



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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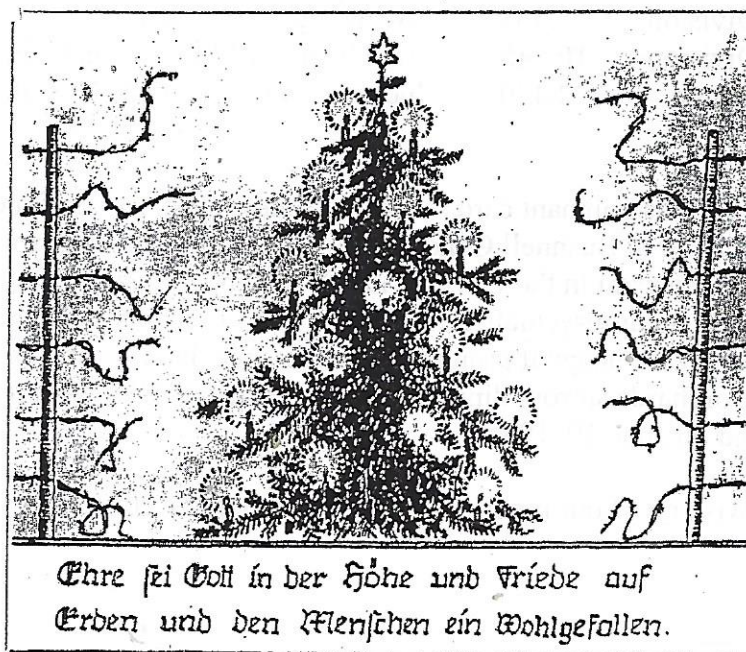
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STUDY GROUP NOTES

Prosit Neujahr! - Welcome to another year of study group activities. We hope to hear from more of you with contributions, criticisms (hard to believe!) or suggestions for improving this publication. Our new "Lost legions" feature yielded several nice covers sent from those exotic volunteer units.

Undercover Mail to Canada - our many Canadian members will appreciate TRSGer Ed Fraser's article on Page 17 which reveals that undercover mail schemes existed for mail between "enemy countries" and both Britain and Canada during WWI.

Combat Division Profiles - beginning in Bulletin # 108 in 1993, we launched this feature to include a registered Feldpost cover and brief history of the many German combat divisions formed during WWII. Initially we included only one division per issue, similar to our ongoing "Navy Log" feature. However, as members sent in ever more new cover illustrations, we realized that at one division per issue, none of us would live long enough to complete this project. In Bulletin # 126 in 1998 we increased to two divisions per issue, which helped, but the pile of new covers was still too large. Finally, in Bulletin # 134 in 2000 we went to four divisions per issue. While we reached the bottom of our existing pile of covers in Bulletin # 188 in 2013, there are still quite a few divisions that have not been covered due to a lack of cover illustrations. As collectors, we are by nature "completest" and we would like to extend this feature as far as possible. To this end, we are compiling a list of those German combat divisions which have not been profiled thus far. This list will appear in the next bulletin so that our members may search their collections for any "missing" divisions for our feature.

Rear Area Support Personnel on Eastern Front - When the Wehrmacht invaded Russia in 1941 there were roughly 7 million troops in all branches of the service including 3,100,000 in the Ostheer (Eastern Army). By 1943 the Wehrmacht totaled 10 million but the Ostheer had declined to 2,800,000. The reason was that large staffs were required to police the vast areas under occupation. A good example of this is a report from the Rear Area Command of Army Group Center (#102) which noted that as of May 1, 1942 there were 120,948 troops assigned to its command as follows:

Kdr Gen IVa Ivc Signals	12,205	Gen. der Pioneer (Engineers)	5,600
Sicherungs Brigade 201	5,053	11th Panzer Division (Anti-partisan duty)	6,834
Sicherungs Brigade 203	9,687	Hoh. SS und Polizei Führer	8,000 (9 Btls.)
221 Sicherungs Division	6,561	Army Signals Officer	9,914
286 Sicherungs Division	10,245	Befehlshaber Mitte - C. in C. East	44,449
Economic Inspectorate	2,400	Includes Supply Depots, Hospital Training Units, etc.	

Cover Illustration: This poignant card for Weihnachten 1945 was designed by Wilhelm Blosch, a German prisoner of war at Bushnell General Military Hospital in Brigham City, Utah. This was the fifth largest military hospital in the USA during WWII and specialized in treating amputations, maxillofacial surgery, neuropsychiatric conditions, and tropical diseases. Because of labor shortages, POWs worked around the hospital grounds, in the kitchen, laundry and hospital wards. They also picked fruit in the orchards surrounding Bushnell. German POWs were repatriated shortly before this hospital was closed on June 19, 1946.

The TRSG Staff wish all of our members a happy and healthy 2014.

Postal Card from 'Assembly Camp' Lichtenburg

by Ian Nutley

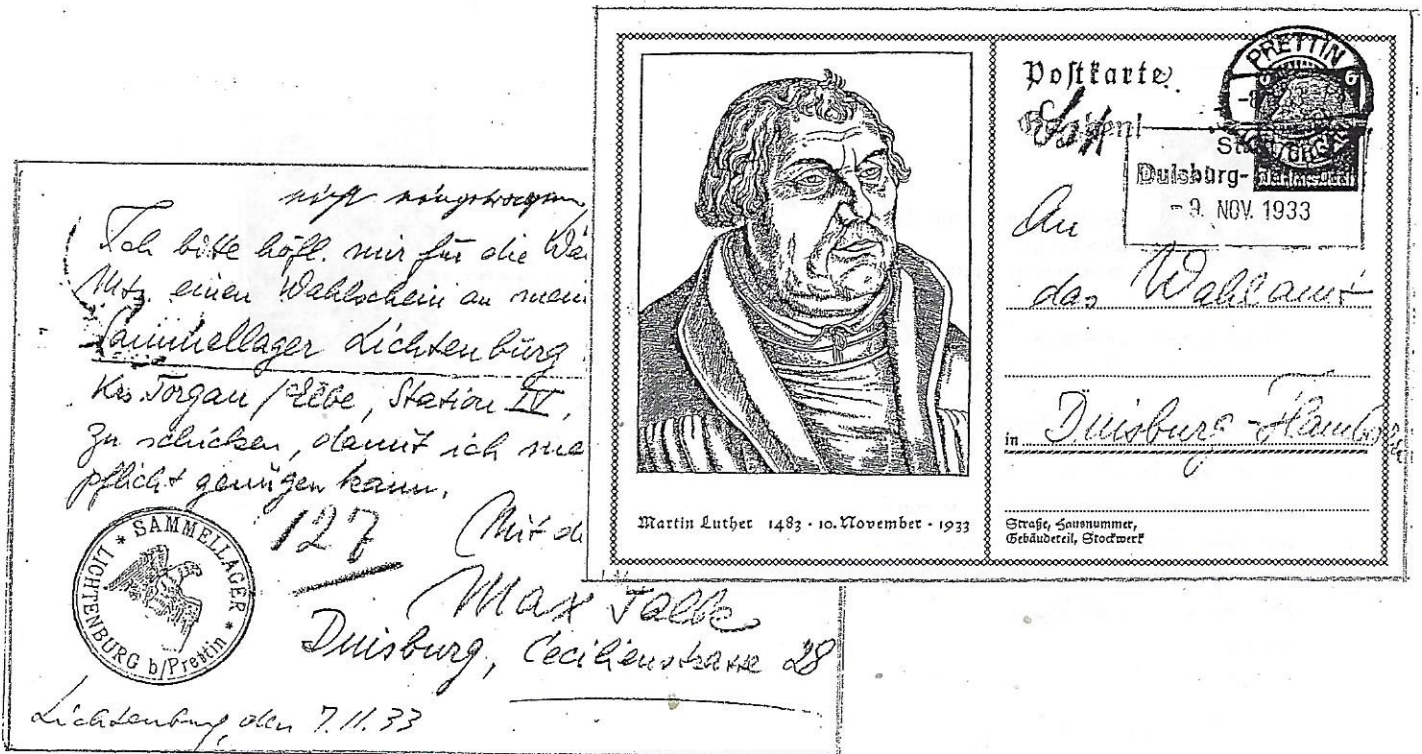
Soon after coming to power, the Nazis established a network of concentration camps in which to detain those they perceived as enemies of the state. These included Communists, trades union activists, socialists, social-democrats, freemasons, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses and, of course, Jews. These early camps, called 'Sammellager' (Assembly Camps) or 'Schutzhaftlager' (Protective Custody Camps), were not representative of the type of camp which developed later. Built under control of the S. A., many were set up by local S. A. leaders, not only for detention of 'enemies of the state' but also to settle private scores. This would all change after the breaking of the S. A.'s power on June 30, 1934.

