

Neapolitan 7th Line Infantry Regiment, Officer

The next few plates illustrate the most famous of all Neapolitan regiments, the 7^o *Reggimento Infanteria di Linea* (7th Line Infantry Regiment). Record of the Winkler original survives in Brun's tracing, titled "Negro Officer of the Neapolitan Army, 1813" (shown at right), although the whereabouts of the original are unknown.

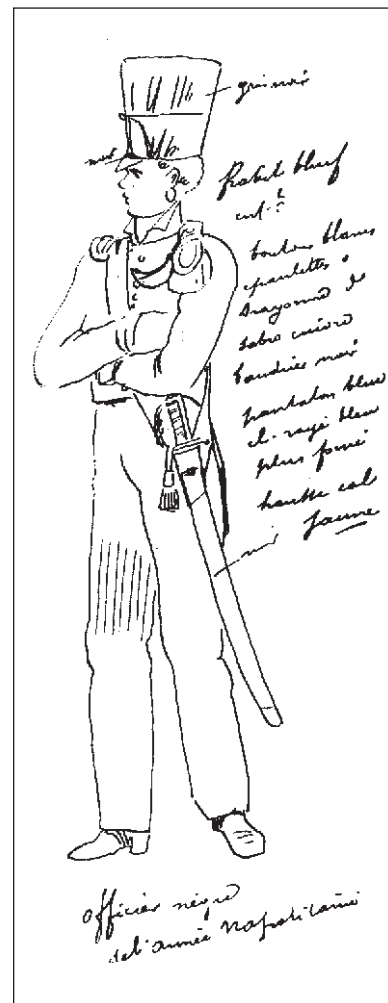
Also known as the *Real Africano* ("Royal African"), this regiment was originally recruited in 1806 from the former *pionniers noirs* ("black pioneers") of the French army. Most of the *pionniers noirs* had been taken into the French service as prisoners (voluntarily or impressed) in 1804, after the French withdrew from Haiti. After driving the Bourbon monarchs from Naples, Napoleon installed his brother Joseph as king in 1806 (Napoleon's brother-in-law Murat became king of Naples in 1808 when Joseph became king of Spain). The old Neapolitan army, however, deserted or followed their monarch to Sicily, and Joseph was desperate for troops to form the core of a new army. France was at war with Prussia in 1806, so the *pionniers noirs* were among the "second line" units made available for service in Naples and converted to infantry (discarding their old red-faced, brown *habits*).

While most colonial regiments had white noncommissioned and commissioned officers, black officers led the 7th Line Regiment. In 1813, after suffering heavy losses in Russia, most of the regiment was with the besieged garrison in Danzig. In April, the 7th Line was rebuilt with white European conscripts and renamed the *Principe Luciano* Regiment. It never left Naples thereafter, however, and the remnants of the old 7th Line continued their service in Danzig and with the regiment's small contingent in the Elite Regiment — that latter are the elements of the 7th Line that Winkler probably saw around Freiberg.

Although the full dress uniform was white, this captain wears a campaign uniform consisting of a plain blue surtout (as we have previously seen with the Italian Royal Guard Officer in Plate 86) without any traces of the 7th Regiment's yellow facing color, and a pair of unconventional light blue trousers with dark blue stripes. The white triangles visible above the collar are the upper parts of the shirt collar. The black shoulder belt to support his sword is unusual, a white sword belt being the norm, but such an accoutrement did appear occasionally among French and French-allied grenadier officers on campaign. A similar shoulder belt was seen on his brother officer in Plate 97 and the Italian Royal Guard officer in Plate 86.

The Danzig artist Trojan recorded a black officer of the Neapolitan 7th Line Regiment, during the unit's sojourn in that city, wearing the Neapolitan regulation white uniform.¹ While Winkler's original served as the source of Herbert Knötel's depiction of two blue-clad black officers of the Neapolitan 7th Line, Trojan's image served as the basis for Knötel's third figure in the grouping in Plate 40, Vol. XVIII of his *Uniformkunde*. There is also a Brun tracing of another black officer from Part III of the *Freiberg Manuscript*, shown from the back, that appears on page 245.

Brun N° 86 from
Freiberg I, 62 >



Brun's annotated tracing (above) of I, 62 used to prepare his final illustration.



99—1813 Officier négre de l'armée Napolitaine

¹ See F. Trojan, an untitled manuscript.