

AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN FORCES IN WORLD WAR I

This exhibit tells the story of the Imperial & Royal forces during the First World War. When the heir to the throne was assassinated in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, Austria declared war on Serbia after a month, triggering the broadest conflict ever seen up to that time and ending in the disintegration of the empire at the end of October 1918.

The story begins with mobilization and the organization of the fieldpost system, including examples of postal paper issued to pay fees not covered by the military free frank and for civil use in the occupied areas. Mail is shown from Serbia, Poland, Montenegro, Albania, Romania, Italy and Ukraine, as well as from units in the territory of its allies -- Germany, Bulgaria and Turkey -- and on the Western Front. Occupation mail is organized chronologically by area and alphabetically within areas. Examples are shown from all three branches of the military, including land, sea and air services.



Cover from the abortive first Austrian invasion of Serbia. Provisional postmark was used on Bosnian stamps at Loznica from 17 November to 9 December 1914, when the Serbians successfully counterattacked. Two registered covers from this period recorded.

The quantity of military mail produced during this era was vast, considering that the Dual Monarchy had more than 7 million men under arms for over four years. However, material from many of the smaller locations is scarce and some, especially from areas occupied late in the war, is rare. Nearly all of the markings of the Etappenpost system of "permanent" military post offices (with location names in the postmarks) established in areas administered by Austria-Hungary are shown. Mail from Austrian forces in other areas used the Feldpost system (with station numbers in the postmarks) or the post offices of its allies already located in those territories.

AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN FORCES IN WORLD WAR I

PLAN OF EXHIBIT

A. Austria-Hungary:

1. Mobilization
2. Postal Paper
3. Organization:
 - Army
 - Navy
 - Air Service

B. Austrian Forces in Allied Countries:

1. Germany
2. Turkey
3. Bulgaria

C. Austrian Occupation of Other Countries:

1. Serbia - 1914
2. Poland - 1914
3. Belgium & N. France - 1914-1918
4. Poland II - 1915-1918
5. Serbia II - 1915-1918
6. Montenegro - 1916-1918
7. Albania - 1916-1918
8. Romania - 1916-1918
9. Italy - 1917-1918
10. Ukraine - 1918

D. Epilogue

Occupations are shown chronologically based on the initial Austrian activity in each country.



Cover from the abortive first Austrian invasion of Poland.

A provisional postmark was used on Austrian stamps at Miechow from only 5 to 14 September 1914, when the troops were withdrawn to meet the threat from the Russian invasion of Galicia.

