

Tropical Uniforms of the German Imperial Entourage and General Staff

Palestine 1898, China 1900-01 and Ethiopia 1905

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Kaiser Wilhelm II and his Staff in Jerusalem 1898

Photo from [WikiCommons](#)

Kaiser Wilhelm II's Expedition to Palestine 1898

The Kaiser had a passion for uniforms and his expedition to Palestine ("*Palästina-Reise*") in 1898 offered a chance to have a whole new range of khaki tropical uniforms with tropical helmets or side caps designed for himself and many of his entourage. This included generals and staff officers, the imperial bodyguard ("*Leib-Gendarmerie*"), footmen and other attendants.

Von Waldersee and his Bodyguard in China 1900-01

The khaki uniforms designed for the Kaiser's visit to Palestine were also worn by Generalfeldmarschal Graf von Waldersee and his two personal bodyguards (a Vizewachtmeister from the 1st Platoon ("*Zug*") and a Gefreiter from the 2nd Platoon of the Leib-Gendarmerie) while he commanded German and Allied forces against the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900-01.

Rosen's Mission to Ethiopia 1904-05

The same khaki uniform was also worn by Fritz Rosen on his diplomatic mission to Ethiopia, which opened diplomatic relations between Germany and Ethiopia with the Trade and Friendship Treaty signed on 7th March 1905. Rosen was also on the Kaiser's staff during the Palestinian Expedition.

Wilhelm II's other Overseas Visits

As far as I know Wilhelm II only travelled outside of Europe on three other occasions (Istanbul in 1889 and 1917 and Morocco in 1905). From period photographs neither he nor his entourage seem to have worn his tropical uniform on these trips.

Tropical Uniforms and Headdress

I have so far found no written descriptions of these uniforms from the period nor official uniform regulations. The information on this page is drawn only from examining monochrome period photographs and the few contemporary illustrations that I have found.

Uniforms

The uniform consisted of a khaki tunic with a stand and fall collar, six buttons fastening the front and four buttoned pockets. The breast pockets were pleated, the hip pockets were not. Trousers and riding breeches were in matching khaki. The colour of collar, cuffs and piping, the addition of Litzen on collars and cuffs and other details of the uniforms depended on the arm of service of the wearer. These details are described below.

Tropical Helmet

Headdress consisted of either a tropical helmet or a side cap. The tropical helmet was khaki and tall with front and rear peaks, similar to that briefly worn by the South West African Schutztruppe around 1891. It had a removable spike (which was fluted for officers and plain for other ranks) on a base (that was cruciform in shape for officers and round for other ranks). On either side of the helmet was a large cockade, on the right in Imperial colours and on the left in Prussian. The helmet plate and hatband varied for different troops, as described below. Some photographs show a white helmet cover.

Side Cap

The side cap was clearly based on a British design. It was fastened at the front with two metal buttons. The lower section of the hat and piping across the top was in the same colour as the tropical helmet's hatband. On either side of the cap was a small cockade, on the right in Imperial colours and on the left in Prussian. The cap was worn with a brown leather chinstrap.

Cape

One photograph of the Leibgendarmerie (see [Pickelhaubes Forum](#)) in tropical uniforms shows one wearing a waist length cape. Its removable hood is shaped to be worn over the tropical helmet and its spike and appears to have a drawstring around the face. The cape was fastened at the front with two pairs of buttons.

Footwear

Footwear with the tropical uniform as of natural brown leather. Riding boots or ankle boots with gaiters were most commonly worn. Gaiters worn by other ranks were of a similar type to those worn by the East African Schutztruppe in the Early 1890s, covering the top part of the foot and with six buckled straps. Officers often wore privately purchased gaiters of varying styles. Von Waldersee's Leibgendarmerie wore the high riding boots of their home uniforms, but presumably in natural brown leather to match their equipment.

Equipment and Weapons

Equipment with the tropical uniform as of natural brown leather. The same basic equipment was worn by General and staff officers, consisting of a brown leather belt and shoulder straps with a single pouch to the right side of the open cavalry style buckle. General and staff officers usually carried a sword on their left side, depending on their arm of service and privately designed variations.

The Leibgendarmerie wore a similar belt and pouch, without supporting shoulder straps. A holster to carry a pistol (presumably the 1883 Reichsrevolver) was also worn on the right side of the belt. The heavy cavalry "*Pallasch*" sword was carried on the left side. A water bottle was carried on the left side from a shoulder strap across the right shoulder, while the cartouche pouch was carried on the back on a strap across the left shoulder. The cartouche carried the Prussian Guard Star emblem in yellow metal. Officers wore an open cavalry style belt buckle, other ranks wore a yellow metal oblong buckle with a white metal Prussian Guard Star in the centre.

Arm of Service Variations

Generals

The collar and Swedish-style cuffs of the tunic were red with gold metallic Litzen. The trousers had two broad red stripes down the outside. The tropical helmet had a fluted spike, a yellow metal Prussian Guards eagle on the front, and gold metallic cords around the hatband. The side cap had red piping and lower half. It had small Prussian and imperial cockades on the left and right sides respectively.

General Staff

The collar and Swedish-style cuffs of the tunic were red with silver metallic Litzen. The trousers had two broad red stripes down the outside. The tropical helmet had a fluted spike, a white metal Prussian Guards eagle on the front, and white metallic cords around the hatband. The side cap had red piping and lower half. It had small Prussian and imperial cockades on the left and right sides respectively.