One of the first camps, known initially as a 'Sammellager, opened in June 1933 at Lichtenburg, near Prettin in Torgau. The card below was written by an inmate and posted in Prettin on November 8, 1933. Addressed to the voting office in Duisburg, the prisoner's home town, under "Postkarte" is a Gothic hand stamp 'Gesehen' (Seen i.e. Censored) over which the censor has scrawled his initials in red crayon. On the back side, above the circular hand stamp is the message which gives a most interesting insight into the writer's predicament:

"I ask you to please send my voting papers for the election on the 12th of this month to my temporary address Sammellager Lichtenburg bei Prettin, District Torgau, Elbe, Station IV, Room 7, so that I may fulfill my electoral duty. With German Greetings,

Max Falke, Duisburg, Cecilienstrasse 28, Lichtenburg den 7.11.1933"

By October 1933 Hitler had dissolved all other political parties and withdrawn Germany from the League of Nations. To obtain endorsement of those policies, he announced dissolution of the Reichstag on October 14th to be followed by a new election on November 12th. With only the NSDAP left on the ballot, the Nazis received 92.1% of the vote for the Reichstag. So we have a bizarre situation wherein a prisoner incarcerated by the Nazis is requesting his voting papers so he may vote for Adolf Hitler, the individual ultimately responsible for his imprisonment!



Apothekertag Cancels

by Bob Ferguson

The following special cancels pertaining to Pharmacist Day are listed in Julius Bochmann's **Katalog der Deutschen Gelegenheitsstempel.**

Essen # 26	4. Deutscher Apothekertag/23.-27. Juni 1937 (machine)	23-27 June 1937
Essen # 27	4. Deutscher Apothekertag/23.-27. Juni 1937	23-27 June 1937
Frankfurt # 85	5. Deutscher Apothekertag/1. Grossdeutscher Apothekertag 28.-30. Mai 1938 (machine cancel)	28.-30. May 1938
Frankfurt # 87	1. Grossdeutscher Apothekertag 1938	28.-30. May 1938
Dresden # 89	Reichsapothekertag/Dresden 2.-6. Juni 1939	2.-6. June 1939

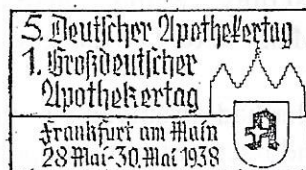
Essen # 27




Frankfurt # 87



Frankfurt # 85



Privately printed Grossdeutscher Apothekertag post card has Dresden # 89 cancel



Dresden, den 4. Juni 1939
Magdeburg
Großdeutscher Apothekertag

Es ist mir eine besondere Freude, Ihnen die vorliegende Karte vom zweiten Großdeutschen Apothekertag mit der wundervollen neuen und für diesen Zweck besonders geeigneten Führermarke mit dem Sonderstempel vom Apothekertag zur Erinnerung und gleichzeitig für eine evtl. Sammlung übersenden zu können.


Mit bestem Gruß und Heil Hitler!

Apotheken-Buchstelle

Druck v. Baensch-Stiftung, Dresden

Übernahme der Postierung „Dresden mit dem Brennertischstempel“ von W. Seifing

Herrn
Frau
Fräulein



Apothekenbes
Hubert Ernst

D a u n / Eifel

German POWs in North America

Camps in Florida

by Jim Lewis

During WWII, nearly 10,000 German POWs were held in Florida's two major base camps: Camp Blanding (Code 14), near Starke, with 19 smaller branch camps holding 7,500 men and Camp Gordon-Johnson (Code 169), near Carabelle, holding about 2,500 men. There were also POW camps in Florida that were branches of out of state base camps. For example, a peanut-harvesting branch camp of Fort Benning, Georgia, was set up in Marianna, which lies in Florida's panhandle, 60 miles west of Tallahassee and located between military bases in Panama City and Fort Walton Beach. As was typical across the nation, Marianna was in dire need of crop labor. Men and women not in active service were driving to the military bases for high paying war labor. At the branch camps in Florida, POWs were citrus pickers and packers, fruit and vegetable canners, sugarcane harvesters, potato diggers, pulpwood cutters. In Dade County, they were put to work cleaning streets in Miami Beach.

Daily routines at base camps began at 5:30 AM, when German POWs donned their blue shirts and pants marked "PW", then entered the mess for an American-style breakfast prepared by fellow Germans. Between 7:30 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Saturday, the POW performed manual labor, unless he was an officer not required to work or a non-commissioned officer required only to do supervisory duties. At noon lunch, probably a sandwich or soup, was sent from the camp. At 5:00 PM the prisoners were returned to their camps to shower, change clothes and have dinner. From then until lights out at 10PM, the POW could play soccer or ping-pong; attend classes or shop at the POW-run camp store, where he could purchase writing implements, paper, American newspapers and magazines, tobacco and up to two bottles of beer a day.

The main camps and branch camps in Florida are listed below

Name of Camp	County	Main Camp	Name of Camp	County	Main Camp
Banana River	Brevard	Blanding	Kendall	Miami-Dade	Blanding
Bell Haven	Miami-Dade	Blanding	Leesburg	Lake	Blanding
Camp Blanding	Bradford	-----	Mabry Field	Leon	Camp Johnson
Clewiston	Hendry	Blanding	MacDill Field	Hillsborough	Blanding
Dade City	Pasco	Blanding	Marianna	Jackson	Camp Johnson
Daytona Beach	Volusia	Blanding	Melbourne	Brevard	Blanding
Drew Field	Hillsborough	Blanding	Orlando Field	Orange	Blanding
Elgin Field	Okaloosa	Gordon, GA	Page Field	Lee	Blanding
Green Cove Spring	Clay	Blanding	Telogia	Liberty	Camp Johnson
Hastings	St. John	Blanding	Venice Field	Sarasota	Blanding
Homestead Field	Miami-Dade	Blanding	White Springs	Hamilton	Blanding
Jacksonville	Duval	Blanding	Whiting Field	Santa Rosa	Rucker, AL
Camp Johnson	Franklin	-----	Winter Haven	Polk	Blanding

