

## THE RUHLEBEN CIVIL INTERNEE CAMP OF WWI

### Introduction

When Great Britain declared war on Germany August 4<sup>th</sup> 1914; there were many British civilians in Germany at the time. These were people from all walks of life and included Students, University Staff, Businessmen, Tourists, Merchant Seamen and British citizens living and working in Germany. Germany detained some 4000 men who were British citizens and interned them at Ruhleben Camp. This was a racecourse converted to this purpose; the Internees living in the horseboxes.

Even though the living conditions were poor to start with, the Internees were able to develop their own society, forming interest groups (language, gardening and the like) with regular meetings. The internees had their own internal postal system until stopped by the Germans 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1916.

### Plan

This exhibit is an open exhibit and includes non-philatelic items.

#### Title Page

**Section 1: Plan of the Camp:** unique sketches of a plan of the Camp and buildings.

**Section 2: Mail addressed to internees:** A selection of postal items is exhibited. These originate from within Germany and from overseas including Great Britain.

**Section 3: Mail sent externally from the Camp:** A selection of postal items sent to Germany and Overseas.

**Section 4: Mail sent within the camp:** Adhesives, and postal stationery sent between Camp internees. Also includes "Revenue" use.



### Ruhleben Christmas Postcard 1915

Sent from Ruhleben to Munchen; SPANDAU RUHLEBEN cancellation 21.12.15; Briefkontrolle zur Beforderung freigegeben Engländerlager Ruhleben (Censored and released at Ruhleben "British camp") cachet in red.

### References

Ruhleben – A Prison Camp Society, J Davidson Ketchum, University of Toronto Press, 1965.

The Ruhleben Story

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

Ruhleben P.O.W. Camp Stamps and forgeries

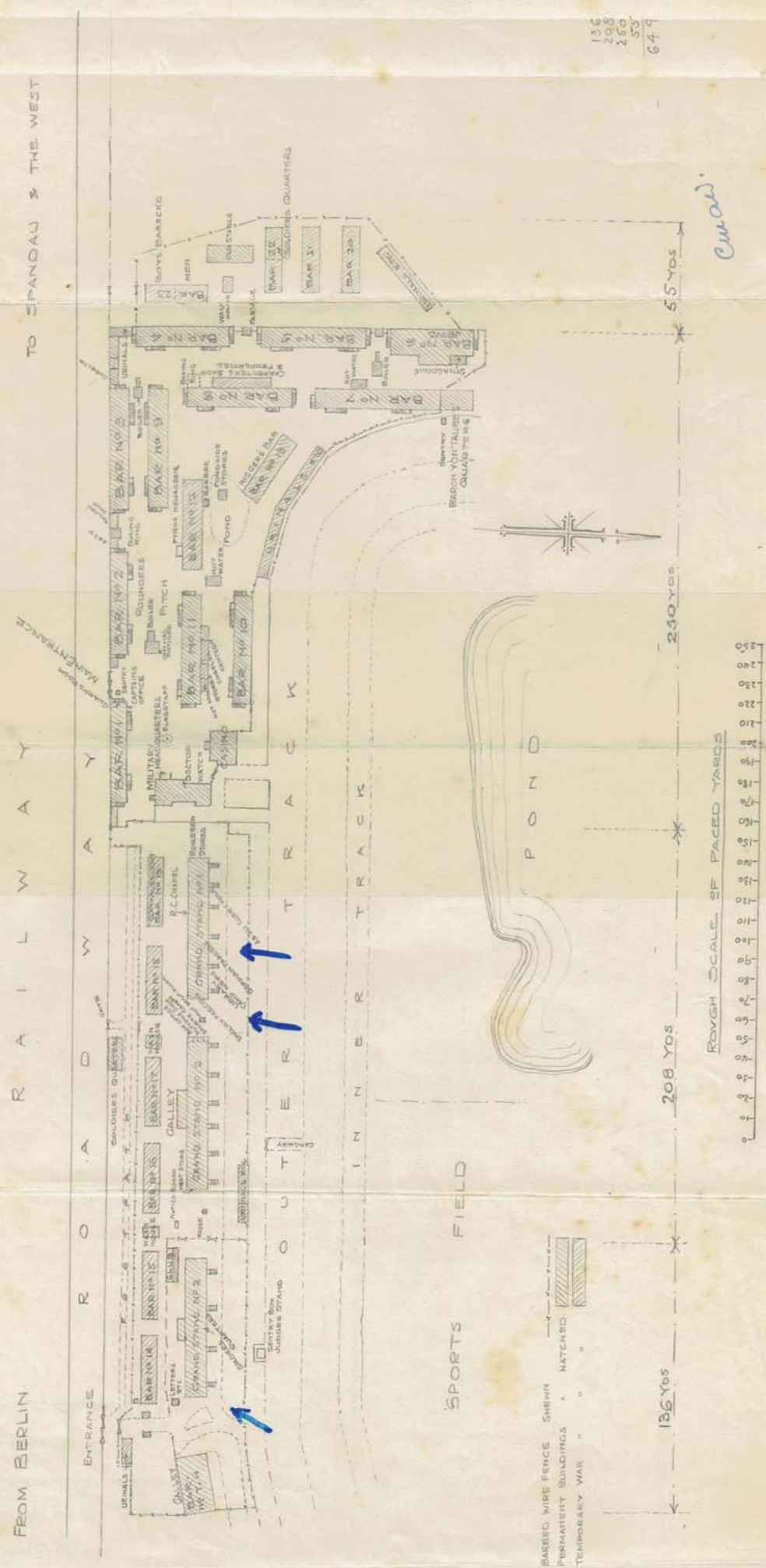
<http://www.filatelia.fi/forgeries/ruhleben.html>

The Ruhleben Camp Post Office

<http://www.prisonersofwar1914-1918documents.com/ruhleben-camp-post-office.php>



C.M.A. Whitehouse was an English architect who was interned at Ruhleben. This is a plan of the camp that he made by stepping out the camp and drafting the plan. Note letters, English Parcels and German Parcels areas.

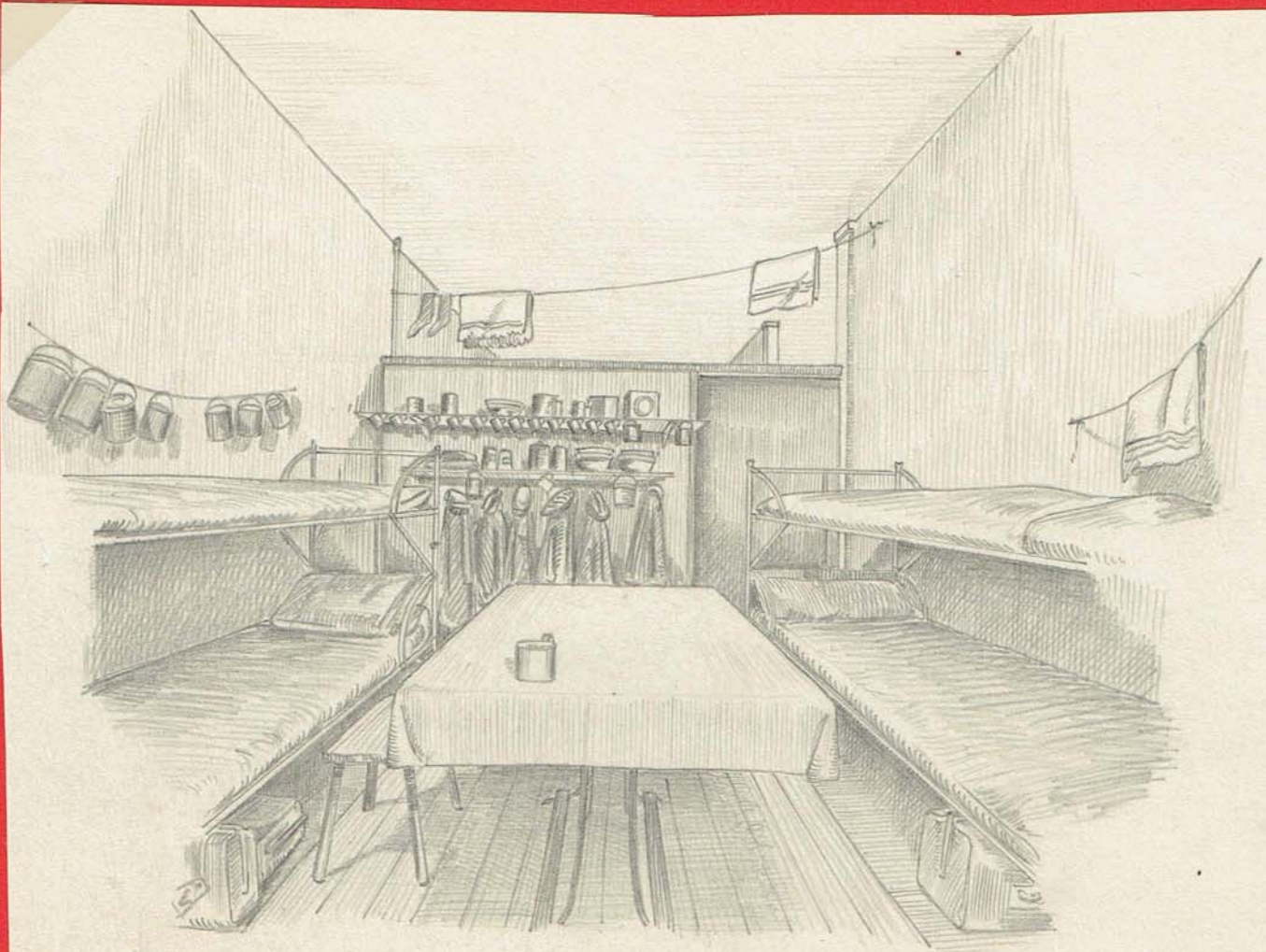




### Sketch of the inside of Box 27, Baracke 8

C.M.A. Whitehouse was an English architect who was interned at Ruhleben. He not only drew the sketch of the camp in page 2/3, but many of the structures inside the camp. This was his "Box". Items of correspondence following related to him.

Whitehouse was thanked for articles written for the Ruhleben Camp Magazine by its editor, C.G. Pemberton in its 5<sup>th</sup> issue (Christmas 1916, p.62). He was recorded as a member of the Ruhleben Lancastrian Society in the Manchester Guardian of Jan 15<sup>th</sup> 1915 (p.12). His address was recorded as Gibson Road, Heaton Moor.



