

Robert Gawet

Museum of Kraków, Branch of the Podgórze Museum



ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5947-9229

FACES OF WAR

VOL. 6 • CITY AND WAR • ŁÓDŹ 2022

ISBN 978-83-8331-012-1 • pp. 193–212

<https://doi.org/10.18778/8331-012-1.11>

AUTOMOTIVE SERVICES IN “FESTUNG KRAKAU” DURING WORLD WAR I

Summary. Since antiquity, the army has been the driving force behind technological development, including the development of motorisation. While the first mechanical vehicle was constructed in 1769, the turning point in motorisation was the construction of the first diesel-powered vehicle. The Austro-Hungarian armed forces were among those interested in the possibility of using mechanical vehicles. The first tests of a military lorry intended for the Austro-Hungarian army initiated a series of various mechanical vehicle tests. As a part of such tests, the first lorries appeared on the streets of Kraków in 1903. With the outbreak of the Great War, the number of military vehicles in Kraków considerably increased. The armed forces also commandeered several facilities in the city to function as workshops, fuel storehouses, and parking lots for their vehicles. In 1916, the first genuine military vehicle maintenance barracks and workshop complex was built in the Kraków Stronghold.

Keywords: army, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Kraków Stronghold, motorisation, World War I

The history of military motorisation (and motorisation in general) began in 1769, when the French army engineer Joseph Cugnot (1725–1804) constructed the first heavy artillery tractor.¹ It was a wooden, three-wheeled vehicle powered by a steam engine with a huge boiler located in front of the tractor. Despite a crash during its trial run in 1770, the seed of motorisation had been sown. The breakthrough in the development of motorisation was made at the end of the 19th century, when a diesel engine was successfully used to power a mechanical vehicle. This feat was independently made by two German engine designers, Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler.²

¹ A. ROSTOCKI, T. SOKOŁOWSKI, *Świat starych samochodów*, Warszawa 1972, pp. 20–21.

² A.M. ROSTOCKI, *Historia starych samochodów*, Warszawa 1981, pp. 63–69.

It is not well known that the first working diesel vehicle was constructed in Vienna in 1875³ by another German designer, Siegfried Marcus. However, this invention, despite the designer's efforts, did not arouse the interest of potential clientele. Nevertheless, this fact is recognised by historians as the birth of motorisation in the Austrian Empire. Twenty years later, in 1895, the Gräf brothers started the first mass-production of automobiles in Austria.⁴

Austrian army circles were also interested in using automobiles for military purposes. The first tests were carried out in 1896 with a Daimler automobile,⁵ and two years later, the first Austro-Hungarian Army trials with a lorry took place. The vehicle was produced by an Austrian company Bierenz, Fischer & Cie.⁶ At the same time, a special military commission to carry out trials with vehicles and assess their results⁷ was established. Gradual development of the Austro-Hungarian Army motor transport base⁸ can be thus dated back to that moment. In 1909, the Austro-Hungarian Army automotive units organisation principles in peacetime⁹ were defined, stating that automobiles are indispensable in a modern army. The principles established at that time remained binding until the outbreak of the Great War. According to these guidelines, in peacetime the army could own only as many cars as were necessary to service individual military units, and in case of war additional vehicles were to be requisitioned from institutions and civilians. A significant element of the entire organisational system was the voluntary automobile and motorcycle corps, established in 1906 and 1907, respectively.¹⁰ They were to provide the army with a suitable number of passenger vehicles and motorcycles, and at the same time, by regular participation of the corps members in manoeuvres and military exercises, ensure an appropriate training level of the voluntary personnel. The issue of providing a suitable supply of lorries to be requisitioned in case of war was solved

³ R. GAWEL, *Galician automobilism*, "Galicja. Studia i Materiały" 2020, vol. 6, p. 350.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ W.J. SPIELBERGER, *Kraftfahrzeuge und Panzer des österreichischen Heeres 1896 bis heute*, Stuttgart 1976, p. 12.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

⁷ J. AUGUSTOWSKI, *Wojska samochodowe w Austrii, Niemczech i Rosji podczas wojny światowej*, "Bellona" 1932, Annual set 14, vol. 40, p. 169.

⁸ Motor transport base should be meant as army motor vehicles, its personnel and related facilities arranged within an organisational framework.

⁹ J. AUGUSTOWSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

in a different way. Just as in Germany,¹¹ a system of subventions was introduced for private persons purchasing domestic lorries.¹² The general idea behind it was to encourage citizens to purchase domestic lorries of technical parameters clearly defined by the army. On purchase, the buyers were partially reimbursed for the purchase cost on the condition that they maintained the vehicle in proper technical condition, had it professionally serviced, and supplied the lorry for a fee for military exercises in peacetime.¹³

In Kraków, the first military automobiles – two lorries – appeared in 1903.¹⁴ These vehicles aroused the interest of both the local residents and the local press. The Kraków "Czas" daily reported on one of the lorries passing through the centre of the city:

Cars for military purposes. Local army supply depot has introduced the use of automobiles. These are large, grey-painted wagons, having an apparatus [engine] in front of their front wheels. Today, such a vehicle drove past the local post office in the morning. A non-commissioned officer from the pioneers was driving the car. The automobile itself seems to be a heavy machine, to be used only on highways and very good quality roads.¹⁵

An image of one of these Daimler-Militär-Lastwagen 12/14 HP vehicles,¹⁶ only that it was used by the artillery depot in Kraków, can be found in an illustration published in the Austrian automotive journal "Allgemeine Automobil-Zeitung" of 1904.¹⁷

In 1906,¹⁸ the lorries were given the first two registration numbers from the pool allocated to Kraków. According to the vehicle register preserved in the

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 177.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 171.

¹³ *Subwencyonowanie automobilów ciężarowych, przydatnych do użytku w razie wojny*, "Głos Rzeczowski" 1914, Annual set 18, No. 8, pp. 1–2.

