

# MEN AT WAR

## 1914-1945

19

### 'Reds' of the Russian Civil War

#### Company Commander, 1919-21



# THE LEAD SOLDIER COLLECTION

**Men at War 1914-1945**

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### Early Formations

- 1: Infantryman, 3rd Petrograd City Guard Rifle Regiment, 1918
- 2: Infantryman, Epifan Kovtiukh's Detachment, Army of Taman, 1918
- 3: Commander, Naval Infantry Regiment, 1918-22





# Cavalry

- 1: Cavalryman, Vatman's 'Red Hussars' Brigade, 1918-19
- 2: Cavalryman, Bashkir Cavalry Division, Petrograd, 1918-19
- 3: Kuban Cossack, Budenny's First Cavalry Army, 1918-20



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# 'REDS' OF THE RUSSIAN CIVIL WAR

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Civil War in Russia lasted from 1917 until 1926, although major military operations were over by 1922. The divisions within Russian society was already in evidence by 1905, when the country faced a popular revolution, brought to a head by the loss of the war with Japan. The next revolution, in February 1917, led to the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, but produced a divided government incapable of solving the backwardness, illiteracy and poverty to which the majority of Russians had been condemned. At first the Bolsheviks (or Communists, as they later called themselves) under Lenin enjoyed genuine popular support. When they seized power in October 1917, they had the great advantage of being more or less united while their divided opponents represented a whole spectrum of beliefs.

The main instrument with which the Bolsheviks imposed Communism on Russia was the Red Army. Traditionally the origins of this army were among the factory workers who had laid down tools in 1905 and again in 1917 to take up arms against the Imperial Russian state. These militant workers organised themselves into paramilitary detachments known as the 'Red Guards'. It was the Red Guards of the newly named Petrograd (renamed Leningrad in 1924 and today given back its pre-revolutionary name of St Petersburg) who enabled the Bolsheviks to seize power in the October revolution of 1917. It was Red Guards, in large part, who took the Winter Palace, stormed the Moscow Kremlin, protected the capital against the Germans and fought the White forces as they sprang up all over Russia. They were officially dissolved in September 1918. Many joined the Red Army, but struggled to integrate into a disciplined regular army regime.

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## THE RED ARMY

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The Bolsheviks declared that their credo of equality was to extend into the armed forces, formally abolished all pre-revolutionary grades, ranks, orders and titles and introduced 'democratic' decision making. Bureaucratic chaos ensued. Although six million battle-weary Russian soldiers were impatient to lay down their arms it was impractical to demobilise the old army at once since Russia was still at war fighting Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey. On 15 January 1918 the Soviet government announced the creation of a new army, raised on new principles and recruited from 'class-conscious workers and toiling peasants' on a voluntary basis. The official name was the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army – *Raboche Krestyanskaya Krasnaya Armiya* or *RKKA* (Cyrillic *PKKA*). It became known as the Red Army.

Admission to the Red Army was at first highly selective. Prospective recruits required a recommendation from a military body, trade union or other organisation aligned with the Bolshevik party, thus ensuring that only dedicated volunteers would be accepted. There were only two ranks

A typical Red Army cavalryman, 1919. His uniform consists of a fashionably tailored cotton summer gymnasterka, with two breast pockets and horizontal cuff patches with buttons. He wears his cap high on the head and creased in the mode of the day. A riding stick is carried for this studio portrait, but they were seldom seen on active service.



in the new egalitarian army: Red Army man and Red commander. Officially there were no officers, and titles were regarded as descriptions of posts held, rather than ranks. This somewhat artificial state of affairs lasted until 1935 when ranks were reintroduced.

As the Soviet Republic found itself embroiled in civil war, surrounded by White and foreign armies, once idealistic volunteers became disillusioned by the lack of progress towards 'World Revolution', and the peasants, who made up nearly 90 per cent of all recruits, began deserting in droves as they saw their villages repeatedly burnt and their crops trampled by both Reds and Whites. The concept of an all-volunteer Red Army soon floundered, and in May 1918 the Soviet government introduced conscription for men aged 18 to 40. The mobilisation plan had envisaged a Red Army of 1,500,000 men; by spring 1919 it already numbered 1,630,000.

