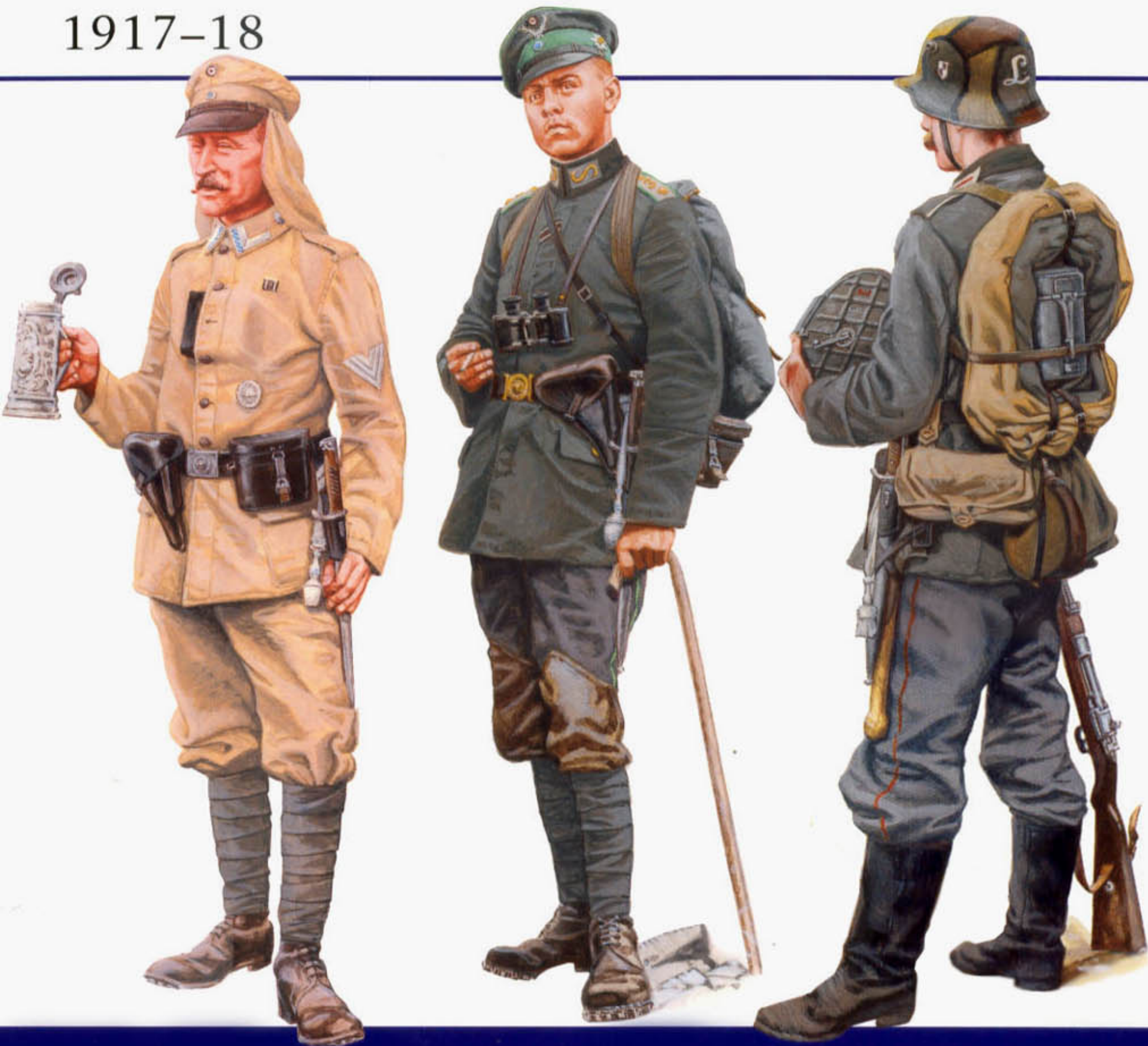


Men-at-Arms

OSPREY
PUBLISHING

The German Army in World War I (3)

1917–18



Nigel Thomas PhD • Illustrated by Ramiro Bujeiro



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Dedication

This book is respectfully dedicated to the late
Oberfeldarzt a.D Friedrich Herrmann

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Author's Note

This volume covers the German Army from the commencement of the British offensive at Arras on 9 April 1917 until the German Armistice of 11 November 1918.

For basic information on German Army **ranks and appointments**, see the first part of this study, MAA 394, Table 5, page 20.

For a selective **glossary** of the titles of German Army commands, arms & branches of service and types of units, and of terms for **uniform items**, see the second part, MAA 497, page 42.

Artist's Note

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THE GERMAN ARMY IN WORLD WAR I

(3) 1917–18

THE GERMAN EMPIRE & SATELLITE STATES IN 1917

THE GERMAN EMPIRE comprised the Kingdoms of Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg, and 21 minor states – six grand duchies, five duchies, seven principalities and three 'free cities'. The 'Imperial Territory' of Alsace-Lorraine had been annexed from France in 1871, and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was under military occupation. A civil-military government ruled most of Belgium as the Belgian Government General, under (from 18 April 1917) GenObst Ludwig Freiherr von Falkenhausen; it was reorganized from 1 July 1917 into Flemish-speaking Flanders (Antwerp, Brabant and Limburg), and French-speaking Wallonia (Hainault, Liège, Luxembourg and Namur).

On the Eastern Front the Germans established six puppet states from occupied Russian territory, all of which gained real independence on the withdrawal of German troops following the Armistice of 11 November 1918. On 14 January 1917 the Warsaw Government General was redesignated the Kingdom of Poland under three Polish regents pending a post-war royal restoration (which never took place).

Established in October 1915, the Eastern Front Military Administration (Oberst von Brandenstein) comprised from 11 October 1916 three districts: Litauen (Lithuania), Grodno-Bialystok (north-western Byelorussia and north-eastern Poland), and Kurland (southern Latvia). On 1 February 1918 Litauen District absorbed Grodno-Bialystok, and on 16 February became the Kingdom of Lithuania, appointing on 9 July the German Duke Wilhelm von Urach as King Mindaugas II. On 25 February 1918 Kurland, Livland (northern Latvia) and Estland (Estonia) formed the Kurland Administration, proclaimed by the Baltic Germans on 12 April 1918 as the 'Baltic State' duchy with Kaiser Wilhelm II, and later Adolf of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, as duke. On 25 March 1918 the Germans permitted the establishment of a Byelorussian National Republic, and formed the Protectorate of Georgia; and on 29 April 1918 formed the 'Ukrainian State' under Cossack Hetman Pavlo Skoropadski.¹ Meanwhile the Rumanian Military



GFM Paul von Hindenburg, early 1918. Although real military and political power lay with his erratic deputy, Ludendorff, Hindenburg's bluff and avuncular image served to reassure most Germans. He wears his M1910 general officer's field tunic with the lemon-yellow collar patches and Guards *Litzen* (braids) of the 3rd Foot Guards, of which he was colonel-in-chief; the field-marshal's shoulder boards also have yellow regimental underlay. At his throat are the Grand Cross of the Iron Cross (awarded 1916) and Pour le Mérite with Oakleaves (awarded 23 February 1915); the breast star of the Order of the Black Eagle is worn above the Iron Cross 1st Class. (Author's collection)

Administration, formed 23 November 1916 to administer occupied Wallachia and southern Moldavia, was abolished on 1 July 1918 following the Treaty of Bucharest.

¹ See MAA 412, *Ukrainian Armies 1914–55*



GERMANY AND THE VARIOUS FRONTS
APRIL 1917 - NOVEMBER 1918



GFM von Hindenburg awarding Iron Crosses 1st Class after the Spring Offensives, August 1918. He wears the M1915 full dress uniform of the 3rd Foot Guards with all his orders and decorations; note the Star of the Grand Cross of the Iron Cross, an Iron Cross surrounded by silver rays, awarded to Hindenburg in March 1918 following the German breakthrough at Arras. The Guards officers (left) are wearing M1915 field tunics with Guards collar braids and M1916 steel helmets. (Author's collection)

Army High Command

Kaiser Wilhelm II was Supreme Commander of the German Armed Forces until his abdication on 9 November 1918 and the proclamation of the German Republic. His successor, GFM Paul von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg, served until July 1919. Wilhelm and the Chief of the Field Army General Staff were based at Pleß (Pszczyna, Poland). The Supreme Command (OHL) was based at Bad Kreuznach, western Germany; from 8 March 1918 at Spa, SW Belgium; and from 9 November 1918 at Wilhelmshöhe, near Kassel, central Germany.

The Chief of the Field Army General Staff was GFM von Hindenburg. His nominal deputy, but *de facto* commander, was the First Quartermaster-General, Gen d.Inf Erich Ludendorff; and from October 1918, GenLt Wilhelm Groener. Hindenburg's nominal assistant was the Quartermaster-General, GenLt Viktor Hahndorff.

HIGHER FORMATIONS

Army Groups

German forces served in ten German, one Austro-Hungarian and one Ottoman army groups fighting on the Western, Eastern, Salonika, Rumanian and Palestine fronts. The army group was a temporary wartime formation, comprising a variable number of armies, independent corps and divisions, with one of the Army HQs acting as Army Group HQ.

The **Western Front** was defended by three army groups, expanded to five to co-ordinate resistance to the Allied offensives of 1918; they were named as follows:

'Kronprinz Rupprecht von Bayern' (GFM Rupprecht, Crown Prince of Bavaria), with three armies (2, 4 & 6), reinforced on 1 February 1918 by 17th Army, manned the Artois front.

'Boehn' (GenObst Max von Bohn) was formed 12 August 1918 with three armies (2, 9 & 18) to defend the Siegfried Line on the southern Artois front, but was disbanded 8 October 1918.

'Deutscher Kronprinz' (Gen d.Inf Wilhelm, Crown Prince of Germany and Prussia), with four armies (1, 3, 5 & 7), briefly reinforced from 27 December 1917 by 18th Army, fought on the Champagne front.

'Gallwitz' (Gen d.Art Max von Gallwitz) was re-raised in January 1918 to defend the Verdun sector of the eastern Champagne front with two armies (5 & Armeecabteilung 'C').

'Herzog Albrecht' (GFM Albrecht, Duke of Württemberg), on the Vosges front, had three independent temporary armies – Armeecabteilungen 'A', 'B' and 'C'. In January 1918 'C' was replaced by 19th Army.

German forces on the **Eastern Front** came under the C-in-C Eastern Front, supervising the 'Prince Leopold of Bavaria Theatre of Operations' (GFM Leopold, Prince of Bavaria). Its forces were systematically reduced following the armistice with Russia on 17 December 1917 and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk of 3 March 1918, and formations were transferred to the critical Western Front. It comprised four army groups:

'Eichhorn' (GenObst, later GFM, Hermann von Eichhorn) defended Lithuania and southern Latvia with three armies (8, 10 & AA 'D') against the Russian Northern 'Front' (Army Group). It was disbanded on 28 March 1918; from 3 April the sector was controlled by 8th Army and AA 'D' as 'Riga' Army Group under GenObst Günther Graf von Kirchbach, from July 1918 Gen d.Inf Hugo von Kathen.

'Woyrsch' (GenObst Remus von Woyrsch) guarded north-western Byelorussia with three independent temporary armies (AA Scheffer, Woyrsch & Gronau) against the Russian Western Front. It was disbanded on 31 December 1917 and its sector taken over by 10th Army.



GFM Albrecht, Duke of Württemberg, represented the Württemberg monarchy as commander of the 4th Army facing British and Belgian forces in Flanders, and later as Army Group commander in the Vosges. As colonel-in-chief of the 119th Grenadier Regt 'Queen Olga' (1st Württemberg) – his state's senior infantry regiment – he is wearing the M1910 general officers' field tunic with the regimental Guards collar braids, and field-marshal's shoulder boards with a silver crowned 'O' cipher and Württemberg infantry red underlay. He was awarded the Pour le Mérite on 27 August 1915 following the Second Battle of Ypres, and the Oakleaves on 25 February 1918. (Author's collection)

'Linsingen' (Gen d.Inf Alexander von Linsingen) defended south-western Byelorussia with the German Bug Army and 4th Austro-Hungarian (AH) Army against the Russian South-West Front. On 31 March 1918 it was redesignated the 'Eichhorn-Kiew' Army Group (GFM von Eichhorn), from 1 May 'Eichhorn', and from 13 August 1918, following Eichhorn's assassination, as 'Kiew' (GenObst von Kirchbach).

The Austro-Hungarian 'Böhm-Ermolli' Army Group guarded north-western Ukraine with four AH armies (1, 2, 3 & 7), with German temporary army AG Eben in 4th AH Army, and one German army (Süd). On 3 February 1918 German forces were withdrawn and the army group disbanded, leaving 2nd AH Army to garrison southern Ukraine from 16 April 1918 as the 'Eastern Army'.

Two army groups served in the **Balkans**. On the Salonika front, 'Below' Army Group (Gen d.Inf Otto von Below), on 23 April 1917 redesignated 'Scholtz' (Gen d.Art Friedrich von Scholtz), technically under Bulgarian control, confronted the Allied Army of the Orient with three armies (11 German; 1 & 2 Bulgarian).² This army group was disbanded on 6 October 1918 following the Bulgarian armistice.

German forces in occupied **Rumania** came under the 'Mackensen' Army Group (GFM August von Mackensen) with the 9th German and Bulgarian 3rd Armies. Following the Treaty of Bucharest of 7 May 1918 the army group was downgraded, and on 1 July 1918 was redesignated the Rumanian Occupation Army.

Army Group 'F' was formed on 27 June 1917 under the indefatigable Gen d.Inf. Erich von Falkenhayn, and on 20 July 1917 redesignated 'Yildirim' (Turkish – 'lightning' or 'thunderbolt') for service on the **Sinai** front. On 1 March 1918 Falkenhayn was succeeded by Gen d.Kav Otto Liman von Sanders; and on 30 October 1918, as Ottoman resistance collapsed, the German staff were repatriated to Germany.

Armies

An army comprised an Army HQ, Army HQ troops and 3 to 6 corps, supported by independent divisions and Landwehr brigades. In August 1914 Army HQ troops had been restricted to an air reconnaissance, airship and signals detachment. By early 1918 these had been joined by a varying number of independent units, including assault, light infantry and Landsturm infantry battalions; machine gun detachments; cavalry squadrons; field artillery regiments and independent battalions, and heavy artillery battalions; engineer and mortar battalions; fighter, bomber and anti-aircraft units; motor transport and motorcycle units and horse-drawn ammunition columns; medical and veterinary units, labour battalions, and prisoner-of-war guard companies.

An independent temporary army (Armeeabteilung, AA) comprised a number of corps but no army HQ troops; while a temporary army (Armeegruppe, AG) – effectively a reinforced corps – was always subordinated to an army. Between April 1917 and November 1918 there were 17 armies (1–11, 14, 17–19, Bug, Süd), 7 independent temporary armies (A–D, Gronau, Scheffer, Woyrsch) and three temporary armies (Eben, Litzmann and Marwitz).

The **Western Front** comprised eleven armies (1–7, 9, 17–19) and three independent temporary armies (A–C). Seven armies (1–7) which had served there since August 1914 were reinforced by four armies released from less critical theatres: 9th Army transferred from Rumania on 19 June 1918 and was disbanded 1 September 1918; 17th Army was formed on 1 February

² See MAA 356, *Armies in the Balkans 1914–18*

1918 with 14th Army troops from Italy; 18th Army was established on 27 December 1917 with Woyrsch Army Group troops from Byelorussia; and 19th Army was formed on 4 February 1918 from the Süd Army transferring from Ukraine. These armies were supported by three independent temporary armies ('A', 'B' & 'C'), usually assigned to the relatively dormant Vosges front.

Four armies (8, 10, Bug, Süd), four independent temporary armies ('D', Gronau, Scheffer, Woyrsch) and three temporary armies (Eben, Litzmann and Marwitz) fought on the **Eastern Front**. Bug Army comprised AG Marwitz and Litzmann; AG Marwitz was disbanded on 22 August 1917, AA Scheffer on 17 September and AA Woyrsch on 15 December. Following the Russian armistice, Bug Army was disbanded on 23 January 1918, Süd and AG Eben on 25 January, and AG Litzmann on 28 January; after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, AA Gronau was disbanded on 27 March 1918. This left 8th Army and AA 'D' in Lithuania, and 10th Army in Byelorussia and Ukraine. AA 'D' was disbanded on 2 October 1918.

The 9th Army served continuously in **Rumania** until 19 June 1918. The 11th Army fought on the **Salonika** front, beginning to retreat on 21 September 1918 northwards through Serbia into Hungary. The 14th Army fought on the **Italian** front from 16 September 1917, serving directly under the Austro-Hungarian South-Western Front, disbanding on 22 January 1918.

Corps

The pre-war organization of the corps, with a Corps HQ, Corps HQ troops and two permanently assigned infantry divisions, had developed by December 1916 into a more fluid organization, with the corps as a temporary grouping of divisions moving between armies and fronts – an arrangement which became the norm among most combatant armies in World War II.

In April 1917 there were 65 corps. These comprised the 23 remaining pre-war regular corps (Prussian Guards, 1, 3–11, 14–18, 21 Prussian; 12, 19 Saxon; 13

Württemberg; 1–3 Bavarian), supported by 26 Reserve Corps (1, 3–10, 12, 14–15, 17–18, 22–27, 38–41; 1, 2 Bavarian) and the Landwehr Corps. There were also 15 Special Corps (51–65), essentially corps HQs without corps troops, supervising a heterogeneous group of occupation and front-line infantry and cavalry units.

By 11 November 1918 there were still 65 corps. 20th Corps was re-formed in October 1918, making 24 regular corps. Two reserve corps were disbanded – 17th Reserve Corps (re-formed as 67th Special Corps) on 17 September 1917, and 23rd Reserve Corps on 12 August 1918, making 24 reserve corps plus the Landwehr Corps.

