The Russian Army 1914-18
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Dedication

The author dedicates this book to Elizabeth, and to his children James, Alex and Charlotte.

The artist dedicates his paintings for this book to the memory of Vladimir Zwergintzow, a Russian patriot, who devoted his life to popularising the history of the Russian Imperial Army.

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INTRODUCTION

THE RUSSIAN ARMY of the First World War has for decades suffered an image problem compounded by politics, secrecy and ignorance. The memoirs of those commanders who survived to write them often tend to be apologist or self-seeking. Russia's withdrawal from the war is blamed upon politicians of varying shades of opinion. Shell shortages, lack of Western support, traitors in high places, Russia's sacrifices in the interests of France in 1914 and Italy in 1916—all these factors have credibility, but none tells the whole story.

Many Western historians tended to fall in with one or other of these schools of thought, until the publication of Professor Norman Stone's *The Eastern Front 1914–17* in 1975. Stone demonstrates that by late 1916 Russia was producing sufficient munitions; but that her inability to adapt to wartime imperatives such as feeding the urban population and developing a viable supply system led to her collapse into revolution.

At the beginning of the 20th century the Russian empire covered eight million square miles, with a population of some 170,000,000 people, and was ruled over by one man: Tsar Nicholas II, whose Romanov dynasty had celebrated 300 years of power in 1913. The authority of the Tsar was absolute but, as the revolution of 1905–06 had shown, it rested on the support of the army. Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) led to a review of Russia's armed forces during the years leading up to 1914. When Gen. V.A. Sukhomlinov was appointed Minister of War in March 1909, reform became a matter of priority.

It became clear that reform of the armed forces and industrialisation would have to proceed together. Domestic production of small arms and field artillery was sufficient, but for heavier artillery, communications equipment and other modern necessities it was woefully inadequate. It was necessary to import these items until Russian industry could produce what was required. The period 1910–14 saw change on a scale unprecedented during peacetime: rates of pay were increased to encourage the retention of experienced men, hundreds of officers were retired as incompetent, conscription was expanded to create a larger reserve pool, and the military budget was increased.

Inevitably there was opposition to these reforms, which polarised into hostility between those who supported Sukhomlinov's modernisation programme and the more traditionalist adherents of the Grand Duke Nicholas, uncle of the Tsar, Commander of the Imperial Guard and the St Petersburg Military District. Consequently reform was implemented only slowly; and in the matter of artillery it was complicated by strategic as well as industrial problems.
Russia’s western defences were based on the assumption of an invasion from Germany or Austria-Hungary. Mobilisation at the outbreak of war would be slow, due to Russia’s vast size and underdeveloped rail system. To buy time for mobilisation a line of colossal fortresses, bristling with artillery, was built during the latter part of the 19th century at key points throughout Russian Poland. However, the range and power of 20th century field artillery outclassed the fortress artillery, which required up-grading. During the five years before 1914 a large percentage of the artillery budget was invested in modernising the fortress guns – at the expense of the mobile heavy artillery of which Russia was particularly in need.

However, war seemed a long way off; and the ‘Great Programme’ of modernisation approved in 1914 was due for completion in mid-1917. Russia and France had been allies since 1893, and through the Anglo-French treaty this also linked Russia to Britain. A French loan was arranged, specifically to construct railways in Poland to speed up mobilisation. It was anticipated that when all the pieces of the Great Programme were in place the armed forces of Russia would be prepared for any scale of international conflict.

The strategic situation

Both Germany and Austria-Hungary were, by early 1914, extremely concerned about the modernisation of Russia’s forces. The necessity for action before Russia’s investments bore fruit was becoming critical, as Germany’s plan for European war rested on the prerequisite of Russia’s mobilisation being slower than Germany’s conquest of France. Germany planned to commit the greater part of her army in the West to overrunning France, leaving some two army corps and local forces to defend her eastern border. These troops, combined with the Austro-Hungarian armies, were thought to be sufficient to hold Russia until victory in the West released the bulk of Germany’s forces to turn against her.

Reality dictated that Russia would face Germany and Austria-Hungary to the west and the Ottoman Turks to the south; it was therefore essential to decide where to place the main weight of the Russian army during the mobilisation period. The Army of the Caucasus was deemed capable of dealing with the Ottoman threat; thus it was a choice between Germany and Austria-Hungary. Clearly Austria-Hungary was temptingly the weaker, but Germany posed the greater threat. Two plans had been drawn up: Plan 19 gave greater weight to an offensive into East Prussia, and Plan 19 Revised, drawn up in May 1912, reduced the forces committed to East Prussia, stressing Austria-Hungary as the main target.

Plan 19 Revised necessitated the creation, at the outbreak of war, of two ‘Fronts’, one to command each operation – the North-Western and the South-Western, both to be overseen by a supreme headquarters known as STAVKA. The Austria/Germany dilemma was one that the Russians never fully resolved. To further complicate the issue the Russians had given an assurance to their French partners that they would launch an offensive into East Prussia during the early weeks of any war.

Following the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne in June 1914 and the intense political activity that ensued throughout Europe, Russia’s mobilisation was carried out according to
Plan 19 Revised, resulting in the invasion of both East Prussia and Austria-Hungary. Despite the distances involved and the incomplete rail network near the western borders the mobilisation was carried out with remarkable efficiency, much to the horror of the Central Powers.

Unsurprisingly, the weather was to play an important part in the war on the Eastern Front. The severity of the winters and the incredible mud generated by the thaws limited the campaigning season to the period May–October. The sheer scale of this front dominated the thinking of the Central Powers, as they did not wish to repeat Napoleon’s failure by advancing too far into Russia. The plains of Poland ended at the Carpathian Mountains to the south, providing a natural defence for Austria-Hungary. To the east of the Carpathians lay the endless steppes of the Ukraine and the almost impassable Pripyat Marshes. Russia’s Baltic provinces, bordering East Prussia, were scantily developed, flat and largely featureless, but provided the shortest route to the capital Petrograd (as St Petersburg was renamed at the outbreak of war), and the bases of the Baltic Fleet.

**CHRONOLOGY**  
NB: The Western calendar is used.

**1914:**

1 August Germany declares war on Russia; mobilisation gathers momentum. 2 August Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich appointed Supreme Commander-in-Chief with Yanushkevitch as Chief of Staff and Danilov as Quartermaster General. STAVKA established at railway junction of Baranovichi. 7 August Russian 9th Army begins to assemble at Warsaw to invade Silesia. 15 August Russian 1st Army crosses into East Prussia from the east. 20 August Russian 2nd Army crosses into East Prussia from the south. 1st Army defeats German 1st Corps at Gumbinnen; German commander panics and is replaced by Hindenburg and Ludendorff. Russian 3rd Army crosses into Austria-Hungary. Austrian and Russian cavalry clash at Jaroslawice. 21 August Russian 8th Army crosses into Austria-Hungary. 23–24 August Russian 4th Army defeated by Austrians at Krasnik in southern Poland; 9th Army moves south; Silesian invasion postponed. 25–30 August: Battle of Tannenberg Russian 2nd Army encircled and destroyed in East Prussia. 26–28 August Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army defeated on River Zlota Lipa. 29–30 August Austro-Hungarian 4th Army
defeated at Gnila Lipa. 30-31 August Russian 4th and 5th Armies defeated at Zamosc-Komarow.

3 September Lemberg (Lvov) falls to Russian 3rd Army. Situation on Austro-Hungarian eastern flank becomes critical; to the north their advance towards Lublin stalls. 11 September Austro-Hungarian forces retreat towards Przemysl; bad weather slows Russian pursuit. Germans send troops to support Austria-Hungary. Mid-September: Battle of the Masurian Lakes in East Prussia; defeat and withdrawal of Russian 1st Army. 16 September First siege of Przemysl begins. 25 September German advance following Masurian Lakes victory is checked.

October German advance on Warsaw begins; Russian counter-attacks succeed, Germans begin to retreat on 20 October. At the same time Austro-Hungarians advance across River San, but by 26 October they are defeated and driven back. 14 October Siege of Przemysl raised. Late October By now Russia has deployed 82 infantry divisions against the Central Powers, with a further 16 defending Baltic and Black Sea coasts.

November Declaration of war on Turkey; Caucasian Front prepares for Turkish invasion. 11 November Russia’s planned invasion of East Prussia, betrayed by German breaking of wireless codes, is pre-empted by German attacks, but these are held. Invasion of Silesia indefinitely postponed. First serious discussions at STAVKA regarding withdrawal from Poland. 12 November Russian SW Front defeats Austro-Hungarians in Carpathian Mountains; advances on Cracow but is held on River Dunajec. Przemysl, with c120,000 Austro-Hungarian troops inside, is besieged again.

Early December Lodz falls to Germans, who are again held before Warsaw. First entrenching begins as weather deteriorates. Austro-Hungarian attempt to relieve Przemysl fails. Turkish invasion of the Caucasus ends in disaster at battle of Sakrimash.

1915:

Early January First recorded use of gas at Bolimov in Poland (effects negligible). 23 January Austro-Hungarians recapture Carpathian passes.

7 February German attack from East Prussia develops into Second Battle of the Masurian Lakes; Russian 10th Army destroyed. Germans begin siege of Osowiec, which is raised after a month. Russian counter-offensive in Carpathians and along the Dniester River pushes Austro-Hungarians back in snowstorms.

Early March Counter-offensive by remains of Russian 10th & 12th armies drives Germans back into East Prussia. NW Front stabilises but its commander, Gen.Ruzski, resigns as he is allowed neither to invade East Prussia nor to withdraw from Poland. 22 March Przemysl falls to Russians who take over 100,000 prisoners. End March Gen.M.V.Alexeyev replaces Ruzski and adopts his ideas.

April Continuing success of Ivanov’s SW Front renders Austria-Hungary’s situation critical. To
relieve pressure Germans advance against thinly defended Courland (western Latvia). 10 April Ivanov halts SW Front’s progress and calls for reinforcements.

2 May Germans open major offensive between Gorlice and Tarnów with (for the Eastern Front) unprecedented weight of artillery support. Brunt of German attack directed at Russian 3rd Army – short of artillery ammunition and poorly entrenched. 10 May After losing nearly 200,000 men and 140 guns, 3rd Army is given permission to retreat to River San. 16–19 May Austro-German troops attack River San positions. Russian 9th Army attacks and overruns much of the Bukovina. 23 May Italy joins the Allies (this does not immediately affect Austria-Hungary’s strategy). 20–25 May Russians hold on the San, but 9th Army retreats to River Dniester.

4 June Przemysł recaptured by Austro-Hungarians. Gen. Alexeyev ordered by STAVKA to defend Courland; German advance stopped.

Mid-June Central Powers resume offensive which, because of artillery tactics employed, is known as ‘Mackenson’s wedge’. Russian Minister of War Gen. V.A. Sukhomlinov arrested for ‘treasonable negligence’ and replaced by Gen. A.A. Polivanov. 20 June STAVKA orders retreat from Galicia. 22 June Lemberg recaptured by Austro-Hungarians. The six-week Gorlice-Tarnów offensive has cost Russia c. 300,000 men and 224 guns. STAVKA decides to defend Polish fortress line.

13 July German attacks in Courland and northern Poland make slow progress for heavy casualties. 15 July Premature Austro-Hungarian advance beaten at second battle of Krasnik. Third battle of Krasnik brings Austrian success; Lublin and Cholm fall by end of July. 19 July Gen. Alexeyev given permission to abandon Warsaw, and on the 22nd the Russians begin to retire from both northern and southern Poland.