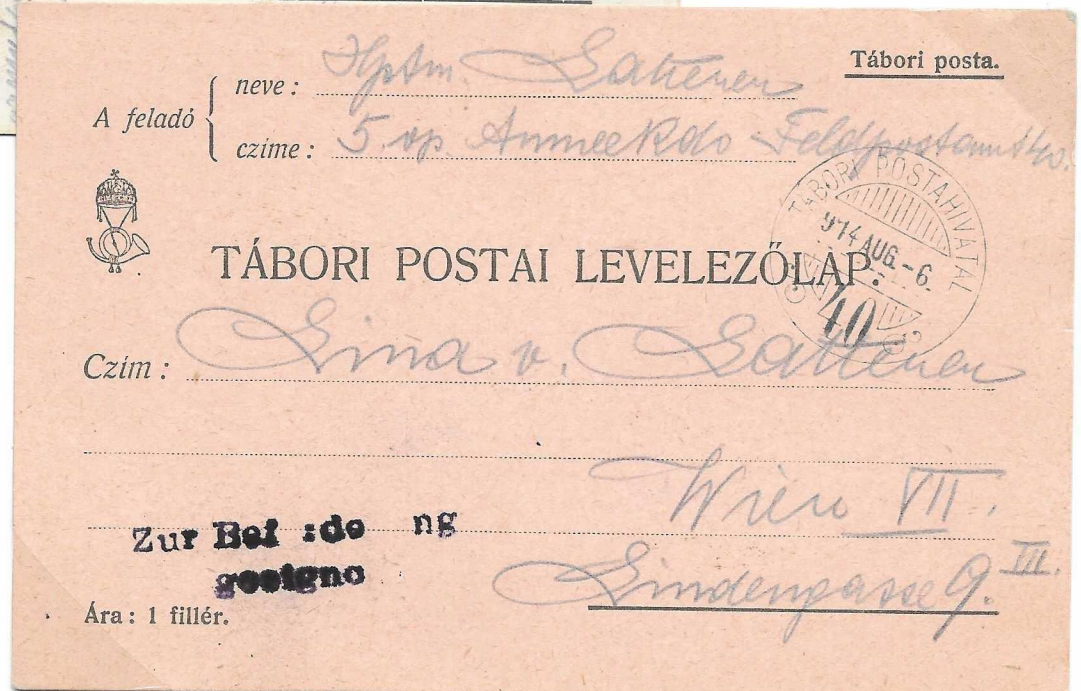
OVERVIEW

World War I was triggered by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, by a Serbian gunman in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. In retribution, Austria-Hungary made a number of political demands on Serbia which, when they were not met, led to the declaration of war on 28 July 1914. Based on long-standing mobilization planning, the fieldpost service was to be activated in four days. Thus, the card dated 1 August represents the first day of free mail for the military forces (two days before the ERD shown in the Clement handbook).

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY Mobilization

Oderberg
1 August 1914

Tabori Postahivatal 40
6 August 1914



Initially, military cards and letters were put into the mail stream at the nearest civil post office. Fieldpost cancellations were introduced in the ensuing weeks; lower card is the earliest example of an FPO marking -- in this case a Hungarian version -- (dated ten days before the ERD in Clement).

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Mobilization

Theresienstadt
2 August 1914

Jagerndorf
3 August 1914

Budapest
4 August 1914



As men were called up to their units, their mail was handled through the existing civil postal system. The volume was small at first, so field post material dated in August 1914 is especially sought after by military collectors.

Imperial Russia threatened to come to the aid of Serbia, so the Austro-Hungarian mobilization against Russia began on 4 August 1914, with war being declared two days later. The first Austrian invasions began on 12 August against Serbia and on 18 August against Russian Poland.

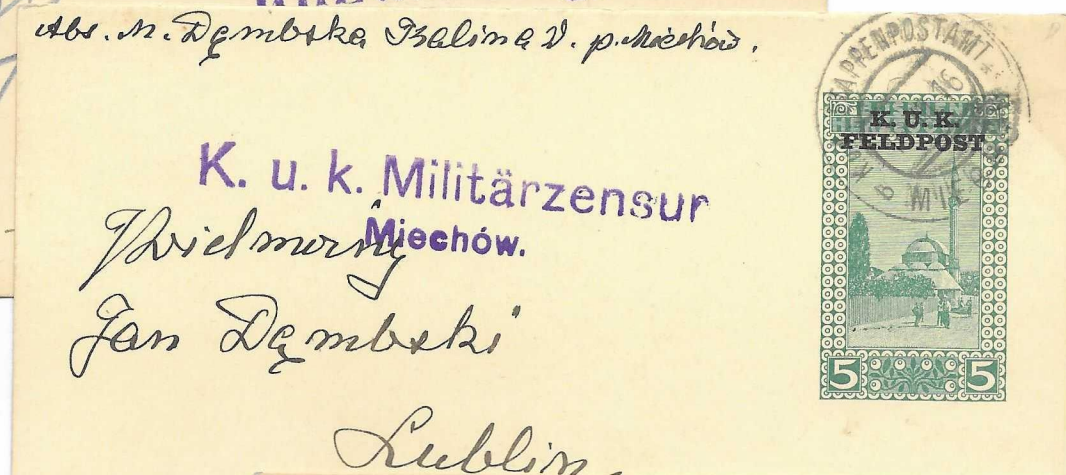
Because of the large number of troops involved, fieldpost cards were printed in large quantities beginning early in the war and are, thus, extremely common. Among the more unusual are the Bosnian postal cards and letter sheets overprinted "Portofrei" signifying free of postage. Most of these were used within Bosnia, although the postal card above was sent from the Italian front.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Postal Paper

Nowo Aleksandrya
28 March 1916

Miechow
19 March 1916

Cetinje
2 March 1917



The Etappenpost system was available to handle mail from military personnel as well as civilians. In order to meet the demand for stationery, Bosnian postal cards were overprinted in 1915 and 1916. Later, in October 1916 when the post card rate was increased to 8 heller, a definitive card was issued.

