

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICAN OCCUPATION

The Union of South Africa declared war on Germany on 9 August 1914 and was assigned the task of invading Southwest Africa. The primary force for this task was assembled at Capetown and then shipped by sea to Luderitzbucht, which was occupied on 19 September. The Union troops gradually expanded their control into the interior, taking the capital of Windhuk on 12 May 1915. The final surrender of the colony took place at Tsumeb on 9 July 1915. In the last days, the Germans destroyed the inventory of stamps as well as some of the postmarks and other postal materials.

Army Base P. O. 1
30 January 1915

1
23 February 1915

Army Base P. O. 3
22 December 1914

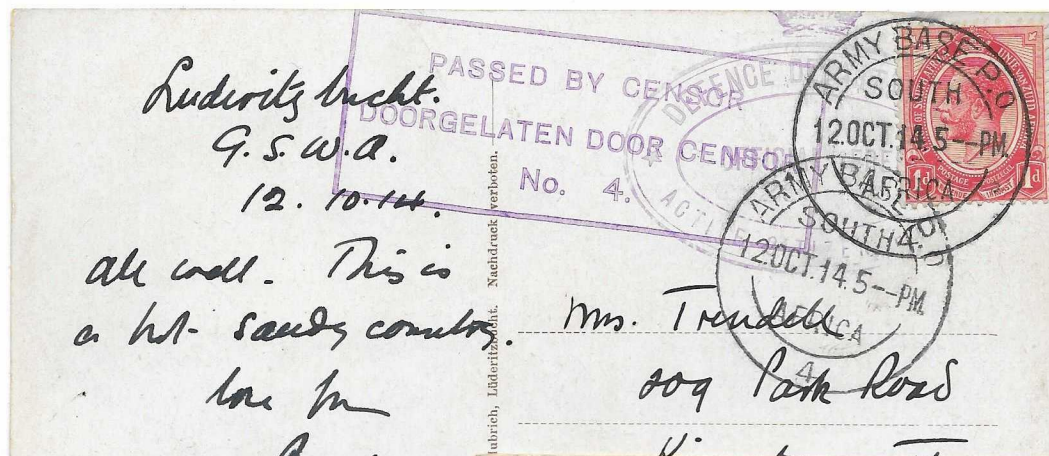


The South Africans set up eight Army Base Post Offices to process the mail from the troops. ABPO was in Capetown but was little used as the soldiers were quickly processed and sent to Southwest Africa. Slightly later, the inscription in the cancel was removed but the number left intact as shown by the middle cover from a member of J. Kruger's Commando. Its location is not specified in the literature, and only two examples have been recorded. ABPO was assigned to O'okiep but an example has not been seen by exhibitor. ABPO 3 was at Upington; example shown is from a member of Squad A, Troop 2 in Cradock's Commando.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

Army Base P. O. 4
12 October 1914
4 November 1914

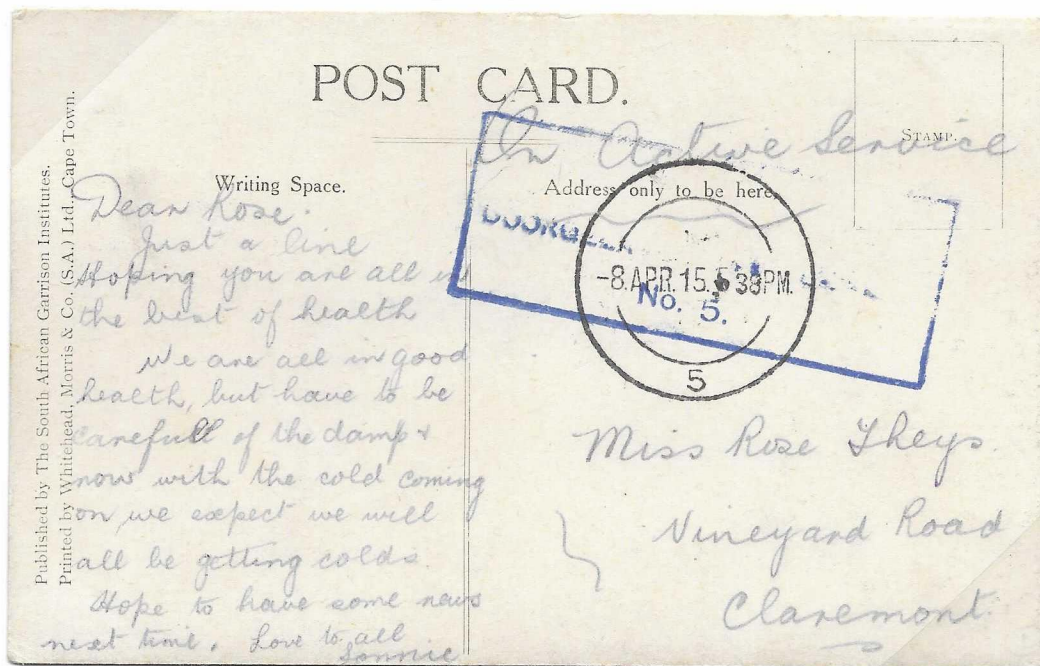
4
18 May 1915



ABPO 4 was based in Luderitzbucht and was the most active of the base offices. The upper card is franked with a Union 1d adhesive, perhaps because it was being mailed to England, although this was unnecessary due to the "Defense Department" cachet. Later, the wording in the cancel was excised, although the numeral was retained.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