Three special corps were formed – 66th on 9 May 1917, 67th on 17 September 1917 and 68th in March 1918; but two were disbanded – 56th in March 1918 and 62nd in October 1918, making 16 in all. 56th–59th Special Corps had formerly been 1st, 3rd, 5th and 6th Cavalry Commands, and 65th Special Corps had been Schmettow Cavalry Corps.

Divisions

In April 1917 there were 230 infantry divisions. These comprised all 50 pre-war regular Guards and Line infantry divisions (1–2 Prussian Gds; 1–22, 25, 28–31, 33–39, 41–42 Prussian; 23, 24, 32, 40 Saxon; 26, 27 Württemberg; 1–6 Bavarian). There were also 87 war-raised Prussian Guards and Line infantry divisions (3–5 Gds; 50, 52, 54, 56, 83, 84, 86–89, 91–93, 101, 103, 105, 107–109, 111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121, 123, 183, 185–187, 192, 195, 197–208, 211–228, 231–242,

Kaiser Wilhelm's Cavalry Bodyguard on parade at GHQ in Bad Kreuznach. Bodyguards retained their regimental uniforms. The five cavalry officers displayed a large silver-plated gorget, with a gold crown above a black Prussian eagle on a white enamel shield with gold trophies. The 175 enlisted men had silver gorgets with a silver crowned 'WII' monogram on a blue enamel shield with bronze trophies. Army, corps and divisional commanders also had cavalry and infantry bodyguard troops, distinguished by gorgets. (Author's collection)



255, 301, 302 Prussian; 58 Saxon; 10–12, 14–16 Bavarian). Five of these divisions (195, 197, 199, 200, 217) contained light infantry units for mountain and mobile warfare, joining the élite Alpenkorps. There were also 56 Reserve Divisions (1, 2 Guards; 1, 3, 5–19, 21–26, 28, 30, 33, 35, 36, 39, 43–54, 75–82 Prussian; 1, 5, 6, 8, 9 Bavarian); 28 Landwehr (1, 3–5, 8–21, 25, 85 Prussian; 45, 47 Saxon; 2, 7, 26 Württemberg; 1, 2, 6 Bavarian); one Temporary (Basedow) and 7 Ersatz (Guards; 4, 5, 10 Prussian; 19 Saxon; 8 Württemberg; Bavarian).

From April to December 1917, six Line infantry (94–96, 228, 243, 303 Prussian), one light (Deutsche Jäger Division) and seven Landwehr divisions (22–24, 38, 44, 46, 48) were formed; but the Basedow and 8th Ersatz were disbanded, giving a grand total of 242. However, during 1918 increasing losses through individual surrenders and the drying up of the recruit pool in Germany forced the disbandment of 29 divisions.

GenLt von Diringshofen, commanding the 'Bug' Rear Area Command, photographed with his staff at Biala, near Brest-Litovsk, in summer 1917. Von Diringshofen (left centre) wears his M1903 greatcoat with general officers' red lapels; next to him, in a peaked field cap, is his chief of staff, Maj Bernhard Count von Poninski. Other officers wear the M1903 and M1915 greatcoats or M1910 and M1915 field tunics, most with Guards officers' collar braids. Note that officers behind the lines still wore the M1895 spiked helmet, with characteristically tall officers' spike. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

These comprised 16 war-raised Line infantry (101, 108, 109, 183, 193, 201, 202, 211, 222, 223, 225, 233, 235, 302 Prussian; 10, 14 Bavarian); 11 Reserve (6, 25, 33, 43, 46, 47, 53, 54, 77, 78 Prussian; 9 Bavarian); 10th Landwehr and the Bavarian Ersatz Divisions. Also, three infantry divisions (251–253) were formed in January 1917 for home service and disbanded in February 1918. Thus, on 11 November 1918 there were 213 infantry and light divisions.

In April 1917 there were 10 cavalry divisions: six mounted (Guards, 1, 2, 6, 7, Bavarian), and four (4, 5, 8, 9) dismounted and fighting as infantry. Six divisions were serving on the Eastern Front (Guards, 1, 4, 5, 8, 9), two in Rumania (6, Bavarian), one (2) on the Dutch frontier and one (7) on the Western Front. 'Cavalry Division North' was a temporary formation operating in Kurland 1 September–22 October 1917. In 1918 three dismounted divisions were disbanded on the Eastern Front (5th on 27 February, 9th on 3 March and 8th on 9 April); and two mounted divisions (2, Bavarian) were transferred to the East. In 1918 four divisions (Guards, 4, 6, 7) were transferred to the Western Front, where three more gave up their horses and were redesignated 'Cavalry Rifle' Divisions (Guards in April; 6th on 5 May, 7th on 14 May). Thus on 11 November 1918 there were still three mounted divisions (1, 2, Bavarian) on the Eastern Front, and one dismounted division (4) and three cavalry rifle divisions (Guards, 6, 7) on the Western Front.



Divisional establishments

After June 1917 all Prussian Guards, Line infantry, Reserve, Landwehr and Ersatz divisions were organized as 13,000-man 'M1915 Infantry Divisions'. There was a Divisional HQ; HQ Troops, comprising a cavalry squadron, engineer battalion (2 engineer companies, 1 mortar company, 1 searchlight detachment), signals detachment, recruit depot, medical company, two 122-man field hospitals, veterinary hospital, motor transport column, and a supply echelon with five columns (3 munitions, 1 field bakery, 1 field butchery). There was a 5,850-strong infantry command with three infantry regiments, each with three infantry battalions. A 650-strong infantry battalion had three rifle companies and one machine gun company (3-6 x 08/15 light MGs), a grenade-launcher platoon (8 grenade-launchers) and a light mortar platoon (4 mortars). The field artillery regiment had two 12-gun field battalions and a 12-gun howitzer battalion, and, if required, a heavy artillery battalion from 1918. Divisional support units comprised a 4-company MG Marksman battalion (12 x MG08 heavy machine guns per company). Divisions were classified according to whether they were capable of attack, defence or trench guard duty; Western Front divisions had more HQ units and younger, fitter troops, many transferred from the Eastern Front.

The Alpenkorps, the 200th Infantry and Deutsche Jäger divisions were classified as 'Light' (Jäger) divisions, the first two intended for mountain warfare. In 1917 the élite Alpenkorps was reorganized as a M1915 division, including 1st Bavarian Jäger Bde (1, 2 Bav Jäger Regts, Bav Lifeguard Regt); 3 Sqn, 4th Bavarian Light Horse Regt; 11 MG battalions (201-205 Mountain; 206-209 Bavarian Mountain; 4 Reserve); 204 Field Artillery Bn, and the 9th Bavarian Engineer Bn. The 200th Infantry had 2nd Jäger Bde (3-5 Jäger Regts) and supporting units. The Deutsche Jäger (formed 14 October 1917) was actually a reinforced brigade with three 650-man Jäger regiments (11-13), each with three Jäger battalions, a field artillery regiment and a medical company.

A 5,238-strong mounted Cavalry Division had an HQ and HQ Troops comprising an engineer detachment, signals detachment, medical company and two veterinary hospitals. There were three cavalry brigades, each with two cavalry regiments, a regiment having four sabre and one light MG squadrons; a Jäger battalion (four Jäger, two MG, one cyclist and one light mortar companies); and a horse artillery battalion. A Cavalry Rifle Division had three 'commands' (corresponding to cavalry regiments), each with four rifle and one light MG squadrons; a mounted squadron, a field artillery regiment and an engineer battalion.



A six-man crew operating a MG08 heavy machine gun mounted for anti-aircraft fire. The corporal commander (second right) has abbreviated NCO collar *Tresse* on his M1915 tunic; the others wear M1907 or simplified M1907 tunics. Note the holstered P08 pistols issued to machine gun crews; and that the soldier at right is wearing his trousers loose over his marching boots. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



Two machine-gunners – a corporal (left) in a simplified M1907 field tunic, and a private in a M1915 tunic – carrying MG08/15 weapons. This 'light' modification was introduced in 1915 as a more mobile weapon for trench warfare, with a bipod, pistol grip and shoulder stock; however, it still weighed 43lb with a full water jacket and 100-round feed drum. The lack of equipment places this photograph behind the front lines. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

German Army strategy was inevitably shaped by external political events. On 8 January 1917 the Supreme Command approved unrestricted submarine warfare in the Atlantic in order to force Great Britain out of the War, even at the risk of provoking the United States. On 15 March a provisional government attained power in a Russia no longer able to offer credible resistance to Germany; but on 6 April 1917 the United States declared war on Germany. Meanwhile the British naval blockade had caused severe food shortages, drastically reducing civilian morale. Industrial strikes, and political opposition to the war and to Ludendorff's leadership, were seen on an increasing scale.

By now it was clear that the war would be won or lost on the Western Front. In desperation, Ludendorff launched his Spring Offensives in March 1918, hoping to capture strategic objectives such as Paris and the

Channel ports before United States forces had built up to an unstoppable 43 divisions, and before German military and civilian morale collapsed. Impressive early advances were achieved; but by July 1918 it was clear that Ludendorff's gamble (resonant of Hitler's desperate Battle of the Bulge in December 1944) had failed. Entente forces began a remorseless advance towards the German homeland and inevitable victory.

Meanwhile, Germany experienced continued success on the Eastern Front, facing a Russian provisional government only half-heartedly inclined – and from November 1917, a Bolshevik government cynically disinclined – to challenge German forces. Now German objectives were primarily economic: to seize Ukrainian wheat to feed the starving German population, and Transcaucasian oil to service the German war machine. By November 1918 these objectives had been largely achieved, although not on a sufficient scale to forestall imminent military and political collapse.

On the Italian, West Balkan, Rumanian and Middle Eastern fronts, German strategy was to allocate minimal forces to support her Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian and Ottoman allies. This method proved successful until those allies, stretched beyond endurance, sought separate armistices with the Entente powers, causing German withdrawals and undermining Germany's ability to endure on the Western Front.

On that main front German forces continued to use infiltration tactics to break through weak points in the enemy trench line. Small teams of infantry and assault engineers, armed with portable machine guns, flame-throwers, grenades and even trench knives, were spearheaded by special assault units, and supported by machine guns, mortars and field and heavy artillery. On the Eastern and Italian Fronts, weak enemy opposition allowed traditional decisive manoeuvre tactics, including the employment of cavalry.

Western Front, 1917

The front line of April 1917 was essentially that established on 20 October 1914, modified on 25 February 1917 when, in Operation 'Alberich', the German 2nd and 7th Armies retreated 10–30 miles in eastern Picardy along the Arras-Soissons salient to the Siegfried (or 'Hindenburg') Line.

Initially the Artois front was held by 'Kronprinz Rupprecht von Bayern' Army Group with three armies (north-south: 4, 6 & 27) confronting the Belgian Army, British Expeditionary Force, and French Northern Army Group. At the battle of Arras (9 April–15 May 1917) the German 6th Army was forced back by British 1st, 3rd and 5th Armies, losing Vimy Ridge to the Canadian Corps. German 4th Army gave up Messines Ridge south of Ypres to British 2nd Army (7–14 June). During the 3½-month battle of Third Ypres or Passchendaele (31 July–10 November) it resisted the 2nd & 5th British and 4th French Armies across a sea

of mud, eventually retreating five miles and conceding Passchendaele village – though inflicting 320,000 Entente casualties for 200,000 German. Finally, 2nd Army conceded three miles to British 3rd Army at the battle of Cambrai (20 November–7 December 1917), when it faced massed enemy tanks for the first time.

The Champagne front was held by 'Deutscher Kronprinz' Army Group (1, 3, 5 & 7 Armies) against the French Northern and Central Army Groups. The 1st and 7th Armies successfully resisted Gen Nivelle's offensive against the Chemin des Dames Ridge at the second battle of the Aisne and in western Champagne (16–20 April 1917), retreating four miles but inflicting 118,000 French casualties (with the result that 68 French divisions refused further orders to attack for two months). German 5th Army resisted French attacks at Verdun (20 August–9 September); but 7th Army finally gave up the Chemin des Dames at the battle of Malmaison (23 October–1 November 1917).

The Vosges front, defended by 'Herzog Albrecht' Army Group, remained the quietest sector, with AA 'A' and 'B' conducting local actions against the French Eastern Army Group.

1918

Ludendorff, aware that Germany must try to break the British and French armies before the American Expeditionary Force could complete its slow training and build-up to an eventual strength of 43 divisions, reinforced the Western Front in early 1918 with four armies (9, 17, 18 & 19) formed from troops transferred from the Eastern Front. Between 21 March and 17 July 1918 he launched five operations, totalling 65 divisions, on the Artois and Champagne fronts in the Spring Offensives.

The first comprised Operations 'Michael' I, II & III – also called the Kaiserschlacht ('Emperor's Battle'), or the second battle of the Somme (21 March–5 April 1918). 2nd, 17th and 18th Armies advanced 40 miles,



An assault troop charge through woods towards open ground. The Swedish cuffs and M1915 standard cavalry boots worn by the central soldier suggest dismounted Dragoons fighting as infantry. Note the concentrated charge carried by the soldier in the right foreground. (Author's collection)

forcing British 3rd Army back towards Amiens and almost destroying British 5th Army; but were halted at Albert and Noyon, having outrun their inadequate supply lines and lost 200,000 irreplaceable troops.

In Operation 'Georgette', the Lys Offensive (9–29 April), 4th and 6th Armies attacked the British 1st and 2nd Armies in northern Artois, advancing ten miles towards Béthune and Ypres before being halted after sustaining 100,000 casualties.

After regrouping, Ludendorff launched 1st and 7th Armies towards Paris in the third offensive, Operation 'Blücher-Yorck' or the Aisne Offensive (27 May–17 June). They advanced 40 miles over the Chemin des Dames and the Aisne, creating the Marne Salient, which was subsequently retaken by Franco-American forces (18 July–5 August).

In Operation 'Gneisenau' or the Motdidier-Noyon Offensive (9–13 June), 7th and 18th Armies pushed towards Paris, but after ten miles were stopped before Compiègne. In the fifth offensive (15–17 July), a pincer movement intended to capture Rheims, 7th Army in Operation 'Marne' and 1st and 3rd Armies in

Infantrymen in evident high spirits advancing westwards during the Spring Offensives of March 1918. Under magnification a variety of uniform items typical of this late date can be made out: field caps and helmets, M1907 and M1915 field tunics, M1907 and M1915 trousers, puttees and marching boots. The gas mask canisters and rifles are carried across the chest when on the march. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

Operation 'Rheims' failed to take the city after minimal gains. The Spring Offensives were called off by Ludendorff on 20 July 1918 after the loss of 500,000 German casualties for no strategic gains.

Thereafter German forces retreated steadily in the face of a decisive Entente counter-offensive (8 August–4 September 1918). Ludendorff dubbed 8 August 1918 as 'the Black Day of the German Army', which 'put the decline of our fighting powers beyond all doubt', as previously reliable German divisions cracked and large numbers of troops surrendered. On the southern Artois front Franco-British forces pushed German 2nd, 9th, 17th & 18th Armies past Albert and Bapaume up to the Siegfried Line, defended by the newly formed 'Boehn' Army Group. Meanwhile, in northern Artois, the 4th and 6th Armies evacuated the Lys Salient on 29 August and retreated towards the Wotan Line. In eastern Champagne, held by 'Gallwitz' Army Group, on 12 September the US 1st Army and French colonial forces occupied the St Mihiel salient east of Verdun, forcing the outnumbered AA 'C' to withdraw.

The final Entente offensives were launched on 26 September 1918, ending with the Armistice of 11 November. From 28 September 'Rupprecht' Army Group in northern Artois abandoned the Wotan Line and were forced by Belgian, French and British forces out of north-eastern France and western Belgium.

On 27 September Franco-British forces broke the Siegfried Line, and by 11 November 'Boehn' Army Group were arranged roughly along the south-west Belgian border. In Champagne, Franco-American offensives in the Aisne and Meuse-Argonne sectors pushed 'Deutscher Kronprinz' and 'Gallwitz' army groups as far as the River Meuse, still just in north-eastern France. The Vosges front, defended by 'Herzog Albrecht' Army Group, remained dormant.

Eastern Front, 1917–18

Following Tsar Nicholas II's abdication, the Russian provisional government assumed power on 16 March 1917 under Prince Lvov, from 21 July under Alexander Kerensky; it was replaced on 8 November 1917, following a coup, by a Bolshevik regime headed by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. All fighting on the Eastern Front ceased on 15 December 1917 with the conclusion of the Russo-German armistice. Following the breakdown in negotiations on 10 February 1918 the Germans unilaterally resumed their offensive on 18 February, forcing Lenin to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March, thus buying time to establish Soviet power in Russia by sacrificing Poland, the Baltic states, Byelorussia (Belarus), Ukraine, Crimea and Transcaucasia to the Central Powers.

Russian forces only attempted local attacks in sectors of the front manned by German forces.

Infantrymen who have just collected their knapsacks from the regimental baggage train get ready to march to the trenches. They wear peakless field caps (the man in the left background with a field-grey strip covering the conspicuous red band), and carry their M1916 helmets. On their upper backs they carry a M1914 shelter-quarter, M1915 greatcoat and M1915 mess tin strapped to the M1915 grey waterproof sailcloth knapsack; on the lower backs, a M1916 gas mask canister, bayonet, M1915 water bottle and M1914 bread bag. (Author's collection)





The entire personnel of a field artillery gun crew help the team drag a C96 n/A 7.7cm field gun and its limber through a gap in the enemy wire during the German advances of spring 1918. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

'Eichhorn' Army Group had stationed 8th Army in southern Latvia, AA 'D' in south-western Latvia and 10th Army in Lithuania. On 1 September 1917, 8th Army attacked northwards, taking Riga on 5 September, overrunning the rest of Latvia by 11 October, and occupying the Estonian islands of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa by 20 October. Meanwhile, in July 1917, AA 'D' fought at Daugavpils, while 10th Army occupied Smorgon before advancing into north-western Byelorussia, absorbing Woyrsch Army Group on 31 December 1917. Linsingen Army Group defended south-western Byelorussia.

