

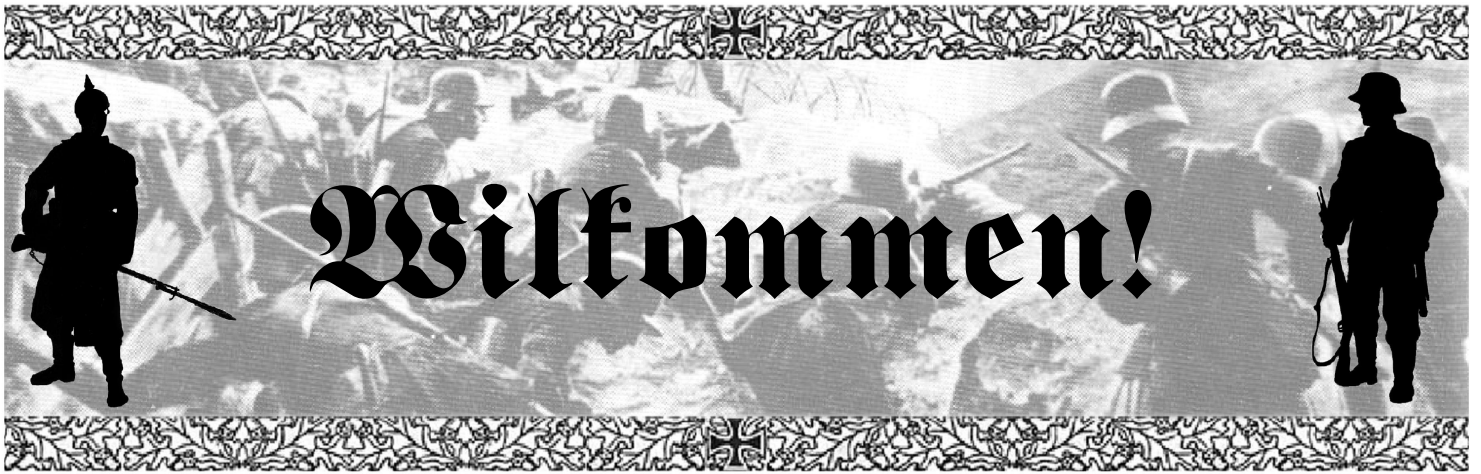
3te Kompanie

Infanterieregiment Nr. 63

# Guidelines for Prospective Members



Das Infanterie Regiment  
"Kaiser Karl von Österreich  
und König von Ungarn"  
(4. Oberschlesisches)



# Willkommen!

**Infanterieregiment Nr. 63** is a vehicle through which committed persons can actively explore the experience of the German Infantryman in the Great War. Gathered together in the form of a typical Infanterie Kompanie, we strive to investigate the art of trench warfare. Each member may have different motives, but collectively our goal is the same. We seek to encounter, within reasonable bounds, the lessons of the Western Front, thus gaining greater insight into ourselves and history.

Like all select brotherhoods, **Infanterieregiment 63** insists on the highest standards from its membership. To be counted as a Kamerad of JR63 one must believe in excellence and precision and by nature be assertive, mature, and willing to work side-by-side as part of a team. Together we achieve that which is beyond mere individualism. It is just this spirit of fellowship that binds each member to his Brothers-in-Arms and allows him to fully understand the meaning of *Kameradschaft*.





# Reenacting, Reenactments and Reenactors

Infanterie-Regiment 63 is part of a larger parent organization, the Great War Association (GWA). The GWA strives to honor the original participants of the First World War through battle reenactments and educational activities. Our membership experiences many of the sights and sounds of the 20th Century's most horrible conflict. This occurs at the Caesar Krauss Great War Memorial Site near Newville, Pennsylvania, which has an authentically recreated portion of the Western Front as it may have appeared circa 1917-1918. The reenactors in these recreations wear carefully reproduced uniforms and equipment of both the Central Powers and Allied armies. The use of original drill and tactics is also emphasized in WWI reenacting.

Our battle reenactments take place within systems of opposing trenches complete with a crater pocked No-Man's Land. There are also belts of barbed wire, which are used to protect the sandbagged front line trenches, and are punctuated by bunkers with functioning machine-guns. Behind the main lines are many supporting and communication trenches, which are connected to underground dugouts, where the officers plan attacks and counterattacks and where the common soldiers eat, rest and ponder their survival.

The sights and sounds of battle are carefully reproduced by blank cartridges in the rifles and pyrotechnic devices that simulate grenades and mortars. Other devices spew out colored smoke to imitate poison gas and at night flares illuminate the landscape giving an eerie, surrealistic view.

As a member of the 63rd, our goal is to try and accurately portray the common infantryman in the Imperial German Army, 1917 to 1918. We accomplish this by accurately recreating his appearance, but we also carefully research and demonstrate the details of his daily life, his duties, and his occasional enjoyments at the front.

From the moment you arrive at an event you will be submerged in the Great War. From the clothing you wear, to the food you eat, to the trenches you fight in - nothing is out of place! It is often said that...World War One reenacting is truly, ***"The Reenactor's Reenactment!"***

As members of the IR63 we feel a source of pride in belonging to the oldest and one of the most authentic Central Powers units in the GWA. Our members have a special spirit of fellowship that binds each member to his Brothers-in-Arms and allows him to fully understand the true meaning of the German term ***"Kameradschaft!"***



# **Eligibility, Time Commitments and Physical Restrictions**

## **Eligibility**

Membership of IR63 is open to anyone, but participation in combat at Great War Association events is only open to men over the age of 18 (this is a Great War Association rule). Men under the age of 18 may join the unit and put their impression together, but they may not actually take to the field until they have passed their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **Time Commitments**

There are normally two major battle reenactments held each year, one in the third full weekend in April and the other on the first full weekend in November. The unit may also have a “Feldtag” – a living history event held in January and/or September. Additionally, the unit may participate in smaller events such as historical displays at air shows or living history presentations. Before some events, work parties are held at the battlefield site to repair trenches and to maintain the unit bunker. Participation in all of these events is encouraged but is not mandatory.

It will take some time in the beginning to assemble a uniform and a set of equipment. After that, the time you devote to the hobby between events is up to you. Many members help out the unit by making grenade simulators, writing articles for the unit newsletter, making uniform and equipment for other members, or recruiting and sponsoring new members.

