

# MAGYAR FRONT



**Vol. XXIV, No. 4**

**FALL 2022**

*An Alternative for Traditional Model Builders, plus:*



*An Alternate Reality for Military History Enthusiasts*

**[www.NewFront.ca](http://www.NewFront.ca)**

# A note from the Editor

It's a pleasure to begin our IHMHPS Recognition Project by presenting Steven Serda with our Badge of Honour. Knowledge shared is what it's all about, and he's a shining example of the kind of generosity we history buffs truly appreciate.

The main articles in this issue focus on one of my labours of love - what I like to call "dynamic military models" in 1:6 scale. I have used figures of this size to accompany historical displays and have found that they generate a lot of positive attention. They're a good tool to help represent military uniforms when we don't have our own museum for full-size ones! Since comparatively few people around the world work with models of this large scale, I thought it would be interesting to showcase a few of mine, and also to present a very basic picture of how they are made.

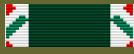
My inspiration comes from two different aspects - my childhood fondness for the famous GI Joe (Action Man in the UK) action figure, and the great number of friends (some of whom are IHMHPS members) who are fellow model builders, military miniature painters, and craftspeople who never cease amazing me with their diverse talents. One stumbling block for enthusiasts is the bewildering realm of tailoring, so I have included simple, step by step instructions, plus a full size basic pattern in the following pages. General familiarity with sewing, model building, woodworking, and plastic casting techniques would be very helpful, however, all of these things can be learned by any hobbyist.

I have simplified some things - for example there are minor differences between an officer's and an other rank's four pocket tunic, but I have left out some minor details which I don't think detract from the figures' authenticity. I'm sure I have also made some mistakes - even though I have access to a few of the world's top experts on Hungarian militaria, I didn't want to constantly pester them with questions regarding my hobby. I think we should do our very best to be as accurate as possible, however, joy should be the number one priority in my opinion.

There are so many ways to explore and immerse ourselves in history, and I learned at a young age that model building is a world of educational opportunity with the added bonus of creating things that can very well become items of inspiration and historical significance in their own right.

On pages 10 and 11 you'll find a slight deviation in my attempts at making realistic Hungarian soldiers - it's an "alternate reality" tribute to what not only made me originally take an interest in military history, but inspired me to look a little deeper, in order to try to better understand this complex and fascinating subject.

P.Cz.



## MAGYAR FRONT VOLUME XXIV, ISSUE 4 FALL 2022

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**Peter Czink, Editor-Designer**

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*"To strive, to seek, to find,  
and not to yield."*

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Membership in the  
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The original *Magyar Front* was the  
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# Steven Serda Receives Our Badge of Honour

Steven Serda had his grandfather's WWI journal translated into English and then took steps to publish it in book form, initially for the benefit of his own family. It was brought to the attention of the IHMHPS when he presented two copies of the book to George Hennessy, and gave permission for it to be published in the Fall 2018 issue of the *Magyar Front*.

We received a great deal of feedback from that issue, not only because of its unique content – it also provided inspiration to others interested in historical preservation. We all have important pieces of the historical puzzle in our family's possession, however, only a few of us take the time to both preserve and share it. The best example I could imagine of the success of such a labour of love was then epitomized by Steven's granddaughter Jamie Kaplan, who in 2021 (at the age of 16) did a school project on her great grandfather, using the diary as a significant part of its foundation.

Her very well-written and researched 6000 word piece on her heritage is a pleasure to read, and a testament to the brightness and genuine care of the younger generation.

Jamie recalls: *"Ever since I was young, I was consistently exposed to countless stories from my grandfather Steven, where he spoke very passion-*



**Australian Steven Serda, above, published his grandfather's WWI memoirs.**

*ately about his family history. The research and writing on WWI was particularly appealing to me as it was a period that was insufficiently discussed."*

I have often been asked why we focus on military history – surely there are more sunny aspects of our past to take interest in. Steven, and now Jamie, have brought to light and shared often overlooked details that must be preserved and understood. Despite their often poignant nature, trials overcome during the darkest times can remind us all of the hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Steven's foresight has sparked a flame all historians hope for – Jamie, while still a teen, understood the importance *"...to do justice to István's full life story, and add a source of memorabilia to the remarkable history of [her] family."*

Congratulations to Steven for doing more than his fair share of historical preservation: *"While going through the many books my grandmother left me, I came across a journal that was handwritten and illustrated by my grandfather ninety-six years ago during World War I. It gave me an insight into his thoughts during the fighting in Italy and the pain he endured for years while in an English prison camp far away from his family. After the completion of his journal, he was freed and returned home to Budapest, Hungary. I am honoured that I have been given his name."* And thanks to Jamie for what I'm sure won't be her last contribution to our fascinating historical puzzle.

*P.Cz.*

**Left: Steven and his granddaughter, Jamie Kaplan.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVEN SERDA

# *Dynamic Hungarian Military Figures in 1:6 Scale*

*by Peter Czink*

Military history has interested me since childhood, and many of my favourite toys were related to that – GI Joe being number one. My first one was a hand-me-down from my older brother – a military man with painted-on short hair, two missing feet, and a hodgepodge of incomplete kit. Fashioning a crude pair of appendages was my first endeavour into “customization,” and what I believe turned me into the collector I became was a well-worn, dog-eared military equipment catalogue that was thrown into the mix. GI Joe debuted in 1964, however, the military themed products disappeared from toy store shelves by the 1970s (when I received my brother’s modest collection), so all I could do was dream about the discontinued accessories. Thinking about it today, it’s quite interesting how those few items came to influence a great deal of my future – I checked out every book on military history from my school library dozens of times, and soon developed an interest in building model kits - later I was bitten by the militaria collecting bug.

