

The Uniforms of the Neapolitan Army 1806-15

Colin Allen, U.K.

Part 4

This final part of the series will deal with the second line units, consisting of the City of Naples Guard, the Provincial Legions, the Provincial Companies, the Voluntary Chasseurs of the Three Abruzzi, the Internal Security Guards and the Gendarmes.

These units were formed for two main reasons, one political and one military. The political aim was to bind people to the new regime; this was achieved by recruiting the members of the units from among those who had something to lose in the event of a Bourbon return, namely the liberal, property owning classes and the newly emancipated serfs who gained much from the arrival of the Bonapartist kings. On the purely military side the units were intended to combat the Bourbon guerillas and to attempt to create a martial spirit amongst the distinctly non-military Neapolitans.

viii) Naples City Guard Origins

In its first incarnation, the City Guard consisted of a battalion of infantry and a squadron of cavalry, both being organised on the standard line pattern. In 1810 the infantry battalion was converted into the 6th Line Regiment while the cavalry squadron formed the cadre of the Cavalleggeri formed in the same year.

The unit was then re-raised, again with a mixture of infantry and cavalry and continued with this organisation until the fall of Murat's kingdom in 1815.

First Uniform

The first uniform of the corps, worn up to 1810, was that which has previously been described for the 6th Line Regiment and the Cavalleggeri in issues 13 and 14 of this magazine, so I will not describe them here. If you have not got the relevant issues, then I am sure that Mr Watkins will be ready to oblige.

Second Uniform Coat

Until 1811 the coat was the habit veste and after this date the Spencer as issued to the line regiments at this date.

Both coats were dark green with amaranth collar, lapels, cuffs, cuff flaps and turnbacks, the latter being decorated with dark green grenades. All of the facings were piped dark green and buttons were brass. From 1810-1811 the infantry wore square ended lapels while the cavalry squadron sported the

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pointed version.

Both infantry and cavalry wore amaranth epaulettes.

Trousers

The infantry wore dark green breeches with undecorated hussar style boots while the cavalry legwear was similar but with yellow Hungarian Knots and seam piping on the breeches and gold braid and tassels on the boots.

Headgear

The infantry style shako with a shield shaped, brass plate bearing a grenade was worn by all members. The infantry sported amaranth cords, flounders and plume while the cavalry had the cords and flounders in yellow and the same plume as their foot-slogging colleagues. The standard amaranth and white cockade was worn and chin-straps were brass.

Equipment

Infantry equipment was identical to that carried by the grenadier companies of line regiments while the cavalry squadron was equipped in the same fashion as the line cavalry regiments before the introduction of the lance. No details of horse furniture are known.

Officers' Uniforms

These followed the usual system with gold epaulettes, shako cords and gorget, the latter bearing a silver grenade. Infantry officers carried a brass hilted epee with a gold strap and

knot in a black, brass mounted scabbard while their mounted brethren were armed with a brass hilted sabre carried in a white metal scabbard.

Musicians

Unfortunately, no evidence exists as to what uniforms were worn by the musicians, either mounted or foot.

ix) Provincial Legions Origins

The Provincial Legions were raised by a decree of May 15th 1806 and were to consist of a variable number of companies of fusiliers, a company of grenadiers, one of voltigeurs and one of dragoons, the latter consisting of a captain, a junior captain, a lieutenant, a second lieutenant, three NCOs, two farriers, eight corporals, two buglers, forty mounted dragoons and fifty on foot.

Admittance to the Legions was only open to land owners and the mounted dragoons had to provide their own horses, as a result of which they came from among the elite of the rural community. However, in November 1808 the dragoons were absorbed into the Guardie d'Onore and the infantry element was apparently reorganised into a variable number of companies of grenadiers and voltigeurs.

First Uniform (1806-1814)

Coat

For both infantry and dragoons the coat was the standard habit coat. Depending on the province, the coat and facing colours varied as can be seen in table 1.

TABLE 1 PROVINCIAL LEGIONS 1806-14

Province	Coat	Collar, lapels, cuffs, cuff flaps, turnbacks	Buttons	Waistcoat
Calabria Ultra Calabria Citra Basilicata	Black	Red	White	Red
Lecce Bari Lucera	Brown	Yellow	White	Yellow
Chieti L'Aquila Teramo	Brown	Sky Blue	Yellow	Sky Blue
Principato Ultra Principato Citra Terra di Lavoro	Blue	White	Yellow	White

Grenadiers wore scarlet epaulettes and voltigeurs green ones, while the fusiliers and dragoons wore coat coloured shoulder straps piped in the facing colour.

