



# Third Reich Study Group Bulletin

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

VOL. XXXV No. 2 (Whole No. 139) 2001

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	<b>Postkarte</b> Wehrmachtmanöver 1937	
Abfender: <u>Joh. Gebertshuber</u> (Name)	<u>Familie</u>	
<u>1458</u> (Dienstgrad [Soldat, Gefreiter, Leutnant usw.] (Selbpostnummer)	<u>Herrmann Gebertshuber</u>	
<u>Greifswald</u> (Leitstelle)	<u>Frankfurt a/M</u>	
<b>Zur Beachtung!</b> Diese Karte ist nur zur Einlieferung bei einem Feldpostamt bestimmt; sie wird dann ohne Anfoh von Postgebühren befördert. Wird die Karte durch die Briefkasten oder bei den Ortspostanstalten eingeliefert, so werden die gewöhnlichen Postgebühren nachgehoben. Die Karte darf nur nach Orten in Deutschland verschickt werden.	<u>Schlossstr. 3</u> (Straße, Haus Nr., Gebäudeteil, Stockwerk, Postschließfach etc.)	
	4163 87 HD	

## STUDY GROUP NOTES

**Waffen-SS Feldpost Feature**— in Bulletin 138 we requested suggestions for new features. Several members asked for illustrations/write ups of Waffen-SS mail beyond those found in our handbook. We are therefore pleased to announce a new feature “Waffen-SS Feldpost” which is based on scarce material from TRSG “Founding Father” John Painter’s collection. The first of these appears on page 23.

**The Michel Cover Catalog** - TRSGer Bob Ferguson writes: “Anyone who has ever bought an overpriced German cover (or declined to do so) from an uninformed dealer has probably wondered how he priced his stock. On the few times I’ve inquired (I no longer do so) I have received answers such as “The Third Reich is hot” or “It’s in Michel” at which point he proceeds to add up the on cover price of every stamp on an obviously overfranked cover. Although I expect that most of our members know how to use the Michel cover catalog, it might be useful to remind some of us of the details.

First of all, knowledge of postal rates is necessary because (except for Colonials) the Michel Catalog prices do not apply if a cover is overfranked by more than 10%. Secondly, for multiple or mixed franking one does not sum the on-cover values of each of the several stamps. Rather, only the one stamp with the highest on-cover value is determined and this value is added to the off-cover used values of the remaining stamps. Thus, unless the cover is single franked, both the cover catalog and the stamp catalog are necessary for the evaluation. Needless to say, unaddressed “covers” are not covers at all but only “on piece”. Since the appeal of a cover often lies in features other than the franking, the value of markings, destination, rate, etc. must be determined in a subjective way by the individual collector.”

**More on Postal Rates** – TRSGer Rex Dixon writes: “A comment on Bob Ferguson’s analysis of the rate on the Geschäftspapiere cover to Brazil in Bulletin #138. The cover is annotated with “29 gr.”, so his analysis of the airmail surcharge is incorrect. Listed on page 95 in *Die Luftpostgebühren für deutsche Briefsendungen nach dem Ausland (1926-1945)* by Reinhold Schwarzer (Osnabruck 1989), the airmail rate to Brazil was 125 Pfg per 5g for letters (“Briefe”) and, from April 1936, 125 Pfg per 25g for (andere) “other” classes of mail. So 250 Pfg. airmail surcharge is the second weight step for this “other” class.

**Waffen-SS Unit History** – I came across an excellent history “*Galicia Division: The Waffen-SS 14th Grenadier Division 1943-45*” by Michael O. Logusz published in 1997 by Schiffer Publishing Ltd., Atglen, PA. This hard cover book with many rare photos of the ill-fated Ukrainian SS division is highly recommended. *Ye Olde Ed.*

### PRICES REALIZED – TRSG AUCTION NO. 83

LOT	PRICE	LOT	PRICE	LOT	PRICE	LOT	PRICE
1	\$115.00	18	\$14.00	30	\$ 56.00	36	\$14.00
2	80.00	24	54.00	31	34.00	37	16.00
3	95.00	25	32.00	32	15.00	39	14.00
4	105.00	28	30.00	33	25.00	40	15.00
13	14.00	29	32.00	35	15.00	42	14.00

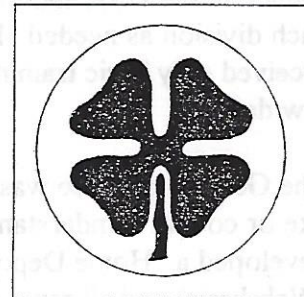
**Cover Illustration** – this Feldpost card was mailed during the 1937 Army Maneuvers by a sergeant using Fp#1458. The Feldpost cancel openly identifies FpA 410 ( A. P.O. of X Army Corps) as Kenn numbers were not in use yet. These scarce Feldpost cards and a detailed description of this Feldpost system used during these maneuvers can be found in the “Feldpost Fundamentals” article that begins on page 9.

## COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE: 294th Infantry Division

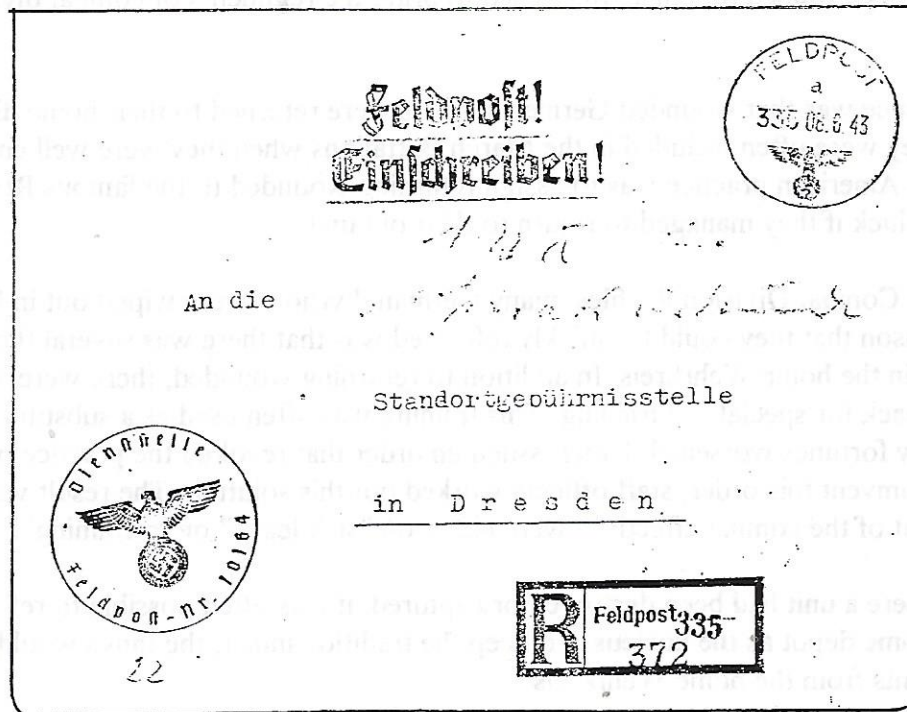
by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS			AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADIER		ARTY	UNITS
294	335	513	514	515	294

Formed with newly trained Saxon personnel in April 1940 (9th Wave), the 294th Infantry Division Feldpost office was assigned Fp. # 02570 as a return address and K-335 for registered mail in lieu of the tactical FpA 294. As a divisional emblem it adopted a solid green clover and stem. The division saw combat in France in 1940 and in the Balkan Campaign in the spring of 1941.



The 294th Infantry Division invaded the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941 as part of Army Group South and took part in the drive on Kiev. Transferred to Army Group Center in the summer of 1942, it took part in the drive toward Stalingrad. It was used to stabilize the Rumanian 3rd Army in the fall of 1942 and suffered heavy casualties when the Rumanians collapsed, setting up the Stalingrad debacle. The bulk of the 8th Luftwaffe Field Division was attached to the 294th Infantry Division in late 1942 during the retreat from the Volga. Remaining in the line, the division was later encircled at Taganrog in December 1943 and sustained heavy casualties in the ensuing breakout. In March 1944 it suffered heavy losses in the withdrawal from the lower Dnieper bend. The 294th Infantry Division was virtually destroyed after being encircled west of the lower Dneestr in August 1944 and was later formally disbanded.



Cover sent to Military Garrison Office in Dresden in June 1943 from Fp. # 10164 (Regimental HQ/ Grenadier Regiment 514) via Field Post Office 294 (K-335).

## The German Army Replacement System

by John Painter

I have been enjoying the articles on German Combat Divisions in our bulletins and thought I might provide some information on the German Replacement System that was quite different from the American. The American thinking was that each division was like each other, so replacements were trained in the USA and then shipped overseas to REPO-DEPOs (Replacement Depots) and then sent to each division as needed. The basic problem with this system was that most of these soldiers had received only basic training and had no combat experience. A great many became casualties within a few days.

The German practice was different. One reason was that, for example, troops from Bavaria wouldn't like or couldn't understand Berliners. These regional differences extended throughout Germany, so they developed a "Home Depot" concept. Each division was formed in a particular Military District (Wehrkreis) and all replacements for that division came from the same source. These training elements were known as the "Replacement Army" (Ersatz Heer).

Another difference was that German divisions in combat replaced their losses differently than the U.S. Effective strength in German divisions was allowed to drop from 8,000 combat effectives to only 2,000 or 3,000. *An extreme example of this was when the 3rd SS-Division 'Totenkopf' left Russia in 1943 it was down to some 300 combat infantrymen.*

The division was then pulled out of the line and sent to a rear area where it received several packets of so-called "March Battalions" numbering 500 each. These replacements, which were from the same region and had been trained together, were used to bring the regiments of combat divisions up to strength.