How was it that such humble items generated so much joy and interest? Today, we are more easily exposed to other’s collections – online groups featuring collectors’ latest and fabulously expensive acquisitions are legion, however, I am often reminded of how even the most modest offering, if lovingly cared for and presented, has a great deal of value.

Twenty-five years ago, I met a man who sought me out to discuss vintage GI Joes, and we quickly became very close. Francis Tavares went on to become the world’s most prolific 1:6 scale model builder, as he too started off with the 12” GI Joe figure and dreamed of producing things he either couldn’t find or that never existed. (I remember as a kid, the few pieces of equipment my GI Joe came with included an MP40 sub-machine gun and ammo pouches for a K98 rifle - back then, plasticine worked well enough for fashioning field equipment). Decades later, as Francis taught himself how to make his own uniforms and equipment, and then the actual figures themselves, I watched and was inspired.

Collecting doesn’t necessarily mean spending all of your disposable income at auction houses. Hobbies like model building or painting military miniatures can expose you to history with the added bonus of developing all sorts of skills. Shopping certainly can provide temporary satisfaction, but re-discovering and delving more deeply into what’s already in front of you, and even going further creatively is even more pleasurable – as Frederick Grove wrote: “The thing done is nothing; the doing everything.”

In the last couple of decades, 1:6 scale figures have graduated from the realm of toys to serious models that are very popular with collectors. For many years the well-known company Dragon Models had produced a great variety of military figures in this scale which have now been discontinued, however, they are readily available from the secondary market. Encouraged by the work of my friend Francis, I decided to have a go at making Hungarian military figures to quench my childhood desire for more authenticity, using the basic Dragon Model figure, along with a few of the German military items that could pass for Hungarian kit (boots, and the odd piece of equipment). Everything else had to be made from scratch.

Being a model builder since childhood, I was already familiar with working with plastics and paints, and some basic wood-working skills also helped with the fashioning of some of the things I needed. Tailoring was another matter. I spent a day or two in Francis’ workshop and was taught the basics of sewing a tiny uniform and learned that it wasn’t so much skill at sewing that is the primary necessity – it’s knowing the secret of the order in which the pieces are sewn together. And contrary to what many assume, you don’t need a tiny sewing machine – any type will do – but if you assemble the garment in the wrong order you’ll end up with a neat pile of rejects (much like mine in the beginning). Finding the right fabric is a challenge. You can’t use actual uniform material as it’s not to scale (it would be six times too thick). I had a little piece of actual WWII material from a moth-eaten old greatcoat, that I took that with me to various fabric stores until I found something the right colour and thickness.

Producing helmets for WWII Hungarian soldiers is a little easier, as the Dragon Models German helmet is similar. It’s a matter of sanding off the original moulded rivets, placing new ones in the correct spots for the Hungarian version, and applying “pea-soup green” paint. Other unique Hungarian equipment was measured and copied from pieces in my collection, or in some cases I used photographs and drawings for reference. Most items like weapons were originally carved and shaped from wood and polystyrene plastic, then cast using two-component plastic resin. Casting is a fun and easy thing to learn – you first make a silicone mould and then you can produce as many pieces as you like. Online tutorials and shops can furnish you with everything you need.

Smaller items like medals and ribbon bars were made with my home computer and printer. I scanned original examples, reduced their images to 1:6 scale, and printed them on card stock. A clear matte coat for the ribbons and a gloss one for the medals finishes them quite nicely.

This issue of the *Magyar Front* includes simple, step-by-step photos of how a basic closed collar, four-pocket uniform tunic and breeches are made (with a pattern on pages 14 and 15). I am neither a tailor nor a pattern maker, so this is a merely a simple documentation of how I went about doing things. Acquiring knowledge of sewing and other techniques will be necessary for your success.

No one starts out as an expert, and time is a key ingredient in acquiring the skills necessary to make your own 1:6 custom figures. And don’t let making a few mistakes stand in your way - the only people who don’t make them are people who never attempt anything.

Major-general (*vezérőrnagy*) with subdued collar insignia for frontline use.



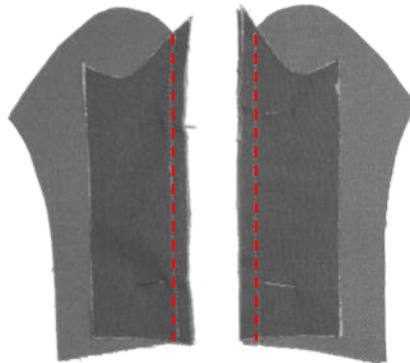
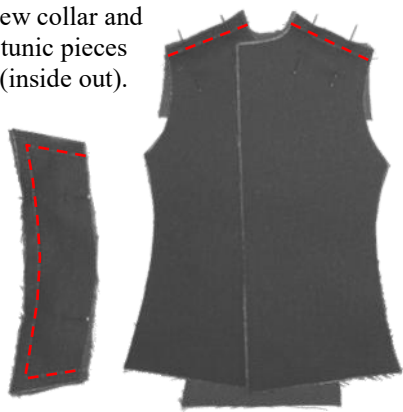
A well-decorated colonel-general (*vezérezredes*) wearing late-war full-dress uniform.



Another major-general in greatcoat and M1944 field cap consulting his M1940 large map case.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LORRAINE WEIDEMAN

Sew collar and tunic pieces (inside out).



Sew sleeve pieces (inside out).

Turn pieces right-side out and press.



