



Third Reich Study Group Bulletin

THIRD REICH STUDY GROUP

Devoted to the Study
of the Postal History
of Germany 1933-1945

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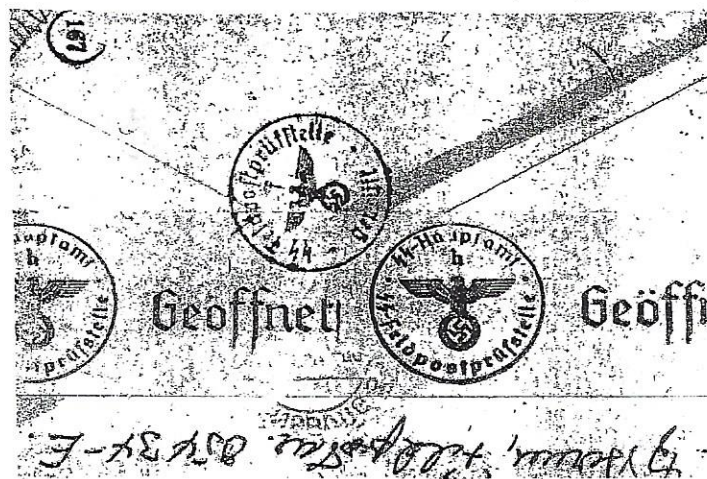
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STUDY GROUP NOTES

Sennheim to Oslo Letters – TRSGer Erik Lordahl has studied about 100 letters going from SS-Ausbildungslager St. Andreas in Sennheim to Oslo between January and November 1944. These letters/postcards were sent from one of about 650 Norwegian students arrested in November 1943 and sent to Germany (Sennheim and KZ-Buchenwald) for “re-education to good members of Das Reich” and to SS-soldiers. They were not SS-Freiwillige and refused to wear SS badges and symbols on their uniforms. The letters from Sennheim to Oslo passed through an SS-Feldpostprüfstelle, initially in Berlin, but from May 1944 through the Flensburg office. These students were permitted to write in Norwegian. Almost all letters carry individual censor numbers in small circles. According to Reimer, the number on front was added by the censor who opened the letter, while the one on reverse by the one who read and closed the letter. In his survey, the numbers on front are mostly between #191 and 199 while those on reverse between 153 and 170. Shown below is part of the reverse of a letter from Fp.# 05434E to Oslo postmarked in Flensburg on July 20, 1944. Note the SS censor tape with letter “h”, the SS Geprüft handstamp with letter “f” and examiner number “167”. If you have any information on this subject, please send to Ye Olde Ed.



American states with POW Camps – hoping that you are at least considering an article on German POW camps in your home state, here is a listing of states that had camps. In parenthesis are the numbers of camps in each state. These are code numbered main camps and hospitals but don't include satellite camps built in outlying areas to house farm laborers, etc.: Alabama (6), Arizona (2), Arkansas (2), California (4), Colorado (5), Delaware (1), Florida (2), Georgia (11), Idaho (2), Illinois (4), Indiana (3), Iowa (3), Kansas (5), Kentucky (3), Louisiana (4), Maryland (1), Maine (1), Massachusetts (3), Michigan (1), Mississippi (6), Missouri (3), Nebraska (4), New Jersey (1), New Mexico (2), New York (5), North Carolina (5), Ohio (1), Oklahoma (7), Oregon (1), Pennsylvania (3), South Carolina (2), Tennessee (4), Texas (20), Utah (1), Virginia (7), Washington (1), West Virginia (1), Wisconsin (1), Wyoming (2).

While I live in New Jersey, there was only the POW compound at Fort Dix, so I decided to use Alabama for the first segment in this series (see Page 20) as it had a much more interesting history. Ye Olde Ed.

Cover Illustration: One popular area of Third Reich philately is the collection of “Privatpostkarten” (private postal cards) that could be ordered with imprinted definitive values from the Reichspost by authorized organizations. This card with a 3 Pfg. Hindenburg imprint was sold by the Berlin Philatelic Federation to commemorate “5 Reichsbundestag” on March 30/31 1940. Note the nice Berlin C2 special cancel.

Story Behind the Cancel: "Auslands-Organization"

by Jim Lewis

Forerunner of the "Auslands-Organization" (Organization for Germans Abroad) was the "Auslandsabteilung der Reichsleiter der N.S.D.A.P.", an organization begun in 1930 by Willy Grothe, a German who had been interned in Africa by the British during World War I. Headquartered in Hamburg, this organization was recognized by the Nazis at a meeting held on May 1, 1931 and given the status of a department of the Reich Directorate. Leadership of this organization passed to Ernst Bohle, who had grown up in South Africa and moved to Germany in 1924. In 1933 the organization had 3,000 members living abroad. In 1935 the title was changed to "Auslands-Organization der N.S.D.A.P" but usually abbreviated "A.O.". The 1st and 2nd annual meetings in 1933 and 1934 apparently received no postal recognition via special cancels. The 3rd annual meeting held in Erlangen in Sept. 1935 was commemorated by a slogan cancel (Fig. 1) inscribed "Auslands-Organization/ der N.S.D.A.P./ Arbeitstagung 7.-9.35". A more elaborate cancel (Fig. 2) was used in Erlangen for the 4th meeting held Sept. 2.-7. 1936. This cancel has the A-O emblem and designates the meeting as "Reichstagung d. Auslands-deutschen" (National Days for Germans Abroad) rather than the earlier "Arbeitstagung" (Working Days). Im unaware of any postcards for the 1933 through 1936 period.

Fig. 1)

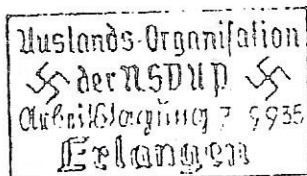


Fig. 2)



The 5th National Conference was held in Stuttgart from Aug. 29 to Sept. 5 in 1937. The move to this city was appropriate since this was the location of the Deutsches Ausland-Institut (German Foreign Institute). Founded in 1917, this institution was a central exchange for statistics and information on Germans living abroad. Postally, there is a slogan cancel (Fig. 3) and postcard (Fig. 4) commemorating this meeting.

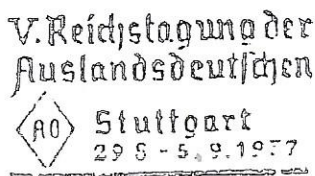


Fig. 3)

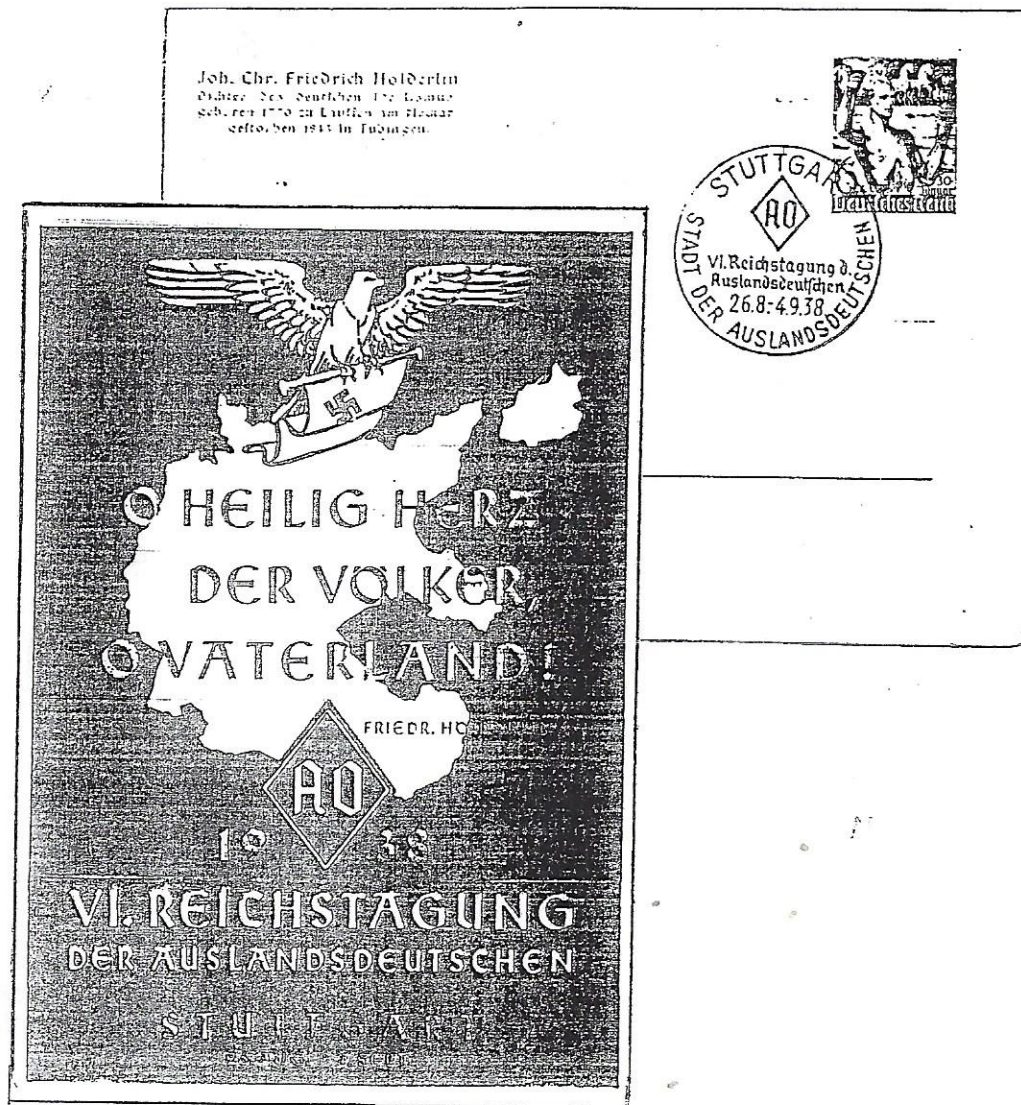


Fig. 4)

