



# 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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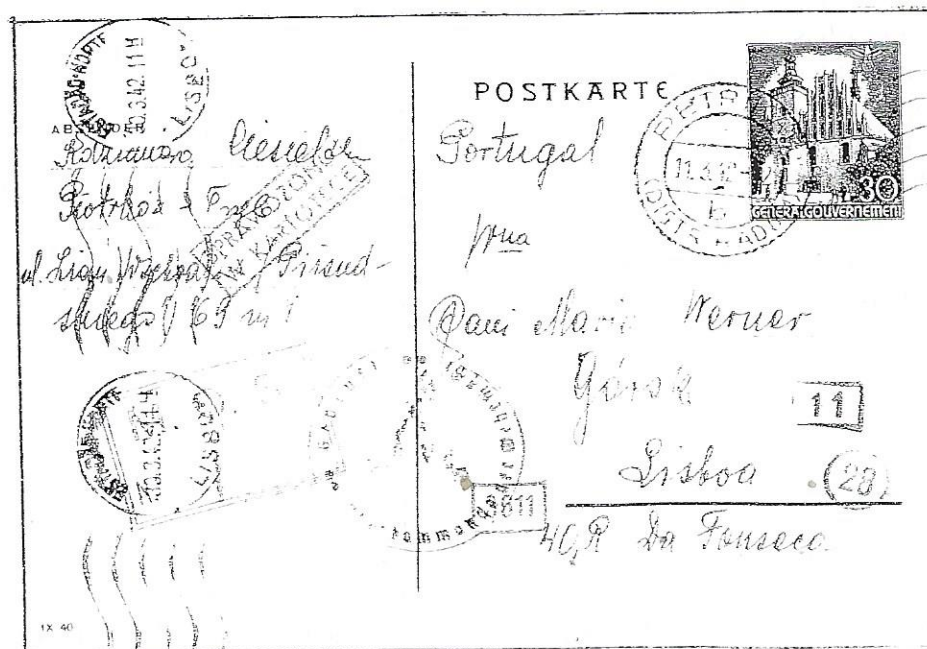
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## STUDY GROUP NOTES

**Rejected by Censor article on Page 9 in Bulletin 171** - TRSGer Larry Nelson writes "The censor marks shown in this article are Jewish self censorship marks - not German censor marks. About 30 of these types of Jewish self censorship marks are shown on pages 131-143 of 'Unsere Arbeit-unsere Hoffnung Ghetto Lodz 1940-1945' by Manfred Scholze and Stefan Petriuk. Mail service was suspended by the Germans on January 4, 1941 which resulted in a number of censored cards (Jewish censorship) being stored by the Ghetto Administration and they survived the war (I am told) in a closet. A few years ago I published an article on this subject 'A Survey of Jewish Self-censorship of the Theresienstadt, Litzmanstadt (Lodz) and Bendsburg Ghetto Mails' on page 174 of December 2004 issue of The Israel Philatelist".

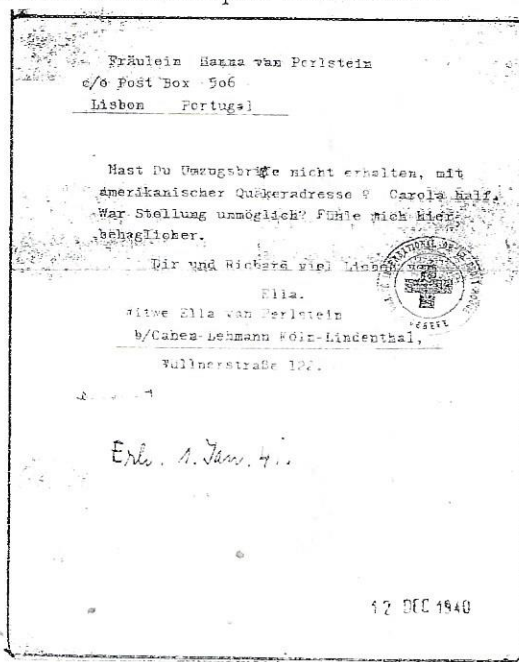
**Postal Substation article on Page 10 in Bulletin 171** - TRSGer Tom Dean writes "Bob Ferguson's article peaked my memory and I dug out this General-Government cover that has the "Poststelle" hand stamp from Lopiennik, a sub station of Krasnystaw."



**TRSG Meeting held during NOJEX 2009** at the Crowne Plaza Meadowlands Exhibition Center in Secaucus, NJ at 2:00 P.M. on May 23 was chaired by

TRSG Director and G.P.S. Vice-President Myron Fox. Attendees included TRSGers Joe Chervenyak, Henry Laessig, Jim Krostin, Edward Fraser and Jim Lewis. Exhibits with Third Reich themes included "A Study of Panzer Mail" by J. Chervenyak and "World War II Civil Censorship of Danish Mail" by Charles LaBlonde.

**Mystery Box 506** - Ed Fraser has this letter sent in Dec. 1940 via the International Red Cross in Geneva. It's from Ella van Perlstein in Cologne and addressed to Hanna van Perlstein c/o Post Box 506 in Lisbon, Portugal. As the Box 506 scheme was to circumvent the delay and restrictions of Red Cross mail, this is indeed an odd duck. However, Ed is pursuing this item and we hope to present his findings in the October bulletin.



**Cover Illustration:** This postal card was sent in March 1942 from the General Government to a fictitious person in Lisbon, Portugal. The boxed hand stamps on left reveal this to be a so-called "Sardine Card" used to communicate between Polish military and government personnel in England and their relatives in occupied Poland. This undercover mail scheme is detailed in the article beginning on page 17

# NAVY LOG

by Martin Lynes

U-Boat Depot Ship 'Erwin Wassner' - Feldpost # 06824



Originally scheduled to be built as the merchant ship 'Gran Canera' but converted to a depot ship by Deutsche Werft (Hamburg) and launched on January 29, 1938. Displacement: 5,150 tons; crew:229; armament: four 37mm AA and six 29mm AA guns. The 'Erwin Wassner' was Admiral Donitz' flag ship at the beginning of the war.

The 'Erwin Wassner' was bombed and sunk on July 24, 1944 during an RAF raid on Kiel. Cover sent to Marine Inspection in Kiel on January 1, 1940.

**COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:****332nd Infantry Division**

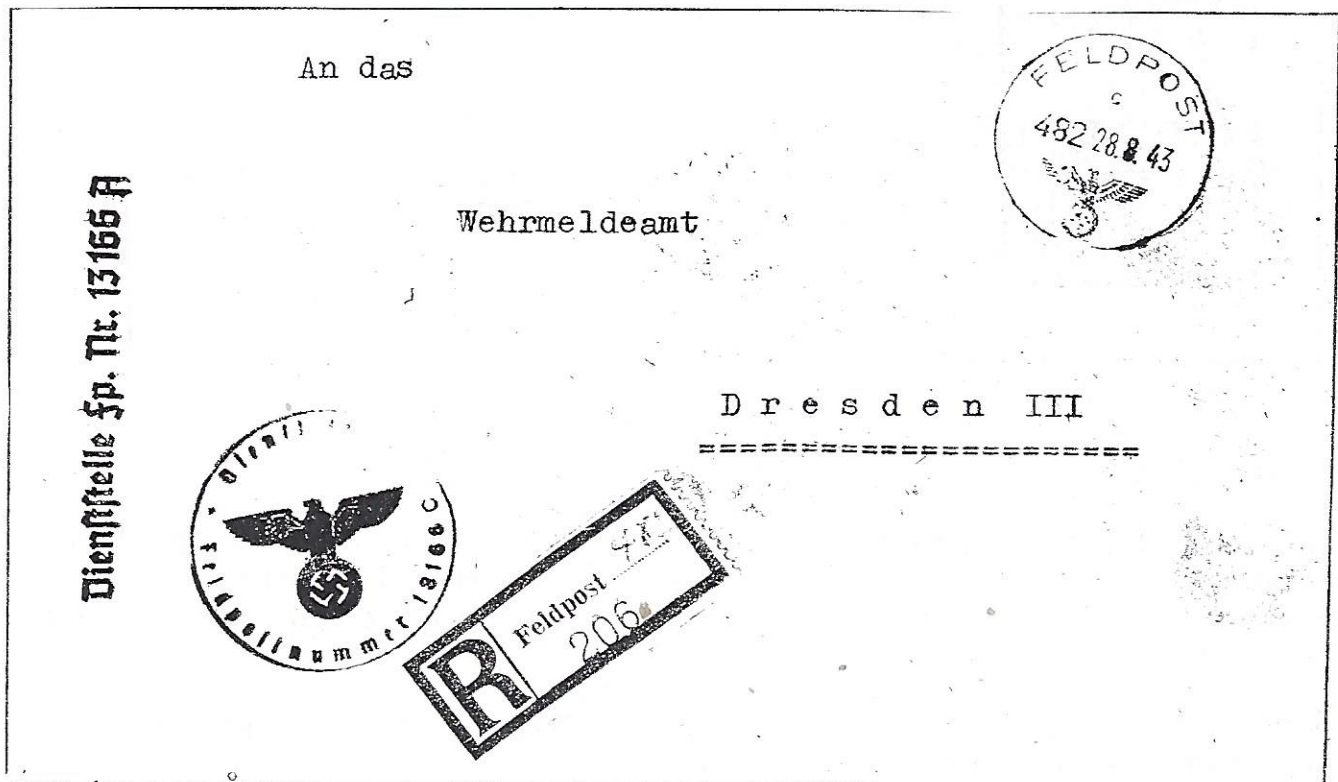
by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT	KENN	INFANTRY			ARTY	UNITS
332	482	676	677	678	332	332