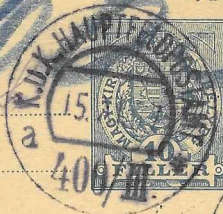
K.u.K. Feldpostamt 311
19 October 1915

K.u.K. Hauptfeldpostamt 400/III
15 November 1917



Herrn

Franz Berlekamp, Priv.

Feldpostamt Nr. <i>400/III</i>	98	remni list.	Raktár könyv vagy kézbesítő könyv folyó száma: Tekuci broj skladištnika ili arhive knjiže:
Csatolva drb árubevallás vagy más okmány. Priloženo kom. očitovanja robe ili inih izprava.		Franko <i>2 K - f</i>	
Érték: — Vriednost: K f			
A küldemény Postáljate { neme } vrst } tartalma } sadržaj }			
Czim } Naslov } <i>Gorh. Paula Fax</i>			
Rendeltetési hely } Odrediste } <i>Novogradiska</i>			
Kerület, városrész, utca, házszám } Okružje, dio grada, ulica, kućni broj }			
Utolsó posta — Zadnja pošta			
Postai előjegyzések. — Poštanske zabilježbe.			
Súly } kg gr. Teжина }		Porto : K f ✓ Postarina : " Értesítési v. kéz. díj : " Doglaszina ili dostavnina : " Összeg : K f Ukupno :	

számlázható magára a csomag göngyöltetére írni. — A csomagra és a szállítólevélre írt címnek teljesen meg kell egyeznie. — A felrakott címet naplósíttal az omot zamotkta. — Naslov na zamotku mora se posvema slagati s naslovom na odpremnom listu.

On 28 April 1915, a provisional issue of overprints reading "K.u.K. Feldpost" was made on the regular issue of Bosnia in order to provide stamps for the payment of postal fees -- mostly on registered letters and parcels -- in the occupied territories. On 1 July 1915, the new definitive series was issued depicting Emperor Franz Josef. The high values of these sets paying proper rates on covers and parcel cards are scarce and sought after by specialists.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Postal Paper

K.u.K. Etappenpostamt 348
2 September 1918

K.u.K. Feldpostamt 436
26 October 1918

12 h

Feldpostamt Nr. **348** **383** ESSE

Gattung *Kisten* Inhalt *Lebensmittel aus Rumänien* Wert K h

An *Fräulein* *Kathilde Biassi*

in *Samac*

Straße, Hausnummer *Slavonien.*

letzte Post (Land)

Die stark um



Gewicht

Abschnitt Aufgabestempel

Feldpostamt Nr. **722** **731**

Gattung *10 Kipfel Lebensmittel* Inhalt

An *K.u.K. 724*

in *Feldpost 297*

Straße, Hausnummer

Letzte Post (Land)

Die stark umrahmten Teile sind vom Absender auszufüllen

Absender *Markteisen*
17 KR.
Sp. 436

Gewicht kg g

Postleitvermerk

Summe K h



The old emperor died on 21 November 1916, and was succeeded by his grandnephew as Emperor Karl. This resulted in the introduction of the third and final set of Feldpost stamps during 1917, which depicted the new monarch. Note extraordinary franking of 22 kronen on lower parcel card.

