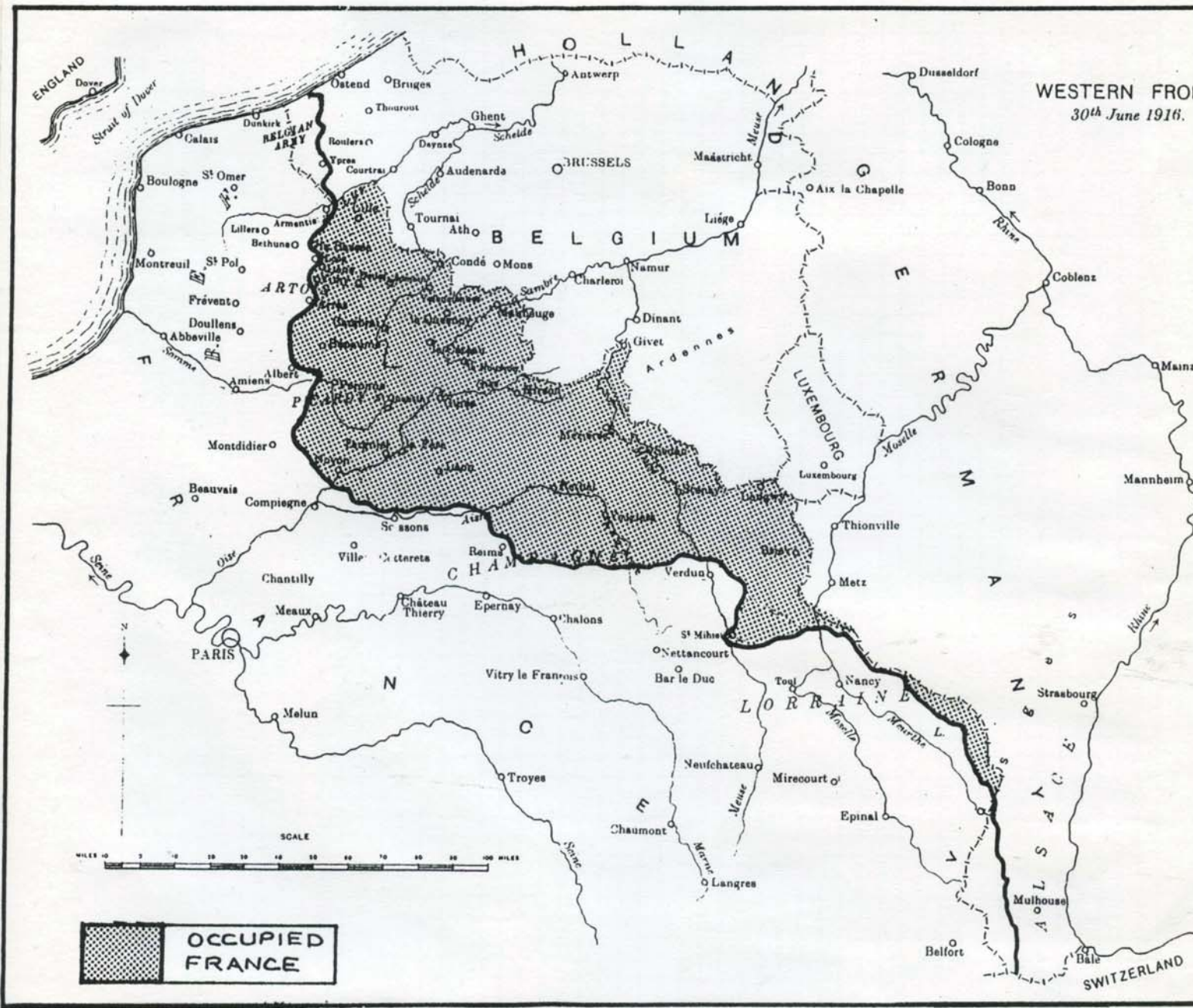


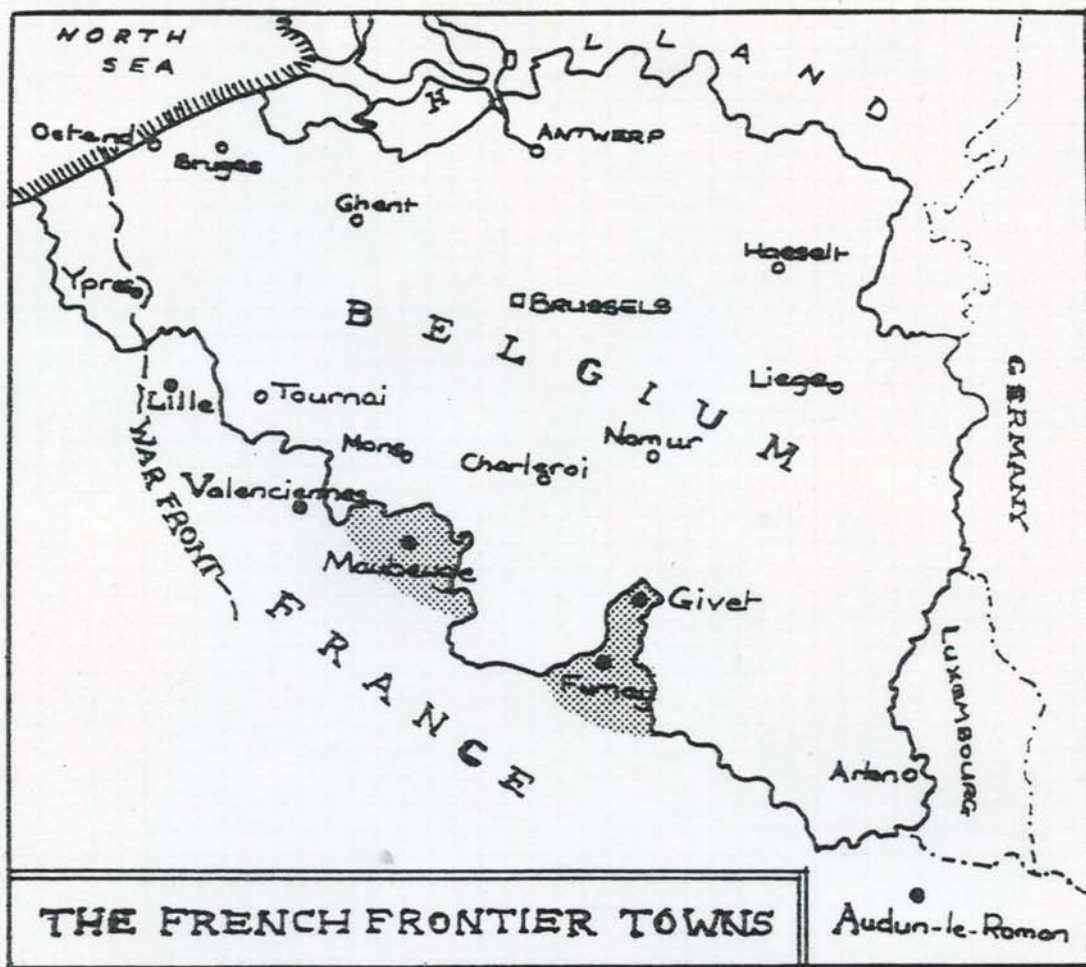
# THE GERMAN OCCUPATION OF NORTHERN FRANCE WORLD WAR I

by R. T. Harrison



Map showing limit of German occupation

Most of occupied northern France remained within the Etappen Zone but the regions of Givet, Fumay and Maubeuge were considered sufficiently safe to be attached instead to the General Government Postal Administration of Belgium

