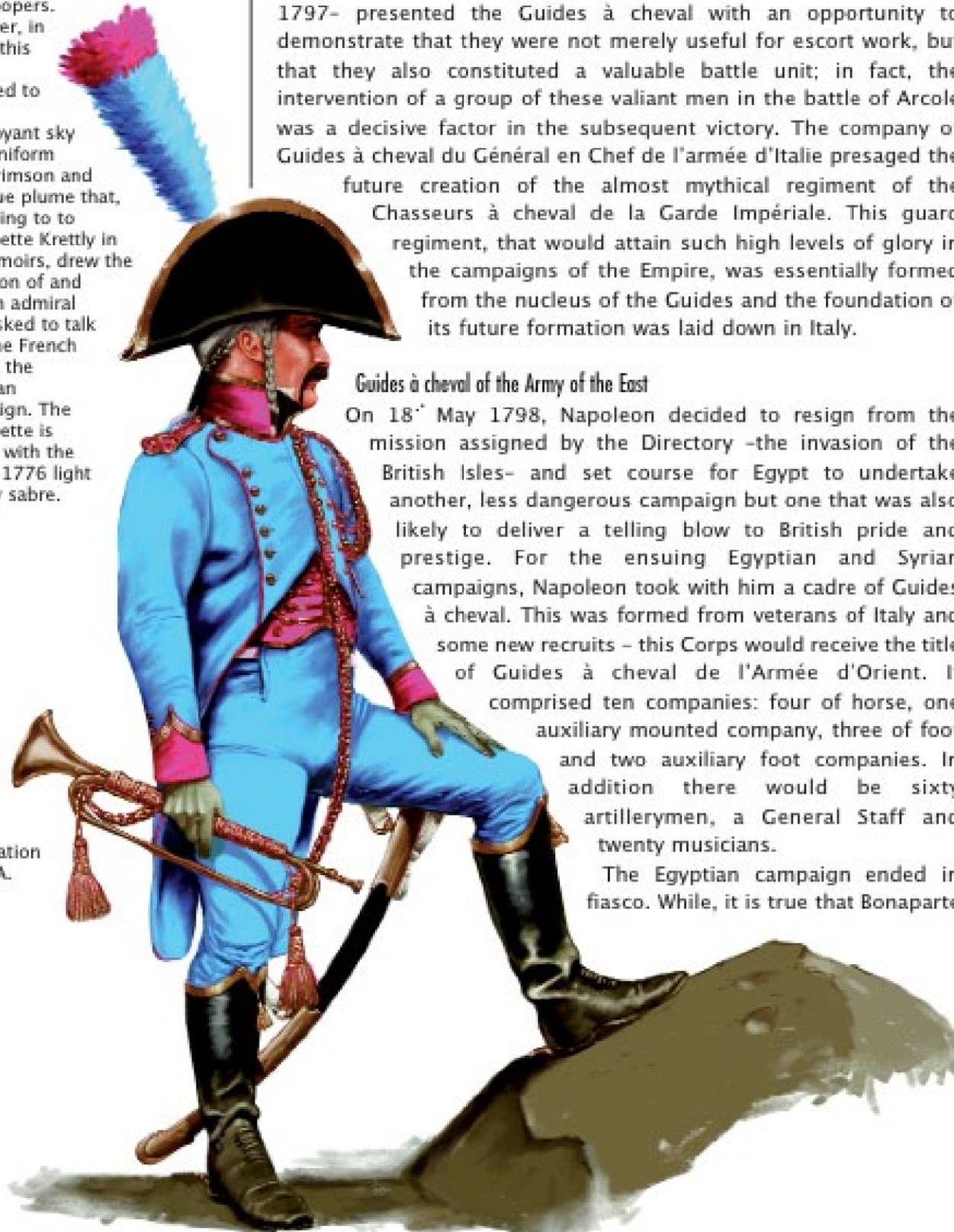


Trompette of the Corps of Guides of the Eastern Army, 1798. The Trompettes of the Corps of Guides began by wearing the same green uniforms as rest of the troopers. However, in 1799, this was changed to the flamboyant sky blue uniform with crimson and sky blue plume that, according to Trompette Krettly in its memoirs, drew the attention of and English admiral who asked to talk with the French during the Egyptian campaign. The Trompette is armed with the Model 1776 light cavalry sabre.