5
8 April 1915
20 July 1915

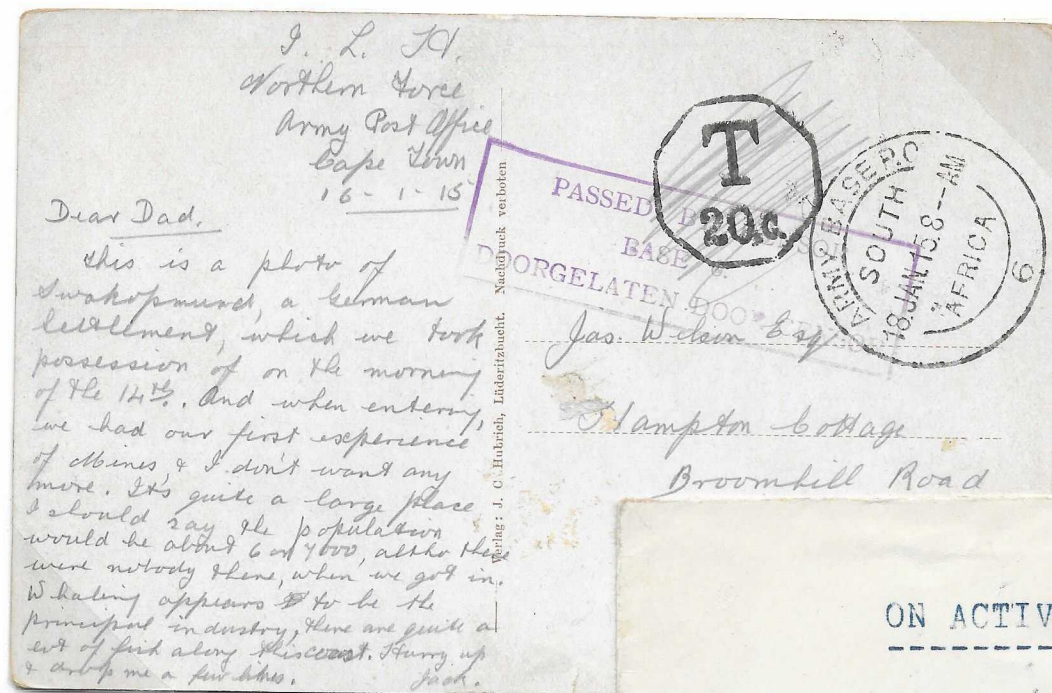


ABPO 5 was assigned to Walfish Bay, a British enclave on the coast of Southwest Africa. The Germans took over this small port on 10 September 1914, but Union forces landed and liberated the town on 25 December. All of the examples of this postmark seen by exhibitor have the wording excised. Note unit cachet of "Right Wing, 5th Mounted Brigade" in English and Afrikaans on the lower card.

Army Base P. O. 6
18 January 1915

6
25 June 1915

Army Base P. O. 6A
25 January 1915

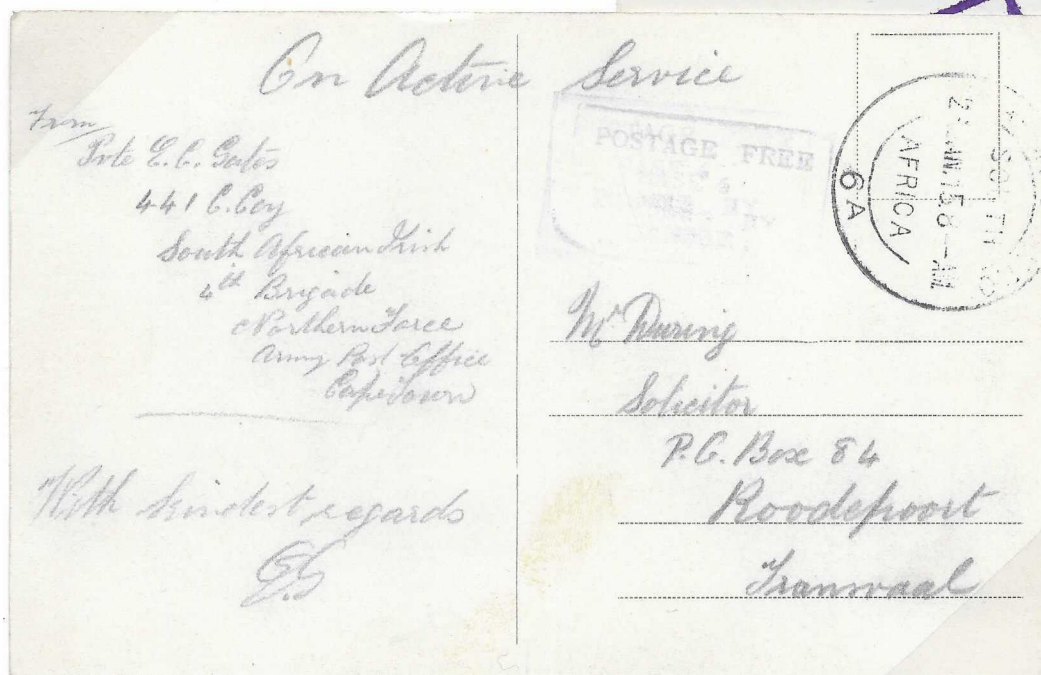


ON ACTIVE SERVICE.

