

MAGYAR FRONT



Vol. XV, No. 2

Spring 2013

IHMHPS EXCLUSIVE:

**Prototype
Designs for the
New Uniform
Project**

**Recently
discovered uniform
renderings from 1917
see the light of day
in this issue of the
Magyar Front**



HUNGARIAN MILITARY
HISTORY INSTITUTE AND
MUSEUM ARTS COLLECTION

www.NewFront.ca



MAGYAR FRONT
VOLUME XV, ISSUE 2
SPRING 2013

Published quarterly by
Peter Czink, Editor-Designer

The NEW FRONT:
(International Hungarian Military
History Preservation Society)

Peter Czink
Founder/President

Lorraine Weideman
Vice-President, Webmaster

Péter v. Laborc
Vice-President, Hungary

John Keir
Vice-President, United Kingdom

George Hennessy
Vice-President, Australia

Josef Lang VRNT RVM
Vice-President, Germany

Manfred Winter
Vice-President, Austria

Sergey Slakaev
Vice-President, Russian Federation

Péter Orincsay
Vice-President, Scandinavia

Dr. Gergely Pál Sallay
Historical Consultant, Correspondent

PO Box 74527 Kitsilano PO
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6K 4P4 Canada 604 733-9948

czink@shaw.ca
www.NewFront.ca

©2013 All rights reserved

Membership in the
International Hungarian Military History
Preservation Society is \$40.00 annually,
and includes the *Magyar Front*.

The original *Magyar Front* was the
weekly newspaper of the Frontline
Fighter's Association, and was
published from the early 1930s until
the end of the Second World War.



First of all, I would like to congratulate IHMHPs member Lovice Ullein-Reviczky on her receiving the Knight's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit (Civilian Division). Lovice's father was a well-known opponent of Nazism and a key figure of the Hungarian resistance movement who dedicated his life work to freedom and justice, and she carries that torch forward boldly. She is the driving-force behind the numerous projects of her Antal Ullein-Reviczky Foundation, and is also close to being ready to publish the English edition of her father's personal account of Hungary's tumultuous period from 1938 to 1944: *German War-Russian Peace*. We will keep you posted on her exciting progress!

This issue of the *Magyar Front* was made possible by the generosity of Colonel Dr. Vilmos Kovács and the Hungarian Military History Institute and Museum. Not long ago, Major Dr. Tamás Baczoni brought a unique find to my attention – a small collection of watercolour paintings from 1917 which were squirreled away in the museum's archives. These illustrations were part of a “new uniform project” – the beginnings of what was to be the new look of the Austro-Hungarian armed forces. Even though the countries were embroiled in “the war to end all wars,” it was understood that once the conflict was over, existing stores of uniforms and equipment would be near depletion – and of course in case of victory, there would be a need for fancy dress uniforms.

It would have been a very involved project, and only remnants survive today. Excellent graphic artists were hired, and colourful artwork was produced to promote the new designs. One actual photo was also discovered, and after an overview of these artefacts, we can deduce that some of the outfits were actually made. We see many similar items painted by different artists – some of the headgear and complicated braid patterns were probably provided, while other, loosely painted and fanciful details might be the products of a visual artist's imagination. The original artwork was painted on watercolour paper which has not aged very well - I have isolated the subject matter in most cases to focus on the images themselves, rather than the discoloured background.

It is a fascinating privilege to peek at these dreams and designs of bygone days. For the military historian it's a goldmine of information spoken in the language of military symbols and pageantry, however, anyone can appreciate these spectacular costumes which were once a part of the everyday splendour of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

P.Cz.

Our cover: Béla Matkovics (1882-?)

**“Atilla Zsinórzat (Változat)” - “Atilla Braid (Variation)”
1917, watercolour on paper**

This might be an artillery major (brown tunics were a tradition of the artillery) wearing a fanciful *atilla*, decorated with braided shoulder cords, which were later incorporated on the M1924 “Csáky” *atilla*. Other parts of the uniform – the black officer's kepi and the red-piped black trousers are the same as those which actually came into use.