The 332nd Infantry Division, formed in January 1941 (14th Wave), was made up of Silesians. The P.O. was assigned Fp.# 44577 as a mailing address and Kenn 482 as a coded identification for registered mail in lieu of tactical FpA 332.

Upon completion of training the division was sent to Normandy in August and remained in France until January 1943, when it was transferred to Army Group South on the Eastern Front. While enroute in February 1943, the 332nd Infantry Division was diverted to Army Group Center following the end of resistance in Stalingrad. It joined the 2nd Army on the southern flank of Army Group Center, which had come under heavy attack.

After helping repulse the Soviet winter offensive of 1942-43, the 332nd Infantry Division fought in the Kursk offensive. The division sustained very heavy casualties on August 3, 1943 in the Third Battle of Kharkov. Continuing in action, the remnants of the division were surrounded at Cherkassy in February 1944 when half of its survivors were lost, along with all of its heavy equipment. The division was pulled out of the line and disbanded shortly thereafter.



Cover sent to Military Records Office in Dresden in August 1943 from Fp. # 13166 (Rgts. Stab/Grenadier Regiment 676) via Field Post Office 332 (K-482).

## Special Collection: Berlin Post Offices

by Bob Ferguson

I have a document published in May 1944 by the Reichspost Central Office that lists every post office in Grossdeutschland, i.e., Germany, areas annexed to the Reich, the Protektorate and the General Gouvenment. This work is 479 pages long and includes the Postleitzahl (postal code), Reichspost Directorate District (RPD-Bezirk), branch status, often the street address and type of services for each post office or postal agency. With this type of information many specialized collections are possible. The first of three I have started is described below..

Objective: Locate covers posted at each of the 283 listed Berlin Post Offices. So far I have obtained covers from 110 offices. Shown below are four covers from the less common facilities and a list of the Berlin offices that appear on my document.

Fig 1) Parcel card posted at Berlin-Schmargendorf, branch office of Berlin-Wilmersdorf 1

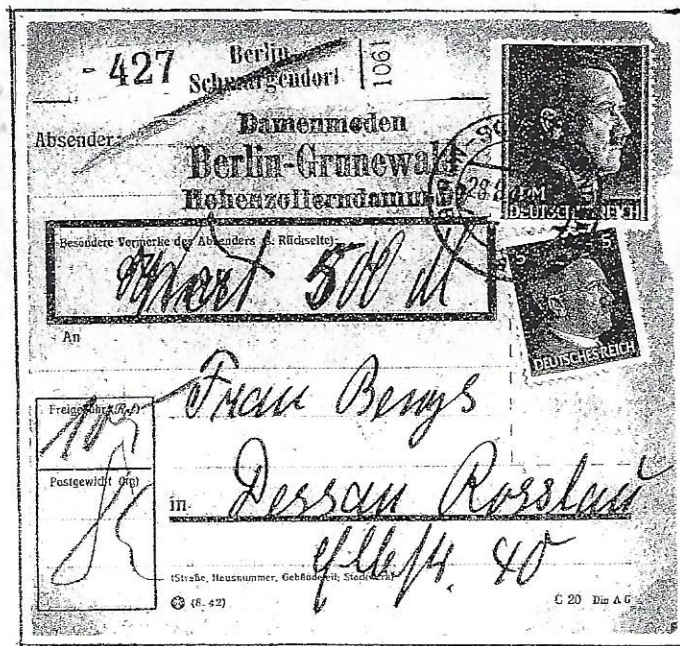


Fig 2) Card posted at Berlin-Hohenschönhausen [Werneuchener Str. 30-33].



Fig 3) Registered cover posted at Berlin C111 [Reichsbank], a branch office of Berlin C2.

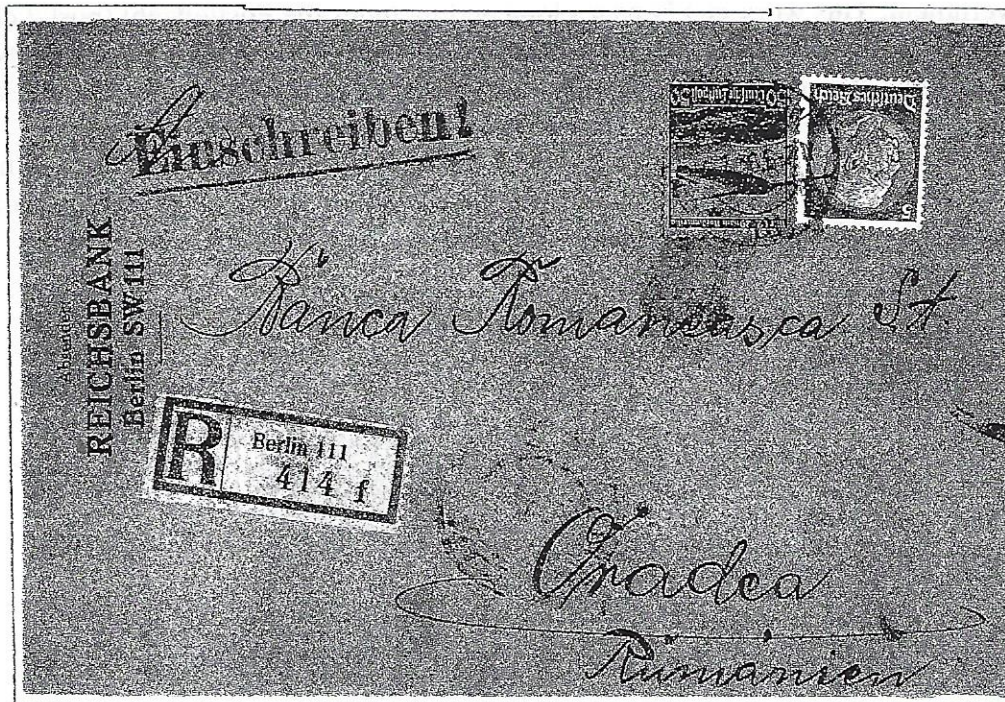


Fig 4) Airmail cover posted at Berlin -Zentralflughafen, a branch office of Berlin SW11.