On 1 July 1917 the 'Kerensky Offensive' by the Russian South-West Front (Gen Brusilov) struck the Austro-Hungarian 'Böhm-Ermolli' Army Group in Austrian eastern Galicia (now NW Ukraine). Initially the Austro-Hungarians were forced back; but the German Süd Army counter-attacked, taking Tarnopol and Czernowitz and forcing Brusilov almost over the Russo-Austrian border by 3 August.

German 8th Army resumed its offensive on 18 February 1918, advancing into Estonia and taking Tallinn on 25 February. By 4 March it had occupied all of Estonia as well as Pskov in NW Russia, and was now within 100 miles of the Russian capital of St Petersburg, forcing Lenin to transfer his government to Moscow on 9 March. AA 'D' advanced through northern Byelorussia, while 10th Army occupied the rest of Byelorussia as far as Mogilev. Meanwhile 'Linsingen' Army Group advanced into western Ukraine.

Following the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, on 3 March 'Linsingen' (later 'Eichhorn-Kiew') commenced a brutal occupation of the Chernihiv, Kharkov, Kiev, Poltava, Taurida and Volhynia provinces of northern and eastern Ukraine. GFM Hermann von Eichhorn established Army Group HQ in Kiev, where he was assassinated by a Ukrainian socialist on 30 July

1918 (the only German field-marshal ever to suffer this fate). Meanwhile the Austro-Hungarian Eastern Army occupied Odessa and the Podolie, Kherson and Ekaterinoslav provinces of southern Ukraine. The Germans then contravened the treaty by advancing further east into the Cossack Don Republic, and occupied the Crimea on 1 May 1918.

German forces undertook two amphibious operations in 1918. On 3 April the 12,000-strong German Baltic Division – formed from the 12th Landwehr Division (GenMaj Rüdiger von der Goltz) and including the dismounted 2nd Guards Cav Bde (1, 3 Gd Lancers) and 27th (Finnish) Light Infantry Bn – landed at Hanko in southern Finland and attacked Finnish Communist Red Guards and Soviet Red Army units, as Finnish LtGen Gustav Mannerheim's White Army advanced from the north. The division took Helsinki on 13 April, Lahti on 20 April and Tampere on 26 April, and fought until Mannerheim's victory on 7 May 1918. Prince Friedrich Karl of Hesse was proclaimed King of Finland, but abdicated on 12 December 1918, four days before German troops withdrew.

On 25 May 1918 a 'mixed brigade' (7 Bav Cav Bde, 29th Bav Inf Regt, 15 Bav Reserve Jäger Regt, 10th Assault Bn, 1st Armd Lorry MG Det, II/65th Reserve Arty Bn, 176 Mortar Det, 28th Flying Det, 1750 Sigs Det) sailed from Turkey to Transcaucasia in order to secure oil supplies for Germany. Landing at Poti in Georgia on 8 June, it seized Tbilisi on 11 June, and briefly occupied Baku in Azerbaijan on 15 September, before evacuating the region in October.

Italian Front

On 16 September 1917 the German 14th Army (Gen d.Inf Otto von Below) was formed in Austrian Slovenia with four corps (2, 51 German; 1, 15 AH) and four German infantry divisions (5, 12, 26 & 117), all three

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 exposed the military weakness of Bolshevik Russia, and Germany had no compunction in contravening the treaty by occupying the Crimea – a territory intended for German settlement after an eventual German victory over the Entente. Here the 53rd Landwehr Inf Regt, 15th Landwehr Div, is marching along the Crimean coast in May 1918. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



German mountain divisions (200 Inf, Alpenkorps, Deutsche Jäger), and five AH infantry divisions. Supported by the Austro-Hungarian Tyrol and Boroëvic Army Groups, 14th Army smashed the Italian forces at Caporetto (Kobarid, Slovenia) on 24 October, spearheading a spectacular 80-mile advance that reached the River Piave, just north of Venice, on 18 November. The 14th Army was disbanded on 22 January 1918 and re-formed on the Western Front as 17th Army on 1 February. Austro-Hungarian forces signed an armistice with the Entente on 3 November 1918.

West Balkan Front

Central Powers forces on the Salonika front in northern Greece included the German 11th Army (Gen d.Inf Arnold von Winckler; June 1917 Gen d.Inf Kuno von Steuben) with two German (101, 302) and seven Bulgarian (1–4, 6, 8, 13) infantry divisions. The 11th Army repelled the French 2nd and Franco-Russian 3rd Divisional Groups at the battle of Prespa (9–17 May 1917), only to lose Pogradec to 3rd Divisional Group on 7 September. In 1918 the front settled into a stalemate until the final Entente offensive of 14 September 1918. Now 11th Army, divided into two special corps (61, 62), retreated northwards, but lost its Bulgarian divisions when Bulgaria concluded a separate armistice on 30 September. In early October the 217th and 219th Inf Divs reinforced the army at Nis, but the retreat continued through Belgrade, and by 11 November had reached Szolnok, central Hungary.

Rumanian Front

The 'Mackensen' Army Group had occupied Wallachia, western and southern Moldavia since January 1917. In June 1917 there were 11 divisions in southern Moldavia in German 9th Army's 1st Reserve Corps (89, 212, 216 Inf, 76 Res, 12 Bav Inf, Alpenkorps); 18 Corps (217 Inf) and Schaer Force (92, 109 & 115 Inf). 3rd Bulgarian

Army in northern Dobrudja included the German 52nd Special Corps with the Goltz Detachment; 1st AH Army in SW Moldavia included four German divisions (218, 225 Inf, 8 Bav Res, 3 Cav); and 7th AH Army in NW Moldavia included two (117 Inf, 6 Cav). In July 1917 the reorganized Rumanian Army, supported by the Russian 'Rumanian Army Group' in eastern Moldavia, launched an offensive into western Moldavia. German 9th Army promptly counter-attacked into eastern Moldavia, but was held by the Rumanian 1st and 4th Armies at Marasesti (6 August–3 September). The front stabilized but, when Russian forces refused to support her, Rumania concluded an armistice on 6 December 1917.

Army Group Mackensen remained in Rumania following the Treaty of Bucharest of 7 May 1918; and on 19 June 1918 German 9th Army transferred to the Western Front, leaving the remaining German forces in place as the Rumanian Occupation Army (GFM Mackensen). Finally, on 10 November 1918, Rumania broke out of her eastern Moldavian redoubt just one day before the German Armistice, forcing the Occupation Army to retreat to Hermannstadt in Hungarian Transylvania (Sibiu, Rumania).

Palestine Front

Army Group 'F' was formed in June 1917 with the German Asia Corps (also known as 'Pascha II Expedition') and 6th and 7th Ottoman Armies, in order to retake Baghdad, captured by British forces on 11 March. The brigade-status Asia Corps eventually comprised 201 Inf Bde (701–703 Inf Bns, each including a MG coy, infantry gun ptn and cavalry ptn); 146 Jäger Regt; 11 Res Jäger Bn; 701 Arty Bn; an engineer bn & 205 Eng Coy; a mortar detachment; Pascha II Sigs Bn; & 301–304 Flying Detachments.

General d.Inf Erich von Falkenhayn, the Army Group commander, rejected retaking Baghdad as unrealistic; and on 20 July 1917 the Army Group was redesignated 'Yildirim' and transferred to Palestine

with the Asia Corps and three Ottoman armies (4, 7 & 8), to defend Gaza from British attacks under Gen Allenby. The British recommenced the offensive on 31 October, and on 8 December 1917 took Jerusalem. Allenby's final advance began on 19 September 1918, forcing the Ottoman 7th and 8th Armies to retreat northwards. On 1 October, Allenby took Damascus and on 26 October, Aleppo. On 30 October 1918 the German staff departed for Germany, and next day the Turks accepted the Entente armistice.

The German Armistice

Following the Bulgarian armistice of 30 September 1918, Ludendorff, by now thoroughly unnerved, demanded that the German politicians conclude an armistice with the Entente while the German Army could still resist. Accordingly, on 4 October Prince Max of Baden was appointed Chancellor and appealed to the Entente for an armistice. Events now moved rapidly. Under Entente pressure, Ludendorff resigned on 27 October and Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated on 9 November, and a German Republic was proclaimed. Meanwhile, on 29 October the German High Seas Fleet, trapped in Kiel by the Entente blockade, mutinied; by 8 November Lübeck, Hamburg, Bremen, Wilhelmshaven, Cologne and much of northern Germany were under the control of the mutineers, and revolts had also broken out in Berlin and Munich. Mathias Erzberger, the Catholic conservative leader, signed the Armistice at Compiègne, north of Paris, on 8 November; and on 11 November 1918, at 11.00am, hostilities ceased on the Western Front.

The Armistice ushered in a period of intense upheaval, as Germany and her neighbours reacted to the collapse of German power. Many German units marched back to the Reich in good order, rightly claiming that they had been undefeated in the field, but



Two members of either the 3rd or 4th Bavarian Ski Bns, 3rd Light Inf Regt, serving with the 200th Inf Div probably in Rumania, 1917. They wear the M1915 hooded windproof jacket reversible from drab green to white, and the matching trousers secured by integral puttees. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

incorrectly blaming German politicians for having 'stabbed them in the back' – this interpretation ignored Ludendorff's obviously justified analysis that the Armistice was necessary to save Germany from being forced to surrender after further costly defeats. Many loyal German troops formed or joined 'Free Corps' (Freikorps) units to attack the Russian-style 'Soviet' councils which had sprung up in most cities, and to overthrow the four German Soviet republics which briefly existed in 1919: in Bremen (10 January–4 February); Baden (22–25 February); Brunswick (28 February) and Munich (7 April–3 May). Freikorps units also fought against Polish insurgents on the eastern borders, and in Estonia and Latvia.³ Meanwhile British, French, US and Belgian troops occupied the Rhineland.

³ See Elite 76, *The German Freikorps 1918–23*



The German Army used the months between the Armistice of November 1918 and the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919 to shift the blame for defeat away from the exhausted German troops, many of whom were in open revolt, and towards the politicians who were attempting to salvage a demoralized nation – the myth of the 'stab in the back'. The Entente unwittingly encouraged this by allowing units to march back to their barracks with colours flying. Here infantry from the XI Corps District parade with perfect discipline at GHQ in Kassel past the supreme commander, GFM von Hindenburg. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

A lieutenant of the Hanoverian 79th Inf Regt 'Von Voigts-Rhetz', taken prisoner by British troops in Flanders while serving with the 20th Inf Div in October 1917. He has a M1907 infantry officers' field tunic, and has been relieved of all his equipment except his M1916 gas mask. Visible on his right forearm is a light blue cuffband with 'GIBRALTAR' embroidered in gold lettering (for enlisted men, in yellow thread). This had been awarded on 24 January 1901 to three Hanoverian units, to commemorate the joint defence of Gibraltar, 1779–83, with Hanover's British allies. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



The Treaty of Versailles, signed 28 June 1919, forced Germany to accept blame for the war and to pay extensive reparations, to reduce her army and navy and give up her air force and heavy weapons, and to cede national territory and colonies. The Republic's acceptance of the Treaty fatally undermined its credibility in the eyes of many Germans; and these events, coupled with the financial recession which followed, would lead inexorably to Hitler's rise to power in January 1933.

UNIFORMS

The German Army continued to wear the M1915/1916 field and officers' undress uniforms introduced on 21 September 1915. On 31 March 1916 Bavaria added the distinctive M1916 light blue and white 'Bavarian cord' edging braid to the collars of the M1916 full dress and field tunics and greatcoat, shortened on 10 December 1917 to the collar's leading edge. These uniforms have been fully described in MAA 407 and will be only briefly summarized here, together with items

introduced from 9 April 1917. It should also be noted that the M1907/1910 and simplified M1907 uniforms, described in detail in MAA 394 and not repeated here, continued to be worn up to and beyond the German Armistice of 11 November 1918. As in the first two parts of this survey, the term 'standard' should be understood to mean 'worn by all ranks'.

LINE INFANTRY

In April 1917 the German Line Infantry comprised 374 regiments, but by November 1918 the disbandment of 24 Prussian (193, 332, 334, 342, 361, 364, 372, 377, 378, 389, 390, 397, 401–403, 418, 419, 427, 432, 449, 450, 454–456) and 472 Saxon, had reduced the total to 349. There were 14 of Prussian Guards: 1–7 Foot Guards, 1–5 Grenadier Gds, Fusilier Gds and Infantry Instruction; and 8 non-Prussian Guards regimental equivalents: Bavarian Inf Lifeguards, Saxon 100th Lifegd Inf and 101st Grens, Württemberg 119th and 123rd Grens, Baden 109th Life Grens, Hessian 115th Lifegds, Mecklenburg-Schwerin I & III/89th Grens, and Mecklenburg-Strelitz II/89th Grenadiers. There were also 13 Prussian Grenadier regts (1–12, 110); 12



LEFT Photographed in 1917, this corporal (his M1915 NCO collar braid barely distinguishable) wears a M1907 field tunic with the shoulder straps removed for security reasons. His gas mask is the first pattern M1915; the M1916 canister is slung in the 'ready' position. The M1909 pouches on his belt are supported by a bread bag strap. Note the obsolete 65cm narrow-bladed M98 bayonet. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

RIGHT An infantryman in a M1907 field tunic and M1916 steel helmet models the first pattern M1917 body armour; note the protection given to the chest and abdomen by the steel plates articulated on leather strapping. At up to 24lb weight this 'Sappenpanzer' was too heavy to be worn except for static sentry duty, and by some MG crews; nevertheless, nearly half a million examples were manufactured from May 1917. It gave protection against shrapnel, fragments, and rifle fire beyond 500 yards' range. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

Prussian Fusiliers (33–40, 73, 80, 86, 90); and 302 Line Inf: 231 Prussian (13–479 series); 25 Saxon (102–107, 133–134, 139, 177–179, 181–183, 351, 354, 391–392, 415–416, 431, 473–474); 14 Württemberg (120–122, 124–127, 180, 413–414, 475–476, 478–479); and 32 Bavarian (1–32).

Officers

Officers' field uniform comprised the M1915/1916 spiked helmet, in the field the M1916 standard steel helmet; M1915/1916 peaked field cap; M1915/1916 field tunic; M1914 field breeches; M1915 standard cavalry riding boots; M1915 greatcoat, and field equipment.

The **M1915 officers' spiked helmet** was in blackened leather with, from 9 Feb 1917, matt-grey galvanized iron or sheet iron fittings and plate, gold-plated chin scales and a tall, detachable spike. In the field it was worn with a cover and a black leather enlisted man's chin strap, with the spike removed. By 1918 the spiked helmet had been replaced in the field by the steel helmet, but continued to be worn by general officers and many field officers behind front lines, and by all troops in Germany.

The **M1916 standard steel helmet** was general issue from Apr 1916, and by Feb 1918 had reached all troops in the field. It was manufactured in chromium nickel steel with a single (1 Aug 1918, two-part) leather chin strap, and was painted matt field-grey. A limited number of detachable brow shields were issued to forward observers and trench

guards for additional protection. On 1 Aug 1918 trials began with M1918 helmets with 'ear cut-outs' at the side to allow the wearer to hear better. Although it was originally planned to manufacture 100,000 of these, only just over 2,000 reached the front line before the Armistice.

Although the helmet was painted matt it reflected in sunlight, moonlight and rainy weather; for lower visibility troops coated their helmets with earth or sand, and from 7 July 1918 were advised to paint them with irregular sharp-edged patterns of dark green, rust brown and ochre yellow separated by thick black lines. Individual soldiers manufactured field-grey cloth or sand-coloured sackcloth helmet covers, and on 3 January 1917 white linen covers were issued to troops fighting in snowy conditions.

The **M1915/1916 officers' peaked field cap** was manufactured in field-grey wool with red crown piping and band, a field-grey soft leather peak and chin strap (24 Apr 1917, vulcanized fibre or cardboard), and the officers' imperial and state cockades. The **M1917 officers' standard peaked field cap**, introduced 20 July 1917 for all branches, had a dark greenish-grey band and crown piping. The Bavarian version, introduced 15 Aug 1917, had a field-grey band and piping.

The **M1915/1916 officers' field tunic** was manufactured in M1915 field-grey wool with a high, dark greenish-grey facing cloth turn-over collar (Bavaria, field-grey); six grey horn front buttons concealed by a fly front; deep plain turn-back cuffs; two concealed waist pockets with slanted flaps with dull brass or nickel-plated domed buttons with a crown; a plain back

vent, and two dull brass belt hooks. The M1915 field-quality **officers' shoulder boards** of matt silver-grey cord had infantry-white cloth underlay and dull brass or nickel domed buttons with a crown; 21 élite units had an inner underlay of silver, red, lemon-yellow, light blue, mid-blue or light green. Officers of the 32 regiments so entitled (1–7 FtGds; Fus Gds; Inf Instruct; 1–5 Gren Gds; 115 Lifegds; Bav Lifegds; 100, 109 Life Gren; 1–8, 11, 89, 101, 119 & 123 Gren; 80 Fus) wore

M1915 collar braids on dark field-grey collar patches – either two Guards braids with gold or silver wire centre and end cords; one Guards braid with gold wire centre and end cords; or Old Prussian braid with a gold, silver or matt-grey centre cord. The **M1915/1916 officers' undress tunic** had white collar patches, with coloured pipings for regiments with inner underlays.

The **M1914 officers' field breeches**, in superior quality grey whipcord, cloth or tricot, were cut as for mounted enlisted men, with grey (Bavaria, field-grey) cloth, suede or leather reinforcements and no piping; and from 14 Nov 1917 field-grey breeches were worn by all officers. Officers wore M1908 cavalry enlisted men's long-shank 'curved top' black leather riding boots or M1912 natural leather ankle boots and leggings.

The **M1915/1916 officers' greatcoat** was single-breasted, tailored and calf-length, in field-grey cloth with a wide dark field-grey collar, field tunic shoulder boards, six front buttons with a crown, and deep turn-back cuffs.