On 6 September 1918 overall command of the armed forces was entrusted to the Revolutionary Military Council, headed by Trotsky. The political side of the army continued to grow in influence with the appointment of commissars and political officers as well as Communist Party members. In effect, the Communist Party had a presence in all Red Army units. By January 1919 the Red Army had new internal service regulations, a field manual and a disciplinary code. Every soldier possessed the Red Army man's booklet spelling out his rights, responsibilities and standards of conduct. By the summer of 1919 a pay allowance had been introduced for soldiers and commanders.

In June 1919 the unification of the Soviet Socialist Republics – Russia, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania and Byelorussia – 'to fight world imperialism' was announced. This, at last, allowed the Bolsheviks to turn the Red Army into a coherent military body with centralised command.

In December 1919 the Red Army numbered three million men; by 1 November 1920 this had increased to five and a half million. These men remained in arms until 1924 when the Red Army was demobilised and its numbers fell to 562,000.



Armband of a Red Guard detachment formed by a local district Soviet in Petrograd (St Petersburg). It is made of red cotton with letters printed in black and reads: '27 February 1917 / Red Guard / of Vissilievsky Island'.



Naval infantry commanders of the Southern front dressed in a mixture of infantry and naval uniforms, with navy caps, dark-blue duck jumpers and undershirts all in evidence. Although infantry gear was obviously more practical on land, naval infantry – unquestionably some of the best troops of the Red Army – clung to their naval clothing with justified pride.



International Units

1: Infantryman, Chinese Battalion, 1918-20

2: Hungarian Hussar, Detached International Cavalry Division, 1918-19

3: Infantryman, E. Rahia's Finnish Red Guard Detachment, 1918-19





### Specialist Troops

1: Private, Broneotryad (Armour Detachment), 1918-22

2: Crewman of Trotsky's Armoured Train, 1918-22

3: Pilot, Aviation Detachment, 1918-21





# COLOUR PLATES

## A: Early formations

### A1: INFANTRYMAN, 3RD PETROGRAD CITY GUARD RIFLE REGIMENT, 1918

The 3rd Petrograd Rifle Regiment was formed from the disbanded Semenovskiy Lifeguard Reserve Regiment, which had been stationed in Petrograd. The Semenovskiy Regiment proper had been created by Peter the Great in 1695, and was one of the key Imperial Guard regiments, but the Reserve Regiment had never shared this elite status. Immediately after the October revolution all ranks of the 3rd Petrograd Regiment wore their old uniforms but with shoulder-boards removed, and with Tsarist cap insignia replaced by the red star. The old greatcoat collar patches remained in use for some time as a mark of regimental traditions, but they were abolished in September 1918 and replaced by the oval-shaped, cloth sleeve badge seen here, inscribed 'GOR/OKhR', an abbreviation for *Gorodskaya Okrana* (City Guard). This soldier's red star cap badge appears to be upside down; in fact this was the correct way of wearing it in the first months of Soviet rule. The khaki canvas bandolier is a version introduced during the Great War, while the so-called *beboot* dagger was carried by machine gunners and scouts of infantry regiments of the Russian Army.

### A2: INFANTRYMAN, EPIFAN KOVTIUKH'S DETACHMENT, ARMY OF TAMAN, 1918

The Army of Taman was a typical early Civil War formation. It was made up of many small detachments of infantry and cavalry which had been forced together under pressure from the Whites. As a result its soldiers were dressed in all imaginable types of clothing, from ex-Tsarist uniforms to civilian attire. This infantryman belongs to the 'First Column' or vanguard detachment of the Army – a crack force which enabled the Army to break out of encirclement. He is dressed in Tsarist infantry uniform with insignia and shoulder-boards removed; this includes a cotton gymnasterka blouse, sharovary (a type of semi-breeches) and puttees. The

headgear is an infantry hat of fake astrakhan fur with a diagonal red cloth band instead of an official red star badge. (Only units formed in major industrial centres could be supplied with red stars in the early years of the war.) The chevron badge of the Army of Taman is worn on the left sleeve. Unlike many other Red



A. Zaitsev, commander of the 'Lieutenant Schmidt' armoured train No.75. His sleeve badge is a red cloth, five-pointed star with a combination of armour, railway and artillery silver metal badges. On his breast pocket he wears a commander's metal badge, and below it the crossed cannon-barrels badge taken from the shoulder-boards of the Tsarist artillery uniform.

units, the Army of Taman's commanders were strict about this chevron, and soldiers were prohibited from modifying it with lace, inscriptions, bows or other 'aesthetic' personal inventions. Criss-crossed machine-gun belts were worn widely throughout the Red Army in this period, especially in semi-regular units, as there was little alternative means of carrying ammunition.