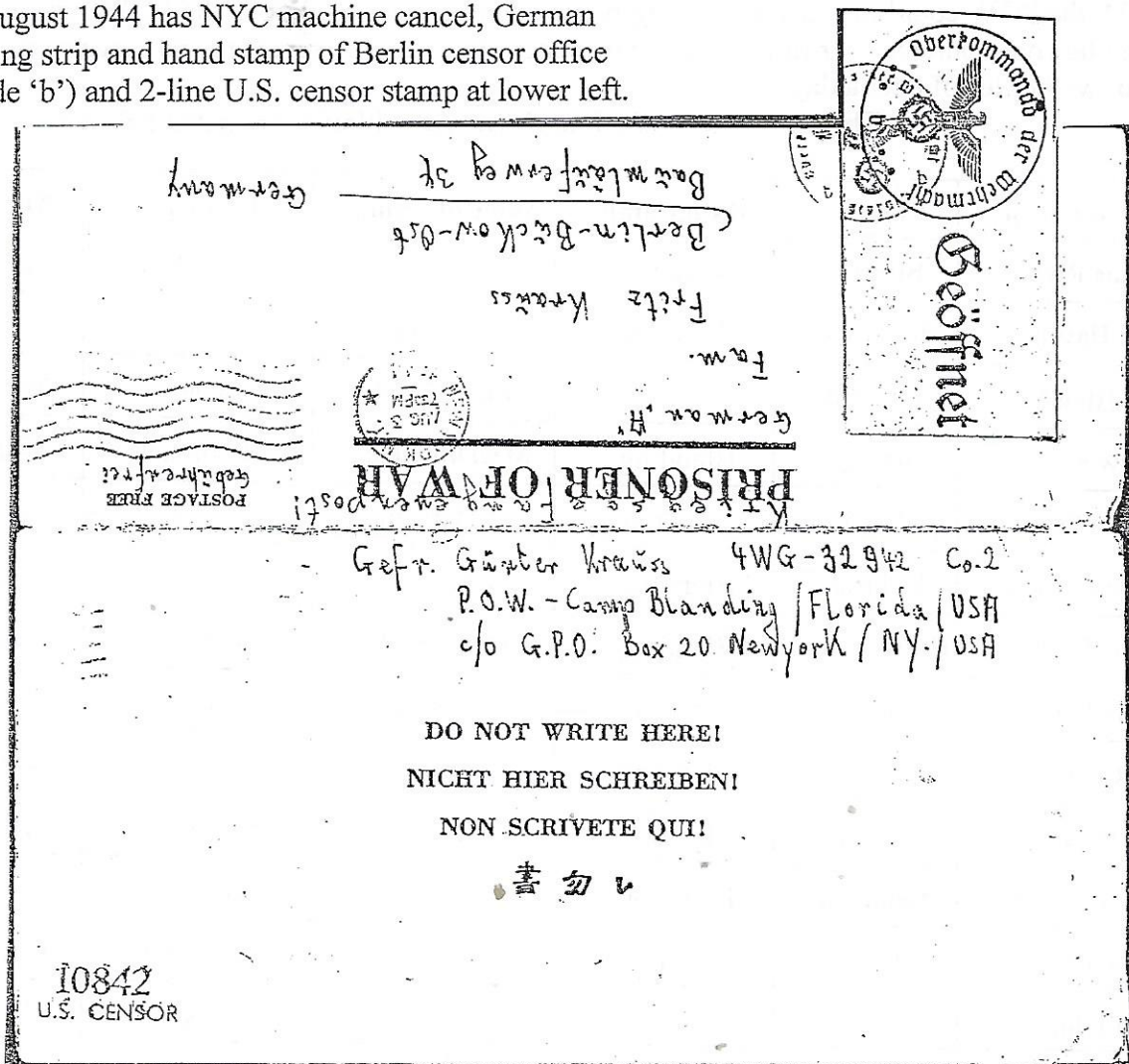
Note: POWs worked at Welch Convalescent Hospital (Daytona Beach)

Among the earliest German prisoners in Florida were the 52-man crew of the 'Arauca', a German freighter that escaped into port at Fort Lauderdale in mid-December 1939 to avoid the British cruiser 'Orion'. A standoff lasted for almost a year while the cruiser kept the 'Arauca' in port. The crew was eventually arrested after Congress passed a law limiting how long foreign ships could remain in U.S. ports. The crew was initially jailed in Broward county and later moved to an internment camp.

Florida's natural fauna did cause quite a sensation among many German POWs. Many relished the opportunity to work in the sugarcane fields for the opportunity to hunt and catch snakes, probably because there were so few snakes in Germany. They would stand at the edges of burning sugarcane fields so they could catch snakes in order to make belts. At the camp in Clewiston, POWs tried to keep a six-foot alligator in their barracks but the gator snapped at a POW's leg and they decided to release it.

Florida camps held 11,746 German pows. Of these, 830 were stationed at the Orlando and Leesburg Airfields, providing manpower to several branch camps dotted around Orange, Osceola, Lake and Seminole counties. These branch camps housed prisoners contracted by private business to work in fields and packing houses. Two branch camps, the Gotha Ordnance Depot and the Minorville Quartermaster Depot were located in West Orange County. POWs lived in domiciles comparable to those of the GIs. Forbidden from working in the war industries, they were contracted as laborers to local citrus and vegetable growers. It is estimated the POW labor contributed 250,000 man-hours of work at an value of \$700,000 in West Orange county.

Fig. 1) Form letter sheet to Berlin posted in Camp Blanding in August 1944 has NYC machine cancel, German sealing strip and hand stamp of Berlin censor office (Code 'b') and 2-line U.S. censor stamp at lower left.



The 15 Pfg. Hitler Head Definitive Postal Card

by Bob Ferguson

On August 1, 1941 the Reichspost issued six new postal cards to replace the Hindenburg definitive cards which had been in use since 1934. These new cards bore the Hitler head indicia and were to enjoy wide use until the end of the war. The least used of these was the 15 Pfg. International sender-reply card. Below are two examples from my collection.

Fig. 1) Reply card P303A to Maikammer/Westmark posted in Davos Dorf (Switzerland) on September 8, 1944 has D-7 Munich censor stamp.

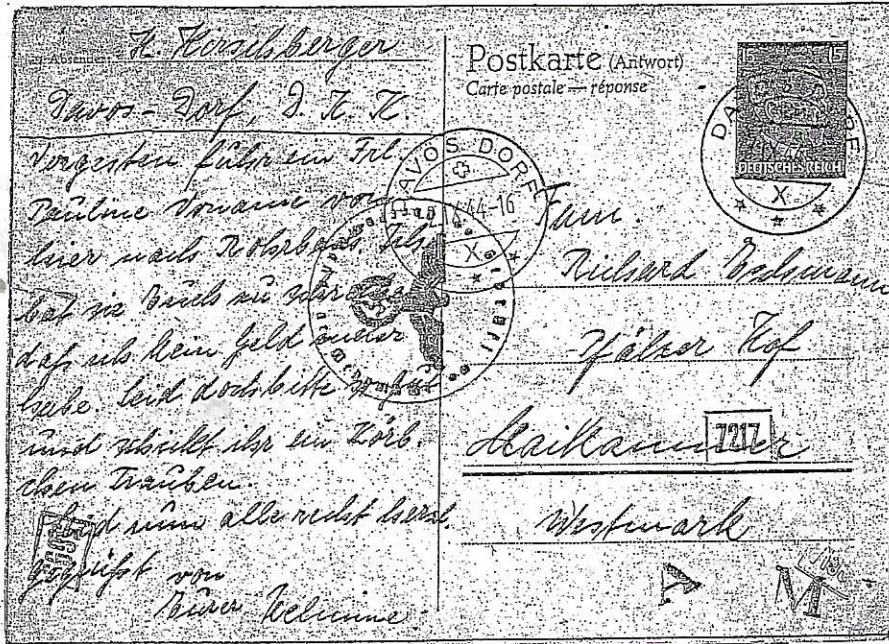


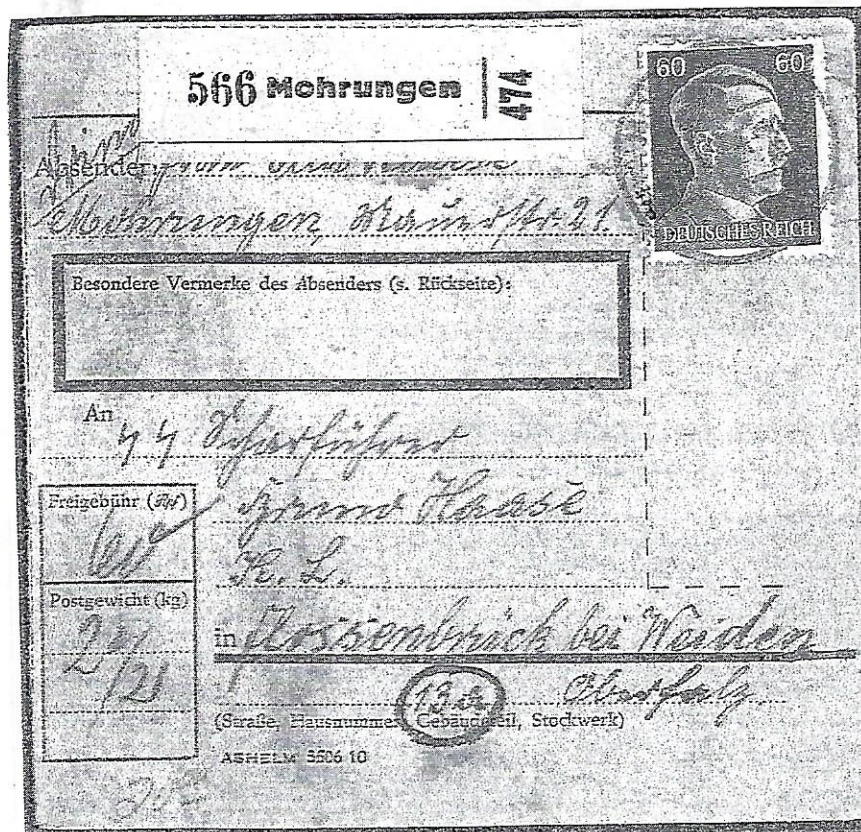
Fig. 2) Sender card P303F to Neuchatel (Switzerland) posted in Graz on October 28, 1944 has D-15 "Zensurstelle" Munich censor stamp.



