



# 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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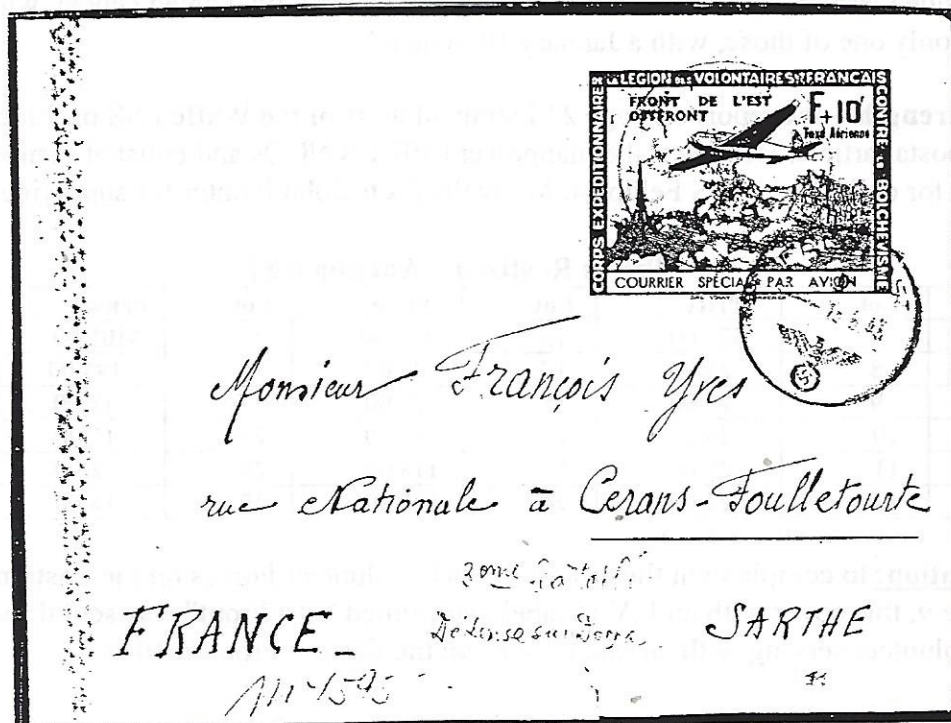
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# STUDY GROUP NOTES

**Otto Redux:** – to follow up Bulletins 135, 141 & 143, TRSGer Bob Larro sent in this ad w/cover to USA posted Dec. 24, 1928. More “Otto Edenharter” items from Bob will appear in future “Study Group Notes”.

## Marken - Versand

# Otto Edenharter, München 19

Postcheck München 27897      Fundsb. Bergstr. 44      Gepründet 1920  
Mitglied bei 23 Organisationen der Branche.

**Sammeln Sie**  
Briefmarken, gebraucht und ungebraucht, aus aller Welt, Geflogene Briefe mit Luftpoststempel, Ganzsachen mit eingepreisten Postwertzeichen, Flugmarken von Schau-, Welt- und Rund-Flügen, Gelegenheitsmarken von Ausstellungen und Messen, Siegelmarken von Höfen, Gerichte etc. Waffeln-, Kriegs- und Militärmarken, Stempelmarken usw.

oder wollen Sie aus obigen Gebieten zu sammeln beginnen, so schreiben Sie mir bitte, ich sende dann gerne eine Verbindung mit Ihnen auf, aber mit der Bitte, dass Sie mir die nötigen Adressen mitteilen, damit ich Sie über weitestgehende Kontakte über Ihre Sammlerangelegenheiten informieren kann.

**Haben Sie**  
Münzen, Medaillen und Ehrenzeichen, ausserkurs gesetzte alte Banknoten und Notgeldscheine, ungebrauchte Ansichtskarten, vordrucklose Briefe und Auftragsformulare, aeronautische, Literatur usw.

so schreiben Sie mir bitte ebenfalls, denn ich interessiere mich für alle Sachen und will darüber mit Ihnen korrespondieren.

**Besitzen Sie**  
Dokumente mit Hand- oder Maschinen-Poststempel, Stempel von lokalen Briefverordnungen, Reklamepoststempel, Seepost- und Luftpoststempel usw.

so schicke ich Ihnen gern, Beachtung, da ich diese Gebiete, ausser für Poststempel und Gegend, Interesse dabei bin.

**Sammeln Sie**  
Marken von Zeitungs- und Briefmarken, die in den Postämtern der Welt zu sammeln sind.

**Sammeln Sie**  
was für auch immer, was erhalten ist und in den Postämtern der Welt zu sammeln sind.

**Sammeln Sie**  
was Ihnen Freude bereitet und Ihre Verhältnisse zu berücksichtigen ist.

**Tauschen Sie**  
mit Ihre Postkarte gegen Ihre Feldpostkarte, wenn Sie einen Versand beabsichtigen, so schreiben Sie mir bitte, ich sende dann gerne eine Verbindung mit Ihnen auf, aber mit der Bitte, dass Sie mir die nötigen Adressen mitteilen, damit ich Sie über weitestgehende Kontakte über Ihre Sammlerangelegenheiten informieren kann.

**Kaufe**  
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U.S. America

3,50

**Überroller cover** – Ben Beede replied to Larry Nelson: “I disagree with your interpretation of a cover shown on page 14 of Bulletin 137. I think that it is what the Germans call an item of ‘Überrollerpost’, that is, a cover seized after World War II and delivered after V-E Day. The marking is characteristic of a fair number of covers sent to members of the German armed forces in March-April 1945. Very occasionally, a cover bears a conventional U.S. censorship marking, as well as the machine marking you illustrated. Meschenmoser’s book on ‘Überrollerpost’ discusses such items. In any case, the cover you showed was not subject to the censorship requirements you cited because it did not go to a foreign country. Normally Feldpost mail was not censored by non-military censorship agencies unless it was addressed outside Germany. The ‘Zurück’ marking also occurs with a dated cancel, which is quite scarce. I have only one of those, with a January 1946 date.”

**Waffen-SS Strength** – the report on page 23 listing all units of the Waffen-SS on June 30, 1944 is not technically a postal article. However, the manpower (officers NCOs and enlisted men) numbers should be very useful for collectors of SS Feldpost. Many thanks to John Painter for supplying this report.

### Prices Realized – Auction # 87

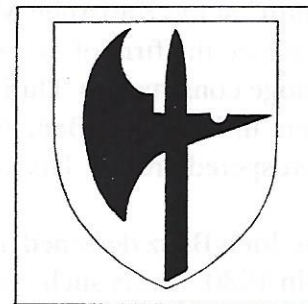
Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price	Lot	Price
1	\$25.00	7	\$25.00	13	\$25.00	25	\$105.00	31	\$14.00
2	25.00	8	25.00	17	25.00	26	195.00	32	14.00
3	25.00	9	25.00	18	25.00	27	18.00	33	16.00
4	25.00	10	25.00	22	115.00	28	15.00	34	14.00
5	35.00	11	25.00	23	118.00	29	12.00	35	17.00
6	37.00	12	25.00	24	120.00	30	18.00	38	25.00

**Cover Illustration:** to complement the article “French Volunteer Forces on the Eastern Front” that begins on page 9, this cover with an L.V.F. label overprinted “Ost Front” was sent through the Feldpost by a French volunteer serving with German forces on the Eastern Front in 1943.

## COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE: 335th Infantry Division by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADIER		ARTY	UNITS	
335	649	682	683	684	335	335

Consisting mainly of Poles in German service, the 335th Infantry Division was formed in Germany in January 1941. At completion of training it was sent to northern France in the summer of 1941. The P.O. was assigned Fp# 43810 as a return address and Kenn 649 as a coded identity. The division emblem was a black axe head inside a black edged shield. Transferred to Brittany the following March, it took part in the occupation of Vichy France in November 1942.



The 335th Infantry Division was sent to the southern sector of the Russian front early in 1943 and was almost continuously in action for the next year and a half. It fought at Kursk, in the subsequent retreats through the Donets, and in the Dneiper Bend battles. In August 1944 the 335th Infantry Division was destroyed at Kishinev, west of the Dneiper, and formally disbanded shortly thereafter.



Cover sent to Military District HQ in Teschen in March 1942 from Fp.# 32825 (2. Fahrkol./Inf. Div. Kol. 335) via Field P.O. 335 (K-649).

## Story Behind the Stamp: Carl Friedrich Benz

by Kelly Stefanacci

Carl Friedrich Benz was born November 25, 1844 at Karlsruhe. He was the son of Johann George Benz, a railroad engineer and his wife Josephine Vaillant. In 1858 the boy completed primary school in Karlsruhe and entered grammar school where he specialized in the natural sciences. His father had died in 1846 and his widowed mother sacrificed so that he could enter the Karlsruhe Polytechnic School in 1860. He studied mechanical engineering for four years. Upon graduation he became a "locksmith" at the Karlsruhe Machine Construction Co. to learn locomotive construction. The next year he joined the firm of Schweitzer at Mannheim. Next he joined Benckiser Bros. in Pforzheim to learn bridge construction. During this time he attended evening classes to improve his theoretical education. In 1871 Carl Benz founded his own mechanical workshop and iron foundry in Mannheim, which prospered greatly. His marriage to Berta Ringer in 1872 produced two sons and three daughters.

Carl Friedrich Benz designed a 1 H. P. 2-stroke gasoline engine in 1877 that was perfected and placed on sale in 1880. It was such a success that he founded the firm "Benz and Co." which designed and produced the first true motor car between 1884 and 1885. On January 26, 1886, Carl Benz received Patent No. 37,435 for his motor car. In 1888 he produced his famous Model 3 motor car and in the winter of 1892-1893 he received a patent for his new rear axle. Disputes within the firm led Carl Benz to withdraw from it in 1903. He went to Ladenburg to found the firm "Benz and Sons" with his sons Eugene and Richard. His retirement to Ladenburg bei Mannheim was permanent and he remained there through World War I and the post-war period. He died there on April 4, 1929. His sons continued to manage "Benz and Sons" but the firm "Benz and C. A.G." later merged with the "Daimler Motor Co. Ltd." to become the firm "Mercedes Benz Motor Co."

