

# NAPOLEON'S INFANTRY HANDBOOK



T.E. CROWDY

# Napoleon's Infantry Handbook



# Napoleon's Infantry Handbook

An Essential Guide to Life  
in the Grand Army

T.E. Crowdy



Pen & Sword  
**MILITARY**



First published in Great Britain in 2015 by  
Pen & Sword Military  
an imprint of  
Pen & Sword Books Ltd  
47 Church Street  
Barnsley  
South Yorkshire  
S70 2AS

Copyright © T.E. Crowdy 2015

ISBN 978 1 78346 295 7

The right of T.E. Crowdy to be identified as the Author of this Work has  
been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and  
Patents Act 1988.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or  
transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical  
including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and  
retrieval system, without permission from the Publisher in writing.

Typeset in Ehrhardt by  
Mac Style Ltd, Bridlington, East Yorkshire  
Printed and bound in the UK by CPI Group (UK) Ltd,  
Croydon, CRO 4YY

Pen & Sword Books Ltd incorporates the imprints of Pen & Sword  
Archaeology, Atlas, Aviation, Battleground, Discovery, Family History,  
History, Maritime, Military, Naval, Politics, Railways, Select, Transport,  
True Crime, and Fiction, Frontline Books, Leo Cooper, Praetorian Press,  
Seaforth Publishing and Wharncliffe.

For a complete list of Pen & Sword titles please contact  
PEN & SWORD BOOKS LIMITED  
47 Church Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2AS, England  
E-mail: [enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk)  
Website: [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk)

# Contents

<i>Tables</i>	vii
<i>Diagrams</i>	viii
<i>Foreword</i>	ix
<i>A Guide to Terms and Measures from Napoleonic France</i>	xiii
<b>Part I: Organisation &amp; Personnel</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b> The Infantry Regiments	3
<b>Chapter 2</b> Officers of the Staff	11
<b>Chapter 3</b> Men of the Petty Staff	17
<b>Chapter 4</b> Company Personnel	25
<b>Chapter 5</b> Non-Combatant Personnel	41
<b>Chapter 6</b> Special Roles & Appointments	45
<b>Part II: Uniform, Arms &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Chapter 7</b> Uniform – General Description	55
<b>Chapter 8</b> Articles of Uniform	61
<b>Chapter 9</b> Headgear & Hairstyles	72
<b>Chapter 10</b> Equipment	82
<b>Chapter 11</b> Weapons & Ammunition	96
<b>Chapter 12</b> Flags	104
<b>Part III: Recruitment &amp; Administration</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Chapter 13</b> Recruitment & Conscription	111
<b>Chapter 14</b> Administration & Pay	119
<b>Chapter 15</b> Promotion & Rewards	133
<b>Chapter 16</b> Civil Matters	140

<b>Part IV: Discipline &amp; Honours</b>	145
<b>Chapter 17</b> Discipline & Military Justice	147
<b>Chapter 18</b> Rendering Military Honours	156
<b>Part V: Tactical Organisation &amp; Drill</b>	161
<b>Chapter 19</b> Tactical Organisation	164
<b>Chapter 20</b> Arms Drill	175
<b>Chapter 21</b> Marching & Manoeuvres	180
<b>Chapter 22</b> Musketry	190
<b>Chapter 23</b> Skirmishing	200
<b>Part VI: Garrison Service</b>	207
<b>Chapter 24</b> Duties & Routines	209
<b>Chapter 25</b> Rations & Supplies	222
<b>Chapter 26</b> Food Preparation	227
<b>Chapter 27</b> Cleaning & Maintenance	232
<b>Chapter 28</b> Training	240
<b>Part VII: Service in the Field</b>	245
<b>Chapter 29</b> Opening the Campaign	247
<b>Chapter 30</b> The Day of Battle	258
<b>Part VIII: Health &amp; Medical Provision</b>	265
<b>Chapter 31</b> Health & Hygiene	267
<b>Chapter 32</b> Medical Treatment	277
<i>Alphabetical Table of Articles</i>	280
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	284
<i>Illustration Credits</i>	285

# Tables

Table 1.	Units of length	xiv
Table 2.	Units of weight	xiv
Table 3.	Line infantry organisation 1791–1815	6
Table 4.	Lifespan of uniforms	58
Table 5.	Loads carried by individual soldiers	59
Table 6.	Weight of individual articles	59
Table 7.	Distinguishing colours 19 January 1812	70
Table 8.	Allocation of wagons and horses	95
Table 9.	Company administrative structure	119
Table 10.	Pay and deductions of an infantryman before the Revolution	123
Table 11.	Pay and deductions of an infantryman <i>23 Floréal V</i>	124
Table 12.	Pay and deductions of an infantryman under Napoleon (circa 1807)	124
Table 13.	Daily ‘presence pay’ (circa 1810)	125
Table 14.	Tactical composition of a battalion 1791	165
Table 15.	Tactical composition 1808 (Bardin formula)	166
Table 16.	Tactical composition 1808 (Heffmeyer formula)	167
Table 17.	Comparison chart of movement rates	183
Table 18.	Drum and cornet voltigeur signals	203



## Diagrams

A	Fusilier platoon 1794	169
B	Grenadier platoon 1794	169
C	Infantry platoon 1808	169
D	Battalion in line 1791 (grenadiers detached)	171
E	Columns, formed on the right of the battalion	185
F	Attack column, formed on centre of battalion	186
G	Anti-cavalry formations (1 August 1791)	188
	I. Column of four battalions closed up with skirmishers deployed	
	II. Square of four battalions with artillery deployed	
H	Column of divisions formed in square	189
I	Platoon deployed in skirmish formation (1811)	202

## Foreword

Two hundred years on, the career of Napoleon Bonaparte, his *Grande Armée*, and his great adversaries continue to excite the imagination and evoke strong passions among historians and enthusiasts of military history. So much has been written about the Napoleonic wars, one would think the subject was all but exhausted; but no, the truth is we have hardly scratched the surface, particularly in the English speaking world. The Napoleonic Wars are rich in great battles, charismatic leaders, colourful uniforms, and these subjects naturally receive the greatest attention from authors and artists. However, two hundred years on, our world is so technologically and culturally removed from the one in which these men existed, how can we really understand what it was like to be a soldier for Napoleon? In a world without railways, radio, photography, or the understanding of something as basic as germs and the transmission of disease, how can we really connect with and understand their time?

