

# Albatross - a dramatic event during the First World War

## 1. Prologue with introduction and map

In July 1915 a German mine cruiser was attacked in Swedish waters off the island Gotland. The crew was interned in Sweden 1915–1918. In the exhibit is given extracts from Albatross’ fate from the moment she was built until she after the war was scrapped. It also provides an insight into the form of postcards during the war used in correspondence with a soldier in the field or captivity and what life was like for the crew during their detention.

As an introduction follows the circumstances and causes of the

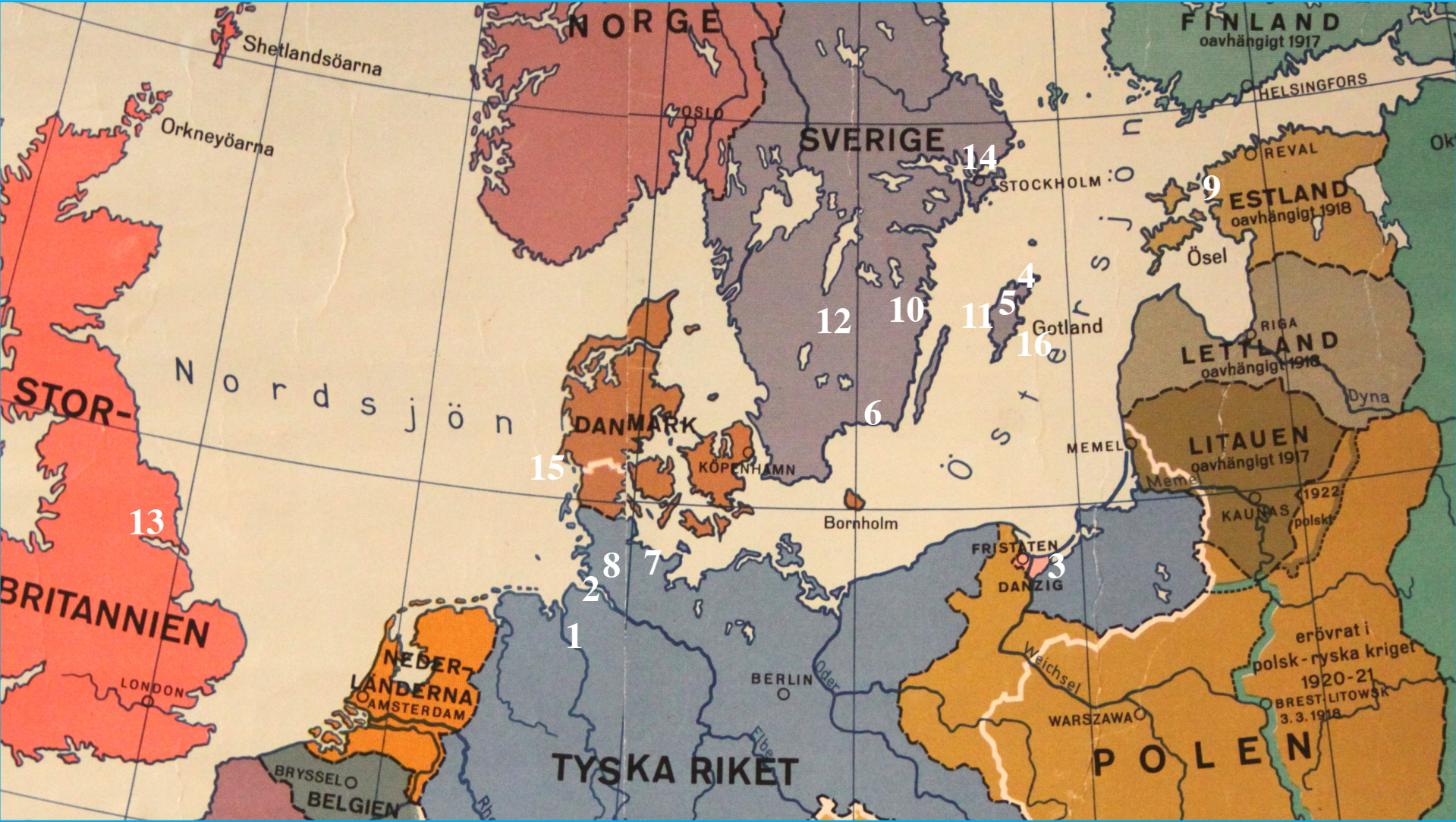
First World War. The most unusual postcards have a red border. Unless otherwise indicated, the photographer is unknown and the card uncirculated.

**Sources:** Svante Hedins book about Albatross, Börje Wallbergs Albatrossposten, information from Albatross Museum in Gotland och Miliseum in Skillingaryd, Internet and personal interviews.

**Chapter mark** (page numbers in the exhibit in parentheses).

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- 6. The grounded Albatross (16)
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- 8. The detention on Gotland 1915–1917 (19)
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- 11. The life of a crew member – Georg Rauch (37)
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Northern Europe at the outbreak of war in 1914



- |            |               |                   |                                    |
|------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Bremen   | 6 Karlskrona  | 11 Roma           | 13 South Shields                   |
| 2 Cuxhafen | 7 Kiel        | 11 Tofta          | 14 Stockholm                       |
| 3 Danzig   | 8 Kiel Canal  | 11 Visborgs Plain | 15 Sylt                            |
| 4 Fårösund | 9 Libau       | 11 Visby          | 16 Östergarn – battle July 2, 1915 |
| 5 Gotland  | 10 Oskarshamn | 12 Skillingaryd   |                                    |

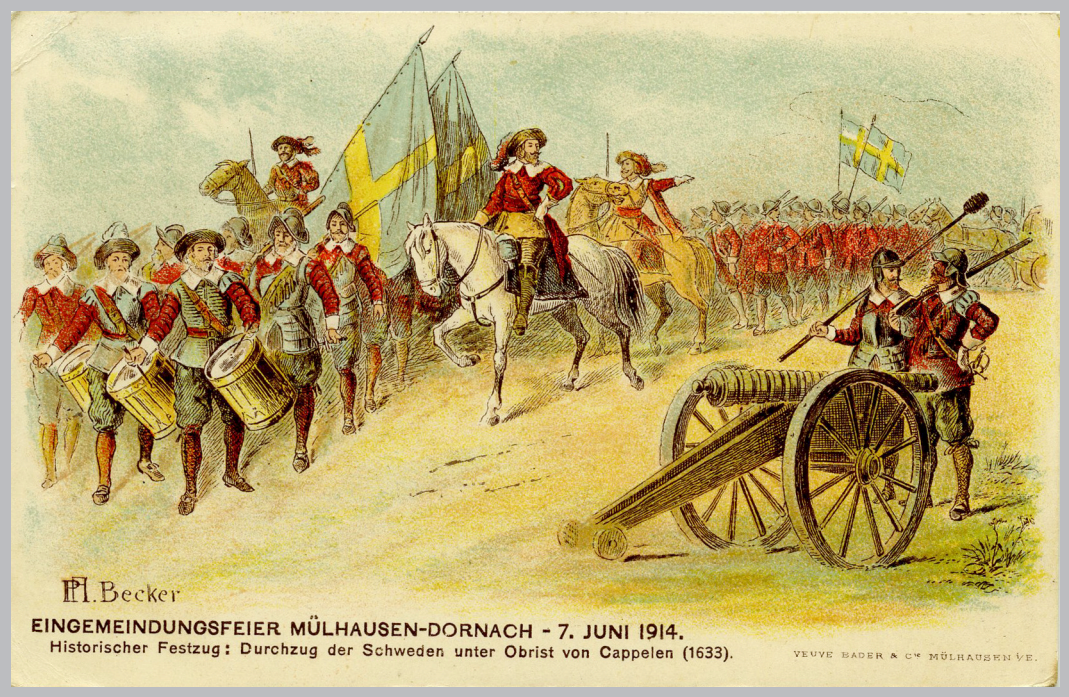
Exhibitor: Per Bunnstad at Nordia 2017 in Vejle, Denmark



Zur Erinnerung, Seegefecht b. Gotland i.d. Ostsee – in memory of the sea battle. Printed: Light Press in 1915.



# 2. Causes of the First World War and the beginning of the war



Historical festivities just before the First World War. Stamped in 1916.



The war outside Leipzig 1813. unstamped 1913 – 100-year anniversary.



Napoleon around 1810. Printed Light Pressure around 1902.



The Norwegian-Danish general Olof (Ole) Rye who was commander in the Danish war with Tykland around 1850. Printed: Light Press in 1915.



Napoleon in Moscow in 1912. Printed around 1910.

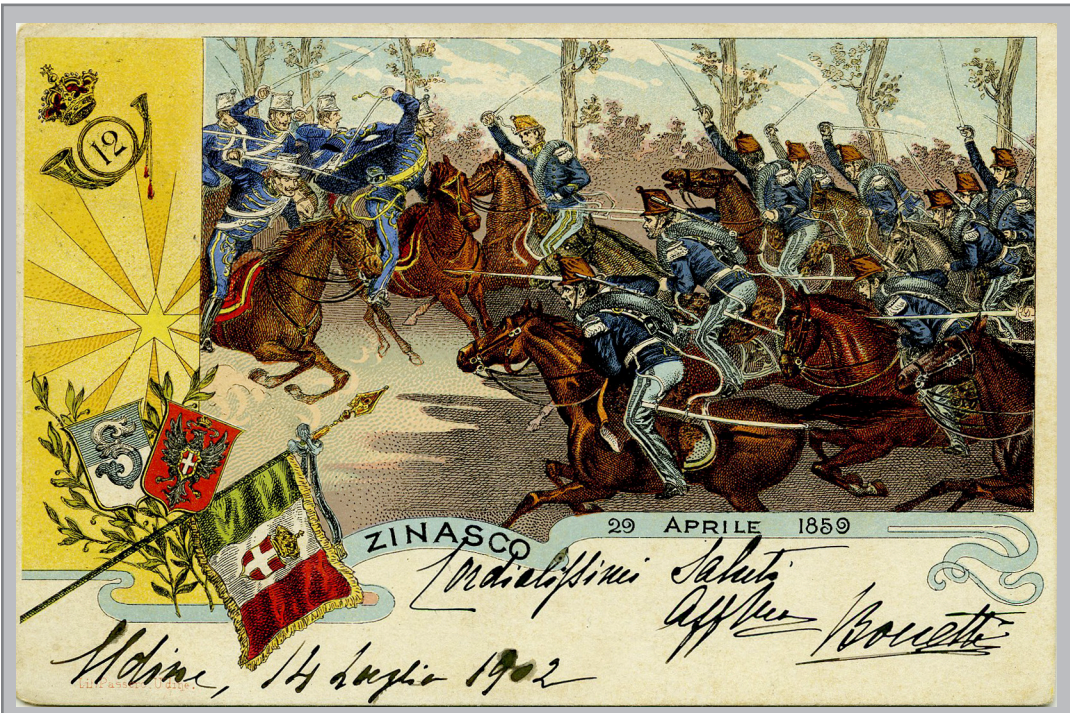
Let's go back in time to what the conditions were in Europe before the First World War. Yes, all the way back to 1815, 100 years before the battle off Gotland. There was since the end of 1815 peace because Napoleon for the last time had been defeated. This year formed the Holy Alliance between

Prussia, Russia and Austria. It was about maintaining the balance of power in Europe. In Sweden, there was also peace, something we as a warrior nation been unaccustomed to. Gustav II Adolf and Charles XII and others had been the major warlords.



Bazeliies 1870. The very bloody battles at Sedan September 1, 1870 became the French Emperor Napoleon III's fall. The result was that Germany emerged as a military superpower. In France, it led to bitterness and vengefulness that would later culminate in the First World War. Stamped 160529 (ymd).

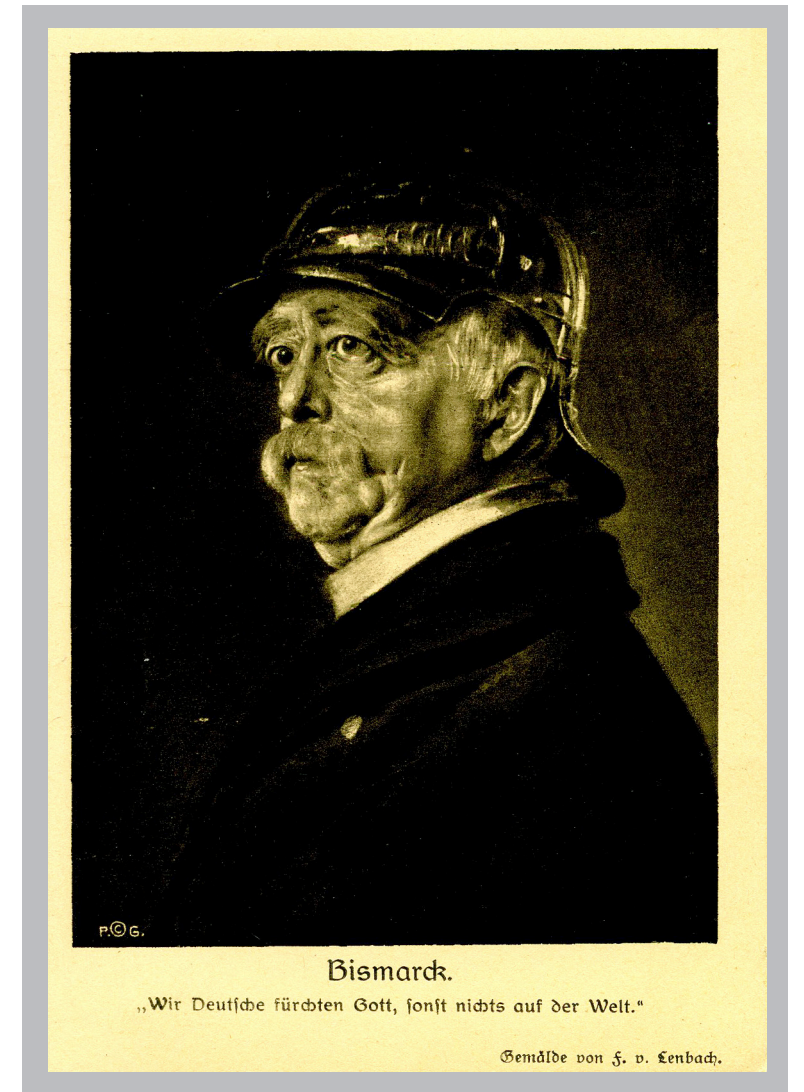




In Italy, there was unrest. Austria attacked and April 29, 1859 can be said to be a part of the birth of the Italian State. Stamped 1902.



Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905. Stamped in 1907.



German chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898) after a painting. He was Europe's most influential politician in the late 1800s. Publisher: Photographischen Gesellschaft, Berlin Charlottenburg around 1910.



Greek revolution. This was fought 1821–1829 between the Greek insurgents and the Ottoman Empire that at the time ruled Greece. Printed around 1910.

The balance of power became even more apparent after the German unification in 1871. The Germans tried in 1873 by Otto von Bismarck to form an alliance with Austria-Hungary and Russia. This failed and instead the Germans six years later formed an alliance with Austria-Hungary. In 1882 Italy joined the alliance that is now called the Tri-

ple Alliance. In 1892 the Franco-Russian alliance was signed to counter the Triple Alliance. In 1904 a pact was sealed with Britain, France, the Entente Cordiale, and in 1907 UK and Russia signed the Anglo-Russian Convention. Russia was involved in the war with Japan from 1904 to 1905.



The Sleswig three-year war 1848–1851 took place between Denmark and German separatists in the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, and their German allies. In 1864 fighting flared up again. The card was issued for the 50th anniversary of the battle in 1850. Publisher: S.J. Koch. Light Press: Knackstedt & Näter, Hamburg.

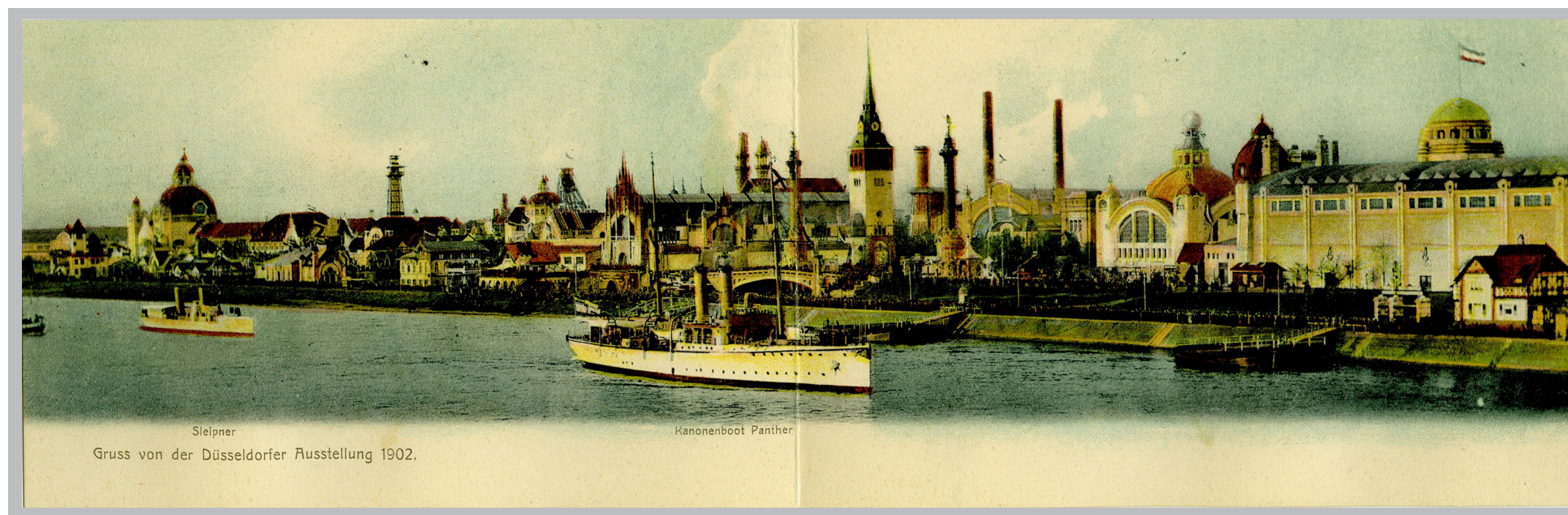


Ankunft the Bayern vor Paris unter Generatl v. Hartmann am 19 September 1870. The Germans in Paris. Printed around 1910.





Russie et Prusse. Joke card about brief little family relations and upcoming Russian comebacks. Unstamped around 1910.



The German warships Sleipner and Panther at an exhibition in Dusseldorf 1902.

## Arms race

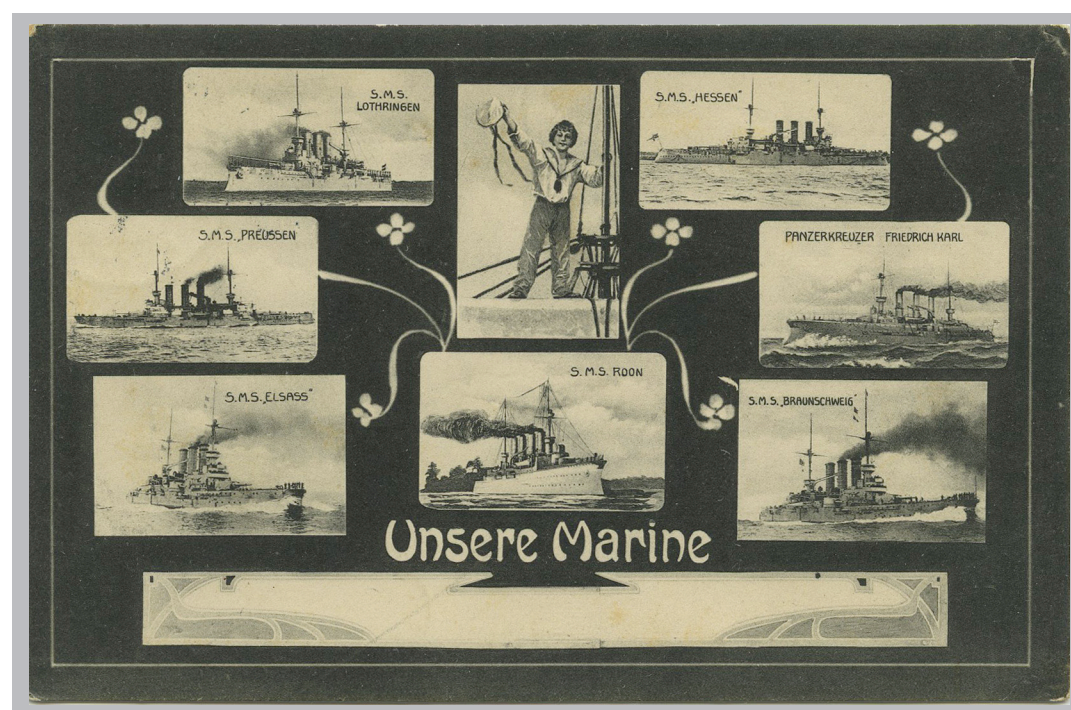
From the 1890s onwards ran an intense arms race between Britain and Germany. The British battleship HMS Dreadnought was an important milestone in the struggle between the British and German Navy.

Germany's industrial and economic power had grown considerably after German unification in 1871. From the mid 1890s onwards, Wilhelm

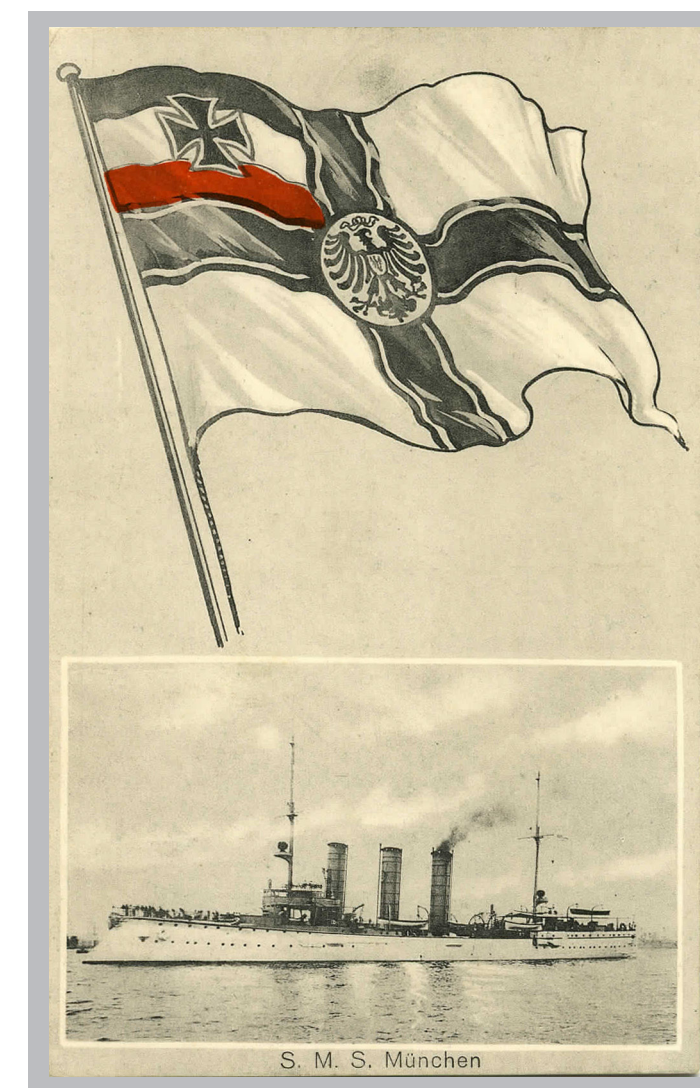
II's reign used this base to invest significant financial resources to build the Kaiserliche Marine, the German Imperial Navy, which was founded by Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz who challenged the British Royal Navy for supremacy over the oceans. Swedish point, it was close to war with Norway in 1905.



Swedish warships around 1902, part of the Swedish arms race. Unstamped but written 1906.



Unsere Marine. The German fleet grew in size. Printed: M. Gluckstad & Munden, Hamburg around 1908. Stamped Wilhelmshafen 090103 (ymd).



SMS Munich was the fifth of seven German Bremen Classified cruisers. She was built in 1903 and was part of the arms race in Europe.

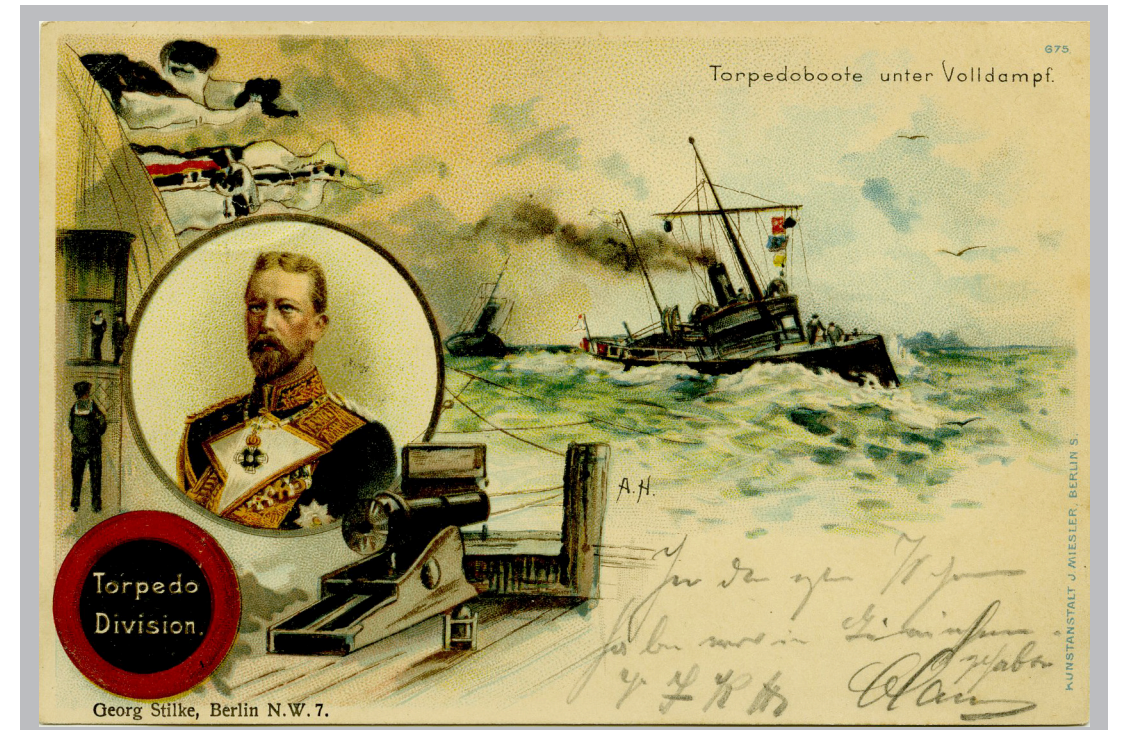




Luftflotte begleitet kriegsschiffe. German air fleet and war ships. Stamped 041230.



