

## Conflict in the East

### Prisoner of War mail

At the start of the Allied intervention in Siberia there were already thousands of German, Hungarian and Austrian prisoners from the WW1 fighting in Europe. Three of the existing camps came under control of the Japanese intervention force; Krasnaya Rechka, Pervaya Rechka and Nikolsk-Ussurisk. Mail from these camps subjected to Japanese censorship received a large Japanese "Kenetsu Zumi" stamp and these are fairly uncommon, the Nikolsk-Ussurisk being scarcer.

The text of a letter from Krasnaya Rechka to Salzburg reveals that the prisoners received better treatment in the Japanese administered camps than their comrades under Russian control. The European prisoners were eventually released and repatriated in 1922; many had been imprisoned since 1915.

# The Siberian Intervention

POW mail Krasnaya Rechka



Attractive cover and superb enclosed letter (see translation) from an Austrian prisoner held in the Japanese camp at Krasnaya Rechka. Cover carries the purple "Ken Etsu Zumi" (Examined by Censor) and "Furyo Yubin" (Prisoner mail) censor stamp and a dated barred cancel dated 8.11.19 (19 November 1919). Since the letter is dated 5 October it seems likely that the cover was carried back to Japan and onward by sea.

"Very honourable Doctor; yesterday I received your card of 17 July 1919. Many thanks for your congratulations on my promotion. Unfortunately I will have to spend a fifth winter in cold Siberia but I am prepared for it. I am very happy to be in the hands of the Japanese. The standard of living here is good and we do not have a shortage of anything but connection to home could be better.

The prisoners who are still in Russian hands have a hard fate. There are camps in Nikolsk, Ussurisk, Krasnojarsk, Marinsk and Kansk. The men from Petropavlovsk moved to Nikolsk and Iman. They have the hardest times behind them. For six months we have a help fund from which every month after we get our payment in Yen a certain sum is sent to the Russian camp at Nikolsk-Ussurisk. From there every month a delegation of two men comes here and all of us do what they can do to make the fate of our comrades easier. In Krasnojarsk and Kansk the POWs run home industry. They supply villages there with their products and many from Nikolsk work in the city, others in the mines nearby. We cannot send anything to western Siberia because the danger of loss is too great. I will write to Consul Muller in Irkutsk and press for payment from Salzburg.

Our men here (4.59ers) feel fine. Good eating and earning in the camp. We have our own commission for payment.

I am in touch by letter with the Salzburgers in Nikolsk. There are ten names. Teacher Enzenburger from Gnigl has been in hospital for months. I have no contact with Salzburgers at other camps.