Leib-Gendarmerie

The Imperial bodyguard consisted of two platoons ("*1. & 2. Zug*"), both of which accompanied the imperial entourage in Palestine.

The "*Leib-Gendarmerie 1. Zug*" were the Kaiser's personal bodyguard and served as his personal standard bearers and headquarter orderlies. The platoon consisted of one officer ("*Kommandeur der Leibgendarmerie*"), three NCOs (one Sergeant Major "*Wachtmeister*" and two Corporals "*Unteroffizier*") and twenty troopers. Their home uniform was a dark green cavalry Waffrock with blue collar and Polish style cuffs with yellow Litzen. Shoulder straps were blue with a yellow metal crowned "*WR*" monogram. Their helmet was cuirassier style in polished steel with a "flying " eagle on top and the Prussian Guards star on the front.

The "*Leib-Gendarmerie 2. Zug*" were the Empress' ("*Kaiserin*") personal bodyguard. The platoon consisted of an officer (always a Premierlieutenant or Sekondlieutenant from the 2nd Queen's Own Pomeranian Cuirassier Regt ("*Kürassier-Regiment Königin (Pommersches) Nr. 2*")), two NCOs and 24 troopers. Their home uniform was a white cavalry Waffrock with collar and Polish style cuffs piped in red with white Litzen. Shoulder straps were white, piped in red. Their helmet was cuirassier-style in polished steel with a "flying " eagle on top and the Prussian Guards star on the front. They also had a Gala Dress 18th Century style uniform with a coatee, again white with red facings and a black tricorne hat (see [Wikipedia](#)).

White metallic lace braided aiguillettes were worn across the right breast by all ranks of both platoons with the home and tropical uniforms.

The tropical uniform of the two platoons had piping down the front and around the collar and Polish style cuffs in blue for the 1st and red for the 2nd. The collar and cuffs were in the platoon colours for officers and senior NCOs and khaki with piping in platoon colours for junior NCOs and other ranks. Litzen was worn on the collar and cuffs in yellow metallic thread for the 1st platoon and white for the 2nd. Shoulder straps were as worn on the home uniforms, blue with a yellow metal crowned "*WR*" monogram for the 1st platoon and white with red piping for the 2nd. Trousers were also piped in blue for the 1st platoon and red for the 2nd.

Musicians swallows nests were also worn on the shoulder by the platoon trumpeters. As on the Leibgendarmerie home uniforms they were blue with vertical yellow metallic lace bands and fringing for the 1st platoon, and red with diagonal white metallic lace bands for the 2nd.

The Leibgendarmerie tropical helmet had a fluted spike for officers and senior NCOs and plain for junior NCOs and other ranks. A Prussian Guard Star was worn the front, in yellow metal for the 1st platoon, white metal for the 2nd. A hatband in in blue for the 1st and red for the 2nd platoons was worn on the tropical helmet. While most period photographs show khaki tropical helmets being worn, some show white helmets. It may be that these were reserved for the 2nd platoon, matching their home uniforms. The side cap had piping and the lower half in blue for the 1st and red for the 2nd platoons. It had small Prussian and imperial cockades on the left and right sides respectively.

Imperial Footmen

I have so far found very little information on the footmen of the imperial entourage. What I have written here is based only on observation of several period photographs and one colour illustration of their home uniform (printed in "*The Kaiser's Warlords*" by R Pawly and P Courcelle, Osprey Elite 97).

The collar and plain turn-back cuffs of the khaki tunic were black for officers and senior NCOs and khaki for junior NCOs and other ranks, both were edged in the same lace as worn on their home uniforms. This lace was white edged in red and back and had black Prussian eagles along its length. They wore no shoulder straps. Some photographs show footmen with plain khaki trousers or riding breeches, and some show a broad white stripe on the outside seam.

Their tropical helmets appear to have been from a different manufacturer to the helmets worn by the staff and Leibgarderie. They may have been bought from several different sources. Some appear rounder than the Leibgarderie helmets, some appear similar to British army helmets of the period (see photographs below). The tropical helmets of the footmen had no spike or eagle on the front, but from period photographs it appears that some members had a small cockade at the front to replace the two on the sides worn by the Leibgarderie and general officers. Officers had yellow metallic cords around the hatband of the tropical helmet. The side cap appears in period photographs to have been plain khaki without cockades.

Other Attendants

Period photographs also show plain khaki uniforms with plain khaki side caps being worn by some other ranks alongside footmen in Palestine. I am not sure exactly what their position or titles were.

Local Additions to Uniforms

Many of the imperial entourage, including the Kaiser, wore loose white drapes over their uniforms. These appear to have been purchased locally and vary from some being simply a silk neckshade, hung from the headdress down the back with others being a more full cape with arm holes.

Other Uniforms Worn in Palestine

The Kaiser and his staff did not always wear their khaki uniforms while in Palestine. Period photographs show them wearing the full dress of their home regiments on some days. A wide variety of Prussian army uniforms were worn, the Kaiser in his white Gardes du Corps cuirassier uniform, the 1st platoon of the Leibgarderie in their green uniforms and the 2nd in their white with other officers in dark blue Guard infantry, cavalry and artillery uniforms.

The entourage consisted of almost four hundred people in total (including 79 members of the court of the Kaiser, 8 members of the court of the Empress, 45 German clerics, 9 foreign clerics, 47 naval personnel and 171 other participants).