The Headquarters of the "A.O." in Stuttgart had the following departments:

<u>Department</u>	<u>Area of Responsibility</u>
I	North Eastern Europe
II	Western Europe except Great Britain
III	Austria, South Eastern Europe and the Near East
IV	Italy, Switzerland and Hungary
V	Africa
VI	North America
VII	Latin America
VIII	Great Britain, the Far East and Australia

The 6th National Conference was held in Stuttgart from Aug. 26 to Sept. 4 in 1938. The center of the cancel has a diamond with initials "A.O." and at bottom reads "Stadt der Auslandsdeutschen" (City of Germans Abroad). The postcard shown below (Fig. 5) has a map of Germany superimposed with the words of Frederick Hölderlin: "Oh Sacred Spirit of the Folk, Oh Fatherland". The address side describes Hölderlin as a poet of German idealism who was born in Lauffen am Neckar in 1770 and died in Tübingen in 1843. While this card doesn't indicate the printing firm, the lower right corner of the picture side indicates that the artist was Lehner of Tübingen.



The 7th and final meeting was held in Graz from August 25 to Sept. 1, 1939. The selection of this city may have been in recognition of the "homecoming" of Austria to the Reich that came about by the "Anschluss" in 1938.

A double-ring/date bar special cancel (Fig.6) has "AO" at the bottom. There is a postcard (Fig. 7) printed in shades of green against the red background of the flags. The backside has only "Fest-Postkarte" but the front identifies A. Wall of Graz as the designer and Reichfelder as the publisher.

The final day of the "Reichstagung der Auslandsdeutschen" (National Days for Germans Abroad) was September 1, 1939, also the day when Germany began World War II by invading Poland.

Fig. 6)



Fig. 7)

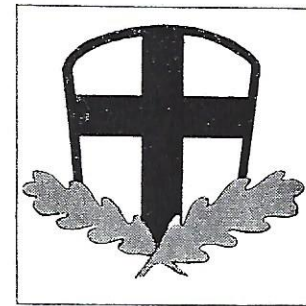


COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:**114th Jäger Division**

by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS		AUXIL	
TACT	KENN	JAGER	ARTY	UNITS	
114	418	721	741	661	114

Formed May 1941 in Prag Military District as two regiment 714th Infantry Division. The personnel were mostly Poles, Czechs and Volksdeutsche. This division was sent to Yugoslavia in November 1941 and conducted anti-partisan operations until December 1943. Division P.O. was assigned Fp.# 47701 and K-418 as a coded identification. During 1943 the division was upgraded and renamed the 114th Jäger Division. The post office was changed from FpA 714 to FpA 114 but retained the same Feldpost and kenn numbers. Emblem is a black cross on a shield rising out of crossed green oak leaves (for Jäger troops).



In January 1944 the division was transferred to the Fiume area of Italy and by February was taking part in the counterattack against the Allied beachhead at Anzio. It later took part in the retreat from the Gustav Line, the battle of the Gothic Line and the Battle of Bologna. The division fought well but by March 1945 was reduced to 984 effectives. The remnants of the division, now numbering less than a battalion in terms of combat strength, were destroyed near the Po River along with the LI Mountain Corps on April 23, 1945.



Cover sent September 1941 to Military District Command in Bayreuth from Fp. # 40629 (Rgts. Stab/Infantry Regiment 721) via Post Office 714 (K-418)

Waffen-SS Feldpost

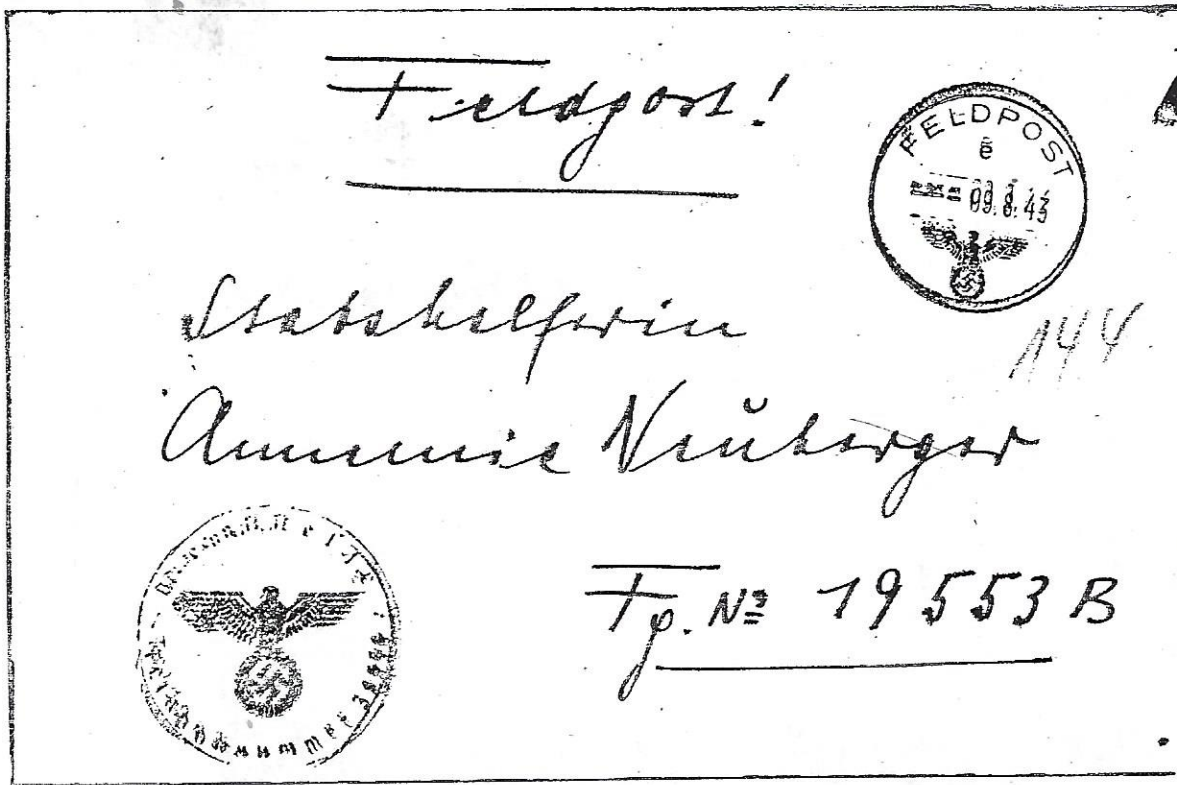
SS- Police Regiment 25 'Todt' in Norway

by John Painter

This cover sent in August 1943 is addressed to a "Stabshelferin" (German WAC) at Fp.# 19553B. This is the coded address of "Kdt. D. H. Qu. O. K. H." (Field HQ of the Army High Command) in East Prussia. The Stabshelferin was working in the large Command office of the Army's Field HQ in Mauerwald that was about 15 miles from Hitler's Headquarters in East Prussia. This installation had over 9,000 military and civilian personnel working in it.

The sender was a soldier assigned to 6th Company (II Battalion) of SS Police Regiment 25 'Todt' stationed in Norway.

Note that a postal clerk has written the Kenn number 144 on the face of the envelope. This was the coded address of FpA z.b.V 631 that was in Truppen Übungsplatz (Troop Training Center) Zossen.



