

MAGYAR FRONT

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ROYAL HUNGARIAN AIR FORCE OFFICER'S UNIFORMS

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This issue of the
Magyar Front
is dedicated to
Dr. Brunó Milinkovich
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2003.IV.26.



BECSÜLETTEL
HÜSÉGGEL
MINDHALÁLIG
ISTENÉRT
HAZÁÉRT
BAJTÁRSAINKÉRT

Like the other defeated nations, Hungary was forbidden to have an air force after the First World War. Training was carried out in secret despite the Treaty of Trianon, and by the 1930's Hungary began to openly build up her military aviation arm, or *légierő*. Modern equipment and aircraft were purchased from Italy, and the new uniform had a distinctly Italian influence - a stylish open collar and cuffed straight-leg trousers. Khaki was the basic colour, and in the field officers wore the four-pocket tunic with breeches, high boots and leather belt. With this form of dress their decorations were represented by ribbon bars.

Service dress consisted of the tunic and trousers with leather belt and khaki shirt; or with the dress belt, dagger and white shirt. Although the side cap was worn in the field, Royal Hungarian Air force officers are most often seen wearing the distinctive peaked cap. An overcoat completed each officer's khaki uniform.

Rank insignia was shown on the shoulder boards, and all officers wore gold air force buttons (a tunic and overcoat button are shown at left actual size). All tunics also had three small buttons on each cuff. For summer dress, a uniform of exactly similar cut was worn (with straight-leg trousers only) and a special gala uniform was also part of the wardrobe. Its lapels were of a different cut, and there were only two visible slanted lower pocket-flaps - otherwise the insignia and buttons were the same as for the other orders of dress. With the blue uniform, only the straight-leg trousers, peaked cap, dress belt and dagger were worn.

Medals and decorations were worn in the usual fashion, and pilots and navigators wore their special insignia on the right breast. The pilot's badge is shown below (actual size). That of the navigators were the same, except without the crown. Shown at the upper-left of this page is a smaller version of the pilot's badge which was worn on the lower left sleeve of the overcoat - navigators also wore a small insignia without the crown on their sleeve. The cap insignia of the Hungarian Air Force (shown on page 4) is often confused with the pilot's badge. Although it is similar in design, it has dramatically upswept wings. The officer's cap badge was also worn on the left side of the 'side cap' - usually in the form of a gold, stamped metal badge like that of the other ranks.

Generals had two broad and one thin red stripe on each pant leg, wore red shoulder boards, and had three, rather than one gold band around their peaked caps. The general's cap badge was also distinctive.

Both a leather winter and lightweight summer flight suit was issued, and although there was no 'official' flight jacket, Hungarian pilots tended to wear warm sheepskin or leather coats which they would have privately purchased. Flight gear such as parachutes, flare pistols and flight boots were a mixture of Italian and German manufacture.

The images on pages 2 and 3 are from an original pre-W.W. II colour poster of Hungarian military uniforms that was published in Hungarian, German, Italian, Japanese, Bulgarian and French. Although it has been re-printed in a small black and white format before, I learned that original examples are very rare - in fact one well known collector in Hungary has never even seen an original. It's a large double sided 34cm X 98cm poster that has started to deteriorate from 60 years of folding, unfolding and handling.

I have begun to digitally restore portions of it for the with the air force officer's uniforms and insignia; and it that you'll enjoy these images in their original size and colours. This precious poster, that I have examined a thousand times, was given to me by my stepfather, **Dr. Brunó Milinkovich** who passed away on April 26, 2003. He was a fine Hungarian, who always encouraged me with his vibrant love of life.



Magyar Front, starting is my sincere hope

RANK INSIGNIA AND UNIFORMS OF THE ROYAL HUNGARIAN AIR FORCE



Lieutenant Field-Marshal - *Altábornagy*



First Lieutenant - *Főhadnagy*



Major General - *Vezérőrnagy*



Lieutenant - *Hadnagy*



Colonel - *Ezredes*



Warrant Officer - *Zászlós*



Lieutenant Colonel - *Alezredes*



General Staff Colonel - *Vezérkari ezredes*



Major - *Őrnagy*



Aviation Engineer - *Repülő mérnök*
(cherry-red velvet)



Captain - *Százados*



Technical Admin. Officer - *Repülő műszaki tisztviselő*
(cherry-red wool)



Pilot's Qualification Badge (left)

