

Garrison Life in the Imperial German Army before the First World War (Part 2)

Education

In the first part, I primarily dealt with the city, the barracks, the accommodation conditions, the catering and the internal service, i.e. the soldier's daily framework; his "home".



In this section I will comment on the training of the German soldier based on a series of postcards. The maps used show very clearly the different subjects and the teaching methods used (They are confusingly similar to those used/used in the Danish army). The maps show an idealized picture of daily life - of course only the harassment is hinted at, as well as the mile-wide distance between the different degrees

Subject

SHOOTING: Practicing shooting positions as well as correct aiming and final shooting on the shooting range.

FIELD SERVICE (gunnery duty): Practicing movement in the terrain, cooperation in the unit (the group, the platoon, the company up to battalion level). All transport to the training ground took place on foot, so it was also a marching exercise.

RIDING: Riding training for the individual, as well as the daily care of the horse (only for mounted units)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (FUT): Gymnastics, rifle fencing, obstacle course and running training.

EXERCISE: practiced like the field service from individual up to larger units, this was particularly relevant in connection with larger parades, such as the annual Imperial Parade, as well as for the daily guard parade in the garrison town.

There was enough time as the active service period (Infantry) was 2 years, reduced from 3 years in 1893. But

the term of service in the reserve and Landwehr was extended from 12 to 19 years, however the re-calls (Musterungen) were decreasing over the years.

An artist



The cards show recruits taking the oath of allegiance. Which is unknown in Denmark.

In 1912, the Bavarian fan oath read as follows:

"You shall swear a bodily oath to Almighty God that you will serve the most serene, mighty king and Lord Otto I, our most merciful warlord, faithfully, and promote his well-being to the best of your ability, His Royal Highness Prince Luitpold of Bavaria as regent, then all show due respect and obedience to superiors, carry out their orders without question and undeterred, in war and in peace, on water and on land,



by day and by night, on marches and on watch, in sieges, in storms and battles, in general on all occasions you have shown yourself to be brave and loyal soldiers, never deserted your flag unfaithfully and perjuringly, but rather always bravely defended it and according to the dictates of the laws of war you want to behave at all times as befits honorable soldiers.

You also swear in war to obey the orders of His Majesty the German Emperor, as federal commander."

Dress, teaching and attitude towards subordinates



The clothing options

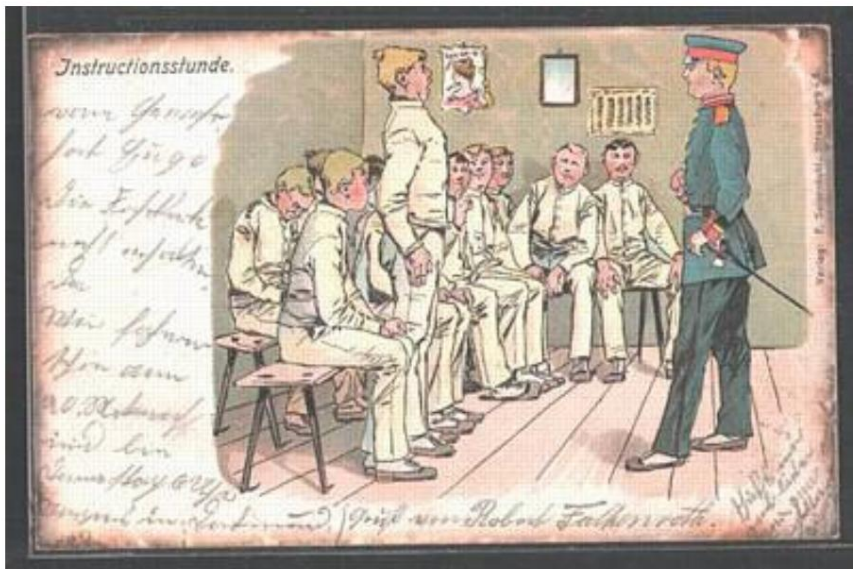
On the map to the left, the different clothing variants are clearly shown:

- Guard clothing (winter)
- Service uniform with blue uniform jacket and dreijl jacket
- Field uniform with full packing
- Paradeuniform



"If my mother knew how I'm doing in the military"

The picture on the right shows very clearly that it is the non-commissioned officers who train in the Imperial German Army, the use of the great pedagogy is also not hinted at.