Concentration Camp Mail: Parcel Card to Flossenburg Camp Guard by Joseph Chervenyak

Flossenburg KZL was in the Oberpfalz region of Bavaria, near the Czech border. Located near Floss and Namering, Germany, the camp was built near a granite quarry. Opened in May 1938, it was a relatively small facility originally intended for criminals and “asocial” persons. During the war, inmate forced labor became increasingly important in German arms production. As a result, the Flossenburg camp system was expanded to include approximately 100 sub-camps that were concentrated around armaments industries in southern Germany and western Czechoslovakia.

There were over 4,000 inmates in the Flossenburg main camp in February 1943. While there had previously been few Jews in Flossenburg, between August, 1944 and January 1945, at least 10,000 Hungarian and Polish Jews arrived at Flossenburg and its sub-camps. In January 1945 there were about 40,000 inmates in the Flossenburg camp system, including about 11,000 women. At its high point in March 1945, nearly 53,000 prisoners were in Flossenburg, with about 15,500 in the main camp.



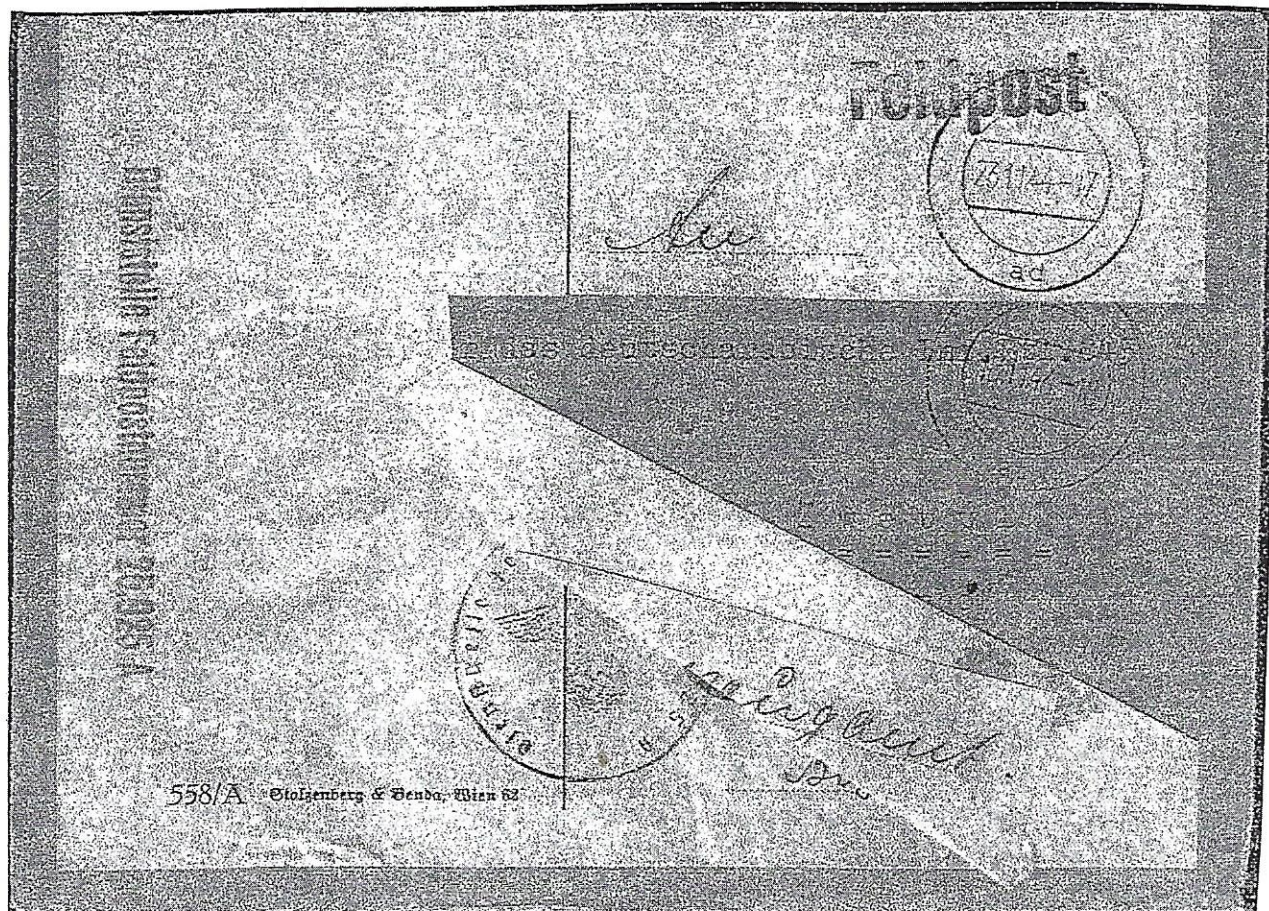
This receipt card for a parcel sent on September 26, 1944 from Mohrungen, Prussia (now Morag, Poland) is addressed to an SS Scharführer who was a guard at Flossenburg.

The Lost Legions: The German-Arab 845th Infantry Battalion by Bruce Fisher

Some of the least known foreign volunteers were Arabs who fought in the Wehrmacht. Initially few in number, most had originally served in French or British units and were later recruited from German POW camps. As the number of Arab volunteers grew, some were sent to Tunisia in 1943 where several weak Arab battalions were raised for garrison and labor duties. Some were sent to the Eastern Front in anticipation of a breakthrough across the Caucasus into the Middle East, but they never saw combat.

The "Deutsch-arabische" (German-Arab) 845th Infantry Battalion was formed in the Summer of 1944. Staffed with German officers, the battalion was trained at Drünhof Lager. At the completion of training in November 1944, the battalion was assigned Fp. # 25925, then sent to Army Group E in the Balkans to perform security and anti-partisan duties as part of the 104th Jäger Division. In October 1944, when the German Army evacuated southern Greece and retreated through the Balkans, the 845th German-Arab Battalion usually furnished the rear guard. In February 1945, the battalion held a position between the Danube and Sava Rivers, then retreated to west of Zagreb, Croatia where it was captured in April 1945.

Re-used cover from Fp.# 25925A (HQ/845th German-Arab Battalion) was posted on Nov. 23, 1944. Under the paste-over can be seen the original cover used five days earlier as a dispatch addressed to "das deutscharabische Inf. Btl. 845" at Drünhof Lager near Zwettl.



