

POSTCARDS SENT FROM AND WITHIN THE RUHLEBEN CIVIL INTERNEE CAMP, WW1, GERMANY

At the outbreak of WWI, the German authorities detained all known British and British Empire male civilians present in Germany. This was in retaliation for the British action of detaining German citizens in Great Britain. More than 4000 civil internees were interred at Ruhleben at the racecourse; the internees living in the horse boxes.

The internees came from all walks of life, including students, university staff, tourists, businessmen, people who had settled in Germany with German wives and families, musicians on tour, seamen who happened to be in port at Hamburg at the onset of the war, and fishermen whose vessels had been sunk in the North Sea.

The German authorities allowed the internees to organise their own affairs under the terms of the Geneva Convention. It was an interesting situation because it placed titled British people living beside able seamen and students of equal status.

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 - d. Postcards of other activities.
- Section 5: Postcards sent within the camp using the Internees RXD (Ruhleben Express Delivery) Mail Service.
- Section 6: And finally....
- Note: Many of these postcards originated from one internee, Duncan Brown.
- References: Ruhleben – A Prison Camp Society, J Davidson Ketchum, University of Toronto Press, 1965.

The Ruhleben Story:

<http://ruhleben.tripod.com/index.html>

The Ruhleben Camp Post Office:

<http://www.prisonersofwar19141918documents.com/ruhleben-camp-post-office.php>

Ruhleben P.O.W. Camp Stamps and forgeries

<http://www.filatelia.fi/forgeries/ruhleben.html>

The Ruhleben P.O.W. Camp 1914 – 1918: Frank Bachenheimer, The German Philatelic Society, Inc, No 6, 1980.



Christmas Postcard published by "The Ruhleben Camp Magazine"; Printed by HGI HOFBUCHDRUCKEREI, I.S. BERLIN S14. FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN, F.a. German censor cachet, LONDON PAID receiving cancellation, dated Jan 7 18.

Section 1: Introduction

Most of the material in this exhibit is correspondence from Duncan Donaldson Brown. Born in St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland, he started work at 13 as an under-gardener at Edinburgh Castle and served his apprenticeship there as a gardener. He joined the Second Battalion of the Royal Scots Guards in 1904. Until the war, he did sentry duty alternatively at the Tower of London, Bank of England and Buckingham Palace.

On August 2nd 1914, an old contemptible, he was injured during the battle of Mons, and was captured by the Germans. He escaped and went into hiding. He was assisted by Nurse Edith Cavell, but due to his leg injury his freedom was short-lived. He escaped again and was sentenced to be shot, reprieved, and walked 70 miles to Ruhleben Camp where he stayed for the rest of the war. It was unusual for a military person to be interred at the Ruhleben Civil Internee Camp.

After the war he rejoined his wife and two children and worked for the War Graves Commission in France. His third child was born and he moved to Nice. In 1932 the family immigrated to New Zealand.

Kriegsgefangenensendung.
Zivilgefangenen-Karte.

Mrs D. Brown.
24 Stanley Road
Rue East Sheen.
Localité Surrey.
Pays et Province England.

Boxed cachet „F.a.“ (Frist abgelaufen – delay expired); Circular cachet Kriegsgefangenen (Prisoners of war) Sennelager (Senne Camp) Briefstempel (letter cancel; LONDON PAID Machine cancellation dated SEP 30 15. Geprüft (censored); and manuscript pencil initials.

This is the first news received by Brown's wife Elizabeth sent from Zivilgefangenenlager Senne 1, Sennelager b. Paderborn (Deutschland – Germany) shortly after his capture. Written Aug 28th 1915; Boxed cachet „F.a.“ (Frist abgelaufen – delay expired); Circular cachet Kriegsgefangenen (Prisoners of war) Sennelager (Senne Camp) Briefstempel (letter cancel; LONDON PAID Machine cancellation dated SEP 30 15. Geprüft (censored); and manuscript pencil initials.

“It is now about six weeks since I first wrote to you and I am looking for news of you every day now. I hope you are all in good health as I am at present. Send me old woollen pants and socks for the cold weather. Also a drop of tea, Biscuits and tobacco. Trusting this finds you and the children well. Your affect Husband, D Brown”.

Section 2: Postcards Provided by the German Authorities

Specially printed postcards for the Ruhleben Camp were provided by the German authorities.

First Type: Not pre-printed with Absender and Baracke Nr: Addressed Ruhleben to Scotland (Schottland). This card has smaller dimensions than the next (139mm x 89mm) "Text P.S. Postage and Cards from Great Britain is free."



