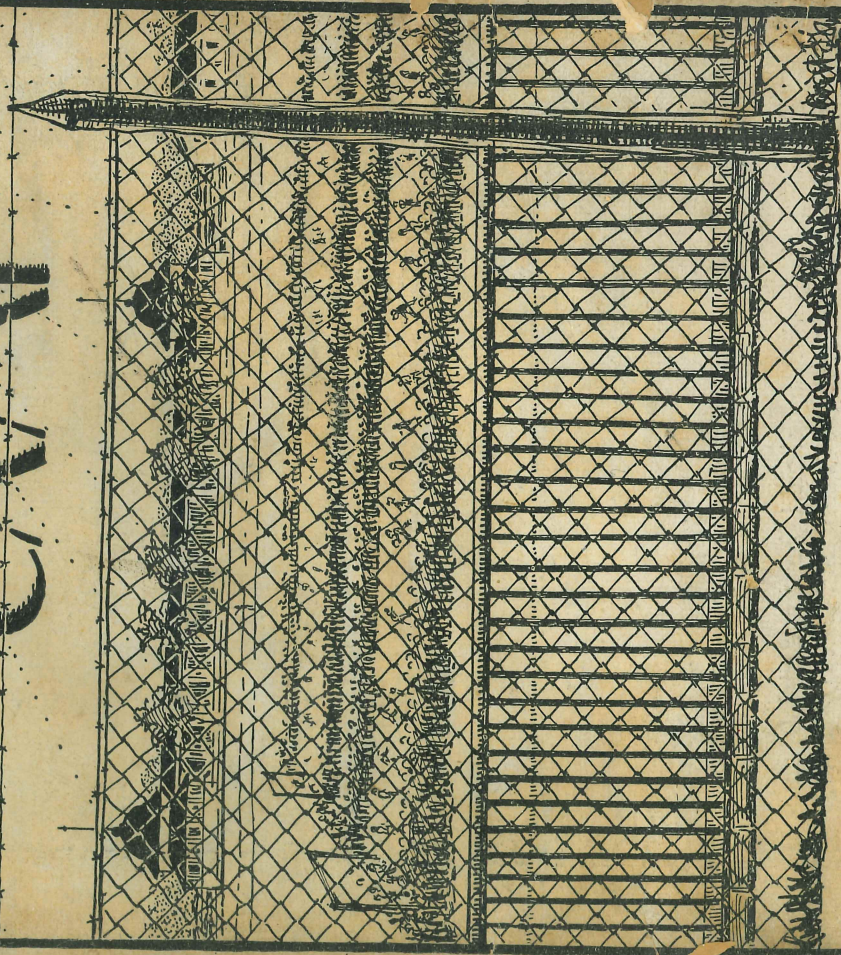


IN RUHLEBEN CAMP



No 9.

October 1915.

3d

515

IN RUHLEBEN CAMP

No 2 20 pfg.



Wolynear

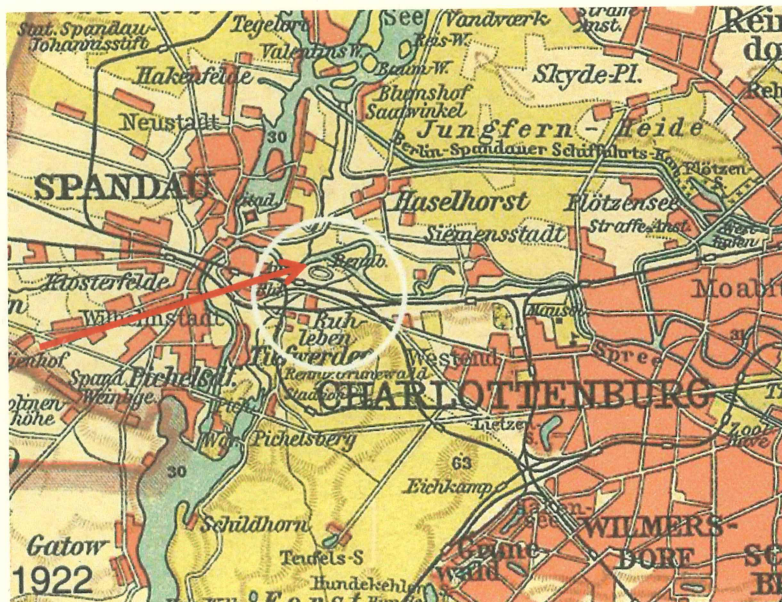
Sunday, June 27th

1915.