**Gendarmerie (Csendőr) captain  
(százados) in dress uniform.**

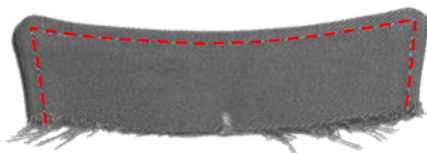


**Border Troops first lieutenant  
(főhadnagy) wearing the summer  
work (zsávoy) uniform.**



**Infantry lieutenant (*hadnagy*)  
from the early World War II period.**

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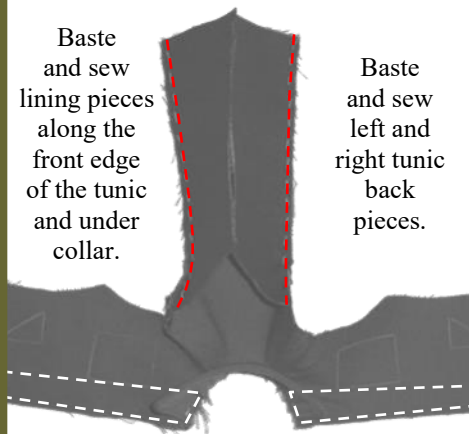


Sew around edge of collar.

Right:

Baste and sew collar to tunic, starting from the middle, working outwards.

(The lining pieces are represented by the white dashed lines.)



Baste and sew lining pieces along the front edge of the tunic and under collar.

Baste and sew left and right tunic back pieces.



Press open.

Corporal (*tizedes*) in the M1942 armoured vehicle crew uniform.



Another corporal in the M1936 two-piece leather armoured vehicle crew outfit and M1939 helmet.

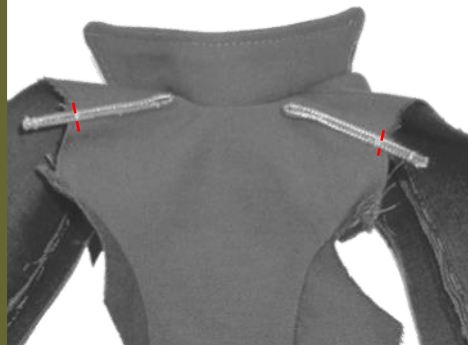


Self-propelled artillery lieutenant (*hadnagy*) wearing the popular wool-sleeved leather jerkin.

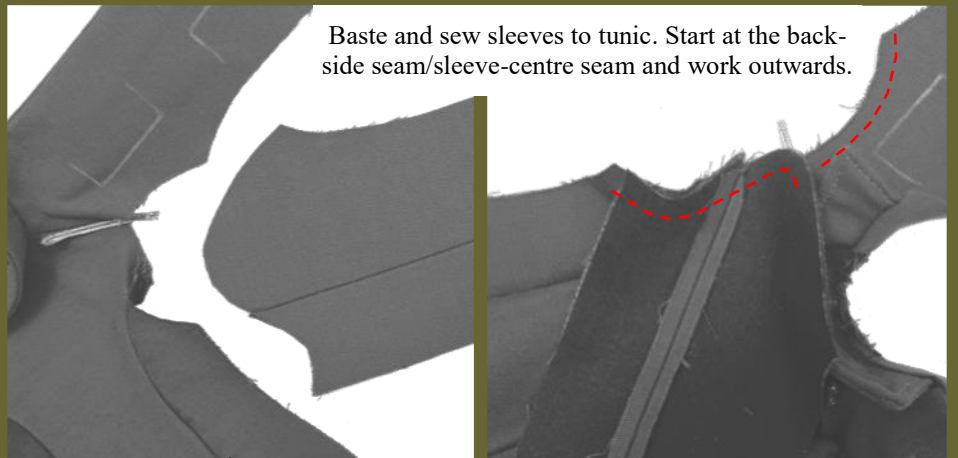


PHOTOGRAPHY BY LORRAINE WEIDEMAN

Stitch shoulder cords (for officers) or shoulder straps (for NCOs and ORs) onto the shoulder seam.



Baste and sew sleeves to tunic. Start at the back-side seam/sleeve-centre seam and work outwards.



This war-correspondent captain (*százados*) has dull aluminum buttons on his uniform tunic for frontline use.

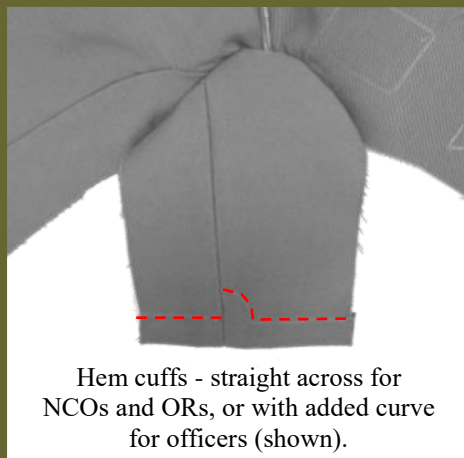


First-lieutenant (*főhadnagy*) in flying gear.

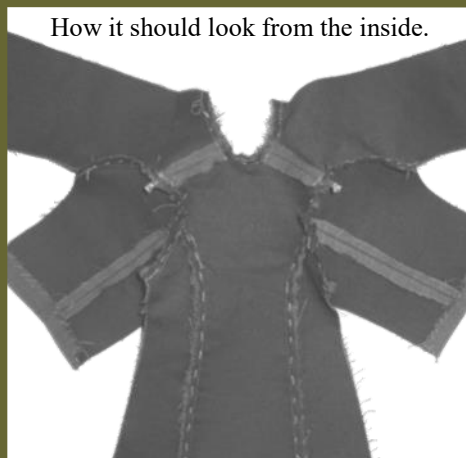


Royal Hungarian Air Force major-general (*vezérőrnagy*) in dress uniform.