### A3: COMMANDER, NAVAL INFANTRY REGIMENT, 1918-22

When, after the October revolution, sailors were required for service on land, they were formed into *Matrosskiye pekhotniye polki* – literally sailors' foot regiments. Further naval infantry units were formed in major naval bases from the crews of the Black Sea Fleet after the ships were scuttled, so as not to fall into German hands. Several other fleets and flotillas also raised volunteer naval infantry units. Naval infantry saw widespread land service, often in the hottest of actions, since sailors were renowned for their high morale and loyalty to communist ideals. A high level of technical training made sailors highly sought after for specialist duties, and they were a favourite choice for crews of armoured trains, and artillery and machine-gun units. Naval infantry were dressed in a combination of Imperial Army and Navy uniforms, but without the insignia and shoulder-boards. This sailor has a peakless cap with the band of the Black Sea Fleet destroyer *Kerch*. His black reefer jacket has a gold anchor sleeve badge which, although changing slightly, was to become a symbol of the Soviet Navy for 70 years. The black and white undershirt had long been the object of great naval pride, and was worn almost as a branch-of-service badge. According to the Navy's code of honour, when a sailor stripped to this in battle, it was impossible for him to surrender or retreat. The white canvas trousers are tucked into infantry jackboots, but could equally be worn loose. Weapons include a Nagant revolver and an officer's dirk, a traditional symbol of authority in the Imperial Navy.

## B: Cavalry

### B1: CAVALRYMAN, VATMAN'S 'RED HUSSARS' BRIGADE, 1918-19

Vatman's Brigade, also known as the Zavolzhskaia Brigade of Red Hussars, included three cavalry regiments that were dressed in the pre-war parade uniforms of the 1st Sumoskoy and 3rd Elisavetgradskiy Hussar regiments. The main regimental distinction was the light

blue peaked cap (piped yellow). For the Sumskoy Regiment the cap had a scarlet band, and for the Elisavetgradsky Regiment, a white band. The black leather peak of the cavalryman's cap was somewhat smaller than the infantry version, and, following the period fashion, worn crumpled in a foppish manner. The dolman had brass buttons and cords, but no shoulder-knots – the traditional hussar mark of rank. The canvas cartridge pouch has its cover turned out to allow easier access to ammunition. He wears red chakchiry breeches. His high cavalry jackboots have brass hussar rosettes. Rifle and shashka-style sword, although both called 'dragon' in the Tsarist army, were issued to all mounted units, including irregular Cossack troops, before the Great War. Some squadrons also had lances with the old regimental light blue-over-scarlet pennants. Regimental musicians are recorded as wearing brass lyre badges instead of red stars on their caps. Several other units also dressed in hussar fashion.

#### **B2: CAVALRYMAN, BASHKIR CAVALRY DIVISION, PETROGRAD 1918-19**

The Bashkir Division was composed, as its name suggests, of Bashkirs – one of many ethnic minorities of the Russian Empire; other nationalities made up only one per cent of all ranks. The division was formed in Petrograd in 1918 to fight Yudenich's White Army. It included infantry, cavalry, artillery, machine gun and specialist units. The distinguishing feature of these units was a green diamond patch with red star and crescent worn on the left sleeve; commanders had a scarlet patch with gold embroidery. This cavalryman's appearance is fairly characteristic of the period. He has the usual soldier's cap, khaki cotton gym-nasterka and sharovary breeches. It was common to wear the red star on the crown of the cap rather than the band, though due to lack of official Red Army stars, metal stars from discarded officers' shoulder-boards were often worn instead. The rifle is of standard army issue, but the shaska sword is of Cossack style.