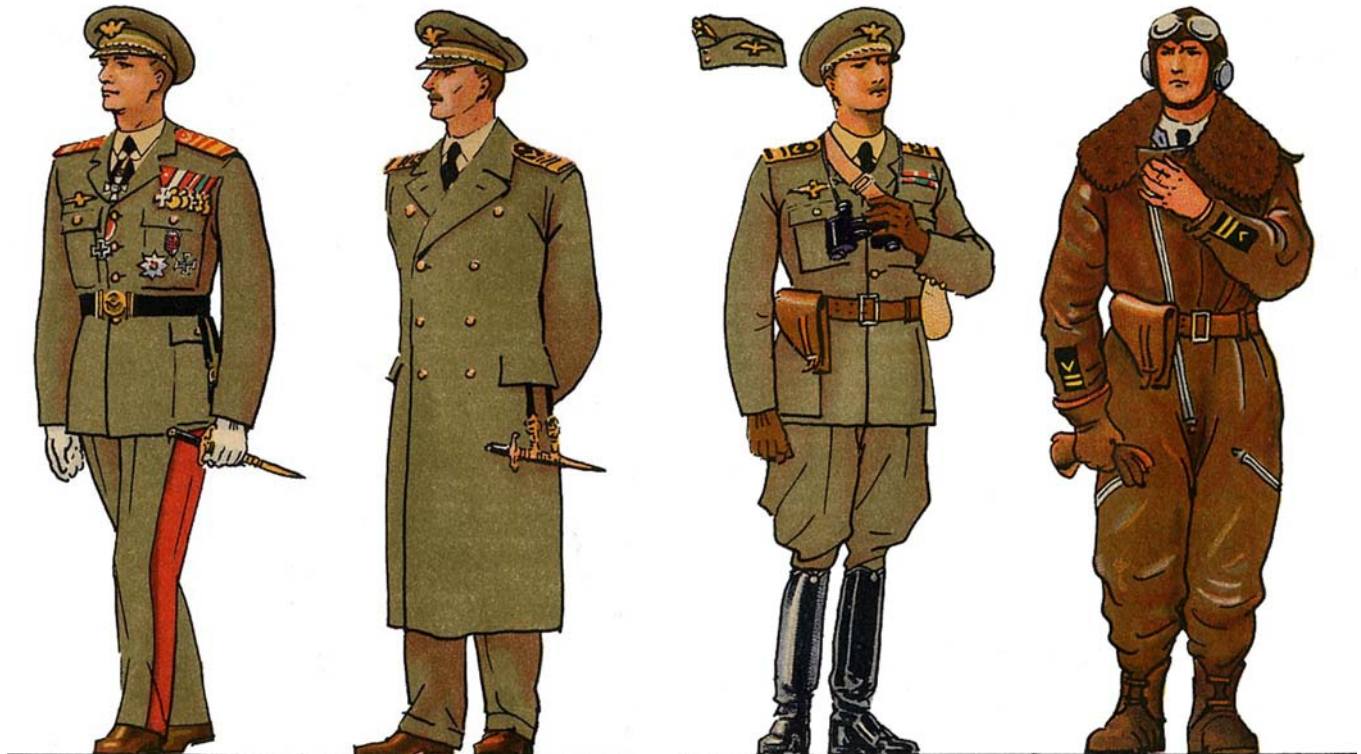
Officer's Cap Badge (below)



The pilot's badge and officer's cap badge are seen here in the actual size and colour from the original poster. It's clear why they are often confused. The NCO's cap badge is identical to the officer's but embroidered in silver rather than gold - another common misconception is that the pilot's badge also came in a silver version - which was never the case.

Pilots and flight officers always wore black velvet shoulder boards, and examples of the general staff, engineering and technical boards are shown on page 2. Other branch-of-service colours in the Royal Hungarian Air Force included light grey (velvet) for doctors; light blue (velvet) for judges; light coffee brown (wool) for clerical officers and violet (wool) for accounting personnel.

Shown below are various forms of khaki dress. From left to right:
 A Lieutenant Field-Marshal in his service dress with full decorations, dress belt and dagger;
 a Colonel wearing his overcoat;
 a Major in field service uniform kitted out with pistol, gas-mask and binoculars (his 'side cap' is illustrated beside him)
 and a First Lieutenant in leather winter flight suit with fur collar.





Above - the general's cap badge.

Below is the insignia worn by Leaders of the Air Ministry. It was sewn above the right breast pocket.



Left - the officer's cap badge.



All badges are shown actual size.



Here are four recent figures I have made in 1:6 scale, representing officers of the Royal Hungarian Air Force. From left to right are: a First Lieutenant in flying gear; a Major in summer white uniform; Lieutenant navigator in dark blue dress uniform and a Major General in his khaki service uniform. I have paid attention to detail as much as possible, as I hope to portray the uniforms, insignia and accoutrements accurately. The clothing was duplicated after extensive study of actual pieces in my collection, and even the buttons (the small ones on the cuffs as well) have the proper air force eagles. Their decorations are each individually made, and arranged according to precise military specifications. I especially enjoyed embroidering the cap insignia and pilot's badges by hand!

I intend to produce figures of this quality of all of Hungary's 20th century military costumes, and one day I hope that they will be displayed in the Military History Museum in Budapest, so that more people can enjoy these colourful miniatures.

The MAGYAR FRONT is published bi-monthly by **Péter Czink VRNT**

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