



THIRD REICH STUDY GROUP BULLETIN

APRIL, 2017 VOLUME LI, NUMBER 2 (#203)

INSIDE:

- The Thomas Cook Affair
- The Ostland
- Forgeries of The Ostland
- Photographic Journeys of the Stamps of the Baltic States
- Trivia!
- And.... Look Inside! Your help is needed

THIRD REICH STUDY GROUP BULLETIN

APRIL, 2017

The Thomas Cook Affair

1: 8000000

Learn about the Thomas Cook Affair, and see some of the finest examples anywhere in the world.

The Ostland

Find out what the Ostland is, and learn about its difficult journey through World War II.

Forgeries from the Ostland

From the German Philatelic Society, see some of the most detailed information available on Ostland Forgeries

Help!

Readers have questions to which I don't have the answer. Look and see if you can be the one to save the day.

Trivia

It doesn't all have to be serious!

WELCOME!

A new and different
study group *Bulletin!*

While certainly a change
from before, it is our

hope that you like the

changes. Nevertheless,

if you have ideas on how

to make this publication

even better, just drop an

e-mail to

ctkolker@mail.com or

write to Christopher

Kolker, 25 Parkwoods

Drive, Norwich, CT

06360

Articles! Articles!

Articles! Send your

articles to the above

address. Long or short,

detailed or general, all

will be used!

Third Reich Study Group Bulletin – April 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITOR'S LETTER 3

THE THOMAS COOK AFFAIR 4

THE OSTLAND	20
FORGERIES OF THE OSTLAND	26
A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY OF ESTONIA	40
A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY OF LATVIA	45
A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY OF LITHUANIA	50
HELP	54
TRIVIA	56

Editor's Notes

To Our Valued Members:

As you know, this is the first issue of the TRSG Bulletin. You may have noted that this issue is a bit different than the last one. For some that might be a good thing, but I understand that for others, this issue may not be what you wanted.

Either scenario is fine with me. This format, from the font to the watermark, to the course content is not etched in stone. Therefore, if you like something, e-mail or write me and let me know what it is you like. If there is something you really don't like, please e-mail or write me that as well. I need to know what doesn't sell as we make this transition to a new generation of writing.

My sincere hope is to keep the best of what keeps this group together while providing enough innovation to keep this group going in the future. It means striking a balance between time-proven ideas and new ways of going forward.

Let's do this together. Write me with any comments, good or bad, to kolkermd@att.net or write to:

Christopher Kolker

25 Parkwoods Drive

Norwich, CT 06360

Yours,

Chris

Undercover Collectors' Corner –

Some of those WWII Thomas Cook & Son Instruction Slips

- Ed Fraser

Perhaps some of the most easily lost Undercover Mail scheme related items are the instruction slips given out by Thomas Cook. Some of these would be used when an item had to be returned by Thomas Cook because the writer needed to correct something. The rules for using their service were very specific, and were not always clear from the general instruction sheets. Additionally, the sheets were available in different languages, with some of them being made up by other organizations. As an example, instructions in Norwegian were made up by a Norwegian organization in Great Britain.

Here as Figure 1 is shown a very simple Form for a very specific instruction – how to use air mail service for at least part of the letter's travels into Europe.

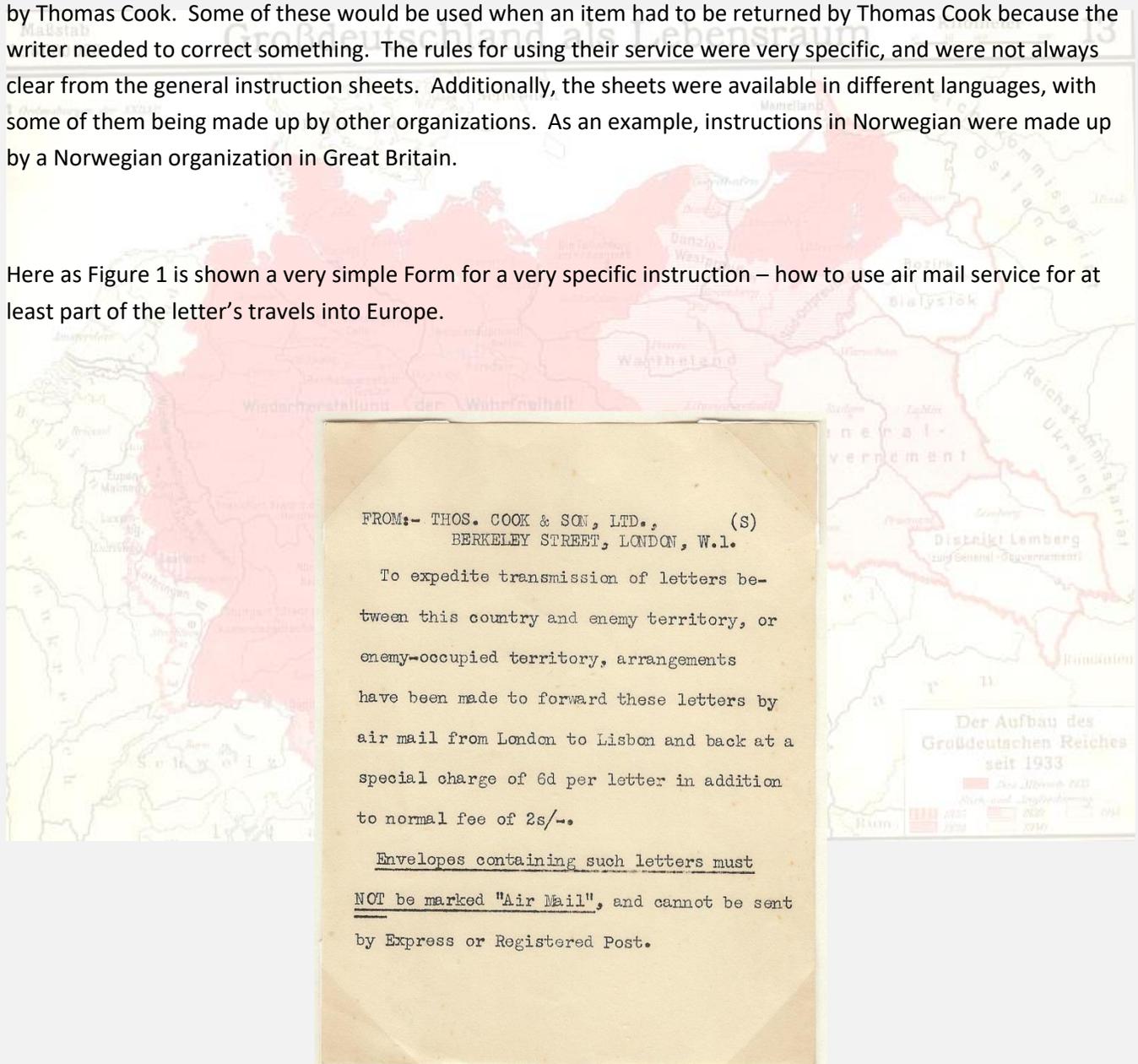
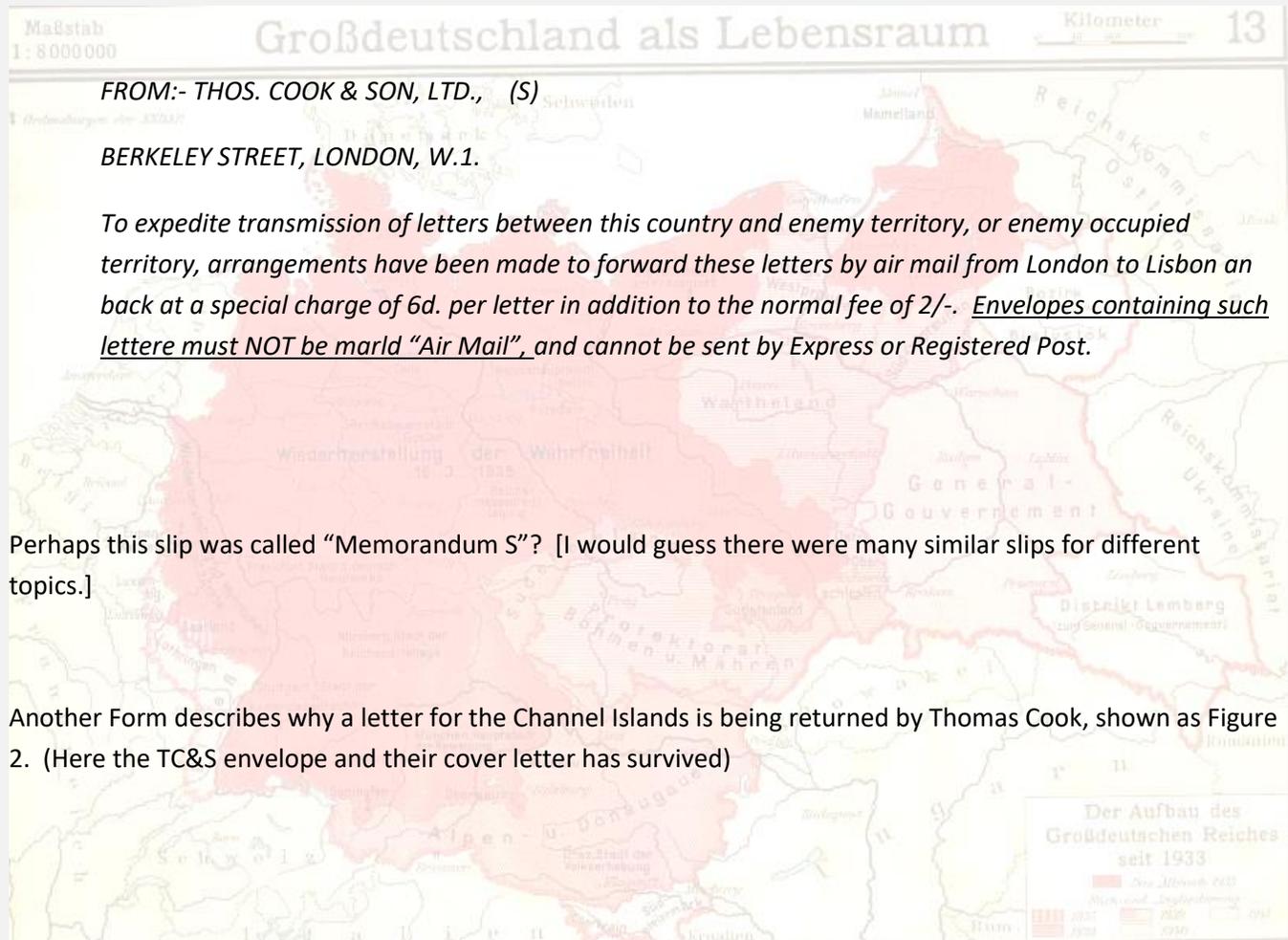


Figure 1

Slip "S"

TC&S Instruction Slip re optional Air Mail service

The actual wording reads:



Perhaps this slip was called "Memorandum S"? [I would guess there were many similar slips for different topics.]

