

Third Reich Study Group Bulletin  
James E. Duffy, Editor  
P.O. Box 65, Highwood, Illinois 60040

Director: Myron Fox, P.O. Box 283, Needham Heights, Mass. 02194  
Sec./Treasurer: Robert J. Houston, 11 Yorktown Drive, Clark, NJ 07066

CONTENTS:

1. Editorial
2. The Foxes Den  
by Myron Fox
7. German Field Post Operations in the West  
Part A. Campaign in the West May-June 1940  
by John W. Painter

Editorial

This TRSG Bulletin is the first issue for 1973. Even though it is being run off in September 1973, I am trying to maintain some sort of continuity as a quarterly bulletin. This does not mean that these bulletins will appear like clockwork every third month, which no doubt, you all have noticed. Bulletin No. 2 of 1973, is now in preparation, and I hope to give you all 4 bulletins by the end of the year.

All we can offer for the present is 4 bulletins a year. We don't even tell you what year, but you WILL get 4 bulletins.

In this issue, Myron Fox, in his "Foxes Den" covers a multitude of subjects, and there is a good chance that Myron has something for everyone.

John Painter sent me a magnificent work on the "German Field Post Operations in the West". Nothing has been published in the U.S., in English, prior to this time and to this extent on this subject. Most of the articles and books have been written about the Eastern Front, the Campaign in Russia, etc. I am grateful to John for granting us the privilege of publishing this original work in the TRSG Bulletin. Yes, it is on the subject of Military Mail. However, once you have read all the Parts of this study, you will have an insight in the administration of the mail, first by the military, and then the preparations involved prior to the period of occupation.

Censored mail and concentration camp mail articles have been received and photo pages are being prepared. Look for them in the next issues to come. Thank you for your continued support. (Jim Duffy)

## The Foxes Den

by Myron Fox

Potpouri

GPS Member Herb Friedman won third prize in the 1972 SPA Philatelic Literature Competition for his article in the December 1971 issue, "The 'Almost' Stamps of Free India". This is a study of the unissued Azad Hind issues.

TRSG'er Gus Snels, having evidently recovered from his HARMONEX induced laryngitis was a member of the committee for the first annual Toronto STAMPEX June 8-10. GPS'er Manfred Walther was also on the committee.

TRSG'er Sam Simon received an award for his exhibit "Concentration Camp Mail of World War II", at the 10th anniversary meeting of the Judaica Historical Society in November. Sam also conducted a symposium on "How to collect Judaica Philately" at the recent INTERPEX in New York. Sam is a busy fellow.

Another busy fellow is your TRSG Bulletin editor Jim Duffy. Jim was President of Chicago's COMPEX, held May 25 to 27. Jim has held this post for three years now and I understand it is one of the best shows in the country of its class. Jim was also one of the two U.S. Commissioners to the International Stamp Exhibition, IBRA, held in Munich, Germany, last May.

TRSG'er Roger Szymanski won the grand award and first prize in LAPEX '72 in Twin Rivers, Wisconsin. (However, shame on you Roger for dabbling in non-German philately).

Your Secretary/Treasurer, Bob Houston received a Gold award, and the War Cover Club award at SEPAD 1972 for his "German Theatres of Operations World War II". TRSG'er Arnold Shay received a silver for his "Postal History of Auschwitz".

The TRSG was busy at CENJEX '72 also. Henry Laessig achieved the President's Award and APS medal for his German area souvenir sheets. Bob Houston won a Best in Class Award for his Luxemburg 1940-41. Bob also won a gold for "German Naval Vessels World War II". His daughter, Jean, also won a Best in Class Award just to keep Bob humble.

Last but not least was the GPS convention held at NOJEX '72. Again the TRSG was well represented. Fred Stengel exhibited several panes of not often seen Channel Island material and received a NOJEX bronze and GPS silver. Bob Houston received GPS gold, NOJEX gold and SPA medal for Best Research, for his Registered Feldpost exhibit. Carl Kroboth received the GPS President's award plus NOJEX gold for his "Feld- and Inselfpost World War II". Russ Wright, Henry Laessig and Drew Nicholson received awards for non III Reich entries.

The Foxes Den, continued.

I would like to take the opportunity to push the annual GPS convention. This year it is being held at SEPAD, in Philadelphia, Oct. 19-21. I have been going to these since about 1968. They offer us the chance to see material that most of us would never see in our local environments. They are highly educational as you obtain a crash course on German philately from the exhibits and discussions with fellow members. But maybe best of all is the general spirit of "gemütlichkeit" that is present everywhere at all these shows. I now look forward to this show every year. Many of modest means plan their vacation around it. Try to make it this year, or the next, I'll be looking for you.

