

# Officers' Pistols of Napoleon's Consular and Imperial Guard: 1799-1815

By Dean Taylor

Napoleon Bonaparte is regarded as one of the world's great military commanders. One of his great strengths (and perhaps his great weakness as well) was his phenomenal attention to detail. He desired that the officers of his Guard be armed, not only with functional pistols, but with pistols of great aesthetic merit as well. Many of these pistols were specifically designed for the Guard by the master gunsmith, Nicolas-Noël Boutet (1761-1833), *Directeur-Artiste de la manufacture de Versailles* (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Nicolas-Noël Boutet—Director Manufacture D'Armes de Versailles (1761-1833).

This paper will look at the structure of Napoleon's Guard and how its officer class operated using pistols for personal defense during command. Specific flintlock pistols both regulation and private purchase, were used by officers. Robert E. Brooker in his talk given to the Canadian Guild of Historical Arms Collectors at Toronto in 1992 (on French military pistols 1600-1892) stated that: "Officers generally provided their own pistols, sometimes a civilian pattern or often a civil gunsmith produced an enhanced version of a 'troop pattern.' Boutet produced a special enhanced version of the Model 9 pistol for officers, but it is not known for what service branch it was designed.

Since its basic form is of the model year 9, which was issued to the cavalry of the Guard, this special Boutet design



could have been used by senior officers of Napoleon's Chasseurs A Cheval who escorted him during his campaigns. This model could apply to the Grenadiers A Cheval, the Gendarmes D' Ordonnance, or any other guard cavalry unit; however, most experts do not know. It is the only example I have identified and none other has come to light.

Mr. Brooker further states that government issue pistols were paid for by reimbursing the regimental Colonel who was authorized to acquire them or contract directly with gunmakers or individuals. One such gunmaker was Nicolas Boutet, Director of Arms Manufacturing at Versailles, who produced them with characteristics relating to specific officer ranks within the Imperial Guard. This Boutet reference is entirely my observation and conclusion relative to some unusual variations which have come to light. I quote Haythornthwaite:

"Most cavalry men carried one or two pistols in their holsters at the front of the saddle, though their effectiveness in combat was virtually nil; in general the pistol was more of an encumbrance than an asset especially if it required a different caliber of ammunition from the carbine."

Hego goes on to say that the pistol's range in combat was very limited; at close range, the sword was more effective. Haythornthwaite relates the reflection of an experienced cavalry officer's statement: "We never saw a pistol made use of except to shoot a glandered horse." One can speculate why these deluxe officer's pistols have so many advanced

**FIRST REPUBLIC**  
(Result of the French Revolution)

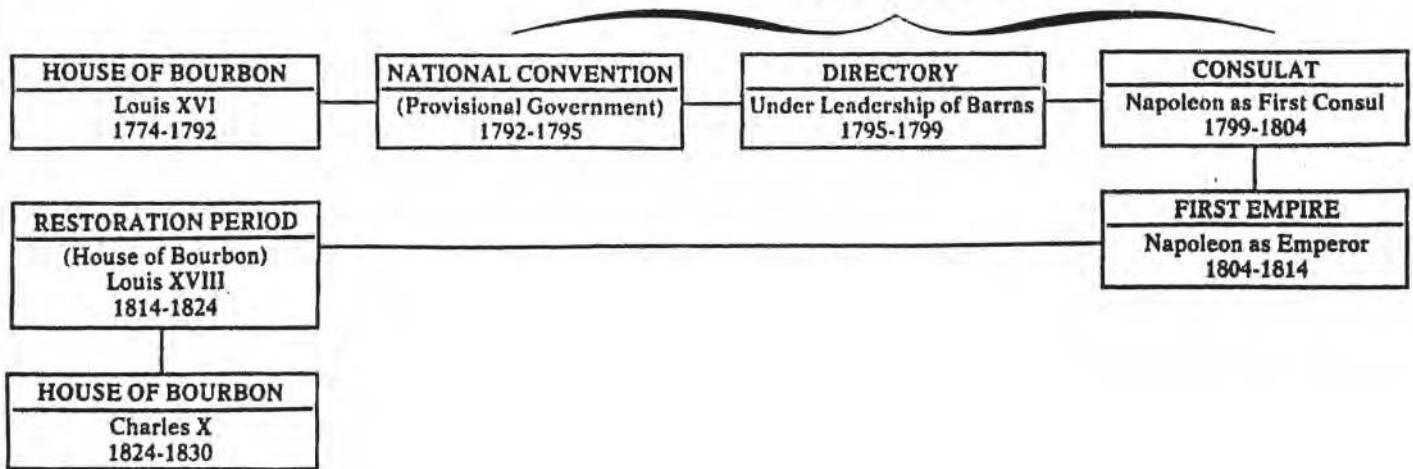


Figure 2. This chart demonstrates the structure of the various French governments which influenced Boutet's operations and production.

shooting features. Features such as poly-groove rifling, adjustable rear sights, and triggers would suggest an accurate and most serious killing intent. Before 1805, many models were designated by a new Republican calendar which was proclaimed in Sept. 1792 and decreed November 1793. On November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1793 a decree was announced by the government to adopt a new Republican calendar. This new calendar replaced the Gregorian calendar. Its beginning was September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1792, the Proclamation of the Republic.

- AN II—Sept. 22, 1793—94
- AN III—Sept. 22, 1794—95
- AN IV—Sept. 23, 1795—96
- AN V—Sept. 22, 1796—97
- AN VI—Sept. 22, 1797—98
- AN VII—Sept. 22, 1798—99
- AN VIII—Sept. 23, 1799—1800
- AN IX—Sept. 23, 1800—01
- AN X—Sept. 23, 1801—02
- AN XI—Sept. 23, 1802—03
- AN XII—Sept. 24, 1803—04
- AN XIII—Sept. 23, 1804—05
- AN XIV—Sept. 23, 1805—Dec. 22, 1805

At the end of this period, the Gregorian calendar by decree was restored on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1805.

Boutet's production spanned several years and interacted with seven governments. Figure 2 shows the extent of his design influence on French gunmaking.

It is interesting to note that Nicolas' father, Noel Boutet, worked for King Louis XVI designing and fabricating pistols (Figure 3) for his horse soldiers (Chevau-Legers de la Maison du Roi).

Another interesting pair of pistols (Figure 4) turned up in the 1970's sold by California dealer, Arthur Yates, which

could possibly be one of Noel Boutet's early fabrications (circa 1780). This is an assumption on my part based on intuitive relationships and I await new input from other scholars to add information to my conclusions.

While Napoleon (Figure 5) was in campaign in Egypt 1798 immediately after having defeated the Mamelukes at the "Battle of the Pyramids", he received news that the current government (The Directory) was in a troubling political situation. He promptly returned to France and along with Abbe Sieyes, Talleyrand and Fouché, he overthrew the Directory and became elected First Consul.

Napoleon, being impressed with Nicolas Boutet's earlier work and craftsmanship, in 1800 granted to him an eighteen year concession at Versailles. Thus began Boutet's responsibility to provide officer's pistols for the Consular Guard (Figure 6).

Boutet produced many variations of muskets and musketoons during this Consular period. This, however, is outside of the focus for this talk and could be covered in another talk for the Society in the future. The officers of the Consular Guard required pistols (Figure 7) for the belt and horse saddle holsters.

In 1795, the Minister of War, Du Bayet, ordered special weapons (Figures 8 and 9) for the guards and for presentation to men distinguished on the battle field. These were initially muskets and musketoons but I believe some specific pistols were fabricated by Boutet for this same function of presentation. These were variations of the basic regulation pattern having silver furniture instead of brass. The overall form was lightened being less bulky and obtained the addition of checkering on the grip as well as ornamental detail on the front barrel band and butt; thus an overall elegance for a military pistol was achieved. This was truly a pistol sidearm for an officer.

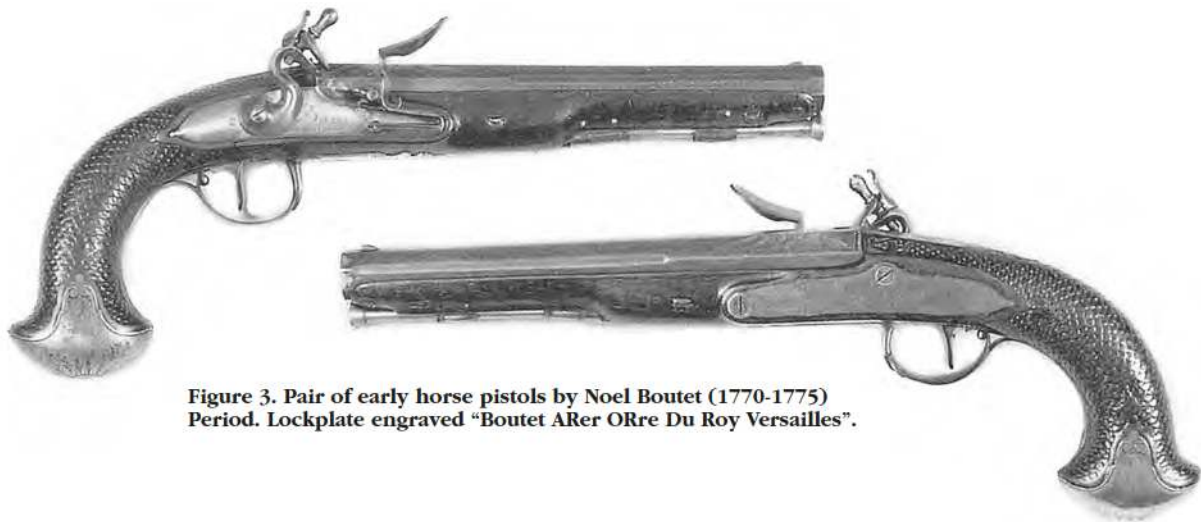


Figure 3. Pair of early horse pistols by Noel Boutet (1770-1775) Period. Lockplate engraved "Boutet ARer ORre Du Roy Versailles".



Figure 4. A possible early pair of Officer's horse pistols made by Noel Boutet (1728-1780) "Arquebusier Des Cheveau-Legers (Versailles)".



Figure 5. "Bonaparte as First Consul" by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres 1804, Musee Des Beaux Arts.



Figure 8. Pair of Model AN IX's by Boutet—"Mre Nle a Versailles" brass mounted, Musee de L'Emperi, Salon-de-Provence, Brunon collection Bob Brooker, photo, Archives.

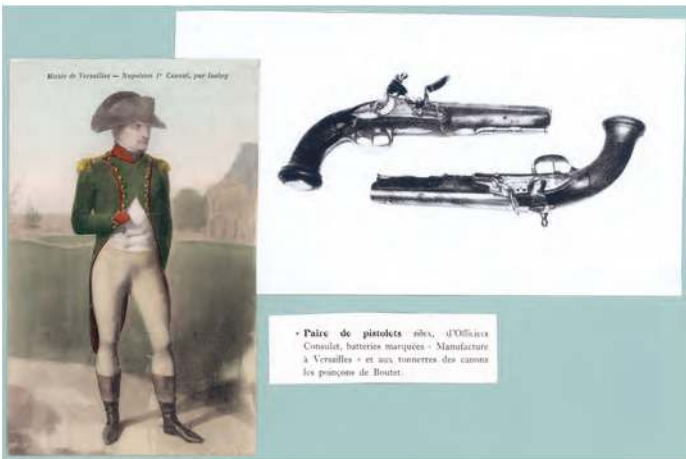


Figure 6. Napoleon 1st Consul with Versailles Consular Dragoon, officer's models circa 1800 (by Isabey).



Figure 7. Boutet Versailles belt pistol—private purchase, early Consulate Period. Author's collection.



Figure 9. Special silver mounted pair of special AN IX horse holster pistols by Boutet—"MANUfre Nle a Versailles", Les Arquebusiers de France No. 34, 1969.

