The Austro-Hungarian Forces in World War I (1)
1914–16

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Peter Jur
Series editor Martin
Dedication

Among the millions of soldiers from the nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, I would especially like to dedicate this work to my grandfather, Franz Rotter of the k.u.k. Eisenbahnberegnung, also to Alois Rotter, k.u.k. Ulanenregiment No.2 /Fürst Schwarzenberg/, killed in action in Serbia in 1915; to Friedrich Rotter, Maschinenbetriebsabteilung II.C/I of the k.u.k. Kriegsmarine, who went down in SMS Zenta on 16 August 1914; to Anton Pelczar, Sepper, k.u.k. Sepperr-spezialbataillon and in 1918 k.u.k. Sturmabteilung No.18; and finally to Camillo Krätzschmer of k.u.k. Fliegerkompanie 20 and later 43. May they and all the other millions rest in peace.

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Artist’s Note

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THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN FORCES
IN WORLD WAR I (1)

1914–16

INTRODUCTION

The armed forces of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy are perhaps the most complicated single organisation to confront the researcher approaching the combatant powers of the Great War – a complexity born of both time and space. The forces of the Habsburg Empire were among the few in the Old World which could boast an impressively unbroken line of tradition over centuries of both victory and defeat. For hundreds of years they had formed the shield of Europe against the attacking Ottoman forces; and later, during the Napoleonic wars, the Austrians were present in nearly every major campaign against the French.

The army represented not only continuity over time, but also a unifying force over an enormously wide and diverse empire. From the mid-19th century the steadily increasing pressure of nationalist sentiments and aspirations initiated a gradual but constant process of imperial decline. In the Italian theatre of war the glorious victories won by Radezky in 1848–49 were followed in 1859 by the decisive defeat at Solferino. In 1866 the Austrian Southern Army and the Navy were victorious in Italy, but the Northern Army suffered total defeat at Königgrätz (Sadowa), which entirely changed the political appearance of the Empire. In 1867 the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy was established, giving more rights to the Hungarian provinces. From that time onward the political emphasis of the Empire shifted increasingly from a concentration on ‘German’ matters to a concern with Balkan and eastern affairs, and with the internal defence provoked by the growing nationalism of both the Slavic and the Italian communities within the imperial borders. Right up until 1918 the subversive activities of these groups were to prove a decisive factor, culminating in the downfall of the old Empire and its fragmentation into the new nations of Middle and Eastern Europe.

According to the military constitution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy after 1867, the armed forces consisted of three autonomous organisations reflecting the constitutional background of the country. As common institutions the kaiserliches und königliches gemischttes Heer (‘Imperial and Royal Common Army’) and k.u.k. Kriegsmarine (‘Imperial and Royal Navy’) represented the formal military power of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. Distinct from the k.u.k. Heer, the k.k. Landwehr (‘Imperial Royal Territorial Force’) provided additional armed forces in the German-speaking half of the Empire; and the ‘Royal Hungarian’ Honvéd (Magyar kirdly Honvédház) fulfilled the same role for
the Hungarian regions. Officially the Common Army was the ‘instrument of war’ for military operations concerning the Empire as a whole, whereas the k.k. Landwehr and the k.u. Honvéd were initially intended solely as home defence troops; however, in the 20th century they had become integral parts of the field army.

To make it even more complicated, the administration was shared by three ministries. The k.u.k. Kriegsministerium, with a special Naval Section, was responsible for the Common Army, and ministries for ‘home defence’ for the Landwehr and the Honvéd existed simultaneously in Vienna and Budapest; naturally, each of the home defence and territorial forces and ministries used its own principal language. In the case of a large scale war these three organisations were to co-operate within the general concept of the k.u.k. Wehrmacht (‘Imperial and Royal Armed Forces’) – which, miraculously, did in practice work successfully for more than four years of war.

Compulsory national service had been introduced in 1867, and men were conscripted to serve both in the Common Army and in the Landwehr or Honvéd between the ages of 18 and 33 years. Behind the Landwehr and Honvéd stood the older men of the territorial Austrian k.k. Landsturm and the Hungarian k.u. Landsturm (Magyar királyi Napléttelek), aged between 34 and 55 years. They were intended to provide replacement units for the first line forces when the latter were mobilised, but in reality the Landsturm formed its own field units – sometimes up to brigade size – and went on campaign with the rest of the army. Its fighting abilities improved noticeably during the years of the Great War.

In peacetime the k.u.k. Wehrmacht consisted of about 415,000 men, organised in 52 Common Army divisions, 16½ Landwehr and Honvéd divisions, 9 cavalry and 2 Honvéd cavalry divisions. This total could be increased upon mobilisation by 14 ‘march brigades’ and 20 Landsturm brigades of reinforcements. According to official sources, the infantry in August 1914 comprised the impressive number of 993 battalions plus three volunteer battalions (Poles), to be followed shortly by 164 ‘march’ battalions.

* * *

Formally, all the armed forces were directly under the command of the monarch, the Kaiser (Emperor) Franz Joseph I. Born in 1830, and thus 84 years old in 1914, in practice he was naturally unequal to the burdens of campaign. His designated heir, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, had been appointed Generalinspektor der gesamten bewaffneten Macht (‘Inspector General of all Armed Forces’) as the first step towards his taking the supreme command when he succeeded Franz Joseph on the throne. This assured continuity was destroyed in a moment on 28 June 1914 during an official visit to Sarajevo in Bosnia, when a Serbian nationalist, Gavrilo Princip, assassinated both Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie von Hohenberg.

A month later the Old World – enmeshed in a net of defensive treaties – was on fire, dragged blindly into general warfare by a combination of militaristic ambitions and diplomatic helplessness. Franz Joseph I signed only four declarations of war – against Serbia (28 July), Russia (6 August), Japan (23 August) and Belgium (28 August). Nevertheless, Austria-Hungary received in all 13 declarations over the years until 1918: by Montenegro (on 5 August 1914), Great Britain and France (22 August 1914), Italy (23 May 1915), the USA (7 December 1917), and others from countries as irrelevant as Nicaragua, Panama and Cuba.

Over his reign of more than 60 years the old emperor had become something of a mystic figure, far above nationalistic or political disputes. From 1906 the professional head of military organisation and operational planning was the Chef des Generalstabes für die gesamte bewaffnete Macht (‘Chief of the General Staff for the Armed Forces’), Franz Conrad von Hützendorf, who still held this appointment in August 1914. The years before 1914 were dedicated to the intensive preparation of several contingency plans for operations against potential enemies, designated Kriegsfall A for Austria, Kriegsfall B for the Balkans, and (although the country was then officially part of the Dreibund or Triple Alliance), Plan ‘I’ against Italy. Combinations of these plans, such as synchronised operations against Russia and Serbia, or Serbia and Italy, were considered; but no ‘wargames’ were held to simulate the possibility of war in both the east and south-west, involving the Austro-Hungarian Empire on two separated fronts at the same time. Furthermore, although the wars of the early 20th century had been studied by the general staff, certain lessons of modern warfare – especially those demonstrated by the Boer and Russo-Japanese wars – were either neglected or disregarded by the responsible authorities. On the other hand, the strength of the Empire’s forces was slightly overestimated. This, along with some confusion in the initial assembly of the troops against Serbia and Russia, led to a number of drawbacks and disasters within the first months of the war (see below).

Perhaps one of the greatest problems for the Common Army was its origin from its national and ethnic diversity; it contained units drawn from eleven main nationalities – Austro-Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Romanians, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Ruthenians (Ukrainians), Slovenes, Serbs and Croats. Only 28 per cent of the personnel belonged to the dominant Austro-German population, followed by about 18 per cent Hungarians. The majority, 44 per cent, were Slavs; 8 per cent (including all groups from the northern, central and south-eastern regions) were Romanian, and about 2 per cent Italian. The movement for ‘Panslavism’ was already well entrenched, and in the south the Italian ‘irredentists’ were increasingly demanding separation of their Empire and unification with the Kingdom of Italy. Perhaps surprisingly, in July-August
1914 general mobilisation was achieved with hardly any resistance from these elements; but problems were later to follow among the field armies.

**ORGANISATION OF K.u.k. WEHRMACHT, AUGUST 1914-SPRING 1916**

Following mobilisation, the Austro-Hungarian forces operated with six armies in the field, numbered 1 to 6th. While the k.u.k. 1., 3., and 4., (later to be joined by the 2.) Armee assembled in Galicia to face the Russians, the 5. and 6. formed the Balkanstreitkräfte or 'Balkan Command'.

In all, 18 army corps became operational. Of these, 16 were of peace-time origin; only XVII Korps (formed in August 1914), and the Armeegruppe von Kummer (one cavalry division and two Landsturm infantry divisions) were wartime formations. Usually, each army corps comprised two to three infantry divisions, along with cavalry and technical formations under direct army corps command; in reality the strength of the latter varied from time to time. A division usually had two infantry brigades, each consisting of two infantry regiments, totalling three or four battalions and a Feldjägerbataillon (rifle battalion); two squadrons of divisional cavalry; and one field artillery brigade with a mixture of guns and howitzers.

Additionally, further units up to divisional strength could be under direct command of an army.

These corps and army troops numbered in total: 50 infantry divisions (1-48, plus 95. & 106. Landsturm Inf Divs), containing 93 infantry, 9 mountain and 44 field artillery brigades; and an additional 19 infantry, 5 mountain, 14 'march', and 5 Landsturm 'march' brigades. There were 11

**Order of Battle, August 1914**

**k.u.k. 1. ARMEEE**
Commander: General der Kavallerie Viktor Dankl
KORPS (Kazak): 5.D. (Olmütz), 46. ID (Krakau), Corps Troops
IX. KORPS (Przemys): 2.D. (Jaroslaw), 24.ID (Przemysl), 45.ID (Przemysl), Corps Troops
Army Troops: 12.D. (Krakau), 3.KD (Wien), 9.KD (Leemberg)

**k.u.k. Armeegruppe General der Infanterie Hermann Kovaß von Kövesháza**
(established from 6 to 25 August 1914, then re-named k.u.k. 2. Arme with Kövesháza being the Commander of the XII. Korps)

**k.u.k. 2. ARMEEE**
Commander: General der Kavallerie Eduard von Böhm-Ermoli
XII. KORPS (Nagyszombat): 16.D. (Nagyszombat), 35.D. (Kolozsvar), 38.HD (Kolozsvar), Corps Troops
VII. KORPS (Graz): 6.ID (Graz), 39.D. (Lebach), 22.1.D (Grad), Corps Troops
VI. KORPS (Temesvár): 17.D. (Nagy-Várad), 34.ID (Temesvár), Corps Troops
IV. KORPS (Budapest): 31.D. (Budapest), 32.D. (Budapest), Corps Troops
Army Troops: 11.ID (Lemberg), 43.ID (Czernowitz), 20.HD (Nagy-Várad), 1.KD (Temesvár), 5.KD (Budapest), 8.KD (Stanislau)

