

Men-at-Arms

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The Russo-Japanese War 1904–05

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A Ivanov & P Jowett • Illustrated by Andrei Karachtchouk

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Dedications

Alexei Ivanov dedicates this book to his great-grandfather, Artillery Private Alexander Surovzev, who served in both the Boxer Rebellion, 1900, and the Russo-Japanese War. The artist dedicates his paintings for this book to the memory of his great-grandfather, an Ussuri Cossack and a participant in the Russo-Japanese War.

Philip Jowett dedicates this book to his much loved and greatly missed cousins Neil and Vicky.

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THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR 1904-05

INTRODUCTION

THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR was a power struggle between the two dominant nations in north-east Asia. Russia had long pursued a policy of eastwards expansion to the Pacific; and the ramshackle weakness of Imperial China encouraged Russian ambitions towards the territories which neighboured her eastern conquests to the south – the northern Chinese region of Manchuria, and the Chinese vassal state of Korea. This policy led to confrontation with Imperial Japan, which during the latter half of the 19th century had emerged from her 200-year self-imposed isolation from the outside world. Astonishingly vigorous modernization of her industry and military forces was achieved in the service of an ambitious, aggressive ideology. China's inability to play any role other than that of a manipulated victim of the ambitions of foreign powers was irresistibly tempting to a Japan determined to stake a claim as the premier power in Asia.

The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 saw the defeat of the archaic Chinese forces by a Japanese army now equipped by and modelled on the Western powers. Under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Japan made substantial gains in Korea, installing a puppet government there; and in Manchuria, where she took over the Liaotung Peninsula including the strategic naval base of Port Arthur. However, during the period of feverish Great Power plotting and manoeuvring that followed, Russia deprived Japan of these gains. The Korean government was overthrown by a Russian-backed coup; Japan was forced by international pressure to return the Liaotung Peninsula to China – and shortly thereafter Russia herself occupied it. The perceived strategic threat and the undoubted humiliation suffered by Japan at Russian hands could not be tolerated, and from 1897 conflict between the two nations was inevitable.

During the next seven years Russia built railways and and a new headquarters (Harbin) in Manchuria, which she dominated militarily and economically, although it remained ostensibly Chinese sovereign territory. Port Arthur was the main strategic prize, since – unlike the main Russian Pacific base at Vladivostok – it remained free of ice in winter. However, in response to the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900, and a consequent threat to Harbin, Russia also poured 100,000 troops into Manchuria. Both Japan and Russia pursued extensive espionage throughout the region; and Japan managed to isolate Russia diplomatically in 1902 by concluding a non-intervention treaty with Britain, from whom she had acquired the warships and the training for her modern navy. (For this and other reasons Russia would enjoy encouragement and some indirect aid from Imperial Germany.)



The typical silhouette of a Russian soldier in winter field dress. He wears the separate *bashlik* hood, its long front extensions wrapped around his neck, over the pre-war black lambswool *shapka* winter cap with the double-headed eagle badge. Note the deep cuffs of the *shinel* greatcoat, which could be turned down to protect the hands; and the additional bandolier of ammunition. This soldier of an unidentified unit appears to wear only a single belt pouch. A water bottle and haversack are slung to hang on his hips. (Adeq Historical Resources Inc)



General Andrei N. Kuropatkin, who commanded Russia's First Manchurian Army and later all Russian forces facing the Japanese until replaced by Gen Linevich in March 1905, following the Russian failure at Mukden. He is wearing the general officer's dress uniform, with the aiguillettes which identify him as a general adjutant to the Tsar. (STAVKA Military Image Research)

It was that navy which launched the first blow when, in 1904, Japan felt strong enough to take her revenge; and it would be the shocking naval defeats suffered by Russia which attracted much of the international attention. However, the land war which accompanied the fleet actions would be of great importance, and the final battle of Mukden in February–March 1905 was the greatest land battle in history up to that date. The Russo-Japanese War was the first conflict of the 20th century fought by major military powers more or less evenly matched in technology; and it was the first war in which the latest weapons and techniques, unveiled to some extent in previous conflicts such as the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), came to dominate the battlefield. Large numbers of military observers from many nations were present to report on the massive use of these new weapons, but not all the armies who received those reports fully absorbed their implications. Ten years later, many of these lessons which the Russians and Japanese had already learned the hard way would have to be re-learned hastily and at great cost in the opening stages of the Great War in Europe.

CHRONOLOGY

Although this book is devoted specifically to the land forces of the Russo-Japanese War, the main naval encounters were decisive; they are included in this chronology in *italic* type.

1904

8–9 February Japanese naval attack on Port Arthur. Japanese destroyers make surprise night attack on Russian squadron of seven battleships and six cruisers in Port Arthur; two battleships and a cruiser are torpedoed. Several failed Japanese attempts to block harbour entrance will follow in late February, March and April.

10 February Japan declares war on Russia.

12 February Japanese landing at Chemulpo (Inchon), Korea. Led by the 3,000-strong 12th Div, followed by 2nd and Guards Divs, the whole Japanese First Army (Gen Tametoko Kuroki) is ashore by 28 March. They march north for the first land battle with the Russian defenders of the Yalu River line, under Gen A.N. Kuropatkin.

13 April Death of Adm S.O. Makarov when his flagship is sunk by mine costs Russia her most energetic naval commander, and damages morale.

25 April–2 May Battle of the Yalu. Japanese draw Russian fire on false bridging attempt while secretly improvising real portable bridge sections for night crossings; advance and reconnaissance carried out under cover of darkness and terrain, while Russians fail to conceal positions; Japanese assault supported by superior artillery. Casualties approximately 1,000 Japanese, 3,000 Russian; Russian losses in equipment include all their eight machine guns and 11 field guns. Japanese victory aids raising of international finance, and prevents Russians reinforcing Liaotung Peninsula from Korean front.

5 May Japanese Second Army (Gen Oku) begins landings on Liaotung Peninsula.

25–26 May Battle of Nanshan – successful Japanese attack on weak Russian defences at neck of Liaotung Peninsula by Second Army (1st, 3rd, 4th Divs). Col Tretyakov's defenders resist skilfully while ammunition lasts, but ordered into hasty retreat by Gen Fok; Russian dead total approx. 1,100, Japanese dead 750.

Early June Japanese Third Army (Gen Maresuke Nogi – 9th & 11th Divs) advance to take port of Dalny and isolate Port Arthur. Main focus of Japanese strategy remains Russian base at Liaoyang on South Manchurian Railway.

14–15 June Battle of Te-Li-Ssu – half-hearted Russian attempt to defeat Oku's Second Army between Liaoyang and Port Arthur. Oku (3rd, 4th & 5th Divs) attacks northwards and defeats Gen Shtakelberg's I Siberian Corps, which loses 477 dead, 2,240 wounded and 754 captured plus 16 guns; Japanese losses 217 dead, 946 wounded.

Late June Japanese First (Gen Kuroki) and Fourth (Gen Nozu) Armies, with four divisions, advance north towards Liaoyang. Gen Kuropatkin abandons strategic Motien Pass.

3 & 17 July Russian attempts to retake Motien Pass fail.

22 July Japanese C-in-C, FM Oyama, and his able chief of staff Gen Kodama arrive with Second Army.

26 July Japanese investment of Port Arthur by Third Army (Gen Nogi – 1st, 9th & 11th Divs) begins. Although handicapped by command incompetence and mutual hostility between Gens A.M.Stessel and C.N.Smirnov, the 45,000-strong garrison have some strong emplacements featuring tunnels, concrete, wire entanglements and numerous artillery.

31 July Gen Keller moves against Japanese First Army on south-east approaches to Liaoyang. Russian preparations slow and obvious; pre-empted by attack of Japanese 12th Div (Gen Inouye), which drives back Russian force of twice its strength, killing Gen Keller among approx. 600 dead.

10 August *Battle of the Yellow Sea*. Adm Vitgeft's Russian squadron of six battleships, three cruisers and 14 destroyers leaves Port Arthur to confront Adm Togo's four battleships, 11 cruisers and 46 smaller vessels. After Vitgeft's death on his crippled flagship his deputy orders withdrawal. The Russians lose two cruisers and a destroyer sunk, plus a battleship, two cruisers and three destroyers interned in neutral ports; Japanese lose only one torpedo-boat. Russian squadron remains blockaded in Port Arthur, removing many guns for use ashore.

9–24 August Gen Nogi's initial frontal assaults at Port Arthur are over-confident, misled by memory of his own easy capture of the port from the Chinese ten years before, and by poor intelligence. Minimal gains cost some 16,000 Japanese casualties and weaken morale. Nogi settles down for a siege.



This photograph of Russian soldiers marching across a harvested field provides a pointed reminder of the suffering endured by Chinese civilians during the war. Both sides largely ignored the plight of the ordinary people of the countryside that they were using as a battleground, although the Japanese were marginally less rapacious during winter 1904/05, and therefore benefited from better local intelligence. The soldiers are wearing the standard dark green uniform with their greatcoats slung across their chests; the white band of the forage cap shows up clearly, denoting the third regiment within a division. (STAVKA Military Image Research)



A trio of Russian soldiers pose with an even more dishevelled Japanese prisoner of war. The Russians are wearing bulky M1881 greatcoats, with the shaggy Siberian 'Manchzhurka' sheepskin hats giving them a wild appearance. The Japanese prisoner wears what could be a captured, cut-down Russian greatcoat over his dark blue M1886 uniform, and seems to have the 1904 issue khaki cap. (Andrei Karachtchouk)

26 August–3 September Battle of Liaoyang. Oyama's First, Second & Fourth Armies total 128,000 men with 33 cavalry squadrons and 170 field guns; they attack Kuropatkin's I, III, IV and V Siberian, X and XVII Corps, with 158,000, 148 squadrons, and 609 guns. Both armies fight to exhaustion in hot, rainy weather, over hilly terrain, on a front about 25 miles wide by 18 miles deep. The result is more or less a stalemate; the Russians claim victory due to their lower casualties (3,600 killed and 14,300 wounded, against Japanese losses of 5,540 and 18,600 respectively). However, Kuropatkin is obliged to retreat northwards; incompetent Russian command, control and communications are exposed; and – worryingly – some Russian units had withdrawn from the battle against orders.

7–17 October Battle of Sha Ho. Kuropatkin attempts a southwards offensive, Oyama a counter-offensive, both sides placing their main hopes on left flanking attacks. Despite the loss of nearly 11,000 dead and 30,400 wounded against Japanese casualties of less than 4,000 and 16,500 respectively, and their failure to advance to relieve Port Arthur, the Russians claim a victory. Exhausted and short of men and supplies, both armies in Manchuria now settle into winter quarters.

25–31 October At Port Arthur, six days of futile Japanese assaults cost them 4,800 dead.

27 November–6 December After arrival at Port Arthur of Gen Kodama, new heavy guns and fresh 7th Div, Japanese Third Army take strategic Hill 203 and Vysokaya Hill dominating harbour, at cost of 14,000 Japanese and more than 5,000 Russian dead. Russian warships in harbour are soon sunk or disabled by Japanese artillery.

18–31 December Four more strongpoints are captured by the Japanese, and Gen Stessel seeks surrender terms for Port Arthur garrison.

1905

2 January Port Arthur garrison surrenders; indiscipline of rank and file, and officers' dereliction of duty, shocks foreign observers. Fall of city frees Gen Nogi's Japanese Third Army to move north and reinforce

First, Second and Fourth Armies, where FM Oyama now faces Gen Kuropatkin's First (Gen Linevich), Second (Gen Gripenberg) and Third (Gen Kaulbars) Manchurian Armies and Gen Mishchenko's Cossack Corps.

January Both sides send cavalry to raid each other's rear lines of supply and communication.

25–29 January Battle of San-de-pu. Gen Gripenberg's Second Manchurian Army attempts south-westwards offensive from winter line on Hun River towards Liaoyang, to outflank Japanese Second Army before Gen Nogi's Third Army could come up. Bungled attack in harsh winter conditions fails with heavy Russian casualties. Gen Gripenberg abandons his army command and publicly denounces his commander-in-chief Kuropatkin.

January–February 'The 1905 revolution' – serious unrest in Russian cities; hundreds of demonstrators killed by police and troops; imperial governor of Moscow assassinated. Japanese intelligence networks supply arms to dissidents in Finland, Baltic provinces and Caucasus.

19 February–10 March Battle of Mukden – fought by most numerous armies in history up to that date. For spring campaign Kuropatkin has First, Second & Third Manchurian Armies (respectively Gens Linevich, Kaulbars and Bilderling), with total of 275,000 infantry, 16,000 cavalry, 1,439 field guns and 56 machine guns. Facing him, Oyama has the Yalu (Gen Kawamura), First (Kuroki), Second (Ozu), Third (Nogi) and Fourth (Nozu) Armies, with 200,000 infantry, 7,350 cavalry, 924 guns (including heavy 11in howitzers brought up from Port Arthur) and 174 machine guns. Advancing northwards, Oyama pre-empts Kuropatkin's attack planned for 24 February. He draws Russian attention to the eastern flank with attacks by Yalu Army, planning a pinning attack in the centre and west by First, Fourth and Second Armies, while Third Army hooks behind the western flank. Hampered as usual by poor intelligence and the inactivity of his army commanders, Kuropatkin sends his reserves to the eastern flank before Oyama's intentions become clear on 27 February. Kuropatkin orders destruction of his rear depots to deny them to the enemy and at first overestimates the Japanese penetration, thus spreading alarm; some troops give way to drunkenness and indiscipline. When he weakens his centre on 2 March to counter the now reinforced Japanese western hook the move is hampered by appalling weather. Kuropatkin decides that abandoning his Mukden base is unavoidable, and orders tactical withdrawals by his centre on 7 March. Under a general Japanese assault these turn into a general and disorderly retreat on 9–10 March. Kuropatkin's utterly demoralized armies finally retreat some 200 miles, losing much of their transport and supplies. Only the exhaustion of the Japanese armies prevents them from exploiting this retreat to the point of a rout.

Casualties reach some 30 per cent on both sides: Russian losses are about 40,000 dead or captured and 49,000 wounded; Japanese, nearly 16,000 dead and 60,000 wounded.