In 2012, my colleague in the museum's uniform department, Ferenc Bálint (with the kind help of the curator of the fine arts department Nóra Szántó), discovered a very interesting lot of drawings and paintings (mostly watercolours) in the Fine Art Collection of the Military History Museum. Although these images, rendered in 1917, may have been known to our predecessors, they have never been published – until today, in this issue of the *Magyar Front*.

The subject of project, or prototype uniforms is quite challenging to researchers and collectors – some believe that only official uniforms are relevant, since projected designs are rarely actually issued. Others, however, are fascinated by such documentation – researchers, academics and collectors can all find interesting and significant details among such ephemera. In this case, for example, we can note many elements which were actually implemented in the post-1918 nationalistic uniform projects, such as the M1924 “Csáky” parade uniform.

We don't know too much about this “1917 *Neuadjusterungs des Heeres Projekt*” (New Army Uniform Project), but some details are presented in Stefan Rest's magnificent book *The Emperor's Coat (Des Kaisers Rock im 1. Weltkrieg - Uniformierung und Ausrüstung der österreichisch-ungarischen Armee von 1914 bis 1918)*. Verlag Militaria, 2002. ISBN: 3950164200). One thing is clear - the leadership of the Austro-Hungarian army wanted to change their uniform colour from field grey to field brown, and intended to introduce some “traditional national elements” the uniform of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd Army. These images plainly illustrate impressive, yet primarily anachronistic parade uniforms, as well as the new field-brown colour for the 1917 project.

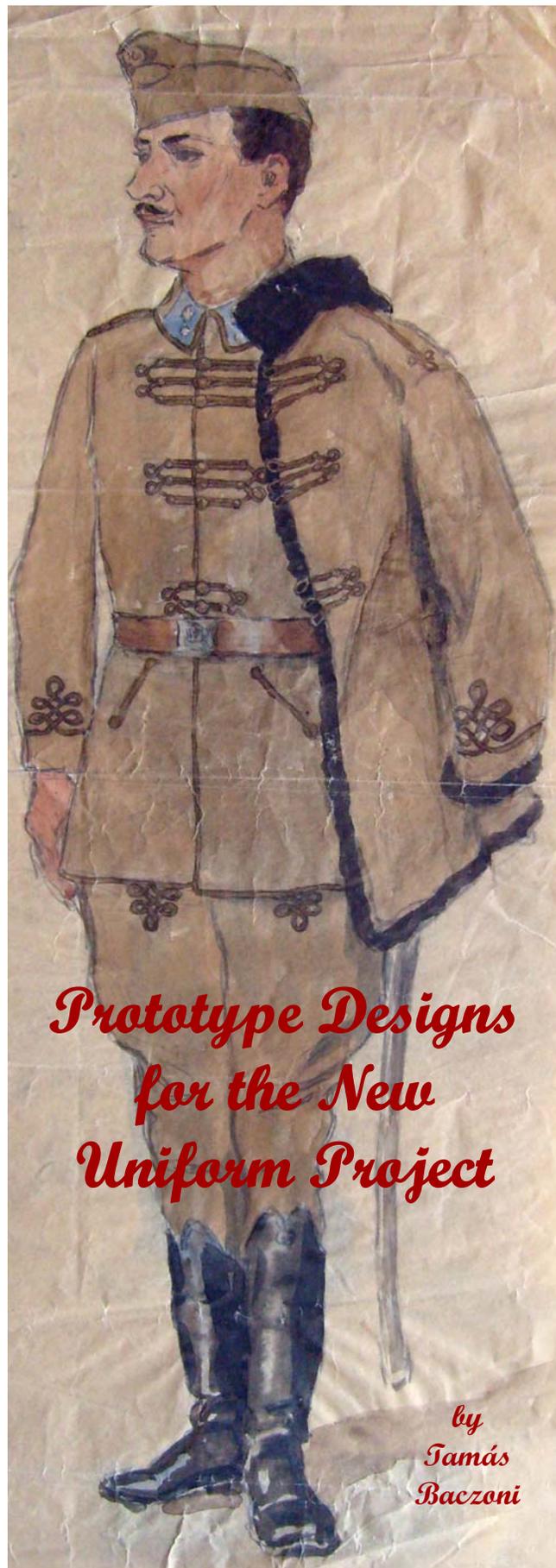
Little information is available about the artists who produced these pictures, and only a few details can be found online. Some are not signed, but most of them are by accomplished, yet not famous painters. Considering their excellent technical skill, however, we can assume that the project was a very serious one, with a good budget. Reserve Lieutenant Viktor Schramm (1865-1929) studied in Munich and later showed at the Hungarian millennium exhibition. In 1917 he participated in an exhibition in the Budapest Art Gallery (Műcsarnok). Béla Matkovics (1882-?) studied and worked in Budapest and is known mostly for his landscapes. He also exhibited at the Budapest Art Gallery. Árpád Romek (1883-1960) received the Fészek Prize in 1917, and in 1922 received a prize from the Budapest Art Gallery. So far, no information has come to light regarding Erzsébet Kovács.

