOs. From 1788 they wore NCO distinctions on their uniforms, and they also stood with the NCOs behind the ranks when not engaged in skirmishing and patrols. From 5 December 1793, each Line battalion was to have a bugler to convey orders to the Schuetzen.

More significantly, in 1787 the Fusilier Battalions were founded, being converted from the three light regiments, five Grenadier Battalions, the 3rd Battalion of the Leipziger Regiment (No. 3), and selected companies of the Garrison Regiments. They received their own drill manual, published on 24 February 1788.

Once the Schuetzen sections and Fusilier Battalions had been founded, they continued to develop continuously throughout the period we are examining. The Fusilier Battalions, too, had their own rifle-armed Schuetzen sections, which were increased to 22 men strong in 1789. Some officers felt that there were too few Schuetzen in the Line companies; in 1805, those in the Potsdam garrison received an extra ten so-called 'Reserve Schuetzen'.

Skirmishing and the use of light infantry was a controversial subject in European military circles of the day, as the use of swarms of *tirailleurs* by the armies of Revolutionary France put the issue very much into the limelight. Some visionaries saw skirmishers as being the decisive weapon in the battles of the future, while the more conservative saw them as being detrimental to the discipline of the Line. Both extremes contained an element of the truth. The skirmisher *was* the weapon of the future; but until the introduction of new technology, that is, the breech-loading rifle, the skirmisher would



remain closely tied to his close-order supports, as it took so long to load his muzzle-loading firearm. So until around the middle of the 19th century, the skirmisher remained a limited weapon. Skirmishing was detrimental to discipline: 18th century armies often consisted in part of unwilling recruits and also of mercenaries, who would take the first opportunity to desert, and to allow them to take part in patrols and skirmishing was providing them with a golden opportunity to do so. Those who opposed skirmishing did so with some justification. However, the wars of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era saw the introduction of mass armies of conscripts who were (according to some historians, anyway) fired with patriotism, and could thus be trusted to perform as skirmishers. It would perhaps be nearer the truth to say that with mass armies and conscription, a much higher rate of desertion could be tolerated. The change in the nature of the soldiery in this period allowed the introduction of increasing numbers of light troops.

The Brandenburg-Prussian army at first followed a middle course, introducing light troops and gradually increasing their numbers. The personnel of the Schuetzen were carefully selected, properly trained, and given better chances of promotion. The Fusiliers were so highly trained that they soon came to be seen as an élite. Such men were less likely to desert, and made good skirmishers. In the campaigns of 1793 and 1794 in the Palatinate, a wooded, hilly region of Germany, the light troops acquitted themselves well against the French. The terrain of this region was clearly ideal for light infantry action; when it came to the battles of 1806, less reliance was placed on the skirmisher, as the terrain was a good deal more open, making him much more vulnerable.

What made it a good deal more apparent to contemporary observers that a greater number of skirmishers were required was the morale effect that the French *tirailleurs* were having in the battles at the turn of the century in Italy. The most effective means of countering them was, of course, to use a sufficiently strong number of one's own men in loose order. A much-favoured way of providing a reserve to perform this and other functions, such as the protection of the battalion's flanks, was to pull out the third of the three ranks of a battalion, form them into platoons and use them as required.

This idea had been, toyed with even before the wars of the French Revolution, when the Duke of Brunswick had an Instruction on this subject printed in 1791. In 1797 the Prince of Hohenlohe wrote a series of regulations for the Lower Silesian Inspection, and these were published on 30 March 1803 under the title '*Vom Gebrauch des 3ten Gliedes zum Tiraillieren*' ('On the Use of the 3rd Rank for Skirmishing'). Furthermore, the Prince Elector of Hesse, a Prussian field-marshal and Inspector-General of the Westphalian regiments, issued an Order to his troops on 11 April 1806 instructing them to use not only the third rank as skirmishers, but when necessary entire companies, especially the flank companies. Finally, on 5 October 1805, the

Compare the last illustration with this study of the same subject by Krickel, taken from Rentzell's '*Geschichte des Garde-Jaeger-Bataillons 1808-88*' (Berlin, 1889). Differences include a yellow binding and green tuft on the tricorne, a brown cartridge box, and buttons spaced evenly rather than in pairs.







Fusilier officer and private, 1789—a contemporary plate by Horvath. The eagle badge is just visible on the latter's bicorn. All battalions wore dark green coats and white smallclothes: a list of facing and button colours will be found in the 'Uniforms' section of the text.

King of Prussia ordered the general introduction of the above-mentioned use of the third rank. This idea thus existed not only before the 'swarms of *tirailleurs*' of the Revolutionary Wars but also before the experience of Jena and Auerstaedt. One is prompted to wonder why certain historians and writers attach the label 'Frederician', whatever that may mean, to the army of 1806, and describe its tactics as 'inflexible' and 'out-moded'.

Where the light infantry branch of the Brandenburg-Prussian army was lacking was in the experience of warfare. In fact, the campaign of 1806 was Prussia's first major confrontation with France since the battle of Rossbach in the Seven Years War, so the army as a whole was somewhat rusty. There was a general lack of experience of skirmishing in action, and this is what gave the French *tirailleurs* the upper hand on a number of occasions. However, by 1812, under the guidance of light infantry experts such as Yorck, the Prussians' performance was somewhat better.

The Reforms of 1807 to 1812 placed a much

greater emphasis on the role and function of the light infantry, and, theoretically at least, all Prussian soldiers were trained to operate in skirmish order. However, as was the case in 1806, the Fusiliers and third-rankers, not forgetting the rifle-armed battalions, were to be the mainstay of the skirmish line and outpost actions. The Instruction of 27 March 1809, based on Hohenlohe's earlier document, provided the basis of light infantry training and was incorporated into the Drill Regulations of 1812 which, with minor modifications, served the Prussian and later German armed forces up until 1888.

Another type of light infantryman to emerge was the volunteer of the Wars of Liberation (1813–1815). They were members of the educated middle-classes, students and the like, who volunteered to join the army for the duration of the war. They uniformed and equipped themselves, and, armed usually with hunting rifles or carbines, tended naturally to be used in a skirmisher role.

The evolution of the light infantry branch throughout this period is thus apparent, and those who hold the view that events forced the Prussian army to adopt such a method of fighting have not properly considered the historical development of this arm.

## Organisation

### Schuetzen

A Cabinet Order of 3 March 1787 fixed the number of Schuetzen in a company at ten men from a total of 160. Each regiment thus had 120 of these rifle-armed light infantrymen. From 5 May 1793 each regiment had one bugler for its Schuetzen, and on 5 December this was increased to one per battalion. In 1798 the Schuetzen sections of the fusilier companies were increased from ten men to 22. From 23 November 1806, the number per Line company was raised to 20. This practice of including rifle-armed sections within each company

Fusilier NCOs of 1792 (left) and 1806, from Kling (see Bibliography). The NCO distinctions were metallic hat and cuff lace, the colouring of the tuft or pompon and the sword knot, and the carrying of a cane hooked to the button. In the adoption of the 1801 cylindrical shako, and the short 1797 jacket we can see a major step from 18th-century to 19th-century uniform styles. Note NCOs' cartridge pouch worn at the waist.





Fig. 1.  
Huteroffizier 1792.

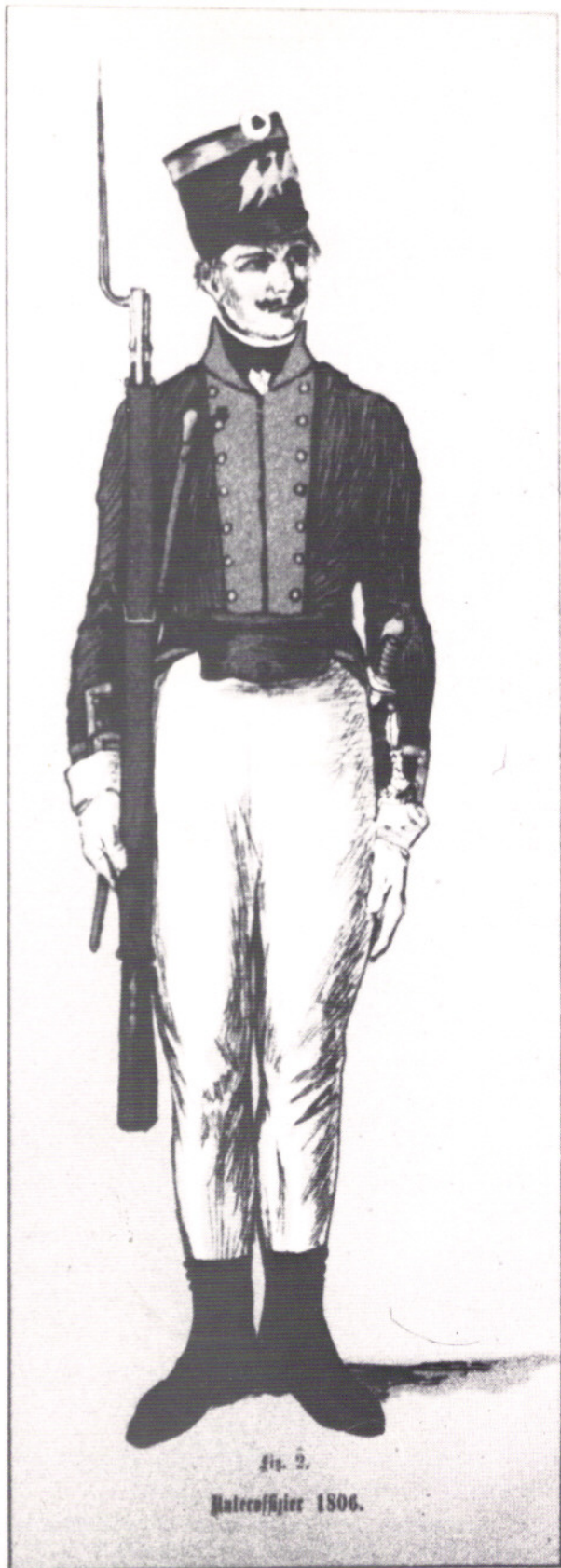


Fig. 2.  
Huteroffizier 1806.





Schütze  
1809—1810.

Schütze

Offizier  
1810—1814.

Waldhornist

## Schlesisches Schützen-Bataillon.

Soldiers, an officer and a bugler of the Silesian Schuetzen Battalion, 1809-14. The dark green uniform was faced black and piped red; see also Plate B. (Knoetel, reproduced by kind

permission of the Franck'sche Verlagshandlung, W. Spemann of Stuttgart, Germany)



was discarded in the Reforms, and the system of using the third rank as skirmishers was favoured.

In March 1809 an independent battalion of Schuetzen, the Silesian Schuetzen Battalion, was formed; and on 20 June 1814 the Guard Schuetzen Battalion was raised from volunteers resident in the Neufchâtel territory, which had just been returned to Prussian sovereignty.

### **Fusiliers**

The Fusilier Battalions were founded in 1787, each being of four companies with 19 officers, 48 sergeants, 13 musicians (each company having two buglers and one drummer, plus the battalion bugler), 80 corporals, 440 privates and 40 reserves. The battalion staff consisted of one auditor and battalion quartermaster, four surgeons including the battalion surgeon, and one armourer. There were also the 40 Schuetzen. For a time, each Fusilier Battalion received a 3pdr cannon crewed by artillery personnel. The wartime strength of a battalion was therefore 680 combatants and 56 non-combatants, the latter figure including 46 train personnel and four artillery labourers. The grand total was 736 men.

In 1787 a total of 20 such battalions were founded; they were organised into brigades which, on 8 April 1791, presented the following picture:

- 1st Magdeburg—Battalions No. 1, 2, 5
- 2nd Magdeburg—Battalions No. 18, 19, 20
- East Prussian—Battalions No. 3, 6, 11, 12
- West Prussian—Battalions No. 4, 16, 17
- Upper Silesian—Battalions No. 7, 8, 9, 10
- Lower Silesian—Battalions No. 13, 14, 15

In 1795 a further battalion was raised. In 1797 it was intended to increase their number to 27, organised in nine brigades, each commanded by a brigadier whose function was similar to that of the regimental colonel-in-chief. However, by 1806 only 24 Fusilier Battalions had been formed (each of them having received eight sappers in 1797); they were organised as follows:

- Magdeburg—No. 1 Kaiserlingk, No. 2 Bila, No. 5 Graf Wedel
- Westphalian—No. 18 Sobbe, No. 19 Ernest, No. 20 Ivernois
- 1st East Prussian—No. 3 Wakenitz, No. 6 Rembow, No. 11 Bergen
- 2nd East Prussian—No. 21 Stutterheim, No. 23

- Schachtmeier, No. 24 Buelow
- 1st Warsaw—No. 9 Borel du Vernay, No. 12 Knorr, No. 17 Hinrichs
- 2nd Warsaw—No. 4 Greiffenberg, No. 8 Kloch, No. 16 Oswald
- Upper Silesian—No. 7 Rosen, No. 10 Erichsen, No. 22 Boguslawski
- Lower Silesian—No. 13 Rabenau, No. 14 Pelet, No. 15 Ruehle

The names given are those of the battalion commanders by which, in practice, the battalions were identified, the numbers being merely for the sake of convenience.

