

A selection of the items discussed in this issue

AUSTRIA 233 – Winter 2025 – Contents:

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AUSTRIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY HONORARY OFFICERS

Note the changes!

PRESIDENT	Andy Taylor 01642 711559 or 07578 255 905 10 Eastfields, Stokesley, North Yorkshire, TS9 5EJ	andy@kitzbuhel.co.uk
EDITOR		
CHAIRMAN	Keith Brandon. 01751 430248 Cartoft Manor, Kirkbymoorside, North Yorkshire, YO62 6NU	duntrading@aol.com
TREASURER	Ian Bergel 07741 460606 9 Hillside Road, Pannal. Harrogate, North Yorks, HG3 1JP	ian@ianbergelassociates.co.uk
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY		
WEBMASTER	Andrew Turngren 13225 Centennial Commons Pkwy, Huntersville, NC 28078, USA	andrew@turngren.net
SECRETARY	Keith Brandon	duntrading@aol.com
PACKET SECRETARY	Barry Clark. 01482 653789 65 Annandale Road, Kirk Ella, Hull, East Yorkshire, HU10 7UR	clark65@clark65.karoo.co.uk
JOINT AUCTIONEERS	for sellers>> Keith Brandon. for buyers>>	duntrading@aol.com

Guest-edited by Gräfin Hestia Schwarzkümmel

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To join the Austrian Philatelic Society, email or write to the Membership Secretary (details on inside back cover) or visit the society's web site at www.austrianphilately.com

We offer various items to buy. Order from the Editor and pay them, and they will arrange for whoever holds the stock to send it to you.

The Society's web site on <http://www.austrianphilately.com> has been updated and enhanced. Further additions are in hand.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT AUCTIONS FROM Nr 160 ONWARDS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE NEW SITE BUT NOT AT THE KITZBUHEL SITE.

"The Story of the Austrian Post up to 1850" describes the development of the post in the Austrian Empire up to the introduction of postage stamps. It is the most comprehensive book written in the English language on the subject to date, and includes for the first time many of the original postal decrees translated into English. The book was created to mark the tercentenary of the 1722 Postal Decree by which Emperor Karl VI took back control of the postal system from the Paar and Thurn & Taxis families. It is 380 pages long, written in the English language, in full colour throughout and in a hard cover. Details here: <http://www.kitzbuhel.co.uk/publications/bokk.htm> The book costs £39 (only £32 to members) plus postage and packaging. To place an order or to enquire about the postage cost to your country, please contact Andy Taylor (email: andy@kitzbuhel.co.uk).

AIDE MEMOIRE

SUBSCRIPTIONS: are due on 1st April every year. UK and Europe £20. Airmail overseas £23. Please send membership applications (with payment) and queries to the Membership Secretary, but subscription renewal payments from existing members to the Treasurer (they won't always be the same person!) See below regarding ways of paying. You may pay in advance at the current rate for as many future years as you like.

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NEW ISSUES: E-Mail sammler-service@post.at You can pay them by credit card. They send "Die Briefmarke" free to their subscribers; if that's all you want contact the President.

ADVERTISING IN 'AUSTRIA': we welcome full or half page adverts. Rates by negotiation.

WAYS OF PAYING: If paying by cheque, please send sterling cheques payable to 'APS' and drawn on a UK bank. Bank transfer is nicer: email the Treasurer for details. **Finally, we have a new Paypal account: please use ian@ianbergelassociates.co.uk as the account identifier.** Please pay so that we receive the requested amount in pounds sterling, and state "who it's from and what it's for".

>>>>APS OFFICERS WANTED<<<<

Have a look at the list of who-does-what on the inside back cover. Rearrange it, and see:

Andy Taylor = PRESIDENT and acting EDITOR

Keith Brandon = CHAIRMAN and SECRETARY and half the AUCTIONEER

Ian Bergel = TREASURER and MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Andrew Turngren = WEBMASTER

Barry Clark = PACKET SECRETARY

By the time you read this, the other half of the Auctioneer will have retired. Andy Taylor is definitely retiring at the next AGM. Keith Brandon and Ian Bergel are overloaded. The APS is in danger of imploding. **Volunteers urgently sought!** It's no consolation to hear that many other societies both British and Continental are similarly afflicted - philately is becoming an Aged Person's Hobby.

Andy Taylor, President

Officer's Observations

A tale of our times... from a letter recently received from a USA member: *"The US tariffs and the declining Euro/Dollar exchange rates are now causing pain so I am afraid my purchases in German and Canadian auctions will have to be curtailed quite a bit. In Germany a successful bid of 100 Euros now costs me \$120 USD plus 24% buyer's fee, 7% German import tax (if the seller is a non-resident of the EU), 15% US tariff, 6% Pennsylvania sales tax and a 4% credit card fee - about \$180. Pretty painful. And not a good investment."* Luckily the percentages are not cumulative - if they were the bid would cost 202 USD.

Next auction

Members have been emailed to remind them that Auction 160 is available on the new website (and nowhere else). Go to <https://austrianphilately.com/> and click 'Auction'. After the auction closes, the results will appear there too: open the site, click LogIn, enter your name & password, save it, click Auction, and click the box containing 'Auction Results'. Non-members are welcome to browse the auction lists but cannot bid.

Your 2026 summer holiday?

SLOVPHILEX 2027 World Stamp Exhibition in BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA, SLOVAK NATIONAL GALLERY from 30th JUNE To 4th JULY 2027. Details: <https://www.slovphilex2027.sk/en/home/>

A tale of our times...

Old Mother Hubbard / Went to the Cupboard / Seeking for something to print
When she looked there / The Cupboard was bare / And so the next issue had nowt.

Sad postperson

The sad postperson on the cover is sad because the application for a dedicated postal worker emoji has been temporarily rejected by the non-profit Unicode Consortium, based in Mountain View, California. A new application for a postal worker emoji cannot be submitted for another four years.

Notes from Other Journals

♪ Die Briefmarke

10/2025: 200th birthday of Johann Strauss II; Phila Toscana at Gmunden; musings on lousy cancels; the 1850 issue (ii); attractive picture postcards; new issues; society news; review of “official money-letter covers” by Armin Lind; etc etc.

11/2025: Ernst Fuchs the artist; the Archangel Gabriel, Patron Saint of Post, Philately, etc; Christmas Cribs; 50 years since death of Franco; Kinderdorf Balloon Post 1948-2005; new issues (should be the last this year but...); Christkindl operations - **looks as if the Three Kings cancel is cancelled**; much society news; exhibitions; etc.

12/2025: Christmas crib figures; the 1963 Tag der Briefmarke; the Arlberg ski club; 200 years since Braille invented braille; Franco (ii); stamp etc issue programme for 2026; Oberndorf cancels; numismatics for philatelists; the 1882-83 polar expedition; the Ernst Fuchs museum; much society news with their Xmas Specials.

♪ Vindobona Vereins-Nachrichten

3/2025 Prof Ferchenbauer's Memoires; 1848: revolution in Vienna - timeline and correspondence; FDC of the 1853 Newspaper Tax stamp; Göstling Post Office; 125 years of the 1899/1900 Postage Due stamps; the Republic of Kugelmugel; and much else.

The President's friend Walter Hamilton, Vindobona Board Member, reminds us that previous issues are electronically available to everybody (no charge) at <https://www.vindobona.club/vindobona-nachrichten/>

♪ Stamps of Hungary

Nr 242 September 2025: Membership, Auction, meetings News; The business reply-paid service; On the edge of Empire; Return to sender or forwarded; The story of the 'lucky number', Part 4 - Hungarian advertising related to WWI; etc etc.

Nr 243 December 2025: Serbian Occupation of Baja in Southern Hungary, 1918-21; The Story of the Lucky Number Stamps, Part 5: Török A. & Co.; Sending money through the Austro-Hungarian post; Business Reply Mail.

♪ Germania

November 2025 (61.4): Membership, Auction, meetings News; Back to Bavaria - A collector's journey; 'Grenz-Verkehr-Tarif' (reduced cross-border rates); Works Order Numbers (HANs); Judaica uncovered: A German-Jewish cover from the 'Refugee ship' Nyassa docked in Casablanca; The philatelic bureau welcomes a new subscriber; Letter redirected from Breslau PÜ to Berlin W8 PÜ [=censors office]- but why?; Deutsche Post stops selling International Reply Coupons.

♪ Wiener Ganzsachen

2/2025: New uncatalogued types of the “Gelblinge” correspondence card; etc

♪ The London Philatelist

Vol 134 / Nr 1530 / November 2025: “An Early Letter Despatched from Trebizond to Constantinople” - actually an 8-page article on the DDSG. Levant-leaning APS members may wish to know that the RPSL's next publication will be “Austrian Maritime Rivals: The Danube Steam Navigation Company and the Austrian Lloyd in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea 1834 to 1849”, by APS member Christopher C. Smith.

See <https://www.rpsl.org.uk/language/en-US/Home/Publications/Books/Austrian-Maritime-Rivals>

♪ Czechout 43/4 Dec 2025

CPSGB's New Market Page; After Validity Use of Hungarian Stamps and Postal Stationery in Czechoslovakia, 1919–1920 (ii); The Velvet Revolution; etc etc

2025 NEW ISSUES (v)

By Zöld Veltelini, who thanks Walter Hamilton.

The information given here is face value; issue date (dd.mm.yyyy); designer; engraver if any; printing method; printer; quantity printed; and details on the design. Many issues are also available in minisheets, blackprints, 'Buntdrucke' (ie printed in different colours from those issued) etc. The sequence is as published in Die Briefmarke; the pictures are scans of the Veltelini Collection since the OPost web site pictures won't download.

Ernst Jandl, in the "Literature from Austria" series. . 1Eu20; 15 October 2025; Roland Vorlauffer; Cartor Security Printers; Offset printing; 270,000 in sheets of 10. "A master of wordplay" - The Viennese lyricist and author Ernst Jandl would have turned 100 this year, and Austrian Post is honouring him with this stamp in the "Literature from Austria" series.



Jandl addressed political and social issues, writing not only poems but also plays, radio dramas, and prose. His experimental poetry and sound poetry initially provoked considerable outrage; it wasn't until the 1970s that he gained recognition and his influence within the Austrian cultural scene grew. The poet Friederike Mayröcker was a kindred spirit in his life. Ernst Jandl would have turned 100

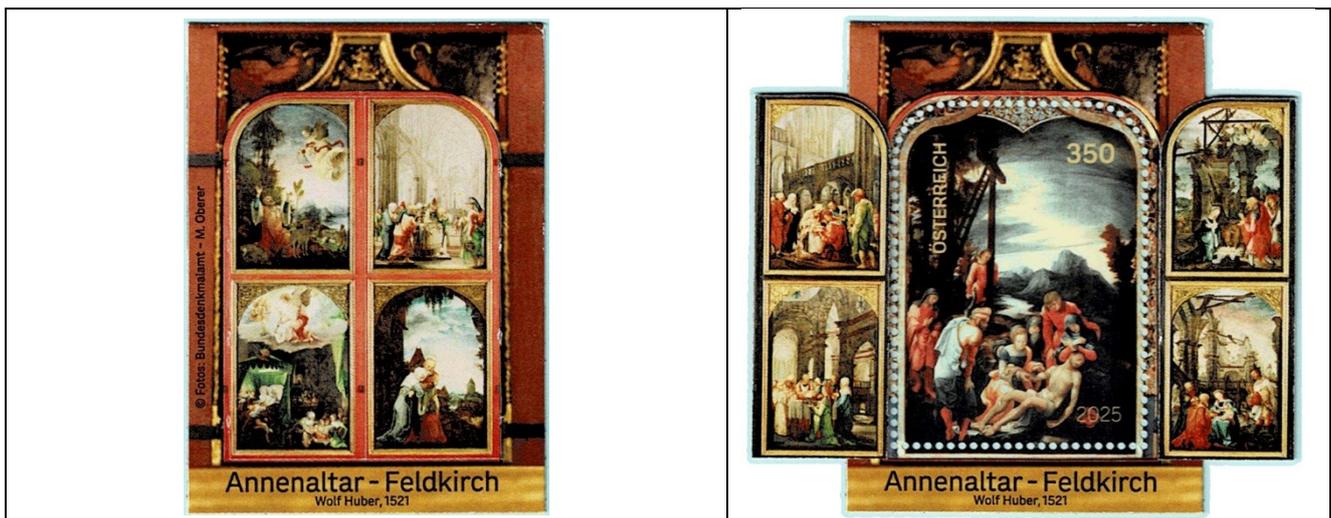
year; after his death in 2000, he was given an honorary grave in Vienna's Central Cemetery. He also performed many of his well-known poems, such as "ottos mops," "schtznqrnrrn," and "falamaleikum," in spectacular readings. The quote on the stamp, "The revenge of language is the poem," reflects his creative use of language.

Erwin Perzy I – the original Viennese snow globe. 1Eu; 16 October 2025; David Gruber; Offset; Enschedé; 350,000 in sheets of 10. Snow globes continue to be popular souvenirs to this day, but very few people know that they were invented by an Austrian. This design brings the "Austrian inventions" series to a close.

Snow globes are known all over the world, but few know that they were invented by an Austrian. At the end of the 19th century, the Viennese inventor Erwin Perzy was experimenting with water-filled spheres, seeking to develop a particularly bright light source. Particles of semolina within the water reminded him of snow. He placed a miniature of the Basilica of Mariazell inside, and thus the first "glass globe with a snow effect" was born. Around 1900, he founded the Original Vienna Snow Globe Manufactory, which is still family-run today and where every snow globe is handcrafted. The historic workshop can be visited at the Snow Globe Museum. This stamp concludes the series "Austrian Inventions."



St Anne altar, by Wolf Huber. 3Eu50; 17 October 2025; Anja Derkits; Variuscard Produktions- und Handels GmbH; 100,000. One of the most valuable works of art in Vorarlberg is the St Anne altar in St Nicholas Cathedral, Feldkirch. It is now being celebrated with a special miniature sheet that opens up like a winged altar. [These are known as Flugelaltars, and a surprising number of examples have survived, notably that at St Wolfgang.]