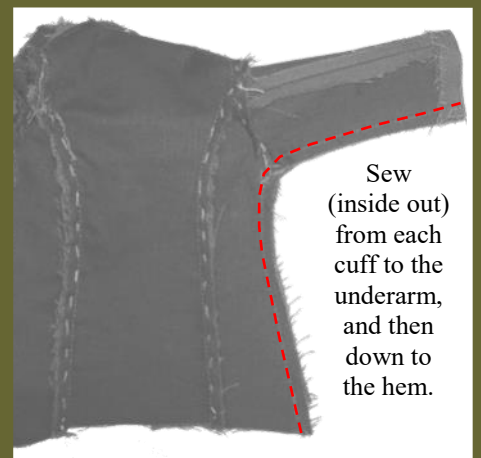
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Hem cuffs - straight across for NCOs and ORs, or with added curve for officers (shown).



How it should look from the inside.



Sew (inside out) from each cuff to the underarm, and then down to the hem.



A late-war veteran private (*honvéd*) with a German Panzerfaust anti-tank weapon and Hungarian M1939 incendiary grenades.



Another infantry private carrying a German MG34 machine gun with extra ammunition.



Detail of the M1935 bread bag.



Before and after - conversion of a Dragon Models German helmet to the Hungarian M1935 version.

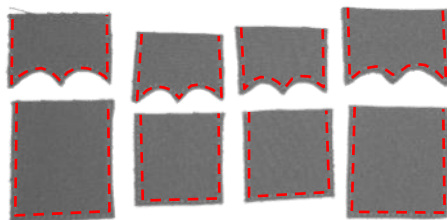
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LORRAINE WEIDEMAN

Turn the tunic right-side out and fold up and press the hem.

Add finishing stitching along the entire edge - starting from under the collar, all the way around the garment (down one fly edge, across the hem, and then up the opposite fly edge until you meet at the centre of the collar).

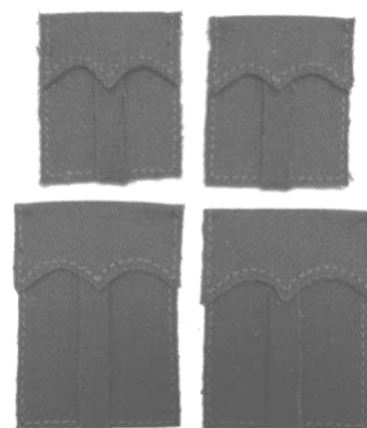
Next, pockets must be added.

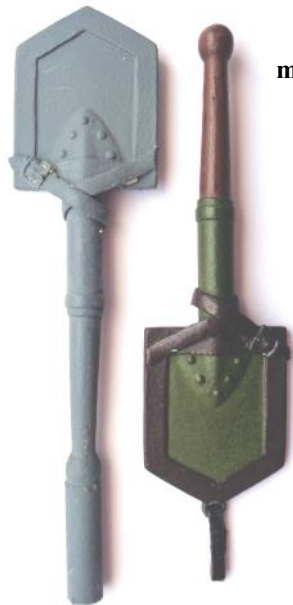
Laminate two layers of your fabric with glue, to stop fraying.



Stitch outlines and cut out. Cut narrow lengths of material to simulate the box pleats.

Hand sew pockets to the locations marked on the tunic.





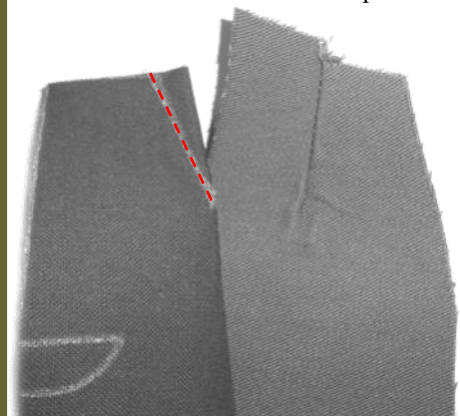
**Left:**  
**Master scratch-built**  
**model of the M1910 infantry**  
**entrenching shovel.**  
 (The piece on the end of  
 the handle is to facilitate  
 pouring resin into the  
 silicone mould.)

**Pre-war Rapid Corps**  
**private (*honvéd*) with his**  
**1930s military issue bicycle.**  
**The special cyclist's pack**  
**and an M1935 rifle**  
**complete his equipment.**

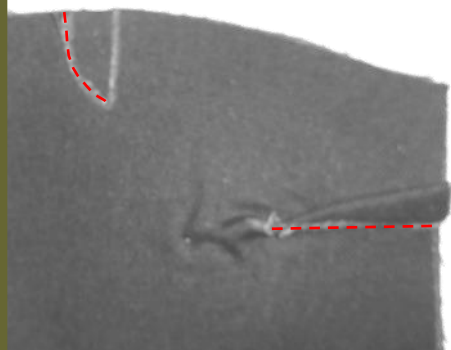


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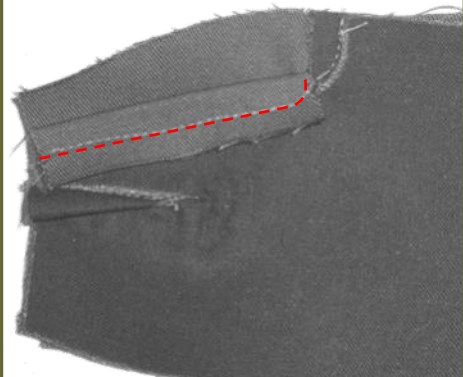
Sew darts into all four trouser panels.