General Maresuke Nogi, the victor of the first attack on Port Arthur during the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, was entrusted with the capture of the city once again as commander of the Japanese Third Army in 1904. He underestimated the strength of the new Russian defences and the garrison, and sent his troops into repeated frontal attacks which cost appalling casualties. He later followed the advice of the much more able LtGen Gentaro Kodama, chief-of-staff to Field Marshal Oyama and the real architect of Japanese success in Manchuria. Here Nogi wears the M1900 officer's service dress 'Attila' with a pair of summer trousers and what appear to be full dress high leather boots. His sword is the M1875 parade sabre. (Author's collection)

A Japanese field telephone crew, dressed in summer khaki uniforms, photographed close to the front line in a hastily dug communications post. There are several puzzling details: the left-hand man seems to have a length of company officer's black-striped coloured cap band attached to the front of his cap only. The foreground man seems to display the chevron-shaped cuff edging of a warrant officer, although this was not regulation on the khaki tunic; and both his cuff and collar seem to be of a darker shade of cloth, matching his coloured cap band.

(Author's collection)



20 March Confidential US offer to mediate peace talks.

27–28 May *Battle of Tsushima*. The decisive naval battle of the war, in the straits between Japan and Korea, between Adm Togo's faster but more lightly gunned fleet, and Adm Rozhdestvensky's Russian 2nd and 3rd Pacific Squadrons. After a nightmare seven-month voyage from the Baltic Sea via the North Sea, Suez or the Cape of Good Hope, Singapore and Vietnam, the poorly trained Russian crews are sick and mutinous, and their defeatist officers completely outclassed. Main Russian losses are five battleships, four cruisers and five destroyers sunk; three battleships, five cruisers and two destroyers captured or interned in neutral ports. Some 4,800 Russian sailors are killed, nearly 7,000 captured and 1,800 interned. Japanese losses are three torpedo boats, 110 men killed and 590 wounded.

The twin disasters of Mukden and Tsushima destroy Russia's will to fight on, although her armies remain by far the stronger; and in Japan, too, the proportionately greater cost in lives and money has become intolerable.

10 & 12 June Japan and Russia publicly accept US offer of mediation.

14–25 June Unrest in Black Sea Fleet. Crew of battlecruiser *Potemkin* mutiny; thousands of sympathetic demonstrators killed by troops at Odessa; *Potemkin* seeks asylum in Romanian port.

7 July–8 August Japan seizes Sakhalin Island.

9 August Peace negotiations begin at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, under auspices of President Theodore Roosevelt.

5 September Treaty of Portsmouth signed. Japan gains southern Sakhalin and Liaotung Peninsula, and rights of influence in Korea. Public reaction to treaty is negative in both Russia and Japan; but humiliation of Tsarist regime is far more damaging in Russia.

MILITARY INNOVATIONS

Few of the technologies seen in the land war were being employed for the first time; it was their scale of use in refined forms which was innovative. As long ago as the American Civil War of 40 years before there had been practical use of breech-loading repeating rifles, telegraphic communications, aerial observation balloons, major railway networks for troop and supply movements, and a few crude early machine guns. What were then novelties had now become commonplace, however.

Machine guns

The Russo-Japanese War saw the wide-scale employment of modern machine guns by both sides. A dozen Gatling guns had been used at the siege of Petersburg in the American Civil War, and developments of these and other early machine guns had seen service in colonial wars during the next 30 years. However, the Russo-

Japanese War was the first time that both sides employed 'second generation' guns – i.e. automatically firing rather than hand cranked, non-rotary, water- or air-cooled weapons – in numbers sufficient to dominate battlefields. In a foretaste of things to come in 1914–18, a massive 50 per cent of casualties during the Russo-Japanese War were credited to machine gun fire. This was largely due to the suicidal Japanese tactics of sending wave after wave of infantry against positions defended by Russian machine guns. This was also the first time that the machine gun had been used in numbers as an offensive support for the infantry attack rather than purely as a defensive weapon – a fact particularly noted by German observers.

(This was an exceptional case; a surprising number of the foreign military observers seem to have explained the outcome of operations as being due to morale rather than technical or professional factors. For instance, a great deal was made of the dauntless courage of the Japanese in the assault, and the failure of the generally defensive posture of the Russians, rather than attempting any real analysis of the relative competence of the generals who led them. This overvaluing of the 'attacking spirit' and undervaluing of machine guns and strong defensive positions would have costly consequences in 1914–15. The failure to stress the relative irrelevance of cavalry as a battle-winning factor is also striking.)

The **Russians** had steadily increased the number of machine guns in their service, from only 12 in 1898 to 40 in 1901. This was, of course, only a tiny number by modern standards, and as the war began much greater numbers were being introduced. However, Russia's 7.62mm Maxim guns had to be imported from Vickers-Maxim in England; before 1905 only the spare barrels could be manufactured at the Tula arsenal, which turned out the first complete guns – recognizable by their smooth bronze water jackets – in that year. The Maxims were deployed in batteries of six to eight, mounted on artillery-type carriages with shields to protect the crews, and ammunition boxes mounted on the back. This form of mounting, and the deployments it encouraged, made the guns easy targets for Japanese artillery and snipers – a weakness that became clear at the battle of the Yalu River. (Later in the war there was reportedly some use of a lower

Excellent study of a Japanese machine gun crew manning their licence production version of the French M1897 Hotchkiss. Apart from some captured Russian Maxims this was the only model of machine gun in service with the Japanese during the war, and they became adept in using it to support infantry in the assault. The crew wear khaki summer uniforms, though the right-hand man still has an uncovered M1886 blue cap; note the sun curtain on the gunner's cap cover, the metal attachments for it on the left man's cap band, the frogged Arisaka bayonet, and details of the buttoned and strapped canvas gaiters. (Corbis)





Though obviously posed, this image of Russian infantry manning the simplest sort of trench does give an impression of the bleak Manchurian landscape in which they operated. (Author's collection)

wheeled mount, but the famous Sokolov carriage of both world wars was not standard before the introduction of the M1910 Maxim.) The guns were far more effective when dug into a defensive position with overhead protection, as at Port Arthur.

Apart from her belt-fed, water-cooled Maxims, before the war Russia also purchased about 200 Danish Madsen magazine-fed, air-cooled light machine guns (variously termed M1902 or M1903) for the cavalry. A handful supposedly reached Manchuria, but no evidence that they saw combat there has yet surfaced.

The war's demonstrations of the importance of machine guns subsequently led to their issue by 1914 at a scale of eight Maxims per four-battalion infantry regiment, and eight Madsens per four-regiment cavalry division.

The **Japanese** also began the war with a relatively small number of machine guns in service but soon realized that they needed more. (They captured a number of Russian Maxims at the Yalu River, and turned them against their former owners.) During their participation in the quelling of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 they had acquired a French Hotchkiss M1897; a licence manufacture agreement was concluded, and the Hotchkiss in 6.5mm calibre went into production at a factory in Tokyo. Within a few months of the outbreak of hostilities each Japanese division had 24 machine guns (held at the direct disposal of the divisional commander), and as their potential was recognized many Japanese officers argued for an increase in this scale of issue.

Comparisons between the two main designs in use during the war tend to favour the Japanese choice, and Russian soldiers complained that the enemy weapons had several advantages over their Maxims. The Hotchkiss, being air- rather than water-cooled, was considerably lighter than the Maxim and could be moved to a new position during an action with relative ease. This favoured its deployment in the attack; the Maxim, mounted on its wheeled carriage, was hard to manhandle over rough ground, and made a much more visible target. The Russians also complained that the canvas feed belts used by the Maxim often distorted in wet weather and jammed in the feed block, a problem not encountered with the rigid metal feed strip employed by the Hotchkiss. (In fact, the rechambering of the Hotchkiss from 8mm to 6.5mm was followed by extraction problems, and one Japanese report claims an average of one jam every 300 rounds – which is hardly negligible.)

The greatest innovation was the Japanese use of machine guns in the attack, firing in enfilade or over the heads of assault infantry and then being brought forward rapidly to a new position. The German observer Capt von Beckmann reported that at Mukden on 1 March 1905 the 12 to 18 guns of one Japanese division were all brought into action against a Russian strongpoint: 'The Russian fire was silenced, but broke out again whenever the machine gun fire slackened. The Japanese infantry used these pauses in the enemy's fire to press forward to close range under cover of their own machine gun fire.'

Also at Mukden, Japanese infantry units crossed the Fan River, clambered from the river bed and assaulted up a steep hill to within 40 yards of the Russian trenches while covered by the continuous supporting fire of machine guns at 1,800 yards range. Of another action the officer commanding the machine guns of the 2nd Division recalled: 'I got the guns into a good position and, firing over the infantry's heads, covered their advance at a range of 1,200 yards... We were soon able to keep [the enemy's] heads down... Each gun expended 1,500 rounds during the action, which lasted about an hour.'¹

Communication

Telephone communication was employed by both sides during the war. The Russians equipped every infantry regiment and artillery division with four telephones and 6km (3¾ miles) of wire. Each Japanese unit advanced on the battlefield carrying a telephone and drawing copper cables behind it. The doctrine of the Japanese Army was to connect a group consisting of three divisions with the commanding general by telephone, and each commanding general with his superior commander.

Radio was also tested by the Russians for battlefield communication from 1900, when it had been developed by the Russian scientist Popov. However, it was not used in the Russo-Japanese War until nearly the end of the conflict: two radio companies were formed in St Petersburg under the command of Capt I.A.Leontiev, and arrived at the front only in May 1905, with 12 radio sets and four spares.

Trench warfare

The trenches and defence works around Port Arthur were a foretaste of the kind of warfare that was to become the norm ten years later on the Western Front in France. The quality of Russian strongpoints was uneven, but the best were protected by poured concrete, and some were capable of withstanding artillery rounds of up to 280mm calibre. Barbed wire (or, in its absence, plain wire) was also used in entanglements covering the approaches to defensive positions, being arranged in multiple belts of conventional 'cattle fencing' with wooden stakes. This was not its earliest military use; but it was the first time that wire barriers were (sometimes) electrified. The Japanese countered this by issuing for the first time wire-cutters with insulated handles. They also cut wire obstacles with primitive 'bangalores' in the form of explosive charges of black powder or gun cotton at the end of long bamboo poles. These charges were set off by volunteers protected (theoretically) from the blast and from rifle fire by metal shields.

Because the Japanese were adept at night attacks the Russians made great use of searchlights and illuminating rockets or 'star shells'. Minefields were also laid to deter attacks, and mines were often set off by electric conductors buried up to 12ft underground. More primitive defence works included spiked mantraps or 'wolf jaws' with sharpened stakes hidden in the bottom and sides of concealed holes.

Despite Russian failure to clear fields of tall standing crops which masked the approaches to their trench lines at Port Arthur, Japanese attempts to take these well dug-in and defended positions by direct

¹ F.W.A.Hobart, *Pictorial History of the Machine Gun*, Ian Allan (1971)

assault proved to be very costly in lives. They soon learnt that the only way they were going to take Port Arthur was by digging trench systems of their own to counter the defence works; and when they did, it was noted that their infantry were more energetic and painstaking, in both digging and concealment, than their Russian counterparts. They constructed siege trenches with large shelters to house up to 50 men, where assault parties could shelter before an attack.

Assault weapons used by the Japanese included crude hand grenades made from cartridge or shell cases filled with explosives and detonated by lighting a fuse. They also employed wooden mortars reinforced with bamboo lashings, which could be moved into a forward position by one man (these immediately recall the 'wooden cannon' employed in Japan's 16th–17th century wars for firing incendiary projectiles at fort walls). Russian reports also mention the Japanese use of the 'Whitehead' mine, which was hurled across no-man's-land by a mine-thrower.

Observation balloons

Both sides made extensive use of observation balloons during this, the last major war before the introduction of aircraft for this role. At first the Russians had one Air Battalion in the East, but this was increased to three, each attached to an Army HQ. The performance of Russian observation balloons was sometimes affected by logistical problems in the supply of the hydrogen gas used to inflate them: for instance, at the battle of Sha-ho a shortage of hydrogen kept them packed uselessly on their rail transport. On 28 October 1904 a Lt Lavrov arrived in Port Arthur to fly an observation balloon. Unfortunately all the necessary equipment and rigging had been lost when the ship carrying it had been captured; but the undaunted Lavrov managed to improvise gear from materials he could buy in Port Arthur. All his work came to nothing, however, when it became apparent that he could not obtain the amount of hydrogen needed to inflate the balloon fully.

The Japanese also made wide use of observation balloons and had at least two types in service. Unlike the Russians they had no specialist troops assigned to crew their balloons, and presumably artillery officers and men performed this role.

Chinese in Japanese and Russian service

Both the Japanese and Russian armies recruited auxiliaries among the local Chinese population of Manchuria. This policy was somewhat frowned upon at the time by many on both sides, and the role of the auxiliaries was little reported.

The Hung-hu-tze ('Chunchus', *khunhuzy*) were Chinese bandits, who for centuries had preyed upon travellers, farmers and towns in Manchuria whenever opportunity offered. Throughout the Russo-Japanese War both sides were to suffer from bandit attacks, especially on their long, strung-out lines of supply and communication. Even before the outbreak of the war the Japanese decided to exploit the vulnerability of the long Russian rear

During the campaign in Manchuria, a Russian signals officer about to make an ascent in an observation balloon while his men hold the restraining ropes. All seem to wear the undyed white *gimnasterka* and peaked cap. An M1890 blue shirt-tunic was also issued to men of the Air Balloon Unit. (Author's collection)





Russian infantry led by a drummer march through Liaoyang, their important forward base in southern Manchuria. They wear the standard M1881 dark green winter uniform, unusually exposed here in the spring or autumn sunshine – it was normally worn under the greatcoat. All the enlisted ranks in this early war photograph have the peakless *furashka* cap; only the officer at left wears the peaked version. Next to him marches an NCO, displaying the medals of a previous campaign. The men wear the lightest equipment – the belt, with a single cartridge pouch. (Author's collection)

lines by organizing small units of guerrillas. Six 'covert' units were formed in Peking in January 1904, under the control of a Col Aoki and led by a total of 71 Japanese NCOs. The rank and file were either 'friendly' Chinese bandits or – after an agreement was reached with the Chinese Imperial Army commander, Yuan Shi-kai – volunteers from his cavalry; Chinese NCOs were also seconded to serve in the Chunchu units alongside the Japanese.

The regular Chinese covert units were soon operating mainly around the important Russian base at Liaoyang. The Russian High Command ascribed all these attacks to the endemic lawlessness of Manchuria, and were unaware that the Japanese were organizing them. Some of these 'bandits' were to rise to high positions in the Chinese military during the 'Warlord' period; one of them, Chang Tso-lin, would become the virtual ruler of Manchuria and northern China for over ten years until his death in 1928.² He was supported during this period by the Japanese, thanks to the links he had established during the Russo-Japanese War.

The Chunchus attacked Russian Army ammunition and supply depots throughout the winter of 1904 and into the spring of 1905. They had a nuisance value; but their attempted attacks on the South Manchuria Railway achieved little, since it was well guarded by Russian troops.

