



Third Reich Study Group Bulletin

THIRD REICH STUDY GROUP
Devoted to the Study
of the Postal History
of Germany 1933-1945

VOL. XXXIV No. 2 (Whole No. 135) 2000

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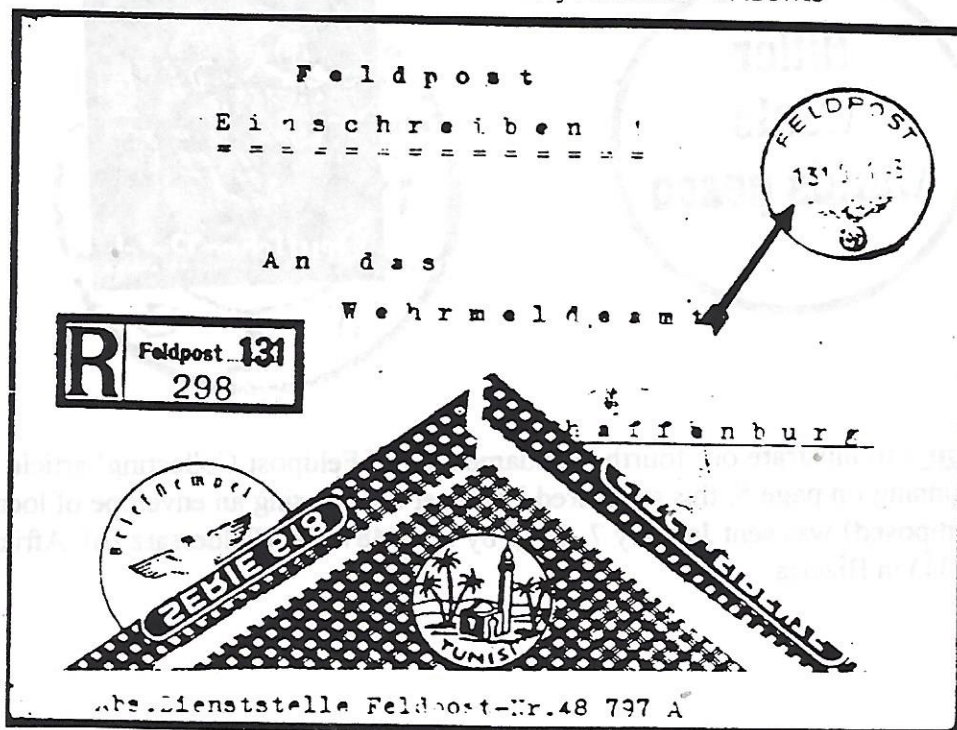
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STUDY GROUP NOTES

TRSG Meeting at NOJEX – there will be an informal TRSG meeting at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 27, 2000 at the Meadowlands Crowne Plaza, Two Harmon Plaza, Secaucus NJ 07094. We have been offered an opportunity to host an entire section of Third Reich postal history exhibits. If anyone is interested in entering an exhibit, a prospectus including the entry form may be obtained from TRSG Editor Jim Lewis. The deadline for entries is April 17th, so I apologize if you receive this bulletin too late to submit an application.

TRSG (U.K.) Anniversary – congratulations to TRSG (U.K.) Editor John Rawlings for the 100th issue of their NewsSheet. This Jumbo landmark issue consisted of 34 pages, many with full color illustrations. An index mailed with this anniversary issue listed all articles published in the NewsSheets between May 1974 and March 2000. There has always been close cooperation between Third Reich Study Groups in the U.K. and the U.S.A. Good going, John, we look forward to NewSheet 200!

Hitler Wanted World Peace? - Major Arik K. Komets writes “Somehow I ended up in the possession of a commercial cover that had been sent from Cologne to Seattle, Washington. Unfortunately the exact date is not clearly discernible (see enlarged copy of postmarks below). My best guess is that this letter was posted on 19.11.37 (19 November 1937). Of particular interest is the slogan postmark to left of the Cologne cancel, which reads “Hitler wants worlds peace”. This statement is grammatically incorrect because the letter “s” in “worlds” is superfluous. This leads me to assume that this marking was in fact applied in Germany. Does anyone have another card or cover with this marking? Who was the originator of this marking? Was it Herr Carl Puder, who sent the letter, or was the marking applied while the letter was in German postal channels? Any information or theories will be greatly appreciated. My address is: Maj. Arik K. Komets, USAF Ret., PSC 120, Box R270, APO AE 09265.”



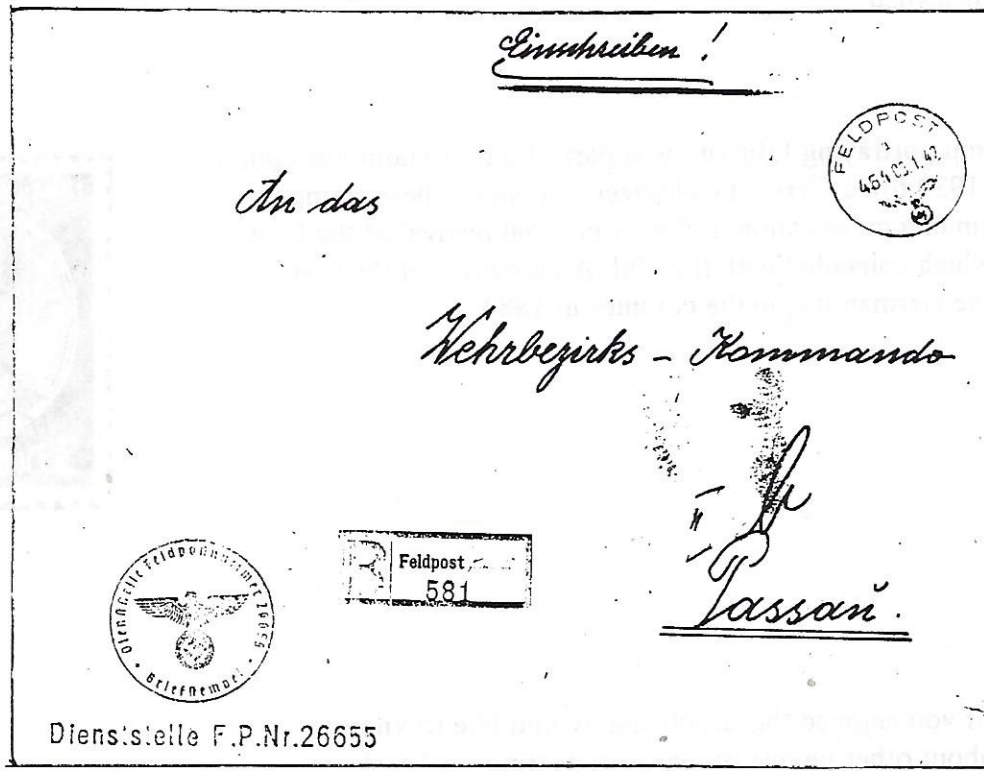
Cover Illustration – to illustrate our fourth ‘Fundamentals of Feldpost Collecting’ article on the famous Afrika Korps beginning on page 5, this registered Feldpost cover using an envelope of local origin (inside rear flap is superimposed) was sent January 7, 1943 by Fp. #48797A (Feldersatz Btl. Afrika 23) via FpA 791zw (Kenn # 131) in Bizerta.

COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:
337th Infantry Division
 by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS			AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADIER		ARTY	UNITS
337	454	313	689	690	337

Formed in January 1941, this two-regiment division was on garrison duty in central France from August 1941 until late 1942. During this period it gave up the 689th Infantry Regiment and received the 313th Infantry Regiment from the 246th Infantry Division. The division post office unit (Feldpostamt or FpA) was assigned Feldpost # 47694 to be used as a return address. In addition, this post office was assigned Kenn 454 for registered mail in lieu of its tactical designation FpA 337.

The 337th Infantry Division was transferred to the central sector of the Eastern front late in 1942 and assigned to XXXIX Corps. During the Soviet summer offensive launched on June 23, 1944 the 337th Infantry Division was decimated defending Mogilev. The division commander was killed and only remnants of the division escaped. These were returned to Germany and reformed as the 337th Volksgrenadier Division, absorbing the partially trained recruits of the new 570th Grenadier Division. A replacement FpA 337 received a new Kenn 110 because Kenn 454 had been re-assigned to FpA 299 (Korps Abteilung 'G') in September 1944. The 337th Volksgrenadier Division fought in Poland and East Prussia but took heavy casualties and was dissolved in early 1945.



Cover sent to Military District Office in Passau in January 1942 from Fp. # 26655 (Transport Column/Infantry Regiment 689) via division P.O. 337 (K-454).

Story Behind the Stamp: Franz Adolph Eduard Lüderitz

by Kelly Stefanacci

Franz Adolph Eduard Lüderitz was born July 16, 1834 at Bremen, the free Hanseatic town on the Weser River. He was the son of Franz Adolph Eduard Lüderitz, the founder of a tobacco importing firm, and his second wife, Wilhelmine Schüssler, whose family came from Oldenburg. The boy attended primary and grammar schools in Bremen until 1851, when he entered his father's business. He was very successful in this business and by 1878 he was able to assume complete control of the firm.

While he occupied a respected position in the business life of Bremen, Adolph Lüderitz had always wanted to encourage German commercial expansion into Africa. For this purpose he went to Lagos, where he founded a small bank in 1881. From the profits of this enterprise, by 1883 he was able to purchase from the Nama Chief the "little bay" of Angra Pequenha together with its hinterland. This bay on the west coast of Africa had originally been discovered by Diaz in 1486 and was rich in deposits of sodium and potassium nitrate. He named this area 'Lüderitzland' and arranged to have it placed under the protection of the German Crown. This occurred on April 24, 1884 upon the formation of the German South West Africa Company and to protect it from British expansion. In 1886 the town that he founded there was called 'Lüderitz-Bucht' but this was later simplified in 1920 to 'Lüderitz'

In 1886 Adolph Lüderitz decided to explore the course of the Orange River in an open boat. He sailed down the coast of South Africa but was unable to cross the bar at the mouth of the river. After several unsuccessful attempts, he decided to return home to Angra Pequenha in the same open boat. He was never seen again and it is assumed that his boat capsized off the African coast on October 20, 1886 and that he was drowned..

A 3 Pfg. stamp portraying Lüderitz was part of a four stamp set issued on June 30, 1934 titled German Colonizer's Jubilee. These stamps were issued in commemoration of the "Memorial festival of the Lost Colonies", which coincided with the 50th Anniversary of the first hoisting of the German flag in the colonies in 1884.



ED NOTE: If you enjoyed this article and would like to know "the story" about other people or places appearing on Third Reich stamps, please send requests to Ye Olde Ed.

