# GERMAN WORLD WAR I MILITARY & OCCUPATION MAIL
FROM ALLIED & ENEMY TERRITORY

This exhibit tells about German postal services in territories of allied and enemy countries during the First World War. Following the assassination in Sarajevo, countries were drawn into conflict like dominoes, with Germany invading Belgium on the first of August 1914, declaring war on France on the second and having Great Britain declare war on it on the third. The ensuing struggle ended in the abdication of the emperor and surrender of Germany in November 1918. As shown, Germany occupied all or parts of 16 different countries, as illustrated in the exhibit with representative covers, with the occupation mail being organized chronologically by area and alphabetically within areas.
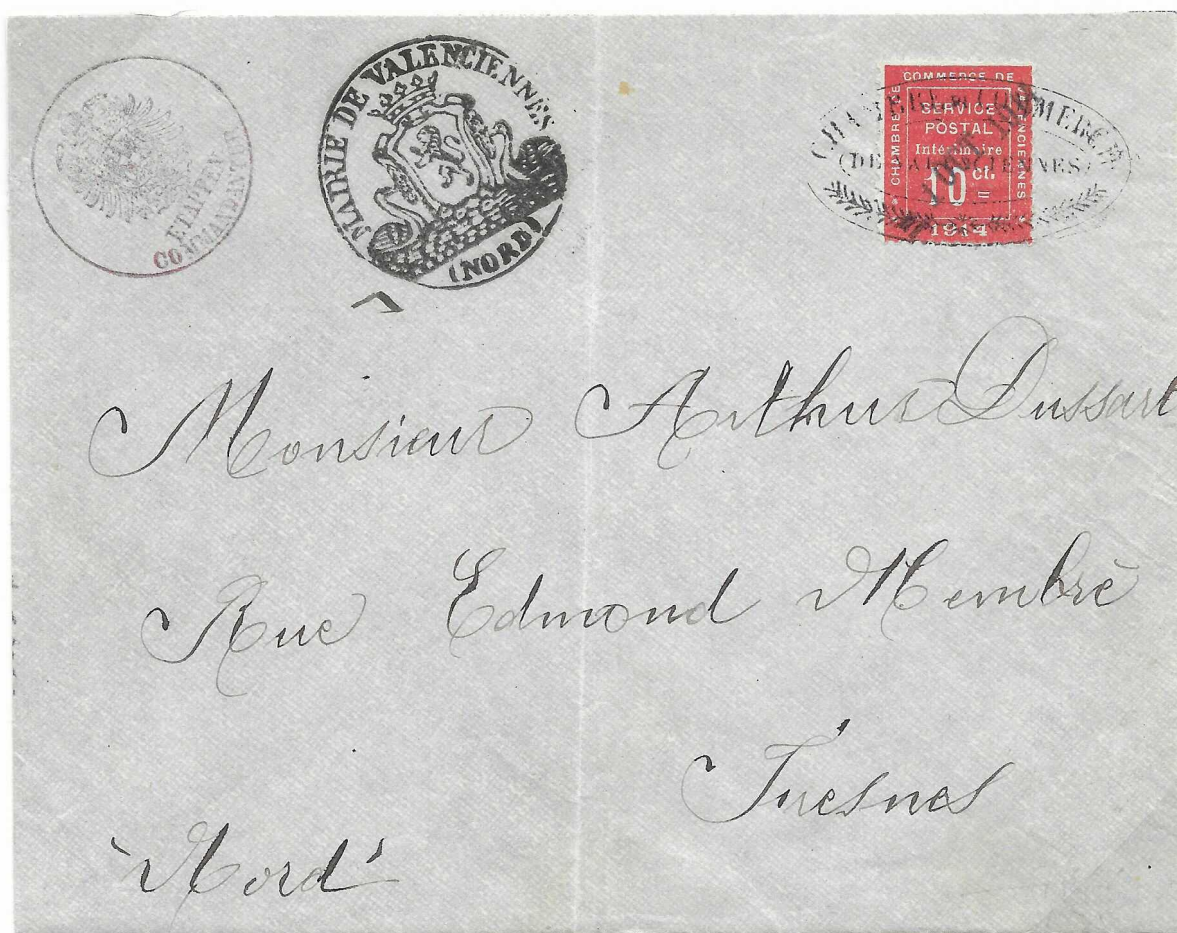
Early in the occupation of Valenciennes, France, the German authorities gave permission for the Chamber of Commerce to issue a 10 centimes stamp to pay for local delivery of letters. Some 3,000 of these labels were printed and used from 8 September to 31 October 1914. An elliptical handstamp of the Chamber was used as a cancellation.

The quantity of military mail produced during this era was vast, considering that Germany had over 11 million men under arms for more than four years. However, material from smaller locations is relatively scarce and some, i.e. from territories occupied late in the war, is rare. Military mail shown in the exhibit concentrates on covers with cachets showing identifiable locations – a relatively difficult achievement.