Another Form describes why a letter for the Channel Islands is being returned by Thomas Cook, shown as Figure 2. (Here the TC&S envelope and their cover letter has survived)

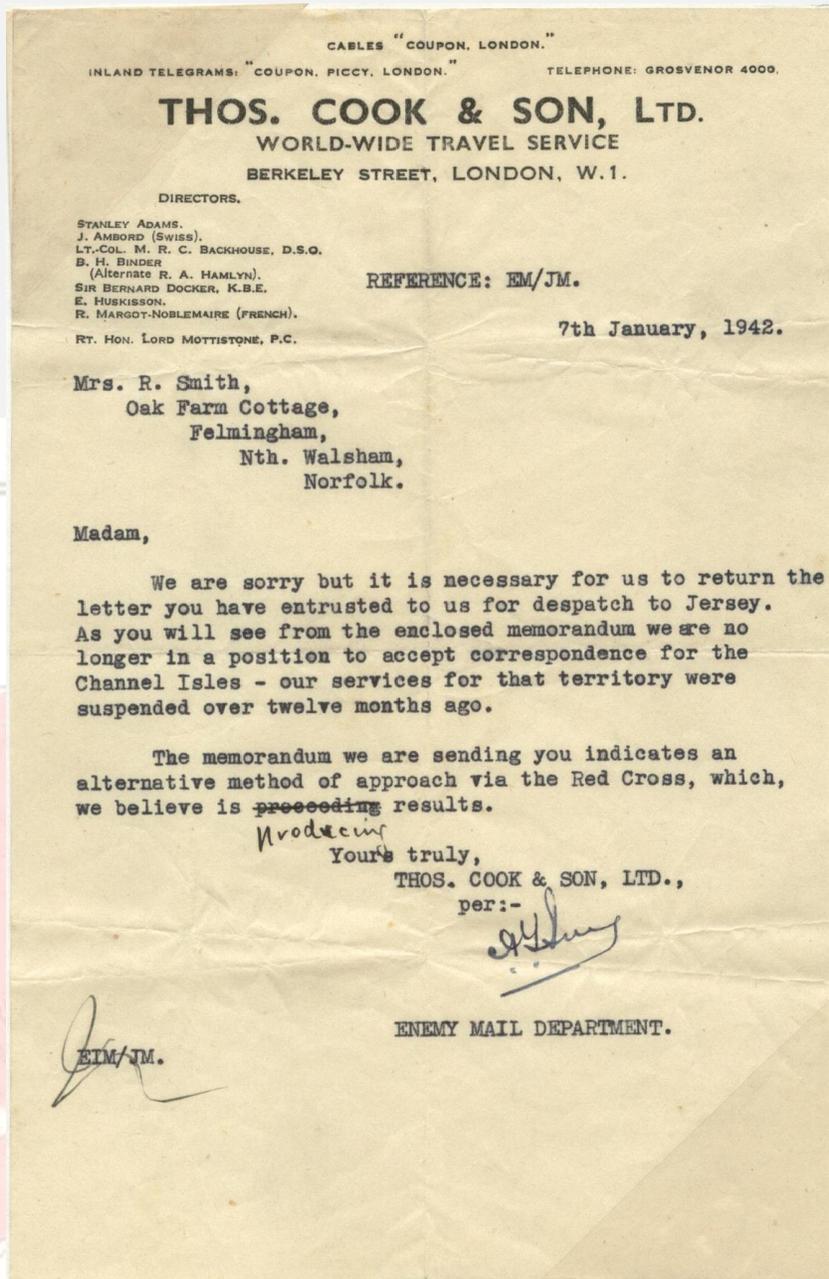


Figure 3

TC&S letter accompanying Figure 2 "Memorandum"

Looking back at some of the TC&S Instruction sheets which they distributed, and perhaps even were available at post office counters, wording and places service offered to changed fairly frequently, as could be expected.

The TC&S use of Air Mail

Form “S” in Figure 1, like wording in other Thomas Cook documents, refers to the choice of air mail both to and from Portugal for a payment of an extra 6d. I do not think this is correct. I do think Thomas Cook could easily separate letters in London into an airmail package and a sea mail package, and so mail each package perhaps daily or a few times daily depending on their quantity of such mail, onward to Portugal for re-mailing there. However, handling replies out of Europe would be another matter. Thomas Cook (Wagons Lits) in Lisbon had the task of collecting the reply mail from Box 506 and packaging it for mailing to London. Consider that the card files (apparently in London they used card files) with the British senders’ name and British address, and name and perhaps address of person letter was sent to in Nazi Europe, were big, and a major task to keep current. Also, for the security of these files as well, there is no information that any Box 506 card file information ever left TC&S London, except as shared with British Censorship (in London) on a censorship required invoice with each package. [Research question: Where are those invoices stored? I believe they are still “classified”, as is such detail involving censorship functioning apparently even from WWI. A British “50 year” Rule does not apply, I understand.] So I conclude that the extra 6d. paid for air mail service for the package to Portugal, and to be fair to those paying that 6d as advertised, ALL packages mailed from Lisbon to London were sent by Air Mail – only because Lisbon had no way to know which covers were entitled to Air Mail service and which were not.

Note that many covers did not have sender’s names on the envelope, many did not have the British addressee’s name with the Box 506 address, and many with names were in stylized handwriting that was not always very readable. Hence, many envelopes would have needed to be opened for hopefully more information – and there is no clue that happened. Letters arriving in Box 506, Lisbon (typically Nazi censored, of course) were only subsequently opened by British Censorship – in London.

Some Background on the Thomas Cook Mail Scheme

Perhaps the best overview of this scheme during WWII can be understood by reading through their Instruction Sheet forms. Here in Figures 8 to 11 are examples of these forms showing the span from Jan 1940, when the service was to begin, to later in the war – e.g. 1943. Examples of usage actually confirm quite well that these rules were generally pretty closely followed. On the other side, though, Nazi censorship did stop much of this mail, and had passed strict laws in Germany against use of such schemes to correspond with anyone in an enemy country except via the Red Cross. By 1943 most of such mail was being stopped by Nazi censorship – but not all. The reasons, and any specific directives relating to stopping or allowing any, have never been found.



Figure 4

Typical cover to Box 506, Lisbon without an addressee name.

Tunis 15 Jan 1942.



Figure 5

A small number of Portuguese covers are known, typically from Jan 1941, where a TC&S German text handstamp advises to reply to the sender care of Box 506, Lisbon. This example is to Holland.

words "Lissabon, Portugal" on the letter. Writer did sometimes use the TC&S service, but this cover cannot, as a result, be definitely confirmed as from Boc 506.,

50.000

Notes for persons wishing to communicate with friends in Enemy Countries, or a Country in the occupation of the Enemy.

Authority has now been given to permit communication with persons residing or detained in enemy territories subject to the following conditions.

1. Letters should be written in English or German **without the address of the sender**, and must contain nothing but matters of personal interest. No enclosure of the following nature is permitted—any printed matter, map, plan, sketch, drawing, print, photograph, or other descriptive or pictorial representation, or postage or revenue stamp. No reference should be made to any phase of the war. No mention may be made in such letters, of any office of Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., at home or abroad.
2. Communications must be as brief as possible in order to avoid delay in censoring.
3. Letters must be placed in an **open** unstamped envelope fully addressed to the addressee.
4. The open envelope containing the letter should be placed in an outer envelope, stamped, and posted to Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., Secretary's Department, Berkeley Street, Piccadilly, London, W.1, together with a memorandum, plainly written, containing in block characters the name and full address of the sender, and an open addressed envelope for the forwarding of a reply, should one be received from the correspondent. The Correspondent in Germany should be informed, if he wishes to send a reply, that the reply should be addressed to the sender, care of Post Box 601, Amsterdam.
5. The communication to Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., must enclose Postal Order value 2s. (stamps or International Coupons cannot be accepted), which fee will cover:—
 - (1) The postage of one envelope containing one communication to the neutral country.
 - (2) Postage from the neutral country to the enemy country.
 - (3) In case a reply is sent from the correspondent in the enemy country, the fee also includes postage from the neutral country to Messrs. Cook's Head Office in London, and from that office to the original sender of the communication, but does not include the cost of postage of the reply from the enemy country to the neutral country.
 - (4) Letters exceeding one ounce in weight will be subject to an additional charge.
 - (5) Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., undertake this transaction at the sole risk in all respects of the party requiring their services, and on the express understanding that no action will lie against them by reason of any act or default on their part or on the part of any person or agent employed by them.
6. Money cannot be sent to Germany in letters as referred to above, but it is possible to obtain permission from The Controller, Trading with the Enemy Branch, Alexandra House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2, to send money in cases where the Authorities consider such course to be warranted. Normally such permission is only granted where the recipient is a British subject or a widow of British birth. Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., can give information as to the arrangements for obtaining licences for such remittances, and for the transmission of payments if the licence is granted.
7. Communications for Prisoners of War, *i.e.*, British and Allied Naval, Military, and Air Force prisoners and Civilian internees, must not be sent under the foregoing arrangement, but forwarded in accordance with the regulations of which particulars may be obtained at any Post Office.

JANUARY, 1940. 1378/1/40 J R P

Figure 8

Early TC&S Instructions (Jan 1940) when service used Box 601, Amsterdam

Notes for persons wishing to communicate with friends in Enemy Countries, or Territory in the occupation of the Enemy.

Authority has been given to permit communication with persons in enemy territories, subject to the following conditions.

The territories included in these arrangements are: Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Danzig, Denmark, France (German-occupied), Germany, Holland, Italy and Italian Possessions, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland (German-occupied) and the Channel Islands.

