

The Napoleon Series

The Uniform of the French 12th Hussars: 1812 – 1813

By [Paul Lindsay Dawson](#)

The uniform of the French 12th Hussars in 1813 has been the subject of discussion by war gamers, historians and illustrators. This paper seeks to present the uniform of the regiment during its short existence of January 1812 to August 1814.

Formed on 9th January 1812 from three squadrons of the 9th Hussars serving in Spain, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th squadrons, was the 9th Bis Hussars. Based at Saragossa in January 1813, the regiment had three squadrons 175 men per squadron and totalled 622 men. By Imperial Decree dated the Tuileries 17th February 1813, the 9th Bis Hussars. Dressed like the 9th Hussars, the regiment had white lace as opposed to yellow, and tin buttons as opposed to copper.

In the spring of 1813 the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Squadrons were in Spain, and the newly raised 4th, 5th, and 6th Squadrons based at Niort were sent to the Army in Germany. On 31 January 1814 the regiment had a total of 523 men in six squadrons, the strength of which varied from 63 men to 125 men. The regiment was in action at Chateau-Thierry on 12th February 1814.

With the restoration of the Bourbons, the regiment was disbanded the men transferred to new regiments. On the 11 August, the regiment had 65 officers, namely:

1 colonel, 3 majors, 4 squadron commanders, 2 adjutants, 1 quarter-master, 4 surgeons, 3 1st captains, 10 2nd captains, 3 1st lieutenant, 7 2nd lieutenant and 27 sub-lieutenants.

Of these 29 were passed to the 6th Lancers.

The rank and file comprised 520 men of which 325 were admitted to the 6th Lancers, including 189 troopers and 2 enfant de troupe:

Small Staff: 3 adjutant-sub-officier, 1 veterinarian, 2 assistant veterinarians, 1 corporal trumpeter, 4 master workmen.

Elite Company: 1 sergeant-major, 4 sergeants, 7 corporals, 2 trumpeters, 38 troopers.

Centre companies: 12 sergeant-major, 49 sergeants, 7 fourriers, 55 corporals, 13 trumpeters and 321 troopers.

The regiment had 92 officer's horses and 218 troop horses. 40 were passed to the 5th regiment of dragoons as they were unsuitable for light cavalry mounts. The newly raised 6th lancers had 377 horses, of which a further 62 were sent to the 5th Dragoons. 1st squadron by the 11 August 1814 had yet to receive 58 remounts, 2nd squadron 57, 3rd squadron would receive two lots of 57

remounts for the 3rd and 7th companies. The depot had yet to receive 114 horses by the 26 August 1814.

At the time of disbandment in August 1814, the regiment was relatively well dressed and had large stocks of arms, equipment and materials in the regiments magazine.



**Trooper of 12e Hussard by Martinet
[Author's collection]**



**Officer of Elite Company 12th Hussars by
Martinet. Iconographic and archive written
sources confirm the Elite company of the
regiment retained the colpack through to
disbandment in August 1814. [Author's
collection]**

The men of the 12th Hussars were wearing on the 11th August 1814 the following items:[\[1\]](#)

Item	In service, but due to expire in the next year.	In need of repair	To be replaced in the next year	To be replaced	Items short	Observations
Pelisse	112	27	97	4	110	The effectives are 350 men.
Dolmans	95	26	101	4	124	
Sleeveless waistcoat	92	17	61		180	
Stable coat	68	35	110	39	98	
Bonnet de Police	100	23	137	13	77	
Hungarian Breeches	20	10	51	10	259	
Pantalon a Cheval	83	50	93	56	68	
Underwear	21				329	
Cloth Pantalons	28				322	
Cloak	170	42	74	17	47	
Schako	249		71	50	2	
Barrel Sash	184		67	25	124	
Colbacks	38					

Thus we see that in 1814 the regiment wore Pelisse and Dolmans, but it seems NCO and Elite company alone had Hungarian Breeches, the centre companies having Pantalons a Cheval. The Elite company, had also managed to hang on to Colpacks, despite these items being officially discontinued from February 1813.

The following items of equipment were in use at the date of disbandment: [21](#)

Item	In service, but due to expire in the next year.	In need of repair	To be replaced in the next year	To be replaced	Items short	Observations
Porte-Manteaux	174	35	39	41	61	The effective is 350 men.
Waistbelt	198	40	27	20	65	
Sword Knot	253				67	
Giberne	180	51	31	21	67	
Giberne belt	201	30	31	21	67	
Carbine sling and clip	207	30		14	51	
Sabretache	206	41			65	
Gloves					350	
Trumpets	2	4	4	1		

Harness and Saddlery in use were: [\[3\]](#)

Item	In service, but due to expire in the next year.	In need of repair	To be replaced in the next year	To be replaced	Items short	Observations
Saddles	183	115		14	51	The effective is 163 horses
Curb Bridles	174	120		18	51	
Bridoon head piece	220	72		16	55	
Stable head collars	195	131		25	12	
Bradoons	126			50	126	
Parade head collar					363	
Breastplate and surcingle	213	85		14	51	
Schabraques	113	154		45	51	
Saddle Blankets	189	68		55	51	

