MEN AT WAR 1914–1945

68

AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN ARMIES OF WORLD WAR I

Corporal of Hussars

del Prado publishers

OSPREY PUBLISHING

Infantry Arm of Service
Common Army: Tiroler Kaiserjäger, 1914

A

Infantry Arm of Service
Common Army: German Infantry

B

Infantry Arm of Service
Common Army: Hungarian Infantry

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Cavalry Arm of Service
Common Army: Dragoons

D

Infantry Arm of Service
Common Army: Bosnia-Herzegovinian Infantry

Cavalry Arm of Service
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Artillery Arm of Service
Common Army: Field Artillerymen

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Austro-Hungarian Armies of World War 1

When Archduke Franz Ferdinand, nephew of of Emperor Franz Josef and heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian thrones, was assassinated in Sarajevo by a Serbian nationalist on 28 June 1914, Austria-Hungary blamed the Serbian government and declared war. Russia naturally came to the aid of its ally Serbia. Thus Austria-Hungary precipitated World War I, a war which ended, among other things, with her own dissolution in 1918.

In 1914, Austria-Hungary was a dual monarchy comprising the Austrian empire and the Hungarian kingdom. The army which the Austro-Hungarian empire fielded in World War I was unique among those of the 'great powers' in being not a single force but three linked but separate armies: the Imperial (or Common), the Austrian and the Hungarian.

The Imperial Army was common to both partners in the dual monarchy, drew its manpower from both parts of the empire, and since 1888 had been known as 'kaiserlich und königlich' (or kuk), translating as imperial and royal, rather than the previous 'kaiserlich, königlich' (or kk), translating as imperial, royal. The Austrian army was recruited only in Austria, and was known as the Landwehr: the Landwehr's elements were known as kk units. The Hungarian army recruited in Hungary and was known formally as the Landwehr but more generally as the Honved: the Honved's elements were known as 'königlich ungarisch' (or ku), translating as royal Hungarian.

This apparently bizarre structure was administered by means of three separate war ministries, one for each of the armies: that controlling the

Farewells to the Imperial Army in Prague, July 1914. After the Serbian Ultimatum, the old emperor in Vienna had made the position clear, 'Russia will not take this lying down. . . Do not be under any illusions, this will be a great war!'

Dragoon NCO reporting to a Staff Officer during the opening campaigns in Galicia, August 1914. At that stage of the war the Cavalry Arm of Service was still wearing full dress uniform in the field.

Common Army was the Imperial Ministry for War, and those of the Landwehr and Honved were each known as Ministries of Defence. The system also required three general staffs, and each of the armies had its own budget which had to be voted annually by parliament. It should be emphasised that the two national forces were partners of rather than juniors to the Common Army, and thus it is an egregious error to liken the Landwehr and Honved to the Territorial Army of the UK or other part-time forces of other countries, for the Landwehr and Honved were manned by full-time soldiers.

The head of the armed forces was Franz Josef I who was Emperor (Kaiser) of Austria and also a king (König) in nine instances including the thrones of Hungary, Bohemia and Jerusalem. Franz Josef was immensely proud of the fact that he was the senior soldier of the Austro-Hungarian empire, to whom the army owed complete loyalty above any other affiliation to class, religion or nation. As such, the army was one of the three pillars upon which the power of the Habsburg dynasty rested, the other two being the aristocracy and the church.

Austria's steady fall from the ranks of the major powers resulted from many factors, but perhaps the single most important was her defeat in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. The war showed clearly that the once-feared Austrian army was now a shadow of its former self: its organisation was poor, its staff system was inadequate, and its infantry was completely outclassed since it had to rely on old breech-loading muskets in the face of an enemy using an altogether more capable and faster-firing rifled weapon.

To a certain degree, Austria now began to turn in on herself. The emperor, who had hoped to spur the recrudescence of the empire, had instead to face a succession of internal crises, of which the most significant was the desire of the Hungarians for independence. On 17 February 1867 the emperor concluded a settlement that created the dual monarchy: under the terms of this settlement, each partner was independent of the other with only the monarch, foreign affairs, finance and the army linking them.