5 August Warsaw occupied by Central Powers. 7 August With Oświęcim fortress as the hinge, Russian forces retire towards Brest-Litovsk, pursued by Germans under Falkenhayn. Accompanied by hundreds of thousands of refugees the Russians retreat, ‘scorching the earth’ as they do so.

Appeals for help to Western Allies are ignored. 15 August Under political pressure to defend Baltic coastline and route to Russia’s capital Petrograd, Guards Army is moved to defend this area from seaborne attack. 17 August STAVKA divides war zone into three fronts: Northern, North-Western and South-Western. 18 August Kovno fortress falls to Germans with loss of 1,300 guns. 20 August Novo-Georgievsk fortress falls with loss of 1,680 guns. 21 August Oświęcim and Kovel fall. STAVKA relocates to Mogilev. 24 August Brest-

The realities of war: wounded men are being helped aboard a hospital train. The battered appearance of their dress is a far cry from the studio portraits of 1914. The medical attendant on the train is wearing a fleece cap with cockade; the side flaps could be let down to protect the ears – cf Plate D.3. The second and fourth casualties from the left are wearing peakless field caps, the third a black fleece cap, possibly of natural wool. The majority of medical personnel wore Red Cross brassards. Wealthy individuals privately supported many hospital trains.
Litovsk fortress abandoned. End August Austro-Hungarian ‘Black-Yellow’ offensive takes railway junction of Lutsk.

1 September The Tsar takes the role of Supreme Commander-in-Chief and appoints Grand Duke Nicholas to the Viceroyalty of the Caucasus. Gen.Alexeyev becomes Tsar’s Chief of Staff, and effective commander of Russian armed forces. 18 September Vilna falls to Germans.

22 September ‘Black-Yellow’ offensive halted by Gen.Brusilov’s Russian 8th Army; SW Front stabilises. 26 September On North and NW Fronts Russian resistance hardens and German attacks are called off. Both sides entrench as Central Powers consolidate their gains.

October Russians lose the first battle of Lake Narotch. Mid-October Central Powers, aided by Bulgaria, invade Serbia. Russians reorganise. The length of the Eastern Front has been cut from 1,700 to 1,000 miles; domestic production of munitions is growing and supply is improving. 1,000,000 refugees have moved into the Russian heartland, as have strategic industrial concerns.

November STAVKA discusses possible seaborne invasion of Bulgaria. When the admirals refuse, Gen.Alexeyev threatens to turn Black Sea Fleet into ‘an infantry brigade’. His threat has no effect, and he proceeds to create ‘Army of Descent’ around core of 7th Army based near Odessa.

December Measures to replace heavy losses among officer corps lead to recruitment of many disaffected men, who are frequently put in charge of depot units in Kiev, Moscow, and Petrograd. Russia extracts promises that during 1916 Western Allied efforts will be synchronised and support given at times of crisis. 27 December Russia launches limited offensive in the Bukovina in support of Serbia. Although a failure, it is carefully analysed by staff officers of SW Front with a view to incorporating lessons into new tactical doctrine.

1916:

January Gen.Alexeyev announces a front line strength of 2,000,000 men. February Turkish city-fortress of Erzurum falls to Russians. 21 February Start of German offensive at Verdun, France. 24 February STAVKA considers Lake Narotch as site of next offensive, to take place in April.

March Trabzon taken by Russians following combined land and sea operations. 18–19 March Russians attack at Lake Narotch in response to French requests for diversion. Results of bombardment poor due to saturated ground; infantry attack as weather deteriorates. End March Narotch operation called off after 120,000 casualties.

April Germans recapture ground lost at Lake Narotch. Gen.A.A.Brusilov becomes commander of SW Front. 14 April STAVKA decides main offensive of 1916 to be carried out by W Front with subsidiary operations by SW Front.

20 May Success of Austro-Hungarian offensive in Italy leads Italian king to appeal to Tsar for help. Western Front’s preparations are incomplete but Brusilov agrees to attack early.

Following the loss of Poland and the advance of the Austro-Germans Tsar Nicholas took personal command. Effectively the power rested with his Chief-of-Staff Gen.M.V.Alexeyev, between September 1915 and May 1917 when he was replaced by Brusilov. Alexeyev came from a very humble background, and his father had risen from serf to officer; a gifted administrator, he had ‘only the good of Russia at heart’. During the summer of 1915 STAVKA relocated to Mogilev, where it was to remain until the end of the war.
4 June Start of the ‘Brusilov Offensive’. All four armies of SW Front – 8th, 9th, 7th & 11th – bombard Austro-Hungarian lines; innovative Russian artillery fire plan causes chaos as Russians breach first and second Austro-Hungarian lines. 5 June 8th Army breaks Austro-Hungarian third line. 6 June Austro-Hungarian 4th & 7th Armies near to collapse. 9 June Austro-Hungarian 7th Army retreats into the Bukovina. 12 June Brusilov halts advance after taking c200,000 prisoners and 216 guns. 24 June Austro-Hungarian offensive in Italy is called off; Central Powers counter-attacks on River Stokhid fail.

1 July In France, British offensive on the Somme begins. 2 July Main Russian attacks by W Front begin; by 8 July Russian casualties reach 80,000 for negligible gains. 3 July General Brusilov attacks again, driving back German 1st Army.

Mid-July In France, Germans call off Verdun attacks. General Brusilov is given more troops but, due to court intrigue, does not have authority over the Guards Army. 28 July Start of series of suicidal attacks through marshes and swamps near Kovel, in which Guards Army is decimated.

August Russian 8th Army continues advance westwards, but supply lines grow longer and resistance hardens. 9th Army drives into the Bukovina; 8th and 9th Armies take Halicz. End August Romania declares war on Central Powers and invades Transylvania. By this time Central Powers losses stand at over 500,000, and Austro-Hungarian troops are being transferred from Italy. However, Brusilov’s ‘Broad Front’ approach has been discontinued in favour of the ‘Narrow Front’ as used with such disastrous consequences at Kovel.

September General Alexeyev sends one cavalry and two infantry divisions to support Romania. 6 September Central Powers move against Romania from the south. 15 September Romanians move troops from Transylvania to the south.

3 October Russo-Romanian offensive against Bulgaria fails. 6 October Central Powers re-occupy Transylvania; end of Russian offensive in the Bukovina. 21 October Central Powers, mainly Bulgarian and Turkish units, drive back Romanian and Russian troops in southern Romania.

End October General Alexeyev sends Russian reinforcements to Romania; Bulgarian-Turkish advance halted.

November Austro-German troops break through Carpathian passes.

23 November Central Powers cross the River Danube.

December Romanian counter-attack fails and army falls back into Moldavia. 7 December Romanian capital Bucharest falls to Central Powers. End December Romanian line stabilises along River Siret.

1917:

Early January Russians in de facto control of Romanian Army; Romanian Front created.

January Russian NW Front launches successful operation near Mitau on Baltic Sea. Discussions at STAVKA regarding offensive on SW Front and radical reorganisation of armed forces. Inter-Allied conference reiterates policy of mutual support and promises delivery of munitions, including heavy artillery and aircraft.
February–March Strikes and demonstrations in Petrograd are supported by replacement units in city; military and civilian authorities lose control. Councils known as Soviets spring up across Russia, acting as alternative, radical form of leadership.

12 March Provisional Government established in Petrograd; revolution accomplished with little bloodshed. 14 March Order No.1 issued by the Petrograd Soviet, dramatically reducing powers of officers, influences whole armed forces and leads to breakdown in discipline. 15 March Tsar abdicates in favour of his brother Mikhail, who rejects the throne. The Petrograd Soviet calls for an end to the war, and world revolution.

April Regimental revolutionary committees exert increasing power over military operations and appointments. The front remains quiet as the Central Powers observe the situation. 16 April V.I.Lenin, leader of the Bolshevik party, returns from exile to Petrograd and calls for ‘Bread, Peace and Land’. 30 April To secure financial and military aid from the West, Miliukov, for the Provisional Government, declares intention to continue fighting. (He is forced to resign on 18 May.) Russian activity on the Caucasian Front ceases due to supply crisis.

May The charismatic Alexander Kerenski becomes Minister of War. Fighting again breaks out at the front. Brusilov replaces Alexeyev as Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Russians withdraw in Anatolia.

June Preparations for summer offensive on SW Front stepped up in attempt to emulate success of ‘Brusilov Offensive’ of previous year.

1 July Start of Russian summer offensive, which becomes known as the ‘Kerenski Offensive’. July Under the greatest weight of shells used by Russian artillery during the war the defences of forces facing SW Front crumble. Russian 7th & 11th Armies advance through 30km breach towards Lemberg. Both W & NW Fronts attack in support. However, within a few days morale erodes; when facing anything but negligible opposition troops refuse to attack, or withdraw. 19 July German counter-offensive; Russian troops fall back, losing cohesion and discipline.

1 August Gen.L.G.Kornilov replaces Brusilov as Supreme Commander-in-Chief with intention of restoring discipline.

August The front line stabilises as Central Powers encounter firmer resistance, particularly on Romanian Front.

3 September Russian 12th Army abandons Riga on Baltic coast. 7–9 September Failure of ‘Kornilov’s Coup’, bungled attempt to overthrow Provisional Government; Kornilov imprisoned with other senior officers. 14 September Russia declares itself a republic.

12–19 October ‘Operation Albion’ – Germans take control of Gulf of Riga by capturing Moon and Oesel islands.
7 November Lenin leads Bolshevik-inspired coup in Petrograd which ousts the Provisional Government. Mid-November Kerenski fails to rally support for Provisional Government, and goes into exile. 18 November Declaration of Soldier’s Rights includes abolition of ranks and election of commanders. 20 November Trotsky, Commissar for Foreign Affairs, formally notifies Allied Powers of change of government and Decree of Peace. 21 November Fraternisation on all fronts is authorised by Krylenko, Commissar for War. 23 November Gradual demobilisation of the army is declared. 26 November Trotsky formally approaches Central Powers for an armistice.

3 December Gen. N. Dukhonin, last Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Russian Armed Forces, is murdered at Mogiliev by Red Guards. With authority collapsing, the army begins to drift home. 15 December Russia signs 30-day armistice with Central Powers.

1918:
January Peace talks with Central Powers begin at Brest Litovsk. 28 January Formation of Red Army announced. 18 February Frustrated by Russian negotiators, Central Powers advance along entire Eastern Front, occupying vast tracts of western Russia. 3 March Russia signs Treaty of Brest Litovsk and withdraws from the war.

ORGANISATION OF THE ARMY

In peacetime the empire was divided into 12 military districts, each under a commander-in-chief: St Petersburg, Vilna, Warsaw, Kiev, Odessa, Moscow, Kazan, the Caucasus, Turkestan, Omsk, Irkutsk, and the Pri-Amur. Russian land forces consisted of the Standing Army and the Imperial Militia (Opolchenie). The Standing Army comprised the regular army and its reserve; the Cossacks; and the ‘Alien’ troops (Innowoditsi) – these latter being non-Slavic Imperial subjects. The strength of the armed forces immediately prior to mobilisation was officially estimated at 1,423,000 men; after mobilisation was complete this would increase to some 5,000,000 – the Russian ‘steamroller’ which was relied upon to crush any opponent by sheer weight of numbers.

Liability for conscription began at the age of 21 and lasted until 43. The first three years (for the infantry and artillery) or four years (for other branches of service) were served with the colours; the next seven years were spent in the first class reserves, and the final eight in the second class. Men could also volunteer, in which case their conditions of service were privileged. Recruitment was in the main from the Russian, Christian population of the empire, thus excluding Moslems, who paid a tax in lieu. (Units referred to as ‘Finnish’ were Russian formations based in Finland, as the Finns themselves were exempted from conscription.) Generally 50 per cent of those called up in any year were exempted on physical, personal, economic or educational grounds; and retention of experienced men who could provide the NCO class was poor.
Cossacks served from 20 until 38, doing 12 years in the 'field class' — four years each in the first, second and third category regiments — and the remaining time in the reserve. The 'Alien' troops were volunteer irregular cavalry units recruited from Moslem tribes.