The St. Anne Altarpiece was created in 1521 in Passau by Wolf Huber, a painter, draftsman, and architect from Feldkirch, considered to be a master of the Danube School. It is his masterpiece and represents the transition from the Late Gothic to the Renaissance. The richly detailed landscapes and buildings in the background of the altarpiece's paintings underscore the solemn mood of the religious motifs, while the figures appear in bright, luminous colours. During a renovation in 1822, the altarpiece's side panels were lost; they were rediscovered in 1953 and, after many detours, returned to Feldkirch Cathedral. There, the St. Anne Altarpiece was reunited with its original side panels in 2005. The stamp block depicts the central section of the altarpiece. On the closed panels are scenes from the life of St. Anne, the mother of Mary. When the side panels are opened, their inner sides reveal scenes from the life of Jesus, as well as the Lamentation of Christ, the altarpiece's central image, which is featured on the stamp.

The world's first 3-D stamp "Edelweiss reloaded". 6Eu50; 18 October 2025; Design and 3D printing by Hämmerle & Vogel GmbH & Co KG; 90,000. The edelweiss is Austria's national flower, and many tales are told about it. And it is to this small white Alpine flower that this innovative, technically unique specimen is dedicated.



Twenty years ago, the Austrian Post dedicated a stamp to this rare little alpine flower, and not an everyday one at that: the country's first embroidered stamp which shows a white edelweiss on a green background. ▶ ▶ ▶



The edelweiss is back – not embroidered, but produced using a new process: a 3D printer. Once again, the Vorarlberg-based company Hämmerle & Vogel is producing the stamp. In this printing process, using a special 3D printer, liquid photopolymer is applied in tiny droplets through extremely fine nozzles onto the stamp sheets and cured with UV light before the next droplets are applied. Layer by layer, the edelweiss blossom motif is built up with printed hairs in varying colour gradients and heights, with the yellow flower heads in the centre being slightly taller than the white bracts. The printed blossom is soft and flexible, feeling velvety like the surface of a real edelweiss. The green lettering on the self-adhesive stamp is also printed in three dimensions using the 3D printer.



With this new issue featuring innovative technology, the edelweiss has finally shed its somewhat kitschy image and made the leap into the modern age – as “Edelweiss Reloaded.” Two postcard sets are available to accompany the special “Edelweiss Reloaded” stamp. One design features a marmot (it looks stuffed), the other a painting of alpine flowers created in 1915 by the Tirolean painter Anna Stainer-Knittel. Each set consists of one postcard and one “Edelweiss Reloaded” stamp.

The first edelweiss stamp from 2005 and the new special “Edelweiss Reloaded” stamp are also featured in the new book “Innovation,” which showcases the outstanding philatelic innovations of the Austrian Post.



The weird polymer construction is difficult to show well; the illustration above is a normal scan. The stamp is 2.5mm thick. Here are two microphotographs, one straight-down and one sideways. It looks like some deep-sea monster!



Weihnachten - Weihnachtsbäume. 1Eu20; 14 November 2025; Anita Kern; Cartor Security Printers; Offsetdruck; 270,000 in rolls of 50.



For many people today, a decorated Christmas tree is an essential part of the Christmas celebration. Evergreen trees and branches have always been considered symbols of hope during the cold season. However, Christmas tree decorations have changed over time. While they used to consist of fruits, nuts, and paper ornaments, later sweets, colourful baubles, and other figurines were added. The illustrated Christmas trees on the stamp are reduced to simple geometric shapes: trees become triangles, ornaments become squares and circles, and tinsel becomes lines.

Weihnachten - Geburt Christi, Pfarrkirche St. Leonhard. 1Eu20; 14 November 2025; David Gruber; Cartor Security Printers; Offsetdruck; 1,000,000 in sheets of 50.



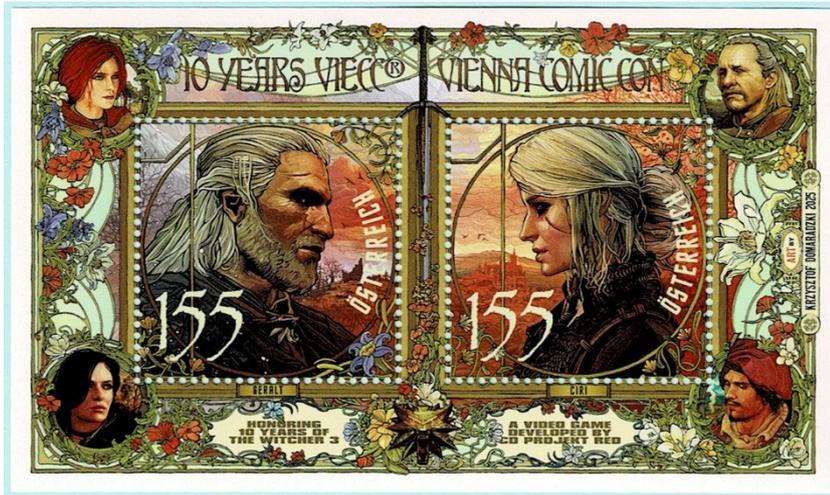
The Christmas stamp depicts an ornate Gothic stained-glass window showing the Holy Family with the newborn Jesus. The parish and pilgrimage church of St. Leonhard is one of Carinthia's most beautiful Gothic religious buildings. It is renowned for having the largest collection of Gothic stained-glass windows in the state. The approximately 140 valuable glass panels, dating from around 1340 to 1400, originate from the Judenburg workshops, which were famous for their craftsmanship, and depict scenes from the lives of Jesus and St. Leonard.

100 Jahre Bahnlinie Pinkafeld-Friedberg. 4Eu50; 15 November 2025; Roland Vorlauffer; Cartor Security Printers; Offsetdruck; 120,000 blocks-of-two. The railway line from Pinkafeld in Burgenland to Friedberg in Styria was opened on November 15, 1925.



In 1921, Burgenland became part of Austria. To mark this occasion, the Pinkatalbahn, which ran from Szombathely in Hungary via Rechnitz and Oberwart to Pinkafeld, was to be connected to the Austrian rail network. The new line ran from Pinkafeld via Sinnersdorf and Pinggau to Friedberg, where it connected to the Wechselbahn. The railway line in Hungary was closed in 1953, and passenger service in Austria ceased in 2011. The stamp block symbolizes the technological progress of the last 100 years. The stamps depict the two railway stations, Pinkafeld and Friedberg, as well as a Class 56 steam locomotive from 1914 and a modern Class 5022 diesel multiple unit. These multiple units have been operating regional services throughout Austria since 2005.

10 Jahre Vienna Comic Con; 3Eu10; 22 November 2025; Krzysztof Domaradzki; Cartor Security Printers; Offsetdruck; 125,100 blocks-of-two.



It's Austria's largest event for pop culture in all its diverse forms – this year, Vienna Comic Con celebrates its 10th anniversary. The convention has been held at the Vienna Exhibition Centre since 2015. The focus is on pop culture and gaming, films, series, comics, anime and manga, cosplay, and fantasy. Around 40,000 fans attend the event annually, which offers workshops, competitions, interviews, and shows. The spectacular commemorative stamp block combines gaming culture with art: 2015 also saw

the release of the video role-playing game “The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt,” based on the Witcher saga and developed by the Polish studio CO Projekt Red, which significantly influenced pop culture. The designer, also from Poland, drew inspiration from Viennese Art Nouveau for the stamp's design. It features characters from the game within an elaborately designed frame adorned with flowers and ornaments. The print run of 125,100 refers to the fictional year 1251, in which Ciri, one of the main characters, was born. Austrian Post will have its own booth at Vienna Comic Con 2025.

Weihnachten - Weihnachtskuss. 1Eu; 28 November 2025; Lisa Filzi; Cartor Security Printers; Offsetdruck; 1,700,000 in rolls of 50.

The design of this stamp is reminiscent of Victorian Christmas postcards from the 19th century. It depicts a kiss between two children. The little girl is wrapped in a dress of mistletoe, while the boy's jacket and headdress are covered with holly branches. Both plants, with their green leaves and red or white berries, are popular decorations during the Christmas season. A kiss under the mistletoe is a beloved Christmas tradition from English-speaking countries, believed to bring good luck. [Eating their berries is bad luck, however!]



Weihnachten - 300 Jahre Einweihung Wallfahrtskirche Christkindl. 1Eu; 28 November 2025; Roland Vorlauffer; Cartor Security Printers; Offsetdruck; 2,200.000 in sheets of 50.



The baroque pilgrimage church in Christkindl, a district of Steyr, is celebrating the 300th anniversary of its consecration this year. Legend has it that when the Steyr tower watchman placed a small wax figure of the Christ Child in a hollow tree and prayed before it, he was cured of his epilepsy. The place soon became a pilgrimage destination. The present pilgrimage church was consecrated in 1725 by the Bishop of Passau; the wax Christ Child is located in a halo above the tabernacle, which is shaped like a globe. This Christmas stamp is also being issued as a maxi-card.

Apologies for the gappy layout - this quarter's issues are a particularly unhelpful series of shapes, given my wish to present them in date-of-issue order. ZV.

Austro-Hungary's Invasion and Occupation of Montenegro 1914-1918.

By Andrew Brooks

Introduction.

The population of Montenegro in 1917 was over 400,000 and is only slightly larger at the present time. Its capital today is Podgorica and the country is roughly the same size as the English county of Yorkshire but there the similarity ends as it is very mountainous with over fifty peaks over 2000m.

In 1914 its capital was Cetinje and its territory did not include the Bay of Cattaro (this was part of the Habsburg Empire and only ceded to Montenegro in 1918). It took part in the first Balkan War (8/10/12 to 30/5/13 against the Ottoman Empire) and the second Balkan War (16/5/13 to 10/8/13 against Bulgaria). In World War 1 it was an ally of Serbia and took their side against Austro-Hungary and Germany.

Following the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo on the 28th June 1914, Austria presented its ultimatum to Serbia on the 23rd July. On the 25th July Serbia ordered mobilisation as did Austria and Montenegro on the 26th.

Invasion of Montenegro.

On the 28th Austria declared war on Serbia and the invasion with the 5th and 2nd Armies began on the 12th August 1914. The 6th Army was not in position to join this attack but managed to prevent incursions around Vizegrad by the Montenegro army. However, on the 8th August Montenegrin forces commenced firing on the fortifications at Cattaro, the Austro-Hungarian southern naval base. They were able to do this from Mt. Lovcen, a formidable mountain which overlooks the Bay of Cattaro. Although artillery returned the fire it was ineffectual and on 13th September three pre-dreadnought battleships (**fig 1**) were sent from the Austro-Hungarian northern base at Pola (*Monarch*, *Wien* and *Budapest*) and they out-gunned the Montenegrins. It did not stop the artillery battle. The French sent an artillery detachment and by October it had commenced firing on Cattaro from the south side of Mt. Lovcen. When SMS Radetzky arrived from Pola it out-gunned the French battery and it had to retire in November. By December the attack on Serbia had been repulsed and the first invasion of Serbia and Montenegro was over.

The Germans found it difficult to supply Turkey as the route through hostile Serbia and neutral Romania was almost impossible and when they decided to invade Serbia in the summer of 1915 Conrad, Chief-of-Staff of the Austro-Hungarian army, was undecided whether to commit as Austro-Hungary were already fighting on two fronts: Galicia and Italy. However, the prospect of revenge against Serbia could not be missed.

By September Bulgaria had agreed to join in the attack on Serbia which was launched in October 1915. By November the Serbs had to retreat over the Albanian mountains to the Adriatic. Conrad ignored Falkenhayn's (Chief of the German General Staff) order to halt at the border of Montenegro and the Austro-Hungarian army invaded for the second time!

Conrad's aim was to take possession of Montenegro and northern Albania and in order to achieve this he removed 3rd Army on the 20th December 1915 from Mackensen's Army group. Their HQ was moved to Sarajevo and 3rd Army was now in charge of three battle groups. It was commanded by General Kovess (**fig 2**).

- ✓ All units to the western side of Montenegro plus the naval detachments in Cattaro.
- ✓ 62nd Infantry Division to the east of Montenegro.
- ✓ VIII Corps (53,52 and 59 Infantry Divisions) were also on the east of Montenegro

The first order given was for General Sarkotic with XIX Corps to advance from the Bay of Cattaro to capture Mount Lovcen. He was covered on his left flank by a smaller group advancing from Trebinje, heading for the

area of Nikisic and Podgorica. There were problems of supplying the armies as the railway lines from Bosnia Herzegovina did not reach Cattaro. In the east of Montenegro 62nd Division and VIII Corps were to attack and secure Mojkovac and Berane. (fig 3) They only faced Montenegrin troops as Serbian units had been asked to leave as they had been plundering villages and causing chaos. On the 6th -7th January at the battle of Mojkovac they inflicted heavy casualties on the Austro-Hungarians when they held off numerous attacks and forced them to retreat. They continued to hold their position until the 18th January when they withdrew. Meanwhile the Austro-Hungarian VIII Corps and 59th Infantry Division had captured Berane on the 19th January and the recently arrived 57th Infantry Division were ordered to advance to Scutari, across the border in Albania.

In the west the crucial attack began with an artillery bombardment on the 7th January, assisted by the battleship *Budapest*, with the aim of reducing the Montenegrin artillery positions. Conrad had at first ordered that Mount Lovcen be taken by a frontal assault, but Sarkotic said it would be too costly to attack the 1,000 - metre rock wall and preferred to attack on the flanks. The fall of the border forts caused problems for the Montenegrins but they held on until the 11th January when the Austro-Hungarians held the ridge on Mount Lovcen. (figs 4 & 5) By the 13th January the capital, Cetinje surrendered and the Montenegrin king (fig 6) tried to negotiate an armistice. An unconditional surrender was demanded but it was not until the end of the month that it was agreed. The delay was partly caused by the king who at first said he was not going into exile and then suddenly departed on the 20th January on an Italian torpedo boat for Brindisi.

The Occupation.

A month later what was left of the Montenegrin government was abolished and a Military General Government was established. In July 1917 this changed to a Department of Military Affairs and a Department of Civilian Affairs. Hardly any Montenegrins kept their positions in either administration as most of them had been interned. (figs 7,8 & 9).