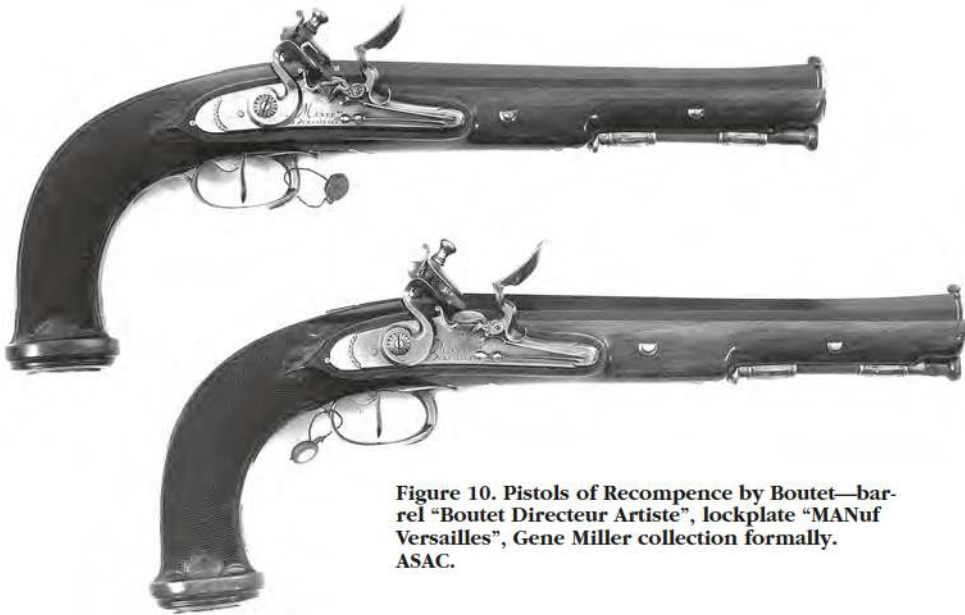


Figure 10. Pistols of Recompence by Boutet—barrel “Boutet Directeur Artiste”, lockplate “MANuf Versailles”, Gene Miller collection formally. ASAC.

These special pistols were known as “Arms of Honor”. Also during the Consulate, many elegant and beautiful presentation sets of pistols were given by the First Consul or his representatives to officers as rewards for military valor. Other pistol types were described as “Arms of Recompence” (Figure 10). Boutet designed and manufactured many varying grades of overall form and ornamentation; the most plain versions exhibit exquisite form and attention to detail.

In my collection is a most elegant example of an Arm D'Recompence (Figure 11). They are a pair and were



Figure 11. Pistols (Armes d'Recompence) by Boutet circa 1799—barrels “Boutet Directeur Artiste”, lockplate “Manufacture A Versailles”, Backstrap silver presentation plates missing. Author's collection.

presented early during the Consulate Period. Their year of manufacture by Boutet at his Versailles facility would be 1799. Both back straps were inlaid and would have an engraved silver presentation plate inlaid which unfortunately is missing. Overall length is 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" with 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" octagonal blued polygroove rifling, with “Boutet Directeur Artiste” script engraving down the middle top flat. The lockplate has “Manufacture A Versailles” script engraved. On breech top is Boutet's gold octagon stamp plus “NB” and “LC” gold stamps, and they have “set” triggers.

The Consulate Period in France was 1799 to 1804 with Napoleon as

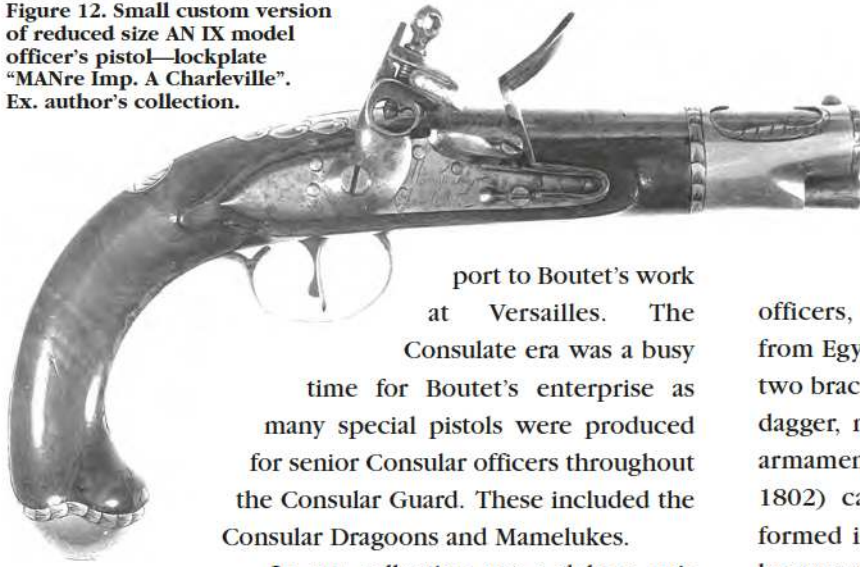
First Consul. After the coup d'etat in November, the guard of the Consuls was officially created from the guard of the Directory and legislature. The guard of the Consuls was organized by decree on 13 Nivose year VIII (Jan. 3, 1800). Its members consisted of 2089 men, a general staff, 50 musicians (½ for infantry and ½ for cavalry), two battalions of grenadiers, a company of light infantry, two squadrons of light cavalry, one company of mounted chasseurs, and one of horse artillery. In 1802, the name of the guard of the Consuls was changed to the Consular Guard by Napoleon.

The foot grenadiers of the Consular Guard was officially formed from the guards of the Directory and legislature on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November, 1799. These officers of infantry would generally carry a belt pistol (Figure 12) in a holster on the right or left of the waist or a pair in a holster as part of the waist belt. Sometimes these would have right and left hand locks so they would lay flat on the abdomen.

A pair of pistols showing left and right hand lock characteristics were fabricated by “Peniet A Paris” (Figure 13). These smaller belt pistols were a favorite with Consular and Imperial Guard infantry officers. They generally were privately purchased except for the AN 9 gendarme pistol (Figure 14), which was regulation issue.

First Consul Napoleon excelled in his administrative ability and exercised power diligently bringing about many reforms in France. He centralized power, created Prefects, and patronized the arts, giving sup-

Figure 12. Small custom version of reduced size AN IX model officer's pistol—lockplate "MANre Imp. A Charleville". Ex. author's collection.



port to Boutet's work at Versailles. The Consulate era was a busy time for Boutet's enterprise as many special pistols were produced for senior Consular officers throughout the Consular Guard. These included the Consular Dragoons and Mamelukes.

In my collection are a deluxe pair (Figure 15) of Consular senior officer's pistols which are circa 1801 and are roughly 62 caliber with polygroove rifling. The lockplate is engraved "Boutet A Versailles" and utilizes a special barrel by Merey Dumares of St. Etienne, which have no breech stamps by Boutet; Boutet did the barrel gold designing. Like his Liege arrangements for parts to be completed and finished at Versailles, he did likewise with the best barrelsmiths at The Manufacture Royale De Saint

Etienne. This pair have engraved silver furniture and extensive silver wire inlay work. The overall form of the pair is Consulate period circa 1801 and are the best deluxe quality for Consular officer's pistols.

On October 13, Bonaparte ordered Jean Rapp to organize a squadron of Mamelukes of the First Consul. Each company numbered four officers, a French trooper, and 75 native horsemen straight from Egypt. Each trooper carried a carbine, a blunderbuss, two braces of pistols (two on belt, two horse-type), a saber, dagger, mace, powder horn, battleaxe, and bayonet. This armament by Consular decree of Germinal AN X (April 1, 1802) came into effect in 1800. The Mamelukes were formed into 3 companies of 100 men apiece and in 1801 became a single squadron of 250 men. By 1802, they were reduced to 155 men and 13 officers. On December 25, 1803 a decree ordered the Mamelukes to form a single company to be attached to the "Chasseurs A Cheval".

The following model descriptions will cover Mameluke Consular versions and many overall form and details will continue into the Imperial post-1804 period, for the Imperial Guard Mamelukes.

Between 1801 and 1813, at Versailles, Boutet produced and delivered to the Mamelukes 73 blunderbusses and 503 special pistols. General Gassendi wrote in 1809 and I quote, "The firearms of the Guard are identical with those of the line except that they are more highly finished at an extra cost of 10 francs." I have noted subtle design changes such as proportion, fitment, checkering, and identification engraving on Boutet's Versailles pistols in comparison to the line issued models AN IX and AN XIII (Figure 16).

Consular Mameluke's trooper model belt pistol (Figure 17) characteristics are

- Overall length—12<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" half-stocked
- Barrel length—7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub>"
- All brass furniture
- Lockplate markings "Manuf re A Versailles" oval stamp, Containing a capital "B".
- Barrel breech—oval containing an "L", "Boutet" name in rectangular stamp, Boutet's octagonal "NB" stamp, "Ent se Boutet" engraved script style.
- Caliber—14,5 mm smoothbore.

This model often had a round butt ring for safe keeping during battle the same as the



Figure 13. Small belt pistols (left and right hand locks) by "Peniet a Paris", Brunet collection. L'Arme a Feu portative francaise. M. Cottaz.

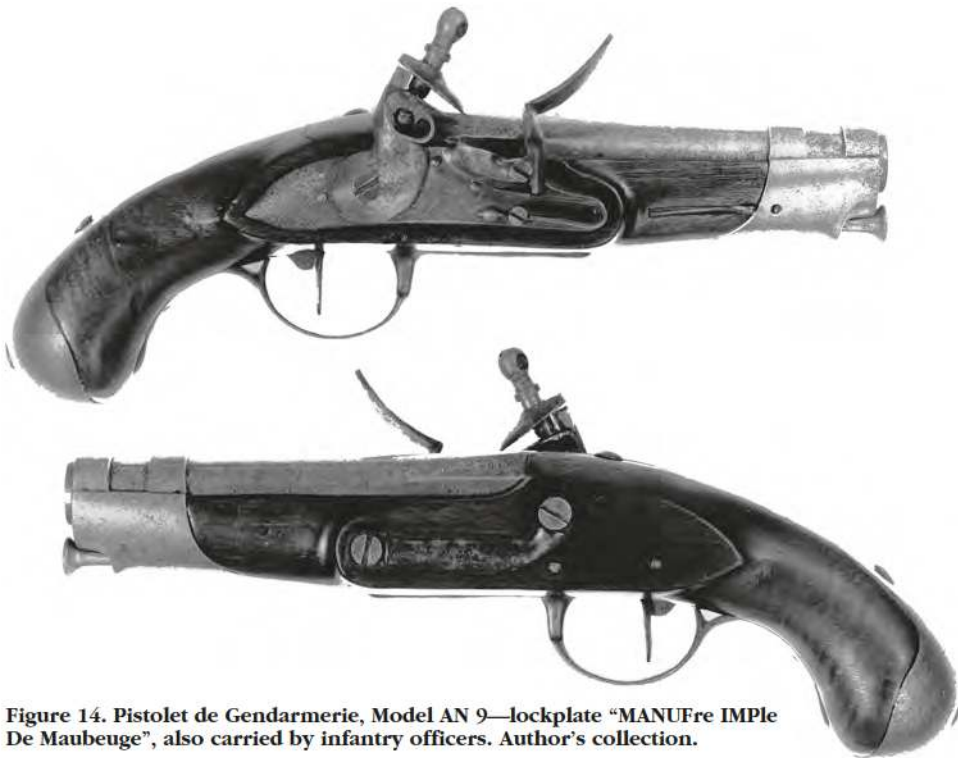


Figure 14. Pistolet de Gendarmerie, Model AN 9—lockplate “MANUFre IMPLe De Maubeuge”, also carried by infantry officers. Author’s collection.

horse model. Pistols were carried under a waist scarf or sash in a two pistol holster.

Consular Mameluke’s trooper horse model pistol (Figure 18) characteristics are

- Overall length—334 mm, half-stocked
- Barrel length—193 mm
- All brass furniture
- Lockplate markings “Manuf re A Versailles”



Figure 15. Deluxe Consulate officer’s pistols, circa 1801—lockplate “Boutet A Versailles”, engraved silver furniture. Author’s collection.

- Barrel breech—“Ent se Boutet” in engraved script
- Caliber 14,5 mm
- All Mameluke pistol models, troopers and officers, had the baleine (whale bone) ramrods
- Weight 0,67 kg
- Caliber 14,5 mm smoothbore
- Carried in horse holsters.

Consular and Imperial Guard Mameluke officer’s model pistol (Figure 19) characteristics are

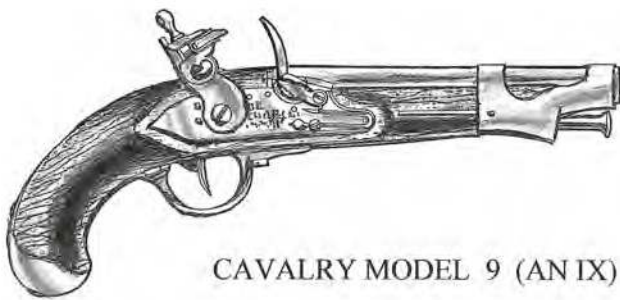
- Overall length—410 mm full-stocked
- Barrel length—270 mm
- All brass furniture
- Caliber 14,5 mm
- Round lanyard ring on brass butt cap
- Whale bone (balene) ramrod
- Carried in horse holsters

If a Consular model existed, its lockplate would have “Manuf re A Versailles” with Ent se Boutet” engraved on top flat of breech. The Imperial Guard variations will be covered later.