## Berlin-a list of Postoffices in May 1944

Berlin-Adlershof	Berlin-Charlottenburg 11
Berlin-Altgliencke	Berlin-Charlottenburg 13
Berlin-Baumschulenweg	Berlin-Dahlem
Berlin-Biesdorf 1	Berlin-Eichkamp
Berlin-Biesdorf 2	Berlin-Falkenberg
Berlin-Biesdorf 3	Berlin-Friedenau 1
Berlin-Biesdorf 4	Berlin-Friedenau 2
Berlin-Blankenburg	Berlin-Friedenau 3
Berlin-Blankenfelde	Berlin-Friedrichsfelde
Berlin-Bohnsdorf	Berlin-Friedrichsfelde Magerviehhof
Berlin-Borsigwalde	Berlin-Friedrichshagen
Berlin-Britz-1	Berlin-Frohan 1
Berlin-Britz-2	Berlin-Frohan 2
Berlin-Britz-3	Berlin-Gatow 1
Berlin-Buch	Berlin-Gatow 2
Berlin-Buckow Ost	Berlin-Gesundbrunnen
Berlin-Buckow West	Berlin-Grunau 1
Berlin-Charlottenburg 1	Berlin-Grunau 2
Berlin-Charlottenburg 2	Berlin-Grunau 1
Berlin-Charlottenburg 3	Berlin-Grunewald 1
Berlin-Charlottenburg 4	Berlin-Grunewald 2
Berlin-Charlottenburg 5	Berlin-Halensee 1
Berlin-Charlottenburg 6	Berlin-Halensee 1A
Berlin-Charlottenburg 7	Berlin-Halensee 2
Berlin-Charlottenburg 8	Berlin-Haselhorst
Berlin-Charlottenburg 9	Berlin-Heiligensee
Berlin-Charlottenburg 10	Berlin-Heinersdorf

Berlin-Hermsdorf 1	Berlin-Lichterfelde 5
Berlin-Hermsdorf 2	Berlin-Lubars
Berlin-Hermsdorf 3	Berlin-Lubars 1
Berlin-Hirschgarten	Berlin-Lubars 2
Berlin-Hohenschonhausen 1	Berlin-Mahlsdorf 1
Berlin-Hohenschonhausen 2	Berlin-Mahlsdorf 2
Berlin-Johanninstal	Berlin-Mahlsdorf 3
Berlin-Karlshorst	Berlin-Mahlsdorf 4
Berlin-Karlshorst A	Berlin-Malchow
Berlin-Karolinenhof	Berlin-Mariendorf
Berlin-Kladow	Berlin-Marienfelde 1
Berlin-Kopenick 1	Berlin-Marienfelde 2
Berlin-Kopenick 2	Berlin-Marienfelde 3
Berlin-Kopenick 3	Berlin-Marzahn
Berlin-Kopenick 5	Berlin-Muggelheim
Berlin-Konradschohe	Berlin-Neuheiligensee 1
Berlin-Lankwitz 1	Berlin-Neuheiligensee 2
Berlin-Lankwitz 2	Berlin-Neukolln 1
Berlin-Lankwitz 4	Berlin-Neukolln 2
Berlin-Lichtenberg 1	Berlin-Neukolln 3
Berlin-Lichtenberg 2	Berlin-Neukolln 4
Berlin-Lichtenberg 3	Berlin-Neukolln 5
Berlin-Lichtenrade	Berlin-Niederschoneweide
Berlin-Lichterfelde 1	Berlin-Niederschonhausen
Berlin-Lichterfelde 2	Berlin-Nikolassee
Berlin-Lichterfelde 3	Berlin-Oberschoneweide
Berlin-Lichterfelde 4	Berlin-Pankow 1



Berlin-Pankow 2	Berlin-Spandau 3
Berlin-Pichelsdorf	Berlin-Spandau 4
Berlin-Plotzensee	Berlin-Spandau 5
Berlin-Rahnsdorf	Berlin-Spandau 6
Berlin-Reichstag	Berlin-Spandau 7
Berlin-Reinickendorf Ost 1	Berlin-Spandau 8
Berlin-Reinickendorf Ost 2	Berlin-Spandau 9
Berlin-Reinickendorf West 3	Berlin-Spandau 10
Berlin-Reinickendorf West 4	Berlin-Staaken
Berlin-Rosenthal	Berlin-Steglitz 1
Berlin-Rudom	Berlin-Steglitz 1A
Berlin-Ruhleben	Berlin-Steglitz 1D
Berlin-Rummelburg	Berlin-Steglitz 3
Berlin-Schlachtensee	Berlin-Steglitz 4
Berlin-Schmargendorf	Berlin-Stralau
Berlin-Schmookwitz	Berlin-Sudende
Berlin-Schoneberg 1	Berlin-Tegel 1
Berlin-Schoneberg 2	Berlin-Tegel 2
Berlin-Schoneberg 3	Berlin-Tegel 3
Berlin-Schoneberg 4	Berlin-Tegel 4
Berlin-Schoneberg 5	Berlin-Tegelort
Berlin-Schoneweide	Berlin-Tempelhof 1
Berlin-Schonholz	Berlin-Tempelhof 1B
Berlin-Siemensstadt	Berlin-Tempelhof 1D
Berlin-Spathsfelde	Berlin-Tempelhof 2
Berlin-Spandau 1	Berlin-Tempelhof 3
Berlin-Spandau 2	Berlin-Tempelhof 4

Berlin-Tempelhof 5	Berlin-Zehlendorf 8
Berlin-Treptow	Berlin-Zentralflughafen
Berlin-Ulhenhorst	Berlin C2
Berlin-Waidmannslust	Berlin N3
Berlin-Wansee 1	Berlin N4
Berlin-Wansee 1A	Berlin NW5
Berlin-Wansee 2	Berlin NW6
Berlin-Wansee 3	Berlin NW7
Berlin-Wartenberg	Berlin W8
Berlin-Weissensee 1	Berlin W9
Berlin-Weissensee 2	Berlin W10
Berlin-Wendenschloss	Berlin SW11
Berlin-Wilhelmshagen	Berlin SW12
Berlin-Wilhelmsruh	Berlin SW13
Berlin-Wilmersdorf 1	Berlin S14
Berlin-Wilmersdorf 2	Berlin W15
Berlin-Wilmersdorf 3	Berlin SO16
Berlin-Wilmersdorf 4	Berlin O17
Berlin-Wittenau	Berlin NW18
Berlin-Wolfsgarten	Berlin SW19
Berlin-Zehlendorf 1	Berlin N20
Berlin-Zehlendorf 2	Berlin N20C
Berlin-Zehlendorf 3	Berlin N20D
Berlin-Zehlendorf 4	Berlin NW21
Berlin-Zehlendorf 5	Berlin N23
Berlin-Zehlendorf 6	Berlin N24
Berlin-Zehlendorf 7	Berlin C25

Berlin SO26	Berlin N58	Berlin O98
Berlin C27	Berlin N58A	Berlin C99
Berlin N28	Berlin S59	Berlin C102
Berlin SW29	Berlin NO60	Berlin N103
Berlin W30	Berlin SW61	Berlin W104
Berlin N31	Berlin W62	Berlin N106
Berlin O32	Berlin C63	Berlin C111
Berlin O34	Berlin NW64	Berlin O112
Berlin W35	Berlin N65	Berlin N113
Berlin SO36	Berlin N65 Westhafen	Berlin N115
Berlin N37	Berlin W66	
Berlin W38	Berlin O67	
Berlin N39	Berlin SW68	
Berlin NW40	Berlin N69	
Berlin C41	Berlin W71	
Berlin S42	Berlin W73	
Berlin C43	Berlin NO74	
Berlin W44	Berlin C76	
Berlin SW47	Berlin SW77	
Berlin SW48	Berlin W80	
Berlin N49	Berlin W81	
Berlin W50	Berlin S84	
Berlin O51	Berlin NW87	
Berlin NW52	Berlin N90	
Berlin N54	Berlin NO92	
Berlin NW55	Berlin SO93	
Berlin W56	Berlin O94	
Berlin W57	Berlin N96	

## COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE: 170th Infantry Division

by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADIER			ARTY	UNITS
240	623	391	399	401	240	240

Formed from existing replacement training units at Munsterlager early in 1940, the 170th Infantry Division P.O. 240 was assigned Fp.# 09829 and K-623. The division first saw combat in Denmark in June 1940, capturing Aalborg and overwhelming Danish frontline positions. After occupation duty in France, it was sent to Romania and then invaded the USSR in June 1941 under XXX Corps of the 11th Army. Advancing across the Ukraine and southern Russia, by October it attacked across the Tartar trench and the Perekop peninsula, and took part in the siege of Sevastopol including the assault in July 1942 that resulted in the fall of that fortress.