Ruhleben Internment Camp

Berlin

On 4 August 1914 Britain declared war on Germany. At that time some 7,000 civilian British subjects were either living in or visiting Germany, and in November all the males between the ages of 17 and 55 were interned as prisoners-of-war. They were sent to Ruhleben, then a village 10 km west of the centre of Berlin, near Spandau. By spring 1915 4,400 men were kept at this former racecourse.



Ruhleben Racecourse is circled in the map above

On 19 July 1915 Albert Kamps started the Ruhleben Express Delivery (RXD), and issued the first postage stamp. Roughly 6,000 pieces of mail of all kinds (much of it postal stationery) were handled each month. In October 1915 a Berlin stamp magazine published an article about this camp post. German philatelists then made complaints to the authorities about the use of postage stamps as private posts were not allowed in Germany at that time. The authorities closed the RXD camp post on 3 April 1916. The RXD was replaced by a stampless postal service that never became very popular.

Ruhleben Camp Post

The Stamps

Genuine

First issue - 19th July 1915



Third issue - 23rd October 1915

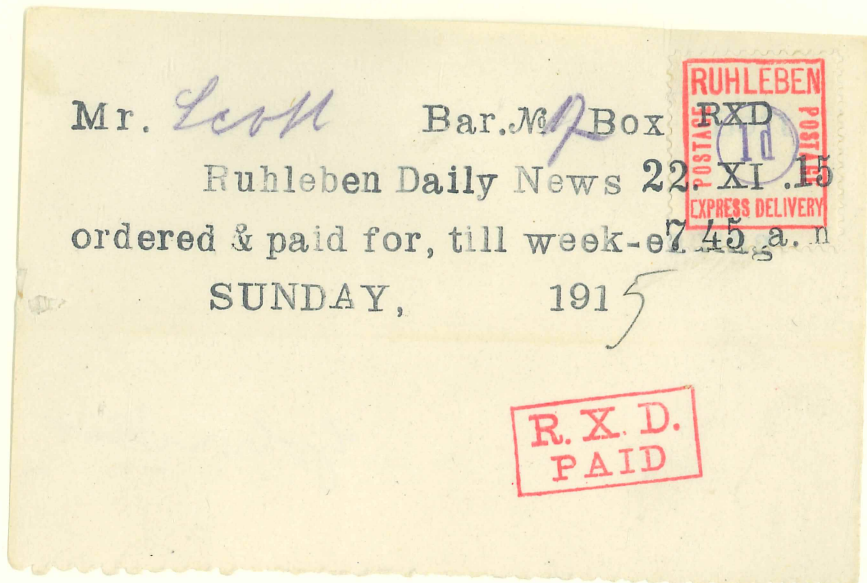


As all of the stamps in stock were confiscated or destroyed in 1916, the remaining stamps are very scarce and have attracted the attention of forgers.

