

**Organization of the Units of the German Army
1918**

Infantry Division

Divisional Headquarters (108 men)

Infantry Brigade

Brigade Headquarters (13)

3 Infantry Regiments, each with

Regimental Headquarters (177 total for 3 HQs)

3 Infantry Battalions (6,984 total for 9 Bns)

3 Machinegun Companies (1,233 total for 9 Cos)

Artillery Command:

Artillery Command (Brigade HQ) (25)

Field Artillery Regimental Headquarters (18 total)

1st Battalion (1st, 2nd & 3rd Btrys) (guns)

2nd Battalion (4th, 5th & 6th Btrys) (guns)

3rd Battalion (7th, 8th & 9th Btrys) (howitzers)

Total 3 Battalions (1,320 men)

Pioneer Battalion

Pioneer Battalion Headquarters (5 men)

2 Pioneer Field Companies (536 men)

Searchlight Section (47 men)

Trench Mortar Company (250 men)

Divisional Troops

1 Telephone Detachment (200 men)

1 Divisional Motor Transport Column (100 men)

1 Bearer Company (260 men)

2 Field Hospitals (122 men)

1 Veterinary Hospital (75 men)

Infantry Regiment

Regimental Headquarters (4/1/54/16/2)

1st Battalion (23/3/1,050/59/19)

1st, 2nd, 3rd. 4th Infantry Companies (5/259/10/4 ea)

1st Machine Gun Company

2nd Battalion

5th, 6th, 7th & 8th Infantry Companies

2nd Machine Gun Company

3rd Battalion

9th, 10th, 11th & 12th Infantry Companies

3rd Machine Gun Company

Machine Guns

When the war erupted every infantry regiment and Jäger battalion had a machine gun company, six guns and a spare gun, assigned to them.

In 1915 and 1916 additional machine gun sections, known as *Feldmaschinengewehrzüge* and *Machinegewehr-Ergänzungszüge* were formed. They contained 30-40 men under the command of an officer and had 3-4 machine guns. These sections were assigned to infantry regiments on an "as needed" basis. By the end of 1915 several infantry regiments possessed two full machine gun companies, the second being formed from these additional units.

During the winter of 1915/1916 a new series of machine gun units were formed. They were formed from picked machine gunners, who underwent a course of four or five weeks where they were especially trained in the "offensive" use of the machine gun.

In February and March 1916 these new "machine gun marksman sections" began to arrive at the front. About 200 were raised and they were allocated on a divisional basis, one per division. They consisted of:

- 1 Captain or lieutenant
- 2 Feldwebel (Sergeant Majors)
(or Vizefeldwebels - Vice Sgt Majors)
- 6 Gun Commanders (Unteroffiziere)
- 20 Gefreite (Lance Corporals)
- 40 Machine Gunners
- 1 Cyclist Orderly
- 1 Armorer
- 1 Transport Driver
- 6 Spare men
- 79 Men total

By the beginning of 1916 the number of machine guns in the German army had risen from 1,600 in peacetime to over 8,000.

By July 1916 the total of machine guns, including captured weapons in use by the German army had risen to about 11,000. However, no standard organization had, as of yet, been adopted. As a result, an infantry regiment could have from 6 to 25 machine guns. In August 1916 the machine gun formations were reorganized and a company of six guns was established as the standard.

In September 1916 each regiment standardized with an organization of 3 machine gun companies, one per battalion. The 2nd and 3rd companies were organized by absorbing the various detachments and other sections that existed at that time.

The machine gun marksman sections, existing prior to August 1916 were reorganized into machine gun companies and organized like the existing regimental machine gun companies. However, they were not assigned to infantry regiments, but were grouped into *Maschinen-Gewehr-Scharfschützen-Abteilungen* or Machine Gun Sharpshooter Battalions. These battalions had 3 companies each. They were assigned on a divisional level and about 90 were identified.

In 1917 the number of machine guns continued to increase. However, the number of machine gun units allocated to a

divisional was not raised, the number of machine guns was. The number of guns rose from 6 to 8 to 10 and finally to 12 guns per company.

At the same time the various types of light machine guns that existed were replaced by the issuance of the "08/15" light machine gun. By the end of 1917 every infantry company on the Western Front had received three light machine guns with a few having as many as six

As a result, each infantry company had a minimum of 3 light machine guns, with a 108 per division. The '08 pattern machine guns were raised to 12 per battalion, with a total of 108 heavy machine guns per division. If a marksman machine gun battalion was attached to the division there was another 36 machine guns.

In addition to the marksman machine gun battalions, there were mountain machine gun detachments. About 50 such units were identified. They were, however, transferred to the Carpathians and Balkans in 1916.

There were also machine gun companies assigned to the cyclist battalions. They were formed in July 1916 and took part in the Rumanian campaign. Each company had 3 officers and 62 men. The company had 6 machine guns. It was transported in 3 trucks and had one horse drawn supply wagon.

The cavalry divisions had a machine gun "abteilung" attached to them in only in wartime. In 1916 these formations had eight machine guns each and there was one attached to each cavalry division.

Cavalry

- 3 Cavalry Brigades, each with
 - 2 Cavalry Regiments, each with
 - 4 Cavalry Squadrons
 - 1 Machine Gun Squadron

Attached

- Jäger Battalion
- 1-2 Cyclist Companies
- Horse Artillery Battalion (3 btrys)
- Cavalry Pioneer Detachment (1 officer & 33 men)
- Signal Detachment

Artillery

The artillery of an active division was originally known as a field artillery brigade. During the early stages of the war they consisted of:

Field Artillery Brigade

- 2 Field Artillery Regiments, each with
 - 1st Battalion (1st, 2nd & 3rd Btrys)
 - 2nd Battalion (4th, 5th & 6th Btrys)

In general, one battalion had three batteries, each with 4-105mm howitzers. The other three battalions had 3 batteries each, and each battery had 4-77mm field guns.

In the reserve infantry divisions the artillery assigned to the division consisted solely of a single regiment, with two battalions. All six batteries had 3-77mm guns each. There were some exceptions where the regiment had three battalions. The first two battalions were armed with 77mm guns and the third had 105mm howitzers. This latter organization was to eventually become standard in 1917 throughout the army. With it the 1st-3rd batteries were with the 1st Battalion, the 4th-6th were with the 2nd Battalion, and the 7th-9th (howitzer) batteries were with the 3rd Battalion.

When the 3 battalion regiment became standardized, the excess artillery was organized into independent field artillery regiments, of which 80 were identified.

Heavier guns, 150mm and up, were organized into Foot Battalions and Regiments. In 1914 a battalion of such heavy artillery was assigned to each army corps. This assignment process continued throughout the war with a general growth as the war progressed. In late 1917, early 1918, most infantry divisions were assigned a battalion of heavy artillery to their artillery commands (brigades). There was, however, considerable variation in this. Those divisions serving in Russia did not have such battalions assigned and, indeed, often had no artillery whatsoever.

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