



## **The Armed Forces of South Russia**

By Marja Erwin

The Armed Forces of South Russia developed from the previously-separate Don Armies and Volunteer Army, and incorporated other pro-White forces such as the Southern Army. In 1919, they had the support of the Entente powers, which eventually supplied about 200,000 rifles, more than 6,000 machine guns, more than 1,100 artillery pieces, and even 74 tanks. By 1919, Armed Forces of South Russia included three main troop categories:

1. **Officers' Units.** The officers' units were the original core of the Volunteer Army. The Guard and Grenadier units joined later but were similar. These were the most reliable shock troops of the Armed Forces of South Russia. By late 1918, the Volunteer Army began to conscript officers in Volunteer-occupied areas. By late 1919, the Armed Forces of South Russia combined regular units into the officers' regiments, in order to mobilize additional officers' regiments.
2. **Cossack Units.** These included most of the Don Armies and much of the Volunteer Army. These included most of the White cavalry. The Don and Terek Cossacks were mostly Russian. The Kuban Cossacks were mostly Ukrainian, but included many Russians.
3. **Other Units.** These included revived units of the old army, non-Cossack units of the Cossack hosts, and others. The Armed Forces of South Russia did not consider peasants, workers, and others as reliable as the officers and Cossacks; the regular forces generally conscripted officers and cossacks before trying to recruit others, but the Cossack forces often conscripted non-Cossacks into their scout units.

In 1918, the Don Host had supported regional separatists outside its territory, but by late 1919, the Armed Forces of South Russia were opposed to regional separatism and were identified with Russian centralism. After Denikin and Wrangel launched a coup in the Kuban, this led to mass desertions among non-Russian troops.

### **The Armed Forces of South Russia, around December 1918**

At the end of 1918, the Armed Forces of South Russia included the Don and Volunteer Armies, as well as smaller forces around Odesa and south of Katerynoslav. The Volunteer Army sent two divisions to the Donets Basin to try to hold the area and protect the Don Army.

#### Volunteer Army of the Odessa Region (December 1918)

Elements of the former 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps of the Hetmanate  
eventually Odessa Brigade

#### Crimean-Azov Volunteer Army (formed January 1919)

2,000 bayonets and sabres (after Denikin)  
3 to 10 artillery pieces

Elements of the former 8<sup>th</sup> Corps of the Hetmanate  
eventually Crimean Division

Donets Group of the Volunteer Army (December 1918)

3,000 bayonets and sabres (after Denikin)  
13 artillery pieces

perhaps 4,000 combat troops

2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps

1<sup>st</sup> Division  
3<sup>rd</sup> Division

Don Army (December 1918)

50,000 bayonets and sabres (after Dobrynin)  
581 machine guns  
153 artillery pieces

about 64,000 combat troops

Western Front

Minor Units

Northern Front

Minor Units

North-eastern Front

Eastern Front

Minor Units

Caucasus Group of the Volunteer Army (December 1918)

28,000 bayonets and sabres (after Denikin)  
79 artillery pieces

perhaps 36,000 combat troops

3<sup>rd</sup> Army Corps

1<sup>st</sup> Caucasus Cossack Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Kuban Separate Scout Brigade (?)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Separate Scout Brigade

1<sup>st</sup> Horse Corps

1<sup>st</sup> Horse Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Kuban Cossack Division (?)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Cossack Division (?)

2<sup>nd</sup> Horse Corps

3<sup>rd</sup> Kuban Cossack Division  
3<sup>rd</sup> Kuban Separate Scout Brigade (?)

Opposite Georgia

2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division

**The Armed Forces of South Russia, around February 1919**

At the beginning of 1919, the Don Army divided into 3 smaller armies. However, the Don Armies were weaker than before; the Volunteer Army was stronger as it absorbed independent White forces.

Volunteer Army of the Odessa Region (February 1919)

Separate Odessa Rifle Brigade

Crimean-Azov Volunteer Army (February 1919)

3<sup>rd</sup> Division  
4<sup>th</sup> Division  
5<sup>th</sup> Division (?)