Ruhleben Camp Post

Genuine Usage

A receipt for payment for Ruhleben Daily News



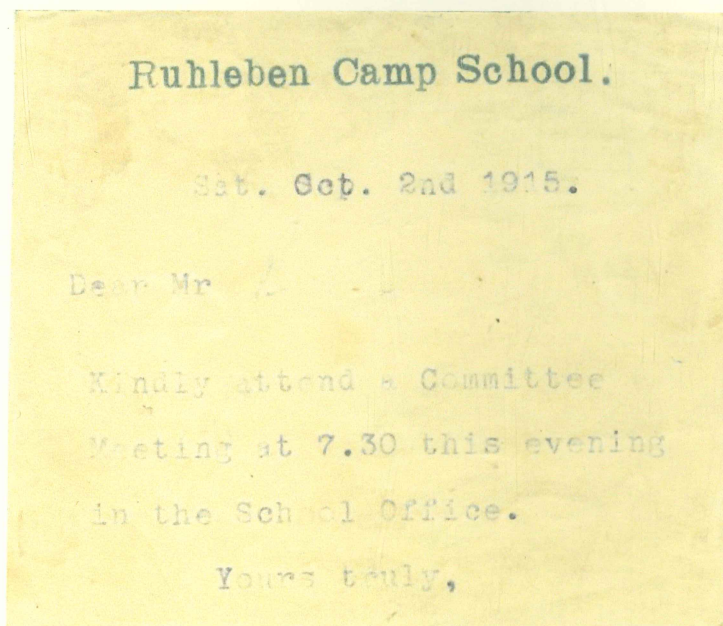
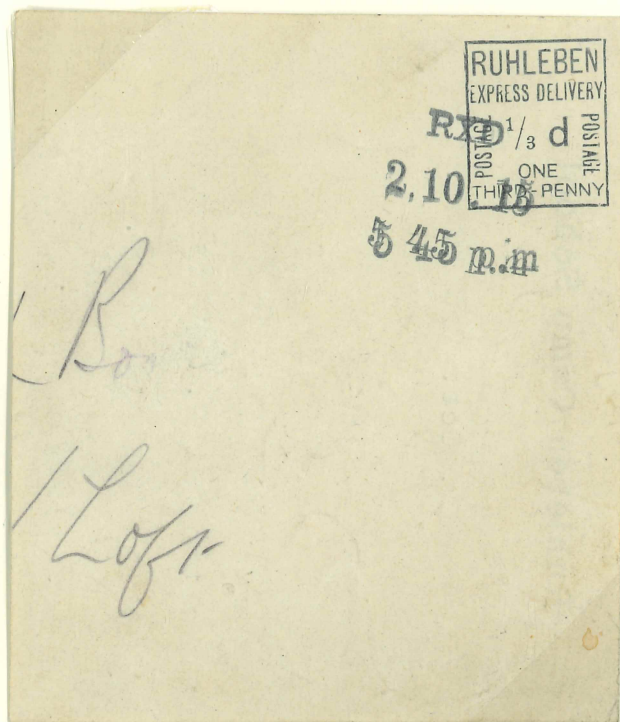
Letter card