**k.u.k. 3. ARMEEE**
Commander: General der Kavallerie Rudolf Ritter von Bruckmann
XI. KORPS (Lemberg): 30.ID (Lemberg), k.k.93.Lit.Brig. (Lemberg), 11.Ma.Brig. (Lemberg), Corps Troops
XVII. KORPS (Hernals): 3.ID (Lust), 8.ID (Bozen), 44.LD (Innsbruck), 88.1.Sch.Brig. (Bozen), Corps Troops
Army Troops: 41.HD (Budapest), 23.HD (Eszéges), 4.KD (Lemberg), 2.KD (Poszony)

**k.u.k. 4. ARMEEE**
Commander: General der Infanterie Moritz Ritter von Außnegg
VI. KORPS (Kassau): 15.ID (Melk), 27.ID (Kassel), 39.HD (Kassel), Corps Troops
IX. KORPS (Leithowitz): 10.D. (Josefstadt), 26.LD (Leithowitz), Corps Troops

**k.u.k. Armeegruppe General der Kavallerie Heinrich Ritter Kummer von Falkenfeld**
7.KD (Krakau), k.k.85. Listd. (Prag), k.k.106. Listd. (Olmütz), Army group formations

**k.u.k. Kommando der Balkanstreitkräfte (Balkan Force Command)**
Commander: Feldzeugmeister Oskar Potocki

**k.u.k. SARMEEE**
Commander: General der Infanterie Liborius Ritter von Frank
VIII. KORPS (Prag): 9.ID (Prag), 21.ID (Prag), Corps Troops
XIII. KORPS (Agram): 25.ID (Agram), 43.ID (Agram), 13.Brig. (Elzegi), Corps Troops

**k.u.k. 6. ARMEEE**
Commander: Feldzeugmeister Oskar Potocki
XV. KORPS (Satava): 1.ID (Satava), 45.ID (Satava), Corps Troops
XV. KORPS (Republik): 18.ID (Morau), 47.ID (Cesaukovo), 40.HD (Budapest), k.k.109.Listd. Corps Troops

**Abbreviations**
- ID - Infanteriedivision (in 1914 the style was e.g. Infanterie-Truppen-Division for all types of division, since this was changed to the more international style during the war, the latter is used here to avoid confusion)
- Lit.Brig. - Infanteriebrigade
- KD - Kavalleriedivision
- GBrig. - Gebirgsbrigade
- LD - Landwehrinfanteriedivision
- HD - Hofeinfanteriedivision
- HKO - Hofkavalleriedivision
- Listd - Landsturminfanteriedivision
- Lit.Brig. - Landsturminfanteriebrigade
- Ma.Formations - Marschinfanteriebrigade
- Ma.Brig - Marschbrigade

**Note**
Throughout these tables German spelling is used for city names e.g. Wien/Vienna, Prag/Prague, Krakau/Kraków, etc.
cavalry divisions (22 brigades), 17 k.k. Landsturm brigades, 9 k.k. Landsturm Ettappen brigades, and 5 fortress artillery brigades.

By the spring of 1916 the organisation had grown to 26 corps plus 1 cavalry corps, numbering in total: 60 infantry divisions (including 111 infantry brigades, 4 half-brigades, 23 mountain brigades and 64 field artillery brigades); and additionally 13 infantry and 8 mountain brigades, 11 cavalry divisions (23 brigades), 5 cavalry brigades, 3 k.k. Landsturm brigades and 1 fortress artillery brigade.

In summer 1914 the artillery arm consisted of 483 batteries (field, mountain, heavy, and improvised guns and howitzers) with a total of 2,610 pieces. By 1916 the arm had grown to 804 batteries and 48 detachments with a total of 4,018 guns and howitzers.

Among the technical units the following selected facts are notable. Initially, 79 Sapper companies formed 14 Sapper battalions. In spring 1916 the number of battalions was unchanged but they now comprised 100 companies, and an additional *Sappeurspezialbataillon* had been formed for gas warfare. The Pioneers had entered the war with 9 battalions comprising 45 companies, which had risen to 48 companies by 1916. The army telegraph service started with 11 detachments, 5 special telegraph detachments and 11 radio stations in 1914. By 1916 it had increased to 16 telegraph detachments, 6 special telegraph detachments, 30 field and 83 *Handradioabteilungen* (mobile field radio stations). Over this period the railway troops expanded from 28 companies to thirty-nine.

In 1914 army aviation comprised 15 *Fliegerkompanien*, 12 *Festungsballonabteilungen* (fortress balloon detachments) and one airship detachment; by spring 1916 it had expanded to 25 flying companies and 15 field balloon detachments.

Perhaps most impressive of all was the constant expansion of the automobile troops, which had entered the war with only 58 transport columns. In spring 1916 they numbered 191 lorry, 26 ambulance and 10 postal transport columns. Finally, the medical troops had nearly doubled their size during the first two years of the conflict.

**PRINCIPAL OPERATIONS, AUGUST 1914–NOVEMBER 1916**

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 by a Serbian nationalist was followed by a month of hectic diplomatic activities. Partial mobilisation was ordered, preparatory to implementing Kriegsfall B (the contingency plan for war in the Balkans), involving three armies (k.u.k. 2., 5., and 6.) with eight corps, followed by the declaration of war against Serbia after an ultimatum had not been answered satisfactorily. Serbia was seen as a ringleader of the Pan-Slavic movement and her punishment had become a matter of political prestige. Only three days later, due to further political developments in Europe, the *Allgemeine Mobilisierung* or general mobilisation was ordered. In keeping with the structure of the army, the document signed by the emperor had to be delivered in three despatches of which two were in German and one in Hungarian.

The danger of a direct conflict with Russia, which supported Serbia, became evident at the beginning of August, and suddenly Kriegsfall B was considered less important. Under the contingency plan for war with Russia, the k.u.k. 1., 4., and 3. Armeen were primarily scheduled for transport to the Galician front; and the 2. Arme, originally destined for operations against Serbia, had to be redirected to Galicia to support the right flank of the Austro-Hungarian forces.

In fact most of the 2. Arme were already en route to the Serbian border or had already arrived in their deployment zone. Needless to say, practically the entire railway system was already employed to capacity, and such changes of deployment were difficult to achieve. The transfer of the greater part of the 2. Arme from the Serbian border to Galicia was only possible from 18 August onwards, and its VII Korps and 29. Infanteriedivision remained on the Serbian front.

**1914**

Meanwhile, operations against both Russia and Serbia had already begun. On 12 August the k.u.k. 5., and 6. Armeen opened the campaign against Serbia, forcing the River Drina. After some initial success the inferiority of the two armies fighting against three Serbian and the Montenegrin army became evident, and the troops were ordered back to their original positions.

In Galicia, linking up with the German 8th Army to their north, the k.u.k. 1., 4., and 3. Armeen were in line facing the Russians; the southern flank was given to the 2. Arme, whose late arrival proved decisive for the opening campaigns along this front. Since the German 8th Army had to face two Russian armies and was in permanent danger of being encircled, on 22 August the k.u.k. 1. Arme took the initiative by invading Russian territory in the direction of Lublin. A day later the Russian 4th Army was repelled in the
battle of Krasnik. The same day, the k.u.k. 4. Armee also pressed forward from the area around Przemyśl to the north. At the end of the consequent battle of Komarov (26 August – 1 September), the Russian 5th Army was forced to retreat and nearly encircled.

While the two Austrian armies were victorious in the north, on the southern flank the k.u.k. 3., and from the end of August the 2. Armee, were confronted by superior Russian strength forcing an entry into eastern Galicia. An Austro-Hungarian counter-attack failed at Zlizow, forcing Gen von Hötzendorf to turn the main body of the k.u.k. 4. Armee in support of the right flank to stabilise the situation. Left alone, the k.u.k. 1. Armee came under pressure by much larger Russian forces and had to give way, constantly retreating south and thus leaving a gap between itself and the k.u.k. 4. Armee. Recognising this opportunity the Russians forced their way into this gap, putting the k.u.k. 4., 5., and 2. Armee in danger of being encircled. The only possibility for the Armeeoberkommando (AOK – Army High Command) was to order a full retreat behind the River San; this was followed by the encirclement and first siege of the fortress of Przemyśl by the Russians.

In early September 1914 a second offensive was launched against Serbia, but was soon brought to a halt by a Serbian thrust against Sarajevo which was only repelled after heavy fighting on 11 September. Meanwhile the Russian high command had turned their primary attention against the Germans now isolated on the northern sector of the Galician front; but the Russians were heavily defeated in the battle of the Masurian Lakes (6-15 September).

The front line of the Austro-Hungarian forces along the Dunajec (k.u.k. 1., 4., and 3. Armee) and in the Carpathian Mountains (2. Armee) had stabilized to a certain extent, but was still threatened by steadily growing Russian forces. As a gesture of support the Germans put their 9th Army into line to protect the k.u.k. 1. Armee’s left flank. A combined offensive by these two armies reached the Weichsel-San line, relieving Przemyśl for the first time. Superior Russian strength soon forced a halt and shortly afterwards a retreat to the old front line, leaving Przemyśl besieged for a second time. Another danger arose for the k.u.k. 4. Armee, which had also advanced northwards; now the Russian 3rd Army endangered its eastern flank. The battle of Limanowa-Lapanow (1-12 December) cleared the situation and forced the Russians to retreat, partly due to timely intervention by the k.u.k. 3. Armee. The severe winter conditions limited further operations by both sides.

They also had serious effects on the Serbian front, where the k.u.k. 5., and 6. Armee advanced again during November and gained ground as far as Belgrade. However, while the 5. Armee was about to encircle the northern flank of the Serbian army, the latter counter-attacked against the 6. Armee, forcing the Austro-Hungarian troops into another retreat behind the River Save with heavy losses on both sides.

1915

During the winter of 1914/15 in Galicia, Gen von Hötzendorf planned the relief of Przemyśl from the south by the k.u.k. 5. Armee and its right flank neighbour the smaller Army Group Pilsen-Budapest, reinforced by the newly arrived German SÃ¼darmee. The offensive began on 23 January, but due to the severe weather conditions it gained practically no ground. Another attempt was made on 27 February by the 2. Armee, which was then deployed between the 3. and the German Südarmee; this too broke down in the face of heavy Russian resistance and appalling weather conditions. Left alone, Przemyśl had to surrender on 23 March; 120,000 Austro-Hungarian defenders became prisoners of war. The night before the capitulation all remaining stores and artillery pieces were blown up, and even banknotes and stamps were burned in the banks and post offices.

On 20 March the Russians had launched an offensive against the k.u.k. 3. and 2. Armee which pushed the front back behind the Carpathian Mountains. Another Russian attempt to break through into Hungary was halted at Easter 1915.