Carl Friedrich Benz appears on the 12 Phennig value of a set of two stamps designed by Karl Diebitsch. These stamps were issued on February 15, 1936 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Motor Car and the International Motor Car Exhibition in Berlin.



There is a special Berlin cancel used from Feb. 14th to March 2nd, 1936 for the Motor Car Exhibition which illustrates Carl Benz's first motor car.



ED NOTE: If you enjoyed this article and would like to know "the story" about other people or places appearing on Third Reich stamps, please send requests to Ye Olde Ed.

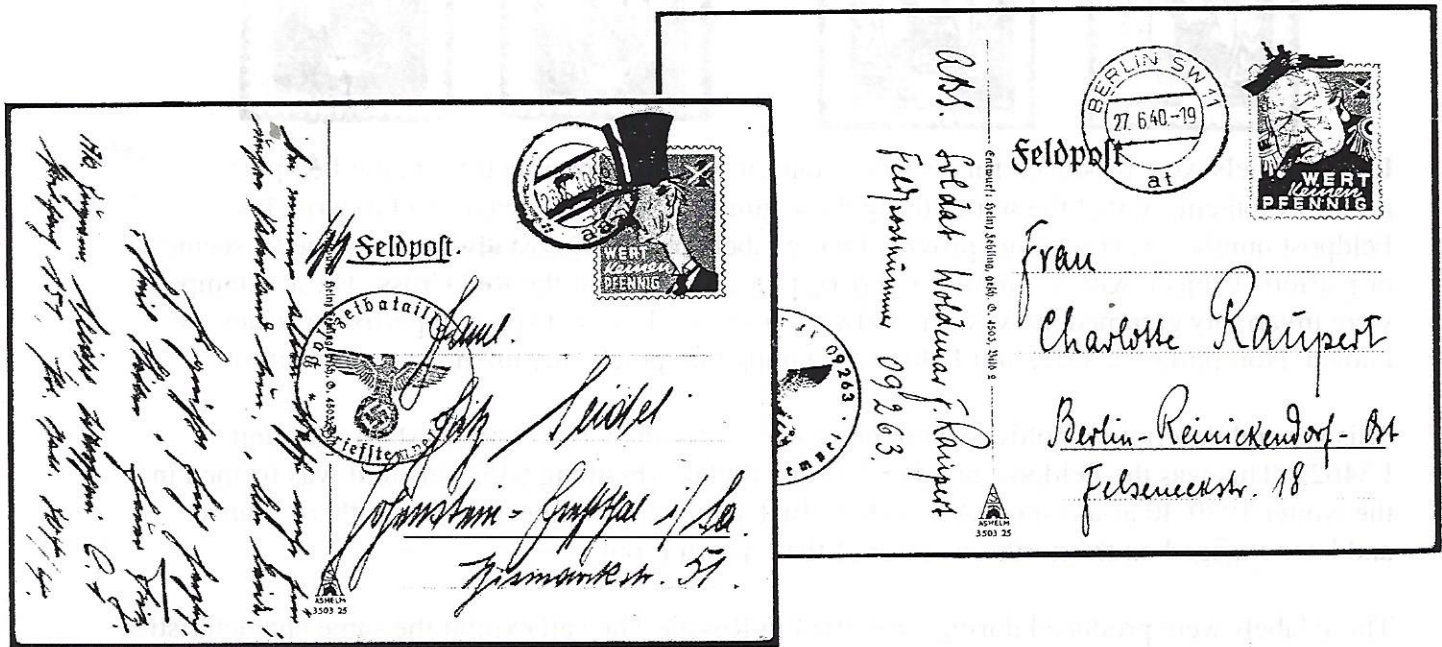
# Fundamentals of Feldpost Collecting

## Part 11. Unit Feldpost Gummed Labels

by Günter Fuchs

Stamps often reflect the trend of their time, whether they show a king or a landscape, a beetle or a shield, they represent somehow a faint image of the nation's ideologies. The First World War brought forth a large variety of German Feldpost seals, all of them issued by private initiative and expressing national fervor. The start of the Second World War brought no such labels.

In the beginning of 1940, the Churchill & Chamberlain caricatures made their appearance. These postcards were instigated and financed by the Ministry of Propaganda. These "stamps" were placed in the upper right corner of the cards and were thus cancelled by the Feldpost.



To counter the Allies' "V for Victory" campaign in the spring of 1941, the Ministry of Propaganda began to issue labels with the letter V. One label has "VIKTORIA" repeated on a brown background and a yellow "V". Another is diamond shaped with a circular red background while another label has a round vignette and text proclaiming German victories on all European fronts. Still another depicts a sitting archer in a shield superimposed on a "V" within a frame. These labels were distributed to the troops for use on Feldpost and are thus known from all fronts.



In my opinion the designation unit Feldpost “stamp” is incorrect. It should properly read unit Feldpost “gummed label”, for according to general philatelic concepts a stamp embodies a certain determined value. However, Feldpost mail was normally free of charge (with the exception of parcels, etc.) and therefore required no postage. However, the word “Feldpost” was required on the address side to denote freedom from postal fees, similar to the marking “Frei durch Ablösung Reich” on official mail. At some point an ingenious paymaster or unit commander hit upon the happy idea of having such labels produced under his own management to distribute them, at a price naturally. The profits went to the unit, which used them to purchase books, music, etc. or to finance Christmas parties and the like. Over the years archer labels (see below) were overprinted locally and then sold to raise funds for unit welfare fund or the Red Cross by units in the Balkans



If these labels were produced for a specific unit, it was also possible to print the Feldpost number on them, so that the writer using these gummed labels no longer had to write his Feldpost number. Several units provided these labels, which almost always contained a scenic or patriotic subject, with an imprint referring to a surcharge for the Red Cross. These “stamps” were invariably gummed, however not always perforated, so that some imperforate issues are known. Non-philatelic used unit Feldpost “stamps” are practically unknown to the author.

This general description holds without qualification for the unit Feldpost “stamp” of unit L34622. This was the Feldpost number for mixed Flak Abteilung 645. This unit was formed in the winter 1939-40 as a reserve AA section, first stationed at home, then in southern France, and later engaged on the northern sector of the Eastern Front.

These labels were produced during June 1944 in Russia. They all exhibit the same characteristics i.e. non-perforated, gummed, no value inscription, and with sheet size unknown.

1. Yellow paper	5 Pfg. black
	10 Pfg. blue
	25 Pfg. green
2. Same as above with overprint	5 + 50 Pfg. black
	10 + 1Mark blue
3. Pink paper	10 Pfg. black
	20 Pfg. blue
4. Same as above with overprint	10 + 50 Pfg. black
	20 + 1Mark blue
5. Yellow paper	10 Pfg. red
	20 Pfg. brown
6. Same as above with overprint	10 + 50 Pfg. red
	20 + 1 Mark. brown
	20 + 50 Pfg. brown (error)

Shown below are varieties of the Luftgaupostamt Königsberg unit seal produced by a Flak Battalion 465 in northern Russia.



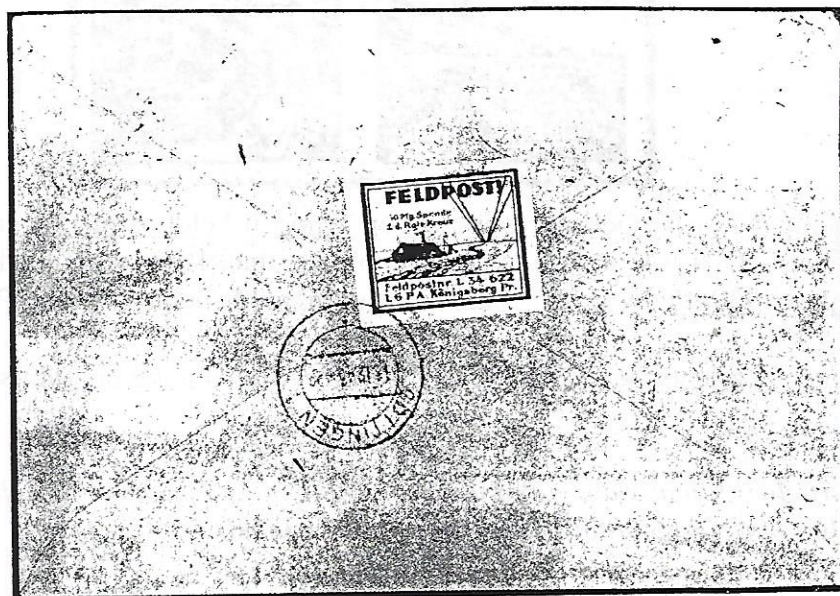
Another unit label design featuring an iron cross, Feldpost # L53040 and Luftgaupostamt Wien (Air District Post Office Vienna) on two paper colors was first distributed in the Balkans in May 1944. Feldpost number L53040 was the coded return address of the Feld-Luftgau Kommando XX

1) Black print on red paper	10 Pfg.
2) Red print on Yellow paper	20 Pfg.
3). Same with "+ 50 Pfg. – RK Spende"	5 Pfg.
4). Same with "+ 1 RM – RK Spende"	20 Pfg.

