

Plate 117 | Brun—Harnachement du Cheval d'un Aide de Camp de l'État Major Général

Study: Horse Furniture of an Aide-de-Camp

Brun correctly translated Bommer's original title, *Pferde-Equipierung eines Generalstaabs-Adjutanten* ("Horse-Equipment of an Adjutant of the General Staff"), and this illustration offers an interesting contrast to Plate 115.

This plate provides a valuable piece of evidence on the contemporary use of rank chevrons on the *schabraque*. The chevrons served an important function by facilitating rapid visual identification, which could be of particular value for aides and staff officers. While not a matter of regulation nor employed consistently in the French army, this system appears to have been instituted sometime in 1812, but by whom or on whose authority is not known. Nor is it clear on whose decision the use of the *schabraque* insignia depended, although its employment was probably consistent throughout a given unit or headquarters. In spite of its presumably practical application, the system disappeared with Napoleon's last *Grande Armée* and did not reappear again in later French armies.

The use of the chevrons on the *schabraque* follows exactly the same pattern of rank insignia displayed on the sleeves and breeches of the light cavalry (see "Rank Insignia" in the Glossary). While the chevrons decrease in size and width for each lower rank (as do the rank insignia for commissioned light cavalry officers), they always remain in the major metal color (white/silver for orderly officers and yellow/gold for officers of the staff, such as the *état-major*). The only exception to the use of this metal color was that for a *major* (the equivalent of a lieutenant colonel), which always displayed the central chevron in the opposite metal color. Note that Brun's annotations on this illustration for the ranks "Lieut-Colonel" and "Major" may be translations of Bommer's original German since, in 1813, the French term for lieutenant colonel was *major*, and for major was *chef de bataillon*.

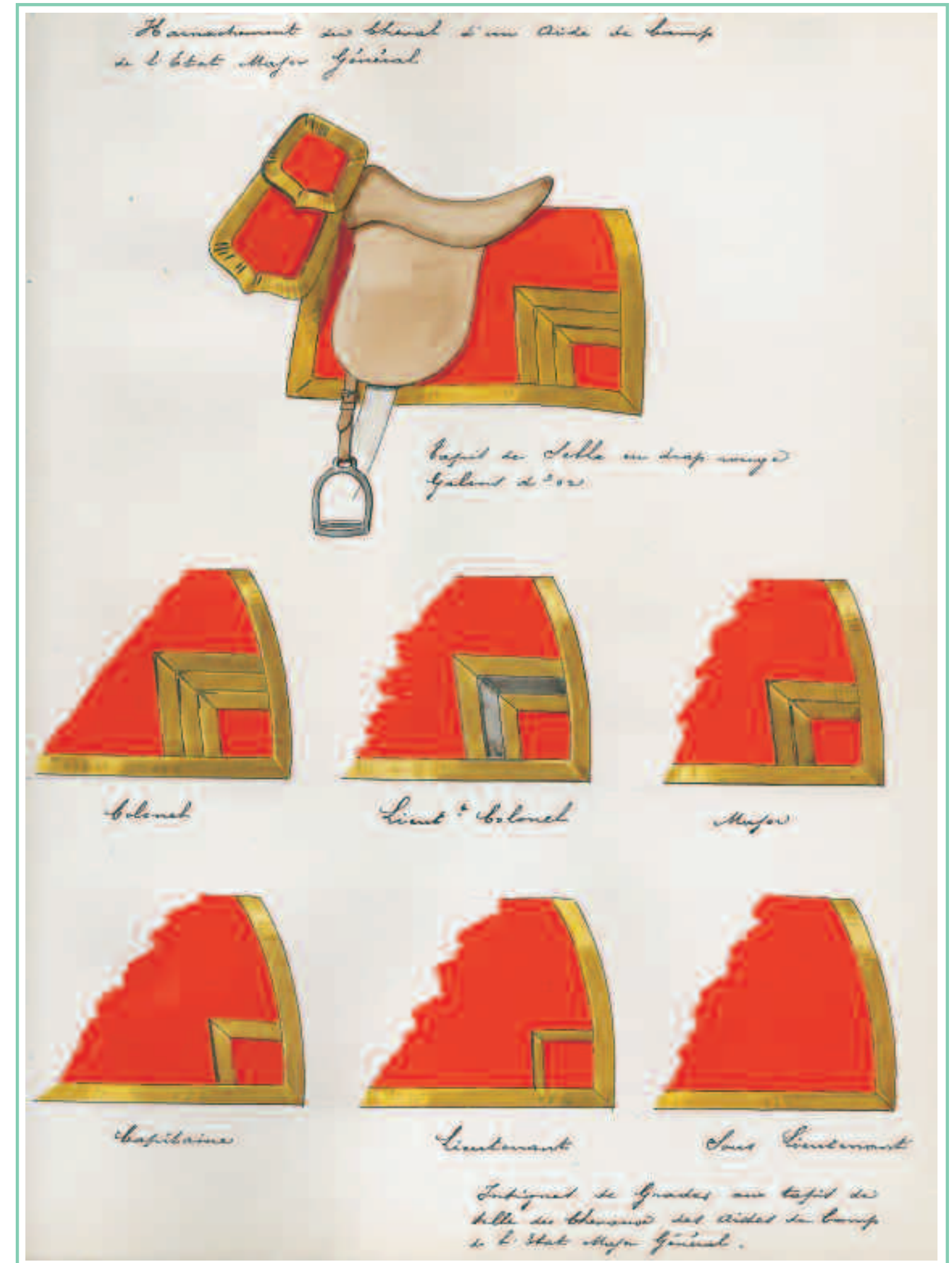
Under the top figure is the annotation "Saddlecloth in red cloth; lace bands/stripes in gold."

The original plate by Bommer differed from Brun's drawing insofar as Bommer provided the details in the opposite sequence, that is, they start with the *Leutnant* (here *Sous-Lieutenant*, or 2nd Lieutenant) and continued up the hierarchy to the *Oberst* (Colonel). Additionally, a fully outfitted horse was represented demonstrating the contrast between heavy cavalry harness, bridle, shape of the saddlecloth, etc., and the light-horse furniture depicted for the horsemen in Plate 115.

Brun N° 6 from Bommer I, 5 >



For comparison, a detail of Plate 115 (above).



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