MAGYARIERONT

Vol. XXII, No. 2

COLLECTING
AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN
SIDEARMS:
RUDOLF FROMMER'S
M1910 PISTOL









Also in this issue:
EXPERIMENTAL BROWN MESS-DRESS "BEAN POT"
CAPS OF THE ROYAL HUNGARIAN ARMY



MAGYAR FRONT VOLUME XXII, ISSUE 2 SPRING 2020

Published quarterly by **Peter Czink, Editor-Designer**

The New Front: (International Hungarian Military History Preservation Society)

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

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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.

A note from the Editor

Due to printing difficulties brought on by the global pandemic, this issue of the *Magyar Front* will be sent to IHMHPS members in digital PDF format - as soon as our printer returns to normal operation hard copies will be produced as usual.

I am very excited to present IHMHPS member Jeff Toth's article on Rudolph Frommer and the Model 1910 pistol. It's a subject I knew very little about, and working on this issue of the *Magyar Front* has been very educational for me - the way in which he meticulously describes the subject inside and out is a treat for anyone fascinated by things mechanical.

Not only is his knowledge and experience in this area impressive, I have learned to admire his patience too - I remember when I was a young lad, deciding to take apart my air gun, and trying to follow the trajectories of the various springs and innards that flew out of it.

Jeff has been an IHMHPS member since 2014, and is a retired engineer and former serviceman whose grandparents immigrated to North America at the turn of the 20th century. Coming from a martial ancestry, with a father who was a foundry patternmaker and firearms instructor, it was natural for him to gravitate towards an interest in military hardware. While all of his brothers are collectors, it was his oldest who started in the 1970s, with Jeff following in the 80s - and by the millennium he became focused on Austro-Hungarian and Hungarian firearms.

I have often said that there is nothing else quite like the IHMHPS – thanks to enthusiasts like Jeff, we can all be enriched by the knowledge and generosity of our fellow members. In this issue we also have a special treat from Major Dr. Tamás Baczoni in the form of an intimate look at some rare experimental headgear - the brown mess-dress "bean pot" caps of the Royal Hungarian Army. Tamás needs no introduction to IHMHPS members, as he is one of the experts at the Hungarian Military History Institute and Museum in Budapest who continuously goes above and beyond when it comes to sharing knowledge in both Hungarian and English.

To Commemorate 20 Years of Publication: Our New Magyar Front Lapel Fin

Available in bright gold (left) and antique gold (right).

The bright gold version can be displayed on the ribbon of the IHMHPS 2014-2018 Commemorative Cross (middle). Shown actual size.







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(Right) Available by donation* (any amount is appreciated).



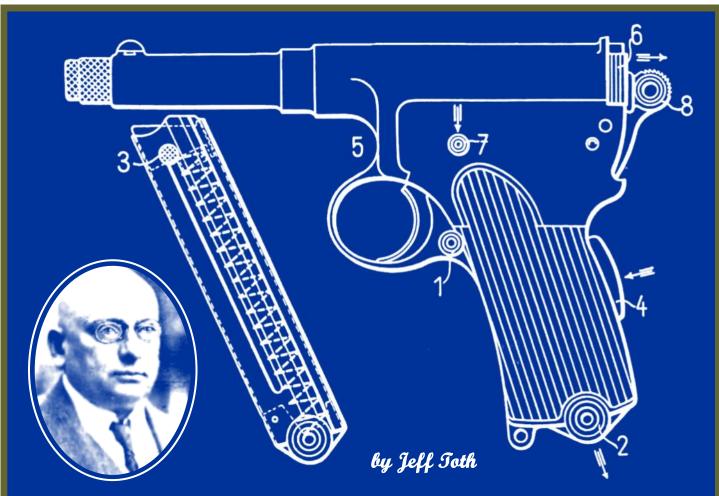
Embroidered insignia (Left) \$5.00* each





2008-2018 Badge (Left) \$10.00* each

^{*}Donations and payments can be made via Paypal (czink@shaw.ca). Postage not included.



