

Men-at-Arms

OSPREY
PUBLISHING

The German Army in World War I (2)

1915-17



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(2) 1915-17

THE GERMAN EMPIRE & ARMY IN 1915

THE GERMAN EMPIRE comprised four kingdoms – Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg – and 21 minor states. This heartland was expanded through military conquest. The French regions of Alsace and Lorraine were annexed in 1871. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was occupied on 1 August 1914, and the Antwerp, Brabant, Hainault, Liège, Limburg, Luxembourg and Namur provinces of Belgium became the 'Belgian Government-General', under a civil-military government led by GenObst Freiherr (Baron) Moritz von Bissing.

Most of Russian Poland – roughly the Ciechanów, Kalisz, Lodz, Lomza, Plock, Siedlce, Warsaw and Wloclawek provinces of present-day central Poland – was occupied as the 'Warsaw Government-General' under Gen d.Inf Hans von Beseler. The 'Eastern Front Military Administration' (Militärverwaltung Oberost), formed October 1915, had six, later three, districts: Kurland (south Latvia); Litauen (central Lithuania); Suwalki (north-eastern Poland) and Wilna (south Lithuania) –



Four senior members of the Prussian, Bavarian and Württemberg royal families were appointed army group commanders, but with their professional chiefs-of-staff exercising real operational control. GFM Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria's army group (1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th & 7th Armies) held the Artois front from August 1916; his chief-of-staff was the able GenLt Hermann von Kuhl. Rupprecht wears the Bavarian M1916 field uniform with field-grey collar and silver *Alt Larisch* braid on red patches, with abbreviated Bavarian 'collar cord' (cf Plate A1). He wears at his throat the *Pour le Mérite*, with the Oak-leaves awarded in December 1916, and the Bavarian Order of Military Merit. (Author's collection – as are all other illustrations not otherwise credited)

amalgamated 1 May 1916 as Suwalki-Wilna, and absorbed on 11 October 1916 into Litauen; Grodno (north-east Belarus) and Bialystok – amalgamated 11 October 1916 as Grodno-Bialystok. The Administration was commanded by Oberst (later GenMaj) von Eisenhart-Rothe, from 2 January 1917 by Oberstleutnant von Brandenstein.

Army High Command

Wilhelm II, King of Prussia and German Emperor (Kaiser), was Supreme Commander of the German Armed Forces, although his military ineptitude rendered his position increasingly nominal. He and his personal staff formed part of the Supreme Command (OHL); based in Charleville-Mézières, NE France, this transferred on 20 September 1916 to Pleß (Pszczyna, Poland), and on 17 February 1917 to Bad Kreuznach, western Germany. The Kaiser and the Chief of the Field Army General Staff were based in Pleß from 9 May 1915. The OHL was headed by the Chief of the Field Army General Staff, Gen d.Inf Erich von Falkenhayn until his resignation on 29 August 1916; he was immediately succeeded by the C-in-C Eastern Front, GFM Paul von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg, with Hindenburg's deputy and Chief of Operations, Gen d.Inf Erich Ludendorff, appointed to the new post of 'First Quartermaster-General'. As a professional staff officer Ludendorff was the power behind Hindenburg, and effectively the Armed Forces commander. Hindenburg's nominal assistant was the Quartermaster-General, GenLt Hugo Freiherr von Freytag-Loringhoven, replaced in October 1916 by GenLt Viktor Hahndorff.



HIGHER FORMATIONS Army Groups

From April 1915 the OHL formed nine army groups, each named after their commander, to co-ordinate the armies fighting on the Western, Eastern and West Balkan fronts. The army group was regarded as a temporary wartime formation, comprising a variable number of armies, independent corps and divisions, with an Army HQ acting as Army Group

HQ. The Western Front was defended by three army groups:

'Gallwitz Army Group' (Gen d.Art Max von Gallwitz) was formed 19 July 1916 with 1st and 2nd Armies, to co-ordinate German defences during the Battle of the Somme. On 28 August 1916 it was redesignated 'Kronprinz Rupprecht von Bayern' (GFM Rupprecht, Crown Prince of Bavaria), and eventually controlled all of the Artois front with five armies (1, 2, 4, 6, 7).

'Deutscher Kronprinz' Army Group (GenLt Wilhelm, Crown Prince of Prussia) was formed 1 August 1915 with 3rd and 5th Armies, Armeegruppe (AG), later Armeeeabteilung (AA) Gaede and AA Falkenhausen and Strantz on the Verdun and Vosges fronts. On 7 March 1917 it was split, controlling the Champagne front with 1st, 3rd and 5th Armies, while the newly formed 'Herzog Albrecht' Army Group (GFM Albrecht, Duke of Württemberg) co-ordinated the Vosges front with Armeeeabteilung A, B and C.

All German operations on the Eastern Front came under the C-in-C Eastern Front, GFM von Hindenburg, his operational forces designated from 30 July 1916 the 'Hindenburg Theatre of Operations', renamed from 29 August 1916 'Prince Leopold of Bavaria Theatre of Operations' (GFM Leopold of Bavaria); this supervised three army groups:

'Hindenburg' (GFM von Hindenburg), on 30 July 1916 redesignated 'Eichhorn' (GenObst Hermann von Eichhorn), comprised 8th Army (later disbanded); Niemen, later 8th Army; 10th Army; 12th Army (reassigned 9 January 1916); and from 29 October 1915, AA Scholtz, later AA 'D'.

'Crown Prince Leopold of Bavaria' (GFM Leopold of Bavaria), on 29 August 1916 redesignated 'Woysch', comprised 9th Army (later disbanded); from 9 January 1916, 12th Army (10 October 1916 redesignated AA Scheffer); AA Woysch; and from 18 September 1916, AA Gronau.

'Linsingen' (Gen d.Inf Alexander von Linsingen), formed 8 September 1915, comprised Bug Army and 4th Austro-Hungarian (AH) Army. The Austro-Hungarian Forces, from June 1916 the 'Archduke Charles Theatre of Operations', from 1 December 1916 the 'Archduke Josef Front', comprised German Süd Army; 1, later 3 AH Army; 2 AH Army with German AG Eben, 7 AH Army, on 4 October 1916 formed into the Böhme-Ermolli Army Group under command of the German Hindenburg Theatre of Operations, plus Rumanian Front units.

Three army groups served on the Balkan Front. These were:

'Mackensen', re-formed on 18 September 1915, eventually comprising four armies (11 German; 3 AH; 1, 2 Bulgarian), occupied Serbia and Serb Macedonia before disbanding on 30 July 1916. It was replaced on 11 October 1916 in Macedonia by 'Below' with three armies (11 German; 1, 2 Bulgarian). A third Mackensen Army Group was formed in August 1916 for the invasion of Rumania, with 9th, Danube and 3 Bulgarian Armies.

Armies

An army comprised an Army HQ, Army HQ troops, and 3 to 6 corps supported by independent divisions and Landwehr brigades. During the war the number of Army HQ troops steadily increased, with the heavy



Crown Prince Wilhelm of Prussia commanded the 5th Army in 1914, and from August 1915 the army group holding the Champagne and Vosges fronts. As a supernumerary officer - i.e. awarded an honorary commission 'à la suite' - in the Prussian 1st Grenadier Regt 'Kronprinz' (1st East Prussian), he wears a general's version of that regiment's M1915 field uniform with the shoulder knots of an infantry lieutenant general. The tunic is of a superior quality, and note the very high collar.

artillery battalions, engineer regiments (later battalions), and signals and airship detachments of August 1914 joined by a varying number of independent detachments - assault, machine-gun and mortar battalions - and, from December 1916, motor transport and horse-drawn ammunition columns.

The Western Front comprised seven armies (1-7), although 1st Army was disbanded in September 1915 and re-raised in July 1916. They were supported on the Vosges front by three 'temporary' armies named after their first commanders: AA Falkenhausen (15 April 1916, redesignated AA 'A'); AG, later AA Gaede (4 September 1916, redesignated AA 'B'); and AA Strantz (2 February 1917, redesignated AA 'C'). An Armeeeabteilung (AA) operated independently under an army group, while an Armeegruppe (AG) always came under a field army.

The situation on the Eastern Front was more complicated. On 21 September 1915 there were seven field armies (8-10, 12, Süd, Niemen, Bug); but 8th



The C-in-C Eastern Front, GFM Paul von Hindenburg, and his chief-of-staff and deputy, Gen d.Inf Erich Ludendorff, at Kaunas, Lithuania, in April 1916. Hindenburg retains his M1910 general's tunic but with the regimental distinctions of colonel-in-chief of the 3rd Foot Guards, and the M1903 light grey greatcoat with a dark blue collar and red general's lapel facings and piping. Ludendorff wears the M1915 standard field-grey greatcoat.

Army was disbanded on 29 September 1915, and on 30 December re-raised by redesignating the Niemen Army. 9th Army was disbanded 30 July 1916, only to be re-raised on 19 September for the west Balkan Front. 12th Army was disbanded on 9 October 1916 and redesignated AA Scheffer.

These armies were supported by six temporary armies. AA Scholtz was formed on 8 October 1915 and redesignated AA 'D' on 13 January 1917; AA Scheffer (17 Reserve Corps) was formerly 12th Army; AA Woyrsch (Landwehr Corps) was redesignated an Army Group on 20 September 1916. Three AGs operated under Bug Army: AG Gronau (41 Reserve Corps) until 18 September 1916, when it became an AA; AG Marwitz (6 Corps) from 15 June 1916; AG Litzmann (40 Reserve Corps) from 28 July 1916. Meanwhile AG Eben (1 Corps) fought under 2 AH Army from 6 August 1916.

The 11th Army, re-formed on 30 September 1915, served on the Salonika Front, while 9th Army, re-formed on 19 September 1916, and the Donau (Danube) Army (52 Special Corps), formed in November 1916, served in Rumania.

On 14 April 1916 a 'Coastal Defence Command' was formed to defend the north German coast from an expected Allied attack from the sea or through Denmark or the Netherlands. Troops were drawn from seven local corps districts (I, II, VII-X, XVII), initially forming two static defence infantry divisions (Altona, Stettin), from January 1917 two corps (31, 39 Reserve) and three divisions (251-3).

Corps

The German Army of 1914 retained the corps, with a Corps HQ, Corps HQ troops and two infantry divisions, as the tactical unit. However, the advent of trench warfare in December 1914 forced a more fluid corps organization, allowing hard-pressed corps sectors to be reinforced with up to six divisions, and quieter sectors to accommodate a few battle-weary divisions, a reform formalised in December 1916.

In September 1915 the German Army comprised 51 corps. There were 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), the Landwehr Corps, and Gen Mitau's Group (Gruppe Mitau).

By April 1917, 15 more corps had been formed. These were all 'Special Corps', essentially a Corps HQ without Corps troops, supervising a heterogeneous group of occupation and front-line infantry and cavalry units on the Eastern Front, already formed as ad hoc corps named after their commanders. 51-53 Special Corps were formed in August 1916, 54 in September, 55-61 in October, 62-63 in December and 64-65 in January 1917.

Four 'Cavalry Commands' (1-4 HKK) had been formed on 2 August 1914 for the Western Front, but trench warfare had rendered large mounted formations irrelevant. Accordingly 2nd and 4th HKK were disbanded in December 1914, and 1st and 3rd HKK were transferred to the more fluid Eastern Front to confront Russian cavalry and Cossack units. 5th and 6th HKK were formed on the Eastern Front on 18 August 1915, and Schmettow Cavalry Corps in September 1916 for Rumania. On 20 November 1916 four commands (1, 3, 5, 6 HKK) were redesignated 56-59 Special Corps, and in January 1917 Schmettow Cavalry Corps became 65 Special Corps.

The 4th Reserve Corps was designated 'Carpathian Corps' from 24 July 1916 to 22 December 1917, while serving with the Austro-Hungarian army in Bukovina; and 38th Reserve Corps was named the 'Beskydy (Beskiden) Corps' when fighting in southern Poland

from 1 April 1915 to 22 October 1917. Many corps were unofficially referred to by their commanders' names or corps sector.

Divisions

In September 1915 there were 159 infantry divisions. These comprised 4 Prussian Guards (1-4) and 74 Line Infantry (1-22, 25, 28-31, 33-39, 41-42, 50, 52, 54, 56, 83, 84, 86-89, 101, 103, 105, 107-109, 111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121, 123 Prussian; 23, 24, 32, 40, 58 Saxon; 26, 27 Württemberg; 1-6, 10, 11 Bavarian). There were also one light division (Alpenkorps); 55 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 Bavarian); 18 Landwehr (1, 3-5, 8-15, 18, 85 Prussian; 2, 7 Württemberg; 1, 6 Bavarian); one Temporary (Basedow), and six Ersatz (Guards; 4, 10 Prussian; 19 Saxon; 8 Württemberg; Bavarian).

From September 1915 to April 1917 a further 69 infantry divisions were formed. These were one Prussian Guards (5); 55 Line Infantry (91-93, 183, 185-187, 192, 195, 197-199, 201-208, 211-227, 231-242, 255, 301, 302 Prussian; 12, 14-16 Bavarian); one light (200 Prussian); and one Reserve (9 Bavarian). There were also 10 Landwehr divisions (16-17, 19-21, 25 Prussian; 45, 47 Saxon; 26 Württemberg; 2 Bavarian). The Basedow Division was re-formed as 5th Ersatz Division.

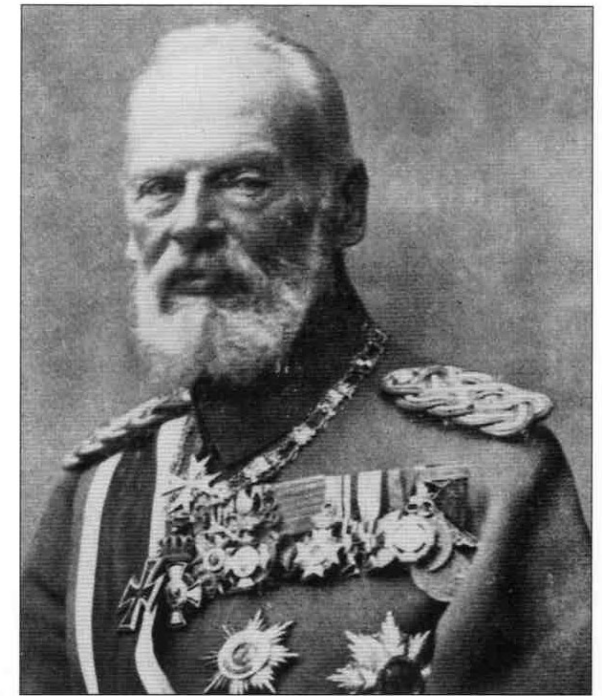
By September 1915 all 11 cavalry divisions (Guards, 1-9, Bavarian) were fighting on the Eastern Front, although three (2, 6, 7) deployed to the Rumanian Front in autumn 1916, and in February 1917 to the Western Front. Four cavalry divisions were dismounted and fought as infantry - 4th, 5th and 9th from October 1916, and 8th from January 1917 - and 3rd Cavalry Division was disbanded on 2 November 1916.

Divisional establishments

The 107 infantry divisions formed before January 1915 (1-3 Guards; 1-42 line; 1-6 Bavarian line; 1-2 Guards Reserve; 1-3, 5-19, 21-26, 28, 30, 33, 35, 36, 43-54 Reserve; 1, 5, 6 Bavarian Reserve; 1-4 Landwehr; Guards Ersatz; 4, 8, 10, 19 Ersatz; 1 Bavarian Ersatz) were organised on the pre-war model. Each had a Divisional HQ, divisional troops, two infantry brigades each of two regiments (Ersatz divisions had three brigades), artillery units and divisional services.¹

Increasing shortages of men led to the last nine reserve divisions (75-82 Prussian, 8 Bavarian) being formed in January 1915 each with only one reserve infantry brigade of three regiments.

In December 1914 Gen von Falkenhayn met the continuing demand for new infantry divisions by creating the M1915 Infantry Division. The division's 13,000 men (about 25 per cent fewer than a pre-war



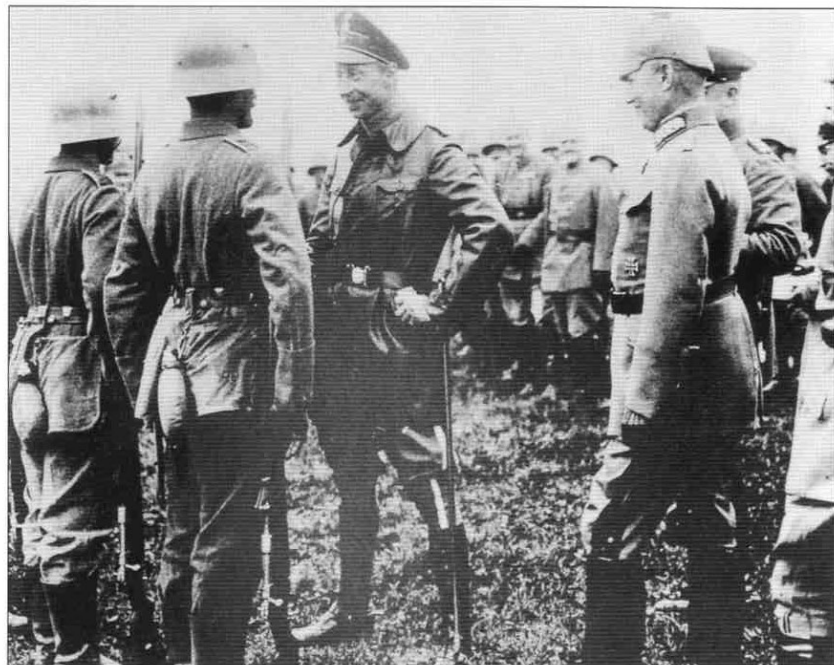
As colonel-in-chief of the 7th Bavarian Infantry Regt 'Prinz Leopold', GFM Prince Leopold of Bavaria wears the Bavarian M1916 full dress regimental uniform with a red collar - curiously omitting the Bavarian collar edging braid - and the large M1915 full dress generals' shoulder boards with the regimental number. Nominally the crown prince was Hindenburg's successor as C-in-C Eastern Front, but the main burden fell upon his talented chief-of-staff, GenMaj Max Hoffmann.

division) comprised officers, NCOs and men transferred from existing divisions together with new recruits, but its increased firepower made it the equivalent of a 17,000-strong pre-war formation. All divisions formed from March 1915 were M1915 Divisions, and by June 1917 all Guards, Line Infantry, Reserve, Landwehr and Ersatz divisions had been converted to this establishment.