The division was then transferred to Army Group North for the assault on Leningrad but was instead tied up in heavy defensive fighting. During the Soviet winter offensive of 1943-43 it defended a section of the German corridor east of Leningrad. It remained with Army Group North through 1943 and sustained heavy losses when the Russians broke the siege of Leningrad in January 1944. After retreating through Estonia, the division was shifted to Army Group Center in July and helped check the Soviet summer offensive of 1944. Reduced to battle group strength, it returned to Army Group North where it took part in the retreat through Latvia and into the Courland Pocket until the war ended.



Cover sent to Military Records Office in Aschaffenburg in November 1942 from Fp. # 13593 (Battalion II of Grenadier Regiment 391) via Division P.O. 240 (K-623).

## Story Behind the Cancel: Lilliput - Schaefer's Märchenstadt

by Kelly Stefanacci

This article concerns the "Lilliput-Schaefer's Märchenstadt" cancels. The literal translation is "Lilliput-Schaefer's Fairy Town". Shown below is the special postmark of the Traveling Post Office that accompanied Schaefer's famous troupe of midgets during their tour of Germany in the 1930's. The name Lilliput is, of course, derived from the "land of the small people" in Swift's classic "Gulliver's Travels". There was a special cancel (Fig. 1) for a predecessor to Märchenstadt's troupe known as "Heep's Liliputanerstadt" (Liliputian Town) which played in Magdeburg from Sept. 17 to Oct. 1, 1933.

There are two varieties of the Schaefer postmark. While the text is the same, one postmark has bold gothic type (Fig. 2) and the other (Fig. 3) has standard type.

Fig. 1)



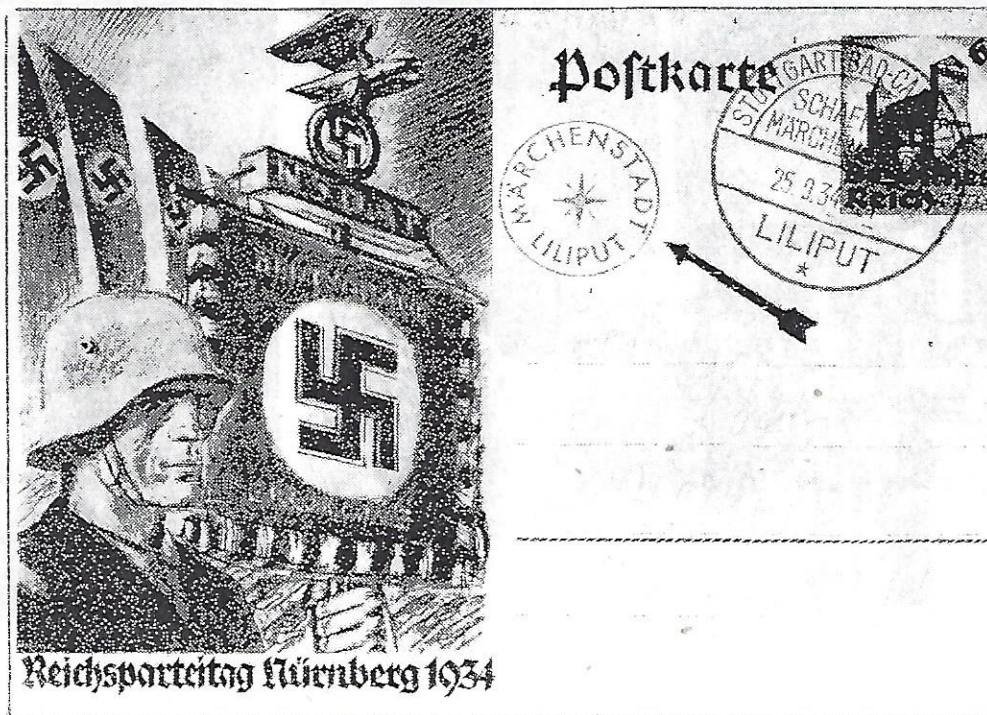
Fig. 2)



Fig. 3)



Shown below (Fig. 4) is a postal card with the special cancel used in Stuttgart on Sept. 29, 1934. The circular hand cachet (see arrow) is usually in purple and was probably applied at the T.P.O.



During intervals in the performance, members of the Schaefer troupe in miniature dinner dress circulated through the audience selling postcards with various photos of the troupe. These cards were printed by the firm Schmidt & Gebr. Böttger of Lübeck. The postcard shown below (Fig. 5) has a special Berlin-Treptow cancel and a photo of the Schaefer troupe. Additional photos show the miniature village (Fig. 6) and a revue in costume (Fig. 7)

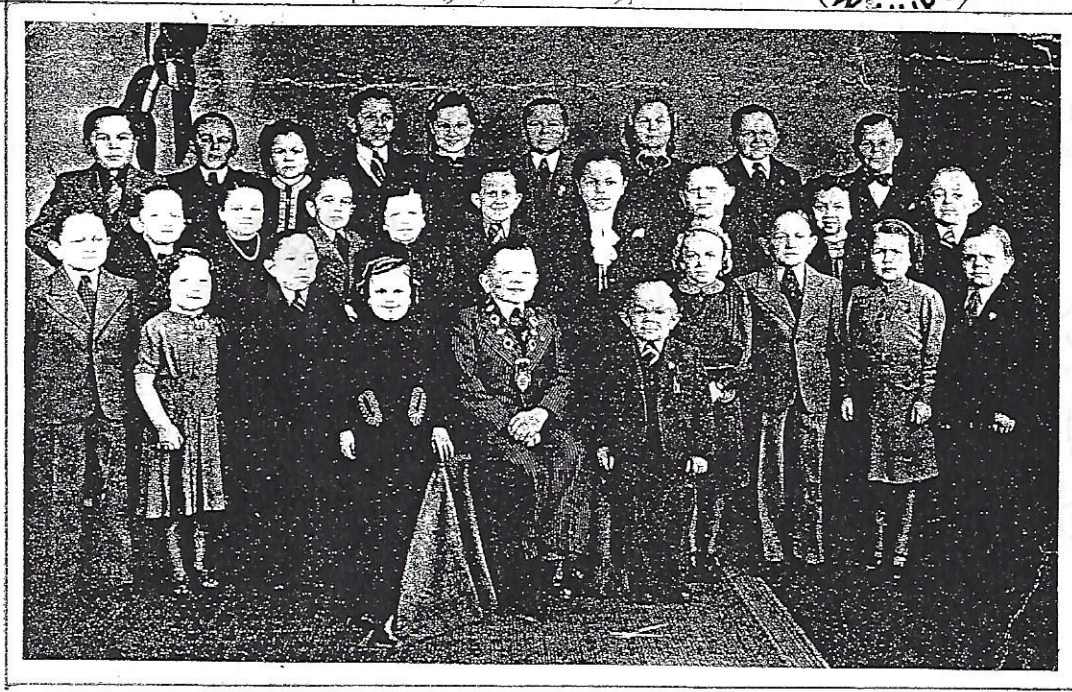


Fig. 6

Fig. 7



Schäfers Liliput Revue

The following is a list of towns and dates for "Lilliput-Schaefer's Märchenstadt" special cancels:

Allenstein Augsburg	6. December 1937	27 Aug. 1939 and 24 Aug. - 8 Sept. 1940
Baden Baden Bamberg	11 October 1941	6 December 1938
Berlin	6-24 Dec. 1934, 7-27 Dec. 1935, 18 - 27 March 1936, 6 - 22 Dec. 1937, 5-22 Dec. 1938, 18 Sept. 1941, 4-11 May 1942, 11-18 June 1942, 5 June 1943 and 20 July. 1943	
Biberach Bonn	2 July 1939	26 Oct. 1934
Bregenz Coburg	15-23 July 1938	5 August 1940
Darmstadt Dusseldorf	21-30 April 1934	21-28 July 1935, 18-26 July 1936
Elbing Erfurt	10 June 1938	17-20 July 1934
Erlagen Frankfurt (Main)	29 August 1938	12 April - 21 May 1934, 12-27 Nov. 1938
Frankfurt (Oder) Freiburg	30 April - 15 May 1938	15-24 Oct. 1938, 20 November 1940
Godesberg Gorlitz	29 July - 3 August 1936	15-25 June 1934
Graz Guben	12-21 October 1940	6 December 1939
Hindenburg Idar	5-14 May 1934	6-11 August 1936
Ingostadt Innsbruck	10-13 August 1940	29 July - 7 August 1939
Insterburg Kaiserlauten	25 July 1938	28 June 1941
Karlsruhe Kolmar	28 Oct. - 7 Nov. 1938, 5 June 1941	2 May 1941
Koln Konigsberg	9 Nov. 1934, 3 August 1935, 15-26 May 1936	27 June 1938
Konstanz Koslin	11-18 August 1943	6 December 1941
Krefeld Landau (Pfalz)	13 July 1935	15 June 1939
Landesberg (Warth) Leipzig	17-25 April 1938	19 April - 10 May 1936
Lorrach Ludenscheid	1-10 October 1938	1 July 1935
Luxemburg Mannheim	20-25 August 1941	3-12 September 1938
Metz Mulhausen	6 July 1941	22 May 1941
Munchen Neisse	19 Sept. - 4 Oct. 1936	8-11 June 1943
Neunkirchen (Saar) Neuweid	8 May 1939	31 May - 2 June 1936
Nurnberg Oppeln	29 Aug. - 15 Sept. 1936	2-10 June 1934
Pforzheim Pirmasens	13-17 September 1934	22 June 1939
Saarbrücken Saarlauten	5-21 June 1936, 15-18 May 1939, 8 August 1941	8-13 July 1936
Salzburg Schweinfurt	14 Sept. - 7 Oct. 1940	19-25 July 1940
Schwenningen Stolp	5 Sept. 1935	15 Sept. 1938
Strassburg Stuttgart	13-27 April 1941	21 Sept. - 1 Oct. 1934, 17-26 Sept. 1938
Trier Wurzburg	29 April 1939, 25 July 1941	4-8 Oct. 1934

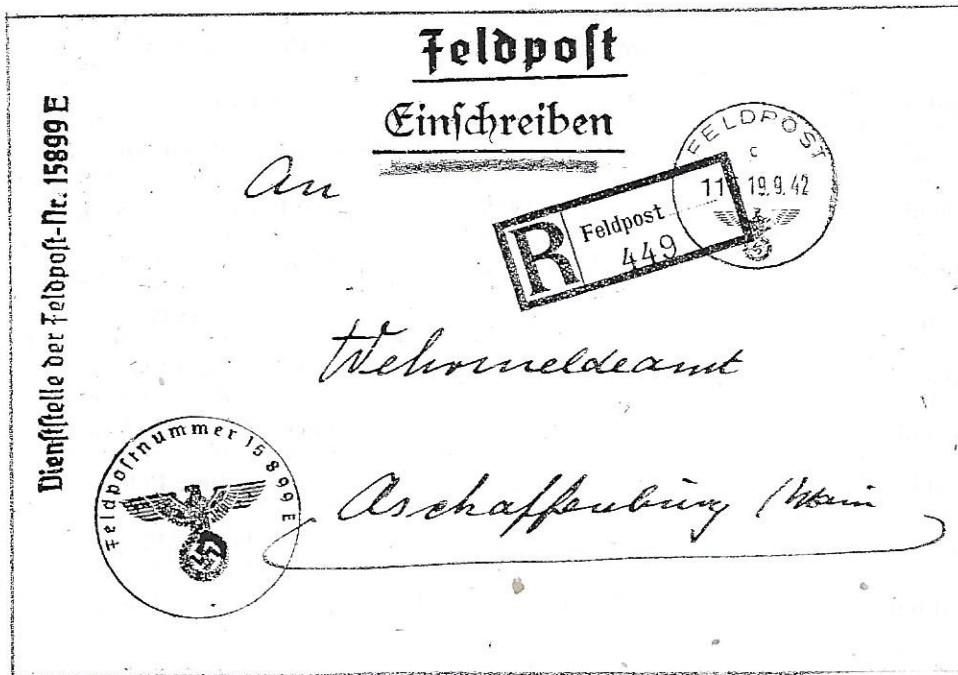
**COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:****129th Infantry Division**

by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADIER			ARTY	UNITS
129	115	427	428	430	129	129

The 129th Infantry Division was formed in 1940 (11th Wave) at Kassel, Germany. Its P.O. was assigned Fp.# 39275 as a return address and Kenn 115 for use on registered mail in lieu of tactical FpA 129. This division remained in Germany until June 1941 when it invaded Russia with Army Group Center.

As an element of XLI Panzer Corps, the division helped establish the Kalinin bridgehead on the upper Volga in October 1941. It opposed the Soviet Winter Offensive of 1941-42 as part of the 9<sup>th</sup> Army. Remaining on the central front, the 129th Infantry Division took part in the defensive battles of 1942 and in the Rzhev withdrawal in early 1943. It fought in the Battle of Nevel in late 1943. The division escaped destruction at Baranowitz during the Soviet Summer Offensive of 1944 but suffered heavy casualties. In August 1944 the division was officially commended for its defensive fighting on the Vistula. However, it had suffered such heavy personnel and equipment losses that it was disbanded late in 1944. The remaining personnel were distributed to surviving divisions of Army Group Center.



Cover sent to Military Records Office in Aschaffenburg in September 1942 from Fp. # 15899 (II/ Grenadier Regiment 430) via P.O. 129 (K-115).



## Polish Undercover Addresses Overseas During WW II

by A. J. Bosworth

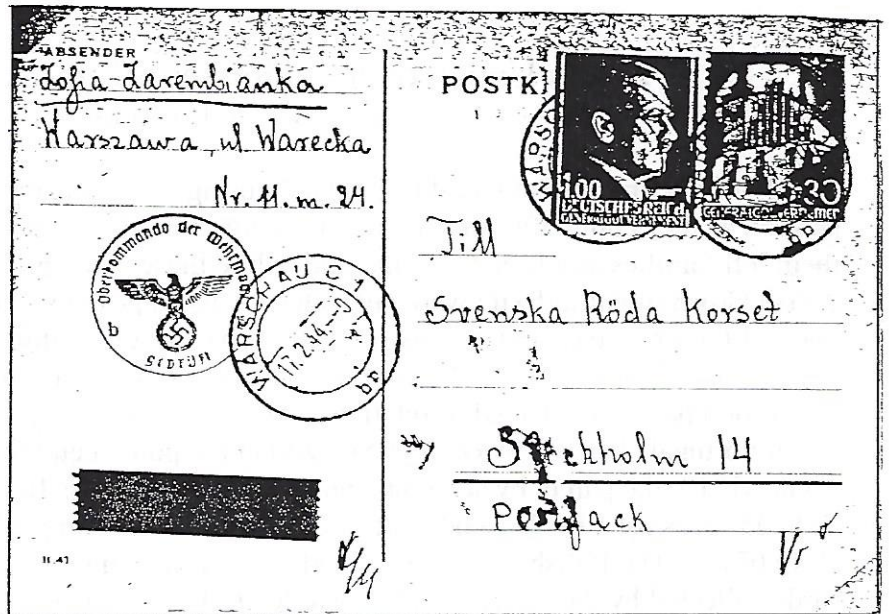
Polish military personnel based in England during the war had usually left their homeland, as best and as soon as they could after the German invasion, to carry on the fight from abroad. Invariably most of them left families and friends behind and, while these men and women in the armed forces, or with the Polish Government in Exile were dedicated to fighting Nazism, most of them desperately wanted to know if their relatives and friends were still alive. Inquiries through normal postal channels were no longer possible so the Polish Government in Exile devised a scheme whereby a person could send a small food parcel to a friend or relative in Poland via specially designated points in a neutral country i.e. in Portugal, Turkey, Sweden or Switzerland. Upon receipt the addressee was required to acknowledge the parcel by sending a postcard to the address from which it had been sent. The names and addresses used by the senders (those of individuals, companies or charitable organizations) were all fictitious. The Polish Government had made arrangements with the neutral authorities to have these cards collected by their agents and forwarded to London where Polish organizations would attempt to trace the sender of the original parcel through their files and card indexes of Poles in England. The person could not always be found but, when they were, I'm assured that it gave them great joy (and, incentive) to know that their loved ones in Poland were still alive. The fact that the food parcels sent very often contained a can of sardines gave rise to the phrase "Sardine Cards", the name by which these acknowledgment cards have become known.

