

In spite of everything. German overseas mail during WWI.

The outbreak of WWI dramatically affected German international postal connections.
 From July 28, 1914 the Orient-Express railway line was interrupted by war between Austria and Serbia.
 On August 1st war on Russia interrupted the use of Trans-Siberian railway.
 On August 4, war declaration of the British Empire obliged German authorities to order all German steamers underway to take refuge in neutral harbours.

Within a week, German overseas postal network ceased to exist.

German communications had to rely on neutral countries and on local humanitarian agreements.
 Private individuals made various attempts, with mixed success.
 On the other hand, English and French controls became more and more stringent.
 This collection aims to illustrate the development of those events.

Main postal connections of the German Empire with date of interruption

- Orient Express (28.7.1914)
- Transiberian (1.8.1914)
- German naval lines (4.8.1914)



Collection plan

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NOTE: rarest items are shown by a blue background

1. Mail from/to East Mediterranean Interruption of the Orient-Express

On 28 July 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. The Orient-Express railway which, passing through Belgrade, connected Constantinople to Europe, was interrupted by hostilities. On the same day, this postcard was sent from Constantinople to Germany. According to the text, the sender is immediately aware of the uncertainty of the route.

From Turkey (German P.O.) TO Germany



From Constantinople (German Post Office) 28.07.1914 to Barthen, redirected to Marburg. Handwritten arrival date: 31/7 [1914]

TEXT: Here we wait hourly the outbreak of a general war, therefore rapid escape from this paradise. **For the moment, for sure only to Romania because nobody here knows if we could cross the Hungarian border...**

Despite the sender's fears, the speed of delivery indicates that, at least until July 31, 1914, the railway Bucharest-Budapest-Berlin remained operative. It was probably interrupted the following day, due to German mobilization and the start of hostilities with Russia.

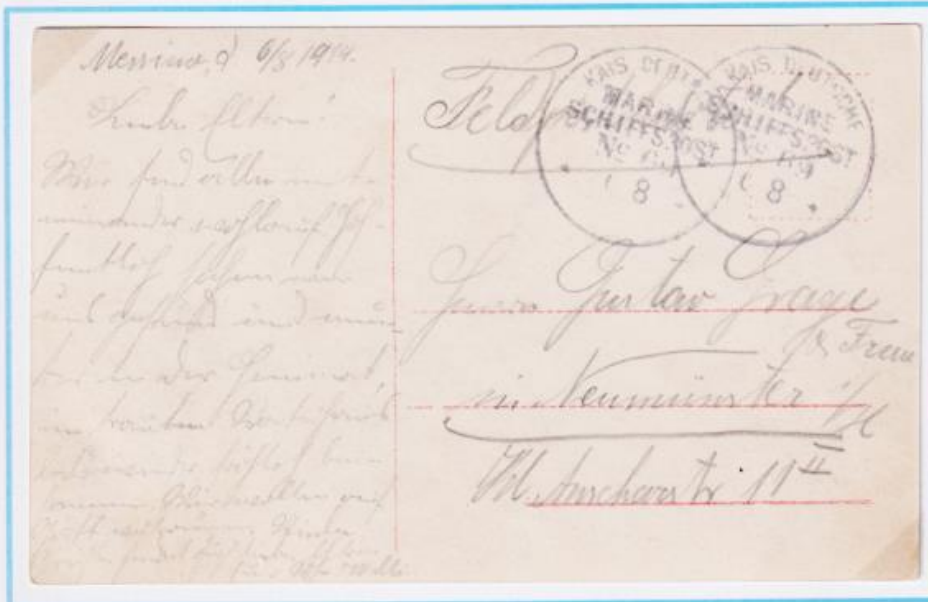


1. Mail from/to East Mediterranean

The Italian route

After the declaration of the Italian neutrality (August 2, 1914), no problem arose in postal communications with Germany even for military mail such as the following postcards.

Between 5. and 6. August 1914 German Admiral Wilhelm Souchon, who commanded the only two German cruisers in the Mediterranean ("Goeben" and "Breslau"), made a stop in Messina (Sicily) to get coal from a German merchant ship before the successful flight of the two ships to Constantinople. From Messina the crew wrote home and the Italian post office forwarded the correspondence free of charge.



From Italy

TO Germany

German Navy fieldpost
Marineschiffspost
n.69 (light cruiser
«Breslau») from
Messina 6.8.1914 to
Germany.

The cancel year date
«14» was missing
since March, 1914.

German mail to and from the Ottoman Empire Mail had to use the 'Italian route': via Brindisi to the Levant Italian Post Offices which remained open until Sept.30, 1914.

From Germany TO Turkey

Fieldpost card
28.8.1914 to Smyrna.
This card went
through Italy and
reached the Italian
Post Office in Smyrna
where it was taxed
because the fieldpost
was only valid until
the German border.



Fac-simile of the
Italian cancel



1. Mail from/to East Mediterranean

The Italian route

From Turkey TO Germany and backwards



From Smyrna 23.7.1914 via Stamboul 25.7.1914 to Berlin, but the addressee had left back to Smyrna (stamp «parti SMYRNA»). From Berlin 16.8.1914 this cover was sent back to the sender via Brindisi 25.8.1914 and Smirne (Ufficio Postale Italiano) 30.8.1914

From Greece TO Germany



From Vathy (Samos) 9.1.1915 via Brindisi 29.1.1915 to Hamburg 1.2.1915



1. Mail from/to East Mediterranean

The Italian route

German post offices in Turkey were closed on 30 September 1914, but even previously it was preferred to use, to or from Germany, the neutral Italian route which guaranteed in both ways safer delivery possibilities.



From Germany
TO Turkey
(Italian P.O.)

From Emden
12.8.1914 (X Army
Corp censorship) via
Italy to Jerusalem
(Italian Post Office
cancel) 6.9.1914

From Turkey
(Italian P.O.)
TO Germany

From Jerusalem
(Italian Post Office)
20.9.1914 to Saint
Amarin (Ober
Elsass) Germany.



The postcard, via Italy, reached Mülhausen (former German Alsace) where it was censored; however it was impossible to be forwarded because the final destination (Saint Amarin) had been occupied by the French.

The card remained in Mülhausen at the local Post Office till the end of the war. The purple star (a French censorship in use from March 1918) indicates that, after having occupied Mülhausen (Nov.1918), the French found the card, censored it and forwarded it to its final destination.

(Bourguignat, J., *Le contrôle postal et télégraphique français pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale 1914-1921*)

2. Mail from/to the Far East

Interruption of Transiberian route

Since 1910 mail from the German territories of the Pacific was forwarded to Hong-Kong and, via Shanghai-Peking-Transiberian railway to Germany. On August 1, 1914, the war between Germany and Russia interrupted the Transiberian route. Mail sent from China already arrived in Russia was blocked by the censorship and sent back to China to be forwarded via San Francisco-New York.



From German New-Guinea

From Herbertshöhe (German New Guinea) 10.7.1914. Forwarded to Hong Kong with the steamer "Prinz Waldemar" and from there via Shanghai to the Transiberian Railway. Blocked by the Russians, censored (Type 1 with Babaev signature) and returned to the Chinese PO. Arrived in Germany between 7 and 9.12.1914.



Registered cover from Manila, 13.7.1914 to Germany. Impossible to forward "via Siberia" as indicated, it was forwarded "via New York" 8.10.1914 with arrival cancel "Dresden 30.10.1914".

From Philippines Islands



2. Mail from/to the Far East

Interruption of Transiberian route

Mail from Kiautschou (German Territory in China) also used the Transiberian Railway to reach Germany.

From Tsingtau (Kiautschou) 19.7.1914, this postcard was forwarded via Siberia. Censored by the Russians (framed Cyrillic D.Z.) and sent back to China, via Shanghai 7.10(?) 1914 it was forwarded via the U.S.



From Kiautschou



Sent from Tsingtau (Kiautschou) 29.7.1914, this fragment of parcel post receipt failed even to reach the Russian border in time. It remained lying at the Chinese Post Office and, like the previous postcard, arrived in Germany in December 1914.

From Kiautschou to the U.K.

This postcard, sent from Tsingtau (Kiautschou) 31.7.1914 and addressed to the UK, was Aug. 10 or 11 forwarded by rail to Tsinanfu and from there to Shanghai where the German Post Office delivered it to the local British Post Office to be forwarded to its final destination.



According to Manfred Knieper's book "Kriegspost Kiautschou" only three items to UK are known.

2. Mail from/to the Far East

Interruption of Transiberian route



FROM China

Sent from Hankow on 23.7.1914, this postcard was forwarded via the Transiberian railway. It was then censored by the Russians (Type 1 cancel signed by the censor Babaev), sent back to China and forwarded via San Francisco-New York to Germany.



FROM China via Canada (?)

Registered cover from Peking 12.9.1914 to Dresden 6.11.1914.

NOTE.

No mark of a real forwarding via Canada. It looks more likely the use of the "U.S. route"



2. Mail from/to the Far East

The China – U.S. route



TO Kiautschou
(attempt via Italy
but not
forwarded)

From Schweinfurth (Bayern) 2.8.1914 to Tsingtau (Kiautschou).

Despite the handwritten indication "via Genua" this postcard wasn't forwarded with the stamp "Wegen Kriezustandes zurück" (Back because of the state of war)



TO China

From Rothenburg (Bayern) 31.7.1914 via U.S.-Shanghai British P.O. [1] (1.10.1914) – Hokow (11.10.1914) to Yunnanfu Oct.1914.

NOTE: Transit of German Mail via an enemy Post Office was quite normal in neutral China.

2. Mail from/to the Far East

The China – U.S. route



FROM China

From Chowfu
28.10.1916 via
Shanghai Chinese
P.O. (6.11.1916) –
U.S. to
Heiligenkreuz.

Handwritten
receiving note:
12.3.1917

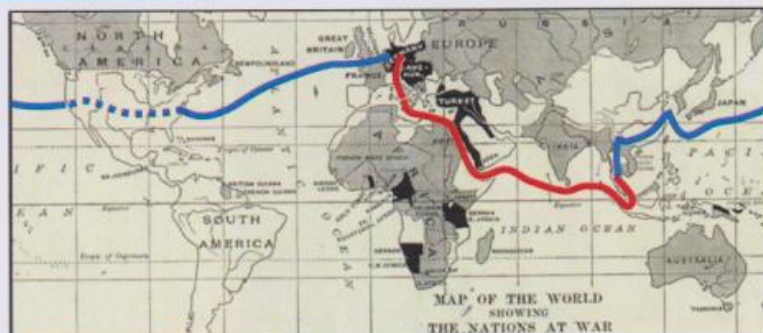
China proved to be the only available route to correspond between Germany and Siam.



To Siam (Thailand)

From Bremen
3.5.1915 via Swatow
14.8.1915 to
Bangkok 23.8.1915

Peacetime route ————
Wartime route ————



2. Mail from/to the Far East

The China – U.S. route

The interruption of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Germany (Feb. 5, 1917) made a stop to postal exchanges with Germany.



Postal stationery from Shanghai 3.2.1917 to Königsberg. Sent via the usual route S. Francisco - New York - Germany, the postcard got the cancellation "Mail service suspended to country addressed" and was held by the United States until the end of the war when it was returned to the Shanghai Post Office 31.10.1919



Postcard from Tientsin China 14.1.1917 via Shanghai 14.1.1917 (mistaken year 22) and again 15.1.1917 to Danzig (Germany). Sent via the usual route S.Francisco - New York - Germany, it was blocked (U.S. stamp **NOT TRANSMISSIBLE**) and sent back to China where it got the stamp **RETURNED TO WRITER**. Arrival cancel Tientsin 13.6.1917 and again 14.6.1917

2. Mail from/to Far East

The re-opening of Transiberian route

The armistice between Germany and Russia, signed in December 1917 and valid till Jan. 14, 1918, made it possible to restore the postal connection between China and Germany via the Trans-Siberian Railway. Despite the state of war between China and Germany, Germans in China after almost a year of inability to communicate, took advantage of the opportunity. However, the expiry of the armistice and the resumption of hostilities (interrupted only with the Peace of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918) made the forwarding of mail rather complicated, so much so that delivery took place after more than 7 months.



Chinese postal stationery card franked with a stamp of the Russian Post Office in China. Sent from Shanghai Poste Russe 11.1.1918 to Berlin.

TEXT: ... we haven't been able to write for a long time and we haven't heard from you for a year...

When we can send you a letter we will send you photos...

Postal stationery of Russian Post Offices in China sent from Shanghai Poste Russe 12.1.1918 to Ahrensburg (Hamburg).

Handwritten arrival notice: erhalten [received] 21.8.1918

TEXT: ...How nice it would be if we could now hear from each other via this route...

Write via Sibiria.
Address: A.M.

Poste Restante

Russian Post Office
Shanghai



3. Mail from/to Africa

German East Africa: first failed attempts

The interruption of German naval lines made postal connection to and from German East Africa impossible. Attempts via neutral countries were blocked by the British in Zanzibar.



From Wilhelmstal 2.8.1914 to Aschach am Bodensee
Purple stamp: "Zurück an Absender. Keine Beförderungsmöglichkeit (Back to sender, no way of forwarding)"



Holland was the simplest solution to send mail from a neutral country; as in the case of this letter, posted in a town about 30 kilometers far from the German border.



From Almelo (Holland) 28.9.1914 to Morogoro (G.E.A.), this letter was blocked by British in Aden. Since the Aden Post Office depended on the India Mail Service, the letter was sent to Bombay where it remained at the local Dead Letter Office until Nov.14. With the label "No communication between India and the country of destination" it was sent back to the sender with arrival 30.12.1914

3. Mail from/to Africa

German East Africa: first failed attempts

The Italian neutrality and the fact that British (or French) avoided excessive controls in the Mediterranean not to endanger the prospect of a future alliance, pushed first German private people then also German postal authorities to try to reach, via Italy, their far colony in East Africa. But the strict British naval blockade to the shores of the German East Africa made this attempts mostly unsuccessful.



From Naples 24.12.1914 to Legung (German East Africa). In Zanzibar 25.1.1915 the cover was blocked and sent back to the sender.

From Rome
12.4.1915 via
Alexandria
20.4.1915 to
Morogoro (German
East Africa) blocked
in Zanzibar
18.5.1915.

NOTE: Surprisingly
not blocked in
Alexandria



3. Mail from/to Africa

The Portuguese route

Neutral countries were committed to deliver mail TO or FROM the belligerent countries.



Registered cover from Chinde (Portuguese Mozambique) 4.7.1914. Blocked in London 25.8.1914 and sent back to sender. On the way back in Lisbon the Portuguese decided to make another attempt and 9.9.1914 they sent the letter to Germany. Censored in Cologne. Bremen arrival 22.9.1914.

The favorable local attitude of the Portuguese lead to a mail-exchange across the border between Mozambique and German East Africa.

From Mozambique 22.11.1914 to Dar-es-Salaam (G.E.A.)

