

**Introduction**

This exhibit shows the development of the modern parachute; what it is made from, its manufacture, and how it is packed. It goes on to show that the first parachutists were often entertainers and it was not until the 1930s that parachutists were properly trained. The exhibit continues by considering the life cycle of a parachute, from its dormant state, often found in a backpack or hanging limp from a balloon, its struggle at birth to fully inflate, the gentle floating to the ground showing off its perfectly round or, in modern times, rectangular, often multi-coloured shape and, finally, coming to rest on the ground, collapsing, its job done.

**Plan**

	Frame
<b>1.1 What is a parachute?</b> – From umbrellas to silk parachutes.	3 sheets A
<b>1.2 The birth of modern parachuting</b> – Parachutists entertain the crowds in the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century.	3 Sheets A
<b>1.3 Training parachutists</b> – Learning to descend under a parachute.	7 sheets A, B
<b>2.1 Ready to go</b> –The worst part of parachuting is waiting to go.	3 Sheets B
<b>2.2 Off we go!</b> – And now the parachute soars into the heavens.	5 Sheets C
<b>3.0 A gentle ride to the ground</b> – Safely under a parachute.	11 sheets C, D
<b>4.0 Its job done!</b> – Safely on the ground.	8 sheets E

**Rarity**

Rarity is shown by a red dot.



Rarity is defined as hard to find in the quality shown.

**Story line**

The Thematic story line is in italics, using this font and this font size. Usually it will be placed alongside the postcard with a directional arrow, if necessary, to avoid any uncertainty on which postcard it refers to.

**Bibliography**

- a. Collecting and exhibiting picture postcards. Dr. Seija Laakso. Livonia Print. Riga 2012.
- b. A History of Postcards. Martin Willoughby. Bracken Books. 1992.
- c. Exhibiting Picture Postcards. Some practical hints. Birthe King. 2016. ABPS website – seminar.
- d. A guide to Postcard Printing Techniques. <http://www.metropostcard.com/techniques0.html>.

**Postcard technical information**

Under each postcard there are, if known and in this order, the following five facts: **date** when it was available, the **artist or photographer**, **printer**, whether it is **used or unused**, and the **printing process**. This technical information uses this font in bold and in this size.

It should be assumed that the postcard has a divided back unless otherwise stated.

**Postcard general information**

Any additional information regarding the postcard will be found alongside it, using this font and this font size.

*Jumping from a great height with just an umbrella to slow you down seems 'optimistic'.*

*Entertaining the crowds by jumping from a height and drifting to the ground under an umbrella-like device was thought to have originated from Chinese clowns a thousand years ago. Perhaps jumping from a two bar fence would not be so entertaining!*

Cynicus was the pseudonym of the well-known Victorian freelance artist Martin Anderson. In 1898 he designed Court cards (4.75 x 3.5 inches) for Blum and Degan, the example here being one of his earliest. He went on to have his own postcard publishing business until the 1920s.

Ex Keith Harrison collection.



Circa 1898, 'Cynicus' - Martin Anderson, -, unused, Chromolitho, Undivided back

**Having a High Old Time**



1941, Reg Carter, Humouresque, used, Halftone.



*It would be many years before parachutists could land on or even near a target on the ground (or balcony!).*

1922, -, FCM&Co, used, Halftone

1.1 What is a parachute? – There are many types and shapes of parachutes



1920, -, unused, lithograph

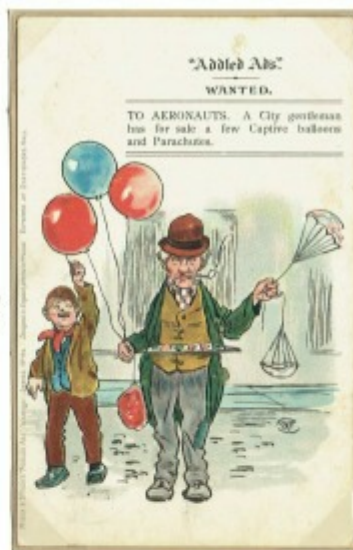
*A typical round parachute, usually about 28ft (9m) in diameter and used exclusively until the 1960s. This design is typically German/Austrian being non-steerable.*

*Steering of a plain round parachute is done by pulling on one of the risers (the cords that come from the edge of the parachute down to the parachutist). This lets the air out horizontally and can give a speed of about 3Km/hour in still air. This enables steering around obstacles.*



1980s, G. Meininger, -, unused, screen printing.