¹⁴ A. BOGUNIA-PACZYŃSKI, *Mój Benz, moja Mercedes*, Kraków 1992, pp. 9–10.

¹⁵ *Samochody do celów wojskowych*, "Czas" 1903, Annual set 56, No. 211 (evening issue), p. 2.

¹⁶ *Oesterr. Daimler-Motorengesellschaft*, "Allgemeine Automobil-Zeitung" 1904, Annual set 5, No. 18, p. 15.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

¹⁸ Starting in 1906, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy assigned registration numbers to mechanical vehicles to be displayed as number plates. This was, however, introduced separately for both parts of the Dual Monarchy. In the Austrian part of the monarchy the regulations were issued as an "Order of the Ministry of Home Affairs with Approval of the Minister of Treasury of 27th September 1905".

National Archives, we know that the vehicle used by the supply depot (*k.u.k. Militär-Verpflegs-Magazin in Krakau*) was given the number¹⁹ S.911²⁰ and the vehicle used by the artillery depot (*k.u.k. Artillerie-Zeugs-Depot in Krakau*) was number S.912.²¹ It also appears from the registers that, in accordance with the 1909 guidelines, not many military vehicles were registered in Kraków.

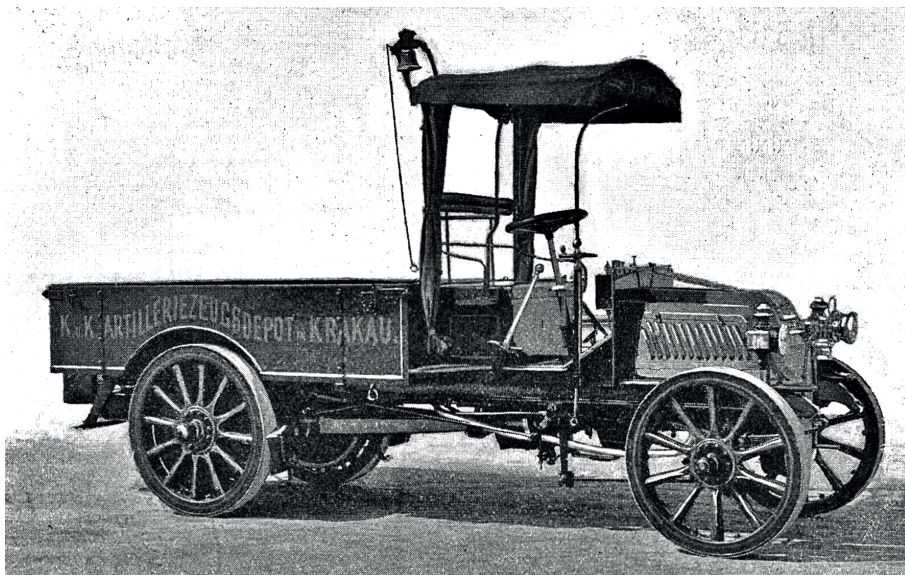


Fig. 1. One of the two Daimler 12/14 HP military lorries which appeared in the streets of Kraków in 1903. (Source: "Allgemeine Automobil-Zeitung" 1904, No. 18, p. 17)

¹⁹ Pursuant to regulations issued in 1905, registration numbers in Austria were composed of an identification letter (displayed as a capital letter on the number plates) and a register number separated from the letter with a dot. Identification letters were assigned for individual federal states. Galicia was assigned with letter S. Moreover, a top-down assignment of register number was binding for individual administrative regions under the same assigned identification letter. In Galicia, numbers were assigned to consecutive districts (*powiaty*) placed in the alphabetical order and additionally to Kraków and Lviv as separate cities. If the assigned range of numbers proved insufficient, the identification letter was expanded by adding a Roman numeral, starting from I, to the capital letter.

²⁰ National Archives in Kraków (hereinafter: ANK), C.K. Dyrekcja Policji w Krakowie 1848–1919 (hereinafter: DPKr.), file No. DPKr 177, Rejestr dla samochodów prowadzony po myśli §. 29 rozporządzenia ministerstwa spraw wewnętrznych w porozumieniu z Min. skarbu z dnia 27 września 1905 l.156 d.p.p., p. 17.

²¹ ANK, DPKr., file No. DPKr 177, Rejestr dla samochodów prowadzony po myśli §. 29 rozporządzenia ministerstwa spraw wewnętrznych w porozumieniu z Min. skarbu z dnia 27 września 1905 l.156 d.p.p., p. 17.

As in the entire Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Kraków drivers also joined the ranks of k.u.k. voluntary automobile corps. The ranks were joined mainly by members of the Galician Automobile Club, thus fulfilling one of the statutory activities of this association.²² In January 1912, Wilhelm Ripper, the main organiser of this voluntary unit, was appointed the commander of the Kraków voluntary unit by order of the Ministry of War. As early as 9th June 1912, representatives of the unit participated in a parade of automotive voluntary units in Vienna.²³ The salute was taken by the Emperor Franz Joseph I himself, and six cars and one motorcycle travelled from Kraków to attend the parade. The cars were driven by: Wilhelm Ripper (commander), Wojciech Kossak, Jerzy Kossak, Count Egon Starzyński, Emil Wekluk (engineer), Andrzej Gulkowski, while the name and the status of the motorcyclist, listed as "Kusma" by "Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny",²⁴ is unclear, as there is no evidence for the establishment of any separate voluntary motorcycle unit in Kraków. A. Bogunia-Paczyński claims the man was Stanisław Kusina,²⁵ however, he does not clarify the inconsistency between the name cited by him and the one provided in "Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny" daily, which Bogunia-Paczyński also refers to. Bogunia-Paczyński was probably guided by an entry in the motorcycle register kept by the Kraków Police Directorate, where a "Stanisław Kusina" is entered as the owner of Puch motorcycle,²⁶ while there is no entry for the name "Kusma." It is obviously possible that the paper misspelt the name, but other explanations are plausible. First of all, it should be considered that by reason of no evidence for existence of a voluntary motorcycle unit in Kraków, the delegation was supplemented with a motorcyclist who was not a citizen of Kraków. Another possible explanation is that the motorcycle belonging to Mr. Kusma had non-Kraków number plates. It would not have been an isolated case after all. One piece of evidence showing that such vehicles existed in Kraków is a picture from

²² A. BOGUNIA-PACZYŃSKI, *Samochodowcy, wyścigowcy, automobilery albo diabły i diabllice w daimlerowskich landach*, Kraków 1998, p. 15.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 73.