The **Russians** employed locally recruited Chinese as auxiliaries to perform guard duties on their railways and supply lines on the same unofficial basis as the Japanese. A major of the Russian Frontier Guards relates in his memoirs how he was alarmed to see a group of armed Chinese crossing the railway line ahead of his train, and pointed them out to a fellow officer. The latter told him not to worry – 'they're ours'; when asked how he could tell, he replied 'because they're not shooting at us'.

² See MAA 306, *Chinese Civil War Armies 1911–49*

Reportedly, these Chinese auxiliaries were not supplied with Russian uniforms but were given Mosin-Nagant rifles with a special stamp on the butt, 'Property of the Imperial Russian Government'. Small groups of mounted Chinese were also attached to some of the Russian cavalry formations, and were presumably recruited locally on an ad hoc basis. These auxiliary cavalry were usually employed as messengers and scouts rather than in a combat role. Their existence was not exactly publicized by the Russian High Command, although photographs do show units of Chinese parading in front of Russian officers.

THE RUSSIAN ARMY IN 1904

In 1904 the Russian Imperial Army (*Russkaya imperatorskaya armiya*) had an initial first line strength of over a million men, but could be expanded rapidly to 3.5 million upon full mobilization. This huge army included some excellent units of Guardsmen, Grenadiers and Cossacks, but also some reservist and second line troops of distinctly poorer quality. Unfortunately for the Russian war effort in Manchuria, it was decided to depend almost totally on the troops of the Eastern Military District, which included a large number of the poorer quality units. At a time of political unrest the government was unwilling to send so far from the centres of power the more reliable troops of the European Military District, in case they were required to keep the peace at home.

The corps was the highest formation in the Russian Army, and consisted of either two or three infantry divisions and one cavalry division. A division was made up of two infantry brigades, each of two regiments; and each regiment had four battalions. A division also had an integral artillery brigade with six or eight batteries, each battery having eight guns.

The structure of Russian regiments raised in the Eastern Military District was different from this norm, however, with only two or three battalions in each. This smaller establishment gave the regiment a strength of 2,100 men instead of the standard 3,100.

Morale and effectiveness

By 1904 the Imperial Russian Army already reflected many of the increasing weaknesses of the Romanov regime of Tsar Nicholas II. In an autocracy, where power was exercised in the name of an absolute ruler by right of birth, command appointments were too often decided for reasons of court connections rather than professional competence. Russian society at the turn of the century was bubbling with competing strains of opinion, including energetic reformers; but the immovably conservative establishment regarded such men with suspicion. An uneasily defensive ruling class too often denied advancement to men of talent, and frustrated necessary reforms.

The result was an officer class in which cynical careerism, laziness and inefficiency were too frequently found, and an officer's duty was still believed by many to begin and end with providing an example of physical bravery in battle. On campaign, a rigidly centralized command structure and military bureaucracy delayed decisions and rapid responses to identified needs (one instance of lackadaisical staff work which would bedevil Russian operations in Manchuria was a chronic

lack of accurate maps). Paradoxically, the indiscipline arising from personal jealousies or self-importance was sometimes remarkable, and some senior commanders persistently failed to co-operate with one another in the national interest.

The peasant class from which the rankers were conscripted displayed their traditional virtues of patriotism grounded in religious feeling, and extraordinary endurance of the worst suffering. However, although defeatism was not nearly as widespread in the Army as in the Navy, this love of country and the semi-religious status of the Tsar did not translate into any deep-rooted loyalty to a sclerotic and sometimes corrupt system which often neglected to provide for its soldiers, or to a distant officer class who – apart from the moment of battle – seldom offered real leadership or showed any effective care for their men. Given the serious unrest in Russian cities in 1905, and its brutal suppression, it is hardly surprising that after long episodes of heroic fighting regiments sometimes crumbled away, looting stores and abusing their officers. There was also considerable ill-feeling not only between the Army and Navy, but between various elements of the Army, such as between the Siberian formations and those from European Russia.

It was only the poorest and most powerless who were unable to escape from conscription, which was regarded as a personal disaster and – when it took young men (and horses) from farming villages surviving on the very edge of subsistence – as a catastrophe for the community. Since the great majority of conscripts were illiterate their chances of acquiring real military skills and promotion were small; for the same reason both training and discipline relied upon the most basic, repetitive methods and harsh sanctions. On campaign the care provided for the men's basic needs seems to have been arbitrary and often minimal – as often because of the inefficient bureaucracy and Russia's huge distances, as because of the officer class's lack of identification with the mass of soldiers.

THE RUSSIAN ARMY IN THE EAST

The Russian forces which fought during the war were mainly those already serving in the Far East at the outbreak of war. These were made up of soldiers serving east of Lake Baikal in Siberia and in Manchuria, including those guarding the Manchurian railways, those stationed on the Amur River, and the garrisons of Vladivostok, Possiet Bay, Dalny and Port Arthur. Total Russian forces in the East at the outbreak of war were 3,115 officers and 147,479 men, with 266 pieces of artillery; this total included Frontier Guard and Siberian Militia units.

There were 32 regiments of East Siberian Rifles, each three-battalion regiment having an establishment of 39 officers and 1,906 men. In addition four regular regiments of line Infantry served in the theatre: the 123rd, 124th, 139th and 140th Regiments, of four battalions, making a total of 312 officers and 15,248 men. There were also 16 battalions of Reserve Infantry, totalling 252 officers and 15,300 men. A battalion and a company of Fortress Infantry from Nikolaievsk

The crew of a Putilov M1902 7.62cm quick-firing breech-loader prepare their gun for action during the winter of 1904/05; this was the standard Russian field artillery piece during the war. All the crew wear the M1881 greatcoat with the *bashlik* hood; the left-hand man can be seen to wear large felt winter boots. (Andrei Karachtchouk)



added another 20 officers and 1,186 men. The Frontier Guard Infantry were made up of 55 companies totalling 268 officers and 13,103 men.

Siberian Rifle Regiments

In 1904 the Siberian Rifle Regiment differed in strength from the European Russian line Infantry Regiment in that it only had three battalions at most. During the early stages of the war units were seldom up to their establishments, the average strength of a battalion being about 700 bayonets. Siberian regiments had fewer staff officers, with a colonel, a staff adjutant and a few other staff officers as well as 100 enlisted ranks who also performed various staff duties. Each regiment had its own mounted scout company – ‘*okhotniki*’ – with two officers and 140 other ranks. Before the outbreak of war the largest Siberian formation was the two-regiment brigade, with no divisional-sized formations, but some brigades were then grouped into ad hoc East Siberian Rifle Divisions. In October 1905, following the close of the war, all East Siberian Rifle Regiments were raised to four battalions, with a combatant war establishment of 68 officers and 3,852 NCOs and men.

The East Siberian Rifles were poor quality troops; the units were made up largely of reservists who had been recalled after discharge from military service, migrants from Western Russia, and Asian tribesmen. About 40 per cent of the ‘Siberian’ troops were in fact Poles, who were not as hardy in the extreme conditions of Manchuria as their true Siberian comrades. However, some commentators praised the fighting qualities of the Siberian soldiers, and blamed their poor performance on lack of training and leadership.

Siberian Artillery

The East Siberian Artillery had 32 batteries, organized into eight brigades of four batteries (numbered 1 to 4 within the brigade), each battery with eight guns. For tactical purposes the brigade was sometimes divided into two *divizioni* each of two batteries. An artillery brigade was normally attached to each infantry division, taking the same designation as the division. At the outbreak of the war the East Siberian artillery were in the process of re-equipping with the 7.62cm Putilov M1902 quick-firing field gun; 23 out of the 32 batteries had the new gun, and the other nine received it during the war.

Railway guards

The **Frontier Guards** were a border patrol force which also performed internal police duties in Russia's most distant provinces. The Frontier Guards were largely recruited from veterans who had completed their Army service; they received a higher rate of pay

A Russian 6in howitzer dug in during positional fighting in Manchuria; three officers and 12 men are visible in the gunpit. Two of the officers are wearing their pale greatcoats, while the officer in the centre just above the breech of the howitzer has a non-regulation *tulup* sheepskin coat to which he has added his shoulder boards. (Author's collection)



PORT ARTHUR GARRISON, 1904

This provides a representative 'order of battle'. The units listed below totalled approximately 41,000 men; and to defend the 25km (15½mile) perimeter the garrison had 646 artillery pieces of all kinds, and 62 machine guns.

4th East Siberian Rifle Division

(MajGen Fok)

1st Brigade:

13th E.Siberian Rifle Regt

14th E.Siberian Rifle Regt

2nd Brigade:

15th E.Siberian Rifle Regt

16th E.Siberian Rifle Regt

4th E.Siberian Artillery (4 btys)

7th E.Siberian Rifle Division

(MajGen Kondratenko)

1st Brigade:

25th E.Siberian Rifle Regt

26th E.Siberian Rifle Regt

2nd Brigade:

27th E.Siberian Rifle Regt

28th E.Siberian Rifle Regt

7th E.Siberian Artillery (3 btys)

Miscellaneous units:

5th E.Siberian Rifle Regt

(minus 1 company as Peking Legation Guard)

3rd, 4th & 7th E.Siberian

Depot Battalions

21st & 36th Frontier Guard Cos

3 x bns Fortress Artillery

1 x bty field howitzers

1 *sotnia*, Verkhne-Udinsk Cossack Regt

Telegraph Co, 2nd E.Siberian Rifle Div

Kuan-tun Sapper Company

Port Arthur Mining Company

The rest of the garrison was made up of ad hoc units of railway guard troops, and the crews from the ships of the 1st Squadron, Pacific Fleet trapped in the harbour. It was further reinforced by the raising of a local militia force:

Port Arthur Town Guard/

Volunteer Corps

As the situation deteriorated the leading townspeople asked if they could form their own policing force to be known as the Town Guard. Permission was eventually given, but this civic force was immediately transformed by the military authorities into a militia. All male residents were conscripted, with the younger men given part time guard duties so that they could carry on their civilian occupations. Older recruits were given support duties, as labourers in the various military stores or as orderlies in the town's hospitals. A total of 12 battalion-size units were eventually formed into what contemporary sources then called the Port Arthur Volunteer Corps. The force was put under the command of LtCol Duvernua, and included small numbers of police, customs and other uniformed civil personnel.

and enjoyed generally better conditions than the rest of the Army. Consequently they attracted a better class of recruit, and were among the most capable and well-trained of all Russian troops. Because of the vital importance of the Siberian and Manchurian railways to the armies in the Far East, and their vulnerability to attack, the Frontier Guards were entrusted with their protection, and excelled in this mission. Apart from security duties this sometimes involved the thankless task of defending a corridor of retreat along a railway line, and on such occasions the Frontier Guards earned a fearsome reputation for bravery. By February 1904 there were 55 infantry companies each 250 strong, 55 squadrons of cavalry, and six batteries of artillery mostly equipped with mountain guns, giving a total strength of 13,750; this was later increased to 72 companies and a total of 18,000 men.

Siberian Militia units

were also used for protection duties, and were organized into eight divisions each of 12 battalions, each battalion having a strength of roughly 1,000 men.

Cavalry

Before the start of the Russo-Japanese War the Russian Army had six line and 36 Cossack cavalry squadrons in theatre. By March 1904 these had been reinforced to 207 squadrons, 63 per cent of this total being Cossacks and the remaining 37 per cent either Dragoons or Mounted Frontier Guards. Non-Cossack cavalry which saw action during the war were primarily three Dragoon Regiments – the Primorsky, Nezinski and Chernigov; and the 42nd and 48th Squadrons of Mounted Frontier Guards. Six Mounted Frontier Guard Cossack *sotnias* were formed into the Frontier Guard Regiment, which served with the Manchurian army throughout the war.

A wagonload of artillerymen from the 23rd Artillery Brigade pose for the camera at Gatchina station before setting off for the front. The difference between the pale greatcoat of the officer in the centre and those of his men is strikingly obvious, as it must have been to Japanese snipers. Most of the gunners wear *shinel* greatcoats, the ends of their *bashlik* hoods crossed on the chest; but a couple in the foreground wear fancy Siberian *tulup* coats with coloured wool embroidery round the edges. In other photographs taken on this occasion it is interesting to note that the men are armed with old 1870s Smith & Wesson revolvers, of which large numbers were ordered by the Russian Army. (STAVKA Military Image Research)

Cossack troops

The Cossack troops had traditionally fulfilled the reconnaissance and scouting needs of the Imperial Army, and in this role they were expected to excel in Manchuria; but in the event they proved something of a disappointment. The units employed were second-rate troops mainly drawn – like the rest of the army – from regions outside the European Military District. The majority were Eastern Cossacks from the Don, Oranberg, Ural, Siberian, Trans-Baikal, Amur and Ussuri 'hosts' (*voisko*), with Caucasus contingents from the Kuban, Terek and Dagestan hosts. In general they were poorly trained, led and disciplined, and were regarded by other Russian troops as little better than militia. The Siberian Cossacks were criticized as mere 'infantry on horseback'; foreign observers judged that the Trans-Baikal Cossacks were 'badly prepared for war' and seemed to know nothing of reconnaissance or outpost duties. Russian soldiers – who often resented the Cossacks for their traditional role as the Tsar's blunt instrument in times of domestic unrest, such as the 1905 'revolution' – seem particularly to have disliked the Caucasians, with their flamboyant uniforms.

Attempts were made to exploit their more useful qualities by mounting large-scale raids behind Japanese lines. The first such raid by Gen Mishchenko in January 1905 employed a mixed force of about 10,000 men, mostly Cossacks but also Dragoons, with 22 artillery pieces, two machine gun sections and four detachments of mounted infantry. A smaller raid in May involved two Cossack divisions with six guns. Both were aimed at enemy supply lines and depots; some damage was done to railways and telegraph lines, but this was modest considering the forces employed. For most of the war Cossacks were themselves employed on security duties along the lines of communication.

The establishment of a Cossack regiment was 25 officers and 955 other ranks and 1,014 horses, in six squadrons or '*sotnias*'.



RUSSIAN ARMY UNIFORMS

Both the Russian and Japanese armies entered the war attired in outdated uniforms first issued in the 1880s: both the Russian M1881 uniform in dark green and the Japanese M1886 in dark blue belonged literally and symbolically to a bygone age. Lessons learned by the British during the Boer War (1899–1902) about the need for a more 'camouflaged' uniform imposed by the performance of modern rifles had to be relearned again by the adversaries in this

conflict, and improvements and adaptations made by both armies grew directly from their hard-won experience. It is strange that although foreign military observers from many nations were witnesses to this process, some European armies – notably the French – still went to war in August 1914 dressed in their traditional colourful uniforms.