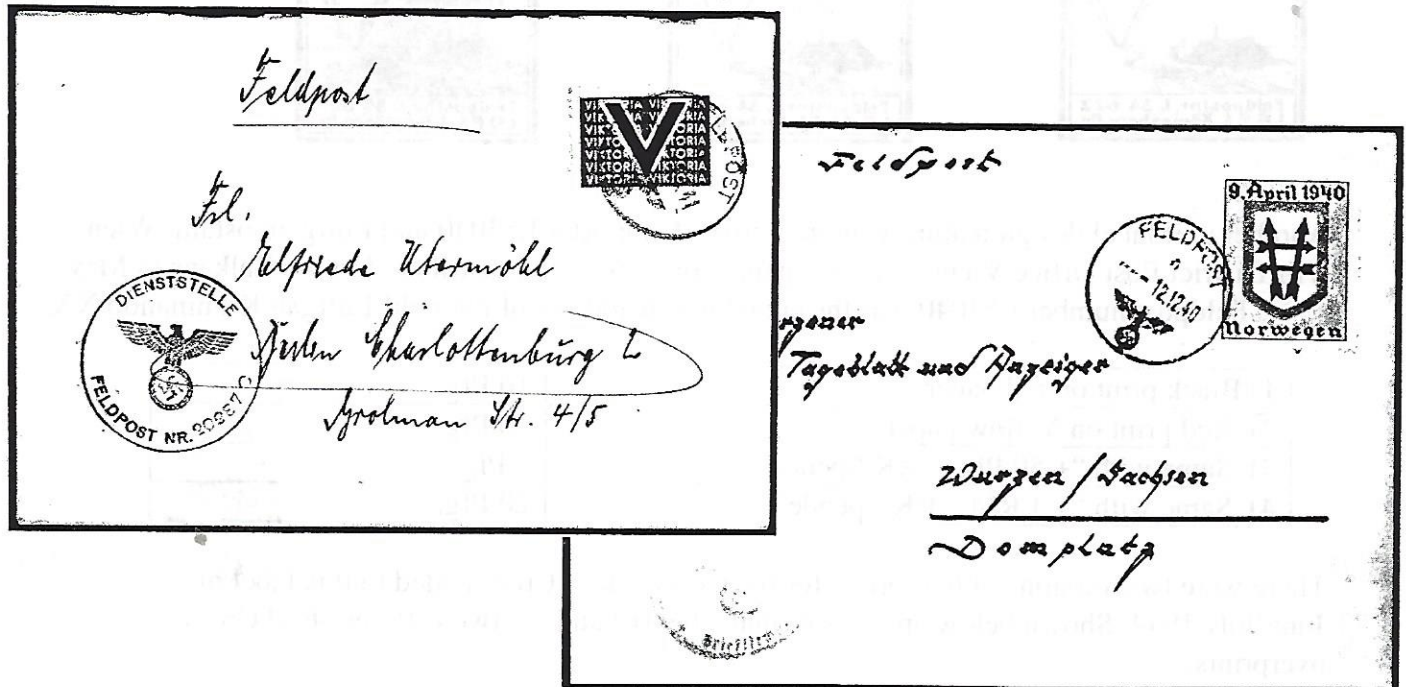
There were two versions of overprints for the German Red Cross added to this label in June/July 1944. Shown below are the original label (L) and the two different Red Cross overprints.



As these labels had no Feldpost validity, they were often placed on the backside on the cover as a return address as shown below.



In addition to these unit labels, there are propaganda labels that are occasionally found on Feldpost but also have no postal validity. Shown below are two Feldpost covers, one with a "V for Viktoria" label described earlier and another with a label from occupied Norway with the date "9. April 1940".



Finally, there is a block of four 5 Pfg. labels designated "Kriegsbilder" (war photos) which depict various battle scenes on what appears to be the Russian front.



#### References:

1. Zusammenstellung der bisher bekannt gewordenen Truppen-Feldpostmarke, catalog-type printing, 1-1/2 pages DIN A4, no date, probably not later than 1946, no publisher indicated.
2. Deutsche Feldpost 1939-45, by G. Hoffmann-Giesecke, published by author, Pönitz, Holstein, approximately 1951.
3. Kleines Handbuch der deutschen Feldpost 1937-45, by Alfred Clement, published by author, Graz, 1952.

*ED. NOTE: This article originally appeared in TRSG Bulletin 31 in April 1973. The Michel Feldpost Catalog has much additional information of these labels.*



## French Volunteer Forces on the Eastern Front

by Jim Lewis

The following is a brief postal history of the French volunteer units that served with German forces on the Eastern Front.

### Part I – The L.V.F.

On July 7, 1941 a committee of the leaders of various collaborationist groups met at the Hotel Majestic in Paris and jointly launched the “Legion des Volontaires Francais contre le Bolschevisme”. Marshal Petain authorized this committee to raise and equip a private “legion” to fight in what was now heralded as a crusade against the Bolshevik menace.

Hitler was suspicious of this enterprise and stipulated that the number of troops not exceed 15,000. In addition, the LVF would be armed only with German weapons and would wear standard German field-gray. The only distinguishing feature would be a Tri-color shield with the word “FRANCE” to be worn on the right sleeve.

The first of these volunteers arrived in late August at Bognis-Desbornes barracks near Versailles. These were mostly members of collaborationist groups or ex-soldiers, including many ex-Foreign Legionaries. Command was given to Col. Roger Labonne, a 60Year old “desk soldier” with no combat experience.

During fall 1941 these first groups of volunteers were sent to the German Army training camp at Demba, near Radom in the General Gouvernement. They were formed into two battalions with 181 officers, 2,271 other ranks and a German liaison staff of 35. During this time, mail from the L.V.F. had the Feldpost privilege and carried an open unit identification. An additional 1400 volunteers arrived at Demba in mid-December and formed the basis for a third battalion. Re-designated “638. Verstärkt Franzöis Infanterie Regiment” the units were assigned Feldpost numbers.

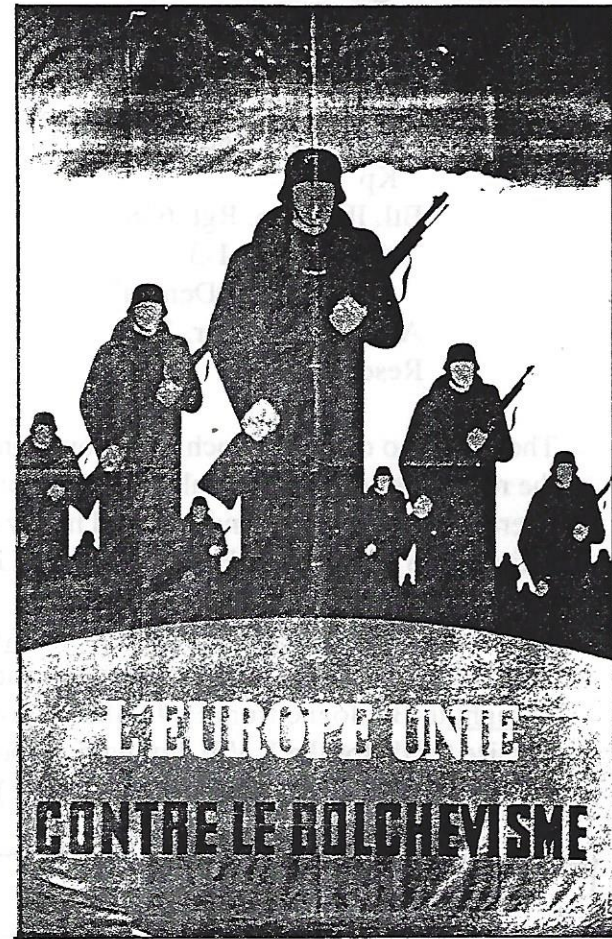


Fig. 1 L.V.F. Recruiting Card

### 638. Verstärkt. Franzöis Infanterie Regiment (1941-42)

Rgt. Stab und Stabskp.	00100
Btl. I (1-4 Kp.)	03865 (A-D)
Btl. II (5-8 Kp.)	04385 (A-D)
Btl. III (9-12 Kp.)	05492 (A-D)
Kp. 13	01196
Kp. 14	02732
Kp. 15	47702
Art. Abt. D. 368. Inf. Rgt	06376
Kolonne	03279
Reserve Kdo.	46795

Battalions I & II were dispatched to the Central Front in late October, proceeding by rail to Smolensk and then by truck and on foot where in early December they joined the German 7th Infantry Division in the battle area near Golovko. During the bitter winter campaign of 1941-42, the L.V.F. was heavily engaged in the battles in front of Moscow. In Feb. '42 the II Battalion was overrun during a Russian assault near Djunovo and virtually annihilated. Reduced to half its effective strength, the badly mauled L.V.F. was pulled out of the line in March. Colonel Labonne was recalled to Paris and relieved of command.

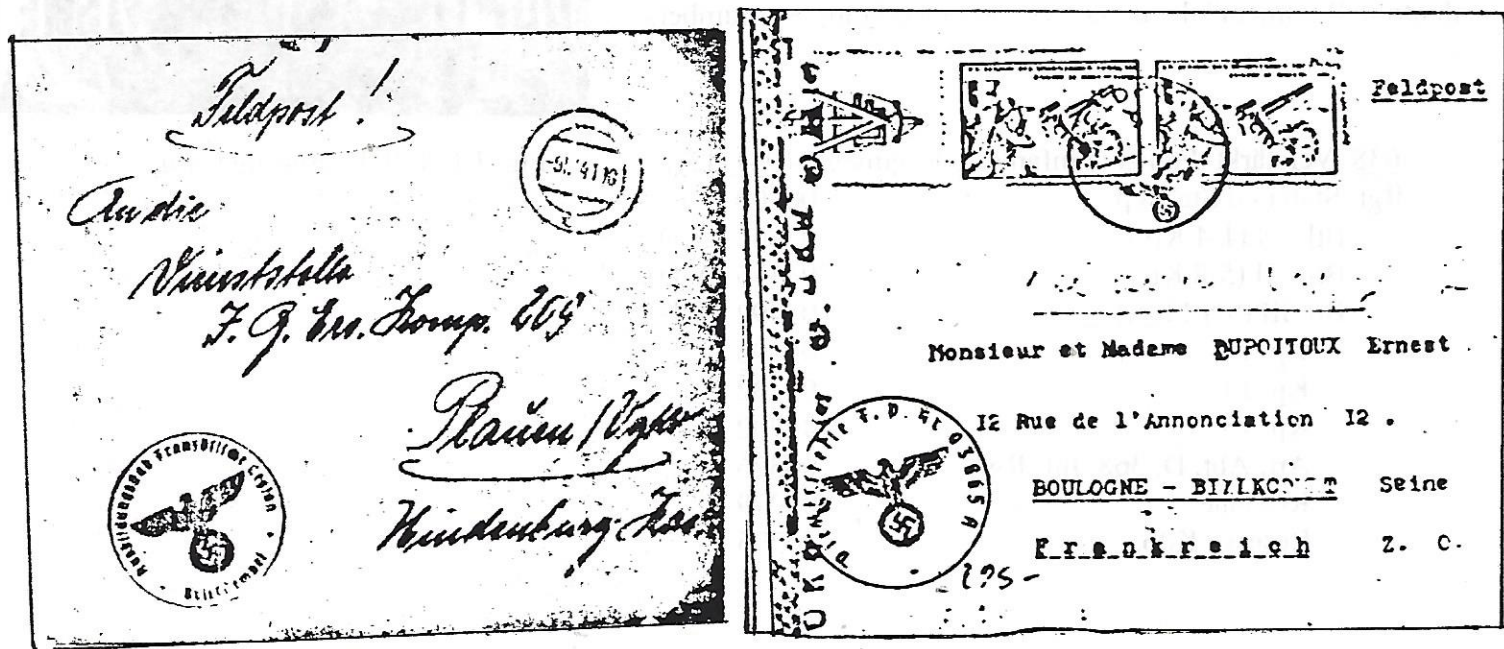
In the spring of 1942, Battalion III arrived at Potchinck, southwest of Smolensk and was employed in anti-partisan and occupation duties. Due to a lack of L.V.F. replacements, the 638th regiment was reorganized into two dissociated battalions (Battalion II having been destroyed) with these Feldpost number changes:

Btl. I/Gren. Rgt. 638:	Feldpost Nrs.
Stab u. Kp. 1-4	03865 (A-E)
Abschnitt 'Radom'	39630
Kp. 15	47702
Btl. III /Gren. Rgt. 638:	
Stab u. Kp. 1-3	05492 (A-D)
Stabsinheit 'Demba'	19440
Art. Abt. U. Battr. 1-3	06376
Reserve Kdo.	46795

There was no overall French field commander at this time. The L.V.F. was out of the front line for the remainder of 1942 and all of 1943. During June 1942, Battalion III took part in anti-partisan operations near Volost and suffered heavy casualties. Battalion I was deployed in anti-partisan activities in the Smolensk area under the German 186th "Sicherheit" (Security) Division.

Fig. 2) Feldpost covers from the L.V.F.: At left posted in Demba November 1941 with unit seal "Ausbildungsstab Französische Legion" and Polish-type "stumme" (mute) cancel.

At right to Boulogne from Fp# 03865A posted February 1944 has pair of charity labels sold in Paris to raise funds for the L.V.F. but with no postal validity. Note that this cover was examined by German censor office in Frankfurt (code e).



On June 28, 1942 the Vichy government announced that the L.V.F. was to be transformed into an officially authorized force designated the "Legion Tricolore". This force would wear French uniforms and would be available for employment on any front where French interest was at stake. The Tricolor Legion was ceremonially inaugurated at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Paris on August 27th (the anniversary of the first enlistment of the L.V.F.). In October the French Postal Ministry issued a "Legion Tricolore" stamp depicting a column of Napoleon's grenadiers sweeping forward into battle. (Fig. 3 below left)



The Tricolor Legion was still in training when the Anglo-American force landed in French North Africa, triggering 'Operation Anton' – the German occupation of metropolitan France that began on November 11, 1942. Shortly thereafter, the OKW decided that a French-controlled force was intolerable and so the Tricolor Legion was disbanded on December 28, 1942. Its personnel were allowed to transfer to the L. V. F.

These transfers, plus active recruiting within the "Vichy" areas, resulted in a reorganization of the L.V.F. in December 1943. Now designated the 638th French Grenadier Regiment, Battalions III and I were brought together with a reconstituted Battalion II under the 186th Security Division. The new commander was Colonel Edgar Puaud, an ex-Foreign Legion officer who transferred from the Tricolor Legion.

In January 1944 the L.V.F. was in action as a unified force for the first time, taking part in a major anti-partisan sweep (code-named 'Operation Morocco' in honor of Col. Puaud) in the forests of Somry. With Battalion IV added in April 1944, the following Feldpost numbers reflect the revised order of battle.

<u>Franz. Gren. Rgt. 638 (1944)</u>	<u>Feldpost No.</u>
Rgts. Stab	02951
Btl. I (1-4 Kp.)	03865 (A-D)
Btl. II (5-8 Kp.)	34206 (A-D)
Btl. III (9-12 Kp.)	05492 (A-D)
Btl. IV (13-16 Kp.)	03295 (A-D)
Aus. Stab (Btl. II)	56381
Aus. Stab (Btl. IV)	20919
Kolonne	03279
Reserve Kdo.	46795

The artillery detachment was disbanded in October 1943, being found to be unsuited for anti-partisan type operations.

To stem the Soviet offensive launched against Army Group Center in June 1944, Battalion I of the L.V.F. and various scratch German units were formed into a Kampfgruppe (battle group) which fought a successful delaying action during Ninth Army's struggle to break out of the Russian encirclement of Bobruysk.

By late July the L.V.F. was engaged in rear area duties in the vicinity of Stettin. There on September 1, 1944, the 638th Regiment was disbanded and its members transferred to the French Waffen-SS.

## Part II – The Waffen-SS

On July 22, 1943 it was announced that Frenchmen would now be admitted into the once-exclusively 'Nordic' Waffen-SS. A recruiting office was opened at 24 avenue du Recteur Poincare in Paris. By August the initial contingent of 800 volunteers were sent to Sennheim in Alsace, the main Waffen-SS basic training center for non-Germans. In November the volunteers, with the exception of candidates for officer and NCO schools, were transferred to Waffen-SS advanced training centers in Bohemia.

On July 18, 1944 the 'French SS Volunteer Assault Brigade' (Französische SS Freiwilligen Sturmbrigade) was pronounced combat-ready and dispatched to the Carpathian front. The following Feldpost numbers were assigned:

### Französische SS Freiwilligen Sturmbrigade (1943-44)

	<u>Feldpost No.</u>
Brigade Stab	47335
. Btl. I (1-4 Kp.)	41592 (A-D)
Btl. II (5-8 Kp.)	35411 (A-D)

By August 10th the Assault Brigade was in action at Mielec in the bend of the Vistula under command of the 18th SS Division 'Horst Wessel'. In less than a week the 1688 man brigade sustained 137 killed and 669 wounded. The badly mauled Frenchmen were pulled out of action in late August and sent to regroup at Schwarnegast near Danzig.

In September 1944 it was announced that the Assault Brigade and L.V.F. were to be amalgamated as the "Waffen-Grenadier Brigade der SS 'Charlemagne'". It was further decided to utilize the thousands of French collaborators who had been arriving in Germany as a result of the Allied breakout in France. By November the SS had transferred 7,340 Frenchmen to what was now called the "33. Waffen-Grenadier Division der SS 'Charlemagne'". The members of this "division", which was actually only a brigade in strength, came from these organizations:

Former Assault Brigade	1,000
Former L.V.F.	1,200
Former NSKK, O.T. etc.	2,000
Former 'Milice'	2,500
Former Naval Volunteers	640



Fig. 4) Unit emblem of the French volunteer SS-Sturmbrigade and, later, 33. SS-Division.

Command of the division was given to a German, SS-Brigadeführer Krukenberg, while the former L.V.F. Col. Puaud was promoted to Oberführer and appointed second-in-command. The division moved to their new depot located at Wildflecken in the Rhöne Mountains, about 25 miles northwest of Schweinfurt. Those selected for special training were dispatched to courses in various quarters of the Reich. The remainder spent a miserable winter at Wildflecken, being short on fuel and food. As their equipment was mostly German and Italian 'left-overs', there were not even enough steel helmets for these French soldiers who had recently taken a shortened version of the SS oath.

By the middle of February 1945 the Division was ordered to join Army Group Vistula which was attempting to stem the Soviet advance into Pomerania. With this transfer to the Field Army came the assignment of Feldpost numbers:

33. Waffen-Grenadier Division der SS 'Charlemagne' (Franz. Nr. 1) 1944-45

	Fp. Nos		Fp. Nos
Stab Deutsches General Kdo	47335	SS-Pz. Jag. Abt. 57	66885
57. SS-Rgt. Stab	66641	SS-Pionier Kp.	64680
Btl. I (Stab u. 1-4 Kp.)	41592	SS-Nachr Kp.	14309
Btl. II (Stab u. 5-8 Kp.)	35411	Sanitäts Kp.	66453
58. SS-Rgt. Stab	02951	Veterinar Kp.	64921
Btl. I (Stab u. 1-4 Kp.)	03895	Feld-Gend. Tr.	06953
Btl. II (Stab u. 5-8 Kp.)	05492	Werkstattzug	13630
SS-Artillery Abt. 57	00290	Feldpostamt	11498
Inspektion d. Franz. Einheit	55448	Feld-Ersatz Kp.	65920

The Division Post Office (FpA SS-33) used Kenn No. 565 from February through May 1945.

The Division saw heavy fighting in the Hammerstein-Neustettin sector. The force of a Soviet assault on Feb. 25, 1945 split the Division into three groups. Of these, one group attempted to withdraw under cover of fog but was caught in a murderous artillery barrage and virtually annihilated.

Oberführer Puaud was among the missing. A second group, mainly former 'miliciens' (irregulars similar to the 'Black & Tans' in Ireland) attempted a withdrawal westward but by mid-March all had been killed or captured.

The third group, mostly L.V.F. veterans, fell back toward Danzig. During this withdrawal occurred one of the great ironies of the war when the remnants of the 'Charlemagne' Division engaged units of the 'Seydlitz' Division, which was composed of 'turn-coat' German POWs now fighting on the side of the Soviets. The Frenchmen were evacuated by sea to Denmark and worked their way back to the advanced depot at Neustrelitz, 60 miles north of Berlin. Of the 7,000 troops who had set out from Wildflecken the previous month, only 800 remained.

On March 27, 1945 Kruckenberg paraded his men and absolved those who no longer wished to fight from the obligation to do so. One officer and 300 other ranks elected to call it quits, those remaining took an oath of loyalty to Hitler.