TEXT : ...your letter reached me at the border of the German territory, between Kionga and Palma...



3. Mail from/to Africa

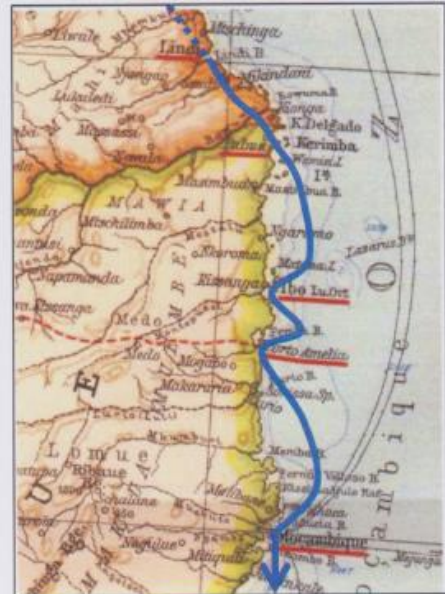
The Portuguese route

At the end of 1914 postal authorities of German East Africa with the help of Portuguese Governor of Palma, managed to organize an official postal connection to Germany via:

Palma - Porto Amelia - Mozambique - Lisbon.

Mail coming from northern regions of G.E.A. was concentrated in Dar-es-Salaam, censored and forwarded to Lindi where it was added to the mail coming from southern regions and locally censored. From Lindi the bags were brought to the border to be taken over by the Portuguese.

In all, 11 shipments "via Mozambique" were prepared of which only 8 (and a small part of the ninth) reached Germany, before the British pressure on Portuguese Government finally interrupted the connection.



To Lisbon

1st Shipment

Left Dar-es-Salaam
28.9.1914

Left Lindi
6.10.1914

From Dar-es-Salaam
14.9.1914 via Ibo
(Nyassa) 16.10.1914
to Kiplegg im Allgäu.



TEXT: ... Did you receive my last postcard?

Today again we have the foresight of a postal connection via Portugal; in any case, it's still uncertain if and when this card will reach you. Since all mail must undergo the censorship I cannot tell anything about the African theater of war ...

NOTE: Although postal censorship had been in force since the beginning of the war, the Dar-es-Salaam censorship stamp was applied only from the second half of December 1914.

(Schlieper, Erich "Deutsch-Ostafrika im Weltkrieg - Postzensuren" Berliner Protokolle n.105 June 2010 P.75)

3. Mail from/to Africa

The Portuguese route

The previous postcard and the ones below, all addressed to Germany, have two different postage (4 Heller or 7½- 8 H.). An early indication of the Main German Post Office, subsequently cancelled, declared that mail via Mozambique had to be franked with the foreign rate (7½ Heller). This created many misunderstandings so that, for the duration of the service via Mozambique, examples of both postages are found.



2nd Shipment

Left Dar-es-Salaam
26.10.1914.

Left Lindi at the
beginning of Nov.1914

From Dar-es-Salaam
24.9.1914 to Planegg bei
München

Handwritten note:
Angekommen 5.III.1915
(arrived 5.III.1915)

3rd Shipment

Left Lindi 7.1.1915

From Dar-es-
Salaam
23.12.1914 via
Lourenço Marques
10.2.1915 to
Dessau



3. Mail from/to Africa

The Portuguese route



4th Shipment

Left Lindi 6.2.1915

From Kilwa (near Lindi) 30.1.1915 to Glatz redirected to Patschkau where it arrived mid May 1915.

NOTE

The Lindi censorship cancel was applied only starting from Feb.18,1915. That's why this stationery card doesn't show any censorship.

5th Shipment

Left Lindi 10.3.1915

From Mohoro 24.2.1915 to Glatz, redirected to Patschkau.

Censored in Lindi with the rare handwritten censorship (Zensur Passiert+ Local District stamp) only used between 18.2 and 9.3.1915

Handwritten arrival notice: 14.5.(1915)



3. Mail from/to Africa

The Portuguese route



6th Shipment

Left Lindi at the beginning of April 1915

From Dar-es-Salaam 22.3.1915 via Lourenço Marques 4.5.1915 to Osnabrück.

7th Shipment

Left Lindi at the beginning of May 1915

From Moschi 4.4.1915 censored in Dar-es-Salaam via Lourenço Marques 24.6.1915 to Offenbach

Handwritten notice:

Erhalten am
[Received]
20.8.1915



3. Mail from/to Africa

The Portuguese route

German postal authorities in East Africa realized that the British pressure on Portugal would be able to break the connection via Mozambique. With the 8th shipment they sent all they had in stock. In this shipment one can find mail sent from September 1914 to May 1915.



8th Shipment

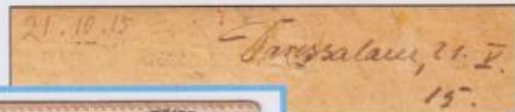
Left Lindi at the beginning of June 1915

From Handeni 24.9.1914, censored in Dar-es-Salaam, via Mozambique to Dresden

Handwritten notice:

Heute den 19 Oct. 1915 diese Karte erhalte. [Today 19 Oct. 1915, this card received]

TEXT : ... From 3.VIII we didn't receive any mail and mail to homeland is rather irregular and undergoes the censorship ... From Nauen [powerful German radio station] we occasionally hear short news that sound favorable ... Too bad that our radio station can only receive from Nauen and do not transmit because the reach is not sufficient...



8th Shipment

Left Lindi at the beginning of June 1915

From Dar-es-Salaam 22.5.1915 censored and forwarded via Lourenço Marques 1.8.1915 to Lübeck.

Handwritten receiving date: 21.10.1915

3. Mail from/to Africa

The Portuguese route

Only 10 shipments were carried out, of which the 9th almost limited to mail addressed to neutral countries and for the 10th the Portuguese only accepted mail addressed to Mozambique; the remaining mail was returned to the Germans at the Kionga border post.

9th Shipment

From Lindi 1.7.1915
censored to Affoltern
(Switzerland) 27.8.1915

10th Shipment

From Dar-es-Salaam
(local censorship)
19.7.1915 addressed
to Beira
Mozambique
23.8.1915 (hardly
readable purple
cancel).



3. Mail from/to Africa

The Portuguese route

A last attempt (the 11th) was done by the Germans on 6.9.1915, but in this case mail was promptly returned by the Portuguese who brought an end to the cooperation. The returned mail was sent back to Dar-es-Salaam where it remained until the end of the war.



From Arusha
14.6.1915,
censored in Dar-
es-Salaam.

Forwarded to
Sweden after the
end of the War.

Arrival cancel
Stockholm
21.9.1919.



From Kilwa
27.8.1915, censored
in Lindi (Zensur
Passiert) sent after
the end of the war
with handwritten
receiving note:
23.IX.1919

3. Mail from/to Africa

The Portuguese route

The connection from Germany worked with greater difficulty. From the report of the director of the G.E.A. Postal service: "...The first direct shipments from Germany arrived in Lindi 7.5.1915, they had the stamp "Via Lissabon-Mosambik-Porto Amelia-Palma" ..."



From Leipzig 2.5.1915 via Cöln (where the forwarding stamp "via Lissabon-Mosambik-Porto Amelia-Palma" was applied. Arrived in IBO 19.7.1915, this postcard was part of the 24.7.1915 delivery to Lindi and reached the addressee in Neu-Moschi 15.8.1915 (handwritten notice at reverse).

The last shipment from Germany arrived on Aug. 20, 1915 with mail sent early July 1915, after which the Portuguese broke the partnership forbidding any further exchange of mail...



End of the Portuguese route

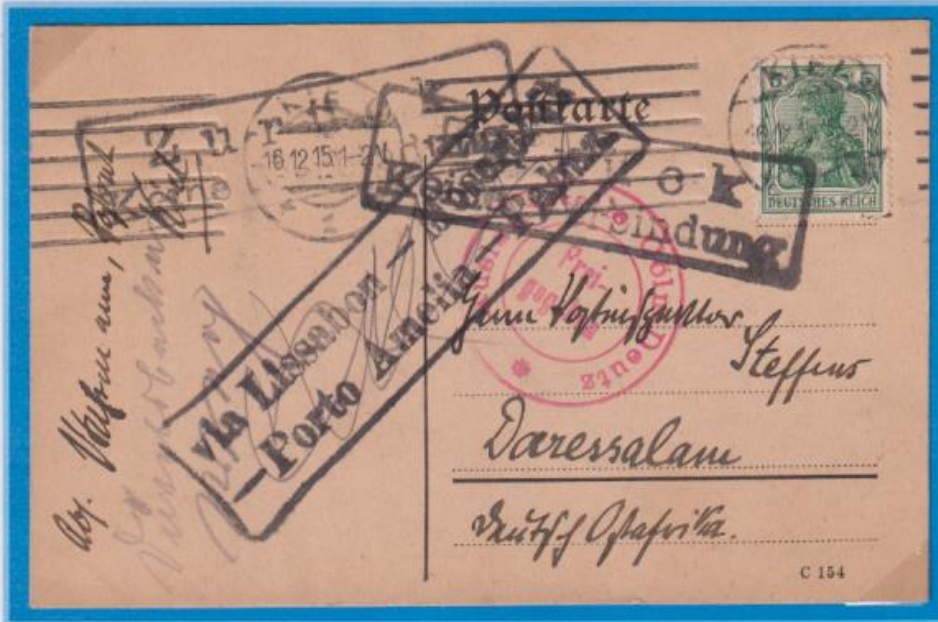
From Goslar 21.8.1915 (Cologne censorship, forwarding stamp «Via Lissabon-Mosambik-Porto Amelia-Palma», to Tabora (G.E.A.). In Mozambique the Portuguese blocked it and sent it back to Germany where a label was stuck «Wegen Mangel an Beförderungsmöglichkeit von portug. Ostafrika zurückgekommen» [Received from Portug. East Africa due to forwarding problems]. With ZURÜCK the card was sent back to sender.



3. Mail from/to Africa

The Portuguese route

End of the Portuguese route



From Kiel 16.12.1915 with Cöln-Deutz censorship and boxed cancel „Via Lissabon-Mosambik-Porto Amelia-Palma" to Dar-es-Salaam. As it was too late to use the «Mozambique connection» this card was sent back to the sender with two further boxed cancels "Zurück keine Verbindung" (Back to sender, no connection)

As far as I know
UNIQUE

The Portuguese continued to collaborate (at least until they entered the war against Germany on March 9, 1916), but only for mail sent from their own colonies.



From Loanda
12.8.1915 via
Holland to Hamburg.
German censorship
Emmerich.

3. Mail from/to Africa

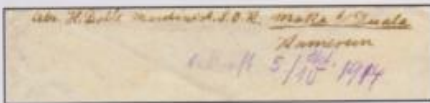
German Kamerun: the last peace-mail

In the very first days of August 1914, the German steamers at sea received the order to take refuge in the nearest neutral port, in order not to be captured by the British. This order was taken by the commander of the steamer "Henny Woermann" which, after embarking the mail from the West African German colonies, was heading for Germany. The "Henny Woermann" then reached the port of Pernambuco (Brazil) where it was interned. The mail was subsequently forwarded, via Brazil-United States-Holland, to Germany.



Sent 23.7.1914 from Duala (German Cameroons) to Germany carried by the steamer «Henny Woermann».

Handwritten arrival note at reverse: **Ankunft [arrival] 5./10 Okt 1914.**



Henny Woermann ———
neutral steamer - - - - -
US steamer ·····



Postcard written in Misselle 2.7.1914, posted in Victoria 10.7.1914 to Zweibrücken (Germany)

German Saarcbrücken censorship.

Carried by the steamer «Henny Woermann».

3. Mail from/to Africa

the Spanish route

German Cameroon bordered Rio Muni and, off its coast, was the island of Fernando Poo, both Spanish colonies. The archive of the German Colonial Ministry reports that from 22.8.1914 to 28.9.1914, Herr Kaumanns, postal inspector of Kamerun, made an official trip in those countries to negotiate a postal connection to Germany with the Spanish authorities. It's highly presumable that in this trip he carried mail to make the most of the situation, also because the Spanish steamer called only once a month in Fernando Poo.



Registered cover sent from Banjo 24.7.1914 (corrected in 31.7.1914) to Duisburg with arrival cancel 17.10.1914

Written in Matat 26.7.1914, posted in Kribi 5.8.1914, censored in Buea to Züllichen (Germany)

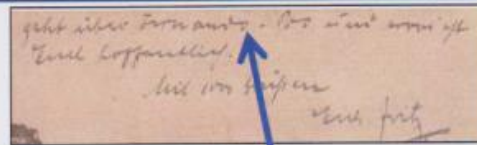
NOTE : Both these items belong to the ones taken by the postal inspector of Kamerun to send them via Spanish steamers



3. Mail from/to Africa

the Spanish route

A less official route from Kamerun via Spain consisted in sending unfranked mail in a big envelope to the German Consul in Barcelona who took care of franking the mail with Spanish stamps to send it to Germany.



TEXT: ..Did you receive my last card?

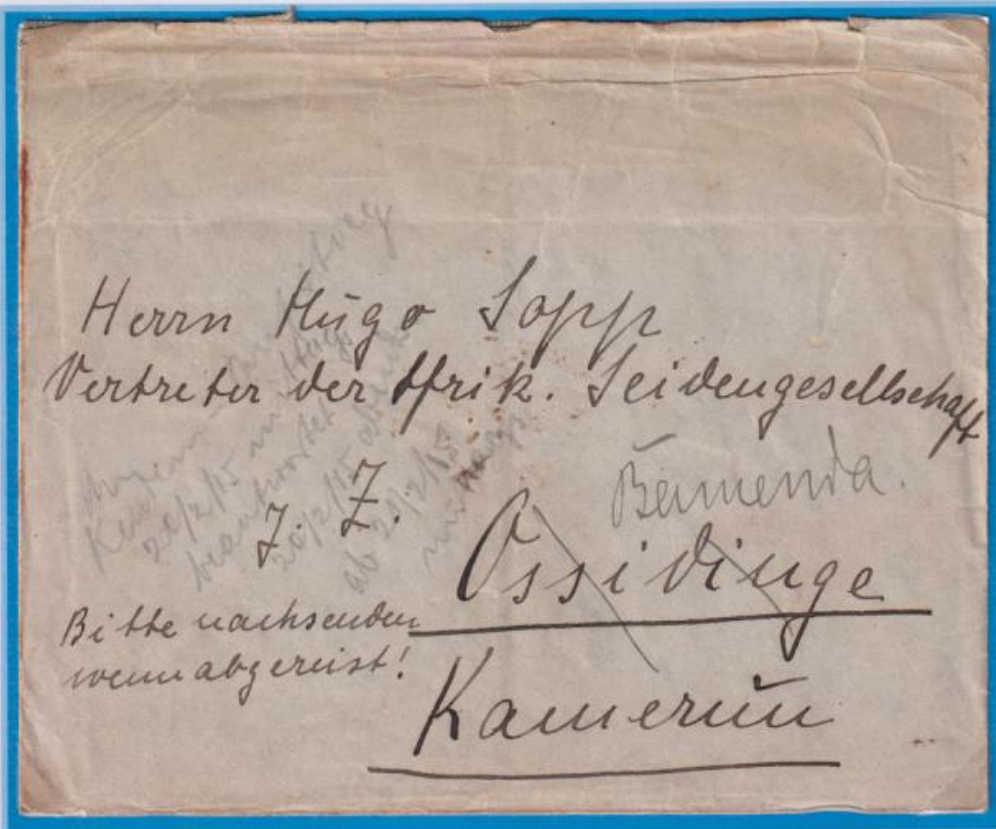
...Mail goes via Fernando Poo and hopefully arrives...

