

Russian uniforms - Manchuria 1939

On the back of the book *Chalchyn-Gol 1939* by Maksym Kolomyjec, which is reviewed elsewhere, the following three uniform drawings are shown:



Scout, in camouflage, 11th Armored Brigade, July 1939.



Sergeant, Deputy Commander/Squadron, 11th Armored Brigade, July 1939.



Lieutenant, Company Commander, 6th Armored Brigade, August 1939.

At first glance, and probably mostly because of the Japanese saber, I thought the scout was a Japanese soldier, but the text suggests that it is a Russian soldier. The hat, whose shadow can just be seen under the blur, is of the same model as shown on the sergeant. The uniform blouse is Russian (the collar mirrors are), while the trousers and shoes appear to be of Japanese manufacture. The blurring on the body appears to have been made after a Japanese model. The Japanese officer's saber (Japanese: *katana*) is of the classic "samurai model".

The sergeant is wearing the blue coveralls that were common in the 1930s and were later replaced by khakis (in almost every color imaginable). The canvas cap (Russian: *panamka*) was worn in warm regions (and later probably best known from pictures of Russian soldiers in Afghanistan in the 1980s). The large red star is printed/painted on and carries in the center a smaller enameled version of the red star with hammer and sickle. The sergeant's insignia on the collar mirror are shown as diamonds; however, they should be shown as triangles, with only brigade, division and cross commanders being rhombuses.

The lieutenant is wearing usual field uniform; the light color of the uniform blouse may suggest that it is made of a lighter material than the trousers. The lieutenant's collar insignia are shown correctly in the form of enameled squares. The sleeve degree marks, which are actually two golden angles - the upper one wide, the lower one narrow - on a red background, appear here as two red angles on fabric corresponding to that of the uniform blouse; whether this is a field version of the degree signs or "artistic freedom" is not known. The sleeve degree symbols went out of use per 1 August 1941 (*Prikaz 253*).

Sources

1. *Japanese Army Handbook 1939-1945* by George Forty, Sutton Publishing Company, London 1999, ISBN 0-7509-1688-5.
2. *The Red Army in the Great Patriotic War 1941-5* by Steven J. Zaloga, Osprey Men-at-Arms No. 216, London 1989., ISBN 0-85045-939-7.
3. *Soviet Uniforms & Militaria 1917-1991* by László Békési, The Crowood Press, Ramsbury/Wiltshire 2000, ISBN 1-86126-370-8.
4. *Uniforms of the Soviet Union 1918-1945* by David Webster and Chris Nelson, Schiffer Military History, Atglen PA 1998, ISBN 0-7643-0527-1.
5. *The Armed Forces of World War II - Uniforms, Insignia and Organization* by Andrew Mollo, Military Press, New York 1987, ISBN 0-517-54478-4.

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