* * *

The Russian Imperial Army went to war against the Japanese in 1904 dressed almost entirely in the 1881 regulation uniform, with minor alterations introduced over the intervening 23 years. The M1881 had been introduced by Tsar Alexander III with the double aims of both simplifying the uniform and promoting a conscious process of ‘Russification’, to distance his army from a past during which Russian soldiers had been dressed in virtual imitation of their Western European rivals. At this date the rankers’ uniforms and even their boots were still made up at unit level from bulk materials provided by the government; this led, inevitably, to uneven appearance and quality control.

1881 regulation uniform (enlisted men)

This consisted of a long, double-breasted tunic fastened at the right front with five hooks-and-eyes, of a green colour so dark as to appear almost black. The tunic had no external pockets; the slightly rounded collar had piping in the colour indicating the regimental sequence within the division, and the broad woollen shoulder straps were of the same colour. Only the Guards regiments had fitted tunics, those of the other units being quite loosely cut. Trousers (*sharovari*) were of the same dark green, made of woollen material; described as of ‘knickerbocker’ shape, these were worn tucked into knee-high boots. Guards regiments alone had coloured piping down the outer trouser seams.

In summertime the same boots and trousers were worn, but the tunic was replaced by a looser-fitting white ‘shirt-tunic’ or blouse known as the *gimnasterka* (‘gymnastics shirt’). Patterned on the traditional Russian peasant smock, this was at first intended for work duties in peacetime, but was adopted for a wartime role. The *gimnasterka* had two front buttons, one at the neck and one on the chest, covered with cotton material. It bore attached woollen shoulder straps in regimental colours. At the back of the shirt at waist level was a cloth strap which buttoned into a support loop for the soldier’s leather belt. The *gimnasterka* was usually dyed khaki for field service.

Headgear

Standard headgear for the Russian soldier was a forage cap known as the *furashka*, which might be peaked (visored) or peakless. The cap was dark green, with red piping around the crown seam and the top and bottom



In this studio shot taken in Mukden in January 1905, two infantry privates pose wearing the M1881 winter uniform, with its double-breasted cut and concealed front fastening. Both have generously sized Siberian-style fleece hats of differing shapes, and M1881 woollen trousers tucked into their M1867 boots. The man on the left is armed with the standard M1891 Mosin-Nagant; his issue belt with iron buckle plate supports a pair of M1892 ammunition pouches of stiffened box shape. Note the five-round cartridge clips protruding from the pockets of his additional canvas bandolier, its tape passing under the coloured shoulder strap of the tunic. His comrade has presumably borrowed for the occasion of the portrait this M1881 Cossack *shashka*, its scabbard slung from a standard Cossack shoulder belt. (Andrei Karachthouk)

A photograph wonderfully evocative of the period: a typical-looking Russian infantry unit resting on their journey in the town of Yinkow, while escorting a transport train. The foreground men wear the standard greatcoat and shaggy hats; the aluminium mess tins are clearly visible, and the right-hand man has an entrenching tool slung in its case on his belt. The officer standing at right has the pointed hood of his *bashlik* hanging down behind his shoulders. (Author's collection)



of the band. Coloured bands denoted each regiment within the division by seniority: red (1st), blue (2nd), white (3rd) and dark green (4th). Prior to early June 1904 only troops from Siberia had peaks (visors) on their caps; after that date it was ordered that all troops be issued with peaked caps, but this change took time to complete. Above the band on the front of the crown was the Romanov dynasty's oval cockade in painted tin, in orange, black and white (reading outwards); and on the band itself the soldier's regimental number was stencilled in red (or yellow) numerals. As the war progressed any new caps issued usually lacked the regimental number but retained the cockade. In service the cap soon lost most of its shape and would have resembled a workman's flat cap.

Even the peaked version of the cap afforded little protection from the glare of the sun, although the older pattern worn by some veteran officers had a larger and more useful peak. In the summer the standard cap was adapted by the addition of a white cloth cover, which in practice (like other parts of the uniform) was dyed in various khaki shades. During times of shortages some men also wore the cloth cover alone in place of the cap, in the style of a beret. Neck flaps in the style of 'havelocks' were also sometimes seen.

1881 greatcoat

The standard Russian overcoat (*shinel*) was earth-brown or grey-brown in colour, and was made of what was described as 'frieze-like' cloth – a rough, heavy wool with a raised nap. It was single-breasted, and reached half way between the knee and ankle; cloth collar patches and shoulder straps in the regimental colour were attached. In severe weather a knee-length sheepskin coat might be worn underneath the 'roomy' greatcoat, which was so loose-fitting that several layers of clothes could be worn underneath it. (A drawback was that it proved rather cumbersome when in combat, especially when its skirt became caked

with mud; but generations of soldiers had learned to attach hooks-and-eyes so that the skirt could be hitched up to shorten it.) A large detached hood or *bashlik* was often seen with the greatcoat, its long extensions wrapped round the neck or passed under the shoulder straps to cross on the chest.

Footwear

The basic footwear was a pair of knee-length boots (*sapogi*) of soft black leather, inside which the Russian soldier wore cloth foot-wrappings in lieu of socks. The boots were light in weight and had a spring



This Russian warrant officer is wearing the old M1887 white summer tunic dyed khaki for war service, as is the white cover on his officer's peaked cap – note that this includes a cover for the peak. His sword is a privately purchased M1881 officer's pattern. (Andrei Karachtchouk)

heel, but lacked hobnails on the sole, which consequently failed to grip well. At first sight foreign observers noted that Russian boots looked perfectly suitable for marching through the mud; but they were not waterproof, and large numbers of the rank and file were seen limping painfully at the end of marches. Another source comments that when the cereal crops of Kaoliang were harvested the remaining sharp stubble tore the Russian soldiers' boot soles open. When supplies of new boots did arrive from Russia they were of poor quality, and were said to wear out after only about 20 miles of hard marching. As usual, the common soldier suffered the ultimate consequences of the endemic corruption within the Russian system.

Although far more practical felt boots did begin to arrive at the front during the winter of 1904–05 there was still a shortfall of at least 300,000 pairs in December 1904. As the war progressed the reconnaissance platoons of some units abandoned their boots entirely for other forms of footwear. A lack of even poor quality boots led to the wearing of Chinese soft shoes with home-made woollen or canvas puttees; the cold weather versions of these *uly* were loosely made and so could be stuffed with insulating materials.

Equipment

Under Military Order No. 111 of 1881, the Russian soldier was to be supplied with a kitbag made from waterproof canvas, and a brown leather belt with twin cartridge pouches. He was also issued with a wooden water flask with metal fittings and copper cup, and a tent section with pegs and hammer. His personal kit consisted of two undershirts, a pair of underpants, two pairs of foot wrappings, a towel, a pair of gloves and a pair of mittens, together with tools for weapon cleaning and uniform repairs, and a spare pair of boots in a cloth bag. His food bag should have contained a ration of 6lb (2.5kg) of dried crusts, and 50g of salt. He carried 84 rounds of ammunition, with 30 in each of the belt pouches and an extra 24 in his pockets. The Russian infantry equipment weighed about 66lb, and was designed so that most of its weight was distributed to the hips.

The soldier was also issued a small bucket-type mess tin holding 2 quarts, which was made from tinned copper material. The soldier's overcoat was rolled into a horseshoe roll and worn around the shoulder with the ends tucked into the mess tin – an arrangement designed to stop the metal tin clattering on the march.

The basic M1881 equipment described above had been modified in various ways in the years before the Russo-Japanese War. The small canvas bread bag was taken out of service in 1889. In 1892 new cartridge pouches with slightly rounded bases were introduced for use with the Mosin-Nagant M1891 rifle. In the same year a bayonet frog was introduced, but this was of poor quality and rarely used. It was followed in 1893 by the introduction of a scabbard for the bayonet, but again this was of indifferent quality and was often discarded – it was largely redundant due to the Russian habit of leaving the bayonet permanently fixed. From 1899 new aluminium water bottles were introduced along with new aluminium mess tins, but throughout the war the old wooden flask and tinned copper mess tins continued in use.



This cavalry officer, *Kornet Zvaginov* – a pre-war military historian – is pictured wearing for field service a private-purchase infantryman's shirt-tunic in heavy woollen cloth, with added breast pockets; his *papaha* is a splendid example made from fox fur. He is carrying basic equipment: a binocular case and, hidden behind his right hip, a holstered revolver, with what appears to be a map case hanging below his sword hilt on his left hip. The silver cloth sash-style officer's belt and the revolver lanyard have stripes in the other Romanov colours of alternating orange/black. (Andrei Karachtchouk)

In accordance with Order No. 51 of 1893, Russian soldiers sometimes wore canvas bandoliers with covered pockets for ammunition, either across the chest or around the waist. One type seen in a photograph seems to have five separate compartments mounted on a brown leather strap.

Both armies tried to make up for shortages in their own equipment by taking items from prisoners or from their own or the enemy's dead. A Russian eyewitness described how during lulls in the battles his comrades would search the Japanese dead. A particularly popular item of booty was the Japanese compass watch, which fastened with a strap around the wrist.

Russian small arms

The standard rifle in 1904 was the Mosin-Nagant Model 1891, a 7.62mm bolt-action weapon with a five-round fixed magazine and a maximum range of just over a mile. A shorter Dragoon version was used by all Russian cavalry including the Cossacks. Russian military emphasis on the effectiveness of 'cold steel' was reflected in the fact that the cruciform-bladed socket bayonet was normally carried fixed at all times; it was usually dulled by painting it brown.

The standard sidearm was the 1895 Nagant revolver, a seven-shot weapon in 7.62mm, which was issued in double-action for officers but single-action for other ranks (in the High Command's opinion rankers could not be trusted not to waste ammunition if given the double-action model).

Some second line units still used the Smith & Wesson .44cal revolver, a clumsy-looking but reliable weapon (this single-action 'Russian Model' with hinged frame was based upon the 1873/75 S&W Schofield). Many officers purchased their own small arms; among the most popular were two early semi-automatics, the 7.63mm Mauser M1896 'broom-handle' and the 7.65mm FN/Browning.

As part of the cultural drive for 'Russification' ushered in by the 1881 regulations, a sabre of traditional *shashka* type was introduced for all branches. There were slightly different versions for officers, Dragoons, Cossack officers and Cossack enlisted ranks; the Field Artillery used the Dragoon pattern sword. The *shashka* came in various lengths depending on the height of the wearer – either 71cm, 74cm, 76cm or 81cm.

Officers' uniforms

The Russian officers' summer field dress at the start of the war was a high-collared, double-breasted white tunic with two rows of gilt brass buttons, known as a *kitel*. Stiff cloth shoulder boards – *pogoni* – displayed rank by a system of gold braid and metal stars (see panel 'Ranks & Insignia'). On field service officers often adopted the same *gimnasterka* shirt-tunic as their men, though of higher quality material and manufacture. Like the men's, these were usually dyed khaki, although

some officers do seem to have left them white. The *kitel* was also dyed khaki on occasion, but this was resisted by the older senior officers. Many officers also bought locally produced tunics, usually designed to be more practical in the field than the regulation versions.

Trousers were still the dark green M1881 with red piping down the outseams, and worn with officers' black knee boots. Officers' regulation greatcoats were double-breasted, and were described as a 'light bluish grey' colour with two rows of gilt buttons. Observers noted that this very different colour made officers dangerously conspicuous among their men, and easy targets for snipers.

Headgear was the M1881 peaked cap with the Romanov cockade at the front. In summer the dark green crown was fitted with a white cover, dyed khaki to match the tunic. As the war progressed the whole cap would be dyed khaki, or new khaki ones would be issued to or bought by the officers. Officers often adapted their peaked caps by adding cloth sunshades or 'havelocks' (as did their Japanese foes). One privately acquired headgear seen in use by some officers during the blazing heat of the Manchurian summer was a cork sun helmet.

Russian officers had to purchase any additional uniform items and equipment from officers' outfitters before leaving for the front, although an officers' shop was opened in Manchuria. Extra uniform items would

RUSSIAN ARMY RANKS & INSIGNIA

Officers and senior NCOs wore M1854 officers' stiffened shoulder boards. These comprised button-colour metallic braid lengthways stripes – gold for most Guards infantry and grenadiers, line infantry, rifles and artillery; silver for some Guards infantry and grenadiers, line infantry, cavalry, Cossack cavalry, engineers and medical. The braid covered the branch-colour facing cloth shoulder board, leaving piping visible in the secondary branch colour. Ranks were indicated by small five-point metal stars in the reverse of button colour, following a unique system: 'no star' ranks were senior to 3 or 4 stars. Medical officers had stars arranged lengthways on narrow shoulder boards. Units were indicated by button-colour Arabic or Latin numbers, Cyrillic letters or ciphers. (The special Cossack cavalry rank titles are shown below after a back-slash.)

General officers Wide braid:

Field Marshal (*General-fel'dmarshal* – Defence Minister Milyutin) Crossed batons

General (infantry, cavalry, artillery – *General ot infanterii, ot kavalerii, General-fel'dtseymester*) No stars

LtGen (*General-leytenant*) 3 stars in triangle

MajGen (*General-mayor*) 2 stars side by side

Field officers

Three braids, revealing two branch-colour stripes:

Colonel (*Polkovnik*) No stars

LtCol (*Podpolkovnik/Voyskovoy starshina*) 3 stars

Company officers

Two braids, revealing one branch-colour stripe:

Captain (*Kapitan/Yesaul*; cavalry *Rotmistr*) No stars

Junior Capt (*Shtabs-kapitan/Pod'esaul*; cavalry

Shtabs-rotmistr) One star above 3 in triangle

Lieutenant (*Poruchik/Sotnik*) 3 stars

2nd Lt (*Podporuchik/Khorunzhiy*) 2 stars

Junior 2nd Lt (*Praporshchik*) 1 star

Warrant officer Class I (*Podpraporshchik/Podkhorunzhiy*)

One wide lengthways braid

WOII (*Fel'dfebel*; cavalry & Cossacks *Vakhmistr*)

Wide transverse braid at inner end

Junior NCOs (*Unter-ofitseri*) & men

wore branch-colour shoulder straps with secondary branch-colour piping; yellow stencilled unit badges (scarlet on yellow, white or dark blue straps); and narrow

white or yellow (Guards – orange) transverse cloth bars:

Sergeant (*Starshiy unter-ofitser/Starshiy uryadnik*) 3 bars

Corporal (*Mladshiy unter-ofitser/Mladshiy uryadnik*) 2 bars

Lance-corporal (*Efreytor/Prikazni*) 1 bar

Private (*Ryadovoy/Kazak*) No bars

Infantry shoulder straps

Officers' stiffened shoulder boards were in gold braid, with lengthways stripes of scarlet or dark blue following those of their men (see below); the transverse braid of the *Fel'dfebel* was also gold, and the stripes of the junior NCOs were white. Volunteers (*Volnoopredelyaushiy*) had piping around the straps in white-orange-black cord. The woollen cloth shoulder straps displayed the regimental number in large Arabic numerals which could be seen easily from a distance. The colour of the straps indicated the brigade within the division. In the standard infantry division the distinctions were:

1st Brigade (1st & 2nd Regts) – scarlet

2nd Brigade (3rd & 4th Regts) – dark blue



Three Caucasian Cossacks chat at a railway assembly point with a Chinese boy servant in attendance. This picture shows the wide variety of fleece hats worn by the Cossacks, and note the long *cherkeska* coats. The man on the right has a traditional silver-mounted *kinjal* dagger, which by this date was largely for show. (Author's collection)

Russian uniforms in service

The uniforms in which the Russian Army went to war were not really adequate for the conditions they faced. Russian shirt-tunics were made of cloth which was sturdy enough for summer peacetime manoeuvres, but not for the weather in Korea and Manchuria; and they lacked any pockets. Overcoats were not warm enough for the extremely severe winter conditions faced in the East; and – as already mentioned – the boots were poorly made. After about six months in the field the poor quality of their original clothing and the lack of an efficient resupply system had reduced many Russian infantry to the appearance of tramps.