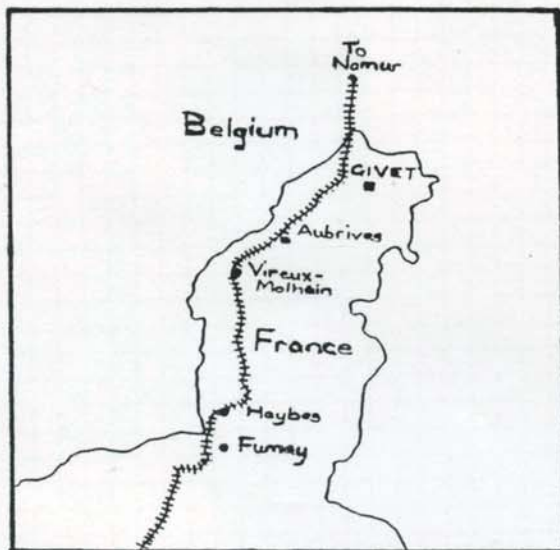


Map showing the general location of  
French Frontier towns

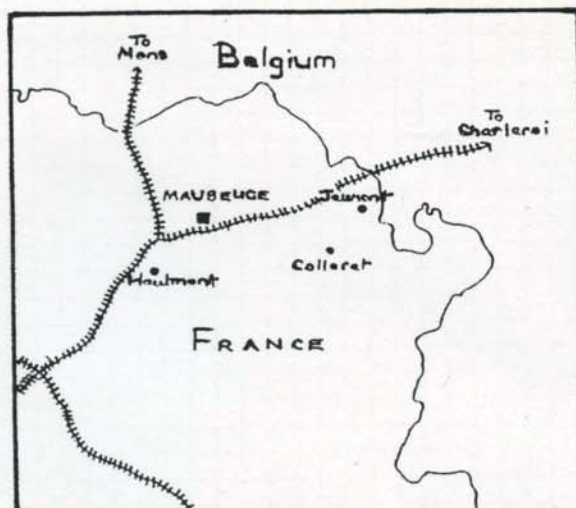
Details of Post Offices

By a compilation of various sources and with the help of the late Ted Coles of the France and Colonies Philatelic Society, the following towns are listed as having Post Office status for civilian use during the war:

Town	Date Opened	Date Closed	Main Office
Aubrives	11.3.16	31.1.18	Givet
Givet	15.1.15	31.1.18	
Vireux-Molhain	1.1.16	31.1.18	
Fumay	30.6.15	31.1.18	
Haybes	30.6.15	31.1.18	
Maubeuge	1.6.15	6.10.16	Maubeuge
Hautmont	30.4.16	6.10.16	
Jeumont	30.4.16	6.10.16	
Colleret	15.9.16	6.10.16	



Map of Givet District



Map of Maubeuge District

### Postal Cancellations Used

The table below lists the known cancellations, together with the relative scarcity. As would be expected, it is the three main towns of Givet, Fumay and Maubeuge which are the most frequently encountered but it should be stressed that none of these cancellations are commonly found being of interest to both Belgian and French collectors.

Town	Type	Diameter	Inscription	Relative Scarcity
Aubrives	German 'Bridge'	26.5mm	Aubrives//(Frankreich)	6
Colleret	French Single Circle	27mm	Colleret//Nord	20
Fumay	German 'Bridge'	27mm	Fumay//(Frankreich)	5
Givet	German 'Bridge'	24mm	Givet//(Belgien)	15
	German 'Bridge'	24mm	Givet//*a*	5
	German 'Bridge'	24mm	Givet//***	4
	Belgian Railway Cancel		Givet No. 2	?
Hautmont	French Single Circle	24mm	Hautmont//Nord	17
	French Double Circle	24mm	Hautmont//Nord	17
Haybes	German 'Bridge'	27mm	Haybes//(Frankreich)	7
Jeumont	German 'Bridge'	27mm	Jeumont//(Frankreich)	16
Maubeuge	German 'Bridge'	27mm	Maubeuge//*(Frankreich)*	6
	Straight Line	29 x 5mm	Maubeuge	-
Sars-Poteries	German 'Bridge'	27mm	Sars-Poteries//*(Frankreich)*	20
Vireux-Molhain	German 'Bridge'	28.5mm	Vireux-Molhain//(Frankreich)	6
	German 'Bridge'	28.5mm	Vireux-Molhain//*(Frankreich)*	8
	German 'Bridge'	28.5mm	Vireux-Molhain/2//*(Frankreich)*	9

Note - the higher the number, the greater the scarcity

'AUBRIVES'

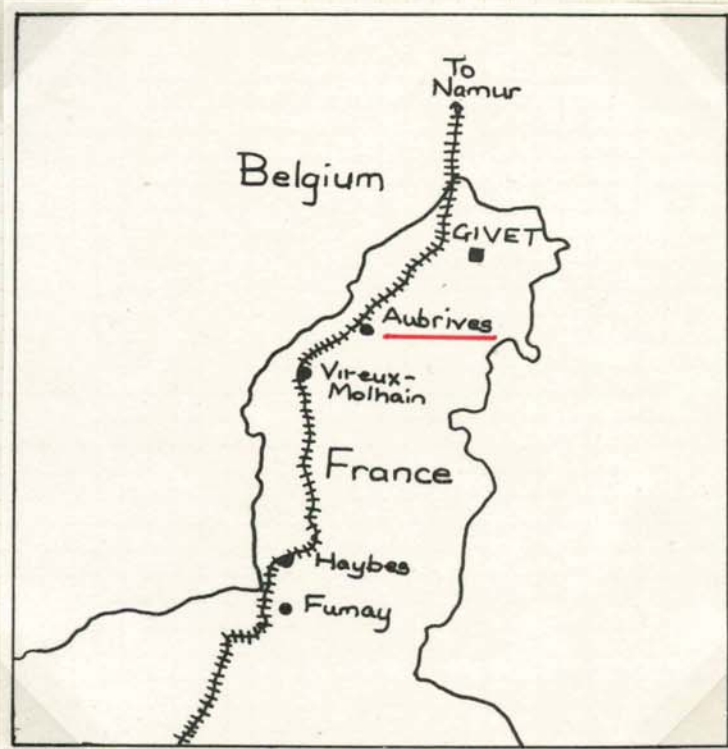
Postal Stationery Card from AUBRIVES dated 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1917  
Cancelled AUBRIVES (FRANKREICH). Registered at Givet.