## **Physical Restrictions**

IR63 requires that every member that takes to the field be reasonably able to portray a German soldier fighting on the Western Front. This means looking like a German infantryman as well as performing the duties of a frontline soldier. This includes simulating intensive, physically demanding combat; climbing out of and jumping into deep trenches and shell craters; running across No Man’s Land; rushing forward and taking cover; and storming the enemy’s positions. This also includes fatigues such as filling sandbags, digging out trenches and hauling munitions, building materials and supplies by hand. Anyone with medical conditions or physical impairments which precludes them from doing the above should not consider joining.

# M63 Uniform & Equipment

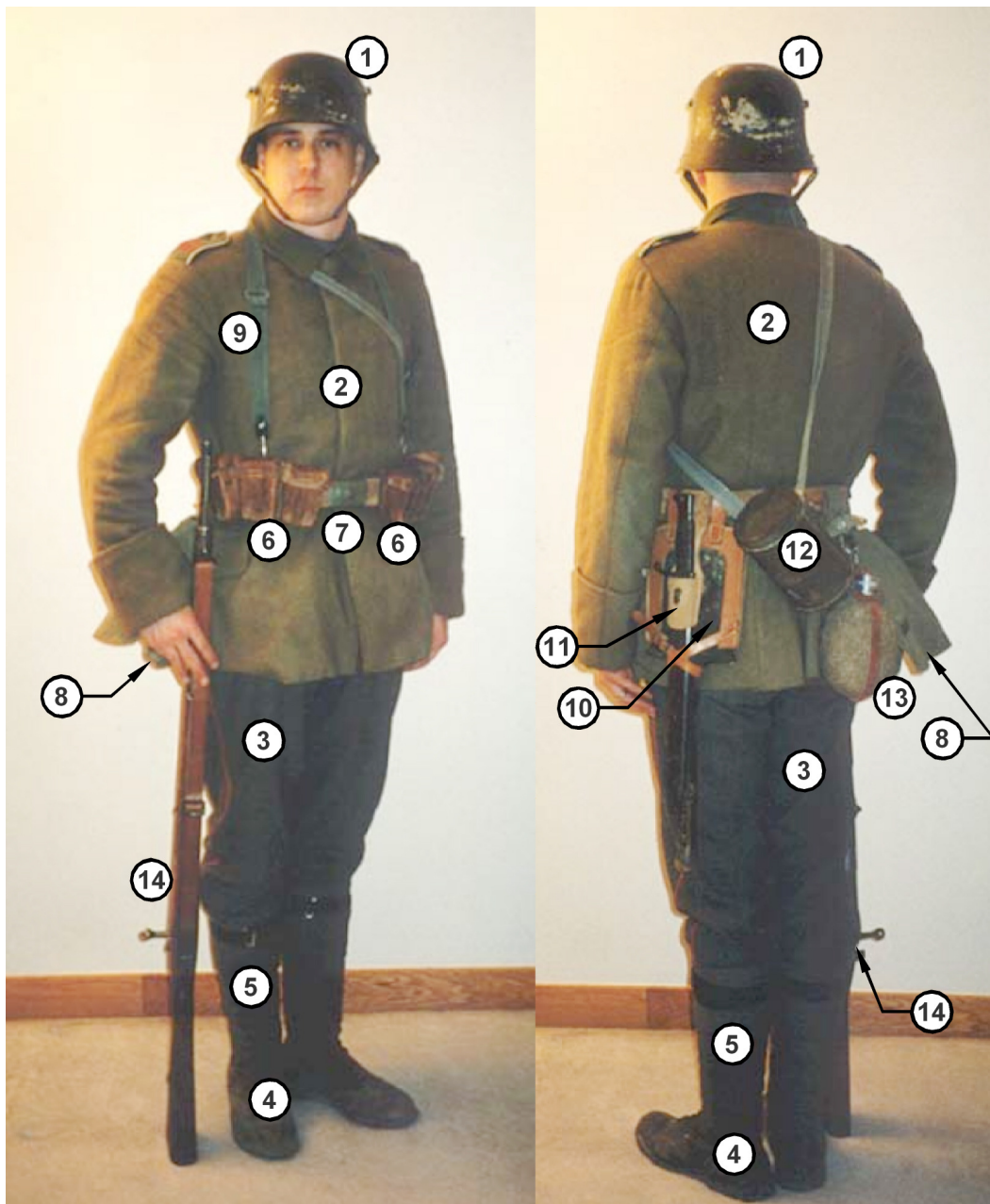


## Casual Dress

- |    |                                 |    |   |
|----|---------------------------------|----|---|
| 1. | Mütze (Soft Cap)                | 5. | Hosenträger (Suspenders)                            |
| 2. | Hemd (Issue Shirt)              | 6. | ID Disk in leather pouch<br>w/ Prussian neck cord** |
| 3. | Hosen (Trousers)                |    |   |
| 4. | Marschstiefel (Marching Boots)* |    |   |

\* Ankle boots w/ Gemaschen are also acceptable.

\*\* ID Disk and cord will be issued to you upon completion of recruit requirements.



## Combat Order

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Stahlhelm (Steel Helmet)                 | 9. Brotbeutelriemen (Breadbag Strap)              |
| 2. M1915 Tunic*                             | 10. Kleines Spaten mit Tasche (Shovel & Carrier)  |
| 3. Hosen (Trousers)                         | 11. Seitengewehr und Koppelschuh (Bayonet & Frog) |
| 4. Schnürschuhe (Ankle Boots)**             | 12. Gasmasken mit tragebüsche (Gas mask and can)  |
| 5. Gemaschen (Leg wraps)                    | 13. Feldflasche (Canteen)                         |
| 6. Patronentaschen (Ammo pouches)           | 14. Gewehr (Rifle)                                |
| 7. Koppel und Koppelschloss (Belt & Buckle) |   |
| 8. Brotbeutel (Breadbag)                    |   |

\* M1910 & Transitional tunics also acceptable.

\*\* Marschstiefel are also acceptable.



# **Assembling your Uniform and Equipment**

Obtaining the uniform and equipment necessary to portray a soldier of a different time and place is one of the more challenging – yet rewarding – parts of reenacting.

Everything that one wears or carries at a reenactment is obtained at the expense of the individual member, except for a few items, such as identity documents, which will be issued to you by the unit. Of course, every item remains the property of the individual member.