1. Communications must be brief. Erasures are not permitted.
2. Letters must omit the sender's address. They may be in English or in the language of the country for which they are intended (except Czech), and must contain nothing but matters of personal interest.

(a) No reference may be made to any town, village, locality or journey in Great Britain, to any phase of the war, or to Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., or any of their offices. No enclosure of the following nature is permitted: printed matter, map, plan, sketch, drawing, print, photograph, or other pictorial representation, or postage or revenue stamp.

(b) Business letters and letters containing directions about property or money matters must not be sent to Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., but should be submitted by the sender to the Trading with the Enemy Branch of the Treasury and Board of Trade, Imperial House, Kingsway, London, W.C.

3. Each letter must be placed in an open unstamped envelope fully inscribed to the addressee, who should be asked to address any reply to *your full name*, care of Post Box 506, LISBON (*Lissabon* in the case of letters from Germany or German-occupied territory), Portugal.

4. The open envelope containing the letter should be placed in an outer stamped envelope and sent to Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., Berkeley Street, Piccadilly, London, W.1, together with a memorandum, plainly written, containing in block characters the name and full address of the sender, and an open addressed envelope for the forwarding of a reply, should one be received from the correspondent.

5. The communication to Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., must enclose Postal Order value 2s. (*stamps or International Coupons cannot be accepted*), which fee will cover the postage of one envelope containing one communication to the neutral country, and from the neutral country to the addressee, also of a reply (if any) from the neutral country to Messrs. Cook's Head Office in London, and from that office to the intended recipient. The fee does not include the cost of postage of the reply from enemy territory to the neutral country.

Letters exceeding one ounce in weight will be subject to an additional charge.

Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., undertake this transaction at the sole risk in all respects of the party requiring their services, and on the express understanding that no action will lie against them by reason of any act or default on their part or on the part of any person or agent employed by them.

6. Letters under this scheme may not cover remittances, directly or indirectly, to enemy territory, for which a licence of the Trading with the Enemy Branch (*see paragraph 2b above*) is necessary. Normally such licence is only granted where the recipient is a British subject or a widow of British birth. Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., can give information as to the arrangements for obtaining licences for such remittances, and for the transmission of payments if the licence is granted.

7. Communications for Prisoners of War, *i.e.*, British and Allied Naval, Military, and Air Force prisoners and Civilian internees, must not be sent under the foregoing arrangements, but forwarded in accordance with the regulations of which particulars may be obtained at any Post Office.

X Unless above directions are followed EXACTLY, delay and extra expense will result. These notes convey ALL information available. X

(144/8/40. J.R.P.)

Figure 9

TC&S Instructions of August 1940, when service had been changed to Box 506, Lisbon. I do not know if the reply envelope request in item 4 was used. TC&S did use yellow re-address labels instead on many incoming envelopes from Lisbon.

Renseignements à l'Usage des Personnes Désirant Communiquer avec des amis Domiciliés en pays Ennemis ou Territoires Occupés par l'Ennemi.

L'autorisation a été donnée permettant l'envoi de communications aux personnes domiciliées en territoires ennemis conformément aux conditions suivantes:

Cette autorisation comprend les territoires suivants: Belgique, Tchécoslovaquie, Danzig, Danemark, France (occupation allemande), Allemagne, Hollande, Italie et possessions italiennes, Luxembourg, Norvège, Pologne (occupation allemande) et les Iles de la Manche.

1. Les communications doivent être brèves. On ne permet pas des ratures.
2. Les lettres ne doivent pas donner l'adresse de l'expéditeur. Elles doivent être écrites soit en anglais soit dans la langue du pays de destination (sauf le tchèque) et ne doivent contenir que des renseignements personnels.

(a) Aucune allusion n'est permise à une ville, village, localité ou voyage en Grande-Bretagne, à une phase quelconque de la guerre ou à Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., ou leurs succursales. Il ne peut être inclus dans les lettres aucune annexe du genre suivant: imprimés, cartes géographiques, plans, croquis, dessins, photographies ou d'autres images ou timbres-poste ou fiscaux.

(b) Des lettres d'affaires ou des lettres donnant des instructions relatives aux biens ou aux questions d'argent ne doivent pas être remises à Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., mais devraient être soumises par l'expéditeur au Trading with the Enemy Branch of the Treasury and Board of Trade, Imperial House, Kingsway, Londres, W.C.2.

3. Chaque lettre doit être mise dans une enveloppe ouverte, non-timbrée, portant l'adresse exacte du destinataire qui doit être prié de diriger toute réponse au nom complet de l'expéditeur aux soins de la Boîte Postale 506 à Lisbonne (Lissabon en cas des lettres provenant de l'Allemagne ou des territoires sous l'occupation allemande), Portugal.

4. Cette enveloppe ouverte contenant la lettre doit être mise dans une autre enveloppe dûment timbrée et remise à Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., Berkeley Street, Piccadilly, Londres, W.1, avec une fiche donnant en lettres simples et lisibles le nom et l'adresse exacte de l'expéditeur, ainsi qu'une enveloppe dûment adressée à l'expéditeur pour la transmission de toute réponse reçue du destinataire.

5. La communication à Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., doit renfermer un mandat (Postal Order) de 2s. (timbres-poste ou coupons internationaux ne seront pas acceptés) ce qui couvre le port d'une enveloppe contenant une communication au pays neutre et ensuite au destinataire, ainsi que le port d'une réponse éventuelle du pays neutre au Siège central de Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., à Londres et ensuite à l'expéditeur. Ce paiement ne comprend pas le droit postal de la réponse du territoire ennemi au pays neutre.

Les lettres dont le poids est supérieur à 1 once (oz.) seront sujettes à surtaxe. Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., s'occupent de cette transmission aux risques et périls de ceux ayant recours à leurs services et à la condition expresse qu'aucune poursuite ne pourra être intentée contre eux sous le chef d'actes ou défauts de leur part ou de la part de toute personne de leurs services.

6. La transmission de correspondance par ce moyen ne comprend pas des remises d'argent, soit directes ou indirectes, aux territoires ennemis, pour lesquelles un permis du Trading with the Enemy Branch (voir 2b ci-dessus) est nécessaire. Ce permis n'est normalement accordé que dans le cas où le bénéficiaire est un sujet britannique ou une veuve de naissance britannique. Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., sont à même de donner tous renseignements utiles quant aux dispositions nécessaires pour l'obtention des permis pour les remises de ce genre, ainsi que pour la transmission de paiements dans le cas où un permis est accordé.

7. Les communications destinées aux prisonniers de guerre, de la marine, l'armée ou l'aviation britanniques et alliées et aux internés civils ne peuvent être transmises par le moyen des susdits arrangements mais doivent être remises conformément aux règlements spéciaux en vigueur, dont des détails peuvent être obtenus à tout bureau de Poste.

X Les indications données ci-dessus contiennent TOUS renseignements que nous avons pu obtenir et il est essentiel qu'elles soient suivies à la lettre, faute de quoi des dépenses et des délais supplémentaires s'ensuivront. **X**

(146/8/40 R. J.R.P.)

Figure 10

Virtually identical TC&S Instructions of August 1940 in French for Box 506, Lisbon.

Note German Occupied France and Channel Islands (Iles de la Manche) included, and in same order as in the English version in Figure 9.

X Unless these directions are followed EXACTLY, delay and extra expense will result. These notes convey ALL information available. **X**

Conditions under which letters may be sent to relatives or friends in Enemy Countries or Enemy-occupied Territory.

The territories included in these arrangements are: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Danzig, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France (zone left unoccupied by the enemy in 1940), Germany, Greece (Mainland), Greek Islands and Crete, Holland, Hungary, Italy and Italian Possessions not occupied by the United Nations, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Roumania and Yugoslavia.

1. Communications must be clearly written or typed on plain, unwatermarked stationery, and should not exceed two sides of a normal-sized sheet of notepaper. Only one letter may be placed in each envelope. Erasures, corrections, mutilated stationery or additions by other people are not permitted.
2. Letters and envelopes must omit the sender's address. They may be in English or in the language of the country for which they are intended. They must refer only to matters of personal interest and must NOT refer to matters relating to money, business or other property, wherever situated. (See paragraph 6.)
(a) No reference may be made to any town (other than Lisbon), village, locality, ship, journey, Censorship, Service matters, results of enemy action or any other phase of the war, or to Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., or any of their offices, or to the means by which the letter is sent. No enclosures are permitted. No indication may be given that the writer is not in Portugal.
(b) Mention of a letter or postcard received from, or written to, enemy or enemy-occupied territory is not permitted. It is suggested that the word "news" or "message" be used instead, but the date of such message must not be given. Mention of a "Red Cross Message" is not permitted.
3. Each letter must be placed in an open unstamped envelope (without watermark, brand mark or maker's name) fully inscribed to the addressee, who should be asked to address any reply to your full name, care of Post Box 506, LISBON, Portugal. Poste Restante addresses are not accepted. The use of titles or Naval, Military or Air Force rank is forbidden. The Lisbon Post Box must not be mentioned on the envelope.
4. The open envelope containing the letter should be placed in an outer stamped

envelope and sent to THOS. COOK & SON, LTD., BERKELEY STREET, PICCADILLY, LONDON, W.1, together with a memorandum, plainly written, containing in BLOCK LETTERS the name (Christian name first) and full address of the sender. A married woman should give her own as well as her husband's initials.

5. The communication to Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., must enclose Postal Order value 2s. (stamps or International Coupons cannot be accepted), which fee will cover the postage of one envelope containing one communication to the neutral country, and from the neutral country to the addressee, also of a reply (if any) from the neutral country to Messrs. Cook's Head Office in London, and from that office to the intended recipient. The fee does not include the cost of postage of the reply from enemy territory to the neutral country.

For an extra fee of 6d. each, letters can be sent by Air Mail between London and Lisbon. Envelopes must not be endorsed "Air Mail."

Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., undertake this transaction at the sole risk in all respects of the party requiring their services, and on the express understanding that no action will lie against them by reason of any act or default on their part or on the part of any person or agent employed by them.

6. Business letters and letters containing directions about property or money matters must not be sent to Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., but should be submitted by the sender to the Trading with the Enemy Department of the Treasury and Board of Trade, 24 Kingsway, London, W.C.2.
7. Communications for Prisoners of War, i.e., British and Allied Naval, Military, and Air Force prisoners and Civilian internees, cannot be sent under the foregoing arrangements. They should be posted in accordance with regulations of which particulars may be obtained at any Post Office.