Box 27 Baracke 8

C.M.A.W  
Jan. 19

View looking towards the door from the inside.



## SECTION 2: MAIL ADDRESSED TO INTERNEES FROM OUTSIDE THE CAMP

Most internees at the outbreak of war were living in Germany. Examples of mail addressed to the camp are not common.  
**South Africa to Ruhleben.**



Cover with no adhesive (correct for Engländerlager - British Camp); "Opened by Censor Geopend door Censor 99" South African label sealing cover; Round PASSED CENSOR C.6/99 censor cachet of South Africa in purple; Oval ENGLANDERLAGER RUHLEBEN GEPRUFT (Ruhleben Censored) cachet in blue.

### Berlin to Ruhleben



Postcard with typewritten Kriegsgefangenen sendung (Prisoner of war post) in purple; No adhesive – correct free postage; Circular BERLIN SW 68r dated 17.8.15 postmark; Circular FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN (Passed) censor cachet in red.



## Eydtkuhnen to Ruhleben.

Eydtkuhnen was part of the German province of East Prussia until 1945.

Card with no adhesive  
Feldpost (German military  
Mail Service) in pen  
manuscript; Circular  
EYDTKUHNEN postmark  
12/4/16; Circular B. Censor  
cachet in red; Boxed cachet  
Briefkontrolle zur Beforderung  
freigegeben Engländerlager  
Ruhleben (Censored and  
released at Ruhleben "British  
camp") cachet in blue.



## Charlottenburg (Berlin suburb) to Ruhleben



5 Pfennig Postal  
Stationery Card with  
CHARLOTTENBURG  
machine cancellation  
9/1/15; Circular  
FREIGEgeben  
RUHLEBEN (Passed)  
censor cachet in red.

5 Pfennig Postal Stationery  
Card with CHARLOTTENBURG  
machine cancellation 8/1/15;  
Boxed cachet Briefkontrolle  
zur Beforderung freigegeben  
Engländerlager Ruhleben  
(Censored and released at  
Ruhleben "British camp")  
cachet in red.





### SECTION 3 OUTWARD MAIL FROM THE CAMP.

**Ruhleben to Leicester, England:** Sent from A. Ban, Baracke XI, Box Loft. There is no recorded information on this internee.

Engländerlager Ruhleben Kriegsgefangenensendung

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**F.a.** SPANDAU  
28.4.15.3-4N  
RUHLEBEN

**FREIGEGEREN  
RUHLEBEN**

Miss H. Christian  
11 Galesby St  
King Richards Rd  
Leicester  
England

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Absender A. Ban  
Baracke XI  
Box Loft Datum 17/4/15

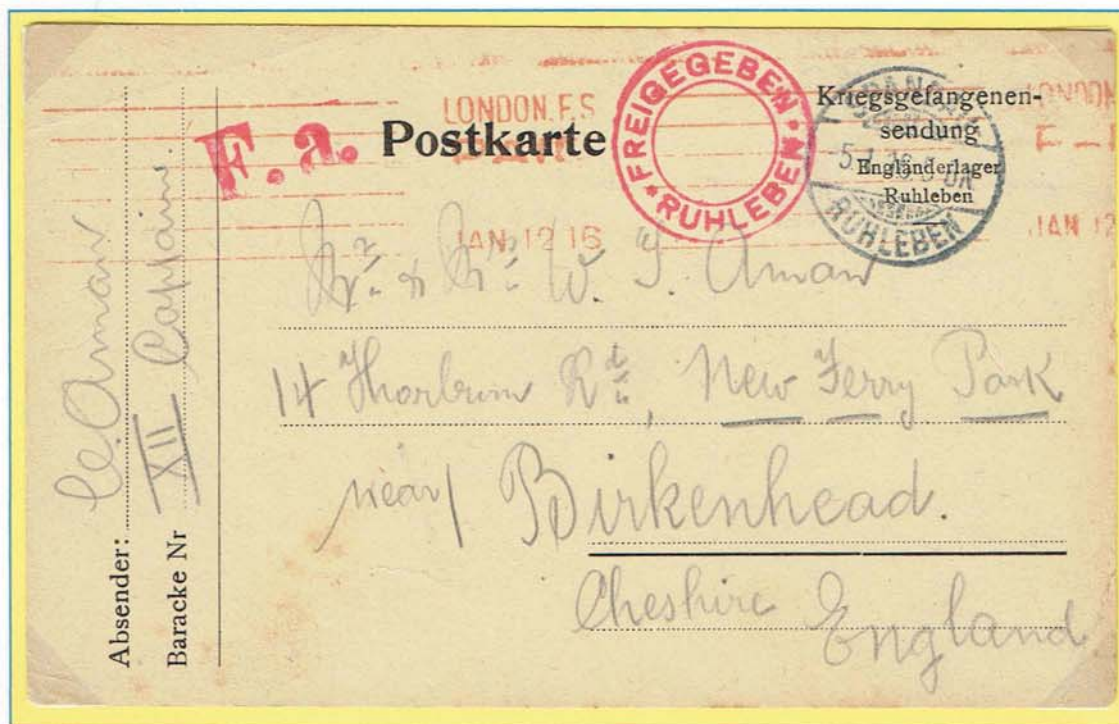
Pre-printed Ruhleben British Internment Camp envelope; Dated in manuscript 17/4/15; Cancelled SPANDAU RUHLEBEN 28/4/15; Circular FREIGEGEREN RUHLEBEN (passed) censor cachet in red; F.a. (Frist abgelaufen – deadline expired) unboxed cachet in red; LONDON PAID machine receiving mark in red dated MAY 7 1. On rear of cover, boxed cachet In Pakete enthaltene briefe werden vernichtet – All letters in parcels will be destroyed (*rare cachet*); LEICESTER receiving postmark dated 8 MY 15.





## Ruhleben to Cheshire, England

Ruhleben Postcard from Cecil Aman to Mr & Mrs W.T. Aman, Cheshire, England. Cecil Aman was one of the Ruhleben internees to sign a message of greeting to Sir Edward Letchworth, Grand Secretary of English Freemasons dated Dec 9<sup>th</sup> 1914, and printed in the times of Dec 28<sup>th</sup> 1914.

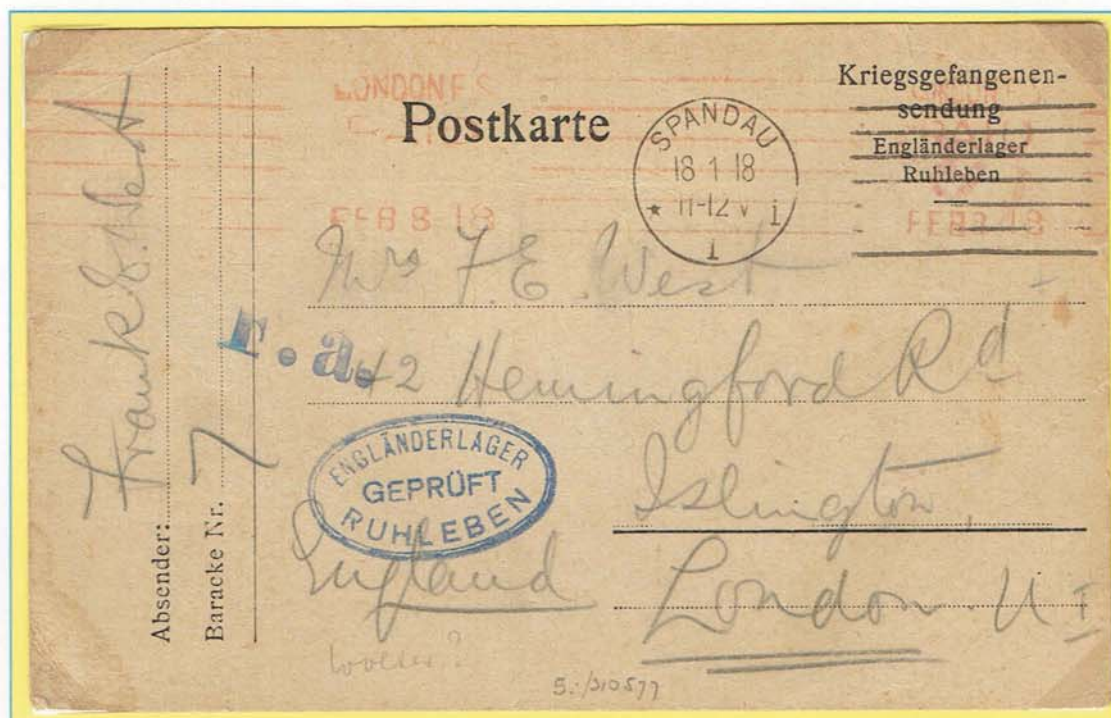


Ruhleben Postcard with no adhesive (correct for Engländerlager - British Camp); SPANDAU RUHLEBEN cancellation 5/1/16; Circular FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN (passed) censor cachet in red; F.a. (Frist abgelaufen – deadline expired) unboxed cachet in red; LONDON P.S. PAID machine arrival mark in red dated JAN 12 16.

## Ruhleben to London, England

Ruhleben Postcard from Frank S. West to his wife. Frank was noted in the first issue of the Ruhleben Camp Magazine (Mar 1916 p8) as having appeared in the play "The Great Adventurer" in the camp. West was thanked in the fifth issue of the Ruhleben Camp Magazine (Christmas 1916, p.37 for his contribution to the theatre during 1916.

Ruhleben Postcard with no adhesive (correct for Engländerlager - British Camp); SPANDAU machine cancellation 18/1/18; Cachet ENGLÄNDERLAGER RUHLEBEN GEPRÜFT (Ruhleben English camp censored) in blue; F.a. (Frist abgelaufen – deadline expired) unboxed cachet in blue; LONDON P.S. PAID machine receiving mark in red dated FEB 8 18.





### Ruhleben to Philadelphia Pa, USA

Ruhleben Postcard from Dr H Sumner Moore to Miss Edna Moorhead. Correspondence from this internee is recorded in "The Ruhleben Story".

Ruhleben Postcard with no adhesive (correct for Engländerlager - British Camp); SPANDAU RUHLEBEN cancellation 27/10/15; Circular FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN (passed) censor cachet in red with central F.a. (Frist abgelaufen – deadline expired).