Place front panels together (inside out)  
 and sew quarter-circle near crotch,



Fold over fly on what will  
 be the left front panel and stitch.



Front and back of a pre-war Hungarian infantry private in full marching order.



Detail of the M1934 canvas gas-mask bag.

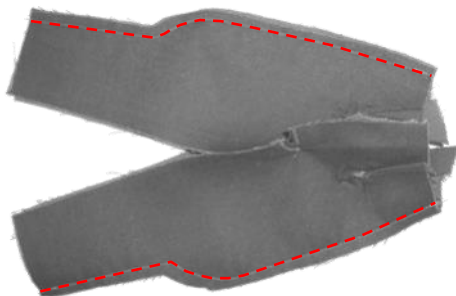


Right: Original primed master model of the M1935 rifle made from wood, plastic, brass tubing and wire - and a finished resin moulded example.

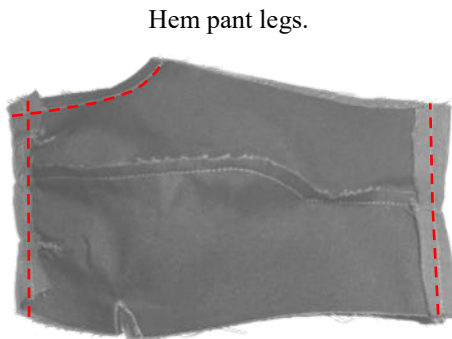


PHOTOGRAPHY BY LORRAINE WEIDEMAN

Sew together the outside edges of all four panels.



Fold over waist and sew.  
Sew back seam (from waist to crotch).



Hem pant legs.



Make sure all seams match at crotch, and sew from hem of one leg to the crotch, then to the hem of other leg.

# A "1967" Hungarian Action Soldier by Peter Czink

Hasbro introduced the line of GI Joe toys in 1964, which included US Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force figures along with a large selection of equipment and uniforms to go with them. In 1967, a new series – GI Joe Action Soldiers of the World was produced, which included German, Japanese, Russian, French, British, and Australian military soldiers boxed individually or with their equipment; as well as a card of their equipment alone. They were very popular back then, and today they are highly valued by collectors.

I thought it would be interesting to make a Hungarian version, modelled as closely as possible to the originals, with the unique Hungarian gear and custom packaging. Contrary to the more realistic figures I have made (pictured on the previous pages of this issue), I endeavoured to make "Hungarian GI Joe" more along the slightly naive lines of Hasbro's original offering, by simplifying the uniform and equipment somewhat. I also made sure I added a medal, which was such a delightful addition to the old Action Soldiers of the World. To ensure that this might be something I would have dreamed of finding under the Christmas

*Continued on next page...*



LORRAINE WEIDEMAN PHOTO



LORRAINE WEIDEMAN PHOTO



**Above:**  
Boxed figures with just their uniform and headgear.

**Below:**  
Separate cards were available to equip each GI Joe.



IMAGES OF ORIGINAL GI JOE ACTION SOLDIERS OF THE WORLD FROM THE HASBRO 1967 GI JOE RETAILER'S CATALOGUE



**Above:** The Action Soldiers of the World deluxe boxed sets included each figure and his equipment.

tree as a child, I made the appropriate packaging for the three different sets as well. The bold, retro artwork for this Hungarian Soldier was painted by Lorraine Weideman.

The figures originally made for all of these GI Joes (known as the “foreign” type), with the exception of the Japanese Imperial Soldier, used the same body and head mould, but came with different hair and eye colours. I have used original GI Joes for my Hungarian versions.

**Right:**

**Individually boxed Hungarian Soldier with the rank of private (*honvéd*). He comes with a heavy wool M1939 tunic, M1943 straight leg pants (with gaiters), and M1944 field cap. His buttons and cap cockade are moulded plastic resin.**