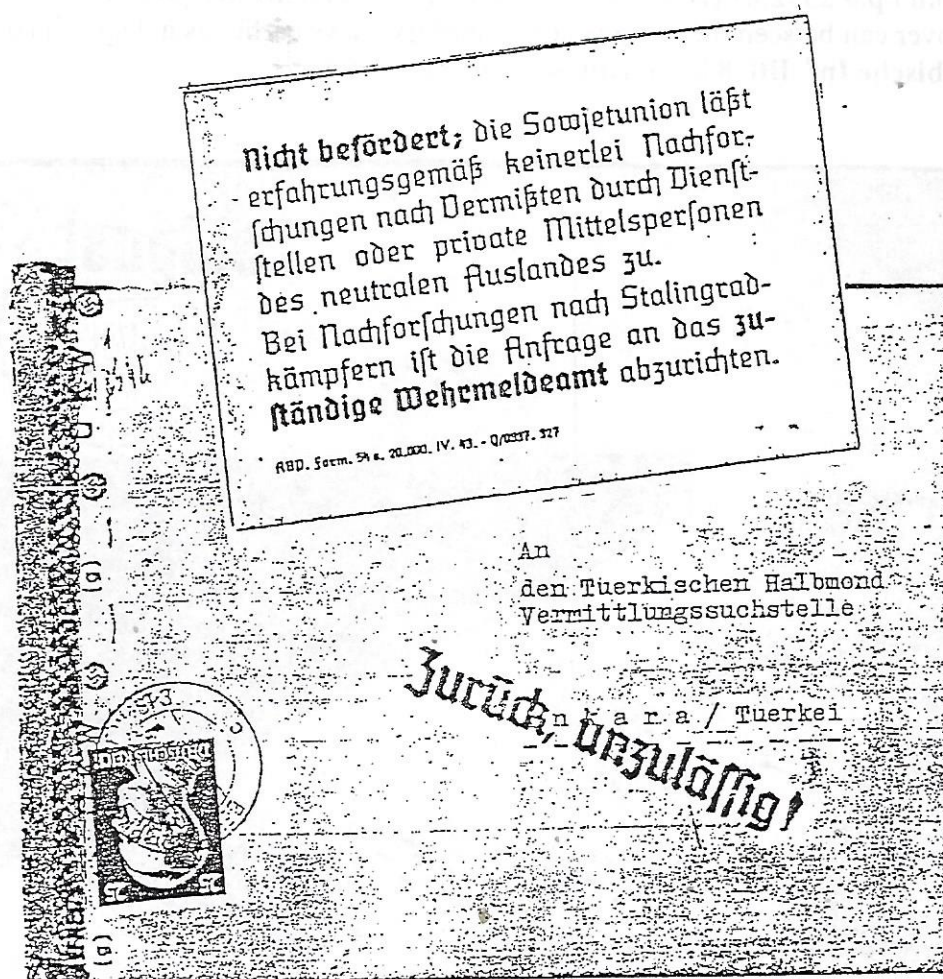
Postal Service for German POWs in Soviet Captivity

by Kelly Stefanacci

The 'Study Group Notes' in Bulletin 189 included an inquiry as to whether any mail exists to or from German POWs in the USSR.

As Stalin had refused to participate with Germany in a postal service for their respective POWs, Section 3 of the Supplementary Order of May 13, 1940 of the German Communications Directive applied: "The sender is expressly advised that the Reichspost has no authority for determining admissibility of mail according to regulations. The intelligence officers of the military districts are responsible for such decisions. The return of fees for such rejected mail does not occur in any case."

This cover was posted in December 1943 and is addressed to the Turkish Crescent (equivalent to the Red Cross) Assistance Office in Ankara, Turkey. It was examined and rejected by the German censor office in Vienna (code 'g') per the hand stamp "**Zurück, unzulässig!**" (Return, not permitted!). The censors enclosed a reason for return insert which explains that this letter cannot be forwarded because the Soviet Union has refused to exchange mail between German POWs and their homeland. Attempts to forward such mail via private parties in neutral countries is also not permitted. Any attempt to send mail to Stalingrad POWs must be routed through the appropriate "**zuständige Wehrmeldeamt**" (Armed Forces Records Office).



Re-used St. Nazaire Covers

by Larry Nelson

After German military forces occupied the French coast in the Summer of 1940, the port city of St. Nazaire became an important base for U-boat operations. Becoming a very strongly fortified base with submarine pens and roughly 35,000 German troops, it soon became a primary target for Allied bombing attacks trying to knock out the U-boat pens. A large number of anti-aircraft and artillery batteries were therefore added to the counter this bombing campaign.

As the war progressed there was a shortage of everything in St. Nazaire. Fig. 1 (top) is a Feldpost cover posted in Viersen on Feb. 16, 1944 that is addressed to a "Feldwebel" (technical sergeant) at Fp.# 24624, the coded address of Marine Flak-Abteilung 820 in St. Nazaire . This Flak battalion included nine anti-aircraft batteries.

Subsequently (bottom), original addresses were crossed out and a new address "Art. Arsenal St. Nazaire" written on the backside. The sender's address "Kommando/ Marineflakabteilung 820" and "Einschreiben" were added by hand stamps. This is an example of "internal" Feldpost mail, but as it is undated, there is no evidence of postal handling.