Another difference was that wounded German soldiers were returned to their home districts to recuperate. They were often included in the March Battalions when they were well enough to return to their units. The American practice was to assign returning wounded to the famous REPO-DEPO and it was only sheer luck if they managed to return to their old unit.

As noted in the Combat Division Profiles, many German divisions were wiped out in North Africa and Russia. The reason that they could be quickly reformed was that there was several thousand former members back in the home Wehrkreis. In addition to returning wounded, there were also soldiers who had been sent back for specialized training. This training was often used as a substitute for leave. As German military fortunes worsened, Hitler issued an order that revoked the practice of granting normal leaves. To circumvent this order, staff officers worked out this solution. The result was that at any time 10 to 15 percent of the combat effectives were either on "sick leave" or "retraining".

So, in cases where a unit had been destroyed or captured, it was often possible to reform it using these troops in the home depot as the nucleus. To keep the tradition intact, the ranks would then be filled with replacements from the home Wehrkreis.

*ED NOTE: See the article on page 6 for more information on German Replacement System.*

## COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:

### 123rd Infantry Division

by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADIER			ARTY	UNITS
123	770	415	416	418	123	123

Formed with Brandenburg personnel in September 1940 (13th Wave) the division post office unit (Feldpostamt or FpA) was assigned Feldpost # 47905 as a return address and Kenn 770 for registered mail in lieu of its tactical designation FpA 123. The 123rd Infantry Division invaded the northern sector of the Soviet Union in June 1941. Under XXVIII Army Corps it fought at Dvinsk and a number of other battles in 18th Army's drive toward Leningrad.

It formed the southern flank of Army Group North during the Soviet winter offensive of 1941-42. Because of the shortage of German troops and vastness of the territory, the 123rd Infantry Division had to cover 50 miles of frontage and was badly over extended. In early January 1942 it was attacked by four Soviet Armies and suffered heavy casualties at Lake Seliger. The remaining units of the division escaped to the Demyansk and Kholm pockets. It was one of six divisions under II Army Corps encircled at Demyansk. Even after a relief corridor was driven into the Demyansk pocket, the division remained and defended the southwestern portion of the Demyansk salient until late in 1942. After the Demyansk salient was evacuated in February 1943, the 123rd Infantry Division was reformed and refitted. It was then transferred to Army Group Center in the autumn of 1943 and fought in the Battle of Zaporozhe. The division suffered such heavy losses during the withdrawal from the lower Dneiper in February 1944 that it was officially disbanded. The 11th Panzer Division absorbed most of the 416th Grenadier Regiment.



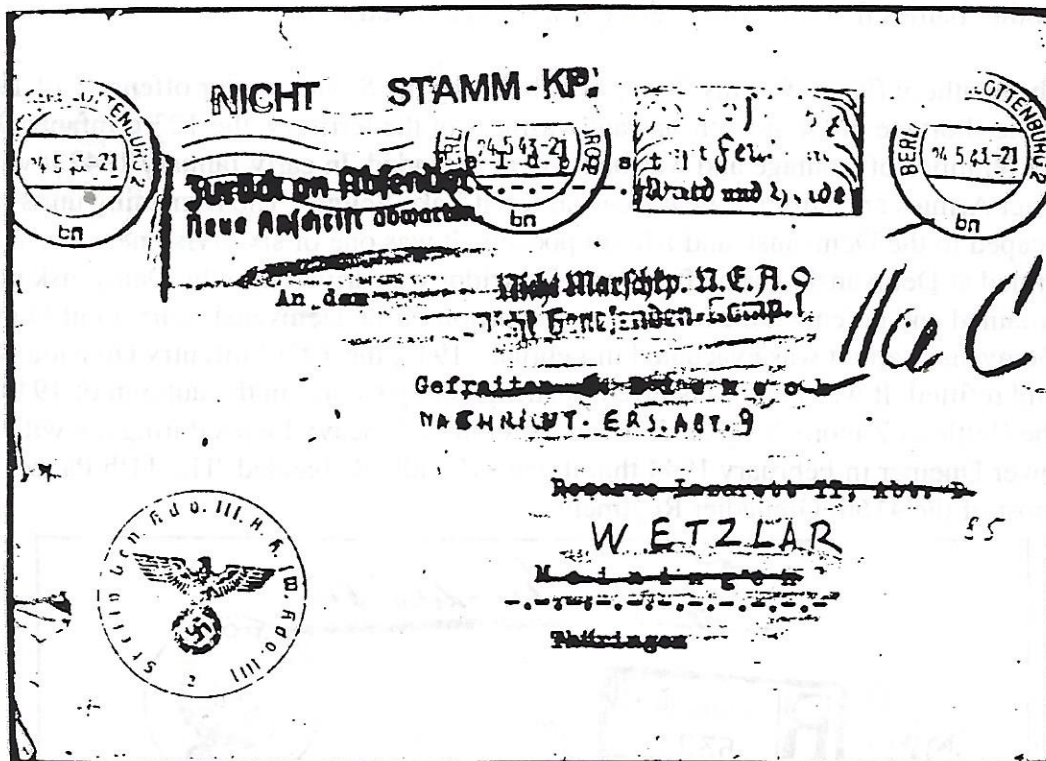
Cover sent to Military Records Office in Ulm in June 1942 from Fp. # 06898 (Battalion III/Grenadier Regiment 415) via Field Post Office 123 (K-770)

## Postal Markings of a German Replacement Battalion

By Chuck Blunk

The cover shown below was acquired during my early days of Feldpost collecting, mainly because the red crayon and numerous hand stamps made it look interesting. Later I realized that these markings indicate the make up of a German Replacement (Ersatz) Battalion.

Germany was divided into Military Districts (**Wehrkreis**) for the purpose of raising and training units, each district being the headquarters for a peace time Army Corps. In wartime these Corps were transferred to the Field Army (**Feldheer**) while the Ersatz staff used their depots to train replacements for the units in the field. When a member of the field unit was seriously wounded or ill, he was sent to a rear area hospital. Upon recovery, he was sent to a convalescence company in his home district before being returned to the field.



This cover was sent by a Sergeant in a staff company of the III Army Corps Headquarters in Berlin. It is addressed to a private in a rear area hospital in Thüringen. However, the intended recipient had been sent to Signals Replacement Battalion 9 in Wetzlar. These replacement battalions were made up of several different kinds of companies. There was the Staff (**Stamm**) Co. which included administrative and other permanent personnel, the Training (**Ausbildung**) Co. which processed new recruits and a Convalescent (**Genesenden**) Co. described earlier. Finally, there was a March (**Marsch**) Co. in which both veterans and recruits were assembled and sent to the Field Army where they would fill various vacancies.

As can be seen on this cover, the letter for Private Bienick passed by Staff, Convalescent and March Companies. Each indicated by hand stamp that he was not there i.e. "Nicht Marschkp. N.E.A. 9". The letter was then returned to sender with the notation "Await new address".

*ED NOTE: This article originally appeared in TRSG Bulletin # 56 in 1980.*

## Story Behind the Stamp: Benito Mussolini

by Kelly Stefanacci

Benito Mussolini was born July 29, 1883 at Predappio in the Italian province of Forli. He was the son of Alessandro Mussolini, an ironworker, and his wife Rosa Maltoni. The boy was educated at the Salesian College in Forlimpopoli where he obtained his teacher's diploma in 1901. He taught at elementary schools in Gualtieri Emilia and in Tolmezzo but soon went to Switzerland to devote his life to politics. Expelled from Switzerland, he returned home to perform his national service in the Bersaglieri. In 1908 he became a journalist for the Trento socialist papers. In 1910 he became secretary of the socialist party in Forli and in 1913 became editor of the party's paper "Avanti". He was wed to Rachele Guidi in 1913 and this marriage produced six children. The next year he left the party to found his own paper "Il Popolo d'Italia", which called for Italy's entry into World War I. When this occurred on May 24, 1915, Mussolini volunteered to serve as a private in the Bersaglieri. He was wounded on February 23, 1917 and spent several months in the hospital.

On March 23, 1919 he founded the political party "Fasci di Combattimento" to combat the socialists. In 1922 his fascists marched on Rome and King Victor Emmanuel III appointed Mussolini as Prime Minister of Italy. He proceeded to crush all opposition and by 1926 became the dictator: Il duce. He consolidated his position at home by concluding the Lateran Treaty of February 11, 1929 with Pope Pius XI, which founded the Vatican State, while he pursued an aggressive foreign policy. He made Albania a protectorate in 1927, took part in the Spanish Civil war from 1936 to 1939, attacked Abyssinia in 1935 and occupied Albania in 1939. He invited the new German dictator Adolf Hitler to a meeting at Venice in June 1934 and participated in the Munich Pact meeting in September 1938. On June 10, 1940 he declared war on France and Great Britain, then met with Hitler at the Brenner Pass on June 18/19. Hitler met Mussolini at the Berghof on January 19, 1941 to request his full support for the planned invasion of Russia. The ensuing Italian military defeats led to Mussolini's repudiation by the Fascist Grand Council on July 25, 1943. German paratroops rescued him from his prison on Gran Sasso on September 12, 1943. Benito Mussolini then headed a "republican socialist party" in regions of northern Italy still controlled by the Germans until April 28, 1945, when Italian partisans executed him at Guilino di Mezzegra near Lake Como.