### The Neutral Countries

1. Switzerland - Cards or letters went to the Swiss Red Cross in Geneva or Lausanne, and then to the Polish Army Postal Section in Paris. This route was not much used after the German occupation of France in June 1940. (See cover from Tschenschow to Geneva Red Cross censored in Munich below)



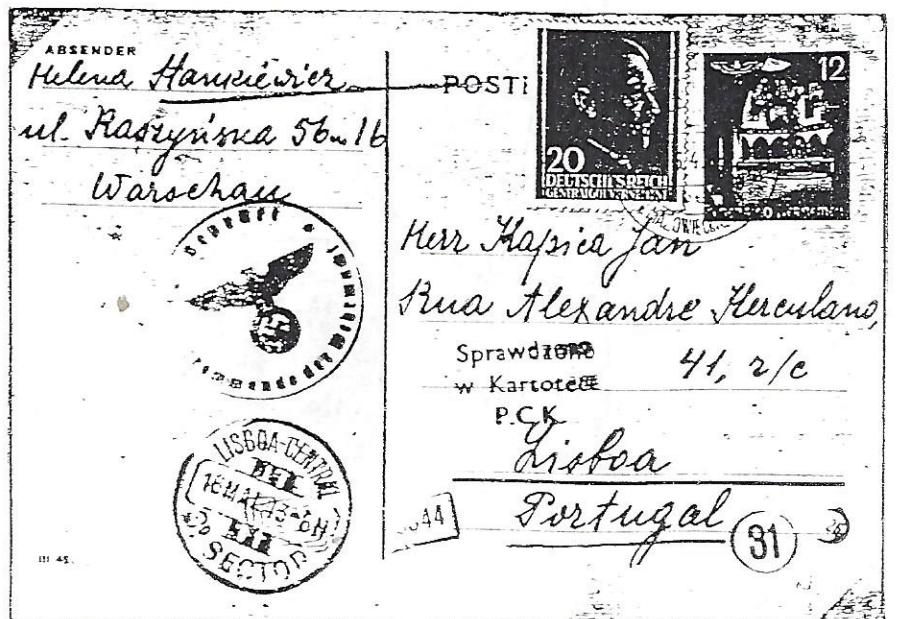
2. Sweden - Cards went to the Swedish Red Cross in Stockholm. This route was little used. This postal card from Warsaw to Stockholm Red Cross was censored in Berlin.



3. Turkey - Cards were sent to the Turkish Red Crescent and (to the best of my knowledge) usually to Madame Janina Kowalski in Ankara. This postal card from Warsaw to Madame Kowalski was censored in Vienna.



4. Portugal - This was by far the most used route and there were at least eighteen Polish underground addresses in Lisbon for the receipt of reply cards (there are still more coming to light from time to time). This postal card from Warsaw to the most frequently used of these addresses, Rue Alexandre Herculano 41 was censored in Munich.



Some writers have advanced the theory that, because mail to these undercover addresses went unhindered through to 1945, the Germans never discovered the real purpose of the cards. I do not subscribe to this idea since the repetitions of names and addresses alone would have made it virtually impossible for the highly efficient German postal and censorship system to miss them. I believe that the Germans tolerated the flow of these cards and may have even used the scheme for their own purposes.

The Cards themselves are a rich source of censorship cachets and transit markings plus cachets applied by the Polish Government organizations in London. Among the latter are the following examples from items in my collection with their appropriate English translations.

A.) Sprawdzono w Kartotece P.C.K. - "Checked in the records of the Polish Red Cross (Polski Czerwony Krzyż)".

B.) Fundusz Rotowania Dzieci - "Foundation for the search and rescue of Polish children."

C.) M.O.S. 15 - Receiving mark of Section 15 of the Polish Ministry of Schools and Education in London.

Fig. 5 This postal card sent from Dombrowa in Upper Silesia to Frau Amelia Limo in Lisbon has the markings noted above as A & C on reverse side.



ED NOTE: This article was first published in the Newsheet of the Third Reich Study Group (U.K.) and appears here with their kind permission.

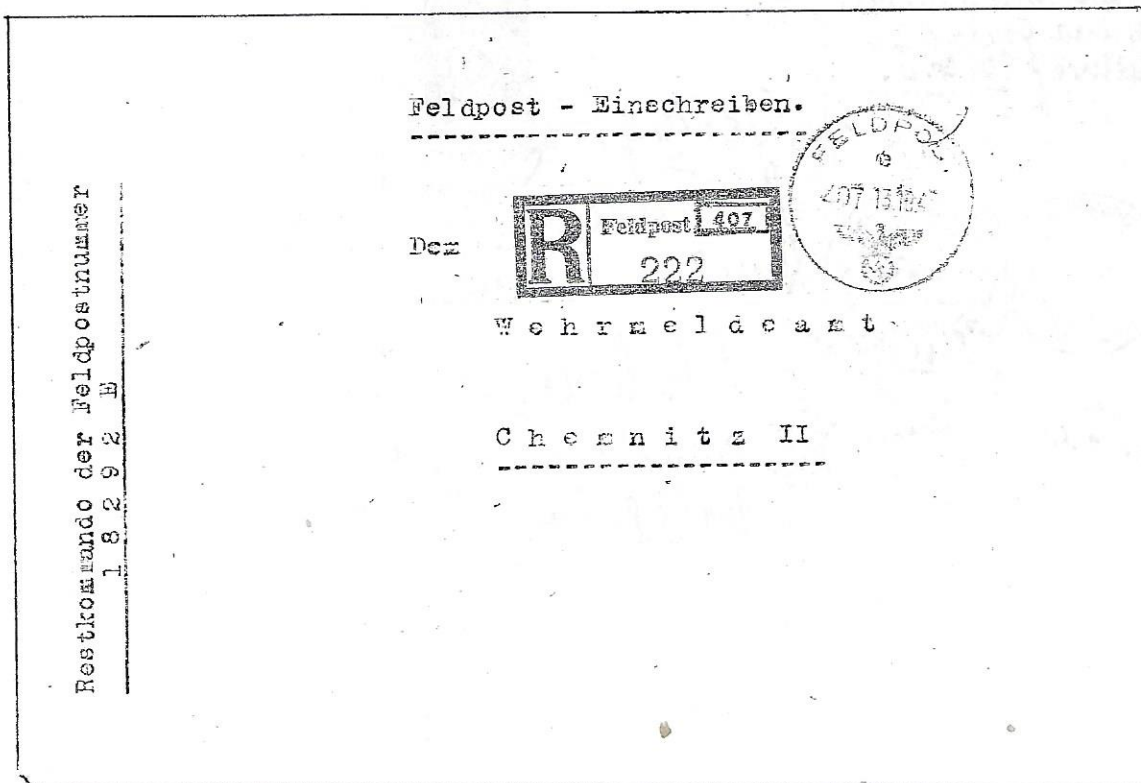
## COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE: 387th Infantry Division

by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADIER		ARTY	UNITS	
387	407	541	542	543	387	387

Formed early in 1942 (17th Wave) in Wehrkreis XVII, the P.O. was assigned Fp.# 45342 as a return address and Kenn 407 as a coded identity in lieu of tactical FpA 387 Nicknamed the 'Rheingold Division', the 387th Infantry Division was sent to the Russian Front where it was continuously and frequently heavily engaged in fighting from the summer of 1942 until May 1944.

