

The Imperial German Field Post Service during the Great War 1914 - 1918



Photographer: Franz Otto Koch

Publisher: Unknown

Typography: Photomechanical collotype

Soldiers writing postcard to send home from the eastern front. Postcard is dated February 1915, so the picture is taken in the first half year of the war (August 1914 – February 1915).

This picture has been published 2 times in B&W, with 2 different publishers.

The German field post system during World War I, was everywhere where the German forces was located and provided the postal services for the soldiers. The goal of this exhibit is to show this history with postcards, displaying how the mail was written and sent to the receiver, and how the mail went through the German field post, and how it operated during the Great War 1914 - 1918.

The Germans published a lot of postcards during World War I, and a lot of the postcards shows the soldiers and equipment. But nevertheless, it is almost no postcards showing the field post system itself, such as writing and receiving the mail. How the field post service transported the mail, how the post offices looked like or how they worked. This exhibit aims to show the field post system in work from sender/receiver to/from the German mail system. It will not focus on artist cards or the romanticised studio cards.

Important postcards are marked with a red the frame.

Used postcards are described with dates to show that the picture is taken after August 1914 but before this date.

Chapters:

- I - The field post is written, sent, read, or received
- II – The field post offices
- III - The field post in work
- IV – The field post transport

Literature:

Karl Schrade, Geschichte der deutschen Feldpost im Kriege 1914/18

Horst Bolringhaus, Stempelhandbuch der Deutschen Feldpost im Ersten Weltkrieg 1914-1918

J.H.H Andriessen, Første verdenskrig en fotografisk historie

<http://www.graphicsatlas.org/identification/>



I – Field Post is written, sent, read, or received



Photographer: Unknown
Publisher: Private
Typography: Photographic silver gelatin

A soldier sending a letter from the trenches on Western front.
Postcard is dated December 1915.

The only possibility for the soldiers to keep contact with family and relatives during World War I was to send and receive mail. This was important for the moral of the soldiers and the home front. The soldiers would read the mail from home again and again, and at the same time sending mail home to the family and friends saying that they are alive, and everything was fine (or that was the impression they wanted to leave). The relatives would also tell their stories and send packages to the front.

Soldiers found any opportunity to write and read the mail, sending the mail or receiving the mail. This chapter intends to show this process. Either from the trenches in the west, or the front from the eastern front. The field conditions under which the mail was written or read. Finding a mailbox so it was possible to send the mail or receiving mail from home. Often you can see the happiness of the soldiers when the mail or a package arrives from home. Maybe some happy words from the wife, a cigar or a sausage has arrived. Some minutes of joy before the slaughter in the war continues.



Photographer: Unknown
Typography: Photomechanical rotogravure

Publisher: Kriegspostkartenverlag S. Egger

A soldier is writing a field post letter. The postcard is sent with the field post in November 1915.



Photographer: W. Braemer
Typography: Photographic silver gelatin

Publisher: E. A. Schwerdtfeger & Co A.-G.

In the trenches on the west front, writing a greeting to the home.
Postcard is sent with the field post from Germany in April 1915.