The sailors from the Imperial yacht Hohenzollern, are seen in some photographs of the expedition on land wearing a white naval shirt, dark blue trousers and tropical helmets with white covers. Generally sailors from the Imperial yacht were distinguished by having white collar patches on the Überzieher jacket although winter jackets were probably not worn in Palestine.

The Empress' ladies in waiting and many civilians on the trip did not of course wear uniform. Most wore their European civilian dress often with privately purchased tropical helmets, parasols and locally acquired loose white garments over the top.

See the Illustrations and Period Photographs below for examples of other uniforms worn in Palestine.

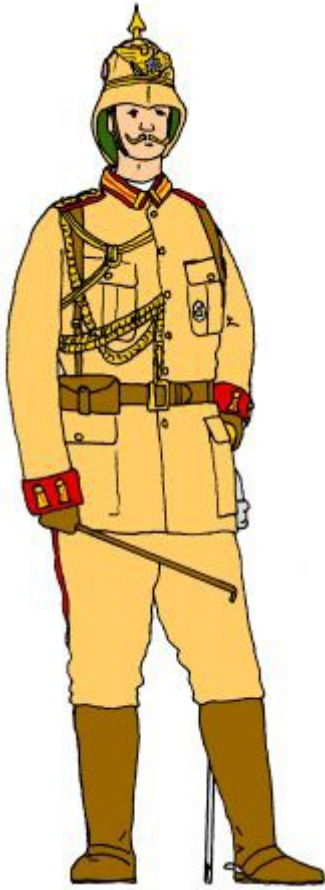


Figure 1
Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1898

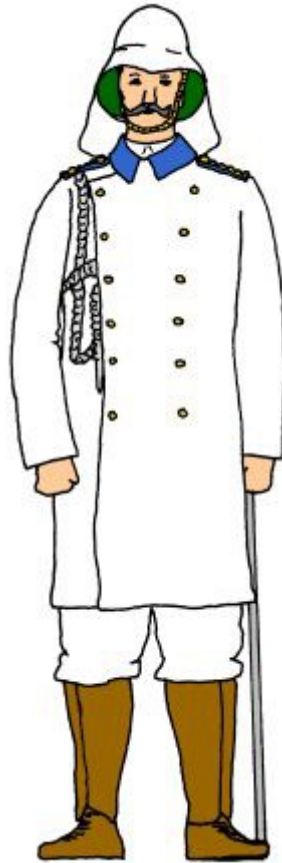


Figure 7
Generalmajor von Scholl,
1. Zug, Leibgarderie



Figure 10
Officer, Imperial Footmen



Figure 6
Sergeant, 2. Zug, Leibgarderie

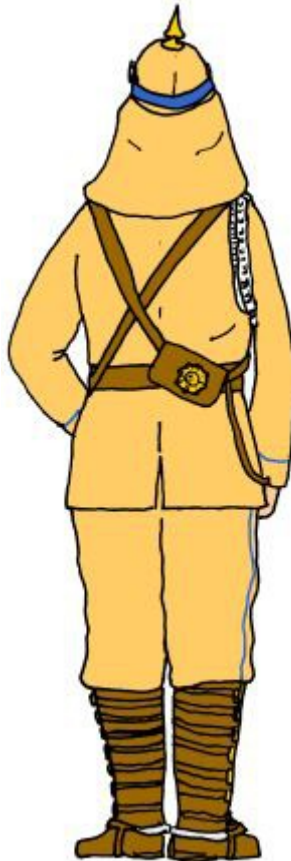


Figure 4
Trooper, 1. Zug, Leibgarderie

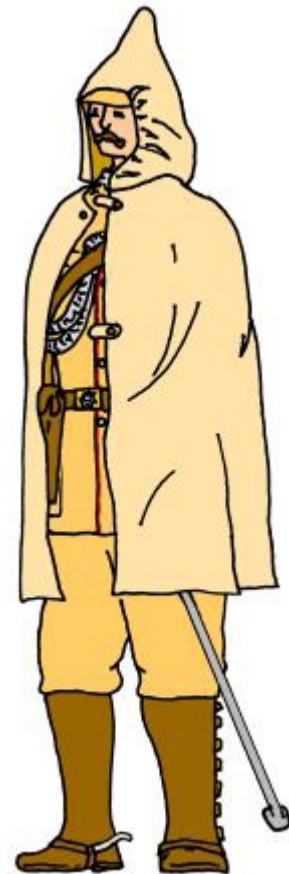


Figure 8
Trooper 2. Zug, Leibgarderie

Illustration Captions

Figure 1 is based on a photograph of **Kaiser Wilhelm II, King of Prussia and German Emperor**, taken in Potsdam shortly before departing for Palestine in 1898. He is dressed typically for a General officer on the visit to Palestine. He wears the khaki tropical uniform for general officers. It has a red collar and Swedish style cuffs with yellow metallic Litzen. His aiguillette cords are in yellow metallic (gold) thread for a general officer. In this photograph the Kaiser is only wearing one breast medal, probably the Prussian Court Hunting Badge (see the [Prussian Hunting Badge Page](#) at [Medal Net](#)). As King of Prussia and German Emperor he was entitled to wear dozens of Prussian and German awards and those of foreign countries. In other photographs taken later in Palestine he wears a few more medals (including an unidentified cross at throat and one breast medal on a ribbon) but never anywhere near his full compliment.

His tropical helmet is the same as worn by other General and staff officers. It has the Prussian Guard Eagle in yellow metal (gold) on the front, a fluted yellow metal spike on a cruciform base, gold lace cords around the hatband and a large cockade on either side (Prussian on the left and imperial on the right).