Unfortunately, no written documents were found with the pictures. In some cases the captions help a little, and I have done my best to supplement them with our current knowledge of the era. The pictures, however, speak for themselves.

Right: An unsigned and untitled watercolour painting of a hussar corporal in field dress, wearing a field-brown uniform, with field cap, and a braided tunic with stand-and-fall collar.

The tunic is kept closed with three groups of three braids, a style inspired by 16th century Hungarian dolman coats.

The collar patches are cornflower blue - after 1920 that became the branch-of-service colour of the cavalry. The *mente (pelisse)* is still worn on the left shoulder in the hussar tradition. The belt is not in the style of the cavalry, however, and looks to be decorated with the Hungarian holy crown or coat-of-arms.



Prototype Designs for the New Uniform Project

by
Tamás
Baczoni



HUNGARIAN MILITARY
HISTORY INSTITUTE AND
MUSEUM ARTS COLLECTION

Left:
Béla Matkovics (1882-?)
untitled
c.1917
watercolour on paper

Hussar private in field uniform, painted by Matkovics. The designer has created a modern four-pocket tunic with some Hungarian features (braid holding the garment closed and branch-of-service coloured cuffs). Even the field cap is shown decorated with matching braid. Although smart-looking in this picture, eleven rows of buttons and braid would be too many to be practical.

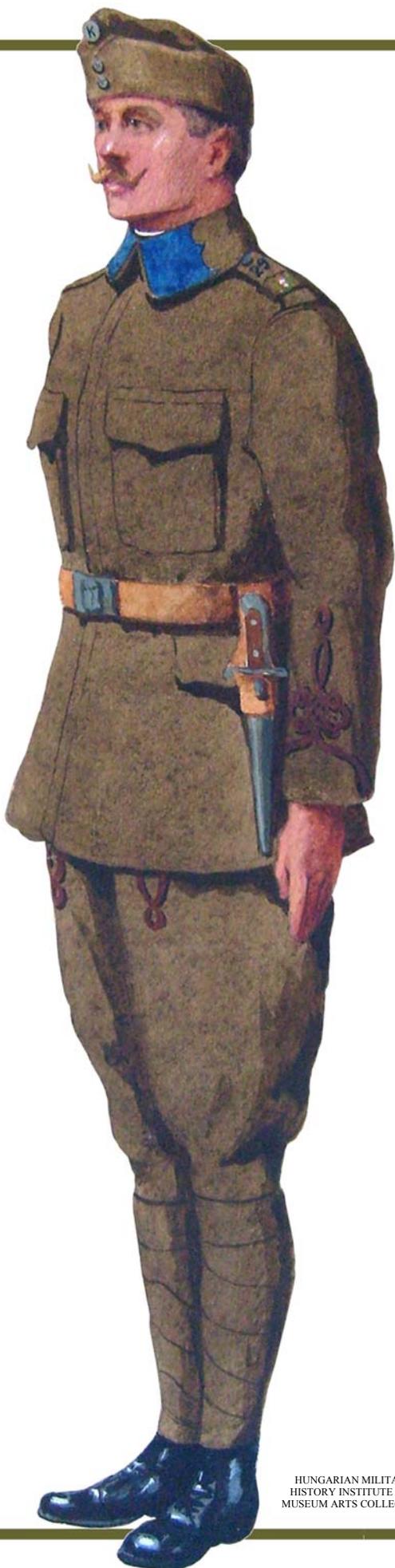
Facing page, left:
unsigned
“Honvéd Gyalogos Kimenő Ruhában
(Tábori Ruha)”
“Infantry Soldier in Walking-Out Uniform
(Field Uniform)”
c.1917
watercolour on paper