With such a small population, the country was not of particular economic significance to Austro-Hungary and although taxes were increased the population was so poor very little was raised. In fact, as early as March 1916 the occupation authorities had to open soup kitchens as the people were starving.

Compulsory work was introduced to construct roads, a railway and military buildings. Most of the secondary schools were closed during the occupation and the Latin script was introduced for public use, while the Cyrillic script was banned. During the whole of the occupation there was guerrilla warfare and military posts and communications were attacked. Reprisals did have some effect and by the end of the occupation attacks were less frequent.

The postal history of the army and administrative organisations is similar to those in other territories occupied by the Austro-Hungarians. In Montenegro (and Albania) the population ignored the postal facility and civilian mail is rare. Nineteen cities and towns were issued with occupation postmarks in addition to the normal feldpost postmarks of the occupying army.

References.

K.u.K. Feldpost 1914-1918. Volumes 4 & 5. Octavian Tabacaru.

Katalog der K.u.K. Feldpostämter und deren Einsatzgebiet mit Truppen und Kriegereignissen. Heinz Nagel.

<https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/occupation-during-and-after-the-war-south-east-europe/>

Illustrations.

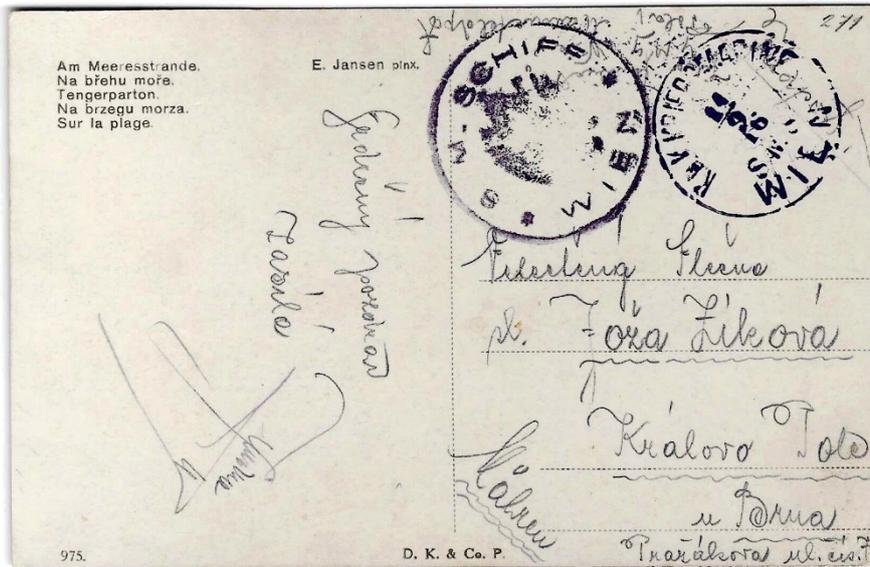


Fig 1: Postmark: *K.u.K.Kriegsmarine Wien.* Dated 11/9/16. Cachet: *S.M.Schiff Wien.* In manuscript 'Pola Marinefeldpost'.

Fig 2: Postmark: *Tabori Postahivatel 43.* Dated 9/2/16. Cachet: *K.u.K. Infanterieregiment Nr.31/1.Feldkompagnie.* Postmark used by 16 Infantry Division/XII Corps, Army Group Kovess. The postcard is an artistic impression of General of Infantry von Kovess.

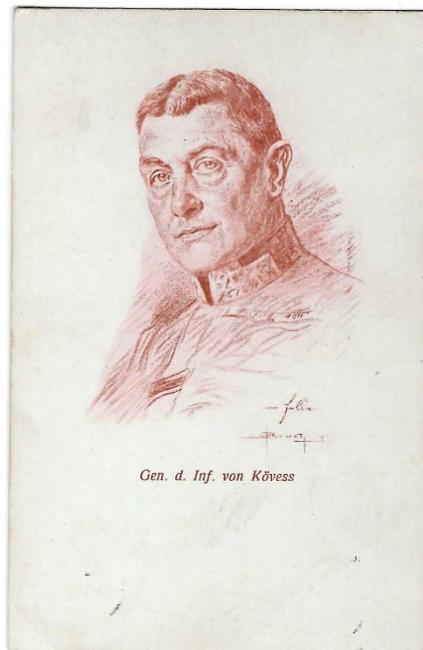


Fig 3: Map showing the invasion by Austro-Hungary. Note the spellings of some towns.

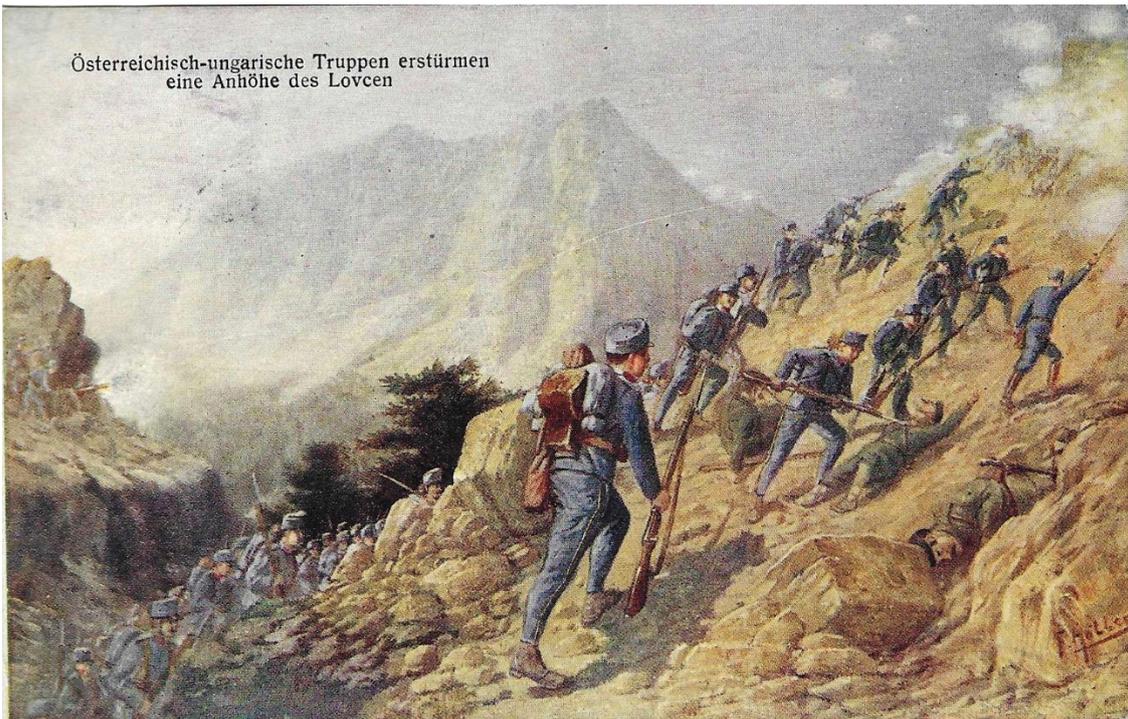
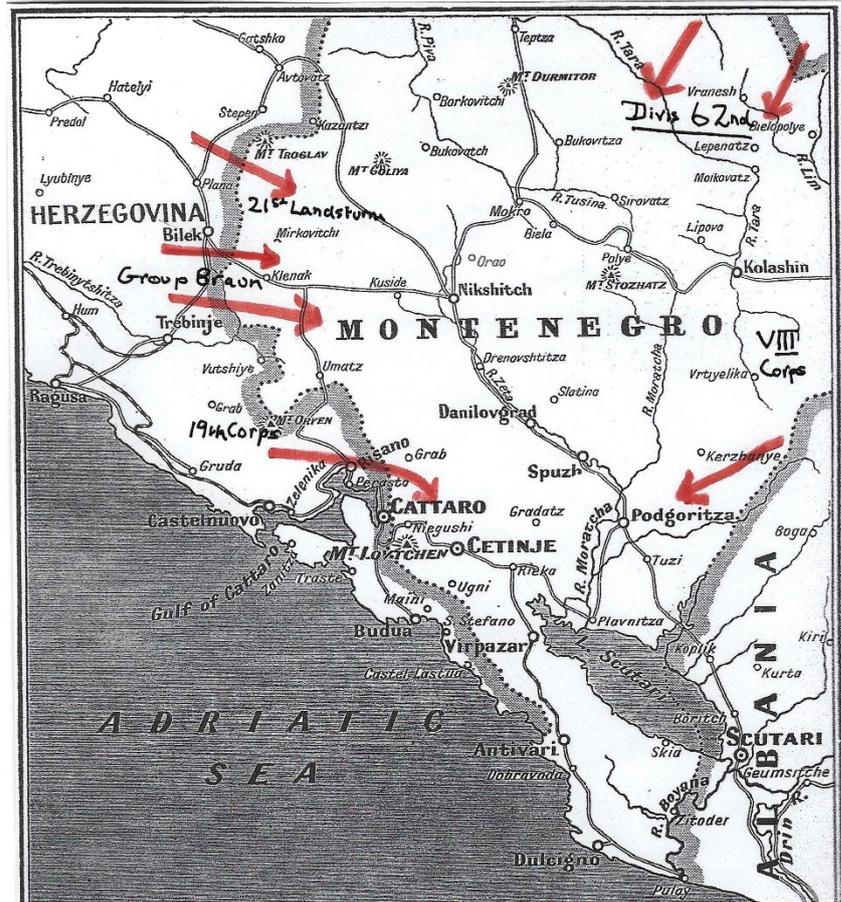


Fig 4: *Offizielle Postkarte für das Rote Kreuz, Kriegsfürsorgeamt und Kriegshilfsbüro Nr.9.* Title of postcard: Austro-Hungarian troops storm Mt. Lovcen. Artist: F.Hollerer.



Fig 5: *Offizielle Karte für: Rotes Kreuz, Kriegshilfs-Büro, Kriegs fürsorge-Amt, Kriegsbildkarte Nr.21.* Title of postcard: The storming of a Montenegrin artillery position and capture of enemy troops forming on the Bosnian-Montenegrin border.



Fig 6: Montenegrin postcard of H.M. King Nicholas I. Postmark: *K.u.K. Feldpost 339.* Dated 31/1/16. Between Jan.-Feb. 1916 this was used by the Brigade of General-lieutenant Koloman Torok von Harasztos of the 47th Infantry Division. Cachet: *K.u.K. Grenzjagerzug No. 2/IV.* (Border Jager Platoon). In manuscript the writer indicated he was in the 4th Company.





Fig 7: *Offizielle Karte der 'Lovcen-Siftung' des K.u.K. Militar-Generalgouvernements in Montenegro.* The Lovcen Foundation was probably in aid of those soldiers who lost their lives or were wounded in the assault on Mt. Lovcen in January 1916. The mountain has quite a distinctive shape. Postcard artist Hans Printz (1865-1925).

Fig 8: A postcard titled the Black Table Mountain in Cetinje (Mt. Lovcen) by the postcard artist Paul Grabwinkler (1880-1946). He was a Professor of the School of Applied Arts in Vienna for much of his career.

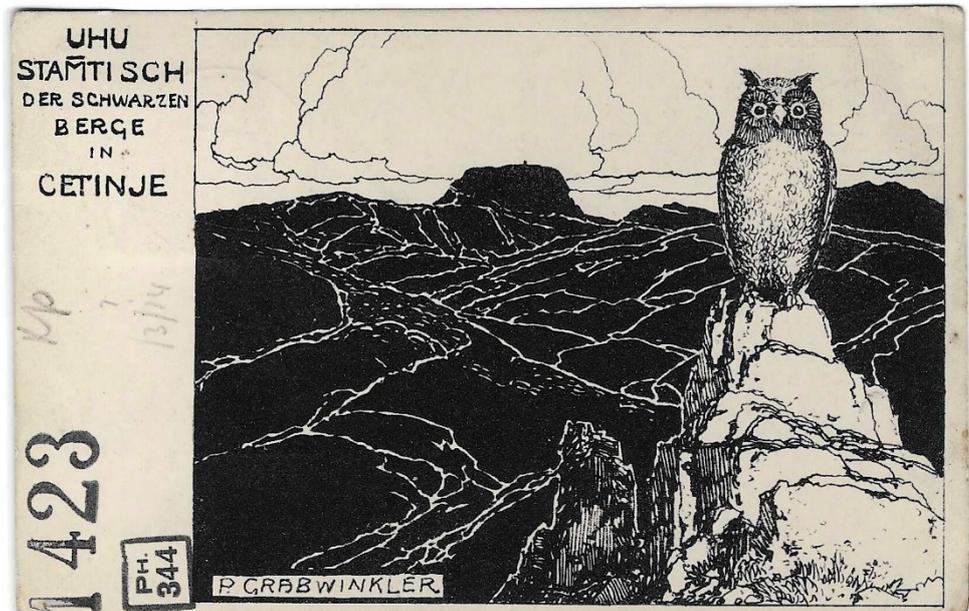




Fig 9: An impressive postcard for the Emperor’s Fete for non-commissioned officers on the occasion of the birthday of His Imperial and Royal Emperor Karl, held in the Royal Gardens in Cetinje. The fete was held in aid of the K.u.K Military Widows and Orphans Fund. Postmark: *K.u.K.Etappenpostamt Cetinje*. Dated 15/9/17. Also, Two-line cachet: *K.u.K. Militargouvernement in Montenegro*.



Fig 10: Occupation stamps issued and unissued for Montenegro. Army HQ wished to use the single line 'Montenegro' overprint but had not enough stocks of the basic stamps. They applied to Vienna who forbade the issue and sent out instead stamps with the three-line overprint. This issue was valid only on 1/3/17, otherwise ordinary military stamps (without the overprint) were to be used. N.B. 'Monteuogro' error.

