



ALEJANDRO M. DE QUESADA

# UNIFORMS OF THE GERMAN SOLDIER

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY FROM  
1870 TO THE PRESENT DAY



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# **Uniforms of the German Soldier**

*An Illustrated History from 1870 to the Present Day*

Alejandro M De Quesada



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# INTRODUCTION TO PART 1

## *The Kaiser's Army, 1870–1919*

Germany's military history has captivated historians for generations. She went from being a strong military power to a vanquished nation only to rise again, like the phoenix, and become strong once more. The study of the uniforms of the German soldier during these periods of glory, defeat, and rebirth shows a gradual change, despite a steady trickle of influence from the past that permeates the decades.

While much has been written on the uniforms of the Kaiser's Army during World War I and on Hitler's Wehrmacht during World War II, virtually nothing has been done on German uniforms during the era of peace from 1871 to 1914, the Colonial and overseas troops, the Reichswehr, the Nationaler Volksarmee, and the Bundeswehr. Furthermore, in recent years no attempt has been made to show the continuation of uniform styles from the earliest days of the German Empire to the present, showing the steady changes of uniform and covering periods that are not familiar to the general public. The closest attempt was made over seventy years ago by Richard and Herbert Knötel and Herbert Sieg's *Handbuch der Uniformkunde*, published in 1937. While this book has become the main primer for anyone wanting to study military uniforms, its coverage stops prior to World War II.

The aim of this book is not to challenge this classic reference work but to complement it. The general history of the German Army and its uniforms presented here uses contemporary photography rather than drawings, showing the uniforms and equipment as they really appeared. In addition, by including a general history and a description of the uniforms it is possible to understand the latter in their context and examine the reasons why particular styles were retained, replaced, or reworked during periods in the existence of the German Army. It was impossible to include every single type of uniform, insignia, headgear, and equipment used in the last 130 or so years; however, this work attempts to illustrate styles and traditions that have been handed down from the earliest days to today's German Army. Hopefully this book will be a useful reference to the novice as well as the advanced military historian.

### **Prussia's Emergence as a Military Power**

In the decades following the decline of the Holy Roman Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia emerged as the dominant player in Central European politics. Prussia had first been settled and Germanized during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by the Teutonic Knights, a military Order of German monks that overran the Slavs in the region. The Knights were eventually defeated by the Poles and Lithuanians at the battle of Tannenberg in 1410; however, in the course of the next century the Hohenzollern dynasty that ruled Brandenburg (with Berlin its seat of power) came to dominate Pomerania, Silesia, West Prussia, and eventually much of the Rhineland and Westphalia.

Germany's military heritage was carefully created by a succession of Prussian rulers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first of these was the great Elector, Frederick Wilhelm (1640–88), who recognized that a standing army with a professional officer corps was the key to the development of a powerful state in his remote part of the Empire. His grandson, Frederick Wilhelm I (1713–40), doubled the size of his professional army to ninety thousand and added a trained reserve of conscripted peasants, forming one of the most modern and efficient fighting armies in eighteenth-



century Europe. The Army was supported through heavy taxation, which consumed 80 per cent of peacetime state revenues. Frederick II (1740–86), known to posterity as Friedrich der Große (Frederick the Great) or “Alte Fritz”, raised the strength of the Prussian Army to 150,000 and fought series of wars between 1740 and 1763. By wresting control of the province of Silesia from Habsburg Austria, Prussia had become one of the most powerful continental states and a rival to the Habsburgs for domination over the myriad of German kingdoms and provinces.

The officer corps and its aristocratic character were established early in the eighteenth century as Prussian kings tried to gain the support of aristocrats, known as *Junkers*, by permitting them virtual control over the selection of officers. A cadet school was established in Berlin in 1733 to train sons of *Junkers* to be officers. Eventually the officer corps was on its way to becoming the most privileged social class in Prussia.

The militarism of Prussia inspired a multitude of feelings—respect, fear and hatred—among other European states and peoples. Under the strong leadership of a self-perpetuating and career-oriented general staff, the Prussian Army rarely had to endure any interference in its affairs by the civil government. However, the Army’s failure to reform and lack of preparedness after the death of Frederick II in 1786 led to its decisive defeat by Napoleon Bonaparte’s forces at Jena in October 1806.

General Gerhard von Scharnhorst oversaw the revitalization of the Army in the years following Jena. Reforms included ending dependence on mercenaries and introducing compulsory military service. The officer corps was expanded to include commoners, and officers were encouraged to take greater initiative in battle. The new Prussian Army distinguished itself at the battle of Leipzig in 1813 and again at Waterloo in 1815, where, under the command of Field Marshal Gebhard von Blücher, the Army was instrumental in Napoleon’s final defeat.

Prussia’s reputation for military efficiency was re-established by the Army’s final victories over Napoleon. The Prussian War College (Kriegsakademie) became a model for military staff colleges around the world in the early nineteenth century. A book of that era, *On War* by the Prussian general Karl von Clausewitz, became a classic, its theories of land warfare still studied by officers of many armies more than 160 years after its author’s death.

Prussian-led victories over Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866 and France in 1870–1 were followed by the unification of the various German states into the German Empire (1871–1918). Seeking recognition of equal status from Great Britain, France, Russia and Spain—the states that comprised “old Europe”—the new German Reich was characterized by a rising surge of patriotism, as can be seen in the creation of organizations such as the Pan-German League, the Colonial League and the Navy League. Powerful industrialists such as Krupp began to wield considerable influence with the German imperial government. Otto von Bismarck became imperial Germany’s first chancellor and began to mastermind a series of aggressive policies. Following the formation of imperial Germany, the legendary Prussian General Staff became the German General Staff. This body was a center of great power in the highly militaristic regimes of Kaiser Wilhelm I (1858–88) and Kaiser Wilhelm II (1888–1918), ignoring Clausewitz’s dictum that civilians should control the military. Within the first years of Kaiser Wilhelm II’s reign the parliament (Reichstag) had lost all direct control over the military, and by 1914 even the Ministry of War had been reduced to an essentially administrative role. By the outbreak of war in August 1914, the German Army was one of the largest in the world, with well over 662,000 soldiers on active duty, and an additional fifteen thousand reservists and thirty thousand officers. The forces of Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg combined amounted to over twenty-four army corps. Their high standard of training, the widely held belief that other nations were preventing Germany from assuming its role as a world power, and the militarization of German

society, toughened the population for a war. Germany was like a coiled spring.