One of the first words of advice that a Russian soldier received when he arrived at the front was not to wear his white-covered summer cap when his head was above the level of the trench parapet: they provided excellent aiming marks, and the Japanese were good shots. When reinforcements arrived at the front dressed in their white caps and *gimnasterka* shirt-tunics they were ordered to dye them, a job usually done by local Chinese or Koreans. One soldier described how the Chinese worked through the night to dye the uniforms of a newly arrived unit. When they awoke next morning they found that their caps and blouses were a multitude of shades of khaki, from yellow to dark green. The colour most commonly described by the soldiers themselves was a 'sickly yellow'. A US Army observer at the front in early June 1904 noted that Russian reinforcements arriving in the front line were wearing caps and shirt-tunics dyed in various green and khaki shades ranging from very yellow khaki to a light green; he commented that the most effective were a greenish grey, a shade similar to the US Army's 'olive drab' but with a slightly greener tinge. Presumably these reinforcements had been told to dye their own uniforms, or they had been dyed for them, while still en route. A more basic method of altering the colour of the *gimnasterka* was ordered by Gen Kuropatkin: the soldiers were to wash their white blouses as seldom as possible, so that they would become dirty and less conspicuous...

include additional winter garments, fur-lined boots, thermal underclothes and other luxuries. A short grey coat for travelling was known as the '*tujurka*' (after the French *toujours*, 'everyday'). During the later part of the war some Russian officers were pictured wearing a black leather jacket with cloth shoulder boards attached. This jacket appears to be the Swedish *kurtka* model which would be worn by Russian armoured vehicle crews during World War I; it was only officially introduced in 1910, and any earlier examples were private purchases.

Although many Russian officers could afford to buy extra items of clothing and equipment others, especially the younger subalterns, could not. These junior officers had to make do with equipment normally issued to other ranks, which they could buy cheaply, and which had the additional advantage of making them less conspicuous to snipers.

(continued on page 33)

RUSSIA: STAFF

1: Captain, General Staff

2: Trooper, Primorsky Dragoon Regt

3: General Baron Meyendorf



RUSSIA: SUMMER UNIFORMS

1: Lieutenant, 85th 'Vyborg' Inf Regt

2: Lance-Corporal, 4th E.Siberian Rifle Regt

3: Private, 11th E.Siberian Rifle Regt

4: Captain, Chernigov Dragoon Regt



А.Корошук 2003

RUSSIA: WINTER UNIFORMS

1: Gunner, Fortress Artillery, Port Arthur

2: Officer, Siberian Rifles

3: 2nd Lt, Primorsky Dragoon Regt

4: Private, 139th 'Morshansk' Inf Regt



RUSSIA: COSSACKS

1: Private, Tersko-Kubansk Regt,
Kuban Cossack Div

2: 2nd Lt, 5th Siberian Regt

3: Lt Baron von Eske, 2nd Verkhne-
Udinsk Regt, Trans-Baikal Cossacks

4: Private, Trans-Baikal, Amur & Ussuri Regt



А. Карашук
2003

RUSSIA: FRONTIER & NAVAL TROOPS, PORT ARTHUR

1: Private, 21st Company, Frontier Guards

2: Lieutenant, Imperial Navy, landing uniform

3: Seaman, landing uniform

4: Seaman, summer working uniform



JAPAN: EARLY WAR UNIFORMS

1: Private, 2nd Inf Regt, Second Army

2: Pioneer, 14th Inf Regt, 12th Div

3: Lieutenant, 1st Inf Regt, Imperial Guards

4: NCO, 'Chunchu' covert unit



JAPAN: KHAKI UNIFORMS

- 1: Captain, 29th Inf Regt
- 2: Private, 18th Inf Regt
- 3: Medical orderly
- 4: Trooper, 13th Cav Regt



Н. Карачук
2003

JAPAN: WINTER UNIFORMS

1: Captain, 19th Inf Regt, 9th Div

2: Private, 47th Inf Regt, 12th Div

3: 2nd Lt, 3rd Cav Regt

4: Sgt, 5th Siege Artillery Bn



During the Russian withdrawal from Hai-Cheng in August 1904 the soldiers were still equipped with winter uniforms. With temperatures reaching 112° F, a number of carts were provided to each unit to carry the men's greatcoats and kitbags, but despite these measures a number of soldiers collapsed on the march from heatstroke.

Cold weather clothing

This came in a wide variety, both of appearance and effectiveness. The Russian Army lost a great deal of equipment, including many soldiers' greatcoats, during the retreat after the battle of Liaoyang in autumn 1904. With the onset of the bitter winter they faced the choice of freezing or of improvising clothing from what was available. General Kuropatkin was pragmatic enough to relax the normally strict dress regulations, and a wide range of more or less exotic outfits were to be seen. By the middle of December the whole army was supposedly provided with some form of winter coats, fleece or fur caps and felt boots.

Besides the standard 1881 issue greatcoat, a thick, knee-length, sheepskin-lined overcoat was also provided – the *polushbok*. Both officers and men also acquired a non-regulation locally made sheepskin coat known as a *tulup*. During the second half of the war a number of different types of winter coats were issued; ordered from a number of manufacturers, these did not conform strictly to dress regulations. Soldiers also bought or stole Chinese padded coats and trousers as well as locally made footwear. Other warm clothing issued during the war included a special undershirt of blanket material, and brown woollen mittens with separate thumbs and trigger fingers.

Before the war the standard winter headgear for most of the Russian Army was the round *shapka* of black lambswool or sheepskin, worn with a double-headed eagle frontal badge. In the Turkestan Military District the peaked cap was retained; and the troops in the Siberian Military District wore a shaggy black sheepskin hat called the *papaha*. During the war this became the standard winter headgear, and was popularly called the 'Manchzhurka'. One drawback of the true Siberian *papaha* was that in order to keep the ears warm it had to be pulled down until it almost covered the eyes.

During summer campaigning Russian regiments stored their winter uniforms in rear depots, and in October officers were sent from every regiment to retrieve their men's warm clothing from the stores in Harbin. Some regiments which had served during the spring fighting had worn their winter uniforms out and needed replacements, and these units were issued with locally purchased Chinese coats. Of quilted or wadded grey cotton, these did not differ other than in colour from the normal Chinese peasant type, which were usually blue.

Meanwhile, new reinforcements sent to the front from September onwards already had their winter gear with them. As they came eastwards from Moscow along the rail network they received winter garments from three main depots along the route, at Kazan, Chelyabinsk, or finally at the Biaknor railhead. When the soldiers reached Biaknor they were



A sergeant of Siberian Cossacks poses as if firing from behind cover. His rank is shown by the three yellow lace bars across the scarlet shoulder straps of his dark green *chekmen* coat. His short-pile sheepskin *papaha* displays the Romanov cockade below a scroll-shaped yellow metal distinction badge awarded to units from 1878 onwards; a cross of yellow braid can be seen on the scarlet cloth crown. (Adeq Historical Resources, Inc)

checked by their officers, and any who were missing items of winter uniform or kit were immediately issued with it.

Cavalry uniforms

The uniform worn in summer by the Eastern or 'steppe' Cossacks included a cloth peaked cap with a black leather peak; Don, Oranberg and Semirechensk Cossacks wore a white cap cover. The white shirt-tunic was worn, over baggy grey-blue breeches with broad seam stripes (*lampasi*); the high, soft leather boots were normally worn without spurs. Like the rest of the army the Cossacks dyed the *gimnasterka* and cap various shades of khaki during the war. Winter uniform was usually a Cossack-style frock coat, the *chekmen*; this was dark blue for Don, Astrakhan and Ural Cossacks and dark green for the other hosts. Over this they wore the standard cavalry pattern greatcoat. Headgear was a tall fleece hat with a short pile, and a cloth crown in the colour of the wearer's host:

Cap bands, hat crowns, shoulder straps & trouser stripes:

Don & Siberian – scarlet

Ural & Semirechensk – crimson

Oranberg – light blue

Astrakhan, Trans-Baikal, Amur & Ussuri – yellow

The Cossacks of the two **Caucasian** hosts wore the knee-length kaftan-style coat or *cherkeska*, open to the waist over a long undertunic or *beshmet*, and decorated with open cartridge pockets on the chest. Shoulder straps/boards attached to the *cherkeska* were scarlet for Kuban and light blue for Terek Cossacks. The high-collared *beshmet*, fastening down the front with hooks-and-eyes, was supposed to be in the host colour. Baggy black trousers, with a broad stripe in host colour, were tucked into the usual Cossack boots. Headgear was as for the other hosts, with scarlet or light blue crowns. Caucasian Cossack artillerymen wore a black *beshmet* with red edging and wore a gilt metal badge.

Besides regulation dress a wide variety of other clothing was worn by Cossacks during the conflict (e.g. see Plate D). Again, they had traditionally been responsible for supplying their own equipment and weaponry, and a good deal of variety could be seen. They were usually armed with a short version of the 1891 Dragoon model rifle, and the standard sword carried by non-Caucasian units was the M1881 'Cossack type' sabre.

In 1881 all cavalry apart from the Cossacks were converted to **Dragoons**. Their headgear was a small round fleece cap known as a '*dragoonska*', with a stiff cloth crown in regimental facing colour. The rest of the uniform consisted of a dark green double-breasted tunic which fastened with hooks-and-eyes; in 1897 a new pattern was ordered, still double-breasted but with 12 front buttons. The blue-grey breeches were tucked into soft black leather boots. In the field Dragoons usually wore the *papaha* in its various styles and shapes.

Port Arthur Volunteer Corps

This local militia wore whatever uniforms they could get hold of. Many, recruited from the police,

Troops on a firing range in Japan before the outbreak of the war, wearing white cotton drill uniforms with the dark blue M1886 cap. The drill fatigues are believed to have been somewhat different from the white summer uniform issue. The NCO instructor is wearing the M1886 dark blue winter uniform. All wear full kit including the unshaven hide knapsack. (Author's collection)



customs and other uniformed services, would have worn their respective uniforms, and others their own civilian clothes with occasional items of uniform. Photographs show some of the volunteers wearing plain white peaked caps. The official uniform of the Russian Militia (*Opolchenie*) was identical to the regular Army model but with their own insignia and shoulder board identification system; Christian soldiers had a brass St George's Cross cap badge with the Tsar's monogram, and Muslims an octagonal oblong badge instead.

THE JAPANESE ARMY IN 1904

The Japanese Army was nearly 400,000 strong, with a large number of battle-hardened soldiers who had seen action in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95.

The combatant army was organized in 12 divisions plus the Imperial Guard Division. Each division's main strength was two infantry brigades, each brigade comprising two regiments, each with three battalions. Additionally the division had a cavalry regiment (three squadrons); an artillery regiment (two battalions, each of three batteries); a 600-man pioneer/engineer battalion (three companies); and a telegraph company (three sections).

In all there were 17 regiments of artillery with between 612 and 680 field guns.

First line strengths were 88,000 infantry; 8,500 cavalry; 14,000 artillery, and 11,000 garrison artillery; 5,000 engineers/pioneers, and 10,000 transport troops. When reserves were called up the total strength increased to 186,800 infantry; 11,500 cavalry; 15,500 artillery with 800 guns, and 13,000 garrison artillery with 20 guns; 9,000 engineers and 12,000 transport troops. The Territorial Army totalled a further 123,500 men of all branches with 300 field guns.

Morale and effectiveness

Both leadership and rank-and-file were well motivated, with a clear idea of what their war aims were, and what needed to be done to achieve them. Russian court and staff opinion (all too often the same thing) consistently underestimated the Japanese for reasons of crude racial prejudice; but foreign observers (including even Gen Kuropatkin, during a visit in 1903) generally agreed that the Japanese Army had adapted to modern methods with an impressive seriousness.

Since education had been one focus of Japan's leap into the modern world under the Meiji Emperor, the Japanese conscript was in fact far more likely to be literate than his Russian counterpart, which made Japanese training more effective. He was indoctrinated to regard service to the emperor with patriotic enthusiasm; and even when this doctrine failed to convince (as among units which refused to leave their trenches for yet more suicidal

A standard bearer and escort of the 1st Infantry Regt pose proudly with their unit's standard, badly damaged during this regiment's service in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. Japanese regimental standards had a gold chrysanthemum finial and a gold fringe around the edges. Superimposed at the bottom left corner of the field, over the red rising sun motif, was a white patch bearing the regimental number. The blue uniforms of the new 1904 regulation bear cuff ranking of the ring-and-star system previously worn only on khaki summer tunics. (Author's collection)



JAPANESE FIELD ARMIES IN MANCHURIA, AUGUST 1904

First Army (Gen Kuroki)
Guard Division – 1st & 2nd
Guard Brigades
2nd Division – 3rd & 15th
Brigades
12th Division – 12th, 23rd &
Guard Kobi Brigades

Second Army (Gen Oku)
3rd Division – 5th & 17th
Brigades
4th Division – 7th & 19th
Brigades
6th Division – 11th, 24th &
11th Kobi Brigades
Support Bdes – 1st Cavalry
& 1st Field Artillery

Fourth Army (Gen Nozu)
5th Division – 9th & 21st
Brigades
10th Division – 8th, 20th &
10th Kobi Brigades

Plus, before Port Arthur,
Third Army (Gen Nogi)
with at this date 1st, 9th &
11th Divisions

assaults at Port Arthur), there was a more consistent *esprit de corps* throughout the army as a whole.