The M1915 Infantry Division combined Line and Reserve units. It had a Divisional HQ; HQ troops (a 167-man cavalry squadron, two 266-man engineer companies, a 61-man pontoon-bridging train, and two medical companies); one infantry brigade of three regiments, with three 97-man regimental machine-gun companies (August 1916, 15 guns per company); one field artillery brigade of two regiments (48 guns) and one heavy artillery battalion of two batteries (8 guns).

The infantry battalion was reduced from 1,079 men in August 1914 to 650 in December 1916, while increasing sharply in firepower, allowing a 55 per cent reduction of divisional infantry from 12,948 to about 5,850. In September 1916 the battalion received a

¹ See MAA 394, *The German Army in World War I (I) 1914-15*



Crown Prince Wilhelm of Prussia had a number of *à la suite* commissions, but his preferred uniform was that to which he was entitled as colonel-in-chief of the 1st Life Hussar Regt; here he wears an unofficial black leather jacket, and the black regimental field cap with red band, white piping, and skull badge between the cockades. He inspects men of a Bavarian infantry division on the Artois front in spring 1916. Note the bread bags and water bottles carried by the men on their M1915 belts; and the Bavarian M1910 collar braid unofficially retained on the M1915 field tunic by the divisional commander (right). Field and general officers not in the front line often wore the leather spiked helmet. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

4-gun (later 12-gun) MG company; and in February 1917 a grenade-launcher platoon (8 grenade-launchers) and a light mortar platoon (4 mortars).

From April 1915 field artillery was reduced to one regiment with two 12-gun battalions (later a 12-gun howitzer battalion was added). In August 1915 a divisional signals double-platoon was introduced, in December 1916 redesignated a Signals Detachment. In February 1916 a 900-man divisional Recruit Depot was introduced, and from September 1916 a divisional mortar company (12 mortars) and a 4-company MG Marksman Battalion (12 guns per company). From December 1916 each division had one medical company and two 122-man field hospitals. In January 1917 the two engineer companies and mortar company were formed into an engineer battalion; and the infantry and artillery ammunition columns were removed from the division.

The Alpenkorps and 200th Infantry Division were classified as 'light' (Jäger) divisions intended for mountain combat. The Alpenkorps, formed on 21 May 1915 for warfare in the Italian Alps, drew largely on traditional Bavarian mountaineering skills. It included two Jäger brigades – 1st Bavarian Bde (1 Bav Jäger Regt, Bav Lifeguard Regt), and 2nd Bde (2, 3 Jäger Regt); 11 MG battalions (201–205 Mountain; 206–209 Bavarian Mountain; 4 Reserve); three field artillery battalions (203, 204; 2 Bavarian Mountain); two heavy artillery batteries (101, 102), and two mortar battalions (269, 270 Mountain). The 200th Division, formed in August 1916 for service in the Carpathians against Rumania, was organized as the M1915 division with 2nd Jäger Bde (3–5 Jäger Regts) and supporting units.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

The September 1915–April 1917 period was principally one of stalemate, as it became clear that both the Central Powers and the Allies were too strong to be defeated, yet too weak to secure victory. Falkenhayn pursued the cautious, almost passive strategy of defending the territory of Germany and her three Central Power allies – Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and (from 12 October 1915) Bulgaria – and the areas of north-eastern France, Belgium and the western Russian Empire already under German and Austro-Hungarian occupation. Increasingly this brought the armies of Germany's allies under German command and forced them to accept German troops as 'stiffening'.

Falkenhayn carefully deployed troops to minimize German casualties and conserve precious manpower, hoping that the Allies would be fatally demoralised by increasing casualties. Except for the catastrophically costly Verdun campaign, he avoided the offensives that the British, French and Russians employed in vain attempts to break the German line. However, in the West Balkans (October 1915–January 1916) Falkenhayn took a successful calculated risk in launching an offensive with his Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian allies, employing the decisive manoeuvre tactics of August 1914 to overrun Serbia, Montenegro and Albania and link up with Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire.

Nevertheless, by August 1916 Falkenhayn's patient tactics were discredited. The Allies were proving unexpectedly resilient; the Verdun offensive (February–December 1916) had failed to break the French Army at

great cost to the Germans, the British Somme offensive (July–November 1916) had inflicted further huge German casualties, and the Russian Brusilov offensive (June–September 1916) threatened an invasion of eastern Austria-Hungary. Rumania's declaration of war on 27 August 1916 proved the last straw, and two days later the hugely popular Hindenburg replaced Falkenhayn. Hindenburg immediately attacked Rumania (August–December 1916), swiftly eliminating it from the Allied camp.

On the Western Front, German infantry and engineers supported by artillery, with better training and weapons than their opponents – especially grenades, machine-guns, mortars and heavy artillery – defended virtually impregnable positions, usually sited on the high ground seized at the outset of trench warfare late in 1914. Junior officers were free to use their initiative to order tactical withdrawals to save lives or to shorten defensive lines. From December 1915 local infiltration attacks by small groups of heavily armed 'storm troops' proved very successful; only in tank warfare were the Germans inferior to the Allies. The Eastern Front also remained static during this period, but the front line had no continuous trench system, allowing cavalry a role in defending more fluid positions.

Western Front

The front line established on 20 October 1914 was largely maintained from September 1915 to April 1917. German forces continued to occupy eastern Nord-Pas de Calais, eastern Picardy, northern Champagne-Ardennes, Alsace and Lorraine, and only retreated tactically from the Soissons-Arras salient of eastern Picardy in March 1917.

The German 4th, 6th, 2nd and 1st Armies, and from March 1917 also the 7th Army, defended the 185-mile Artois front (Nieupoort to Soissons) against the Belgian Army and Franco-British Northern Army Group. The 7th, 3rd and 5th Armies (3rd and 5th from March 1917) defended the 130-mile Champagne front (Soissons-Verdun), including the Argonne Forest, AA Strantz, Falkenhayn and Gaede (later 'C', 'A' and 'B') defended the 160-mile Vosges front (Verdun-Bonfol) against the French Eastern Army Group.

The German 3rd Army (Gen d.Kav Karl von Einem) conceded two miles of ground to the French 2nd and 4th Armies in the Second Battle of Champagne (25 September–6 November 1915), while the massed machine-guns of 6th Army (GenObst Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria) decimated British 1st Army

This study of German infantry assaulting at Verdun in 1916 gives a good view of the M1916 assault packs, to which the two Gefreite (first and second right foreground) have strapped 120cm-long engineers' spades.

(Gen Sir Charles Munro) on the Artois front at Loos-en-Gohelle (25 September–8 October 1915).

On 21 February 1916 German 5th Army (GenLt Crown Prince Wilhelm of Prussia) attacked the network of forts north of Verdun in eastern Champagne, defended by the French 2nd Army (Gen Pétain, from May 1916 Gen Nivelle), intending to bleed France of her manpower by attacking a position the French could not afford to lose, so provoking a battle of attrition which Falkenhayn was confident of winning. Forty German divisions advanced steadily against determined French resistance, men of 6th Infantry Division capturing Fort Douaumont on 26 February, while 50th Infantry Division took Fort Vaux on 2 June, almost reaching Fort Souville on 11 July. However, responding to pressure from the Franco-British Somme offensive, Falkenhayn halted his advance, and from August his successor Hindenburg ran down this increasingly wasteful operation. The French counter-attacked, recapturing Douaumont on 24 October and Vaux on 2 November; and by 18 December 1916 German 5th Army was almost back at its February positions, having failed to break the French Army. The siege of Verdun was the longest battle of the First World War, costing perhaps 336,000 German and 362,000 French casualties (dead, wounded or missing).



If Verdun was the longest battle, the Somme was the costliest. On 1 July 1916, from east of Albert on the Somme, British 4th Army (Gen Rawlinson) and 5th Army (Gen Gough) and 2nd Corps (3rd Army), with the French 6th Army and 10th Army further south, initially attacked German 2nd Army (Gen d.Inf Fritz von Below, later Gen d.Art Max von Gallwitz), which was relieved on 19 July by the newly formed 1st Army (Gen d.Inf Fritz von Below). The British sustained huge losses during near-suicidal frontal attacks against well-defended German positions. The British advanced slowly, taking Bazentin in July, Delville Wood, Pozières, Guillemont, Ginchy, Flers-Courcelette, Morval and Thiepval in September, Le Transloy in October and Ancre in November. The French made similar progress but with only 40 per cent as many casualties. The Allies halted on 18 November, having advanced only eight miles and having failed to reach the objectives of Bapaume and Péronne. The Somme cost 498,054 British, 194,451 French and 237,159 German casualties.

During the first months of 1917 the exhausted Franco-British forces launched local attacks in Artois and Champagne; and on 16 March 1917 the German 2nd Army (Gen d.Kav Georg von der Marwitz) and 7th Army (Gen d.Inf Max von Boehn) conducted an orderly 35-mile tactical retreat from the Soissons-Arras salient in Artois to the shorter defensive position of the Siegfried Line, thereby handing the Allies their largest gain on the Western Front during the 1915-17 period. Activity on the Vosges front was limited to unsuccessful French local attacks on strong German defensive positions, notably against the Hartmanns-willerkopf (21 December 1915-9 January 1916) and in Upper Alsace (1 March-5 September 1916) against AA Gaede.



A posed photograph symbolizing the assault trooper's heroism. Taking cover in a shallow ditch the grenadier - wearing the M1916 helmet, M1915 field tunic, puttees and ankle boots of an 'establishment' assault battalion - takes aim, beside the half-buried body of a French soldier. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

The Eastern Front

On 1 October 1915 the Central Powers were defending the 500-mile Dvina-Czernowitz Line with four army groups. 'C-in-C Eastern Front' controlled the Hindenburg Army Group holding Lithuania and southern Latvia against the Russian Northern 'Front' (army group); and the Crown Prince Leopold of Bavaria Army Group in western Belarus confronted the Russian Western Front. Meanwhile the Austro-Hungarian High Command supervised the Linsingen Army Group defending north-western Ukraine from the Russian South-West Front; and the Austro-Hungarian Böhme-Ermolli Army Group in eastern Galicia (now south-western Ukraine) faced the Russian South-West Front.

Falkenhayn held existing positions to conserve troops for the Western Front; but the Russians launched diversionary attacks, particularly against the less formidable Austro-Hungarian forces, to relieve pressure on the Western Front. On 24 December 1915 the 7th and 9th Armies of South-West Front (Gen Ivanov) invaded the Bukovina district of eastern Galicia and almost reached Czernowitz (Cernovcy, Ukraine) before being stopped on 15 January 1916 by 7th AH and German Süd Armies. On 17 March 1916 Russian 1st Army of Western Front (Gen Evert) attacked German 10th Army in eastern Lithuania hoping to reach Vilnius, but was defeated with heavy losses at the First Battle of Lake Narocz on 14 April.

In response to Allied requests to divert pressure from the Trentino front in Italy, Gen Alexei Brusilov launched the four armies (7-9, 11) of his South-Western army group on a 200-mile front against the Austro-Hungarian units in the Linsingen Army Group in north-western Ukraine and eastern Galicia. The Austro-Hungarians were forced back over 40 miles,

losing Lutzk on 7 June, Czernowitz on 17 June and Brody on 28 July. Only the formidable Süd Army (Gen d.Inf Felix Graf von Bothmer) in Galicia and the Carpathian Corps (1 Reserve, 200 Inf Divs) held firm. Now Gen Linsingen moved his German divisions south and took command of all Austro-Hungarian forces, and by late July had halted the 'Brusilov Offensive'. He then blocked further attacks on 28 July and 7 August, inflicting massive casualties. The Carpathian Corps won particular distinction for its defence of the Tartar Pass and Ludova district throughout August 1916. When, on 20 September 1916, Brusilov finally called off operations, the Russians had made important territorial gains but had lost a staggering 1.4 million men, the Austro-Hungarians 750,000 and the Germans 150,000. As the biggest Allied victory of 1916 the Brusilov Offensive contributed to the downfall of Falkenhayn, and forced the Germans to take over control of the entire Eastern Front on 4 October 1916; but the huge Russian losses had fatally undermined Russian morale.

During the Brusilov Offensive, AA Woysch was engaged at Baranovichi in Belarus (July 1916) and Shtshara-Servetch (September), while Süd Army fought hard in south-western Ukraine at Zborov (August), Narayovka (August-October), Brzezany (September-October) and Lipnica (October-November). Meanwhile Linsingen Army Group was engaged at Vladimir-Volynskij in north-western Ukraine (October). Only the Lithuania-southern Latvia line was relatively quiet. However, by January 1917 Russian forces were no longer able to attack the thinly stretched enemy line. On 10 March 1917 (Russian Calendar: 27 February) the Petrograd (St Petersburg) garrison rebelled against Tsar Nicholas II, forcing him to abdicate on 16 March and initiating exhausted Russia's slow process of withdrawal from the war.

The Italian Front

On 28 May 1915 Germany deployed the élite Alpenkorps to support the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army in the Austrian Tyrol, but as the sector remained inactive it was withdrawn on 12 October 1915 for service on the Balkan Front without seeing combat.

The West Balkan Front

On 18 September 1915, Mackensen Army Group (GFM August von Mackensen) was re-formed for the West Balkan campaign. It comprised two armies: the German 11th Army (Gen d.Art Max von Gallwitz), with 3rd, 4th Reserve and 10th Reserve Corps and the Austro-Hungarian Fülöpp Group; and the 3rd AH Army, with German 22nd Reserve Corps. Mackensen attacked Serbia on 6 October, taking Belgrade on 9 October. The 11th Army then advanced south down the Morava Valley, taking Kragujevac on 1 November and Kraljevo on 6 November, while 3 AH Army



The M1915 field tunic with Guards collar braids and blank shoulder straps identifies this war reporter as a member of one of the 1st to 4th Foot Guards regiments. He holds his bulky camera ready as he waits to take a photograph of a German attack. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

advanced through western Serbia, Montenegro and Albania. Meanwhile Bulgarian forces moved into eastern Serb Macedonia, Bulgarian 2nd Army taking Skopje on 22 October and Bulgarian 1st Army (including an Alpenkorps detachment) occupying Nis on 5 November. The 11th Army continued southwards, forcing back a Franco-British expeditionary force from Salonika, reaching the Serb-Greek frontier on 3 March 1916. The Austro-Hungarian forces reached southern Albania shortly afterwards, thereby forming the Salonika front.²

On 20 January 1916 Central Powers forces on the Salonika front were reorganised. Mackensen Army Group (for political reasons, under nominal Bulgarian command) comprised German 11th Army and Bulgarian 1st Army, with 19 AH Corps garrisoning northern and central Albania and Bulgarian 2nd Army occupying eastern Greek Macedonia. Meanwhile the Austro-Hungarian army placed western Serbia and Montenegro under military government and occupied north and central Albania, while Bulgaria occupied eastern Serbia and Macedonia. From November 1915 German divisions were gradually withdrawn from this front, and by January 1916 the 11th Army contained only the Carpathian Corps and three Bulgarian infantry divisions (2, 5, 9), reduced still further in April 1916 to the 101st Division.

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



A well-known study of a battle-weary infantryman taken prisoner by the British in 1917; the photograph was used in British propaganda to suggest (inaccurately) that the quality of German infantry was in terminal decline. He wears the M1915 peakless field cap with a field-grey band cover, and his imperial and state cockades are missing. His M1915 tunic shoulder straps have field-grey loops to cover his regimental number. The spectacles are field issue.

Throughout 1916 German units supported Bulgarian 1st Army in the Vardar Valley and around Lake Doiran from March, Florina (August) and Lake Ostrovo (August–September). The Allied Armée de l'Orient launched an offensive on 10 September 1916, and German units with Bulgarian 1st Army fought fierce rearguard actions at Mount Kaimakchalan (September–October), Lake Ochrid (October–November), First Monastir (November), Second Monastir and Lake Doiran (March 1917). Meanwhile the Alpenkorps 201st, 207th and 208th Mountain Machine-Gun Battalions fought with the Bulgarian 2nd Army on the Struma Plateau (August–September 1916). On 30 July 1916 Mackensen Army Group HQ transferred to Rumania, and on 12 October was replaced by Below Army Group (Gen d.Inf Otto von Below), with German 11th and Bulgarian 1st and 2nd Armies. In November 1916 the Hippele Division joined 11th Army with German officers and Bulgarian enlisted men, re-forming in January 1917 as 302nd Infantry Division with German personnel only.

Rumania

On 28 August 1916 three Rumanian armies invaded Austro-Hungarian Transylvania, and by mid-September had advanced 50 miles over the border.³ Meanwhile the Mackensen Army Group (GFM von Mackensen) was re-formed in northern Bulgaria in early August 1916, with Bulgarian 3rd Army, German 52nd Special Corps (redesignated January 1917 'Danube Army') and Ottoman 15th Corps. On 1 September Mackensen's Bulgarian and Ottoman forces, with elements of 52nd Corps, advanced into Rumanian Dobrudja, taking Constanza on 22 October, crossing the Danube at the delta on 23 November 1916, and continuing to fight on the northern bank until 5 January 1917. Meanwhile 52nd Corps crossed the Danube at Sistova on 10 September, and headed for Bucharest.

A new and extremely powerful German 9th Army (Gen.d.Inf Erich von Falkenhayn) was formed on 19 September 1916 to defend Transylvania, as part of the Austro-Hungarian 'Archduke Josef Army Group' (December 1916, 'Archduke Karl'), which also included the 1st and 7th AH Armies. The 9th Army comprised 1st and 39th Reserve Corps and the Alpenkorps; it was joined in October by three further corps (Schmettow Cavalry, 'Kneußl' and 'Krafft'), and in November 1916 by 52nd and 54th Special Corps. The army group duly counterattacked, 9th Army taking Hermannstadt (Sibiu, Rumania) on 29 September, Kronstadt (Brasov) on 9 October, and the Vulcan and Szurdak passes on 14 November. They then poured into western Wallachia, defeating a determined Rumanian counter-attack on the River Arges on 5 December and taking Bucharest the following day. Meanwhile the rest of the Archduke Charles Army Group had pushed the remaining Rumanian forces over the River Sereth into northern Moldavia. From 27 December 1916 five German divisions (117, 218, 225 Inf; 8, 10 Bav Inf.) with the 1st AH Army guarded the north-east Transylvanian frontier with Rumanian northern Moldavia.