In the early hours of April 24, 1945, this dedicated band of Frenchmen was rushed south to defend Berlin and entered the city just before the jaws of the Soviet pinchers closed. The Frenchmen were attached to the Danish-Norwegian "11. SS-Freiwilligen-Panzer Grenadier Division 'Nordland' ", by then reduced to a few hundred. All of these volunteers fought with undeniable heroism and terrible loss. Within a week the 'Charlemagne' regiment was reduced in effective strength to 120 men. Among the ruins of Berlin a handful of Frenchmen, Norwegians, Danes, Belgians and Spaniards fought desperately in a lost cause that had become their own.

*ED. NOTE: This article originally appeared in TRSG Bulletin No. 49 in 1978.*

## The Battles of Narvik

by R. J. Houston

The collection of German naval Feldpost covers invariably leads one into interesting areas of naval history. Such was the case when I recently assembled a small exhibit entitled "The Battles of Narvik" using covers from each German ship involved, an accompanying photo of each vessel and appropriate philatelic/statistical/historical information.

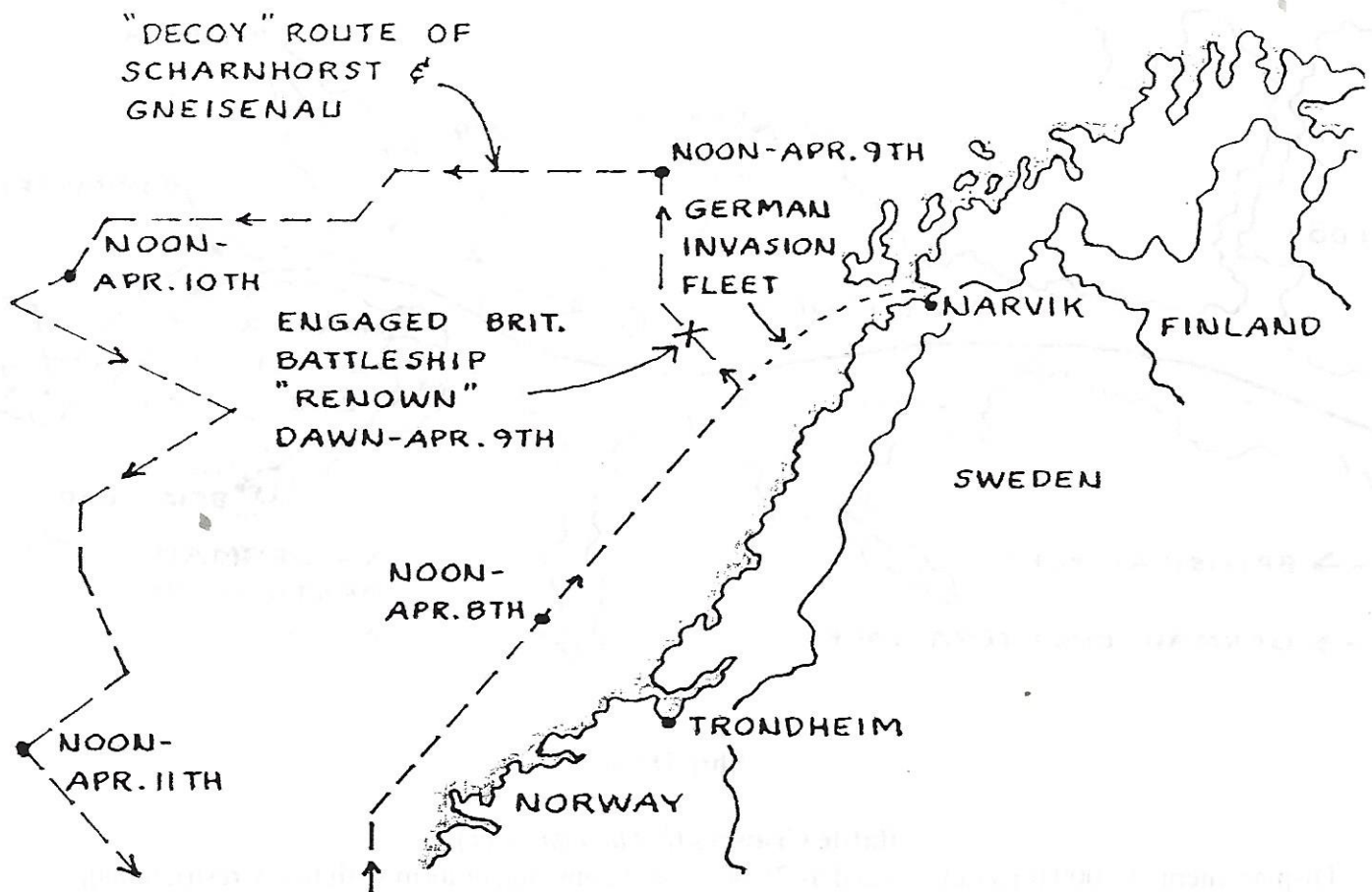
The Battles of Narvik were two of the many actions which erupted during the German invasion of Norway (Operation 'Weserübung') on April 9, 1940. The story of the Narvik phase actually began on April 2, 1940, when the German battle cruisers '**Scharnhorst**' and '**Gneisenau**' sailed for Norwegian waters in company with ten destroyers. Aware that the British were determined to prevent heavy German warships from breaking out into the Atlantic, the German fleet commander (Vice Admiral Günther Lütgens) was under orders to lure British battle units away from the Narvik area using Scharnhorst and Gneisenau as bait, while the ten destroyers went on to Narvik with the landing forces.

The plan worked perfectly; on the morning of April 9th, British Admiral Whitworth in the battle cruiser '**Renown**', sighted Scharnhorst and Gneisenau 50 miles off Narvik in heavy weather. The two German ships ran to the northwest, as planned, with Admiral Whitworth in hot pursuit. During a brief exchange of fire, Renown landed three 15 inch shells on Gneisenau – ruining her fire control system and knocking out her forward 11 inch turret. Contact was soon lost due to bad weather and for the price of one damaged battle cruiser, British forces had been prevented from savaging the German invasion force.

Meanwhile, Narvik had fallen to Commodore Paul Bonte's ten destroyers (4th Destroyer Flotilla) that had smashed the Norwegian coast defense ships '**Eidsvold**' and '**Norge**' and landed their troops, who took the port without trouble.

At noon on the 9th, the British learned of the Narvik landing and Captain Warburton-Lee's 2nd Destroyer Flotilla was directed to enter Narvik's Ofot Fjord and attack any warships or merchantmen present. After sounding out the German strength at Narvik (which was sadly underestimated) from the Norwegian pilot station at Tranøy during the evening, Warburton-Lee attacked Ofot Fjord at dawn on the 10th. The British destroyers '**Hardy**', '**Hunter**' and '**Havoc**' sailed up the fjord and sank the German destroyers '**Wilhelm Heidkamp**' (Z-21), Bonte's flagship, and '**Anton Schmitt**' (Z-22). The British destroyers '**Hotspur**' and '**Hostile**' weighed in for a second attack and sank six transports. The remaining German destroyers were, however, well deployed in the branch side fjords and came in for a savage counterattack – trapping the British force. Warburton-Lee was killed, the Hardy was knocked out and the Hotspur badly damaged. Luckily for the British, the victorious German destroyers did not press home their attacks and by 0630 the "1st Battle of Narvik" was over.

Map 1) The Battles of Narvik – April 1940



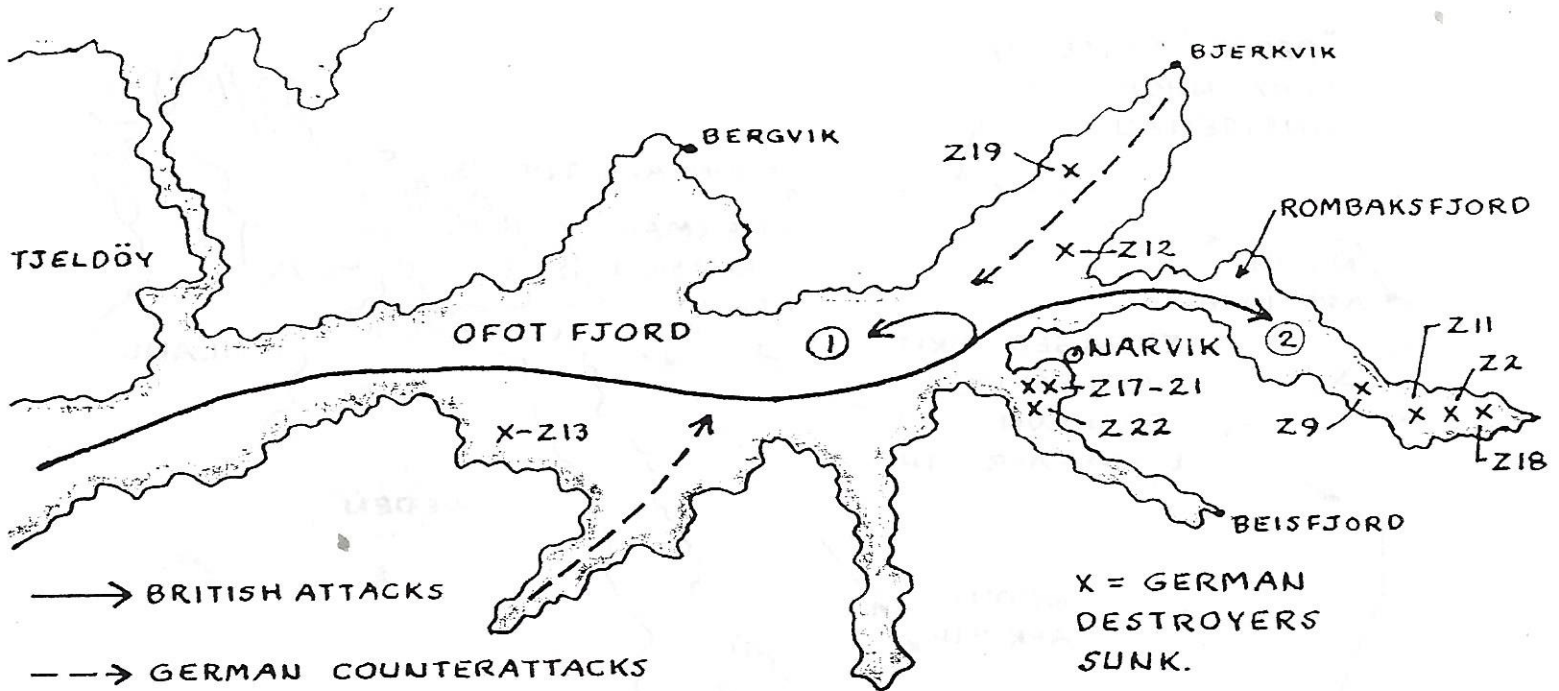
On April 13th, British Admiral Whitworth, now aware of the German strength, took the battle cruiser 'Warspite' up Ofot Fjord with nine destroyers and the "2nd Battle of Narvik" ensued.

