

# German units at Antwerp in 1914, Part 1

## Introduction

This article began modestly as a search for the names of some of the German units that took part in the battles for the Belgian port city of Antwerp in the autumn of 1914. However, it gradually developed into a collection of notes on the organization and equipment of the German reserve units, exemplified by the forces that fought at Antwerp.

## Armee-Abteilung Beseler



*General Hans von Beseler.*  
From FirstWorldWar.com.

The German units at Antwerp fought within the framework of Armee-Abteilung Beseler, which was established on 27 August 1914, with the aim of holding in check the remnants of the Belgian Field Army, the main force of which had then retreated to Antwerp. The task developed from 27 September into an actual attack on Antwerp, which was captured on 9 October 1914.

Originally Armee-Abteilung Beseler consisted of III. Reserve Corps (General von Beseler) and IX. Reserve Corps (General von Boehn), but later became IX. Reserve Corps replaced by other units.

Per On 27 September 1914, Armee-Abteilung Beseler consisted of the following units:

### **Armee-Abteilung Beseler** (*General Hans von Beseler*)

III. Reserve Corps, with

5th Reserve Division (*Generalleutnant Voigt*)

6th Reserve Division (*Generalleutnant von Schickfuß und Neudorff*)

Marine-Division [1](#)) (*Admiral Ludwig von Schroeder*)

26. Gemischte Landwehr-Brigade (*Generalleutnant von Schütz*)

37. Gemischte Landwehr-Brigade (*Generalleutnant von Meyer*)

4. Ersatz-Division (*Generalleutnant von Werder*) (from 21 September 1914)

A siege artillery of 173 pamphlets

Siege units of the engineer troops

Siege units of the engineer troops Various fortress units.

Preliminary studies under the auspices of the German General Staff had estimated that 11 divisions should be set aside to capture Antwerp, but General von Beseler thus only had a good 5 divisions at his disposal.

## The German conscription system

As will be seen, the majority of the German units at Antwerp carry designations such as *Reserve-*, *Landwehr-* or *Landsturm-* in addition to their name, thereby showing different stages in the German (Prussian) conscription system. This system - the Krumper System - dates back to the Napoleonic Wars.

The period of conscription in the period was 27 years and during these years the conscript was part of various unit types.

**Table 1: Outline of the German conscription system Age Note**

17-19 Landstormen's 1st draft ( <i>Landsturm, I. Ban</i> ) consisted of the youngest conscripts who could receive a limited pre-military education.	<b>Device type</b> Land storm
20-22 Serving military service. Soldier time was 3 years in the cavalry and the mounted artillery, and 2 years in the other types of weapons.	Line
22-26 The term of service in the reserve units was 4 years in the cavalry and the mounted artillery, and 5 years in the Reserve the other types of weapons. Usually there were two annual convocations.	
27-31 When the conscript turned 27, he was transferred to the Landwehr's 1st command ( <i>Landwehr, I. Ban</i> ).	National Guard
32-38 After this, the conscript transferred to the Landwehr's 2nd order ( <i>Landwehr, II. Ban</i> ). Land Guard 39-45 Landstormen's 2nd recruitment ( <i>Landsturm, II. Ban</i> ) consisted of the oldest cohorts, intended for Landstorm tasks in the defense of the home country, so that regular units could be released for active service.	

## Mobilization

During the mobilization on 2 August 1914, the following happened:

The line units went from peace force to war force, which in practice meant that they received 30% reservists, from the cohorts most recently repatriated. The units then left their barracks and went to the front.

The reserve units and the national defense units were immediately mustered and dressed. The units were sent to the front as quickly as possible. In some cases, these units were not at full strength, just as equipment and materiel of the latest type was far from available when equipping and equipping these units.

Especially the land defense and land storm units, which were the lowest priority, were most often equipped with a mixture of new and older equipment items.



*Soldier from  
Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 119, August  
1914.*

Drawn by Bryan Fosten. From Source 3.

The following can be cited as special national defense characteristics:

- The cover of the peaked cap bears an *L* (*Landwehr*) above the regimental number. The reserve units similarly wore an *R* over the regimental number, to the extent that this was worn at all. Helmet covers without a number/letter were quite common. The color of number/letter could be red or green.
- The uniform coat is of an older model, and the shoulder patches bear only the regimental number, as reserve and national defense units did not wear the mother unit's distinctive features - royal name tags, crowns, etc.
- Belt clothing, cartridge cases and boots are also of the older, black model, whereas the highest priority units wore light brown leather equipment. From 1915, the light brown equipment was generally replaced by/dyed black.

Far from all conscripts of a cohort were actually called up, in 1910 thus only 52% of the cohort.

Those who were not called up, however, stood in number in the first and second tenders of the land storm, while the age group 20-31 constituted a personnel replacement reserve (*Ersatz-Reserve*).

Some units were actually sent to war in the "mixed uniform" shown.

Herbert Sulzbach mentions in his book *With the German Guns - Four Years on the Western Front 2*) that his unit - a reserve unit of the *2. Nassauisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 63* - only 8 November 1914 receiving field gray uniforms, having been on active service from 2 September 1914 wearing "mixed uniforms".

## Device types

The units were organized in such a way that a line unit was "mirrored" in a reserve unit as well as a land defense unit, which in principle bore the same unit designation, only supplemented by *Reserve- and Landwehr-* respectively .

As an example, the *5th Reserve Division*, mentioned below, can be compared with *the 5th Infantry Division*, mentioned in my article *On German Organization and Uniforming 1914*. It can be seen that the infantry brigades and infantry regiments from the line division are mirrored in the reserve division.

The reserve infantry regiments—113 in all, with 332 battalions—consisted like the line regiments, usually of three battalions; some had four battalions, others only two. Not all reserve infantry regiments had a machine gun company.

The National Guard regiments – 96 in total, with 294 battalions – also consisted of three battalions; analogous to the reserve regiments, however, some had four battalions, others only two. With regard to machine guns, the allocation was often more modest, and instead of a machine gun company, a machine gun platoon was common - see e.g. my article *On German Machine Gun and Hunter Units, 1914*.

In the overview of units at Antwerp, units with the designation *Ersatz-* and *Reserve Ersatz* also appear . The personnel replacement (*Ersatz*), which included the non-called conscripts, a large part of whom also volunteered at the outbreak of war, was multiplied into actual combat units. These units had a core of trained personnel, while the new soldiers only received a short basic training before being sent to the front.

However, the personnel intake was often so great that additional units could be formed, which were then called *Reserve-Ersatz*.