ARMY

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Organization

K.u.K. Hauptfeldpostamt 22/II
17 April 1916

K.u.K. Etappenpostamt 176
7 April 1916

K.u.K. Feldpostamt 186
27 July 1916



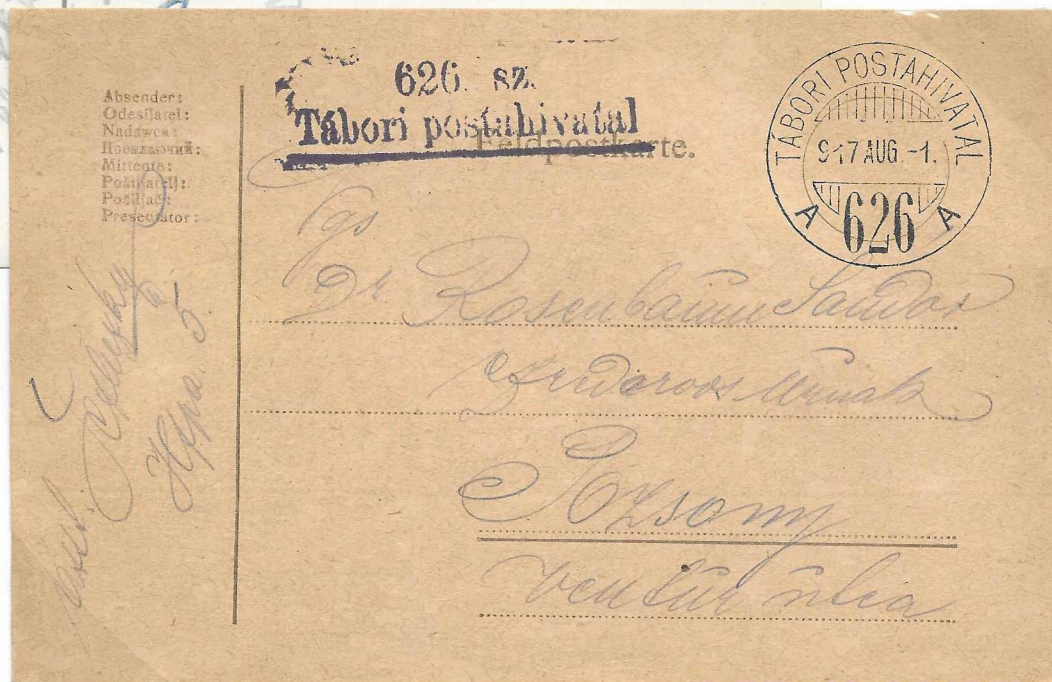
The Austrian field post offices were organized into three classes: Head FPO, Base PO and Field PO. In general, the first two types were stable offices, operating from specific locations. The FPOs were assigned to units and were mobile, shifting location with their assigned troops. In total, about 700 numbered post offices were created by the end of World War I.

**AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Organization**

Tabori Fopostahivatal 18
11 September 1914

Hadtap Postahivatal 167
5 April 1917

Tabori Postahivatal
1 August 1917



Hungarian field post offices were organized into the same three classes as the Austrian: Head FPO, Base PO and Field PO. They were numbered sequentially along with the Austrian offices. Examples of their markings are shown above.