GERMAN WORLD WAR I MILITARY & OCCUPATION MAIL
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Plan of Exhibit

This exhibit starts with separate sections showing the mail of Germans assigned to the territory of their allies: Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey, which are followed by five additional geographic sections, reflecting the various fronts on which German forces served on enemy territory in the 1914-1918 period. In addition, there are. Within these different "chapters" there are 24 different areas shown, with representative postmarks and other usages of the individual areas being grouped in the order of their importance and/or geographically:

Territory of Allies:
  Austria Hungary
  Bulgaria
  Turkey:
    Turkey Proper
    Iraq
    Palestine
    Persia
    Syria
    Transjordan

Western Front:
  Luxembourg
  Belgium
  France

Eastern Front:
  Poland
  Lithuania
  Latvia
  Estonia
  Finland
  Russia
  Belarus
  Ukraine
  Georgia
Southeast Front:
  Serbia
  Romania
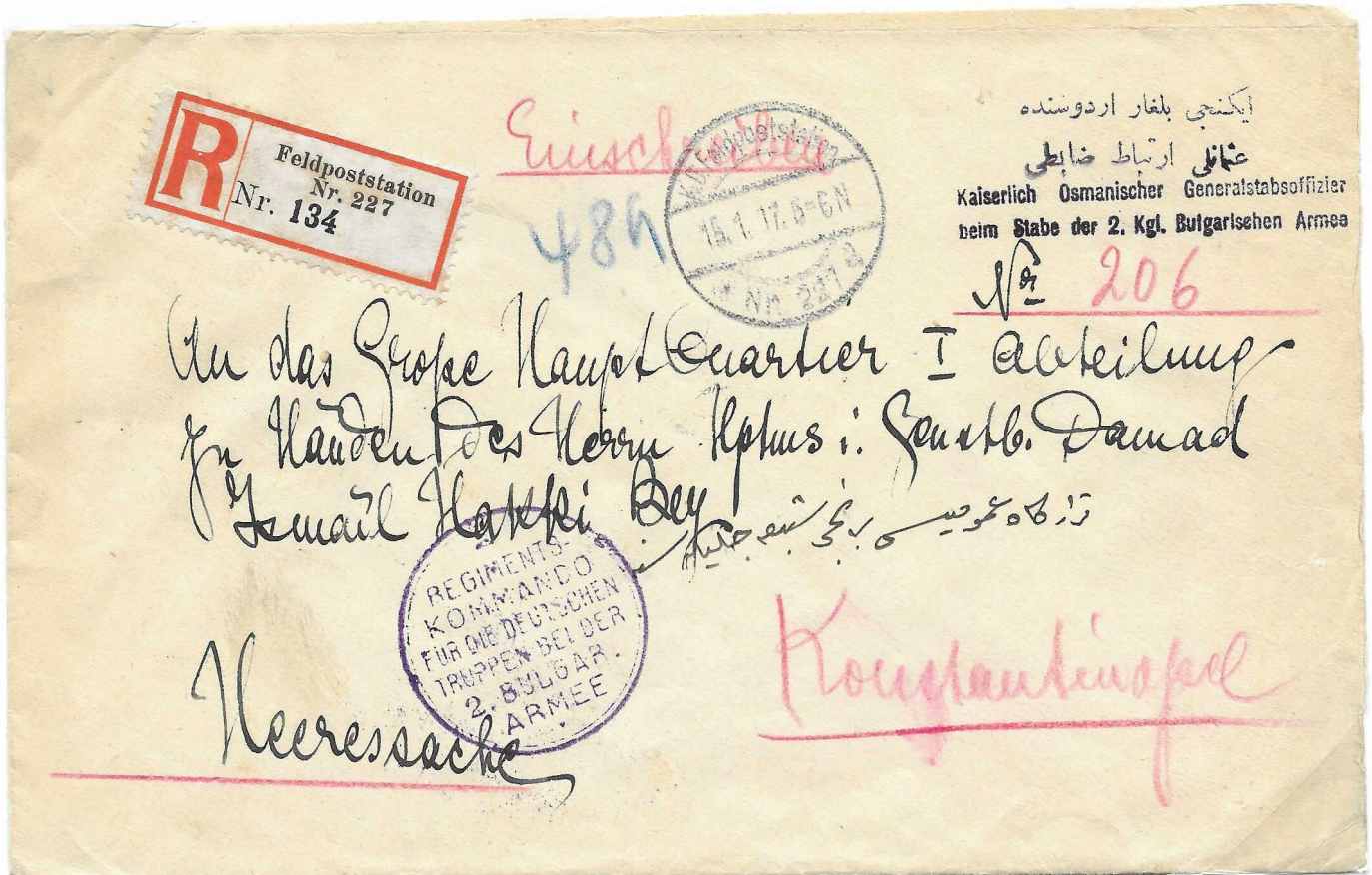Southwest Front - Italy
East Africa

Registered cover sent through German Fieldpost Station #227 to Constantinople with cachet of the "Regimental Headquarters of the German Troops with the Bulgarian 2nd Army." In addition, there is a handstamp of the "Imperial Ottoman General Staff Officer with the Staff of the Royal Bulgarian 2nd Army." A true example of the cooperation between Germany and its allies of the Central Powers.

