

The Russian Civil War (1)

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INTRODUCTION

Every civil war is a tragedy for the nation involved. The tragedy for Russia was aggravated by its relative backwardness, its enormous territory, the mass illiteracy of its population, and by the pompous promises of a better world to come, which never came true. The loss of about 13 million lives within five years speaks for itself.

The Civil War in Russia lasted from 1917 until 1926, although major military operations were over by 1922. Residual fighting continued in Central Asia, where the Reds were opposed by local independence movements, and in Russia and Ukraine, where Cheka security forces viciously put down a number of peasant uprisings.

The division of Russian society was already in evidence by 1905, when the country faced a popular revolution that had been brought to a head by the loss of the war with Japan. The next revolution, in February 1917, led to the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, but produced a divided government which was incapable of solving the many problems at hand, and which failed to improve the living standard of the poor. Under Lenin,

The Udarnaya (shock) group of Moscow's Rogozhsko-Simonovskiy District Red Guard. The group was created in February 1918 to combat banditry in the city. The members are typical Red Guardsmen of the period, and wear metal militia shields on their headgear, and armbands. The man standing in the centre has a plaque on his armband in the shape of St. George, the patron of Moscow. The 1st Moscow Soviet Rogozhsko-Simonovskiy Infantry Regiment, the first regular Red Army regiment in Moscow, was later formed on the basis of this Red Guard detachment.



the Bolsheviks (or Communists, as they later renamed themselves) at first enjoyed genuine popular support for their activities. When they seized power in October 1917, they had the great advantage of being more or less united; their opponents represented a whole spectrum of beliefs and were unable to combine to counter the Reds.

The main instrument with which the Bolsheviks imposed communism on Russia was the Red Army. Traditionally the origins of this army were among the factory workers who laid down tools and took up arms as a way of expressing their grievances against the Imperial Russian state. Already formed by the time of the revolutions of 1905 and February 1917, these militant workers organised themselves into paramilitary detachments known as the *krasnogvardeytsi*, or 'Red Guards'.

THE RED GUARDS

During the 1905 Russian Revolution, Red Guard detachments sprang up in Moscow and in other towns and cities. They reappeared in February 1917, immediately after the second revolution, as a means of protecting the People's Soviets (councils) as well as the strategic factories and industrial sites where most Red Guardsmen were recruited.

Although not directly aligned with the Bolshevik party, it was the Red Guards of Petrograd who enabled the Bolsheviks to seize power in the October revolution of 1917. (Petrograd was the name given to St Petersburg at the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, as the latter name sounded German.) It was Red Guards, in large part, who took the Winter Palace in Petrograd and arrested the members of the provisional government, and who later stormed the Moscow Kremlin. And in the first months of the Revolution, it was Red Guard detachments who were the only military force available to protect the capital against the Germans, and who fought the White forces as they started to appear all over Russia.

At first the Red Guards organised themselves loosely into local *otryads* (detachments) of perhaps 100-150 men who took turns patrolling the streets around their factories and homes, and were called to arms in case of military necessity. Smaller numbers of trusted *krasnogvardeytsi* were employed to guard local Soviets and the Bolshevik HQ at the Smolni Institute in Petrograd.

All Red Guardsmen were volunteers, and commanders were elected at militia meetings. Besides factory workers, many Red Guard recruits were former servants of the rich and powerful, idealistic youths burning to participate in the 'World Revolution', as well as outlaws and criminals who saw an opportunity to seize riches from the abandoned palaces and town houses of Russian aristocrats and merchants.

A more formalised organisation of the Red Guards resulted from General Kornilov's attempted coup at the end of August 1917. Four *desiatky* (each of 10-15 men) made up a *vzvod* (platoon), four platoons made up a *druzhina*, and three *druzhinas* formed a battalion, which was usually 600 strong. Bigger formations, columns, groups, brigades and divisions also gradually appeared.

By November 1917 the Red Guards numbered more than 200,000 men, and they continued to expand with the arrival of demobilised soldiers in the last months of

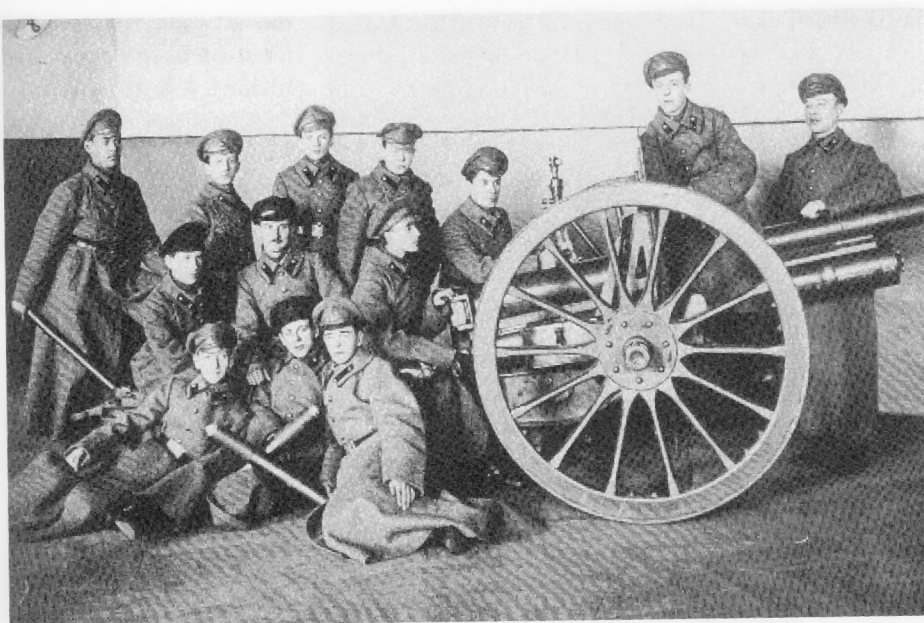


Armband of a Red Guard detachment formed by a local district Soviet in Petrograd (St Petersburg). It is made of red cotton with letters printed in black, and reads: '27 February 1917 / Red Guard / of Vassilievsky Island'. (Collection of Ilya Savchenkov and Anton Shalito)



Armband of a Red Guard detachment, formed, as many early detachments were, at an industrial factory. It reads: 'Kiev Machine Factory/3rd Combat Druzhina (detachment)'. The colours are the same as for the Vassilievsky Island armband, but with a stitched black border.

Kursants (officer cadets) of the Secret Commanders' Artillery School, Petrograd, spring 1918. They wear the winter uniforms of the old Imperial artillery, with shoulder-boards removed, khaki cloth peaked caps, and grey greatcoats with black-piped-red collar patches and red piping around the collar. Their black leather belts have brass buckles embossed with a double-headed eagle and crossed cannon barrels. Some cadets wear badges removed from discarded shoulder-boards on their caps, while others have them on their collar patches. The gun is a 3-inch M.1902 field cannon.



1917. In December the first regular regiments were formed from Red Guard units: the 1st Red Workers' and Peasants' Socialist Putilovsky Regiment, and the Steel Artillery Putilovsky Division (half-regiment).

The Red Guards were officially dissolved in September 1918, although some detachments still existed in remoter regions near the end of the Civil War. Many Red Guardsmen joined the Red Army when it was officially established in January 1918, but the process of integration dragged on for a number of years, hindered greatly by the Guardsmen themselves, who having got used to behaving much as they liked, had no desire to submit to the stricter discipline of a regular army. Nevertheless, Guardsmen were especially valued as recruits for the Cheka political police, since they knew the likely troublemakers in their own neighbourhoods as well as the dark alleys in which to ambush them.

THE RED ARMY

On the second day of the Bolshevik Revolution, 26 October 1917, a supreme body was created to take over control of the armed forces – the Committee on Military and Naval Affairs. It had three members, whose task was to install Bolsheviks into the highest military posts and to begin the organising of a new

'People's Army'. On the following day the committee took on six new members, and was renamed the Soviet of People's Commissars on Military and Naval Affairs. At the end of November this body was split into two separate commissariats, one for the army and the other for naval affairs.

The Bolsheviks declared that their credo of equality for all was to extend into the armed forces, and that when authority was needed it should be organised democratically by elections. There followed a decree, on 10 November 1917, which took the remarkable step of formally abolishing all pre-revolutionary grades, ranks, orders and titles, both military and civilian. On 16 December further decrees formalised the election procedure for new authorities in the army and outlined the equality of all servicemen.

By this date virtually all power in the former Tsarist Army was in the hands of soldiers' committees at front, army, divisional and regimental level, and, in effect, a military parliament was present in every regiment. The bureaucratic chaos this caused was terrific: before any order from a commander was obeyed, a ruling from the soldiers' committee was needed to confirm the order. It is remarkable that anything got done at all.

Despite the Revolution, it was impractical to demobilise the old army at once, as Russia was still at war with Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey. But six million Russian soldiers were sick of the conflict, a fact apparent to Trotsky – one of the key figures in the Red Army's formation – as he journeyed to Brest-Litovsk in an attempt to negotiate a peace with Germany.



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

A 'gradual demobilisation' of the old army was announced on 10 November 1917. In the event it proved impossible to control the speed of the demobilisation from Petrograd. On hearing the news, soldiers began leaving their front-line positions in droves, taking their weapons with them and attempting to return home by whatever means they could find. This chaos was not helped by Bolshevik announcements that now 'the land belonged to the peasants'.

Although many reached their homes, others were drawn into Red or White units on the way or simply became armed bandits – the 'Greens', who fought anybody. (The Greens have sometimes been wrongly associated with nationalist formations, such as Father Makhno's People's Army. In fact there was nothing political about them: they simply killed for profit.)

The demobilisation of the Tsarist Army continued until April 1918, but on 15 January 1918 the Soviet government announced the creation of a new army. It was to be raised on new principles, and recruited from 'class-conscious workers and toiling peasants' on a voluntary basis. The official name of the new force was

the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army – *Raboché Krestyanskaya Krasnaya Armiya* or *RKKA* (Cyrillic PKKA). It became known as the Red Army.

Admission to the Red Army was at first highly selective, and prospective volunteers required a recommendation from a military body, trade union or other public organisation aligned with the Bolshevik party. If an existing military unit or Red Guards detachment was willing to join the Red Army, a democratic deci-



Voyenspets, or military specialist (basically an ex-officer of the Tsarist Army), late 1918. He wears a khaki cloth peaked cap of Tsarist Army model with a small, brass-star cap badge and an old-fashioned winter blue-grey officers' coat with additional fur collar. His brown leather field belt and equipment are of 1911 pattern with a Red Army badge clipped to one of the shoulder straps; this manner of wearing badges had become popular during the Great War. (Andrei Karachtchouk Collection)

was needed, followed by the mutual guarantees of all unit members. This approach ensured that only dedicated volunteers were to be found in the ranks of the fledgling Red Army.

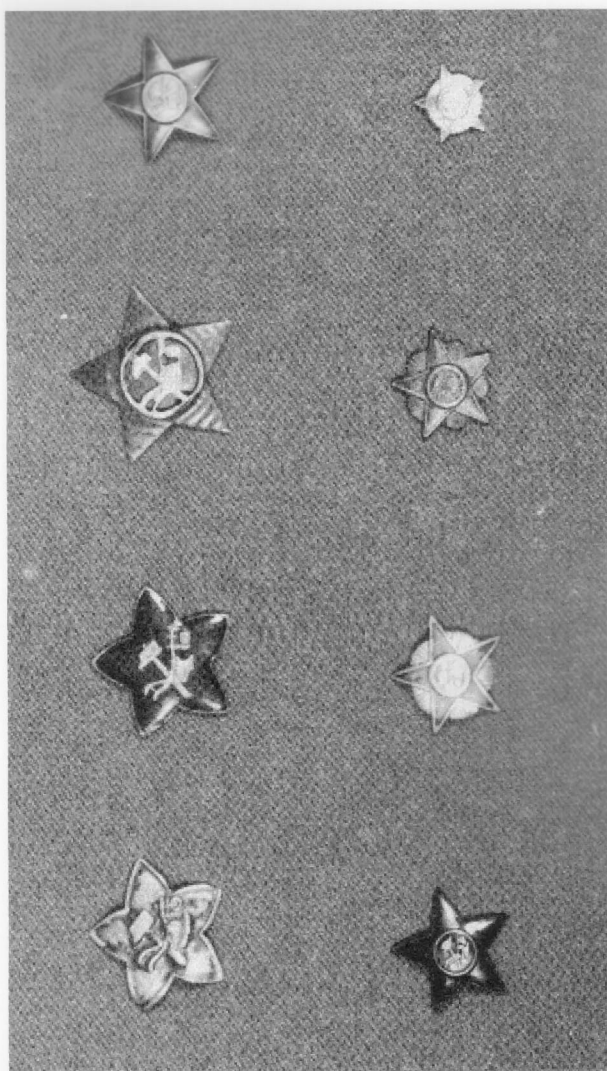
The first 'regular' corps of the Red Army was the 1st Corps, which appeared in January 1918; in practice it functioned as a depot from which battalions were sent to the front. The Red Army received its true baptism of fire in February 1918, when, alongside the Red Guards, regular Red Army troops clashed with Germans at Pskov and Narva. The battle had been preceded by a famous call-to-arms from the Soviet of People's Commissars, who on 21 February declared: 'The socialist motherland is in danger!'. Over the next two days, thousands enrolled in the Red Army, and ever since, 23 February has been celebrated as Soviet Army Day (now Russian Army Day).

On 4 March 1918, the Supreme Military Soviet was established. It took full responsibility for the development of the Red Army, and its first actions were to create six military *okrugi* (districts) and to set up military commissariats at all levels. The formation of 58 military divisions, specialist and technical troops, and armour, artillery and cavalry units was also begun.

By 1 April 1918, there were already 155,000 men in the Red Army, and by 20 April this number had risen to 280,000. At this stage the Army still had no formal organisational structure, no training centres, no uniform and a bewildering variety of weapons of different calibres. Its units were commanded by elected leaders or by an assortment of elected bodies. Only a genuine enthusiasm for the Revolution kept things moving.

By the end of 1918 about 50 'Red commanders' training schools' had been established in major Russian cities, and the first Soviet military academies were founded. The latter were organised on a branch-of-service basis, and included naval, medical and general staff academies. On Trotsky's initiative, nearly 22,000 officers of the old Tsarist Army (tolerated under the euphemistic name *voyenspets* – military specialist) were encouraged to enrol in the Red Army; they helped greatly to improve the quality of training. More important still was the re-employment of 130,000 former Tsarist NCOs, whose field experience was vital in turning recruits into soldiers.

In theory, after the abolition of all ranks and titles, on 10 November 1917, all persons were to address each other as *grazhdanin* (citizen), but this was soon replaced by *tovarish* (comrade). The Red Army was intended to be just as egalitarian: there were only two ranks: *Krasnoarmeyets* (Red Army man) and *Krasny Komandir* (Red commander) – *Kraskom* for short. (The



Variants of Red Army headgear badges from 1918 to 1922. Only the two topmost were of official issue; the rest were manufactured by local craftsmen to their own designs. Note that most have the hammer-and-plough device rather than the hammer-and-sickle. (Alexey Stepanov Collection)

first Soviet cadets had, in fact, graduated with the title of *Komvzvoda*, or platoon commander, but this was changed to *Kraskom* to provide all with equal chances of promotion.) Officially there were no officers in the new army, and the command titles listed below were regarded as distinctions indicating posts held, rather than ranks. This somewhat artificial state of affairs lasted until 1935, when ranks were reintroduced.

