

The Armies of 1813-14

A Pictorial Review of the Armies of the Sixth Coalition - artwork by Joe Amoral



Introduction

The travesty that was the War of 1812 in Russia spilled over into Germany in 1813 and became the War of the Sixth Coalition. Russia and Great Britain, soon joined by Prussia, faced off against Napoleon in the Spring of 1813. The results were two titanic battles which were incomplete French victories due to the lack of cavalry with which to pursue the retreating armies. Later in June both sides agreed to an armistice that favored the Allies as Sweden and Austria-Hungary joined the Coalition in the Fall. Following a series of losses by his subordinates, Napoleon's doom was sealed at Leipzig, the largest battle of the Napoleonic Wars. In 1814 the fighting spilled over into a new arena, as France itself was invaded by Austria, Prussia and Russia from the East and Great Britain, Spain and Portugal from the southwest. The Allies gained the final victory at the end of March in the Battle of Paris.

All of the nations were exhausted by war. Even the enthusiastic Prussians would have difficulties manufacturing a war machine capable of defeating Napoleon. The Austrians had been ravaged by two wars with Napoleon (1805 and 1809) and were in no shape to take the field. Although wary of renewing hostilities, they wanted to restrain Napoleon and were tired of his domination of the German principalities. The Austrians wanted to limit France to her “natural” borders, but wanted France to remain a viable counterweight against the Prussians and Austrians. Russia had lost a large number of men in 1812 and most Russians were ready for peace and the rebuilding of their army. Only Czar Alexander, along with Great Britain and Prussia, had any appetite for continuing a “crusade” to deliver Europe from the Corsican Ogre. Most of the Russians felt that the war had been won in 1812 and would truly have been satisfied with rebuilding the army and resuming a peace.

Napoleon was drawing on a France that had long since tired of war. By virtue of incredible efforts, he managed to put together an army of tremendous strength, but of dubious character. The senior generals, once a key pillar of the French army, had had enough of war and wanted to retire to their estates. Although the French rank and file were eager enough to fight, France’s remaining allies were equally eager to desert or become neutral. Some of these allies, such as Bavaria, switched sides and went over to the Allied Coalition. Murat and Naples would join the Coalition only to return to Napoleon in 1815.

By this time all of Europe had grown war weary. It would take all of 1813 and up to May in 1814 to accomplish the peace. This would be broken again shortly in 1815 as Napoleon came back from exile. Only after Waterloo would Europe have a peace that would last 50 years.

Graphics Tribute

Joe Amoral did a wonderful job on the unit pictures while Mark Adams touched up the finished product and set each image caringly into place. This file is as much a tribute to their hard work as it is to the soldiers that fought in the War of the Sixth Coalition.



(Joe on left, Mark on right)

The Soldiers of France

Infantry



The infantry of France had taken devastating losses not only in Russia but also in Spain. The infantry varied in type from the typical Ligne and Legere infantry to the Foreign Regiments and Marine Artillery units of the Navy. The latter in particular would distinguish themselves in the campaign, their greatcoats often causing their enemies to mistake them for the Imperial Guard. The conscript regiments, when near Napoleon usually performed well but apart from L'Emperor were not as motivated. They lost as much from straggling and desertion as they did on the battlefield. Unused to the rigors of the campaign they also succumbed to illness easier.

Cavalry



The cavalry was in sad condition after the retreat from Russia in 1812 and could barely muster a brigade of cavalry in the army the Eugene commanded in the early Spring. The lack of cavalry throughout the campaigns of 1813-14 would rob Napoleon of any hope of pursuing his enemy and also would leave his rear area open to raids by Allied cavalry forces.

Artillery



One of the harder branches to replace after the disaster of 1812 was the technical troops. While Napoleon's army of 1813 would not lack for artillery pieces he lacked gunners and was constantly pulling away men from the Navy or fortresses to man the batteries. He was able to rebuild sufficient artillery to equip his corps and divisions but never again would have a sufficient reserve to match the more numerous Allied artillery.