25 JUN 15 3--PM

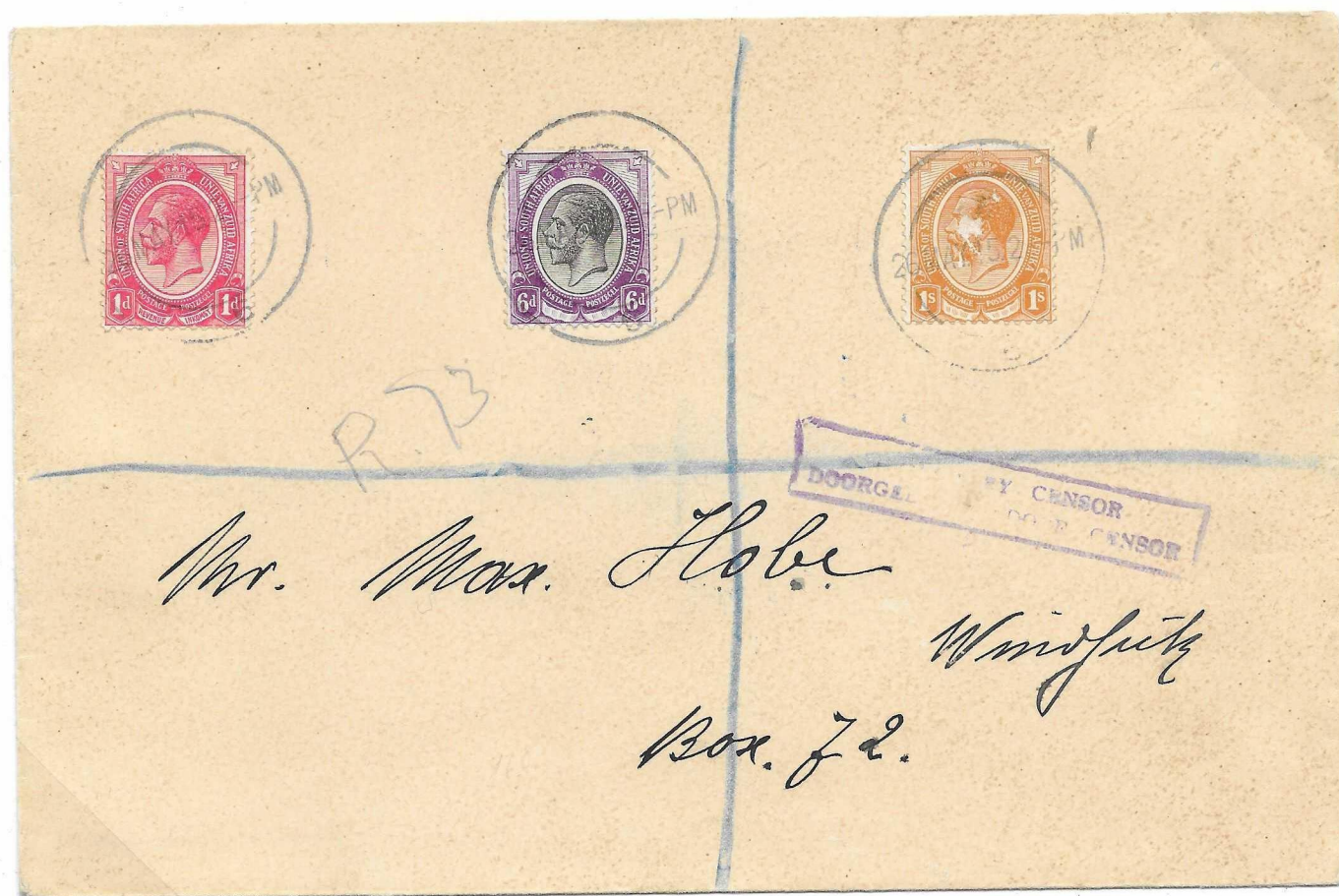
Messrs. Watson's.

High Street,
Sheffield,
England.



ABPO 6 was located in Swakopmund, a port on the South Atlantic coast. This town was occupied by Union forces on 14 January 1915. This marking also exists with the wording removed, but the fieldpost office had moved to Windhuk in the meantime. ABPO was located at the Namib Railway Station. Note the endorsement from a member of the "South African Irish" on the lower card.

Registered Mail



Registered mail from the Base Post Offices is extremely uncommon; see manuscript "R. 73." This cover from #6 was mailed within Windhuk and is overfranked, suggesting philatelic origin. However, it has a receiving mark on the reverse in the form of a large blue oval inscribed "Army Base Post Office/South Africa/No. 6/30 May 1915." Reportedly (Putzel) only two examples of this marking have been recorded.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