The Imperial Militia comprised the majority of the men granted exemption from the regular army between the ages of 21 and 43. The first category was used to strengthen or complete the Standing Army and was divided according to age. The second, less physically capable group, was used to form non-combatant units. Provision existed for the organisation of 640 battalions (druzhina) of militia. During the years preceding the revolution of March 1917 several million militiamen of all classes were mobilised.

**Infantry**

The 208 recruiting areas in Russia provided men for the 208 line infantry regiments. The Guard, Grenadiers, Rifles, artillery, cavalry, and engineers drew recruits from any district. The minimum height requirement was 5 feet and half an inch.

The field army was divided into 37 army corps: the Guard, the Grenadier, I to XXV, I to III Caucasian, I and II Turkestan, and I to V Siberian. These included all the infantry divisions with their attached artillery. The normal composition of an army corps was two infantry divisions, one division of light howitzers (two 6-gun batteries), and a battalion of sappers; the term division refers here to a half-regiment. An infantry division consisted of four regiments each of four battalions, and a field artillery brigade of six 8-gun batteries.

Of the 236 infantry regiments 12 were Guards and 16 Grenadiers. The Guards regiments were named, the Grenadiers numbered 1–16, and the Line named and numbered. The 4th or Caucasian Grenadier Division was permanently stationed in the Caucasus.

An infantry regiment was made up of four battalions each of four companies, plus a non-combatant company. Infantry regiments were allotted serially to divisions; thus the 17th Infantry Division would include the 65th to 68th Regiments inclusively. A wartime company would number 240 men and four or five officers. At regimental level machine gun, communications and scouting detachments, known as kommandos, brought total regimental strength up to about 4,000 men. In 1914 each regiment had eight machine guns; 14 mounted messengers and 21 telephonists in the communications detachment; and 64 specially trained scouts including four cyclists.

Infantry regiments from Siberia and Turkestan were known as Rifles, but organised like other infantry regiments with four battalions. The Rifle regiments
proper’ had only two battalions each. There were four Guards Rifle regiments forming the Guards Rifle Brigade; 20 Line Rifle regiments numbered 1–20, forming the 1st to 5th Rifle Brigades; 12 ‘Finnish’ Rifle regiments numbered 1–12, forming the 1st to 3rd Finland Rifle Brigades; and eight Caucasian Rifle regiments numbered 1–8, forming the 1st and 2nd Caucasian Rifle Brigades. The 22 Turkestan Rifle regiments were numbered 1–22; the 1st to 4th Turkestan Rifle Brigades had four battalions each, the 5th and 6th three. Each Rifle brigade contained a Rifle Artillery Brigade of three 8-gun batteries. By 1914 the title Rifle signified nothing more than the unit’s historical role.

On mobilisation, 35 reserve infantry divisions were formed numbered 53rd to 84th, and 12th to 14th Siberian. The establishment of these divisions was identical to that of the regulars, though their artillery was often equipped with less modern ordnance.

Cossack infantry were known as plastuni. Initially only the Kuban Cossack Host raised infantry, but the practice later spread to others. They were organised into brigades each of six battalions, without artillery. In 1914 three brigades were assigned to the Caucasian Front.

Cavalry

Russia had the largest cavalry establishment of all the belligerent nations in 1914. There were four groups: the Guard (see below under ‘Elite Units’), the Line, the Cossacks and the Alien troops. Line cavalry and Cossack regiments were all composed of six squadrons, giving a combat strength of about 850 men; a Cossack squadron was known as a sotnia. Although the historical lancer, hussar and dragoon titles were retained they had no tactical significance. Specialist detachments for scouting, communications and demolition were as per the infantry. Attached to each division was a machine gun detachment of eight guns.

In 1914 there were 20 dragoon, 17 lancer and 18 hussar regiments of the line. On mobilisation 24 cavalry and Cossack divisions were formed, and an additional 11 independent cavalry and Cossack brigades. Cavalry divisions were formed of two brigades, the first grouping a dragoon and a lancer regiment, the second a hussar and a Cossack regiment. The regiments were organised serially; thus the 3rd Cavalry Division would include the 3rd Dragoon, Lancer and Hussar Regiments. There was also a dragoon division with the Army of the Caucasus, the Caucasian Cavalry Division.

Cossacks

The Cossacks were divided into two broad groups: those of the steppe, Stepnoy, and those of the Caucasus, Karakas. The Caucasians split into two voiskos (‘Hosts’), the Kuban and the Terek; the Steppe, into the Don,
Siberia, Orenburg, Ural, Astrakhan, Trans-Baikal, Semirechchi, Amur and Ussurski voiskos. The largest Host was that of the Don.

The first category regiments were maintained in peacetime, the second and third categories being activated when the need arose. The Don Host raised 54 regiments, the Kuban 33, the Orenburg 16, and the others in proportion to their populations. Cossack divisions were created in the main from a single Host, but Combined Divisions formed from different Hosts were raised during the war. Second category squadrons were allotted to infantry divisions for use as escorts, messengers, local security troops, etc. Some 50 batteries of Cossack horse artillery were raised, mainly from the Don Host.

The Alien cavalry were volunteers: the Daghestan Native Cavalry Regiment, the Ossetian Cavalry Division (half-regiment), and the Turcoman Cavalry Division. The first two were Moslem tribesmen from the Caucasus, the latter from the Tekin tribe of Turkestan. During August 1914 it was decided to raise a new cavalry division of six regiments among the Moslem peoples of the Caucasus; this Caucasian Native Cavalry Division was nicknamed the ‘Savage’ or ‘Wild’ Division, and earned a high reputation (see below under ‘Elite Units’).

Artillery
The artillery was divided into specialist types: field and mountain; horse and horse-mountain; field howitzer and heavy.

Field artillery was grouped into brigades of two divizions each with three 8-gun batteries. A brigade was allocated to each infantry division; this gave three Guard brigades, four Grenadier (1–3 and the Caucasian), 52 line brigades, 11 Siberian Rifle, five Rifle, three Finnish Rifle, two Caucasian Rifle and six Turkestan Rifle brigades.

Mountain batteries were distributed to the Caucasus, Siberia, Finland, Turkestan and Kiev for use in the Carpathian Mountains. The mountain guns could be drawn or broken down for pack transportation.

Horse and horse-mountain artillery was organised into divizions of two 6-gun batteries, other than in the Guard, and were attached one to each cavalry division. The three horse-mountain units were distributed one each to the Caucasus (Caucasian Cavalry Division), Siberia (Ussuriv Cavalry Brigade) and Kiev (IXth Army Corps).

There were 35 divizions of field howitzers (mortaria) each of two 6-gun batteries. One each was allotted to the Guard, the Grenadiers, each of the 25 numbered army corps, 1st–3rd Caucasian, 1st–5th Siberian, and one battery with the 1st Turkestan Rifle Artillery Divizion.

What heavy artillery there was was organised into seven divizions each of three 6-gun batteries. Divizions 1–5 were stationed in the west and the Siberian 1st and 2nd in the east. The first and second batteries in each unit were equipped with 6in. howitzers and the third with 4.2in. guns.
The establishment of fortress artillery was determined by the size of the fortress and the guns it mounted. A large base such as Vladivostock had two brigades, a smaller one a single company.

**Technical branches** included sapper, railway, and pontoon battalions, field and siege engineer parks, and wireless telegraph companies. The field engineers numbered 39 battalions, one for each army corps and two extra for the Siberian establishment. Other than the Guard engineer battalion (which had four), each battalion had three companies – one or two telegraph companies and a searchlight section.

**Wartime innovations**

The experience gained during the war caused organisational changes throughout the armed forces. Across the board technical equipment such as telephones became common at all levels. The number of machine guns was hugely increased by imports, captures and expanded domestic production, to the point where MG units organised themselves at almost local level.

Reform of the cavalry divisions was undertaken at the beginning of 1916, when each had attached to it an infantry battalion of three dismounted squadrons. Later in 1916 a reduction in the mounted strength of each cavalry and Cossack regiment from six to four squadrons was approved. The dismounted men were used to increase the infantry element to a three-battalion regiment. Artillery support for the cavalry was to be increased by the provision of howitzer battalions of eight guns – several hundred British 4.5in. howitzers were imported during that year with the promise of more to follow.

During winter 1916/17 STAVKA began reorganising the infantry, reducing the divisional establishment from 16 to 12 battalions and using the surplus to create some 60 new divisions, which were attached to existing corps as a third division. However, the major problem was shortage of divisional artillery; and to overcome this it was decided to reduce the numbers of field guns in passive areas and allocate the surplus to the new divisions. The artillery was to be provided with more heavy guns and these were to be assembled into a 46th Corps, to be known as TAON – the Cyrillic initials for Heavy Artillery on Special Duties. TAON was to be at the disposal of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief; equipment consisted of weapons of varying calibres, including many from France and Britain, which had agreed to give priority to their supply. These were scheduled to arrive during the early months of 1917.

**ELITE UNITS**

**Guards Corps/Special Army**

At the outbreak of the war the elite force of the army was the Guards Corps, a self-contained formation including units of all branches, with their own jealously guarded traditions. (Not all of these were based on their fighting record over 300 years – the Pavlovski Guards Regiment was notable for its recruitment of men with snub noses...)

The Guards infantry were divided into three divisions each of four regiments brigaded in pairs, the Guards Rifle Brigade of the 1st to 4th Regiments.
1st Guards Infantry Division
1st Brigade Preobrazhenski & Semenovski Guards Regts;
2nd Brigade Izmailovski & Egerski Guards Regts

2nd Guards Infantry Division
1st Brigade Moskovski & Grenadier Guards Regts;
2nd Brigade Pavlovski & Finlandski Guards Regts

3rd Guards Infantry Division
1st Brigade Litovski & Kekholmiski Guards Regts;
2nd Brigade St Petersburg (Petrograd, 1914) & Volynski Guards Regts.

The two Guards cavalry divisions each had three brigades. The Guards cavalry regiments were organised in four squadrons each of 150 men, other than the Horse Grenadiers and the Cossacks, which had six squadrons.

1st Guards Cavalry Division
1st Brigade Chevalier Guards Regt; Horse Guards Regt. 2nd Brigade His Majesty’s Cuirassier Guards Regt; Her Majesty’s Cuirassier Guards Regt.
3rd Brigade His Majesty’s Cossack Guards Regt; The Ataman’s, HH the Tsarevich’s Cossack Guards Regt (both these regiments recruited from the Don Host);
Combined Cossack Guards Regt (this unit was drawn from all the smaller Cossack Hosts in proportion to their populations).

2nd Guards Cavalry Division
1st Brigade Horse-Grenadier Guards Regt; Her Majesty’s Lancer Guards Regt
2nd Brigade Dragoon Guards Regt; His Majesty’s Hussar Guards Regt
3rd Brigade His Majesty’s Lancer Guards Regt; Grodno Hussar Guards Regt.

His Majesty’s Personal Escort, the Konvoy, recruited four squadrons, two each from the Kuban and the Terek Cossack Hosts.

The 1st to 3rd Guard Artillery Brigades were attached to the appropriate infantry divisions, the Rifle Artillery Brigade to the Guards Rifle Brigade. There were six 6-gun Guard Horse Artillery batteries, the sixth being the Don Cossack Guard Battery. The Guards Howitzer Divizion (of two 6-gun batteries) completed the artillery.