Fig 11: Postmark: *K.u.K. Etappenpostamt Cetinje 'b'*. Dated 1/3/17. Stamps issued to mark the first year of the Austro-Hungarian occupation. This official envelope was printed for use by the Post and Telegraph Station prior to the occupation. The Montenegrin heading and royal coat of arms have been 'cancelled' by 4 horizontal lines and the single line *K.u.K. Militär-Generalgouvernement in Montenegro* added. The postal rate to Prag was 15h: a large envelope suggesting a third weight would account for the 10h additional franking.



Fig 12: Cetinje was the first of the nineteen base post offices set up by the occupying Austro-Hungarian forces in May 1916. This feldpostkorrespondenzkarte is dated 26/9/16. Cachet: *K.u.K. Militär-General Gouvernment in Montenegro*



Fig 13: Postmark: *K.u.K. Etappenpostamt Cetinje 'a'*. Dated 11/7/18. Correctly rated registered envelope to Hungary. Three- line cachet in violet: *K.u.K. Stabsabteilung des Militär-Gouvernements in Montenegro*. (Headquarters of Military Government) Boxed cachet: *K.u.K. Militärzensur Zensurstelle Cetinje Zensuriert: I*.

Fig 14: The local postal rate for this letter from the National Bank of the Kingdom of Montenegro should have been 15h with a 25h charge for registration. Either this under-franked cover escaped the scrutiny of the postal clerk and was indeed delivered by registered post, or the under-franking of 5h was detected, the registration label removed (partly) and the letter delivered by ordinary post. The letter is addressed to Gospodin Vaso Radovanovic, a stamp dealer, book and stationery seller in Cetinje. Single line cachet: *K.u.K. Militärzensur in Cetinje*.



Fig 15: Postmark: *K.u.K. Etappenpostamt Plevlje*. Dated 15/3/18. A town of 19,000 inhabitants, it is located in the north of Montenegro. Cachet: *K.u.K. Kreiskommando Plevlje* (District Command).



Fig 16: Postmark: *K.u.K. Etappenpostamt Kolasin*. Dated 18/7/16. With a population of just over 2,000 it is in the north-west of Montenegro. Cachet: (faint) *K.u.K. Gebirgs Staffel I / Festung*. (Mountain unit -fortress).

Fig 17: Postmark: *K.u.K. Etappenpostamt Podgorica*. Dated 9/12/16. In 1914 it was the commercial centre of Montenegro and in 2025 the population was 179,000

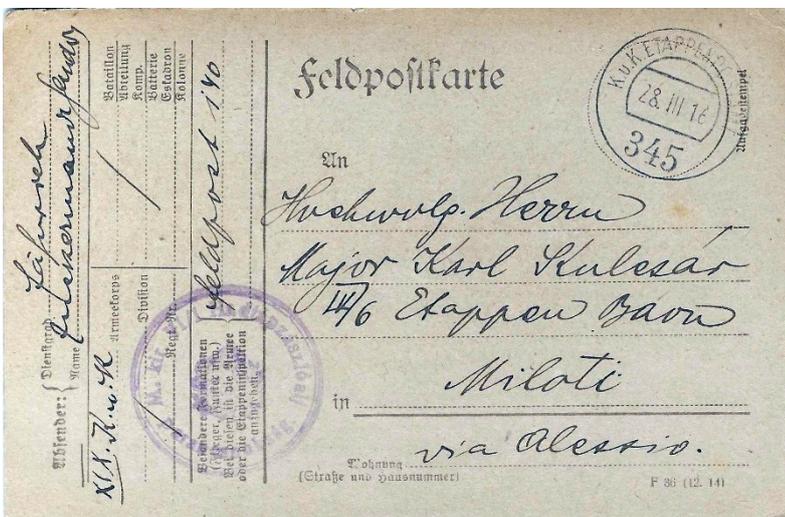


Fig 18: Postmark: *K.u.K. Etappenpostamt 345*. Dated 28/3/16. (Command of 19th Army Corps). Cachet: *M.Kir. VI / I Hadtapzaszloalj Paraneshoksag* (Headquarters Communications Zone). The sender of the feldpostkarte gave Feldpost 140 in manuscript and this is located in northern Albania at the end of March 1916.

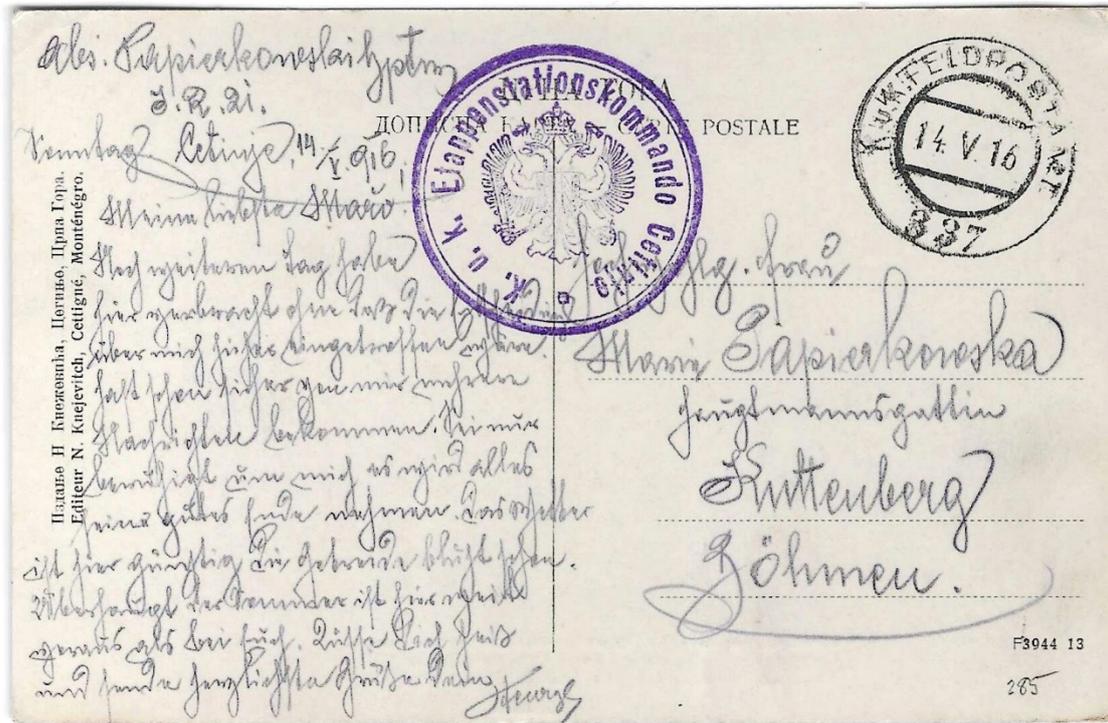


Fig 19: Postmark: K.u.K.Feldpostamt 337. Dated 14/5/16. Cachet: K.u.K. Etappenstationskommando Cetinje. The postcard is a view of the Royal Palace for the successor to the throne, Danilo.

The 2025 Ulm philatelic event

Andy Taylor

On 22 October a small party of hardy perennials set off for Ulm before dawn had even cracked, via Manchester and Munich. Many transport vicissitudes later, they arrived at their hotel on Münsterplatz. The day after, ie on Thursday 23 October 2025, Ulm Minster lost its title of Tallest Spire In Europe when part of the spire-top cross of Sagrada Familia in Barcelona was lifted into place by a rather large tower crane. It's now 162.9 metres above local ground level - and not finished yet; final height 172m - while Ulm is only 161.5. For comparison, Big Ben in London is 96 metres; and the UK's tallest spire, Salisbury Cathedral, is 123 meters, same as it was in 1561. The Shard at 309.6 metres is the tallest building in the United Kingdom. However Emley Moor TV transmitting station is 330.4 metres tall - and as you would expect is in West Yorkshire.



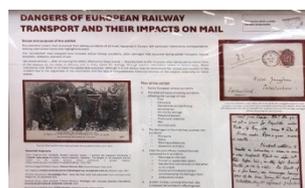
The Ulm show was much the same as in the last two years - numerous well-stocked dealers; two exhibitions "Postal History Live" with 53 exhibits and "Danubria" with 37; huge Deutsche Post stand; busy canteen; daily symposiums and meetings; 50 Society Stands (would have been 51 if ours had been included); and an abundance of old friends to greet and new ones to make. Take as read the photos of unvisited displays!



A small part of the canteen at lunchtime



New to me! A several-frame exhibit.



Accidents, not incidents.



Verrechnungsmarke and dues, accounting for money-delivery fees collected by postmen delivering cash.



The party tried a new-to-us restaurant (excellent) and returned to two (one excellent, one acceptable). I fitted in a short exploration of the Fishermans Quarter - somewhat sanitised from what it would have been 4 centuries ago. Return via Frankfurt and Manchester was no worse than the outward trip. Would I go again? Yes. Could I? Dunno.

The now-customary sheet-of-three was again produced by the Austrian Post Office. In my opinion it's not as good as last year's - especially the central stamp.



For revenue collectors?



Visitors were 'stamped' to permit leaving for fresh air or lunch elsewhere then re-entering!



The ever-helpful Renate Rebhandl at the Austrian Post stand



A cheery welcome from Ms Stefanie at the Tyrol Phila stand

AIJP Meeting

This is the Association Internationale des Journalistes Philatéliques, and as a formally-retired Editor I am a member. I find it stimulating, not least because the conversations switch seamlessly from German to English and back - and English is the de facto second language especially if you choose not to use German. Everybody from all over Europe had the same complaint: the active members are getting older and wearing out and younger (or even comparatively younger, eg 50) replacements are rarer than Red Mercuries.

We discussed digital vs printed journals. Both have non-trivial archiving problems. Paper takes time and needs dry storage space. Digital also takes time, and needs equipment that can read it. Does any reader use 3.5 inch floppy disks? Run Lotus Smartsuite? (And do your heirs know where your passwords are?)

Technology exists to do complex searches on data sets. “Complex” includes phrases, ie two or more character strings separated by spaces, such as “first-day cover”; some searches index documents as a word list so will never find “first-day cover” as it contains a hyphen and a space. Find a search-expert and ask them!

ULM piccies



Breakfast room in hotel



Käsespätzli mit Zwiebeln



Maultasche (I was given four!)



Pumpkin soup “with a bit on the side”



Market day! Pumpkins!



Assorted peppers



Conehead (Hispi) cabbage



Rossa di Tropea Calabrian onions (sweet)

“Long thin pictures” of the older parts of the town, taken on a long thin smartphone.



The “Fisherman's Quarter” next to the Danube.



Postal reform May 2025: Changes to the labeling on domestic letters at post offices, postal partners and self-service stations

Dr. Hans Moser, Bärenweg 14, 6410 Telfs

hans.moser@uibk.ac.at

Effective May 1, 2025, changes were implemented at Austrian Post AG, which also affected the labeling of postage labels. For domestic letters, there is now only the “**Letter**” service, available in sizes S (small) and M (medium), which is delivered within 2-3 business days (previously called ECO). With the “PREMIUM” service, 95% of letters are expected to reach the recipient on the next business day. PREMIUM thus replaces the previous PRIORITY service. Delivery costs remain unchanged for postal customers. With the same maximum dimensions (L 235 x W 162 x H 5 mm) and a weight of up to 20g, the **S letter costs** €1.00 and the **M letter** €1.55 (weight 20g to 75g). The **PREMIUM service** adds 30 cents to the cost of each. Mail in a larger format and weighing up to 2kg can be sent as a **parcel in Austria**, product S (L 353 x W 250 x H 30 mm) or M (larger, also rolls, see folder), and costs €3.10 or €4.65 respectively.

The different procedures for registered mail within Germany have been retained. These procedures pertain to the delivery of the item. If a customer requests “**registered mail**”, a **faster delivery (PREMIUM)** with **the recipient's signature is usually charged at €4.80 (unless the postal worker provides further instructions)**. If next-business-day delivery with a signature is not required, **a standard letter with registered mail must be requested, which costs €4.50**.

If, however, you are happy for a **registered letter** to be dropped into the mailbox (i.e., without the recipient's signature), which was already common practice some time before May 2025, then you must request “**Registered Mail (Standard)**”. This will save you at least €1, regardless of whether it's a “Registered Letter” or an “Expedited Letter”.

Older postal customers were accustomed to registered letters always requiring a signature upon delivery. As part of rationalization measures, coupled with personnel cost-cutting, a two-tiered system for “registered mail” was introduced. It would likely have been more customer-friendly to use the term “registered mail” for the cheaper option and to refer to the more expensive option (requiring a signature) as, for example, “Registered Mail Extra” or “Registered Mail SIG” (SIG = Signature).

When mailing items at post offices or postal partners, “letters” and “expedited letters” are placed in separate containers. This means the decision regarding the forwarding method (standard or expedited) is made on-site at the point of mailing, not at a regional distribution center. I am unaware whether this organizational separation existed in this form before May 2025.

From 2019 until April 30, 2025, the labels of post offices and postal partners included the designation ECO or PRIORITY on the left-hand side, depending on the delivery method. There are changes to the labeling at the counters of post offices, postal partners, and self-service stations, which are described below. All images are shown reduced in size.

I was informed that the change in label printing was carried out electronically from a central location and not on site.

1. Regular mail without registration

Post offices

6290 MAYRHOFEN

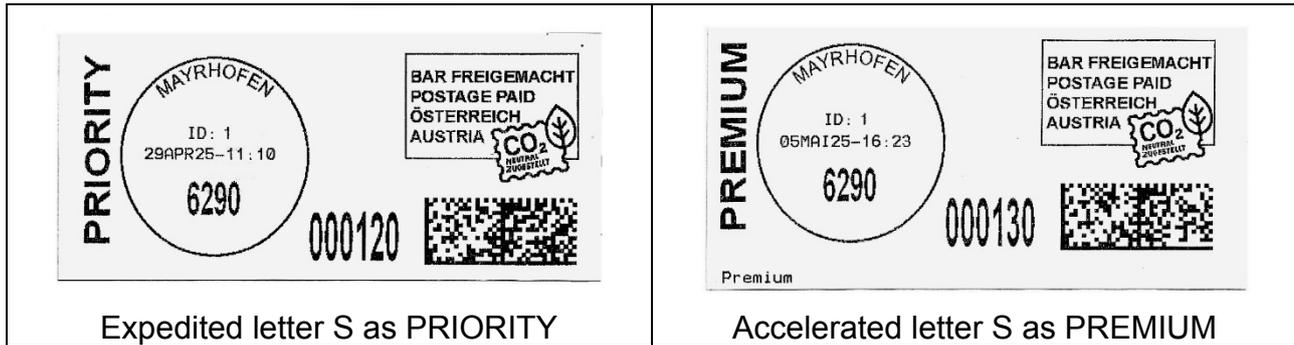


Fig. 1: While on April 29, 2025, a letter was marked with PRIORITY for expedited next-business-day delivery at a cost of 120 cents, the same service was charged at 130 cents from May 2, 2025, and is now labeled PREMIUM. The word “Premium” appears again in small print at the bottom left.