Units with the designation *Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon*, were multiplied by companies - 2 per infantry regiment in a brigade - and composed as shown in *4. Ersatz-Division*. A total of 86 battalions of this type were raised. The battalion's number refers it to the parent regiment it was attached to [3](#)). —

The term *gemischte Brigade* covers a composite/reinforced brigade, as opposed to an infantry brigade, which only included pure infantry units. A composite/reinforced brigade included e.g. a cavalry squadron, a field artillery battery and a pioneer company.

In summary, it can be stated that the different types of reserve units were in principle organized like the corresponding line units, but that - in descending order of priority - they numbered fewer soldiers and that they were equipped with less material than the line units.



*Die Beschießung Antwerpens durch unsere Mörser.*

From a simultaneous postcard seen for sale on the Internet.

A previous owner of the card had indicated that the pamphlet was a 42cm howitzer, but I assume it is rather a 30.5cm howitzer (Schwere Küsten-Mörser).

The efforts of the siege artillery are discussed in more detail in Part 2.

A Zeppelin dropped bombs on Antwerp on the night of August 25, 1914. This was one of the first actual aerial bombings of a major city.

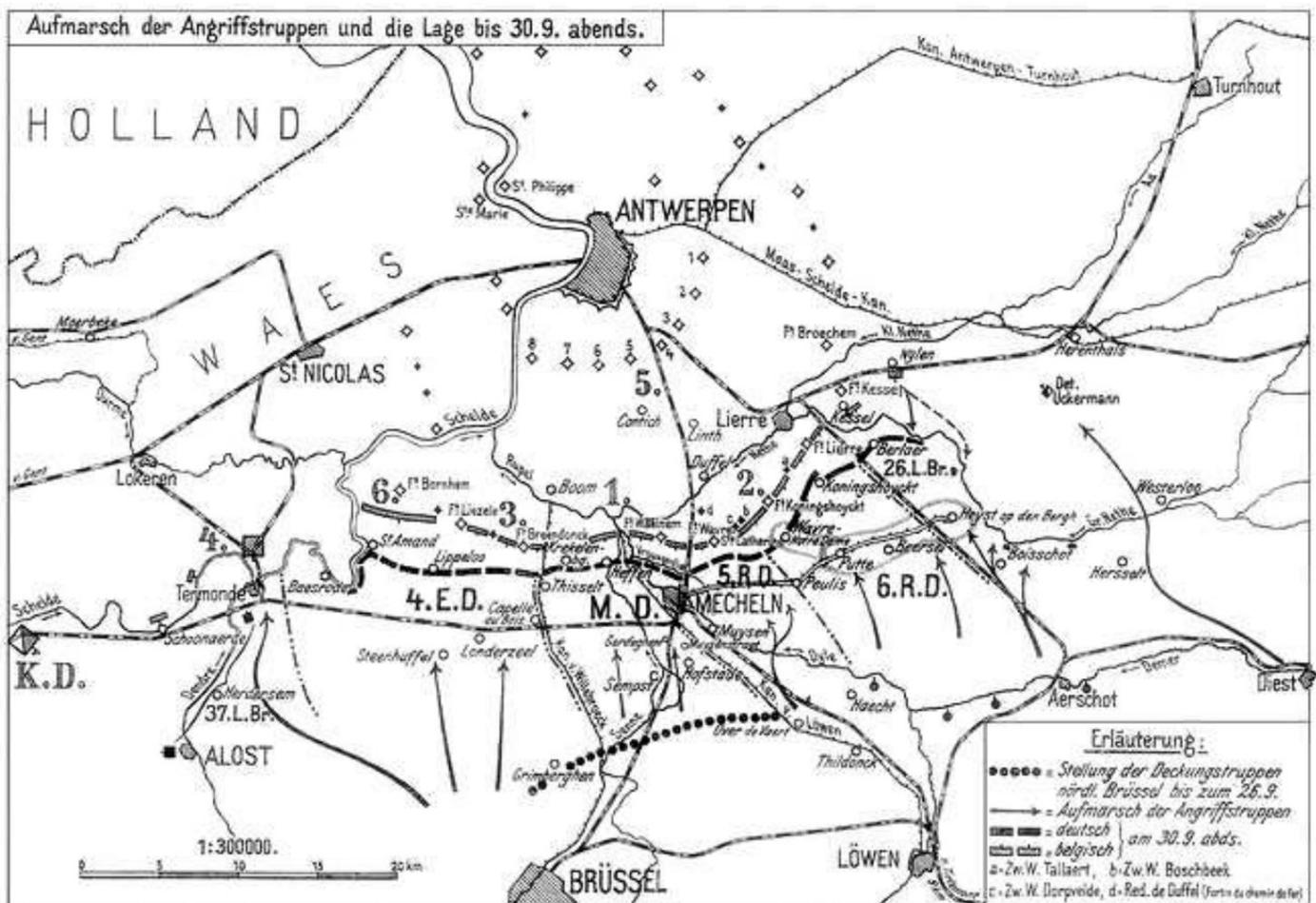
See *Fighting in Flanders* by the American journalist E. Alexander Powell (*Great War in a Different Light*).

## General von Beseler

General der Infanterie Hans Hartwig von Beseler [4](#)) was an experienced gentleman who had, however, retired in 1911. For a time it had been suggested that he should take over the post of Chief of the German General Staff, where he had been second-in-command since 1899, but the post instead went to Helmuth von Moltke (the younger).

At the beginning of the war he again entered active service and was given command of the III. Reserve Corps.

Originally he was a pioneer (*Garde Pionier-Bataillon*) and as a young lieutenant had participated in the Franco-German War. From 1904 to 1911 he held the post of commander of the engineering troops and general inspector of fortifications.



Map sketch 1: The situation as of 30 September 1914.  
From Source 1.

### III. Reserve Corps (General Hans von Beseler)

#### 5th Reserve Infantry Division (Generalleutnant Voigt)

Reserve-Dragoner-Regiment 2 (3 squadrons) (Major von Tschammer)

Reserve Field Artillery Regiment 5 (Oberstleutnant Schweinitz)

4. Reserve-Kompanie/Brandenburgisches Reserve Pionier-Bataillon 3

Reserve-Divisions-Brückentrain-Abteilung 5

Reserve-Sanitätskompanie 3

#### 9. Reserve-Infanterie-Brigade (Generalmajor Briese)

Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment 8 (Colonel von Kleist)

Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment 48 (Oberstleutnant von Bieberstein)

#### 10th Reserve Infantry Brigade (Generalleutnant Stumpff)

Reserve Infantry Regiment 12 (Oberstleutnant Kotze)

Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment 52 (Oberstleutnant von der Osten)

Reserve-Jäger-Bataillon 3 (three companies) 5) (Hauptmann Wobeser)

#### 6th Reserve Infantry Division (Generalleutnant von Schickfuß und Neudorff)

Reserve-Ulanen-Regiment 3 (4 squadrons) (Major von Uckermann)

Reserve Field Artillery Regiment 6 (Oberstleutnant von Dertzen)

1. Reserve-Kompanie/ Brandenburgisches Reserve Pionier-Bataillon 3 2.

Reserve-Kompanie/ Brandenburgisches Reserve Pionier-Bataillon 3 Reserve-

Divisions-Brückentrain-Abteilung 6 Reserve-

Sanitätskompanie 16 11.