There are numerous works by social historians who have studied the motivations and experiences of soldiers in the Napoleonic era, and these are important. However, having researched and written on the subject for a decade and a half, I realised there was still much to be said about the everyday habits and routines of Napoleon's soldiers, and the 'mechanics' which underpinned their experiences.

Under Napoleon alone, somewhere in the region of 2.4 million men were conscripted into the French Army. This is to say nothing of the emergency levies of the 1790s and the tens of thousands who served as National Guard Volunteers; but it gives an idea of the numbers of individual human beings who had experience of military service, who were processed, trained, uniformed and commanded by Napoleon and his marshals. In the English speaking world, much of our knowledge of this multitude originates from a handful of translated memoirs of infantrymen such as Captain Coignet, Sergeant Bourgogne and Captain Elzéar Blaze. These memoirs *are* essential reading and *are* the mainstays of any Napoleonic collection, but they are the mere blink of an eye on a colossal subject. Take the memoirs of Blaze (a personal favourite). They tell of the absurdities of military life, the throwing away of useless articles of uniform, the practice of marauding, the pursuit of the fairer sex, the drinking of drams, the smoking of pipes and so on; but are they truly reflective of the experience of 2.4 million men? Even great memoirists such as Blaze ignore the basic practices and procedures they knew too well: what time they woke, how frequently they mounted guard, what the procedure was for applying for leave, or what time they went to bed. These memoirs were written for the amusement of fellow old soldiers initiated and steeped in the same rituals

of army life as the author, and such pedantic attention to detail would hardly have excited cognitive function in their greying years. In short, they are incomplete as portraits of the soldierly daily life (*vie quotidienne*); so what hope have we of better understanding this subject?

Step forward Colonel Étienne Alexandre Bardin (1774–1840). The son of a noted artist, Bardin served in one of the volunteer battalions of National Guardsmen raised after the storming of the Bastille in 1789. Intelligent and exact, Bardin quickly achieved the rank of adjutant major (a battalion-level staff officer) and bore witness to the opening battles of the war. He saw action at Hondschoote in 1793 and served in the Army of the Sambre and Meuse as a company commander in the 8th Light Infantry. He served in Italy and during the Consulate became an aide de camp to General Jean-Andoche Junot, who was, for a time, governor of Paris. For much of the imperial period, Bardin was attached to the ministry of war with the rank of major. In 1811 he held the rank of colonel with the regiment of Pupils of the Imperial Guard and then commanded the 9th Regiment of Tirailleurs of the Young Guard. After the disaster of Russia, Bardin saw active service in the Campaign of Saxony (1813) and was made a Baron of the Empire that same year. His military career concluded with an attachment to the War Depot, the forerunner of France's military archives and historical service known today as the Service Historique de la Défense. This brief biographical note is only given to establish Bardin's credentials as a soldier, and to illustrate his exposure to the different elements of the armed services, operational and administrative. He also had a parallel career as an author of military reference books, and this is what makes him such an essential figure in our understanding of the Napoleonic military machine.

This book was largely inspired by the 1813 edition of Bardin's *Manuel de l'Infanterie*. This infantry manual was first published in 1807, but the 1813 edition really captures a high mark of the development of France's infantry regiments; a process which began in the aftermath of the Seven Years War and which arguably came into real fruition during the period from the formation of the camp of Boulogne in 1804, until the British were driven out of Spain at Corunna in 1808. In this four year period, French infantry was unrivalled, besting the armies of Austria, Prussia, Russia, Spain and Britain in quick succession with only the occasional proverbial bloodied nose. Although in 1813 Napoleon's empire was about to commence upon a cataclysmic decline, the technical and theoretical knowledge of soldiering codified in this small book was the bitter fruit of two decades of near continuous warfare. There were young men reading this book in 1813 who had not been born when the conflict heard its first shots in the summer of 1792. Although in 1812 Napoleon had lost an army in Russia, in the spring of 1813, it was not beyond the French nation to raise and equip a new army. Had the so-called Marie-Louise conscripts of 1813 been afforded a summer or two of peace in which to train and perfect their military education there is no reason to suppose they could not have been as formidable in war as their predecessors from the camp of Boulogne. Alas, Napoleon's many enemies knew and feared this outcome and

so refused to treat with the emperor. As a result the year 1813 was marked by the disasters of Vitoria in the south, and Leipzig in the east. Within two more summers the imperial army was dismembered and its eagles melted down for good.

Although French soldiers have a reputation for dash and flamboyancy, in fact their army was heavily regulated, bureaucratic and relied on working practices and traditions dating well back into the 18th century and beyond. As Bardin often recognised in his notes, the laws, decrees, regulations, orders and procedures which governed the French Army were often contradictory. Quite often Bardin could merely offer a Gallic shrug and diligently footnote the discrepancies and flaws in the system he sought to describe. Despite the occasional inconsistency, his infantry manual is a crucial reference for those who are interested in the mechanics of army life.

This book was supplemented in 1809 by the two-volume *Mémoires de l'officier d'infanterie* (also revised in 1813) which was a collection of military regulations and served as a reference tool for officers. In his introduction to this book, Bardin claimed he produced the work to provide officers with a reference material pending the publishing of the *code militaire*, a work which was commissioned by Napoleon in 1805, but which never materialised. True enough, in the early part of Napoleon's reign he intended rationalising the various military regulations into a single code. Completion of the code was initially hindered by the resumption of hostilities in 1805 and the subsequent war of the Third Coalition. The project was never completed because, as some argue, Emperor Napoleon became increasingly autocratic, ruling by executive order rather than through process. In the absence of systematic reform, Bardin's 'memorial' must have proved extremely useful to diligent officers trying to master their profession.

Many of the terms used, and the items described in Bardin's manuals, have now fallen out of common use, even in French. This particularly applies to the articles of petty equipment and the products daily used for cleaning and repair. It is therefore indispensable for any student of Napoleon's army to have access to Bardin's seventeen-volume exploration of the military sciences entitled the *Dictionnaire de l'armée de terre*. This work was the fruit of thirty years work and was published posthumously in 1841. It not only sought to explain the terminology and objects which were then in use, but also to describe their practical and etymological origins. Over five thousand pages in length, this work is truly monumental.

Of course, Bardin's work does not stand alone. In 1789 Captain Lacuée of the Dauphin Infantry Regiment began work on the four volume *encyclopédie méthodique, art militaire*. This work was completed in 1797 by General Joseph Servan and is an excellent reference for the French Army in 1790s. In 1803 the first edition of Pierre Nicolas Quillet's *état actuel de la législation sur l'administration des troupes* etc. was published. Head of the bureau of pay in the war department, Quillet's work provides essential detail on the logistics and administration of the army. Captain H. Berriat's 1812, four volume *Législation militaire, ou Recueil méthodique et raisonné des lois, décrets, arrêtés, règlements et instructions actuellement en vigueur sur toutes les branches de l'état militaire* is another indispensable reference.