The Post Office at Aubrives was opened on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1916 and closed on 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 1918.

Givet acted as the main office to which this card was sent for censorship.

Note - this part cover is from the LEJAEK collection addressed to TROIS PONTS.



FUMAY (FRANKREICH)

Letter Card from FUMAY to BRUSSELS dated 14<sup>th</sup> Aug 1916

Added adhesives stamps and Registration label.

Cancelled FUMAY (FRANKREICH) C.D.S.

Fumay was one of the French border towns which came under the Government General of Belgium and had its own postmark.

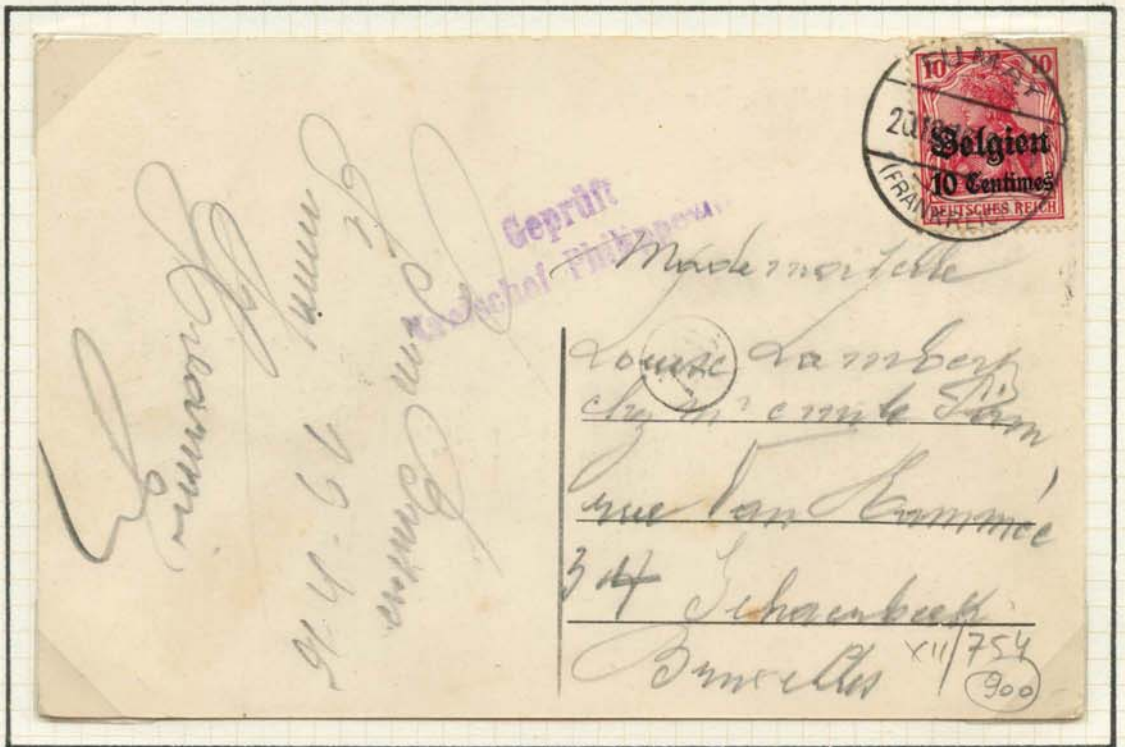
Backstamped arrival Brussel 1<sup>e</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> August.

Oval censor cachet of NAMUR



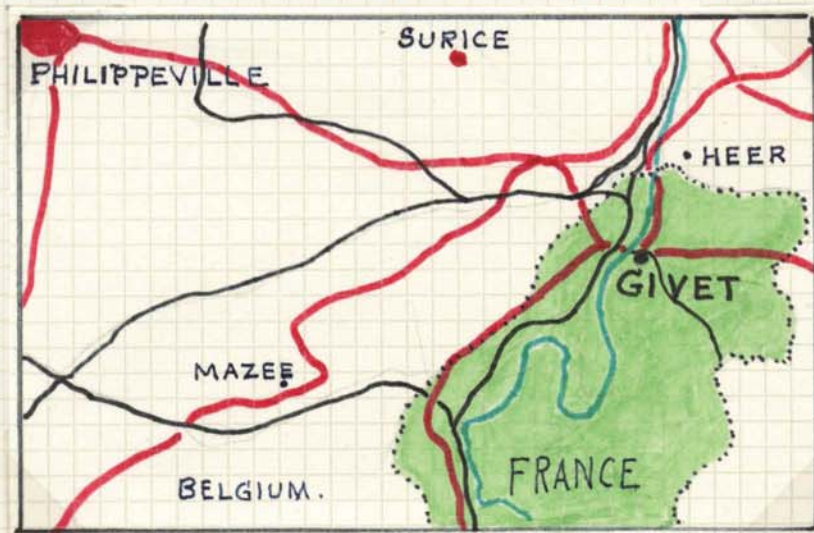
FUMAY

Postcard from FUMAY to BRUSSELS dated 20<sup>th</sup> December 1916.  
Franked with 10 Pfennig Germania overprinted Belgien 10 Centimes.  
Cancelled FUMAY (Frankreich)  
Censor mark Geprüft Kreischeff Phillipeville.  
Brussels postmans mark 748 in circle.



GIVET (BELGIEN)

Envelope from **AUBRIVES** to **CHARLEROI** dated **15<sup>th</sup> April 1915**.  
Franked with **10 Pfennig Germania** overprinted '**Belgien 10 Centimes**'  
Cancelled **GIVET (BELGIEN)**. This canceller was in use between  
**15<sup>th</sup> January 1915** and **31<sup>st</sup> May 1915** then withdrawn due to GIVET  
being in **FRANCE** not **BELGIUM**.  
Censor cachet '**Gepuft Kreischef Philippeville**'



GIVET (BELGIEN)

Envelope from GIVET to BRUSSELS dated 18<sup>th</sup> April 1915.

Franked with pair of 5 Pfennig Germania overprinted 'Belgien - 5 Centimes'

Cancelled GIVET (BELGIEN) bridge-type C.D.S.

This canceller was in use between 15<sup>th</sup> January 1915 and 31<sup>st</sup> May 1915

then withdrawn due to GIVET being in France not Belgium.

Censor cachet 'Geprüft Kreischef Philippeville' with initials of censor.





