

Plate 54 | Winkler—Franz: Dragoon

Dragoon, Trooper

While the two preceding officers each wore the common and popular surtout, Winkler's "French: Dragoon" seems to be wearing a sort of "emergency" uniform — a very modified coatee. It has the cut and shape of the prescribed 1812 Bardin *habit-veste*, but without the colored lapels called for by the regulations. All of its other features correspond to the regulations for the coatee, except for the patch of color on the collar (a peculiarity seen in previous plates).

Nevertheless, the yellow cuffs and turnbacks, uncolored cuff flaps, and vertical pockets taken together permit the exact identification of the regiment: the 23rd Dragoon Regiment. The very small collar patches are hard to explain, as the 23rd Dragoons had no yellow facing color on their collars. (While three other regiments had yellow collars, in contrast to this dragoon's uniform, the 19th Dragoons also had horizontal pockets, the 22nd had yellow cuff flaps, and the 24th had no facing color on their cuffs, so this figure is unlikely to belong to one of those units.) Perhaps the small collar patches substituted, in this case, for the absent yellow lapels.

Furthermore, the unadorned shoulder straps sewn in at the collar and buttoned at the outer end were an element of the 1812 Bardin *habit-veste*. The red plume indicates a member of the elite company; the absence of fringed epaulettes and a bearskin indicate the contrary. Perhaps the red plumes commonly worn during this campaign by a range of troops, outside of those for whom it was usually reserved, served as compensation for the otherwise reduced uniform features.

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The 23rd Dragoons served the 1813 campaign in the 1st Reserve Cavalry Corps under GD Latour-Maubourg. On 2 May, the three squadrons of the 23rd Dragoons tallied a mere six officers and 119 men for the Battle of Lützen; eighteen days later, at Bautzen, they had nine officers and 159 troopers. After the end of the summer armistice, the regiment swelled to 21 officers and 341 troopers. By 1 September, the 1st Squadron alone had 12 officers and 152 men, while the 2nd Squadron had eight officers and 113 troopers. At Leipzig, the entire regiment had shrunk to 202 troopers plus their officers.

After the summer armistice, but before the Battle of Leipzig, officer casualties in the 23rd Dragoon Regiment amounted to one dead and two wounded, while the Battle of the Nations resulted in one more fatality and six additional wounded.

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