*In the 1960s slots and side skirts started to appear on round parachutes. This gave the parachutist better control of the parachute and in still air could achieve around 12Km/hour.*



1904, -, Misch & Stock, used, lithograph

*Although this size of parachute is too small for human use small parachutes, often under a metre in diameter, were used to pull bigger ones from their containers. These pilot or drogue parachutes can be found on ejection seat, aircraft braking and spacecraft parachute systems, amongst others.*



1909, -, unused, screen printing

*By the 1980s most sport parachutists and display teams were using the ram-air type of parachute.*

*These parachutes provide lift; whereas the round parachute provides just drag. Speeds of over 30Km/hour are possible in still air.*

*There are many sport off-shoots from parachuting. Paragliding is one of them. This is just a wing which gives lift and is designed to be deployed open i.e. it does not need to withstand large opening stresses.*



1990s, Warren, Judges, unused, screen printing.

1.1 What is a parachute? – Silk was the main material for making parachutes in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



1910, -, -, unused, lithograph and hand coloured

Silkworms feast on mulberry leaves and a single silkworm can produce, in a single thread, 1000m of silk thread.

Getting the silk thread out of the cocoons and then putting it onto reels takes time and a lot of patience!



1909, -, -, unused, lithograph and hand coloured. Undivided back.

In 1907 Japan allowed divided back postcards. However, until 1918 backs were not 'centrally' divided having just 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the space for the message. The Japanese produced postcard above has such a divided back.



1909, -, -, used, possibly an Etched postcard



1920s, -, -, used, Halftone

Spinning the silk thread is a slow and very skilled job.

Raw silk can be sent around the world, in this case the UK, and using modern machinery can make commercial silk spinning very efficient.

Girls making parachutes using manual sewing machines.



1903, -, Photochrome Ltd, used, Photochrome

1.1 What is a parachute? – packing a parachute is a key skill although some parachutes do not need to be packed!



1946, US Marine Corps, WR Thompson, used, Halftone.

Packing a parachute so that it opens smoothly is a skilled task. It takes about 20 to 30 minutes to pack a single parachute and on D-Day in 1944 nearly 20,000 parachutes were used!



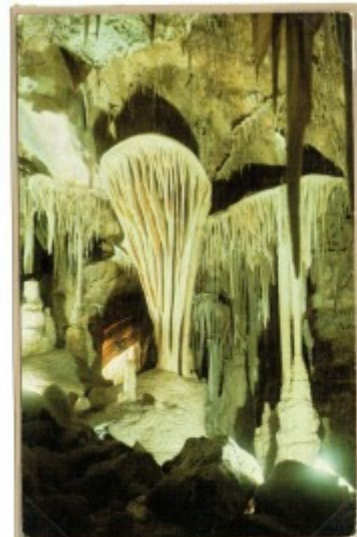
1940s, Hans Schaller, HORN, unused, Real Photo Postcard (RPPC).

The most famous parachute packer of all times was Marilyn Monroe. In 1944, when she was 18, she worked inspecting packed parachutes for the Radioplane Munitions Factory in California.



1953, Gene Korman, Camden Graphics, unused, Photochrome.

Storing parachutes before they are packed takes a lot of space. Great care is needed to ensure that the parachute cords do not get tangled.



Parachutes come in many forms and these are found in the Lehman Caves in Nevada. Technically this is called a Shield cave formation, but it does look like a parachute!

1950s, -, O.M. Terry, Nevada, unused, Photochrome.