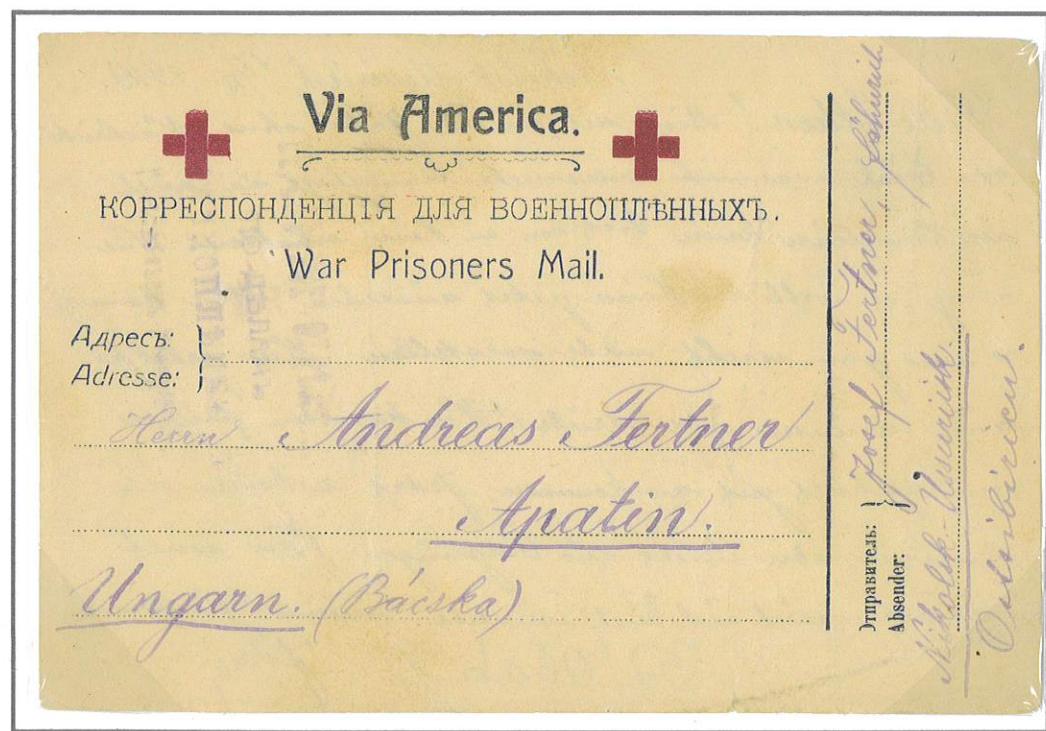
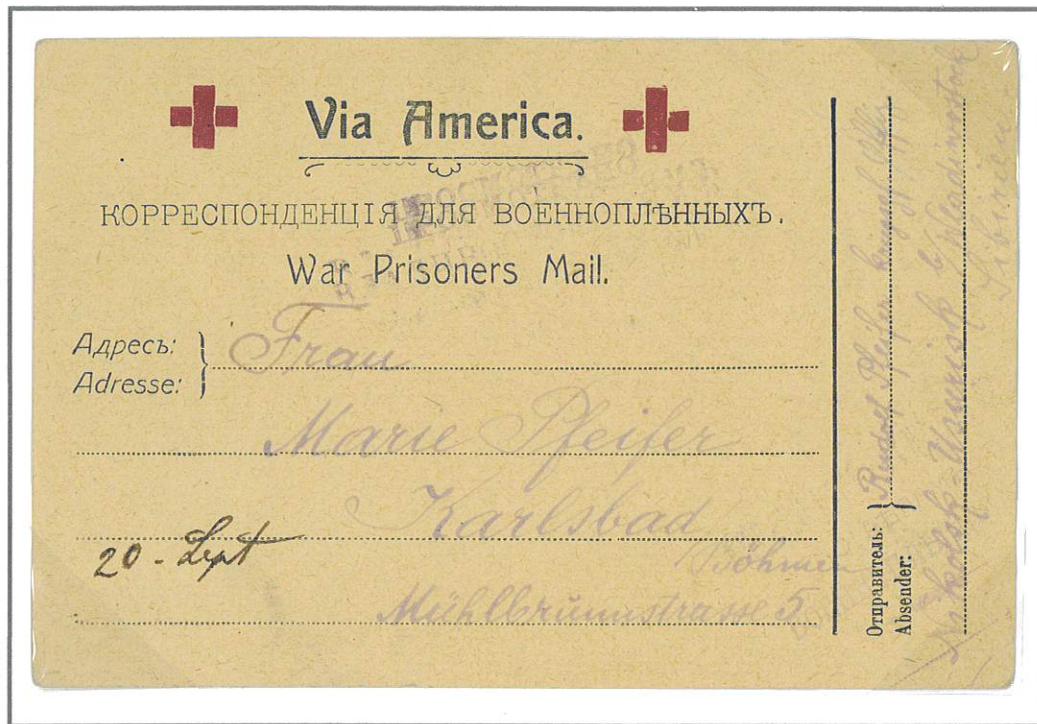
We are all waiting for transport home, especially since the Treaty with Austria on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

Best greetings from all the comrades. Please give my greetings to my parents and to Miss S.