8
29 June 1915



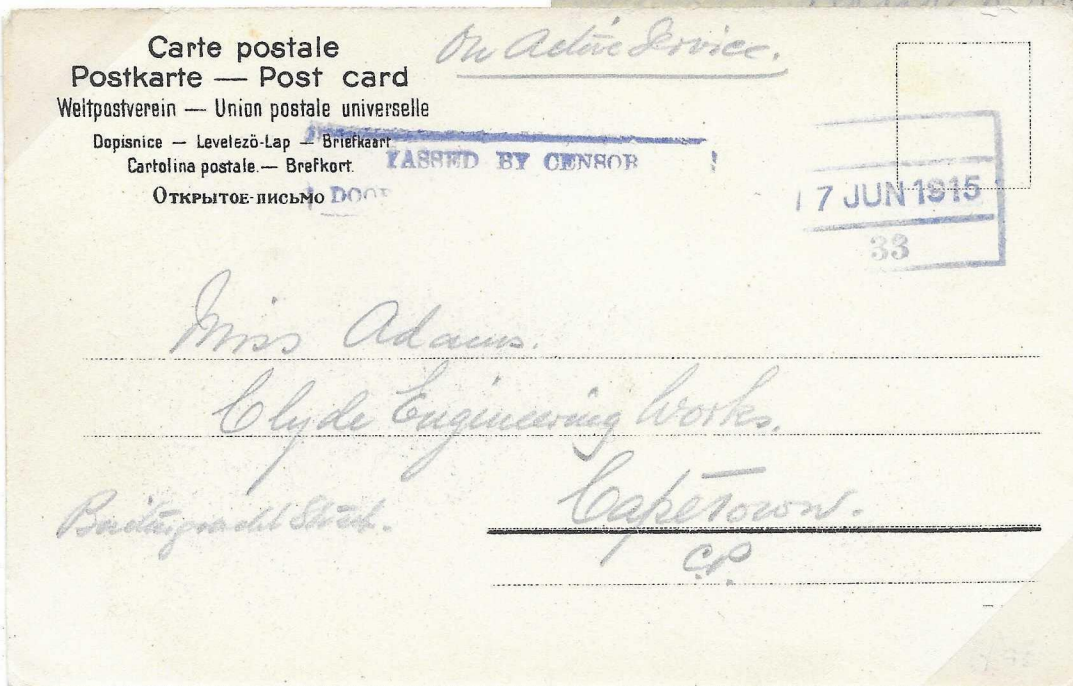
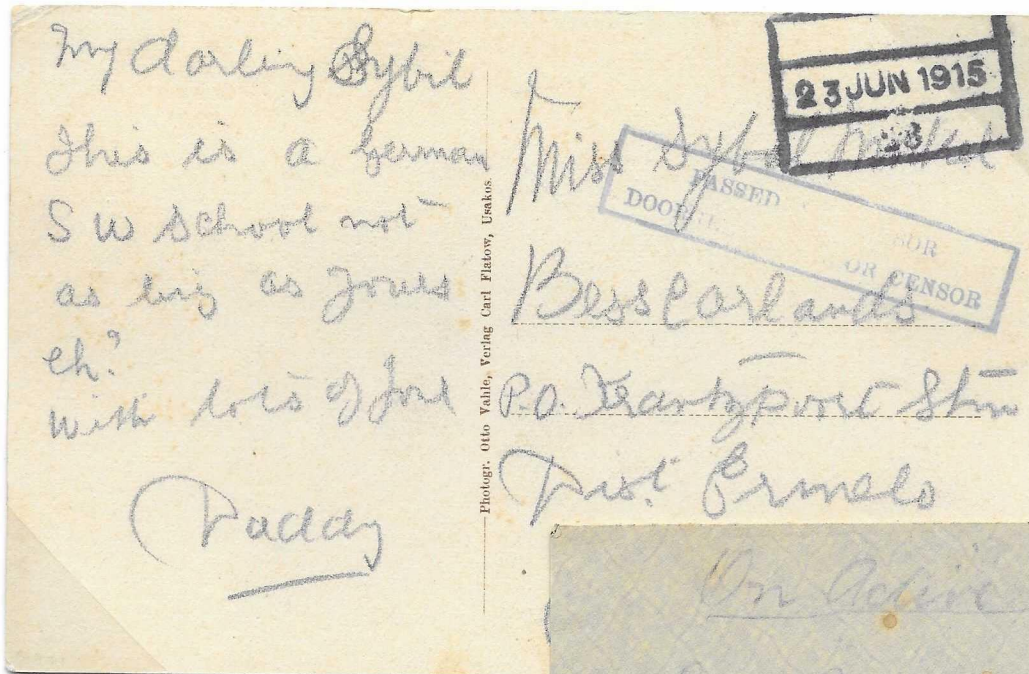
ABPO 7 is reported as being assigned to Kuruman in Union territory but not seen by exhibitor. ABPO 8 was used in Keetmanshoop, Southwest Africa. The example above was mailed by a Canadian serving with the 7th Field Mounted Troop of the South African Engineers. As usual with Canadian military mail, stamps were provided on receipt in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