The development of an all-volunteer Red Army soon floundered, and the military situation deteriorated as the Soviet Republic became surrounded on all sides by White and foreign armies. Once-ardent and idealis-

Commanders' titles (ranks) in the Red Army

<i>Komandir Otdeleniya</i>	Section Commander
<i>Pomkomvozvoda</i>	Assistant Platoon Commander
<i>Zamkomvozvoda</i>	Deputy Platoon Commander
<i>Starshina</i>	Sergeant-Major
<i>Komvozvoda</i>	Platoon Commander
<i>Komroty</i>	Company Commander
<i>Kombat</i>	Battalion Commander
<i>Kompolka</i>	Regiment Commander
<i>Kombrig</i>	Brigade Commander
<i>Komdiv</i>	Division Commander
<i>Komandarm</i>	Army Commander
<i>Komanduyushiy Frontom</i>	Front Commander
<i>Glavkom or Glavkoverkh</i>	Supreme Commander

tic volunteers became disillusioned by the apparent lack of progress towards the 'World Revolution', and the peasants, who made up nearly 90 per cent of all recruits, began deserting in droves as they saw their villages repeatedly burnt and their crops trampled by both Reds and Whites. In May 1918 the Soviet government decided the only option was to introduce conscription for men aged 18-40.

In September the first higher level military structures, field armies and Fronts (Army groups) began to appear. By November, thanks to conscription, 47 rifle divisions (116 brigades and 339 regiments), four cavalry divisions and one cavalry brigade had been formed. By

the end of 1918 there were 12 field armies numbering more than 285,000 infantry and cavalry. The mobilisation plan had initially envisaged a Red Army of 1,500,000 men: by spring 1919 it already numbered 1,630,000.

On 6 September 1918 overall command of the armed forces was entrusted to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic – the RMSR, *Revvoensovet*, headed by Trotsky. The political side of the army continued to grow in influence, and the number of commissars and, later, political officers, as well as communist party members, grew rapidly: from 35,000 in October 1918 to 121,000 in October 1919 and 278,000 in August 1920. In effect, the Party had a presence in all Red Army units.

By January 1919 the Red Army had new internal service regulations, new garrison duty regulations, a field manual and a disciplinary code. Every soldier possessed the *Knizhka Krasnoarmeytza* (Red Army man's booklet) spelling out his rights, responsibilities and the expected norms of conduct. By the summer of 1919 a pay allowance for soldiers and commanders of the Red Army had been introduced.

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

In December 1919 the Red Army numbered three million men; by 1 November 1920 this had increased to



Austin-Putilovets armoured car of a Letuchy Broneotryad, or 'flying' armoured detachment, near Petrograd, autumn 1919. The crew and their commander (second from left) wear the black leather clothing popular in Red Army armoured units.

1.5 million. These men remained in arms until 1924, when the Red Army was demobilised and its numbers fell to 562,000.

CHRONOLOGY

February The February revolution begins in Petrograd.

March Abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, creation of the provisional government.

25 October The October (Bolshevik) revolution begins in Petrograd.

October The Soviet government (Soviet of People's Commissars) is formed.

November Soviet rule is established in Petrograd, Moscow, Donbass, the Urals, Baku and the Volga region.

November General Dukhonin, supreme commander of the Russian Army, is shot.

December The Cheka, headed by Dzerzhinsky, is formed.

December Great Britain and France divide Russia into spheres of influence: Britain gets the Caucasus, France gets Ukraine and the Crimea.

January Formation of Red Army announced.

February The clash of Red Guards and the first Red Army units with Germans at Narva and Pskov.

March Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Germany: Russia loses Ukraine, Finland, Georgia, Poland and the Baltic states.

April Japanese troops arrive in the Soviet Far East.

6-7 July An uprising in Moscow is suppressed by Red Latvian rifle regiments.

17 July Tsar Nicholas II and his family are executed by Bolsheviks in Ekaterinburg.

30 August Attempt on Lenin's life.

5 September The 'Red Terror' begins.

6 September

The Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic (RMSR) is established as the ruling body of the armed forces.

1919

March

Kolchak's troops take Ufa, Sarapul and Bugulma; the French order the evacuation of their troops from Odessa.

May

Yudenich's White Army advances on Petrograd.

July

Denikin's White armies advance on Moscow.



Anton Blizniuk, machine-gun team instructor of the 1st 'Kotchubey' Revolutionary Cavalry Regiment. In 1918 he single-handedly covered a retreat with his Maxim gun, turning, when out of ammunition, to a Mauser K-96 pistol. After suffering 26 sabre wounds he was rescued by friends. He was later captured by the Whites, but managed to escape a firing-squad by swimming across a mountain stream in winter. He wears a kubanka fur hat, and leather equipment of 1911 pattern, together with a navy dirk, binoculars and map case. On his left sleeve is a machine-gun team badge embroidered in gold, and beneath it ten red stripes, marking the number of wounds according to the army system introduced in 1916.

October Yudenich's attempt to take Petrograd fails and his Northern Army is destroyed; mass desertions in the Red Army.

November Kolchak's army is thrown out of the Urals.

1920

February Soviet rule in Latvia collapses; the Red Army occupies Krasnovodsk – the main White stronghold in Central Asia.

March The Reds take Ekaterinodar and Novorossiysk from Denikin; Denikin's troops are evacuated to the Crimea; the Poles take Kiev.

April Poles and Ukrainians advance on Russia and Ukraine; General Brusilov calls upon former Tsarist officers to join the Red Army to repel the Poles; more than 14,000 respond.

17 August Red troops decisively defeated near Warsaw by the Poles. All hopes of spreading the revolution to western Europe are thwarted.

November Red troops capture the Crimea; Wrangel's White Army is evacuated to Turkey.

1921

8–18 March Kronstadt sailors' revolt is brutally suppressed.

April Founding of the Far Eastern Republic (FER).

1922

March White Guards withdraw to Manchuria. Japanese troops evacuate the Soviet Far East.

October The end of large-scale military operations.

30–31 Dec. The USSR is officially formed by the federation of previously independent republics.

RED ARMY ORGANISATION

Not later than 4 March 1918 (the exact date is not known) the Supreme Military Soviet (SMS) was created to organise the country's defence and to form a new regular army. This body was headed by military chairman Trotsky and two political commissars, and was staffed by former *Stavka* (General HQ) officers who worked on a voluntary basis. On 6 September 1918 the SMS was replaced by the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic (RMSR), still with Trotsky, the People's Commissar on Military and Naval Affairs, as its chairman. The RMSR now had the entire military infrastructure of the country under its control.

Working closely with Lenin, Trotsky played a vital part in the conversion of the Red Army into an effective fighting force – brushing aside the opposition of men such as Stalin and Voroshilov, who were against conscription and the employment of former Tsarist officers as 'military specialists'. From his armoured train, which became his command post and also his home for two and a half years, Trotsky also took an active part in the campaigns against the White general Yudenich, Denikin and Kolchak and the Polish leader Pilsudski.

The Front

The highest operational unit of the Red Army was the Front, the first of which was created in June 1918. Each Front was given a geographical name, and usually comprised between two and five field armies as well as detached forces, reserve units, specialist troops and administrative bodies. From mid-1919, when more cavalry became available, Fronts began to include entire cavalry corps and cavalry armies.

The Northern Front was established in September 1918 and operated on the Vologda-Archangelsk-Kotla line, in an attempt to prevent White and foreign units in the north from linking with those in the east. In February 1919 it was incorporated into the Western Front, which covered what was considered the most important part of the Soviet border, facing the Baltic states and Poland. The Ukrainian Front operated from January to June 1919 against Ukrainian nationalists, Whites and Poles, and in the Crimea against foreign interventionist forces.

The Southern Front existed from 11 September 1918 and was involved in large-scale operations against Whites, from Ukraine to the Azov Sea. On 10 January 1919 it was renamed the South-western Front. It finished off Denikin's retreating armies and then took part in the assault on Poland. The 2nd Southern Front was formed to capture the last White stronghold in Europe in the Crimea – which it achieved in November 1920.

The Central Asian region contained a large number of Fronts, many of which operated for the duration of the campaign; others, notably the Turkestan Front, were more durable, and were eventually transformed into the more permanent *Okrugi* (Military Districts). The Caspian-Caucasian Front existed from 8 November 1918 to 13 March 1919 and was disbanded into the Southern Front. The Turkestan Front (14 August 1919 to 4 June 1926) had a wide remit in Central Asia, and after the defeat of the Whites was involved in sporadic fighting with Muslim rebels.

The Eastern Front fought the Czechoslovak Legion and White troops in the Urals and Siberia, and was disbanded in January 1920. The war in the Soviet Far East developed almost as a separate conflict, and generated a number of Fronts as well as an independent military organisation, the People's Revolutionary Army of the Far Eastern Republic. The FER Eastern Front existed from 18 December 1921 to 2 May 1922, where it stamped out resistance from White partisans and also evicted the Japanese interventionist forces from the Far East.

...of the Baltic fleet who distinguished themselves in the defence of Riga in 1919. Some wore bushlat coats; others wore tiemenky (duck jumpers). The famous black and white *telniashka* undershirts are seen clearly, as are the blue denim collars with three white stripes signifying, according to legend, the three great Russian naval victories at Cape Hango (1794), Chesmah (1770) and Semp (1853). The English, of course, associate these stripes with Nelson's great victories. (Both legends are, in fact, good examples of invented tradition. The Russian naval regulations of 1872 describe the white lines just as 'appropriate decoration'.)

Army/field army (*Armiya*)

There was no rigid structure for an army at the beginning of 1918; armies had an *ad hoc* character and were commanded by elected leaders. Only in June 1919, after the introduction of conscription, did regular field armies begin to appear, followed soon after by reserve armies and even labour or food provision armies. Each field army had between two and nine divisions, and between 12,000 and 50,000 men. On occasion, fleets were temporarily subordinated to field armies.

Infantry

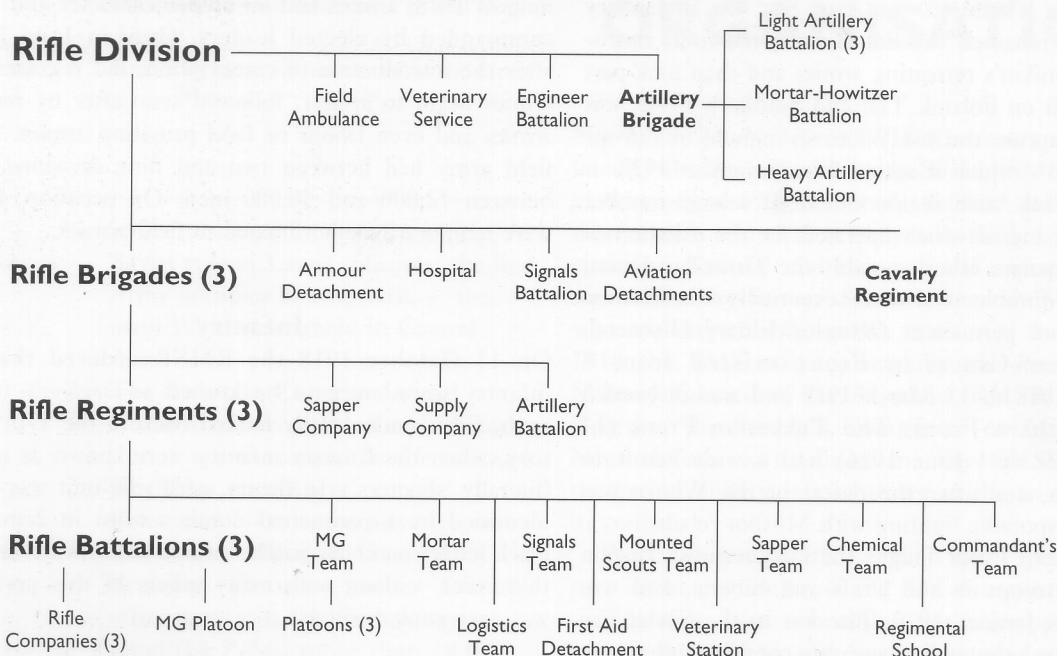
On 11 October 1918 the RMSR ordered that all infantry units were to be known as *strelkovy* (rifle) units. This undoubtedly harked back to the 17th century, when the Russian infantry were known as *streltsi* (literally 'shooters'). In theory, each rifle unit was to be identified by a regimental number worn in 2cm-high black letters on collar patches; there is no evidence that this order – along with many others of this period – was ever implemented.

Rifle division (*Diviziya*)

In accordance with RMSR Prikaz of 13 November 1918, each rifle division was to have 1,657 commanders, 56,668 other ranks, 24,338 horses, 382 machine-guns and 116 artillery pieces. In practice, such



Infantry division organisation



divisions were far too cumbersome, and changes were introduced up to mid-1919. As a result, the cavalry *divisions* (half-regiments) that were part of rifle divisions were amalgamated to become a cavalry regiment, the number of batteries was reduced to five, and divisions were officially allowed to have 35 per cent fewer commanders and men than the official establishment. But even these reductions did not reflect the true state of affairs: rifle divisions rarely numbered more than 10-15,000 men (and sometimes as few as 3-4,000), 50-150 machine-guns and 18-46 artillery pieces. It was therefore common for a division to have only two rifle brigades instead of three.

Rifle brigade (*Brigada*)

The Prikaz of 13 November 1918 envisaged a brigade of three rifle regiments, one artillery battalion and one sapper company (of 361 men), plus supply and administrative units. Altogether each brigade was to have 11,000 men, 1,700 horses, 144 machine-guns, 18 mortars, eight howitzers and 14 field guns. However, in practice field strength was usually between 1,500 and 4,000 men.

Rifle brigades were progressively reduced in size until finally they were formally abolished in 1922.

Rifle regiment (*Polk*)

By the Prikaz of 13 November 1918, a rifle regiment had three rifle battalions each of three companies. Official regimental strength was 106 commanders, 3,581 other ranks, 36 machine-guns, and six mortars. Actual field strength varied between 400 and 1,000 men. In 1921 the establishment strength was reduced to 2,000 men while the number of machine-guns was increased to 46, and mortars were reassigned.