RUDOLF FROMMER AND HIS MODEL 1910 PISTOL

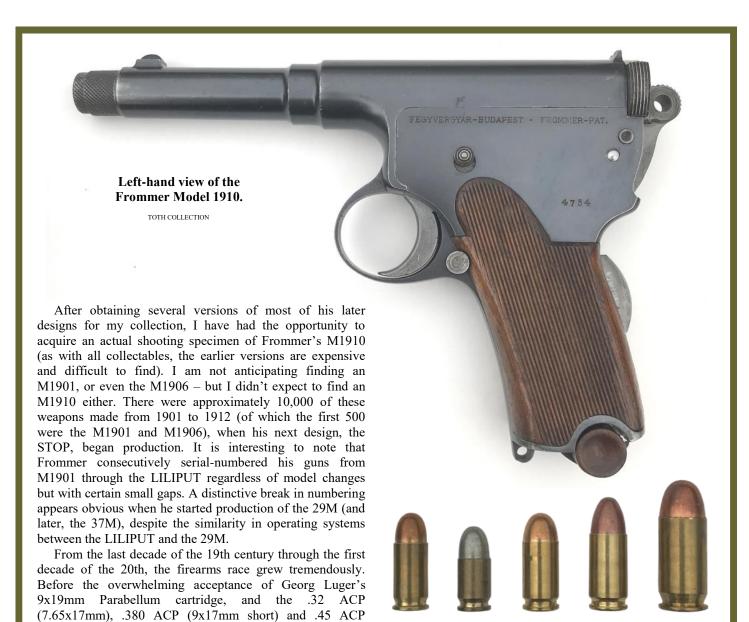
Rudolf Frommer (August 4th, 1868 – September 1st, 1936), although formally schooled at the Academy of Commerce, made his claim to fame in the mechanical engineering field as a prolific weapons designer. In 1896 he accepted employment with a banking firm in Budapest and was transferred to the recently acquired Fegyver és Gépgyár Részvénytársaság (Weapon and Machinery Manufacturing Company), in which he was given the role of Managing Secretary. In 1897 he married Leona, the niece of his immediate supervisor Zsigmond Kornfeld. The couple had two sons (István Simon and József Károly) and a daughter (Erzsébet Marianna).

In 1914 Emperor Ferenc József elevated him to Hungarian noble status and an additional name (fegyverneki) was added to his surname according to custom. By the end of his life he obtained 107 Hungarian patents, as well as sixty-eight British and twenty-two American – all mostly related to firearms. Frommer was buried in the Jewish section of the Farkasréti Cemetery in Budapest.

His most notable design would be the adaptation of John M. Browning's October 16, 1900 long recoil action patent for auto-loading shotguns and rifles. In simple terms, the two most familiar semi-automatic pistol operating systems that many people are familiar with today are the blow-back

and the short recoil-operated mechanisms of Browning's design. The former using a non-locked breech, primarily with low powered pocket-pistol cartridges (such as the .25, .32, and .380 ACP cartridges), and the latter using a locked breech (unlocking after recoiling a short distance), generally for the higher powered cartridges.

Unlike these more well-known designs, Frommer used the long recoil system in his pistol design. This system operates with the cartridge case being locked in the chamber by the bolt/breech block immediately following discharge, with the barrel and bolt remaining locked together until the moment of full recoil, where, during the return to battery, the bolt is momentarily held back allowing the barrel to unlock from the bolt and continue forward and eject the spent cartridge. Upon return of the barrel to original position the bolt is released to again move forward and simultaneously strips a fresh cartridge from the loaded magazine similar to Browning's long recoil design. It is the opinion of many that although this process was touted as safer, it was indeed more complex and expensive, thus letting it fall from favour. Frommer did use this design in several of his gun models: the M1901, M1906, M1910, STOP and BABY, before converting to the more widely accepted blow-back action for his last designs: the LILIPUT, 29M and 37M.



