

Austrian Hussars 1866

(Bohemian Theatre)

A Painting Guide



ORGANISATION, TACTICS & WEAPONRY

These notes are intended to act as a guide when painting our range of 28mm Austrian Hussars, specifically those regiments serving in Bohemia, with the exception of the 14th Regiment, which wore a different uniform to the others and will be modelled separately.

Hussars were classed as light cavalry, designated for duties such as scouting and reconnaissance. However, they were perfectly capable of acting as shock troops, and engaged in a number of hand-to-hand actions during the war. Hussars sometimes also fought dismounted – notably during the Battle of Gitschin – although not anything like to the same extent as cavalry did during the American Civil War.

There were 14 regiments of hussars, 10 of which served in Bohemia. A regiment consisted of a staff and 6 squadrons. Wartime strength consisted of 50 men with 34 horses; squadrons consisted of 5 officers, 2 sergeant majors, 4 sergeants, 8 corporals, a trumpeter and 130 troopers mounted, along with a blacksmith, a harness maker, 13 supplementary troopers and 5 officers' servants unmounted – a total of 170 men with 149 horses. As with the Prussians, the depot squadron – that rated the least efficient by the regiment's commander – would remain behind, transferring its best men and horses to the other squadrons and receiving the untrained recruits etc. in return.

The men were armed with the M. 1859 or 1860 light cavalry sword and the M. 1860 Lorenz percussion pistol. In 1866, the hussar regiments of the 1st Light Cavalry Division, and one squadron per regiment of those belonging to the 2nd Light Cavalry Division received the 'Extracorps Gewehr' – this was a rifle for technical troops such as the pioneers, not a cavalry carbine, and was aimed to boost the regiments' firepower.

UNIFORMS

Boots – black with black and yellow cord edging around the top.

Trousers – see regimental distinctions table. Black and yellow piping down the seam and a knot on the thighs.

Tunic ('Attila') – worn slung in 1866. See regimental distinctions table. Featured 5 rows of mixed black and yellow woollen braiding, each ending in a loop to which was attached a white metal or brass rosette (see table) Metal toggles fastened the tunic down the front (see table). The black and yellow braiding also piped the hem of the tunic, the collar edges, the front opening, a knot on the cuffs, the rear of the sleeves, and down the back including the skirt flaps. The cords which were used when slinging the tunic over the shoulder were black and yellow.

'Leibel' or fatigue tunic – worn as the main tunic in 1866. White with a patch in the colour of the cap 'bag' (see regimental distinctions table).

NCOs distinctions – white stars on collar patches.

Officers' distinctions – gold replaces yellow and black woollen braiding; metal colour was gilt brass or silvered metal depending on regimental metal colour. Officers wore the tunic slung, and a plain dark blue 'blouse' or jacket, with collar patches the same as the cap 'bag' colour. Stars were worn on the collar patches, their colour being silvered metal or gilded brass – the opposite colour of the regimental metal colour.

Regimental distinctions

<i>Regiment Nr</i>	<i>Trousers & tunic ('Attila')</i>	<i>Metal rosettes etc.</i>	<i>Cap 'bag'</i>
2	Light blue	Brass	White
4	Light blue	White metal	Scarlet
5	Dark blue	White metal	Scarlet
6	Dark blue	Brass	Scarlet
7	Light blue	White metal	Grass green
8	Dark blue	Brass	Scarlet
9	Dark blue	White metal	White
10	Light blue	Brass	Grass green
12	Light blue	White metal	White

HEADGEAR

Cap ('Kutsuma') – black lambswool, black chinstrap, with cloth 'bag' in regimental colours (see table below). Black cock's feather fitted into yellow woollen holder. Yellow cord worked with black hung around the cap,

including tassels. Officers' caps had black and gold cording and tassels, the chinstrap was of gilded metal, and the fitting for the feather was of gold.

Forage cap – dark or light blue (same as regimental trouser colour), a band of the same colour as the cap 'bag' around the base, and a yellow and black cord around the bottom, forming a knot at the front.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT & WEAPONS

Pistol – wooden stock stained light brown, gunmetal barrel, breech etc, brass bands and trigger/trigger guard.

Rifle – wooden stock stained light brown, gunmetal fittings, breech etc, white sling.

Sword & scabbard – steel blade with steel guard and black grip. Scabbard was steel with steel fittings.

Officers' sword & scabbard – steel blade with polished steel guard and black grip, scabbard also of polished steel with fittings. Yellow sword knot.

Officers' equipment – red leather sword slings with gold overlay, a small pouch belt of red leather, and a silvered metal pouch.

Ensign's equipment/flagpoles etc. – flagpoles – descending spirals of red, white, black and yellow, sometimes missing out the white. Black oilskin cover worn wrapped around body, from which emerges the bandolier attaching itself to the flagpole. The bandolier was of the cap 'bag' colour down the centre, with edging either side in gold or silver depending upon the regimental button/rosette colour.

Bugle – brass with black and yellow cords and tassels.

Pouch – Red Russian leather (if using new equipment), or black (if using old equipment).

Pistol ramrod – gunmetal with whitened leather strap.

Belts – some regiments sported the new equipment, which was of red Russia leather – including pouch belt, and sword belt and slings. Other regiments still used the old white belts and slings.

HORSE FURNITURE

Complex for the hussars and including a lot of campaign kit.

Pistol holster [right side] – blackened leather.

Rolled forage [right side] – 'straw' colour with black straps.

Portmanteau [immediately behind rider] – madder red cloth covered in black lambswool.

Mess tin [above portmanteau] – natural metal.

Saddlebags [rear, behind portmanteau] – pale grey.

Leather packs [front, underneath greatcoat] – natural leather.

Greatcoat [front, above leather packs] – white.

Horse furniture – saddle and cropper in natural leather, headstall and bridlery in blackened leather.

Officers' horse furniture – as for the men, but with black lambswool saddle cloth.

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