On 23 November 1916 the 'Rumanian Military Administration', with 11 German and three Austro-Hungarian districts, was formed to administer occupied Rumanian Wallachia and southern Moldavia under Gen d.Inf Tüllf von Tscheppe und Weidenbach.

The Middle East

From December 1913 Gen d.Kav Otto Liman von Sanders commanded the German Military Mission to the Ottoman Army in Constantinople. Promoted to Ottoman field-marshal (mushir), he commanded the Ottoman 1st Army (November 1914–March 1915) and 5th Army (March 1915–February 1918) in Turkish eastern Thrace. From 25 April 1915 to 9 January 1916 von Sanders led the Turkish defence of Gallipoli against the Allied landings. His colleague, GFM Kolmar

These infantrymen in Serbia, September 1915, are wearing the M1914 field-grey felt helmets with cloth neck flaps, brass plates showing the regimental number, and black leather chin straps – see Plate F1. Their M1915 field-grey cotton summer jackets, trousers and field-grey puttees give them a distinctly oriental appearance. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



Freiherr von der Goltz, commanded Ottoman 1st Army (April–October 1915) and 6th Army (December 1915–April 1916) in Mesopotamia (eastern Iraq).

In March 1916 the regimental-status 'Pasha Expedition' fought with the Ottoman 4th Army in southern Palestine. It comprised 60th Heavy Artillery Battalion, 601st–608th MG Companies, 350th–352nd Mortar Battalions, 300th Flying Detachment, 103rd Signals Detachment, 105th Radio Command and 133rd–136th Observation Balloon Defence Platoons. On 4 July 1916 it joined Ottoman forces attacking British positions in the Sinai Peninsula at Romni, withdrawing to El Arish on 12 August.

M1915/1916 UNIFORMS

On 21 Sept 1915 new full dress, field and undress uniforms were introduced for the German Army and Air Corps; Bavarian units followed on 31 Mar 1916. The collars of Bavarian full-dress, undress and field tunics had a distinctive M1916 light blue and white 'Bavarian cord'. (The different 'orders of dress' mentioned in the descriptions which follow are detailed in MAA 394, *The German Army in World War I (1) 1914–15*, Table 4.)

The full dress uniform was worn with the officers' formal and informal ceremonial and parade orders of dress, and with enlisted men's parade order, by pre-1914 units which would be retained after the war following an anticipated German victory. However, it soon became clear that these full dress uniforms were an unnecessary luxury during wartime; on 24 Jan 1916 further production was halted for the duration of the war, and in the event was never recommenced. Those few officers and even fewer enlisted men who obtained this uniform usually did so at their own expense. In the descriptions below 'gold' buttons refers to officers' bright gold-plated and enlisted men's bright brass-

plated buttons, while 'silver' buttons refers to officers' bright silver-plated and enlisted men's bright nickel-plated buttons, from 9 Feb 1917 in highly polished galvanized sheet metal.

The full dress uniform resurrected the pre-1914 full dress but replaced the branch or regimental uniform colour with field-grey (Light Infantry, grey-green). Headdress consisted of the Pickelhaube spiked leather helmet or M1915 officers' peaked service cap with branch- or regimentally-coloured band and piping. The M1915 superior quality full dress tunic with branch- or regimentally-coloured piping, collar and Swedish cuffs (infantry, Brandenburg; lancers, Polish), and any medals, was worn with M1914 breeches or trousers or M1915 full dress trousers; M1896 officers' waist belt or men's black leather belt; officers' and NCOs' white or men's grey gloves; officer's black riding boots/shoes or NCOs' and men's black marching boots/ankle boots; officers' and senior NCOs' sword and sword knot or junior NCOs' and men's bayonet and bayonet knot.

The M1915/1916 field uniform was worn with officers' walking-out, service, undress and field orders of dress, and with enlisted men's walking-out, reporting, service, undress, guard, field and training orders. Its simple, practical and austere lines eliminated most of the traditional state and unit distinctions of the M1907/1910 tunic, matching the sombre but purposeful mood of wartime Germany; and it was retained (with changes in insignia) until 1 Jan 1921. However, photographs show that existing M1907/1910 and simplified M1907 enlisted men's tunics continued to be widely worn until Nov 1918.

Officers, especially staff officers working indoors, often preferred to wear the officers' undress tunic (*Kleiner Rock*), which replaced the M1903 undress tunic (*Litewka*). The M1915/1916 officers' undress tunic was a double-breasted tunic cut like the Litewka in superior

³ See MAA 356, *Armies in the Balkans 1914–18*



A Bulgarian, an Austro-Hungarian and a German infantryman (left to right) stand symbolic guard in Uskub (Skopje) on the Salonika front, 1917. The German wears the simplified M1907 field tunic, and a straw hat as originally issued to troops in Germany's African colonies. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

quality M1915 doeskin or tricot, with a dark field-grey (Bavaria, field-grey) turn-over collar, plain back vent, two rows of six plain domed gold or silver buttons, concealed waist pockets with diagonal flaps and dress shoulder-boards. Piping on the collar, front and turn-back cuffs was usually red. The 9.5cm long rhomboidal buttoned collar patches and the shoulder board underlay were in the branch or regimental colour, sometimes with a contrasting piping.

In the following descriptions the term 'standard' applies to clothing and equipment items worn by all ranks.

LINE INFANTRY Officers

By Apr 1917 the German Line Infantry comprised 374 regiments. There were 14 of Prussian Guards: 1-7 Foot Guards, 1-5 Grenadier Guards, Fusilier Guards and Infantry Instruction. The 8 non-Prussian Guards equivalents were the Bavarian Infantry Lifeguards; Saxon 100th Lifeguard Infantry, 101st Grenadiers; Württemberg 119th, 123rd Grenadiers; Baden 109th Life Grenadiers; Hessian 115th Lifeguards; Mecklenburg-Schwerin I & III/89th Grenadiers; and Mecklenburg-Strelitz II/89th Grenadiers. There were also 13 Prussian Grenadier regiments (1-12, 110); 12 of Prussian Fusiliers (33-40, 73, 80, 86, 90); and 327 Line Infantry: 255 Prussian (13-479 series); 26 Saxon (102-107, 133-134, 139, 177-179, 181-183, 351, 354,

391-392, 415-416, 431, 472-474); 14 Württemberg (120-122, 124-127, 180, 413-414, 475-476, 478-479); and 32 Bavarian (1-32).

Officers' field uniform comprised the M1915 spiked helmet, later the M1916 standard steel helmet, or 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 gold- or silver-plated fittings and plate, gold-plated chin scales and a detachable screw-on spike. In the field it was worn with a fabric cover, the spike removed and a black leather enlisted man's chin strap added. On 19 Oct 1916 production of new leather helmets ceased, and from 9 Feb 1917 the fittings and plates of existing helmets were to be in matt grey galvanized iron or sheet iron. The standard cotton helmet cover was available in five versions: M1892 greyish-green, M1914 grey, or grey with a detachable spike cover (28 June 1915), greyish-brown (18 Oct 1915), or in Bavarian field-grey (19 Jan 1916). Helmet cover insignia were only worn in rear areas and Germany from Dec 1914, and from 27 Oct 1916 were discontinued entirely. Some units serving in Serbia in 1915 were issued with the M1915 field-grey felt helmet with the spike detached, a metal scroll plate showing the unit number, no cockades, and a neck visor.

By summer 1915 head wounds were causing 50 per cent of German trench fatalities, leading AA Gaede on

the Vosges front to have manufactured 1,500 cloth- or leather-lined steel skull caps for front line troops. The standard M1916 steel helmet was field tested from Dec 1915 by the 1st Assault Battalion, then by the 5th Army at Verdun and 6th Army on the Somme, and finally issued generally from Apr 1916. It was manufactured in chromium nickel steel with a neck guard to protect against artillery splinters and a leather chin strap, and painted matt field-grey. For better camouflage troops coated the helmet with earth or sand or manufactured field-grey cloth or sand-coloured sackcloth covers, and on 3 Jan 1917 white linen covers were issued to troops fighting in snowy conditions. A limited number of detachable forehead shields were issued to forward observers and trench sentries for additional protection.

The M1915/1916 officers' peaked field cap was manufactured from superior or coarse qualities of field-grey wool with red cloth crown piping and band (with optional M1915 field-grey cloth band cover), a soft field-grey leather peak and chin strap with two galvanized steel slides and plain field-grey buttons, and the officers' service cap cockades.

The M1915/1916 officers' field tunic was closely tailored in M1915 superior or coarse quality field-grey wool, slightly darker than the M1910 field-grey but lighter than the enlisted ranks' tunic. It had a high dark greenish-grey ('dark field-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 and dull brass or nickel-plated domed buttons with a crown; a plain back vent and two dull brass belt-supporting buttons with a crown. Against regulations many officers added concealed or external breast pockets with buttoned flaps.

Officers wore M1915 field-quality officers' shoulder boards with an infantry-white facing cloth underlay and dull brass or nickel domed buttons with a crown, but 21 regiments or equivalents had a coloured inner underlay: silver (1 Ft Gds; I & III/89 Gren; 100, 109 Lifegds); red (2 Ft Gds; 2 Gren Gds; Inf Instruct; 8 Gren, II/89 Gren; 115 Lifegds; 168 Inf); lemon-yellow (3 Ft Gds; 3 Gren Gds; Fus Gds; 7, 11 Gren; 118 Inf); light blue (4 Ft Gds; 4 Gren Gds; 145 Inf); mid-blue (117 Inf Life Regt); and light green (114 Inf). Sometimes field-grey shoulder slides were worn to disguise the unit distinctions in combat.

Officers of the 32 regiments so entitled wore 6.9cm-long M1915 matt silver-grey embroidered collar braids on dark field-grey collar patches. Eighteen regiments or equivalents had two Guards braids with gold wire centre and end cords (2-4 Ft Gds; 1-4 Gren Gds; 115 Lifegds; Bav Lifegds; 100, 109 Life Gren; II/89, 101, 119, 123 Gren), or silver (1 Ft Gds; Fus Gds; Inf Instruct; I & III/89 Gren). Nine (1-8, 11 Gren) had one Guards braid with gold wire centre and end cords; five had Old Prussian braid with a gold (5 Gren Gds),



Reserve infantry march through a German town in 1916, all wearing the new M1916 steel helmet. The officer (left) is recognisable by the superior quality cloth and high collar of his M1910 tunic, leather gaiters, officers' sword and knot. His men, wearing the simplified M1907 field tunic, are probably newly recalled reservists. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

silver (5-7 Ft Gds) or matt grey centre cord (80 Fus). 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. From 21 Sept 1915 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, manufactured in superior quality field-grey cloth with matt brass or nickel-plated buttons with a crown (9 Feb 1917,



A photograph of poor quality but considerable interest: Gefreiter Adolf Hitler marching through a French town in 1916. At the time he was acting as a regimental runner in 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regt. He wears the M1896 Bavarian leather helmet with plain M1916 Bavarian field-grey helmet cover, and the M1915 greatcoat; he has obsolete M1896 Bavarian ammunition pouches and carries an old Gewehr 88 rifle.

galvanized gold or silver). It had an extra wide dark field-grey collar, field tunic shoulder boards, one row of six buttons and deep turn-back cuffs, concealed waist pockets with slanted flaps, a buttonable back vent and back flaps with one button. The light grey M1903 double-breasted officers' greatcoat could continue to be worn with a grey or field-grey collar and M1915 buttons, but against regulations some officers had the M1903 greatcoat manufactured in field-grey cloth.

Field equipment for field officers and captains comprised the M1915 officers' waistbelt; P08 pistol in the 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; the M1914 officers' backpack on the upper back, to which the greatcoat could be strapped; the M1884 signal whistle, and the M1898 enlisted men's bayonet with M1896 Prussian officers' 'closed tassel' sword knot on the left back hip. All leather items were blackened. The black (Bavaria, brown) leather waist belt had a circular gold-plated (9 Feb 1917, galvanized brass-plated) buckle with a state badge as for the M1896 waist belt.

The standard M1915 **gas mask**, introduced that autumn, was made of gas-proof rubber-coated cotton material with two glass eyepieces, the screw-on M21/8 filter in a cylindrical black tin container, and elasticated head straps. In late 1915 the M11/11 anti-phosgene gas filter was introduced, and in Jan 1916 the M1916 gas mask with improved head straps. Initially the gas mask was stored in a cylindrical tin container carried with two filters in a grey sailcloth bag strapped to the back of the waistbelt. This required the soldier to screw the filter to the mask before use; but on 29 Mar 1916 the larger M1916 'alert container' was issued, containing the mask with a filter already screwed in place, in an internally modified bag. From June 1916 the bag was discarded; the 'new model M1916 alert container' was painted field-grey, fitted with a black leather or grey cloth strap, and worn over either shoulder.

Enlisted men

The **enlisted men's field uniform** comprised the M1915 spiked helmet, later the M1916 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, worn with a helmet cover. Reserve and Ersatz units often wore felt and metal helmets. It was superseded by the M1916 standard steel helmet.

In the field the M1915 officers' field cap was worn officially by senior NCOs and unofficially by junior 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 finely woven red facing cloth. From 21 Sept 1915 lance-corporals and privates were allowed to add a field-grey soft leather peak at their own expense. On 31 Mar 1916 a new Bavarian enlisted men's state cockade was introduced for the peaked and peakless caps, with a blue cloth centre and a silver serrated outer edge.

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, but 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 braids: 18 regiments had two Guards braids with a red centre stripe and white braid stripes (1-4 Ft Gds; 1-4 Gren Gds; Fus Gds; Inf Instruct; 115 Lifegds; Bav Lifegds; 100, 109 Life Gren; I & III/89 Gren; 101, 119, 123 Gren), or yellow braid stripes (II/89 Gren). Nine had one Guards braid with a white (1-6, 8, 11 Gren) or yellow (7 Gren) braid stripe; five had Old Prussian braid, with a white (5-7 Ft Gds), yellow (5 Gren Gds) or no (80 Fus) braid stripe.

The 4.5cm-wide M1915 field-grey field shoulder straps, narrower than the M1907 pattern, had red chain-stitched unit numbers or ciphers, dull-brass or nickel-plated buttons with a crown, and infantry-white edge piping. However, personnel of the 21 regiments or equivalents whose officers wore the distinctive inner shoulder board underlay wore piping of the same colours. From 27 Jan 1917 a field-grey shoulder loop was added to M1915 infantry field tunics; the shoulder strap could be rolled around it, thereby concealing the unit designation when troops were moving positions.

The **M1914 enlisted men's field trousers**, in coarse quality grey (Bavaria, field-grey) cloth with red outseam piping, continued to be worn. They did not fully supersede the M1907 field-grey trousers in Prussia until 8 Oct 1915. Bavaria attempted to reintroduce field-grey on 31 Mar 1916 but economic constraints largely prevented this. The trousers were worn with high-shaft natural leather enlisted men's M1866 marching boots. During the war substitute materials were increasingly used, and on 11 Dec 1916 wooden heels were introduced. The widespread use of blackened leather M1893 or M1914 ankle boots with field-grey (from 31 July 1916, also grey) cloth puttees, often causing 'trench foot' or poor leg circulation, forced the Army on 18 Sept 1915 to restrict them to Air Corps, Mountain and 'establishment' Assault units. The M1915 **enlisted men's greatcoat** was like the M1915 officers' greatcoat, but was loosely tailored in coarse-quality field-grey cloth with dull brass or nickel-plated buttons and enlisted men's M1915 field shoulder straps.

The **M1895 enlisted men's fatigue uniform** in off-white herringbone pattern 'drill' (twilled linen) – from 2 Aug 1915 dyed field-grey or manufactured in grey shelter-quarter material – was worn for heavy manual duties. The **M1915 enlisted men's summer uniform**, introduced on 11 June 1915 for lance-corporals and privates, was intended to supersede the fatigue uniform. Troops in Germany wore the M1915 enlisted men's field-grey cotton summer tunic, cut like the simplified M1907 field tunic, with detachable plain steel buttons and no pipings; Guards regiments wore shoulder strap piping and collar braids. Troops at the front wore the M1915 enlisted men's summer field jacket, cut like the fatigue tunic in field-grey cotton with detachable matt brass or nickel-plated buttons with crowns. The grey cotton trousers were cut like the fatigue trousers. Italy's entry into the war in May 1915



A private of the 127th Infantry Regt, 27th Württemberg Infantry Div, looks through a trench periscope in a typically well-appointed German trench. He is wearing the M1915 field tunic, and holds an M1916 stick grenade. The 27th Division sustained heavy losses on the Somme with 13th Corps. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

against Germany cut off the main source of cotton, and production ceased on 11 Feb 1916. The relatively few summer uniforms manufactured were prioritised for front line troops on the Salonika and Rumanian fronts.

Senior NCOs' **field equipment** comprised the M1915 enlisted men's waist belt and pack support straps; Luger P08 pistol and holster; M1898 enlisted men's bayonet with M1896 officers' sword knot on the left hip; enlisted men's knapsack and rolled greatcoat on the upper back; and gas mask case on the lower back. Enlisted men's field equipment was worn by junior NCOs and men. It comprised the M1915 enlisted men's waist belt and pack support straps; M1909 rifle ammunition pouches on each front hip; M1898 bayonet and frog, with bayonet knot, strapped to the M1874 or M1898 spade and frog on the back left hip; M1915 enlisted men's knapsack, 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 wrapped in the shelter quarter, and this was strapped across the left shoulder.

The **M1915 enlisted men's waistbelt**, in blackened leather, had a rectangular buckle plate with a state badge, usually surrounded by a motto and wreath in a ring. The belt plate was in galvanized iron (from 2 Feb 1916, galvanized sheet steel) sprayed matt grey. The triple sets of blackened leather **M1909 rifle ammunition pouches** had galvanized iron or steel fittings from 1 Jan 1915, and from 21 Oct 1916 were manufactured in stronger leather. The junior NCOs' white woollen **bayonet knot** had state colour threads, and the men's had a battalion-colour stem and a company-colour slide and wreath. Further production was halted on 22 Jan 1917 to save materials. The M1874 or M98 (introduced 1899) 'short spade' was carried in a black leather frog.