Left to right: .32 ACP, 7.65x13mm Frommer (7.65x13 Roth-Sauer pictured), .380 ACP, 9mm Luger and .45 ACP.

Die Frommer-Selbstladepistole

ist die Taschenpistole der Kenner.

(11.43x23mm) cartridges of John Browning, many different

chamberings were offered with almost as many different gun



Nur mit dieser Etikette versehene Kartons ent-halten echte Frommer-Patronen. Vor Verwen-dung anderer Munition muss gewarnt werden.

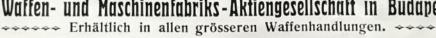
Neunschüssig, Kal. 7,65.

Sie ist systemisierte Ordonnanzwaffe vieler staatlicher u. städtischer Verwaltungen u. die einzige Pistole des Weltmarktes, welche den gleichen Verschluss besitzt, wie die modernst. Militärgewehre. Daher grösste Sicherheit für den Schützen und höchste Schussleistung bei bequemem Taschenformat.

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designs (e.g. 7.65mm Mannlicher of 1905, 8mm Roth-Steyr of 1907, 9mm Steyr of 1912 and the long running standard of 8mm Gasser for the revolver Model 1898). Many of these obscure cartridges are no longer manufactured and quite difficult to come by, however, there are many people who participate in the hobby of reloading cartridges and can still make some of them today. I happen to know several, one of whom did all the research necessary to recreate the 7.65x13mm Frommer (or .32 Frommer Short) cartridge, for which the Model 1910 is chambered (this cartridge was developed in 1901). It should be mentioned that in 1905, J.P. Sauer & Sohn, of Suhl in Thuringia, Germany, developed their own cartridge based on the Frommer dimensions for use in their 7.65 Roth-Sauer semi-automatic pistol.

According to Erlmeier and Brandt, in their book *Manual of Pistol and Revolver Cartridges, Volume 1, Centerfire Metric Calibers*, the biggest difference was a slightly lower velocity than Frommer's cartridge.

Left to right: 7.65x13mm Frommer (7.65x13 Roth-Sauer pictured), 7.63mm Mannlicher, 8mm Roth-Steyr and 8mm Gasser.











Kilenczlövetű.

határrendőrség, az államrendőrség, az erdészet, a posta- és távirdaszolgálat, valamint számos városi rendőrség rendszeresített szolgálati fegyvere.

Az egyedűli pisztoly a világpiacon, a melynek csöve lövés közben épp olyan erősen és megbizhatóan van elzárva, mint a legujabb katonapuskáké, tehát a lövőnek

a legnagyobb biztonságot

és a legkitűnőbb lővési eredményt nyajíja és e mellett kényelmesen zsebben hordható. Négyszeres biztosítója van legtökéletesebb kivitelben. Félkézzel kényelmesen felhuzható és bármikor leereszthető kakasa.

Minden részében teljesen kicserélhetően gépmunkával késziti a

FEGYVER- ÉS GÉPGYÁR R.-T.

Kapható a bel- és külföld minden jobb fegyverkereskedésében. Különféle nyelvü leirás dijmentesen rendelkezésre áll. At first appearance the M1910 is rather bottom-heavy and awkward. When held, the only part protruding above your hand is the thin tubular barrel. Unlike the iconic modernized Browning semi-automatic design (i.e. Colt M1911 in .45 ACP), which has the recoil spring in a separate chamber of the slide below the barrel, the Frommer recoil spring is wrapped around the barrel itself in the same chamber (much like the later Browning 1910 and 1922).