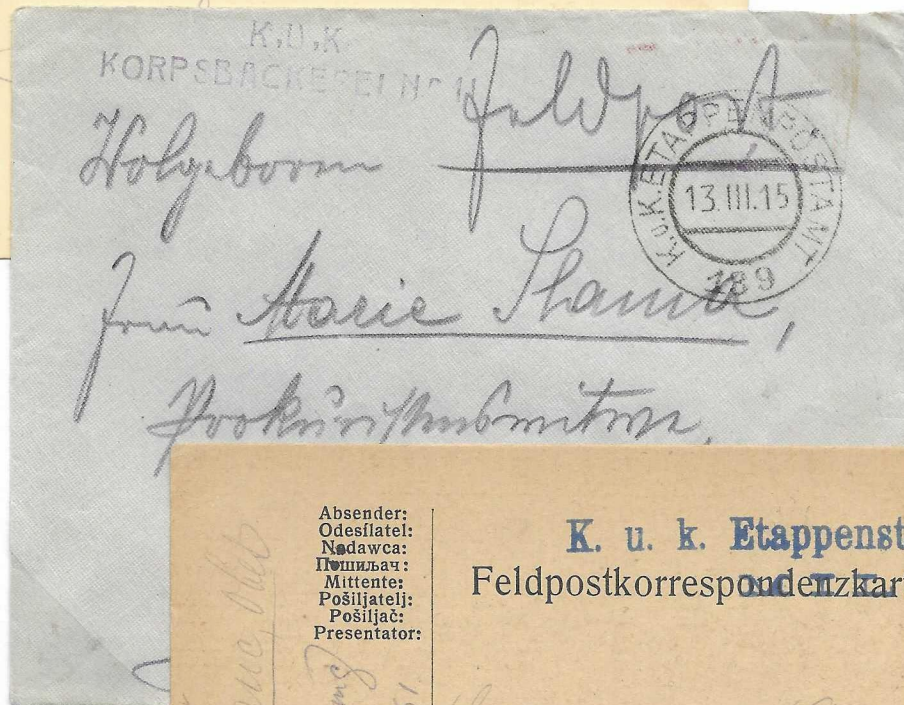
AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

Organization

K.u.K. Hauptfeldpostamt 301
11 April 1916

K.u.K. Etappenpostamt 189
13 March 1915

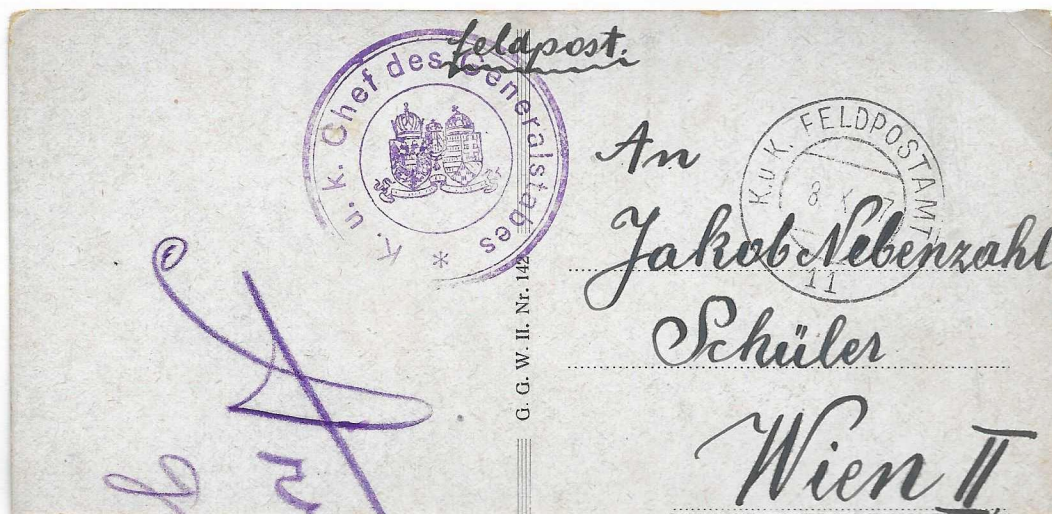
K.u.K. Feldpostamt No. 61
6 October 1914



Field post operations for the troops based in Bosnia-Hercegovina were also organized into the classes of Head FPO, Base PO and Field PO. However, their postmarks differed from those used by the Austrians in that the wording ran essentially all of the way around the dial. Thus, they are easily recognized.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Organization

K.u.K. Feldpostamt 11
8 October 1917
18 July 1918



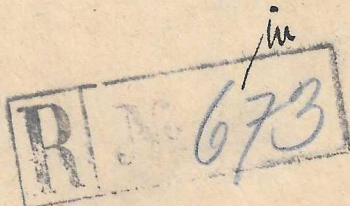
Königl. bulgar. Militärbevollmächtigter
beim k. u. k. Armeeoberkommando.
Feldpostamt Nr. 11.

zum No: 2691

An



dem k. u. k. Militärseelsorgeamt



Wien. IX.