The **M1915 enlisted men's backpack**, introduced 18 Aug 1915, comprised a grey waterproof sailcloth knapsack with a backflap. The **M1914 shelter-quarter**, introduced 15 Oct 1914, was in grey waterproof cotton with brass (1 Jan 1915, galvanized iron or steel) fittings, but never entirely superseded the M1892 reddish-brown pattern. The **M1915 mess tin**, introduced 22 Sept 1915, was in sheet steel painted field-grey. The **M1915 water bottle**, introduced 10 June 1915, was in galvanized sheet steel with a waterproof field-grey cotton cover. The **M1914 breadbag**, in grey waterproof cotton, had iron fittings from 16 Jan 1915.

ASSAULT ('STORM') TROOPS

The commencement of trench warfare on the Western Front in Dec 1914 rendered massed frontal infantry

attacks extremely costly in lives. On 2 Mar 1915 an experimental *Sturm-Abteilung* ('assault detachment') was formed under Hauptmann Willy Rohr, becoming Assault Battalion 5 'Rohr' on 11 Mar 1916. In Dec 1916 each Army was allocated an 'establishment' assault battalion (*Sturm-Bataillon*), and eventually 16 battalions (1-4, 5, 7-12, 16; 6, 15 Bavarian) were formed. Each battalion was effectively a mixed-arms battalion group, with an HQ and 1-5 assault companies (1st-5th); one or two machine gun companies or platoons (1st, 2nd); and one mortar company or platoon (1st). The prestigious 5th Bn also had an engineer flamethrower platoon, an artillery howitzer battery, and a horse transport column.

Uniforms varied between the companies, but the battalion number was normally worn on shoulder boards and straps. The assault and machine gun companies wore infantry uniform (1, 3 Bn - Light Infantry; 5, 10 - engineers) uniforms, and the mortar company, engineers uniforms. On 2 Jan 1917 all establishment battalions were issued M1914 reinforced mountain trousers, puttees and mountain boots.

Most front line divisions also formed a 'non-establishment' assault company (*Sturm-Kompagnie*), regiments a platoon-sized assault detachment, companies an 8-10 man 'assault troop' or 'shock troop'. These wore standard infantry uniforms, sometimes with an unofficial unit badge, and carried assault troops' weapons, but were forbidden the M1914 mountain clothing.

Second-line infantry

Reserve, Landwehr and Landsturm regiments were prescribed the M1915 field uniform, but the slow supply chain, and the pride these units had in their traditional

uniforms and insignia, meant that many units retained the M1907/1910 uniforms until Nov 1918.

By Nov 1916, when the last **Reserve regiments** had been raised, there were 190 regiments: 148 Prussian (1, 2 Gds; 1-441 series); 13 Saxon (110 Gren; 101-4, 106, 107, 133, 241-5); 7 Württemberg (119-122; 246-248); and 22 Bavarian (1-8, 10-23). The M1915 uniform rendered Reserve units indistinguishable from the parent Line Infantry regiment, except for the helmet cover (green 'R' and regimental number; plain for Guards); and the white Landwehr Cross (often omitted) on the middle of the state cockade on the M1915 peaked and M1907 peakless field caps. Four Bavarian Reserve regiments (16, 17, 20, 21) wore the M1813 oilcloth peaked cap with helmet cover insignia on the grey cap cover. The field tunic insignia was copied from the parent regiment, but shoulder boards and straps (usually with parent regiments' piping or underlay) showed only regimental numbers, not ciphers. At least seven Reserve regiments wore their parent regiment's collar braids: two matt silver-grey Guards braids with silver (1 Gds, 100, 261, 262) or gold (2 Gds, 84, 109) wire centre and cords.

By Apr 1917 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). They wore the M1915 field uniform with the spiked helmet cover (green 'L' and regimental number); the white Landwehr Cross on the middle of the state cockade of the M1915 peaked and M1907 peakless field caps, or on 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. Two regiments (100, 116) wore two matt silver-grey Guards collar braids with gold wire centre and cords.

By 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). There were also about 380 independent mobile battalions for line-of-communication duties in rear areas, and 270 static defence battalions based in Germany. The Landsturm usually wore the M1907/1910 field-grey uniform or obsolete field and undress tunics.⁴

Light Infantry

By Apr 1917 the Light Infantry (*Jäger*) had largely changed their rôle from cavalry divisional infantry to mountain infantry or lightly equipped mobile infantry. There were 19 regular battalions (Gds, 1-11, 14, 27, 31; 12, 13 Saxon; 1, 2 Bavarian), and 29 reserve battalions (Gds, 1-11, 14-24; 12, 13, 25, 26 Saxon; 1, 2 Bavarian). From May 1915, 28 of these battalions (1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10,



Another very well-known picture, but one which can hardly be bettered. The image of the 'assault trooper' exerted a powerful grip on German post-war politics. This grenadier, wearing the M1916 helmet and M1915 field tunic, carries regimentally made hand grenade sacks, a 120cm engineers' 'long spade' strapped to his shoulder strap, a slung Karabiner 98, and the M1916 'alert' gas mask container.

11, 14; 1, 2 Bavarian; 2, 4-7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16-18, 23-26 Reserve; 1, 2 Bavarian Reserve) were grouped into nine Light Infantry regiments (2, 4-6, 8, 9; 7 Saxon; 1, 29 Bavarian); and were allocated to five divisions - the Alpenkorps on the Verdun front, in Italy, Serbia and Rumania; and the 200th Light Infantry and 195th, 197th and 199th Infantry on the Eastern Front. In Feb 1915 Finnish volunteers, eventually 2,000 strong, were formed into the Lockstedt Training Unit, in May 1916 redesignated 27th Light Infantry Battalion - with four rifle battalions, an engineer company and field artillery battery - and assigned to the Latvian front.

In Aug 1916 battalion establishment increased to nine companies - four Light Infantry, two cyclist (later transferred to the cyclist battalions), two machine gun and one light mortar company.

The **M1915/1916 field uniform** included the M1915 shako without the officers' cockade and with a leather chin strap for all ranks; but on 19 Oct 1916



This group of shocked but no doubt relieved prisoners of war are from a Grenadier Guards regiment of the élite 2nd Guards Div, captured by the British on the Somme near Péronne, August 1916. The guardsmen at second and third left have retained their M1907 field tunics with the distinctive Guards collar and cuff braids, while the man standing at right wears the simplified M1907 field tunic with turn-back cuffs. Their captors have confiscated some of their boots to discourage escape attempts. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

⁴ See MAA 394, *The German Army in World War I (1) 1914-15*



A squad of Landwehr infantry pose for a commemorative photograph in Russia in 1916. All wear the M1915 enlisted men's peaked field cap originally intended for the supply and medical corps, but issued to many Landwehr units to replace the M1895 helmet. Note the mixture of M1907, simplified M1907 and M1915 field tunics; and the fact that each has only one set of triple M1909 ammunition pouches for their Gewehr 88 rifles. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



This assault trooper, also shown in a posed study, wears the simplified M1907 field tunic, and is demonstrating the use of the M1917 stick grenade; note at his feet six grenade heads wired around a complete grenade to form a 'concentrated charge'. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

production was discontinued. The shako covers had green regimental numbers for the regimental HQ, while subordinate battalions retained their battalion numbers. The M1915/1916 field tunic was the infantry model, but in M1915 grey-green (Bavaria, field-grey) with a dark grey-green (Bavaria, field-grey) collar. Officers had green shoulder board underlay, while enlisted men had M1915 grey-green pointed shoulder straps piped green and bearing red regimental or battalion numbers (Bavaria, green straps with yellow numbers). Officers of the Light Infantry Guards and 14th (Mecklenburg) Bn had two M1915 matt silver-grey collar braids with gold wire (14 Bn, silver) centre and end cords; enlisted men, two M1915 grey linen braids with a dark grey-green centre and yellow (14 Bn, white) braid stripes. Trousers were grey with green outseam piping. The officers' field-grey M1915/1916 undress tunic had green collar patches.

There were three **Rifles** (Schützen) units; the Rifle Guards and Reserve Rifle Guards independent battalions, and the Saxon 108th Regiment serving with the 23rd Infantry Division. The M1915 field tunic was the Light Infantry model, the officers' shoulder boards having green outer and black velvet inner underlays; enlisted men's grey-green pointed shoulder straps were piped black, the 108th Regt adding a red hunting horn and regimental number. Rifle Guards and Reserve Rifle Guards officers had two M1915 matt silver-grey collar braids with gold wire centre and end cords; enlisted men, two M1915 grey linen braids with a black centre and yellow braid stripes. Breeches and trousers were grey with green outseam piping. The officers' M1915 field-grey undress tunic had green collar patches piped black.

Most divisions on the Western Front disbanded their **Cyclist companies**, leaving 36 companies (11–255

A cyclist company from an infantry regiment make their way through the waterlogged fields of north-eastern France, early 1916. They are wearing M1915 field tunics with M1895 spiked helmets, or M1915 peaked field caps for NCOs; their greatcoats and shelter-quarters are strapped to the handlebars of their bicycles.



Prussian series; 10, 12 Bavarian; 58, 204 Saxon; 1, 2 Württemberg) and 11 Reserve companies (30–72 series; 8 Bavarian) on the Eastern Front acting as messengers. From Aug 1916 these were formed into eight Cyclist Battalions (1–2, 4–8; 3 Bavarian), each with one MG and six cyclist companies. They wore the M1915 Light Infantry uniform with the company or battalion number on the shoulder boards and straps, but were distinguished by reinforced trousers, puttees, ankle boots, the M1911 light grey waterproof cycling cape, and the M1912 black leather knapsack.

By Apr 1917 the **Mountain Troops** comprised the 3rd Light Infantry Regt (formed 1 Oct 1915), with four ski battalions (2, 3; 1, 4 Bavarian), forming the Alpenkorps; plus the Württemberg Mountain Bn, formed Oct 1915, serving in the Vosges, and from Oct 1916 to Feb 1917 in Rumania. The 3rd Regt wore the M1914 uniform, but on 18 Nov 1915 they were ordered to wear the M1915 Light Infantry shako and M1915 officers' peaked and enlisted men's peakless field caps instead of the popular mountain cap in order to distinguish themselves from their Austro-Hungarian allies. The M1915 field-grey greatcoat, introduced Dec 1915, had Light Infantry shoulder boards/straps with the battalion number.

The Württemberg Mountain Bn wore the M1915 shako from 24 March 1916, and from Oct 1916 the M1916 steel helmet or field cap. On 2 Oct 1915 the M1914 field-grey ski Litewka was modified with green facing cloth collar patches and matt gold-plated (enlisted men, brass-plated) buttons with a crown, although the M1914 horn buttons were still worn. Officers wore a crowned collar patch button and shoulder boards with a green underlay; enlisted ranks, M1915 grey-edged white NCO braid and the company

1916: a machine gun crew pose with grimly determined expressions in a slit trench obviously behind the front lines, with their MG08; its 'sledge' mount has the front legs pivoted forward to allow firing at almost ground level. The crew wear the M1915 field tunic with the collar braids of the Guards regiment to which they are attached. The NCO gun commander (right) is recognisable by his NCO *Tresse* collar braid. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

number (1–4) on their collar patches, and a unique green facing cloth shoulder seam padding. The rarely worn M1915 field-grey infantry field tunic had the same insignia. Enlisted men wore the green chain-stitched company number on the green-piped field-grey shoulder straps of the M1915 greatcoat, introduced 2 Oct 1915.

Machine gun units

The rapid expansion of these units underlined their position as a key arm. By Apr 1917 there were 13 regular independent machine gun detachments (1, 2 Gds; 1–10; 1 Bavarian), each with 160 men, attached to the cavalry divisions. From Aug 1916, 338 MG platoons (1–330; 1–38 Bavarian), 354 supplementary MG platoons (531–878; 1–6 Bavarian), 111 light MG sections (1–111), and other ad hoc units were allocated as pairs of platoons to each battalion MG company, increasing establishment by two platoons and from six to 12 guns. On 21 Sept 1915 MG troops (except those attached to Light Infantry battalions) lost their shakos and grey-green uniforms and adopted the infantry or cavalry uniforms of their parent unit.

From May 1915 Mountain Machine Gun Detachments, each with 204 men, were formed for mountain warfare in Italy, the West Balkans and



Rumania, and by Apr 1917 there were 72 of these (7–8, 201–247, 249–255, 263–265; 9, 248, 262 Bavarian), attached to the Alpenkorps and other divisions. Unlike other MG units they wore the M1915 grey-green Light Infantry (Bavaria, field-grey) uniform with the infantry spiked helmet and mountain troops' breeches, ankle boots and rucksacks. From 21 Aug 1915, 40 battalions (211–250) wore an experimental field-grey felt spikeless helmet with a battalion number shield, replaced on 17 Apr 1917 by a plate.

In Jan 1916, 200 élite Machine Gun Marksman Troops were formed, and in Sept 1916 they were organised into 83 detachments (1–79; 1–4 Bavarian) to be allocated to individual corps and divisions. From 8 Feb 1916 they wore M1915 infantry uniforms with the section or battalion number on shoulder boards and straps. A special sleeve badge – showing a brass MG08 machine gun on a field-grey oval with a brass edging representing an ammunition-belt – was issued to enlisted men, and to officers from 21 Aug 1917.

GENERAL OFFICERS & GENERAL STAFF⁵

General officers wore the M1915 officers' peaked field cap. The M1915 field-grey field tunic was cut like the infantry officers' tunic but with concealed breast pockets with external scalloped flaps, red collar and cuff piping, matt gold-plated buttons showing a crown, and dark field-grey collar patches with matt gold 'Alt Larisch' embroidery. Bavarian generals had silver buttons, field-grey collar patches and silver/light blue collar cord; Mecklenburg-Schwerin generals wore silver buttons and silver laurel-leaf collar embroidery. The M1914 grey field-breeches had red outseam piping and stripes (*Lampassen*).

The M1915/1916 field-grey undress tunic had red collar patches with bright gold Alt Larisch embroidery and red piping. Bavarian generals had silver buttons, silver cuff and collar embroidery and silver/light blue cord; and Mecklenburg-Schwerin generals, silver buttons and silver laurel-leaf cuff and collar embroidery. The M1915/1916 field-grey general officers' greatcoat was cut as for infantry officers but with matt gold-plated (Bavaria and Mecklenburg-Schwerin, silver-plated) buttons, and red front, cuff, waist pocket and back flap piping. The top two front buttons could be unfastened to display a red facing cloth lining.

General officers of the General Staff wore the general officers' uniform. Field officers and captains wore the M1915/1916 field-grey infantry field tunic with crimson pipings and shoulder board underlay, and two M1915 matt silver-grey embroidered 'Kolben' Guards braids with silver centre and end cords. The M1914 grey field breeches had crimson outseam piping and stripes, but the conspicuous M1848 adjutants' sash was replaced by the officers' waist belt.



In a rather more convincingly tactical setting, this MG08 crew are wearing M1907 infantry field tunics and M1916 assault packs. The Gefreiter gun commander carries binoculars. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

The M1915/1916 field-grey undress tunic had crimson collar patches and piping. Officers of the War Ministry wore the same uniforms but with gold Kolben embroidery and matt gold-plated buttons.

CAVALRY

Although the infantry was regarded as the most important arm of service, the cavalry retained huge social prestige and traditionally wore the most attractive uniforms. However, since mounted units were clearly unsuited to trench warfare one-third (53 regiments out of 157) were converted to 'dismounted cavalry regiments' from Aug 1916. Although the peacetime regiments retained their traditional regimental titles, this loss of status encouraged a disproportionate number of cavalrymen to volunteer for the Air Corps.

A dismounted regiment was organised as an infantry battalion with four rifle squadrons (companies) and a machine gun squadron. Three regiments formed a Dismounted Cavalry Command (regiment).

Cuirassiers were heavy cavalry originally intended to spearhead offensive operations, and comprised 17 regiments: 10 Prussian Cuirassiers (Lifeguards, Cuirassier Gds, 1–8 Cuirassiers); and seven Heavy Cavalry (*Schwere Reiter*) – three Prussian Reserve (1–3), two Saxon (Gds, Carabiniers), and two Bavarian (1–2). From 30 Dec 1916 eight regiments (Cuirassier Gds, 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 1 Pruss Res, Carabiniers) redeployed as dismounted cavalry.

On the M1915 field tunic officers wore shoulder boards with a white (Lifegds, grey) underlay, regimentally coloured inner underlay and regimental numbers or ciphers (Guards and Reserve Heavy Cavalry, plain). Enlisted men wore white shoulder straps with regimental-colour piping. Guards officers had two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with silver wire centre

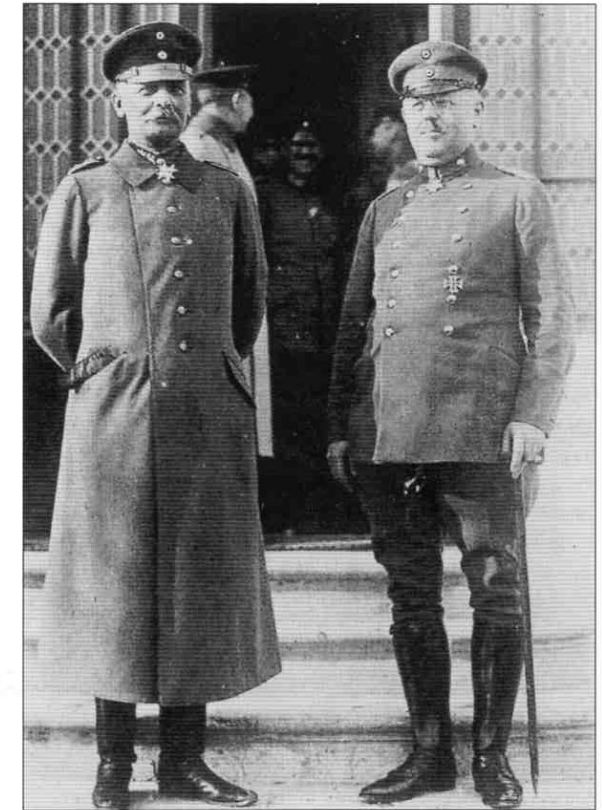
and cords; Lifeguards enlisted men had grey linen braids with a red (Cuirassier Gds, dark blue) centre stripe and white braid stripes. The officers' M1915 field-grey undress tunic had white collar patches piped in the regimental colour (Lifegds, grey outer piping).