IR63, its NCOs, and your sponsor will help you to put your impression together by giving you advice, helping you locate equipment, or assisting you in making your own gear.

Portraying a WWI soldier is somewhat difficult due to the fact that, after almost 100 years, original gear is becoming scarce, fragile, and expensive. Thus, reproduction equipment must often be used. On the other hand, some metal items, such as Gewehrs and bayonets, are too expensive to reproduce and originals **MUST** be used.

The task of getting your kit together is a process of assembling equipment from the 1914-1918 period, finding gear used by various armies in later period that appear identical (or is adaptable to) WWI German gear, and making or buying newly reproduced items.

## **“Just How Much is All of this Going to Cost?”**

Some recruits have made much of their own gear and shopped judiciously at gun shows, flea markets and surplus stores, and put their impressions together at the minimum expense. Going this route may take a year or more to do.

Other recruits, lacking the time, means of energy or patience needed to pursue the above option, have simply ordered everything they needed from various dealers and paid top dollar to acquire their impression.

Most recruits pick a route that is between the two options above. The cost can range from \$1000 - \$3000. How you obtain your uniform and equipment will depend on your own desires, interests, abilities, time and funds available.



# IR63 Impression Policy


It is a privilege to belong to IR63, and once through the probationary period, it should be a source of pride to belong to IR63. In this light, members should strive to be more authentic in their impressions and to learn the rifle drill to perfection.

IR63 has a motto, which is a quote of Frederick the Great: *“Do more than your duty!”* As a member of IR63 you should always do your best to live up to these words!

**Some of IR63’s policies regarding the following aspects of our impressions are as stated below:**

- ✘ Unit membership is open to anyone 18 or older. Women may apply for unit membership but **MAY NOT** participate in combat roles.
- ✘ Specialist Badges — Only those specialist badges which are part of an IR63 program, and are recognized by the same, will be allowed. Members wearing unsanctioned badges will be asked, and expected, to remove them immediately from their uniforms.
- ✘ Decorations — Members of IR63 who distinguish themselves will be awarded the privilege of wearing appropriate decorations. Only decorations or badges of ranks that have been recognized by IR63 will be allowed.
- ✘ Maintenance of Uniforms and Equipment — Members are expected to keep their kit in good repair. This means remove all mud from leather gear and remove all rust from metal items. The weapon should be cleaned, so as to function properly, and also so that it does not look like an 80 year old antique. Uniforms should have all rips and tears repaired and should be kept clean.
- ✘ Hair — Each member will be required to have a haircut that is consistent with historical accuracy. This means haircuts that are very short, especially in the back and on the sides. Beards and mustaches may be worn, but sideburns and other exotic facial hair should be avoided. Remember, if you do not follow the haircut regulations, you may not be allowed to participate in the reenactment, and **IN FACT**, you may be asked to leave or get an on-site haircut.
- ✘ Glasses, watches and jewelry — Service glasses: Here is the #1 biggie for guys who normally wear glasses. Perfectly round lenses only with wire frames. Anything else looks really out of place. A reenactor can dress in totally original kit, speak German like a native, but wear modern plastic framed glasses and you ruin the whole impression. Just having wire





frames is not enough. The Landser were issued glasses, and they were always round. There are often a great many actual period frames available at places like ebay usually fairly inexpensive, but we now have reproduction frames available. Modern glasses and sunglasses are not permitted to be worn with the uniform.

Watches, if carried or worn, must be of a period style. Pocket watches were common but wristwatches were just starting to be used in the WWI period.

Modern jewelry looks really out of place and therefore is not acceptable. Wedding bands (Germans of the period wore them on the right hand when they were married and on the left if engaged) and signet rings are OK, as well as rings with an obvious period motif. Large, shiny, or modern necklaces are not permitted, but old-fashioned religious medals are acceptable.

- ✘ **Tobacco and lighters** — Many German soldiers smoked – and prized – tobacco in various forms. Smoking is permitted, but the items smoked and the implements used to smoke must be something accurate to the period and appropriate for a front-line soldier. Cigars and pipes were common. Hand rolled cigarettes and short, filter-less cigarettes were also becoming popular at this time, and are permitted. Original military-style trench lighters can be used. Basically , what we don't want to see in the field is someone pulling out a modern cigarette pack and lighting up with a plastic lighter.
- ✘ **Use of the German Language** — Each member of IR63 should familiarize himself with the German words for each part of his uniform and equipment, as well as the most common military terms (i.e. Schützengraben, Hande Hoch, Stellung, etc...). Those of us who have a working knowledge of the German language are greatly encouraged to speak German as much as their fluency permits. When trying to maintain historic accuracy in the presence of British, French or American troops, members who speak no German are asked not to make loud conversation in English and to, in general keep usage of the English language to a minimum. When English speech is necessary it has been found that the use of an accent can be quite effective and greatly reduces distraction.
- ✘ **Our unit** portrays 2te Zug, 3te Kompagnie of the 63te Regiment of the Imperial German Army, late 1917. The appropriate impressions in 2te Zug are riflemen, grenadiers and light machine gun crew members. Rank and awards are assigned by the unit. Other combat portrayals are acceptable only during living history events and must be approved prior to the event by the Kompagnieführer.

- ✘ **When JR63** was established as a reenactment unit, it was chosen because it was a typical German combat infantry company. Therefore, items for your impression should be what was common, typical and ordinary for a German soldier. Exotic, exceptional or unusual items should be avoided, even if documentable.

## Some Regulations

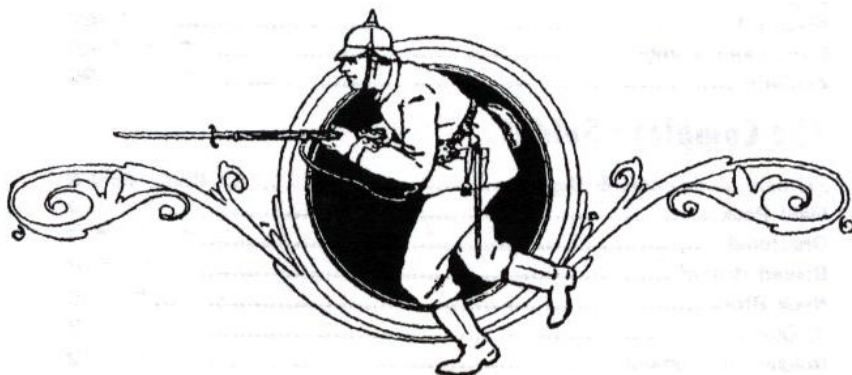
Authenticity inspections will be conducted – either formal or informal. A probationary member's impression will be monitored and critiqued. The unit leaders will assist a Rekrut in any way that they can to help him meet IR63 standards. Rekruts have 1½ years to complete their basic impression.