The Soldiers of the Austria and Hungary

Infantry



The Austrian infantry were composed of infantry from both Austria and Hungary with additional forces from the border areas. Austria had suffered very little losses in 1812 but after the losses of 1809 their army was lacking in veterans and thus the quality of the battalions was suspect. Rothenberg mentions that they were not even able to maneuver in line formation. Rounding out the infantry forces were the fine Jagers and Grenzers who performed light infantry duties based on the whim of the commander. Napoleon considered the latter to be the best part of the Austrian army.

The Hapsburg infantry came from regions such as Styria, the Tyrol, Bohemia, Hungary, Transylvania and Galicia. Several of these regions were weary of being under the Hapsburg Empire and would eventually gain their freedom within the next one hundred years.

Cavalry



The cavalry was well trained and included Hussars, Uhlans, Cheveauxlegers, Dragoons and Cuirassiers. The latter two were the heavy cavalry of the army though some of the Cheveauxlegers could be rated as such. They were usually not employed by their commanders as they tended to be handed out in small amounts to the divisions. Usually only the Cuirassiers were kept in reserve brigades.

Artillery



The Austrian artillery was a competent branch of service and could be devastating at medium range. Not noted for long range support they would still exact a devastating number of losses on their opponents if properly employed. By 1813 they were still using the same tactics that they had employed in 1809 against the French.

The engineer branch of service, in particular, were very adept at building bridges due to the importance of the Danube to military operations. The campaign would not demand as much of their services as the campaign of 1809 had but their services, nonetheless, would be employed to help the army cross the numerous waterways in Bohemia and Saxony.

The Soldiers of the Russian Empire

Infantry



The Russian infantry were undoubtedly one of the most durable in Europe. They endured great loss in 1812 but came through as hardy campaigners. While their losses had depleted their strength they still retained their fine morale.

Cavalry



The Russian cavalry suffered severe losses in 1812 but their horses were more hardy than the typical French mount and therefore they endured the winter with far fewer losses. The Cossack ponies in particular were trained to stand in cold water for long periods of time in order to acclimate them better to the cold winter. This arm of the Russian army caused more losses by their indirect warfare, with large groups of cossacks and light cavalry being used in the French rear areas. Napoleon never could adequately counter their actions and his supply situation suffered as a result. Large groups of recruits moving up in "Battalion de Marche" likewise could be ambushed when they least suspected. On the battlefield they were durable and probably of the Allies the best of their cavalry.

Artillery



The Russian artillery had a fine reputation of service. They matched up well against the French and other European artillerymen. Their crews were valiant usually dying to protect their guns rather than retreating.

The Soldiers of Prussia

Infantry



From the Line infantry to the Landwehr and Frewilige Jagers, from Schutzen to von Lutzow's Freicorps the Prussian infantry was a varied group in 1813. They still retained grenadier battalions but any semblance of a royal army was lost in the mass conscription that was part of the mobilization of Prussia in 1813. What had been a King's army became a national force zealous to assert their individual efforts. The Prussian infantry would perform very well during the war and would again take up arms against Napoleon in 1815.

Cavalry



The cavalry of Prussia went through quite a transition from the days of 1806. They had to make do with less heavy cavalry and instead the ranks were filled with hastily raised National and Landwehr formations in the Fall. The Guard cavalry had two regiments, Garde du Corps and Garde Light regiment, the latter made up of Uhlans, Hussars, Dragoons and even a Cossack squadron. Along with this the volunteer Jager squadrons were attached to the line and guard regiments. These were men that paid for their own uniform and weapons and often had to provide their own horses.

Artillery



The Prussian artillery retained a good cadre of trained men throughout the peace with France and as the war began was able to expand to meet the needs of the army. From Guard foot to line horse batteries they were able to support the infantry from the early days of the Spring campaign right up to the Battle of Paris and beyond.