Once the re-organisation of the army had begun in 1808, the practice of separating the Line from the light troops was to an extent reduced in that each Line regiment received one Fusilier Battalion. From 1809 to 1813 there were 12 Fusilier Battalions. An additional number of Reserve Fusilier Battalions were raised during the mobilisation of 1813. The seven battalions which went to Russia in 1812 were set at 762 men strong, and the wartime strength of the remaining five Line and the Reserve Fusilier Battalions was set at 801 men on mobilisation in spring 1813—although obviously, in such conditions, the strength of the battalions varied greatly.

### **Jaeger**

In 1792 the Foot Jaeger Regiment was at a strength of ten companies with 42 officers, 100 NCOs and ten buglers plus 1,200 privates. On mobilisation they were joined by 94 train soldiers and four artillery labourers for their two ammunition waggons. By 1802 the size of the companies had been increased and the wartime strength of the regiment was set at 51 officers, 120 NCOs, 36 buglers and 1,800 privates. In addition to these there were 12 company surgeons, seven staff and 126 train soldiers.

In 1808 the remnants of this regiment, which had acquitted itself well during the 1806 campaign, were used to form the Guard Jaeger Battalion and the East Prussian Jaeger Battalion. These were initially 501 men strong, but when the Guard Fusilier Battalion was raised they were reduced to 401 men. On mobilisation for the Russian campaign in 1812 the East Prussians were brought up to 501 men, as were the Guard Jaeger and Silesian Schuetzen on mobilisation in spring 1813.

Towards the end of 1815 a new Jaeger battalion





Fusilier officer and private, 1800—from Ramm (see Bibliography). The fusilier displays the shortened 1797 jacket, but has not yet replaced the bicorn with a shako. Note the white breeches and black calf-length gaiters. See Plate E.

was formed from the Jaeger Company of the Russo-German Legion (themselves partly former members of the East Prussian Battalion), men of the Saxon Jaeger Battalion and the Saxon 'Volunteer Banners'.

### Third Rank

From 1809, the men of the third rank of each battalion—Grenadier, Musketeer and Fusilier—could be pulled out of their companies and formed into four platoons. Fighting in two ranks these platoons were led by a specially appointed captain and together were called the Schuetzen Company. When not so deployed, these men fought as part of the battalion's four companies.

Prior to the Reforms, members of the third rank had been used for various tasks which will be discussed in the section on drill.

### Volunteers

A further branch of light troops which was founded in 1813 were the volunteers. A Decree of 3 February called for volunteers aged between 17 and 24 to uniform and equip themselves at their own expense and join the regiment of their choice for the duration of the war, initially as members of separate detachments no stronger than a company or squadron, but later with the possibility of becoming officers and NCOs in the Line. There were several thousand such volunteers.

## Drill and Training

Something that tends not to be understood very well is what skirmishing actually involved, and how small-scale warfare was conducted at this time. The sort of terminology used includes expressions like 'swarms of skirmishers', 'loose order', and of formations being 'dissolved'. These need proper explanation. Moreover, the impression created is one of the 'liberated' French *tirailleur* being expert in the conduct of such warfare, whereas the 'oppressed' soldiery of Europe of the *ancien régime* was not to be trusted and had to be kept in rigid close-order lines if he was not to desert. As with most myths, there is an element of truth in it, but this is lost or obscured through colourful, romantic exaggeration. The fact of the matter is that most, if not all armies at this time used light troops in open order in certain conditions, and the reasons that more were not used were not only social and political, but more importantly due to the restraints of technology.

The muzzle-loading smoothbore flintlock musket was so cumbersome, slow to load and inaccurate that it could only inflict significant casualties when concentrated in large numbers. Moreover, for a number of reasons to be examined below, troops operating in skirmish order were very much tied to their close-order supports. And to co-ordinate the inter-relationship of the open-order troops with their close-order supports and to function efficiently in open order required a high level of expertise and training.

Frederick the Great produced the first drill instructions for the Brandenburg-Prussian light



infantry—the ‘*Instruction for the Free Regiments*’, published on 5 December 1783. According to this the functions of the light infantry were to fight in villages and woods, as vanguards and rearguards, to cover flanks, to attack positions on high ground and artillery batteries and earthworks, and to protect the baggage trains and the winter quarters of the army. Such activities are termed ‘the war of outposts’ or small-scale actions. As mentioned above, the Free Regiments were the forerunners of the Fusilier Battalions, and their techniques and methods of training continued to be used throughout the period in question.

The Fusilier Battalions received their regulations on 24 February 1788. These regulations remained in use into the 1806/7 campaign, and formed the basis of part of the 1812 ‘*Regulations for the Infantry*’. These ‘*Regulations for the Light Infantry*’ ordered the use of two ranks instead of the three in which the Line troops fought. As the Fusilier Battalions fired their volleys in two ranks there was no need for the front rank to kneel. The two-rank volley of the light infantry was adopted by the entire Line infantry by the introduction of the 1812 Regulations. Each Fusilier company consisted of four divisions, that is a total of eight platoons. For a ‘skirmish attack’ the 1st and 8th platoons were to be used, i.e. one quarter of the battalion’s strength; and they could be supported or relieved by the 5th or 7th. There were bugle calls for the advance, halt, rally, firing, cease firing, move to the left or right, deploy, retreat and calling. Of course, what was much more important than a set of regulations was to have good, experienced officers who knew what outpost warfare meant and how it should be performed; and this was certainly the case in the Brandenburg-Prussian army right from the inception of its light infantry branch. The officer corps of this branch consisted of former Free Battalion commanders, men with experience of the American War of Independence; and it produced some of the army’s most capable commanders, such as Yorck, Buelow and Mueffling. This corps soon became an élite body with a strong spirit of professionalism, and performed well in the wars of the French Revolution.

The Schuetzen sections of the Line companies received a set of instructions on their duties on 26 February 1789. Being armed with rifled weapons

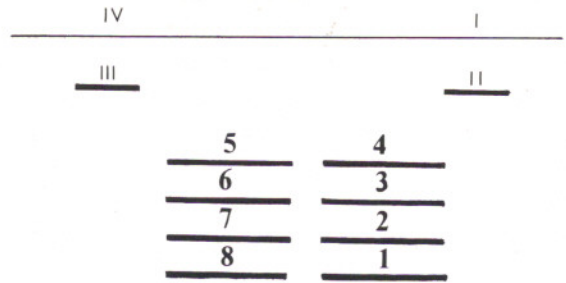
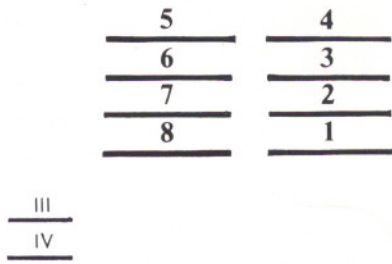


‘Foot Field Jaeger Regiment’—an officer and private, 1800, from Ramm. Only minor changes had taken place in this uniform since Frederick the Great’s day. See also Plate C1.

and having special tasks to perform, they required separate training. They were to spend two weeks a year in target shooting. Their training was to be supervised by a specially selected officer from the regiment. One of the company’s 12 NCOs was designated the Schuetzen-NCO and armed with the rifled musket. It was intended that the Schuetzen should fight in much the same way as the Foot Jaeger.

Emphasis was placed on accurate shooting and the skilful use of terrain, especially woods and undergrowth, ditches, rocks, growing crops, and so on. They were also required to form pickets and patrols as well as to protect the march. When





(Left) Platoons of the Third Rank drawn up in reserve on the flanks of a battalion in column of attack; Arabic numbers indicate Line platoons, Roman numbers the skirmish platoons; each platoon is in two ranks. (Right) Skirmish platoons deployed for a firefight; in this example, two platoons deploy in open order while two remain closed up as a support. The battalion column remains in reserve; it will either deploy for a firefight or press home a bayonet attack, depending on circumstances.

attacking enemy positions, they were to spread out about 100 paces in front of the battalion and to break up the enemy formations, throwing him into confusion until the formed battalion had moved up into effective range and could press home with the decisive attack. The Schuetzen were to fight in a similar fashion when withdrawing.

The light infantry fought well in the wars of the French Revolution, and the experience gained showed that only minor modifications were needed. The Instruction of 14 March 1798 tied up a few loose ends. The way in which the Fusiliers had previously been deployed was to send out the flank platoons of the battalion. The new instruction changed this practice and called for the deployment of a section of each platoon, which allowed the skirmish line to be formed more rapidly. Target practice was also introduced for the smoothbore-armed Fusiliers. The number of Schuetzen in the Fusilier companies was increased from ten to 22 men. A Cabinet Order of 18 June 1801 set the number of bugle signals at 20, putting an end to the craze for superfluous bugle signals which had swept the light infantry.

Although they were a well trained, highly professional body, the one major problem faced by the light infantry in the 1806 campaign was that there were not enough of them to go around, and they often found themselves outnumbered. A

number of German military thinkers of the time and observers of the French army had recognised this prior to 1806, and there had been some attempts to rectify the situation. The practice of pulling the third rank out of the line opened up the possibility of deploying these men in skirmish order. The Duke of Brunswick had in fact issued such an instruction to his regiment (No. 19) as far back as 1791. The Prince of Hohenlohe also toyed with the idea, writing on the subject in the instruction he issued to the Lower Silesian Inspection in 1797. The Potsdam and Berlin garrisons considered this use of the third rank also, and Hohenlohe's Regulations were eventually published on 30 March 1803. (The *'Instruction on the Use of the Third Rank'* of 27 March 1809, later incorporated in the 1812 Regulations, was based largely on this document). The Prince Elector of Hesse, a Prussian field marshal and Inspector-General of the Westphalian Regiments, issued a similar order to his troops on 11 April 1806. Moreover, the King of Prussia likewise issued a similar order on 5 October 1805.

Certainly the third rank was used to form independent formations in the battles of 1806. At Auerstaedt, reserve battalions of men of the third rank were used to plug gaps or to extend the line. At Jena they were used to support the Schuetzen. However, such a use of the third rank appears not to have been general throughout the army and it would seem that even the Silesian Regiments of Grawert's Division, from Hohenlohe's Inspection, did not make much use of their training under his Regulations. Indeed, the practice of supporting the Schuetzen with volunteers from the Line seems to have been more common.

When a unit was deployed into skirmish order,



this does not mean that every one of its members was deployed in open order, but rather that a number—and usually a small number, at that—were thrown out to the front of the unit while the main body remained in support in close order. The main restraint on deploying whole formations into loose order was in fact technological. The infantry firearms of the time were too inefficient to give the firer sufficient means of protecting and defending himself when alone. It simply took too long to load such a weapon for an individual to be able to keep the enemy at bay. Even operating in teams of two men, as the Napoleonic skirmisher did—one waiting to fire while the other loaded—the rate of fire was slow. The amount of ammunition carried by a soldier was limited, and with such an inaccurate weapon it could easily be used up without having caused the enemy any casualties at all, let alone sufficient to encourage him to retreat. Using up all his ammunition rapidly not only made a skirmisher useless for the rest of the battle, but could also cause his barrel to overheat and rupture. Furthermore, the muzzle-loader was difficult, although not impossible, to load prone—the firer was better off standing up to load, thus restricting his ability to make proper use of cover and making him vulnerable to enemy fire.

Out in the open the skirmisher was particularly vulnerable to enemy cavalry, and, if surprised, the entire skirmish line could easily be ridden down. The close proximity of formed troops was thus essential. The platoons and sections could rotate their deployment in the skirmish line, feeding fresh men into it and relieving those who had been there some time; and in the event of a cavalry attack, the formed troops provided a place to rally and offer resistance. Skirmishers were therefore very much an integral part of the infantry battle and only very rarely indeed could they hope to achieve a decision on their own. Rather, they provided a firing line which opened the encounter and prepared the way for the close-order troops, who made the real decision.

An examination of certain points in the relevant section of the 1812 Regulations will serve to illustrate the training, role and functions of light infantry at this time.

The introduction to that section makes it clear that the functions of the formed ranks and the

skirmish sections were closely related and that co-operation between the two was an essential feature of contemporary tactics. Moreover, it points out that the third rank—and all light infantry, come to that—were equally expected to be able to fight in close order when required, and conversely, that members of the first and second ranks were likewise expected to fight in open order when necessary. In 1806 the light infantry were a specialist branch; by 1813 all infantrymen were expected to have at least a rudimentary idea of what skirmishing was about. Finally, the introduction outlines further possible uses of the third rank. Its members could also be formed into sections for special functions in close or open order: that is, as a reserve for the battalion, as a van, rear or flank guard, as a support for pickets, to occupy defiles or other such positions—in short, to fulfil any special requirements at battalion level.

The platoons of the third rankers usually fought in two ranks, and if all four platoons were pulled out for a special task then they were commanded by a specially appointed and trained captain. Each platoon was officered by a junior lieutenant and three NCOs. The lieutenant had a bugler who conveyed a number of orders to the men—there were specific signals for halt, deploy, fire, cease fire, retreat, withdraw slowly, etc.

The skirmish platoons were to be used in the following circumstances:

- 1) Where the nature of the terrain would obstruct the movement of closed troops.
- 2) To protect the close-order lines or columns from the fire of individual enemy skirmishers.
- 3) To maintain a better-aimed fire than is possible in formed line, where each man is put off by the others and where the powder smoke obstructs aiming, whereas the marksman standing alone can make use of the advantages of the terrain and fire at his own pace.
- 4) To mask another attack by throwing a swarm of troops fighting in loose order against the enemy in order to prevent him from discovering the attacker's movements.