(Illustration by D. A. C.).

men. In the succeeding months, the incorporation of new elements forced the creation of four squadrons, each one of which was granted a guidon, pennants on which their exploits would be embroidered.

Napoleon's first campaign in Italy -which would last until October 1797- presented the Guides à cheval with an opportunity to demonstrate that they were not merely useful for escort work, but that they also constituted a valuable battle unit; in fact, the intervention of a group of these valiant men in the battle of Arcole was a decisive factor in the subsequent victory. The company of Guides à cheval du Général en Chef de l'armée d'Italie presaged the future creation of the almost mythical regiment of the Chasseurs à cheval de la Garde Impériale. This guard regiment, that would attain such high levels of glory in the campaigns of the Empire, was essentially formed from the nucleus of the Guides and the foundation of its future formation was laid down in Italy.

Guides à cheval of the Army of the East

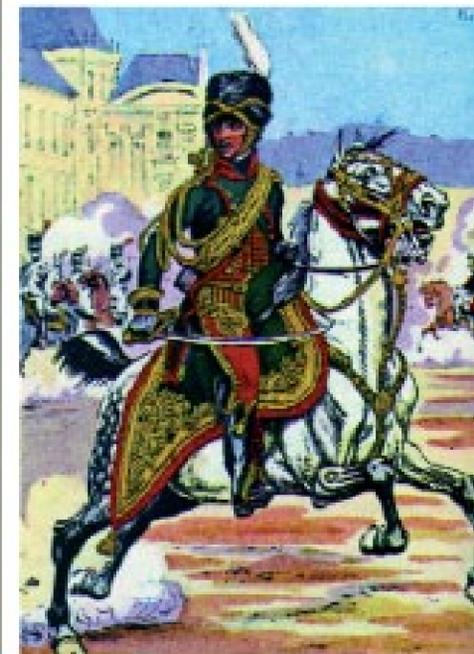
On 18th May 1798, Napoleon decided to resign from the mission assigned by the Directory -the invasion of the British Isles- and set course for Egypt to undertake another, less dangerous campaign but one that was also likely to deliver a telling blow to British pride and prestige. For the ensuing Egyptian and Syrian campaigns, Napoleon took with him a cadre of Guides à cheval. This was formed from veterans of Italy and some new recruits - this Corps would receive the title of Guides à cheval de l'Armée d'Orient. It comprised ten companies: four of horse, one auxiliary mounted company, three of foot and two auxiliary foot companies. In addition there would be sixty artillerymen, a General Staff and twenty musicians.

The Egyptian campaign ended in fiasco. While, it is true that Bonaparte

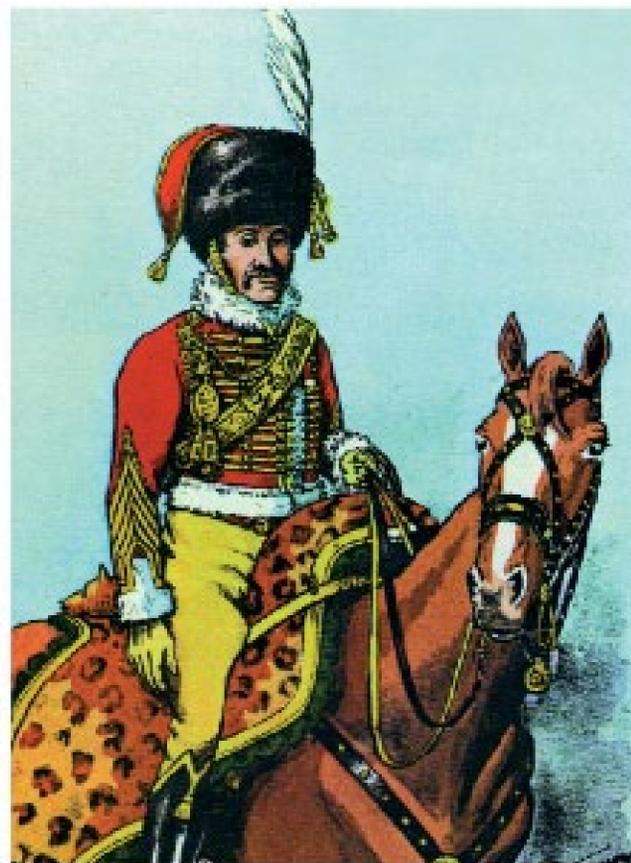


Chasseur of the Consular Guard in a uniform 'à la hussarde' in 1803. The uniform 'à la hussarde' with its distinctive feature of the fur-edged pelisse began to be worn by the Chasseurs of the Guard from the end of 1800. (Engraving by E. Dettaille, Vinkhuijzen Collection of Military Uniforms, New York Public Library).