Armament was as follows: [\[4\]](#)

Item	Good condition	To Be Repaired	To be replaced.	Observations
Fusils [?carabine]	212	25	4	The effectives are 350 men
Sabres	268	13	4	
Pistols	241	24		

Small equipment comprised: [\[5\]](#)

Item	In service, but due to expire in the next year	In need of repair	To be replaced in the next year	To be replaced	Items short	Observations
Shirts	853					The effective strength is 350 men.
Cloth pantaloons	66					
Black Stock	295					
Corporals stripes	175					
Handkerchiefs	404					
comb	320					
Cocardes	350					
Epinglettes	200					
Musket worm	177					

Spring clamp	221				
Oat bags	224				
Musette	444				
Pairs of scissors	197				
Sponges	227				
Comb	237				
Brushes	239				
Curry Comb	238				
Pairs of forage ropes	226				
Pay book	350				
Clothing brush	150				
Button brush	290				
Grease brush	250				

Stocks of material in the regiments depot comprised [6](#)

Item	Amount	Observation
Scarlet wool cloth	34 meters	
Green wool cloth	4 meters 63	
Bleu de Roi wool cloth	326 meters 55	Transferred to 64th Line
Scarlet wool cloth	30 meters 10	
White wool cloth	46 meters 99	
White serge	193 meters	
White flannel to line Pelisse	360 meters 38	
Green wool cloth	105 meters	Transferred to the Imperial Guard
Green serge	187 meters	
Green serge	135meters 95	
Linen cloth for linings	449 meters 66	
Large buttons	625 dozen and 6	
Small buttons	75 dozen and 10	
Medium buttons	1996 dozen 10	
Square braid	3962 meters 76	
Lace	3811 meters 56	
Cording to fastening barrel sash	147 meters	
Lambskins	757	
Cow hide	37	
Red Moroccan leather	252 meters	76

The green wool cloth, in theory was used for the manteaux under the Bardin regulations of 1812. The green serge was used to make the portmanteau and also the Pantalon a Cheval. Of interest the facing colour is not the specified Bleu Celeste, but the darker and richer Bleu de Roi.

In the regiment's magazine were the following items: [\[7\]](#)

Item	New	In good condition	To be repaired	To be replaced	Items short	Observations
Sleeveless waistcoats	26					
Hungairan Breeches	50					
Underwear	8					
Manteau	18		6			
Schako	62					
Barrel sash	64					
Giberne	131		410			
Carbine sling and clip	200		17			
Waistblet	108		50			
Sabre slings	66					
Sword knots	199					
Pelisses	3					
Sabretache	55		16			

Weapons in the magazine were: [\[8\]](#)

Item	Good Condition	Need repairing	To be replaced
Sabres	46	34	3
Fusils [?Carabine]	35	40	7
Pistols	15	30	43

Items of harness and saddlery in depot comprised: [\[9\]](#)

Item	New	In good condition	To be repaired	To be replaced	Items short
Wooden Saddle tree	170	29	60	40	
Curb bridle	146	29	60	10	
Bradoon headpiece	117	13	40		
Stable head collar	3				
Lead rope	3				
Parade head collar	3				
Surcingle and breastplate	170	29	60	40	
Schabraques	110	25	100	63	
Saddle blankets	170	41	16	59	

Stirrup leathers and irons					
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Small equipment in the regiments magazine comprised: [\[10\]](#)

Item	Good condition	To be replaced	Observations
Shirts	28	450	The effective strength was 350 men.
Black Stock	49	150	
Combs	38	20	
Socks	586	90	
Grey gaiters	34	150	
Oat bags	18	250	
Pairs of scissors	16	80	
Clothing brush	30	120	



Martinet print of the 12th Hussars, showing a two colour plume. [Author's collection]

Notes

[\[1\]](#) SHDDT Xc 183 5e et 6e Lanciers 1811 - 1814

[\[2\]](#) SHDDT Xc 183 5e et 6e Lanciers 1811 - 1814

[\[3\]](#) SHDDT Xc 183 5e et 6e Lanciers 1811 - 1814

- [\[4\]](#) SHDDT Xc 183 5e et 6e Lanciers 1811 - 1814
- [\[5\]](#) SHDDT Xc 183 5e et 6e Lanciers 1811 - 1814
- [\[6\]](#) SHDDT Xc 183 5e et 6e Lanciers 1811 - 1814
- [\[7\]](#) SHDDT Xc 183 5e et 6e Lanciers 1811 - 1814
- [\[8\]](#) SHDDT Xc 183 5e et 6e Lanciers 1811 - 1814
- [\[9\]](#) SHDDT Xc 183 5e et 6e Lanciers 1811 - 1814
- [\[10\]](#) SHDDT Xc 183 5e et 6e Lanciers 1811 - 1814

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