Cavalry

Fairly elitist before the Great War and dominated by aristocratic fops, the Soviet cavalry force was transformed after the Revolution. The typical post-Revolution cavalryman could well have been a former caretaker or gardener of an aristocrat's house. A severe shortage of trained cavalymen led to a massive recruitment drive with the slogan 'Proletarian, mount up!'. Anyone who had ever dealt with horses was enlisted, and it became normal to see cavalymen in peculiar clothing: ex-office workers in bowler hats and dark jackets, ex-sailors in their famous *beskozirkas* and infantry jackboots, and peasants in fur hats and *lapti* boots made of bast. By winter 1919 the cavalry arm of the Red Army numbered two corps, three detachments,

sleeve
 1928-29. They
 from left: company
 commander – gold embroi-
 on scarlet cloth;
 unit commander
 red silk star,
 central device and
 on black cloth;
 veterinary sur-
 silver embroidered
 on dark blue cloth.
 of Ilya
 and Anton



divisions and ten detached brigades – and making up
 per cent of all Soviet armed forces. The First
 Army, *Pervaya Konnaya Armiya*, was the first
 strategic cavalry formation in the Red Army, and
 referred to in words rather than figures. Its
 commander, Semion Budenny, later one of Stalin's
 heroes, became a legendary figure in the 1930s, one
 of the few real Civil War heroes who survived the
 purges. The 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Armies never
 achieved quite the same degree of popular fame.

Cavalry division

By the *Prkaz* of 3 August 1918, a cavalry division was
 to have three cavalry brigades and an attached horse
 artillery *division* comprising four horse batteries.
 Theoretical strength was 7,653 men and 8,469 horses.
 By 4 January 1919 a technical squadron was added,
 and in July 1919 the number of horse batteries was
 reduced to three. By this time, full cavalry division
 strength was 9,499 men and 10,210 horses; in practice,
 however, it was usually between 3,000 and 8,000 men.

Cavalry brigade

The structure of the cavalry brigade was determined
 only in February 1919, and consisted of 2,603 men and
 2,800 horses organised as two cavalry regiments. There
 were also 'detached cavalry brigades' which had an
 additional four-gun horse battery.

Cavalry regiment

Regiments of cavalry within rifle divisions had four
 squadrons, each with 872 men and 947 horses. In
 November 1918 such regiments were abolished, and
 gave way to four detached cavalry *divisions* (half-regi-
 ments of two squadrons each). However, they were

restored in July 1919 with only one change: the horse
 machine-gun detachment was named a 'horse machine-
 gun platoon'.

Cavalry regiments that were part of cavalry divisions
 got their formal structure on 3 August 1918. They
 were to number 1,105 men and 1,203 horses and to
 consist of four squadrons and a machine-gun detach-
 ment (with four Maxims). Each squadron (210 men
 and 221 horses) had four platoons, each of two sec-
 tions. This establishment was increased in the follow-
 ing month to 1,152 men and 1,247 horses. From
 February 1919 a mounted machine-gun squadron (with
 20 Maxims) was added to each regiment. Each of the
 five squadrons now had 176 men and 193 horses.

Air force

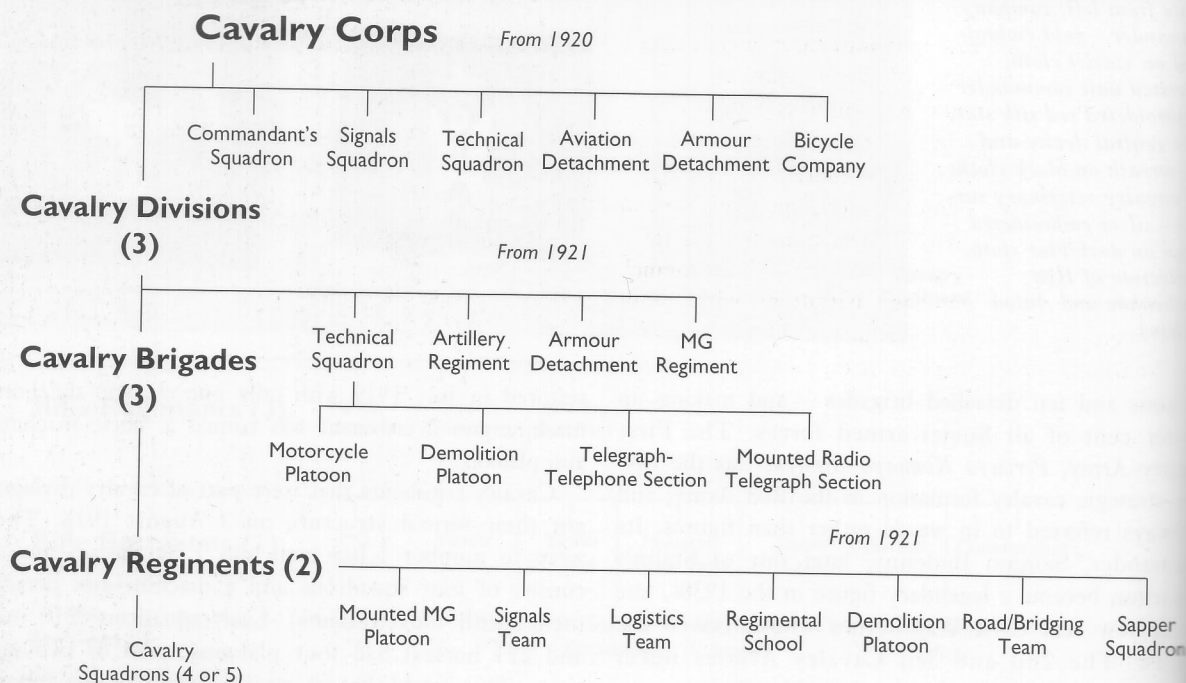
The fundamental administrative unit of the aviation
 arm was the *aviaotryad*, or aviation detachment. The
 first were set up in November 1917, but their estab-
 lishment was tabled only on 15 May 1918, and was as
 follows: 113 men, six planes, four automobiles and five
 horse-drawn carts. An *aviaotryad* was designated either
 as reconnaissance (70-75 per cent), fighter (18-20 per
 cent), fire-support, photographic or special task. In
 practice, however, these *otryads* were used tactically as
 the military situation demanded.

A new larger scale organisational unit was created in
 the summer of 1918, the *aviagruppa* or aviation group.
 Each consisted initially of two *aviaotryads* – one desig-
 nated as a reconnaissance *otryad* and one as a fighter
otryad. Later, an *aviagruppa* could comprise as many as
 ten *aviaotryads*.

Armour

An *avtobronevoy otryad* (armoured car detachment)
 consisted of two armour platoons, a technical platoon, a

Cavalry corps organisation



headquarters and a signals section; altogether it numbered between 80 and 100 men. Each armour platoon was equipped with four armoured cars (one of these had a cannon and two machine-guns, while the other three had just two machine-guns each). There were 'line *otryads*', which were parts of rifle or cavalry divisions, and detached *otryads*, which were subordinated to armies and Fronts or to Cheka units.

The first *avtotankovy otryady* (auto-tank detachments) were formed in 1920 and had 81-113 men, three or four tanks, one or two artillery pieces and 12-28 machine-guns. They had the following establishment: one or two tank platoons, a tank support section (30 riflemen with two machine-guns), a headquarters and a reserve (signals section, three or four cars and three or four trucks).

The Cheka and other special formations

On 7 December 1917, the All-Russia Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-revolution and Sabotage was formed. Its chairman and guiding star was Felix Dzerzhinsky (1877-1926), a Pole by birth. Known as the *Chrezvichaynaya Komissiya* or Cheka for short, the commission soon earned itself a reputation for brutality beyond the call of duty.

The modern image of the Cheka as a 'secret police force, in the style of the later NKVD and KGB, does not do justice to its wide-ranging role in the Civil War. For example, 'Chekists' were regularly used as *zagradny otryady* – screen detachments, whose function was to shadow Red Army formations and shoot anyone who attempted to run from the battlefield. Far from being secretive, Cheka members wanted everyone to know exactly who they were, and to fear them. They dressed accordingly: the Chekist's normal outfit was made of leather from head to toe, and his favourite weapon was the sleek German Mauser K-96. The secrecy came later, when the Cheka's task became the elimination of Stalin's rivals and enemies. The Cheka did carry out occasional covert operations against the Whites, but this was not its major function.

The Cheka had the right to make arrests, interrogate suspects, pass sentence and carry out executions. But even here the Cheka and the Soviet Militia (the police force authorised in January 1918) exceeded their authority. Even so, the Cheka were given a complete free hand in December 1918, when the Central Committee passed a motion of the infallibility of the Cheka, on the grounds that it was working 'under extremely difficult conditions'. Though answerable in theory, directly to *Sovnarkom* (the Soviet of People

commissars, the prototype of the Council of Ministers) the Cheka usually supplied activity reports only after activities had been carried out.

At first the Cheka was split into three departments: information, organisation and *Borbi* (combat). A rail and transport department was soon added, but was removed in 1920. The Cheka Military Forces were created on 18 March 1918, and initially numbered five companies of infantry, one of cavalry, one machine-gun company, artillery and bicycle detachments, and three armoured vehicles. By August 1918 the military branch had expanded to 33 detached battalions with about 2,000 men. By July 1921 it comprised 11 border-guard brigades, three detached regiments, 68 detached battalions, four armoured detachments, two aviation detachments and seven cavalry squadrons. Half of these troops were designated as reserves for the Red Army; the rest were intended to fight counter-revolution.

On 6 February 1922 the Cheka was reorganised into the GPU (State Political Department), which was placed under the control of the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs). Dzerzhinsky continued as head of both organisations. In 1923 the GPU was renamed the OGPU (Unified GPU), which continued to operate until 1934, when it was fully absorbed into the NKVD.

A number of other special organisations were connected with the Cheka to varying degrees. These were as follows:

The paramilitary security force

The *Voenizirovannaya Okhrana* (VOKhr) or Paramilitary Security was formed on 29 May 1919 by combining a number of detachments responsible for guarding strategic points, railways, waterways and factories. VOKhr troops were directly subordinated to the Cheka, and were organised as 35 brigades. By 1 January 1920 they were 105,000 strong.

Internal service troops

The *Voyska Vnutrenney Sluzhbi* (VnuS) were established on 1 September 1920 and embraced, organisationally, VOKhr troops, Cheka troops and 360,000 VnuS troops divided into 14 divisions and 18 brigades. Besides the protection of communications networks, VnuS units were responsible for guarding and conveying 'anti-Soviet elements' to prisons and camps. However, on 19 January 1920 the Cheka troops were taken away as a separate body, and all VnuS units were transferred to Red Army control.



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

Border guards

The *Pogranichniye Voyska* (Border Guards) were established by a decree in May 1918; but it was not until the major part of the White Army, and, in the west, all foreign units, had left Russian territory in March 1920 that the borders of the Soviet Republic were reinstated and special border troops appeared. Made up of trusted Red Army men, the Border Guards were at first supervised by the Cheka; from 19 January 1921 they were subordinated to it fully.

Special task units

The *Chasti Osobogo Naznacheniya* (ChON), or special units, were authorised by the Central Committee on 17 April 1919. The first units were formed in Petrograd and Moscow – the provinces followed suit. Only volunteers could join, they had to be aged between 14 and 55 and of fanatic loyalty – communists, idealistic work-

ers and peasants, trade union members and members of the Young Communist League (*Komsomol*). Recruitment remained voluntary until ChON units were disbanded in 1924/5. ChON units fought in close co-operation with the Cheka and played an important part in the establishment of Soviet rule and the defeat of counter-revolution. They were always present at the most dangerous points on the battlefield, and were usually the last to withdraw. When retreat was the only option, many *Chonovtsi* stayed behind in occupied areas to form clandestine networks and partisan detachments.

On 24 March 1921 the ChON became a somewhat peculiar branch of the Red Army, under the control not of military commanders but of commissars, who still held paramilitary status. ChON personnel were divided into permanent staff and militia. By December 1921 they numbered 39,673 and 323,372 respectively.

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

WEAPONRY

By 1917 Russian industry was able to satisfy most of the Tsarist Army's demand for weapons and ammunition, with imports accounting for about 12 per cent of the total. Although the bulk of these resources fell into Bolshevik hands, they turned out to be inadequate for the needs of the Civil War.

The overall command of the weapons industry was handed to the Supreme Soviet of State Economy. Special 'Labour Armies' were formed to provide the Red Army with weapons and clothing. Within three years, by 1920, more than 2,000 factories were engaged in military production and were working under military law. Absence from the workplace at this time was tantamount to desertion and was punishable by death.

Russia has always been good at producing weapons and the official statistics for this period are probably fairly accurate: by the middle of 1920, three million rifles, 21,000 machine-guns, 1.6 million hand-guns, 3,000 artillery pieces, 5.6 million greatcoats and four million summer uniforms had been manufactured.



...gun of an anti-aircraft battery in the ... Fortified District, ... Many combinations of ... uniform are visible. The red banner is one ... by the Petrosovet ... (Society) – the ... administrative body to ... awarding hand- ... red banners for ... conduct in battle' ... official Honour Banner ... be handed out only by ... Central ... Committee). The ... Russian M.1914 ... anti-aircraft ... which could fire 20- ... per minute, and ... range.



...however, at the beginning of the Civil War the Red Army had no formal logistical system, be it for food, weapons, ammunition or uniforms. The situation was further complicated by the diversity of equipment available, with more than 60 makes of artillery pieces as well as 35 types of rifles and carbines. There was a shortage of everything, and it is hardly surprising that swords and lances once again became a decisive factor in combat.

Rifles and pistols

About 1.3 million rifles were left over from the old Tsarist Army. The bulk of these were the famous Russian 7.62mm Mosin-Nagant M.1891, known in Russia as the *trekhlineyka* (literally 'three-lines', referring to the calibre in the old Russian measurement system). Many *trekhlineykas* had been made to order by Remington in the USA during the Great War, and they continued to be serviceable until 1945. There were several versions: *pekhotnaya* (infantry); *dragoonskaya* (dragoon – shorter and lighter); and *kazachya* (Cossack – practically the same as the *dragoonskaya*, but without bayonet and with a slightly different sight configuration). Horse and foot artillerymen were usually equipped with the Mosin M.1908 carbine.

Alongside these 'Russian' weapons, foreign-made rifles abounded. The most common were the 7.92mm German Mauser M.1898, the 8mm Austrian Mannlicher M.1895, and the Japanese Arisaka M.1905. Another favourite was the American Winchester M.1895, specially modified for Russian 7.62mm ammunition, and bearing the plaque 'USA for Russia'.

The standard revolver of the Civil War period was the 7.62mm Nagant M.1895, which had been licensed for local production, while the Smith-and-Wesson 1893 was also widely available. The stylish and efficient German Mauser was especially popular among political commissars, commanders of all ranks and revolutionary sailors, not to mention Chekists. But again, all marks of hand-gun available to the interventionist troops could also be found in use by Red Army men.

Bladed weapons

Red Army cavalymen and artillerymen were armed with dragoon or Cossack *shashka* swords of the 1881 Model. Besides these, Caucasian *shashkas* (with no hand-guard) and *kinzhals* (daggers) richly decorated with silver were popular with Red commanders and Cossack units.

The M.1910 lance had been issued in 1911 to all



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

regular cavalry and Cossacks. The lance was made of a hollow metal tube painted in Russian khaki green, and had a short canvas cover in the middle section for handling the weapon, a leather loop for carrying it across the back and a smaller loop for attaching to a boot on parades.