On the M1915 field tunic **Saxon Heavy Cavalry** officers had dark blue shoulder board underlays and regimental-colour inner underlays, and a gold regimental cipher (Carabiniers, plain); enlisted men wore dark blue shoulder straps with regimental-colour piping. Officers had two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with silver wire centre and cords; enlisted men, two grey linen braids with a dark blue centre stripe and white braid stripes. The officers' M1915 undress tunic had dark blue collar patches with regimental piping (Guards, silver; Carabiniers, black).

On the M1915 field tunic **Bavarian Heavy Cavalry** officers had plain shoulder boards with lemon-yellow underlay and dark green inner underlay; enlisted men, lemon-yellow shoulder straps piped dark green. The 1st Regt had silver buttons, 2nd Regt gold. The officers' M1916 field-grey undress tunic had a field-grey collar and dark green patches, with lemon-yellow collar and patch piping.

Dragoons were originally intended to fight as mounted infantry, and comprised 38 regiments: 26 Prussian (1, 2 Gds, 1–24); 9 Prussian Reserve (Gds, 1–8); and three Württemberg (25, 26, Reserve). From 30 Dec 1916, nine regiments (2, 9, 15, 25, 26; 1, 2, 5, 7 Pruss Res) redeployed as dismounted cavalry. On the M1915 field tunic dragoon officers wore shoulder boards with a dark blue underlay and regimental-colour inner underlay (23, 24 Hessian Regts, dark green second inner underlay); enlisted men wore dark blue shoulder straps with regimental-colour piping. Officers of the six élite regiments (1, 2 Gds, 17, 18, 23, 25) had two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with silver (2 Gds, 18, 23, 25) or gold (1 Gds, 17) wire centre and cords; enlisted men had grey linen braids with a red (18, black) centre stripe and white (2 Gds, 18, 23, 25) or yellow (1 Gds, 17) braid stripes. The officers' M1915 field-grey undress tunic had dark blue collar patches piped in the regimental colour.

Hussars were light cavalry undertaking reconnaissance, outpost and skirmishing duties, originally wearing traditional Hungarian-style uniforms. They comprised 30 regiments: 18 Prussian (Lifegds Hussars, 1–17); eight Prussian Reserve (1, 2, 4–9); three Saxon (18–20), and the Saxon Reserve Regiment. From 30 Dec 1916 seven regiments (8, 9, 11–13; 1, 2 Pruss Res) redeployed as dismounted cavalry. 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 wide regimental-colour subalterns' shoulder boards with yellow braid unit ciphers, or white or yellow (reversed button-colour) numbers. Also, perhaps due



Gen der Inf Erich von Falkenhayn (left), Chief of the General Staff for two years from September 1914, who was the architect of the German attack on Verdun and of the terribly costly doctrine of the battle of attrition. He continued to serve in subordinate army commands in the Balkans and Middle East after his replacement by Hindenburg in August 1916. Here, in spring 1916, he wears the M1915 standard field-grey greatcoat and his *Pour le Mérite* neck decoration. His companion, an Oberst of the General Staff, wears the M1915 *Litewka* undress tunic, and breeches with *Lampassen* stripes and piping in the style of general officers but in staff corps crimson rather than generals' brighter 'poppy-red'. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

to an official oversight, officers retained button-colour (enlisted men, white or yellow) braid on the seams and seat of their breeches and trousers. Lifeguard Hussar officers had two matt silver-grey Guards collar braids with a gold wire centre and cords; enlisted men, grey linen braids with a red centre stripe and yellow braid stripes. The officers' M1915 field-grey undress tunic had regimental-colour collar patches.

Lancers were light cavalry performing essentially the same duties as hussars, but wore traditional Polish-style uniforms. They comprised 34 regiments: 19 Prussian (1–3 Gds, 1–16); seven Prussian Reserve (Gds, 1–6); three Saxon (17–18, 21) and Saxon Reserve Regt; two Württemberg (19–20); and two Bavarian (1, 2 Bavarian). Of these, 13 regiments (1, 3 Gds; 3–5, 9, 11,

15, 21; 4, 5, 9, Saxon Res) redeployed as dismounted cavalry from 2 Oct 1916. 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 shoulder straps with dark green strap piping. Officers of the three Prussian Guards regiments had two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with silver (1, 3 Gds) or gold (2 Gds) wire centre and cords; enlisted men, grey linen braids with a red (1, 2 Gds) or yellow (3 Gds) centre stripe and white (1, 3 Gds) or yellow (2 Gds) braid stripes. The officers' M1915 field-grey undress tunic had red (Bavaria, dark green) collar patches with regimental (Bavaria, crimson) piping.

Prussian and Bavarian Light Horse were light cavalry performing skirmishing and mounted liaison duties. They comprised 25 regiments: 13 Prussian (1-13), one Prussian Reserve (1); eight Bavarian (1-8), and three Bavarian Reserve Cavalry (1, 5, 6). Their wartime value for mounted liaison meant that only four regiments (2, 6, 13 Prussian; 5 Bav Res) redeployed as dismounted cavalry from 2 Oct 1916. On the M1915 grey-green field tunic with a dark grey-green collar, Prussian officers wore shoulder boards with a green underlay and regimental-colour inner underlay; enlisted men, green shoulder- straps with regimental-colour piping. The officers' M1915 field-grey undress tunic had green collar patches with regimental-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-colour underlay and a dark green inner underlay; enlisted men had plain regimental-colour shoulder straps with dark green piping. The officers' M1916 field-grey undress tunic had dark green collar patches with regimental-colour piping.

In Sept and Oct 1915, eight **war-raised cavalry regiments** (84-89, 93, 94) were formed, mainly from Ersatz, Landwehr and Landsturm squadrons, and allocated to eight newly formed infantry divisions (84, 86-89 Inf; 14, 16, 85 Landwehr). They wore M1915 Dragoon field uniforms, officers having shoulder boards with a dark blue underlay and a white inner underlay; enlisted men wore dark blue shoulder straps with white piping. In Sept 1916 the 86th Regt was disbanded and the other seven regiments redeployed as dismounted cavalry.

Some of the 57 **Landwehr** cavalry squadrons were formed into five regiments - two (1, 2) on 2 Aug 1914 and three (90-92) on 7 Aug 1915 - for three Landwehr infantry divisions (1, 10, 11). Each squadron wore the field uniform of their 'parent' Dragoon, Hussar, Lancer or Prussian Light Horse regiment. From 16 Aug 1916 all five redeployed as dismounted cavalry, and in Oct 1916 adopted M1915 Dragoon uniforms.

ARTILLERY

Field Artillery regiments provided supporting firepower for divisions and usually carried the divisional number. In late 1916 a third battalion was added to all regiments, although some increased to four or even five battalions,

(continued on page 33)



This Gefreiter of Lancers on the Eastern Front, 1916, wears the M1916 helmet with M1915 gas mask and M1908 enlisted men's tunic (Ulanka), and carries a standard M1893 cavalry lance. Obsolete on the Western Front, horsed cavalry was still valuable in the more fluid operations on the Eastern and Rumanian fronts. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

FULL DRESS UNIFORM

- 1: *Generalleutnant*, Bavarian Army; Munich, 1916
- 2: *Oberjäger*, 6th Light Inf Regt; Galicia, August 1916
- 3: *Major*, 4th Foot Guards; Lassigny, Artois front, March 1916



WESTERN FRONT, 1915-16

- 1: *Musketier*, 87th Landwehr Regt; Cernay, Lorraine, September 1915
- 2: *Leutnant*, 44th Flying Bn; Champagne front, October 1915
- 3: *Wachtmeister*, 50th Reserve Field Artillery Regt; Neuville-St-Vaast, Artois front, January 1916



VERDUN, 1916

- 1: *Sergeant*, 115th Life-Grenadier Regt; Beaumont, February 1916
- 2: *Gefreiter*, Reserve Engineer Guards Regt; Souville, September 1916
- 3: *Feldwebel*, 200th Bavarian Mortar Co; Fort Douaumont, October 1916



THE SOMME, 1916

- 1: *Schütze*, 1st Bavarian MG Marksman Detachment; Morval, September 1916
- 2: *Sergeant*, 62nd Inf Regt; Hardecourt, July 1916
- 3: *Rittmeister*, 20th Hussar Regt; Deniecourt, August 1916



STORM TROOPS

- 1: *Pionier*, 5th Assault Bn (Rohr); Verdun, June 1916
- 2: *Grenadier*, 11th Assault Bn; NW Ukraine, February 1917
- 3: *Gefreiter*, 108th Rifle Regt; Somme, July 1916



WEST BALKAN FRONT

- 1: *Gefreiter*, 231st Mountain MG Bn; Serbia, September 1915
- 2: *Gefreiter*, 3rd Light Inf Regt; Serbia, September 1915
- 3: *Unteroffizier*, 115th Motor Transport Column; Macedonia, September 1916



EASTERN FRONT

- 1: *Kanonier*, 55th Reserve Artillery Regt; Lithuania, January 1916
- 2: *Leutnant*, Fusilier Guards Regt; Ukraine, August 1916
- 3: *Generalmajor*, 1st Reserve Div; Ukraine, August 1916



RUMANIA

- 1: *Sanitätsgefreiter*, 52nd Corps Medical Co; Silistria, September 1916
 2: *Leutnant*, 182nd Inf Regt; Focsani, January 1917
 3: *Oberleutnant*, Württemberg Mountain Bn; Putna River, February 1917



1916: field artillery drivers hauling guns behind the Western Front, but evidently still within artillery range. They wear M1915 gas masks and M1915 field tunics, while their teams are fitted with special horse gas masks. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



and each battalion had a company-status munitions column. By Apr 1917 there were 204 regiments for the Guards, infantry and cavalry divisions: 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).

On the M1915/1916 field-grey field tunic officers wore shoulder boards with a red underlay; six regiments added a regimental-colour inner underlay - white (1 Gds, 12, 32), lemon-yellow (3, 7 Gds), or light blue (4 Gds). Unit insignia for Guards regiments comprised different flaming grenade 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 listed regiments adding a coloured piping), with yellow cloth unit insignia. 1st-5th Artillery Guards officers had two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with gold wire centre and cords; enlisted men, grey linen braids with a black centre stripe and yellow braid stripes. 6th and 7th Artillery Guards officers had one Old Prussian matt silver-grey embroidered collar braid with a gold centre cord; enlisted men, a grey linen braid with a yellow centre cord. The officers' M1915/1916 field-grey undress tunic had red collar patches.

There were also 57 **Reserve regiments** for the Reserve divisions. From late 1916 each regiment had three battalions and three munitions columns. There were 45 Prussian (1, 3 Gds; 1-70 series, 239); four Saxon (23, 24, 32, 53); three Württemberg (26, 27, 54); and seven Bavarian (1, 5, 6, 8, 9-11) regiments. They wore the regular M1915/1916 field uniform; 1st and 3rd Reserve Artillery Guards wore a triple-flamed shoulder board or strap grenade badge, inner underlay or strap piping (1st, white; 3rd, lemon-yellow) and, together with the 63rd Regt, Guards collar braids. There were also 22 **Landwehr regiments**, some allocated to the Landwehr

divisions and wearing the field uniform of their parent line regiments: 16 Prussian (3-5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 250-256, 258); one Saxon (19); two Württemberg (1, 2); and two Bavarian (1, 2, 6).

The 21 **Mountain Artillery batteries** were grouped consecutively in threes into six battalions (1-5, 7): 15 Prussian (1-5, 9, 11, 14-21); two Württemberg (6, 13); and four Bavarian (7, 8, 10, 12). Prussian and Bavarian troops wore the M1914 field-grey ski-cap with black crown piping and a yellow cloth (officers, silk-embroidered) triple-flamed grenade badge on the left side, replaced on 21 Jan 1916 by standard field artillery headgear. From 18 March 1917 unit insignia on the M1915/1916 field tunic comprised a flaming grenade/'GA'/ battery number. Mountain ankle boots and puttees were also worn. The Württemberg batteries wore the M1914 ski Litewka with black collar piping and field-grey shoulder straps with black unit insignia.

Infantry Gun batteries numbered 1-50, each with three officers and 100 men, were formed in 1916 to give close support to infantry attacks. Personnel wore field artillery uniforms and, from 18 March 1917, unit insignia comprising a flaming grenade/'JG' or 'IG'/ battery number. In Jan 1917 **Close Combat batteries** numbered 201-250 were formed as anti-tank units, but in June 1917 converted to infantry gun batteries. Their unit insignia was a flaming grenade/'NG'/ battery number.

Ordnance officers and senior NCOs and TQMSs were artillery armourers, wearing M1915/1916 field artillery uniforms. Officers wore plain shoulder boards with a black velvet underlay, NCOs plain black shoulder straps piped red. **Artificer** officers and senior NCOs and TQMSs, responsible for artillery ammunition, added a gold-plated 'F' to their shoulder boards or straps.

The **Heavy Artillery** provided field armies with heavy fire support. By late 1916 a regiment comprised

three to four battalions, consisting of heavy field howitzer battalions (25 officers, 900 men), each with four 15cm batteries; and heavy trench mortar battalions (14 officers, 520 men), each with two 21cm batteries, supported by light munitions columns. Trench warfare led to a greater proportional expansion of the Heavy Artillery than of any other branch. There were 37 regiments: 28 Prussian (1-3 Gds, 1-11, 14-18, 20-28); two Saxon (12, 19); one Württemberg (13); and six Bavarian (1-6). Regiments never operated as units, but as 135 independent battalions (21-407 series, 10-29 Bavarian series), with administrative support from the regimental staffs (joined Jan 1916-Feb 1917 by about 40 staffs: 101-125, 203-225 series). There were a further 651 independent batteries (11-796 series), each with eight officers and 200 men, later reorganised into independent battalions.

On the M1915/1916 field-grey field tunic officers wore shoulder boards with a golden-yellow underlay (3rd Gds, 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 regimental number only; for independent battalions, the parent regimental number; and from 1 March 1916 independent batteries wore their battery number. Enlisted men had golden-yellow shoulder straps with red cloth unit insignia. Guards officers had two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with gold wire centre and cords; enlisted men, grey linen braids with a black centre stripe and yellow braid stripes. Officers wore the field artillery M1915/1916 field-grey undress tunic.

There were also 26 **Reserve regiments**: 20 Prussian (1, 2 Gds; 1-11, 13-18, 20); two Saxon (12, 19); and four Bavarian (1-3, 6); plus 10 Reserve battalions (22-31), and 25 Landwehr battalions (1-4 Gds; 1-11,

13-20; 1-3 Bavarian). All wore the uniform of their parent regiment.

TECHNICAL TROOPS

Engineers

Field Engineers carried out combat engineering duties. By Apr 1917 there were about 238 divisional battalions (Gds, 1-30, 38-519 series; 5-26 Bavarian series), and about 400 independent companies (99-116, 183-423 series; 1-18, 19-28 Bavarian). The nine regiments formed in Aug 1914 (18-20, 23-25, 29-31; Bavarian Regt) were disbanded in Jan 1917.

On the M1915/1916 field-grey field tunic officers had two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with a silver wire centre and cords. Their shoulder boards had black underlay and a red inner underlay, the unit insignia being the battalion number (Gds, none; 12th, 22nd Saxon, crossed pick and spade above battalion number). Enlisted men of the Engineer Guards Bn had grey linen braids with a black centre stripe and white braid stripes, and black shoulder straps piped red, with red unit insignia. The officers' M1915/1916 field-grey undress tunic had black velvet collar patches piped red.

In Apr 1915 eight **Bavarian Mining Companies** (1-8) were formed to dig tunnels and explode enemy tunnels, followed in Jan 1916 by 46 Prussian companies numbered in the general engineer company series. They wore the unit insignia of their parent battalions, but from 23 Nov 1915 the Bavarian personnel wore light blue crossed hammers above the company number on their left upper sleeves.

There were also 35 **Reserve Engineer** companies: 28 Prussian (Gds, 1-11, 14-21, 23-30); two Saxon (12, 22); one Württemberg (13); and four Bavarian (1-4), wearing the uniform of their parent battalion. In Apr 1916 the élite **Guards Reserve Engineer Regt** was formed with three battalions (I-III) controlling 12

flamethrower companies (1-12), allocated to various field armies. Personnel wore the Engineer Guards Bn uniform with two collar braids; and on 28 July 1916, as a special distinction, officers were awarded a silver wire embroidered skull or 'death's-head' (Totenkopf) badge on a field-grey oval patch, worn above the left cuff of the M1910, simplified M1907 and M1915 tunics. Enlisted men wore a light grey skull on a field-grey oval patch above the cuffs of the M1907 and simplified M1907 tunics but on the M1915 cuff. This badge earned the regiment the nickname 'Death's-Head Engineers'.

Fortress Engineer officers supervising fortifications wore the M1915/1916 engineers' field uniform with two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with a silver wire centre and cords, and shoulder boards with the gold-plated Roman inspectorate number, on a black velvet underlay and red cloth inner underlay.

In Oct 1915 all existing **Mortar units** were reorganised. By Apr 1917 there were 13 Mortar Battalions (I-XIII) in General Reserve, available to reinforce particular sectors at need, each battalion having 30 officers and 1,000 men in four mortar companies (each with six heavy and four light trench mortars), one signals and one motor transport company. The other troops were formed into about 260 mortar companies (1-58, 83-123, 161-500 series; 1-16, 100, 200-209, 230, 239, 301-306 Bavarian series), with 10 officers and 305 men manning three heavy, six medium and 12 light mortars. They wore M1915 engineers' uniform; on 5 Oct 1915 the distinctive oval sleeve badges were replaced with new unit insignia - for officers, a gold-plated 'MW' on the shoulder boards, for enlisted ranks a red 'MW' with the Roman battalion number or Arabic company number, on the black shoulder straps piped in red.

Communications Troops

These had developed from the Engineers before 1914. On the M1915/1916 field-grey engineers' field tunic, officers wore shoulder boards with a light grey underlay, and enlisted men light grey shoulder straps with red unit insignia. Entitled officers wore two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with a silver wire centre and cords, while entitled enlisted men had grey linen braids with a black centre stripe and white braid stripes. The officers' M1915/1916 field-grey undress tunic had light grey collar patches.