Dated 15/11/14; Spandau Ruhleben cancellation 17/12/14; Boxed cachet *Briefkontrolle zur Beförderung freigegeben Engländerlager Ruhleben* (censored and released at Ruhleben "British Camp")

First Type: Not pre-printed with Absender and Baracke Nr: Addressed Ruhleben to Rotterdam, Holland. This card has larger dimensions than above (14.15mm x 9.15mm)



Dated 9/2/15; Cancellation SPANDAU RUHLEBEN 20. 2. 15; Unboxed cachet *F. a. (Frist abgelaufen - delay expired)*; Double circular cachet *FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN* first type 27 and 17mm.

Second Type: Pre-printed with Absender and Baracke Nr: Addressed from M. A. Hardingham, Baracke 5, Box 3 to Rotterdam, Holland. "Many thanks for your kind letter of the 9th inst, containing Mk 20 – received today. As it is not allowed to receive money in letters, kindly send all future amounts by money order. Thanking you for your trouble in this matter & heartily reciprocating my London friend's good wishes, I am yours truly M. A. Hardingham". Hardingham not recorded *The Ruhleben Story*.

Dated 15th July 1915;
Cachet *F. a.* (Frist
abgelaufen – delay
expired); Double circular
cachet **FREIGEgeben**
RUHLEBEN first type 27
and 17mm; **LONDON PAID**
machine cancellation
dated **JUL 31 15**; A. 95
Censor cachet.



Second Type: Pre-printed with Absender and Baracke Nr: Addressed Ruhleben to Berlin, Germany from H. Rawnsley Baracke 15. Rawnsley not recorded *The Ruhleben Story*.



Dated 10/9/15; Cancellation
SPANDAU RUHLEBEN
10.9.15; Boxed cachet
Briefkontrolle zur
Beförderung freigegeben
Engländerlager Ruhleben
(censored and released at
Ruhleben "British Camp")

Section 3: Postcards Designed and Published Within the Camp by the Internees

There are several cards that were designed and published within the camp. Some of these the artists are known, but most not. Usually they have a humorous theme.

Best Wishes from Ruhleben 1916: This postcard is published by "The Ruhleben Camp Magazine"



Sent by D. Brown to his wife in England. *Undated;* Receiving LONDON F.s PAID machine cancellation very faint and date not legible; Double circle FRIEGEGEBEN RUHLEBEN ENCLOSING F.a, (Frist abgelaufen – delay expired).

Ruhleben Series „4 AM” Postcard: Designed by F. Wade. Frank Wade was listed in the third issue of the Ruhleben Camp Magazine (May 1916, p.43) as having exhibited in the camp's third art exhibition. In the fourth issue (August 1916, p.32), Wade contributed a drawing entitled "The Last Voyage of HMS Lion". Wade was also noted in issue six of the Ruhleben Camp Magazine (June 1917) as having given an exhibition of humorous drawings in the Studio in Ruhleben in April 1917, alongside fellow artists Robert Walker and Percy P. Wood.

Unsent postcard dated "February" and "sender" identified as D. Brown.



There's Hope 1918 Christmas Card

Published by The Ruhleben Camp Magazine; Printed by KGL HOFBUCHDRUCKEREI I.S. PRIESS, BERLIN S.14.

This card designed by P. P. Wood, and entitled troubles? The rising steam from the plate of food spells 1918, hoping that this year would be the last of the war, and it was.

Sent by D. Brown, Ruhleben to his son, England. Undated; LONDON F S PAID CANCELLATION, Dated JAN 7 18; Double circle FRIEGEGEBEN RUHLEBEN ENCLOSING F.a, (Frist abgelaufen – delay expired).



Enlarged censor cachet



Ruhleben Christmas Card 1916

Published by The Ruhleben Camp Magazine.
Sent from D. Brown to his two children in England; Undated; Receiving machine cancellation LONDON F.S PAID dated JAN 2 17; Double circle FRIEGEGEBEN RUHLEBEN ENCLOSING F.a, (Frist abgelaufen – delay expired).

Section 4a: Real Photographic Postcards – Postcards of the Ruhleben Camp

A number of Real Photographic cards were produced reflecting scenes of the camp and activities of the internees.

General View of "Trafalgar Square" including Casino and Guardhouse: Card No. 1713.

Sent by D. Brown to his daughter in England. Dated 2/4/18; No receiving cancellation; Double circle cachet FRIEGEGEBEN RUHLEBEN ENCLOSING F.a, (Frist abgelaufen – delay expired).

