

Stereoscopy History Series

The Great War

Selling the Front

ANDRÉ RUITER

Selling the Front

The story of French publishers and sellers who sold the First World War in 3D.



The *Stereoscopy History Series* explores the history of stereoscopy in Europe between 1850 and 1930, unveiling the stories of the people, companies and their remarkable instruments and images that captured the imagination of an era.

Foreword

As a photographer, I specialise in the theme *Historic Landscapes*, a combination of landscape photography and history. In 2009, I visited the First World War battlefield of Verdun in France. The remnants of the battlefield made a huge impression on me, and I started a photo project that I would eventually work on for 10 years.

My connection to this project prompted me to search on eBay for an original trench map of the battlefield. I eventually found this map, but not before I came across a collection of obscure glass plates with stereo photos of the battle. I knew little about stereo photography, and these slides fascinated me. I looked for more images of Verdun and started collecting them, with no apparent purpose. In the meantime, I tried to find out more about the background of these images. Who were the photographers, publishers and sellers? How many slides exist? It seemed that the resources were scarce. Things changed when I found the website *The Great War in 3D*, with a large collection of stereoviews from the Jordan/Ference collection and some information about the publishers. In the same period, I bought my first stereoscope, a Zeiss Ikon hand-held viewer. The first time I watched a stereoview through the lenses was a wonderful experience, and a new passion was born. I started collecting the war views and focused on glass stereoviews from French publishers. Elaborating on the information on *The Great War in 3D*, I looked for catalogues, invoices, advertisements and other items that could tell something about the manufacturing and sale of war stereoviews in the 1920s. Slowly, a more complete picture emerged.

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1.S.U 432. Carency.
Déjeuner macabre.

The First World War

On 28 June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo by the Bosnian Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip. The assassination was the trigger for the outbreak of the First World War, but the real causes lay deeper. The beginning of the 20th century was marked by a nationalist and militaristic sentiment, caused by expansion drift and the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. It led to tensions between the major powers in Europe, and each country began to plan for a possible war.

Several alliances were forged in the run-up to the war. Germany and Austria-Hungary were allies. France had an alliance with Russia. The Germans were working on a major expansion of the fleet, which alarmed the United Kingdom. The British had traditionally been the rulers of the seas, and Germany's naval plans led the British to approach their old enemy, France.

The assassination of Franz Ferdinand set off a chain reaction. On 23 July 1914, Austria-Hungary issued an ultimatum to Serbia. The assassination had to be sorted out, and unfair terms would cause a major encroachment on Serbia's sovereignty. The Serbs refused and mobilised their army. On 28 July, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Austria-Hungary was supported by Germany. The Serbs were supported by Russia, and the Russians began mobilising their army on 30 July.

Germany declared war on Russia on 1 August, and because of the French alliance with the Russians, France also began to mobilise its army. On 3 August, Germany declared war on France. On their way to France, the German armies demanded a free passage through neutral Belgium, but the Belgians refused. The Belgians defended themselves against the German invasion, and because the United Kingdom had guaranteed Belgium's neutrality, the British also became involved in the war. In one week, all the major European powers were at war. The war was welcomed by most countries. France saw it as an opportunity to take revenge for the humiliating defeat of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 and wanted to retake the lost regions of Alsace-Lorraine. A short war was expected, and everyone would be home by Christmas.

Germany feared it would have to fight on two fronts simultaneously against both France and Russia. It had worked out the Schlieffen Plan long before the war, which should prevent a war on two fronts. Germany estimated that much time was needed by the Russians to mobilise their army. Germany wanted to deal with France first, so it could then focus on the war against Russia. The French army had to be defeated in 42 days. The German armies would invade through the north of France, move around Paris, and enclose and destroy the French armies advancing in Alsace-Lorraine. The plan was very opportunistic, and the Germans assumed that the Belgians would give them a free passage.

The Schlieffen Plan had setbacks from the start. The German armies advanced through Belgium but encountered heavy resistance from the forts around Liège, which immediately delayed the ambitious planning. The Russian army also mobilised much faster than expected, and in August, the Russian armies invaded East Prussia. The German army hastily moved armies from the Western Front to the Eastern Front. With a German victory over the Russians at the Battle of Tannenberg, the immediate danger had passed.

Despite setbacks, the German advance into France went well, and the French armies were pushed back towards Paris. From 5 to 12 September 1914, a huge battle took place on the river Marne. The German armies were defeated by the allied French and British armies. The German advance was halted, but the Allies failed to achieve the decisive victory which was needed to drive the Germans out of France.

Following the Battle of the Marne and the failures by both sides to turn the opponent's northern flank during the Race to the Sea, the war of movement ended. Germany was now engaged in a two-front war and on the Western Front in Belgium and France, the armies began to dig in. This would be the start of the trench war. The hope that everyone would be home by Christmas was gone.

The Western Front ran from West Flanders in Belgium via northern France to Alsace, where the French offensive to retake Alsace-Lorraine had stalled on the peaks of the Vosges Mountains.



A group of German prisoners of war, guarded by French soldiers on horses. They are walking along a building with the text Gott strafe England! The photo was taken near the village of Bucy-le-Long in Northern France.
Gott strafe England (May God punish England) was a slogan used by the German army during the First World War. The slogan came from the German poet Ernst Lissauer. The text on the facade dates from the time that Bucy-le-Long was occupied by German troops and reflects the nationalistic sentiments at the beginning of the war. The building in the photo was part of a distillery, later a sugar factory. The first distillery on this site was founded in 1862. During the First World War, the distillery was in the front line. The buildings were largely destroyed but the factory was rebuilt after the war. Today, the factory still exists and is located along the Aisne river, on the road between Bucy-le-Long and Crouy.


LONDON
Southend
Reading
Thames
Queenboro
Margate
Q to F.109
E.Schelde
Walcheren
Flushing
W.Schelde
Zeebrugge
Ostend
Dover
61
Nieuport
Dover
Folkestone
Dunkirk
Southampton
Hastings
Calais
C.Gris Nez
Boulogne
Brighton
Newhaven
Portsmouth
ENGLISH CHANNEL
Étaples
Montreuil
Somme
St.Valery-sur-S.
Tréport
Crécy
St.Pol
Abbeville
Dieppe
St.Valery-en-Caux
Fécamp
Barfleur
C.d'Antifer
Seine Bay
Le Havre
Harfleur
Yvetot
Bolbec
Honfleur
Trouville
Bayeux
Caen
St.Lo
Lisieux
Elbeuf
Louviers
Évreux
Bernay
Falaise
Condé
Vire
Rouen
Aumale
Neufchâtel
Amiens
Montdidier
Beauvais
Compiègne
Gisors
Les Andelys
Pontoise
Creil
Senlis
Ivry
St.Germain
PARIS
St.Denis
Meaux
Coulommiers
Corbeil
Melun
Provins
Sezanne
Montmirail
Château Thierry
Epernay
Ay
Reims
Châlons s/Marne
Mourmelon le Grand
Vouziers
Stenay
Rethel
Laon
La Fère
Chauny
Soissons
Vervins
Guise
St.Quentin
Rocroi
Charleville
Mézières
Sedan
Montmedy
Verdun
St.Mihiel
Bar-le-Duc
Vitry le François
St.Dizier
Toul
Commercy
Meuse
Marne
Aisne
Oise
Somme
Ancre
Lys
Yser
Ypres
Armentières
Bethune
Lens
Douai
Arras
Albert
Péronne
Cambrai
Le Cateau
Denain
Maubeuge
Avesnes
Fourmies
Valenciennes
Condé
St Amand
Mons
Tournai
Courtrai
Roulers
Thielt
Ghent
Bruges
Ostend
Zeebrugge
Gravelines
St.Omer
Ypres
Tourcoing
Roubaix
Lille
Oudenarde
Alost
Malines
Antwerp
St Nicolas
Schelde
Turnhout
Bergen
Breda
Tilburg
Nijmegen
Roermond
Hasselt
Louvain
BRUSSELS
BELGIUM
Nivelles
Namur
Huy
Liége
Maas
Meuse
Charleroi
Dinant
Givet
Bastogne
Arlon
Longwy
Thionville
Briey
Wiltz
LUXE
Eumay
Diekirch
Ardennes
Forêt d'Argonne
Woëvre
Hauts de Meuse
Côtes de Meuse
Plateau de Langres
Plateau de Haye
Plateau de Lorraine
Plateau de Haye
Plateau de Lorraine
Plateau de Haye
Plateau de Lorraine

Between the trenches on both sides lay “no man’s land”. Attempts to break through each other’s lines led to pointless offensives in which hardly any ground was gained. Heavy shelling and the use of the machine gun claimed many casualties. Soldiers who survived the bombings were mutilated for the rest of their lives, and the use of poison gas was feared. Gas became a powerful psychological weapon.

In 1916, the German army tried to break the deadlock. On 16 February, the Germans launched a major offensive to the city of Verdun with a devastating bombardment. The battle lasted until December 1916 and became one of the bloodiest battles in history. The French eventually managed to hold out, and in December the front line was almost back in the same position as in February. During the battle, 263,000 soldiers were killed and 492,000 were wounded. The Allies, in turn, tried to break through the German lines at the river Somme. The Battle of the Somme began on 1 July 1916, and 30,000 soldiers were killed or wounded in the first hour of the battle alone. This offensive to break the stalemate also failed, and the trench warfare continued. Soldiers were knee-deep in mud, and the bodies of the dead could often not be buried, leading to a terrible stench and unsanitary living conditions.

A revolution broke out in Russia in 1917. The Bolsheviks came to power and sought peace with Germany. After the conclusion of peace in 1918, Germany was able to move its troops from the Eastern Front to the Western Front. In the summer of 1918, the German armies made one last attempt to win the war. The offensive was initially successful, and the Germans made major gains in territory. However, the Allies hold out, and the breakthrough failed.

On 6 April 1917, the United States declared war on Germany and sided with the Allies. The supply of fresh American troops and the large shortages in Germany because of the naval blockades by the British Royal Navy eventually caused Germany to capitulate. The armistice was signed on 11 November 1918, ending the war that had cost millions of lives worldwide.


L.S.V. 2018. LA PARTIE DE CARTES


L.S.V. 2018. PARTIE DE CARTES DANS UN ABRI DE 1re LIGNE

Shooting the Front

Photography had become accessible to a large group of amateurs at the beginning of the war. Compact and affordable cameras, such as Jules Richard's Glyphoscope, easily fitted into a soldier's backpack. In France, it was forbidden by law for soldiers to possess a camera on the front line, without proper authorisation. This law was intended to prevent espionage and bypass censorship. However, soldiers and civilians could obtain authorisation to own a camera and take photographs at the front[1].

Le Miroir first appeared in 1910 as a richly illustrated supplement to *Le Petit Parisien*. It had been published as an independent weekly magazine since 1912. The images consisted mainly of illustrations and reproductions of photographs.

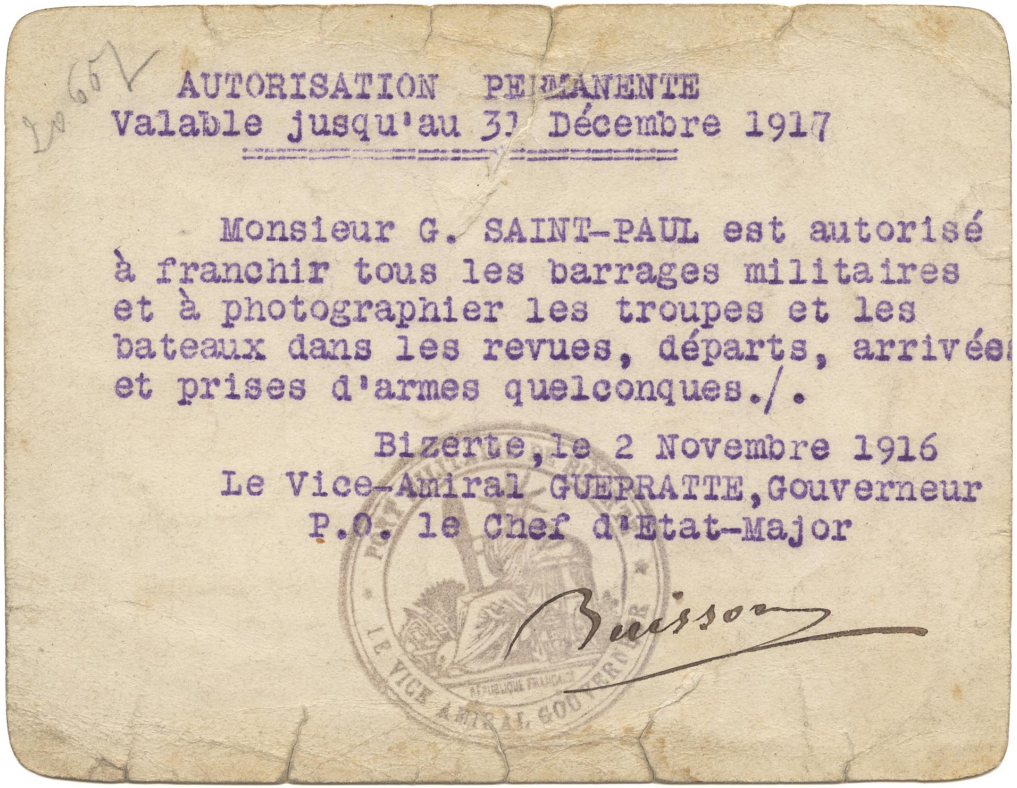
The magazine had its largest circulation at the end of the war, with 1 million copies. The editions were thinner because of the paper shortage, but were completely devoted to the war. *Le Miroir* showed a one-sided and chauvinistic image of the war and constituted important propaganda. The magazine was constantly looking for sensational images that could boost sales. It mainly focused on soldiers at the front who were in possession of a camera and who managed to bypass censorship. Later in the war, the subtitle of the magazine was:

> *Le Miroir* pays any price for photographic documents relating to the war, presenting a particular interest.

The magazine also organised a competition for the "most appealing picture" with a grand prize of 30,000 francs.



Jules Richard's Glyphoscope Modèle 3 was a compact stereo camera. Its light weight and small size made it ideally suited to fit into a soldier's backpack.



AUTORISATION PERMANENTE
Valable jusqu'au 31 Décembre 1917

Monsieur G. SAINT-PAUL est autorisé à franchir tous les barrages militaires et à photographier les troupes et les bateaux dans les revues, départs, arrivées et prises d'armes quelconques./.

Bizerte, le 2 Novembre 1916
Le Vice-Amiral GUEPRATTE, Gouverneur
P.O. le Chef d'Etat-Major

Buisson

An authorisation granted to a civilian allowing unrestricted movement and photography within military zones.



Sixième année. — N° 145. Le Numéro : 25 centimes. DIMANCHE 3 Septembre 1916.

LE MIROIR

PUBLICATION HEBDOMADAIRE, 18, Rue d'Enghien, PARIS

LE MIROIR paie n'importe quel prix les documents photographiques relatifs à la guerre, présentant un intérêt particulier.