His riding breeches have the thick double red stripes of general and staff officers. As with most officers he wears brown leather equipment and riding boots. His sword was attached with a more supportive leather strap system than usually worn by officers to compensate for his weak left arm. This system is seen more clearly in other photographs of the Kaiser in different uniforms, but was also used by other officers on the Palestinian visit. On the sword is a Prussian officers sword knot "*Portepee*" in white metallic lace with black threads.

Figure 2 is based on a photograph of **Kommandeur der Leibgendarmerie und Diensttuende General à la suite SM General-Major von Scholl** taken in Germany shortly before departing for Palestine in 1898. He wears a white officer's Paletot double breasted coat with a blue collar for the 1st platoon of the Leibgendarmerie. On his right breast are the white metallic aiguillette cords of the Leibgendarmerie. His trousers are in white as were the usual home uniform trousers of the Leibgendarmerie and are tucked into privately purchased leather gaiters and ankle boots. He wears the tropical helmet with a white cover and neckshade.

Figure 3 is based on a photograph of an **Officer of the Imperial Footmen** taken in Palestine in 1898. He wears the khaki tropical uniform with black collar and cuffs with white lace, edged in red and black with small Prussian eagles along it. His headdress is a tropical helmet. It appears lower and rounder than those worn by the Leibgendarmerie, has no imperial eagle but does appear to have a small cockade at the front and officers yellow metallic cords around the hatband. He wears khaki trousers, though from the original photograph upon which this illustration is based, it cannot be seen if he has the broad white stripe down the edge. He wears the same brown leather gaiters and short ankle boots as worn by the Leibgendarmerie in Palestine. His belt is similar to that of a Prussian army officer (white metallic silk with black stripes) with the Prussian crown on the buckle. His weapon appears to be some kind of short sword although it cannot be seen clearly enough for positive identification in the photograph upon which this illustration is based.

Figure 4 is based on a photograph of a **Sergeant of the 2nd Platoon of the Leibgendarmerie** taken in Germany shortly before departing for Palestine in 1898. He wears the khaki tropical uniform with the white Litzen and red collar, cuffs and piping of the 2nd platoon. Note the trouser piping. The shoulder straps are the 2nd platoon's white with red piping. The white metallic lace around his collar and cuffs and small collar button at the rear of his collar Litzen indicates his rank as Sergeant. He wears the sided cap with piping and lower half in red for the 2nd platoon, note the small Prussian cockade on the side.

He wears short brown leather boots with gaiters with six straps and buckles, seen clearly from the side. The equipment is typical for the Leibgendarmerie in tropical uniform and consists of a brown leather belt carrying the the heavy cavalry "*Pallasch*" sword (with its Prussian white and black "*Faustriemen*" sword knot) and shoulder strap carrying the cartouche pouch.

Figure 5 is based on a photograph of a **Trooper of the 1st Platoon of the Leibgendarmerie** taken in Germany shortly before departing for Palestine in 1898. He wears the khaki tropical uniform with the blue piping of the 1st platoon, also noticeable on the trousers. He wears the white metallic lace braided aiguillettes by all ranks of both platoons of the Leibgendarmerie, here seen tied around the right shoulder. Note the slit in the rear of the tunic skirt to facilitate mounted duties. He wears the khaki tropical helmet with blue hatband for the 1st Platoon and khaki neckshade. The spike for the helmet would be plain for other ranks on a circular base.

He wears short brown leather boots with gaiters with six straps and buckles, seen clearly from the rear. The

equipment is typical for the Leibgendarmerie in tropical uniform and consists of a brown leather belt and shoulder straps carrying the cartouche pouch seen here with its Prussian Guard Star.

Figure 6 is based on a photograph of a **Trooper of the 2nd Platoon of the Leibgendarmerie** taken in Germany shortly before departing for Palestine in 1898. He wears the same khaki uniforms, tropical helmet and brown leather equipment, sword, boots and gaiters as worn by the previous Leibgendarmerie figures. Over this uniform he wears a cape. This illustration is based on the only period photograph I have seen of the tropical cape. It appears to be a waist length cape with a removable hood shaped to be worn over the tropical helmet and its spike and appears to have a drawstring around the face. It appears to be fastened at the front with two pairs of buttons.

Jerusalem Cross Medal

A mention should here be made of the Jerusalem Cross ("*Jerusalem Kreuz*"). It was a medal awarded to members of Kaiser Wilhelm II's entourage during the Palestine expedition. Wilhelm personally awarded the medal while in Palestine. The medal consisted of a Jerusalem Cross (made up of four smaller crosses around a larger central one) in red enamel edged in gold hung on a red ribbon.



Jerusalem Cross

Image from [Israeli Decorations](http://www.israeli-decorations.com).



Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Imperial Entourage, Jerusalem 1898

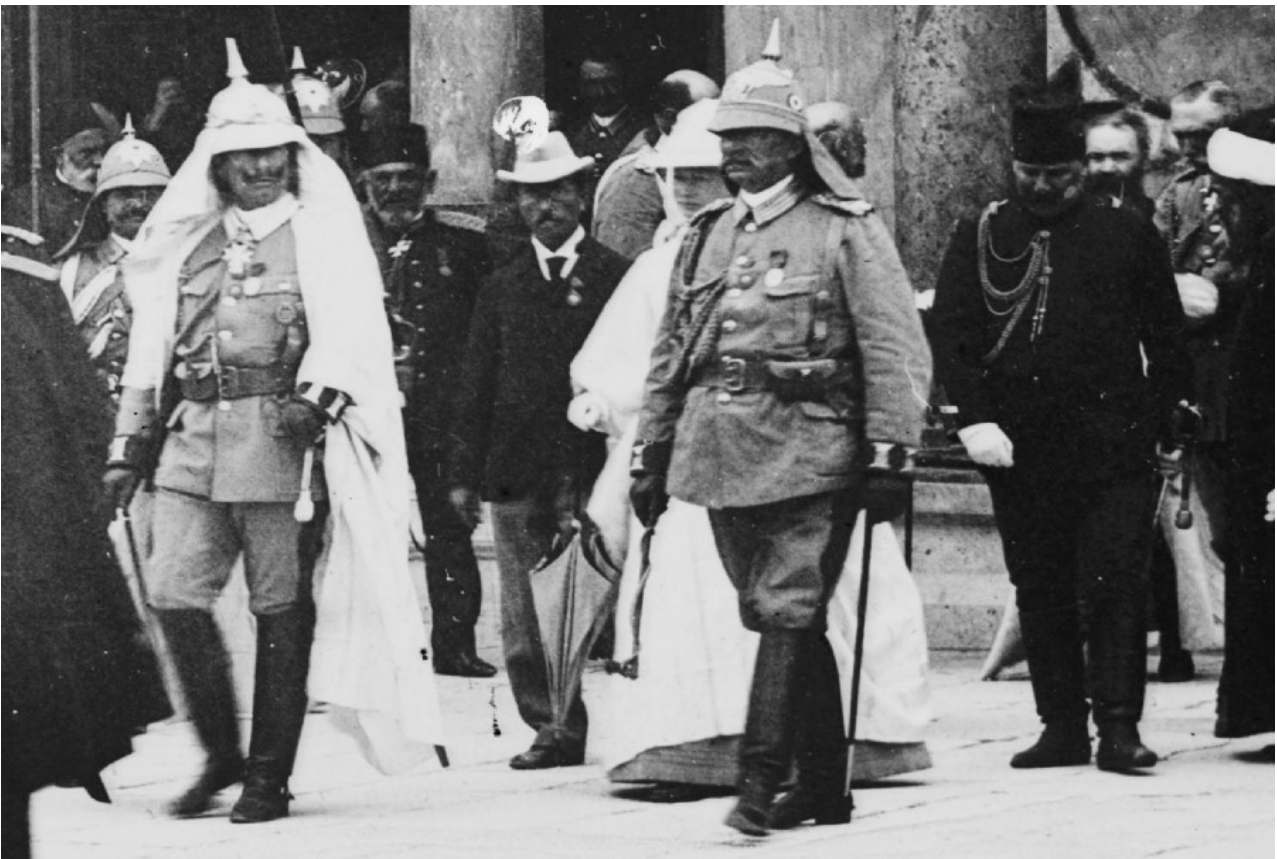
Photo from G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, US Library of Congress / [WikiCommons](#)

This photograph shows Kaiser Wilhelm II and his entourage at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The Kaiser, in the centre, wears his khaki tropical uniform and tropical helmet. The helmet has a white cover and a loose white cloak is worn from it. The general walking with him also wears the khaki uniform and tropical helmet. He has no cover on his helmet and his "flying" Guard eagle, Prussian cockade and neckshade can clearly be seen in the close up below.

Behind the Kaiser can just be seen two members of the Leibgardermerie bearing their imperial standards. In the close up below it can be seen that they both wear khaki tropical helmets with the Guard star on the front.

To the right of the photograph can be seen two Ottoman Zouaves of the Imperial Guard. Their uniforms are not dissimilar to those worn by the Zouaves of the French and American armies. They are blue with red edging and a red waistband. For headdress a green turban ("Keffiyeh") is worn wrapped around a red fez. Their ankle boots and gaiters are French army pattern in black leather. Their medals cannot be clearly made out. They may possibly include the Ottoman medal to commemorate the Kaiser's previous visit to Istanbul in 1889 or the Medal for the Greco-Turkish War of 1897.

Elsewhere in the photograph are some civilians in the Kaiser's entourage, Ottoman army officers in dark blue uniforms with red fezzes and Muslim leaders in traditional clothing.





Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Imperial Entourage, Jerusalem 1898

The Kaiser and his entourage at the arch erected to celebrate the Imperial visit by the Jewish community of Jerusalem. Most wear the tropical uniform. Note the variety of khaki and white tropical helmets and loose white gowns worn over them.

Photo from G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, US Library of Congress / [WikiCommons](#)



Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Imperial Entourage, Jerusalem 1898

The Kaiser and his entourage in Muristan, Jerusalem. In this photograph they wear European uniforms. There is a fabulous array of uniforms on view.

Wilhelm wears the uniform of the Prussian Gardes du Korps cuirassier regiment, complete with cuirassier helmet with eagle on top and Guard star on front, breastplate and high boots. Over his uniform he wears a white coat. I can only hope he didn't have to walk far in this outfit in the heat of Jerusalem. The Empress, Kaiserin Augusta sensibly carries a parasol just to the right. Her ladies in waiting appear to be struggling to keep up with the pace in their long dresses behind the Empress.

Behind the imperial couple are two guardsmen from the 1st Platoon of the Leibgarderie bearing the imperial standards and wearing their dark green home uniforms and cuirassier style helmets. In the upper right of the photo is trumpeter from the 2nd Platoon of the Leibgarderie wearing the white home uniform piped in red and cuirassier style helmet. Note the musicians swallows nests.