Railway Engineers transported combat troops between the Western, Eastern, Salonika and Rumanian Fronts, enabling a rapid deployment of reinforcements to threatened sectors. After 1914 the six peacetime rail transport units (1-3 Rgts, 4 Bn, Bavarian Bn, Traffic Bn) were vastly expanded to form new mainly Prussian and Bavarian units. There were 127 200-man Railway Traffic Cos (1-100, 201-209; 1-13 Bavarian; 1-4 Fortress),



Enlisted men from the 8th Engineer Bn relax off duty on a steel half-pontoon from the divisional pontoon-bridging train. Some have the M1915 peakless field cap - with black band and red piping - pulled fashionably over one ear. Their simplified M1907 or M1915 field tunics have M1915 black shoulder straps bearing a red battalion number and piping. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

which drove the trains to railheads; and to transport them from there to the front lines, 48 600-man Field Traffic Bns (1-4, 10-53), 28 160-man companies (101-128), and five 150-man Cable Car Detachments (1-3; 1, 2 Bavarian). Meanwhile 121 300-man Railway Construction Cos (1-34; 1-49 Reserve; 1-9, 200-205 Landwehr; Bavarian units) laid and repaired track. On the M1915 field-grey field tunic Prussian, Saxon and Württemberg officers and enlisted men wore two Guards collar braids and shoulder board/strap unit insignia of the pre-war parent units - 'E/1-4'. Bavarian units had no collar braids and wore a simple 'E' as unit insignia. The limited unit insignia made individual unit identification impossible.

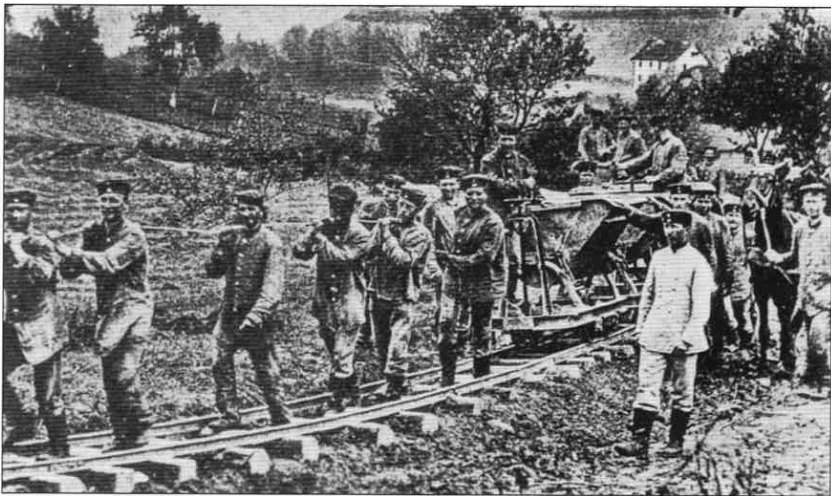
Signals Troops ensured radio communications between units, and were organised in company-sized detachments. By Apr 1917 there were 30 Army Radio Bns (1-15), each with 10 officers and 280 men, two per Army, connecting armies and corps. Twenty-seven Group Radio Bns (Guards; 1-21, 34, 36; 1-3 Bavarian) and 28 Reserve Radio Bns (Guards; 1, 3-10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 22-27, 38-41, 1-3 Bavarian), each with eight officers and 180 men, handled connections between corps and divisions. After Oct 1915, 251 Divisional Radio Bns and Wireless Bns (1-616 series, 1-14 Bavarian series) liaised between divisions and regiments. On the M1915/1916 field uniform all Signals personnel wore the shoulder board/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. Again, these limited insignia made individual unit identification impossible. All ranks therefore wore on the left upper sleeve yellow chain-stitched insignia on a red cloth oval; from Dec 1915,



Heavy artillery crew drilling with a 21cm 'heavy mortar' (howitzer) on the Eastern Front, early 1917. All are wearing peakless field caps with a black band and red piping. The gunner (first left) wears an M1907 field tunic, the Obergefreiter beside him a simplified M1907 tunic with field-grey puttees, and the right-hand man an M1915 tunic. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



A crew from a trench mortar company drill with a 7.6cm light mortar in a weapons pit, 1916. Their peakless field caps have field-grey band covers. The engineer at left has an M1915 field tunic, his comrade a simplified M1907 tunic. Both have M1915 black shoulder straps piped red, with 'MW' for *Minenwerfer* in red chain stitch. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



Western Front, 1916: railway engineers building one of the light tracks which allowed reinforcements and ammunition to be transported efficiently up to the line. They wear M1915 peakless engineer field caps, with M1915 field-grey linen drill fatigue uniforms; but note that all wear unofficially the longer NCO tunic instead of the less practical enlisted men's waist-length jacket. Note also the non-standard double-breasted fatigue tunic, in M1895 off-white linen, worn by the supervisor (probably an NCO) in the right foreground. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

yellow on a field-grey oval; from Oct 1916, red on a light grey oval. These sleeve insignia indicated the army, corps or divisional number – 'T/Roman number' (Army Radio Bns); 'F/Arabic number' (Group, Reserve and Divisional Bns).

The **Motor Transport Corps** manned staff cars and supply lorries organised into company-sized columns. From March 1915 there were 319 Army Rear Area Motor Columns (1–130, 171–384 series), each with two officers and 60 men; 26 Rear Area Motor Companies (1–23, 30, 51–52); about 70 Corps Motor Columns (abolished Dec 1916); and 251 30-man 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' insignia on shoulder boards/straps. All motor transport units wore a white armband on the left upper sleeve (abolished 10 Dec 1915) with the unit identity in black letters, e.g. 'A.K.K.I.' etc. – Army Columns; 'K.K.K.I.'

etc. – Corps Columns; 'D.K.K.I.' etc. – Divisional Columns. 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 twill summer uniform was also worn, and from Sept 1915 a field-grey rubber raincoat. Personnel of the **Motorcycle battalions** wore the same uniform with, from Aug 1915, a dull brass motorcycle collar patch badge on the *Litewka* and, from Oct 1916, a black leather crash helmet.

Air Service

On 8 Oct 1916 the Air Corps, under Oberstleutnant Hermann Thomsen (later 'von der Lieth-Thomsen'), left the Communication troops and was awarded semi-independent status within the Army as the Air Service (*Luftstreitkräfte*), under GenLt Ernst von Hoeppner, with Thomsen remaining as Chief of Staff.

Motorcycle detachment despatch riders on an exercise with an officer, spring 1917. They wear M1915 black leather crash-helmets with imperial and state cockades on the front, M1915 gas masks, M1912 black leather *Litewkas* and trousers with marching boots, and carry despatch cases. The officer wears the M1915 field-grey greatcoat, but has unofficially added M1915 officers' Guards double braids to its collar. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



By April 1917 the Flying Troops included nine 'single-seater battle squadrons' (1–9), for home fighter defence; and from Aug 1916, 37 fighter squadrons (1–37), each squadron (*Jagdstaffel*) having 17 officers and 125 men, operating 'D-type' fighters. The tactical bomber force comprised OHL Bomber Groups 1–4, each having six squadrons numbered sequentially 1–24, and having 86 officers and 550 men operating 'G-Type' twin-engined bombers. There were also four 'Giant Aircraft Detachments' (500–503) with 'R-Type' heavy bombers. The 83 Field Flying Detachments, numbered 1–74 and 1b–9b, were reorganised on 1 Jan 1917 into 'Flying Detachments' 1–48, carrying out battlefield reconnaissance with 'C-Type' reconnaissance machines and having 15 officers and 175 men. There were also 93 Artillery Spotter Detachments (201–298 series; 101–103 Bavarian), each with 20 officers and 185 men. From January 1917 there were 30 'Protection Squadrons' (1–30) escorting artillery spotters with 'CL-Type' aircraft, each squadron having two officers and 80 men.

On the M1915/1916 field tunic officers wore a light grey shoulder board underlay and a gold-plated winged propeller as branch 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. To enhance the limited identification possible from these insignia, some individual units wore on the left upper sleeve of the field tunic and greatcoat red chain-stitched insignia on a light grey cloth oval: bomber units, the group number above the squadron number – 'I–IV/ 1–24'; flying detachments – 'F/Arabic detachment number' (Bavaria, 'F' only). On the collar officers wore two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards braids with a silver wire centre and cords, while enlisted men had one grey linen Guards braid with a white centre stripe (Bavaria, two braids with a black centre stripe and white braid stripes; war-raised Bavarian units, plain collar). Officers seconded to the Air Service

(usually cavalrymen) wore their original uniforms with a gold-plated winged propeller on their shoulder boards. The officers' M1915/1916 field-grey undress tunic had light grey collar patches with piping in the colours of the five pre-war battalions: 1st Bn, white; 2nd, red; 3rd, lemon-yellow; 4th, light blue; Bavarian, no piping.

Airship personnel comprised six airship battalions (1–5 Prussian; Bavarian Detachment), which were disbanded on 2 Aug 1914 to form wartime units. Each of the 22 Airship Troops (3–6, 8–24; 1 Bavarian) had 10 officers and 270 men manning reconnaissance and bomber airships; these proved almost defenceless



1917: a subaltern seconded to the Air Service, wearing an officers' M1915 peaked field cap and a well-cut M1915 field tunic. On his left breast he wears the Iron Cross 1st Class and the M1914 Prussian air observer's qualification badge. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



Without even the degree of warmth generated by an aeroplane engine, the crews of observation balloons needed heavy clothing to protect them from the intense cold at altitude. The subaltern at left wears a French 'Roold' leather helmet, M1913 goggles, M1912 motor transport troops' issue double-breasted black leather *Litewka* with a fur collar, field-grey high-waisted trousers, fur-lined leggings, and fur gloves tied by a cord around his neck. His comrade wears the M1915 half-length coat, as in the photograph of Lt Franckl on page 44. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

against enemy fighters, leading to their disbandment in Jan 1917. There were 54 Field Airship Detachments (1-46; 1-8 Bavarian), each with 10 officers and 270 men, operating **tethered balloons** for aerial photography and artillery spotting. Of these 45 (1-45) were reorganized on 3 March 1917 into 158 independent Balloon Platoons (1-112; 1-23, 201-223 Bavarian), each platoon having three officers and 110 men. On the M1915/1916 field tunic officers wore a light grey shoulder board underlay and a gold-plated gothic 'L' as branch insignia. Enlisted men had light grey shoulder straps with 'L/1-5' (Bavaria, no number) in red chain stitch. Officers of the 1st and 2nd Airship Bns wore two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with a silver wire centre and cords, while enlisted men had two grey linen braids with a black centre stripe. NCO airship helmsmen and mechanics wore black shoulder straps with a gold-plated 'L', and on the upper left sleeve a black cloth oval with a white silk embroidered ship's wheel or propeller in a red inner edging.

Supply Troops

On 2 Aug 1914 the 25 pre-war Corps Supply battalions (Gds, 1-21; 1-3 Bav) and the 2nd Guards Bn (formed Dec 1915) became depot battalions, providing personnel for 277 divisional echelon staffs (1-13 Gds, 1-555 series; 1-28 Bavarian series), allocated three per corps, and each supervising 17 company-sized units numbered within each corps. Seven company-sized horse-drawn vehicle park columns transported rations and equipment from the railhead to the six supply (*Proviant*) columns for delivery to the front line. Two field bakery columns supplied bread, while two remount depots ensured a constant supply of draught horses. Between December 1916 and April 1917 these units had been placed under Army command and numbered sequentially: 180 supply columns (1-156, 201-203; 1-25 Bavarian); 444 vehicle park columns (1-319, 409-459, 601-842; 1-41 Bavarian); 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 Bavarian); and 140 remount depots (1-178, 201-217, 251, 301-315; 1-22 Bavarian). They were grouped tactically under 33 Army Supply Corps Commanders (1-30, 1-3 Bavarian).

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 officers (Gds Corps) wore two matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with a gold (1st Bn) or silver (2nd Bn) wire centre and cord; enlisted men, two grey linen braids with a mid-blue centre stripe and white braid stripes. Officers wore mid-blue shoulder board underlay and gold-plated unit insignia, enlisted men mid-blue shoulder straps and red cloth unit insignia. All supply columns within each of the 23 remaining pre-war corps, 26 remaining Reserve corps, 15 special corps and 24 independent divisions (Alpenkorps; 50-123 Prussian series; 10, 11 Bavarian) wore the Arabic corps or divisional number (Gds Corps, plain shoulder boards/straps) as unit insignia. From 21 Apr 1917 the individual column or depot number was adopted. The officers' M1915/1916 field-grey undress tunic had mid-blue collar patches.

Medical and Veterinary Corps

The **Medical Corps** formed 198 medical companies, three per corps, designated '1-3/Corps number'; and about 80 Reserve companies for Reserve corps and Landwehr divisions. In Dec 1916 all 314 companies were numbered consecutively (1-86, 101-123, 201-278, 300-301, 401-420, 501-576, 601-644 series; 1-30 Bavarian series). Of these, 251 were allocated to the divisions and the rest joined the Army HQs. By Apr 1917 the company had been reduced to 271 men - nine officers, nine NCOs, 208 stretcher-bearers, eight orderlies and 37 supply corps drivers. There were 792 field hospitals, 12 per corps, designated

'1-12 /Corps number'; about six Reserve hospitals per Reserve corps, and four per Landwehr division. In Dec 1916 the 502 hospitals were numbered consecutively (1-532 series; 1-5 Bavarian) and allocated two per division. By Apr 1917 a hospital had nine officers and officials and about 75 men, including stretcher-bearers and orderlies. There were also two to six officers attached to each regiment and independent battalion HQ.

On the M1915/1916 field-grey field tunic general officers had two matt gold embroidered Guards collar braids with a gold wire centre and cords, on dark blue velvet patches piped red. Other officers had matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with a gold wire centre and cord on dark blue velvet undress collar patches piped red. The M1915 matt gold or matt silver aluminium wire shoulder boards with dark blue velvet underlay preserved the distinctive M1910 medical officers' pattern with a gold-plated Aesculapius staff. Stretcher-bearers wore the M1915 peaked field cap with a crimson band and piping; the M1915/1916 field tunic had nickel-plated buttons, and crimson shoulder straps with yellow chain-stitched unit insignia. Bearers in companies and hospitals in the Guard Corps wore two grey linen Guards collar braids with a crimson centre stripe and white braid stripes. Medical orderlies had a dark blue cap band with light blue piping, dull brass buttons, and dark blue shoulder straps with yellow chain-stitched unit insignia. Companies and hospitals in each of the 23 remaining pre-war corps, 26 remaining Reserve corps, 15 special corps and 24 independent divisions (Alpenkorps; 50-123 Prussian series; 10, 11 Bavarian) wore the Arabic corps or divisional number (Gds Corps, plain shoulder boards/straps) as unit insignia. From 21 Apr 1917 the individual unit number was adopted. All medical personnel wore a red cross on a white armband on the upper left sleeve. The medical general officers' M1915/1916 field-grey undress tunic had two gold embroidered Guards braids on deep dark blue velvet collar patches piped red; other officers, normal dark blue velvet undress collar patches piped red.

By Feb 1915 the officer-only **Veterinary Corps** had formed 472 veterinary hospitals: 288 divisional and 77 rear area hospitals (1-5 Gds; 1-570 series; 1-36, 41 Bavarian); 27 Army HQ hospitals (571-594; 40,50,51 Bavarian); and 80 stationary hospitals (1-113 series). A veterinary hospital comprised two veterinary officers and 75 supply corps personnel. There were also five veterinary officers attached to each cavalry regiment, four to an artillery regiment and one to a signals detachment and a supply corps remount depot. On the M1915/1916 field-grey field tunic officers had matt silver-grey embroidered Guards collar braids with a gold wire centre and cord, on black patches piped crimson. The M1915 matt silver aluminium wire



Obergeneralarzt (Surgeon Brigadier) Professor Dr von Kern, commanding German medical units on the Eastern Front. He wears the M1915 field tunic, with matt gold Guards collar braids on dark blue velvet patches piped red. The neck decoration is the Order of the Red Eagle with Crown and Swords. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

shoulder boards with crimson underlay preserved the distinctive M1910 veterinary officers' pattern with a gold-plated snake badge. The supply corps personnel attached to veterinary hospitals wore the M1915/1916 field uniform with the Arabic hospital number in red chain stitch on mid-blue shoulder straps. The M1915/1916 field-grey undress tunic had crimson collar piping and black patches piped crimson.

Labour units

There were 219 **Reinforcement battalions** (1-200 Prussian; 1-19 Bavarian), each with two to four companies, a company having three officers and 520 men. The equivalent to the British Army Pioneer Corps, these units dug fortifications behind the front line. From 21 Oct 1915 they were issued M1915/1916 field-grey field uniforms with the M1915 peakless field cap, replaced on 6 July 1916 by the M1915 enlisted men's peaked field cap, with a field-grey band and piping. On 19 May 1916 Bavarian units (Prussia, 12 Jan 1917) replaced their white linen M1915 battalion armband on the right upper sleeve with a less conspicuous field-grey band.

**Table 2: Rank Insignia of the German Army
21 September 1915 – 11 November 1918**

The insignia illustrated were worn on the officers' and enlisted men's M1915/1916 field tunics, and officers' M1915 greatcoats.

General officers (1–4, 6): large triple woven shoulder cords in matt gold – matt silver (with state colour threads) – matt gold; matt silver-plated batons, stars; red underlay not visible; plain matt gold-plated buttons.