G. Eder"

# The Siberian Intervention

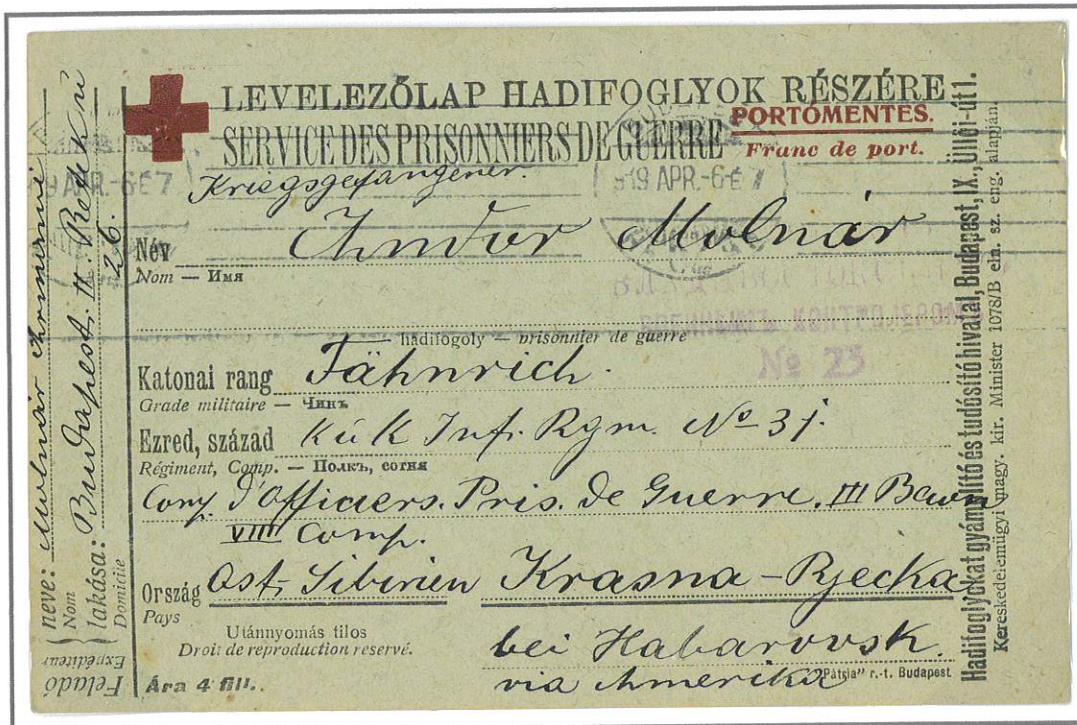
POW mail Nikolsk-Ussurisk



Two flimsy single sheet POW cards from Nikolsk-Ussurisk to Hungary pre-printed to be sent via America. Dated June and November 1919 the cards are from soldiers held captive since WW1 and still in Siberia during the Intervention. The card sent on 16 June 1919 has been endorsed 20 September, presumably the date of arrival at Karlsbad. By this date, Karlsbad had been incorporated into the new state of Czechoslovakia.

## The Siberian Intervention

## Prisoner of War mail



Red Cross POW card from Budapest to a prisoner of war in Krasnaya Rechka camp in Siberia. Despatched 6 April 1919 the card travelled via America and arrived in Vladivostok where it received the Vladivostok Type 8 Censor No. 23 stamp. Addressee was an officer in the Austrian 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment.