Trench and dugout regulations – The living history environment of the trench system and our bunker is carefully maintained. To this end, certain rules must be followed to preserve the authenticity and atmosphere of these areas.

- ✘ All food items brought into this are **MUST** be in period wrappings and must be something that could have realistically been available to a front-line soldier of the wartime period.
- ✘ Sleeping bags are not permitted in the bunker or trench areas.
- ✘ Beverages in cans are **NOT ALLOWED**. Beverages must be in period bottles with corks or wire-and-porcelain stoppers, and have either no labels or period looking labels.

Rules regulating the consumption of alcohol vary from site to site. The unit commander will explain the particular rules governing alcohol at each event. It is forbidden to consume alcoholic beverages on a training range on a U.S. military base. In accordance with the Great War Association rules, **ANYONE** caught participating in a combat scenario while drunk **WILL BE SUBJECT TO EXPULSION** from the event, and their status in our unit will be reviewed.

General behavior in the line will be in accordance with military protocol; officers and NCOs should be obeyed. Command structure **WILL** be observed.





# Tips for New Men

Reenacting can be very cold in April and November. Make sure you are properly outfitted for this type of weather. You will be expected to do night-time sentry duty and will need gloves, long johns, warm sock, and a scarf in proper colors such as green or gray. We seem to attract a lot of inclement weather, so waterproof your boots thoroughly. Bring extra socks. Your sponsor and NCOs can (and will) help you with all this!

In order to enjoy the event to the fullest, keep your weapon clear and operable. If you drop a stripper of ammo in the dirt, *don't load it!* This will cause a jam for sure. Bring a cleaning kit and oil to make sure your Gewehr works.

If you have problems, see your NCO right away. Look to your NCOs for instructions, and do what they tell you to do. This is a military event and as such, independent action should be the exception rather than the rule. NEVER leave you section of trench without reporting to an NCO.

Before you leave home for an event, use the unit's checklist to lay out and pack your kit. This will greatly ensure that you have not forgotten anything! (Trust us, this *is* important! Reenacting WWI is kind of difficult without your rifle or boots!)

Remember, NOTHING MODERN will be allowed into the trench system after 5:00 pm on the Friday night of an event.

The unit will provide a period hot meal for dinner on Friday and Saturday nights, and a light breakfast on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Other food can be brought if it is wrapped in wax paper, brown paper or other period type containers. Be careful about non-period items, they can ruin the experience for others.

Expect a lot of digging and hard work, so bring a good pair of work gloves. This is where your work uniform (Drillishanzug) will come in handy!

Cigars and cigarettes were general issue in the Imperial German Army (a note of interest: filter tips did not exist at this time). Pipes were also very common and can be used as long as they are of a period appearance.

Most important of all – READ about the time period! LEARN all that you can about the Imperial German Soldat of 1914-1918. This is the only way to truly appreciate what this event is all about.

# Why You Should Join IR63

Experience the camaraderie of belonging to the oldest recreated WWI German reenactment unit in existence.

Be a part of a unit that takes reenacting seriously, yet also keeps sight of the goal of providing enjoyment to its members.

Belong to a unit that has considerable experience in building authentic trench sections and bunkers.

Receive “Der Angriff!”, our bi-yearly newsletter. This publication, in addition to containing useful unit information, also contains useful information on how to improve your impression, and historical research into all different aspects of WWI history.

Receive a free Soldbuch (soldier’s record book) and identity tag, unit Handbook (which gives you detailed information on how to put your impression together).

## How to Get Involved

Here’s what you should do if you like what you have read so far, have a desire to become a Frontkämpfer, and take part in the Great War experience with IR63:

- ✧ Fill out the application for that accompanies this Prospectus.
- ✧ Send it in with your \$25 annual dues to the address at the bottom of the application.

You will receive in return the official IR63 Handbook and a vendor’s list of IR63 approved suttlers. You will also be contacted by phone or email by an IR63 representative and you will be assigned a sponsor who will work with you throughout your Rekrut period in IR63 to help you acquire your kit and build your impression.



# A History of the Real IR63 During the Great War

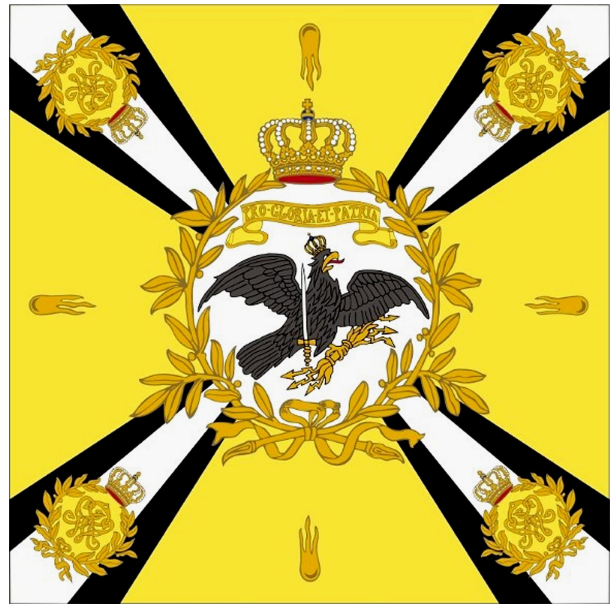
Silesia (Schlesien in German) was an area that stretched along the 220 mile long Oder River valley and had been part of Prussia since the 1740s. It was divided into two sections: the northwestern part known as Lower Silesia and the southwestern part known as Oberschlesien (Upper Silesia). The latter area was the home of IR63.