GERMAN TROOPS IN ALLIED COUNTRIES

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

Although not in occupation of enemy territory, German soldiers and sailors served on the territory of its allies, both on liaison duty and helping to defend against common enemies. Thus, the mail of these forces should be considered as part of the philatelic story of the German occupations of World War I. It is appropriate to consider the troops on the territory of Austria-Hungary first, as this country was an ally from the beginning.
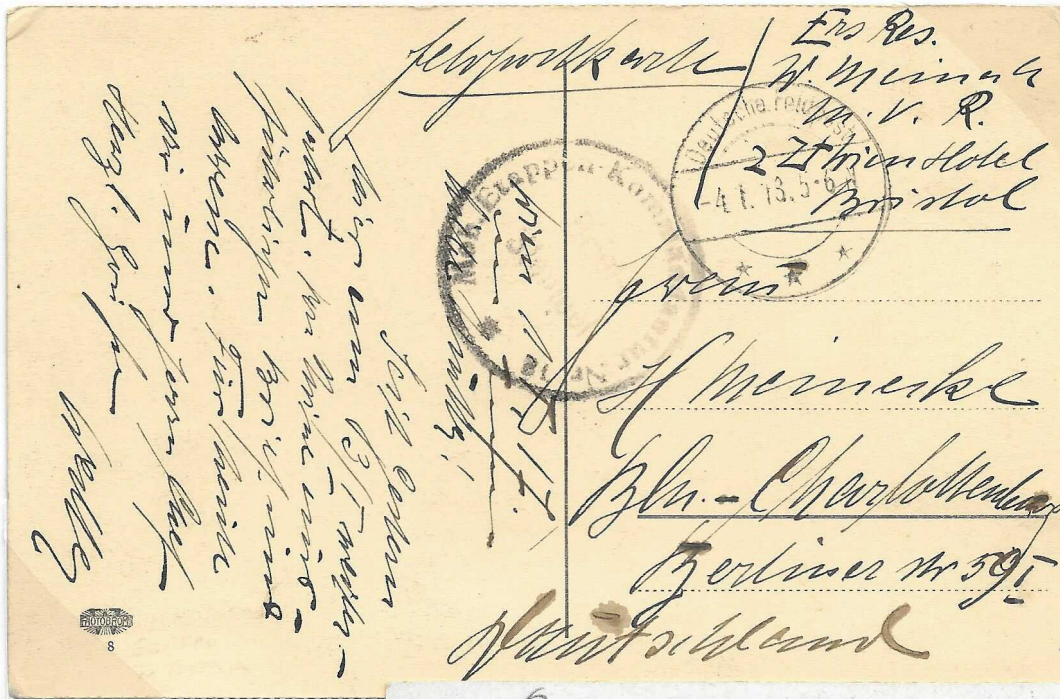
Vienna
Budapest

Picture postcard datelined from the Hotel Bristol in Vienna.
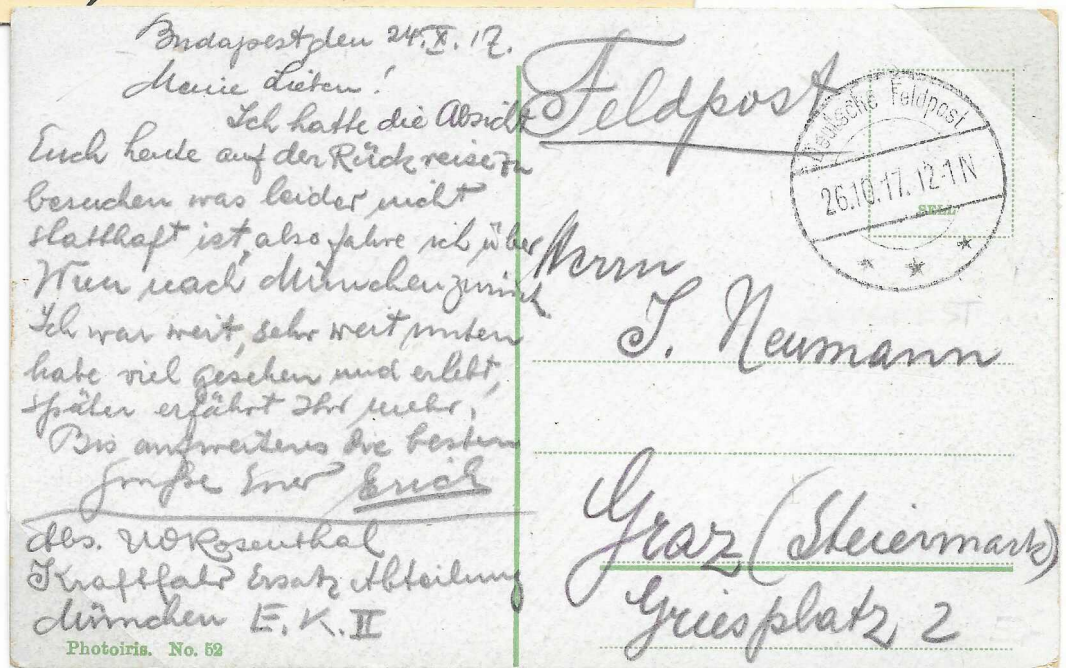
Picture postcard datelined from Budapest.

Postcards with scenes from the capitals of the Dual Monarchy sent through the German fieldpost by troops serving as liaison with their Austro-Hungarian counterparts.

Kaiserlich Deutsches Konsulat

für Galizien und die Bukowina

in Lemberg.

R Feldpoststation
Nr. 193
№ 150

K.D. Feldpoststation
28. 8. 16. 7-8 N
* Nr 193 *

An das

Königliche Kriegsministerium

EINSCHREIBEN!

Reichsdienstsache frei

№ 10451/16

Berlin

25   kk. Landst. Reg.
Wilh. Buchner

Przemysl.

Rechts die Straße mit Brücke
von Radymno führend.
Man sieht wie Przemysl bereits
an den Ausläufern der
Bergketten liegt.
Gruß
Willi

17. VII. 1915

Frau

Elise Büchner

Wien XVIII

Währingerstr. 202

Mail from the Austrian Province of Galicia, where the Germans helped to defend against the Russian invasions.
Both cities were, in fact, captured by the Russians early in the war but were subsequently liberated by Austrian
and German forces.

