



British and German Naval and Air Forces, Belgium, World War 1

The Royal Navy on the Western Front

The Navy's support of the army in France was controlled, on a day-to-day basis, by the Dover Command. In postal history terms, this took the form of the naval siege guns, the monitors bombarding the German lines from offshore Belgium (floating siege guns, really) and a number of Royal Naval Air Service squadrons based in Northern France.

Dover Command had its own style of censor mark: CEN  SOR, (with a unique unit symbol within the ) and thus can be easily recognised.



The Dover Command had an advanced base at Dunkirk, and the Belgian HQ, and its British Mission is likely to have been close by.

THE ROYAL NAVAL SEIGE GUNS

CENSORED.

*H. C. Hala-han
Comd R.N.S.*

The Wilkin son



Pall mall

London

This is an unlisted censor from the commander of the Royal Naval siege guns in northern France, Commander (later Captain) Henry C. Hala-han, DSO. He volunteered for the Zee-brugge raid of Admiral Keyes, and commanded the naval storming party. He was killed on board the assault vessel HMS Vindictive.

ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE.

*The Paymaster in Chief
H.M.S. President
Royal Victoria yard
Deptford.*



Mrs. J.E. Iye,
c/o Mrs. Pridmore,

"Burnt Post,"
Coventry,

CEN  SOR
Dover Command

Dover Command type censor
used by the Royal Marine
Artillery in northern
France.

LONDON

APR 22 1897

On Active Service

RECEIVED FROM H.M. SHIP
NO CHARGE TO BE RAISED

Mr R. J. Robinson,
Beechwood
Waterlooville,
Hants.

CEN  SOR

CEN  SOR


'B' for Battery ? Or
Base ?


C. D. D.
LONDON

JUL 31 1897

RECEIVED FROM H.M. SHIP
NO CHARGE TO BE RAISED

Mr. F. D. Mellors
21 Beck. St.
Nottingham

CEN  SOR
D. H. S. S.

CEN  SOR is presumably Headquarters.

Two items from the Naval Siege Guns, one from one of the 9.2" batteries.



Judging by the reference to 'the sand' in the text, this postcard may be from one of the long 9.2" guns set up at Coxyde (now Koksijde) on the coast in March 1917.



The two ships sunk in the canal at Zeebrugge in an attempt to block it and hence deny its use to U boats.



Some of the damage to the facilities on Zeebrugge mole after the raid.



The German Navy in Belgium



From the Marine Artillery Company in Antwerp.



From the Naval Harbour Company at Zeebrugge, dated ten days after Keyes' St. George's Day raid.

The RNAS/RAF over Belgium

Two items from 202 Squadron, RAF, in May 1918. This unit was originally 2 Squadron RNAS under the command of Dover – hence the Dover style censor on the upper item. It was taken into the RAF on April 1st 1918, and consequently came under nominal army administration, hence the change to the army style censor (CM6/ 6181), lower item. The squadron was equipped with DH4 (light) bomber aircraft, and was based at Bergues, at this time, about 12 km west of the Belgian border.



No.1 Wing RNAS, located at St Pol, had five squadrons under command in 1917, including 10 Squadron, which, at the time of the cover here was located at Leffrinck-houke, a little to the east of Dunkirk. It was equipped with the famous Sopwith Camel.

On ACTIVE SERVICE.

Recreation Huts, Tents & Clubs.



LONDON

CENSOR

RECEIVED FROM H.M. SHIP

NO CHARGE TO BE RAISED

Oct 22 1917
Mr. G. S. Bird
c/o Mr. Beswick

Grantham
W. Fildes
Yorkshire
England

On Active Service

LONDON

RECEIVED FROM H.M. SHIP

NOV 22 1917

NO CHARGE TO BE RAISED

Mr Portlock,

c/o Messrs J. Eaton & Co Ltd.

7 Warwick Lane

London E.C.

El. J. Russell
CENSOR

CENSOR

LONDON

RECEIVED FROM H.M. SHIP

DEC 19 1917

NO CHARGE TO BE RAISED

The Secretary,
The Army & Navy Co-operative
Society Ltd.,

105 Victoria St.,

London, S.W.

5 Squadron, however, were part of 4 Wing, and were stationed at Petit Synthe, a little to the south west of Dunkirk. They were equipped with the de Havilland DH4 bomber aircraft.