Kiel. Die raft in Hafen – the German navy in Kiel. Unstamped around in 1915.

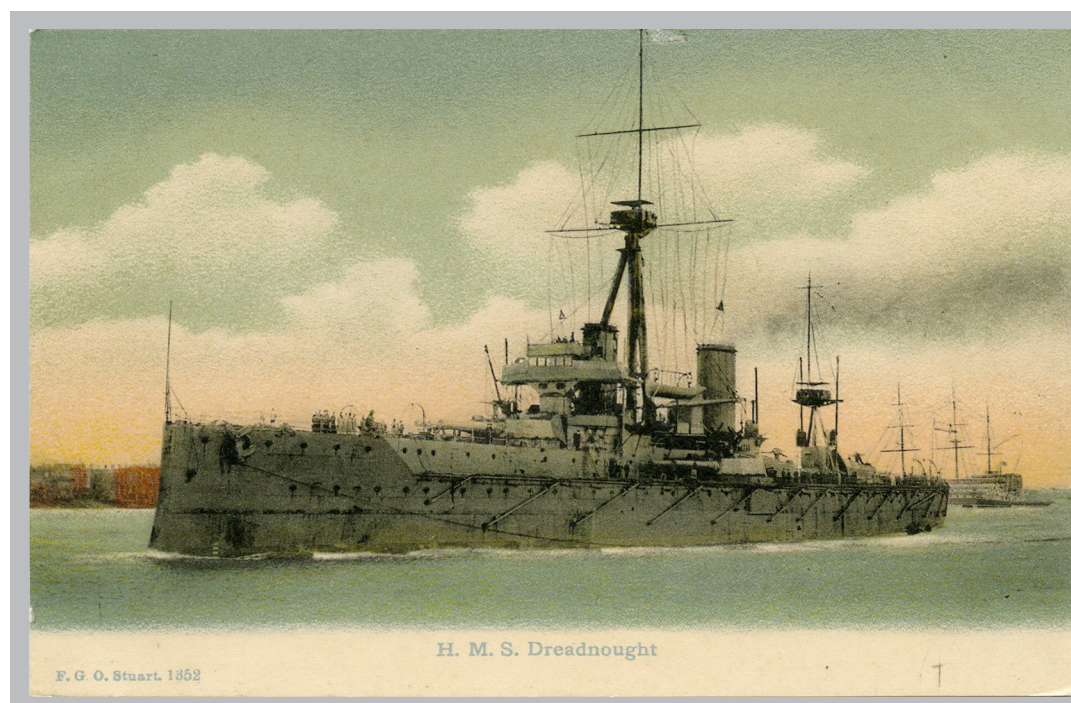


Prince Heinrich von Preussen, based in the castle in Kiel was the commander of the German war fleet in the Baltic Sea. Stamped 1900.

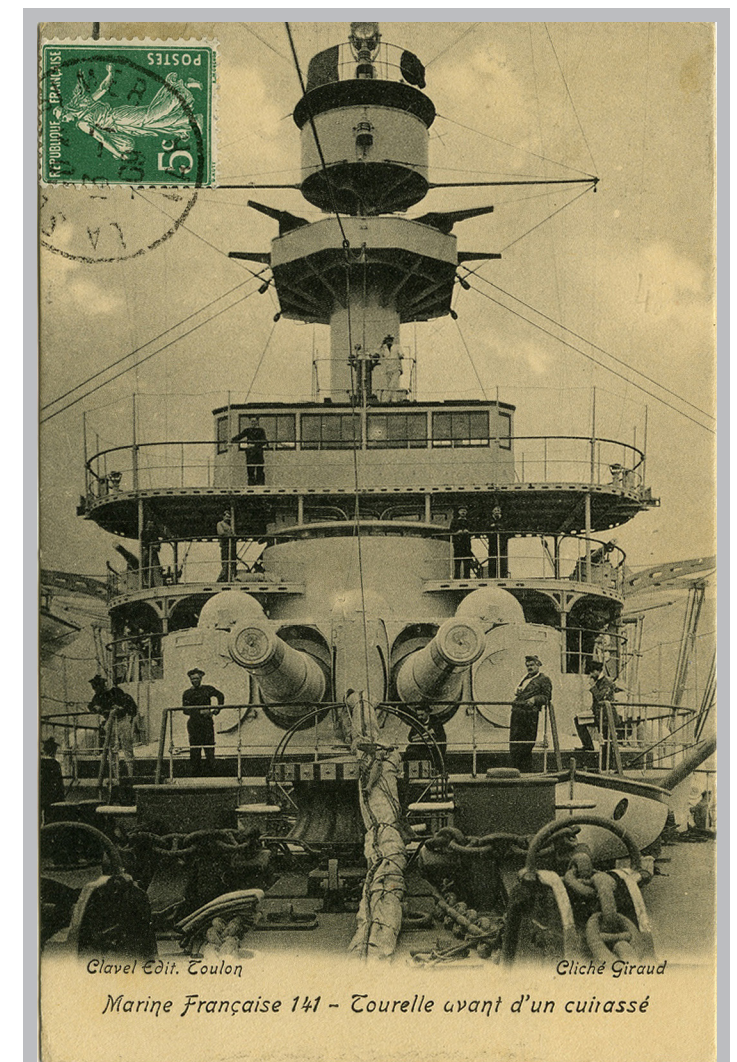
When the groundbreaking new battleship HMS Dreadnought was launched in 1906 the British navy's extended its major advantage over its German competitors. The arms race between Britain and Germany eventually spread to the rest of Europe, where all the great powers dedicated a substantial part of their industrial production to prepare for a future European major war. Between 1908–1913 the military spending for the European powers increased by 50%.



The submarine became important during the First World War. The French also had submarines. The Swedish Navy acquired its first submarine, HMS Hajen, in 1904. The card is written in 1903 but unstamped.



H.M.S. Dreadnought. The battleship had such an impact when she was launched in 1906 that battleships built after her were called just dreadnoughts. Printed in Germany around 1910. Unstamped.



Marine Francaise 141- Tourelle avant d'un cuirassé. French Navy battleship 141 - front tower. Stamped 090713 (ymd).





Rencontre Amical the l'armée serbe et montenegrine - Serbs and Montenegrins in the Balkan War 1912.

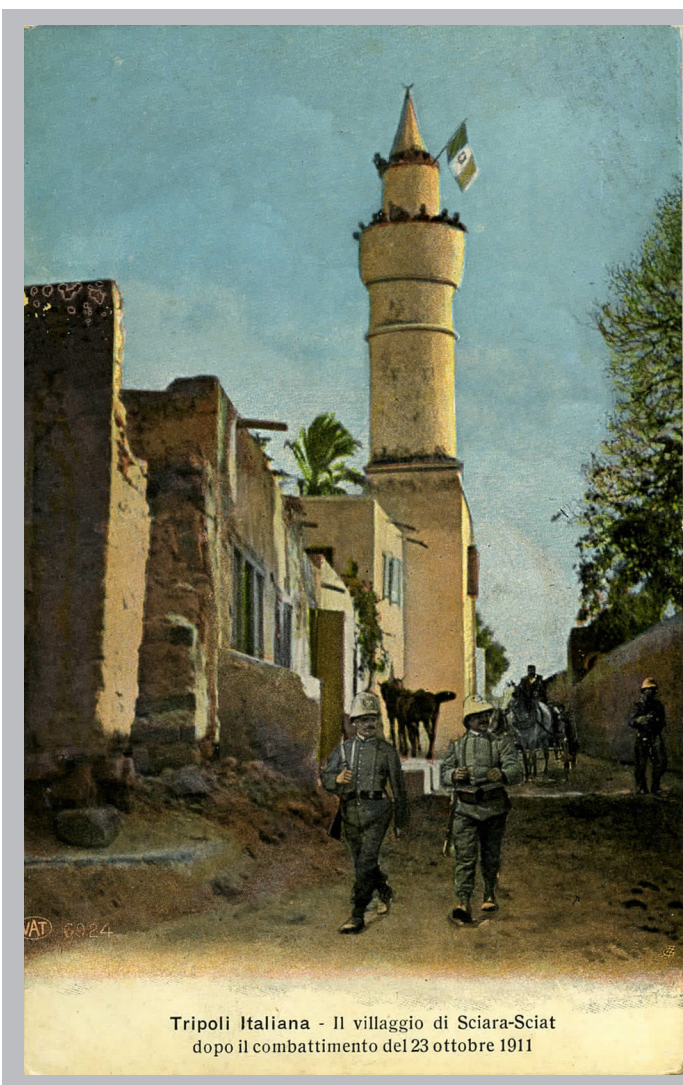


La guerre balkanique 1912 - Balkan War. Publisher: P. Voukoitch & Co., Podgoritza.

## War 1911–1913

Italian-Turkish war took place from 1911 to 1912. In 1912 and 1913 the First Balkan War took place between the Balkan League and the shattered Ottoman Empire. It resulted in the Treaty of London, which further shrank the Ottoman Empire through the creation of an independent Albanian state, while the territorial holdings of Bulgaria,

Serbia, Montenegro and Greece was enlarged. When Bulgaria attacked both Serbia and Greece June 16, 1913 it lost most of Macedonia to Serbia and Greece and southern Dobruja to Romania in the 33 days long Second Balkan War which further destabilized the region. The First World War was close.



Tripoli Italiana - Il Villaggio di Sciara-Sciat baptism il Combattimento part 23 ottobre 1911 – battle Sciara-Sciat. The card is unstamped.



Les Troupes turques the Zeki Pacha – Serbs and Turks in the war in October 1912. Stamped Austria 1913.



Koumanovo: Le camp de l'armée Sebe devant Koumanovo – Serbian camp during the Balkan War 1912.



Political satire in 1913 related to the war, Serbia and Bulgaria. The card is hand painted. Stamped 130905 (ymd).





Winston Churchill was an English naval minister. Printed around 1914.



Crown Prince Couple of Austria were killed June 28, 1914 and it is usually referred to as the start of the First World War. Unstamped around 1910.



The shots that started the First World War were fired in Serbia and caused a war in this country as well. Stamped in 1915.

## World War I begins with shots of Sarajevo

The shots fired in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914. With the shots Gavrilo Princip – who was a member of Young Bosnia – killed Archduke and Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg. The incident triggered the so-called black

week, which a few weeks later led to the start of the First World War.

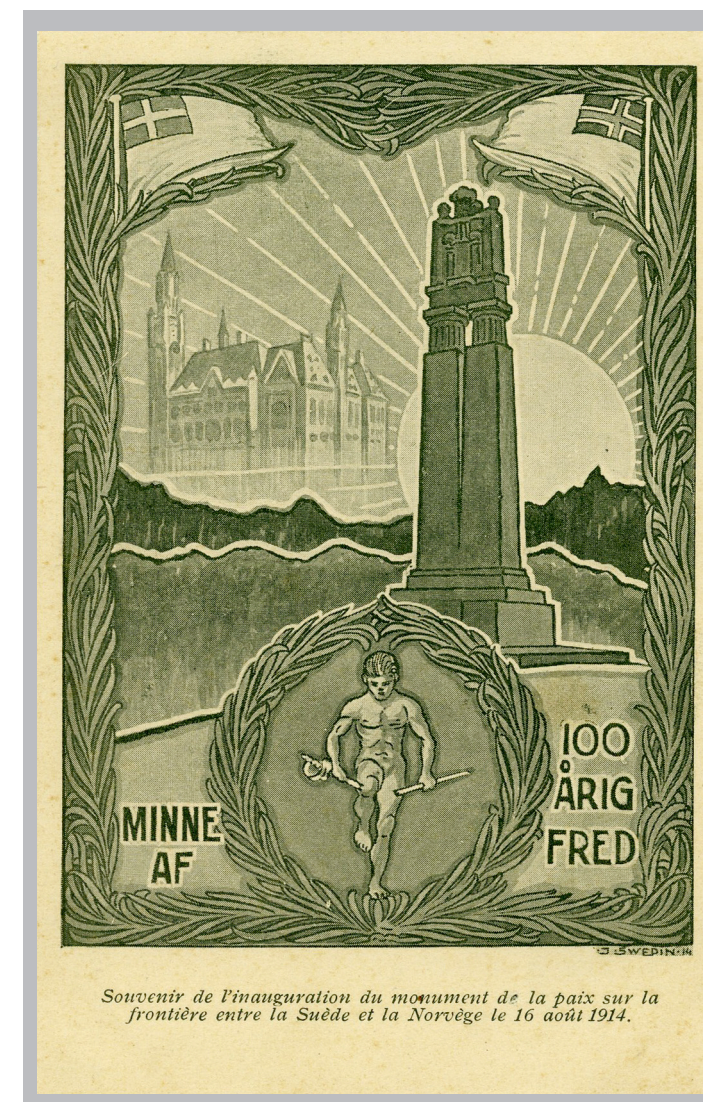
Now almost all of Europe was mobilizing, including Sweden, even if we did not have the war terrors within our borders.



Swedish military was ready for war like here on the island Gotland. Stamped 1909 to France.



Mobilization in Skillingaryd 1914. Unstamped.



In August 1914 the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society celebrated 100 years of peace between Norway and Sweden. Uncirculated card.





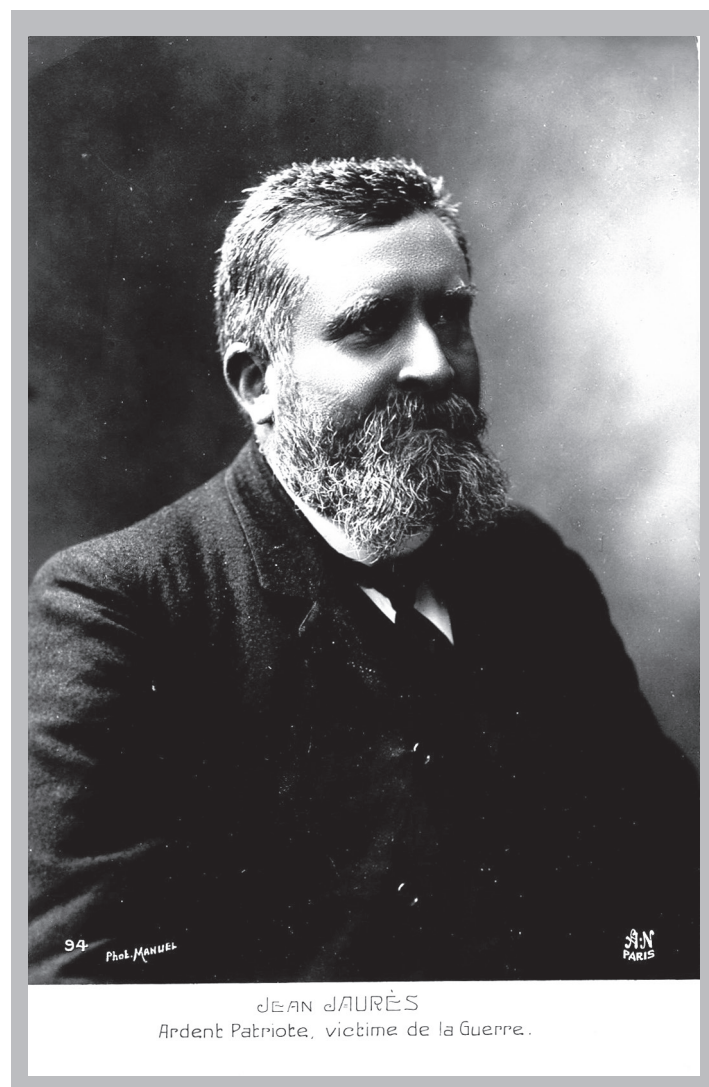
Flag Card with belligerent countries in the middle. Later joined by several of the others to the First World War. Unstamped 1914.



Triple Entente comprised of Britain, France and Russia. Stamped 141105 (ymd).



Louis of Battenberg was the commander of the British fleet. His background as a German prince forced him to resign when the First World War broke out. The anti-German sentiments prevailed. Stamped 1908.



Jean Jaures was a French politician and anti-militarist who was murdered July 31, 1914. Printed around 1914.



Propaganda cards. The allies against the "barbarians". Written in 1916.

The war was under way and millions of soldiers and civilians had to let go of life 1914-1918. There was revolution in Russia in 1917 and nationalism continued to thrive. Germany Fire underestimated hard and it was one of several reasons for a breeding ground for a new big war.



Battle of Antwerp around the turn of the year 1914-1915 with English and German soldiers. Printed in 1915.



### 3. The boat Albatross

The mine cruiser SMS Albatross was built in the fall of 1907 at the Weser shipyard in Bremen and was launched on 13 October. The boat was 96 meters long, 11 meters wide and fully loaded she weighed 2,506 tons.

The crew was about 240 men.

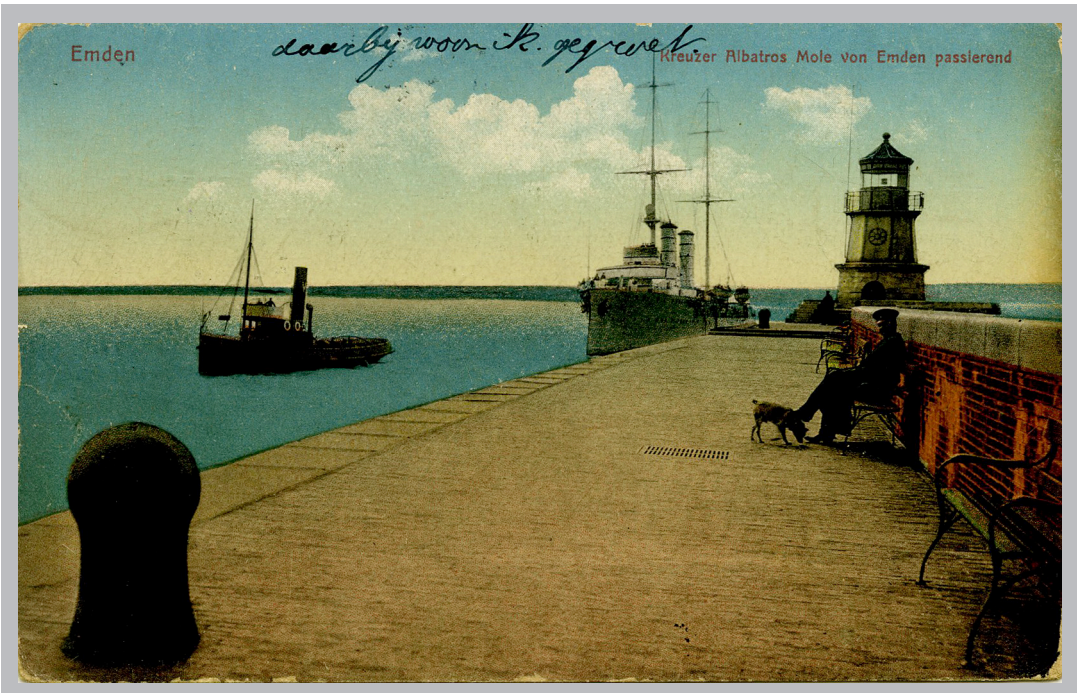
Armament was not so great: 8 x 8.8 cm SKL / 45 guns.

She had 200 mines to be deployed, and the maximum speed was 20 knots.

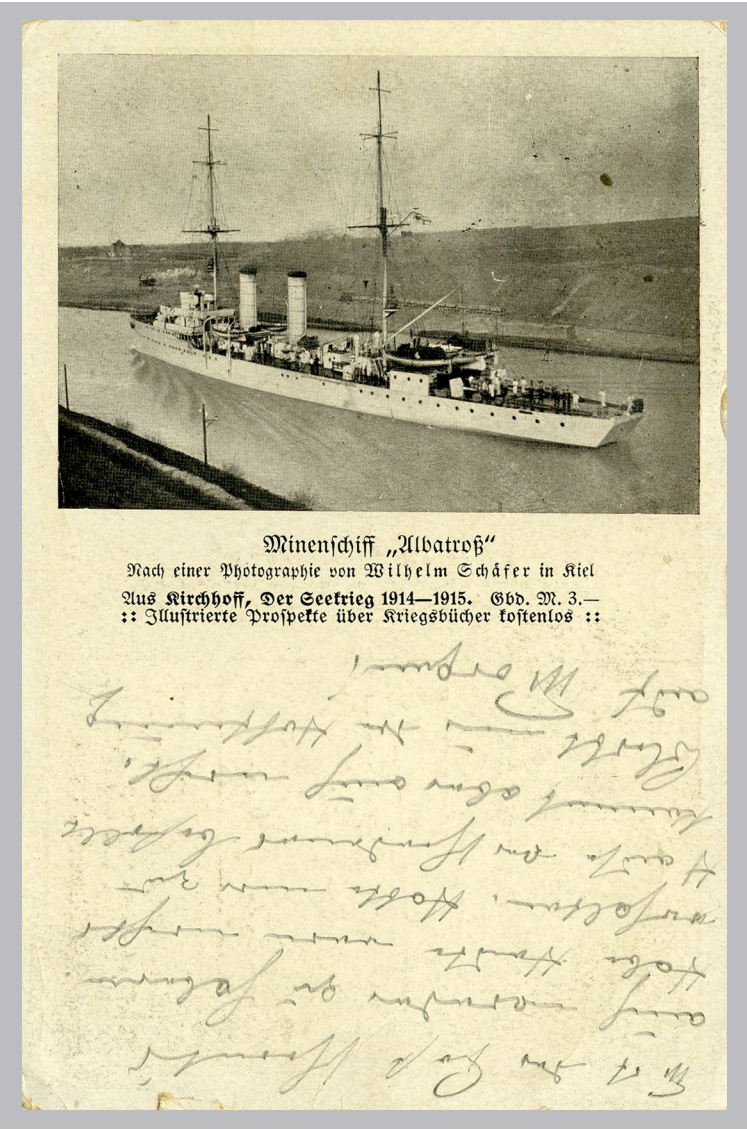
Albatross was part of the rearmament before the war that was to come.



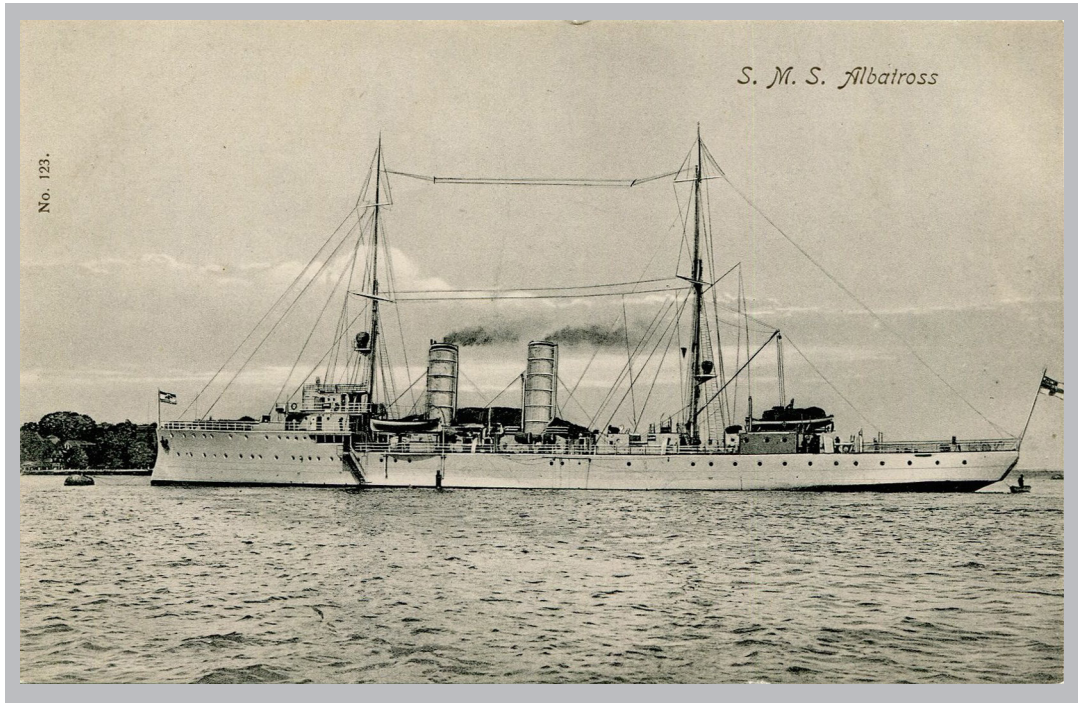
Gruss aus Bremen. Act. OER. Weser Bremen. Weser shipyard in Bremen where the Albatross was built. Publisher: F. Belsmeyer of 1918.