Upper card mailed from the German FPO 207 in Hermannstadt (Nagyszeben) in the Hungarian Province of Transylvania, where the troops had been preparing for action against Romania. Lower card from the German Harbor Commandant in Vukovar, located on the Danube River just north of the Hungarian border with Serbia.
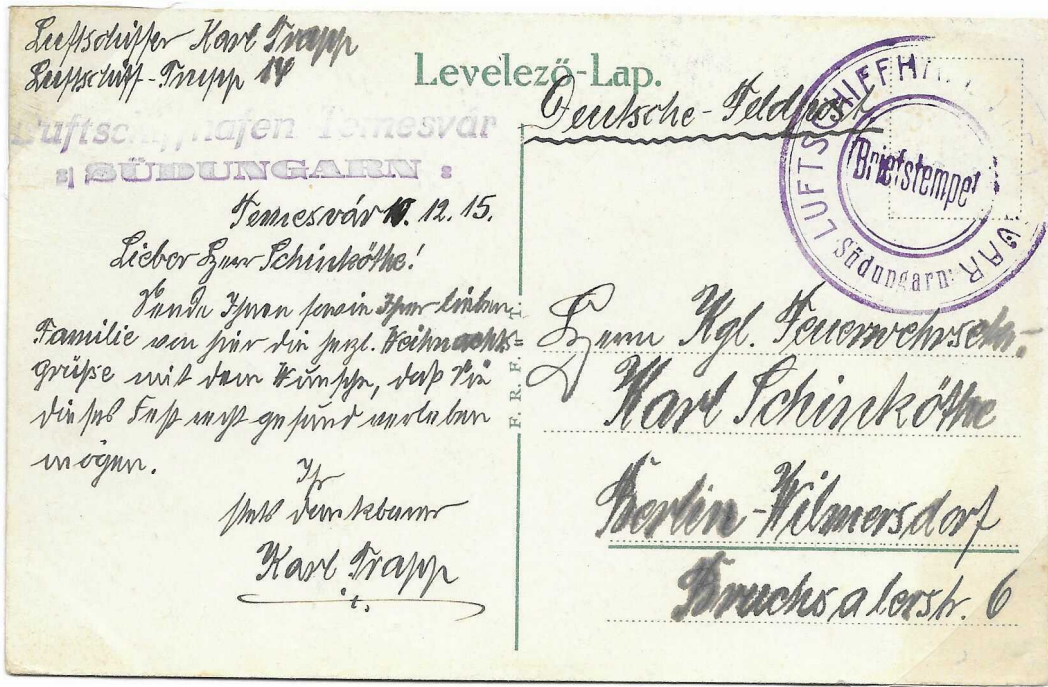
Fieldpost cards sent from the German Airship Base at Temesvar in the Hungarian