Soldiers of the Allies of France

Baden



In 1813, the Baden infantry and artillery was part of the 39th Division of the III Corps. The cavalry was part of the III Cavalry Corps. They joined the Allies once the French had been driven over the Rhine. Like many of the German allies they grew weary of fighting Napoleon's battles. In 1814 they would fight against France as part of the 8th Bundes-Corps in support of the Hauptarmee.

Bavaria



The Bavarians were part of the XII Corps of the Army of Berlin. They had little interest in fighting for France at this point. Bavaria defected to the Coalition by October and were involved in an unsuccessful attempt to halt Napoleon's retreat near Hanau. They went on to fight in 1814 against France as the 1st Bundes-Corps which would become the V Corps of the Hauptarmee.

Berg



The Berg Lancers were part of the French Imperial Guard. The regiment had been rebuilt after the debacle that was the War of 1812. The regiment was not as capable in 1813 but nonetheless was a valuable attribute to the Guard. The horse artillery was also attached to the Guard. In 1814 they were part of the 5th Bundes-Corps which relieved Langeron's Corps at the siege of Mainz.

The Balkan States



Under the dominion of the Hapsburg empire until 1809, Illyria, Dalmatia and Croatia were ceded to the French and several regiments were formed. These were former Grenzer units and thus some of the units retained a uniform that was similar to the one they had worn in Austrian service. They were good warriors of which Napoleon had commented on several occasions in the past that they were the best troops in Austrian service.

Denmark



The Danes supplied a good contingent to the French army in 1813, mainly fighting under the command of Davout in the north. Their principal enemy was Sweden. After the 1813 campaigns their army returned home.

Dutch



By 1813 the Kingdom of Holland had been absorbed into Metropolitan France. They contributed very few units to the main theater mainly being used to watch the coast against a sea invasion. The 2nd "Dutch" Lancers were part of the Imperial Guard and were good troopers despite having suffered huge losses to the regiment in Russia. The 7th Tirailleurs were known as "Les Pupiles" and were part of the Young Guard. Although they wore the same uniform as the French Tirailleurs they have been included to acknowledge their contribution to the French cause.

Hesse-Darmstadt



The Hessians were a part of the Confederation of the Rhine and had been contributing troops to the French army. They provided a sizeable contingent in 1813 despite the losses of 1812. Their forces were part of the XI Corps under MacDonald's command. They would serve for the Coalition in 1814 in the 6th Bundes-Corps operating in the Alsace-Lorraine and Lyons areas.

The Kingdom of Italy



The forces of Northern Italy provided one of the largest contingents to the French army of all of the allies. By 1813 their losses in Russia had gutted their army and filling out the formations demanded their utmost. They were part of the IV Corps in Germany but a large force of them were stationed in the Po Valley to face the threat of the Austrians and British. Later the Kingdom of Naples would turn against Napoleon and Eugene's forces would be stretched to the utmost. Still they held out until the fall of Paris.

The Kingdom of Naples



While the Northern Italian forces were good troops those to the south in Naples did not share that reputation. The flamboyant Murat, King of Naples, was more impressed with how they looked rather than how they fought. Their combat record was not distinguished and in the engagements in 1813-14 as well as in 1815 they would lose most of their engagements. They provided a few units to the main army in Germany but by and large were better off left at home. What they needed was a Davout or Eugene to train and lead them to become better soldiers.

Grand Duchy of Warsaw



The Polish troops were to remain some of the best of Napoleon's allies. Still seeking to become independent from Saxony they fought on til the end. Finally by 1814 Napoleon had released them from service and many of the men were to fight in various units in his army. The 1st Polish Guard Lancers would remain a part of the Guard until 1814 and then fight again with the French in 1815.

Portugal and Spain



Despite being at war with France the Kingdom of Portugal and of Spain both contributed troops to the French army. The Joseph Napoleon regiment had served in Russia as well as the Portuguese Legion. Spanish sappers were attached to Ney's corps to help meet the need for engineer troops. These units were never highly enthusiastic about serving under the French and by 1814 would almost be nonexistent.