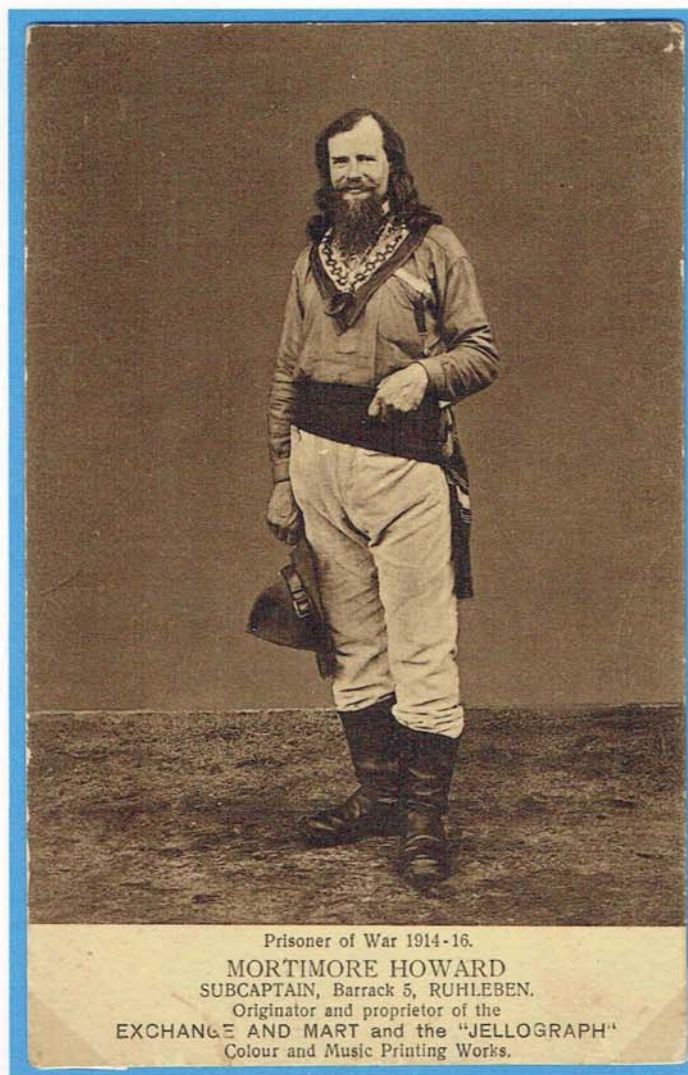


Wagons with what looks like Red Cross Food Parcels, or Parcels from Home: Card No. 1706; This camp was particularly well supplied with Red Cross parcels. These were distributed on a regular basis, and some internees actually enjoyed the stay – perhaps they were better fed than at home??



Sent by D. Brown to his wife in England. Dated 13/4/18; No receiving cancellation; Double circle cachet FRIEGEGEBEN RUHLEBEN ENCLOSING F.a, (Frist abgelaufen – delay expired).

Mortimore Howard, Prisoner of War 1914 – 1918:



Richard Mortimore Howard set up and ran an exchange and mart in Barrack 5 of the camp.

Howard is recorded as having been born on August 2nd 1870 in Washington USA, and is described as having been an animal trainer prior to his internment. His home address was the Circus Paul Wilke c/o Das Programm, Berlin, W.8.

Published 1916 Kunstanstalt Max O'Brien & Co., Berlin No 18.