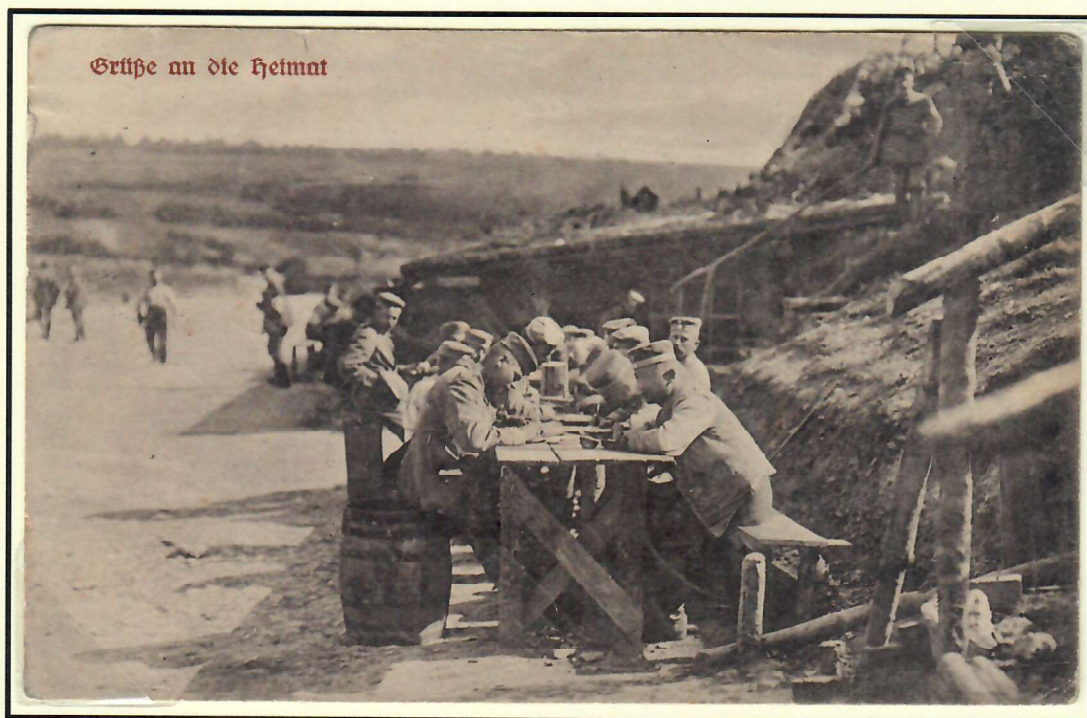
Photographer: Unknown

Publisher: Sächsische Verlags-Anstalt G.m.b.H.

Typography: Photomechanical letterpress halftone

A greeting to the home.

Postcard is sent with the field post in December 1915.



Photographer: Unknown

Publisher: Sächsische Verlagsanstalt G.m.b.H.

Typography: Photomechanical collotype

Greetings to the home.

Postcard is sent with the field post in September 1915.



Photographer: C. Ehbert

Publisher: Knackstedt & Co

Typography: Photomechanical photogravure

Field post from the home. Postcard sent with the field post in July 1918



Photographer: A. Menzendorf

Publisher: Unknown

Typography: Photographic bromoil

Springtime in Argonnen, France when eating dinner and writing letters.
For some soldiers it was evidently more important to write a letter than to eat.



Photographer: A. Pachmayr
Publisher: Simhart & Co
Typography: Photomechanical rotogravure

Recreation period in the trenches on the West front, used to write a letter.



Photographer: Alfred Kühlewindt
Publisher: Unknown
Typography: Photomechanical letterpress halftone

Before the battle another letter to the home from the Eastern front. Postcard sent with the field post April 1918.



Grüße in die Heimat.

„Der Mensch muß sich zu helfen wissen“
 Tut Euch dies kleine Bildchen kund
 Beim Schreiben auf des Sandsacks Kissen
 Teil' ich Euch mit, daß noch gesund
 Und munter ich, im Schützengraben
 An strengem Dienst mich kann erlaben.
 Ist's brenzlich oft, s'ist alles gleich,
 Denn für die Heimat geht's und – Euch.

Nachdruck verboten.



Photographer: Unknown
 Publisher: Unknown
 Typography: Photographic bromoil

A letter to mother from the trenches in Argonnen on the Western front.

Greetings home.

“People have to know how to help themselves”
 Make this little picture known to yourself
As I write on the pillow of the sandbag
 I'll let you know that *I'm still healthy*
and cheerful; in the trenches
 I can allow hard work.
 It's often dangerous, it's all the same
 Because it's good for the home and – you.

Photographer: A. Künzel
 Publisher: F. Emil Boden G.m.b.H.
 Typography: Photomechanical letterpress halftone

Greetings to the home from the Western front. Postcard is sent in January 1916.



Photographer: Unknown
Typography: Photographic bromoil

Publisher: Unknown

The soldiers have received the mail and are reading it. Postcard is written but not sent.



Photographer: Unknown
Typography: Photomechanical rotogravure

Publisher: Sächsische Verlagsanstalt G.m.b.H.

In the trenches, greetings from the home.
Postcard is sent with the field post from the front to Germany in July 1915.



Artist: Ludwig Lutz Ehrenberger
Publisher: Verlag der Lustigen Blätter G.m.b.H.
Typography: Photomechanical letterpress halftone

A wife has received a field post letter from her husband and dreaming about him.
Ludwig Lutz Ehrenberger (1878-1959) was born in Austria and moved to Germany where he was a regularly producing art from 1910.



