

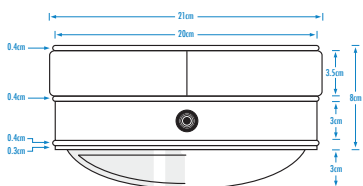
# PART 1 – IMPERIAL GERMANY 1871–1918

## ARTILLERY OFFICER SERVICE CAP CIRCA 1880



ARTILLERY OFFICERS' circa 1880

1) The overall height of the cap as prescribed by regulation is shown on the right.  
 2) Measurements of the component parts are taken from original examples.  
 3) Differences in the sum of peak + crown and the prescribed height in parts 1 are the result of manufacturing variations.



Made from a blue twill material with a black velvet cap band and red piping around the cap identifies the branch of service of this officer as either Artillery or Engineers. It is in the form as prescribed and introduced into the Prussian army in 1867 and the cap band is approximately half the height of the cap. The height of this example, when measured from the bottom of the cap band to top of the crown, is approximately 8cm. The peak is made from vulcanised fibre and is often referred to in collectors' circles as a "stubby" because of it being only 3cm wide. As will be seen one of the major changes in cap design was the width of the peak, with it eventually reaching 4.5cm on service caps. Sometimes these pre-1890 caps came with a soft leather peak, a fashion with some officers at this time. A change of regulations aimed at standardising the cap stipulated that leather peaks were only to be worn on field caps, to allow them to be folded more easily, and the peaks of the stiffer service caps to be made of fibre. Vulcanised fibre is a material made by compressing layers of paper or cloth. The final product is a homogeneous nearly 100%-cellulose mass free from any artificial glues, resins, or binders. The finished vulcanized fibre offers high tear and tensile strength, whilst allowing flexibility to conform to curves and bends such as found on the peaks of caps. A Prussian cockade is positioned in the front centre of the cap band to denote where the regiment was raised. Of note is the thick piping around the cap band and crown, which is wrapped round a reed rod and then attached to the cap. This style of piping is common to the caps of this era. The inside shows a leather sweatband and black



An Artillery officer wearing the Prussian style service cap. The cap has a black velvet cap band, a short peak and a state cockade dating it pre-1897.

high quality cotton lining. The maker's marks are embossed on the lining for an Albert Bruse who was based in Schalke. The legend above his details reads Müzen Fabrik or cap maker.



An Infantry officer who has obligingly had his photograph taken from the side to allow us to see the cap profile. This one dates post-1897 as the officer has added the national cockade to his cap.





as shown in this example. The sweatband is made from oilskin but is sadly breaking and splitting with age. The term oilskin also refers to a type of fabric, in this case a heavy cotton cloth waterproofed with linseed oil. The main interest of this cap is that it offers some issue date stamp of 1895 to the sixth company (6.K.) along with the marks "PE". These may well correspond with the policy to stamp a cap with an E for Eigentum (property) once it has been worn for a year by the NCO. After this the cap was deemed, in accountant's terminology, written off by the regiment and was given to the wearer. To differentiate it from unit stocks it was marked with an "E" or the word Eigentum. The meaning of the "P" is unknown at this time. This cap could well have been one of the last to be issued in this style before the regulation change of 1896.



An Infantry NCO who has opted to stand for his formal photograph. His service cap is placed on the table to his left, facing the camera, allowing a good view of its shape and single cockade: circa 1890.

ARTILLERY OFFICER SERVICE CAP CIRCA 1896/1900



The fashion of the late 19th century resulted in officers slowly but surely extending the height of their caps to the point where the authorities were eventually forced to curb the excesses of this trend by publishing regulations in 1896 stating that the crown should protrude by at least 5cm over the lower band.

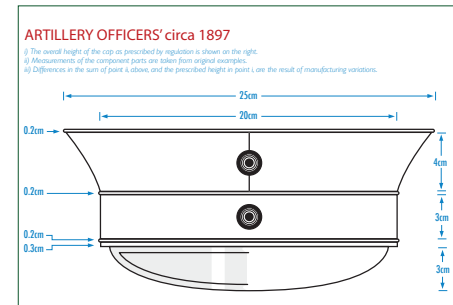
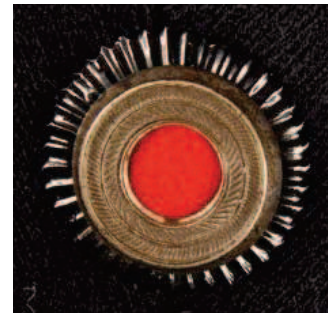
The change in cap shape that resulted is marked and this is an elegant example of the post 1896 regulations cap with a black velvet band and red piping denoting branch of service. The use of velvet material was usually reserved for officers only who served in units that that required a black cap band. Again shown with the short fibre peak and the 5 cm requirement for the crown to overhang the lower band can be clearly seen. The crown material is a very dark blue and demonstrates that as service caps were all privately purchased not only the type of material used but also the colour could vary significantly. The peak, which was covered with a lacquer to protect it, has small cracks, which look like scratches, running top to bottom on the outside. This is known as "crazing" and is the result of the materials used in manufacture drying and shrinking over time. The underside of the peak is a dark brown and has a crosshatch pattern common to most fibre peaks.



Aptly demonstrating the fact these two fashion conscious soldiers pose proudly wearing their caps. The caps, with two cockades, date the photograph post-1897 showing that changes in regulations took time to filter down to the ranks and were not automatically adhered to.



An earlier photograph dating from the 1880's showing how the service cap's height gradually extended during this period.



The introduction of the national cockade in 1897 meant that two cockades were now present on all caps. The state cockade remained central in the cap band and the new national colours were placed top centre on the crown. The officer's version had a red velvet or cloth centre whilst the NCO version was made of stamped metal.