What was now the Austria-Hungarian empire contained a population of some 47 million people comprising elements of many of Europe's races with different languages, different religions and different cultures. The kingdoms, duchies and provinces constituting Austria proper were known as Cisleithania and ruled from Vienna. This area comprised not just Austria, but also regions that later became, in

Corps machine-gun training school shortly after the outbreak of war. In peacetime an army school of machine-gun training had been set up at Bruck an der Leitha, but with the expansion of the machine-gun arm it was found necessary for each Corps to set up its own school. The specialist badge worn by machine gunners can be seen on the collar of the man seated in the right foreground.

whole or in part, Czechoslovakia, southern and much of eastern Poland, large parts of northern Italy, and Slovenia in what was for some half century Yugoslavia. The Common Army units raised in Cisleithania were all known as 'German' regiments even though many of them were manned by Czechs, Poles and Italians among others.

The provinces of Bosnia-Herzegovina, annexed by Austria-Hungary during 1908, were administered through a separate bureau, as Bosnia-Herzegovina was a part of neither Cisleithania or Transleithania, which was the other part of the dual monarchy and comprised the Magyar kingdom of Hungary as well as portions of what later became Yugoslavia, in particular Croatia. Transleithania was controlled from Budapest. The Common Army units raised in Transleithania were known as 'Hungarian' regiments.

The settlement of 1867 was a political compromise that many Austrians felt would lead to the break-up of the empire once Hungary started to demand total independence, possibly leading to a civil war. The emperor therefore despatched General Beck, chief of his military cabinet, to discuss the problem with the Hungarian authorities, and Beck then reported that he felt the creation of a Hungarian army to be the sole factor that might prevent the break-up of the army and then the empire. At the same time a committee that the emperor had established to consider ways of revitalising the army as a modern force also reported, and the emperor appointed the Erzherzog (archduke) Albrecht, chairman of the committee, as inspector general of the army with extensive powers.

The first task was the creation of a larger army, and this demanded the inauguration of universal male conscription in place of the all-volunteer forces on which Austria had relied up to this time. This process did indeed enlarge the Austro-Hungarian army, but at the same time it weakened it, for the decision to allow the creation of the Honved had to be balanced by the authorisation of the Landwehr as the Austrian equivalent. The establishment of the two national armies and their organisational and administrative infrastructures adversely affected the Common Army.

A second decision was to remodel the army along Prussian lines, with the all-arms division as the basic formation for an enlarged force based on 22 infantry and one cavalry divisions. Other decisions reformed

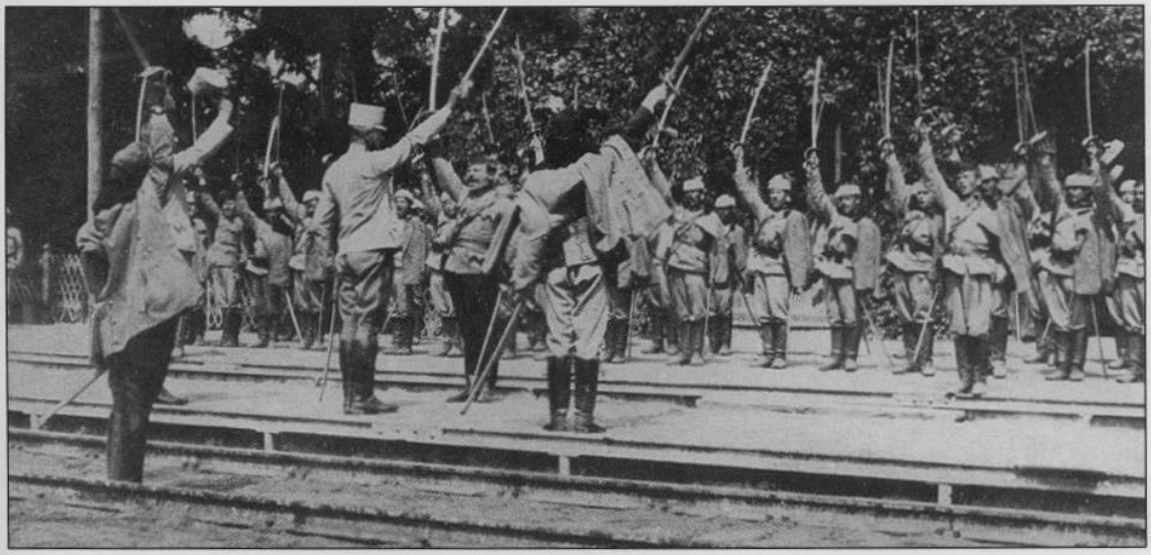
the army's punishment system, abolished the concept of a colonel-in-chief 'owning' his regiment, and replaced the designation 'common soldier' by rifleman, gunner, hussar etc. The period also saw the introduction of a new type of uniform based on a blue rather than white coat.