6410 TELFS

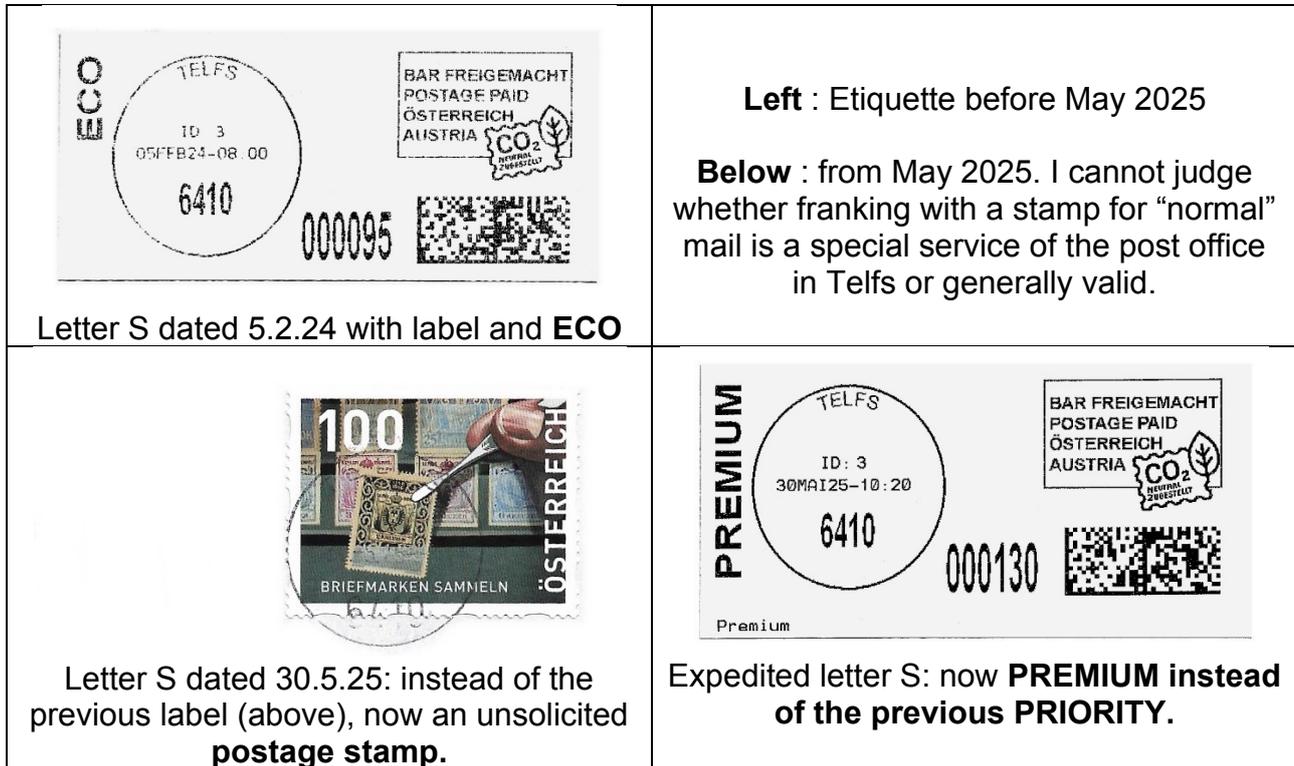


Fig. 2: The two lower letter excerpts were processed consecutively at the same counter on May 30, 2025. For the ordinary “letter” submission, the clerk was offered a stamp (not a label) by machine, which he affixed and canceled with the OT stamp (TELFS 6410 “c”). The expedited letter S, marked **PREMIUM**, however, received the illustrated label with ID 3.

Comment : The letters were delivered to the same recipient on two consecutive working days. While receiving a stamped letter is certainly welcome, it has a drawback: using stamps inevitably leads to delivery delays. From an advertising perspective, it would have been better to link expedited delivery with stamps; then the many different denominations of stamps would at least convey an image of appreciation and genuine need. Even though using stamps with a free supplementary stamp is now permitted for premium mail, many customers and postal partners are unaware of this.

Post partner

6412 TELFS - ST. GEORGEN



Fig. 3: On the left are labels from letters before May 2025, on the right from May 2025. Adjacent labels indicate the same delivery type: at the top within 3 working days, at the bottom on the next working day.

6182 GRIES IM SELLRAIN



Fig. 4: Both items were posted in May 2025, the one on the left as a “letter” (with delivery within 3 working days) without any further markings and with the now increased fee of 100 cents, the one on the right as a “Premium”. The smaller “Premium” designation on the lower left may be missing at other postal partners (e.g., Hopfgarten im Brixental, Zams).

Comment : As an addendum, “IM” in GRIES IM SELLRAIN should be written in smaller capital letters, but this is usually (always?) ignored on labels.

6095 GRINZENS

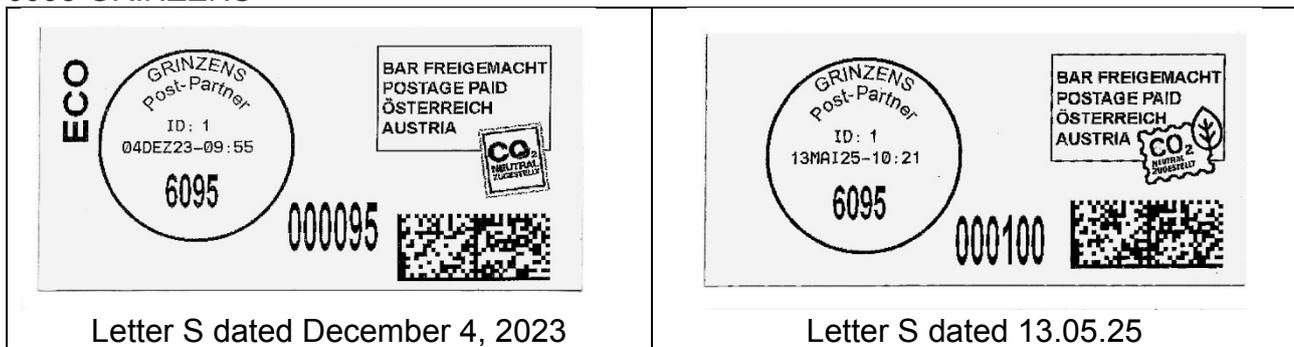
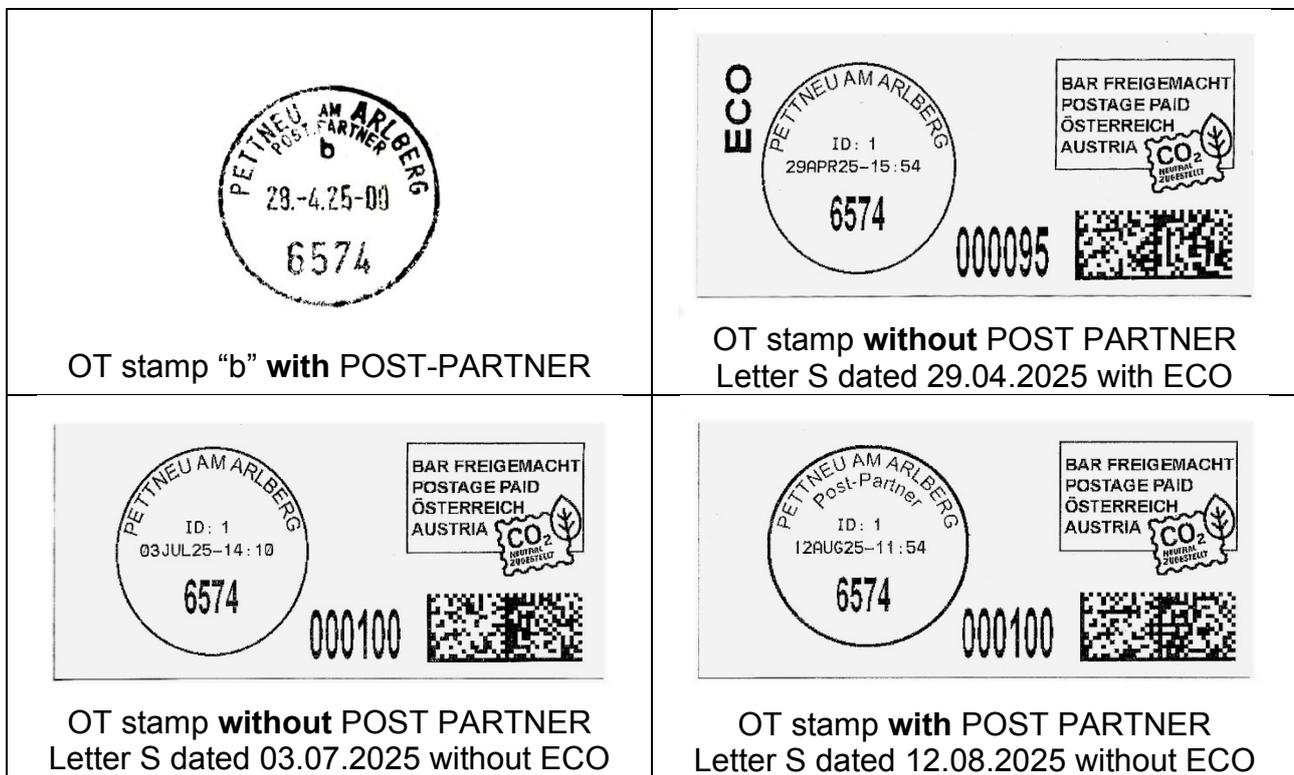


Fig. 5: In the left-hand image (Dec. 4, 2023), the box labeled “CO₂ / neutral / produced” is shown without the accompanying leaflet. It is questionable whether the label “CO₂ / neutral / produced” with the accompanying leaflet (see right) ever existed in Grinzens, even briefly, before May 2025. In any case, the ECO label is visible on the left, which is missing in the right-hand image. The postage increase for letter S, valid from May 2025, was 5 cents.

6574 PETTNEU AM ARLBERG

has an incorrect OT stamp designation . A stamp specialist unfamiliar with the history of this postal establishment would assume that Pettneu was briefly a post office branch, which is incorrect.



Postal partner was established at the MPreis branch in Pettneu . While the postal stamp included the inscription “POST-PARTNER” (top left), this designation was omitted from the label printer and went unnoticed (top right, bottom left). Following my notification (July 15, 2025), the labeling was changed (presumably from July 21, 2025, as shown in the bottom right). Due to the “postal reform” effective May 2, 2025, the label with ECO or PRIORITY markings on domestic mail will only be valid for 8 days, while the incorrect designation (without “Postal Partner”) will be valid for approximately 1 month.

2. “Registered Mail Easy”, “Registered Mail”: various registration slips

Interestingly, while the term “registered mail” is used, the accompanying slip bears an “**R**” for “recommended.” This continues the tradition of marking “registered mail” with an “R” on the accompanying slip. Obligations to the Universal Postal Union may play a role in this practice.

A characteristic of **postal receipt slips** is that the top line contains only the postal code and the name of the post office, but no further information.

In contrast, **postal partner return slips include** both the postal code and name, as well as the additional designation “Post Partner”. The latter may be truncated or even missing if the partner's name exceeds the number of available characters, as in “6351 Scheffau am Wilden Kaiser” (completely without “Post Partner”).

Post offices

Registered mail (simple): This means the letter can be deposited in the mailbox without the recipient's signature. The tasks to be performed by the mail carrier are listed on the **left side of the label in four fields**: From top to bottom, the pictograms mean: the letter must be scanned again, a signature is not required, and it must be deposited in the mailbox. The fourth field concerns delivery: an empty field means the letter must be delivered within three business days; however, if this field is filled in by PREM, the letter should be delivered on the next business day.

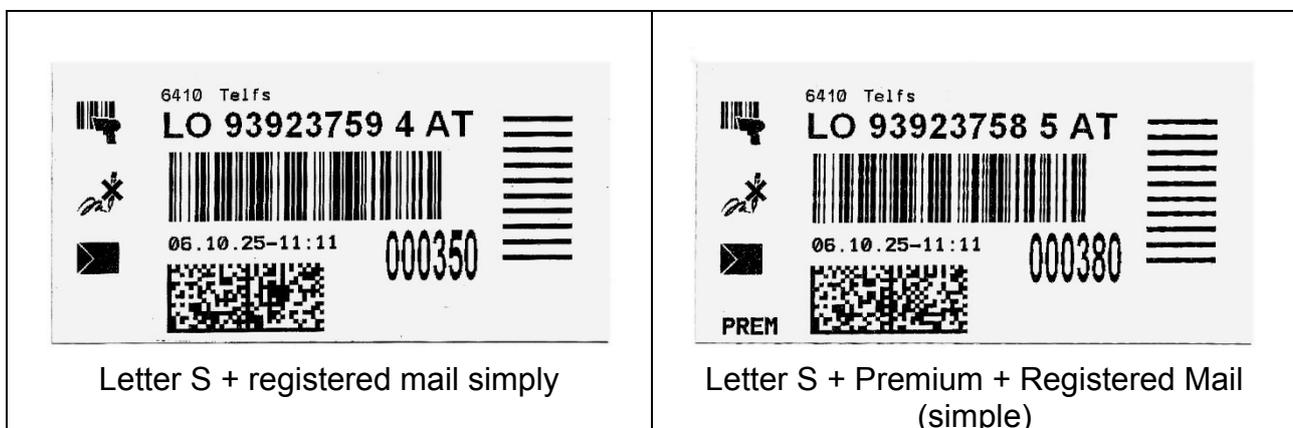


Fig. 7: The letters were posted consecutively at the same counter in the Telfs post office on October 6, 2025, as evidenced by both the registration numbers (which differ by one [unit of measurement], 758 and 759 in the second line, respectively) and the identical date and time. The difference between the letters lies in the delivery method: either the next business day (Premium, label on the right) or within three business days (label on the left). Before May 2025, ECO and PRIORITY served the same purpose.