### Ruhleben to New Jersey, USA

Ruhleben Postcard from Harold F. Howard to Miss Clara B. Miller. He refers to some poems that were lost in the mail and not received by him. Howard is not recorded in The Ruhleben Story.



Ruhleben Postcard written July 21<sup>st</sup> 17, no postmark; Circular FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN (Passed) censor cachet in red with F.a. (Frist abgelaufen – deadline expired) in centre. Unboxed cachet NO CHARGE FOR POSTAGE, PRISONER OF WAR MAIL, NEW YORK, N.Y. in black.



### Ruhleben to Brussels, Belgium

Ruhleben Postcard from J. Shatwell to Monsier Jules Dufarris. Shatwell is recorded as being a member of the Ruhleben Lancastrian Society, from 94 Hamilton Street Ashton-under-Lyne. He was a jacket with 8 wins out of 115 rides to his credit, making him No. 18 in the winner's statistics.

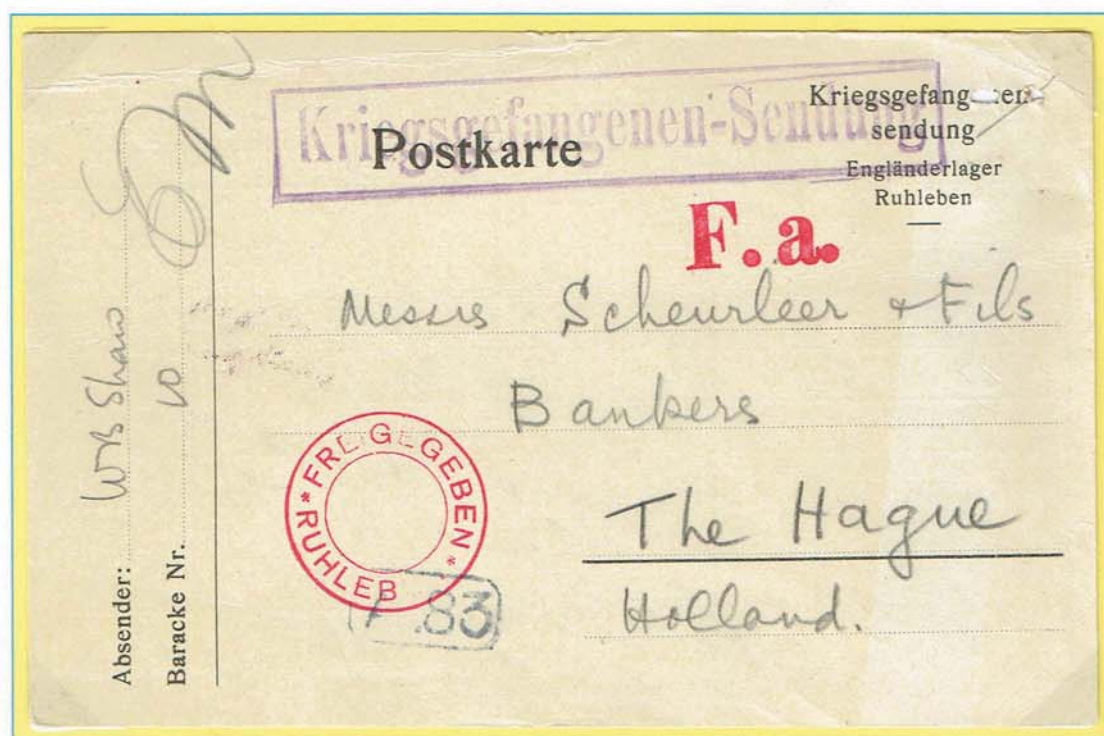


Ruhleben Postcard different from below – without “Absender and Baracke Nr.” on front and with “Only answer by Postcard, and no letters in parcels allowed” on reverse; SPANDAU RUHLEBEN cancellation 18/2/15; Circular FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN (Passed) censor cachet in red.

### Ruhleben to The Hague, Holland

Ruhleben Postcard from W B Shaw to Scheurleer & Fils, Bankers, The Hague. Unclear whether this is the Mr B Shaw referred in The Ruhleben Story as a merchant seaman from South Shields and published in the Scotsman newspaper 7/1/1915.

Ruhleben Postcard with no adhesive (correct for Engländerlager – British Camp); Card dated Oct 21 15, but no Ruhleben cancellation; Boxed cachet Kriegsgefangenen – Sendung (Prisoner of war post) in purple; Circular FREIGEgeben RUHLEBEN (Passed) censor cachet in red; F.a. (Frist abgelaufen – deadline expired) unboxed cachet in red; Dutch censor A.83 boxed cachet in black.





## SECTION 4 MAIL SENT WITHIN THE CAMP

The German authorities adhered to the Geneva Convention and allowed the camp detainees to administer their own internal affairs. Gradually, a mini-society evolved in the camp. Letters, books, sports equipment and a printing press were all allowed into the camp and the detainees organized their own police force, magazine, library and postal 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

**The stamps** Sets of stamps are exceptionally scarce, except for forgeries which are common.

### First Issue 1/3d Black

*Issued 19 July 1915*

*p 11½, 3000 printed*



### Surcharged set of 3

*Issued 1 August 1915,*

*perf 11½.*

*200 sets issued.*



### Set of 9

*Issued 23 October*

*1915, Perf 11½,*

*7200 sets issued.*



### The Postage Dues

*Issued 19 July 1915*

*7200 sets issued.*



### The Official

*Issued 23 October 1915,*

*7200 issued.*





## Forgeries

Forgeries are common. The genuine stamps are identified by being perforated  $11\frac{1}{2}$ , whereas the forgeries are  $10\frac{1}{2}$ . The word postage is separated from the border by a distinct gap in the genuine stamps, but in the forgery there is no gap between.

$\frac{1}{2}$ d Due genuine,  
perf  $11\frac{1}{2}$



$\frac{1}{2}$ d Due forgery,  
perf  $10\frac{1}{2}$



## 10 forgeries below



## Internal Letter

Letter sent within the camp to Mr. Paul Heinemann, Kitchen 1. Two items of correspondence noted in The Ruhleben Story, where items were addressed to the "Teahouse".

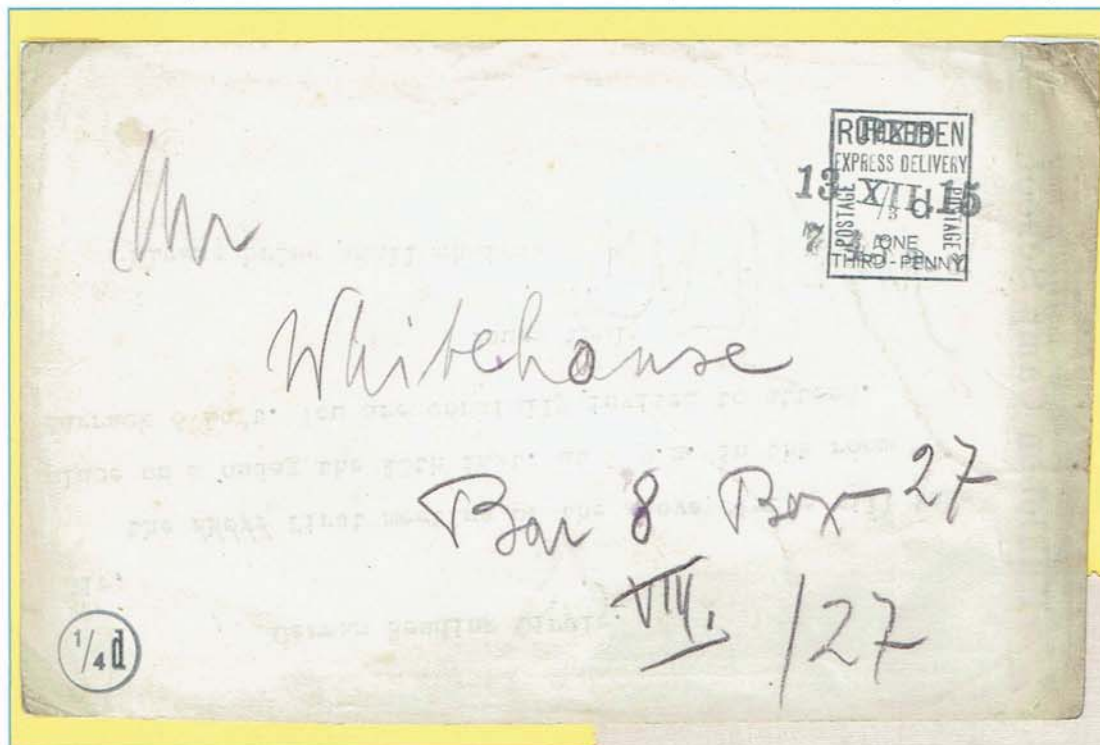
Cover with 4 x  $\frac{1}{4}$ d  
adhesives which is double  
the standard rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d  
per half ounce. Cancelled  
with 4 x RXD cancellations  
in black, dated 14/2/16.





### Postcard A.W. Flabur to Whitehouse

Inviting Whitehouse to the first meeting of the German Reading Circle in room F, Barrack 6 Loft. This is organised by the Ruhleben Camp School. Note this address is the Barack VIII, box 27 illustrated by Whitehouse previous page.



Pre-printed Ruhleben R.X.D. Postcard. Standard delivery rate for postcards of 1/4d. Cancelled with R.X.D cancellation 13 XII 15 in black.

The price 1/4d seems to be incorrect. It is likely to have been 1/2d.

### Lettercard A. J. Maggs to C. M. A. Whitehouse

Thanking for communications. Obviously Whitehouse had given him some Ruhleben stamps quoting Whitehouse who said "these will hardly be considered as postage stamps and shall nevertheless value them".

Maggs not recorded in The Ruhleben Story.

1/4d Lettercard with pre-printed postage in blue. Cancelled by one line 30 June 1915, 2.10. 3/4d price cachet.

*This lettercard proves that the service did indeed start in June 1915 (not July as previously thought), and had been going for some time for Whitehouse to have given Maggs some presumably used stamps.*





### The Ruhleben Camp Magazine

This is a copy of the Ruhleben Camp Magazine, No 1 March 1916. This copy bears Alfred E Bodger's signature. In The Ruhleben Story, Alfred E. Bodger was noted in the third issue of the Ruhleben Camp Magazine (May 1916, p.47) as having been the secretary for the camp's Lost Property Department.