This time of expansion and reformation, in the period up to 1882, saw an increase in the number of infantry regiments to 80, the start of the process of revising the cavalry from eight to five types, and the establishment of the Landwehr and Honved. There followed a time of consolidation and further expansion up to the beginning of World War I: an establishment of 102 Common Army infantry regiments was attained, and there also appeared four Kaiserjäger regiments, additional Feldjäger battalions, four Bosnia-Herzegovinian infantry regiments, another Dragoon regiment, and expansions of the artillery arm and also of the Landwehr and Honved.

This growth persuaded Beck, now chief of the general staff, to plan a field force of 45 infantry and 10 cavalry divisions in the Common Army, supported by the Landwehr and Honved with an overall strength of 15 infantry and two cavalry divisions. It was schemed that the Common Army would be used wherever required, but that the Landwehr and Honved would be home defence formations except under crisis conditions. The two national armies thus became second-line forces, and a third line of defence was constituted by the Landsturm, a militia of older men designed to undertake the garrison and similar duties that would free the Landwehr and Honved for a more active role.

Many circumstances foiled the implementation of Beck's 55-division Common Army, so from March 1890 the Landwehr and Honved became part of the Austro-Hungarian empire's first-line strength with commitment to operations where and when required. A start was quickly made on the process of upgrading the Landwehr and Honved to the standard of the Common Army, but this process was still incomplete at the beginning of World War I. The process of elevating the Landwehr and Honved from second- to first-line status also had the effect of raising the Landsturm to second-line status, so this force too had to be modernised.

A salute to the Emperor Franz Joseph at a captured Serbian railway station. Despite initial successes, the Imperial Army's troops were too weak to win a decisive victory in Serbia. August–December 1914.



COLOUR PLATES

A

Kaiserjäger (1914)

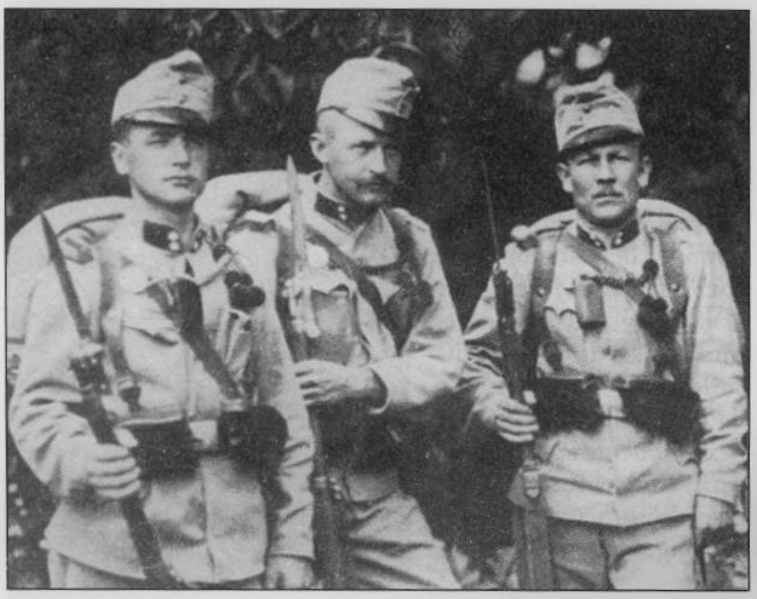
Some of the most striking information left to us about Austro-Hungarian uniforms are the water colour paintings of Alexander Pock. This example, completed in 1914, highlights a march-past by a Common Army unit of a Tiroler Kaiserjäger Regiment. The green cord and balls carried on the breast of some of the men indicated the attainment of a certain proficiency in marksmanship.

The four Tiroler Kaiserjäger regiments numbered on the Austro-Hungarian army list of 1914 could trace a direct link back to the Tiroler Jäger Regiment first raised in 1801 and disbanded in 1808. Then in 1813 came the next evolutionary step in the development of the regiment, when a Rifle Corps was created by General Franz Fenner von Fennerberg. This corps was redesignated as the Tiroler Jäger Regiment Kaiser Franz during 1816 and, between 1835 and 1848, carried the name of the new ruler of Austria. the Emperor Ferdinand. The regiment was further redesignated on the accession to the Austro-Hungarian throne of the Emperor Franz Josef during 1848.