LA FACTION DEVANT VERDUN. — EN SENTINELLE DANS LE FORT DE SOUVILLE

C'est dans le fort fameux de Souville, qui barre aux Allemands la route de Verdun, qu'a été fixée, dans les casemates effondrées, cette silhouette fantastique de guetteur muni de son masque.

The cover of *Le Miroir*, 3 September 1916.

Selling the Front

Stereoviews with war scenes were already being sold during the war, but the supply was limited, and censorship allowed the population to see only what the French Ministry of War approved. After censorship ended, the range of photos was expanded with photos that the soldiers took from the front line. The soldiers sold (copies of) their negatives to commercial publishers. The real horrors of the war became visible, and the depth effect of stereo photography enhanced the experience.

The stereoviews became very popular. The views were offered on paper and glass, but in the French tradition, it were the glass slides in the formats 45 x 107 mm and 6 x 13 cm that were the most popular. The slides were sold in series of 10 or 12 and were packed in cardboard boxes. Each series had a theme related to a specific battle or campaign. It was also possible to buy the slides individually, based on titles in a catalogue, or complete collections in wooden cases. There were leaflets with overviews of all battles and their locations, allowing the buyers to see where their photos were taken.

The Photo-Plait catalogue of 1918–1919 included series with glass stereoviews. The slides could be bought as a series or separately. A 45 x 107 mm glass slide cost 0.95 francs, and a 6 x 13 cm slide cost 1.20. The same catalogue also showed stereoviews that were not related to the war. These slides were 12% cheaper. Prices were increased in the Photo-Plait catalogue of 1919. The 45 x 107 mm war slides were 28% more expensive than the non-war slides, and the 6 x 13 cm slides were 36% more expensive. The sale of the war views became a lucrative business. Éditions Stéréoscopiques – G. Ferret wrote in his catalogue:

> As painful as the war period has been, you owe it to yourself and your descendants to keep the memory alive. These images, due to their impressive realism, will remain the only testimony of value for future generations.

The market for war stereoviews flourished in the 1920s in France. Many publishers and sellers took advantage of the war stereo craze and marketed their stereoviews to curious buyers and veterans.



A wooden case with 200 glass stereoviews in the 45 x 107 mm format and a Unis France hand-held stereoscope.





Jules Richard's Pliant is a very basic foldable stereoscope for 45 x 107 mm glass stereoviews.

Photo-Plait

Henri Plait was born in Surgy on 7 November 1881. He opened his first photography shop in 1910 at 37, Rue Lafayette in Paris. Following the outbreak of the First World War, he was mobilised by the French army. He fell ill and suffered from pleurisy, resulting in his dismissal from military service after recovering[2]. Upon returning to his shop, he started promoting a camera for the soldiers at the front. The camera he marketed was the Vest Pocket Kodak, a compact folding camera that used film and was easy to carry. The marketing slogan was “Le Kodak du Soldat” (The Soldier’s Kodak). Additionally, Plait provided more services to the soldiers at the front. They could send their negatives by postal service to Photo-Plait, where the negatives were developed and the printed images were sent back to the photographer.

Photo-Plait also sold stereoviews depicting war scenes. The 1918–1919 catalogue included a detailed list of 14 series, each consisting of 12 glass stereoviews with their numbers and titles. The slides were manufactured by publisher Rolland.

Following the war, Photo-Plait expanded its business activities and opened more stores in Paris. In 1938, Plait was awarded the title of Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur[3]. He passed away on 7 December 1976. The last Photo-Plait store eventually closed its doors in the 1970s[2].



Photo-Plait Catalogue Général, 1916.



APPAREILS & TRAVAUX PHOTO

PHOTO-PLAIT

37, RUE LAFAYETTE

TÉLÉPHONE CENTRAL 66-51

Appareils de toutes Marques et tout ce qui concerne LA PHOTOGRAPHIE

APPAREILS KODAK PELLICULES

ADRESSE TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE PLATOSCOPE-PARIS I954S

PARIS-OPÉRA, LE 25 Septembre 191 7

Monsieur CHARBONNIER
Sous-Lieutenant 1ère Cie 10ème Inf.
S.P. 53

J'ai l'avantage de vous informer que je vous ai expédié, le 21 Sept. en 1 colis poste la commande que vous avez bien voulu me confier, pour laquelle je vous remercie et dont voici le détail :

30 déve. 6x9	6.
12 caches diverses en pap.	0. 30
1 dégradateur 6 1/2x9	0. 75
frais d'envoi	0. 25
	7. 30

v/ envoi espèces 20 frs + 2f 95 créd. s/ nos livres = 22f 95

Il vous revient la somme de 12 frs 65 que je porte à valoir sur votre prochaine commande.

Toujours dévoué à vos ordres, veuillez agréer Monsieur, mes sincères salutations. Pt. H. PLAIT

A Photo-Plait order confirmation to a second lieutenant at the front, 25 September 1917.

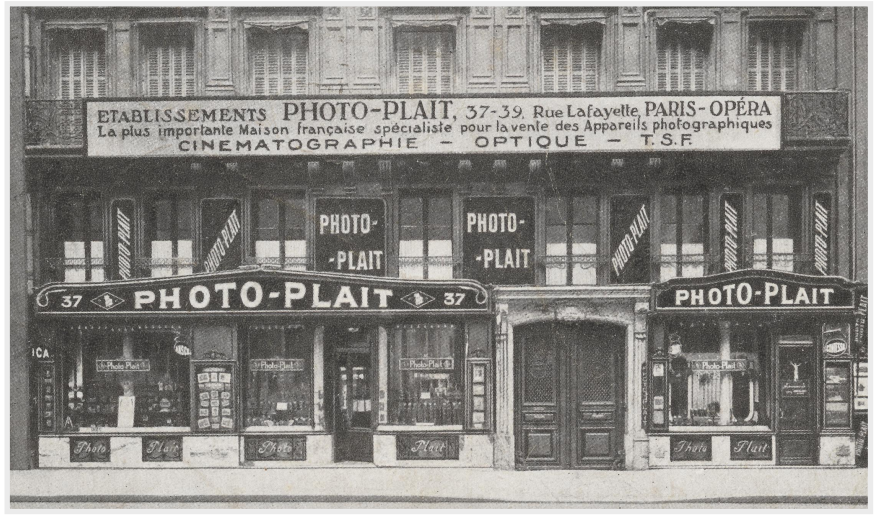


Photo-Plait at 37, Rue Lafayette, c. 1925.



Cardboard box for 6 x 13 cm glass stereoviews.



Le Platoscope is a basic stereo camera that was made by an unknown manufacturer and sold by Photo-Plait and other retailers. The camera was introduced during the First World War as a “sensational novelty”. Le Platoscope was promoted by Photo-Plait with the slogan “for the soldier and the beginner in photography”. The camera was purchased with six plate holders and weighed only 275 grammes. It is unknown how popular this camera was among soldiers, but its compact shape and weight made it very easy to fit in a soldier’s backpack.

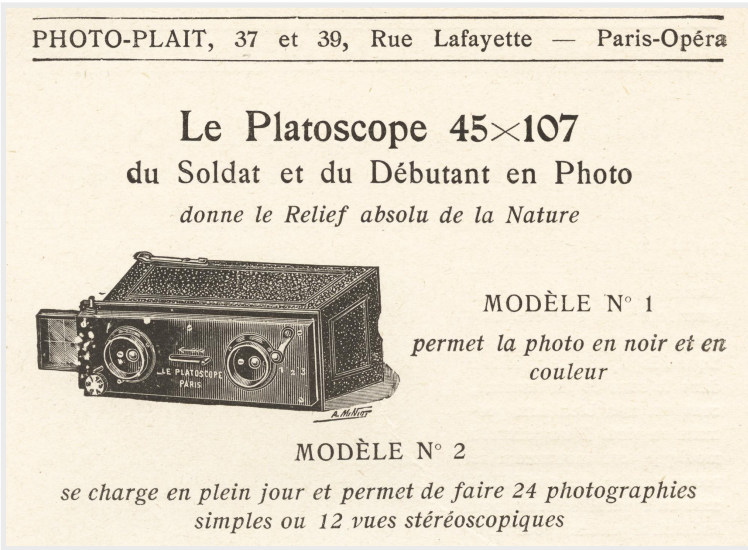


PHOTO-PLAIT, 37 et 39, Rue Lafayette — Paris-Opéra

Le Platoscope 45×107

du Soldat et du Débutant en Photo

donne le Relief absolu de la Nature

MODÈLE N° 1

permet la photo en noir et en couleur

MODÈLE N° 2

se charge en plein jour et permet de faire 24 photographies simples ou 12 vues stéréoscopiques

Éditions Rolland

La Stéréoscopie Universelle was a trademark of Paul Rolland. His company became one of the largest manufacturers of glass and paper stereoviews, featuring images from the First World War. Rolland was located at 51, Boulevard Saint-Martin in Paris and stayed in business for more than 30 years. The first war stereoviews that can be definitively attributed to Rolland were released towards the end of 1917[4]. However, the trademark La Stéréoscopie Universelle might not have been introduced until c.1922[5].

From March 1925, Rolland ran the company Rolland et Cie in collaboration with Albert Dollberg[6]. The *Archives Commerciales de la France* described the business activities of Rolland et Cie as follows:

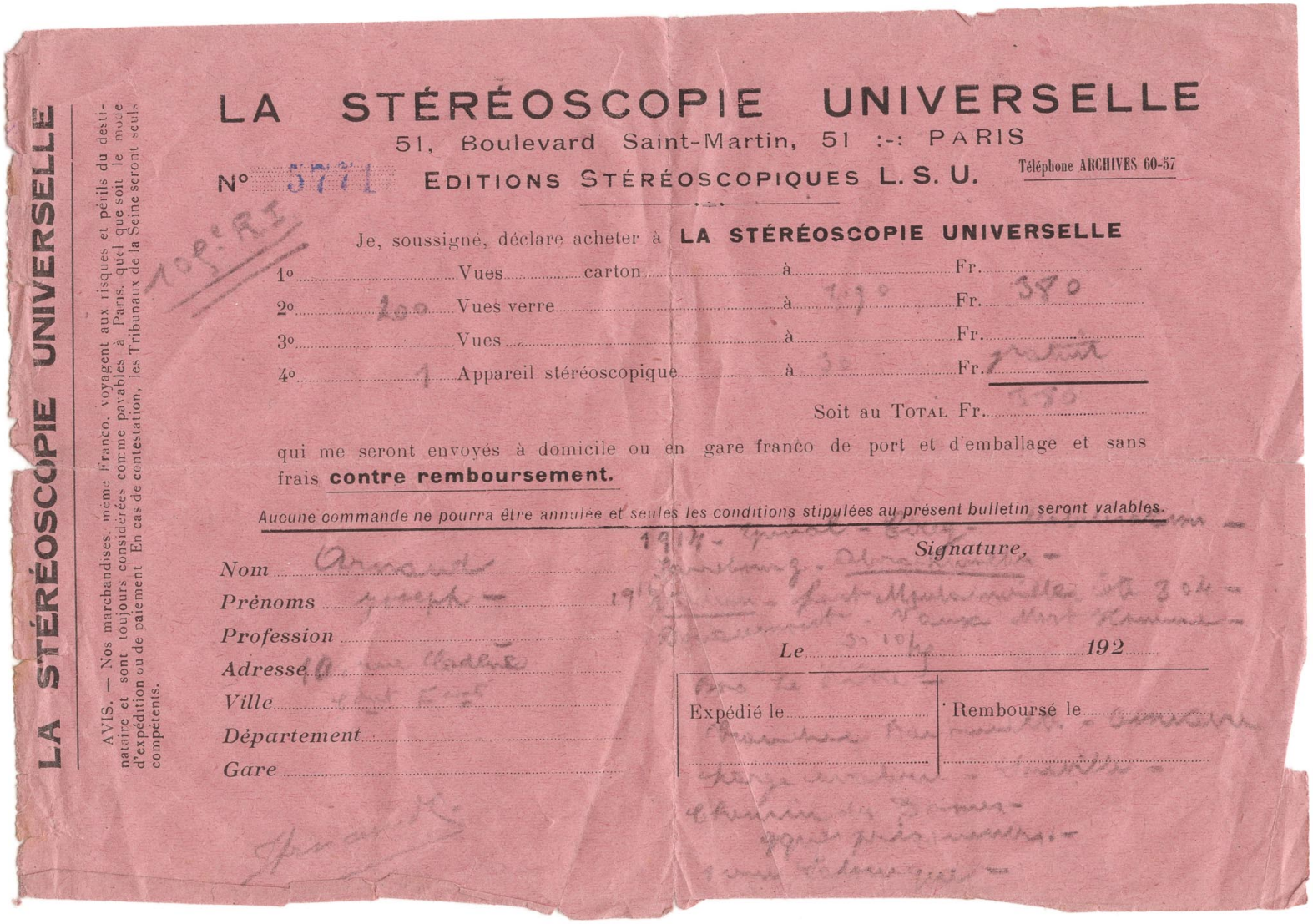
> The manufacturing, acquisition and sale of devices, stereoviews, projections, film and all related items… publishing, buying and selling of artistic paintings.

The collaboration with Dollberg came to an end in 1928[7]. After the dissolution of Rolland et Cie, Rolland remained active as a stereoview publisher, with the last known advertisement dating back to 1949[8].

Rolland manufactured glass stereoviews in the 45 x 107 mm and 6 x 13 cm formats, as well as paper stereoviews. Numerous slides featured the abbreviation “LSU”. Collections were numbered using different numbering schemes. A conservative estimate suggests that Rolland manufactured approximately 3,000 war stereoview titles, which were distributed through resellers such as Photo-Plait and Service des Ventes de l’U.N.C. Rolland also employed sales agents to distribute his images[9].



Cardboard box for 45 x 107 mm glass stereoviews.



LA STÉRÉOSCOPIE UNIVERSELLE

AVIS. — Nos marchandises, même franco, voyagent aux risques et périls du destinataire et sont toujours considérées comme payables à Paris, quel que soit le mode d'expédition ou de paiement. En cas de contestation, les Tribunaux de la Seine seront seuls compétents.

LA STÉRÉOSCOPIE UNIVERSELLE

51, Boulevard Saint-Martin, 51 :-: PARIS

N° 5771 EDITIONS STÉRÉOSCOPIQUES L. S. U. Téléphone ARCHIVES 60-57

Je, soussigné, déclare acheter à **LA STÉRÉOSCOPIE UNIVERSELLE**

1°		Vues	carton	à	Fr.
2°	200	Vues verre		à 1,90	Fr. 380
3°		Vues		à	Fr.
4°	1	Appareil stéréoscopique		à 32	Fr. gratis

Soit au Total Fr. 380

qui me seront envoyés à domicile ou en gare franco de port et d'emballage et sans frais **contre remboursement.**

Aucune commande ne pourra être annulée et seules les conditions stipulées au présent bulletin seront valables.

