

Men-at-Arms

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The Austro-Hungarian Forces in World War I (2)

1916–18



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THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN FORCES IN WORLD WAR I (2) 1916-1918

THE NEW EMPEROR

UPON THE DEATH OF Emperor Franz Joseph I on 21 November 1916 his great-nephew, Archduke Carl Franz Joseph (1887-1922), ascended the throne as Emperor Karl I (King Karl IV in Hungary), to be confronted with a number of immediate problems. The 29-year-old monarch assumed command of all the armed forces on 2 December 1916, relieving Archduke Friedrich, who had substituted for the aged Emperor Franz Joseph as commander-in-chief. To cement his control, on 1 March 1917 Karl relieved the long-serving Feldmarschall Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf as Chief of the General Staff of the k.u.k. Armeeoberkommando, replacing him with General der Infanterie Arthur Arz von Straussenburg. (Conrad von Hötzendorf would later take over field command on the South Tyrol front.)

It was important for the new emperor to become known and popular, especially among the troops who were fighting for him. To achieve this he undertook visits to practically all the different fronts, in many cases accompanied by his wife, Zita of Bourbon Parma. One of the first of these inspections took him to the Tyrol, where on 9 December 1916 the k.u.k. 8. Infanteriedivision was renamed 'Kaiserjägerdivision'.

Shortly afterwards a decree of 16 January 1917 renamed the famous Tiroler Landesschützen as 'Kaiserschützen' as a special reward for the loyalty and battle readiness that these troops had often demonstrated.

Further changes in title included, on 1 May 1917, the k.k. Landwehr, now renamed k.k. Schützen; and the Landwehr-Gebirgsformationen, redesignated as k.k. Gebirgsschützen. Finally, the battle-proven

k.u.k. 3. Infanteriedivision (3.ID) was given the title 'Edelweiss division' on 2 May 1917 in a further attempt to improve morale and promote an elite status for the Alpine and Tyrolean forces.

On the political side, Karl made several attempts to end the war for Austria-Hungary as soon as possible.

The empress' ties to royal families in several of the Entente powers were seen both as an embarrassment and an

A dramatic photograph from the pursuit of the Italian forces after the victory of Caporetto, late October 1917. When crossing this bridge over the Tagliamento river, HM the Emperor Karl I (second left - and cf Plate A1) was so near the front line that the advancing troops had not had time to clear the dead out of his path. (Kriegsarchiv)





Feldmarschall Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf (cf Plate A2) inspecting troops on the Tyrolean Front, winter 1917/18. The soldiers have decorated their caps with the traditional winter field sign of a fir sprig for this special occasion. Note that full decorations are worn on the overcoat. (Kriegsarchiv)



This detail shows at least seven semi-official insignia added to the field cap. At his left front are a captured Italian collar star and what seems to be a coloured *Egalisierungs* stripe, or perhaps a two-colour stripe – yellow/black or white/green? On the left side are five or six more badges, including two *Edelweiss* – one of the latter probably being the only regulation item, authorised for XIV Korps of the k.u.k. 3. Armee in August 1914. (Kriegsarchiv)

opportunity to pursue Karl's hopes through family channels. Zita's two brothers, Sixtus and Xavier, were serving in the Belgian Army; but in March 1917 the emperor invited them secretly to travel to Austria in disguise. They had meetings with the emperor and took notes on Karl's views regarding possible roads to peace, which were intended for transmission to the French president, Poincaré.

However, about a year later, in February 1918, the French prime minister Clemenceau published these notes – which contained explosive material – in a nearly successful attempt to split the alliance between Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The 'Sixtus Affair' suddenly became

important: from that time on Germany was no longer a wholehearted ally, but a suspicious co-belligerent from political necessity only, vigilantly monitoring Austria-Hungary's commitment to the war. A visit by Karl to Kaiser Wilhelm II at Spa helped to calm the situation to some degree; but in August 1918, when the Austrian emperor told the Germans directly that he was willing to enter peace talks with the Entente powers, they let him know that they were not prepared to entertain this. At home, the Sixtus Affair led to frequent criticism of Empress Zita as a traitor; and this unpopularity would be greatly aggravated when, at the end of war, more than 300,000 Austro-Hungarian soldiers were sent to Italian prisoner of war camps instead of going home. Before that, however, the Austro-Hungarian Army would experience extremes of both victory and defeat.

PRINCIPAL OPERATIONS, AUTUMN 1916–NOVEMBER 1918¹

1917

The front line in the south-west against Italy had now become the most urgent priority for Austria-Hungary.

During the course of 1916 the Italians had launched four separate offensives in the Isonzo river sector – the so-called Fifth (March), Sixth (August), Seventh (September) and Eighth (October) Battles of the Isonzo – without reaching their main objective, the port of Trieste. During the Sixth battle, as a preliminary, they managed to capture the town of Gorizia on 8 August. Starting from 1 November the Italians launched a Ninth offensive; this led to even more furious fighting than formerly, since it was supported by heavy artillery and bomber aircraft which the Austro-Hungarian defenders lacked. The Italians captured only a limited amount of territory, but this was important for their continuing efforts to reach Trieste.

At the end of 1916 the common situation of the Central Powers was becoming critical. Although good progress had been made against Romania in October–December, the 'South Tyrolean Offensive' against

Italy in spring 1916 had been thwarted after initial advances due to the exhaustion of supplies and heavy material. On the Western Front, German armies had suffered appalling losses in the great battles of attrition which opened at Verdun in February and on the Somme in July, and which both lasted almost until the end of the 1916. The political developments of early 1917 seemed to offer the Central Powers a last chance to break the stalemate and tip the balance of the war decisively in their favour.

Along the Isonzo front Italy had suffered great losses during her Ninth offensive, and would need nearly six months of preparation before she could renew major operations. Meanwhile, the first **Russian Revolution** in February 1917 swept away the Tsar; but the new bourgeois-liberal government, with Alexander Kerenski as minister of war, tried to continue the war on the side of the Entente. Under the command of the able Gen Brusilov, the Russians prepared for another offensive against the Central Powers. (During spring 1917 both Germans and Austro-Hungarians frequently tried to influence Russian soldiers to desert – the first real attempt during the Great War to aim sustained propaganda at enemy troops.)

The first new pressure on the Austro-Hungarian armies came in May 1917 when Italy launched its Tenth Battle of the Isonzo. The Italians gained ground at Plava above Gorizia at a high cost of about 150,000 casualties, of which 35,000 were killed. The defending Austro-Hungarian troops were heavily outnumbered, but since the Ninth battle their artillery had been reinforced and had received increased allocations of ammunition. In all Austro-Hungarian losses reached 75,000, of which 7,300 were killed.

At the beginning of July the **Russian 'Kerenski Offensive'** opened, and their 7th and 11th Armies achieved some initial success. South-east of Lemberg the front line of the Central Powers broke, and a few days later the Russian 8th Army managed a penetration on the River Dniestr. After about a week, however, the Russian offensive ground to a standstill, and during the second half of July the Central Powers counter-attacked. During a push on Tarnopol on the southern flank the k.u.k. 3. & 7. Armeen joined in, and Russian morale began to collapse. On 3 August, Czernowitz was relieved.

At about the same time, on 24 July, the **Romanians** attacked the k.u.k. 1. Armee north-west of Focsani, forcing the Austro-Hungarian forces to retreat to high ground before they could stop the offensive. A counter-attack towards the Moldau plain failed.

In August 1917, Italy unleashed her Eleventh offensive on the Isonzo, capturing the high ground of Bainsizza and pressing on Monte San Gabriele –

Members of the k.u.k. Seebataillon Triest and k.u.k. Landsturm-Radfahrbataillon No.2 in a stone-built defensive position typical of the region, high above the Adriatic coast at Duino. The third men from the left and right are NCOs of the Seebataillon, wearing round-topped peaked caps. See also Plate D2.



¹ See also MAA 356, *Armies in the Balkans 1914–18*, MAA 364 *The Russian Army 1914–18*, MAA 387 *The Italian Army of World War I*, and MAA 392 *The Austro-Hungarian Forces in World War I (I) 1914–16*

which they named the *'Monte del morte'* (Mountain of Death). After extremely severe fighting the Austro-Hungarians secured this strategic position; but once again, the casualty figures had been catastrophic. The Italians lost about 40,000 dead and 110,000 other casualties, and the Austro-Hungarians some 10,000 killed among a total of 100,000 casualties. In total, the Italians' 11 separate attempts to reach Trieste had cost them about 200,000 dead; and for the Austro-Hungarian defenders the totals of casualties had reached unjustifiable and hardly replaceable figures.

During September and early October 1917 enormous efforts were made to assemble a Central Powers counter-offensive force in the Isonzo sector. It became evident that a real offensive could only be launched with German help; a formal request for assistance brought a positive response, and German troops began to reach the rear areas of the Isonzo front. Under the overall command of Archduke Eugen, the armies were deployed as follows. The former k.u.k. 5. Armee had been divided and expanded into the k.u.k. 1. and 2. Isonzoarmeen (under Generaloberst Svetozar von Boroevic von Bojna), covering the area from Trieste up into the valley of the Isonzo river. Linked along the middle part of the Isonzo, the German 14th Army (von Below) was flanked to its north by the k.u.k. 10. Armee from Army Group Conrad. This massed assembly of troops and material was achieved only at great cost to Austria-Hungary's military and civilian resources; the requisitioning of trains to transport soldiers and military stores caused such failures in the civilian distribution system before the onset of winter that many towns were left starving and without heating fuel.

During October 1917 the assembly of troops along the Isonzo was completed, and on 24 October the Austro-German offensive (the **Twelfth Battle of the Isonzo – the Battle of Caporetto**) was launched with a heavy gas attack against Italian defences in the area of Flitsch (Bovec), Karfreit (Caporetto, Kobarid) and Tolmein (Tolmin).

Although Gen Cadorna, the Italian Chief of the General Staff, had received warning of a possible attack and had sent up reinforcements, his front line generals, Badoglio (Caporetto area) and Capello (Gorizia), did not deploy them to advantage, and under the pressure of the Austro-German push the whole Italian 2nd Army line collapsed into a hasty retreat towards the Tagliamento river.

In the south, the Italian 3rd Army was in danger of being outflanked and cut off and had to give way under heavy pressure by the k.u.k. 1. and 2. Isonzoarmeen. Within a few hours Monfalcone was retaken, and the advancing armies pressed on to the fringe of the great lagoon west of Grado. This campaign saw a rare example of amphibious operations, on 1 November against Grado and two days later against Lignano. Both operations met little or no Italian resistance; at Grado the Austro-Hungarian troops (mainly from k.u.k. Seebataillon Triest and

In the streets of Monfalcone, retaken on 28 October 1917 during the first week of the Caporetto offensive, troops await further orders. In the foreground are two members of the k.u.k. Seebataillon Triest, wearing field-grey round caps with naval ribbon 'tallies'. (Kriegsarchiv)



Istrian volunteers) were greeted by flags in Austro-Hungarian national colours hanging from the windows and the ringing of church bells.

The offensive pressed on, crossing the Tagliamento and the Livenza rivers and only coming to a standstill at the Piave river in mid-November. This halt was more the result of Austro-Hungarian staff officers' fear of over-extending their supply lines than of Italian resistance. By this time the offensive had cost the Italian Army some 300,000 casualties with all their weapons, including more than 3,000 artillery pieces.

On the Adriatic coast, Caorle became the forward station of the k.u.k. Kriegsmarine and the reception port for supplies shipped directly to the front line. In their new positions the Austro-Hungarian troops were only a matter of miles away from Venice, which became one of the objectives for a possible further advance. However, the Italian defences on the Piave were heavily and rapidly strengthened, and supported by five British and six French divisions hastily sent from the Western Front. In November 1917, an Austro-Hungarian attack via Belluno in order to intercept the retreat of Italian forces from the Carnia front failed.

* * *

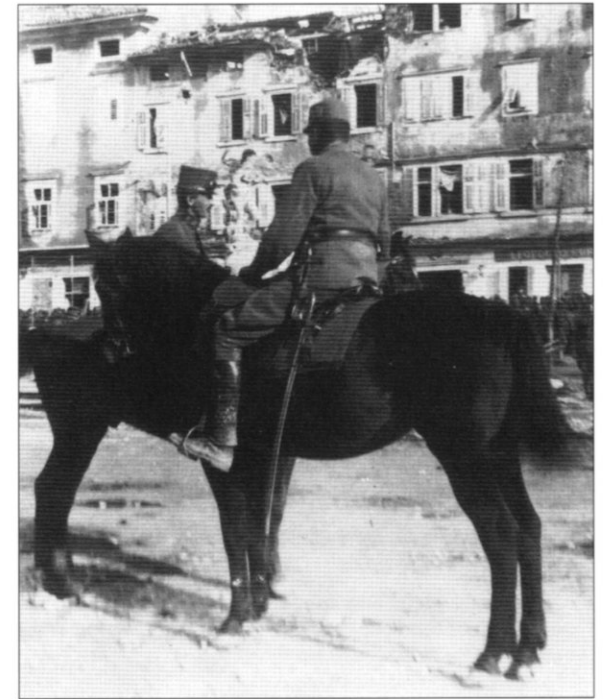
In the East, political avalanches had changed the strategic landscape completely.

During 1917, with the co-operation of the German High Command, the Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin returned to revolutionary **Russia**, gaining power in late autumn of that year. Having already split the country into two political spheres, the Bolsheviks negotiated an armistice with the Central Powers in November 1917, followed by a separate peace treaty – whose terms greatly favoured Germany and Austria-Hungary – signed at Brest-Litovsk in March 1918. During the standstill on the Eastern Front there were frequent instances of fraternisation between front line Russian and Austro-Hungarian troops (especially Slavic elements of the latter).

Meanwhile, with the winter of 1917/18 approaching, the situation in **Italy** developed rather differently for both sides. On the Piave front the Italians became stronger with Allied help, while the German troops were withdrawn and sent back to the Western Front. The Austro-Hungarian forces, and also their **home front**, had to face a bitter winter with serious shortages of many necessities for survival due to the exhaustion of the railway system. Strikes and bread riots occurred in nearly all major cities; this political situation presented greater immediate dangers to the government than did the enemy on any of the military fronts.

1918

The separate treaty made with the Ukrainians in February 1918 (the so-called 'bread peace') and with the Russians at Brest-Litovsk in March changed the economic situation. German troops now occupied the



Görz (Gorizia) was also retaken by Austro-Hungarian forces on 28 October. The mounted staff officer (right) carries both an officer's bayonet on his belt and a sword attached to his saddle. He wears at least two semi-official badges on the left of his stiff cap. (Kriegsarchiv)

Baltic states and, in co-operation with Austro-Hungarian forces, the formerly Russian **eastern Poland and the Ukraine**. The political agendas of Germany and Austria-Hungary were widely different. Austro-Hungary favoured the foundation of a free, autonomous and separate state in the Ukraine, as a controllable buffer between the Dual Monarchy and the potential future threat from Russia. (The Ukrainian Legion that served with the Austro-Hungarian forces would provide the cadre for the newly born army of that state.) Geographically, occupying the Ukraine gave both Austria-Hungary and Germany a corridor of communication with Turkey via the Black Sea.

Recognising this new situation, Romania had to accept peace; this left only Greece – which had been neutral until mid-1917 – offering resistance to the Central Powers in the Balkans. However, this resistance was enforced by the eastern armies of the Entente, which remained a permanent and in late 1918 a dangerous threat to Austro-Hungarian interests and military abilities in the Balkans.

The occupation of new territories, especially the Ukraine, enabled Austria-Hungary to improve the food situation on the home front for some time ahead. (Food was so plentiful in this great 'bread basket' that even simple soldiers were able to buy and send home to their families food parcels of about 50kg – 100lbs – via the k.u.k. Feldpost.) Apart from these material improvements, many troops from both the German and Austro-Hungarian armies in the East could now be transferred to the Western and Italian fronts respectively, allowing the Dual Monarchy to prepare for a further push against the Piave defences.