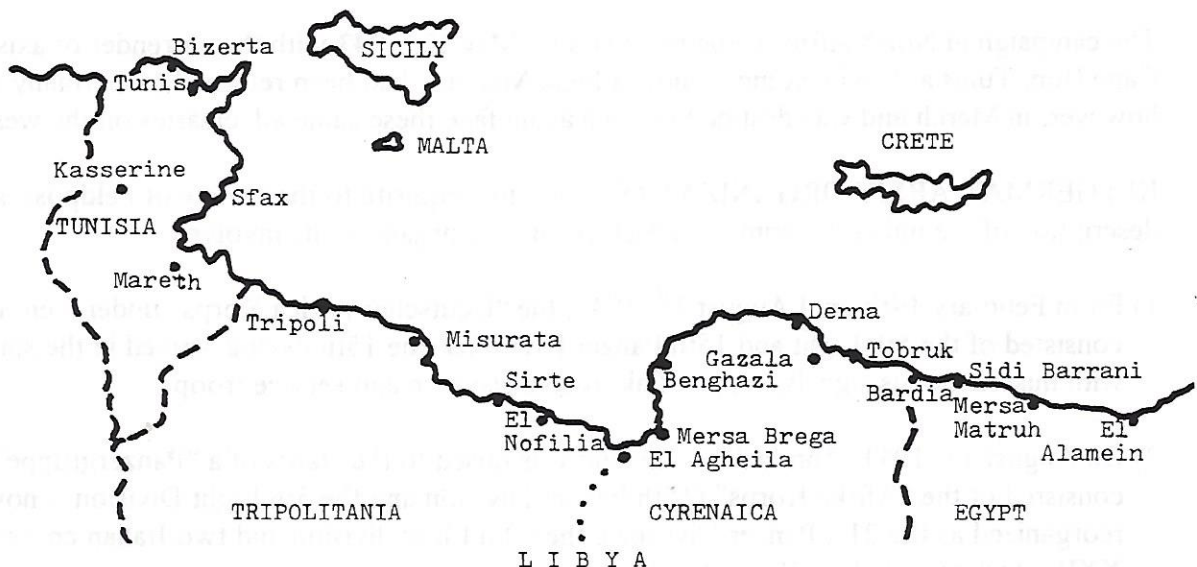
Fundamentals of Feldpost Collecting

Part 4. Fieldpost in North Africa 1941-43

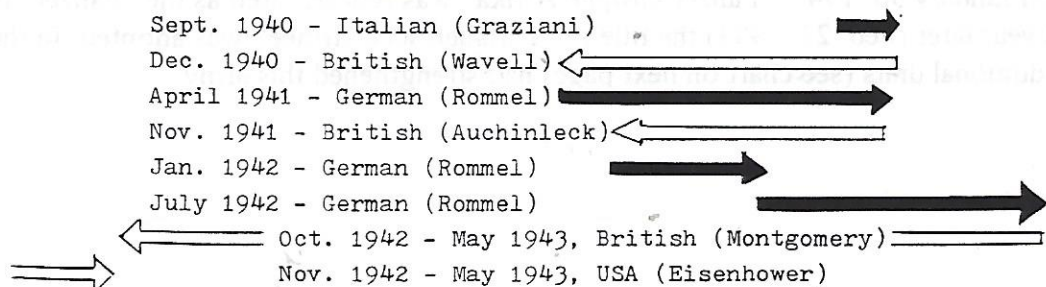
by Robert J. Houston

I.) GENERAL BACKGROUND – the story of “Panzer Armee Afrika” begins necessarily with the Italian invasion of Egypt in September 1940, which had ground to an abrupt halt after reaching as far as Sidi Barrani. In December 1940, British forces under General Wavell launched a counter-offensive, forcing an Italian retreat westward back to Cyrenaica. Bardia fell on January 7th and Tobruk on January 22, 1941. The Italian’s situation was now desperate and previous German plans to send a “Sperrverband” (blocking force), consisting of the 5th Light Division and miscellaneous units, to North Africa were now accelerated and at German insistence, all German and Italian units in Libya were placed under a single German command. As commander, Hitler chose Gen. Lt. Erwin Rommel (later to be respectfully called “The Desert Fox”), who had distinguished himself as commander of the 7th Panzer Division in France. Rommel was appointed on February 6, 1941 and arrived in Africa on February 12th as the commander of “Aufklärungs Stab Rommel”. By this time all of Cyrenaica had fallen to the British and all that stood between the British and Tripoli were 7000 disorganized Italian troops. The first German combat troops arrived at Tripoli on February 14th, 1941 and marched immediately to Misurata. On February 18th, Hitler decreed that these German forces would now be designated as the “Deutsches Africa Korps” and thus began a two-year classic of modern military history.

II.) MILITARY OPERATIONS – the two year war in North Africa became a “see-saw” battle, with each side launching spirited offensives and racing across the northern edge of Libya’s provinces of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, only to encounter the inevitable logistic problems of overextended supply lines – since Tripoli and Alexandria were the only deep water ports capable of handling the supplies required by the Germans and British respectively.



GRAPH OF MAJOR OFFENSIVES



Rommel's first offensive began in April 1941 and resulted in the driving of British forces all the way back into Egypt, thereby regaining all of Cyrenaica – except Tobruck (whose stubborn defense became a wartime chronicle).

In November 1941 British forces under Gen. Auchinleck retook virtually all of Cyrenaica in a drive which ended at the "El Agheila Line", where Axis forces made a determined stand.

The German/Italian forces launched a new offensive in January 1942, driving eastward as far as Gazala, where the front again became static for a time. Following one of the bloodiest battles of the campaign, termed by historians as the "Battle of the Gazala Cauldron" (May 1942), Rommel's forces again attacked eastward (this time taking Tobruck), but was finally brought to a halt well into Egypt at a little known railway stop named El Alamein.

This front again became more or less static, with both sides in need of replacements and supplies. The German position was now particularly precarious due to supply problems. Control of the Mediterranean by the British fleet and the Axis failure to neutralize the vital British base at Malta, kept the axis convoy routes in continuous peril and heavy losses were accordingly sustained by axis shipping. Considerable quantities of material nevertheless reached North Africa, however the necessity of landing most of these supplies at Tripoli still presented Rommel with a difficult and incredibly long supply line.

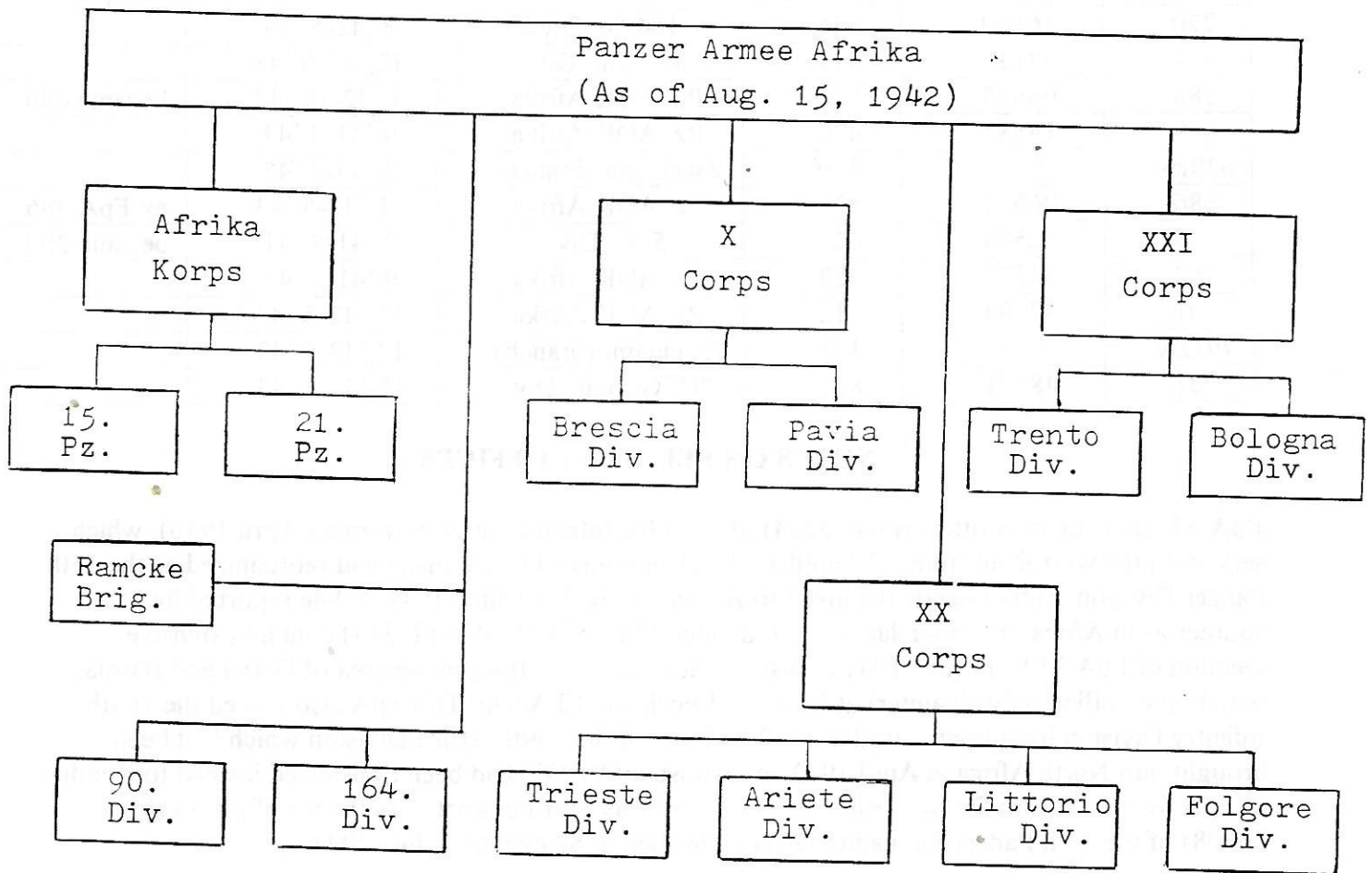
In November 1942, British forces under Montgomery launched the final westward offensive, forcing the withdrawal of the axis forces through all of Libya and into Tunisia, where they were eventually trapped between the British 8th Army and the U.S. II Corps (which had landed in North Africa in November and had advanced into Tunisia from the west).

The campaign in North Africa came to an end on May 12, 1943 with the surrender of axis forces at Cape Bon, Tunisia. Erwin Rommel, now a Field Marshal, had been returned to Germany on sick leave however, in March and was destined to once again face these same adversaries on the western front.

