

The Eagle of the 45eme Regiment

Distributed on the 1st June 1815, this model was used throughout the 100 days. It was a simpler version of the one issued on the 5th December 1804. Because of this, each one would be worth only 95 francs instead of 145. Its weight was almost the same, about 1850 grams, with a height of approximately 308mm.

In order to throw some light onto this period of French history, it is important to remember that only the numbers fixed to the base had survived the burning of 1814. As careful as all the other Finance Ministers, the one under King Louis XVIII had taken precautions to un-gild the Eagle before sending it to be melted down. In payment for this fine, loyal service, the artisan who took on this delicate work had authorisation to keep the numbers which had been attached onto the bases.

At the return of the Emperor, obviously wanting to be held in high esteem, the artisan offered to give these treasured numerals to Napoleon who hastened to give the order that the numbers from 1804 should be put on the bases of 1815 model - and do you know what this ardent Bonapartiste was called? He was called Roy!

The Standard of the 45eme Regiment

As on the previous versions from 1812 and 1813, the silk lined tricolour was trimmed with gold. Although we don't know exactly why, the dimensions are different, starting at 80cm and later becoming 120cm. As it was needed quite quickly, it was decorated with simple embroidery of golden coloured laurels. The golden coloured letters are also embroidered on a black material and stitched in place.

The names of the battles of ESSLING and WAGRAM are included, which is odd as we know that the 45eme Regiment were fighting in Spain, thousands of kilometres away. We also know that the 4th Battalion, which had troops stationed in Liège, were assigned to play their role in the first Brigade of the Regimental Infantry of the legendary Grenadiers of OUDINOT, and therefore took part in these two great battles.

At 90cms long, the tricolour ribbon, which is embroidered and fringed with gold, is attached below the Eagle by two ties, finished off with two golden tassels.

Confirmed from the 1815 model conserved in Edinburgh castle: without knowing exactly why, the fabric of lined silk measures 1.2 metres at the sides instead of 0.8m.

The sides are bordered by a simple laurel frieze sewn with gold thread. These are called facings "affrontes" and three motifs are repeated four times being separated by a rose. The inscriptions are sewn in part, in gold thread on black fabric, then sewn into place. The gilded letters making up the word "Empereur" measure on average 4.5 cms, the others only 3.5 cms.

Soutache – with gilded fringes 2.5 cms deep, this borders the four sides and keeps the two sides of the emblem in place. The blue silk cover is on a runner on the 2.5 metre long flagpole; once fixed in place it is attached by two running cords. Details of the laurel frieze: this repeats 8 times along the sides, separated by four roses and in the corners of the silk square by 4 palm fronds placed diagonally.

Tie: in silk, formed from three sewn bands, it is knotted under the plinth of the eagle with the aid of a double cord in gold thread .6m long, which finishes with two fringed tassels. The tie itself is 0.16m wide and 1.06 m long, folded into two equal sections – each end is embroidered and fringed with gold.

Embroideries on the tie: in gold thread, you can recognise the motifs which figure already on the standards distributed in 1812/1813. Details of battle honours figure on the reverse of the flag material of the 1815 model of the 45eme.

The (battle names) are stitched in gold thread on black fabric sewn in place – this method allowed very quick production (a quick fix). Though the official histories are in agreement saying that the 45eme were well and truly at Austerlitz and Friedland, they don't all agree about attributing Jena to the 45eme, besides, not that there's anything astonishing about that when one knows of the passivity of Bernadotte, commander in chief of the first Army Corps on the day. But the fact is that Jena features well and truly on the flag conserved at Edinburgh. One could equally well believe there was a mistake over the battles of Essling and Wagram, because at that time the 45eme were fighting in far-distant Spain. Fair enough, but its entire fourth battalion was part of the Grenadiers of the Reserve, which specialists of the period know by the name of Grenadiers of Oudinot. With the four battalions of the 8eme and 24eme Line Regiments, it made up the first demi- brigade commanded by Colonel Chabert, Brigade Albert, Division Tharreau, at Essling and Wagram.