Observers noted many instances of the intelligent care taken by officers in the performance of all aspects of field service, and of the patient obedience of their troops. While court influence was obviously important, Japan's power structure had only recently re-invented itself; a number of different political power centres acted as mutual checks and balances, and neither the young emperor nor any other one man enjoyed the autocratic power of Tsar Nicholas and his family. Military appointments did not depend upon manipulated favouritism to the same degree, and in general the profession of arms was taken seriously. Compared with their Russian counterparts, more Japanese officers were determined to excel through study, energy and self-discipline as much as by social connections; and they believed in victory. This was a vigorous young society, ambitious to overtake the older powers, and the ideal of service was not being frustrated by the inertia of the ruling class.

In contrast to the grumbling Russian Empire with its huge ethnic and social divisions, Japan was a unified and broadly contented society. While by modern Western standards conditions of service for a Japanese conscript were grim, by comparison with the life of a contemporary peasant farmer (or of many Russian conscripts) they were perfectly tolerable – plentiful food, good clothing and regular pay were a novelty. Discipline was as rigid as in Russia, but was the natural product of a self-disciplined society, and the social gulf between regimental officers and rankers was narrower than in the Tsarist army. Except when on active service the soldier's daily round of duties allowed him reasonable spare time to enjoy games, bathing, and modest free issues of alcohol and cigarettes. Intelligent efforts were made to provide him with decent conditions on campaign, such as good rations and basic comforts when in transit or in camp. In Manchuria this reduced the degree of pillaging and maltreatment of the local Chinese civilians below that suffered in Russian-occupied areas, with consequent benefit to the Japanese intelligence network.

It is also worth stressing that at the beginning of the 20th century Japanese treatment of wounded and prisoners was agreed – by neutral Western observers and returning Russian captives alike – to be generally humane. The savagery of the 1930s–40s was still in the unimagined future.

Despite their embrace of the new military technology and tactics, however, the Japanese, no less than the Russians, still clung to many of their old traditions. One example was the bizarre incident related by a Russian officer during the siege of Port Arthur. Some of the more fanatical Japanese officers had complained of their army's poor performance during the siege. The emperor is said to have replied that these officers should



A medical team wearing a mixture of dark blue and khaki uniform items; from its straining buttons, the rear stretcher bearer appears to be wearing the summer khaki jacket over the top of his dark blue tunic. (Author's collection)

take matters into their own hands instead of criticizing others. A number of them then donned their families' traditional samurai armour and swords, and took part in a two-day assault on Vysokaya Hill. The Russian defenders were shocked by the sight of medieval warriors charging bravely up the hill towards them; but this amazement did not deter them from inflicting heavy casualties on the courageous but futile charge.

JAPANESE ARMY UNIFORMS

This tough-looking veteran of the Japanese infantry wears marching order. His rank of corporal is shown by the two yellow stripes on the cuffs of his M1886 blue uniform; he has scarlet infantry shoulder straps and trouser stripes. His awards are (right) the medal for service during the Sino-Japanese War, and (left) the Order of the Sacred Treasure 8th Class, awarded for long and meritorious service. (Author's collection)



1886 regulation uniform (enlisted men)

The forces of the Imperial Japanese Army (*Dai-Nippon Tei-koku Riku-gun*) which landed in Manchuria in early 1904 were dressed in the 1886 regulation winter uniform made of dark blue cloth. The single-breasted tunic had a standing collar, piped in yellow for line troops and scarlet for Imperial Guards; five brass front buttons; and shoulder straps in branch-of-service colour according to 1887 regulations (see panel 'Ranks & Insignia').

Trousers were dark blue, with a stripe about an inch wide down the outseam, in yellow or scarlet for line troops or Imperial Guards. They were worn tucked into white cloth gaiters which reached up to just below the knee and buttoned up the outside, with a buckled leather strap fastening at the top and another passing under the brown hobnailed shoes.

Headgear

The dark blue 'pillbox' style M1886 cap had a black leather peak and chin strap, and a coloured band and crown seam piping, in yellow or scarlet for line division troops or Imperial Guards respectively. All branches wore a brass five-point star badge frontally on the band. In summertime a white cloth cover was worn over the crown of the cap, and a light cotton sun flap or 'havelock' was fastened to the back of the cap by buttons on either side. When not required this was usually tucked up inside the cap. The cover and flap changed to khaki with the adoption of this colour for the rest of the uniform (see below).

Greatcoats

The M1886 overcoat worn at the start of the war was single-breasted, with large bone buttons, made of a heavy dark blue material and unlined, and with an attached hood. There was a second type of cold weather coat, also dark blue in colour and single-breasted, but with a goatskin lining. Like the rest of the 1886 uniform the dark blue overcoat was found to be conspicuous in service conditions, and was discarded as soon as an alternative was available (see 'Cold weather clothing' below).

Footwear

The Japanese soldier wore a pair of brown leather hobnail shoes, which were worn greased rather than polished (unlike the rest of the leather equipment). Other footwear seen in service were the traditional *tabi*, light fabric shoes with a separated big toe. All Japanese soldiers were quite capable of producing their own emergency footwear by plaiting straw into traditional peasant sandals; these might be worn in camp or on the march to save wear on the boots (and for comfort – many peasant

soldiers took a long time to get used to stiff leather footwear). The Russians countered attacks by troops wearing straw sandals by scattering tacks around their positions.

Cavalry uniforms

At the outbreak of war the cavalry wore dark blue tunics of 'Attila' cut, with green standing collars and cuffs. These had five brass front buttons down the centre of five rows of hussar-type cord frogging, with loops to five buttons at each side of the chest. The frogging was black for officers and yellow for NCOs and other ranks. On the back of each side of the tunic a single cord with a loop at the end passed from the armhole seam down to the small of the waist, then dropped in three cords to loops at the hem. Headgear was the M1886 peaked cap, with the band and piping in the green branch colour. The breeches were scarlet with a green sidestripe, and were worn with black leather riding boots with steel spurs.

These particularly colourful uniforms were gradually replaced with much plainer khaki (see below); but the process of replacement seems to have been slower than in the infantry, and the old Attila was still worn by some troopers until the end of the war. Equipment included a single brown leather ammunition pouch, larger than the infantry pattern, worn on the right hip of the belt, and a slung water bottle. Any other kit was carried in saddle bags, which also held additional supplies of water.

M1904 khaki uniform (enlisted men)

The old pre-1904 summer uniform was made of white cotton and was usually worn with the standard cap with a white cloth cover on the crown. By the outbreak of the war this uniform was being phased out of service but was still being worn by recruits in training in Japan. As the war progressed a new khaki M1904 summer uniform was issued, the old white version still being worn by reservists in Japan.

The 1904 khaki summer jacket was single-breasted, with five brass front buttons, and cut shorter than the dark blue tunic. It had two inside breast pockets, and an extra pocket that held the soldier's first aid kit. Some photographs of Japanese soldiers also show roughly sewn breast pockets on the outside of the tunic, presumably added by individuals. The tunic did not have shoulder straps, and the wearer's branch of service was now shown only by the colour of the cap band and of the rank insignia on the sleeve (see panel). The straight-cut trousers, without sidestripes, were usually worn tucked into the old white canvas gaiters, which were often dyed khaki to match the uniform. The new khaki cap was of slightly more modern shape than the blue version, with the edges of the crown bulging out slightly proud of the body. It had a coloured band but not matching seam piping.

Factory-made khaki uniforms were issued in Manchuria in June 1904 after the battle of the Yalu River. Priority was given to the infantry, followed by the cavalry and finally the artillery; some second line troops did not receive them before the end of the war. As far as is known only troops in



Cheerful Japanese soldiers of the 38th Infantry Regt take a break for rice and sake; the immaculate dark blue M1886 uniforms which they wear for this photograph would soon lose their shine when they reached the battlefield. Their greased boots appear lighter than the polished leather of their belt equipment. On the scarlet shoulder straps the white metal Arabic numerals of the regimental number show up clearly, as do the yellow cuff stripes of several corporals and senior privates. (Author's collection)

OPPOSITE The commander of a Japanese cavalry regiment and his adjutant pose at Hiroshima railway station before departure for the Manchurian front. Both wear the early war cavalry uniform with frogged 'Attila'; the commander's three medals show that he served in the Sino-Japanese War. Both carry M1886 cavalry sabres, and the senior officer has a water flask on his hip. (Author's collection)



A Japanese artillery crew move their Arisaka 7.5cm field gun into position; most artillerymen kept the blue M1886 uniform throughout the war. Each Japanese division had 36 field guns in the six batteries of its artillery regiment. The 7.5cm, adopted in 1897, was the standard equipment; but six heavy 28cm (11in) howitzers were also used to great effect during the siege of Port Arthur, and were later dragged north to take part in the battle of Mukden. Quite widespread use was also made of captured Russian field guns and machine guns. (Author's collection)



the Manchurian theatre were actually issued with khaki uniforms. A newspaper report of 13 August 1904 describes a large-scale exchange of summer for winter uniform at Feng-Wang Cheing, the soldiers handing in their dark blue uniforms when receiving their new khaki issue. This policy may not have been universal, however, as many Japanese soldiers were seen late in the war still wearing items of the dark blue uniform.

Equipment

Japanese soldiers carried equipment with a total weight of about 52 pounds. The basic harness was a brown leather belt with three box-like cartridge pouches attached, two at the front and a larger one at the rear; the two front boxes held 30 rounds each and the rear box 60 rounds. On the back the soldier wore a knapsack of unshaven hide stretched over a wooden framework, slung by brown leather straps. The pack (12in wide x 11in high x 4½in deep) contained three days' rations, 30 rounds of spare ammunition, two pairs of socks and a set of underwear. Other items included spares and cleaning kit for the rifle, bandages, grease for protecting the shoes, and personal items such as sewing kit, comb and scissors. The overcoat was folded and rolled up to be carried around the knapsack. An Army issue red wool blanket, and finally a waterproof canvas tent section measuring 5ft x 5ft 2in, were rolled on top of the coat, and the whole was then attached by four leather adjustable straps, two at the top and one at each side. The shelter section was usually joined to others by means of buttons, assembling into makeshift tents for anything between four and 18 men.

Other items in the soldier's kit included a pair of spare shoes strapped to either side of the pack, and a metal mess tin fastened to the back of it. A black- or brown-lacquered metal water bottle was slung over the left shoulder on a brown leather strap; during the war a khaki canvas cover was provided for this as part of the effort to camouflage the troops better. The last basic item was a khaki canvas haversack measuring 8in x 10in, also slung to hang on the right hip, and accommodating any extra gear. One useful piece of equipment issued to some Japanese troops was a pair of dust goggles; these looked very much like those worn by pioneer motorists in the early days of the automobile.

Entrenching tools were divided up between the men, a company carrying a total of 67 spades, 17 picks, five hand axes and five folding saws. Tools were fastened to the top or left-hand side of the pack depending on their type; when they were carried on the left, the spare shoes were moved to the right side.

Japanese small arms

The main rifle in service was the 6.5mm Arisaka Type 30 adopted in 1897, with a fixed five-round

magazine. Older 8mm Murata M1887 rifles were used by some second line and reserve units, and by most naval landing forces which saw action. Cavalry were issued with either the 8mm Type 22 Murata M1889 carbine or the more up-to-date Arisaka Type 30 in 6.5mm.

Japanese officers had to purchase their own sidearms, so many types were in service during the war. Pistols and revolvers manufactured in Japan were usually more expensive than Western models. To make domestically produced revolvers more affordable, officers' co-operatives were set up to produce them at a reduced price. The standard Japanese-manufactured revolver was the 9mm Type 26 of 1893, but 20-year-old imported Smith & Wessons were also in use.

Cavalry swords were longer than the standard pattern, with a blade length of nearly 33in to give enough reach to attack infantry from horseback. There were four types, for field officers, company officers, warrant officers, and NCOs and men. The officer's belt suspender was made from silvered chain rather than leather.

Officers' uniforms

The standard Japanese officer's uniform was immediately distinguishable from that of the rank-and-file. It featured a midnight-blue (virtually black) hussar-type 'Attila' jacket. This M1886 jacket was edged at collar, front and hem with black mohair braid, and the chest was decorated with five rows of black cord frogging with hanging loops and netted buttons. Rank was indicated on the forearms by a system of black braid 'knots' (see panel 'Ranks & Insignia'). Trousers were dark blue with red stripes down the outseam: company officers had one narrow stripe, field officers a broader stripe, and general officers two broad stripes. High black leather boots were worn with both winter and summer uniforms.

When the khaki 1904 uniform was introduced for officers during the war, it had a stiff-collared tunic fastened with nine concealed hooks-and-eyes, and normally a single left breast pocket; the rank insignia displayed on the sleeves were the same as those which had been worn on the M1893 summer uniform (see panel). This was worn with khaki breeches and a khaki cap.

One noticeable feature of photographs of Japanese officers during the war is the mixture of items from different dress regulations. For instance, the khaki M1904 tunic might be worn with blue M1900 trousers; and the white M1900 tunic might be worn alongside the M1893 or new M1904 khaki patterns, or even the M1874 white tunic with white cord frogging.

Officers' caps – both dark blue and khaki – closely resembled those of the rank-and-file but were of better quality. Rank was indicated by a system of black stripes around the coloured band: two black stripes for company officers, three for field officers and four for general officers.

Cold weather clothing

The dark blue M1886 winter uniforms were soon to prove impractical, making the soldiers easy targets, especially during positional warfare



A line of Japanese soldiers drill behind the lines at Port Arthur, dressed in the new issue khaki uniform; under magnification the cuff is seen to be cut to a point. The gaiters appear to be still white. Basic belt equipment includes (centre and right) the larger rear ammunition pouch. The blue M1886 cap is worn with a khaki cover over the crown only, and two men are wearing issue dust goggles. Several have a cloth (towel?) wrapped around the actions of their rifles, and one man (centre) has one tucked under the back of his belt. (Author's collection)

OPPOSITE

In this photograph taken by a US Army observer a soldier takes aim, wearing the khaki summer uniform; note the crumpled look of the field cap crown. Other points of detail are the visible cuffs of his white cotton undershirt, and the bulk of his knapsack with strapped-on tent section. Note the raised rear sight; the Japanese devoted more time and ammunition to musketry training than did the Russians. However, although based on the excellent Mauser system, the Arisaka 6.5mm Type 30 rifle acquired a reputation for unreliability, with frequent jams and misfires; one historian states that its dangerous weakness lay in design faults which allowed it to be fired after having been incorrectly assembled. (US Army)

JAPANESE ARMY RANKS & INSIGNIA

Officers wore narrow black cuff braids forming a single or triple knot, above medium-width black edging braid to the pointed cuff, on the dark blue M1886 officer's Attila jacket. On the M1893 and M1904 khaki summer tunics they wore narrow white braid rings above 1 to 3 horizontally placed silver five-point stars on the plain cuff.