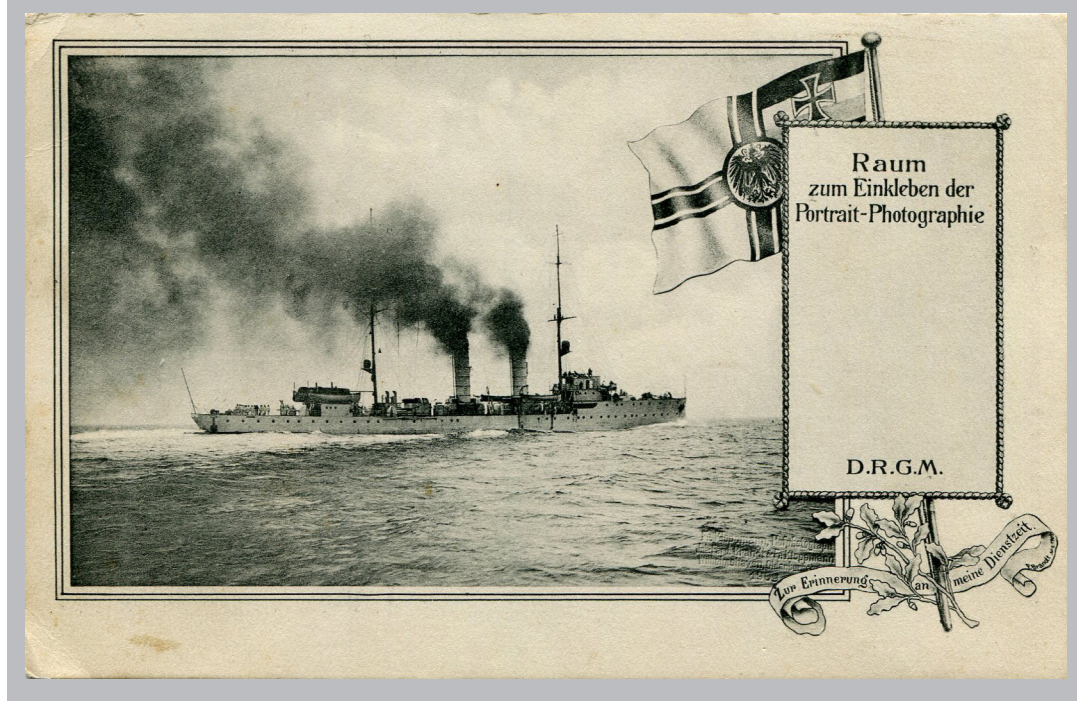
Emden Kreuzer Albatross Mole von Emden passierend. Albatross in Emden, which is a port on the North Sea. The card is stripped of the stamp. Stamped 130513 (ymd).



Mine Schiff Albatross. The boat in the Kiel Canal. Printed 1915. Stamped 160422 (ymd).



S.M.S: Albatross Mine Leger. Publisher: M. L. Carstens, Hamburg 30. Number 4019. Unstamped.



S.M.S: Albatross or sister ship Nautilus. Publisher: Atelier Fr, Kleppmann, Wilhelmshaven. Unstamped around 1910.





Albatross men. Photo: E. Vogt, Photogr, Atelier, Cuxhaven. 16 crew members were seen on board. Stamp Cuxhaven 090508.



Neufahrwasser - Westerplatte. Flottenbesuch. Publisher: William Stobbies, Neufahrwasser. 4250.

Stamp: Neufahrwasser 080621. If it is Albatross or her sister ship Nautilus at the dock is not easy to determine. Neufahrwasser is now in Poland.



14 Albatross men, perhaps in a studio. Photo: Emil Vogt, Cuxhaven. Hermann Edsche from Hamburg wrote the card but it is not dated or post-treated.



30 Albatross men aboard the ship. Photo: Emil Vogt, Cuxhaven. Ernst Krummheim from Nordhausen wrote the card but it is not dated or post-treated.

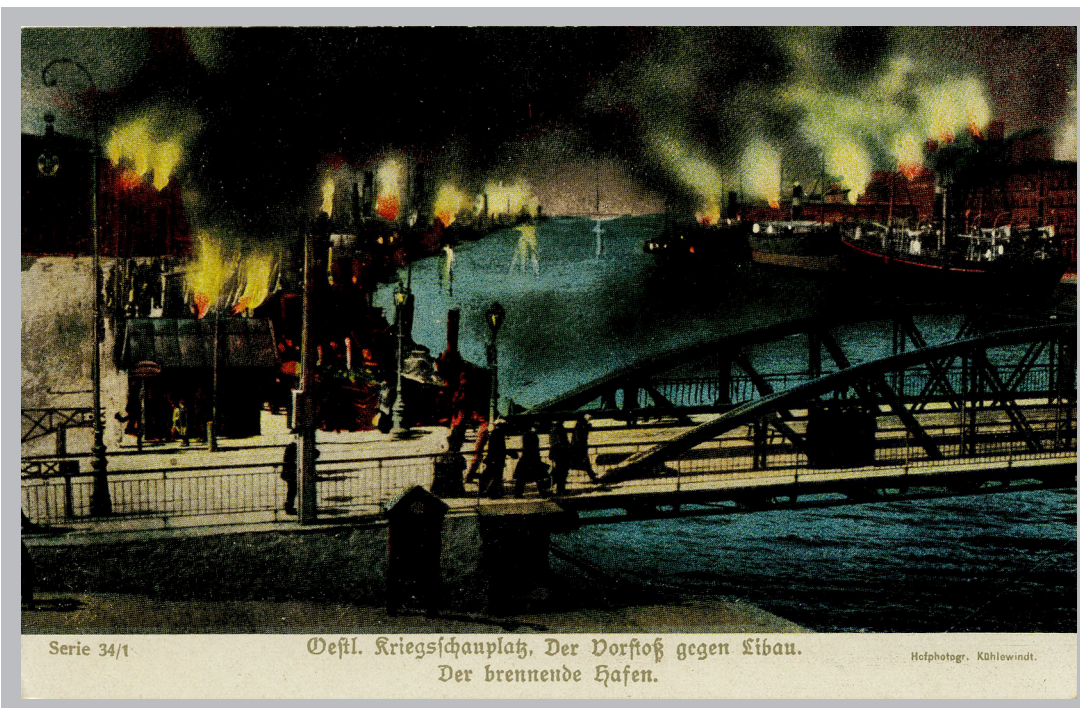
Life on the boat Albatross probably had both light and dark sides for the crew. It was extremely cramped for space and there were great hardships when they were out at sea. At the same time there was a great camaraderie when they lived so close together.

From letters and postcards from the crew of the Albatross and other boats it is understood that comfort was good but you always longed home to loved ones. However, for Albatross the time war operations was short lived.

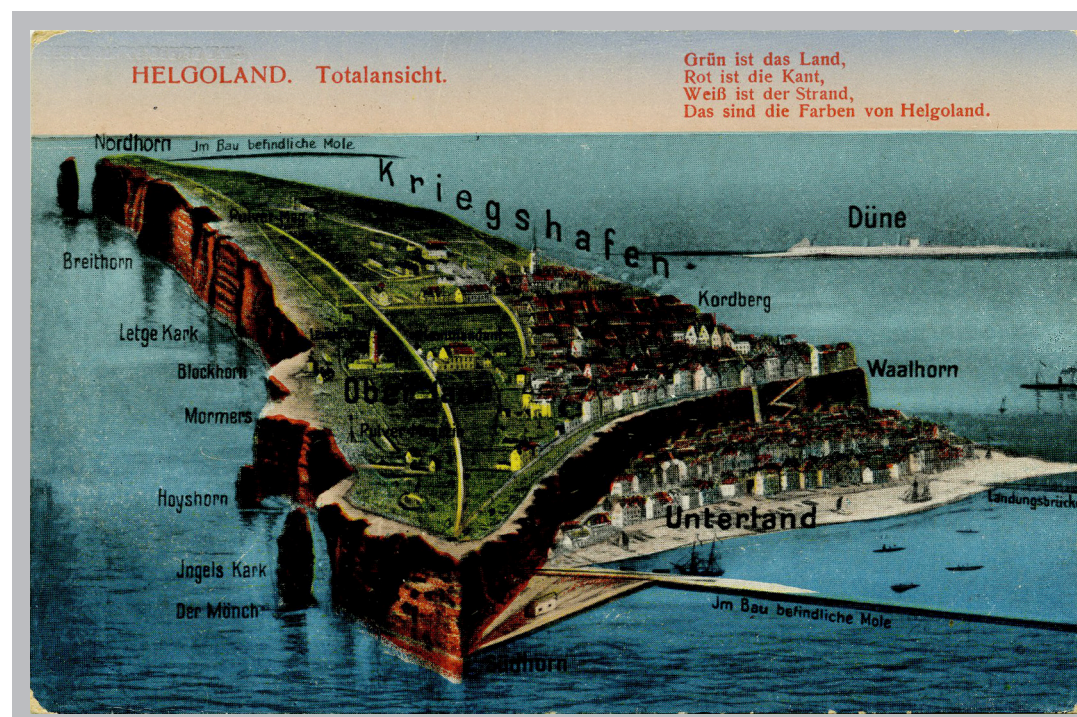


On board the Albatross. Photo: Otto Plath, Cuxhaven. Unstamped.





The Germans put the Baltic Sea town of Libau in Latvia on fire. It was May 7, 1915 that the city was taken. Unstamped in 1915.

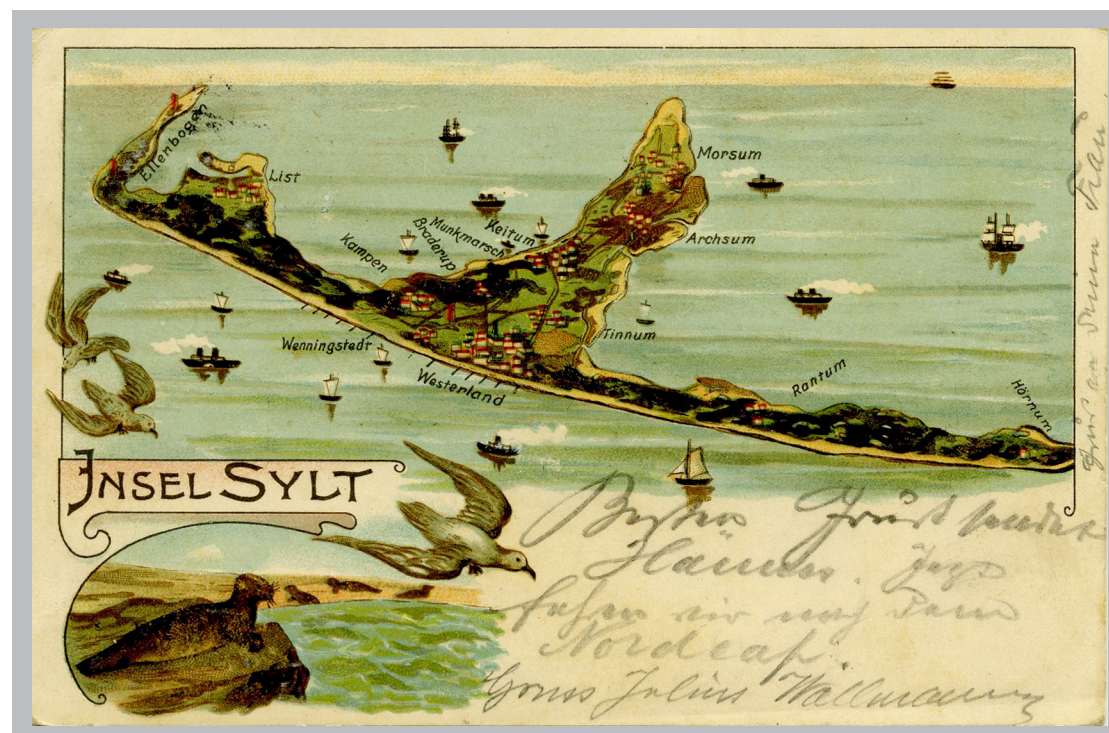


Heligoland. On September 9, 1914 the Albatross with boats Nautilus, Prince Adalbert, Roon, Kolberg and Stralsund set up a defensive barrier on Heligoland. Stamped July 30, 1914 on board Königin Luise. This boat was sunk by the British in August 5, 1914.

Albatross carried out her first mission during the war by the beginning of August 1914 by deploying 180 mines on the island of Sylt. On August 25, it was time for the next mission: to lay 200 mines in South Shields near Newcastle outside the English east coast. After several missions during the autumn of 1914, among other ships, along with its sister ship the Nautilus, the Albatross called at Cuxhaven on Christmas Eve. In the spring of 1915 Albatross was equipped for new missions and now in the Baltic Sea. In the first two missions in the middle of June 1915 Albatross laid out 225 and 320 mines in the western part of the Gulf of Finland. Albatross and Roon and five torpedo boats left Danzig shortly after midnight July 1, 1915 and headed northwards to join the light cruisers Augsburg and Lübeck and two additional torpedo boats.



South Shields. Albatross deployed in August 1914 mines outside South Shields in England. Printed about 1910. Unknown publisher.



Insel Sylt – the island of Sylt, where Albatross laid the mines. Publisher: Mohr & Dutzauer, Leipzig. Stamped 060525 (ymd).



Der misslungene englische Fliegerangriff auf Cuxhaven 25 Dezember 1914 - the failed English air raid on Cuxhaven. After her mission at Christmas Eve 1914 Albatross called at Cuxhaven at the North Sea coast.



## 4. The battle off the coast of Gotland in 1915

### German warships

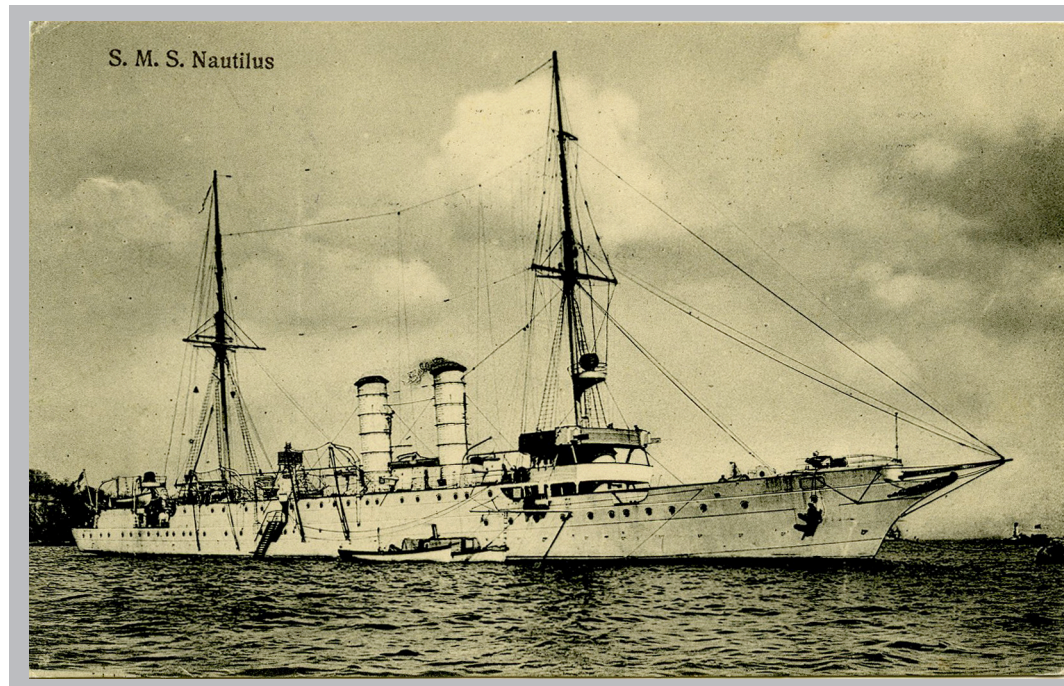
Three German boats assisted Albatross in the Baltic Sea just before the meeting with the Russians:

Augsburg, Lübeck and Roon.

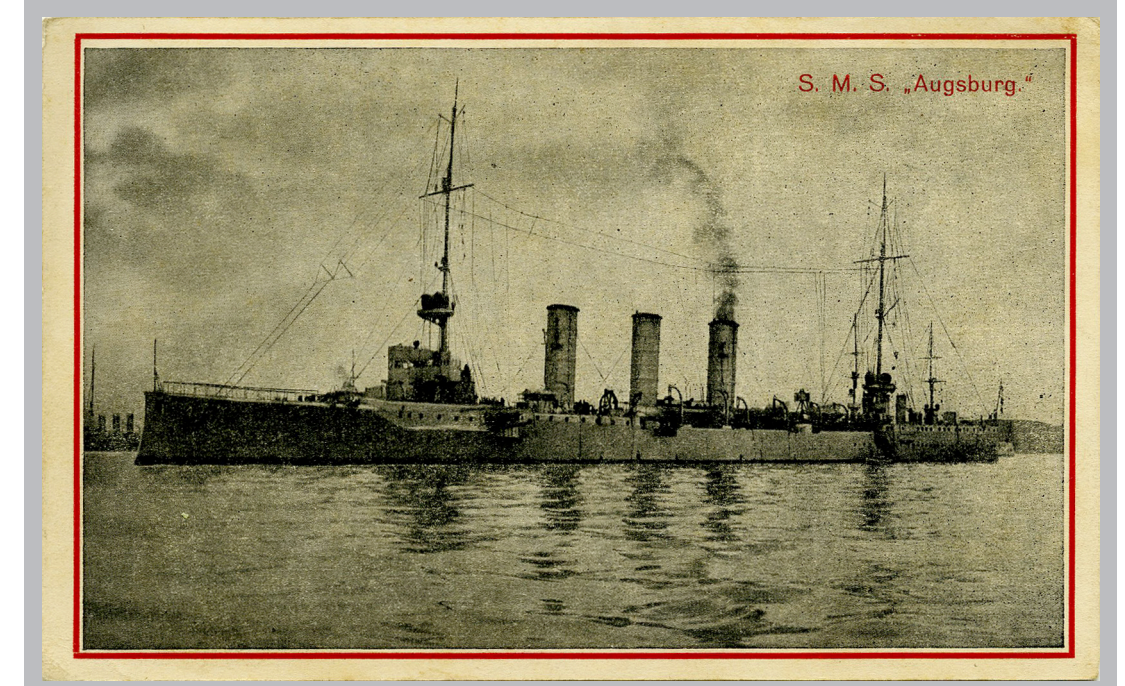
Nautilus had previously accompanied Albatross on her mission but was now in the North Sea.

SMS Magdeburg had been sunk in the summer of 1914 but was still part of the battle...

German officers had during interrogation said that secret documents in Magdeburg had been destroyed. Now this was not the case, but the Russians had the important documents that meant they had access to the German encrypted traffic.



S.M.S. Nautilus. Nautilus was the sister ship to the Albatross. She was also built on the Weser shipyard in Bremen but in 1906, the year before the Albatross. The two mine layers were assigned to several common missions, however, not when the Albatross was attacked by the Russians off the island Gotland. Stamped 160130 (ymd) – Marine Post and no stamp.

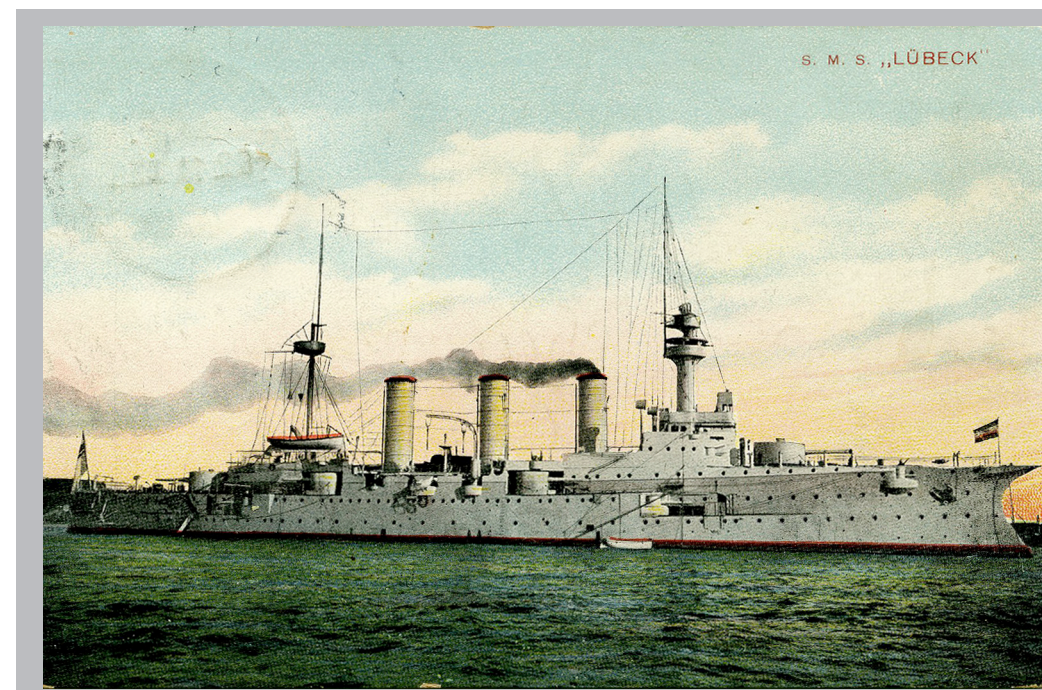


S.M.S. Augsburg. The boat was built in 1909 and was a ship in the so-called Kolberg class in which also included Kolberg, Mainz and Cologne. Augsburg was built in 1909 and was scrapped in 1922. Augsburg was one of the cruisers who was present at the Russian bombardment of Albatross.

Printed: Phot. -Verlagsanstalt Ernst Crull jr, Kiel. Dated 150307 (ymd) and listing Feldpostkarte. Stamp: Marine Feldpost without date.



Gr Kreuzer Roon - cruiser Roon. SMS Roon was the leading armored cruiser in the Imperial German Navy. The boat was built in 1902. Printed: Rex 5. Hedicrom. Stamped 110815 (ymd).

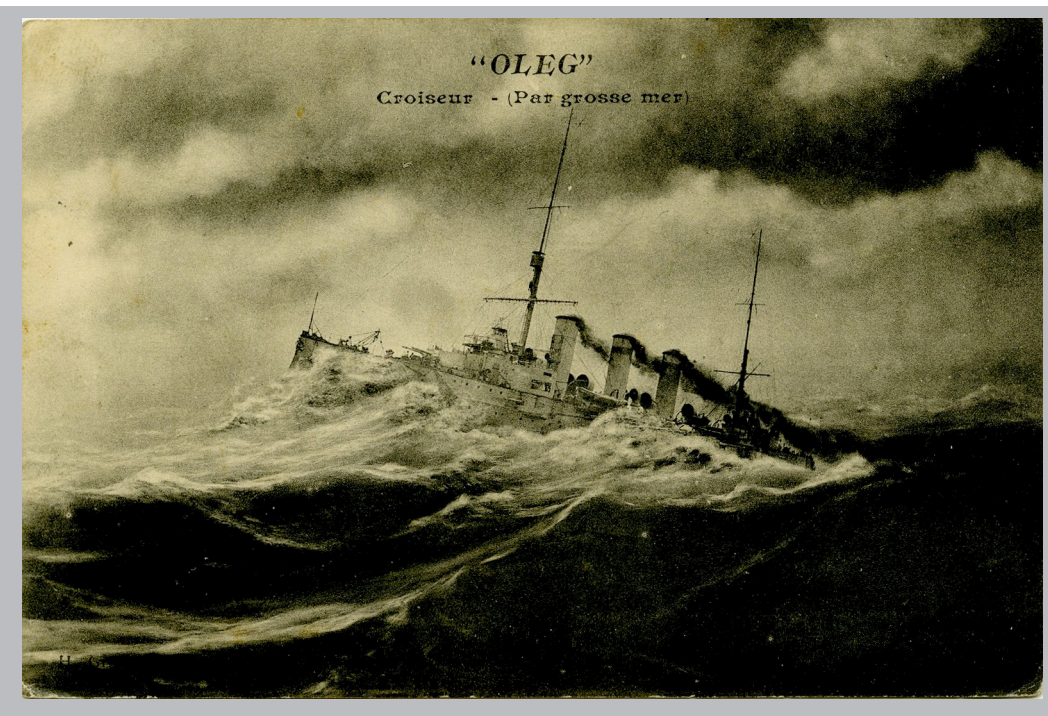


S.M.S. Lübeck. The cruiser was also involved in the sea combat off Gotland July 2, 1915. She was a ship of the Bremen-class. This also included, SMS Hamburg, Berlin SMS, SMS Munich, Leipzig and Danzig. Unknown publisher. Stamped 120219.



Magdeburg included in Magdeburg-class. Further this was Breslau, Strassburg and Stralsund. In August 1914, Magdeburg commissioned to lay mines. She ran aground and was destroyed by Russian cruisers. Unknown publisher. Stamp Wilhelmshafen 141222. Feldpostkarte.





Oleg was built in 1901–1903 in St. Petersburg and was torpedoed by British warships in 1919. This took place in Kronstadt not far from St. Petersburg. Oleg was included in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 and was in a series of missions during the First World War. Oleg was one of the Russian boats involved in the attack on the Albatross. Armoured cruisers Bogatyr and Oleg continued shelling of the Albatross in the neutral Swedish waters. It was also during the passage through the strait between Östergarnsholm - Kuppen.