Mussolini appears alongside Hitler on a 12 + 38 Pfg stamp designed by Prof. R. Klein which was issued on January 30, 1941 to commemorate the Brenner Pass Meeting and the German-Italian Brotherhood in Arms.



A special cancel depicting a sword and clasped hands was used on January 30, 1941 in Berlin, Vienna & Munich.



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.

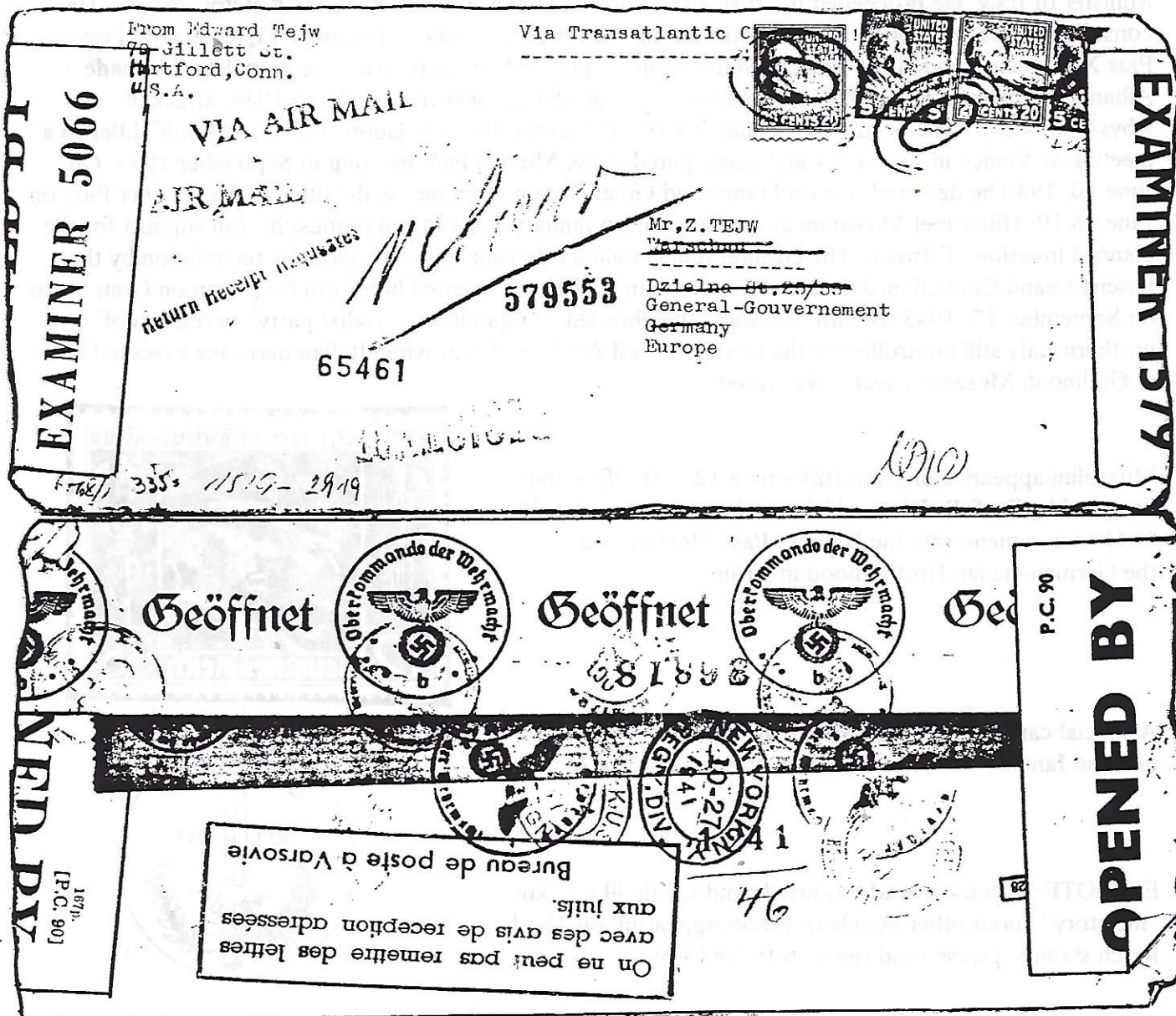
# Rejected by Censor - Inadmissible Mail

by Jim Lewis

## Restricted Postal Service for Jews in German Occupied Territories

This registered airmail letter with return receipt requested was posted in Hartford, Connecticut on September 3, 1941. It was presumably opened by British censors in Bermuda on the transatlantic flight per examiner tape 5066 on left. Upon entry into Germany the letter was opened at the Frankfurt Censor Office (code "e"), resealed with brown tape and forwarded to Warsaw.

At Warsaw it was rejected by the postal bureau who obviously discovered that the intended recipient was Jewish. The cover front has the manuscript notation "Retour" (Return) while the back bears a boxed violet hand stamp with French text reading: "One cannot send letters with return receipt requested to Jews - Warsaw Postal Bureau". Returned to Germany, the letter was re-examined at the Berlin Censor Office (code 'b') and resealed with white tape applied over the brown tape. Again reopened by British censor on the return trip, the letter was finally back stamped in Hartford on October 28, 1941.





## Fundamentals of Feldpost Collecting

### Part 7. The 1937 Maneuvers

by Robert J. Houston

#### General Background:

These military exercises were held in September 1937 and are of particular interest to the Feldpost collector, since they constituted the first real test of the Feldpost system that was to be used (with some modifications) during World War II.

Conducted in the Mecklenburg area of North Germany, the exercise consisted of three forces: The invading "Red" force, the defending "Blue" force and a contingent of "Neutral" forces which included the observers, judges, service and communications units required to control the maneuvers. The actual "fighting" lasted from September 18-26, with a few days before and after these dates required for mobilizing and demobilizing. While no official announcement was made as to the "winner", it appears from battle maps and reports that the Red Force's invasion was a failure with the battle line moving several miles to the west and elements of it's 3rd Panzer Division being surrounded at Teterow.

This study of the '37 Maneuvers was greatly facilitated by my very fortunate acquisition of U.S. Archives microfilm roll T78-374 in which a series of captured German army documents dealing with these exercises is reproduced (see Fig. 1).

Entitled "**Bestimmungen für die Wehrmachtmanöver (Heer) 1937**", these documents contain mobilization orders, orders of battle, position maps, lists of units vs. Feldpost numbers and locations of various facilities. A section on postal regulations specifies the use of special postal cards that could be mailed free of charge by the maneuver participants (there was no free mailing privilege otherwise in effect for individual servicemen at this time). These very cards are the catalysts which creates our interest in the "1937 Battle of Mecklenburg". Of great help was a portion of the research notes of the late Günter Fuchs – which I was also very fortunate to obtain.

#### The 1937 Maneuver Cards:

Listed by Clement as #501, these specially printed cards (See Fig. 2) were inscribed "Postkarte/Wehrmachtmanöver/1937". On the left front are line entries for the sender's address – consisting of name, rank, Feldpost number and "Leitstelle" (routing post office). Instructions at the lower left read:

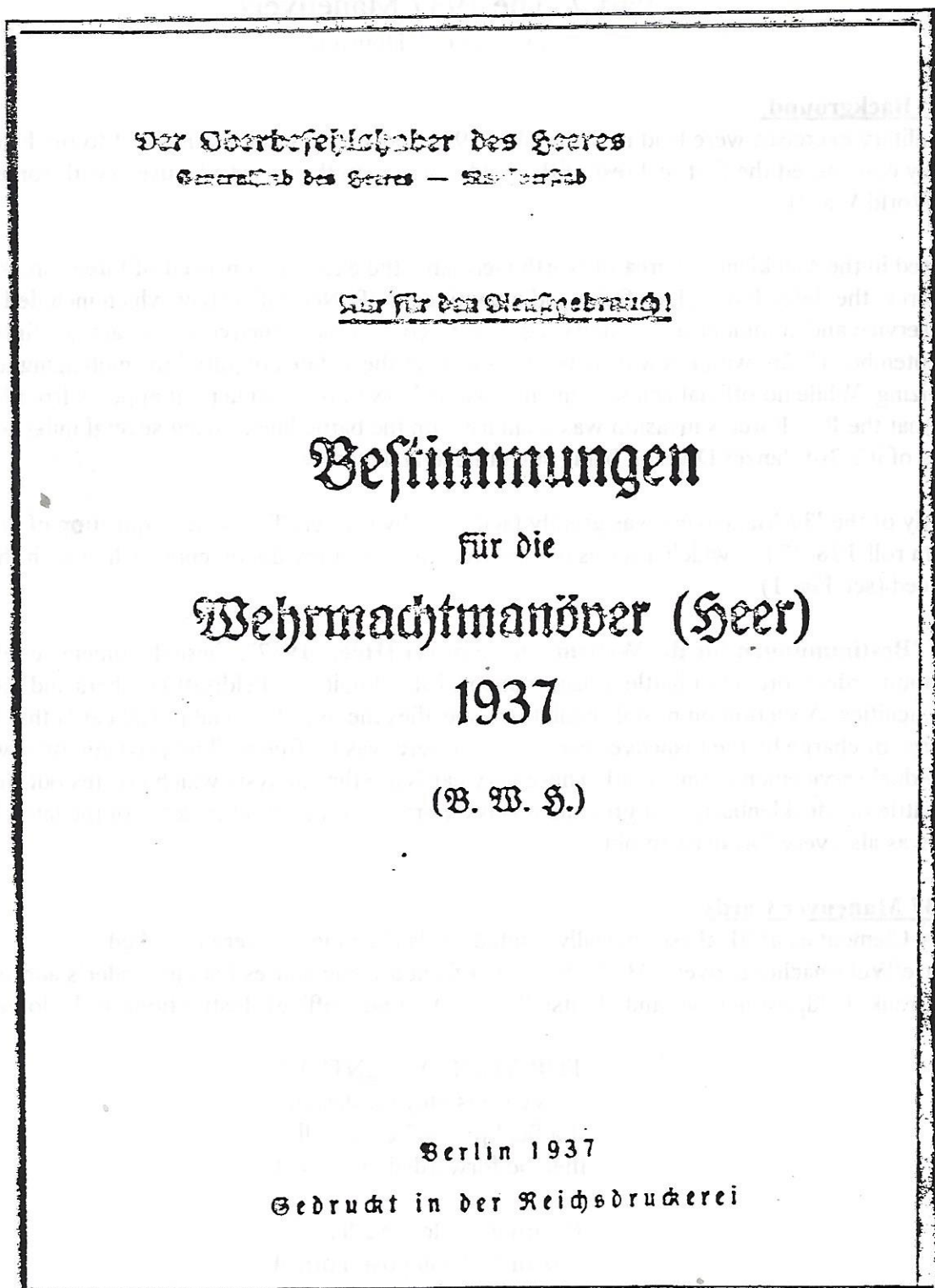
**FOR YOUR ATTENTION!**

This card is only for dispatch  
at a field post office; it will  
then be forwarded at no cost.

If card is mailed in a letter  
box or by local post, normal  
postal fee will apply.

These cards will be forwarded  
to locations in Germany only.

Fig. 1) Photographic enlargement of microfilmed title page of the 1937 Maneuver Directives entitled "Orders for the Armed Forces Maneuvers (Army) 1937"





The "Leitstelle" was a civilian post office through which mail to the military units was to be routed. Three such routing offices were used:

**Güstrow (for the Red Force)**  
**Pasewalk (for the Blue Force)**  
**Neustrelitz (for Neutral Troops)**

While Clement indicates Treptow as a fourth Leitstelle, this does not appear to be substantiated. In the upper right is a dotted circle, indicating the desired position of the military postal cancellation.

#### **The Feldpost Cancellation:**

The '37 Maneuvers marked the "debut" of the standard 28mm Feldpost cancellation. These are quite interesting in that they bear the actual tactical number of the FpA ("Feldpostamt" or Field Post Office) at the left of the date line – as opposed to the familiar "Kenn" (Code) number of later years which was a "cover" number for the actual post office number.

Fig. 4 lists the military post offices participating in the 1937 maneuvers. It can be noted from this list that while the "Red Force" consisted of elements of the 5th Army (AOK 5), there were no 5th Army level post offices utilized. It should also be noted that the list of FpAs indicated in Clement's handbook is somewhat in error in that 002 and 021 were not used and numbers 022, 403, 530 and 532 should have been shown.

#### **Office Code Letters:**

All FpA cancellations during the maneuvers are found with a "b" code letter (just under the word "Feldpost"), however the code letter "a" is also found, although very infrequently, with cancels of 001, 003, 023, 030, 239, 402, 530, and 621.

#### **Printing Varieties:**

The Maneuver cards are found in two printings, with the printing number found in the extreme lower right corner. By far the most common is No. 4162.37.IID. When found, the scarcer No. 5409.37.IID will be invariably cancelled by FpA 001, 621 or 631. An additional detectable aspect of the card printing is a gradual plate defect in which the closing parenthesis of the lower right instruction (after "Postschiessfach-Nr.") is eventually lost.

#### **The Four-digit Feldpost Number:**

Naturally a salient point of collecting these Maneuver Cards is the identification of the actual unit of the sender as represented by the four-digit "code" number. Once the unit identity is established, the location can also be determined by referencing position maps. It is interesting to note that these numbers were not assigned at random as with the later wartime numbers, but assigned sequentially within each division. Fig. 5 is a sample of such assignments (30th Infantry Division) in which the "pattern" can be noted.

Fig. 4)

# Fieldpost

## The 1937 Maneuvers

A total of 17 field postoffices  
functioned in the Maneuver area:

### BLUE FORCE

<u>P.O.#</u>	<u>Cancel</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
G1	001	1st Grenzschutz Division
3	003	3rd Infantry Division
12	012	12th Infantry Division
23	023	23rd Infantry Division
32	032	32nd Infantry Division
402	402	II Army Corps
403	403	III Army Corps
530	530	1st Army

### RED FORCE

G10	010	10th Grenzschutz Division
22	022	22nd Infantry Division
30	030	30th Infantry Division
239	239	3rd Panzer Division
410	410	X Army Corps.

### NEUTRAL TROOPS

532	532	Laage
601	601	Treptow
621	621	Neubrandenburg
631	631	Neustrelitz

Fig. 5) Photographic enlargement of a typical microfilmed page listing Feldpost number assignments of the 30th Infantry Division. Certain of these pages were never copied on this microfilm roll, however our good friend NORBERT KANNIPIN was able to locate the "missing pages" in Germany for us and we now have a complete list.

**Frame #6338074 – Roll T78/374**

**Feldpostnummern.**

**Leitstelle: Süstrow.**

Friedenstruppenteil (soweit er nicht dem Übungs- truppenteil entspricht)	Übungsstruppenteil	Feldpost- nummer
	Kommando 30. Division	0980
	Kradmeldezug	0981
	Kartenstelle	0982
	Feldgenbarmerietrupp	0983
	Infanterie-Regiment 6	
	Stab	0984
	Nachr.-Zug	0985
	Stab I.	0986
	Nachr.-Zug I.	0987
	1.	0988
	2.	0989
	3.	0990
	4.	0991
	Stab II.	0992
	Nachr.-Zug II.	0993
	5.	0994
	6.	0995
	7.	0996
	8.	0997
	Stab III.	0998
	Nachr.-Zug III.	0999
	9.	1000
	10.	1001
	11.	1002
	12.	1003
	13.	1004
	Inf.-Reiterzug	1005
	14.	1006
II., Inf.-Regt. 47 .....		

Fig. 6) Earliest known cancellation on a Maneuver Card (Sept. 16) – sent by a Lieutenant Colonel at Feldpost # 0489 (Headquarters, Engineer Battalion G1 of the 1st Grenschutz Division), then at Elmenhorst. Posted via Division’s post office #G1 (001) with cancel of the scarce code letter “a”.

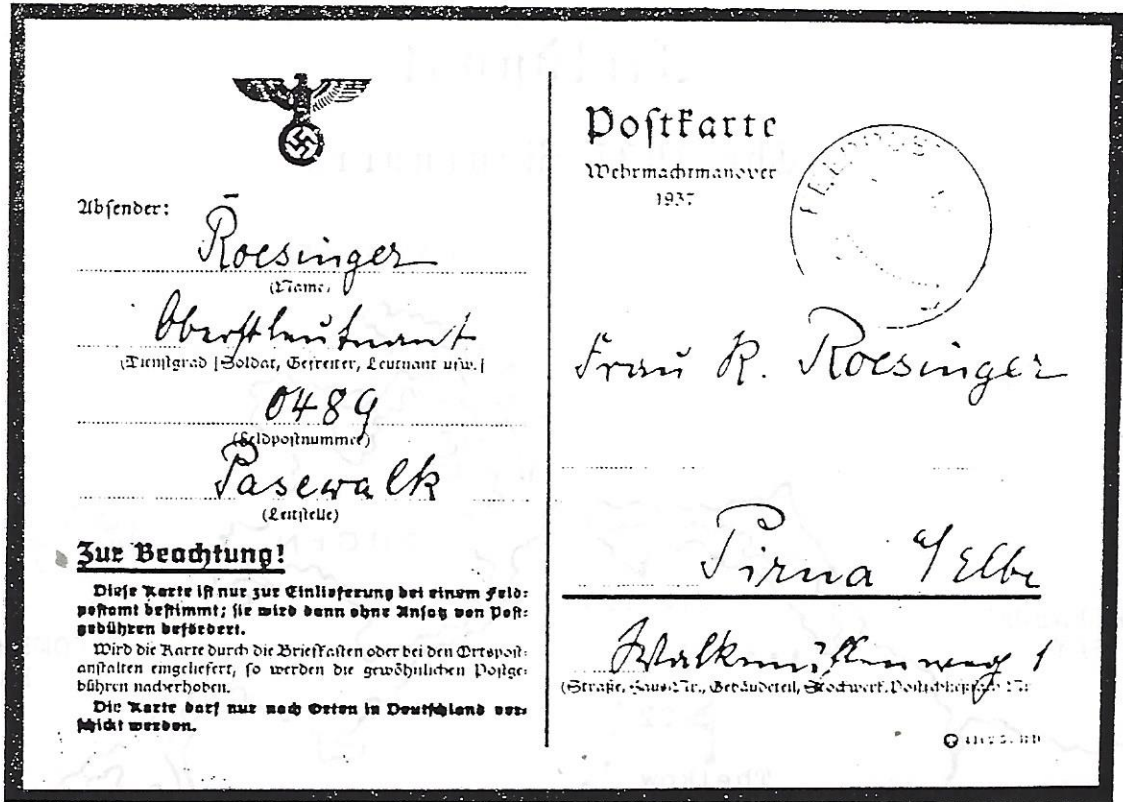


Fig. 7) Latest known cancellation on a Maneuver Card (Sept. 29) – sent by a gunner at Feldpost # 0984 (Headquarters, Infantry Regiment 6 of the 30th Infantry Division) via X Corps field post office #410.