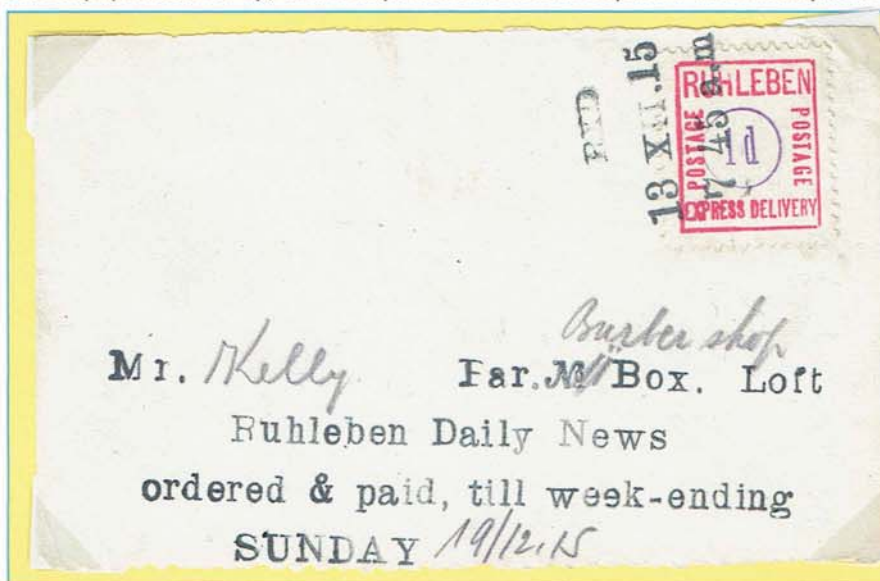
Ruhleben stamps were used to acknowledge payment (revenue use) for the Ruhleben Camp Magazine, and the Ruhleben Daily News.





## Revenue Use - Payment for Ruhleben Daily News

A newspaper was set up, and stamps were used as receipts for the subscriptions to the paper.



Kelly is noted in The Ruhleben Story as being the barber in the camp, and noted on another receipt dated 7/1/16.

Receipt of 1d for one week's subscription of the Ruhleben Daily News for the week ending 19/12/15. 1d red adhesive cancelled with RXD 13 XII.15, 7.45am datestamp.

G Barton is mentioned in The Ruhleben Story where two similar receipts are recorded.

Receipt of 1d for one week's subscription of the Ruhleben Daily News for the week ending 19/12/15. 2 x 1/2d green adhesives cancelled with RXD 13 XII.15, 7.45am datestamp.



E Watteiz is not mentioned in The Ruhleben Story.

Receipt of 1d for one week's subscription of the Ruhleben Daily News for the week ending 20/2/16. 1 x 1/2d green adhesive, and 1 x 3/4d blue adhesive cancelled with RXD 16.2.16, 11am datestamp.

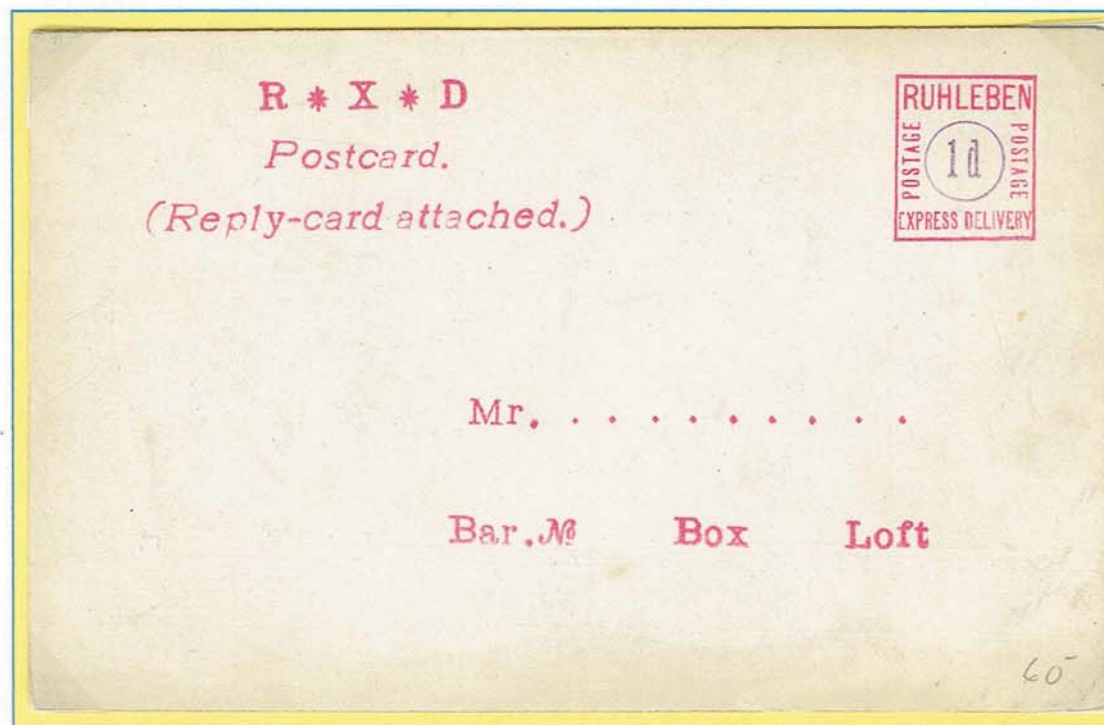


## R.X.D. Postcard (Reply Card attached) Unused Copy

Postcard with reply postcard attached; 1d pre-printed postage in red with purple centre and 1/3d pre-printed postage in purple with red centre to post the reply postcard.



Scan of reply postage.



## Ruhleben Internal mail Philatelic Item

Cancelled 10/1/17, this cover carries much more than the usual standard 1/3d postage. The postal service in the camp was closed down by the Germans 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1916. It is possible this envelope was "cancelled to order" using stamps that were not destroyed by the authorities. These stamps are genuine, and not forgeries.



1/3d, 1/2, 3/4, and 1d adhesives, cancelled with R.X.D. 10.1.17 4.15pm cancellation.



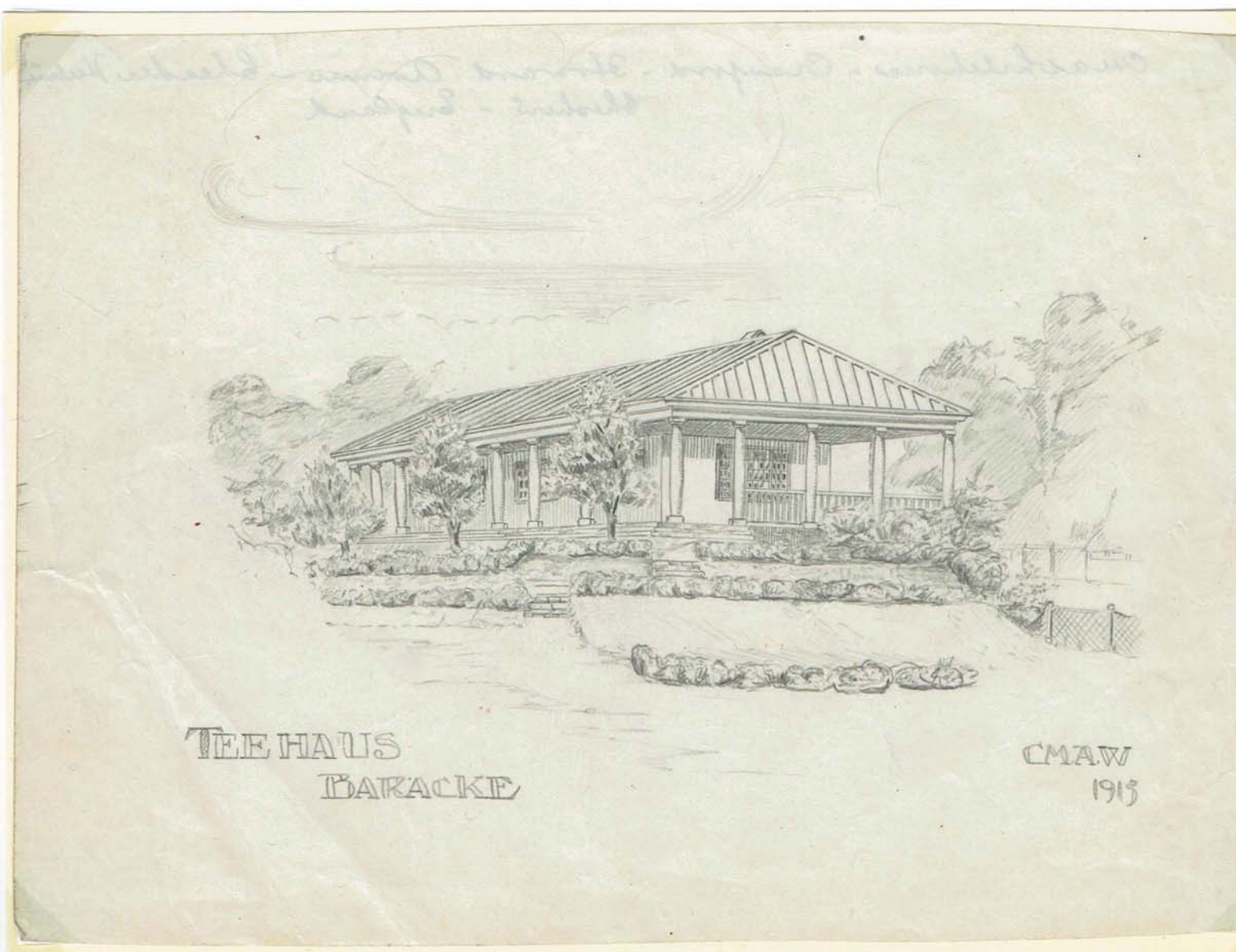
## SERIES OF SKETCHES BY BRITISH ARCHITECT C.M.A. WHITEHOUSE

This display is part of a collection of sketches of the Ruhleben Camp drawn by one of the civil internees. The accuracy and attention for detail make this the best record of its type that is known. Whitehouse also sketched the front covers of at least some of the Ruhleben magazines; two copies of which are displayed. One is an original magazine cover; the other is a newspaper clipping from The Manchester Guardian.