Field equipment for field officers and captains comprised the M1915 officers' waistbelt; P08 (Luger) pistol in a M1908 hardshell holster, and M1912 map case on the left front hip; binocular case on the right front hip, and standard gas mask bag on the lower back. Subalterns added standard M1895 support straps, a M1914 officers' backpack to which the greatcoat could be strapped; a M1884 signal-whistle; and on the left back hip a M1898 enlisted men's bayonet with M1896 Prussian officers' 'closed tassel' sword knot. All leather items were blackened.

The **M1917 gas mask**, introduced 6 June 1917 to supplement the M1915 and M1916 masks, was manufactured in sheep's leather to save scarce rubber supplies. The final model, the M1918 leather gas mask, was introduced on 29 Sept 1918, but few reached the troops before the Armistice.

Enlisted men

The **enlisted men's field uniform** comprised the M1915 spiked helmet, in the field the M1916 or M1918 standard steel helmet; M1915 peaked field cap (NCOs) or M1907 peakless field cap (men); M1914 field trousers; M1915 greatcoat, and field equipment.

The **M1915 enlisted men's spiked helmet** was the M1895 pattern but with matt-grey galvanized iron or sheet iron fittings and plate, and a spike which was removed in the field; it was worn with a cover. In the field the M1915 officers' field cap was worn officially by



A classic study of an assault trooper. He wears the M1907 engineers' tunic, and M1917 field-grey trousers with M1866 marching boots – suggesting that he is from a 'non-establishment' assault troop raised at regimental or divisional level. Around his neck is slung a M1917 bandolier for rifle ammunition clips, leaving his belt free to hook on four M1916 stick grenades. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



Six members of an assault troop pose proudly with a group of dejected French prisoners they have just captured. Some troopers have field-made cloth helmet covers; M1907 infantry field tunics are worn with M1917 trousers, M1866 marching boots or puttees with M1912 ankle boots. They carry locally made grenade sacks, and the corporal (left) has a field torch suspended from a front button. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

senior NCOs; junior NCOs and men continued to wear the inelegant **M1907 enlisted men's peakless field cap** in coarse field grey wool with a band in finer red facing cloth; they could add a field-grey soft leather peak at their own expense.

The **M1915 enlisted men's field tunic** was manufactured like the M1915 officers' tunic, but in a slightly darker shade of coarse field-grey wool, more loosely tailored, with no central back seam and a lower turn-over collar. Personnel of the 32 regiments entitled to collar braids wore 7cm-long M1915 grey linen enlisted men's collar braids. From 27 Jan 1917 a field-grey shoulder loop was added to M1915 infantry field tunics so that the shoulder strap could be rolled up round it.

The **M1914 enlisted men's field trousers** were in coarse quality grey cloth with red outseam piping, but shortages of grey cloth forced the adoption of field-grey from 14 Nov 1917. The trousers were worn with high-shaft natural leather M1866 marching boots, from 11 Dec 1916 with wooden heels. Blackened leather M1893 or M1914 ankle boots with field-grey or grey cloth puttees were popular despite official restrictions.

The **M1915 enlisted men's greatcoat** was in coarse field-grey cloth with dull brass or nickel-plated buttons and enlisted men's M1915 field shoulder straps and, from 13 Nov 1916, shoulder loops. The **M1895 enlisted men's fatigue uniform** in off-white herringbone drill or, from 2 Aug 1915, dyed field-grey, was worn for heavy manual duties. The **M1915 enlisted men's summer uniform** for lance-corporals and privates was prioritized for front line troops on the Salonika, Rumanian and Ukrainian fronts.

Senior NCOs' **field equipment** comprised the M1915 enlisted men's waist belt and backpack support straps; P08 pistol and holster, and M1898 enlisted

men's bayonet with M1896 officers' sword knot, on the left hip; enlisted men's backpack with rolled-up greatcoat and shelter-quarter on the upper back; gas mask case on the lower back; and water bottle and M1914 breadbag behind the right hip. Field equipment worn by junior NCOs and men comprised the M1915 enlisted men's waist belt and backpack support straps; M1909 rifle ammunition pouches on each front hip; M1898 bayonet with frog and bayonet knot, strapped to the M1874 or M1898 spade and frog, on the rear left hip; M1915 enlisted men's backpack, M1914 shelter-quarter, greatcoat and M1910 mess tin on the upper back; and M1915 or M1916 gas mask case, M1915 water bottle and M1914 breadbag on the lower back. The backpack and support straps were omitted for the 'assault order'; the mess tin was strapped to the greatcoat, which was in turn wrapped in the shelter-quarter and strapped across the left shoulder in a horseshoe roll.

The triple sets of **M1909 rifle ammunition pouches** were manufactured from 21 Oct 1916 in stronger leather; and from 5 Oct 1918 infantry were issued M1911 cavalry ammunition pouches. The **M1915 enlisted men's backpack**, introduced 18 Aug 1915, comprised a grey waterproof sailcloth satchel (from 5 Aug 1917, reinforced cardboard) with a backflap in unshaven calfskin – from 3 Apr 1917 also in rabbit, kid or even dog skin. The M1914 shelter-quarter was in grey waterproof cotton with galvanized iron or steel fittings. The **M1915 mess tin**, introduced 22 September 1915, was in field-grey painted sheet steel; the **M1915 water bottle** was in galvanized sheet steel with a waterproof field-grey cotton cover – from 7 Oct 1917 some were made from glass. The **M1914 breadbag** was in grey waterproof cotton with iron fittings.

For extra protection while on sentry duty, men were sometimes issued a heavy steel strap-on brow shield for the helmet; and **body armour**, of four steel plates joined by leather straps and resting on the shoulders. A second pattern armour incorporated a raised stop on the front of the right shoulder to prevent the rifle butt slipping.

Tropical uniform

The Asia Corps in Palestine, the Mixed Brigade in Georgia and some troops fighting in Ukraine, Rumania and on the Salonika front were issued M1916 khaki drill tropical uniforms, supplemented by items originally issued to the 1900 Chinese Expeditionary Corps, Colonial troops in Africa and the German Navy. The M1900 cork tropical helmet for all ranks had an M1900 branch-colour band, large brass or aluminium imperial eagle, large sheet iron imperial cockade on the right side, and a removable cloth neck guard. The M1916 cotton peaked cap for all ranks had a brown leather chin strap and peak, imperial and state cockades and a removable neck guard; the M1918 cap had a larger peak.

The first pattern officers' M1916 cotton field tunic had a high turn-over collar, fly front, and turn-back cuffs; two external breast and two external skirt pockets all with pleats, scalloped flaps, and khaki buttons with a crown; and loops for the M1915 shoulder boards. The second pattern had plain cuffs, six exposed front buttons, and the internal skirt pockets with squared flaps. Enlisted men wore a M1916 tunic with a lower

turn-over collar, plain khaki shoulder straps, six front buttons, plain cuffs, and two external skirt pockets with squared buttoned flaps.

Assault ('Storm') Troops

In Apr 1917 there were 17 assault battalions numbered 1–17, joined on 7 Aug 1917 by the 18th Battalion. Each battalion was attached to an Army HQ. Ten (1–7, 14–16) served on the Western Front, seven on the Eastern Front (8, 10–13, 17–18) and one (9) on both the Rumanian and Western Fronts. The 9th Bn was disbanded on 22 May 1918, 17th on 22 Aug 1918, and 12th on 9 Oct 1918; the others served until the Armistice. The assault and MG companies wore infantry uniform (1, 3 Bn – light infantry; 5, 10 – engineer), and the mortar company engineer uniform. From 2 Jan 1917 all these 'establishment' battalions were issued M1914 reinforced mountain trousers, puttees and mountain boots. 'Non-establishment' assault units raised at divisional and regimental level wore standard infantry uniforms and carried storm troops' weapons, but were forbidden the M1914 mountain clothing.

Second-line infantry

In Apr 1917 there were 190 Reserve infantry regiments: 148 Prussian (1, 2 Gds; 1–441 series); 13 Saxon (110 Gren; 101–4, 106, 107, 133, 241–245); 7 Württemberg (119–122, 246–248); and 22 Bavarian (1–8, 10–23 Bav). However, with the disbandment by Nov 1918 of 28



Members of the German Mixed Brigade in Georgia, June 1918, talk to local tribesmen. The second lieutenant (second left) wears a khaki M1900 tropical peaked cap and M1916 officers' tropical tunic and trousers. The corporal (centre) has a M1915 field-grey field tunic, his M1914 reinforced mountain trousers suggesting that he is from the 10th Assault Bn, which served on this front. (Author's collection)

Prussian (11, 20, 24, 32, 35, 67, 75, 81, 116, 130, 201, 203, 211, 215–220, 227, 246–248, 257–258, 260, 265, 273, 440), three Saxon (241–243) and 12 Bavarian regiments (4–6, 8, 11, 13–15, 17–18, 20–21), this total had been reduced to 147. Their M1915 uniforms were indistinguishable from those of their parent Line infantry regiments, except for the green 'R' and regimental number on their spiked helmet cover, and the white Landwehr Cross on the state cockade on the M1915 peaked and M1907 enlisted peakless field cap. At least seven Reserve regiments (1, 2 Gds, 84, 100, 109, 261 & 262) wore their parent regiment's collar braids.

In Aug 1914 there had been 32 independent **Landwehr** infantry brigades, but during the war most were allocated to Landwehr, Line infantry, Ersatz and Cavalry Rifle divisions, leaving four independent brigades (29, 31, 61 & 84). There were 127 Landwehr regiments: 94 Prussian (1–328 series); 11 Saxon (100 Gren-Landwehr, 101–102, 107, 133, 350, 388); 8 Württemberg (119–126) and 14 Bavarian (1–8, 10–15). By Nov 1918 three (9, 87 Prussian; 13 Bavarian) had disbanded, leaving a final total of 124. Landwehr regiments were widely used on the Eastern Front in 1918. They wore the M1915 field uniform, with a green 'L' and regimental number on the spiked helmet cover, and the white Landwehr Cross on the state cockade of M1915 peaked and M1907 peakless field caps, or the grey cloth cover of the M1860 shako. The M1915 field tunic carried the insignia of the parent regiment, but shoulder boards and straps showed only regimental numbers, not ciphers. The only exception was 2nd (independent) Regt, which was awarded on 29 July 1917 the cipher 'WII' for Kaiser Wilhelm II. Two regiments (100, 116) wore Guards collar braids.

In Apr 1917 the **Landsturm** comprised 41 regimental staffs, each with three mobile battalions, intended to man quiet sectors of the front line: 35 Prussian (3, 7–11, 17, 20, 22–26, 31–38, 40, 47, 111, 115, 329, 330, 601, 602, 606, 607, 611–614); one Saxon (19); two Württemberg (13, 39); and three Bavarian (1–3).

Two regiments (606, 607) were disbanded in February 1918. There were also about 380 independent mobile battalions and 270 static defence battalions based in Germany. The Landsturm usually wore the M1907/1910 field-grey uniform or obsolete field and undress tunics. On 12 June 1918 all remaining waxed cloth caps were replaced with spiked leather helmets.

This cheerful Jäger on winter sentry duty, probably on the Salonika or Rumanian fronts, wears the light infantry's M1914 felt shako with the cockade and plate removed. He is wearing a fleece surcoat over his greatcoat, and has slipped his M1916 marching boots into M1917 felt sentry's shoes, which afforded greater warmth but limited mobility. Note that he carries an obsolescent Gewehr 88 rifle. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

LIGHT INFANTRY

In Apr 1917 there were 19 regular Light Infantry (Jäger) battalions (Gds, 1–11, 14, 27, 31 Prussian; 12, 13 Saxon; 1, 2 Bavarian) and 29 Reserve battalions (Gds, 1–11, 14–24 Prussian; 12, 13, 25, 26 Saxon; 1, 2 Bavarian), operating mainly as mountain or mobile infantry. Between May 1915 and May 1918 they were grouped, usually in threes, into 15 Light Infantry regiments (2, 4–6, 8–14 Prussian; 7 Saxon; 1, 15 Bavarian, 29 Bav Inf). These were allocated to seven divisions (Alpenkorps, Deutsche Jäger, 195, 197, 199, 200, 217 Infantry). The 15th Regt, comprising '1st Caucasian Light Inf Regt' – German ex-prisoners of the Russians, and Baltic Germans from the Russian Army –





Captain Paulcke, commanding the Prussian 2nd Ski Bn, 3rd Light Inf Regt with the 200th Inf Div, wears a M1915 field-grey peaked cap with the 'Carpathian Corps' badge partly surrounding the imperial cockade. The M1915 Jäger officers' grey-green tunic has the regulation plain green-piped collar, and the characteristically stubby M1915 shoulder boards bearing the Arabic battalion number. The fold in his tunic has superimposed the Iron Cross 1st Class and a M1918 Wound Badge. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

served in Georgia in 1918. On 13 Feb 1918 the 27th (Finnish) Bn officially left German service, but joined German forces assaulting southern Finland in Apr 1918, forming the nucleus of the newly formed Finnish Army. The 31st Bn remained unmobilized on the German coast; and seven battalions (Gds, 3, 4, 9, 14; 3, 11 Res) operated independently.

The **M1915/1916 field uniform** included the M1915 shako and cover, although the M1916 steel helmet was increasingly worn. The M1915 grey-green (Bavaria M1916, field-grey) field tunic had a dark grey-green (Bavaria, dark field-grey) collar and green shoulder board underlay or shoulder strap piping (Bavaria, green straps). Two battalions (Gds, 14) had Guards collar braids. Some battalions (including Gds, 9, 12; 1, 2 Bav), deployed for mountain warfare, were issued rucksacks, puttees and mountain boots.

There were three **Rifles** (Schützen) units: the Rifle Guards Bn (11 Light Inf Regt), Reserve Rifle Guards Bn

(independent), and the Saxon 108th Regt (23rd Inf Division). They wore grey-green Light Infantry uniforms; officers' shoulder boards had green outer and black velvet inner underlay, and enlisted men's shoulder straps were piped black, 108th Regt adding a red hunting horn and regimental number. Rifle Guards and Reserve Rifle Guards had Guards collar braids.

From Aug 1916 to Nov 1918 the 36 companies and 11 Reserve companies of **Cyclists** on the Eastern Front were formed into eight Cyclist Bns (1-2, 4-8 Prussian; 3 Bav), each with one MG and six cyclist companies. On 1 Aug 1916 the 2nd Cyclist Bde was formed, having by 8 Oct 1918 six battalions (1-2, 4-8 Prussian; 3 Bav) in two regiments. Cyclist troops wore M1915 grey-green Light Infantry uniforms (54th Mecklenburg Bn, silver collar braids) with reinforced trousers, puttees, ankle boots, the M1911 cycling cape and the M1912 back satchel. Initially officers' shoulder boards carried gold-plated company numbers, and grey-green enlisted shoulder straps red numbers (Bavaria, yellow on green); but on 19 Mar 1917 the 1st and 2nd Württemberg companies adopted an 'R' above the company number. Prussian cyclist battalions wore battalion shoulder board/strap numbers (1-2, 4-8); and on 25 Aug 1917 the 3rd Bavarian Bn adopted 'R/III', other Bavarian companies 'R' only.

The **Mountain Troops** comprised the 3rd Light Inf Regt with four ski battalions (2, 3; 1, 4 Bav) in the Alpenkorps, and the Württemberg Mountain Bn, in May 1918 expanded to form the Royal Württemberg Mountain Regt of two battalions. The 3rd Regt wore the M1915 shako and M1914 field-grey ski Litewka with the plain collar piped green, slowly superseded from 19 July 1916 by the M1915/1916 grey-green field tunic with green officers' shoulder board underlay. The Württemberg Mountain battalion/regiment wore the M1915 shako (introduced 24 Mar 1916) with the Württemberg Order of the Crown shako plate (later replaced by the Württemberg coat of arms), or the M1916 steel helmet; and the M1914 ski Litewka modified with green collar patches, and green shoulder board underlay or shoulder seam padding for officers and enlisted men respectively. The rarely worn M1915 field-grey infantry field tunic bore the same insignia.

Machine gun units

In Apr 1917 there were 13 regular independent MG detachments (1, 2 Gds; 1-10; 1 Bav), allocated to the cavalry divisions. Later nine were disbanded to form MG squadrons attached to individual cavalry regiments, leaving four detachments (1 Gds; 3, 5, 8). There were also 338 MG platoons (1-330; 1-38 Bav); 354 supplementary MG platoons (531-878; 1-6 Bav); 111 light MG sections (1-111), and other *ad hoc* units; these were allocated as pairs of platoons to each battalion MG Company, increasing establishment from 6 to 12 guns. MG troops (except those attached to

grey field breeches had red outseam piping flanked by two stripes.

Field officers and captains of the **General Staff** wore the M1915/1916 field-grey infantry field tunic with crimson pipings and shoulder strap underlay, and matt silver-grey (Defence Ministry, silver) embroidered 'Kolben' Guards braids; their field breeches bore crimson outseam piping and stripes.

CAVALRY

In July 1914 there were 110 regiments of Cuirassiers and Heavy Cavalry, Dragoons, Hussars, Lancers, and Prussian and Bavarian Light Horse. These were grouped in pairs into 55 cavalry brigades (1–4 Gds, Life Hussars, 1–35, 37–45, 1–6 Bav), with the Guards brigades forming the Guards Cav Div and the remaining brigades allocated to the 48 Line infantry divisions. The Transylvanian Cav Bde, formed Nov 1916, later became the 7th Bavarian Cav Bde. On 1 Aug 1914, 21 brigades (4 Gds; 4, 6, 7, 10, 15, 20, 21, 24, 27, 29, 31, 32, 34, 35, 37, 43, 44; 2, 3, 6 Bav) were disbanded and their regiments allocated as individual squadrons to infantry divisions. By Apr 1917, ten brigades (2, 3, 5, 22, 25, 26, 30, 41; 1, 5 Bav) had been allocated to the six mounted divisions; 11 brigades (11, 12, 14, 17, 19, 23, 28, 38, 39, 40, 45) to the four dismounted divisions; 13 brigades (1–3 Gds; Life Hussars, 1, 8, 9, 13, 16, 33, 42; 4, 7 Bav) were operating independently; and one (18) was with 41 Reserve Corps. By Nov 1918 there were five brigades (2, 22, 25; 1, 5 Bav) in the three mounted divisions; one (39) in the sole dismounted division; 18 independent brigades (1–3 Gds; Life Hussars, 1, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 23, 26, 33, 42; 4, 7 Bav), mainly on the Eastern Front; and nine brigades (3, 5, 11, 14, 28, 30, 38, 41, 45) converted in May 1918 into regimental-status Cavalry Rifle Commands, each with three cavalry regiments, and allocated in threes to the three Cavalry Rifle Divisions.