#### **B3: KUBAN COSSACK, BUDENNY'S FIRST CAVALRY ARMY, 1918-20**

Cossack units were rightly considered the



Mobile gun of an anti-aircraft battery in the Petrograd Fortified District, 1919. Many combinations of Red Army uniform are visible. The red banner is one presented by the Petrograd Soviet, the first administrative body to start awarding hand-embroidered red banners for 'glorious conduct in battle'. The gun is a Russian M.1914 Lender 76-mm anti-aircraft cannon.

best cavalry formations in the Red Army. Over the centuries the Cossacks had become a nation of warriors, and before the October revolution the vast majority had had field experience serving as border guards. Naturally both Civil War factions wanted the Cossacks on their side, and they led active propaganda campaigns. The Cossacks who joined the Red Army wore much the same national clothes and weapons as their White counterparts, but with the red star instead of the Imperial cockade. This figure wears traditional Juban Cossack attire: a small fur hat, a linen undershirt and a cloth coat. Shirts and coats for everyday use were of dull colours – grey, brown or black, while ceremonial ones were often brighter and embellished with silver or gold embroidery. The lining of the coat was usually of the same colour as the shirt. Characteristic gaziry breast pockets were used to carry ammunition. This Cossack has cut them along the middle to show that they hold four Mosin rifle cartridge clips, in a style that became fashionable in the last years of the Great War. A traditional Caucasian Cossack sword and dagger are worn slung from black leather belts with silver fittings. A winter hood is

worn hanging on the shoulders. Cossack boots were made of very soft leather and traditionally had no heels. Spurs were also not worn, since Cossacks preferred to guide their horses with a short leather whip. The sleeve patch is a combined rank insignia and branch badge – popular among Red commanders. The patch is made of cloth and could have devices made of metal or cloth or be embroidered in silk or gold thread. The two triangles identify his rank as a deputy platoon commander.

#### **C: International Units**

**C1: INFANTRYMAN, CHINESE BATTALION, 1918-20**  
Chinese 'internationalist' soldiers wore the same uniform as most Red Army troops, but they were always instantly recognisable, since Russian clothing was far too big for them. The Chinese had a special value to the Bolsheviks: industrious, efficient and seldom able to understand Russian, they were employed by the Cheka for the arrest and execution of anti-Soviet elements. The Chinese soldier's equipment consists of canvas cartridge pouches and a primitive canvas haversack that was in use throughout the Red Army.



# Military Schools

1: Cadet, Infantry Commanders' School, 1918-20

2: Commander, 2nd Petrograd Red Commanders' Artillery School, 1918-22

3: Officer Cadet, 1st Tver Soviet Cavalry Commanders' School, 1918-20



Senior Commanders

1: Commissar, Special Task Unit, 1919-20

2: Staff Official, Rifle Brigade, Army of the Far Eastern Republic, 1921-22

3: Soviet General Staff Official, 1919-22





The boots are of common Red Army issue, made of a single piece of hard leather, laced with rawhide strips; these are worn over canvas puttees. The weapons are a Lee Enfield Mark III rifle – 'borrowed' from some unfortunate British soldier – and a Russian hand grenade.

## C2: HUNGARIAN HUSSAR, DETACHED INTERNATIONAL CAVALRY DIVISION, 1918-20

Thousands of Hungarian PoWs found themselves drawn into the Civil War, mainly on the Red side, and in 1918 several Hungarian formations were organised in the Ukraine. The unit to which this hussar belongs was formed by Istvan Horvat in Kiev, after a warehouse containing the uniforms and equipment of the 1st Austrian Hussar Regiment was captured by the Red Army. Initially the unit had four squadrons: three manned by Hungarians and one (for scouting purposes) manned by Russians and Ukrainians. Also attached to it were two light artillery batteries, a machine-gun platoon, and signals and sapper detachments. Initially no horses were to hand, although saddles were available in abundance; and in the first parades the hussars marched on foot carrying the saddles on their backs. A month later 180 cart horses were requisitioned locally. Soon afterwards, four additional squadrons were formed of Hungarians drafted from other Red cavalry units. An eighth foreign squadron was formed of Germans and Austrians under an Austrian officer, Franz Morgauer. In 1920 the Hungarians were demobilised under an arrangement with the Hungarian government, and most returned home. Those who preferred to stay on in Russia joined the International Cavalry Division, commanded by Sandor Tede, which was posted to the city of Kazan to carry out patrol service. Their uniform was an odd combination of Russian and Hungarian: all cavalymen had red Hungarian sidecaps, Russian gymnasterkas, greatcoats and cavalry jackboots. Hungarian squadrons wore red hussar breeches, while others had Russian khaki sharovary breeches. The Red Hungarian Hussar has on his cap a red star badge covering the old Austrian pom-pom (with Emperor Franz-Josef I's mono-