Feldflieger Abteilung (FFA) or *Field Flying Companies* were the pioneering field aviation units of the Luftstreitkräfte (German air service) in World War I. The use of aircraft as a tactical reconnaissance tool was established by the German Army in its annual exercise in June 1911. Early usage was limited to providing post-flight situation reports. At the start of World War I, there were thirty-three units, comprising one allocated to each of the eight Army Headquarters and one to each of the twenty-five regular Corps Headquarters. Each unit, having a designation number usually matching that of the army group it was assigned to, was equipped with either six Idflieg Category A (unarmed monoplane) or Category B (unarmed biplane) two-seater aircraft. By March 1915 the number of Feldflieger Abteilung had doubled and separate specialist fighter and bomber units, known as Jastas and Kampfgeschwader, respectively, were being developed.

A postcard from **Feldflieger Abteilung 41**, posted from Ghent in November 1914. The picture side is a cross-written photo of a church in Thielt, a town about 25km west of Ghent.

Information from the internet indicates that FFA 41 arrived with 4th Army in October 1914. They were first stationed at Gent but moved further to Staden on 30 Oct 1914 (about 20km NE of Ypres). Then there is a note that they were stationed at Gits on 20 Nov 1914. They stayed with the 4th Army until the battle of Somme (July 1916) when they moved to the newly established 1st Army.



Feldfleiger Abteilung 38, on a ppc of Brussels, dated 25th September 1914.



A convivial evening at the FFA 38, In the background is a picture of Max Immelmann.

(<http://www.buddecke.de/ffa38.htm>)

Brieftauben Abteilung Ostende (BAO), "Carrier Pigeon Section at Ostend", was a special (clandestine ?) German air unit formed early in World War I to carry out pioneer bombing operations. The Ostend connection seems to have arisen, perhaps, from the proximity to that town when it was formed in November 1914 at Ghistelles, a town about 6km south of Ostend. The unit was located thus during its existence:

11/1914 - 01/1915: Ghistelles
 01/1915 - 02/1915: Metz
 02/1915 - 03/1915: Ghistelles
 07.03.1915 Allenstein (Ostpreußen) Flugplatz Deuthen
 23.04.1915 Krakau (Galizien-Offensive)
 01.07.1915 Berlin - Ghistelles

Complement: 50 Offiziere, 200 Unteroffiziere und Mannschaften

The writer is Hauptmann Kurt Muller. He appears to have moved on from the BAO, and was killed while serving with FFA 69 on 15th October 1915 when his plane crashed fatally on the way back from a mission to Sofia. With him died his pilot Wulfgar von Koerber.



Kampfgeschwader 1: Belgium, 1916

There is nothing useful about this unit (Battle Group 1) on the www. The picture side, of Ostend, suggests a location in Belgium at this time (January 1916).



A field letter card from Luftschiff Trupp nr.12 in April 1915 to the writer's mother. He gives his return address as Luftschiffhafen Namur.

Feldpostbrief

Frau

S. B.
Württembergischer
Luftschifftrupp Nr. 12.

C. Mayer - Ruppstr.

St. Gerzen (Schwazwald)

Baden

Mühlstr. 24 1/2

Abfender: Luftschifftrupp C. Mayer II
Regt. Nr.
Division
Abteilung
Kompanie
Batterie
Kolonie
Zuführende Formationen (Stieger, Kämpfer usw.)
13. Kampfbataillon

However, a little more is known about the writer of this postcard (also depicting Ostend). Lt. Wilhelm Fahlbusch. He was that rarity in the Luftstreitkräfte, a reconnaissance pilot who became an ace. He flew as a member of *Kasta I*, teamed with Hans Rosencrantz in a Roland Whale. They were credited with five aerial victories during 1916, with the last being scored on 31 August 1916 over a British Martinsyde Elephant two-seater craft.^[2] Fahlbusch was awarded the Iron Cross for his valor.^[3] On 6 September 1916, Fahlbusch and Rosencrantz clashed with Sopwith 1 1/2 Strutters from 70 Squadron RFC. The German duo was shot down in flames over Malincourt, with three British air crews posting victory claims. Credit was granted to both Bernard Beanlands and his observer, and William Sanday and his observer.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_Fahlbusch)



Fahlbusch (on right) and Hans Rosencrantz