In 1895 the single Tiroler Jäger Regiment Kaiser Franz Josef was revised into four serially numbered regiments of Kaiserjäger, of which all had the emperor as their colonel-in-chief. The Tiroler Kaiserjäger Regiment Nr 1 was created by the amalgamation of the first four battalions and the first replacement battalion of the existing Tiroler Jäger Regiment 'Kaiser'. Similarly, the second regiment came into existence by the grouping together of Bataillone Nrn 5 to 8 and the second replacement battalion, the third regiment by the combination of Bataillone Nrn 9 to 12 and the third replacement battalion, and the fourth regiment by the linking of Bataillone Nrn 13 to 16 and the fourth replacement battalion.

The Austro-Hungarian army had no specific sovereign 'Guard' regiments such as the Household troops of the British army or the Prussian Guard Corps of the Imperial German army. However, there were certain regiments in the Austro-Hungarian army that were generally considered to be elite units, and first among those were the Kaiserjäger regiments.

Group of NCOs of the Kaiserjäger, c. 1902. Each of them has the marksman's distinction: a cord running towards the left shoulder from which are suspended woollen balls. The two NCOs on the left have the golden cord of a first class marksman.



B

German Infantry

One of a series of 34 illustrations painted by Oskar Brüch, at one time a lieutenant in a regiment of the Imperial and Royal army, this reveals details of a German infantry unit. The painting and its companions are now held by the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (museum of army history) in Vienna.

From left to right, the painting depicts an infantry regiment pioneer in winter marching order, a lieutenant in parade dress, a captain in mounted marching order, an officer in marching order, and a standard bearer in parade dress.

The Austro-Hungarian empire was divided into 16 territorial military districts each responsible for the raising and maintenance of a single corps. With the exception of XV Corps, these corps comprised regiments recruited in the corps' district. Of these districts, eight were in Austria, six in Hungary, one in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and one in Dalmatia, and the districts were additionaly divided for recruiting purposes, into 112 sub-districts, of which 60 were Austrian, 48 Hungarian and four Bosnia-Herzegovinian. Some 102 of these 112 sub-districts each raised one regiment for the Common Army. Of the other 10, three (Brixen, Innsbruck and Trient) were allocated to the Tiroler Kaiserjäger regiments, four (Banja-Luka, Donja Tuzla, Mostar and Sarajevo) to the Bosnia-Herzegovinian regiments, and three (Fiume, Sebenico and Trieste) to the Imperial and Royal navy.

C

Hungarian Infantry

Another of the paintings of the Austro-Hungarian army's units created by Oskar

Brüch shows men of the Hungarian infantry. From left to right, the painting depicts a cadet officer in marching order, a corporal in parade dress, a captain in mounted marching order, an infantry pioneer in marching order, a drummer in winter parade dress and a standard bearer in parade dress.

Of the Common Army's 16 corps, XV Corps was headquartered in Sarajevo and controlled the regiments raised in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the XVI Corps headquartered at Ragusa controlled the regiments raised in Dalmatia. Of the other 14 corps, eight were headquartered in Austria, and six in Hungary. These latter included IV Corps headquartered in Budapest and recruiting in central and south-western Hungary, V Corps headquartered in Pozsony and recruiting in western Hungary, VI Corps headquartered in Kassa and recruiting in north-eastern Hungary, VII Corps headquartered in Temesvar and recruiting in central and southern Hungary, and XI Corps headquartered in Nagyszeben and recruiting in south-eastern Hungary.

D

Dragoons

Another painting by Oskar Brüch shows men of the Common Army's cavalry arm, more specifically dragoons or heavy cavalry. From left to right, the painting depicts a trumpeter in winter parade dress, an officer in winter walking-out dress, an officer in marching order, a dragoon in mounted marching order, a dragoon in marching order, and a non-commissioned officer in marching order.