Province of Banat (now in Romania). The Zeppelin that was stationed there was later reassigned to Bulgaria.
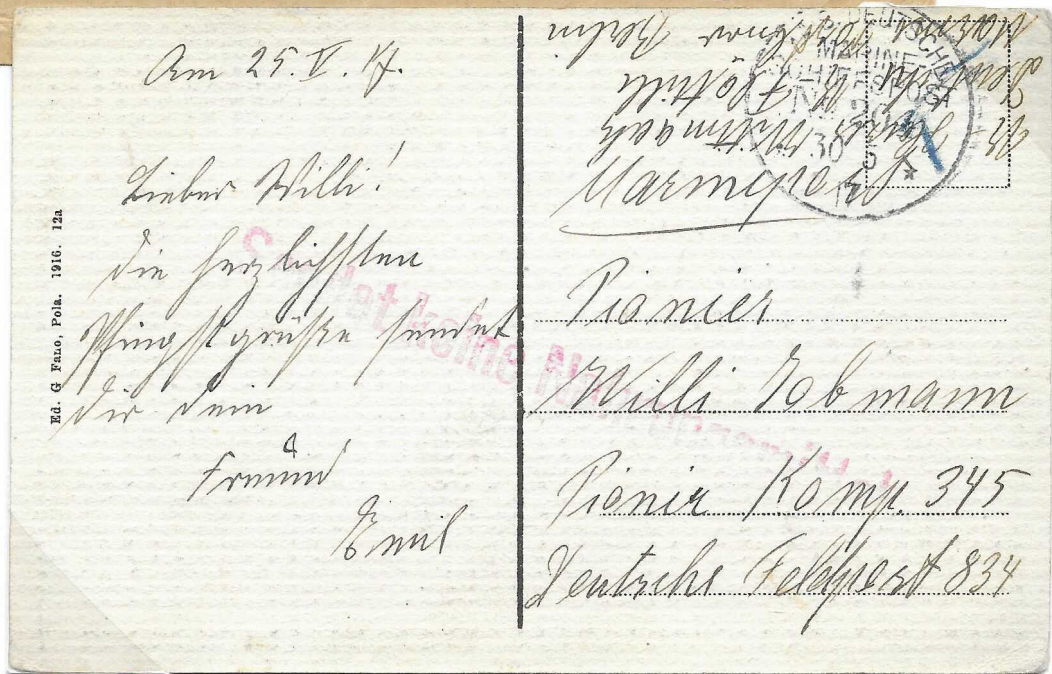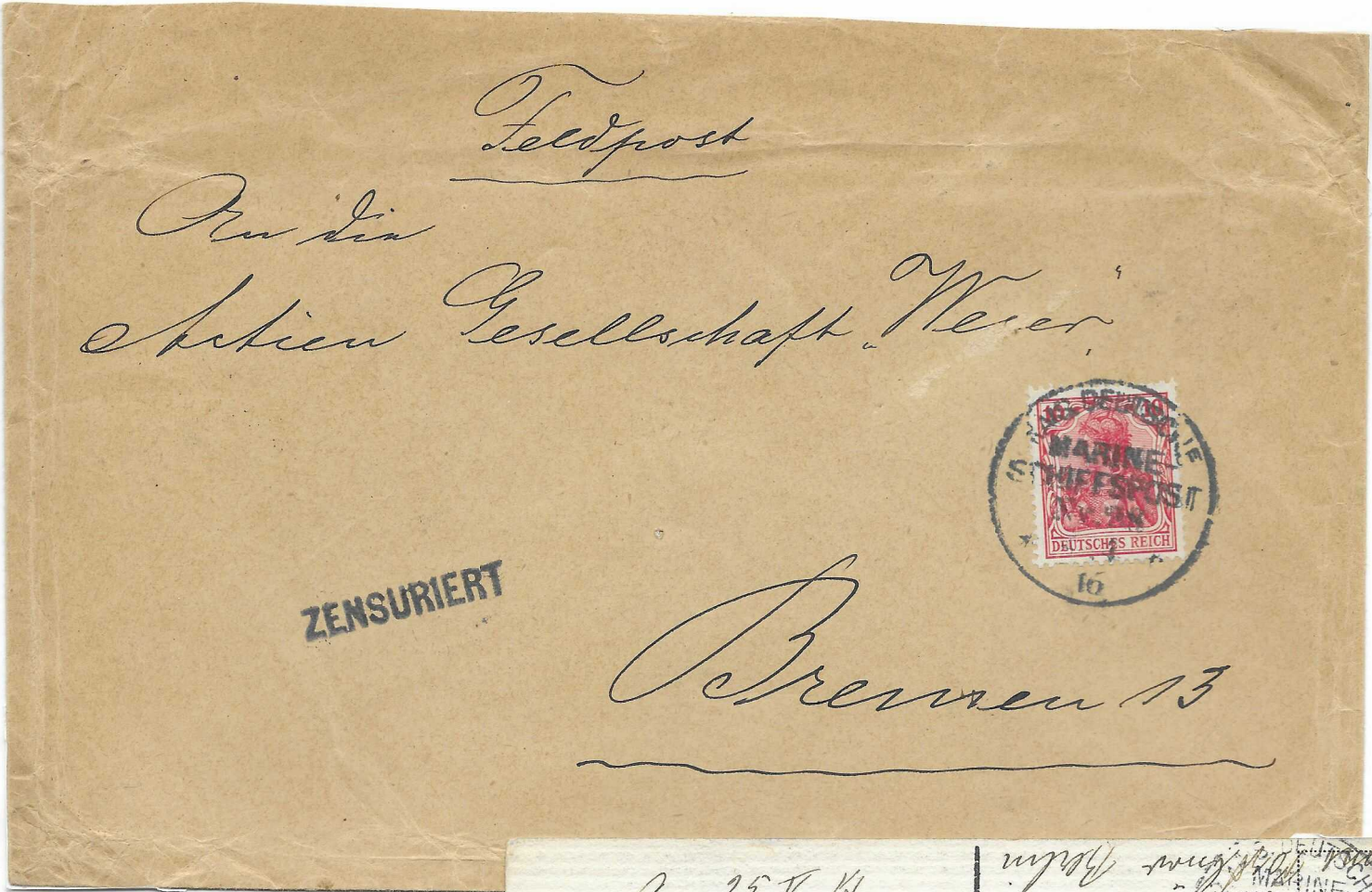
German naval personnel were assigned to the Austrian naval bases on the Adriatic Sea. Cover above from MSP 98 of the Deutsche Spezial Kommando Pola. Picture postcard of Pola sent from MSP 20 of the Deutsche U-Flotille (submarines).