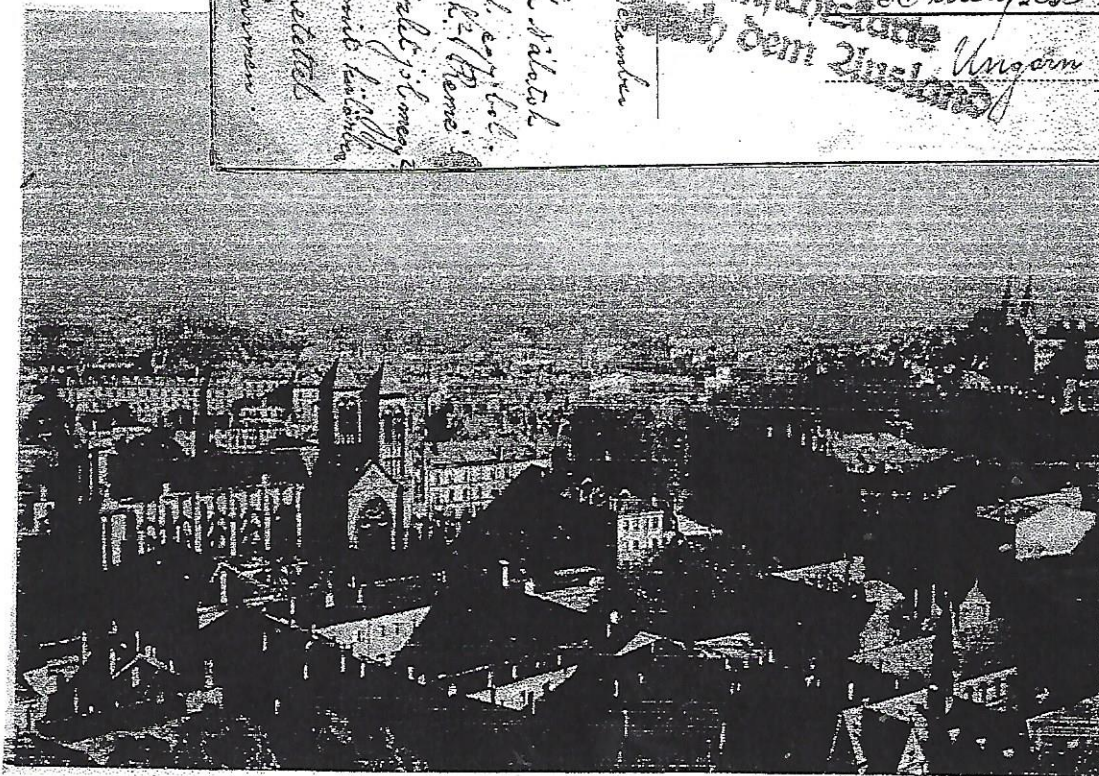
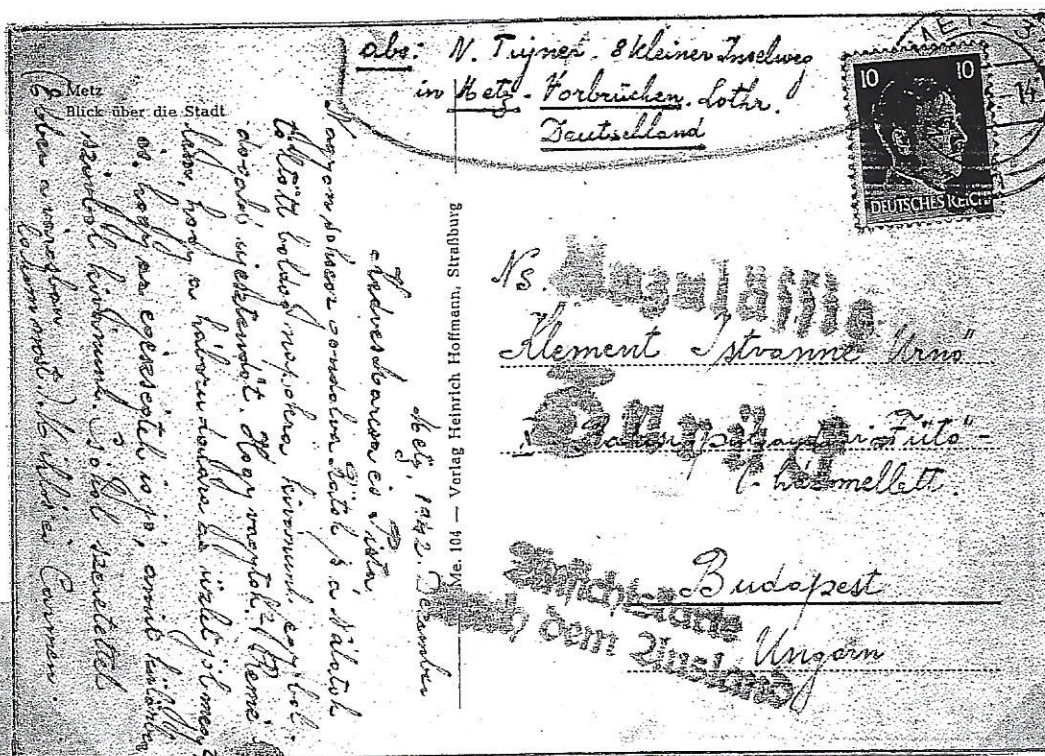
Rejected by Censor - Inadmissible Mail

by Bob Ferguson

View Cards

Part II, Sec. 2A, Para. 1a. "The sending of picture postcards of all kinds, of photos pasted on other objects, braille materials, chess problems, crossword and other puzzles, are prohibited in postal service to non-belligerent foreign nations."

Shown below are both sides of a view card sent from Metz to Budapest, Hungary on December 22, 1942. The censor office added hand stamps reading "Unzulässig/Zurück" (Not permitted/Return) and "Ansichtskarte/ nach dem Ausland" (Viewcard/ to a Foreign Nation).



Special Cancels – KdF Stamp Shows

by Bob Ferguson

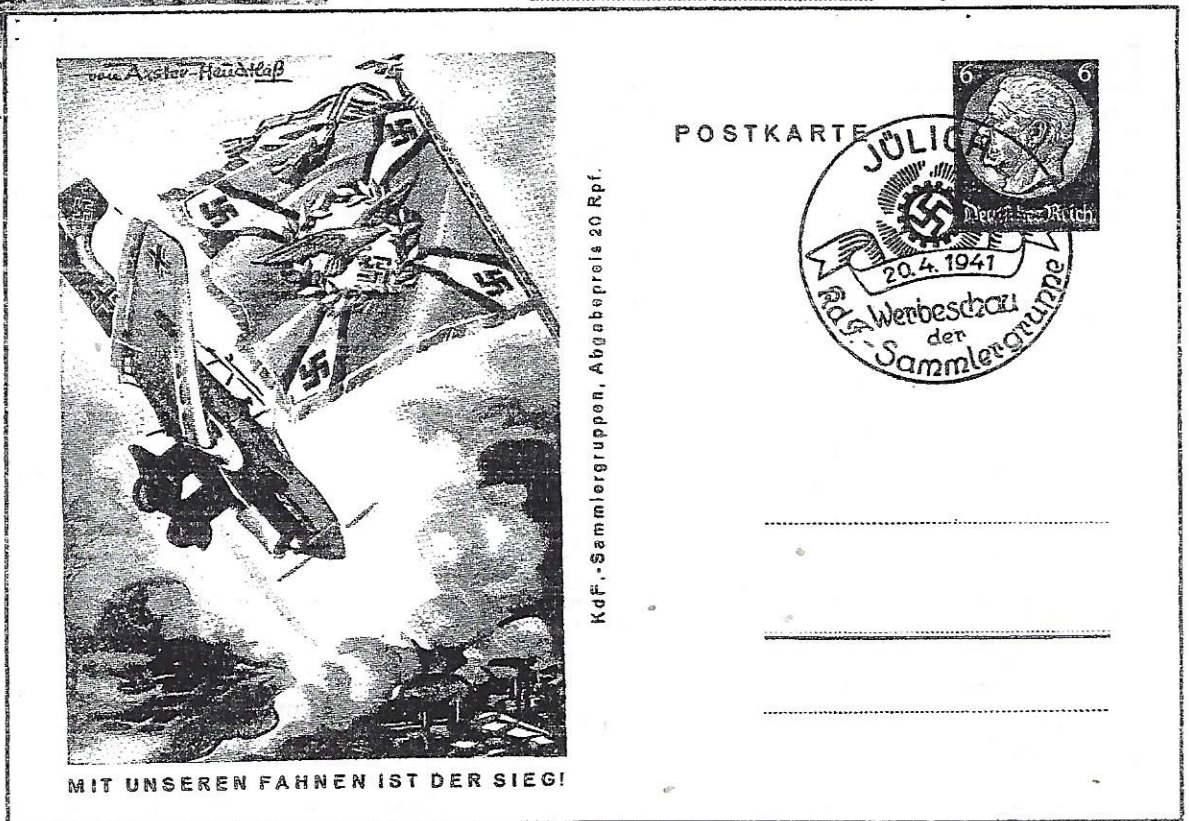
These cancels advertise Kraft durch Freude stamp shows held on Hitler's birthday, April 20, 1941. The cancel numbering scheme is in Julius Bochmann's work "**Katalog der Deutschen Gelegenheitsstempel**".

Aue # 7	Grosstansch der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Bautzen # 3	Grosstansch der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Belzig # 2	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Berlin # 359	Briefmarken-Werbeschau der Kreises 33	19. u.20.4.1941
Berlin # 361	Briefmarken-Werbeschau der Kreises V333	20.4.1941
Berlin # 362	Grosstansch der KdF.-Sammlergruppe des Kreises V3	20.4.1941
Bonn # 3	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Braunschweig # 33	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Chemnitz # 36	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Deutsch Krone # 4	KdF.-Sammlergruppe An Wald und Wasser	20.4.1941
Dresden # 100	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Eisleben # 3	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Erfurt # 27	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Esslingen # 6	1. Briefmarken-Ausstellung der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	19. u.20.4.1941
Esslingen # 7	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Hagen # 9	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Halberstadt # 3	Erst Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Halle # 25	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Hamburg #113	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Hamm # 4	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Hannover # 67	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Heidelberg #23	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Hildesheim # 8	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Hoheneibe # 3	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Inlich # 2	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Juliche # 2	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Kassel # 41	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Landshut # 8	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Leipzig # 128	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Ludwigshafen # 17	Grosstansch der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	19. u.20.4.1941
Ludwigshafen # 18	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Magdeburg # 34	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Merseburg # 6	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Munche # 160	Festveranstaltung der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Namburg # 3	Kraft durch Freude Briefmarkenausstellung Ekkehard und Uta die Steinernen Wunder	20.4.1941
Polanitz # 5	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941

Saarbrücken # 17	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Salzwedel # 3	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Stettin # 33	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Strassburg # 10	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Swinemund # 5	KdF.-Sammlergruppe Werbeschau	20.4.1941
Wein # 82	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941
Zittau # 7	Werbeschau der KdF.-Sammlergruppe	20.4.1941



Erfurt#27



Jülich#2

MIT UNSEREN FAHNEN IST DER SIEG!