Moreover, the Russians started to release prisoners of war; the Austro-Hungarian military administration organised these men in *Ausbildungsgruppen* for eventual return to the armies in the field – though in many cases, naturally enough, their fitness and morale were not rated highly.

The preparations for the planned **June offensive in Italy** were hampered by the differing opinions of Feldmarschall Conrad von Hötzendorf in the Tyrol area and Feldmarschall (since February) Boroëvic on the Venetian plain. Conrad strongly favoured a push towards Lombardy and the occupation of Venice and Milan. Boroëvic's intention was to go straight ahead, breaking through all the Italian defence lines to reach Treviso, by-passing the Venice lagoon (which presented little danger) and leaving it under the observation of minor forces. Finally, both plans were combined, and a date around 10 June was

fixed for the opening of the offensive.

This final push was to be accompanied by operations by the capital ships of the Austro-Hungarian Navy under their new commander Kontre-Admiral Nikolaus von Horthy. The Navy was to 'blow away' the Otranto Barrage, and to threaten the eastern coastline of Italy.

Shortly before 10 June, Feldmarschall Boroëvic suddenly announced that his troops were not in physical condition to attack,

and demanded a delay of several days to feed them up. While Conrad was informed, no one gave a hint to the Navy, which initiated the operation on the original date and ran into disaster, losing the battleship SMS *Szent István* on 10 June.

The Italians and their allies had learned from previous defeats, and were informed of the Austro-Hungarian attack plans. When the offensive started on 15 June the two Austro-Hungarian army groups totalled only 24 divisions; far from outnumbering the defenders as all experience dictated, the attackers were slightly outnumbered themselves. A straight attack on the Asiago plateau failed in the face of determined Italian, British and French resistance. Moreover, due to several days of heavy rain since 10 June the swollen Piave river had become a formidable obstacle. The Austro-Hungarian pioneers, obliged to cross under heavy fire, suffered such severe losses that one historian would later remark that the crossing of the Piave brought that corps' long history to an end.

The preparatory artillery barrages hit the first Italian trench line – which was practically empty. Subsequently, when the assault troops began crossing on pontoons and barges and over hastily-laid bridges, they found the defenders back in their positions in the best possible order, and suffered heavy losses. Only in two places were they able to create temporary bridgeheads: one was around the Montello ridge, and further down river Boroëvic's k.u.k. XXIII Korps managed to cross in the delta area. Compared with the rest of the army this was the only success of the day, taking some hundreds of Italian prisoners and making some ground in the direction of Venice. However, this thrust was also brought to a standstill, and the troops had to be evacuated a few days later; many were taken prisoner, and only a minority made it back to Austro-Hungarian lines.

While the failure of this offensive became evident shortly after it had started, and the initiative passed to the Entente forces, it took them several further months to seize their opportunity. The Italian chief of staff, Gen Armando Diaz, was a much more cautious commander than Gen Cadorna whom he had replaced after Caporetto; he was quite



A rare photograph showing fraternisation between Austro-Hungarian and Russian troops on the Eastern Front at some unknown date in 1917; note the absence of weapons and field equipment, and also the wide variety of overcoats worn by the Austro-Hungarian soldiers. (Author's collection)

Barges of the Lagoon Flotilla of the k.u.k. Kriegsmarine, manned by both Navy and Army personnel, ferrying troops across the Isonzo at Canziano on 31 October 1917. The operation is commanded by a naval officer standing at the stern of the barge, wearing field-grey uniform; see Plate D3. (Kriegsarchiv)





In a trench on the Eastern Front, one of the 37mm infantry guns which was operated by special *Infanteriegeschützzüge* ('infantry gun platoons'). Normally each regiment of the Common Army, the *Tiroler Kaiserjäger* regiments, the *k.k. Schützenregimenter* (including *Kaiserschützen* and *Gebirgsschützen*), *k.u. Honvéd* regiments, *k.k.* and *k.u. Landsturm-Infanterieregimenter* had two infantry gun platoons; autonomous battalions (i.e. *Feldjägerbataillone*, *Bosnian-Hercegovinian Jägerbataillone*) and all dismounted cavalry regiments had one platoon. Each platoon had two guns, an officer commanding and 28 NCOs and troops. The standardised infantry gun could fire up to 16 shots a minute, and had a range of about 600 metres. (Author's collection)

content that summer and early autumn 1918 should pass in a stalemate along the Piave. Pressed by his government to make some offensive move, to lend weight to Italy's political claims at the eventual peace conference, Gen Diaz waited until the end of October before launching his last offensive.

On 24 October Italian and British troops crossed the Piave and broke through the Austro-Hungarian lines. The Austro-Hungarian forces

retreated slowly; but on 29 October the Hungarian government ordered their troops to fall back, endangering the controlled withdrawal. Morale was uneven; even crack Alpine units hesitated when ordered to take up front line positions left open by the Hungarians, while a Bohemian replacement column still marched forward to reach the front. In the Balkans the Entente forces also advanced, and the Romanians were about to take the old military border area of Transylvania from Hungary, opening a political conflict.

Within a few days peace negotiations were taking place between Italian and Austro-Hungarian emissaries at Villa Giusti. The Austro-Hungarian side were said to have 'misunderstood' the actual time limit for military operations, which enabled the Italians to gain their victory of **Vittorio Veneto** and some 300,000 Austro-Hungarian prisoners. The final **Armistice** was signed on 3 November and took effect the following day. On 3 November 1918 the *k.u.k.* Army's centuries-old living traditions ceased to exist.

Ironically, when the Armistice was signed at Villa Giusti, no enemy troops had entered the territory of the Dual Monarchy, and the collapse occurred at places deep within occupied countries. Over vast areas many thousands of soldiers who had not been taken prisoner tried to make their way home, most of them on foot.

ARMY REORGANISATION, 1917-18

The first two years of the conflict had demonstrated that the whole structure of the army in the field had to be reorganised to match the conditions of modern warfare.

In 1915 Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf and his staff considered a possible reorganisation which was intended to include every level from the highest to the lowest – the so-called 'Conrad reforms'. There were to be changes in the number of corps and divisions, but each of the infantry divisions was still to have 16 battalions, which meant four battalions for each regiment to be included. After Conrad von

Hötzendorf's relief from duty in the *k.u.k.* *Armeeoberkommando* on 1 March 1917, General der Infanterie Arz von Straussenburg and his chief of staff *Freiherr* von Waldstätten continued to pursue the reorganisation plans.

Spring 1917 saw many proposals intended to give the army in the field a totally new shape in accordance not only with the requirements of the war, but also envisaging the size and structure of the post-war army. By common agreement, 11 infantry divisions were to be disbanded after the return of peace, but 60 divisions were to be retained as the main body: 41 *k.u.k.* Common Army divisions, 10 *k.k.* *Landwehr* (*Schützen*) divisions, and 9 *k.u.* *Honvéd* divisions. Orders for renaming and reorganisation on this level was given on 10 October 1917. The minimum personnel establishment for each of these divisions was 6,040 men, of which 4,680 were infantry, 960 artillery, 300 technical troops, and 100 aviation personnel. As a second step, in spring 1918 most of the existing brigades were either renamed or received new numbers; in all 138 brigades had to change their numbers.

More interesting were the actual changes at the lower unit level. Up to early 1917 the infantry of the Common Army had grown to 107 regiments, of which only those up to IR 102 could be considered 'normal' formations. The others were wartime creations, mainly consisting of 'marching' and replacement detachments from other units; it was therefore planned that after the war Regiments 104 to 107 should be disbanded. In order to 'make space' for a total reorganisation those regiments were renumbered as IR 204 to 207 in October 1917; and the *Bosnian-Hercegovinian* IR 5 was redesignated IR 10.

Parallel to these formal acts, the *k.u.k.* *Armeeoberkommando* worked intensively on a new structure which could bring the army the bonus of 41 'new' regiments. The old structure comprised regiments with four or even more battalions, which made for difficulties of command and control. The new organisation would give each regiment a main body of three battalions, and form new regiments from the supernumerary battalions (see Table 1). In all the infantry grew to 139 regiments, plus 8 *Bosnian-Hercegovinian* regiments and 4 of *Tiroler Kaiserjäger*.

Within the regiments, the machine gun companies were steadily brought up to a standard of 8 heavy machine guns. The distribution of trench artillery and searchlight detachments among the technical companies within infantry regiments grew steadily, and each regiment received a regimental pioneer company (*Truppenpioniere*).

The cavalry, starved of remounts, was to a large extent dismounted. Most units served as infantry, forming so-called 'half-regiments' of two battalions; only one squadron per regiment remained mounted to serve as divisional cavalry. Within the technical troops the Sappers provided the new type of technical soldier, whereas the traditional Pioneer Corps was limited to bridging activities.

Finally, the artillery was reorganised into new *Feldartilleriebrigaden*, allocated to the new divisions. This new type of *Feldartilleriebrigade*

The Austro-Hungarian Army frequently used strong dogs to draw all sorts of different loads on small carts – here, 37mm infantry guns. Medical troops used dogs to locate casualties, and one type of dog-drawn cart to evacuate single wounded soldiers. (Kriegsarchiv)



Table 1: (A) Composition of Common Army Infantry regiments formed during 1917-18 reforms

(Roman numbers = battalion, Arabic numbers = regiment; bh = Bosnian-Herzegovinian; TKJ = Tiroler Kaiserjager)

| IR No. | Battalions | IR No. | Battalions | IR No. | Battalions | IR No. | Battalions |
|--------|----------------|--------|-------------------|--------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | II., III., IV. | 43 | I., II., III. | 85 | I., II., IV. | 126 | IV./12, IV./19, IV./26 |
| 2 | I., II., III. | 44 | II., III., IV. | 86 | I., II., IV. | 127 | IV./47, V./47, IV./27 |
| 3 | I., II., III. | 45 | I., III., IV. | 87 | I., II., IV. | 128 | IV./62, V./62, I./51 |
| 4 | I., II., III. | 46 | I., II., IV. | 88 | I., II., IV. | 129 | I./61, IV./61, IV./29 |
| 5 | I., III., IV. | 47 | I., II., III. | 89 | I., II., III. | 130 | IV./30, IV./80, IV./89 |
| 6 | II., III., IV. | 48 | II., III., IV. | 90 | II., III., IV. | 131 | II./82, IV./82, III./31 |
| 7 | I., II., III. | 49 | I., II., IV. | 91 | I., II., III. | 132 | III./68, IV./68, I./32 |
| 8 | I., II., IV. | 50 | I., II., III. | 92 | I., III., III./73 | 133 | IV./33, IV./46, II./101 |
| 9 | I., II., III. | 51 | II., III., IV. | 93 | II., III., IV. | 134 | III./65, IV./65, II./34 |
| 10 | II., III., IV. | 52 | I., II., III. | 94 | I., II., I./28 | 135 | III./96, IV./96, IV./53 |
| 11 | I., II., III. | 53 | I., II., III. | 95 | I., II., III./55 | 136 | III./75, IV./75, I./102 |
| 12 | I., II., III. | 54 | I., II., III. | 96 | I., II., IV./79 | 137 | II./92, IV./92, IV./42 |
| 13 | I., II., IV/57 | 55 | I., II., IV. | 97 | I., II., III. | 138 | II./64, IV./64, IV./50 |
| 14 | I., II., III. | 56 | II., III., IV. | 98 | II., III., IV. | 139 | III./39, IV./39, IV./37 |
| 15 | II., III., IV. | 57 | I., II., III. | 99 | II., III., IV. | bh.1 | I., II., IV. |
| 16 | I., II., III. | 58 | I., II., III. | 100 | III., IV., I./56 | bh.2 | I., II., III. |
| 17 | I., II., III. | 59 | I., II., IV. | 101 | I., III., IV. | bh.3 | I., II., IV. |
| 18 | I., II., IV. | 60 | I., II., IV. | 102 | II., III., IV. | bh.4 | I., II., IV. |
| 19 | I., II., III. | 61 | II., III., IV./43 | | | bh.5 | III./bh1, V./bh1, bhJg.5 |
| 20 | I., II., III. | 62 | I., II., III. | 103 | I./63, V./63, III./85 | bh.6 | IV./bh2, V./bh2, bhJg.6 |
| 21 | II., III., IV. | 63 | II., III., IV. | 104 | IV./4, V./4, IV./84 | bh.7 | III./bh3, V./bh3, bh.Jg.7 |
| 22 | I., IV., V. | 64 | I., II., V. | 105 | I./44, II./52, III./69 | bh.8 | III./bh4, V./bh4, bh.Jg.8 |
| 23 | I., II., I/6 | 65 | I., II., II./66 | 106 | III./83, IV./83, III./76 | TKJg.1 | I., II., III. |
| 24 | I., II., III. | 66 | I., III., IV. | 107 | III./59, X./59, IV./7 | TKJg.2 | I., II., III. |
| 25 | I., II., III. | 67 | I., II., III. | 108 | III./8, IV./81, I./99 | TKJg.3 | I., II., III. |
| 26 | I., II., III. | 68 | I., II., III./38 | 109 | IV./9, II./45, IV./77 | TKJg.4 | I., II., III. |
| 27 | I., II., III. | 69 | I., II., IV. | 110 | III./40, IV./40, I./10 | (ex-104 to 107:) | |
| 28 | II., III., IV. | 70 | I., III., IV. | 111 | IV./11, III./88, III./35 | 204 | to be disbanded after the war |
| 29 | I., II., III. | 71 | I., II., IV. | 112 | III./71, V./71, II./72 | 205 | to be disbanded after the war |
| 30 | I., II., III. | 72 | I., III., IV. | 113 | III./13, IV./13, IV./20 | 206 | to be disbanded after the war |
| 31 | I., II., IV. | 73 | I., II., IV. | 114 | IV./14, X./14, III./49 | 207 | to be disbanded after the war |
| 32 | II., III., IV. | 74 | I., II., IV. | 115 | III./95, IV./95, I./15 | bh.10 | renaming of former bh.5 |
| 33 | I., II., III. | 75 | I., II., IV./91 | 116 | III./78, IV./78, IV./16 | | |
| 34 | I., III., IV. | 76 | I., II., IV. | 117 | IV./17, III./87, IV./97 | | |
| 35 | I., II., IV. | 77 | I., II., III. | 118 | III./18, I./2, I./98 | | |
| 36 | disbanded | 78 | I., II., II./70 | 119 | IV./54, IV./3, I./93 | | |
| 37 | I., II., III. | 79 | I., II., III. | 120 | I./100, II./100, I./1 | | |
| 38 | I., II., IV | 80 | I., II., III. | 121 | III./94, IV./94, III./74 | | |
| 39 | I., II., II/5 | 81 | I., II., III. | 122 | II./22, III./22, V./97 | | |
| 40 | I., II., I./90 | 82 | I., II., IV./2 | 123 | III./23, IV./23, III./86 | | |
| 41 | I., II., III. | 83 | I., II., I./48 | 124 | IV./24, IV./58, IV./41 | | |
| 42 | I., II., III. | 84 | I., II., III. | 125 | III./25, II./60, IV./67 | | |

(B) Renumbering of battalions during reforms

| IR | Battalion | Former Battalion No. | IR | Battalion | Former Battalion No. | IR | Battalion | Former Battalion No. | IR | Battalion | Former Battalion No. |
|----|-----------|----------------------|----|-----------|----------------------|-----|-----------|----------------------|------------|-----------|----------------------|
| 1 | I. | IV/1 | 60 | II. | IV/60 | 93 | I. | IV/93 | 118 | III. | III/18 |
| 5 | II. | IV/5 | 61 | I. | IV/43 | 100 | I. | IV/100 | 122 | I. | V/97 |
| 6 | I. | IV/6 | 63 | I. | IV/63 | 100 | II. | I/56 | 122 | II. | II/22 |
| 10 | I. | IV/10 | 66 | II. | IV/66 | 101 | II. | IV/101 | 122 | III. | III/22 |
| 28 | I. | IV/28 | 70 | II. | IV/70 | 102 | I. | IV/102 | 124 | II. | IV/41 |
| 32 | I. | IV/32 | 72 | II. | IV/72 | 112 | I. | V/71 | 124 | III. | IV/58 |
| 34 | II. | IV/34 | 75 | II. | V/91 | 112 | II. | II/72 | 136 | I. | V/102 |
| 44 | I. | IV/44 | 90 | I. | IV/90 | 112 | III. | III/71 | 136 | III. | IV/75 |
| 45 | II. | IV/45 | 92 | II. | III/73 | 117 | II. | IV/97 | bh 5. I. | V/bh.1 | |
| 48 | I. | IV/48 | 93 | I. | IV/93 | 117 | III. | III/87 | bh 5. II. | bh.Jg 5 | |
| 51 | I. | IV/51 | 98 | I. | IV/98 | 118 | I. | I/21 | bh 5. III. | III/bh1 | |
| 52 | II. | IV/52 | 99 | I. | IV/99 | 118 | II. | I/98 | | | |



A 20cm Luftminenwerfer on the Eastern Front in Galicia. This Spitz-Bartelmus system heavy trench mortar, powered by air compressed at 55 atmospheres, could throw bombs - of either 22.5kg (50lbs) or 34.5kg (76lbs) weight - out to about 1150 metres. It weighed 725kg (1,600lbs) and was operated by a crew of five. The compressed air canister had to be replaced for each shot, and the rate of fire was only about ten rounds an hour - its main drawback. (Kriegsarchiv)

consisted of two Feldartillerieregimenter, one heavy Feldartillerieregiment and a Gebirgsartillerieabteilung (mountain artillery detachment). The first of the two Feldartillerieregimenter, the heavy Feldartillerieregiment and the Gebirgsartillerieabteilung took the brigade number, while the second Feldartillerieregiment bore the same number added to 100 (e.g. see page 39, panel).