Signature,

Nom Arnaud

Prénoms Joseph

Profession

Adresse

Ville

Département

Gare

Le 30 10 14 *192*

Expédié le

Remboursé le

Invoice for 200 war stereoviews in the 6 x 13 cm format and a Unis France stereoscope.

8000 and 9000 series

The Photo-Plait catalogues provide insight into the development of Rolland's 8000 and 9000 series. An initial collection of 180 images appeared in the Photo-Plait catalogue announced in January 1918. This indicates that these stereoviews were published by Rolland no later than the end of 1917. The collection compromised 14 series of 12 images, with numbers from the 8300 and 8400 series and some from the 3200 and 7000 series. Since the war was still ongoing, these images were censored by the French Ministry of War.

A year later, the Photo-Plait Autumn 1919 catalogue was released. The collection of war stereoviews was expanded with numbers ranging from 8467 to 9474. With the war now over, the new series included uncensored images. The total portfolio contained 1188 images. The new images were likely produced by Rolland between June 1918 and Autumn 1919. The same series also appeared in the Photo-Plait catalogue of March 1923, indicating that the portfolio had remained stable for a few years.

An undated catalogue of the 8000/9000 series lists the numbers from 9475 to 9606. Because these images did not appear in Photo-Plait's March 1923 catalogue, it seems that they were published after March 1923.

The stereoviews from the 8000 and 9000 series do not have the abbreviation "LSU", which can be attributed to the fact that the trademark La Stéréoscopie Universelle was introduced at a later stage. The title bars of the 8000 and 9000 series have a distinctive appearance and cannot be mistaken for those of other manufacturers. The printing style is consistent, with the titles written in capitals on a black background.



8995 - *Reims Mai 18 - Devant la Cathédrale*
6 x 13 cm glass stereoview
Rolland

PHOTO-PLAIT, 37 et 39, Rue Lafayette — Paris-Opéra

Liste spéciale des vues de la guerre

Format.....	45×107	Format.....	6×13
La vue.....	0.95	La vue.....	1.20

Édition autorisée par le Ministère de la Guerre

Série A. — *Salonique*
La Guerre en Orient

8301 Salonique. Agents français, anglais et grecs, assurant la police des rues.
8302 Camp de Zeitenlick. Aux patates.
8303 Camp de Zeitenlick. Installation de désinfection des soldats serbes.
8304 Camp de Zeitenlick. Les cuisines roulantes.
8305 Décoration du Général Bailloud.
8306 Fontaine dans un petit village occupé par nos troupes.
8307 Soldats français travaillant à un canal.
8308 Arc d'Alexandre à Salonique.
8309 Panorama de Salonique.
8310 Débarquements de mulets.
8311 Camp français sur le Vardar.
8312 Malte (fort Angelo) Escale de nos bateaux de guerre.

Série B
La Guerre en Orient

8313 Débarquements à Salonique.
8314 Epouillage des effets.
8315 Vieille mosquée affectée aux réfugiés Arméniens.
8316 Ravitaillement des soldats anglais Grecs travaillant aux routes.
8317 Vue de la ville haute. Salonique.
8318 Vue extérieure et remparts.
8319 Abreuvoir dans un collège occupé par nos troupes.
8320 Maison turque dans un village grec.
8321 Types turcs.
8322 Une vue de la ville haute à Salonique.
8323 Soldats grecs au repos.
8324 Soldats grecs à l'exercice.

Série C. — *Meuse*

8325 Les débordements de la Meuse près de C...
8326 Canal de la Meuse et débordements.
8327 Sentinelle aux avant-postes sous le givre.
8328 Un 155 long dissimulé à la lisière d'une forêt.
8329 Cuisines dans la forêt.
8330 Une cagna d'officier très confortable.
8331 Un poste d'observation d'officiers.
8332 Prisonnier allemand dans un village de la Meuse.
8333 Boyau d'accès avec haie pour cacher les mouvements.
8334 Dans les forêts de la Woëvre.
8335 Un coiffeur dans la forêt en 1re ligne.
8336 Chemin de fer Decauville dans la forêt.

Série D. — *Meuse*

8337 Les 155 longs en route pour le front.
8338 Tranchée sous la neige, région de Verdun.
8339 Installations de cuisines sous bois.
8340 Eglise de X..., 1re ligne, sans cesse bombardée.
8341 Tranchée dans une sapinière.
8342 Explosion d'obus.
8343 Abris sous la neige.
8344 Soldat grièvement blessé à la tête, embarqué dans un train sanitaire.
8345 Etablissement d'un pont de rondins sur un marais. Haies artificielles.
8346 Chapelle rustique et messe en forêt.
8347 Construction d'un blockaus.
8348 La vie aux tranchées. Travaux de décrottage.

Série E. — *En Champagne*
Après l'Offensive de Septembre 1914

8349 Prisonniers faits au bois Sabot. L'interprète les interroge.
8350 Une entrée d'abri, près du bois X...

Rolland's stereoviews of the 8000 series
in the Photo-Plait catalogue 1918–1919.



A rare Rolland & Cie cardboard box for 6 x 13 cm glass stereoviews.



HISTOIRE DE LA GUERRE 1914-1918

1914

Première Bataille de la Marne.

La mobilisation, Sermaize, Favresse, Glaunes, Ecriennes, Huiron, Luxémont, etc.

Bataille de la Woëvre.

Vaucquois, La Gruerie, Le Four de Paris, Saint-Mihiel, Bois Le Prêtre, La Harazée, Fort des Paroches, etc.

1915

Les Éparges.

Trésauvaux, Ravin d'Hadimel, etc.

Bataille d'Arras.

Lorette, Souchez, Ablain-St-Nazaire, Carency, Neuville-St-Vaast, Côte 140, Roclincourt, Vermelles, etc.

Bataille de Champagne.

Perthes, Tahure, Les Hurlus, Souain, Maison de Champagne, Mesnil, Main de Massiges, Beauséjour, Moronvilliers, etc.

Alsace.

La Schlucht, Le Linge, L'Hartmanwillerskopf, Breitfirst, Soppe-le-Haut, Le Reichaker, Sondernach, Metzeral, Hilsenfirst, etc.

Bataille de l'Yser.

Nieuport, Ypres, Lombertzyde, Coxyde, Furnes, Roulers, etc.

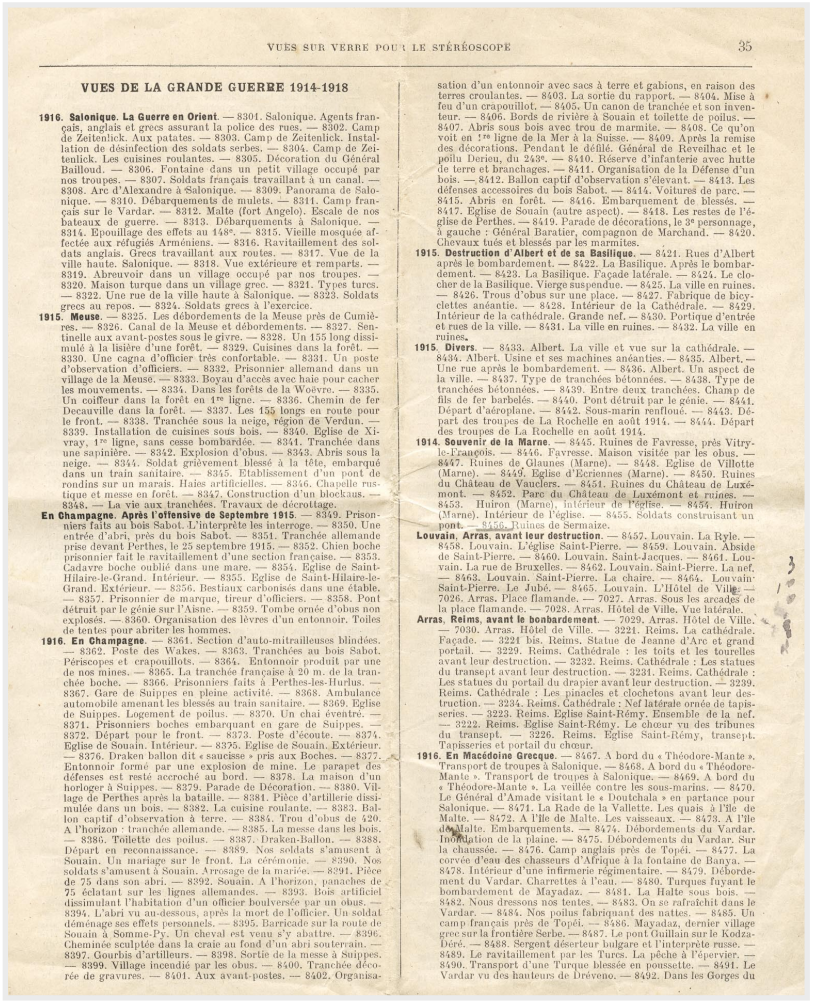
1916

Verdun.

Douaumont, Fort de Vaux, Fort de Tavannes, Fort de Souville, Ravin de la Caillette, Ravin des Vignes, Bois des Caurières, Côte du Poivre, Côte de Froideterre, Fleury, Côte 304, Mort-Homme, Esnes, Montzéville, Béthelainville, La Laufée, Tranchée des Baïonnettes, Ossuaire de Douaumont, etc.

Somme.

Curlu, Combles, Maurepas, Albert, Vermandovillers, Sailly-Saillisel, Cléry, Cappy, Le Forest, Lihons, Bouchavesnes, etc.



VUES SUR VERRE POUR LE STÉRÉOSCOPE 35

VUES DE LA GRANDE GUERRE 1914-1918

1916. Salonique. La Guerre en Orient. — 8301. Salonique. Agents français, anglais et grecs assurant la police des rues. — 8302. Camp de Zeitenlick. Aux patates. — 8303. Camp de Zeitenlick. Installation de désinfection des soldats serbes. — 8304. Camp de Zeitenlick. Les cuisines roulantes. — 8305. Décoration du Général Bailloud. — 8306. Fontaine dans un petit village occupé par nos troupes. — 8307. Soldats français travaillant à un canal. — 8308. Arc d'Alexandre à Salonique. — 8309. Panorama de Salonique. — 8310. Débarquements de mulets. — 8311. Camp français sur le Vardar. — 8312. Malte (fort Angelo). Escale de nos bateaux de guerre. — 8313. Débarquements à Salonique. — 8314. Epouillage des effets au 148e. — 8315. Vieille mosquée affectée aux réfugiés Arméniens. — 8316. Ravitaillement des soldats anglais. Grecs travaillant aux routes. — 8317. Vue de la ville haute. Salonique. — 8318. Vue extérieure et remparts. — 8319. Abreuvoir dans un village occupé par nos troupes. — 8320. Maison turque dans un village grec. — 8321. Types turcs. — 8322. Une rue de la ville haute à Salonique. — 8323. Soldats grecs au repos. — 8324. Soldats grecs à l'exercice.

1915. Meuse. — 8325. Les débordements de la Meuse près de Cumières. — 8326. Canal de la Meuse et débordements. — 8327. Sentinelle aux avant-postes sous le givre. — 8328. Un 155 long dissimulé à la lisière d'une forêt. — 8329. Cuisines dans la forêt. — 8330. Une cagna d'officier très confortable. — 8331. Un poste d'observation d'officiers. — 8332. Prisonnier allemand dans un village de la Meuse. — 8333. Boyau d'accès avec haie pour cacher les mouvements. — 8334. Dans les forêts de la Woëvre. — 8335. Un coiffeur dans la forêt en 1re ligne. — 8336. Chemin de fer Decauville dans la forêt. — 8337. Les 155 longs en route pour le front. — 8338. Tranchée sous la neige, région de Verdun. — 8339. Installation de cuisines sous bois. — 8340. Eglise de Xivray. 1re ligne, sans cesse bombardée. — 8341. Tranchée dans une sapinière. — 8342. Explosion d'obus. — 8343. Abris sous la neige. — 8344. Soldat grièvement blessé à la tête, embarqué dans un train sanitaire. — 8345. Etablissement d'un pont de rondins sur un marais. Haies artificielles. — 8346. Chapelle rustique et messe en forêt. — 8347. Construction d'un blockaus. — 8348. — La vie aux tranchées. Travaux de décrottage.

En Champagne. Après l'offensive de Septembre 1915. — 8349. Prisonniers faits au bois Sabot. L'interprète les interroge. — 8350. Une entrée d'abri, près du bois Sabot. — 8351. Tranchée allemande prise devant Perthes, le 25 septembre 1915. — 8352. Chien boche prisonnier fait le ravitaillement d'une section française. — 8353. Cadavre boche oublié dans une mare. — 8354. Eglise de Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand. Intérieur. — 8355. Eglise de Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand. Extérieur. — 8356. Bestiaux carbonisés dans une étable. — 8357. Prisonnier de marque, lieur d'officiers. — 8358. Pont détruit par le génie sur l'Aisne. — 8359. Tombe ornée d'obus non explosés. — 8360. Organisation des lèvres d'un entonnoir. Toiles de tentes pour abriter les hommes.

1916. En Champagne. — 8361. Section d'auto-mitrailleuses blindées. — 8362. Poste des Wakes. — 8363. Tranchées au bois Sabot. Périscopes et crapouillots. — 8364. Entonnoir produit par une de nos mines. — 8365. La tranchée française à 20 m. de la tranchée boche. — 8366. Prisonniers faits à Perthes-les-Hurlus. — 8367. Gare de Suippes en pleine activité. — 8368. Ambulance automobile amenant les blessés au train sanitaire. — 8369. Eglise de Suippes. Logement de poilus. — 8370. Un chat éventré. — 8371. Prisonniers boches embarquant en gare de Suippes. — 8372. Départ pour le front. — 8373. Poste d'écoute. — 8374. Eglise de Souain. Intérieur. — 8375. Eglise de Souain. Extérieur. — 8376. Draken ballon dit « saucisse » pris aux Boches. — 8377. Entonnoir formé par une explosion de mine. Le parapet des défenses est resté accroché au bord. — 8378. La maison d'un horloger à Suippes. — 8379. Parade de Décoration. — 8380. Village de Perthes après la bataille. — 8381. Pièce d'artillerie dissimulée dans un bois. — 8382. La cuisine roulante. — 8383. Ballon captif d'observation à terre. — 8384. Trou d'obus de 420. A l'horizon : tranchée allemande. — 8385. La messe dans les bois. — 8386. Toilette des poilus. — 8387. Draken-Ballon. — 8388. Départ en reconnaissance. — 8389. Nos soldats s'amusent à Souain. Un mariage sur le front. La cérémonie. — 8390. Nos soldats s'amusent à Souain. Arrosage de la mariée. — 8391. Pièce de 75 dans son abri. — 8392. Souain. A l'horizon, panaches de 75 éclatant sur les lignes allemandes. — 8393. Bois artificiel dissimulant l'habitation d'un officier bouleversée par un obus. — 8394. L'abri vu au-dessous, après la mort de l'officier. Un soldat déménage ses effets personnels. — 8395. Barricade sur la route de Souain à Somme-Py. Un cheval est venu s'y abattre. — 8396. Cheminée sculptée dans la craie au fond d'un abri souterrain. — 8397. Gourbis d'artilleurs. — 8398. Sortie de la messe à Suippes. — 8399. Village incendié par les obus. — 8400. Tranchée décorée de gravures. — 8401. Aux avant-postes. — 8402. Organisation d'un entonnoir avec sacs à terre et gabions, en raison des terres croulantes. — 8403. La sortie du rapport. — 8404. Mise à feu d'un crapouillot. — 8405. Un canon de tranchée et son inventeur. — 8406. Bords de rivière à Souain et toilette de poilus. — 8407. Abris sous bois avec trou de marmite. — 8408. Ce qu'on voit au 1re ligne de la Mer à la Suisse. — 8409. Après la remise des décorations. Pendant le défilé. Général de Reveilhac et le poilu Derieu, du 243e. — 8410. Réserve d'infanterie avec hutte de terre et branchages. — 8411. Organisation de la Défense d'un bois. — 8412. Ballon captif d'observation s'élevant. — 8413. Les défenses accessoires du bois Sabot. — 8414. Voitures de parc. — 8415. Abris en forêt. — 8416. Embarquement de blessés. — 8417. Eglise de Souain (autre aspect). — 8418. Les restes de l'église de Perthes. — 8419. Parade de décorations, le 3e personnage, à gauche : Général Baratier, compagnon de Marchand. — 8420. Chevaux tués et blessés par les marmites.