Parcels cannot be dealt with under the foregoing scheme.

ON 11273/6/43 JRP

Figure 11

By June 1943 TC&S was using a smaller, two sided form. Note expanded list of countries. Note "German Occupied France" and "Channel Islands" deleted, and Vichy France added. Note the requirements in Items 3 and 4 are in new detail from earlier instruction sheets. Also, the air mail wording has been changed from the Figure 1 "memorandum"—I would say "corrected". Note especially in #3 the requirement to NOT put the Box 506 return address on the envelope.

The author collects undercover mail, but focuses on the Thomas Cook Undercover mail scheme.

Additional information greatly appreciated. Also glad to exchange scans of additional TC&S Instruction Sheets not shown. edfraser@gmail.com



Figure 12

Early Box 506 cover from Berlin Sept 1940 re-addressed at TC&S in London by adding yellow label and 2½d. British TC&S perfin franking for delivery in England. Obviously no “self-addressed envelope” used for this reply, as specified in August 1940 instructions in Item #4 (Figures 9 and 10).

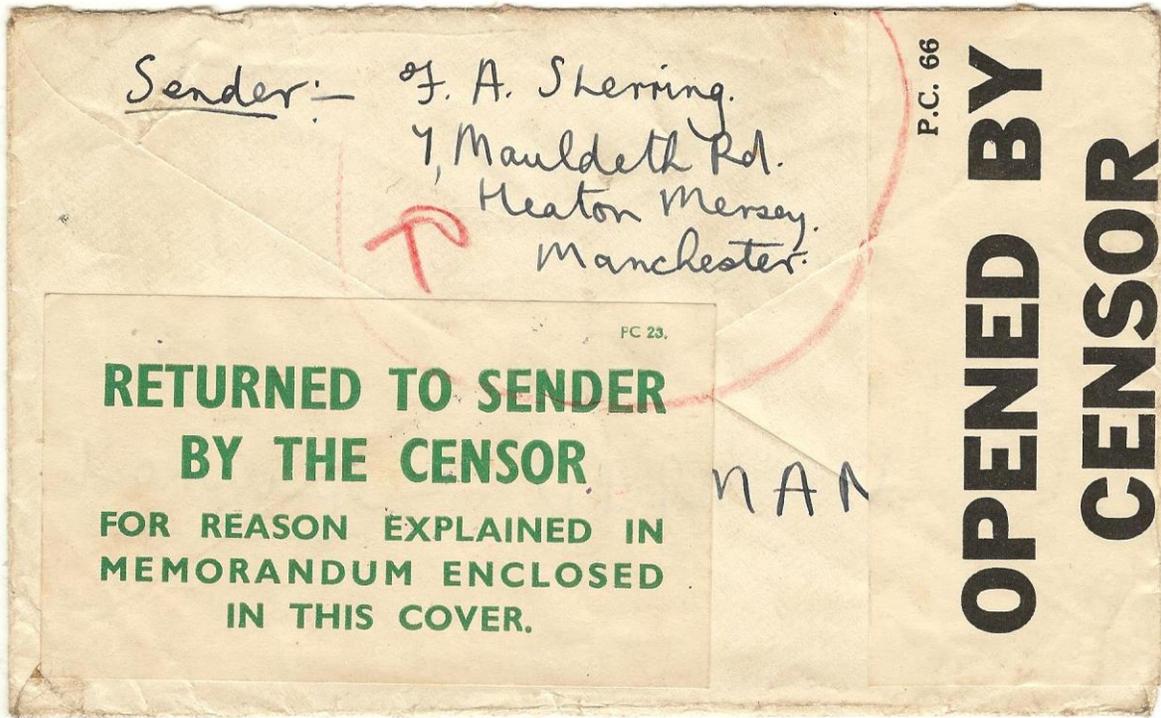
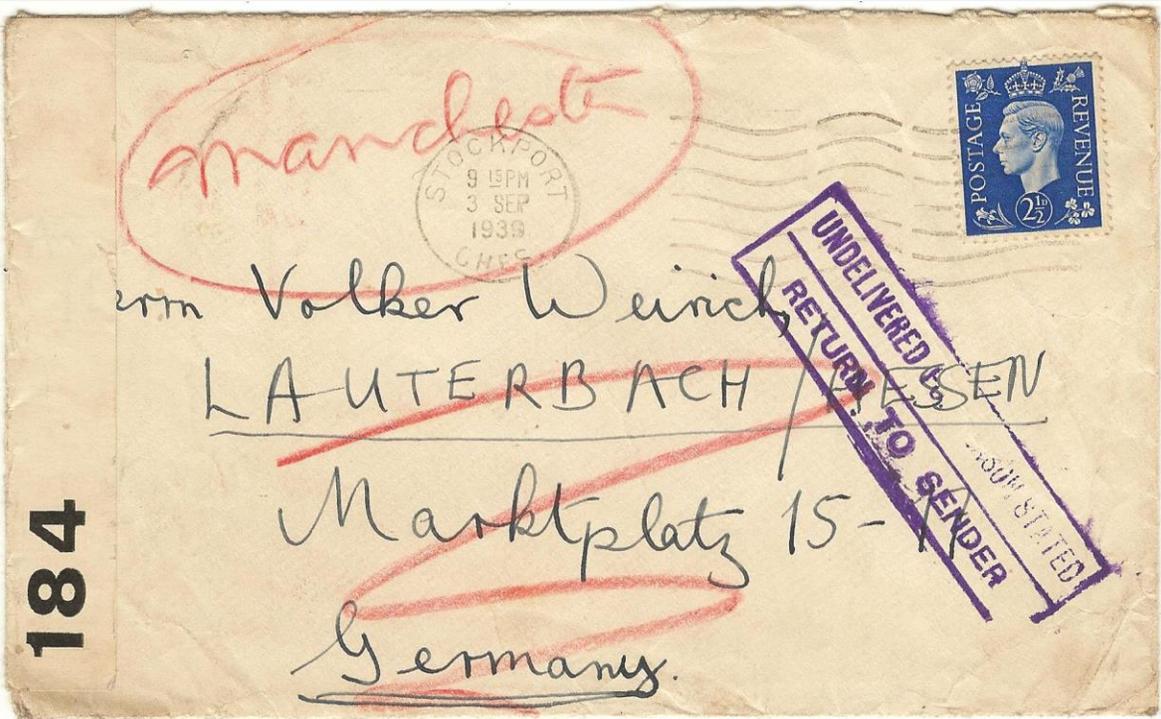
Appendix

Why Thomas Cook & Son, the International Travel Agency?

When World War II started, all mail service to places under enemy control immediately stopped. At the British Government’s request, in large part humanitarian, a method of exchanging civilian mail between family and friends in enemy territory was sought.

Thomas Cook & Son in London proposed to the British government to be allowed to offer such a forwarding service for civilian mail between England and Germany via a mail drop in Holland. Their goal was also humanitarian, but it also allowed some modest revenue generation effort to offset lost travel agency business during wartime, and would help keep some staff employed. There was precedent for this – they had offered such service during WWI. During WWI when many forwarding schemes sprang up, the British Government had become very apprehensive of such services not being under full British Government control, and thereby were difficult to effectively apply mail censorship to – and Thomas Cook agreed to fully satisfy those concerns.

Information about this service in England was widely announced in the press, and apparently information was available through post offices besides being able to write to Thomas Cook in London. Additionally, censor slips were printed for enclosure in returned mail, and incoming mail from enemy controlled places, directing to use Thomas Cook’s service or the Red Cross’s message system. The “TC&S” service was intended to be available throughout the “British World” – to their Dominions and Colonies, and areas under British protection. (Likewise, a Thomas Cook & Son “undercover mail scheme” had been offered beyond England during WWI, but examples of usage outside England have probably not been identified or reported in the philatelic press.)



PC 79

POSTAL CENSORSHIP.

Persons wishing to communicate with enemy or enemy occupied territory are informed that at the present time no letters of this nature can be forwarded.

As soon as facilities can be established for correspondence of this nature, a notice will be issued to the Press.

(393/2716) G2616 25M 9/39 H & S Ltd. Gp. 393

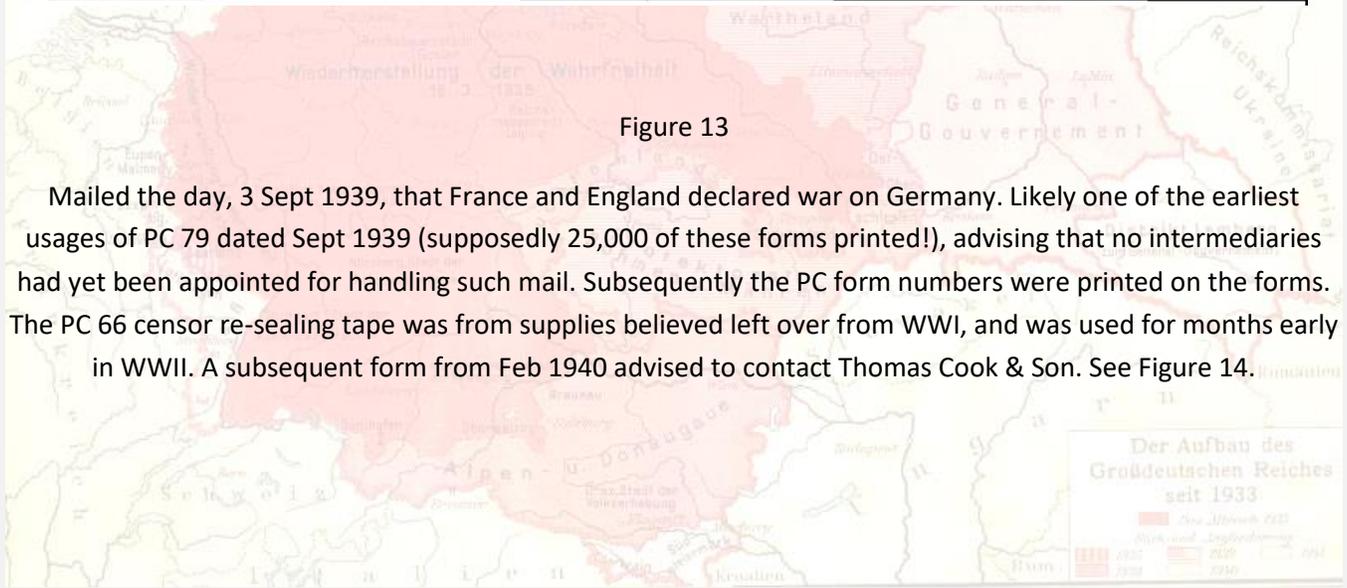
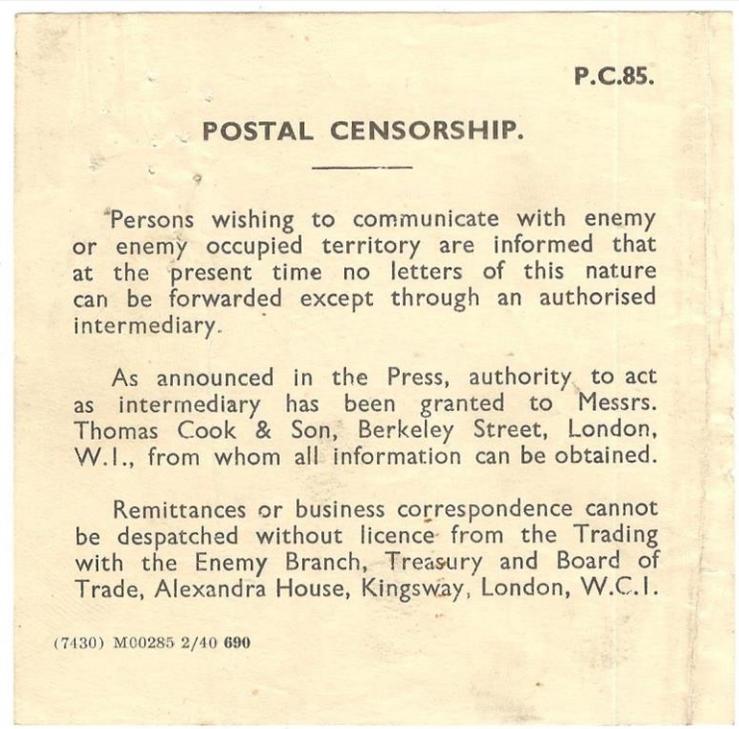