When the Austro-Hungarian army went to war in 1914, it had eight regular cavalry divisions (the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 10th of the peacetime establishment) supplemented by the 9th Cavalry Division that came into existence during the general mobilisation, and the 5th and 11th Cavalry Divisions created from Landwehr and Honved regiments. In general cavalry regiments were allocated on an individual basis to infantry divisions as divisional cavalry for scouting, reconnaissance and outpost purposes, or to cavalry brigades that were grouped to form cavalry divisions that operated as entire formations for long-range reconnaissance and the protection of other army formations from surprise attack.

Up to the middle of the 19th century, the cavalry of the Austrian empire had comprised eight distinct types, but in the middle of that century the number was reduced to five, and by the end of the century to just three within the regular army, notionally the heaviest of these types was the dragoon (15 serially numbered regiments), with the hussar dear to the Hungarians as notionally the middle-weight type (16 serially numbered regiments), and the Ulan or lancer of the Slavs (although now without his lance) as notionally the light-weight type (11 regiments numbered 1 to 8 and 11 to 13). The three types of cavalry could still be distinguished by their different dress, but were all in fact mounted riflemen.

The 42 regiments of the Common Army were supplemented by six regiments of Ulans and two half-regiments of mounted rifles in the Austrian Landwehr, and 10 regiments of hussars in the Hungarian Honved.

E

Bosnia-Herzegovinian Infantry

This painting by Oskar Brüch shows men of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian infantry, from left to right a captain in mounted marching order, a lieutenant in marching order, an infantry pioneer in marching order and an infantryman in parade order. Raised in the area of XV Corps headquartered in Sarajevo, the Bosnia-Herzegovinian infantry regiments were numbered from 1 to 4. The 1st Bosnia-Herzegovinian Infantry Regiment was recruited in the Sarajevo are, and had been raised in January 1894 by the merging of the independent 1st Bosnia-Herzegovinian Infantry Battalion (formed in 1885), the 5th Bosnia-Herzegovinian Battalion (formed in 1889) and the 9th Bosnia-Herzegovinian Battalion (formed in 1892). The 2nd Bosnia-Herzegovinian Infantry Regiment was recruited in the Banja-Luka area, and had been raised in January 1894 by the merging of the 2nd Bosnia-Herzegovinian Battalion (formed in 1885), the 6th Bosnia-Herzegovinian

Graf Czernin, the Austrian Foreign Minister. In April 1917 he drew up a secret report for the German leadership, clearly stating that the monarchy could not hold out until the following spring.

Battalion (formed in 1889), and the 10th Bosnia-Herzegovinian Battalion (formed in 1892). The 3rd Bosnia-Herzegovinian Infantry Regiment was recruited in the Dolnya-Tuza area, and had been raised in January 1894 by the merging of the 3rd Bosnia-Herzegovinian Battalion (formed in 1885), the 7th Bosnia-Herzegovinian Battalion (formed in 1889), and the 11th Bosnia-Herzegovinian Battalion (formed in 1892). The 4th Bosnia-Herzegovinian Infantry Regiment recruited in the Mostar area, and had been raised in January 1894 by the merging of the independent 4th Bosnia-Herzegovinian Infantry Battalion (formed in 1885), the 8th Bosnia-Herzegovinian Battalion (formed in 1889) and the 12th Bosnia-Herzegovinian Battalion (formed in 1892).