General officers Triple knot on the Attila, comprising three pairs of 'circles' below a 'spearhead':

Field Marshal (*Gen-sui* – appointment introduced January 1898 for the Army Commander) 7-braid knot on Attila; 3 rings above 3 stars on summer tunic, plus multi-coloured enamel breast badge

General (*Tai-sho*) The same, without breast badge

LtGen (*Cho-sho*) 6-braid knot; 2 rings, 3 stars

MajGen (*Sho-sho*) 5-braid knot; 1 ring, 3 stars.

Other officers wore a simple knot on the Attila, with one pair of 'circles' below a 'spearhead':

Field officers:

Colonel (*Tai-sa*) 6-braid knot; 2 rings, 3 stars

LtCol (*Cho-sa*) 5-braid knot; 2 rings, 2 stars

Major (*Sho-sa*) 4-braid knot; 2 rings, 1 star

Company officers:

Captain (*Tai-i*) 3-braid knot; 3 rings, 1 star

Lieutenant (*Cho-i*) 2-braid knot; 2 rings, 1 star

2nd Lt (*Sho-i*) 1-braid knot; 1 ring, 1 star.

Warrant officer (*Toku-mu So-cho*) Black cuff edging on Attila; plain cuff on summer tunic

Non-commissioned officers and men On M1886 tunic, narrow cuff rings in line or Guards colours; on M1904 khaki jacket, in branch colours:

Sergeant-Major (*So-cho*) 3 coloured rings above medium width gold braid ring

Sergeant (*Gun-So*) 2 coloured rings above medium gold ring

Corporal (*Go-cho*) 1 coloured ring above medium gold ring

Lance-corporal (*Joto-hei*) 3 coloured rings

Trained (1st Class) Private (*Itto-hei*) 2 coloured rings

2nd Class Private (*Nito-hei*) 1 coloured ring

Shoulder straps

Shoulder straps on the dark blue M1886 tunic, by 1887 regulations, were in the branch colour:

Infantry – scarlet

Artillery – yellow

Cavalry & Medical – green

Pioneers (engineers) – brown

Supply Corps – dark blue

The regimental number was displayed in white metal Arabic numerals near the base. Support branches attached to units, e.g. medical personnel, had their particular symbol in the centre of the strap in place of the number. Coloured piping around some straps indicated a Student Cadet (red), a Military Preparatory Student (yellow) or a One-Year Volunteer (black & white).

against a background of mud, slush and snow. In a short-term attempt to solve this problem the khaki summer uniform was quite widely adapted to be worn over the blue winter uniform as a form of camouflage. This was done by unpicking the seams of the jacket and trousers and producing a sort of khaki overalls. In many cases these were still too tight to fit easily, and photographs show the front of the jacket failing to meet; it seems to have been fastened loosely with either ties or hooks-and-eyes. Soldiers also made rough sacking overalls to wear over the dark blue uniform, and are even reported to have worn their dark grey issue underwear over it. These improvisations were a purely temporary measure until the Japanese Army could issue their men with khaki winter coats, but they do confirm how seriously the problem of concealment was regarded.

Additional sources of winter clothing were local suppliers, and there is one reference to 200,000 sets of winter clothing being bought in northern China and delivered to the Japanese army dug in along the Sha Ho River in October 1904.

Once the supply system hit its stride, however, the Japanese soldier was relatively well provided with cold weather gear. This included goatskin or sheepskin jerkins, which were worn over the tunic and under the greatcoat. They were also seen worn in place of the greatcoat by some troops – e.g. artillerymen – when working in winter conditions,





Lieutenant-General Baron Oseko, the commander of the Japanese 7th Division, poses here wearing the M1900 'Attila' service jacket; note that for this senior rank the multiple braiding of the sleeve knots reached almost to the shoulder seam. His headgear is the red képi-style cap prescribed for general officers, although senior ranks in fact wore a wide variety of uniform. Photographs show officers wearing items from the 1874, 1886, 1900 and 1904 regulations in any combination they pleased.

General Oseko's division were sent as reinforcements to the Third Army besieging Port Arthur, and suffered annihilating casualties during frontal attacks on the defences of Hill 203 in late November-early December 1904. This vital position was stubbornly held by a relatively tiny garrison led by Col Tretyakov, who had already distinguished himself at Nanshan in May. (Author's collection)

since they offered both warmth and more freedom of movement than the greatcoat. A dark blue woollen 'mantle' with a large hood formed part of the M1886 uniform; this was used in transitional weather for such work as sentry duty, but it too was felt to be dangerously conspicuous.

New model winter coats were issued to the majority of the army in Manchuria as soon as the front stabilized in winter 1904/05. These were made from khaki blanket

material with very deep fleece or fur collars; in fact many of them were produced using actual blankets, donated by the Japanese public. A general appeal was publicized, and according to sources no fewer than 200,000 blankets were donated in Tokyo alone. This donation of material allowed the Army to provide their men with warm coats at little cost to the state. In addition, separate ear protectors were provided, made out of rat skins also collected for the Army by members of the public. They received a bounty for these, and since the appeal fortunately coincided with something of a plague of rats in Japan, some civilians made a healthy sum out of the trade.

One striking comparison made by foreign observers between the provisions for the Japanese and Russian armies was the fact that during the winter of 1904/05 every Japanese soldier was issued wherever possible with two blankets, while Russian soldiers had none.

This is not to say that Japanese soldiers were always adequately kitted out, however. On at least one occasion they were glad to make use of winter coats captured from the Russian 5th Siberian Rifles, which were recognized during their subsequent attacks.

One area of winter clothing in which both the Japanese and Russians were lacking was the provision of good gloves or mittens. The Japanese types were made from thick cloth but were not really adequate for the severe conditions in Manchuria. The Japanese soldier wore one or two pairs of ribbed woollen socks, and either woollen puttees or canvas gaiters. Some soldiers also wore woollen 'toe caps' over the top of their socks to protect themselves against frostbite. Japanese shoes were found to be inadequate for the winter conditions, the stiff, tight-fitting leather being particularly hard on the feet of peasants who had never worn them before they were conscripted.

Japanese soldiers outside a dug-out (note the neat brick chimney stack), wearing light-weight khaki jackets of varying lengths as 'camouflage' over their very visible dark blue uniform. (Author's collection)



THE PLATES

A: RUSSIA: STAFF

A1: Captain, General Staff

This General Staff officer, looking through a field telescope, is wearing the regulation officer's service dress coat, in light-weight sea green woollen material, with the black facings, red piping and silver buttons of the staff. The visible central stripe of the silver braid shoulder boards of captain's rank is black, the edging red; and his staff appointment is also indicated by his silver aiguillettes. Officers were responsible for buying extra uniform and equipment items from outfitters; his lambswool *papaha* is privately purchased and of high quality. As the war progressed many staff officers adopted an exotic variety of field dress, and this officer's regulation coat might well be replaced with a more practical locally made Chinese wadded coat.

A2: Trooper, Primorsky Dragoon Regiment

At the start of the conflict this dragoon is acting as a despatch rider for the General Staff. He is wearing the dark green M1897 Dragoon jacket piped in yellow, with 12 brass buttons, and yellow shoulder straps with the regimental monogram – the Cyrillic letters 'PRM' in red. Rank, where appropriate, was indicated by yellow 'Polish'-style sleeve chevrons distinctive to the cavalry branch. In place of the small fleece Dragoon hat he wears a larger *papaha*, giving more protection in the Manchurian climate; this was typical of the regiments of the Coastal Military District, such as the Primorsky. He is equipped with the standard brown leather belt and single cartridge pouch, and is armed with the M1881 enlisted ranks' Dragoon model sabre and the Dragoon version of the Mosin-Nagant M1891 rifle.

A3: General Baron Meyendorf

Commander of the Russian I Army Corps, and Adjutant to His Majesty, Gen Meyendorf is wearing the officer's white summer *kittel* jacket with gilt buttons. The cypher of Nicholas II on his massive gold braid shoulder boards shows that he is a member of the Tsar's personal staff. The sash-style braid belt is in the Romanov colours of silver with orange/black stripes. His dark green officer's peaked cap has white piping around the crown and the top and bottom of the red band,

Common Russian clothing terms

Attempts to transliterate from Cyrillic spelling and Russian phonetic pronunciation are notoriously varied. In this text we follow Boris & John Mollo, *Uniforms of the Imperial Russian Army*, Blandford Press (1979).

<i>Bashlik</i>	cowl or hood
<i>Chekmen</i>	Cossack frock coat
<i>Cherkeska</i>	Caucasian Cossack coat
<i>Furashka</i>	forage cap
<i>Gimnasterka</i>	soldier's shirt-tunic
<i>Kitel</i>	officer's summer jacket
<i>Papaha</i>	lambswool/sheepskin winter hat
<i>Polushbok</i>	fleece-lined overcoat
<i>Pogoni</i>	shoulder boards
<i>Sapogi</i>	knee-length boots
<i>Sharovari</i>	trousers
<i>Shinel</i>	woollen greatcoat



Two brothers serving as officers in the 36th E.Siberian Rifle Regt, 9th E.Siberian Div, I Siberian Corps. Typically, they wear the officer's pale bluish-grey version of the M1881 greatcoat, superior quality lambswool hats, and M1881 sabres. (Andrei Karachtchouk)

which indicates that he is a member of the Tsar's suite. The blue-grey trousers bear the general officer's wide double red stripes divided by a red piping.

B: RUSSIA: SUMMER UNIFORMS

B1: Lieutenant, 85th 'Vyborg' Infantry Regiment

This line infantry *poruchik* is wearing a khaki-dyed M1887 white summer uniform jacket. His gold braid shoulder boards show red at the centre and edges, and bear three rank stars and the regimental number in silvered metal; his gilt buttons bear the imperial double-headed eagle motif, and his belt is the standard officer's embroidered type in silver with orange/black stripes. The officer's pattern dark green trousers have red piping on the outseam. His officer's quality cap is of khaki-dyed cotton, with a black leather peak and the officer's version of the Romanov cockade. He is armed with an M1881 officers' sabre, with the standard officer's sword knot in Romanov colours, hanging from a black leather shoulder belt with gold braid facing. Like many officers during the war he is armed with a Nagant M1895 revolver in a black leather holster, secured by a white, orange and black cord lanyard.

B2: Lance-Corporal, 4th East Siberian Rifle Regiment

This soldier is wearing the style of uniform typical of most of the Russian infantry towards the end of the war. His *furashka*

has a khaki cloth cover, but the red piping round the bottom of the green band shows below this. His khaki-dyed *gimnasterka* shirt-tunic has the short buttoned opening off-set to his left; reports speak of many variations of khaki and green, due to the different dyes and stains used to colour the white smock. Shoulder straps, here in the blue of the 2nd Brigade of each division, bear the single white rank stripe of *efreytor*.

Extra ammunition for the M1891 Mosin-Nagant rifle is carried in the canvas bandolier across his chest; and note the bayonet carried permanently fixed in typical Russian fashion.

B3: Private, 11th East Siberian Rifle Regiment; battle of Yalu River, May 1904

This private is reconstructed from a description in the memoirs of the 35th Infantry Division's Dr V.Kravkov.

According to sources this soldier's tramp-like appearance was more the norm than the exception at this stage of the war. His shirt-tunic has been dyed a very unmilitary light pink shade. Its lack of shoulder straps was not unusual at this date, and those visible on his roughly rolled greatcoat – in the red of the division's 1st Brigade – are his only identification apart from the cockade on the cap cover. He is wearing this white cover as a sort of beret for lack of a proper forage cap, and has a pair of Chinese 'uly' shoes in place of army boots. Equipment is limited to the standard ammunition pouches and an aluminium water bottle carried in an M1899 cloth cover. His M1881 haversack is worn pulled around to the front, and carries extra ammunition.

B4: Captain, Chernigov Dragoon Regiment

This *rotmistr* illustrates the adaptations that many officers made to create a practical field dress. On his M1900 officer's peaked cap he has a khaki cover with a sun flap or 'havelock' attached by three metal loops. He wears a privately purchased non-regulation khaki officer's jacket with breast and skirt pockets. His grey-coloured M1881 Dragoon breeches have scarlet seam piping. He is armed with a Dragoon officer's M1881 sabre, with the cavalry sword knot – *temlyak* – hanging from the guard.

C: RUSSIA: WINTER UNIFORMS

C1: Gunner, Fortress Artillery, Port Arthur

This artillery crewman from the garrison of Port Arthur is wearing the kind of improvised uniform typical of many of the garrison. His civilian sheepskin coat is fastened with a standard infantry black leather belt with a steel buckle. His *shinel* greatcoat, slung here bandolier-style, is cut generously enough to wear on top of the sheepskin garment in extreme conditions. Around his neck and tucked under his equipment is his issue *bashlik* hood (note the tape edging), which was a separate garment. His dark green M1881 trousers are tucked into M1867 leather boots; and the whole outfit is topped off with an M1901 sheepskin *papaha* hat. Arms carried are an M1881 artillery sabre and a Nagant '3-line' revolver, secured by a red woollen lanyard.

C2: Officer, Siberian Rifles

This officer wears a locally produced *tulup* coat, to which unstiffened braid shoulder boards are attached. In the conditions of Manchuria non-regulation coats like this were allowed by the usually intolerant high command. His hat is the large, shaggy Siberian style *papaha* which became known as the '*Manchzhurka*', with a brass scroll badge awarded to his regiment for distinguished service – a device introduced in 1878. He is also fortunate to have a pair of



A standard bearer of what is described as 'the Tsar's Regiment of Sharpshooters' (Guards Rifles?) poses with his damaged colour for the camera of Victor Bulla, correspondent of *The Sphere* magazine; the picture was published in the issue of 17 June 1905. The double-headed eagle which should be attached to the finial of the staff has been shot away. With the usual winter field dress he wears the low-crowned, short pile lambswool hat normally worn as part of the dress uniform; note the award scroll above the cockade. He has the new M1899 water bottle slung on his hip.

privately purchased boots with leather feet and padded felt uppers. The officer's whistle around his neck is the Volunteers type rather than the regular pattern. His M1896 Mauser 'broom-handle' semi-automatic pistol hangs in its wooden holster-stock from a brown leather revolver belt and is secured by a lanyard in Romanov colours. A second revolver belt also serves to hold his coat together in the absence of a more substantial type.