Reserve-Infanterie-Brigade (Generalmajor von **Jacobi** )

Reserve Infantry Regiment 20 (Oberstleutnant Grube)

Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment 24 (Colonel von Schwemler)

**12th Reserve Infantry Brigade** (*Major General Wachsmuth*)  
Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment 26 [6](#) (*Colonel von Westernhagen*)  
Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment 35 (*Oberstleutnant von Ernst*)



*Infanterie-Regiment von Stülpnagel (5. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 487).*

The pennant tradition of the reserve units has not been investigated in detail, but preliminary investigations suggest that the pennants were like those of the main unit.

On German Organization and Uniforming 1914 describes the basic organization of infantry, cavalry and artillery units. It should only be stated here that the reserve divisions had only one reserve field artillery regiment, which was, however, in principle organized like the line regiments. The corps' hunter battalion is listed here at *10. Reserve-Infanterie-Brigade*.

## **Pioneer units**

The reserve divisions' engineering units were basically organized as follows:

**Pioneer Company** (*Pionier-Kompanie*) - 6

*officers, 24 non-commissioned officers and 226 privates as well as 14 draft constables/sanitation soldiers - 4 pioneer wagons, 1 baggage wagon, 1 supply wagon, 1 fodder wagon and 1 field kitchen - 6 riding horses and 16 draft horses.*



German field bridge train, approx. 1914.

From Die ehemalige Pioniergarnison Hann. Münden (Bodo Redlin).

**Field bridge train** (*Divisions-Brückentrain-Abteilung*) - 2 officers, 9 non-commissioned officers and 3 privates as well as 47 train constables/sanitation soldiers - 15 bridge wagons, 1 pioneer wagon, 2 baggage wagons, 1 supply wagon, 1 fodder wagon and 1 field kitchen - 14 riding horses and 84 draft horses.

Each reserve division included one sanitary company, which in principle was organized as follows:

**Sanitary Company** (*Sanitätskompanie*) -  
 14 officers, 32 non-commissioned officers and 265 privates - 10 ambulance or sick transport wagons, 1-2 baggage wagons and 2 supply wagons - 18-23 riding horses and 28-30 draft horses.

## Corps units

In terms of corps units, the III. The Reserve Corps had a special position compared to other reserve corps, as it was assigned both air and balloon troops as well as a heavy artillery division.

Reserve Fernsprech-Abteilung 3

Feldflieger-Abteilung 38

Feldluftschiffer-Abteilung 1 (*Hauptmann de la Roi*) 8

I. Battalion/Reserve Fußartillerie-Regiment 2 (2 batteries of 2 pcs. 15 cm field howitzers) (*Major Banke*)

**Reserve Munitions Column Abteilung 5** Reserve Munitions Column 6 Reserve Infantry Munitions Column 1 Reserve Infantry Munitions Column 3 Reserve Infantry Munitions Column 2 Reserve Infantry Munitions Column 4 Reserve Artillery Munitions Column 1 Reserve Artillery-Munition-Column 3 Reserve Artillery-Munition-Column 2 Reserve Artillery-Munition-Column 4 Reserve Artillery-Munition-Column 5

### Reserve Train-Abteilung 5

Schwere Reserve Provisions Kolonne 1

Reserve Fuhrpark-Kolonne 1

Reserve Fuhrpark-Kolonne 2

Reserve Fuhrpark-Kolonne 3

Reserve Field Hospital 1

### Reserve Train-Abteilung 6

Schwere Reserve Provision-Kolonne 2

Schwere Reserve Provision-Kolonne 3

Reserve Fuhrpark-Kolonne 4

Reserve Fuhrpark-Kolonne 5

Reserve Fuhrpark-Kolonne 6

Reserve Field Hospital 2  
Reserve Field Hospital 6  
Reserve Field Hospital 7  
Reserve Feldbäckerei-Kolonne 5

Reserve Field Hospital 3  
Reserve Field Hospital 4  
Reserve Feldbäckerei-Kolonne 6



*Telegraph battalion, approx. 1914.  
From Alte Ansichtskarten.*

## **Telegraph troops**

### **Telephone division (*Fernsprech-Abteilung*)**

- 1 officer, 5 non-commissioned officers and 41 privates and 1 sanitary soldier
- 5 material wagons and 1 fodder wagon
- 7 riding horses and 22 draft horses.

See Telegraphen-Bataillon Nr. 2 - Frankfurt/Oder (Verein Historische Uniformen).

## **Air and balloon troops**



Officers from *Flieger-Bataillon Nr. 2*, 1914.  
 From a series of recent postcards entitled *Uniformen der Lufttruppen 1884 bis 1918*, published by Verlag Fr. A. Wilhelm Jurke, Bad Neuheim, approx. 1970.

### **Flying Division (*Feldflieger-Abteilung*)**

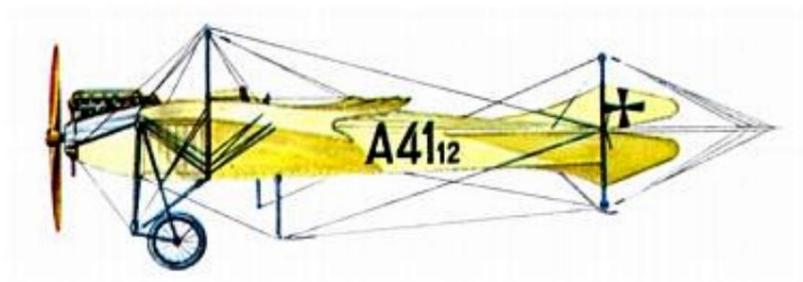
- 15 officers (including 7 pilots and 6 observers), 14 non-commissioned officers and 86 privates as well as 16 train constables/sanitation

soldiers - 6 aircraft

- 6 aircraft transport vehicles, 2 petrol vehicles, 1 workshop vehicle, 1 ammunition and baggage vehicle, 1 bus and 5 passenger vehicles (all rolling stock were motor vehicles).