This unit was number 63 in the Prussian line, but was also part of (and referred to as) the “4. Oberschlesisches” (4<sup>th</sup> Upper Silesian). The 4. Oberschlesisches consisted of JR63 and JR157. On the


eve of the war, JR63 and JR157 constituted the 78<sup>th</sup> Brigade. This brigade, along with JR23, JR62, Jäger zu Pferde (mounted rifles) Regt. Nr. 11. Feldartillerieregiment Nr. 21 and Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 57, made up the 12<sup>th</sup> Division. The 12<sup>th</sup> Division was based at Neiße.

The 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Divisions formed the 6<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, which in peacetime was based at Breslau (now called Wroclaw), the largest city in the province. Though actually in Lower Silesia, Breslau was roughly in the middle of Silesia, thereby providing a centralized location from which to administer the two divisions. In August 1914, the 6<sup>th</sup> Army Corps was an element of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army under command of Krönprinz Friedrich Wilhelm.

JR63's home station was in the vicinity of the towns of Oppeln and Lublinitz in Oberschlesien (now a part of southwestern Poland). This area was a great mining and industrial center: the mines produced much of Germany's coal, zinc, and lead, and large steelworks operated in many cities, including Lublinitz. The factory towns of Niederschlesien (Lower Silesia), particularly Breslau, turned out trucks, motors, leather items, and metalwork. Silesia's farms grew much more produce – barley, rye, wheat, oats, vegetables, fruit and potatoes, even tobacco – than the province's residents needed. Goods from the area were transported to other markets on the well-developed German railway network and the Oder River, which ran the length of the province. In addition to fields and orchards, a large percentage of the land –



JR63 Regimental Standard



at least 25% - was still heavy forest – a good place to hunt and a source of timber.

Although Silesia was a province in the state of Prussia, the people of the area had a distinctive character that set them apart from other Prussians. Many were of Polish and mixed Polish-German descent. A large part of the population was Roman Catholic or Jewish, which differed from the predominantly Protestant population in other parts of Prussia. Princess Evelyn, the English wife of Prince Blucher, spent time both in Berlin and on the Blucher estate in Silesia during the war. In her memoirs, *An English Wife in Berlin*, she compared the common citizens of Prussia Proper and Silesia. She said she preferred the Silesians, characterizing them as a self-reliant, good-natured people, and as being friendlier than the Berliners. Even in the times of great adversity that came during the war, she reported that the average Silesian was willing to share what little he had with his neighbors. Despite the fact that almost every household had lost family members in combat by 1917, the people generally remained steadfast in their sense of duty, and were as cheerful as possible under the circumstances.

## Viewpoint

Rick Baumgartner, a former member of JR63, met and talked with a man who provided another viewpoint on the Silesians. He located and interviewed a German veteran from a Bavarian artillery regiment that had been stationed next to JR63 at one point during the war. He said that they all liked the Silesians, whom he described as big, friendly, good-natured miners and farmers. But he felt sorry for them, as they were so easy-going and good-natured that Bavarian artillerymen were able to play some truly awful practical jokes on them. In spite of such relatively un-warlike traits, early in the war the Silesians were among the best troops in the German Army. British army intelligence listed the 12<sup>th</sup> Division as a first-rate assault division. By 1918 though, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division was only classed as a second rate division (the rating had four levels). As JR63 was part of the 12<sup>th</sup> Division, it is safe to say that this assessment of the quality of the parent organization also applies to the regiment. The Division's record of service during the war can be used to trace the engagements which JR63 was involved and where it was stationed. There are two regimental histories of JR63, but as of yet neither has been translated into English.

On the other hand, German divisional histories, are available in English. Those sources make it clear that the 12<sup>th</sup> Division – and therefore JR63 – was actively engaged from the first months of the war right up through the Armistice.

# The 12. Infanteriedivision at War



12th Division Headquarters in Oppeln

JR63 was part of the 12<sup>th</sup> Division which also included JR23 and JR62. The 12<sup>th</sup> Division saw its first action in the battle of August 22, 1914 at Rossignol les Bulles and entered France August 24, passed the Meuse above Mouzon on August 28, and took part in the battle September 7 at Laheycourt and Villotte near Louppy.

After the battle of the Marne, September 21, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division – with JR63 as one-quarter of its infantry strength – went into combat at Berru and at Nogent L'Abbesse (east of Rheims) in the Champagne region.

In April 1915, the infantry strength of the 12<sup>th</sup> Division was affected by the German General Staff's efforts to create more divisions, when IR157 was transferred to the newly formed 117<sup>th</sup> Division. At that point, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division had only one brigade, as JR63 was included in the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade with JR23 and JR62. The 12<sup>th</sup> Division remained on the Rheims front until mid-June 1915 when it was shifted to the Artois sector.



## **Artois**

The 12<sup>th</sup> Division was engaged in very heavy fighting in the Souchez sector from July 1-16, 1915. After the fighting, the Division received a short rest in the region of Cambrai.

## **The Somme**

In October of 1915, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division, including JR63, moved to the Somme. On July 1, 1916, the 12th Division took the brunt of an attack by a large part of the British 4th Army in the Somme. In just one day of defensive action, the division suffered severe losses amounting to just over 60% of its effectives. The 12<sup>th</sup> Division was relieved on July 12<sup>th</sup> and reorganized in the vicinity of Cambrai.

## **Cambrai**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of July, the First and Second Battalions of JR63 took part in counterattacks against British positions just northeast of Pozières. The Second Battalion attacked through the ruins of the village of Courcellette, while the First Battalion moved along its right flank near Martinpuich. Both took heavy losses. About the 9<sup>th</sup> of August the 12<sup>th</sup> Division was relieved, and on the 21<sup>st</sup> went into the sector of Monchy aux Bois (south of Arras) which it held until October 16.

## **Ancre**

The entire 12<sup>th</sup> Division again suffered heavily in a bloody fight on November 14, 1916, when it defended a line north of the Ancre River near Beaumont-Hamel against another British Attack.

## **Ostfront**

Shortly after Ancre, troops of the Division received a rest of sorts when they were transferred to the Eastern Front. On December 28, 1916, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division entrained for the east. It did not, however, see any major actions against the Russians.



## **Zurück nach dem Westen**

In late May 1917, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division returned to the West and was posted as a reserve division in the area of Wytschaete-Messines front. In August 1917, it relieved the 22<sup>nd</sup> Reserve Division in the sector east of Klein-Zillebeke in Belgium. While in this position, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division was not actually engaged in combat, but it did suffer severe losses due to the almost constant artillery bombardment it received.