GIVET (BELGIEN)

German Postcard from GIVET (FRANCE) to DARMSTADT dated 11<sup>th</sup> May 1915

Franked with 10 Pfennig 'Germania'

Cachet 'KRIEGSGEFANGENENSENDUNG' - Prisoner-Of-War Letter-in violet.

Canceller 'GIVET (BELGIEN)' of German bridge-type, used to cancel the stamp and repeated clear of the stamp.

This canceller was withdrawn due to GIVET being in France not Belgium.

In use 15<sup>th</sup> January 1915 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 1915.



Card from Prisoner at Fumay to Prisoner in Camp at Darmstadt.



'GIVET'

Envelope from GIVET to METZ dated 29<sup>th</sup> July 1917.

Franked with 14 x 2½ Pfennig of Bavaria plus one 5 Pfennig 'Germania' Registration label.

Cancelled 'GIVET a'

Backstamped arrival METZ 30<sup>th</sup> July.

Sender - Telegraphen Bauführer Namur - 6<sup>th</sup> Army Area.



'GIVET'  
\* d \*

Envelope from FROMELENNES to BRUSSELS dated 15<sup>th</sup> May 1917.  
Franked with 15 Pfening 'Germania' overprinted 'Belgien 15 Cent'  
Cancelled 'Givet \* d \*'  
Oval censor mark of Givet.

Fromelennes was a french village close to Givet.



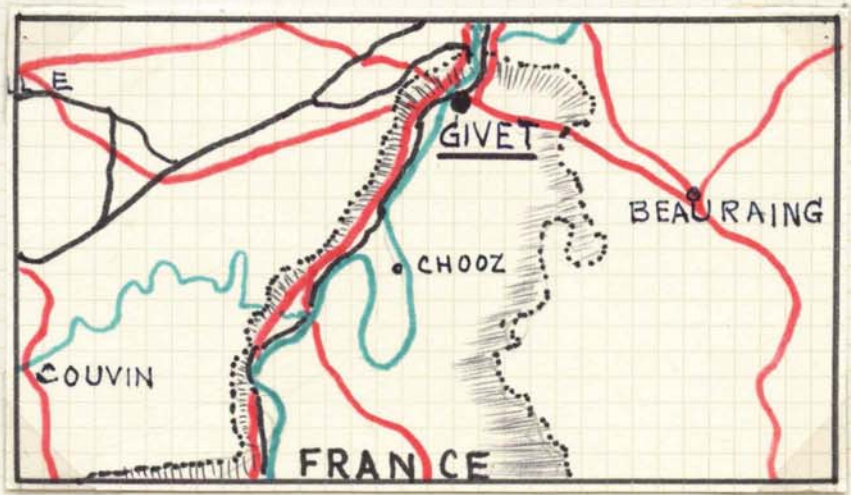
'GIVET'  
\* a \*

Envelope from GIVET to BRUSSELS dated 1<sup>st</sup> August 1917.  
Franked with 5 Pfennig and 10 Pfennig Germania overprinted 5 and 10 Cent.  
Cancelled 'GIVET + a \*'  
Rectangular military censor cachet Nr 1 of GIVET.



'GIVET'  
+ a +

Envelope from HAVERSIN to BRUSSELS dated 19<sup>th</sup> July 1915.  
Franked with 10 Pfennig Germania overprinted 'Belgien 10 Centimes'  
Cancelled 'Givet + a +'  
Censor mark 'Geprüft Kreischef Philippeville'



GIVET  
\* a \*

Postal Stationery Card from FELENNE to TOURNAI dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 1915.

Felenne was a Depot-Relais office in Belgium but during WWI came under the office of GIVET (France).

Censor mark of Philippeville in violet ink.

Arrival TOURNAI 2<sup>nd</sup> October.



'GIVET'   
\* \* \*

Letter Card from **VIREUX-MOLHAIN** to **BRUSSELS** dated **14<sup>e</sup> August 1916**.  
Additional stamps for Registration fee.  
Censor mark 'Geprüft Kreis Hof Philippeville'  
Back stamped arrival Brussels 14<sup>e</sup> August.

COLLECTA: PHILATELIC PUBLISHERS LTD STORRINGTON SUSSEX PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN



'HEER'

Envelope from **HEER** to **BRUSSELS** undated.

Franked with **5 Pfennig** and **10 Pfennig** Germania overprinted **5** and **10 Centimes**

Censor mark used as a cancellation on stamps - **GIVET**.

'MILITARISCHE POSTUBERWACHUNGSTELLE \* - GIVET - \*' in violet ink.

Heer was a village just inside Belgium near Givet

Postmans delivery mark 9 in circle of Brussels.





HAYBES (Frankreich)

Private Postal Stationery Card from HAYBES to BRUSSELS dated 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1917.  
Cancelled HAYBES (Frankreich) bridge-type canceller.

Haybes was a french town near the Belgian frontier which came under the control of the Government General of Belgium.

This office was opened on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1916 and closed on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1918.



JEUMONT

FRENCH FRONTIER TOWNS.

Envelope from MAUBEUGE to NAMUR dated 8<sup>th</sup> August 1916.

Franked with Germania overprints 5 Centimes and 10 Centimes (Oc 2/3)

Stamps cancelled JEUMONT (FRANKREICH) although envelope bears an oval censor cachet of Maubeuge.

Backstamped arrival NAMUR NAMEN 10<sup>th</sup> August.



MAUBEUGE

Picture Postcard MAUBEUGE (Porte de France) to BRUSSELS dated 30 July 1915.

Cancelled 'MAUBEUGE \*(FRANKREICH)\*'

Dusseldorf violet unit cachet.

Maubeuge office open 1<sup>st</sup> June 1915 - 5<sup>th</sup> October 1916.



Herrn Heinrich Tommler, Brussels

Fieldpost

Maubeuge 29.7.15

Please forgive me for not writing until today. Well, again my most heartfelt thanks for your exceptional guided tour through Brussels. I hope you are as well as I am. Have you, in the meantime, guided anybody else? I hope I shall again have the opportunity to visit there. If I were to visit Brussels again I will most certainly call on you.

Warmest greetings with Heil and Victory.

Christian Bering.

MAUBEUGE

Feldpost Envelope from MAUBEUGE to GERMANY dated 27 July 1915.  
Unit cachet '2 Landst. JÄGER KOMP VII AK MAUBEUGE' in green ink.  
Cancelled 'MAUBEUGE (FRANKREICH)'



'MAUBEUGE'

Envelope from **BAVEU** to **LIEGE** dated **16 April 1916**

Franked with **10 Pfennig** Germania overprinted '**Belgien 10 Centimes**'

Cancelled '**MAUBEUGE (FRANKREICH)**'

Oval censor cachet of Maubeuge.