23
23 June 1915

30
15 March 1915

33
17 June 1915



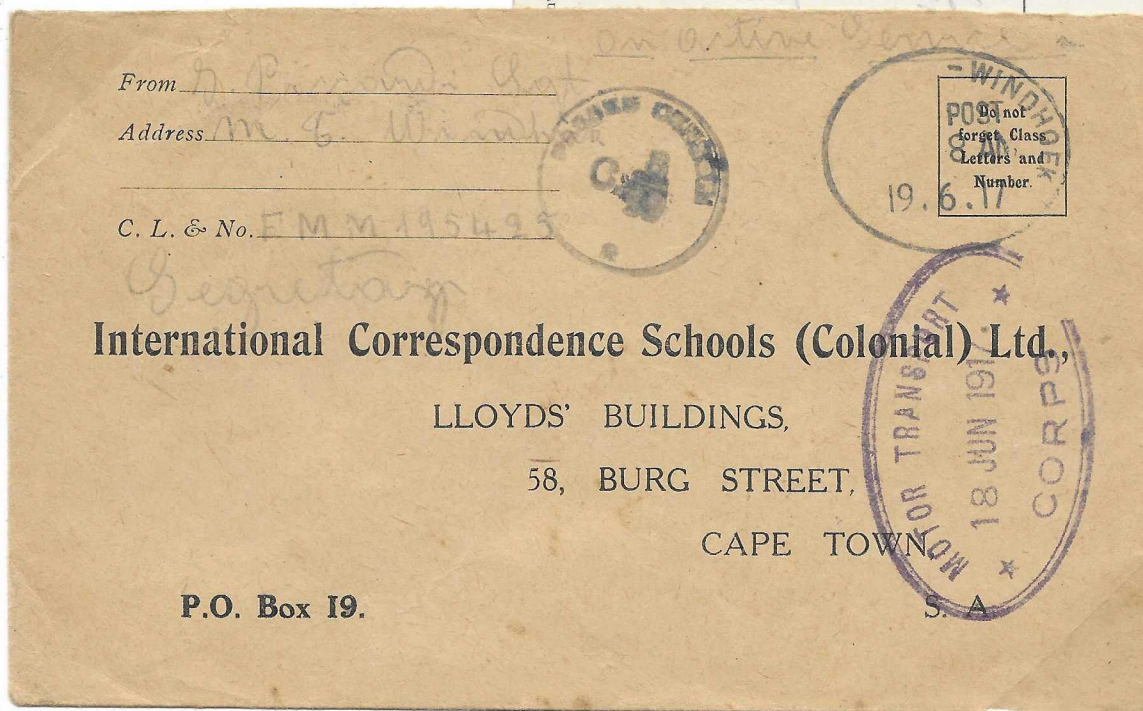
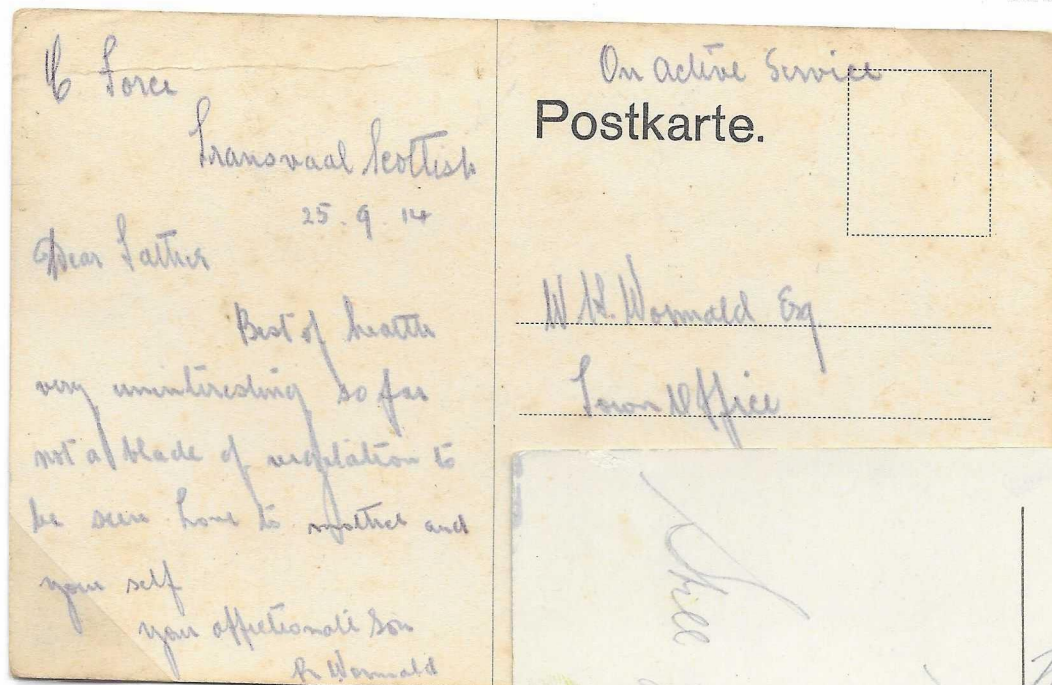
Later fieldpost markings were rectangles with three parts: date in the middle and FPO number at the bottom. About a dozen of these are listed in the literature (Hoffmann-Giesecke) but not all are recorded on covers. Examples above are from FPO 23 at Ukamas, FPO 30 at Mariental and FPO 33, which is unrecorded but shown here on a picture postcard of Abbabis. Middle item has large cachet of the 2nd Regiment, 5th Mounted Brigade.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