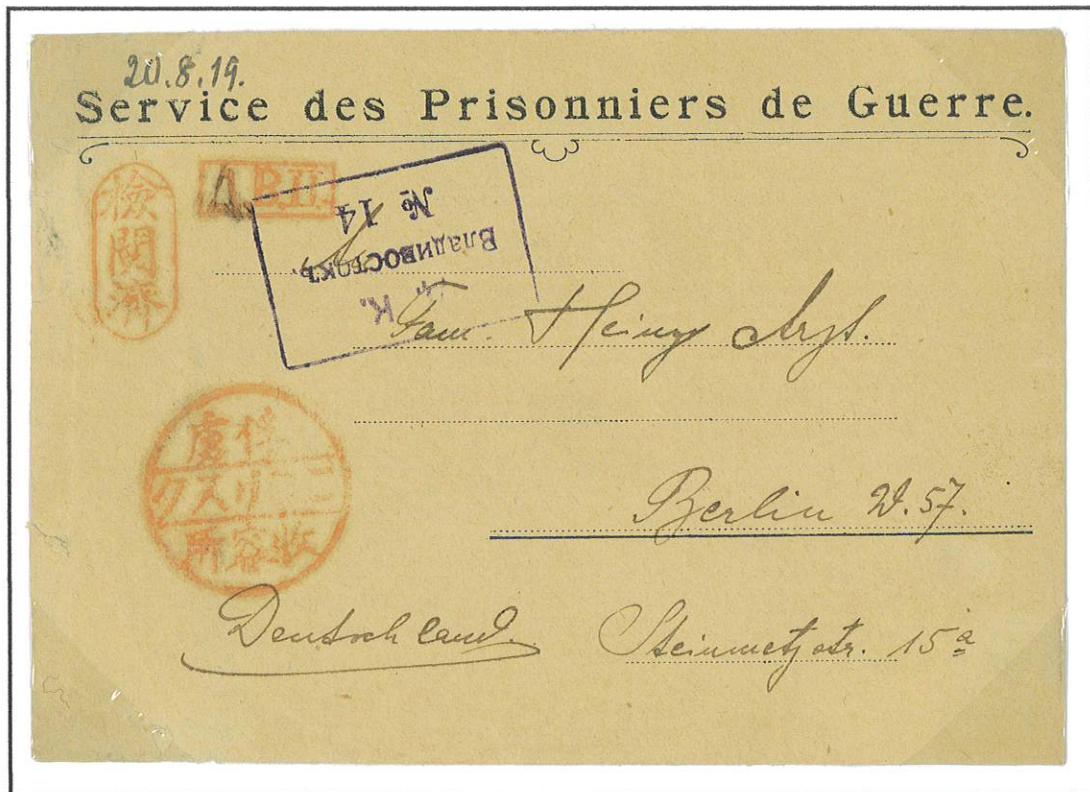


## Conflict in the East

Siberian Intervention

POW mail

Stampless cover from a German POW held in a Japanese administered camp during the Siberian Intervention period. Cover is addressed to Berlin and is endorsed as being from "Nikolsk-Ussurisk, Ost Siberien, Japanische Kriegsgefangenen Lager. The red circular cachet is the scarce type used only at Nikolsk and reads in the top segment "Furyo" (Prisoner), in the lower segment "Shuyojo" (Camp Office) and in the centre "Nikolsk". The red oval cachet reads "Kenetsu Zumi" (passed by censor), and there is a further red boxed Russian censor cachet. The rectangular box is the Russian Vladivostok No. 14 censor mark. No indication of despatch date, but the hand written 20.8.19 may well be the arrival date in Germany.





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## Conflict in the East

Siberian Intervention

POW mail

Stampless cover from an Austrian POW held in a Japanese administered camp during the Siberian Intervention period. Cover is addressed to Vienna and is endorsed as being from "Japanische Lager Vladivostok. Pervaya Rjetschka". The cover was provided by the Japanese YMCA Army Recreation Department. The red circular cachet is bi-lingual, and carries in the upper segment "Nihon Gun" (Japanese Army), with "Kenetsu Zumi" (Passed by censor) in the centre section, whilst the lower segment carries the Russian letters DK meaning "Passed by Censor". There is a further rectangular boxed Russian censor cachet reading "Passed Censorship, POW Camp Commandant". The boxed rectangular CENS is thought to be of Japanese origin. There are no postal markings to indicate date or route taken from Vladivostok to Austria.





## Conflict in the East

### Siberian Intervention

## POW mail

Stampless card from an Austrian POW held in a Japanese administered camp during the Siberian Intervention period. Cover is addressed to Vienna and is endorsed as being from "Pervaya Rjetschka bei Vladivostok Offizier Lager". The red circular cachet is bi-lingual, and carries in the upper segment "Nihon Gun" (Japanese Army), with "Kenetsu Zumi" (Passed by censor) in the centre section, whilst the lower segment carries the Russian letters DK meaning "Passed by Censor. There is a further rectangular boxed Russian censor cachet reading "Passed Censorship, POW Camp Commandant". There are no postal markings to indicate date or route taken from Vladivostok to Austria, but the writer has dated the card 24<sup>th</sup> July 1920.