1915. Destruction d'Albert et de sa Basilique. — 8421. Rues d'Albert après le bombardement. — 8422. La Basilique. Après le bombardement. — 8423. La Basilique. Façade latérale. — 8424. Le clocher de la Basilique. Vierge suspendue. — 8425. La ville en ruines. — 8426. Trous d'obus sur une place. — 8427. Fabrique de bicyclettes anéantie. — 8428. Intérieur de la Cathédrale. — 8429. Intérieur de la cathédrale. Grande nef. — 8430. Portique d'entrée et rues de la ville. — 8431. La ville en ruines. — 8432. La ville en ruines.

1915. Divers. — 8433. Albert. La ville et vue sur la cathédrale. — 8434. Albert. Usine et ses machines anéanties. — 8435. Albert. — Une rue après le bombardement. — 8436. Albert. Un aspect de la ville. — 8437. Type de tranchées bétonnées. — 8438. Type de tranchées bétonnées. — 8439. Entre deux tranchées. Champ de fils de fer barbelés. — 8440. Pont détruit par le génie. — 8441. Départ d'aéroplane. — 8442. Sous-marin renfloué. — 8443. Départ des troupes de La Rochelle en août 1914. — 8444. Départ des troupes de La Rochelle en août 1914.

1914. Souvenir de la Marne. — 8445. Ruines de Favresse, près Vitry-le-François. — 8446. Favresse. Maison visitée par les obus. — 8447. Ruines de Glaunes (Marne). — 8448. Eglise de Villotte (Marne). — 8449. Eglise d'Ecriennes (Marne). — 8450. Ruines du Château de Vaucler. — 8451. Ruines du Château de Luxémont. — 8452. Parc du Château de Luxémont et ruines. — 8453. Huiron (Marne). Intérieur de l'église. — 8454. Huiron (Marne). Intérieur de l'église. — 8455. Soldats construisant un pont. — 8456. Ruines de Sermaize.

Louvain, Arras, avant leur destruction. — 8457. Louvain. La Ryle. — 8458. Louvain. L'église Saint-Pierre. — 8459. Louvain. Abside de Saint-Pierre. — 8460. Louvain. Saint-Jacques. — 8461. Louvain. La rue de Bruxelles. — 8462. Louvain. Saint-Pierre. La nef. — 8463. Louvain. Saint-Pierre. La chaire. — 8464. Louvain. Saint-Pierre. Le Jubé. — 8465. Louvain. L'Hôtel de Ville. — 7026. Arras. Place flamande. — 7027. Arras. Sous les arcades de la place flamande. — 7028. Arras. Hôtel de Ville. Vue latérale.

Arras, Reims, avant le bombardement. — 7029. Arras. Hôtel de Ville. — 7030. Arras. Hôtel de Ville. — 3221. Reims. La cathédrale. Façade. — 3224 bis. Reims. Statue de Jeanne d'Arc et grand portail. — 3229. Reims. Cathédrale : les toits et les tourelles avant leur destruction. — 3232. Reims. Cathédrale : Les statues du transept avant leur destruction. — 3231. Reims. Cathédrale : Les statues du portail du drapier avant leur destruction. — 3230. Reims. Cathédrale : Les pinacles et clochetons avant leur destruction. — 3234. Reims. Cathédrale : Nef latérale ornée de tapisseries. — 3223. Reims. Eglise Saint-Rémy. Ensemble de la nef. — 3222. Reims. Eglise Saint-Rémy. Le chœur vu des tribunes du transept. — 3226. Reims. Eglise Saint-Rémy, transept. Tapisseries et portail du chœur.

1916. En Macédoine Grecque. — 8467. A bord du « Théodore-Mante ». Transport de troupes à Salonique. — 8468. A bord du « Théodore-Mante ». Transport de troupes à Salonique. — 8469. A bord du « Théodore-Mante ». La veillée contre les sous-marins. — 8470. Le Général d'Amade visitant le « Doutchala » en partance pour Salonique. — 8471. La Rade de la Vallette. Les quais à l'île de Malte. — 8472. A l'île de Malte. Les vaisseaux. — 8473. A l'île de Malte. Embarquements. — 8474. Débordements du Vardar. Inondation de la plaine. — 8475. Débordements du Vardar. Sur la chaussée. — 8476. Camp anglais près de Topcl. — 8477. La corvée d'eau des chasseurs d'Afrique à la fontaine de Banya. — 8478. Intérieur d'une infirmerie régimentaire. — 8479. Débordement du Vardar. Charrettes à l'eau. — 8480. Turques fuyant le bombardement de Mayadaz. — 8481. La Halte sous bois. — 8482. Nous dressons nos tentes. — 8483. On se rafraîchit dans le Vardar. — 8484. Nos poilus fabriquant des nattes. — 8485. Un camp français près de Topcl. — 8486. Mayadaz, dernier village grec sur la frontière Serbe. — 8487. Le pont Guillain sur le Kodza-Déré. — 8488. Sergent déserteur bulgare et l'interprète russe. — 8489. Le ravitaillement par les Turcs. La pêche à l'épervier. — 8490. Transport d'une Turque blessée en poussette. — 8491. Le Vardar vu des hauteurs de Drevno. — 8492. Dans les Gorges du

Page of a detailed catalogue of the 8000 and 9000 series.

An overview of battlefields and locations.
These leaflets helped collectors relate
their stereoviews to a battle or campaign.

Other series

Likely published from c.1922, the stereoviews from the 2000 series feature the abbreviation “LSU”. The printing style is less consistent. Many descriptions are elegantly designed and italicised. The “L” in “L.S.U.” sometimes underlines the other letters. Titles are written in black against a white background or in white against a black background.

The images numbered between 1 and 1999 display a wide variety of styles and were probably not sold as part of a series. There are also numerous smaller series with other number ranges that are less consistent in style, making them more challenging to categorise.

Rolland also produced special series with specific themes or custom series for individual customers. For example, there are slides with numbers ranging from 30xx to 31xx which cover the Battle of the Yser and the surrounding towns. Based on their location, these slides were likely marketed and sold in Belgium. Another example is the series dedicated to the French 172nd Infantry Regiment, identifiable by the abbreviation “172 RI”.

Rolland’s paper stereoviews were sold in sets of ten, and many therefore bear numbers from 1 to 10. The photographs have a warm tone and were mounted on cardboard cards.



2084 - *Châteaux Thierry - Transport de Troupes*
6 x 13 cm glass stereoview
Rolland



3066 - *Nieuport Mamelon Vert*
45 x 107 mm glass stereoview
Rolland



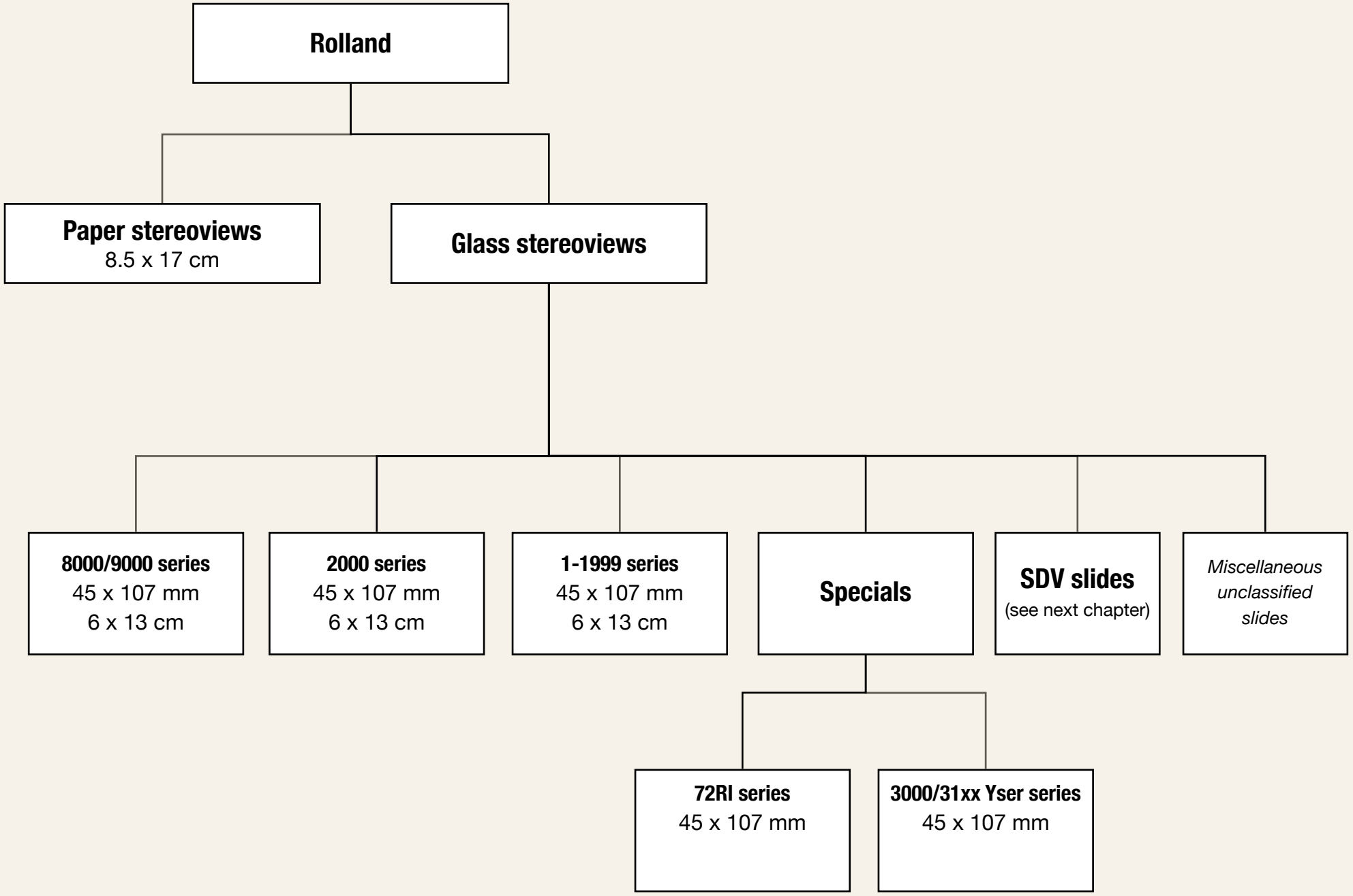


An envelope with 8.5 x 17 cm paper stereoviews from Série 8. The collection contains 10 cards, numbered from one to 10. The envelope and cards do not bear the name or abbreviation of Rolland or La Stéréoscopie Universelle. Numerous images correspond to the images from the 8000/9000 series and are slightly enlarged images of the smaller stereo glass negatives.





A coin-operated stereoscope with a La Stéréoscopie Universelle plate. This revolving stereoscope was manufactured by Stéréoscopes A. Mattey and was likely used by Rolland to showcase the company's stereoviews during exhibitions or in public places.


Rolland
Paper stereoviews
8.5 x 17 cm
Glass stereoviews
8000/9000 series
45 x 107 mm
6 x 13 cm
2000 series
45 x 107 mm
6 x 13 cm
1-1999 series
45 x 107 mm
6 x 13 cm
Specials
SDV slides
(see next chapter)
Miscellaneous unclassified slides
72RI series
45 x 107 mm
3000/31xx Yser series
45 x 107 mm

Service des Ventes de l'U.N.C. (S.D.V.)

The Union Nationale des Combattants (U.N.C.) started as an association of French veterans from the First World War. The association was founded on 11 November 1918 (Armistice Day) and was located at 13, Rue Lafayette in Paris. U.N.C. represented the interests of French veterans and advocated for the improvement of the veterans' pensions. The motto of the was "Unis comme au Front" (United as at the Front).

In 1919, the association published the weekly newspaper *La Voix du Combattant* (The voice of the Combatant). From 1921, it operated a seller service known as Service des Ventes de l'U.N.C. In 1927, the service started advertising the sale of war stereoviews in *La Voix du Combattant*[10]:

> We hold at the disposal of our comrades a collection of very authentic and interesting stereoscopic views on glass in 45 x 107 or in 6 x 13 format that we can provide on very favourable terms.

The advertisements continued to appear weekly until February 1930[11]. It is likely that S.D.V. exclusively sold the stereoviews to its members, offering them at a reduced rate. The slides were manufactured by Rolland of La Stéréoscopie Universelle.

An S.D.V. catalogue lists 80 numbered series of 10 slides[12]. The highest serial number is 106, indicating that the total portfolio consists of almost 1100 slides. An S.D.V. slide number is made up of the serial number followed by a number 0 to 9. Certain series were available in both 45 x 107 mm and 6 x 13 cm formats; others were only sold in the 45 x 107 mm format. Some slides were re-used La Stéréoscopie Universelle views, with a new S.D.V. number added.



A 45 x 107 mm glass stereoview with LSU number 3038 and S.D.V. number 18. The slide is from the first S.D.V. with the title *Yser*. Some images in this series are from La Stéréoscopie Universelle's Flanders series with numbers ranging from 30xx to 31xx.



Member card of the Union Nationale des Combattants, 1920.

Brentano's Paris

Brentano's started in 1853 as August Brentano's kiosk in New York. Brentano's opened its first store in 1883, and the first foreign branch followed in 1887 in Paris. Brentano's Paris was located at 37, Avenue de l'Opera and specialised in English-language publications.

The bookstore sold glass stereoviews of the First World War in the 45 x 107 mm and 6 x 13 cm formats, and a limited range of paper stereoviews. Brentano's offered a large number of images of the American Expeditionary Forces in France.