C Force
25 September 1914

S.A. Field Telegraph & Postal Corps
25 May 1915

Windhoek
19 June 1917

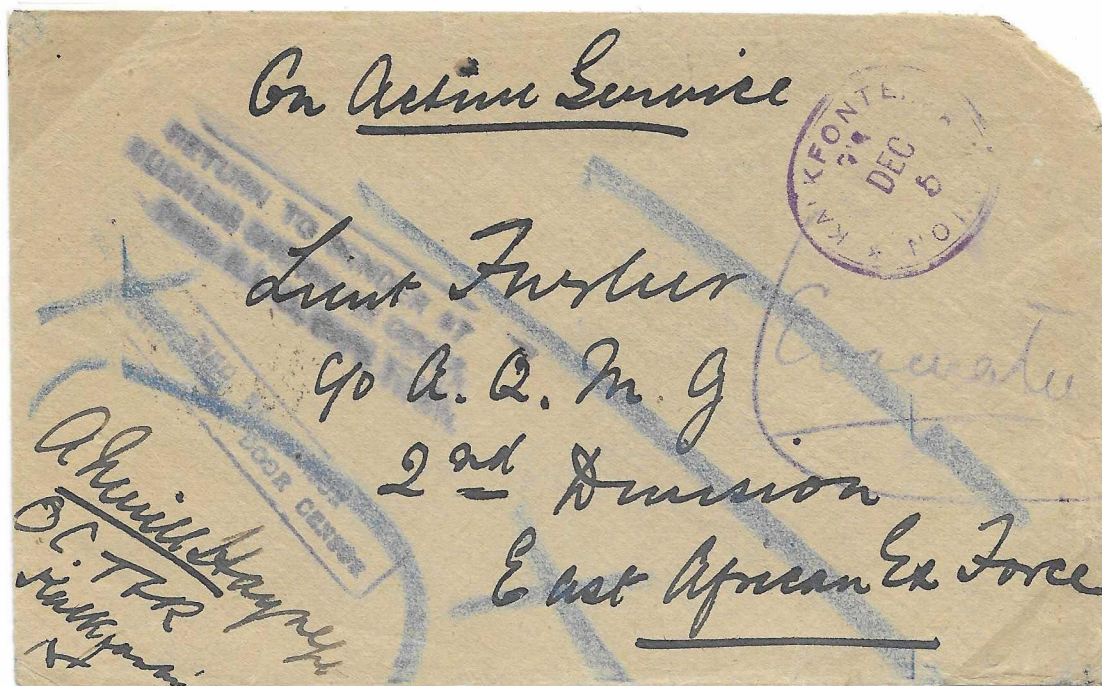


Other fieldpost mail can be found without postal markings, with unit cachets and with cancels used at civil post offices. The upper card is a very early usage, probably mailed at Luderitzbucht shortly after its capture by Union forces on 18 September 1914.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

Kalkfontein
5 December 1916

Otjiwarongo
18 February 1917

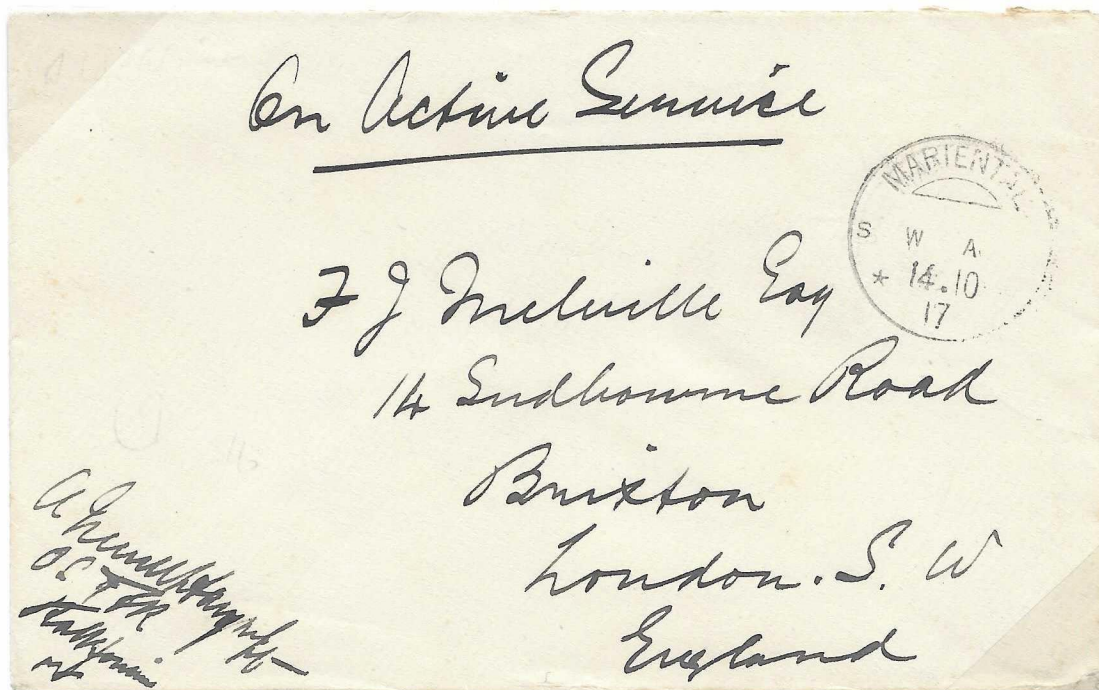
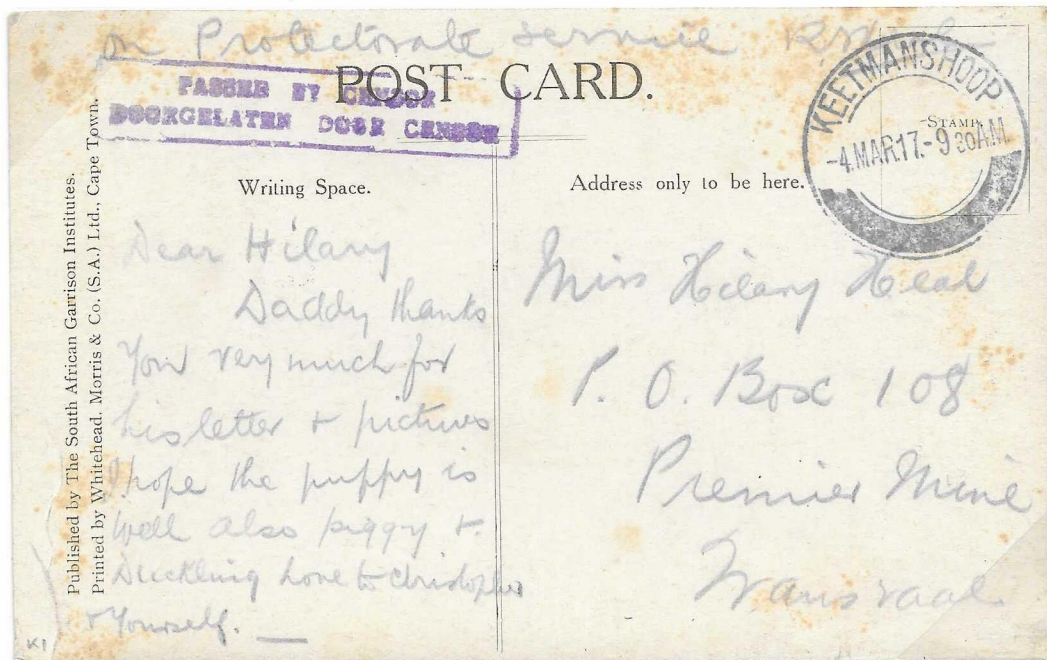