III.) GERMAN ARMY ORGANIZATION – a prior requisite to the review of Feldpost operations is a description of the military command structure and the organic units involved:

- 1) From February 19th until August 15, 1941, the "Deutsches Africa Korps" under Gen. Lt. Rommel consisted of the 5th Light and 15th Panzer Divisions (the 15th having arrived in the spring), along with miscellaneous signals, supply, flak, reconnaissance and service troops.
- 2) On August 15, 1941, Rommel's command was raised to the status of a "Panzergruppe", which consisted of the "Afrika Korps" (15th Panzer Division and the 5th Light Division - now reorganized as the 21st Panzer Division), the 90th Light division and two Italian corps (XX and XXI) which included six Italian Divisions.
- 3) On January 30, 1942, "Panzer Gruppe Afrika" was redesignated as the "Panzer Armee Afrika" and a year later (Feb. 23, 1943) the title of "1. Italienische Armee" was adopted. In the meantime, additional units (see chart on next page) had strengthened this army.

- 4) The Allied invasion of NW Africa prompted the establishment (in November 1942) of a separate axis forces in Tunisia under Gen. Walther Nehring, which was designated as the XC Corps and consisted of miscellaneous German field battalions, paratroop and artillery regiments – supplemented by several additional Italian divisions including “Superga” and “Imperiali”.
- 5) On December 9, 1942, XC Corps was expanded and redesignated as the “5th Panzer Army” (Pz. AOK 5). This army now included the “Manteuffel Division” (former “Division von Broich”), the Luftwaffe Division “Hermann Göring”, the 334th Infantry Division and the 19th/20th Flak Divisions – later to be further reinforced by elements of the 999th Light Division.
- 6) The eventual convergence of the two major axis armies in Tunisia, made it necessary to create a unified command on February 23, 1943 which was designated as “Heeresgrupe Afrika” under the overall command of Field Marshal Rommel. Returning to Germany on sick leave on March 9, 1943, Rommel was succeeded by Generaloberst Jürgen von Arnim, the last commander of the axis forces in North Africa.



IV.) THE MILITARY POSTAL SYSTEM – while each organic division had it's own "Feldpostamt", the command structures and multitude of other miscellaneous and auxiliary units required additional post offices, both mobile and fixed. Mail to and from these post offices (as well as the several Italian military post offices in North Africa) was transported by sea and air from Italy where the primary forwarding of German mail was effected in Naples.

As usual, the German field post offices had "Kenn" (3-digit code) numbers assigned to facilitate routing and P.O. identification. Through the study of microfilmed records of German Army Operations/Feldpost directives and reports, etc., examination /identification of actual covers and the compilation /comparison of information provided by numerous other sources, it is now possible to assemble the following listing of German "Feldpostämter" (FpA) which operated in the North African theatre:

FpA	Feldpost #	Kenn #	Assignment	Dates (Africa)	Notes
33	05254	697	15. Pz. Div.	5.'41-5.'43	
90	21630	985	10. Pz. Div.	12.'42 – 5.'43	
190	19560	805	90. le. Div.	8.'42-5.'43	
200	21589	615	21. Pz. Div.	8.,41-5.'43	ex-FpA 735
220	16550	946	164. le. Div.	8.,42-5.'43	
334	48115	412	334. Inf. Div.	12.'42-5.'43	
386	06677	538	Pz. AOK Afrika	3.'42-10.'42	became 686
639	14881	420	Pz. AOK Afrika	9.'41-4.'43	
639zw	" "	550	Zweigamt (branch)	2.'43-4.'43	
686	06677	538	Pz. AOK Afrika	11.'42-5.'43	ex-FpA 386
735	12589	615	5. le. Div.	2.'41-8.'41	became 200
762	44777	282	Pz. AOK Afrika	9.'41-5.'43	
791	47294	212	Pz. AOK Afrika	11.'42-5.'43	
791zw	" "	131	Zweigamt (branch)	12.'42-5.'43	
921	48571	822	"H. Göring" Div.	12.'42-5.'43	

NOTES ON FELDPPOST OFFICES

FpA 33: Division post office (Fp.#05254) of the 33rd Infantry Division (formed April 1936), which served on the west front from 9.39 until 10.40, then returned to Germany and reorganized as the 15th Panzer Division. Subsequently deployed to Africa during April/June 1941. While reported by other sources as in Africa only after January 1942, microfilm rolls 440/446 (T-313) contain extensive mention of FpA 33 from June 1941 onwards – at various locations in the area of Derna and Bardia, with branch offices (Zweigämter) at Gambut, Lucch and El Adem. This FpA also served the 164th Infantry Division for a brief period in 1942 and served the 999th Africa Division which had been brought into North Africa in April 1943 and whose FpA (999) had been transferred instead to Rhodes as FpA for the "Sturm Division Rhodos". FpA 999 was later designated as the new FpA 33 (Fp.# 26908) of the 15th Panzer-Grenadier Division formed in Sicily during July 1943.

FpA 90: Division post office of the 10th Panzer Division, which had served in the Polish, French and Russian campaigns and was transferred to Tunisia in late November 1942, assigned to Gen. Nehring's XC Korps. It is interesting to note that the Feldpost number 21630 of this FpA was later assigned (July 1943) to FpA 476 of the LXXVI Panzer Korps in France.

FpA 190: The 90th le. Africa Division was formed in Africa as “Afrika Division zbV” in August 1941 from miscellaneous units and was designated as the 90th Light Division from November 28, 1941. This title was changed to “90th Light Africa Division” in March 1942. This unit was served by a branch (Zweigamt) of FpA 33 until August 1942 when the branch was redesignated as FpA 190 (Fp.# 19560). This redesignation is included in a report of the Armee Postmeister covering the period August 16-31, 1942 found on frame 8729437 of microfilm roll 436, Series T-313.

FpA 200: Originally FpA 735 (Fp.#21589) of the 5th Light Division which had been formed in June 1940 and dispatched to North Africa in February 1941. This unit was reorganized as the 21st Panzer Division on August 1, 1941 and it's FpA redesignated as “FpA 200”. Following its capitulation in May 1943, the tactical designation of FpA 200 was assigned to the FpA (Fp.# 58445) of the “931. Schnelle Brigade” in France (July 15, 1943).

FpA 220: Division post office of the 164th Infantry Division – originally formed in December 1939, served on the west front from June 1940 until January 1941, participated in the Balkans campaign and was eventually stationed on Crete. FpA 220 (Fp.# 02476) was redesignated as FpA 224 and remained on Crete when the major portion of this division was hurriedly flown to North Africa in July 1942 – being temporarily served by FpA 33 until the arrival of a new division post office FpA 220 (Fp.# 16550) in November. The division was redesignated “164th Light Africa Division” on August 15, 1942.

FpA 334: Division post office (Fp.# 48115) of the 334th Infantry Division which had been formed in the autumn of 1942 and dispatched into the Tunisian bridgehead in late December 1942. This FpA was among the units capitulating on May 8, 1943. A new FpA 334 (Fp.# 59007) was established in October 1943 and attached to the newly re-formed 334th Infantry Division which carried the honorary title “334. Infanterie Division (Afrika)”.

FpA 386: Designated as “FpA 386 z.b.V.” (for special use), this FpA (Fp.# 06677) was formed in March 1942 and assigned as “Gruppe Feldpost beim Pz. Armee Afrika”. On October 30, 1942, it's tactical number was changed to FpA 686 (still Fp.# 06677) and the tactical number 386 was assigned to the FpA (Fp.# 08292) of the newly formed 386th Infantry Division back in Germany (Wehrkreis III). The “African” FpA 386 is reported in microfilm records (T-313), roll 440) during the period 3.42 to 10.42 at such locations as: Derna (April/June 1942); Tobruck (July 1942) and Marsa Matruk (Aug./Oct. 1942).

(See FpA 686 for further history).

FpA 639: Also designated as “z.b.V.”, this FpA (Fp.# 14881) had been attached to Armee Oberkommando 1 in France until reassigned to Panzer AOK Afrika in September 1941 and established in Tripoli under the “Kdt. D. rückw. Armeegebeit” (Commander of the Rear Army Area). FpA 639 took over branch offices of FpA at Benghazi and Derna in July 1942 and later maintained offices at Bizerta, Misurata, Sousse, Gabes and Sfax. A special branch in Tripoli itself had it's own “Kenn” (Code) number K-550 assigned. This Kenn number had for some time been somewhat of a mystery to Feldpost collectors, but this writer was able to locate a specific reference to this Kenn on frame 8729434 of microfilm roll T-313/436 in which the APM reports that he had assigned “the special K-550” to FpA 639zw in Tripoli on February 23, 1943. This Feldpost unit was successfully evacuated from Africa in April 1943 and became new FpA 190 (Fp.# 14881) of the 90th Panzer-Grenadier Division which had been formed from the “Divisions Kdo. Sardinien” in September 1943.

FpA 686: (Ex-FpA 386) This FpA continued to serve the Panzer Armee Afrika following its tactical number change and is recorded in microfilm records at the following locations: Vicinity of Nofilia (December 1942); Misurata (January 1943); Sfax (Feb./March 1943) and Bizerta (April 1943). The few FpA personnel surviving the African campaign were used as a nucleus for a new FpA 686 z.b.V. which was attached to AOK 14 in Italy.

FpA 762: Designated as “z.b.V”, this FpA was assigned to Pz. AOK Afrika as an “Umschlagstelle” (re-shipping office) and “Feldpostprüfstelle” (military censoring office). This field post office was formed in Africa on September 21, 1941 (considerably earlier than reported in most sources, but confirmed in microfilm roll T-313-436, in which the APM reports its formation – using personnel trained at FpA 735). Reports in the T-313 microfilm series place this FpA at the following various locations: Benghazi (November 1941); 47 kilometers east of Nofilia (Dec. 1941 to Jan. 1942), Tobruck (July 1942) and Tripoli (November 1942) and with branches at Benghazi and Derna (May 1942) as well as Misurata and Sirte (Jan. 1942). This postal unit was among those units capitulating in May 1943.

FpA 791: Designated “z.b.V”, this FpA had been formed in August 1941 and assigned as a stationary P.O. at Ploesti under the “APM O. Qu. Schwarzes Meer” (Army Postmaster, Quartermaster Command – Black Sea) until reassigned to Panzer AOK Afrika on October 9, 1942 and located in Tunis with a branch (FpA 791zw using Kenn #131) at Bizerta.

FpA 921: Portions of the Luftwaffe’s Division “Hermann Göring” were sent to Tunisia over the period November 1942 – March 1943 and included a partial post office unit (Teil FpA) assigned Fp.# 48571. These units actually operating as “Kampfgruppe Schmid” fought with distinction until the final days of the campaign when some escaped by air to Sicily and were later incorporated into a new unit designated as the “Fallschirm Panzer Division Hermann Göring”.