1910, -, Misch & Stock, used, Lithograph.

The large sail over the bows of the yacht is called a parachute sail. Its bulging shape looks like a parachute on its side! However, it will do little to bring a parachutist safely to earth!

1.2 The birth of modern parachuting – parachutists entertain the crowds in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

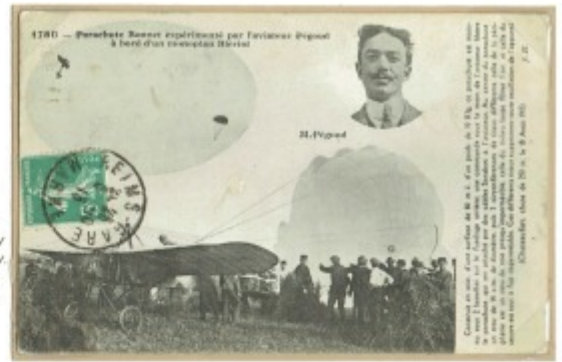


1904, G. Smith of London, -, used, lithograph and hand tinted.

Alexandra Palace, London was the home for many parachutists at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the summer they would entertain the crowds at the weekend by jumping from balloons.

In the early years after divided backs came into use [1902 in the UK] a few postcard printers still left some space for messages on the front of the postcard.

M. Pegoud was a well-known French parachutist, pilot and entertainer in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He would fly his plane and then jump out. He and his plane would both land safely!



1918, J. Hauser of Paris, -, used, Halftone.



Circa 1910, A.E. Langdon, -, unused, Real Photo (RPPC)

Dolly Shepherd (1886-1983), was a London-based Edwardian parachutist. From 1904 until 1912 she entertained crowds across the country jumping from balloons. She is considered by many to be the 'mother' of British parachuting and her image, in a mural, adorns the wall of Alexandra Palace to this day.

I have only seen one other postcard like this outside of a museum in 30 years of collecting and this one is also signed by Dolly.



Circa 1908, -, unused, Real Photo (RPPC)

The gas balloon ready for lift off. Gas or hot air balloons were used by parachutists in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The parachutist, third from the left, is Dolly Sheppard. Note the parachute lying on the ground.

The French had their female parachutists as well. Note the risers join well above the head of the parachutist, making it impossible to steer. As the postcard says this is a parachute designed by Maurice Blanquier.



1920s, -, unused, Halftone .

1.2 The birth of modern parachuting – exhibition parachuting was particularly strong in Germany and the USA.



Circa 1925, -, German Aero Club, unused, Real Photo (RPPC)

Werner and Marie Triebner were popular parachutists in Germany in the 1920s. He died in an accident in Altenbury in September 1927 but Marie survived him and lived until 1985.

The parachutist can be clearly seen hanging under this gas (likely to be coal-gas) balloon in Presho, South Dakota. Notice that he/she is hanging on to a trapeze – no harnesses in those days!



1909, -, used, Photogravure



Circa early 1930s, -, C. Linke and W. Elberfeld, unused, Halftone

This is the German parachutist Willy Buss using a typically German designed parachute. Willy is wearing a harness and jump suit, suggesting the photograph is around 1930.



Circa 1930s, -, unused, Photogravure

R34 left Britain on 2 July 1919 and arrived at Long Island, USA on 6 July after a flight of 108 hours. As the landing party had no experience of handling large rigid airships, Major E. M. Pritchard jumped by parachute and so became the first person to reach American soil by air from Europe.

The parachutist appears to be trying not to land on the cattle at the fair in Springfield, Vermont!



1908, -, used, Photogravure

1.2 The birth of modern parachuting – Parachutes move from being a source of entertainment to a method of war.



1933, -, Grinnell Litho Co. New York, unused, Linen.

Arguably the greatest female European parachutist was Kathie Paulus, from Germany. Before WW1 she made over 70 descents entertaining the crowds. Note the lack of a harness: often the parachutist had to hold on to a trapeze bar for the journey to earth!

