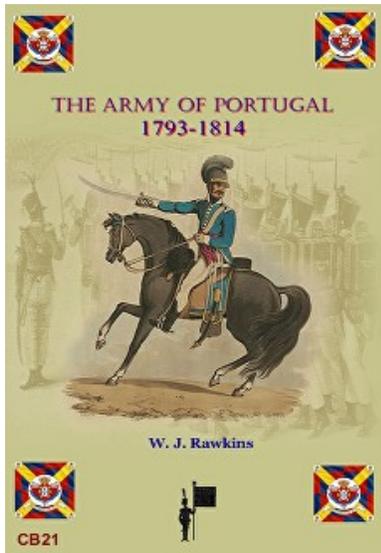


## The Napoleon Series Reviews

Rawkins, W.J. *The Army of Portugal 1793 – 1814*. History Bookman, 2017. E-Book. 234 pages. £4



*The Army of Portugal* is the 22<sup>nd</sup> book in William Rawkins' [Armies and Uniforms of the Napoleonic Wars](#). These books cover a large number of countries, from major powers such as [The Austrian-Hugarian Army 1792 - 1814](#), to minor countries like [The Royal Saxon Army 1792 – 1814](#). There are also books on the foreign regiments in the French Army, such as [Foreign Regiments in French Service 1795 – 1814](#) [the Swiss Regiments](#). All use the same general format. There is a section on the history of the country's participation in the Napoleonic Wars, the organization of its army and its regiments / units, and the uniforms worn by them.

The strength of these books lies in their descriptions of the uniforms. They do not cover just the basic uniforms for a given year, but track it and all of its changes from 1792 to 1814. Furthermore, the books also tell of the equipment and weapons they carried. They do this not just for the privates, but also for the non-commissioned officers, the musicians, and the officers of all ranks. The book usually has a section devoted to army's flags.

*The Army of Portugal 1793 – 1814* follows this formula. Its "Table of Contents" does a good job of describing what is in the book:

Preface

Precursor to the Peninsular War 1793-1807

The Portuguese Army and the Beresford Reforms

Infantaria da Linha

Legiao De Tropas Ligeras 1796-1807

Legião Lusianiana Leal 1808-1811

Caçadores de Batalhões 1809-1814

Divisão De Voluntários Reais 1815

Regimento de Milícia 1793-1814

The Ordenanza

Voluntários

Companhia de Eclesiaticos do Porto 1808-1809

Regimento de Voluntários do Porto 1808-1809

Voluntários do Comércio Real de Porto 1810-1814

Voluntários Real de Milícias a Cavallo 1807-1808

Voluntários Real de Milícias a Pe 1807-1808

Voluntários do Comércio Real de Lisboa 1808-1814

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Voluntários a Cavallo De Mello 1809-1810  
 Corpo de Privilegiados de Malta 1808-1809  
 Corpo Academico Militar de Coimbra 1808-1810      Legião Transtagana  
 1808-180  
 Infantry Flags of the Portuguese Army  
 Regimentos de Cavalaria  
 The Cavalry Standards  
 Regimento De Artilharia 1793-1814  
 Artilheiros-Condutores 1812-1814  
 Arsenale Reale Dell'esercito 1793-1814 Companhia Pe De Castello 1793-1799  
 Companhia Guarniçoes Fixas 1800-1812)  
 Corpo de Veteranos 1812-1814  
 Estado Mayor de Praza 1793-1814  
 Batalhão Reformados 1808-1814  
 Real Corpo de Engenheiros 1793-1814  
 Comphana de Artifices/ Batalhão de Artifices 1803-1814  
 Corpo Telegraphico 1809-1814  
 General Officers and Staff 1793-1814  
 Corpo de Guias Montados 1808-1814  
 Vivares do Exercito, Thesourarias do Exercito, Commissariado  
 Serviços Médicos do Exército 1793-1814 Policia do Exercito 1806-1814  
 Military Academies  
 Garda Real da Policia 1801-1814  
 Primero Piano do Exercito 1800-1814 Archeiro do Guarda Real 1793-1814  
 The Off-Shore & Colonial Garrisons  
 Notes on Research and Sources

So at this point you might be telling yourself that it is a nice Table of Contents but it does not really tell me how many pages are on each topic. (The original Table of Contents does give the pages, but I had a problem copying it from the pdf.) *The Army of Portugal 1793 – 1814* has 234 pages. The sections on the various infantry units cover 112 pages! Forty-two of those pages are about the line infantry regiments and 15 pages on the *caçadores* battalions. Much of the Portuguese Army was militia and other part-time volunteer units. The book has another 22 pages on their organization and the uniforms they wore or most cases did not wear. The cavalry and artillery, plus the many support units are also included.