The stereoviews were sold in cardboard boxes bearing Brentano's name. These boxes also showed up in the United States, and the images were sold there by Over There Review and STERECO. Brentano's images appeared with different numbers, descriptions and presentation styles. Bob Boyd of *The Great War in 3D* concluded that Brentano's Paris might have been a publisher and wholesaler to other sellers, and he classified the different style types[13]. However, research has led to new insights, and today it seems unlikely that Brentano's was a publisher and wholesaler. No known source confirms this role for the company. Brentano's probably sold the stereoviews in their bookshop, and because of their connections in New York, the stereoviews were also distributed there. There is more evidence that the images were supplied by publisher Stéréo-Éditions F. Meiller or by an affiliated collective of publishers who printed their own stereoviews from a shared pool of negatives.

Brentano's Paris closed its doors in 2009 but reopened in 2010. The company no longer has archives from the wartime period[13], so the exact role of the company regarding the sale of stereoviews will remain unknown. While it is unlikely that Brentano's was a publisher and wholesaler of stereoviews, the wartime stereoviews associated with the bookstore are still categorised as "Brentano's".



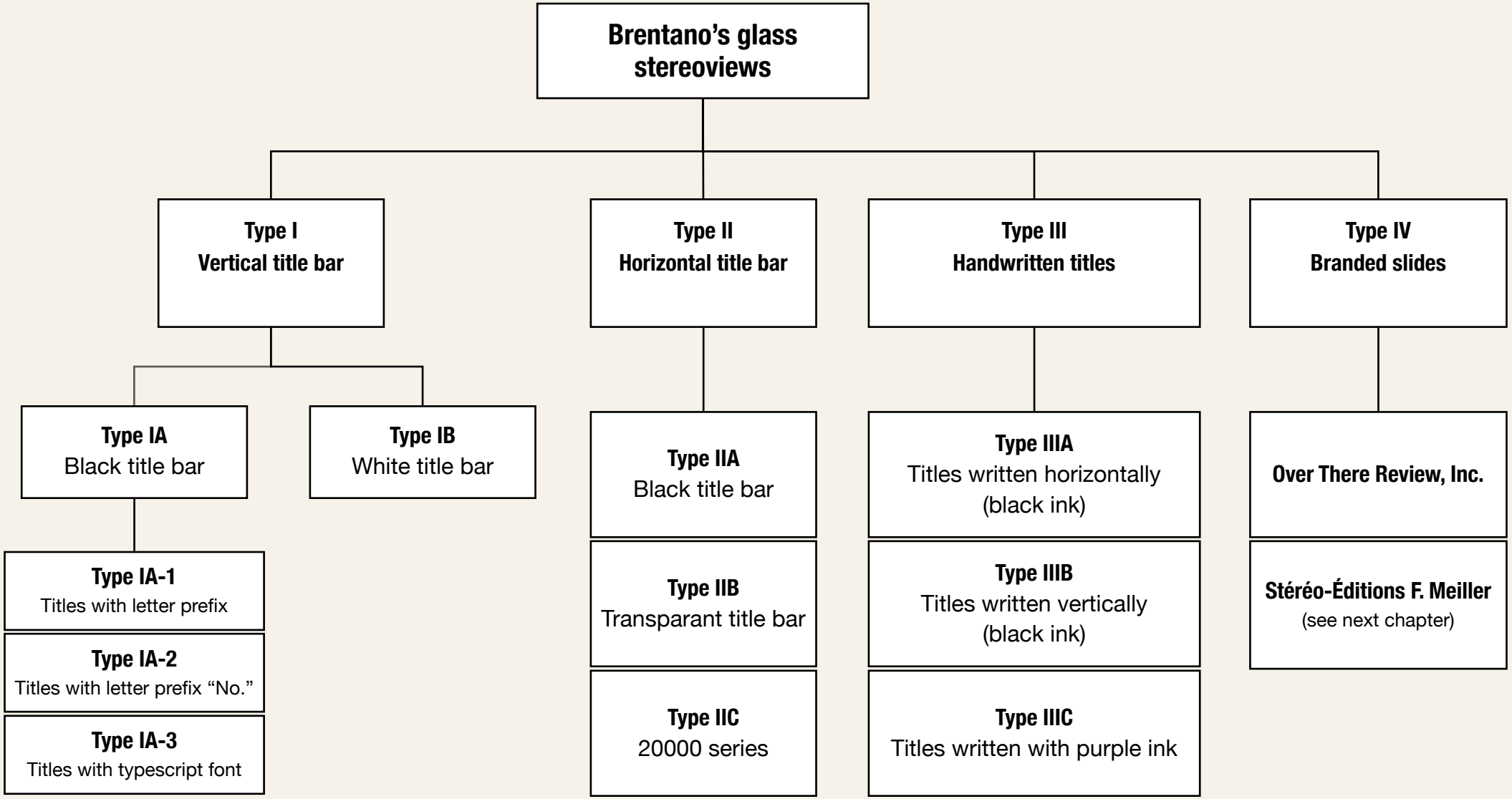
Cardboard box for 45 x 107 mm glass stereoviews.







6 x 13 cm and 45 x 107 mm glass stereoviews.
The slides show the same image but with different descriptions, caption styles, crops and numbers.
It is characteristic for Brentano's stereoviews.


Brentano's glass stereoviews
Type I
Vertical title bar
Type II
Horizontal title bar
Type III
Handwritten titles
Type IV
Branded slides
Type IA
Black title bar
Type IB
White title bar
Type IA-1
Titles with letter prefix
Type IA-2
Titles with letter prefix "No."
Type IA-3
Titles with typescript font
Type IIA
Black title bar
Type IIB
Transparant title bar
Type IIC
20000 series
Type IIIA
Titles written horizontally (black ink)
Type IIIB
Titles written vertically (black ink)
Type IIIC
Titles written with purple ink
Over There Review, Inc.
Stéréo-Éditions F. Meiller
(see next chapter)



2104 - *En Argonne - La Soupe au Repos*

6 x 13 cm glass stereoview - Type IA

Brentano's



No. 88 - *Fort de la Pompelle*

6 x 13 cm glass stereoview - Type IA-2

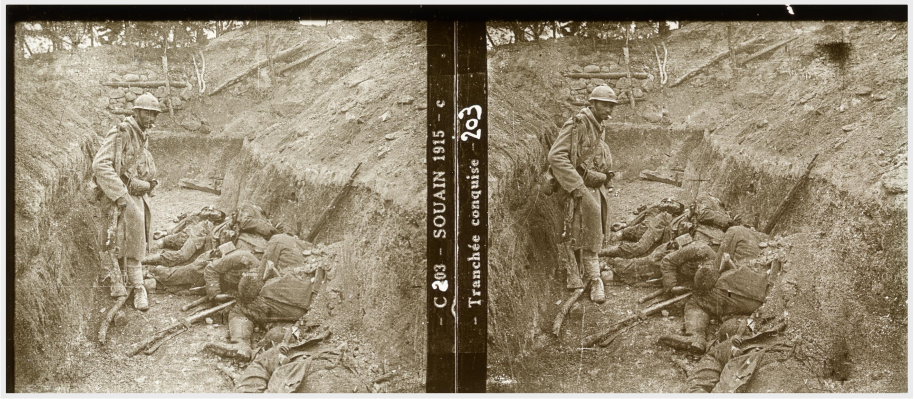
Brentano's



O268 - *Un Boyau - Bois des Fougasses*

45 x 107 mm glass stereoview - Type IA-1

Brentano's



C203 - *Souain 1915 - Tranchée conquise*

6 x 13 cm glass stereoview - Type IA-3

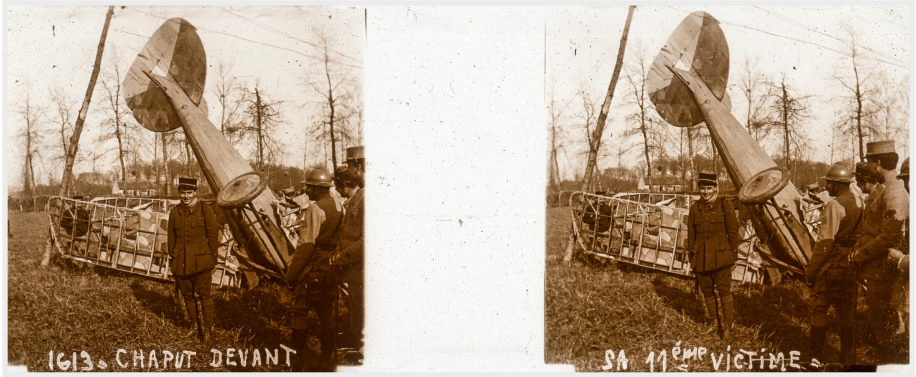
Brentano's



A-113 - *Chavonne - Cadavres Allemands*

45 x 107 mm glass stereoview - Type IB

Brentano's



1613 - *Chaput devant sa 11eme victoire*

45 x 107 mm glass stereoview - Type IIB

Brentano's



Ypres Cathédrale

45 x 107 mm glass stereoview - Type IIA

Brentano's



23356 - *Verdun*

45 x 107 mm glass stereoview - Type IIC

Brentano's



Aux Éparges - Corvée de Jus

45 x 107 mm glass stereoview - Type IIIA

Brentano's



Soissons - Equipage de prout de bateau

45 x 107 mm glass stereoview - Type IIIB

Brentano's



Prisonniers de St. Mihiel

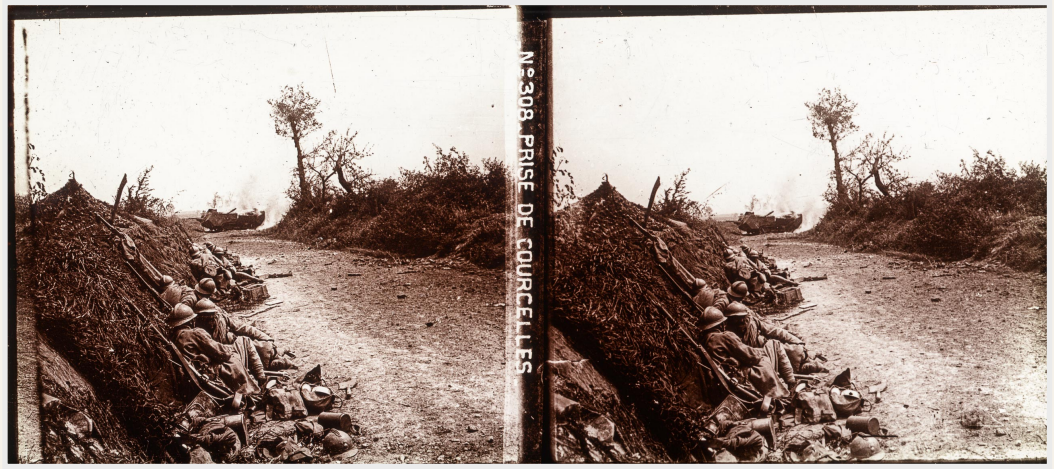
45 x 107 mm glass stereoview - Type IIIC

Brentano's

Prise de Courcelles by Brentano's

A triptych of stereoviews taken in quick succession. The first photograph shows French soldiers taking cover. The second records the scene after a bombardment. The third depicts a dead and severely mutilated soldier in the foreground, observed by another soldier.

The triptych is frequently found in larger collections, such as those sold in wooden cases. It was evidently a sought-after set, offering a stark representation of the horrors of the war. The differing formats and presentation styles are characteristic of the stereoviews that are classified as Brentano's.





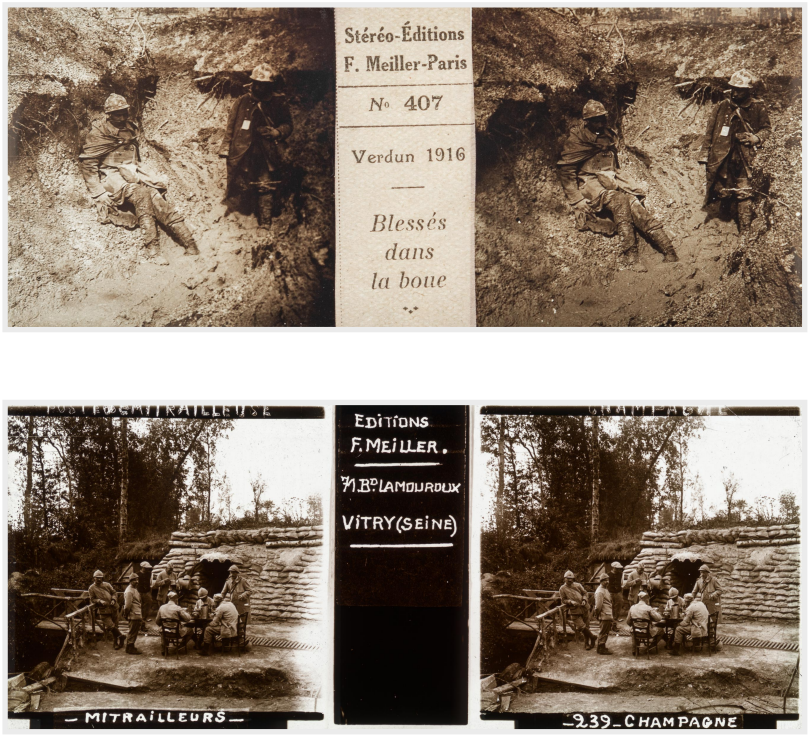


Stéréo-Éditions F. Meiller

Stéréo-Éditions was a trademark of Jules Fernand Meiller (1891–1971). The company was located at 71, Boulevard Lamoureux, and there was a store at 39, Rue Gracieuse, in Paris. Meiller was a prominent manufacturer, seller and wholesaler of stereoviews with scenes from the First World War. There are reasons to believe that Meiller was the wholesaler who published the stereoviews that are categorised as “Brentano’s”.

Meiller served during the First World War in the French army[14]. He started selling stereoviews after the war, and his company became a major player in the stereoview market in France. Meiller sold 45 x 107 mm and 6 x 13 cm glass stereoviews and paper stereoviews. Many stereoviews were Stéréo-Éditions branded and sold in Meiller-branded cardboard boxes. A report from the Exposition de Photographie states[15]:

> This stand was undoubtedly the one that drew the most attention. This is because Maison Meiller had collected a collection of striking war photographs in warm tones on Lumière-Jougla plates. They are not staged images, but war events experienced on the spot and captured with striking accuracy… the choice of an unrivalled collection and disturbing by reality, forced the success of this stand… their value is measured by the number of visitors that crowded behind the stereoscopes.