The remaining German destroyers were hunted down and smashed one by one. By nightfall of the 13th, none of the original ten German destroyers at Narvik were left. Destroyers sunk were:

'Erich Koellner'	(Z-13)
'Hermann Kunne'	(Z-19)
'Hans Ludemann'	(Z-18)
'Diether von Roeder'	(Z-17)
'Wolfgang Zenker'	(Z-9)
'Bernd von Arnim'	(Z-11)
'Georg Thiele'	(Z-2)
'Erich Giese'	(Z-12)

British troops were landed in Norway on April 14th, taking Narvik on May 28th. The position of these forces was untenable, however, due to the collapsing Allied front in France and they could do little but wreck the port facilities and evacuate on June 8th, exactly four days after the historic evacuation of Dunkirk.

## Map 2) First and Second Battles of Narvik – April 10 and April 13, 1940



### Ship Data

#### Battle Cruisers (*Schlachtkreuzer*)

Displacement: 32,000 tons (announced as 26,000 tons at time to conform with treaty restrictions).

Dimensions: 741 x 98 x 24 ft.

Speed: 31-1/2 knots.

Armament: nine 11", twelve 5.9", fourteen 4.1", sixteen 37mm and ten 20mm guns; six 21" torpedo tubes; four aircraft. Complement: 1800

**'Scharnhorst'**: launched Oct. 1936. Atlantic operations 1939-40, Norwegian campaign 1940, Raiding in Atlantic 1941. In Feb. 1941 returned to Brest, broke out Feb. 1942 with Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen and returned to Germany. Sunk in Battle of North Cape by HMS 'Duke of York' Dec. 26, 1943.  
Feldpost number 23657

**'Gneisenau'**: launched Dec. 1936. History same as for Scharnhorst until return to Germany. Damaged by bombs and decommissioned July 1942. Hulk sunk as block ship.  
Feldpost number 00105



**Destroyers (Zerstörer)****Leberecht Maass Class**

Displacement: 2200 tons.

Dimensions: 374 x 37 x 9 ft.

Speed: 30 knots.

Armament: five 5", four 37mm, six 20mm, ten 20mm guns; eight 21" torpedo tubes; sixty mines.

Complement: 315

Name of Ship	History	Feldpost No.
<b>Georg Thiele</b> (Z-2)	Launched 1937. Sunk in 2nd Battle Narvik	07730
<b>Wolfgang Zenker</b> (Z-9)	Launched 1938. Sunk in 2nd Battle Narvik	08975
<b>Bernd von Arnim</b> (Z-11)	Launched 1938. Sunk in 2nd Battle Narvik	25349
<b>Eric Giese</b> (Z-12)	Launched 1939. Sunk in 2nd Battle Narvik	02167
<b>Eric Koeller</b> (Z-13)	Launched 1939. Sunk in 2nd Battle Narvik	07395

**Von Roeder Class**

Displacement: 2400 tons.

Dimensions: 384 x 38 x 9 ft.

Speed: 38 knots.

Armament: five 5", six 37mm, twelve 20mm guns; eight 21" torpedo tubes; sixty mines.

Complement: 313

Name of Ship	History	Feldpost No.
<b>Diether von Roeder</b> (Z-17)	Launched 1939. Sunk in 2nd Battle Narvik	05521
<b>Hans Lundemann</b> (Z-18)	Launched 1939. Sunk in 2nd Battle Narvik	28375
<b>Hermann Kunne</b> (Z-19)	Launched 1938. Sunk in 2nd Battle Narvik	25349
<b>Wilhelm Heidkamp</b> (Z-21)	Launched 1939. Sunk in 1st Battle Narvik	01345
<b>Anton Schmitt</b> (Z-22)	Launched 1939. Sunk in 1st Battle Narvik	12260

Headquarters – 4th Destroyer Flotilla – Feldpost No. 32300.

Headquarters – 8th Destroyer Flotilla Narvik – Feldpost No. 03052.

(This flotilla consisted of later type destroyers of the Z-23-34 class launched between 1940 and 1942 and was named "Narvik" in honor of the ten destroyers sunk at Narvik.)

*ED. NOTE: This article originally appeared in TRSG Bulletin No. 27 in 1972.*

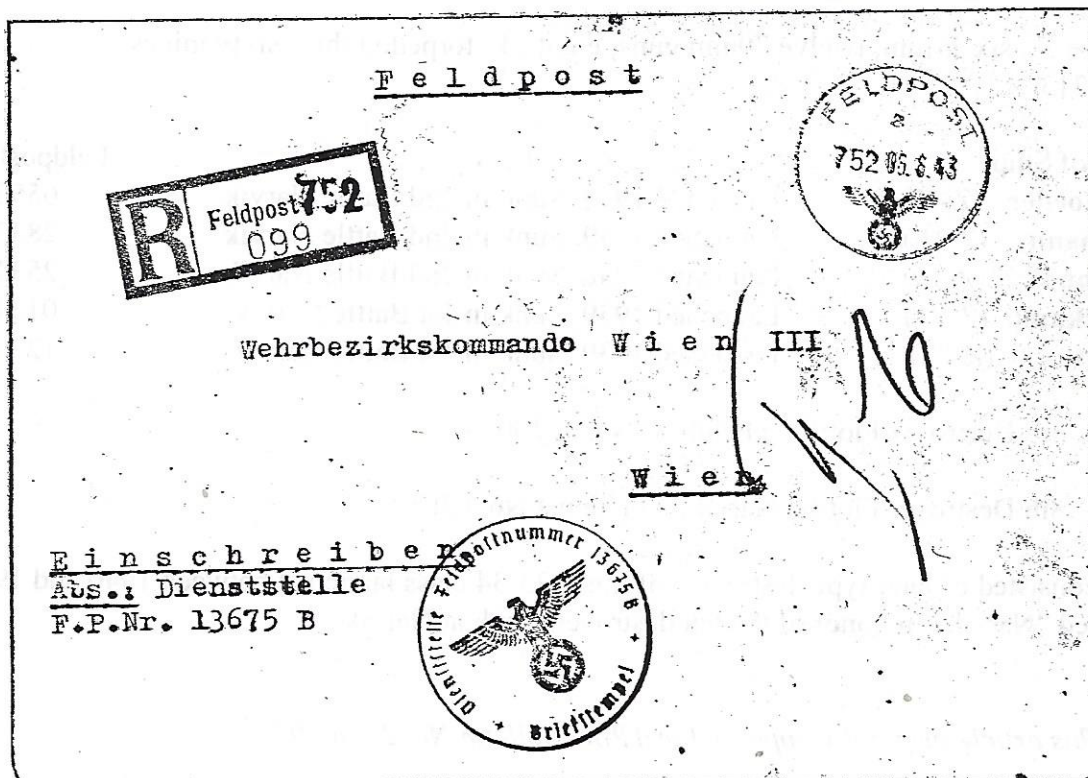
**COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:****331st Infantry Division**

by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS			AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADEIER		ARTY	UNITS
331	752	557	558	559	331

Formed in eastern Austria in December 1941, the 331st Infantry Division post office was assigned Fp. # 10365 as a mailing address and Kenn 752 as a coded identification in lieu of its tactical number 331. It was then sent to the central sector of the Eastern Front in March 1942. It was transferred to the northern sector as an element of the 16th Army in the spring of 1943 and held a portion of II Army Corps defenses between Cholm and Newel. After fighting on the northern sector for nearly two years, the 331st Infantry Division was virtually annihilated near Newel in December 1943.

Remnants of the division were sent to Germany and reformed at the Wahn Maneuver area in early 1944. The 331st Infantry Division incorporated the partially trained members of the Infantry Division Wahn into its ranks. Transferred to the Calais area of France in April 1944, the division was sent into action against the Allied landings at Normandy and suffered heavy casualties during the withdrawal through France. It was then attacked by the U.S. 1st Army on August 28, 1944 while defending south of Paris and was again virtually annihilated. The remnants of the division regrouped and sent to Holland, where they fought on the northern sector of the western Front until the end of the war.



Cover sent to Military District Office at Vienna in June 1943 from Fp. # 13675 (Battalion II/Grenadier regiment 557) via Field P.O. 331 (K-752).

# THIRD REICH POSTAL RATES

by Bob Ferguson

## FORWARDED AIRMAIL FOR ZEPPELIN POST

30 January 1933 – 10 May 1934

Rate: Basic zeppelin rate

Letter (to 20 grams) - 150 Pf.

Postcard - 75Pf.

11 May 1934 – August 1939

Rate: Basic zeppelin rate

Letter (to 20 grams) - 100 Pf.

Postcard - 50Pf.