E. Rau, pinx.

Der Feldpostbrief ist angekommen

Artist: Emil Rau
Publisher: EMM
Typography: Photomechanical letterpress halftone

The field post letter has arrived. Postcard is sent with field post in September 1916.
Emil Rau (1858-1937) was a German painter known for romantical rural German motives.

Photographer: Unknown
Publisher: Photochemie, Berlin
Typography: Photographic silver gelatin

Love package (Liebesgaben) for the father!
When you the gift of love receive,
will you as well think of us with love?

“Love package” (Liebesgaben) was the naming of
packages from home, or a charity package from
some organization. A huge amount of the mail was
packages.



Field post

My heart is gone,
I have felt that for a long
time,
Now it's clear to me:
You have requisitioned it.

Photographer: Unknown
Typography: Photographic bromoil

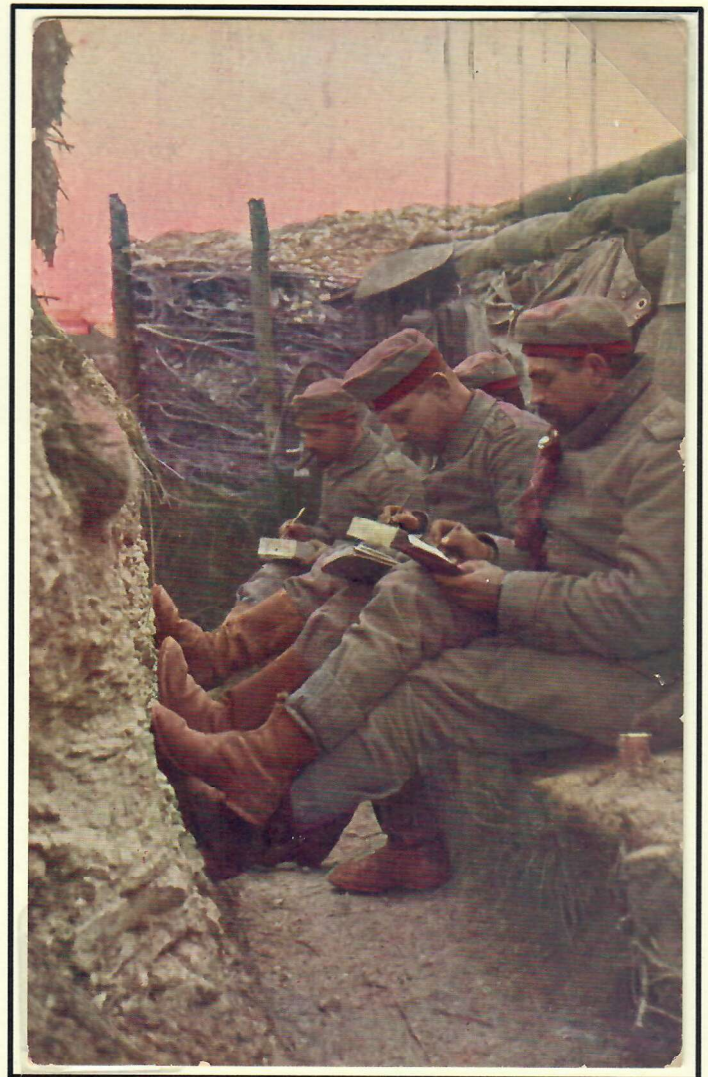
Publisher: Rotophot AG

A wife has written a letter to her husband.