The machine in the background may be a reconnaissance aircraft of the *Taube type*, which in 1914 made up more than half of the German flying troops. The aircraft type was, among other things, manufactured by the factories Albatros Werke, Deutsch Flugzeug-Werke, Gothaer Waggonfabrik and Rumpler Flugzeugwerk 9).\_\_

Feldflieger-Abteilung 38 was formed on 31 August 1914 from Festungs-Flieger-Abteilung 3 10). Contemporary accounts refer to the German planes over Antwerp as Taube.



## Rumpler Taube11)

Span	14.35 m
Length	9.85 m
Height	3.15 m
Starting weight	870
Maximum speed	kg 115 km/h
Flight time	4 hours
Crew	2

The uniforms shown are specifically for the officer in the blue uniform peacetime uniforms, while those at the front would have worn field gray uniforms.

The ground personnel were in principle uniformed like the telegraph and hunter troops [12](#)), including chakot. This uniforming is attributed to the fact that the aviator troops originated from the telegraph troops. The chakot was ordered discontinued in [September 1914 13](#)) and replaced by the round field hat, of which an extra one was issued in place of the chakot.



*Officer (balloon operator) and non-commissioned officer (mechanic) from Luftschiffer-Bataillon Nr. 4*

4. (Kgl. Württ.) Company, 1914.

From a series of recent postcards entitled *Uniformen der Lufttruppen 1884 bis 1918*, published by Verlag Fr. A. Wilhelm Jurke, Bad Neuheim, approx. 1970.

#### **Balloon Company** (*Feldluftschiffer-Abteilung*)

- 5 officers and 177 non-commissioned officers and privates - a number of observation

balloons - 12 tender wagons (with hydrogen for the balloons), 2 equipment wagons, 1 cable winch wagon, 1 telephone wagon - 123 horses (all rolling stock was horse-drawn).

The American war correspondent, Irvin S. Cobb, who followed the German troops around the turn of 1914-1915, has described "a trip" in an observation balloon - see *In an Observation Balloon* (Great War in a Different Light).



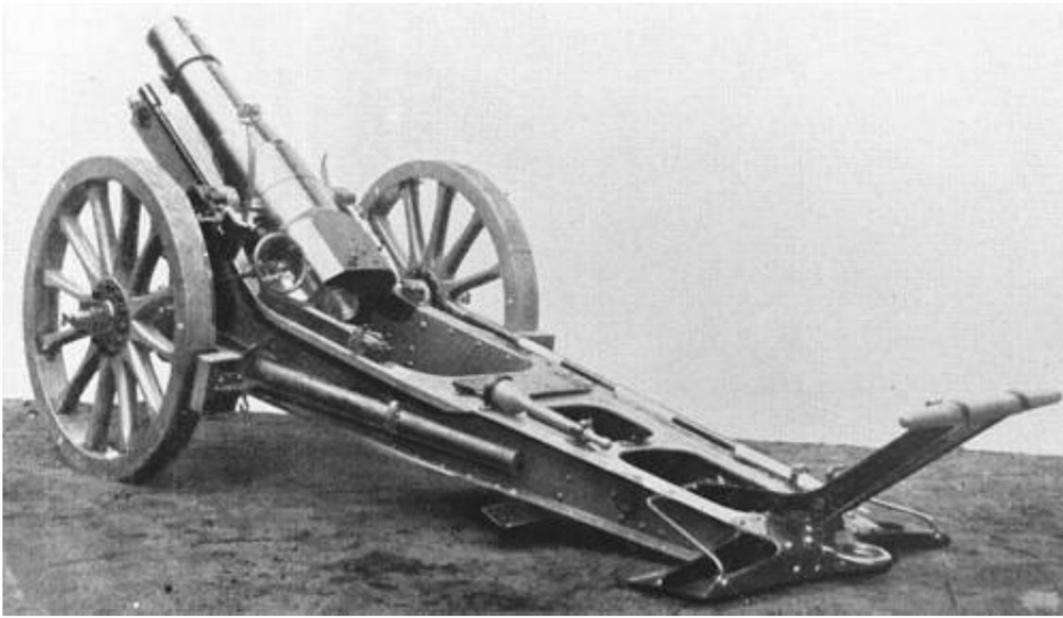
*A section of 15 cm field howitzers, approx. 1914.*

From a roughly simultaneous postcard seen for sale on the Internet.

#### **Corps Artillery**

The illustration is certainly not one of the very best, but shows quite well what a heavy division like Major Bankes could look like.

Like other postcards of the period, an airplane has been inserted to update a photograph that probably originates from a peacetime exercise.



15 cm field howitzer Model 1902/14). \_\_\_\_

The pamphlet, which was introduced from 1904, weighed approx. 2.7 t.

The firing range was a good 7.5 km.

A heavy field howitzer battery had the following personnel and equipment:

#### **15 cm field howitzer battery**

- 6 officers, 24 non-commissioned officers and 191 privates as well as 9 constables/sanitation soldiers - 4

heavy field howitzers (with displays) - 8 ammunition

wagons, 1 observation wagon, 1 supply wagon and 1 blacksmith wagon as well as 1 baggage wagon, 1 kitchen wagon and 1

fodder wagon - 20 riding horses

and 102 draft horses

#### **Supply troops**



*Ausmarschierende Ammunition column, approx. 1914.*

From Alte Ansichtskarten.

The airplane is a "wartime" addition that should make the picture more current.

### **Ammunition Column** (*Infantry-Ammunition-Column*)

- 3 officers, 15 non-commissioned officers and 175 privates as well as 7 train constables/sanitation soldiers  
- 34 ammunition wagons, 3 supply wagons and 1 fodder wagon - 30 riding horses and 168 draft horses.

### **Ammunition Column** (*Artillery - Ammunition Column*)

- 3 officers, 14 non-commissioned officers and 158 privates as well as 7 draft constables/sanitation soldiers  
- 21 ammunition wagons, 5 supply wagons, 1 kitchen wagon and 1 fodder wagon - 26 riding horses and 160 draft horses.

### **Food column** (*Provision-Kolonne*)

- 4 officers, 9 non-commissioned officers and 116 privates - 36 supply wagons and 2 kitchen wagons  
- 23 riding horses and 160 draft horses.

### **Train column** (*Fuhrpark-Kolonne*)

- 5 officers, 13 non-commissioned officers and 84 privates - 48 train wagons and 2 kitchen wagons - 27 riding horses and 112 draft horses.