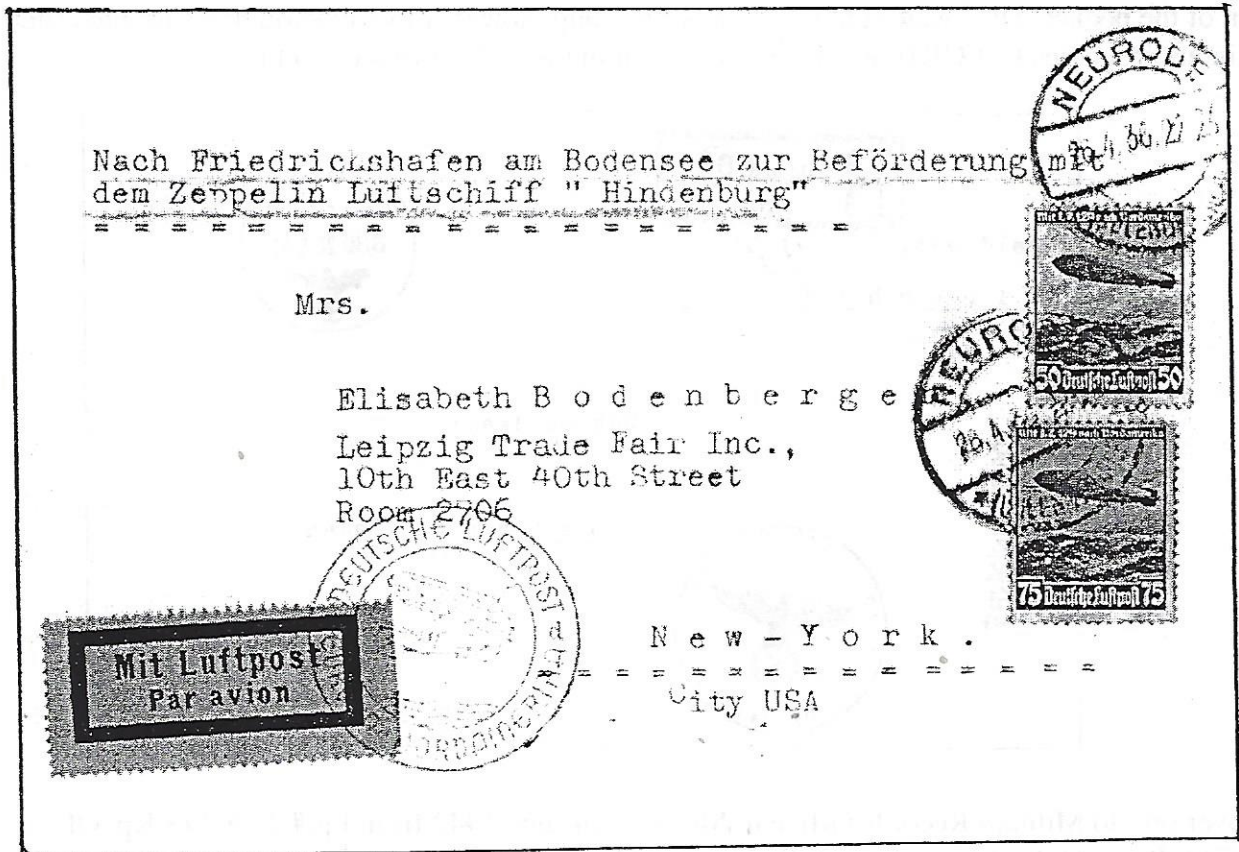
Posted: Neurode, April 26, 1936 to New York City

### FORWARDED LETTER FOR ZEPPELIN POST TO USA

Franking (1.25 RM.): 25 Pfg. = Foreign letter rate for weight 0-20 grams.

100 Pfg.= Zeppelin rate to USA for weight 0-20 grams.

Note routing instructions "To Friedrichshafen on the Bodensee for forwarding via the Zeppelin Airship 'Hindenburg'".

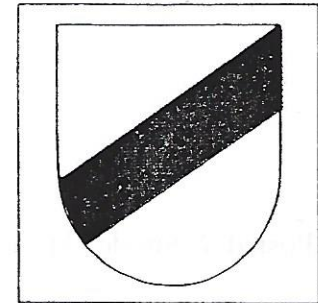


## COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE: 112th Infantry Division

by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADEIER		ARTY	UNITS	
112	680	110	256	258	86	112

Formed October 1940 (12th wave) in Wehrkreis XII, the 112th Infantry Division received Infantry Regiment 110 from 33rd Infantry Division when the latter was converted to the 15th Panzer Division. The P.O. was assigned Fp# 47930 as a return address and Kenn 680 as a coded identity. The division emblem was a white shield with a broad brown diagonal bar. The 112th Infantry Division first saw combat in the June 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union as part of Army Group Center and later took part in the battles around Moscow.



Unequipped for winter, the 112th suffered terribly from the extreme cold. As early as November 17th, each regiment reported over 400 cases of frostbite. Despite its casualties the division fought on, opposing the 1941-42 Soviet winter offensive as well as fighting in the defensive battles on the central sector in 1942 and early 1943. It sustained heavy losses during the Kursk offensive and was caught up in the retreat after the defeat of Operation 'Citadelle'. The 112th Infantry Division was surrounded at Cherkassy as part of XLII Corps but remnants of the division broke out of the pocket. They were sent to Poland to regroup, however the division had sustained such ruinous casualties that OKH decided to disband it in the early spring of 1944.

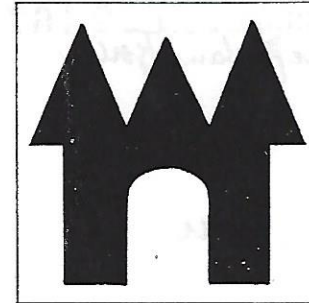


Cover sent to Military Records Office in Mosbach in June 1942 from Fp.# 24903 (3 Kp. Of Panzer Jäger Abtl. 112) via Field P.O. 112 (K-680).

**COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:**  
**320th Infantry Division**  
 by Jim Lewis

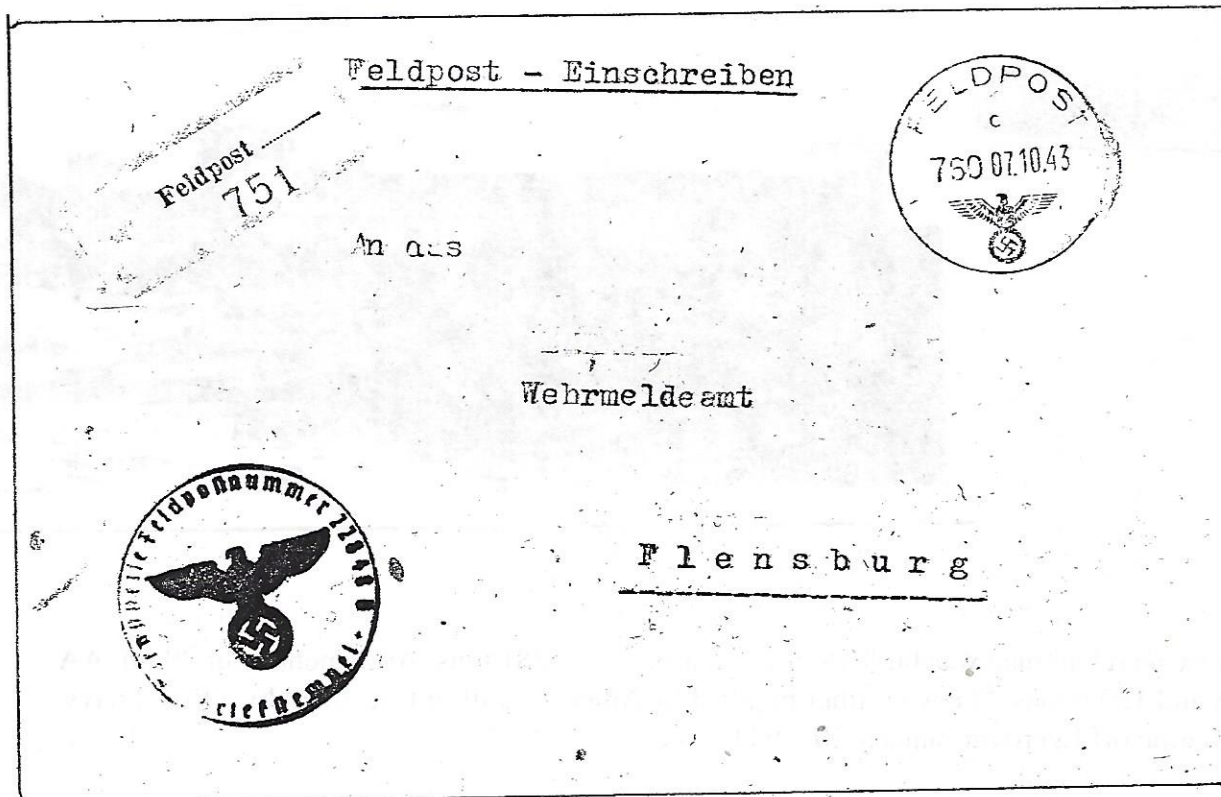
POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS			AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADIER		ARTY	UNITS
320	760	585	586	587	320

Formed in late 1940 (13th wave), the 320th Infantry Division was sent to Belgium a year later. In January 1942 it was transferred to Brittany and moved to northeastern France in April. The P.O. was assigned Fp# 47601 as a return address and Kenn 760 as a coded identity. The division emblem was a red gateway with pointed roofs.



The 320th Infantry Division was sent to the southern sector of the Russian front in January 1943. It later took part in the retreats on the southern zone and was down to battle group strength by October 1943. In August 1944 it was encircled west of the lower Dneiper and suffered such heavy losses that it was formally disbanded.

On October 27, 1944, the 558th Infantry Division forming in Silesia was re-designated as the 320th Volksgrenadier Division. The new P.O. was assigned Fp# 66002 as a return address and Kenn 597 as a coded identity. The division returned to combat in southern Poland late in 1944 and surrendered to the Red Army in Czechoslovakia along with 1st Panzer Army at wars end.