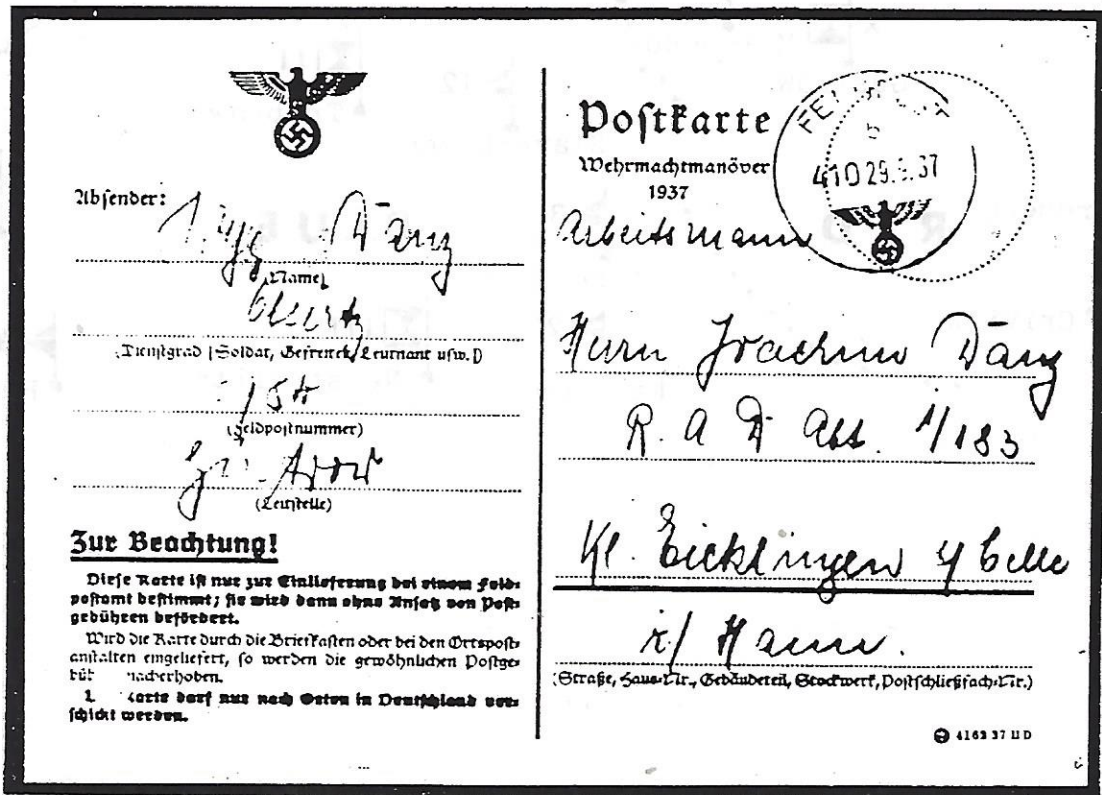
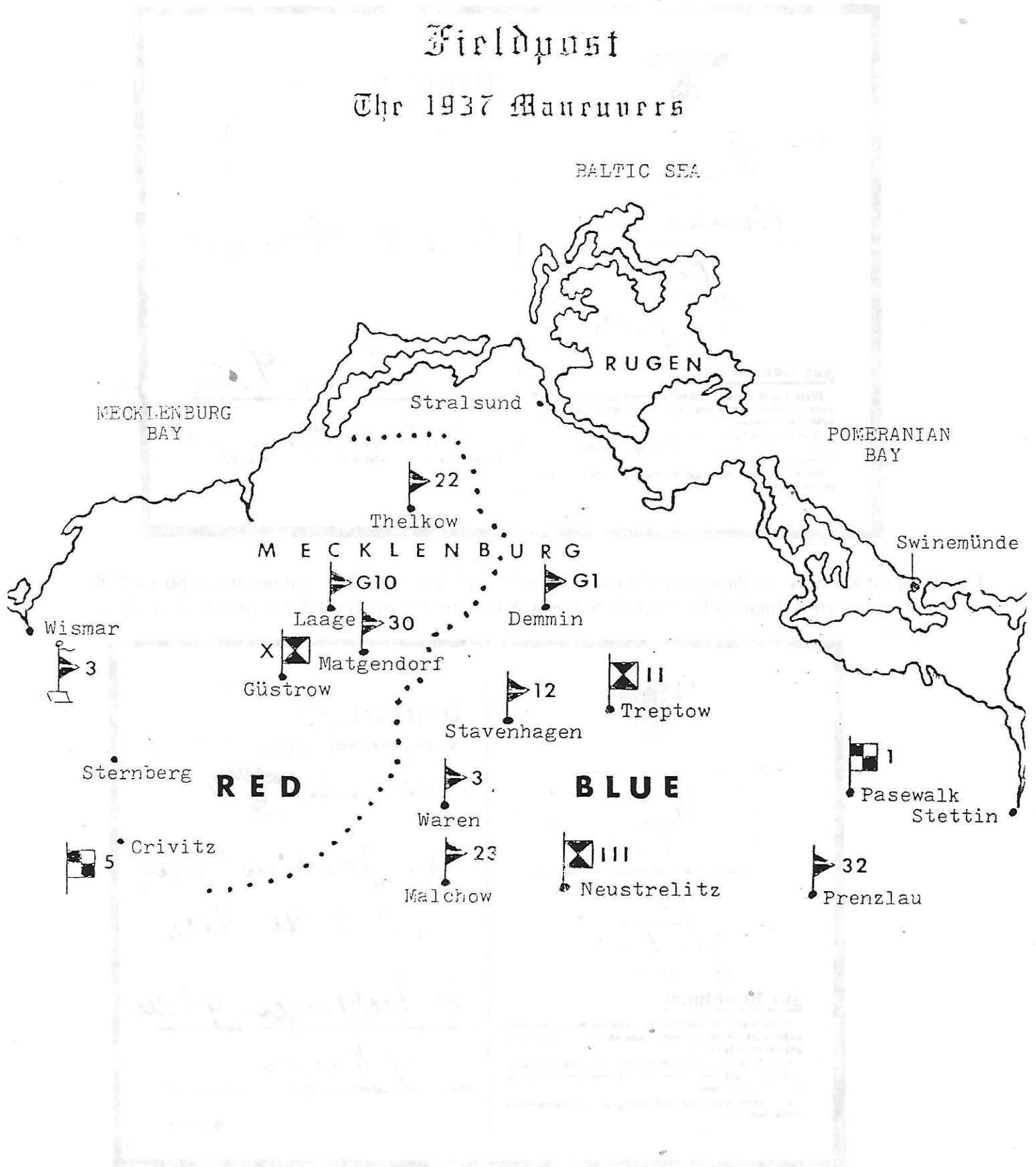


Fig. 8) **TACTICAL SITUATION**— at start of the Maneuvers on Sept. 19, 1937, the “Blue Force” (1st Army) assumed defensive positions against the invading “Red Force” (elements of 5th Army).





The numbering plan ran from Feldpost # 0001 to 1614 with "blocks" allocated as follows:

0001 – 0076:	AOK 1
0077 – 0135:	II Army Corps
0136 – 0276:	12th Infantry Division
0277 – 0409:	32nd Infantry Division
0410 – 0501:	1st Grenschutz Division
0502 – 0542:	III Army Corps
0543 – 0677:	3rd Infantry Division
0678 – 0809:	23rd Infantry Division
0810 – 0841:	AOK 1 (I.R. 1, A.R. 1, etc.)
0842 – 0847:	Neutral Units
0848 – 0856:	AOK 1
0857 – 0909:	Neutral Units
0910 – 0979:	X Army Corps
0980 – 1117:	30th Infantry Division
1118 – 1203:	10th Grenschutz Division
1204 – 1337:	22nd Infantry Division
1338 – 1456:	3rd Panzer Division
1457 – 1481:	AOK 5 Units
1482 – 1486:	Not used
1487 – 1507:	Neutral Units
1508 – 1511:	Not used
1512 – 1563:	Neutral Units (except 1556 is X Corps)
1564 – 1568:	AOK 1
1569 :	Not used
1570 – 1586:	Neutral Units
1587 – 1609:	Misc. (AOK 1, 30th Inf. Div., X Corps)
1610 – 1614:	Neutral Units

**Usage Dates:**

The vast majority of used cards are found cancelled between September 19-26 (the period of the actual "fighting") and relatively scarce are cards cancelled during the mobilization period of September 16-18 (See Fig.6) or the demobilization period of September 27-29 (See Fig.7). Figure 8 indicates the relative positions of the various Divisions and Corps at the beginning of the exercises.

**The Swinemünde Cancellation:**

While the regulations specified that the Maneuver Cards could only be posted free of charge at a military post office, one exception was made for 15 elements of Infantry regiment 47 and Engineer Battalion 2 (support elements of AOK 1) on detached duty at Swinemünde. Mail from these units was allowed to be accepted free of charge and processed by the Swinemünde civil post office. The only known example of such a card is shown in Fig. 9.