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## Uniforms of the Kaiserheer, 1871–1918

Describing the uniforms worn by imperial German soldiers from 1871 to 1914 is a complicated business, since there were many variations across the different regiments and German kingdoms. Basically, Hessian, Prussian and Saxon infantrymen wore dark-blue, single-breasted tunics, while those from Württemberg were the same colour but double-breasted. The tunic sported scarlet piping on the skirts at the rear and down the front; on Saxon tunics it was round the bottom of the skirts. As special distinction, Prussian Guard Regiments wore two bars of white lace (*Kapellenlitzen*) on their scarlet-colored collars. A number of other regiments, including those from Bavaria and Saxony, wore these bars in white or yellow lace. Sleeves might have Swedish or Brandenburg-style cuffs, the color differing according to regiment. Brandenburg cuffs were normally worn by the infantry, while Swedish cuffs tended to be worn by the artillery, cavalry, and pioneers. There were, however, numerous differences and exceptions to the norm from kingdom to kingdom. For example, a Bavarian infantryman wore a light-blue tunic, whereas his Saxon equivalent, say a member of the 108th Saxon Regiment, wore a dark-green tunic. With the notable exception of Bavarian infantrymen, who wore light-blue trousers, most German infantry units wore dark-grey, almost black, trousers with scarlet piping down the legs. Infantry battalion and company distinctions were identified by the color of the cloth knot affixed to the bayonet frog.

Field artillerymen wore a uniform similar to that of the infantry. The coat was dark blue with black collars and cuffs with red piping. The shoulder-straps were scarlet, while the trousers were dark grey. Saxon artillerymen wore dark-green tunics with a scarlet collar, cuffs and piping. The foot artillery wore the same uniform as the field artillery, with the sole exception that their shoulder-straps were white. Saxon foot artillery wore scarlet shoulder-straps.

German cavalry uniforms were as varied as those worn by the infantry. There were three basic types of cavalry: Heavy (Cuirassiers), Medium (Lancers/Uhlans) and Light (Dragoons, Hussars and Light Horse). Each Cavalry Regiment wore a distinctive regimental uniform. The Cuirassier Regiments took their name from the cuirass they wore. The Guard Regiments' cuirasses were copper-colored, while those of other regiments were of black iron. Cuirassiers wore a white tunic with regimental stripe facings on the collar, down the tunic front and on the Swedish cuffs. The Guard Regiments wore the usual *Kapellenlitzen* of white lace on each side of the collar and miniature versions of the double bar on the cuff. Their pantaloons were made of white kersey and their overalls of dark-grey cloth with scarlet piping. When mounted, the men wore leather thigh-boots. Imperial German Dragoons wore a similar tunic to that of the Prussian infantry, with the difference that it was light blue in color. The tunic's front, skirts, shoulder-straps and Swedish cuffs were piped with the regimental colors. Their pantaloons were dark blue and their overalls dark grey with scarlet piping.

The Hussars wore a tunic, its color varying from regiment to regiment; it was cut short, with five rows of lace or braided cord on the chest. The collar and cuffs were the same color as the tunic, with trimming and, in the case of the Guard Hussars, yellow lace. The uniquely shaped buttons found on the lace or braided cord were of metal or wood. Only the 3rd, 15th, and Guard Hussars Regiments were entitled to the dolman-pelisse that was worn loosely over the left shoulder suspended by lace or chains. Their pantaloons were dark blue. A low busby of sealskin with a colored bag was worn by all Hussars and white hanging plumes were worn as part of the full dress uniform. Most Uhlans or Lancers wore dark-blue, double-breasted tunic with piping of the color of the facings and pointed Polish cuffs with a button near the point. However, the Bavarian Uhlans' tunics were dark green and those of Saxony were light blue. A pair of metal epaulettes with a cloth center and backing were a distinctive feature of the

uniform. Regimental colors were featured on the tunic's collar, cuffs and turnback, and under the surface of the epaulette. As a regimental distinction, the 17th and 18th Lancers wore metal shoulder-scales.

At the outbreak of World War I airship personnel wore the uniform of the Prussian Guard Pioneer Battalion, with a shako and Guard *litzen* on the collar and cuffs. The Flying Troops, who were founded during the Great War, wore a large variety of uniforms, since many of the officers and men had been pulled from other sectors of the Army. However, standardization of uniforms was begun in the latter part of the war. Officers wore winged propeller insignia on their braided shoulder-boards with a light grey underlay, while enlisted men wore a winged propeller over their unit number (Bavarian flying units had only the insignia without the unit number) embroidered or chain-stitched into their cloth shoulder-straps. Piping colors on the shoulder-boards designated the battalion—white for the 1st Battalion, red for the 2nd Battalion, yellow for the 3rd Battalion and blue for the 4th Battalion. In addition, some flying units wore their numerical designation in the form of an oval patch on the left sleeve of the tunic and greatcoat. The designation consisted of the group number in Roman numerals over the squadron number in arabic numerals for bomber units, and “F” over arabic numerals for flying detachments. Field airship detachments consisted of a script “L” over the depot battalion number. Anti-aircraft platoons consisted of a winged artillery shell or “MG” (for *Maschinengewehr* or Machine Gun) for Prussian units, and for Bavarian units “FLK” and “MG” in red chain-stitch on their shoulder-straps. While Bavarian flying units wore a plain collar, all personnel in Prussian and other flying units wore the *Kapellenlitzen* of Guard Regiments. Seconded officers wore the winged propeller insignia on the shoulder-boards of the original regimental uniforms of their previous service. Hence in some unit photographs we are treated to the interesting spectacle of a variety of officer uniforms—for example, *Litewka*, *Überrock*, *Attila*, and other field-grey uniforms—all in one sitting. Early in the war a variety of cold-weather clothing was used by pilots and their crews, many donning civilian fur coats and motorcycle crash helmets. In 1917 field-grey flight coveralls were authorized.

Military chaplains and field rabbis were designated as senior military officials without rank distinctions. On 3 June 1913 a field uniform was authorized for them. It comprised a knee-length field-grey frock coat with stand-up collar, barrel cuffs and violet piping on the collar, tunic front and cuffs. A Red Cross armband—white-edged violet for Christian chaplains and white for Jewish rabbis—was worn on the left sleeve of the frock coat. Military chaplains and rabbis wore a colonial-style Model 1907 Wide-Brimmed Felt Hat with violet brim edging and band as well as the Model 1910 Officer's Peaked Cap with violet band and crown piping. For Christian military chaplains both hat and cap had a white enamelled cross between the state and national cockades, while Jewish rabbis wore no distinctive insignia. Military chaplains and field rabbis also carried visible symbols—the Protestant cross (silver), the Catholic crucifix (black with silver edging) and the Jewish Star of David suspended from a silver chain. In 1915 the eight buttons of the frock coat were changed from matt grey to matt white.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, royal ladies began to make official appearances in versions of military uniforms. The idea of noble ladies as honorary chiefs of regiments originated in Germany where this distinction was conferred on royal personages and distinguished generals and statesmen. These ladies often donned the uniform of their corps and rode at the head of their regiments. Queen Victoria was the honorary chief of the 1st Dragoons of the Prussian Guard, but she never wore the light-blue tunic of the regiment. However, several princesses of her family held positions as chiefs of German regiments and wore their uniforms. The German Empress Frederick, a daughter of Queen Victoria, sported the uniform of German regiments, as did her successor, the last German Empress and wife of Kaiser Wilhelm, who was chief of the Schleswig-Holstein Fusiliers and also of a Circassian

Regiment; looking particularly attractive “in the pretty white tunic of the latter, and with a three-cornered hat, her Majesty was often seen on parade”. Queen Margharita of Italy, Crown Princess Sophia of Greece and Princess Frederick of Hesse followed suit, as did Russian royal ladies—both the Dowager Empress and the Empress, a granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Crown Princess Marie of Romania, daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (better known as the Duke of Edinburgh), was honorary colonel of the 4th Romanian Hussars, and wore their uniform. Queen Alexandra and the Duchess of Connaught both held honorary colonelcies of German regiments, but the Queen did not wear the uniforms concerned.