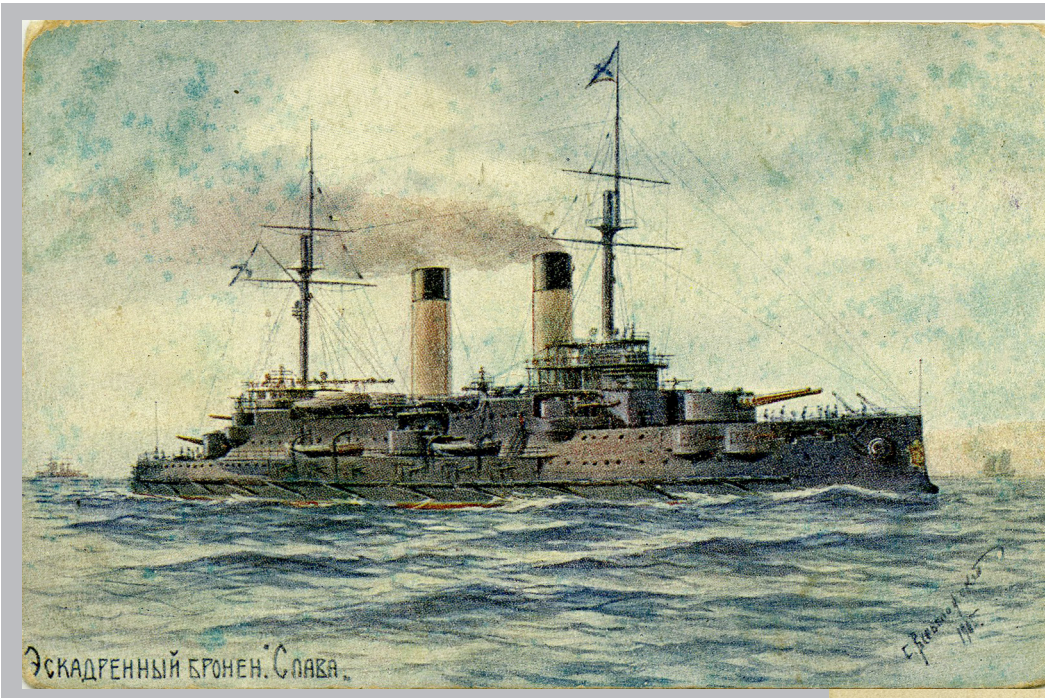


Bayan was a Russian cruiser that among others was in the sea battles against Japan. Unstamped around in 1904.

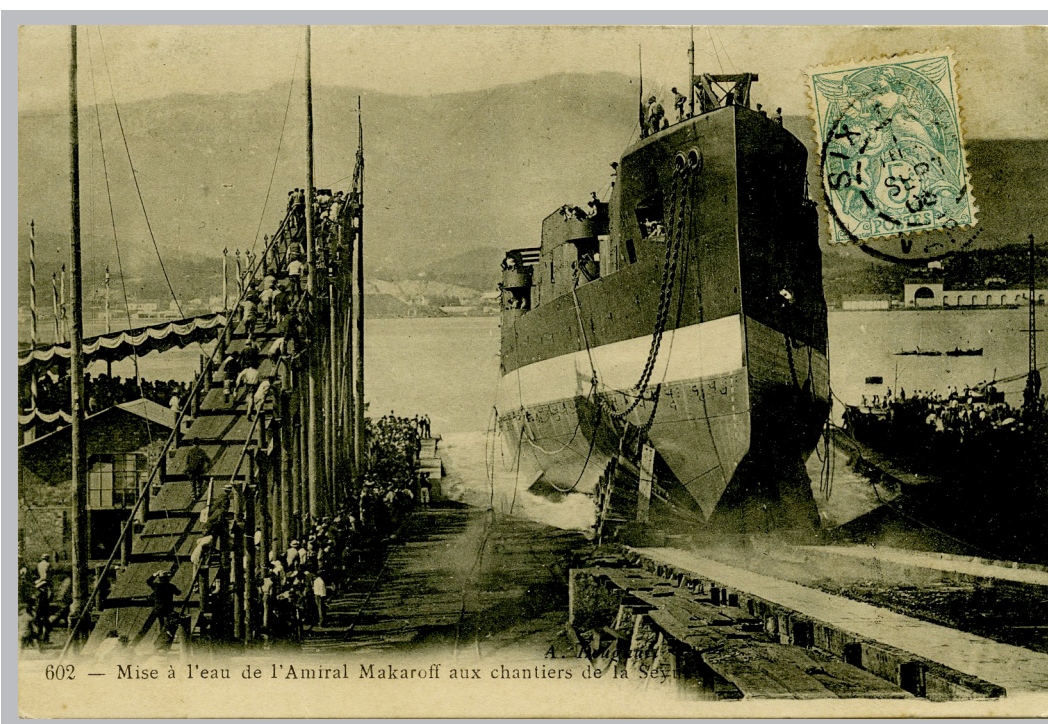
## Russian warships

The German naval superiority in the Baltic Sea led to the Russian Navy's efforts to be primarily defensive. The Russians had experience in naval battles years before the First World War, when they were at war with Japan from 1904 to 1905.

The Russian brigade for the attack on the Albatross consisted of the cruisers Admiral Makarow, Bajan, Bogatyr, Oleg and Rurik. Commander was Rear Admiral Bachir-eff. Additionally included in the operation was the light cruiser Nowik and a destroyer flotilla. The Russians were ready to take up the fight against Albatross.

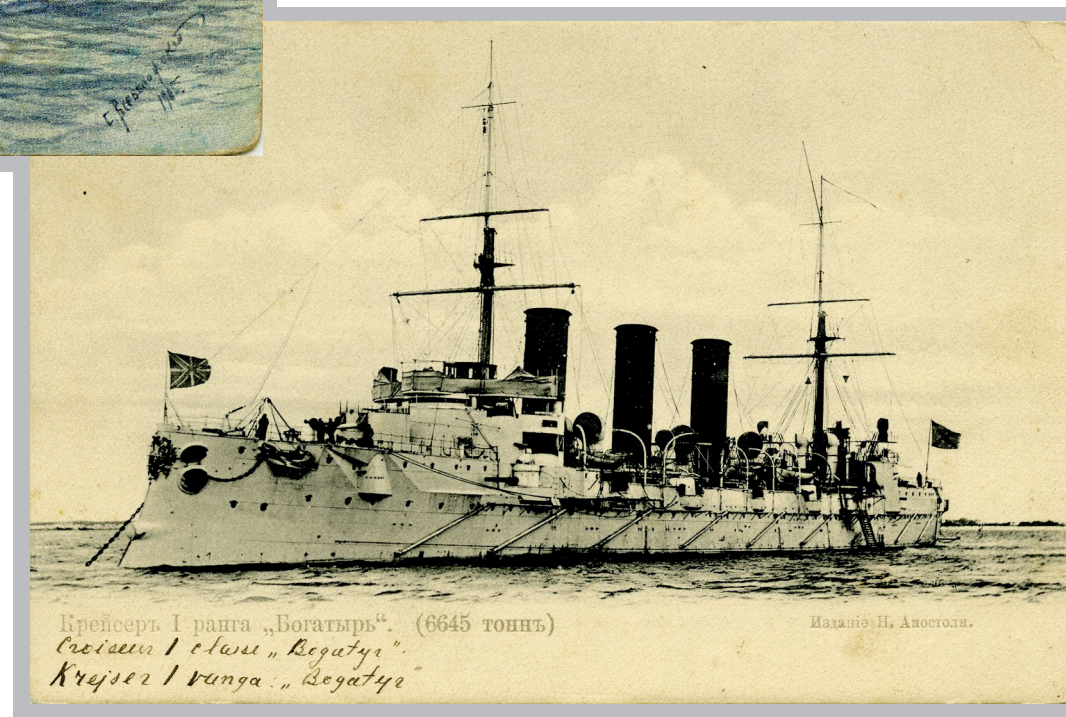


Slava was one of the Russian battleships that indirectly was involved in the battle. She and Tsesarevitj were part of the guards. Included was also the seventh anti-torpedo division with Bditelnij, Bojevoj, Burnij, Inzjener-Mechanik Dimitriev, Inzjener-Mechanik Zverev, Vnimatelnij, Vnuschitelnij and Vynoslivij. Slava was part of the so-called Borodino-class and was built in St. Petersburg. She was ready for battle in 1905. However, it was too late to be used in the war with Japan. The card is a painting from 1905, and it is unstamped.



Mise à l'Eau the l'Amiral Makaroff aux chantiers - the launching of the boat. Admiral Makarov was the second of the four armored cruisers in Bayanklassen. She was built for the Imperial Russian Navy in 1906 in France. Before the war she served in the Mediterranean, but when World War I broke out, she came to be used in the Baltic Sea. The cruiser was involved in several battles with the Germans, including the attack on the Albatross. Stamped in France 080907 (ymd).

Bogatyr. The ship went into operation in 1902 and was one of the Russians' most important cruisers during both the war with Japan and World War I. Printed: Around 1903 by Otto Leder Ansichtskarten Manufaktur, Meissen1, Sa. Written but unstamped.





## The battle off Gotland

As second in command at the Albatross, korvettkapitän Karl Bühler, around six-thirty in the morning looking over the horizon with binoculars, he saw aft on the port side of something. Before he thought clearly a volley struck down a few hundred meters from the boat.

Now there was not much of a fight. For Albatross, it was about escape and they eventually saw land. The Russians approached all the time, and the Albatross was hit repeatedly.

The German boat had during the sea combat been hit by twelve 21 cm shells, nine 15 cm grenades and four grenades of smaller calibre.

27 crew members on the Albatross were killed and 51 were injured.

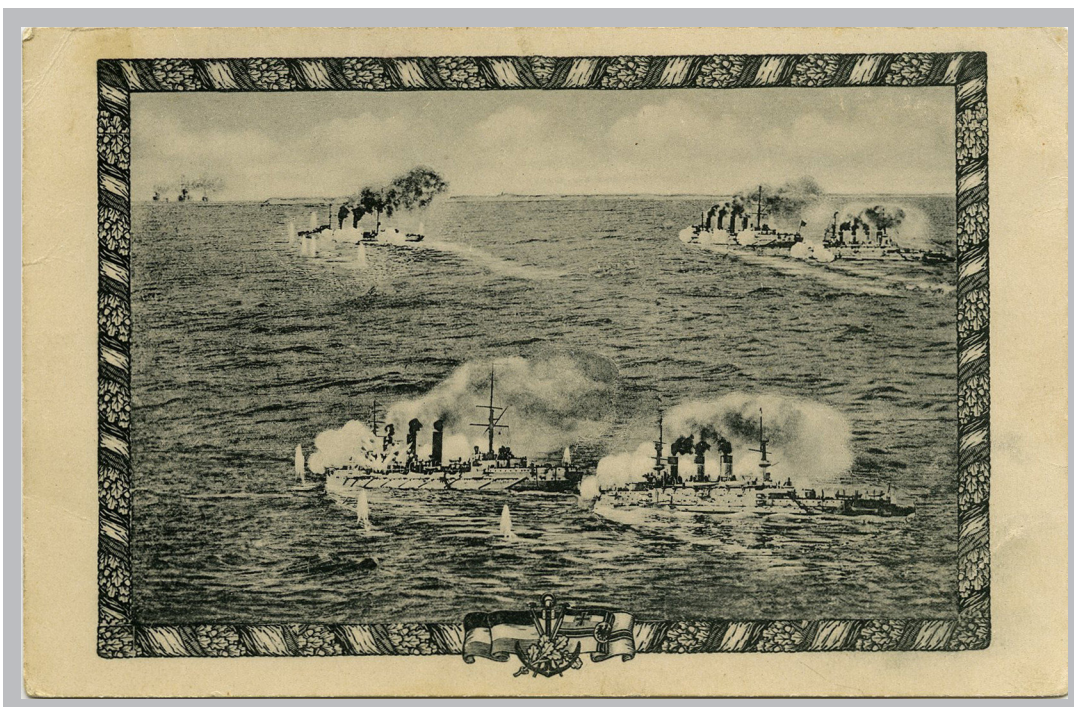
On land began now a hive of activity to rescue the crew of the Albatross.



S.M.S. Albatross im Kampf mit vier russischen Panzerkreuzern nach einer Handzeichnung eines Beteiligten - Albatross in battle with Russian armoured cruiser – after a drawing. 07:45 Albatross entered Swedish waters and it was very worrying. It was only a matter of time how long the ship would stay afloat. Although the Albatross was now in Swedish waters Russian shelling continued.



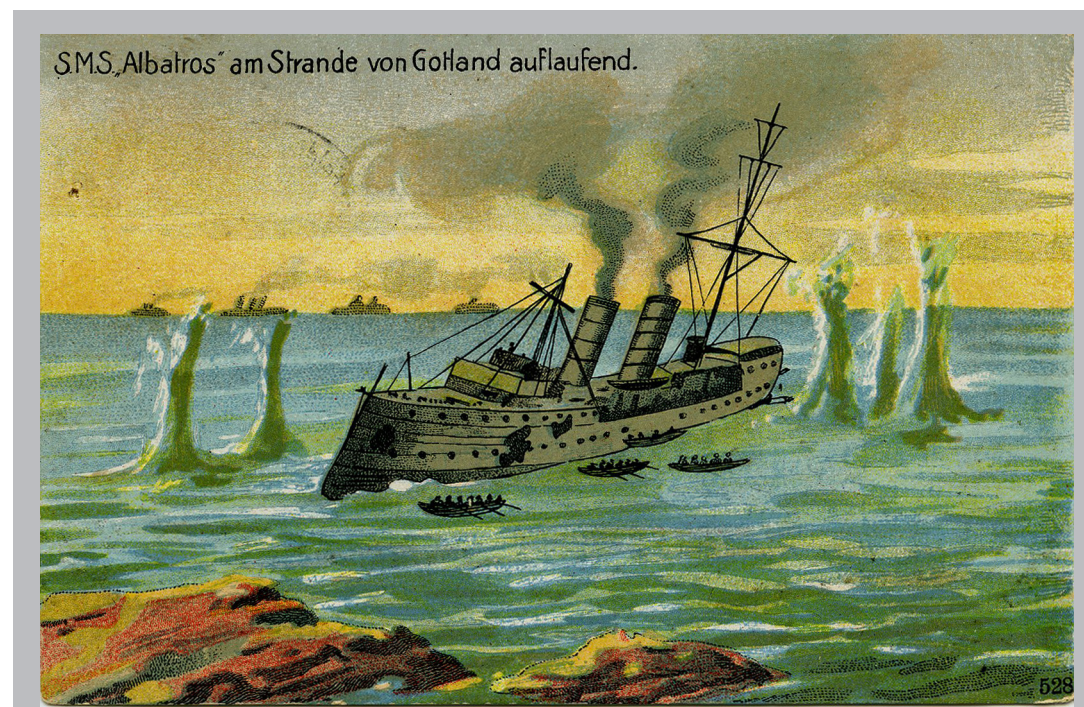
Kyllej. Gotland. Pilots in Kyllej, Herrvik and Slite could through binoculars follow warships and battle. Photo: A. Berglund, Lidingön-Bredvik around 1910.



S.M.S. Albatross im Kampf mit vier russischen Panzerkreuzern - Albatross in battle with four Russian armoured cruisers.

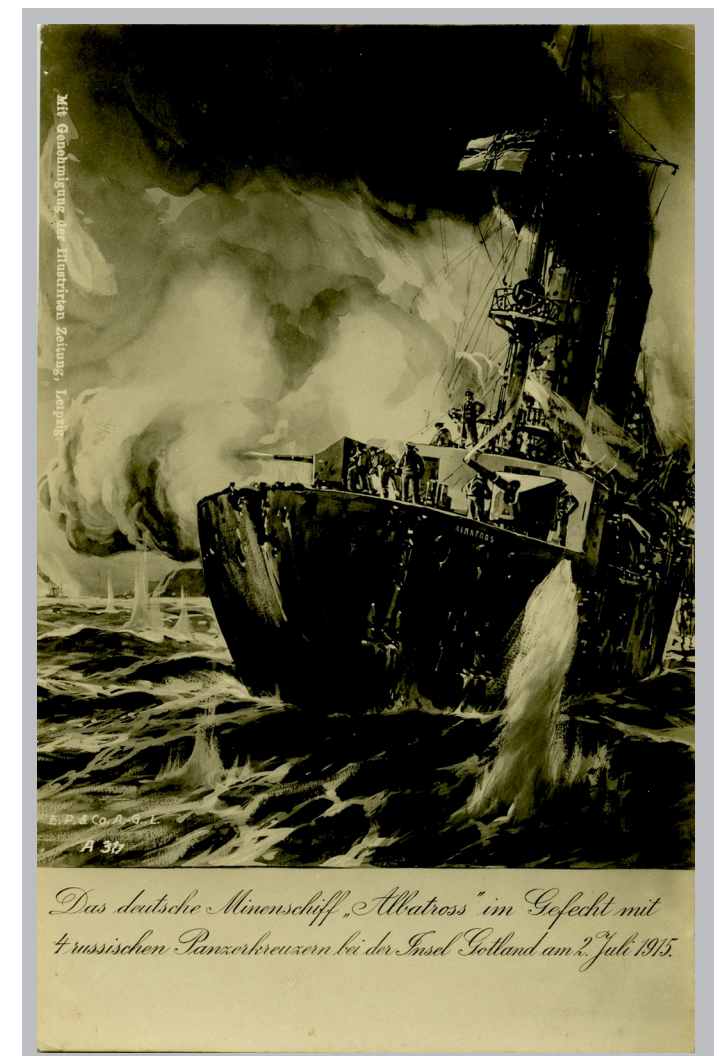
There are no photos of the actual battle, only drawings or paintings.

Printed or publisher: Kubitz, Wisby. It is not known that there was any Kubitz in Visby. However the name of one of the German sailors was Kurt Kubitz. He was born in 1893 and was in civil a butcher.



SMS Albatros am Strande von Gotland auflafen - Albatross on the beach off the coast of Gotland. Three lifeboats are visible and on a painting can change reality or the artist did not know to the fact that only one of the lifeboats on the Albatross was usable after the sea battle. However Swedish fishing boats assisted and they took ashore crew members. Then the bombardment had ceased long ago.

Printed: BKH. Postmark: 160 228 KD Feldpostexp and S. B. Int. Regt 361 11 Comp.



Das Deutsche Minenschiff „Albatross“ im Gefecht mit 4 russischen Panzerkreuzern bei der Insel Gotland am 2. Juli 1915. Printed: With the permission of the magazine Illustrierten Zeitung, Leipzig.



## 5. Crew members rescued



2 July 1915. Landings Completed effects. The boat with four people three Albatross crew can be seen. Photographer Karl Johan August Gardsten from Visby was early at location and immortalized the events of the July 1st Friday.  
Photo: Gardsten, Visby – stamped on the bottom left.



Albatross is hard aground at Östergarn July 2, 1915. The Russians have disappeared. This leaves nearly 30 dead German crew members and survivors. There was no direct rescue operation, but some Gotlanders helped get ratings and belongings onto land.

Photo: Bruzelius, Visby, 1915. Printed in 1916 according to the text on the back.



Salvage of equipment from the boat. On the back someone has written: War 2 July 1915. Albatross crew are happy after all salvage what can be salvaged. Photo: Bruzelius, Wisby.

On board the Albatross and the stranding site Black Pour attempts were made to as fast as possible get ashore and take care of the wounded. Albatross had run aground at 08.15.

Only one of the lifeboats could not be used and therefore fishing boats on the location came in handy. At 10.30 a special train departed from the south railway station in Visby. With this train travelled a velocipede section of 40 men from the 27.

On land, the locals gathered to try to assist the Germans awaiting medical personnel. At noon arrived doctors and nurses from Visby.



Some 30 of the crew members were wounded, several of them very seriously. They were treated initially at the beach. There was a little better care when doctors and nurses arrived from Visby around noon.

It may be noted that there are several print editions of this and several other cards at the beaching. Apparently, there was great interest to buy these postcards, but as the event was very large – Sweden had received recognition from the war we actually stood outside. The card is uncirculated but written War. July 2, 1915.



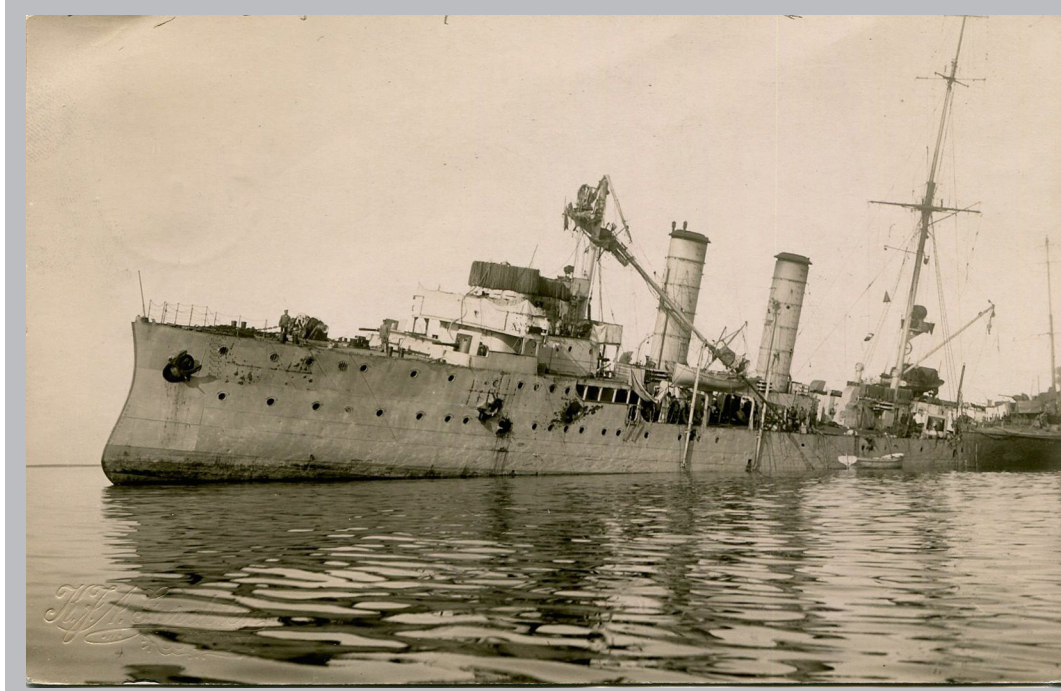
On the beach. It was a sad day for the crew of the Albatross but a little comfort and help was given from the locals. Photo: Bruzelius, Wisby.



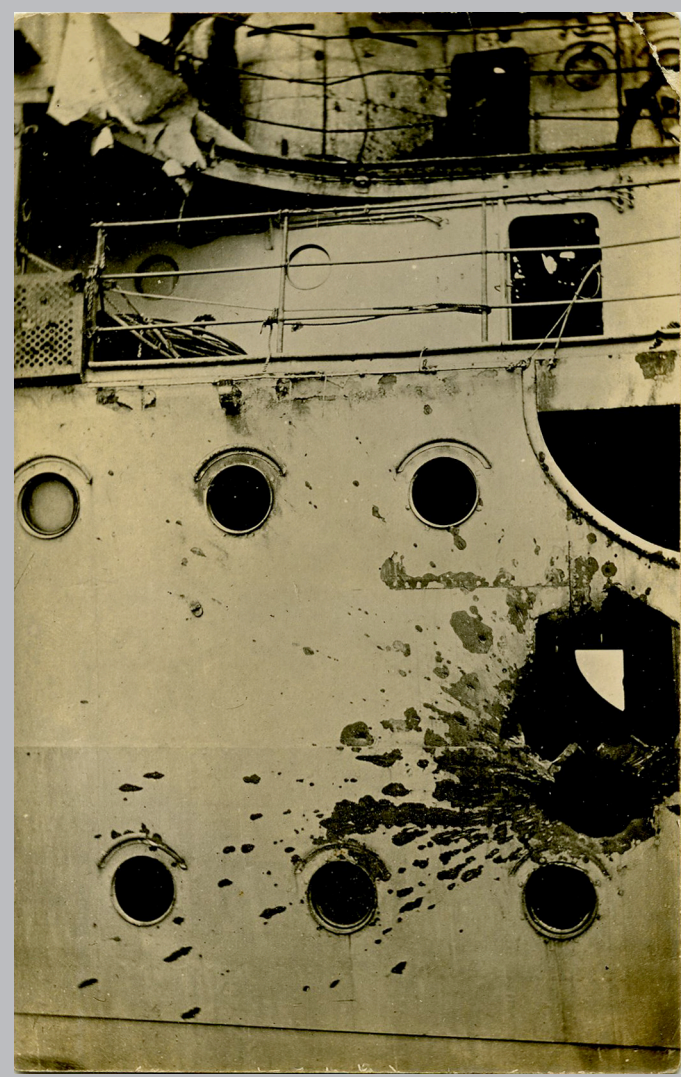
## 6. The grounded Albatross



Albatross with surveillance boats.  
Photo: Gardsten, Visby - stamped on the front lower left. Stamped: Visby 150713 (ymd).



"Zobius" writes Lieutenant William Kleen in Saltsjöbaden and says that he has been working from a few hours after the battle and how important it is to help the Germans.  
Press: Gårdsten Wisby. Stamp: Wisby 150710 (ymd).



Damage to the Albatross.  
Printed: Bruzelius Adelgatan 25, Visby in 1916.

Albatross was guarded after the sea combat by the Swedish destroyers Ragnar Sigurdsson, Wale and Vidar. Almost to the minute three weeks after the boat has been grounded she could be drawn afloat by rescue ships Hercules

and Poseidon. The next day, she was towed to Fårösund.

Between September 30 to October 1 Albatross was towed to Oskarshamn where she had to lie in just over three years.



Tyska Minkryssaren Albatross på grund vid Östergarn, Gotland.