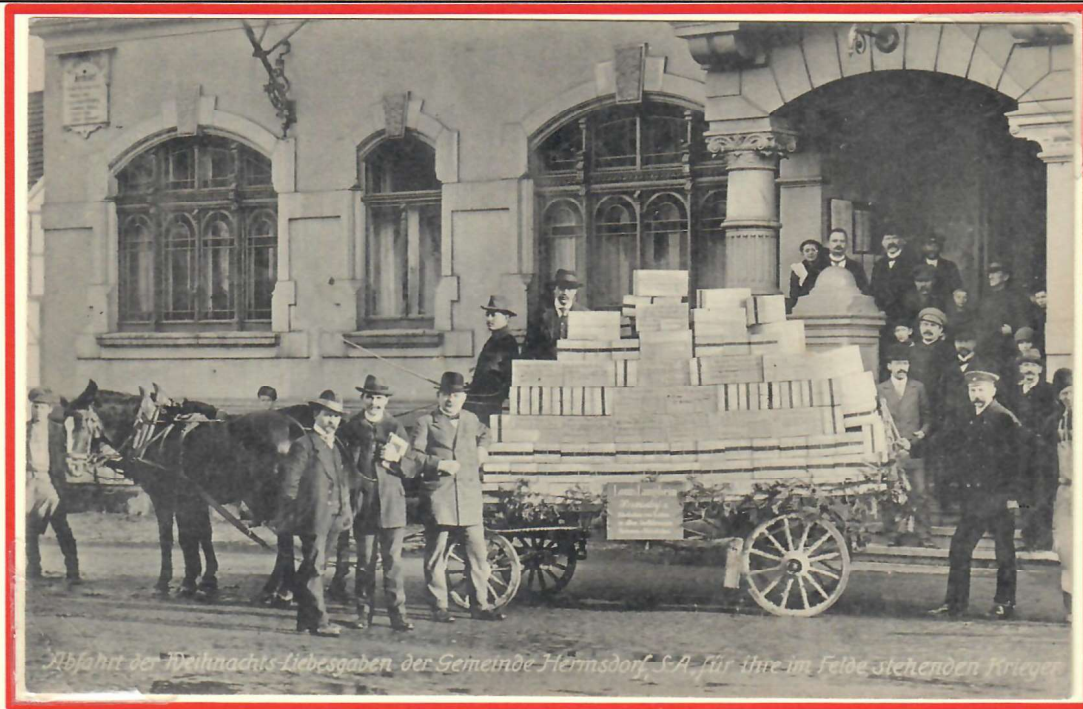
Photographer: Unknown
Publisher: Unknown
Typography: Photographic bromoil

A letter to mother, sent from Argonnen on the Western front.
Postcard is sent June 1916.



Photographer: Leipziger Presse-Büro
Publisher: C. C. Meinhold & Söhne
Typography: Photomechanical letterpress halftone

Soldiers writing postcard to send home from the front. The
trenches are typical for the Western Front. Postcard sent in 1915.



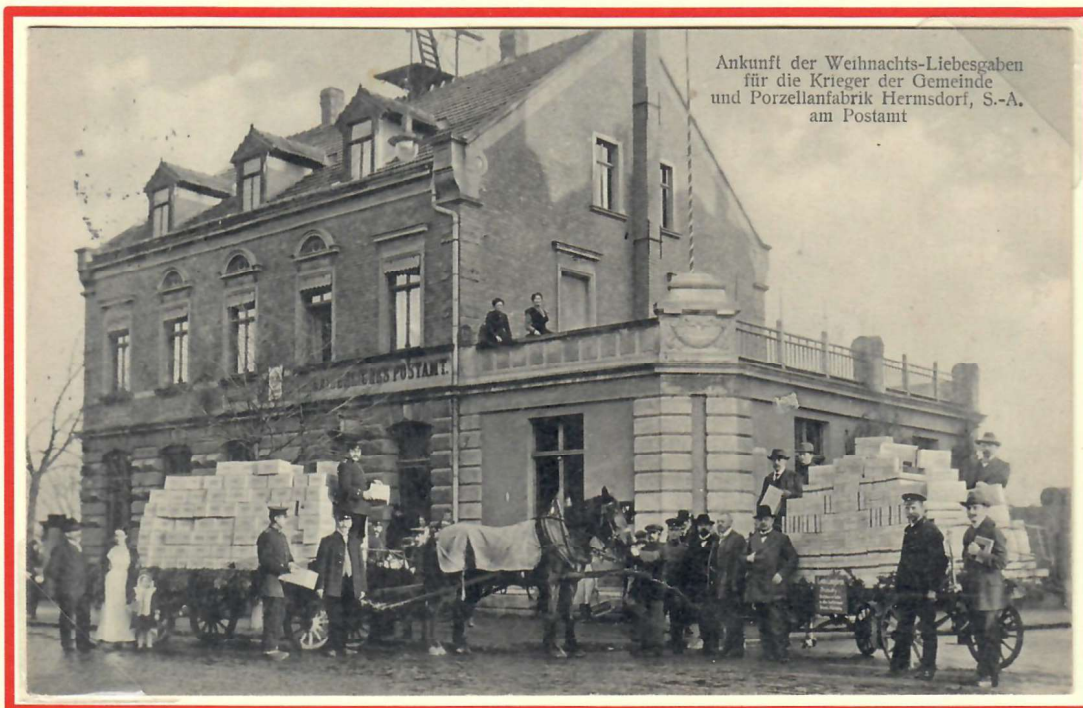
Photographer: Bruno Gerlach
Typography: Photomechanical collotype

Publisher: Bruno Gerlach

Departure of the Christmas love gift ("Liebesgabe") from the Hermsdorf porcelain factory to their workers serving in the army.