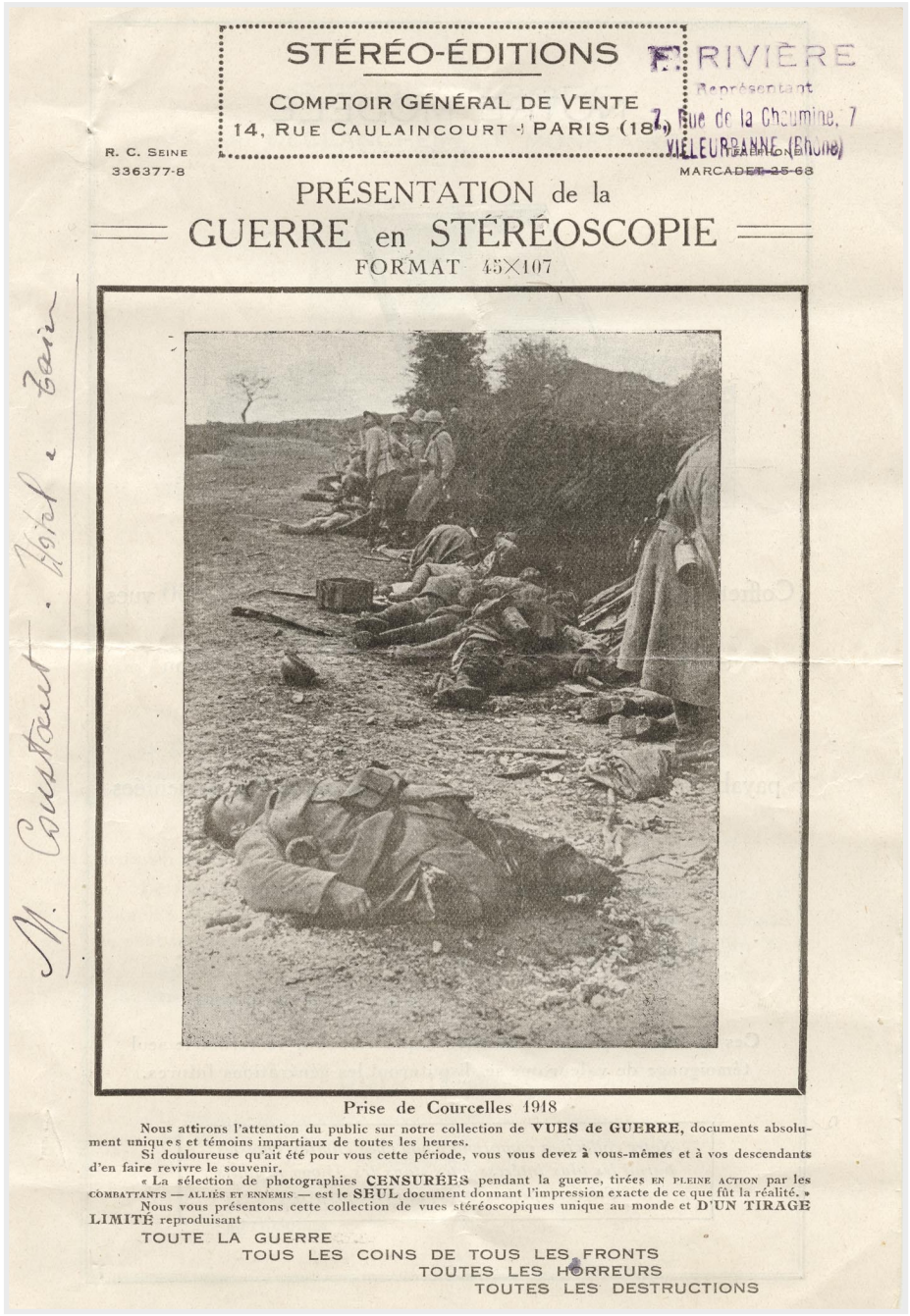


Two examples of Meiller-labelled images that were sold by Meiller in his store.

Meiller and Brentano's

Brentano's-styled stereoviews are characterised by the same images appearing with different numbers and styles. There are reasons to believe that Meiller was the wholesaler of Brentano's images because:

- The views sold by Stéréo-Éditions can be linked to the Brentano's style based on the presence of Stéréo-Éditions logos on the stereoviews. A Brentano's image also appeared on the cover of a Meiller catalogue (see next page).
- Stéréo-Éditions advertised until the 1930s with 30,000[16] to 50,000 stereoview titles of war scenes. The company claimed that the images were their property[17]. In other words, the company owned the rights. These huge numbers far exceed those of the other prominent manufacturer, Rolland of La Stéréoscopie Universelle, and emphasise the scale of the enterprise. Perhaps Meiller acquired collections from smaller publishers, which explains the diversity of styles and numbers.
- The Brentano's collection contained many stereoviews with images of the American Expeditionary Forces in France, and the collections were also marketed in the United States. In an advertisement, Stéréo-Éditions claimed that the collections were the "only collection of its kind authorised by the American Legion"[18]. Meiller also advertised in The New York Herald in search of sellers in the United States[19].
- Meiller ran the Comptoir, or Service Général de Vente, located at 14, Rue Caulaincourt. This part of the company sold glass stereoviews in wooden cases and stereoscopes through sales agents who received a commission. If desired, the products could be purchased on credit. It shows the scale and versatility of their distribution network, and perhaps that Brentano's Paris was one of the resellers.



STÉRÉO-ÉDITIONS

COMPTOIR GÉNÉRAL DE VENTE
14, RUE CAULAINCOURT - PARIS (18e)

F. RIVIÈRE
Représentant
7, Rue de la Chaumine, 7
VIEUX-BANNE (Rhône)

R. C. SEINE
336377-8

TÉLÉPHONE MARCADET 25-68

PRÉSENTATION de la
GUERRE en STÉRÉOSCOPIE
FORMAT 45×107

M. Courtaut · Foirl « Zaire

Prise de Courcelles 1918

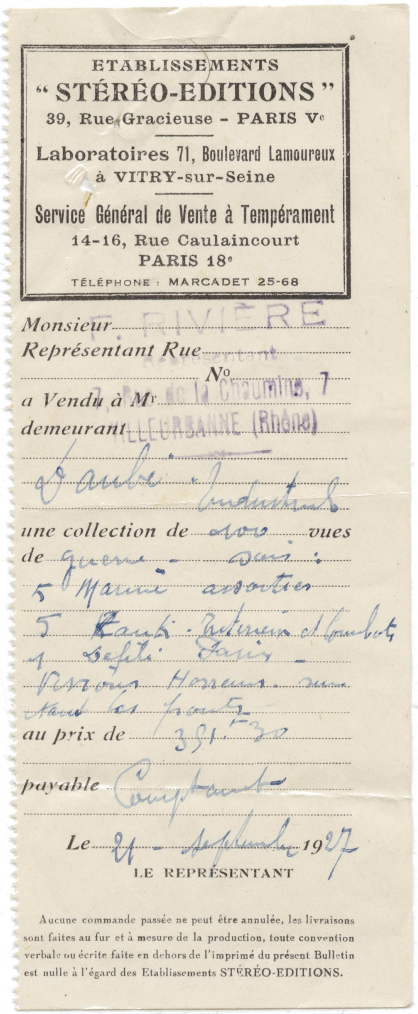
Nous attirons l'attention du public sur notre collection de **VUES de GUERRE**, documents absolument uniques et témoins impartiaux de toutes les heures.

Si douloureuse qu'ait été pour vous cette période, vous vous devez à vous-mêmes et à vos descendants d'en faire revivre le souvenir.

« La sélection de photographies **CENSURÉES** pendant la guerre, tirées EN PLEINE ACTION par les COMBATTANTS — ALLIÉS ET ENNEMIS — est le **SEUL** document donnant l'impression exacte de ce que fût la réalité. »

Nous vous présentons cette collection de vues stéréoscopiques unique au monde et **D'UN TIRAGE LIMITÉ** reproduisant

TOUTE LA GUERRE
TOUS LES COINS DE TOUS LES FRONTS
TOUTES LES HORREURS
TOUTES LES DESTRUCTIONS



ETABLISSEMENTS
"STÉRÉO-EDITIONS"
39, Rue Gracieuse - PARIS Ve
Laboratoires 71, Boulevard Lamoureux
à VITRY-sur-Seine
Service Général de Vente à Tempérament
14-16, Rue Caulaincourt
PARIS 18e
TÉLÉPHONE : MARCADET 25-68

Monsieur F. RIVIÈRE
Représentant Rue 7, Rue de la Chaumine, 7
N°
a Vendu à Mr
demeurant VILLEURBANNE (Rhône)
une collection de cent *vues*
de guerre - cent :
5 Marne - arrestes
5 Kanti - Verdun - Argonne
4 Belfi - Paris -
Reprom - Hareum - cum
Nord et Front
au prix de 391 f 30
payable Comptant
Le 21 - septembre 1927
LE REPRÉSENTANT

Aucune commande passée ne peut être annulée, les livraisons sont faites au fur et à mesure de la production, toute convention verbale ou écrite faite en dehors de l'imprimé du présent Bulletin est nulle à l'égard des Etablissements STÉRÉO-EDITIONS.

An invoice, issued on 21 September 1927 by F. Rivière, one of the sales agents of Meiller's Comptoir Général de Vente. The invoice is for a collection of 100 war stereoviews.

A catalogue of Meiller's Comptoir Général de Vente that sold stereoviews and stereoscopes by sales agents. The cover shows an image that is classified as Brentano's.





A case with 100 war stereoviews and a Unis France stereoscope. The cover has a stamp of Louis Provot Édition Stéréoscopique, who might have been one of Meiller's resellers.

Vérascope Richard

In addition to manufacturing stereo cameras and stereoscopes, Jules Richard offered a wide range of 45 x 107 mm glass stereoviews with a variety of themes, including war scenes. An English catalogue[20] mentions more than 1,600 glass stereoviews with the themes *The Great War* (1,500), *Allied Peace Celebrations in Paris* (76) and *Signature of Treaty of Peace at Versailles* (28). Richard is therefore one of the few publishers whose exact number of stereoviews related to the First World War is known.

It seems that Richard used employed or hired photographers during and after the war. Series of parades, ceremonies or other scenes indicate that a single photographer captured the events. The glass slides bear the name Vérascope Richard, but not every war stereoview that is labelled Vérascope Richard was published by the company. Richard also sold Vérascope Richard-branded glass plates to amateur photographers who used the plates to print their own stereo negatives. Richard's published war stereoviews are mainly identified by a (six-digit) number in combination with an elegantly handwritten or typed description.



A collection of three 45 x 107 mm stereoviews from the series *Protection des Monuments*. The photos were likely taken by a single photographer who was hired or employed by Richard. The images show the Parisian monuments, protected by sandbags against German bombardments.

Éditions S.T.L.

Éditions S.T.L. was a trademark of Lavelle et Cie, a publisher of postcards and stereoviews. The company was founded around 1905[21] and located at 37, Rue du Parc in Issy-les-Moulineaux, Paris. The company had a long history and was still in business after the Second World War, when it published sets of postcards with images of the liberation of Paris.

After the First World War, the company also published a series of stereoviews with war scenes. The views were available in the glass formats 45 x 107 mm and 6 x 13 cm and as paper stereoviews. The total number of titles is estimated at 2,000. Many stereoviews can be linked to the publisher because of the abbreviation “S.T.L.” on the slides. Most of the stereoviews are of high quality with good contrast, tonality and stereo depth effects. It seems that Éditions S.T.L. favoured quality over quantity.



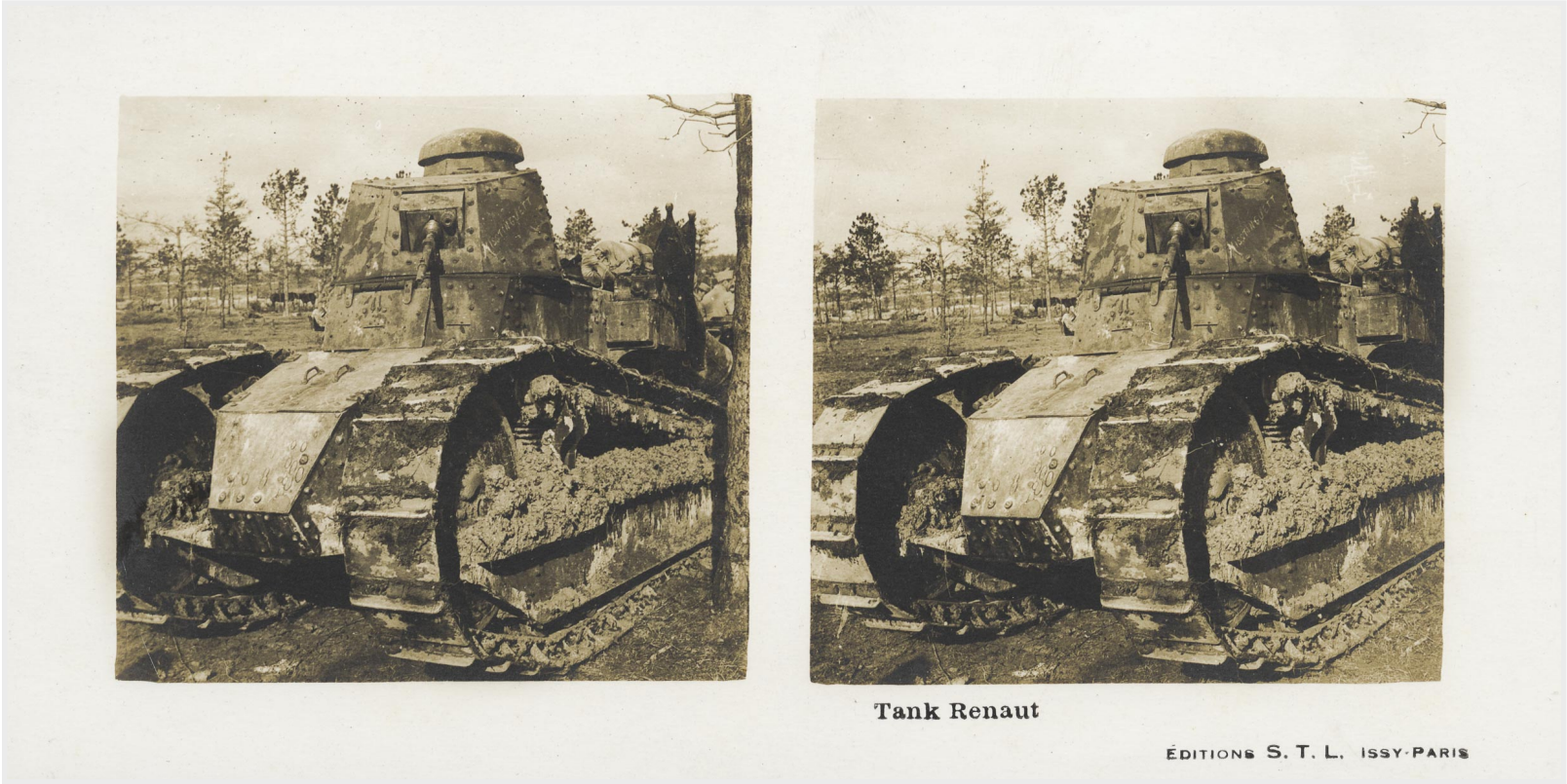


420 - *Crane d’un Boche*
45 x 107 mm glass stereoview
Éditions S.T.L.

The word “Boche” is a French insulting term for German soldiers. It appears frequently on the war images issued by various publishers.