Squadron Commander Beauharnais. The schabraque covering the saddle ridge is of green cloth with gold embroidery in an Eastern style, something that would only be allowed for this particular officer, as the other officers had one of the same cloth but without the exotic embroidery. At that time, the troopers had sheepskin schabraques. Once the pelisses were introduced the gauntlets were discarded as the fur trim prevented them from being pulled up and, therefore, the use of gloves became widespread among the Chasseurs.



won several battles against the Mamelukes and Turks, on 1st August 1798 a British naval squadron destroyed the fleet of ships he had used to transport his army to those exotic lands. A year later, Bonaparte returned to France. Because of the shortage of ships, only 180 cavalry and 125 infantry from the Guides could return with him; all were selected from the longest serving and those most devoted to the general. The remainder were left behind to seek their fate in Egypt. On 16th October, Bonaparte arrived in Paris, where his astuteness at propaganda turned his great military failure in Egypt into a failure of the government. This allowed him to orchestrate a coup d'etat against the Directory on 10th November 1799, resulting in Napoleon becoming First Consul on 15th December. Those members of the Guides à cheval that had managed to return from the sands of the Egyptian desert were summoned to Paris, where they



▲ Nicolas Dahlmann as Colonel of the Chasseurs of the Imperial Guard, 1806. (Illustration by E. L. Bucquoy. The Author's collection).

Moselle and that of the Eastern Pyrenees. In 1796, he marched to Italy with Bonaparte's troops and there he was one of those selected to make up the company of Guides of the Army of Italy, ending the campaign with the rank of second lieutenant. He joined the Guides of the l'Armee d'Orient, distinguishing himself in Salahieh -where he won a battlefield promotion to lieutenant- and Aboukir. One of the lucky ones to return to France with the commander-in-chief after the l'Armee d'Orient was abandoned in Egypt, Dahlmann was named squadron commander of the Chasseurs à cheval of the Consular Guard in October 1802. He served at Austerlitz, where, at the head of two squadrons of Chasseurs, he captured 1,500 prisoners and twenty guns. He gained the rank of colonel of Chasseurs à cheval de la Garde Impériale when the previous colonel, François-Louis Morland, was killed in that battle.

On 30th November 1806, after notably participating in the Battle of Jena and the Battle of Lopaczyn, the Emperor promoted him to Général-de-brigade, an appointment that forced him to

leave the Chasseurs à cheval de la Garde Impériale.

At the Battle of Eylau, 8th February 1807, he requested the honour of being united with his old regiment for a charge. He died, as he would have wanted, next to his old comrades in arms, a large-calibre cannon ball destroying his left hip.

Frédéric Auguste Beurmann (1777-1815)