Trousers

Infantry could wear either breeches in the coat colour with gaiters, white breeches or white trousers, while the dragoons wore white breeches with heavy cavalry boots.

Headgear

In the early days all ranks wore the bicorne, this bearing the French cockade and a black plume tipped in the facing colour. After about 1808 the infantry adopted the line infantry shako with the same metalwork as for the Naples City Guard but in the button metal, red cords and plume for the grenadiers and the same in green for the voltigeurs. The shako plate bore either a grenade or a hunting horn, depending on the company.

Equipment

Infantry companies were equipped in exactly the same manner as their equivalents in the line units while the dragoons were armed with a dragoon pattern musket and a brass hilted sabre with a white or black strap and knot, this being carried in a brass mounted, black leather scabbard. In addition, they carried a plain cartridge pouch. No details of horse furniture are known.

Officers' Uniforms

Officers had the usual distinctions in either gold or silver, depending on the button colour.

Musicians

Musicians wore coats of reversed colours, the facings being decorated with red, white and blue lace. Swallows' nest epaulettes in the facing colour were worn, these also having the lace trim. The bicorne bore a facing coloured plume with a white tip.

Second Uniform (1814-1815)

Coat

The new coat was a dark green Spencer with facing colours as per Table 2. Alternatively, a surtout could be worn; this had the collar and pointed cuffs in the same colours as the Spencer and was piped in the facing colour. Grenadiers wore amaranth epaulettes while those of the voltigeurs remained green. Turnbacks were decorated with either a grenade or a hunting horn, these being in yellow on the blue and black turnbacks and green on the others.

Trousers

Dark green breeches were worn with short gaiters.

Headgear

The same shako continued to be worn with the metal work in the button colour and the amaranth and white cockade.

Equipment

Equipment was identical to that issued to the grenadier companies of the line regiments.

Officers' Uniforms

Officers wore the same uniform as the men but with the epaulettes and gorget in the button colour, the latter bearing a gilt grenade or hunting horn. Their shakos bore cords and flounders in the button colour while the company plume was

TABLE 2 PROVINCIAL LEGIONS 1814-15

Province	Collar	Lapels	Cuffs	Cuff Flaps	Buttons
1st Military Divn					
Terra di Lavoro	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Brass
Contado di Molise	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Brass
2nd Military Divn					
Principato Citra	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Brass
Principato Ultra	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Brass
Basilicata	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Brass
3rd Military Divn					
Abruzzo Citra	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Brass
1st Abruzzo Ultra	Green	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Brass
2nd Abruzzo Ultra	Green	Medium Blue	Green	Medium Blue	Brass
4th Military Divn					
Capitanata	Dull Yellow	Dull Yellow	Dull Yellow	Dull Yellow	Silver
Bari	Green	Dull Yellow	Dull Yellow	Dull Yellow	Silver
Lecce	Green	Dull Yellow	Green	Dull Yellow	Silver
5th Military Divn					
Calabria Citra	Black	Black	Black	Black	Silver
Calabria Ultra	Green	Black	Green	Black	Silver

Note: All coloured facings were piped green and vice versa.

worn over a button colour pompon.

Officers were armed with an epee which had the hilt, strap and scabbard mounts in the button colour while the scabbard itself was of black leather.

Musicians

No information is available.

x) Provincial Companies

Origins

The Provincial Companies were formed from discharged veterans or those unsuited to military service and were responsible for guarding public buildings and the maintenance of order.

Uniform

The only uniform for which I can find any information is that worn in 1813-15.

Coat

The coat was a dark brown Spencer with epaulettes, collar, lapels, turnbacks and pointed cuffs in the facing colour according to Table 3.

Buttons were brass while the turnbacks bore grenade badges in either yellow or the coat colour. As an alternative, a white surtout could be worn, this having the same distinctions as the surtout and facing coloured piping down the front.

Trousers

White breeches were worn with short gaiters.