Also of note is Doctor Jean Jacques Martin's 1801 *Manuel de l'officier de santé*. Each of these works has been consulted in the preparation of this book, along with numerous other contemporary texts, which are referenced where relevant.

Embracing the spirit of Bardin, this book presents an eclectic selection of facts and procedures which help to explain the composition, administration and service in the infantry regiments which marched with Napoleon. The book is divided into themes, so it is often necessary to investigate different articles to fully explore a particular subject. Readers are encouraged to follow the cross references as their curiosity takes them. Wherever possible this book uses English translations of technical terms with the original French technical term given afterwards, if required. The two principal exceptions to this are *chasseur* and *voltigeur*, both of which in this book are a form of light infantry. The terms *gendarme* and *gendarmerie* are also used in their original French form. Originating from the term *gens d'armes* (men-at-arms), in the Napoleonic period the *gendarmerie* was a branch of the military responsible for policing the army. Some pieces of petty equipment defy translation, such as *astic* or *martinet*. Explanations of these terms are given in the appropriate places.

Another translated term which often causes confusion is the difference between the words 'company' and 'platoon'. In the modern armies of *le monde anglo-saxon* (as our Gallic cousins like to describe us), a platoon is a sub-unit of a company, which itself is usually a sub-unit of a battalion. In the French Napoleonic system a company (*compagnie*) was an administrative sub-unit of a battalion, while a platoon (*peleton*) was the equivalent tactical sub-unit. In other words, the terms 'company' and 'platoon' essentially refer to the same formation depending on the context. While this might at first appear confusing to those familiar with NATO definitions, it does in fact accurately reflect the military system of the era described in these pages. Another editorial decision is the use of the direct translation sub-officer (*sous-officier*), rather than the English 'non-commissioned officer' (NCO). The term could also be translated as under-officer (very much like the German *Unteroffizier*). The republican ranks *chef de brigade* and *chef de bataillon* both ought to be translated as chief of brigade, and battalion respectively. For brevity I have preferred brigade commander and battalion commander.

As a final note, I must pay my dues and acknowledge the following people: Martin Lancaster, Pierre-Yves Chauvin and Gerd Hoad have followed the progress of this book, helping me define its scope and acting as a continual sounding board for ideas. I am very grateful to Oliver Schmidt and Jakub Samek for their detailed reading of my first draft and their extensive notes and comments. I must acknowledge Bernard Coppens who first introduced me to the works of Bardin. Many others have shared in my Napoleonic journey over the years, and I thank them all for stoking my enthusiasm. I must also thank my editor Philip Sidnell for commissioning this book, and of course my wife Sarah who has patiently supported and encouraged me through this and many other projects.

T.E. Crowdy

## A Guide to Terms and Measures from Napoleonic France

Before the introduction of the metric system, France had a system of weights and measures based on Charlemagne's interpretation of the ancient Roman system. At the time of the 1789 Revolution, there were numerous regional variations and while modern readers might notice many similarities with the old French system and the Imperial System still used in the USA, they must be cautioned that the values between the French and Anglo-Saxon systems are entirely different. Where 'Imperial' measurements are given in this book, they refer to the old French versions.

The French made great use of the league (*lieue*) and the fathom (*toise*); the league being composed of 2,000 fathoms, and the fathom of six feet (*pieds*). While English speaking readers might be familiar with these terms in a nautical context, the French applied these terms terrestrially. The French did not make use of the 'yard', and there are only occasional references to the mile (*mille*) in military texts. The mile originated as a unit of measurement in Roman times (*mille passus*), and signified one thousand double paces (approximately 1.48 km). However, the French interpretation of the mile was one thousand fathoms (*toises*) – in other words, half a league.

The regularity of measurement only became a reality when the metric system was introduced by the French in 1795 and standardised in 1799. This decimal system had at its heart two essential calculations: in length, one metre was equivalent to one ten-millionth of the distance between the North Pole and the earth's equator, as measured via the Paris meridian. In weight, one gram was equivalent to the weight of one cubic centimetre (i.e. one hundredth of a metre) of water at the temperature of melting ice. From these two calculations, everything else can be computed.

The following tables give the metric equivalent of the most common old French units of weight and measurement, along with an equivalent in the Imperial System.

Alas, decimalisation was not universally popular and Napoleon's subjects hankered after their old *livres* and *toises*. Therefore in 1812 Napoleon introduced a system known as 'customary measures' (*mesures usuelles*). While official institutions were required to use the metric system, civilian traders and merchants were permitted to go back to their cherished terms of yesteryear. Of course Napoleon was sensible enough not to allow a return to the chaos of regional variations, so the new pounds and feet were assigned metric values. The 'metric pound' was conveniently deemed to weigh 500g (half a kilo), while the 'metric fathom' was measured at two metres, with one foot being 1/6th of a fathom, with an inch being 1/12th of a foot, or 1/72nd of a fathom. In terms of volume, for the purposes

**Table 1:** Units of length.

<i>Old unit of measurement</i>	<i>Composed of</i>	<i>Metric</i>	<i>Imperial</i>
Paris league ( <i>lieue de Paris</i> )	2000 fathoms	3.898 km	2.422 miles
Mile ( <i>mille</i> )	1000 fathoms	1.949 km	1760 yards
Fathom ( <i>toise</i> )	6 feet	1.949 m	2.131 yards
King’s foot ( <i>pied du roi</i> )	12 inches	32.484 cm	1.066 ft
Inch ( <i>pouce</i> )	12 lines	27.07 mm	1.066 in
Line ( <i>ligne</i> )	12 points	2.256 mm	88.81 thou
Point	–	0.188 mm	7.401 thou

**Table 2:** Units of weight.

<i>Old unit of measurement</i>	<i>Composed of</i>	<i>Metric</i>	<i>Imperial</i>
1 hundredweight ( <i>quintal</i> )	100 pounds	48.95 kg	107.9 lb
1 pound ( <i>livre</i> )	16 ounces	489.5 g	1.079 lb
1 marc	8 ounces	244.8 g	8.633 oz
1 ounce ( <i>once</i> )	8 gross	30.59 g	1.079 oz
1 gross ( <i>gros</i> )	72 grains	3.824 g	2.158 drachms
1 grain	–	53.11 mg	0.8197 grains

of this book, other than the metric litre (divided into one thousand millilitres) there was the archaic French pint (*pinte*), which measures at 952.1 ml. This was much larger than our Imperial one (568 ml).