A further 47 cavalry regiments and 21 battalions were formed during the war. Following general mobilization on 1 Aug 1914 the pre-war regiments formed 34 Reserve cavalry regiments, with squadrons allocated as divisional cavalry for the Reserve divisions. There were three of Prussian Reserve Cuirassiers, designated Heavy Cavalry; ten of Reserve Dragoons; nine of Reserve Hussars; eight of Reserve Lancers; one of Prussian Reserve Light Horse; and two – from Sept 1914, three – of Bavarian Reserve Light Horse, designated Reserve Cavalry. In Sept–Oct 1915 eight Cavalry regiments were formed for the corresponding new infantry divisions; and in 1914 and 1915 five Landwehr Cavalry regiments were raised. Of this total, 13 regiments were subsequently disbanded, leaving 34 in Nov 1918. Later in 1914, 21 Reserve Cavalry battalions were formed for the correspondingly numbered Reserve divisions. By Apr 1917 all except four had been disbanded, and in Nov 1918 only one battalion (8 Bav) remained.

Cavalry wore the standard M1915/1916 field-grey uniform, although many troopers contrived to make their distinctive M1908/1910 uniforms last until Nov 1918.

From Nov 1917 the ten Prussian **Cuirassier** regiments had been reorganized into four mounted regiments (Lifegds, 3, 6, 8) and six dismounted (Cuirassier Gds, 1, 2, 4, 5, 7); while the seven **Heavy Cavalry** regiments comprised five mounted (1, 2 Prussian Res; Saxon Gds; 1, 2 Bav) and two dismounted (3 Prussian Res, Saxon Carabiniers). One Reserve regiment (3 Prussian Heavy Cav) was disbanded 12 Apr 1918, leaving 16 regiments in Nov 1918. On the M1915 field tunic officers wore shoulder boards with a white (Lifegds, grey) underlay and a regimental-colour inner underlay; enlisted men, white shoulder straps with regimental-colour piping. Two regiments (Lifegds, Cuirassier Gds) had Guards collar braids. **Saxon Heavy Cavalry** officers had dark blue shoulder board underlays and regimental-colour inner under-lays; enlisted men, dark blue shoulder- straps with regimental-colour piping, and all ranks Guards collar braids. On the M1916 field tunic **Bavarian Heavy Cavalry** officers had plain shoulder boards with a lemon-yellow underlay and dark green inner underlay; enlisted men, lemon-yellow straps piped dark green.

From Nov 1917 the 38 **Dragoon regiments** had been reorganized. There were 29 mounted regiments: 28 Prussian (1, 2 Gds; 1, 3–8, 10–14, 16–24; Gds, 3, 4, 6, 8 Res) and the Württemberg Reserve Dragoons. Nine dismounted regiments comprised seven Prussian (2, 9, 15; 13 later 1, 12 later 2, 5, 7 Res) and two Württemberg (25, 26). Three Reserve regiments (1, 2, 5) were subsequently disbanded, leaving 35 in Nov 1918. On the M1915 field tunic Dragoon officers wore shoulder boards with a dark blue underlay and regimental-colour inner underlay; enlisted men, dark blue shoulder straps with regimental-colour piping. Six regiments (1, 2 Gds; 17, 18, 23, 25) wore Guards collar braids.

There were 30 **Hussar** regiments, of which 23 – 13 Prussian (Lifegd, 1–7, 10, 14–17), six Prussian Reserve (4–9), and four Saxon (18–20, Res) – served as mounted cavalry, and seven (8, 9, 11–13; 1, 2 Pruss Res) dismounted as infantry. Two Reserve regiments (1, 2 Pruss Res) were subsequently disbanded, leaving 28 in Nov 1918. On the M1915 field tunic officers wore shoulder boards with a regimental-colour underlay and matt-gold metal unit insignia. Two traditional Hussar distinctions survived: enlisted men wore wider regimentally coloured subalterns' shoulder boards with yellow unit ciphers, and white or yellow reversed button-colour numbers. Also, perhaps due to an official oversight, officers retained button-colour (enlisted men, white or yellow) braid on the outseams and seat of their breeches and trousers. Lifeguard Hussar officers had two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with a gold wire centre and cords;

(continued on page 33)

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(continued on page 33)

WESTERN FRONT, 1917

1: Generalmajor, 17th Inf Div; Arras, April 1917

2: Vizefeldwebel, 22nd Heavy Artillery Regt; Cambrai, November 1917

3: Gefreiter, 10th Bavarian Reserve Regt; Aisne front, April 1917



SPRING OFFENSIVES, MARCH 1918

1: Leutnant, 267th Field Arty Regt; Peronne

2: Sanitätssoldat, 185th Inf Regt; Peronne

3: Unteroffizier, 92nd Inf Regt; Bapaume



RETREAT, 1918

1: *Unteroffizier*, 3rd Heavy Combat Vehicle Detachment; Cambrai, October 1918

2: *Sergeant*, 29th Reserve Inf Regt; Flers, August 1918

3: *Grenadier*, 1st Foot Guards Regt; Passy-sur-Marne, August 1918



EASTERN FRONT, 1917

1: *Pionier*, 42nd Mortar Co; Tarnopol, August 1917

2: *Gefreiter*, 4th Grenadier Guards Regt; Riga, September 1917

3: *Major*, 87th Cavalry Rifles Regt; Kaunas, August 1917



EASTERN FRONT, 1918

1: *Oberwachtmeister*, 66th Military Police Detachment;
Kiev, June 1918

2: *Jäger*, 153rd Cyclist Co; Ukraine, June 1918

3: *Offizierstellvertreter*, 27th Light Inf Bn;
Tampere, April 1918

3



ITALY, 1917

1: *Oberleutnant*, 3rd Light Inf Regt; Udine, October 1917

2: *Oberjäger*, Württemberg Mountain Bn; Cisterna, November 1917

3: *Feldrabbiner*, 2nd Bavarian Corps; River Piave, November 1917



BALKANS, 1917-18

1: *Landes-Beirat*, Rumanian Military Administration; Bucharest, March 1918

2: *Etatsmäßiger Wachtmeister*, 5th Hussar Regt 'Prince Blücher of Wahlstatt'; Prespa, Macedonia, May 1917

3: *Gefreiter*, Assault Detachment, 26th Bavarian Inf Regt; Marasesti, August 1917



PALESTINE AND TRANSCAUCASIA

1: *Musketier*, 701st Inf Bn; Nazareth, October 1918

2: *Oberleutnant*, 301st Flying Detachment, Asia Corps; Gaza, November 1917

3: *Etatsmäßiger Feldwebel*, 15th Bavarian Reserve Light Inf Regt; Baku, September 1918



A group of ten lance-sergeants from a mounted Hussar regiment. While five are wearing the M1915 standard field tunic, five retain the elegant 'old cavalry' M1909 enlisted ranks' Attila with grey woollen cord frogging on the breast. NCO collar, and in some cases cuff braid can be seen on this traditional tunic, which contrasts with the modern steel helmets. Most of these soldiers wear reinforced breeches with M1915 standard cavalry boots, but note the M1866 marching boots worn by the medical NCO, third from right. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



enlisted men, grey linen braids with a red centre stripe and yellow braid stripes.

Of the 34 regiments of **Lancers**, 18 – 12 Prussian (2 Gds, 1, 2, 6–8, 10, 12–14, 16; Gds Res), two Saxon (17, 18), two Württemberg (19, 20) and two Bavarian (1, 2) – retained their mounts, while 16 regiments – 14 Prussian (1, 3 Gds; 3–5, 9, 11, 15; 1–6 Res), and two Saxon (17, Res) – fought dismounted. Five Reserve regiments (1–3, 5, 6) were subsequently disbanded, leaving 29 in Nov 1918. On the M1915 field tunic officers wore shoulder boards with a red underlay and secondary regimental-colour inner underlay; enlisted men, red shoulder straps with secondary regimental-colour piping. The Bavarian regiments had crimson underlays, and straps with dark green piping. Officers of the three Prussian Guards regiments (1–3 Gds) had two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids; enlisted men, grey linen braids.

Prussian and Bavarian Light Horse comprised 25 regiments. Their wartime value for mounted liaison meant that 21 regiments – 11 Prussian (1, 3–5, 7–12; 1 Res) and 10 Bavarian (1–8; 1, 6 Res Cav) – retained their mounts, and only four regiments – three Prussian (2, 6, 13) and one Bavarian (5 Res Cav) – fought dismounted. One Reserve regiment (5 Bav Res) was disbanded on 12 Feb 1918, leaving 24 in Nov 1918. On the M1915 grey-green field tunic with a dark grey-green collar, Prussian officers wore shoulder boards with a green underlay and regimental facing-colour inner underlay; enlisted men, green straps with regimental facing-colour piping. On the field-grey M1916 field tunic with a field-grey collar, Bavarian Light Horse and Reserve Cavalry officers wore plain shoulder boards with a regimental facing-colour underlay and a dark green inner underlay; enlisted men, plain regimental facing-colour shoulder straps with dark green piping. No regiments wore Guards collar braids.

By Apr 1917 there were seven dismounted **Cavalry** regiments (84, 85, 87–89, 93, 94). Five (84, 87–89, 94) were subsequently disbanded, leaving two (85, 93) in Nov 1918. They wore M1915 Dragoon field uniforms, officers' shoulder boards having dark blue underlay and a white inner underlay; enlisted men, dark blue straps with white piping. There were five **Landwehr Cavalry** regiments (1 later 10, 2 later 11, 90–92), but 10th Regt was disbanded on 8 May 1918, leaving four (11, 90–92) in Nov 1918. They wore the field uniforms of their 'parent' Dragoon, Hussar, Lancer or Prussian Light Horse regiments, and from Oct 1916 redeployed as dismounted cavalry. The four **Reserve Cavalry** battalions – Prussian (46), Saxon (53), Württemberg (54) and Bavarian (8) – wore Reserve Dragoon (53, Lancer) uniforms with regimentally coloured facings and shoulder board underlays or shoulder strap pipings.

Trench warfare spelt the virtual end of mounted cavalry on the Western Front. Consequently, 41 mounted regiments – 17 pre-war and 24 war-raised – were converted between Aug and Dec 1916 into **Cavalry Rifle Regiments**, followed by a further 12 pre-war regiments on 14 Nov 1917, making a grand total of 53 regiments out of 157. 15 regiments were subsequently disbanded, leaving 38 in Nov 1918. Cavalry rifle regiments were organized as infantry battalions, with 4 rifle squadrons (companies) and a machine-gun squadron. Pre-war regiments retained their original titles and their mounted uniforms, with infantry trousers and boots. War-raised regiments added 'Rifles' to their titles, and from 30 Oct 1916 wore Dragoon helmets and white cap bands and pipings; officers retained their regimental uniform, while enlisted men adopted silver buttons and light green shoulder straps with red unit numbers.

The crew of a 15cm field howitzer, wearing M1915 tunics with the heavy artillery's conspicuous yellow shoulder straps with red crossed grenades and regimental number. The two gunners on the left are setting the fuse of a shell they have just removed from its basket-weave container. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



ARTILLERY

Field Artillery regiments provided supporting fire-power for divisions and usually carried the divisional number. By Apr 1917 there were 204 regiments: 168 Prussian (1–7 Gds; 1–602 series); 13 Saxon (12, 28, 32, 48, 64, 68, 77, 78, 115, 192, 245, 246, 279); 7 Württemberg (13, 29, 49, 65, 116, 281, 238); and 16 Bavarian (1–12, 19–23). The Prussian 103rd FA Regt was disbanded in May 1918, leaving a total of 203 in November.

On the M1915/1916 field-grey field tunic officers wore shoulder boards with a red underlay; six regiments (1, 3, 4, 7 Gds, 12, 32) added a regimental-colour inner underlay. Unit insignia for Guards regiments comprised different flaming bomb designs; for Line artillery, a cipher or a flaming grenade above the regimental number; for Bavarian regiments, the regimental number only. Enlisted men had red shoulder straps (the six regiments adding a coloured piping) with yellow facing-cloth unit insignia. 1st–5th Artillery Guards had Guards collar braids, 6th and 7th Artillery Guards one Old Prussian collar braid.

There were also 59 **Reserve regiments** for the reserve divisions – 45 Prussian (1, 3 Gds; 1–70 series, 239); four Saxon (23, 24, 32, 53); three Württemberg (26, 27, 54), and 7 Bavarian (1, 5, 6, 8, 9–11) regiments. They wore the regular M1915/1916 field uniform, 1st and 3rd Reserve Artillery Guards wearing a triple-flamed grenade on the shoulder boards with a regimental inner underlay, or shoulder straps with regimental piping, and (together with the 63rd Regt), Guards collar braids. There were also 22 **Landwehr regiments** – 16 Prussian (3–5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 250–256, 258); 1 Saxon (19); 2 Württemberg (1, 2), and 3 Bavarian (1, 2, 6), wearing the field uniform of their parent Line regiment.

The 21 **Mountain Artillery batteries** – 15 Prussian (1–5, 9, 11, 14–21); two Württemberg (6, 13) and four Bavarian (7, 8, 10, 12) – were grouped into six battalions (1–5, 7). On 21 Jan 1916 Prussian and Bavarian troops replaced their M1914 field-grey ski-caps with standard

field artillery headgear. Unit insignia on the M1915/1916 field tunic comprised a flaming grenade/‘GA’/battery number. The two Württemberg batteries wore the M1914 ski Litewka with black collar piping, and field-grey shoulder straps with black unit insignia.

In Apr 1917 there were 50 **Infantry Gun batteries** (1–50) to give close support to infantry attacks. 22 batteries (29–50) were disbanded in Nov 1917, reraised in May 1918 as 23 batteries (29–51), and disbanded again in July 1918, as were the 1st and 12th Batteries, leaving 26 batteries in Nov 1918. Personnel wore field artillery uniforms, the shoulder board or strap insignia comprising a flaming grenade/‘JG’ or ‘IG’/battery number.

The **Heavy Artillery** in Apr 1917 totalled 35 regiments – 28 Prussian (1–3 Gds, 1–11, 14–18, 20–28); 2 Saxon (12, 19); one Württemberg (13), and four Bavarian (1–4), joined in 1918 by two more Bavarian (5, 6). Each regiment’s 3–4 battalions usually operated independently. In Apr 1917 there were 667 independent batteries (11, 83–84, 101–149, 182–199, 201–797), but by Nov 1918 about 622 had been grouped into independent battalions. By that date there were 179 independent battalions – 142 Prussian (21–57, 59–63, 65–71, 73–95, 97–101, 106, 108–151, 153–159, 162–164, 167–170, 401–403, 405–407); 12 Saxon (58, 64, 72, 96, 103–105, 107, 152, 160–161, 404); and 25 Bavarian (4–5, 7–29).

On the M1915/1916 field-grey field tunic officers wore shoulder boards with a golden-yellow underlay (3rd Gds Regt, white inner underlay). Unit insignia for Guards regiments comprised crossed flaming artillery shells, for Line regiments crossed shells above the regimental number, for Bavarian regiments the number only, for independent battalions the parent regimental number, and for independent batteries the battery number. Enlisted men had golden-yellow shoulder straps with red facing-cloth unit insignia. Personnel of the three Guards regiments wore Guards collar braids.

There were also 26 **Reserve heavy artillery regiments** – 20 Prussian (1, 2 Gds; 1–11, 13–18, 20); two Saxon (12, 19), and four Bavarian (1–3, 6) – and also ten Reserve battalions (22–31). In Apr 1917 there were 78 Landwehr battalions (1–4 Gds; 1–71, 1–3 Bav), and five more (72–76) by Nov 1918. All wore the uniform of their parent regiments.

TECHNICAL TROOPS

Engineers

Field Engineers carried out combat engineering duties. By Apr 1917 there were about 238 divisional battalions (Gds, 1–31, 38–519 series; 5–26 Bav series). About 400 independent companies (99–116, 183–423 series; 1–18, 19–28 Bav) were also formed, often as specialist units, from which eight battalions (35–39, 94–96) assembled in 1917 to fire gas mortar shells. On the M1915/1916 field-grey field tunic all engineer officers had Guards collar-braids, and shoulder boards with a black underlay and a red inner underlay and the battalion number (Gds, no insignia; 12th, 22nd Saxon, crossed pick and spade above battalion number). Enlisted men had black shoulder straps piped red with red unit insignia, the Engineer Gds Bn adding Guards collar braids.

There were also 35 **Reserve Engineer** companies: 56 Prussian (1–2/Gds, 1–2/1–11, 14–21, 23–30, 43–52, 55, 75–91); six Saxon (1–2/12, 22; 53, 54); two Württemberg (1–2/13), and 29 Bavarian (1–2/1–4; 1–21). These wore the uniform of their parent battalion. The élite Guards Reserve Engineer Regt operated 12 flamethrower companies (1–12), wearing Guards collar braids and a 'death's-head' badge on the left cuff. The 54 **Mining companies** – 46 Prussian (general company series), and eight Bavarian (1–8) – dug tunnels and exploded enemy tunnels. They wore the unit insignia of their parent battalion, Bavarian personnel adding light blue crossed hammers above the company number on their left upper sleeves.