Written in an unknown place in Kamerun
29.9.1914 franked in Barcelona.

As far as I know
UNIQUE

The route also worked in the opposite direction: from Germany to the German Consulate in Madrid and via Fernando Poo - Rio Muni to Kamerun.

Pyrmont 8. Dez. 1914.



From Pyrmont
8.12.1914 to
Ossidinge
redirected to
Bamenda
(Kamerun. Sent
in a big envelope
to the German
Consulate in
Madrid. From
there forwarded
via Spanish
steamer to
Fernando Poo -
Rio Muni and
delivered to the
Germans at the
border

ⓔ

Only 5 known

3. Mail from/to Africa

the Spanish route

Thanks to the spanish cooperation, mail to Germany went: via Bata (Rio Muni) - Fernando Poo - Spain



FROM German Kamerun

From Jaunde
19.5.1915 to Lipsia,
redirected to the Front
(Im Felde!).
As it wasn't censored
in Kamerun, the card
got the censorship
control in Germany
(Emmerich)



TO German Kamerun

With the Spanish steamer to Spain

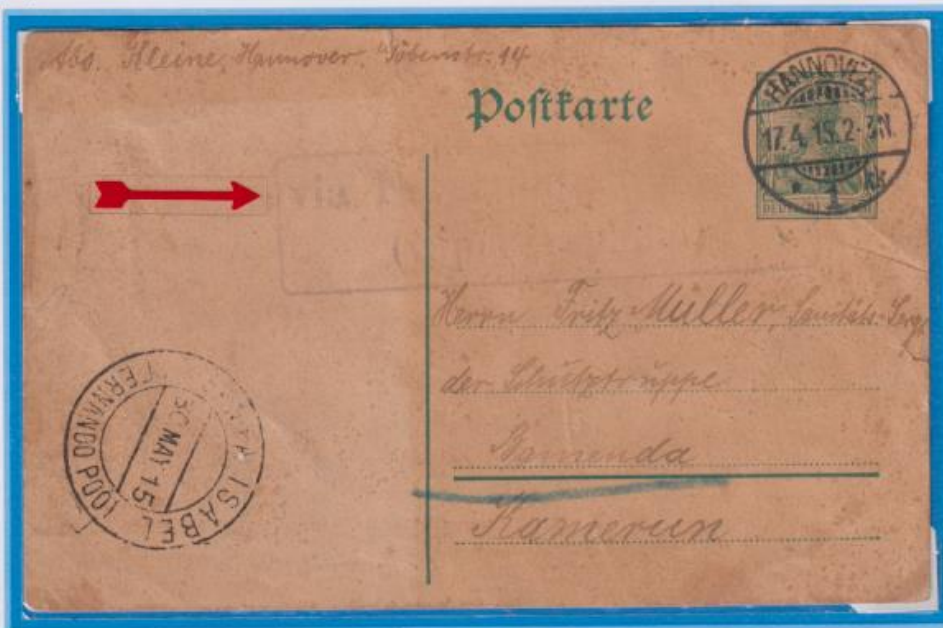
Mail from Germany to Kamerun met more difficulties even using the same procedure. Only starting from Apr. 6, 1915 German postal authorities were allowed to communicate the possibility of sending mail to Kamerun «via Fernando Poo -Bata».

But only few people were able to use it also because the colonie surrendered a few months later.

From Hannover
17.4.1915 via Cologne
with the forwarding
cancel «Via Fernando
Poo – Bata (por vapor
español)», via Santa
Isabel (Fernando Poo)
30.5.1915 to Bamenda
(Kamerun).

TEXT: ...Since,
according to the last
arrangements, mail
to Kamerun isn't sent
back to the sender
anymore, I'll try to
send you news...

NOTE: No German censorship but the forwarding cancel indicate that the content had been checked in the Foreign mail office in Cologne



Fac-simile of the forwarding cancel (from the article of C. Brekenfeld in ARGE Berichte n.136)

Only 3 known



3. Mail from/to Africa

the Spanish route

Spain, in this case with Italy, was also used as a safe transit for connections between Germans living in neutral countries trying to avoid British controls.



FROM Liberia
via Spain-
Italy-Russia
TO China

Russian
censorship
(Moscow)

As far as
I know
UNIQUE

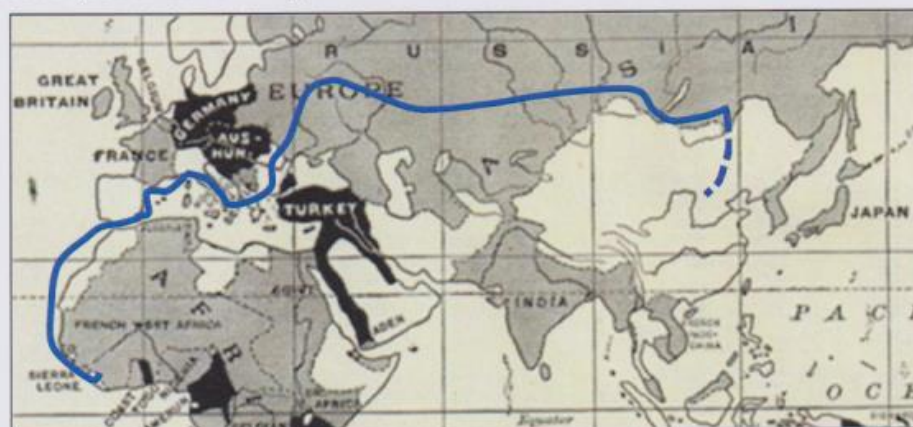
Registered cover from Monrovia (Liberia) January 1915 (day unreadable) via Barcelona 29.1.1915, Peking Russian Post Office 2.3.1915 (Russian calendar, corresponding to 15.3.1915), Peking Chinese Post Office 16.3.1915 to Feng-Lo-Chen (Hunan) China 18.3.1915 (handwritten notice)

NOTE: Handwritten forwarding indication: «by spanish steamer» and «Via Cadiz, Barcelona, Genova».

Purple Russian censorship (Moscow).



The presence of a Russian censorship stamp used in Moscow clarifies the route: from Italy via Greece-Bulgaria-Romania (all these neutral nations at that time) via Trans-Siberian Railway, hence the cancellation of the Russian post office in Peking.



4. Mail from/to Americas

The Italian route

Given the large number of emigrants, Italy had good naval connections with the Americas. German Post immediately made the most of this opportunity.



FROM Brazil

Registered cover from Porto Alegre (Brasil) 24.8.1914 «via Genova» to Berlin 22.9.1914. Sent back with «Addressee Not Found» (handwritten: «23/9 retour») with arrival 28.10.1914.



TO Brazil

From Nürnberg
8.9.1914 to Buenos
Aires.
Handwritten red note:
Via Genua
Handwritten receiving
note: Llegò [arrived]
17/10/1914

4. Mail from/to Americas

The Italian route



FROM
Uruguay

Registered cover from Montevideo 25.8.1914 via
Italy Genova 18.9.1914 – Milano 19.9.1914 to
Strassburg 23.9.1914.
Censored in Frankfurt



FROM
Argentina

Argentina Postal
stationery card cancelled
with Italian Naval cancel
«PRINCIPE UMBERTO -
PIROSCAFO POSTALE
ITALIANO» 12.1.1915 to
Germany.
Handwritten arrival date
8.2.1915

4. Mail from/to Americas

The U.S. route

During the war, the United States, which had been able to assert their economic power (and the loans granted to England), had obtained the right to somehow keep contacts with all belligerent countries. Despite occasional British interferences, their steamers carried mail from or to Germany until February 5, 1917, when the U.S. broke the diplomatic relations with Germany.



FROM
Chile

From Concepcion 22.7.1914 via
Valparaiso 24.7.1914 and New York
21.8.1914 to Reichenbrand - Sachsen
(Germany) 12.9.1914



4. Mail from/to Americas

The U.S. route

FROM the U.S.(and backwards)



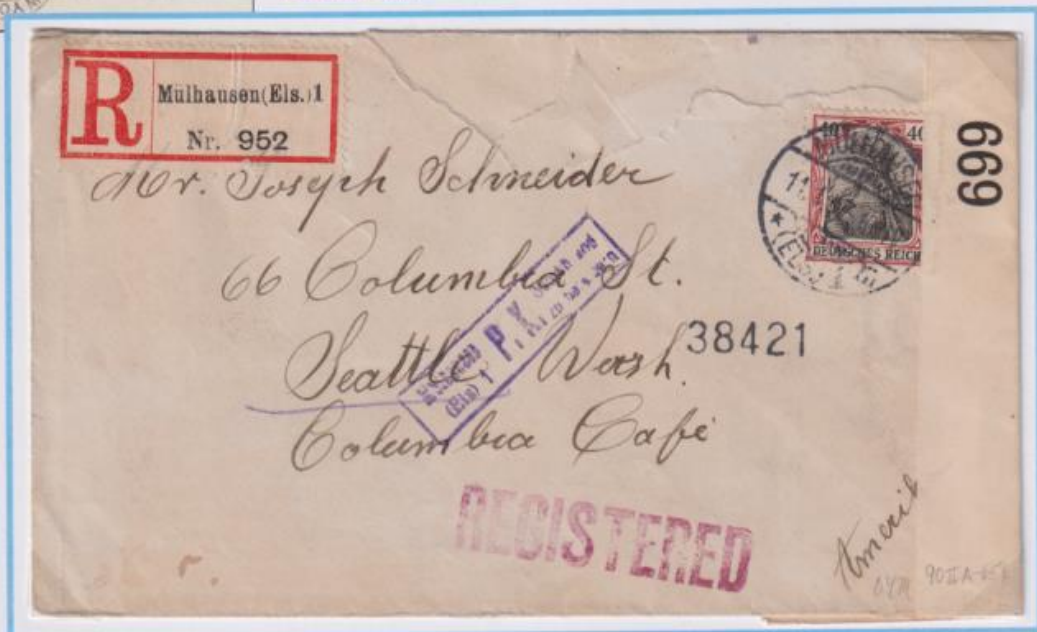
Registered letter from New York 14.1.1915 to Hagen 29.1.1915, forwarded to Aachen 29.1.1915. There, the label "Unknown" was stuck and the letter sent back to New York 27.2.1915



TO the U.S.

Registered cover from Mülhausen 11.1.1917 via New York 7.3.1917 to Seattle 12.3.1917. German and British censorship

NOTE: one of the last mail duly delivered, between Germany and the U.S.



4. Mail from/to Americas

The U.S. route



FROM Guatemala

Cover from Guatemala 8.8.1915 "via New Orleans-New York to Strassburg (German Censorship).

FROM Ecuador



From Guayaquil (Ecuador) 6.12.1916 via New York and Spain to Hamburg. Private Company receiving cancel: 5.2.1917. British and German (Emmerich) censorship.



EMMERICH BY
Militärbüro
mitte Hauptpostamt geöffnet

4. Mail from/to Americas

The U.S. route

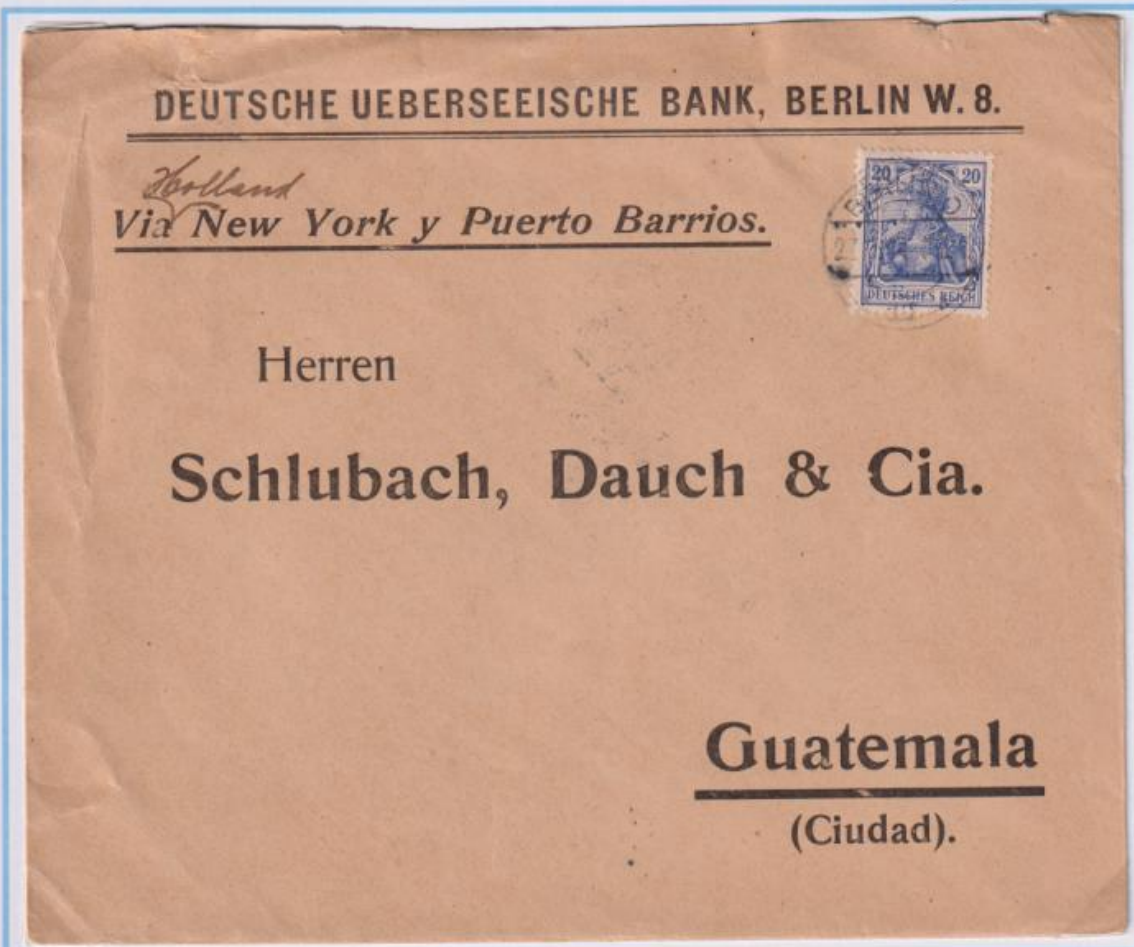


FROM Curaçao and backwards

From Curaçao
6.10.1915 via New York to Germany;
redirected to Belgium where the postcard got the stamp «Zurück – Unzulässige Sprache» [Back to sender. Language not allowed].
Receiving cancel Curaçao 4.12.1915



TO Guatemala



From Berlin 27.11.1914 to Guatemala 6.1.1915. Berlin censorship.