The advantage of using the third rank only for such actions was that it would not be necessary for an entire battalion to get involved in a loose-order firefight, wasting its ammunition by firing at the enemy from long ranges and not being in a position to launch the decisive bayonet attack.



It is interesting to note that when the regulations talk of 'skirmisher platoons', they always stress the point that only a small part of these platoons

actually operate as individual skirmishers, the remainder being formed in close order as a support. For instance, when acting as a vanguard, '... the division of the third rank is to march in platoons at several hundred paces in front of the battalions and has a small number of individual skirmishers to its fore.' When the object of the action is to tie the enemy down to allow another formation to outflank him or for some other purpose, then: 'The third rank fights here, if the enemy does not press forward too strongly, with only part of it in loose order, one-



**Fusilier bugler, 1792—from Kling; and (below) bugle-horn of the Guard, 1806-15, now in the Museum for German History in East Berlin, formerly the Royal Prussian Arsenal—this surviving instrument is apparently identical to that shown by Kling. The use of bugles for controlling light troops deployed in open order in battle was common to most armies of the Napoleonic period; the buglers would normally be found close to their officers, fulfilling the same role as drummers in Line units.**





third to at the most two-thirds of the total. If the entire third rank was to deploy, it would have no support and soon run out of ammunition.' When advancing against a wavering enemy when no skirmishers are needed, or when retreating: 'A small part of the third rank of every battalion must be kept in close order so that the skirmishers have a rallying point should one be necessary.'

Keeping a significant part of the light troops in close order was not due to any timid, pedantic, rigid or conservative mentality, which some say pervaded the Prussian army at this time. Rather, the restrictions that were placed on skirmishing and the preference for close-order bayonet charges were real and logical, founded on the limitations of technology and human psychology—with the weapons available at the time, the infantryman was closely tied to his formed supports. Moreover, an individual was less likely to charge the enemy than a great mass of men next to each other.

The second chapter of the section of the regulations dealing with the use of the third rank outlines the methods to be employed when training its members. Firstly, the third rank was to consist of men especially selected for their intelligence, ability to use their initiative and physical fitness. Emphasis was placed on the following three points in training:

- 1) Knowledge and use of the firearm.
- 2) Physical fitness, proper use of local advantages to his own protection.
- 3) Defence against individual cavalymen in open country.

The next matter dealt with is the deployment into a skirmish line. Here, it is emphasised that '... no more men should be deployed in loose order than is made necessary by the terrain and strength of the enemy...' The men so deployed were to remain in pairs in close proximity to each other for mutual protection. The officer was to remain at the centre of the platoon with the bugler. The NCOs were to remain with their sections, giving the men instructions and drawing their attention to the officer's orders.

The paragraph on firing muskets makes it clear that it was a very organised matter. A shot was to be fired only if it stood a good chance of being effective; and as each marksman tended to select his target carefully, the overall rate of fire must have been slow. As mentioned above, firing was usually done

in pairs, one man firing and the other waiting until his partner had reloaded before selecting a target himself and firing. The reason for this was the time it took to reload such primitive weapons.

An important paragraph is that dealing with the function of those parts of the skirmish platoons still in close order. They were positioned out of enemy musket range, but close enough to the skirmish line to offer it quick support. They were to make use of any available cover such as embankments, bushes, hills, buildings, etc., and to be prepared to engage the enemy should the skirmish line get pushed back. The main function of the formed supports was of course to relieve the skirmish line. Loading and firing the flintlock musket was a tiring business requiring a good deal of physical effort; the pieces tended to become fouled easily or overheated, and ammunition would run low after a time, so it was important to relieve the skirmishers and replace them with another section. Obviously this was no easy task in the face of the enemy. It was accomplished by deploying the relief into the skirmish line where there were gaps, and then pulling back the relieved once their replacements were in a position to engage the enemy—a good deal harder in practice than it sounds.

The penultimate paragraph deals with another important part of the training of the skirmisher platoons, namely how to rally. When pushed back by a stronger enemy, they were to fall back into line with the formed supports. If the skirmish platoons were then too weak to hold the enemy, they were then to fall back on the rear of the flanks of the battalion and act as a reserve to it. If surprised by enemy cavalry in the open, the skirmish line was to rush back to its supports and form irregular 'clumps' facing in all directions with the front rank charging arms, the second trying to drive off the cavalry with small arms fire. In the meantime, the battalion was to move up in support. Should the skirmish line be cut off from its supports, the 'clump' was to be formed around the officer and bugler. It can be seen from the above that skirmishers were especially vulnerable to formed cavalry, and that clear thinking and good training were necessary to avoid panic when surprised. Furthermore, the close proximity of formed supports was obviously necessary if the 'clumps' were not to be ridden down rapidly, and this is another indication of how closely



It should also be pointed out that the skirmish line was often supported by the battalion guns (until 1807) or by the brigade foot battery (from 1809), which were positioned according to circumstances; and that light cavalry, especially the hussars, often skirmished along with the infantry, and that inter-arm skirmish training was also conducted.

Considering how the training was conducted is of course to look at only one side of the 'war of detachments'. How the light infantry were used in practice was not always ideal. Common errors made in training were highlighted in one chapter of the draft of the 1812 Regulations: they included using skirmishers against formed cavalry, deploying them too early, and allowing them to become separated from the battalion. Errors made under battle conditions were outlined in the Royal Instruction of 10 August 1813. This document states that the French in the spring of 1813 had proved themselves to be better at fighting in cover—in villages, woods, houses and hedges—and tended to wear out the Prussians, who still attacked in large masses. The other misuse of light infantry was the way that rifle-armed troops were sent off to storm villages and other prepared positions when they were better equipped for acting as snipers, firing from cover at longer ranges, out of range of the enemy's smoothbores. These were really only minor problems, and the light infantry branch of the Prussian army was a well-trained, effective and respected élite in the campaigns of 1812 to 1815.



**Contemporary engraving of Yorck in 1813, wearing the *Pour le mérite* at his throat and the Red Eagle Order on his breast. A major influence on the development of Prussian light infantry, Yorck was also a notably successful commander, particularly in 1813-14.**

skirmishers were tied to formed troops.

Not to be forgotten is the function of the Fusilier Battalions, whose prime duty was to skirmish. When acting as the skirmish line to their brigade, the men of the third rank of both Fusilier Battalions were to be pulled out to skirmish in the manner described above. When detached for 'special duties', i.e. as a vanguard, for picketing, etc., then each company was formed into three platoons two ranks deep and they were used alternately in skirmish order. Fusilier companies were also trained to fight independently in a linear or column formation.

By now, it should be clear just how complex a matter proper skirmishing was. It consisted of a good deal more than a swarm of wildly firing individualists, and required well-trained troops fighting in a highly organised fashion.

## Yorck

Hans David Ludwig von Yorck (1759-1830) is regarded by some as an ultra-conservative and reactionary, but in fact he was among the most progressive light infantry officers of his time, and greatly influenced the development of this arm. Yorck was also one of the great generals of this era, a colourful and controversial character who always attracted attention. His brilliant rearguard action at Altenzaun in 1806 made him one of the more popular Prussian commanders; his rebellion at Tauroggen sparked off Prussia's uprising against France; and his determination and hard fighting in



the campaigns of 1813–14 won him victor's laurels and earned his corps the title of Bluecher's 'Fighting Corps', immortalised by Beethoven's 'Yorck'scher Marsch'.

Yorck's early career in the Prussian army was a chequered one, and he was once dismissed from the army by Frederick the Great for an accusation he made against a fellow officer. Only after Frederick's death did he regain a commission in the Prussian service, and on 5 May 1787 he was appointed captain in the Fusilier Battalion von Plueskow. After five years of garrison life in Silesia he was promoted to major. Being a mere 33 years old, he was one of the youngest men to hold this rank at this time. In 1794 he distinguished himself in action during the suppression of an uprising in one of Prussia's newly-acquired Polish territories. In 1797 he got his first independent command—a Fusilier Battalion. A more significant promotion was to command the crack Foot Jaeger Regiment. Now an experienced light infantry commander, Yorck was able to increase the efficiency of this unit by careful training, and modernised a number of practices. In 1803 he received the rank of colonel and also became a member of the commission on rifle and musket design. In 1805 he became colonel-in-chief

of the Foot Jaeger, a position with some financial benefits. So in less than 20 years Yorck had come to high rank in a prestigious regiment despite his history of court-martial and dismissal. This is an indication of how such talent was rewarded in the Brandenburg-Prussian army, and how men of ability could rise to positions of authority despite serious setbacks.

In October 1806 Yorck, along with four companies of his regiment, was attached to a raiding corps under the Duke of Saxe-Weimar. When the news of Jena and Auerstaedt was received, this corps fell back to the River Elbe. The crossing was protected against the French pursuit by Yorck's men, who inflicted the first defeat of the campaign on the French in a rearguard action at Altenzaun on 26 October. Yorck joined Bluecher's corps, which fought its way to Luebeck on the Baltic coast before it was eventually forced to surrender. Yorck was to be found fighting at the head of the rearguard, where he was wounded twice and taken prisoner. He was later exchanged for a French staff officer, and in June 1807 was decorated and

**Yorck after the battle of Wartenburg, 3 October 1813; he doffs his cap to men of the Life Regiment, in recognition of their valiant part in his victory over Marshal Marmont.**





promoted to major-general. Yorck was now in a position from which he could influence the light branch of the entire army.

From 4 June 1808 Yorck chaired a committee empowered to draft training instructions. Other members of this committee were Gneisenau and Buelow, the latter being the man who in 1813 defeated Oudinot at Grossbeeren and Ney at Dennewitz. On 17 February 1810 Yorck became Inspector-General of the light troops of the entire army. His influence on the development of tactics was thus profound, and Yorck was one of the authoritative reformers of the army.

Yorck's next opportunity for fame came when he

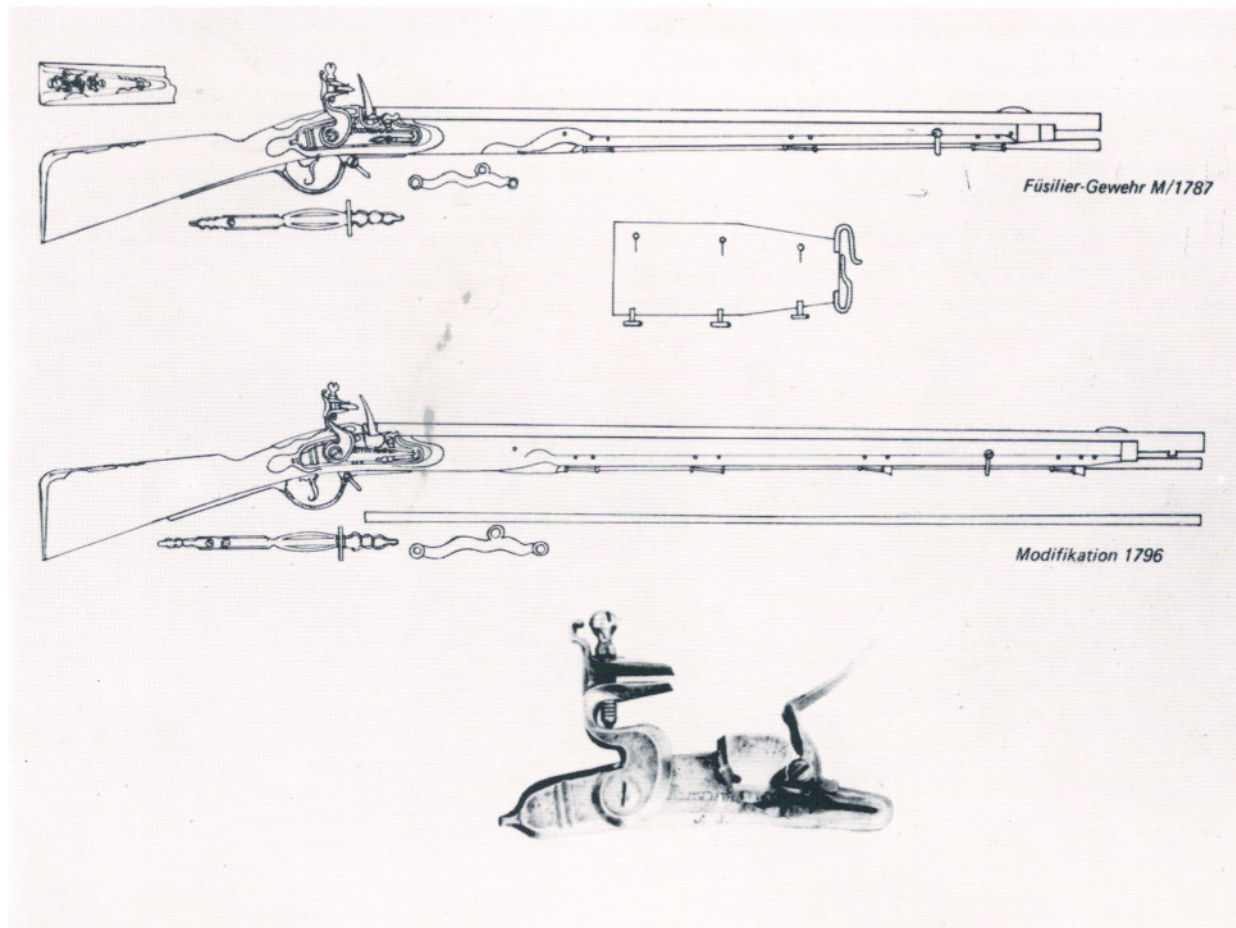
was appointed second-in-command to the Auxiliary Corps of 20,000 men sent to Russia in 1812. By then he had been promoted to lieutenant-general, and he soon assumed full command when his superior Grawert fell ill. Once the disaster which had befallen the main body of the Grande Armée became apparent and the pressure from the Russians grew, Yorck signed the Convention of Taugoggen on 30 December 1812, which neutralised his contingent. He entered East Prussia in concert with the Russians and, in effect, the Wars of Liberation had begun.