The postcard is of Japanese production and carries a depiction of Kaleykskaya Street in Vladivostok (and it does look a bleak place).

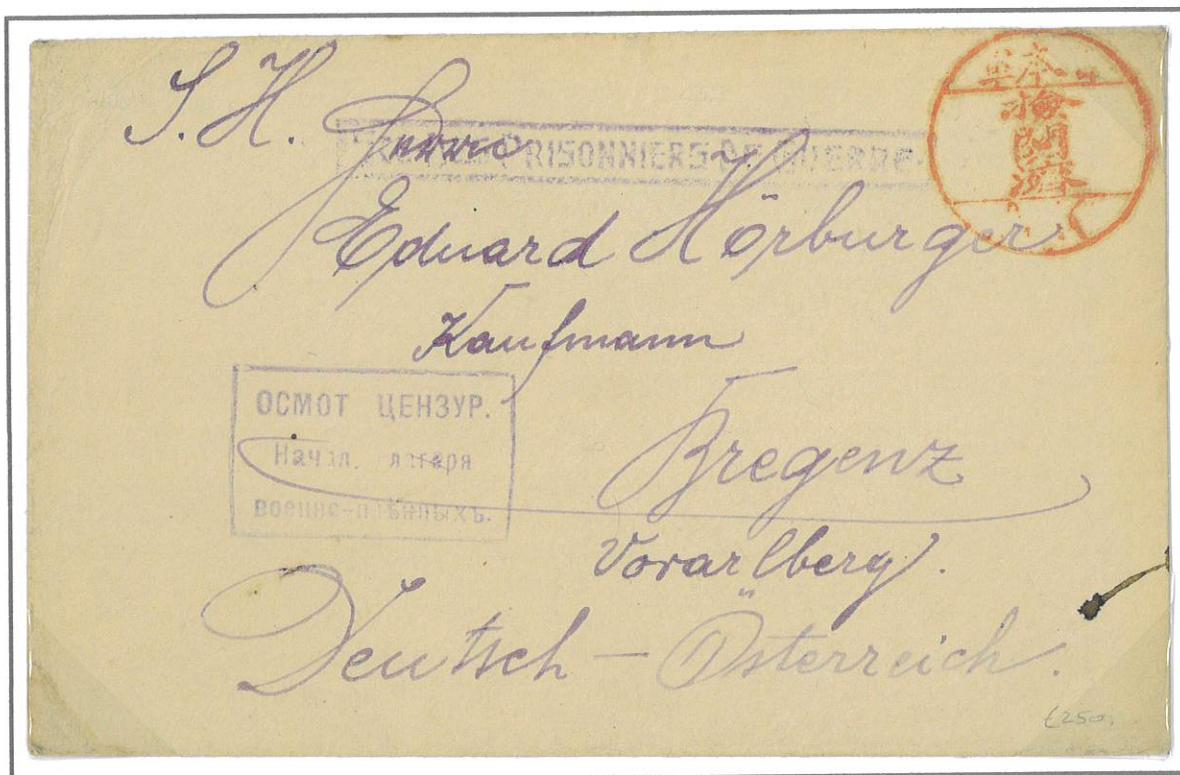




## Conflict in the East

### Siberian Intervention POW mail

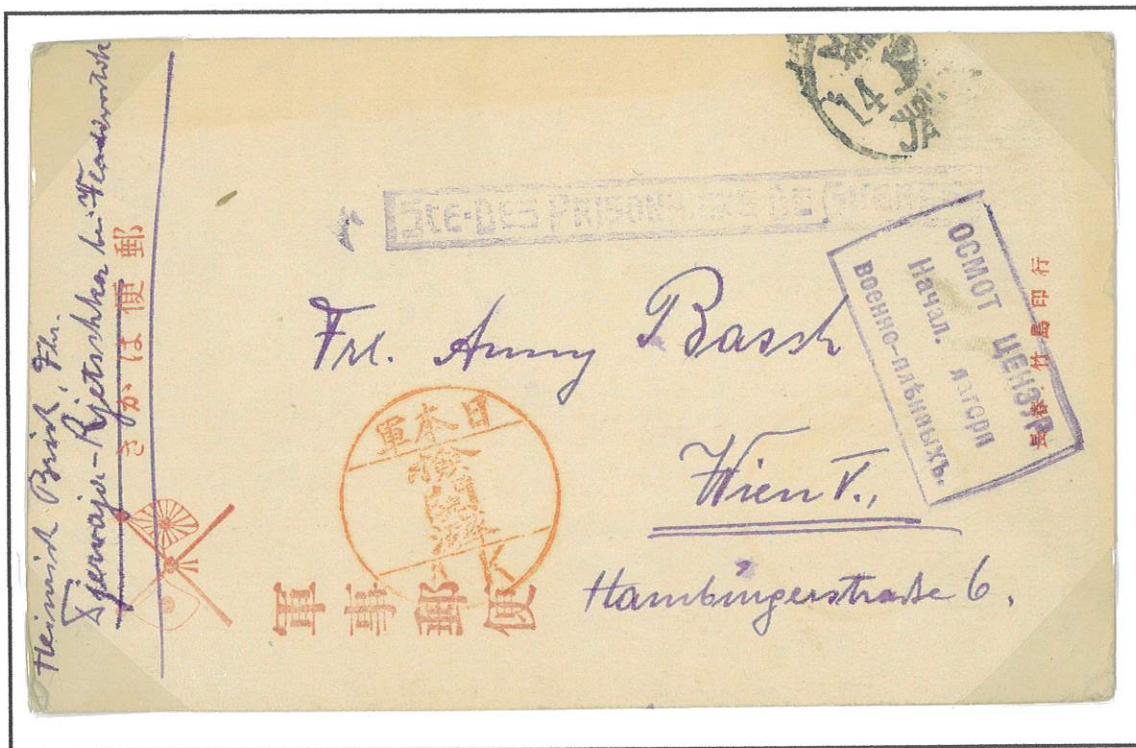
Stampless cover from an Austrian POW held in a Japanese administered camp at Pervaya Rechka during the Siberian Intervention period. Cover is addressed to Bregenz (on Lake Konstanz). The red circular cachet is bi-lingual, and carries in the upper segment "Nihon Gun" (Japanese Army), with "Kenetsu Zumi" (Passed by censor) in the centre section, whilst the lower segment carries the Russian letters DK meaning "Passed by Censor". There is a further rectangular boxed Russian censor cachet reading "Passed Censorship, POW Camp Commandant" and a single line boxed "Service de Prisonniers de Guerre". There are no postal markings to indicate date or route taken from Vladivostok to Austria, but Speeckaert records that these marks were used from the Japanese takeover of the camp at the end of 1919. They are rare.



## Conflict in the East

## Siberian Intervention

Japanese Field Post Card used as POW free mail by an Austrian prisoner held in a Japanese administered camp during the Siberian Intervention period. Cover is addressed to Vienna and is endorsed as being from "Pervaya Rjetschka i Vladivostok". The red circular cachet is bi-lingual, and carries in the upper segment "Nihon Gun" (Japanese Army), with "Kenetsu Zumi" (Passed by censor) in the centre section, whilst the lower segment carries the Russian letters DK meaning "Passed by Censor". There is a further rectangular boxed Russian censor cachet reading "Passed Censorship, POW Camp Commandant". The partial c.d.s. is that of Moji, Japan, the port through which the card was sent to Austria. Card is dated by the sender 17<sup>th</sup> November 1919, so the date of "14" in the Moji cancel may mean that the card was held for almost a month before transmission. International mail from Japanese ports used the Western dating system, not the Japanese native dating, so the "14" is the day, not the year.