In Apr 1917 there were 13 **Mortar battalions** (I–XIII) in general reserve, with 20 more (XIV–XXIII) formed in 1918. 708 independent mortar companies were also formed, but 600 of them had been attached to infantry regiments by Nov 1918, leaving only 108 independent units. Personnel wore M1915 engineers's uniforms, the officers with a gilt 'MW' on their shoulder boards; enlisted men had a red 'MW' with the Roman battalion number or Arabic company number on their black shoulder straps piped in red.

Communications Troops

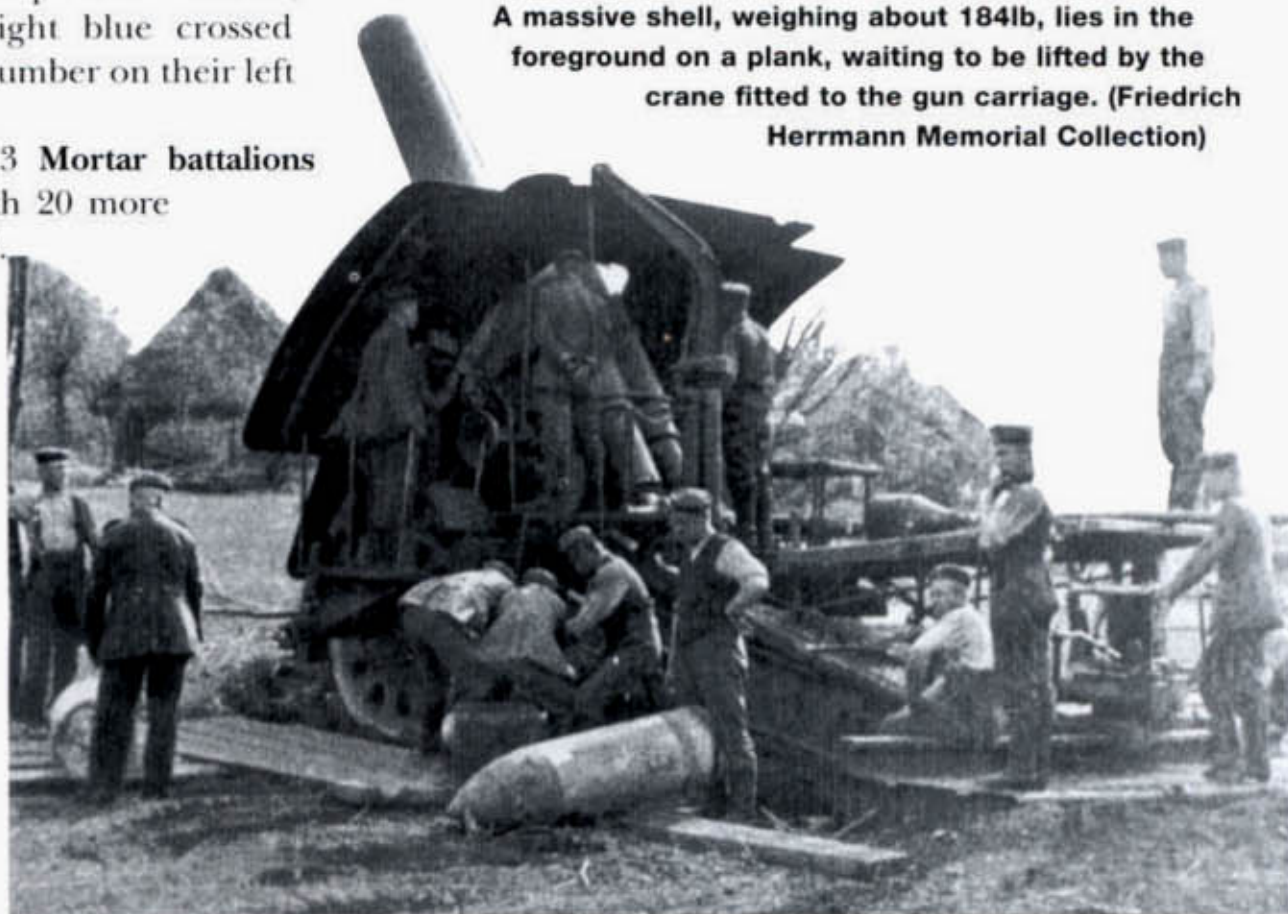
These wore M1915/1916 field-grey engineers' field uniforms, officers' shoulder boards having a light grey underlay, and enlisted men light grey shoulder straps with red unit insignia.

There were 329 units of **Railway Engineers**, organized into 11 numbered Military Railway Directorates. There were 127 Railway Traffic Cos manning the long distance trains; 48 Field Traffic Bns; 28 companies and five Cable Car Detachments, running local trains to the front lines; and 121 Railway Construction Cos laying and repairing track. On the M1915 field-grey field tunic all ranks wore Guards collar braids and shoulder board or strap insignia of the pre-war parent unit: 'E/1–4'. Bavarian units had no collar braids and a simple 'E' (for Eisenbahn) insignia.

The **Motor Transport Corps** manned staff cars and supply lorries organized into company-sized columns. There were 319 Army Rear Area Motor Columns (1–130, 171–384 series); 26 Rear Area Motor Companies (1–23, 30, 51–52) and 251 Divisional Motor Columns (530–796 series). On the M1915 field uniform all ranks of all except Bavarian war-raised units wore two Guards collar braids, and a 'K' shoulder board or strap insignia. Enlisted men serving as vehicle drivers wore the M1912 black leather driving uniform, accompanying personnel the M1912 black leather greatcoat. In the summer the M1912 waterproof black (22 Dec 1917, field-grey) twill summer uniform was worn, also a field-grey rubber raincoat. Personnel of the **Motorcycle battalions** wore the same uniform with a dull brass motorcycle collar patch badge on the

Heavy artillery crew manning a 21cm 'heavy mortar' – in fact, a howitzer. All are wearing M1915 peakless field caps, but most have removed their tunics in the summer heat.

A massive shell, weighing about 184lb, lies in the foreground on a plank, waiting to be lifted by the crane fitted to the gun carriage. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



The 16-man crew of an A7V heavy tank (there could be up to 18, depending upon how many machine gunners were carried) pose with their vehicle in summer 1918. All appear to wear M1915 uniform with Motor Transport Corps or Engineer Guards collar braids. The officer tank commander (third from right, foreground) and an NCO next to him are wearing M1915 peaked field caps. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



Litewka, a black leather crash helmet, and from 6 Nov 1917, M1912 ankle boots without puttees or M1915 cavalry boots.

On 29 Sept 1917 Germany belatedly formed volunteer **armoured units** as part of the Motor Transport Corps, operating captured British tanks and (eventually) up to 21 examples of the German A7V heavy tank. Numbers 501–507, 525–529, 540–543 and 560–564 are listed; the largest number to see action were 20 on 15 July 1918. By the Armistice nine of what were at first called Sturm Panzerkraftwagen Abteilungen, 'Assault Armoured Vehicle Detachments' had been formed (1–3, 11, 12, 13 Bav, 14–16); establishment was a captain, five subalterns and 170

enlisted men for units with A7Vs, and 134 enlisted men for those with the smaller British tanks. In Sept 1918 the units were redesignated schwere Kampfwagen Abteilungen, 'Heavy Fighting Vehicle Detachments', each fielding five tanks; the A7Vs were operated by Abt 1–3, the remainder having British captures. Detachments 1–3 fought on the Western Front from 21 Mar 1918, and by Nov 1918 seven A7Vs had been lost in action. Half the crewmen came from the Motor Transport Corps, wearing the M1915 uniform, while volunteers from other branches – mainly infantry, machine gun units, field artillery and signals – preferred to retain their original uniforms, with, from 16 Nov 1917, field-grey puttees and M1914 ankle boots,



An interesting close-up of the driver's position in the top of the A7V tank – in this case, No.563 'Wotan' of the 3rd Assault Armoured Vehicle Detachment – with the top and rear plates of the cupola folded down. All three A7V units were based at Marchienne-au-Pont. The Motor Transport Corps driver is wearing a M1907 leather peaked cap and M1907 field-grey tunic with Guards collar braids and 'K' on the shoulder straps. His companion at left wears a M1915 tunic with the distinctions of the Engineer Guards Battalion. 'Wotan' survived the war, but was scrapped by its captors in late 1919. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

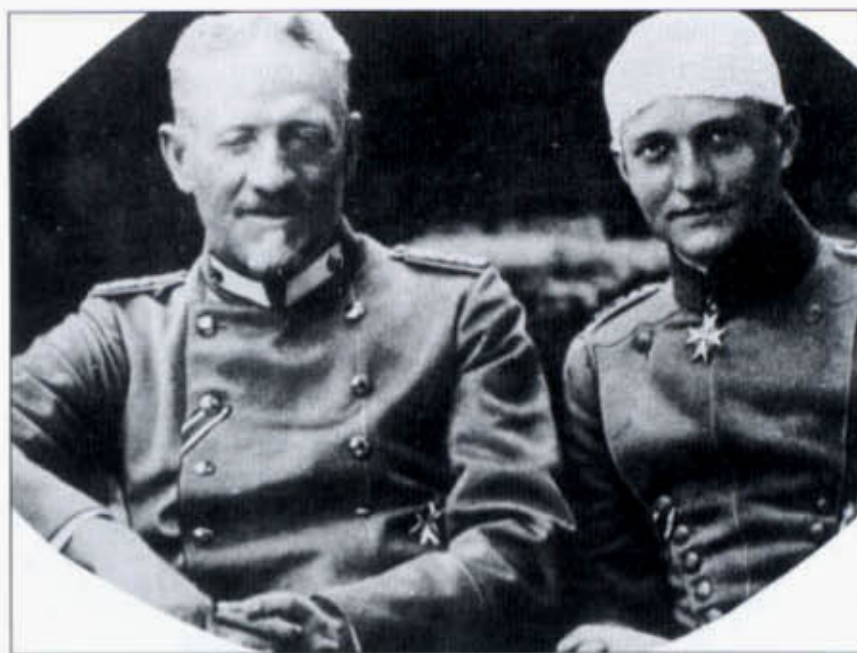
and from 17 Mar 1918, with M1914 reinforced mountain trousers. On 23 Aug 1918 crews were issued dark blue fatigue uniforms, and, from 16 Sept 1918, field-grey overalls and a leather tank helmet.

Signals Troops (Telegraphentruppen) were organized in company-sized detachments. By Apr 1917 there were 30 Army Radio Bns (1–30), each with 10 officers and 280 men, two battalions per Army, connecting armies and corps; 27 Group Radio Bns (Gds; 1–21, 34, 36; 1–3 Bav); and 28 Reserve Radio Bns (Gds; 1, 3–10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 22–27, 38–41, 1–3 Bav), connecting corps and divisions; and 251 Divisional Radio Bns and Wireless Bns (1–616 series, 1–14 Bav series), liaising between divisions and regiments. On the M1915/1916 field uniform all personnel wore the shoulder board or strap unit insignia of the nine pre-war battalions: 'T /1-7', Bavaria 'T/1-2'. All ranks of the 1st Signals Bn and the Bavarian 1st and 2nd Bns as parent units (except Bavarian war-raised units) wore two Guards collar braids, and on the left upper sleeve red chain-stitched M1916 insignia on a light grey cloth oval: 'T/Roman number' (Army Radio Bns); or 'F/Arabic number' (Group, Reserve and Divisional Bns).

On 12 Sept 1917, Signals left the Communications Troops and became an independent arm redesignated Nachrichtentruppen. There were five 368-strong Army Group Signals Detachments (200–204); 51 Army Signals Detachments (1–25 and 101–125 series, 1701), each with 920 men; 25 Army Radio Detachments (1–23, 26, 1725), each with 117 men; 65 Group Signals Detachments for the corps (Gds, 1–701 series; 601–603 Bav), each with 301 men; 63 Group Radio Detachments (501–563), each with 52 men; 212 Divisional Signals Detachments (1–5 Gds; 1–590, 901–907 series, 1703; 1–16, 401–409, 501–506, 551 Bav series), and ten Cavalry Signals Detachments (Gds, 1–9), each with 361 men. From 8 May 1918 Prussian, Saxon and Württemberg personnel wore the M1915 uniforms. Officers' shoulder boards had light green underlay, red inner underlay, and the gilt Arabic number of one of the 21 depot battalions (1–21), Guards no number. Enlisted men had light green shoulder straps piped red, with a red chain-stitched battalion number. Guards wore no shoulder insignia; Guards officers, two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with a silver wire centre and cords; enlisted men, grey linen braids with a black centre stripe and white braid stripes. From 28 Oct 1918 all Bavarian Signals officers had 'Kolben' Guards braids, enlisted men grey linen Guards braids. The M1916 sleeve ovals were no longer worn, making individual unit identification impossible. The officers' M1915/1916 field-grey undress tunic had light green collar patches piped red.

Air Service

The Flying Troops included 90 Fighter Squadrons (1–90), reduced in Nov 1918 to 81, sometimes grouped



Capt Manfred Baron von Richthofen (right), the 25-year-old commander of Jagdgeschwader 1 (1st Fighter Wing, comprising Jagdstaffeln 4, 6, 10 & 11), and the leading fighter 'ace' of the war. He is photographed in September 1917 on convalescent leave following a head wound sustained in July – the last leave before his death on 21 April 1918. He wears the red-piped M1910 Lancer officers' field tunic of his parent unit, 1st Lancer Regt 'Emperor Alexander III of Russia' (West Prussian). His Pour le Mérite was awarded on 4 January 1917 for his 16th 'kill'. The 'Red Baron' poses with his father, the retired Maj Albrecht von Richthofen, who wears the 1915 undress Litewka of his old 1st Life Cuirassier Regt 'Great Elector' (Silesian), with white collar patches piped red, and shoulder boards with a white underlay and red inner underlay. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

into fighter wings, and 16 squadrons formed into four fighter groups (1–4). There were also 16, later 27, Bomber Squadrons (1–27), grouped into four, later eight, bomber groups (1–8); and four 'Giant Aircraft Detachments' (500–503), by Nov 1918 reduced to one (501). There were 53 Flying Detachments (1–48, 301–305) for battlefield reconnaissance; 101 Artillery Spotter Detachments (201–298 series; 101–103 Bav); and 38 Protection Squadrons (1–38) for escorting artillery spotters. In Mar 1918 the latter were redesignated Battle Squadrons for ground attack missions, and sometimes grouped into battle wings and battle groups.

On the M1915/1916 field tunic officers wore a light grey shoulder board underlay and a winged propeller insignia. Enlisted men had light grey shoulder straps piped in the battalion colour (Bavaria, no piping), with the unit insignia – 'winged propeller/1-4' – (Bavaria, no number) in red chain stitch. Some units wore on the left upper sleeve of the field tunic and greatcoat red chain-stitched insignia on a light grey cloth oval: for bomber units, the group number above the squadron number – 'I-IV/1-24'; for flying detachments, 'F/Arabic detachment number' (Bavaria, 'F' only). All personnel wore two Guards collar braids, but war-raised Bavarian units a plain collar. Seconded officers wore their original

Surgeon Brigadier Dr Steuber, senior medical officer of the Ottoman 'Yildirim' Army Group in 1917. He wears a medical officer's M1910 peaked field cap with Prussian cockade on the red-piped blue band. His M1915 field tunic has the special medical generals' shoulder boards but, against regulations, the Line generals' red collar patches with gold Alt Larisch embroidery, instead of red-piped dark blue patches with matt gold Guards braids. Note the Order of the Red Eagle neck decoration. Steuber became 18th Army senior medical officer in 1918. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



collar braids. Officers wore a mid-blue shoulder board underlay and, from 21 Apr 1917, the column or remount depot number; enlisted men, mid-blue shoulder straps with red cloth numbers.

Medical and Veterinary Corps

The **Medical Corps** formed 314 companies (1–86, 101–123, 201–278, 300–301, 401–420, 501–576, 601–644 series; 1–30 Bav series), of which 251 were allocated to divisions and the rest to army HQs. There were also 502 field hospitals (1–532 series; 1–5 Bav) allocated two per division; and 2–6 officers attached to each regiment and independent battalion HQ. On the M1915/1916 field-grey field tunic general officers

had two matt-gold Guards collar-braids, other officers silver braids, on dark blue velvet collar patches piped red; and special M1915 shoulder boards with dark blue velvet underlay and a gilt Aesculapius staff (caduceus). Stretcher-bearers wore the M1915/1916 field tunic with crimson shoulder straps with, from 21 Apr 1917, yellow unit numbers; bearers in companies and hospitals in the Guards Corps wore two Guards collar braids. Medical orderlies had dark blue shoulder straps with yellow unit insignia. All medical personnel wore a red cross on a white brassard on the upper left sleeve.

The officer-only **Veterinary Corps** formed 473 veterinary hospitals: 288 divisional and 77 rear area hospitals (1–5 Gds; 1–570 series; 1–36, 41 Bav); 27 Army HQ hospitals (571–594; 40, 50, 51 Bav); and 80 stationary hospitals (1–113 series). Veterinary officers were also attached to cavalry and artillery regiments, signals detachments and supply corps remount depots. On the M1915/1916 field-grey field tunic officers had silver Guards collar braids and M1915 matt-silver shoulder boards with a crimson underlay and a gilt snake device. The supply corps personnel attached to veterinary hospitals wore the M1915/1916 field uniform with a red Arabic hospital number on mid-blue shoulder straps.

Labour units

There were 219 **Reinforcement battalions** (1–200 Prussian; 1–19 Bav), digging fortifications behind the front lines. Personnel wore M1915/1916 field-grey field uniforms with a battalion armband on the right upper sleeve, and the M1915 enlisted men's peaked field cap with a field-grey band and piping. During

uniforms with a winged propeller shoulder insignia. Field-grey flight overalls were issued in 1917.