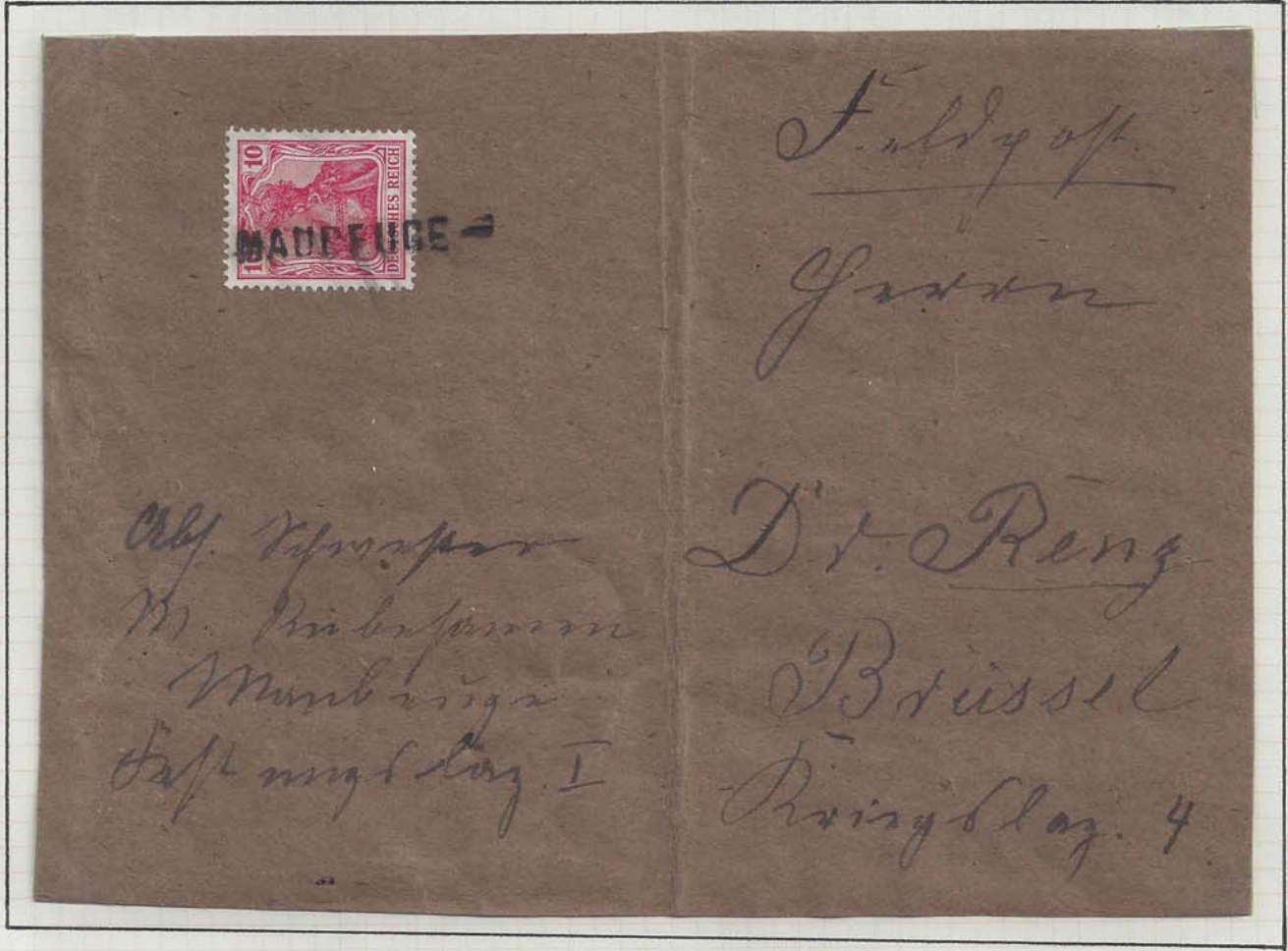
'MAUBEUGE'

Envelope from MAUBEUGE to BRUSSELS dated 28 August 1916.  
 Franked with 3 x 5 Pfennig Germania overprinted 'Belgien 5 Centimes'  
 Cancelled 'MAUBEUGE (FRANKREICH)'  
 Oval censor cachet 'Postamt Maubeuge'



'MAUBEUGE'

Front from MAUBEUGE to BRUSSELS undated.  
 Franked with un-overprinted 10 Pf 'Germania'  
 Cancelled by MAUBEUGE straight-line handstamp.  
 Marked -  
 Sender - Sister M. RÜBESAMEN  
 Maubeuge  
 P.O.W. Camp 1



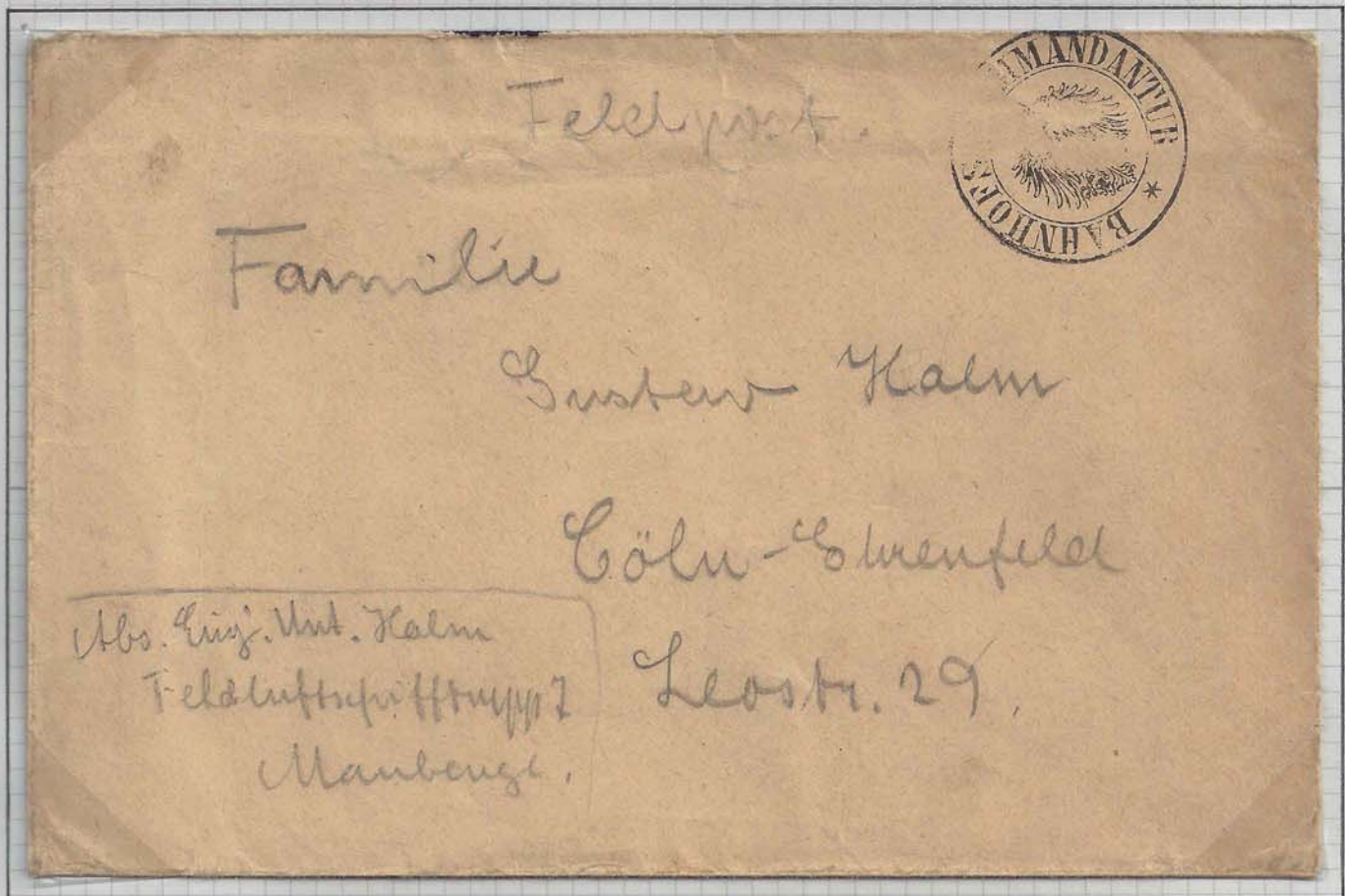
MAUBEUGE.