Russ anerkennen

Field post office #11 was assigned to the supreme headquarters of the General Staff. The above cover is very unusual in that it has the imprinted corner card of the Royal Bulgarian Representative to the Imperial and Royal Army High Command.

**AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Organization**

K.u.K. Feldpostamt 2
21 October 1917

K.u.K. Hauptfeldpostamt 650
2 August 1915

K.u.K. Feldpostamt 1064
9 July 1918

Absender:

K. k. Standschützen Bataillon Meran

Feldpostkorrespondenzkarte

An das
Zensuriert
Briefmarkennachschub
E. Prüwer



Häuser K. k. Landsturm
Halle mare komp.
Universität Innsbruck
Innsbruck 1104

K. k. Landsturm-Ersatzkompagnie Innsbruck

Ursé Tami
pi. Fr. Hlinker
Lms. Chors. Loo - Beer



Absender:
Odeslatel:
Nadawca:
Rozumowu:
Mittente:
Poštlatelj:
Poštlatelj:
Presentator:

K. u. k. Feldpostamt 1064

Feldpostkarte.

a. Wahlgeboren Herrn
k. u. k. Generalfeldpostdirektor
Lektionschef Josef von Pasch
Feldpost 51.



Brünn - Mähren
Lochnergasse

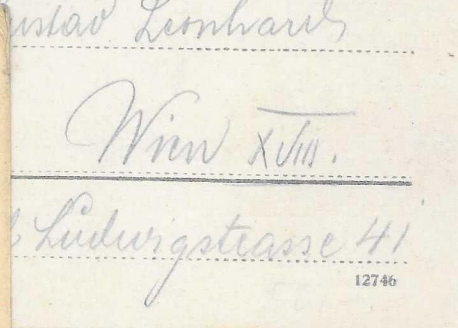
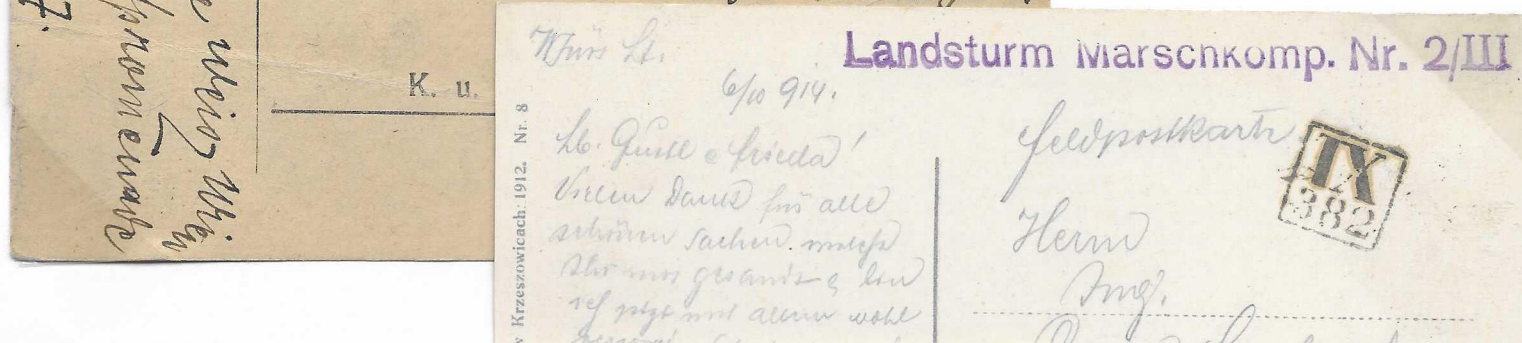
The initial series of numbered military post offices ran from #2 to #650. However, with greater integration of Austrian and German units as the war progressed, especially in Italy and Romania, a new series with higher numbers from 1051 to 1200 was introduced between June and September 1918. These are seen very infrequently.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Organization