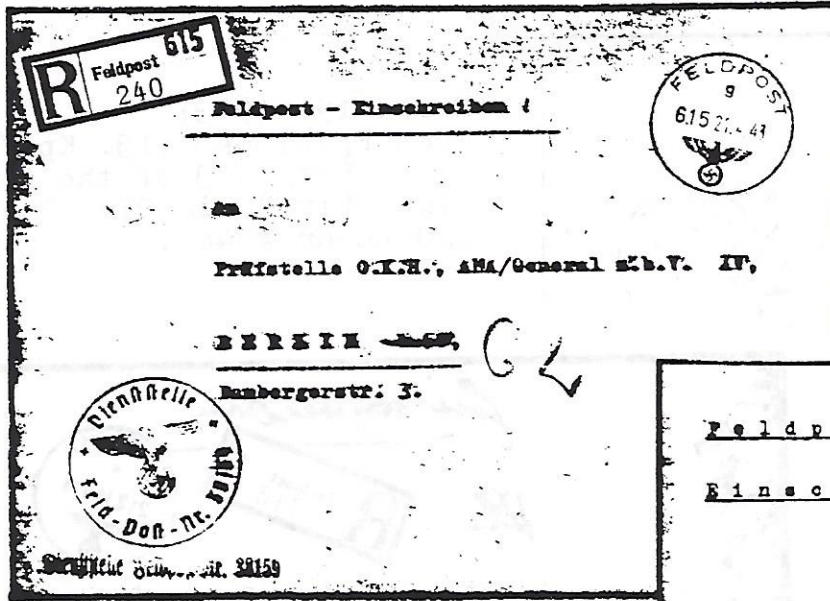
FpA 999: The FpA (Fp.#26908) of the 999th Afrika Brigade, formed in late 1942 – mainly from court marshaled soldiers to whom combat duty had been authorized for purposes of rehabilitation. In March 1943 the unit was redesignated as the “999. Leichte Afrika Division” and portions were sent to Tunis. All available histories indicate that FpA 999 was sent instead to the island of Rhodes at this time, where it was employed as the post office for the “Sturm Division Rhodos”. Surprisingly however, Fp.#26908 – FpA 999 is listed in a then-secret listing (Ref. 8) by the OKW entitled “Übersicht der in Kampfraum Tunisien eingesetzt gewesenen Einheiten” (Directory of units employed in the Tunisian battle theatre). This listing is captioned “Geheim” (secret) and coded “OKW/AHA/Ag E/Tr. – Tr. Abt. 4400/43”. In the record, Fp.#26908 is crossed out by hand, but the fact that it had been printed there initially would indicate that the FpA had actually gone to Africa and then was subsequently relocated to Rhodes.

On the following two pages are examples of registered Feldpost covers from FpAs in North Africa.

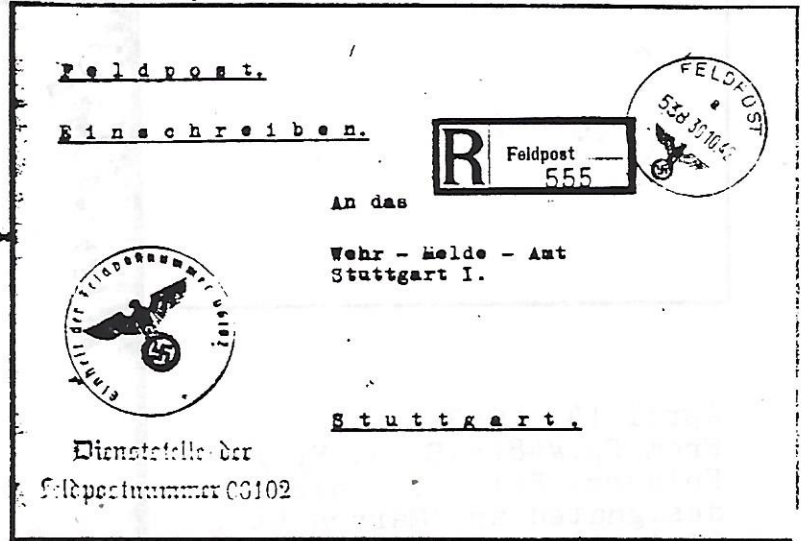
REFERENCES

1. U.S. Archives, Captured Records Div. Microfilm Series T-313, Rolls 418, 436, 440 & 462.
2. U.S. Archives, Captured Records Div. Microfilm Series T-78, Rolls 129-133.
3. Microfilm publication # 60-15.
4. “Feldpostämter”- unpublished research of N. Kannapin.
5. “Die deutsche Feldpost im Zweiten Weltkrieg” – B. Gericke.
6. “Uniforms, Organization and History of the Africa Corps” – R. J. Bender and R.D. Law.

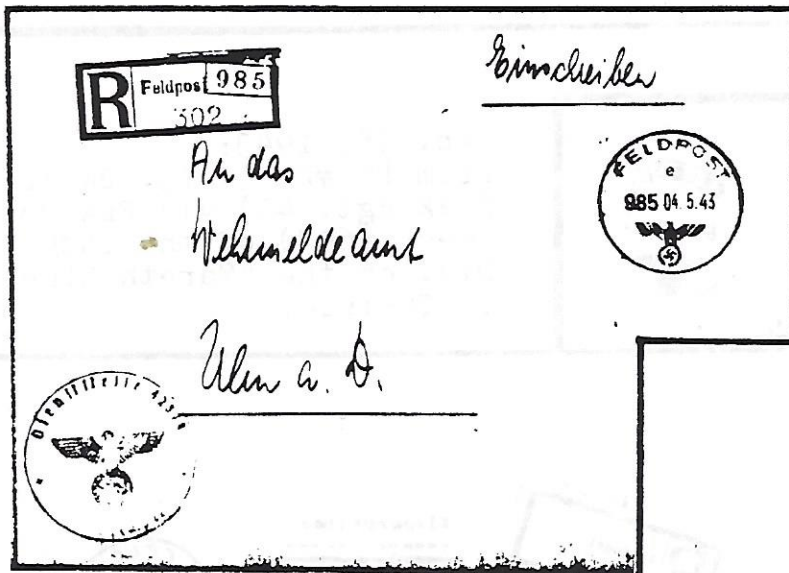
Note: Originally published in TRSG Bulletin # 50 (1979), Parts V to IX will appear in Bulletin # 136.



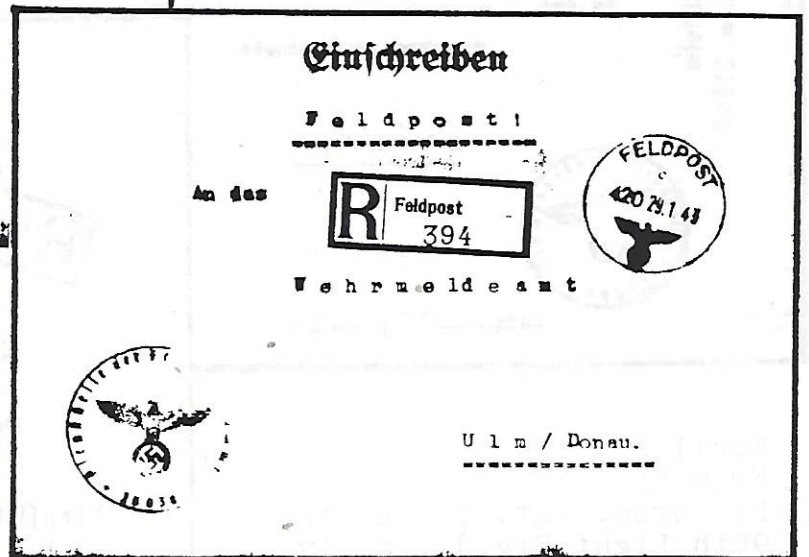
April 21, 1943:
 From Fp.#38159 (Kdr. d.
 Pz. Div. Nachschub Tr.
 200) via FpA 200 (Kenn
 #615) of 21st Pz. Div.



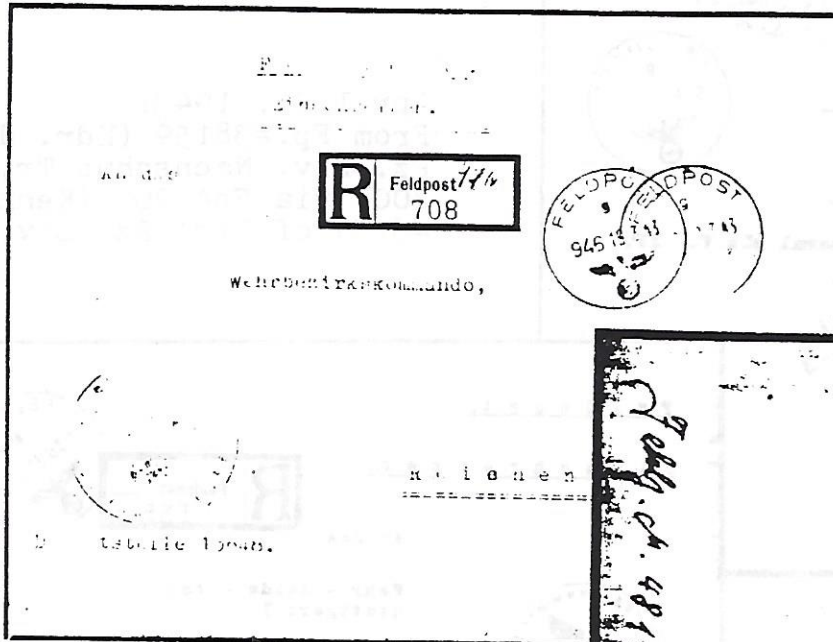
Oct. 30, 1942:
 From Fp.#06102 (2. gr. Kw.
 Kol./Nachschub Kol. Abt. 902)
 via FpA 386/686 (Kenn #538) -
 cancelled on the exact date of
 change from FpA 386 to 686.



