



Introduction to the Orders of Battle

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Most of the opposing armies in the Russian Civil War inherited the same equipment and tactics from the Russian Imperial Army. Each army developed in its own direction, reflecting its ideological and social bases, its military situation, and its access to regular supplies and heavy weapons.

Theoretical Unit Organization

The armies drew on the same tactics, but each army developed its own brigade and division organizations. The Red Army cut its authorized strengths several times due to weapon and ammunition shortages. The other armies faced similar shortages to differing degrees.

Russian Army Infantry Division (August 1914)

14,180 bayonets & 32 machine guns	in 2 brigades & 4 regiments
900 sabres	in the divisional cavalry or attached from corps level
48 field guns	in 6 batteries
6 field howitzers	attached from corps level

54 artillery pieces for about 15,000 bayonets, sabres, and machine gunners. (If we count 1 machine gun, any type, as the equivalent of 25 rifles and/or carbines.)

Volunteer Army Infantry Division (July 1919)

5,800 bayonets, 144 machine guns & 12 mortars	in 3 regiments
300 sabres & 8 machine guns	in the divisional cavalry (2 squadrons)
20 field guns & 10 machine guns	in 5 batteries
8 field howitzers & 4 machine guns	in 2 batteries
4 heavy guns & 2 machine guns	in 1 battery

44 artillery pieces for about 10,000 bayonets, sabres, and machine gunners.

Red Army Rifle Division (March 1919)

16,800 bayonets & 432 machine guns	in 3 brigades & 9 regiments
No standard organization	in the divisional cavalry (½ regiment to 2 regiments)
36 field guns	in 9 batteries
4 field howitzers	in 2 batteries
4 heavy guns	in 2 batteries

44 artillery pieces for about 28,000 bayonets, sabres, and machine gunners.

Red Army Rifle Division (August 1919)

9,700 bayonets & 324 machine guns	in 3 brigades & 9 regiments
No standard organization	in the divisional cavalry (½ regiment to 2 regiments)
24 field guns	in 6 batteries
4 field howitzers	in 2 batteries
4 heavy guns	in 2 batteries

32 artillery pieces for about 18,000 bayonets, sabres, and machine gunners.

8th Red Army (November 1919)

18,267 bayonets & 447 machine guns in 7 rifle divisions
1,043 sabres
149 artillery pieces

149 artillery pieces for about 31,000 bayonets, sabres, and machine gunners.

In late 1919, the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine was about as strong as the typical Red Army, if not stronger in infantry and cavalry; it comprised 4 corps of varying sizes.

1st Corps of the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine (December 1919)

3,906 bayonets & 91 machine guns 4,477 rifles if including regimental surpluses
877 sabres 1,015 sabres if including regimental surpluses
14-16 guns & 2 mortars

Approximately 16 artillery pieces for about 7,000 bayonets, sabres, and machine gunners.

In mid-late 1919, the Ukrainian People's Army was weaker than the typical Red Army; People's Army divisions were comparable to strong Red Army regiments or weak Red Army brigades.

Ukrainian People's Army (August 1919)

6,324+ bayonets & 284+ machine guns in 10 1/3 infantry divisions (with data for 9 1/3)
1,266+ sabres
106+ artillery pieces

Approximately 120 artillery pieces for about 15,000 bayonets, sabres, and machine gunners.

The strength and structure of the units of the Armed Forces of South Russia varied as much as any of their opponents.

Most infantry divisions had 3 to 4 regiments under direct divisional command. Some divisions reached 5 or 6 regiments by late summer, but these were divided up in the fall of 1919. Volunteer Army infantry regiments usually had 2 large battalions, and were authorized 4 battalions; Cossack scout/plastun brigades typically had 4 weak battalions, but rarely exceeded the strengths of infantry regiments. The infantry divisions of the Don Army had been reconstituted from the remnants of the infantry corps of the Don Armies; they could have 6 to 12 regiments in 2 or 3 brigades.

Some cavalry divisions had 3-6 regiments under direct divisional command. This included the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Don Horse Divisions, most Kuban and Terek Horse divisions, the Chechen Horse Division, and others. Other cavalry divisions had 6-9 regiments in 2-3 brigades. This included the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Divisions, and the 4th, 9th and 10th Don Horse Divisions.

Forces of the Novorossiysk Area (September 1919, including garrisons)

12,525 bayonets & 167 machine guns in 1 infantry division and 2 cavalry brigades
2,654 sabres
61 artillery pieces

61 artillery pieces for about 19,000 bayonets, sabres, and machine gunners.