There are two items of German origin, relating to invitations by the Camp Commandant to the British Officers and Orderlies (these are not military people, but the elected civilian leaders of the Camp and the Barracks) to attend a Chamber Music Evening, and a Variety Show put on by the Germans. This demonstrates the respect that the Germans had for the British civil internees who just happened to be in the wrong place when war was declared.

### Tea Haus Baracke

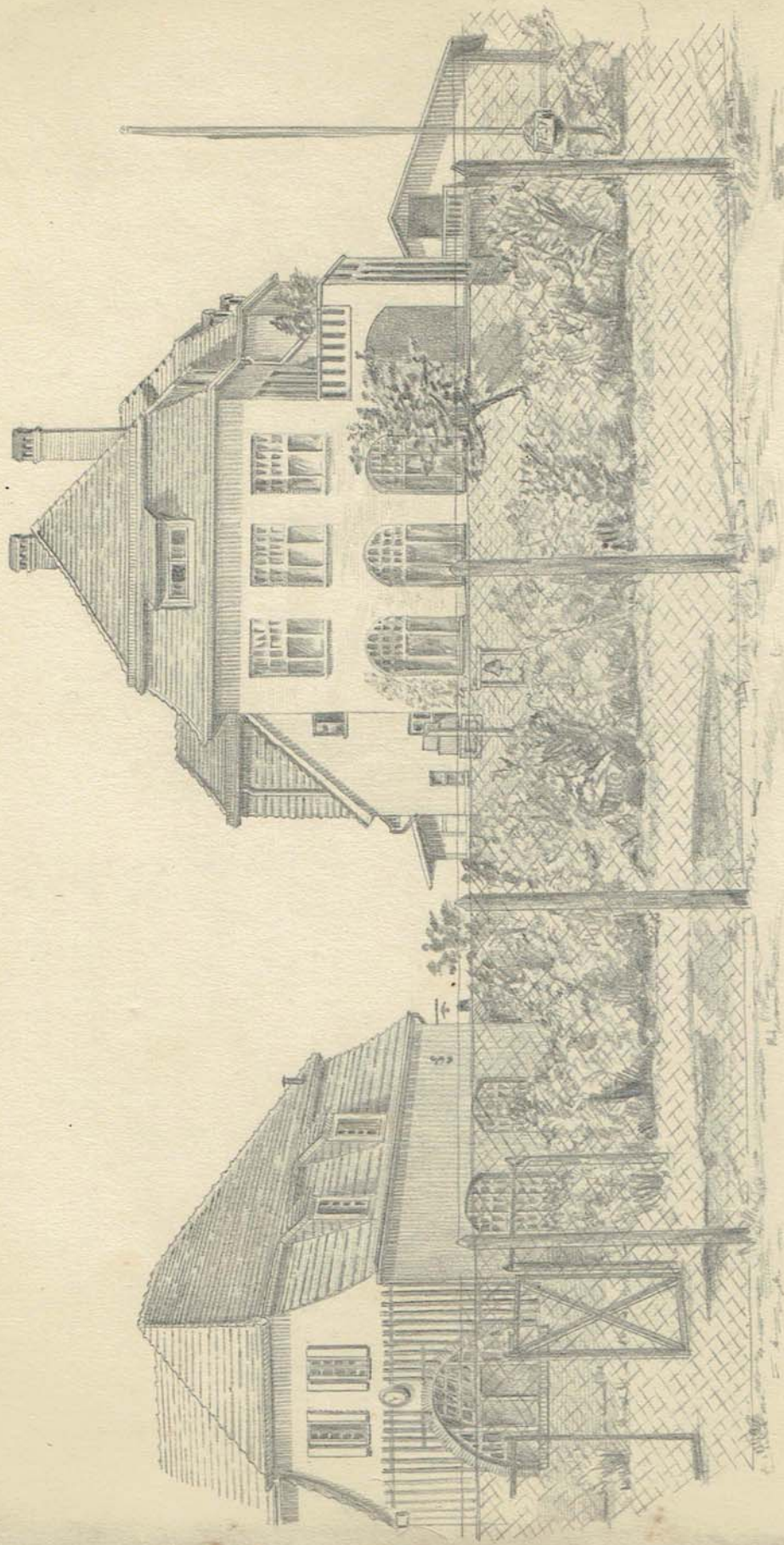
Sketched by British Architect, C.M.A. Whitehouse, dated 17/8/1915.





**Back of Guard Room and Casino**

Sketched by British Architect, C.M.A. Whitehouse. Dated 10/9/15.



CMAW

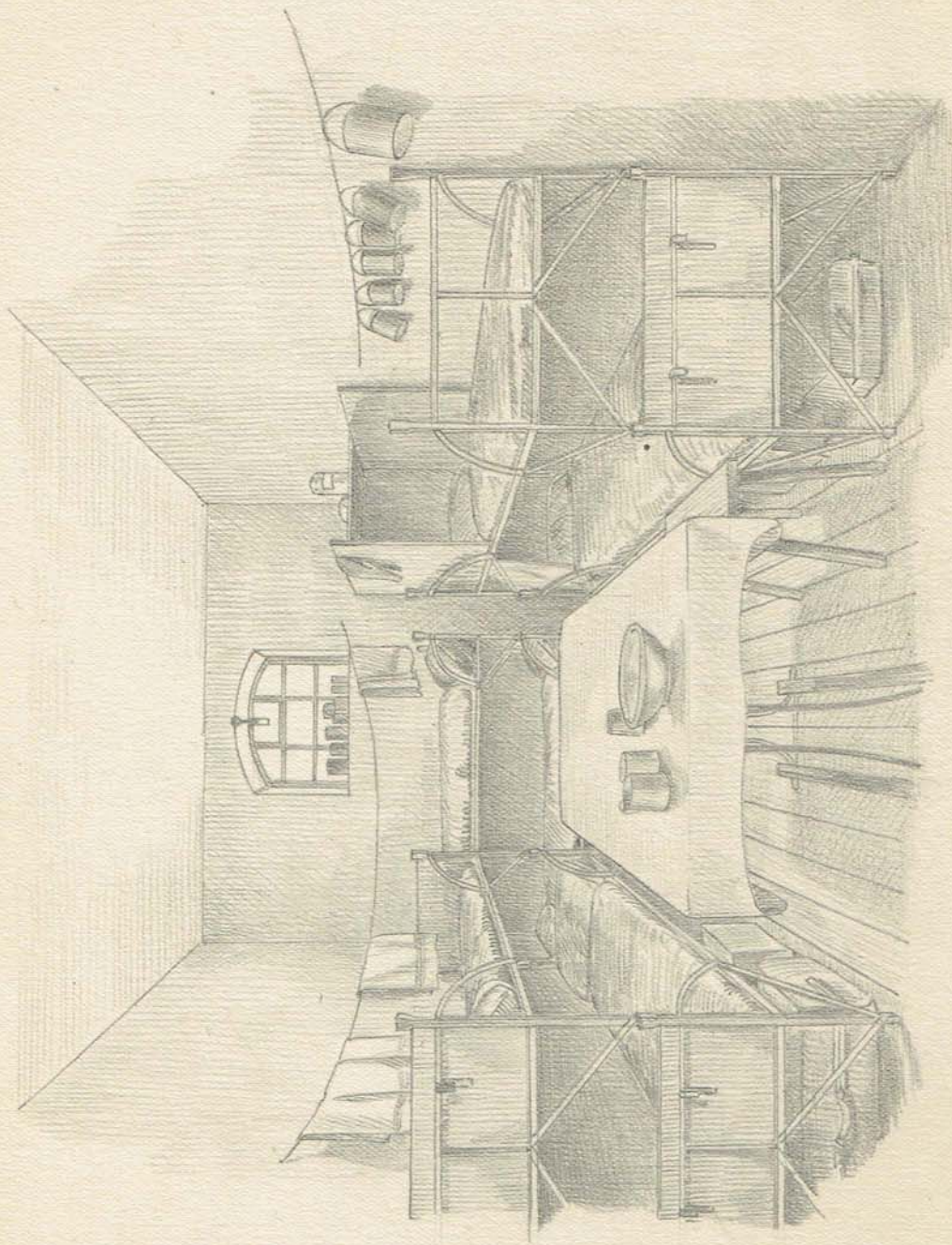
10.9.15

BACK OF GUARD ROOM & CASINO



**Box 27 Baracke 8**

Sketched by British Architect, C.M.A. Whitehouse (unsigned on front, but signed on back). Dated Jan 1915, this is Whitehouse's living quarters for the duration of his stay at Ruhleben.