Machine-guns and mortars

The Maxim M.1910 was the most popular machine-gun of the Civil War. A standard method for improving the weapon's mobility was to place it on a horse-drawn cart, known as a *tachunka*. Also in wide-

spread use were the French Hotchkiss M.1914, American Colt and the British Lewis M.1915, the two of which were often appropriated by pilots for use in aerial combat.

The most widely used mortar was the Russian Likhonin 47-58mm, which had a range of 500 metres. In 1918 every rifle regiment had a *bombometny* (literally 'bomb-throwing') team armed with four 90mm *bomety*, which were similar to mortars but fired small calibre explosive shells. In November 1918 these teams were replaced by mortar teams, each equipped with 58mm mortars.

In March 1919 the mortars were taken away from individual rifle divisions in order to concentrate them in a single mortar division, which had two heavy batteries (with six 240mm mortars each) and three light batteries (with eight 58 mm mortars each). These batteries were assigned to rifle divisions as and when needed for specific offensive operations.

Artillery

Thanks to the drastic expansion of arms factories during the Great War and a concentration on the artillery arm, by 1916 Russia was virtually self-sufficient in howitzers and field guns, and was producing three-quarters of the heavy artillery it needed. The ammunition stocks set aside by 1917 proved enough to see the Red Army through much of the Civil War.

The 3-inch field gun M.1902, the 3-inch mountain gun M.1909 and the M.1910 howitzer made up the bulk of the Red Army's light artillery. The two most common makes of heavy artillery were the 42- (107mm calibre) field gun M.1910 and the 6-inch 1910-pattern howitzer. The French 120mm cannon M.1878 was also available in small numbers.

Alongside these pieces were a number of weapons previously employed by the Tsarist Army for trench warfare. These were the 6-inch M.1904 siege gun, British 6-inch and 8-inch Vickers howitzers, the 10-inch M.1914 Snider howitzer, the Obukhov Plant 10-inch M.1915 howitzer, the 10-inch coastal cannon, 37mm M.1915 trench gun and 37mm and 40mm automatic guns mounted on ordinary split-trail field gun carriages.

Aircraft

Red Army *aviaotryads* (aviation detachments) were attempted, often unsuccessfully, to equip themselves with aircraft of a single type for logistic reasons. Among the Russian-built aircraft available (these

planes in short supply) were the Ilya Muromets, the C-20 bomber, the Lebed-12 fighter and the C-20 fighter.

Two-thirds of all planes were foreign made. Together more than 30 foreign models were in use, with French Nieuport fighters and reconnaissance aircraft making up more than 50 per cent of the force. Other French makes included Farman bombers and reconnaissance aircraft, and the Voisin (respectively 15 and nine per cent of the total). About four per cent of the park consisted of obsolete Moranes and Blériots. More sophisticated aircraft, such as Spads, Sopwiths and Fokkers, could only be obtained by capture from the Whites and interventionist forces.

Armour and armoured trains

The Austin-Putilovets was the only armoured car manufactured in Tsarist Russia to participate in the Civil War. Foreign-made tanks, notably the British Mark I and French Renault, were available only when captured from the Whites. A variety of Soviet-built *broneviki* (armoured cars) were available, and were mostly armed with one or two machine-guns.

A great influence on the strategy and tactics of both

belligerents was the armoured train or *bronepoyezd*. In the vast Russian countryside, where roads were a rarity, the railways provided the only reliable and relatively fast means of transportation. As a result, the most serious fighting almost always took place at major railway junctions.

At first armoured trains were built as 'one-offs', and installed with as many artillery pieces and machine-guns as they could feasibly carry (typically between two and four cannons and four to 16 machine-guns). From March 1916 the trains were graded into three categories: the first was a 'shock' type with 76mm field guns; the second, a 'fire-support' type, with 107mm or 122mm naval guns; and the third, a 'heavy fire-support' type with 152mm or 203mm naval guns. The first two types were usually allocated to Front commanders, while the third was under the direct control of the RMSR.

All armoured trains received numbers and names, as, for example, armoured train No.6, built in 1918, which was named after Vladimir Lenin. The chairman of the RMSR, Trotsky, carried out his command functions from a specially equipped armoured train known as *Revvoyensovet* – Revolutionary Military Soviet.

country colour party before departure to the southern front, 1919. The ex-Tsarist army winter uniforms with Soviet insignia are typical of this period. The two Soviet squares on the commander's sleeve indicate a company commander. The chest badge on his greatcoat is the first official Red Army metal badge – a red star within a white metal wreath. His leather equipment is of 1911 pattern, and he carries a Cossack shashka sword. The standard-bearer's assistant on the right is armed with a beboot dagger and, like many other men, has a canvas cartridge belt and canvas 'dried crust' bag.





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

UNIFORMS AND INSIGNIA

In the first year of the Revolution, 1917, there was no such thing as a uniform for Red forces. Red Guardsmen were dressed in all types of clothing – mil-

itary and civilian, whatever was available. Members of Red Guards detachments – workers, soldiers and peasants – wore little more than a red ribbon or ribbon bow on their hats or clothing, and/or a red armband as the mark of their allegiance. Before long, red cloth armbands inscribed with the words *Krasnaya Gvardiya* (Red Guard) appeared. This title, often with the detachment name, was usually printed in black.

Red Flag and Red Star

The choice of red as the colour of the Russian Revolution deserves further explanation. Red has for centuries been the international symbol of mutiny and brigandage; it was the traditional colour, symbolising blood, of pirates' flags (alongside black, standing for death). In international naval usage, the red flag was known as the 'flag of defiance', and was raised when a ship was preparing for battle; in contrast to the white flag, which, of course, was the flag of peace or surrender.

In Russian, red or *krasni* has the secondary meaning of 'pretty', but for centuries red flags set up on the taller buildings of Russian towns had meant only one thing – a plague epidemic. This traditional meaning caused a degree of confusion after the Revolution, and for some time White troops gave a wide berth to towns and villages displaying red flags. But the Bolsheviks persevered with this colour, and the red flag soon became firmly established as the symbol of their brand of communism. (The white colour chosen by anti-Bolshevik forces, incidentally, was associated with pre-revolutionary monarchy and loyalist movements, and is thought to derive from the house colour of the French Bourbon monarchy.)

The other great symbol of the Revolution was the red star. There are several legends on how the five-pointed star came to be the badge of the Red Army, and, consequently, of the Soviet Union. According to one credible story, in 1917 many soldiers began to arrive in Moscow on their way home from the war with Germany and Austria. To distinguish the soldiers of the Moscow garrison from this influx of soldiers, garrison members were ordered to wear a white tin star on their hats. Eventually, revolutionary fervour led these soldiers to paint their tin stars red. The innovation was approved by the Bolsheviks, and the red star became the official badge of the Red Army.

Another legend has it that the five-pointed star was introduced by Jews, who had a major presence in the first Soviet government and military structures. It



...that these Jews believed that with the Revolution progress, the Promised Land would be created in Russia. Whatever the truth of these stories, the party soon became that the five points of the red star signified world revolution on the five continents.

In July 1918 the new ruling body of the army, the RSFSR, introduced the first official Red Army badge – a large red enamel star set in a silver wreath. The wreath was formed from two branches: a laurel on the right side and an oak branch on the left, while the red star had at its centre a brass hammer-and-plough device – symbolising the unity of workers and peasants. At first this badge was worn only by commanders and military cadets, but it was soon adopted by all Red Army servicemen, military and civilian. Known officially as the Revolutionary Military Symbol of the Red Army, it was required to be worn on either the headgear or on the left side of the greatcoat or tunic by military men, and in a buttonhole on civilian dress. Soon a smaller red enamel star with the same brass hammer-and-plough device was introduced to be worn on headgear. In accordance with Prikaz 321 of 7 May 1918, people not serving with the Red Army faced a revolutionary tribunal if caught wearing the red star.

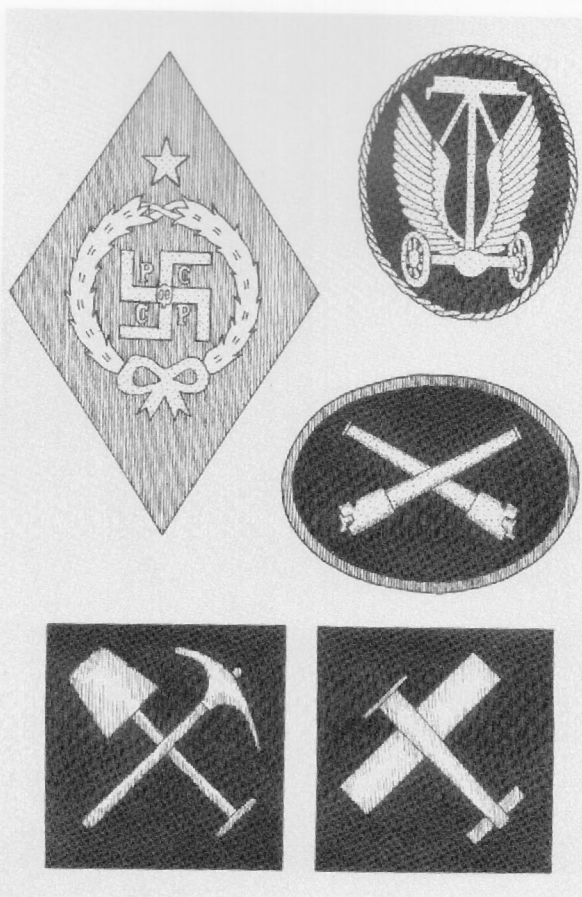
For the first year of its use the red star was actually worn 'upside down' (see Plate A). The star on the first

Commanders of a Kazakh cavalry regiment. All are dressed in black beshmet shirts and cherkeska coats. The regimental sleeve patch is the Muslim star and crescent, and is worn by both Kazakh junior commanders and Slav senior commanders. The figure kneeling in the front row, far right, has the sleeve insignia of a starshina (sergeant-major) probably of his own personal design. All are armed with dragoon or Cossack shashkas, and some also have Caucasian daggers.

official medal of the Russian Soviet Federation, the Revolutionary Order of the Red Banner, appeared in a similar orientation. The star was reversed to its now habitual position only at the end of 1918. In the following year the plough of the hammer-and-plough device began to be replaced by the peasant's scythe (or sickle), which was more easily recognisable. At first the hammer-and-sickle was seen on non-metallic items, such as sleeve patches, but from 13 April 1922 it became the official device on the red star headgear badge, and for more than 70 years was the unchallenged symbol of the Soviet Union and its army.

A confusion of clothing

Due to the economic disruption of Russia caused by the Great War and two revolutions, it proved impos-



Non-regulation sleeve badges, 1918–20 (clockwise from top left): 1st Kalmuk Cavalry Regiment; the most popular armoured unit badge; 2nd Moscow Red Heavy Artillery; Commanders' School; rare pattern used by aviation detachments; sapper company of an infantry regiment or brigade

ible in the early stages of the Civil War to introduce anything resembling a uniform for the new Red Army. Commanders were forced to make do with existing Tsarist Army stores and to condone the widespread use of civilian clothing. In general, uniforms of the Reds and the Whites were of the same origin, a fact used repeatedly by both sides to deceive the enemy, especially in poor weather.

The most readily available military clothing was the Tsarist Army uniform introduced between 10 March 1909 and 7 May 1912. Its most distinctive Russian garment was the olive khaki *gymnasterka* – a short shirt-tunic or blouse with a standing collar fastened by two buttons, with three further buttons down the shirt-front and shirt-type cuffs. Trousers were of the same colour, and they were worn tucked into tall jackboots or with puttees and boots. A single-breasted field

greatcoat was worn by both soldiers and commanders; this had a broad falling collar and roll cuffs, and hood instead of buttons.

The main insignia on Tsarist uniforms was the Russian *kokarda* (cockade) worn on the cap band. This was made of cloth, until 2 January 1844, when Tsar Nicholas I ordered it replaced with a metal oval rosette with white, orange and black circles. In 1917 the provisional government abolished all shoulder-board badges and the *kokarda*, but during the long changeover period, before new red insignia and the red star became available, many of the metal badges from the old shoulder-boards soon found their way back onto clothing.

Because of widespread clothing shortages, volunteers to the Red Army were permitted, by Prikaz 92 of 30 September 1918, to keep their own clothes. Moreover, it was the responsibility of their unit commanders to reimburse them the value of these clothes as if they had been provided by the state. Not knowing of this concession, many volunteers continued to arrive in worn-out clothes, expecting to throw them away on receiving uniforms. Even when men did get uniforms, it was an endless temptation to trade them for food. The end result was that most early Red troops looked like an armed rabble, which only added to the contempt they were held in by White officers and soldiers, who made a point of being much better turned out.

When obtainable, Red commanders and commissars favoured tunics cut in British or American style, or leather jackets worn with leather headgear, leather trousers and jackboots. A British-style tunic, which was known in Russia as a 'French', had been popular among Russian officers and even civilians during the Great War.

On parade, some units wore shakos that would not have looked out of place on a Napoleonic battlefield. They had in fact been issued in 1911 to some former Imperial Guard regiments and military colleges. These colourful uniforms had been put into storage in 1914 when the entire Russian Army switched to khaki field uniforms. Cavalrymen also wore all manner of fancy clothing from a bygone era, ranging from Hussar breeches to lancer kurtkas.

There were a number of foreign volunteers in the Red Army, and at the beginning of the Civil War (on 23 July 1918) they were prohibited from wearing the uniforms of their countries of origin within the borders of the Russian Republic. However, period photographs prove that this order was widely ignored, and they were the majority of orders at that time.

The new uniform

It is often said that the uniform which came to typify the Red Army in the Civil War – the pointed hat and long greatcoat with coloured tabs – had been designed in 1913, to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty. It is claimed that the Bolsheviks merely took these uniforms from Tsarist supply depots. In apparent confirmation of this idea, the greatcoat had those bastion-shaped *razgovory* tabs – one for each century of the Romanov dynasty.

In reality, the design of the new uniform seems to have been accomplished by the RMSR. On 25 April 1918 a Commission on the Elaboration of Uniform was set up, and on 7 May it initiated a competition to design a new uniform for the Red Army. Many famous artists and designers took part, and finally, on 18 December 1918, new headgear, commanders' insignia and branch-of-service colours were chosen. On 16 January 1919 Prikaz 116 of the RMSR announced the official adoption of these new uniform items. Further detail was added over the following months, and a number of modifications were made in the light of field experience.

Headgear

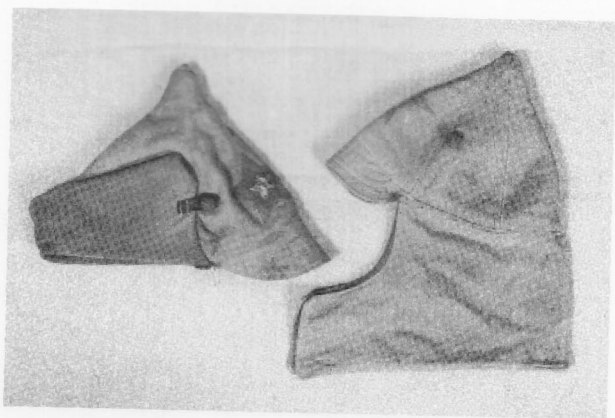
The new headgear, or *shlem*, was designated for winter use, and was a blunt-pointed peaked khaki cloth helmet, with flaps that could be pulled down and fastened under the chin to protect against the cold. A broad-based five-pointed star in branch-of-service colour with a wide black stripe (or red if the star was black) was attached to the front of the helmet. On top of the cloth star was to be pinned the smaller red star metal badge adopted in July 1918.