Rhinebund



These Confederation of the Rhine forces served under French leadership and usually in a support role such as guarding lines of communication. In 1809 Napoleon did not feel that they were ready for frontline duty and for the most part they would remain in garrisons or as support forces. During the 1813 campaign the the 2nd Rhinebund regiment, for instance, was part of the Glogau garrison. The Anhalt Chasseurs saw active duty in the I Cavalry Corps but were destroyed at the Battle of Kulm.

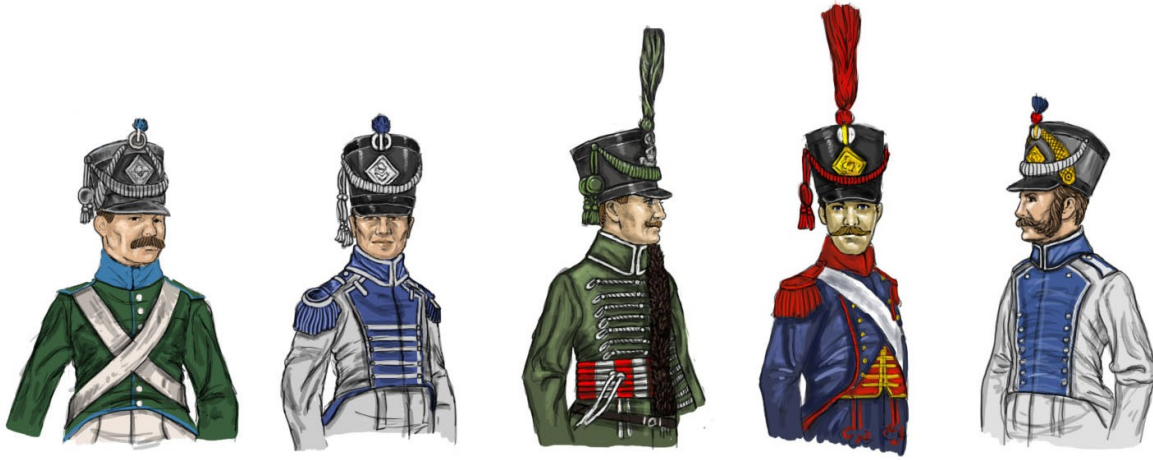
In the game icon on the left is used for all Rhinebund infantry regimentss due to the fact that we had to draw the line somewhere as far as artwork needs went. I would have liked to have had an icon for each company for each of the existing regiments as many of them wore different uniforms.

Saxony



The Saxon king was indebted to Napoleon for helping him to gain his kingdom and thus provided his army to the French. Only a few units would remain behind during the campaigns from 1809-1813. Their cavalry was usually considered the finest in Europe. Their infantry when properly lead could perform as well as the French line infantry. During the 1806 campaign many feel that they had outperformed their Prussian masters. Once the campaign of 1813 had concluded the king was confined while his army served the Coalition. The Saxons were part of the 3rd Bundes-Corps in 1814 and supported the operations of the Army of the North. They were at best reluctant partners as were most of the German troops in the Bundes-Corps.

Westphalian



The Westphalians had never been willing members of the French army having served with the Prussian army and the kingdom carved out for Napoleon's brothers to rule over. yet when properly led they performed well. By 1814 they were under the banner of their former title of Hesse-Kassel. In 1815 several new regiments in the Prussian army would be formed from this region. The troops served in the 4th Bundes-Corps in 1814 operating in support of the Army of Silesia.

Württemberg



The Württemberg forces would provide a sizeable contingent to the French army during the years but by 1813 their numbers, like most of the German allies, had been drastically reduced. They served in the IV Corps under Bertrand during the 1813 campaigns and suffered from the poor handling of the army commanders in the struggle to take Berlin. After the Fall Campaign they became part of the Allied Coalition forces serving in the 7th Bundes-Corps which would become the IV Armee Corps of the Hauptarmee (former Army of Bohemia). They would participate in many of the actions in the main theater of operations against Napoleon. Prince Eugene of Württemberg would assume command of the corps but his forces would be outmaneuvered time and time again. More often than not the Austrians used the German allies as a buffer for their own forces and thus the corps suffered a higher percentage of casualties than their fellow German "brethren" of Vienna.