TABLE 3 PROVINCIAL COMPANIES 1813-15

Province	Facing Colour
Napoli	Yellow
Capitanata	
Bari	Scarlet
Lecce	
Aquila	
Teramo	Dark Pink
Chieti	
Contado di Molise	
Basilicata	
Calabria Citra	Green
Calabria Ultra	

Headgear

The shako was worn with all metal work in brass. Over the amaranth and white cockade was worn a dark brown plume with the tip in the facing colour.

Equipment

All equipment was as worn by the grenadier companies of the line regiments with the sabre strap and knot in the facing colour.

Officers' Uniforms

As usual, officers wore the same uniforms as the men but with gilt epaulettes and gorgets and a gold pompon below the plume. Their armament consisted of a brass hilted epee with a gold strap and knot carried in a brass mounted, black leather scabbard. In addition, they also wore hussar style boots with black braid and tassels.

Musicians

No information is available.

xi) Cacciatori Volontari dei Tre Abruzzi

Origins

The Voluntary Chasseurs of the Three Abruzzi were three short lived companies of cavalry raised in the provinces of Abruzzo Ultra 1 (Teramo), Abruzzo Ultra 2 (Aquila) and Abruzzo Citra (Chieti) by a decree of June 25th 1807. They were disbanded on December 28th of the same year so the following uniform may never have been issued.

Uniform

Coat

The uniform was in the hussar style with a white dolman with 17 rows of either scarlet or white braid (depending on which source you use), each having 5 white metal buttons.

The collar and pointed cuffs were scarlet piped white.

The pelisse was medium blue with scarlet braid, white buttons and black fur edging, the latter having white lace around the cuffs.

The stable coat was medium blue.

Trousers

The scarlet breeches bore white Hungarian Knots and white seam piping and were worn with hussar style boots, these having white lace trim and tassels. The stable overalls were medium blue.

Headgear

The shako had brass chin scales and a shield shaped plate, this latter bearing the royal monogram. White cords were worn, as was the French cockade and a distinguishing plume for each company, these being white, black or green respectively.

The forage cap was white with scarlet trim.

Equipment

All belts were of white leather and these supported a plain black cartridge pouch, a steel hilted sabre with a white strap in a steel fitted, black leather scabbard and a sabretache, which was scarlet with white trim and bore the Royal Monogram and crown in white.

The horse furniture consisted of a white sheepskin edged with scarlet Wolf's Teeth and a round scarlet portmanteau.

Officers' Uniforms

As usual, these were similar to those of the men with the usual hussar style rank markings on the sleeves and thighs, these being in silver, as was the braid.

Musicians

Musicians wore a scarlet dolman with white braid,

scarlet breeches and a yellow pelisse with scarlet braid.

xii) Internal Security Guards

Origins

The Internal Security Guards (infantry and cavalry) were organised by a decree of March 2nd 1813 in order to maintain order in the capital and to protect against insurgency. However, the uniforms of the infantry battalion (which consisted of grenadiers and voltigeurs) and cavalry squadron were only issued in March 1815, when the latter had a staff of four officers and two companies, each consisting of a captain, a lieutenant, two second lieutenants, a company sergeant major, four junior NCOs, a farrier sergeant, eight corporals, two buglers and 79 hussars.

The Infantry

Coat

The coat was a medium blue Spencer with the collar, lapels, cuffs, cuff flaps and turnbacks being in the same colour, all piped amaranth as were the pockets.

Grenadiers wore amaranth epaulettes with white straps and silver grenade turnback badges while the voltigeurs wore a yellow collar and epaulettes. All buttons were white metal.

Trousers

White breeches were worn with short gaiters.

Headgear

Aloja shows the grenadiers wearing what appears to be a bearskin shaped leather hat with a white metal sunburst plate bearing the royal monogram in brass, a black peak, red cords and flounders and a white over amaranth plume. This marvellous piece of headgear also had a large white metal grenade badge on the rear where the "monkey's rump" would be on a normal bearskin. The voltigeurs wore a slightly more normal shako, this being medium blue with white metal chin scales and hunting horn plate, yellow cords and flounders and a yellow over medium blue plume above a yellow pompon. The normal cockade was worn.

Equipment

All personnel wore Guard Infantry style belts supporting a black cartridge pouch, this having a white metal grenade for the grenadiers and a hunting horn for the voltigeurs, and the usual sabre and bayonet. Sabre straps were yellow for the voltigeurs and amaranth for the grenadiers.