Army **airship** bombing and reconnaissance operations were discontinued in Jan 1917 due to their vulnerability. Field Airship Detachments, operating tethered balloons for aerial photography and artillery spotting, were organized into 158 independent Balloon Platoons (1–112; 1–23, 201–223 Bav). On the M1915/1916 field tunic officers wore a light grey shoulder board underlay and a gilt Gothic 'L'. Enlisted men's light grey shoulder straps bore the depot battalion number 'L/1–5' (Bavaria, no number) in red chain stitch. The 25 **anti-aircraft battalions** (801–803, 901–921, 925), each with three 100-man companies, were formed 1 Aug 1917 to protect Air Service installations, their crews wearing M1915 infantry uniforms with the battalion number as shoulder board or strap insignia. Personnel of the 103 AA Platoons (1–103), formed on 28 Aug 1917 to defend west German factories from enemy bombers, wore field artillery uniforms with a winged artillery shell/'MG' shoulder strap insignia (Bavaria, 'FLK/MG').

Supply Troops

From Apr 1917 there were 180 supply columns (1–156, 201–203; 1–25 Bav); 444 vehicle park columns (1–319, 409–459, 601–842; 1–41 Bav); 331 rear area vehicle park columns (1–71, 193–748, 901–953); 292 depot supply columns (3–591, 813–871, 917, 954); 148 bakery columns (1–307; 1–22 Bav); 287 field butchery columns (1–349 series); and 140 remount depots (1–178, 201–217, 251, 301–315; 1–22 Bav). They were grouped tactically under 33 Army Supply Corps Commanders (1–30; 1–3 Bav).

All ranks wore the M1915 peaked field cap with a mid-blue (Bavaria, bright red) band and piping. On the M1915/1916 field-grey field tunic, 1st and 2nd Gds Depot Bn personnel (Gds Corps) wore Guards

1918 troops operating near the front line were armed with captured enemy rifles. There were also 56 **Road Repair companies** (1–40, 62–76, 116), building new roads and carrying out general repairs. The enlisted men wore the M1915 field tunic with, from 6 July 1917, a grey linen armband on the right upper sleeve with the unit number printed in black. This was replaced on 30 Jan 1918 by the M1915 Motor Transport Corps field-grey uniform without Guards collar braids and with plain field-grey shoulder straps.

Military Police

By 1918 there were 48 Detachments and 14 Troops, one or two usually being allocated to each corps or Reserve corps (the latter usually had Troops), and numbered 1st & 2nd within each corps. Other units included 70 independent detachments (37–122 series) and 15 independent troops (1–28 series) in occupied and rear areas of the Eastern Front, and the Warsaw Government General Brigade. The M1916 Military Police field uniform comprised the M1860 Dragoon helmet (replaced 5 Feb 1918 by the M1916 steel helmet) or the M1915 peaked field cap; and the M1916 field-grey field tunic with a dark green collar piped red. Officers wore two matt-gold Guards collar braids, their shoulder boards having a dark green underlay and red inner underlay; enlisted men, two (lance-corporals, one) grey braids, and dark green shoulder straps piped red. All personnel on duty wore the field-grey painted M1914 duty gorget. Personnel acting as Auxiliary Military Police wore their normal uniforms with a white linen left armband with 'MP' in black letters, and a

gorget with 'POLIZEI/Arabic personal number'. Auxiliary Police wearing white armbands (replaced in 30 Mar 1918 by a gorget) were also employed in Germany from summer 1917 as frontier guards, and to guard cornfields and vegetable fields from theft by the starving population.

OFFICIALS

The Military Administration Corps comprised 14 military branches having daily contact with Army personnel, and 13 civil branches manning offices in Germany. All officials had civil service titles equivalent to Army ranks, sometimes with variations between Baden, Bavaria, Brunswick, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Prussia, Saxony and Württemberg. There were senior officials (brigadier to lieutenant equivalents), with university education qualifications; intermediate officials (major to second lieutenant equivalents), with secondary education; and junior officials (warrant officer II to sergeant equivalents), with elementary education. Officials wore Army uniforms with distinctive collar patches and shoulder boards (junior officials, shoulder straps). Only the seven most important branches are described here: Corps and Divisional Administration; Regimental and Battalion Administration; Court Martial; Legal; Pharmacists; Military Administration of Occupied Territories, introduced 13 Dec 1917; and Construction. The first six were military officials, Construction were civil officials.

The M1910 infantry officers' field-grey field uniform was introduced 2 May 1913 as the M1913



A group of stretcher-bearers from various units of the 12th Landwehr Div drag off a wounded civilian during the fighting against Communists in southern Finland, April 1918. They are wearing M1915 field uniforms with Red Cross armbands. The soldier at right carrying medical belt pouches is from 564th Medical Co, the other two are regimental orderlies. (Author's collection)



Divisional Chaplain Menke, photographed in 1917, wearing a M1915 frock coat and holding a M1915 peaked field cap with a silver cross between the cockades. He displays a chaplain's white-edged violet armband with the Red Cross; his neck cross is tucked inside his coat, but note his Iron Cross 1st Class. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

officials' uniform, similar to the medical officers' uniform. The M1913 peaked field cap had a silver officials' badge between the two cockades, often omitted in the field – e.g. eagle (Prussia), coat of arms (Saxony), no badge (Württemberg, Bavaria); junior officials wore the shoulder board badge. The M1913 field-grey tunic had gilt or silver-plated buttons and Swedish cuffs. Senior officials wore dark blue velvet rhomboidal collar patches (Construction, cornflower-blue) with coloured piping, brigadier equivalents adding two button-colour wire Guards braids; intermediate and junior officials had no collar patches. Brigadier equivalents wore the M1910 general officers' tunic with breast pockets and plain piped turn-back cuffs. The velvet cap band and tunic collar and cuff piping were in the facing colour; the pipings around the band edges and crown, tunic front and back flaps

were in the piping colour. Trousers had coloured piping; brigadier equivalents had general officers' red piping and stripes. All had silver-plated buttons. The facing/piping colours were:

Corps & Div Admin	– dark blue/crimson
Regt & Bn Admin	– dark blue/white
Court Martial & Legal	– light blue/red
Pharmacists	– crimson
Construction	– dark blue (senior), cornflower-blue (inter- mediate)/crimson

Senior and intermediate officials wore shoulder boards with reverse button-colour rank rosettes, a branch-colour underlay, and a state badge on a crowned shield: e.g. gold eagle on silver shield (Prussia), coat of arms (Saxony, Württemberg), white and blue shield (Bavaria). Brigadier equivalents had general officers' gold/dark blue inlay/silver/gold plaited shoulder knots. Other senior officials wore field officers' button-colour/dark blue inlay/button-colour plaited knots on piping-colour underlay, with 2–0 rosettes. Intermediate officials had subalterns' flat gold braids with dark blue threads and facing colour underlay, and 2–0 rosettes; major equivalents had a special plaited shoulder board with two rosettes. Court Martial officials (highest rank, major-general equivalent with one silver rosette) had red and black inlays and threads; Construction, crimson. Junior officials had plain piping-colour shoulder straps with the state badge.

On 21 Sept 1915 officials adopted the M1915 Army field uniform, but M1913 facing and piping colours were retained (Construction intermediate officials, cornflower-blue collar patches). Velvet was replaced by cloth; tunic collar and cuff pipings were cornflower-blue. Senior officials wore the brigadiers' Guards collar braids and silver plaited shoulder knots; intermediate, plain collar patches and flat silver braid shoulder boards. Pharmacists had crimson collar patches, and the Military Administration had dark green facings and piping and silver buttons.

The **Secret Field Police** were formed in Aug 1914 to control the population in occupied territories, fight against espionage and sabotage and, by 1917, increasingly to combat criminality among German troops. Each Army HQ had a Geheime Feld Polizei group comprising a captain and 6 (later up to 80) policemen. They wore civilian clothes in the field, but from 29 Apr 1918 for parades the field-grey M1915 officials' uniform with cornflower-blue facings.

There were about 1,800 Protestant and 1,700 Catholic **military chaplains** and 30 Jewish field rabbis (Feldrabbiner), all designated as military senior officials but without rank insignia. All posts had Protestant and Catholic representatives. A provost (brigadier equivalent) was based at each army HQ, a senior priest (Militär-Oberpfarrer) at corps HQ, and a

divisional priest (Divisions-Pfarrer) at divisional HQ. In Dec 1914 a field senior priest (Feldoberpfarrer) supervised chaplains on the Western and (later) Eastern Fronts, replaced in summer 1917 by an army senior priest (Armeeoberpfarrer) at each army HQ. The M1913 chaplains' field uniform, introduced 3 June 1913 in M1907 field-grey, comprised a wide-brimmed felt hat with a violet brim edging and band, or a M1910 officers' peaked field cap with a violet band and crown piping, both with a white enamel cross (omitted for rabbis) between the imperial and state cockades. The field-grey knee-length frock coat had a stand-up collar and deep turn-back cuffs, eight matt-grey buttons, and violet collar, front and cuff piping. A silver Protestant cross, black Catholic crucifix edged silver, or silver Jewish star of David was worn on a silver chain on the chest; and a violet armband edged white (rabbis, white armband) with a red cross was worn on the left upper sleeve. The M1915 field-grey uniform had matt-white frock coat buttons.

OFFICER CANDIDATES

A soldier entering the Army could be appointed an officer candidate (Fähnjunker) by his regiment; ranking as a private, his only visible distinctions were a privately purchased M1908 enlisted greatcoat with an officers'-style double-breasted front (but still with one row of buttons) and double back-pleat, and privately purchased marching boots. After six months' service he spent six months at one of the ten Prussian or one Bavarian military academies as an officer cadet (Fähnrich); ranking as a lance-sergeant, he wore a corporal's uniform with officer's peaked field cap, cockades and sword knot, the modified M1908 enlisted greatcoat (Bavaria, M1903 officers' greatcoat), and the officers' backpack. Following successful completion of officers' examinations at the academy he would return to his regiment to be appointed senior officer cadet (Degenfähnrich), awaiting promotion to second lieutenant; he wore the M1903 officers' greatcoat with enlisted shoulder straps and the M1889 officers' sword.

A medical (veterinary) officer cadet (Unterarzt/Unterveterinär), attending the Berlin or Munich medical (Berlin veterinary) academy, wore the M1910 medical (veterinary) officers' uniform without collar patches and field-grey enlisted shoulder straps piped dark blue (crimson), edged in silver NCO braid with state-colour threads and a gilt Aesculapius staff. On the 1915/1916 medical (veterinary) officers' uniform he wore no collar patches but had M1915 grey NCO braid on the shoulder straps. From 6 Mar 1916 a medical (veterinary) officer cadet in his second clinical semester could serve at the front as a 'field officer cadet' (Feldunterarzt/ Feldunterveterinär), ranking as a sergeant, wearing the M1915/1916 uniform with NCO collar and cuff braid (often unofficially omitted) and



An Offizierstellvertreter was a sergeant or company sergeant-major temporarily acting as a platoon commander in the absence of a subaltern. This member of the 3rd Light Inf Regt from 200th Inf Div wears the M1915 NCO's peaked field cap in Jäger grey-green with a green band and crown piping and Prussian state cockade. Around the imperial cockade note the silver Carpathian Corps badge: splayed antlers and pine branches, with a short sword at bottom centre, bound by a scroll 'KARPATHEKORPS'. Apart from the NCO Tresse braid and button of rank on the collar, his M1915 grey-green field tunic also has Tresse on the green-piped shoulder straps, to indicate his appointment. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

shoulder strap. After six months he could become a field auxiliary surgeon (Feldhilfsarzt) or field veterinary surgeon (Feldhilfsveterinär), wearing a medical/veterinary second lieutenant's M1915 shoulder boards and ranking as a commissioned second lieutenant (Feldwebelleutnant).

SPECIAL UNIT INSIGNIA

Certain pre-war regiments or battalions, often belonging to the smaller states, wore distinctions on their M1895 and M1907/1910 uniforms. Most of these were abolished with the introduction of the standardized M1915/1916 uniform, but the latter's anonymity prompted some units to adopt unofficial badges for reasons of morale. Some of these, especially those awarded by the Austro-Hungarian ally, received grudging official approval.



This company sergeant-major from the 20th Bavarian Engineer Bn, 8th Bavarian Reserve Div, wears the Bavarian state cockade on the red-piped black band of his M1907 peaked field cap. His M1907 field-grey tunic has the *Tresse* collar edging and large heraldic side-buttons of his rank, with strips of light blue and white 'Bavarian cord' on the front edges only, as ordered from December 1917. The M1915 engineer shoulder straps in black had red piping and a red battalion number, although they appear as solid black in this photograph. Note on his left collar only this division's unofficial badge: the Bavarian national shield set on two silver holly leaves. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

On 20 June 1915 members of the Alpenkorps who had served on the Tyrol front, May–Oct 1915, were awarded the M1914 Austro-Hungarian Edelweiss cap badge: a silver-grey metal flower with yellow stamens, worn on the M1915 spiked helmet, M1895 light infantry shako, M1910 officers' peaked field cap or M1907 enlisted peakless field cap, just above the left ear.

From Aug 1917 personnel who had served for two months against the Russian Army between Aug 1916 and July 1917 in the 4th Reserve Corps (1, 200 Inf Divs) – the 'Carpathian Corps' – under the 7th Austro-Hungarian Army, could wear on their caps between the imperial and state cockades the 'Carpathian Badge': a

scroll inscribed 'KARPATHEINKORPS' binding paired antlers and pine branches, for officers in silver on their peaked caps, for enlisted men in white metal on field-grey backing on their peaked and peakless field caps.

From Aug 1914 Austro-Hungarian units adopted hundreds of unofficial metal badges to commemorate particular battles or famous units, often wearing several together on the left of their caps. German troops were forbidden to wear these badges, but some were adopted and other German badges minted. The 8th Bavarian Reserve Div wore a blue and white Bavarian shield on two silver holly leaves on the collar or the left side of the cap; while the 11th Bavarian Inf Div displayed a silver shield portraying the German and Austro-Hungarian emperors on the left or right collar. In 1918 the 1st Foot Guards Regt and 1st Guards Signals Bn of the élite 1st Guards Div serving on the Western Front unofficially painted the black and white quartered 'Hohenzollern' shield of the Prussian royal family on the left side of their helmets. Individuals painted other unit or speciality badges on their helmets, and this later became a widespread practice among Freikorps units in 1919–23.

Some divisions introduced schemes of identification badges for quick recognition of units after they had been ordered to remove or cover the regimental numbers on their shoulder straps. From 24 Sept to 15 Nov 1916, units of the XIII (Württemberg) Corps in Flanders wore coloured shoulder loops, 26th Inf Div on the left board or strap, 27th on the right. Infantry of the 12th Inf Div in Flanders in 1918 adopted regimentally coloured shoulder loops: red (23 Inf Regt), green (62 Inf Regt) and yellow (63 Inf Regt). From July 1917 units of the 208th Inf Div on the Artois and Champagne fronts wore white cloth shapes above a white horizontal bar on the lower left sleeve and painted on the back of the steel helmet: a vertical bar (25 Inf Regt), 'X'-shape (185 Inf Regt), vertical cross (65 Res Inf Regt), triangle (267 Arty Regt), or square (157 Heavy Arty Bn). Many other such schemes must have existed, but due to the chaos which followed the Armistice they were not systematically recorded.

ORDERS & DECORATIONS

Most German awards dated from before 1914. Prussian awards could be given to all German and foreign personnel, while those of other states were restricted to their own citizens. Usually the highest class was worn around the neck on a wide ribbon; the intermediate class as a pin-back badge on the lower left breast pocket; and the lowest class as a conventional medal ribbon on the breast or fixed to the second front buttonhole. Since awards were often progressive, different classes could be worn simultaneously. Crowns and oakleaves denoted higher levels within a class, and crossed swords indicated awards for bravery under fire.

Officers' awards were usually 'Orders', granting privileged membership of a restricted social group. The highest Prussian decoration was the pin-back Star of the Grand Cross of the Iron Cross: a 63mm diameter Iron Cross on a silver starburst, awarded in 1918 to Hindenburg for national military leadership. Then came the Grand Cross, a 63mm Iron Cross neck decoration, awarded for distinguished strategic leadership to Hindenburg, Kaiser Wilhelm II, Mackensen, Leopold of Bavaria and Ludendorff.

A total of 613 Army and flying service officers – 55 per cent of them in 1918 – were awarded the Pour le Mérite neck decoration; this sky-blue enamel and gold Maltese Cross on a Prussian black and white ribbon was awarded for conspicuous bravery or outstanding merit in combat, including to fighter 'aces' with eight, later 16 confirmed aerial victories. A total of 111 officers – before 1918 usually general officers – won the order with gold Oakleaves, for significant victories or contributions to the war effort. In Saxony the St Heinrich Order was worn, and in Württemberg the Crown Order Merit Medal.

For distinguished service in the field Prussia awarded officers the Order of the Red Eagle 1st to 4th Classes, comprising a white Austrian cross and swords. Bavaria awarded the Knight's Cross of the Maximilian-Josef Order; Saxony, the Albrecht Cross Order in ten classes; and Württemberg, the Friedrich Order Merit Medal. For lesser bravery in combat Prussia awarded the Knight's Cross of the Royal Hohenzollern Order, a white crowned Austrian Cross and swords; Bavaria, the Order of Military Merit 1st to 4th Classes; Saxony, the Silver Merit Cross; and Württemberg, the Wilhelm Cross with Crown and Swords breast medal.

Enlisted men (Feldwebelleutnant to Gemeiner) were awarded decorations without 'Order' status. For conspicuous personal bravery in combat Prussia awarded 1,763 Golden Military Merit Crosses, comprising a gold Maltese Cross on a Prussian ribbon; Bavarians and Württembergers gained the Military Merit Cross with Swords (the Württemberg award instituted Jan 1915); and Saxons, the War Merit Cross (instituted Aug 1915).

For repeated acts of lesser bravery, Prussia decorated 288,000 officers and enlisted men with the Iron Cross 1st Class breast medal, a blackened iron 44mm diameter Teutonic Order cross edged silver, with a 'W' (for Wilhelm II) monogram and the reconstitution date '1914'. Bavarians and Württembergers could gain the Golden Military Merit Medal, and Saxons the Silver Friedrich-August Medal.

Prussia awarded 5,200,000 officers and enlisted men the Iron Cross 2nd Class medal for a single act of lesser bravery. Bavarians and Württembergers had the Silver Military Merit Medal, Saxons the Bronze Friedrich-August Medal.