Notes: 1. From 1803 – 1813, 27 Line Infantry Regiments were “missing” either by being laid off or by transfer, which explains why the 45eme took the name 42eme under the restoration, that being due to the fact that the 31eme, 38eme and 41eme were ‘vacant’ under the Empire. (See History During The Restoration and Waterloo Campaign)

2. From 10.6.1815 after the parade of St Sauve (near Valenciennes) the first Corps of the Army of the North came under the command of Lieutenant General Drouet D’Erlon. The first two battalions of the 45eme commanded by Colonel Chapuzet numbered 43 officers and 960 men. They formed part of Lieutenant General Marcognet’s division.

Brigade of Marechal de Cap Grenier: On 14th September 1815, at Angouleme, the 2 battalions comprised only 20 officers and 152 men.

Standard Bearer

3. Whilst fighting in Spain in 1809, Pierre Guillot took a shot in the right foot. Still in Spain in 1811, he suffered a lance wound in his left flank. 2 years later he was wounded in the right thigh. Yet again in Spain, he was taken prisoner by the English on 1.11.1813. Freed on 18.6.1814, he returned to the town of Conde where his regiment had its base. Guillot was born on 2.9.1771 at St Remy de Provence, and was laid off with his regiment

45eme Standard Today

Today the Eagle and Standard of 45eme are on permanent display in Edinburgh Castle at the Scots Dragoon Guards Museum. Thanks to Major Robin Maclean TD, the current Museum Curator, we have a good account of the conservation and restoration of the 45eme Standard.

Re-Examination

The standard was closely examined after its removal from the frame. The standard had been sewn between two layers of coarse grade greenish nylon net some time before 1956 (letter from Museum dated 2 June 1993). The fragmented Standard was kept between the two layers of net by horizontal lines of crude running stitch, which for the majority of them extended from edge to edge across the Standard. The lines were 2-8cm apart from each other and they had been sewn with brown thick multifilament cotton thread through the fragments of fragile silk.

The net was highly degraded and it had little strength left. The thread of the running stitch lines was far too thick for sewing through the fragile silk; it was damaging the silk and it was clearly visible.

It was discovered that the Standard was made of three layers of silk; plain weave interlining the twill face and back. Very little of the face silk remained but more of the back existed. Most of the visible silk was that of the interlining. All the silk was in a very fragile condition. Both the face and back were constructed of three vertical sections of roughly equal widths. The sections had originally had the blue, white and red of the French tricolour. Now only some of the red silk remained on the face of the Standard, all the colour of the rest of the silk had changed into shades of light brown.

From behind the Standard it was possible to see that the interlining was also sewn of three vertical sections; selvages of the interlining silk could be seen approximately where the seams of the face and back silks lay. There was a wide, uneven overlap of two pieces of the fabrics along the seams of the interlining. The interlining seams were sewn to those of the face. The hand stitching of the lining seams was crude compared to the exquisite stitching of the seams of the face and back.

The same brown multifilament cotton thread as was found in the running stitch lines was holding the seam between the pole sleeve and the left edge of the Standard. It appeared that by releasing this stitching the pole sleeve would come away from the Standard. It was revealed that the pole sleeve had been separated from the rest of the Standard during the course of the pre-1956 conservation treatment; the inside of the sleeve had been covered with the same nylon net. The pole sleeve was sewn between the two layers of nylon net in horizontal lines of short and long stitch about 2cm apart with the same brown multifilament cotton thread as that of the horizontal running stitch lines of the Standard.

The fringes on both sides of the net-covered pole sleeve were sewn in overcast stitch with the same thread. The fringe of the pole sleeve was partially adhered to the pole sleeve probably with the same glue which was used to glue the back of the pole sleeve and edges of the Standard onto the glass behind the Standard for display.

The metal thread embroidery was sewn on both the face and back of the Standard separately and not through the interlining. The fringe of the edges was sewn onto the edges of the face. The letters had paper between their metal thread cover and the twill weave silk. They were sewn on the interlining silk with black multifilament cotton thread. The black twined outlining of each letter was sewn onto the letters with doubled brown multifilament cotton thread.