The practical developments in warfare up to 1916 had made the fortress artillery's original role obsolete. Some units were disbanded, but others transformed into 'mobile' heavy artillery regiments to answer the demands of trench warfare. These regiments used the heaviest pieces, the 35cm gun (only one piece existing), 24cm gun, the 42cm and 38cm howitzers and the famous 30.5cm mortar.

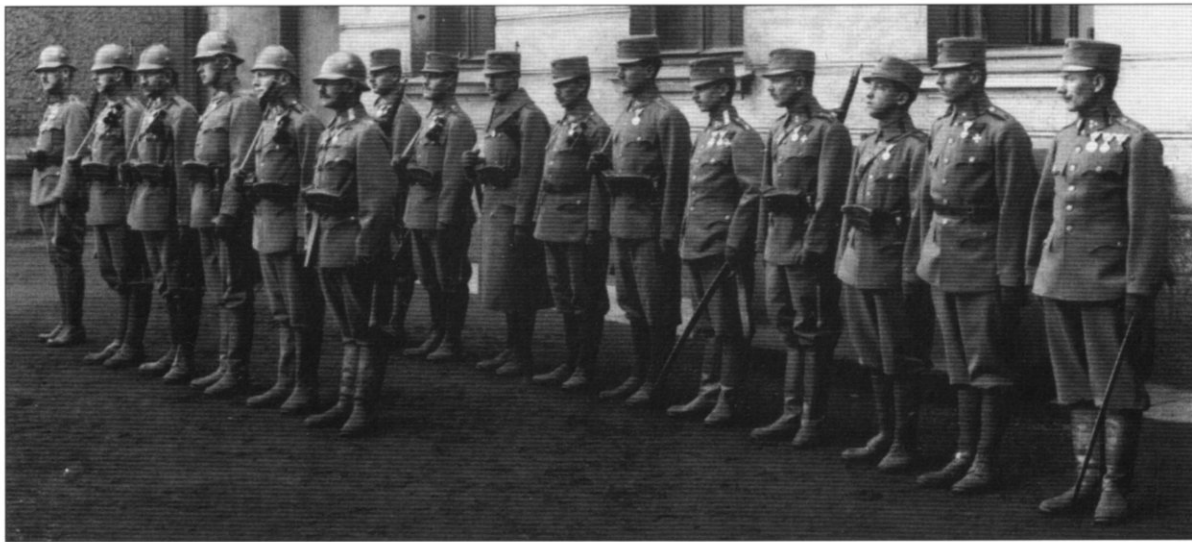
An interesting addition in support of the artillery were the **trench mortars** or Minenwerfer, which were developed from 1915, at first to provide light support fire for the infantry. These later appeared in large calibres, organised in batteries and operated either by sappers or artillery crews. The 9cm M14 (M14/16), 9cm System Lanz, 14cm M15 and M16, 22cm M15 and M17, the 24cm (25cm) M16 Minenwerfer, and the small and medium Granatwerfer fired normal shells with explosive propellant, as did the 9cm M17, 14cm M18 and 26cm M17. The 12cm M16 and 20cm M16 Luftminenwerfer used compressed air to throw their bombs.

All these reforms were presented to the German ally on 20 October 1917, and were received with a degree of scepticism. In fact, the reforms at unit and divisional level were put into effect during the first months of 1918, but the intended changes to corps and army structure did not take place before the end of the war.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

As described and illustrated in Part 1 of this study (MAA 392), the army made a major change to the colour of their field uniforms in 1915, abandoning 'pike-grey' in favour of 'field-green' (actually, field-grey). Given the necessities of mass production, a wide range of actual shades were tolerated; uniform clothing appeared in hues of grey, green and even green-brown according to the dyes used. Generally, the later war field-grey clothing made of inferior or *ersatz* material tended to be of a sort of brownish grey-green shade. The variety became even wider in 1917/18 with the re-use of captured Italian *grigio verde* jackets by the Austro-Hungarian army, introducing garments of a much more greenish tone.

The year 1916 also saw the gradual abandonment of the old stand-up jacket collar, replaced by the more comfortable stand-and-fall collar which had previously been a privilege of the mountain troops of the k.k. Landwehr. This new *Bluse* was adopted rapidly; and since there was now no real difference between the separate arms of service, it soon gave the armed forces an appearance of near total uniformity. This



regular uniform remained unchanged in cut until November 1918, although shortages in the second half of the war meant that cloth quality deteriorated from month to month. (During the final months, troops in home stations were issued a perturbing mixture of different clothing; blue dress tunics were worn with field-grey or pike-grey caps and trousers, puttees or woollen stockings.)

During 1916 there was in fact an initiative to change the uniform even more radically: from field-grey to khaki, and in a completely new cut which was intended to give the whole army a new appearance for forthcoming peacetime duties. There is documentary evidence that a small number – perhaps about 4,000 – of these uniforms were actually produced and issued for use by troops under training. However, when the new Emperor Karl was shown these plans in late 1916 he seems to have been unimpressed, and ordered that the new uniform not be adopted.

However, the new design featured a blouse with visible buttons, much easier to tailor than the old concealed-button style; and from late 1917 and especially in 1918 this new 'Karlbluse' was favoured by some officers and senior NCOs. Although unauthorised by the War Ministry, it seems evident that it was privately purchased. Surviving examples show little uniformity and many details are clearly dictated by personal preference.

It became fashionable, especially for officers and NCOs, to wear field caps without peaks (visors), which was formerly allowed only for the cavalry and artillery arms. For enlisted

A posed group from different branches of the Army line up to display the experimental 1916 khaki uniform, which never became reality due to the Emperor Karl's disapproval. (The only features to survive were the visible buttons, incorporated into the private purchase field-grey 'Karlbluse' acquired by some officers and senior NCOs.) Note the interesting helmet (left). Under magnification unit numbers can be seen on the left side of the stiffened caps, and the collars display large Egalisierungstreifen perhaps 2cm broad. (Kriegsarchiv)



Chart 1: 1917 Truppenabzeichen - Representative selection of shoulder & cap patches

| | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|------|
| 1 | TJ1 | bh4 | J3 | GrJ8 | D9 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| U8 | H12 | ✕14 | ✕15 | ✕FsR6 | S12 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| P5 | +10 | ✕14 | III | 16 | B100 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| RDS | ✕23 | 22 | 22Z | 7H | ✕ |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |

(See also relevant explanations in body text)

K.u.k. Heer (Common Army):

- (1) Infanterieregiment No.1 – blue
- (2) Tiroler Kaiserjägerregiment No.1 – blue
- (3) Bosnisch-herzegovinisches IR No.4 – blue
- (4) Feldjägerbataillon No.3 – blue
- (5) Grenzjäger-Kompanie No.8 – blue
- (6) Dragonerregiment No.9 – blue
- (7) Ulanenregiment No.8 – blue
- (8) Husarenregiment No.12 – blue
- (9) (Reserve) Feldkanonenregiment No.14 – blue
- (10) Reitende Artilleriedivision No.6 – blue
- (11) Festungsartillerieregiment No.6 – blue [also -bataillon = e.g. 'cannons, FsB1']
- (12) Sappeurbataillon No.12 – blue
- (13) Pionierbataillon No.5 – blue
- (14) Sanitätstruppe – red cross, blue number
- (15) Baukompanie – metal symbol, blue number

K.k. Landwehr & Landsturm (Austrian):

- (16) Tiroler Landeschützenregiment No.III – grass-green [Landwehrinfanterieregimenter = green Arabic numbers]

- (17) Landsturminfanterieregiment No.16 – red [Landsturminfanteriebatallione = e.g. red 'B3']

- (18) Landsturm-Etappen-Bataillon No.100 – red
- (19) Reitende Dalmatiner Landeschützen-division – green
- (20) Landwehrfeldhaubitzzregiment No.23 – green

K.u. Landwehr & Landsturm (Hungarian):

- (21) Landwehrinfanterieregiment No.22 – 'slate grey' (dull pink) [Landsturminfanterieregimenter = white; Landsturminfanteriebatallione = e.g. '28Z']
- (22) Landsturm-Etappen-Bataillon No.22 – white
- (23) Landwehrhusarenregiment No.7 – 'slate grey' [Landsturmhusarenregimenter – white]
- (24) Reitende Landwehrartilleriedivision No.1 – 'slate grey' [all Hungarian LW artillery units = appropriate styles in 'slate grey', LS artillery units in white]

OPPOSITE **Soldiers resting between actions at the Piave river front in 1918. Note the mixture of Berendorfer and German-type M17 helmets (the latter distinguishable by their 'horns'); and also the bicycles, at top and left. The top right man in the pale uniform seems to be an Oberleutnant, and a dark Egalisierungstreif stands out clearly on his collar. (Author's collection)**

overcoat was in many cases shortened into a *paletot* style reaching only to the knee or thigh; this became very popular in the Balkans and on the Italian Front. The mountain troops received some examples of a *parka*-type coat, usually made of weather resistant linen. The experience of the first winter of the war led to the authorisation of the cavalry's warm, comfortable Dragonerpelzrock or Pelzulanka lined jackets for all army officers in the field. These were very popular, and photographs show that they were widely worn. Naturally the cavalry, even in the dismounted role, tried to keep them as long as possible; and they were also distributed to war-raised cyclist battalions.

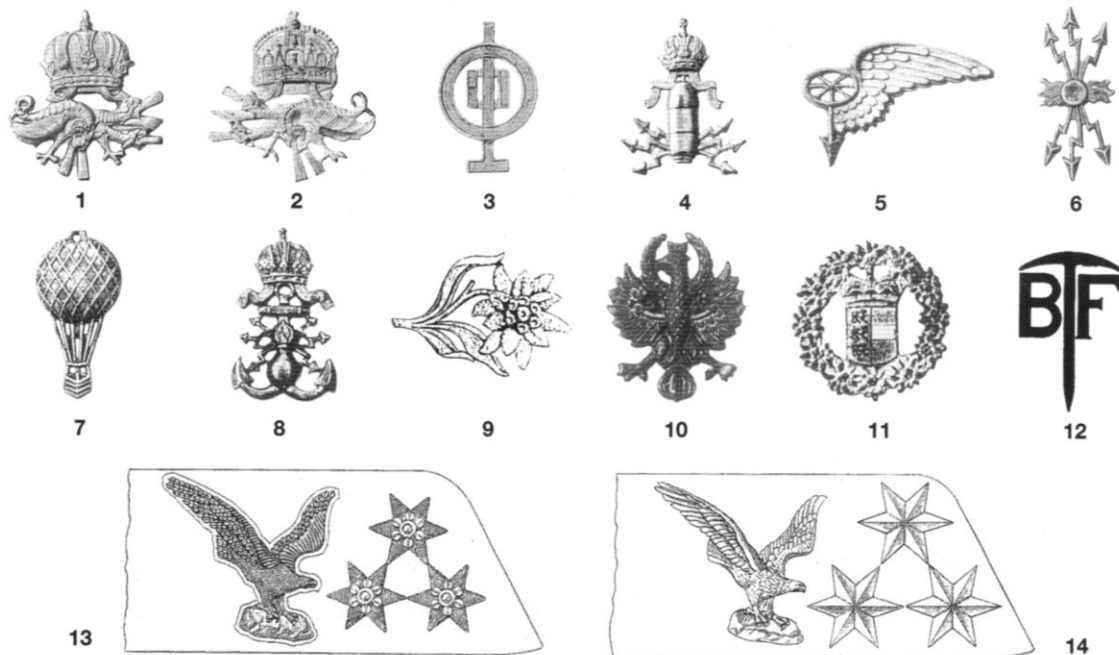
The dismounted cavalry very quickly lost their kneeboots, and served on wearing puttees and regular issue ankle boots. With the change to field-grey the Pioneer Corps were also issued with garments in this colour, but as a gesture to their traditions they retained their high boots; as wartime shortages bit, however, some took to wearing ankle boots and puttees.

ranks the peaks were frequently produced from pressed cardboard, sometimes covered with field-grey cloth. Leather had become scarce and had to be saved wherever possible. Therefore, depot troops on the home front received boots of inferior quality, and many items of leather equipment, e.g. belts and pistol holsters, were replaced by fabric versions which were only to be edged with narrow leather stripes. Similarly belt buckles were no longer produced in brass but were made of iron.

The elaborate knapsack was replaced with the much cheaper and more easily manufactured rucksack in a strong, light brown linen fabric. This alpine item had previously been in use by the mountain troops, but from the mid-war period it was rapidly adopted on all fronts by all types of units.

The necessities of war in different terrain and weather conditions also favoured the production of special garments. The regular issue infantry

Chart 2: Representative selection of specialist branch badges



- (1) Machine gun units (Austrian crown). Officers, gold or silver according to rank lace; NCOs and troops, white metal. For field uniforms a cap badge was introduced; in 1917 specialist badges were restricted to collars only, but the cap badge was not withdrawn.
- (2) Hungarian Honvéd MG, differentiated by Hungarian crown of St Stephen.
- (3) Infantry gun detachments.
- (4) Trench mortar units – both Austrian & Hungarian crown versions existed.
- (5) Automobile troops. Embroidered in gold for staff officers, in silver for officers, white metal for NCOs and troops.
- (6) Electrical units, on collar & left side of cap.
- (7) Flying corps. Officers, gold or silver according to rank lace; NCOs and troops, white metal; on collar behind rank stars.
- (8) Pioneers (Engineers); Common Army & Landwehr with Austrian crown, Honvéd with crown of St Stephen. Introduced in 1915 for wear on collar, cap and left upper arm; 1917, on collar only.
- (9) Edelweiss. Introduced 1907 for k.k. Landwehr Gebirgstruppen, worn on collar; 8 Aug 1914, awarded to all members of k.u.k. XIV Korps, worn on caps.
- (10) Tiroler Standschützen, worn on collar, as (13) & (14).
- (11) Kärntner Freiwilligen Schützen, worn on collar as (13) & (14).
- (12) Military mountain guide badge, introduced 1918; dark blue cloth on left arm 10cm below shoulder.
- (13) & (14) Grenzfäger – placing of eagle emblem on green collar patch behind rank stars for officer (embroidered), & NCO (pressed metal).