**Below left:**

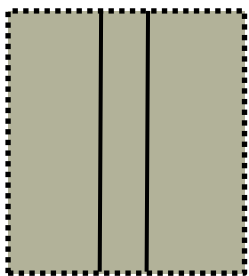
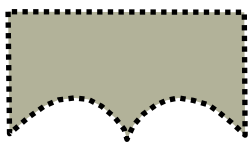
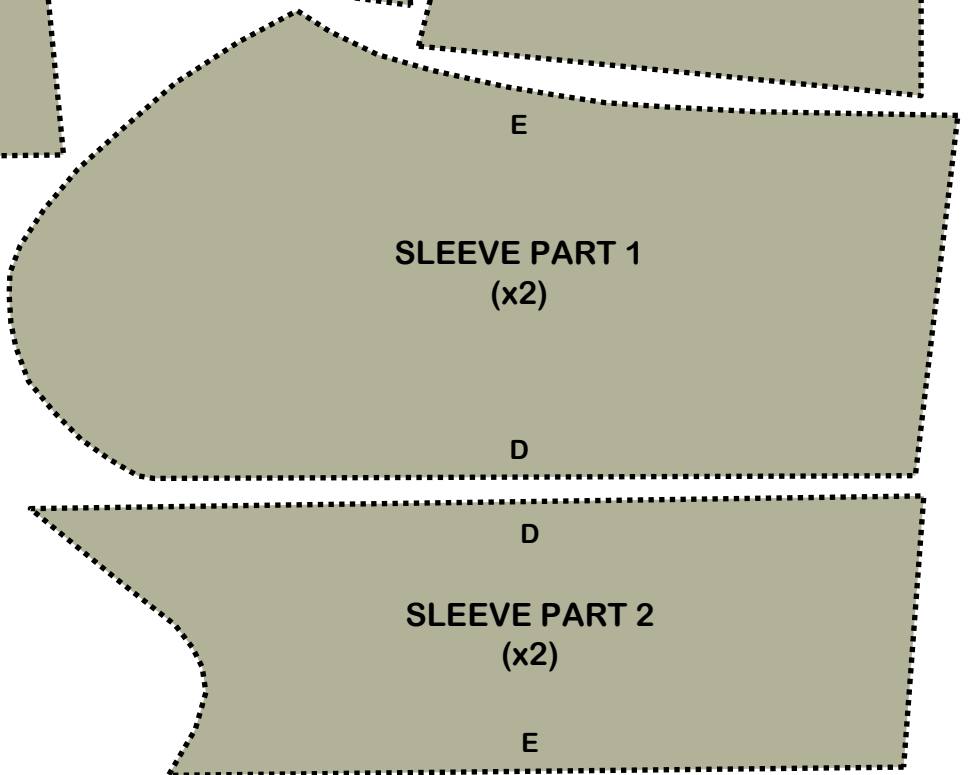
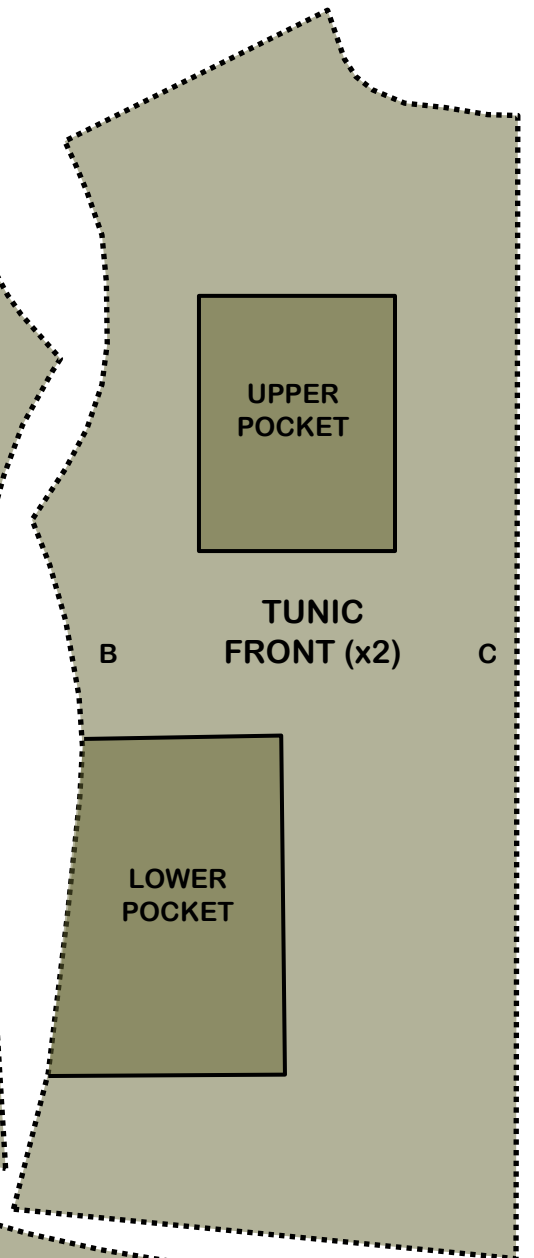
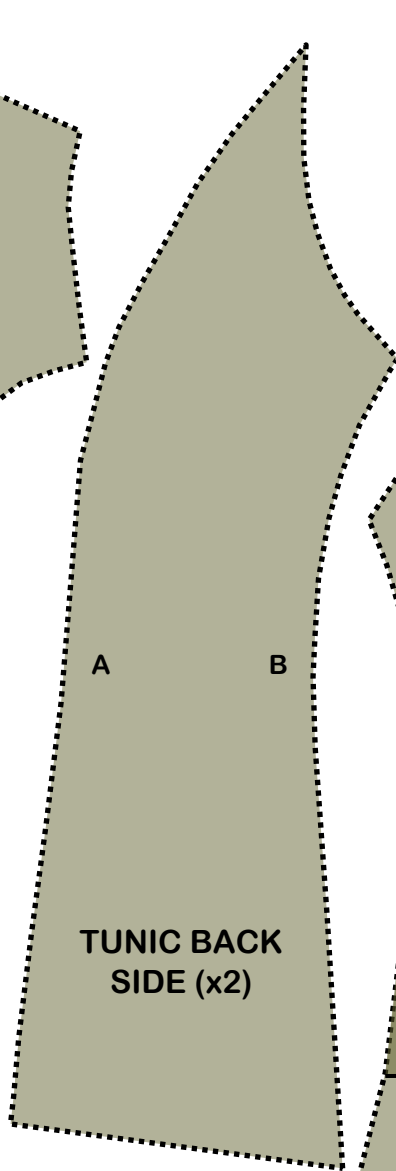