At first the new headgear was nicknamed the *bogatirka* – the original *bogatiry* being warrior heroes of Russian legend who were traditionally depicted wearing similarly-shaped pointed metal helmets. The headgear was also known, for a time, as the *frunzevka*, after Mikhail Frunze; his troops included weavers who were the first to manufacture and wear the headgear. But the term by which the peculiar hat eventually became known, both in and outside of Russia, was *budenovka*, after Semion Budenny, the dashing commander of the First Cavalry Army.

On 8 April 1919 this winter headgear was heavily modified, no doubt in the light of early field experience. The new version had a peak and a roll-up neck cover, and was made of six pieces of khaki cloth with a stiffener 2cm in diameter stitched into the 'spike' of the helmet to prevent it from drooping. The roll-up



Red Army General Staff Academy graduate, on parade in 1919. He wears a pea-green kaftan and matching budenovka cap with black velvet collar, cuffs, breast tabs and pocket patches, all piped crimson. The black-piped-crimson star on the sleeve and the cap was the emblem of the General Staff. Four rows of gold lace on the collar (and possibly on the cuffs) could indicate Staff status – although this is not mentioned in official documents. (Andrei Karachtchouk Collection)



Red Army budenovka caps as authorised by Prikaz 116 of 16 January 1919. Some men had their caps made with a taller point, giving rise to the Russian expression: *umootvod* (rod-brains) – from *gromootvod* (lightning rod), the joke being that the taller the point, the smaller the brains of the owner. (Collection of Anton Shalito and Ilya Savchenkov)

neck cover was kept in place by brown leather straps with two 1.5cm-wide buttons covered in cloth of branch colour. A five-pointed cloth star, 10.5cm in diameter, was sewn on the front of the helmet, 3.5cm above the peak. This star was edged in red paint if black, and in black paint if of any other colour. An enamel red star badge was to be pinned to the centre of the cloth star.

In practice these winter helmets began to be worn widely only from the beginning of 1920. The summer headgear remained as before – a peaked khaki forage cap for both soldiers and commanders.

Greatcoats

Clearly inspired by the colourful uniforms of the 17th-century Russian musketeers, called *streletsi*, the new greatcoat was introduced on 8 April 1919. For historical reasons it was known as a *kaftan* instead of the more usual *shinnelle*. The greatcoat was of khaki cloth, and had as its most characteristic feature three tabs in branch-of-service colour worn prominently across the chest.

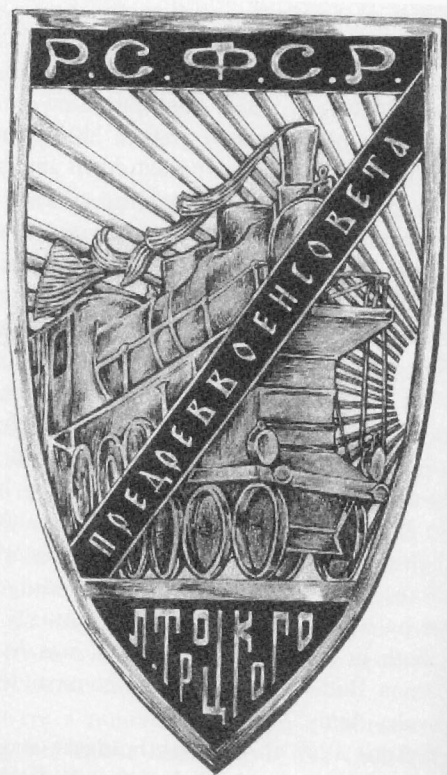
These tabs were similar in shape to the ‘bastion’ lace of British regiments. They were soon nicknamed *razgovory* by the soldiers, although the origin of the term is disputed. The word is similar in meaning to the English ‘palaver’, and can mean ‘conversation’ and ‘a mess’ or ‘to mess around’. Fastening the tabs was a fiddly process, hence one interpretation. Another ver-

sion has it that the new uniforms were first issued to commanders and commissars, and when ordinary soldiers spotted their approach they grumbled: ‘Here come the big talkers!’

Three-quarters of each tab was permanently stitched to the upper left side of the single-breasted greatcoat while the remainder was normally fastened by a button to the right side. The two uppermost tabs ran horizontally, while the third was at a slight angle. In the field coloured tabs were replaced by khaki ones.

The *kaftan* had two vertical side pockets and two vertical breast pockets, and was fastened by means of four metal hooks and two waist straps, each with two buttons. The collar, cuffs and pocket flaps were made of darker khaki cloth, and collar and cuffs were piped in branch colour. The only difference between cavalry and infantry versions of the greatcoat was a slit cut into the skirt to 14cm below the waist to allow for horse riding.

The first recorded occasion where the *kaftan* was seen in widespread use was at the storming of Perekop in the Crimea in 1920. Before then the shortage of greatcoats had become so serious that in October 1919



Sleeve badge of crew members of Trotsky's armoured train. Made of silver, it had a white and red enamel design. See Plate D2 for a reconstruction of a crew member of this train.

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



Red Army commanders had been given instructions to requisition overcoats from civilians.

Branch-of-service and rank insignia

Branch colours were officially adopted from 16 January 1919, and were to be worn on the collar patches of tunics and greatcoats, and on cloth stars of helmets. The collar patches were 9cm long and 4cm wide and similar to those introduced in the Tsarist Army from 1872, when greatcoats were issued with falling collars. The new branch colours were as follows:

- Infantry – Crimson
- Cavalry – Blue
- Artillery – Orange
- Engineers – Black
- Air Force – Light Blue
- Border Guards – Light Green

New Red Army commanders' insignia were approved at the same time as the branch-of-service insignia, and consisted of a red star with a black hammer-and-sickle over combinations of triangles, squares or diamonds. This was made of red cloth and stitched to the left sleeve of the tunic or greatcoat, with its centre located 12.5cm above the cuff; the star for junior commanders was to be 11cm in diameter, and for senior commanders from *Kombrig* upwards, 14.5cm. Triangles had 4cm sides; squares and diamonds, 3cm sides. To begin with, Red commanders arranged these devices in all manner of imaginative geometrical forms, and it took some time before approved layouts could be enforced.

On 3 April 1920 branch-of-service badges were introduced to be worn on the left sleeve, between shoulder and elbow. The badges for infantry, artillery, cavalry, engineers and aviation units are depicted on the plates. These badges were edged gold for soldiers of units that had been awarded the Revolutionary Red Banner, and edged silver if the owner had been wounded in battle or had served in the Red Army for at least one year and taken part in at least one major battle.

Summer shirts

The new summer shirt was a smock-like garment made of light khaki cotton fabric. It had a 5cm wide standing collar with two hooks. A cloth strip attached to the right shirt-breast covered the two shirt buttons, and was 22cm long and 4.5cm wide. The cuffs were fastened by two buttons each. The collar and the front of the shirt were decorated with pairs of cloth *razgovory* tabs in branch colour, though as with greatcoats, these were replaced in the field by tabs of darker khaki colour.

Legwear

The severe shortage of footwear led to a drastic measure intended to restore a semblance of uniformity among soldiers, who had even been seen wearing laced ladies' boots or white gaiters. This was the adoption of leather *lapti* or peasant boots, which were made of interlaced leather strips, and were rather non-military in appearance. Ordinary *lapti*, made of birch bark, were also widely used, and were even regulated by a Prikaz



Members of a Cheka 'shock' troop examine a cannon captured from Denikin's White Army at Sochi, March 1920. Men of such shock units were dressed from head to toe in black leather. They were always well supplied with equipment and for a long time were almost the only units to wear official Red Army breast badges.

on May 15. Besides the officially introduced leather *lapti*, boots worn with puttees were common, while commanders and commissars usually had privately purchased military- or civilian-cut leather jackboots.

Despite the official introduction of the new uniform over the course of 1919, the majority of soldiers and commanders still had no alternative but to wear ex-Tsarist uniforms. The general clothing situation continued to be desperate, and permission was given, by a special Prikaz, for Red Army men to keep their own clothes, though these had to be 'close to uniform style', and of 'either light-motley or grey colour...bright, contrasting colours are not allowed'. By the end of 1919 everyone in the Red Army was at least wearing a red star badge, patches in branch colour and the sleeve badges mentioned above.

Some peculiar situations and abuses of the system were developing in the period of uniform shortages, as the titles of several Prikazes suggest: 'On the prohibition of undressing one unit to provide clothes for another unit' (Prikaz 2185 of 23 December 1919); 'Badges for commanders may be obtained along with other types of clothing allowance but not more than three sets for one year' (Prikaz 1364 of 21 July 1920).

1922 uniform

On 31 January 1922 all previous uniform except leather *lapti* shoes and branch-of-service sleeve badges was abolished. In its place came a new strictly regulated uniform, with command badges as the only distinction

between ordinary soldiers and commanders. It was to be worn by all units, but the wearing of earlier uniforms was permitted until 1923.

Headgear

The winter *budenovka*, as adopted in 1919, remained but became dark grey, with a cloth star, 9.5cm in diameter, in branch colour. Summer headgear was made of light grey cotton and had a one-piece peak and neck cover and a chin strap. The star was the same as on winter headgear.

Greatcoat

This remained basically as before, but became dark grey and somewhat shorter, with the cuffs of the same dark grey colour and the waist tightened at the back with a single strap. The garment had *razgovory* tabs on breast and collar; these were in branch colour and baton-shaped (16cm long by 3.25-5cm wide).

Shirts

The new winter shirt was in dark grey cloth like the greatcoat and had a falling collar and the same sleeve patch as the greatcoat (see below). The summer shirt was light grey with falling collar. Both winter and summer shirts had pairs of rectangular collar patches, 8.5cm long and 4cm wide, and *razgovory* tabs on the chest.

Breeches

Summer breeches were of light grey cotton, while winter breeches were of dark grey cloth for all arms of service (reinforced with brown or black leather for cavalry and horse artillery units). Commanders' breeches were piped in branch colour on the outside seams.

Insignia

A new feature which was introduced to be worn on greatcoats and shirts was the bastion-shaped sleeve patch in branch colour. This was 18cm long, 5cm wide at its lower part (which was aligned with the top of the cuff) and 7cm at its widest point. The patch was piped red on its sides and top, and had a red star in the upper part. Space was left in the lower part for rank badges, which were the same as those of 1919. The rank badges were red for military commanders, blue for administrative staff and white/silver for general staff.

At the same time a number of changes were made to insignia for specialist units. Sleeve badges were adopted for the first time by armoured units, Republican convoy guards and Revolutionary Military Tribunals. The colour of the artillery badge was changed from scarlet to black, and the collar-patch

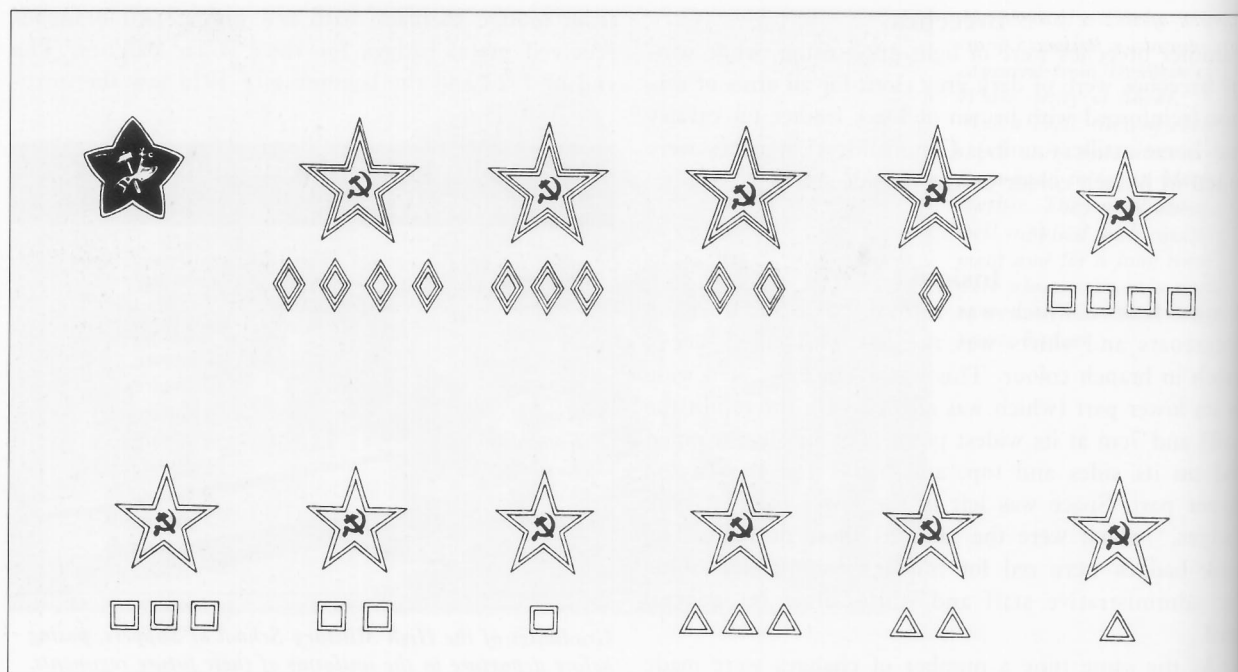
from orange to black with red piping. All branches received metal badges for their collar patches. The end of 1922 and the beginning of 1923 saw the intro-

Command insignia introduced 16 January 1919

<i>Komandir Otdeleniya</i>	1 triangle
<i>Zamkomvzвода/Pomkomvzвода</i>	2 triangles
<i>Starshina</i>	3 triangles
<i>Komvzвода</i>	1 square
<i>Komroty</i>	2 squares
<i>Kombat</i>	3 squares
<i>Kompolka</i>	4 squares
<i>Kombrig</i>	1 diamond
<i>Komdiv</i>	2 diamonds
<i>Komandarm</i>	3 diamonds
<i>Komanduyushiy Frontom</i>	4 diamonds

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





Command insignia (1919). Top row: Red Army headgear badge (1918); Komanduyushiy Frontom (Front Commander), Komandarm (Army Commander), Nachdiv (Division Chief), Kombrig (Brigade Commander), Kompolka (Regimental Commander). Bottom row: Kombat (Battalion Commander), Komroty (Company Commander), Komvzvoda (Platoon Commander), Starshina (Sergeant-Major), Pomkomvzvoda (Assistant Platoon Commander), Komandir Otdeleniya (Section Commander).

duction of enormous numbers of badges and insignia, for commanders' schools, military academies, ChON units, revolutionary tribunals and various other organisations.

On 27 June 1923 the last significant Civil War period uniform changes took place: piping was abolished on breeches and breast pockets on greatcoats and summer shirts; sleeve patches and *razgovory* tabs were given the same piping as collar patches; greatcoat breast tabs were lowered by 2cm, and the greatcoat collar became 1.5cm narrower.