**"Roll Call" on the Field
 Ruhleben Sept. 1917**

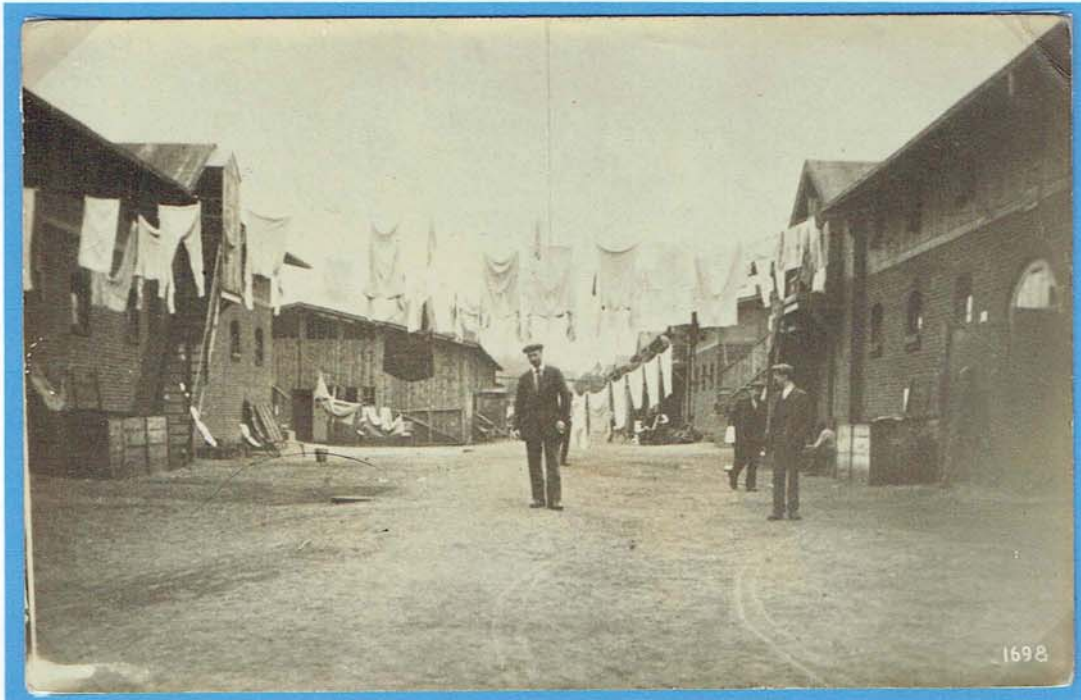
Postcard No. 1394; Sent by D. Brown to his wife in England.
 Dated 3/2/18; No receiving cancellation; Possible censor mark **H**.



Cachet from back
 (enlarged) of card -
 ? censor



Wash Day at Ruhleben: General view behind some of the living quarters. Washing can be seen hanging from the lines.



Sent by D. Brown to his wife in England. Dated 2/3/18; No receiving cancellation; No receiving cancellation; Possible censor mark **H**.

Queuing at Ruhleben: Card No. 1707; Queues were part of camp life, and Ruhleben was no exception. We don't know what the queue is for, but it must have been worth having – food, parcels, who knows?



Sent by D. Brown to his wife in England. Dated 16/3/18; No receiving cancellation; Possible censor mark **H**.

Cachet from back (enlarged)
of card - ? censor



Section 4b: Postcards of Stage Shows

The civil internees prevented boredom by providing their own entertainment. Included were variety shows, light opera and plays.

Theatre de Ruhleben – “La Flambée” Acte 3 (11/14 Juillet 1918)

Metteurs en scène (Stage Directors): H. Alf Bell & M. Perrot. H. Alf. Bell was a prisoner in Loft 6 – as recorded in *The Ruhleben Story*. Perrot recorded in *The Ruhleben Story*; producing the play “La Belle Aventure” whilst in the camp.

Real Photo. Number 2186.
From D. Brown to his wife in
England; Undated Circular?
censor cachet *Sto*, not
recorded *Bachenheimer*.