German mine cruiser Albatross aground at Östergarn, Gotland.  
Publisher: J. Ridelius, Wisby.  
Printed: Svenska Litografiska AB, Stockholm.



Damage to the Albatross.



Fårösunds Hamnbrygga

Fårösunds Harbor Bridge. To the left is the Neptun Company Salvage steamship Herakles that salvaged Albatross Fårösund. Heracles later towed the boat to Oskarshamn.  
Publisher: Charles. Fr. Smittberg, Fårösund. Printed: Esping & Lundell, Norrköping.



## 7. The burial of the deceased crew and the march to Roma

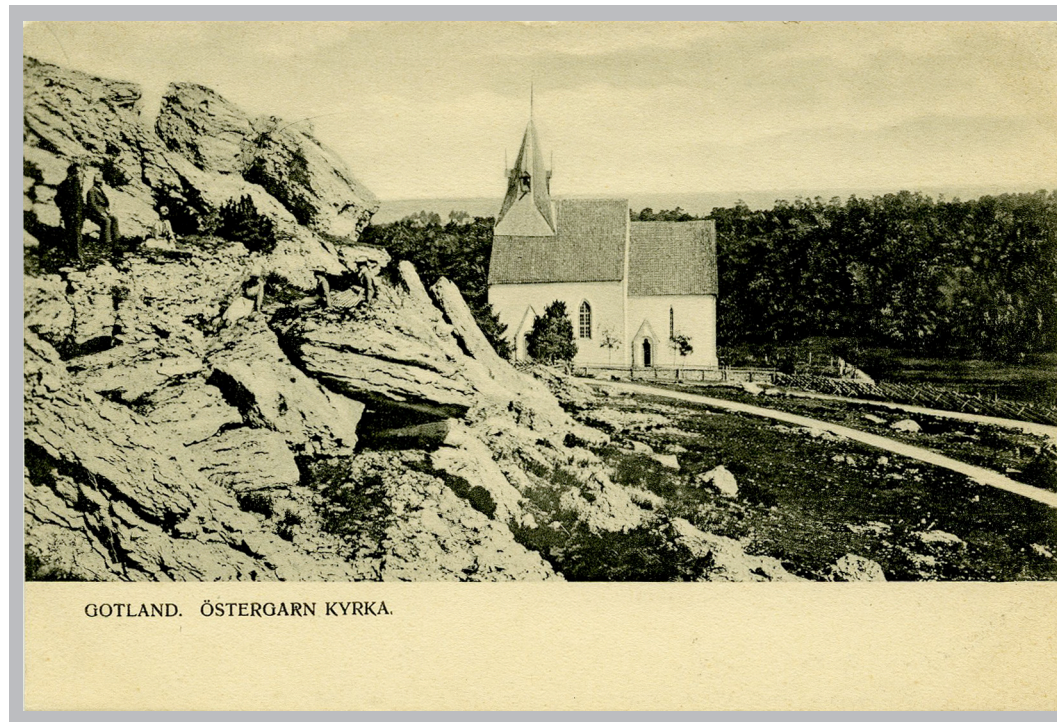
During the sea combat 27 of the crew members were killed. One of them was not found as he had been hurled overboard.

The 26 were buried in the evening July 2, 1915 in a mass grave at Östergarns church.

Three seriously injured died during transport to Visby and they were buried July 3 in individual graves at the cemetery Björke.

On July 2, but the following year, during a ceremony, a tombstone was unveiled with the names of all fallen.

After the funeral, most of the sailors stayed overnight at Bengt's farm.



Gotland. Östergarn Church. Östergarns church has its roots from the 1200s and there are Russian warrior ties beyond the Albatross in 1915. Exactly 200 years before it was subjected to vandalism in connection with the Russian landing on the island. An extensive interior and exterior renovation of the church was made in 2008. Printed: C. N's Lj., Stockholm around the 1903.



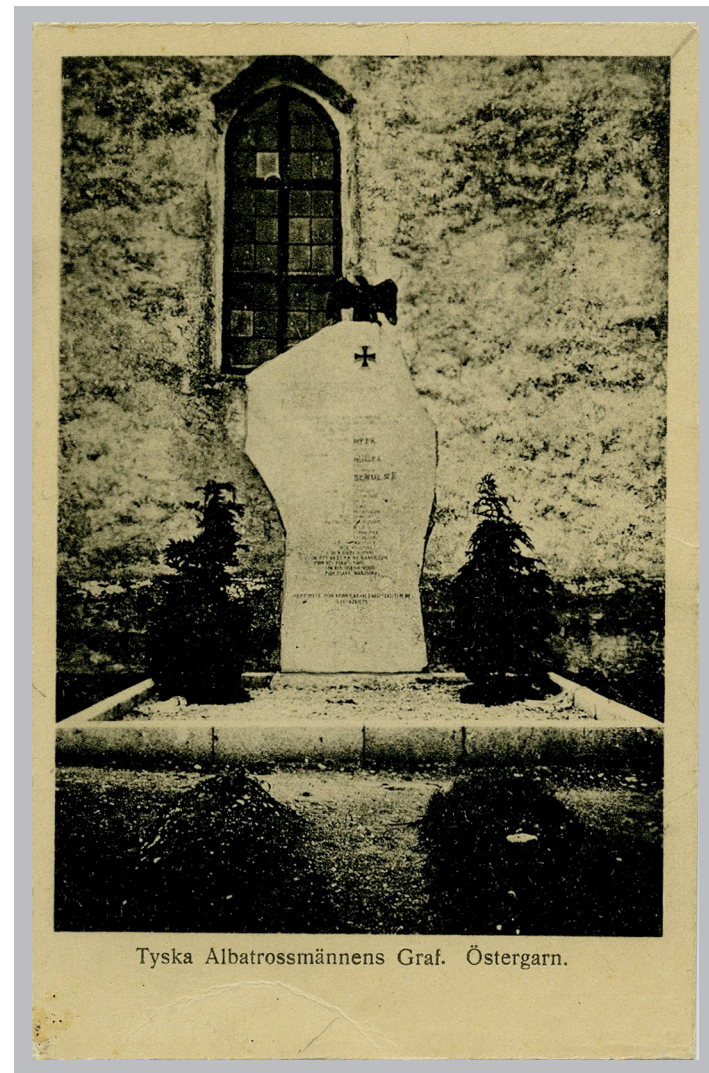
Private photo taken of the funeral at Östergarns cemetery. The surviving crew members standing closest to the grave and most of them took off their hats. A large crowd of civilians followed the funeral, and there are also some Swedish soldiers.



In anticipation of the funeral of Östergarns cemetery. Seen here are some Swedish soldiers but also a few German crew members. The card is unstamped.



The memorial stone was unveiled at Östergarn cemetery July 2, 1916, the anniversary of the battle off Gotland. The card is dated Wisby May 20, 1919, written in German and sent to Germany.



German Albatross men Graf. Östergarn.  
Unknown publisher around the 1920.





Line-up for the march to Roma. After the first night of makeshift accommodation at Bengt's farm was the line-up for the march. Photo: J. Ridelus, Visby.



The goal was Roma in central Gotland. There were 40 kilometres there and in the hot July day, it was an exhausting march. The Germans were in their uniforms with shoes on his feet. The Germans were in their uniforms with shoes on his feet. Several of them fainted during the march and had to be put in any of the eight horse carriages.



Several Albatross men received serious injuries like this man. Unstamped.



28 crew members had been buried. Unstamped. Photo: J. Ridelius, Visby.



Albatross men at home campaign in Roma. In Roma the crew was housed in campaign home at Roma sugar factory, named Victoria. It could be utilized up until the grazing season began. The officers were already in the evening July 2 received the accommodation at the inn near the station house. A week later, the officers were moved to a sugar mill house in Sugar park. In the fall everyone was moved to the camp Blåhäll in Tofta on Western Gotland. Photo: J. Ridelius, Visby. Unstamped.



The Germans have come to Roma. Photo: J. Ridelius, Visby. Unstamped.



## 8. The detention on Gotland 1915–1917



Near the sugar factory. Three men from the Swedish guards along with nine Albatross men and a dog. In the background parts of the sugar factory in Roma can be seen. Here the Germans were interned from July 3 in 1915.

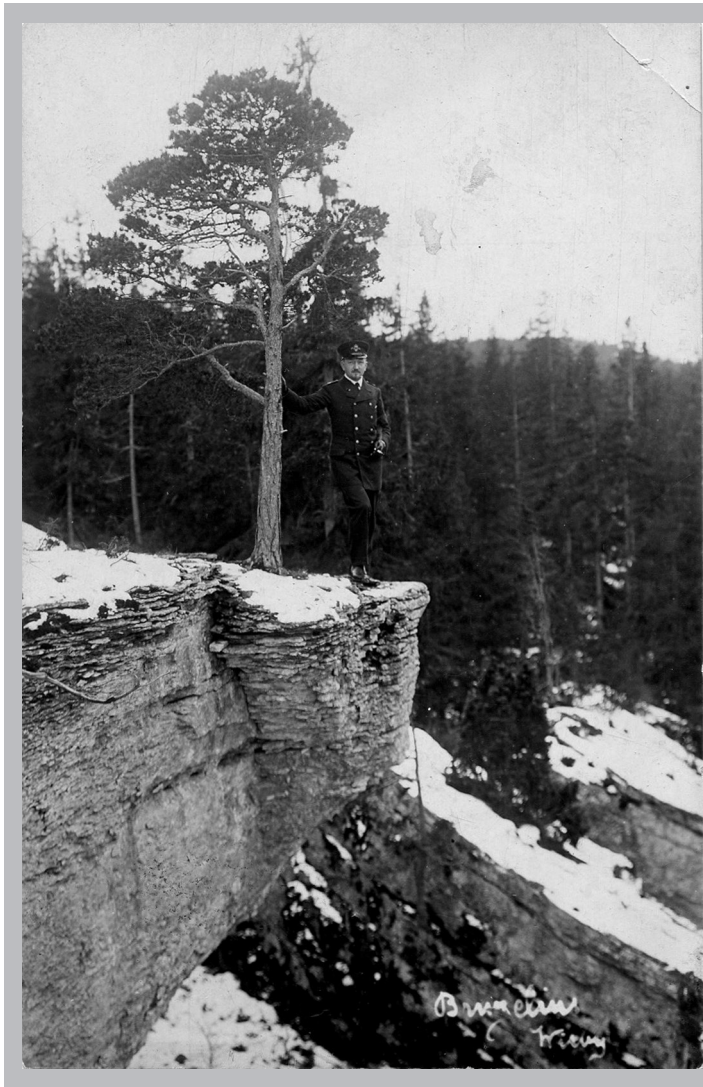
The first detention of the German crew was on Bengts farm in Östergarn. The nearly 150 men had to march there after they followed their deceased comrades to final rest. Ship manager, other officers and most of the wounded were transported to Roma.

Early the next morning began the long march in the July heat. From Bengts farm marched to the Roma, nearly 40 kilometers.

In Roma accommodation was given at the sugar mill, but in the fall, everyone had to move.



Albatross men. Probably one of the Albatross men but one can never be sure. Because some Swedes let themselves be photographed in German uniforms.



Officer. Many let themselves be photographed like this officer from the Albatross. It is unknown where the place is, but it may be at Tofta where there are similar formations. It looks a bit daring to stand where he does. Sensibly enough, he keeps himself in the tree. Photo: Bruzelius, Wisby.



Barracks. Albatross men at the camp of Blåhäll at Tofta firing range. The card sent as "Feldpost" May 2, 1917, but without a stamp or censorship. It is signed by several crew members and sent to another Albatross man with address on the boat then located in Oskarshamn.



Officers. German and Swedish officers photographed at a birthday celebration for Queen Victoria in 1916. The Queen was highly regarded in Germany. For she was born a princess there August 7, 1862. She was, for example, a cousin of the German Emperor William II. The party of officers was held on Gotland probably exactly the Queen's 54 birthday on 7th August. German and Swedish officers socialized a lot and the same thing happened between ordinary privates from both countries.

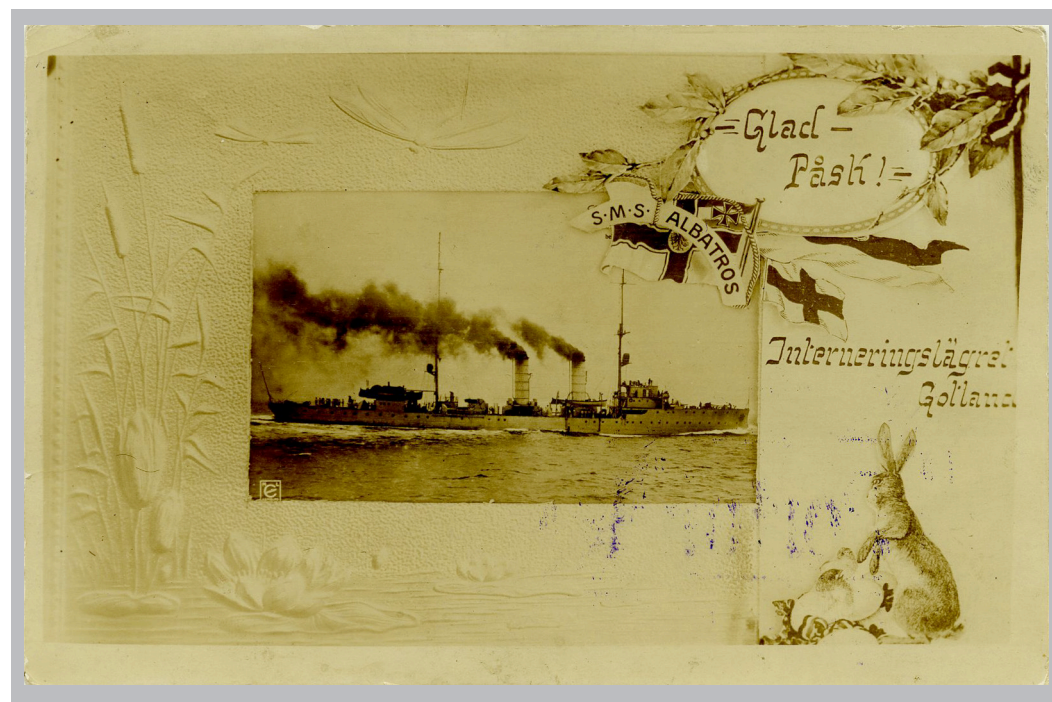




Frohe Weihnachten 1915. Interniertenlager, "S.M.S. Albatross". Gotland-Schweden. One of the more unusual postcards related to the Albatross.



A copy of the reduced state of the back of the postcard below to the left. Here it can be seen that it is treated by the censor in Visby.



The card is stamped Palm Sunday April 1, 1917, that is the weekend before Easter. It is likely that the card was developed precisely for this Easter. The card is signed by Oskar and Leppel. There were multiple Oscar among the crew. There was no Leppel but it could be a nickname. It may have been about Arthur Lippert which, however, was the non-commissioned officer.

## Greetings and new detention location

The Germans sent a lot of postcards to loved ones. They had their own photographer among the crew – Ernst Alexander Schultz – and he produced a large number of postcards as those on this page. Although the cards were produced in fairly large numbers, they are now 100 years later quite rare.

The postcards underwent censorship in Visby, but some were stamped elsewhere and ended up sometimes beyond censorship. Sometimes postcards and letters were also put in mailboxes and could occasionally circumvent censorship.

The rules were otherwise mighty clear; Telegrams, postcards, letters and other postal items were through the watch officer handed over to the military commander for review and, where appropriate censorship.

Royal Majesty decided September 13, 1915 to change the accommodation location for the detainees. They had chosen Blåhäll on Tofta firing range on the island's west coast. Tofta is just 15 km from Visby. Here they were to stay for almost exactly two years.



Happy New Year! S.M.S. Albatross. Internment camp – Tofta – Gotland. Another card that is developed by the Albatross men. It is an uncirculated and slightly cropped card.



Merry Christmas! S.M.S. Albatross. Internment camp – Tofta – Gotland.



Postcards Designs of Luleå. Feldpost from Gotland to Skillingaryd May 7, 1918. Georg Rauch had an acquaintance who happily wrote to him.



Happy Easter of 1917. The internment camp Tofta. The card was developed by the Germans themselves. It is an uncirculated and slightly cropped card.



In work

The detainees were offered different jobs to get employment and extra income.

A survey revealed that 1 / 3rd of crew members civilian professions were artisans with good expertise. Just as many were blacksmiths or labourers. The remaining were sailors or had other occupations.

Those who could were offered mainly forestry work but also work on roads, building maintenance and more in the camp.

Despite the additional costs, many involved the talented Germans. Especially machine operators had an easy time to find work.

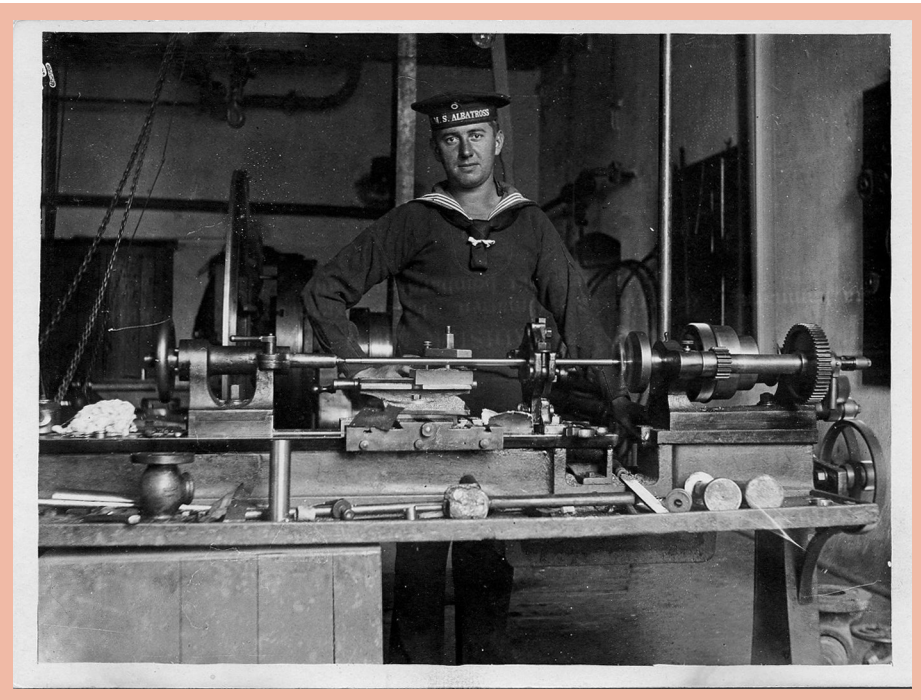
The Germans were otherwise not without compensation. However, they received only a third of the war pay they had on board. Additional revenue was therefore not to be despised.



In order for the detainees to be allowed to participate in the work it was presupposed that both the German Embassy in Stockholm as well as ship captain West left his voluntary consent. On Tofta forestry work was offered on the firing range för 60 men during six weeks. Six hours of work paid 2:50, which was the usual fare.



Albatross men working to dig a trench at the camp. Being detained did not mean that they were forced to work, but everything was voluntary. The Germans also received compensation when they worked in the camp or outside of it.



Many of the Germans were skilled craftsmen and it was many who utilized their service. In some cases the Swedish workforce was not enough, then the Germans got to work.



German crew with the Swedish security personnel, probably at the camp at Tofta. Photo: J. Ridelius, Visby – stamped on the bottom left.



Two men in Albatross Uniforms. Text on the back: This photo was taken by a German sailor but it became not any good, it was best to keep from laughing. The card is uncirculated in general.





Party with Albatross men. Probably in the camp at Tofta sometime between 1915–1917. On the table is a nationalist book: *Das Brot Tägliche* of Clara Viebig, which was published in 1900. The brand of the 25 beers we have not been able to figure out and drank the four of them all of these on their own they must not have been so keen the day after. Though it says Pilsner on one bottle so it was perhaps the 1917 in Sweden weak "pilsner".



Officers gathered to feast on Tofta. Obviously they did not party with the men, even if they were interned. The officers had it significantly better in terms of, for example, living conditions. The card is unstamped.

## Party and leisure

Sometimes there was a party with beer and other things. Sometimes one was treated to invitations by the Gotland people and which was especially true for the officers. It was actually a pretty carefree time on Gotland although everyone probably missed their families back home in Germany. They escaped in all cases, the horrors of war when you lived in a neutral country where everyone seemed to be well disposed towards Germany and the Germans.

This was written by the US newspaper the "Västakusten" (west coast) – in Swedish in 1915: prefect Roos gave July 15 dinner for the German officers on the "Albatross", together with a number of guests from the city. The seven German officers arrived at 4 pm to the city by special train from Roma and, took first a tour of the city."



Party with Albatross men. Some of the cards have a wide range and hidden here. Handwritten text on the back: Christmas Eve on Gotland. The card is otherwise uncirculated.



Festivities probably in Tofta with both Swedish and German officers and four women. The card is addressed to Dr. Göran Löfmark in Eksjö. It is dated Tofta December 20, 1916 but not post treated.



Three Swedes from security force which, however, has taken a break. The postcard is from one of the Albatross men at Tofta. Some of the cards have a wide range and it is hidden here.



Girls, soccer, party...

The Germans in their handsome uniforms had no difficulty getting in touch with women from the island. There are several photographs where

Germans and young women are photographed together.

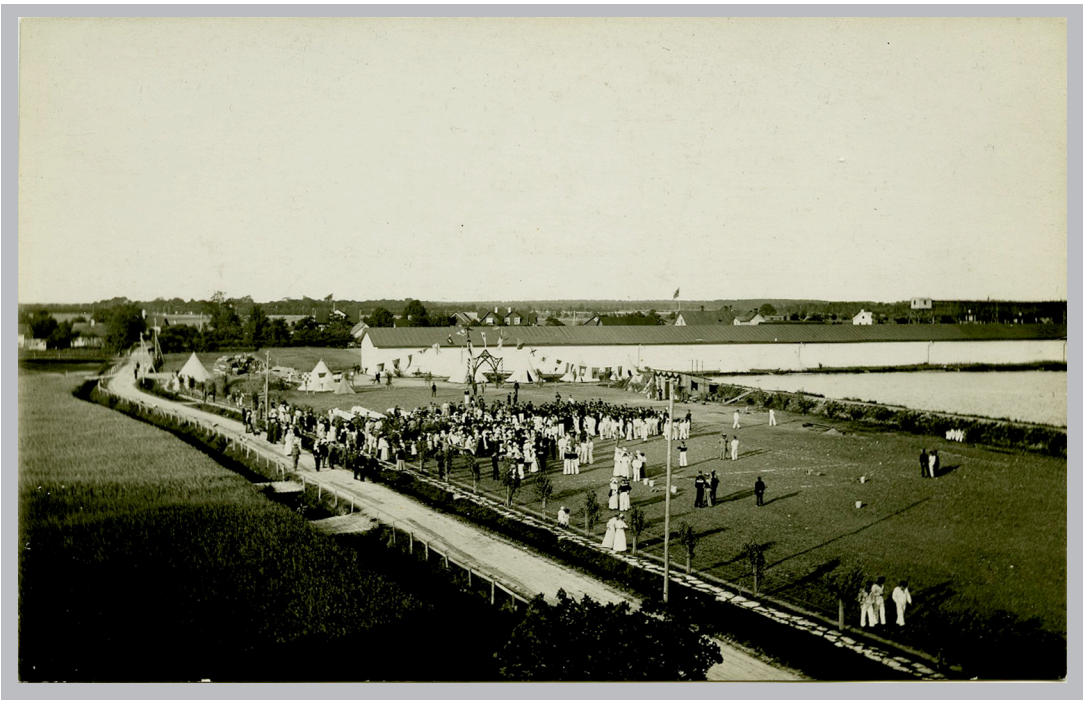
It even went so far that some Germans returned after the war to marry women from Gotland. In some cases, the newlyweds stayed on Gotland, or

any other place in Sweden, but in some cases they moved to Germany.

Various celebrations were organized, like at mid-summer, and the Germans had no difficulty to get leave for shorter or longer.



Here four Albatross men have each met a woman. There was one or two relationships. Many were probably short-lived but a few things lasted a lifetime.



Certainly the Germans were interested in meeting the women from Gotland but most of all they longed to return to their Germany, even though it could mean continued military service. Now that it was not possible to go home they had to make the best of the situation. This image is from perhaps a midsummer feast at the camp. Photo: J. Ridelius, Visby (stamped).



Gothlandic. Text on the back: Erinnerung an Miss Amanda, Tofta, Gotland - in memory of Miss Amanda. Otherwise, the card is uncirculated.



As interned there was largely leisure all day. It was not something the Germans were directly used to and most wanted something to do.



Outside the campaign home in Roma. The Germans in performing a Bavarian folk dancing.





This is the Albatross man that is "figurant" on the card below.

## Monitoring and escape

The Swedish guards at Tofta was an infantry company from the 27th  
The guard force consisted of four officers and non-commissioned officers and 125 privates. During certain times had the force increased to 190 men. There was relief about every fortnight.

Several of the detainees managed to escape on several occasions but in almost all cases, they could be tracked and retrieved. But not in all. On May 16, four men escaped. Two of them were caught but Hardtke and Mayer were never found. They disappeared probably to Germany.

Security was tightened, but did not help much. Many managed to escape but were caught most often. Some in addition Hardtke and Mayer managed to get home to Germany.