Unsigned illustration of an infantry private in field dress. The blue branch colour is anomalous for the infantry – perhaps it was intended as a universal colour for the Hungarian army (as madder red was prior to 1908; and slate grey between 1909 and 1915).

Note the regimental number “29” on the shoulder strap.

Facing page, right:
unsigned, untitled
c.1917
watercolour on paper

An other-ranks hussar in a field-dress uniform with branch-of-service coloured decoration on the collar and cuffs. Straight trousers (possibly for walking-out dress) are worn with the four pocket stand-and-fall collar tunic, which is “Hungarianized” with braid (the branch-of-service coloured buttons are a very novel idea). The fifteen braids down the front of the tunic may have looked good on the drawing board, however, they would have been quite impractical.



HUNGARIAN MILITARY
HISTORY INSTITUTE AND
MUSEUM ARTS COLLECTION



HUNGARIAN MILITARY
HISTORY INSTITUTE AND
MUSEUM ARTS COLLECTION



**Left:
Unsigned
“Társasági Ruha (Változat)”
“Dress Uniform (Variation)”
c.1917**

watercolour on paper

An unsigned illustration of an officer wearing a field-brown *atilla* – it seems the designer also wanted to present a less colourful parade dress uniform, but with a traditional cut and decoration.

The elaborate braiding on the tunic, however, would have been too ostentatious for a military uniform, even at that time.

The branch-of-service colour is shown on the cuffs.

**Facing page, left:
unsigned
“Társasági Ruha (Egyik Alternatívája)”
“Dress Uniform (An Alternative)”
c.1917**

graphite and watercolour on paper

An unsigned design for a field-brown *atilla*, with three groups of three braids down the front. A similar garment (but a regular tunic rather than an *atilla*) was issued to the Royal Body Guard in the 1930s as a service uniform.

Note the additional pencil renderings between the existing chest braid.

**Facing page, right:
unsigned, untitled
c.1917**

watercolour on paper

Another idea for a field-brown parade *atilla*. This unsigned picture features a relatively plain *atilla* that’s both traditional and modern, and would have been suitable for military use in 1917.

Note the “K” (for Emperor Karl) cipher on the sword knot.

Also, the similarity between these two illustrations is notable. Two artists have painted what seems to be the same uniform and model, which indicates that some of these prototypes were manufactured first, and then perhaps variations were painted afterwards.

*Társasági ruha
(szék alternatívája)*



Left:
Béla Matkovics (1882-?)
“Gyalogtiszti Díszben (Változat)”
“Infantry Officer in Parade Uniform
(Variation)” 1917
watercolour on paper

One of the most curious uniforms of the project, illustrated by Matkovics. The history of this design is also unique – it is the only one which has a matching contemporary photograph (so at least one of these projects was actually made). An infantry captain is portrayed, although this impractical light-blue material has no traditional connection with that branch of service.

The helmet, complete with feather decoration, the generous fifteen braids closing the tunic, and the hussar style belt and sabre are a revival of 17th century fashion. Rather than tight-fitting Hungarian trousers, he is outfitted with riding breeches, which were popular in 1917.



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE
 AND MUSEUM PHOTO COLLECTION

Above right: Proof that at least one of these designs were actually made. Originally, it was thought that this undated picture was of an experimental version of the M1924 “Csáky” mess-dress uniform, however, since discovering these paintings, we can clearly identify it is one of the 1917 project uniforms.