A Croatian Philatelic Society has just been founded. Details available from the Croatian Philatelic Society, 1408 Hazelwood, Suite C, Borger, Texas 79007. (SASE please).

A 70-page work "The 1936 Olympic Games, A Philatelic History" is now available. It may be purchased for \$3.95 from James Danner, 3 Clinton St., Whitesboro, New York 13492. Jim is a member of our group.

Ladislav Fargo in his voluminous work on the German espionage system in World II, The Game of the Foxes states on page 333 that a certain Louis Matzhold while serving as the Washington correspondent for the Berliner Börsen Zeitung was actually an agent for the Abwehr. This gentleman, according to his reports to his Abwehr supervisors, had a common bond with President Roosevelt as both were ardent philatelists, and he would often meet with the President to discuss and trade stamps. Author Fargo points out it is not clear that these meetings ever took place only the Abwehr records show that the Abwehr was told that they did. (In the same book it is stated that Abwehr offices existed in Hamburg, Bremen, Wilhelmshaven, Münster, Hanover, Kassel, Stuttgart and Kiel). The Abwehr shipped rare stamps to the U.S. to Matzhold for these meetings.

#### Scanning the Journals

Germania for October 1972 has an article entitled "The Sudetenland Locals/Organized Chaos" by Peter Perfect. This discusses the history behind and illustrates the commemorative postmarks and reprints of this era.

The same issue of Germania has a quote from Michel Rundschau stating that about 300,000 pieces of mail are still stored in Munich either addressed to former members of the Armed Forces or by them to relatives, none of which can be delivered. Red Cross messages are said to be included.

Der Sammler-Drant issues 22 and 23, 1972 have an article "Flugabwurfblätter gehören mit in die Sammlung" by A. Schiltze Schreppen concerning propaganda leaflets of World War II. The same issue has an interesting article on the Heydrich souvenir Sheet by the leader of the Böhmen-Mähren Study Group, which quotes results by Specialist editor George Blizil.

The Foxes Den, continued.

Issues 1 and 2, 1973, of the same magazine, contain an article by V. Indra on "Die Postverhältnisse in der Tschechoslowakei in den Befreiungstagen Mai 1945". This article, which is richly illustrated, discusses the various postwar usages of stamps, postmarks and registry labels, etc., of the protectorate.

Die Sammler Lupe for 8/1972, has an article "Nicht postalische Kriegsausgaben 1939-1945" by Bernhard Droese. Article discusses among other items the local National Socialistic Party vignettes in Denmark. Two items are illustrated. The author also warns about postwar creations, including hand-painted covers, offered at auctions.

Der Deutschland-Sammler for December 1972 has another short note on a new variety of the so-called "Krim-Päckchenmarke" Michel Feldpost No. 15. Michel describes Type I as normal and Type II which has the "n" of "Päckchen" and "Richtung" replaced by an inverted "u". The new variety has instead of the "n" of the word "Richtung" an inverted "u", while the "n" in "Päckchen" is normal. Dr. Wittmann calls this Type III and states that it appears to be the rarest type.

Der Deutschland-Sammler for February 1973 has two interesting articles. The first is by the German Channel Islands expertiser and specialist Heinz Möhle. It covers many new findings concerning the German period of occupation and is so encompassing that it is best treated by a separate review. The second article concerns an area that has been getting a lot of print in Dr. Wittmann's fine journal in recent years of which the latest article is "Kuban-Päckchenmarke ein Scwindelprodukt?". Dr. Wittmann refers to an article in an unnamed German trade journal which casts some doubt on the authenticity of these stamps. The case relies mainly on unofficial sources and the eyewitness' account of a former member of a military unit involved in the Kuban campaign. This witness states that he had never heard nor seen such a stamp, and believes that they were never issued or used. Dr. Wittmann states that such testimony is not conclusive and then states some of his personal experiences with similar items. First he personally was involved in the Ruhrkessel events in 1945 and had never seen or heard of the Ruhrkessel stamp. In another instance, his brother was in a hospital in Tunis in 1943 and was unaware of the existence of the Tunis stamp. Dr. Wittmann and his brother were ardent philatelists since they were schoolboys and would naturally have noticed such items. (The implication here, although not explicitly stated is that both of these items are considered authentic without question).