In the right foreground with an ostrich-plumed hat, is Prince Albrecht of Prussia ("*Prinz Albrecht von Preußen*") in the uniform of Herrenmeister of the Johanniter Order, a Prussian Protestant Order of Knighthood always headed by a high ranking member of royalty. His tunic is red with white facings and gold lace.

Prussian army officers can be seen in dark blue uniforms with Pickelhauben with the spikes replaced by parade plumes (or feathers for general officers).

Several Ottoman officers are also in dark blue uniforms with the black wool "*Kalpak*" headgear or a red fez. The Kalpak was only authorised for all army officers from 1909, but was worn prior to then by officers of the cavalry and artillery. It has been speculated that the three officers in the top centre right of the photograph may be German officers then serving as Generals in the Ottoman army (Kamphoevener Pascha and Baron Von Hobe Pascha both serving in the cavalry and Pasha von Grumbkow of the artillery). Baron Von der Goltz Pascha, the Inspector General of the Ottoman army may also have been present.

On the far right of the photo is a Zouave of the Ottoman Imperial Guard (wearing the blue uniform and green turban as described above). Note that every male in the photograph, including the Zouave has a full breast of medals.



Imperial Entourage, Jerusalem 1898

The imperial entourage on the Jaffa Road, Jerusalem. Most wear European uniforms. An officer of the footmen on the left of the photograph is the obvious exception. Note his cuff and collar lace, and impressive medal bar.

Just to the right is an imperial naval officer in dark blue frock coat and cocked hat. Further right is a trumpeter of the 1st Platoon of the Leibgendarmerie in dark green home uniform with cuirassier helmet. Note the lace bars on his sleeve to denote him as a musician.

In front of him is a Prussian Guards Infantry officer, also in European Uniform with Guards eagle on his Pickelhaube which has the parade white plume rather than a spike. Note the Litzen on his collar and cuffs.

To the right of him is a standard bearer of the 1st Platoon of the Leibgendarmerie again wearing the dark green home uniform and cuirassier helmet.

Photo from G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, US Library of Congress / [WikiCommons](#)



Second Platoon Leibgendarmerie, Jerusalem 1898

This photograph shows troops of the 2. Zug of the Leibgendarmerie in European Uniforms mounted in camp at Jerusalem. They wear the white cavalry Waffenrock with red collars and Polish cuffs and white Litzen of the 2nd Platoon. They are also wearing the polished steel Cuirassier helmet with "flying" Prussian eagle on top and Guard star on the front. The "lobster tail" neckguard of the helmet can clearly be seen on the figure on the right.

The officer in the foreground wears a dark blue tunic with Swedish style cuffs with Litzen and therefore is not from the Leibgendarmerie, but from a guard unit of the Prussian army. He wears a dark blue Waffenrock and black leather Pickelhaube bearing the Guard star. He has an improvised neckshade tucked into the chin scales of his helmet and wears a long loose white gown over his uniform.

Photo from G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, US Library of Congress / [WikiCommons](#)



Imperial Footman, Berlin 1898

This photograph shows an Imperial Footman in Tropical Uniform after his return from Palestine. He wears the khaki uniform and side cap with lace around the collar and cuffs showing the Imperial Eagle in black on a white background edged in red and black. He wears the Jerusalem Cross in his second buttonhole and the Ottoman Medjidie Order on his left breast.

Photo © [Joe Robinson](#)

Uniforms of Field Marshall Graf von Waldersee and his Leibgendarmerie in China 1900-01

Photographs show that Generalfeldmarschal Graf von Waldersee wore several different uniforms while serving in China as commander of the German East Asian Expeditionary Corps and also as Supreme Allied Commander in the theatre. See period photographs of [Von Waldersee's Uniforms](#) below.

1898 Tropical Uniform

Von Waldersee's tropical uniform was that of a General Officer of the 1898 Palestinian Expedition. The collar and Swedish-style cuffs of the tunic were red with gold metallic Litzen (von Waldersee's removable collar is photographed along with his field marshal's baton in "*The German Colonial Troops 1889-1918*" by J Kraus and T Müller). His shoulder straps were those of a general officer with field marshal rank- thick twisted white metallic cords on the left and yellow metallic braided shoulder strap side with a crossed field marshal's baton on the right. He wore aiguillette cords are in yellow metallic thread for a general officer. The trousers and riding breeches had two broad red stripes down the outside.

With this uniform he wore three different headdresses. The tropical helmet had a fluted spike, a yellow metal Prussian Guards eagle on the front, and gold metallic cords around the hatband. The side cap had red piping and lower half. It had small Prussian and imperial cockades on the left and right sides respectively. Period photographs show that a white generals peaked field cap was also worn with red hatband and piping and a small Prussian cockade at the front.

Likewise his two Leibgendarmerie bodyguards wore the 1898 tropical uniforms with tropical helmets as worn in Palestine two years earlier.

Winter Uniforms

In colder weather von Waldersee is seen in period photographs taken in China wearing the uniforms of his home regiment, the 13th Kings Own Hanoverian Lancers ("*Königs-Ulanen-Regiment (1. Hannoversches) Nr. 13*").

His tunic was the dark blue double breasted lancer jacket ("*Ulanka*") with white piping, a white plastron front, white Polish style cuffs and officers metal epaulettes. His trousers were matching dark blue, with officers thick stripes of white down the side seems. He is also seen in period photographs wearing a similar double breasted dark blue coat ("*Überrock*") again with a white collar and piped in white and at other times a double breasted, grey officers greatcoat ("*Paletot*") with dark blue collar.