After the fieldpost stations were discontinued, military mail was sent through the civil post offices as shown above. Upper cover shows unusual use to an officer serving in the former German East Africa. However, he had been evacuated (wounded?) and the letter was returned as undeliverable.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

Keetmanshoop
4 March 1917

Mariental
14 October 1917



Additional examples of military mail sent through the civil post offices. Note the use of altered German postmark on the lower cover.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

Albrechts
25 August 1917

Aub/Station
1 October 1915

Bethany
14 October 1919

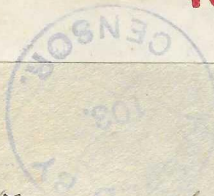


Mrs.

Herbert Buggh.

opened by censor

103



Die

STATION

Badenkredit-Gesellschaft



*Messrs. Groves & Linsley,
Exporters of Clothing
The Lion.*

*Huddersfield,
England.*



The fieldpost period officially ended as of 21 July 1915, when the postal activities were turned over to civil authorities. As there was a paucity of German stamps that could be overprinted, supplies of Union of South Africa adhesives and postal stationery for use in Southwest Africa were provided. Where available, German postmarks continued in use, although some were altered to provide new spelling. Examples above show Albrechts = Albrechtshöhe and Bethany = Bethanien. The Aub postmark was lost or destroyed, so a provisional one was made up.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

Swakopmund
2 October 1916

Mariental
8 January 1917

Kolmannskop
11 February 1918

Opened by Censor.

99

On das



Internationale Friedensbureau



Bern



Bookpost

Herrn A. Guis



120. Windhoek

POST CARD



POST CARD

For address only
Slechts voor adres.



her.

Herbert Busch.

Keetmanshoop

South West Africa.

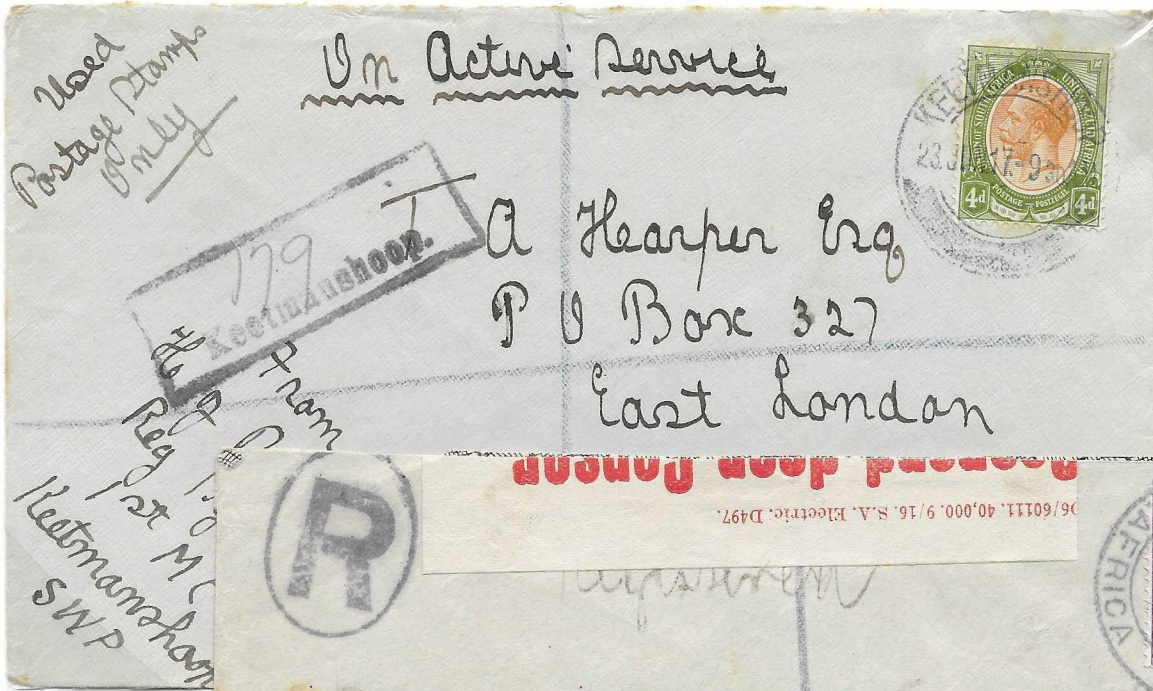
Examples of altered German postmarks; in the case of Swakopmund and Mariental, letters in the name of the colony were excised, i.e. S(ud) W(est) A(frika) -- with the latter also struck with a negative seal inscribed "Mariental P.O." of which only a few examples are recorded. Kolmannskop cancel on wrapper has the colony name fully removed.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

