

## November 1919 Polish-Soviet War Tactical: Polish Impression Guidelines

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Being a campaigner immersion event, the Polish side will uniformly portray the 3rd battalion of Infantry Regiment Nr. 34 (Polish designation III/34 Pułk Piechoty). The third battalion was the first and the oldest unit of the regiment, retaining its "Germanic" appearance until the end of 1919, when German uniforms were finally replaced with US surplus uniforms coming from France.

The regiment traces its origins to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment of the so-called "Polnische Wehrmacht" of the German-aligned Kingdom of Poland created in 1917. Following the collapse of the Habsburg war effort, this regiment was sent to Dęblin on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918 to disarm the Austro-Hungarian garrison holding the left bank of the Vistula River. The Austrian commandant complied with Polish demands and handed over Austrian occupied part of the fortress along with all military depots and military hardware.

The right bank of the Dęblin citadel (occupied by the German army since 1915) would not see disarmament until November 10-11, 1918. Following one month after the declaration of the Polish Second Republic by Jozef Pilsudski in Warsaw, the unit was officially redesignated Infantry Regiment Nr. 34 on December 7th, 1918. The 34th was one of the few lucky units of the newly established Polish army to have at its immediate disposal depots full of uniforms, gear, and weapons.

According to the regimental history, units raised in Dęblin and later in Biała Podlaska were fully dressed in German uniforms and equipped with Austrian M95 and Italian M91 rifles to supplement existing supplies of German G98 Mausers. Therefore, anyone already possessing German and Austrian WWI late war impressions should have a solid basis on which to build a 1919 Polish 34th Regiment impression.

### Uniform:

1. The most important part of the impression is the so called "Maciejówka" field cap, also known as the Model 1917 cap (czapka Wz.1917). Cap must be either purchased from an approved source or, if size permits, can be loaned from Vladimir Ruzhnikov (58 and 59cm sizes in stock)
2. German Model 1915 tunic is preferred. If you are attending as regular enlisted man of private rank (*szeregowiec*), shoulderboards are not required, but if desired, plain unpiped feldgrau shoulderboards are to be worn. but are highly recommended as this was the most common modification done to the tunic in order to "Polonize" it.

-Shoulderboard rank tape used at that time corresponds with 1917 regulations and should be made of plain white twill tape. Polish "zig zag" braid on the collar is allowed (authorized May 1919 for all ranks) but is not required, since lack of materials/sewing expertise often kept troops



from universally applying them. Nevertheless, their use is by all means encouraged, and can be applied in advance to the event by Vladimir Ruzhnikov for a small fee.

3. Austrian Model 1916 tunics are permitted, although collar insignia must be removed.
4. Polish Model 1917 tunics (kurtka wz.17) are permitted.
5. Feldgrau trousers, both Austrian and German models are appropriate when worn with their respective tunics
6. Austrian and German lowboots with putties are preferred, although German model 1866 jackboots and other period officer style or riding boots are permitted as per cold weather. No modern military surplus jackboots will be allowed.
7. Greatcoats should be either German M.15 (with or without Polish eagle buttons) or Austrian M.15/16. Greatcoats are not required but are highly recommended since event will be taking place in second half of November.
8. Appropriate long underwear, gloves, scarfs and other personal items for respective German/Austrian WW1 impressions.

#### Gear:

1. Since the 34th regiment never formed an assault company there is no solid evidence that captured German/Austrian helmets were used. However, we are permitting limited use of German/Austrian helmets if some participants are not able to acquire M.1917 cap on time. Preferable ratio is 1 helmet to every 3 caps in the unit.
2. Belts. German belt with buckle are permitted but not recommended. Austrian M.1915 roller buckle belts preferred. Russian Imperial Army style leather roller buckle belts are also permitted.
3. Ammo pouches, both German and Austrian models are preferred. There are pictures of Italian ammo pouches in use but these are not encouraged to be used. Photo evidence also shows that some troops used German ammo bandoliers instead of leather ammo pouches.
4. Bread bag, either German or Austrian models
5. Canteen, either German or Austrian models
6. Shovel with leather carrier, either German or Austrian models
7. Back pack, German model, late war canvas tornister preferred; Austrian M.1915 rucksack allowed
8. Mess kit, either German or Austrian models
9. Tent/rain cape, either German or Austrian models

As a general rule we should not try to mix Austrian/German gear. The only exceptions are rucksack/back pack and rifle where mixing is permitted. Ex: German gear with Austrian rucksack or Austrian gear with German Gew.98. If you need further guidance on this point, feel free to contact the event organizers.