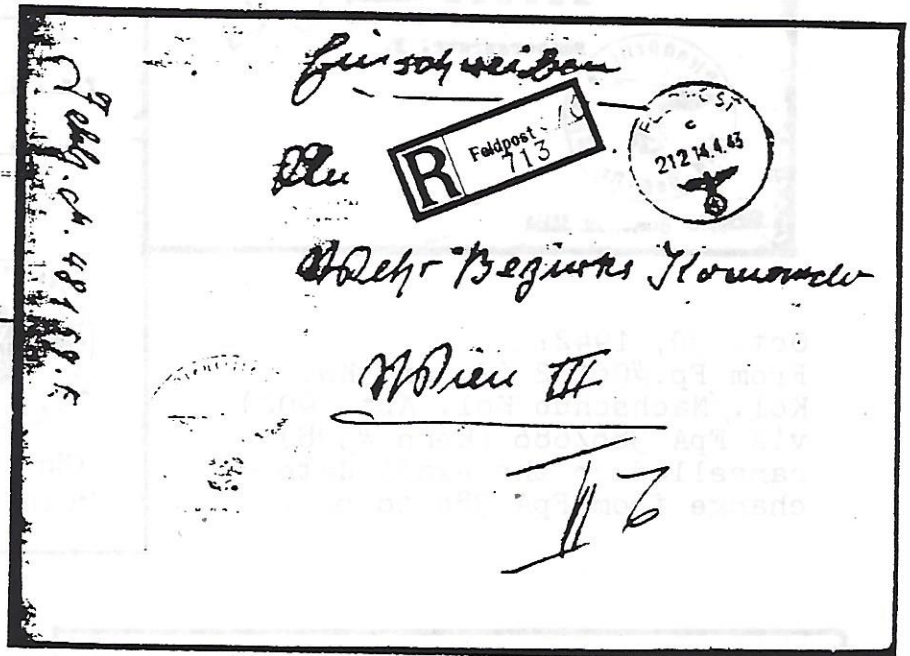
May 4, 1943:
 From Fp.#42879 (4. Kp./
 Pz. Rgt. 7 of the 10th
 Pz. Divis.) via Div. FpA
 90 (Kenn #985) only a few
 days before capitulation.



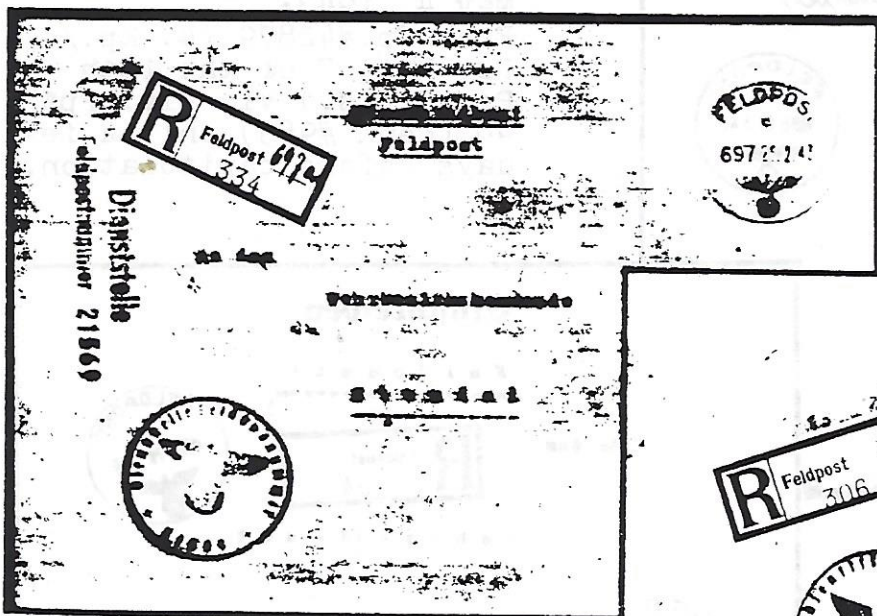
Jan. 29, 1943:
 From Fp.#28038 (Stab II/
 Pz. Rgt. 8 of the 15th
 Pz. Div.) via FpA 639
 (Kenn #420).



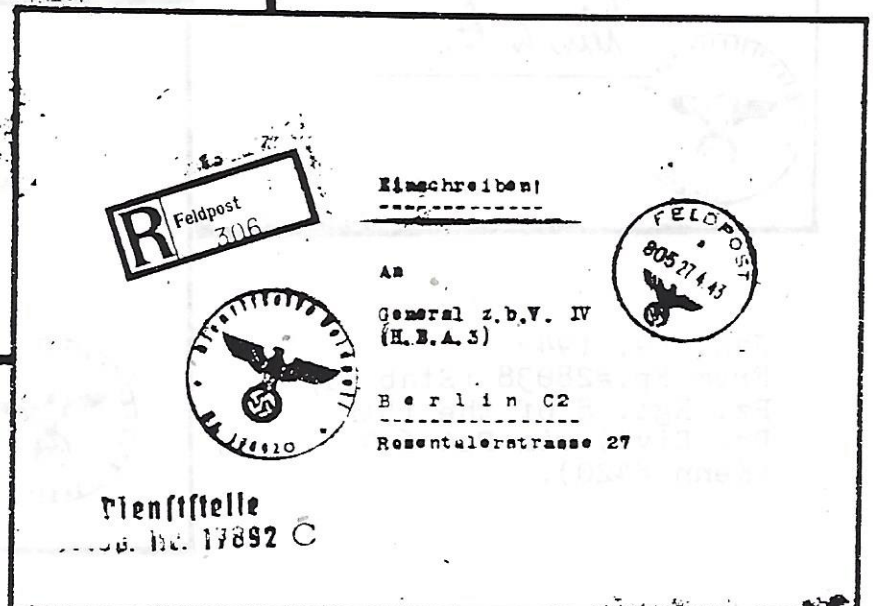
March 19, 1943:
 From Fp.#13648 (13. Kp./Pz. Gren. Rgt. 433 of the 164th Light Div.) via Div. FpA 220 (Kenn #946).



April 14, 1943:
 From Fp.#48159E (4. Kp./Felders. Btl. 21 - also designated as "Marsch Btl. Afrika") via FpA 791 (Kenn #212).



Feb. 26, 1943:
 From Fp.#21569 (3. Battr./Flak Rgt. 43) via FpA 33 (Kenn #697) of the 15th Pz. Div. on the "Mareth Line" in Tunisia.



April 27, 1943:
 From Fp.#17892C (6. Kp./Pz. Gren. Rgt. 155 of the 90th Light Div.) via Div. FpA 190 (Kenn #805).

COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:

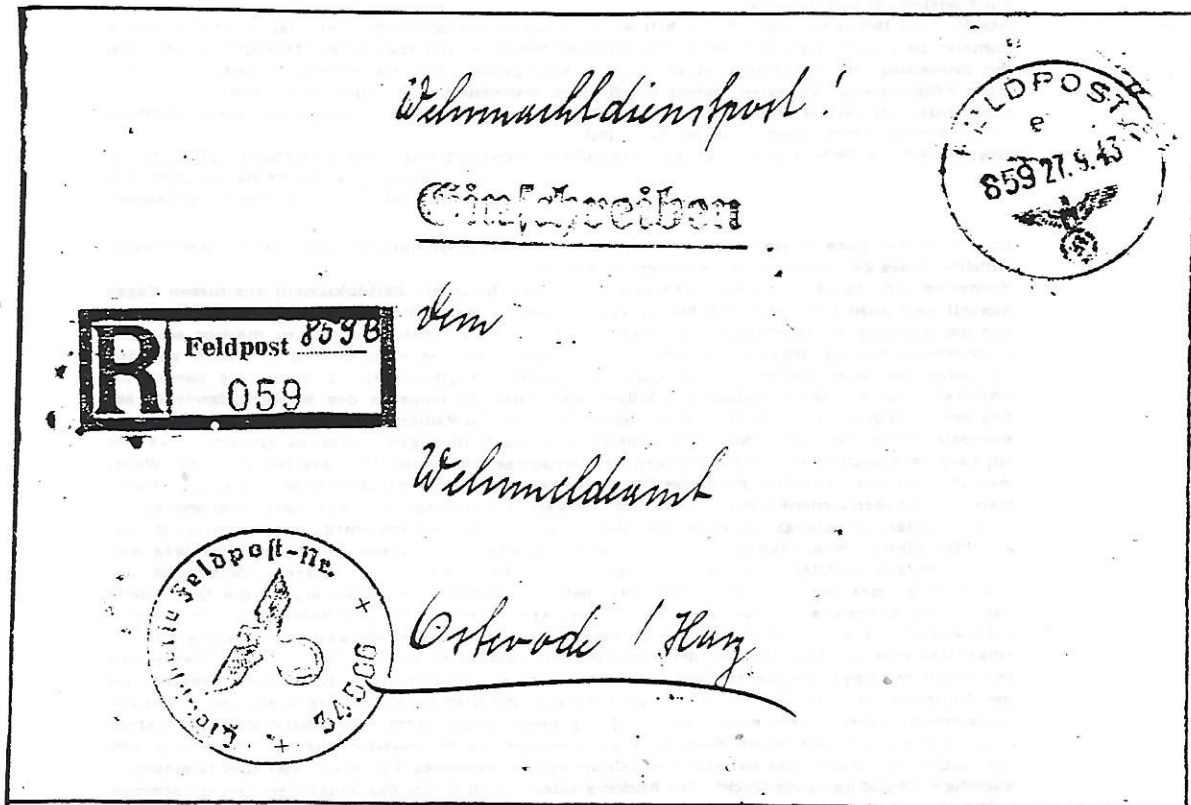
96th Infantry Division

by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADIER		ARTY	UNITS	
196	859	283	284	287	196	196

The 96th Infantry Division (Watzmann-Division) was raised in August 1939 from recruits from all over north and west Germany and was stationed at Hannover. The post office was assigned Fp. # 34635 as a mailing address and Kenn 859 as a coded identification in lieu of its tactical number 196. It first saw combat in France in 1940 and was then sent to the northern sector of the Eastern Front in 1941, where it spent the next four years. It fought at Novgorod, Lake Ilmen and in the early stages of the Siege of Leningrad. Remaining on the northern sector through 1943, it took part in the second Battle of Lake Ladoga, the Battle of Volkhov and the Battle of the German Corridor east of Leningrad.

Despite its losses, the 96th Infantry Division remained on the front lines until January 1944 when it was transferred to the southern sector, where it fought in the battle of the northern Ukraine. In the summer of 1944, while an element of LIX Corps, the division was overwhelmed by the Soviet attack that eventually led to the encirclement of the 1st Panzer Army. Although there is no evidence that it was rebuilt, the remnants of the 96th Infantry Division were nevertheless sent back into combat. In late 1944 it was fighting the Red Army in Slovakia and in 1945 was still resisting north of Vienna when the war ended.



Cover sent to Military Records Office in Osterode in September 1943 from Fp. # 34566 (Co. 14/Grenadier Regiment 287) via Division P.O. 196 (K-859).

More on the Rommel Gedankblatt

by Rex Dixon

The article in German shown below (in reduced size - ED) appeared on the reverse of the undated advertising sheet from Hermann E. Sieger shown on the following page. As the price was then DM 100, it must have been quite a while ago. My own sheet is #0001883 with the usual stamps & postmarks except that the French stamp is tied by a second strike of the G.E.43 cachet rather than the Strasbourg canceling device.

Das Rommel-Armee-Gedenkblatt

Mit freundlicher Genehmigung des Herausgebers entnehmen wir der Zeitschrift „Austria Philatelist“ den nachfolgenden Artikel:

„Glück und Ende des deutschen Afrikakorps“ lautete die Überschrift in der Juni-Nummer des Jahres 1949 mit der ich erstmals Gelegenheit hatte, in meiner Zeitung, das inzwischen als „Rommel Souvenir Sheet“ bekanntgewordene philatelistische Zeitdokument des zweiten Weltkrieges abzubilden.