Ruhleben Camp Post

Genuine Usage

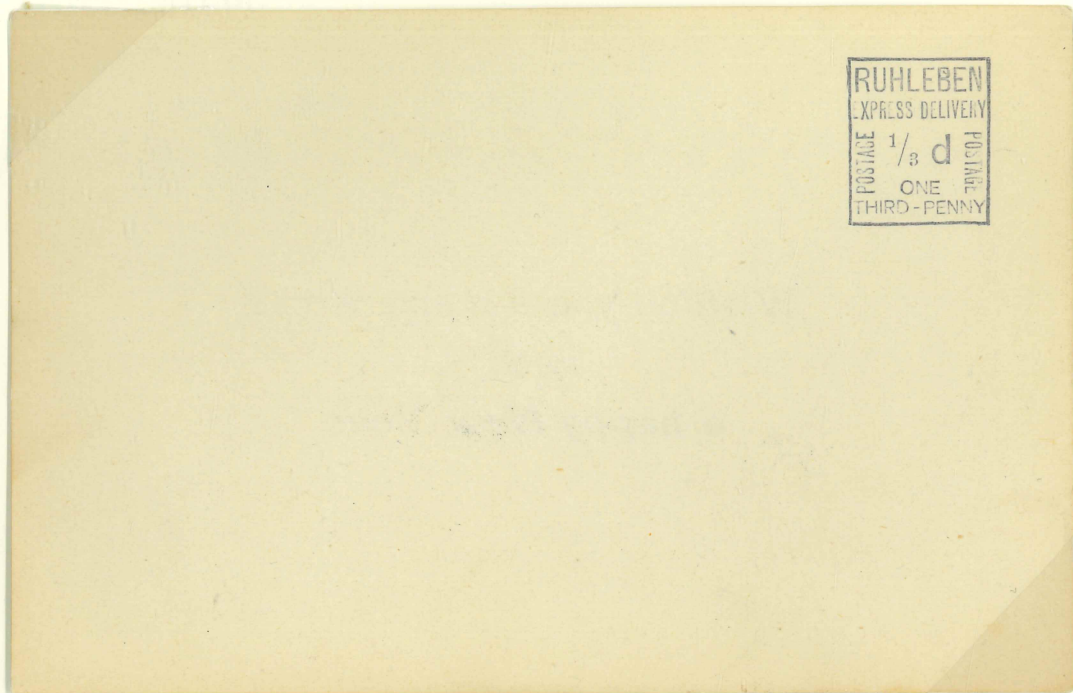
Part of a postcard



The reverse

Ruhleben Camp Post

A Postal Card
(Genuine)



The reverse

Ruhleben Camp Post

The Forgeries (F1)

In the F1 Forgery the "P" of Postage is much closer to the frame line and the stamps are perforated $10\frac{1}{2}$ instead of $11\frac{1}{2}$



Originals



F1 Forgery

Ruhleben Camp Post

The Forgeries (F1)

First Issue



Second Issue



Third Issue



Ruhleben Camp Post

The Forgeries (F1)



Ruhleben Camp Post

The Forgeries (F1)



Ruhleben Camp Post

The Forgeries (F2)

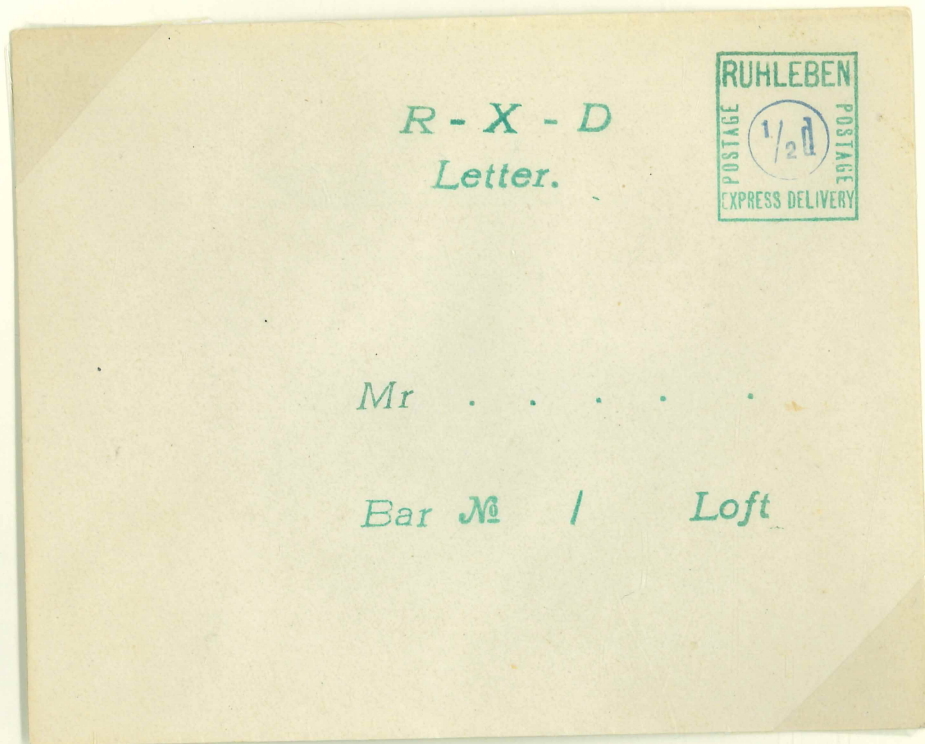
The printing is cruder and much heavier than the originals and only used copies have been recorded, all with impossible postmark dates well after the closure of the post service.