The Guard Eskipage or Crew, naval personnel drawn from the fleet to man the royal vessels, was expanded at the outbreak of war to form two battalions each of two companies; these were given infantry training and sent to the front.

By the summer of 1916 the 1st and 2nd Guards Infantry Divisions had been united to form the 1st Guard Corps, and the 3rd, the Rifles and the Eskipage, the 2nd Guard Corps. Each corps had an aviation detachment and a heavy artillery division. These corps were to be known, from 21 July 1916, as the Guards Army. However, following the losses sustained by the Guards during the Brusilov Offensive their numbers were supplemented with line army corps and the whole became in September 1916 the ‘Special Army’.

The military muscle behind the March 1917 revolution was provided by the reserve battalions of the Guard in Petrograd. Indeed, the Eskipage, led by its commander the Grand Duke Cyril Romanov, marched through Petrograd sporting red revolutionary cockades. The

In the summer of 1914 there was one aviation company for each of the 25 army corps, one each for the Guard and Grenadier corps, three Siberian companies and eight allocated to the fortresses. The number of aircraft available to the army was 244, the navy having only 20 or so. However, according to some estimates the Air Service had lost some 140 planes by the autumn of 1914, the inventory of the SW Front alone being reduced from 99 to 8 aircraft. By the end of 1914 Russia had established the so-called Air-Ships Squadron to operate the four-engined heavy bomber known as the Illya Muromets.

Although the air war over the Eastern Front was active and fierce it was a somewhat one-sided affair, dominated by the Central Powers. Russian production and repair facilities were limited; and between 1915 and the end of 1917 Russia imported, mainly from France, 1,800 aircraft and 4,000 engines. To ease production difficulties (continued opposite)
the Russians resorted to the expedient of using captured enemy aircraft; at one stage the XVIII Corps Aviation Company was operating exclusively with captured machines. On 9 December 1917 the Air Service had 579 operational aircraft.

OPPOSITE A typical imported scout type, a Morane ‘Parasol’ monoplane. Russia’s leading ace, Staff Capt. A.A. Kazakov (17 confirmed victories, but possibly as many as 32), flew an MSS as commander of the XIX Corps air squadron, and later a Nieuport 17 as CO of the 1st Fighter Group of four squadrons.

The pilot officer is dressed in the flying kit issued from 1913: cf Plate F4. The helmet is brown leather with the usual officer’s pattern cockade, the leather jacket is black, and the breeches are black piped red, indicating the Air Service’s origin as a part of the Engineers. A double-headed eagle of the Engineer pattern with a bronzed metal twin-bladed propeller was the shoulder strap badge for pilots; it was worn in gilt metal by observers. Other ranks had the same badge stencilled in brown on their shoulder straps.

personal bodyguard of the Tsar, the Konvoi, declared their allegiance to the new regime within days of the abdication, symbolically removing the Imperial monogram from their shoulder straps.

**Grenadier Platoons**

By the end of 1915 trench warfare led to the development of units which became known as ‘grenadiers’; but note that these had no connection with the traditional Grenadier Corps itself. The XXV Army Corps raised the original unit in late 1915. Such detachments were to be a fourth platoon in each company, consisting of ‘brave and energetic men’ armed with ten hand grenades, a shovel and wire-cutters. Other detachments were armed with revolvers, carbines, swords or short lances. The purpose of the grenadiers was to lead intelligence-gathering raids, assaults and counter-attacks. During assaults they were to be found operating with the sappers, infiltrating and expanding the gaps in the wire. The extent to which the grenadier platoon system was instituted throughout the army is difficult to gauge, but they were certainly established in the Special Army, the Grenadier Corps and the XXV Army Corps.

**St George’s Battalions**

Although not front line units, these hand-picked battalions were regarded as elite troops in that all ranks had to have been highly decorated: enlisted men with the St George’s Cross or Medal, officers with the Order of St George. Formed as part of the guard at STAVKA in 1916, the original battalion was increased to five during July 1917, stationed at Minsk, Kiev, Pskov and Odessa and at STAVKA. Their task evolved into that of instructors to the Storm Battalions and other volunteer units.

Their uniform was the standard field dress with distinctions in the colours of the Order of St George, orange and black, based on the uniform of the 13th Dragoons (itself named the ‘Military Order Regiment’). Officers had orange-piped breast pockets, breeches and cuffs; other ranks had orange-piped cuffs and breeches and also the front edge of the tunic. The officer’s cockade had the officers’ St George’s Cross superimposed, and other ranks’ their cross.

**‘Storm’ and ‘Death’ Battalions**

In the wake of the March Revolution the armed forces became a hotbed of political discussion, active warfare taking a back seat. However, this did not apply to all; and by May 1917 several proposals had been put to STAVKA to prevent the further deterioration of the forces. The impetus behind this movement came from the lower echelons and their suggestions were not always greeted with enthusiasm by higher command. However, it was decided to harness this enthusiasm, and various units were recruited during the build-up to the 1917 summer offensive.

There were two identifiable sources of such volunteers: troops already serving in combat units, and men either not in uniform or posted in rear areas. The second group was inspired to harness the revolutionary fervour of the population in support of what Kerenski called ‘the freest army in the world’. Recruiting was carried out by members of the fabulously titled ‘Executive Committee for the Formation of Revolutionary Battalions from the Rear’, and enjoyed the support of some leading generals – notably, Brusilov. During the next six
months 39 such battalions were formed. Some, such as those organised by cadet schools or combat formations (e.g. the 2nd Orenburg from Siberia), performed with great valour. Broadly speaking they were called ‘Storm Battalions’, ‘Shock Battalions’ or ‘Battalions of Death’. Their purpose was to group together volunteers who were prepared to attack, and so inspire their comrades to follow.

The 1st Storm or Shock Detachment was formed on the South-Western Front commanded by Gen.L.G.Kornilov. The unit consisted of two 1,000-man battalions with three machine gun teams of eight guns apiece, and one foot and one mounted scout detachment of 16 men each. It performed well during the summer offensive but sustained very heavy casualties. When Kornilov became Supreme Commander-in-Chief one of his first actions was to reorganise the 1st Shock Detachment into the Kornilov Storm Regiment of four battalions (see Plate H2). The combat record of the regiment was such that for an action on 16 August every man in its ranks was recommended for the St George’s Cross. Following the failure of Kornilov’s so-called putsch the regiment was renamed the 1st Russian Shock, and later the Slav Shock Detachment, the latter possibly in honour of the number of Czech members of the unit.

Women’s ‘Battalions of Death’ were also raised, but they were mainly a propaganda exercise. However, the remains of the 1st Women’s Battalion (see plate H4) provided the Provisional Government’s last line of defence outside the Winter Palace in November 1917 on the night of the Bolshevik coup. Naval ‘Battalions of Death’ (including one of women) were also raised, but details are scant.

The ‘Savage Division’

Following the success of native volunteer cavalry units during the Russo-Japanese War it was decided in August 1914 to recruit a six-regiment cavalry division from amongst the Moslem tribesmen of the Caucasus and the Tartars of Baku. The official title was the Caucasian Native Cavalry Division, but it was also known as the ‘Wild’ or ‘Savage Division’ – both for its ferocity in battle, and also because many Russians regarded Caucasians in that light. The Tsar’s brother, the Grand Duke Mikhail, commanded the division from 1914 to 1916. The organisation was only changed by the addition of a battalion of Ossetian rifle-men early in 1917.

1st Brigade Daghestan Regt, Kabardian Regt
2nd Brigade Chechen Regt, Tartar Regt
3rd Brigade Circassian Regt, Ingush Regt

A division of mountain horse artillery (two 6-gun batteries) provided support until 1916, when three
batteries of Don Cossack horse artillery were added. The machine gun detachment was drawn from sailors of the Black Sea Fleet, who wore the kaftan and fur or fleece cap but with naval badges of rank. The signallers, transferred from the engineers, wore the standard army field dress. The officers had transferred from other cavalry regiments and were allowed to wear the cap of their original regiment when off-duty.

The ‘Savages’ fought on the South-Western and Romanian Fronts until transferred to take part in the Kerenski Offensive of summer 1917 as part of the 3rd Cavalry Corps. After participating in the abortive Kornilov coup the division did not return to the front, and was finally sent home to demobilise later that year.

NON-RUSSIAN UNITS

Belgian

The stagnation on the Western Front made the armoured car units of both Britain and Belgium surplus to requirements. During summer 1915 the Russians requested that the Belgians transfer a unit to the Eastern Front, where there was a pressing need for such weapons. By December 1915 the Corps des Autos-Canon-Mitrailleuses Russie were parading for Nicholas II at Tsarskoe Selo. The vehicles were organised into a battery of two sections, each of five armoured cars – three Morris and two Peugeots – armed with 8mm machine guns and 37mm short guns. The men of all ranks were dressed in a mixture of Belgian and Russian uniform with rank distinctions worn on the shoulder straps. The other ranks wore volunteer cords on their shoulder straps, which entitled them to certain privileges. Contemporary photographs show that the Belgian stable-cap was commonly worn. The Corps fought on the South-Western Front under 9th Army until summer 1917. The majority of the 360 men returned to Belgium via Vladivostock during summer 1918.

British

Shortly after the arrival of the Belgians a British armoured car unit landed at Alexandrovsk (Murmansk) on New Year’s Day 1916. Known as the Russian Armoured Car Division, Royal Naval Air Service, it was led by Commander Locker-Lampson MP. During the summer and autumn of 1916 it served on the Caucasian Front fighting the Turks, and gained valuable experience before being transferred to the South-Western Front in Romania, where it went into action in December. Relocated in June 1917 as part of the build-up for the Russian summer offensive, the RNAS unit participated in both the advance and the retreat. The vehicles were mostly machine-gun armed Lancasters, supplemented by Pierce-Arrow armoured lorries mounting 3-pounder guns. Following the debacle of the Kerenski Offensive the British vehicles were supplemented with Fiat armoured cars and lorries. In autumn 1917 the majority of the men were withdrawn via Kursk and Archangel to Britain.

During 1917 a mission was sent by the Royal Flying Corps to train Russian air and ground crews in the use of British aircraft supplied to Russia. Allocated to the South-Western Front in time for the Kerenski Offensive, they were withdrawn in December 1917. (A French aviation training mission was also operating in the same area at the time.)
A number of privately funded, voluntary medical units from Britain were active with the Russian army until the end of 1917.

* * *

The units formed from Russia’s subject races rarely wore anything to distinguish them from other Imperial troops. The grudging manner in which they were raised typified the Imperial government’s distrust of anything that hinted at nationalist aspirations. The majority of these formations were no more than tokens until the March Revolution ushered in a more liberal atmosphere. Even units formed from prisoners taken from the Austro-Hungarian army were treated in the same manner.

**Polish**

Russia ruled the greater part of Poland, and in October 1914 unenthusiastic permission was given to raise a Polish Legion for service with the Russian army. However, it was relegated to the status of a reserve infantry battalion and two squadrons of lancers. Due to the manpower shortage it was agreed, in January 1917, to expand these units to a Rifle division and a lancer regiment. During the summer offensive of 1917 they were held in reserve and some elements were used to control the retreat that followed.

The Provisional Government further upgraded the Poles to an army corps, which became I Polish Corps in September 1917. The corps was based in Byelorussia when the treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed in March 1918. The majority of the Polish troops surrendered to the Germans, though some fought with the anti-Soviet forces in southern Russia during 1918.