The gun is 186mm (7.32") long - 100mm (3.94") of that length is the barrel; and weighs 635g (1lbs. 6.4oz.) unloaded. It has a deep blue metal finish and nicely fitted, grooved wood, stocks. It is loaded from a detachable magazine capable of holding eight rounds of ammunition. The original M1901 had an internal magazine requiring a charging clip, like the later Roth-Steyr M07. Part way through the production of the M1906 the internal magazine was replaced with a removable box style. This detachable magazine has a Luger-like appearance to it, all the way down to the wooden plug base of the older style Luger magazines. Some of these bases have ringed impressions and others are smoothly dished. It's hard to say which style was early or late, as magazines are easily switched over time. However, due to a statistical prevalence across several observations, one might conclude that the ringed design was the earlier version.



Ringed magazine wooden plug base (above) and smooth dished type (below).



Also noted at the bottom of the pistol grip, integral with the metal frame and in front of the magazine well, is a stud with a hole in it for attachment of a lanyard (pisztoly hord-szsinór) to prevent loss of the weapon if dropped while on the move (provided the other end is fastened to the person).

As with many military handguns of the period, it is equipped with very small, non-adjustable, front and rear sights. During some additional research for this article, it was brought to my attention by my fellow enthusiast and collector Merv Broten, that he knew of at least one specimen (#4199) with a multi-piece, drift-adjustable, front sight blade (and I have since found two more, only 147 numbers apart from each other, and 835 guns before his observation). It is dovetailed and staked in final position so it's not easily moved in the field, but it might be possible to drift it slightly, with hammer and punch at a work bench, for minor adjustments. I thought maybe this was a metal-saving step considering the whole receiver would have to be as tall as the front sight and machined down everywhere else to satisfy the outline of the weapon. In retrospect, the rear sight is just as tall, so without making it in several pieces as well, not much metal would have been saved. It's possible a machining error required the original fixed front sight blade to be removed and replaced for proper shot alignment. These anomalies appear at about the mid-range of production and did not last



Front sight variations are the multi-piece, semiadjustable type (above left); and solid (or unified), completely fixed version (above right).

Located at the backstrap of the frame is a grip safety which is depressed when holding the gun, allowing it to be fired. The Frommer M1910 style of grip safety is somewhat awkward to depress while shooting and Frommer corrected this issue when he designed the STOP in 1912. After shooting several magazines worth of ammunition, I found the grip safety a non-issue, so long as you held the weapon with a firm grip.

On the left side of the frame, in traditional Browning locations and easily accessible with a right-handed shooter's thumb, are the bolt release button and below it, the magazine release button. The bolt release button is used to lock the bolt to the rear and inspect the chamber of the gun, and also to release the bolt and close the chamber after firing the last round and/or inserting a fresh magazine.

The removable left side-plate is also stamped with the manufacturer's factory location and patent information: "FEGYVERGYÁR – BUDAPEST • FROMMER-PAT." along with a serial number. An inspection mark (proof mark) containing a "crown over BP" in a circle is located at the top front of the trigger guard where it meets the frame. The serial number is repeated inside the receiver (visible

after the side plate is removed). Several models also have the underside of the wooden grips numbered to the gun.



There appears to be two separate styles of cocking hammer. It has been reported by Mötz and Schuy in Vom Ursprung der Selbstladepistole that a ringed style (similar to that of the Mauser C-96, also known as the "Broomhandle Mauser") is the earlier version and a winged style the latter (similar to that which Frommer used on his STOP design in 1912). Although at least one winged style version has been observed as early as #4099, the bulk of the remainder does not appear until after #9000. Most people picture a spur-type





The hammer variations are ringed (left) and spurred, or "winged" (right).



De-cocking with two hands (from a French language Frommer pistol manual).

hammer as one with a protrusion off the back of the top of the hammer, facilitating the cocking of the hammer with the thumb of the firing hand. While both of these hammer designs have serrations across the top, Frommer added two spurs, or wings, one off each side of the hammer, allowing the shooter to more positively engage the hammer with thumb and forefinger of his non-firing hand, and while squeezing the trigger with the other, allow the hammer to ease forward without striking the firing pin hard enough to discharge a bullet - a safer practice than the one-handed method.