With the Lancer uniform he wore a square topped lancer helmet ("*Tschapka*") with a white metal Flying Prussian eagle with the battle honours Peninsula, Waterloo and Garzia Hernandez scrolled across the front and an oval Prussian cockade on the top. He also wore a peaked field cap to match the Ulanka (dark blue with white hatband and piping), it had a small Imperial cockade above a Prussian cockade on the front.

All these items were as per regulation for officers of the 13th Hanoverian Lancers. The uniform regulations of 6th July 1900 for the East Asian Expeditionary Corps, stated that general and staff officers would wear the uniforms of their home regiments in place of the Interimsrock worn by other officers of the Expeditionary corps on formal occasions. Period photographs of von Waldersee's staff show them wearing infantry, artillery and several types of cavalry uniform as worn in Germany.

1901 Tropical Uniform

During von Waldersee's stay in Peking a fire destroyed his residence and with it many of his uniforms. I have seen no photographs of him wearing his Lancer uniform latterly in China. New uniforms may have been sent from Germany for him and possibly some made by local tailors.

One photograph taken in Japan in 1901 shows him wearing a plain khaki uniform conforming roughly to the 9th February 1901 uniform regulations for the East Asian Expeditionary Corps. Curiously the tunic has unpiped pointed Polish style cuffs without buttons, which appear to be a variation by the private tailor as such cuffs were not specified in the regulations, nor are they usually seen on officer's tunic of the period. Next to him, on a table is rested his new Bortfeldt tropical helmet with a white hatband and imperial cockade on the right side, as authorised for generals of the East Asian Expeditionary Corps from February 1901.

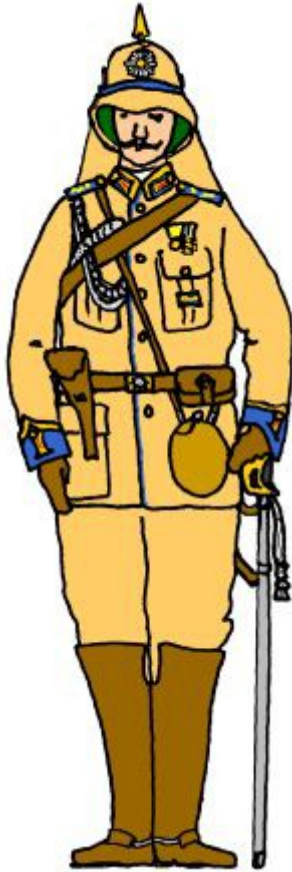


Figure 7
Vizewachtmeister, 1. Zug, Leibgardarmerie

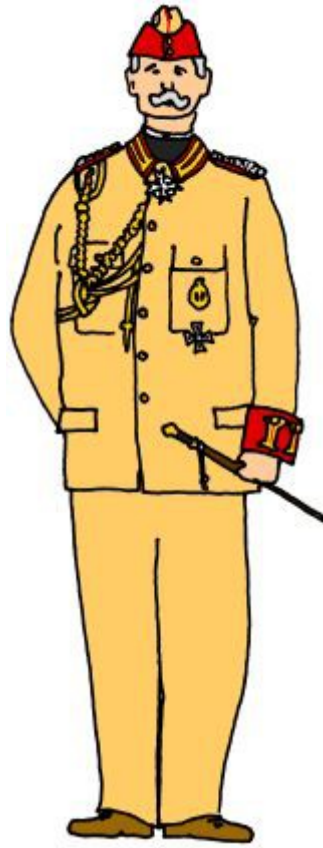


Figure 8
Generalfeldmarschal von Waldersee



Figure 9
Gefreiter, 2. Zug, Leibgardarmerie

Illustration Captions

Figure 7 is based on a photograph of a **Vizewachtmeister of the 1st Platoon of the Leibgardarmerie** taken in Germany shortly before departing for China in 1900 as one of von Waldersee's two personal bodyguards. He wears the khaki tropical uniform with the yellow metallic Litzen and blue collar, cuffs and piping of the 1st platoon.

The shoulder straps are the 1st platoon's blue with yellow metal crowned "WR" monogram. The yellow metallic lace on the collar and cuffs and the large collar buttons indicate his rank as Vizewachtmeister. He wears the white metallic lace braided aiguillettes were worn across the right breast by all ranks of both platoons of the Leibgardarmerie. His medals cannot be made out for certain in the original photograph upon which this illustration is based but one appears to be the 1897 Wilhelm I Centenary Medal. Lower on his pocket is a Prussian long service award.

He wears the khaki tropical helmet with Guard Star, blue hatband for the 1st Platoon and khaki neckshade. The spike for the helmet should presumably be fluted on a cruciform base for that of a senior NCO although it cannot be seen for certain in the original photograph upon which this illustration is based.

His boots are the high cuirassier riding boots of the Leibgardarmerie on home service but appear to be in natural brown leather. The equipment is typical for the Leibgardarmerie in tropical uniform and consists of a brown leather belt and pouch, a holster to carry a pistol, the heavy cavalry "*Pallasch*" sword, a water bottle carried on a strap across the right shoulder and the strap for the cartouche pouch across the left. The buckle is the other ranks yellow metal oblong with a white metal Guard Star.