In 1992, I had documented a total of 11 brass mounted full-stocked officer Mameluke models but found only one Consular version.

Jean Brunon (at the Museum De L’Emperi at Marseille) had attributed a pair of full-stocked horse pistols to the Mamelukes. These have engraved on the lockplates “Manufacture A Versailles”. They are 36 cm long, caliber 17,5 poly-groove rifling. I also have two examples, each a bit different in detail. One is marked “Manuf re A Versailles” on the lockplate and on the breech, 3 stamps of a liberty cap (le bonnet phrygien) with a “V3” in an oval.

On the brass butt, is a large period “R” engraving. I wonder if this pistol belonged to Roustam, Napoleon’s valet. All screws are engraved. The other pistol is almost identical with its lockplate engraved “Manf re A Versailles” in script, 3 identical stamps as above on the breech, and above them a stamp “B No 1”, a wreath in an oval. On the brass flat butt cap is a large engraved No. 45. Both pistols are full stocked. These could be



CAVALRY MODEL 9 (AN IX)



CAVALRY MODEL 13 (AN XIII)

Figure 16. Showing standard model AN IX and AN XIII made at centers other than Versailles. Author's archives.

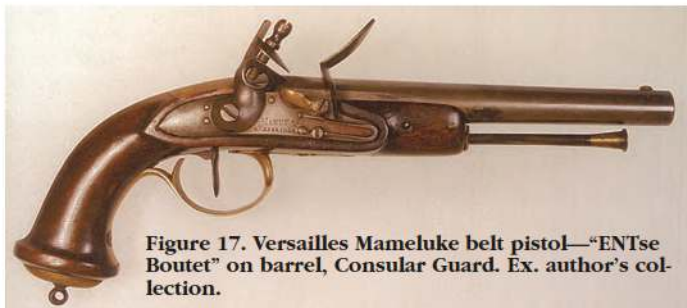


Figure 17. Versailles Mameluke belt pistol—"ENTse Boutet" on barrel, Consular Guard. Ex. author's collection.

rifled horse holster pistols for a trooper or an officer. No records document their existence. The furniture is all brass construction and all existing pistols have a large engraved number on the flat butt cap, denoting something within the Mameluke structure. These pistols (Figure 20) are shown in the photo (provided by Bob Brooker) on Mameluke arms.

When we look at the Mameluke models for officers, two versions have surfaced which are similar to the brass mounted version of the officer's model. One has polished steel mounts and the other has silver. The silver mounted pistol (Figure 21) has an exotic butt cap with turban and fancy engraved trigger guard, while the other a butt cap of burnished steel (Figure 22) with mounts identical to the design features on the brass model.

The steel mounted pistol has been converted to percussion. During conver-



Figure 18. Versailles Mameluke horse pistol—lockplate "MANUFre A Versailles", Consular Guard. Les Arquebusiers de France No. 36, 1969.

sion, the rear pan flash guard was partially left. Its design feature is identical to a version of the AN XII Medusa Versailles D'officer general model deluxe pistol. This would suggest it was used by a very high ranking Mameluke officer. I have scaled both pistols (Figure 23) graphically and the AN XII Medusa lock fit the steel Mameluke pistol exactly.

This all steel Mameluke pistol has the following characteristics

- Overall length—15¾"
- Barrel length—10½"
- Lockplate markings—"Manuf re A Versailles"
- Barrel breech markings—Boutet's octagon "NB", left flat "LC" in rectangle, under octagon Boutet in rectangle, right flat is worn out.

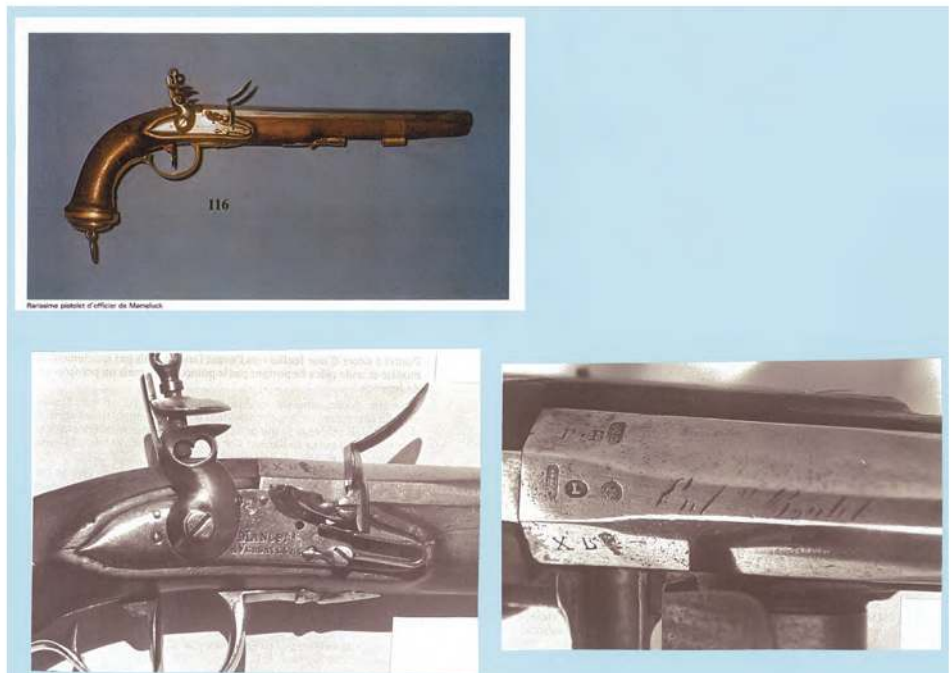


Figure 19. Consular Mameluke officer's pistol, circa AN IX—barrel engraved "ENTre Boutet", Lot 116, L'Hotel Des Ventes. Coll. Docteur C. 1980.

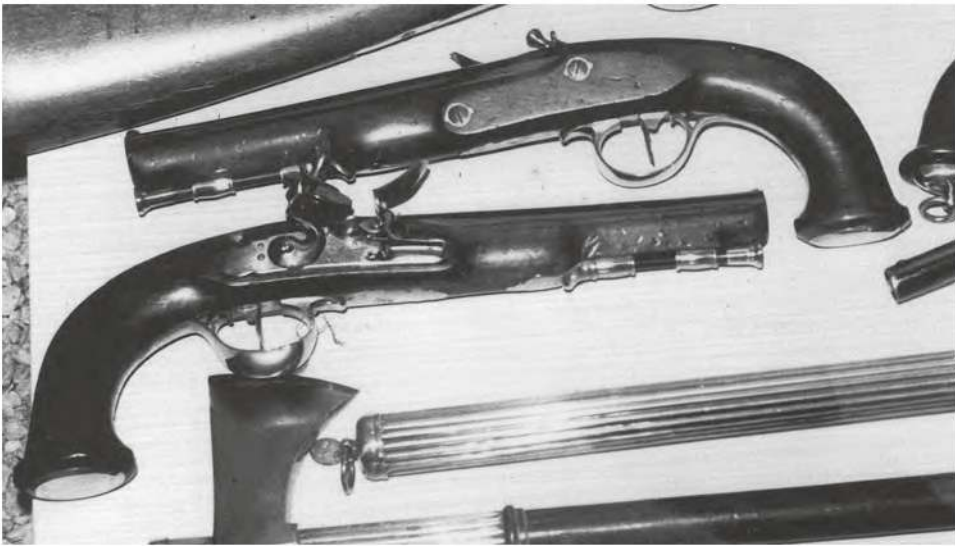


Figure 20. Mameluke rifled officer's pistols at the "Musee De L'Emperi", Salon-de-Provence Brunon, B. Brooker photo.

- Round, flat burnished steel butt
- Serial number—176 on left flat of barrel breech. Decorative pan fence partially left during percussion conversion. This is identical to a Medusa AN XII officer's model.
- All furniture including lockplate, screw washers are burnished (polished) steel.
- Ramrods are balene with an ivory button and a reversible ballworm on the end.

This steel mounted pistol could well be a Consular pre-1805 Mameluke officer's model establishing design parameters which came later for the brass Imperial Guard model. The barrel and stock stamps only add to the confusion, because they vary on so many examples with no consistency as to regulation. Maurice Bottet in his monograph on "L'Arme A Feu Portative" speaks of an officer's pistol with a silver butt ornamented with a turban but does not elaborate with any conviction.



Figure 21. Mameluke officer pistol with silver turban butt caps—Museum of the Army, Paris, owned by "General de Division, Guyot, Imperial Guard" while serving in Spain 1811. Photo copyright Musee de L'Armee, Paris.

One will have to draw their own conclusions with regard to the senior Mameluke officer class and private purchase versus regulation issue. I am convinced that these two extremely rare models could have been privately purchased from Boutet's shop. They represent the most senior officer rank within the Mameluke guards. This is only supposition on my part; the Mameluke structure remains a mystery for both French and English researchers.

To add to the general confusion, another pistol in my collection was featured in an article by a Mr. Rod'est. It attributes this Boutet model to an officer of the Mamelukes and of the guard.

Since he begins with an 1809 date, this pistol and another in my collection will be discussed as Imperial Guard models later.

#### CONSULAR GUARD DRAGOONS

Figure 24 is an example of a large horse holster pistol with a flat brass oval butt with blued steel furniture and ramrod. The overall length is 14", with markings on the lockplate "Manuf re A Versailles", round 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ " smoothbore barrel, caliber of  $\frac{5}{8}$ " diameter, and breech stamps, Boutet's "NB" octagon on top of breech. Stamps are left flat "NB", center flat "Boutet" in rectilinear stamp, and right flat rectilinear stamp not clear. Stock is checkered and barrel blued (Author's collection).

We will observe later in this paper the physical characteristics of the Empress Dragoon 1804 model pistol which has many similarities to the Consular Dragoon model.

#### "CHASSEURS A CHEVAL" (LIGHT HORSE CAVALRY)

The Chasseurs during the Consular period were armed with a carbine and a brace of pistols. As with most cavalry units at this early period, the Chasseurs were issued pistols of diverse quality and patterns with many French and foreign origins of varying calibers. This Consular guard unit would probably have been issued the

AN IX model pistol produced by Boutet at Versailles, and eventually during the post-1804 period replaced by the



**Figure 22. Burnished steel model Mameluke officer's type—"MANUFrea Versailles" converted to percussion matched pair. Author's collection.**

model AN XIII Versailles pistol. Officers would either privately purchase deluxe pistols or later use the AN XII Medusa model (Figure 25).

**CONSULAR OFFICER PISTOL "GENERAL" LEVEL 1800-1802  
(GENERAL D'ARME OR GENERAL DE CORPS D'ARMEE)**

Maurice Bottet in his monograph describes this model and attributes it to the regulation of year XII. However, I feel

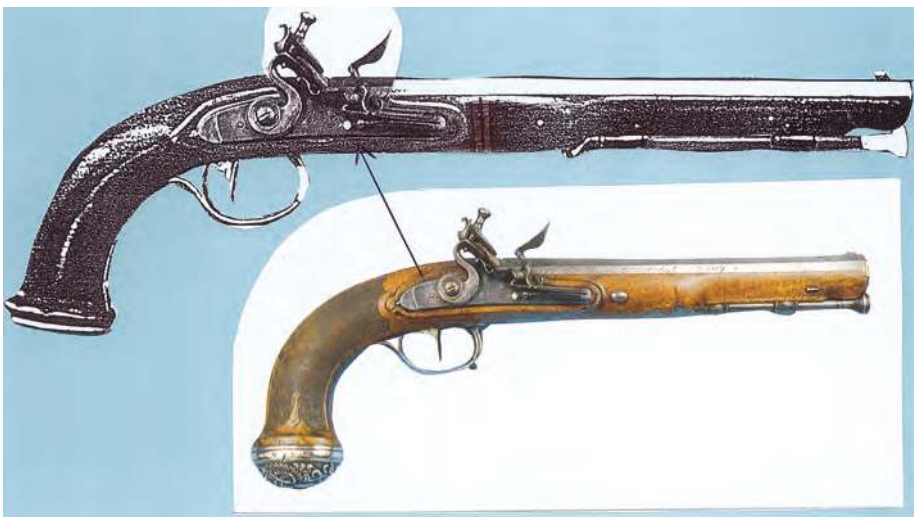
it is an earlier year and was probably a private purchase from Boutet at his Versailles showroom. I have viewed this model at the following sources:

Draeger Collection—2; Jackson C. collection—2; Musee Lambinet—1; Author's collection—2.