Figure 13

Mailed the day, 3 Sept 1939, that France and England declared war on Germany. Likely one of the earliest usages of PC 79 dated Sept 1939 (supposedly 25,000 of these forms printed!), advising that no intermediaries had yet been appointed for handling such mail. Subsequently the PC form numbers were printed on the forms. The PC 66 censor re-sealing tape was from supplies believed left over from WWI, and was used for months early in WWII. A subsequent form from Feb 1940 advised to contact Thomas Cook & Son. See Figure 14.



Maßstab
1: 8000000

Kilometer 13

↑ Großstädte über 100000

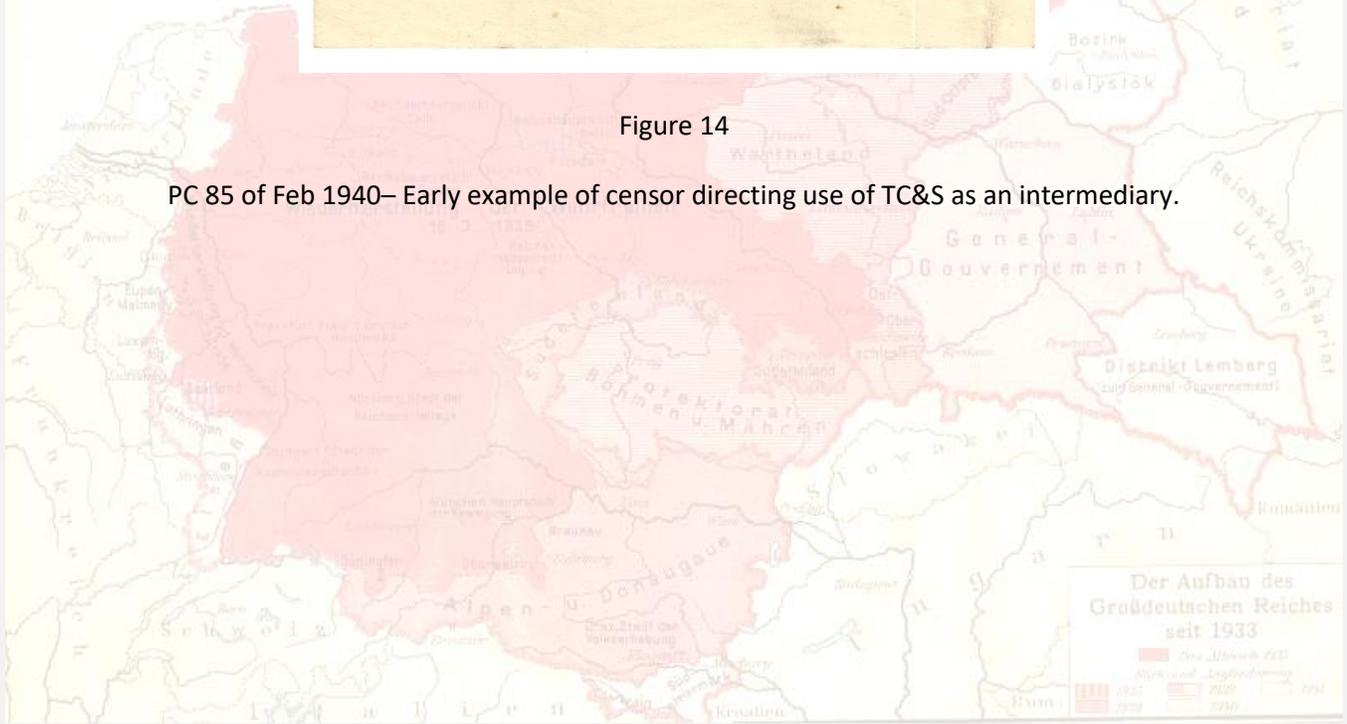


Figure 14

PC 85 of Feb 1940— Early example of censor directing use of TC&S as an intermediary.

The Ostland: Its Difficult Journey Through World War II and Its Philatelic Legacy

Hanging on by a thread. That may be the best way to describe the Baltic states in the 1930s. Situated between powerful Germany and the ever-present threat of Russia, it seems inconceivable at times these three nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania could ever maintain their independence.

But after World War I, these countries did just that. They surely had their challenges. But as long as the Soviet Union and Germany remained fairly weak, which both were after the ravages of World War I, these countries could maintain some independence. And by sticking together in a defense alliance known as the Baltic Entente that was formalized in 1922, renewed in 1934 with Lithuania finally agreeing to it (there been excluded because of hostilities that lingered with Poland,) these countries flourished and were philatelically active during the 20s and 30s.



The stamps the three countries can certainly be considered nationalistic. For instance, that of Latvia 1937 included the tomb of Col. Oskar Kalpaks, a national hero of the Latvian war of independence from 1918 to 1920, which effectively freed Latvia from Russia. Rulers General J. Balodis and Pres. Karlis Ulmanis feature prominently the

stamps 1938, along with Independence Monument. The last stamps Latvia made were simply the arms and stars, their national symbol. This was before the Russian occupation that changed their philately forever.

Lithuania likewise had stamps depicting their independence. The 1938 stamps celebrated the independent since 1918, and featured their first president Antanas Smetana was present when the Russians invaded. Their last set reveals some of the more natural artwork and depictions of everyday scenes in Lithuania. Once again, the next set were Soviet occupation stamps.

Estonia's last issues were of more ordinary scenes, including a beach hotel, a local hospital, and one of a plane. The last issues honoring prominent citizens included Estonian author Friedrich Faehlmann and Friedrich Kruetzwald.



Lithuanian prewar stamps

Suffice to say, keeping strict neutrality was key. However, in 1934 the states renewed a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union and another in 1939, ironically just before the start of World War II. Perhaps that was for the more worthless agreements in the history of the Baltic states.

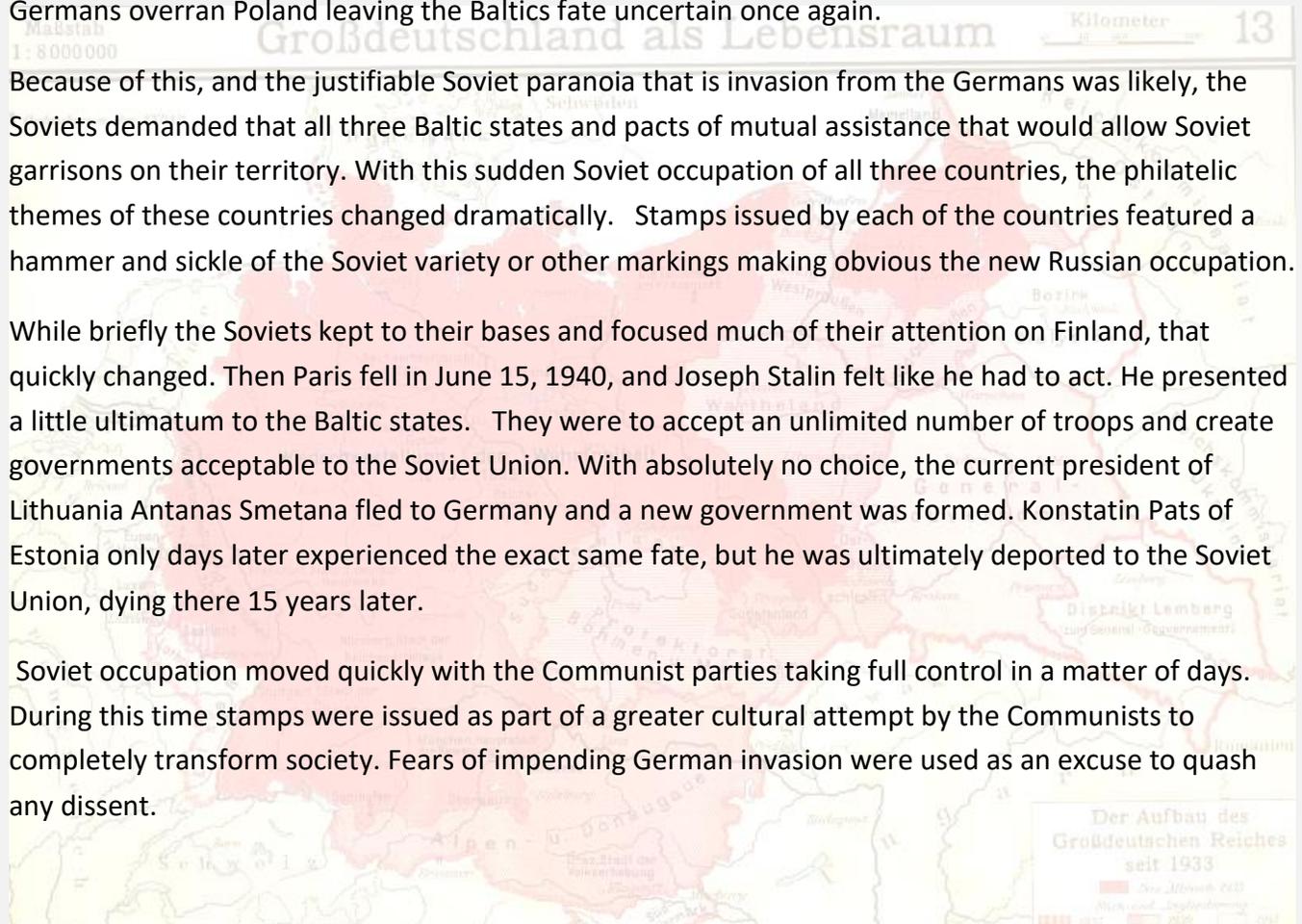
The German-Soviet nonaggression pact of August 23, 1939 voided prior agreements. Estonia and Latvia were recognized as falling within a Soviet sphere of influence. Lithuania was given to Germany. But about a month later the Germans overran Poland leaving the Baltics fate uncertain once again.