#### Weapons:

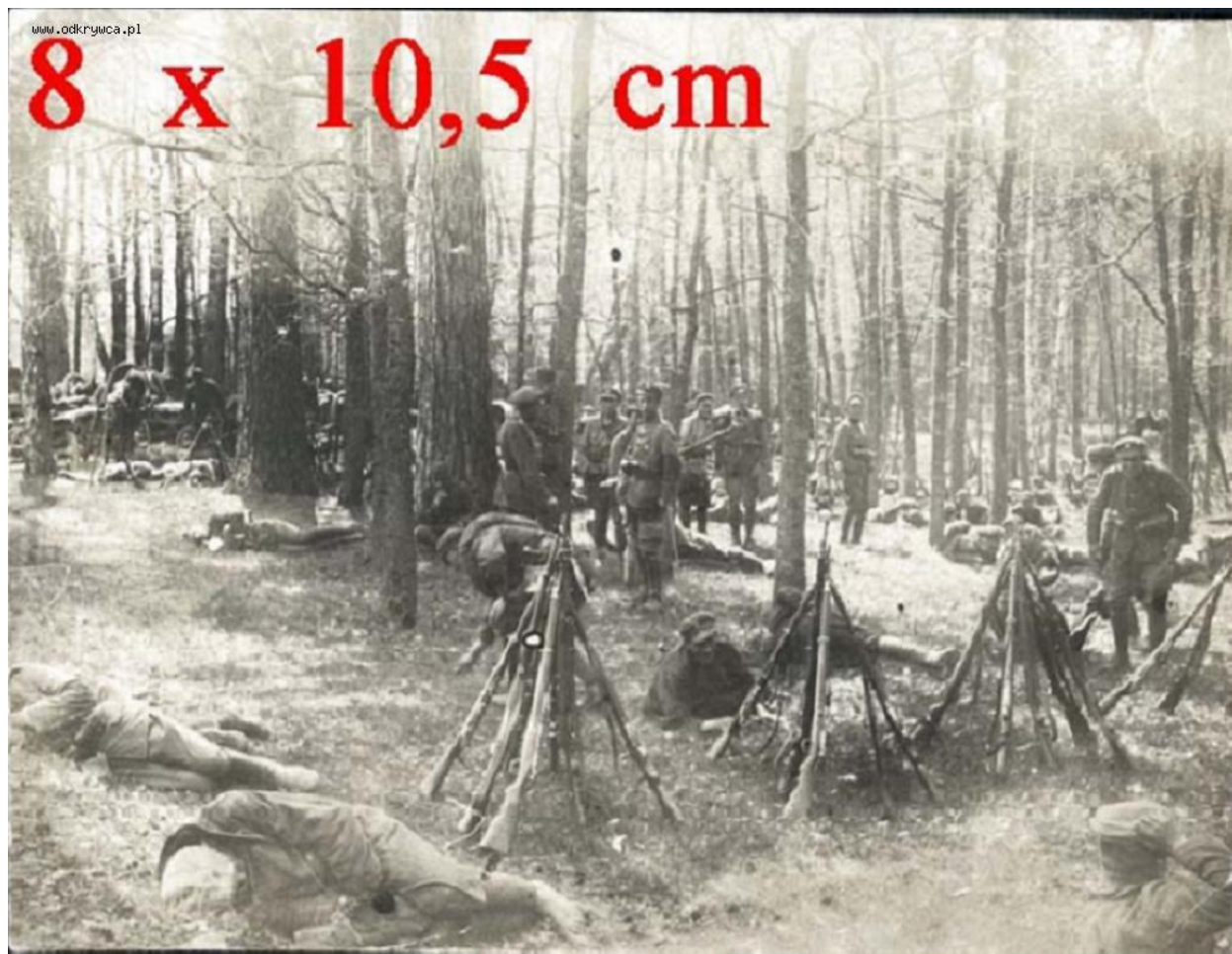
1. German Gew.98 or Kar98AZ with sling and appropriate bayonet
2. Austrian Mannlicher M.95 rifle with sling and appropriate bayonet