²⁴ *Defilada samochodowa przed cesarzem*, "Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny" 1912, Annual set 3, No. 130, p. 5.

²⁵ A. BOGUNIA-PACZYŃSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

²⁶ ANK, DPKr., file No. DPKr 177, *Rejestr dla motocykli prowadzony po myśli §. 29 rozporządzenia Ministerstwa spraw wewnętrznych, w porozumieniu z Min. Skarbu z dnia 27 września 1905 d.p.p. L. 156*, p. 55.

the collection of the Museum of Kraków²⁷ showing an automobile with Vienna number plates in front of the Kraków railway station. Another example is the case of Jan Włodek, who joined the Polish Legions with an automobile with Vienna number plates.²⁸ The possibility that the vehicle simply had no number plates should not be taken into account, although such cases did occur, as evidenced by letters addressed to the Police Directorate in Kraków.

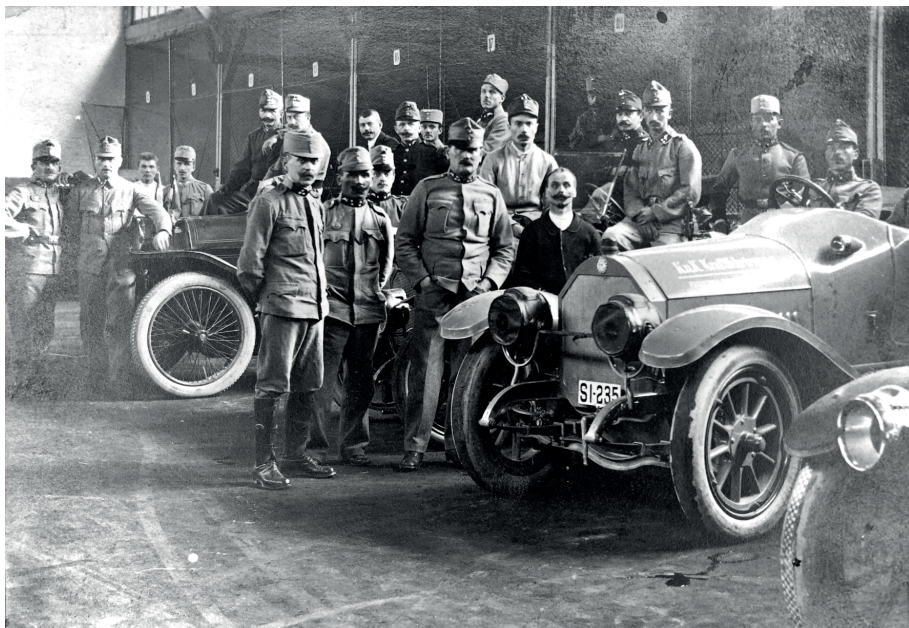


Fig. 2. Interior of Na Stawach Square Benz-Garage, taken over by the army during the war. Benz 16/40 HP automobile (registration No. S.235), second from left, commandeered by the army and earlier belonging to Rudolf Peterseim. (Source: autor's collection)

With the outbreak of the war and announcing mobilisation, the automotive base in Kraków changed significantly. The army took over the civilian Austro-Daimler-Garage on Smoleńsk Street, the Benz-Garage in Na Stawach Square, and city workshops in Lelewela Street, forming them into the “Kraków

²⁷ Museum of Kraków (hereinafter: MHK), No. MHK-8423/N; *Album fotografii dawnego Krakowa z atelier Ignacego Kriegera*, Kraków 1989, unpublished.

²⁸ J.M. WŁODEK, *Jan Włodek legionista, dyplomata, uczonec*, Kraków 2009, s. 42; ANK, Naczelny Komitet Narodowy (hereinafter: NKN), file No. 29/530/0/2.16/384, p. 37.

Workshops" (*k.u.k. Werkstätte Krakau*), later renamed the "Kraków Auxiliary Automobile Workshops" (*k.u.k. Behelfskraftwagenwerkstätte Krakau*).²⁹

Fuel depots constituted a vital element of the automotive base. After all, vehicles were useless without fuel. In the Festung Krakau (Kraków Stronghold), the main depot was located near Dąbie-Piaski railway station (*k.u.k. Benzin Depot Dabie-Piaski*).³⁰ It provided a petrol supply both for mechanical vehicles from the entire stronghold and for airplanes based at the nearby airfield in Rakowice. The proximity of the railway line was essential inasmuch as fuel was at that time supplied by tank cars, and then packaged in steel barrels. These barrels were used to store the fuel and to transport it to individual units. It was also from the barrels that vehicles were fuelled, most often by using manual pumps.

With the front line approaching Kraków, civilian vehicle traffic, with few exceptions, ceased, as vehicles were requisitioned by the military authorities.³¹ The automobiles with their owners constituting voluntary personnel of the Kraków automotive unit were incorporated into an automobile column of the 1st Corps constituting a part of the 1st k.u.k. Army. Rittmeister Wojciech Kossak was appointed the commanding officer of the unit,³² whose main task was to dispatch delivery and service.³³

The Kraków automotive base of the Polish Legions had its separate story.³⁴ The first automobiles, still not organised in a unit, left for the Kingdom of Poland with the Rifleman Society units in August 1914. Upon establishing the Supreme National Committee (SNC), the Army Department subordinate to SNC formed an automotive unit equipped, among others, with automobiles belonging to its volunteers. The aforementioned Jan Włodek was an example of such a case. The vehicles of the automotive unit were on duty for the SNC Presidium, its Army Department, the Organisation Department, and administration and supply management. In October 1914, the unit included around

²⁹ W. SCHIMON, *Österreich-Ungarns Kraftformationen im Weltkrieg 1914–1918*, Lubljana/Lai-bach 2007, p. 100.