The letters were indeed found in the mailbox on consecutive days. Comment: It is plausible that both letters were processed at the Vomp distribution center on the same day, first the premium mail, then the others. The pre-sorted mail is then transported separately to delivery depots for final sorting, possibly on the same day. Does the “slower” mail item then get left behind?

In the days of the Austrian Post, every effort was made to deliver mail as quickly as possible. Today, due to “maximum” staff reductions, are unnecessary delays being imposed on a fraction of mail items?

Registered mail : The striking difference on the labels is that the three fields of the pictogram on the left sidebar have been replaced by a large R. For the postal worker, the “R” means that a signature is required upon delivery of the letter.



Fig. 8: The top row shows delivery slips used before May 2025. They depict “normal” and “expedited delivery” **with Recipient's signature** , indicated by ECO or PRIO(RITY). The same delivery options are shown in the bottom row from May 2025 onwards. Instead of the previous ECO, the bottom field in the left sidebar now remains blank; PRIO is replaced by PREM. Fees : ECO €0.95; PRIO €1.20; Registered mail €3.50. The fee increases effective from May 2025 are 5 cents for standard mail (formerly ECO) and 10 cents for PREM.

Registered mail with delivery receipt : “Registered mail” can be combined with additional services such as “Personal Delivery” or “Delivery Receipt.” The fee is €2.20 per item. When mailing, a form is filled out and affixed to the back of the letter. The recipient confirms receipt of the mail item by signing the form. The delivery receipt is then detached from the mail item. The mail carrier then returns the receipt to the mailing system, after which it is delivered to the sender.

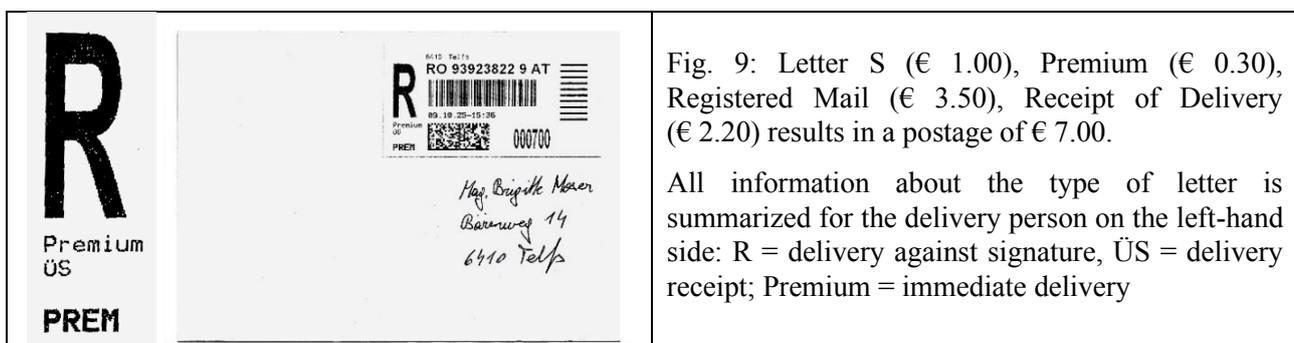




Fig. 10: Both sides of the acceptance slip from Fig. 11. Original size: 15 x 9 cm.



Fig. 11: Fees: for **letter M** (€1.55); premium (€0.30); registered mail (€3.50) and delivery receipt (€2.20) resulted in postage of €7.55. Stamps worth €4.65 were already prepaid, therefore €2.90 had to be added. The addressee was **not present at the time of delivery** .

Comments : The letter was posted as “Premium” mail in Telfs on Monday, June 16, 2025, at 10:07 a.m. An unsuccessful delivery attempt was made on Wednesday (!), therefore “ **ben . / 18.6.25** “ was noted on the envelope for “**notified**”. The mail carrier returned the item to the **Vomp delivery depot , from where it was handed over to the Schwaz** post office for collection on Friday (June 20, 2025) and picked up by the recipient on the same day.

The responsibilities of the delivery base in Schwaz (and Jenbach), which had existed since 2003, were transferred to the logistics center and delivery base in Vomp on March 4, 2022.

It would be preferable if undeliverable items were handed over to the collection point on the same day. In that case, the recipient would have received the letter two days earlier. The “Premium” service was charged but not provided.

Post partner

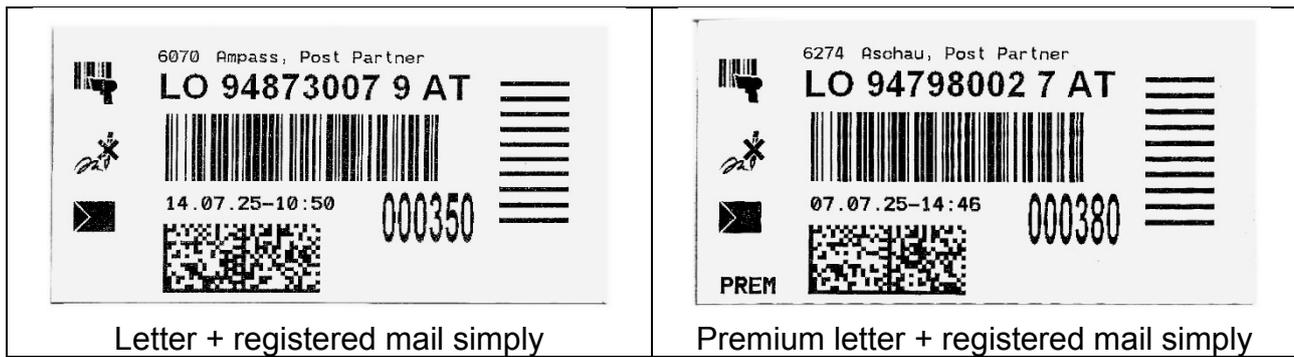


Fig. 12: The labels for “Registered Mail Easy” always include pictograms on the left edge. These provide the postal worker with the following information: the item is to be scanned (scanner gun over the barcode), no signature is required (pencil crossed out), and it is to be placed in the mailbox. If it is a “3-day letter,” the bottom field remains blank; for a “1-day letter,” PREM is displayed.

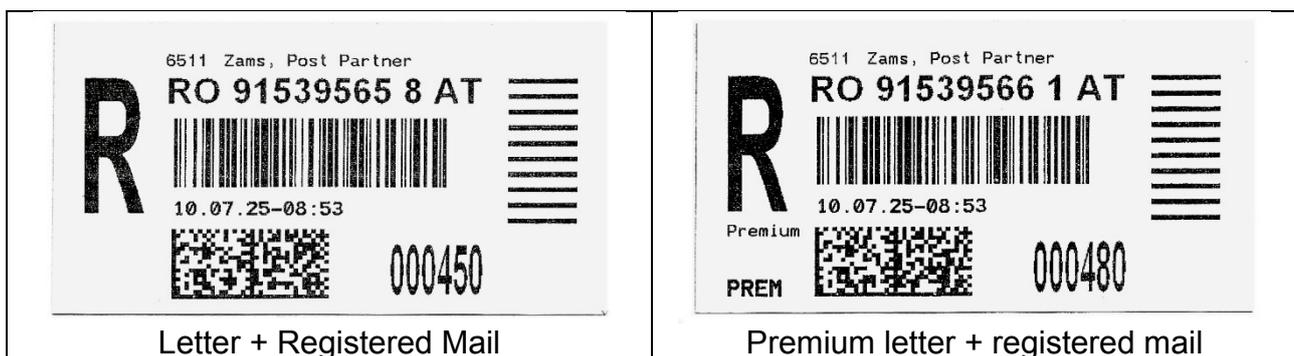


Fig. 13: “Registered mail “ requires the recipient's signature and is indicated by a large R on the left edge of the label. Depending on whether it is a standard letter or an “expedited letter,” the remaining margin is either blank or marked twice, as PREM and PREMIUM respectively. The letters were posted successively at postal partner 6511 Zams on July 10, 2025, at 8:53 a.m. and reached the recipient on different days.

LEUTASCH

This postal partner occupies a special position: It does not have a label printer, but only an OT stamp, and sells stamps in packs of four. For any type of registered mail, customers are directed to the self-service station located next door, see below (Fig. 15).

Self-service stations

Unlike post offices and postal partners, the labels printed at self-service stations do not bear an OT stamp. The vertical rectangle displays the postage rate at the top, the date in the middle (the year is multi-digit on the right), and a stylized postal logo on a simulated stamp at the bottom. As it turns out, the changeover also affected the self-service stations with the altered label printing. Whether the printing change occurred simultaneously with the other postal facilities is unknown to me due to a lack of suitable documentation.

SB TELFS is located in a side room of the post office branch.

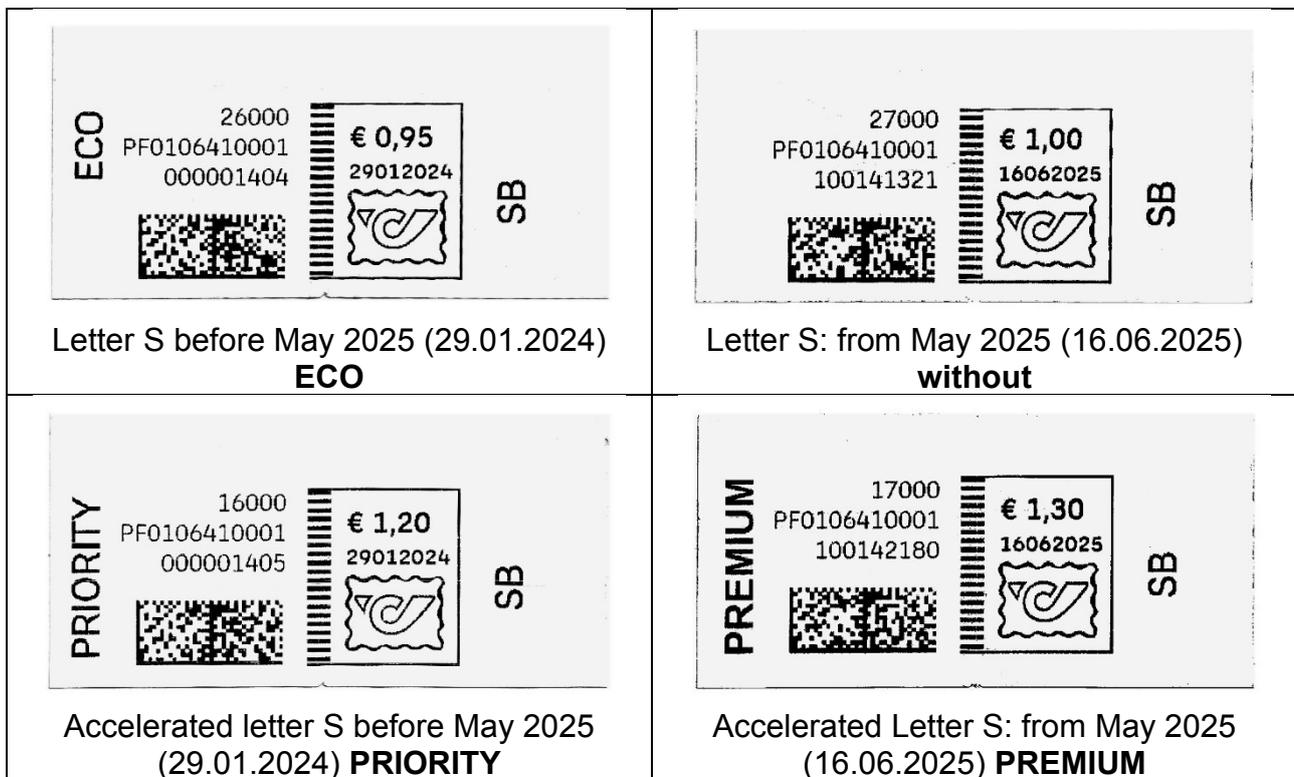


Fig. 14: The four letters were mailed at the Telfs post office (post office 6410 Telfs, middle line PF010 6410 001 above the QR code) on the same terminal 001 (= PF0106410 001) on two separate days. During this period, the numerical code (top line) for standard letter S changed from 26000 to 27000, and for expedited letter S from 16000 to 17000. While the counter (bottom line) on the left increased by 1 from 1404 to 1405 for consecutively mailed letters, the counter on the right shows significant differences for consecutively mailed letters: 100141321 and 100142180. It is possible that the two types of mail are now being counted separately.

The Leutasch self-service post office is located next to post office partner 6105 (Leutasch) and is served by **post office branch 6100 in Seefeld, Tirol** . The self-service station was established in the Leutasch community center on October 6, 2014, even before a self-service station existed in Seefeld.