Officers' Uniforms

Officers wore similar uniforms to the men with silver epaulettes, gorgets and headgear cords. Hussar style boots were worn, these having silver trim and tassels while the armament consisted of a steel hilted sabre with a silver strap in a steel fitted, black leather scabbard.

Musicians

No information is available.

The Cavalry

Coat

In full dress, a dark sky blue dolman was worn, this



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having white braid and trim to the collar and cuffs. The pelisse was amaranth with white braid and piping and black fur lining while the sash was silver and amaranth. In undress a dark blue dolman with dark blue braid and amaranth cuffs and collar, the latter having a silver horizontal stripe, could be worn.

Trousers

In full dress, dark sky blue breeches, bearing white Hungarian Knots and seam piping, were worn with hussar style boots with white trim and tassels. The undress overalls were light grey with amaranth seam piping.

Headgear

The dark sky blue shako had a black peak and false rear peak, both of these being trimmed in white metal. A large cockade was worn on the front, held in place by a silver cockade strap. The large, drooping, dark green horsehair plume was worn over another smaller cockade while the top of the shako was encircled by a silver band.

In undress a dark blue forage cap piped silver and with a silver tassel was worn.

Equipment

The black belts supported a brass hilted sabre with a silver strap in a steel scabbard, a black sabretache bearing the crowned royal monogram in silver and a black cartridge pouch bearing the same device.

The horse furniture consisted of a black sheepskin with amaranth Wolf's Tooth edging and an amaranth portmanteau

pipied white. All leatherware was black with white metal fittings.

Officers' Uniforms

Officers' uniforms had the usual hussar-style distinctions in silver while the top of the shako was ringed by a line of interlinked silver hoops. Full dress belts were gold with silver edging and supported the same equipment as worn by the men. In undress, officers could wear a black bicorne with the cockade held in place by a silver strap. The undress coat was a dark sky blue surtout with amaranth pointed cuffs and collar, these bearing a silver stripe. The turnbacks were amaranth and silver epaulettes were worn. White breeches and the full dress boots were worn with this outfit.

The junior officers' saddle furniture consisted of a black sheepskin trimmed with a band of silver, this having amaranth piping on the outer edge. More senior officers had a dark sky blue, light cavalry style shabraque this being piped in amaranth with a silver trim and monogram in the rear corner. All leatherware was black with silver fittings.

Musicians

The buglers wore reversed colours; namely a dark sky blue pelisse, amaranth dolman and breeches and a white over amaranth plume.

xiii) Gendarmerie Coat

The coat was a dark blue habit coat with amaranth collar, pointed lapels, pointed cuffs and, for the foot companies,

epaulettes with amaranth and white straps. The turnbacks were also amaranth and carried white metal grenade badges. All buttons were white metal. The waistcoat was white and the mounted companies wore white trefoil epaulettes with aiguillettes on the left shoulder.

In undress, a dark blue surtout could be worn. This had a dark blue collar and cuffs, these being piped in amaranth, and amaranth turnbacks.

Trousers

In full dress, white breeches were worn, the foot troops wearing gaiters and the mounted heavy cavalry boots. In undress, dark blue breeches could be worn.

Headgear

The full dress bicorne was trimmed with silver and sported an amaranth plume and a cockade, the latter held in place by a silver strap.

The undress version was untrimmed and lacked the plume.

Equipment

The foot companies carried grenadier pattern equipment, the cartridge pouch bearing a brass grenade and the sabre an amaranth strap while the greatcoat was dark blue.

The mounted companies were equipped with a brass hilted, straight bladed sabre, this having an amaranth strap and a steel scabbard. In addition, the same cartridge pouch was carried as by the foot companies, as was a dragoon pattern musket. All belts were white leather with brass fittings.

The horse furniture consisted of a dark blue saddle cloth trimmed in silver and edged in amaranth, as were the portmanteau and the round ended holster covers while the cape was dark blue with an amaranth collar. All leatherware on the horse was black with white metal fittings.

Officers' Uniforms

No information is available.

Musicians

Again, no information can be found.

This wraps up my series on the Neapolitan Army. If anyone has any further information I would be happy to hear from you, especially if you are interested in forming a study group on the Tolentino Campaign of 1815. Please contact:

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Hopefully, the next series will be on the Bourbon army of the Two Sicilies 1800-1815 and the Sardinian Army of 1815.

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