On 4 August 1923 Red Army commanders, for the first time in the Civil War, were issued with regulation light brown leather equipment: a belt, gun holster, shoulder belt and map case. This last year of the Civil War period, 1924, was marked by a long overdue innovation – on 15 February official permission was given for the wearing of sheepskin coats, *poddyorkas* (long-waisted coats) and *valenki* (felt boots) in winter weather.

Red cross and railway insignia

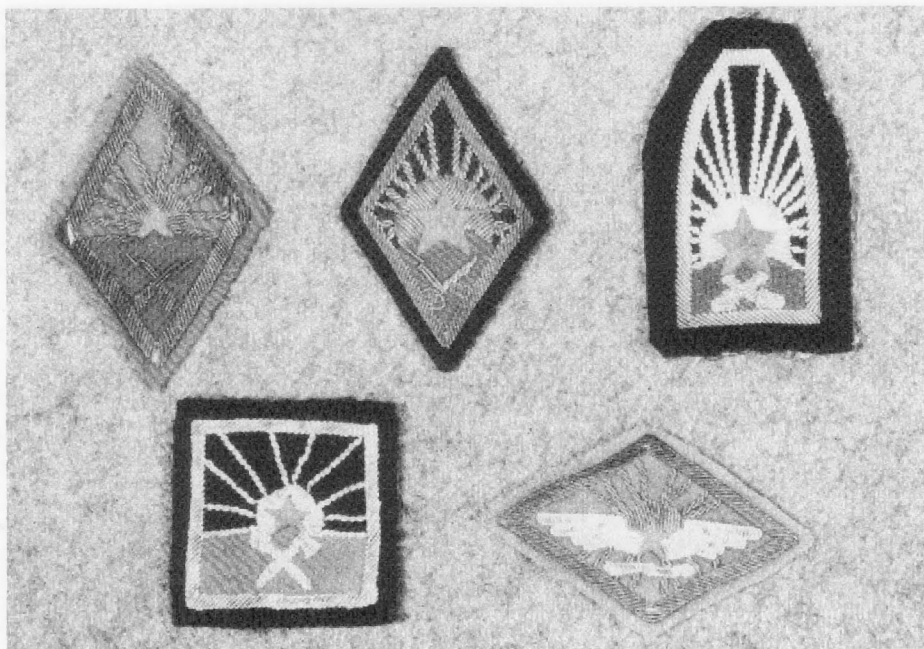
Only in October 1918 did the Soviet government adopt the Geneva Convention and order 'all organisations and facilities dealing with sick and wounded' to install the Red Cross flag, and all medical personnel to wear enamel Red Cross badges in their headgear. Medical orderlies in a battlefield were additionally to wear a white armband with a red cross on the left sleeve.

On 22 August 1919 an armband was introduced for commandants of railway stations (earlier a civilian profession, but militarised because of the great strategic importance of the railways). At the same time, a sleeve badge was introduced for military communications personnel. The armband was made of red cloth, 12cm wide, with a black velvet diamond (8cm by 12cm wide) decorated by a white (silver) railway wheel with two wings on its sides. The piping on the diamond was green for commandants and yellow for commissars. A diamond-shaped badge of the same design was worn on the left sleeve, above the elbow.

Awards and Military Decorations

Over the course of the Civil War a number of awards were introduced to replace the old Tsarist orders and medals that had been abolished along with ranks by the decree of 10 November 1917. The intention was that awards would be made irrespective of social status or origin. For a time, soldiers were rewarded for meritorious conduct in combat with gifts of binoculars, watches

branch-of-service badges, introduced by *Prikaz* 572 of 3 April 1920. Upper row: Cossack guard (two versions); artillery (1922). Lower row: engineers; and aviation. (Collection of *Olga Savchenko* and *Anton Shalito*)



and engraved silver cigarette cases, and on occasion with new *sharovary* breeches or boots, which because of their scarcity were greatly appreciated.

On 16 September 1918 the Russian Soviet state introduced the Order of the Revolutionary Red Banner of the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic). Many other republics of the future USSR followed suit and introduced their own awards of roughly equivalent status. Eventually these awards were standardised as a single Order of the Red Banner for the entire country; instituted on 1 August 1924 it was the first national award. Until 1926 this order was worn on a red silk rosette, which harked back to Tsarist traditions, when medals for bravery were worn on a ribbon tied in a bow. More than 15,000 men were decorated with the Order of the Red Banner for acts of bravery during the Civil War.

The equivalent award for entire military formations was the Honour Revolutionary Red Banner, instituted on 3 August 1918 by the People's Commissariat on Military Affairs. In all, two armies, 39 divisions, four brigades and 175 regiments received this award. The soldiers of the decorated units were permitted to wear a narrow gold edging on their branch-of-service badges and commanders' rank badges.

As early as 1918, Red Army men and commanders had been presented with 'Weapons of Honour' – typically swords, but later firearms. The custom was developed further on 8 April 1920 as the *Pochetnoye Revoliutsionnoye Oruzhiye* or Revolutionary Weapon of

Honour. This took the form of a gold-plated *shashka* sword for the army and a dirk for the navy, both with the Order of the Red Banner attached to the hilt. Only 21 Red Army and Navy leaders were presented with this, the supreme award of the Civil War period.

THE PLATES

A: Early formations

A1: Infantryman, 3rd Petrograd City Guard Rifle Regiment, 1918

The 3rd Petrograd Rifle Regiment was formed from the disbanded Semenovskiy Lifeguard Reserve Regiment, which had been stationed in Petrograd (St Petersburg). The Semenovskiy Regiment proper had been created by Peter the Great in 1695, and was one of the key Imperial Guard regiments, but the Reserve Regiment had never shared this elite status.

Immediately after the October revolution all ranks of the 3rd Petrograd Regiment wore their old uniforms but with shoulder-boards removed, and with Tsarist cap insignia replaced by the red star. The old greatcoat collar patches remained in use for some time as a mark of regimental traditions, but they were abolished on 29 September 1918 and replaced by an oval-shaped, cloth



*The evacuation of wounded during the Kronstadt revolt, March 1921. On the right stands the railway station commandant. His sleeve insignia qualifies him as a *kombat* (battalion commander) – the white thread around the three red squares is probably a local innovation. His cap badge is the old Tsarist railway unit emblem made of ‘German silver’. A medical orderly at the carriage door wears the Red Cross sleeve insignia on a white cloth shield which is piped in red.*

sleeve badge, inscribed ‘GOR/OKhR’, an abbreviation for *Gorodskaya Okhrana* (City Guard).

This soldier’s red star cap badge appears to be upside down; in fact, this was the correct way of wearing it in the first months of the Soviet rule. The khaki canvas bandolier is a version introduced during the Great War, while the so-called *beboot* dagger was carried by machine-gunners and scouts of infantry regiments of the Russian Army.

The 3rd Petrograd Rifle Regiment took part in the defence of Petrograd against General Yudenich’s White North-Western Army, but the men defected en masse to the Whites on 29 May 1919 after killing the commissars and communists in their ranks.

A2: Infantryman, Epifan Kovtiukh’s Detachment, Army of Taman, 1918

The Army of Taman was a typical early Civil War formation. It was made up of many small detachments of infantry and cavalry which had been forced together under pressure from the Whites. As a result its soldiers were dressed in all imaginable types of clothing, from ex-Tsarist uniforms to civilian attire. This infantryman belongs to the ‘First Column’ or vanguard detachment of the Army – a crack force which enabled the Army to break out of encirclement. He is dressed in Tsarist infantry uniform with insignia and shoulder-boards removed; this includes a cotton *gymnasterka*, *sharovary* breeches and puttees. The headgear is an infantry papakha of fake astrakhan fur with a diagonal red cloth band instead of an official red star badge. (Only units formed in major industrial centres could be supplied

with red stars in the early years of the war.)

The chevron badge of the Army of Taman is worn on the left sleeve. This was 22.3cm long and 4.5cm wide, and was introduced to commemorate the Army’s breakout through enemy lines. Unlike many other Red units, the Army of Taman’s commanders were strict about this chevron, and a unique *Prikaz* prohibited soldiers from modifying it with lace, inscriptions, bows or other ‘aesthetic’ personal inventions.

Criss-crossed machine-gun belts were worn widely throughout the Red Army in this period, especially in semi-regular units, as there was little alternative means of carrying ammunition.

A3: Commander, Naval Infantry Regiment, 1918-22

When, after the October revolution, sailors were required for service on land, they were formed into *Matrosskiye pekhotniye polki* – literally sailors’ foot regiments. Further naval infantry units were formed in major naval bases from the crews of the Black Sea Fleet after the ships were scuttled, so as not to fall into German hands. Several other fleets and flotillas also raised volunteer naval infantry units.

Naval infantry saw widespread land service, often in the hottest of actions, since sailors were renowned for their high morale and loyalty to communist ideals. A high level of technical training made sailors highly sought after for specialist duties, and they were a favourite choice for crews of armoured trains, and artillery and machine-gun units.

Naval infantry were dressed in a combination of Imperial Army and Navy uniforms, but without the

insignia and shoulder-boards abolished in 1917. This sailor has a *beskozirka* (peakless cap) with the band of the Black Sea Fleet destroyer *Kerch*. His black *bushlat* (reefer jacket) has a gold anchor sleeve badge which, although changing slightly, was to become a symbol of the Soviet Navy for 70 years. The black and white *telniashka* undershirt had long been the object of great naval pride, and was worn almost as a branch-of-service badge. According to the Navy's code of honour, when a sailor stripped to his *telniashka* in battle, this made it impossible for him to surrender or retreat. The white canvas trousers are tucked into infantry jackboots, but could equally be worn loose. Weapons include a Nagant revolver and an officer's *kortik* (dirk), a traditional symbol of authority in the Imperial Navy.

B: Cavalry

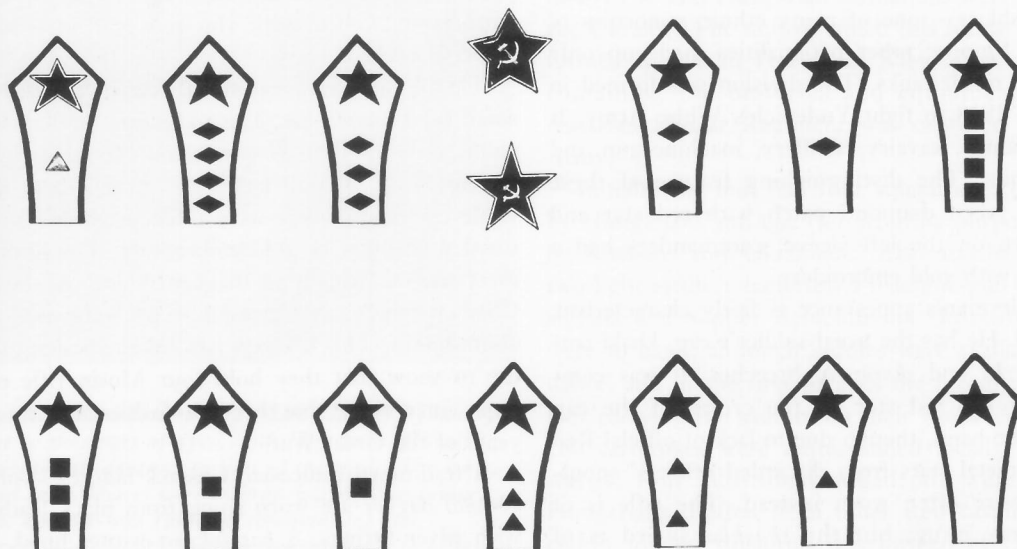
B1: Cavalryman, Vatman's 'Red Hussars' Brigade, 1918-19

Vatman's Brigade, also known as the Zavolzhskaya Brigade of Red Hussars, included three cavalry regiments that were dressed in the pre-war parade uniforms of the 1st Sumskoy and 3rd Elisavetgradsky Hussar regiments. The main regimental distinction was the light blue peaked cap (piped yellow). For the Sumskoy Regiment the cap had a scarlet band, and for the Elisavetgradsky Regiment, a white band. The black leather peak of the cavalryman's cap was somewhat smaller than the infantry version, and, following the period fashion, worn crumpled in a foppish manner.

The dolman had brass buttons and cords, but no shoulder-knots – the traditional hussar mark of rank. The canvas cartridge pouch has its cover turned out to allow easier access to ammunition. The *chakchiry* breeches were of a red colour called *krapozy* in the Russian Army. High cavalry jackboots have brass hussar rosettes. Rifle and *shashka* sword, although both called 'dragoon' in the Tsarist Army, were issued to all mounted units, including irregular Cossack troops, before the Great War. Some squadrons also had lances with the old regimental light blue-over-scarlet pennants. Regimental musicians are recorded as wearing brass lyre badges instead of red stars on their caps.

Several other units were also dressed in hussar fashion. The Narvsky Cavalry Regiment fought on the Eastern Front in 1918-19 in the uniform of the former 13th Narvsky Hussar Regiment. This was similar to Vatman's Hussars but with white piping, cords and

Sleeve command patches and headgear badges, 1922. Top row: Glavkom (Supreme Commander); Front Commander or Detached Army Commander; Army Cmdr or Deputy Army Cmdr or Corps Cmdr; headgear star, April 1922 (top); headgear star, July 1922 (bottom); Division Chief or Detached Brigade Cmdr; Brigade Cmdr; Commander or Deputy of either a Regiment or a Detached Battalion. Bottom row: Battalion Cmdr or Detached Company Cmdr or Detached Company Deputy Cmdr; Company Cmdr or Company Deputy Cmdr; Platoon Cmdr; Starshina; Platoon Deputy Cmdr; Section Cmdr; Krasnoarmeyets (Red Army man).





Commanders of the 2nd 'Blinov' Cavalry Division, 1922. Only a few of them have the new 1922 uniform; the rest wear whatever was available. Cavalry sleeve badges are of various sizes and designs, and not all regulation. The Kombrig standing on the right wears an old-style gymnasterka, but has worked hard to make it look like the new uniform – the collar patches, razgovory and sleeve insignia have no piping and are all hand-made

metal fittings. Another unit, the Detached Cavalry Division (half-regiment) of the 21st Rifle Division, was dressed from the depot of the 15th Ukrainian Hussar Regiment, and wore a brown busby with light blue bag and white metal chin-scales, rose-orange dolman with white cords and silver buttons, black breeches and jack-boots.

B2: Cavalryman, Bashkir Cavalry Division, Petrograd 1918-19

The Bashkir Division was composed, as its name suggests, of Bashkirs – one of many ethnic minorities of the Russian Empire; other nationalities made up only one per cent of all ranks. The division was formed in Petrograd in 1918 to fight Yudenich's White Army. It included infantry, cavalry, artillery, machine-gun and specialist units. The distinguishing feature of these units was a green diamond patch with red star and crescent worn on the left sleeve; commanders had a scarlet patch with gold embroidery.