The Draeger pair have 24.5 cm barrels with multi-groove rifling, 17 mm caliber, breeches—Boutet and LeClerc stamps, engraved "Entse Boutet", lock plates "Manufre A Versailles, silver palms, and crossed sword and axe butt caps. Overall 34.7 cm (15 5/8").

My pair (Figure 26) have overall 15 5/8" with 9 1/2" barrels, browned finish—marked "Entrep Se Boutet", breech stamped Boutet—"N.B, L.C., B.C.", light walnut stocks with checkered grips, and browned mounts. They also have bright steel ramrods, locks with reinforced hammers marked "Manuf.re Versailles" and large silver butt caps with raised martial designs.

This description is directly from Irving Moskowitz's inventory book from whose collection they were purchased. It is my opinion that this pair had been field damaged and had new lock components brought up from Boutet's Liege works to refit and re-finish the pair. Look to "Four



**Figure 23. Burnished steel Mameluke officer's pistol—(Percussion conversion) re-converted by AN XII Medusa flint version. Done graphically.**



Figure 24. Large Boutet brass furniture horse pistol—Consulate Dragoon model, lockplate “MANUFre a Versailles”. Author’s collection.

Centuries of Liege Gunmaking” by Claude Gaier, pg. 104, picture 88.

Figure 27 illustrates how officers carried their pistols during the Consular and Imperial periods.

The period AN VIII (1799-1800) saw a decree naming the manufacture at Versailles as “Manufacture Nationale” signed by Le Premier Consul, Bonaparte. The First Consul desired special troop pistols to be manufactured for his Consular Guard. This is well documented by Capt. M. Bottet in his Versailles work on Boutet. It is also well stated by

Bonaparte’s Minister of War, Berthier, that the First Consul desired Consular special Pieces for various officers.

The Consular Guard organized in early 1800 was to escort the First Consul Bonaparte wherever he went to give him protection.

Consular Dragoons were issued pistols during the Consular period and Emir Bukhari tells of earlier 18<sup>th</sup> century models such as the brass-mounted 1763 pattern and the steel mounted republican model.

#### IMPERIAL GUARD

On May 18, 1804, the Consular Guard took the title of Imperial Guard, as Napoleon crowned himself Emperor of France (Figure 28).

During this period, basic cavalry units generally were issued a brace of AN IX or AN XIII model pistols (Figures 29 and 30). But being an Imperial Guard unit, Boutet would have manufactured these in a level of higher quality. Officers would either have a deluxe version of these two models or have ordered a pair of custom deluxe design from Boutet’s special department (Figures 29, 30 and 34).

During the Consular years, Peter Young states that corporals and chasseurs carried one pistol in the left holster. The

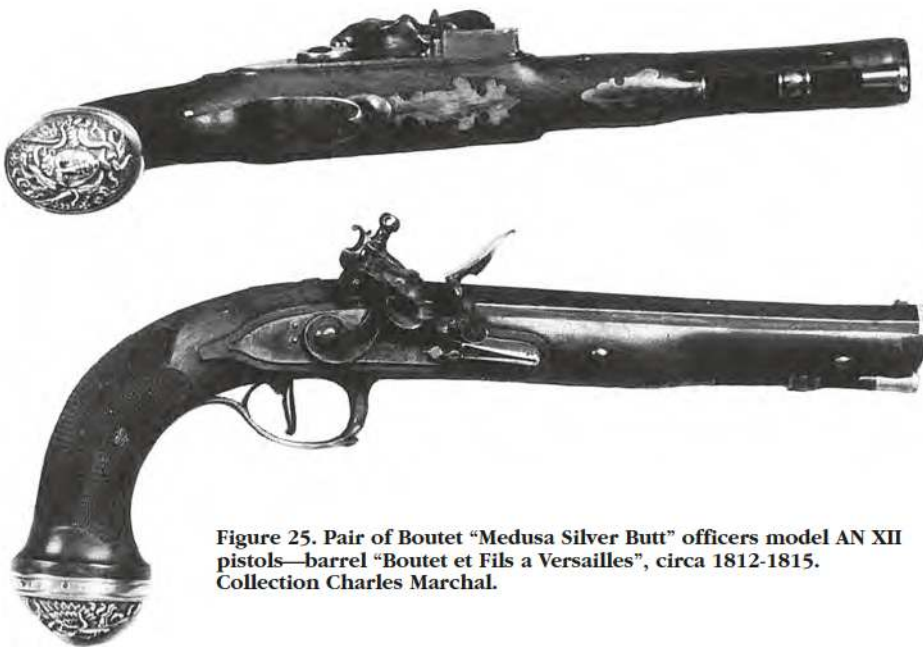


Figure 25. Pair of Boutet “Medusa Silver Butt” officers model AN XII pistols—barrel “Boutet et Fils a Versailles”, circa 1812-1815. Collection Charles Marchal.



Figure 26. General's pistols—(circa 1800-02) barrels "ENTse Boutet" polygroove, silver butts, sword and axe motif. Author's collection.



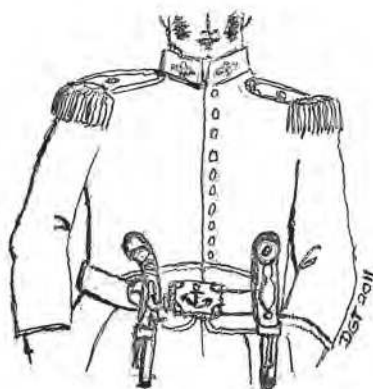
INFANTRY  
EAGLE BEARER  
(A)



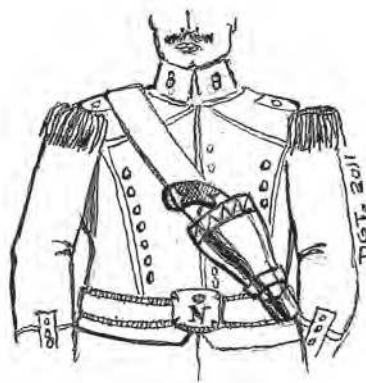
CAVALRY  
MAMELUCK OFFICER  
(C)



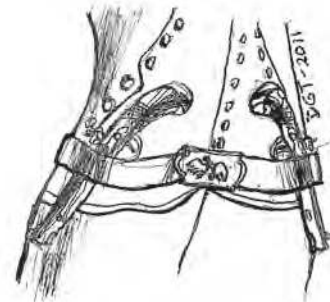
CAVALRY OFFICER  
HORSE HOLSTERS  
(E)



NAVY OFFICER  
(B)



INFANTRY OFFICER  
(D)



INFANTRY CONSULAR  
(F)

Figure 27. Illustration—How Consular and Imperial Guard officers carried their pistols. Artwork by the author.



Figure 28. Napoleon's coronation portrait by artist Gerard, Versailles, December 2, 1804 (La Sacre) "The New Emperor".

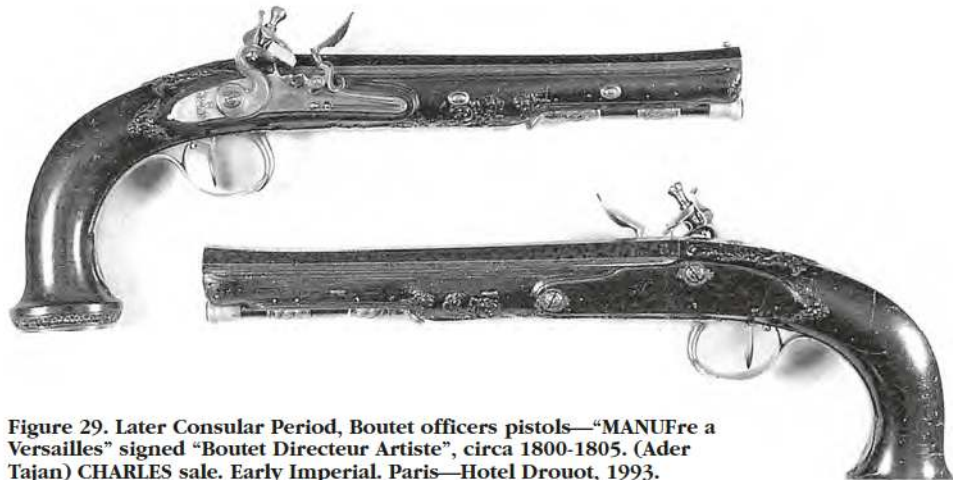


Figure 29. Later Consular Period, Boutet officers pistols—"MANUFre a Versailles" signed "Boutet Directeur Artiste", circa 1800-1805. (Ader Tajan) CHARLES sale. Early Imperial. Paris—Hotel Drouot, 1993.



Figure 30. Boutet-Versailles—long barrel officers pistols. Liege Museum, Merrill Lindsay archives.

non-commissioned officers and trumpeters had two pistols which I feel would have been horse holster models.

During this early formation of the Imperial Guard, Napoleon enjoyed to wear the undress uniform of a Colonel of the Chasseurs at many occasions.

The Cuirassiers and Carabiniers were only equipped with pistols until 1812, these being the AN IX (Figure 31) and AN XIII (Figure 32) patterns. It is seen that the troopers would have models fabricated at the regular arms factories such as Chareville or St. Etienne, etc. I have studied these marked "National", "Imperial", and even "Royale" on their lockplates.

The Funcken authors in their "Napoleon Wars Part 2" stated, "Most of the weapons of the Garde Imperiale were manufactured at Versailles under the supervision of one Boutet. Although of the same types as those carried by the regiments of the line, the weapons of the Guard were of superior workmanship."

The AN XIII patterns total length was 35.2 cm with barrel length of 30.7 cm. Its weight was 1.269 kg with a smoothbore caliber of 17.1 mm. The officers carried a pair of pistols in two holsters on the horse saddle. Officers would have carried these deluxe Versailles models, purchased privately their own choice of pistols from other makers, or used the Medusa XII model made at Versailles by Boutet. I have never seen a specific model attributed to these cavalry groups, except Imperial Guard officers of cavalry units. They commonly carried their pair of horse pistols in holsters attached to the front of the saddle.

Imperial Guard officers of artillery or the engineering corps carried their smaller pistols in holsters suspended from the waist, often a two loop white buff belt, on left and right positions relative to the decorative belt plate. Sometimes other officers would use a holster attached to a shoulder-belt either left or right.

Senior high-ranking officers would use privately purchased pistols (Figures 33 and 34) as well as deluxe regulation versions; often with a detachable carbine type shoulder stock and in some instances cased with all the accessories. Napoleon desired to update this newly established Imperial Guard's officers with high quality pis-

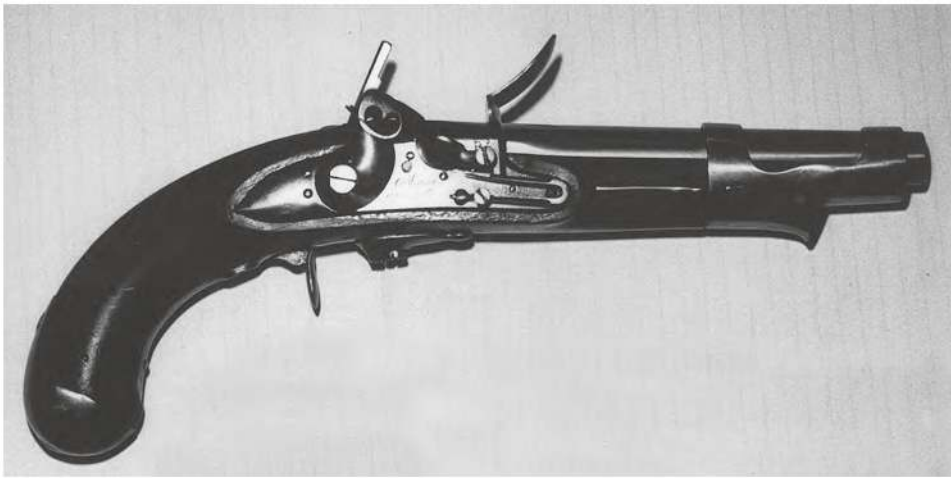


Figure 31. AN IX Boutet pattern piece—lockplate “MANUFre a Versailles”, Bob Brooker, photo archives.