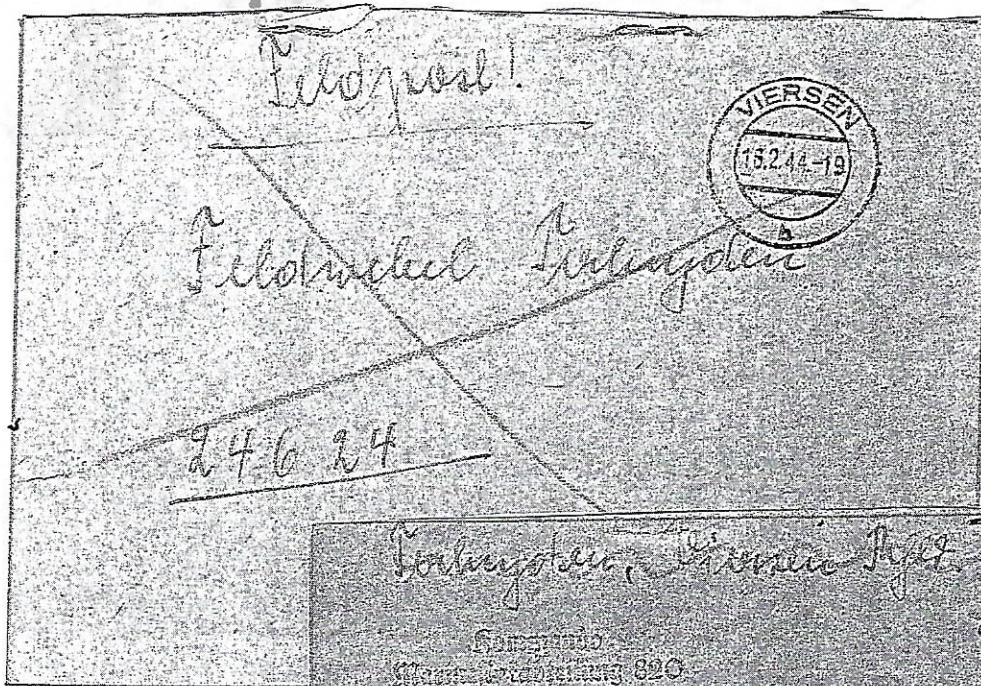
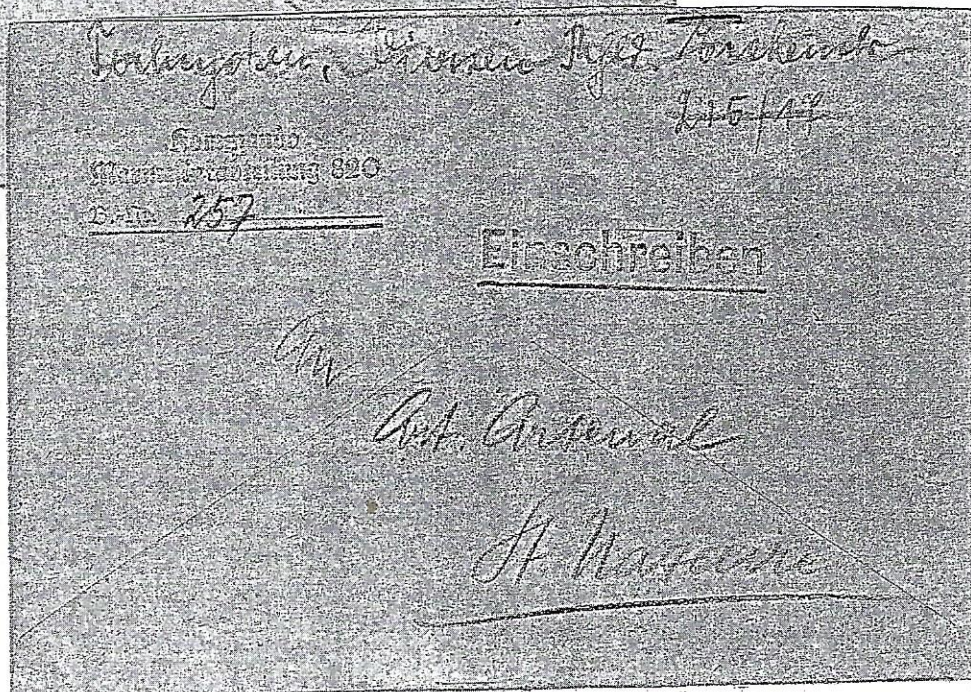
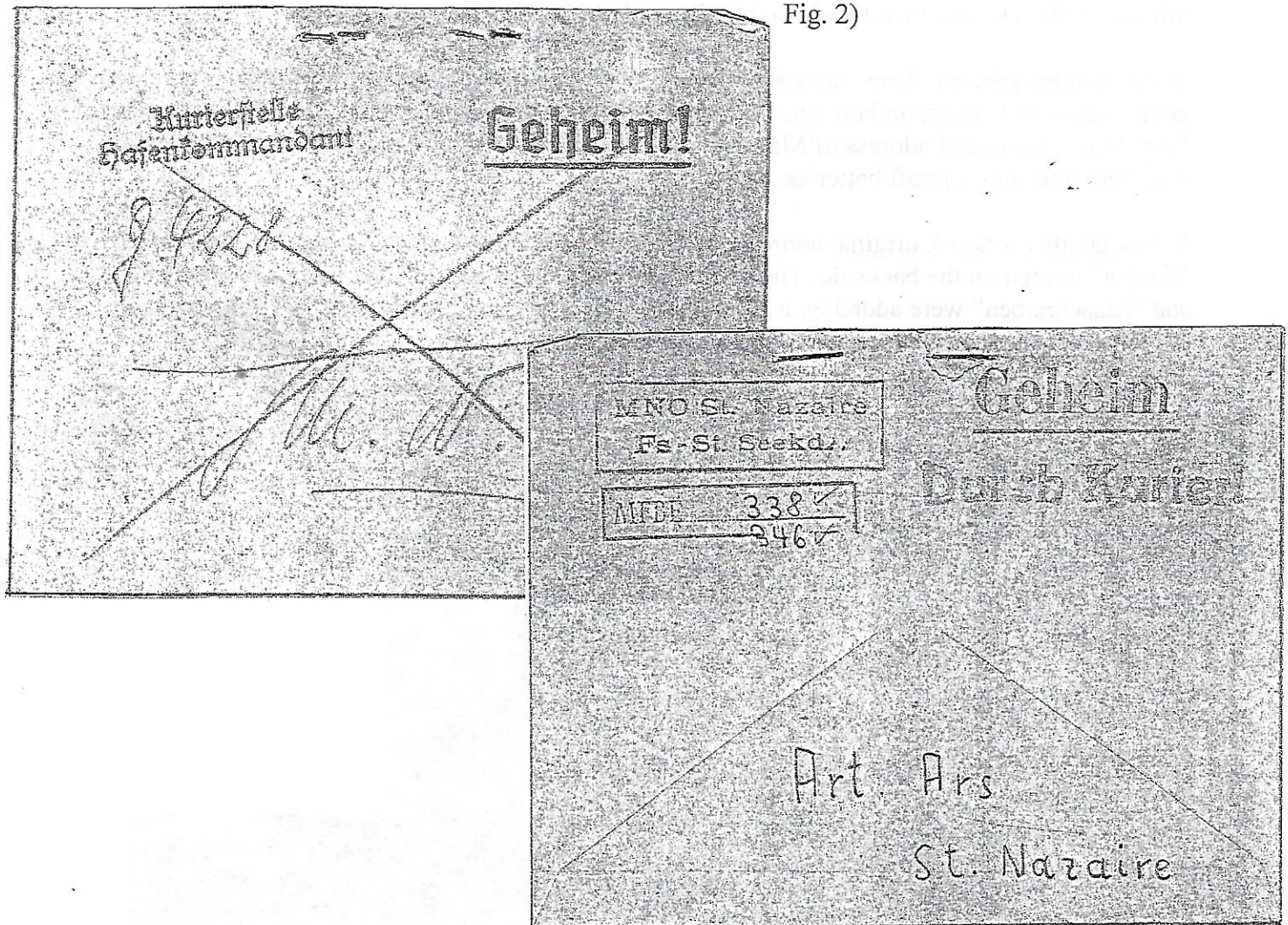


Fig. 1)



Another example of undated internal St. Nazaire mail (Fig. 2) was sent from “Kurierstelle/
“Hafenkommandant” (Courier Office/Harbor Command) to “M.N.O. = Marine Nachrichten Offizier”
(Naval Signals Officer). Indicia “Geheim!” (Secret!) appears in red in upper right corner.

This address was crossed out and “MNO St. Nazaire”, “Geheim”, “Durch Kurier”(By Courier) and boxed
“MFBE” (indicating the secret documents enclosed) were hand stamped on backside. This cover was also
sent to the Artillery Arsenal St. Nazaire. Both Fig. 1 & 2 re-used covers were closed with staples.



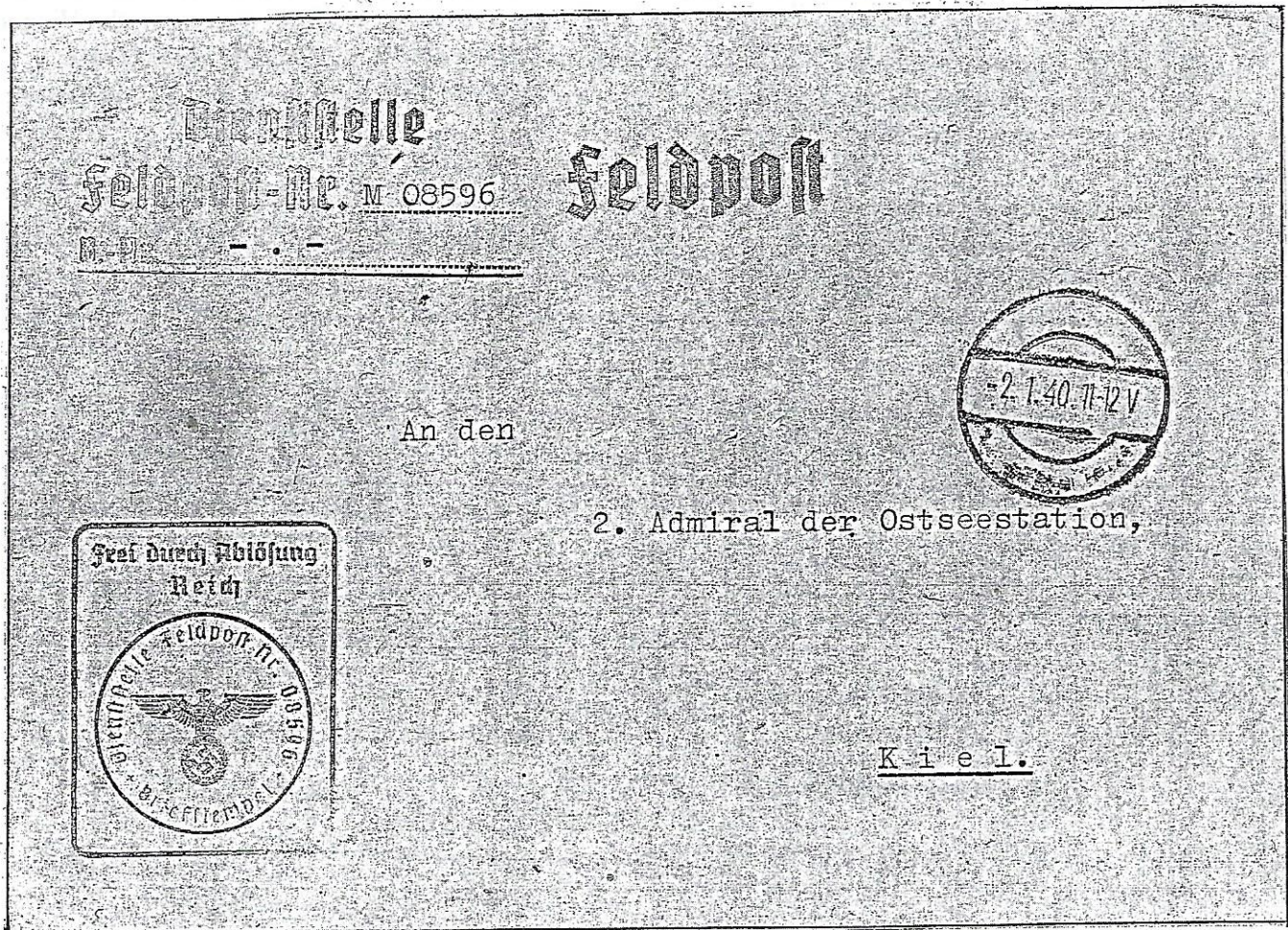
After the Allies broke out of the Normandy beachhead in early August 1944, VIII Corps of Patton’s 3rd Army turned east to capture port cities in the Brittany region and secure facilities which would allow needed supplies to be unloaded. However, after a battle to capture the port of St. Malo had cost of 20,000 Allied casualties, the Allies realized that the combination of Allied bombing and thorough German demolitions had rendered this port utterly useless. As Hitler had designated St. Nazaire as a “Festung” (fortress) to be held at all costs, it was bypassed by the Allies in favor of capturing eastern port facilities such Antwerp. By August 11, 1944, St. Nazaire was cut off and remained so until the city surrendered on May 8, 1945.

