

German organization and uniforming 1914



The march out in 1914.

Simultaneous postcard drawn by A. Roloff,
reproduced from the website
The Great War in a Different Light.

Introduction

In connection with reading Walter Bloem's book *The Advance from Mons 1914 - The Experiences of a German Infantry Officer* (Source 1), I found it relevant to examine the German organization and uniforming in 1914, in order to get the full benefit of the book.

The following is thus a general introduction to this extensive subject, rather than a detailed account.

The basic organizational information comes from Source 2. Unit designations are provided based on Sources 3 and 4 and supplemented with information from the German genealogical website GenWiki, which contains an excellent overview of e.g. the German Alte Armee and Das Deutsche Heer 1914, which i.a. contains a very instructive overview of the 1st Army (Generaloberst von Kluck).

The German 5th Infantry Division

The starting point for the description is the 5th Infantry Division, in which Walter Bloem's regiment - *Grenadier Regiment Prinz Carl von Preußen (2. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 12* included. The division was made up of units from Brandenburg.

A German infantry division totaled (in 1914) 17,500 men, 4,000 horses, 72 field guns and 24 machine guns.

5th Infantry Division (Lieutenant General Georg Wichura)

Hussar-Regiment von Zieten (Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3 (three squadrons)

5. Feldartillerie-Brigade, with

Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (2. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 18 Neumärkisches

Feld-Artillerie-Regiment Nr.54

9th Infantry Brigade Leib-

Grenadier-Regiment König Friedrich Wilhelm III (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 8 Infanterie-Regiment von

Stülpnagel (5. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 48

10. Infantry Brigade

Grenadier-Regiment Prinz Carl von Preußen (2. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 12 Infanterie-

Regiment von Alvensleben (6. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 52 Brandenburgisches Jäger-Bataillon No.3 1)

An infantry division included the following combat support and supply units:

Combat support and supply units

The most likely device name

1-2 pioneer companies (a total of 3 per corps) *Pionier-Bataillon von Rauch (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr.3.*

1 field breaches crew

Division-Brückentrain-Abteilung 5.

1 signaling department (telephone sharing)

Telegraphen-Bataillon No.2.

1-2 sanitary companies (a total of 3 per corps)

train

Brandenburgisches Train-Abteilung Nr.3.

The infantry



German infantry in attack, 1914. 2) [___](#)

The image comes from Kilde 1's dust jacket, but the artist's name does not appear.

In the publisher's preface to Source 1, it is mentioned that the German infantry regiments carried their banners into the field.

During the battles in 1914, the flags were rolled up on the march, with flag covers, but unfolded in battle - exactly as shown in the picture.

However, this quickly went out of fashion, but was to be used in some cases during the later battles on the Eastern Front.

Further information on customs and usage in connection with tabs can be found here: [Die alte Armee](#).



German infantry, 1914.

Drawn by Knötel the Younger.

The image comes from Kilde 1's dust jacket.

A German infantry regiment in 1914 consisted of:

- Regimental staff
- 3 battalions (each 26 officers and 1,050 non-commissioned officers and privates) with 4 companies (each 5 officers and 259 non-commissioned officers and privates)
- 1 machine gun company (6 machine guns and 1 in reserve)
- Fencing and baggage training.

The battalions' numbers were denoted by Roman numerals - I., II. and III. Battalion - while the companies were numbered from 1 to 12; The 1st Battalion thus consisted of the 1st to 4th Company. The machinery company was 13. Company.

In the English translation of Walter Bloem's book, the companies are designated by letters, which of course is due to adaptation to English custom, rather than current terminology in the 12th Grenadier Regiment.

A light infantry battalion (*Jäger Battalion*) consisted of:

- Battalion staff 4
- companies (each 5 officers and 259 non-commissioned officers and privates) 1
- cyclist company (each 4 officers and 104 non-commissioned officers and privates)
- 1 machine gun company (each 3 officers and 113 non-commissioned officers and privates).

The above information comes from Source 2.