1813 marked the peak of Yorck's career. He was always in the thick of the action, fighting at Grossgoerschen and Bautzen in the spring with an army corps under his command. In the autumn he became a full general, and sported the Order of the Red Eagle (1st Class), Iron Cross (1st and 2nd Class) and the *Pour le Mérite*. In the autumn campaign he commanded the 1st Corps of Bluecher's Army of Silesia and was in the forefront

**Fusilier muskets:**

(Top) Pattern 1787. Length, 134cm; barrel, 95cm; calibre, 18mm. The leather lock-cover for foul weather is shown below.

(Bottom) Modification 1796. Length, 145cm; barrel, 104cm. This was an advanced weapon for its time; the photo below shows the pan-shield, which protected the priming from rain and wind and prevented the flare from the igniting priming from spreading.





## Armament and Arms Training

of the fighting at numerous battles, including Katzbach, Wartenburg and Moeckern. He entered Paris in 1814, and received the coveted Grand Cross of the Iron Cross. In 1815 he commanded the 5th Corps and was not involved in the campaign in the Netherlands. By now he was also a member of the Order of the Black Eagle, and had received oak leaves on his *Pour le Mérite*.

As good a commander as Napoleon's best marshals, and better than most, as well as one of the shapers of the 'new' Prussian army and later German military system, this great general is an underrated and misunderstood character.

### Prussian rifles:

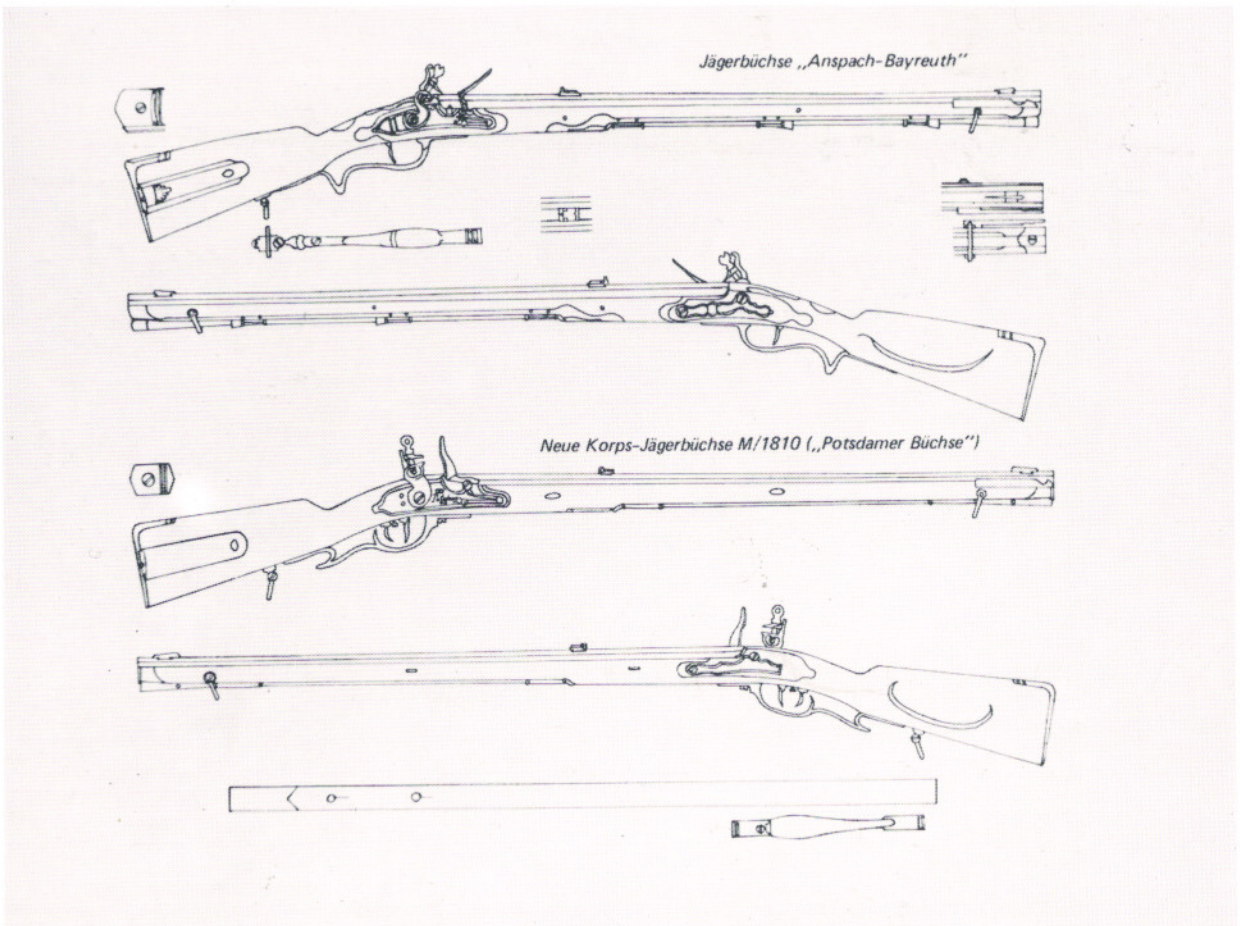
(Top) 'Anspach-Bayreuth' hunting rifle. Length, 110cm; barrel, 72cm; calibre, 15mm. One of many patterns used by the Foot Jaeger, this rifle was carried particularly by the two companies recruited in this region, which in 1795 became III Bataillon of the regiment.

(Bottom) 'New Corps hunting rifle, model 1810, "Potsdam rifle"'. Length, 111.9cm; barrel, 73cm; calibre, 14.65mm. Introduced to the Jaeger battalions from 1810, this weapon was never available in sufficient numbers to become their universal equipment.

The one sentence which characterises Prussian small arms to many people is that hackneyed quote from Clausewitz that the Prussian musket was 'the worst in Europe'. Very few writers have bothered to consider those few words in the context of the remainder of the essay in which they were written, let alone to point out that there was no such thing as 'the' Prussian musket, as throughout the period in question there were several models in use at any one time. The fact is that in terms of performance, reliability and accuracy most of the Prussian small arms were as good if not better than their contemporaries, and the manufacture and export of small arms was an established industry in Brandenburg-Prussia.

Among the models used by the light infantry branch were:

- 1) Fusilier Musket, 1787 Pattern





- 2) Fusilier Musket, 1796 Modification
- 3) 'Old' Prussian Rifles, various types, including 1796 Pattern
- 4) 'New' Corps Rifle, 1810 Pattern
- 5) Schuetzen Rifle, 1787 Pattern
- 6) Various privately manufactured rifled and smoothbore hunting guns and carbines

The skirmishers of the third rank tended to use standard-issue infantry muskets of the following patterns:

- 1) 1782 Pattern
- 2) 1801 Pattern (Nothardt Musket)
- 3) 1809 Pattern ('New' Prussian Musket)

'Sharpshooter rifle, model 1787'. Length, 124cm; calibre, 18.5mm. A total of 10,000 of these weapons were produced; they were used by Schuetzen sections of the Line and light battalions, and were later to be found in the ranks of a number of other light formations. The detail views show the spring clip for fixing the bayonet (bottom left), the rifling, and the adjustable backsight. (This, and the previous two weapons plates, from Lehner's 'Altpreussische Schusswaffen', reproduced by kind permission of Biblio Verlag, Osnabrueck, Germany.)

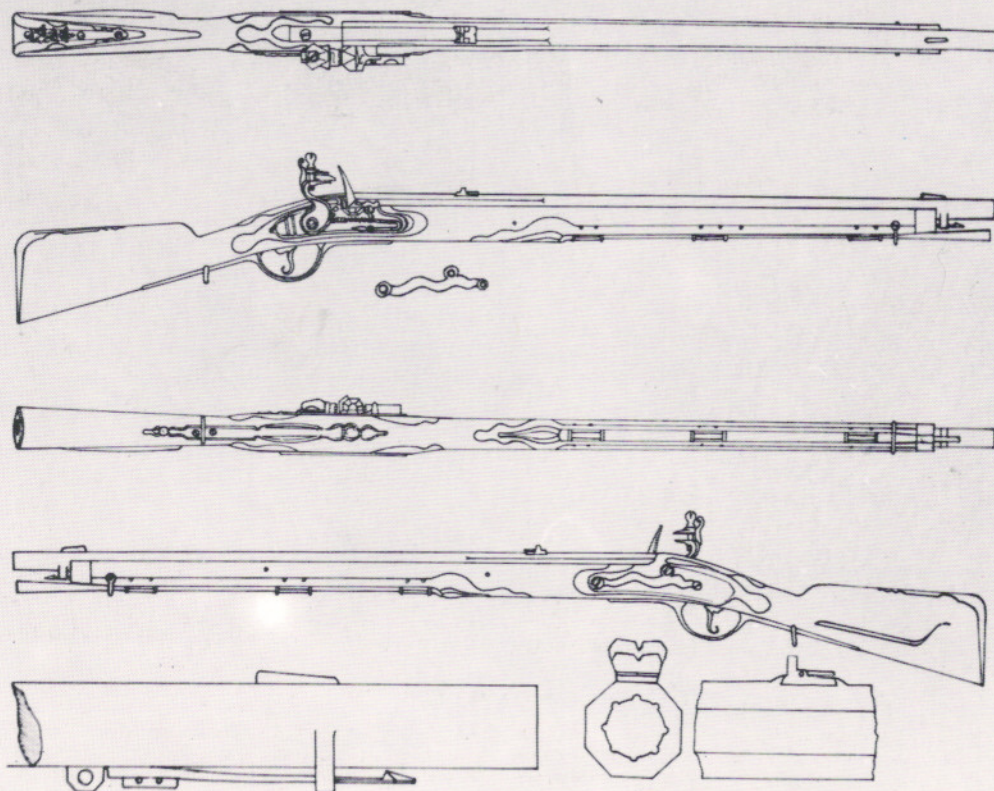
## Fusiliers

The Fusilier Battalions were initially armed with the 'Fusilier musket', but from 1808 they were armed with whatever they could get hold of, due to the shortage of firearms at that time. Popular weapons were the French Charleville musket, and then the 'New' Prussian musket when supplies became available.

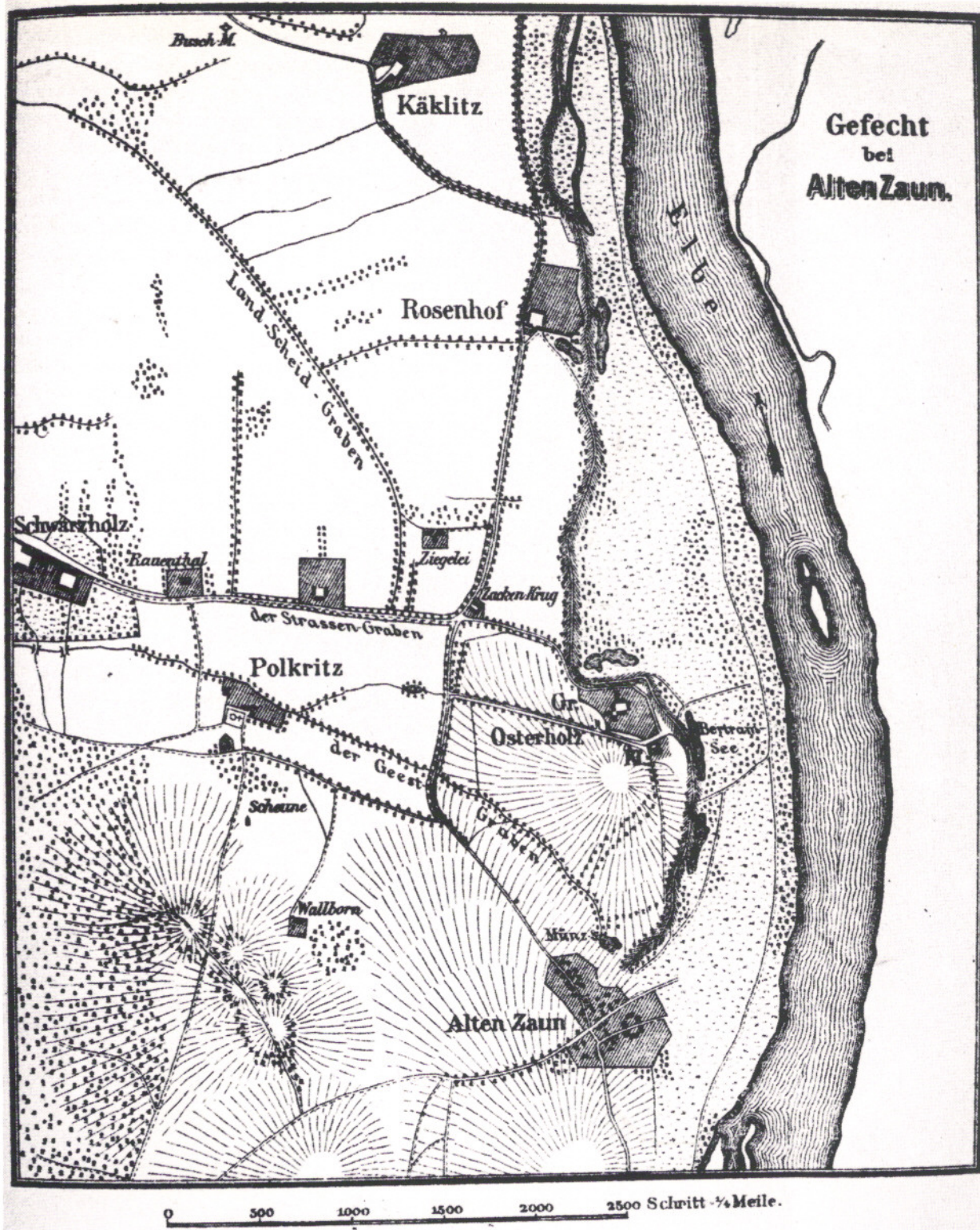
## Jaeger

As the Jaeger were recruited largely from gamekeepers, foresters and the like, they usually brought their own hunting rifles with them into military service, so it is difficult to determine the type of every weapon carried. However, there were attempts to introduce a uniform weapon, notably in 1744, again in 1796 and then in 1810. For a number of reasons these attempts were often thwarted. For instance, most of the 336 serviceable rifles available to the Guard Jaeger Battalion on its founding in November 1808 were loans and gifts from foresters and huntsmen. Although from 1809 a new weapon,