In all, the winter operations in the Carpathians had cost nearly 700,000 victims.

During the first months of the war, two Austro-Hungarian Common Army infantry regiments showed severe signs of instability. Both units – Infanterieregiment No.28 (Prague) and IR 36 (Jungbunzlau) – were drawn predominantly from Czech nationals. Several elements simply went over to the Russians, while others made little effort to defend their positions when attacked. As a result, in April and June 1915 these regiments were disbanded for ‘cowardice in the face of the enemy’. IR 36 was deleted from all regimental lists, ‘never to be raised again’. A Marschbataillon of IR 28, dominated by Bohemians of German background, was given the chance to redeem itself against the Italians on the Isonzo front. Here their behaviour was judged satisfactory, and in March 1916 the regiment would formally be re-raised; it continued fighting on the Italian front.

Both the German and Austro-Hungarian general staffs agreed to initiate decisive operations on the Eastern Front during 1915. On 2 May, with the German 11th Army in the lead, the offensive started with a breakthrough at Gorlice-Tarnów, supported by the Austro-Hungarian VI Korps with the Germans and on the right flank by the k.u.k. 4., and 3. Armee. During the early stages the Russian 3rd Army launched a counter-offensive against the Austro-Hungarian southern flank with little success. Meanwhile, except for local counter-attacks by the Russians, the main offensive pushed forward like an avalanche. On 4 June Przemyśl was retaken, and by 26 August Brest-Litovsk had been taken. The retreating Russians gave up nearly all Russo-Polish territory.
A further push east of Luck by the k.u.k. 4., and 1. Armee was later halted by the Russians with considerable losses. In autumn 1915 the Galician front stabilized.

**The Italian front**

Meanwhile, on 23 May 1915, the Kingdom of Italy – neutral until now – had joined the Entente powers in the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary, opening a new front in the south-west running from the Swiss border through the high Alps and ending along the Isonzo river. The Italian aims were to conquer the southern part of the Tyrol on their left and/or to take Trieste and Istria on their right flank. The Italian advance during the Austro-German spring offensive in the East, the Austro-Hungarian general staff decided not to take troops from Galicia for the new front, but to build up the new line by shifting the k.u.k. 5. Armee from the Balkan theatre to the Isonzo. The defence of the mountainous regions – which had been heavily fortified since summer 1914 – was in the hands of the Landesverteidigungskommando Tirol ("Home Defence Command Tyrol") and the Armeegruppe Rohr along the Carinthian front.

The Italians attacked with great fury, both in the Alps and – as their main effort – with their 2nd and 3rd Armies along the Isonzo. So many battles would take place in this relatively limited region that historians would have to number them. The First to Fourth Battles of the Isonzo all took place in 1915, to be followed by the Fifth to Ninth in 1916.

The defence of the Italian front reunited most of the ethnic groups of the Empire for the last time; however, the AOK had learned from the episode of the two Czech regiments, and initiated some precautions against any repetition on this front. Ethnic Italians, especially from the southern part of the Tyrol, were posted to so-called 'South-West battalions' – even those from the Kaiserjäger regiments – and in theory these units served only on the Balkan (Romanian) or Eastern fronts.

Although permanently outnumbered, the Austro-Hungarian forces resisted even the heaviest Italian attacks, which in many cases came to bitter hand-to-hand fighting. In the high mountains of the Alps and Dolomites a new kind of warfare developed at enormous cost in lives and material. Logistics and all movement of heavy equipment presented tremendous problems especially during the winter, when avalanches also killed thousands of soldiers from both sides.

In autumn 1915 the final offensive against Serbia was launched, with considerable German help replacing the k.u.k. 5. Armee which had been shifted to the Isonzo front. Under the command of the German Generalfeldmarschall von Mackensen, Austro-Hungarian troops from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia, together with the k.u.k. 3. Armee and German 11th Army supported by two Bulgarian armies, entered Serbia on 5 October. By mid-December 1915 the country was conquered, but some 140,000 Serbian soldiers managed to retreat to the Adriatic coast, from where they were evacuated to the island of Corfu on ships provided by the Entente powers.

On the Galician front the winter of 1915/16 saw Russian activities against the k.u.k. 7. Armee (formed from the former Army Group Böhm-Ermolli) north of Czernowitz, but these met with little success.

**1916**

In early January 1916 the k.u.k. 3. Armee took the offensive in the Balkans, invading Montenegro and reaching the capital Cetinje on the 14th. King Nicholas fled the country, and on 17 January the last groups of Montenegrin soldiers surrendered. The most impressive action in this campaign was the combined attack by land and naval forces to take Mount Lovcen overlooking the bay of Cattaro (Kotor), the southernmost Austro-Hungarian naval station.

The next objective was northern Albania, which was invaded by the XIX Korps supported by the VIII Korps. The Italians had invaded southern Albania in 1915, so this campaign was launched to prevent a possible further Italian advance. In northern Albania the Austro-Hungarian forces received a warm welcome from many of the population. On 9 February they reached the capital, Tirana; the port of Durazzo was fiercely defended by the Italians, but was taken on 26 February.

In April 1916 central Albania was occupied, and a defensive line along the Vojossa river was established by Austro-Hungarian battalions supported by local volunteers of the Albanian Legion.

With the situation stabilised in the Balkans, the AOK initiated a counter-offensive against Italy from...
the southern Tirol (known as the ‘Südtirolfensive’ in Austria and the ‘Strafexpedition’ in Italy). The aim was to overrun the Venetian plain and cut off the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Italian Armies. The offensive was planned to open in March, but due to the weather conditions it had to be postponed until 15 May.

Winter 1915/16 and early spring 1916 had seen fierce fighting in the mountains; this sometimes involved tunnelling under the mountain peaks — in most cases by the Italians, but in some cases also by Austro-Hungarian sappers. On 17 April 1916 the undermined peak of the Col di Lana was blown up by the Italians, killing about 300 Kaiserjägers.

On 15 May the k.u.k. 11., and 3. Armee launched their southwards offensive in the Tyrol. Despite success in taking mountain peaks and high altitude positions, the offensive failed to make progress in the valleys and came to a standstill on 16 June. Meanwhile, the Russian Gen Brusilov had launched an offensive in the East, and late in June Austro-Hungarian reinforcements had to be rushed to that front.

This gave the Italians a chance to counter-attack, and the Austro-Hungarian forces had to give up ground taken at high cost in order to shorten their front line. In August, during the Sixth Battle of the Isonzo, the Italians finally captured the town of Gorizia.

The (First) Brusilov Offensive by the Russian South-West Front - 7th, 8th, 9th and 11th Armies - had opened on 4 June 1916 to relieve Austro-Hungarian pressure on the Italian front. Britain and France were not yet ready to launch their own summer offensives, which would follow in July. The Russian plan was well co-ordinated among the Entente staffs, and well prepared and executed by this most able of Russia’s generals. Heralded by heavy and unusually sophisticated artillery bombardments, the Russian attack fell first on the k.u.k. 4. Armee, which was driven back behind the Styrian river and had to cross bridgehead at Luck on 7 June. On the southern flank the k.u.k. 7. Armee was hard pressed by the Russian 7th and 9th Armies and had to give way, exposing the eastern Bukovina and the entrance to the Carpathian passes. The town of Czernovitz was lost on 18 June. Brusilov’s first offensive ran out of momentum with the arrival of reinforcements from the Balkans and southern Tyrol, having inflicted heavy losses on the badly shaken Austro-Hungarian armies.

To the north the offensive by Russia’s West Front – in fact planned as the main effort, to which Brusilov’s operations were supposedly secondary – opened on 2 July, but made little progress despite massive casualties. The next day Gen Brusilov launched his second offensive west of Luck, which was met and eventually halted by the k.u.k. 4. Armee. Costly fighting continued through August, as casualties mounted and Brusilov’s lines of supply became overstretched.

A counter-attack by the k.u.k. 7. Armee did not break through, but stabilised the area astride the borders of Russia, Galicia and Romania. In all the Austro-Hungarian forces had lost at least 150,000 men during this campaign.

On 27 August 1916, Romania declared war on the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and started operations to invade Siebenbürgen (Transylvania) from the Carpathian mountains with a force of about 400,000 men. The Austro-Hungarian defenders from k.u.k. 1. Armee numbered only about 35,000 in two divisions and six brigades, and had to make a fighting retreat to a second line. Nearly the same happened in the Dobrudja area, where about 140,000 Romanians faced 70,000 Germans and Bulgarians.

The combined k.u.k. 1. Armee and newly assembled German 9th Army met the Romanians, inflicted several defeats, and forced them back behind their borders by mid-October. In an attempt to relieve the pressure on the Romanians, Gen Brusilov launched a third offensive, but without success; it was halted in December 1916. Romania was invaded at the end of November, and the capital Bucharest fell to German troops on 6 December.

The end of an era

On 22 November 1916 the Emperor Franz Joseph I died in Vienna at the age of 86 years. His death not only marked the end of an era influenced by his long reign of 68 years; it removed Austro-Hungary’s primary symbol of continuity, fellowship and unity. His successor on the throne, Karl I, faced a very difficult task.
UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT

Like most of the other European nations at the end of the 19th century, Austria-Hungary had a colourfully uniformed army. The last major changes, after 1866, had replaced the traditional costume – the white tunic of the infantry – with dark blue, which dominated the parade and campaign uniforms up to the early years of the 20th century.

In 1908 the next major change began to be seen, and for the first time this would affect the armed forces as a whole. Influenced by early 20th century wars elsewhere and convinced that the next conflict would be in the Balkans, the authorities introduced a new field uniform completely in a less conspicuous colour termed hechtgrau – "pike-grey". This shade was not itself newly invented, since it had been in use by the Jäger and technical troops for decades.

The soft, high-crowned field cap had a peak of black composition material, later often covered with grey cloth or painted grey; and a deep 'curtain' flap fastened by two regimental buttons in front, which could be let down to protect the face and neck. On the front of the crown all ranks wore a national cockade ('rosette') in plain metal, pierced with the imperial/royal monogram 'EI' or (for Hungarian units) 'HE'. The cavalry wore a peakless version of the field cap – virtually a visor cap.