The 387th Infantry Division was assigned to support the 8th Italian Army during the Stalingrad campaign and suffered heavy losses when that formation collapsed in late 1942. It also sustained severe casualties during the withdrawal from the lower Dneiper in 1944. By the summer of 1944 the division was considered burned-out and it was withdrawn from the line and formally disbanded near Nikopol.

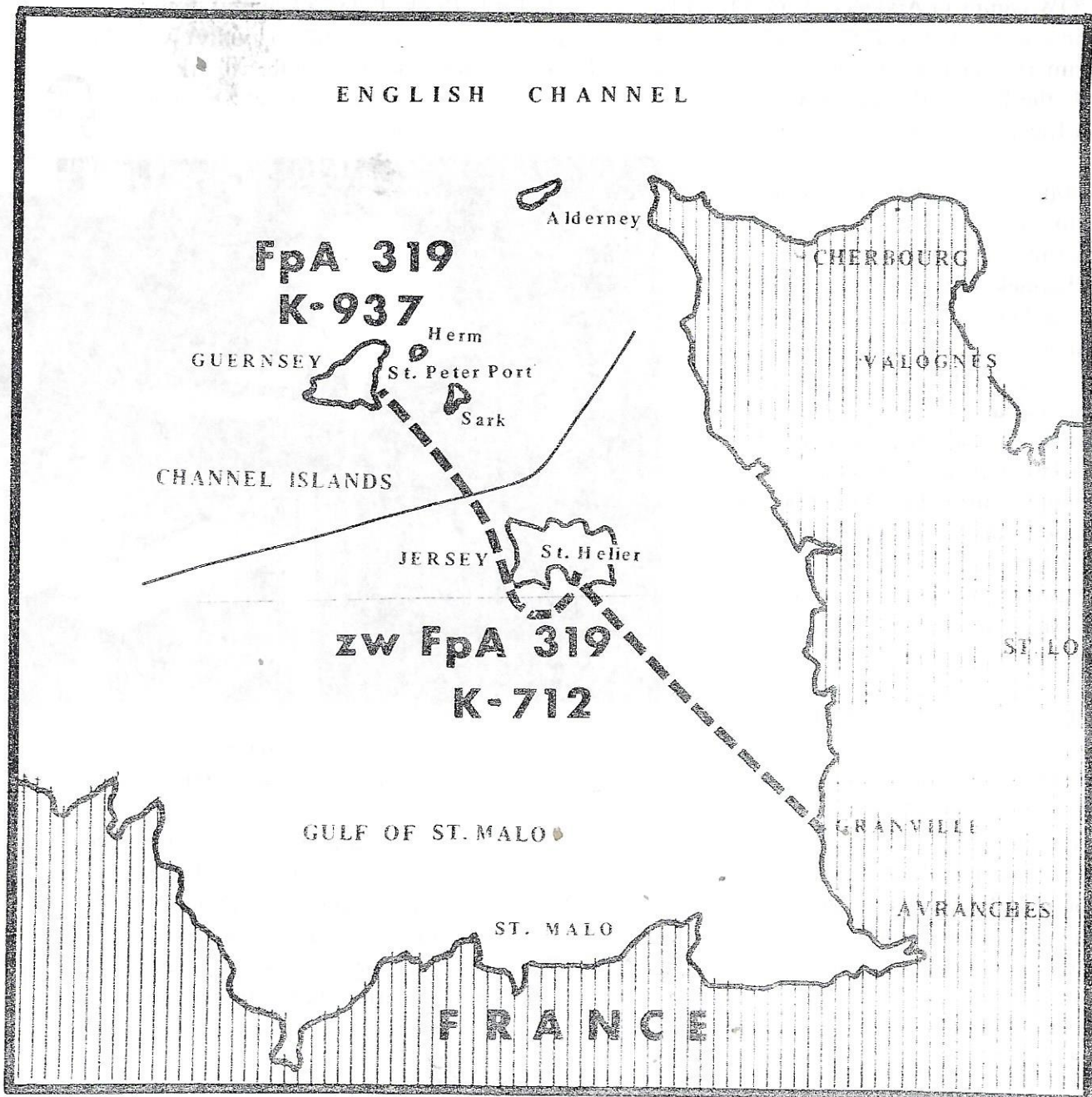


Cover sent to Military Records Office in Chemnitz in October 1943 from Fp. # 18292 (Stab I/Grenadier Regiment 525) via division P.O. 387 (Kenn 407)

## TRSG Map: German Feldpost Offices on the Channel Islands 1940-1944

by Kelly Stefanacci

Formed in Wehrkreis IX (Wave 13) in Nov.-Dec. 1940, the 319<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division took over defense of the English Channel Islands in the summer of 1941. This division was also responsible for the city of St. Malo and a sector of the French coast. The division was dispersed as follows: Division HQ and Grenadier Regiment 582 were on Jersey. Grenadier Regiment 583 plus Battalions I (except Company 2) and III of Grenadier Regiment 584 were on Guernsey. Battalion II of Grenadier Regiment 584 was on Alderney and Company 2 of Grenadier Regiment 583 was on Sark. The division Feldpost office FpA 319 was located in St. Peter Port on Guernsey and used code ("Kenn") 937. By 1943 Hitler was so convinced that the Allies would have to take the Channel Islands before they could land in France that he reinforced the 319<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division to a strength of 40,000 men, making it the largest division in the German Army during WWII. To expand postal service a branch office ("Zweigstelle") of FpA 319 was established in St. Helier on Jersey but this office used code ("Kenn") 712. This map shows the routing of mail from France to the Feldpost offices on the Channel Islands.



## German POWs in North America Camps in Arkansas

by Jim Lewis

During World War II, the United States established many prisoner of war (POW) camps on its soil for the first time since the Civil War. By 1943, Arkansas had received the first of 23,000 German and Italian prisoners of war, who would live and work at military installations and branch camps throughout the state. Establishing and managing POW camps in the United States was challenging on many levels, but organizing prison camps overseas created problems of its own. Supervising large groups of prisoners in Europe while adhering to the POW treatment policies established by the Geneva Convention diverted food, transportation, and medical resources from the American war effort overseas. Eventually, the War Department reasoned that keeping POWs in the United States would be an efficient use of military resources.

Nearly 23,000 captured troops, mostly Germans and Italians from Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps, were sent to POW camps in Arkansas. Camp Robinson in North Little Rock (Pulaski County), Camp Chaffee in Fort Smith (Sebastian County), and Camp Dermott in Dermott (Chicot County) were the state's primary centers for Germans. The remote locality of Camp Dermott in southeast Arkansas, previously the Jerome Relocation Center for Japanese Americans, made it the perfect site to house German officers, while Camp Monticello in Drew County housed Italians.

Camp Robinson was regarded nationally as a model camp. Living conditions in the camps were pleasant under the circumstances and included barrack housing, recreational activities, and creative and educational opportunities. Soccer was a popular sport among prisoners. POWs also performed theatrical plays and musical concerts. But it was not all fun and games. The POWs were required to work in and around the camp, earning eighty cents a day for their labor. Their duties included working in the camp cafeteria, in grounds maintenance, and on local construction projects. POWs could use their wages to buy toiletries, candy, cigarettes, and even beer.