### **Field Hospital** (*Field Hospital*)

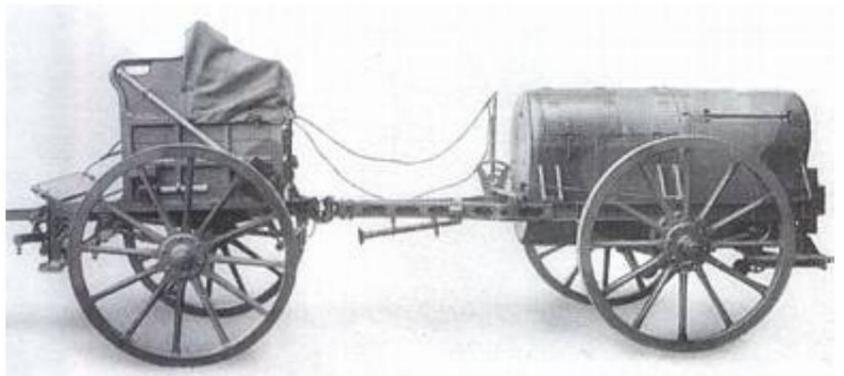
- 9 officers, 13 officers and 38 privates - 4 material wagons, 2 ambulance wagons, 1 transport wagon, 1 baggage wagon - 9 riding horses and 16 draft horses.

### **Field Bakery** (*Bäckerei-Kolonne*)

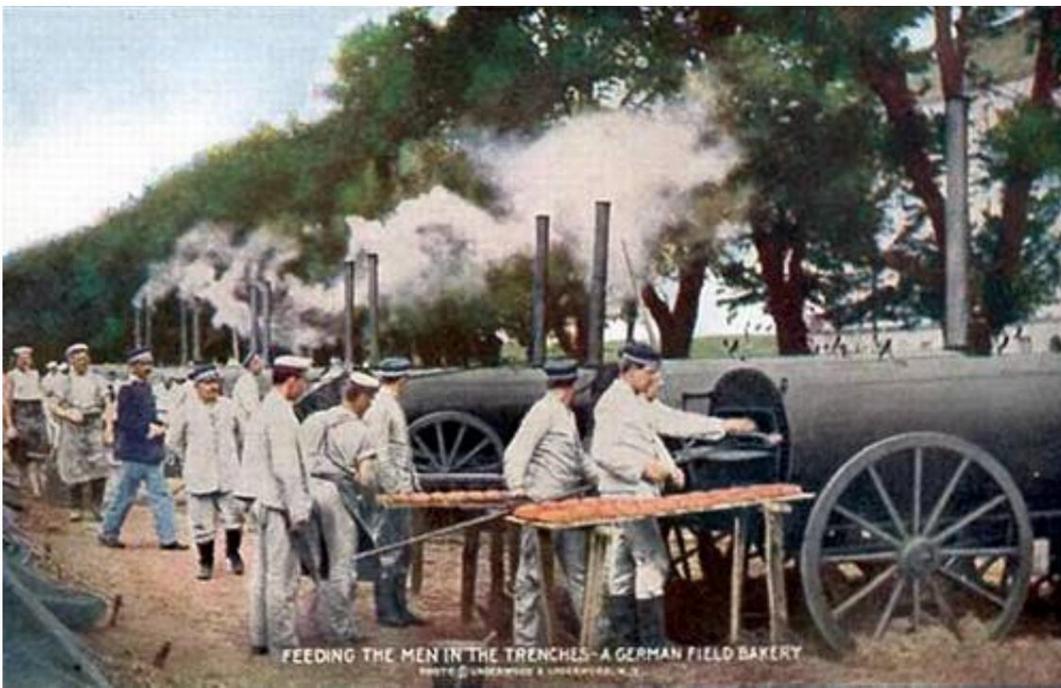
- 5 officers, 11 non-commissioned officers and 177 privates - 12 baker's wagons, 12 material wagons, 1 office wagon and 1 supply wagon - 19 riding horses and 84 draft horses.



*Backofenwagen 90.*



*Teigknetmaschine, mit Protze.*



*Feldbäckerei, 1910.*

See also the article in the same place *Die Feldküche und die Verpflegung*, in which the baker's wagon is referred to as *Backofenwagen 90*, which was pulled by 2 horses.

The material wagons included, among other things, a kneading machine (*Teigknetmaschine*).

## **Other infantry units in Armee-Abteilung Beseler**

### **Marine Division** (*Admiral von Schröder*)

1. Landwehr-Eskadron, X. Armeekorps 3.

Landwehr-Eskadron, X. Armeekorps I.

Landwehr-Feldartillerie-Abteilung, X. Armeekorps (two batteries 7.7 cm field gun)

Landwehr-Pionierkompanie

### **Marine-Infanterie-Brigade** (*Generalmajor Carl von Wichmann*)

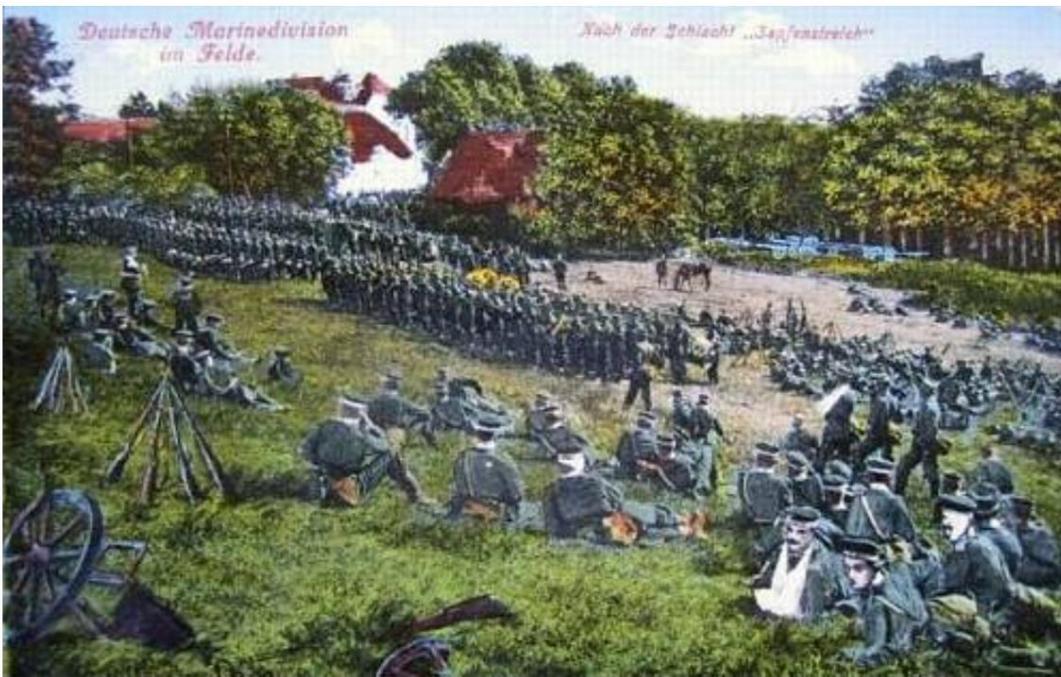
Marine-Infanterie-Regiment 1

Marine-Infanterie-Regiment 2

### **Matrosen-Artillerie-Brigade** (*Kapitän zur See Hans Herr*) (the brigade was deployed as infantry)

Sailor Artillery Regiment 1 Sailor

Artillery Regiment 2



*Deutsche Marinedivision im Felde - Nach der Schlacht "Zapfenstreich".*

From a simultaneous postcard seen for sale on the Internet.