THIRD REICH POSTAL RATES

by Bob Ferguson

PARCEL POST (POSTGUT)

Postgut was introduced on January 15, 1933 for the bulk transport of packages. Fees were lower than for ordinary parcel post and green paket cards (Postgutkarten) were used after October 1, 1934

First Rate Period – January 30, 1933 – February 14, 1933

	1 Zone -75 Km	2 Zone -150 Km	3 Zone -375 Km	4 Zone -705 Km	5 Zone over 750 Km
To 5 Kg	0.35 RM	0.45 RM	0.45 RM	0.60 RM	0.65 RM
- 6 Kg	0.40 RM	0.55 RM	0.55 RM	0.80 RM	0.90 RM
- 7 Kg	0.45 RM	0.60 RM	0.65 RM	1.00 RM	1.20 RM

Second Rate Period – February 15, 1933– August 12, 1944

	1 Zone -75 Km	2 Zone -150 Km	3 Zone -375 Km	4 Zone -705 Km	5 Zone over 750 Km
To 5 Kg	0.30 RM	0.40 RM	0.40 RM	0.50 RM	0.60 RM
- 6 Kg	0.35 RM	0.45 RM	0.50 RM	0.60 RM	0.80 RM
- 7 Kg	0.40 RM	0.50 RM	0.60 RM	0.70 RM	1.00 RM

Postgut (Second Rate Period)

Posted: Bergisch-Gladbach December 7, 1943 to Ebermannstadt

POSTAGE PAID PARCEL POST (POSTGUT)

Franking (40 Pfg.): Weight: 4 Kg to Zones 2 or 3

Postage Paid: GEBÜHR BEZAHLT

951 Bergisch Gladbach 1537
Opfermann & Sohn G.m.b.H.

Absender: Opfermann & Sohn G.m.b.H. Bergisch Gladbach

Besondere Vermerke des Absenders (e. Rückseite):

Freigebühr (RM) 40
Postgewicht (kg) 4

An die Stadt - Apotheke in Ebermannstadt Obfr.

Keine Zustellgebühr
Bitte in jedes Postgut oben auf ein Doppel der Aufschrift zu legen

C 20 d Din A 6

COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:

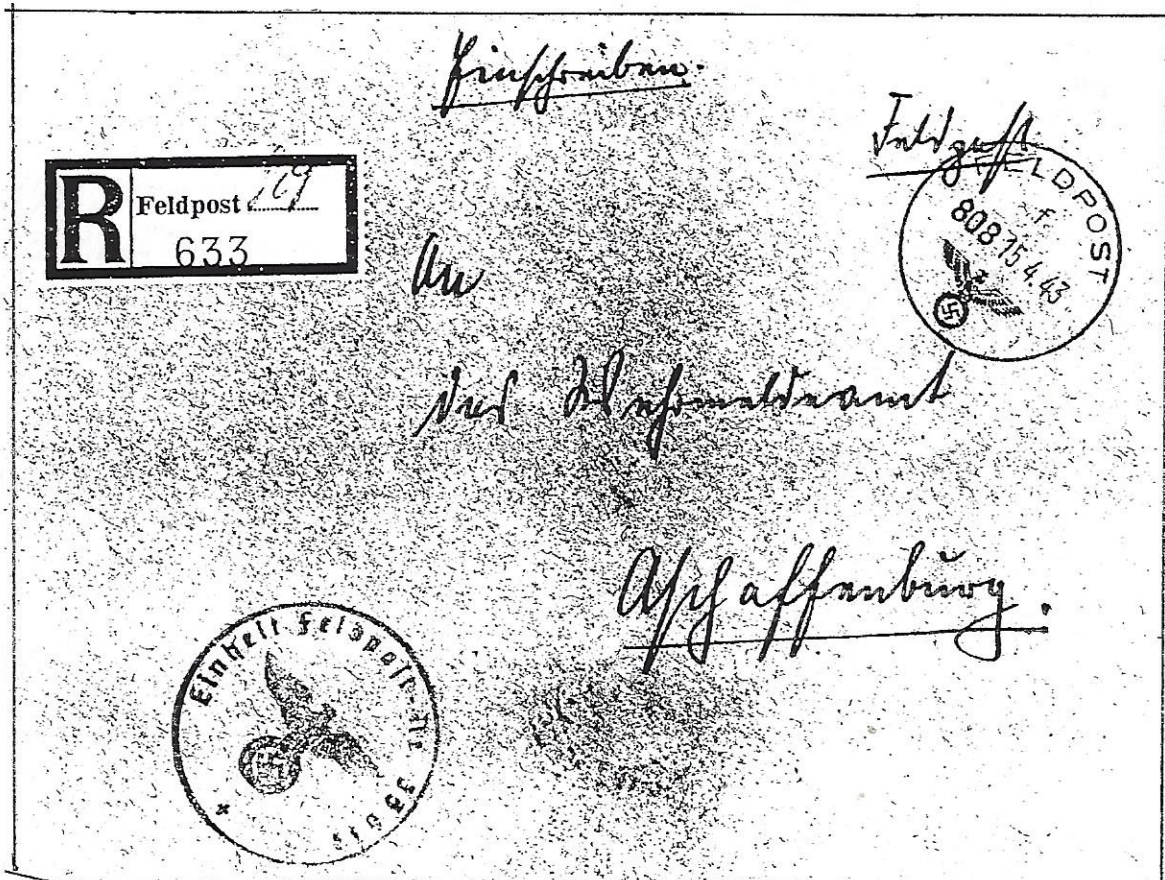
82nd Infantry Division

by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT	KENN	MOTORIZED INFANTRY		ARTY	UNITS	
182	808	158	166	168	182	

This reserve division was mobilized in the fall of 1939 (5th Wave). Upon transfer to the Field Army the Feldpost Office was assigned Fp.# 38830 as a return address on its mail and Kenn 808 for use on registered mail in lieu of tactical FpA 182. The 82nd Infantry Division was stationed in France in 1940 and then on garrison duty in the Netherlands from early 1941 to the spring of 1942.

The 82nd Infantry Division was transferred to Army Group South in May 1942 and remained on the Eastern Front for the next two years. It fought at Kursk and in the battles around Kiev before being encircled at Cherkassy in February 1944. A portion of the division escaped but required reorganization, including a new FpA 182 that was assigned Fp.# 58467 and K-457. The division was virtually destroyed near Buczacz in Poland and disbanded during the winter of 1944-45.



Cover sent to Military Records Office in Aschaffenburg in April 1943 from Fp. # 35839 (Kraftwagen Werkstatt Kompanie 182) via Field Post Office 182 (K-808).

Behind the Wire: Returned Prisoner Mail

By Larry Nelson

It has been my experience that returned mail from prisoners held by the Germans is not at all common. Here are two post cards that are particularly interesting because of the postal markings added.

Fig. 1 is a censored POW card dated 6/11/41 sent from a British soldier to his Jewish grandfather (note the obligatory “Israel” middle name) in Prag. A number of Jews serving in the British Army were captured in Greece and Crete and sent to Stalag VIII B at Lamsdorf (Lambinowice) Poland in Upper Silesia in July 1941. By the time the card arrived, his grandfather had died. This fact is noted by the manuscript message “gestorben” to the left of the mute cancel and a “Verstorben” (deceased) label. The card was then returned (hand written “Züruck”) on “8/XI” November 8. The “29B” written on the bottom left of the card was probably the sender’s barracks number. In the card he had asked his grandfather to send some clothing in a paper suitcase.