This cavalryman's appearance is fairly characteristic of the period. He has the usual soldier's cap, khaki cotton *gymnasterka* and *sharovary* breeches. It was common to wear the red star on the crown of the cap rather than the band, though due to lack of official Red Army stars, metal stars from discarded officers' shoulder-boards were often worn instead. The rifle is of standard army issue, but the *shashka* sword is of Cossack style.

B3: Kuban Cossack, Budenny's First Cavalry Army, 1918-20

Cossack units were rightly considered the best cavalry formations in the Red Army. Over the centuries the Cossacks had become a nation of warriors, and before the October revolution the vast majority had had field experience serving as border guards. Naturally both Civil War factions wanted the Cossacks on their side, and they led active propaganda campaigns. The Cossacks who joined the Red Army wore much the same national clothes and weapons as their White counterparts, but with the red star instead of the Imperial cockade.

This figure wears traditional Kuban Cossack attire: a small fur *kubanka* hat, a linen *beshmet* undershirt and a cloth *cherkeska* coat. *Beshmets* and *cherkeskas* for everyday use were of dull colours – grey, brown or black, while ceremonial ones were often brighter and embellished with silver or gold embroidery. The lining of the *cherkeska* was usually of the same colour as the *beshmet*. Characteristic *gaziry* breast pockets were used to carry ammunition. This Cossack has cut them along the middle to show that they hold four Mosin rifle cartridge clips, in a style that became fashionable in the last years of the Great War.

A traditional Caucasian Cossack *shashka* sword and a *kinzhal* dagger are worn slung from black leather belts with silver fittings. A *bashlyk*, or winter hood, is worn hanging on the shoulders. Cossack boots were made of

very soft leather and traditionally had no heels and spurs were also not worn, since Cossacks preferred to guide their horses with the *nagaika*, a short leather whip.

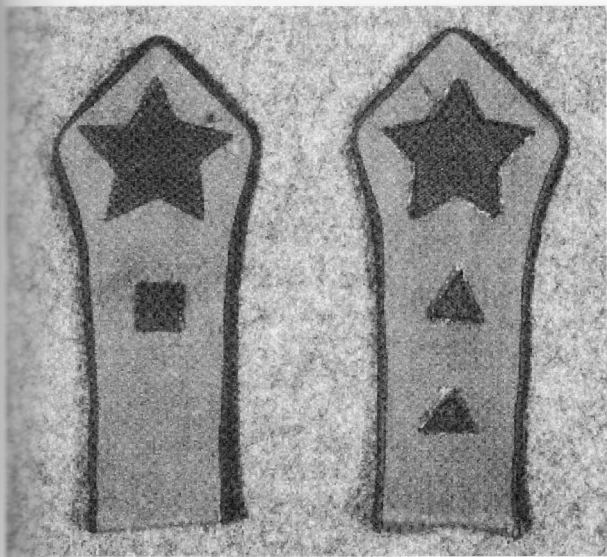
The sleeve patch is a combined rank insignia and branch badge – popular among Red commanders. The patch is made of cloth and could have devices made of metal or cloth or be embroidered in silk or gold thread. The two triangles identify this commander as a *Zamkomvzвода* (deputy platoon commander).

C: International Units

C1: Infantryman, Chinese Battalion, 1918-20

Chinese 'internationalist' soldiers wore the same uniform as most Red Army troops – a peaked cap, khaki cotton gymnasterka and *sharovary* breeches; but they were always instantly recognisable, since Russian clothing was far too big for them. The Chinese had a special value to the Bolsheviks: industrious, efficient and seldom able to understand Russian, they were employed by the Cheka for the arrest and execution of anti-Soviet elements.

This Chinese soldier's equipment consists of canvas cartridge pouches and a *kotomka*, a primitive canvas haversack that was in use throughout the Red Army.



Sleeve patches as authorised by Prikaz 322 of 31 January 1922. Due to shortages of dyed cloth they were officially made of material identical to that of the tunic. The stars, piping and rank devices were in branch-of-service colour. From left: komvzвода (platoon commander) and zamkomvzвода (deputy platoon commander). (Collection of Anton Shalito and Ilya Savchenkov)



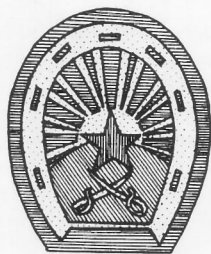
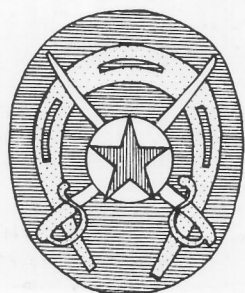
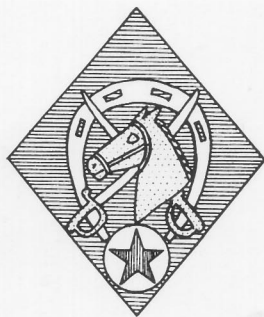
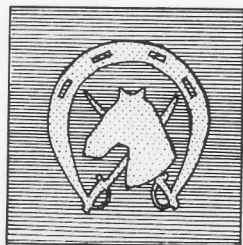
*Winter and summer budenovka hats made according to Prikaz 322 of 31 January 1922. The winter budenovka is of dark grey cloth, while the summer version is of khaki cotton. Both were officially to have metal stars pinned over cloth stars, but this was rarely complied with. The additional peak at the back of the summer budenovka, led to it being called the *Zdravstvuy-proshay* or 'Hello-goodbye'. (Collection of Anton Shalito and Ilya Savchenkov)*

The *lapti* boots are of common Red Army issue, made of a single piece of hard leather, laced with rawhide strips; these are worn over canvas *obmotki* or puttees, sometimes referred to as *binty* (bandages). The weapons are a Lee Enfield Mark III rifle – 'borrowed' from some unfortunate British soldier – and a Russian hand-grenade.

C2: Hungarian Hussar, Detached International Cavalry Division, 1918-20

Thousands of Hungarian POWs found themselves drawn into the Civil War, mainly on the Red side, and in 1918 several Hungarian formations were organised in the Ukraine. The unit to which this hussar belongs was formed by Istvan Horvat in Kiev, after a warehouse containing the uniforms and equipment of the 1st Austrian Hussar Regiment was captured by the Red Army.

Initially the unit had four squadrons: three manned by Hungarians and one (for scouting purposes) manned by Russians and Ukrainians. Also attached to it were two light artillery batteries, a machine-gun platoon, and signals and sapper detachments. Initially no horses were to hand, although saddles were available in abundance; and in the first parades the hussars marched on foot carrying the saddles on their backs. A month later 180 carthorses were requisitioned locally. Soon afterwards, four additional squadrons were formed of Hungarians drafted from other Red cavalry units. An eighth foreign squadron was formed of Germans and Austrians under an Austrian officer, Franz Morgauer.



Evolution of cavalry sleeve badges from 1918 to 1922. The cavalry badge developed from a non-regulation badge depicting a horse's head within a horseshoe. This proved highly popular, and it took a great deal of official effort to replace it with the regulation 1922 badge, which dispensed with the horse's head.

In 1920 the Hungarians were demobilised under an arrangement with the Hungarian government, and most returned home. Those who preferred to stay on in Russia joined the International Cavalry *Divizion*, commanded by Sandor Tede, which was posted to the city of Kazan to carry out patrol service.

The International Cavalry *Divizion*'s uniform was an odd combination of Russian and Hungarian: all cavalrymen had red Hungarian side-caps, Russian *gymnasterkas*, greatcoats and cavalry jackboots. Hungarian squadrons wore red hussar breeches, while others had Russian khaki *sharovary*. Infantry units had Russian peaked caps and puttees and ordinary boots.

This Red Hungarian Hussar (called 'Red' not so much because he fought for the Bolsheviks, but rather after the red cap and breeches) has on his cap a red star badge covering the old Austrian pompon (with Emperor Franz-Josef I's monogram). His *gymnasterka* has faded in the hot Ukrainian sun. The collar of an undershirt is turned over the collar of the *gymnasterka*. The leather equipment is Hungarian, as are the weapons — a 1907 Rot-Steyr automatic pistol and an 1869 cavalry sabre.

C3: Infantryman, Rahia's Finnish Red Guard Detachment, 1918-19

After the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, on 3 March 1918, Poland, Ukraine, the Baltic states, Georgia and Finland gained independence from Russia. Finns of communist persuasion — more than 28,000 in number — were forced to move to Soviet Russia, and some of them joined the Red Army in the hope of restoring Soviet rule in Finland. These volunteers formed a number of units and took part in battles on the Northern and North-western Fronts. The 3rd Finnish Communist Regiment helped to protect Petrograd from the Germans and from Yudenich's White Army; the 6th Finnish Rifle Regiment served in Karelia in 1919; and the 480th Finnish Rifle Regiment even fought in Poland in 1920. Other, more exotic, Finnish units included the Finnish Ski Battalion, which made up part of the Petrograd Garrison, and cadets from the Finnish Red Commanders' Infantry School, who took part in the suppression of the Kronstadt revolt.

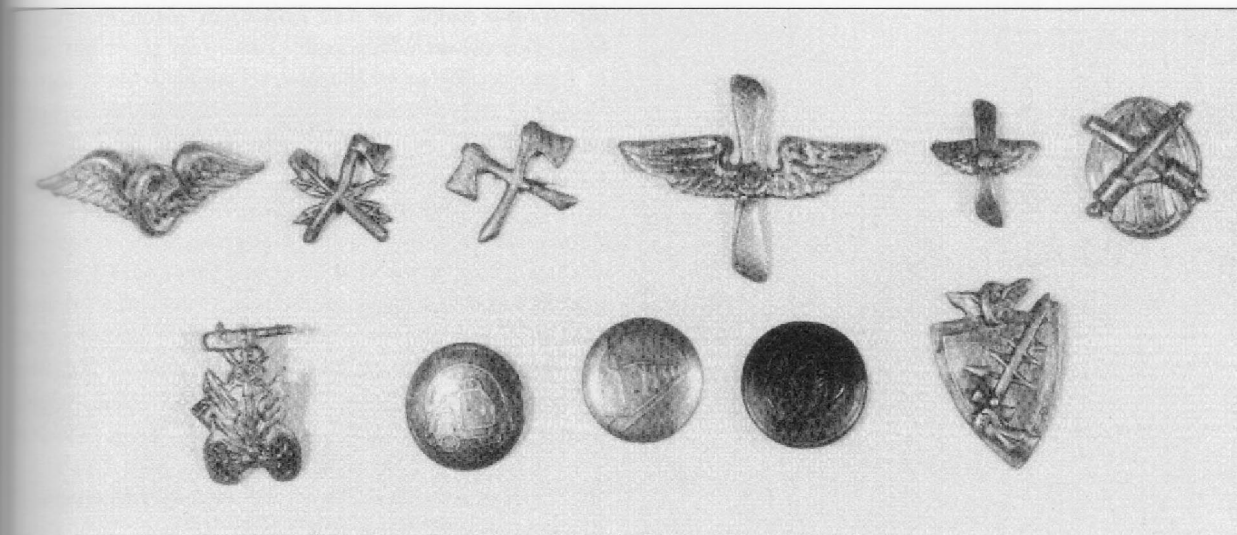
This rifleman is dressed in the Russian infantry greatcoat and boots. He wears his canvas cartridge belt on the waist, rather than across the chest as normally worn by Russians. He is armed with a German Mauser M.1898 rifle and a German infantry sword-bayonet. The main detail that distinguished the Finns from the Russians was the traditional Finnish peaked cloth cap, which was worn with the inevitable red star.

D: Specialist Troops

D1: Private, Broneotryad (Armour Detachment), 1918-22

Red Army men serving in motorised, armoured-car and armour units all wore much the same uniform, characterised by the rich use of leather. It consisted of: a khaki cloth or leather cap with a large square peak, introduced in the Russian Army for automobilists and *samokatchiks* (velo-cyclists); a leather coat (typically a black, so-called 'Swedish', 1912-issue); and below this a *gymnasterka*. Leather or cloth breeches were worn with jackboots or boots with leggings of all possible shades of leather.

The different motorised and armoured branches could be distinguished by breast and sleeve badges. Although motorised units were organisationally a branch of the Engineers, they preferred the old Tsarist steering wheel, wings and wheels to the Red Army Engineers' sleeve badge. Before an official badge appeared for armour units, personnel wore various sleeve patches, and continued to use the Tsarist Army badge, which was similar to that of motorised units but



with a machine-gun instead of a steering wheel. Motorised-unit emblems were also added to otherwise standard Red Army breast badges, below the red star.

D2: Crewman of Trotsky's Armoured Train, 1918-22

Because of the lack of special armoured train insignia in Tsarist and Red armies, crews wore sleeve badges with different combinations of railway, artillery and machine-gun emblems, or patches with the name and/or number and a depiction of the armoured train. Sometimes armoured train commanders wore all these badges together.

Some armoured train crews wore leather uniforms dyed in peculiar colours: the entire crew of the armoured train that took RMSR chairman Trotsky around Russia were dressed from head to toe in red leather, and were known as the 'Red Sotnia (Hundred)'. They wore a silver sleeve badge depicting a steaming train and engraved with the train's name, *Revvoyensovet* (see also the black and white illustration). The preferred weapons of these leather-clad men were carbines, *beboot* daggers and the Mauser K-96 hand-gun.

D3: Pilot, Aviation Detachment, 1918-21

Nearly all Red pilots had served in Imperial Russian aviation before the Revolution, and naturally they inherited its fashions, from black leather *kurtkas* (coats) to checked tweed jackets, yellow leggings and hand-made shoes. For men who had fought in France during the Great War it was fashionable to continue to wear French pilots' insignia.

This pilot wears a *gymnasterka* trimmed to give it the look of the so-called 'French' jacket; in addition he has cloth *sharovary* breeches piped red, leggings and

Red Army metal collar-patch badges. From upper left: Dept of Military Communications (1922); Divisional Field Electric Power Stations (1922); Dept of Military Engineers (1922); Aviation (in use from 1914); Aviation (1920, non-regulation); Special Task Artillery (commanders, cadets, artillery units, etc, 1922). Lower row: armoured car units (1922, non-regulation); armoured car units (1922 regulation); armoured train crews (1922); tank units (1922); armoured units (common to the three previous types, and replacing the older badges, 1922). (Collection of Anton Shalito and Ilya Savchenkov)

leather shoes. His belt is of regulation issue, complete with a dirk – effectively the badge of the Imperial Russian Airforce. Black pilots' caps or peaked caps, both piped red, were widely worn, although British field caps were especially favoured. Some pilots had the new red star badge, but more common were badges taken from discarded shoulder-boards. These were of two main types: a brass or oxidised-silver propeller with wings (nicknamed the *utka*, or duck), and the old Imperial double-headed eagle (known disrespectfully as the *kuritsa*, or chicken) with sword, flaming grenade and propeller; the crown on the eagle had been removed after the Tsar's abdication in March 1917. The same badges were worn on sleeves or could be pinned on Red Army chest badges. The medal is the Order of the Red Banner, worn on a scarlet silk rosette. In the air, leather flying helmets and goggles of all imaginable types and styles were worn, often with white silk scarves.