The process of metrification also impacted on France’s currency. At the time of the Revolution, the principal currency was the *livre*, which consisted of 20 *sous*, each of which consisted of 12 *deniers*. Other coinage included the *écu* which was valued at 6 *livres*. Until 1792 the French minted a golden Louis (*Louis d’or*) which was valued at 24 *livres*, and a double Louis (*Louis doubles*) of 48 *livres*. In 1795 the decimal *franc* was introduced, which was composed of 10 *décimes* or 100 *centimes*. The exchange rate between new and old was set at 1 *franc* to 1 *livre*, 3 *deniers*. The *écu* was replaced by a silver coin of the same name worth 5 *francs*. In 1803 the ‘Napoleon’ and the ‘double Napoleon’ were introduced as a throwback to the old *Louis*. The Napoleons were valued at 20 and 40 *francs* respectively.

The French Revolution had a profound impact on every facet of society. One of the most obvious was the rejection of the Gregorian calendar and the resetting of time itself. On 24 October 1793 the French adopted a new *calendrier républicain*. According to the new calendar, the new era had officially begun on 22 September 1791, the date on which monarchy was abolished. Each year was henceforth divided into twelve equal months, each thirty days long and given entirely new names based on the seasons and weather:

Vendémiaire	(the month of grape harvests)
Brumaire	(the month of fog)
Frimaire	(the month of frost)
Nivôse	(the month of snow)
Pluviôse	(the month of rain)
Ventôse	(the windy month)
Germinal	(the month of germination)
Floréal	(the month of flowers)
Prairial	(the month of pasture)
Messidor	(the month giving harvest)
Thermidor	(the month giving heat)
Fructidor	(the month giving fruit)

Each month was divided into three, ten-day weeks, called decades (*décades*). To make up the shortfall against the solar year, five extra days were added after the final month (six in a leap year). These five days were intended as a period of national holiday and were originally named *les sans-culottides* after the revolutionary party. After the demise of the *Sans Culottes* in 1795, they were referred to as the complementary days (*les jours complémentaires*).

In April 1802 the ten-day week was abandoned, and there was a return to the traditional days of the week, although the new months were retained. The Gregorian calendar was fully restored on New Year's Day 1806. In summary, the calendar represented the corresponding Gregorian dates:

Year I	22 September 1792–21 September 1793
Year II	22 September 1793–21 September 1794
Year III	22 September 1794–21 September 1795
Year IV	23 September 1795–21 September 1796
Year V	22 September 1796–21 September 1797
Year VI	22 September 1797–21 September 1798
Year VII	22 September 1798–22 September 1799
Year VIII	23 September 1799–21 September 1800
Year IX	22 September 1800–22 September 1801
Year X	23 September 1801–22 September 1802
Year XI	23 September 1802–23 September 1803
Year XII	24 September 1803–22 September 1804
Year XIII	23 September 1804–22 September 1805
Year XIV	23 September 1805–31 December 1805

(Note: documents written before 24 October 1793 carry the Gregorian date.)

In this book where a law or regulation was made during the period this calendar was in use, the Republican and Gregorian dates are given together. This is to make



it easier for readers to look up the original document and conduct more detailed research.

It may be helpful to provide a note on the administrative structure of France. Prior to the Revolution, France was divided into various provinces. In 1790 the country was reorganised into administrative *départements* which by 1800 were divided into districts (*arrondissements*), cantons, and communes. Each department had a capital city, and each district had a capital which was called the sub-prefecture. The district which contained the departmental capital was called the prefecture. From 1793 France was also divided into a number of administrative military divisions (*divisions militaires*). Initially there were twenty military divisions, but as French territory expanded, there were twenty-five by 1800, and thirty-two by 1812, including the 30th (Rome) and the 32nd (Hamburg). These military divisions are not to be confused with 'divisions' of infantry or cavalry serving in the field armies.

It is perhaps useful to reference the various governments under which the men described in this book served. From the fall of the Bastille to the first restoration of the Bourbon monarchy there were six distinct phases of government. First was the National Constituent Assembly (*Assemblée nationale constituante* – 9 July 1789 to 30 September 1791); then the National Legislative Assembly (*Assemblée nationale législative* – 1 October 1791 to 20 September 1792); National Convention (*Convention nationale* – 20 September 1792 to 26 October 1795) during which executive power was for a time wielded by the notorious Committee of Public Safety (*comité de salut public*) and included the period known as the Terror (*la Terreur* – September 1793 – July 1794). A five member executive called the Directory (*Directoire*) then held sway from 26 October 1795 until 10 November 1799. They were replaced by the Consulate, a three man executive led by Napoleon Bonaparte as First Consul. This form of government was disbanded on 18 May 1804 when the French Empire was created. Napoleon's imperial coronation did not formally take place until 2 December 1804. The reign of Napoleon came to an end on 11 April 1814 with the Treaty of Fontainebleau and the subsequent first restoration of Louis XVIII. The period from Napoleon's return to Paris on 20 March 1815, to the second restoration of Louis XVIII (8 July 1815) is popularly known as the Hundred Days (*cent jours*).

*Part I*

**Organisation & Personnel**



## Chapter 1

# The Infantry Regiments

### 1. Introduction

The word ‘infantry’ (*infanterie*) had its roots in Latin and came into the French language from the Spanish *infante* (an infant or little servant), a reference to the foot soldiers or recruits who accompanied a mounted *hombre des armas* (man-at-arms). The Italians had a similar expression – *fante* (boy) which came to designate a *fantaccino* (foot soldier), a word the French corrupted into *fantassin*, their generic term for infantryman. The word regiment (*régiment*) is also believed to have found its way into French from the Spanish language at the time of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V (1500–1558). The word had its origins in the Latin *regimentum* (administration or government) and from *regere* (control, or rule), and was synonymous with the word *régime* – in other words, it implied a body of men who were under someone’s authority. Long considered the *queen of battle*, like the chess piece, infantry was a flexible force which could go anywhere. Indeed, French infantry served on land, in the colonies, and even performed the role of warship garrisons, in lieu of any specialist marine force. This first chapter summarises the basic organisation of the infantry regiments between 1789 and 1815, and also outlines the roles performed by each grade within the regiment.