**Latvian**

As part of Russia’s Baltic territories Latvia was directly in the line of Germany’s advance up the Baltic coast in 1915. On 1 August 1915 nine Latvian Rifle battalions were raised, with Latvian officers. During 1916 the battalions were grouped first into a single brigade and then into two, each of two regiments. By the beginning of 1917 the brigades were consolidated into a division as part of VI Siberian Corps on the Northern Front. Throughout their service in the Russian army the Latvians fought on their home territory. However, the division fell under the influence of Bolshevik agitators and played a significant role during the Civil War as part of the Red Army.

**Serbian**

During late 1915 and early 1916 permission was granted to form a Serbian infantry division from among the Slavs captured from the Austro-Hungarian army. The division was assembled near Odessa and numbered some 10,000 men and officers.
Czech

Probably the most famous of the ‘foreign’ units, the Czech Legion was raised in August 1914. Initially consisting of four companies, the unit was committed to the Galician theatre. The Tsarist government did not encourage its expansion until late 1915, when it became the Czechoslovak Rifle Regiment with eight rifle companies and a trench mortar company, some 1,600 men in total. Following the March Revolution the Provisional Government authorised the expansion of the regiment to divisional strength by recruiting from amongst Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war. By the time it went into action during the Kerenki Offensive the ‘Czechoslovak Army Corps’ numbered 7,000.

UNIFORMS & PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Until the early years of the 20th century boots and clothing had been made by the troops themselves from materials provided by the government. This ‘regimental economy’ led to the waste of much time that should have been used in training; and poor quality control had left many soldiers convinced that the government was indifferent towards them. Following the Russo-Japanese War it was decided to phase this system out. By 1909 some 50 per cent of production had been taken over by contractors theoretically supervised by the Quartermaster’s Department. Officers provided for themselves from military outfitters in the large cities, and the quality of their uniforms was consequently much better than that of the men’s.

Cossacks were also expected to provide their own uniforms, as were the other irregular cavalry formations. The service dress of Caucasian Cossacks was based on their traditional clothing, more native Caucasian than Russian in style (see Plate E3).

Clothing the Imperial Militia was the responsibility of the local government in the relevant district. The only regulations were that the men had to be uniformly dressed; and that scarlet shoulder straps and the ‘militia cross’ on the service cap (furashka) were compulsory. Consequently, certainly during the early months of the war, many men were dressed in obsolete clothing such as the white shirt-tunic and dark green breeches (shamwari).

Parade uniforms and other orders of dress would occupy volumes in themselves, therefore any reference to them will be limited to those items that were worn by the combat troops – e.g., it was common for officers, and not only in 1914, to wear their parade caps in the field.

Service dress

In 1907 khaki of a light olive-green shade was introduced as the service dress colour for all ranks
Siberian infantry regiments were all termed Rifles. The private shown here is dressed for cold weather in the shinel greyish-brown greatcoat with the bashlik cowl neatly arranged across his chest. The headgear is the Siberian fleece hat, much 'woolier' than the papahta. Collar patches, cowl piping and shoulder strap piping all show well in this excellent portrait.

### Table A: Guards tunic piping & lace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Cuffs:</th>
<th>Pocket &amp; front:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Division</td>
<td>1st Regt: crimson; 2nd: white</td>
<td>1st to 4th Regts: crimson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Division</td>
<td>1st Regt: scarlet; 2nd: light blue; 3rd: white; 4th: dark green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Division</td>
<td>1st Regt: yellow; 2nd: light blue; 3rd: white; 4th: dark green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guard Foot Artillery:

- **Cuffs only:**
  - 1st Bde: white; 2nd: blue; 3rd: yellow
- **Guard Horse Arty:** all piping black
- (Among Guard Cossack units only the Combined Cossack Regt had cuff lace, in yellow.)

### Table B: Cavalry breeches stripes

- **Guard cavalry:** Scarlet, except:
  - Hussars: white
  - His Majesty's Cuirassiers: yellow
  - Her Majesty's Cuirassiers: light blue

- **Line cavalry:**
  - Dragoons:
    - Scarlet: 1st, 3rd, 4th, 9th, 10th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th Regts
    - Light blue: 6th, 11th, 12th Regts
    - Yellow: 5th, 7th, 8th, 20th Regts
    - Light green: 14th Regt
    - Pink: 2nd Regt
  - Lancers:
    - Scarlet: 1st, 5th, 9th, 15th, 16th, 17th Regts
    - Light blue: 2nd, 6th, 12th, 14th Regts
    - Yellow: 4th, 8th, 10th, 13th Regts
    - White: 3rd, 7th, 11th Regts
  - Hussars:
    - Yellow: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 16th, 17th Regts
    - White: 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 18th Regts
  - Dagesthan Cavalry Regt: blue breeches with scarlet stripe
  - Ossetian Division: plain
  - Turcoman Division: yellow stripe
bright metallic lace. The ranks were distinguished by a system of metallic stars and lengthways lines of the base colour, and the unit and branch of service by additional insignia – see Tables F, G & H, pages 33 & 35.

The breeches were cut to fit comfortably inside the boots; they were dark ‘Tsar’s green’ for infantry and other dismounted troops. Cavalry officers wore blue-grey, or sometimes regimentally coloured breeches – crimson for hussars and dark blue for all others. Cavalry breeches were striped in the regimental colours – see Table B, page 22. Unstriped khaki breeches were clearly more practical in the field and became almost universally worn as the war dragged on. Mountain artillerymen wore plain black leather breeches.

Each Steppe Cossack Host wore a distinguishing colour; this was particularly noticeable as a broad stripe on their dark blue breeches. See Table C, this page.

Other ranks had been issued a soldier’s version of the officer’s tunic, without breast pockets, until 1912. Officially discontinued, it was, however, seen in use throughout the war. The almost universal wartime garment was a pull-over shirt-tunic, the gymnastiorka, based on the smock-like shirt of the Russian peasant and worn untucked over the breeches, with knee-high boots and peaked cap.

There were several versions of the shirt-tunic, produced both by outside contractors and the regimental economies. Usually such variations took the form of the addition of one or two breast pockets, and the position of the front fastening – either vertically from the centre of the collar or offset to either side. There were normally five small front buttons of horn or metal. Summer and winter shirt-tunics were produced in cotton or wool respectively. Cuffs were either plain, or shirt-fashion with two buttons. The only line infantry who wore cuff lace were the machine gunners and the scouts, in crimson and green respectively. Guards infantry wore cuff lace to identify their division, and lace down the front opening to identify the regiment within the division – the colours followed those of their officers’ cuff and pocket flap piping respectively, as in Table A.

Shoulder straps indicated rank, branch of service, unit number and other information. The shoulder straps were reversible, one side khaki and the other appropriately coloured. They were worn on both greatcoat and tunic. See Tables E & F, pages 24 & 33, for basic details.

In bad weather all ranks and most branches wore the greatcoat, shinek, a cap of natural fleece or artificial astrakhan lamb’s wool, papaha, and a shawl-like cowl, bashlyk. In addition the Cossacks and other irregular cavalry of the Caucasus wore a sleeveless black cloak of felted goat or camel hair, the burka.

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A very young member of the 23rd Engineer Bn; the number and the arm-of-service badge can be seen on the shoulder straps. His gymnastiorka is the cotton M1914 pattern.

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**Table C: Cossack distinctions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host</th>
<th>Trouser stripe</th>
<th>Shoulder strap/ piping</th>
<th>Collar patch/ piping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>dk-blue/scarlet</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orenburg</td>
<td>light blue</td>
<td>light blue</td>
<td>light blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ural</td>
<td>crimson</td>
<td>crimson</td>
<td>crimson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siberian</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astrakhan</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amur</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>green/ yellow</td>
<td>green/ yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samarchensk</td>
<td>crimson</td>
<td>crimson</td>
<td>crimson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ussuri</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>yellow/ green</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-Balkal</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot Artillery</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>black/scarlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse Artiy</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>dark blue</td>
<td>dark blue?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuban*</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terek*</td>
<td>light blue</td>
<td>light blue</td>
<td>light blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuban Inf.</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>crimson</td>
<td>black/ crimson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"* Inch wide stripes only"

Each regiment had an individual monogram worn on the shoulder straps; to list them all here would be impossible, but some examples (of the Latin letters which resemble the Cyrillic initials) are:

Kb = Küber, O = Orenburg, y = Ussurski, A = Amur,
Cm = Semiretchi, 3b = Trans-Balkal, Br = Terek. The Don units displayed a Cyrillic D, to distinguish them from Dragoons, which used the Latin initial.
The greatcoat was made of blue-grey cloth for officers and coarse grey-brown wool for other ranks. It was double-breasted, with a fall collar, fastening on the right with hooks-and-eyes. An earlier model had a single row of six metal buttons down the front; although manufacture was discontinued before the war they were worn as long as stocks lasted. The coat was generously cut, and gathered at the back by a half-belt and two buttons. For dismounted men the greatcoat reached halfway between knee and ankle, with a loosely sewn turn-back hem which could be turned down in extreme weather. Mounted troops wore a longer type, with cuffs curving to a point at front and back; one of these was traditionally worn unsewn, to carry messages. Coloured collar patches were applied to the greatcoat; in some units these were edged with coloured piping to identify the regiment and branch of service — see Table D, this page. Officers’ and NCOs’ patches bore a button in regimental metal.

The peaked (visored) cap was available in both coloured and service versions. The service type was khaki with a black peak — this was painted green in the field. Officers and mounted personnel had chin straps, others did not.

The basic shade of the coloured version for dismounted units was dark green. In the Guards the band was coloured in regimental sequence within the division — red, blue, white and green for the 1st to 4th Regiments. The Grenadiers and Line infantry used the same system. The band and crown seam were piped in red. The artillery and technical branches had a black band, and scarlet piping around the band.

### Table D: Greatcoat collar patches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>patch</th>
<th>edging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Guards Inf Div:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Regt</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Regt</td>
<td>blue</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Regt</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Regt</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Guards Inf Div:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Regt</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Regt</td>
<td>blue</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Regt</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Regt</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Guards Inf Div:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Regt</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Regt</td>
<td>blue</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Regt</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Regt</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Rifles:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Regt</td>
<td>crimson</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Regt</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>crimson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Regt</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Regt</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Cavalry:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(regimental colours)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Cossacks:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(regimental colours)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Artillery:</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Engineers:</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st–4th Grenadier Divs, &amp; all Line Inf Divs:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Regt</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Regt</td>
<td>blue</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Regt</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Regt</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Rifles:</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>crimson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Cavalry:</td>
<td>(regimental colours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Artillery:</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Engineers:</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table E: Other ranks’ shoulder strap colours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>coloured side</th>
<th>piping, khaki side</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guard Infantry</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>regimental (Table A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Rifles</td>
<td>crimson</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Cavalry</td>
<td>as breeches stripe, regimental piping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Cossacks</td>
<td>regimental colours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Arty.</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Engr.</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Gren Div</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Gren Div</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Gren Div</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Gren Div</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Inf Divs:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Bde</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Bde</td>
<td>blue</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Rifles</td>
<td>crimson</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Cavalry</td>
<td>as breeches stripe, piped:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragoons</td>
<td></td>
<td>dark green or white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancers</td>
<td></td>
<td>dark blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hussars</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Arty.</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Engr.</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gran.Arty.</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gran.Engr.</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cossacks (Table C)</td>
<td></td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagehan Cav</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turcoman Cav</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STAFF
1: Captain, General Staff, 1917
2: General of Artillery Irmanov, 1914
3: Adjutant General of Cavalry Brusilov, 1916
4: Colonel, medical service, 1915-16
GUARDS
1: Staff Captain, Grodno Life Guard Hussar Regt, 1915
2: Private, Semenovski Life Guard Inf Regt, 1914
3: Cossack, Ataman's (Tsarevitch's)
   Life Guard Cossack Regiment, 1917
4: Volunteer, Her Majesty's
   Life Guard Lancer Regt, 1916
INFANTRY
1: Lieutenant-Colonel, 94th Yeniseiski Regt, 1914
2: Private, 404th Kamyshinskyi Regt (Opolchenie), 1915
3: Senior NCO, machine gun *kommando*, 8th Moscow Grenadier Regt, 1917
4: Senior private, grenadier platoon,
   4th Rifle Bde (‘Iron Brigade’), 1916
LINE CAVALRY
1: Bombardier Layer, 20th Horse Artillery, 1915
2: Captain, 5th Alexandrovskaia Hussar Regt
   ('immortal Hussars'), 1916-17
3: Trooper, 16th Tverskaia Dragoon Regt, 1915-17
COSSACKS