## **Reorganization of Italy**

Later the same month, the Division was sent to Elsaß-Lothringen (Alsace Lorraine to the French and English) for the rest of the reorganization. It remained in the area of Bâle until the end of September. The 12<sup>th</sup> Division was then sent to the Italian front to become part of the newly-formed 14<sup>th</sup> German Army.

## **The Tolmino Offensive**

The troops of the 12th Division had a key role in the German-Austrian joint operation known as the Tolmino offensive which took place in October 1917. The 12<sup>th</sup> and 117<sup>th</sup> Divisions, along with the Alpine Corps (which included a company of Württemberg mountain troops commanded by one Erwin Rommel) formed an assault force referred to as the “Stein Group.”

This force was assigned the task of executing the main attack intended to roll up three entrenched Italian positions. The 12th Division's assignment was to break through to the town of Karfreit by moving along both sides of the Isonzo Valley. With the aid of fog and rainy weather, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division's three infantry regiments all made excellent progress against the Italians. By October 25, they had passed their original goals and were into the Natisone Valley.



**An original photo from the 12th Division**

## Caporetto, Mount Matajur and Honors for IR63

On October 25-26, 1917, elements of JR63, JR23 and the Württemberg Mountain Battalion attacked and captured critical Italian positions on Mount Della Colonna and Mount Matajur. The fall of these commanding positions made it possible for the combined German and Austrian forces to inflict a decisive defeat on the Italians later that same month in what was known as the 12th Battle of the Isonzo, or the Battle of Caporetto.

Leutnant Schnieber, an officer from 4./JR63, and Rommel both received the "Pour Le Mérite" for their roles in the assault on the mountain-top defenses. And, in recognition of its part in the Caporetto offensive, the entire JR63 was awarded a distinction shared by only one other regiment in the German Army – shoulder boards with the royal cipher of the Austrian Kaiser, Karl.



On November 3, 1917, Kaiser Wilhelm decreed that Kaiser Karl would become the ceremonial regimental chief of certain units that had distinguished themselves in the cooperative actions with Austria. This decree was made official as Army order 1080 of November 10, 1917, which bestowed the honor upon Garde Grenadier Regt. Nr. 2, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Westfälischen Husaren Regt. Nr. 11, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Oberschlesischen Infanterieregiment Nr. 63. The latter two units received the boards with the royal cipher of Kaiser Karl – a double-crowned "K".

In conjunction with this new ciphered shoulder board replacing the old version with the numeral "63", the unit was renamed "*Infanterieregiment Kaiser Karl von Österreich und König von Ungarn (4. Oberschlesisches) Nr. 63*".

On December 8, 1917, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division was relieved at a position on the Piave River and by Christmas it was back on the Western Front. Once again, in February 1918, the Division was given a rest period in Elsaß. But three days before the great March offensive, it was moved to the Douai sector.

## Vis en Artois

The 12<sup>th</sup> Division marched up the Cambrai Arras road to Vis en Artois on March 23, 1918, and went into the line on the night of March 23-24. IR63 was part of an attack on the British defenses the next morning, but the assault was held up by intense artillery fire. The Division, including IR63, remained in the line until April 1, 1918, while making little progress and suffering significant casualties.

In mid-May, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division was engaged in more heavy fighting south of Arras, along the Lys River. For his leadership of the Division in three engagements, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division's commander, General Lequis, was awarded the "Pour Le Merit".

From mid-July to late August 1918, the Division was almost constantly involved in hard defensive fighting, principally in the area around Armentieres. On August 28, it entrained near Armentieres and went to a point north of Douai.

The Division again engaged the enemy southeast of Monchies on September 3, and in the next 10 days, was driven back towards Inchy en Artois. By the end of September 1918, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division had been pushed back past Boulon, Epinoy, Aubenchel au Bac, and Fressies. By the time the Division was relieved on October 6, 1918, its casualties included the loss of more than 1,100 prisoners.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Division was reengaged on October 22 southeast of Armentieres. In a fighting retreat, it passed Lille on October 20, and stopped at Helchin, where it was again relieved on October 25. The German Army's desperate straits at this point were reflected in that even after all the battering it had taken, the 12<sup>th</sup> Division was again put into the line, east of Joulain, where it remained until the Armistice.



An original postcard. "Treu deutscher Gruß" literally means "A loyal German greeting".

## After the Armistice

After the armistice, the 12th Division was eventually moved back to Silesia. Following demobilization, many former 12th Division members were involved in Freikorps activity and the fighting along the Polish Border. Apparently some ex-12th Division soldiers also served with Polish forces fighting the Bolshevik Russians.

## IR63 Artifacts

Today, artifacts of IR63 are not particularly common. Most items that can be identified as coming from JR63 seem to come out of Canada, suggesting that at some point in the war – probably in 1916 – JR63 was hit hard by Canadian troops. There is no indication that the unit did any significant fighting against American forces.





# JR63 By-laws

## **I. Name of the Organization**

1. The unit is officially called 3te Kompagnie/4. Oberschlesisches Infanterieregiment Nr. 63 (3./JR63).

## **II. Purpose**


1. 3./JR63 is a chartered unit within the Great War Association (GWA) and is primarily a means for individuals to explore the life and times of the common infantryman in the Imperial German Army.

## **III. Political Statement**

1. The membership of 3./JR63 is not affiliated with any racist, radical or right wing political organization, especially and including the Neo-Nazi movement. 3./JR63 does not adhere to any political agenda, nor will it allow any extremist political views to be expressed by its members while acting as a representative of the unit.

## **IV. Membership**

1. There are three distinct types of membership in the 3./JR63. These are Recruit, Reservist, and Full Member. All members will use the impression of a member of JR63 of the Imperial German Army, circa 1914-1918. Any other impression used at unit sanctioned events must be approved in advance by the Kompagnieführer and must be historically correct for the unit.
2. A recruit is a male at least 18 years of age who is applying for membership in JR63. The recruit must have filled out a membership application, been assigned a sponsor and paid unit and GWA dues. He can participate in all unit activities but cannot hold rank or vote. To apply for full member status, the recruit will have his basic kit and attend three unit sanctioned events; one of them must be a combat event. At the next event after his third, he will be voted on for full membership. A 75% affirmative vote of all members present will admit him to the unit.