Tatsächlich erreichen mich nun besonders seit diesem Jahr aus den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika viele Anfragen über die Entstehung dieses interessanten Zeitdokumentes des afrikanischen Kriegsschauplatzes. G. Hoffmann-Giesecke hat bereits in seinem Katalog „Deutsche Feldpost 1939 bis 1945“ eine Beschreibung dieses Gedenkblattes gebracht und bringe ich mit freundlicher Erlaubnis des Verfassers nachstehend Abdruck desselben:

„Der Feldpostmeister der Rommel-Armee hat beim Vormarsch und Rückzug alle geschichtlichen Daten in einem einzigartigen Gedenkblatt festgehalten. Dieses, zum „Tag der Wehrmacht“ erschienene Gedenkblatt, belegt durch Briefmarken verschiedener Länder und echte Stempel den historischen Zug des Afrika-Korps. Der erläuternde Text wurde nachträglich eingedruckt. Als Organisator des nummerierten Gedenkblattes, das eine Auflage von 2000 Stück hat, zeichnete das Winterhilfswerk. Glück und Ende des deutschen Afrika-Korps, das von 1940 bis 1943 bestand, spiegeln sich in diesem einmaligen Dokument aus dem zweiten Weltkrieg wider.

Das Titelblatt trägt den Stempel der Stabs Einheit der Rommel-Armee..

Der Einmarsch in Frankreich ist durch zwei französische Stempel belegt, mit Datum vom 10. Mai 1940.

Der Poststempel der Postdirektion von Catania vom 20. April 1941 wurde hinzugefügt, als das Afrika-Korps von Sizilien nach Nordafrika übersetzte. Den „Tag der Wehrmacht“ verzeichnete ein Poststempel von Tripolis.

Am 21. Juni 1942 dokumentiert ein britischer Armeedienstpoststempel mit der Inschrift „Army Signals“ die Eroberung von Tobruk. Ein weiterer Beutestempel arabischer Herkunft wurde nach der Eroberung von Abu-Hagag in El Alamein hinzugefügt (Juli bis November 1942).

Dann Rückzug nach Tunesien, belegt durch einen französischen Stempel von Gabés.

Und schließlich Verlust des Brückenkopfes Afrika, ausgedrückt durch einen italienischen Stempel „Posta Militare“ mit Datum vom 20. April 1943.

Das Winterhilfe-Gedenkblatt trägt die Faksimile Unterschrift von Generalfeldmarschall Rommel. (Auszug aus: Deutsche Feldpost 1939 bis 1945 von G. Hoffmann-Giesecke.)

Ich bin in der Lage, ergänzend zu diesen Mitteilungen, noch einiges über die Entstehungsgeschichte dieses Zeitdokumentes berichten zu können.

Vornweg möchte ich erwähnen, daß es sich tatsächlich um ein Zeitdokument aus diesen Tagen handelt und nicht vielleicht, wie bei so vielen anderen Belegstücken des zweiten Weltkrieges, erst um nachträglich angefertigte, als man merkte, welches Geschäft damit zu machen sei. Alle verwendeten Stempel sind echt, wurden erbeutet, bzw. waren in Verwendung in diesem von den Deutschen besetzten Gebiet. Im Frühjahr 1940 erhielt die Dienststelle L 31554, die damals im Rheinland lag, die Genehmigung, ein Militärgedenkblatt zu Gunsten des Winterhilfswerkes am Tag der Wehrmacht aufzulegen und zu verkaufen. Die Verwendung eines besonderen Feldpoststempels wurde von dem Armeefeldpostmeister abgelehnt, hingegen wurde es gestattet, daß der normale Feldpoststempel des zuständigen Feldpostamtes mit Datum 17. März 1940 (Tag der Wehrmacht) sowie eine besondere Form des Dienstsiegels dieser Stelle mit dem Zusatz „Tag der Wehrmacht“ auf diesen Gedenkblättern zum Abdruck kam. Die Auflage war wahrscheinlich 5000 Stück, davon wurden bis anfangs Mai etwa 3000 Stück verkauft. Der Verkauf wurde durch den am 10. Mai erfolgten Einmarsch in Frankreich beendet und wurde bereits zu diesem Zeitpunkt der Weg dieser Dienststelle philatelistisch durch das Einkleben einer französischen Marke sowie durch die Anbringung eines Post- und Detachmentstempels festgehalten. Ende 1940 wurde die Dienststelle dem Afrika-Korps zugeteilt und nach Sizilien und Afrika verfrachtet. Ein Restkommando verblieb auf Catania und wurden dort zum Geburtstag Hitlers italienische Marken (meist Duce-Führer) eingeklebt und mit dem Stempel der Postdirektion Catania entwertet. Der Tag der Wehrmacht 1942 wurde mit libyschen Marken sowie dem Poststempel von Tripolis in Nordafrika bedacht. Bei der Einnahme von Tobruk wurden durch die Italiener die Stempel des dortigen englischen Dienstpostamtes erbeutet, wovon einer davon mit der Bezeichnung „Army Signals/IV BD“ mit Datum 21. Juni im Gedenkblatt seinen Platz fand. Im Verlaufe des Vormarsches bis Alamein wurde von der Station Abu Hagag, der Bahnlinie von Cairo, ein Bahnpoststempel in arabischer und lateinischer Sprache erbeutet und abgedruckt. Der Rückzug spiegelt sich durch das Einkleben von tunesischen Briefmarken, entwertet mit dem Poststempel von Gabés (bekannt durch seinen großen Temperaturunterschied, bei Tag 45 und mehr Grad, nachts nur 0 Grad) und fand durch die Anbringung eines italienischen Feldpoststempels des Brückenkopfes Afrika seinen Abschluß. Circa fünf bis zehn dieser Gedenkblätter wurden von Rommel persönlich unterschrieben, der Rest, bzw. der größte Teil, mit dem Unterschriftsstempel des Feldmarschalles versehen. Die Auflage, die zuerst mit 2200 Stück angenommen wurde, stellte sich dann durch starken Makulaturanfall auf endgültig 2000 Stück heraus. Zu bemerken wäre noch, daß der jeweilige Textaufdruck neben den Stempeln und Marken von den Druckereien des betreffenden Landes angebracht wurde, soweit in dem Gebiet solche zu finden waren.

Rommel

HERMANN E. SIEGER
7073 LORCH/WÜRTT

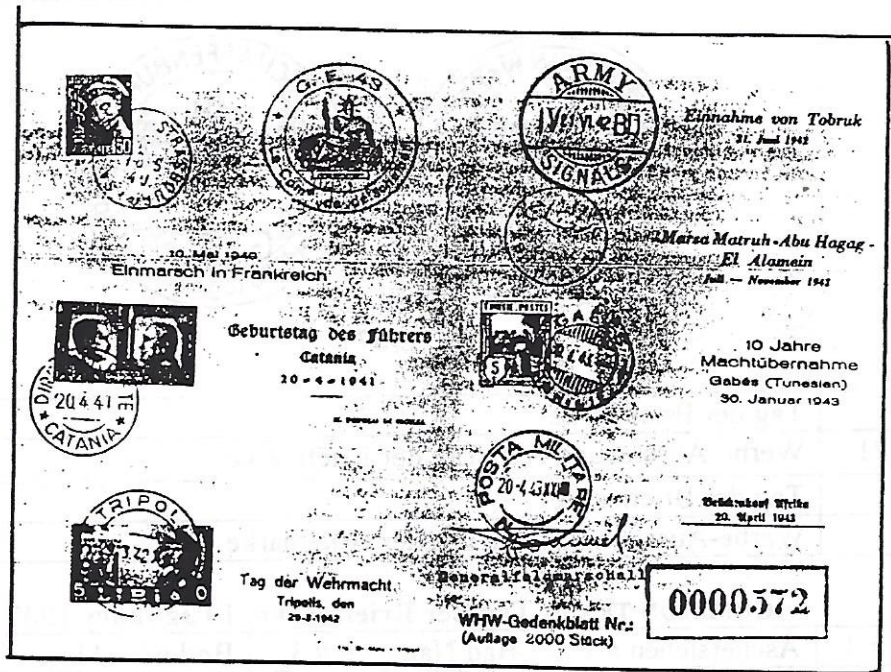
DAS ROMMEL - ARMEE - GEDENKBLATT

ist ohne Zweifel eines der ungewöhnlichsten und eines der beliebtesten philatelistischen Belegstücke aus dem II. Weltkrieg.

Das Glück und das Ende des deutschen Afrikakorps spiegeln sich in den Stempeln und Vermerken dieses Blattes wieder.

Da wir vor mehreren Jahren unseren Kunden diese Gedenkblätter anboten, sind wir immer wieder gefragt worden, ob es denn nicht möglich wäre, die Blätter noch einmal zu beschaffen.

Wir haben uns seit 5 Jahren darum bemüht - jetzt ist es uns gelungen, aus dem Ausland eine begrenzte Zahl dieser Blätter zu erhalten.



Wir bieten Ihnen heute dieses Rommel-Gedenkblatt an - die Auslieferung erfolgt in der Reihenfolge des Bestelleingangs, der Zwischenverkauf bleibt vorbehalten.

Der Preis des Blattes ist DM 100.--

Genauere Informationen über das Rommel - Gedenkblatt finden Sie auf der Rückseite dieses Angebotes.

-----bitte ausfüllen, abtrennen und im Brief einsenden an :-----

HERMANN E. SIEGER, 7073 LORCH / WÜRTTEMBERG

Bitte, senden Sie mir ein Exemplar des Rommel-Armee-Gedenkblattes für DM 100.-- zu
Anschrift des Bestellers :

Special Cancels – Tag der Briefmarke 1936 - 1939

by Bob Ferguson

The first “**Tag der Briefmarke**” was held on 7 January 1936 and was commemorated by two special cancels. The last (National Socialist) was in 1944 and was marked by a modesty similar to the first, a single stamp (Mi. 904) but no special cancel. For the entire nine-year period, “**Tag der Briefmarke**” was commemorated with 494 special cancels. These will be shown in the next several bulletins except for the 1941 cancels which appeared in Bulletin 124.

The cancel numbering scheme is in Julius Bochmann’s work “**Katalog der Deutschen Gelegenheitsstempel**”.