4. Mail from/to Americas

The U.S. route

On February 5, 1917, due to the worsening of the German submarine war, United States broke the diplomatic relations with Germany, thus putting an end to the "U.S. Route"

From the U.S. to Germany BLOCKED



From Stanford (Conn.)
13.3.1917 to Hamburg
Blocked with stamp
"Mail service suspended
to country addressed"

From Germany to the U.S. BLOCKED



From Oldenburg
26.3.1917 to
Kankakee Illinois U.S.
Blocked with stamp
"Zurück - Keine
Verbindung" [Back to
sender - No
connection]

4. Mail from/to Americas

The Scandinavian route

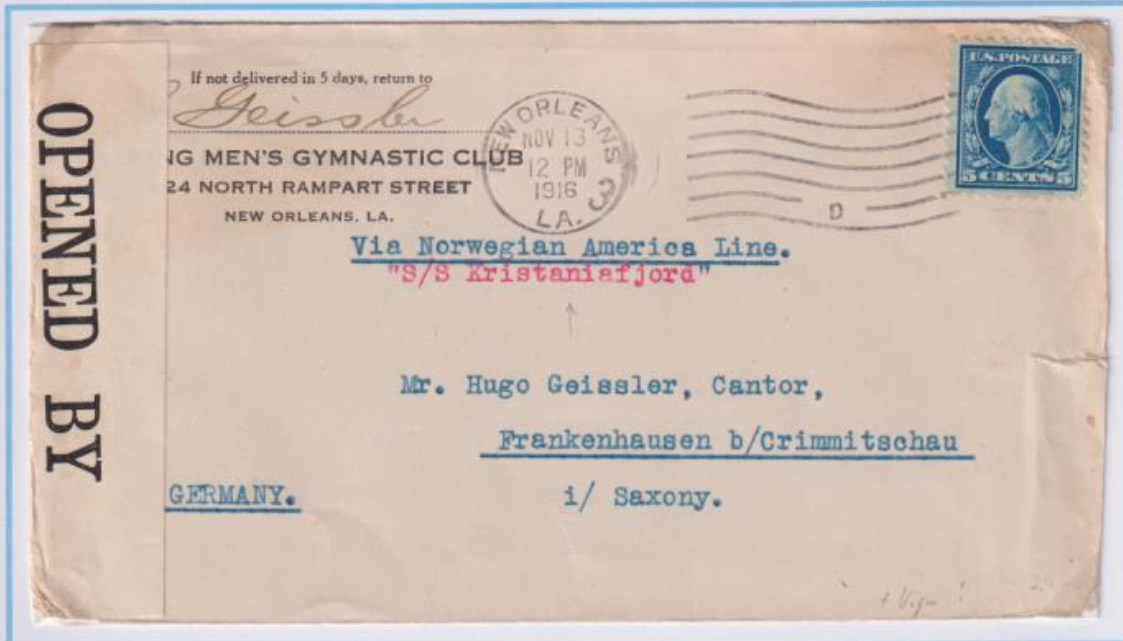
An alternative route, perhaps even more effective (involving more neutral nations), required the use of the Scandinavian naval lines.

From the U.S. per Scandinavian American Line



From Cleveland 26.10.1915 per steamer «Oscar II» via Kristiania- Copenhagen to Göttingen. Handwritten receiving note: 11.11.1915

From the U.S. per Norwegian America Line



From New Orleans 13.11.1916 per Norwegian steamer «S/S Kristianfjord» to Frankenhäusen. British censorship

4. Mail from/to Americas

The Scandinavian route

From the U.S. per
Danish steamer

From New York
10.8.1915 with the
Danish steamer
«Frederik VIII» to
Hamburg



To EL SALVADOR per Dutch or Danish steamer



From San Miguel 7.10.1915 via La Union 8.10.1915 to Sulzburg

4. Mail from/to Americas

The Scandinavian route

From CHILE with Danish steamer via New York

From Valdivia 6.1.1917
via Valparaiso 8.1.1917
and Panama with
Danish steamer to
Hamburg.
Due to the breakdown
in diplomatic relations
between the U.S. and
Germany (5.2.1917)
the card was blocked
in New York and sent
back to the sender.
Receiving cancel
9.7.1917



The Danish connection proved essential for contacts with Iceland

To ICELAND via DENMARK

356 WS Hamburg 11 569

expedition.

Anbei Parei m. Mar. Anzahl der Zoll-
Ci-joint № 5744 inbaltungs-
Número de declaraciones en douane

Wertangabe Zollamtlich geprüft
Valeur assurée

An A Herren 5012

franco 23.5 5.578-
(Bestimmungsort) in Reykjavik
(Lieu de destination)

Wohnung 27 27
(Straße und Hausnummer) Island

Postgewicht 4 1/2 kg g
Poids

Zollgebühren*)
Droits de douane

Postleitzahl
Hamburg 7

*) Von der Grenz-Eingangs-Postanstalt des Bestimmungslandes anzufüllen.
à remplir par le bureau d'échange d'entrée du pays de destination.

Postamt über die Anfertigung
Indication de la province à laquelle le colis a été remis
L'arrêté

21.5.1915

g des Empfängers (bei Post-
et du destinataire lorsqu'il s'agit de lettres)

Interpretation bestimmt, die unfernt bestimnte Sendung
habet.

Den 101

21.5.1915

Packet sent from Hamburg
19.5.1915 via Copenhagen
21.5.1915 and 23.5.1915 to
Reykjavik 2.6.1915

4. Mail from/to Americas

The Dutch route

The Dutch route, which had often operated in coordination with the U.S. route, was widely used. However, it did not enjoy the favorable treatment reserved by English censors for American lines. Mail seizures were therefore more frequent.



From HAWAII
via Holland



Fieldpost postcard 21.8.1915 censored in Köln via Holland and Sidney 20.10.1915 to Hawaii Islands U.S.

Via "Holland-Amerika-Linie" to Peru



From Biberach 26.2.1916 «Per Holland-Amerika-Linie Via New York-Panamá» to Lima 15.4.1916

4. Mail from/to Americas

The Dutch route



FROM
Argentina

Registered
cover from
Buenos Aires
15.9.1915 via
Dutch steamer
«Tubantia» to
München
16.10.1915.
Censored in
Emmerich

TO Argentina



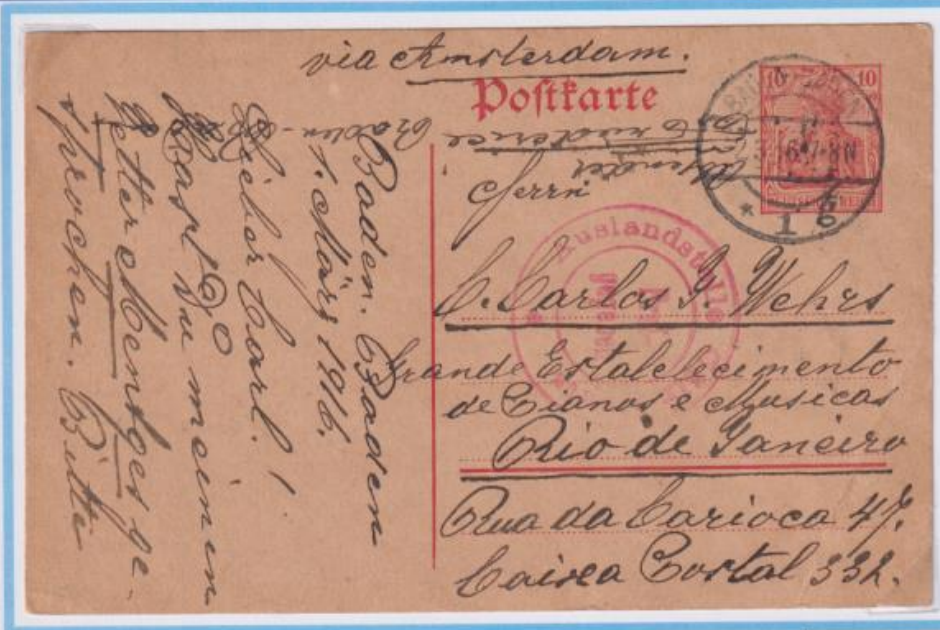
Fieldpost 1.7.1915 to Union.
As the free fieldpost wasn't valid
outside Germany the letter was
taxed with many TAX cancels
(19-21-23.8.1915).

Purple military cancel to free the
fieldpost and red censorship of
Cologne.



4. Mail from/to Americas

The Dutch route



TO Brazil

From Baden Baden
2.3.1916 "via
Amsterdam" to Rio
de Janeiro.
Censored in Cöln.

TEXT: Cannot send
newspapers
anymore because
from the Dutch
steamer „Hollandia“
packets and the
whole
correspondence
were confiscated by
the British.

From Cochabamba 25.10.1915 via Tupiza 5.11.1915 and Buenos Aires 11.11.1915 to Berlin.
German Censorship Emmerich (near the Dutch border)



FROM
Bolivia

4. Mail from/to Americas

The Dutch route

FROM Chile



Quiriquina

Postal stationery card written in Quiriquina 1.1.1916 from a member of the crew of the German cruiser «Dresden», posted in Talcahuano 2.1.1916 via Buenos Aires-Amsterdam to Hamburg. German censorship Emmerich

FROM Argentina - Mail blocked by the British



Sent from Buenos Aires 3.2.1916 per Dutch steamer «Tubantia» to Dresden. Blocked by the British and released after the war (see red squared cancel)

NOTE: S/S Tubantia was a big Dutch ocean liner which carried, almost always successfully, mail from South America to Germany. Unfortunately it was sunk by mistake by a German submarine on March, 16 1916.

5. Humanitarian agreements

Australian policy

This letter, addressed to an enemy country, was nevertheless forwarded by the Australian Post. In London, the letter was blocked and sent back to Sidney where a leaflet containing instructions on how to proceed to send mail to enemy countries was added.



From Sidney 19.8.1914 to Hamburg. Blocked in London with UNDELIVERABLE L.P.S (London Postal Service) und RETURN TO SENDER. In Sidney it got the squared cancel UNDELIVERABLE APR.23,1915 and remained by the DEAD LETTERS OFFICE till 29.4.1915 when it was sent back to sender.



Very rare full item

Letters for places in territories of the German, Austrian or Turkish Empires are undeliverable if addressed directly to such places. Letters so addressed will not be despatched, but will be returned to the senders. Letters may, however, be transmitted to addressees in enemy countries indirectly. This may be done by enclosing a letter in an envelope addressed to an intermediary in a neutral country. The intermediary may be a person, or firm, or agency, chosen by the sender. The letter for the enemy country should itself be left open and enclosed in the envelope addressed to the neutral intermediary. If the letter is then closed and posted, it must be plainly endorsed with words indicating its contents, "Letter for Germany enclosed" or "Letter enclosed for S. p. r." etc., etc. Such envelopes will be opened, and the enclosed contents scrutinized by the censor, and if not objectionable will be allowed to pass.

In Sydney the Censorship Office added a leaflet with the instructions about the procedure to use to correspond with enemy countries.

5. Humanitarian agreements

Australian policy

This procedure proved to be effective also for Germans living in the former German New Guinea, occupied by the Australians in September 1914



From Madang (former Friederich-Wilhelmshafen) 9.11.1916 via Sidney 28.11.1916 arrived in Rotterdam at the beginning of 1917. The inscription "Letter for enemys country enclosed" followed the instructions listed on the previous page..



From Bairnesdale Victoria 4.2.1917 to Stockholm 19.4.1917

5. Humanitarian agreements

Australian policy



From Fairfield N.S.W. (date unreadable) to Saint Moritz Switzerland 23.11.1916 redirected 24.11.1916 to Lugano 24.11.1916



New Zealander policy

Germans living in Samoa (occupied by New Zealand) were allowed to correspond to Germany only till Oct. 31, 1914



From Apia
23.10.1914 to
Dresden.
Handwritten arrival
note: erhalten
[received]
28.11.1914

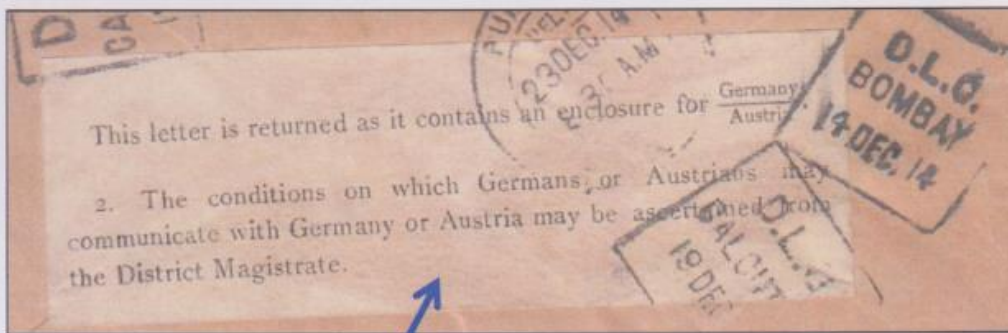
5. Humanitarian agreements

British India policy

As early as Sept.30, 1914, strict rules had been decided for correspondence with Germany. Unfortunately these were not that clear to the public, resulting in a traffic jam at the Bombay censorship office. To solve the problem, a label was prepared to be affixed to rejected mail. (Robert Gray, in Civil Censorship Study Group Bulletin n.219 pages 95-97)



Cover containing a letter to Germany sent from Purulia 3.12.1914 to Zurich. Blocked by the Indian censor in Bombay 11.12.1914 and sent to the dead Letter Office where it remained from 11.12.1914 till 19.12.1914. Sent back to the sender with arrival cancel 21.12.1914 and 23.12.1914



The cover was sent back with the label above

According to the Bulletin n.219 July 2023 of the Civil Censorship Study Group, this is the UNIQUE known sample of the label



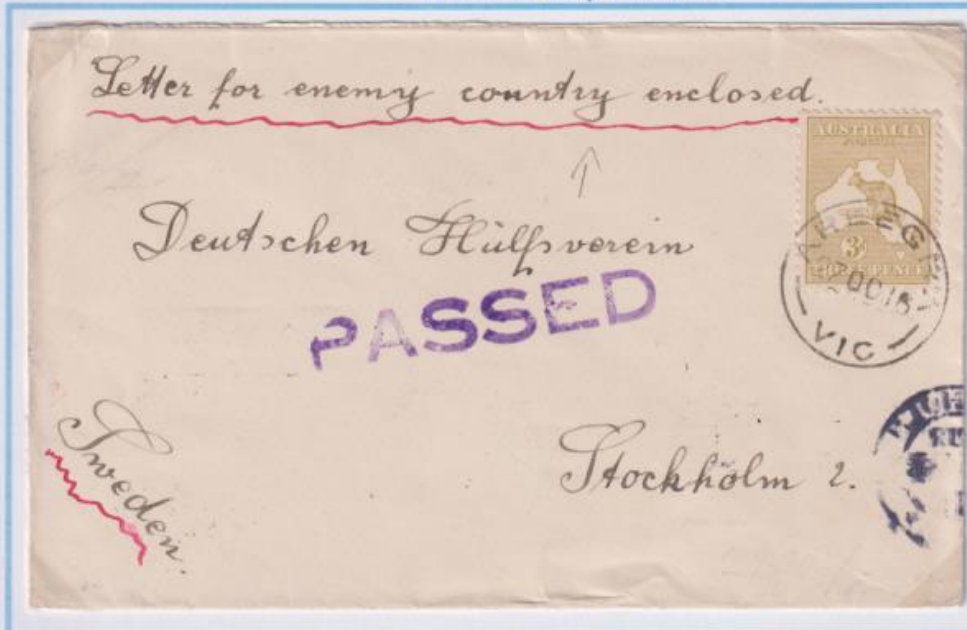
5. Humanitarian agreements

Sweden: the «Deutscher Hilfsverein»

A German association: the «Deutscher Hilfsverein» in Stockholm devoted itself to make possible correspondence to and from Germans living in German colonies, in neutral countries and also in enemy countries. The enemy authorities showed a tolerant attitude towards this activity, controlling the mail but mostly allowing it to be delivered.