The special exception permitting these 15 units to post via the Swinemünde post office is found in a document entitled "Lage für die Besatzung des Abschnitts West der Seefestung Swinemünde" (The arrangements for the Garrison of 'Detachment west' of the Coastal Fortress of Swinemünde) on frame # 6337974 of microfilm T78-374 and is quoted as follows:

“Feldpostdienst:

Die Feldpost ist beim Postamt Swinemünde durch die Truppenteile abzuholen. Abgehende Manöverpostkarten sind über das Postamt Swinemünde zu leiten. (Sonderregelung abweichend von Ziff. 212 der B. W. H., letzter Satz).”

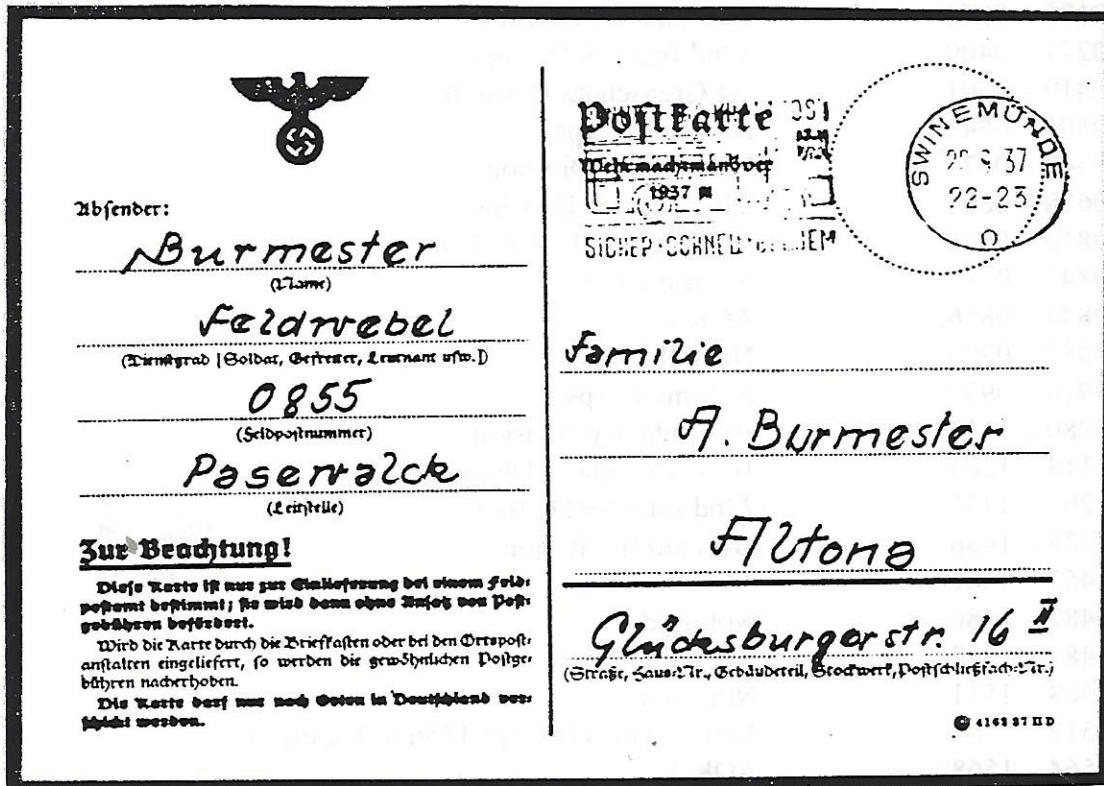


Fig. 9) Card posted Sept. 20 by a Sgt. At Fp #0855 (Co. 4, Inf. Rgt. 47) via Swinemünde civil post office. Fifteen such elements were stationed here under the “Abschnittskommandeur West der Seefestung Swinemünde”:

Infantry Regiment 47	Feldpost Nr.	Engineer Battalion 2	Feldpost Nr.
Rgt. Headquarters	0848	Battalion Headquarters	1564
Rgt. Signals Platoon	0849	Signals Platoon	1565
Btln. I Headquarters	0850	Company 1	1566
I Signals Platoon	0851	Company 2	1567
Company 1	0852	Company 3	1567a
Company 2	0853	Supply Column	1568
Company 3	0854		
Company 4	0855		
Company 14	0856		

ED NOTE: This article originally appeared in TRSG Bulletin # 53 in 1979 and is another example of first rate Feldpost research by former TRSG Bulletin Editor Bob Houston.

## COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE: 25th Panzer-Grenadier Division

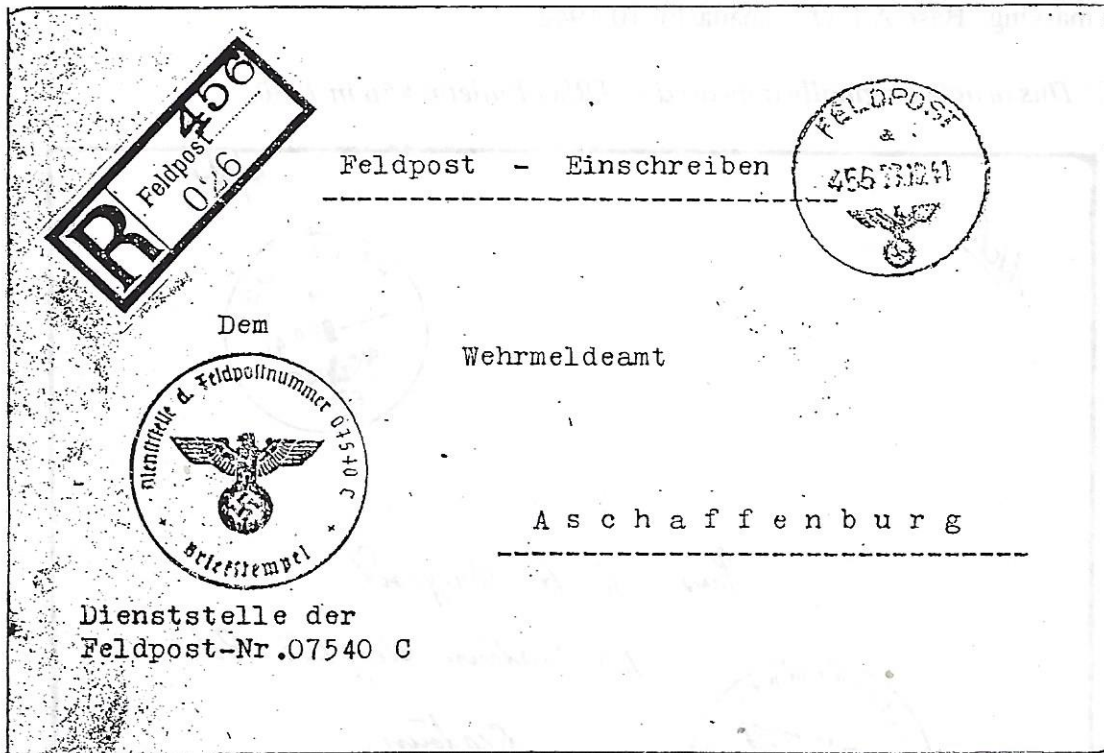
by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT	KENN	MOTORIZED INF	PZ BTL	ARTY	UNITS	
255	456	35	119	125	25	25

Formed in 1934-35 (1st Wave) by expansion of the 13th Infantry Regiment of the old Reichwehr, the 25th Infantry Division initially included the 13th, 35th and 119th Infantry Regiments. Lightly engaged in campaigns in Poland and France, in August 1940 it was converted to a motorized infantry division, giving up the 13th Regiment to the 6th Gebirgs Division.

It invaded the Soviet Union with Army Group Center in June 1941 and remained in the central sector for three years. It fought in 2nd Panzer Group's battles of encirclement east of Minsk, Kiev and Moscow. Re-designated the 20th Panzer-Grenadier Division in the fall of 1942, it sustained heavy casualties at the Battle of Kursk and fought at Smolensk in the fall of 1943. In the summer of 1944 it was encircled east of Minsk, escaping only because it was Army Group Center's mobile reserves when the Soviet attack began.

Withdrawn to Grafenwohr Maneuver area for refitting, the 20th Panzer-Grenadier Division was sent to the Western Front after the German collapse in France. That fall it was engaged north of Saarbrucken, where it absorbed the 107th Panzer Brigade. In November 1944 it took part in the Battle of the Bulge. After the defeat in the Ardennes, it was sent east and defended a sector north of Berlin during the last Soviet offensive.



Cover sent to Military Records Office at Aschaffenburg in October 1941 from Fp. # 07540 (Battalion II/Panzer-Grenadier Regiment 35) via Field Post Office 25 (K-456).