"Liebesgaben" (love gifts) was a term used on gifts from the family of the soldier, or from an organization such as Red Cross, different women's organization, and so on. This postcard shows that companies also did so for its workers. The photo was taken before Christmas 1914.

Postcard is sent with the field post in January 1915.



Photographer: Bruno Gerlach
Typography: Photomechanical collotype

Publisher: Bruno Gerlach

Arrival of the love gifts ("Liebesgaben") at the post office in Hermsdorf for the soldiers of the porcelain factory in Hermsdorf. Porzellanfabrik Hermsdorf was grounded in 1890 and is still active today. The factory has been producing technical ceramics such as high-voltage insulators for more than 100 years. There is practically no postcards showing the delivery of the field post. The photo was taken before Christmas 1914. Postcard is sent with field post in December 1914.



Photographer: Unknown

Publisher: Kriegspostkartenverlag S. Egger

Typography: Photomechanical rotogravure

Field post station behind the front in France with soldiers sending mail from the front.
Postcard is sent with the field post in 1915.

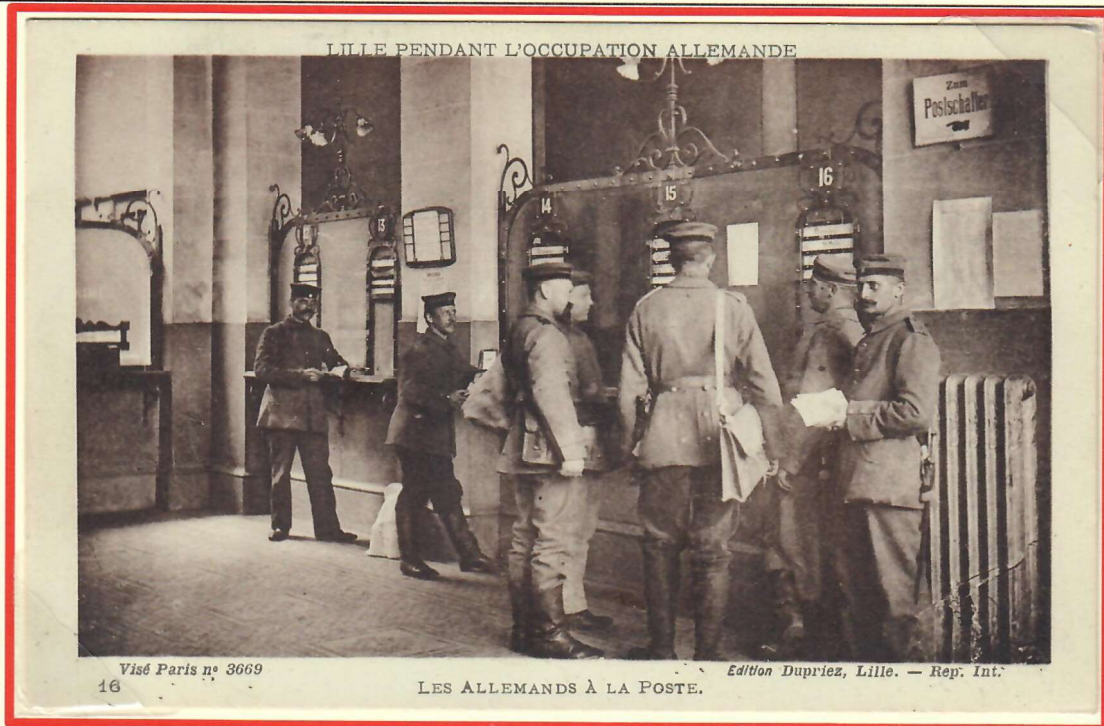


Photographer: Unknown

Publisher: Imberg & Lefson G.m.b.H.

Typography: Photomechanical letterpress halftone

Soldier delivering mail to the postman. Postcard is sent with field post in December 1915.