Dr. Wittmann's editorial comment then leads into an article by Erich Sauer "Amtliche Unterlagen zur Kuban-Päckchenmarke", which is the results of research into official records. Herr Sauer's note quotes official documents ordering a rationing of the privilege to send packages home and the issuance of special "Zulassungsmarken" to help regulate this traffic. The article notes that similar official records exist for the Krim Zulassungsmarke also. Thus he states that both these issues are without doubt genuine and were legitimately used.

## The Foxes Den, continued.

The latter discussion reminds me of a discussion I had with GPSer Gerhardt Siebenbrodt at the convention in Toronto in 1971. It turned out that he was a member of the Afrika Korps in WWII, and he also stated that he had never seen the so-called "Palmenstempel" letters while he was there and questioned if they really ever existed.

(Editor's note:) The "Palmenstempel" letters from Tunis during WWII, are the subject of serious discussion among German philatelists now, and as far I can determine questions were being raised about them being genuine since the end of the war. The Verein für Briefmarkenkunde von 1885 e.V. Mainz, had two forged "Afrika Korps Palmenstempelbriefe" illustrated in the Bundesnachrichten of the Bund Deutscher Philatelisten Nr. 77, July 1, 1967. I wish that I had had a copy of this publication in 1970, when I bought a "Palmenstempelbriefe" from a very reputable stamp dealer, complete with expertisers certificate and photo and signed by Volz, who was considered THE last word on these covers. In the April-July issue of the 1971 TRSG Bulletin series, I used the Palm Tree Hand-stamp from my cover as illustration number 38, in the "German Military Mail Cancellations 1937-1945" section, page 12. THIS IS A FORGERY. The entire cover is a fake. The provisional double ring-bridge cancellation never existed, and many of the covers are cancelled after the Africa campaign. I am working right now on an article which will illustrate all of the known Palm Tree type hand-stamps used, and hope to have an up-to-date list of all those which are known to be forged. In the meantime, BEWARE! Before you purchase a "Palmenstempelbriefe" send it to the GPS Expertising Service, it may be one of the best investments you could make.).

The February 1973 War Cover Bulletin has a note by Norman Grienzer showing a U.S. APO #658 from World War II with a German Dienstsiegel for Feldpost No. 28 383C. According to the note, the sender was a U.S. Major assigned to the British Army during the Normandy invasion. Near the French town of Falaise he came across the remains of a Hungarian horse-drawn outfit and also came across the postal wagon. Being an ardent philatelist he "liberated" all postal cancels and other unspecified items. One of these cancels found their use on some of his own mail, causing a visit from the FBI according to the article. (According to my records this unit was assigned to the 10 SS Panzer Division in this period which did get rather beat up in Normandy. However, I can find no records of this Division having Hungarian units).

Auction Results

Karl Pfankuch's 81st auction in November 1972, in Braunschweig, had 2 St. Nazaire "Funkkarten" estimated at DM350, realized DM660 (not including 15% surcharge). Several Auschwitz Concentration Camp covers from 1941-43 with various markings, estimated DM100-120, went unsold, as did many covers from Dachau, Gusen, Sachsenhausen, etc., all in same price range.

Roger Koerber, Detroit, Dec. 2, 1972 auction, a 24 cover collection of III Reich Feldpost issues for warships; estimated \$100-150, realized \$48.00. "Göring" behind-the-screen sheet, unrecognized issue, estimated

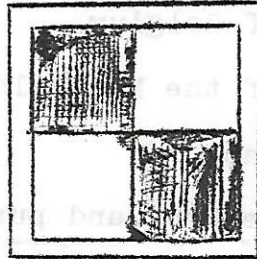
## The Foxes Den, continued.

\$150-200, realized \$85.00. American Propaganda Forgery, Michel Bc, sheetlet of 4, similar to 646, Michel 1000DM, Realized \$170. German Propaganda Issue George VI Forgery, mixed used & mint, 6 values, Michel Ec 3-8, Realized \$34.00. Two covers from Germany to Shanghai 1940-41 via Moscow, stated to be uncommon, realized \$10. It is my opinion that this realization is overvalued. 25 POW covers and cards including 4 US 9 British, 1 Russian, 1 Luxemburg, 4 Dutch and 5 Belgian est. \$75-100, realized \$33. A similar lot of 31 covers described as from POW's including French, FM, free, etc., est. at \$100-150, realized \$31. I was successful on one of these bids and was very pleased with the results which included some sleepers like ILAG covers. Bohemia 1-19 on a philatelic cover, obviously realized \$14.00. A registered Dienstpost cover with 2 cachets with Dienstpost Prerau cancel, franked with Scott B231 and 236, most likely philatelic, realized \$15. Another registered Dienstpost cover with 4 undescribed stamps with a Behördenstelle marking also realized \$15. Several Guernsey bisects were offered with the following results: Guernsey #I-\$15., #II cancelled St. Peterport \$8., Guernsey roller cancels and circular date stamps also realized \$8. Mi. #1 on First Day Cover, Guernsey postmark, realized \$9. A similar item canceled Sark, \$11. Two lots with mixed German and Iceland stamps to Hamburg and thus probably "Karl Hennig mache" est. \$30, did not sell.