gram). The leather equipment is Hungarian, as are the weapons – a 1907 Rot-Steir automatic pistol and an 1869 cavalry sabre.

## C3: INFANTRYMAN, RAHIA'S FINNISH RED GUARD DETACHMENT, 1918-19

After the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty on 3 March 1918, Poland, Ukraine, the Baltic states, Georgia and Finland gained independence from Russia. Finns of communist persuasion – more than 28,000 in number – were forced to move to Soviet Russia, and some of them joined the Red Army in the hope of restoring Soviet rule in Finland. These volunteers formed a number of units and took part in battles on the Northern and North-western Fronts. The 3rd Finnish Communist Regiment helped to protect Petrograd from the Germans and from Yudenich's White Army; the 6th Finnish Rifle Regiment served in Karelia in 1919; and the 480th Finnish Rifle Regiment even fought in Poland in 1920. Other, more exotic, Finnish units included the Finnish Ski Battalion, and cadets from the Finnish Red Commanders' Infantry School, who took part in the suppression of the Kronstadt revolt. This rifleman is dressed in the Russian infantry greatcoat and boots. He wears his canvas cartridge belt on the waist, rather than across the chest as normally worn by Russians. He is armed with a German Mauser M.1898 rifle and also German infantry sword-bayonet. The main detail that distinguished the Finns from the Russians was the traditional Finnish peaked cloth cap, worn with the inevitable red star.

## D: Specialist Troops

### D1: PRIVATE, BRONEOTRYAD (ARMOUR DETACHMENT), 1918-22

Red Army men serving in motorised, armoured-car and armour units all wore much the same uniform, characterised by the rich use of leather. It consisted of: a khaki cloth or leather cap with a large square peak, introduced in the Russian Army for automobilists and motorcyclists; a leather coat and gymnasterka. Leather or cloth breeches were worn with jackboots or boots with leggings. The dif-

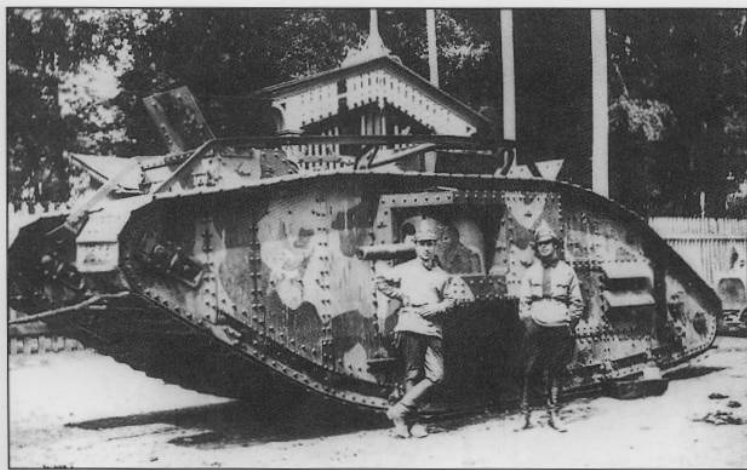


Official Red Army breast badge of 1918. It has the hammer-and-plough device, which gave way officially in 1922 to the better known hammer-and-sickle.

ferent motorised and armoured branches could be distinguished, by breast and sleeve badges. Although motorised units were organisationally a branch of the Engineers, they preferred the old Tsarist steering wheel, wings and wheels to the Red Army Engineers' sleeve badge. Personnel in armour units continued to use the Tsarist Army badge, which was similar to that of motorised units but with a machine gun instead of a steering wheel. Motorised unit emblems were also added to otherwise standard Red Army breast badges, below the red star.