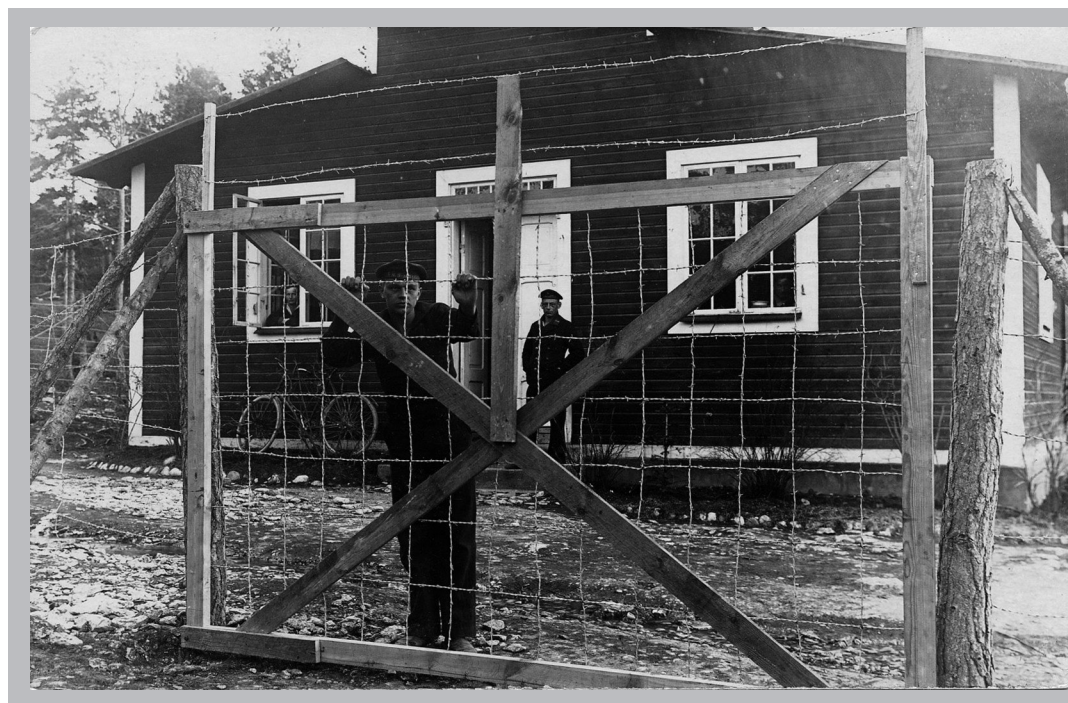
A Swedish guard force at the camp probably in Tofta. In total 25 men are seen, of which only glimpsed.



Parts from a Swedish guard force, and the men seem to have an interest in music and card games. Probably card from Tofta.



Swedish guard and Albatross men. What not to do to entertain?  
Card is uncirculated and some with white face hidden to make room for more cards.



Two Albatross men at the detention camp in Tofta. Inside the building another pair of Albatross men can be seen.



Wozu faun uns Posten? Sollen wir hier verrosten? - Why fence and posts?  
Should we rust away here? The Germans had a sense of humour.



In front of the photographer

The German sailors made ready a music pavilion at Blåhäll at Tofta firing range in the western part of the island. It was the spring of 1916 as this was done, and it became a popular place. Here, the Germans happily let themselves be photographed, and now and then with a newfound friend. It should also be noted: Sometimes mostly Swedish guards let themselves be photographed dressed in German attire. The Germans also had their own bandwagon and they played both your fellow citizens and to others who came to visit. This occurred both on Gotland and later when interned in Skillingaryd.



Albatross man and a acquaintance close to the music chapel.



Albatross band chapel in front of the bandstand in Tofta. The happily Germans made music together and they were discussed and written about for their musical skills.



The beach at Tofta. Friedrich Kahrmannn has been on the back is written: Erinnerung Fritz Kahrmann – as a memory. He called himself then Fritz. He was in the civil a stoker and was born in 1892. On the card are seen five Albatross men and two men from the Swedish guards. The card is not addressed.

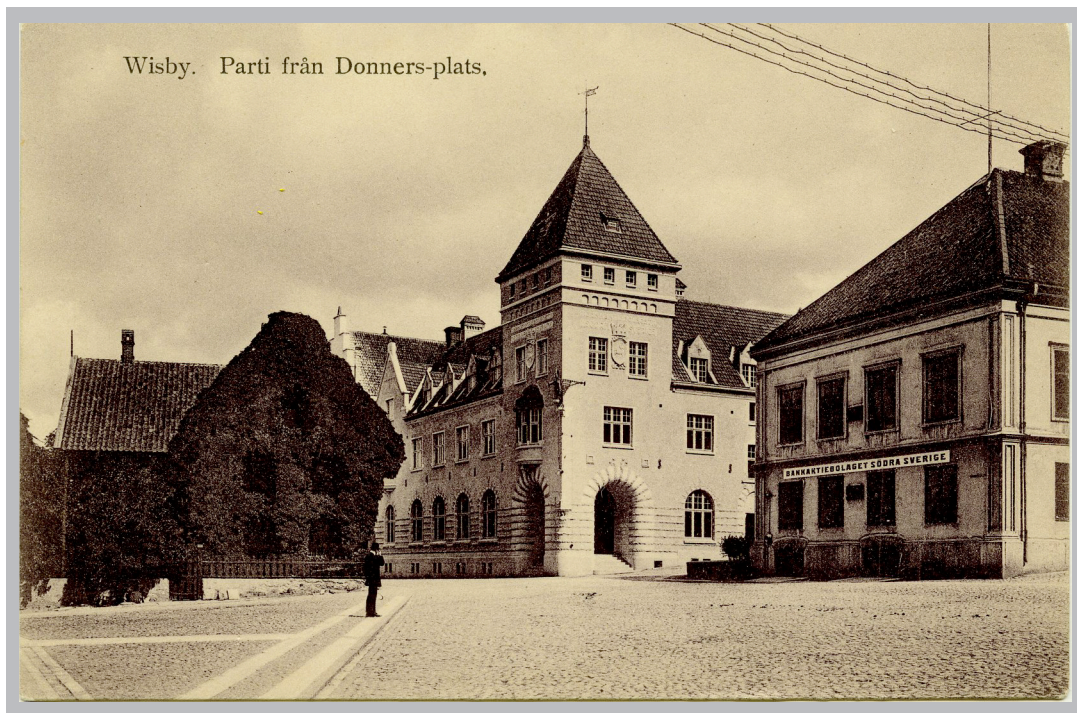


Established musicians, crew of the Albatross. Unstamped.



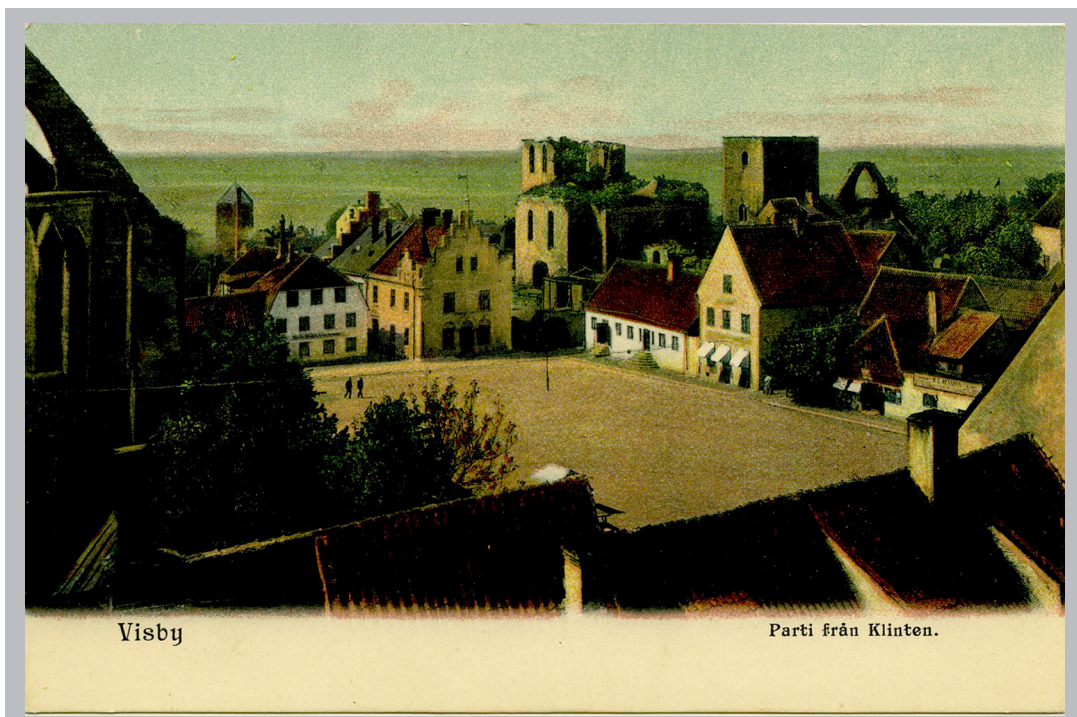
Karl Paul built a Four-Man. Rodel- and the bob course in Tofta was about 500 meters long. Foremost is Joseph Kretschmann result of Karl Paul and the Swedish lieutenant Struwe. Others are unknown. The Germans learned Swedes go Bob. Conversely learned Swedes Germans to ski. Text on the back written in ink: Germans in the residential camp on Gotland 1917.





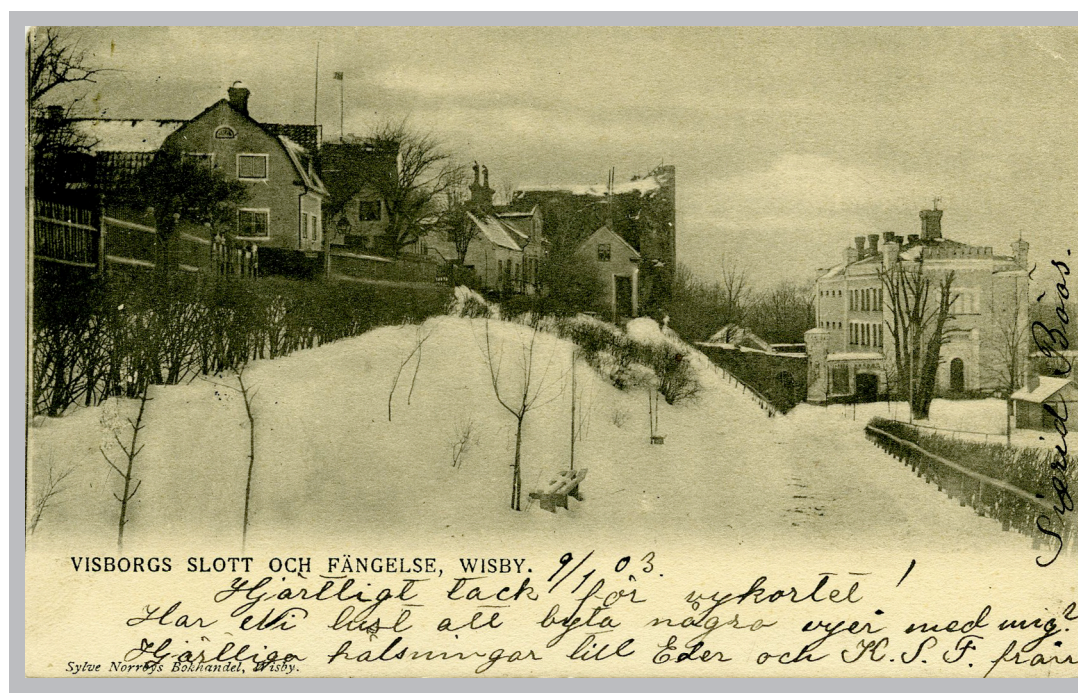
Wisby. Donners-place. The first shipments to and from the Germans initially ended up at the Post Office which was located in the national bank's house at Donnerplan. Here all mail went through censorship. The Censorship Department rented from April 1, 1916 a property at Hästgatan 4.

Publisher: AB Sylve Norrbys Bomhandel, Wisby. Printed: Import.



Visby. Wholesale of Kliten. Visby was no metropolis, but considering the isolation at Tofta it nonetheless felt like something big. Leave was often granted to visit to the city.

Publisher: Sylve Norrby, Visby. Import approximately in 1904.



Visborg castle and prison, Wisby. Sailor Hedemann and sailor Rauch was court-martialled after an escape attempt. They were sentenced each to three months in prison, Publisher: Sylve Norrbys Bookstore, Wisby. Stamped Visby January 9, 1903 and sent to Helsinki.



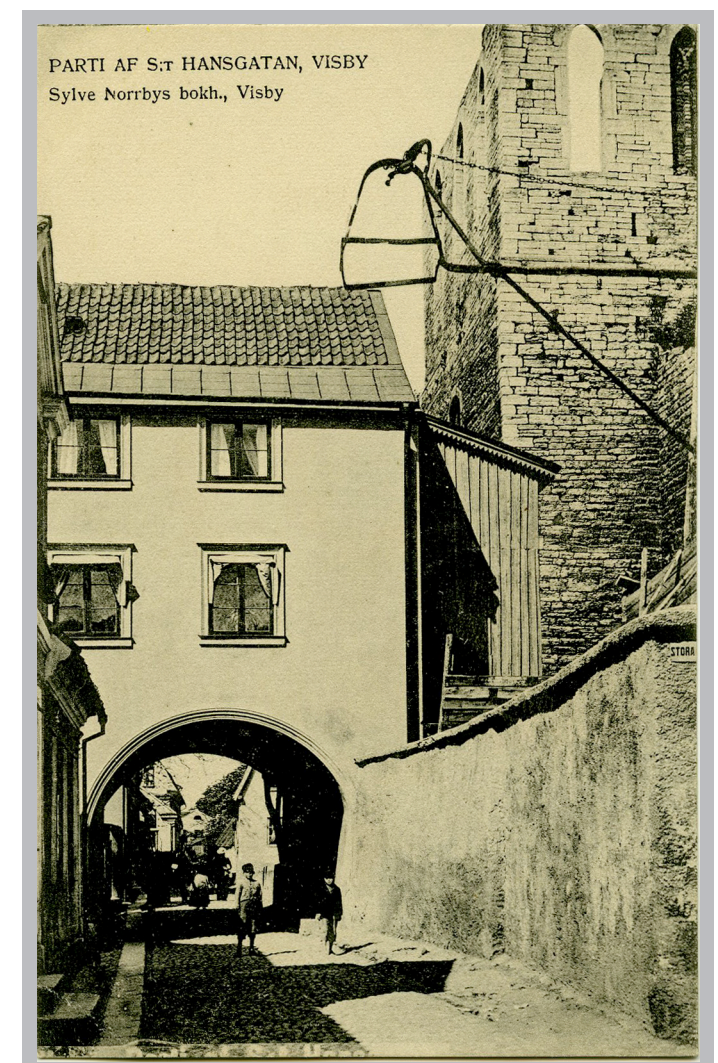
Visby. "Högre Allmänna Läroverket". A 17-year-old at the school was to forge a strong friendship with Albatross man Otto Kliemann. It was the councillor's son Nils Tiberg who was interested in learning German.

The postcard is stamped Visby 1936.

## Visby calling....

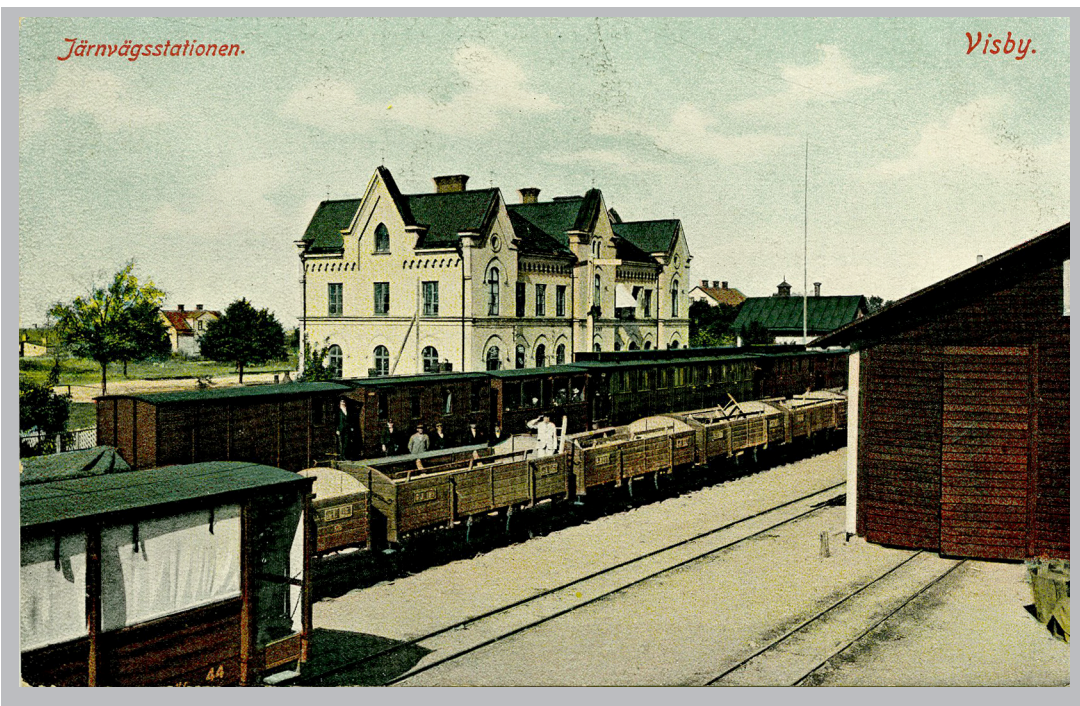
The sailors were never located at Visby but the higher officers were. However, Visby was often visited even by the sailors. The city called and it was easier and easier to get leave.

In different ways a few Germans involuntarily ended up in hospital in Visby. In a few cases of escape attempts a trip to Visby for a short stay in prison was in order.

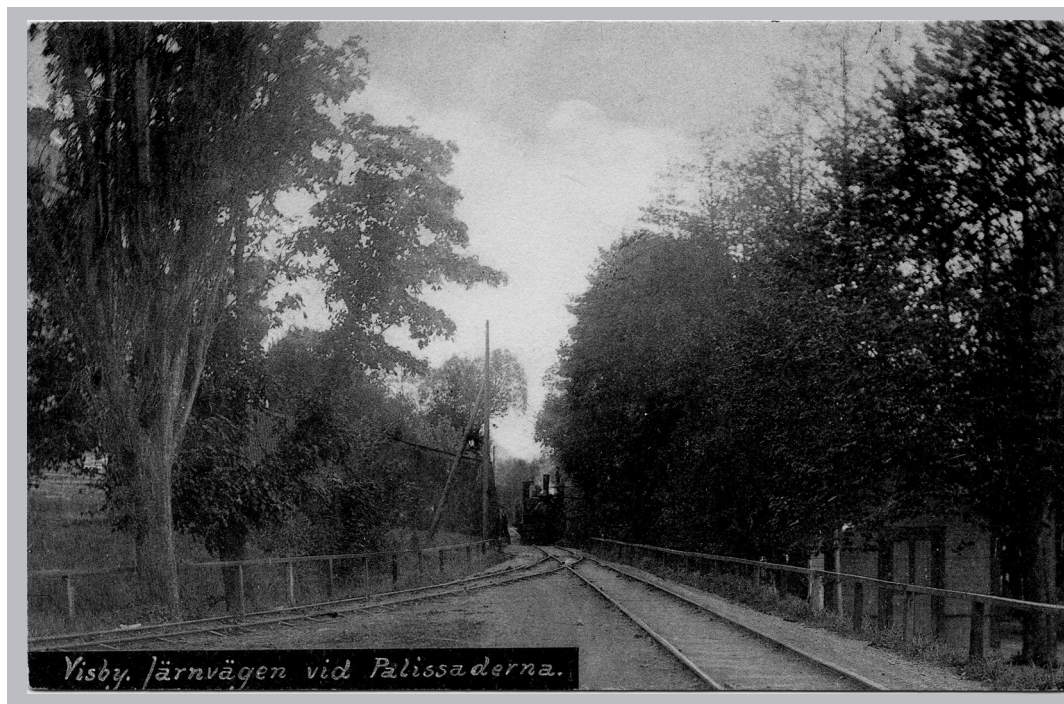


At St. Hansgatan there was full speed for at least two people when the news of the Albatross fate came. Here next to each other the photographers Bruzelius and Ridelius had their studios and it was a fast trip to the Östergarn. The postcard is from around 1915.

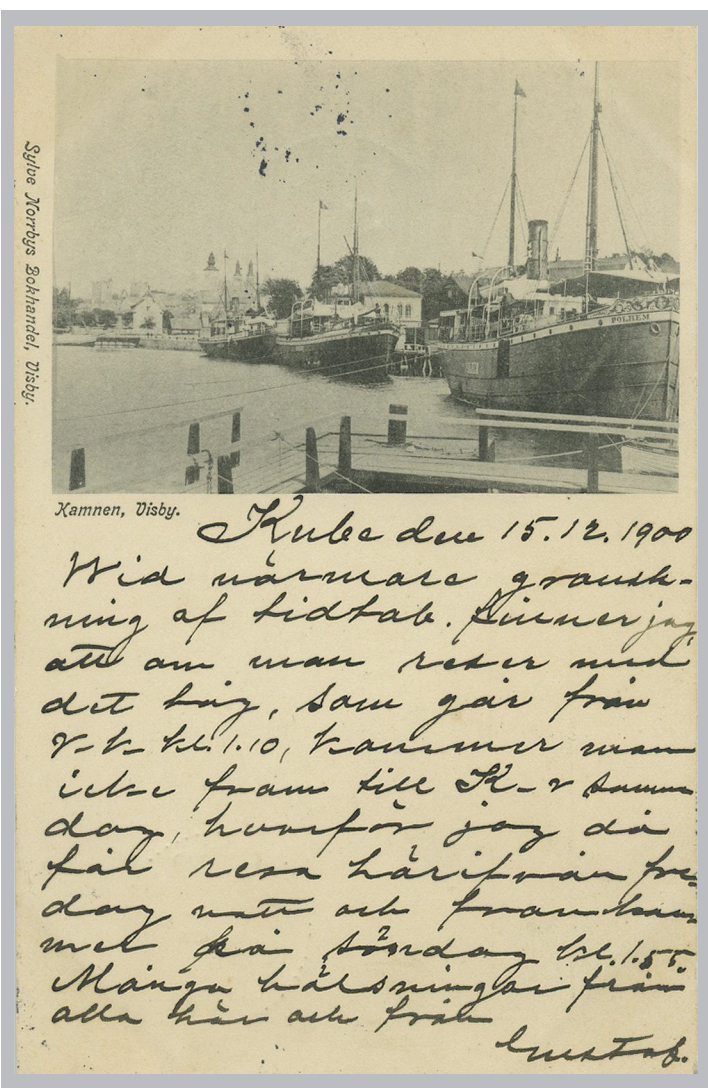




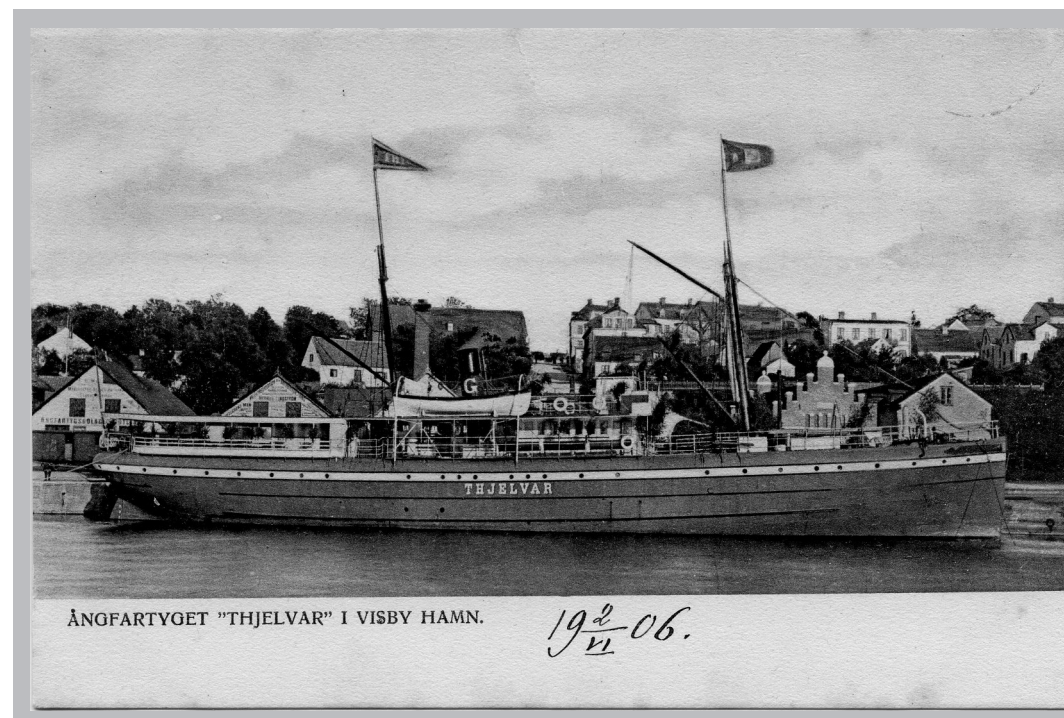
The railway station Visby. Here Albatross men often arrived by train from Hallvards. Publisher: S.E. Hallström Visby around 1910.



Visby. Railway at palisades. On the way south into Visby and here the Albatross men were probably rejoicing about the idea of a little entertainment in the city. Printed around 1910.



