

# Prussian Line Infantry 1866

## A Painting Guide



### ORGANISATION, TACTICS & WEAPONRY

These notes are intended to act as a guide when painting a range of 25 mm Prussian Line Infantry.

The Prussian Line Infantry performed extremely well during the campaign, surprising contemporary commentators with their élan and skill. The intensive peacetime training all recruits received, with an emphasis on shooting practice and advanced tactical manoeuvres had a beneficial effect on their battlefield performance. The army was recruited by universal conscription, which caused the rank and file to possess above average levels of literacy and initiative.

The infantry regiment consisted of three battalions, although on the battlefields of 1866 the half-battalion was frequently the unit of manoeuvre. Each battalion consisted of 18 officers, two surgeons, one paymaster, one quartermaster and 1002 NCOs and privates. The standard battlefield formation, the half-battalion, manoeuvring in two 10 deep company columns. Strong screens of skirmishes were pushed out ahead of the main body of the unit. During 1866 the company columns were often used to feed troops into the skirmish line. The formation was notable for its flexibility and rapidity across the battlefield, although it could become entangled with neighbouring formations.

The men were armed with the famous Dreyse breech-loading 'needle gun'. This had a devastating rapidity of fire -five aimed or eight unaimed rounds per minute. Its drawback was a low muzzle velocity, which caused it to have a relatively short range of about 500 yards. It was lethal at between 135 and 250 yards. At distances beyond 450 yards men could be hit several times and be unfortunate to sustain more than a bruise.

### UNIFORMS

**Boots** - black.

**Trousers** - dark grey with thin red seam.

**Coat** - dark blue with red piping down front of coat and on coat tail. Brass buttons (except for Füsilier Regiment Nr 40, who had white metal). **Cuffs** - red. Upright section of the cuff was piped in coat colour, where appropriate. Regiments in I, III, V and VII corps had white piping. Regiments from all

other corps had no piping on the cuff. Collar - dark blue with large red flashes. **Shoulder straps** - varied according to which corps the regiment belonged to. Brass buttons. Corps distinctions as follows: I & II Corps - white; III & IV Corps - red; V & VI Corps - yellow; VII & VIII Corps - Sky blue.

**Musician's wings** - red and white stripes.

**Officers' distinctions - Sash** - silver with dark blue flecks. **Shoulder straps** - regimental colour piped gold or silver depending on the button colour.

**Buttons** - gold or silver depending on regimental button colour (brass/white metal). **Horse furniture** - dark blue shabraque edged in gold or silver, depending on the regiment's button colour, with monogram in corner. Reins and pistol holsters were mid-brown with brass accoutrements.



Monogram for officers' shabraque

#### HEADGEAR

**Pickelhaube** - black leather with brass fittings, including chin scales. Füsilier Regiment Nr 40 had a silver eagle plate. The national cockade (white-black) was worn on the right-hand side. This is visible in the picture overleaf.

**Feldmütz (forage cap)** - dark blue crown with red piping and band. The national cockade (black-white-black) was worn on the front of the cap. The officers cap identical save that it had a black leather peak.

#### PERSONAL EQUIPMENT & WEAPONS

**Rifle** - wooden stock stained light brown. Highly polished gunmetal barrel, breech etc. Brass bands and trigger/trigger guard. Sling light brown.

**Officers' sword & scabbard** - polished steel blade with brass guard and brass/black grip. Scabbard was black with brass fittings for 1st and 2nd battalions of non-Füsilier regiments; polished steel for Füsilier (3rd) battalions of non-Füsilier regiments, and all battalions of Füsilier regiments. Sword knot was silver & black.

**Officers' equipment** - black waist belt and pistol holster. Black, dark or mid-brown binoculars case. Black leather backpack with black or white straps to match leather harness colour of the battalion.

**Ensign's equipment/flagpoles etc** - black oilskin cover wrapped over the right shoulder in the form of a belt. Just below waist a brass plate bearing an Iron Cross (black edged silver). Flagpole was silver with a brass or gold finial which bore an Iron Cross, again black edged silver. On top of the pole would be tied the regiment's honour ribbons or battle honours. All ribbons were black silk edged silver.

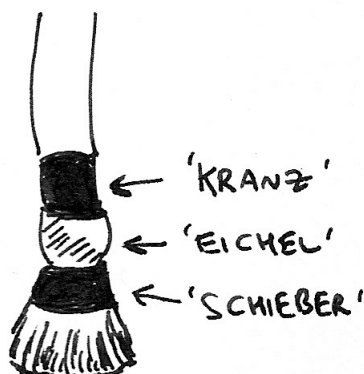
**Drum** - brass centre shell. Red upper and lower bands with white triangles. On the upper band these were point upwards; on the lower band, point downwards. White skin. Black drumsticks tipped with brass at non-playing end. Drum attached to waist belt by brass holder.

**Bugle** - brass with red and white cords. Fife case (right hip) black leather with brass fittings.

**Canteen** - black felt or leather with black strap. Bung could be dull silver or dark brown.

**Side-arm** - brass grip. Carried in a black leather scabbard tipped in brass. A belt crossing just below the crossbar attached scabbard to the waist belt. This was of the same colour as the rest of the harness belt (see below). Wrapped around the grip and hanging down was a white sword knot. At the end of this hung a 'troddel' or coloured bar. This was used to distinguish the battalions and companies within the regiment. It was coloured as follows:

<i>Battalion</i>	<i>Company</i>	<i>'Kranz'</i>	<i>'Eichel'</i>	<i>'Schieber'</i>
I	1	White	White	White
I	2	Red	White	Red
I	3	Yellow	White	Yellow
I	4	Sky blue	White	Sky blue
II	5	White	Red	White
II	6	Red	Red	Red
II	7	Yellow	Red	Yellow
II	8	Sky blue	Red	Sky blue
III	9	White	Yellow	White
III	10	Red	Yellow	Red
III	11	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
III	12	Sky blue	Yellow	Sky blue



**Backpack** - mid-brown fur.

**Bread bag and belt** - worn on the right hip, this was of white canvas with two white metal buttons.

**Harness belts** - this harness consisted of the waist belt and under-and overarm straps holding backpack in place. Figures in the light kit will only be wearing the waist belt. Belt buckle

was brass. Belts coloured as follows: **Black** - Füsilier (or 3rd) battalions of all infantry regiments, and all battalions of regiments numbered 33-40 (these were Füsilier regiments). **White** - first and second battalions of all infantry regiments, except for regiment numbers 33-40.

**Cartridge boxes** - black, attached to the waist belt by brass clip.

**Blanket** - dark grey. Tied by piece of leather of the same colour as the harness belts.

**Mess tin** - polished white metal attached by black leather straps to the backpack or blanket roll.

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