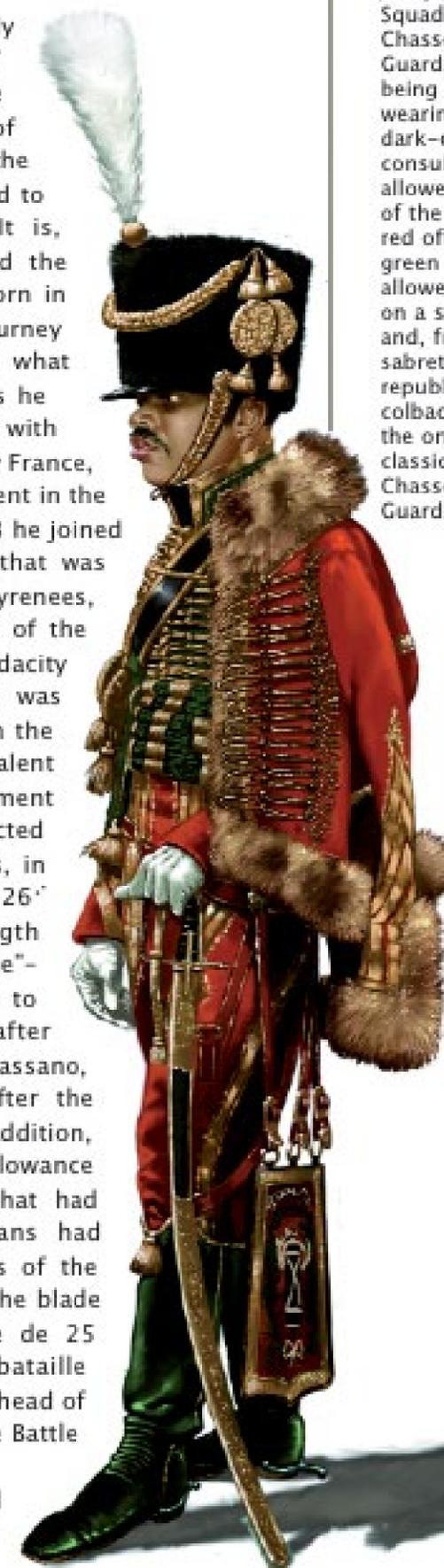
Beurmann began his military career as a simple soldier a few years before the French Revolution. In 1792, he was already a second lieutenant and, the following year, an aide-de-camp to General Kléber. In 1795, he joined the Chasseurs à cheval as a first lieutenant and, in 1798, became an aide-de-camp to General Mortier. In November 1800, he was transferred to the Chasseurs à cheval of the Consular Guard where he would become a squadron commander in 1802. He became prominent at the Battle of Austerlitz, refusing to leave the battlefield in spite of having received two bayonet thrusts that caused him to lose a considerable amount of blood. After convalescing, he left the Chasseurs to be promoted to colonel and took over command of the 17th Dragoons.

On 13th April 1815 he committed suicide with a shot to the head. With Napoleon's return to France, Beurmann could not face the shame of meeting Napoleon because of his supposed treason of accepting the title of Chevalier of the Meritorious Military Service Order from Louis XVIII.

Joseph Domingue "Hercule" (1761-1820)

The ideals of equality and the, hopefully proposed Declaration of the Rights of Man by the philosophers of the Revolution also arrived in the islands of the Caribbean, principally Haiti, where the numerous black slave population decided to fight for its much-desired freedom. It is, perhaps, this situation that precipitated the escape of a slave, Joseph Domingue, born in Havana in 1761, and his subsequent journey to Bordeaux. It is not known under what circumstances or what eventful journeys he took for such a distance. What is known with certainty is that, in the new Revolutionary France, skin color was no impediment to enlistment in the Infantry regiment of Champagne. In 1793 he joined the 22nd Chasseurs à cheval regiment that was integrated into the Army of the Eastern Pyrenees, formed to fight the Spanish in the War of the Convention. Domingue demonstrated audacity and valour in this campaign and he was promoted to *maréchal-des-logis* that, in the French cavalry of the time, was the equivalent of sergeant. He participated with his regiment in the first Italian campaign and was selected by Captain Bessières to join the Guides, in which he was promoted lieutenant on 26th October 1796. His uncommon strength -which earned him the nickname "Hercule"- and his bravery in the battle called him to the attention of Bonaparte who, after witnessing his heroic performance at Bassano, promoted him lieutenant and then, after the charge he led at Arcole, to captain. In addition, he was awarded a substantial financial allowance and a Sabre of Honour - the prize that had replaced medals, which the republicans had abolished considering them decorations of the Old Regime - with a motto recorded in the blade that said: "Pour avoir renversé, à tête de 25 guides, un colonne autrichienne à bataille d'Arcole" ("For forcing the retreat, at the head of 25 Guides, of an Austrian Column at the Battle of Arcole").

Hercules, despite his skin color and although practically illiterate, reached the



Joseph Domingue 'Hercules', Squadron Commander of the Chasseurs of the Consular Guard, 1801. In spite of being an officer, he is shown wearing a pelisse edged with dark-coloured fur; during the consular period he was allowed to wear this instead of the usual white. He wears red officer's trousers and green boots, another quirk allowed at that time. He leans on a sabre à la hongroise and, from his belt, hangs a sabretache, decorated with republican motifs. The colback is the peaked model, the one used prior to the classic model of the Chasseurs of the Imperial Guard.



▲ Model 1786 light cavalry carbine. From 1803, this weapon could be fitted with a bayonet. The hoop on the rear served to hold the weapon on a hook on the bandolier. (Illustration by D. A. C.).

▼ Cavalry Pistols. From the end of the Consular period to the close of the Empire, both AN IX and AN XIII models were used. 80,000 of the first model and over 300,000 of the second were manufactured. (Illustration by D. A. C.).