[Reconsideration of Treatment](#)

The least time consuming and hence the least expensive method for conserving the remains of the Standard would probably have been to

adhere the silk fragments on a film of thermoplastic polyvinylacetate coated sheer silk fabric. This would, however, require the separation of all three layers of silk of the Standard from each other. Technically it would have been very difficult to get the adhesive only under the fragments and not on those numerous areas where the silk was missing. Areas of adhesive without silk would have later lead to problems of dirt pick up. In addition the ageing properties of adhesives and textile conservation adhesive techniques cannot generally be reliably predicted. Most importantly, however, the treatment would not have been reversible; once the very fragile silk was stuck, no method would have removed it from the adhesive surface without immense loss and further damage to the silk.

Textile conservation methods aim at preserving as much of the original textile as possible without interference and alteration. The option of separating the three layers of silk of the Standard was not considered viable because one would have had to unpick the minute, exquisite authentic stitching along the top, bottom and fly edges, which held the layers of silk and fringes together. In this instance considerable problems would also have occurred once it was attempted to lay the three layers back together in order to finish off the treatment. Multilayered flags and banners were often made in a rather haphazard manner, and it was likely that after the treatment those three layers would have been of such different sizes and shapes that they would never have fitted together again.

It was decided to keep the Standard as one double-sided, three-layered textile. A method of conservation unique to the Standard was devised; it was decided to insert a layer of new support silk under the few remains of the face layer and another under the back and interlining layers in order to support the fragmented silk and the metal thread embroidered areas of the Standard. The support silk was inserted under the remains of the face layer because originally none of the interlining would have been seen on the face of the Standard. No attempt was made to imitate the colour of the original three sections of the tricolour in the supporting silk as none of the blue and white remained. The support silk was dyed to match the overall brown colour of the remaining silk of the Standard. The Standard was seen to benefit from this treatment in the following ways:

1. All the silk fragments were permanently supported with the covering nylon net, support silk and lines of running stitch.
2. The heavy metal thread embroidered letters in the centre of the Standard were supported with the two layers of support silk.
3. The inserted layers of support silk made the areas of silk loss less obvious than before conservation.

4. The words were easier to read than before conservation when the back of the letters on the rear of the Standard could be seen on the face.
5. Although support sewing through the very degraded silk was not altogether avoided, it was greatly reduced as compared to the pre-1956 conservation method.

The last of the major conservation decisions concerned wet-cleaning the Standard. pH levels of the silk Standard were measured with Merck pH indicators in several locations of the three different layers. The pH readings varied between 4 and 5.7. These rather highly acidic conditions may have partially caused some of the degradation of the silk and the acidity may still be breaking up the silk. Cleaning the Standard in several wash and rinse baths of water would have reduced the acidity and brought the pH readings closer to neutral pH of 7. This, however, had to be considered potentially highly dangerous; to control three layers of small fragments in a bath would have been impossible. Highly degraded, fragile silk fragments would have clung together when wet and prevented safe separation and straightening of the layers for drying them out.

[Release from Net](#)

The nylon net and running stitch lines of the old conservation treatment had to be released from the Standard because the net had very little strength left, its coarseness was a potential threat to the silk ready to powder away if abraded, the stitch lines gave inadequate support to the silk fragments, the cotton thread was far too thick for sewing through such fragile silk and because it prevented crease relaxation and straightening attempts of the silk fragments. All the stitch lines, which were holding the net on the Standard, were cut with a pair of scissors in approximately 2cm lengths, and the lengths were pulled away from the silk with a pair of tweezers. The old conservation stitch line, which held the pole sleeve to the left edge of the Standard, was also cut and hence the pole sleeve was separated from the Standard. The pole sleeve was opened, the stitch lines sandwiching the sleeve between the two layers of net were cut from inside and removed. Inevitably some of the removal of the thick thread from the very fragile silk led to small stitch holes and some loss of silk on the Standard.

The glued areas of the net behind the Standard was softened by laying a source of moisture, strips of wet cotton cloth, on strips of Goretex, which were laid on the glue. Goretex is non-woven polyester material, which is capable of releasing moisture slowly one way to the object without risk of wetting the treated area. Once the adhesive had softened enough, the net was lifted off and if possible, some of the softened adhesive was also removed. Most of the adhesive, however, had to be left on the Standard

as to remove it would have damaged the silk and the metal thread embroidery.