The ladies’ regimental uniform usually consisted of the correct male-style tunic with high neck and epaulettes, but with left-hand buttoning, and a woman’s skirt, riding-style in the case of mounted regiments. Headgear varied from feminine versions of military caps to the *Pickelhauben*, complete with spike and, for the Tsarina, resplendent plume. In addition, noble ladies were permitted to wear medals, decorations and orders on their regimental uniforms, thereby completing their militaristic appearance.

Officers’ rank distinctions were found on their shoulder-boards with pips. Gefreite wore a small button on each side of the collar. Unteroffizier or non-commissioned officers wore lace around the bottom of the collar and cuffs. Feldwebel or Cavalry Wachtmeister wore a pair of large buttons over the Unteroffizier lace on the collar. Vizefeldwebel wore the same distinctions as the Feldwebel but with an additional band of lace above each cuff. The Offizierstellvertreter wore in addition to the Vizefeldwebel distinctions a metallic braid around their shoulder-straps with metal unit designations. A Fähnrich had Unteroffizier distinctions but with an officer’s sword knot (portepee).

On 23 October 1842 Prussia adopted the leather helmet with a metal spike ornament known as the *Pickelhaube* for its armed forces, and soon afterwards for its fire and police organizations as well, which were run on military lines. The different German states began to adopt the helmet, beginning with Oldenburg (1843), and then Hansestädte (1845), Sachsen-Altenburg (1845), Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach (1845), Reuss (1845), Anhalt (1846), Sachsen-Meiningen (1846), Hessen-Kassel (1846), Mecklenburg-Schwerin (1848), Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1848), Schleswig-Holstein (1848), Hannover (1849), Nassau (1849), Baden (1849), Hessen-Darmstadt (1849), Sachsen (1867), Württemberg (1871), and Bayern (1886). This style of helmet was also adopted by some civil organizations in nearby Austria-Hungary.

The *Pickelhaube* replaced the bell-crowned shako that had been worn by all Prussian infantry and Guard units. The first model, the M1842 Helmet, was constructed of heavy leather with reinforced side panels. The front visor was squared and the rear visor covered the neck. It was tall, typically measuring about thirty-seven centimeters. A tall brass spike was affixed to a cruciform base on the crown of the helmet (the base was then secured by stud retainers, star-shaped for officers and round for enlisted men). A raised neckband (*perlring*) was secured around the narrow base of the spike proper. A leather rosette or cockade in the colors of the German state was affixed to the right side by the knurled bolt that also served as support for the scaled chinstraps.

The Prussian *Pickelhaube* was modified in 1856. The chin scales were flattened (although convex ones were still used by cavalry, administrative personnel and regimental officers). The knurled bolts were replaced with a new retainer for securing the chin scales to the body of the helmet, while the cockade was reduced and began to appear in metal. The helmet’s ungainly height was reduced in 1856 and again in 1860.

After field experience in the campaigns against Denmark (1864) and the Austro-Hungarian Empire

(1866), the design of the *Pickelhaube* underwent several further changes. In 1867 the squared front visor was replaced by a rounded visor for the infantry regiments. The base plate of the helmet, once cruciform in design, was now rounded. The Prussian cockade was reduced in size. The metallic spine was also removed from the helmet. Only Dragoon officers and generals continued to wear the square visor.

After the Franco-Prussian War, the failure of helmets to retain their shape was addressed in a directive of 23 November 1871 which called for the replacement of the rear spine. It was to be secured by a rivet in the rear visor and a screw post in the crown of the helmet. The scaled chinstraps of enlisted men's helmets were to be secured by threaded and notched screws, while those of officers were to be mounted by push-through posts. It was not until 1887 that a new model of *Pickelhaube* with many significant changes was issued for enlisted personnel.

The *Pickelhaube* worn by imperial German field and foot artillery regiments differed from that worn by the infantry only in that the spike was replaced by a ball. In full dress, the Guard Artillery wore white horsehair plumes, the horse and Saxon Artillery black plumes and the Bavarian Artillery scarlet plumes.

Cuirassiers wore a special *Pickelhaube* of yellow metal or white steel that descended very low behind the head and curved backwards to cover the nape of the neck, with a square front peak and a metal-scale chinchain. All Cuirassier Regiments wore the spike, but for the two Guard Regiments in full dress the spike was replaced with a white metal crowned eagle.

Dragoons wore a similar *Pickelhaube* to the infantry, except that the front peak was cut square with metal binding and the chin scales were of metal. The Uhlans, however, wore a type of *Pickelhaube* known as a *tschapka* or *czapka*. This helmet had a lacquered leather body with a tall, raised, four-cornered mortarboard top. The cloth facings matched the epaulette uniform facings. The visor trim of the helmet was of brass or German silver matching the color of the plate. Officers' *czapkas* were trimmed with silver or gold piping on the mortarboard. Cords were worn, secured to a leather knot on the top of the helmet. The scale chinstraps were mounted by screw retainers or the Model 1891 Posts. The *Reichskokarde* was worn on the right post of the *czapka* and the *Landeskokarde* was worn on the mortarboard. In 1915 the chin scales were replaced with black leather straps, and the fittings were issued in a pewter-colored field-grey finish. A variety of Uhlan *czapkas*, from metal to felt, were made during World War I, until all such decorative forms of headgear were phased out of service in 1917.

Many German states in the years preceding and following World War I used the standard Model 1881/91 leather helmet shell; the ornaments made the headgear distinct from state to state. Each helmet had the *helmwappen* (helmet plate) of a province or a distinctive regimental plate. On some *Pickelhauben* a *Landeskokarde* showing the province's color was attached to the sides of the shell. The *Pickelhaube* was virtually obsolete by the time World War I broke out.

An interesting earlier type of headgear was the crested helmet known as a *Raupenhelm*, adopted around 1803 by Bavaria during the Napoleonic Wars. The black leather helmet was similar to an earlier model that had been adopted in 1789. The helmet had a small plate on the front with a crown above, and a small chinchain, fastened on each side by lion's-head bosses. The plate was later replaced with the royal cipher in 1848. By the time of the Franco-Prussian War Bavarian troops wore a modified crested helmet with a leather chinstrap, binding around the peak, and a crowned "L" cipher. The helmet was replaced with the *Pickelhaube* in 1886.