The Azad Hind issue 15 different values, including perf. and imperf. realized \$13.50. Jersey 1-2 on two F.D.C.'s did not sell. Jersey 3-8 mixed with German stamps and tied by Feldpost circular cancels, said to be "scarce" realized \$60. (These are listed in Michel as mache!). Kurland Michel 4b tied by Wurwer (Varel) über Windau postmark 30.4.45 on small cover Mi. est. \$11 plus, realized \$15. A collection of 45 different parcel cards from occupied Poland to labor POWs in Berlin, with various markings, est. \$200-250, realized \$80. Several concentration camp items were also sold including Auschwitz printed card used in 1942 \$40., Dachau printed envelope from 1941 \$35, Dachau letter sheet 1943, \$37., Sachsenhausen letter sheet 1943 \$32. A set of Warsaw Ghetto essays with authenticating letter from Wallner realized \$115.

In the Shanlon Philatelic Agency of London's 90th sale of Jan 13, 1973, several unusual Feldpost cancels on cover were offered. A 1940 stampless Feldpost cover from MAA 513 (Clement 527b, Petersen 17b, 80 points) realized \$12; (all prices converted from Pounds at 1 equals \$2.40); a 1941 cover with Postsammelstelle Wien Cancel, (Clement #535, Petersen #25-32, to 100 points) realized \$10.80. A registered Feldpost cover with Kenn 200 posted from Camp Beverloo in Belgium realized \$3. A 1942 censored Feldpost cover from L12 281, LgPA Brüssel, realized \$1.80. A 1944 stampless Feldpost cover from Aschaffenburg to LgPA Paris, and re-directed to LgPA Hamburg I, captured by U.S. Army with certificate from US Army Major "stating facts", est. \$6., realized \$8.16. The Postal Covers mail sale from Feb. 9, 1973 saw an interesting cover from the German occupation of Greece censored Mytilene with 2 strikes, Riemer #3, Lp, Est. \$10, realized \$11. (Item incorrectly described as censored Mycene in auction catalog). That's all for this time. \* \* \* \* \* (Ed. note: Mr. Fox submitted the preceding copy of "The Foxes Den" to me in March 1973. There is valuable and interesting information contained herein, and you can compare some of the pricing of 1972-73 with current auction results. Sorry for the delay Myron, but this kind of copy makes for good reading anytime; many thanks). \* \* \* \* \*

GERMAN FIELD POST OPERATIONS  
IN THE WEST  
1940 - 1944



**O. B. WEST**

by JOHN W. PAINTER

GERMAN FIELD POST OPERATIONS IN THE WEST

INTRODUCTION

The campaigns in the west were planned with little political forethought. No attempt was made to determine how occupied areas were to be administered in the case of victory. Decisions had to be made as to whether the area was to have a military or civilian type government. Under these conditions a high degree of improvisation became necessary for the occupation of the western territories.

Belgium and France were put under direct military control while in Denmark the government was run by the Danes themselves, with only the German military forces under the control of a military commander. In Norway and the Netherlands authority passed into the hands of a Reichskommissar who answered directly to Hitler. Certain areas like Eupen and Malmedy were annexed to the Reich, while others, like Luxemburg, although not formally annexed, were administered as part of Germany.

Although Norway and Denmark are technically considered in the west, their activities are covered separately in the chapter "German Field Post Operations in the North". Field post activities in the west cover operations in France, Belgium and the Netherlands. Because of the complex nature of the subject, this study is divided into the following parts:

- A. Campaign in the West (May-June 1940)
- B. Sealion and the Battle of Britain (Jul-Oct 1940)
- C. Combat Forces stationed in the West
- D. Occupation of France
- E. Occupation of Belgium
- F. Occupation of the Netherlands
- G. Southern France
- H. Invasion, breakout and pursuit

#### A. CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST (Fall Gelb)

On May 10, 1940 the German Forces began their attack in the west. Holland was quickly overrun and surrendered in 5 days. The Wehrmacht, concentrating their armored forces in the center, penetrated the allied front at Sedan and within 10 days had marched through the rear of the British and the French to the channel. The resulting entrapment of the allied armies in the north forced the Belgians out of the war and caused the British withdrawal at Dunkirk. By the end of May the first phase of the campaign was completed.