The new jacket was produced in two versions: a woolen standard version with a standing collar, and a linen 'summer' version with a stand-and-fall collar. Interestingly, the summer version was less common among the troops than the standard woolen model. Wartime photographs frequently show the woolen version worn in summer, and the linen type mainly limited to use in the warmer southern areas, e.g. the Adriatic coast (lower Bosnia), Dalmatia, Montenegro and Albania. Both types had concealed buttons, and pairs of breast and hip pockets with scalloped flaps, again with the buttons concealed; however, photographs show that the pocket flaps – especially on the breast – sometimes had visible buttons (irregularly hand made?). The jacket had broad, square-ended shoulder straps, and a very typical Austro-Hungarian feature was a shoulder roll fixed at the outer end of the right shoulder strap in order to retain the slug or shouldered rifle. The matching trousers came in several patterns. Hungarian units had special lace trim – see Plate B2. Dismounted troops wore straight, loose trousers gathered at the ankle by small gaiters (Hosenspangen) fastened with buttons. Mountain troops and Landwehr wore knee breeches with long stockings, sometimes with long buttoned canvas gaiters. Foot artillery wore pantaloons, full in the thigh but tight right below the knee; similar pantaloons were worn by Bosnian-Herzegovinian units. Mounted units wore breeches.

The new field uniform was accompanied by new leather equipment, which changed from black to natural brown, including the boots (though these were usually blackened with protective polish). Two weights of ankle boots were issued, the heavier type for mountain units; Pioneers wore 'jackboots' similar to the German 'marching boot'. The basis of the field equipment was a waist belt with four or two cartridge pouches and the frogged bayonet; and a natural hide knapsack in two parts, the upper holding the greatcoat, spare clothing and rations, the small lower compartment an ammunition reserve and a tinned soup

Rank insignia, Austro-Hungarian Army 1914-1918

General officers (Generale, 1-5): Scarlet collar patch; gold embroidery (1) & zig-zag lace (2-5); embroidered silver laurel wreath (2) and stars. Field officers (Stabsoffiziere, 6-8): Collar patch in regimental or branch facing colour; gold or silver embroidery; zig-zag lace corresponding to regimental or branch button colour; embroidered gold or silver stars opposite to lace colour; (8) small black patch on larger scarlet patch; gold lace, embroidered silver stars.

Captains & subalterns (Ober-Offiziere, 10-12): Collar patch in regimental or branch facing colour; embroidered gold or silver stars in regimental or branch button colour.

NCOs (Unter-Offiziere, 13-19): Collar patch in regimental or branch facing colour; (13) gold 1.3cm lace, silver metal star; (14) yellow silk 1.3cm lace with 0.2cm black central stripe, gold 0.6cm lace, white celluloid stars; (15) gold 1.3cm lace overlapping 1.3cm yellow lace; later, gold lace removed, remaining yellow lace as for (14); white celluloid stars; small regimental or branch button from March 1915; (17) until March 1915, yellow cuff lace with black central stripe; (18) yellow lace, (16 & 18) white celluloid stars.

Men (Gemeine, 20-22): Collar patch in regimental or branch facing colour, white celluloid stars.

Notes:
(0) Cavalry = General der Kavallerie, Artillery = Feldzeugmeister
(10) Cavalry = Rittmeister
(13-22) NCOs and most rank stars of regiments which had white facings were slightly smaller and had a backing of dark blue cloth.
(15) Jäger = Stabsoffizier, Cavalry = Stabsoffizier, Artillery = Stabs-Feldzeugmeister
(16) E.F. Kavallerie-Oberst, General, Artillery = Stabsoffizier, Artillery = Stabsoffizier, Artillery = Stabsoffizier
(17) Oberleutnant, Wachtmeister, Feldzeugmeister, Artillery = Hauptmann, Artillery = Hauptmann, Artillery = Hauptmann
(20) Jäger = Unterleutnant
(21) Jäger = Panzerjäger, Artillery = Artillerie
(22) Jäger = Jäger, Dragons = Dragoner, Husars = Husar, Ulan = Ulan, Artillery = Kanonier, Train & Medical Service = Sanitätsoffizier & Sanitätsoffizier.

Drawings by Darko Pavlovic
A tent section, pegs and poles were strapped to the knapsack. A slung haversack ('bread bag') contained a water bottle, eating utensils, the bread ration and some personal items. The soldier's total load in marching order was about 60lbs (27kg) — normal for most armies of the day. Half the men in each section also carried the Linnenman entrenching spade, two men picks, and one a wire-cutter.

While the infantry and the technical troops more or less accepted this new uniform without much opposition, the cavalry arm managed to avoid its drab uniformity until the end of 1915. Theoretically, in August 1914 the whole army in the field should have been equipped with the new uniform; but thousands of photographs confirm that in reality the troops on campaign showed many individual differences, from the very first days and for a considerable time thereafter. The reason was quite simple. The professional officers, who purchased their own uniforms and equipment, always tried to be dressed and equipped à la mode, and were usually allowed some latitude over individual items such as privately tailored jackets showing differently cut collars, the choice of pistols or revolvers, binoculars, boots, and so forth. The professional NCOs sometimes tried to copy their officers. The rank and file were completely dressed by the depots; but despite regulation issues even they managed to add some personal touches — e.g. by covering the upper part of the collar and its insignia with the folded-over internal neck band (also in pike-grey) which was introduced with the M1908 field uniform.

This latter fashion, uniquely, sometimes proved life-saving when it hid part of the colourful collar insignia from enemy snipers; most individual touches revealed the opposite effect. The officers' taste for the idle but fashionable use of old distinctions included the black and yellow field sashes of staff and infantry officers, the diagonal Kartuschermappen pouch belt of cavalry and artillery officers, shiny leather gaiters, polished boots and dazzling sabres — all of which quickly proved lethally attractive to enemy marksmen, who killed them in hundreds. In September 1914 the Archduke Friedrich issued a circular letter recommending officers to keep a low profile and to avoid wearing sashes and even leather gaiters. Following these instructions, sabres were either left behind or, in many cases, at least had their shiny scabbards darkened.

The same document also brought to an end the long history of drummers within the infantry; modern warfare had proved them useless on the battlefield. The drums were to be sent back to the depots and the drummers became ordinary soldiers within their units. During the same period another long preserved Austro-Hungarian peculiarity began to fade away. Traditionally, the emperor's troops had worn a special field sign — an oakleaf in summer and a fir twig in winter — fastened behind their hat cockades. With the new M1908 field uniform these were ordered to be placed on the left side of the cap, helmet or fez (the latter of the Muslim Bosnian and Herzegovinian troops). In summer 1914 the troops proudly wore the field sign during the first weeks of the conflict, but photographs show that as early as the late autumn of 1914 it had virtually disappeared, and thereafter was seen only during ceremonies, inspections and parades.

Within a short time, however, another typically Austro-Hungarian habit was adopted by both officers and other ranks: the fixing of metal badges along the left side of the field cap. These badges — of brass or white metal and sometimes even enamelled in colours — were usually sold by canteens and other army stores. Many of them featured regimental symbols or references to campaigns; to individuals such as the emperor, archdukes, or commanding generals; to patriotic scenes, propaganda images, or even religious motifs. Others were sold to raise funds for charity groups. By 1918 hundreds of different types had been produced and had found their way onto the soldiers' headdress.

Like most of the other armies engaged in the Great War, Austria-Hungary did not have sufficient stocks in her depots to support long campaigns. In August 1914 everyone thought that they would be home by Christmas, at the latest. Consequently, from late autumn 1914 the priority for clothing the Austro-Hungarian forces ceased to be the correct adherence to written regulations and became much more a matter of using what was to hand. While everyone tried to get warm clothing for the forthcoming winter, the administration tried to standardise different uniform parts in order to achieve more efficiency when ordering replacements. Among the first innovations were the 'unified' trousers of 1915; the Kniehose ('knee length trousers' — in fact, longer) of the Landwehr were adopted as a common garment. From that time the
distinctive Hungarian trousers gradually fell victim to the issue of the new type, which could be worn with both Wadenstüten (woollen stockings) or the puttees which were becoming increasingly popular.

Apart from these major changes, small stylistic items like the feathers decorating the caps of the mountain formations still remained in use, and were even expanded by a newly raised formation: the Grenzjägertrupp in the Balkans, who proudly displayed eagle feathers in their caps.

The pike-grey uniform colour proved unsuitable on the Galician plains, and this may have influenced the authorities to consider alternatives. In autumn 1915 they settled on the choice of introducing the German feldgrau (field-grey) for the Austro-Hungarian forces. This was often referred to alternatively as feldgrün (field-green), perhaps to emphasise national differences.

With the introduction of field-grey/field-green the cut of the jacket (Bluse) was unchanged; but a new type soon began to replace both the 1908 models and the early field-grey. This retained concealed buttons but had a more comfortable stand-and-fall collar. Already in use for some time, it was formally adopted as the Einheitsbluse M16 that autumn. From the first, shortages of coloured cloth made it necessary to reduce the size of the collar patches in regimental facing colours (see under 'The Infantry' below, and Table 1); by 1916/17 these had shrunk to simple vertical stripes behind any rank devices, which were retained until the end of the war.

While newly raised units were usually issued complete field-grey uniforms before Marching out, the troops already at the front at first received field-grey items as replacement garments only. Consequently, all kinds of combinations of pike-grey and field-grey might be seen, especially between late 1915 and 1916.

At the beginning of operations in summer 1914 pike-grey uniforms were only available for first line troops of the Common Army, the Landwehr and Heimatläger. The Landsturm formations were usually fitted out with pre-1908 uniforms; and in August 1914 some units even went on campaign wearing civilian clothes with a brassard of yellow/black/yellow (or for Hungarians, green/white/red) on their left arm to indicate their status as regular soldiers. These shortages, from the very beginning of the war, were a first warning of many more problems to be faced during the years to come.

Weapons
The regulation issue for the infantry was the 8mm M95 Mannlicher rifle, with shorter carbine versions for mounted, mountain and technical troops. However, there were still many of the older 8mm M90 and M88/90 Mannlichers available, and these were frequently issued to Landsturm and replacement troops. Units guarding depots in the rear areas were sometimes issued Werndl 11mm M67/77 and M75/77 rifles. Since Austria-Hungary also produced Mauser rifles under licence for export, stocks were made available for the armed forces in 1914. The 7mm so-called 'Mexican' Mauser (produced for the Mexican government) came into use in great numbers; as the war continued other types were also to be seen, including rifles originally produced for Romania and Greece, as well as captured Russian weapons.

Handguns were either issued or purchased privately by officers before the war. The most common of many models in use included the eight-shot 8mm Rast & Gasser M08 Armeerevolver for the infantry, the 8mm Roth-Knka M07 Repetierpistole for the cavalry, and the old 11mm Gasser M70 and 70/74 Armeerevolver for the artillery and train units. The 9mm Steyr M12 Repetierpistole and 9mm Gasser-Kropatschek revolver also came into common use, while staff officers often preferred lighter weapons such as the 7.65mm Steyr-Klipflaufpistole or 7.65mm Frommer-Stop pistol. The most accepted pistol among the aviation troops was the classic 7.63mm Mauser C96 'broomhandle' with its wooden holster/shoulder stock. Generally, after the war started practically any handgun might be found among the troops, either home produced or captured.