*Box 27 Baracke 8.*

*Jan 1915*



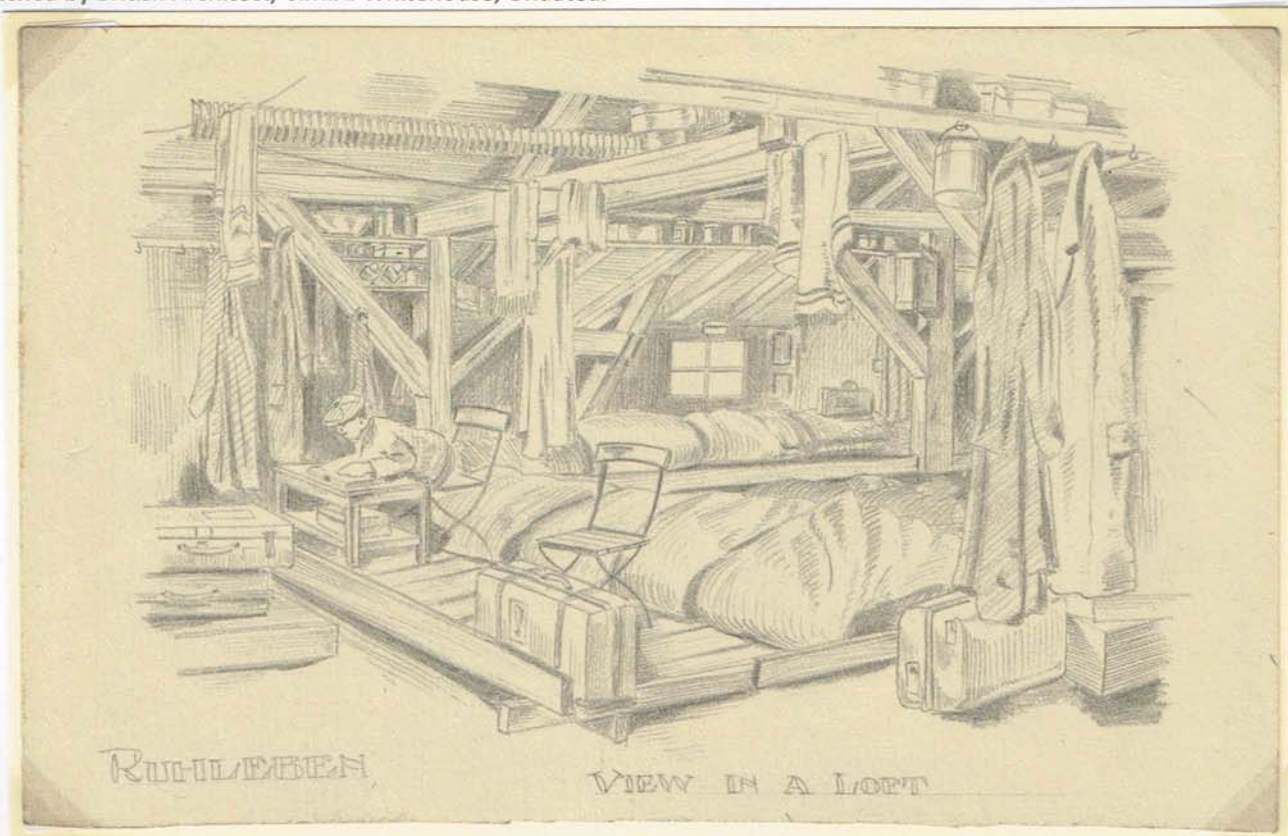
## Spandau

Sketched by British Architect, C.M.A. Whitehouse, Dated 2/5/15.



## View In A Loft, Ruhleben

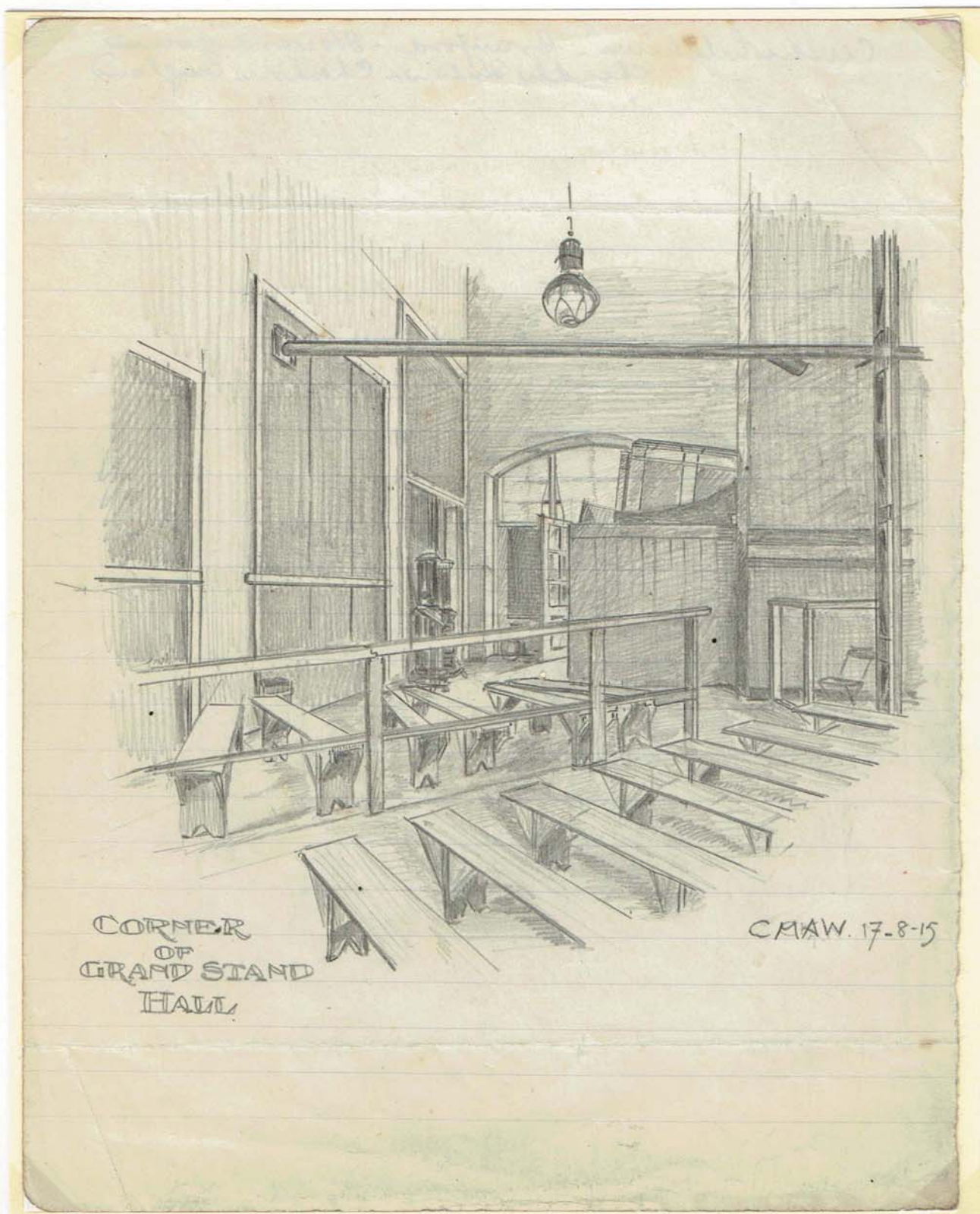
Sketched by British Architect, C.M.A. Whitehouse, Undated.





# Corner of Grand Stand Hall

Sketched by British Architect, C.M.A. Whitehouse, dated 17/8/1915.



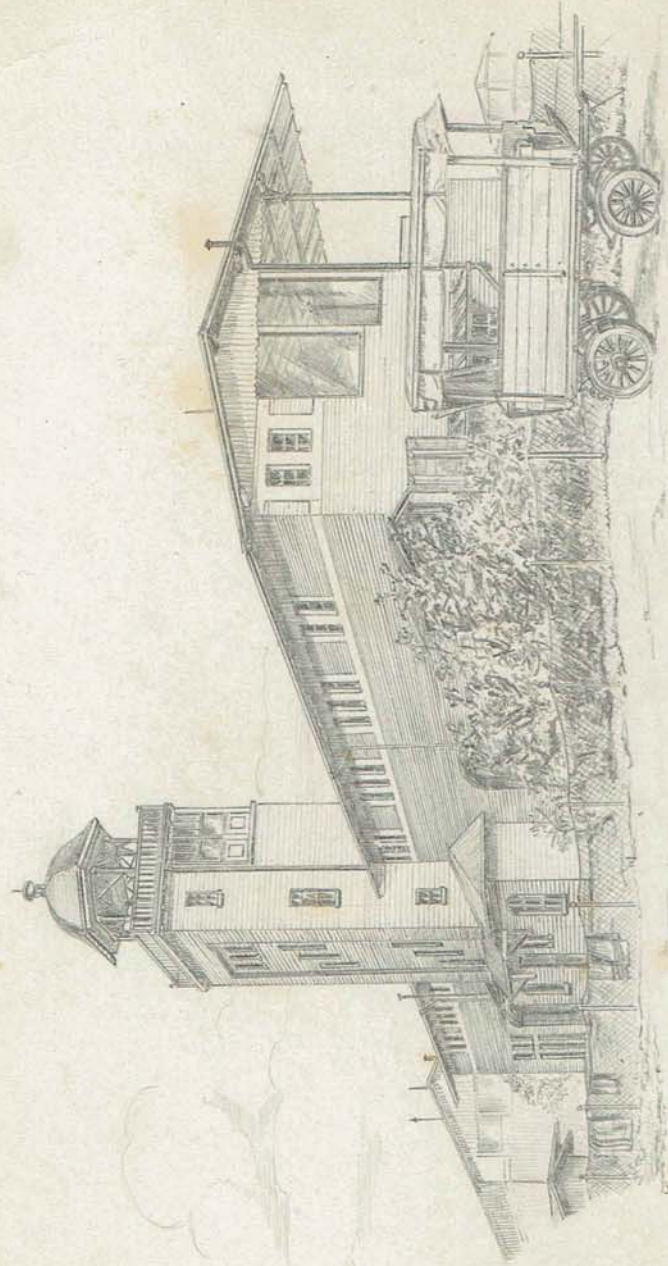
CORNER  
OF  
GRAND STAND  
HALL

CMAW. 17-8-15



**Third Grand Stand, Ruhleben**

Sketched by British Architect, C.M.A. Whitehouse, Undated.



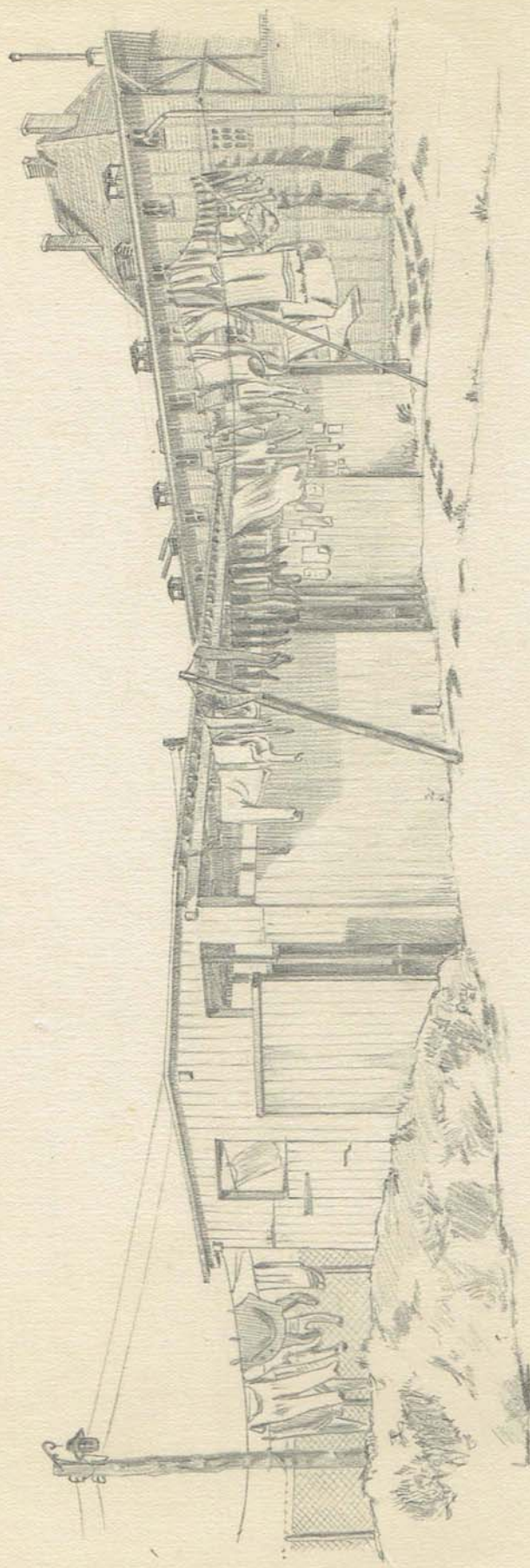
THIRD GRAND STAND  
RUHLEBEN

C.M.A.W.