C3: Second Lieutenant, Primorsky Dragoon Regiment

This *poporuchik* is dressed in a cavalry officer's regulation blue-grey winter greatcoat, with officer's buttoned collar patches in dark green trimmed gold, and attached shoulder boards. His dog fur hat is of the type favoured by this regiment. His equipment includes a non-regulation black leather waist belt with a left-handed holster for his revolver. His M1881 Dragoon sabre hangs from a gold-faced leather strap over his right shoulder. Over his left shoulder is a broad gold-faced belt for his *liadunka* 'cap pouch' worn on the back; this had a silvered flap and a gilt double-headed eagle badge.

C4: Private, 139th 'Morshansk' Infantry Regiment

This figure typifies the appearance of an averagely well-equipped Russian line infantry soldier in winter. He wears the

M1881 enlisted ranks' greatcoat with white collar patches, and his *bashlik* hood wrapped around his neck for warmth. His green, red-piped *furashka* cap has the white band of the third regiment within his division with the regimental number stencilled in red Arabic numerals, below the imperial cockade. (The regimental numbering was discontinued during the war.) Canvas bandoliers each carrying an extra 50 rounds were worn by many Russian soldiers; like the rest of their uniforms and kit, at this date they were still made up at unit level, so many variations would be seen. The rifle is carried with bayonet fixed; when going up to the front line most Russian soldiers discarded their bayonet scabbards (if they had ever received them) as a sign of their traditional faith in 'cold steel'.

D: RUSSIA: COSSACKS

D1: Private, Tersko-Kubansk Regiment, Kuban Cossack Division

This Caucasian Cossack wears the native *cherkeska* coat with the traditional 16 cartridge pockets on the chest. The silver *gaziri* (tubes for measured charges) usually carried in these pockets harked back to the Caucasian wars of the mid-19th century and were now purely decorative. His *papaha* has a cloth crown in the red identifying colour of the Kuban Cossacks, which is also seen as shoulder panels on his coat. His Caucasian sabre may be a family heirloom passed down over generations; he also carries a handsome silver-mounted *kinjal* Caucasian dagger. The Mosin-Nagant is the shortened Dragoon version; he carries ammunition in a leather or canvas bandolier at his waist.

D2: Second Lieutenant, 5th Siberian Regiment

As an officer of Siberian Cossacks he is dressed in a traditional *chekmen* frock coat in sea green, fastened with hooks-and-eyes and gathered with a Volunteer's silver-buckled waist belt. His silver braid shoulder boards bear gilt rank stars and regimental numbers. His red-striped blue-grey trousers are tucked into his high leather boots. His *papaha* is made from lambswool shaved short, and bears the standard officer's cockade on the front. In his left hand he holds his M1881 Cossack officer's *shashka* sabre, hung

over his right shoulder on a belt faced with silver braid. Like all Cossacks he uses the *nagaika* whip, which replaced spurs in Cossack use from 1885 onwards.

D3: Lieutenant Baron von Eske, 2nd Verkhne-Udinsk Regiment, Trans-Baikal Cossacks

Baron von Eske was a famous leader of volunteer Cossack scouts, and his wartime-raised unit (this regiment's 1st Sotnia) recruited mostly from former hunters drawn from the small Siberian nations of Buriat, Nanaizu and Tungusu Cossacks. They were dressed – like their commander – in homespun clothing in colours that would camouflage them in the forests. His green shirt-tunic with breast pockets has unstiffened shoulder boards attached, in silver braid showing a central stripe in the yellow of the Trans-Baikal host – also displayed as trouser stripes. Von Eske wore this distinctive white *papaha*; his shoes are the very practical and comfortable Chinese '*uly*' which were widely worn instead of Russian boots. Officers purchased their own equipment and weapons, and Von Eske is armed with a privately acquired Winchester rifle and a German hunting knife. He carries on sling belts an M1889 officer's leather map case and an M1882 wooden canteen.

D4: Private, Trans-Baikal, Amur & Ussuri Regiment

This Cossack is a rider from the front rank of his regiment, since only they carried a lance. His black-painted M1901 *pika* is about 14ft in length and has an iron spear point. The khaki-dyed summer smock is of the type usually worn by Cossacks for hunting in peacetime; it has two five-round cartridge pockets on the breast. The prescribed manner of carrying the rifle was slung over the right shoulder. The picket pin strapped to his saddle gear was part of the Cossacks' official equipment following an order of 1895.

E: RUSSIA: FRONTIER & NAVAL TROOPS, PORT ARTHUR

E1: Private, 21st Company, Frontier Guards

Frontier Guards made up a substantial part of the available manpower in the Far East, and this *straznik* – typically, an older and more experienced man – belongs to one of the

General Nogi and his staff pose at Third Army headquarters in Port Arthur following its surrender in January 1905. Most of the officers are wearing the new 1904 regulation service tunic of conventional cut, while Gen Nogi (grey beard, third row centre) and a few others retain the frogged M1900 'Attila'. At right are several civilians attached to the Army – *gunzoku* – identified by their organization's sleeve badge of a five-point interlinked star in different colours depending upon rank. (Author's collection)



units that defended Port Arthur. He is wearing the dark green M1891 Frontier Guards double-breasted jacket, with two rows of six brass buttons, and light green shoulder straps, collar patches, piping and pointed cuff braid. His grey-blue trousers, without seam piping, are tucked into the usual high Army boots; his hat is a tall fur 'Manchzhurka'. His black leather cavalry pattern equipment includes the M1893 scabbard for the bayonet of his Mosin-Nagant rifle. Japanese admiration of, and frustration with, the tough resistance of the Frontier Guards is indicated by a quoted order from one Japanese officer: 'Make no prisoners of green uniforms; kill them without mercy!'

E2: Lieutenant, Imperial Navy, landing uniform

The crews of the Russian ships caught by the Japanese blockade in Port Arthur were used as part of the city's garrison. This lieutenant in charge of a working party wears the M1899 black naval greatcoat with 12 brass buttons, and a naval officer's peaked cap with white piping – the cockade was made of porcelain. His equipment includes a pair of naval binoculars in their case, and a small canvas satchel for his personal belongings. His M1855 naval sabre is slung from a black leather belt with gilt lion-mask clasps and a snake 'S'-hook. His pistol lanyard is in the usual Romanov colours.

E3: Seaman, landing uniform

This sailor from the battleship *Pobeda* fighting with the garrison is armed with the standard M1891 rifle. His uniform is made up of an M1882 blue flannel shirt worn with a separate brighter blue collar with three white stripes around the edges. His black M1872 sailor's cap has white piping, and the imperial cockade above his ship's name on the band. The two black silk ribbons hanging from the back have painted yellow anchors at the ends. Black flannel trousers are tucked into high leather boots. His basic equipment is the black leather M1898 naval belt and two ammunition pouches.

E4: Seaman, summer working dress

As hot weather working uniform he wears the M1882 white summer shirt over his M1872 striped undershirt (*telnashka*). His peakless sailor's cap has a white cotton summer cover, and the tally identifies him as a crewman from the battleship *Retvizan*.

F: JAPAN: EARLY WAR UNIFORMS

F1: Private, 2nd Infantry Regiment, Second Army

This soldier wears the M1886 dark blue winter uniform which was standard issue in the first few months of the war. The collar piping and the rank stripe of a 1st Class private, like the piping and band on his cap and the trouser stripes, were worn in yellow by foot units of the line divisions. The cap displays the national star badge, and the shoulder straps in infantry scarlet bear his regimental number in large metal Arabic numerals. His long white canvas gaiters fasten by buttons up the outside and a buckled strap at the top. Above his shoulder can be seen the shelter tent section and poles fastened to the top of his knapsack, whose straps attach by braces to his front ammunition pouches. His equipment includes a water bottle and a canvas haversack slung on his right hip.



A Japanese medical orderly wearing the M1886 blue uniform with a Red Cross brassard. If his uniform accords with the regulations then his cap band should be in the green of the medical branch. Presumably the whistle in his left breast pocket is to summon stretcher bearers or other assistance. (Author's collection)

F2: Private, Pioneers, 14th Infantry Regiment, 12th Division

This private of pioneers, attached from the divisional battalion to the 14th Infantry, wears the standard dark blue M1886 tunic with his branch of service indicated by the brown colour of his shoulder straps. His white trousers are summer issue and show that the two versions of the 1886 uniform were sometimes worn mixed. His special pioneers' knapsack has the haft of his pick fastened to its left side and the detachable head in a leather case on top. Other members of this soldier's platoon would carry large shovels, again in two pieces. He is armed with the standard Arisaka Type 30 rifle, with bayonet fixed as he prepares to go into the attack.

F3: Lieutenant, 1st Infantry Regiment, Imperial Guards

The Imperial Guards infantry were distinguished by red cap bands and piping from the line units. This *cho-i* wears the officer's dark blue 'Attila' with black braid edging, cord frogging down the front, and the double-braid Austrian knot of his rank on the sleeve. The single black stripe around his red cap band identifies a company officer. His M1886 company officer's sword scabbard is hooked up to a black leather waist belt; he carries a rolled coat and a slung haversack and water bottle.

F4: Non-commissioned officer, 'Chunchu' covert unit

Attached to one of the units of local Manchurian bandits employed to harass Russian supply lines, this Japanese NCO is disguised as a Chinese to the point of growing a beard and wearing a false pigtail. He is well kitted out for the severe Manchurian winter with a warm Chinese coat and a padded jerkin, a sheepskin hat and felt boots. He is armed with a captured Mosin-Nagant M1891 rifle, and a Nagant revolver tucked under his waist bandolier.

G: JAPAN: KHAKI UNIFORMS

G1: Captain, 29th Infantry Regiment

During the fighting of summer 1904 this line infantry *tai-i* has adopted the practical issue khaki jacket and reinforced khaki breeches tucked into officer's leather boots. Since the cap band is the only place to indicate branch of service, it has now changed from line yellow to infantry red. His rank is shown by the 1893 system of braid rings and stars as used on the cuffs of the old white summer uniforms – here, three rings above a single star. To avoid telltale reflections his sword scabbard has been wrapped with khaki cloth.

G2: Private, 18th Infantry Regiment

This tough looking veteran from the 3rd Infantry Division wears the standard uniform issued to most Japanese troops in Manchuria during the latter part of the war. His khaki jacket has his 1st class private's rank stripe on

the cuffs in infantry scarlet, matching his cap band. The khaki of his cotton trousers does not match the jacket; there were noticeable differences in the exact shades, from one soldier to another and even between parts of the same soldier's uniform. This man's khaki cap cover has an attached sun flap, which was of great use in the blazing heat of the Manchurian summer plains. His gaiters are the old white canvas type re-dyed khaki. A Japanese soldier would normally carry 120 rounds of rifle ammunition, but this would be increased to 230 when going into action.

G3: Medical orderly

This soldier of the medical corps, displaying the red cross on a brassard and on his bag of dressings, is wearing the 1904 khaki uniform with breast pockets added to the jacket – either by the soldier himself or by a local tailor. Supporting branches generally had a low priority for the issue of the new khaki clothing, but the medical personnel who shared the hazards of the front line with the infantry did receive it. Here canvas gaiters are worn above local Chinese shoes. The medical corps colour of green is displayed in the cap band and his cuff rank stripe.

G4: Trooper, 13th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Independent Cavalry Brigade

The khaki uniform was worn by some of the Japanese cavalry in the field, although the old coloured uniform was also worn concurrently. This trooper has tucked the 'havelock' sun flap up inside his cap. He is also wearing a pair of woollen gloves, which were probably sent to him in a comfort package from his relatives at home. Cavalry equipment featured only a single right-hand ammunition pouch on his hip, and a standard water bottle. The rest of his equipment, including extra ammunition for his Arisaka carbine, would be stowed in his saddlebags.

H: JAPAN: WINTER UNIFORMS

H1: Captain, 19th Infantry Regiment, 9th Division

This officer, from a unit of Gen Nogi's Third Army besieging Port Arthur, is wearing a khaki M1904 greatcoat with a large hood, over the top of his dark blue M1900 uniform. Japanese officers were allowed a great deal of licence in the uniforms they wore, and items from various dress regulations were worn together. His rank is not displayed on the greatcoat but is indicated by the two black stripes, divided by a red piping, around his red cap band. Over his right shoulder he has an adjutant's yellow and white sash – obscured here are the two tassels at the end. The sword was worn

Japanese soldiers photographed at night after landing at Chemulpo (Inchon) in Korea. They wear heavy duty khaki winter coats with goatskin lining – see Plate H2 – which seem to have been issued first to élite units such as the Imperial Guard. Some foreign observers reported that this coat was worn on top of the M1886 dark blue greatcoat; less fortunate units had to make do with that alone.

(Author's collection)

underneath this greatcoat with only the hilt emerging from a slash in the waist.

H2: Private, 47th Infantry Regiment, 12th Division

This infantryman from the division's 12th Brigade is on the march in cold weather, wearing the overcoat made from blanket material and sheepskin which could be worn over the top of the old M1886 blue greatcoat. Although he is relatively well dressed for winter he, like many of his comrades has not been issued with a pair of gloves or mittens.

H3: Second Lieutenant, 3rd Cavalry Regiment

Although pictured late in the war, this officer is still wearing – under his rather flamboyant privately purchased fur jacket and tall felt boots – the coloured cavalry uniform. The cap has cavalry green piping and a band with a black rank stripe. The dark blue 'Attila' has black cord frogging; NCOs and men had yellow trim on the jacket, but all ranks wore the red breeches with green piping or stripes down the outseam. His sidearm is the Type 26 revolver which was standard cavalry issue, and he has an M1886 company officer's sword. The system of sword knots for this period is not fully known, but company officers are reported to have had them in gold braid.

H4: Sergeant, 5th Siege Artillery Battalion

Artillerymen were usually the last in line to receive the new issue of khaki uniforms and many continued to wear the old dark blue until the end of the war. This NCO displays yellow artillery distinctions, and the cuff rank insignia of *gun-so* – two narrow yellow stripes above one medium gold. He has acquired a sheepskin jerkin surcoat, combining warmth with freedom of movement. His only armament is the M1886 artillery shortsword or 'hanger', which was standard issue to all gunners; although designed as a defensive weapon it seems to have been used more often as a cutting tool.



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