The second phase of the campaign, known as Fall Rot (Case Red) began on June 5, 1940 after several days of regrouping by the German armies. The objective was to break up the remaining French armies. After some initial resistance, the German Army, led by the Panzer divisions, penetrated deep into France. Paris fell on the 14th after being declared an open city. On the 17th Petain was asked to form a new government and immediately asked for an armistice, which was signed on the 22nd of June in the forest at Compiègne in the same railroad car in which the 1918 armistice was signed.

In spite of the over 2 million men involved in this campaign, field post letters, both official and personal, from this period are scarce because the rapid movement of the various armies left little time for retaining and filing letters. At the start of the campaign a postal embargo (postsperr) was employed to prevent any news of the operation from leaking out. The success of the campaign depended upon the panzer forces getting through the Ardennes unopposed.

During this campaign the Germans marshalled 3 army groups, 9 armies, 39 corps and 140 divisions of which 14 were either motorized or armored. An additional 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  divisions were provided by the Waffen SS which came under the tactical control of the army while in combat yet retained their own administrative services and supply.



The strength of the field army had risen from 2.76 million to 3.3 million in the 8 months since the start of the war. The number of divisional formations rose from 103 to 156 during this same period.

The field post offices (along with the kenn number where known) of these German forces involved in the campaign are listed below.

FIELD POST OFFICES OF THE GERMAN COMBAT FORCES  
ENGAGED IN THE FRENCH CAMPAIGN  
MAY-JUNE 1940

(Kenn numbers shown in parentheses represent numbers known to have been used for that unit later in the war. Experience has shown that most such numbers were used by the same field post office throughout the war).

|                         |               |                          |              |         |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Oberkommando des Heeres | OKH           | FpA 631                  | FpNr. 13 728 | K-144   |
| Army Group 'A'          | v Rundstedt   | Stabsfeldpostamt FpA 616 | FpNr. 09 647 | K-105   |
| Army Group 'B'          | v Bock        | Stabsfeldpostamt FpA 621 | FpNr. 04 085 | (K-448) |
| Army Group 'C'          | Ritter v Leeb | Stabsfeldpostamt FpA 605 | FpNr. 36 385 | (K-585) |
|                         |               | FpA 607                  | FpNr. 36 796 | (K-292) |

Other field post offices known to have been in the area but have not been identified with any specific Army Group or Army.

|         |        |         |
|---------|--------|---------|
| FpA 602 | 15 267 | (K-112) |
| 608     | 17 507 | (K-601) |
| 614     | 18 254 | (K-711) |
| 615     | 07 018 | (K-978) |

ARMIES

|                     |                                  |                 |        |       |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|--------|-------|
| Armeeoberkommando 1 | Armeefeldpostmeister Dr. Winter  |                 |        |       |
| APM 590             | 11 400                           | FpA 590         | 10 219 | K-549 |
| ABSt 590            | 24 450                           | K-443 FpA 591   | 16 838 | K-761 |
| FpLst 597           | 29 271                           | (K-474) FpA 592 | 08 754 | K-298 |
|                     |                                  | FpA 593         | 16 839 |       |
| Armeeoberkommando 2 | Armeefeldpostmeister Hochmueller |                 |        |       |
| APM                 | 14 400                           | FpA 501         | 09 011 | K-271 |
| ABSt 602            | 33 317                           | K-307 FpA 506   | 07 109 | K-727 |
| FpLst               |                                  | FpA G171        | 28 818 | K-323 |
|                     |                                  | FpA Lw154       | 04 444 | K-413 |

Armeeoberkommando 4

|       |     |        |         |         |        |         |
|-------|-----|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| APM   |     | 09 980 |         | FpA 570 | 28 617 |         |
| ABSt  | 503 | 38 841 | (K-387) | FpA 571 | 26 891 | (K-615) |
| FpLSt | 577 | 07 475 | (K-776) | FpA 573 | 13 518 | (K-614) |