1: Cossack, 1st Argun Regt, Trans-Baikal Host
2: Cossack, Kuban Cossack infantry
3: Lieutenant, 2nd Volgski Regiment, Terek Host
4: Warrant Officer, 17th Don Cossack Regt

General Baklanov, 1914
SPECIAL TROOPS
1: Armoured car driver, 7th Automobile Machine Gun Platoon, 1915
2: Stretcher bearer, 1915–17
3: Regimental Orthodox priest
4: Pilot officer, Aviation Service, 1914
5: Cyclist, 3rd Bicycle Company, 1915–17
NATIONAL TROOPS
1: Private, 5th Latvian Rifle Regt, 1916-17
2: Trooper, Turkmens Horse Half-Regt, 1914-15
3: Trooper, 'Savage Division', 1914-17
4: Lieutenant, Polish Lancers, 1917
ELITE UNITS 1917–18
1: Lieutenant, Shock Bn of Rear Echelon Volunteers, 1917
2: NCO, 1st (Kornilov's) Shock Regt, 1917
3: Russian 'Legion of Honour'; France, 1917–18
4: 1st Women's Death Bn, 1917
5: 2nd Vol.Det. of Crippled Warriors, 1917
1A: Shock Bn of Rear Echelon Volunteers

5A: Committee for Recruiting Disabled Soldiers
6: Reval Naval Shock Bn
7: St George's Bn, STAVKA
8: 1st St George's Bn, Kiev
9: Death Bns
10: Shock Bns
and crown. The permutations of the coloured cap in the cavalry branch were virtually endless, based on individual regimental colours; for instance, in Line lancer regiments the base colour was blue with the band and crown piping as the trouser stripe.

Pressed metal cockades were worn at the front centre of the cap band. There were three qualities, for officers, NCOs and enlisted men; the colours were the Romanov orange, black and white. Militia units wore the ‘Opolchenie cross’ above the cockade. The cockade was also worn on fleece caps which were the standard winter headgear for the army. Siberian units and other groups wore variations on it – sometimes larger, darker and shaggier, or smaller like the kubanka of the Kuban Cossacks, which came into use due to a shortage of material.

**Personal equipment**

In 1912 the officer’s field kit was designed around a brown Sam Browne-style belt, with two braces worn vertically at the front and crossed at the back. The sword hung from the left hip in the Oriental manner. On the left strap was a whistle, on the right side a pistol holster. Map cases and binoculars, often privately purchased, completed the outfit. When mounted the greatcoat was strapped to the front of the saddle. Havesters were usually carried with the baggage.

Other ranks’ equipment consisted of a leather waist belt, white for the Guards and brown for all other troops, supporting on each side of the belt plate 30-round ammunition pouches, and on the right side the Linnemann entrenching tool slung with the handle down. Suspended over the right shoulder was a waterproof

Table F: Shoulder strap devices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>colour</th>
<th>device</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corps staff</td>
<td>orange</td>
<td>Corps no., Roman numerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line inf.</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>unit no. or monogram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclists</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>unit no., &amp; badge of crossed rifles on bicycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine guns</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>unit no., &amp; machine gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gren.inf.</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>monogram only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gren arty.</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>grenade on crossed cannons, unit no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ri.RT.</td>
<td>crimson</td>
<td>unit no. or monogram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rifle Art.</td>
<td>crimson</td>
<td>(as Artillery)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>lt.blue</td>
<td>category initial, unit no., or monogram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cossacks</td>
<td>dk.blue</td>
<td>Voronko initial, unit no. or monogram (see Table C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artillery</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td>crossed cannons, bde no. in Roman numerals, monogram if appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortress arty.</td>
<td>orange</td>
<td>crossed cannons above fortress initial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse arty.</td>
<td>lt.blue</td>
<td>crossed cannons, unit no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse mtn.arty.</td>
<td>lt.blue</td>
<td>(as Horse Artillery)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>brown</td>
<td>crossed pick &amp; shovel, unit no. or monogram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gren.engrs.</td>
<td>brown</td>
<td>grenade on crossed pick &amp; shovel, unit no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontoneers</td>
<td>brown</td>
<td>crossed pick, axe, saw &amp; shovel on anchor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odessa Naval Bn</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>crossed axe, shovel &amp; anchor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armoured cars: 1914-15</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>machine gun over winged wheels, steering wheel, unit no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aviation</td>
<td>brown</td>
<td>winged propeller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signals*</td>
<td>brown</td>
<td>two entwined lightning bolts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signals (radio)</td>
<td>brown</td>
<td>winged foudre on entwined lightning bolts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railway troops</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>crossed axe &amp; anchor, unit no.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Supply & Trans. (inc.hospital trains) | white | -?-
| Field hospitals | orange | Cyrillic L above unit no. |
| Intendance | black | Cyrillic I |

* Artillery signallers showed their specialism by a cloth badge of crossed signal flags in red worn above the left elbow; artillery telephone men – later all telephone men – by a similar badge of entwined lightning bolts.
canvas haversack (replaced by a knapsack slung behind the shoulders in the Guards), which contained clothes, food and other personal items. The greatcoat was rolled and carried horseshoe-fashion over the left shoulder, with a spare pair of boots and the cowl rolled up in it. An aluminium water bottle and the oval mess tin were suspended over the right shoulder, though the latter is often seen with the greatcoat ends tucked into it. Each man carried one-sixth part of a tent and its poles attached to the coat roll. The weight of all kit including ammunition was some 56½ pounds.

**Wartime innovations**

The functional design of the field service dress in use in 1914 meant that very little alteration was necessary during the war; the changes introduced were not nearly as sweeping as those in other European armies. A system of wound stripes was introduced in 1916, and some other insignia such as those marking the ‘grenadier platoons’ (see Plate C4).

Officers in the field made themselves less conspicuous by modifying their shoulder straps. During the war a fashion developed replacing the stiff detachable shoulder boards with soft straps that were sewn into the shoulder seams. The conspicuous metallic lace was replaced by a subdued khaki equivalent; or rank insignia were even drawn onto plain cloth straps with indelible pencil. It became common for officers in the field to wear the soldier’s shirt-tunic and to discard their swords; another fad was to remove the stiffener from the cap to give it a softer, more British look. During the war years many officers also purchased tunics which, while retaining the stand collar, were otherwise modelled on the British officer’s service dress jacket; generously cut, with two large, pleated patch pockets on the breast and two very large ‘bellows’-style expandable pockets on the skirt. This was confusingly known as the ‘French’, in reference to Gen. Sir John French, who commanded the British Expeditionary Force in France in 1914. General Staff officers also began to wear a special black tunic which, though apparently unofficial, existed in several versions.

At the end of 1916 the army adopted the *pilotha*, based on the forage cap of the Aviation Service, to be worn under steel helmets. From the spring of 1917 they were issued to all officer cadets. Steel helmets of the French Adrian pattern, with an Imperial eagle badge added to the front, were imported from 1916 until domestic production facilities could be established. Although they were available, steel helmets were not popular and generally seem to have been worn mainly by grenadier units and ‘death battalion’ personnel during 1917.

A shortage of leather necessitated the introduction of ankle boots worn with puttees. The only items of equipment introduced during the war were a gas mask, a fabric ammunition bag worn suspended from the shoulder, and a 60-round canvas bandolier.

Following the Revolution of March 1917 men of all ranks, depending on their political persuasion, removed all Tsarist symbols from their uniforms – particularly the regimental monograms on the shoulder straps associated with members of the imperial family. The Provisional Government introduced an alternative system of rank indicators for officers similar to the cuff rings of the navy; however, these do not seem to have enjoyed widespread acceptance (see Plate H1).
Flags
Each infantry regiment had a colour, which was carried to the front by the 1st Battalion. Regiments also had a camp colour, measuring 50ins. x 35ins., coloured according to the regiment's place in the divisional sequence and bearing its number in black in the centre. Battalions and companies also had flags, which were carried on the bayonets of the men acting as markers. Those of battalions had three horizontal stripes of black, orange and white with the battalion number on the central stripe. Company flags were coloured according to the number of the regiment within the division, and had a vertical and a horizontal stripe which crossed centrally. The horizontal stripes were red, blue, white and dark green for the 1st–4th battalions respectively; the vertical stripe, in the same colour sequence, identified the 1st–4th companies in each battalion. (For instance, a white flag with a cross formed by a scarlet vertical and a blue horizontal stripe was that of the 1st Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Regiment in its division.)

All Line Cossack regiments carried two banneroles into action, one to mark the regimental commander, the other the squadron. The regimental marker was a 35in. square in the same colour as the shoulder straps. Those of the Siberian, Orenburg, Semirechti and Trans-Baikal regiments bore a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table G: Officers' shoulder strap lace colours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Guards Inf Div</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Guards Inf Div</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Guards Inf Div</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Rifles:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st &amp; 3rd Regts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd &amp; 4th Regts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Cavalry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Foot Artillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Horse Artillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Cossacks (regimental)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st, 2nd, 3rd Br.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Br.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Gren Div</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infantry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Rifles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Cavalry (regimental)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Artillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Engineers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table H: Rank insignia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank was shown on the shoulder straps at all levels. (The Cossacks, and in some cases the cavalry, used the alternative titles shown in the notes below, but the same insignia.) Other ranks wore strips of lace attached across the top of the shoulder straps; pre-war these were in either yellow or white, and orange for the Guards, but at the beginning of the war red replaced the other colours. Officers' shoulder boards had narrow lengthways stripes of base colour showing between the strips of metallic lace facing - central single stripes, and double stripes dividing the width into thirds - and added five-point metal stars. General officers had metallic lace facing in a zig-zag pattern, without lengthways stripes of base colour. It was a Russian peculiarity that the senior, rather than the junior rank within a grade wore no stars.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian rank</th>
<th>British equivalent</th>
<th>Insignia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ryadovoi (1)</td>
<td>private</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yefremov (2)</td>
<td>lance-corp.</td>
<td>1 stripe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mladshi Unterofficer (3)</td>
<td>corporal</td>
<td>2 stripes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starshi Unterofficer</td>
<td>sergeant</td>
<td>3 stripes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feldfebel (4)</td>
<td>sgt-major</td>
<td>1 wide transverse metallic stripe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pod-Praporschik (5)</td>
<td>warrant officer</td>
<td>1 wide lengthways metallic stripe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pod-Poruchik (6)</td>
<td>2nd lieutenant</td>
<td>2 stars, 1 stripe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poruchik (7)</td>
<td>lieutenant</td>
<td>3 stars, 1 stripe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shtabs-Kaptan (8)</td>
<td>staff captain</td>
<td>4 stars, 1 stripe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapitan (9)</td>
<td>captain</td>
<td>1 stripe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>major</td>
<td>2 stars, 2 stripes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pod-Polkovnik (10)</td>
<td>lt.col.</td>
<td>3 stars, 2 stripes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polkovnik</td>
<td>colonel</td>
<td>2 stripes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General-Major</td>
<td>maj.gen.</td>
<td>2 stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General-Leutnant</td>
<td>lt.gen.</td>
<td>3 stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>general</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General-Feldmarshal</td>
<td>field-marshal</td>
<td>crossed batons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(1) Cossacks, Kazak. (2) Cossacks, Prikazni.
(3) Cossacks, Uryadnik. (4) Cossacks and cavalry, Vakhmistr.
(8) Cossacks, Pod-ESal; cavalry, Shtab-i-Rotmistr. (9) Cossacks, ESal; cavalry, Rotmistr.
(10) Cossacks, Voiskovoi Starshina.
St Andrew’s cross in white, and the Amur Cossacks in yellow. All showed the regimental number in the centre.