³⁰ Jagiellonian Library (hereinafter: BUJ), file No. 144473 III, vol. 1, p. 222, *Ausgegeben mit FsKmdoBef. Nr. 296 vom 22. Oktober 1915*.

³¹ A. BOGUNIA-PACZYŃSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ J. AUGUSTOWSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

³⁴ ANK, NKN, file No. 29/530/0/2.16/384, p. 72.

25 automobiles and 60 volunteers (drivers and mechanics). The unit had its own garages in Kraków and a workshop on 1 Ariańska Street. In September, some of the automobiles, along with the Command of the Polish Legions, moved to the Carpathian Mountains. In November 1914, the Legions' automotive unit left Kraków, going to Třinec near Jablunkov in Silesia.

An important step in development of the military automotive base in Kraków was providing mechanical vehicles for the Festung Fire Brigade (*Festungsfeuerwehr*). It was established by the Festung Command at the beginning of September 1914.³⁵ Based on the Municipal Fire Brigade of Kraków, it also comprised the Municipal Fire Brigade of Podgórze³⁶ and the Voluntary Fire Brigades from Krowodrza, Zwierzyniec and Płaszów.³⁷ Jan Nowotny, the commandant of the Kraków Fire Brigade, was appointed the commanding officer of the Festung Fire Brigade. He was an ardent supporter of replacing the horse-drawn vehicles of the Fire Brigade with automobiles. As early as 1907, he trialled using a mechanical vehicle with the Fire Brigade in Kraków,³⁸ though regrettably the trial ended with an automobile crash. Being appointed the commandant of the Festung Fire Brigade, he convinced the Festung command that to provide better safety it was essential to equip the brigade with automobiles. Along with the purchase of vehicles, the fire station in Potockiego Street was improved, having its stables converted to garages.³⁹ The new position of driver was created, and the first two vehicles reached Kraków in October 1914.⁴⁰ On 29th November 1914, the vehicles first took part in firefighting action at a residential house on Krzywa Street.⁴¹ In total the army purchased five vehicles for the Fire Brigade, all Austro-Daimler: two equipment cars, three fire engines equipped with pumps, and one passenger car. Towards the end of 1915, the municipality purchased

³⁵ ANK, Akta Miasta Pogorza, file No. P-63, *Instruction für die Festungsfeuerwehr*, pp. 2127–2130.

³⁶ Podgórze is currently one of the right-bank districts of Kraków, but in 1914 it was still an independent city.

³⁷ Three of Kraków's districts, prior to being absorbed by Kraków in the early 20th century, were independent communes which had their own Voluntary Fire Brigades in 1914.

³⁸ *Automobil w usługach straży pożarnej*, "Nowości Ilustrowane" 1907, Annual set 4, No. 40, p.15.

³⁹ *Jubileuszowa księga krakowskich straży pożarnych 1873–1925 1865–1925*, Kraków 1925, p. 14.

⁴⁰ *Straż pożarna krakowska* (...), "Nowa Reforma" 1914, Annual set 33, No. 471, p. 2.

⁴¹ *Pożar*, "Nowa Reforma" 1914, Annual set 33, No. 528, p. 2.

another fire engine,⁴² also Austro-Daimler.⁴³ The base for the Festung Fire Brigade automotive column was generally the City Fire Station in Potockiego Street, which was converted for the purpose. There is, however, a photograph⁴⁴ showing one of those automobiles with its crew at the yard of the City Fire Station in Mickiewiczza Street in Podgórze. The author personally knows of two copies of that photograph, each of them sent as a postcard by Jan Nikiel, who was one of the drivers of Kraków fire engines.⁴⁵ Therefore, we can acknowledge that the automotive fire brigade also used to be stationed at Podgórze. An interesting fact related to the question of the Festung Krakau automotive base is a note on the reverse of both postcards, reading: "Nikiel k.u.k. Festungs Fäuerwehr Abteilung 1. Mickiewiczgasse No 39. Podgusz." Despite obvious spelling mistakes, it is clear that the 1st Festung Fire Brigade Unit had its seat at 39 Mickiewiczza Street in Podgórze, and Jan Nikiel served there.

In Kraków during the Great War, besides the strictly automotive workshop base, there also existed workshops of other branches of service that repaired and/or possessed their own vehicles. One such example is two artillery workshops, one of which was established in November 1914 in the largest factory in Kraków, viz. Zieleniewski Factory.⁴⁶ In addition to cannons, also automobiles and steamrollers were repaired there.⁴⁷ From photographs of the time the author is familiar with, it is clear that vehicles to be repaired were placed outdoors at the factory yard.⁴⁸ The location of army workshops in this factory is one of more spectacular examples of destruction made by war in Kraków. It was explicitly expressed by W. Saryusz-Zaleski in his history of the factory:

⁴² *Zakupno automobilu strażackiego*, "Dziennik rozporządzeń dla stoł. król. miasta Krakowa" Kraków 1916, Annual set 36, p. 93.

⁴³ *Der Krakauer Austro=Daimler=Feuerwehrzug*, "Allgemeine automobil-Zeitung" 1916, No. 26, p. 30.

⁴⁴ Author's collection (hereinafter: a.c.), vehicle of the Festung Krakau Fire Brigade at the City Fire Station yard in Podgórze.

⁴⁵ On both photographs, the sender marked himself sitting behind the steering wheel.

⁴⁶ W. SARYUSZ-ZALESKI, *Dzieje przemysłu w b. Galicji 1804–1929*, Kraków 1930, p. 231.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 232.