Photo examples: scroll down for original photos of the desired "look" for this event

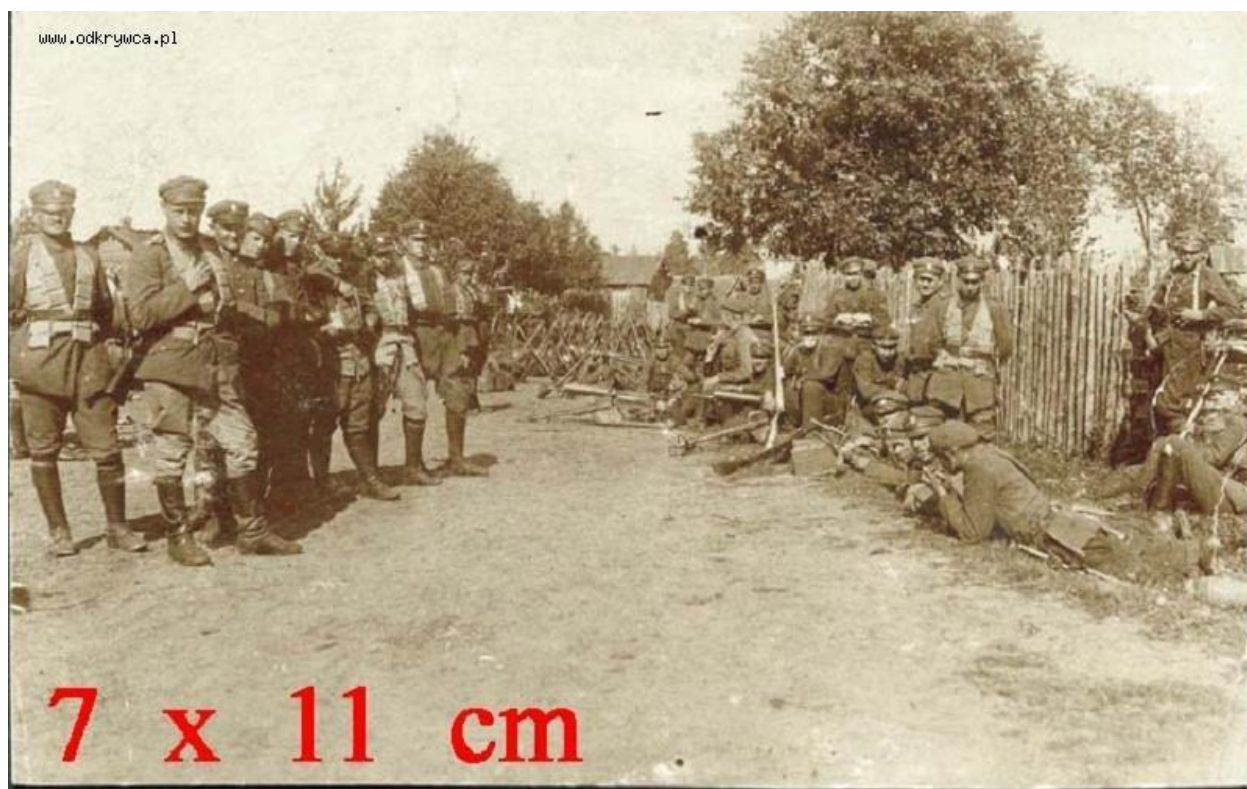
Actual photo of 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in Dęblin before departing to the front. Clearly visible is exclusive use of German M.15 tunics without any modifications.



2<sup>nd</sup> company, I battalion 34<sup>th</sup> IR. May 8, 1919.



5<sup>th</sup> Company, II battalion 34<sup>th</sup> IR. September 27, 1919. Heavy use of German cloth bandoleers.



6<sup>th</sup> company, II battalion 34<sup>th</sup> IR. Undated, but definitely summer 1919.



And some random pictures but representative of the period we are trying to recreate:





German m1915

tunic with self-made collar braid "zig zag" insignia"



Plain German M1915 greatcoat with shoulder insignia removed





Plain M1915

tunic with barrel cuffs removed and repurposed to make tall standing collar.