Steel helmets

During the latter half of 1916 steel helmets began to replace field caps in the trenches. Two major models came into use: the Austrian-produced 'Berndorfer' or M16, which had many similarities with the German M16 type; and the latter itself, which was also purchased in great numbers and renamed M17 in Austro-Hungarian service. The brim of the Berndorfer was rather smaller than its German counterpart, and a ventilation hole was positioned at the apex covered by a metal disc of about 2cm (0.78in) diameter. Production of this helmet was complex, which favoured the purchase of the simpler German type. In 1916 about 400,000 of the latter were acquired; from 1917 it was also produced throughout Austria-Hungary by the Berndorfer factory, by Gottlieb & Brauchbar at Brünn (Brno) in Moravia, Sholz Mateocz in Hungary, Warchalowsky in Vienna, the Weis Bros in Budapest, and A.Westen at Cilli near Laibach in Krajina (now Celje and Ljubljana in Slovenia).

Altogether in 1917, 675,000 were delivered and during 1918 another 807,132 reached the army. Under the conditions of the Italian Front these helmets were eagerly received and proved generally effective.

Further trials with a heavy armour shield fixed to the forehead of the helmet were not very effective and it was made only in small quantities.

Sidearms

As described in MAA 392, from as early as September 1914 officers were advised to discard their highly visible field sashes and polished sabres. By 1916 the bayonet began to replace the sabre for field duty, the latter being left in quarters for use only on ceremonial duties. Officers' bayonets were sometimes richly decorated; of special note were those privately purchased by officers of the aviation troops, among whom it became popular to have grips of mother-of-pearl or similar material, with a silver-plated balloon emblem in the centre. The gold (or silver, for volunteers) officers' portepée used on bayonets was rather smaller than that for the sabre, and had a 'closed' tassel.

Bayonets were also issued to the cavalry in their new dismounted role, but also to the remaining mounted squadrons. They were carried on the belt; the cavalry sabre was no longer carried from the *Kuppel* but from the saddle. This method also became popular among mounted staff officers. For combat troops the bayonets became increasingly simplified, with examples of the so-called *Ersatzbayonette* made entirely of steel without wooden grips.

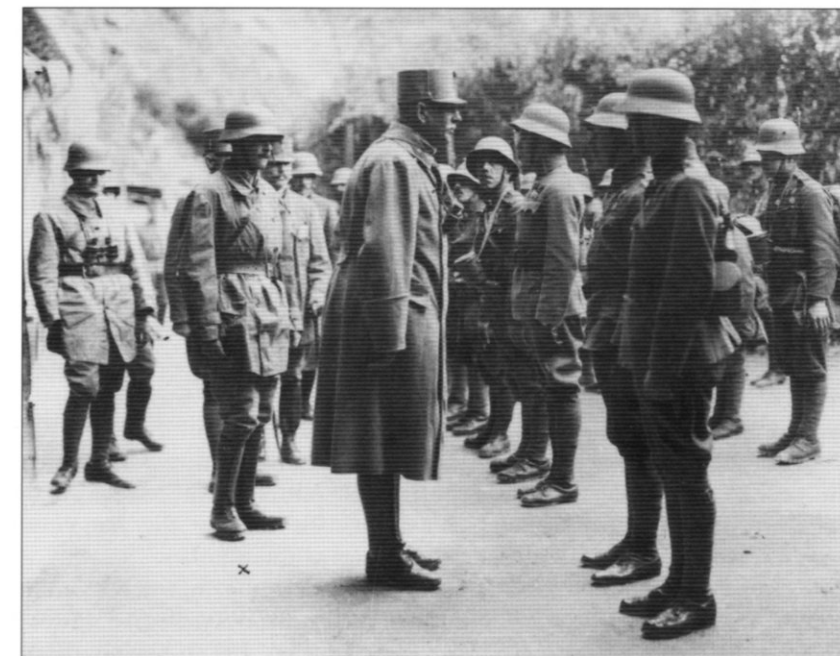
Trench warfare led to a popular practice of carrying daggers, which were seen among a wider range of troops than the official Sturmtruppen or assault troops. These daggers were produced by many factories in Austria and Hungary, and appeared in both iron and fabric scabbards. Photographs also show that in some cases officers mounted the portepée on the dagger hilt.

Insignia

During 1916 the facing-colour cloth for the regimental collar patches ran low. Improvisations saw the appearance of ever smaller patches; and by the middle of the year they were being replaced altogether with a simple vertical stripe of colour, about 1cm (0.4in) wide, set on the stand-and-fall collar 8.5cm (3.3in) behind the rank insignia. However, regiments were allowed to use up their facing-colour patches for as long as they had enough cloth.

The creation of new units without regimental

An inspection of troops in the Alpine region, with most of the officers and soldiers wearing Berndorfer steel helmets and rucksacks. Note that the officers on the left side are dressed in the thigh-length wind jackets introduced for mountain warfare. (Kriegsarchiv)



facing colours, and the increasing uniformity of the armed forces, led in 1917 to a further major decision which broke with all traditions of the comparatively colourful army of 1914. Stripes of specific colours would no longer identify individual regiments (in conjunction with button colours and German/Hungarian national distinctions), but henceforward would simply identify arms and branches of service.

To identify his unit, each soldier would now receive five square patches of waxed cloth, to be worn by troops and NCOs on their jacket and greatcoat shoulder straps (reading from the front), and on the left side of their cap. For officers the patch was larger and worn only on the cap. These patches showed – in the colours listed below – the number of their regiment, battalion, battery, etc:

k.u.k. Common Army – blue

k.k. Landwehr – green

k.k. Landsturm – red

k.u. Honvéd – 'slate-grey' (a dull pinkish shade)

k.u. Landsturm – white

These colours were also to appear as *Egalisierungstreifen* on the collar, at least for the infantry.

Infantry units (from the Common Army and both the Landwehr and Landsturm) were identified by numbers; line infantry displayed numbers only, while all other arms and branches used either abbreviations or symbols with the unit numbers, in the same colours. (See Chart 1.) The Tiroler Kaiserjäger had the prefix 'TJ' before the regimental number, the Bosnian–Hercegovinian regiments 'bh', the Feldjägerbataillone 'J', the Bosnian–Hercegovinian Jägerbataillone 'bhJ', and the Grenzbataillone 'GrJ'. In the cavalry, the dragoons displayed the prefix 'D', the Ulanen 'U' and the Hussars 'H'.

The artillery had crossed cannon barrels over a shell between two balls, followed by the number for the Feldkanonenregiment. Feldhaubitzenregiment displayed the number underlined once, and heavy field artillery regiments, underlined twice. Horse artillery had the number boxed and with a diagonal bar, and for mountain artillery the number was 'encircled' by an oval border. Fortress artillery showed the cannons and 'FsR' or 'FsB' (Festungsartillerieregiment or -bataillon) followed by the number. Among the technical troops, Sappers wore an 'S' prefix, Pioneers 'P', and Brückenbaubataillone (bridging battalions) 'Br' before the battalion number. Medical units wore a red cross ahead of the number.

Within the Landwehr and the Honvéd the regular infantry showed numbers in the appropriate colour, with the three Tyrolean Landes-



Classic photograph of a soldier on sentry duty in the fringe of a wood on the Isonzo front, August 1917. He wears the German-type M17 steel helmet; his equipment includes a slung gas mask canister, a large bread bag, a fixed bayonet complete with knot in national colours, and a separate dagger – cf Plate E4. (Kriegsarchiv)

number in Roman numerals. Etappen-Bataillone had their number boxed. In the Landwehr cavalry, Ulanen had a 'U', Reitende Tiroler Landeschützen 'RTS' and Reitende Dalmatiner Landesschützen 'RDS'. In the Hungarian Honvéd Artillery the cannons were positioned behind the regimental number.

As the war went on the waxed cloth squares had to be produced of *ersatz* material, and they were finally made of waxed cardboard. Photographs rarely show the squares on the shoulderstraps, simply because of the angles at which most photographs were taken, but occasionally they do show up on the side of the field cap. Interestingly, these cap patches must have been much more acceptable to all ranks,

since in December 1917 a special order was issued restricting the patches (either cloth or privately embroidered) on the caps to officers only. With the common use of steel helmets even that possibility faded away.

This complex system could only have been understood as a wartime improvisation, and was not very popular.

Photographic evidence even from late 1918 shows that the collar stripes in regimental or branch colours and sometimes even the old full collar patches still survived. In practice the field uniforms of the Austro-Hungarian forces between 1916 and November 1918 showed a great variety of whatever was available, and there was hardly any real uniformity even within individual units. When a soldier's uniform had to be replaced the newly issued garment was usually of inferior quality and varying shade to others still worn by his comrades.

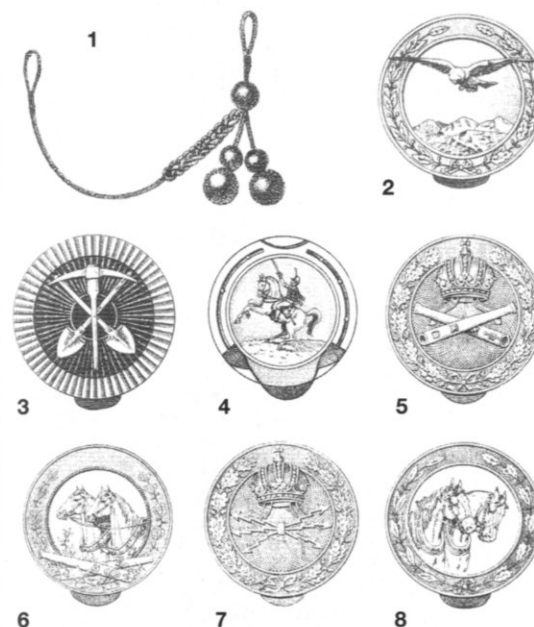
SPECIALIST AND TECHNICAL TROOPS

The k.u.k. Sturmtruppen

These assault units were created in 1916, drawing upon the experience of the German forces on the Western Front. Between mid-November 1916 and January 1917 three special courses were held at the German assault troop training school at Beuville for Austro-Hungarian officers and NCOs. The returning graduates of these courses later formed the nucleus of the units raised among the Austro-Hungarian forces.

The nomenclature chosen by the k.u.k. Armeekorpskommando for the new units was Sturmpatrouillen ('assault patrols'), and it was intended that by spring 1917 every company within the infantry should have trained at least

Chart 3: Representative selection of proficiency badges



(All applied to Common Army, k.k. Landwehr & k.u. Honvéd unless otherwise noted)

- (1) *Schützenauszeichnung*. This marksmanship lanyard – scarlet for line infantry, grass-green for Jägertruppe – was awarded for other types of quantified proficiency in other branches: e.g. to Pioneers in 'steel-green', to Sappers in cherry-red, and to railway and telegraph units in dark green. For infantry and Jägertruppe a higher class for 'Scharfschütze' had gold cords and only the balls in branch colours.
- (2) Infantry distance-judging badge.
- (3) Sapper's badge, later extended to Truppenpioniere.
- (4) Rough-rider's badge for k.u. Honvéd cavalry, showing a Hungarian hussar; Common Army & k.k. Landwehr version featured St George and Dragon within oak & laurel circlet.
- (5) Artillery gun-layer's badge.
- (6) Artillery driver's badge.
- (7) Telegraph operator's badge.
- (8) Transport driver's badge.



two patrols each made up of an NCO and eight men. During 1917 special *Armeesturmabteilungen* ('army assault battalions') were formed for special missions ordered by the different armies; and finally *Divisionssturmabteilungen* ('divisional assault battalions') were formed from *Sturmkompanien* drawn from every regiment within the division.

The equipment of an assault soldier was quite complex; it included a steel helmet, field-grey uniform reinforced with leather elbow and knee patches, a rucksack, four emergency rations of tinned food, two water bottles covered with cloth, a gas mask in its container with a spare filter, two hand grenade bags, four empty sandbags, an electric flashlight, a short-hafted spade or pick, a carbine, bayonet, dagger, 40 cartridges in the blouse and trouser pockets, and both stick- and egg-grenades. Leather gloves and wire cutters were issued, as were a compass, signal whistle and first aid kit. Additionally, for hand-to-hand fighting many troops made for themselves archaic but effective weapons such as trench clubs.

Specialist mountain units

From May 1915, when Italy attacked along the Alpine Front, the war in the high mountains rapidly led to both improvised and centrally developed techniques and equipment.

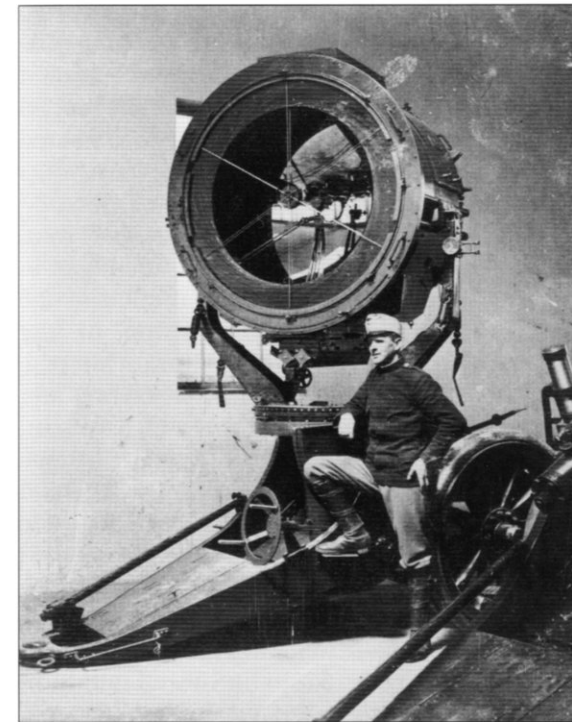
One sometimes deadly 'weapon' was the *Gesteinsbohrgerät* ('rock drilling equipment'), which was available in several different sizes, to undermine mountain positions in order to blow up their peaks. As mentioned in MAA 392, the first example of such an operation was the blowing up by the Italians of the peak of the Col di Lana, killing about 200 *Kaiserjäger* defending positions on that mountain. The Italians put great emphasis on this type of equipment, but the Austro-Hungarian army always lagged behind in the development and especially the quantity of such machinery made available. The pneumatic mobile *Gesteinsbohrzug* ('pneumatic mining machine') was

Officers and NCOs of *Sturmpatrouillen* assault troops on the Italian Front in September 1917 – cf Plate E. Visible details include cloth drawstring helmet covers, leather-trimmed canvas pistol holsters, grenade bags, and full medals worn on combat dress. Note also the variety of shades of field-grey uniforms among this group. (Kriegsarchiv)

OPPOSITE A 90cm M15 *Scheinwerfer* (mobile searchlight) photographed in a depot at Trieste in 1916. This type had an effective range of about 2500m, and this detachment was deployed to sweep the Gulf of Trieste. Interestingly, the soldier wears a dark blue pre-1908 jacket with a pike-grey field cap and trousers and spirally-strapped leather gaiters. (Kriegsarchiv)



The use of searchlights in the field was an area in which Austria-Hungary played a leading role. This 45cm acetylene/oxygen searchlight was photographed at a training ground in Galicia in March 1917. (Kriegsarchiv)



telephone sections and a technical section. Their replacements were taken from alpine battalions.