German submarines were stationed at the Austrian base at Cattaro. Cover from "German Mediterranean Submarine Flotilla/Bay of Cattaro." Picture postcards are datelined Cattaro and have notation of U-Boats. Such submarine mail is very scarce and sought after by naval postal historians.

MILITARY MISSION IN BULGARIA

Bulgaria joined the Central Powers on 6 September 1915 and was a significant participant in the second invasion of Serbia and the occupation of Romania. In addition, its forces served on the Salonica front in northern Greece until the end of the war. Only after the Allies scored a significant breakthrough in that area did the Bulgarians surrender on 30 September 1918. German troops served in a liaison role with their Bulgarian counterparts as well as in logistical and service capacities, and several fieldpost stations were established to handle their mail.

Some of the mail from the Military Mission in Bulgaria can be identified by the use of the word "Balkan" either in the unit cachet or dateline. The examples above were all sent through FPO 185 in Sofia.
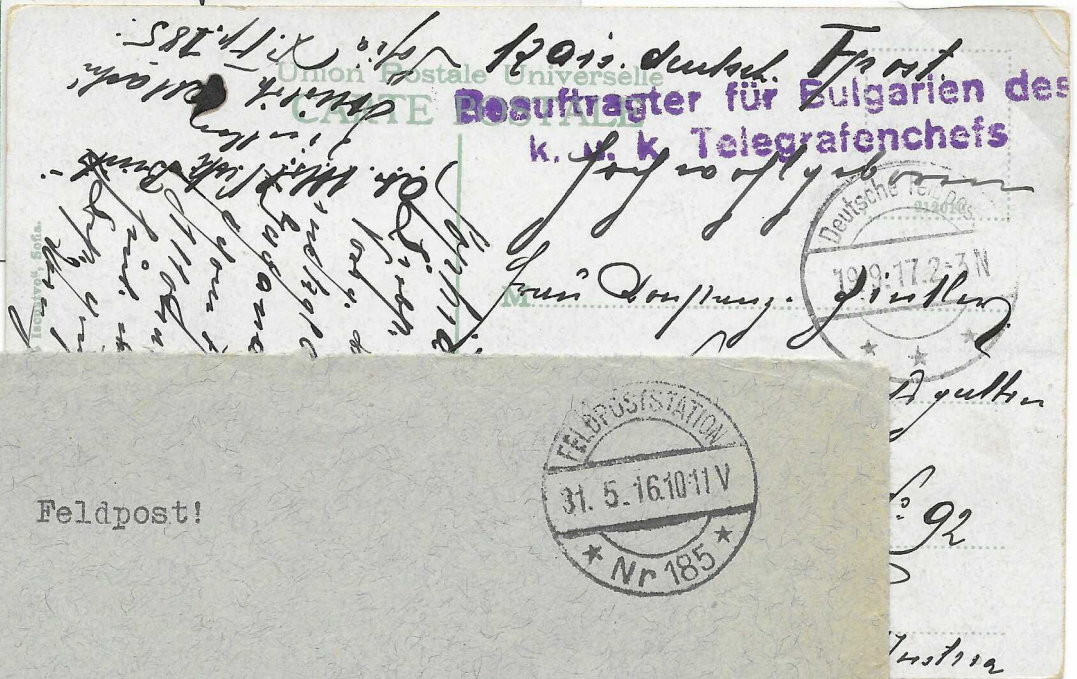
BULGARIA
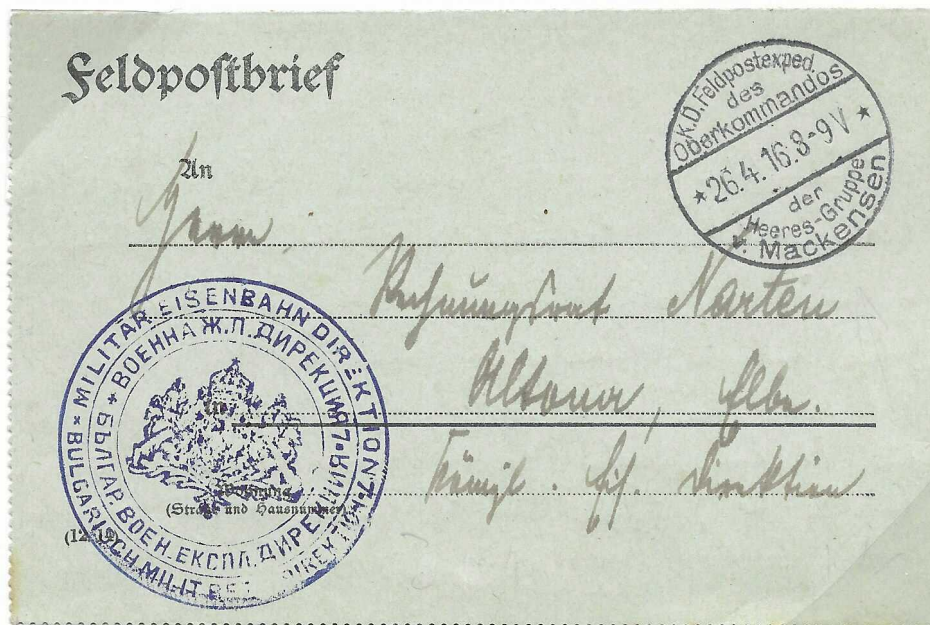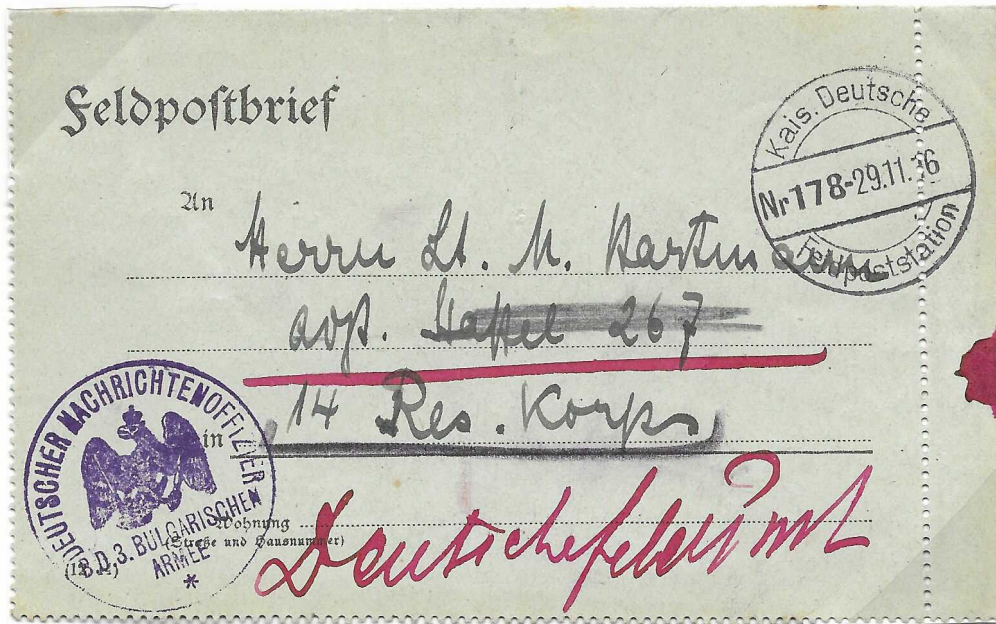
Mail from the troops in liaison with the Bulgarian forces can be identified by the unit cachets. Examples shown are from the "German Radio Officer with the Bulgarian Third Army" and "Supervision of Military Railways." The latter was sent through the FPO of the Army Group von Mackensen stationed at the time in Uskub.

