addition to the breeches they were issued green trousers.

An officer is shown in a uniform almost identical to that of the troopers although of better quality. Instead of the cartridge pouch, the officer has a large buckle with the Swedish coat of arms. In 1806 they were converted back to light dragoons and adopted the same uniform as the rest of the regiment.

By February of 1806, the regiment had been issued with a shako, although the exact date of issue is unknown. As carbines were no longer issued, the carbine belt was no longer worn and the cartridge pouch belt was moved from the right to the left shoulder.

In December 1807, these hats were passed over to the Nylands Jager Regiment and the Life Guards received new hats of a similar model as those worn by the Svea Life Guard (the foot guards) and the grenadiers (see First Empire No.5). This was a the characteristically Swedish 'kusket', a black round hat with elongated left brim upturned and a horse-hair crest (chenille) running fore-and-aft. A white plume was worn with a sky-blue and yellow cockade at its base. The rest of their uniform remained basically unchanged, although all illustrations after this date show the jacket without buttons, held together at the front by small hooks and eyes. It was thus uniformed the six squadrons of life guards took part in the Russo-Swedish war of 1808-09 (see First Empire No.8)

The Life Guards also received at this time, an undress uniform consisting of a sky-blue jacket with short tails and trousers. The jacket had a single row of white metal buttons, white piping, white cuffs and a white collar. A first the trousers probably had white metal buttons down the outside of the leg, but these were later replaced by a white stripe. It appears to have been common practice while on campaign to wear the white jacket with the sky-blue trousers.

In 1810 the hat, which was considered to be too clumsy, was again replaced by a shako, with plume, cords and badge. A white plume, probably of goose feathers, was worn with the full dress (white) uniform while a black plume, probably of horse hair, was worn with the undress (blue) uniform.

The rest of their uniform remained basically unchanged, and it was thus uniformed the five squadrons of life guards took part in the campaigns of 1813-14. While passing through Elberfeld, wearing the white jacket with blue trousers, they were recorded for posterity (but incorrectly identified as Swedish Hussars) in the Elberfeld Manuscript.

The officers uniforms remained basically the same as the troopers, and even they were issued the blue undress uniform. The officer's blue jacket may have had three rows of buttons on the front instead of the trooper's one, and their blue trousers were ornamented with white Hungarian knots. One Swedish print shows an officer with the same style of jacket as the troopers with much more elaborate Hungarian knots on his blue trousers. A German print shows an officer in an unusually modified 1807-08 (kusket and brassard) uniform. He wears the white full-dress jacket but with long tails and unbuttoned at the waist to reveal a sky-blue waistcoat with hussar-like braiding. He wears blue breeches and Hessian boots instead of trousers.

In December 1813 a new hussar uniform with kiwer shako was designed for the Mounted Life Guards by the Crown Prince Bernadotte. It was made in Berlin and issued in 1814 when the Horse Guards went back to Sweden.

TRUMPETERS

A print from 1806 shows a trumpeter wearing a uniform that was the same as the troopers. Nothing is known about the trumpeters uniforms after 1812. It is probable that the trumpeters wore swallows nest epaulets and four lace chevrons on each arm - the top two facing up and the bottom two down. They would have been white trimmed light blue on the white coat and the reverse on the light blue coat. It is known that the epaulets and chevrons were used by the infantry and artillery after 1812 and by the Mounted Life Guards just after the end of the Napoleonic Wars - so this is the "best guess" for wargamers wishing to paint the regiment.

HORSE FURNITURE

The Mounted Life Guards had a light blue schabraque of hussar model (round front, pointed back) edged with white teeth.

STANDARDS

As was the practice in the Swedish army, no light cavalry regiment, including the Mounted Life Guards carried standards. It was thus not until 1863 that the Mounted Life Guards received a standard; as a present from Queen Louise who had embroidered it herself.

WEAPONS

At the start of the Napoleonic wars the troopers carried a m/1759 - 1791 hussar sabre. In 1806 they were ordered to carry the m/1793 hussar sabre, although illustrations from 1810 show the earlier model still in use. These sabres were used throughout the wars until 1815 when the new m/1814 was issued.

NCOs carried the same model sabre as the other-ranks, but of better quality and decorated with three crowns. Until 1815, when the m/1814 cavalry officers sabre was issued, officers carried a hussar sabre of no

Vandamme (1).JPG

Vandamme Comte d'Unsebourg

Tony Linck,
United Kingdom

Part 2 1800 - 1830

With Europe at peace after the Treaty of Tilsit, Vandamme returned to his former post as commander of the 16th Military Division at Lille on 11 November 1807. He later moved to the Camp of Boulogne as commander on 16 August 1808. Many awards for past campaigns came his way, including the Grand Cross of Wurttemberg on 29 February 1808. The introduction of the Imperial Nobility resulted in the former republican being made the "comte d'Unsebourg" on 19 March 1809.