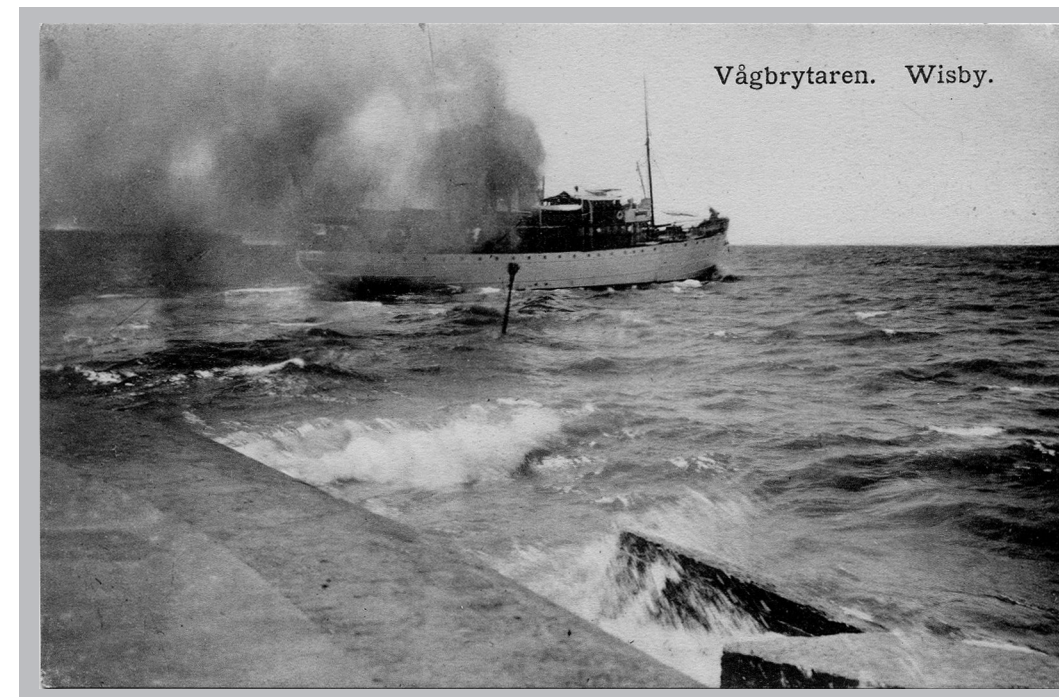
The harbour, Visby. The Germans sometimes strolled at the harbour in Visby, and on some occasions escaped by boat from here to the mainland. Publisher: Sylve Norrbys Bookstore, Visby. Stamped in Stenkumla a mil south of Visby 16/12 1900.



The steamship "Thjelvar" in Visby harbor. It was with this boat the Albatross men were moved from Gotland to Oskarshamn and on to Skillingaryd. Printed: C. N's Lj., Stockholm about 1904. Dated June 2, 1906, otherwise uncirculated.



The pavilion was a popular venue even for the Germans. Publisher: Sylve Norrbys Bookstore, Visby. Stamped in Stenkumla just south of Visby 000822 (ymd).



The breakwater. Wisby. Sea attracted the Germans – it was a bit of freedom. They often had leave and that was also some escapes from here or from Tofta. A few managed to cross to the mainland. Publisher: W. Sandberg Pappershandel, Wisby around 1910.



## Care for damages

Albatross had 238 crew and of these, 27 were killed and 50 wounded. Many were seriously injured. During transport to the hospital two men died. Some were taken to hospital in Stockholm. The following was written by the US newspaper "Västkusten" – the west coast: In the field hospital in Roma remain where they are now 23 of the injured from the "Albatross". The others have been discharged as healthy. The remaining still in custody and care of Dr. Grönberger, who announced that all the wounded now firmly considered to recover.



Visborg Plain from the south. The hospital in the foreground. To the hospital the seriously injured Germans were transferred. Publisher W. Sandberg, Visby around 1910.

## They immortalized the events from the July 2, 1915

The event outside Östergarn July 2, 1915 was spread across the world in both text and image. For the latter, accounted some of Gotland photographers.

The first professional photographer on site was Måns Birger Bruzelius. Even at eleven o'clock he came on his motorcycle to

perpetuate what happened. He thus came an hour before doctors and other medical staff.

Other photographers who took many pictures were Karl Johan August Gardsten and John Ridelius.



Healthcare. Most often the healthcare at the camp was sufficient, like here, probably in Tofta. Here are Swedish personnel and German interns. The card is sent as Feldpost May 15, 1917 but without the stamp.



Stockholm. Great Square. Following from the US to Sweden in 1897 Måns Birger Bruzelius established himself as a photographer in the birth city of Stockholm. He took over a photographic studio in the Main Square in Old Town. In 1911 he and his wife Jenny moved to Visby where they opened a studio at Adelskatan. Later in life, he returned to the United States. Publisher: Axel Eliassons Art Publisher Stockholm. The card is stamped 030304 (ymd).



Visborg plain was a military training area in Visby 1887–2005. It was also a store where there were all sorts of things to buy. It appears that there were "Photography studios" and Postal Savings Bank. Publisher: W. Sandberg, Wisby. Press: Swedish Lithographic AB, Stockholm around 1910.



North Main Street, Port Chester. N.Y. It was not particularly unusual for photo interested Swedes to make their way to the United States. So did Måns Birger Bruzelius who in the mid-1890s opened a photo studio in Port Chester on the outskirts of New York. But he returned to Sweden in 1897. The card is from around 1902.



## 9. The detention Skillingaryd 1917–1918

It was September 30, 1917 when the Albatross men had to leave Gotland for Skillingaryd in Småland.

In Skillingaryd the Germans made many contacts with the local population.

In one or another case the Germans left a more tangible memory by itself as in a case of a new-born son. The boy Birger was born July 27, 1918 with a mother from Skillingaryd. His father was one of the German Albatross men.

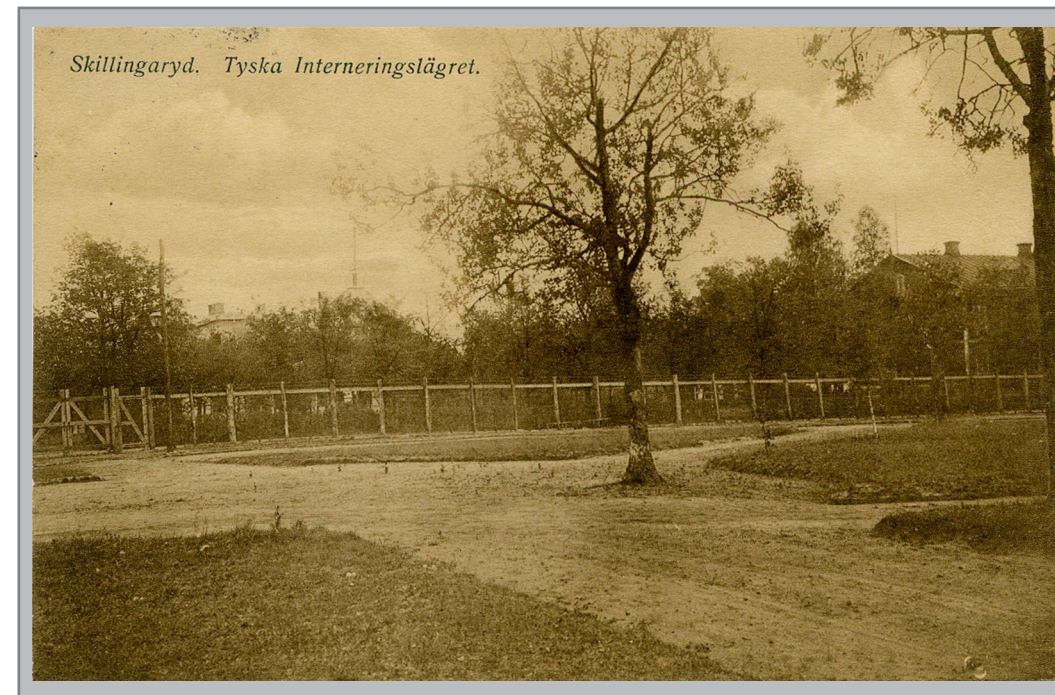


Square and Main Street. Skillingaryd. Here the Albatross men surely strolled. The station at the top had been replaced by a new one in 1907. Stamped 050608 (ymd).



Skillingaryd's station building. The pulse of the community was the third station house. The first burned down in the early 1880s and the other was demolished and replaced by the current in 1907.

To and from Skillingaryd it was the train that counted. Here came the Albatross men in the fall of 1917, and left about a year later. The card is stamped 120927 (ymd).



Skillingaryd, German internment camp. In Skillingaryd the Albatross men were interned at the western camp that includes buildings built from 1850 until essentially the beginning of the 1900s. Skillingaryd has military ties since the mid-1600s and became the official camp in 1777. Skillingaryd has always been in harmony with the military and so also when the Germans arrived September 30, 1917. Here they stayed until 28 November of the year thereon. Publisher: John Bengtsson.



Wardroom. An Albatross man front of the "mess". The house was and is to this day the most distinguished in the western camp in Skillingaryd. There is little information available about parties and more during the time of the Albatross but it is likely that this was where they celebrated, just as others are doing today.



Barracks and interns. According to data the Albatross men were living in what is today's expedition, originally a hospital built in 1863. Looking at this card of one of the barracks with a large number of Germans – even some indoor – it points to the fact that they also lived in this building. It is probably the barracks which was located just south of the expedition and the building that was destroyed by a fire in the late 1940s. During the daytime the Albatross men had free access to town, but at night they were guarded and there were fences around the area.





Swedish security force at the camp. Text on the back that is otherwise uncirculated: Beva-  
chungskompanie in Skillingaryd für die Albatross-Deutschen – security company for the  
Albatross men.



Swedish security force and a few German sailors. Uncirculated.

The Western military camp is only 200–300 me-  
ters from Skillingaryd town centre. Around much  
of the camp a fence was erected to prevent escape.  
Guard was handled by a force from Jönköping  
Royal Regiment I 12.

Sometimes Albatross men could get leave for a  
trip to Germany. Some fled, even though it was  
guarded. When the Germans were at the station  
for the return trip home at the end of 1918 one  
of them told that they had dug a tunnel from the  
building where they lived to the stairway at the  
adjacent Camp Shack . It was then called the Tun-  
nel of Love.



Skillingaryd. Regementets sjukhus. In this building lived the Albatross men. Today the house  
is the regimental office.  
Publisher: M. Izikowitz, Jonkoping. Printed: Jkpgs Lit. A.-B. The card is stamped 110417 (ymd).



Albatross men and Swedish guards winter 1917–1918. There is text on the back but otherwise  
uncirculated: Für freundlichen Erinnerung gewischt von Ihren Georg Rauch, Interniert Skil-  
lingaryd, Großbritannien – a greeting from Georg Rauch.



The Crown Prince's visit. Some of the Albatross men are  
discernible in this image from the summer of 1918. The card  
is written but not posted.



The Germans got on very well in Skillingaryd and it was certainly often note on the door. The district's young ladies were charmed by the Germans in their stylish uniforms. There were many love affairs.

Willi Wohlfeld was machine steward at the Albatross. He met Nanny Klaesson, daughter of timber merchant, J.A. Klaesson in Skillingaryd. They married and had two children. It was one of several marriages between Albatross men and Swedes.

They also let themselves be photographed in various contexts, such as in the Court Photographer Bror Malmquist's studio at what is now called the Southern Railway Street.



Party. 25 Albatross men probably in a barracks or storage hut.



Girls. Two Albatross men along with five girls for a good time somewhere in the neighbourhood of Skillingaryd.



Albatross men or Swedish guard. A card from one of the Swedish guards in Skillingaryd. If there is a Swedish or German companion to him is unclear.



Albatross men at work. Wednesday 8 May 1918 wrote Georg Rauch in Swedish like this to his sweetheart Edit Sandberg Sjöaryd located in Tofteryd few kilometers east of Skillingaryd: Dear Edit! Hereby, a greeting and thanks for the last cards Hope you feel good wishes your Georg. I come on Sunday. The card is pre-paid 5 cents and stamped 180508 (ymd). It has gone past the censors.



Studio photography. Two uniformed Albatross men and in the middle a man who even he can be assumed to be one of the Germans. Text on the back of a card that is not posted, but perhaps loaded in a letter: "Skillingaryd the 7/4 1918, Småland, Schweden. In memory of your Fritz." Fritz had sent the card to Hedwig Hedstrand.



Although it may seem idyllic to be in a country that was not at war, the Germans longed for home. Many tied friendships with inhabitants of Skillingaryd and others. In one or another case it led to marriage. After the war several of the Albatross men visited Skillingaryd and other places they had been detained. Some of them had also married Swedes. On July 14, 1918, for instance, Albatross man Woldt married his Ingeborg Augusta Carolina Siltberg who had moved to Skillingaryd from Västerhejde parish on Gotland. The couple settled in 1919 in Germany. On the Swedish side, interest in the Albatross been great and is so today. There has not only been postcard written like here adjacent but also several books.



Fritz. The former Albatross man apparently continued in military service. He writes, April 2, 1920 from Germany to his dear Hedwig Hagstrand in Skillingaryd. He says, among other things, that he caught the Spanish flu, but recovered. The entire back of the postcard is covered by the text and the card was most certainly sent as a letter to Hedwig. Possibly she may also have been visiting Fritz.



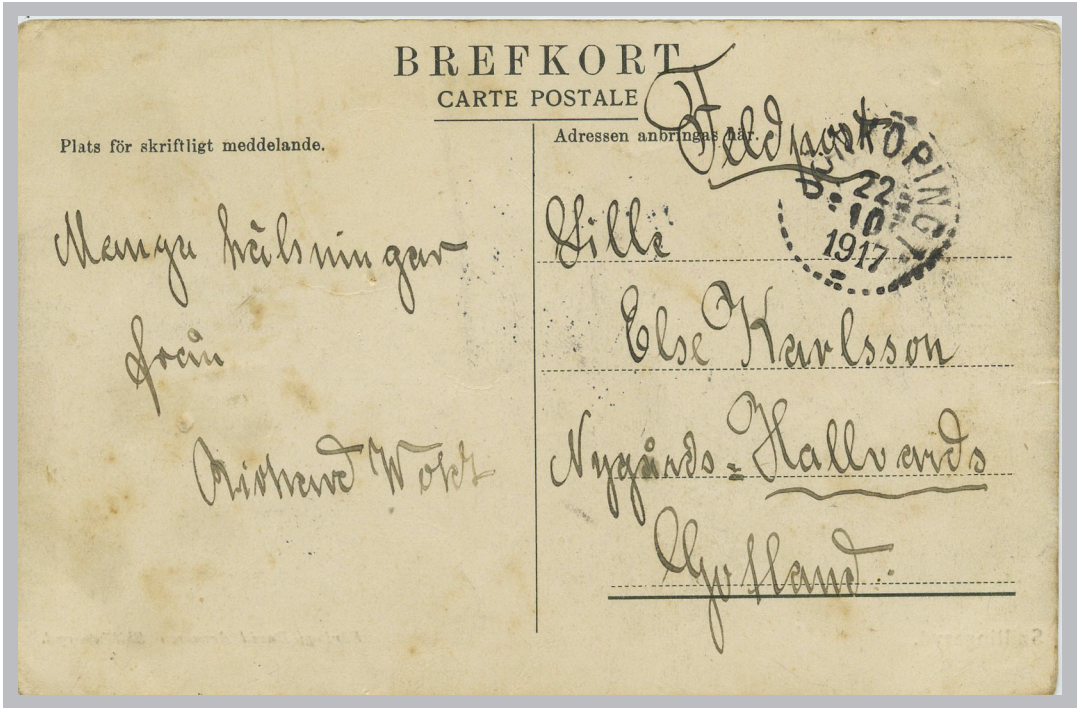
In front of the camera. An Albatross man in an unknown location in Skillingaryd.



The Albatross Uniforms. Two Albatross men in an unknown location in Skillingaryd.

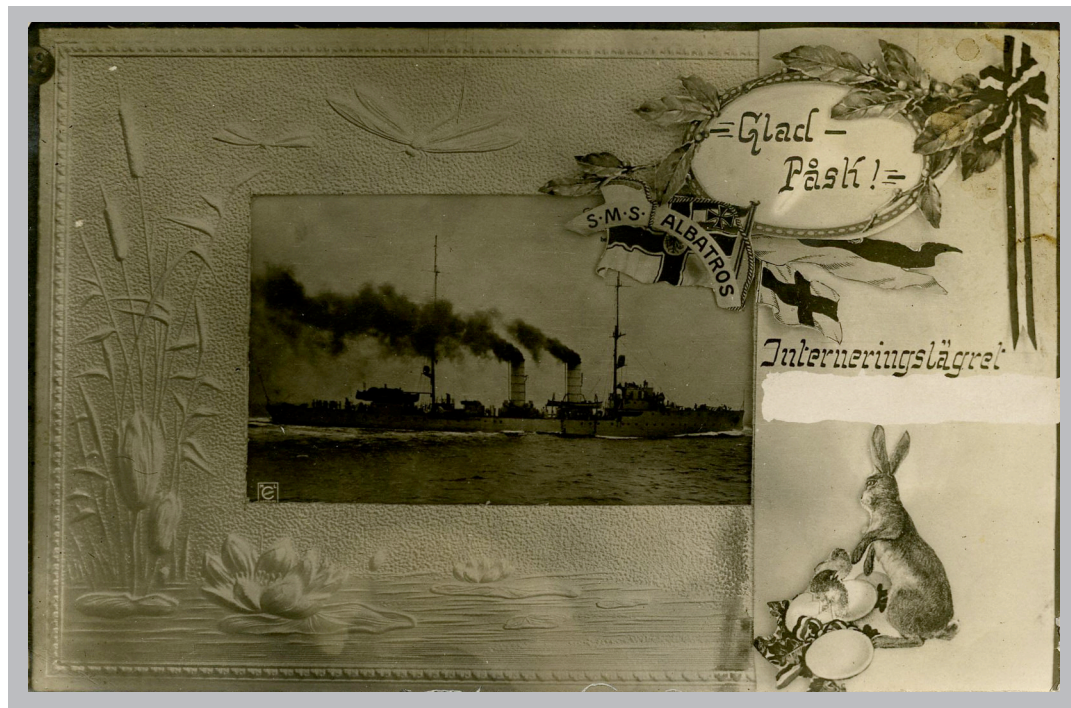


Couple. Albatross man Fritz and his Hedwig Hagstrand from Skillingaryd. The card is written but not post treated April 27, 1921.

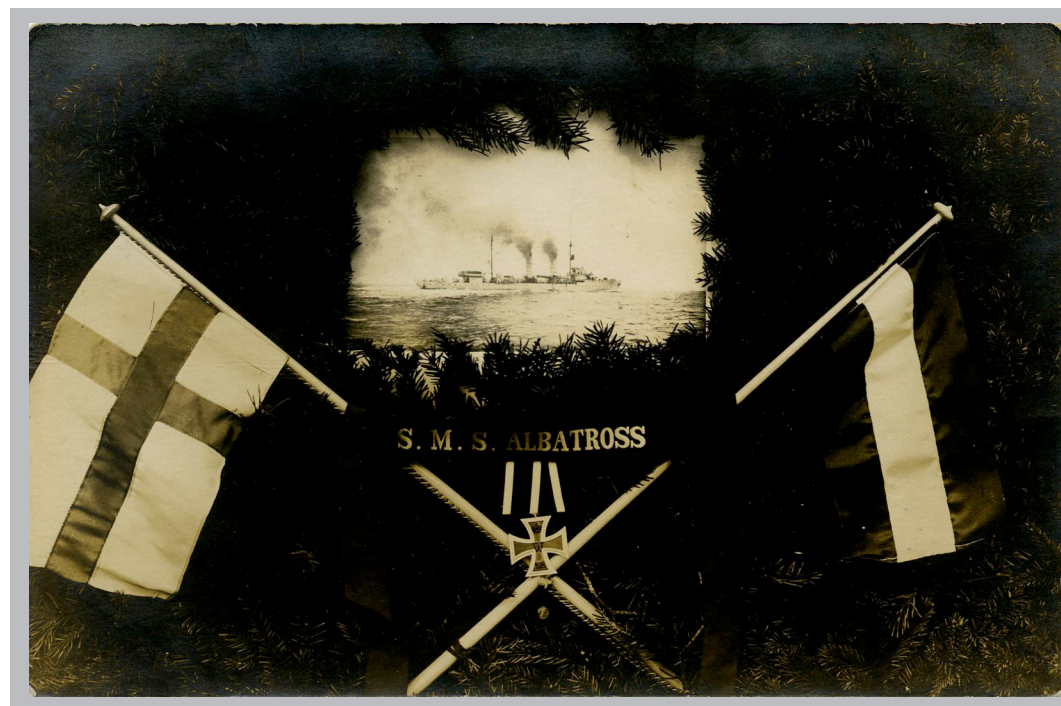


Skillingaryd's railway station on the other side. One of the Albatross men were sending a greeting to a woman he knew from the time of Gotland. The card is Feldpost went to Jönköping for censorship.





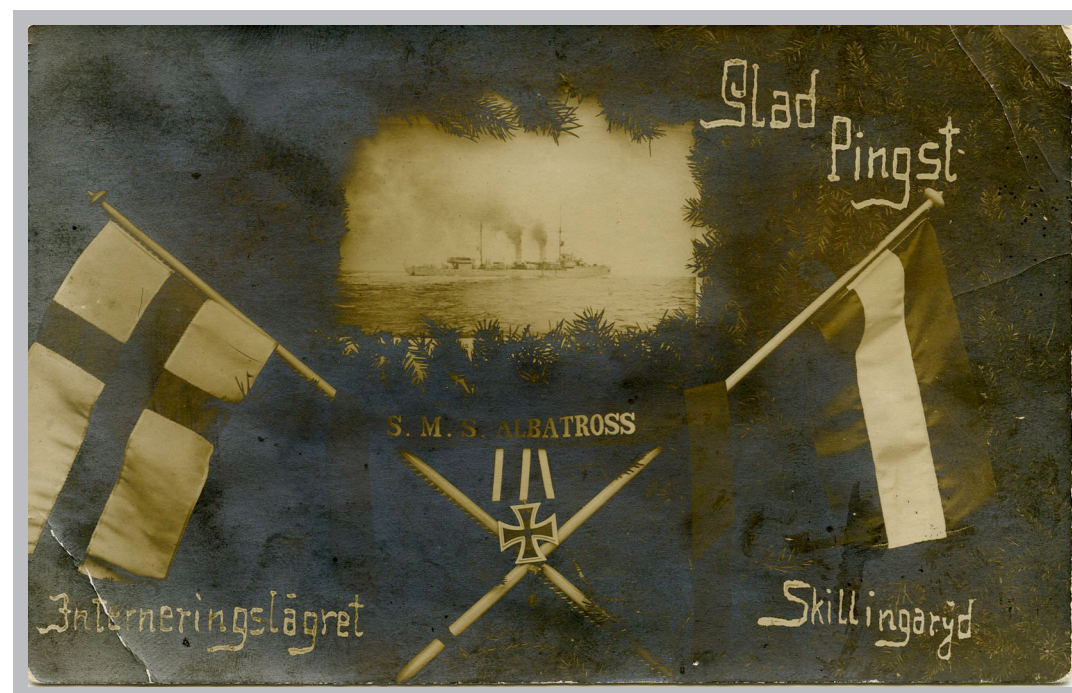
Happy Easter! S.M.S. Albatross. The internment camp. "Johansson" writes on Easter Sunday March 31, 1918 to an acquaintance. The card is postmarked Skillingaryd.



S.M.S. Albatross. A card designed in Skillingaryd.



Happy Christmas 1917. S.M.S. Albatross. Internment camp – Skillingaryd. The Germans developed several postcards with motifs of their boat and with different greetings for example for Christmas. One of the Albatross men was a very good photographer.



Happy Pentecost. S.M.S. Albatross. The internment camp. Skillingaryd. Pentecost got the attention of Germans who sold postcards also to the public. This is sent by "Johansson" to a woman in Slätthög in neighboring county Kronoberg. The card is stamped Whitsun 18 May of 1918.

The Germans wrote many regards and like on Gotland they develop their own, local postcards. These were sent not only by the crew but also by locals and others.

On November 27, 1918 all Germans left Skillingaryd. The train left at 13:24 and there were speeches, floral tributes and more. Next stop was the Oskarshamn in order to get on the boat that more than three years earlier they had been fired on while aboard, the Albatross.



Aron Blansch was a Swedish sergeant at the camp, living in Skillingaryd and like many other let himself be photographed wearing a German sailor's uniform.



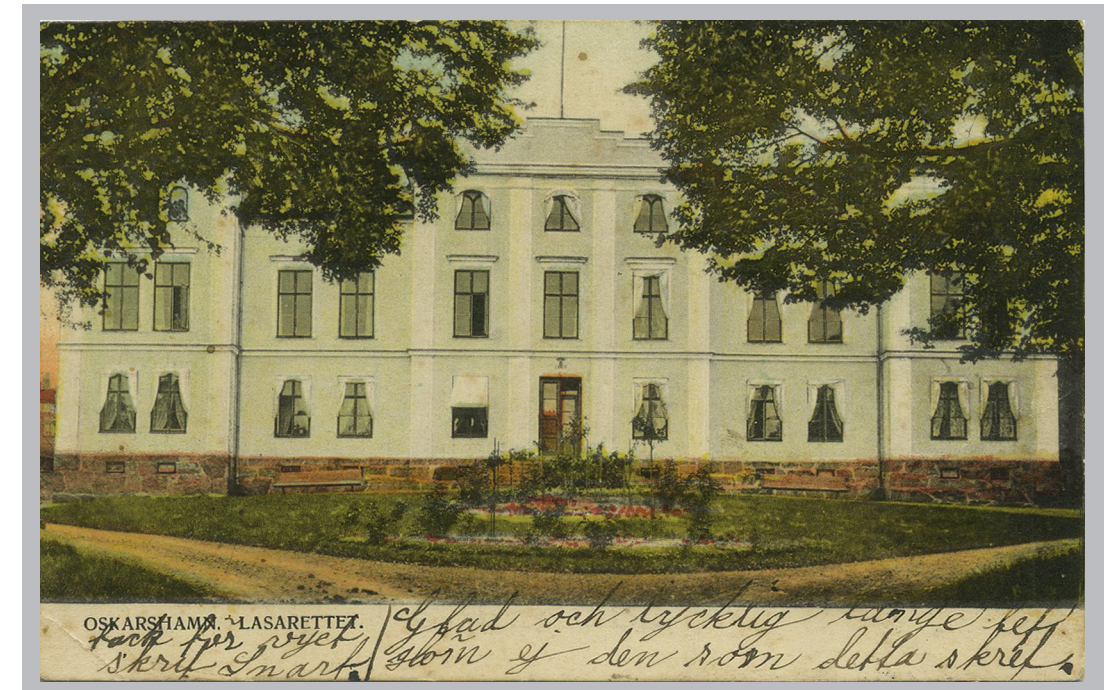
## 10. Albatross in Oskarshamn 1915–1918

On October 30 and November 1, 1915 Albatross was towed from Fårösund to Oskarshamn. It was salvaging steamboat Herakles who had the assignment. The destroyers Wale and Magne guarded.