F

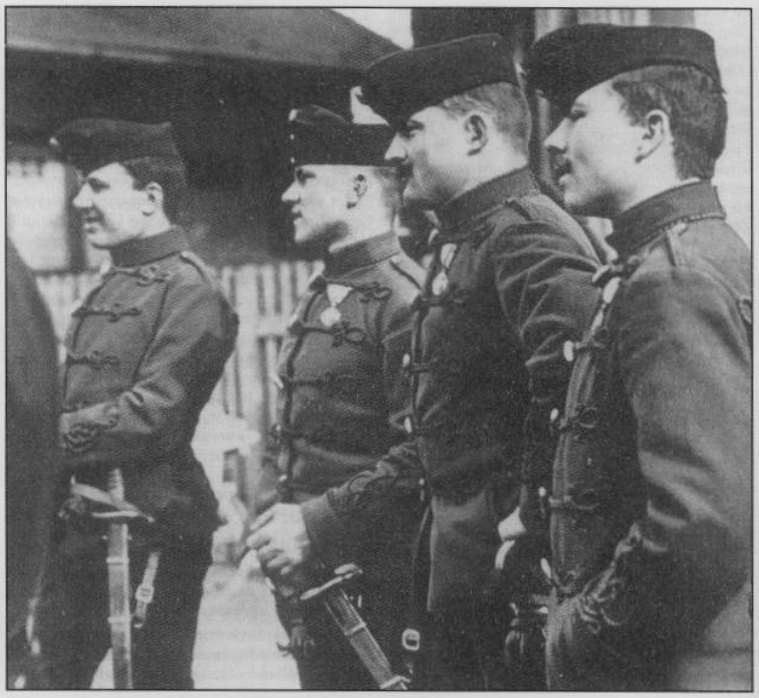
Hussars

This painting by Oskar Brüch shows men of the hussar element of the Common Army's cavalry arm. From left to right, the painting depicts an officer in marching order, an officer in winter parade dress, a field officer in mounted parade dress, a

hussar in winter marching order, and a corporal in service dress.

The 16 hussar regiments of the Common Army rejoiced in some of the most splendid names of any units involved in World War I: Hussar Regiment Nr 1 'Kaiser Franz Josef', Hussar Regiment Nr 2 'Friedrich Leopold, Prinz von Preussen', Hussar Regiment Nr 3 'Graf Andreas Hadik von Futak', Hussar Regiment Nr 4 'Artur, Herzog von Connaught und Strathearn', Hussar Regiment Nr 5 'Feldmarschall Graf Josef Radetsky von Radetz', Hussar Regiment Nr 6 'Wilhelm II, König von Württemburg', Hussar Regiment Nr 7 'Wilhelm II, Deutscher Kaiser und König von Preussen', Hussar Regiment Nr 8 'General Tersztyanszky', Hussar Regiment Nr 9 'Feldmarschall Graf Leopold Nadasdy auf Fogoras', Hussar Regiment Nr 10 'Friedrich Wilhelm III, König von Preussen', Hussar Regiment Nr 11 'Ferdinand I, König von Bulgarien', Hussar Regiment Nr 12 (no title after the death of King Edward VII of the UK in 1910), Hussar Regiment Nr 13 'Wilhelm, Kronprinz des deutschen Reiches und Kronprinz von Preussen (Jagyzier und Kumanier Husaren Regiment)', Hussar Regiment Nr 14 'General von Kolossvary', Hussar Regiment Nr 15 'Erzherzog Franz Salvator', and Hussar Regiment Nr 16 'General Graf Alexander Uxküll-Gyllenband'.

This primary hussar force was also complemented in time of war by 10 Honved hussar regiments. From 1890 these regiments, previously identified only by their numbers, were authorised to include the name of their garrison towns within their titles, and these units were the Hussar Regiment Budapest Nr 1, Hussar Regiment Debreczin Nr 2, Hussar Regiment Szegedin Nr 3, Hussar Regiment Kecskemet Nr 4, Hussar Regiment Kassa Nr 5, Hussar Regiment Waitzen Nr 6, Hussar Regiment Papa Nr 7, Hussar Regiment Fünfkirchen Nr 8, Hussar Regiment Maros-Vasarhely Nr 9, and Hussar Regiment Varasdin Nr 10. It is worth noting that these Honved regiments wore exactly the same uniform and were differentiated (in most cases) only by the colour of their shakos: from the 1st to the 10th regiments, these were grey, light blue, white, madder red, madder red, dark blue, grass green, madder red, madder red, and madder red respectively.



Hussars of a Common Army regiment in Vienna, c. 1908. They are wearing the scarlet peakless field service cap which was on issue to all mounted units.

G

Ulans

This painting by Oskar Brüch shows men of the Ulan (lancer) element of the Common Army's cavalry arm. From left to right, the painting depicts an Ulan in mounted marching order, a lieutenant in walking-out dress, a captain in marching order, an officer in winter parade dress and a major in mounted parade dress.

The Common Army numbered some 11 Ulan regiments these being numbered between 1 and 13 with the exception of the 9th and 10th Regiments, which had been converted into the 10th Dragoon Regiment and 16th Hussar Regiment respectively. Of the surviving regiments, eight had been raised in Galicia, two in Croatia and one in Bohemia.