*Scharfschützen-Gewehr 1787*







The battlefield of Altenzaun, 26 October 1806—see text for details of Yorck's deployment of his light troops. Polkritz was the anchor of his right flank; he covered the Geestgraben, the ditch running down and right on this map, as far as the pond labelled 'Münz-See' just above Altenzaun, and the slopes between the pond and Osterholz, with his centre at the

Zackenkrug junction. The Elbe dyke can be seen here meandering down the map left of the river, passing right of Rosenhof, making a bulge round Osterholz, and curving in towards Altenzaun at the bottom. The French attempted to advance from Altenzaun both towards Polkritz and up the dyke towards Osterholz. (From Droysen)



the 'New' Corps Rifle, was manufactured, in 1812 and 1813 there was still a distinct lack of uniformity of armament in the Jaeger.

The essential difference between a rifle and a musket was that the former had a series of grooves etched into its shorter barrel which imparted such a spin to the bullet that the range and accuracy of fire was increased. Unlike most infantry muskets, rifled weapons had a back and a fore sight. A number of Prussian rifles, including the 1810 Pattern, had a double trigger system which reduced shake and thus increased accuracy. However, the main drawback with rifled weapons was the time they took to load—up to several minutes—and the ease with which they became fouled. To increase accuracy the lead bullets were patched, that is, a

small disc of felt was wrapped around the bullet so that it fitted tighter into the grooves. Usually a mallet was used to bang the ball down the barrel with the ramrod. After a few shots a smaller size ball was used, as fouling reduced the calibre. Eventually, the weapon needed a good clean before it could be fired again. Hence the fact that riflemen tended to wait for a suitable target, aim carefully and make their few shots count. A few well-placed riflemen could make good snipers, but its slow rate of fire prevented this weapon from being widely adopted.

### **Schuetzen**

The Schuetzen sections of the Line and light companies were armed with the 1787 pattern rifled weapon. It had front and back sights, the latter graded for 150 and 300 paces. Some 10,000 of these weapons were manufactured. These rifles could have a bayonet attached to them. The Silesian Schuetzen Battalion also lacked uniformity of armament and, at first anyway, was partly armed with infantry muskets.

**Yorck at Altenzaun, by Richard Knoetel. This illustrates the way in which light infantry fought at this date. In the foreground are pairs of skirmishers alternately loading and firing; in the background the close-order sections and platoons remain in reserve behind cover. The commanding officer is in a position from which he can supervise the engagement and control the feeding-in of reserves.**





## NCOs

Theoretically all NCOs were armed with rifled carbines, and they did not fire with the ranks' volleys. However, in practice they often gave up their weapons to rifle units to make up for shortages. They used a number of different patterns of weapons, including some originally made for the cavalry.

## Volunteers

A number of volunteer formations were raised, especially at a time of crisis such as late 1806/07 and spring 1813. Their members tended to bring their own weapons and obviously there was quite a variety. It would appear that most of the weapons were smoothbores—carbines or shortened muskets—as there were simply not enough rifles available.

## Third Rank

One of the hindrances to using the third rank as skirmishers was the 1782 musket: this weapon was designed for rapid fire, and could not be aimed with any accuracy. It was intended to replace this musket with the Nothardt Pattern, but as the latter went into mass production only in 1805 it was never issued to more than seven battalions in time for the 1806 campaign. Supplies of this musket captured by the French were given to various Confederation of the Rhine states. The 1809 Musket was a much more suitable weapon for contemporary warfare. The third-rankers used this and a number of other weapons—Prussian and foreign—in the campaigns of 1812 to 1815, including the 1782 model with a re-designed butt.

As one of the important functions of light infantry was to engage in aimed fire against the enemy, target practice was obviously an important part of their training. The Instruction for the Schuetzen of 26 February 1789 specified that they were to spend a fortnight each year engaged in firing practice, shooting from all possible positions. A number of the Fusilier Battalions at this time engaged in target practice with their smoothbore weapons. Obviously the Jaeger were all skilled marksmen. Attempts to increase the amount of target practice after 1807 were restricted by the lack of government funds to buy the necessary powder. In the year 1811/12 the Fusiliers were allowed only 30 practice rounds and the Jaeger and Schuetzen, 60. A further  $\frac{1}{2}$ lb of powder per man was allowed for firing blanks.



Fusilier officers, 1806—from Kling. Uniform details will be found in the main text.

## *The Light Infantry at War*

Having examined their development, organisation, drill, leaders, armament and training, it now remains to look at how Brandenburg-Prussia's light infantry functioned in practice; and firstly, in the campaign of 1806.

The story we are usually told is one of liberated French *tirailleurs* and flexible columns defeating the 'rigid' Prussians and their 'outmoded' linear tactics. Reference to the reports made by participating officers paint quite a different picture. For instance, Maj. von Krafft, commander of the Grenadier Battalion Krafft at Auerstaedt, wrote: '... [the battalion] was ordered to send the Schuetzen officer with 20 Schuetzen to reinforce the vanguard.' This remark is interesting, not only as it indicates how the Schuetzen were used, but also as it shows that there was a tendency in 1806 to deprive the





**Fusiliers in field dress, 1806—from Kling. Uniform details will be found in the main text. Note the field equipment, including a calfskin pack slung diagonally, a cloth bread-bag and a tin canteen.**

battalions of their skirmish element, which in turn required the battalions to improvise when needing light troops—as we shall see later. Col. von Kalkreuth, commander of the Infantry Regiment Prince Hohenlohe (No. 32) at Jena, reported that on one occasion: ‘The Schuetzen of the regiment, spurred on by their commanding officer, prevented the enemy light troops from pressing forward for a very long time, despite the fact that the latter were under better cover from the advantageous terrain.’ From this it can be seen that Prussian skirmishers, even when at a disadvantage, were capable of giving a good account of themselves. Maj. von Hahn, commander of a grenadier battalion at Jena wrote: ‘Lt. von Zarski, commander of the battalion’s Schuetzen, was sent with them against the bushes nearby, however I soon noticed that the enemy outnumbered him. He did not return to the battalion with the Schuetzen.’

On this occasion the Prussians were beaten by the

French due to the latter’s superior numbers. On other occasions, various methods were used to support the Schuetzen when they were outnumbered. At the battle of Halle (17 October 1806) Infantry Regiment Tresckow (No. 17) sent the first platoon of the colonel’s company to the support of its Schuetzen. Later on more support was required, and 2nd Lt. von Bilow related: ‘As our Schuetzen were too few against the superior number of *voltigeurs* and *tirailleurs*, the General [that is Maj.-Gen. von Tresckow, also colonel-in-chief of this regiment] called to the regiment for volunteers, whereupon nearly all the chaps left the ranks, so that for the moment the call had to be withdrawn; but the Schuetzen were reinforced, and held back the enemy’s pressure very well.’ These are the demoralised and inflexible Prussians that we hear so much about!

When there were no Schuetzen to hand other troops from the line were used in their place. Col. von Raumer, commander of the Infantry Regiment Malschitzky (No. 28) at Jena, remarks that the left flank company of his second battalion was detached to occupy the village of Benndorf. Von Kalkreuth mentions an occasion when he prevented French skirmishers from outflanking him by detaching two platoons to cover his flank. Lt.Col. von Hallmann, commanding a battalion in the Infantry Regiment Winning (No. 23) at Jena, mentions detaching a company of musketeers to operate ‘à la débânde’ and cover his retreat. From these instances it can be seen that even in 1806 the Prussians were capable of operating in open order when required, although it should be pointed out that the above examples are not representative of the entire army, and the level of ability varied from regiment to regiment.

Secondly, to the battle of Altenzaun, one of the most famous and successful rearguard actions in the history of the Brandenburg-Prussian army. This example also serves to illustrate the fact that with proper leadership and planning it was well within the capability of the army of 1806 to defeat the French. Moreover, it is a good example of how able a commander Yorck was, and that he was an inspiring light infantry tactician.

The Duke of Weimar needed to cross the River Elbe by ferry with his corps, which was being closely pursued by the French. Obviously such a manoeuvre was very difficult and time-consuming,



- 1: Private, Schuetzen of the Guard, 1806  
2: Private, Schuetzen of Inf. Regt. von Ruechel, 1806  
3: Bugler, Schuetzen of Inf. Regt. von Puttkamer, 1806





- 1: Private, Silesian Schuetzen Bn., 1808-14  
2: NCO, Silesian Schuetzen Bn., 1810-14  
3: Bugler, Silesian Schuetzen Bn., 1808-14





- 1: Private, Foot Jaeger Regt., 1800  
2: Private, East Prussian Jaeger Bn., 1808-13  
3: Officer, Guard Jaeger Bn., 1808-14





- 1: Private, Foot Jaeger Regt., 1806  
2: Officer, Foot Jaeger Regt., 1806  
3: Private, Guard Jaeger Bn., 1813





- 1: Fusilier officer, Magdeburg Bde., 1800  
2: Private, Fusilier Bn. von Renouard, 1792  
3: Bugler, Fusilier Bn. von Rembow, 1792





1, 2 & 3: Officer, Private and NCO, Fusilier Bn.  
Graf Wedel, 1806





1, 2: Fusiliers, 6th Inf. Regt. (1st W. Prussian), 1808-14  
3: Fusilier NCO, 6th Inf. Regt. (1st W. Prussian), 1814-15





- 1: NCO, Volunteer Jaeger Co., 9th Inf. Regt. (Colberg), 1815  
2: NCO, Volunteer Jaeger Co., 6th Inf. Regt. (1st W. Prussian), 1813  
3: Volunteer Jaeger, 8th Inf. Regt. (Life Regt.), 1815





and needed the greatest skill to accomplish. Yorck was put in charge of the rearguard, which was positioned at Altenzaun, some 5km to the north of the crossing point. His force consisted of three Fusilier Battalions, six Jaeger companies and two cannon. The terrain (see map p.21) consisted of undulating countryside around Altenzaun itself, with a plain a few hundred paces to its north broken up by tree-lined roads, ditches and bushes. On the northern edge of these heights was a ditch known as the Geestgraben flowing from a pond, the Muenz-See, in a westerly direction past the Polkritz church. This plain was separated from the meadows running along the Elbe by the Elbe Embankment (Elbdamm) which, beginning at the heights at Altenzaun, runs past the villages of Osterholz and Rosenhof. The road from Sandau goes through Altenzaun in a north-westerly direction through the hilly terrain, over a sunken road (Strassen-Graben) at Zackenkrug, and over the plain to Rosenhof.

Such broken terrain offering a good deal of cover was ideal for Yorck's light infantry. The wood near Polkritz church covered his right flank; the two companies of Jaeger he placed there occupied the churchyard and farm with their skirmishers, linking up with the Schuetzen of the three Fusilier Battalions behind the Geestgraben down to the Muenz-See. A third Jaeger company covered the bushy plain between the pond and Osterholz with its skirmishers; a fourth occupied the village, and pushed out its skirmishers to the edge and left over the Elbe Embankment. Zackenkrug was designated the central point of the defence and behind it, furthest to the rear, was a battalion of Fusiliers, with in front of them, on both sides of the bridge there, two companies of Jaeger. To the front of them, half way to the bridge over the Geestgraben, were the other two Fusilier Battalions. The enemy could try to break through either along the road or along the dyke. The two companies of Jaeger by the sunken road were near enough to either point to be brought up quickly.

The French took their time. Their cavalry, from Maragon's Division, first appeared at four in the afternoon of 26 October 1806, sweeping through the terrain from Altenzaun up to the church at Polkritz, where the sudden fire from the Jaeger caused them to make a hasty withdrawal. An hour later infantry columns from the 26<sup>e</sup> Léger moved up

on the Elbe dyke towards Osterholz, while a thick chain of *tirailleurs* was thrown against the Jaeger stationed between the Muenz-See and the village.