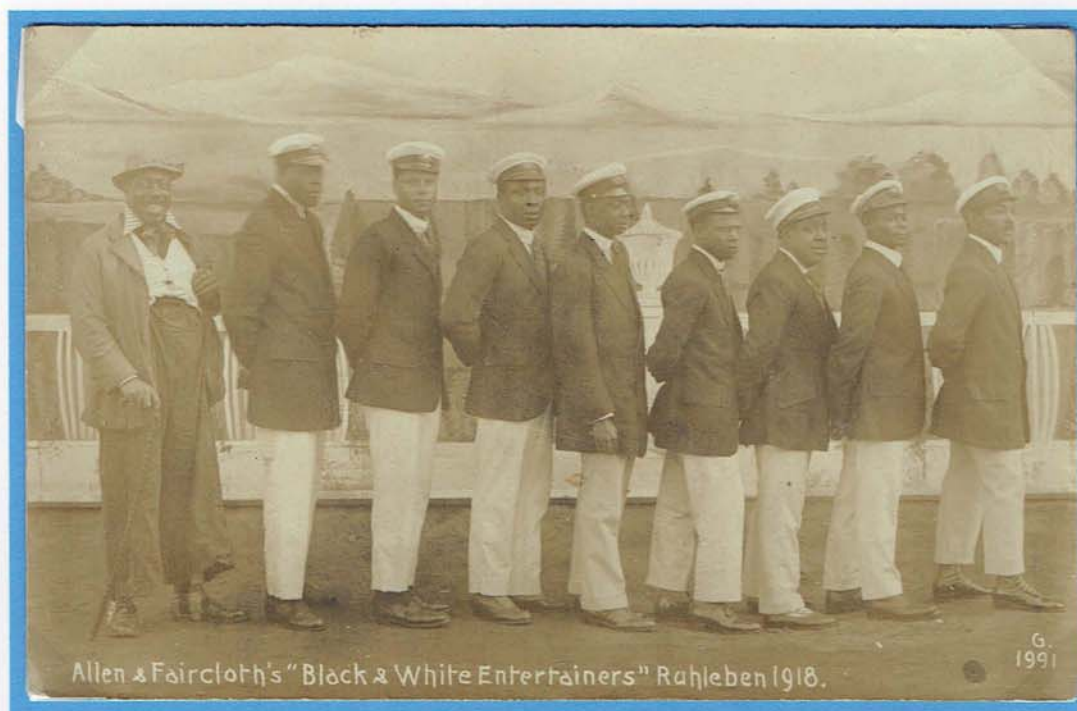


Enlarged ? censor
marking from back.



Allen & Faircloth's “Black & White Entertainers” Ruhleben 1918

Faircloth not recorded in *The Ruhleben Story*; No Allen mentioned as being involved with entertainment.



Real photo No G 1991 from D. Brown, Ruhleben to his wife in England; Not dated; Same Undated Circular? censor cachet *Sto*, not recorded *Bachenheimer*.

Ruhleben August 1918 Fortifying the Home

Real Photo. Depicting Martin and Nelson. No Martin is mentioned in the Ruhleben Story associated with Drama, and no Nelson is mentioned in The Ruhleben Story.

Sent from D. Brown to his son in England; Undated; Double circle censor cachet FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN 2nd type (27mm and 17mm diameter).



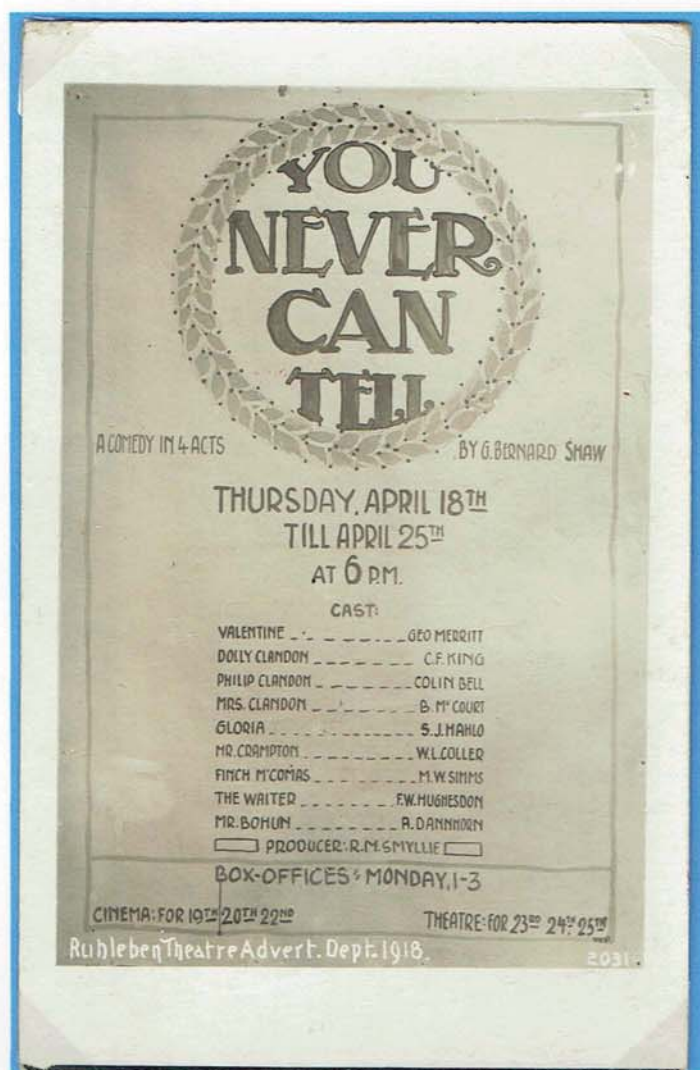
Enlarged censor cachet



Ruhleben Theatre Advert Dept 1918

Real photo of Theatre Advertisement for the George Bernard Shaw play, "You Never Can Tell".

Sent from D. Brown to his wife in England; Undated; Double circle censor cachet FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN 2nd type (27mm and 17mm diameter).