E: Military Schools

E1: Cadet, Infantry Commanders' School, 1918-20

Most Red commanders' schools were set up in the



PRA artillery commander at an observation post during the battle for Spassk, Soviet Far East, 1922. He wears the peaked cap of the artillery, which had a bottle-green crown and black velvet band piped red. The crossed cannon-barrel cap badge is of brass and removed from Tsarist shoulder-boards. The sleeve patch of the People's Revolutionary Army of the Far Eastern Republic, with its black border, identifies him as a kompolka (regiment commander).

premises of former Tsarist junior officer schools and military academies, and employed the same equipment and, sometimes, the same teaching staff. The junior officers' training course remained practically unaltered, with the exception of new communist disciplines. Besides training, cadets were often involved in patrol duties, the suppression of uprisings and in punitive expeditions; and on occasion they were brought in as the last reserve in battle.

This *kursant* (cadet) wears the *peclotka* or pilot's cap. These khaki caps had been adopted by the Imperial Army at the end of 1916, to be worn under steel Adrian helmets provided by the French, and from the spring of 1917 they were issued to all *yunkers* (officer cadets). There were so many *peclotkas* in storage, that they were the natural choice for Red *kursants*, although alterations were made: they were dyed dark green, and

pipings were added, as well as a cloth patch in branch-of-service colour. This patch, worn on the right side, had one or two brass buttons, to which a black leather chinstrap was attached. A red star badge, or in some schools an old metal shoulder-board badge, was worn on the front of the cap.

Kursants wore standard issue uniforms, but they were made of better quality materials. After graduation they were given a different uniform, a light-grey peaked cap, black *gymnasterka*, blue, blue-grey or khaki breeches, and commanders' jackboots. Chevrons with the school emblem or branch badge were sometimes worn on the left sleeve. Greatcoats had collar patches with a single brass button and a branch badge below it.

E2: Commander, 2nd Petrograd Red Commanders' Artillery School, 1918-22

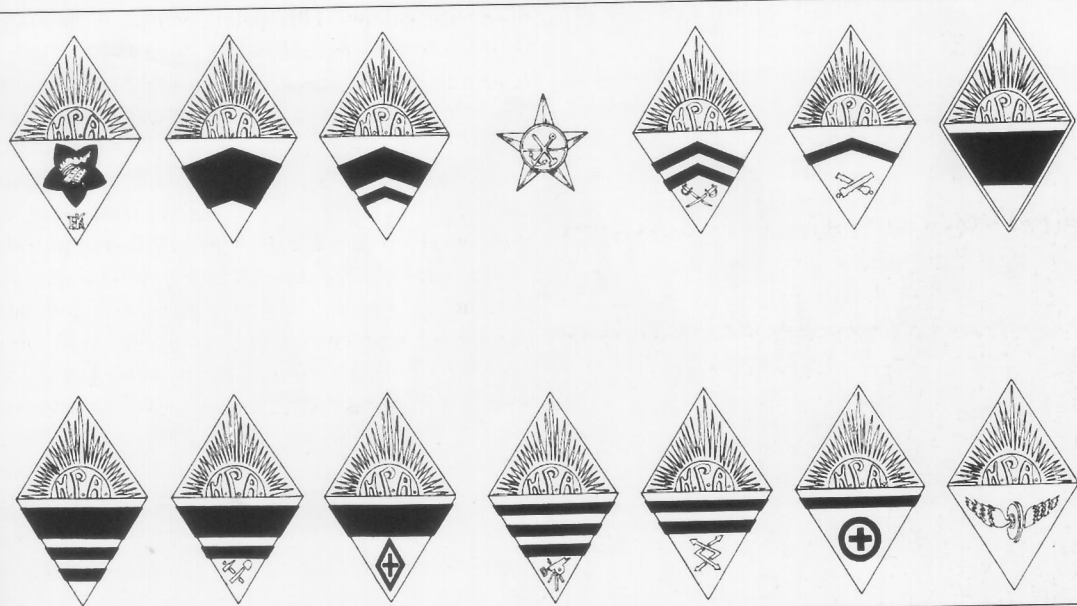
Units stationed in Petrograd in particular, because of the political importance of the location, had to participate in regular parades. In the first years of Soviet rule the uniforms of former Imperial lifeguard regiments and military academies were issued at some commanders' schools for these parades. This elaborate clothing, which had been in storage since the beginning of the Great War, was not always issued in complete sets, and items of different regiments were often mixed up, sometimes with comical results.

These old uniforms were altered to suit the new political reality: the metal headgear fittings were liberally covered with red paint, and Soviet symbols were installed wherever possible. This Red commander wears the shako of the old Mikhailovsky Artillery College, with a red star in place of the Tsarist eagle. He has an old artillery greatcoat with patches and collar piping, and a rank badge above his left cuff. The leather equipment is of 1911 issue.

E3: Cadet, 1st Tver Soviet Cavalry Commanders' School, 1918-20

The *kursant* (cadet) here is dressed in the old 'gala' uniform for *yunkers* of the Tverskoy cavalry college. The uniform for everyday wear was as follows: a peaked or peakless cap with a dark green band and light blue crown, piped dark green; khaki *gymnasterka* and *sharovary* breeches; cavalry jackboots; and a cavalry greatcoat with light-blue collar patches piped dark green.

Cadets of the 1st Petrograd Soviet Cavalry Commanders' School wore the even more opulent uniform of the old Life-Guard Hussar Regiment. This consisted of a brown fur busby with white plume, a scarlet dolman, blue breeches and a white pelisse, all



with yellow cords. Only the sabretache was discarded, since it was considered to be of no value to a Red *kursant*. Most of the newly formed Red commanders' schools did not, of course, have old stocks of such lavish clothing, and their cadets simply wore the uniforms of their respective regiments.

F: Senior Commanders

F1: Commissar, Special Task Unit, 1919-20

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

F2: Commissar, Army of the Far Eastern Republic, 1921-22

The Far Eastern Republic (FER) was a semi-autonomous territory with its own communist-influenced army known as the People's Revolutionary Army (PRA). The uniforms of the PRA were a combination of Russian, Japanese and American. In place of red star cap-badges, PRA men wore a yellow five-pointed star. At the centre of this star was a circle of red over blue, representing the sun rising over the sea, on which was a crossed pick-axe and anchor, symbolising the union of miners and fishermen. The PRA diamond sleeve

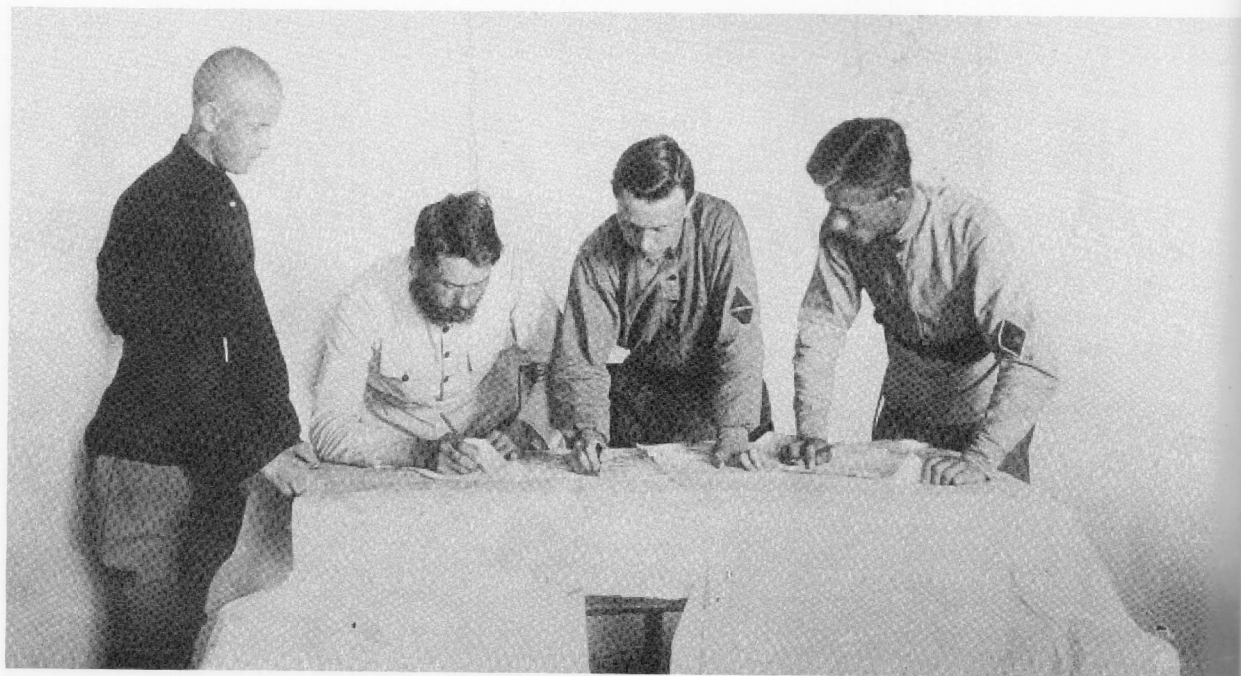
Sleeve command badges of the People's Revolutionary Army of the Far Eastern Republic, 1921. The triangles, squares and diamonds used on Red Army command insignia were replaced in the PRA by a combination of broad and narrow stripes, and, for the highest ranking commanders, with chevrons. PRA units awarded with the Order of the Red Banner had, as in the Red Army, a gold border around their patches.

From top left: Military Commissar, Front Commander, Army Commander, Headgear badge, Division Commander (Cavalry), Brigade Commander (Artillery); Regimental Commander (Staff). Bottom row: Battalion Commander (Infantry), Company Commander (Engineers), Platoon Commander (Military Surgeon), Starshina (Machine-gunners), Platoon Deputy Commander (Signals), Section Commander (Medical Orderly), Soldier (Military Railway Units).

badge had in its upper part a rising sun device surrounding the letters "PRA" in the Cyrillic alphabet, while the lower part was reserved for rank badges. Here the red star indicates a military commissar. These sleeve badges were printed, embroidered, or made of metal. This commissar has a Russian peaked cap, a 'French' jacket, khaki *galife* breeches, and American leggings, belt and boots.

F3: Member of the Soviet General Staff, 1919-22

The Soviet General Staff uniform for formal wear was garish in the extreme. The most colourful garment was a crimson cloth *gymnasterka* with black velvet collar patches, *razgovory* tabs and star on the left sleeve, and silver aiguillettes on the right shoulder. With this were



Operations room of the 2nd PRA Composite Rifle Division headquarters, the Far Eastern Republic, 1922. The sleeve patches are the white-piped insignia of HQ officials. Patches of various sizes are seen; the only requirement was for them to be large enough to accommodate the necessary symbols.

worn (despite the clashing colours): scarlet riding-breeches with yellow side-stripes; a scarlet peaked cap with yellow piping ('borrowed' from the Lifeguard Hussar Regiment); and kid-leather jackboots with spurs.

This picturesque uniform was considered pompous, and the crimson *gymnasterka*, in particular, often ended up in the possession of wives, who cannibalised them for the fine-quality material, turning many into ladies' jackets. As a result, few of these garments have survived. Nevertheless, the scarlet peaked cap and riding-breeches became relatively popular, and were worn with a khaki *gymnasterka* faced with black velvet. For field use, lower visibility over-garments were authorised, namely a *kaftan* greatcoat of high quality pea-green cloth with black velvet collar, cuffs, *razgovory* tabs and star (on the left sleeve), all piped crimson, with four rows of gold lace on collar and cuffs. Also worn was a pea-green *budenovka* hat with black velvet star piped crimson and with buttons covered with black velvet.

G: 1919 uniforms

G1: Rifleman in Winter Clothing, 1919-21

This is the typical Red Army uniform of the last years

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

G2: *Starshina* (Sergeant-Major) of Artillery, 1919-21

The *budenovka*, *gymnasterka* and breeches are of cotton fabric, and are worn with cap star, collar patches and *razgovory* in the orange that was adopted for artillery units in 1918 but soon changed to black. The rank of *Starshina* is denoted by triangles on the left sleeve, although command status is equally well indicated by the binoculars and a pocket-watch modified to be worn on the wrist – both items were rarely owned by ordinary soldiers. This man, like many others of this time, has non-regulation embroidered insignia – in this case an artillery badge. He is armed with the 1881-issue 'dagoon' sword, which has fittings to keep in place the bayonet from a Mosin 1891 rifle.

G3: *Komroty* (Company Commander), 1919-21

This commander is one of the so-called *voyenspets* (military specialists), former Tsarist officers and generals who, despite political opposition, were encouraged to rejoin the Red Army at a time when their skills were badly needed. He is dressed in a khaki cloth peaked cap, tunic and breeches of Great War vintage. Before

commanders' rank badges were standardised, many varieties of sleeve patches were invented locally; the design here, with four squares, indicates a *komroty* (company commander).

A Red Army badge is worn on a leather shoulder strap, though it could equally have been worn on the tunic itself. The jackboots are typical of commanders' fashion: they have high tops with 'cups' covering the knee and square 'bulldog'-type toe-caps. The *shashka* sword is of Caucasian origin, of a type favoured by both Red and White officers.

H: 1922 Uniforms

H1: *Zamkompolka (Deputy Regimental Commander), Cavalry, 1922*

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

H2: *Commander of an Engineers Brigade, 1922*

The only part of the new 1922 uniform is a *gymnasterka* shirt. This has collar patches, *razgovory* and sleeve rank badge in the facing colour of engineers and artillery – black piped scarlet. The remainder of the uniform is of pre-1922 period: supplies continued to be scarce, and often instead of dressing one regiment in the new uniform, individual items were distributed among different regiments of the same division.

The collar patches bear the crossed pick and spade of engineer units, and the graduate's badge of the Red Military Engineers' Academy is worn on the chest. (Despite the Red Army's egalitarianism, only Red academy graduates ever had the chance of attaining positions of responsibility.) The leather equipment is typically Caucasian, made of black leather and decorated with chased silver ornaments, as is the *shashka*.

Such items were especially popular among troops of the southern fronts.

H3: *Section Commander, the RMSR Security Battalion, 1922*

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

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Furst Units

1 Infantryman, 3rd Petrograd City Guard Rifle Regiment, 1918

2 Infantryman, Epifan Kovtuikh's Detachment, Army of Taman, 1918

3 Commander, Naval Infantry Regiment, 1918-22



Cavalry

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



International Units

1: Infantryman, Chinese Battalion, 1918-20

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

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



Specialist Troops

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

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

3: Pilot, Aviation Detachment,
1918-21



Александр Карацук-94

Military Schools
 1: Cadet, Infantry Commanders'
 School, 1918-20
 2: Commander, 2nd Petrograd
 Red Commanders' Artillery
 School, 1918-22
 3: Kursant, 1st Tver Soviet
 Cavalry Commanders'
 School, 1918-20



Senior Commanders

1: Commissar, Special Task Unit, 1919-20

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

3: Soviet General Staff Official, 1919-22



1919 Uniforms

- 1: Rifleman in winter clothing, 1919-21
- 2: Starshina (Sergeant Major) of Artillery, 1919-21
- 3: Komroty (Company Commander), 1919-21





1922 Uniforms

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