The 250 ft parachute tower gave the public a taste of parachuting! The World's Fair ran from 1939 until 1940 in Flushing Meadow New York and when it shut the tower was moved to Coney Island. Although it has been restored it is not used and is now a State landmark.



Circa 1910, -, E. Balsler, Germany, unused, Photogravure. Undivided back.



1916, -, HA Dickerman, unused, Real Photo (RRPC).

Started in the 1870s the Brockton Fair remains a major event in Massachusetts. Parachute jumps were a major attraction in 1916, particularly as one parachutist had died at the 1915 show!

Kurt Student was a Luftwaffe general and commander of the German airborne forces in WW2. Considered by many to be the founder of modern parachuting. His forces were successful in Norway, Belgium and Crete although his losses in Crete were so high Hitler refused to sanction further airborne operations.

Few postcards of Kurt Student have survived the war and even fewer in such good condition.



Between May 1940 and September 1943 (based on the medals worn), -, -, unused, Photogravure.

The postcard is printed on very thin card reflecting wartime shortages.

1.3 Training parachutists – Learning to descend under a parachute.



1937, Josef Sudek, -, used, Photogravure.

Josef Sudek was an acclaimed photographer (1896-1976). Despite losing an arm in WW1 he produced a huge portfolio of pictures of Prague's buildings, statues, but rarely people, which have been admired around the world, particularly for his use of light. Known as the Poet of Prague this photograph came from his 'commercial' period in the 1930s.

Fort Benning Georgia was THE training establishment for USA paratroopers in the 1950s. Thousands of men jumped from these nearly 250ft high towers. During WW2 the 555<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Battalion, comprising of Black Americans, trained at Fort Benning.

The military (in this case Czechoslovakian) often train their parachute forces using parachute towers. It allows them to practise their landing in relative safety.



1940s, -, The White Company Columbus Georgia, unused, Photogravure on Linen.



1940s, -, Exhibit Supply Company ESCO, unused, Halfnote.

Early Chinese acrobats in the 11<sup>th</sup> century used an umbrella-like device to descend to the ground to entertain the people. I am not sure this umbrella would help this airman but perhaps the flowers would help to soften his landing!

These cards, often known as Exhibit cards, were dispensed by vending machines, often targeting a male audience. They were thicker, shorter and narrower than standard postcards.

During WW2 the standard issue parachute was around 24ft – and not a 6ft umbrella! The use of humour is frequently used in WW2 parachute postcards, perhaps to calm the nerves of the postcard sender and recipient!



1940s, -, Midwest Map Co (MWM), unused, Photogravure on Linen.

1.3 Training parachutists – Parachuting for beginners.



1940s, -, Grogan Photo Co. Illinois, used, Real Photo (RPPC).

Beginners often move from jumping from a tower to jumping from a balloon. Cheaper to use than fixed wing aircraft and balloons can carry more parachutists.

The Japanese used balloons to train parachutists as well.



1930/1940s, -, -, unused, Real Photo (RPPC).



1943, -, Graycraft Card Virginia, used, Halftone.

This parachutist has the ability to steer the parachute by pulling down on the 'risers', the cords connecting the parachute to the parachutist, in the direction he wants to go. This type of steerable parachute was used by the American, British and Polish forces in WW2.

Whilst training there is a lot to remember; however, some things are more fundamental than others!



1942, Jack Greens, Tuck, used, Halftone.

The early Japanese parachutists used a similar style of parachute to the Germans i.e. it could not be steered as the 'risers', the cords connecting the parachute to the parachutist, could not be reached.



1930s, -, -, unused, Halftone.

1.3 Training parachutists – Many consider the initial jump to be the most nerve-racking!



1939, -, Valentine's, unused, Real Photo (RPPC).

The Whitworth Whitley converted bomber was used to train parachutists during WW2. It was also used in February 1941 for the 1<sup>st</sup> British parachute operation in World War 2.

The Blackburn Beverley was used in a variety of operational roles during the 1950s and 60s including the training of parachutists.