The Wound Badge was instituted on 3 Mar 1918: a breast badge depicting a steel helmet over crossed



GFM August von Mackensen (he claimed Scottish ancestry) epitomized the dashing cavalryman in an age of mechanical warfare. He was the longest serving Army Group commander, gaining spectacular victories in Poland and Serbia in 1915 and Rumania in 1916, and rivalling Hindenburg in national prestige. Here he combines two uniforms, with the freedom typical of a senior general. As colonel-in-chief of the 129th Inf Regt (3rd West Prussian) he wears an officers' M1915 field tunic, and field-marshal's shoulder boards with the lemon-yellow regimental underlay and silver regimental number. As an ADC to the Kaiser he wears gold wire aiguillettes, and a gilt crowned 'W' superimposed on the field-marshal's batons on his shoulder boards; but he has omitted the ADC's 'Kolben' collar braids. His neck decorations are the Pour le Mérite with Oakleaves (awarded 3 June 1915) and the Grand Cross of the Iron Cross; among his breast decorations (right) is the star of the Order of the Black Eagle. (Author's collection)

swords within a wreath, this was awarded in black for one or two wounds, in silver for three or more, and in gold for serious permanent injury or disfigurement.

Qualified aircrew wore silver breast badges depicting a device beneath a Hohenzollern crown (Bavaria, Bavarian crown) within an oak and laurel wreath: pilot, an aeroplane; former pilot, a flying eagle; observer, a black and white quartered square edged red; air gunner, an eagle with outstretched wings; former air service personnel, a winged propeller.

THE PLATES

A: WESTERN FRONT, 1917

A1: Generalmajor, 17th Infantry Division; Arras, April 1917

The commander of the 17th Inf Div's senior 34th Inf Bde (after 1915 redesignated the 'Infantry Commander') was traditionally a Mecklenburg-Schwerin general officer. He wears a general's field uniform, comprising the Dragoon helmet; M1915 general's tunic with Mecklenburg-Schwerin collar patches and silver buttons; and M1915 greatcoat with dark field-grey collar, red piping and lapel linings. He carries binoculars and a P08 pistol, and wears the neck decoration of the Golden Merit Cross of the Order of the Wendish Crown.

A2: Vizefeldwebel, 22nd Heavy Artillery Regiment; Cambrai, November 1917

This NCO gun captain is wearing the standard M1917 officers' peaked cap to which he is entitled, with dark field-grey band and crown piping, and the Prussian state cockade. His M1915 greatcoat has the colourful M1915 heavy artillery shoulder straps. He carries a M98/05 bayonet, which replaced the impractical sword on 15 Dec 1916, and a P08 pistol. His rank is denoted by the single Prussian NCO collar braid and officers' sword knot.

A3: Gefreiter, 10th Bavarian Reserve Regiment; Aisne front, April 1917

As a sentry in the 5th Bavarian Reserve Div in a forward trench facing the Nivelle offensive, this soldier is wearing a M1917 strap-on brow shield on his M1916 helmet, and the first pattern M1917 body armour. His M1916 field tunic has M1916 collar buttons of this rank, and M1916 Bavarian collar edging. M1916 grey trousers, field-grey puttees and M1914 laced shoes complete his outfit. He carries a M1916 gas mask in the M1916 container, and a Gewehr 98 rifle.



B: SPRING OFFENSIVES, 1918

B1: Leutnant, 267th Field Artillery Regiment; Peronne, March 1918

This lightly wounded subaltern in the 208th Inf Div's artillery regiment is wearing the M1915 artillery officers' peaked cap with red piping, a black band and a Prussian state cockade. His M1915 officers' field tunic shows the regiment's distinctive left forearm insignia as part of the divisional scheme. He carries the M1917 leather gas mask, P08 'Long Luger' artillery pistol, U/M artillery bayonet with officers' sword knot, and a binocular case; and he displays the Iron Cross 1st Class breast medal.

B2: Sanitätssoldat, 185th Infantry Regiment; Peronne, March 1918

This infantryman of the 208th Inf Div, advancing with 2nd Army against British 5th Army in Operation 'Michael II', has been trained as a medical orderly to give first aid to field casualties. He wears the M1915 field tunic with regimental shoulder straps, and regimental left forearm insignia according to his division's unofficial scheme, with MA1914 trousers. His medical status is indicated by the Red Cross armband, unofficial helmet device, belt pouch for bandages, M1915 medical water bottle and knapsack. He carries a P08 pistol, M1871 bayonet with 3rd Company knot, and M1917 gas mask canister.

B3: Unteroffizier, 92nd Infantry Regiment; Bapaume, March 1918

This section commander in Brunswick's only infantry regiment, serving with 20th Inf Div, is advancing with 17th Army's 14th Reserve Corps against British 3rd Army positions in Operation 'Michael I'. His M1916 helmet has a makeshift sacking cover. He has retained his M1907 field tunic after removing the conspicuous NCO cuff braid. His tight-fitting trousers and puttees give him a lean look, contrasting with the baggy appearance of the 1914 infantryman. He carries the infantry marching pack, and obsolete M1895 ammunition pouches for his Gewehr 88 rifle.

C: RETREAT, 1918

C1: Unteroffizier, 3rd Heavy Combat Vehicle Detachment; Cambrai, October 1918

This A7V tank commander, resting before the last German tank engagement on 11 October 1918, is wearing the M1918 crewman's field-grey overalls and leather protective helmet, over his Bavarian M1915 Motor Transport field tunic, just showing the M1915 NCO *Tresse* edging and Guards *Litzen* braids on the field-grey collar. In some photos the overalls seem to be leather, in others proofed cloth. He carries a M1917 gas mask canister, and is armed with a C96 Mauser pistol.

C2: Sergeant, 29th Reserve Infantry Regiment; Flers, August 1918

This commander of a 'non-establishment' assault troop of the 16th Reserve Div is wearing the M1918 steel helmet with cut-out sides, painted in M1918 disruptive camouflage; a photograph confirms that some men of

Three relaxed infantrymen on sentry duty, 1917. They wear M1915 felt helmets with field-grey sheet iron fittings, and the spike removed. The waist belt with M1909 cartridge pouches and scabbarded bayonet is worn over the M1915 field-grey greatcoat, and all carry Gewehr 98 rifles. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



1917: men of the 267th Field Artillery Regt relax with a beer. As field artillerymen all wear M1915 field-grey breeches and M1915 standard cavalry boots with spurs, their M1915 peakless field caps with black bands and red piping. The M1907 field tunics have red M1915 shoulder straps with a yellow grenade and Arabic '267'. Note particularly, on the left forearms, the regimental sign – a white triangle above a bar – as part of the parent 208th Inf Div's quick recognition scheme. See Plate B1. (Courtesy Gerry Embleton)

this division received it before the Armistice. The shoulder straps of his M1915 field tunic are rolled around the loops to conceal the regimental number. A previous act of bravery is marked by the Iron Cross 2nd Class buttonhole ribbon. Against regulations, he is wearing 'establishment' assault troop reinforced trousers, puttees and ankle boots. He carries a MP18/I Bergmann sub-machine gun with spare 'snail' magazines in a M1914 bread bag, a M1917 gas mask canister, P08 pistol, M1915 percussion stick grenades and a trench knife.

C3: Grenadier, 1st Foot Guards Regiment; Passy-sur-Marne, August 1918

This infantryman in the 1st 'Life' Company of the élite 1st Foot Guards, 1st Guards Div, is wearing a M1916 steel helmet painted in July 1918 disruptive camouflage, with the regimental Hohenzollern shield on the left side. This company's white Gothic 'L' is painted on the back; other companies displayed the company number in red Arabic numerals. His M1915 field tunic has regimental Guards collar braids and blank shoulder straps. He wears the M1916 assault pack, with a greatcoat and shelter-quarter tied around his M1917 mess tin; strapped to the back of the belt is the M98 bayonet with 1st Company bayonet-knot, and entrenching tool; his M1916 gas mask bag,

M1918 bread bag, and two M1917 water bottles. He carries a Karabiner 98 rifle and a feed drum for a MG08/15 light machine gun.

D: EASTERN FRONT, 1917

D1: *Pionier*, 42nd Mortar Company; Tarnopol, August 1917

This member of a light mortar crew serves with the Süd Armee's 42nd Inf Div, counter-attacking during the Russian 'Kerensky Offensive'. He wears the M1915 engineers' field uniform, with mortar company shoulder straps. He has M1909 pouches for his Gewehr 98 rifle, a M1898 short pick-axe strapped to his all-steel Ersatz bayonet, and a M1917 leather gas mask. He loads a gas round into his 'Ehrhardt' 7.6cm leichte Minenwerfer.

D2: *Gefreiter*, 4th Grenadier Guards Regiment; Riga, September 1917

This infantryman from the élite 2nd Guards Div during the assault on Riga has covered his M1916 helmet with mud as makeshift camouflage. He is still wearing a simplified M1907 field tunic with deep turn-back cuffs, regimental shoulder strap cipher and Guards collar braids. He carries his assault pack on bread bag straps, and a 250-round bandolier for reloading the 25-round extended magazine of his modified



Private of the Württemberg Mountain Bn, wearing the M1915 peakless field cap with a fashionably crushed crown, with the black and red state cockade on the front of the green band and the Edelweiss badge on his left. His modified M1914 ski Litewka shows the green shoulder seam padding, and green collar patches with a button displaying the company number, 1-6. See Plate F2. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

Gewehr 98. Note two M1916 stick grenades and a trench knife on his belt, a field flashlight, and the 8th Company bayonet knot.

D3: Major, 87th Cavalry Rifles Regiment; Kaunas, August 1917

This regimental commander in the 87th Inf Div with the 10th Army in Lithuania is wearing the M1915 Dragoon officers' uniform with infantry equipment. His M1915 peaked cap has a white band and piping, and he wears M1915 field shoulder boards with a white underlay on his M1915 tunic. He has infantry officers' leggings and ankle boots; binoculars, a M1881 holster for his M1879 revolver, 98/05 bayonet and officers' sword knot, M1912 map case, and (slung behind) a M1917 gas mask canister. At his throat is the Order of the Crown 2nd Class with Swords.

E: EASTERN FRONT, 1918

E1: Oberwachtmeister, 66th Military Police Detachment; Kiev, June 1918

This senior NCO wears field uniform. The M1916 field tunic has a dark green collar piped red, and he displays two cuff

rings as well as NCO collar and shoulder strap braid. His duty gorget shows the Roman number of his original corps and his personal police number. Front line service is indicated by his Iron Cross 1st Class and M1918 black wound badge. He wears riding breeches and boots, and is armed with a P08 pistol and M98/05 bayonet.

E2: Jäger, 153rd Cyclist Company; Ukraine, June 1918

This 1st Cav Div cyclist is wearing the cyclists' M1915 light infantry uniform. He has a M1915 shako with M1915 greyish brown cover and Prussian state cockade; M1911 cyclists' cloak, with his Gewehr 98 strapped underneath across his back; and his shelter-quarter strapped to his handlebars.

E3: Offizierstellvertreter, 27th Light Infantry Battalion; Tampere, April 1918

This Finnish senior NCO acting as a platoon commander in the 27. Jäger Btl wears the M1916 steel helmet which gradually supplanted the traditional M1915 shako. His M1915 green-grey tunic has abbreviated M1915 NCO collar and cuff braid; the shoulder strap had NCO braid but no battalion number. He wears senior NCOs' field equipment, including in this case the Prussian light infantry backpack incorporating a badger's mask; a rolled greatcoat and shelter-quarter, M1917 mess tin, M1898 bayonet, M1916 gas mask bag, M1914 bread bag, M1917 water bottle, and a P08 pistol.

F: ITALY, 1917

F1: Oberleutnant, 3rd Light Infantry Regiment; Udine, October 1917

As a former unit of the Alpenkorps at present serving with the 200th Inf Div, the 3. Jäger Regiment were entitled to wear both the Edelweiss and Carpathian Corps special cap badges. This subaltern in the 4th Bavarian Bn has discarded his M1914 field-grey Litewka in favour of a M1916 grey-green Bavarian field tunic, but has unofficially retained the brass 'S' collar badges. He is wearing enlisted reinforced trousers with puttees and mountain boots. His subaltern officers' field equipment includes the mountain rucksack, P08 pistol, binoculars, and M98/05 bayonet with officers' sword knot.

F2: Oberjäger, Württemberg Mountain Battalion; Cisterna, November 1917

This section commander wears the M1915 field cap pulled fashionably over one ear, with the Württemberg cockade and Alpenkorps Edelweiss badge. His M1914 ski Litewka (modified 1915) has pleated breast pockets, horn buttons and his unit's shoulder seam padding; the collar shows M1907 silver NCO braid, and the collar patches with a gold button originally intended for battalion HQ troops. Having discarded his rucksack for close-quarter fighting he is using M1914 bread bag straps to support his M1909 ammunition pouches. His M1907 field-grey trousers have leather reinforcements for mountaineering; he wears climbing boots and carries ropes. His weapon is the Gewehr 98 with M98/05 bayonet.

F3: Feldrabbiner, 2nd Bavarian Corps; River Piave, November 1917

Approximately 30 field rabbis ministered to the 100,000 Jews fighting in the German forces. This rabbi wears the M1913 chaplains' field-grey service uniform, comprising a felt hat and frock coat with violet distinctions, officers' breeches and riding boots, but with special features for rabbis introduced in Nov 1915 – a Star of David pendant, Red Cross armband and no chaplain's hat badge.

G: BALKANS, 1917-18

G1: Landes-Beirat, Rumanian Military Administration; Bucharest, March 1918

This Prussian military official, of equivalent status to a captain, wears the Military Administration Officials' field-grey service uniform introduced 13 Dec 1917. The M1915 peaked service cap has dark green piping and band, and a silver Prussian eagle between the cockades; the M1915 field tunic has dark green collar piping and collar patch, with matt silver Guards braids. The M1915 shoulder boards, of silver braid with tiny dark blue 'Vs' interwoven, have dark green underlay, and two gold rank rosettes flanking the Prussian officials' badge. The M1914 grey trousers have red piping. His Iron Cross 2nd Class ribbon suggests that he was a line officer earlier in the war.

G2: *Etatsmäßiger Wachtmeister*, 5th Hussar Regiment 'Prince Blücher of Wahlstatt'; Prespa, Macedonia, May 1917

Cavalrymen usually preferred their pre-war field-grey uniforms with traditional regimental distinctions to the standard Army M1915 uniform. This squadron sergeant-major of the 3rd Sqn is wearing the simplified M1909 enlisted Hussar field tunic with grey breast braids and plain turn-back cuff, with two short cuff bars indicating his status. He has M1915 Hussar breeches with distinctive braiding up the outseams and curling in to unite on the seat; the M1915 cavalry riding boots have Hussar enlisted ranks' braid trim. His headgear is the M1900 East Asian Expeditionary Corps tropical helmet and neck guard, with a regimental silver cap badge and dark red band.

G3: *Gefreiter*, Assault Detachment, 26th Bavarian Infantry Regiment; Marasesti, August 1917

This infantryman is wearing the standard Bavarian M1916 field uniform with M1916 helmet. The tunic's field-grey collar displays abbreviated M1916 Bavarian collar edging and M1916 lance-corporal's rank button; the shoulder straps are piped infantry white. He carries locally produced grenade sacks, M1917 water bottle, M1914 bread bag and M1896 long shaft spade. The M98/05 bayonet for his Karabiner 98 has the 8th Company knot.

H: PALESTINE AND TRANSCAUCASIA

H1: *Musketier*, 701st Infantry Battalion; Nazareth, October 1918

This infantryman wears the M1900 tropical helmet with the imperial cockade, infantry-yellow band, and no eagle plate. His M1916 enlisted field tunic carries no unit insignia; his M1916 enlisted trousers are worn with M1915 puttees and ankle boots. He has M1895 ammunition pouches for his Gewehr 98 rifle, a M98/05 bayonet with 4th Company knot, and a M1916 stick grenade.

H2: *Oberleutnant*, 301st Flyin Detachment, Asia Corps; Gaza, November 1917

This pilot operating in support of Turkish forces in Palestine wears light khaki drill tropical clothing from various sources. He has removed the stiffening ring from his ventilated M1900 cap to give the fashionable crushed effect. On the M1916 field tunic he has shoulder boards with the Air Service winged propeller badge and light grey underlay, and a light blue (3rd Flying Bn) inner underlay. He wears it open-necked with a shirt and tie, suggesting a former naval pilot. M1900 officers' breeches are confined by M1912 blackened leather



Disproportionately high losses among regular and reservist subalterns forced the class-conscious German Army to promote infantry sergeants to 'hostilities only' officer rank in Depot, Landwehr and Landsturm units. Feldwebel-leutnant Hagmann, of the 1st Landsturm Bn, XIII (Württemberg) Corps District (Stuttgart), wears an M1907 enlisted ranks' field tunic but with the M1915 shoulder boards of a second lieutenant, with infantry-white underlay and the gilt 'XIII' of his Corps District. Such men resented having to retain their NCOs' collar and cuff insignia (the collar *Tresse* is just visible here) – a clear reminder that these 'commissioned second lieutenants' were 'not real officers'. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

leggings and ankle boots. He displays the Iron Cross 1st Class and M1913 Prussian pilot's qualification badge. Like many pilots, he carries an unofficial swagger stick; and has fitted a pocket watch to a special wrist strap.

H3: *Etatsmäßiger Feldwebel*, 15th Bavarian Reserve Light Infantry Regiment; Baku, September 1918

This company sergeant-major is wearing the M1916 peaked cap with Bavarian state cockade, and a neck guard. The M1916 enlisted field tunic carries abbreviated M1916 Bavarian collar trim and NCO braid, and the three NCO braid chevrons of his status. He carries privately purchased binoculars, a P08 pistol, a M98/05 bayonet with a Bavarian sword knot, and has been awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class, and M1918 Wound Badge in silver for three or four wounds.

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