### 2. Line infantry regiments

In 1789 the French Army was composed of seventy-nine infantry regiments and twenty-three foreign infantry regiments (eleven of which were Swiss, eight ‘German’, three Irish and one from Liege). These regiments were numbered from 1 to 104, the discrepancy in number being made up by the Royal Corps of Artillery (ranked 64th), and the Provincial Troops (ranked 97th). On 1 January 1791 all the provincial regimental titles were abolished and the regiments were henceforth identified only by number. On 21 July 1791 the National Assembly decreed the 96th Infantry Regiment (formerly titled Nassau), and all those designated as German, Irish or from Liege were henceforth to be classified, recruited, paid, and uniformed just like any other French regiment. The Swiss regiments in French pay remained in service until 20 August 1792, when they were disbanded after the massacre of the Swiss Guards at the Tuileries Palace ten days previously.

On 13 July 1789 the Constituent Assembly called for the formation of a national militia called the *Garde Bourgeoises*. This became known as the National Guard



(*Garde Nationale*) and played a very important part in the early years of the war. A law of 15 June 1791 called for a 'free conscription' of one in twenty National Guardsmen who might assemble if the state required their assistance. This was followed by a decree of 20 June 1791 which activated the National Guards in the departments bordering France's eastern frontier. Other departments were required to provide contingents of between two and three thousand men. These volunteers were organised into battalions of ten companies, each comprising of fifty men. Before long, over seventy thousand volunteers had joined the armies protecting France's eastern border. A decree of 12 August 1791 rationalised the composition of each battalion at 568 men in eight companies. On 14 October 1791 a law formally gave Louis XVI the power to incorporate the volunteers into the line. This did not occur and the volunteers retained their independence. From this point on the volunteers began to use the title National Volunteers (*Volontaires Nationaux*) to distinguish themselves from the volunteers serving in the regular army (still then recruited on a voluntary basis). They were extremely enthusiastic supporters of the new nation; their patriotism, intelligence, and generosity was often in sharp contrast to the regular army.

The law of 3 February 1792 titled the volunteers as National Guard Volunteers (*Gardes Volontaires Nationaux*). This law regulated their composition at two lieutenant colonels, one of whom commanded the battalion. All officer appointments were made by election. By 18 May 1792 somewhere in the region of 240,000 volunteers had been called up. After the country was declared to be 'in danger' on 11 July 1792 there were 257 National Guard Volunteer battalions on active service. By February 1793 there were 392 battalions of National Volunteers, plus an additional 328 volunteer corps of varying composition.

France effectively had a two-tier army: on the one hand, enthusiastic, patriotic, freedom-loving National Guard Volunteers; on the other, regular, professional soldiers whose morale was dented by the political instability around them, and irked by the better conditions enjoyed by those preferring to join the Volunteer battalions. Although the former were a symbol of everything good about the Revolution, they perhaps lacked the professionalism and sense of discipline of regular soldiers. The Volunteer battalions also lacked the supporting depots to replenish losses and to maintain the men in the field. Therefore, on 21 February 1793 the government ordered the creation of infantry half-brigades (*demi-brigades*) which united a single battalion of regulars with two battalions of volunteers. This was partly a political measure designed to obliterate the identity of the royal army, and partly a practical measure to create a single, coherent, manageable structure.

A half-brigade of the line of battle (*demi-brigade de bataille*) would be formed of a staff commanded by a brigade commander or *chef de brigade* (the rank of colonel was suppressed), three field battalions (each containing eight companies of fusiliers and one of grenadiers), an artillery company with six 4-pounder guns, and, in wartime, an auxiliary company which formed a depot. As it happened, the formation of the half-brigades was adjourned on 31 March 1793 due to the approaching campaign season. Their composition was further clarified in a decree

of 12 August 1793, particularly in terms of the composition of the staff, and how the amalgamation would actually be accomplished. The law of 2 *Frimaire II* (22 November 1793) further clarified the composition of the companies (see Table 1). On 19 *Nivôse II* (8 January 1796) a decree was issued finally enacting the reform proposed eleven months before.

Two years later, on 18 *Nivôse IV* (8 January 1796) a further rationalisation took place, reducing the number of infantry corps to one hundred line half-brigades, and renumbering them by lottery. A second order ten days later raised the number to one hundred and ten. The basic structure of the half-brigade was barely changed by this second formation, consisting of three battalions and an artillery company (albeit reduced in size to three 4-pounders). Two notable changes were the addition of a second quartermaster treasurer who would remain with the depot and also the addition of a fourth battalion commander who was charged with overseeing the accounting, instruction and discipline of the corps. The auxiliary company comprised of three supernumerary officers, the craftsmen of the corps and the surplus of the men left over from the amalgamation process.

There was in fact a third amalgamation of sorts which occurred in 1799. On 10 *Messidor VII* (28 July 1799), the government ordered the formation of an auxiliary battalion (*bataillon auxiliaire*) in each department of France. Each auxiliary battalion contained ten companies (eight of fusiliers, one of chasseurs and one of grenadiers). These battalions were formed from the newly raised conscripts and were equipped locally and trained by veterans. Towards the end of the year, these auxiliary battalions were incorporated into the line, with the chasseur companies being sent to reinforce the light infantry half-brigades.

When he was First Consul, on 1 *Vendémiaire XII* (24 September 1803), Napoleon restored the title 'regiment' to the French infantry and also the title of colonel. Napoleon also reintroduced the rank of major, a senior grade which had been omitted since 1 January 1791. On 19 September 1805 each battalion of line infantry was instructed to convert its second company to one of voltigeurs, a form of light infantry skirmisher recruited from men of short stature who could never qualify for service in the grenadier companies. In many cases the implementation of this decree was interrupted somewhat by the Ulm and Austerlitz campaigns. The main change of the imperial period came on 18 February 1808 when each regiment was brought to a strength of five battalions. The first four battalions contained only six companies – four of fusiliers and one each of voltigeurs and grenadiers. The size of each company was increased, being more than twice the size of the peacetime companies formed in 1791. The fifth company formed the regimental depot and consisted of four fusilier battalions only. By adopting this measure Napoleon significantly increased the number of field battalions available to him, without having to employ significantly more sub-officers and officers. On 12 April 1811 twenty-five regiments were assigned a sixth battalion.

One of the features of Napoleon's army was the creation of a number of ad hoc regiments. The depot companies were often collected to form provisional regiments. These might be classed as a half-brigade (*demi-brigade*), a provisional

regiment (*régiment provisoire*), or a battalion of march (*bataillon de marche*). Often they would be returned to their parent regiment at the end of a campaign or particular mission, or incorporated into the battalions already in the field. Napoleon's army also saw the creation of so-called grenadier divisions made from collections of elite companies removed from their parent battalions. Elite soldiers serving in the same brigade or division might also be collected to form 'special battalions'.