Basically, the sabretache used during the Empire period had a green cloth background edged with aurore wool lace, woven in a wavy pattern. In the centre was the Imperial mantle surmounted by a crown. On the mantle was an eagle, while behind the mantle were light green, crimson and sky blue guidons.

The early models had the Imperial crown, the mantle, the eagle and the guidons cut from cloth and sewn to the face of the green cloth. Aurore cloth covered the edges of these items. The pikes, cravats, fringes, staffs and the butts of the pikes were embroidered in colored wools. The crown was basically yellow, with a crimson interior. The crown trefoil leaf designs were light green edged with gold-yellow cord. The base of the crown, which was also yellow edged gold-yellow, contained a number of ovals, representing jewels, surrounded by silver "pearls".

The central oval was crimson, flanked by light green ovals, while the two half-ovals at the edges, were again crimson. The mantle itself was crimson, lined white. Upon the white lining appeared black ermine markings. The edges of the mantle were bordered by aurore lace that, in turn, was edged with aurore cords, and decorated with aurore stitching. The guidons appearing at the top edges of the mantle were, from the crown outwards; light green, crimson and sky-blue. The pike-heads, staffs and fringes were aurore, while the cravats at the top of the staffs were white with aurore fringes. The ribbon crossing the sky-blue guidon was aurore. At the bottom of the mantle, the staffs were embroidered to correspond to the color of the guidons, and the butts were aurore. In the centre of the mantle was an Imperial eagle, embroidered in yellow wool and shaded with brown wools. On the inside of the aurore edging lace was a soutache of aurore. Later it would appear, only the white of the cloak was of cloth. All the remaining ornamentation was embroidered in colored wools, outlined by aurore cords, and the embroidered eagle was replaced by a brass stamping. The model in

use at the close of the Empire period was identical to that described but the surrounding stripe had lost the soutache. The sabretache was carried on straps 34 mm wide.

Except for parades and other special occasions, a black-varnished linen sheath or cover known as a "couvre-sabretache" protected this elaborate, fragile accessory. This cover was, at first, plain but, by 1812, was decorated with a yellow painted crowned eagle. There also exists the possibility that the Chasseurs used a "service" sabretache of plain black leather, decorated with a brass crowned eagle, similar to that issued to the Young Guard squadrons.

ARMAMENT

Chasseurs à cheval de la Garde sabre

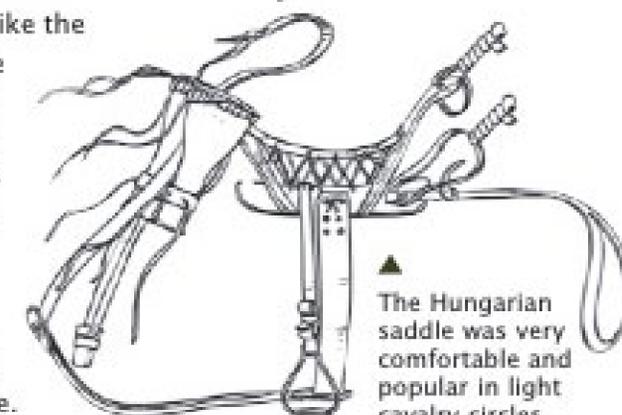
In 1800, Napoleon felt that a distinguished unit, like the Chasseurs à cheval of the Consular, should be equipped with their own model sabre. The Guides Model 1786, used in Italy and Egypt, was the "à l'allemande" light cavalry sabre, but it was now imperative to equip to the Guard elite horsemen with a magnificent weapon that would be given the title of "Sabre des Chasseurs à cheval de la Garde des Consuls 1e modèle 1800-1803". This sabre had the inscription "Manuf^{re} de Klingenthal" inscribed on the blade.

This was the only piece made by the prestigious Alsatian factory and supplied to the French army from the mid XVII century and was the finest

sabre blade. The remainder of the troops had s a b r e s manufactured at



▲ Sheepskin schabraque, with dogtooth edging, used by the troopers of the Chasseurs à Cheval regiment of the Consular Guard.



▲ The Hungarian saddle was very comfortable and popular in light cavalry circles. This was mainly due to its ease of repair, as it was made from a large piece of leather.



▲ Cloth schabraque, used by the troopers of the Chasseurs-à-Cheval regiment of the Imperial Guard with corner.

▼ The English saddle, made from a single piece of leather.

