Infrastructure and equipment

When choosing a helmet, the soldier must make sure that the morion, which weighs around 1.9 kg, does not exert any pressure at isolated points on the head (the helmet issued in the Swiss Armed Forces weighs 1.5 kg).

The blacksmith puts some 130 hours' work into a helmet. The ornamentation and precision handwork on the rosettes, the end of the crest and the oak-leaf ornamentation on the fixtures for the feathers are particularly time-consuming.

Morions: In addition to the everyday headgear, the beret, the Pontifical Swiss Guard wears a magnificent helmet of polished steel, the so-called morion, on important public holidays. To ensure that the Guard can be provided with the right equipment at all times, 25 new helmets need to be purchased.

These replica helmets are forged by hand and in line with traditional, old craftsmanship. This ensures that the helmet bowl with the high crest made from a single steel plate is moulded into the right shape.

The coat of arms of Julius II is not embossed with a punch and die, but instead is driven into the metal by hand. Every helmet is thus unique. Although the Swiss Guard has about 75 helmets, not all guards can wear them because of their fit.

Armour: The Swiss Guard has a number of historically valuable pieces of armour. The oldest sets of armour were made in approximately 1580, but most of them date back to the 18th century. Up until 1970, the ornamental armour was worn at canonisations and official state receptions; since then, it has only been worn for the swearing-in ceremony on 6 May. The historical armour is now suffering from the ravages of time, with traces of wear and tear clearly visible. To ensure the preservation of this magnificent armour, they must be replaced with replicas. Equivalent copies of the original armour are created by hand, which are now also worn once again at Christmas and Easter.

For the purchase of additional morions and selected armour, we anticipate costs of around CHF 30,000 p.a. for the coming years.