I/125
21 November 1917

IX/382
6 October 1914

X/55
8 December 1915



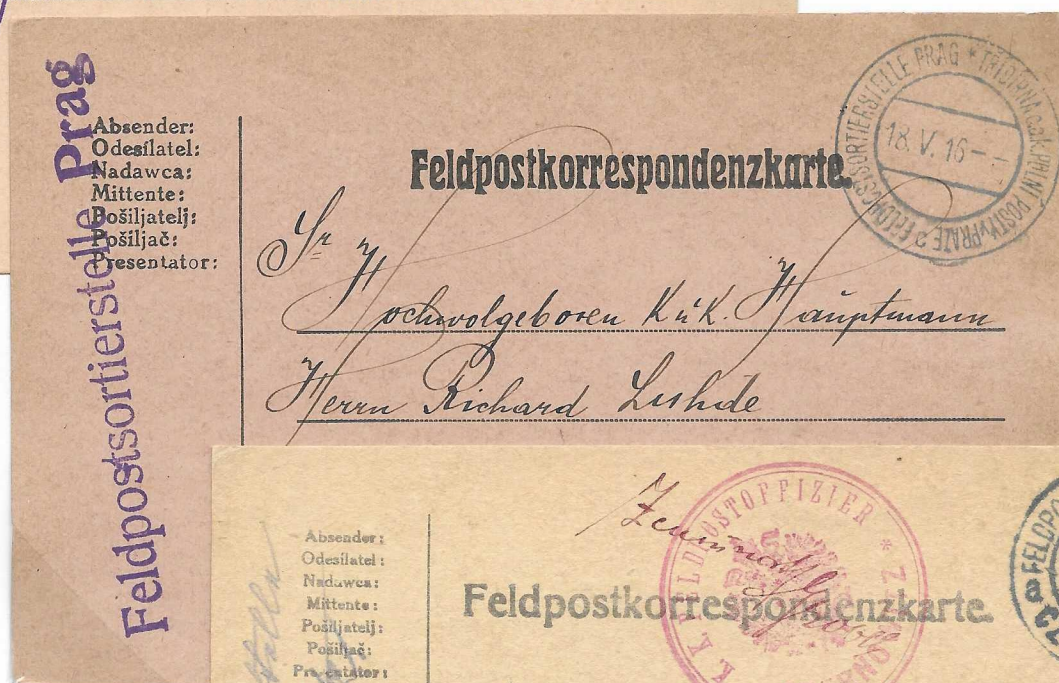
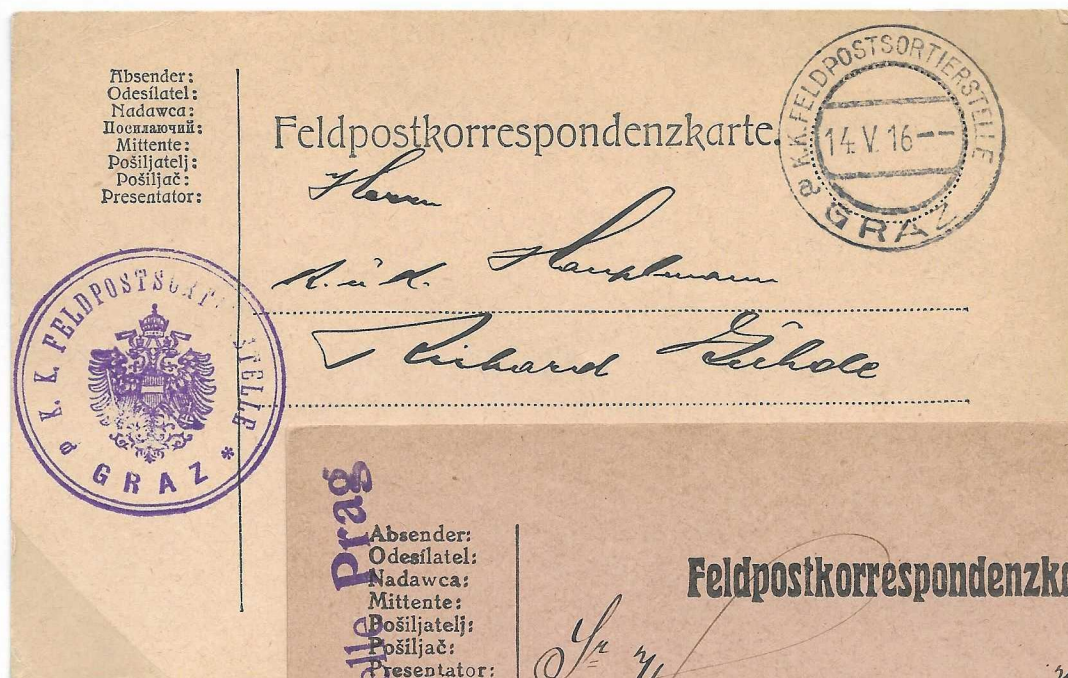
Early in the war, the authorities were concerned about the use on field post of civil postmarks which showed the location of military units. As a result, it was ordered that numbered control markings be used as postmarks for the various provinces/towns. The most widely used examples were IX for Galicia and X for Bukovina, both of which areas were invaded by the Russians. In theory, the use of these devices became unnecessary after numbered FPOs were available, but examples are known from later years. Post card with I/125 marking for Vienna is the only known example of an "I" district marking (unrecorded in Clement and Tranmer).