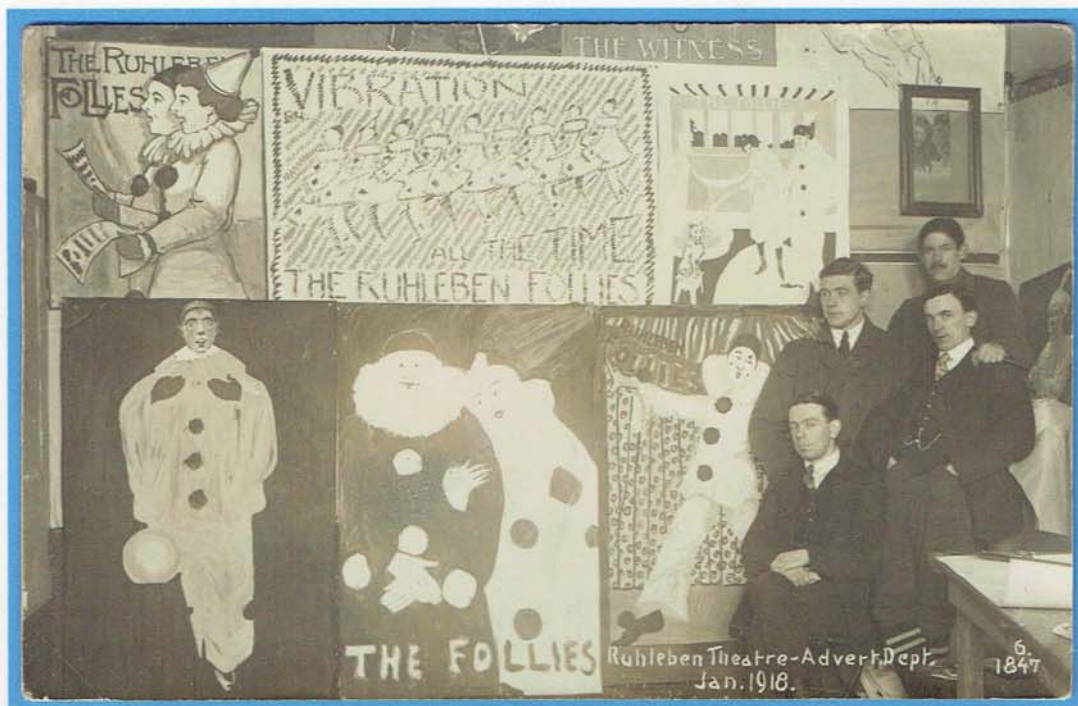


The Follies: Ruhleben Theatre Advert Dept, 1918



Ruhleben Theatre Advert Dept Real Photo postcard No. G 1819. Sent by D. Brown to D. J. R. Brown, England. Not dated; Double circle censor cachet **FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN** 1st type (26mm and 16mm diameter)

The Follies: Ruhleben Theatre Advert Dept, Jan 1918



Ruhleben Theatre Advert Dept Real Photo postcard No. G 1847. Sent by D. Brown to his wife, England. Not dated; Double circle censor cachet **FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN** 2nd type (27mm and 17mm diameter).

Section 4c: Postcards of the Royal Horticultural Society

Ruhleben Horticultural Society – Nursery Aug. 1918 A very strong Horticultural Society which was affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society of Great Britain was formed. Seeds and bulbs were sent from Britain, and the internees supplemented their rations with home-grown vegetables, and even sold flowers to Britain.



Royal Horticultural Society
Series Postcard No. 2246.
Sent by D. Brown to his
daughter, England. Not
dated; Double circle censor
cachet **FREIGEgeben**
RUHLEBEN 1st type (26mm
and 16mm diameter)

Y.M.C.A. Garden – Ruhleben Aug. 1918. R.H.S. Series

Royal Horticultural Society
Series Postcard No. 2248.
Sent by D. Brown to his
daughter, England. Not
dated; Double circle censor
cachet **FREIGEgeben**
RUHLEBEN 1st type (26mm
and 16mm diameter)



Section 4d: Postcards of Other Activities

Ruhleben Tea House 1st Eleven 1817-18: Football (soccer) was very popular and there were several teams representing the different barracks. Games were played in the centre of the racecourse.



Unused Real Photo. Number 2016.

Internees Gathering for a Meeting: There were many different circles of interest in the Ruhleben camp. These ranged from studying language, science, literature, music, business, history, and many others. Most circles met weekly for a paper and discussion.