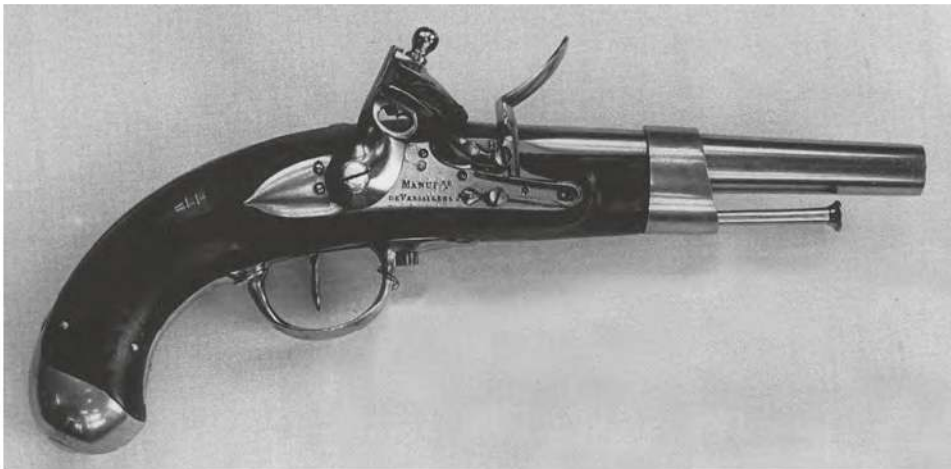


Figure 32. AN XIII Boutet sealed pattern piece—lockplate “MANUFre De Versailles”, Bob Brooker, photo archives.



Figure 33. Deluxe Boutet cased Medusa officers pistols—lockplate “Boutet a Versailles”, Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove, Glasgow, Scotland.

tols. Some were of regulation issue but the majority were privately purchased from Boutet at his Versailles showroom (Figure 35) or his Paris retail outlet.

These privately purchased models exhibited a most sensitive design approach showing a refinement of form and detail which were created by Boutet to accomplish what Napoleon wanted for his Guard officers.

Col. Rodgers mentions that heavy cavalry such as the Cuirassiers and Carabiniers were armed with a pistol. For the Guard regiments, these would have been the AN IX or the model AN XIII made at Versailles. I know of no special officer model made for this heavy cavalry group other than the model AN XII Medusa butt. This officer model is covered in depth by my article in *Arms Collecting*, Vol. 25, No. 3, editor James Gooding.

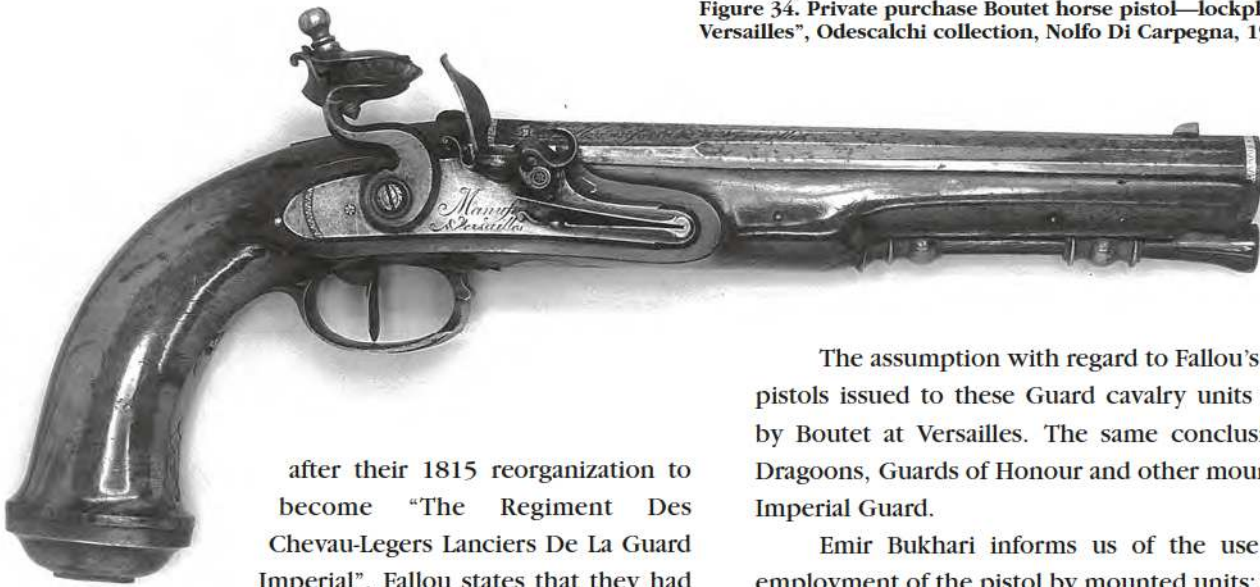
In reference to the deluxe grade of the majority of Boutet's officers guard pistols (Figure 36), we find them with poly-groove rifling in an octagon or round barrel. The butt caps were sterling silver and beautifully sculptured in classical themes showing the faces of Medusa, Zeus, Poseidon, military wreath with sword, and an axe in a wreath.

As a further note, it is observed that Boutet, LePage, and Fatou all used different variations on their Medusa theme designs.

L. Fallou in his work on the Imperial Guard shows only by illustration (Figure 37) an Officer de Grenadiers A Cheval with his horse holsters (no mention of the type of pistol but they are probably the Medusa model), a Grenadier A Cheval, model AN XIII, and a Gendarmerie D'Elite, model AN IX pistols and holsters.

Fallou also illustrated (Figure 37) an officers model with what appears to be a Medusa silver butt cap. The illustration is not clear so it appears to be not definite as to the butt detail. In terms of the Chevaulegers lanciers,

Figure 34. Private purchase Boutet horse pistol—lockplate “MANUFre A Versailles”, Odescalchi collection, Nolfo Di Carpegna, 1969.



after their 1815 reorganization to become “The Regiment Des Cheval-Legers Lanciers De La Guard Imperial”, Fallou states that they had 38 officers. The Grenadiers A Cheval had 644 men with 42 officers. The Gendarmes D’Elite were issued two pistols, the AN IX and AN XIII.

The Polish Lancers in 1807 by decree were raised further in statue as the “Regiment De Cheval-Legers Polonais de La Garde”. Their pistols were initially of Prussian origin but were found to be too long in barrel length for their horse holsters. After this problem was identified, the pistols were exchanged for the AN IX or post-1804 XIII pattern. Figure 38 shows the AN IX model.

The assumption with regard to Fallou’s work is that the pistols issued to these Guard cavalry units were fabricated by Boutet at Versailles. The same conclusion is made for Dragoons, Guards of Honour and other mounted units of the Imperial Guard.

Emir Bukhari informs us of the use of the tactical employment of the pistol by mounted units: “If engaged, the Hussar skirmishers would discharge their carbines at less than a hundred meters from a stationary position, their primary targets being enemy officers. Then, pistol in the right hand and drawn sabre hanging from the sword knot at the wrist, they would charge home, preserving the pistol ball to the last moment, then passing the hand gun to their left hand and setting to with cold steel.”

Relating to the Fallou reference concerning the officer model shown, we have some clarification as to its type. In the September 1992 issue, No. 68 of Tradition Magazine,

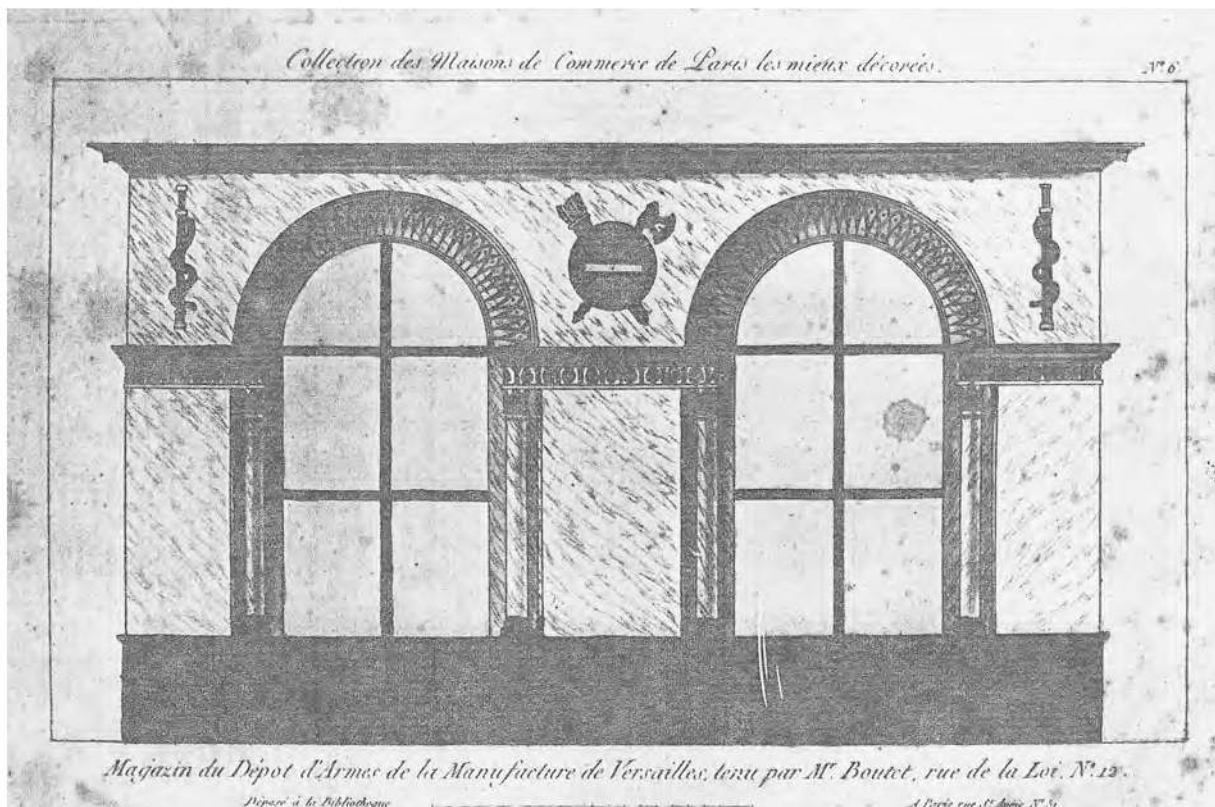


Figure 35. Paris store/retail outlet for Boutet’s Versailles products. (Officers private purchase) Repertoire D’Arquebusiers et de Fourbisseurs Francais—Pierre Jarlier, Francois—Pierre Lobies, editor 1976.



Figure 36. Silver butt cap detail, Mars (Pirmet). Author's collection.

## La Garde Impériale

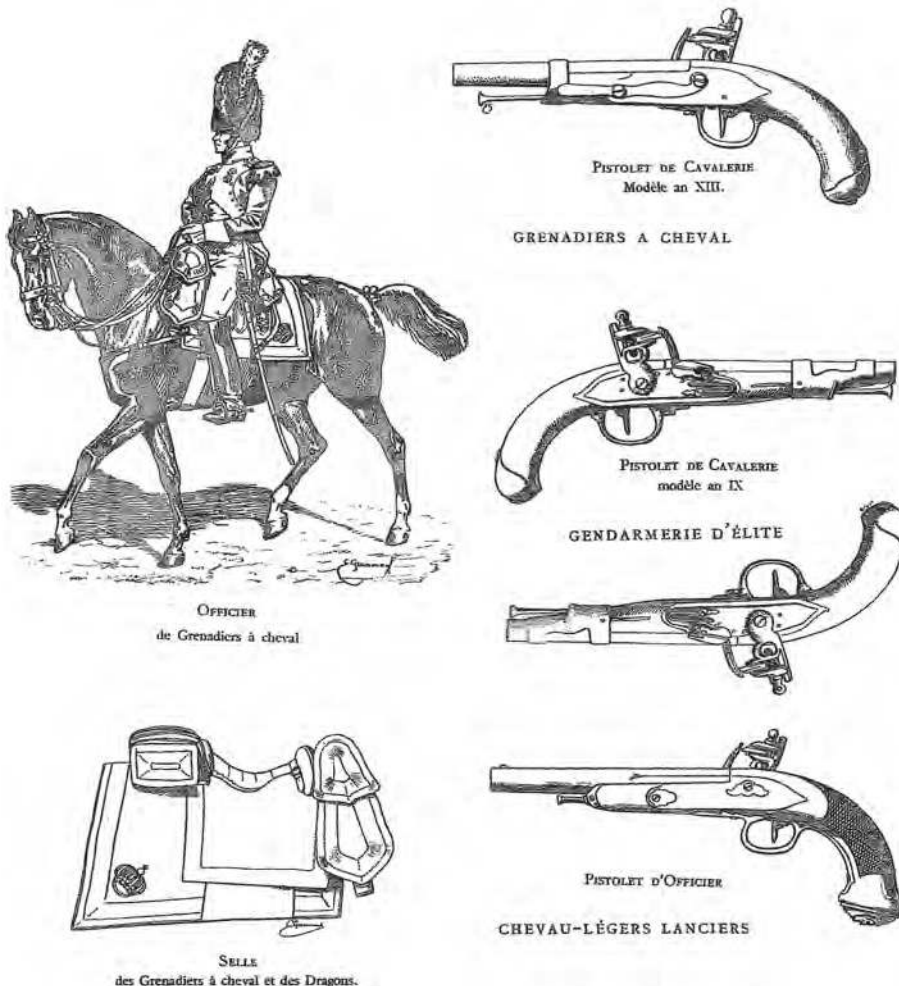


Figure 37. Illustrations (compiled) of Imperial Guard officer and pistols used or carried from "La Garde Imperiale" by L. Fallou.