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Organization

Graz
14 May 1916

Prag
18 May 1916

Czernowitz
8 June 1916



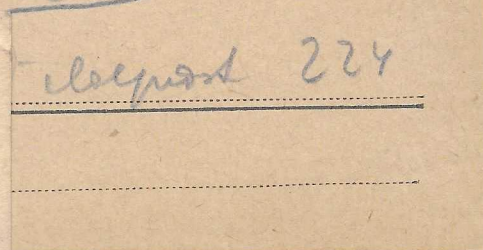
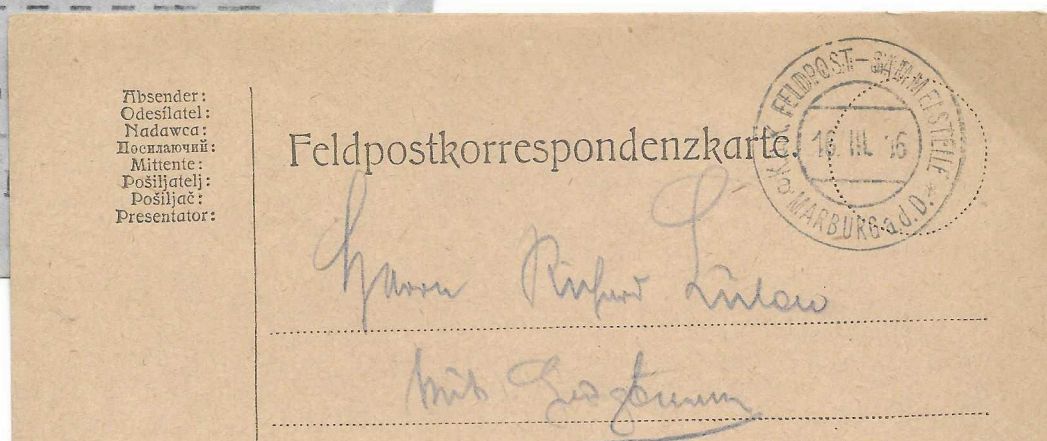
In addition to the different classes of field post offices, field post sorting stations were established in various locations to process the huge amount of military mail that was sent to and from the troops. Shown above are the markings of the sorting stations at Graz (Styria), Prague (Bohemia) and Czernowitz (Bukovina).

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
Organization

Sibenik
4 October 1916

Marburg a. d. D.
16 March 1916

Lebring
6 March 1918



Closely related to the sorting stations were the field post collection points (Sammelstelle). Above examples of collection point markings from Sibenik in Dalmatia and Marburg an den Drau in southern Steiermark. A detention camp for military personnel at Lebring had a special postmark, rated by Tranmer as very scarce.