Donets Group of the Volunteer Army (February 1919)

2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps

1<sup>st</sup> Division

3<sup>rd</sup> Don Army (February 1919)

4<sup>th</sup> Don Corps

6<sup>th</sup> Don Foot Division

7<sup>th</sup> Don Foot Division

5<sup>th</sup> Don Corps

3<sup>rd</sup> Don Horse Division

4<sup>th</sup> Don Border Division

8<sup>th</sup> Don Scout Division

Horse Corps

1<sup>st</sup> Don Horse Division

2<sup>nd</sup> Don Horse Division

8<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division

2<sup>nd</sup> Don Army (February 1919)

3<sup>rd</sup> Don Corps

5<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division

6<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division

Separate Don Foot Brigade

Composite Corps 7<sup>th</sup>

Don Horse Division 9<sup>th</sup> (?)

Don Horse Division

Don Partisan Brigade

1<sup>st</sup> Don Army (February 1919)

6<sup>th</sup> Don Corps

11<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division

12<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division

11<sup>th</sup> Don Foot Division

7<sup>th</sup> Don Corps

13<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division

Special Brigade

1<sup>st</sup> Don Foot Division

8<sup>th</sup> Don Corps

4<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division

14<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division

Saratov Corps Astrakhan Corps

Caucasus Group of the Volunteer Army (February 1919)

1<sup>st</sup> Horse Corps

(Transferred to Donets as 1<sup>st</sup> Kuban Corps; later returned to Caucasus)

1<sup>st</sup> Horse Division

1<sup>st</sup> Kuban Cossack Division

2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Cossack Division (?)

2<sup>nd</sup> Horse Corps

(Stays in Caucasus as 2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Corps)

3<sup>rd</sup> Kuban Cossack Division

3<sup>rd</sup> Kuban Separate

Scout Brigade (?)

Army Reserves

1<sup>st</sup> Terek Cossack Division

1<sup>st</sup> Caucasus Cossack Division

2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Separate Scout Brigade (?)

2<sup>nd</sup> Terek Separate Scout Brigade (?)

#### Forces of the North Caucasus Area (February 1919)

1<sup>st</sup> Kuban Separate Scout Brigade  
1<sup>st</sup> Terek Separate Scout Brigade  
Separate Terek Brigade (later becomes 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Terek Cossack Division (until April)  
Separate Kabardian Horse Brigade

#### Forces of the Black Sea Coast (February 1919)

2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Cossack Separate Brigade

### **The Armed Forces of South Russia, around June 1919**

In May 1919, amid intense fighting, the Armed Forces of South Russia reorganized their forces:

1. White forces west and northwest of Rostov, previously divided between part of the Crimean-Azov Volunteer Army and part of the Caucasian Volunteer Army, became the new Volunteer Army, and the elite 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Divisions were combined into the new 1<sup>st</sup> Corps; other units became the new 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps.
2. White forces northeast and east of Rostov, previously part of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Don Armies, were combined into one Don Army; armies became corps and corps became divisions.
3. White forces on the Manych Front, previously part of the Caucasus Volunteer Army, became the new Caucasus Army.

#### In Crimea (June 1919)

3<sup>rd</sup> Army Corps  
4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
Separate Cavalry Brigade

#### Volunteer Army (June 1919)

perhaps 18,000 bayonets and sabres

about 26,000 combat troops (after Denikin)

2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps  
5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division

1<sup>st</sup> Army Corps  
1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division  
3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division

3rd Kuban Corps  
1<sup>st</sup> Terek Cossack Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Caucasus Cossack Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Scout Brigade  
2<sup>nd</sup> Terek Scout Brigade

#### Don Army (June 1919)

perhaps 19,000 bayonets and sabres

about 28,000 combat troops (after Denikin)

3<sup>rd</sup> Don Corps  
1<sup>st</sup> Don Horse Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Don Horse Division  
3<sup>rd</sup> Don Horse Division  
5<sup>th</sup> Don Division  
8<sup>th</sup> Don Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Don Rifle Brigade

2<sup>nd</sup> Don Corps  
4<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division (operating independently)  
7<sup>th</sup> Don Division  
Don Composite-Partisan Division

1<sup>st</sup> Don Corps  
Horse Brigade  
9<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division (6th Don Division  
14<sup>th</sup> Don reorganizing)  
10<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division (reorganizing)  
Cossack rebels in the area of Veshenskaya

Caucasus Army (June 1919)

Composite Don Corps  
Composite Mountain Horse Division  
Don Ataman's Brigade

1<sup>st</sup> Kuban Corps  
6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Kuban Cossack Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Terek Cossack Division