The sender should send in an open cover addressed to the «D. H.» an open unfranked cover addressed to the final destination + 2 Coupons Réponse (3 for German colonies). «D. H.» franked the cover with Swedish stamps, marked it with their stamp and posted it.

FROM Enemy countries



FROM Australia to D.H. Sweden

From Areegra
(Victoria) 27.10.1916
censored to
Stockholm
30.12.1916

FROM D.H. Sweden to Australia



Confirmation postcard from the "Deutscher Hilfsverein" of receipt of the letter directed to Germany and notification of its shipment to destination.

From Stockholm
10.11.1915 to Sydney
14.1.1916. UNCLAIMED
and by the Dead Letter
Office 29.3.1916.



5. Humanitarian agreements

Sweden: the «Deutscher Hilfsverein»

FROM Enemy countries



FROM
Russia

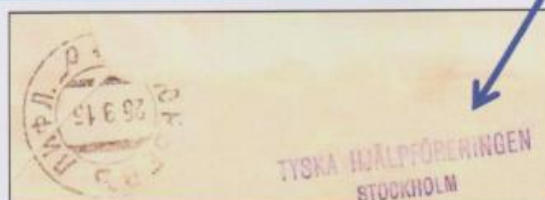


From Moscow (local censorship) 18.11.1914 to Stockholm 7.12.1914.



TO Russia

From Stockholm 18.8.1915 to Juriev 25.9.1915.
Censored in St. Petersburg



5. Humanitarian agreements

Sweden: the «Deutscher Hilfsverein»

FROM Enemy countries



FROM the U.S.



From Portland, Oregon 21.2.1918 to Stockholm 6.5.1918. Handwritten note: «To enemy»



To the U.S.

Handwritten note: From enemy country



From Stockholm 13.5.1918 to Clinton Iowa (US).
British and American censorship.

5. Humanitarian agreements

Sweden: the «Deutscher Hilfsverein»

FROM German East Africa



From Lindi
10.6.1915, with
the local
censorship, via
Lourenço
Marques 1.8.1915
to Stockholm
1.9.1915
Censored by the
British in London.

Sometimes, the lack of envelopes in German East Africa, due to the British blockade, prevented compliance with the D.H. rules. In this case, obviously, no Coupons-Réponse (if still available) could be attached.



FROM
German
East Africa

From Dodoma 26. (5).
1915 via Lourenço
Marques 1.8.1915 to
Stockholm.
Censored in Dar-es-
Salaam

TEXT
Please send this card to
Mrs. de Haas, Honnef
am Rhein, Germany, as
a sign of life...

5. Humanitarian agreements

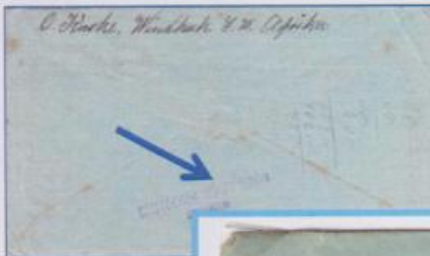
Sweden: the «Deutscher Hilfsverein»

Unfortunately, even the effective organization of the “Deutscher Hilfsverein” had to deal with the automatism of the Swedish postal service. This letter addressed from Germany (see sender's address) to German East Africa, was duly franked and sent from Stockholm, but the Swedish Post forwarded it, as in peacetime, via Germany (!!!), making the attempt useless.

FROM Germany to German East Africa



From Stockholm 20.1.1915 to German East Africa (German sender). Forwarded by mistake forwarded to Germany from where it was impossible to forward. Sent back to sender «Zurück- Keine Beförderungsgelegenheit» [Back to sender – No possibility of forwarding]



Mail TO Germany (from German Southwest Africa)

From Stockholm 26.2.1916 to Germany.
Letter inside written from Windhuk 3.12.1915



5. Humanitarian agreements

Sweden: the «Deutscher Hilfsverein»

FROM/TO neutral countries : Brazil



From Brazil



From Porto Alegre 10.9.1916 via Rio de Janeiro 15.9.1916 to Stockholm 30.10.1916

TEXT: Please forward the annexed letter ... , because the postal connection between here and Germany has ended we have been without news for 4 months...Two international Coupons-Réponse annexed to pay the postal fee

To Brazil



From Stockholm 10.10.1917 to Rio de Janeiro Brazil 31.12.1917. British censorship



5. Humanitarian agreements

Sweden: the «Deutscher Hilfsverein»

The mentioned tolerance of the British authorities had actually some limits; contents judged suspicious were always blocked and were delivered only after the the end of the war.

Mail FROM neutral countries : MEXICO blocked



From Zacatecas 24.6.1918 via
Chignahuapan 25.6.1918 and
Mexico City 26.6.1918 to
Stockholm.
Blocked and delivered
23.6.1919



5. Humanitarian agreements

Sweden: the «Deutscher Hilfsverein»

Mail TO neutral countries : BRAZIL blocked



From Stockholm 30.6.1916 to
Porto Alegre.
Blocked by the British and
delivered via Rio de Janeiro
16 and 17.9.1919 to Porto
Alegre 24.9.1919



5. Humanitarian agreements

Spain: "Affaires de famille"

On June 20, 1917 the Spanish "Boletín de correos" n.275 reported: "Following agreements between this Direction and the French Administration, the latter has authorized the transit through its territory of correspondence between Germans resident in Spain and their families in Germany. **This correspondence must be delivered clearly marked with the words "Nouvelle de famille"**. Otherwise mail will be sent by sea when possible. **Since the correspondence will have to be subjected to French censorship, senders are advised to respect its "family character"...**". At first this mail followed the route "via Portugal", afterwards it was forwarded directly from Spain to France and via Switzerland to Germany.

From SPAIN via Portugal



From (unreadable) with
ambulant cancel 22.5. [1917] to
Pasewalk Germany.

The cover went via Lisbon
(Portuguese censorship
31.8.1917). Censored again by
the French in London (n.912), it
reached Holland and was finally
forwarded to Germany (German
censorship Emmerich).

Red ink note: **unknown and
redirected to Posen.**



5. Humanitarian agreements

Spain: "Affaires de famille"

The agreement was also valid for German post offices in Spanish Morocco and for Germans living in the Spanish colonies.

From SPANISH MOROCCO via Portugal



TEXT: Dear parents, today the mail once again operates from here to Germany. I take advantage of this opportunity to send you news

[Faint handwritten text on the reverse side of the postcard]

From Larasch (German P.O.) 20.7.1917, via Spain - Portugal - Holland to Diebach bei Rothenburg ob der Taub. Censored in Portugal (Portuguese oval cancel N.58 11.9.1917 + French censorship N.27) and in Germany (Emmerich) where the additional stamp was removed to check possible hidden inscriptions.

NOTE: A total of 16 postcards like this one are known, all addressed to various destinations in Germany and all with a missing stamp. (Dr. Dietrich Rauschenberger, Berichte Arge Deutsche Kolonien n.127).



From SPANISH GUINEA directly via France



From Elobey (Spanish Guinea) 27.8.1917 via Spain and France (censored in Lyon N.203) to Bergneustadt. German censorship Frankfurt. NOTE: The blue asterisk indicates the French chemical control to check hidden ink.

6. Official/private tricks

Smuggled mail

When no connection was available anymore, the only way to communicate was to try to smuggle mail.

Nov.7, 1914 Tsingtau (Kiautschou) surrendered to the Anglo-Japanese. Mail that could not be forwarded remained at the local post office. On Dec.10, 1914, the Japanese demobilized the Chinese postal clerks who were sent to China. To fulfill their commitment, some of them secretly hid a small part of the correspondence in their luggage. The Japanese did not notice and the correspondence could be delivered to the German Post Office in Shanghai. From there, on Dec. 12, 1914, it was forwarded via the US to its destination with arrival around 10-12 February 1915. (The book of Manfred Knieper, Kriegspost aus Kiautschou, mentions only 5 similar items. This one is the sixth).

From Tsingtau (Kiautschou) to Germany.



Only 6 known

Postcard sent on 23.10.1914 by Feldpost to Germany. Canceled by the Shanghai German Post Office on 21.12.1914 and forwarded via the United States.

NOTE: The sender, Ernst Harm, a stoker on the SMS Jaguar gunboat, used a postcard of his ship with the official stamp and signature of Lieutenant Fliegelskamp, to make it free of charge. Both were later taken prisoner by the Japanese.



6. Official/private tricks

Smuggled mail

This postcard probably reached Berlin via private individuals, aid organizations or diplomatic way and was then forwarded to the addressee via the Reich Colonial Office as a Reich official matter.

FROM German South-West Africa to Germany



Only 2 known

Postal stationery of German South-West Africa written 3.6.1915 and taken to Berlin to be forwarded 28.8.1915 to its final destination e

TEXT: am unwounded and healthy as well as Miss Busse and most of our people. Everything is fine on farms so far.

German East Africa. Smuggled coastal mail on Dhow "Taharazi". FAILED ATTEMPT.

For a period of several months, the German Customs office at Kilwa permitted non-franked mail to be carried along the coast by Arab-owned commercial dhows, hoping to avoid British control. The only surviving letters were carried on two vessels "Taharazi" and "Fetehadi", captured by the British. The mail was kept in Zanzibar.



Letter from Kilwa 16.11.1914 to Dar-es-Salaam carried on the dhow "Taharazi", intercepted between Kilwa and Dar-es-Salaam, with the Kilwa Customs Office seal.

TEXT: No letter from you... We trust you have enough rice for food. If you don't, let us know and we will send 1 or 2 sacks...

6. Official/private tricks

Re-directions

A further attempt to communicate was made using the help of a correspondent in a neutral country. Mail was addressed to him and he redirected it to the destination agreed.

From the UK to Norway redirected to Germany



From Bexhill 16.12.1914
to Kristiania redirected
22.12.1914 to Hamburg

Added TEXT: I just got this
card...the packet was
blocked by the British...

*Ein herzliche grüß aus
meiner Heimat.
Ich würde dem Herrn Rhesi ein
beständiges Interesse an der Sache der
deutschen Sache haben.
Sicherlich kann ich
nicht anders sein als
zu helfen und zu
arbeiten. Ich bin
im Moment in
Hamburg und
ich würde mich
sehr freuen, wenn
ich von Herrn Rhesi
etwas hören könnte.
Mit besten Grüßen
aus der Heimat
E. Wisendanger*

From Mexico to Norway redirected to Germany



From Nogales 18.4.1915 via New York 17.4.1915 to Bergen
2.5.1915 redirected to Karlsruhe 7.5.1915

6. Official/private tricks

Re-directions

Sometimes redirections also involved the change of the addressee...



From Russia to Denmark
redirected to Germany



Registered postal stationery from Wwjalka 29.9.1914 (Russian calendar, corresponding to 12.10.1914) via St. Petersburg 8.10.1914 (21.10.1914) to Kjøbenhavn 5.11.1914 re-directed to Augsburg.

ADDED TEXT: Dear Mrs von Hacke, here is your husband's postcard. Today I forwarded your letter to him. I also sent your husband a card to let him know that you are well. I hope he gets both...

...sometimes an official institution (the German Consulate) forwarded the message.



German ANSWER postal stationery from Mozambique 2.6.1915 via Lourenço Marques 12.6.1915 to Berlin. Additional Mozambique franking because the local Post Office didn't admit the German stationery.

German censorship Emmerich.

TEXT: ...following your letter of 28.3.1915, I inform you that the contents were transmitted to your son. Since there is a direct postal connection with Dar-es-Salaam, I recommend sending letters directly, that is: "via Lisbon and Porto Amélia"...



6. Official/private tricks

Cover addresses

Beside the official cooperation of the neutral countries Germans tried to overcome the British controls using "cover addresses". Persons living in a neutral country acted as a Post Box to forward mail to destination. They received unfranked mail and posted it with neutral stamps. Most times, actually, these attempts were unsuccessful.

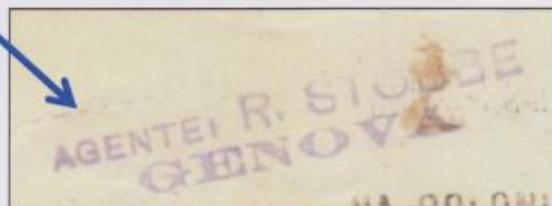
The role of Norddeutscher Lloyd's agent in Genoa: Herr R. Stobbe

Cover addressed to the captain of the steamer "Präsident" in harbour at Dar-es-Salaam (G.E.A.). Written by his wife (note sender's address: Frau Schütt, Hamburg), it was sent to the Norddeutscher-Lloyd's agent R. Stobbe in Genoa that acted as a "mailbox" for the subsequent forwarding. In this case, the attempt was unsuccessful due to the ingenuous address: "Zanzibar", where the letter was blocked by the British.



From Genoa 7.12.1914 via Napoli Porto to Zanzibar to reach Tanga or Dar-es-Salaam (G.E.A.).