Heavy weapons included the 8mm Schwarzlose M07/12 machine gun which remained the standard issue but, again, during the war a number of captured weapons also came into use on the different fronts, such as the Italian Fiat-Revelli and the Russian Maxim. Support weapons such as trench mortars or infantry guns were not employed in 1914 but developed during the first two years of war, especially after experience of facing such weapons in the hands of the Russian forces. From the end of 1915 trench mortars came into frequent use on practically all fronts, their calibres varying from 9cm to 26cm (the heavier calibres not being used by the infantry). Common early types were the 9cm M15 and M16 Minenwerfer, firing bombs weighing respectively 5.5kg (12lbs) and 11kg (23lbs); these had the disadvantage of a highly visible muzzle flash. The two-mortar detachment usually numbered about 30 men with a subaltern and two NCOs. A pair of light, short range 3.7cm M15 and later M16 'infantry guns' was also introduced at regimental level from 1916, operated by a section of similar size drawn from specially trained infantrymen; they fired 0.55kg (1lb) shells out to ranges of just over a mile (1,600m).
Hand grenades of several models were developed, and at first were as improvised and unreliable as those of other combatant armies. Two main types officially issued from March 1915, in parallel with increasingly widespread supplies of the German stick grenade, were an "egg" type, and the Kohut grenade. The latter was a short cast iron cylinder weighing 0.8kg (1lb 13oz), enclosed in a cardboard tube which served as a throwing handle, and ignited by a 4- or 8-second friction pull fuse.

Additional equipment such as flame-throwers and items for gas warfare were developed during the war by special formations of the k.u.k. Sappeurtruppe and came into use from 1916.

Lastly, the special items issued for mountain warfare should be mentioned. The status of mountain equipment in 1914 was at its best among the specialist units raised from Alpine regions such as the Tyrol and Carinthia. In 1914 seven regiments — all from the k.k. Landwehr — were specially trained and equipped for this type of warfare: the Tyrolean Landeschützenregiment I (Trient), II (Bozen) and III (Innichen); the k.k. Landwehrinfanterieregiment No.4 (Klagenfurt) and No. 27 (Laibach), to be re-named Gebirgschützenregiment Nos.1 & 2 in 1917; and the k.k. Landwehrinfanterieregiment Nos.23 (Zara) and 37 (Gravosa), both from Dalmatia.

With the exception of the Dalmatians these units all wore the distinctive Binkhahn (blackcock) feather in their caps and the Edelweiss symbol on their collar patches. Their uniforms were specially cut in a practical ‘sportsman’ style for mountain climbing; their equipment included heavy boots, snow goggles, snow shoes, skis, ice picks and climbing ropes, along with an Alpine type of overcoat specially designed to protect both man and equipment in severe weather conditions. Additionally, these troops also made wide use of snow camouflage smocks of various different designs during the winters along the Italian front (although these were in fact first seen in winter 1914/15 in Galicia and the Carpathians, used by infantry and cavalry units).

### The Infantry

As in all other nations of the period, the infantry formed the main mass of troops for operations. The last peace time order of battle registered 110 regiments of infantry for the Common Army, made up of 102 Line regiments each with 4 field battalions; 4 regiments of Tiroler Kaiserjäger (Regts Nos.1, 3 & 4 with 3 bns, No.2 with 4 bns); and 4 Bosnian-Herzegovinian regiments (Nos.13-3 with 4 bns, No.4 with 3 battalions).

Additional units included 26 Feldjäger (rifle) battalions; one Bosnian-Herzegovinian Feldjäger battalion; 6 Grenzjäger companies (established in late spring 1914); 37 k.k. Landwehr infantry regiments (usually with 3 field bns, except No.4 with 5 bns, No.23 with 2 bns, and No.27 with 4 bns); 3 Tyrolean k.k. Landeschützen regiments (Nos.1 with 6 bns, Nos.11 & 13 with 5 bns each); and 32 k.u. Hovnől infantry regiments (usually with 3 field bns, only No.19 having 4 battalions).

The Landsturm formed 40 regiments (a total of 136 battalions) in the Austrian half of the Empire, and in the Hungarian regions 32 regiments (totaling 97 battalions).

The 1914 war establishment of the infantry regiment was up to 4,600 all ranks, organised in a small regimental staff; a Pioneer platoon; four

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**Table 1: Austro-Hungarian Common Army Infantry Regiments, 1914**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Field battalions</th>
<th>Line battalions</th>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>k.k. Landwehr Infanterieregiment II</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>k.k. Landwehr Infanterieregiment III</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>k.k. Landwehr Infanterieregiment IV</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>k.k. Landwehr Infanterieregiment V</td>
<td>brown</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>k.k. Landwehr Infanterieregiment VI</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>k.k. Landwehr Infanterieregiment IX</td>
<td>brown</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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battalions, each of four rifle companies (each 5 officers, 250 men), each of four platoons; and four machine gun sections (each 1 officer, 36 men, 2 guns). The establishment of the Jäger battalion was a headquarters, a Pioneer platoon, four companies each of four platoons, and one machine-gun section.

Insignia

The historical system of identifying infantry regiments by facing colours – now reduced to collar patches – and buttons of either white or yellow metal was still in use in summer 1914. The administration separated the infantry regiments into two blocks: the ‘German’ regiments, from the Austrian part of the Dual Monarchy but including Galicians, Bohemians, Italians, etc.; and the ‘Hungarian’ regiments, also including Croatians, and Romanians from Transylvania. The Hungarian regiments could easily be identified by their distinctive trousers, decorated on the thigh with the șteț köles or Hungarian knot. Therefore, four regiments could share the same facing colour: two ‘German’ and two ‘Hungarian’, one of each pair having yellow metal and the other white metal buttons. The collar insignia also incorporated badges of rank as appropriate (see chart on page 17).

The Tyrolean Kaiserjäger regiments all displayed the ‘grass-green’ facing of the Jäger units. The 26 independent Feldjäger battalions and the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Jäger battalion in 1914 used the same facing colour. The four Bosnian-Herzegovinian infantry regiments shared the facing colour ‘alizarin-red’, and were distinguishable by the regimental number on their buttons. The Austrian Landwehr all had grass-green facing colour, whereas the Hungarian Honvéd all displayed slate-grey.

The system worked quite well as long as the Army as a whole was a ‘colourful institution’. With the introduction of drab field uniforms only the facing colour collar patches remained clearly visible; buttons appeared only on the shoulder straps and were later darkened to reduce visibility. The identification of regiments at a glance thus became impossible, and even more problematic from the mid-war years when the collar patches were reduced to simple stripes.

Interesting variations were displayed by the four Bosnian-Herzegovinian infantry regiments and the Jäger battalion from this region. Their usual headdress was the Muslim fez, but for Christian officers the wearing of the fez was optional. In practice, most of the officers adopted the fez, both to show solidarity with their men (continued on page 54)
1: Korporal, k.u.k. IR No.27 'Albert I, König der Belgier', summer 1914
2: Zugführer, k.u.k. IR No.53 'General Dankl'
3: Feldwebel, k.u.k. bosnisch-herzegowinisches IR No.4
4: Tambour, k.u.k. IR No.97 'Freiherr von Waldstätten'

1: Korporal, k.u.k. Dragonerregiment No.10 'Fürst von Liechtenstein'
2: Ulan, k.u.k. Ulanenregiment No.2 'Fürst zu Schwarzenberg'
3: Wachtmeister, k.u.k. Husarenregiment No.13 'Friedrich Wilhelm Kronprinz des Deutschen Reiches und Kronprinz von Preussen'
4: Zugführer-Trumpeter, k.u.k. Horvéd Husarenregiment No.4
AUTUMN/WINTER 1914/15
1: Austrian Landsturmman, autumn/winter 1914/15
2: General Staff officer improvised winter uniform; Carpathian Mountains, winter 1914/15
3: Infantryman in marching order, winter 1914/15
1: Korporal, k.k. Landwehr-IR No.4 Klagenfurt, spring 1915
2: Tyrolean Landeschütze with ski equipment
3: Schützen, Kärntner Freiwillige Schützen, autumn 1916
4: Tyrolean Standschütze, autumn 1915/spring 1916
1: Sapper, Isonzo front, early 1916
2: Austrian Feldgendarm, Isonzo front, 1915/16
3: Officer, Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie (Mounted), winter 1915/16
4: Gefreiter, k.k. Landwehr-IR No.23, Gorizia, spring 1916

1: Zugskommandant, Polish Legion, late 1915
2: Ulan, Polish Legion, mid-1915
3: Soldier, Polish Legion Infantry, late 1914
4: Legion-S-Zugskommandant, Ukrainian Legion, autumn 1916
### DRAGOONS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Buttons</th>
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<td>Leitmeritz</td>
<td>dark red</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Graf Paar</td>
<td>Prag</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Friedrich August</td>
<td>Wien</td>
<td>dark red</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>König von Sachsen</td>
<td>Innsbruck</td>
<td>green grass</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Kaiser Ferdinand</td>
<td>Graz</td>
<td>imperial yellow</td>
<td>white</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Friedrich Franz IV.</td>
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<td>yellow</td>
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<td>Herzog von Lothringen</td>
<td>Prag</td>
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<td>Graf Montecuccoli</td>
<td>Leitmeritz</td>
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<td>Echterzog Albrecht</td>
<td>Lemberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fürst von Liechtenstein</td>
<td>Prag</td>
<td>sulphur yellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kaiser</td>
<td>Wien</td>
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### HUSSARS

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### ULANIS

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1: Kanonier, 24cm Motor-Mörserbatterie No.8; Gallipoli, winter 1915/16
2: Major, 15cm Haubitcbatterie No.30; Smyrna, spring 1916
3: Zugführer, Gebirgsauflaftdivision von Mauro; Palestine, summer 1916
4: Korporal, Autokolonne Türkei No.2; Darbehkhir, summer/autumn 1916
and as a welcome difference from the rest of the Army. This distinction largely disappeared with the later general adoption of the steel helmet.

THE CAVALRY
The cavalry was the most traditionalist and conservative arm on the Austro-Hungarian armed forces, some of the regiments tracing their lineage back as far as the Thirty Years' War of the 17th century. The greatest modernising reform of the cavalry units was instituted after 1867 when the heaviest arm, the Cuirassiers, were disbanded and these regiments were converted to Dragoons. Furthermore, the practical distinctions between heavy and light cavalry vanished, and the remaining three types of regiment – Dragoons, Hussars and Ulan (the Austrian spelling) – continued carrying the same arms consisting of carbines, revolvers (later semi-automatic pistols) and sabres only.

In 1914 they still wore their distinctive uniforms with helmets, shakos and czapkas, blue tunics, Atilias and Ulanka, all with red trousers (for Hussars, in Hungarian style). The Dragon units were identified by different facing colours and buttons, while Hussars and Ulan were distinguishable by their shako and czapka colours. In the case of the Hussars half the regiments wore light blue uniforms (Atilas) and half dark blue; again, buttons in white or yellow metal made further distinctions. The Ulans all had madder-red collars and cuffs, and made further distinctions by the top colours of the czapka and the button metal.