As I said in the beginning the real draw of these books are their uniforms studies. Most of *The Army of Portugal 1793 – 1814* is about the uniforms. To show the detail Mr. Rawkins gives, here is an example of its description of the headgear worn by the cavalry:

“The dress regulations of 1806 specified that all cavalry regiments should wear a black leather helmet with a black leather turban around the base edged with narrow brass strips. The front of the turban was to be decorated with an oval brass badge either embossed with the royal arms, as for the infantry, or a plain badge stamped with the regimental number. The crown of the helmet was strengthened with an inverted V of brass stiffener straps. Two distinctive styles of helmet were in use

between 1806 and 1810 and which exact style was worn by individual regiments has been a subject of debate by students of military uniforms. Most modern researchers now believe that the confusion has arisen because of the general neglect that the cavalry received from the general command resulting in poor funding and most adjutants of cavalry regiments being left to arrange the finishing off of uniform and equipment items locally leading to deviations from the official patterns provided and cost cutting by the regiments. Both style of helmet appear to have been based on a boiled black leather cap from the British pattern used for the manufacture of the Tarleton helmet.”

“The first style of helmet was similar to that prescribed for the British heavy cavalry with a wooden crest surmounted by a black wool raupe, or caterpillar crest. The helmet had a black leather peak and rear visor and brass chinscales with a plain round boss just forward of which was a small brass socket on the left side of the helmet to hold the tall red plume. This style of helmet is believed to have been used by the 1o Regiment Cavalaria ‘Alcantara’, 4o Regiment Cavalaria ‘Mecklenburg’, 5o Regiment Cavalaria ‘Evora’ and possibly 7o Regiment Cavalaria ‘Lisboa’ at least during the period 1808-1810 and may have been remodelled from existing pre-1806 helmets.”

“The second and more common pattern of helmet after 1808 was very similar in appearance but lacked the wooden combe and was supposed to be crowned with a ‘black hair crest’. In fact the rolled horsehair crests were quickly abandoned as they were prone to disintegrate if they got wet or were allowed to dry out and were replaced in most regiment with a black wool raupe which was more robust. The helmets were decorated with the national cockade and a tall red plume on the left side above the chinscale boss and in 1809 the older pattern chinscales appear to have been replaced with British manufactured items.”

“The uniforms of the cavalry regiments highlight the difference between the paper regulations and the actual garments in use. It could take up to a year for regiments to have received issues of the new regulation garments especially if they were ordered by the adjutants to be manufactured locally. In reality, the cavalry probably only received the new dress regulations in 1806 and would still have been wearing their old uniforms and bicorn hats in 1807 when disbanded by Junot, perhaps only a few companies and the regimental officers having moved towards conforming to the new dress regulations. The returns for December 1808 when the regiments were recalled show that only five regiments had stores of uniforms and could only dress half their recruits. There is some indication that those regiments forced to remain in garrison because of the lack of horses or recruits had their quartermaster’s stores appropriated to supply those regiments in the field.”

“In 1811 the cavalry finally began to receive some of the uniforms and equipment being sent as part of the subvention agreement from Britain. The 5o Regiment Cavalaria ‘Evora’ and the 8o Regiment Cavalaria ‘Elvas’ were issued in December 1810 with new British manufactured bell-topped shakos with black leather trim to the upper edge and a narrow black leather tightener strap at the base with a small

brass buckle at the rear. The peak was black leather and the chinscales were brass. The front of the shako was decorated with the regimental number in brass, and the red and blue national cockade was worn at the upper edge of the shako surmounted by a short red plume. By late 1812 or early 1813 all regiments in the field had received the British shako and issues of new shakos had been made to the remaining regiments by the end of 1814.”

“Nothing has been discovered about that fatigue caps issued as part of the 1806 regulations but British style ‘watering caps’ were issued in 1809 to some regiments and all regiments had received new fatigue caps by the end of 1811. The cap was of the ‘Tam-O-Shanter’ style with a dark blue crown and a regimental coloured headband and pompom. Later caps are often depicted with the regimental number embroidered on the headband.”

Mr. Rawkins believes that a picture is worth a thousand words and illustrated the above passage with his own artwork.



Most books on the Portuguese Army only cover its army which was located in Europe. Yet Portugal had overseas colonies, such as Portugal, Angola, and the Azores. *The Army of Portugal 1793 – 1814* does not neglect these forgotten soldiers. There are sections on all of their colonies and the soldiers who were stationed there. The book includes such esoteric units as the Angolan Cavalry Squadron, the Madeira Militia, and the Mozambique Sepoy Company.

As with the other books in this series *The Army of Portugal* is lavishly illustrated with 136 color and 11 black and white plates. Many of these plates are by such artists as A. Arthur, Louis Beaufort, William Bradford, Jean-Baptiste Debret, Rene North, Carlos Ribeiro, and Eric Karlsen-Smythe. Many of the images are contemporary.

*The Army of Portugal* is a superb resource whether you are looking for information on the history of the Portuguese or their uniforms. Wargamers and miniature figure painters will find it especially valuable. Highly recommended.

Placed on the Napoleon Series: March 2018

Reviewed by [Robert Burnham](#)