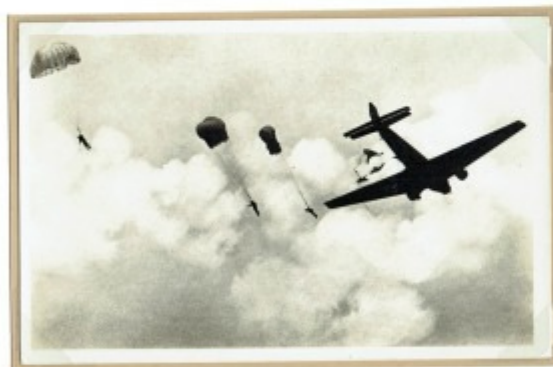


1940s, -, Horn's, unused, Photogravure.

A German paratrooper about 2 seconds after jumping with his parachute not quite open.



1950s, -, -, unused, Halftone.



1944, -, Rotaphot Berlin, unused, Photogravure.

The JU52 was the main German aircraft of World War 2 that was used to drop parachutists. It could carry 17 fully equipped paratroopers; although, on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1940 a total of 278 were lost in the 'Battle for the Hague'.



1940, -, -, unused, Halftone.

The Blackburn Beverley could carry 70 fully equipped parachutists. The lack of any equipment or weapons on the parachutists suggests that this is an early training jump.

1.3 Training parachutists – Steering the parachute is harder than you might imagine.



1905, Britton & Ray San Francisco, used, Real Photo (RPPC).  
Undivided back.

During World War 2 the Golden Gate Park was used as a drop-zone for American parachute forces under training. It was also the location for Baldwin's first parachute jump in 1887. He went on to design the first parachute harness.

The USA did not permit divided-back postcards until March 1907.

Landing on top of somebody is likely to cause significant injury – if only to your pride!  
The lady is complaining that the parachute should be enough to ensure a soft landing!



1940s, NARBO Toulous France unused, Photographure.



1940s, Grinnel Litho Co., unused, Linen.

My landings were never as soft as this! Notice the absence of a helmet, gloves or weapons!

Have you "ENJEN" for army life? Do you find things very soft? Perhaps you'd like a break like this. When next you go aloft?



1940s, USA Army Signal Corps., WR Thompson & Co., Richmond, Virginia, unused, Halftone.

Learning to land in a large group without knocking into a colleague, yet still landing correctly, is much harder than landing on your own!

Difficult to see how this parachutist can control or steer his parachute! A rather unorthodox style that is likely to result in him getting wet!



1943, Worrell Associates Shreveport Louisiana, used, Linen.

1.3 Training parachutists – Getting into the right position to land is critical if you wish to avoid injury.



1944, Irby, MWM MidWest Map Co., used, Linen.

Before you can think about getting into the right position it is important to remember to pack your parachute!

I don't think this parachutist will make a safe landing! Note the hole in the middle of the parachute. This is called a Carnerin hole which gives greater stability to the parachute.



1940s, KWH Germany, unused, Halftone.

Perhaps this parachutist thought he was landing in Australia!

Humour with sex is often found on parachuting postcards. Quite risqué for the period – but it is Italian!!



1930s, Buratlin, d'Arle V.E. Boeri Rome, unused, Halftone.



1920/30s, unused, Halftone

You can just make out the parachutist in a rather odd position, with his arms and legs stretched out. Not quite the preferred shape of legs together and arms above your head!

Flying without a parachute would be a good skill to have! Then you would not have to bother getting into a landing position.



Now we have a little more advanced instruction.

1943, used, Halftone.

1.3 Training parachutists – As the ground rushes up to meet you it is important to focus on it.



1937, -, used, unknown.

The landing position is legs together, bent knees and hands above your head holding the risers. One out of three is not really good enough!



1940s, -, Narbo Toulouse, unused, Lithography.

The parachutist is meant to be looking down not up!



1940s, - Midwest Map Co. Aurora Missouri, unused, Linen.

Although the parachutists is focussing on the ground she is about to break her ankles!