### D2: CREWMAN OF TROTSKY'S ARMoured TRAIN, 1918-22

Because of the lack of special armoured train insignia in Tsarist and Red armies, crews wore sleeve badges with different combinations of railway, artillery and machine-gun emblems, or patches with the name and/or number and a depiction of the armoured train. Sometimes armoured train commanders wore all these badges together. Some armoured train crews wore leather uniforms dyed in peculiar colours: the entire crew of the armoured train that took RMSR chairman Trotsky around Russia were dressed from head to toe in red leather, and were known as the 'Red Sotnia (hundred)'. They wore a silver sleeve badge depicting



Photograph taken in 1920 of a British-built Mark V male tank with (at right) the commander of armoured detachments of the Southern Front and (left) a tank commander. The senior commander has the sleeve insignia of a divisional commander. His gymnasterka is individually tailored and decorated with black cloth. Both men wear black leather helmets.

a steaming train and engraved with the train's name, Revvoyensover. The preferred weapons of these leather-clad men were carbines, beboot daggers and the Mauser K-96 hand-gun.

#### D3: PILOT, AVIATION DETACHMENT, 1918-21

Nearly all Red pilots had served in Imperial Russian aviation before the Revolution, and naturally they inherited its fashions, from black leather coats to checked tweed jackets, yellow leggings and hand-made shoes. For men who had fought in France during the Great War it was fashionable to continue to wear French pilots' insignia. This pilot wears a gymnasterka trimmed to give it the look of the so-called 'French' jacket; in addition he has cloth sharovary breeches piped red, leggings and leather shoes. His belt is of regulation issue, complete with a dirk – effectively the badge of the Imperial Russian Airforce. Black pilot's caps or peaked caps, both piped red, were

widely worn, although British field caps were especially favoured. Some pilots had the new red star badge, but more common were badges taken from discarded shoulder-boards. These were of two main types: a brass or oxidised-silver propeller with wings (nicknamed the duck), and the old Imperial double-headed eagle (known disrespectfully as the chicken) with sword, flaming grenade and pro-



Military pilot Vasily Nazartchuk (seated) and his mechanic near their British Sopwith Camel. Both wear black leather coats and black cloth breeches and have pilots' caps (black piped red), and gilded metal badges taken from old shoulder-boards. The crowns and peaks of the caps are crumpled in a manner fashionable in the Civil War.

pellor. The medal is the Order of the Red Banner, worn on a scarlet silk rosette. In the air, leather flying helmets and goggles of all imaginable types and styles were worn, often with white silk scarves.

### E: Military Schools

#### E1: CADET, INFANTRY COMMANDERS' SCHOOL, 1918-20

Most Red commanders' schools were set up in the premises of former Tsarist junior officer schools and military academies, and employed the same equipment and, sometimes, the same teaching staff. The junior officers' training course remained practically unaltered, with the exception of new communist disciplines. Besides training, cadets were often involved in patrol duties, the suppression of uprisings and in punitive expeditions. This cadet wears a pilot's cap. These khaki caps had been adopted by the Imperial Army at the end of 1916, to be worn under steel Adrian helmets provided by the French, and from the spring of 1917 they were issued to all officer cadets. The cloth patch, worn on the right side was in branch-of-service colour. A red star badge was worn on the front of the cap. Cadets wore standard issue uniforms, but they were made of better quality materials. After graduation they were given a different uniform, a light-grey peaked cap, black gymnasterka, blue or khaki breeches, and commanders' jackboots. Chevrons with the school emblem or branch badge were sometimes worn on the left sleeve. Greatcoats had collar patches with a single brass button and a branch badge below it.