Once this violent firefight had begun, Yorck moved up his two reserve companies to reinforce the fire line, and at the same time another company was moved from the church to a position in a curve of the dyke from where they were able to fire into the left flank of the enemy. All these movements were made rapidly, and put the French into an awkward situation which their *tirailleurs* were not able to retrieve. Being unable to score many hits on the well-protected Prussians, they suffered a defeat which cost them many men—they were fired on from three sides by 400 rifles. Yorck then brought up his two cannon, one to the Geest bridge and the other to the dyke at Osterholz, and fired into the French columns. Then he launched a counter-attack. A dismounted dragoon regiment was totally surprised by this and fell back in the greatest disorder. The infantry battalions were driven back to Altenzaun. The Prussians had lost only 20 dead and wounded in this action. They reckoned to have caused the French six times that amount of casualties. After nightfall, the Prussians lit their bivouac fires and then slipped away, crossing the Elbe by barge. The French did not notice their withdrawal until it was over.

One of Yorck's most famous victories in the Wars of Liberation was at Wartenburg on 3 October 1813. Skirmishers played a notable role in this battle, and Yorck's biographer, Droysen, outlines this:

'The 1st Battalion of the 2nd East Prussian Regiment was involved in a firefight from the morning onwards [to cover the surprise crossing of the River Elbe] and "was relieved after six hours of action" says Yorck's report, "being only around 60 men strong with their colour in the middle, led back by the one remaining officer, Lt. von Werner, who was wounded." Steinmetz [the commander of the reserve brigade] "with his usual cold-bloodedness" sent the militia battalions Seydlitz, Mumm and Walter off to skirmish; after the skirmishers of these battalions, twice reinforced, twice provided with fresh ammunition, were all but wiped out, the battalions themselves were, one after the other, deployed into skirmish order.'

This firefight was essential to the entire





Guard Fusilier officer and NCO, 1809 parade dress—from Thuemen, 'Die Uniformen der Preussischen Garden' (Berlin, 1840). It is interesting that the NCO's sidearm is the 'old'

Prussian infantry sabre carried by the Guard, instead of the Fusilier sword carried by Line Fusiliers.



operation, as it tied the French down frontally and distracted their attention sufficiently to allow them to be successfully outflanked. The skirmishing was initially the task of the third rank, but entire companies were fed in as reinforcements over a period of several hours. This skirmish action was not the decisive event of the battle—the turning of the French right flank settled the issue—but it served to facilitate the victory.

The bloodiest battle Yorck ever fought was at Moeckern (16 October 1813) at the beginning of the decisive battle of Leipzig. The entire campaign had been fought with great determination and little mercy by both protagonists. The street fighting in Moeckern was the climax of the Wars of Liberation. Droysen relates:

‘Only remnants of the 2nd Brigade remained, it had lost over 1,500 men, half of its strength; Battalion Schleuse [1st East Prussian Infantry Regiment] had 428 dead and wounded; all of its staff officers, von der Schleuse, Kurnatowsky, Dessauniers, Pentzig, Fischer, were dead or wounded. But the tiled roofs of the barns to the side of Moeckern offered good cover this was noted; and they were made the aim of the next attack.

‘Whilst this murderous battle was going on to the side of Moeckern, the fighting in the village itself was no less bitter and bloody. If we took the streets, then the enemy still held the houses, stalls, barns, fired from the windows, from the roof-tops, from the cellars. Each house had to be taken individually. All formation was lost, groups of 30 or 40 men, militia, Grenadiers, Jaeger, depending on who stood next to whom, got on with the job to hand; when the walls were taken, the gate broken open, the door smashed in, then whatever was found inside was bayoneted, no quarter was given. Others had moved right onto the high banks of the River Elster and in unison with the Jaeger that had been left behind, they drove the enemy from the Elster bridge which he was still holding. But we did not get much further, suffering heavy casualties. Kluex and Schon were wounded. Major Pfindel was mortally wounded. A third of the men were dead or wounded.’

Of course, street-fighting was quite a different matter from skirmishing and should not be confused with it. Skirmishing was an organised matter under close supervision from the officers and NCOs, whereas street-fighting, as the above quote makes

clear, was very much an improvised and confused matter.

The Brandenburg-Prussian army as a whole, and its light infantry branch in particular, fought with great courage and bravery throughout the wars of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Its sacrifices were eventually rewarded with victory, and an end to the period of French domination in German affairs.

## Uniforms

### Fusiliers

1789–1796

The Fusiliers had a dark green coat of the same cut as the infantry, a white waistcoat and knee breeches, black gaiters, a bicorn know as the ‘casquet’ which sported an eagle badge, a black neckstock and white belts. The colour of the collar, lapels, cuffs and buttons distinguished the battalions, as follows:

<i>Battalion</i>	<i>Facings</i>	<i>Buttons</i>
1	light green	yellow
2	pink	yellow
3	white	yellow
4	light blue	yellow
5	dark green	yellow
6	orange	yellow
7	pink	white
8	light green	white
9	straw	white
10	straw	yellow
11	white	white
12	orange	white
13	chamois	white
14	black	yellow
15	chamois	yellow
16	black	white
17	light blue	white
18	carmine	yellow
19	carmine	white
20	dark green	white

The officers with dark green, black and carmine facings had them made of velvet. The officers’ tricorns had a white-over-black feather plume, a cockade and a clasp with a small eagle badge. They wore boots. The men were armed with the Fusilier



musket and the straight-bladed short sword. From 1793 the sword knots distinguished the four companies—white, dark green, orange and violet. The officers were armed with an épée.

1797–1807

The old-style tricorne with a white trim was reintroduced to replace the casquet, and the battalions of each brigade were distinguished by the colour of the pompon as follows:

<i>White</i>	<i>Red</i>	<i>Yellow</i>
2,6,8,10,14,	1,4,7,9,11,15,	3,5,12,13,16,
17,19,21	18,23	20,22,24

From 24 August 1801 a cylindrical black felt shako was introduced. This had an eagle badge in the button colour, a plume of the above system, and a white trim around the upper edge.

From 1797 a new shorter jacket was introduced. The lining was red. The collar, lapels and cuffs were in the facing colour. The Kurmark (from 1803, Magdeburg) and Magdeburg (from 1803, Westphalian) Brigades had crimson facings; the Lower and Upper Silesian, black; the 1st and 2nd East Prussian, light green; the 1st Warsaw and South Prussian (Battalions No. 7 and 8), light blue; and the 2nd Warsaw (Battalions No. 4 and 16), dark green. In 1800 the South Prussian Brigade was disbanded and its facing colour adopted by the 2nd Warsaw (Battalions No. 6, 8 and 16). In 1806, the battalions were distinguished as in Table A below.

In 1800 the men of the Silesian battalions received red neckstocks, the officers retaining their black ones. Throughout the branch white cloth tailless 'chemisette' waistcoats replaced the green 'gilet', and they in turn were replaced by white coating jerkins in 1801. Long white breeches with short black gaiters were worn. Twill overalls were

also issued. Belts were black, but the sabre belt was now worn around the waist over the jacket instead of over the right shoulder. The officers wore a tunic of the same cut as Line officers; it had red-lined tails. They also had white waistcoats and trousers and black boots. Their tricorns sported a white feather plume. Their silver/black waist sash was worn over the tunic, the tassels behind the sabre, which was carried on a black belt. Their overcoats and greatcoats were green.

1808–1815

From 1808 a new uniform was issued to the Fusiliers. They were clothed as the Line battalions, reflecting their new status as an integral part of each Line regiment. Moreover, their dark blue tunics bore the same distinctions as their parent regiments, and in 1808 these were as in Table B on the right.

Coat-tails were faced in poppy-red for all regiments, and the buttons were yellow for all regiments except for the Foot Guards. The neckstocks were black.

The shakos were made of black felt, 7ins high and with a circumference on the upper edge of 22ins. The lower edge had a leather band and the upper edge a trim which was white for privates, gold for officers and NCOs. The black leather chinstrap was  $\frac{3}{4}$ in wide. The peak was of plain black leather. At the front top edge was a pompon—white, centred black for privates, and silver and black for officers. The Fusiliers had a circular black and white cockade fixed on the front of the shako by a brass button and a 'loop'—white for privates, brass for officers and NCOs.

From 1814 a new type of shako was issued, tapering from top to bottom, 6½ins high and about 22½ins in circumference. The sides were reinforced

**Table A**

<i>Brigade</i>	<i>Bn. No.</i>	<i>Facings</i>	<i>Buttons</i>
Magdeburg	1,2,5	carmine	yellow
Westphalian	18,19,20	carmine	white
1st East Prussian	3,6,11	light green	yellow
2nd East Prussian	21,23,24	light green	white
1st Warsaw	4,8,16	light blue	yellow
2nd Warsaw	9,12,17	light blue	white
Lower Silesia	13,14,15	black	yellow
Upper Silesia	7,10,22	black	white



*Regiment*

1st East Prussian  
 1st Pommeranian  
 2nd East Prussian  
 3rd East Prussian  
 4th East Prussian  
 1st West Prussian  
 2nd West Prussian  
 Foot Guards  
 Life  
 Colberg  
 1st Silesian  
 2nd Silesian

(\*with white lace and white buttons)

**Table B***Collar & cuffs*

orange  
 white  
 orange  
 orange  
 orange  
 carmine  
 carmine  
 poppy-red\*  
 poppy-red  
 white  
 yellow  
 yellow

*Shoulder straps*

white  
 white  
 poppy-red  
 yellow  
 light-blue  
 white  
 poppy-red  
 white  
 white  
 poppy-red  
 white  
 poppy-red

with leather strips and the upper edge was now of plain black leather. The pompon had an elliptical shape. Brass chinscales replaced the leather strap and were fixed on rosettes which, for the Fusiliers, were in the shape of a bugle horn. The crowned royal monogram 'FWR' decorated the front. On parade, white cords were worn.

Due to shortages, not every Fusilier was issued with the straight-bladed sidearm. When supplies became available the third ranks were the first to receive them, as they were more likely to be deployed in undergrowth where this machete-like weapon would be of use. The scabbard was of brown leather with brass fittings. Until around 1810 the sword was worn on a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ in-wide waistbelt with a square brass buckle. From October 1810 a belt with two rings was issued, worn over the shoulder on manoeuvres, marches and campaigns but around the waist when on parade, garrison duties and training when not in full pack. However, the practice of wearing this belt around the waist gradually declined, and was abolished from April 1814. Sword knots were worn and distinguished the companies within the battalion. The first company had green knots, the second yellow, the third blue and the fourth red.

The cartridge box was carried on a 2in-wide black belt over the left shoulder. Various patterns of light brown calfskin knapsack were worn. They were attached over one or both shoulders by black straps. The field canteen was fixed on the back of

the pack and had a grey cover when on campaign, a white one for parade. Grey greatcoats were carried rolled on top of the pack when on parade, 'en bandolier' over the left shoulder when on campaign. Buglers and drummers wore 'swallows' nests' on both shoulders, usually in the facing colour with white lace; but as the Pommeranian battalions had white facings they wore red nests, and it appears that the Silesians used either red or their facing colour.

**Jaeger**

1789

The Foot Jaeger Regiment wore a plain casquet with a green feather plume for privates and a black one with a white tip for NCOs. The coats had green turnbacks and round cuffs; green waistcoats were worn and leather trousers with top boots. The officers wore a white feather plume with a black base, and a cockade and clasp. Otherwise, the uniform was more or less the same as worn in the time of Frederick the Great.

1797-1807

The tricorne was reintroduced, furnished with white and green cords and a black cockade with a gold clasp. The plumes were retained. In 1800 white cloth knee breeches with knee boots were introduced. In 1802 white waistcoats replaced the green ones. On mobilisation in 1805 the Jaeger were issued with long green buttoned overalls; in 1806, with grey ones. The green coat retained its red collar and cuffs and yellow wool shoulder straps.





Fusilier Battalion of the 1st Foot Guards, 1813—from Thümen. A good impression of the Guard Fusiliers in field kit; again, note the man kneeling in the foreground holding his

fire until his partner has finished loading, and the officer supervising the skirmish closely. Note covered shakos and canteens, and rolled coats.



The turnbacks were green. The black velvet neckstock had a white tie-band. It was intended to introduce a shako in 1806, but due to the outbreak of war this was never accomplished.

1808-1815

The Jaeger were issued with a dark green coatee which had red piping on the tail turnbacks. The collar, cuffs and shoulder straps were poppy-red; the Guards had gold lace on their collars and cuffs (from 1811, of yellow wool), but the red shoulder straps were not decorated. Trousers similar to those of the Line were worn—white linen for parade, grey wool for campaign—but until the end of 1813 they wore knee boots.

Shakos were also similar to those of the Line, but without any trim and with green cords. On parade a black feather plume was added. On campaign, a waxed cloth cover was worn to protect it from the

elements. The Guards had a brass plate on the front of their shakos, the East Prussians a cockade. NCOs had black-over-white plumes; the sergeant-major, black with a white tip; officers had silver and black cords, gold eagles and chain, falling black feather plume with a white spot, in the Guards with a silver star and enamelled badge. In 1814 the new shako was introduced, with white cords (officers silver and black), and a tall, thin, hair plume which was black for officers and men, with a white tip for NCOs and red for buglers.