Feldpost envelope MAUBEUGE to COLOGNE undated.

Cancelled BAHNHOF'S KOMMANDANTUR \* of Maubeuge.

Free franchise - no censor markings or backstamps.

Sender of FELDLUFTSCHIFFGRUPPE - MAUBEUGE. (Airship group)





'MAUBEUGE'

Bank Envelope from MAUBEUGE to VALENCIENNES dated 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 1918.  
 Franked with pair of 10 Pfennig Germania over-printed '10 Cent'  
 Cancelled by bank cachet and 'Geprüft P.U. St.' boxed.  
 Rectangular bank cachet with serial NO 15621.  
 Bank censor cachet in bottom corner.

Backstamped CRÉDIT-LYONNAIS MAUBEUGE 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 1918.

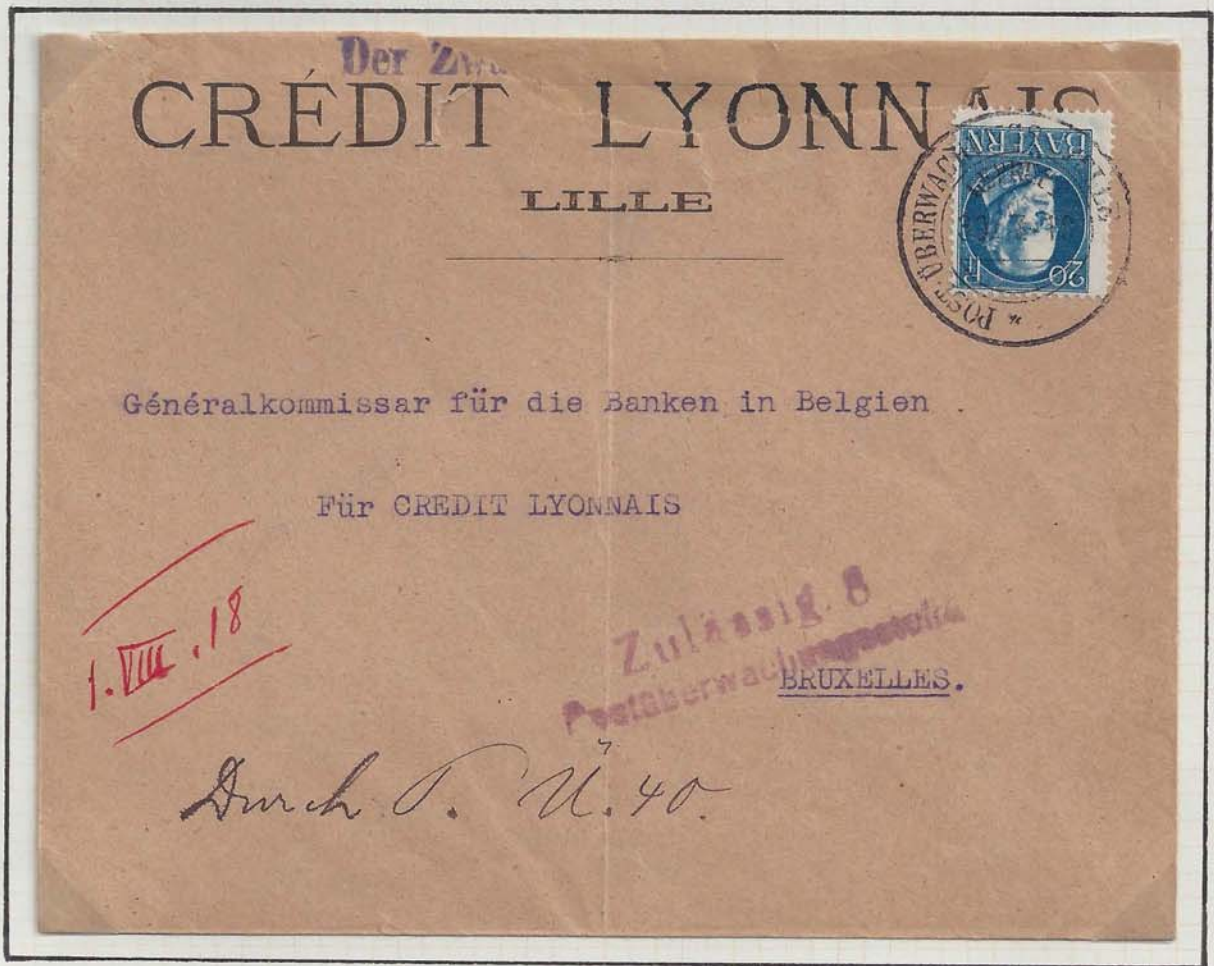


VIREUX-MOLHAIN

Express registered envelope to **STUTTGART** dated **30 January 1917**.  
 Franked with selection of overprinted Germania stamps.  
 Cancelled with handstamp of **VIREUX-MOLHAIN (Frankreich)**  
 Backstamped arrival Stuttgart 11<sup>th</sup> February.



Damaged envelope from LILLE to BRUSSELS dated 1st August 1918.  
 Franked with 20PF stamp of Bavaria. Cancelled 'POST UBERWACHUNGSSTELLE  
 - ' Geprüft. Original word JOURNAL erased for security reasons.  
 Manuscript 'Durch P. U. 40' (Through Post inspection 40)  
 Censor 'ZULÄSSIG 8....'