⁴⁸ W. SARYUSZ-ZALESKI, *Ibidem*, p. 55; National Digital Archives, file No. 1-H-26-3, *Reflektor przeciwołtmiczy zamontowany na ciężarówce* – it is noteworthy that the photograph was incorrectly described as "Austrian military equipment in Wieliczka." Facilities that can be seen in the background clearly indicate that the picture was taken at the Zieleniewski Factory yard in Kraków.

Its mother plant – the Kraków Factory – has never been directly affected by military activities. However, as soon as autumn 1914 it could be deemed immobilised. Evacuation of the city, conscription of the majority of the employees and lack of raw materials led to the fact that this October the factory has only a dozen or so workers busy with small commissions for the army (...) Even after the military authorities moved out from the factory, for a long time it was not possible to restore normal operation, as the yard was full of uncleared materials, and parts of already started commissioned items were scattered in total disorder, rusting in the rain, if not “confiscated” at all for military purposes.⁴⁹



Fig. 3. One of the Festung Krakau Fire Brigade vehicles. Photograph taken at the City Fire Station yard in Podgórze, a seat of the 1st Festung Fire Brigade Unit. Jan Nikiel behind the steering wheel. (Source: author's collection)

The second site was the artillery workshops in the Podgórze district of Kraków.⁵⁰ At the turn of 1917, at the back of the still-existing artillery workshop building (*k.u.k. Artillerie-Brigade-Werkstätte*) at the junction of Wielicka Street and Płaszowska Street, a new workshop hall was built.⁵¹ The exact range of

⁴⁹ W. SARYUSZ-ZALESKI, *op. cit.*, pp. 231–232.

⁵⁰ In 1915, Podgórze ceased its existence as an independent city, and upon merging with Kraków it became its XXII district.

⁵¹ ANK, Zakład Instalacyjny Adam Bieniarz w Krakowie, file No. 29/1408/0/-/758, p. 1, *Plan na z kanalizowanie Realności L.or.1/sp.41. w Dz. XXII przy ul. Wielickiej w “Artillerie-Brig-Works”*.

operation of those workshops remains unknown. However, it is certain that the workshops had at least two lorries of their own. A photograph taken in March 1918 shows two lorries in front of the workshop hall with k.u.k. soldiers (most probably the personnel of the workshops) standing around them or sitting in their cabs.



Fig. 4. A. Fross-Büssing lorry and R.A.F. lorry (left to right) in front of the artillery workshops in the Podgórze district of Kraków (*k.u.k. Artillerie-Brigade-Werkstätte*) located at the junction of Wielicka Street and Płaszowska Street in a photograph from March 1918 (Source: author's collection)

During the war, a few automotive base units were stationed in the Festung Krakau, including the automobile workshops of the 1st Army (*k.u.k. Armewerkstätte IV*), which occupied the facilities and garden leased by the army from the Kraków Rifleman Society (*Bractwo Kurkowe*, Brotherhood of the Rooster), in the immediate vicinity of the Kraków railway station. Workshop machines were installed in the Dancing Hall of the Celestat,⁵² an indoor shooting range

⁵² Celestat is a customary name of a stately building located in the Rifleman Park and a seat of the Kraków Rifleman Society, currently a seat of one of the Museum of Kraków branches.

was converted into a smithy, while the park was used to place damaged or repaired automobiles. It is well depicted on a series of photographs from the album "Im Etappenraum der I. Armee."⁵³ The most surprising of these photos show machine tools placed at the windows of the ballroom, where you can see the main drive shaft above them propelling individual machines via transmission belts. The other photograph shows a huge hole made in the outer wall linking the smithy (in the shooting range) and the workshop hall (in the ballroom). When the workshops left the facilities in November 1915, the Celestat ballroom was converted into a tyre storehouse, an extension was used as a storehouse for kerosene, petrol, and lubricating oil, while the park served as a fuel depot, where fuel barrels were placed in pits covered with planks.⁵⁴

At the beginning of the war, the number of lorries available for military purposes was limited. First, the army obtained subsidised vehicles, then those from state civilian offices. Some of them were individually assigned to army units and others were formed into only a few automobile columns. Next, private automobiles were requisitioned. Somewhat later, new vehicles were purchased from factories. Due to such activities, rearrangement of transport columns was possible. The number of columns was increased to several dozen and the number of vehicles in each column was decreased, making them more efficient to use.⁵⁵

Currently, it is hard to say when the Kraków Automobile Column (*k.u.k. Kraftwagenkolonne Krakau*) was formed.⁵⁶ Its name suggests its relation with Kraków, but soldiers of various nationalities served in its ranks.⁵⁷ It is also known that it was a transport column composed of lorries,⁵⁸ which was assigned as a transport unit to the 2nd Army.⁵⁹

⁵³ *Im Etappenraum der I. Armee*, Vienna 1915/16, unpublished.

⁵⁴ ANK, Towarzystwo Strzeleckie w Krakowie, file No. TSK 94, p. 3.

⁵⁵ J. Augustowski, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

⁵⁶ Later renamed No. 151 Automotive Column (Kraftwagenkolonne Nr 151) *vide*: W. SCHIMON, *Österreich-Ungarns Kraftformationen im Weltkrieg 1914–1918*, Ljubljana/Laibach 2007, p. 134.

⁵⁷ W. SCHIMON, *Österreich-Ungarns Kraftformationen im Weltkrieg 1914–1918*, Ljubljana/Laibach 2007, p. 134.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 282.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 296.