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3. A reservist is a full member of JR63 who must request to become a reservist. He will pay associate dues of 60% of current membership dues and will receive the 3./JR63 newsletter. He can voice his opinions but cannot vote in unit business. He can participate in all unit sanctioned events other than the GWA National combat events and he cannot hold rank.
  4. A full member is a member who has been voted into the unit and is current with his unit and GWA dues. He can participate in all unit-sanctioned events, vote, hold rank and sponsor a recruit.
  5. A full member may lose his membership for serious violations of unit and GWA safety or authenticity rules or not paying dues.

## **V. Voting**

1. A quorum for official, scheduled meetings will consist of the Kompagnieführer and at least 40% of the unit's full member status.
2. Votes will take place on one-time extra-ordinary treasury disbursements, recruit membership, membership fees, major site improvements, elections and bylaws changes or violations.
3. An affirmative vote of 75% is necessary for any motion to pass.

## **VI. Officers and Responsibilities**

1. The position of Kompagnieführer is nominated and elected by the membership. Nominations and elections will take place at the Spring GWA event. The Kompagnieführer will serve a two year term which begins immediately after the Spring GWA event. He may serve for more than one term but he cannot serve more than two terms consecutively.
2. The structure of the unit will be dictated by the size and effectiveness (ie unit minus GWA staff) of the unit and will emulate the organizational and command structure that was used by the Imperial German Army.
3. All junior and senior NCOs and specialists (company cook, grenadier, etc.) are appointed by the Kompagnieführer with the consent of the full membership. If required, officers may be appointed on an acting basis.
4. If there is an JR63 member with a higher rank than the Kompagnieführer serving on the Central Powers GWA staff, he may only act as the



**“Ceremonial” head of the unit on occasions such as parades, living history demonstrations, etc.**

- 5. Members of JR63 may be on the Central Powers GWA staff or perform duties outside the ordinary unit structure and still be voting members of the unit.**
- 6. A unit treasurer will be appointed by the Kompagnieführer and the senior NCOs. He will be in charge of all money transactions that occur for the unit. All transactions must be documented and any payment transactions that occur with parties outside of the unit must include a receipt, which will be kept by the treasurer. Any member wishing to be reimbursed for common unit expenses (unit food, revetting materials, etc.) must present a receipt to the treasurer before monies will be disbursed. The treasurer will also have a full financial report at all major events where an official unit meeting will take place.**
- 7. The safety officer for the unit will be the member whose rank is considered to be the second in command.**
- 8. In the case that the Kompagnieführer is not able to complete his term, the position will be given to the highest ranking member in the command structure. He will hold the Kompagnieführer position until the next unit sanctioned event which provides for an official meeting to take place at which time a new Kompagnieführer will be elected by the membership.**

## **VII. General**

- 1. Authenticity and safety guidelines will be approved by a vote of the NCOs. Any member may propose a change in the guidelines. He must provide printed documentation which supports the change.**
- 2. Members of JR63 will wear no awards or decorations on their uniform except those formally given to them by the unit.**
- 3. Payment of unit dues must be done before the National GWA Spring Event.**




# The German Reenactor's Recommended Reading List

## Personal Accounts, Novels, etc., of the Great War


- ✘ **A Fatalist at War** by Rudolf G. Binding, translated by Ian F. D. Morrow, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1929 [*Aus dem Kriege*, Frankfurt Am Main: Rutten & Loening 1925].
- ✘ **Pillbox 17. The Story of a Comradeship-in-arms** by Karl Broger [Bröger], translated by Oakley Williams, London: Thornton Butterworth 1930 [Karl Bröger, *Bunker 17, Geschichte einer Kameradschaft*, Jena: Eugen Diderichs 1929]. Reprint edition by Naval & Military Press Ltd. 2006.
- ✘ **In the Line 1914-1918** by Georg Bucher, translated by Norman Gullick, London: Jonathan Cape 1932 [*Westfront, 1914-1918. Das Buch vom Frontkamerade*, Wien-Leipzig: C. Konegen 1930]. Reprint edition by Naval & Military Press 2006.
- ✘ **Diary of a German Soldier** by C. Feldwebel, New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1919. Originally published in France 1918.
- ✘ **Zero Hour** by Georg Grabenhorst, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1929 [*Fahnenjunker Volkenborn*, Leipzig: Hase & Koehler 1928]. New editions by University of South Carolina Press and Naval & Military Press Ltd. 2006.
- ✘ **In the Hell of Verdun** by Alfred Hein, translated by F. H. Lyon, London: Cassell 1930 [*Eine Kompanie Soldaten. In der Holle von Verdun*, Berlin: Wilhelm Köhler 1930].
- ✘ **Loretto. Sketches of a German Volunteer** by Max Heinz, translated by Charles Ashleigh, New York: H. Liveright 1930 [*Loretto. Anzeichnungen eines Kriegsfreiwilligen*, Berlin: Rembrandt-Verlag 1930].
- ✘ **The Holocaust. From a Survivor of Verdun** by William Hermanns, New York: Harper & Row Publishers (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Ltd.) 1972. [This is an exception, not published during the war-book boom.]
- ✘ **The Storm of Steel: From the Diary of a German Storm-Troop Officer on the Western Front** by Ernst Jünger, translated by Basil Creighton, London: Chatto & Windus Ltd., and New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1929 [the translation is from the 1924 edition of *In Stahlgewittern*, E. S. Mittler & Sohn Verlag, Berlin]. New facsimile editions from the 1980s to the early 2000s by Howard Fertig Inc. (New York); Zimmermann & Zimmermann and Constable and Company Ltd. (London 1996). New translation (from the 1971 edition, Clett Cotta, Stuttgart) by Michael Hofmann (*The Storm of Steel*) published by Allen Lane and Penguin Modern Classics 2003.
- ✘ **Copse 125: A Chronicle from the Trench Warfare of 1918** by Ernst Jünger, translated by Basil Creighton, London: Chatto & Windus Ltd. 1930 [*Das Wäldchen 125. Eine Chronik aus den Grabenkämpfen 1918*, Berlin E. S. Mittler & Sohn Verlag 1925]. New facsimile edition by Zimmermann & Zimmermann 1988.