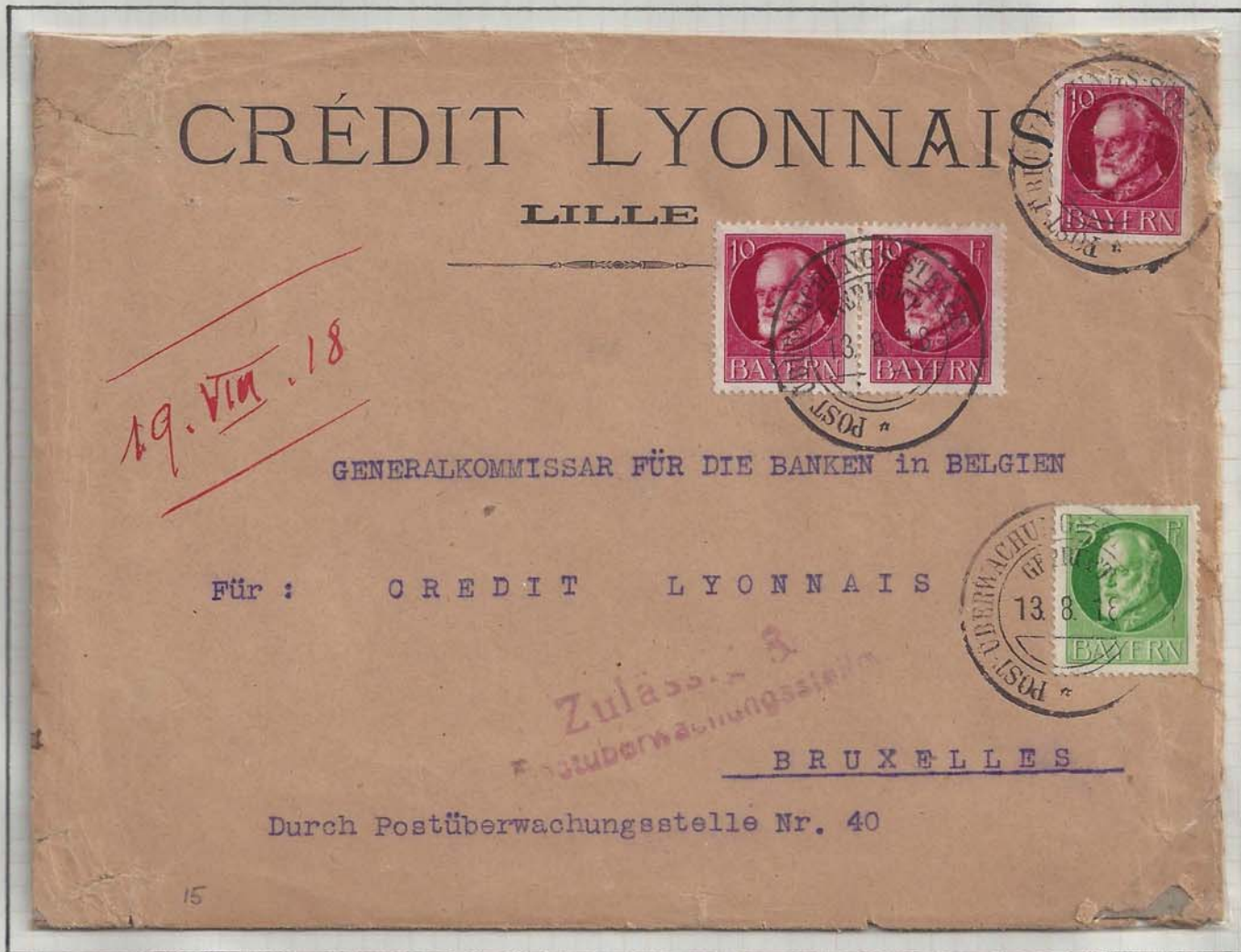
LILLE.

Envelope from LILLE to BRUSSELS dated 13<sup>th</sup> August 1918.

Franked with 3x 10 Pf and 5 Pf of 1914 Bavarian issue.

Cancelled 'POST ÜBERWACHUNGSTELLE ..... ' of 6<sup>th</sup> Army. The word Tournai was removed for security reasons.

2-line censor cachet.



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF VALENCIENNES  
'LOCAL POST'

Letter from VALENCIENNES to FAMAIS dated 18<sup>th</sup> Sept 1914.

Franked with the special stamp issued by the local CHAMBER OF COMMERCE and in use from 8<sup>th</sup> September to October 30<sup>th</sup> 1914.

Cancelled by the chambers oval cachet and straight-line date stamp.

This postal service was set up with the approval of the German Occupation during the early days of war and was run by the VALENCIENNES Chamber of Commerce solely for the Town and suburbs including Famais.