F2 Forgery - 24th November 1917 - impossible date

Ruhleben Camp Post

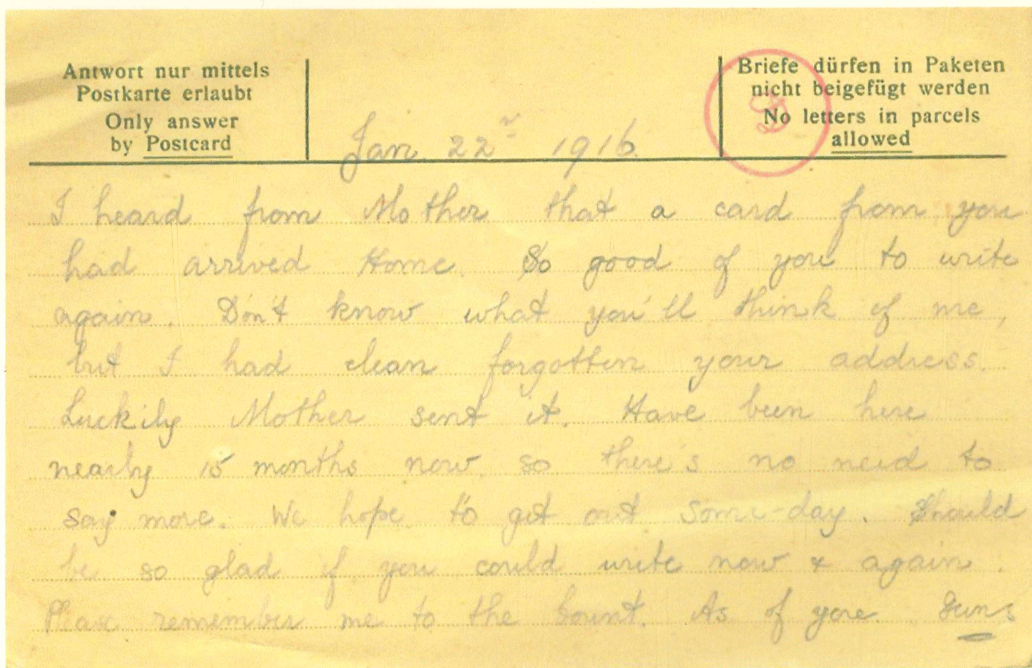
A Postal Envelope
(Forgery)



Ruhleben

Official Camp Mail

The internal camp post is of particular interest but as with other camps there was official external mail. An example of a prisoner of war postcard sent from a J G Marchant in barrack 8, to Dundee in January 1916 contemporary with the internal Camp Post is shown below.



