Miksa Domonkos In His Office

This picture shows my father, Miksa Domonkos, in his office at the Caterpillar Company. The photo was taken in Budapest in 1913. After my father graduated from the Commercial Academy he spent two years in Germany at a technical college. That's how he became entitled to be an artificer officer and to get a civil job. He spoke German perfectly, he was absolutely fluent and he was handsome, perhaps this also played a role in the fact that the Caterpillar made an arrangement with him to introduce the caterpillar tractors in Middle Europe, which was a great novelty at that time. And my father played an important role in the entire Middle European propagation. He magyarized his name to Domonkos at this time, sometime around 1910, because the name Fleischmann bothered him. In the meantime, in 1911 he had to join the forces for the one-year volunteer service as an officer. He was assigned to a technical formation, to the 'Kraftfahrtruppe' [German for 'motorized unit'], even though there weren't any caterpillars, those were only introduced during World War I by the British. But he wasn't only a specialist in caterpillars, he was specialized in motor-cars, too, and he spoke fluent German, which counted very much in the army of the Monarchy, so they entrusted a formation to him. From 1912 he was at the Caterpillar company again, he had his own office and he got a good salary. When World War I broke out they called him up immediately with the stock of cars and other means of transportation that he had been responsible for, i.e. with the unsold caterpillars and motor-cars he had. The authorities collected the available means of transportation and gave them to the body of troops he belonged to. The Caterpillar company couldn't do anything, it was wartime. It didn't matter that the USA

wasn't at war yet. They entrusted to him a supplier mechanized troop. He joined the forces as an officer, but he soon became an ensign, and he demobilized as first lieutenant at the end of the war.