After Napoleon's first abdication in 1814 the line regiments were reorganised on 12 May 1814. The Royal Army was reduced to ninety line infantry regiments, each organised into 3 battalions of six companies, with a cadre of officers and sub-officers for a fourth battalion. This meant some regiments were renumbered or even merged. Even with prisoners of war returning to France, only six regiments actually had enough soldiers to form the third battalion. When Napoleon returned from exile in Elba in 1815, he undid the reforms of the Bourbons, restoring the renumbered regiments back to their original identities in the decree of 25 April 1815. Previous to this on 13 April 1815, he announced a provisional organisation of the infantry regiments, ordering them to form five battalions each (one depot, four field battalions). However, by the time of the Hundred Days campaign, few regiments could field more than two battalions, and these were much weaker than the 1808 equivalents (see Table 3). After Waterloo the imperial army was utterly

**Table 3:** Line infantry organisation 1791–1815.

<i>A. The Staff</i>	<i>1 Jan 1791</i>	<i>8 Jan 1794*</i>	<i>8 Feb 1808</i>	<i>12 May 1814</i>	<i>13 Apr 1815</i>
Colonel	1	–	1	1	1
Brigade commander	–	1	–	–	–
Major	–	–	1	1	1
Lieutenant colonel	2	–	–	–	–
Battalion commanders	–	3**	4	3	4
Adjutant majors	2	3	5	3	5
Quartermaster treasurer	1	1***	1	1	1
Paymaster officer	–	–	1	–	1
Clothing officer****	–	–	–	–	1
Chaplain	1	–	–	–	–
Eagle / standard bearer	–	–	1	1	1
Surgeon major	1	3	1	1	1
Surgeon aides	–	–	4	1	4
Sub-aide surgeons	–	–	5	1	5

\* This composition was set on 12 August 1793

\*\* A fourth battalion commander was added between 1796 and 1799.

\*\*\* A second QMT was added in 1796.

\*\*\*\* Prior to 1815 this rank was an appointment only.

<i>B. Petty staff</i>	<i>1 Jan 1791</i>	<i>8 Jan 1794*</i>	<i>18 Feb 1808</i>	<i>12 May 1814</i>	<i>13 Apr 1815</i>
Adjutant sub-officers	2	3	10	3	10
2nd and 3rd eagle bearers	–	–	2	–	2
Drum major	1	1	1	1	1
Drum corporal	1	1	1	1	1
Musicians	8	8	8	8	12
Master tailor	1	1	1	1	1
Master armourer	1	3	1	1	1
Master cobbler	1	1	1	1	1
Master gaiter-maker	–	–	1	–	–
Baggage master	–	–	1	–	–

\* This composition was set on 12 August 1793.

<i>C. The companies</i>	<i>1 Jan 1791</i>		<i>8 Jan 1794*</i>		<i>18 Feb 1808</i>	<i>12 May 1814</i>	<i>13 Apr 1815</i>
	<i>F.</i>	<i>G.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>G.</i>			
Captain	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lieutenant	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sub-lieutenant	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sergeant major	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sergeant	2	2	4	2	4	4	4
Quartermaster corporal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Corporal	4	4	8	4	8	8	8
Chosen men	4	4	–	–	–	–	–
Men	53	40	104	64	121	56	80
Drummers / cornetists	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

\* This composition was set on 22 November 1793.

broken up by the Bourbon government, creating new formations with no links to the army of the republic or empire.

Table 3 sets out the key changes in the effective strength of the line infantry corps over the period from 1791 to 1815. Throughout the period each regiment contained a number of staff officers who were classed as the *état-major*. There were also a number of soldiers and specialists who held the rank of sub-officer and were classed as the petty staff (*petit état-major*). Finally there were the officers and men who formed the individual companies. In addition to the positions shown in the table, each regiment would have a number of supernumerary officers (*officiers à la suite*), sutlers, laundresses and children. These groups and other specialist roles will be discussed later in the appropriate chapters.

A line infantry grenadier typical of the 1790s and early part of the First Empire.



### 3. Light infantry regiments

The wars of the 18th century saw the development of infantrymen who fought outside of the line of battle and formed part of an army's advanced guard. France initially relied on irregulars to fulfil this function, often recruiting foreigners for the role. They also experimented with mixed 'legions' of light horse and infantry, or adding light infantry companies to the regiments of the line. It took until 1788 for independent battalions of foot chasseurs (huntsmen) to be formed in the manner of Frederick the Great's *jaeger* corps. The purpose of these light battalions was to provide an advanced guard service to the army, scouting, protecting camps and covering retreats. Light infantry also came to play an increasingly important role on the battlefield. When originally conceived, light troops tended to be posted on the periphery during battles, guarding the flanks of the army and the camp. However, the field service regulations of 1792 assigned light infantry with four specific roles on the battlefield, namely:

1. Screen the deployment of the line infantry and artillery batteries.
2. Discover enemy dispositions.
3. Target enemy batteries and kill the gunners.
4. Pursue retreating enemy troops.

Unlike troops of the line, light infantry were to fight outside of regular troop formations and to exploit cover as it could be found.

At the outbreak of war there were fourteen battalions of light infantry; by the time of Napoleon's first abdication in 1814 thirty-five regiments existed (numbered 1st to 37th; numbers 20 and 30 not having been used). In 1791 the composition of a light infantry battalion included a staff of two lieutenant colonels (one of whom commanded), one adjutant major, one quartermaster treasurer, an adjutant, one surgeon major, one drum major, four musicians, a master tailor, one master armourer and one master cordwainer. The eight companies each included a peacetime complement of one captain, a lieutenant, a sub-lieutenant, one sergeant major, two sergeants, one quartermaster corporal, four corporals, four chosen men, one drummer, six riflemen (*carabiniers*) and forty chasseurs.

Light infantry immediately proved their worth in the opening stages of the war, serving in the outposts in advance of the armies and skirmishing in battle. In order to meet the demand for light infantry, on 28 July 1792 the government decreed the formation of National Volunteer Chasseurs (*Chasseurs Volontaires Nationaux*) to serve with the light troops in the forward posts. This led to the formation of numerous free companies of light infantry irregulars and battalions of chasseurs. As with the line infantry, this led to the formation of light infantry half-brigades (*demi-brigade d'infanterie légère*) in 1794, with a further amalgamation in 1796 to rationalise the light infantry arm into thirty half-brigades, each with three battalions organised in the same manner as the infantry, but without an artillery company. The fact France went from fourteen to ninety light infantry battalions in five years clearly demonstrates their utility.