Surface Cleaning

It had become apparent during the close examination of the Standard that tiny fragments of clear glass were scattered all over the Standard. A cover glass of a display mount might have broken on the Standard in the past. Both sides of the Standard were surface cleaned again with a low powered vacuum suction through a screen of fine mesh nylon net in order to remove the abrasive glass fragments and dust from the Standard.

Support Work on Face

A template of the location of the letters and the silk fragments of the front was drawn on Melinex, transparent non-woven polyester film. The hand sewn stitches, which were holding the letters of the face on the interlining, were cut so that the supporting layer of new silk could be inserted under them. The remains of the stitches were left in place for possible future reference. It was discovered during this separation process that most of the letters still had a letter shaped piece of the face silk behind them.

The few remains of the face fabric were lifted on pieces of Melinex. Larger sections of Melinex were laid under these pieces to cover the whole of the interlining from edge to edge of the standard. This layer of Melinex was to remain under the support silk in order to stop the support stitching catching the interlining.

A template of the face from edge to edge was drawn, and the new dyed silk support of medium weight silk Habutai was cut. It had to be cut in two sections as the width of the silk was narrower than that of the Standard.

A seam in the support silk was made to follow the seam of the centre and right hand sections of the face of the Standard.

Each end of the two sections of the support silk was rolled vertically from the edges to the centre on narrow (approximately 2cm diameter) rollers made of rolled, heavy weight Melinex. The edges of the silk were temporarily stuck onto the rollers with small pieces of masking tape. The silk was rolled under the first layer of Melinex-supported remains of the face of the Standard by lifting the remains on their supports one at a time. Areas, which were not meant to move, were weighted down with heavy glass weights, which were moved around as the work progressed. Once the silk had been laid flat under the remains of the face of the Standard, the Melinex rollers and the Melinex supports under individual fragment groups or areas were removed.

In those places, in which all the silk of the face had vanished from all the way to the continuous metal thread embroidered line, the edge of the support silk was turned under and sewn in short and long stitch with fine monofilament polyester thread. These turned edges were in addition to sewn to the continuous metal thread embroidered line in order to keep them in place. In areas, in which face silk remained along the edge of the Standard, the edge of the support silk was left flat without turning or sewing.

Some of the remains of the face of the Standard were severely creased and some were folded over. The folds and creases were relaxed by treating these areas with the fine mist of an ultrasonic humidifier, small areas at a time. Each area was left to dry under the light weight of glass microscope slides. The direction of silk fragments was generally corrected to follow the direction of the grain in their location during the humidification process.

The location of the letters and silk fragments of the face were checked against the template, and a layer of fine grade nylon net dyed to match the overall brown of the silk was laid on the face of the Standard. The support silk and the covering net were pinned together with fine entymological pins around the fragments, and a line of small running stitches with fine brown monofilament polyester thread was sewn around the perimeter of all the silk fragments through the support silk and cover net only in order to keep fragments in place.

[Support work on Back](#)

The Standard was turned over between two layers of large sheets of acid-free card after the stitching of the face was finished. On the back a seam in the support silk was also made to follow the seam of the centre and right hand sections. Templates of both of the sections to be supported were drawn, and the support silk and Melinex were cut accordingly. From the pole sleeve edge of the Standard the smaller section of Melinex was gradually slid under the layer of Melinex, which had remained under the treated face to hold the support stitching off the interlining, under the fragments of the right hand section of the back of the Standard. The larger section of Melinex was similarly gradually slid under the Melinex and fragments on the left hand side of the seam from near the remains of the seam. Now the fragmented back of the Standard had two layers of Melinex underneath.

Both of the sections of the support silk were taped onto long, narrow strips of acid-free card and the silk was wrapped around the strips from the edges towards the centre. The silk wrapped card strips were pushed centrally under the first layer of Melinex, the wrapped silk was unwrapped towards the edges of the Standard under the Melinex and the card strips were removed. After both of the support silk sections were flat under the

back of the Standard the top layer of Melinex was removed from under the fragments of silk by cutting it with a scalpel blade or fine pointed scissors into 5x5 – 10x10cm squares. The remains of the back of the Standard now lay on a layer of support silk on a single layer of Melinex, which again was to stop support stitching catching the face of the Standard.