Armeeoberkommando 6 Armeefeldpostmeister Zschiesche

|       |     |        |       |         |        |         |
|-------|-----|--------|-------|---------|--------|---------|
| APM   |     | 09 600 |       | FpA 540 | 17 816 | (K-376) |
| ABSt  | 540 | 26 151 | K-173 | FpA 541 | 11 735 | (K-499) |
| FpLSt | 547 | 03 784 | K-227 | FpA 542 | 04 475 | K-611   |
|       |     |        |       | FpA 543 | 12 676 | (K-347) |

Armeeoberkommando 7

|       |     |        |       |         |        |       |
|-------|-----|--------|-------|---------|--------|-------|
| APM   | 7   | 24 500 | K-527 | FpA 551 | 18 947 | K-696 |
| ABSt  | 550 | 00 805 | K-311 | FpA 552 | 00 690 | K-942 |
| FpLSt | 557 | 15 800 | K-618 | FpA 553 | 06 167 | K-307 |
|       |     |        |       | FpA 55  | 16 361 | K-368 |

Armeeoberkommando 12

|       |     |        |       |         |        |         |
|-------|-----|--------|-------|---------|--------|---------|
| APM   | 12  | 21 800 |       | FpA 560 | 14 078 | (K-170) |
| ABSt  | 560 | 20 952 | K-500 | FpA 561 | 09 366 |         |
| FpLSt | 567 | 08 616 | K-484 | FpA 562 | 17 897 | (K-439) |
|       |     |        |       | FpA 563 | 12 388 | K-235   |

Armeeoberkommando 16

|       |     |        |  |         |        |         |
|-------|-----|--------|--|---------|--------|---------|
| APM   | 16  | 22 400 |  | FpA 510 | 30 246 | K-978   |
| ABSt  | 538 | 11 729 |  | FpA 512 | 32 726 | (K-748) |
| FpLSt | 601 | 21 321 |  | FpA 516 | 33 795 | K-661   |
|       |     |        |  | FpA 520 | 31 397 | K-814)  |

Armeeoberkommando 18

|       |     |        |       |         |        |         |
|-------|-----|--------|-------|---------|--------|---------|
| APM   | 18  | 13 700 |       | FpA 580 | 22 930 | (K-935) |
| ABSt  | 580 | 00 805 | K-311 | FpA 581 | 23 329 | (K-423) |
| FpLSt | 587 | 20 495 | K-320 | FpA 582 | 10 817 | K-668   |
|       |     |        |       | FpA 583 | 02 257 | -       |

Armeeoberkommando 9

(Formed 15 May 1940 from the staff of OBER OST KOMMANDO)

|       |     |        |       |         |        |       |
|-------|-----|--------|-------|---------|--------|-------|
| APM   |     | 13 000 |       | FpA 432 | 09 238 | -     |
| ABSt  | 530 | 36 392 | K-589 | FpA 532 | 26 706 | K-557 |
| FpLSt | 537 | 19 929 | K-566 | FpA 533 | 03 320 | K-554 |
|       |     |        |       | FpA 530 | 22 862 | -     |

GERMAN ARMY CORPS INVOLVED IN THE FRENCH CAMPAIGN (MAY-JUNE 1940)

Showing Feldpost Offices assigned to each Corps along with the Feldpost number and Kenn number. Those Kenn numbers shown in parentheses represent the number used for these units later in the war; however, experience has shown that most such numbers remained unchanged for most of the war period.