In the Napoleonic period the light infantry regiments underwent significant changes. In 1804 each light infantry battalion converted its second company into voltigeurs (a move copied by the line the following year). Following the changes of 18 February 1808 (see Table 3), the special nature of light infantry regiments appears to have diminished. During the later imperial period in particular, voltigeurs were widely recognised as the true light infantry of the French Army, with a different recruitment process, armament and tactics. Whether they came from line or light battalions, the voltigeurs were often combined at divisional or brigade level into special battalions which performed the traditional advanced guard role and took on an increasing burden when it came to battlefield skirmishing.

In the reforms of 12 May 1814 the Bourbons consolidated the surviving light infantry into fifteen regiments, each consisting of three battalions, with a cadre for a fourth battalion in reserve. On Napoleon's return in May 1815, most regiments could only provide two combat battalions and the shortness of the campaign did not allow the depots sufficient time to provide the remaining two battalions. The organisation of light infantry regiments during the Hundred Days followed that of the line (see Table 3).

#### 4. Regimental artillery

Before the Revolution, the ordinance of 28 April 1778 had attached two artillery pieces to each line infantry battalion. The decree of 21 February 1793 attached six 4-pounders and an artillery company to each half-brigade of the line, with two guns allocated to each battalion. The artillery company was composed of two captains, three lieutenants, one sergeant major, five sergeants, one quartermaster corporal, five corporals, one drummer, thirty-five first gunners (*premiers canonniers*), four artificers and thirty-two second gunners (*seconds canonniers*). In the second formation of the half-brigades of 1796, the artillery company was reduced to three 4-pounders with a complement of three officers, one sergeant major, three sergeants, one quartermaster corporal, six corporals, one drummer and thirty-five gunners. A law of 5 *Pluviôse* VI (24 January 1798) reversed this decision and disbanded the regimental artillery companies.

Regimental artillery was revived by Napoleon during the imperial period. The decree of 9 June 1809 awarded regiments earmarked for service against Austria with two pieces of captured Austrian artillery (3 or 4-pounder) plus a substantial train of three ammunition caissons, a campaign forge, an ambulance caisson, one caisson for the regimental papers, two caissons per field battalion for infantry cartridges and the transport of bread. These vehicles would be served and conducted by a company of regimental gunners included one lieutenant, one sub-lieutenant, three sergeants, three corporals, twenty gunners, forty soldiers of the train, and two craftsmen. A decree of 11 April 1810 ordered the regiments returning from Germany to surrender all such vehicles, equipment and horses on their arrival in France or Italy. Those regiments remaining in theatre retained their guns and in 1811 increased their number to four. On 17 April 1811 the regiments in France were ordered to reconstitute their artillery detachments. Those regiments which took part in the ill-fated invasion of Russia in 1812 lost their artillery during the winter retreat. Napoleon drew a line under the experiment in 1813.

In terms of its tactical employment, the regulation of 1 August 1791 mentioned using regimental artillery to protect the intervals between battalions when fending off cavalry attacks. The principal use was to bolster the firepower of the line and give close support against fixed positions. Gunners were instructed to concentrate on enemy troop formations rather than engaging in counter battery fire. The problem with regimental artillery was the difficulty of transporting it across the battlefield on drag ropes. On balance this difficulty outweighed its usefulness. If fire support was required at a particular point, a general was probably better served by horse artillery which was able to move at speed and arrive at an important point relatively quickly.

[See also: 2. Line infantry regiments; 85. Wagons and horses; 165. Infantry squares.]



## Chapter 2

# Officers of the Staff

### 5. Colonel (*colonel*)

**T**he colonel was the commanding officer of an infantry regiment. The title originated from the Italian *colonnella* – the commander of a column of soldiers. Traditionally appointed by the sovereign, during the early republican era the title colonel was suppressed and replaced with the title *chef de brigade* (21 February 1793) with this post falling to the most senior battalion commander in the half-brigade. The title of colonel was readopted in 1803. Regardless of the title, the colonel took a leading role in every aspect of the regiment's administration, instruction and training, police and discipline and led it in the field in wartime. He was the chairman of the regiment's council of administration; he set the objectives for training for officers and men alike. Colonels chose the regimental musicians and the regimental children. Colonels made the nominations for promotion and made recommendations for entry into the Legion of Honour.

[See also: 20. Chief musician; 24. Captain; 34. Grenadier; 37. Drummer; 43. Recruitment captain; 45. Ensign bearer; 47. Master-at-arms; 48. Orderly; 51. Worker; 52. Fifer; 53. Uniform – general description (introduction); 64. Epaulettes; 68. Shako; 71. Plumes; 84. Tents; 85. Wagons and horses; 94. Flags and eagles; 95. Ensigns; 107. Council of administration; 109. The regimental chest; 110. Pay; 114. Auditing and reviews; 115. Leave; 118. Promotion to the officer corps; 119. Awards and national recognition; 132. General disciplinary measures; 135. Councils of War; 139. Honouring dignitaries; 141. Funerary honours; 149. Tactical placement of senior officers and staff; 183. The daily routine; 205. Cleaning & maintenance (introduction); 213. Basic training; 214. Instruction of officers; 219. General education; 234. After the battle.]

### 6. Major (*major*)

The rank of major was introduced by Bonaparte on 15 Floréal XI (5 May 1803). It is important to note this rank had existed before 1 January 1791, but previously the major was placed below the lieutenant colonel in seniority. Napoleon placed the majors second only to the colonel in rank. While the colonel was in charge of personnel, the major was placed in charge of material and administration. The major was not a field officer, but remained in command of the regimental depot. They were specially charged with administrative inspections, the uniform of the regiment, its discipline, police, and the accounting of the regiment and its companies. In many respects there was a degree of crossover with the duties of the

quartermaster treasurer and the adjutant major. In the council of administration, the major took on the role of 'reporter' and had a consultative voice in the debates, although he was not a formal member. However with colonels increasingly away in the field for extended periods, majors took on the role of chairman of the permanent council of administration. Majors were responsible for reporting acts of heroism to the minister of war; they would also report births, deaths and marriages which occurred in foreign lands. From 1811 there was also the title of major in second (*major en second*). With regiments having anything up to five field battalions, it was common for a single regiment to be providing battalions to different theatres. The major in second would therefore command those battalions not under the colonel's direct control.