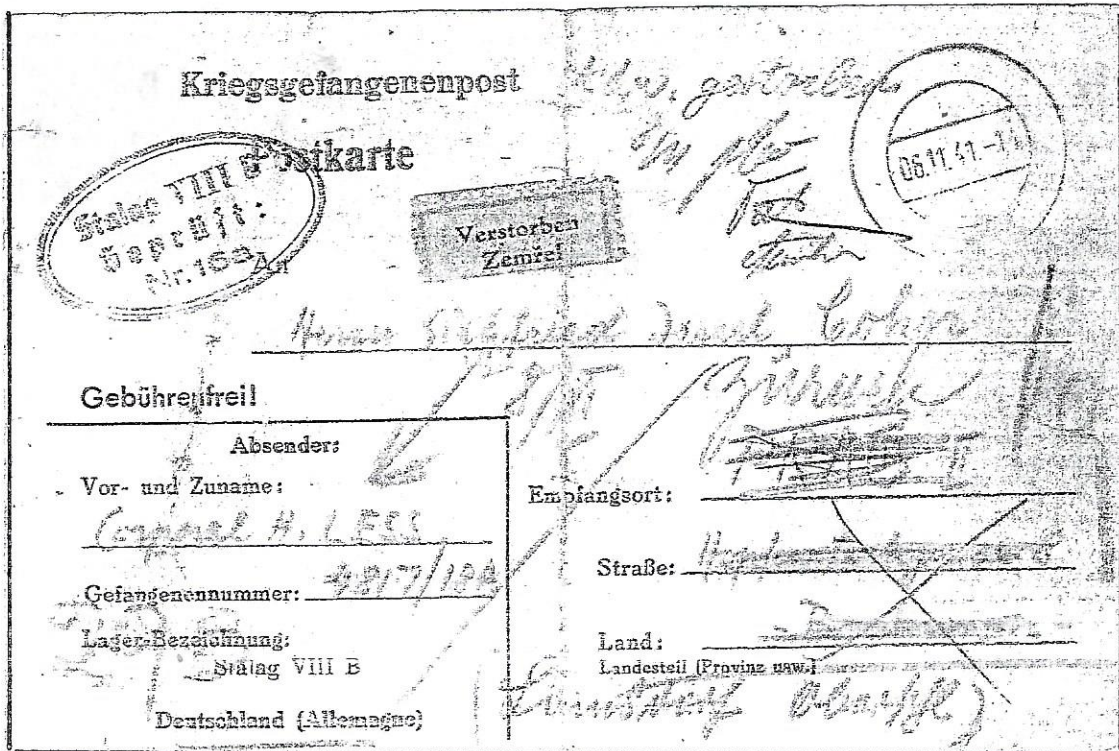
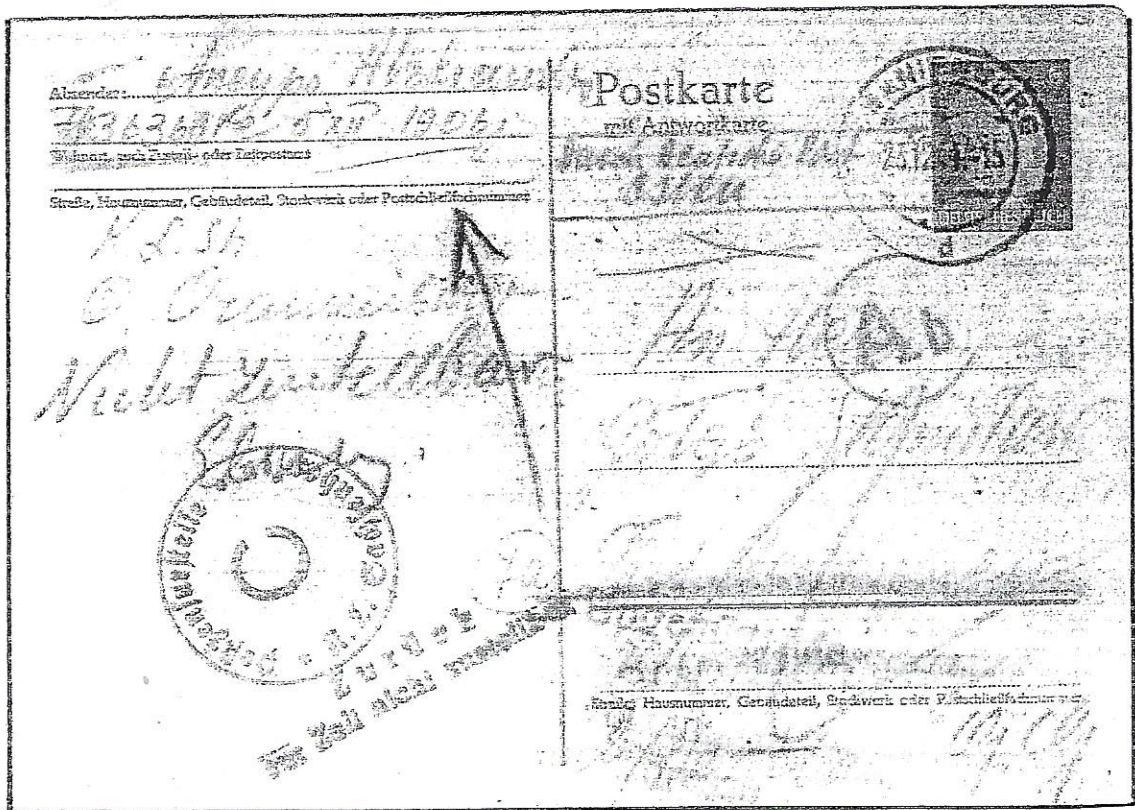


Fig. 2 is a postcard dated 23/12/44 (with a reply card still attached) from a prisoner in Sachsenhausen concentration camp (near Berlin) to Warsaw that has both a camp censor "C" and an "Ab" transit stamp of the Berlin censor office. The several markings added by postal clerks include a manuscript "Durch Deutsche Post Osten" in red to the left of the Oranienburg cancel.

Between August 1 and October 2, 1944, the Polish uprising in Warsaw was being put down by the Wehrmacht. On January 1945, the Polish 1st Army and the Russians entered Warsaw. Given all that was going on at that time, it isn't hard to understand why this card was returned. There is a red 4-line hand stamp that reads "Insufficient address" in German and French at bottom right. There is also a violet 2-line hand stamp in German (under the "C" censor stamp) that reads "Return/cannot be delivered at this time" with an arrow pointing to the return address.

Finally, there is a manuscript notation (above the "C" censor stamp) in German that reads "Cannot be delivered". The message on this card asks about the health of the correspondent and children. It closes with a Christmas greeting.

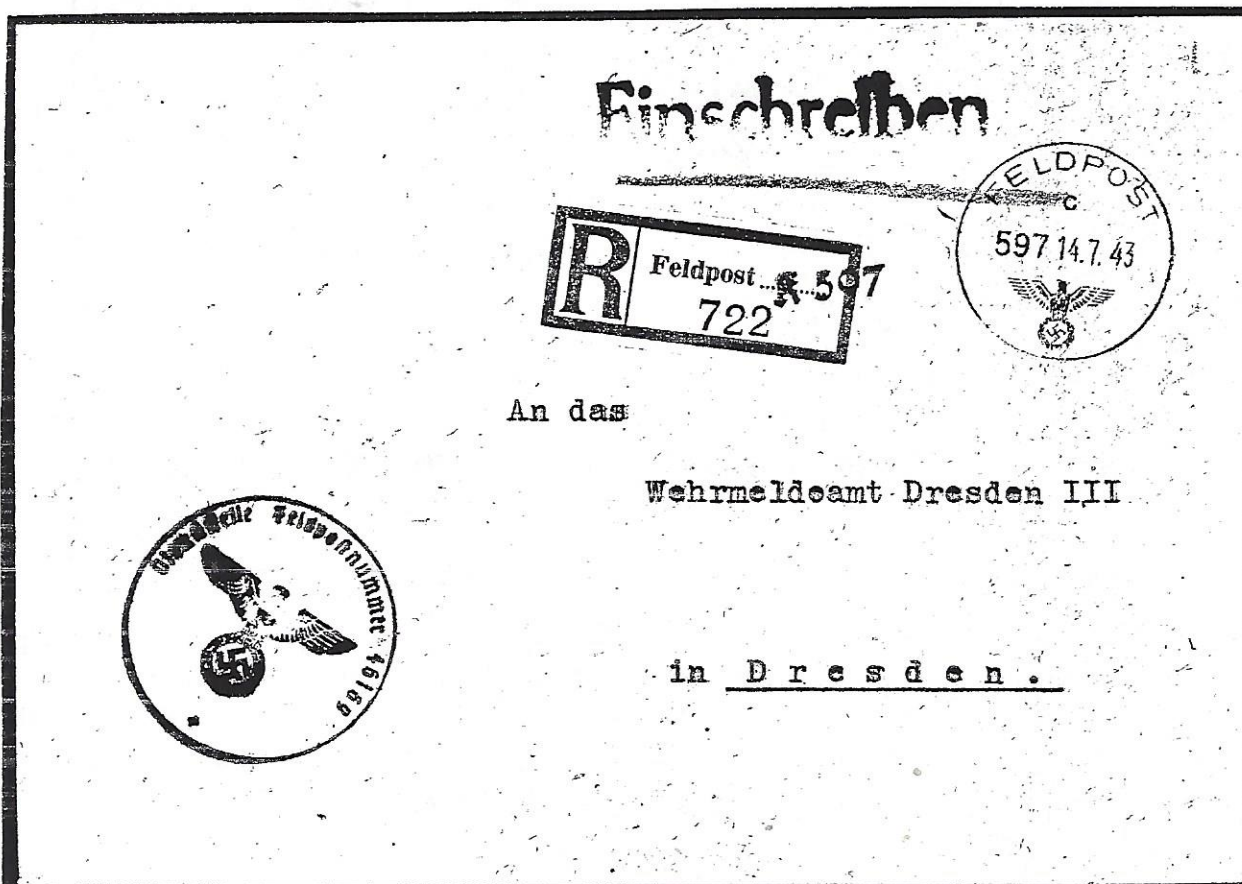


COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:
201st Security Division
 by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS			AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	SECURITY		FUSILIER KP	UNITS
66	597	406	601	466	466

The 201st Security Division was formed early in 1942 by expansion of the 201st Security Brigade and served under Army Group North. The division post office was assigned Fp. # 21192 as a mailing address and Kenn 597 as a coded identification. In September 1942 the division was transferred to Army Group Center where it protected important installations and performed line of communication duties for a year.

In September 1943 it was sent to the front lines but returned to rear area duties with 9th Army early in 1944. It suffered heavy casualties near Minsk in late June 1944 when the Soviet summer offensive destroyed most of 9th Army. Part of the 201st Security Division escaped to the north and spent the rest of the war in the rear area of Army Group North and later in the Courland Pocket.