Mr. Michel Petard wrote an excellent article on the officers of Hussards 1812. He cites an officer's model similar to the Fallou illustration. His illustration (Figure 39) shows the silver butt of Jupiter (Roman origin), therefore one assumes he has viewed an officer's model like this. I have never seen one but the physical characteristics appear much like my pair of Eagle Bearers model circa 1809.

Dragoons were issued initially with the AN IX cavalry pattern pistol, which replaced the 1766 model, manufactured and issued as late as 1802. This AN IX model was 33 cm in length, weighed 1.3 kg, and was in 17.1 mm caliber; thirty-three thousand AN IX were manufactured in total. The AN XIII model was a somewhat shorter version of the 1786 marine navy model, was simplified from the AN IX, and was of the same 17.1 caliber.

In 1806, an Imperial decree of April 15 took men and officers from the line together with officers from

the Chasseurs A Cheval and Grenadiers A Cheval of the Guard and created three squadrons. One of the three were Velite troopers numbering 296. The other two squadrons comprised 476 troopers, all three were commanded by 60 officers. The Emperor wished to impress his Empress and presented them to Josephine as her "Regiment De Dragoon De L'Imperatrice". The regular Dragoon trooper originally was issued the brass mounted 1763 pattern or the steel mounted republican pattern. Later these were replaced by the AN IX and AN XIII models. However, it is my opinion that the Consular officer Dragoon carried a brass model and after 1804, a silver butt version as outlined next in this paper. Both Consular and the Imperial models were designed by Boutet at Versailles for these special Guard units. What Boutet did was to use the design process to produce (as said earlier) a more refined and enhanced model of a regulation pattern. It is not known whether officers purchased these direct from Boutet or if they were issued at government expense.

### THE EMPRESS DRAGOONS

The Empress Dragoon officer's model as described in Bottet's book is overall 310 mm in length. A similar pair of pistols (Figure 40) sold at Sotheby Parke Bernet in Los Angeles on Sept. 16, 1973 had 7/8" bar-



Figure 38. Basic Model AN IX calvary model—one shown “MANUFre De St. Etienne—Les Pistolets Reglementaires, Francais de 1730 a 1822”, Maryse Raso, Les Armes D’Antan, Paris.

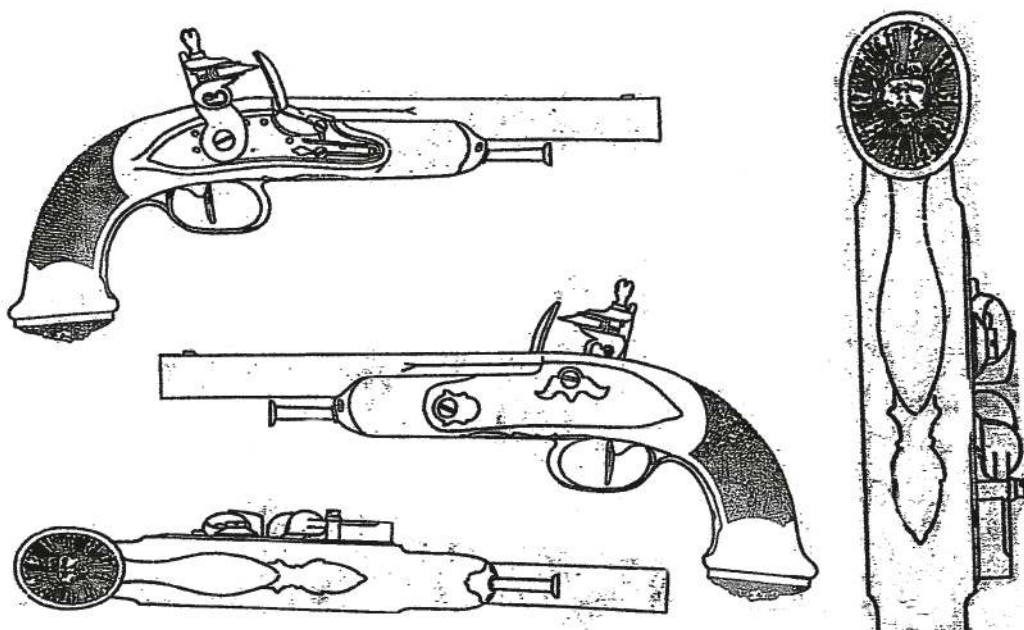


Figure 39. Imperial Guard Hussard officer (after L. Fallou) silver Jupiter butt cap—artwork by Michel Petard, Tradition Magazine, No. 68, Sept. 1992.



Figure 40. Pair Empire Dragoon officers pistols—lockplates “MANUFre a Versailles” circa 1810, Sotheby Parke Bernet, L.A., Sept. 16, 1973.

rels smoothbore and blued. The breeches are numbered 384 and have 3 gold Boutet stamps at the rear. Lockplates are script engraved “Manue A Versailles”. Brass pans and steel burnished hardware are on the pair and they have full-length walnut checkered stocks. The front detail of the trigger guard is in the shape of a palmette. Overall length is 14 inches, oval butt cap is sterling silver with a crowned “N” within a laurel wreath against a dotted textural ground. This Imperial Guard Dragoon officer’s pistol is circa 1810 and is identical in all details with the Consular Dragoon officer’s pistol which has a plain oval brass butt cap. I am of the opinion that these special pistols, made in low numbers by Boutet, were issued at government expense to Dragoon officers at the direct order of the Emperor Napoleon without all the excessive detail of regulation pistols and how they were distributed. The lockplate has the stamp of the Inspector Nicaise, the barrel has Boutet’s octagon and rectangular one. The sterling silver butt cap has a crowned capital “N” within a wreath against a dotted textural back- ground circa 1810.

I have identified 12 pistols or six pairs of this Dragoon officer model, all of which were smoothbore caliber 17.1 mm.

In the year 1804, with the coronation of Napoleon (Le Sacre) as Emperor, the Consular Guard was reorganized as the Imperial Guard. By official decree the officers would carry a pistol along with their sword in the infantry corps and those in the mounted corps would carry a pair of horse pistols. This new Imperial Guard regarded as the army’s reserve

enjoyed higher standards of pay, living conditions, uniform, firearms quality, and prestige. The Imperial Guard consisted basically of a general staff, infantry corps, Grenadier A Pied, and Chasseurs A Pied, fusiliers, young guard, National Grenadiers A Cheval, Chasseurs A Cheval, Mamelukes, Lancers, Dragoons, Gendarmes D’Elite, Artillery, engineers, and marines. The Imperial Infantry had 17 battalions in 1806 and by 1813 had 70 battalions, with a total compliment of roughly 800 officers of all grades and ranks. By 1812, there were no less than 56 battalions, 169 Imperial guardsmen of one category or another.

Consequently, their pistols would come from a variety of sources both regulation and private purchase. During the last campaign in 1815, the First Grenadiers under General Petit’s command numbered only 32 officers and 1,000 men, who four out of five

proudly wore the Legion of Honour. During the Imperial Period, many of the cavalry units carried the AN IX and AN XIII pistols especially fabricated by Boutet at Versailles. These are shown throughout this paper. Other specific models are shown as they become known to me and new discoveries are anticipated with further research.

#### IMPERIAL GUARD INFANTRY

Infantry officers during the Consular Period 1799-1804 and Imperial Period 1804-1814 often carried small belt pistols (Figure 41) either private purchase or the regular AN IX Gendarme pistol which sometimes exhibits a butt ring screw for a lanyard cord.

During the First Empire (Imperial) Period, Boutet provided an infantry officers model pistol in varying grades and

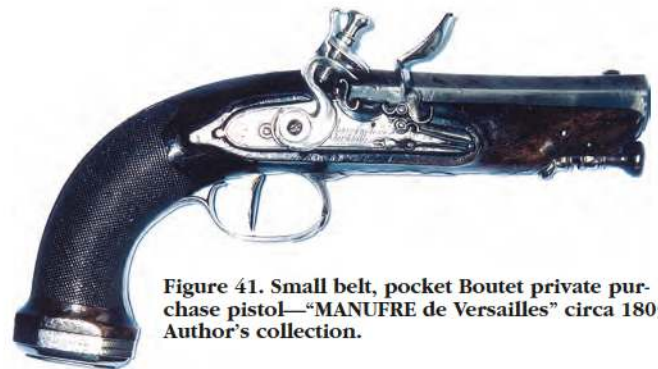


Figure 41. Small belt, pocket Boutet private purchase pistol—“MANUFRE de Versailles” circa 1805. Author’s collection.

in some cases fully accessorized in a deluxe box with powder flask, mold and compartments. I have a pair of these infantry Boutet models for a Grenadier officer A Pied and a pair for an Eagle Bearer. The Grenadier model shows the following characteristics as described by R. Caranta.

In the volume "Le Guide Des Collectionneurs D'Armes De Poing", author R. Caranta describes a "pistolet d'officier d'infanterie de la Garde" as 308 mm overall length, caliber 15.5 mm poly-groove rifling. The furniture and butt cap are polished plain iron. The hammer has reinforced neck and the 172 mm long hammer is swamped. Much of the overall form (1/2 stocked) is similar to the Eagle Bearer model and the Hussard officer's as defined by Michel Petard. The lockplate shows "Manufacture Versailles" and the breech has Boutet's stamp. The left side of the breech is stamped with number "538".

Referring to the pair of pistols (Figure 42) for the infantry officer of the Guard, owned by me, the following details are noted. On many of these smaller scale belt-holster models, the AN IX gendarme lockplate is used by Boutet. Overall length 310 mm barrel, 173 mm mounts are burnished steel, nothing is on the plain butt cap, barrel is multi-groove rifling blued, and caliber is 15.2 mm swamped. Walnut checkered stock and barrel marks order numbers "540" on both pistols.

- Lockplate—"Mre Imple De Versailles"
- Breech—Boutet octagon gold stamp, 3 rectangular Boutet stamps
- Overall length 12 1/2 inches
- Barrel length 6 13/16 inches

Maryse Raso in her book "Les Pistols Reglementaires Francaise De 1730-1822" talks of a "pistolet d'infanterie de la Garde Imperiale Officer" as having total length of 270 mm with 130 mm long barrel and in 16 mm caliber. This pistol is smaller overall when compared to the infantry model and more like a Gendarmerie model made by "Duc" gunmaker to the Imperial Guard. There is a strong possibility that the Rasopistol was made by Boutet for officers of the Imperial Guard gendarmes.



Figure 42. Imperial Guard Infantry model "Mre Imple De Versailles" officers pistol circa 1806. Author's collection.



Figure 43. Imperial Guard Eagle Bearer's pair of belt pistols. Model 1809-1811. "Mre Imple D. Versailles". Author's collection.

With the possibility of infantry Guard officers using the AN IX Gendarme model, it is interesting to note that a total of 32,000 pairs were marked "Maubeuge Manufre Imperial" (length 25 cm, weight 0.7 kg, caliber 15.2 mm.).