Some of the unit cachets were generic, i.e. mentioning Bulgaria but not showing a specific location. However, the examples above can be identified to Sofia by the dateline or postmark of FPO 185.

Much of the activity of the Military Mission was centered in the Bulgarian capital of Sofia. Examples above have cachets identifying use from Sofia, including two different markings from the "German Supervisory Office (Censorship)" and the "Representative of the Royal Prussian War Ministry to the Royal Bulgarian War Ministry."
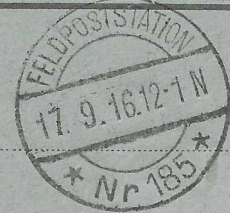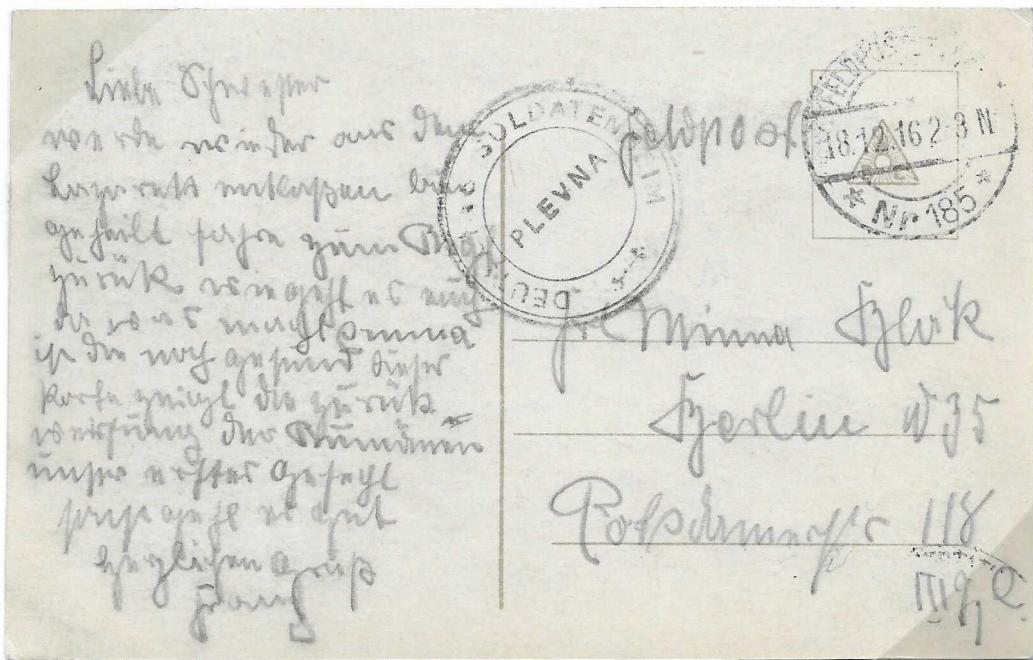
Cachets identifying units operating outside the capital are exceedingly elusive. The examples above are from Gumurdjina (today Komotini in Greece) and Plevna.
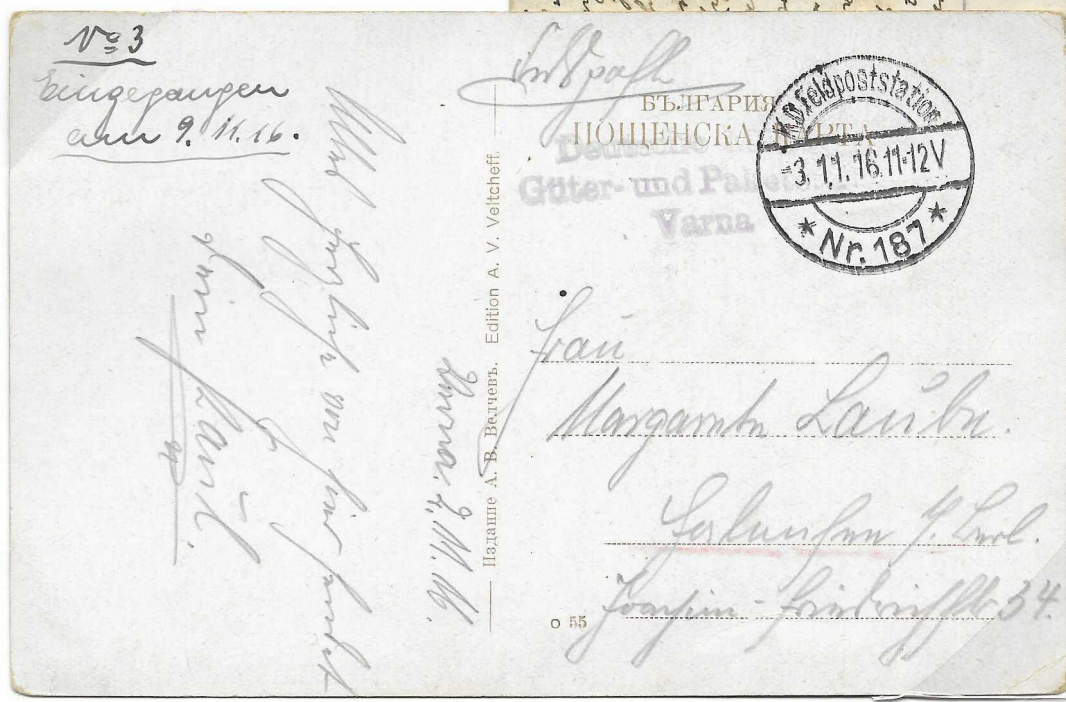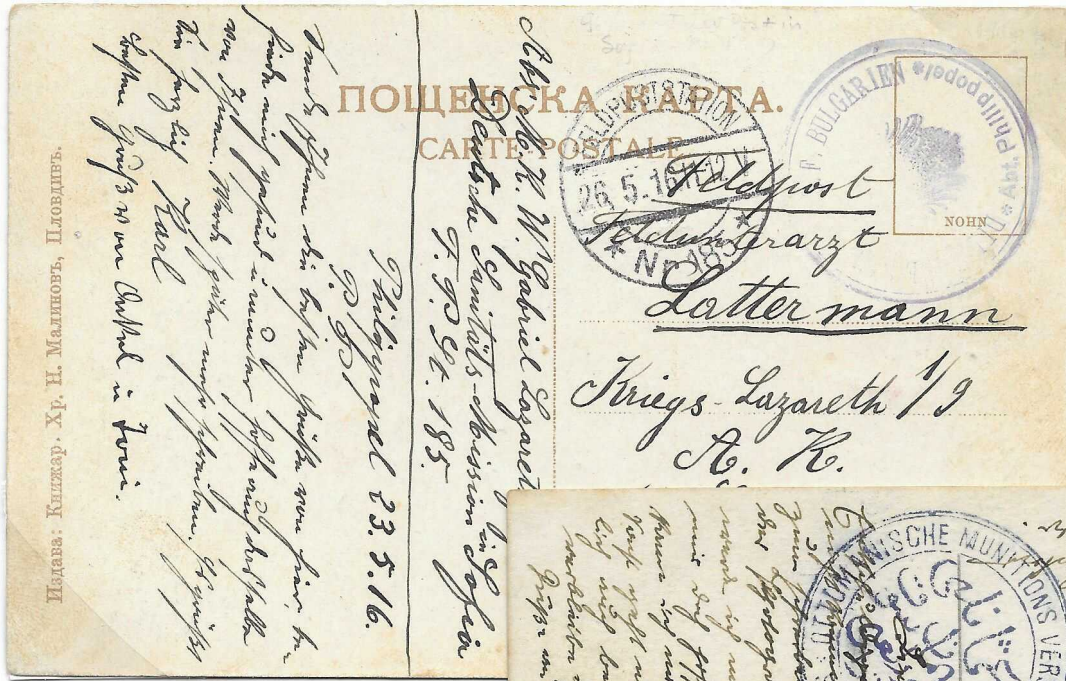
Some mail from outlying towns was sent to Sofia for processing by FPO 185. However, as shown, Sistov and Varna had their own fieldpost offices.