| Corps  | FpA | FpNr   | Kenn Nr | Corps    | FpA | FpNr   | Kenn Nr |
|--------|-----|--------|---------|----------|-----|--------|---------|
| I      | 421 | 03 956 | K-789   | XXII     | 422 | 02 266 | K-401   |
| II     | 402 | 29 344 | (K-999) | XXIII    | 308 | 34 107 |         |
| III    | 403 | 25 239 | K-101   | XXIV     | 311 | 19 539 | (K-773) |
| IV     | 404 | 26 873 |         | XXV      | 307 | 25 149 | (K-530) |
| V      | 405 | 26 905 | K-618   | XXVI     | 426 | 34 908 | (K-605) |
| VI     | 406 | 15 462 | (K-953) | XXVII    | 427 | 21 979 | (K-600) |
| VII    | 407 | 18 052 | (K-189) | XXVIII   | 428 | 06 350 |         |
| VIII   | 408 | 19 730 |         | XXIX     | 429 | 03 429 | K-794   |
| IX     | 409 | 26 903 | K-503   | XXX      | 430 | 07 972 |         |
| X      | 410 | 18 458 | (K-987) | XXXII    | 432 | 09 238 | (K-169) |
| XI     | 411 | 14 907 |         | XXXIII   | 433 | 02 156 | K-247   |
| XII    | 412 | 12 082 | K-801   | XXXVI    | 436 | 28 925 | (K-854) |
| XIII   | 413 | 06 341 | (K-557) | XXXVII   | 337 | 28 793 | K-140   |
| XIV m. | 414 | 15 709 | K-542   | XXXVIII. | 438 | 28 897 | K-247   |
| XV m.  | 415 | 27 659 | K-365   | XXXIX m. | 439 | 26 613 | K-119   |
| XVI m. | 473 |        |         | XL       | 440 | 30 177 | (K-396) |
| XVII   | 417 | 27 612 | K-758   | XLI m.   | 441 | 08 315 | K-953   |
| XVIII  | 418 | 32 057 | K-759   | XLII     | 442 | 15 682 | (K-462) |
| XIX m. | 419 | 12 541 | (K-845) | XLIII    | 443 | 28 900 | (K-586) |
|        |     |        |         | XLIV     | 444 | 32 253 |         |

## FIELD POST OPERATIONS DURING THE CAMPAIGN

The rapid movement of the field forces during the French Campaign can be observed in the after action report of the Armeefeldpostmeister of the 4th Army. In the march across Belgium and France the Army Postal Station (Armeebriefstelle-ABSt) moved 9 times between May 10, and August 3, 1940. The locations of the ABSt during this period are as follows:

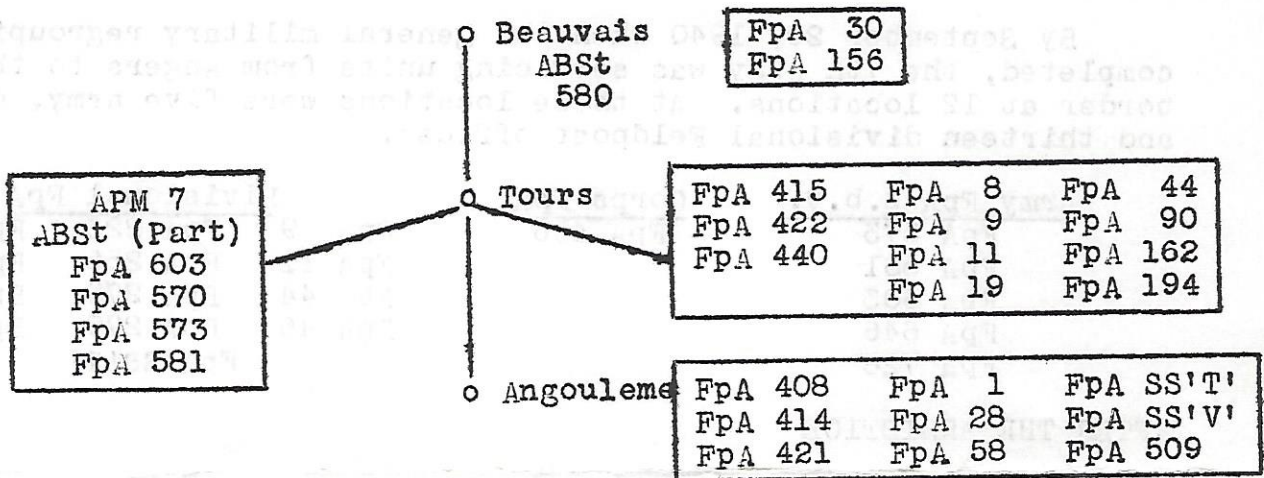
|  |   |
|--|---|
| 13-15 May, St. Vith, Belgium           |   |
| 17-22 May, Ciney, Belgium              | 13-18 June, Gournay en Bray,<br>France    |
| 23-25 May, Liory,                      |   |
| 26 May-6 June, Cambrai,<br>France      | 19-24 June, Evreux, France                |
|  | 2 June-6 July, Chateau Gantier,<br>France |
| 7-12 June, Avesnes le Comte,<br>France | 7 July-3 August, Angers, France           |

Two of the Feldpost offices attached to this army (Fpa 583, 618) were used to provide mail services to army and corps troops. The remaining two Feldpost offices (Fpa 580, 582) were used to set up and staff letter collection offices along the line of march.