During the early years of the 20th century machine gun and telegraph detachments had been formed and specially trained. To some extent, the machine gun detachments of the Dragoons and Ulan were the only cavalry troops to wear a pike-grey field uniform in 1914.

The peacetime organisation counted 15 regiments of Dragoons, 16 regiments of Hussars and 11 regiments of Ulan (Nos.1-8 and 11-13). See Table 2, page 33, for regimental titles and facing colours. The normal strength of a cavalry regiment comprised six squadrons with 900 horses.

In wartime the regiments were organised in Kavalleriedivisionen, each consisting of four regiments separated into two cavalry brigades.

In addition to the Common Army cavalry, the k.k. Landwehr had six regiments of Ulan, a division of mounted Tyrolean Landesschützen and another of mounted Dalmatian Landesschützen (each of two squadrons). The Hungarian Honvéd included ten Hussar regiments, and additional squadrons of Hungarian Landsturm Hussars.

It became evident during the early stages of the war that these formations were destined to suffer great losses. Hastily, at least some field items were created, sometimes 'on the spot'; the helmets of the Dragoons were either overpainted in grey or covered with grey linen, as were the shakos of the Hussars and the czapkas of the Ulan; sabre scabbards were also sometimes overpainted grey. Paradoxically, many Ulan still wore the high horsehair plume and brass chin chain with their field-covered czapkas. A further step was the 'overpainting' of the trumpeters' traditionally white horses; this led to some strange effects, like black-overpainted horses shining violet after the first rain.

As the war continued it became difficult to supply remounts to keep up with the casualties among the horses, and each year a larger proportion of the cavalry were dismounted to serve as infantry in the trenches. Although they were issued field-grey uniforms from the second half of 1915, photographs show officers and men still wearing the winter overcoats of their old coloured uniforms. In reality the summer and autumn of 1914 saw the swansong of this old arm of service. It was on 21 August 1914 at Jaroslawice that the Dragoons and Ulan of the 4.Kavalleriedivision fought with distinction against Cossacks, Dragoons, Hussars and Ulan of the Russian 10th Cavalry Division, in what was later called the last true cavalry battle in history.

ARTILLERY, TECHNICAL & SPECIALIST TROOPS
The artillery arm had a remarkable tradition of devotion and ability, and had often distinguished itself in battle; for instance, in 1866 at Königgrätz, where a sacrificial stand by the major part of the artillery covered the retreat of the Austrian army. Nevertheless, before 1914 the importance of the artillery was underestimated in contrast to that of the cavalry, which was overvalued by the general staff. As a consequence, in summer 1914 the Austro-Hungarian divisions were mostly under-provided with artillery; a regular infantry division normally had only 46 pieces, in contrast to the German norm of 60, the Russians' 50 and the French Army's scale of 72 guns. Of even the 46 guns which were provided, at least 16 were old models that could no longer meet the demands of modern warfare. After the outbreak of war the artillery improved steadily, and within a relatively short period received modern and functionally suitable pieces.

The artillery was essentially divided into three branches: the field artillery (and horse artillery, with the cavalry divisions), mountain artillery, and fortress artillery. Among the many different pieces in use by field and mountain units the most notable were the 8cm and later 10.4cm field guns, 10cm and 15cm field howitzers, 7cm and 7.5cm mountain guns, and 10cm mountain howitzers. The mountain artillery formed a distinct branch and, as war proceeded, became famous for its valuable contribution on all fronts. The mountain guns could be disassembled
easily for transport on pack horses. These guns and howitzers proved effective not only in mountain warfare but also in the deserts of southern Palestine, in the Balkans and on the Isonzo and later Piave fronts.

The fortress artillery, organised in battalions and companies, manned the pieces mounted in fortresses and fixed defences along the borders of the Empire, such as Przemysl in Galicia, and the impressive defensive line following the Italian border through the Dolomites and in Carinthia.

As the war proceeded, with its new demands for the heavy bombardment of continuous trench systems, elements of the fortress artillery were made mobile to form 'heavy artillery regiments'. Types used by both the fortress and the heavy artillery included the 24cm M98/07 mortar (the German term—not to be confused with the British and American usage to mean a small trench mortar), which also saw action on the Gallipoli Peninsula and later in Palestine 1915–18; and perhaps the best known Austro-Hungarian piece of all, the 30.5cm M11/16 mortar. The heaviest pieces included 24cm and 35cm guns (the latter actually a naval gun), and the 38cm and 42cm howitzers.

In summer 1914 the main body of the artillery counted 42 Feldkanonenergeregiment (field gun regiments), and 14 Feldhaubitzenregiment (field howitzer regiments); 9 reitende Artillerie divisionen (horse artillery divisions, each with 2 or 3 batteries); 7 schwere Haubitzendivisionen (heavy howitzer divisions); 10 Gebirgsartillerieregiment (mountain artillery regiments); 6 Festungsartillerieregiment (fortress artillery regiments) and 8 Festungsartillerie-bataillone (fortress artillery battalions); 8 and Landwehrfeldkanonen-divisionen, 8 Landwehrfeldhaubitzen-divisionen, 8 Hovnöwdfeldartillerieregimentet, and 1 Hovnöwd reitende Artilleriederivision.

The regiments of the field and mountain artillery each consisted of two 'divisions' of two or three batteries each. Field artillery gun and howitzer batteries had six pieces; horse, mountain and heavy field howitzer batteries had only four pieces. The fortress artillery formed regiments of two or three battalions, and independent battalions, each of them divided into four companies with two to six pieces each.

As a special weapon the k.u.k. Heer also employed armoured trains on most fronts. Most of these were built by the Hungarian MAV (State Railways) and armed with naval guns removed from disarmed warships or obtained directly from the naval arsenal. The crews were mixed and drawn from specialist branches as required. They usually consisted of members of the K.u.K. Eisenbahnerregiment (Railway Regiment) together with officers and men from the infantry, artillery and sappers to man the various weapons. While these trains were, of course, of use only along railway tracks, the Austro-Hungarian forces also experimented with home produced armoured cars; these will be discussed in the second book of this series. The Sappers were distinct from the regular Pioneers. The primary mission of the latter was the building of bridges, but the former developed several specialist units during the war. The first of these was a Spezialformation for the 24cm Luffmnenswerfer, which operated on several fronts. This was soon followed by the Sappeurspeilbataillon, which was employed to a certain extent in gas warfare; it was later renamed k.u.k. Sappeurbataillon 62. Another special unit was raised to develop the use of flame-throwers, and this later became k.u.k. Sappeurbataillon 61.

Facing colours of technical troops:

- Artillery: scarlet, yellow buttons
- Sappers: cherry-red, yellow buttons
- Pioneers: steel-green, yellow buttons
- Railway troops: steel-green, yellow buttons
- Telegraph troops: steel-green, yellow buttons
- Train (transport) units: light blue, white buttons
- Medical troops: madder-red, yellow buttons

Aviation troops did not have a distinctive facing colour and were only identified by adding the balloon emblem behind the rank device on the collar patch.

STANDSCHÜTZEN & VOLUNTEERS

The Standschützen had a particular tradition among the population of the mountainous areas of the Tyrol and Vorarlberg. Deriving from 'rifle associations', they had shown their loyalty to the Habsburgs for centuries. One of their most remarkable episodes was the Tyrolean resistance led by the famous Andreas Hofer in 1809 against Napoleon's allied Bavarian and Saxo troops.

According to the special rights granted to the Tyrol and Vorarlberg, these associations were allowed to bear firearms 'in perpetuo', which meant that everyone belonging to one of the associations (which were organised for practical purposes in towns, villages or valley communities) kept his rifle at home. When general mobilisation took the able-bodied age classes for the Army, the older men and boys left behind had to form the main strength of these clubs. As a special
tradition they usually elected their 'officers' and 'NCOs' by democratic vote.

In 1915, when Italy threatened the Tyrol once again, the associations showed their loyalty by offering to perform home defence duties; the offer was welcomed, and within a short time numbers variously estimated at between 20,000 and 24,000 were under arms, ranging from schoolboys to grandfathers whose military experience was decades in the past. Interestingly, the 'Welschtirler' (southern Tyrolese whose mother tongue was Italian) joined in considerable strength — some 3,500 — and remained loyal.

In spring 1915 the equipment of the Stand-
schützen was rather poor, some being identified only by a brassard. During the months which followed it improved considerably; they were supplied with field-grey loden uniforms and, eventually, M95 Mannlicher rifles. As a distinction, their collar patches bore the Tyroleans eagle or the arms of Vorarlberg behind the rank device. Since their officers were not really trained the bureaucracy decided to give them rosettes as rank insignia instead of regular officers' stars; photographs show that this regulation was widely disobeyed, with both officers and NCOs wearing regular stars on their patches. Officers who carried sabres were to fix a silver woven portée (fist strap) instead of the regular officers' gold equivalent.

On campaign the Standschützen formed companies and — in cases of more than 200 men coming forward from the same region — battalions. They developed remarkable fighting abilities in the defence of the line high in the mountains, but they were naturally unsuitable for mobile campaigning. Furthermore, as the younger men reached military age and some of the older ones became less fit, there was a natural dwindling in numbers, to about half the original figure by May 1917.

Patriotic sentiment, especially after the declaration of war by Italy, favoured the formation of volunteer 'rifle' units among the Austrian population, partly on the same basis as the Standschützen organisation in the Tyrol and Vorarlberg.

Thus, a number of units from battalion to sometimes regimental strength were formed: in Carinthia (Kärntner Freiwillige Schützen), Upper Austria (Oberösterreichische Freiwillige Schützen), Salzburg (k.k. freiwillige Schützen Salzburgs), Styria (Steirisches freiwilliges Schützenbataillon), Vienna (Wiener Bürger Scharfschützenkorps), Marburg (k.k. freiwilliges Schützenbataillon Marburg No.IV), Laibach (k.k. freiwilliges Schützenbataillon Laibach No.V, and the cyclists of the k.k. freiwilliges Schützenbataillon No.201), and Trieste (k.u.k. freiwilliges Schützenbataillon Triest No.VII).

The equipment of these units varied a great deal, from Mannlicher rifles of all models to 'Mexican' Mausers and even Russian M91 Mosin-Nagants. Many wore uniforms based on pike-grey of varying shades (like the 'Mohrengrau' of the Carinthians); but stocks were quickly exhausted, and these were soon replaced by field-grey regulation issue items in all possible combinations. As Schützen their facing colour was Rifle grass-green bearing the arms of the battalion's region behind the rank device. Again, they were ordered to wear rosettes instead of rank stars, but as soon as these units reached the front these were in many cases hasty replaced by stars so that their wearers would not be considered as 'irregulars' by the enemy. Some of the units, like the k.k. Kärntner freiwilliges Schützenregiment, were granted the stars officially at a later date. Elected officers were ordered to have silver portées, but those coming from the Army or Landwehr organisation were entitled to gold.

**FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS**

Political activities at the time of the outbreak of the Great War favoured the existence of nationalist clubs and associations, sometimes not only of political agitators but also organised as 'rifle associations' vaguely comparable to the Tyrolean Standschützen. Their peacetime sporting activities became extremely politicised when the international situation deteriorated towards military conflict. Despite the long confrontation — some would claim, an underground war — between the Austro-Hungarian authorities and the various clandestine nationalist groups which sought the breakup of the Empire, the government was not above using such groups when they threatened Austro-Hungary's enemies.

**The Polish Legion**

Most prominent among the foreign volunteers were the Poles, fighting for the cause of an independent and united nation of Poland. The third division of Poland in 1795 had been ratified at the Congress of Vienna in 1815: Austria received West Galicia, with its capital Krakow, and Eastern Galicia with its capital at Lemberg (Lvov); Prussia (after 1871, the German Empire) got West Prussia and Posen (Poznan). The remainder —
nearly 80 per cent of the former Polish nation with perhaps 60 per cent of the population - passed into Russian hands. After 1867 the Austro-Hungarian authorities favoured the Galician provinces by granting a certain degree of internal autonomy and freedom of cultural activities, thus making the Dual Monarchy comparatively attractive for the rest of Poland.

The main objective for Polish activities remained either a unification of all Polish regions to form an autonomous area within the Russian Empire, or - more radically - the restoration of an independent Polish state.

Josef Pilsudski, later the president of independent Poland, became the commander of the unified strecke (riflemen') movement on 30 July 1914. On 19 August 1914 the AOK agreed to the formation in East and West Galicia of a Polish Legion, officially permitted to use the Polish language, and Pilsudski became the commander of its 1st Regiment. Despite the critical situation the Legion attracted so many volunteers that this unit had to be expanded into the 1st Polish Legion Brigade in November 1914. It suffered heavily during the winter campaign of 1914/15, but continued to attract so many recruits that after a period of rest in early spring it was able to go back into the line between March and July 1915.

With Lemberg occupied by the Russians, in late 1914 a 2nd Polish Legion was formed from East Galician volunteers in Krakow, with two regiments of infantry, three batteries of field artillery and two cavalry squadrons. It fought with distinction in the hard Carpathian winter and in 1915 was active in the Bukovina and Bessarabia. Later a smaller 3rd Brigade was formed. All three brigades were used to halt the Brusilov Offensive, and were re-organised into a Polnisches Hilfskorps (Polish Auxiliary Corps') in August 1916.

In 1917 the attempted re-creation of a Kingdom of Poland failed, causing political problems that were further aggravated by the First Revolution in Russia. At around this time the Legion was disbanded, with only elements of the 2nd Brigade remaining loyal until early 1918.

The uniforms of the Polish units varied enormously and photographs show a perturbing variety of garments, uniform designs and rank distinctions. However, some main items may be noted. Headgear was either the Polish soft cap with a Prussian peak, the maiczkauka, or the distinctive rogatywka with its square crown. The Ulans of the cavalry squadrons favoured the high czakpa recalling the Napoleonic period, but a slightly lower and smaller version could also be seen. In all cases a variety of cockades and shields were applied, mostly showing the Polish eagle with inscriptions e.g. 'S' for strecke or 'L' for Legiony. Rank badges consisted of bars for NCOs, and for officers stars in combination with the distinctive Polish zigzag lace, in 1914-16 in red for subalterns and silver for staff officers. As with the Tyrolean and Austrian volunteers, the rank devices were ordered to be rosettes rather than stars, causing irritation among the legionaries; some even discarded their rank badges in protest. Later, in 1916, following new regulations, the red zigzag lace passed to the NCOs, officers receiving silver or (for staff officers) gold lace in combination with stars.

Generally, pine-grey cloth was issued for the uniforms, and the jackets were tailored with a touch of the Polish cut; trousers were worn with woollen stockings or puttees. Later the colour became field-grey, mostly in the same cut. A great variety of detail differences can be seen in surviving photographs, including Polish legionaries dressed in full Austro-Hungarian regulation uniforms. Photographs also show that even within single units headgear and clothing varied to a certain extent.

While the 1st Legion Brigade's infantry collar patches varied from red to none, the 2nd Legion Brigade seems to have had green patches throughout. In other units carmine red has been reported for Ulans, black for artillery and white for the medical service. Weapons included either Austro-Hungarian standard issue of all available models for the infantry, with the M04 cavalry sabre for the Ulans, although the latter also used former Russian cavalry sabres. Officers were usually issued the M61 Austrian infantry officer's sabre. Officers from the Kupfel underneath the jacket, with silver/red striped portepèes, but photographs also show infantry officers carrying Russian infantry sabres.

**The Ukrainian Legion**

Following practically the same agenda as the Polish Legion, Ukrainian (Ruthenian) separatists volunteered to fight for an independent state of 'Ukraine'. Ukrainian political groups supported the formation of a regiment of two battalions totalling 2,500 men, incorporated in the Austro-Hungarian Army's XXV Corps. At first named 'Ukrainian Rifle Volunteers' (freiwillige ukrainische Schützen), they later received the title Ukrainische Legion; the word 'Legion' was always used before the officers' rank titles.

From 1914 to 1916 they wore Austro-Hungarian uniforms of pike-grey and later field-grey, with light blue collar patches with a narrow yellow stripe at the rear edge - the Ukrainian colours. Rank distinctions included stars which were arranged in a horizontal line along the collar patch.

Towards the turn of 1916/17 the collar patch was reduced to a small light blue/yellow stripe; and a new headgear was designed, which was
introduced during 1917. In 1918 most elements of this Legion formed the cadre of the new independent Ukrainian army.

Most unusually, they were also allowed to have women in their ranks; some of them were even decorated for bravery during the war.

The Albanian Legion

In spring 1916 the k.u.k. XIX Korps, which had entered the northern and central parts of Albania, began to reorganise the internal security system of that country. Elements from the Austrian k.k. Gendarmerie helped to organise and train Albanian gendarmerie units and set up police units in towns such as Tirana and Elbasan.

Distinct from this police force, the Army tried to establish a new military system by forming Albanian militias on a territorial basis. Nine battalions each of four companies of 150 to 175 men were formed in the course of 1916, and remained active until 1918. Officers and NCOs came from the Austro-Hungarian Army. In some cases certain tribes volunteered collectively with their chiefs. Usually the Albanians wore Austro-Hungarian regular uniforms of field-grey material with distinctive headgear, which could be either the Albanian white conical fez or a grey cylindrical fez displaying a cockade in the red/black national colours. There is also evidence that some volunteers continued to wear their national costumes.

These Albanerbataillone served within their country alongside the Austro-Hungarian forces against Italians, French and Greeks until 1918. In 1917 special clothing instructions were proposed, but as far as is known these were never issued. Arms and equipment included both standard Austro-Hungarian issue and various kinds of captured weapons.

AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN UNITS ON TURKISH FRONTS

During the fight for the Gallipoli Peninsula the Turkish war minister, Enver Pasha, asked for support for the hard-pressed defenders. During the primary stages of the campaign no direct support was possible because Serbia blocked the route down the Balkans. In autumn 1915 an Austro-Hungarian/German force under the command of Generalfeldmarschall von Mackensen defeated the Serbian army and opened the way for direct support to Turkey. In December 1915 two Austro-Hungarian artillery units were transported down the River Danube and finally reached Gallipoli. The 15cm Haubitzbatterie No.36 reached the Sogan lidere opposite Sedd-ul bar, and the 24cm Motor-mörserbatterie No.9 took position around Anafarta, shelling ANZAC troops from there. Both units took part in the final stages of this campaign.

In 1916 the 15cm Haubitzbatterie No.36 moved to the Smyrna area for coastal defence duties; here its gunfire sank the British Monitor M30. The 24cm Motor-mörserbatterie was divided in 1916: two guns were sent for coastal defence to Mount Carmel near Haifa in Palestine, where they remained. The other half of the battery was re-equipped with new 10.4cm guns and named 10cm Kanonenbatterie No.20; it saw action in the second and third battles of Gaza, and the two battles of the Jordan valley.

In 1916 a mountain howitzer division ("Gebirgshaubitzzdivision von Marno"), consisting of two batteries of 10cm mountain howitzers, joined the second Turkish attempt to win control over the Suez Canal. The division at first attacked during the battle of Romani, but suddenly found itself in a rearguard position when the Turkish front line collapsed. Astonishingly, the Austro-Hungarian unit proved equal to the situation, and succeeded in bringing all their pieces back to a new defence line on the fringe of the Negev Desert.

The division remained in the area; in 1917 it was renamed 'k.u.k. Gebirgshaubitzzdivision in der Türkei'. Finally, re-equipped with field howitzers in early 1918, it was again renamed 'k.u.k. Feldhaubitzz- abteilung in der Türkei'. It fought with distinction in all three battles of Gaza, covered the Turkish retreat, fought in both battles of the Jordan valley, and finally marched in the direction of Aleppo.

Apart from these combat units, the Austro-Hungarian Army sent nearly a dozen instruction detachments to train the Turkish artillery in the use of Skoda mountain guns and howitzers. Ski training was also given to Turkish mountain soldiers. Particularly effective were medical institutions such as a field hospital in Jerusalem, a field ambulance at Bir-Sebba, and two mobile field hospitals which joined in 1917. During the final retreat of one of the latter, the k.u.k. Felsbapt No.309, was completely destroyed by an Australian air raid. At least four lorry transport columns (k.u.k. Auto-kolonnen Türkeli Nos.1–4) supported the Turks between Diarbekir and Mosul.

During all these operations the Austro-Hungarian units always operated in support to the Ottoman forces and, in contrast to military elements from Germany, they never passed under Ottoman administrative control. In 1918 the survivors were concentrated in Haidar Pasha (Constantinople); they were repatriated via Trieste in early 1919.
THE PLATES

A1: Hauptmann, k.k.k. Infanterieregiment No.4 'Hoch- und Deutschmeister', summer 1914
This captain of a Vienna regiment offers a vivid example of an Austro-Hungarian officer during the early stages of the war, wearing the traditional officer's sash, the field sign on his cap, and riding boots. As a captain he would be mounted and in command of a company. He is equipped with an M07 Repetierpistole, and the M01 sabre with gold lace pommel hangs from the Kuppel, a belt usually worn underneath the jacket. His decoration bar shows the 1898 Jubilee Medal and the Jubilee Cross of 1908.

