

Line Infantry, Grenadier

Without already knowing the date of this illustration of a French grenadier, uniform historians might previously have assumed this to be a soldier of the 1806 or, at the latest, the 1809 campaign. This man is wearing the traditional *habit*, long gaiters, and distinctive red, fringed epaulettes of the grenadier in broad accordance with the uniform regulations of 24 July 1806;¹ he is also distinguished most prominently by his bearskin.

Grenadier bearskins were authorized on 27 August 1800, while replacement with a shako was regulated as early as 24 September 1803 and further on 25 March 1806. Grenadier bearskins were finally officially abolished on 9 November 1810, but that it should still be present is not surprising, as all armies in all ages quite naturally continued to use the equipment and material on hand — particularly distinctive items in which the unit took pride — until worn out or stocks were readily available to replace what they had. The only concession to campaigning is the total absence of any decoration on the headdress; otherwise, we see the full dress of the Empire’s heyday.

Several generations of French military artists have broadly assumed that the 1812 regulation “Bardin” uniform for French troops (featuring a shorter coat and a shako without plume and cords) was widely in use by 1813. However, eyewitness illustrations such as this argue for reconsideration of this view. Evidently, large portions of the last *Grande Armée* in 1813 were still dressed in the uniform style of 1806–1810.

Winkler accurately portrayed not only the somewhat wild, unkempt style of the bearskin’s fur, rather than the unnaturally combed and smooth headdress so often depicted, but also the large cartridge pouch and the baggy shape of the backpack. The figure’s manner of carrying the musket is a casual one, and in English was known as carrying the weapon “clubbed” (see the next two plates as well). It was a common method, and many other contemporary sources display this pose as well. The weapon itself seems to be of non-French origin, as one can observe the absence of the three metal bands fixing the barrel to the stock. The French made use of weaponry from both Prussian and Saxon magazines in 1813.

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¹ The applicable uniform regulations were further modified on 7 October 1807, to change the *habit* back from white to blue, and were modified again on 18 February 1808.