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- ✘ **All Quiet on the Western Front** by E. M. (Erich Maria) Remarque, translated by Arthur Wesley Wheen, Little Brown (New York), and G. P. Putnam's Sons Ltd. (London) 1929 [*Im Westen nichts Neues*, 1928/1929]. Several editions. New translation by Brian Murdoch 1993.
  - ✘ **War** by Ludwig Renn, translated by Willa & Erwin Muir, London: Martin Secker 1929 [*Krieg*, Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Societäts-Druckerei 1928]. New editions 2001 and 2006 by Naval & Military Press.
  - ✘ **The Red Battle Flyer** by Manfred [Captain] von Richthofen, translated by J. Ellis Barker, New York: McBride Co. 1918 [*Der rote Kampfflieger*, Berlin: Ullstein 1917].
  - ✘ **The Fiery Way** by Franz Schauwecker, translated by Thonald Holland, London & Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons Limited 1929 [*Der feurige Weg*, Berlin: Frundsberg-Verlag o. J. 1930].
  - ✘ **The Furnace** by Franz Schauwecker, translated by R. T. Clark, London: Methuen 1930 [*Aufbruch der Nation*, Berlin: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft 1929].
  - ✘ **Schlump: The Story of an Unknown Soldier**, Anonymous [Emil Schulz], translated by Maurice Samuel, London: Martin Secker 1929 [*Schlump. Geschichten und Abenteuer aus dem Leben des unbekanntes Musketiers Emil Schulz, genannt "Schlump": von ihm selbst erzählt*, München: Kurt Wolff 1928].
  - ✘ **Private Suhren. The Story of a German Rifleman** by Georg von der Vring, translated by Fred Hall. New York: Harper 1928 [*Soldat Suhren. Roman*, Berlin: J.M. Spaeth Verlag 1927].
  - ✘ **Education before Verdun** by Arnold Zweig, translated by Eric Sutton, New York: Viking Press Inc. 1936 [*Erziehung vor Verdun*, Amsterdam: Querido 1935]. New edition by Award Books 1964.
  - ✘ **Fritz: The World War One Memoirs of a German Lieutenant.** by Fritz Nagel. Blue Acorn Press: Huntington, WV, 1995.
  - ✘ **A Surgeon with the Kaiser's Army**  
by Stephen K. Westmann. William Kimber: London, 1963.
  - ✘ **German Student's War Letters.**  
Translated by A.F. Wedd. Methuen, 1929.
  - ✘ **Jackboot; The Story of the German Soldier.**  
by Fritz Nagel. Blue Acorn Press: Huntington, WV, 1995.
  - ✘ **The Passage; A Tragedy of the First World War.**  
by Stephen K. Westmann. William Kimber: London, 1963.

## German Army, Uniforms, etc.

- ✘ **Imperial German Army Handbook, 1914-1918.**  
by David Nash. Ian Allen Ltd.: London, 1929.

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- ✘ **German Infantry, 1914-1918.**  
by David Nash. Almark Pub.: London 1971.
  - ✘ **World War I Infantry in Colour Photographs.**  
by Laurent Mirouze. Windrow & Green: London 1990.
  - ✘ **The German Army 1914-1918.**  
by D.S.V. Foster and R.J. Marion. Osprey Pub. Ltd.: London 1978.
  - ✘ **The German Officer Corps 1890-1914.**  
by Martin Kitchen. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1968.
  - ✘ **German Stormtrooper 1914-1918.**  
by Ian Drury. Osprey Pub. Ltd.: London 1995.

## **Trench Warfare, Tactics, etc.**

- ✘ **Death's Men.**  
by Denis Winter. Penguin Books Co., Ltd.: New York, 1978.
- ✘ **Development of Tactics – World War.**  
by Wilhelm Balck, Lt. General, German Army.  
General Service Schools Press: Ft. Levenworth, Kansas, 1972.
- ✘ **The Dynamics of Doctrine: The Changes in German Tactical Doctrine During the First World War.**  
by Timothy T. Lupfer. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.  
Ft. Levenworth, Kansas, 1981.
- ✘ **Eye Deep in Hell.**  
by John Ellis. Pantheon Books: New York, 1976.
- ✘ **If Germany Attacks; The Battle in Depth in the West.**  
by G.C. Wayne. Greenwood Press: Westport, CT, 1976.
- ✘ **Attacks.**  
by Erwin Rommel. Athena Press, Inc.: Vienna, VA 1979.
- ✘ **Stormtroop Tactics; Innovation in the German Army, 1914-1918.**  
by Bruce I. Gudmundsson. Prager: New York, 1989.
- ✘ **Trench Fighting 1914-1918.**  
by Charles Messenger. Balentine Books, Inc.: New York, 1977.
- ✘ **Trench Warfare 1914-1918; The Live and Let Live System.**  
by Tony Ashworth. Holms & Meier Publishers: New York, 1980.

## Battles and Campaigns

- ✘ **The Price of Glory; Verdun 1916.**  
by Alister Horne. Penguin Books: New York, 1964.
- ✘ **The Battle of Caporetto.**  
by Cyril Falls. J.B. Lippincott Co.: Philadelphia, 1966.
- ✘ **The Battle of Cambrai.**  
by Bryan Cooper. Stein and Day: New York, 1968.
- ✘ **The Defeat of Imperial Germany 1917-1918.**  
by Rod Paschell. Algonquin Books: Chapel Hill, NC, 1989.
- ✘ **1918 the Last Act.**  
by Barrie Pitt. MacMillian Publishers, Ltd.: London, 1962.
- ✘ **Tannenberg; Clash of Empires.**  
by Dennis E. Showalter. Archon Books: Hamden, CT, 1991.
- ✘ **The Kaiser's Battle: Classic Military History**  
By Martin Middlebrook, Penguin Books
- ✘ **The Advance from Mons**  
by Captain Walter Bloem, Award Books, 1967
- ✘ **To The Last Man: Spring 1918**  
MacDonald, Lyn, Viking, 1998
- ✘ **1918 The Year of Victories**  
Martin Evans, Chartwell Books, 2002
- ✘ **First Day on the Somme. 1 July 1916.**  
Martin Middlebrook, W. W. Norton & Co, 1972
- ✘ **This Carnival of Hell - German Combat Experience on the Somme 1916.** Compiled,  
Translated & Edited by Richard A. Baumgartner, Blue Acorn Press, 2010.