The squadron markers were swallow-tailed, 22½ins. in the hoist, 35ins. in the fly to the tips of the tails and 15ins. in the notch. The upper half was in the regimental colour, the lower in that of the squadron, with a white or yellow median stripe if the regimental bannerole had a St Andrew’s cross. Squadron colours were scarlet, light blue, white, dark green, yellow and brown for 1st–6th squadrons respectively.

**TACTICS**

**Infantry**

Offensive infantry tactics prevalent in most of the armies of Continental Europe at the outbreak of the First World War blissfully ignored the developments in weapons that had taken place during the previous 50 years. Men and their officers would line up, in close formation, and move at varying speeds across more or less open ground, to drive their foes before them with élan and the bayonet. Russia, with the recent experience of the Russo-Japanese War to draw upon, had theoretically instituted some tactical changes, but these were not in widespread use by the outbreak of war.

Before 1914 Gen.Lesh had developed a system based on platoons advancing in groups of three men with roughly two metres space between each man. Each trio moved independently so that no more than two groups were on their feet at once. The depth was three lines, with other platoons extending the line on either flank. By contrast, the usual method of attack in 1914 was the ‘chain’, with some two metres between each man and some six metres depth between each ‘chain’—basically straight, extended lines. The bayonet charge began at 50 metres from the enemy line. Lesh’s system was slow but efficient; the ‘chain’ was a recipe for heavy casualties. Machine guns were to be pushed well forward to support the advancing troops, and hand grenades were also to be used. However, the firepower available to defenders—and Russia’s weakness in artillery support for much of the war—was such as to render all but the most carefully prepared attacks suicidal, as was so tragically the case across Europe during 1914–16.

The 1912 cavalry regulations stressed the importance of ‘initiative and resolution’, and that each trooper ‘must be prepared to fight with his rifle in his hand as well as any infantryman’. However, the majority of cavalry officers still dreamed of knee-to-knee charges with sabre and trumpet. Cavalry-vs-cavalry actions would commence by trotting in extended order, breaking into a charge and closing ranks at between 100 and 50 metres from the enemy. The ‘swarm’, lavra, was an old Cossack formation that had been adopted by the regulars to disrupt the enemy formation, break through a picket line, or
to envelop an enemy force. A five-metre gap was left between the riders in the front rank, the second rank filled the gaps some 20 metres behind. It was against the Austro-Hungarians that the Russians fought their last great cavalry-vs-cavalry battle, including knee-to-knee charges, at Jaroslavice in Galicia on 20 August 1914.

A cavalry squadron attacking infantry or artillery would advance in single rank extended order. It is interesting to note that several successful attacks were carried out during the war against advancing infantry. As Gen. Danilov said, 'infantry naturally fire at the rider, not the horse'.

Dismounted action was also noted in the regulations, with one-third of the men being detailed as horseholders. It very rapidly became obvious that modern weapons made the old role of cavalry redundant. To dismount the men and turn them into infantry was one solution, but, until it began to be adopted in late 1916, the cavalry was generally kept waiting in anticipation of exploiting a breakthrough that never really came.

The artillery was supposed to accompany infantry attacks, engage hostile artillery and machine guns, destroy obstacles and oppose counter-attacks. Conditions during the war demanded a different approach, and artillery turned into a fairly static sledgehammer to pound enemy defences.

**Wartime innovations**

The innovative use of the newly formed grenadier units to spearhead attacks was one of the ways in which the Russians sought to overcome the murderous obstacles to the success of frontal assaults. Another was the use of partisan warfare, particularly in the primeval conditions of the Pripyat Marshes; in this area vast swamps cut by numerous waterways prevented the Central Powers from establishing a continuous line. A raid carried out in the early winter of 1915 attracted attention: a force of irregulars, guided by sympathetic locals, launched a night raid on the HQ of a German infantry division and took prisoner the commander – who committed suicide – and several of his staff. This success led the Ataman of the Cossacks to order the formation of partisan units from volunteers in every Cossack regiment. The most famous of these was the ‘Wolves’, so called because their standard was the skin of a wolf with wolf-tails attached to the pole, and the men wore wolfskin caps. The unit was led by a young Kuban Cossack officer, A.G. Shkuro, who was later to become famous as a cavalry leader in the Civil War.

However, the major innovation was the method of assault used during the opening phases of the Brusilov Offensive in 1916.
The Brusilov Offensive

General A.A. Brusilov was promoted to the command of the South-Western Front in April 1916, and immediately set about preparing an offensive against the Austro-Hungarians, who were well dug into positions which they had occupied for several months. Brusilov and his staff had analysed the failures of previous Russian offensives, however.

Artillery preparation would be co-ordinated so that the Austrians would be confused. Apparently random pauses and resumptions in the bombardment were calculated to throw them off balance and make them wary about emerging from their dugouts during a lull. The entire line would be bombarded in the same way so as to give no hint of where the main attack would fall, thus preventing the enemy from placing their reserves effectively for a counter-attack.

Trenches were sapped forward, in places to within 50 metres of the enemy, along as much of the line as possible. Huge dugouts were built to house the reserves within a short distance of the front line, to enable them to get forward quickly. Models were made of the Austrian defences in each sector, and the Russian infantry were trained in them so as to become familiar with their objectives. Careful aerial reconnaissance, including photography, was carried out, and enemy batteries were pin-pointed.

The South-Western Front's four armies faced a similar number of Austrians. Brusilov ordered each army to choose a point to attack depending on the local conditions. The offensive was to have begun in July, but was brought forward to relieve the Italians, who were under huge pressure from a successful Austrian offensive. After a relatively short bombardment along the whole of the South-Western Front the Russian 8th Army attacked on 4 June 1916, meeting with unparalleled success. The Austrian defences caved in, troops being captured in their dugouts by the hundred, and Brusilov's
men rolled forward. By 12 June nearly 200,000 officers and men, 216 guns and 645 machine guns had been captured and the line had been pushed forward by several miles.

The main Russian summer offensive had been planned for the northern part of the front, opposite the German line. However, after a colossal bombardment and some initial success that offensive came to a halt in the middle of July after just two weeks. In July Brusilov’s men again advanced, but by this time they were running into supply problems as the region’s transport network was poorly developed. Russian casualties mounted and, in a series of hideously miscalculated attacks employing the methods which Brusilov had specifically abandoned as worthless, the Guards Army was decimated near Kovel. August 1916 witnessed further Russian success on the South-Western Front, but by now the Central Powers were bringing in reserves from all fronts, including two Turkish corps.

Brusilov’s system of methodical preparation had achieved advances of up to 50 miles by the time it was called off in the early autumn – an effort unsurpassed by the Western Powers until the summer of 1918.

Training facilities
Russian wartime training facilities were poor. Large numbers of men were kept in the depots in large cities until they were sent to the front as replacements. The training they received was little more than drill and parade ground manoeuvres, due to the lack of instructors with combat experience. With time on their hands, these men were a prey to the political agitation and rumour-mongering which were rampant from the early months of the war; and it was they who supported the revolutionaries of March 1917.

More worthwhile training was carried out at the front, but this depended very much on the resourcefulness of local commanders. Schools were established to train, in a shortened version of the peacetime programme, potential officers who were called up during the war; casualties among the trained, professional officer corps were huge and suitable replacements were difficult to find.

WEAPONS

Small arms
The standard infantry rifle in use was the Mosin-Nagant M1891 7.62mm, a bolt-action weapon with a fixed five-round magazine. Variations on the basic infantry model were the dragoonskaya (‘dragoon’), which was shorter and lighter, and the kazachya (‘Cossack’), which was the dragoon type without a bayonet. Artillerymen were issued with the Mosin M1908 carbine.
Artillery

...continued...
British M1904 12.7cm (5in., 60pdr), Krupp's 15.2cm M1910 howitzer, and the Schneider M1910 15.2cm howitzer and gun. The Schneider and Krupp weapons were produced under licence in Russia.

Wartime innovations

Trench warfare created the need for small calibre, man-portable guns that could be used in the front line. In 1915 a 37mm trench gun was developed and by 1917 it was planned to equip every infantry regiment with a four-gun battery of these weapons.

The first trench mortars were copied from captured Austrian and German types. However, the most widely used was the robustly simple 58mm M1915 Likhonin. In time for the Kerenski Offensive of 1917 the British provided '60 tons of 2in. mortars, Stokes guns (3-pdr trench pieces) and ammunition'. These weapons were operated by men of Locker-Lampson's RNAS armoured car force, who also acted as instructors in their use.

Machine guns were imported in large numbers, including the 8mm French Hotchkiss M1914, the .303in. Lewis M1915, and particularly the .30cal Colt M1895 'potato-digger'; indeed, so widespread was the use of the latter that the units issued with it were simply listed as Kolja detachments.

Armoured fighting vehicles

Russia had experimented successfully with armoured cars before the outbreak of war. In 1914 suitable touring cars and lorries were armed and armoured by the firm of Putilov, and the 1st Automobile Machine Gun Battery was created. The success of these units led to the expansion of armoured car companies, until in 1916 the entire force became known as the Armoured Division, with companies allocated to all Fronts. Lacking a domestic vehicle industry Russia imported chassis, notably from Austin, and armed and armoured them herself.

A typical armoured car platoon consisted of two or three twin-turreted machine gun cars such as Austins or Fiats, and one or two armoured lorries – usually American Garfords – mounting short-barrelled 75mm guns. American-manufactured Indian motorcycles provided communications, and some had Maxim machine guns mounted to give anti-aircraft cover. By November 1917 over 200 armoured cars were in service. (Interestingly, the Red Army made the first use of half-tracks as fighting vehicles in 1920, using converted Austins.)

Estimates vary as to the number of armoured trains Russia possessed in 1914, between two and ten. At first the guns
Aircraft such as this Nieuport 17c scout from France reached the Russian lines via Vadinov and Archangel, albeit slowly. The machine appeared to be factory-fresh, with all the usual roundels and national markings. The top right wing was red, blue and white, reading 'Rafale'. The machine was flown by a crew of two, with a ground crew of three members from the French air force. The aircraft was later used by the Russian army to train pilots in ground attack tactics.