NOTE: In order not to attract attention, the words "Norddeutscher Lloyd" was scratched off from the sender's stamp



6. Official/private tricks

Cover addresses

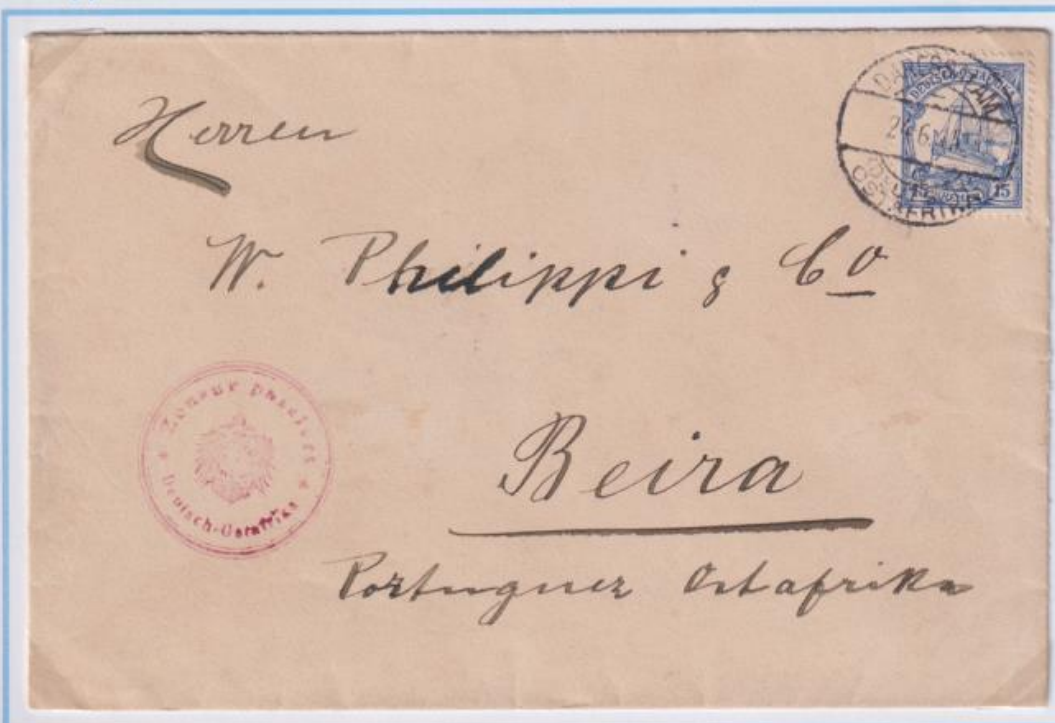
Cover address in Mozambique used from Turkey to reach German East Africa.



From Smyrna
29.5.1915 to Beira
(Portuguese
Mozambique) to be
forwarded to German
East Africa. This
postcard didn't even
reach his first
destination.

Censored in Turkey, forwarded via Italy (Italian censorship) and via France 21.6.1915 where it was blocked «ACHEMINEMENT IMPOSSIBLE» (Forwarding impossible)

Philippi & Co. was the main cover address, in Mozambique, to reach German East Africa.



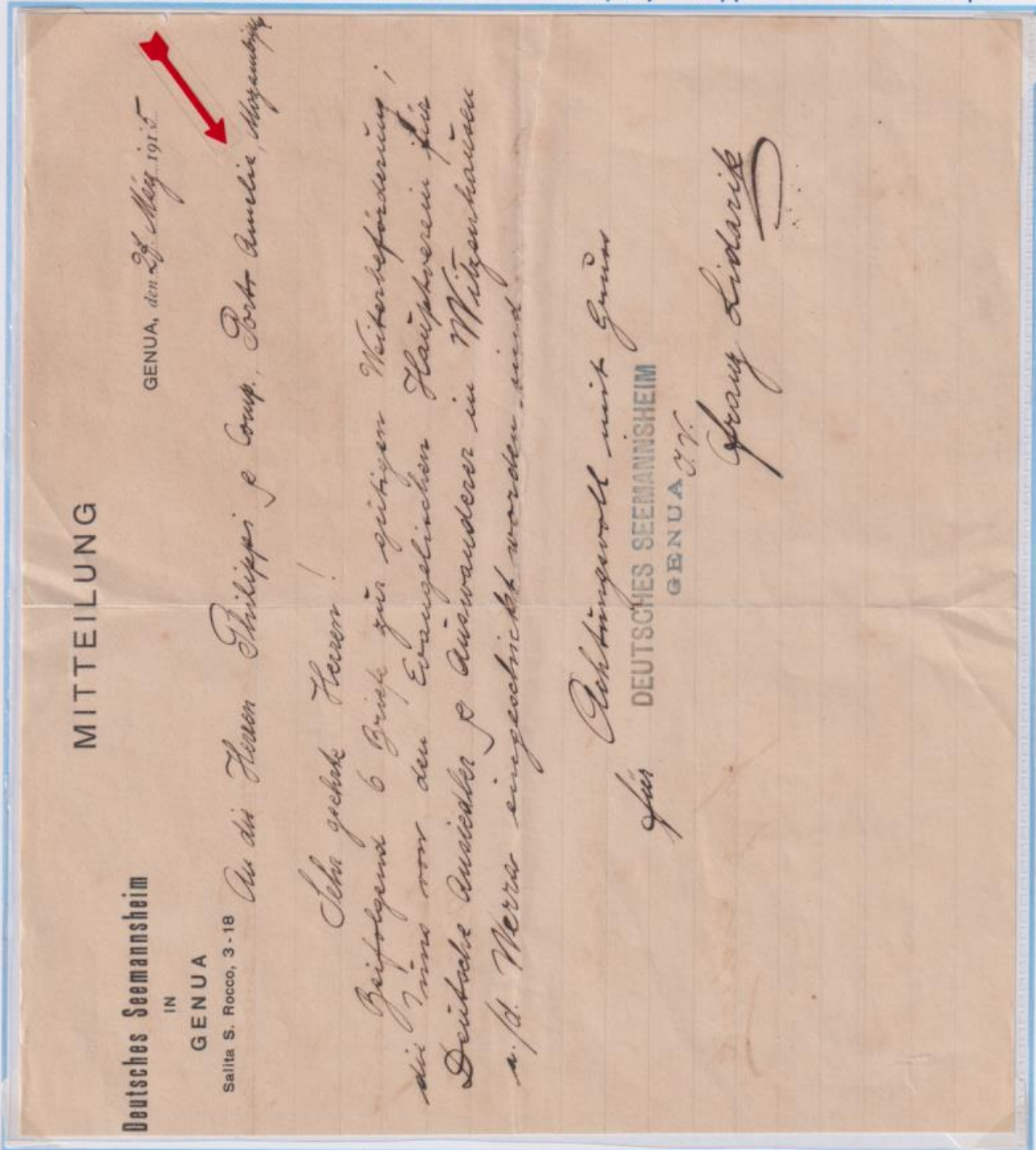
From Dar-es-Salaam (German East Africa) 24.6.1915 to Beira (Mozambique). Beira unreadable arrival cancel

6. Official/private tricks

Cover addresses

Letter from the "Deutsche Seemannsheim (the House of German sailors)" in Genoa, to another "receiving mailbox": the German company Philippi & Co, located in northern Mozambique acting as cover address until Portugal entered the war (9/3/1916). Cover is missing, but the content perfectly illustrates the attempts to reach German East Africa thanks to the coverage.

The "Deutsche Seemannsheim" in Genoa and the company "Philippi & Co." in Mozambique



TEXT : ... annexed six letters given by the Evangelical Relief Company for German settlers, for a benevolent forwarding...

6. Official/private tricks

Cover addresses

In Switzerland the Spanish consul in Zürich, who had actually German origins, acted as mail forwarder to Germany but, little by little, the British and the French became able to identify in neutral countries 'suspects' senders and/or recipients. Consul Emilio Gaisert in Zurich appears in the French blacklist published 15.6.1916.



From Barcelona 3.11.1915 to Zürich 16.11.1915
Censored in France



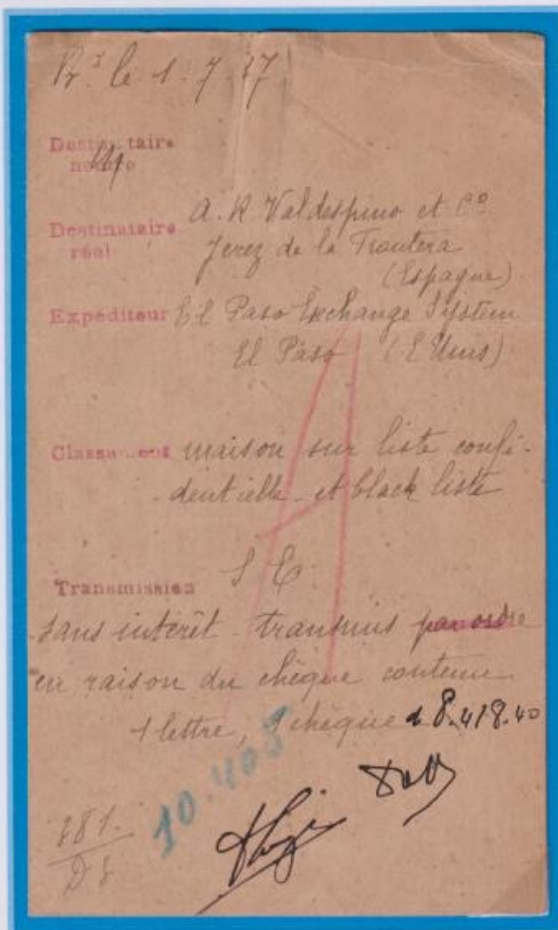
From n.75 of the weekly Spanish magazine «iberia» 9.9.1916

Gaisert (Emilio M.) calle Princesa, 50, Barcelona.

6. Official/private tricks

Cover addresses

As in the previous case, French censors were very careful in identifying content harmful to their country.



Letter from the US 17.6.1917 to Spain blocked by French censorship 1.7.1917 because the recipient was blacklisted. Inside, the censor's card with reasons and procedure followed, accordingly signed.

NOTE

These cards were secret and should never have been kept with the letter.

(Jerôme Bourguignat, *Le contrôle postal et télégraphique français pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale 1914-1921*)

7. Mail between enemy countries Japan, an enemy too far away to be

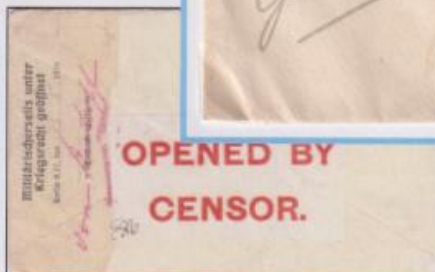
Japan had entered the war against Germany on Aug.23,1914 mainly because they were interested in all German Possessions in China (Kiautschou) and in the Pacific Area (Marianas-Carolines-Marshall Islands). All these territories were taken within the end of 1914. It seems that Japanese had no problem in allowing correspondence to Germany and neither did Germans in accepting and delivering it.

From Japan to Germany: Japanese censorship, no German censorship

Registered cover
from Keelung
(Taiwan/Japan)
14.9.1914 via Hong
Kong 14.9.1914
(faint cancel) then,
probably via Italian
steamer, to Genua
and, via Milan
28.10.1914, to
Gotha (Germany)
31.10.1914.
Japanese red
censorship stamp.



From Japan to Germany: British and German censorship



Cover from Yokohama 29.3.1916 via Seattle to Berlin Friedenau.
Censored in UK and later in Berlin 18.5.1916

7. Mail between enemy countries

Japan, an enemy too far away to be

FROM the German possession in China (Kiautschou) occupied by Japan to Germany:
Japanese – British – German censorship



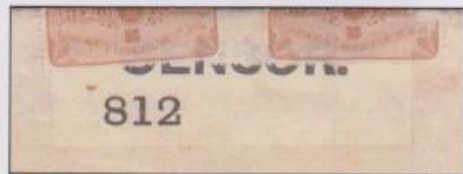
Cover from Tsingtau (Japanese Occupation) 5.3.1916 with Japanese censorship via Moji (Japan) 21.3.1916 to Kiel Germany. The cover should have been carried by a Dutch steamer. Emmerich, the place of the German censorship, was located near the border with the Netherlands..



7. Mail between enemy countries

Japan, an enemy too far away to be

British censorship also monitored correspondence coming from an allied country. This letter was judged "suspicious", with the consequent block and return to the sender.



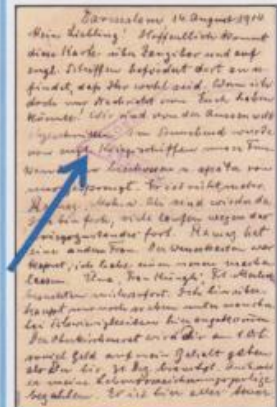
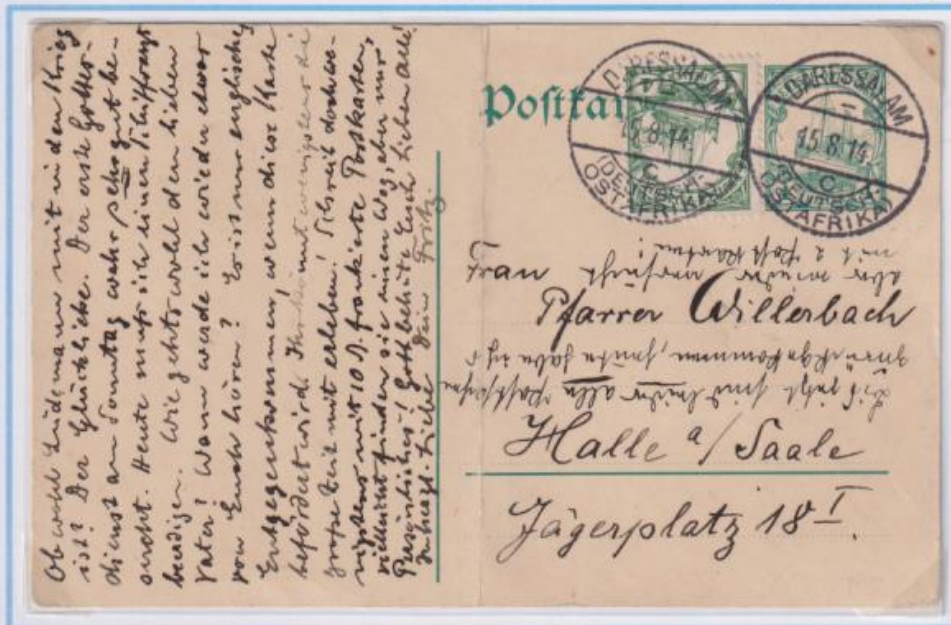
From Yokohama 7.12.1915 to Bremen (Germany). Censored by the British, blocked and sent back to the sender. Japanese postal authorities opened the cover to find the sender, sealed it again and stuck a label explaining the procedure applied.