#### IMPERIAL GUARDEAGLEBEARER

Also, in my collection is a pair of special pistols (Figure 43) made for the Eagle Bearers, which have many details of



Figure 44. Illustration of the Eagle-Bearer Imperial Guard infantry Officer. From "La Garde Imperiale" by L. Fallou.

the "540" infantry officer's model. This eagle-standard bearer is model 1809-1811. This pair were worn on a special white buff belt, looped left and right, as shown in Fallou's Imperial Guard book (Figure 44). These are identical proportions of the infantry Guard model with plain steel mounts and utilize the AN IX gendarme lockplate.

The silver sterling butt cap (Figure 43) has a large capital "N" with a crown above and surrounded with oak and laurel leaves (overall length 310 mm, barrel length 17.3 mm, caliber 15.2 mm, polygroove rifling). There are order numbers (488 and 489) on the left sides of the barrels. The butt cap carries 3 hallmarks: Boutet's own stamp, Paris garantie, and one not readable. The barrels are fireblued with 50 spiral grooves. Other characteristics are: rear of the barrel

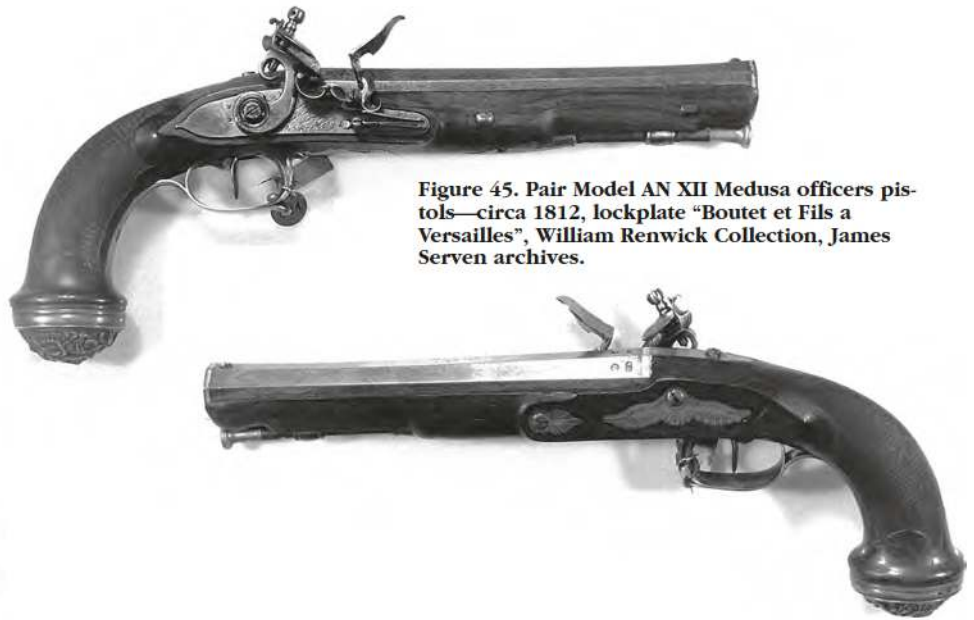


Figure 45. Pair Model AN XII Medusa officers pistols—circa 1812, lockplate "Boutet et Fils a Versailles", William Renwick Collection, James Serven archives.

breech—on 3 flats gold Boutet octagonal stamp, on 3 flats Boutet's gold rectangular stamp; fine grade French walnut checkered stocks; and lockplate "Mfre Imple D'Versailles". The front of trigger guard is in the form of a palmette.

The Garde Imperiale Infantry was issued 16 eagles. In 1811, Napoleon wrote to General Clare: "A definite order must be issued about the pike to be carried by the two ensigns, whose duty is to escort and defend the eagle. The pike must be a strong one, with which the standard may be defended independently of the brace of pistols each of these officers wears on his breast." St. Cloud, 16<sup>th</sup> November, 1811.

#### IMPERIAL GUARD PISTOLS OF GENERAL OFFICER'S TYPE YEAR XII—MEDUSA BUTT

In September 1803, the order of Vendemaire, year XII directs Boutet to create a new model (Figure 45) for officers. The basic design stipulates the following essential characteristics: caliber 18, blued steel mounts, butt to be a silver cast head of Medusa. All other aesthetic details and overall form modifications were left to the initiative of Boutet and to other gunmakers such as LePage, Ronge (Figure 46a), Fatou (Figure 46b), Pirmet and Goffart (Figure 46c).

The products of other gunmakers were considered civil fabrication and were purchased direct from the gunmakers. The general officers pertain to those officers placed at the head of an army or an army corps or one of its units, division or brigade. Also included were the company sergeant-majors and those staff officers having the grade of Colonel or Lieutenant-Colonel and last, the Aides-de-Camps.

Within this officer category, the inspectors for the inspections (those charged with surveillance of the administration of the Corps) and war commissioners (those charged with



Figure 46. Other gunmakers designing variations on the Medusa theme Ronge (a), Fatou (b) (Author's collection), and Goffart (c) (M. Raso, Armes d'Antan, Paris).

material surveillance of materials and the armouries) were issued the year XII model with a plain silver oval butt cap. After many years of study on Boutet at Versailles, I have never seen a model of this type in Europe or United States.

An example of the basic AN XII model Medusa pistol (Figure 47) has the following characteristics: total length 0.351 mm (13 inches); barrel is swamped octagon 8 inch long with polygroove rifling showing 120 grooves; barrel fastened to stock by two wedges.

Other variations (Figure 48) exhibit luxury deluxe features such as silver mounts and gold ornamental work on the barrels. They cost 500 francs or more, when ordinary cavalry pistols cost the state 30 francs a pair. Between 1803 and 1810, at least 55 pairs of Medusa head pistols were fabricated by Boutet for Generals, staff, and naval officers. Figure 49 illustrates art work of the various design terminations for the Medusa butts.

Within the year AN XII category, the last model (Figure 50) is the staff officer of Fortress. It is like the Medusa model but has a reverse "C" cock and a plain blue polished butt.

During the post-1804 period, Boutet and his son, Pierre-Nicolas Boutet (Figure 51), were working in collaboration producing many types of arms at Versailles. This collaboration can be seen in an example of a model XII pistol (Figure 52) with a plain iron butt used by officers of staff Fortresses marked on the barrel "Boutet Et Fils a Versailles".

Pierre-Nicolas, born in 1789, apprenticed with his father and worked with him until his death in 1816.

In the French collector's newsletter "Les Arquebusiers de France", bulletin No. 20, Mr. Rod'est has through line drawings laid out a model he describes as "Garde Imperial—pistolet d'officier de Mameluck et des Officers de la Garde". He notes that the number



Figure 47. Basic Medusa AN XII model showing views and butt detail. Author's collection.



Figure 48. Deluxe grade Medusa model pair—all silver furniture. P. H. De Rougemont collection, Christies, 1966.

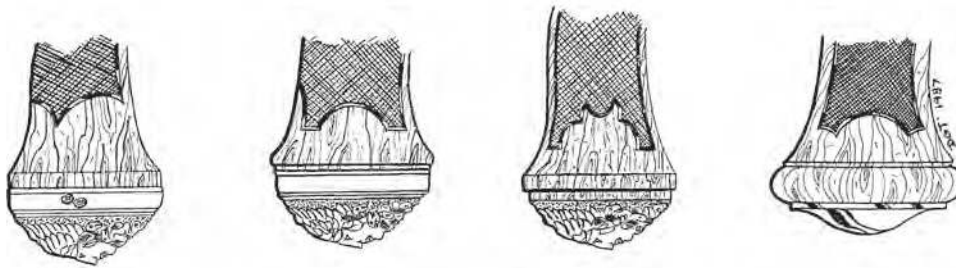


Figure 49. Illustrations of Medusa silver butt variations of the model AN XII officers model—by the author.



Figure 50. Boutet and Son—staff officer of fortress—Author's collection. Photo Ed Prentis, Whittier, California. Keith Dill, Canada.



Figure 51. Son of Nicolas Noel Boutet—Pierre-Nicolas Boutet (1789-1816). Assisted father at Versailles (Boutet Et Fils).



Figure 52. Close-up lockplate Boutet model officer of staff fortress. Boutet and son collaboration. Author's collection. Photo: Keith Dill, Canada.



Figure 53. Imperial Guard-officer Guard and Mameluke—from Rod'est study, conversation. Author's collection.



Figure 54. Smaller scale Versailles belt model possibly for officer of foot Artillery or Gendarme officer. Author's collection.

"574" is engraved on the breech tang above the screw hole. The hammer is spurred cock (chien en ergot) and the lockplate is stamped "Mre Imple De Versailles". This is a larger version (365 mm overall) than the infantry models (310 mm) and would be more suitable as a horse pistol and possibly used by an officer of the Grenadiers a Cheval. Reflecting on Fallou's work, the Grenadiers were also equipped with a pair of ANIX or ANXIII, probably manufactured by Boutet's facility. Boutet's records show a total of 681 ½ pairs of ANIX manufactured and a total of 411 pairs of ANXIII.

The larger (365 mm) half-stocked Rod'est version (Figure 53) is identical to one in my collection which has been converted to percussion. This pistol is numbered "575" on the barrel tang. On the breech are 3 gold stamps

(poinçons) of Nicholas Boutet. Barrel is 8 ¼ inches long, polygroove rifling round barrel swamped at the muzzle with iron ramrod, lockplate stamped "Mre Imple de Versailles", and checkered French walnut half stock. Caliber is 16.5 mm, overall length is 14 ¼", trigger guard fore-end is a palmette form, and butt cap is plain oval. If it would be extreme to assume this model to be a Mameluke model as there is enough confusion with the Mameluke connection already. In all likelihood this model could relate to any mounted cavalry unit whose officers required horse pistols of this larger size. A higher grade model in my collection is shown in Figure 54.

A feature of the smaller scale belt model is a spurred cock (chien en ergot) with a waterproof pan. Since this pistol is slightly smaller than the Rod'est horse model, it could have been for an Imperial Guard officer of foot artillery or a senior Gendarme officer.

#### "MARSHALLOFFRANCE"

In 1804, the title of "Marshall" was established, these most senior commanders of Napoleon's army over the years totaled 62 promotions. In many cases, they were the recipients of the finest firearms that Boutet would produce at Versailles, often presented directly by the Emperor

himself. Certainly the Medusa model in the highest deluxe grade and the Jupiter or Zeus model were used in battle formations by the marshals. The Jupiter model (Figure 55) in my collection has the following features

- Overall length, 400mm
- Barrel 265mm
- Caliber 17.1mm poly-groove rifling
- Sculptured burnished steel mounts
- Blue barrel
- Exceptional sculptured sterling silver Zeus butt cap.

The regulation 1st Vendemiaire ANII by Napoleon stipulated that officer's pistols for senior ranks (Étas-majors) be of a standard caliber, the furniture be burnished steel, and the butt be in sterling silver as a Medusa's head. The major-

ity of these would be private purchase, and variations in a hierarchy of ornamental butt caps (Figure 56) could be purchased by other gunmakers (as stated earlier in this paper) such as LePage, Pirmet, Ronge, Goffart, and Fatou. Many of these exceptional gunmakers had worked under Boutet's direction at Versailles and were influenced by his quality of exceptional design.

“IMPERIAL GUARD NAVY”

Navy officers of the Imperial Guard would in many cases carry their model AN IX or AN XIII pistols hung on a belt hook “crochet de ceinture”, which slipped over the waist belt, eliminating the need for a holster. Smaller personal pistols of large caliber would be carried in pockets of jackets or great



Figure 55. Marshall of France, Jupiter butt model—lockplate “MANUFAC A Versailles”. Author's collection.



Figure 56. Layout shows butt caps of Boutet (Medusa, Jupiter, Neptune, Napoleon). All author's collection.



**Figure 57. Possible naval pocket or belt pistol very large smooth bore caliber, all brass barrel and furniture. Author's collection.**

coats, often with a brass barrel and furniture to offset the corrosive effect of seawater. A massive pistol (Figure 57) in my collection is of the brass type mentioned. The bore caliber measures over 7/8 inches and is smooth bore and swamped in octagonal brass. All mounts and lockplate are engraved brass with silver tacks and wire inlay in the stock. No maker's name is present but it has a Liege proof mark on the barrel.

It is noted in Bottet's book that a design feature signified its use by an Admiral; this is the sterling silver butt cap of Poseidon God of the sea or of the head of Neptune. These interpretations were at the discretion of the artist gunmakers.