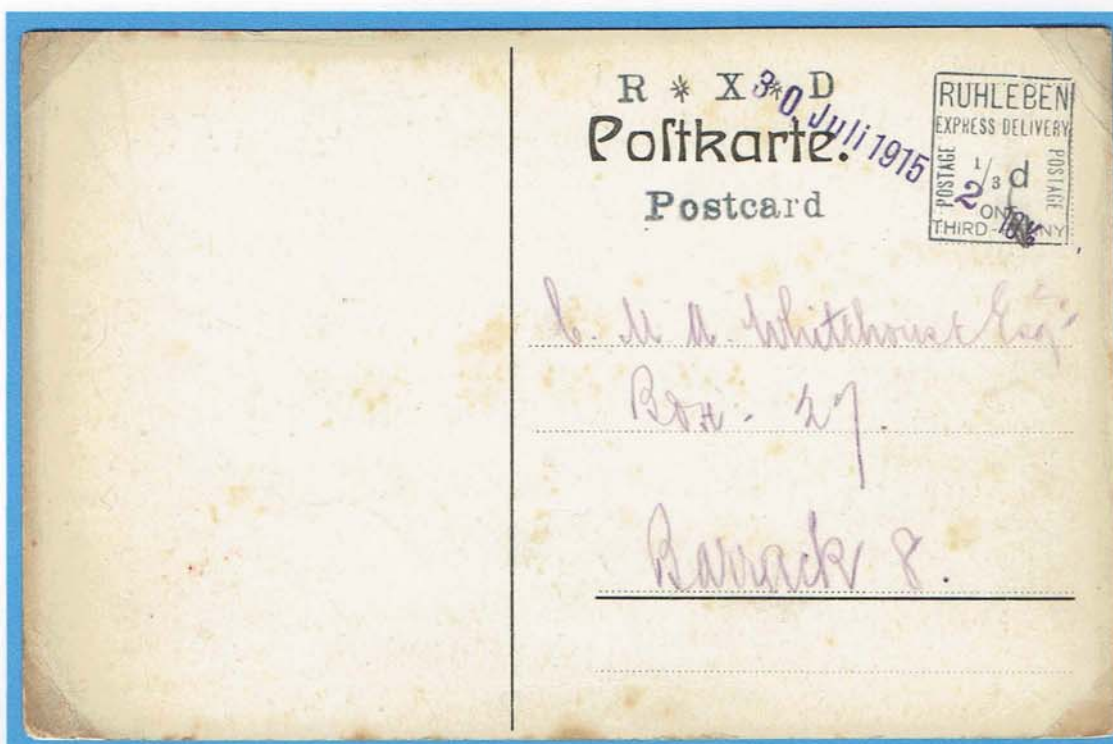
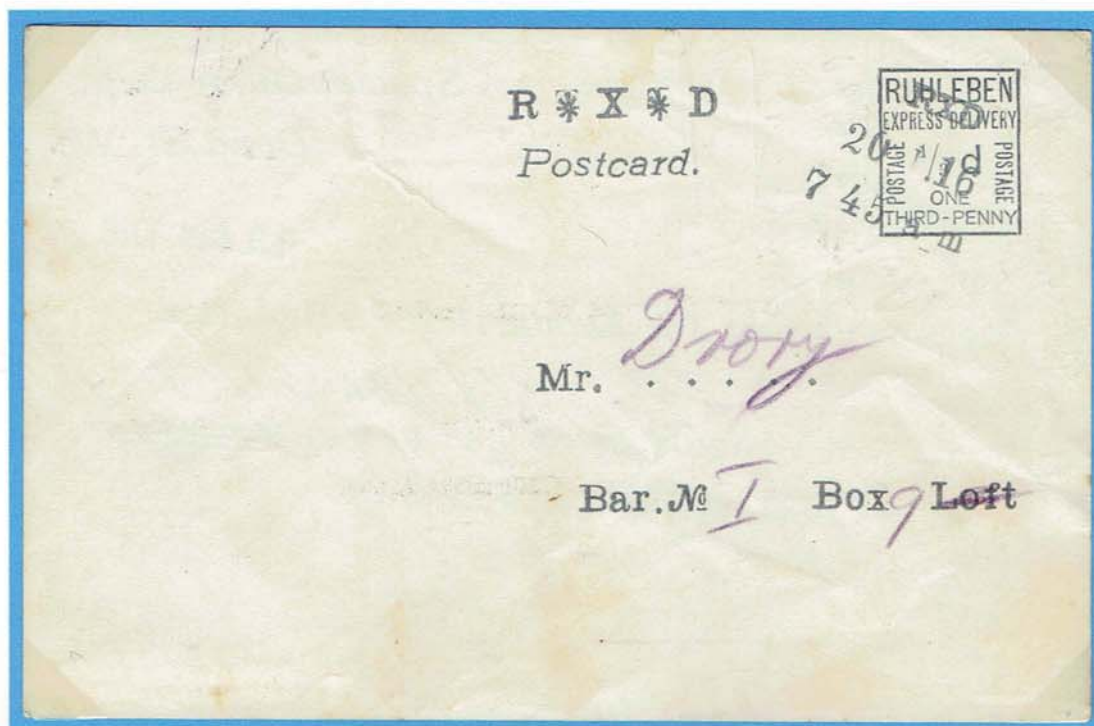
From D. Brown, Ruhleben to his wife in England; Dated 2/4/18; Double circle **FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN**
F. a. Censor cachet (x2).