The special *Bergführerkompanien* (mountain guide companies) were in fact only administrative entities; most of the guides were detached in sections to provide guide and scouting support to other units.

Finally, *Seilbahnformationen* (cable car units) took over the task of moving men, matériel and ammunition forward and of evacuating the wounded where possible; their equipment could span distances of up to 1½ miles (2.5km).

Searchlights and electrical equipment

The requirements of modern warfare that revealed themselves early in World War I led to the creation of what were – for those days – highly technical units.

Among the most important were the k.u.k. *Scheinwerferformationen* (searchlight units) operating a wide range of different equipment.

Each infantry technical company operated one 30cm and one 45cm acetylene/oxygen searchlight, and each technical platoon one 30cm light. The 70cm acetylene/oxygen equipment was operated by army-level units. Apart from these models, electrical searchlights underwent a remarkable process of development. Again, two main groups existed. The 25cm and 35cm searchlight were used to illuminate the closer areas of the battlefield (from 700 to 1000m); for greater distances (up to 4000m), lights of 60cm, 90cm, 110cm, 120cm and 150cm were available. All of these were mobile; some of the larger types

were initially horse-drawn, but the largest were mounted on lorries (Autoscheinwerfer).

Another and particularly deadly 'weapon' was developed for use by electrical platoons: the Hochspannungs-Hindernis ('high voltage fence'). A platoon consisted of two officers and 67 men, of whom 16 were electricians, 20 soldiers and 21 service corps men. They could electrify a 1¼-mile (2km) length of wire fence; but could also be used for maintenance activities such as powering trench pumps, ventilators and electrical saws.

Gas warfare

Apart from the use of gas shells by the artillery, which became standard practice for most of the combatant armies in the Great War, the Austro-Hungarian forces made only slight use of heavy gas attacks – although in one instance this proved very effective.

When the possibility of using poison gas was reported to Emperor Franz Joseph I, he – like many soldiers of 19th century up-bringing – found the idea repugnant, and rejected any use of gas for killing soldiers. Later, when it was reported that gas was already in use by the Dual Monarchy's enemies, the old emperor reluctantly agreed to its employment, but only in retaliation.

Meanwhile, the army had already made preparations for the creation of special units for gas warfare. At the turn of 1915/16 two k.u.k. Sappeurbataillone, Nos.61 and 62, provided the nucleus for the new Spezialformationen der k.u.k. Sappeurtruppe ('special Sapper units'). In February 1916 these troops formed the k.u.k. Sappeur-Spezial-Bataillon, which later reverted to the title k.u.k. Sappeurbataillon No.62.

Records report a few experimental 'blown attacks' to create gas clouds, the first taking place on the plateau of Doberdo at the southern flank of the Isonzo front line on 29 June 1916. The Italians were taken by surprise, but the gas cloud hit both the defenders and the Austro-Hungarian attackers; the Italian second line trenches were taken in the subsequent assault, but lost again to a counter-attack half an hour later. The second reported use, at the Assa gorge in the Tyrol, is not well documented by either side and thus may have been a failure.

On the Eastern Front, the Germans used gas in support of the k.u.k. 29. Infanteriedivision in the area of Witonitz on the Stochod river on 17 and 18 October 1916. Again, due to the unpredictable movement of the gas cloud troops of both sides were affected and the subsequent infantry attack was only partially successful. Over the following months the k.u.k. Sappeur-Spezial-Bataillon operated in co-ordination

with the Germans in several smaller actions on the Eastern Front.

The battalion was then transferred to the Isonzo front and there, again with German aid, prepared the decisive gas attack for the Twelfth Battle (Caporetto). In the early hours of 24 October 1917, this attack opened the way for the Austro-Hungarian and German assault forces in the Flitsch-Tolmein sector; this occasion saw the most effective of all gas operations by the k.u.k. unit, in the narrow Isonzo valley.

A few months later, on the Piave front, another operation was planned for the area between Nervesa and the Adriatic coast. The gas canisters were reported ready on 30 March 1918, but the attack was postponed until 2 April. Further delays were then ordered, until the 13th and 17th; and finally until 2 May, when heavy rains forced the operation to be abandoned completely.

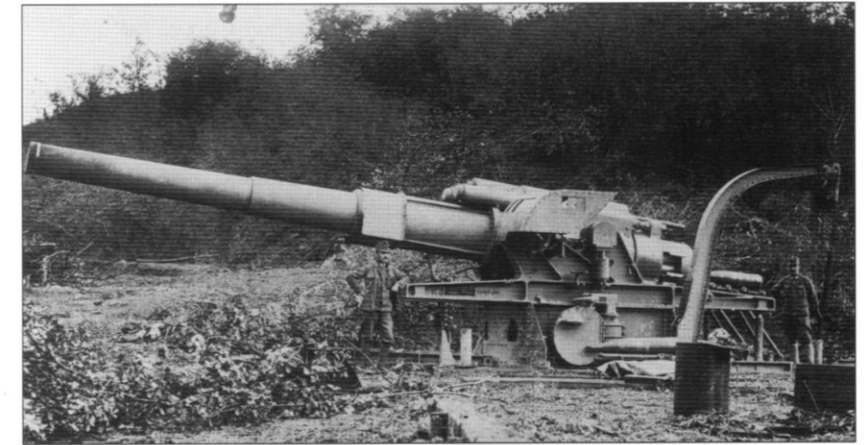
The k.u.k. Autotruppe

The cadre for this support branch was formed in 1909 under the title Autokader, renamed in 1913 as Automobilabteilung, in 1915 as Kraftfahrtruppe, and finally in 1917 as Autotruppe. In 1914 volunteers of the k.k. Österreichisches freiwilliges Automobilistenkorps, the k.u. Freiwilliges Automobilistenkorps, and the k.k. Österreichisches freiwilliges Motocyclistenkorps made up the nucleus of this motorised organisation. Usually these volunteers possessed their own private cars, and offered them together with their own services.

Lorries gradually became available during the war, and the Autotruppe grew to a strength no one had anticipated. In late 1917 the k.u.k. Autotruppe numbered 900 officers, 30 engineers and about 48,000 NCOs and enlisted men. During the second half of the war every k.u.k. Armee had its own automobile section with a number of depots and central maintenance facilities. Subordinate to this army level command were up to three Autogruppenkommandos, each of them having a small depot, a maintenance garage for minor repairs, one lorry column for postal transport, one ambulance column, and three lorry columns.

The strength of the Autokolonne was a command car, a maintenance car and 20 lorries. According to requirements the unit might be designated as a light column, with a capacity of about 40 tons, or a heavy column with a greater capacity. Each ambulance column had one command car and ten ambulances; and the postal column consisted of one command car and 20 postal lorries carrying up to 30 tons in total. The vehicle types varied enormously and were only partially standardised before the end of the war.

Initially the uniforms were pike-grey, which was later changed to field-grey. Personnel also received leather protective coats. Their



24cm M16 Skoda gun in action at Dornberk on the Isonzo. This type of gun, together with the 35cm (a naval design, of which only one piece saw action) were deployed on the Italian Front by former Fortress Artillery units redesignated as Heavy Field Artillery regiments – schwere Feldartillerieregimenter. (Kriegsarchiv)

10.4cm Langrohrkanone on the Italian Front, either firing gas shells or during an enemy gas attack, since all the crew wear gas masks. (Kriegsarchiv)



distinctive badge was worn behind the collar rank insignia, and consisted of a winged steering wheel.

Armoured cars

This branch saw some of the most interesting technical developments of the war, though its field strength was negligible.

In 1914 the armoured train was considered to be the most important mobile asset, especially on the Eastern Front, and both the Russian and Austro-Hungarian forces made comparatively wide use of them. The Austro-Hungarian trains were mostly converted by the Hungarian State Railways (MÁV) and were frequently armed with guns from either the naval arsenal at Pola or from disarmed ships. (Interestingly, no naval personnel were transferred to man them in the armoured trains.) As the nature of the war changed over the years, all the armoured trains were called back to Deutsch-Wagram in Lower Austria, where they were re-composed for future service.

Despite the emphasis on armoured trains, the idea of producing armoured cars and even tanks was pursued by individuals, though their projects were never received with much enthusiasm by the Army. In 1911 an Austro-Hungarian officer, Oberleutnant der Genietruppen Günther Burstyn, had come up with a very promising design for a tank based on the chassis of the American Holt caterpillar tractor, but the army did not adopt it. A model survives in the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum in Vienna; a track-laying vehicle with a movable turret on top mounting a small calibre quick-firing gun, it was 3.5m long, and 1.9m in both width and height. It would have been manned by three or four men.

During the early war years two main types of armoured cars were developed, but neither aroused much interest among the military authorities. Some of the small number used in the field were home produced, and others captured and repaired enemy types taken into service. One Austro-Hungarian type, named the Junovicz after its designer, was built from 1915, based on different truck chassis. Three Junoviczs are recorded as having been built on the Fiat 40PS chassis, and two more based on the Büssing 36t and Saurer 34PS respectively.

Some other sources report two others based on the chassis of a Perl and a Praga. Their crews consisted of five

(continued on page 33)



A Junovicz armoured car photographed in Bukovina, armed with three Schwarzlose 07/12 machine guns and carrying a crew of five. 'P.A.1' probably stands for *Panzerauto 1* - 'Armoured Car No.1'. Only about half-a-dozen were built, but photos prove that at least one of them saw action during counter-attacks in this region. (Kriegsarchiv)

1: Emperor Karl I, 1917/18

2: FM Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf; Tyrol, winter 1917/18

3: GenOberst Svetozar Boroevic von Bojna; Isonzo front, 1917



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- 1: Rittmeister, k.u. Honvéd Husarenregiment No.7, 1916
- 2: Unteroffizier, Tiroler Kaiserjägerregiment No.1, 1917
- 3: Dog-handler, Sanitätstruppe, late 1917
- 4: Vormeister, k.u.k. Gebirgsartillerie



- 1: Feldkurat, Isonzo front, 1917
- 2: Feldkurat, Balkan theatre, 1916-18
- 3: Feldrabbiner, Eastern Front, 1916-1918
- 4: Militärinam, Balkan theatre, 1917



- 1: Kontre-Admiral Alfred Freiherr von Koudelka
- 2: Gefreiter, k.u.k. Seebataillon Triest, 1917
- 3: Linienschiffsleutnant, k.u.k. Lagunenflottille, autumn 1917
- 4: Maat, k.u.k. Seeflugstation Triest, summer 1917



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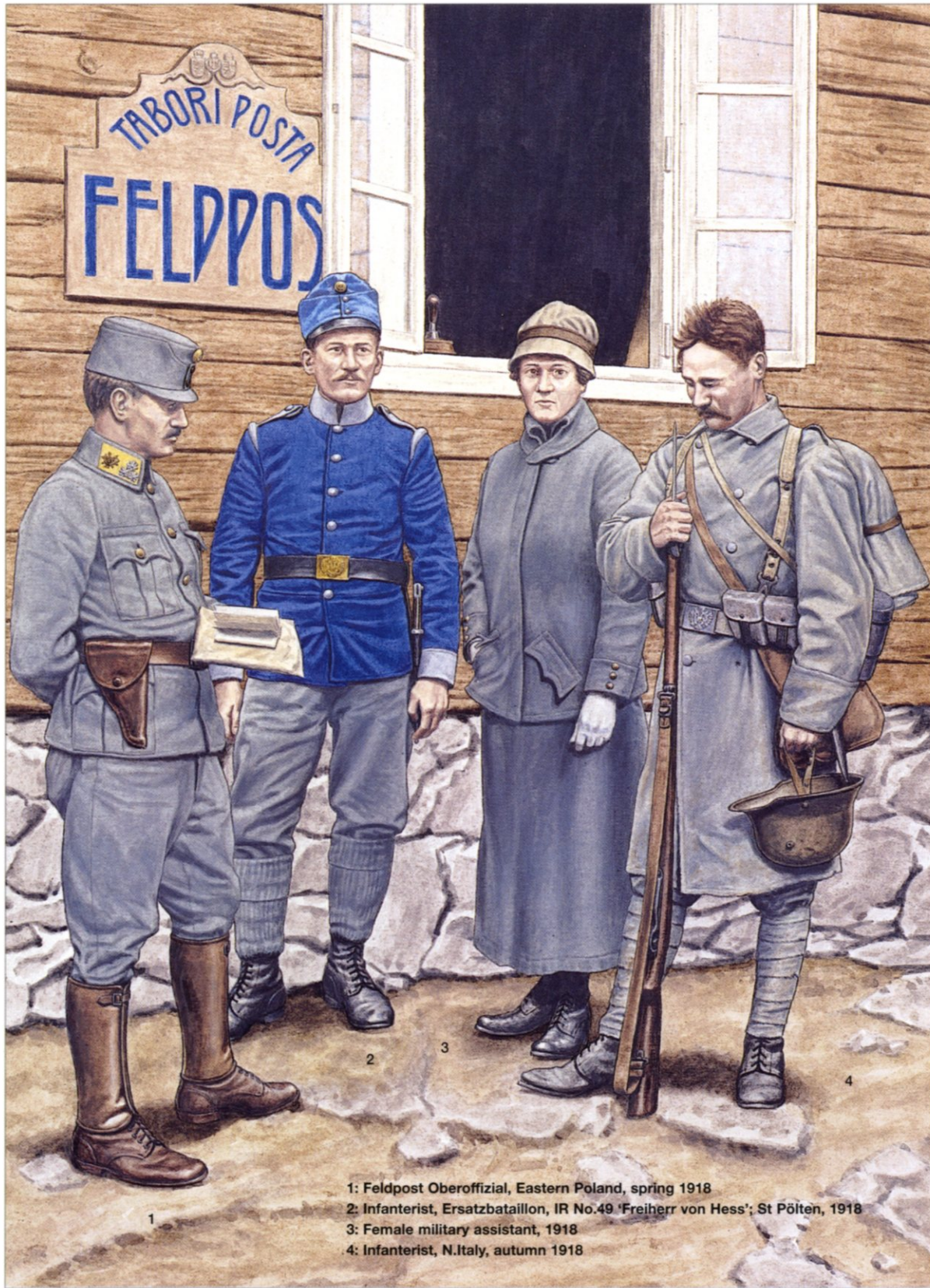
- 1: Leutnant of a k.u.k. Sturmbataillon, 1917-18
- 2: Zugführer of a k.u.k. Sturmbataillon, 1917-18
- 3: Gefreiter, k.u.k. Sappeurbataillon 61
- 4: Korporal of infantry, Piave front, summer/autumn 1918

- 1: Oberleutnant Feldpilot Frank Linke-Crawford, Italian Front, spring 1918
- 2: Officer in flying clothing, Eastern Front, 1917
- 3: Fregattenleutnant, k.u.k. Seeflugstation Triest, 1917-18
- 4: Korporal, k.u.k. Autotruppe, Balkans, 1917



- 1: Feldwebel, Dalmatian Islands, spring 1917
- 2: Offizier of k.u.k. Grenzjäger, Albania, autumn 1917
- 3: Freiwillige, Albanian Legion, autumn 1917
- 4: Legions-Feldwebel, Ukrainian Legion, autumn 1917





1: Feldpost Oberoffizial, Eastern Poland, spring 1918
 2: Infanterist, Ersatzbataillon, IR No.49 'Freiherr von Hess', St Pölten, 1918
 3: Female military assistant, 1918
 4: Infanterist, N.Italy, autumn 1918

men, and all were armed with two Schwarzlose M07/12 machine guns each.