7. Mail between enemy countries

Mail exchanges beyond the frontline

On August 8, the German civil authorities of Dar-es-Salaam agreed an armistice with the commander of the British cruiser "HMS Pegasus". Among the clauses it was agreed to give to the British Post Office in Zanzibar all the mail addressed to British countries lying in Dar-es-Salaam. In a second time the British also accepted mail addressed to Germany. Mail exchange took place (towards Zanzibar) on Aug.25 (arrival between Sept.21 and 27, 1914).

Mail taken TO Zanzibar by «HMS Pegasus» on Aug.25, 1914



TEXT: ...I hope that this postcard sent via Zanzibar by British ships arrives ...

ⓔ

From Dar-es-Salaam 15.8.1914 via Zanzibar (the triangular Zanzibar censorship means that this card was brought by the «Pegasus») to Halle a/Saale Germany.

Mail exchange FROM Zanzibar took place on Sept.17, 1914.

Mail brought FROM Zanzibar by «HMS Pegasus» on Sept.17, 1914

From Jerusalem (German Post Office) 22.7.1914 to Dar-es-Salaam. This card went via Port Said 28.7.1914 and reached Zanzibar when war had already been declared. It was therefore blocked by the British Military Authorities until «HMS Pegasus» on 17.9.1914 took it to Dar-es-Salaam.

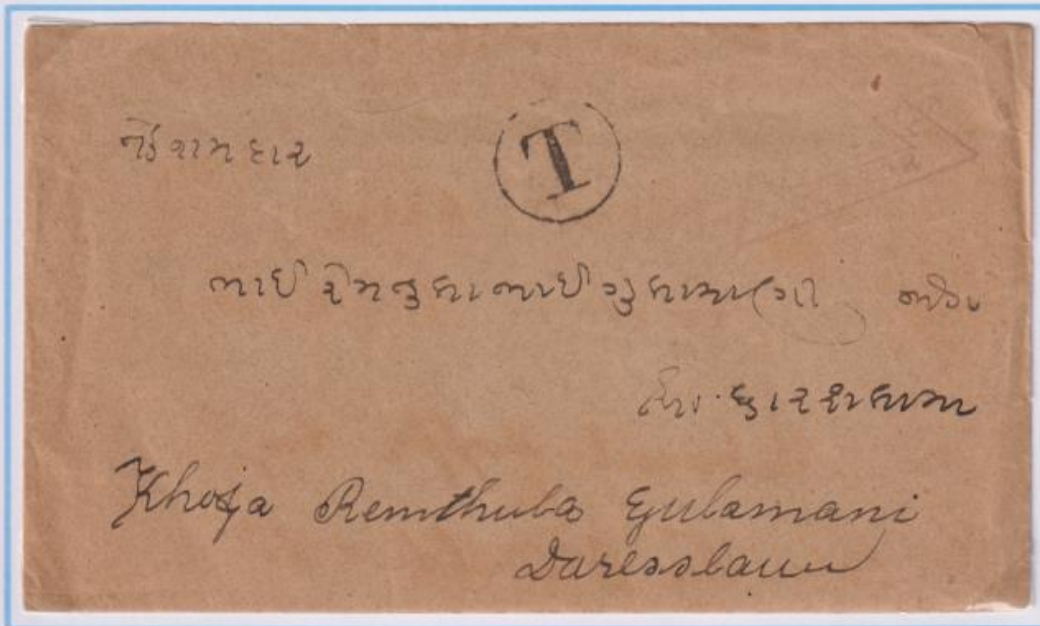
ⓔ



7. Mail between enemy countries

Mail exchanges beyond the frontline

In the early morning of 20 September 1914, "HMS Pegasus" was anchored in Zanzibar. The German light cruiser "SMS Königsberg" launched a surprise attack on the ship. "HMS Pegasus" sank later that day. All mail awaiting the next voyage, was stranded on Zanzibar.



Zanzibar
censorship for
mail to be sent
via S.M.S.Pegasus

1914 (Sept 19) cover, with four separate letters written in Gujarati to Indian merchants in Bagamoyo, advising them to leave German East Africa on the next available dhow. Cover with triangular "Passed Postal Censor", handstamped "T" (postage to be collected from the addressee), with Zanzibar Sept. 23, 1914 cancel on back.

On June 15, 1915 a further postal exchange took place. The British steamer "SS Duplex" brought to Dar-es-Salaam mail addressed to German East Africa blocked in Mombasa in exchange for mail from British internees and prisoners held by the Germans.

June 1915. The postal exchange by means of steamer «SS Duplex»



Postal stationery sent from Mombasa 28.7.1914, to Muanza (G.E.A.). Blocked till 15.6.1915 when the steamer "Duplex" brought it to Dar-es-Salaam. Then forwarded to its final destination Bukumbi (Muanza P.O.) 30.6.1915. Ex-Lobdell coll. Signed Steuer.

7. Mail between enemy countries

Mail exchanges beyond the frontline

From autumn 1916 to spring 1917, some truces were agreed in German East Africa. The British supplied mail and food for their prisoners; Germans exchanged mail addressed to their families living in the area occupied by the British.

Autumn 1916 – Feb.1917. German East AFRICA, postal exchanges beyond the front lines



From Fieldpost Nr.3 sent 6.11.1916, to Makunyuni :

- green note handwritten in Mahenge: "zensiert 20/XI"
- purple censorship cancel of the German Schutztruppen
- Red British censorship



7. Mail between enemy countries

Against all odds

This section shows cases of mail addressed to the enemy and, nevertheless, forwarded. Sometimes a rational explanation can be found, but some cases remain unexplained.



As Finland belonged to the Russian Empire, this registered letter from Nikolaistad, sent to Hannover on August 3, 1914, would have had to be censored and stopped because it was addressed to a hostile country; but this did not happen. The statement "via Tornea - Haparanda", added in pencil at top, indicated the use of a neutral route. Between Tornea and Haparanda there was the only railway connection between Finland and Sweden. Arrived in Tornea on August 8, the letter crossed the border and, by train and Swedish steamer, reached the German harbour of Danzig. Unfortunately, the local German censorship office, which was not allowed to censor foreign mail, blocked the letter (see the two censorship stamps of Danzig) and wanted to send it back to the sender (stamp "Zurück"). But of course this was no longer possible. The letter was kept waiting for instructions. Thereupon the "Zurück" stamp was stroken out and the letter was sent to Hamburg where a censorship office for foreign mail had been set up. From there, it was forwarded 3.11.1914 to Hannover with arrival 4.11.1914.



- Finnish railway
- Swedish railway
- Swedish ferry
- German route



7. Mail between enemy countries

Against all odds

In this case, the German post office acted according to normal peacetime procedures.



This cover, sent from Stockholm 6.9.1916, was addressed to Ing. Barnholdt in Preston England. The Swedish postal clerk read Dresden instead of Preston (even if England was clearly indicated) and sent the envelope to Germany. In Dresden the only address compatible with the one written was the local firm Bernhard where the envelope arrived on 10.9.1916. Here, after opening it, they realized the mistake. The envelope was then returned to the post office, where the clerk wrote at reverse: «Opened by mistake by the Company Bernhard», then adding "Closed. Witness: (signature and date) Kaltenbach 13/9 ". The closure was made with two blue labels of the Dresden Post Office. Since good relations with Sweden were indispensable for the German war economy, no one thought to block the letter even if directed to an enemy country. After having pointed out in red the destination and having carefully censored, German postal service returned it to the Swedish postal service to forward it to the U.K. where it was again opened and censored.



7. Mail between enemy countries

Against all odds

It is surprising that this postcard was allowed to be sent to an enemy country; the local post office was probably not yet prepared to deal with the problem. In any case, the forwarding via the U.S. allowed it to reach its destination.



FROM
The Bahamas

Registered stationery
card from Nassau
6.8.1914 via New York
10.8.1914 to Hannover
24.8.1914

Being directed to a Mortgage Corp. this cover may have contained payment orders from a German to a British account. This could explain the British green light, but not the same from the German censorship...

Mail from Germany to Canada. Both German and British censorship



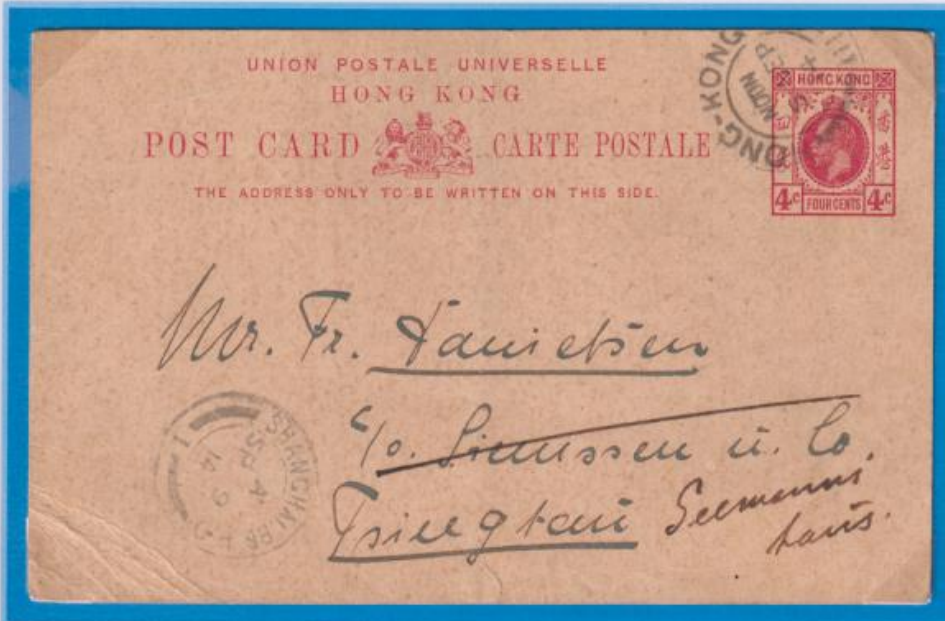
From Berlin 25.11.1915, censored in Cöln, to Canada with British Censorship (London)

7. Mail between enemy countries

Against all odds

Neutral China represented a case apart with the presence on its territory of Post Offices of belligerent states, which worked regularly until China entered the war alongside the allies (Aug.13, 1917). Even postal communication between two enemy Settlements and to enemy Concessions could take place.

From Hong Kong to Kiautschou



Postal stationery from Hong Kong 5.9.1914 to Tsingtau via Shanghai (English P.O.) 9.9.1914. This postcard reached Tsinanfu at the latest on 11.9.1914 and from there by rail Tsingtau just before the circle of the Anglo-Japanese siege closed (13.9.1914). In Tsingtau it was redirected to Seemann's Haus where a field hospital had been set up.

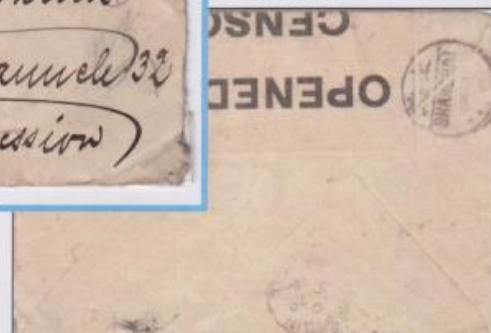
Unique postal document sent from a location of the British Empire to Kiautschou during WWI

TEXT: "... your letter was opened twice under the law of war ..."

From Germany via Hong Kong to the Italian Concession in Tientsin



From Berlin 29.4.1916, addressed to the Italian concession in Tientsin. Censored by the British «Opened by censor n.505» and again censored in Hong Kong «PBC» (Passed By Censor); transit in Shanghai (Chinese P.O.) 18.10.1916 (instead of 18.7.1916) and arrival in Tientsin (British P.O.) 20.7.1916.

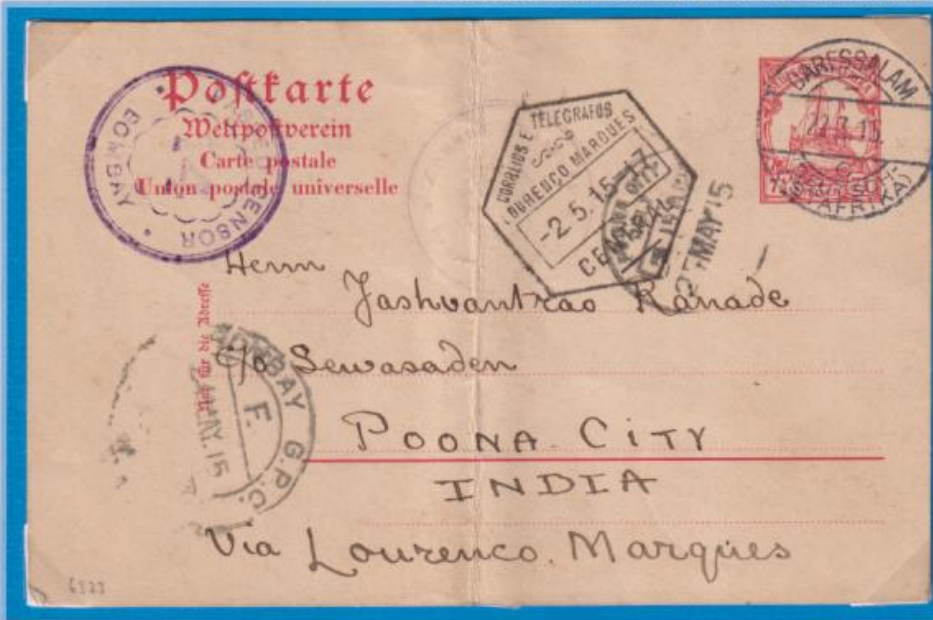


7. Mail between enemy countries

Against all odds

An official postal connection to Germany via Portuguese Mozambique took effect from Oct.1914 to Aug.1915 with a total of 9 shipments. Surprisingly, the same route was used to write to the enemy. This postcard could show a reciprocity from the German side with respect to what was established by the Indian authorities (see Page 9), but neither I nor the previous owners have found official documents that prove it.

Mail from German East Africa to British India



From Daressalam
22.3.1915 with the 6th
Shipment via Lourenço
Marques 2.5.1915 and
Bombay 24.5.1915 to
Poona (India)
27.5.1915.

Light purple German
censorship
(Daressalam) and
purple Indian Bombay
censorship.

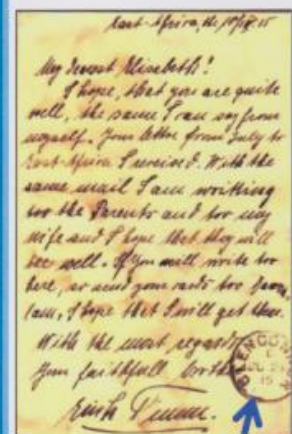
(ex-Lobdell collection
and ex-Schlieper
collection)

Only 3 postcards
from G.E.A. to the
enemy are known

Mail from German East Africa to South Africa



From Salale 19.4.1915,
censored in Lindi, via
Lourenço Marques
24.6.1915 to Glenconnor
(South Africa) 28.6.1915.