1936

Berlin # 178	Tag der Briefmarke/Grundungstag des Reichsverbandes der Philatelisten	7 January 1936
Aschaffenburg # 3	Tag der Briefmarke	7 January 1936



1937

Chemnitz # 18	Tag der Briefmarke	10 January 1937
Frankfurt/M # 71	Werbe-Ausstellung zum Tag der Briefmarke	9-10 January 1937
Hamburg # 68	Tag der Briefmarke	8-10 January 1937
Stuttgart # 55	Werbe-Ausstellung zum Tag der Briefmarke	9-11 January 1937

COMMON TEXT - Tag der Briefmarke, 10 January 1937

Aschaffenburg # 3	Aschersleben # 2	Bad Nauheim # 3	Berlin # 211	10 January 1937
Bremen # 18	Breslau # 33	Erfurt # 14	Forst (Lausitz) # 7	
Frankfurt/M # 72	Grossnitz # 2	Hannover # 39	Leipzig # 117	
Munchen # 92	Nurnberg # 47	Hannover # 39	Leipzig # 117	



1938

Bergendorf # 2	Tag der Briefmarke/WHW,	9 January 1938
Berlin # 252	Tag der Briefmarke/WHW,	9 January 1938
Chemnitz # 24	Tag der Briefmarke Sachsen	9 January 1938
Dessau # 1	Briefmarkenschau Tag der Briefmarke	9 January 1938
Frankfurt/M # 81	Werbe-Ausstellung zum Tag der Briefmarke	8-9 January 1938
Frankfurt/O # 9	Tag der Briefmarke	9 January 1938
Hamburg # 76	Tag der Briefmarke/Sonderschau des Hamburg-Altonaer Vereins für Briefmarkenkunde	7-9 January 1938
Kassel # 27	Tag der Briefmarke/Wintershilfswerk Deutsches Reich	9 January 1938
Mannheim # 48	Tag der Briefmarke/Verein Mannheimer Briefmarken Sammler	9 January 1938
Rostock # 3	Tag der Briefmarke/Briefmarken Werbeschau "Grief"	8-9 January 1938
Sorau # 1	Sorauer Briefmarkenausstellung zum Tag der Briefmarke	8-10 January 1938

COMMON TEXT - Tag der Briefmarke/Reichsbund der Philatelisten, 8-9 January 1938

Berlin # 253	Bremen # 22	Breslau # 37	Erfurt # 17	8-9 January 1938
Frankfurt/M # 82	Friedberg (Hess)#1	Leipzig # 126	München # 106	
Regensburg 3 12	Stettin # 13	Weimar 3 14	Wiesbaden # 42	



1939

Berlin # 294	Tag der Briefmarke RdP Neu Philharmonie/Zu Gunsten des WHW Wintershilfswerk	7-9 January 1939
Haida # 1	Haida Dies Glasstadt/Tag der Briefmarke	8 January 1939
Hamburg # 88	Tag der Briefmarke/8 January 1939 in Zoo/Zu Gunsten des WHW Wintershilfswerk	7-9 January 1939
Machine Can. #307	Tag der Briefmarke//Zu Gunsten des WHW Wintershilfswerk RdP/WHW (Used Munich & Wien)	30 December 1938 - 8 January 1939

Uniform Designs - Tag der Briefmarke/RdP or WHW 7-9 January 1939

Berlin # 296	Bremerhaven # 4	Frankfurt/M # 94		7-8 January 1939
Berlin # 295	Bremen # 29	Breslau # 43	Chemnitz # 28	7-9 January 1939
Crimmitschau # 2	Erfurt # 20	Finsterwald # 2	Halle # 18	
Hamburg # 89	Hannover # 51	Kassel # 30	Kiel # 40	
Königsberg # 30	Leipzig # 156	Linz (Donau) # 3	Mainz # 21	
Mannheim # 51	München # 122	Reichenberg # 2	Stettin # 17	
Swinemünde # 1	Troppau # 2	Warnsdorf # 1	Weimar # 18	
Wien # 23	Wiesbaden # 46			

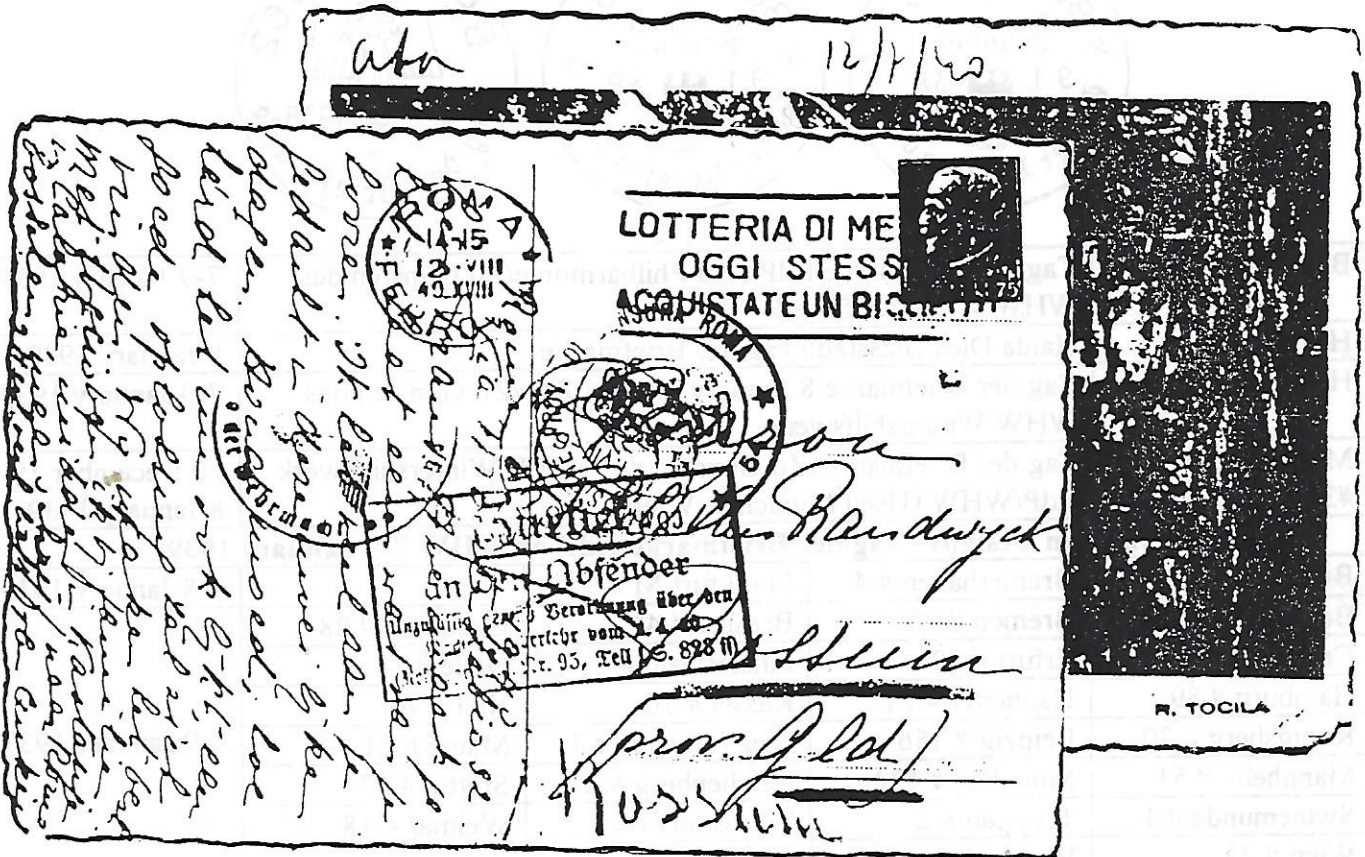


Rejected by Censor - Inadmissible Mail

by Larry Nelson

Rejection of Italian Picture Postcard

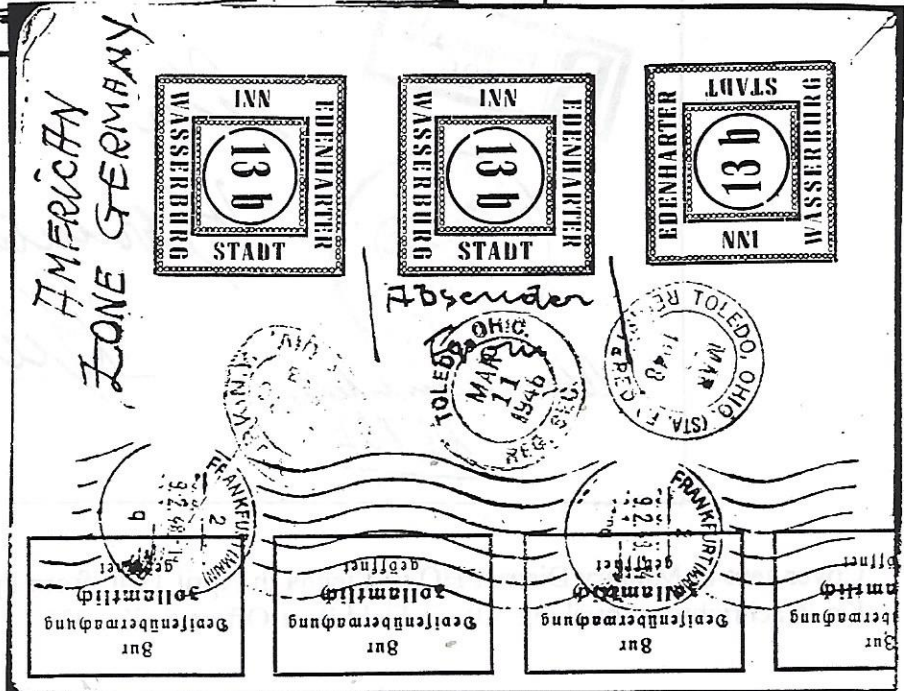
Shown below is an Italian picture postcard sent in August 1940 from Rome to Bossum, Holland that was initially rejected by German censors during examination at Munich. The boxed rejection handstamp reads: "Return to Sender - not admissible under the Directive on Communication Service of April 2, 1940". The reason for the rejection was probably the card itself as Part II, Sect. 2A, Para. 1a of the 1940 directive states "The sending of picture postcards of any kind --- are prohibited in postal service to non-belligerent foreign nations." It appears that the examiner may have initially misunderstood the address because the censors crossed out the rejection and added "Bossum" at bottom right with the same pen. A standard "Geprüft" (Examined) hand stamp was then applied over the left corner of the boxed marking.



More Covers from Otto Edenharter

by Jason Manchester

The article by Jim Lewis in Bulletin # 132 featured a propaganda card by Otto Edenharter of Munich that was obviously designed for Americans. I have two covers sent to the USA in 1948 when Otto Edenharter lived in Wassenburg, 50 km from Munich. The one shown below was sent from Munich on February 7, 1948. It was opened in Frankfurt to inspect for enclosed currency and sealed with the same currency control label that first appeared in 1933. Note the nicely printed return address labels on this cover. This label and the earlier propaganda card may indicate that Mr. Ederharter was a professional printer. I have seen German airmail covers sent by Otto Edenharter in 1932 and also noted a cover from him in a German inflation collection. These covers also had a Munich return address for Mr. Otto Edenharter, who was a very active cover producer for many years. Now I wish I had purchased one of those airmail covers I passed up two years ago! Please send any additional information to the Bulletin Editor.



COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:

5th Jäger Division

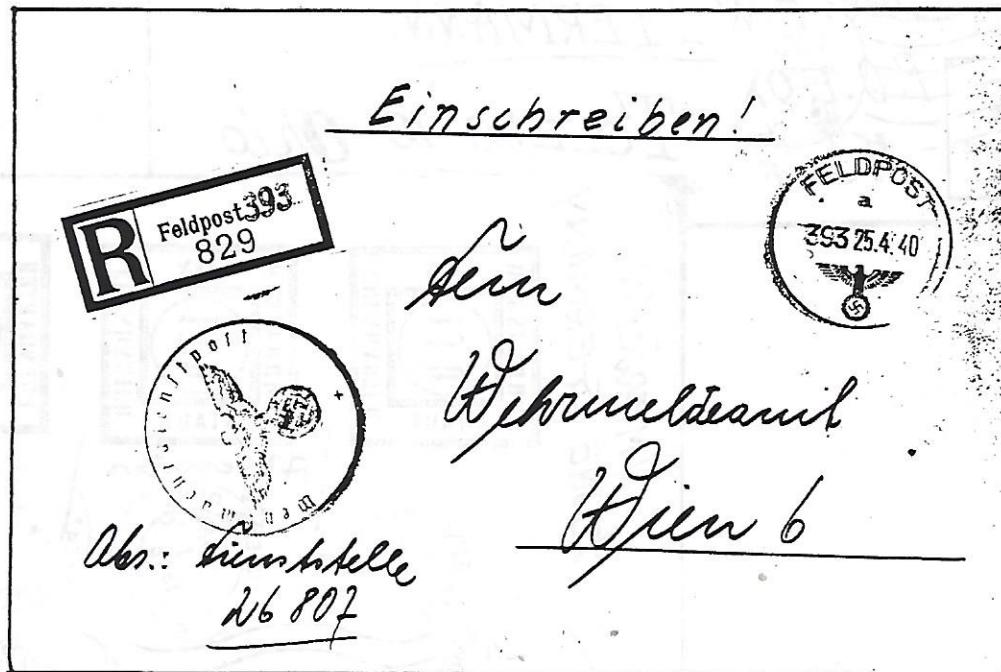
by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS			AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	JÄGER		ARTY	UNITS
5	393	56	75	5	5

Originally the 5th Infantry Division was formed in Stuttgart in the mid-1930s with soldiers recruited from Baden and Württemberg. It took no part in the Polish campaign in 1939 and was only lightly engaged in the invasion of France the following year. In June 1941 it took part in the invasion of the Soviet Union and sustained very heavy casualties during bitter fighting in the Vyasma sector.

The remnants of the division were sent to France in December 1941 to rest and refit. It was then converted to a light (Jäger) division with two regiments. Its third regiment, the 14th Infantry, was dissolved. The 5th Jäger Division returned to Russia in February 1942 and was attached to Army Group North. In March and April 1942 it was part of 'Combat Group von Seydlitz' that helped break the Soviet encirclement of II Army Corps at Demyansk. During the winter of 1942-43, it was under X Corps of the 16th Army and took part in the fighting around Staraya Russa.

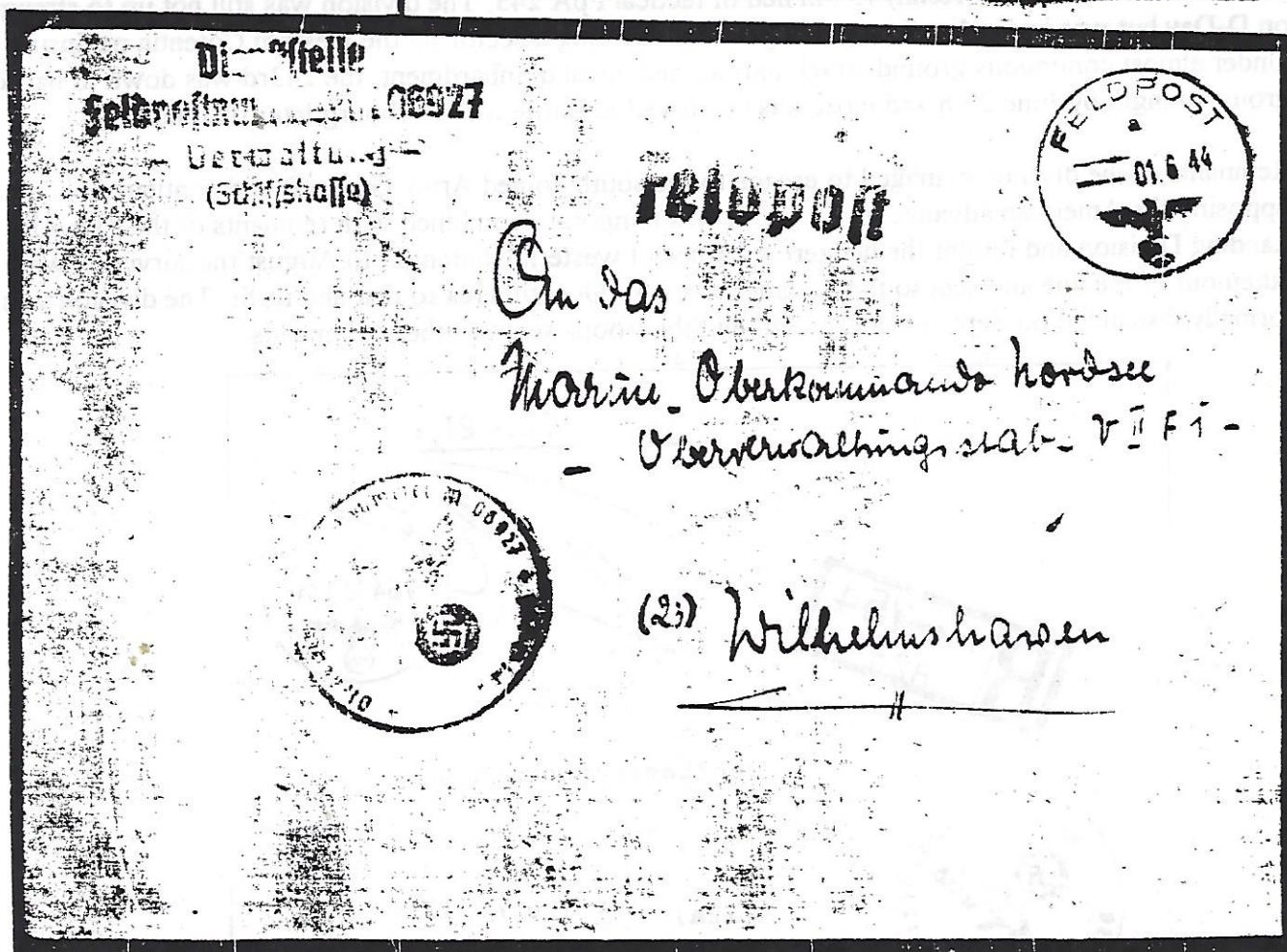
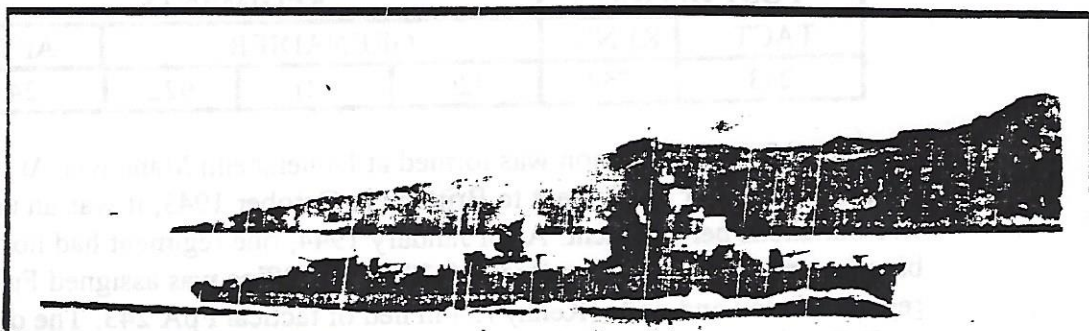
After the collapse of Army Group Center in the summer of 1944, the 5th Jäger Division was sent west to aide in the defense of Poland and, later, eastern Germany. It fought its last battle in front of Berlin where it was destroyed in April 1945.



Cover sent to Military District HQ in Vienna in April 1940 from Fp. # 26807 (2 Funk Kp./Nachrichten Abteilung 50) via Field Post Office 5 (K-393).

NAVY LOG

Destroyer Z-25 - Feldpost # 06927



The third of 12 unnamed destroyers (Z-23-34). Built by AG Weser (Bremen) and launched March 16, 1940. Displacement: 2600 tons; speed: 38 knots; main armament: five 5.9" guns, Eight 21" torpedo tubes; crew: 321.

This "Zerstörer" (Destroyer) was taken over by British Navy in 1945, then to French Navy and re-named 'Hoche'. Scrapped in 1956. Cover above to North Sea Naval HQ, Wilhelmshaven in June 1944 via military P.O.

COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE: 243rd Infantry Division

by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS			AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADIER		ARTY	UNITS
243	754	920	921	922	243

The 243rd Infantry Division was formed at Döllersheim Maneuver Area in northeast Austria in August/September 1943. Sent to Brittany in October 1943, it was an understrength division with only two battalions per regiment. As of January 1944, one regiment had horse-drawn vehicles, one had bicycles and the third was motorized. The Post Office was assigned Fp. # 59960 as a return address for registered mail and code (Kenn) 754 in lieu of tactical FpA 243. The division was still not up to strength on D-Day but was in combat from the beginning, covering a sector on the western Cotentin peninsula. Under almost continuous ground attack plus air and naval bombardment, the 243rd was down to battle group strength by June 20th and most was destroyed in Battle for Cherbourg later that month.

Remnants of the division managed to escape to the south, joined Army Group B and continued opposing the American advance on St. Lo. It was temporary combined with remnants of the 91st Air Landing Division and fought the hedgerow battles of western Contentin. In August the survivors were taken out of the line and sent to the Somme river - St. Quentin area to rest and re-fit. The division was formally disbanded on September 12, 1944 and the troops sent to other commands.



Cover sent to Military District Command in Vienna in April 1944 from Fp. # 59050 (Headquarters of 243rd Infantry Division) via P.O. 243 (K-754).