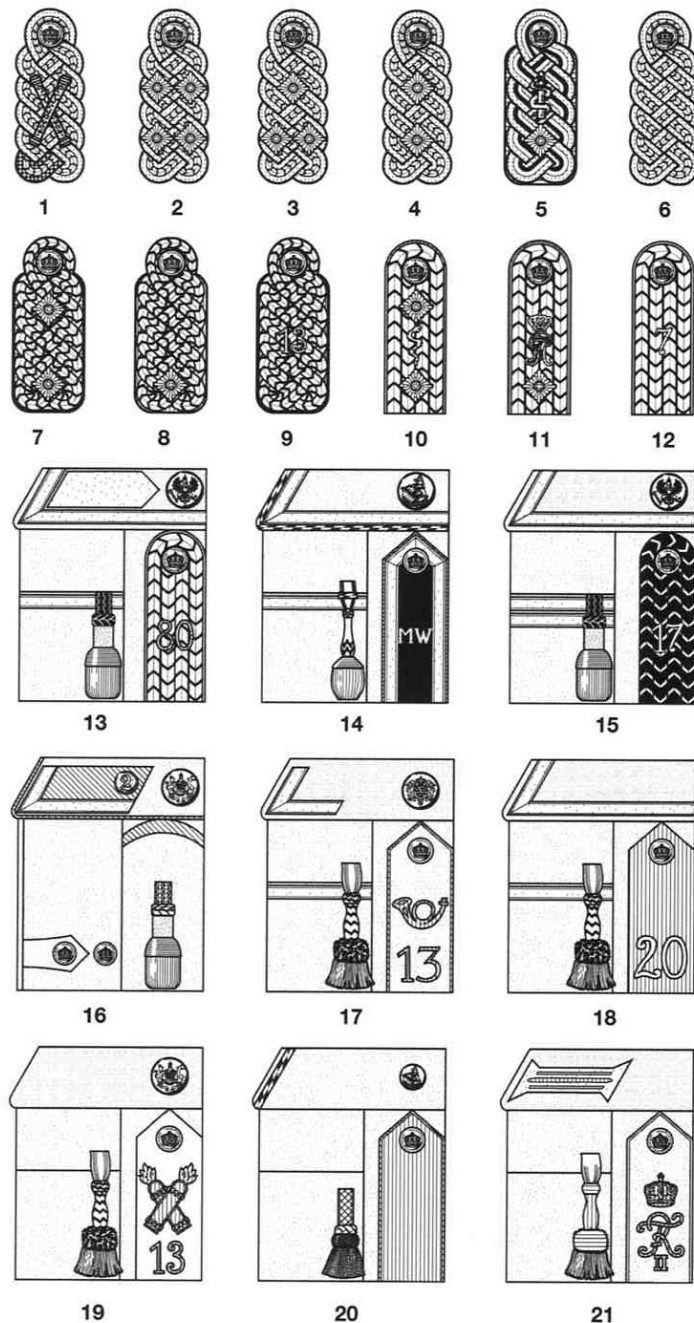
(5): woven cords, in matt gold – M1910 state colour silk (Prussia, black) – matt silver – matt gold; matt silver-plated star, matt gold-plated Aesculapius staff and buttons; blue velvet underlay.

Field officers (7–9): woven matt silver-grey aluminium wire shoulder boards, state colour threads; matt gold-plated stars and unit numbers; facing cloth underlay. **(7):** matt gold-plated buttons, blue inner, black outer underlay. **(8):** matt silver-plated buttons, crimson underlay. **(9):** matt silver-plated buttons, red inner, black outer underlay. **Captains and subalterns (10–13):** flat matt silver-grey aluminium wire shoulder boards, state colour threads; matt gold-plated stars, ciphers, unit numbers, branch badges and buttons; facing cloth underlay. **(10):** crimson underlay. **(11):** inner underlay matt silver-grey wire, white outer underlay. **(12):** white underlay. **(13):** white underlay; dark field-grey collar, grey and white wool NCO collar and cuff braid, grey linen Old Prussian collar braid, large field-grey painted state pattern collar button²; Prussian sword knot.

Senior NCOs (14–16): NCO collar and cuff braid, large field-grey painted state pattern collar button², crowned shoulder strap buttons; Prussian sword knot. **(14):** field-grey collar, light blue/white Bavarian collar braid ('cord'); black shoulder strap piped red, NCO braid edging, matt gold-plated letters, matt nickel-plated button; Bavarian sword knot. **(15):** dark field-grey collar; black wool shoulder boards with golden-yellow threads, white thread unit number, matt brass-plated button. **(16):** field-grey collar piped green; green facing-cloth collar patch with NCO braid and matt brass-plated button with company number; green facing-cloth shoulder seam padding; brass-plated cuff buttons.

Junior NCOs (17–18): NCO collar and cuff braid, large field-grey painted state pattern collar button², crowned matt nickel-plated shoulder strap button, stitched unit numbers. **(17):** dark grey-green collar, abbreviated NCO collar braid; grey-green shoulder strap piped green, red insignia; Saxon NCOs' bayonet knot. **(18):** dark field-grey collar; crimson shoulder strap, yellow unit number; Prussian NCOs' bayonet knot.

Men (19–21): Grey-painted state pattern collar button², crowned shoulder strap button; dark field-grey collar, plain cuff. **(19):** large collar button; yellow cloth shoulder strap, red insignia, matt brass-plated button; Württemberg NCOs' bayonet knot. **(20):** field-grey collar, abbreviated Bavarian collar braid, small collar button; crimson shoulder strap piped dark green, matt nickel-plated button; Bavarian sword knot. **(21):** light silver-grey double Guards collar braids with red centre stripe and white braid stripes; field-grey shoulder strap piped light blue, red insignia, matt brass-plated button; 8th Company enlisted bayonet knot.



Notes

1 Officers' M1915 shoulder board threads: Prussia – black-white; Bavaria – light blue-white; Saxony – green-white; Württemberg – black-red; Hesse – red-white; Mecklenburg – blue-red-gold.

2 State pattern collar buttons: Prussia – eagle; Bavaria – lion & shield; Saxony and Württemberg – respective coat of arms; Hesse – crown & lion; Mecklenburg-Schwerin/Strelitz – crown & badge.

Drawing by Darko Pavlovic

In Jan 1915, 56 **Road Repair companies** (1–40, 62–76, 116) were formed, each company having two engineer officers and 230 engineer NCOs, elderly Landsturm soldiers, civilians and prisoners of war; their duties involved building new roads and carrying out general repairs. The enlisted men wore the M1915 enlisted men's peakless field cap and the M1915 field-grey field tunic with, on the right upper sleeve, a white linen armband with the unit number – e.g. 'Straßenbau-Komp.33', etc. – printed in black.

Military Police

These units policed the roads and supervised the civilian populations of the occupied territories. They formed the Warsaw Government General Brigade, and 115 62-man detachments. Each of the latter had 22 seconded Prussian – and some Bavarian – Rural Police (captain, company sergeant-major, 20 sergeants), and 40 seconded cavalrymen (20 corporals, 20 lance-corporals). Each 21-man rear area detachment had seven Rural Police sergeants, seven cavalry corporals, and seven cavalry lance-corporals. They were allocated two to each corps, and one per independent division (37–122 series). The M1916 military police field uniform was not introduced until 29 June 1916. It comprised the M1860 Dragoon helmet with detachable spike, or the M1915 peaked field cap with a dark green band and red piping. The M1916 field-grey field tunic had a dark green collar piped red. Officers wore two matt gold embroidered Guards collar braids with a gold wire centre and cord,

KEY TO TABLE 2 OPPOSITE:

- 1 **Generalfeldmarschall – Württemberg**
- 2 **Generaloberst mit dem Range eines Generalfeldmarschalls – Prussia**
- 3 **Generaloberst – Saxony**
- 4 **General der Kavallerie – Bavaria (General der Infanterie)**
- 5 **Generalstabsarzt der Armee – Prussian Medical Corps (Generalleutnant)**
- 6 **Generalmajor – Mecklenburg Schwerin/Strelitz**
- 7 **Oberst – Saxon Cavalry (1 Carabinier Regt)**
- 8 **Oberstleutnant – Prussia (General Staff)**
- 9 **Major – Württemberg (13 Engineer Bn)**
- 10 **Stabsveterinär – Bavarian Veterinary Corps (Hauptmann)**
- 11 **Oberleutnant – Mecklenburg-Schwerin Infantry (I/89th Grenadier Regt)**
- 12 **Leutnant – Baden Infantry (7 Assault Bn)**
- 13 **Feldwebelleutnant – Prussian Infantry (80 Fusilier Regt)**
- 14 **Offizierstellvertreter – Bavarian Engineers (15 Light Mortar Bn)**
- 15 **Etatmäßiger Wachtmeister – Brunswick Cavalry (17 Hussar Regt)**
- 16 **Vizefeldwebel – Württemberg (Mountain Bn)**
- 17 **Sergeant – Saxon Light Infantry (13 Bn)**
- 18 **Sanitätsunteroffizier – Prussian Medical Corps (60 Company) (Unteroffizier)**
- 19 **Obergefreiter – Württemberg Artillery (13 Heavy Arty Bn)**
- 20 **Gefreiter – Bavarian Cavalry (2 Lancer Regt)**
- 21 **Grenadier – Prussian Guards (4 Gren Guards Regt)**

and shoulder boards with a dark green underlay and red inner underlay; enlisted men wore two grey linen braids with a dark green centre stripe and yellow braid stripes (lance-corporal, one braid with a yellow braid stripe), and dark green shoulder straps piped red. NCOs wore the rank insignia of their equivalent Army ranks, as in Aug 1914. The M1914 duty gorget was painted field-grey. The officers' M1915/1916 field-grey undress tunic had dark green collar patches piped red (Bavaria, no piping).

In cities and larger towns of the occupied territories corporals and lance-corporals from rear area units were seconded as Auxiliary Military Police, wearing on the left upper sleeve a white linen armband with 'M.P.' in black letters, and a gorget with 'POLIZEI/Arabic personal number'.

RANK INSIGNIA

(See also Table 2)

On 14 Oct 1915 new shorter but wider dress shoulder boards were introduced for officers for the M1915/M1916 full dress and undress tunics. General officers wore 11.5cm x 6.2cm boards, with flatter triple-woven bright gold and silver wire braid shoulder knots with silk state-colour dress V-threads, silver-plated crossed batons, and 1.5cm diameter four-pointed stars, the red cloth underlay not being visible. Medical Corps general officers had bright gold, silver and state-colour braid shoulder knots with a 0.3cm visible dark blue underlay, a bright silver-plated star, and a bright gold-plated Aesculapius staff. Other officers wore 11cm x 5.5cm boards with double-woven bright wire dress cords with silk state-colour dress V-threads – woven knots for field officers and flat braid for captains and subalterns; gold-plated 1.5cm diameter stars and 2cm-long patterned unit insignia, with a 0.3cm-wide inner underlay and a 0.3cm-wide outer underlay. Dress V-threads were: Prussia, black; Bavaria, light blue; Saxony, green; Württemberg, black/red; Hesse, red; Mecklenburg, blue/red/gold. Distinguished general officers appointed colonel-in-chief or supernumerary officer to particular regiments wore regimental uniform with general officers' shoulder knots and breeches stripes.

Enlisted men wore rank insignia on the collar, shoulder straps and cuffs of the M1915 dress and field tunics. Bright 1.6cm-wide gold or silver NCO collar lace (*Tresse*) was worn on the collar and cuff of the dress tunic, an Offizierstellvertreter adding shoulder strap lace and a Feldwebel having two cuff laces. A large 2.9cm diameter bright gold or silver button was worn on the sides of all collars down to Sergeant, plus Obergefreiter; a Gefreiter had a 2.5cm diameter button, an Unteroffizier and Musketier no button. On the field tunic lace was replaced by 1.8cm-wide grey woollen braid edged white, and the collar buttons were painted field-grey.

A group of Landwehr infantry prepare to escort British prisoners on a work detail from a POW camp at Teltow, near Berlin, 1916. They are wearing M1915 enlisted men's peaked field caps, and M1915 field tunics with the double collar braids of the parent Guards regiment. The officer (third right) can be identified by his leather leggings and pistol. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)



SELECTIVE GLOSSARY

High Command

Oberste Heeresleitung (OHL) – Supreme Command
 Militärverwaltung – Military Administration (of occupied territory)
 Erster Generalquartiermeister – First Quartermaster-General (Senior Deputy Commander)
 Oberbefehlshaber Ost – Commander-in-Chief Eastern Front
 Chef – colonel-in-chief
 Inhaber – colonel-in-chief (Bavaria, Hesse)
 à la suite – supernumerary
Arms & branches of service
 Armierungs – reinforcement (labour)
 Chevaulegers – Bavarian light horse
 Feld-Gendarmerie – military police
 Feuerwerker – artificer
 Fuß-Artillerie – heavy artillery
 Gardes du Corps – Life Guards
 Gebirgs – mountain
 Hilfs-Gendarmen – auxiliary military police
 Ingenieur – fortress engineer (officer)
 Jäger – light infantry
 Jäger zu Pferde – Prussian light horse
 Kavallerie – (1) cavalry (2) war-raised cavalry
 Kürassiere – cuirassiers
 Maschinengewehr (MG) – machine gun
 Maschinengewehr-Scharfschützen – machine gun marksmen
 Minenwerfer – mortar
 Pioniere – engineers
 Schützen – rifles

Schwere Reiter – (Bavarian and Saxon) heavy cavalry
 Train – supply corps
 Ulanen – lancers
 Verkehrstruppen – communications troops
Units
 Landwehr – territorial army
 Landsturm – home guard
 Ersatz – depot
 Heeresfront – theatre of operations, front
 Heeresgruppe – army group
 Armee – army
 Armeecabteilung (AA) – independent temporary army
 Armeegruppe (AG) – temporary army
 Armeekorps – corps
 Karpathenkorps – Carpathian Corps
 Alpenkorps – mountain corps (divisional size)
 Höherer Kavallerie-Kommandeur (HKK) – cavalry command
 Kavallerie-Schützen-Regiment – dismounted cavalry regiment
 Abteilung –
 (1) cavalry or field artillery battalion
 (2) independent company-sized detachment
 Kolonne – column
 Feld-Lazarett – field hospital
 Pferde-Lazarett – veterinary hospital
 Fuhr-Park – vehicle park
 Infanterie-Geschütz-Batterien – infantry gun batteries
 Nahkampf-Batterien – close combat batteries

Trupp – independent troop (company, platoon or section)
Assault (Storm) Troops
 Sturm-Truppen – storm troops, assault troops
 Sturm-Bataillon – assault battalion
 Sturm-Abteilung – assault detachment
 Sturm-Kompagnie – assault company *
 Sturm-Trupp – assault platoon
 Stoß-Trupp – shock platoon
Air Service
 Flieger-Truppen – flying troops (fixed-wing)
 Bombengeschwader – bomb group
 Feld-Flieger-Abteilung – field flying detachment
 Flieger-Abteilung – flying detachment
 Jagdstaffel – fighter squadron
 Flieger-Abteilung-A – artillery spotter detachment
 Schutz-Staffel – artillery spotter protection detachment
 Luftschiiffer-Truppen – airship troops
Uniform items
 Alt Larisch – general officers' collar and cuff embroidery
 Kolben – general staff officers' collar and cuff braid
 Litewka – pre-1915 undress tunic
 Kleiner Rock – M1915 officers' undress tunic
 Pickelhaube – spiked leather helmet
Ranks
 For listing see MAA 394 *The German Army in World War I (1) 1914–15*, Table 5
 (* Kompagnie = pre-1928 spelling)

THE PLATES

A: FULL DRESS UNIFORM

A1: Generalleutnant, Bavarian Army; Munich, 1916

This divisional commander at King Ludwig III's court wears the M1916 Bavarian general officers' parade uniform. The M1915 Dragoon helmet has the Bavarian coat of arms and silver-plated fittings. His M1916 field-grey full dress tunic shows M1915 Bavarian general officers' dress shoulder boards, red pipings and facings, plain silver buttons, and M1916 Bavarian 'collar cord' (actually light blue and silver or white braid); the M1916 silver *Alt Larisch* collar and cuff embroidery has replaced the Bavarian silver laurel-pattern. M1916 field-grey officers' breeches have scarlet *Lampassen*; the uniform is completed by M1915 Bavarian standard cavalry riding boots and M1907 spurs, M1896 officers' waist belt in silver and light blue brocade, and M1915 infantry officer's sword with M1896 knot. Decorations are the Military Merit Order (MVO) 3rd Class and Pour le Mérite at the throat; Maximilian-Josef Order, MVO 4th Class and Iron Cross 2nd Class chest medals; and MVO Officer's Cross and Iron Cross 1st Class pin back medals. (Erratum: the tunic collar should be solid red.)

A2: Oberjäger, 6th Light Infantry Regiment; Galicia, August 1916

This section commander from the 14th Mecklenburg-Schwerin Battalion wears the M1915 Light Infantry enlisted men's parade uniform. The M1915 shako has the distinctive quartered Mecklenburg cockade and starburst plate. The M1915 grey-green full dress tunic has a green collar, shoulder straps and Swedish cuffs, with white collar and cuff Guards braids, red piping to collar and shoulder straps, and silver NCO dress collar and cuff rank braid (*Tresse*). He wears M1914 enlisted men's grey field trousers with green outseam piping, and blackened M1866 marching boots; the M1915 enlisted men's waist belt with Mecklenburg-Schwerin buckle plate supports the M1898 bayonet with the green and silver Light Infantry NCO's knot; note also the M1894 Level 6 marksman's aiguillette and Iron Cross 2nd Class buttonhole ribbon. He carries the Gewehr 98 rifle.

A3: Major, 4th Foot Guards Regiment; Lassigny, Artois front, March 1916

This aristocratic Prussian battalion commander in the élite 1st Guards Division wears the stylish M1915 field-grey undress tunic (*Litewka*) tailored to give a fashionably tapered waist and high collar. The darker, greener collar, the front and cuffs are piped red; the infantry-white collar patches have light blue regimental piping and gold buttons; and the field shoulder boards have white outer and light blue inner underlay. His M1915 officers' peaked field cap has a scarlet band and piping with imperial and state cockades; M1914 officers' field breeches are worn with M1915 standard cavalry riding boots. Above his pin-back Iron Cross 1st Class is the prestigious Red Eagle Order 3rd Class.

B: WESTERN FRONT, 1915–16

B1: Musketier, 87th Landwehr Regiment; Cernay, Lorraine, September 1915

Landwehr personnel were usually among the last to receive new equipment, but this soldier from the 12th Bavarian Division of Armeecabteilung Gaede on the Vosges front has



A Vizefeldwebel (his rank confirmed by the officer's sword and knot) of the Bavarian 12th Infantry Regt 'Prinz Arnulf' poses proudly in a privately purchased Bavarian M1916 full dress uniform. The tunic has a red collar with Bavarian 'cord' edging and red Swedish cuffs, brass buttons, and gold NCO collar and cuff braid. He displays the Bavarian Military Merit Cross with Swords, Iron Cross 2nd Class, and Golden Military Merit Medal, and the pin-back Iron Cross 1st Class. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

the M1915 steel headpiece, a forerunner of the M1916 helmet which was mounted on a black leather skull cap to protect the top and front of the head and extended into a nasal bar. He wears the M1907 infantry field tunic, and blackened M1895 ammunition pouches supported by the strap of his M1914 bread bag. He carries a field flashlight; the M1915 gas mask in the ready position; a civilian hunting knife; and an obsolete Gewehr 88 rifle with the brass-hilted M1871 bayonet.