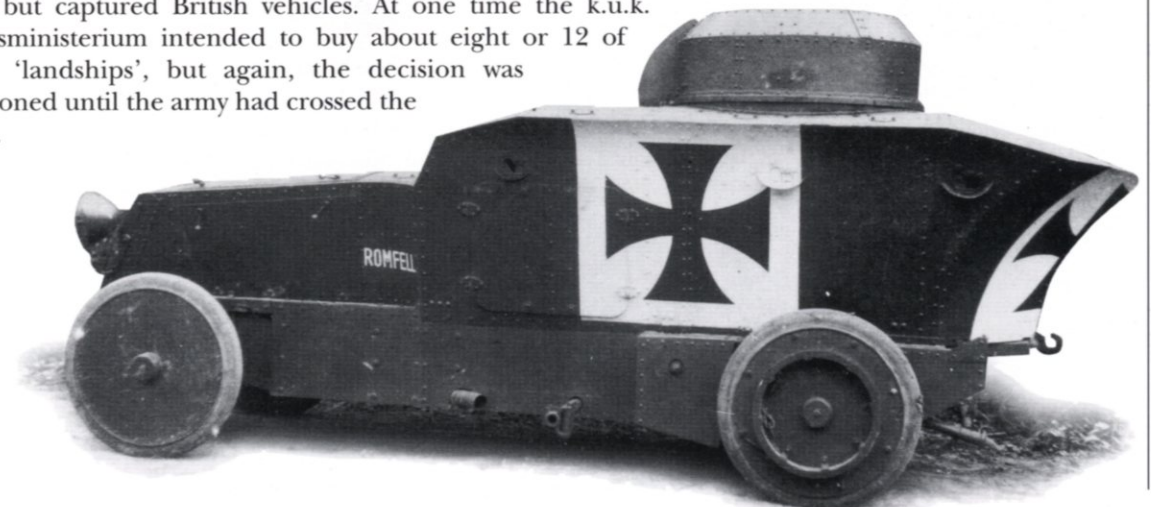
The other Austro-Hungarian development – a very elegant one – was built in Budapest by Hauptmann Ing. Romanic and Oberleutnant Fellner, their names contracted to give 'Romfell'. One was built in 1915 on the chassis of a Seilwindenwagen M09 (Samson) with a 4-cylinder Daimler 75hp engine; another is said to have been based on the M09 (Goliath) with a 6-cylinder 90hp engine. Since these were extremely heavy, captured 2-ton Fiat chassis were used after the battle of Caporetto. The Romfell was armed with one Schwarzlose machine gun in a rotating turret, which could also be elevated for anti-aircraft fire, and had a four-man crew.

Armoured cars first saw action in the East and the Balkans; later they also reached the Italian Front, one being listed under the defensive command at Trieste. Some enemy cars captured up to 1917 were repaired and partly re-armed for Austro-Hungarian service. A document of 1918 gives evidence that after the advance during the Twelfth Battle of the Isonzo, a 'k.u.k. Panzerautozug No.1' (Armoured Car Section No.1) existed in the area of Udine and was busy training its personnel. This section had one Romfell, two Junoviczs, an Italian Lancia and a Russian Austin. In his report the commanding officer claimed the need to re-arm the cars with Austro-Hungarian weapons since the stocks of ammunition for the captured machine guns were low. The k.u.k. Armeekorpskommando remained cool to the idea of using armoured cars on the plains of the Veneto, which are constantly cut by canals and lagoons; but they apparently foresaw a more intensive use in the pursuit of Italian forces after the planned crossing of the Piave river. The k.u.k. Panzerautozug No.1 may therefore never have seen front line service.

The total number of vehicles in service is still unconfirmed. Most sources report three to five (or perhaps even seven) Junoviczs, and one or two Romfells (perhaps some more in the course of construction), together with a number of captured cars. Interestingly, according to a note from the Director of the Hungarian War Archive in Budapest (from 1963), the Hungarian army in 1919 operated no less than 38 Romfells, with three-man crews.

By the end of 1917 some Austro-Hungarian officers had been sent to Berlin to become acquainted with tanks – not the German A7V type, but captured British vehicles. At one time the k.u.k. Kriegsministerium intended to buy about eight or 12 of these 'landships', but again, the decision was postponed until the army had crossed the Piave.

A rather more graceful Romfell armoured car, photographed in Galicia. Again built in only a tiny handful of examples, this type mounted a single Schwarzlose MG in a rotating turret. Their rarity makes Austro-Hungarian armoured cars an interesting subject for research, but their operational contribution was not significant. (Kriegsarchiv)



Army aviation

In 1914 a separate air service based upon the k.u.k. Luftschiffer Ersatzabteilung was at the planning stage. Thereafter, k.u.k. Fliegerkompanien and Ballon-Kompanien were formed to serve with the operational armies. Usually, during the earlier stages of the war, the aircraft were mostly employed for reconnaissance, the pilots frequently being NCOs and the observers officers. During the middle years the number of Fliegerkompanien increased steadily, and their identifying numbers took suffixes to indicate their specific missions: J = Jagdfliegerkompanie (fighters); D = Divisionsfliegerkompanie (reconnaissance bombers); F = Fernaufklärungs-Fliegerkompanie (long range reconnaissance); P = Photofliegerkompanie (aerial photography); Rb = Reihenbildfliegerkompanie (film photography); S = Schlachtfliiegerkompanie (ground attack); K = Korps-Fliegerkompanie (corps asset, from September 1918); and G = Grossflugzeugkompanie (multi-engined bombers).

Because of the hasty formation of the new arm, no attempt was made to create special uniforms. The uniform of the previous assignment remained in use, with the sole addition of the balloon symbol of the aviation service behind the rank device on the collar. During the first years of the war many different uniforms could be seen, but these faded away with the standardisation of field-grey clothing throughout the Army. The air service did not even have its own facing colour, so from 1916 a collar stripe might be worn in the former regimental colour, behind the rank device and balloon badge; later, only the rank and branch devices were displayed. The balloon symbol, introduced in 1906, was of white metal for NCOs and enlisted ranks, and might be gilt or silver for officers depending on the colour of the lace in their rank device.

For details of aircraft and operations, readers are highly recommended to consult the specialised literature (e.g. Osprey Aircraft of the Aces No.46, *Austro-Hungarian Aces of WWI*).

Naval shore units

During the early Italian threat to Trieste the k.u.k. Seebezirkskommandant (naval district commander), Kontre-Admiral (Rear Admiral) Alfred Freiherr von Koudelka, formed a unit later to be named k.u.k. Seebataillon Triest (Naval Battalion Trieste), which went into the front line at Duino during the first battles of the Isonzo. Koudelka was given command of k.u.k. 187. Infanteriebrigade (which included the naval battalion) – a unique position for a naval officer.

Initially the k.u.k. Seebataillon had only two companies, and incorporated as its third company the so-called k.k. Triester Jungschützen,

a volunteer organisation drawn from the final year classes of secondary schools in the city (at Adm Koudelka's initiative these youngsters received naval uniform). In addition about a dozen machine gun detachments were formed and incorporated. Later, a fourth company was established to make up the core of the so-called Lagunenflottille (Lagoon Flotilla), which operated with small armoured motor barges in the Gulf of Trieste and along the coastline to the mouth of the Isonzo.

This latter unit became independent in 1916, and in October/November 1917 it played an interesting role in the amphibious re-occupation of the town of Grado. Thereafter it was busy in the supply of goods by sea or via the waterways of the lagoon and the Veneto canals, with Caorle as its forward base.

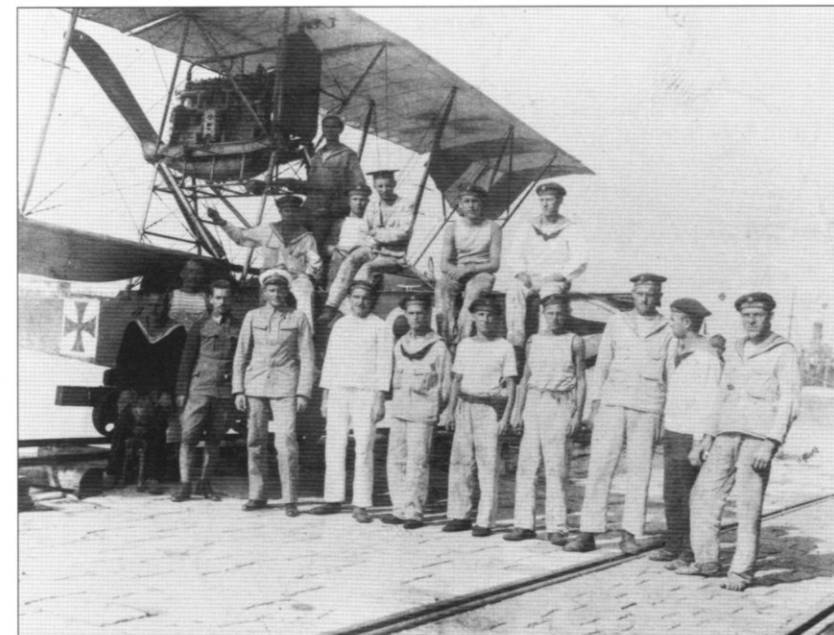
Admiral Koudelka's precautions to defend the wide open Gulf of Trieste against Italian amphibious landings also included the formation of numerous batteries of all calibres along the coastline leading to Istria. Again, replacements for personnel were provided by the k.u.k. Seebataillon Triest. During the Twelfth Battle of the Isonzo some of the artillery units were made mobile, and advanced with the Army as far as the Piave line. Most of these units were intended to take part in the planned occupation of Venice following the last offensive in 1918.

Army chaplains

Although the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy was mainly a Roman Catholic state the different nationalities within the Empire followed a number of religious faiths, and the Army established religious support for a variety of confessions (though some of them only as reservists to be called up at the time of mobilisation). The largest group were the Roman Catholic chaplains, followed by Greek Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Protestant Lutherans and Calvinists. Jewish rabbis were provided only in wartime and formed the Israelitische Militärseelsorge (Jewish pastoral care) section. The Islamitische Militärseelsorge was likewise provided for the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslim troops.

Interestingly, the clerical garments were basically the same for all the different confessions, special religious attributes being added only when celebrating the appropriate rites. In the field, many of the chaplains quickly adopted either pike-grey or (more frequently) field-grey clothing, and different cuts can be identified from photographs. While many chaplains wore uniforms of similar design to those of the troops, others preferred that of the old-style black clerical coat (see Plate C1)

A Feldpilot (pilot officer) in a leather flying helmet and coat; cf Plate F2. (Kriegsarchiv)



Naval personnel of the k.u.k. Seeflugstation Triest; this air base was more involved in operations along the lower Isonzo front line than in naval actions at sea. The CO of the station was the famous Linienschiffsleutnant Gottfried von Banfield, who was decorated with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Maria Theresia for his bravery during the defence of Trieste. Second left is a naval aviator in field-grey uniform. See Plates D4 & F3. (Author's collection)

tailored in either pike-grey or field-grey. Chaplains wearing steel helmets can be identified in some photographs. The most distinctive features displayed by chaplains in the field were golden-yellow stripes worn above the cuffs, which were used by all the different confessions: most commonly, three narrow stripes, equivalent to captain's rank and identifying the most junior chaplains. Even Catholic friars usually wore their cowls with the stripes sewn to the sleeves.

Female personnel

In 1916 the War Ministry agreed to employ female assistants in offices, depots or kitchens, and during that year some Army rear commands followed this idea. During 1917 the number of female employees increased steadily, up to 60,000 in War Ministry and central command installations and 27,000 in the rear areas of the armies in the field. By October 1918 these figures had grown to 107,000 on the home front and 33,000 with the field armies. Distinct from these, female auxiliaries served with ambulances and hospitals either as regular nurses or Austrian (or Hungarian) Red Cross personnel.

During 1918 the Army decided to dress those serving with the armies in the field to some level of uniformity. The new dispensation created two main classes of female employee within the commands or equivalent authorities: the more highly educated were to be employed as 1st Class assistants, and their less well educated 'helpers' as 2nd Class. The k.u.k. Armeeoberkommando issued dress guidelines for these female personnel, but the official attitude was somewhat schizophrenic – there seemed to be a desire to avoid any extremes of fashion, while simultaneously denying the hint of official military status which would be implied by true uniformity. The dress guidelines were not to be considered as an 'order'; the women were to be persuaded to dress in neat field-grey or grey-green costumes, but any sign of uniformity should be prohibited. The costumes were tailored with yellow metal buttons on the cuffs; and, while 'any sign of uniformity' was prohibited, the 2nd Class assistants were to have two buttons and the 1st Class three buttons...

SECONDARY FRONTS

The k.u.k. Orientkorps

Following a request from the Ottoman high command in 1917, Austria-Hungary agreed to form a special corps for service in Palestine. This was influenced by the German Asienkorps which was already establishing itself along the Palestine front line. After lengthy consideration the k.u.k. Armeeoberkommando decided in December 1917 that the unit should be structured like a Gebirgsbrigade, reinforced with transport columns for its necessary support in the front lines. These latter were to be provided partly by the k.u.k. Autokolonnen Türkei Nos.1, 2, 3 & 4, which were already operating in Mesopotamia and Palestine (see MAA 392). To these would be added the newly formed k.u.k. Autokolonnen Türkei Nos.8 & 10 (only the latter would in fact be transferred to Turkey in 1918).

The main weight of the force was to be four battalions of infantry, plus two artillery units of which one – the k.u.k. Feldhaubitzeabteilung in der Türkei – was already in Palestine. The other, the k.u.k.

Gebirgskanonenabteilung in der Türkei, was concentrated near Kraljevo in Serbia for special training. The 4th Company of k.u.k. Sappeur-bataillon 38, already ear-marked for independent service in Turkey, was also to be integrated in the Orientkorps.

Interestingly, the religious composition of the infantry was, for the first time, a gesture to the Turks: three of the four battalions were to include men of Muslim Bosnian origin, to be taken from existing regiments. The fourth battalion was to be formed from IV/IR 103, mainly made up of Romanians, Hungarians and Germans from Transylvania.

On 8 January 1918, Oberstleutnant im k.u.k. Generalstabkorps (Staff LtCol) Stefan Duic took over command and began to assemble his units for training and equipment. During the initial phases the sappers were taken away for service on other fronts, and until the end of May 1918, although the force was equipped with tropical uniforms and trained, no movement orders arrived. On 6 June 1918 the k.u.k. Gebirgskanonenabteilung in der Türkei was ordered to leave for Palestine; and this was in fact to be the only unit to do so. The infantry of the corps eventually served on the Piave front. In August the corps was transferred to Albania, where it took part in the very last operations undertaken by the k.u.k. forces. Unfortunately, there is no evidence as to whether or not these units were still wearing tropical uniforms when on the Piave or in Albania.

The Western Front

The first request from Germany for Austro-Hungarian support on the Western Front came as early as August 1914. Specifically, the Germans asked for modern heavy artillery to take part in the shelling of Liège.

The Austro-Hungarian Army could spare four batteries each of two 30.5cm 'mortars', each named after the place it came from. From the area of Krakau the 3rd and 4th Batteries, k.u.k. Festungsartillerieregiment No.2 were detached and named Halbbataillon Krakau. The other half-battalion, detached from Görz (Gorizia), consisted of 7th and 8th Batteries, k.u.k. Festungsartilleriebataillon No.8, and were named Halbbataillon Görz.