1840 - *Chemin des Dames - Tranchées*
45 x 107 mm glass stereoview
Éditions S.T.L.



Tank Renault

8.5 x 17 cm paper stereoview

Éditions S.T.L.

Éditions S.T.L. published paper stereoviews in different styles.

The cards can be numbered or unnumbered.



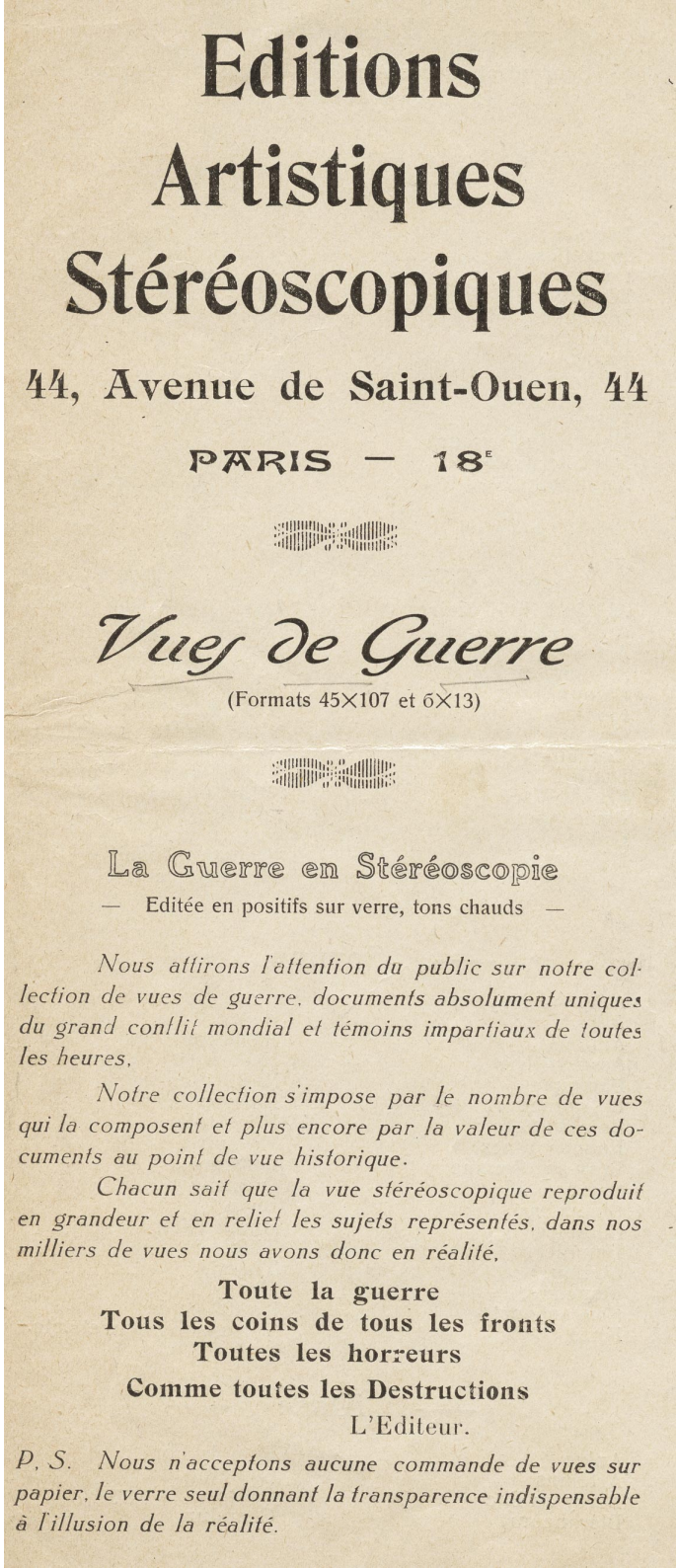
Éditions S.T.L. 8.5 x 17 cm paper card stereoviews in numbered boxes labelled *Vues Stéréoscopiques Guerre*.

Éditions Artistiques Stéréoscopiques

Éditions Artistiques Stéréoscopiques was a publisher and seller of stereoviews in Paris. Little is known about the company. An undated catalogue shows the company's location at 44, Avenue de Saint-Ouen, but an invoice from 1929 lists the address as 4, Rue Louis Besquel. The company was led by E. Despont and sold war stereoviews in the formats 45 x 107 mm and 6 x 13 cm. Remarkably, the company's catalogue explicitly stated that they did not sell paper stereoviews for the following reason:

> Glass alone gives the transparency which is essential to a realistic viewing experience.

Some stereoviews contain the abbreviation "EAS". A wooden case with 100 slides in the 45 x 107 mm format, and the original invoice from 1929, contains only nine stereoviews with the abbreviation "EAS". Many other slides in the case have a similar style but no abbreviation. Éditions Artistiques Stéréoscopiques was probably a prominent publisher, but the size of their portfolio is unknown.



Editions
Artistiques
Stéréoscopiques

44, Avenue de Saint-Ouen, 44

PARIS — 18e

Vues de Guerre

(Formats 45×107 et 6×13)

La Guerre en Stéréoscopie

— Editée en positifs sur verre, tons chauds —

Nous attirons l'attention du public sur notre collection de vues de guerre, documents absolument uniques du grand conflit mondial et témoins impartiaux de toutes les heures.

Notre collection s'impose par le nombre de vues qui la composent et plus encore par la valeur de ces documents au point de vue historique.

Chacun sait que la vue stéréoscopique reproduit en grandeur et en relief les sujets représentés, dans nos milliers de vues nous avons donc en réalité,

Toute la guerre
Tous les coins de tous les fronts
Toutes les horreurs
Comme toutes les Destructions

L'Editeur.

P. S. Nous n'acceptons aucune commande de vues sur papier, le verre seul donnant la transparence indispensable à l'illusion de la réalité.



G744 - *Vue de Verdun*
45 x 107 mm glass stereoview
Éditions Artistiques Stéréoscopiques



Aviateur Allemand devant Verdun
45 x 107 mm glass stereoview
Éditions Artistiques Stéréoscopiques

ÉDITIONS ARTISTIQUES STÉRÉOSCOPIQUES

E. DESPONT, Directeur

4, Rue Louis-Besquel, 4 - VINCENNES (Seine)

R. C. Seine N° 266.832 Chèque-Postal 502-02



Formats 45×107 et 6×13

Nous avons l'avantage de présenter au public les vues de la grande Guerre 1914-1918 éditées sur plaques diapositives tons chauds.

***Tous ces documents ont été pris sur le vif en relief et en pleine action** par des combattants de toutes armes munis d'appareils photographiques stéréoscopiques.*

Le but de notre collection est d'offrir aux anciens poilus les endroits de leurs exploits, les heures les plus marquantes de leur vie.

Ces vues de vérité donneront à leurs enfants la plus forte leçon d'histoire et constitueront pour l'avenir le grand plaidoyer de la paix.

L'ÉDITEUR

E. Despont



An invoice from 7 February 1929 for 100 war stereoviews in the 45 x 107 mm format and a hand-held stereoscope in a wooden case. The pasted photo may be the buyer's.

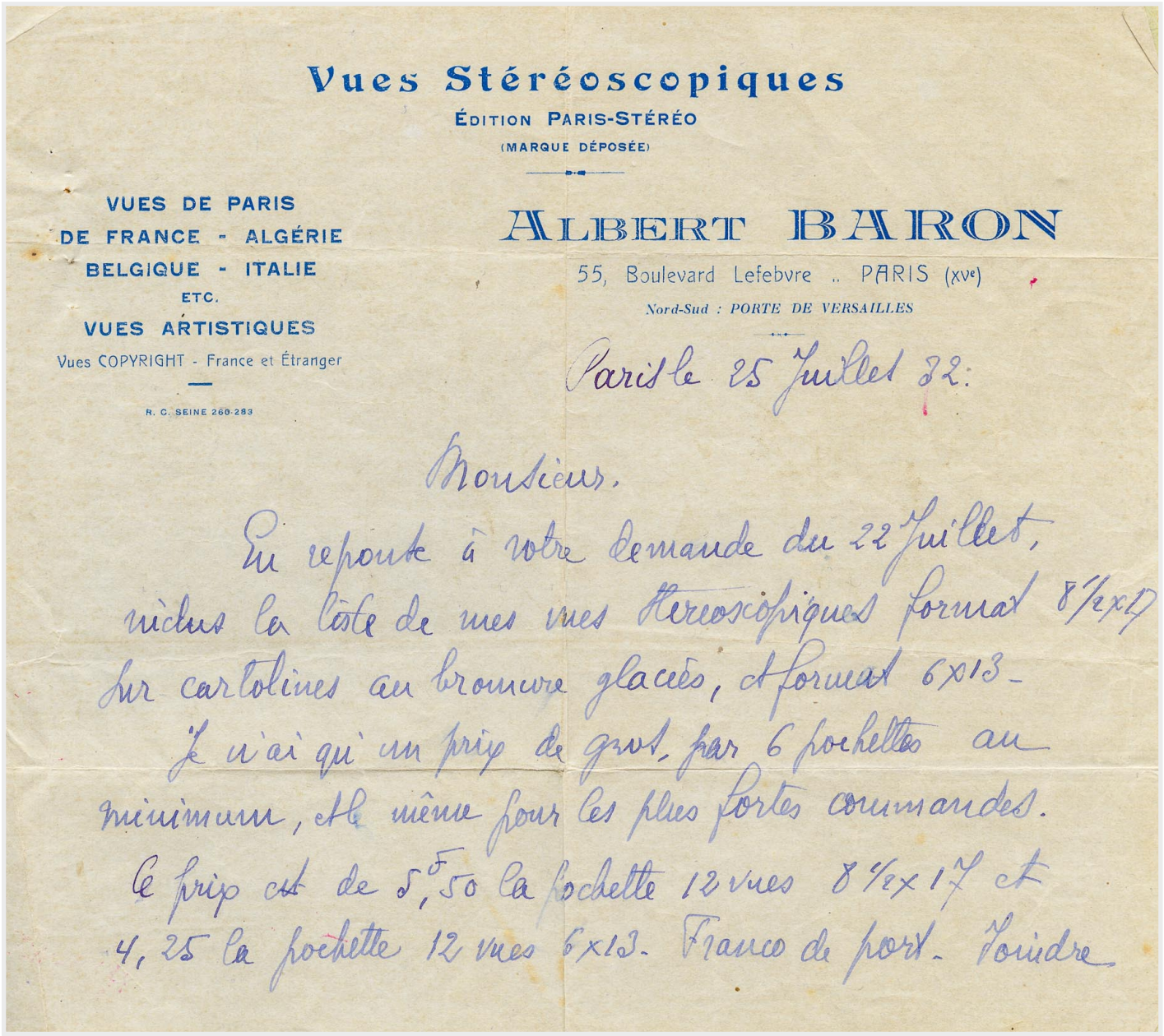
Paris-Stéréo

Paris-Stéréo was a trademark of Albert Baron. Albert Ernest Baron was born on 3 October 1870 in Rouen, Normandy, as the third child and only son of Gustave Alfred Baron (1839–1888) and Justine Maria Elisabeth Bertrand (1843–1904), both merchants[22].

On 29 July 1910, Albert married Marie Augustine Doute. The marriage record lists his profession as photographer and publisher, confirming his active involvement in the production and distribution of images[23]. Baron published a limited range of glass stereoviews, but his company is mainly known for its paper stereoviews under the name Paris-Stéréo. The stereoviews were sold in series of 12 and depicted scenes from France, Algeria, Italy and Belgium. This specific and relatively limited geographical range, combined with the fact that Baron was himself a photographer, suggests that a substantial portion of the images were taken by Baron personally. The last known reference to his company dates from 1931[24]. By that time, Baron was 60 years old, and it is plausible that the business was wound up either in connection with his retirement or due to the broader decline of stereoscopy. Albert Baron died on 10 January 1951 in Houdan.

Series showing scenes from the First World War were issued both during the conflict and in the years that followed. A catalogue titled *Vues de la Guerre* lists ten series of twelve stereoviews in the 8.5 × 17 cm format. Neither Albert Baron nor Paris-Stéréo is mentioned in this first catalogue. The stereoviews are numbered in the 25xx to 28xx range. Most series are not devoted to a specific theme or battle. Both the catalogue and the views were issued during the war and were therefore subject to censorship.

In a later catalogue, the number of series was expanded to twenty. The series from the first catalogue reappear, although some individual views have been replaced by others with new numbers, and ten entirely new series have been added. The numbering now extends into the 29xx range. This time, the catalogue explicitly mentions the name Paris-Stéréo, which allows the earlier, anonymous catalogue to be attributed to Baron and his firm. The later catalogue also states that the views are authorised, indicating that it too was published while censorship was still in force.



Vues Stéréoscopiques

ÉDITION PARIS-STÉRÉO

(MARQUE DÉPOSÉE)

VUES DE PARIS
DE FRANCE - ALGÉRIE
BELGIQUE - ITALIE
ETC.
VUES ARTISTIQUES
Vues COPYRIGHT - France et Étranger

R. C. SEINE 260-283

ALBERT BARON

55, Boulevard Lefebvre .. PARIS (XVe)

Nord-Sud : PORTE DE VERSAILLES

Paris le 25 Juillet 22.

Monsieur.

En réponse à votre demande du 22 Juillet, vous la liste de mes vues stéréoscopiques format 8½x17 sur cartolines au bromure glacées, et format 6x13.

Je n'ai qu'un prix de gros par 6 pochettes au minimum, et même pour les plus fortes commandes.

Ce prix est de 5f,50 la pochette 12 vues 8½x17 et 4,25 la pochette 12 vues 6x13. Franco de port. Foudre

A handwritten letter by Albert Baron that was attached to a Paris-Stéréo catalogue.



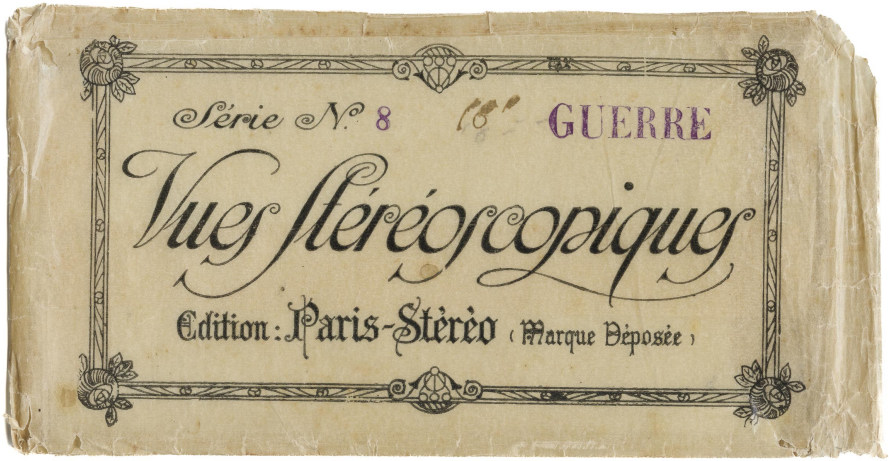
A cardboard box with 8.5 x 17 cm paper stereoviews from Série 3.