Another type of headgear that was considered to be distinctively German was the shako or *tschako*. The shako had been the standard form of headgear for the Jäger and Schützen units since the

Napoleonic Wars. In an *Allerhöchste Kabinetts-Ordre* (AKO) of the Prussian Army in 1854 a new pattern of shako was introduced. Enlisted personnel wore a shako made of black leather, while officers wore one with a fine black cloth cover. A field badge or cockade, black and white in color (for Prussia), was worn on the peak of the headgear, and a helmet plate affixed to the front. At the time there were only three styles of plates worn with the shako. Jäger Battalions 1, 2, 5 and 6 wore a ciphered “FWR” device, while Guard units wore a German silver Guard star. Other Jäger units wore a device with a brass button securing a vertical bar of braiding or *litzen*. The shako was designed to take brass or (for officers) gilded chinstraps. A parade plume of black and red was authorized for Sunday and parade service. The plumes were secured behind the cockade and fanned out, dangling forward slightly to add a drooping effect.

In 1860 a new shako was introduced for use in the Prussian Army. The front and rear visors were reduced in size, a black leather chinstrap was authorized for enlisted personnel, and rosettes were added. A new brass shako plate for Jäger Battalions 1, 2, 5 and 6 was adopted, consisting of a heraldic Prussian eagle with the “FWR” cipher in a shield on the eagle’s breast. A simple “FR” cipher on the eagle plate was to be used by the other Jäger units. In addition, a bandeau inscribed “MIT GOTT FÜR KOENIG UND VATERLAND” (With God for King and Country) was authorized and incorporated into the Jäger plate. Further additions to the shako were also made: ventilation holes were added in 1888, infantry-style chinstraps in 1892, post mountings for the enlisted *Pickelhaube*-style chinstraps in 1895, and the black, white and red *Reichskokarde*, to be worn on the right post of the shako, was authorized in 1897. While on field manoeuvres, special cloth field covers that were cut specially to permit the wearing of the field badge were worn over the black leather shakos. In April 1915, during World War I, the fittings were switched to pewter trim.

The origins of the visorless field cap (*feldmütze*), resembling a “pillbox” and worn by enlisted personnel, date from the Napoleonic Wars. Before World War I the color of these caps was the same as the tunic, and they were piped with the color of the appropriate branch of service or regiment. By 1910 all field caps were field-grey in color, with a red band and piping on the crown for infantry and black band with red piping for artillery, pioneer, and other specialist units. Commissioned and non-commissioned officers wore the same field caps as enlisted personnel, although theirs had a visor. By 1915 the officer’s peaked cap had a grey-green visor and chinstrap. The Model 1917 Officer’s Standard Peaked Field Cap was adopted for all branches of the Army, and consisted of a dark greenish-grey band and crown piping, while a field-grey band and piping were used by Bavarian troops. All styles were worn with state and national cockades. In addition, special unit insignia were worn with the enlisted and officer caps. Ski troops of the Alpenkorps wore an Austrian Army metal edelweiss flower on the left side of the green cap band, while military administration officials wore a Hohenzollern eagle between the state and national cockades, members of the Carpathian Corps wore a scroll between their cockades inscribed “KARPATHENKORPS”, with binding paired antlers and pine branches, and members of the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division wore a blue-and-white Bavarian shield on two silver holly leaves on the left side of the cap. Additionally, the 17th Brunswick Hussar Regiment and the 1st Life Hussar Regiment wore their distinctive regimental badges on the field-grey undress caps.

In essence, the German Army had a standard uniform by the time World War I began in August 1914. The introduction of field-grey uniforms for all German troops began as an experiment in 1907, and selected units were issued with the trial uniforms. The new uniforms were successful, and the German General Staff made them the official service dress of the German Army in orders of 23 February and 18 March 1910. The cut of the tunic was basically the same for artillery, infantry and train. The color of the early tunics was much lighter and less green than that which became typical

during the war. The Jäger and Schützen Regiments received grey-green uniforms. The buttons and metal fittings, such as belt hooks, on the Model 1910 Tunic were made of dull brass or silvered metal. The tunics had their own distinctive piping or *Waffenfarben*—red for infantry, pioneer and machine-gun units; green for Jäger and Schützen (although the Prussian Guard Machine-Gun Unit was permitted to retain black piping for collar and cuffs); scarlet for artillery; and light blue for train. The uniform collar, *litzen* and so on were basically the same as the peacetime uniform. General officers had their traditional gold embroidery on red collar patches, while non-regimental (staff) officers wore plain collar patches in the color of their peacetime tunic collar. Field tunics continued to use the three cuff styles, Brandenburg, Swedish and Saxon. Company or squadron numbers were placed on the buttons of the shoulder-straps, while the tunic buttons bore crowns or heraldic emblems. Each of the cavalry branches (Uhlans, Hussars and Cuirassiers) retained their own distinctive characteristics in the newly adopted field-grey uniforms.

In 1915 a simplified version of the Model 1910 Uniform was first issued. The cut remained basically the same, as did the collar and shoulder-straps, but the distinctive cuffs were replaced by plain-back or barreled styles, and the piping on the rear skirt was discontinued. On 21 September 1915 a new, simplified field uniform was introduced. In addition, field-grey greatcoats without collar patches were issued, as were stone-grey trousers (field-grey for Bavarian troops). The new Model 1915 Field Blouse consisted of a fly front that concealed its buttons; rank distinctions were still restricted to the collar and, occasionally, the shoulder-straps. It was in essence the old *Litewka* Model 1893 of Boxer Rebellion vintage, slightly modified from dark blue to field-grey, and was issued in large quantities to Landsturm units at the outbreak of World War I. The same order also abolished the colorful distinctive regimental uniforms. A considerable number of full-dress uniforms in field-grey were made and stored away in order to be donned after the war, only to be worn later on by some officers and members of the Freikorps during Germany's post-War revolutionary period. The Model 1915 Field Blouse was modified with the addition of breast pockets, and used by ski companies as well.

The Model 1916 Steel Helmet or *Stahlhelm* was widely distributed, and soon replaced all other forms of protective headgear used by the imperial German forces during the war. This helmet and its variants would become the new symbol of Germany and its military from 1916 onwards. Covers for the M-16 Pattern Helmets were of grey or white cloth and had a reinforced leather ventilation hole through which the helmet "horn" fitted. In addition, the helmet was often painted with an angular camouflage pattern. In 1918 a "special" steel helmet was introduced with cutouts along the leading edge of the distinctive pattern helmet. The cutouts were designed to offer protection to telephone talkers in the trenches, allowing them to wear the bulky helmet while also holding headsets to their ears. In the Weimar era, this style of helmet seems to have been issued from old stock to Reichswehr cavalry and artillery units. A plain leather chinstrap was utilized in the 1916 and 1918 Pattern Steel Helmets.