In early May, 1940, the Army Field Postmaster (APM) of the 4th Army reported that he was receiving 1,200 to 1,400 sacks of Feldpost mail daily from front line troops attached to his army and was processing another 2,300 sacks of mail daily from the Reichspost in Germany. By the end of May the APM reported that his outgoing mail volume had jumped to 1,800 sacks per day which required 5 to 6 rail-way cars.

A report of the APM of the 7th Army illustrates how mail was routed to combat forces in the field. During the French campaign, this army, which had remained stationary in May, attacked the French troops in the Maginot Line during the middle of June and broke through into the province of Alsace. Their advance carried them deep into the Vosges mountains. After the armistice the Army staff and some of its troops moved to the Bordeaux area on the Atlantic coast to prevent the British from returning to the continent.

During May and June, mail for this army was routed through Baden-Baden. After the advance into France it went via Strasbourg from which point it was picked up by vehicles of the various Feldpost offices. After the armistice the Feldpostleitstelle 587 was moved to Duisburg where it began receiving mail from the Reichspost designated Duisburg A. This took effect on July 3, 1940. From Duisburg, the mail was routed via express train to Brussels and then to Beauvais where the Army (letter or post) Office (Armee Briefstelle) was operating. At this location all mail destined for the 7th Army was unloaded and sorted by the post office into bundles by the 5-digit Feldpost number. On July 3, this army reported that it was servicing about 1,500 Feldpost numbers, but was sending mail to only 26 Kenn numbers at 4 different locations. The following chart explains the function of the Kenn number. The Kenn (code) number hid the identity of the receiving unit, yet could be easily identified to permit the rapid sorting of mail sacks.



Each mail sack was tagged with an appropriate flag (Fahne für Briefbeutel) that indicated the Kenn number of the unit involved. Illustrated below is a flag from the PSST (Postsammelstelle) in Duisburg to K-396 for the FpA 440 of the XL Corps.



By August 4, the 7th Army was headquartered in Bordeaux and its Feldpostleitstelle (587 K-320) had moved to Colgne. Mail for the unit was now identified as KÖLN-DEUTZ B where it was loaded aboard an express train for direct shipment to Bordeaux. At that point the Army post office further sorted the mail into sacks for distribution to the five divisional Feldpost offices, the one corps and seven army Feldpost offices at ten different locations.

By September 20, 1940 when the general military regrouping was completed, the 7th Army was servicing units from Angers to the Spanish border at 12 locations. At these locations were five army, one corps and thirteen divisional Feldpost offices.

| <u>Army FpA z.b.V.</u> | <u>Corps FpA</u> | <u>Divisional FpA</u> |           |         |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| FpA 573                | FpA 406          | FpA 9                 | FpA 223   | FpA 263 |
| FpA 581                |                  | FpA 11                | FpA 255   | FpA 294 |
| FpA 603                |                  | FpA 44                | FpA 278   | FpA 309 |
| FpA 646                |                  | FpA 46                | FpA 279   | FpA 399 |
| FpA 726                |                  |                       | FpA SS'T' |         |

#### AFTER THE ARMISTICE

Immediately after the armistice there was a complete rearrangement of the German Occupation Administration in France. The two northern departments, which until then were semi-autonomous, were put under the control of the Military Commander in Belgium located in Brussels. France was put under the control of the Chief of Military Administration located in Paris. From the outset the situation was complicated by the overlapping lines of authority in the German occupation machinery.

The occupation staff for Occupied France was composed of a headquarters command (Militärbefehlshaber FRANKREICH) and an administrative staff similar to that found in every Germany Army Group. This staff, which was known originally as Oberquartiermeister PARIS and later as Oberquartiermeister FRANKREICH, had sections dealing with every phase of the occupation; such as economic exploitation, police administration and troop billeting. One of these sections dealt with the administration of the stationary Feldpost network that would be needed when the combat elements moved out.

The new staff, which had originally been part of Oberquartiermeister BRÜSSEL, became operational on June 26, 1940 and was responsible for the military security and the administration of the territory under its control. Subordinate commands, which following regular German practice would normally be called Oberfeldkommando, were known as Military Administrative Districts. Initially there were five districts, but after the reorganization of 1942, this number reduced to three. They were:

- Gross Paris                      Later merged into the Northwest District
- "A" later renamed      Northwest (13 departments)
- "B" later renamed      Southwest (12 departments)
- "C" later renamed      Northeast (18 departments)
- "Bord" (Bordeaux Area) Later merged into the Southwest District

\* \* \* \* \*

To follow: Part B. Sealion and the Battle of Britain (Jul-Oct 1940).