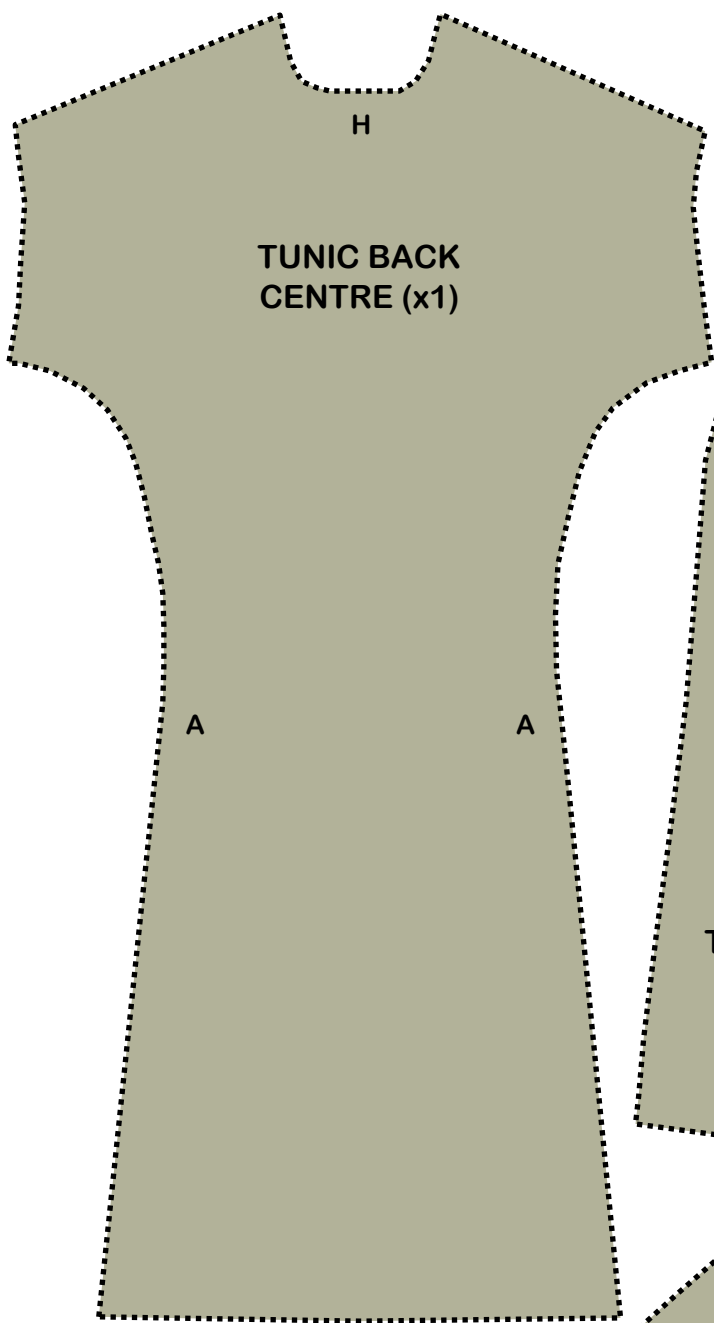
**The deluxe set includes the uniformed figure, leather belt, pistol holster, M1943 Király submachine gun, two M1942 grenades, M1942 knapsack, and Gold Bravery Medal.**