#### E2: COMMANDER, 2ND PETROGRAD RED COMMANDERS' ARTILLERY SCHOOL, 1918-22

In the first years of Soviet rule the uniforms of former Imperial lifeguard regiments and military academies were issued at some commanders' schools for military parades. This elaborate clothing, which had been in storage since the beginning of the Great War, was not always issued in complete sets, and items of different regiments were often mixed up, sometimes with comical results. These old uniforms were altered to suit the new political reality: the metal headgear fittings were liber-



# 1919 Uniforms

1: Rifleman in winter clothing, 1919-21

2: Sergeant Major of Artillery, 1919-21

3: Company Commander, 1919-21





## 1922 Uniforms

- 1: Deputy Regimental Commander, Cavalry, 1922
- 2: Commander of an engineers' brigade, 1922
- 3: Section Commander, the RMSR Security Battalion, 1922





ally covered with red paint, and Soviet symbols were installed. This Red commander wears the shako of the old Mikhailovsky Artillery College, with a red star in place of the Tsarist eagle. He has an old artillery greatcoat with patches and collar piping, and a rank badge above his left cuff. The leather equipment is of 1911 issue.

### E3: CADET, 1ST TVER SOVIET CAVALRY COMMANDERS' SCHOOL, 1918-20

The cadet here is dressed in the old 'gala' uniform for officer cadets of the Tverskoy cavalry college. The uniform for everyday wear was as follows: a peaked or peakless cap with a dark green band and light blue crown, piped dark green; khaki gymnasterka and sharovary breeches; cavalry jackboots; and a cavalry greatcoat with light-blue collar patches piped dark green. Cadets of the 1st Petrograd Soviet Cavalry Commanders' School wore the even more opulent uniform of the old Life-Guard Hussar Regiment. This consisted of a brown fur busby with white plume, a scarlet dolman, blue breeches and a white pelisse, all with yellow cors. Only the sabretache was discarded.

## F: Senior Commanders

### F1: COMMISSAR, SPECIAL TASK UNIT, 1919-20

Special Task Units, or ChONs, could be distinguished from ordinary Red Army units by their banners, which were covered with slogans and Communist symbols, and by the youth of the men – mostly between 14 and 20 years old. All members of Special Task Units also wore large red cloth stars on their left sleeves. Many units served in Turkestan and fought against the Central Asian Muslim rebels. These units were also issued with cotton panama hats, as shown here.

### F2: COMMISSAR, ARMY OF THE FAR EASTERN REPUBLIC, 1921-22

The Far Eastern Republic was a semi-autonomous territory with its own communist-influenced army known as the People's Revolutionary Army (PRA). The uniforms of the PRA were a combination of Russian, Japanese and American. In place of red star cap badges, PRA men wore a yellow five-pointed star. At the



centre of this star was a circle of red over blue, representing the sun rising over the sea, on which was a crossed pick-axe and anchor, symbolising the union of miners and fishermen. The PRA diamond sleeve badge had in its upper part a rising sun device surrounding the letters 'PRA' in the Cyrillic alphabet, while the lower part was reserved for rank badges. Here the red star indicates a military commissar. These sleeve badges were printed, embroidered or made of metal. This commissar has a Russian peaked cap, a 'French' jacket, khaki breeches and American leggings, belt and boots.

### F3: MEMBER OF THE SOVIET GENERAL STAFF, 1919-22

The Soviet General Staff uniform for formal wear was garish in the extreme. The most colourful garment was a crimson cloth gymnasterka with black velvet collar patches, tabs and star on the left sleeve, and silver aiguillettes on the right shoulder. With this were worn scarlet riding-breeches with yellow side-stripes; a scarlet peaked cap with yellow piping, and kid-leather jackboots with spurs. This picturesque uniform was considered pompous, and the crimson gymnasterka, in particular, often ended up in the possession of wives, who cannibalised them for the fine-quality material, turning many into ladies' jackets. As a result, few have survived. Nevertheless, the scarlet peaked cap and riding breeches became popular and were worn with a khaki gymnasterka faced with black velvet. For field use, lower visibility over-garments were

Members of a Cheka 'shock' troop dressed from head to toe in black leather examine a cannon captured from Denikin's White Army at Sochi, March 1920.

authorised, namely a kaftan-style greatcoat of high quality pea-green cloth with black velvet collar, cuffs, tabs and star on the left sleeve, all piped crimson, with four rows of gold lace on collar and cuffs. Also worn was a pea-green hat with black velvet star piped crimson and with buttons covered with black velvet.