Both units left Austria in August 1914 but were too late to take part in the bombardment of Liège. They first saw action along the



Albanian Volunteers relaxing in a village. Note two different sorts of fez, and distinctive black/red Albanian cockades. These soldiers are dressed in the M15 field-grey jacket with standing collar. (Kriegsarchiv)

Principal Austro-Hungarian units on Turkish Fronts, 1915-18

Command echelon for artillery, transport & medical units (Constantinople, 1915-18)
k.u.k. 24cm Mörserbatterie No.9 (1915-18; from 1917, only 2 mortars)
k.u.k. 15cm Haubitzbatterie No.36 (1915-18)
k.u.k. Gebirgshaubitze division von Marno (from mid-1917, renamed k.u.k. Gebirgshaubitze division in der Türkei; later, k.u.k. Gebirgshaubitzeabteilung idT; 1918, re-armed & renamed k.u.k. Feldhaubitzeabteilung idT)
k.u.k. 10cm Kanonenbatterie No.20 (from half personnel of 24cm Mtr Bty, equipped with two guns)
k.u.k. Gebirgskanonenabteilung in der Türkei (1918)
k.u.k. Instruktionsdetachment für Gebirgsartillerie (1916-18) (also training detachments for searchlights, trench mortars & infantry guns)
k.u.k. Kraftwagenkolonnen in der Türkei Nos.1, 2, 3 & 4 (1916-18; 1916, renamed k.u.k. Autokolonnen idT)
k.u.k. Instruktionskraftwagenkolonnen Türkei Nos.1, 2 & 3
k.u.k. mobile Kraftwagenwerkstätten Türkei Nos.1, 2 & 3 (1916-18 - mobile maintenance units, later renamed k.u.k. mobile Autowerkstätten Türkei)
k.u.k. Feld u. Reserve-spitälär (including ambulances, at Jerusalem, Bir-Sebba, Ain-Karin, Damascus, Aleppo, Diarbekhir, Mosul)
k.u.k. mobile Feldspitälär Nos.206 & 309
k.u.k. Feldpostämter (field post office) Nos.451 (Constantinople) & 452 (Aleppo)
k.u.k. Bahnhofkommandos (railway station commands, at Pawliköj, Sirkedji, Haidar Pascha, Smyrna)

River Maas, shelling the forts of Namur. Halbbataillon Görz was then transferred to Maubeuge, and saw action against Antwerp and later at Ypres. The 8th Battery remained at Ypres until January 1915, and was then transferred to East Prussia; 7th Battery was detached to Nieuport in December 1914, remaining there until March 1915. The Halb-bataillon Krakau was ordered to shell Fort Givet, and was later positioned further south-east at the Côtes Lorraine; it saw action against Fort Troyon, Paroches and Liouville, before returning to Austria in May 1915.

A further request for troops for the Western Front was received during the last year of war, and altogether four infantry divisions under k.u.k. XVIII Korpskommando were sent to France. The Germans had no intention of deploying them as a corps, but put them into the front lines in the Verdun area as separate divisions; the Korps-kommando had just one of them and some further German units under command. With the proven exception of the artillery, the Germans do not seem to have had high expectations of the fighting abilities of the Austro-Hungarian forces, and

insisted on putting many of the soldiers through basic battle school before sending them to the trenches. The Austro-Hungarians were not posted to the most dangerous sectors; but they suffered significant losses during the final Allied advance of autumn 1918, when they were assaulted by American and French troops with tank support for which they had no answer.



Order of Battle, Austro-Hungarian troops on Western Front, 1 October 1918

k.u.k. XVIII Korps

Commander: Feldmarschalleutnant Ludwig Goiginger
Chief of Staff: Oberst d.Generalstabskorps Matsvanszky

1.ID

Commander: Feldmarschalleutnant Metzger
1.IBrig: IR 5, IR 61
2.IBrig: IR 112, JgB 17, JgB 25, JgB 31
Artillery: FAR 1, FAR 101, sFAR 1, GbAA 1 (plus divisional troops)

35.ID

Commander: Feldmarschalleutnant von Podhoránsky
70.IBrig: IR 51, IR 63
69.IBrig: IR 62, IR 64
Artillery: FAR 35, sFAR 35, FAR 135, GbAR 35

37.HID

Commander: Feldmarschalleutnant Faber
73.HIBrig: HIR 13, HIR 18
74.HIBrig: HIR 14, HIR 15
Artillery: HFAR 37, HFAR 137, sHFAR 37, HGbAA 37

106.ID

Commander: Feldmarschalleutnant Kratky
211.IBrig: LdstIR 6, LdstIR 25
210.IBrig: LdstIR 31, LdstIR 32
Artillery: FKR 206 (other units en route)

Totals:

52 bns infantry, 4 sqns cavalry, 53 MG cos,
73 btys artillery (309 guns), 8 sapper cos,
28 Bau (labour) cos, 50 POW labour cos

Artillery not allocated to XVIII Korps:

sFAR 11, sFAR 54, sFAR 53, sFAR 72, 1.& 2. Bty sAR 9 (30.5cm mortar); 1.Bty sAR 1 (38cm howitzer); 13.Bty sAR 8 (42cm howitzer); 3.& 12.Bty sAR 1, 10.Bty sAR 6, 10.Bty sAR 10 (each 4x 10cm field howitzer).

Abbreviations:

ID - Infanteriedivision
HID - Honvédinfanteriedivision
IBrig - Infanteriebrigade
HIBrig - Honvédinfanteriebrigade
LdstIBrig - Landsturm infanteriebrigade
LdstIR - Landsturm infanterieregiment
IR - Infanterieregiment
HIR - Honvédinfanterieregiment
JgB - Feldjägerbataillon
FKR - Feldkanonenregiment
FHR - Feldhaubitze regiment
sFKR - schweres Feldkanonenregiment
sFHR - schweres Feldhaubitze regiment
SAR - schweres Artilleries regiment
HFAR - Honvédfeldartilleries regiment
sHFAR - schwere Honvédartilleries regiment
GbAR - Gebirgsartilleries regiment
GbAA - Gebirgsartilleries abteilung
HgbAA - Honvédgebirgsartilleries abteilung

Epilogue

Nowadays the old battle zones can be identified by hundreds of war cemeteries, stretching from Galicia to the Ukraine and from the Tyrol to Trieste; several dozen cemeteries have survived within the few miles which separate Caporetto/Kobarid/Karfreit and the Adriatic coast. In many cases the dead of the Dual Monarchy did not receive the peaceful commemoration they deserved, since the harsh political climate which attended the destruction of the old Empire prevented any continuity of respect for its military history or traditions. The new Austrian republic was reduced to a small area; nevertheless, while Hungary initially commemorated only the Honvéd, some Austrians tried to pay proper respect to the 'old Army' as a whole. Some 20 years after the Armistice another world war passed over the graves, to be followed by the installation of a number of Communist regimes in the territories of the old Empire. Naturally, none of them was interested in honouring the Imperial and Royal dead of World War I.

In Austria a society called the Österreichisches Schwarzes Kreuz ('Austrian Black Cross') has been established to care for graves in Austria and along the former fronts by means of donations and collections, but it receives no government funds. Interestingly, the first foreigners to co-operate were the Italians, who worked hard to build a war cemetery culture in the old frontier zones; these are now in good order thanks to the care of people from both sides. Some years ago the presidents of Italy and Austria stood side by side on a bridge

OPPOSITE Tyrol, spring 1917:
a 10cm M10 mountain howitzer
in action with 11. Batterie, k.u.k.
Gebirgsartilleries regiment No.5.
This howitzer proved to be one
of the best pieces the Austro-
Hungarian artillery put into
the field. Light, quick-firing,
and easy to 'break down'
for transport, it was deployed
not only in mountain regions
but also as far afield as Turkey
and Palestine, and with
the naval shore troops
along the Adriatic coast.
(Author's collection)



A dressing station on the Italian Front. The ambulance is marked 'K.u.K./ San.Kraftwagen Kol.No.24/ San.Wag.No.1'. (Kriegsarchiv)

across the Isonzo river, and together cast a wreath into the water.

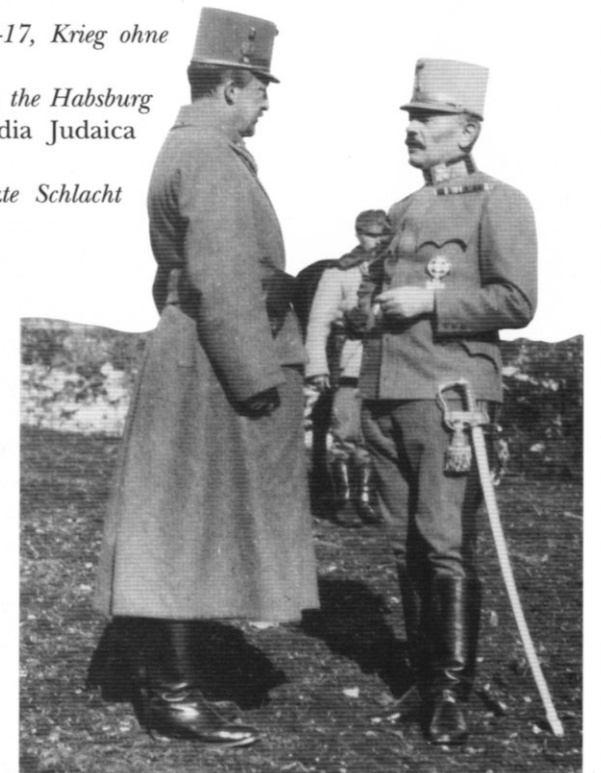
Fortunately, since the fall of the Iron Curtain people in many of the former Communist countries have also started to take an interest in the history of the former Empire, and to give much needed help to the Austrian Black Cross in the restoration and maintenance of the far flung cemeteries. It is to be hoped that in future the legions of the dead will be left to their final rest in dignity and continuity amid suitable surroundings.

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General der Infanterie Svetozar Borojevic von Bojna (later promoted field-marshal), talking to Archduke Joseph (left), Commander of VII Korps, on the Isonzo front line. Borojevic (cf Plate A3) habitually wore Hungarian riding boots, usually spurred; displayed his decorations on a ribbon bar, and carried the infantry officer's sabre. (Kriegsarchiv)



THE PLATES

A1: HM Emperor Karl I, 1917/18

During visits to the fronts the monarch wore uniforms in both pike-grey and, from later in 1917, field-grey as here. He wears the staff officers' cap with field-grey peak; a jacket with the distinctions of a Feldmarschall, the usual concealed buttons and scalloped flaps to the breast and side pockets; and trousers with the distinctive red stripes (*Lampassen*) for general officers. The emperor wears a very simple brown leather belt and leather gaiters; and note the sabre replaced with an officer's bayonet with gold/black portepée. Around his neck and only partly visible is the Order of the Golden Fleece. On his left breast are the Grosskreuz of the Order of Maria Theresia, above the German Iron Cross 1st Class; on his right breast is the so-called 'Franz Joseph-Kreuz'. The emperor frequently displayed different decorations on different occasions. In this case he wears the small decoration of the Österreichischen Orden der Eisernen Krone 1.Klasse, the Grosse Militärverdienstmedaille mit Schwertern, the Militärverdienstkreuz 1.Klasse, the Bronzene Militärverdienstmedaille on a red ribbon and the Military Jubilee Cross, and finally the buttonhole ribbon of the German Iron Cross 2nd Class.



Drill-book studies taken by k.u. Honvéd Infantry Regiment No.1 to illustrate different ways of packing the new rucksack. Note the different cuts of these two pairs of trousers: straight (left), and *Kniehosen*. (Kriegsarchiv)

A2: Feldmarschall Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf; Tyrol, winter 1917/18

The former chief of the General Staff is illustrated as an Army Group commander on the Tyrolean front. He wears the staff officers' cap, a field-grey overcoat with fur collar, and, interestingly, puttees and heavy mountain boots. Again, he follows the mid- to late-war practice of wearing the officer's bayonet with gold/black portepée in place of a sword.

A3: Generaloberst Svetozar Boroevic von Bojna; Isonzo front, 1917

The front commander wears the field-grey staff officers' cap, with field-grey leather strap and peak, matt finish buttons, and gold wire officers' type national cockade ('rosette'). The field-grey jacket has a stand-up collar with the badges of this rank (he was promoted Feldmarschall on 1 February 1918). His red-striped breeches are tucked into the black officers' riding boots which he favoured, usually worn with spurs. He is armed only with an M1861 officers' sabre, with gold lace portepée. His major decorations include the Kommandeurskreuz des Militär-Maria-Theresien-Ordens around his neck, and the Grosses Militärverdienstkreuz mit Schwertern on his left breast above the German Iron Cross 1st Class. General Boroevic habitually wore the ribbon bars only.

B1: Rittmeister, k.u. Honvéd Husarenregiment No.7, 1916

From 1916 many cavalry units were dismounted to serve on foot. This Hungarian Hussar captain wears the field-grey peakless cap of the mounted branches, with two matt buttons below the officers' cockade. On the left side is the regimental patch with the letters '7H'. The collar of the officer's jacket displays the three gold wire embroidered stars of this rank. Despite the dismounting of his regiment he still wears riding breeches with black Hungarian riding boots. The dark brown waistbelt, with the officers' buckle for the Hungarian Honvéd, supports a holstered M07 Roth-Steyr semi-automatic pistol on the right hip and an officer's bayonet and portepée on the left.

His ribbons show awards of the Eiserne Krone 3.Klasse, Militärverdienstkreuz 3.Klasse, Bronzene Militärverdienstmedaille, Offiziersdienstzeichen, and Militärjubiläumskreuz.

B2: Unteroffizier, Tiroler Kaiserjägerregiment No.1, 1917

This NCO of one of the four Tyrolean Imperial Rifles regiments wears the field-grey 1916 issue cap with matt front buttons below the old 'FJI' cockade, and on the left side a patch with 'TJ 1' in blue. His jacket is the *Einheitsbluse* M16 in field-grey; on both shoulders square waxed linen patches repeat the designation 'TJ 1', and the collar displays the grass-green *Egalisierungstreif* which is all that remains of the old collar patches of this branch. The decoration is the Silberne Tapferkeitsmedaille. His backpack is the light brown canvas rucksack, complete with blanket and matt-finish mess tin on top. The buckle of his brown waistbelt is made of cheap iron. He carries a 'bread bag' of light brown linen on his left hip with his bayonet over it; the belt supports two leather cartridge pouches on each side of the buckle. He is armed with the 8mm Mannlicher M95 rifle with brown leather sling.

B3: Dog-handler, Sanitätstruppe, late 1917

The Austro-Hungarian Army made quite widespread use of dogs, both for detecting wounded on the battlefield and to draw small carts with stores or weapons. This figure depicts a medical soldier – his status marked by the red cross brassard – with a dog in attendance. His field-grey cap is of the late type with cloth-covered peak; the matt cockade is pierced with the monogram of the new emperor, 'K'. He wears the standard issue field-grey overcoat (*Einheitsmantel*) with two rows of matt buttons. The leather equipment includes a brown medical case and the holster for an M07 Roth-Steyr pistol on his right hip, secured by a field-grey lanyard. He carries the usual rucksack with attached blanket.

B4: Vormeister, k.u.k. Gebirgsartillerie

The mountain artillery was in fact the only arm that received printed dress regulations in 1917. This lance-corporal is completely dressed in field-grey. On the front of his cap below the cockade he has two small matt artillery buttons. He wears the M16 *Einheitsbluse* with the artillery's red collar stripe, the mountain branch indicated by the use of *Wadenstutzen* stockings and mountain boots. His overcoat is attached to his rucksack, as is his mess tin; he carries a slung water bottle in a cloth cover. His weapon is an M95 Repetierkarabiner, and his sidearm is the M15 Pioniersäbel ('pioneer sabre') in a scabbard over-painted field-grey.

C1: Feldkurat, Isonzo front, 1917

This illustration of a Roman Catholic chaplain of the k.u.k. Common Army is taken from a photograph of the Feldkurat attending a wounded soldier. He wears a mixture of pre-war and field uniform: a field-grey cap with a black peak, the old black clerical coat, long black tailored trousers, and officer's quality shoes.

His status is indicated by the three golden-yellow arm stripes; he has put on his white silk *stola* with Catholic symbols, piped and fringed in gold with an embroidered golden cross. The medal ribbon is that of the Geistliches Verdienstkreuz 2.Klasse.