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### Siberian Intervention POW mail

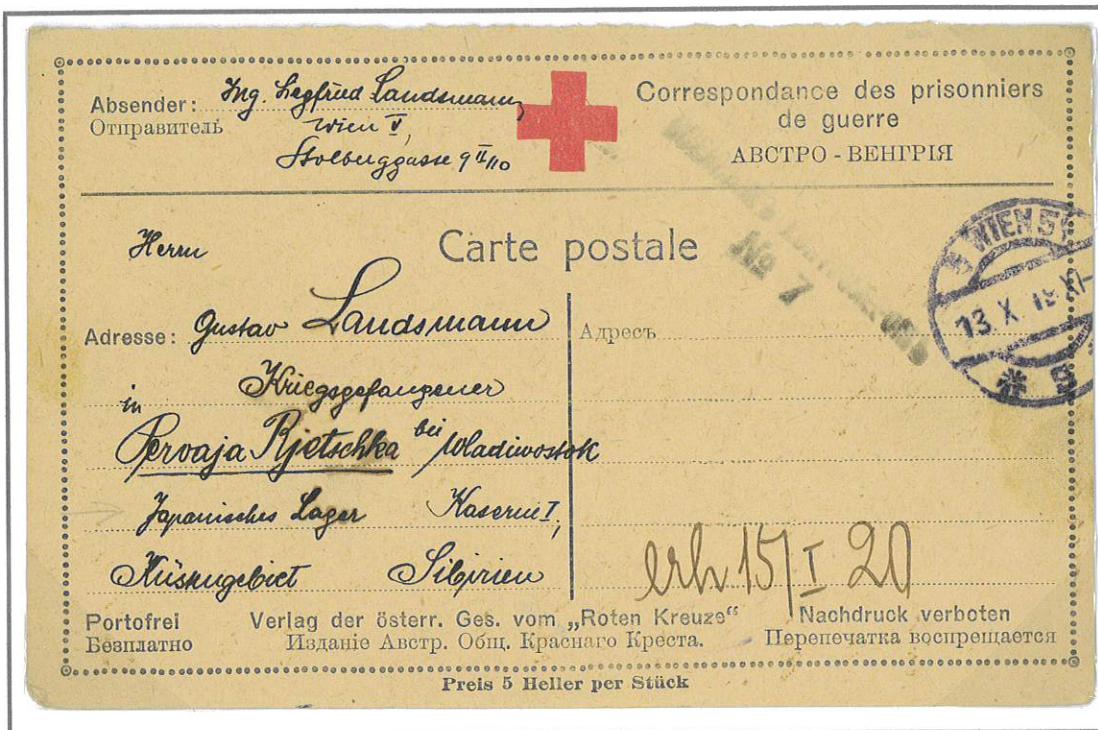
Japanese field postcard used by a Hungarian POW held in a Japanese administered camp at Pervaya Rechka during the Siberian Intervention period. Cover is addressed to Szolnok. The red circular cachet is bi-lingual, and carries in the upper segment "Nihon Gun" (Japanese Army), with "Kenetsu Zumi" (Passed by censor) in the centre section, whilst the lower segment carries the Russian letters DK meaning "Passed by Censor". There is a further rectangular boxed Russian censor cachet reading "Passed Censorship, POW Camp Commandant" and a single line boxed "Service de Prisonniers de Guerre". There are no postal markings to indicate date or route taken from Vladivostok to Hungary. Speeckaert records that these marks were used from the Japanese takeover of the camp at the end of 1919. They are uncommon.

Despatch 30 August 1920. Received 25 October 1920 (Recipient endorsement)



## The Siberian Intervention

## POW mail into Siberia



Red Cross P.O.W. card from Vienna to an Austrian prisoner of war held in a Japanese administered camp at Pervaya Retschka near Vladivostok. Despatched Vienna 13 October 1919 and endorsed as received 15 January 1920. Russian Vladivostok censor No. 7.