

Lot Type Grading Description

Est \$AUD

NEW GUINEA - German (Deutsch) New Guinea - Postal History

Lot 790

790 C A+ **1914** usage of plain 'Postkarte' with 'FELD-/nur für die Wehrabteilung und/für die Expeditionstruppe' h/s and Rabaul mailbag seal both in violet, to Hollandia (Dutch New Guinea!) with the message headed "Bitabaka [sic] 10 September 1914", 10pf affixed but tied by Australian-pattern 'HERBERTSHOHE' cds of 4DE15, *Bothe* guarantee h/s. Superb! *Horst Lantelme Certificate* (1993). [When War was declared, on 4/8/1914, no suitable military stationery was available so this provisional expedient was resorted to. This is the only example we have recorded used to any external destination apart from Germany]

Bitabaka was the site of an important radio station, of major strategic importance. The "Battle of Bitabaka", on 11/9/1914 was Australia's first engagement of World War I. 25 naval reservists overcame stiff resistance, losing seven killed & five wounded. The Germans lost an NCO and about 30 armed Melanesians. This item was written the day before the Australian offensive. The postcard was impounded and held at Herbertshohe for more than a year before being released. The sender identified himself as a *Feldwebel* (= sergeant), so he was probably the NCO who died in the engagement.

2,500T