

## Plate 115 | Brun— [untitled]

## Orderly Officers of the Emperor, Horse Furniture and Rank Insignia

This Brun illustration combines a wealth of information from two original Bommer paintings. One of them provided the basis for the preceding drawing (Plate 114). The second source illustration, entitled by Bommer *Pferde=Equipierung der Ordonanz=Officier vom Kaiser* ("Horse Equipment of the Emperor's Orderly Officer"), provides a rare glimpse of a widely used system of rank insignia on *schabraques* that was apparently not officially codified.

The central figure is a fully furnished horse for a colonel in his role as an Orderly Officer of the Emperor (see text for Plate 114 for a fuller consideration of these orderly officers). It has light cavalry harness, including the Mameluke-style horsetail fringes (called *chasse-mouches*, "fly-chasers," by the French) that were very popular among light cavalry officers. The docked tail of the horse is unusual, as French horses habitually wore the tails long. The British commonly docked their horses' tails, a practice roundly criticized both at home and abroad, though the French are known to have done it on the Iberian Peninsula in an effort to deceive Spanish guerrillas. It is perhaps ironic here that even as this horse has been deprived of a crucial defense against irritating flies, the harness has supplied what the shears took away.

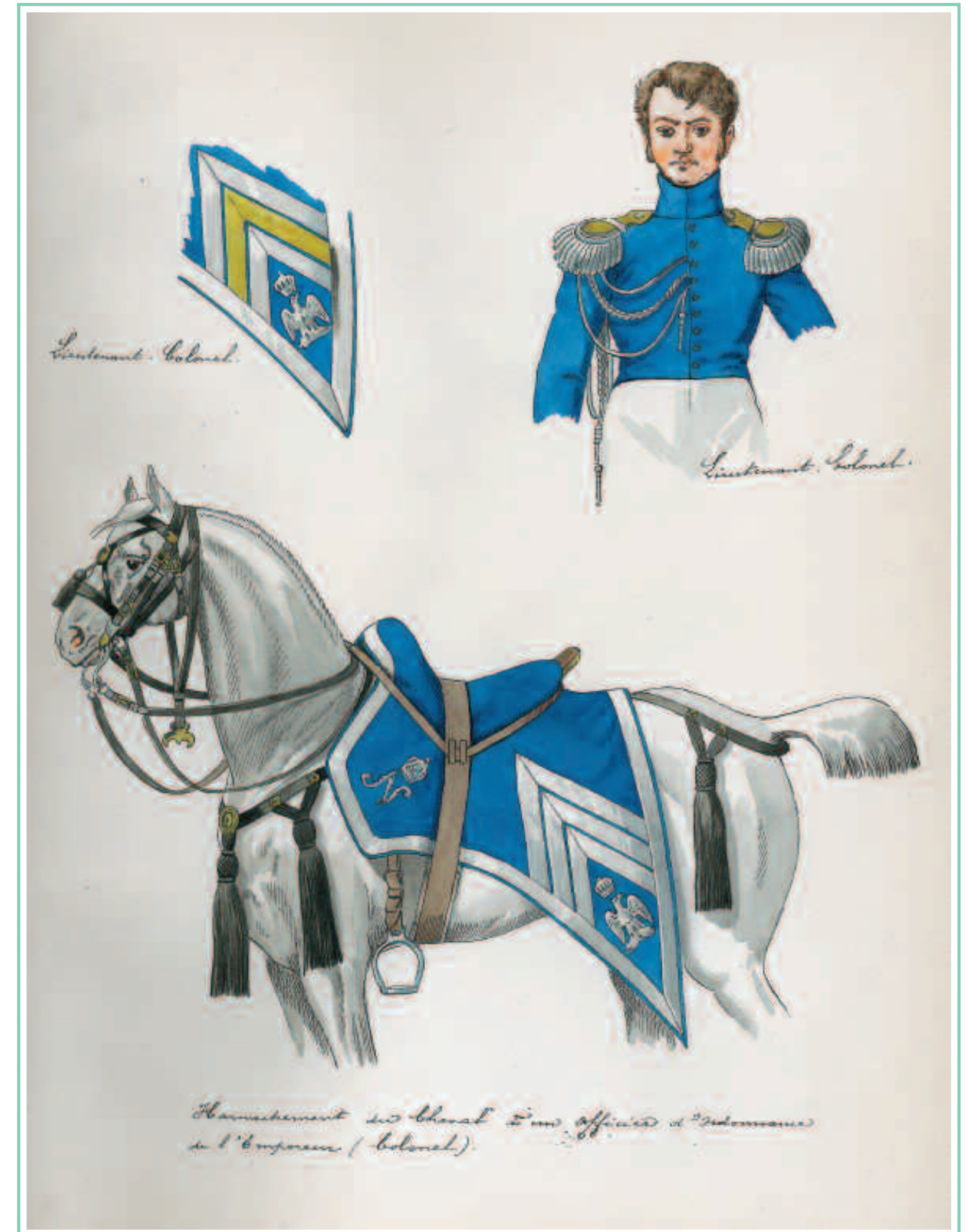
The pointed cloth *schabraque* is decorated with the crowned eagle and crowned "N" devices, and displays three prominent silver chevrons. The *Bommer Manuscript* provides invaluable documentation on the use of these chevrons on the *schabraque*, for these insignia were apparently used widely but not covered in the regulations; generally, later artists failed to reproduce them. These *schabraque* chevrons correspond to the lace rank insignia on light cavalry officers' breeches and sleeves (see "Rank Insignia" in the Glossary). One other contemporary 1813 source corroborates the same detail: on plate 57 of the *Subr Manuscript*,<sup>1</sup> the *schabraque* of an officer of the *15 Chasseurs à Cheval* bears a sub-lieutenant's single chevron in the same style. Suhr's observations confirm this use of chevrons on the *schabraque* as a practical and unofficial distinction used by the French army.

The *schabraque* detail and the officer's portrait display the different colors for use by a "Lieutenant Colonel," with the central chevron and the field of the epaulettes' shoulder board in gold. Brun may have translated Bommer's German term for this rank (*Oberstleutnant*), however, in 1813 the French term for the equivalent of the rank of lieutenant colonel was *Major* (see Glossary).

Brun N° 4 from  
Bommer I, 6 and I, 7 >



For comparison, Plate 114 (above).



<sup>1</sup> C. Suhr, *Abbildung der Uniformen*, plate 57 (*15 Chasseurs*).