Because of this, and the justifiable Soviet paranoia that is invasion from the Germans was likely, the Soviets demanded that all three Baltic states and pacts of mutual assistance that would allow Soviet garrisons on their territory. With this sudden Soviet occupation of all three countries, the philatelic themes of these countries changed dramatically. Stamps issued by each of the countries featured a hammer and sickle of the Soviet variety or other markings making obvious the new Russian occupation.

While briefly the Soviets kept to their bases and focused much of their attention on Finland, that quickly changed. Then Paris fell in June 15, 1940, and Joseph Stalin felt like he had to act. He presented a little ultimatum to the Baltic states. They were to accept an unlimited number of troops and create governments acceptable to the Soviet Union. With absolutely no choice, the current president of Lithuania Antanas Smetana fled to Germany and a new government was formed. Konstatin Pats of Estonia only days later experienced the exact same fate, but he was ultimately deported to the Soviet Union, dying there 15 years later.

Soviet occupation moved quickly with the Communist parties taking full control in a matter of days. During this time stamps were issued as part of a greater cultural attempt by the Communists to completely transform society. Fears of impending German invasion were used as an excuse to quash any dissent.

Unfortunately, deportations also became the rule of the day with intellectuals and the educated being deported to Arctic or desert regions of the USSR. From the Baltic states alone, about 150,000 people





were deported in a year's time. Things changed again on June 22, 1941 when Germany attacked USSR.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011410-0020-10
Foto: Hausen, v. 1. August 1941



German troops entering Estonia, 1941

Because of this, it seemed at first these new, rapidly approaching German troops might be liberators. Anti-Soviet revolts occurred in all three states from those desperately hoping to be free from the Russians. Nationalists were hopeful that they could reestablish truly Baltic governments, but that quickly became understood as nothing more than a pipe dream.



Germans at the courthouse of Tallinn, Estonia

Once firmly in place, Germany turned the Baltic states and Belarus into a new territorial unit called Ostland. Once properly transformed, the Germans thought that an inevitable Ostland incorporation into the Reich proper would take place.

Politically, the Nazis established the Reichskommissariat Ostland (RKO) in 1941. This was to be the civilian occupation regime for the entire area. It encompassed Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the northeast part of Poland and the far western edge of Belarus. Nominally, the RKO was said to be held by Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, but the Reichskommissar was Hinrich Lohse, who ran the day-to-day affairs.

The exact opposite economic system the Baltics had endured with Soviet occupation was quickly set up. Instead of having a communist type of system, monopolies for the most important forms of commerce were set up in the country, obviously populated and controlled by Nazi supporters. With this said, the overall purpose of Ostland was nothing more than to extract goods, material, and people from this area for the war effort. At first, the attempt to attract volunteers for German sponsored military primary care units was

Members of the Estonian 10th Regiment, 20th Waffen



Heinrich Lohse, 1941

somewhat successful, but as the war moved on, German attempts at recruitment became downright impossible.

The stamps of Ostland were over-printed Hitler head stamps. Now popular and inexpensive collectibles, they quickly circulated after the Germans exercised control of the entire area. These stamps were part of a larger effort to control the commerce and culture of the area, as a way of politically saying who is boss.

The goal was the complete extermination of the Jewish population, as well as the Lebensraum of ethnic Germans. This meant that Germans would ultimately be settled into places to expand the Germanic influence, while other ethnic groups be forced to move out of the general area.

Another major goal was to have a German protectorate. The Baltic lands were to be joined with Belarus, later to be organized as one gigantic German protectorate prior to union would Germany. Rosenberg himself said that these lands had a fundamentally European character. After all, their history was entwined with history of Europe. With that said, the Nazis felt those of the Baltics to be seldom to be a somewhat inferior people and therefore could be moved out of the way.

The Reichskommissariat Ostland was subdivided into four general regions, and they were based on existing borders. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Belarus were each headed by the Generalkommissar. The Baltic states were further divided into districts. Territory to the west was to be part of greater Germany, while territories to the East were to be under military jurisdiction. The capital of the entire area was Riga, which is now the present-day capital of Latvia.



Administrative Districts of the Baltic States Under Germany during WWII

The administration of the Ostland after operation Barbarossa was complex. Rosenberg had little authority. The SS and the Wehrmacht managed the security and military aspects of government. Fritz Sauckel was the director of labor and a controller manpower working areas. Albert Speer and Hermann Goring. And importantly for us, the Reich Postal Service administered the eastern territories postal services.

Rosenberg's authority was further eroded when after the civil administration was set up. Initially, Lohse objected to very little power within the existing structure. He sought to administer the territories within the authority of Gauleiters, which basically was the Nazi party paramilitary rank. Ultimately accomplishing this, Lohse could work outside of direct civilian authority and through the Nazi party. He

therefore had contacts going all the way back to Adolf Hitler. Because of this, Lohse became the main power in Ostland.

Economic extraction became the rule the day. Slave labor immediately started, with some 380,000 farmworkers in 247,000 industrial workers were exported for the Baltic states to greater Germany. Extermination of Jews began at the onset. By the autumn of 1943, ghettos were liquidated.

The West was slow to catch on. In the esteemed journal, *Foreign Affairs*, October, 1943 author Joachim Joesten speculated about the tolls of occupation on the Baltic states:

Maßstab 1: 8000000 **Großdeutschland als Lebensraum** Kilometer 13

Working conditions in the Ostland the same as those in other Nazi on countries. The workday in theory is 10 hours, six days a week, but most workers are forced to put in 12 hours or more. The average pay does not exceed four marks a day, even in hazardous occupations like work and sawmills, limestone quarries and cement factories. One of the main grievances of the Baltic people against the new regime stems from discrimination in food rationing. Germans are favored at the expense of the native population. Not only do they get larger rations but they have exclusive access to special restaurants which serve cheaper and more substantial meals and those catering to the general public.

He goes on to say:

since the last days of February 1943, general mobilization has been affect throughout the Ostland, supplanting the former recruitment of volunteers for the Waffen – SS which had produced singularly meager results. Now all able-bodied men between the ages of 17 and 45 are being forcibly drafted into the SS legions, one each for Estonia via and Lithuania.

As terrible as these descriptions sound, it serves only to prove the point that the preeminent foreign-policy journal during World War II simply missed the mass executions, forcible relocations, and the most brutal aspects of the Nazi regime.

Of course, the end came for the Nazi regime, and for the Baltic states that was in 1944. By February 1944 the siege of Leningrad was over, and the Germans were on the defensive. The Soviet Baltic offensive, the Tallinn Offensive began on September 14, 1944 with 150,000 troops. In just a few days later, through operation Aster, the Germans began to withdraw.

This is not to say that suddenly everything was okay, and of course history records that it was not. The NKVD, essentially the internal Soviet security apparatus, was quickly established in the Baltics to stop

anyone from saving the country. Some refugees did escape, especially Estonians and Swedes, fleeing to Sweden or Finland before the Soviets could establish complete control.

It rapidly became obvious that the Soviets had their own agenda for each of the three Baltic states. Forced conscription quickly followed; however, only about 40% of those eligible responded to the summons. As a result, the NKVD tracked down some draft dodgers and killed about 400 to make a statement. During 1944-1945 Soviets conscripted 82,000 Lithuanians as an example.

As can be predicted, Soviet domination was the rule in each of the Baltic states from 1944 to 1991 when independence was obtained. Deportations became the order of the day for many in these three countries, as the Soviets tried to break any naturalistic pride or identity that might remain. About 124,000 Estonians, 136,000 Latvians, and 245,000 Lithuanians were deported to Siberia over the next decade.

Philatelics provides a snapshot into this history. What once was presented as a friendly occupation back in 1940, complete with Soviet stamps of the three Baltic countries, was followed by the complete absence of any philatelic independent activity of the Baltic states. Soviet stamps were to be used for the next 47 years. True to form, in 1991, when independence was achieved for the three Baltic states after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, each of the country's first stamps were simple national symbols. It seems the Baltic states can be militarily defeated, but never truly broken.

To this day, each state it produces its own stamps. Many are heroic poses of bygone heroes, espousing nationalistic pride. Philatelic provides a window into the psyche of this much-maligned but very proud area.

Editor's note: Subsequent articles in this journal take a more visual journey of the stamps involved during this time for each of these countries. While admittedly mostly stamps are still plentiful and available to this day, they provide such a powerful insight into the occupiers and peoples of the Baltic states. In this and subsequent issues we can reintroduce the history of the Ostland with readers' materials showing postcards, stamps, and related items depicting this area.



Release No. 30/May/1990

Copyright 1990 Germany Philatelic Society, Inc.

**NEPRIKLAUSOMA
LIETUVA
1941-VI-23**



German Occupation
1939 - 1945

GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LITHUANIA
Michel Nos. 1 - 9

Type I
Raseiniai
1941. VI. 23

Type I
Raseiniai
1941. VI. 23.