4<sup>th</sup> Horse Corps  
1<sup>st</sup> Horse Division  
Astrakhan Horse Brigade

2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Corps  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Cossack Division  
3<sup>rd</sup> Kuban Cossack Division  
3<sup>rd</sup> Kuban Scout Brigade

Forces of the North Caucasus Area (June 1919)

1<sup>st</sup> Kuban Separate Scout Brigade  
1<sup>st</sup> Terek Separate Scout Brigade  
Separate Terek Brigade  
Ossetian Horse Division  
Separate Kabardian Horse Brigade

Forces of the Black Sea Coast (June 1919)

2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Cossack Separate Brigade

National Guard (June 1919)

Several provincial brigades

**The Armed Forces of South Russia, around October 1919**

By September-October 1919, the Armed Forces of South Russia were organized into the Volunteer, Don, and Caucasus Armies, and several independent forces, totaling 107,395 bayonets, 46,671 sabres, 2,813 machine guns, 9 infantry guns, 449 field and mountain guns, 69 field howitzers, 74 heavy guns, 41 armored trains, 38 tanks, 34 armored cars, and 72 aircraft. In October-November 1919, the Armed Forces of South Russia broke several of their larger infantry divisions into smaller infantry divisions.

Forces of the Novorossiysk Area (September 1919)

12,525 bayonets (after Volkov, including garrisons)                      about 19,000 combat troops  
2,654 sabres  
167 machine guns  
61 artillery pieces

4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
Slavyansk Infantry Regiment (regrouping)  
Chechen Cavalry Division (regrouping)  
Sklyarov's Cavalry Group  
Rosenschild-Paulin's Cavalry Group

Separate garrisons

After Reorganization (November 1919)

13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Composite Infantry Division  
Separate Cavalry Brigade  
Separate Cossack Brigade

Forces of the Kiev Area (October 1919)

8,551 bayonets (after Volkov)  
331 sabres  
220 machine guns  
74 artillery pieces

about 14,000 combat troops

2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps  
5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (in part)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Terek Scout Brigade

After Reorganizations (October and November 1919)

Composite Guards Infantry Division  
5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
4<sup>th</sup> Rifle Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Terek Scout Brigade

Volunteer Army (October 1919)

17,791 bayonets (after Volkov)  
2,664 sabres  
451 machine guns  
65 artillery pieces

about 31,000 combat troops

5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Corps  
1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Division

1<sup>st</sup> Army Corps  
1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division  
3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division  
9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (in part)  
Composite Regiment of the 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division

After Reorganizations (October and November 1919)

Shock Division of General Kornilov  
Officers' Division of General Markov  
Officers' Rifle Division of General Drozdovskiy  
Partisan Infantry Division of General Alekseyev  
Composite Brigade of the 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division (former 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Corps)

After Arrival of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Corps from the Don and Caucasus Armies (December 1919)

Shock Division of General Kornilov  
Officers' Division of General Markov  
Officers' Rifle Division of General Drozdovskiy  
Partisan Infantry Division of General Alekseyev  
Composite Brigade of the 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division (former 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Corps)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Cossack Division  
3<sup>rd</sup> Kuban Cossack Division  
4<sup>th</sup> Kuban Cossack Division

Don Army (October 1919)

25,834 bayonets (after Volkov)  
24,689 sabres  
1,077 machine guns  
212 artillery pieces

about 77,000 combat troops

3<sup>rd</sup> Kuban Corps

1<sup>st</sup> Terek Cossack Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Caucasus Cossack Division

4<sup>th</sup> Don Corps

9<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division  
10<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division

3<sup>rd</sup> Don Corps

1<sup>st</sup> Don Horse Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Don Horse Division  
3<sup>rd</sup> Don Horse Division  
8<sup>th</sup> Don Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Don Rifle Brigade  
8<sup>th</sup> Don Scout Brigade  
9<sup>th</sup> Don Scout Brigade  
Tula Foot Brigade

2<sup>nd</sup> Don Corps

4<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Division  
7<sup>th</sup> Don Division Don  
Composite-Partisan Division

1<sup>st</sup> Don Corps

6<sup>th</sup> Don Division  
10<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Brigade  
14<sup>th</sup> Don Horse Brigade

Caucasus Army (October 1919)