On board the Albatross was a Swedish crew. No German was thus present during the towing. 40–55 of the detainees lived for three years on the boat in Oskarshamn. The head of the boat, Karl Bühler, however, lived on Hotel Kung Oscar. Here he also took the meals together with his closest subordinate officer.



Oskarshamn. The harbor. The newspaper Kalmar September 1, 1917: "Albatross" contested movement. Principal inspector in Oskarshamn's district, E.W. Holmgren, has submitted observations concerning the proposed movement of the German minelayer cruiser "Albatross" from Oskarshamn to Karlskrona. The inspector points out that, if the movement in the port is increased significantly, the ship must be moved from its current location and whether it should remain in Oskarshamn be located to one of the small, uninhabited islands in the port area. The card is stamped in 1909 but the stamp has been stripped away.



Oskarshamn. Hospital. In Oskarshamn was the German minelayer cruiser Albatross interned between 1915 to 1918. A fireman from the crew died and had his tomb remain in Oskarshamn until just a few years ago. When there became more substantial illnesses among the crew they had go to the hospital.

Today the building is called the Rope house and has largely other applications than when it was built in 1870.

The card is stamped 070911 (ymd).



Crew on the Albatross. A Swedish guard writes a card from Oskarshamn: March 8, 1918.

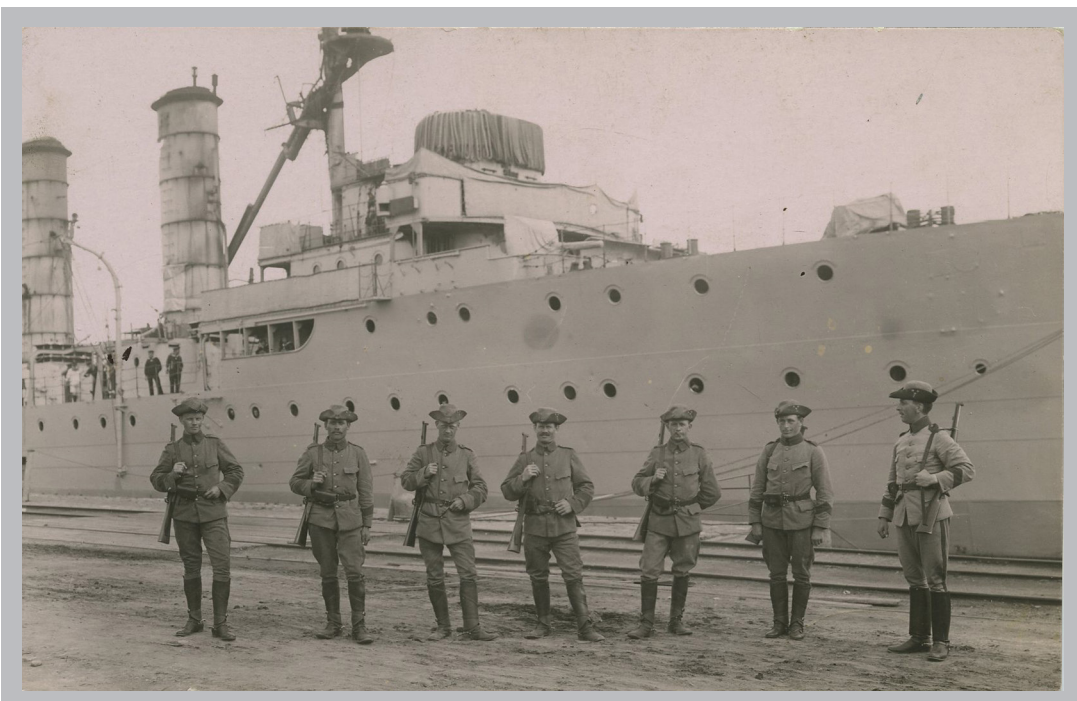


The Swedish boat Herakles in the port of Oskarshamn. Herakles pulled Albatross to Oskarshamn 30/9–1/10 in 1915.



Oskarshamn. Hotell Kung Oscar and telegraph station. The boat's captain spent much of his time at "Hotel King Oscar" when he lived here, but he was probably not in idleness but were most likely aboard the boat during the day. The card is from around 1902.





Albatross with Swedish guard. The newspaper Kalmar writes among other things August 22, 1917: From the in Oskarshamn interned minelayer cruiser "Albatross" have four men, two under the command and two privates, on the night between Sunday and Monday escaped. As it is suspected that they had gone to the sea, the Swedish torpedo boat, staying guard at the minelayer cruiser, was ordered out to search for the fugitives.

The newspaper published September 15, 1917: The latest Albatross escapees have succeeded. Stockholm, Friday. From Oskarshamn announced that the German officers, who the night of August 20 ran away from the "Albatross" and then despite eager searches not been heard from has now, according to the conclusion of a message, reached home.



Oskarshamn. Albatross. Most of the famous postcards of the boat Albatross were taken in Oskarshamn and it's not surprising since the minelayer cruiser was in port for more than three years.

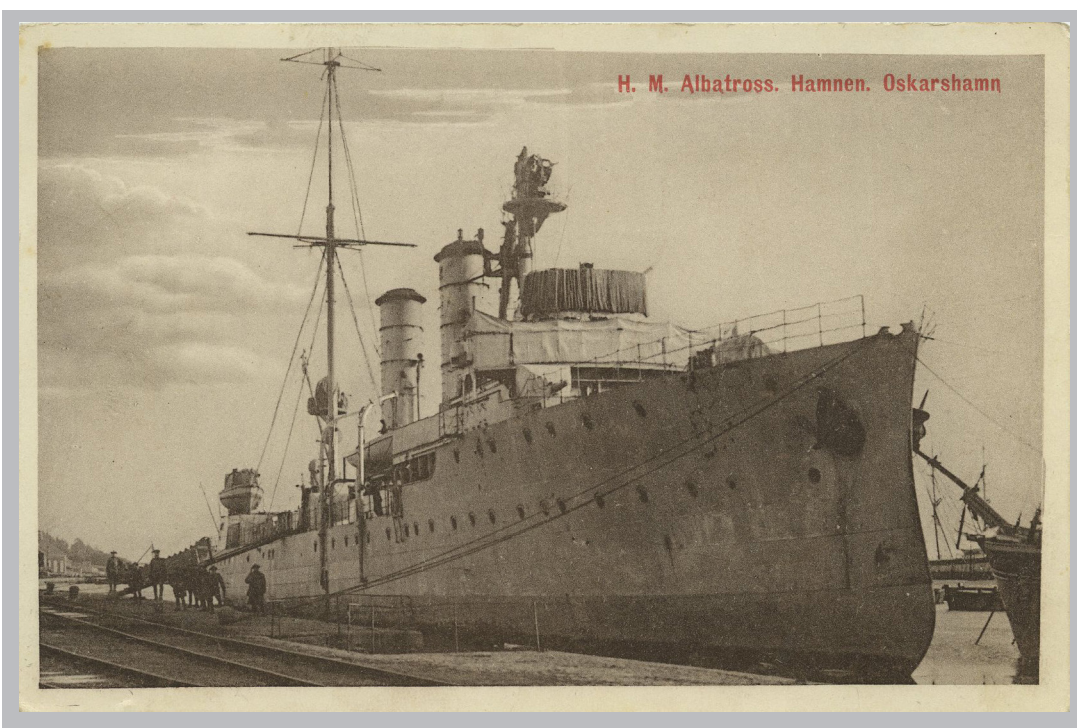
The newspaper Kalmar writes September 20, 1918: J. Loch on the Albatross performed a model of the minelayer cruiser at a scale of 1: 100, crafted in wood with fittings, which as a gift from the officers and crew on Friday handed over to the Swedish queen by a Swedish officer, which has been monitoring the interned Germans and who travelled to Borgholm for the purpose.

The postcard is printed abroad.

Albatross was much discussed in Oskarshamn with its surroundings and it was almost an honour to be part of the guards, who made many friendships with Germans. Sweden and Germany were not at war. The countries had quite a lot in common like strong trade ties and the Swedish queen was raised in Germany. The guarding on land was run by a force of about 30 men from the Royal Småland Hussar Regiment K 4.

Despite the guard several escape attempts were made. On most occasions the fugitives were retrieved, but there are also examples of how they managed to get home to Germany.

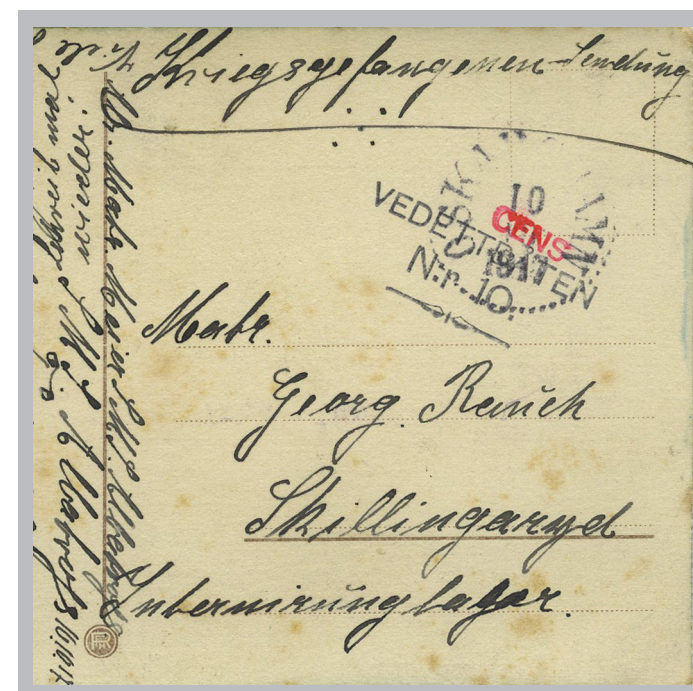
Gradually the interned got almost free access to Oskarshamn. Officers were allowed to move up to eight kilometres from the detention quay, others up to two kilometres.



H.M. Albatross. The harbor. Oskarshamn. Publisher: Mission Bookstore, Oskarshamn. Pressure imports. Written but not posted by the following: "The memory of Småland spring of 1916! This boat I have seen, as well as the Germans on board."



S.M.S. Albatross. The photo is taken in Oskarshamn. This card is also available in several versions without the stylish flag. Photo and print: Gebr. Lempe, Kiel.



A postcard where on the other side, a hand-painted boat motif – not militarily. It is dated and stamped as Kriegsgefangenen-Sendung – POW mail – October 10, 1917. One of the boats guarded the Albatross was picket boat number 10, as shown by a stamp. There is also a censorship stamp.



Albatross was not in particularly good condition and the Swedish government said yes to repair the boat. That meant the crew had to stay on land while the boat was being repaired.

In the summer of 1916 the crew – which for a while were 40 men, some time over 50 – to return to their Albatross.

On 28 November 1918 the main force arrived by train from Skillingaryd to Oskarshamn. On November 30 began the trip with the Albatross and the goal was Karlskrona where they came the next day.



On the boat. One of the "barrels" and an Albatross man.



Mine. A postcard that was once owned by an Albatross man, but if it is photographed in Oskarshamn is not clear.



Albatross men. On the back listing Feldpostkarte and sent to sailor Georg Rauch in Skillingaryd. Text: "Oskarshamn 24/12/17. Fröhliche Weinachten wünscht Dir Freund Meyer". There were two with surname Meyer among the crew. The card has no stamp or postal note.



Swedish guard in Oskarshamn. Stamp: Oskarshamn 180319 (ydm).



At the train. Three Albatrossare and four men from the Swedish security strength at railway in Oskarshamn. Photo: Atelier Lux Oskarshamn.



Albatross men. Twelve men from the crew next to the boat in Oskarshamn. Some hold a tool in their hand but it is unclear what it might be.



# 11. The life of a crew member – Georg Rauch



German military. The card is written but not addressed and probably sent as a letter to Georg.



German gunners. George got a greeting from the Gunners at home. The card is sent as Feld-post – thus unstamped – and postmarked 150428 (ymd). The address was Georg Rauch, S.M.S. Albatross, Cuxhaven.



Georg Rauch. Text on the back: Im Weltkrieg 1914. The card is written but probably not posted because it does not have a stamp. It was part of George's postcard album.



Georg Rauch. Studio photo: Fr Kloppman, Wilhelmshaven.

Georg Rauch was one of the Albatross who left strong marks behind. In literature you find information from February 18, 1916. When sailor Hedemann and sailor Rauch in the morning broke through the fence of the camp at Blåhäll on Gotland. They were arrested the next day in Burgs-

vik. It does not seem likely that they wanted to escape from the island of Gotland, but longed probably more to escape the camp to feel some freedom.

George additionally tried to run one more time, and even then he was captured.



The card is postmarked Hamburg July 21, 1914 and addressed to Georg Rauch. The text is difficult to interpret, but it could be from relatives. The two on the right are also on the card to the right.



Party card addressed Georg Rauch and stamped Hamburg July 21, 1914. This is, like the adjacent one without stamp and both are sent to George in Wilhelmshaven.





Brother Heinrich. Heinrich writes to George – on an otherwise uncirculated card – that he thinks of him.  
Photo: V. Bonny, Theurent.



Weihnachten 1916. St. Saulve (Frankreich) – Christmas 1918 in France. Brother Heinrich sends a greeting on an otherwise unstamped postcard with no address.

Georg Rauch has left a large number of postcards of loved ones, even of himself. He himself wrote many postcards to Edit Sandberg in Tofteryd just a few kilometres from Skillingaryd. She was a dear friend and perhaps a bit more than that. However, there was no marriage between them. Edit

remained unmarried for life, but lived for many years with a man. What happened to George after his return to Germany is not investigated. At least not yet. It is difficult to obtain information from the German archives. Georg was born in 1892.



1914–1915. Vier gesunde Jungen im Flanders - four, healthy young people in Flanders. The card is a greeting from Brother Heinrich. The card is not addressed.



Inf. Pionier-Comp 362. Brother Heinrich writes 25 May in 1916. The card is written but not stamped, and have probably been sent as a letter.



Musical group with the military. A postcard sent as Feldpost without a stamp and stamped Beverloo in Belgium August 4, 1915. Recipients are Georg Rauch who receives a greeting. The card is printed in German Darmstadt.

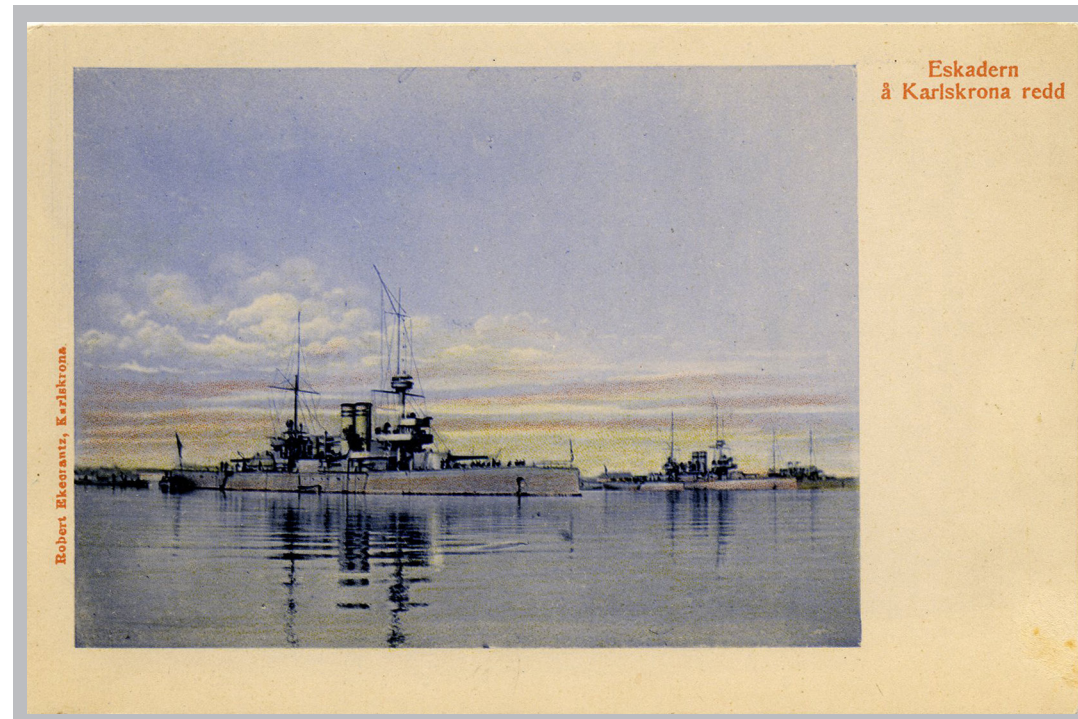




In der Heimat, in der Heimat, da gibt's ein Wiederseh'n – in the home, it will be a reunion. Georg Rauch writes to his brother in Beverloo in Belgium September 29, 1915.



War! Sweden has been spared from this for 200 years, but almost all the rest of Europe has been hit. The card was written by several Albatross men on 03.03.1917 as "Kriegsgefangen-sendung", labeled "Visby" and "Military Censorship Wisby". The recipient was Georg Rauch who at that time was at the Albatross in Oskarshamn.



The squadron in Karlskrona. Publisher: Robert Ekecrantz, Karlskrona around 1902.



The trip home. Albatross men and prominent guests on the Albatross shortly before departure.

## 12. The end of the war and return to Germany

The First World War began July 28, 1914 and lasted until November 11, 1918. Even if Germany lost the war the detainees in Skillingaryd and those who were on the boat in Oskarshamn were certainly happy that soon would get to go home.

November 11 was a memorable day in Skillingaryd. On 28 November, the Albatross men stepped on board a train in Skillingaryd with destination to Oskarshamn. Two days later, the boat with the crew set off to Karlskrona.



Dover. The card has stamps Dover on the back - not postal - and handwritten text much later. Victory Peace Treaty Party - victory celebration. On a banner it says Victory - victory. There is an end to the war that has lasted for over four years. Over 20 million people died prematurely because of the war. The peace would not last forever in Europe.



Paul with unknown surname – there were several Albatross men who were named Paul. Text on the back of the card that is otherwise not stamped: To the memory of your friend Paul. Danzig, January 6, 1919. Seen at the bottom right of the card is the studio stamp: Atelier Marino Karlskrona.

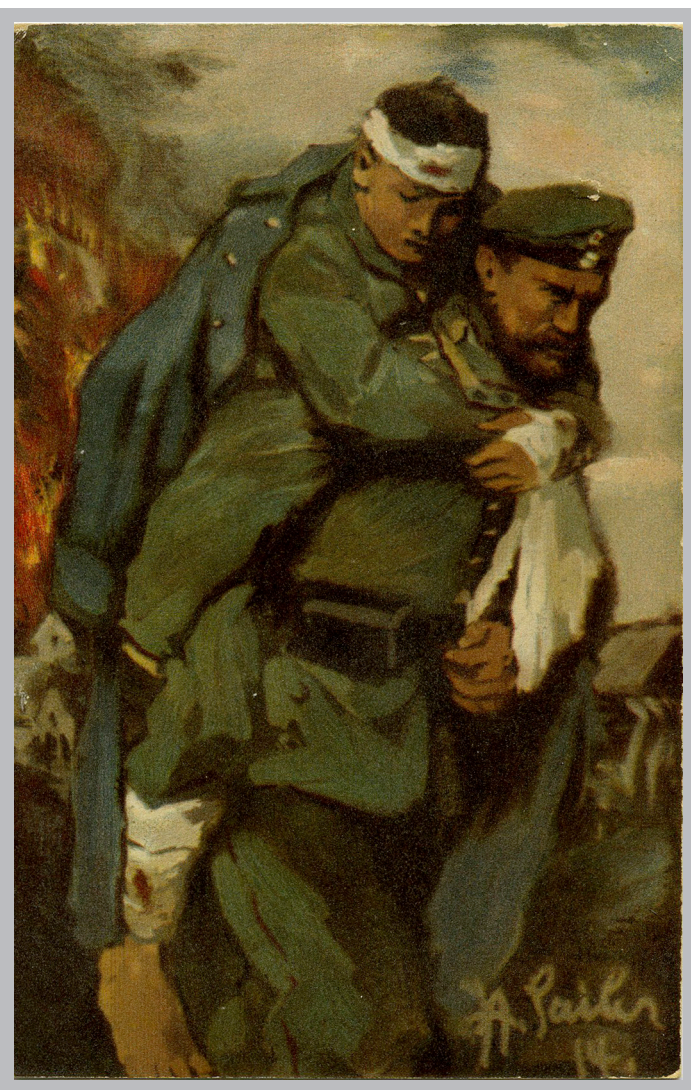




Signature de la Paix de la Grande Guerre, 28 Juin 1919 – signing of the peace agreement, known as the Treaty of Versailles. The card is stamped at the Peace Congress June 28, 1919 but has no address and no writing.



Reims – The Cemetery of Sillery and the Monument to the dead soldiers – cemetery of Sillery and the monument to the dead soldiers. War is always terrible and the First World War reaped millions of victims.



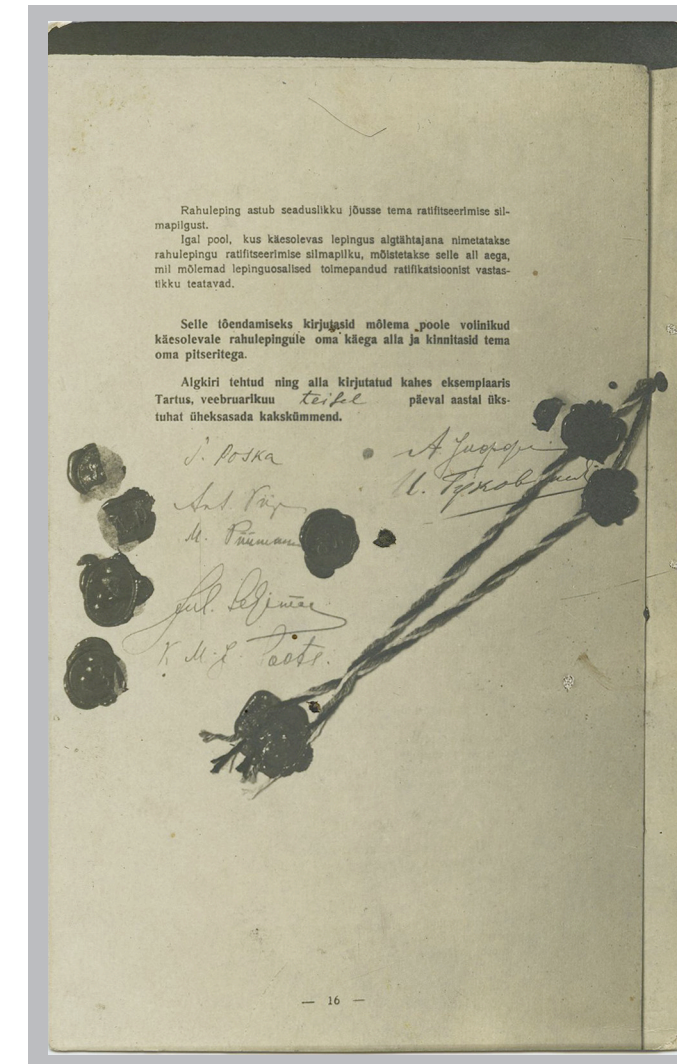
German art card issued by the Red Cross. POW Post from Albatross in Oskarshamn, stamped January, 2 in 1917 and by the word censorship in red. There is also a stamp torpedo boat Antares.

On December 30, 1918 the Albatross left Karlskrona. Captain Lieutenant Karl Bühler handed over a letter to the acting admiral where he wrote: We leave Sweden with the feeling that the long stay here forever ties us together with this beautiful country and its friendly inhabitants. Albatross went to the home port of Danzig and

later in January to Kiel. On January 23, 1919 the Albatross was demobilized and taken out of service. On March 21, 1921 the Albatross was deleted from ship rolls and was scrapped shortly after Kiel. The Albatross was gone but many memories still lives today. From generation to generation.



Peace. The Grim Reaper was finally going away but had left 20 million victims. On the back of the unused postcard printed God Jul tillönskas av (Merry Christmas from), which today seems a bit macabre.



Signing of peace negotiations, between Russia – Estonia in 1920. Company stamp: Parikas' te Fotografia Tallinnas. The card is otherwise uncirculated.



Kiel. Germania Werft – the shipyard in Kiel. Albatross last trip went to Kiel in the then war-torn Germany. Publisher: M. Dieterle, Kiel. Unstamped around 1910.