C2: Feldkurat, Balkan theatre, 1916–18

Experience of trench warfare soon proved the unsuitability of traditional clerical dress in the front lines, and army chaplains – of all confessions – took to wearing field-grey uniform when serving with the troops in the field. This Roman Catholic Feldkurat wears the M16 *Einheitsbluse* with stand-and-fall collar and black silk patches without any rank distinctions. Again, the three golden-yellow cuff stripes indicate his status and rank.

C3: Feldrabbiner, Eastern Front, 1916–18

Originally, the field rabbis who cared for the spiritual needs of Jewish troops also wore the black clerical three-quarter length coat with the triple arm stripes. During the war they, like the priests of other faiths, changed to field-grey uniforms, practically identical to those of their Christian colleagues. Over his shoulders he wears the *Gebetsmantel* made of white linen with blue lining.

C4: Militär imam, Balkan theatre, 1917

The Muslim imams of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian units also changed to field uniforms, completely in field-grey during the latter half of the war; this imam wears the same sleeve stripes as the other priests but is distinguished by a field-grey *fez* with a tassel in the same colour. His jacket is the so-called '*Karlbluse*' with stand-and-fall collar and visible buttons; note the narrow collar stripe of 'aliacin-red', the facing colour of the BH units.

D1: Kontre-Admiral Alfred Freiherr von Koudelka

Rear Admiral Baron von Koudelka was the commanding officer of the Trieste Naval District when war broke out with Italy. Apart from forming naval units to fight ashore, he also became the commander of the k.u.k. 187. Infanterie-brigade. Seen here in field uniform, he wears the Austro-Hungarian Navy officer's cap for rear admiral's rank, in field-grey with three gold stripes, naval badge and black peak. His field-grey jacket displays the distinctions of this rank on the shoulders, and is worn with field-grey riding breeches. His equipment is of brown natural leather – gaiters and boots, officer's waistbelt with officer's buckle, and holster for a small 7.65mm pistol. His horse was a Lipizzaner from the area around Trieste.

D2: Gefreiter, k.u.k. Seebataillon Triest, 1917

These troops, mostly drawn from either surplus crews or reservists of the k.u.k. Kriegsmarine, fought along the coast between the Grado lagoon and the Gulf of Trieste. This lance-corporal's uniform shows a mixture of both Navy and Army issue items. He wears the standard Austro-Hungarian sailor's cap with the crown covered with field-grey, a black 'tally' with the gold wire inscription 'K.u.K. KRIEGSMARINE', and a black 'FJI' cockade with a yellow metal outer ring.



Classic drill-book shots of Austro-Hungarian Pioneers, showing the equipment carried. During the war the duties of the actual Pioneer Corps were mostly shifted to the Sappers, leaving the Pioneers proper as bridging units. Meanwhile, due to the nature of trench warfare the 'Infantry Pioneers' or *Truppenpioniere* of the technical platoon and later company within each infantry regiment became increasingly important. Distinctive of Pioneers are the high boots, which remained in use until the end of the war, and the special way of wearing the long, straight trousers folded up inside above the ankles. (Kriegsarchiv)

His jacket is the field-grey M16 *Einheitsbluse* with stand-and-fall collar; his trousers are *Kniehosen* worn with puttees. His boots are of brown leather, as is his field equipment, and he is armed with a 7mm 'Mexican' Mauser rifle.

D3: Linienschiffsleutnant, k.u.k. Lagunenflottille, autumn 1917

The Lagoon Flotilla was formed in 1917 for both the defence of the Gulf of Trieste and for close support in the coastal



areas of the upper Adriatic. Since their missions took them into inland waterways the officers and men were uniformed in field-grey. This lieutenant's cap is the standard Austro-Hungarian naval officer's type but in field-grey, with gold insignia and black peak (the non-regulation use of the white-topped cap with this uniform was occasionally seen). His '*Karlbluse*' has rank distinctions on the shoulders – naval summer ranking was adopted for this type of uniform. He has conventional brown leather equipment, and carries the M07 Roth-Steyr pistol with a field-grey lanyard. His

decorations are the Bronzene Militärverdienstmedaille, Karl Truppenkreuz and Militärjubiläumskreuz.

D4: Maat, k.u.k. Seeflugstation Triest, summer 1917

This seaman on guard duty is taken from a photograph of the Trieste Naval Air Station. In the warm summer conditions he is dressed lightly. His navy blue sailor's cap bears the same tally and cockade as D2. The standard naval undershirt was striped dark blue and white, worn with off-white linen trousers and black shoes. His leather field equipment consists of a brown leather waist belt with darkened buckle and a holstered 11mm Rast & Gasser revolver on the left hip.

E1: Leutnant of a k.u.k. Sturmabteilung, 1917–18

This second lieutenant represents the 'modern' storm trooper as he appeared during the last two years of the war. The Austrian-made Berndorfer helmet is painted a brown shade; chin straps could be either brown leather or khaki fabric. His '*Karlbluse*', with visible darkened buttons, displays the narrow stripe indicating his regiment behind his single rank star on the otherwise plain collar. His field-grey trousers and puttees are worn with brown *Bergschuh* boots. His equipment shows both leather and cheaper fabric elements; the holster is made from webbing only edged with leather. He carries a distinctive assault troops' dagger on his left hip; a gas mask slung in the ready position on his chest, and its container; and a stick grenade hooked to his belt. It was popular among the assault troops to wear full decorations in the field, in this case the Silberne Tapferkeitsmedaille für Offiziere, Bronzene Militärverdienstmedaille, and the Karl Truppenkreuz.

E2: Zugführer of a k.u.k. Sturmabteilung, 1917–18

This figure represents a sergeant platoon leader of the same period. His brown-painted helmet is the German M16 type (named M17 in Austrian service), with a khaki fabric chin strap. The stand-and-fall collar of the M16 *Einheitsbluse* displays the three celluloid stars of his rank in front of the narrow stripe of regimental facing colour. Jacket, trousers and puttees are all field-grey. Leather equipment includes brown waist and shoulder belts, with two cartridge pouches

and a bayonet scabbard on the left hip. Additionally, he carries the *Sturmdolch* ('assault dagger') with wooden grips in a field-grey scabbard; two linen grenade bags; and wire cutters. His main weapon is the Mannlicher M95 Repetierstutzenkarabine (carbine).

He has been decorated with the Goldene Tapferkeitsmedaille, Silberne Tapferkeitsmedaille 2.Klasse (a silver clasp on the ribbon indicating a second award), the Karl Truppenkreuz and the Jubiläumskreuz 1908.

E3: Gefreiter, k.u.k. Sappeurbataillon 61

This lance-corporal is a flame-thrower operator from one of the assault battalions of the k.u.k. Sappeurtruppe. His German helmet is covered with field-grey cloth, and his face and lungs are protected by a gas mask. The collar of his M16 *Einheitsbluse* bears the single celluloid star of this rank and a narrow stripe in the 'cherry red' facing colour of the Sappers. The elbows are reinforced with leather patches, as are the knees of his trousers. His equipment is again mixed, of both brown leather and leather-edged canvas; and he carries the assault dagger as well as the 15-litre *Flammenwerfer* M16. His decorations are the Bronzene Tapferkeitsmedaille and the Karl Truppenkreuz.

E4: Korporal of infantry, Piave front, summer/autumn 1918

This junior NCO on vedette duty represents the regular infantry on the Piave river line. His German 'M17' helmet is painted brownish green. The collar of his M16 blouse bears two celluloid rank stars ahead of the narrow blue stripe now identifying all line infantry of the Common Army. His arms and equipment consist of the Mannlicher M95 rifle, brown leather belt with four pouches, bread bag, bayonet scabbard, and slung gas mask container painted field-grey. His fixed bayonet is embellished with the yellow/black portepée; he also carries a dagger – these had become widely popular on the Italian Front.

F1: Oberleutnant Feldpilot Frank Linke-Crawford, Italian Front, spring 1918

Frank Linke-Crawford, who came from an Austro-British family, rose to command *Fliegerkompanie* 60J at Feltre on



The portable equipment of the *Truppenpioniere* of an infantry regiment's technical platoon, including different sizes of axes and crosscut saws, and leather satchels for smaller tools.

At right is the less heavily laden NCO. (Kriegsarchiv)

the Piave front. One of most famous Austro-Hungarian air aces of the war, he was officially credited with 30 aerial victories by the time of his death in action on 31 July 1918. The uniform he wears is a good example of the combination of regulation pattern and private initiative often shown by field pilots. His peakless officer's cap displays the gold cockade above two yellow metal buttons. The stand-and-fall jacket collar bears the first lieutenant's two stars and the balloon emblem of the flying branch; it is worn slightly opened over a shirt and private purchase tie; given the cut of his blouse, this gives a 'British' appearance. His trousers are of off-white linen. On his right breast he wears the Austro-Hungarian Feldpilotenabzeichen.

F2: Officer in flying clothing, Eastern Front, 1917
Leather flying clothing was privately purchased by officers of all the combatant powers and thus showed a wide variety of designs and colours. This pilot wears a flying helmet of dark red-brown leather and a flying coat of black leather with black horn buttons; the scarf is a personal item. Sometimes leather trousers were also worn, though this officer favours field-grey *Kniehosen* and puttees.

F3: Fregattenleutnant, k.u.k. Seeflugstation Triest, 1917-18

The naval aviators of the Trieste Naval Air Station fought in close support of the land forces of the Isonzoarmee, and later in support of XXIII Armeekorps (made up of the former Isonzo armies) at the Piave front. In many cases they wore a mixture of naval and field-grey garments. This officer wears the naval officer's cap in navy blue with gold insignia, together with the naval aviator's field-grey field jacket introduced in late 1915, field-grey breeches and brown leather gaiters. The sleeve rank device of a Fregattenleutnant is in black lace, and on his right breast he displays the naval aviator's badge.

F4: Korporal, k.u.k. Autotruppe, Balkan theatre, 1917

This special type of dress was introduced for all personnel on motorised duties, and could therefore be seen among the Autotruppe, artillery, medical service, etc. This corporal lorry driver wears the standard field-grey cap with dull enlisted men's cockade showing the 'K' of Emperor Karl I, above two overpainted buttons; the peak (visor) is of pressed card covered with field-grey cloth. On the left side he has added some semi-official campaign badges. His M16 jacket shows two white celluloid rank stars on the collar with the branch badge of the Kraftfahrtruppen. Over the field jacket he wears the black leather *Autobekleidung* (driver's jacket) with black horn buttons. His trousers are the standard *Kniehose* worn with puttees; equipment is limited to a brown waist belt and black leather gloves.

G1: Feldwebel, Dalmatian Islands, spring 1917

The appearance of this sergeant-major, taken from a photograph, is typical for the warm weather areas of the Empire. His field-grey cap is made of lightweight material, with a matt 'K' cockade and buttons. The field-grey 'summer type' blouse of drill material has the conventional stand-and-fall collar, concealed buttons and flapped pockets, and the Feldwebel's rank device of three stars on yellow lace is displayed on collar patches. His trousers are made of off-white linen and he has 'organised' himself a pair of non-regulation white shoes, perhaps from naval stores. His



M1861 sabre with yellow/black portepée hangs from the *Kuppel* worn beneath the jacket.

G2: Offizier of k.u.k. Grenzjäger, Albania, autumn 1917

The Grenzjägertruppe ('Frontier Rifles') were formed in 1914 for special operations in the Balkans. At first organised in companies, they later grew to battalion size; their main field of operations was Albania and occupied Serbia. This officer, whose rank is not evident, wears a peakless version of the distinctive Grenzjäger cap with the officer's gold cockade and buttons. On the left side a cloth 'socket' holds the straight eagle feather of this branch. His field-grey coat is of the shortened style - *paletot* - with dull buttons. He wears matching trousers with puttees and heavy brown *Bergschuhe* mountain boots, the brown officer's belt with brass buckle, and a holstered M07 Roth-Steyr pistol.

G3: Freiwillige, Albanian Legion, autumn 1917
Soldiers of the Albanian Legion, or *Albanische Freiwillige* ('Albanian volunteers'), wore a variety of Austro-Hungarian field uniforms and different headdress. Sometimes they even reported for service led by their chiefs and wearing traditional local costume. This volunteer has elements of Austro-Hungarian clothing and captured weapons. His grey Albanian fez bears a black/red cockade. The M15 field-grey jacket is the light summer version, worn without collar patches; the *Kniehose* and puttees are both field-grey. His natural brown leather equipment is of captured Serbian origin, with two cartridge pouches, and he is armed with a Serbian 7mm Mauser rifle.

G4: Legions-Feldwebel, Ukrainian Legion, autumn 1917

By the time the Ukrainian Legion fought alongside the Austro-Hungarian forces the separate peace of Brest-Litovsk made possible the establishment of the independent state of Ukraina, for whose army the Legion would form the nucleus in 1918. The uniforms remained practically Austrian, apart from the introduction in late 1917 of a new field-grey cap. The collar of this sergeant-major's M16 jacket bears the three white celluloid stars of his rank, but set in a straight line in contrast to the Austro-Hungarian 'L'-shape; behind them is

OPPOSITE A Common Army field post office - note the signboard, 'Feldpostamt' and Hungarian 'Tabori Posta'. These auxiliaries, called up from the civil postal service, wear a variety of uniform items. See Plate H1. (Author's collection)



Detail from a group photo of flying and ground personnel of an Austro-Hungarian Fliegerkompanie in northern Italy, 1918. The aviators wear various short leather coats, and some (see right) leather trousers. The captain at centre has a peakless cavalry-style field cap embellished with several side badges; and note the balloon emblem of the air service to the right of his collar rank stars. See Plate F. (Author's collection).

a 1cm stripe in the Ukraine's blue and yellow national colours. The trousers and puttees are Austro-Hungarian. He is armed with a captured Russian 7.62mm Moisin-Nagant rifle, and his ammunition pouches are made of ersatz material.

H1: Feldpost Oberoffizial, occupied Eastern Poland, spring 1918

Field Post personnel were usually members of the state postal services called up at the time of mobilisation. As 'civil servants in the military', senior grades were not considered to be officers but military officials; the difference was marked by wearing officer's uniforms but with 'rosettes' instead of stars on their collar patches. This man wears the officer's cap with peak in the same colour, and matt finish cockade and buttons. His *Karlbluse* displays golden-yellow cloth patches with three silver metal rosettes, in front of the postal bugle-horn emblem. His field-grey breeches are confined by gaiters, and on his belt is the small holster for a 7.65mm pistol.

H2: Infanterist, Ersatzbataillon des Infanterieregiments No.49 'Freiherr von Hess', St Pölten, 1918

This Common Army infantry private was photographed at his 'German' regiment's home depot in Lower Austria, and is a representative example of the motley clothing issued on the home front in the last months of the war.

He wears the pre-war light blue cap with 'FJI' cockade and white metal buttons. His jacket is the standard pre-war dark blue model, here with the pike-grey facings of IR 49 at collar and cuffs, and white metal buttons. His legwear are field-grey *Kniehose* with *Wadenstutzen* and black leather boots. Equipment includes a black leather belt with brass buckle decorated with the the double-headed eagle, and a frogged bayonet.

H3: Female military assistant, 1918

By mid-1918 the army in the field had accepted female administration personnel in the rear zones. These women were never intended to be uniformed at all, but in order to avoid 'fashion wars' they were requested to accept working costumes of field- or brown-grey. The only distinction between lower and higher level service was the number of yellow metal buttons on the cuffs - two or three respectively. Shoes were ordered to be 'decent', either in dark brown or black.

H4: Infanterist, northern Italy, autumn 1918

This soldier stands as an example of the shortages and improvisations during the last months of the war. He has a German-type M17 helmet, but his field-grey *Mannschaftsmantel* coat is made of shoddy quality material, as are his trousers, puttees and boots. The fixed bayonet of his M95 rifle is made entirely of metal. His waist belt is made of natural canvas, the four cartridge pouches of ersatz material.

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