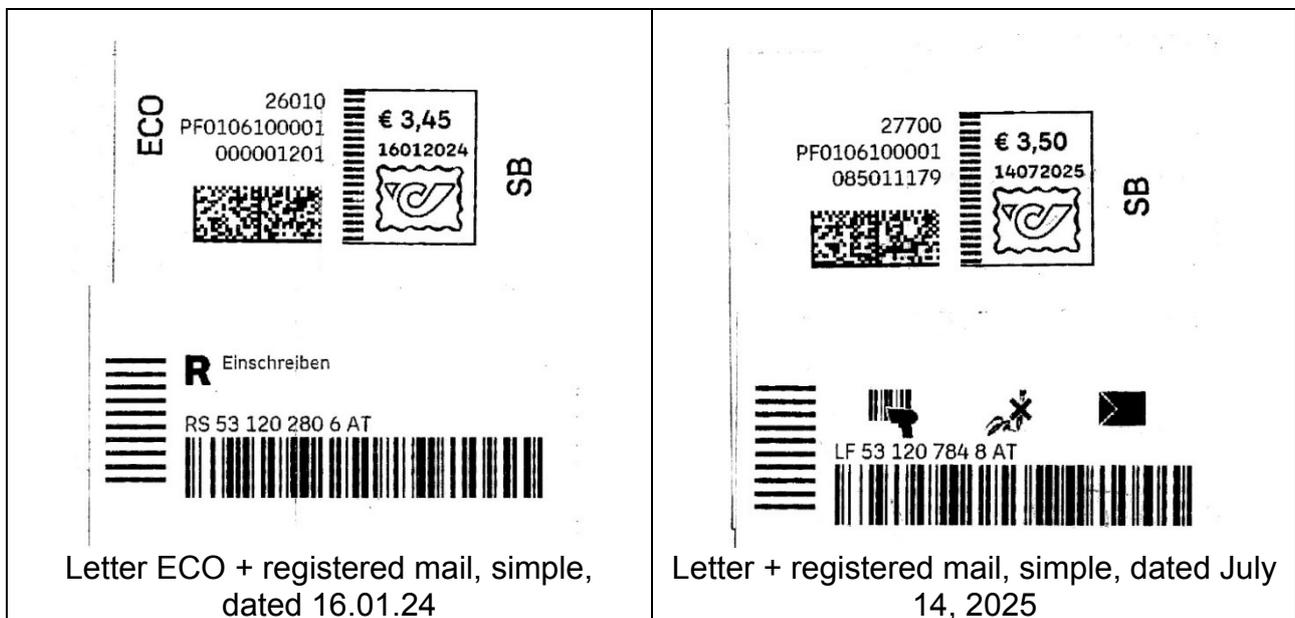
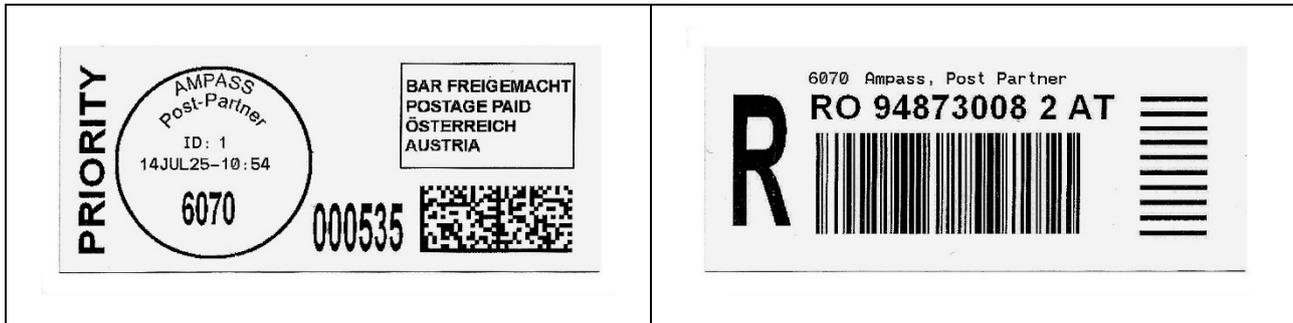


Fig. 15: The middle line above the QR code contains the postal code 6100 (= Seefeld) with Terminal 001, which is installed in the Leutasch self-service station. Terminal 002, installed much later, is located in the Seefeld post office branch. Unlike post offices and postal partners, self-service stations will continue to print two labels for

“Registered Mail Simple” and presumably also for “Registered Mail” even after the postal reform of May 2025. Each label measures 8 x 8 cm. The labels are overlapping in the above document excerpts, which is visible on the left-hand side. Another peculiarity is that the **pictograms are arranged horizontally** (right-hand image), which is possibly related to the “old” type of machine used here.

3. International postal traffic

Interestingly, the designations ECO and PRIORITY have been retained in **international mail** for both Europe and the rest of the world. Obligations arising from treaties with the Universal Postal Union are likely the reason for this.



Letter S (€1.40) sent **abroad** on July 14, 2025, by the postal partner in Ampass was sent by **registered mail** (€3.95), resulting in a total cost of **€5.35**. Unlike domestic mail, the label here is printed with PRIORITY (instead of PREMIUM, see Fig. 12, left). For registered mail, a **second label is always** printed for international mail. The fee of €3.95 charged here applies to registered mail; standard registered mail would cost €2.95.

Comment: Most postal customers probably won't understand the difference in delivery. They'll automatically select “Registered Mail” when sending a letter, even though they'd be perfectly happy with the option that's around €1 cheaper. It would be more customer-friendly to keep “Registered Mail” for the cheaper option and call the special service “Registered Mail Extra” or “Registered Mail Signed” (Sign. = Signature).

I would like to thank Reinhold Weilguny for providing many pieces of evidence.

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Post Office AG brochure: Domestic and international letters and parcels. As of May 2025.

Postbook 2024

Moser Hans: Label franking at postal partners using Tirol as an example. Arge Österreich, Newsletter 135, Pages 37-48 (2024)

Moser Hans, Najc Wendelin, Stohl Hans: North and East Tirolean postmarks of postal institutions L to Z from 1850 to approx. 2023 (from pages 390-401) Self-published by Moser (2024)

[See also the documents linked at the bottom of here: <https://www.post.at/en/p/c/letter-mail-parcel-rates>]

WHEN AUSTRIA HAD A NAVY

by
John Germann

Few people realize today that realize that Austria at one time had a navy. One reason is that Austria is a landlocked nation today and has no practical reason for having one.

The Republic of Austria Today



Another reason is that it has been over a century since it did have a navy, and that navy never made much of a “splash” on the world scene. However, Austria was a very large empire from 1804 to 1918, ultimately comprising 11% of the land mass of Europe (excluding Russia). That empire at times included both sides of the Adriatic Sea, occasioning needs for defence. There were also the usual imperial ambitions for expansion.

The Austrian Empire in 1850



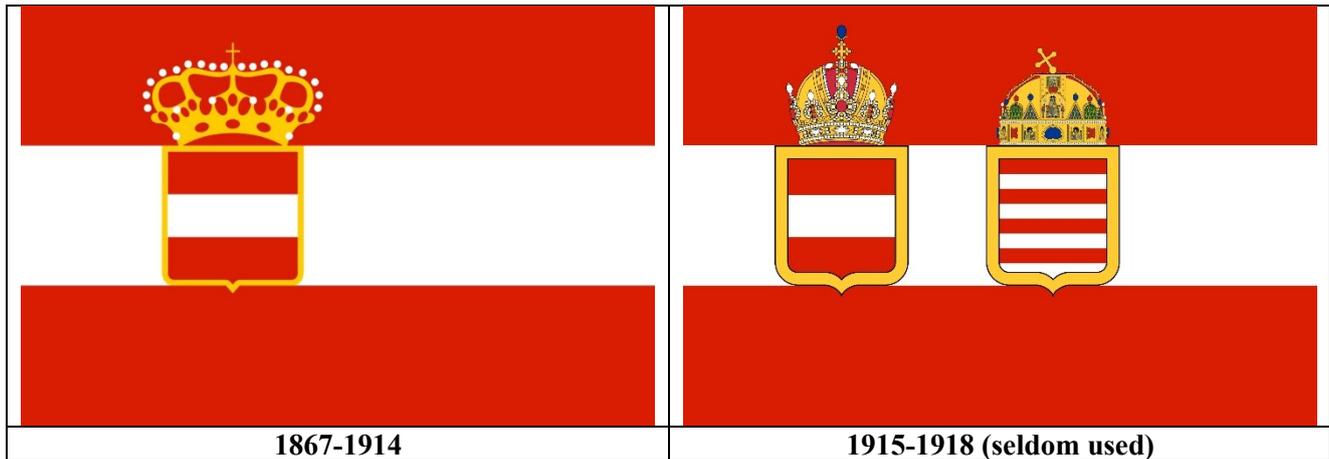
During the years 1850-1867 Austria lost two consecutive wars, in the process losing the prized territory of Lombardy-Venetia. For the consequences, see [The Austro-Hungarian "Ausgleich" of 1867](#)

The Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1867-1918



On top of that, in the early 1870s the powerful nations of Germany and Italy were born, both bordering threateningly on Austria. Austria-Hungary had little choice but to join the world's arms race. When World War I broke out in 1914 the empire's fleet had grown in size to no less than the seventh largest in the world. It trailed, in descending order, Britain, Germany, USA, France, Russia, and Italy; next in line behind it was Japan.

The Austro-Hungarian Navy (Kriegsmarine) Ensign



The Austro-Hungarian Navy Ships

The navy ranged from Danube River gunboats and old steam and sail vessels to recently constructed dreadnought battleships. Here is a list of the *capital* ships in the navy when Austria-Hungary entered “The Great War” in 1914:

Dreadnought Battleships – 4	Scout Cruisers - 4
Pre-Dreadnought Battleships – 9	Destroyers - 18
Armoured Cruisers – 3	High Seas Torpedo Craft - 25
Torpedo Cruisers – 2	Coastal Torpedo Craft - 29
Protected Cruisers – 5	Submarines - 6

Note the emphasis on torpedo craft. Also note the lack of emphasis on submarines; this particular deficiency was alleviated in part by loans of U-boats during the war from its Central Powers ally, Germany. Many of these ships were outdated and wound up being used for purposes other than combat, such as training, storage, and military barracks. There were also large numbers of coastal defense ships, river gunboats, repair ships, supply ships, colliers, and the like.

The Austro-Hungarian Naval Bases

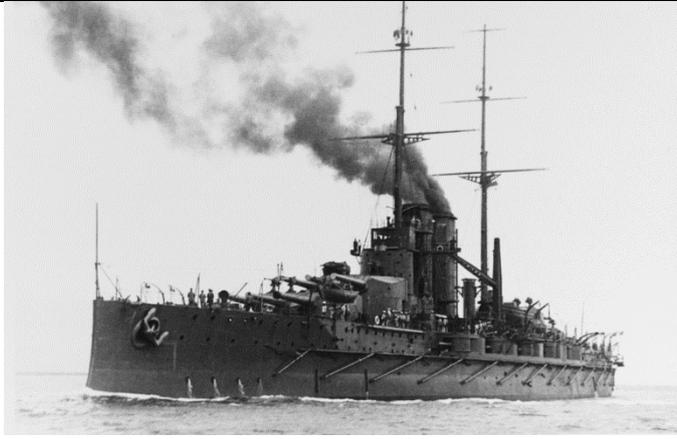
This navy needed ports and bases, of course. And the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea provided a host of them. The most important bases were located in a triangle in the far northern Adriatic. The primary base was located at Pola; it housed the navy (Kriegsmarine) headquarters, along with dockyards and an arsenal. Fiume served as the headquarters of the merchant marine and the home of torpedo manufacture. Trieste, the largest commercial port, completed the triangle. All three had substantial shipbuilding facilities. Sprinkled along the Dalmatian coast to the south, all the way down to Cattaro (Kotor) in Montenegro, were smaller ports which served as bases for the lesser warships and auxiliaries.



A Brief Sampling of Ships in the Austro-Hungarian Navy and their Postal History

(Note: SMS stands for Seiner Majestät Schiff, i.e. His Majesty's Ship)

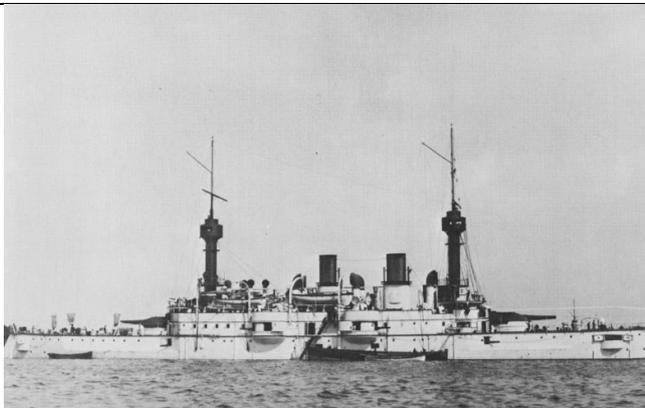
SMS VIRIBUS UNITIS - Dreadnought Battleship



The flagship of the navy. The name means “With United Forces” - Kaiser Franz Joseph's personal motto. Built at Trieste. Commissioned in 1912. Pre-war training operations and foreign voyages. Bombarded the Italian city of Ancona during the war. Sunk at anchor at Pola in 1918, by a mine attached by Italian sailors.

Letter to Germany. Posted and censored at Pola in 1916. Censor tape at top. A “received” handstamp from the August Stukenbrok arms firm

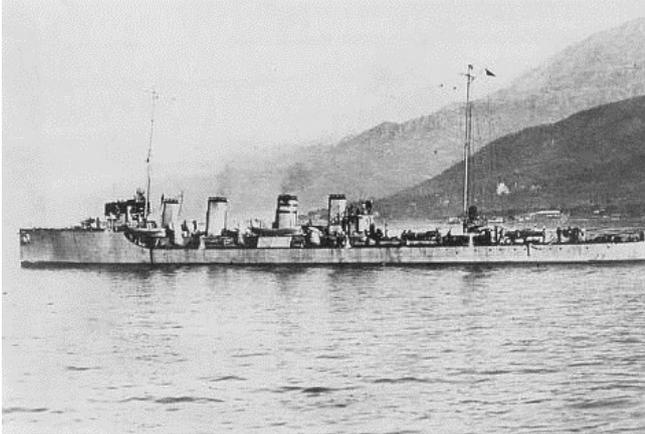
SMS KAISERIN UND KONIGIN MARIA THERESIA - Armoured Cruiser



Named for the famed Hapsburg empress. Built at Trieste. Commissioned in 1894. Performed missions to the Caribbean and China. During WWI served as a harbour guard at Trieste and as a barracks ship at Pola. Allocated to Britain at war's end and scrapped.

A 1915 picture postcard mailed to Charlottenburg, Germany. Censored at Zara. Kudos to the handiwork of the cancel's creator - fitting all of the information so nicely within it.