For a more detailed discussion of the division, I refer to my article *On the German Marine Division, 1914.*

#### **26. Gemischte Landwehr-Brigade** (*Generalleutnant von Schütz*)

1. Landwehr Squadron, XXI. Army Corps \*)

2nd Landwehr Squadron, VIII. Army Corps 3.

Landwehr Squadron, VII. Armeekorps 2.

Batterie/Feldartillerie-Ersatz-Abteilung 59 (7.7 cm field gun) and department staff 2/ 3

Landsturm-Pionierkompanie

Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiment 39 (4 battalions) (*Colonel Tanke*)

V. Battalion, Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiment 76 (*Major von Mathiessen*)

\*) One of the listed squadrons was probably part of the 37. Gemischte Landwehr-Brigade.

#### **37. Gemischte Landwehr-Brigade** (*Generalleutnant von Meyer*)

2. Landwehr-Eskadron, X. Armeekorps

Feldartillerie-Ersatz-Abteilung 26 (one battery 7.7 cm field gun and one battery 10.5 light field howitzers)

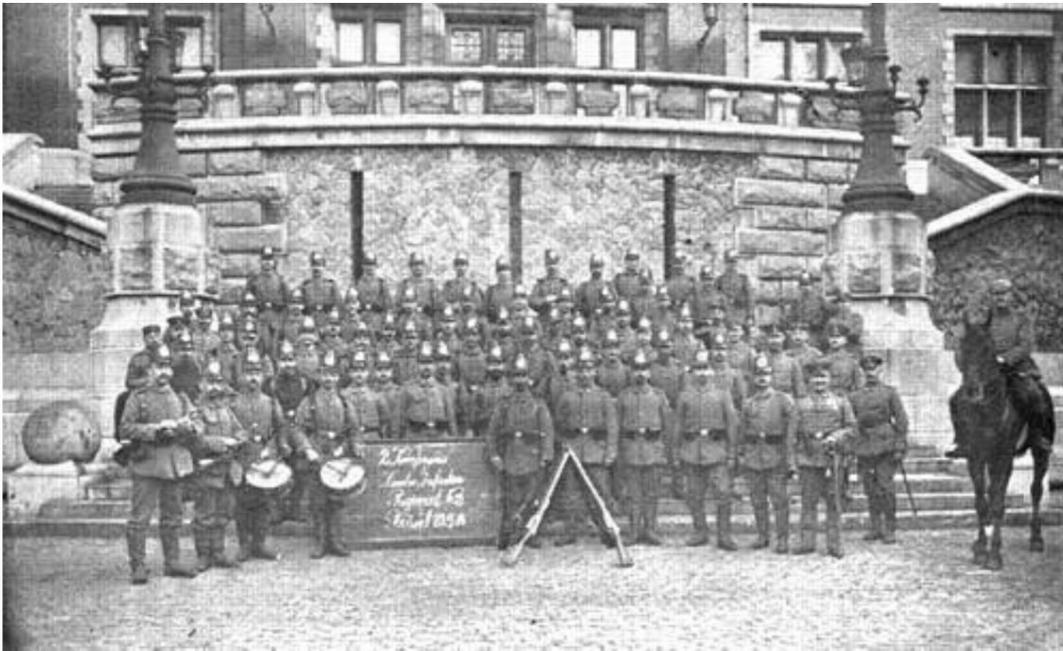
1. Batterie/Feldartillerie-Ersatz-Abteilung 59 (7.7 cm field gun) ½

Fußartillerie-Bataillon (the unit's number does not appear in the sources, it is only stated that the pamphlets were heavy field howitzers)

2. Landsturm-Pionierkompanie, IX. Armeekorps

Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiment 73 (*Colonel Eulert*)

Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiment 74 (*Oberstleutnant von Gosel*)



*German Land Guard Company, 1914.*

From *A Journal from Our Legation in Belgium* by Hugh Gibson.

Not all text on the board is equally clear, but I read it as *2. Kompanie, Landw. Infanterie Regiment ? (number), ? (place name), 23.9.14.*

The majority of the soldiers are wearing the high chakot Model 1860, which was worn by units of the land defense and the land storm 15). [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#)

The National Guard battalions were organized as follows:

The land defense infantry regiments mentioned here did not, as far as is known (Source 1), have their own machine guns, but *Festungs-Maschinengewehr-Trupp 8* (6 machine guns) was deployed under the auspices of 37. National Guard Brigade.

#### **Land Defense Battalion (*Landwehr-Bataillon*)**

- 26 officers, 82 non-commissioned officers and 920 privates as well as 4 train constables/sanitation soldiers - 4 ammunition wagons, 4 baggage wagons, 1 supply wagon and 1 sanitation wagon - 9 riding horses and 20 draft horses.

The main regiments of the infantry units were the following:

#### **26. Gemischte Landwehr Brigade**

Niederrheinisches Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 39 Infanterie-Regiment Hamburg (2. Hanseatisches) Nr. 76 **37. Gemischte**

#### **Landwehr Brigade Füsilier-Regiment**

Feldmarschall Prinz Albrecht von Preußen (Hannoversches) Nr. 73 Hanoverian Infantry Regiment Nr. 74

#### **4. Ersatz-Division (*Generalleutnant von Werder*)**

- 2. Ersatz-Kompanie, Pionierbataillon 3 (Spandau)
- 1. Ersatz-Kompanie, Pionierbataillon 4 (Magdeburg)
- 1. Ersatz-Kompanie, Pionierbataillon 9 (Hamburg)

#### **9. Gemischte Ersatz-Brigade (*Major-General Trip*)**

- Cavalry-Ersatz -Abteilung III (Brandenburg)
- Feldartillerie-Ersatz Abteilung 18 (Frankfurt an der Oder) (a battery of 7.7 cm field guns and a battery of 10.5 light

field howitzer)

