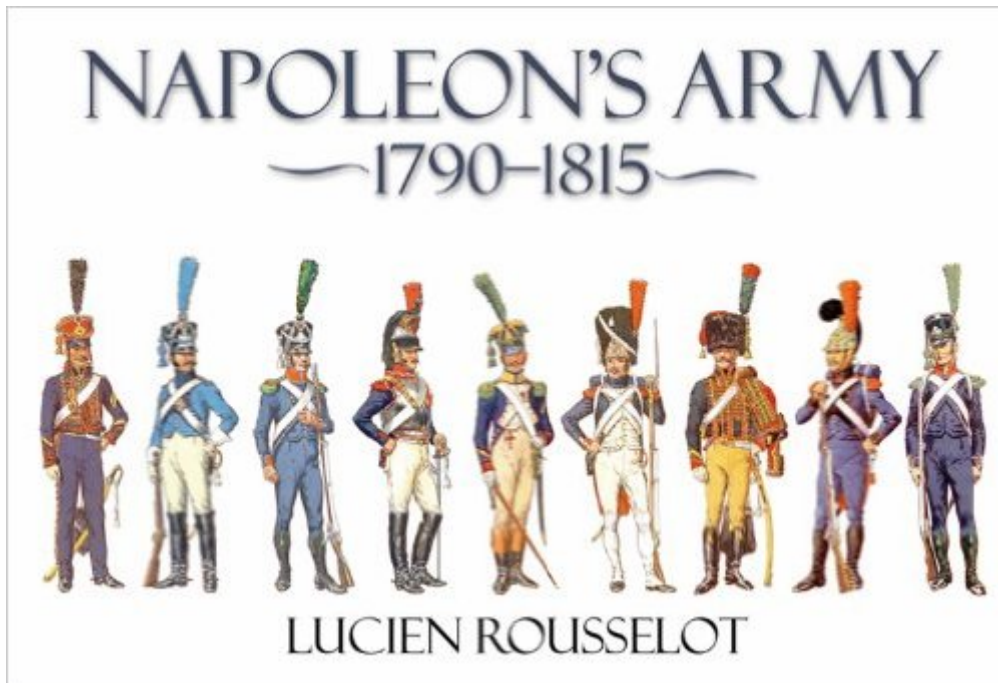


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Napoleon's Army: 1790-1815



Synopsis

Lucien Rousselot is one of the world's most important military artists, having played an integral role in establishing uniformology as a true science. He was born in France at a time when the 1871 military defeat by Prussia was still very present in the psyche of the French people. After all, it had not been long since the French army under Napoleon I had not only amazed the world, but had stood victoriously astride the whole of Europe. Indeed, triumphant armies guided by the military genius of Bonaparte had marched down the avenues of Paris to the delight of enormous crowds. It is no surprise, therefore, that the talented young Rousselot decided to devote much of his life to recreating the martial splendor of France's greatest age. The Napoleonic period offered innumerable opportunities for his skills, as uniforms varied widely in style and color, as befitted an age when individual glory still counted for much on Europe's battlefields. Rousselot received his artistic training at the renowned School of Decorative Arts in Paris while at the same time immersing himself in the study of the classic military illustrators. His immense talent was equaled only by his innate modesty and intense commitment to his work. This level of dedication ultimately resulted in the marvelous watercolors and exacting narrative presented in this publication. Aside from a now-rare work published in France costing many hundreds of dollars, Napoleon's Army: 1790-1815 is the only complete collection of Rousselot's life's work on the period, here presented admirably yet affordably for the English-speaking public. REVIEWS - written by the most renowned expert on the uniforms and history of the Napoleonic Era - it was like finding the Holy Grail - The color prints are exquisite in beautiful color and in perfect registration. The descriptions of each article of clothing for every soldier and his equipment are detailed in wonderful English - I would recommend this book very highly not just for figure painters as myself, but as a wonderful history of a very special time in the past. - PMS, 11/16/2010 - marvelous illustrations of uniforms, equipment and weapons - the only complete collection of Rousselot's legacy on this period - History buffs and military hobbyists will be left dazed and amazed by this superb and invaluable book. - Toy Soldier and Model Figure, 09/2011

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Customer Reviews

As noted in other reviews, Rousselot's illustrations and text are the foremost treatment of First Empire uniforms, bar none and by a considerable margin. His text is masterful in breadth and depth and his illustrations place him more in the company of Meissonier than with later, lesser uniform illustrators. Andrea Press seems to have been constrained to produce the entire collection for an accessible price. The plates are scaled far down and the colors don't seem to match the original. It's still an invaluable resource and the translation is surprisingly graceful, but there's very little of the pure guilty pleasure of looking at the plates that one gets from the standalones or even from the Elite Cavalry volume. I'd have preferred to have a series of books, each covering one or two of the chapters of the existing work, with larger and better-reproduced plates. Still, it's a huge step forward to have Rousselot's central work in (relatively) wide circulation again.

The publisher made all efforts to prevent this book from being sold plate by plate somewhere on Ebay. I am not sure if that was part of his publishing or licensing agreement, but the publisher have succeeded. First, the book is produced in a LANDSCAPE format. Second, the reproduction of colored drawings is abyssal. If you have never seen Rousselot's watercolors you would've thought that he was a mediocre painter. Let me repeat this again: The reproduction of Rousselot's watercolors is so bad, it must be intentional. The colors are distorted and cheap (poor approximation of originals) they are also overlapping and have no defined edge. Faces are blurry, smudged spots. This book gives you neither glorious illustrations nor acceptable book format. I can see how it could be useful to those who are looking into a reference source for their modeling hobby, but for the book collectors this volume is a waste of time and money. To become what it should have been in a first place, this book should be 1.5 times larger, have a normal, rectangular book format, have precise 1:1, high-quality color plates of the original drawings and not low resolution tiny prints. If you are looking for an eye-candy with some useful info to boot, you should not consider this volume.

Lucien Rousselot is the Gold Standard for the French Army of Napoleon. This volume is the collected works of his folio sized prints. The text is woven into the color drawings in a way that supports the figures and is more easily accessed than the separate sheets of explanations in the originals. The originals have a real color vitality from the ink used at that time. Later reprints lost this and some were quite atrocious. The only down side to the book is that the page size is considerably smaller than the originals so the drawings are reduced in scale. This is not an insurmountable issue and to have all the plates, normally retailing at \$10 each, for a fraction of the cost is well worth the reduction in size. If you only have room for one reference on French Napoleonic uniforms - this is it.

This is a quibble. The advert that accompanied the book gave me the impression that what was coming was some sort of encyclopedia of Rousselot's entire output. This is a new English reprint of Rousselot's groundbreaking 1943 analytic presentation of all the uniforms of the Grande Armée. Since it was the middle of WWII, and France was an occupied country, the printing and distribution of the work was small. Given time and many, many more pieces of art and study Rousselot's name as premier in his field into the 1980's was secure. The illustrations are wonderful in their detail and color, but it is the accompanying text that sets this work apart. 30 years of study prior to preparing this work assured Rousselot was master of his subject. Get this book. It's a steal with the current discount... (Feb 2013 Jumpin' horney-toads!! Obviously the edition has run out and that "get the bargain while you can" statement no longer applies. Ouch!)

Really great book.

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