After 1916 the *Pickelhaube* was no longer issued, and surplus quantities were later modified and issued to German fire-fighting units or *feuerwehr*. The shako was later adopted by the Prussian and other German state police forces after the war, and remained in service well through the Weimar and Nazi eras. After World War II both East and West Germany continued to use the shako, until it was finally phased out in the 1970s. The shako, then, was one of the most versatile and enduring forms of headgear in German service.

## **Germany as a Colonial Power**

Germany possessed four colonies in Africa—German East Africa (Tanzania), Togoland (Togo),



Kameruun (Cameroon), and German Southwest Africa (Namibia). In addition, Germany maintained colonial interests in the Pacific region—New Guinea, Samoa, and Tsingtao (China). All were lost to Great Britain, France, the United States and Japan in the course of World War I. All four African colonies were the scenes of conflict between the natives that dwelled there and the German colonial troops, called *Schutztruppen*.

The *Schutztruppe* was one of the smallest colonial forces in the world, even smaller than the forces of Portugal and Belgium. In 1900 it numbered only three thousand officers and men, and in 1914 it had 6,461 officers and men, of which fourteen companies were stationed in East Africa, nine companies in Southwest Africa and twelve companies in Cameroon. Togoland, however, had a paramilitary police organization rather than a *Schutztruppe*. In times of need the *Schutztruppe* would receive aid from German Marines (*Seebataillon*) stationed abroad, from German warships patrolling in the area or from regular Army units sent to the colonies from Germany itself.

The officers and NCOs of the *Schutztruppe* were white, regular officers and NCOs from the German Imperial Army. There were considerable incentives to serve with the *Schutztruppe*. The pay was good and it was a chance to see exotic lands and military action, which appealed to bored officers in peacetime Germany. The enlisted men, or *askaris*, were local natives. They generally enlisted for an initial five-year term and then re-enlisted on a yearly basis. The *askaris*' uniform was khaki, and they were armed with either the Mark 71 or 84 Model Single-Shot Rifle. They were very loyal and well trained. The Germans stressed discipline and marksmanship. In the field, the *askaris* were taught to fight as a company.

In 1884, German trading companies founded all four German colonies in Africa. Within several years they proved unable to cope with the problems of running a colony, so the Imperial German Government took over their administration. The Germans' desire to push inland and expand their holdings led to conflicts with the natives and the creation of the *Schutztruppe*. For the next twenty-odd years, there was almost always fighting in at least one of the colonies. The numerous and varied skirmishes, campaigns and wars with the native tribes are reminiscent of the American Indian Wars. Small groups of German troops patrolled and attempted to control a vast amount of land. As the colonial wars were numerous, only the more major conflicts will be described here.

Three principal campaigns were fought by the *Schutztruppe* in East Africa: the Abushiri Rebellion in 1888–90, the Hehe War in 1891–8 and the Maji-Maji Revolt in 1905–7. German involvement in Cameroon began in 1884, when trade treaties were signed with Dovala chiefs along the coast. Conflicts with tribes living in the interior ensued, and the Germans created a *Poliztruppe* in November 1891 to combat the hostile natives. The Dohomey troops mutinied against the new acting governor, Leist, a brutal man who had treated them badly and, when they had complained about poor pay and terrible food, ordered their wives to be publicly whipped. The government in Germany founded the *Schutztruppe* in Cameroon on 9 June 1895. Togoland's paramilitary police force was very similar to the *Schutztruppe*: the soldiers wore khaki dress, were armed with Model 71 Mauser Rifles, and their officers were regular German Army men who referred to them as soldiers, not policemen. The police force was divided into platoons based on the tribal background of the men. In 1914, it consisted of two officers, six NCOs and 560 enlisted men.

Events in Cameroon were typical—the fighting consisted of small wars against rebellious or independent-minded tribes. The most ardent opponents of the Germans were the Dagombe, who resented German control over traditional trade routes. In 1877, they rebelled against the Germans along with their allies, the Konkomba, who were aggrieved at the loss of tribal lands. In May, Lt Valentine von Massow and a force of ninety-one police marched into the area to quell the revolt. The

were attacked at Adibo by between six and seven thousand Dagombe and Konkomba warriors. Again it was the combined use of machine-gun and small-arms fire and discipline which saved the day for the Germans. Some five hundred natives were killed, and their forces scattered. Shortly after the battle of Adibo, Massow and his men took the Dagombe capital, Yenbli, and burned it. The rebellion soon ended.

Some of the heaviest fighting witnessed by German colonial troops was to take place in German Southwest Africa. Made a protectorate in 1884, because of its extensive plains and grazing lands Southwest Africa was viewed as an area for German settlement. The German *Schutztruppe* almost immediately began to move inland in order to secure lands for German farmers and settlers. Also in the colony were large numbers of natives, divided into several large tribal groupings. In the north were the Ovambi, in the central region were the Herero, and in the south were the Nama, or Hottentots. All of the tribes were semi-nomadic cattle raisers. The first real opposition to the Germans came from one of the Nama subdivided tribes, the Witbooi, led by Hendrik Witbooi. Hendrik refused to sign a treaty of peace and opposed further German encroachment into their lands. German officials in the colony called upon the *Schutztruppe* to force Hendrik Witbooi and his people to sign.

The *Schutztruppe* in German Southwest Africa had been created in 1890, and was commanded by Captain Curt von Francois. Eventually it would consist of nine field companies, one of which was mounted on camels, and three light batteries of artillery. However, at the start of the Witbooi conflict Captain Francois had few men, and required reinforcements from Germany before the campaign could begin. Reinforced, Captain Francois planned a surprise attack upon Hendrik Witbooi's stronghold at Hornkranz. On 12 April, Captain Francois's force arrived outside Hendrik's fortified city. Francois split his command, ordering the first company to attack the city from the east and the second company to attack from the north. After the defense, which lasted approximately three hours, Hendrik ordered the city to be abandoned. Behind them they left 150 Witbooi dead. The German forces returned to Windhoek in triumph, but their victory was short-lived. In retaliation, the Witboois attacked a German horse post and drove off or captured most of the German horses. For the time being the German forces were left on foot, and the well-mounted Witboois were now hard to catch. Even after a further hundred men arrived from Germany in June 1893, Captain Francois seemed unable to regain control over the situation. In August, the Witboois ambushed a supply train of twenty wagons and destroyed it completely. In the following six months after the battle of Hornkranz, Hendrik was stronger than ever with six hundred men, four hundred rifles and three hundred horses at his disposal.