**Latrines and Back of Barrack No 6.**

Sketched by British architect C. M. A. Whitehouse dated Jan. 3/9/15.



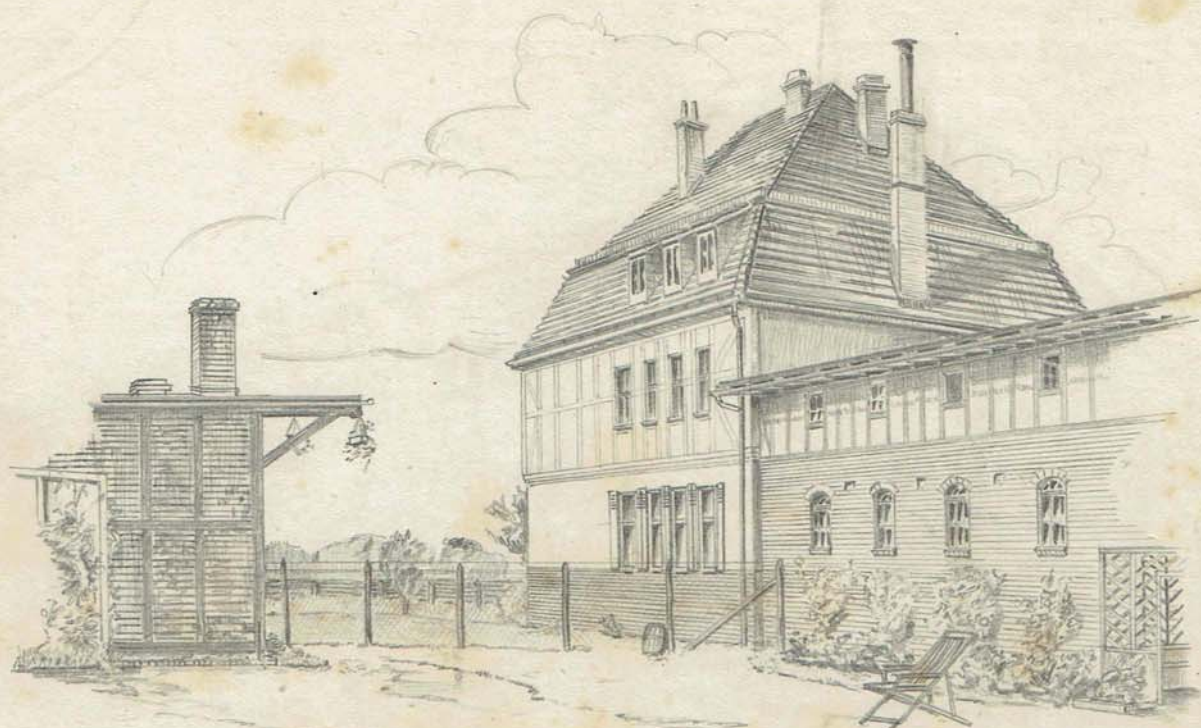
LATRINES & BACK OF  
BARRACK NO 6

CMAW  
3-9-15



## Commandant's Quarters

Sketched by British Architect, C.M.A. Whitehouse, Dated 22/8/1915.



KOMMANDANT'S  
QUARTERS

CMAW  
22.8.15



Cutting from the Manchester Guardian Jan 19<sup>th</sup> 1917 of "The Ruhleben Camp Magazine". This is Issue No 5; Volume 2; June Xmas 1916. This has been drawn by C. M. A. Whitehouse - initials in house, bottom left.

CHRISTMAS READING AT RUHLEBEN.

*Spiek and Spandau. The fashionable Tailors.*

**RUHLEBEN**  
**CAMP MAGAZINE**

No 5  
VOLUME II  
XMAS 1916

OFFICE . PROMENADE DES ANGLAIS.  
RUHLEBEN

**A & S. U. SAUCE**  
"NOTHING LIKE IT."

PRICE 50 PFENNIGS.

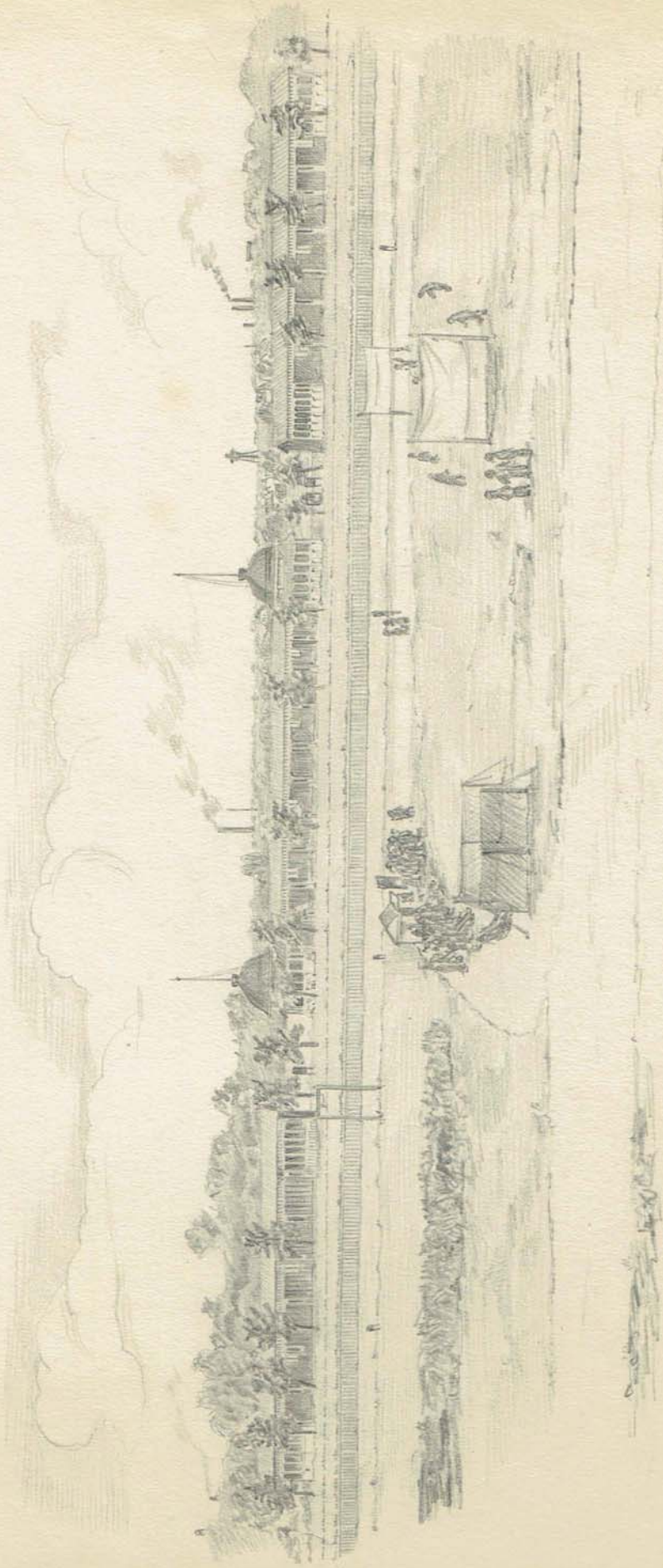
A reproduction from the cover of the Christmas Number of the Ruhleben Camp Magazine.

*M/c Guardian Jan 19<sup>th</sup> 1917*



**View from the Third Grand Stand.**

Sketched by British architect C. M. A. Whitehouse dated Jan. 11/9/15 (not signed).