Photographer: Unknown

Publisher: Dupriez

Typography: Photomechanical collotype

Lille, France under the German occupation, the Germans at the post office.
This is the only postcard published by a non-German publisher and texted in a foreign language showing the field post service.



Photographer: Leipziger Presse-Büro

Publisher: C. C. Meinhold & Söhne

Typography: Photomechanical letterpress halftone

Soldiers sending/receiving mail at the Bavarian III. Army Corps in St. Benoit, France.
The postcard itself has been censored (retouched) to remove army unit and location St. Benoit.
Postcard is sent from the front to Germany in July 1915.
This picture has been published 8 times (2 times in color, and 6 times in B&W), with 6 publishers.

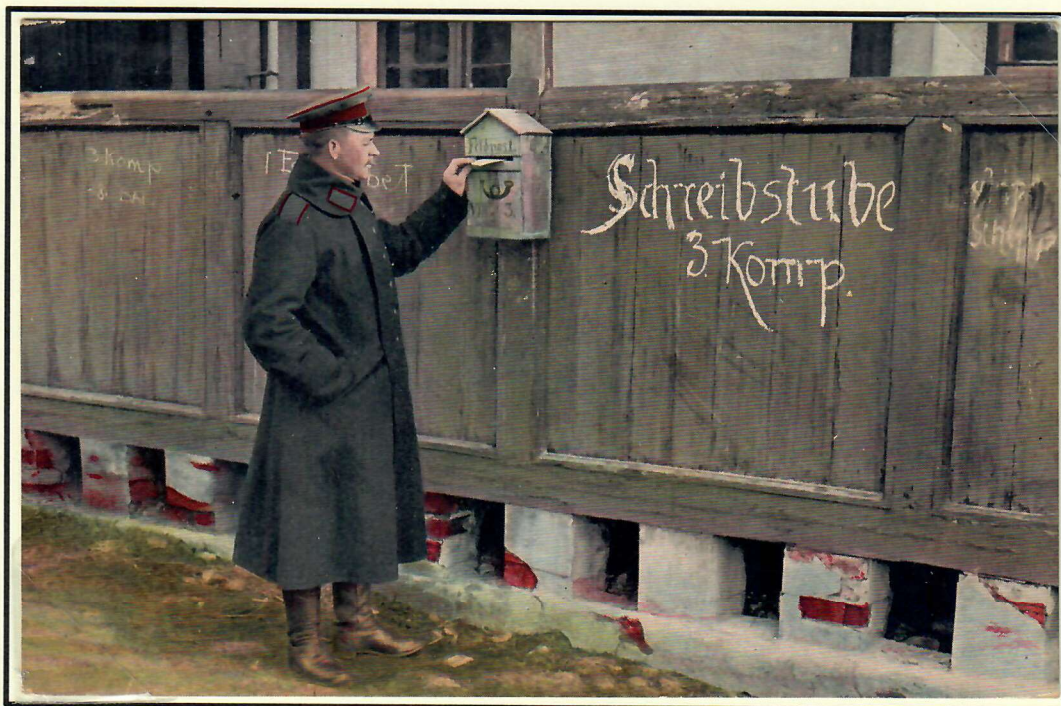


Vom östlichen Kriegsschauplatz. Wilna. Ein Brief in die Heimat

Photographer: Alfred Kühlewindt
Typography: Photomechanical collotype

Publisher: Gebrüder Hochland

From the eastern theater, Vilnius. A letter to the home.
Outside the Feldpostexpedition for the 31st Infantry Division. Vilnius was occupied by the Germans 9th September 1915, and this postcard is sent with the field post in December 1916.



Photographer: Unknown
Typography: Photomechanical letterpress halftone

Publisher: Sächsische Verlags Anstalt G.m.b.H.

A field post mailbox in enemy territory. Postcard is sent with the field post in October 1915.



Photographer: Unknown

Typography: Photomechanical rotogravure

Publisher: Kriegspostkartenverlag
Fritz W. Egger

A field post mailbox on the Eastern front.
Postcard is sent in August 1917.



Photographer: Unknown

Typography: Photomechanical collotype

Publisher: Max Ketting

Mailbox in the trenches. Notified as Darmstadt trenches (most likely units from Darmstadt), manufactured by the II.Ers.Btl.Leibg.Inf.Regt.115. Inf.Regt.115 was formed 2nd April 1915. At the time of the picture taken the unit was located on the Western front (Artois). Postcard is sent with the field post to Germany in August 1915.