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- Knox, M.J. & Sir Alfred. With the Russian Army 1914-17. (London 1921)
- Wildman, R.K. The End of the Russian Imperial Army. (New Jersey 1987)

Albatrosses and LVGs. Many were re-used with Colmar machine guns which were very popular with Russian pilots.
THE PLATES

A: STAFF
A1: Captain of the General Staff A.Afanasyev, 1917
The typical officer's uniform of the later war. The tunic was known as the 'French'; his breeches and boots are standard patterns. Note that the shoulder boards are now of unstiffened material, and are sewn into the tunic seams to make them less prominent. Staff aiguillettes were either white or khaki. He is decorated with the Order of St Anne 2nd Class with Swords, the Order of St Stanislaus 2nd Class with Swords, and the Order of St Vladimir 4th Class with Swords, and wears on his right breast pocket the badge of the Nikolaevski Military Academy; he also carries a gilded St George's Sword 'for Bravery'. All these figures wear the more elaborate officers' version of the cap cockade, of domed construction with the rayed edge making a crenellated effect.

A2: General of Artillery V.Irmak, 1914
This illustrates the officers' greatcoat, in this case with the scarlet lapels and cuff piping which distinguished general officers; his rank is also shown by his shoulder boards, in the zig-zag patterned lace of general officers. The black and red details on the service cap and collar patches indicate the arm of service. He wears the Order of St George 3rd Class and the ribbon of the 4th Class. Hidden here by the coat, his breeches would have scarlet stripes - ropasvi. General Irmak commanded III Caucasian Corps in 1914. Following the March 1917 Revolution he resigned his commission and re-enlisted as a private soldier.

A3: Adjutant General of Cavalry A.A. Brusilov, 1916
Russia's most effective general of the war wears a plain, regulation officer's service uniform with staff aiguillettes, the general officer's trouser stripes being the only concession to colour. He displays the Order of St George 3rd and 4th Class, and the badge of the Corps of Pages, and carries a gilded St George's Sword for Bravery.

A4: Colonel, medical service, 1915–16
The doctor is wearing the Bekesha which was a popular alternative to the usual greatcoat; this was a long version of the fleece-lined polushubok worn by Plate B4. His earmuffs are privately purchased. All members of the medical services wore the red cross brassard on the left arm.

B: GUARDS
B1: Staff Captain, Grodno Life Guard Hussar Regiment, 1915
The crimson hussar breeches were commonly seen at this early stage of the war. The boots are of the style worn by hussars throughout Europe, high-fronted and with a white metal rosette at the front. Note the whistle on his left shoulder brace. On the breast pockets he wears the badges of his regiment and the Officer's Cavalry School.

B2: Private, Semenovski Life Guard Infantry Regiment, 1914
In full summer service dress, this Guardsman typifies what the British military attaché described as 'the finest human animals in Europe'. On the cuff of his gymnastorka can be seen the white lace identifying the 1st Guards Infantry Division, and on the chest and shoulder straps the blue lace of the division's second regiment. The Guards were the only infantry to be issued knapsacks for wear on the back. The ends of his rolled greatcoat are tucked into his mess-tin, a common practice.

B3: Cossack, Ataman's (Tsarevitch's) Life Guard Cossack Regiment, 1917
Cossacks always wore their headgear in defiance of gravity.

This typically posed studio shot of Pod-porutchik (2nd Lt) Mikhail Zheleznyak shows the officer's field equipment for the campaigns of 1914–15; he was killed in October 1914. Oddly enough, the wearing of the shoulder braces vertical at the front and crossed at the back was banned, along with officers' shoulder boards, after the November Revolution of 1917. The M1881 sword is slung in the 'Oriental' style, edge upwards; the pistol on the right hip is probably an M1895 Nagant. During the early part of the war shoulder straps were often worn with the decorated side uppermost; for officers the lace colour corresponded with that of the regimental buttons, either gold or silver. Cf Plates B & C.
Regimental

Bragade (The Iron Brigade), 1861

Bragade (The Iron Brigade), 1861

C: Infantry, 4th Lieutenant: Colonel, 4th Vermont

C: Infantry, 4th Lieutenant: Colonel, 4th Vermont

The soldier wearing his greatcoat—fattened by books—

The soldier wearing his greatcoat—fattened by books—
bombardier from any other mounted soldier. The sword and pistol are standard issue. To his left is a Danish manufactured M1904 Madsen light machine gun of the type issued to some cavalry regiments before 1914.

D2: Captain, 5th Alexandriyski Hussar Regiment ('Immortal Hussars'), 1916-17
The unit was known as the 'Immortal Hussars' after a line in its regimental song. This officer is very much in the wartime fashion with his black leather jacket cut like the uniform tunic, gloves, and regimental breeches striped with silver lace. The brown leather equipment is regulation issue of the 1912 pattern. Again, note the hussar boots with rosettes.

D3: Trooper, 16th Tverskoi Dragoon Regiment, 1915-17
The 16th Dragoons served with the Army of the Caucasus. This trooper wears a fleece cap, cowl and gloves in cool weather; his greatcoat is strapped to the front of the saddle. The horse furniture is the standard issue brown leather with saddlebags at the rear. Regular cavalry carried the bayonet, which can be seen attached to the sword scabbard in the '1881 method'.

E: COSSACKS
E1: Cossack, 1st Argun Regiment, Trans-Baikal Host
Cossacks were expected to provide their own uniforms; and this man shows the regulation dress for the Steppe Hosts, distinguished by the yellow trouser stripe of the Trans-Baikal troops. His weapon is the 'Cossack' model of the standard M1891 Mosin-Nagant '3-line' rifle.

E2: Cossack, Kuban Cossack infantry
Kuban infantry units wore the traditional Caucasian Cossack dress including the heavy black felted hair burka cape for foul weather. His weapons include rifle, pistol, and a Caucasian dagger which has its highly decorated scabbard protected by cloth bindings. The standard shirt-tunic is worn under a kaftan coat. Kuban and Terek Cossacks shaved their heads.

E3: Lieutenant, 2nd Volgskoi Regiment, Terek Host
The epitome of the Caucasian Cossack officer; the highly decorated weapons and kaftan are typical of these units throughout the war. The cartridge pockets on each breast, gazni, were functional as well as decorative. The undershirt, beshmet, was often privately made and did not always conform to regulations. During the war supply problems led to khaki replacing the grey kaftans. The rank of this sotnik or first lieutenant is identified by the three stars and single stripe on his shoulder boards, which also bear the regimental number '2' and the Cyrillic initial of the Terek Cossacks, which resembles 'Br'. Light blue was the traditional distinguishing colour of the Terek Host. He wears the Order of Vladimir 4th Class with Swords, the Order of St Anne 4th Class with Swords, a Terek Cossack badge and that of the Novocherkask Cossack School. His handsome weapon is a St Anne's Sword 'for Bravery' – note the rosette in the pommel. He carries the Cossack nagaika whip.

E4: Warrant Officer, 17th Don Cossack Regiment General Bakanov, 1914
The 17th Don Regt wore on their caps the scroll and death's head as a reminder of past glories; they were named for Gen. Yakov Bakanov, a hero of the Crimean War. This veteran pod-khorunji's extraordinary collection of decorations testifies to his personal bravery and skill at arms: 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Classes of the St George's Cross, St George's Medal 4th Class, Russo-Japanese War medal, 300th Anniversary of the Romanov Dynasty, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Classes of the Sharpshooter's Badge, and the crossed swords marking proficiency at swordsmanship. His jacket is a non-regulation nagolny polushbok cut to a practical length for riding; it is left in natural sheepskin rather than being covered with fabric. Note the bashlyk bundled around his neck.

F: SPECIAL TROOPS
F1: Armoured car driver, 7th Automobile Machine Gun Platoon, 1915
The 'Swedish kurka' leather jacket, gauntlets and breeches were issued from the beginning of the war. This style of
FS: Regional Orthodoxy Priest

F: Streicher F.B.C. 1915-17

G: Troop F, London House Hall Regiment

C: Commandant of a Brigade

NATIONAL TROOPS

FS: Cyclists and Bicycle Company, 1915-17
considerable latitude (e.g., this rider wears a privately made kattan with fleece trim), and all descriptions may well be correct. The majority of the officers were Russians, as were the technical troops and gunners. The machine gun sections were sailors from the fleet, who wore Circassian dress with naval shoulder straps.

G4: Lieutenant, Polish Lancers, 1917
The details on this officer's uniform mark him as Polish: the white Polish eagle on the cap, the crimson breeches stripes and cuff lace, and the eagle badge on the breast pocket.

H: ELITE UNITS 1917-18
H1: Lieutenant, Shock Battalion of Rear Echelon Volunteers, 1917
The movement to continue the war after the March Revolution produced various schemes, including the idea of forming 'Shock Revolutionary battalions from rear volunteers'. A good number came forward, mainly from cadet schools and reserve units. Cuff ring rank insignia were introduced during the brief period of the Provisional Government as an alternative to the shoulder straps, which had Tsarist overtones. The badge on his right arm was issued to all ranks of these units and was worn on both tunic and greatcoat; and note the death's-head on the shoulder straps. A piece of black and red cloth was often substituted for the Imperial cockade. This officer wears a soldier's grade St George's Cross awarded by his men in recognition of his bravery; he also displays a university badge.

H2: Senior NCO, 1st (Kornilov's) Shock Regiment, 1917
This sergeant wears the shoulder straps and left sleeve badge of the famous Kornilov regiment. On his right arm is the chevron of the Shock units, red and black symbolising revolution and death. Note the death's-head helmet emblem in cast metal, although these were often painted on in white. The white belt and cuff piping show that this man was formerly in the 1st Guards Division.

H3: Private, Russian 'Legion of Honour'; France, 1917-18
The Russians sent infantry units to serve on both the Western and Salonika Fronts in token of their solidarity with the Western Allies. In both cases the French provided clothing (here, in Colonial khaki) and equipment; these were worn with Russian shoulder straps and, in the case of the troops in France, a cloth Russian tricolour on the left sleeve of the tunic or greatcoat. The 'LR' on the helmet and collar patches stands for Légion Russe.

H4: Private, 1st Women's Death Battalion, 1917
The 1st Women's Battalion of Death was raised in Petrograd during May 1917 at the instigation of Sgt. (later Lt.) Maria Botchkareva who, after serving at the front since 1915 and being disgusted by the condition of the army, was granted permission to form this unit. Accorded the unique honour of carrying a standard featuring Botchkareva's name, the battalion, numbering 1,000 women, took part in the Kerenski Offensive of summer 1917, sustaining heavy casualties. Other women's battalions were formed, at least one in Moscow and another glorying in the name of 'The Black Hussars of Death'. The uniform differed little from that of the men other than the shoulder straps and the shock unit chevron (note black-and-red stripe on the former).

H5: Private, 2nd Voluntary Detachment of Crippled Warriors, 1917
This strangely titled unit was raised in early summer 1917 from volunteers who had been severely wounded and were now based in Petrograd, organised into two battalions of some 1,000 officers and men. The Cyrillic letters in the sleeve chevron are the initials of the words 'shock' or 'storm detachment'. He wears ribbons of the Order of St Vladimir, and the regimental badge of the 69th Ryazansky Infantry Regiment. His sidearm is a regulation issue sword.

(Details:)
1A: Private's shoulder strap, Shock Battalion of Rear Volunteers, 1917
5A: Cuff title, Committee for Recruiting Disabled Soldiers, 1917
6: Sailor's shoulder strap, Reval Naval Shock Battalion, 1917
7: Private's shoulder strap, St George's Battalion, STAVKA 1916-17
8: Private's shoulder strap, 1st St George's Battalion, Kiev, 1917
9: Cap badge, Death Battalions, 1917
10: Cap badge, Shock Battalions, 1917

Taken in Romania during May 1917, this photo shows two Aviation Service observers dressed in leather jackets and trousers, with ankle boots and gaiters. One wears the coloured service cap, the other the khaki version; such combinations were not uncommon. Black leather breeches and jackets were very popular with young officers during the last year of the war. Cf Plate F4.
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