Fraudulent Overprints
Type II
RASEINIAI
1941. VI. 23.
RASEINIAI
1941. VI. 23.

Genuine Overprints
Type II
RASEINIAI
1941. VI. 23.



Type III
RASEINIAI
1941. VI. 23

Type III
RASEINIAI
1941. VI. 23.



German Occupations
1939 - 1945

GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LITHUANIA
Local Issue Raseiniai
Michel Nos. I - 11, Type I, II & III



GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LITHUANIA

Local Issue Rokiskis
Michel Nos. 1 - 7, a & b



Laisvas
1941-01-27
Rokiskis

German Occupations
1939 - 1945

Genuine Overprints

LAISVAS
1941 - 01 - 27
ROKISKIS.

Fraudulent Overprint

"Copyright 1990 Germany Philatelic Society, Inc."

Release No. 30/May/1990



13

GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LITHUANIA

Local Issue Telsiai
Michel Nos. 1 - 25



Laisvi
Telsiai
1941.VI.26.

Type I
"L" and "T" 2mm high



Laisvi
Telsiai
1941.VI.26.

Type II
"L" and "T" 2.5mm high



Laisvi Laisvi
Telsiai Telsiai
1941.VI.26. 1941.VI.26.

Type III
"L" and "T" 3.5mm high
Genuine Overprints

Copyright 1991 Germany Philatelic Society, Inc.

Release No. 30/Rev./July/1991



13

GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LITHUANIA

Local Issue Ukmerge
Michel Nos. 1 - 5

German Occupation
1939 - 1945

Išlaisvinta
1941 VI 24 d.
Ukmerge.



"Copyright 1990 Germany Philatelic Society, Inc."

Genuine Overprints

Islaisvinta
1941 VI 24
Ukmerge

Type II

Fraudulent Overprints

Išlaisvinta
1941 VI 24
Ukmerge

Type I

Release No. 30/May/1990



GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LITHUANIA

Local Issue Zarasai
Michel Nos. 1 - 7, a & b



German Occupation
1939 - 1945

Lietuva
1941-VI-26
Zarasai

"Copyright 1990 Germany Philatelic Society, Inc."

Genuine Overprints

Lietuva
1941-VI-26
Zarasai

Lietuva
1941-VI-26
Zarasai

Release No. 30/May/1990

Type II

Type I

Fraudulent Overprints



13

GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LITHUANIA

Overprint "Wir sind Frei"
on issue of Lithuania, Michel Nos. 268-273



German Occupation
1939-1945

**Wir sind
frei!**



This overprint was never officially applied, but produced to defraud collectors.

"Copyright 1978 Germany Philatelic Society, Inc."

Release No. 11 / March / 1978



GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LITHUANIA
 Fraudulent Festungspost Kowno Overprints



**Festungs-
 post
 Kowno**

German Occupation
 1939 - 1945



**FESTUNGS
 POST
 KOWNO**

**Festungspost
 Kowno**



Release No. 30/May/1990

© Copyright 1990 Germany Philatelic Society, Inc.

Germany, Michel Nos. 787, 788, 826, 827 and Ostland, Michel Nos. 19 and 20 with overprints "Festungspost Kowno" are fraudulent. These overprints are a private fabrication produced to defraud collectors.



13

GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LITHUANIA
Issue for southern Lithuania
Michel Nos. 10 - 16

German Occupation
1939 - 1945

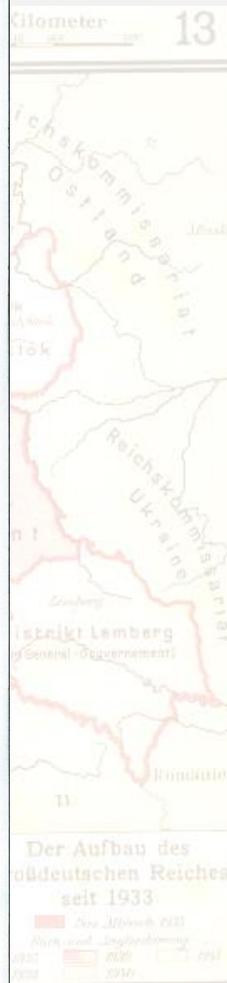


VILNIUS

Genuine Overprints

"Copyright 1990 Germany Philatelic Society, Inc."

Release No. 30/May/1990



GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LITHUANIA
Issue for southern Lithuania
Michel Nos. 17 & 18



"Copyright 1990 Germany Philatelic Society, Inc."

Release No. 30/May/1990

German Occupation
1939 - 1945

VILNIUS ←

Genuine Overprints

VILNIUS ←

Fraudulent Overprint



GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LITHUANIA
 Local Issue Ponewesch
 Michel Nos. 1 - 9



"Copyright 1990 Germany Philatelic Society, Inc."

German Occupation
 1939 - 1945

**Laisva
 Lietuva
 27-VI-41
 Panevėžys**

Genuine Overprints

**Laisva
 Lietuva
 27-VI-41
 Panevėžys**

Fraudulent Overprint

Release No. 30/May/1990



13

Estonian Changes

As can be expected during a time of great change, the stamps of Estonia also go through dramatic transformation in the early 1940s as conquest becomes the order of the day. In 1938 and 1939, domestic designs and armorial airings of various statistics are commonly seen. The conference series in 1936 is an example. Local heroes are depicted on stamps 1938 and the carrier pigeon with the plane is one the last stance made in 1940. However, in 1941, issues of September 29 we have the occupation city postal stamps it shows a castle tower in Tallinn, the capital, and the Estonian arms with a swastika also done in 1941. Sadly, these were to be some of the last stamps produced until 1991, when the Soviet Union disintegrated, leaving Estonia to be a free people once more. Its first stamps after liberation included a map highlighting its place in the world and its independence, as well as one with its national arms. Please see below for the panorama that is the Estonian philatelics of the 1940s:



The carrier pigeon issue, the last Estonian issue from 1940 to 1991.

Figure 1- Occupation semi-postal stamp Scott NB3, Issued 9/29/1941



Figure 2 Castle Tower, Tallinn on Occupation Semi postal stamp Scott NB-1



Stone Bridge Tartu, another 141, occupational semi-postal stamp

Tartu University, Estonia, from the occupation semi-postals of 1941



Estonian arms and swastika, issued in August of 1941



Estonian arms and Swastika, August of 1941



3rd of the Estonian arms and Swastika. Rare imperforate sets exist!



Narva Castle of Estonia, the last of the occupation semi-postal set



And here is the entire semi-postal set!





Großdeutschland als L

Kilometer 13

What are these? It seems that in 1941, the Germans overprinted existing Russian stamps that were being in used in the city of Pernau, now called Parnu. As one can guess these stamps commemorate the date of German occupation of Estonia, July 8, 1941. They were used until the more familiar Ostland overprints became available.



Another Russian overprint, from July 8, 1941



Common "Hitler-head" stamps with the Ostland overprint that would have been used commonly in Estonia during the German occupation



Welcome back, Estonia! The first stamp in 51 years is the National Arms set of October, 1991.



The Estonian flag stamp of Nov. 1, 1991



Still celebrating independence with the Nov. 1, 1991 map stamp

Latvian stamps in the 1940s

As with the other Baltic states, Latvia had its share of change philatelically. Its class standard issue simply feature the arms and stars with its national seal issued in 1940. With the Russian invasion, Russian stamps are over printed starting in July 1941. Also in 1940, some Latvian's Soviet Latvia stamps are made with the hammer and sickle. Furthermore 1945, the very familiar Hitler had stamps over printed with a line were also made. Of course after World War II when Latvia became part of the Soviet Union until 1991 no independent stamps are made. As if to pick up right where they left off, the first issues of 1991 were once again the arms and stars of the Latvian national seal. Below is a visual timeline of those issues.



Very Nationalistic, very short-lived, the 1940 issues of the “Arms and Stars” of Latvia, shortly before the Soviet Occupation



Großdeutschland a Kilometer 13





Maßstab
1: 8000000

Großdeutschland als Lebensraum

Kilometer 13





Maßstab 1: 8000000

Großdeutschland als Lebensraum

Kilometer 13

Scott 300, 1991 – the first Latvian stamps in 51 years!

Scott 300-307, the entire first set in 51 years of Latvian history

Lithuanian stamps of the 1940s

Lithuania had a bit more straightforward history in its stamps of the 1940s. After producing a commemorative set that celebrated 20 years of independence in 1939, Lithuania released a more generic set 1940 featuring common scenes. With Soviet occupation in 1940, some of the more common Lithuanian stamps had Soviet overprints applied. That includes the last set issued by the Lithuanians, and is pictured below. With German occupation, it appears that the more common Hitler head stamps with the Ostland imprints were used. Below is a montage of Lithuanian stamps from the late 1930s through World War II.



The last set of Independent Lithuanian stamps for 50 years: 140 Scott 317-322

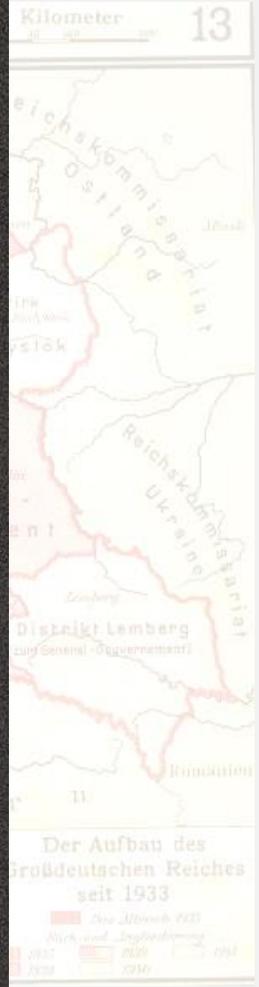


Yikes, an overprinted Lithuanian (Scott 286), issued under Russian Occupation! As you might have guessed, the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic was proclaimed July 21, 1940.



More examples of Soviet occupation stamps

Another Russian Occupation Stamp



Hitler heads from Kauen, Lithuania, one of the larger cities in Lithuania



Maßstab
1: 8000000

Großes Lebensraum

Kilometer 13

↑ Großdeutschen über 1933/37

The first issues by Lithuania as a free country, even before the Soviet Union formally recognized their independence, in 1991.