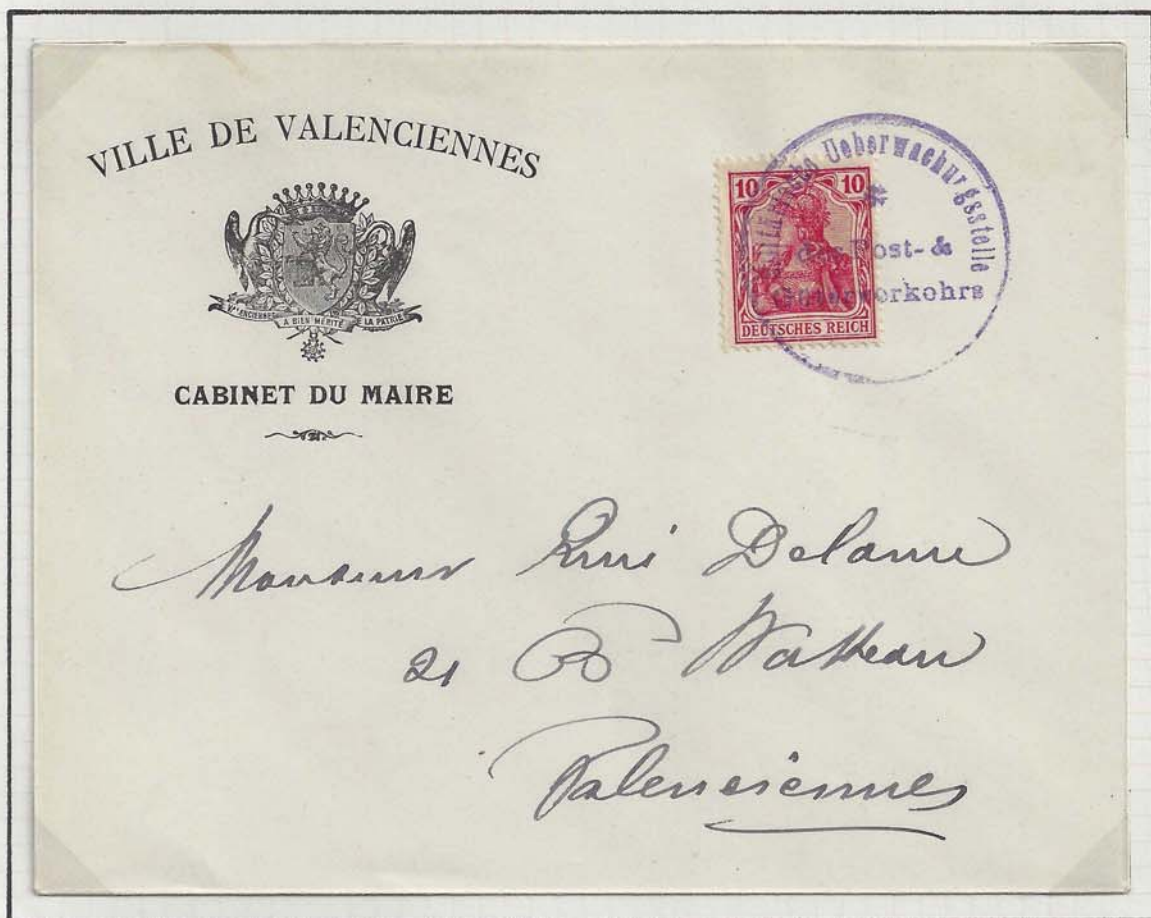
VALENCIENNES

Envelope from VALENCIENNES to VALENCIENNES undated.

Franked with 10 Pfennig 'Germania' - no overprint.

Stamp cancelled 'Militarische Ueberwachungsstelle des Post & Guterverkehrs' in violet ink. (Post and goods control)

Official town envelope of Mayor's Office.



VALENCIENNES.

Cover from VALENCIENNES to BRUSSELS undated.

Franked with 5 Pfennig and 15 Pfennig 'Germania'.

Cancelled "Zulässig - Militärische Ueberwachungsstelle - des Post- und Güterverkehrs"

- cachet repeated at bottom (Goods traffic censor cachet)

Valenciennes bank cachet and manuscript confirmation.



CAISSE INDUSTRIELLE DU NORD  
L. DUPONT & C<sup>ie</sup>, à Valenciennes

*Inhalt anbelangt*  
**Bankaufsichtsstelle  
Valenciennes.**  
*No. 4144*



*Crédit Lyonnais*

**Zulässig  
Militärische Ueberwachungsstelle  
des Post- und Güterverkehrs**

*Bruxelles*

*I 1917*

'VALENCIENNES'

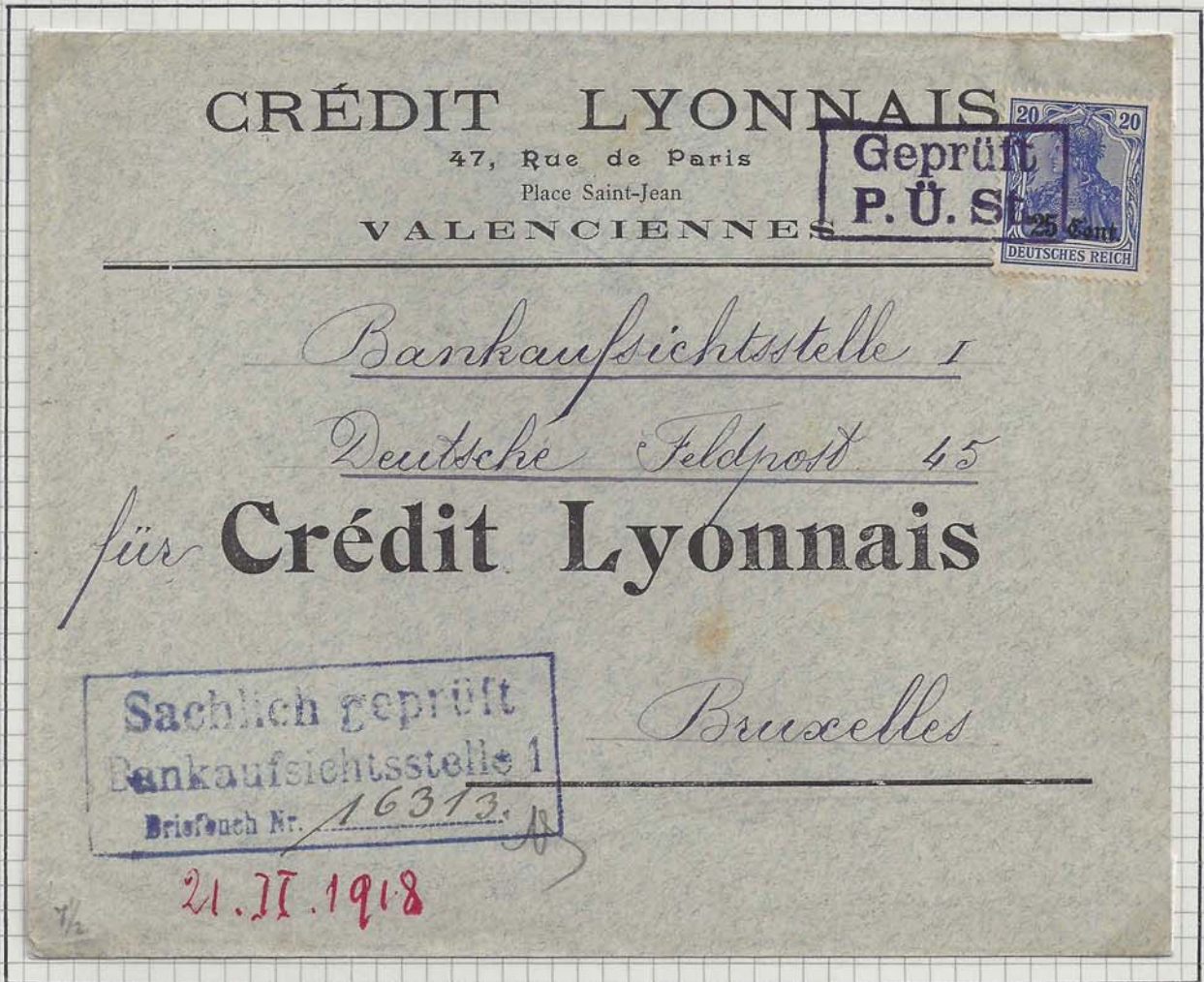
Bank Envelope from VALENCIENNES to BRUSSELS dated 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 1918.

Franked with 20 Pfennig 'Germania' overprinted '25 Cent'

Cancelled 'Geprüft P. Ü. St' in rectangle.

Bank censor cachet.

Backstamped 'CREDIT LYONNAIS 11<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1918 VALENCIENNES'



1-3  
←