The numbering of the stereoviews in the catalogues is not consecutive and contains several gaps. Remarkably, none of the series includes images of the Battle of Verdun. Taking into account the replacements and additions, the total number of 8.5 × 17 cm war views is estimated at around 300.

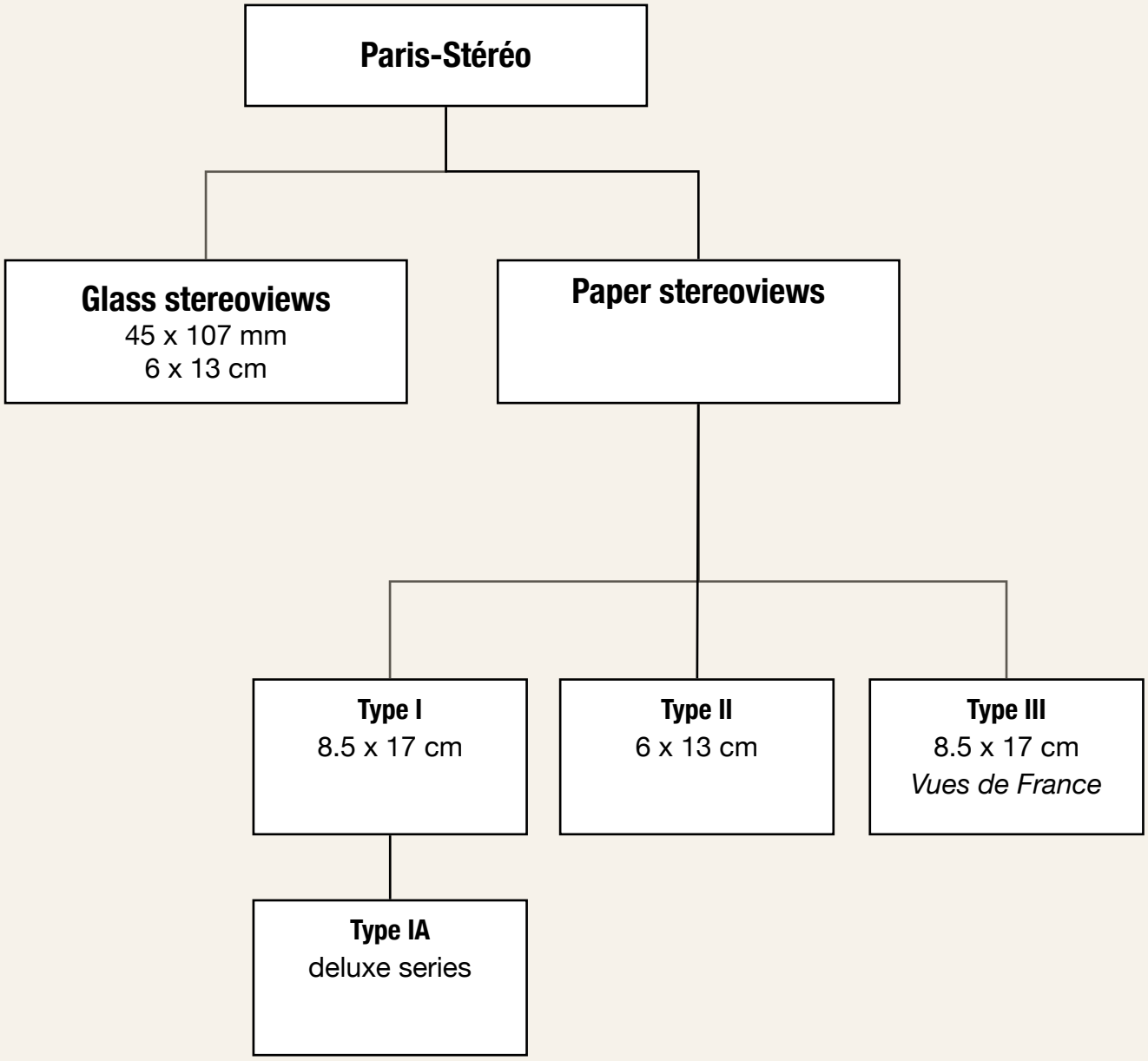
Baron also marketed glass stereoviews in the 6 × 13 cm and 45 × 107 mm formats, although these glass slides are much rarer than the 8.5 × 17 cm paper stereoviews. The images on the 6 × 13 cm glass stereoviews were also printed and issued as 6 × 13 cm paper views. The 45 × 107 mm slides were cropped versions of the 6 × 13 cm images. Like the paper views, the glass slides also bear numbers in the 25xx range and higher. It seems that the gaps previously identified in the numbering of the 8.5 × 17 cm series are in fact occupied by 6 × 13 cm slides. This indicates that each war stereoview, in each format, was assigned a unique number by Baron. It is possible that a separate catalogue was produced for the 6 × 13 cm series, but the total number of stereoviews in this format remains unknown.

After the war, Baron introduced new series under the title *Vues de France*. These series depict various regions and sights of France and include several sets that still relate to the conflict. The 8.5 × 17 cm paper stereoviews differ in both presentation and numbering from Baron's earlier productions. All cards in these series carry the name Paris-Stéréo together with the designation *Vues de France*.

The author believes that a large portion (or maybe all) of the stereoviews related to the war were taken by Baron himself. He may have held an authorisation from the French army. This would explain the relatively limited portfolio, the censored imagery and the absence of views of the Battle of Verdun—likely because he was never present there.



Paper envelope with 8.5 x 17 cm paper stereoviews from Série 8.


Paris-Stéréo
Glass stereoviews
45 x 107 mm
6 x 13 cm
Paper stereoviews
Type I
8.5 x 17 cm
Type II
6 x 13 cm
Type III
8.5 x 17 cm
Vues de France
Type IA
deluxe series



3497 - *Un poste de commandement*
8.5 x 17 cm paper stereoview - Type I
Paris-Stéréo



2671 - *la grand halte*
8.5 x 17 cm paper stereoview - Type IA
Paris-Stéréo

Type IA was a deluxe variant of Type I and was mounted on a sturdy cardboard board with rounded corners. These stereoviews were sold in purple cardboard boxes instead of the more common paper envelops.



2635 - *Crénaux dans la tranchée*
45 x 107 mm glass stereoview
Paris-Stéréo



2635 - *Crénaux dans la tranchée*
6 x 13 cm paper stereoview - Type II
Paris-Stéréo

This stereoview is mounted on cardboard, but this does not apply to all Type II stereoviews.



S.7.78 - *Arras - Place des États*
8.5 x 17 cm paper stereoview - Type III
Paris-Stéréo

A different presentation style with the series name *Vues de France*. This series name was also used for non-war stereoviews. Each series has a theme. The views show the name Paris-Stéréo. The images have a distinctive shape of flat-arched windows.

Éditions L.L.

The trademark Éditions L.L. has its roots in the firm of Moïse Léon and his son-in-law Isaac-Georges Lévy. From 1864 onward, their company Léon & Lévy succeeded Ferrier père fils et Soulier, a publisher renowned for the production of high-quality glass stereoviews in the 1860s[24].

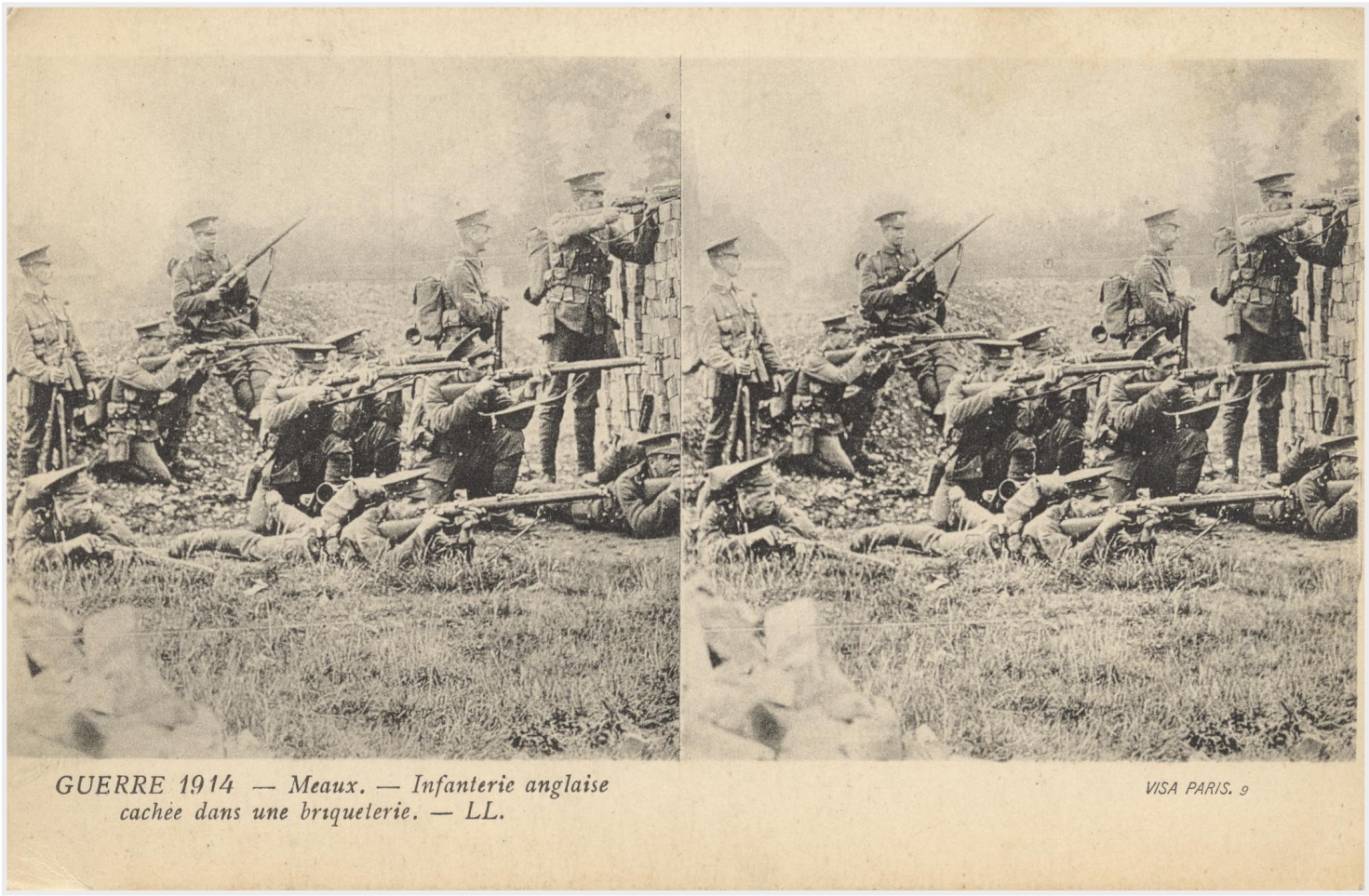
In 1871, Léon & Lévy issued an extensive series of glass stereoviews depicting the ruined city of Paris after the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune. In the years that followed, their activities gradually shifted away from exclusive glass stereoviews toward other visual media, such as magic lantern slides, cartes de visite, postcards and paper stereoviews.

Léon left the firm in 1871, after which the business continued under the name J. Lévy & Cie. Following the death of Lévy, the company passed to his sons and operated as Lévy & ses fils, and from 1915 onward as Lévy fils & Cie. The production of glass stereoviews ceased around 1911[25], but the firm continued to publish paper stereoviews and postcards until 1920. These paper images were issued under the name Éditions LL, a direct reference to Léon & Lévy.

During the First World War, Éditions L.L. issued postcards and paper stereoviews in the 9 × 14 cm format. The postcards were marketed in booklets of 20 cards, while the stereoviews were supplied in series of 24.

The back cover of a 1916 postcard booklet lists a catalogue of 17 postcard series and 4 stereoview series. The front cover bears the title *La Guerre Européenne 1914–1916*, indicating that the booklet was published during the conflict itself.





9 x 14 cm paper stereoview
Éditions L.L.

The stereoviews mention VISA PARIS, followed by a number. Visa Paris (also Vise Paris or Visé Paris) appeared on many images printed in France during the First World War. It probably indicated that the image had been approved by a central department in Paris before publishing[26].

Final remarks

The quality of war stereoviews is determined by three factors: photography, development and preservation.

Photography

The most important factor for quality is determined by the photographer while taking the photo. The exposure, the captured subject and the composition determine whether the photo is appealing. The chosen subject shows how the soldier experienced the battlefield and what he thought was important to record as a lasting memory. The exposure and composition tell something about the photographer's skills. With stereo photography, the composition is even more important than with conventional photography because, to achieve a 3D effect, it is important that there are subjects in the foreground, the middle plane and the background. Many soldiers took overview photos of the devastated battlefields. This is very understandable because the enormous destruction must have made a huge impression on the soldiers, but these photos are less appealing as stereo images.

Development

After the war, the gelatin silver negatives were developed by publishers of glass stereoviews. The images were often tinted with a brown or other tone. This was found to be more attractive than standard black-and-white images. The publishers were driven by commercial motives, and the quality of stereoviews that were printed from the same negative could vary. Most publishers offered stereoviews in the popular 45 x 107 mm and 6 x 13 cm formats. When a photo was captured by a 6 x 13 cm stereo camera, this image could not be scaled down to 45 x 107 mm. To sell the image as a 45 x 107 mm stereoview, the larger image was simply cropped, and a part of the image was lost. This shows that the publishers wanted to serve as many customers as possible in order to boost sales. The artistic quality was of less importance.

Preservation

Stereoviews with war scenes were very popular in the 1920s. Many ended up in attics afterwards. The images are particularly vulnerable to light and moisture. Images may fade, or the emulsion may be affected by fungus. Glass stereoviews are also sensitive to scratches or breakage. The frequent placement of glass slides in stereoscopes left its mark. Glass stereoviews from the war in mint condition are very rare.



8641 - *Entrée du Fort de Souville*
6 x 13 cm glass stereoview
Rolland



A cropped version of the same photograph. Parts of the original image are no longer visible, diminishing both the composition and the overall impact of the picture.

Captions

Many stereoviews contain a caption that gives context to the images. Most detailed descriptions contain the number of the publisher, a short description, the location and date. It turns out that these descriptions are not always reliable. The publisher likely relied on notes provided by the soldiers who supplied the negatives—notes that may have been written from memory. The soldiers themselves were not always certain of their exact location. Publishers adopted these descriptions verbatim, with no real incentive to verify their accuracy. Their motivations were purely commercial.



The title states that the image shows the Froideterre fortification, but in reality it depicts the entrance to Fort Souville.



The image shows the barracks of Fort Troyon, not Fort Douaumont.



- 470 - LAFFAUX -

- PRES DU MOULIN -



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Revisions

0.1	22-11-2025	First edition
1.0.1	29-11-2025	Minor adjustments

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