I. Seeflieger-Abteilung
Flugstation Xanti.
B.-Nr. 694

Kaiserliche Marine
** BRIEFSTEMPEL **
Kommando
der
Seeflugstation Xanti

FELDPOSTSTATION
30.12.16 7-8 N
* Nr 185 *

An
die Weiterleitungsstelle

Ober-Leschen

Marinesache!

Feldpostkarte

An Herrn
Flugmaat
Fritz Haase

in
Helgoland
Nordsee.

K.D. Feldpoststat. Kaiserliche Marine
9.6 ...STEMPEL
der
Seeflugstation Bulgarien

Kaiserliche Marine
...STEMPEL
Bulgarien

F 36 (12. 14)

The Germans had seaplane bases at Varna on the Black Sea and at Xanthi near the Aegean Sea. The markings of
the units stationed there are exceedingly elusive and highly sought after by collectors of naval mail.

Luftschiffhafenbau
Jambol

KÖNIGLICH PREUSSISCHER
MILITÄR-
BAUBEAMTER.

FELDPOSTSTATION
27. 5. 16. 9-10 V
* Nr. 177

An das

„Kriegsministerium"
A.-M.-D. Luftfahrtabteilung.

BERLIN W. 66.

Heeres-
J. Marine-Luftschiff-Trupp
Deutsche Feldpost 177
B. Nr.

Einschreiben

Deutsche
M. 185-15. 6. 18
Feldpoststation

Marine-Luftschiff-Trupp

Marinesache!

KOMMANDO KAISERLICHE MARINE
JAMBOL

Seetransportabteilung
des Reichs-Marine-Amt,

Berlin.

Einschreiben
Deutsche Feldpost
185
№ 580

The Germans sent an airship (Zeppelin Schütte-Lanz X) to Bulgaria, where a base was established at Jamboli. (A plan was actually considered to fly the airship to the forces still resisting in German East Africa with critical supplies and mail, but the idea was dropped as the obstacles seemed too formidable.)