In August, the newly promoted Major Francois now felt he could move against the Witboois. He planned to surround the Witboois, isolate them, then draw them into a confrontation and defeat them. However, the mobile Witboois kept slipping away while skirmishing with the Germans and raiding their rear areas. Losing confidence in Major Francois, the German government decided to replace him with Major Theodor Leutwein. Leutwein arrived in German Southwest Africa in February 1894. He did not immediately move against the Witboois, instead spending time meeting with, negotiating with and winning over neighboring tribes. He began to regain German control over the region while at the same time severing aid and support to Hendrik. In May Leutwein persuaded Hendrik to agree to a truce which was to last until the end of July. Leutwein hoped he could negotiate the Witboois into surrender; if not, the break would nevertheless allow time for additional German reinforcements to arrive. The Witboois did not capitulate, and the final confrontation was now at hand. Hendrik and his followers had retreated to the Naukloof Mountains and fortified their positions there. Leutwein blocked off the various mountain passes, thereby stopping any possible escape, and advanced into the Naukloof Mountains. The battle of Naukloof started on 27 August and became wide-ranging, roaming over rough terrain. The control of waterholes and advance points on the high grounds were contested

by both sides. Unable to retreat and having lost the last of the Witboois-controlled waterholes, Hendrik surrendered on 9 September 1894. The Witboois conflict had proven to be an unpleasant experience to the Germans, but nothing like the next campaign, which would rock the colony.

A number of factors had led to unrest amongst the Herero: there had been an epidemic in 1897 which had killed half of the Herero cattle herds, and German settlements were putting mounting pressure on various tribes to move. On 12 January 1904, the Herero, led by Chief Samuel Maherero, revolted at Okahandja. The *Schutztruppen* under Leutwein were taken completely by surprise by the revolt. Leutwein's forces consisted of forty officers and 726 soldiers divided into four companies of mounted infantry and one artillery company. He also had a reserve of thirty-four officers and 730 enlisted men, four hundred German settlers with no military training and 250 native scouts and auxiliaries. His troops were armed with the Gewehr 1888 Rifle, and in addition there were five quick fire, five older artillery pieces and five Maxim machine guns. There were also a number of small walled forts consisting of an armory, barracks and watchtower. Major Leutwein and three companies were in the extreme southern part of the colony, over four hundred miles away, subduing a small revolt by the Bondelzwort, when the Herero struck. With little opposition from the overstretched German colonial authorities, the rebellion in the north spread rapidly, destroying isolated farms and ranches and attacking most of the German settlements and forts in the region. Okahandja and Windhoek were briefly placed under siege. Between 19 January and 4 February, German troops were able to relieve both cities, but were not strong enough to take the offensive. Reinforcements arrived, consisting of Marines from the cruiser *Habicht* on 18 January. Sufficiently reinforced for Major Leutwein to put 2,500 men in the field, the Germans began a three-column counter-offensive in April. The columns were named the eastern, western and main. However, the newly arrived German troops were not conditioned for the climate, and soon proved to be ineffectual against the seasoned Herero. With so little success, Leutwein finally called off the offensive to await more reinforcements; in the meantime, the German government removed him and ordered General Lothar von Trotha, a seasoned colonial officer who had fought in East Africa and China, to take command of the colonial forces.

Von Trotha arrived on 11 June. During the months of May and June, large reinforcements arrived until von Trotha had approximately ten thousand men and thirty-two pieces of artillery. General von Trotha was able to accomplish what Leutwein had been unable to do: encircle the Herero with a large force. The Herero began to dig defenses at the Waterburg Mountains and prepare for their final battle. The battle commenced on 11 August, when the Germans advanced into the mountains. The artillery bombarded the Herero positions, causing heavy losses. The infantry converged on several fronts, thus making it hard for the Herero to fight everyone at once. Unable to resist any longer, the Herero finally broke out and retreated into the desert, therefore ending the rebellion.

Just as one uprising ended another had begun. The Nama revolted in October under Hendrik Witbooi, now eighty years old. The Nama numbered 1,000–1,500 men, with only one-third armed with rifles. German troops now numbered seventeen thousand. Despite the imbalance of numbers, a long and arduous guerrilla campaign was waged, with over two hundred skirmishes and engagements. During the course of the revolt, Hendrik Witbooi was killed near Tses, and leadership passed to Jacob Morenga. The revolt was eventually put down, and the fighting ended in 1907. With this final campaign, the German colonial wars in Africa ended. In fact, the Germans would control their colonies for only another ten years, until World War I ended their colonial empire.

## **Uniforms of the Imperial German Colonial and Overseas Troops**

In German East Africa from 1889 to 1891, troops raised under the authority of the Reichskommissar wore white tropical helmets with the national cockade of black, white and red. The basic uniform was

white for service and a dark-blue tunic with turndown collar and brass buttons for full dress. The full dress tunic also had twisted shoulder-cords of silver, black, and red, as well as between one and three gold rank stripes on the cuffs, with the top row in the form of a loop. Officers wore sashes and sword knots embroidered in silver, red and black. In addition, a khaki service dress of the same pattern was worn, and NCOs' ranks were denoted on the left upper arm with one to three chevrons. The *askaris* wore a red fez with a blue tassel or turban, single-breasted khaki tunics and blue puttees. All leather equipment of the *askaris* and *Schutztruppen* in the German colonies was brown. Following the incorporation of the colonial troops of German East Africa into imperial service, the following uniform was adopted from 1891 until 1896.

For full dress, the officers wore a *Pickelhaube* bearing an imperial German eagle plate and chin scale in yellow metal, and a dark-blue single-breasted tunic with gold buttons, white piping on the turndown collar, tunic front, Brandenburg cuffs and skirt-pocket flaps, and a gilt imperial crown at the end of each collar. The sash and shoulder-straps were similar to those worn by the *Seebataillon*. Dark blue trousers with white piping were worn. The fatigue or daily uniform was a white tunic with dark-blue piping and breast and skirt pockets. Tropical helmets were white, and worn with a brass spike and imperial German eagle plate. In addition, a white cap with a dark-blue band and a national cockade was worn by all ranks. In the same style as the white uniform, a khaki service dress with yellow piping and imperial crowns at the ends of the collar were used by the troops when in the field. British-style chevrons were used to denote NCO ranks. The uniform of the *askaris* remained unchanged.

From 1889 to 1893, the troops of the Reichskommissar in German Southwest Africa wore jackets and trousers of grey cord. Between 1893 and 1896, when this force entered imperial service, a light-blue collar and pointed cuffs were added to this uniform, with a white loop of Guard lace (officers wore silver) on a red patch. Up to 1895 a small, French-style kepi made popular in the American Civil War was worn, with a blue band and piping around the top and a black rectangular leather visor; the German national cockade of black, white and red was affixed to the front.

In 1896 a general pattern uniform was introduced for the *Schutztruppen* and became standard for most of the troops stationed in the various German overseas colonies. The home service uniform was a tunic of light-grey cord with stand-and-fall collar, Swedish cuffs and piping in the color of the colony (white for German East Africa, light blue for German Southwest Africa and red for Cameroon). In addition, light-grey trousers with the colony's piping was worn with the tunic. A broad-brimmed grey hat with a band bearing the color of the colony became the symbol of the German colonial soldier. The hat was turned up at the right side, with a large black, white and red metal cockade fastened to the flap. On the collar and cuffs of the tunic white Guard lace (silver for officers) with a red patch was worn. The sword knot, shoulder-straps and sash were in the national colors, in styles similar to those used by the Kaiser's army in Germany. Officers wore a double silver aiguillette on the left shoulder of their full dress uniform. General officers had traditional Prussian-style red distinctions with gold embroidery, gilt buttons and gold hat binding.