Facing page, left:
Béla Matkovics (1882-?)
untitled, c.1917, watercolour on paper

In this Matkovics illustration, traditional Hungarian tunic braid has been abandoned, and a strange new pattern has been suggested. The colour of the uniform is also highly unusual. Note how the paintings on page nine are rendered much more loosely than the one at left - indicating that these may have been quick ideas for variations.

Facing page, right:
Béla Matkovics (1882-?)
untitled, c.1917, watercolour on paper

An opulent parade uniform painted by Matkovics. Without any period captions, the branch-of-service it represents is uncertain. The medieval style helmet (a predecessor of the M1924 “Lohengrin” parade helmet) and the gold-decorated *atilla* is disharmonic with the traditional black trousers (with madder red piping) of the officer corps, however, three braids decorate each cuff to give them a more Hungarian look (the same feature was used on the M1930 Royal Bodyguard uniform).

HUNGARIAN MILITARY
 HISTORY INSTITUTE
 AND MUSEUM ARTS
 COLLECTION



HUNGARIAN MILITARY
HISTORY INSTITUTE AND
MUSEUM ARTS COLLECTION

HUNGARIAN MILITARY
HISTORY INSTITUTE AND
MUSEUM ARTS COLLECTION

Left:
Béla Matkovics (1882-?)
“Társasági Ruha (Egyik Alternatívája)”
“Dress Uniform (An Alternative)”
1917
watercolour on paper

An alternative of the mess-dress uniform by Matkovics. The cornflower blue of the collar and cuffs illustrate this captain as a hussar. The shoulder cord and stand-and-fall collar are unusual features for an *atilla*, as are the excessive number of braids. Another curiosity is the braid decoration which runs from the lower pocket up to the breast – something that traditionally only appeared on the backs of some Hungarian military dress tunics. The black officer’s kepi is standard. The trousers have branch-of-service coloured piping (those of the Imperial officer corps generally featured madder-red piping), while the cuffs are decorated with a trio of braids.



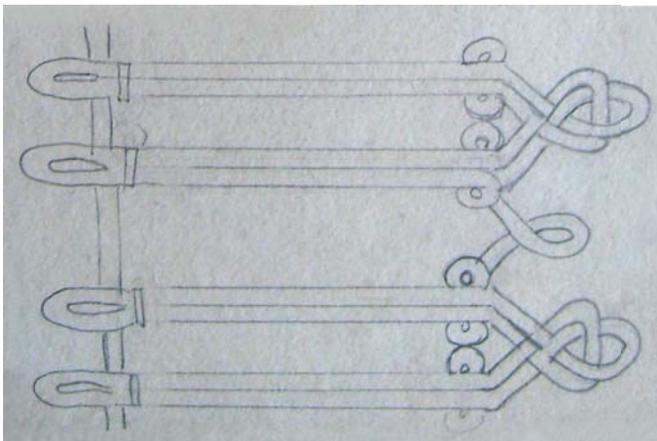
Right:
Erzsébet Kovács
untitled
c.1917
watercolour on paper

Erzsébet Kovács's uniform illustration consisting of a brown kepi and *atilla* with a stand-and-fall collar. Such collars were never used by the armed forces of Imperial Austria-Hungary, however, they did appear on those used by Prussian hussars in the 1840s. The brown kepi was issued in from 1920 to 1928 for officers, and from 1920 to 1945 for NCOs.

Previous page, right and below:
Béla Matkovics (1882-?)
untitled
1917
watercolour on paper (details)

Matkovics' design for a field-brown *atilla*, decorated with black (or perhaps very dark brown) braid. A schematic illustration detailing the tunic alone was most likely meant for the tailors, while the full renderings would be most useful in the promotion of the overall designs.

In the pencil detail below, Matkovics worked out the details of this very unique new braid design. It looks to be somewhere between Art Nouveau and Art Deco stylistically.