Feldartillerie-Ersatz Abteilung 39 (Berleberg) (one battery 7.7 cm field gun and one battery 10.5 light field howitzers)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 9 (Küstrin)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 10 (Kottbus) (the battalion also included a machine gun division)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 11 (Brandenburg) (the battalion also included a machine gun platoon)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 12 (Neuruppin)

### **13. Gemischte Ersatz-Brigade** (*Generalmajor von Mechow*)

Cavalry-Ersatz -Abteilung IV (Halberstadt)

Feldartillerie-Ersatz Abteilung 40 (Burg) (two batteries 7.7 cm field gun)

Feldartillerie-Ersatz Abteilung 75 (Halle) (one battery 7.7 cm field gun and one battery 10.5 light field howitzers)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 13 (Magdeburg)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 14 (Halberstadt) (the battalion also included a machine gun platoon)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 15 (Dessau)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 16 (Torgau) (the battalion also included a machine gun platoon)

### **33. Gemischte Ersatz-Brigade** (*Generalleutnant Melior*)

Cavalry-Ersatz -Abteilung IX (Wandsbeck)

Feldartillerie-Ersatz Abteilung 45 (Altona) (two batteries 7.7 cm field gun)

Feldartillerie-Ersatz Abteilung 60 (Schwerin) (one battery 7.7 cm field gun and one battery 10.5 light field howitzers)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 33 (Hamburg)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 34 (Schwerin)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 35 (Flensburg)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 36 (Lübeck)

Brigade Ersatz-Bataillon 81 (Rendsburg) (the battalion also included a machine gun platoon)



*German infantry in battle, 1914.*

The division was supplied to *Armee-Abteilung Beseler* as reinforcement per 21 September 1914.

On mobilization, the division became part of the *Ersatzkorps*, which was part of the *6th Armee* (under Generaloberst Rupprecht, the Bavarian crown prince) and was deployed in Lorraine. The crew was originally intended to be personnel replacement for line and reserve units from, among other things, Brandenburg, Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein.

From an organizational point of view, it was probably a "piece of art", whereby another infantry division was created from practically nothing, but in practice it was rather a "miscarriage" consisting of older and uncooperative personnel.

The organization of the replacement units is listed below.

The soldiers on the postcard are shown as belonging to the *Infanterie-Regiment Prinz Moritz von Anhalt-Dessau* (5. *Pommersches*) No. 42. Here the picture is simply to illustrate German infantry.

#### **Replacement Battalion** (*Ersatz-Bataillon*)

- 20 officers, 76 non-commissioned officers and 840 privates as well as 4 train constables/ sanitation soldiers
- 2 ammunition wagons, 5 baggage and supply wagons and 1 sanitation wagon - 9 riding horses and 30 draft horses.

#### **Replacement machine gun division** (*Ersatz Maschinengewehr-Zug*)

- 1 officer, 4 non-commissioned officers and 29 privates - 2 machine guns - 2 ammunition wagons, 1 baggage wagon and 1 fodder wagon (probably also 2 machine gun wagons) - 2 riding horses and 12 draft horses



#### **Replacement Squadron** (*Kavallerie-Ersatz-Abteilung*)

- 1 officer, 5 non-commissioned officers and 51 privates as well as 3 train constables/ sanitation soldiers
- 1 baggage wagon and 1 fodder wagon
- 58 riding horses and 4 draft horses.

#### **Replacement pioneer company** (*Pionier-Ersatz-Kompanie*)

- 4 officers, 21 non-commissioned officers and 180 privates as well as 6 train constables/ sanitation soldiers
- 2 material wagons and 1 baggage wagon -
- 1-3 riding horses and 10 draft horses

## Replacement battery (*Feldartillerie-Ersatz-Batterie*) 16)

- 1 officer, 8 non-commissioned officers and 98 privates - 6 field guns (with sights) - 6 ammunition wagons, 1 observation wagon, 2 baggage wagons, 1 supply wagon and 1 fodder wagon. - 33 riding horses and 109 draft horses.

### 1. Reserve Ersatz-Brigade (*Generalmajor Jung*)

Reserve Ersatz-Infanterie-Regiment 1 Reserve  
Ersatz-Infanterie-Regiment 2

The brigade was supplied with 4. *Ersatz-Division* as reinforcement per 4 October 1914.

The parent regiments were:

Grenadier-Regiment Kronprinz (1. Ostpreußisches) Nr.1 Grenadier-Regiment König Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1. Pommersches) Nr.2

### 1. Königliche Bayerisches gemischte Landwehr-Brigade (*Generalmajor Eichhorn*)

1. Königliche Bayerisches Landwehr Kavallerie-Eskadron, I. Bayerische Armee-Korps 1. Königliche Bayerisches Landsturm Artillerie-Batterie, I. Bayerische Armee-Korps (7.7 cm field gun)

1. Königliche Bayerisches Landsturm Pionier Kompanie, I. Bayerische Armee-Korps Königliche Bayerisches Landwehr Infanterie-Regiment 1 (*Oberstleutnant Edenhofer*)  
Königliche Bayerisches Landwehr Infanterie-Regiment 2 (*Colonel Hübner*)



*Königliche Bayerisches Landwehr Infanterie-Regiment 2* 17).

The brigade was supplied with 4. *Ersatz-Division* as reinforcement per 9 October 1914.

The main infantry regiments were:

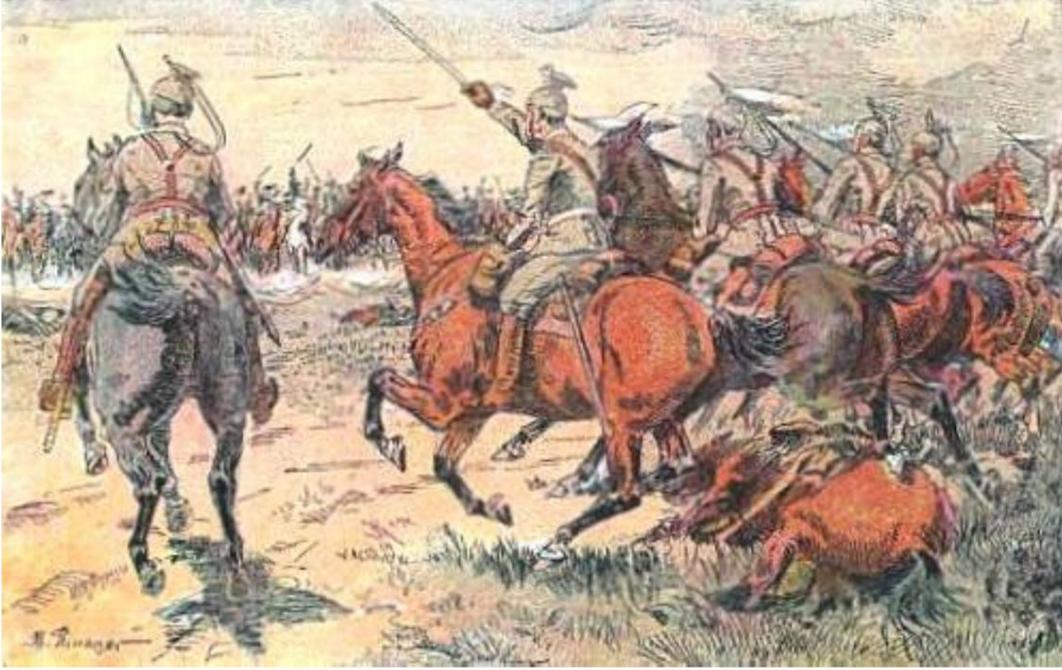
Royal Bavaria. 1. Infantry Regiment König Kgl.  
Bavaria. 2nd Infantry Regiment Kronprinz.