The deteriorating situation with Austria saw his appointment as commander of the Wurttemberg contingent with the Army of Germany on 20 March 1809. The move was undoubtedly a calculated one, another semi-independent command in charge of the Wurttemberg troops, who he respected. It suited both him and Napoleon. Napoleon needed a man of his talents, but not causing an unnecessary disruption amongst his marshals since he found it difficult to serve under anyone.

At the beginning of the campaign against Austria the Wurttembergers were centred on Donauworth and with the arrival of Napoleon, the Emperor sent them forward to Ingolstadt on 18 April. From there he linked with Lefebvre's VII Corps, then outflanked and drove in Hiller's left wing of the Austrian army at Abensberg on 20 April. He followed the Austrians as they fell back to Landshut and started to probe east along the Isar. In the right position at the right time Napoleon ordered him in the middle of the night of 21 April to form the advance guard of the army's march on Eckmuhl to relieve the hard pressed Davout.

The Wurttembergers put up a brilliant display. Leading the way they slogged twenty-three miles in darkness up a muddy single lane road. At dawn after four hours marching at the double they drove out the Austrian outposts at Ergoldsbach and then around mid day reached the field. They hit the Austrian left centred on Lindach clearing them from the village and from there stormed across the Gross Laber into Eckmühl.

With his Wurttembergers joined the pursuit of the enemy and on 4 May he entered Linz. He had orders to remain at the city, a key crossing point on the Danube and reorganise the government of the province. The Austrians still held the northern suburbs on the opposite bank and felt reasonably secure as they had broken the bridge. Vandamme demanded the commander surrender of the city included the north bank. That demand refused, he proceeded to bombard the Austrians across the river. A bold amphibious crossing of the river followed and the entire city was secured.

The possibility of an Austrian attempt to sever Napoleon's communications by crossing the Danube at Linz was very real, Vandamme repaired the bridge and strengthened the defences on the north bank. It paid off, Kolowrat in Bohemia assembled his corps and 20,000 men soon marched on the city. The Austrians appeared before Linz on 17 May and Kolowrat immediately hurled his columns against the bridgehead. Vandamme's men held on, and when Bernadotte arrived with elements of his Saxon corps, Kolowrat retired. He fell back on Freystadt, and from there remained inactive with all ideas of an offensive abandoned.

On 1 June he received command of VIII Corps of the Grand Army, as the Wurttembergers were given corps status in recognition of their fine contribution in the campaign. During June the bulk of his corps moved to Vienna where they formed the garrison and covered the river line to the west of the city. Anxious to be in action he left his troops and accompanied Napoleon's staff during the battle of Wagram receiving a shoulder wound on 6 July. After hostilities ended he supervised the occupation of Styria during August and then returned to Vienna as head of the garrison till the withdrawal of the army in November.

On his return to France he replaced Saint Suzanne as commander of the Camp of Boulogne on 7 February 1810. He was soon in trouble when within twenty four hours of his arrival he forcefully evicted the mayor from his house, in order to use it as his headquarters. This incident prompted Napoleon's famous remark," If there were two Vandammes one would hang the other". On 30 August 1811 he moved to Cherbourg as commander of the 14th Military Division.

On 21 February 1812 he was appointed deputy commander of the VIII (Westphalian) Corps of the Grand Army under Jerome Bonaparte. The uneasy relationship that existed in 1807 soon boiled over. Hardly had the army crossed the Niemen when charges of insubordination and looting were brought against him by Jerome that resulted in his dismissal on 3 July 1812.

Back in France, he was without employment until 17 March 1813. When he took command of two divisions at Wesel in Holland and charged with restoring order in the 32nd Military Division after Carra Saint Cyr had abandoned Hamburg. Operating under Davout, whilst there was little love lost between the two, there was accord. He advanced on Hamburg from the south west and took Harburg on 29 April. Turning his attention on the islands at the mouth of the Elbe he then captured Wilhelmburg on 9 May before he entered the city on 31 May 1813.

With the reorganisation of the French armies during the armistice he replaced Davout at the head of I Corps on 1 July 1813 and moved with his troops to Dresden. His command comprised the divisions of Phillipon, Dumonceau, Teste and the cavalry of Corbineau.

Vandamme (2).JPG

When the campaign started, the Army of Bohemia advanced on Dresden. Napoleon saw an opportunity, and ordered Vandamme to cross the Elbe upstream and take Pirna. His plan was then for Vandamme to work his way to the rear of the Allies, ready to sever their line of retreat at Peterswalde with his 40,000 men. On 26 August while the main Allied army tried to storm Dresden he crossed the river at Zittau, drove back Ostermann's outposts and seized the Pirna plateau. Gradually he pushed Ostermann back and reached Peterswalde on 28 August.