## G: 1919 Uniforms

### G1: RIFLEMAN IN WINTER CLOTHING, 1919-21

This is the typical Red Army uniform of the last years of the Civil War. The budenovka cloth helmet has roll-down sides and a star in the dark crimson infantry branch colour, while the kaftan-style greatcoat has bottle-green collar and cuffs, with collar patches and tabs also in dark crimson. Buttons are covered with cloth. Also worn is a simple leather belt with a cartridge box. The rifle is a Mosin 1891.

### G2: SERGEANT MAJOR OF ARTILLERY, 1919-21

The budenovka helmet, gymnasterka and breeches are of cotton fabric, and are worn with cap star, collar patches and tabs in the orange that was adopted for artillery units in 1918 but soon changed to black. The rank is denoted by triangles on the left sleeve, although command status is equally well indicated by the binoc-

ulars and a pocket-watch modified to be worn on the wrist – both items were rarely owned by ordinary soldiers. This man, like many others of this time, has non-regulation embroidered insignia – in this case an artillery badge. He is armed with the 1881-issue 'dragoon' sword, which has fittings to keep in place the bayonet from a Mosin 1891 rifle.

### G3: COMPANY COMMANDER, 1919–21

This commander is one of the so-called military specialists, former Tsarist officers and generals who, despite political opposition, were encouraged to rejoin the Red Army at a time when their skills were badly needed. He is dressed in a khaki cloth peaked cap, tunic and breeches of Great War vintage. The sleeve patch, with four squares, indicate a company commander. A Red Army badge is worn on a leather shoulder strap, although it could equally have been worn on the tunic itself. The jackboots are typical of commanders' fashion: they have high tops with 'cups' covering the knee and square 'bulldog'-type toe-caps. The shaska sword is of Caucasian origin, of a type favoured by both Red and White officers.

### H1: DEPUTY REGIMENTAL COMMANDER, CAVALRY, 1922

This commander is dressed in 1922 winter uniform: budenovka helmet, long cavalry greatcoat with collar patches, star tabs and sleeve badge all in the cavalry branch colour, cornflower blue. The silver embroidery on the sleeve badge indicates a wound in battle or at least one year's Red Army service. He is armed with a Mauser K-96 pistol and a Cossack shaska sword, and his decorations are the Order of the Red Banner and the graduation badge of the 1st Petrograd Red Commanders' Cavalry School. The leather equipment is of standard 1911 Russian officers' pattern, but the shoulder belts are worn criss-cross rather than parallel (like braces) – a style adopted by Red commanders to distinguish them from White officers.

### H2: COMMANDER OF AN ENGINEERS BRIGADE, 1922

The only part of the new 1922 uniform is a gymnasterka blouse. This has collar patches, tabs and sleeve rank badge in the facing colour of engineers and artillery – black piped scarlet. The remainder of the uniform

is of pre-1923 period: supplies continued to be scarce, and often instead of dressing one regiment in the new uniform, individual items were distributed among different regiments of the same division. The collar patches bear the crossed pick and spade of engineer units, and the graduate's badge of the Red Military Engineers' Academy is worn on the chest. (Despite the Red Army's egalitarianism, only Red academy graduates ever had the chance of attaining positions of responsibility.) The leather equipment is typically Caucasian, made of black leather and decorated with chased silver ornaments, as is the shaska sword. Such items were popular among troops of the southern fronts.

### H3: SECTION COMMANDER, RMSR SECURITY BATTALION, 1922

This man wears the full 1922 summer uniform, which was of grey cotton, faced in the infantry colour, crimson piped black. His position as section commander is shown on the sleeve patch. Collar patches bear the cipher of the RMSR Security Battalion – the forerunner of the famous Kremlin Guards. The belt and pouch are of plain leather, and the rifle is a Mosin 1891.

Graduates of the High Military School of Sappers, posing before departure in the uniforms of their future regiments. Two men in the front row have typical 1919 insignia, embroidered in gold on red cloth patches. The facings on headgear and on the gymnasterka are black with silver. The leather equipment is of 1911 pattern, but with one shoulder belt instead of two, as worn by White and former Tsarist officers.