Theory teaching

Theory teaching - Again the personal stool is seen in use, you sit in the give attention position, with both hands on your knees and a straight back, it was thus difficult to fall asleep!

During questioning, a legal position is assumed and answers are given in a loud, clear voice.



This card's very telling text speaks for itself. However, this caricature has a lot of truth in it.



Shooting training

Shooting training

Aiming practice: The rifle is placed on a tripod equipped with a sandbag, then proper aim is taken at a target located some distance away. When the shooter reports that he has the correct aim, it is checked by the commanding officer

This exercise is followed by loading exercises and trigger exercises, finally shooting positions are practiced.

This procedure must be completed before the soldier is ready to fire live ammunition on the firing range.

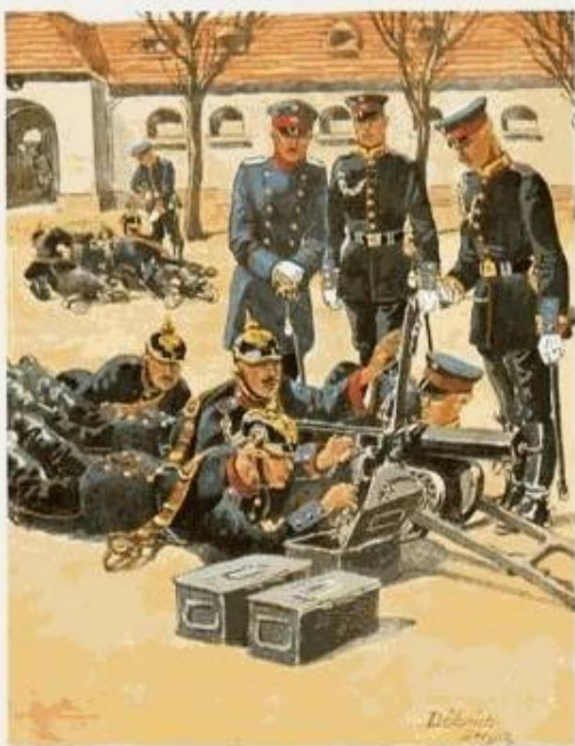


Standing shooting position is practiced here.



Here, several shooting positions are practiced at the same time, kneeling, standing and lying down.

From the picture on the left, it is clear that the unit is divided into troops.



Laufwechsel am MG 08
2. Ermländisches Infanterie-Regiment
Nr. 151.

St. I. u. III. Bataillon Sensburg, II. Bataillon Bischofsburg

Teaching barrel change on machine guns (MG)

The officer in the middle is the one who controls the changes; the troop in the background appears to be practicing drills.

This methodology, with changes between different teachers, is still a used method when teaching many of the military subjects.

