

An M.16 mass-produced depot issue steel helmet.



This helmet was manufactured by the company; Siemens 'U'. Halske A.G. of Berlin. It was stamped with their logo, in the front left hand side of the rear skirt. The logo was a stylised monogram of the entwined capital letters 'S' and 'H', at the left of the size marking. The helmet was of the smallest size available, having a shell size of 60cm. Both large and small steel helmets are quite rare today, as the majority of helmets produced were made for the average size ranges.

The field grey paint finish used by the S&H company for this helmet, was slightly darker than that of the previously featured E.T. made helmets. The interior bowl still retains its matt finish. This has now shined to a semi gloss, by handling or polishing, both inside the rear skirt and on the whole exterior of the helmet.



The liner system is of the early mass production style, in that it had stamped out pads and a leather band made from a single thick piece of cow hide. The pad tie, was cut from a piece of lambskin, similar to that found in some pickelhauben. One of the rear pads has a wearer's name, written in indelible pencil, above his unit abbreviations. These are now hard to decipher, but they could be that of a motoring company.

The chinstrap, looks as if it was made by using standard M.15 zinc plated steel pickelhaube fittings. The sewn, brown leather strap appears to be quite thick and may have been made specifically for the much heavier steel helmet. Some pickelhauben straps were also produced from thick leather, so it may just be a standard M.15 chinstrap.



An M.15 Hessen enlisted man's issue pickelhaube with an Infantry spike top and a J.R. 117 M.15 cover.



The spike top, is of a style, only worn by this state and differs from the fluted version worn by some Bavarian elements.

An original wartime configuration of Hessen pickelhaube and cover, was pictured and described previously in 'Feldzug' Volume 2. This helmet and cover, was marked to the Hessen Liebgarde Infantry Regiment 115, but did not conform to specification of the helmet furniture for this regiment. It was fitted with brass furniture from new, and had a round spike base, such as with Hessen artillery. It was later re-issued to the wartime raised 186th Infantry Regiment also of Hessen origin. The M.15 Hessen helmet shown here, came to me many years ago from another collector, with its round spike base and the spike pictured. If the helmet had an artillery ball it would have been regulation, but as the spike is of the fluted infantry style of Hesse, its not. Just another one of those little things that there is no real answer to, other than possible wartime shortages or re-issue.

in the form of R.B.A.18. for the Hessen Reserve XVIII Corps clothing depot, there are no regimental stamps whatsoever. It is therefore now impossible to know if when made, it was to be artillery, but was issued to the infantry instead, due to shortages. Generally M.15 helmets followed the pre-war '95' model helmets, in being exact replicas, but of steel instead of the semi precious metals previously used. The ersatz period, in-between, was slightly different and rather unclear, with regards to regulation. Oddities from this period tend to be seen more frequently. The chinstrap conforms to standard M.15 manufacture and was made of blackened, brown leather, with sewn zinc plated, steel fittings. The national cockade is of the standard form, while the Hessen state cockade is of the non-serrated style, applicable to this state. It was made of white painted steel, with two thin red rings. Earlier Hessen cockades were made of silvered brass with red rings. These changes, in terms of materials are also found with other states who, in earlier times, had either gilded or silver plated cockades.

The helmet was made in either 1915 or 1916, it is hard to discern from the illegible, manufacturers, smudged black ink stamp inside. Although it has acceptance stamps on the rear peak,

The M.15 detachable spike pickelhaube cover came separately from another collector some years later, minus its spike top. It fits this helmet almost perfectly, although it was size stamped by the maker; 54, but the helmet was size marked 56! This is not uncommon with original pickelhaube covers, which did not always fit the helmet they were intended to. The cover was constructed from four body panels, woven from light grey and olive green threads. The green woollen, badge cloth regimental numbers were hand applied, most likely at the clothing depot some time later. Most manufacturers were quite proud of the products, that they 'had' to sell, stamping them with their logo, as a form of advertising. The neat, but hastily applied, (in quite large stitches) regimental numbers, do not seem to have been sewn by the same worker(s) as the well constructed cover was. No tissue was gummed to the cloth numbers before application, this seems to have been not used as often as it was. The cover was made in 1916, the date was incorporated in the manufacturers, large black ink stamp in the rear. The exact name of the company is hard to decipher, but the place of manufacture was Elberfeld. This town being quite near the border of XVIIIth Corps, in the VIth Corps area. The hand stitching around the oil cloth reinforced, chinstrap outlets and the rear spine air vent, were both executed very well, with blanket stitching. The five fairly large, flat ended, steel fixing hooks, do not appear to have been zinc coated. They may have received a coat of black shellac, that had worn off through use, or later whilst laying in storage.



A Bavarian ersatz painted steel two piece belt buckle.



This two piece buckle was constructed from steel sometime after January 1915, but before March 1916. The two main pieces, the folded back plate and the central motif, were lead soldered at two points, visible at the rear. The purpose of the smaller, middle hole is unclear, it may have been a weep hole, allowing the gases that form when soldering, to escape. The catch at the rear is quite unusual in style, it's spot welded feet both point inwards, towards the centre. After construction, the

steel buckle was finished with a coat of matt black paint, as it was not zinc plated it was made before March 1916. The 'U' shaped prongs that hold the buckle to the leather belt, were welded to the steel tube that keeps them in position. Another sign of earlier, rather than later production. To speed up the production process, later manufactured prong bars were crimped and not welded. Why the buckle was painted black is unclear, but it was likely produced before the general move to grey/field grey belt furniture was accepted as the way forward.

An M.16 Bavarian enlisted man's undyed brown leather belt and buckle.



After January 1915 belt buckles and their keepers were to be made of steel. At first, the buckles continued to be of two piece construction. Prussian examples were zinc plated, as a means of weather protection, Bavaria however, did not specify this until March 1916. Earlier Bavarian steel buckles, were usually only painted to stop them from rusting, this method was not as effective as the Prussian remedy of zinc plating, followed by a coat of anti rust varnish.

This natural undyed brown leather belt, has a post March 1916, zinc plated one piece stamped steel buckle, which was anti-rust varnished with a matt finish. The buckle keeper, sewn to the belt, also had the same type of finish applied before fixture.



A contemporary black and white period post card of a Bavarian enlisted man serving in the 10th F.A.R., 36th anti Balloon section of 3rd Bavarian Corps, (inked and post marked on the reverse). He is wearing either an M.07/10 or an M.07/14 feldrock with black piped Swedish styled cuffs with Bavarian rampant lion buttons. His shoulder straps were sewn into the shoulder seam, a common method of application for Bavarian depots when using non-detachable straps. They bare the solitary number 10, with no flaming grenade as per Bavarian regulation. His open single pronged buckled belt was likely of foreign origin. On it he wears a P.08 automatic pistol

and the Bavarian 1892 artillery brass hilted lion head side arm with an infantry company styled knot. His spiked helmet has a round peak with a very shiny trim, which could mean it was a felt ersatz version. Bavarian artillery wore a square peak.. The back pack straps have an unusual method of adjustment, with slotted holes and studs. He wears standard foot troop styled marching boots. His trench torch has a lens cover in the style of a Prussian buckle centre, with a crown and the 'Gott Mit Uns' motto. This is just another one of those original pictures that tell the collector; 'in times of war, things were not always done as they were before during peace time'.