Like the hussar regiments, the Ulan regiments also rejoiced in splendid names: Ulan Regiment Nr 1 'Ritter von Brudermann', Ulan Regiment Nr 2 'Fürst zu Schwarzenberg', Ulan Regiment Nr 3 'Erzherzog Karl', Ulan Regiment Nr 4 'Kaiser Franz Josef', Ulan Regiment Nr 5 'Nikolaus II, Kaiser von Russland', Ulan Regiment Nr 6 'Kaiser Josef II', Ulan Regiment Nr 7 'Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand von Oesterreich-Este', Ulan Regiment Nr 8 'Graf Auersperg', Ulan Regiment Nr 11 'Alexander II, Kaiser von Russland', Ulan Regiment Nr 12 'Graf Huyn', and Ulan Regiment Nr 13 'General von Böhm-Ermolli'.

This primary Ulan force was also complemented in time of war by six Landwehr hussar regiments, which were number plainly from 1 to 6. It is worth noting that the Common Army Ulan regiments wore exactly the same uniform and were differentiated (in most cases) only by the colours of their shapka cap and button: from the 1st to the 8th and the 11th to the 13th regiments, these were imperial yellow/yellow metal, dark green/yellow metal, madder red/yellow metal, white/yellow metal, light blue/yellow metal, imperial yellow/white metal, dark

green/white metal, madder red/white metal, cherry red/white metal, dark blue/yellow metal, and dark blue/white metal.

H

Field Artillerymen

This painting by Oskar Brüch shows men of the field artillery arm of the Common Army. From left to right, the painting depicts an officer in winter service dress, a lieutenant in walking-out dress, a captain in marching order, a gunner in mounted marching order, a trumpeter of a half regiment in parade dress, and a gunner in marching order.

Artillery was a branch of the army that dated back some time in Austrian service, the first artillery uniforms dating from 1734, but despite its steadily growing importance it was considered an auxiliary service rather than an intrinsic arm of the army. This situation began to change only in 1854, when current artillery units were re-formed into 13 regiments (12 of field artillery and one of coastal artillery). The parlous state of the artillery became very clear in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, and steps were taken to upgrade the artillery as a means of paving the way for an offensive, supporting the infantry in the attack, and bolstering the defence by helping to disperse the enemy's attack. The reorganisation of the artillery involved the removal of the fortress artillery role from the field artillery by the creation of a fortress artillery branch of 12 battalions comprising nine raised in 1867 and the other three by converting coastal artillery regiments in 1868.

When the division became standard as the Austro-Hungarian army's standard field formation, it was decided to create divisional artillery groups, which came into being during May 1885. In this month the field artillery was reorganised into 14 brigades each including one corps artillery regiment and two independent half-regiments of heavy artillery. The brigade and corps artillery regiment each bore the relevant corps number, but the battalions of the half-regiment of heavy artillery were numbered in series: 1st, 2nd etc in the 1st Artillery Brigade and so on. When he became chief-of-staff, General Conrad von Hötzendorff undertook a major reorganisation of the artillery, and on the outbreak of World War I each of the Common Army's infantry divisions had one field artillery brigade, comprising one field gun regiment and one field howitzer half-regiment. Each infantry division of the Landwehr possessed one field artillery brigade comprising one Common Army field gun regiment, one Landwehr field gun half-regiment, and one Landwehr field howitzer half-regiment, while each infantry division of the Honved possessed one field artillery brigade comprising one or two Common Army field gun half-regiments and one Honved field gun regiment: in 1914 there were field howitzer units on the establishment of the Honved. Each cavalry division controlled a horse artillery half-regiment and each corps had a heavy howitzer half-regiment, while some corps also included mountain artillery units.

In overall terms, in 1914 the Austro-Hungarian army's field artillery arm mustered 42 Common Army regiments, eight Landwehr half-regiments and eight Honved full regiments. The Common Army establishment included 14 howitzer regiments, plus 14 heavy howitzer half-regiments, nine horse artillery half-regiments, 10 mountain artillery regiments and one independent half-regiment, six fortress artillery regiments, and 10 fortress artillery battalions. The Landwehr and Honved had eight full regiments and eight half-regiments of field artillery, and one half-regiment of horse artillery. In terms of equipment, the artillery had 2,562 pieces of ordnance in 397 field and 74 mountain batteries. The field gun batteries were grouped into 42 regiments, the field howitzer batteries into 14 regiments, the horse artillery batteries into nine half-regiments, and the mountain artillery batteries into 10 regiments and one independent half-regiment.

Austrian troops advance during the German-Austrian counterthrust against the Russians in July 1917.