	7		ī	
Serial	Hammer	Mag	Front	Proof
#	style	Base	Sight	mark
549	Ringed	Ringed	Fixed	N.O.
684	?	?	?	?
1109	Ringed	Broken	Fixed	Cr/BP
2107	?	?	?	?
2440	?	?	?	?
2501	Ringed	Ringed	Fixed	Cr/BP
2644	Ringed	Ringed	Fixed	Cr/BP
2974	Ringed	N.O.	?	Cr/BP
3005	Ringed	Smooth	Fixed	Cr/BP
3114	Ringed	Ringed	Fixed	Cr/BP
3147	Ringed	Ringed	Fixed	Cr/BP
3185	Ringed	Ringed	?	Cr/BP
3217	Ringed	Ringed	Adjustable	Cr/BP
3364	Ringed	Ringed	Adjustable	Cr/BP
3436	?	?	?	?
3448	Ringed	Replaced	Fixed	Cr/BP
4028	Ringed	Ringed	Fixed	Cr/BP
4099	Winged	Smooth	Fixed	Cr/BP
4187	Ringed	Ringed	Fixed	Cr/BP
4199	Ringed	Smooth	Adjustable	Cr/BP
4628	Ringed	Ringed	Fixed	Cr/BP
4754	Ringed	Smooth	Fixed	Cr/BP
5096	?	?	?	?
5448	Ringed	Smooth	Fixed	Cr/BP
6128	Ringed	Smooth	Fixed	N.O.
6448	Ringed	Smooth	N.O.	Cr/BP
7179	Ringed	Smooth	Fixed	None
7541	?	?	?	?
7952	Ringed	Smooth	Fixed	N.O.
8531	?	?	?	?
9236	Winged	Ringed	Fixed	None
9347	Winged	Smooth	Fixed	N.O.
9427	Winged	Smooth	Fixed	N.O.
9495	?	?	?	?
10722	Winged	Smooth	Fixed	N.O.
10898	?	?	?	?
N.O Not Observed, due to lack of clear picture				

N.O. - Not Observed, due to lack of clear picture of the concerned area.

OBSERVED DATA THROUGH DECEMBER 2019 COMPILED BY JEFF TOTH

^{? -} Either no picture available or information was not gathered at the time of observation.



On the right side of the frame is the head of a threaded takedown screw. Removal of this screw allows the side plate to be lifted off from the left side and, after removal of the left grip panel, the working innards of the gun can be accessed.

Now the fine craftsmanship becomes clearly apparent. At first glance it appears to be strikingly similar to that of Karel Krnka's M1907 (Roth-Krnka, Fegyvergyár-Budapest or Roth-Steyr, Waffenfabrik-Steyr, Vienna), adopted by the Austro-Hungarian military (the Model 1910 was only ever officially adopted by the Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie). Closer scrutiny shows all the springs to work the parts are captured inside the part with a floating cap. Soldiers would not have been losing those springs while cleaning their guns in the field.

Additional markings on the internal parts include a small "R" typically found on several of the Hungarian gun models from this early 20th century that were manufactured in Budapest. This becomes more important to the collector in other models such as the M07 Roth-Krnka made in Budapest - having small parts stamped with an "R" while the identical model M07 Roth-Steyr made in Vienna's parts are stamped with a "K". The parts are identical, but a Budapest model should have all "R" marked parts inside, unless it has been repaired with spare replacement parts obtained from other sources later.

Interestingly, the internal parts are not stamped with any portion of the serial number of the gun frame itself. This is a departure from the more typical protocol of this period,



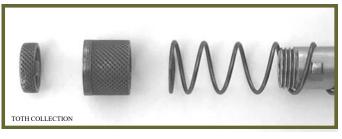
Grip safety lever with captured spring (left) and disassembled (right).



Note the capital "R" on the small parts (as well as more captured springs).

where the small internal parts of most guns were stamped with the last two, or three digits of the full serial number (another way for a collector to tell if a particular gun has been repaired). I like to surmise that Frommer believed that the precision of the products from Fegyver és Gépgyár Részvénytársaság was such that his guns did not require serializing completely and the parts were truly interchangeable.