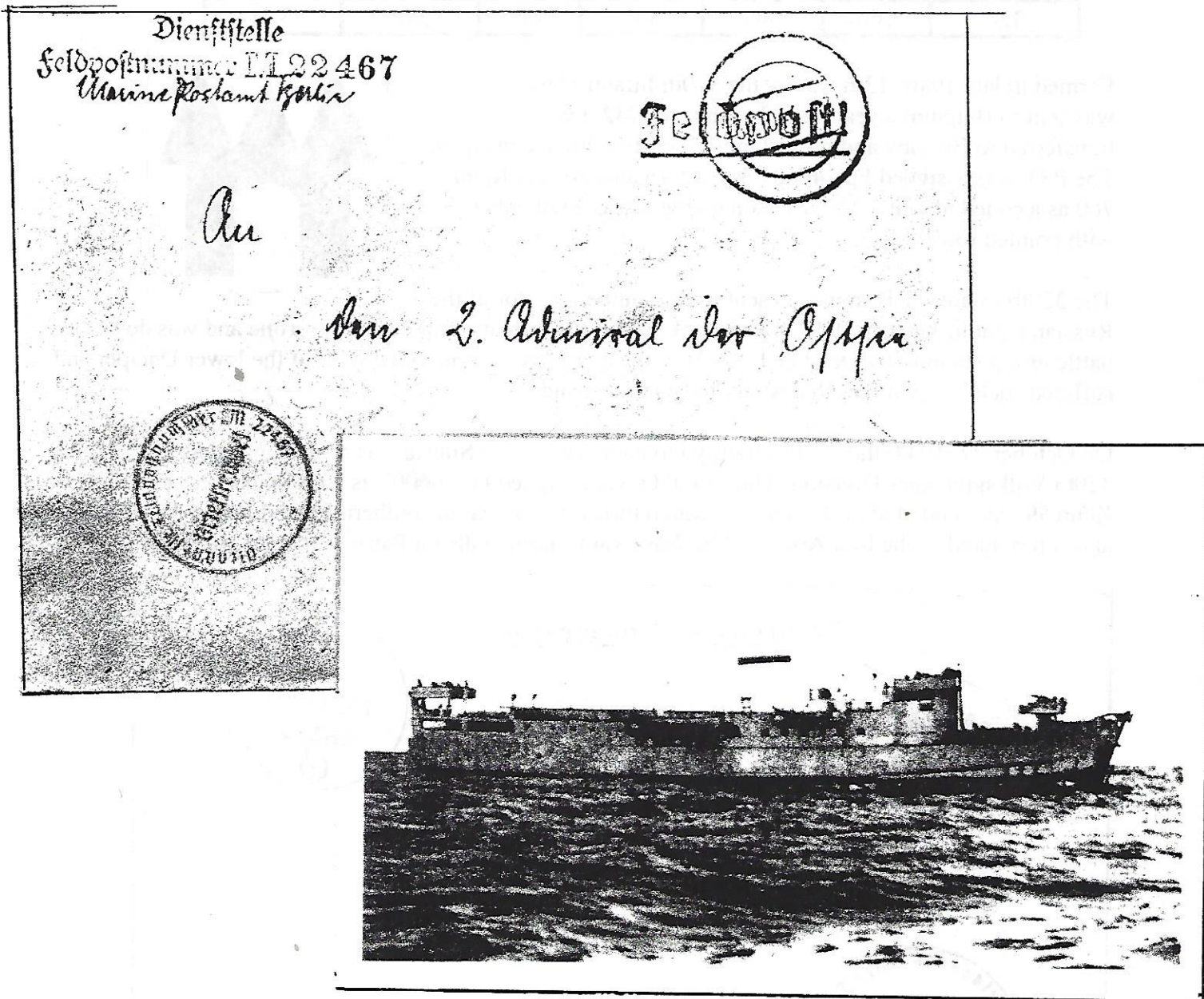


Cover sent to Military Records Office in Flensburg in October 1943 from Fp.# 22848 (Stab I of Grenadier Regiment 587) via Field P.O. 320 (K-760)

# NAVY LOG

By Robert dunn

Auxiliary Minelayer 'Skagerrak' - Feldpost # 22467



This ex-merchantman was built 1939. Displacement: 1,281 tons. Armament: four 20mm AA guns and 180 mines. She was either bombed by Allied aircraft or torpedoed by a Royal navy submarine off Egero on January 20, 1944.

The cover shows a Baltic Sea Headquarters, Kiel address. The mute cancellation is the 28/19/9 ring/segment variety.

## Waffen-SS Feldpost

Troops of the Command Staff of the Reichsführer-SS -30 June 1944

by John Painter

*Note: the author copied the strength report shown below in 1968 from the Captured German Documents Series microfilm at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.*

Einheit	Fuehrer	Unter-fuehrer	Männer	Zusammen
<b>I. Feldtruppenteile</b>				
Gen. Kdo. I SS-Panzer Korps LSSAH	122	579	3,028	3,729
Gen. Kdo. II SS-Panzer Korps	115	531	1,993	2,639
Gen. Kdo. III (germ.) SS-Panzer Korps	96	484	2,086	2,666
Gen. Kdo. IV SS-Panzer Korps	33	133	588	754
Gen. Kdo. V SS-Geb. Korps	105	509	2,916	3,530
Gen. Kdo. VI SS-Frw. Korps	72	279	1,178	1,529
1. SS-Panzer Div. LSSAH	478	2,860	16,353	19,691
2. SS-Panzer Div. "Das Reich" Kampfgruppe	336	1925	8934	11,195
Reste	192	1462	7355	9,009
3. SS-Panzer Div. "Totenkopf"	433	2,847	16,783	20,063
4. SS-Pol. Panzer Gren. Div.	385	2491	13,015	15,891
5. SS-Panzer Div. "Wiking"	455	3,066	13,847	17,368
6. SS-Gebirgs Div. "Nord"	415	3,025	15,915	19,355
7. SS-Frw. Gebirgs Div. "Prinz Eugen"	385	2,238	16,212	18,835
8. SS-Kav. Div. "Florian Geyer"	258	1,538	11,099	12,895
9. SS- Panzer Div. "Hohenstaufen"	433	2,559	12,926	15,918
10. SS- Panzer Div. "Frundsberg"	374	2,266	10,912	13,552
11. SS- Panzer Gren. Div. "Nordland"	355	1,857	8,788	11,000
12. SS- Panzer Div. "Hitlerjugend"	461	2,281	15,116	17,858
Waffen-Geb. Div. d. SS "Handshar" (Kroat Nr. 1)	391	2,244	16,501	19,136
14. Waffen-Gren. Div. d. SS (galiz. Nr. 1)	346	1,131	13,822	15,299
15. Waffen-Gren. Div. d. SS (lett. Nr. 1)	541	2,322	15,550	18,413
16. SS Panzer Gren. Div. "RFSS"	369	1,984	11,865	14,218
17. SS Panzer Gren. Div "Gotz von Berlichingen"	351	2,029	14,596	16,976
18. SS Frw. Pz. Gren. Div "Horst Wessel"	226	1,765	6,539	8,530
19. Waffen-Gren. Div. d. SS (lett. Nr. 2)	329	1,421	8,842	10,592
20. Waffen-Gren. Div. d. SS (estrn. Nr. 1)	451	1,657	11,355	13,463
4. SS Frw. Pz. Gr. Brigade "Neiderland"	220	1,318	5,175	6,713
5. SS Frw. Sturmbrigade "Wallonien"	53	232	903	1,188
6. SS Frw. Sturmbrigade "Langmarck"	47	262	1,422	1,731
7. Landstorm "Nederland"	51	226	2,910	3,187
SS Panz. Gren. Brigade 49	75	575	3,238	3,886
SS Panz. Gren. Brigade 51	59	398	2,466	2,923
SS Jäger Btl. 500	14	120	1,137	1,271
SS Jäger Btl. 501	9	113	820	942
SS Jäger Btl. 502 u. Sondereins. Abt. z.b. V.	23	108	519	650
SS Fallschirmjäger- Btl. 500	15	81	196	292
Kommandostab RF-SS	47	300	1,206	1,533

SS Wehrgeologen - Btl.	29	164	1,254	1,447
SS Standarten "Kurt Eggers"	63	420	697	1,180
SS Sonderkdo. "Dirlewanger"	17	87	867	971
SS Karstwehr -Btl.	12	132	815	859
SS Panzer Abt. 103	33	154	850	1,037
SS Beob. Abt. 500	6	35	153	195
SS Nachr. Abt. 104	14	73	576	663
SS Nachr. Abt. 501	24	192	980	1,176
SS Pi.- Bau Btl. 1	9	56	142	207
SS Flak - Abt.505	32	146	999	1,177
SS Flak - Abt.509	15	64	348	427
SS Feldlaz.500	11	32	31	74
SS Feldlaz.501	16	35	145	196
SS Feldlaz.504	5	15	17	37
SS Feldlaz.509	1	-	-	1
SS Kr. Kw. Zug 505 u.509 u. San. Kp.	17	50	151	218
Zahnärztl. Eins. Abt. 500	49	75	53	177
SS Beob. Battr. 105	4	18	131	153
<b>II. Neuaufstellungen und Auffrischungen</b>				
Gen. Kdo.Waffen-Geb. A.K, Ger-SS	29	108	273	140
Waffen-Geb. Div. der SS "Skanderberg"	86	551	5,437	6,156
SS Frei. F. V. Division	96	570	4,248	4,914
Waffen-Geb. Div. der SS "Kama" (Kroat. Nr. 2)	82	209	1,908	2,199
8 Franz SS-Freiw. Sturmbrig	30	44	1,614	1,688
SS Werfer-Battr. 500	7	47	363	417
SS Korps Abt. 107	15	66	448	529
SS Pi.- Bau Btl. 2	2	25	131	158
Begleit Btl. RFSS	18	81	460	559
schw. Beob. Battr. 108	5	19	224	246
SS Werfer Abt. 103	14	33	242	289
SS Art. Abt. 503	10	68	508	586
SS Werfer Abt. 107	14	14	74	102
I/SS Pz. Gren. Rgt. 23 "Norge"	9	33	327	369
I/SS Pz. Gren. Rgt. 24 "Dänmark"	6	50	324	380
Waffen-Geb. Karstjäger Div.	12	132	730	874
SS Panzer Jäger. Abt. 4	10	53	185	248
schw. Beob. Battr. 101	4	3	120	163
I. SS Frw. Rgt. 3	32	162	838	1,032
<b>III. Ausbildungs u. Ersatztruppenteile</b>	2,385	18,546	106,712	127,643
<b>IV. Schulen</b>	1,101	5,584	6,337	10,544
<b>V. Sonstige</b>	1,701	6,278	18,560	26,544