Keetmanshoop
23 June 1917

Grootfontein
22 June 1917

Windhuk
31 August 1920

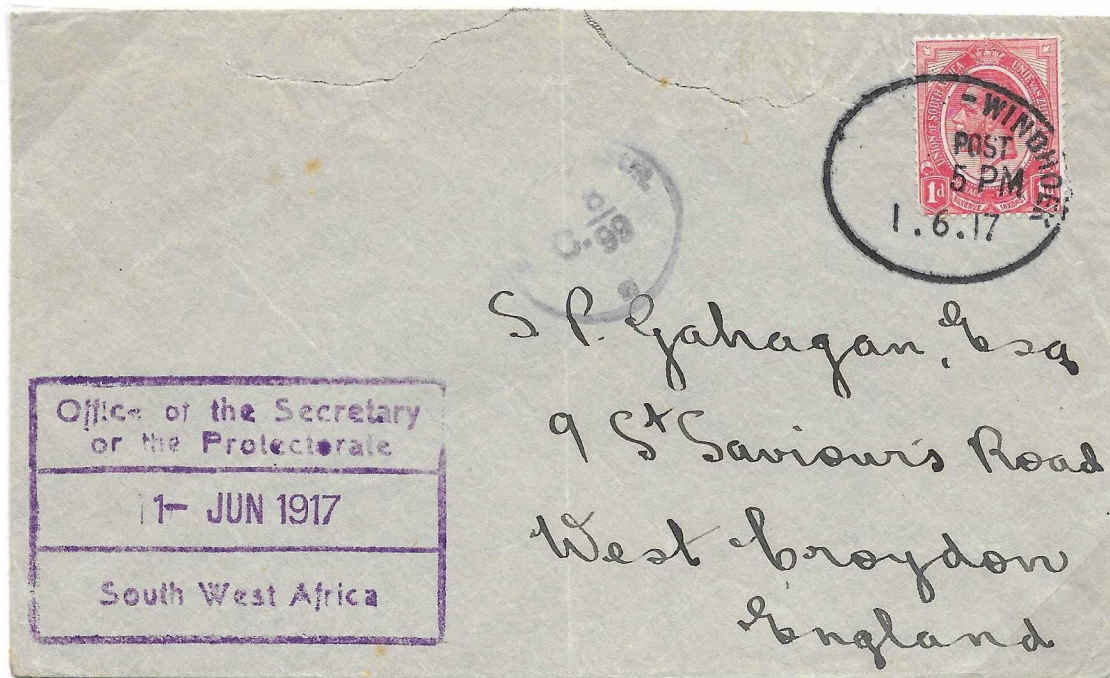


Examples of covers with the postage cancelled with new British-type postmarks with a filled-in bottom of the dial, "S.W. Africa" or "S.W.A.P." below.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

Windhoek
1 June 1917

Swakopmund
11 October 1917

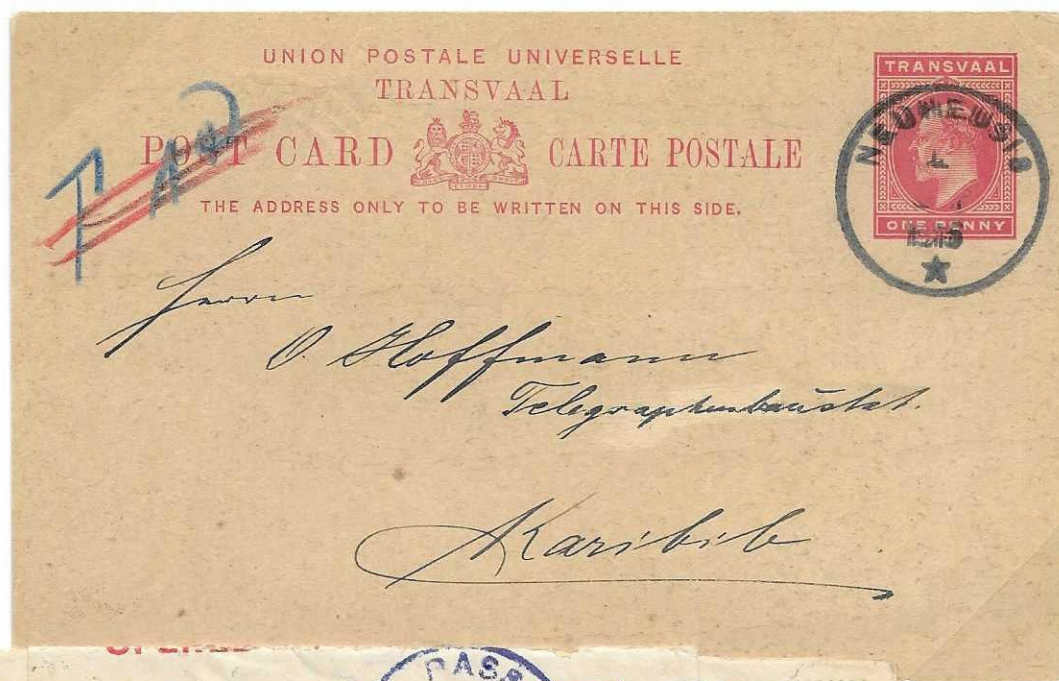


One unusual adaptation was the use of altered TPO cancels from the Swakopmund-Windhoek rail line as regular postmarks of the two towns. In each case the name of one town was excised, as well as "Bahn" which had indicated rail service.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

Neuheusis
1 September 1915

Post Neuheusis
9 August 1916



Two different provisional postmarks of Neuheusis used on these examples. The altered German one was used on a Transvaal postal card; a postal clerk initially intended to mark it postage due but found that the card was still valid for postage in the Union. The small handstamp reading "Post Neuheusis" with the date added in manuscript is one of the most elusive SWA cancels, used here on a letter to Karibib where it was received two days later.

GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICA
South African Occupation

Klein Windhuk
27 November 1916

Windhuk
22 November 1916

Windhoek
1 March 1918



Perhaps because of a heavy volume of mail out of the capital, Windhuk used several different cancels, apparently concurrently. Shown are "Little Windhuk," a British type and an altered German one (without the colony name, the latter still in use in 1918).