The service dress of the German colonial troops consisted of a khaki jacket with a row of white metal buttons bearing the imperial "squared" crown, turndown collar and round cuffs—piped with the appropriate colony's colors, with no lace—khaki trousers and a khaki tropical helmet bearing a cockade on the front. The *askaris* wore a similar uniform, with dark-blue or khaki puttees. A khaki fez with a neck flap was adopted, with a silver or brass German imperial eagle plate affixed to the front. As the distinctive color of the *Schutztruppen* in Cameroon was red, it was found on their uniform's piping, rank chevrons, and the bandsmen's wings worn by the native troops. The police troops in Togo wore the same uniform. All leather equipment and footwear were brown.

In 1850 a *Marinirkorps* was raised in the Prussian Navy, and in 1854 it was renamed the *Seebataillon*. It was composed of infantry and artillery carried on board ship. From 1867, the German Imperial Marines were strictly an infantry unit. The *Seebataillon* survived the transition from confederation to imperial troops in 1871. The numbering of the units began with the 1st in 1883, followed by the 2nd in 1889 and the 3rd in 1898. The *Seebataillon* began to see service in the German African and overseas colonies—the 3rd Sea Battalion was called in as part of the Allied Relief Expedition during the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, and after that was stationed in the German colony of Tsingtao, China. On 29 August 1914, the 1st and 2nd Sea Battalions, home-based in Wilhelmshaven, were assigned to a special Naval Division, which also included units of the Marine Artillery and some other naval formations. Throughout World War I the Naval Division fought in most of the battles on the Western Front, including Flanders. On 10 November 1914, the 3rd Sea Battalion surrendered to Japanese Forces after a spirited defense of Tsingtao—losing one-third of Germany's marine force in the process. With the Armistice on 11 November 1918, the *Seebataillon* were no more. When the German armed forces were reorganized in 1919, no provision was made for Marine Infantry.

Beginning in 1850, the uniform worn by units of the *Seebataillon* consisted of a dark-blue tunic with self-colored collar and Brandenburg cuffs. The front of the coat, collar, and the three-button scalloped skirt pocket flaps were piped in white. Officers wore white-piped cuff patches and a loop of old Guard lace on the collar. On the officers' epaulettes and other ranks' white shoulder-straps was a fowl anchor. The trousers were dark blue with white piping. From 1856 to 1867, there existed a special *Seearterieabteilung*. It wore the same uniform as the *Seebataillon*, but with black collar and cuffs. Anchors with two crossed cannon barrels above them were worn on the shoulder-straps. Until 1862, the *Seebataillon* wore a *Pickelhaube* like that of the line artillery, with a brass plate. This was replaced with a blue-covered felt shako with a black leather peak, bearing a bronze anchor badge with the motto "MIT GOTT FÜR KOENIG UND VATERLAND". The shako plate was altered in 1875 with the addition of the imperial eagle over the anchor, and brass chinscales were added to the shako. In 1883 the shako was modified with leather front and rear peaks. Officers' shakos were of black cloth, while those of other ranks were of lacquered leather. For full dress a black plume—red for musicians—was worn on the shako. Initially, the dark-blue visored cloth caps with white piping around the top of the band were worn with the initials "KM" on the front. In 1875 white bands and piping around the top were introduced to the cap. From 1854 a cockade was worn, with the national colors of red, white and black becoming standard after 1871.

From 1875 white collars and cuffs were worn on the tunic, and in 1888 officers and men adopted two loops of Guard lace on the collar and three on the cuff patches. The Guard lace was in gold for officers and yellow for the men. An imperial crown over two crossed anchors was affixed to the men's shoulder-straps and the officers' epaulette crescent. After a while, battalion designations in Roman numerals were added below the crossed anchors. Officers wore a gold imperial crown on their shoulder-straps. From 1906 onwards the lapels for officers were faced with white. On the field-grey Model 1910 Uniform the *Seebataillon* wore white piping on the cuffs, shoulder-straps, front of the coat and collar, with yellow Guard lace on the collar and cuff patches. The shoulder-strap for enlisted men consisted of an imperial crown over crossed anchors and the battalion designation in yellow embroidery. With the adoption of the Model 1915 Field Blouse the men wore yellow Guard lace on a white collar patch. The *Seebataillon* wore the same greatcoat as the Army. Leather equipment and footwear were black. For service in China and other tropical climates, khaki uniforms were worn, with a stand-and-fall collar and shoulder-straps. In addition, a tropical helmet bearing the brass shako plate of the *Seebataillon* was worn with the uniform. A national cockade was fixed below the plate. Leather equipment and footwear were brown.

During the Boxer Rebellion, Germany provided troops for the Allied armies waging the various campaigns in China. At the start of the Rebellion in June 1900, there were sailors from the East Asia Squadron, the 3rd Sea Battalion, a Kommando detachment, and a battery of Marine Horse Artillery. The East Asia Brigade, consisting of two infantry brigades, was quickly established and sent off to China under the command of General Graf von Waldersee. In addition, there was a Field Artillery Regiment, a mounted regiment of Uhlans, and a pioneer battalion with railroad-engineer and telegraph companies. Sanitation, train, munitions, and other support troops completed the complement of the East Asia Brigade. General von Waldersee's forces arrived at Taku on 21 September 1900 and remained in China until 7 September 1901 and the official declaration of the end of hostilities. The remaining troops of the East Asia Brigade and of the 3rd Sea Battalion returned to Tsingtao.

The uniforms of the East Asia Brigade were officially field-grey, but a wide variety of materials, shades, and styles were worn by the troops. Generally, the *Litewka* or jacket was of a slightly darker shade than the trousers and the hat. The Model 1892 *Litewka* was of field-grey cloth and fastened down the front by six horn buttons. There were four large pockets on the front of the jacket and, unusually, two on the rear. To improve wear, the two lower pockets were lined with leather and were intended for carrying cartridges. For all branches the collar, front seam of the jacket, and pocket flap were piped in poppy red. The Jägers' jacket piping was light green. Reversible shoulder-straps were used for both field and garrison duties. For garrison duty the shoulder-straps used the following colors and emblems: infantry had white with the unit's number stitched in red, Jägers light green, cavalry poppy red, artillery poppy red with a red grenade, pioneer poppy red with a red "P", and railroad troops poppy red with a red "E" and lightning bolt. When in the field, troops reversed their shoulder-straps to show the field-grey body piped in either light green for Jägers or poppy red for all other branches. In addition, the Model 1893 *Litewka* was used by some troops. The jacket was dark blue, a front flap concealing the six horn buttons, and was issued with and without four flap pockets on the front. The shoulder-straps previously mentioned were also used with this coat, although the reverse for field use was dark blue. This coat and its later variants would later influence the adoption of the Model 1915 Field Blouse during World War I. Khaki uniforms for summer service were basically the same styles used by the *Schutztruppe* and *Seebataillon*. Shoulder-strap colors remained the same for field and garrison duties when worn on the khaki uniforms.