8,640 bayonets (after Volkov)  
6,115 sabres  
384 machine guns  
85 artillery pieces

about 24,000 combat troops

1<sup>st</sup> Kuban Corps

Composite Grenadier Infantry Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Kuban Cossack Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Scout Brigade  
3<sup>rd</sup> Kuban Scout Brigade

4<sup>th</sup> Horse Corps

1<sup>st</sup> Horse Division  
4<sup>th</sup> Kuban Cossack Division  
Astrakhan Cossack Division  
Kabardian Horse Division

2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Corps

2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Cossack Division  
3<sup>rd</sup> Kuban Cossack Division  
Composite Mountain Horse Division  
Separate Kuban Cossack Brigade  
2<sup>nd</sup> Terek Scout Brigade

After Departure of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Corps from the Don and eventually Volunteer Armies (October 1919)

Composite Grenadier Infantry Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Horse Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Kuban Cossack Division  
Astrakhan Cossack Division

Kabardian Horse Division  
Composite Mountain Horse Division  
Separate Kuban Cossack Brigade  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kuban Scout Brigade  
3<sup>rd</sup> Kuban Scout Brigade  
2<sup>nd</sup> Terek Scout Brigade  
Lower Volga Otryad  
Trans-Volga Otryad

Forces of the North Caucasus Area (October 1919)

11,167 bayonets (after Volkov)  
about 22,000 combat troops  
5,513 sabres  
225 machine guns  
70 artillery pieces

8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
1<sup>st</sup> Kuban Separate Scout Brigade  
1<sup>st</sup> Terek Separate Scout Brigade  
Ossetian Horse Division  
2nd Terek Cossack Division (new formation, still forming)  
Transcaspiian Otryad

Forces of the Black Sea Coast (October 1919)

6,504 bayonets (after Volkov)  
about 11,000 combat troops  
1,303 sabres  
125 machine guns  
16 artillery pieces

2nd Infantry Division  
2nd Kuban Cossack Separate Brigade

National Guard (October 1919)

Several provincial brigades

**The Forces of the Novorossiysk Area & Internal Front, September through December 1919**

From August to December 1919, the Forces of the Novorossiysk Area and the Internal Front were the main White forces fighting against the Makhnovist uprising. On September 20<sup>th</sup>, on the eve of its main offensive against the Makhnovists and the Directory, the Forces of the Novorossiysk Area had about 12,000 combat troops in its forward units, and 7,000 more in the rear areas:

Forces of the Novorossiysk Area (September 1919)

12,525 bayonets (after Volkov, including garrisons)                      about 19,000 combat troops  
2,654 sabres  
167 machine guns  
61 artillery pieces

At the Front

6,978 bayonets  
1,840 sabres  
129 machine guns  
27 artillery pieces

4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
(Reorganized on November 10th into the 13th, 34th & 1st Composite Infantry Divisions)  
1<sup>st</sup> Simferopol Officers' Regiment  
1<sup>st</sup> Composite Regt. of the 13th Infantry Div.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Composite Regt. of the 13th Infantry Div.  
1<sup>st</sup> Composite Regt. of the 34th Infantry Div.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Composite Regt. of the 34th Infantry Div.  
Reserve Battalion  
4<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company



4<sup>th</sup> Artillery Brigade

General Sklyarov's Brigade

(Redesignated on October 5th the Separate Cossack Brigade)

2<sup>nd</sup> Labinskiy Regiment

2<sup>nd</sup> Taman Regiment

42<sup>nd</sup> Don Cossack Regiment

General Rosenschild-Paulin's Composite Otryad

(Redesignated on October 8th the Dnestrovskiy Otryad; on November 16th the Separate Cavalry Brigade)

Crimean Horse Regiment

Composite Dragoon Regiment

Composite Battalion of the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Div.

Also 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Simferopol Officers' Regt.

#### Regrouping in the Rear Area

1350 bayonets

about 800 sabres (?)

15 machine guns

about 10 artillery pieces (?)