## Feldpost to Enemy Countries

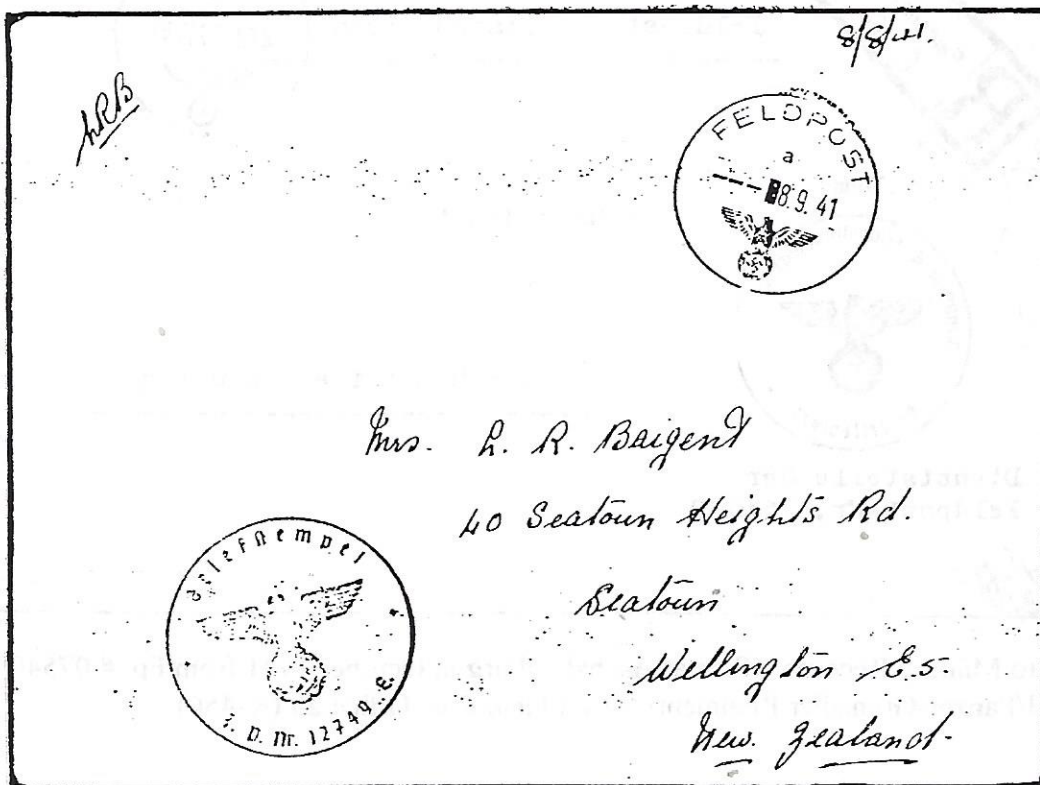
by Richard Imus

In recent years there have been a number of articles concerning the posting of German Feldpost mail overseas, either to Germany's allies or to neutral countries. The subject of this short article, however, is Feldpost mail to enemy countries. While not common, such mail is found from time to time. While Feldpost correspondence to enemy countries was not normally permitted, there were at least two instances in which such mail was allowed.

**Correspondence of Allied Prisoners of War** – immediately after capture, Allied POWs were collected in camps near the front (Frontstammlager) awaiting transport back to POW camps in Germany. Correspondence of prisoners in these forward camps to their families, as provided for in the Geneva Convention, had to be processed by the German Feldpost as this was usually the only functioning postal system available. For example, the cover shown below was sent by a New Zealander in a German front POW camp on Crete and bears the briefstemple of Fp. # 12749 (Battalion III of Infantry regiment 746). The backside has 3-line hand stamp "Zensiert Gefangenen Lager". A cover from the same correspondence in the author's collection bears instead of the briefstemple a 2-line hand stamp reading "Zensiert Gefangenen Lager Kreta (VI)" and a Feldpost cancel dated 18/9/41.

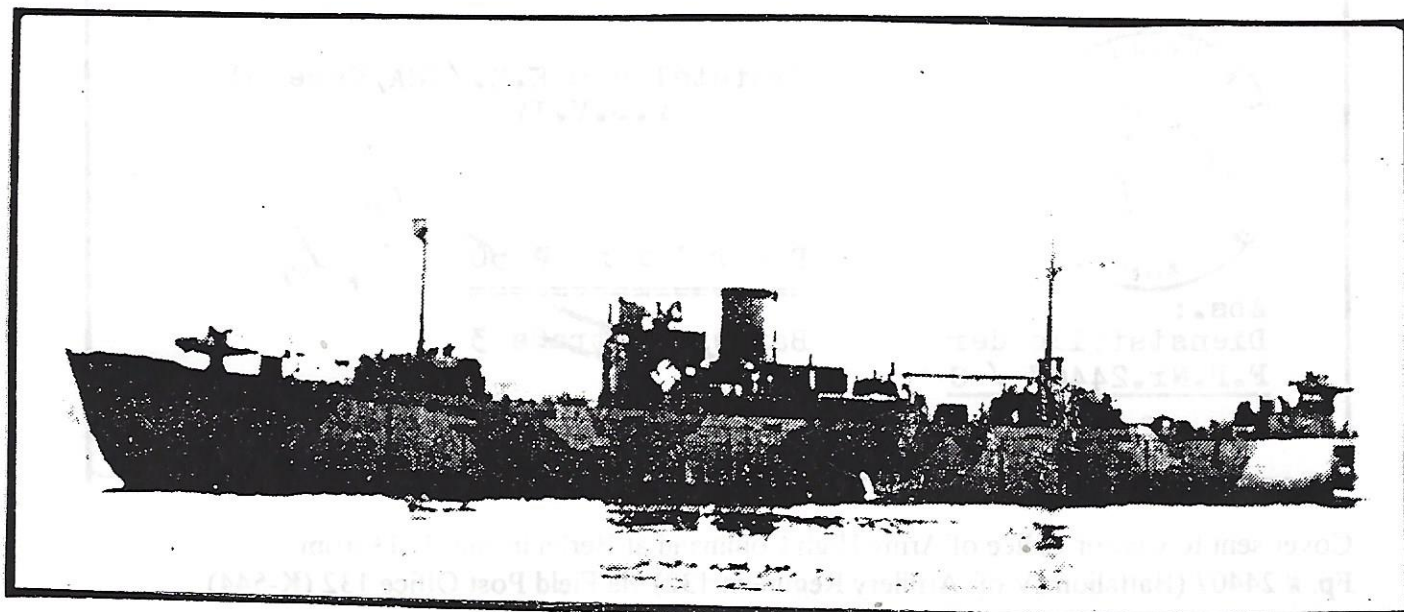
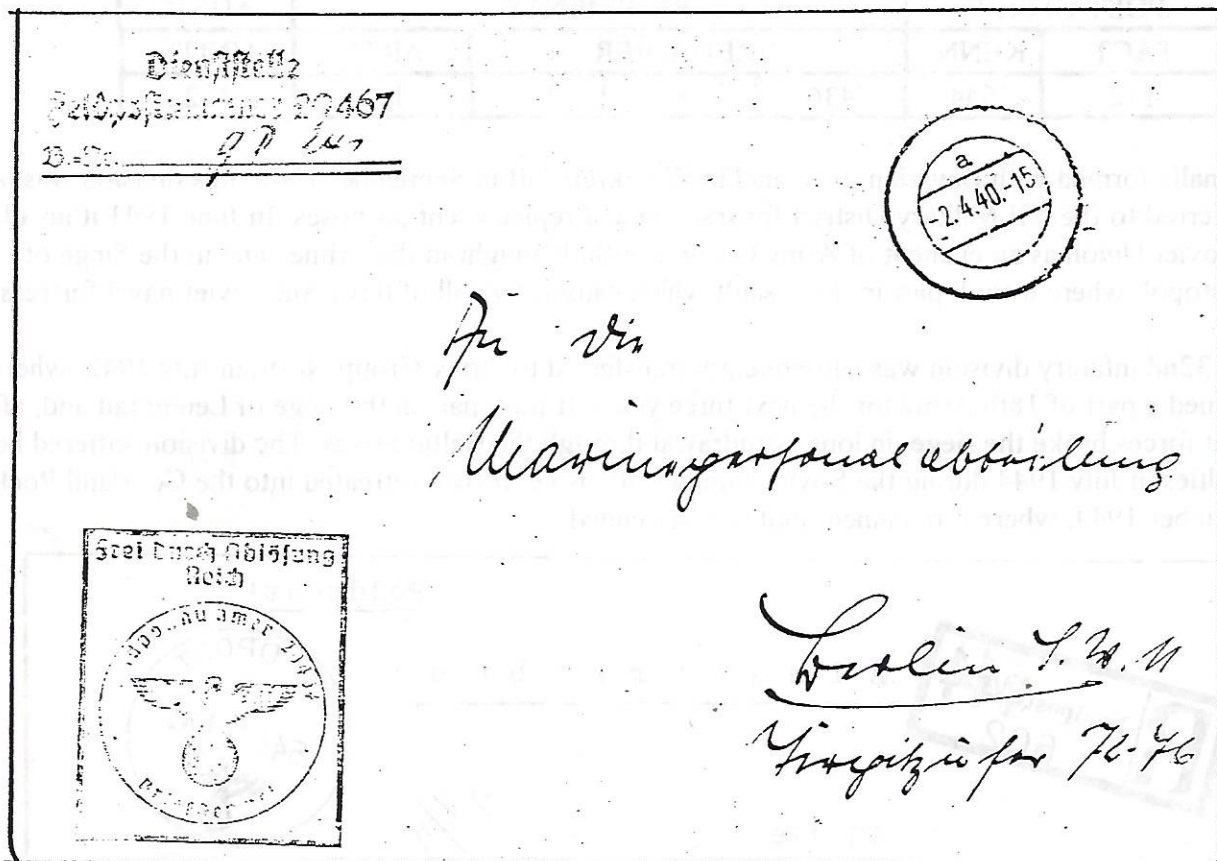
**Correspondence of German POWs Abroad** – after March 28, 1941 German soldiers were allowed to send mail through the Feldpost system to German POWs abroad, according to the terms and conditions normally applying to such correspondence. The author has a letter sent by a German sailor at Dunkirk via the Feldpost to a German POW in Great Britain. This letter was censored at the "Auslandbriefstelle" in Berlin and also by the British upon arrival. However, as the POW had been transferred to a camp in Canada, the letter was forwarded across the Atlantic, censored again in Canada and back stamped with a machine marking "Base A.P.O. Canada/Jul 10 1942".