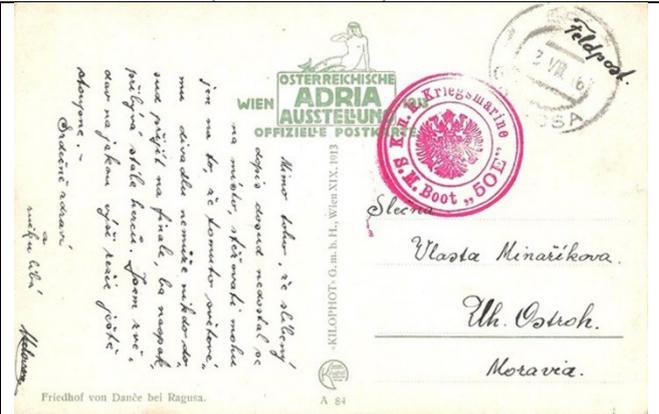
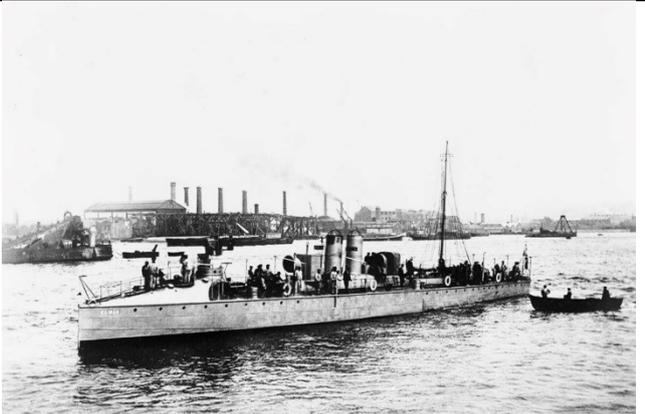
SMS ORJEN - Destroyer



Named for the mountain peak between Bosnia and Montenegro. Built at Kraljevica, Croatia. Commissioned in 1914. Helped to sink an Italian destroyer; raids on Albania and on the Otranto Barrage. Ceded to Italy at war's end. Renamed *Pola* and served as a training ship. Later named *Zenson*. Scrapped in 1937.

A Feldpost (Field Post) letter mailed to Budapest in 1914. Cancelled at Sebenico (Sibenik), its home port.

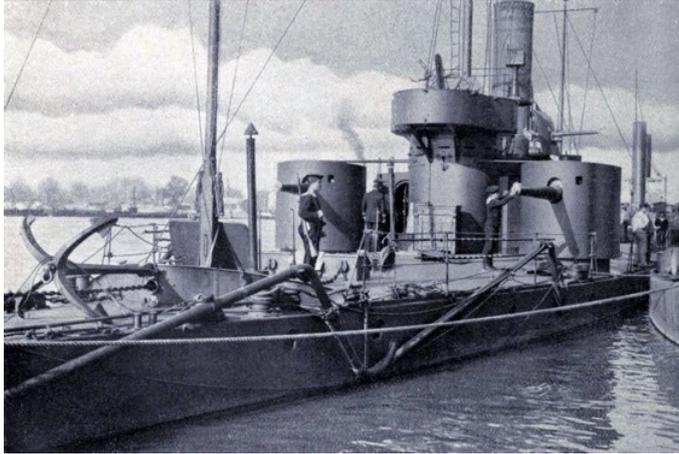
SMS TORPEDO BOAT 50E (Kaiman)



Built in England as Kaiman; renamed in 1914. Performed many wartime operations, including the bombardment of Ancona. Ceded to Britain and scrapped.

Picture postcard mailed from Gravosa (today part of Dubrovnik) in 1916. Written in Czech to a young woman in today's Ostrava, Moravia, Czech Republic.

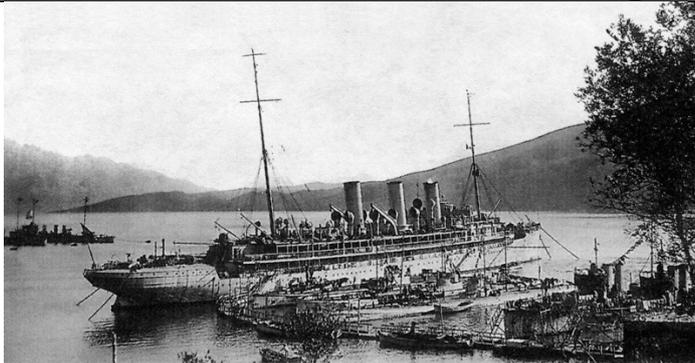
SMS BODROG - River Monitor



Named for a river in Hungary. Built in Budapest. Commissioned in 1904. Part of the Danube Flotilla. Fired the first shots of World War I when she bombarded Belgrade, Serbia. Also engaged Romanian forces in the war. Captured by Serbs in 1918. Ceded to Yugoslavia at war's end. Renamed *Sava*. Saw combat in WWII. Now a museum ship at Belgrade.

Letter mailed to Graz, Styria in 1915 from Feldpost 300, in the Balkans at the time.

SMS GAA - Torpedo Storage Ship



If this looks like an ocean liner, that's because it was one. Built in Germany as *Furst Bismarck* in 1890. Purchased by Austria from Russia in 1909. Renamed for a mountain in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Converted to a torpedo storage ship and then to a houseboat for submariners. Note the submarines in the photo. Ceded to Italy. Refurbished as *San Giusto* and made one trip, carrying 2375 passengers to the USA. Scrapped in 1923.

Picture postcard mailed to Znaim, Moravia in 1914.

SM HULK “VULKAN”- Repair Ship



Built in Germany as the ironclad *Prinz Eugen* (shown here). Commissioned in 1878. The name changed when converted to a repair ship in 1909, with a crane added. The engines were removed and she was towed to Sebenico where she spent all of WWI. Seized by Italy at war's end. Scrapped in 1920.

A Feldpost card posted from Sebenico (Sibenik) in 1916. Note the handstamp designation as “His Majesty's Hulk”(!) rather than “Ship” because it had become stationary.

The Navy's Role in World War 1

Question: What did this powerful Austro-Hungarian navy do in “The Great War?”

Answer: Precious little!

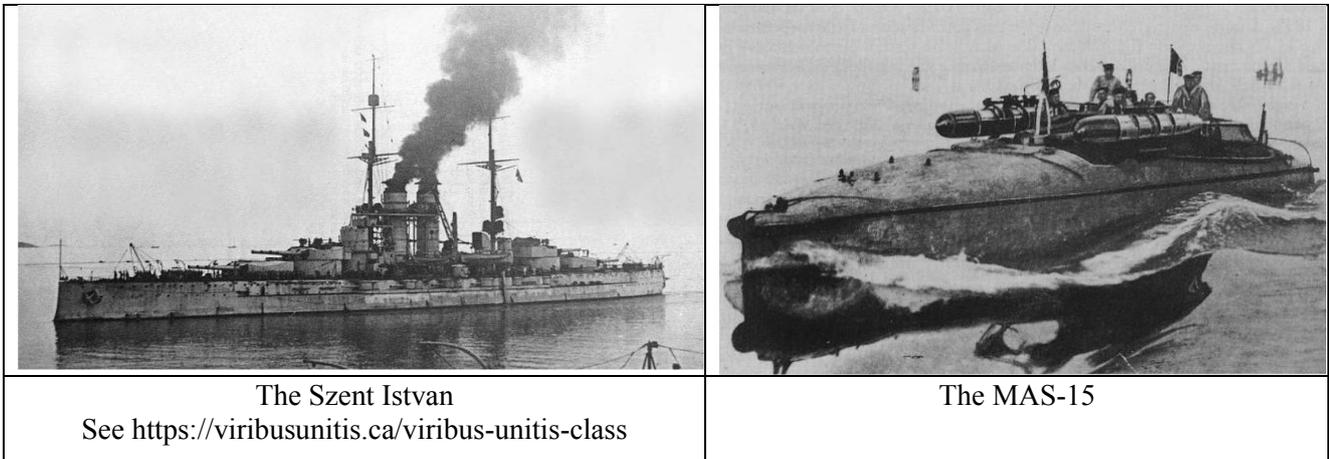
Why: The principal reason lies in geography.

A quick look at the map of the combatants suggests a similar and major problem for both the German and the Austro-Hungarian navies. They did not have wide-open access to the world at large because their bases were on inland seas with narrow outlets to larger waters. The Allies understood this and effectively bottled up the surface fleets, and some under-the-surface ships as well, by creating large barrages of mines backed by numerous ships. The **XXX** markers denote the North Sea and English Channel Barrages against the German High Fleet and the Otranto Barrage against the Austro-Hungarian navy.

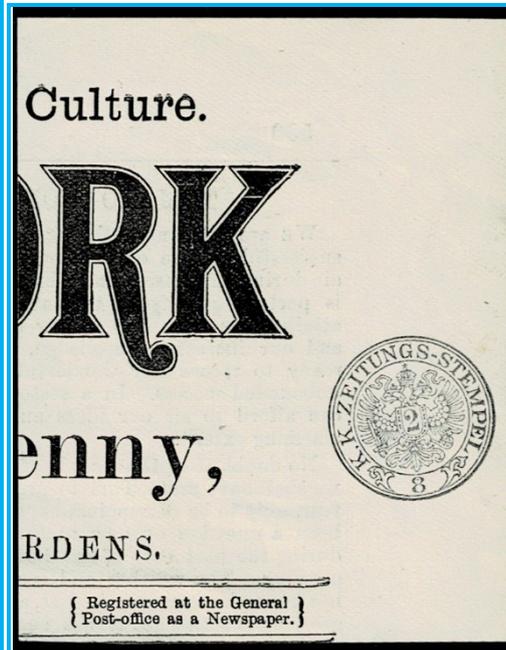


Even though Austria-Hungary's navy made 24 different attempts to break through the Strait of Otranto and out into the Mediterranean, it never succeeded. In a desperate move in June, 1918 the Kriegsmarine sent all four of its dreadnoughts down the Adriatic to blast away the barrage. However, before they ever got there an Italian torpedo sank one of them.

The ship that was sunk happened to be the pride and joy of the Austro-Hungarian fleet - SMS *Szent Istvan* (St. Stephen), the newest of the empire's dreadnoughts. And it went down in a shocking David-and Goliath type of encounter - from two torpedoes launched by the diminutive Italian torpedo boat *MAS-15*. She disappeared underneath the waves in a mere three hours, with 39 crewmen killed. The armada turned back; the Austro-Hungarian navy, for all intents and purposes, was finished.



On November 3, 1918 Austria-Hungary “called it quits” and signed the armistice that ended the fighting. In 1919 the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye took away Austria-Hungary's emperor and empire, leaving it with no coastline. Its ships were divided up among the Allies. The USA did not want any of the ships, France and Britain immediately scrapped almost all that they received, and Italy briefly found use for a few and scrapped the remainder. The newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (soon to be Yugoslavia) had no navy, so it kept and used most of the ships that it received. The Republic of Austria's navy kept a pair of riverine patrol vessels on the Danube until 2006. Today civilian police boats perform those duties. The Austrian Armed Forces of today consist of Land Forces, Air Forces, Cyber Forces, and Special Forces. There are no “Water Forces.”

	<p><i>“It’s who you know that matters!”</i></p> <p>Query: from what newspaper is this snippet? It’s evidently British and obviously something to do with York. The reverse is page number 530, so it’s published many times each year; it discusses ‘the recent Tomato season’ so this issue must be autumnal. The 2kr tax signet was introduced in Lemberg in 1887 and Vienna in 1890 and used till 31 Dec 1899. Die 8 is probably Vienna.</p> <p>Try the British Library Newspaper archive. They’re still recovering from a very serious hack, but the list of newspapers is available. However, searching it for a title when you only know the last two letters is impractical! Time to ask a friend...</p> <p>The journal is “Garden-work”, which appeared in 13 volumes between 1884 and 1896. A typical front page reads:</p> <p>“Garden-work / Weekly: One Penny / For Villa, Suburban, Town, and Cottage Gardens.” Not York at all!</p> <p>Many thanks to N.R. !</p>
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The Royal Philatelic Society London

Austrian Maritime Rivals

The Danube Steam Navigation Company and the Austrian Lloyd
in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea 1834 to 1849

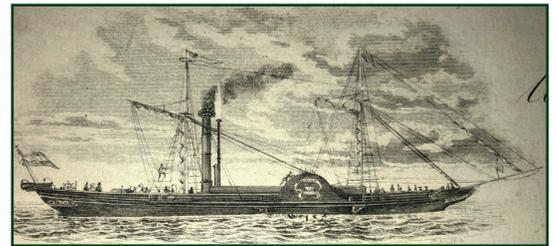
by Christopher C. Smith

A new publication from the RPSL

The latest book to be published by The Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL) details the history and postal history of these two Austrian steamship companies operating in the eastern Mediterranean Sea over a period of fifteen years. It follows the rivalry of the two companies amid important historical events of the period and provides detailed information on the rates, routes and individual voyages of the steamships. The author has made extensive use of primary sources and in doing so has been able to both correct errors in the existing literature and present much new information for postal historians.

The first chapter focuses on the Austrian Lloyd's Egypt line and the five known postal uses of the handstamp of that company used in Alexandria. The Danube Steam Navigation Company (DDSG) briefly ran its own line to Egypt, and this is the subject of the second chapter.

There follow two chapters containing detailed information on the DDSG's history and operations in the Black Sea and eastern Mediterranean, including extensive tables documenting the individual voyages. The research contained in these chapters comprises essential data for the final chapter which is built around the analysis of 13 selected letters carried on the maritime lines of the DDSG.



About the author

Christopher Smith has been a philatelist and postal historian for nearly six decades. His collecting interests include Austrian offices abroad, the consular post offices of Egypt, the Bordeaux issue of France, local posts of Sweden and Denmark, and classic United States.



Further information

This 345-page hardback was published in November 2025 and costs £58 for members of the RPSL and £65 for non-members. It can be ordered through the RPSL website (www.rpsl.org.uk).

ISBN 978-1-913015-33-6.

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The worldwide home of stamp collecting and postal history, since 1869