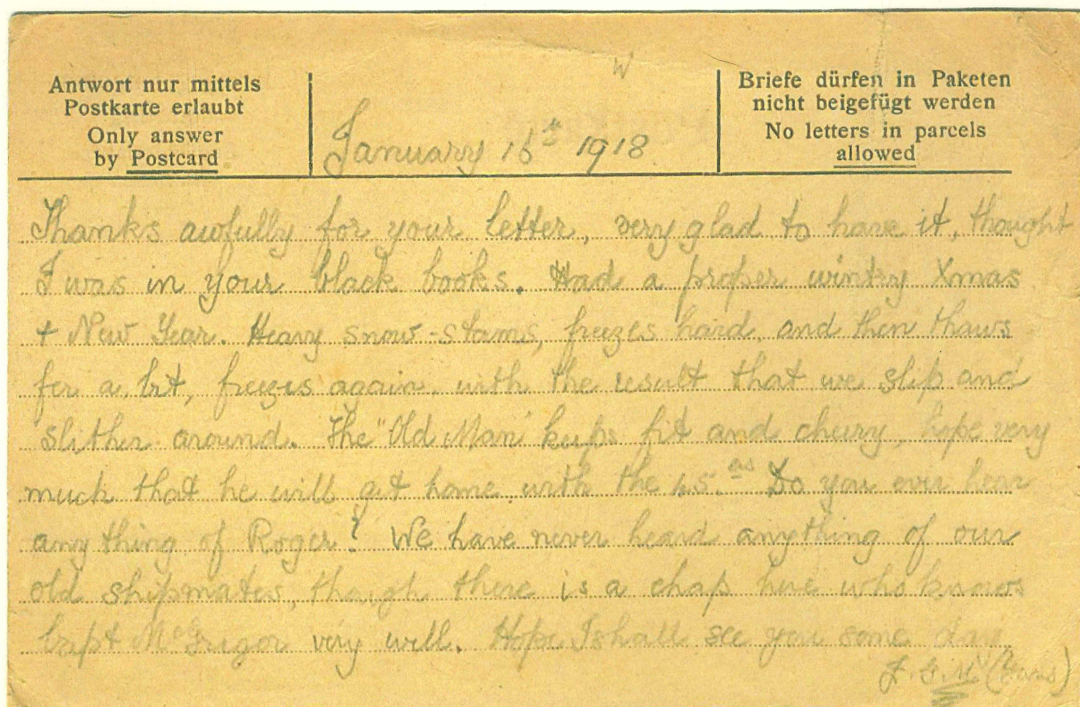
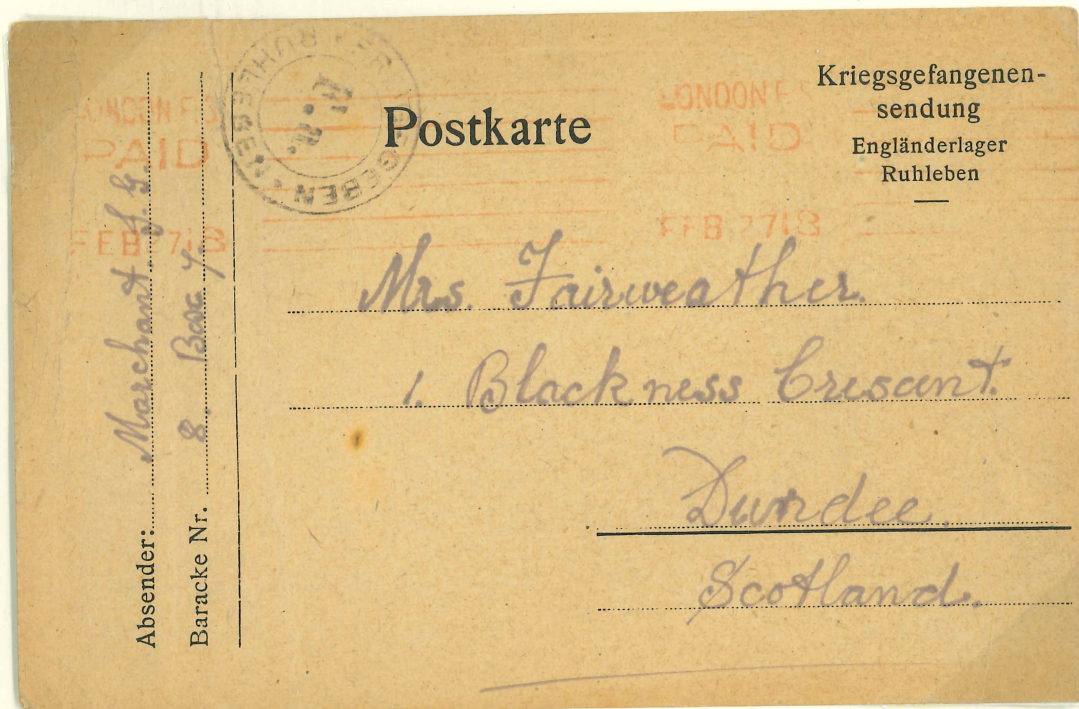
Reverse

The National Archives in London has an enquiry from a John Burrell Marchant of St John's, in South East London, in respect of his son, John Guyse Marchant, a prisoner at Ruhleben. In the second issue of "In Ruhleben Camp" (June 1915, p.14), a gentleman named Marchant is noted as having played cricket for Barrack 8 against Barrack 2 in the Ruhleben Cricket League.