The artillery

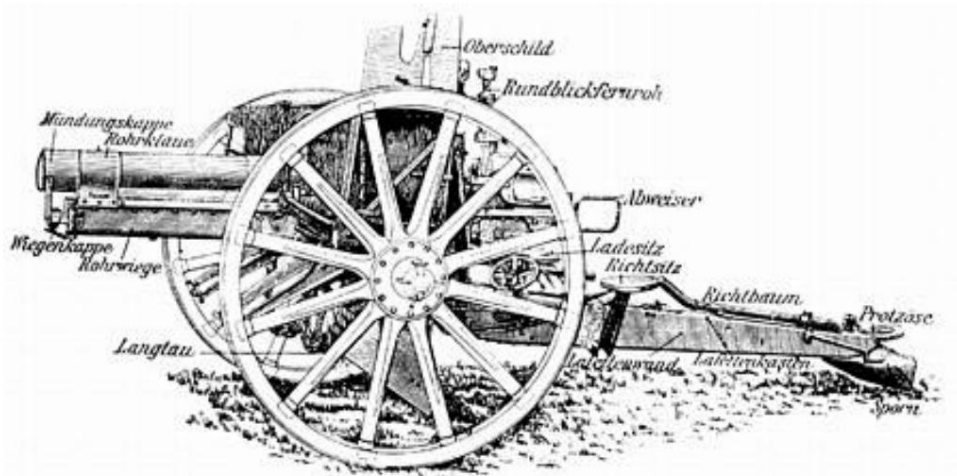


German field artillery, 1914.

The artist is not known.

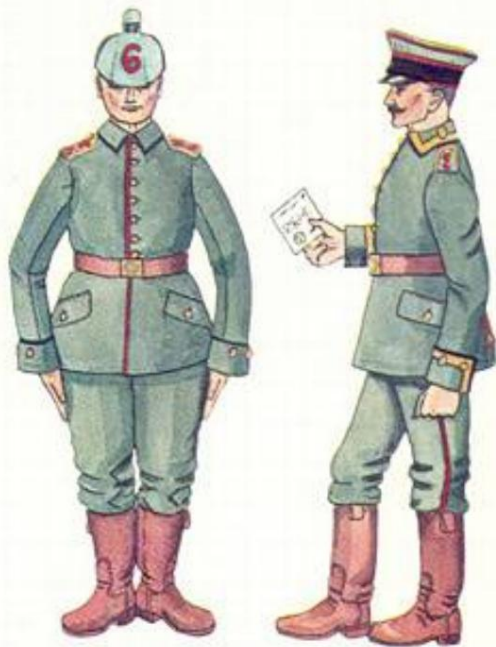
The image comes from an edition of the *Deutsches Soldatenkalender*.

The unit is not known, but given the use of peaked caps (with a point) rather than peaked caps, it must be a Bavarian unit, as the artillery from here did not use the traditional headgear for artillerymen - peaked cap with ball.



German 7.7 cm field cannon Model 1896. From Source 5.

This pamphlet, whose official designation was *Feldkanone C 96 nA*, was the standard pamphlet of the German field artillery in 1914.



German Field Artillery, 1914-1915.

Artillery Constable and NCO.

From Source 5.

The artillery icon stack wears the traditional pickel hat (with ball). The number 6 on the helmet cover indicates that he belongs to *Feld-Artillerie-Regiment von Peucker (1. Schlesisches) Nr.6*.

The artillery constable's yellow shoulder pads were introduced in 1915 to replace the field gray ones seen on the non-commissioned officer.

Tysk feltartilleriregiment, 1914

	Officerer	Underofficer og menige	Heste	Kanoner med forstillinger	Ammunitionsforstillinger	Observationsvogn	Andre vogne
Feltartilleriafdeling	59	1371	1258	36	36	8	75
Stabsbatteri	5	9	16				1
I. Afdeling	27	681	621	18	18	4	37
Stabsbatteri	8	25	35			1	1
1. Batteri	5	156	136	6	6	1	4
2. Batteri	5	156	136	6	6	1	4
3. Batteri	5	156	136	6	6	1	4
Ammunitionskolonne (1et)	4	188	178				24
II. Afdeling	27	681	621	18	18	4	37
Stabsbatteri	8	25	35			1	1
1. Batteri	5	156	136	6	6	1	4
2. Batteri	5	156	136	6	6	1	4
3. Batteri	5	156	136	6	6	1	4
Ammunitionskolonne (1et)	4	188	178				24

Strength overview - German field artillery regiment 1914. From Source 5.

The infantry division's 2 field artillery regiments were united in a brigade.

The brigade staff consisted of:

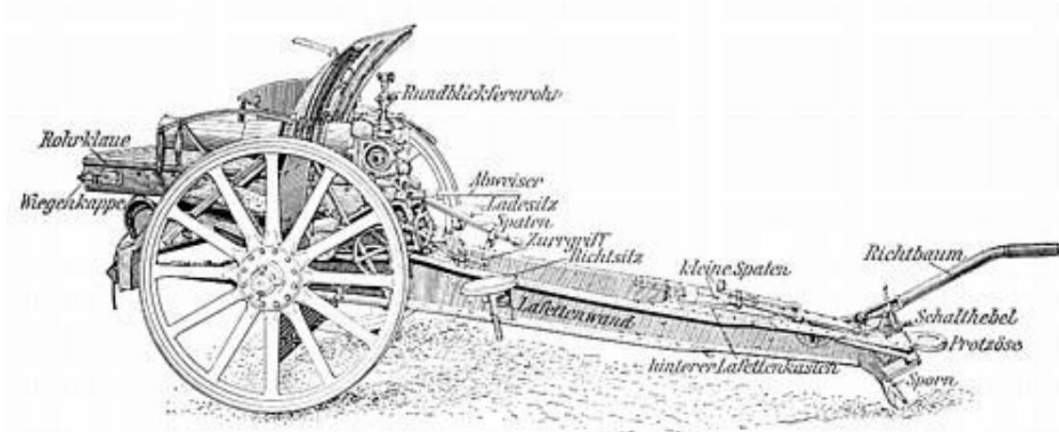
2 officers 18

non-commissioned officers and
privates

12 horses 1 carriage, second.

All horse-drawn vehicles were pulled by 6 horses.

A section of the divisional artillery's total of 4 sections 3) was equipped with 10.5 cm light field howitzers Model 1898/09.



German 10.5 cm light field howitzer Model 1898/09.

From Source 5.

The division was not organizationally assigned heavy artillery, but the corps had a heavy division (I.

Battalion, *Garde Fußartillerie-Regiment 2* of 4 batteries of 4 pamphlets. The heavy batteries were equipped with 15 cm heavy field howitzers Model 1913 (*15 cm schwere Feldhaubitze 13*) or 21 cm heavy howitzers Model 1910 (*21 cm Mörser 10*), in the latter case, however, the batteries only consisted of 2 pamphlets.

The cavalry

The cavalry of the 5th Infantry Division consisted of 1 division of the *Husaren-Regiment von Zieten*

(*Brandenburgisches*) Nr. 3 and consisted of 3 squadrons. The fighting strength of a squadron was 6 officers, 163 non-commissioned officers and privates, and 178 horses.

The following illustrations are intended to show how German Hussars were uniformed in 1914, but do not depict soldiers from *the Husaren-Regiment von Zieten*. Incidentally, Walter Bloem consistently refers to the Hussars as the Rathenow Hussars, which alludes to the regiment's garrison town.



German Hussars in Reims, 9 September 1914 [4](#).

Contemporaneous field postcard drawn by TR Rache, published by the Royal Saxon Ministry of the Interior as number 6 in the series *Der europäische Krieg 1914/15*.



German Hussars, 1914.

Simultaneous postcard drawn by A. Roloff, reproduced from the website *The Great War in a Different Light*.

Closing

As mentioned at the beginning, this article has come about as part of my reading of the book and so that I have a picture of the units' organization and uniforming. I hope that others can benefit from this work, either in connection with reading the book or in another context.

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Sources

1. *The Advance from Mons 1914 - The Experiences of a German Infantry Officer* by Walter Bloem, Helion & Company Ltd., Solihull 2004, ISBN 1-87462-257-4.
2. *Official History, Military Operations, France and Belgium, 1914* by JE Edmonds, London 1922.
3. *A Photohistory of World War One* by Philip J. Haythornthwaite, Arms and Armor Press, London 1993, ISBN 1-85409-210-3. (The book was also published in booklet form, in a series called *Fotofax*.)
4. *Mons 1914 - The BEF's Tactical Triumph* by David Lomas, Osprey Campaign Series No. 49, London 1997, ISBN1-85532-551-9.
5. *German Artillery 1914-1918* by David Nash, Almark Publications, London 1970, ISBN 85524-003-2.

Per Finsted

Notes:

1) The light infantry battalion was usually a corps unit, but was here assigned to the 5th Infantry Division. Walter Bloem refers to the battalion as the light infantry battalion of the regiment

2) The unit is *I. Battalion, Garde-Regiment zu Fuß*, and the soldiers in the foreground are from 2. Kompagni. The distinguishing features are: the tab, the beam-shaped laces on the sleeve cuffs, the white laces on the shoulder flaps and the bayonet tassels.

On the website *Militär- Formationsgeschichte-Deutschland*'s mention of the regiment there is a reproduction of the tab.

Thanks to Niels Blangsted-Jensen, who has assisted me in identifying the device.

3) In the 5th Infantry Division it was apparently *II. Abteilung, Neumärkisches Feld-Artillerie-Regiment Nr.54*, which was equipped with 10.5 cm light field howitzers.

4) These are not hussars from *the Husaren-Regiment von Zieten*, but hussars from one of the 3 Saxon hussar regiments:

- Royal Sächsisches 1. Husaren-Regiment "König Albert" No. 18 Kgl.
- Sächsisches 2. Husaren-Regiment Nr.19 Kgl.
- Sächsisches 3. Husaren-Regiment Nr.20

The easy distant recognition is the lance flags, which are in the white and green Saxon colours. The cockades are similar, but it is not distinguishable on the postcard.