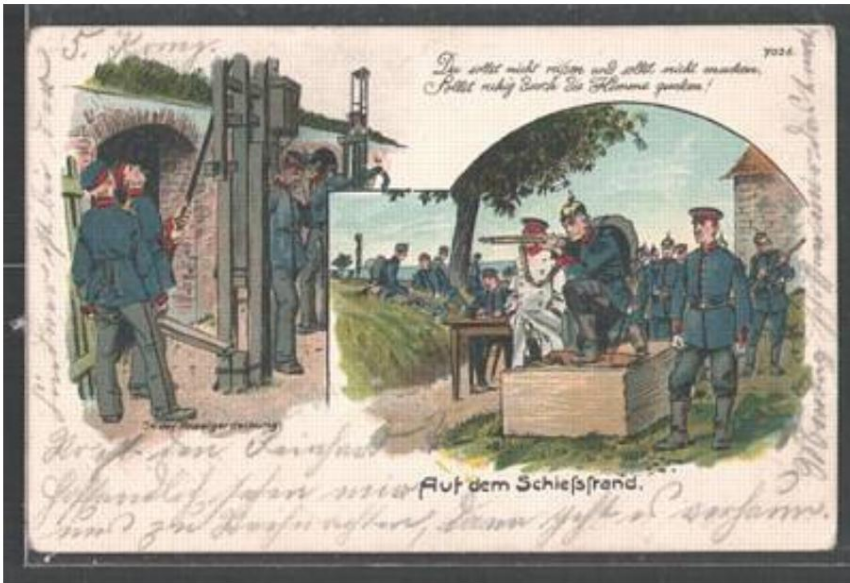
Machine gun 08

- Caliber 7.92 mm

- Firing range approx. 4,000
m - Combat sight 1,800m
- Rate of fire 400-500 shots/min - Total
weight approx. 63 kg - Water-
cooled - Belt
fed with 250 cartridges in canvas belt - Normal stock
per MG 12,000 cartridges - Crew: Group leader, gunner,
helper, and two suppliers.
(After Per Finsted)

The shooting range

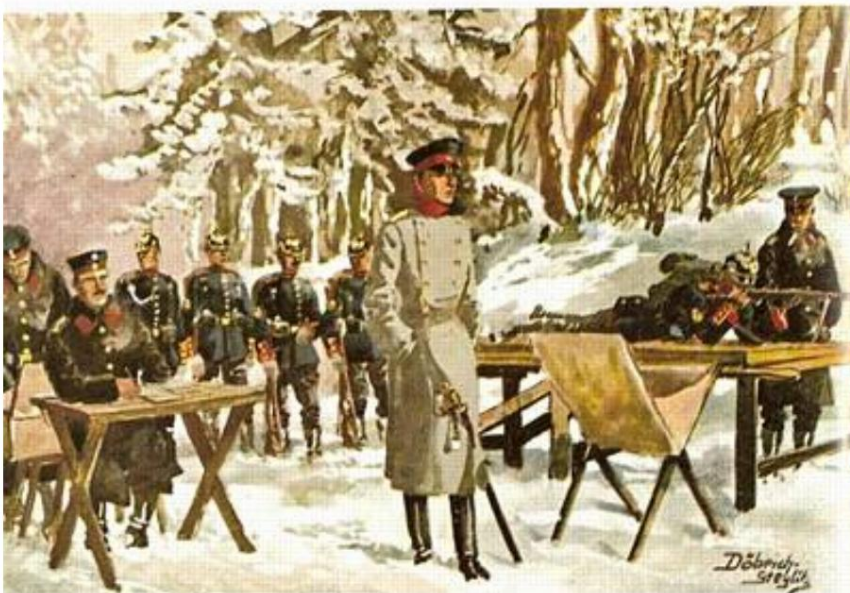
The two subsequent maps show the service at the shooting range.



Here you can see again that there is good time. There is only one gunner who fires at a time and each shot is noted by a non-commissioned officer. The shooter's result was then noted in the individual shooter's book.

The map on the left also shows how the discs are operated in the marker pit.

Unten: Auf dem Schießstand – Nach einer mehrfarbigen Zeichnung von Erich R. Döbrich-Steglitz



On the map to the right, of special note is the rack with canvas fabric standing to the right of the gunner, it is intended to catch the cartridge cases when they are ejected from the rifle during reloading.

Physical education and training (FUT)

Part of the physical education and training (FUT) took place outdoors.

The clothing was turncoats and a field hat.