The most common headgear worn by members of the East Asia Brigade and colonial troops was the tropical helmet or *tropenhelm*, a khaki cloth helmet with a cork body and removable ventilator. The frontplate was of imperial colonial style in brass. The *Waffenfarbe* coloration on the cap band denoted branch of service, white for infantry and black with red piping for artillery, and a national tricolored cockade was affixed to the right side of the helmet. The cloth neck flap or havelock was removable, and designed to protect the wearer's neck from the South China sun. Troops also wore a floppy straw hat with the brim turned up and pinned to the wearer's right side; it sported a large German national cockade and, immediately beneath, a small cockade of the soldier's home province.

In addition, enlisted members of the Imperial German East Asiatic Infantry wore a *Pickelhaube* consisting of a grey-green cloth cover over a leather body with grey leather-beaded front and rear visors. It had a brass-trimmed spike, base, and stud retainers, a brass colonial eagle and grey leather chinstrap with brass fittings secured to Model 1891 Posts. The frontplate was common to all imperial colonial units. A single *Reichskokarde* was worn on the helmet's right side. Contingents from the other German provinces that formed the East Asiatic Forces used this helmet, with their respective state helmet plates and cockade. The following brass plates have been observed with the East Asiatic *Pickelhaube*: Baden, 92nd Brunswick Regiment (1st and 2nd Battalions), Prussia (Regiments 74, 77, 78, 164 and 165) and Württemberg.

The Imperial German East Asiatic Jäger and other enlisted services wore a shako whose helmet body was composed of green leather with green cloth sides. The frontplate was the familiar brass colonial service eagle. A brown leather chinstrap with brass buckles was worn, secured to brass Model 1891 Posts. The field badge or cockade was in black, white and red, as befits colonial troop units. The Jägers adopted a flat-topped sun helmet for their tropical kit, apparently attempting to pattern it after their shako. The body was khaki over cork with a reinforced, stitched bead on the front visor and a flip-up rear visor. The helmet plate, in brass, was the colonial services eagle. The top of the helmet was a ventilator button, and a cockade was secured to the right-hand side of the helmet. A color band was also used.

With the outbreak of World War I in August 1914, Germany sent troops to aid her allies of the Austro-Hungarian and Turkish Empires. Regular German forces were sent to Palestine, Sinai, Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Greece. Many of the troops were issued with khaki drill uniforms, or had normal continental uniforms modified for hot climates.

Troops serving in Macedonia and Palestine wore tropical helmets in brown drill with or without the colonial-style imperial German eagle plates commonly worn by the *Schutztruppen*. In addition, a helmet band was worn with a large national cockade affixed to the front or side, similar to those worn during the Boxer Rebellion—many might have been surplus items from that conflict. The color of the helmet band was white for infantry and black with red piping for artillery. Later, General der Kavallerie Otto Liman von Sanders, commanding the German troops in Palestine, issued orders for the tropical helmet to be replaced by a brown drill cap, to avoid confusion with British troops who wore similar headgear. These caps were worn with or without removable havelocks and were fashioned with brown leather chinstraps and visors. The cap bands were black with red piping for artillery, plain drill for infantry, and blue with red piping for train troops. The caps were designated as the Model 1916 Tropical Cap with regular peak and the Model 1918 Tropical Cap with the larger peak.

The uniform was varied but consisted mainly of a lightweight khaki drill jacket. The brown drill jackets had turned-down collars, breast and hip pockets, and six metal buttons down the front. Another version was similar in construction but had only two hip pockets and no breast pockets. A notable feature of these tunics was the clear stitching of field-grey thread on the hip pockets and the front of the coat. This becomes even more distinctive when the tunic has faded, almost to a yellowish color, under the blazing desert sun of the Middle East. Today many military historians and collectors apply the term Model 1916 Tropical Tunic to the above-mentioned pieces in order to differentiate those used by the Colonial, Marine, Naval, and East Asia Expeditionary Forces. The following shoulder-straps were used with the khaki tunic: artillery had scarlet piping and red grenades or numerals; infantry had either piping in army corps colors with red numerals or plain khaki; medical troops had dark-blue piping; train had blue piping. Trousers were of the same material as the jackets and were worn with puttees and brown ankle boots. Surplus colonial uniforms and equipment were also utilized by these troops.

Troops serving on the Macedonian and Serbian Fronts wore a felt ersatz spiked helmet. It was an all-pressed-felt construction with pressed-felt visors. A field-grey “pewter” metal regimental unit plate was secured to the front of the helmet, bearing the designation “R 22” (22nd Infantry Regiment). It had field-grey Model 1891 Posts with a matching spike base and ventilation top, and a black leather chinstrap with grey metal lugs and buckles. In addition troops wore another modified *Pickelhaube* variant made of cork and with a white cloth covering. The fittings were of wartime “pewter”, and consisted of a spike base with a lug mount showing and a grey metallic frontplate with a regimental designation only. A brown leather chinstrap was worn, secured by alated side-split brad retainers. The



havelocks made for these helmets are particularly interesting.

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As the German states were united and collectively became a colonial power in Africa and the Pacific, the German soldier became the symbol of the nation's prestige and honor. Many nations around the world, especially in Latin America, admired the professionalism of the Teutonic militaristic bearing of the Imperial German Army. Military missions from Germany were sent all over the world to train foreign armies, many of which adopted the military uniforms, equipment and even the military traditions of the German Army. To this day one can still see Chilean or Ecuadorean soldiers dressed in Imperial Prussian-style uniforms and *Pickelhauben*, as well as bandsmen carrying "Jingling Johnnies" and goose-stepping down the main boulevards during national events. Throughout the twentieth century the Mauser bolt-action rifle was the weapon of choice for most nations of the world, and was only replaced by the Russian AK-47/AKM-style assault rifles in the latter part of the century. The golden era of German influence on other countries' uniforms, equipment and weapons began with Germany's victory in the Franco-Prussian War and ended with the Armistice and the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Civil war and social upheaval followed, after which Germany's fledgling democracy emerged. The military itself underwent changes, reinventing itself several times and appeared to be in search of its soul—looking for a clear purpose to its existence in a world its monarch had now departed. In less than two decades the German Army would find its long-awaited Messiah—Adolf Hitler.

ALEJANDRO M. DE QUESADA

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# COLOR ILLUSTRATIONS



*Above. A Prussian soldier from one of the Guard Regiments with a Model 1860 Pickelhaube, photographed in 1866*

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