Chechen Horse Division

1<sup>st</sup> Chechen Horse Regiment

2<sup>nd</sup> Chechen Horse Regiment

3<sup>rd</sup> Chechen Horse Regiment

4<sup>th</sup> Chechen Horse Regiment (Regrouping in the rear area of the Volunteer Army)

Kumybskiy Horse Regiment (Regrouping in the rear area of the Caucasus Army)

Slavyansk Rifle Regiment

(Regrouping since September 17<sup>th</sup>)

Dvoichenko's Battalion

Muslim Mountain Squadron

#### Support Units

3<sup>rd</sup> Radio-Telegraph Battalion

3<sup>rd</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Separate Telegraph Companies

4<sup>th</sup> Separate Heavy Howitzer Battalion

Separate Heavy Howitzer Battery

5<sup>th</sup> Armored Train Battalion

3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Car Battalion

8<sup>th</sup> Air Detachment

#### Garrisons in the Novorossiysk Area

4,227 bayonets

no sabres

22 machine guns

24 artillery pieces

Odessa Watch Regiment

9<sup>th</sup> Army Reserve Battalion

Sevastopol Curfew Battalion

Sevastopol Fortress Artillery

Simferopol

Yevpatoria

Feodosia

Yalta

Kerch

Ochakov

Kherson

Aleshek

Garrisons under the direct control of the Armed Forces of South Russia

2,308 bayonets  
110 sabres  
15 machine guns  
1 artillery piece

Taganrog  
Rostov  
Yeisk

In October, the Armed Forces of South Russia formed the Internal Front to combine the forces fighting the Makhnovists east of the Dnipro; this drew units from the Novorossiysk Area and the Don Army:

Forces of the Novorossiysk Area (October, fighting the Directory)

4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
Separate Cossack Brigade (Sklyarov's Brigade)  
Dnestr Otryad (Rosenschild-Paulin's Otryad)  
5<sup>th</sup> Armored Train Battalion  
3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Car Battalion  
8<sup>th</sup> Air Detachment

Garrisons

Internal Front (October, fighting the Makhnovists)

1<sup>st</sup> Terek Cossack Division  
Chechen Horse Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Separate Don Cossack Brigade  
Slavyansk Infantry Regiment 1<sup>st</sup> Caucasus Regiment (only company strength)  
Composite Chechen Regiment (only company strength)  
Several reserve infantry battalions (initially 3; later at least 5)

Reserve Armored Car Battalion (?)

Garrisons

In November, they divided the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division into 3 smaller infantry divisions. On December 6<sup>th</sup>, they revived the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps for the forces fighting the Makhnovists west of the Dnipro:

Forces of the Novorossiysk Area (December)

3<sup>rd</sup> Army Corps

13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division

Independent Units

1<sup>st</sup> Composite Infantry Division  
Separate Cossack Brigade  
Separate Cavalry Brigade

5<sup>th</sup> Armored Train Battalion  
3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Car Battalion  
8<sup>th</sup> Air Detachment

Garrisons

Internal Front (December)

1<sup>st</sup> Terek Cossack Division  
Chechen Horse Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> Separate Don Cossack Brigade  
Slavyansk Infantry Regiment



<u>Kuban Forces (January 1920)</u>	
5,849 bayonets (after Denikin)	estimated 11,000 combat troops
2,468 sabres	
? machine guns	
36 artillery pieces	
<u>Terek Forces (October 1919)</u>	
estimated 2,500 bayonets (based on Volkov)	estimated 6,000 combat troops
estimated 1,300 sabres	
<u>Terek Forces (January 1920)</u>	
1,185 bayonets (after Denikin)	estimated 5,000 combat troops
1,930 sabres	
? machine guns	
7 artillery pieces	
<u>Caucasus Mountain Forces (October 1919)</u>	
estimated 2,800 bayonets (based on Volkov)	estimated 12,000 combat troops
estimated 5,000 sabres	
<u>Caucasus Mountain Forces (January 1920)</u>	
490 bayonets (after Denikin)	estimated 2,000 combat troops
552 sabres	
? machine guns	
8 artillery pieces	
<u>Caucasus Mountain Forces (October 1919)</u>	
few or no bayonets (based on Volkov)	estimated 2,000 combat troops
estimated 1,600 sabres	
<u>Astrakhan Forces (January 1920)</u>	
no bayonets (after Denikin)	estimated 1,000 combat troops
468 sabres	
? machine guns	
5 artillery pieces	

## Major Sources

- Denikin, *Ocherki Russkoy Smuty*.
- Dobrynin, *The Fight Against Bolshevism in Southern Russia*.
- Slashchov-Krymskiy, *Krym, 1920*.
- Volkov, *Beloye Dvizheniye v Rosii: Organizatsionnaya Struktura*.