## Replacement training unit (*Train-Ersatz Abteilungen*)

At divisional level, a training unit of unknown size and composition was included.

It was an improvised unit, the composition of which was not foreseen in peacetime.

## Cavalry units



*Ulanen-Attacke.*

*Armee-Abteilung Beseler* separates units from *III. Reserve-Corps* and *Marine-Division* an independent command - *Detachment Uckermann*.

The command operated on the right wing - at Herenthals - with the task of observing towards the eastern part of the Antwerp Fortress, and obscuring that an attack was not launched from here.

### **Detachment Uckermann** (*Major von Uckermann*)

Reserve-Ulanen-Regiment 3 (4 squadrons) 2

guns 2

machine guns 1

halfing pioneers 2

cyclist companies, from *Marine-Division*.



German dragon, approx. 1914.

The command was temporarily deployed to reinforce the 26. *Gemischte Landwehr-Brigade* on 30 September 1914 when the brigade was threatened by a Belgian counter-attack near Lierre.

It is not known whether the efforts here were carried out on top.

*Reserve-Dragons-Regiment 2* of the *5th Reserve-Infanterie-Division* consisted of 3 squadrons, which was the general organization of the cavalry reserve units, while the previously mentioned *Reserve-Ulanen Regiment 3* of the *6th Reserve-Infanterie-Division* for reasons unknown to me counted 4 squadrons.

In Source 5 it is mentioned that a *Kavallerie-Ersatz-Abteilung* (which must be considered a squadron, minus) consisted of:

- 1 officer, 5 non-commissioned officers, 51 privates and 3 draft constables/sanitation soldiers - 5 revolvers/pistols, 50 carbines and 51 lances
- 1 baggage and fodder wagon - 58 riding horses and 4 draft horses.

It is possible that the national defense squadrons mentioned had a similar composition.

## Sources

1. *Antwerp 1914* by Erich von Tschischwitz, *Schlachten des Weltkriegs*, Band 3, published by the German Reichsarchiv, Verlag Gerhard Stalling, Berlin 1925.

2. *Imperial German Army 1914-18 - Organization, Structure, Orders-of-Battle* by Hermann Cron, Helion & Company Ltd., Solihull / West Midlands 2002, ISBN 1-874622-70-1. The book is an English translation of one of the standard sources on German organization, published in 1937 as volume V of the series *Geschichte des Deutschen Heeres im Weltkrieg, 1914-1918*. The translation of unit designations is not consistent in places.
3. *Imperial German Handbook 1914-1918* by DB Nash, Ian Allan Ltd., Shepperton / Surrey 1980, ISBN 0-7110-0968-6.
4. *Wartime development of the Imperial German Army Infantry 1914-1918, Mobilization - 1914* by Glenn Jewison (A Pocket German Army)
5. *Deutsches Heer 1914 - 1918 Formationsgeschichte (Interessen- und Arbeitsgemeinschaft Weltkrieg 1914-1918)* - especially Rekrutierung, Divisionen, Brigaden and Generalkommandos.
6. *Der erste Weltkrieg (Malte Znaniecki)* - especially *Armee-Abteilung Beseler (Chronik 1914)*, III. Reserve Corps (Chronik 1914-1918), 5th Reserve Division (Chronik 1914-1918) and 6th Reserve Division (Chronik 1914-1918).
7. *Das Deutsche Heer 1914* (Max A Forsythe).

Per Finsted

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### Notes:

- 1) For a more detailed discussion of the division, see my article *On the German Marine Division, 1914*.
- 2) *With the German Guns - Four Years on the Western Front* by Herbert Sulzbach, Pen & Sword Military Classics, Barnsley/South Yorkshire 2003, ISBN 1-84415-019-4. Originally published in 1913.
- 3) See e.g. *Provisorische Gliederung - Verzeichnis der im Kriege vorhandenen Einheiten (GenWiki)*.
- 4) See Hans Hartwig von Beseler (1850-1921) (*The Prussian Machine*) and Hans Hartwig von Beseler (Wikipedia).
- 5) Source 2 states that the battalion did not have a machine gun company.
- 6) Source 2 states that the regiment (at the time of mobilization?) did not have a machine gun company. Source 1 states, however, that at Antwerp a machine gun element (company?) was included in the regiment.
- 7) From *Infanterie-Regiment von Stülpnagel (5. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 48 (Formationsgeschichte, Deutschlands, Gen-Wiki)*. The publisher is a German cigarette card.
- 8) The boss's name comes from the article *Flugzeugfallen an den Himmel gestellt* by H. Rahskopf (Drachenarchiv).
- 9) See *German Aviation 1914 (The Story Of World War 1 Aviation)*.
- 10) See *Feldflieger-Abteilung 38 (Frontflieger)*
- 11) Drawing and information comes from *All the world's planes in Colours: Warplanes 1914-1914*, Politikens Forlag, Copenhagen 1968.
- 12) See *On German Machine Gun and Hunter Units, 1914*.
- 13) From *German Air Forces 1914-18* by Ian Sumner, Osprey Elite Nr. 135, Oxford 2005, ISBN 1-84176-924 -X.
- 14) From *L'artillerie lourde Allemande* by Günter Schalich (a Belgian collection of historical articles).

15) See also the article [Der Osteroder Landsturm \(Alte Armee\)](#), which i.a. mentions the chakot. Regarding the Landsturm uniforms, refer to [Uniform 1914 - Der Landsturm \(Alte Armee\)](#).

16) The information about the battery includes a training force of unknown size.

17) From [Formationsgeschichte, Deutschlands \(Gen-Wiki\)](#). The publisher is a German cigarette card.