1940s, -, Asheville PostCard Co. North Carolina, unused, Linen.

I think these four parachutists need to go back to basic training, assuming that they survive the landing!



1942, -, Kings Features Syndicate, unused, Lithography.

The thought of landing in high heel shoes is frightening! Conventional wisdom is that landing under a round 28 ft. parachute is equivalent to jumping off a wall that is between 4 and 8 ft. high! Hence the need for good ankle support!

2.1 Ready to go – The worst part of parachuting is waiting to go



1940s, -, Friko Bildverlag Osterode/Harz, unused, Unknown.

Waiting, sometimes for hours, is the worst part of parachuting.

In February 1914 Jean Ors parachuted from a Deperdussin aircraft and landed safely. See how the parachute is packed under the aircraft and the parachutist sits in a cradle between the wheels.



Circa 1914, -, unused, Half-tone.



1943, -, MWM, used, Linen.

Taking a hostess with you might be one way to calm the nerves before you jump from the aircraft.



1930s, -, Paul Mehlhorn Mannheim, unused, Real Photo (RPPC)

Jumping from aircraft (and from my research this looks like a Bristol Bulldog) instead of balloons became the norm from the 1920s. The neatness of the parachute suggests they are about to get ready and take off.



1970/80s, M. Lebleaux, Promodis France, unused, Half-tone.

The parachutists are in position ready to jump. See the orange static line attaching their parachute to the overhead wire via a short piece of cord. As they fall away from the aircraft the parachute will be pulled out and the connecting cord will be broken leaving the parachute free to descend.

2.1 Ready to go – Get into position and launch yourself into the air!



Circa 1914, -, unused, Photogravure.

Many early parachute displays were family teams, in this case Mr and Mrs Pelletier. Whilst Mr Pelletier flew the aircraft you can see Mrs Pelletier strapped to the under-side of the aircraft and at the appropriate height she will let go!

Hang on tight as the hot-air balloon soars upwards. Usually the parachutist had a trapeze bar to hold on to as harnesses were not used until the 1920s.



1909, -, The Simplicity Co. Chicago, used, Halftone.



1980s, R. Castro, Cecami Italy, unused, Chrome.



Circa 1950s, -, unused, Halftone.

Launching yourself into the air can be a traumatic experience. Note the weapon container, weighing up to 90 lbs, on this parachutist's front. Once safely under a parachute the container is lowered about 10 feet so that it lands first and does not injure the parachutist.

Waiting for your turn to jump can be a nervous time. Note the static line attached to the parachute ready to pull it out of its bag once the parachutist has jumped.

The parachutist has just deployed his parachute. Note the small parachute pulling out the bigger one.



1980s, Charles Bonney, Crown Colour Views Massachusetts, unused, Chrome

2.1 Ready to go – And now we are off.



1906, -, used, Real Photo (RPPC).

Undivided back.

The USA permitted undivided backs in March 1907.

This is the Calhoun County homecoming Fair and picnic on the Hardin, Illinois school grounds in Illinois USA. The parachutist is 'Reckless Nolan' who rode into the sky under a hot air balloon, cut himself loose and floated back to earth under his parachute.

The point of no return! Jumping from the rear of a C-123 PROVIDER aircraft of the USAF.

Note the sand bag hanging off the balloon on the right hand side. When the parachutist descends the heavy sandbag will force the balloon to topple over and return to earth; hopefully, not too far from where it started.



Greetings from First Campbell, Kentucky

Circa 1960s, -, Thompson's Community Tennessee, unused, Halftone.



1917, L. Deslandes, French, used, Lithograph?

One parachutist has just jumped from the observation balloon, and the parachute is starting to unfurl.

Before you jump it is always good practise to find out where your parachute is!



1943, -, Army Navy Card Co. New York, used, Linen.

Getting out of the aircraft and then deploying the parachute is correct; however, not whilst still attached to the aircraft!!



1942, CP Halfeld, Flieger Fotos Germany, used, Chrome.