The sidearm was a sword bayonet carried over the right shoulder. Sword knots were green. The cartridge box was worn on a black belt over the left shoulder. The belt had a brass plate with a picker,

**Foot Jaeger, and Foot Jaeger officer, in the uniform authorised for 1806, although the shako was not in fact issued for the campaign of that year—from Henschel.**





## The Plates

and a bag for a brass powder flask. The Guards had a black leather knapsack with a badgerskin flap; the Line battalions had calfskin packs. Other details were similar to the Line battalions.

The Madgeburg Jaeger Battalion received yellow shoulder straps.

### Third Rank

The men of the third rank had no particular uniform distinction and wore the normal uniform of their unit. For uniform details of the third rankers of the Fusiliers, see above.

### Volunteers

Volunteer formations, by their very nature, tended to lack uniformity of dress as they usually supplied their own clothing. The volunteers of 1813 were ordered to dress as the Jaeger Battalions, but with the facing colour of their parent regiment. The volunteers attached to the Jaeger Battalions wore white shoulder straps as a distinction.

### Schuetzen

The men of the Schuetzen sections of the Line battalions prior to 1808 wore more or less the same uniform as their parent formations. The distinctions were as follows:

- 1) On the hat, a small black-and-white plume and black-and-white cords as worn by NCOs. These cords were first introduced with the tricorne; the casquets did not have them.
- 2) On the sidearm, the black-and-white knot of the NCO.
- 3) Schuetzen of the Grenadiers had a black-and-white plume, initially made of cord, later of feathers.

The Silesian Schuetzen Battalion was uniformed as follows: dark green coatee, yellow buttons, dark green tail turnbacks piped red, black collar piped red, black 'Brandenburg' cuffs piped red and with dark green patches. Shoulder straps were black, piped red, until the formation of the Rhenish Schuetzen Battalion in 1815, when the former received white shoulder straps and the latter poppy-red. The shako was of the standard pattern, but without a trim, just a cockade and clasp on the front; officers had silver and black cords, gold eagles and chain, and a falling black feather plume with a white spot. The 1814-style shakos were decorated in a similar way to those of the Jaeger. Packs were calfskin, belts black, and other equipment similar to that of the Jaeger.

### A1: Private, Schuetzen of the Guard, 1806

This figure wears campaign dress, including the drab twill trousers with wooden buttons at the bottom of the legs. Note the Guard lace on the poppy-red facings, and the feather plume. The front of the tunic has been buttoned over for the sake of warmth. He carries the 'old' Prussian infantry sabre, and holds in his left hand an aiming-rest for the rifle, a feature copied from the Austrians. After Herbert Knoetel.

### A2: Private, Schuetzen of Infantry Regiment von Ruechel, 1806

Another figure in campaign dress. Note that the uniform facings are in a light 'tile' red, while the lining and turnbacks are in poppy-red. This man carries his share of the bivouac equipment—wooden tent pegs, and a covered axe—in addition to his own field equipment. After Kling.

### A3: Bugler, Schuetzen of Infantry Regiment von Puttkamer, 1806

The bugler is in parade dress: trousers, knapsack and bread-bag would be added on campaign. The tunic no longer buttons, but is fastened with hooks and eyes down the front closure. The regimental colours may be seen on the facings, lace, hat pompon and musician's 'swallows'-nest' wings, but the lining and therefore the turnbacks are poppy-red. After Kling.

### B1: Private, Silesian Schuetzen Battalion, 1808–14

Raised from various companies formed in 1807 to defend Silesia against the French invasion, the battalion was garrisoned in Liegnitz during 1809–12, and was heavily involved in the campaigns of 1813–15. This figure shows the campaign dress worn for most of that period. The slightly 'belled' shako has had the plume removed and an oilskin cover fitted, fastening up the back. The greatcoat is worn 'en bandolier'; the canteen carried on the rear face of the knapsack has a grey cloth cover. After Knoetel.

**Guard Jaeger in the new uniform issued in 1808—from Rentzell. The dark green coatee has poppy-red facings at collar, cuff and shoulder strap, and gold Guard lace loops on the collar and cuffs. The trousers are grey, tucked into knee boots; the leather equipment black with brass fittings.**





S. Kriokel.  
89.





From Kling, another study of the 1808 Guard Jaeger uniform, this one showing more detail of the officer's uniform—note his buttoned overalls.



*B2: NCO, Silesian Schuetzen Battalion, 1810–14*

Immediately distinguishable by the gold lace worn at collar and cuffs, this NCO is in parade uniform with the white linen trousers worn during summer. After Knoetel.

*B3: Bugler, Silesian Schuetzen Battalion, 1808–14*

This figure in campaign dress displays the usual musicians' distinction: the 'swallows'-nest' shoulder wings of cloth in regimental colours—here the black, laced with white, piped red, of this battalion. Although they did not carry a firearm the buglers retained the sword bayonet. After 1814 a new tunic with a closed collar was issued. After Knoetel.

*C1: Private, Foot Jaeger Regiment, 1800*

The parade uniform of this élite formation is very 18th century in appearance, although it was in this year that the Jaeger zu Fuss received these white breeches and knee boots.

*C2: Private, East Prussian Jaeger Battalion, 1808–13*

After the reduction of the Jaeger zu Fuss to a strength of about two companies in the 1806 campaign, it proved possible to raise two battalions based on survivors and returned prisoners: the Guard and East Prussian battalions. The East Prussians—whose parade uniform is illustrated here—fought throughout the 1812–14 campaigns. Members of the unit captured in Russia even fought on in the Russo-German Legion, and this later became part of the 3rd Jaeger Battalion. After Knoetel.

*C3: Officer, Guard Jaeger Battalion, 1808–14*

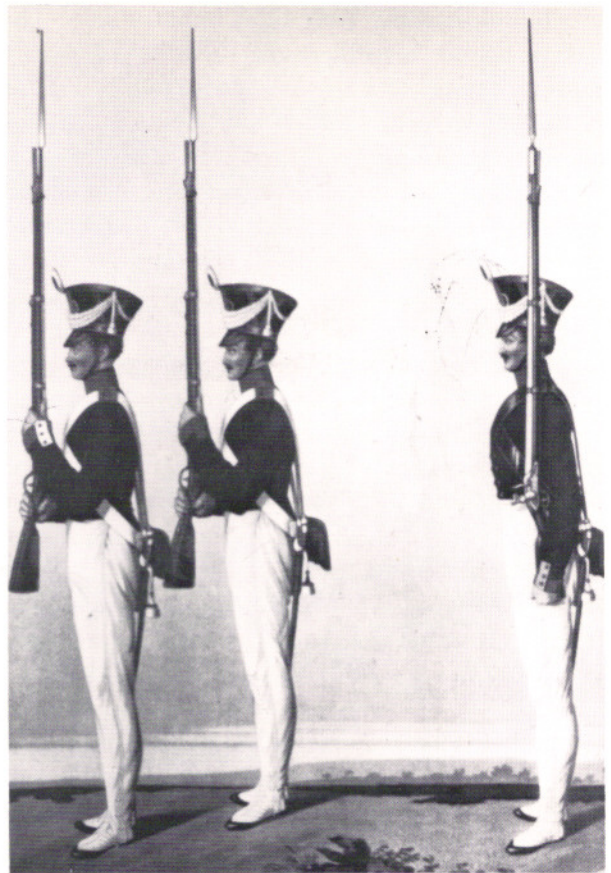
Note the Guard star on the shako, and the Guard lace at collar and cuffs. In summer, white trousers would be worn on parade. From 1814 a new tunic with a lower, closed collar was introduced. After Knoetel.

*D1: Private, Foot Jaeger Regiment, 1806*

All twelve companies fought in this uniform in the 1806 campaign; it did not prove possible to issue them with the planned new coatee and shako in time. After Henschel and Knoetel.

*D2: Officer, Foot Jaeger Regiment, 1806*

Based on a painting by Richard Knoetel, this figure



Although dating from later in the 19th century, this picture of infantry in three ranks about to fire a volley echoes exactly the relevant section in the 1812 Regulations: the first two ranks make ready to fire, while the third takes a pace back and does not fire. From Lieder/Juegel, 'Darstellung der Koenigl. Preussischen Infanterie in 36 Figuren'.

is interesting in featuring the greatcoat, so rarely found in contemporary illustrations. Yorck wore such a uniform when colonel of this regiment.

*D3: Private, Guard Jaeger Battalion, 1813*

The origins of this unit can be traced back to the days of Frederick the Great, who founded the Jaeger in 1744. Almost annihilated in 1806, it was reformed in 1808 and fought in numerous engagements in 1813–14. It was mobilised as part of the Guards Brigade in 1815, but did not see action. This Jaeger in campaign dress displays the badgerskin flap of the black leather knapsack, peculiar to this unit; and the Guard star on the cartridge pouch flap. After Knoetel.

*E1: Fusilier officer, Magdeburg Brigade, 1800*

Fusiliers initially wore the traditional huntsman's



green, emphasising their light infantry role. The facing colour identified the brigade—a purely administrative formation; on mobilisation the battalions were distributed independently among the field formations. Officers of each battalion of the brigade wore the same uniforms. The Magdeburg Bde. of 1800 was redesignated the Westphalian Bde. in 1803. After Ramm.

*E2: Private, Fusilier Battalion von Renouard, 1792*

Note the characteristic ‘casquet’ bicorn with its eagle badge. A single shoulder strap in coat colour was worn on the left, behind the seam, and is obscured here. This, the 2nd Bn., fought in the 1792 campaign, and was part of the vanguard under Hohenlohe; it was present at the ‘Cannonade of Valmy’. In 1793–94 it fought along the Rhine and in the Palatinate. As the Fusilier Battalion von Bila it was in Ruechel’s Corps in 1806, but did not fight at Jena. After Knoetel.

*E3: Bugler, Fusilier Battalion von Rembow, 1792*

Part of the East Prussian Inspection, this 6th Bn. fought in Poland in 1794 and at Eylau in 1807. It later became the Fusilier Battalion of the 2nd East Prussian Infantry Regiment.

*F1: Officer, Fusilier Battalion Graf Wedel, 1806*

This 5th Bn. fought with Yorck at Altenzaun; it later retreated on Luebeck, where it was forced to capitulate, and was not reformed. After Kling.

*F2: Private, Fusilier Battalion Graf Wedel, 1806*

The sombre but practical campaign dress adopted for all Fusiliers in 1806, quite similar in style to that adopted for the whole infantry in 1808—but note the characteristic cylindrical shako of 1801. The drab campaign trousers are worn over the gaiters. Visible among the equipment are the field canteen, the calfskin haversack, and the large canvas breadbag, all slung across the back. After Knoetel.

*F3: NCO, Fusilier Battalion Graf Wedel, 1806*

The distinctions of the non-commissioned officer

**Paderborn Volunteer, 1814, by Ludwig Scharf, taken from a contemporary drawing. Dark green cap with light green band. Light grey greatcoat with light green collar and shoulder straps. Black belts, yellow fittings; yellow buttons. Blue-grey trousers. This was one of many volunteer formations raised in Germany after the expulsion of the French.**





included metallic lace at cuff and collar and round the top band of the shako; the black and white sword knot; the cartridge box worn on a waist belt; and the cane, which was looped to a tunic button when not in use. After Knoetel.

*G1: Fusilier, 6th Infantry Regiment (1st West Prussian), 1808-14*

This is the summer parade dress introduced in 1808. The shako is the 1808 model. Once Fusilier Battalions became an integral part of the Line regiments their tunics became Line blue rather than green, regiments being distinguished by the facing colours. Fusilier distinctions were the cockade on the shako, black leather equipment, and the Fusilier sword and sword knot. After Kling.

*G2: Fusilier, 6th Infantry Regiment (1st West Prussian), 1808-14*

The campaign uniform, worn from 1808 and throughout the Wars of Liberation. After Kling.

*G3: Fusilier NCO, 6th Infantry Regiment (1st West Prussian), 1814-15*

This new tunic was worn by some formations during the Hundred Days campaign in the Low Countries. NCO distinctions remained the collar and cuff lace and the black and white sword knot. The cartridge pouch on the waist belt seems to have disappeared from the NCO's uniform after 1813, though no doubt unevenly. NCOs were usually armed with a rifle. After Kling.

*H1: NCO, Volunteer Jaeger Company, 9th Infantry Regiment (Colberg), 1815*

The Jaeger-style uniform ordered for volunteers during this period is distinguished here by the usual type of collar and cuff lace. Drawn largely from the relatively wealthy middle classes, volunteers were able to provide themselves with smart, good-quality uniforms. After Knoetel.

*H2: NCO, Volunteer Jaeger Company, 6th Infantry Regiment (1st West Prussian), 1813*

Based on a line drawing by Herbert Rothgaengel, this uniform is very similar to H1 in essentials.



**Infantry of Schill's Free Corps, 1807, by Ludwig Scharf, from contemporary sources. This was one of numerous small volunteer forces raised in the aftermath of the French victories of 1806, which operated until the armistice of the following year, often behind enemy lines. (Left) Dark blue cap with red band and tassel; red stock; dark blue coatee with red facings, yellow buttons; white belts; white waistcoat; grey trousers. (Right) Black hat and stock; dark blue coatee with yellow facings, yellow buttons, red lining and turnbacks; trousers and belts, white.**

*H3: Volunteer Jaeger, 8th Infantry Regiment (Life Regiment), 1815*

Another example of the finely made volunteer uniforms of these companies, taken from the Elberfeld Manuscript.