The creases and folds of the fragments of the back of the Standard were relaxed by the same method as that on the face described above. The location of the letters of the back were checked against the template, and a layer of the dyed fine grade nylon net was laid over the back. The support silk and the net were pinned together with fine entomological pins, and a line of short running stitch with fine brown monofilament polyester thread was sewn around the perimeter of every fragment of the silk of the Standard. In addition to this running stitch lines had to be sewn along the perimeter of those fragments of the back, which were laying on top of the fragments of the interlining in order to keep these fragments in place too.

At this stage the conservation work of the Standard was taken over from Tuula Pardoe by Wilma Bouwmeester after 450 hours.

The stitching of the back fragments was finished up to 5-10cm from the seam in the net. The Melinex was removed by cutting it in a few pieces, which were removed one by one. One small piece was re-inserted under the seam.

The seam of the net was trimmed, folded in and pinned in place. The stitching around the fragments was finished and the remains of the seam in the Standard were sewn down with a line of running stitches on either side. One of these lines also held down the seam in the nylon net. After this the small piece of Melinex was removed.

Along the three fringed edges of the Standard the nylon net was trimmed, the hems of both layers of the net were folded in and sewn together with a running stitch.

Treatment of Pole Sleeve

The glued areas on the back of the pole sleeve were initially treated in a similar way to the adhesive on the Standard: the glue was softened with strips of wet cotton cloth and strips of Goretex. During this treatment it became apparent that two different adhesives were used: one was similar to the glue on the back of the Standard, it softened easily after moisturising with water. The second adhesive however did not respond to the humidity-treatment at all. On closer inspection the adhesive looked slightly different (less brown) and had formed a transparent film in some

areas. Small pieces of this film could be removed with tweezers and tests with solvents were carried out on these samples. It appeared that the adhesive dissolved easily in Industrial Methylated Spirit. The areas with the second adhesive were treated with strips of blotting paper, dampened with IMS, on strips of Goretex, to soften – but not dissolve – the adhesive.

The result of this treatment was similar to the treatment of the adhesive on the back of the Standard: the net could be lifted off and some of the softened adhesive was also removed, but most of the adhesive had to be left on the pole sleeve.

The fringe on the front of the pole sleeve was stuck down with water soluble brown adhesive. It was not possible to soften the adhesive using 'Goretex strip' -method, because the layer of adhesive was too thick and too much embedded in the metal fringe. Here the adhesive was softened by applying drops of water onto the adhesive and gradually removing or breaking up the layer of adhesive, so that the fringes could be released and the old net could be removed from under the fringes. As this treatment dampened the fringes, this opportunity was used to straighten them out at the same time. The fringe of the back was straightened with the use of cold water vapour.

Relaxing the creases and straightening of the several layers of the pole sleeve was considered. However, it appeared to be impossible because the adhesive on the back had stuck the several layers together in the creased and distorted shape, and the fabric was considered too weak to be separated. Also straightening would have caused an undesired change in size. Therefore the pole sleeve was left as it is, and was only give a covering layer of nylon net. On the back the extension of the nylon net of the Standard could be used for this, on the front a separate strip of net was used.

Re-assembling Standard and Pole Sleeve

The Standard was turned back over with the face up. The pole sleeve was placed back along the unfinished edge, the fringes were laid back in place, nylon net was laid over the pole sleeve and the net was pinned in place.

The two silk support layers and the front nylon net layer of the Standard were trimmed and inserted in the pole sleeve. The covering net of the pole sleeve was trimmed, folded in, pinned in place and stitched down through the four support layers with a running stitch. Then the outer seam in the net covering the pole sleeve was trimmed, folded in, pinned in place and sewn with a running stitch. The fringes were sewn onto the covering nylon net with a running stitch to hold them in place.

Finally, to prevent the many small fragments in between layers of the pole sleeve from moving around, the nylon net was sewn down to secure them.....

It is a fitting tribute to all those who bravely fought and died protecting their eagles and Standards and to those who attempted to capture these precious items, that so much care and attention has and is being paid to the conservation of these symbols which invoke so much heroism and conjure up the past.