Fig. 5. Passenger car belonging to the Kraków Automobile Column (*Kraftwagenkolonne Krakau*). Transport trailers in the background. Date and location unknown (Source: author's collection)

Interestingly, the Festung Krakau Command had the Innsbruck Automobile Column⁶⁰ (*k.u.k. Autokolonne Innsbruck*), formed at the end of August 1914 in Austrian Tirol under its orders. The Column was transferred to Kraków by railway. It reached Kraków late at night on 7th September. Captain Ernst von Handel-Mazzetti⁶¹ was the unit commander. At that time his vehicles were stationed outdoors, in the yard of cavalry pioneers' (*Pionieren*) barracks in Kamienna Street. Lorries were repaired there, while passenger cars were repaired in the Smoleńsk Street workshops.⁶² The yard also functioned as parking lot for vehicles from other units.⁶³ The column finally left Kraków after almost 10 months.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 275.

⁶¹ I.I. BEKIRCHER, *Tiroler Autopioniere im Ersten Weltkrieg*, Innsbruck–Vienna 2015, p. 53.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 80.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, pp. 68–69.

⁶⁴ BUJ, file No. 144473 III, vol. 3, p. 588, *ArtRes. Nr. 2887 Autokolonne Innsbruck-Belobung*.

There is no information about the use of post vehicles in Kraków during the war; however, there are photographs showing such vehicles in all probability at the Kraków railway station.⁶⁵ It is unlikely that during the war such a popular means of transport was not used to carry letters and parcels in Kraków.

During the Great War, motorised medical transport was a field that developed quite rapidly. Ambulances were present in every army, at the front line and at the back. On one hand, they symbolised modernity, but on the other hand their crews witnessed unprecedented force of destruction brought by warfare. Inside the Festung Krakau, military vehicles marked with the red cross appeared as well.

The 15th Garrison Hospital had its medical transport service. In the Museum of Krakow collection we can find a photograph showing an ambulance with a proprietary inscription indicating the affiliation of the vehicle to the aforementioned hospital.⁶⁶ The inscription painted on the side of the vehicle comprises an abbreviated name of the unit the vehicle belonged to and the vehicle number – “GARN.SPITAL.15. AUTO. N^o 10.” Therefore, it is obvious that the photograph shows the tenth automobile of those used by the hospital. Thus, the automotive column of the 15th Garrison Hospital had to be composed of at least ten ambulances and they had to be garaged somewhere. In case of larger vehicles, they were most frequently parked outdoors, although efforts were made to house smaller vehicles in garages. Here, the ambulances were probably garaged in the wooden sheds seen in photographs. It should be kept in mind that at the time the hospital was designed, i.e. at the beginning of the 20th century,⁶⁷ motorisation, including military motorisation, was still in its infancy and the need to keep automobiles in such facilities was not taken into account. It is noteworthy that the question of adaptation of old cities, like Kraków, to the needs of quickly developing motorisation is older than we could generally think. It appeared at the very beginning of motorisation, when the first automobile, horse-drawn vehicle and pedestrian collisions occurred in the city streets, where roadways were not strictly outlined. Another problem was visibility at intersections, which were

⁶⁵ *Im Etappenraum der I. Armee*, Vienna 1915/16, n.p.

⁶⁶ MHK, file No. MHK Fs13946-9/325, *Auto szpitalne*.

⁶⁷ Buildings of the 15th Military Garrison Hospital were built in 1907–1911 acc. to a design by an Austrian military engineer M. Hoffman. The works on implementation of the design of this new hospital were commenced by the Austrian military authorities in 1905, [in:] *5 wojskowy Szpital Kliniczny z Polikliniką. Historia szpitala*, <http://5wszk.com.pl/historia-szpitala> (access: 5 I 2021).

made for slow horse and pedestrian traffic. Finally, the question of storage of automobiles appeared. After all, the courtyards of the old city tenement houses were not designed for such a purpose.

The Railway Dressing Station,⁶⁸ established as a result of efforts by the Kraków Red Cross Branch Administration with its president, Count Paweł Sapieha, also had automobiles at their disposal. The Station's task was to provide first aid for the wounded and ill who were transported from the front line to Kraków railway station by train. The Station was equipped both with horse-drawn ambulances and with automobiles. Three of the latter were donated by the Red Cross Central Board in Vienna.⁶⁹ In photographs from the collection of the Sisters of the Order of Preachers we can see a large passenger car, an ambulance, and a small passenger omnibus,⁷⁰ which belonged to the transport section of the Station, managed by Włodzimierz Miarczyński and manned by 36 volunteers.

Another automobile adapted to fulfil medical transport duties was garaged in the Salt Factory Barracks (*k.u.k. Salinenkaserne*) located in Podgórze near the III Bridge on the Vistula.⁷¹ The automobile was a patient transport bus that could carry 18, belonging to the Festung Ambulance Service (*k.u.k. Festungs Sanitär Dienst*).⁷² A similar bus used for patient transport was at the disposal of the No. 1 Military Epidemic Hospital⁷³ (*k.u.k. Militär Epidemie Spital Nr. 1*) located in Łagiewniki near Kraków, within the convent of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.

In 1917, a large, specialist barracks complex for automobile units (*k.u.k. Kraftfahrersatzdepot*)⁷⁴ was built in the Dąbie suburb of Kraków. This complex consisted of a dozen or so buildings housing among others a guardroom, together

⁶⁸ *Dworcowa Stacja Opatrunkowa w Krakowie*, <http://pck.malopolska.pl/dworcowa-stacja-opatrunkowa-w-krakowie> (access: 5 I 2021).

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁷¹ *Salinenkaserne* is a colloquial name, nota bene to be seen on an official plaque hung on the facility. The full German name of the barracks was *Salinenkaserne Podgórze III Most, Nazwy koszar*, [in:] *Polska Komenda Wojskowa w Krakowie. Rozkaz Nr. 11*, Kraków 1918, p. 4.

⁷² BUJ, file No. 144473 III, vol. 1, p. 24, Nr. 1348. *Autobus für Krankentransporte*.

⁷³ *Szpital epidemiologiczny (dawny), Przyjęcie chorego*, <https://polska-org.pl/8562931,foto.html?idEntity=8462805> (access: 5 I 2021).