Figure 8 is based on a studio photograph of **Generalfeldmarschal Graf von Waldersee, Commander of the East Asian Expeditionary Corps** taken in Germany shortly before departing for China in 1900.

He wears the khaki tropical uniform for general officers as worn in Palestine in 1898 with a red collar and Swedish style cuffs with yellow metallic Litzen. His shoulder straps are gold braid with a crossed field marshal's baton. His aiguillette cords are in yellow metallic thread for a general officer.

In this photograph von Waldersee wears three medals, the Grand Cross of the Order of the Red Eagle at his throat, a badge on his left breast (possibly the Prussian Court Hunting Badge) and the 1870 Iron Cross, first class from the Franco-Prussian War below that. He wears the side cap with piping and lower half in red for general officers and small Prussian and imperial cockades on the left and right sides respectively.

In his year in China, von Waldersee wore a variety of uniforms, the tropical khaki one illustrated here, several uniforms of his home regiment, the the 13th Kings Own Hanoverian Lancers ("*Königs-Ulanen-Regiment (1. Hannoversches) Nr. 13*") and a different later replacement khaki uniform.

Figure 9 is based on a photograph of a **Gefreiter of the 2nd Platoon of the Leibgendarmerie** taken in Germany shortly before departing for China in 1900 as one of von Waldersee's two personal bodyguards. He wears the khaki tropical uniform with the white Litzen and red piping of the 2nd platoon.

The shoulder straps are the 2nd platoon's white with red piping. The small collar button at the rear of his collar :Litzen indicates his rank as Vizewachtmeister. He wears the white metallic lace braided aiguillettes were worn across the right breast by all ranks of both platoons of the Leibgendarmerie.

He wears a white tropical helmet with Guard Star, red hatband for the 2nd Platoon and khaki neckshade. He is the only other ranks member of the Leibgendarmerie I have seen with a white helmet, yet several period photographs confirm its shade. The large Prussian cockade on the left side can clearly be seen. The spike for the helmet should presumably be plain for other ranks although it cannot be seen for certain in the original photograph upon which this illustration is based.

His boots are the high cuirassier riding boots of the Leibgendarmerie on home service but appear to be in natural brown leather.

The equipment is again typical for the Leibgendarmerie in tropical uniform and consists of a brown leather belt and pouch, a holster to carry a pistol , the heavy cavalry "*Pallasch*" sword, a water bottle carried on a strap across the right shoulder and the strap for the cartouche pouch across the left. The buckle is the other ranks yellow metal oblong with a white metal Guard Star.



Waldersee in Tropical Uniform with his bodyguard behind him, China 1900

Photo from [WikiCommons- Graf von Waldersee](#)

Main Printed Sources

"**Der Kaiser Reist ins Helige Land**" by Alex Carmel & Ejal Jakob Eisler (Verlag W.Kolhammer)

"**Tropenhelme der kaiserliche Marine, der Ostasiatischen Truppen und der Schutztruppen**" by Ulrich Schiers (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Heereskunde)

"**Zeitschrift für Heeres- und Uniformkunde**" (April/May/June 1936 Edition)- contains a photograph of von Waldersee's bodyguard

"**Deutsche Expeditionstruppen und Schutztruppen**" by Edgar Graf von Matuschka - contains colour illustrations of Waldersee and his bodyguard

"**The Kaiser's Warlords**" by Ronald Pawly and Patrice Courcelle (Osprey Elite)- this book contains the only colour illustration I have so far found of the imperial footmen in their home uniforms

"**Das Deutsche Heer, Friedensuniformen bei Ausbruch des Weltkrieges**" by H. Knötel and P. Pietsch (Diepenbroick-Grüter & Schulz) - shows the home uniforms of the [Leibgendarmerie](#)

"**The German Colonial Troops 1889-1918**" by Jürgen Kraus and Thomas Müller (Verlag)

"**Uniforms of the German Soldier - 1870 to the End of World War One**" by Alejandro M. De Quesada (Greenhill)

Main Online Sources and Recommended External Links

Discussions on the [Pickelhaubes Forum](#) on the [Leibgendarmerie in Tropical Uniform](#), the [Leibgendarmerie](#), a [Leibgendarmerie Helmet](#) and the [Johanister Order](#)

Discussion on the [Jerusalem Voyage on the Axis History Forum](#)

Discussion on the [Jerusalem Cross](#) at the [Gentlemens Military Interest Club](#)

Discussion on the [Jerusalem Cross and Palestine Voyage on the Wehrmacht Awards Forum](#)

[The Jerusalem Cross and Other Commemoratives of the Palestine Visit at Israeli Decorations](#)

German Wikipedia article on [Palästina-reise Kaiser Wilhelms II](#) and the [Leibgendarmerie](#)

Wikipedia article on and [Fritz Rosen](#)

Photographs of the Kaiser and the Zionist Delegation in Palestine at the [Zionist Archives](#)

Another photograph at the [Huis Doorn Photograph Collection](#)

WikiCommons images of [The Leibgendarmerie by Krickel](#), [The Leibgendarmerie by Knötel](#), [Leibgendarmerie Uniforms from a Postcard](#)

And thanks very much to Peter Abbot, Mike Dwyer, Christopher Flaherty and Mike Blake for their generous help on this subject.



The Kaiser Wilhelm II Obelisk on Mount Carmel in Haifa looking out to see where the Imperial yacht Hohenzollern first anchored. The cannon next to it is an Ottoman one, probably from the early 19th century.

Photo by Dr. Avishai Teicher at [Wikimedia](#)

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