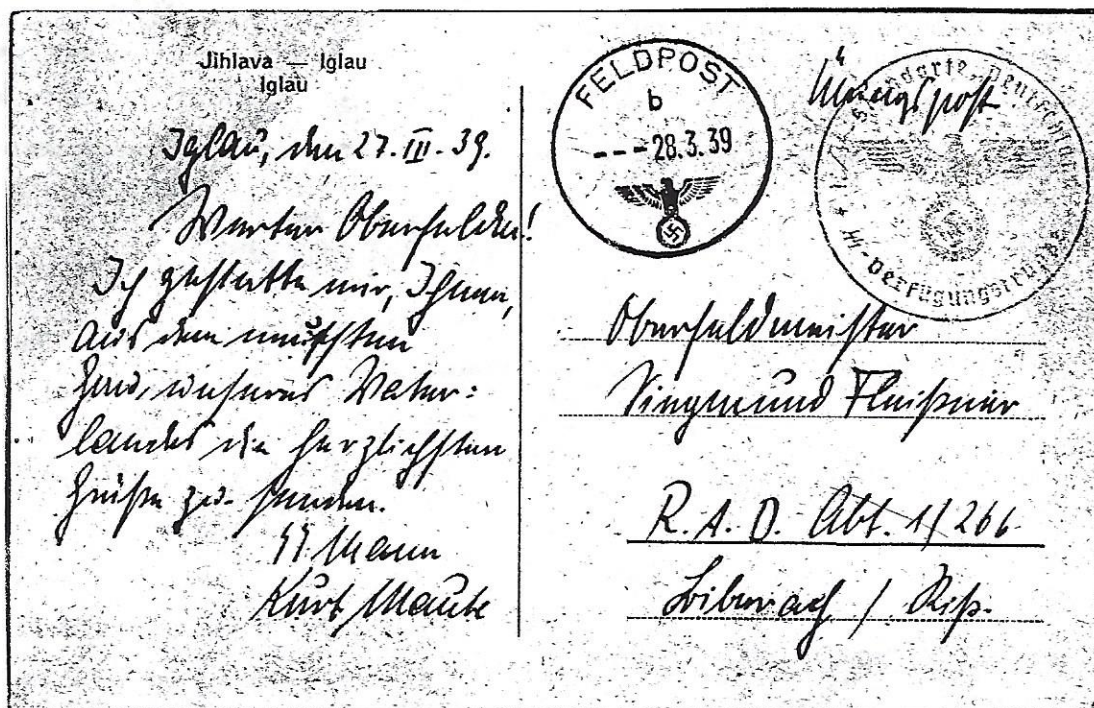


Cover sent to Military Records Office in Dresden in July 1943 from Fp. # 46169 (Heeresunterkunftsverwendung 304) via Field Post Office 466 (K-597).

Waffen-SS Feldpost: SS Regiment 'Germania'

by John Painter

The SS Verfügungstruppe participated in the occupation of Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1939 as part of the so-called 'Flower Wars'. They got this name from the fact that the troops placed flowers in their rifle barrels. They thus achieved these conquests without firing a shot. The SS had been able to create a division out of the many different SS formations in existence and it was named 'Verfügungs' or 'Readiness' division. It was able to be mobilized and assembled in two days time which is exceptional when you consider that its major elements were scattered all across Germany. The division was mobilized during the Austrian Anschluss, the Sudetenland Crisis and again in March of 1939 for the occupation of what remained of Czechoslovakia. See Bulletin 152 (Page 3) for another SS Verfügungstruppe item.



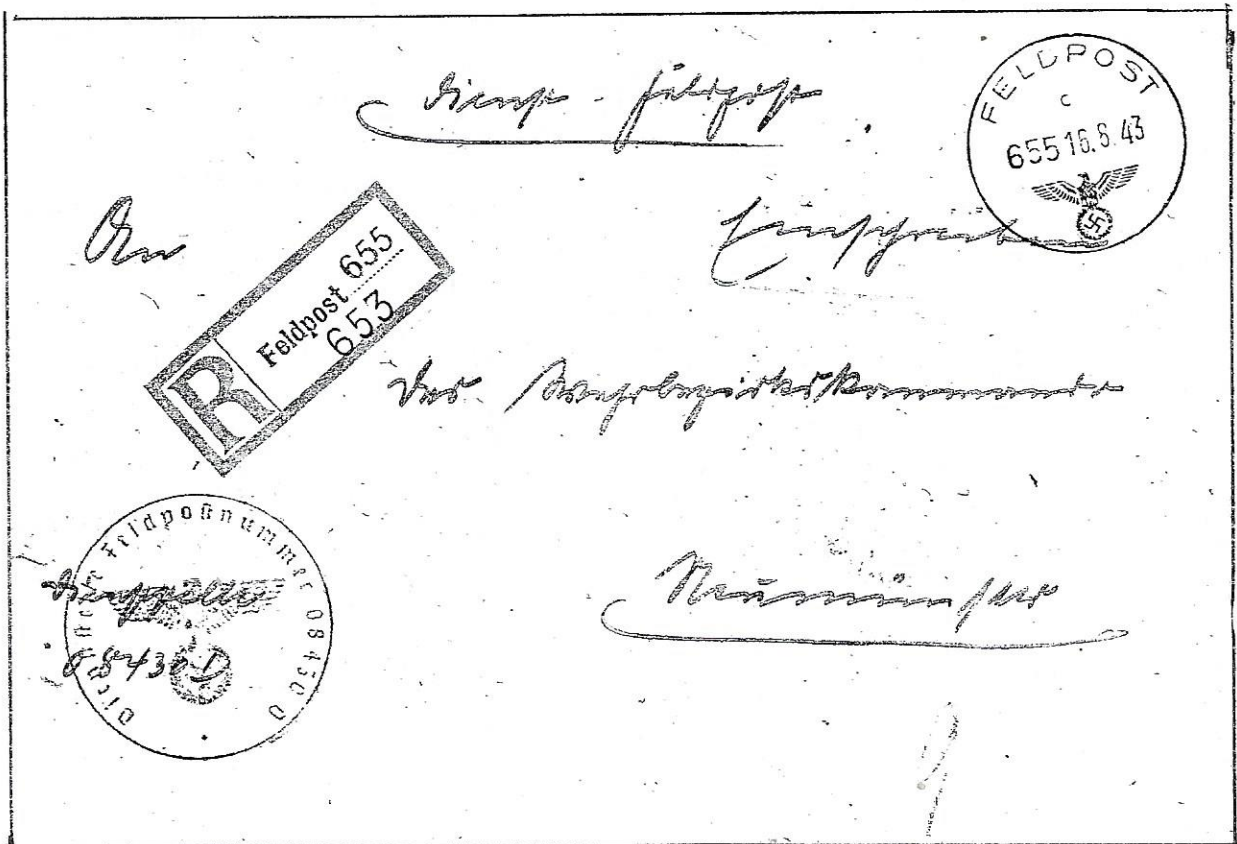
This card was sent by in March 1939 by a member of the SS Regiment 'Germania' located in Iglau (Bohemia-Moravia). It is addressed to an Oberfeldmeister of the National Labor Service (R.A.D.) who apparently was formerly the superior of the sender, SS Mann Mante, when the latter was serving his two year hitch in the labor service. Note the improper placement of the unit dienstsigel in the upper right instead of the lower left corner of the card.

COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE: 342nd Infantry Division by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT	KENN	INFANTRY			ARTY	UNITS
342	655	697	698	699	342	342

The Rhein-Mosel 342nd Infantry Division was formed in January 1941 (14th Wave). The post office unit was assigned Fp.# 47982 as a return address and Kenn 655 as a coded address for registered mail in lieu of tactical FpA 342. After performing mop-up operations in Yugoslavia the following winter, the division was sent to Army Group Center on the Eastern Front in February 1942.

During 1942 and 1943 the division fought in the Rzhev withdrawal and in the Battle of Kursk. Late in 1944 the division was transferred to Army Group North Ukraine and subsequently fought in Hungary. By March 1945 the 342nd Infantry Division had been reduced to battle group strength but remained in action on the Eastern Front until the end of the war.