Section 5: Postcards Sent Within the Camp Using the Internees R.X.D. (Ruhleben Express Delivery Mail Service)

The Ruhleben Express Delivery (R.X.D.) was organized by Albert Kamps commencing July 1915. There were 25 post boxes and internees were paid to deliver mail, empty boxes, taking mail to and from the central post office. Soon it was handling over 6,000 pieces of mail per month and 16 different postage stamps were issued, as well as items of postal stationery. The postal service did not last long. Kamps corresponded with a Berlin stamp collector, K. Hobrecker, who published a letter in The Berline Briefmarken-Zeitung newspaper causing outrage amongst the Berlin Philatelic Club. They objected to the authorities because since April 1st 1900 it had been illegal to have any private postal services in Germany. The military acted by trying Kamps and his two brothers who were sentenced to 3 weeks in the "bird cage", a wire enclosure for solitary confinement. The stamps and stationery were impounded and presumably destroyed; the service stopping in April 1916.

R.X.D. Postcard: These were printed by the Ruhleben Civil Internees printing press. The standard rate was 1/3d for a postcard. *Dated 19 Jan 1916; Cancelled 20.1.16 with R.X.D. obliterator, from E. Way to Mr Drory, Baracke 1, box 9. This was in regard to an order for "Accumulator & Sundries".*

Neither E. Way or Mr. Drory are recorded in "The Ruhleben Story".



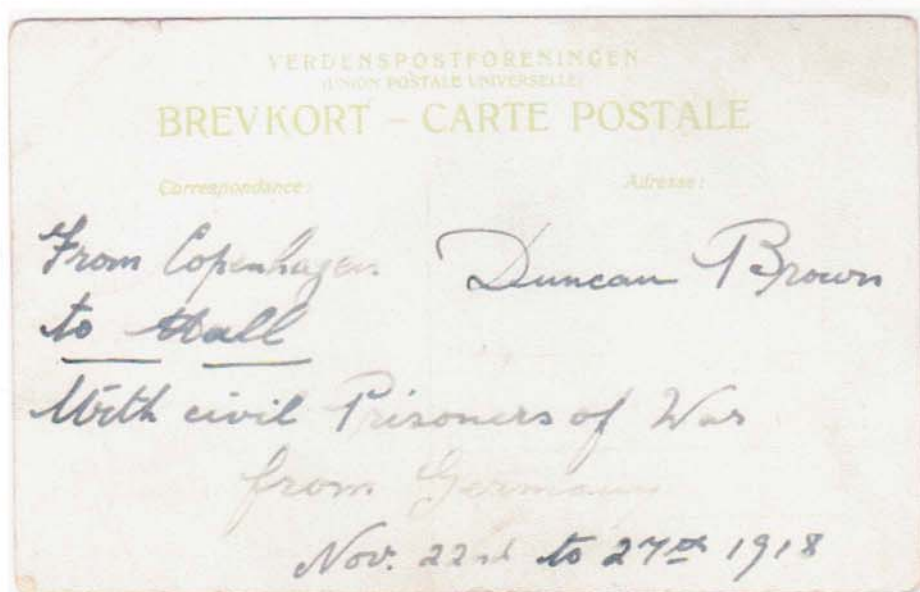
R.X.D. Postcard: *Dated 29 July 1915, Cancelled straight line date stamp 30 Juli 1915; from A.J. Maggs to C.M.A. Whitehouse, Box 7, Baracke 8. Whitehouse was a British architect who spent the whole of the war in Ruhleben. He sketched many aspects of Ruhleben and designed the cover of at least two issues of the Ruhleben Magazine.*

A.J. Maggs is not recorded in

Section 6: And Finally.....

Souvenir Postcard of Frederik VIII: This was the ship that took Duncan Brown home at the end of the war. The Frederik VIII of The Scandinavian American Line was chartered by the British Government and made five trips Wermünde/Lübeck /Stettin-Hull with about 7500 British prisoners of war from November 23rd 1918.

Postcard with "S. / S. Frederik VIII Kopenhagen – New York.



Annotated "From Copenhagen to Hull, with civil Prisoners of War from Germany, Nov. 22nd to 27th 1918".