NOTE: The additional 4 Heller stamp applied to match the international rate, was removed, probably by the censor to check hidden messages.

This postcard, sent to an enemy country, should not have left German East Africa, according to the warning of 14.08.1914 of the censorship office in Dar-es-Salaam. Its shipment remains inexplicable. Furthermore, this card was sent from a location closely linked to the place where the German cruiser "Königsberg" was hidden; locations then "a fortiori" subject to strict security controls.

7. Delivery of blocked mail

Blocked by Belgium

On October 10, 1914, after a two-month siege, the Belgian city of Antwerp surrendered to the Germans. In the post office of the station, Germans found correspondence addressed to Germany and blocked by the Belgian authorities. The German Postal Service hastened to deliver it to the recipients after application of an explanatory label.

From German P.O. in Morocco to Germany

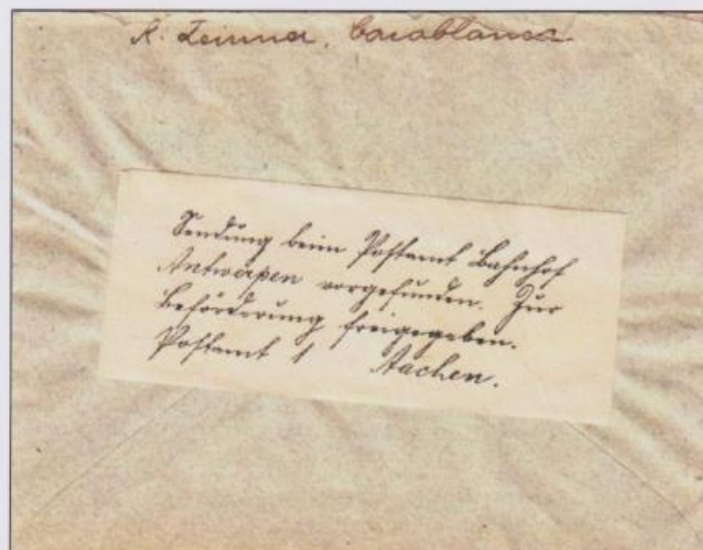


Cover sent from the German Post Office of Casablanca (Morocco) 30.7.1914 to Germany. Found on Oct.10, 1914 in Antwerp in the Belgian Post Office of the station and forwarded to the addressee.

At the German border, in Aachen, the local Post Office stuck a label with the following text::

Mail found at the Antwerp Station Post Office. Free to be forwarded.

Post Office 1 Aachen



7. Delivery of blocked mail

Blocked by Belgium

From Brazil to Germany



Cover sent from Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) 27.7.1914 to Neugersdorf.

Handwritten receiving note; 26.1.1915

At the German border, in Aachen, the local Post Office stuck a label with the following text::

Mail found at the Antwerp Station Post Office. Free to be forwarded.

Post Office 1 Aachen

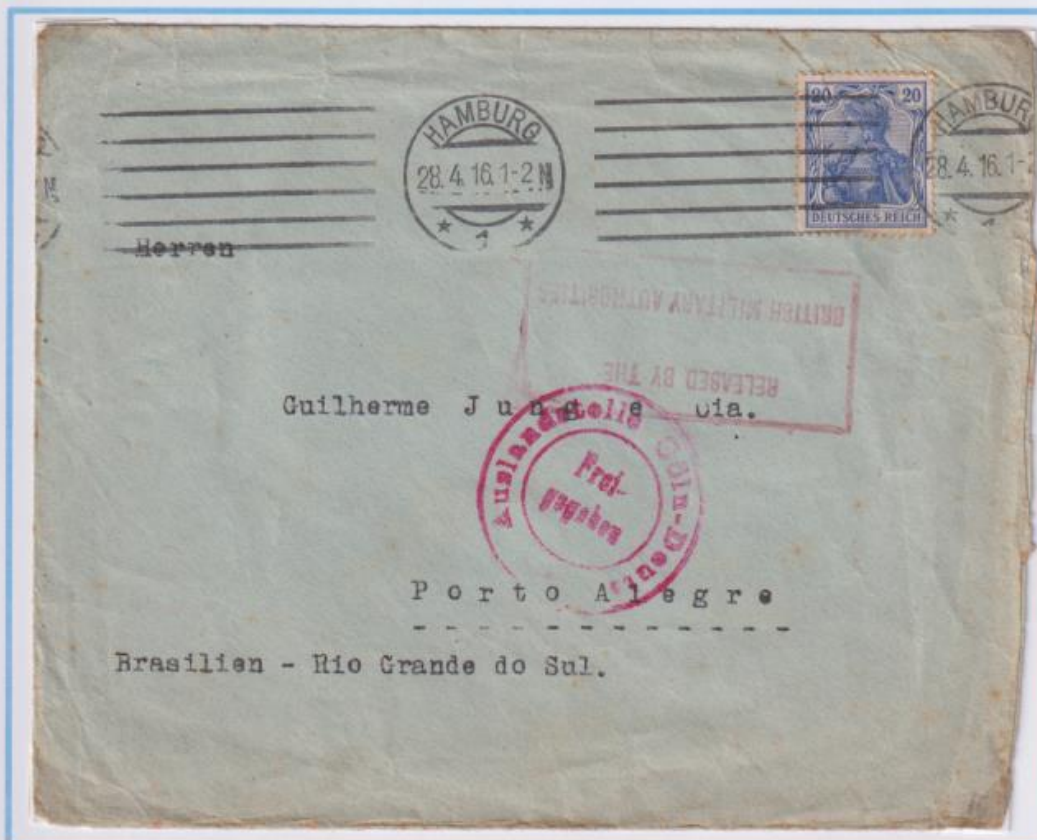


7. Delivery of blocked mail

Blocked by the British

At the end of the war British authorities had to deal with the huge quantity of correspondence blocked by the censorship. The decision taken was to destroy (with some exceptions) most of this correspondence but for commercial and registered mail: «...Before being passed to the Post Office those items to be released were re-examined to remove any Censor's comments etc. This, in part, accounts for the multiple labels that can be found on released packets... The Post Office was responsible for applying the familiar boxed handstamp: «RELEASED BY THE BRITISH MILITARY AUTHORITIES»

(Graham Mark, «British Censorship of civil mails during World War I, 1914-1919)



FROM
Germany

From Hamburg 28.4.1916 to Porto Alegre
(Brazil).
Censored in Cöln

Blocked by the British
(censor label n.4010 + red asterisk).
Released in 1919 (censor label n.4481), via
Rio de Janeiro 18.9.1919, arrived 26.9.1919



7. Delivery of blocked mail

Blocked by the British

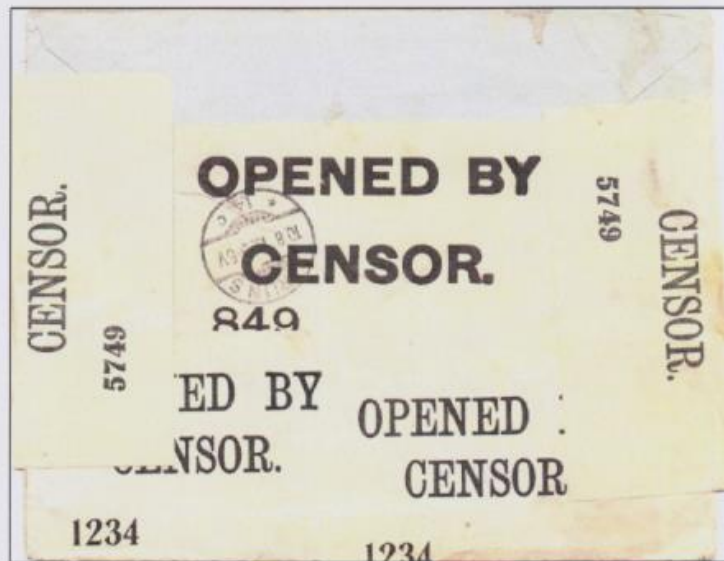
TO Germany



Registered cover from
Encarnacion 6.11.1915 to
Berlin

Blocked by the British
(label n.849) , after June
1919 checked (label
n.1234) and checked again
(label n.5749)

Arrived 10.8.1919



7. Delivery of blocked mail

Blocked by Germany

Like the envelope at page 25, also this insured cover (red seals), sent on 23.7.1914 from Duala (German Kamerun) with the steamer "Henny Woermann", followed the path. Despite being addressed to England, from Pernambuco (Brazil), where the steamer had been interned, via Brazil-United States-Holland it reached Germany.

As it was addressed to an enemy country, it was held by the German postal authorities until the end of the war. A few months after the signing of the Treaty of Peace (June 28, 1919) the cover was finally forwarded to the addressee. Checked for currency control in Hamburg, it was closed with a "currency check" label, resealed with black sealing wax and sent to England where the registration label and the "Insured" label were applied.



Insured cover from Duala (German Kamerun) to London.
Blocked by German authorities and delivered after the end of the war.
The red cancel «Registered London 6.1.1920» stated the end of a 1993 days trip.

As far as I know
UNIQUE

7. Delivery of blocked mail

Blocked by Germany

German postal authorities, after the signing of the Treaty of peace (June 28, 1919), provided for the delivery of this in transit blocked mail. In the early months of 1920, as the addressee company no longer existed, the letter was returned to the sender. In London. With a new registration label, it was forwarded on March 17, 1920 with arrival March 18, 1920

Transit mail from the U.K. to Russia «via Germany»



Registered letter sent from London on 1st August 1914 to St. Petersburg in Russia. As England was not yet at war the letter was forwarded via Germany; but Germany was already at war with Russia so the letter was censored in Cologne and blocked with the stamp "Auf militärische Anordnung zurückgehalten" [Held due to military orders].

Hardly readable stamp : «Zurück an den Absender wegen...» [Back to sender due to...]



7. Delivery of blocked mail

Blocked (buried) by Germany

Early August 1914 the German Far East Squadron was concentrated in the Caroline Islands, then German colony when the order came to try to reach the mother country. Given the absolute English rule of the seas it was a desperate mission. Since they were still in German territory, crew members wrote home and many made a will by entrusting it to the post office. The whole mail, enclosed in a metal box, was entrusted to the post office of the capital Ponape, waiting for a neutral steamer to pass through; but none passed.

End of September 1914, shortly before the arrival of the Japanese occupation troops (October 3, 1914), the metal box was handed over to the monks of the local mission. In order not to let it fall into the hands of the enemy, they buried the box under the church floor. The Japanese never found it.

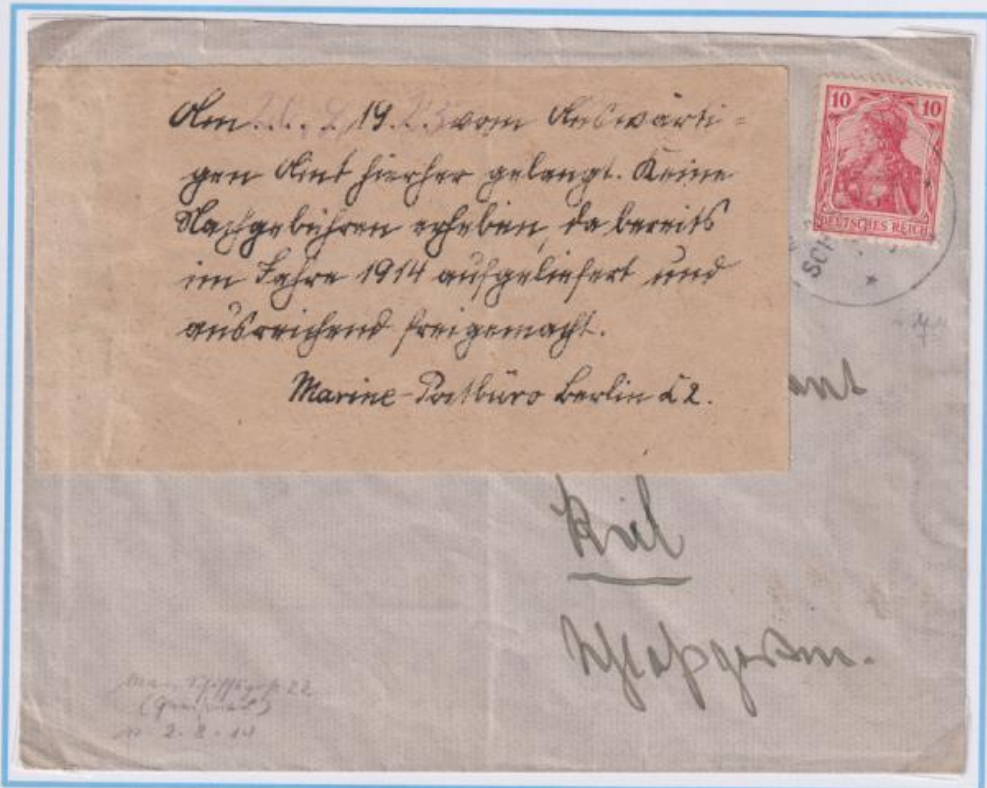
In summer 1923, German authorities agreed with the Japanese the recovery of the "buried mail". The exhumed box was sent to the German Navy Post Office in Berlin, which took over the task of delivering the content. But those were the times of the dramatic German inflation (on Sept. 19, 1923, postage for a postcard was 30,000 Marks, 600,000 times the pre-war tariff). This correspondence was free of charge or franked with the basic rate of 1914 (5 Pfennig for postcards, 10 for letters). How to deal with the insufficient postage?

Two labels were prepared to be stuck on the correspondence. Their text said:

Am (20.9).19(23)*
vom Auswärtigen Amt
hierher gelangt. Keine
Nachgebühren
erheben, da bereits im
Jahre 1914
aufgeliefert und
ausreichend
freigemacht. Marine-
Postbüro Berlin L2

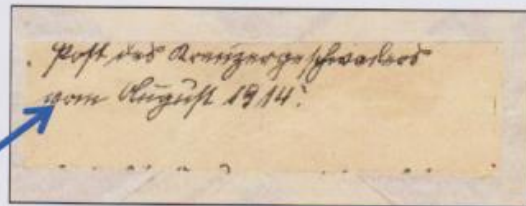
[Arrived here on
(20.9).19(23) from
the Ministry of Foreign
Affairs Do not apply
any tax, since already
handed over and
sufficiently franked in
year 1914. Navy Post
Office Berlin L2]]

* The figures in
brackets were
completed by hand.



Post des
Kreuzergeschwaders
vom August 1914.

(Mail of the Cruisers
Squadron of August
1914).



Sent from the armoured cruiser
"Gneisenau" to Kiel, cancelled M(arine)
S(chiffs) P(ost) 22 2.8.1914.

Delivered to the addressee 9 years later.

The armoured cruiser Gneisenau was sunk by the British on Dec. 8, 1914 during the battle of Falkland Islands