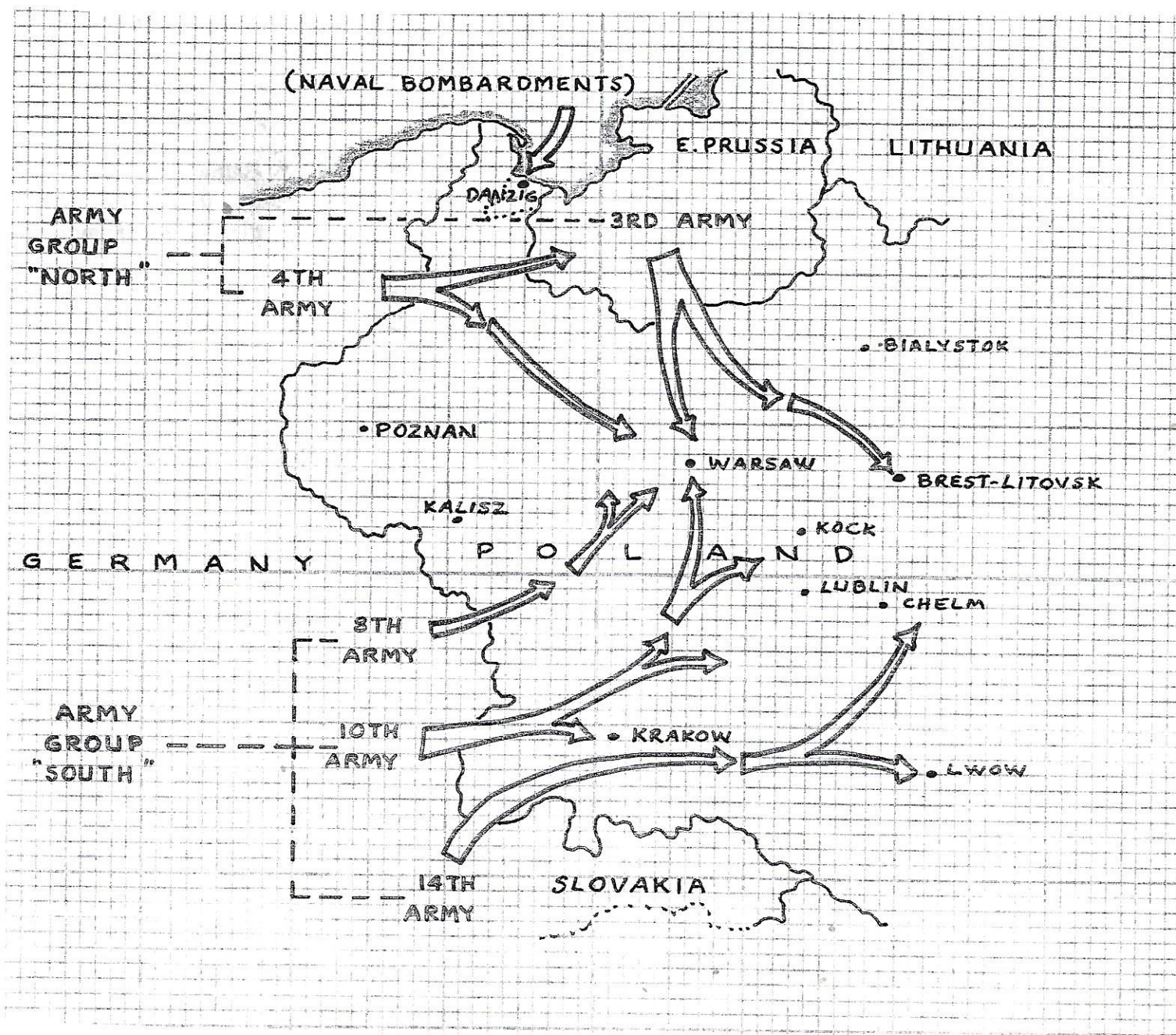
Cover sent to Military District Command in Neumünster in August 1943 from Fp. # 08430 (Stab/Artillery Abteilung 422) via Field Post Office 342 (K-655).

TRSG Map: The Polish Campaign

by Kelly Stefanacci

Operation 'Case White' - Sept. 1, 1939

Army Groups 'North' (Gen. von Bock) and 'South' (Gen. Von Rundstedt) consisted of 50 divisions - 11 of which were armored/motorized. Along with 2 airfleets & naval support, this force defeated the 30 division Polish Army in 5 weeks.



1942 Brown Band Race (Mi. 815) on "Overfranked" Cover by Bob Ferguson

One wonders why anyone would spend 21.00 Reichsmarks to post the registered cover shown below. I'm glad, however, that he did.



German POWs in the USA & Canada:

Camps in Alabama

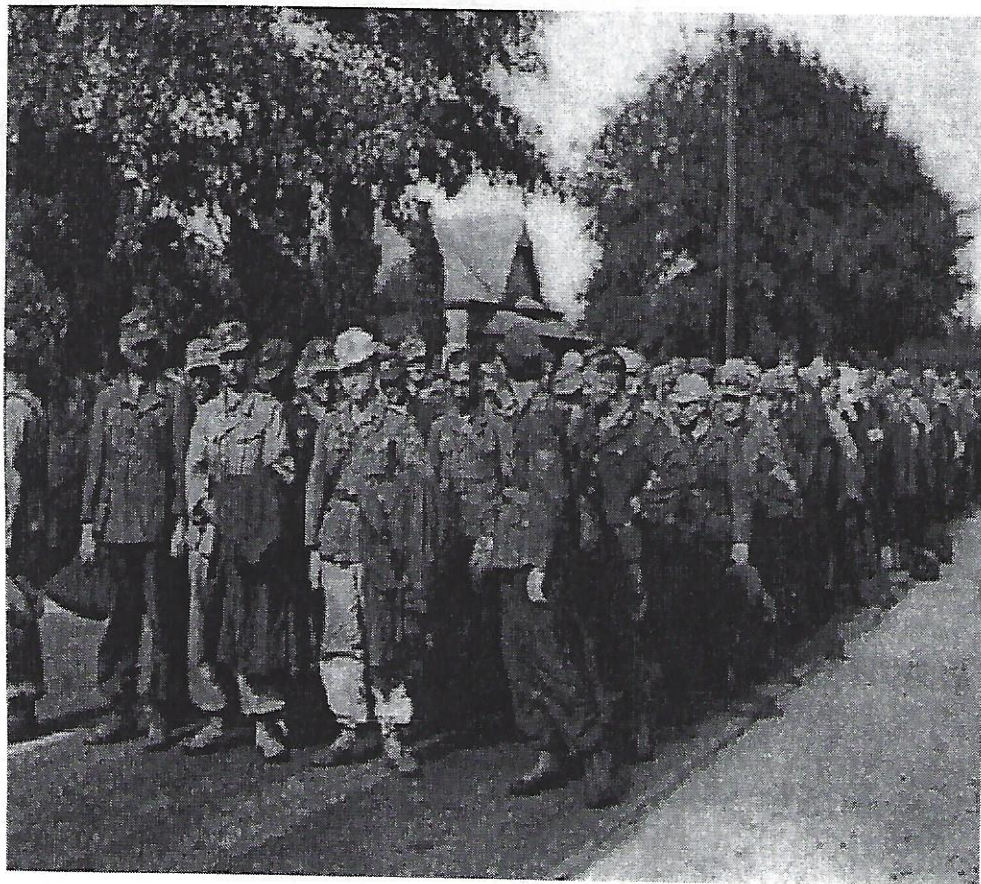
by Jim Lewis

In late September 1942 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began construction of a camp near a dairy farm in the normally tranquil community of Aliceville, Alabama (population 4,800). The camp, with its 400 frame barracks, capable of housing 6,000 prisoners and nearly a thousand civilian and American military personnel, was activated in December, 1942. Yet no prisoners arrived and the new barracks remained empty until June 2, 1943, when a special train pulled into the depot and 500 members of the Afrika Korps poured off the train and stood blinking into the late afternoon sunlight. Some still wore bandages; others limped visibly. Almost all had been baked a deep brown by the North African sun; most were plagued with a variety of skin diseases and nagging injuries. As the last prisoner of war climbed from the train and fell into the five abreast formation, a guard moved down the lines and asked in German if any prisoner spoke English. When one raised his hand he was led to the front of the formation and with a resounding step of hobnailed boots, the group began the last forced march any of them would make during World War II. For them, the war was over.

Fig. 1) The first contingent of German prisoners prepare to march from the Aliceville train depot to the POW camp.

Within a week the camp held over 3,000 men who were assigned to compounds that held a thousand men each, then to barracks quartering fifty prisoners. Wearing blue denim uniforms with the letters "PW" stenciled across the back, all able-bodied prisoners were soon assigned to perform either as farm laborers in the adjacent areas or to perform improvements to the camp.

In order to provide laborers for farms too far from the camp for daily transportation, satellite camps were built in outlying areas but were controlled by the main camp.



The scenario detailed above is similar to what occurred in most of the camps established in the United States and Canada. The majority of these were located in the South and Southwest in mild climates to keep construction costs down and the employment of POWs in agricultural areas was also a consideration.

Since the war began in 1939, Great Britain had amassed a huge POW prison population, one this small island could barely handle. By the fall of 1942 the United States agreed to help alleviate the problem, and authorized the arrival of 50,000 Axis POWs from England. The Office of the Provost Marshall began the process of building POW camps. Using abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps camps built during the Depression offered the best option. Fairgrounds, unused sections of military bases, auditoriums, and even tent cities were also considered. The CCC camps were perfect for housing POWs since they were built barracks near rural work projects, were empty and available, and were located mainly in the South and Southwest, far removed from the war industries of the Midwest and the Eastern seaboard. But, like Aliceville, many camps were built from the ground up using a basic plan for construction and layout that all camps followed. Built of wood frame construction on concrete piers, the sidewalls and roof were covered with black battened tar paper. Each barrack was designed to hold 20 to 25 bunks and was heated with three coal-burning stoves. Camps usually included a hospital, chapel, shower with hot and cold running water, a post office, warehouse, and utility area. Many also included a recreation area for sports, and a theater for variety shows and theater productions.

German POW Camps in Alabama

Name of Camp	Code #	County	Main Camp	Population (8.'43)
Aliceville	38	Pickens	---	5,130
Chatom	--	Washington	Camp Shelby [1]	247
Clanton	--	Chilton	Camp McClellan	224
Foley	--	Baldwin	Rucker	298
Greenville	--	Butler	Rucker	230
Huntsville Arsenal	--	Madison	Camp Forrest [2]	655
Jackson	--	Clarke	Camp Shelby [1]	253
Loxley	--	Baldwin	Camp Shelby [1]	410
Camp McClellan	54	Calhoun	---	2,758
Montgomery H & R	--	Montgomery	Rucker	248
Opelika	57	Lee	---	2,649
Rucker	173	Dale	---	1,718
Sibert	174	Etowah	Camp McClellan	1,578

[1.] Camp Shelby was located in Mississippi. [2.] Camp Forrest was located in Tennessee.

In addition, there was P.O.W. hospital Northington (Code # 99) located in Tuscaloosa.