He ignored the alarming fact that he had become increasingly isolated. Contemptuous of the Allies, overestimating their plight, being the first to Prague, Austria knocked out of the war and the prospect of a marshal's baton, clouded his judgement. He pressed on to the outskirts of Teplitz the next day where Ostermann turned on him after being reinforced by the Russian Guard of Grand Duke Constantine. Forced to give a little ground, he fell back to Kulm to wait for support from Saint Cyr's XIV Corps.

The next day the Allies realising the threat to their communications as they fell back from Dresden massed over 50,000 men to keep the route open. Vandamme confidently held the enemy's assaults until beset in the rear by a Prussian Corps under Kleist. This officer, desperately trying to escape from Saint Cyr's pursuing troops, had swung eastward from his original line of retreat in the hope of slipping past Vandamme's rear. Instead, he blundered into Vandamme's main body at the very climax of the renewed battle with Ostermann. Boxed in by 54,000 Allies, in the furious action that followed his corps swung around and stampeded their way to safety through Kleist's equally surprised Prussians. Over half his men escaped, but Vandamme with generals Haxo and Quiot was among the 13,000 prisoners and 48 guns lost, while another 6,000 were killed or wounded in the battle.

Taken to Prague a dramatic interview followed when brought before Czar Alexander. He nearly ran the grand duke Constantine through when the latter demanded his sword before entering the Czar's presence. The Czar then joined the fracas and in turn demanded his sword. Muskets levelled, swords bared, Vandamme's sarcasm was not lost when he declared it was easy then to remove his sword, but would be more noble and dangerous to take it on the field of battle. Furious the Czar responded by saying he refused to accept a sword from a murderer, thief and brigand. Vandamme countered by saying the accusations were irrelevant since at least he could never be accused of having the blood of his father on his hands. The interview promptly ended as the guards bundled him into a carriage. He spent a period imprisoned in Moscow, before moving to Viazma only to return to France in July 1814.

Placed on the non active list on 2 September 1814 he sought an interview with Louis XVIII and offered to serve under the Bourbons. The king refused to see him and on 22 September 1814 ordered him from Paris and exiled him to Cassel. He rallied to Napoleon on his return, was recalled and appointed commandant superieur at Dunkirk on 9 April 1815 where he immediately set about effectively putting down potential royalist opposition. He was then given command of III Corps of the Army of the North comprising the infantry divisions of Habert, Berthezene, Lefol and the cavalry of Domon. On 11 June his corps moved from Rocroi to Beaumont with orders to screen the rest of the army as it concentrated near the Belgian border.

The campaign started badly for him. Napoleon's orders to cross the border at 3.00 am on the morning of 15 June did not reach him. He had inexplicably left his headquarters and spent the night at a nearby chateau. As a result Lobau's closing VI Corps began to collide with his troops and a terrible snarl up resulted. The delay meant that there was no infantry support when Domon's cavalry tried to seize the bridges over the Sambre at Charleroi. Later in the day after he had crossed the river he was placed under Grouchy's command and ordered to support the assault on Pirch's brigade at Gilly. He treated Grouchy with contempt, considering him a mere, "commander of cavalry". For two hours he wasted time arguing how the attack should go in. The impasse resolved itself when Napoleon arrived, and exasperated by the delays ordered a brief artillery barrage followed by an infantry assault, which soon had the Prussians falling back to Fleurus. Ordered by Grouchy to take Fleurus he flatly refused as he had ordered his men to make camp and would only take orders from the Emperor.

At Ligny the next day he led the assaults against the Prussian right centred in the Saint Armand hamlets. By 17.00 hours his troops had carried the Saint Armands and routed a Prussian attempt to envelope the French left but could make no further progress due to heavy fire from Brye. Then just as Blucher launched a furious counter attack when D'Erlon's corps appeared in the distance his men panicked mistaking them for Wellington's columns and lost their gains. Only when Duhesme intervened with his Young Guard division was the situation stabilised and his men able to regain new heart and hurl the enemy back.

The next day he showed little energy under Grouchy. Following the Prussians, he took all day to reach Gembloux by the evening, a distance of seven miles. On hearing the opening cannonade at Waterloo on 18 June, with Gerard harsh words were exchanged with Grouchy urging him to march to the sound of the guns. When he heard the Prussians were at Wavre he was suddenly jarred into action. He urged his men forward and in the late afternoon attacked the town in a most reckless fashion without proper reconnaissance or artillery preparation. He advanced through the narrow streets in dense columns and quickly cleared the east bank but lost heavily as he tried to rush the bridges over the Dyle. Caught by a plunging fire from the Prussian batteries and sharp shooters from the heights on the opposite bank his troops caught in a cauldron could neither advance or retreat till dusk.