Figure 58 shows a double barrel Boutet pistol, with the Neptune bust, utilized by an Admiral in service to Napoleon (from my collection). I know of no specific officer's model pistol for the "Gardes D'Honneur". In all likelihood, these would be privately purchased or they would have received the AN III Versailles version from Boutet's facility. This model from all production centers fabricated 150,000 pairs in 17.1 mm caliber. It appears in factory records that Boutet produced, after 1804, a total of 939 pairs but with no certainty how they were distributed within the Imperial Guard ranks. It is highly probable that these guards, being of a rather aristocratic bearing, would purchase deluxe pistols from Boutet (such as the Rod-est type) or be issued the year 12 Medusa model in a high grade.

Reviewing what Imperial Guard Dragoon and Lancer officers would have used, we find the following information.

Emir Bukhari, in his "Men-at-Arms" series 55, makes reference to Napoleon's Dragoons and Lancers stating that Dragoons were issued two versions, the brass mounted 1763 pattern and the steel mounted republican. However, Boutet from year XI until 1818, produced 1235 pairs of pistols for the cavalry. These would be the models year 9 and 13 plus a special order of 222 model 1763 in a most limited quantity, designed and made by Boutet at his Versailles gunworks. I have never seen an example of this special rare model. Senior officers of Imperial Guard Dragoons and Lancers would use the Medusa models in varying grades. The Empress Dragoon officer would use the special model previously discussed. It is interesting to note that a pair of these special Dragoon officer's pistols were found with the silver capital "N" defaced on the silver butt cap. This was done probably during the 100 days during Napoleon's exile to Elba and shows the respect the officer corps gave to their Emperor (M. Baldet, page 47 "Les Armes a Feu").

#### "PISTOLET D'OFFICER DE MAMELUCK" IMPERIAL GUARD

This basic brass mounted officer's version after 1804, carries "Mre Implede Versailles" on the lockplate. Above this inscription, the stamp of the reviseur, Augustin Germain, dates this version at 1812-1818. This post-1804 model officer's pistol has a military reinforced cock, as opposed to the AN IX Mameluck officer's type, which has "Ent. Boutet" on



Figure 58. Boutet, Versailles DB pistol—Admiral French Navy type, Silver Neptune head and anchor butt. Author's collection.

the barrel breech with inspector Lamogere's mark and a swan plain type cock. The AN IX model was 408 mm long with a 207 mm barrel in 0,0145 caliber bearing "DB", Daniel Bouyssavy, stamp as on the lockplate. Returning to the 1812-1818 version, it is 410 mm long, with a 270 mm barrel in 14.5 mm. The brass furniture is identical in design to the AN IX model and the author's conversion pair is in burnished steel. With the Consular and the post-1804 officer's versions, there is little change in the basic design other than changes of the

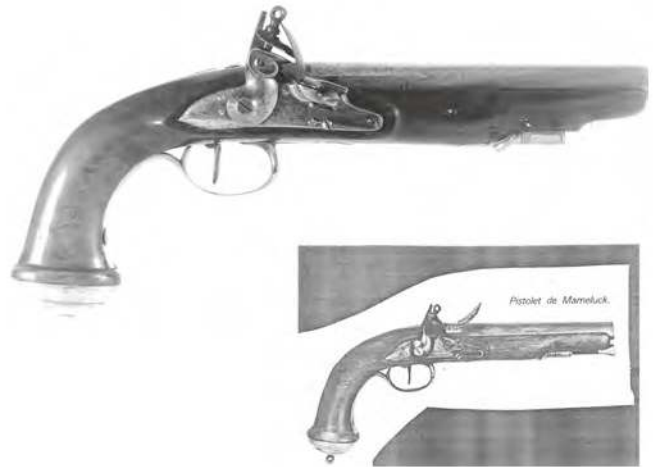


Figure 59. Layout shows two Mameluke models that were cut-down from horse holster size to belt proportions. Large photo courtesy of "Photo copyright Musee de L'Arms, Paris". Smaller—Armes Gazette, 1960, Newsletter, Paris.

lockplate markings and inspector's stamps. Often these models (Figures 59 and 60) are found with reduced barrel lengths.

#### EXAMPLES OF MARKINGS ON MAMELUKE PISTOLS OF THE CONSULAR AND FIRST EMPIRE PERIODS

Upon return of the King, after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, Boutet was still at work designing officer's pistols

EXAMPLES OF MARKINGS ON MAMELUKE PISTOLS					
<u>LOCKPLATE</u>					
<u>CONSULAR PERIOD 1799-1804</u>					
<i>M. Reyal de Versailles.</i>					
<u>INSPECTOR STAMPS</u>					
①	AN X AND AN XI 1801-1802/ 1802-1803 BOUYSSAVY				
<u>FIRST EMPIRE PERIOD 1804-1814</u> NAPOLEON AS EMPEROR					
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">M<sup>RE</sup> IMP<sup>LE</sup></td> <td style="text-align: center;">M<sup>RE</sup> IMP<sup>LE</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">DEVERSAILLES</td> <td style="text-align: center;">AV<sup>LES</sup></td> </tr> </table>		M <sup>RE</sup> IMP <sup>LE</sup>	M <sup>RE</sup> IMP <sup>LE</sup>	DEVERSAILLES	AV <sup>LES</sup>
M <sup>RE</sup> IMP <sup>LE</sup>	M <sup>RE</sup> IMP <sup>LE</sup>				
DEVERSAILLES	AV <sup>LES</sup>				
②	1806 -- DESCHASEAUX				
④	1808 -- DESCHASEAUX VARIATION				
③	1807 -- BOUYSSAVY VARIATION				
⑤	1809-1810 -- NICAISE				
⑥	1813 -- GERMAIN				

Figure 60. Mameluke Consular and First Empire pistol markings—lockplate and inspection stamps. After Maryse Raso editions "Les Armes D'Antan", Paris.



Figure 61. Versailles Model 1816 Guard Du Corps King Louis 18<sup>th</sup>—lockplate “Mre Royale de Versailles”. Author’s collection.

during this Restoration Period. However, he did design the 1816 second model King’s bodyguard pistol (Guard du Corps). This 1816 model (Figure 61) is brass mounted and on the butt is three Fleur de Lys in high relief. The lockplate is marked “Mre Royale De Versailles”, breech stamps “star over H” in rectangular stamp and “DT” stamp on lockplate “star over G” in rectangle. Boutet fabricated 399.5 pairs of this model 1816 for the King’s household Guard (Guards du Corps du Roi).

I have viewed 1816 officer’s pistols with the three Fleur de Lys on their butt caps as well as the “Gendarme de la Maison du Roi” model fabricated by Boutet a Versailles (M. Baldet, page 59, “Les Arms a Feu”).

#### BOUTET “MANUFRE ROYAL”

An interesting pistol in my collection (Figure 62) is one made by Boutet circa 1817. It has an 8 inch octagonal swamped barrel with poly-groove rifling and is engraved down the center “Manufre Royale”; it terminates with a silver front sight. The breech has 4 Boutet gold stamps; the center one is Boutet’s octagon (gold) and the other 3 are Boutet rectangular. Lockplate is engraved “Manufre a Versailles”, the ramrod is balene with brass button and threaded end. All steel mounts are elegantly engraved. The left side of the barrel breech is engraved No. “28”.



Figure 62. Late Boutet officers Restoration Louis XVIII Period pistol. “MANUFre Royale” circa 1817. Author’s collection.



In June of 1812, Napoleon invaded Russia and this campaign resulted in a disaster for his strategy for an United States of Europe. He had entered Russia with 600,000 troops but after his retreat he could muster only 35,000 troops. Many officers were lost during this ill-fated campaign and many officer pistols were lost on Russian soil. Napoleon abdicated during 1814 and was exiled to the island of Elba giving Louis XVIII the opportunity to regain the throne of France as King. As events were moving swiftly during this period, Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo June 18, 1815 by the allies and the Duke of Wellington. He was exiled to the island of St. Helena.

Boutet continued his manufactory until its closure in 1818. He furnished many styles of officer’s pistols (Figure 63) during the Restoration at his Paris shop at 87 Rue De Richelieu during his final gunmaking career.

These have a quiet, sober form often without the silver mounts or gold ornament on the barrels. They are all private purchase and as far as I know none have direct identification of royal patronage either with the king, Louis XVIII or any other royal individual. The marks on Boutet’s officer’s pistols, both on the barrel breeches or silver butt caps, are shown in Figure 64. Marks on Boutet silver mounts included his maker’s mark, the standard mark, and excise mark.

Boutet in his Paris workshop continued to produce private purchase officer’s pistols (Figure 65) into his final years. These were percussion back action lock types and surprisingly he used the finest of materials such as silver furniture and ebony stocks.

He experimented with certain percussion systems such as pill lock variations and might have produced some in officer pistols at the experimental custom level. The years passed quickly and with his glory years of Imperial and Royal patronage fading, he carried on as an “ordinary gunmaker to the king and princes” in Paris at 87 Rue de Richelieu. Always in debt, he passed away on October 12, 1833. His grave is neither marked nor known, a sad ending for a great artist and crafts-



Figure 63. Late Restoration officers pistol, circa 1819—Ex Smithsonian, B. Jackson collection.



man who worked so creatively (Figure 66) during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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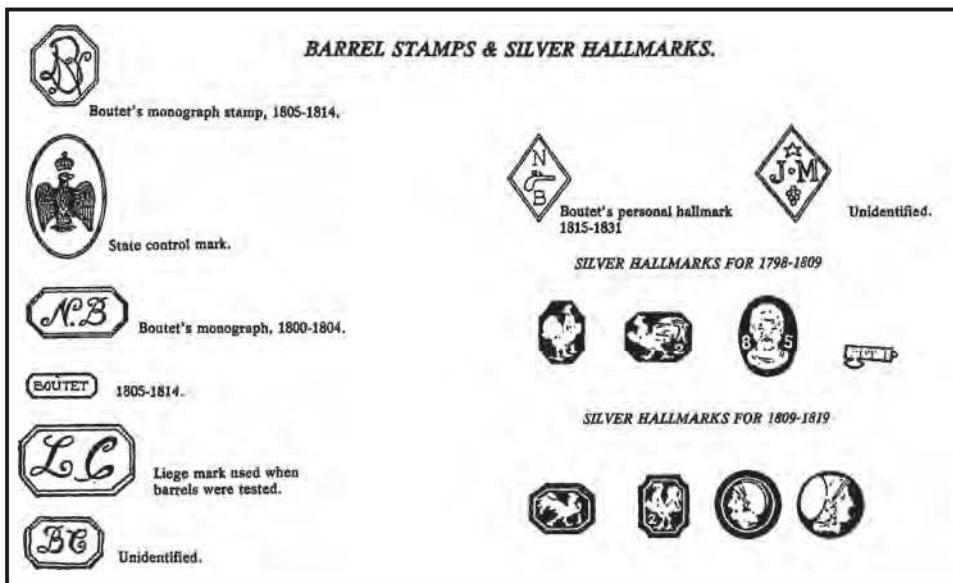


Figure 64. Boutet's barrel breech stamps and silver mounts stamps. Author's art work and archives.

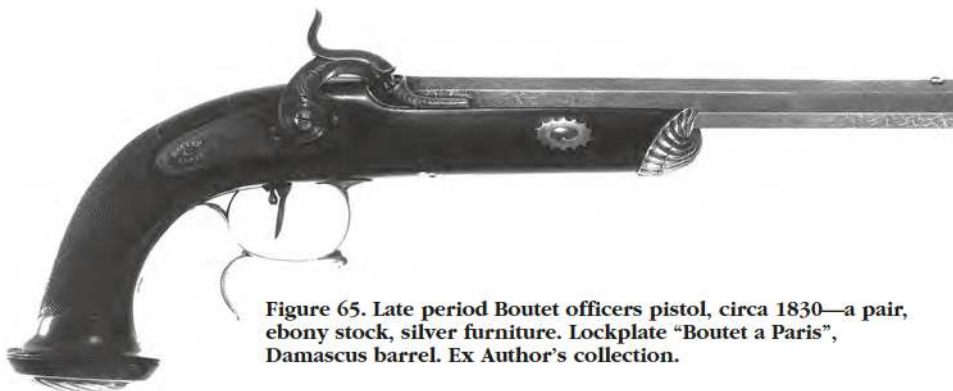


Figure 65. Late period Boutet officers pistol, circa 1830—a pair, ebony stock, silver furniture. Lockplate "Boutet a Paris", Damascus barrel. Ex Author's collection.



Figure 66. Imperial Guard Grenadier—infantry head gear plate, circa 1813. Author's collection.

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