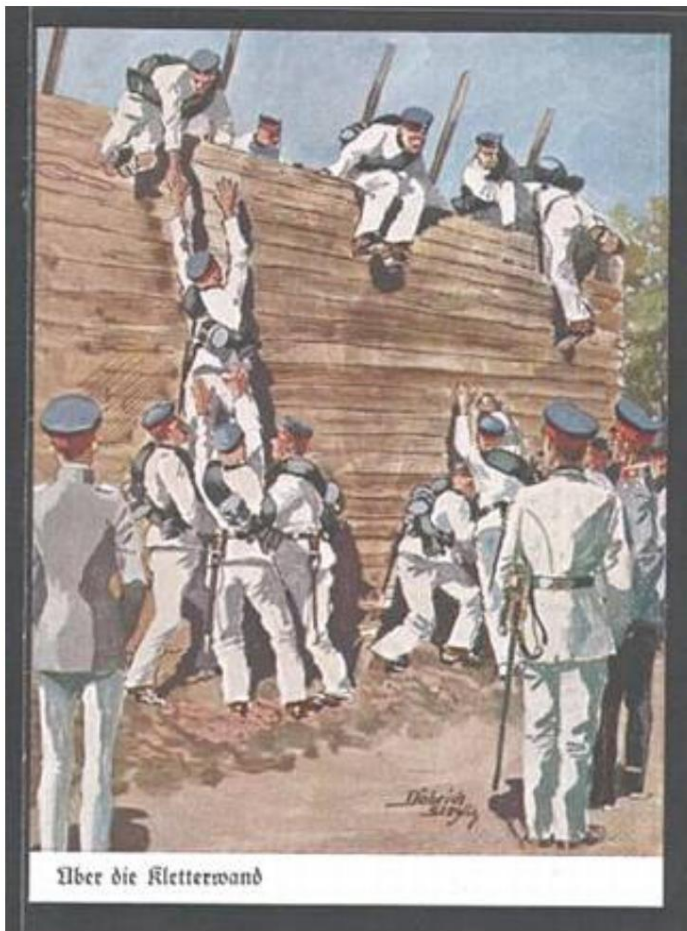


Bayonet fencing without mask and cuirass.

Bayonet fencing



Here, fencing is done with protection and guns intended for this.



Back then, the field track was also an important part of physical education.

Here are two very nice examples.



Exercises



The entire company exercises under the command of the company commander. Der Spieß stands by his side and notes all the sins, for later reckoning.



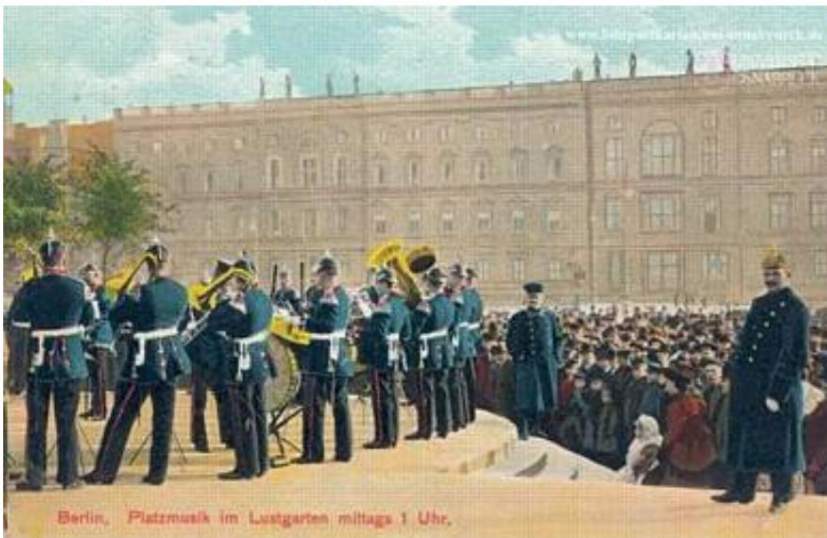
Platoon practice of rifle grip, supervised by an officer wearing a paletot (officer's coat of convenient cut).

Guard parade



The guard pulls up.

Typically from the barracks to the town guard.



The game is played on the town square.

This is known from the guard parade at Amalienborg, where the lifeguard's band entertains after the changing of the guard itself.

Since we are in the time before the mechanical and electronic music reproducers known to us, it must be mentioned that it was a catch-up piece, also if the band played in the park or in the square on Sundays.

Field service



An exercise many enjoyed in the following war.

Free time and leave





These last cards speak for themselves. Leave when you could go home was rare and when the soldiers were at home, they were not allowed to wear civilian clothes, but still had to wear uniform.

With this small series of pictures, I hope to have illustrated a bit of a bygone era in a bygone era.

Niels Blangsted-Jensen