Forces of the Novorossiysk Area (September 1919, excluding garrisons) 8,298 bayonets & 145 machine guns in 1 infantry division and 2 cavalry brigades 2,654 sabres 37 artillery pieces

37 artillery pieces for about 14,000 bayonets, sabres, and machine gunners.

Forces of the Kiev Area (October 1919)

8,551 bayonets & 220 machine guns in 2 infantry divisions
331 sabres
74 artillery pieces

74 artillery pieces for about 14,000 bayonets, sabres, and machine gunners.

Volunteer Army (October 1919)

17,791 bayonets & 451 machine guns in 3 infantry and 2 cavalry divisions
2,664 sabres
65 artillery pieces

65 artillery pieces for about 32,000 bayonets, sabres, and machine gunners.

Equipment & Tactics

Civil War battles tended to be more mobile, and less bloody, than Great War battles, despite the same basic equipment and tactics. Smaller forces, with fewer weapons and less ammunition, were expected to cover longer fronts on both the attack and the defense. Larger-scale Civil War battles tended to become a series of smaller-scale outflanking and blocking actions.

A frontal attack could not succeed without artillery support and ample supplies; forces could outflank positions they could not attack. An attacking force would require 28 artillery pieces to suppress 1,000 defending infantry or cavalry, and 2 artillery pieces to suppress each defending artillery piece. These figures increase if the defenders are entrenched or if the attackers require artillery for obstacle-clearing.

A positional defense could not succeed without strong forces on narrow fronts; forces could screen, but could not hold, much longer fronts. A defending regiment would deploy 1/3 to 2/3 of its strength in the front lines and retain 1/3 to 2/3 of its strength in support. On narrow fronts, defending regiments would require 1,000 infantry, cavalry, or machine gunners per kilometer, including supports. On extended fronts, defending regiments could deploy 500 infantry, cavalry, or machine gunners per kilometer, including supports; furthermore, defending forces could leave gaps between the forward battalions and regiments, thereby screening fronts up to twice as long as they could hold.

A defending brigade or division would deploy about 1/2 to 2/3 of its regiments in the front line and retain 1/3 to 1/2 in reserve. On narrow fronts, defending brigades and divisions would require 2,000 infantry, cavalry, or machine gunners per kilometer, including reserves. On extended fronts, defending brigades and divisions might reduce this to 375 infantry, cavalry, or machine gunners per kilometer.

A positional defense on the rail lines or the rivers might also require 4 to 8 artillery pieces to turn back opposing armored trains and river gunboats.

At their peak in September-October 1919, the Armed Forces of South Russia totaled 224,000 infantry, cavalry and machine gunners, 601 artillery pieces, 41 armored trains with 2 to 4 guns each, 38 tanks, 34 armored cars, and 72 aircraft, on a 2,400-kilometer front. They only had enough infantry and cavalry to hold 112 km (4.7%), or to screen 600 km (25%) of their front.

Supply

Several times during the Civil War, forces which were effectively unsupplied were able to sustain themselves through the capture of enemy supplies, to fight, and often to defeat forces which were fully supplied.

At the end of 1918, the Red Armies were relatively well-supplied. They could draw on the stockpiles of the old army, as well as the remains of the Russian arms industry. At this time, the opposing armies in Ukraine were able to draw some of their needs from the stockpiles of the old army. However, the Don and Volunteer Armies primarily depended on the capture of ammunition from the Red Army.

By the middle of 1919, the Armed Forces of South Russia were far better supplied. They imported thousands of artillery pieces and millions of shells from the Great Powers. The Ukrainian People's Army received some supplies from Romania. The Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army wholly depended on the capture of ammunition from the Armed Forces of South Russia.

The Armed Forces of South Russia, at their peak, had about 3 times as much ammunition available, relative to their strength, as the Red Army, and on the order of 10 times as much ammunition available, relative to their strength, as the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine.

Armed Forces of South Russia (October 1919)

154,066 bayonets and sabres
2,813 machine guns Supplies Delivered, April through September
224,000 rifle-equivalents 70,000,000 small-arms rounds per month (310 per rifle)
601 artillery pieces 280,000 artillery shells per month (470 per piece)

Southern Front (November 1919) (Excluding Southeastern Front)

99,364 bayonets and sabres
2,270 machine guns Supplies Delivered, July through December
156,000 rifle-equivalents 15,300,000 small-arms rounds per month (100 per rifle)
533 artillery pieces 93,000 artillery shells per month (170 per piece)

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