Vandamme (3).JPG

On the morning of 19 June he crossed the river unopposed and occupied Wavre, the Prussians having fallen back to La Bavette on the Brussels road. Following up he drove them from the village, when around midday he heard the news of Napoleon's defeat. He immediately withdrew through Wavre and by evening had reached Gembloux where the rest of Grouchy's force had concentrated. With Gerard wounded the previous day he took on the added responsibility of leading IV Corps.

On 20 June he severely compromised Grouchy when he could not be found as he had spent the night in a nearby house without informing anyone where he was. He missed Grouchy's orders issued during the night and as a result failed to post III Corps astride the Glembloux road so to cover the withdrawal of the rest of the army. His divisional commanders acting on their initiative began to fall back towards Namur without warning IV Corps. The move resulted in IV Corps's flank being uncovered and mauled by enemy cavalry the next morning until Grouchy at the head of a brigade of hussars drove them off.

Having safely passed through Namur he fell back on Laon reaching the city on 25 June where he rejoined the rest of the army. In command of the rearguard he reached the outskirts of Paris on 28 June. Adopting a hard line he doggedly insisted on a battle before Paris convinced that the widely spread Allies could be defeated in detail but the politicians won the day. He then retired with the rest of the army towards the Loire on 4 July after the declaration of an armistice.

Exiled by the Ordonnance of 24 July 1815 he quit his command on 7 August. Ignoring the Ordonnance he sort refuge with friends at Olivet and then Vierzun, till the hew and cry had died down. He returned to Cassel but declared an exile, was forced to leave the country on 12 January 1816. He settled in Ghent till 16 May 1816 when he was in turn expelled from the Kingdom of the Netherlands. He moved to the United States and lived near Philadelphia till June 1819 when he returned to Ghent and was allowed to return to France the following December. Reconciled with the Bourbons his rank and privileges were restored on 1 April 1820 but he never held any post up to his retirement on 1 January 1825. Ill health dogged his last years and he died of throat cancer throat at Cassel on 15 July 1830.

Undoubtedly one of Napoleon's foremost generals the rough, violent, hard fighting Vandamme was his own worst enemy. His career was marred by the fact that he showed neither respect nor could he be capable of serving under anyone but Napoleon himself. As a young man his rebellious nature and uncontrollable temper first prevented him gaining a commission. The lesson never sank in, and during the Revolutionary Wars he fell out successively with Moreau, Saint Cyr and Jourdan. It resulted in him failing to attain higher commands, which would have placed him high among the candidates included in the first batch of marshals created in 1804. He had all the attributes required, intelligence, bravery and total devotion to Napoleon.

From 1805 onwards a baton was within his grasp but again his temper, lack of tact and often outright insubordination was to continue landing him in trouble resulted in him being given semi-independent commands that were largely side shows. Command of I Corps in 1813 was his first real opportunity for many years to show his real worth. His failure at Kulm was unlucky. The risk he took was in keeping with Napoleon's style of warfare, his orders were clear. The Allied army beaten and demoralised, the appearance of Kleist in his rear was as equally unexpected for the Prussian as it was for Vandamme.

At times his behaviour during the Waterloo Campaign was inexcusable, but it is easy to apportion blame on a person after a campaign is lost. Had Napoleon won Waterloo the story would have been different after the tenacity he displayed at Ligny. Napoleon in his memoirs certainly did not place much importance on his behaviour affecting the outcome of the campaign. Such indiscretions would have been ignored and with Drouot and Gérard he would have received the marshal's baton he so coveted.

Waterloo Campaign Order of Battle June 1815

III Army Corps, Army of the North

Commander: Général de Division Vandamme - comte d'Unsebourg

	10.06.1815						25.06.1815					
	Infantry		Cavalry		Artillery		Infantry		Cavalry		Artillery	
	Btn	Men	Sqd	Men	Guns	Men	Btn	Men	Sqd	Men	Guns	Men
8th Infantry Division												
Lefol	(11)	5059	-	-	(8)	186	(11)	4034	-	-	(8)	155
10th Infantry Division												
Habert	(12)	5583	-	-	(8)	187	(12)	2916	-	-	(8)	187
11th Infantry Division												
Berthezene	(8)	4538	-	-	(8)	196	(8)	2670	-	-	(8)	196
3rd Cavalry Division												
Domon	-	-	(9)	1017	(6)	180	-	-	(9)	904	(6)	180
Artillery Reserve												
Doguereau	-	-	-	-	(8)	608	-	-	-	-	(8)	166
Corps Strength	(31)	15180	(9)	1017	(38)	1357	(31)	9620	(9)	904	(38)	1257

Vandamme (4).JPG