Following the German surrender on May 7, 1945, Alabama's POW camps began to close. The Aliceville facility was deactivated in September 1945 and the Opelika camp closed in December. Camp Rucker, however, stayed open until March 31, 1946, permitting camp authorities to continue POW work details that were vitally important to that labor-short region. The POW compound at Camp McClellan, which served as a processing center for prisoners in Alabama, was the last facility deactivated on April 10, 1946.

Under the Geneva Convention, it was agreed that POWs during WW II would be allowed two letters per month for enlisted ranks while officers would be allowed three letters and four postcards per month. They would also be allowed to receive letters and relief parcels. Each POW was allowed to send a postcard to their family as soon as practicable after capture, and in any case not later than seven days after arrival at a POW camp. The routing of such mail in Europe was carried out with the assistance of the International Red Cross based in Geneva.

Fig. 2) Form letter sheet posted in Dec. 1944 by Gefreiter in POW camp in Huntsville, Alabama.

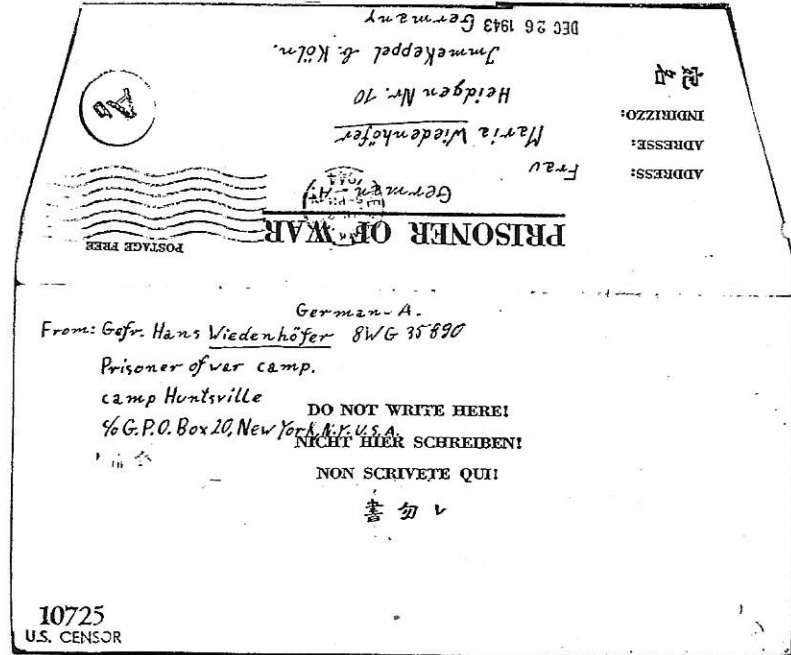
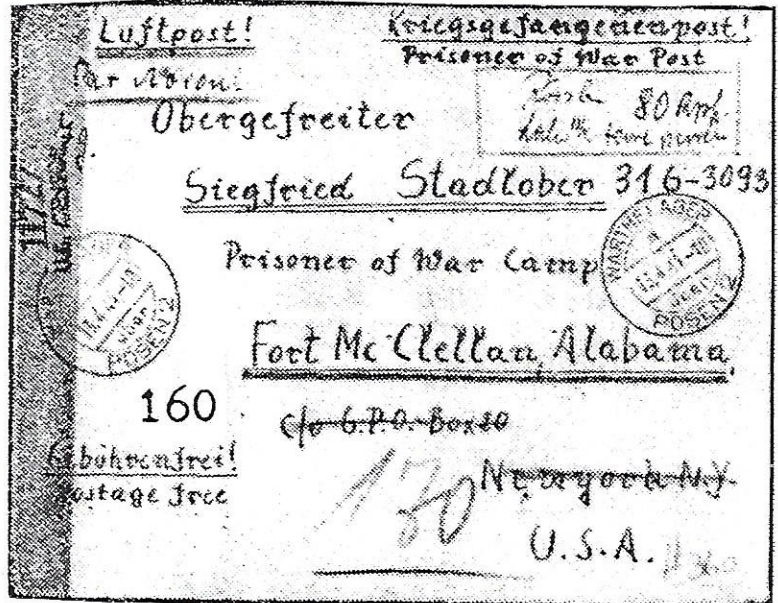


Fig. 3) Airmail letter posted at Warthelager in April 1944 addressed to an Obergefreiter at the POW camp in Fort McClellan, Alabama.



In the 1980s, former POWs started coming to Aliceville looking for something from their time there. After a POW/guard reunion held in 1989 was a great success, two downtown buildings no longer in use were donated for use as a POW camp museum. This museum has a vast collection including full uniforms of soldiers in the Africa Corps, helmets, weapons, insignia and medals such as the Iron Cross. Among its prized possessions is a map of Africa issued to each German soldier serving on the continent that is fully intact and on display. The museum is at 104 Broad Street, Aliceville, AL 35442. Operating hours are Mon.-Fri. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Adult admission to the museum is \$4 but only \$3 for students and senior citizens.

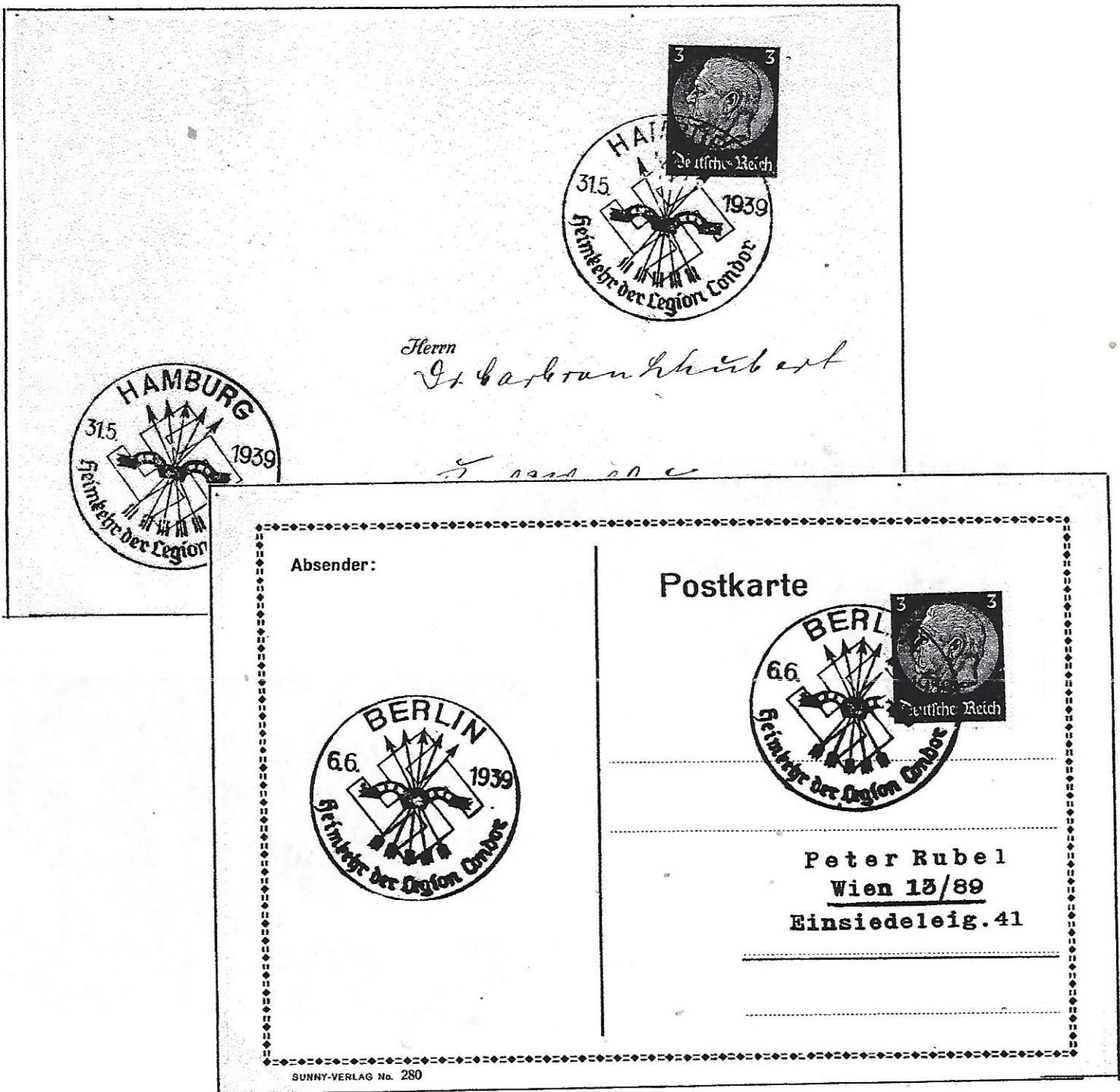
Homecoming of the Condor Legion

by Bob Ferguson

On July 16, 1936 General Francisco Franco staged a military revolt in Spain and civil war broke out. Early on Franco appealed to Hitler for help and although German aid to Franco never equaled that given by Italy, it was considerable: planes, tanks, technicians and a Luftwaffe unit called the Condor Legion. The return of the Condor Legion to Germany from Spain in the spring of 1939 was commemorated by the Reichspost with two special cancels.

Hamburg # 93: Heimkehr der Legion Condor used 31 May 1939

Berlin # 311: Heimkehr der Legion Condor used 6 June 1939



The following cards all feature General Franco in the front center