Würzburg



The forces of Würzburg were minor in size when compared to the other contingents from the Rhineland but they were good troops and fought with courage for Napoleon. By 1813 they were reduced to a minor contingent in the army serving in the VII Corps under Reynier. Operations in the north were abysmal thus the troops were subject once again to poor handling and thus their numbers by the end of the campaign were justifiably low. In 1814 they would fight with the Allied Coalition alongside the forces of Hesse-Darmstadt, Reuss, Frankfort and Isenberg in the 6th Bundes-Corps.

Soldiers of the Minor Allies of the Coalition

Anhalt



The Anhalt-Dessau battalion was raised during 1813 Campaign and served through the end of the year and into the end of the War of the Sixth Coalition as well as in the Waterloo Campaign.

Britain and Hanover



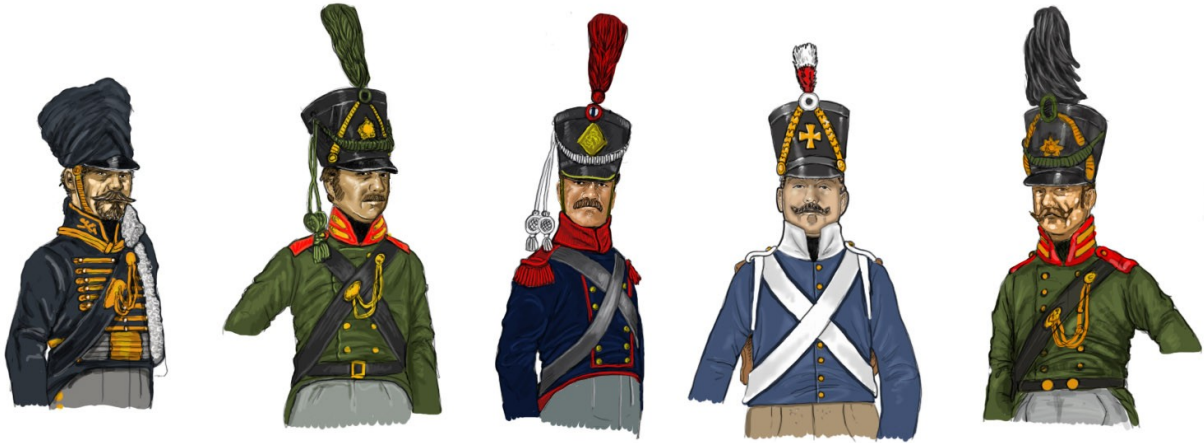
The British contributed minor forces to this campaign as they were busy in the Iberian Peninsula fighting the other French armies under Soult and Joseph. Nonetheless they sent infantry, cavalry and artillery to fight in northern Germany with the Hanoverians. These forces would be kept busy fighting Davout's XIII Corps near Hamburg. They were not to take part in any of the major battles of the Fall Campaign. In 1814 they took part in the siege of Hanover.

Hanseatic League



The cities of Luneburg, Hannover and others formed the Hanseatic League so it was only natural that they fought with Walldmoden's army in the north against Davout. They participated in the siege of Hamburg later as the war moved into 1814. As they were not true front line troops they were well suited to this role.

Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Mecklenburg-Schwerin



Both Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Mecklenburg-Schwerin had been a part of the Confederation of the Rhine but once Napoleon had been driven back into Germany they aligned themselves with the Coalition forces. They provided line infantry and cavalry as well as artillery and landwehr. The Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin served in the Prussian army and commanded a brigade. The Mecklenburg-Schwerin Hussars were a part of the I Armee-Corps under General Yorck.

Sweden



The Kingdom of Sweden had undergone massive changes in the years leading up to 1813 to include the failed Russo-Swedish War of 1808-09. Now under the rule of the Crown Prince (Bernadotte) they joined the Coalition but were to fight infrequently during 1813-14. The division attached to Wallmoden's force would see more action than the other divisions of the Swedish Army.