





## The American Soldier, 1812

The Regiment of Light Artillery, an elite horse artillery corps, was organized in 1808 in response to President Jefferson's request for an augmentation of the Army in the face of hostile British and French acts against the United States, and by 1812 ranked first among the combat units in the Army. The regiment retained its position of eminence until it was disbanded in 1821. Because of the growth of the Army during the War of 1812 several staff departments were organized to serve the troops in the field, the Hospital Department being one. The department was equal to that in any other army of its day and rendered valuable services during the course of the war.

The figure on foot in the right foreground shows a sergeant of light artillery in the all blue uniform trimmed with yellow prescribed in January 1812, when the light artillery became the first corps of the Army to do away with colored facings. The rank is recognizable by the two yellow silk epaulettes and red sash. The sergeant wears a yeoman crowned shako -- a shako wider at the top than at the bottom -- with yellow cords, a yellow plate, and a red and white plume peculiar to the light artillery at this time.

To the left in the background is a captain of light artillery in a blue coat with white breeches, with one gold epaulette on his right shoulder and three bars in the corner of his red, gold-laced, saddle cloth. To his left is a trumpeter of light artillery in a coat of red, the reversed color of the regimental uniform.

The horseman in the foreground is an infantry surgeon in the uniform adopted in January 1812. He is recognizable by the silver embroidered collar on his plain blue coat, the lack of epaulettes, and the black ostrich feather in his black bordered hat.

Behind the infantry surgeon and partially obscured by him is a gun with its mounted crew preceded by a caisson.