⁷⁴ ANK, Archiwum Budownictwa Miejskiego, file No. ABM Kosynierów 4 f.422, p. 1, *Linear Skizze des Kraftfahrersatzdepot in Dąbie-Piaski*; a plan of those barracks was incorrectly filed among the documents pertaining to the other barracks complex in Kraków's district of Dąbie.

with a jail, near the main gate, the barracks headquarters, residential barracks, workshop halls, fire station, and storehouses. A residential building for officers was located slightly farther from the complex centre. All the facilities were well linked with an extended road network. Moreover, the barracks had their own siding with a loading ramp, and a railway track led to main workshop halls. An automobile track for training drivers was also built. A portion of the fenced area remained undeveloped, leaving space for possible complex expansion. The complex construction was the last action undertaken by the Austrian military authorities within the scope of expanding the stronghold automotive base.

On 30th October 1918, i.e. 12 days before the end of the Great War, Kraków was the scene of a campaign aiming at liberation of the city from foreign authority. Troops led by Antoni Stawarz and Franciszek Pustelnik with a group of conspirators first took over military facilities in Podgórze, the right-bank district of Kraków, and then marched to the city centre.⁷⁵ On 31st October 1918, the Poles regained power in Kraków and the Austrians handed over their authority to the Polish Liquidation Committee. The Committee, in turn, handed over the Military Command in Galicia to Colonel Roja on 1st November 1918.⁷⁶

However, before power was officially transferred, the Austrian Festung Krakau automotive base played one last part. Despite the ongoing negotiations and arrangements between the military authorities and the Polish Liquidation Committee, on 30th October and during the night from 30th to 31st October, army vehicles were used to carry huge amounts of food from Kraków in a westward direction.⁷⁷ No one exactly knows the range of this action; however, it is certain that the vehicles never returned to Kraków.

Among the numerous actions undertaken by the Polish military authorities related to taking command over military units in Kraków, there were also those pertaining to the automotive base. The Kraków Military Command issued a series of orders corresponding to such actions. The first of them (issued as early as 4th November) organised the issue of the allotment of vehicles taken over from the Austrians. With this order, Roja reserved for himself and his deputy the exclusive right to administer these vehicles.⁷⁸ Reading the following order issued

⁷⁵ *Podgórze. Przewodnik*, ed. D. Rywczak, Kraków 2020, p. 63.

⁷⁶ *Polska Komenda wojskowa w Krakowie, Rozkaz Nr. 1*, Kraków 1918.

⁷⁷ *Układy swoją drogą, a wojsko żywność wywozi!*, "Goniec Krakowski" 1918, No. 122, p. 3.

⁷⁸ *Polska Komenda Wojskowa w Krakowie. Rozkaz Nr. 4*, Kraków 1918, p. 2.

by the Polish Military Command (PMC) four days later, we learn that in November 1918 the Commandant of the automobile column in Kraków was lieutenant Piotrowski.⁷⁹ Another step taken by the PMC was an effort to inventory all the vehicles found in Kraków. With this end in view, an appropriate order was issued and a form specimen was distributed to be filled in and sent back immediately.⁸⁰ People were asked to report the vehicles themselves, divided into passenger cars and lorries, as well as the number and inventory of inner tubes and tyres, as those were in extremely short supply at that time.

In order to ensure proper operation of the automotive base it was essential to form an appropriate corps. Therefore, they commanded every soldier of the former Austrian automotive corps (*k.u.k. Autotruppe*), in particular "drivers and metal processing professionals" residing in Kraków and those arriving in Kraków, to report to "the command of the auxiliary automotive corps in Dąbie-Grzegórzki near Kraków."⁸¹

On 23rd November, changes were made to the staffing of the commanding posts of the automotive units in Kraków. Captain Franciszek Schneider of the second heavy artillery regiment replaced Łucyan Myciński in the post of the auxiliary automotive corps commandant. At the same time, Captain Kazimierz Kristmann-Dobrzański of the second heavy artillery regiment⁸² became the commander of automotive units and the automobile officer with the Military Command.

Automobile traffic in the city certainly constituted a problem in respect of the threat posed by automobiles, as can be proven by orders issued by the military authorities. The first regulations concerned the traffic of all military vehicles, including those drawn by horses. Military vehicles were to keep to the left side of the roadway. Lorries were not to exceed 10 km/h⁸³ within the city. However, lorries still posed a threat, and the following order reduced the speed limit to 6 km/h.⁸⁴ This order also reminded drivers about left-hand traffic and passing the opposite direction traffic on the left, while overtaking on the right.

⁷⁹ *Polska Komenda Wojskowa w Krakowie. Rozkaz Nr. 6*, Kraków 1918, p. 3.

⁸⁰ *Polska Komenda Wojskowa w Krakowie. Rozkaz Nr. 9*, Kraków 1918, p. 3.

⁸¹ *Polska Komenda Wojskowa w Krakowie. Rozkaz Nr. 10*, Kraków 1918, p. 4.

⁸² *Komenda Wojskowa w Krakowie. Rozkaz Nr. 13*, Kraków 1918, pp. 3–4.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

⁸⁴ *Dowództwo Generalnego Okręgu w Krakowie. Rozkaz Nr. 22*, Kraków 1918, p. 7.

The order also stated to “severely punish drivers who do not obey the regulations or wilfully exceed the speed limit.”

On 30th December 1918, the following order was issued:

In order to control the traffic and check the ownership of automobiles that belonged to the former military authorities and currently are at the disposal of Polish army units and commands, we hereby order as follows:

The aforementioned vehicles, i.e. passenger cars, lorries and special vehicles, together with those whose assignment is not clear, shall be reported to the General District Headquarters in Kraków (Division V.) until 15th January 1919 at the latest.