A2: Hauptmann im Generalstabskorps, summer 1914
Generals and officers of the General Staff were identified by their distinctive high, stiff kepi-style caps with a gold lace cockade and loop. Other details include the red-edged, black silk collar patch of the General Staff. Captain was the lowest rank in the Generalstabskorps. He wears the officer's sash over his waistcoat, and is armed with a 7.65mm Steyr Kipplaf pistol. Typical ribbons would be the Jubilee Medal of 1898, the Jubilee Cross of 1908, and the Mobilisation Cross of 1912/13.

A3: Oberleutnant der Artillerie
The most distinctive features of this artillery first lieutenant's uniform are the Kartuscherlenker (carradge pouch belt) across the chest, and the Achatdragere made of gold/black striped lace on his left shoulder. He is armed with the M04 cavalry sabre with gold fist strap, and an M09 Rast & Gasser revolver. Note his gaiters.

B1: Korporal, k.k.k. Infanterieregiment No.27 'Albiet I, König der Belgien', summer 1914
This corporal represents the standard type of Austro-Hungarian infantry from 'German' regiments at the outbreak of war; his unit was raised in the Graz region of Styria in Austria. He wears the 1908 field uniform with Hosenspangen (small gaiters) and full equipment, and is armed with the M95 Mannlicher rifle. On the left side of his cap he displays the field sign of an oakleaf, typical for the first few weeks of the war only. Note the Schützenauszeichnung (marksmanship lanyard, 2nd Class) on his left shoulder; and the proficiency badge for Distanzschützung (distance judging) on his right breast.

B2: Zugführer, k.k.k. Infanterieregiment No.53 'General Dankl'
This sergeant represents the 'Hungarian' component of the Common Army, wearing the light summer field jacket with stand-and-fall collar. He belongs to a Croatian regiment raised in the Agram/Zagreb area; Croatian units were incorporated in the Hungarian half of the Dual Monarchy and dressed like Hungarian regiments with their distinctive trousers. He is armed with the standard M95 Mannlicher; note on his left shoulder the 1st Class marksmanship lanyard.

B3: Feldwebel, k.k.k. bosnisch-herzen- gowinisches Infanterieregiment No.4
This staff sergeant serves with a regiment raised in the Mostar region. The fez was the most distinctive item worn by the Bosnian-Herzeogovinian regiments, which soon earned a high reputation for bravery and loyalty. The colour of the fez was changed from red to pika-grey for field uniforms. He is armed with an M07 Repetierpistole and, in keeping with his rank, with a sabre furnished with a black/yellow wool fist strap.

B4: Tambour, k.k.k. Infanterieregiment No.97 'Freiherr von Waldstätten'
This drummer from a Trieste regiment is armed with the M03/02 Pioneer sword; nevertheless, the red wool lanyard indicates his qualification as a marksman. The drums were usually produced from polished aluminum and were hastily overpainted pike-grey for low visibility in the field. By the end of September 1914 drums were removed from the troops and the former drummers served on as normal infantrymen.

C1: Korporal, k.k.k. Dragonerregiment No.10 'Fürst von Liechtenstein'
Dragoons were identified by their facing colours and differently coloured buttons. As a corporal he is armed with an M07 Repetierpistole and the M04 cavalry sabre. His distinctive dragon helmet, in peacetime shining black with brass fittings, has been overpainted grey in a gesture towards the needs of a field uniform.

C2: Ulan, k.k.k. Ulanenregiment No.2 'Fürst zu Schwarzenberg'
Against cold weather this trooper is wearing the PeizUBLA
a 7mm Mauser Infanteriegewehr M14 (the famous 'Mexican' Mauser).  
E4: Tyrolese Standschütze, south Tyrolean front, autumn 1915/spring 1916  
This type of proper uniform was received from autumn 1915 together with other items of regulation Army equipment and weapons. Before that the volunteer units were issued anything that was available from depots in the Tyrol, and considerable numbers wore civilian clothing with only a braided cap to indicate their military status. The characteristic grass-green boro the Tyrolean eagle or the arms of Vorarlberg in white metal behind any rank device. In many cases these were hardly visible behind the mighty bores which were popular in the Tyrol. This Standschütze serving in the Dolomites is armed with the standard M95 Mannlicher.

F1: Sapper, Isonzo front, early 1916 
A typical example of weather improvisations; he wears the standard early pigeye grey field tunic with later field-grey trousers tucked into jackboots of the Pioneer type; a privately acquired pullover worn under the jacket is folded outwards, covering the upper collar as well as helping to ward off the cold dampness of the Isonzo (Soça) valley. The natural brown waistbelt is the M15 type, with M95 bayonet attached.

F2: Austrian Feldgendarm, Isonzo front, 1915/16  
The Gendarmerie belonged to the k.k. Landwehr organisation and elements were mobilised to form the military police in the field. This Gendarm wears a greatcoat, and the typical khaki cloth-covered cork helmet with brass fittings; later the standard field cap would replace this headdress. He is armed with the M90 Gendarmerie rifle with bayonet and the M51 Gendarmerie sabre. The brassard indicates his status as a Feldgendarm, i.e. a military policeman.

F3: Officer, Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie (Mounted), winter 1915/16  
The Hungarian Gendarmerie wore black hats with brass badges and cock feathers instead of the spiked helmets of the Austrians. This officer's Dragon-type Peterkow overcoat is of course a later issue. For hand-to-hand fighting both arms favours improvised weapons such as spades and daggers, and both re-invented archaic implements like the spiked trench club carried here. The lance-corporal wears the field-grey tunic with standard-and-fall collar, together with Kniehose trousers and Wadestutzen woollen stockings. His main weapon is a sling M95 Repetiersturz carbine.

F4: Gefreiter, k.k. Landwehrinfanterieregiment No.73, Podgora (Gorizia), spring 1916  
This regiment, together with No.37, gained a high reputation for hard fighting along the Isonzo front, especially in the area around Görz (Gorizia). Being Dalmatians they were familiar with the Italian language, and took the Italians by surprise when counter-attacking. For hand-to-hand fighting both arms favours improvised weapons such as spades and daggers, and both re-invented archaic implements like the spiked trench club carried here. This lance-corporal wears the field-grey tunic with standard-and-fall collar, together with Kniehose trousers and Wadestutzen woollen stockings. His main weapon is a sling M95 Repetiersturz carbine.

G1: Zugkommandant, Polish Legion late 1915  
This officer, equivalent to a first lieutenant, is already dressed in field-grey with some 'Polish' alterations to the Austro-Hungarian cut; his cap is the macijovka. His equipment is purely Austro-Hungarian, consisting of the M61 officer's sabre with silver portépée and the M98 Rast & Gastor revolver.

G2: Ulan, Polish Legion, mid-1915 
This uniform is preserved in the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (Army Museum) in Vienna. It includes the high czapka with brown leather fittings and the Legion's Polish eagle badge. The Ulanka field blouse is very similar to Austro-Hungarian Ulan cut, but made of a lighter shade of field-grey cloth and with cherry-red piping round the pocket flaps and down the front; the collar patches are the same colour. He is armed with an M04 Austro-Hungarian cavalry sabre.

G3: Soldier, Polish Legion Infantry, late 1914  
During the early stages of the Great War the Polish Legion received pigeye-grey cloth from which the uniforms were tailored in a 'Polish' cut; later issues also saw Polish Legion soldiers wearing full Austro-Hungarian uniforms. Note the distinctive Polish rogestyka cap, its square crown recalling the historic shape of the czapka. He is armed with the standard M95 Mannlicher and wears regulation leather equipment.

G4: Legions-Zugskommandant, Ukrainian Legion, autumn 1916  
The Ukrainian volunteers wore standard Austro-Hungarian equipment, consisting of the M61 officer's sabre with silver portépée and the M98 Rast & Gastor revolver.

The most obvious distinction was the collar patch of light blue with a yellow stripe at the end, and the rank stars arranged in a single line. This first lieutenant is armed with an M98 revolver.

H1: Kanonier, 24cm Motor-Mörserbatterie No.9; Anafarta, Gallipoli, Turkey, winter 1915/16  
Before leaving for Turkey the Austro-Hungarian artillery contingent were issued the modern field-grey uniform in the best available quality - the winter weather on the Gallipoli peninsula made it necessary. This gunner's waistbelt is of cavalry type with two ammunition pouches.

H2: Major, 15cm Haubitzebatterie No.36; Gulf of Saros ( Smyrna), spring 1916  
Classic khaki tropical uniforms were issued in Constantinoi only and consisted of a sun helmet and khaki garments, sometimes of the same cut as the pigeye-grey equivalents. His equipment is standard. Note the ribbons of the 'Signum Laudis' Medal of Merit, 1898 Jubilee Medal, 1908 Jubilee Cross and, on the fly front, the German Iron Cross; on the right breast he wears the Turkish Iron Crescent.

H3: Zugführer, Gebirgshaubitzdivision von Marno; Palestine, summer 1916  
The out of the sergeant's khaki tropical blouse is the same as the summer pattern 1908 pigeye-grey field jacket. His sun helmet has the standard other ranks' cockade (darkened), with the lettering 'FI'. The waist belt is of cavalry type, and would support the bayonet for the M95 Repetierkarabiner with the NCOs' tassel. On the upper right breast he wears the gunlayer's proficiency badge made of Tombak alloy; he too has the Turkish Iron Crescent decoration, and he displays the German Iron Cross ribbon on the fly front of the tunic.

H4: Korporal, Autokolonne Türkei No.2; Diarbekir, summer/autumn 1916  
This corporal driver's khaki tropical jacket still has concealed buttonholes, which indicates that the uniform was tailored in early 1916. His field cap is the standard issue, again made of light khaki material. Khaki trousers and puttees of brown cloth and bayonet with yellow/black tassel complete his outfit. He displays the bronze Medal for Bravery on its white/red ribbon. Both H3 and H4 display a facing colour stripe on the collar in place of the old patches.

Palestine, 1916: camp scene of k.k.k. Gebirgshaubitzdivision von Marno. Officers and men are dressed in khaki tropical uniforms; the usual national cockade is fixed to the front of the sun helmets. The sabre was not carried in the field. See Plate H2. (Kriegsarchiv)  
RIGHT Camp of k.k.k. Autokolonne Türkei No.2 at Diarbekir, late 1916; see Plate H4. The sun helmets worn with the khaki tropical uniforms do not bear the national cockade. The lirrieses are 3-tension Flat 'Subvention Lastwagen'. (Kriegsarchiv)
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The part played in the Great War by the army of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy is little known to English-speakers, perhaps because the end of the war saw the complete destruction of the Empire. Yet it was of central importance, providing nearly all Central Powers forces on the Italian front, huge numbers on the Russian front, seven Army Corps in the Balkans – and even a little-known contingent in Turkey and Palestine. The first half of the story of this complex multi-national organisation at war is described here in a concise but detailed text, supported by data tables and an insignia chart, and illustrated with rare photographs and colourful uniform plates.