Questions for the membership are: a) were these covers re-used during the “Festung” period? We know that, everything, including envelopes, were in short supply during this period but the lack of dates make it difficult to know for sure. b) does the boxed notation in Fig. 2 reading “Fs-St. Seekd.” mean “Festung-St. (Nazaire) Naval Command 2? Please e-mail any thoughts on these questions to either Ye Olde Ed or to the author at “[censorship@comcast.net](mailto: censorship@comcast.net)”

NAVY LOG

by Robert Dunn

Auxiliary Minelayer 'Preussen'- Feldpost # 08596



This merchant ship was built by Oderwerke (Stetten) and launched in March 1926.

Refitted for mine-laying and anti-aircraft defense in September 1939

Gross Tonnage: 2,529 tons

Armaments: two 3.5 in. A.A. guns, 400 Mines.

History: Laid mines along western coast of Denmark during invasion in April 1940.

Fate: Hit and sunk by mine off Olandsund, Denmark on July 9, 1941.

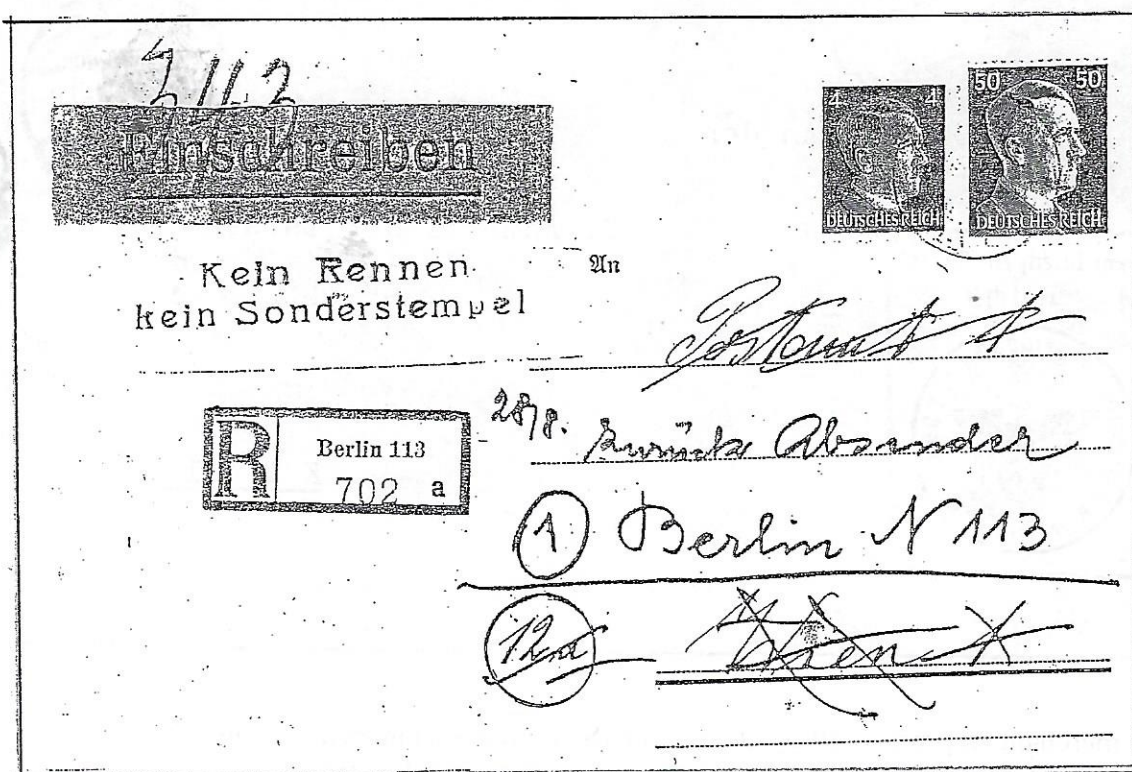
Official Feldpost cover sent January 2, 1940 to 2. Admiral East Sea Station in Kiel.

Special Cancel for 1944 Vienna Grand Prix Race?

by TRSG Staff

Like most novice Third Reich postal collectors, we got most of our information on the stamps and cancels from this era from the handbook "The Stamps of Germany Third Reich" by A. Harper & W. Scheck which was published in 1966. While most information in this handbook has stood the test of time, our sister TRSG in the U.K. has discovered an error concerning the Vienna Grand Prix horse race in 1944. The Reichspost issued two stamps (Mi. 900/01) for this race which were announced in the August 2, 1944 issue of the Amtsblatt but there was no mention of a special cancel for the event.

While according to the Harper & Scheck handbook, this race for three year olds was won by a horse named "Nordlicht" ridden by jockey O. Schmidt, TRSG (UK) member Rex Dixon obtained the cover shown below which reveals that this race had been cancelled at short notice.



This registered cover bearing 54 Rpf franking for a heavy letter weighing between 20 and 250 grams, almost certainly containing a batch of pre-addressed covers or cards, was sent to Vienna 1 post office to be cancelled-to-order with the anticipated special handstamp for the race. The dealer or collector concerned must have missed the Amtsblatt announcement and, at the time this letter was posted in Berlin (probably on August 24th - the date is not clear) he must have been unaware that the race had been cancelled. The manuscript date on the cover front shows that it was sent back to Berlin on August 28th and the receipt back stamp confirms its arrival at Berlin P.O. N113 on August 30th. The reason for its return is explained by the two-line handstamp reading "Kein Rennen/kein Sonderstempel" (No race/no special cancel).

Ed Note: The information contained above was originally published by the TRSG (UK) and appears here with their kind permission.

Story Behind the Cancel:
'Sieg im Westen'
 by Kelly Stefanacci

'Sieg im Westen' (Victory in the West) was the official German army film covering its campaigns in Belgium, Holland and France in May and June of 1940. The production history of this film challenges the widely-accepted notion that German propaganda was monolithic and orchestrated down to the last detail by Dr. Goebbles' omnipotent Propaganda Ministry. This history further illustrates that Nazi Germany was not an efficient totalitarian organization. Often, the tension between conflicting organizations in making a film can result in a better end product. However, in 'Sieg im Westen', conflicting viewpoints were never synthesized, with the result that the film is divided into two ungainly sections, neither one having much to do with the other in content or style: the first section was the product of the Propaganda Ministry and the second, combat footage produced by the Oberkommando der Heeres (Army High Command).

In March 1940, four specially assigned OKH Propaganda Company film units had been "embedded" with the troops preparing for the offensive. Per a directive from General Hasso von Wedel, Chief of the OKW Propaganda Staff, appropriate film footage was to bypass Goebbles' Propaganda Ministry. However, upon previewing the finished film in September 1940, Goebbles felt that it placed insufficient emphasis on the political background for the war. A prelude was therefore added that "interpreted" history by explaining that Germany was the historical victim of an "encirclement policy" by other European nations and had been forced to defend herself. Much wrangling during the fall and winter of 1940 resulted in a number of edits. Several rectified complaints from Luftwaffe Chief Hermann Göring, who felt that not enough credit was given to his fighter squadrons who established air superiority and allowed for the rapid panzer advances, nor to his glider troops who had assaulted and captured Fort Eben Emael in Belgium.

