

SANITÄTSHUNDE OLDENBURG SANIGRUPPE

Postcard Artist: unknown, German school

Subject: Paul Ludwig Hans Anton von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg (1847-1934)

Photograph: Nicola Perscheid (1864–1930) German photographer, primarily known for his artistic portrait photography. He developed the "Perscheid lens", a soft-focus lens for large format portrait photography.

Publisher: postcard colour lithograph by art publishing house (kunstverlagsanstalt), Gerhard Stalling, Oldenburg

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The modern guide dog story begins during the First World War, with thousands of soldiers returning from the Front blinded, often by poison gas. A German doctor, Dr Gerhard Stalling, got the idea of training dogs *en masse* to help those affected. He explored ways of training dogs to become reliable guides and in August 1916 opened the world's first guide dog school for the blind in Oldenburg. The school grew and many new branches opened in Bonn, Breslau, Dresden, Essen, Freiburg, Hamburg, Magdeburg, Münster and Hannover, training up to 600 dogs a year. These schools provided dogs not only to ex-servicemen, but also to blind people in Britain, France, Spain, Italy, the United States, Canada and the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, due to a reduction in dog quality, the venture had to shut down in 1926, but by that time another large guide dog training centre had opened in Potsdam, near Berlin, which was proving to be highly successful. This school's work broke new ground in the training of guide dogs, and it was capable of accommodating around 100 dogs at a time and providing up to 12 fully-trained guide dogs a month.

The most common breed for patrolling and law enforcement operations has been the German Shepherd, the Belgian Malinois and Dutch Shepherd dogs.

A medical dog is the oldest type of trained and used rescue dogs. The English army used Scottish Shepherd dogs, which rendered valuable services in the war of the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1901. German Shepherd dogs, bearing a Red Cross emblem feature frequently on postcards 1914–1918.

Today, medical dogs are trained for purely sporting purposes. The sanitary dog in level 3 searches for a forest area of 120 x 400 meters after three people and a backpack and has just 30 minutes for it. In addition, medical dogs also have to show different subordination exercises in an examination.