Removal of the barrel and bolt assembly is rather unique. First the bolt group is removed from the rear of the gun, after removal of the pinned-bolt plug. Then, before the barrel can be removed, the wider barrel spring bushing must be slid rearward and rotated counter clockwise one-half of a quarterturn (1/8-turn, or 45°). This compresses the barrel spring just enough to allow some room to disengage the barrel spring bushing from the tab on the thinner barrel bushing-nut. The barrel bushing-nut is then free to be removed by counterintuitively unscrewing in a clockwise direction (the threads are left-handed, or reversed). With the barrel bushing-nut removed, the barrel bushing can then be rotated counter clockwise another 1/8 of a turn (completing a full quarterturn) and then carefully allowing the barrel spring to expand slowly until all pressure is relieved - then both barrel bushing and spring can be slid off the end of the barrel. The barrel is then free to be removed from the rear of the weapon, as was the bolt group.

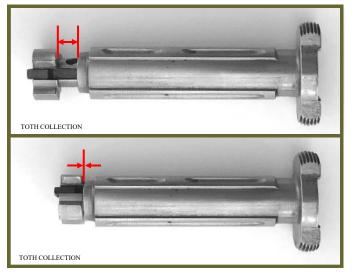


Left to right: Barrel bushing nut, barrel bushing, barrel spring and barrel.

As mentioned earlier, Frommer's long recoil design required the cartridge to be locked in the chamber of the barrel by the bolt. This system relies on a pair of helix grooves milled into the body of the bolt and a corresponding pair of studs inside the bolt carrier that ride in the grooves, causing the bolt to twist as it is inserted into, or retracted from, the carrier. There are also three lugs on the head of the bolt that engage three corresponding grooves in the barrel. At the end of the three grooves, and just before entering the chamber, is an annular cavity that allows the lugs of the bolt head to twist during the last 3/16" (5mm) of forward travel of the bolt group, thus effectively locking the cartridge in the chamber of the barrel.



Top: Bolt showing one of the helix grooves. Lower left: Bolt carrier showing internal studs that engage the helix grooves of the bolt. Lower right: Bolt inserted into bolt carrier until lugs of both are aligned. (Lower right image is upside down from normal position when installed).



Above: Bolt in extended position showing lugs aligned with bolt carrier lugs. Below: Bolt in closed position showing lugs rotated and offset from bolt carrier lugs.





Above: Bolt group partially inserted into barrel (brass cartridge case partially exposed), lugs aligned between bolt and bolt carrier. Below: bolt in full battery, closed position, showing bottom lug of bolt rotated and offset from carrier lug.

Further markings on the barrel's left side, at the end of the chamber and beginning of the bore, include "7.65 crown/BP (proof mark) 696" where the 7.65 confirms the barrel calibre in millimetres. The 696 is a mystery to me - there is no decimal separator to denote possibility of a bore measurement, and even so 6.96 in millimetres appears entirely too small. Additionally, it has been brought to my attention that these barrel markings were not consistent - approximately 700 guns earlier, the markings included circled "7.65/XII followed by crown/BP" (proof mark) only. Is the Roman numeral XII for the production/inspection month of December, or a personal inspector's identification number? I'm afraid some of these markings may remain mysteries. Then, approximately 3200 guns later, another observed barrel specimen was just stamped with the "crown/ BP" (proof mark).



Rudolph Frommer's gravesite at Farkasreti Cemetery.



TOTH COLLECTION

PHOTO COURTESY OF N.S.

Above: Two of the observed barrel markings: author's barrel markings (left), and barrel markings from an earlier observation (photo courtesy of N.S.).