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE
AND MUSEUM ARTS COLLECTION



HUNGARIAN MILITARY
HISTORY INSTITUTE AND
MUSEUM ARTS COLLECTION



Left:
 (signed) P.M.
 “Közhuszár Díszkivonuláskor
 (Tábori Ruha, Kalpag)”
 “Other Ranks Hussar on Parade
 (Field Uniform, Busby)”
 c.1917
 watercolour on paper

Signed “P.M.” – this is an illustration of a hussar trooper in parade uniform (actually a field uniform with parade *kolpack*, or busby - the traditional hussar’s headdress). Other than the archaic headgear, this field-brown tunic, *mente* and riding breeches would have been practical.

Below, and facing
 page, lower left:
 Béla Matkovics (1882-?)
 untitled
 1917

watercolour on paper (details)

Design for a parade-dress *atilla* by Matkovics. This tunic is decorated with an unusual style of braiding, which is also incorporated in some of the other illustrations. It seems like an attempt at something new, rather than the traditional 19th century style *atilla* braid, however, the angular shapes seem a little awkward.



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE
 AND MUSEUM ARTS COLLECTION

Right:
Viktor Schramm (1865-1929)
“Huszártiszt Díszben”
“Hussar Officer in Parade Uniform”
c.1917
watercolour on paper

Hussar officer in parade uniform by Schramm. This extravagant and archaic design is based on the M1849 Hungarian general's full-dress gala uniform, and consists of a busby (featuring the coat-of-arms supported by angels), red (cherry red instead of the scarlet red of the general's uniform) tunic and breeches, and white *mente*. The designer illustrates three groups of five braids on the tunic – far too many to be practical on such a garment. Even if it were actually put into service in the second decade of the 20th century, it would still have been anachronistic, even as a parade uniform.



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE
AND MUSEUM ARTS COLLECTION



HUNGARIAN MILITARY
HISTORY INSTITUTE AND
MUSEUM ARTS COLLECTION



HUNGARIAN MILITARY
HISTORY INSTITUTE AND
MUSEUM ARTS COLLECTION

Left:
Béla Matkovics (1882-?)
“Vezérkari Tiszt Díszben”
“General Staff Officer in Parade Uniform”
1917
watercolour on paper

Captain of the General Staff in parade-dress uniform, by Matkovics.

For this uniform, the designers chose a tall fur busby, decorated with plume holder and feather (plus a coat-of-arms and elaborate cord at the side) as a suitable (yet surely impractical and uncomfortable) parade headdress for all officers of the army. The *atilla* is pictured in the traditional colours of the General Staff - dark green, decorated with scarlet and black velvet branch-of-service colours. The braid on the *atilla* as well as the braided belt are also inspired by medieval fashion.

It is unknown why the trousers are piped blue rather than red; and the 18th century style hussar sabre would look out of place by the time this uniform would have been put into use.

Back cover:
Árpád Romek (1883-1960)
“Számtanácsos Díszben”
“Pay Counsellor in Parade Dress”
c.1917
watercolour on paper

Romek’s composition of a “pay counsellor” (a military official equivalent to a major) wears a *síveg* on his head and his colourful uniform is decorated with silver braid. Perhaps the designers intended gold decoration for frontline officers, while non-combatant branches, such as officials, would wear silver.

**Right:
unsigned
“Százados Hadbíró Díszben”
“Judge-Advocate Captain in
Parade Dress”
c.1917
watercolour on paper**

An unsigned illustration of a judge-advocate captain in parade dress. This design is also a little archaic – his headgear is a 17th century style *síveg*, inspired by that of the Rákóczi’s Kuruc soldiers. The long atilla is decorated with elaborate braid, and the branch-of-service colours are represented on the cuffs.



Major Dr. Tamás Baczoni

graduated in history from the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, in 1995; in museology in 1998; and he received his history PhD degree in 2006. He has worked at the Hungarian Military History Institute and Museum since 1995 as the curator of the Equipment Collection; and from 2009 as the curator of the Uniform and Equipment Collection. His main focus is the military uniforms and personal equipment of the post-1945 era.

Some of his books include: *Hungarian Army Uniforms 1926-1945* (edited by László Tóth), *Hungarian Army Uniforms 1945-1956*, and *Hungarian Army Uniforms 1957-1990* (with Sándor Molnár).



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM



www.hm-him.hu