*ED NOTE: This article originally appeared in TRSG Bulletin #56 in 1980.*



# NAVY LOG

## Auxiliary Minelayer 'Königin Luise' - Feldpost # 29467



This ex-mercantile ship was built in 1934. Displacement: 3,667 tons; armament: two 3.4" AA, one 37mm AA, two 20 mm AA and 240 mines.

Mined and sunk off Helsinki on September 29, 1941.

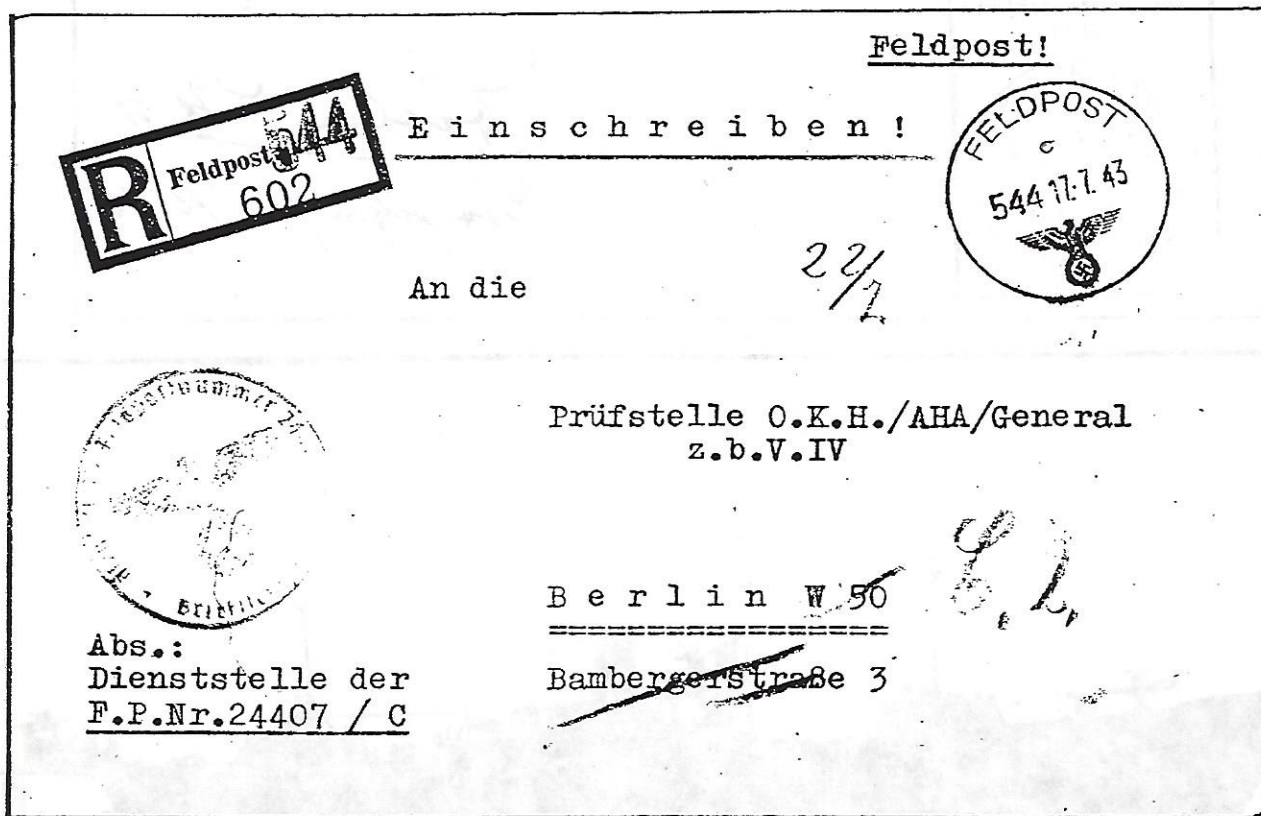
## COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE: 132nd Infantry Division

by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT	KENN	GRENADIER			ARTY	UNITS
132	544	436	437	438	132	132

Originally formed with Bavarian personnel in Wehrkreis VII in September 1940, this division was later transferred to the XII Military District for training and replacement purposes. In June 1941 it invaded the Soviet Union as an element of Army Group South. It fought in the Crimea and in the Siege of Sevastopol, where it took part in the assault which caused the fall of this giant Soviet naval fortress.

The 132nd infantry division was subsequently transferred to Army Group North in July 1942, where it remained a part of 18th Army for the next three years. It took part in the siege of Leningrad and, after Soviet forces broke the siege, in long withdrawal through the Baltic States. The division suffered heavy casualties in July 1944 during the Soviet summer offensive. It then retreated into the Courland Pocket in September 1944, where it remained until the war ended.



Cover sent to Censor Office of Army High Command at Berlin in July 1943 from Fp. # 24407 (Battalion IV of Artillery Regiment 132) via Field Post Office 132 (K-544).

# Waffen-SS Feldpost: Einsatzkommando Units

by John Painter

Fig. 1) Einsatzkommando C

The registered cover shown below was sent through normal Feldpost channels to Military District Command of St. Wendel in the Saar. The command staff of Einsatzkommando C (Action Group C) sent the cover. This was one of the mobile killing squads of the RSHA that was sent into Russia behind the advancing armies to liquidate all Jews and political commissars they might find. This was part of the so-called 'Final Solution' of the Jewish question.

Each detachment was given a code name for security reasons. The unit that sent this cover was Fp. # 46624 which is listed in the Feldpost Directory as SS Kommando Obersalzburg, which happens to be the code name for Einsatzkommando C.

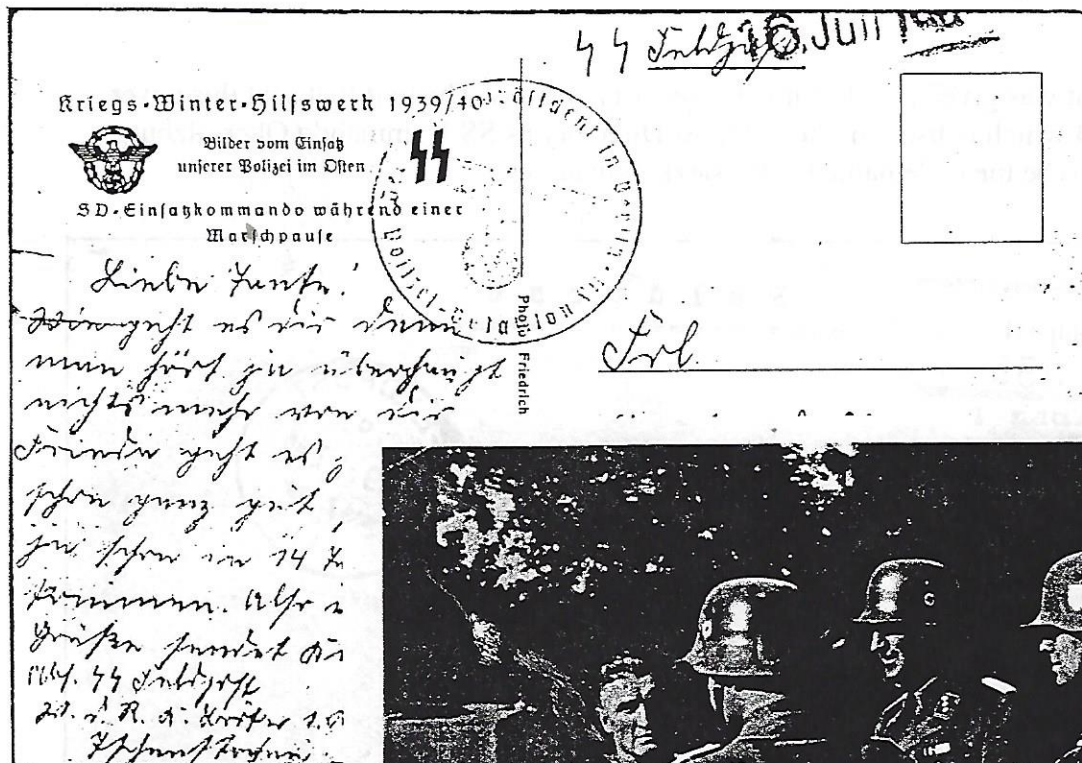


This cover was postmarked with a regular Feldpost cancel with the Kenn number 499. This was the Kenn (code) number for the Army Feldpostmaster of the 6th Army, which was under Army Group South.

Fig. 2) Einsatzkommando Postcard

Postcard mailed from a member of Police Battalion VII originally stationed in Berlin. The card is addressed to the sender's aunt and states that he will be back in fourteen days but doesn't say where he is.

Instead of a city cancel, there is a date stamp that appears to be 16 June 1943. The postcard itself is more interesting because it shows a Security Service (SD) Einsatzkommando at rest during march pause. The SD was a field organization of several SS offices and sub-offices, which included the Gestapo, the Criminal Police and the Security Police. In addition to the SD, an Einsatzgruppe had other SS and Policemen that were used to fill special tasks such as executions.



These Einsatzkommandos were used to round up and usually kill political opponents, Communists, Gypsies and Jews. The card above has a printed date of 1939-1940 and the SS men are shown in their office type uniforms but they are Waffen-SS and not police.