[See also: 48. Orderly; 64. Epaulettes; 71. Plumes; 85. Wagons and horses; 107. Council of administration; 118. Promotion to the officer corps; 141. Funerary honours.]

## 7. Lieutenant colonel (*lieutenant colonel*)

In the regulation of 1 August 1791, infantry battalions were commanded by a lieutenant colonel. In the original light infantry battalions and National Guard Volunteers there were two lieutenant colonels, one of whom was the commanding officer. When the battalion was in line formation, the battalion commander was mounted on a horse and located thirty paces behind the file closers rank at the centre of the battalion, directly behind the flag. During battalion fire he would decide if firing should be oblique or direct. If formed as part of a brigade he would repeat commands of the brigadier general. In a square he would be at the centre and able to look over his men's heads to direct their fire. The rank of lieutenant colonel ceased to be recognised after 1793.

[See also: 2. Line infantry regiments; 8. Battalion commander.]

## 8. Battalion commander (*chef de bataillon*)

After the creation of the half-brigades on 21 February 1793, the rank of lieutenant colonel was suppressed in favour of the term chief of battalion, or battalion commander. Generally speaking, prospective battalion commanders first had to serve as captains. On 15 Floréal XIII (5 May 1805) Napoleon stipulated battalion commanders must have eight years' experience as an officer, including four years as a captain. The most junior battalion commander in the regiment would command the first battalion because it was supposed the colonel would always be with his first battalion. If a battalion was broken up into detachments, the battalion commander would remain with the largest portion of it. When the battalion commander was absent he was deputised by the most senior captain who took on the title commanding captain (*capitaine commandant*). On 23 Fructidor VII

(9 September 1799) an additional battalion commander was appointed to look after administration of the corps. This practice appears not to have been universally recognised and ceased after the creation of the post of major in 1803.

[See also: 7. Lieutenant colonel; 24. Captain; 48. Orderly; 51. Worker; 64. Epaulettes; 68. Shako; 71. Plumes; 85. Wagons and horses; 107. Council of administration; 117. Promotion; 118. Promotion to the officer corps; 127. Wills; 131. The hierarchy of command; 135. Councils of War; 141. Funerary honours; 149. Tactical placement of senior officers and staff; 169. Volley firing; 171. Firing by rank; 173. Firing from the cross-bayonets position; 183. The daily routine; 184. Police; 226. Arrival at camp; 227. Duties in camp; 229. Outpost duty; 231. Battle tactics.]

## 9. Adjutant major (*adjutant major*)

The adjutant major was the officer charged with all details relating to the instruction, movement, discipline and police of a regiment, with particular concern for their own battalion. Reporting directly to the senior officers, the adjutant major was known simply as ‘the major’ in order to distinguish him from the adjutant sub-officer.

The position of adjutant major was typically awarded to a lieutenant by the regiment’s council of administration. After eighteen months in the role, the adjutant major would be automatically raised to the rank of captain and would retain this grade until promoted to the rank of battalion commander. Although this was a means of fast tracking the careers of promising junior officers, critics of the system pointed out the potential pitfalls of having battalion commanders with no first-hand experience of the command and administration of their own company.

The adjutant major’s tactical position was behind the right half of the battalion. When the battalion was formed with other battalions, if the brigade commander’s voice was drowned out by the noise of battle, or lost in strong winds, the adjutant major was permitted to repeat the words of command. In terms of administration the adjutant major was specially responsible for maintaining the book of orders (*livre d’ordres*). They were also able to deputise for the quartermaster treasurer.

[See also: 16. Adjutant; 25. Lieutenant; 37. Drummer; 42. Clothing officer; 48. Orderly; 64. Epaulettes; 85. Wagons and horses; 131. The hierarchy of command; 132. General disciplinary measures; 149. Placement of senior officers and staff; 183. The daily routine; 185. The police guard; 191. Rations & supplies (introduction); 215. Instruction of sub-officers; 227. Duties in camp.]

## 10. Quartermaster treasurer (*quartier maître trésorier*)

The regimental quartermaster treasurer (QMT) was an officer responsible for the management of funds and accounting. Traditionally they were ‘officers of fortune’, which is to say they were selected on merit and competence rather than a noble pedigree. In many cases they were given the rank of sub-lieutenant and were

considered non-combatants. By 1788 they were allowed to progress to the rank of lieutenant and after the decree of 3 August 1792 they were allowed to hold the rank of captain. The law of *18 Nivôse IV* (8 January 1796) recognised a second QMT; one remaining with the corps in the field, while the first remained at the depot. After the reforms of 18 February 1808 only a single QMT was recognised. He would remain in the depot while a paymaster officer accompanied the regiment.

The principal duties of the QMT were to ride ahead on the march and prepare the regiment's lodgings and to oversee distributions. This officer held the accounting books and other records such as annual registers of troops and movement records. He was secretary of the regimental council of administration and sat opposite the chairman, although he was not granted a vote. The QMT was one of three key holders for the regimental chest. Under the civil code introduced by Napoleon (*code Napoléon*) the QMT performed the role of civil officer when the corps was on campaign. This made the QMT responsible for the register of births, deaths and marriages within the regiment.

[See also: 107. Council of administration; 109. The regimental chest; 110. Pay; 112. Deductions and funds.]

## 11. Paymaster officer (*officier payeur*)

This role was created on 18 February 1808 and was, in essence, a lieutenant who performed the role of treasurer to the field battalions while the regiment's quartermaster treasurer remained at the depot. The paymaster officer would maintain a register detailing all receipts and expenditure and submit this to the quartermaster treasurer on their eventual return to the depot. In the absence of the quartermaster treasurer the paymaster officer would also assist at distributions.

[See also: 10. Quartermaster treasurer; 110. Pay.]

## 12. Chaplain (*aumônier*)

The decree of 1 January 1791 recognised one chaplain per infantry regiment attached to the staff. Chaplains were not provided for the battalions of foot chasseurs, nor for the battalions of National Guard Volunteers; although this is not to say some may have had chaplains on an unofficial basis. As the Catholic Church increasingly became a rallying point for counter-revolutionaries, public worship was forbidden in October 1793. Therefore by 1794 the post of regimental chaplain ceased to exist. Although Catholic worship was officially restored in France in 1801, the post of regimental chaplain was not officially re-established until after the Napoleonic Wars, on 24 July 1816.

[See also: 140. Honours to religious parades and services.]