

Plate 118 | Brun—Infanterie de Ligne — Cornet de Voltigeurs et Sapeur

Line Infantry, Voltigeur Horn Player and Pioneer

Here Brun copied two of the three figures in Bommer's original illustration of line infantry on campaign, omitting the front view of the pioneer (which showed, among other things, this pioneer's corporal chevron on his sleeve).

The back of the pioneer (right) illustrates his equipment arranged for the march with the axe out of its sheath. A battalion had four pioneers serving in the grenadier company (hence the red-fringed epaulettes, red sword knot, and bearskin with its grenade patch — appropriate for 1813). The pioneers marched at the head of the column (or, if in a grand column of many battalions, grouped with the other sappers in the lead) to clear obstacles on the route. When not needed, the axe was carried upside-down, with the head in the black leather sheath to which the cartridge pouch was attached, and with the handle beneath the pack.

Pioneers, buglers, and artillerymen shared with the dragoons the use of their special musket — a shortened version of the M1777 or Year IX (*An IX*) — and they generally carried it with the sling loosened and the musket slung in order to keep their hands free. For all other infantry, the sling was buckled tightly to stabilize the musket when shouldered and to ease the handling when its metal parts heated up during a firefight. Here, the pioneer has passed the musket under the pack's central buckle, but Brun neglected to show, as Bommer did originally, the musket sling descending to pass over the left shoulder to cross the chest — the musket is not supported simply by the pack, as this illustration would suggest. (Bommer's front view of the pioneer, omitted by Brun, makes this very clear.) A pioneer usually carried a *sabre-briquet* (short infantry sword) with a more ostentatious hilt, commonly with a cock's or eagle's head. In 1813 these more fashionable items often had to be replaced by whatever arms were available. Curiously, the pioneer's *sabre-briquet* lacks the normal companion bayonet scabbard.

Although dressed in an overcoat, the voltigeur (left) is clearly recognizable by the green pompon, epaulettes, and cords for his horn. Brun depicted the muskets of both figures with their locks protected by elaborate leather covers. In many cases, including Bommer's original illustration, what appears to be an ordinary rag was tied around the musket lock to keep moisture away.

While Brun remained dependably faithful to the vast majority of the original's details, this copy did not escape some other "corrections." Brun changed the white trousers of Bommer's figures to blue. He shortened and fattened the bearskin slightly, and changed the grenade patch color from yellow. Lastly, Brun added the brass insignia to the sapper's cartridge pouch (where Bommer had depicted nothing).

Brun N° 50 from
Bommer I, 15 (1 and 3) >



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