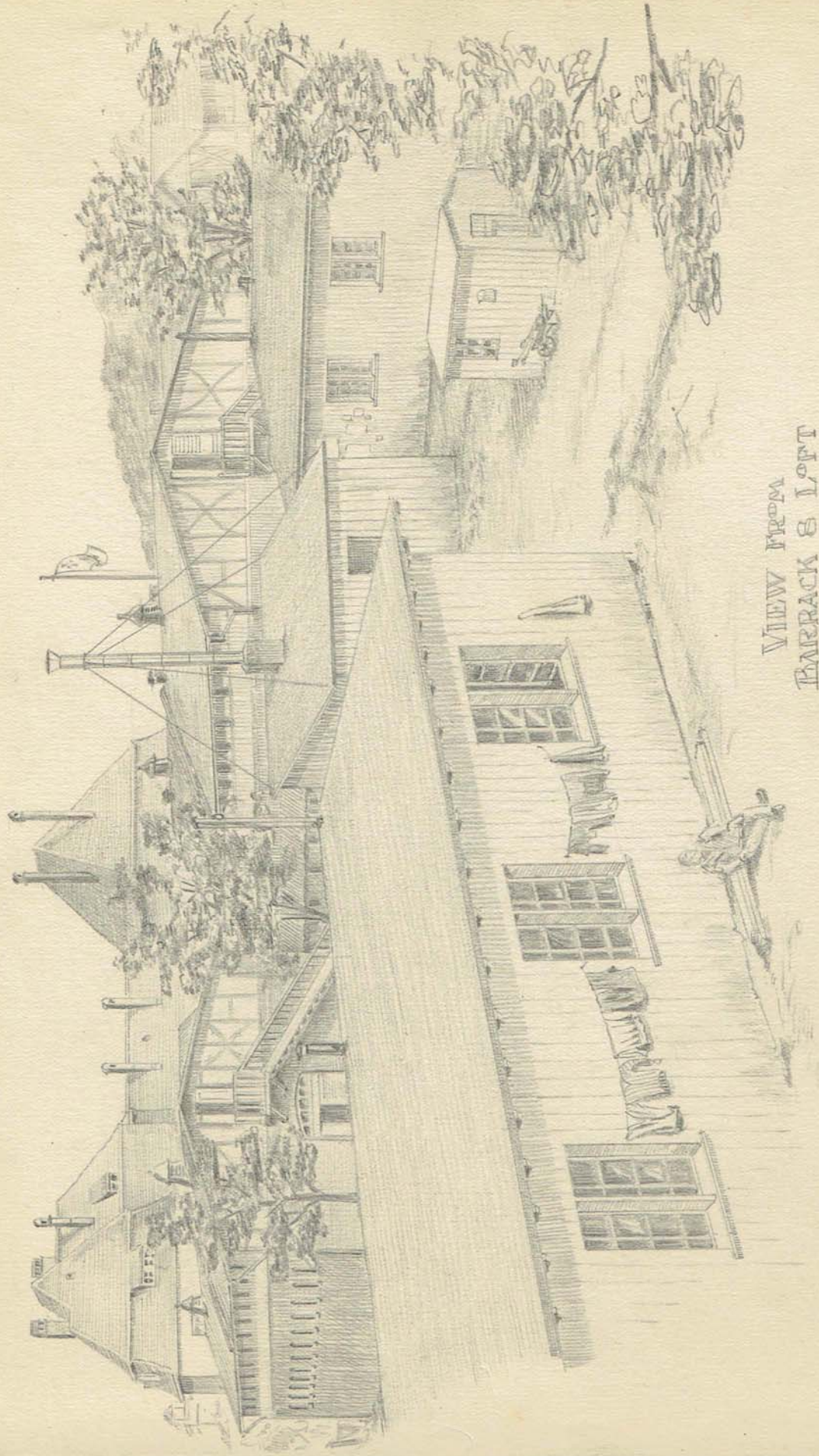


View from third Grand Stand



### View From Barrack 8 Loft

Sketched by British architect C. M. A. Whitehouse dated Sept. 1915. This was the Barrack that was home to Whitehouse for the duration of the war.



VIEW FROM  
BARRACK 8 LOFT

Sept. 1915



# The Ruhleben Camp Magazine

Cover Sketched by British Architect, C.M.A. Whitehouse. (C.M.A.W. left corner). This is Issue No 6 June 1917.





Invitation from German Commandant to British Officers and Orderlies to attend a Chamber Music Evening.  
The invitations to attend each other's performances of music, stage shows and variety concerts showed each other's mutual respect.

# Chamber-Music Evening.

*.modern·classic·romantic·  
·choir·*

---

**T**he German camp leading would esteem  
it a great honour to have the officers  
and OR's present at to night's performance  
at 7<sup>30</sup> o'clock.

*Kell,*



Invitation from German Commandant to British Officers and Orderlies to attend a Variety Show Evening, Easter Sunday 19..  
at 19.30 hr. The invitations to attend each other's performances of music, stage shows and variety concerts showed each other's mutual respect.



# VARIETY-SHOW

on Easter Sunday 1930<sup>h</sup>

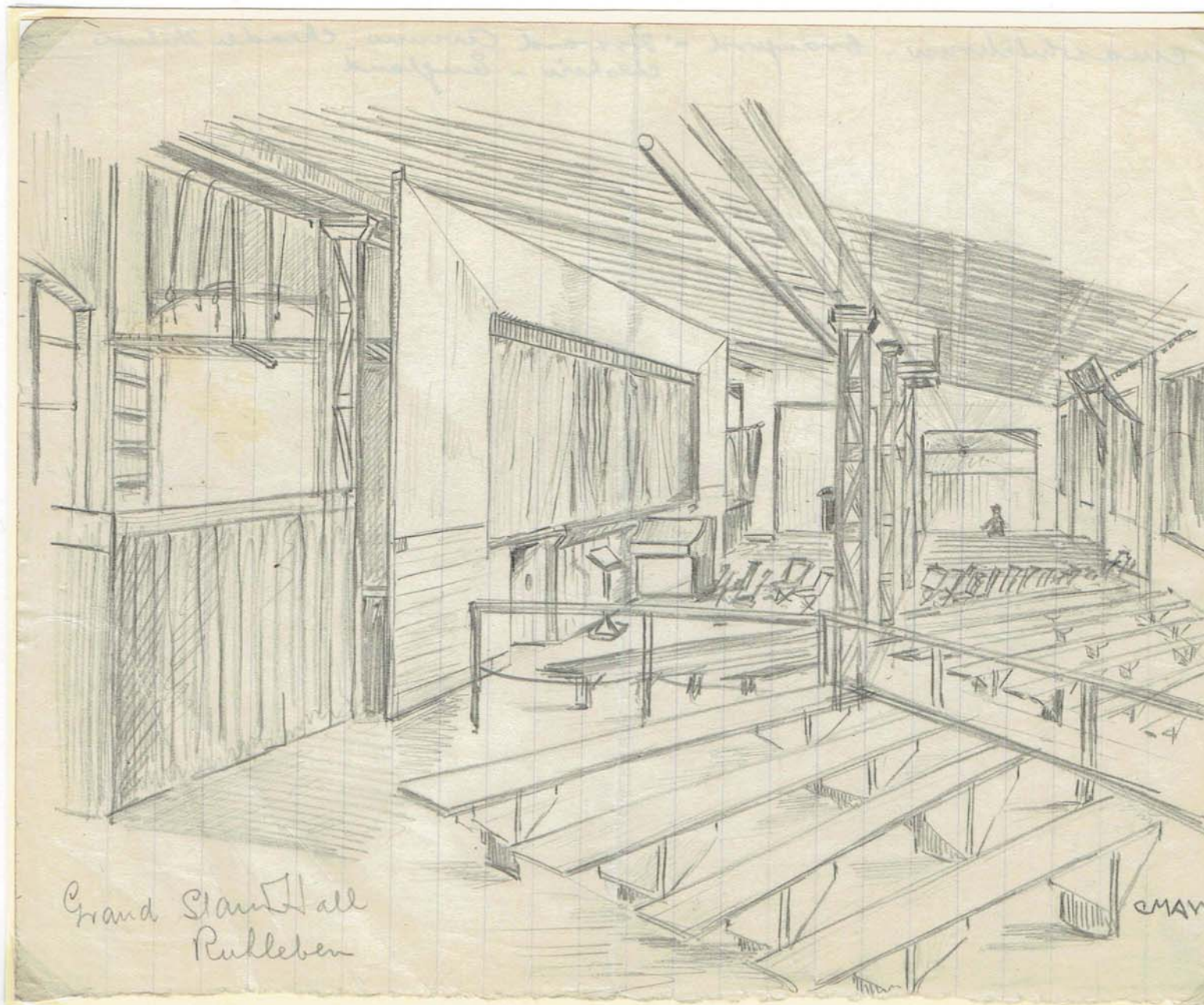
The German Camp Leader and the members  
of the variety show esteem it a great honour  
to have the British Officers and O.R.'s. present  
at the performance

*G. S.  
Hall*



# Grand Stand Hall, Ruhleben

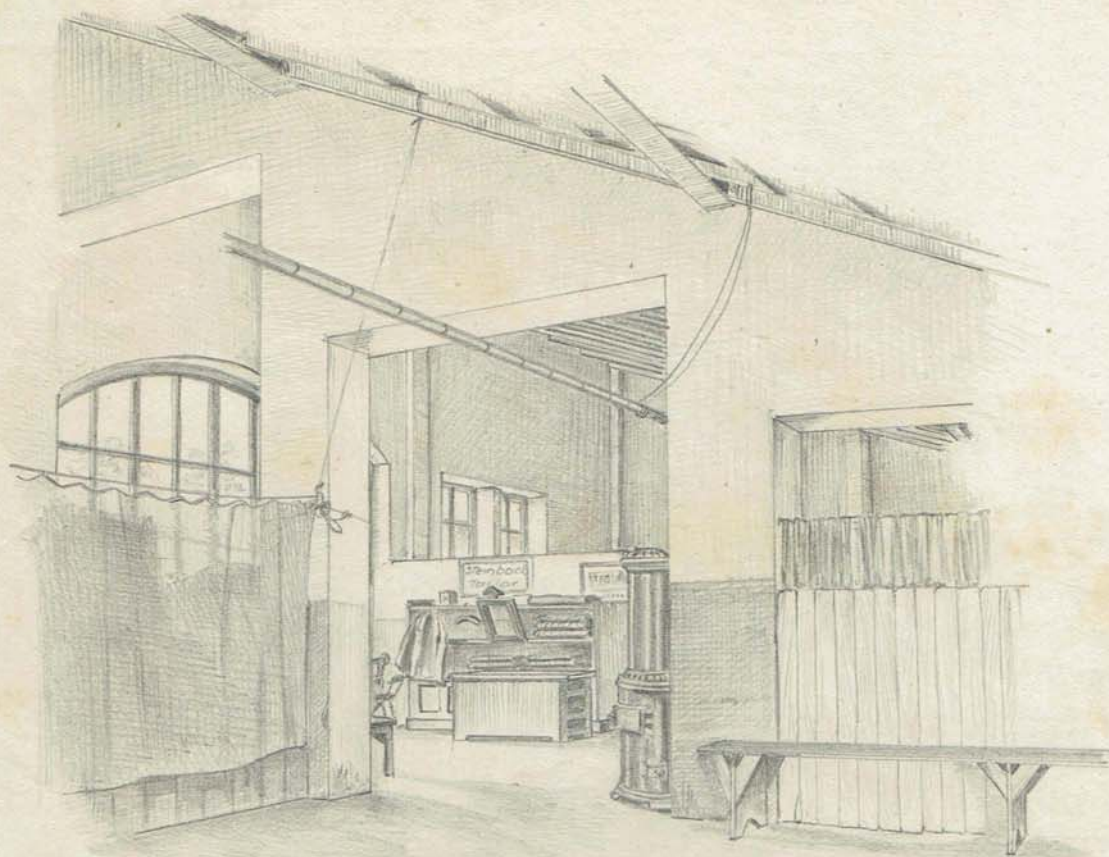
Sketched by British Architect, C.M.A. Whitehouse, Not dated.





# The Taylors Shop, Grand Stand Hall

Sketched by British Architect, C.M.A. Whitehouse, dated 21/8/1915.



THE TAILORS SHOP  
GRAND STAND HALL

CMAW/  
21-8-15