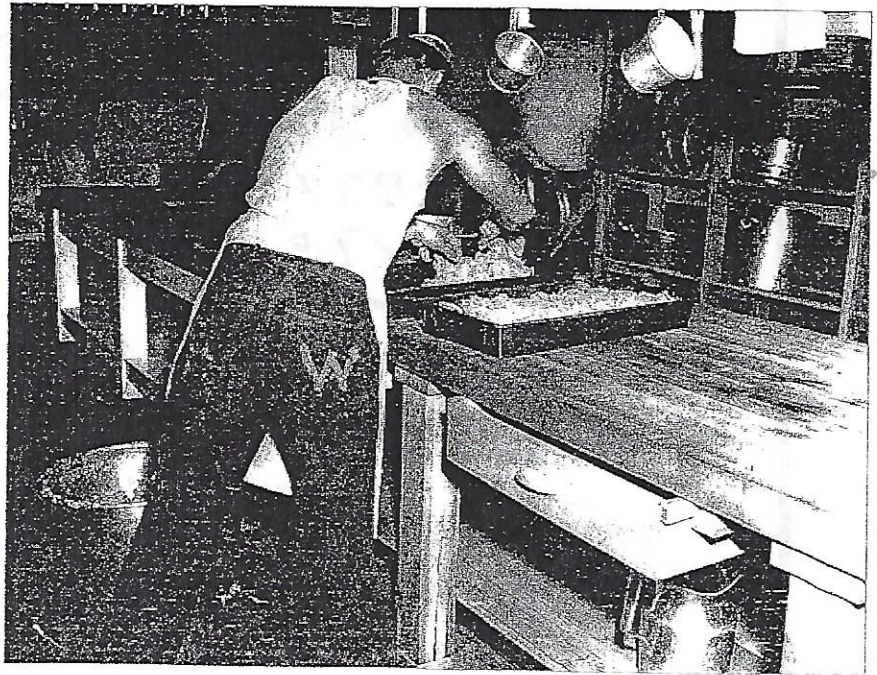


Fig. 1) German POW preparing hamburger at Camp Chaffee in June 1943

Many young men left Arkansas during WWII to serve in the military or to find jobs in defense related industries. Consequently, a labor shortage occurred in the farming and timber industries. To alleviate these shortages, POWs supplemented the farm and labor forces in branch camps throughout Arkansas, mostly in the Delta and southern regions. In many cases, facilities from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) served as barracks for the POWs in the branch camps. Each day, trucks of prisoners were transported to farms and timber sites to chop cotton, cut wood, and perform other chores to help stabilize the economy.

After filling out a Red Cross post card assuring their families that they were alive and in Allied hands, each German prisoner was assigned a serial number which would be used throughout his captivity. The first component designated the theater in which he was captured: 81 meant North Africa; 5 meant the Western Defense Command and 31 meant the European Theater. A German captured in North Africa, for example, would have a number that began with 81G while an Italian's number would begin with 81I and an Austrian with 81A. The rest of the number for any of them was a sequential series, i.e. 81G-1234.



Fig. 2) German POW near tents in branch camp at Murfreesboro in 1944. It was 1 of 23 branch camps of Joseph T. Robinson main camp.

Upon arrival in their permanent camp, POWs were provided with postage free form cards to inform their families as to their physical condition and their new mailing address. The card shown below (Fig. 3) was sent to Idar-Oberstein from a "Soldat" in Camp Chaffee, Arkansas. The face side shows the circular U.S. camp censor on left side superimposed by a Berlin (Code 'b') machine censor marking.

Fig. 3)

I am in an American internment camp.  
 Ich befinde mich in einem Amerikanischen Konzentrationslager.  
 Mein Gesundheitszustand ist gut  
 Meine Adresse ist wie folgt:  
 Name Soldat Helmuth Schneider USA  
 Internment Serial No. ISN. 048460 M.I.  
 U. S. A. P. O. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date 21.1.1943.

Postage Free  
Portofrei

**PRISONER OF WAR POST CARD**  
 Postkarte für Kriegsgefangene

Address  
 Adresse FAMILIE

Do Not Write Here!  
 Hier Schreiben!

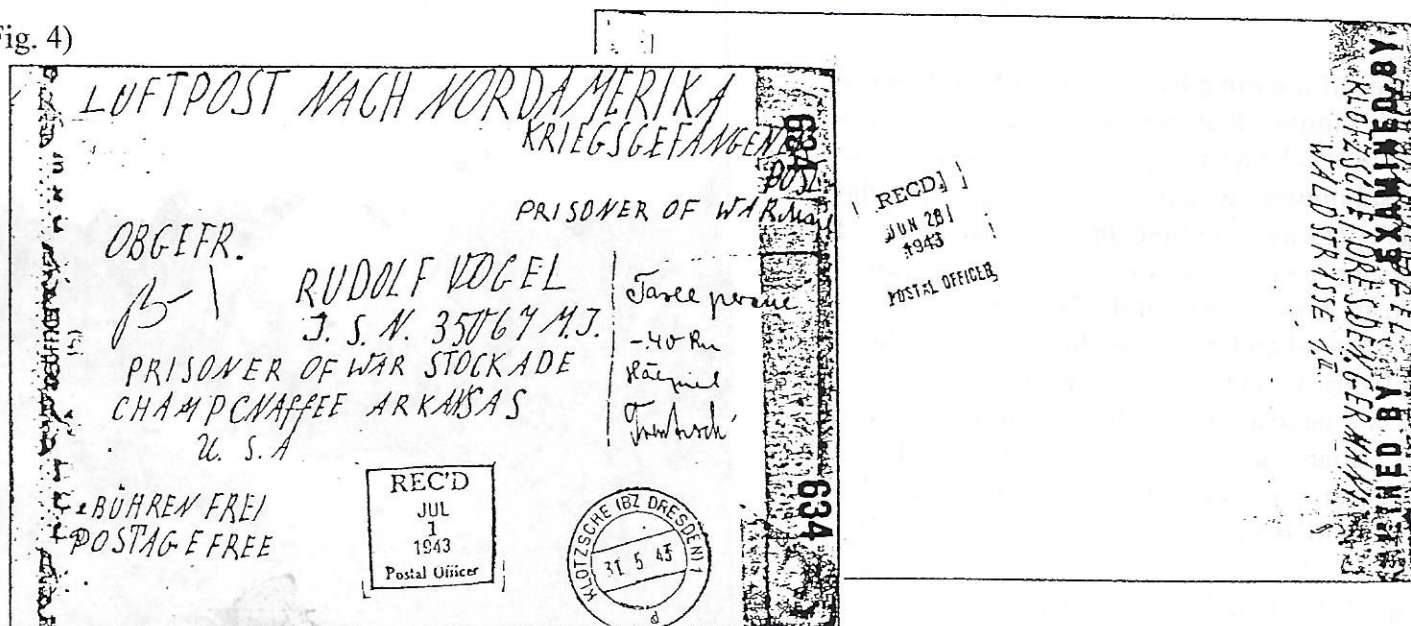
OTTO SCHNEIDER  
 IDAR-OBERSSTEIN-3/Rheinland  
 TIEFENSTEINER-STR.433  
 GERMANY

U. S. G. Form No. 6  
 July 17, 1943

1-22-43

Mail from Germany could be expedited by payment of 40 Rpf for airmail service. This airmail letter (Fig. 4), posted in Koltzsche on May 31, 1943, was back stamped in Camp Chaffee on June 26th. After examination by censors, a July 1st boxed receiving stamp was added to front side by the postal officer.

Fig. 4)



Name of Camp	Population	Main Camp	Name of Camp	Population	Main Camp
Athenia	418	Robinson	Knobel	94	Robinson
Bassett	588	Robinson	Lake Village	334	Dermott
Blytheville	591	Robinson	Luxora	248	Robinson
Robinson	2,290	-	Marked Tree	313	Robinson
Crawfordsville	301	Robinson	Monticello	2,706	-
Dermott	5,402	-	Murfreesboro	244	Robinson
Earle	245	Robinson	Oseola	393	Robinson
Elaine	392	Robinson	Pine Bluff	554	(Arsenal)
Chaffee	3,002	-	Russelville	149	Chaffee
Grady	241	Monticello	Simboro	296	Robinson
Harrisburg	295	Robinson	St. Charles	100	Robinson
Hot Springs	212	-	Stuttgart	386	Robinson
Hughes	439	Robinson	Turrell	294	Robinson
Jonesboro	389	Robinson	West Helena	498	Robinson
Keiser	293	Robinson	Wynne	684	Robinson

There were no escape attempts because of the remote location of the state. Most prisoners resigned themselves to a relatively comfortable existence in the camps. The lifestyle caused many citizens to accuse the military of coddling the enemy. Americans were subject to rationing of food and other items, while POWs were provided a steady diet of good food and access to many name brand items, such as cigarettes, that were unavailable to the general population.

To ease the transition between the period of civilian labor shortages and the return of U.S. soldiers, the camps were dismantled around the summer of 1946, and the POWs allowed to return to Europe.