Brand, police register number, type, power, wheel rim size, owner’s and driver’s names shall be provided. Vehicles whose rightful ownership and assignment would be established, and those acknowledged necessary to be kept in operation at present, shall be provided with appropriate cards at the General District Headquarters in Kraków. Vehicles that do not receive the card by the deadline stated above shall not be allowed in traffic and will be stopped and confiscated by appointed bodies.⁸⁵

Earlier, posters with the same content⁸⁶ addressed to civilians were displayed in the city and undersigned by Z. Lasocki, the head of the administrative department of the Polish Liquidation Committee.⁸⁷ Those restrictions remained binding in Poland virtually until the end of hostilities during the Polish-Soviet War in 1920.

⁸⁵ *Dowództwo Generalnego Okręgu w Krakowie. Rozkaz Nr. 28*, Kraków 1918, p. 4.

⁸⁶ Unfortunately the poster lacks the date of the order issuance, it only holds information about commandeering of automobiles not reported until “the 26th day of the current month.” In Lviv, similar posters issued by the Supreme Command of the Polish Armed Forces were dated 15th November 1915.

⁸⁷ National Library, file No. DŹS IA 6 Cim., *Obwieszczenie!*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival primary sources

Jagiellonian Library

File No. 144473 III, vol. 1; 144473 III, vol. 3.

National Archives in Kraków

Akta Miasta Pogórza, file No. P-63, pp. 2127–2130.

Archiwum Budownictwa Miejskiego, file No. ABM Kosynierów 4, f. 422.

C.K. Dyrekcja Policji w Krakowie 1848–1919, file No. DPKr 177.

Naczelny Komitet Narodowy, file No. 29/530/0/2.16/384.

Towarzystwo Strzeleckie w Krakowie, file No. TSK 94.

Zakład Instalacyjny Adam Bieniarz w Krakowie, file No. 29/1408/0/-/758.

National Digital Archives

File No. 1-H-26-3.

National Library

File No. DŹS IA 6 Cim., *Obwieszczenie!*

Printed primary sources

Automobil w usługach straży pożarnej, "Nowości Illustrowane" 1907, Annual set 4, No. 40, p. 15.

Defilada samochodowa przed cesarzem, "Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny" 1912, Annual set 3, No. 130, p. 5.

Der Krakauer Austro=Daimler=Feuerwehruzug, "Allgemeine Automobil-Zeitung" 1916, No. 26, pp. 29–30.

Dowództwo Generalnego Okręgu w Krakowie. Rozkaz Nr. 22, Kraków 1918.

Dowództwo Generalnego Okręgu w Krakowie. Rozkaz Nr. 28, Kraków 1918.

Im Etappenraum der I. Armee, Vienna 1915/16.

Jubileuszowa księga krakowskich straży pożarnych 1873–1925 1865–1925, Kraków 1925.

Komenda Wojskowa w Krakowie. Rozkaz Nr. 13, Kraków 1918.

Österreichische Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft, "Allgemeine Automobil-Zeitung" 1904, Annual set 5, No. 18, pp. 15–17.

- Podgórze. Przewodnik*, ed. D. RYWCZAK, Kraków 2020.
- Polska Komenda wojskowa w Krakowie. Rozkaz Nr. 1, 4, 6, 9, 10*, Kraków 1918.
- Pożar*, "Nowa Reforma" 1914, Annual set 33, No. 528, p. 2.
- Samochody do celów wojskowych*, "Czas" 1903, Annual set 56, No. 211 (evening issue), p. 2.
- Straż pożarna krakowska (...)*, "Nowa Reforma" 1914, Annual set 33, No. 471, p. 2.
- Subwencyonowanie automobilów ciężarowych, przydatnych do użytku w razie wojny*, "Głos Rzeszowski" 1914, Annual set 18, No. 8, pp. 1–2.
- Układy swoją drogą, a wojsko żywność wywozi!*, "Goniec Krakowski" 1918, No. 122, p. 3.
- Zakupno automobilu strażackiego*, "Dziennik rozporządzeń dla stoł. król. miasta Krakowa" Kraków 1916, Annual set 36, p. 93.

Secondary sources

- Album fotografii dawnego Krakowa z atelier Ignacego Kriegera*, Kraków 1989.
- AUGUSTOWSKI J., *Wojska samochodowe w Austrii, Niemczech i Rosji podczas wojny światowej*, "Bellona" 1932, Annual set 14, vol. 40, pp. 169–189.
- BEIKIRCHER I.I., *Tiroler Autopioniere im Ersten Weltkrieg*, Innsbruck–Vienna 2015.
- BOGUNIA-PACZYŃSKI A., *Mój Benz, moja Mercedes*, Kraków 1992.
- BOGUNIA-PACZYŃSKI A., *Samochodowcy, wyścigowcy, automobilery albo diabły i diabllice w daimlerowskich landach*, Kraków 1998.
- GAWEŁ R., *Galician automobilism*, "Galicja. Studia i materiały" 2020, vol. 6, pp. 348–372.
- ROSTOCKI A.M., *Historia starych samochodów*, Warszawa 1981.
- ROSTOCKI A., SOKOŁOWSKI T., *Świat starych samochodów*, Warszawa 1972.
- SARYUSZ-ZALESKI W., *Dzieje przemysłu w b. Galicji 1804–1929*, Kraków 1930.
- SCHIMON W., *Österreich-Ungarns Kraftformationen im Weltkrieg 1914–1918*, Lubljana/Laibach 2007.
- SPIELBERGER W.J., *Kraftfahrzeuge und Panzer des österreichischen Heeres 1896 bis heute*, Stuttgart 1976.
- WŁODEK J.M., *Jan Włodek legionista, dyplomata, uczonec*, Kraków 2009.

Netography

- Dworcowa Stacja Opatrunkowa w Krakowie*, <http://pck.malopolska.pl/dworcowa-stacja-opatrunkowa-w-krakowie> (access: 5 I 2021).
- Szpital epidemiologiczny (dawny), Przyjęcie chorego*, <https://polska-org.pl/8562931,foto.html?idEntity=8462805> (access: 5 I 2021).