**Below right:**

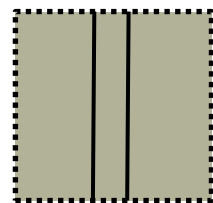
**The equipment card was meant to go with the individually boxed figure. All three types of these GI Joe Action Soldiers of the World packages were originally wrapped in cellophane.**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LORRAINE WEIDEMAN

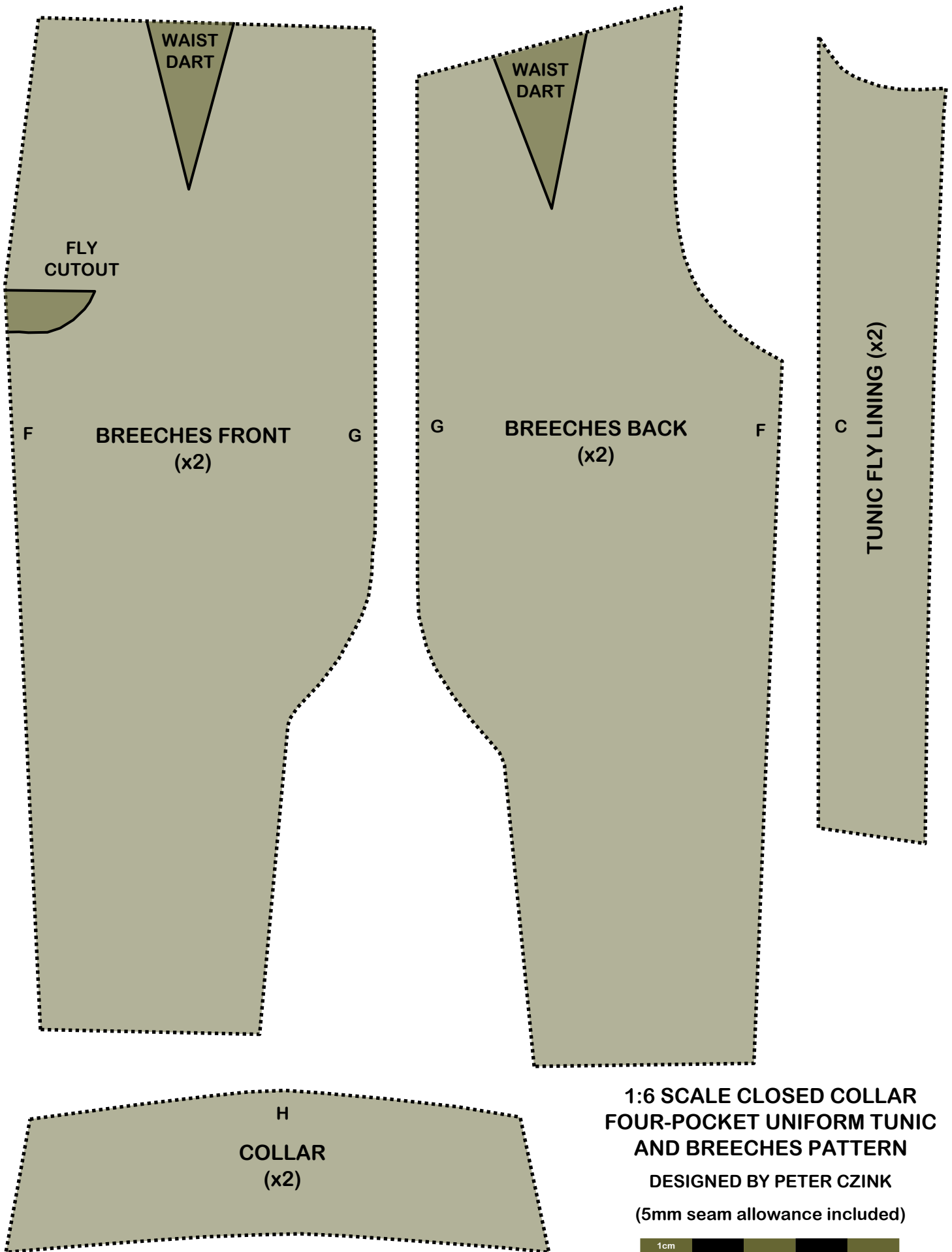


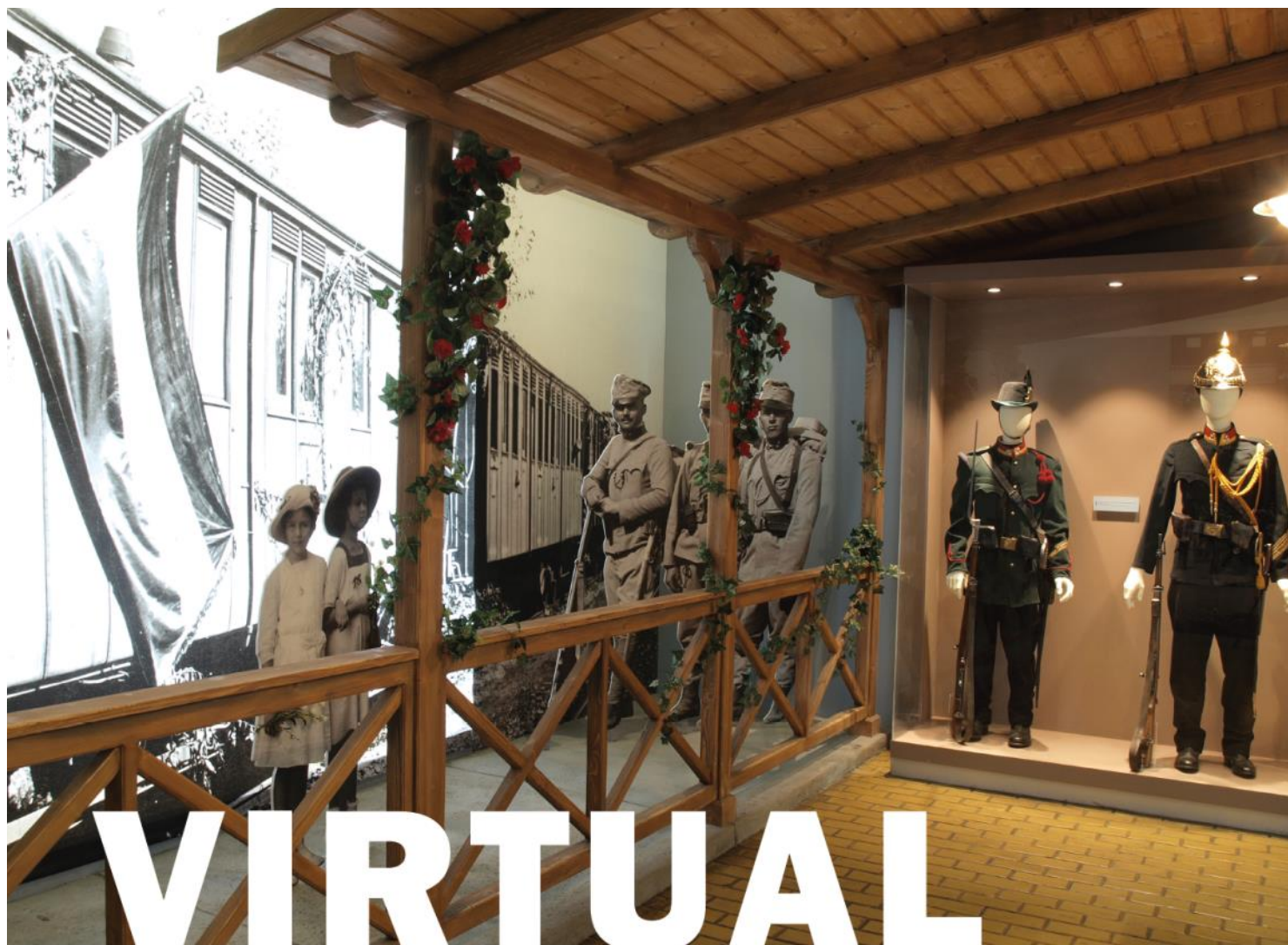


**LOWER POCKET AND FLAP (x2)**



**UPPER POCKET AND FLAP (x2)**





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