B2: Leutnant, 44th Flying Battalion; Champagne front, October 1915

This former troop commander of the 3rd Lancer Regiment has transferred to the 44th Flying Battalion, but retains his stylish M1910 Lancer field tunic with regimental lemon-

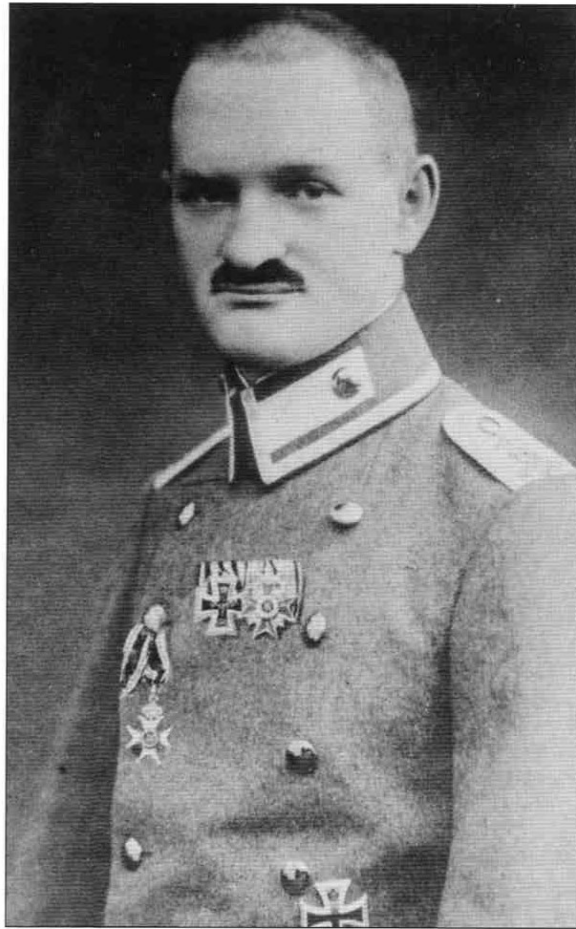


Leutnant der Reserve Wilhelm Frankl of 4th Fighter Squadron (Jasta 4) on the Somme front, September 1916. He wears the M1915 Air Corps officers' field tunic with Guards collar braids, and an M1915 aircrew's field-grey, double-breasted, six-button, half-length coat with a fleece collar. Frankl was awarded the Pour le Mérite on 12 August 1916 for eight air victories; he was killed in April 1917 after recording 19 victories. He was a Jew by birth who converted to Protestantism, so his heroism was ignored during the Third Reich, but recognised once again by the German Federal Republic in 1973.

yellow piping, which also appears on his field cap. He has added Air Corps shoulder board badges, and the battalion's left sleeve patch. He wears field-grey breeches and M1912 leather leggings with ankle boots; and the impractical M1896 officers' braid waist belt supports a P08 Luger pistol. As an air 'ace' with more than 8 'kills' he wears the prestigious Pour le Mérite decoration at the throat; note the Prussian pilot's qualification badge on his left breast.

B3: Wachtmeister, 50th Reserve Field Artillery Regiment; Neuville-St-Vaast, Artois front, January 1916

This Prussian battery sergeant-major from the 50th Reserve Division wears field artillery field uniform with the M1915 enlisted men's leather helmet; the artillery ball 'spike' has been removed, and a grey-brown M1915 cover fitted – note the green appliqué 'R' over '50'. His M1915 standard greatcoat in coarse field-grey cloth has a dark, greenish shade of field-grey collar; it retains the conspicuous M1915 enlisted shoulder straps, in red with yellow 'bomb' and regimental number, and the Wachtmeister's double black-on-white rank braids on the collar. A cross strap supports his artillery issue 'long' P08/14 Luger pistol, in its holster



Leutnant der Reserve Otto Ritter von Lanz, a company commander of the 1st Bavarian Infantry Regt 'König'; 'Ritter' was a title of aristocracy equivalent to a baronetcy. He wears the Bavarian M1916 undress tunic with field-grey collar, Bavarian collar edging, and infantry-white collar patches. His shoulder boards have white underlay and a gilt regimental cypher. He wears the Iron Cross 2nd Class and Military Merit Cross decorations, the Military Order of Maximilian-Josef from his buttonhole and the Iron Cross 1st Class. Shortly after this portrait was taken, von Lanz was killed at Douaumont, Verdun, on 12 June 1916. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

strapped to a detachable wooden shoulder stock; on his belt is a M84/98 bayonet (with the NCO's silver and black knot) instead of the obsolete sword.

C: VERDUN, 1916

C1: Sergeant, 115th Life-Grenadier Regiment (1st Grand Duchy of Hesse); Beaumont, February 1916

This section leader serving with the 25th Infantry Division, 5th Army, in the storming of Beaumont has been issued one of the first M1916 helmets. He wears the M1915 field tunic with grey NCO cuff and collar edging, which with the large button on each side of the collar denotes his rank; note the

Guards collar braids, and the red cypher of this Hessian Guards regiment on shoulder straps piped in infantry white. He wears M1915 grey trousers with red outseam piping, and has followed the common practice of wearing puttees and M1914 lace-up boots in the trenches, despite official warnings against 'trench foot'. The M1915 belt has a Hessian buckle plate and supports conventional M1909 ammunition pouches, spade and M1898 bayonet, plus a M1915 stick grenade. In the mid-war years substitution of the shorter, broader and stronger M98/05 bayonet, as originally issued to foot artillery men, was very common. The partial front view of his reduced assault pack shows the M1911 cavalry support straps.

C2: Gefreiter, Reserve Engineer Guards Regiment; Souville, September 1916

This Prussian engineer in the 5th Company still wears the M1907 enlisted engineers' field uniform with his M1916 steel helmet. His field tunic has regimental Guards braids on the collar and cuff and M1915 shoulder straps; and note the M1916 'Death's-Head Engineers' left forearm badge. On his back is the 2nd Pattern M1912 'Kleif' flamethrower, with a 3m hose and 1.9m lance, normally requiring a three-man crew.

C3: Feldwebel, 200th Bavarian Mortar Company; Fort Douaumont, October 1916

This Bavarian company sergeant-major behind the front line wears the M1916 Bavarian officers' peaked cap with M1916 officers' state cockade and a field-grey cover for the conspicuous red band. The field-grey collar of his M1916 field tunic has Bavarian 'collar cord' edging; his rank is shown by the combination of M1916 side buttons and an abbreviated L-shape of NCO Tresse, and his appointment by the double cuff braids. The engineers' red-piped black shoulder straps bear in red 'MW/200'. He carries a P08 pistol, M98/05 engineers' saw-backed bayonet with officers' knot, M1916 gas mask invisible here on the back of his belt, and his CSM's 'reporting book' tucked into his tunic. Civilian walking sticks were a common affectation.

D: THE SOMME, 1916

D1: Schütze, 1st Bavarian Machine Gun Marksman Detachment; Morval, September 1916

From September 1915 machine gun units usually wore infantry uniform. This No.5 in his crew, not in the front line, wears the M1916 Bavarian infantry uniform, with the new enlisted men's state cockade on the low visibility field-grey band fitted over the scarlet band of his field cap. His field tunic shows the Bavarian 'collar cord', and the MG Marksman's left sleeve badge introduced 19 February 1916 for Bavarian units. MG crewmen were issued the P08 pistol; his M1898 bayonet is embellished with the 2nd Troop knot in white and red. Note the wartime model machine gun drag strap; the web sling of the M1916 gas mask hidden behind his body, and an ammunition box for two 250-round belts.

D2: Sergeant, 62nd Infantry Regiment (3rd Upper Silesian); Hardecourt, July 1916

This section leader in the Prussian 12th Infantry Division defending Hardecourt is in effect the NCO in Plate C1 seen from behind. His assault pack comprises the M1914 shelter quarter wrapped around his M1915 enlisted man's greatcoat, the whole roll strapped around the M1910 mess



A Vizefeldwebel of the 109th Baden Reserve Infantry Regt, 1916. As a senior NCO he wears the M1915 officers' peaked field cap. His simplified M1907 enlisted men's field tunic has M1915 shoulder straps piped infantry-white, with the red chain-stitched regimental number. His dark field-grey collar shows abbreviated 'L'-shapes of M1907 bright silver NCO Tresse, and a nickel-plated rank button at the side. As a member of the Reserve unit of Baden's 109th Life Grenadier Regt he has retained Guards collar braids, but wears the obsolete M1907 single braid for NCOs instead of the M1915 double braid. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

tin, and attached to the M1911 cavalry pattern support straps passing over his shoulders. His M1915 belt holds, behind his left hip, the M1898 spade strapped to a M1898 bayonet with a 12th Company black and white knot; the M1915 gas mask case is attached at the rear, and behind the right hip the M1914 breadbag and M1915 water bottle. He wears the M1916 steel helmet, and M1915 field tunic with collar and cuff braid.

D3: Rittmeister, 20th Hussar Regiment (3rd Saxon); Deniecourt, August 1916

This captain of dismounted cavalry commands the 4th Squadron, which suffered heavy losses with the Saxon 32nd Infantry Division on the Somme. He wears the M1915 cavalry officers' uniform: standard M1916 helmet, M1915 field tunic, waistbelt, and Hussar officers' cloth-reinforced breeches with silver Hussar braid, standard riding boots and officers' spurs. The shoulder boards bear the gilt regimental number between the two rank pips; his ribbons are the Iron Cross 2nd Class and the pale blue and lemon-yellow of the



This group of nine troopers of a 'non-establishment' unit have formed an assault party in order to raid an enemy trench in 1916. All wear the standard infantry uniform with M1907 or simplified M1907 field tunics, M1907 trousers and marching boots, rather than the mountain trousers and boots issued to 'establishment' Sturmtruppen; cf Plate E. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

Friedrich-August Medal in bronze, and he displays the pin-back Iron Cross 1st Class. He carries civilian binoculars, a P08 pistol and M1912 map case.

E: STORM TROOPS

E1: *Pionier*, 5th Assault Battalion (Rohr); Verdun, June 1916

All companies except the artillery howitzer battery of this, the original assault battalion, retained their engineer uniforms. This Prussian private wears the M1907 engineers' field tunic, with his right sleeve rolled up ready to throw his second pattern M1913 'Kugelhandgranate'; it has leather-reinforced elbows, and black M1915 shoulder straps piped red bearing the red battalion number. Note the M1914 reinforced mountain trousers, puttees and mountain boots which were official issue for 'establishment' assault units. He wears grenade sacks made locally from the grey waterproof cotton of the M1914 bread bag; and a new pattern M1916 'alert container' holding his gas mask slung ready for use. He has two M1916 stick grenades on his belt, a M98/05 bayonet, a M1897 'long spade' (note loop to shoulder strap), and a Karabiner 98a rifle. (Erratum: Engineer buttons were silver or painted grey.)

E2: *Grenadier*, 11th Assault Battalion; North-West Ukraine, February 1917

This is a back view of a member of a Prussian assault company in the Linsingen Army Group on the Eastern Front, wearing identical equipment to the previous figure. His simplified M1907 field tunic has M1915 field-grey shoulder straps piped in infantry white and displaying a red battalion number. Note the trouser seat and knee reinforcements, and the spade in its blade cover. M1911 cavalry Y-straps were not needed to support just the M1915 water bottle and M1914 bread bag. Rifle ammunition was often carried round the neck in the ten-pocket canvas *Patronenträgergurte* bandolier.

E3: *Gefreiter*, 108th Rifle Regiment, 23rd Infantry Division; Somme, July 1916

Assault units not on the HQ establishment wore standard infantry uniform and were forbidden 'establishment' reinforced trousers, puttees and mountain boots. This Saxon soldier from the only non-Prussian rifle regiment wears the grey-green

M1915 Light Infantry field tunic, with the green and white armband worn by Saxon assault units. The sackcloth grenade bags sometimes buttoned together at the front or back corners. Note M1911 engineers' wire-cutters and a trench knife. He has wired six M1916 stick grenade heads around an intact grenade to form a 'concentrated charge'.

F: WEST BALKAN FRONT

F1: *Gefreiter*, 231st Mountain Machine Gun Battalion; Serbia, September 1915

This 'No.1' of a Prussian MG08 crew wears the M1910 Light Infantry uniform, with the experimental grey felt helmet with battalion number plate and neck guard, as issued to Mountain MG battalions in Serbia in 1915. His tunic has the battalion number on the shoulder straps, and he wears reinforced mountain breeches, puttees and mountain boots. The M1915 belt supports a P08 pistol, M1898 short bayonet with Light Infantry knot, and a M1908 binocular case.

F2: *Gefreiter*, 3rd Light Infantry Regiment; Kragujevac, Serbia, September 1915

This soldier of the 1st (Bavarian) Ski Battalion, advancing through Serbia with the Alpenkorps, carries standard infantry equipment. He wears the M1914 field-grey ski cap with green crown piping, an imperial cockade on the right side and a Bavarian cockade on the left. The field-grey M1914 'ski Litewka' (modified in 1915) has green shoulder cords; the green-piped collar has field-grey patches with a green embroidered 'S' (inspiring the nickname 'snake hunters') and the battalion number. He wears M1914 mountain trousers, field-grey puttees and M1914 laced boots. The blackened leather claw-buckle belt is unofficial; the cavalry M1911 cartridge pouches are supported by the bread bag sling, and a M98 short spade is strapped to a 98/05 bayonet frog with a red and white 2nd Company knot. He carries a rucksack and a Gewehr 98 rifle; unusually for an enlisted man, he wears a pin-back Iron Cross 1st Class.

F3: *Unteroffizier*, 115th Motor Transport Column; Macedonia, September 1916

Following civilian chauffeur fashion, this Prussian transport lorry driver is wearing black leather items: the M1912

sheepskin peaked cap with red piping and band; M1916 calfskin Litewka, with M1912 collar patches and shortened NCO collar braid on the blue cloth collar; M1912 grey calfskin shoulder straps with gilt 'K'; M1912 calfskin breeches, M1912 leggings and M1914 ankle boots. He has a P08 pistol, 84/98 bayonet with NCOs' knot, a despatch case and driving goggles.

G: EASTERN FRONT

G1: *Kanonier*, 55th Reserve Artillery Regiment; Lake Narocz, Lithuania, January 1916

This gunner on sentry duty is wearing makeshift winter clothing: a civilian sheepskin coat (photos show some made from contrasting fleeces), worn over his M1915 field uniform and field equipment. Also visible are his M1915 Prussian artillery peakless fieldcap, M1886 marching boots and Gewehr 98 rifle.

G2: *Leutnant*, Fusilier Guards Regiment; Halicz, Ukraine, August 1916

This young platoon commander of the élite Prussian Fusilier Guards of 3rd Guard Division prepares for a trench raid. He wears the M1916 helmet; an M1915 officers' field tunic customized with a high collar in the aristocratic style and general officers' breast pockets, and Guards regimental collar patches. His plain M1915 officers' breeches are cut as for enlisted men and worn with puttees and ankle boots. He has chosen an artillery issue C96 Mauser pistol with M1915 holster-stock, and carries binoculars and a privately purchased dagger with a Prussian officers' bayonet knot.

G3: *Generalmajor*, 1st Reserve Division; Ukraine, August 1916

This Prussian deputy divisional commander, resisting the Brusilov Offensive, wears the M1915 general officers' field uniform, retaining his M1910 peaked field cap. The M1915 tunic has M1915 field shoulder boards and M1916 gold *Alt Larisch* braid field collar patches. He wears M1914 grey officers' breeches with red *Lampassen*; M1915 standard cavalry riding boots and spurs, and the M1915 officers' field waist belt. He carries civilian binoculars, and the obsolete Revolver 79 with blackened M1883 holster. He displays the Red Eagle Order 2nd Class with Swords as a neck decoration.

H: RUMANIA

H1: *Sanitätsgefreiter*, 52nd Corps Medical Company; Silistria, September 1916

Medical company personnel wore the M1915 stretcher-bearers' uniform, comprising M1915 enlisted men's peaked field cap and field tunic, with the corps number on crimson shoulder straps. This Prussian orderly has reinforced his M1915 trousers with leather, and wears puttees and M1914 ankle boots. His left medical pouch contains bandages, the right one medicines; he has the M1915 1.2-litre medical

This private of the Württemberg Mountain Bn poses for a photograph perhaps before departing to join his unit. He wears the M1914 ski cap with imperial and state cockades on the right and left sides respectively. His M1914 ski Litewka, with its distinctive green shoulder seam padding, has M1915 green collar patches. He carries the 98/05 bayonet issued to junior NCOs and privates. Cf Plate H3. (Friedrich Herrmann Memorial Collection)

water bottle with a drinking cup, and on his back a grey sailcloth bag contains dressings.

H2: *Leutnant*, 182nd Infantry Regiment; Focsani, January 1917

This Saxon platoon commander in the 216th Infantry Division wears M1916 helmet; M1915 standard overcoat, with field-grey covers masking his conspicuous officers' shoulder boards; officers' M1912 leather leggings, and M1914 ankle boots. His subalterns' field equipment comprises the M1914 officers' backpack, M1915 officers' belt, P08 pistol, M98/05 enlisted men's bayonet with officers' M1896 Prussian sword knot, M1912 map case, binocular case, signal whistle and M1916 gas mask.

H3: *Oberleutnant*, Württemberg Mountain Battalion; Putna River, February 1917

This platoon commander is wearing the M1914 ski cap with green crown piping, imperial cockade on the right side and Württemberg state cockade on the left. He also wears the Alpenkorps' silver-grey Edelweiss with yellow stamens, awarded for distinguished service with that formation in Rumania during winter 1916/17. His M1915 reversible windproof jacket, worn over his M1914 ski Litewka and field equipment, bears the company number on the left upper sleeve, but no officers' rank insignia; his M1915 reversible windproof trousers are secured by integral puttees. He has M1915 woollen mittens, M1914 ankle boots with cleats, snow goggles, and the M1915 rucksack; and is armed with a Karabiner 1888 cavalry carbine.



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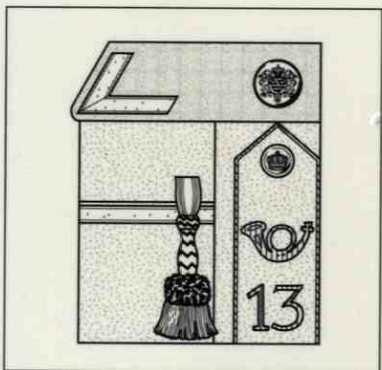
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ISBN 1-84176-566-X



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