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Experimental Brown Mess-Dress Caps of the Royal Hungarian Army

by Tamás Baczoni



The Hungarian National Army (later Royal Hungarian Army once again) tried to create a "traditional" Hungarian uniform in 1919-1920 to show their separation of the Austro-Hungarian monarchist influence. Some elements of the pre-1918 uniform were retained, however, like the black officer's mess-dress cap, a traditional piece of headgear from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The old caps could be worn with modified cap badges (featuring the national colours instead of the imperial and royal cypher) and buttons (bearing the Hungarian Crown). However, the black cap was only allowed for undress - during service the field cap was prescribed.

In 1922 a new type of mess-dress cap was issued, following the old design, but made of khaki fabric, with fabric visor and chinstrap (both previously made of leather). The new cap, together with the khaki tunic and trousers gave a more modern and somewhat civilian look to the army officers and NCOs. Theoretically it was meant to replace the black cap, as it was to be worn as both a dress and undress cap, but in actuality officers retained their old-style black caps as well.

It was found that the fabric visor was not practical or very martial looking, and in 1926 it was given a brown leather

Continued on page 14...



Above left: The M1920 experimental cap badge. Above right: The original proposed badge design.



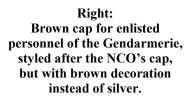


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visor and chinstrap - making it look acceptably military. The end came in 1929 when the brown cap was withdrawn from the officer corps and standardized as the mess-dress cap of NCOs - meanwhile, the black cap was once again prescribed for officers as the mess-dress cap, now forbidden to be worn by NCOs. As a new mess-dress uniform was issued in 1926 and the black cap issued with it was only for officers, it is quite clear that the 1929 decision was first to distinguish the officer corps from the NCOs, and second to return the former monarchist tradition.

> Left: The 1926-1945 version of the NCOs brown cap.

COURTESY HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM



The short lived "bean pot" as it was colloquially known (perhaps named after the colour of the cap, as the black cap was nicknamed the "plum pot") was an interesting experiment in the history of Hungarian uniforms, however, it was soon abandoned during the remilitarization of the fashion of the Hungarian Army.

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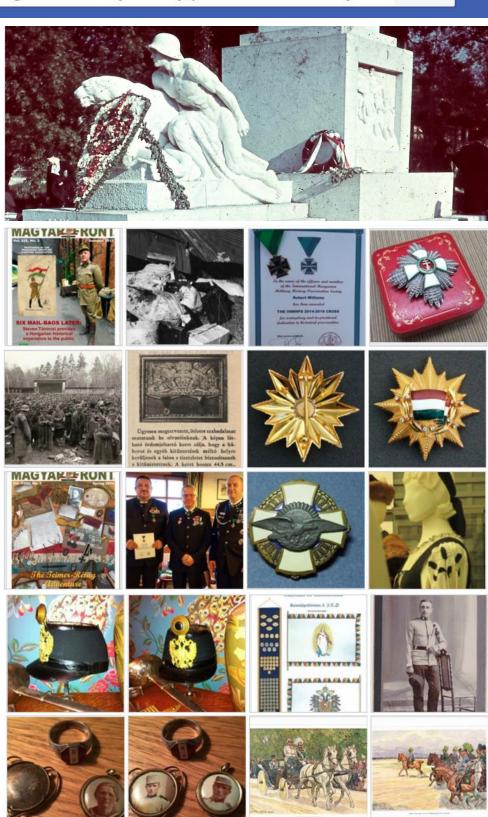
Files

Many of our IHMHPS members have not embraced social media - and that's not surprising, considering how much nonsense can be found online. Social media like Facebook is definitely not for everyone, however, it can be a very good communication tool.

For those members who have Facebook profiles, there is an IHMHPS group page for your use and enjoyment. Here you can easily exchange ideas and images with fellow members and pose your questions about Hungarian military history. It's an excellent resource for collectors and historians, from expert to beginner.

Everyone is rightfully concerned about privacy these days, and our Facebook IHMHPS group is private, which means only other members can post or view the content and communicate with one another.

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Selected Artefacts
from the Hungarian
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Its Centenary Year