Ruhleben

Official Camp Mail

Another card posted in January 1918: by this time John Marchant would have been a prisoner for at least 2 years and probably over 3 years.



Reverse

1914
THE FIRST
WORLD WAR
1918

ON THIS DAY MAY 23, 1918

PRISONERS
AT
RUHLEBEN

We have been informed by a British journalist who suffered internment in Ruhleben for two-and-a-half years that, owing to the fact that the prisoners receive no vegetables at all and no fats — practically living only on tinned stuff — the condition into which the prisoners have fallen is appalling. In his own case the entire absence of these necessary food constituents caused prolapsus of the stomach, the body commencing to

feed on its own tissues and muscles. Ruptures were frequent. If the prisoners requested a belt they were given one, but the German "doctors" never inquired into the cause.

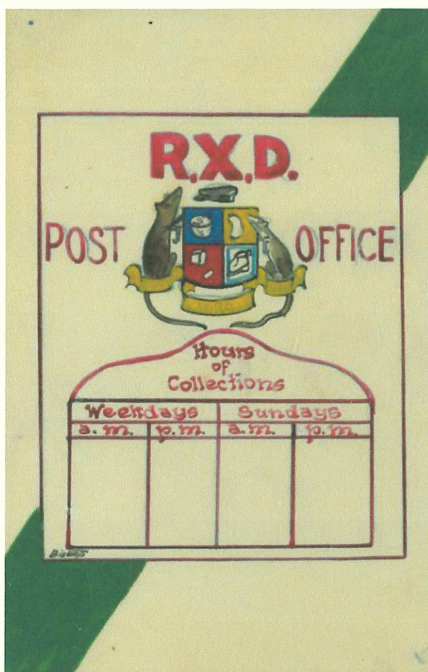
A wealthy man can — as some did — by giving a big commission to the camp commandant, get clothes, bedding, and a little furniture. These fortunate ones would pay to get their horse stall or shed cleaned out, and then install their heavily paid-for bits of furniture. These were the places shown to the American Ambassador on his visits, and on which his earlier reports as to the condition of British prisoners were founded. He was carefully piloted to that part of the camp where the prisoners had been allowed to make the best of their plight and was guided away from places it was undesirable he should see. The Germans always knew beforehand of these visits, and made preparations. But one day Mr Jackson, of the United States Embassy in Berlin, after being carefully engineered through the "show part," evinced a desire to see another part of the camp. In spite of

the efforts of the German Staff to prevent him, he walked to that part of the camp which had heretofore been avoided. He was greeted with cries of "Bravo, Jackson!" by the unlucky men imprisoned there, who shouted, "See Barrack No 6! See Barrack No 5!" as the officials again tried to get him away. The report Mr Jackson made of this part of the camp brought an immediate visit from the Ambassador, who was most indignant, and there and then (in our correspondent's words) "went for" the Germans. Our informant, in spite of the fact that he has now been back for nearly a year, is still in a deplorable physical state. He has four ruptures, his body and arms are covered with sores, and he is semi-blind. All the deaths that occurred, including those due to neglect and ill-treatment, were put down to typhus by the Germans.

SIGN UP FOR A WEEKLY EMAIL
WITH EXTRACTS FROM
THE TIMES HISTORY OF THE WAR
WWW.THETIMES.CO.UK

Ruhleben Camp Post

The Post Office sign below shows the coat of arms of the camp with "Rats Rampant".



The group photograph of the Parcel Post was taken in front of a sign "Camp Messenger Service"

Ruhleben Camp Post

The inmates produced their own Christmas card in 1915.