Requests

As a new editor, I am getting some requests that I am having a difficult time filling. However, I know that you readers out there have the information that others need to find what they need. For both requests, I have the member's permission to use their e-mail address, but I would really like some communication back to me in the form of an e-mail or a letter so we can publish the information in the next issue. That is one of the main points of the study group: to share information so that we can more fully enjoy this branch of philately.

The first is from GPS member George Shaw, who writes that he is "interested in Feldpost covers from the Eastern Front but not the Western one. Given that field units moved around during the war, is there a relatively easy way to confirm where the unit was on the date of the postmark?"

I pointed out Axishistory.com and Feldgrau.com, but these are not really great answers. Can you readers out there help? E-mail the answer to g0b07shaw@gmail.com and kolkermd@att.net

The second request is from Lt. Col Frederick Clements. He simply wants back copies of the Bulletin, preferably in pdf form. If you have such copies, please e-mail him at denny70947@aol.com and me at kolkermd@att.net.

If you can help us with these requests, and don't have e-mail access, please write me at:

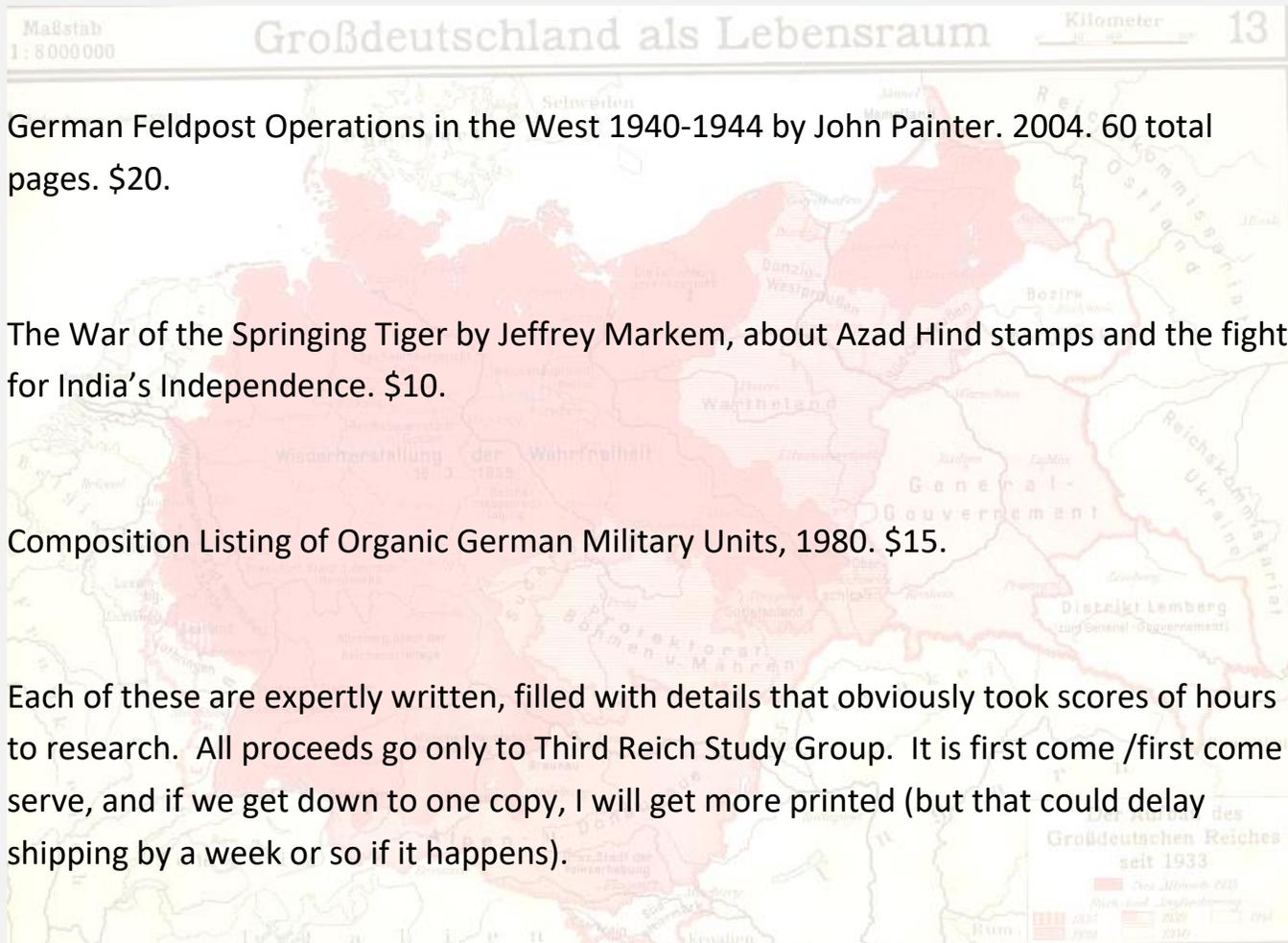
: Christopher Kolker
25 Parkwoods Drive
Norwich, CT 06360

Thanks!!!

For Sale

We do have a few items for sale:

Mail Surveillance under the Third Reich by R.J. Houston. 35 pages. \$15.



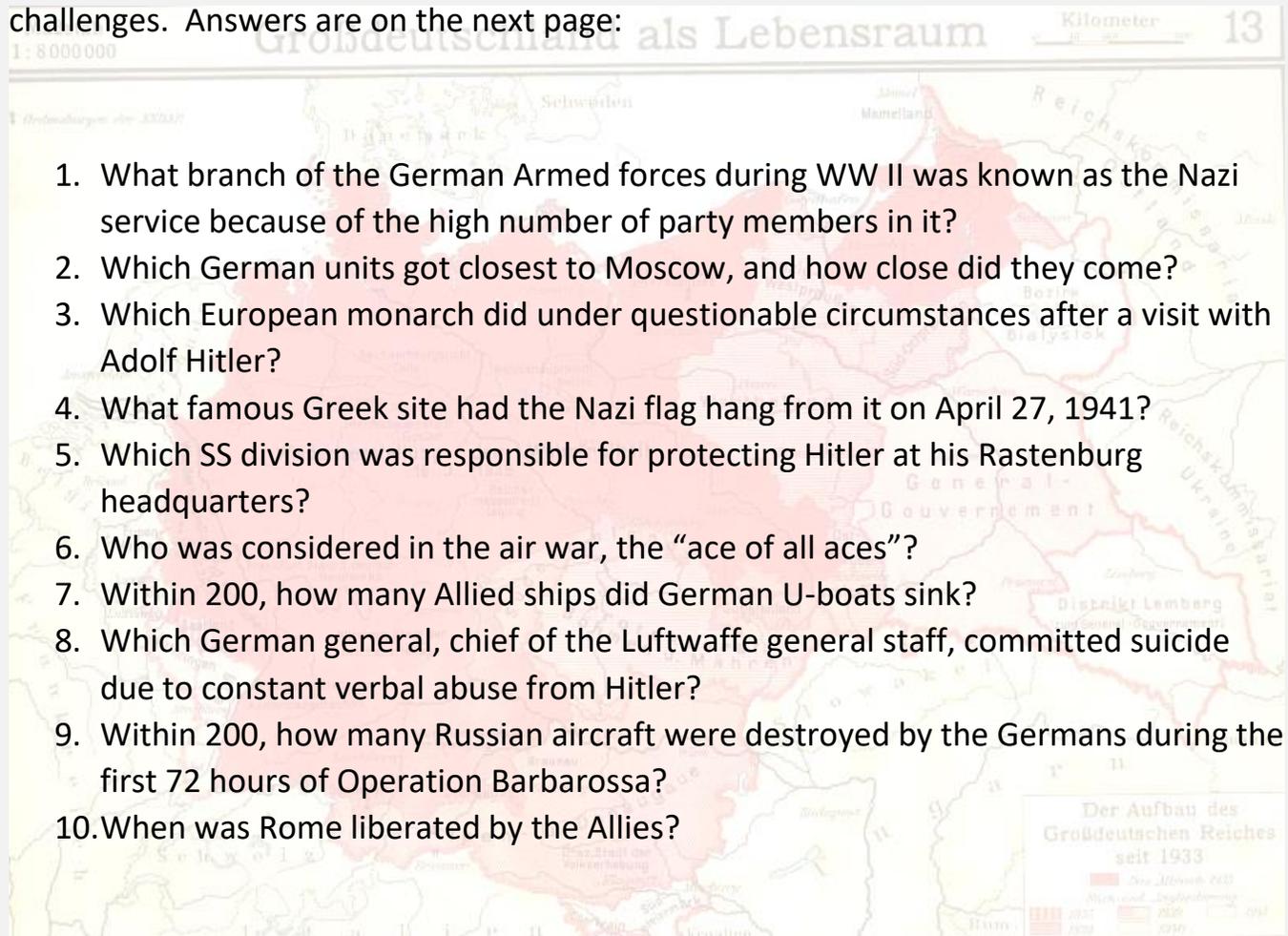
Each of these are expertly written, filled with details that obviously took scores of hours to research. All proceeds go only to Third Reich Study Group. It is first come /first come serve, and if we get down to one copy, I will get more printed (but that could delay shipping by a week or so if it happens).

E-mail me at kolkermd@att.net or write to : Christopher Kolker, 25 Parkwoods Drive, Norwich, CT 06360, for orders or for questions.

Thanks!!!!

(Yes, we can have a little fun with this!)

I would love to tell you that I have thousands of stamp-related questions, but I am still working on that. However, here are some trivia question about the World War II era in general. I'll bet this group thinks they know their history, so here are some real challenges. Answers are on the next page:



Send your questions to me at ctkolker@mail.com. Yes, philatelic questions would be even better!

Answers:

1. The Luftwaffe
2. The 3rd and 4th Panzer Groups got within 25 miles of Moscow in December 1941
3. King Boris III of Bulgaria, who had been a lukewarm Axis supported on August 28, 1943. The cause was listed as natural, even though it was widely believed he was assassinated.
4. The Parthenon
5. The Gross Deutschland Division
6. Luftwaffe Major Erich Hartmann, but the Germans included parked planes on the ground, and not just “dogfights”.
7. 2800, at a cost of 631 German U-boats and 27,491 submariners
8. This victim to stress and office politics was Hans Jeschonnek.
9. Nearly 2000. Before this, the Russian air force was thought to be the largest in the world.
10. June 5, 1944 one day before the Normandy invasion!

Maßstab
1: 8000000

Großdeutschland als Lebensraum

Kilometer 13