## Bibliography

A number of printed works, documents and manuscripts have been consulted in the preparation of this work and the most important of these include:

Curt Jany's history of the Prussian Army, especially the third and fourth volumes, namely: *Geschichte der Preussischen Armee vom 15. Jahrhundert bis 1914—Dritter Band 1763–1807; Vierter Band: Das Koeniglich Preussische Armee und das Deutsche Reichsheer 1807 bis 1914* (Reprinted Osnabrueck, 1967). This is the standard text on which every study of the armed forces of Prussia should be based.

A further work from the pen of this renowned historian is his essay on infantry tactics in 1806, namely: *Die Gefechtsausbildung der Preussischen Infanterie von 1806* (Reprinted Wiesbaden, 1982). This work was originally published in 1903 by the German Grand General Staff as the fifth book in the series of the *Urkundliche Beitrage und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Preussischen Heeres*.

An excellent history of the army in the period 1812 to 1815 appeared in that series, namely: *Das Preussische Heer der Befreiungskriege*. Volume One was sub-titled *Das Preussische Heer im Jahre 1812* (Berlin, 1912); Volume Two, *Das Preussische Heer im Jahre 1813* (Berlin, 1914); and Volume Three, *Das Preussische Heer in den Jahren 1814 und 1815* (Berlin, 1914/20). All three volumes were reprinted in 1982.

Further official publications consulted include: *Rangliste der Koeniglich Preussischen Armee fuer das Jahr 1806* (Reprinted Osnabrueck, 1976); *Stammliste aller Regimenter und Corps der Koeniglich-Preussischen Armee fuer das Jahr 1806* (Reprinted Osnabrueck, 1975); and 1806—*Das Preussische Offizierkorps und die Untersuchung der Kriegsereignisse* (Berlin, 1906).

A more recent history of the army and its role in European warfare has been written by the noted historian Siegfried Fiedler, namely: *Grundriss der Militaer- und Kriegsgeschichte*. Volume Two: *Das Zeitalter der Franzoesischen Revolution und Napoleons* (Munich, 1976) and Volume Three: *Napoleon gegen Preussen* (Munich, 1978).

Details of Yorck's life and times were obtained from one of the many editions of Johann Gustav Droysen's *Das Leben des Feldmarschalls Grafen Yorck von Wartenburg*.

Information on weaponry came largely from *Die altpreussischen Schusswaffen und ihre Beiwaffen*



Thuringian Volunteers, 1814, by Scharf. (Left) Black-covered cap. Dark green coat with light blue collar; light blue shoulder straps with red tabs at outer end; light blue cuffs; red turnbacks; yellow buttons. Dark green trousers, red stripe. Dark grey gaiters; brown knapsack; black cartridge box with yellow badge. (Right) Black shako, brass chinscales, green oakleaf spray. Dark green coat with light blue collar, cuffs and shoulder straps; red turnbacks, and red lining showing as edging along lower front of coat; yellow buttons. Blue-grey trousers, red stripe; dark grey gaiters. Black leather equipment.

1713–1823 by Dieter Lehner (Krefeld, 1973) and *Die Preussischen Handfeuerwaffen 1700–1806* by A. Wirtgen (Osnabrueck, 1976), which is Volume 8 of Part IV of the series *Das Altpreussische Heer—Erscheinungsbild und Wesen 1713–1807* edited by Hans Blackwenn.

Uniform details came from a number of contemporary plates as well as from more modern printed sources. The contemporary sources include: *Preussische Armee Uniformen unter der Regierung Friedrich Wilhelm II Koenigs von Preussen* (Horvath, Potsdam, 1789); *Tabellarische Nachweisung von allen*





*Regimenter und Korps der koeniglich preussischen Armee* (Ramm, Berlin, 1800).

Important among the later printed sources are: *Geschichte der Bekleidung, Bewaffnung und Ausruestung des Koeniglich Preussischen Heeres* by C. Kling (3 vols, Berlin, 1902ff); *Formations-und Uniformierungsgeschichte des preussischen Heeres 1808 bis 1914* by Paul Pietsch (2 vols., Hamburg, 1963-66); *Geschichte der Bekleidung und Ausruestung der Koeniglich Preussischen Armee 1808 bis 1878* by Louis A. Mila (Reprinted Krefeld, 1970).

Two companies of the Silesian Schuetzen under Capt. von Neumann throwing back French Guard Lancers with a bayonet charge at the battle of Vauchamps, 14 February 1814; note the short rifles and long bayonets. This incident demonstrated that, when required, light infantry units could function in close order like Line troops.



## Notes sur les planches en couleur

**A1** Uniforme de campagne. Notez les pantalons en drap aux boutons en bois. Notez les distinctions en passements des Gardes. La tunique a un bouffage croisé pour en faire un vêtement chaud. L'appui de visée pour le fusil est une caractéristique copiée sur les autrichiens. **A2** Notez que les parements des uniformes sont rouge brique clair alors que les queues d'habit à revers sont rouge coquelicot. Une partie du matériel de campement de l'escouade est transportée sur le dos des soldats. **A3** Uniforme de parade. Notez les parements du régiment et les distinctions blanc et bleu clair, mais la doublure de l'habit est toujours rouge coquelicot.

**B1** Ce bataillon, qui se distingua dans les campagnes de 1813–15 est représenté par un soldat en habit de campagne: le shako a un revêtement en toile huilée, la capote est portée en bandoulière et le matériel de campagne est transporté. **B2** Uniforme de parade, avec les pantalons blancs portés l'été; le rang de sous-officier est montré par les passements métalliques du col et des manchettes. **B3** Quoiqu'ils ne portaient pas d'armes à feu, les musiciens conservaient l'épée-bajonnette.

**C1** L'uniforme de parade a un aspect très 18e siècle. Les pantalons blancs furent fournis pour la première fois en 1800. **C2** Uniforme de parade. Un de deux bataillons recrutés après le désastre de 1806–07, cette unité combattit beaucoup en 1812–14. Les hommes capturés en Russie continuèrent à combattre avec la légion russo-allemande. **C3** Notez les distinctions des Gardes—la plaque de shako en forme d'étoile et les barrettes de passements sur le col et les manchettes. A partir de 1814, un col plus bas et fermé fut introduit.

**D1** L'ensemble des douze compagnie combattit dans cet uniforme en 1806, quoique qu'une nouvelle tunique et un nouveau shako avaient été projetés. **D2** La capote, si rarement vue dans les illustrations contemporaines, constitue une caractéristique intéressante. **D3** Cette unité, qui combattit beaucoup en 1813–14, n'alla pas au feu en 1815. Notez le rabat en peau de blaireau sur le sac d'ordonnance de cet uniforme et l'étoile de Garde sur la cartouchière.

**E1** L'uniforme initial de fusilier en vert chasseur. Les couleurs des parements permettaient de reconnaître les brigades—c'étaient des formations purement administratives, et les bataillons étaient déployés selon des formations de campagne différentes lorsqu'ils étaient mobilisés. **E2** Notez le chapeau 'casquette' caractéristique avec insigne d'aigle. Cette unité combattit à Valmy, sur le Rhin et dans le Palatinat en 1792–94. **E3** Ce bataillon combattit en Pologne en 1794, à Eylau en 1807, et devint plus tard le bataillon des fusiliers de 2e Régiment d'Infanterie de l'est de la Prusse.

**F1** Ce bataillon combattit sous York à Altenzaun, un des plus beaux succès des troupes légères prussiennes. **F2** Habit de campagne adopté à partir de 1806—notez le shako caractéristique du fusilier de 1801, de forme cylindrique, et l'équipement porté au travers du dos. **F3** Les distinctions des sous-officiers comprenaient des passements au col et aux manchettes, et à la partie supérieure du shako; des dragounes noir et blanc; la cartouchière portée à la taille; et la canne.

**G1** Habit de parade d'été à partir de 1808. Maintenant intégrés dans les régiments d'infanterie de la Ligne, les fusiliers remplacèrent leur tuniques vertes par des tuniques bleues. La cocarde sur le shako, les ceintures noirs et la dragonne et l'épée spéciales les distinguaient des autres bataillons. **G2** Habit de campagne, porté durant toutes les guerres de libération. **G3** Cette nouvelle tunique était portée par certaines unités en 1815. La cartouchière portée à la ceinture semble avoir disparu après 1813. La plupart des sous-officiers portaient des fusils.

**H1, H2, H3** Trois exemples des uniformes élégants et bien coupés, de style Jaeger, fournis par eux-mêmes par les volontaires de 1813–15, qui étaient recrutés parmi les classes relativement riches de la société.

## Farbtafeln

**A1** Felduniform; man beachte die hellgrauen Hosen mit Holzknöpfen. Man beachte die Gardetressen. Der Uniformrock ist quer über die Brust geknüpft, um mehr Wärme zu geben. Die Zielstütze für das Gewehr wurde von den Österreichern übernommen. **A2** Man beachte, dass die Uniformaufschläge ein helles Ziegelrot sind, die zurückgeschlagenen Rockschöße dagegen mohrrötlich. Ein Teil der Feldausrüstung des Trupps wird auf dem Rücken getragen. **A3** Paradeuniform. Man beachte die Regimentsaufschläge und die weissen und hellblauen Auszeichnungen; das Rockfutter ist noch mohrrötlich.

**B1** Dieses Bataillon, das sich in den Kampagnen von 1813–15 auszeichnete, ist hier durch einen Soldaten in Felduniform vertreten: der Tschako ist mit Wachstaffel bezogen, der Überzieher ist ein bandolier getragen, und der Soldat trägt seine Feldausrüstung. **B2** Paradeuniform mit der im Sommer getragenen weissen Hose; die Metalltresse an Kragen und Manschetten identifiziert einen Unteroffizier. **B3** Obwohl die Musikanten keine Waffe trugen, behielten sie das Schwertbajonett.

**C1** Die Paradeuniform ist typisch für das 18. Jahrhundert. Die weissen Kniehosen wurden 1800 erstmals ausgegeben. **C2** Paradeuniform. Diese Einheit ist eine von zwei nach der Katastrophe von 1806–07 ausgehobenen Bataillonen und war 1812–14 häufig im Einsatz. In Russland gefangene Soldaten kämpften mit der Russisch-Deutschen Liga. **C3** Man beachte die Gardeauszeichnungen—die sternförmige Tschakoplatte und die Tressen auf Kragen und Manschetten. Nach 1814 wurde ein tieferer, geschlossener Krage eingeführt.

**D1** 1806 kämpften alle 12 Kompanien in dieser Uniform, obwohl ein neuer Rock und Tschako geplant waren. **D2** Der Überzieher ist ein interessantes Merkmal, da er in zeitgenössischen Illustrationen selten zu sehen ist. **D3** Die Einheit war 1813–14 häufig im Einsatz, war 1815 jedoch nicht an den Kämpfen beteiligt. Man beachte die Dachstellklappe auf dem Knapsack bei dieser Felduniform sowie den Gardestern auf dem Patronenbeutel.

**E1** Die ursprüngliche Füsiliereinheit in Jägergrün. Die Farben der Aufschläge identifizierten die Brigaden, rein verwaltungstechnische Formationen. Die mobilisierten Bataillone wurden in verschiedene Feldformationen unterteilt. **E2** Man beachte den charakteristische 'casquet' mit Adlerabzeichen. Diese Einheit kämpfte in Valmy, am Rhein und in der Pfalz (1792–94). **E3** Dieses Bataillon kämpfte 1794 in Polen, 1807 bei Eylau und hiess später das Füsilierbataillon des 2. Preussischen Infanterieregiments.

**F1** Dieses Bataillon bei Altenzaun unter York und errang einen der grössten Erfolge der leichtbewaffneten preussischen Truppen. **F2** Kampagnenuniform seit 1806—man beachte den charakteristischen zylindrischen Füsiliertschako aus dem Jahre 1801. Die Ausrüstung wird auf dem Rücken getragen. **F3** Zu den Auszeichnungen für Unteroffiziere gehörten Tressen auf Kragen und Manschetten sowie oben auf dem Tschako, dazu schwarz-weiße Portepees, der an der Hüfte getragene Patronenbeutel und der Rohrstock.

**G1** Sommerparadeuniform seit 1808. Die Füsiliere waren jetzt Teil der Infanterieregimenter und ersetzten ihre grünen Uniformröcke mit blauen. Die Kokarde am Tschako, die schwarzen Gürtel und das besondere Schwert mit Portepees unterschieden sie von anderen Bataillonen. **G2** Feldbekleidung, während der Freiheitskriege getragen. **G3** Dieser neue Rock wurde 1815 von einigen Einheiten getragen. Der Patronenbeutel am Hüftgürtel verschwand offenbar nach 1813. Die meisten Unteroffiziere trugen Gewehre.

**H1, H2, H3** Drei Beispiele für die eleganten Uniformen im Jäger-Stil, die Freiwillige von 1813–15 trugen. Diese wurden weitgehend aus den wohlhabenden Schichten der Gesellschaft rekrutiert.



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Avec annotations en français sur les planches en couleur.  
Mit Aufzeichnungen auf Deutsch über den Farbtafeln

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