The film was finally completed and released in January 1941. In several of the larger cities, it was preceded by exhibits of maps, military hardware, uniforms, etc. Goebbles later expressed regrets about the optimistic view of warfare shown to the German public by this film.

Fig. 1) Cover of 'Illustrierter Film-Kurier' magazine.



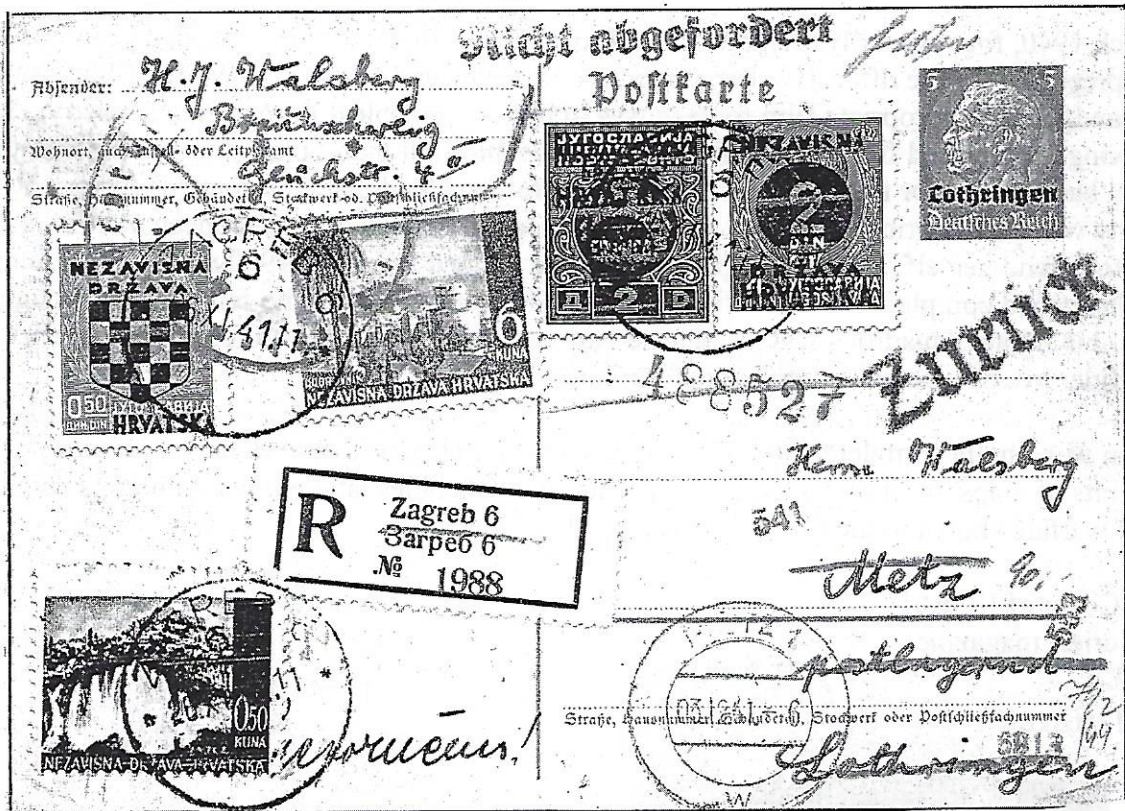
Fig. 2) Special Vienna cancel dated January 12, 1941 announces an "Wehrmachtausstellung" (Armed Forces Exhibition) that coincided with opening of 'Der Sieg im Westen' film.

Philatelic High Jinx

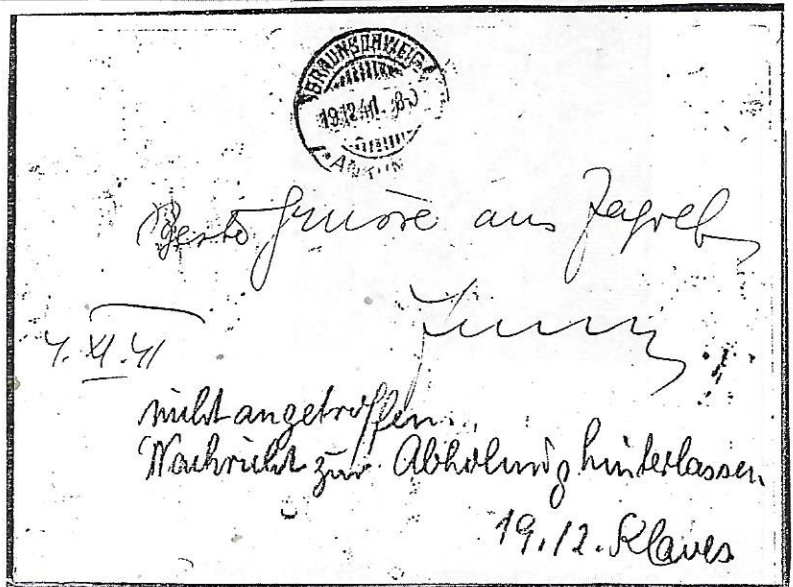
by Henry Laessig

This item, which at first glance appears to be good piece of postal history, is actually an attempt by a collector to create an "interesting" item. A 5 Rpg 'Lothringen' overprint postal card obtained by H. J. Walsberg of Braunsweig was addressed to himself via General Delivery in Metz. The card was then forwarded to someone in Zagreb, Croatia (no doubt via "ambulance" cover) where the recipient affixed five different Croatian stamps to pay the Axis registered rate (2.00 Kuna post card + 9.00 Kuna registry fee). He then took the card to the Zagreb 6 post office which added the registry label and cancelled the stamps on Nov. 28, 1941.

After obtaining a censor stamp in Vienna (see top left) the card was date stamped in Metz on Dec. 3rd (see bottom center). As the intended recipient was nonexistent, the Metz P.O. voided the address and stamped the card "Züruck" (return) and "Nicht abgefordert" (Not claimed).



The card was then returned to the sender in Braunsweig where it was backstamped on Dec. 19th with an added manuscript explanatory note. The only curiosity is why no General Delivery fee was charged for this item.



Undercover Collector's Corner:
The Thomas Cook & Son "Undercover" Mail Scheme in Canada
 by Ed Fraser

What do we know about WWI that was used in WWII? We do know that the British censorship experience of WWI was the basis for the planning that took place in 1939, prior to the outbreak of WWII, and that any knowledge of Germany's censorship plans were apparently overlooked. (The German Communications Directive establishing censorship regulations was not issued until April 2, 1940). We also know that while there were numerous undercover mail schemes in WWI, detailed information is quite scarce. Even the Thomas Cook scheme used in Great Britain, documented as beginning in 1914, is difficult to detail. Covers are scarce, the neutral countries Cook used varied, and it was not necessary to conceal the deliberate circumventing of any rules about exchanging mail with an enemy country. Apparently, such mail exchanges were widely accepted as being humanitarian and were, therefore, allowed.

Fig. 1) Thomas Cook & Son instruction sheet dated February 1918.

**NOTES FOR PERSONS WISHING TO COMMUNICATE WITH FRIENDS IN ENEMY COUNTRIES OR
 A COUNTRY IN THE OCCUPATION OF THE ENEMY.**

Letters or Post Cards should be written in English, French, Flemish, or German, and must contain nothing but matter of personal interest. No reference should be made to any phase of the War. No mention may be made in such letters, etc., of any Office of THOS. COOK & SON, at home or abroad.
 Picture Post Cards and Photographs of persons or places cannot be sent.
 Communications must be as brief as possible, in order to avoid delay in censoring.
 Letters must be placed in an open envelope fully addressed to the addressee.
 The envelope containing the Letter or Post Card should be placed in an outer envelope and posted to THOS. COOK & SON, SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT, LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C. 4, together with a memorandum, plainly written, containing the full name and address of the sender and instructions as to the forwarding of a reply, should one be received from the correspondent. THOS. COOK & SON endorse on each communication the address to which the recipient should reply should he desire to send an answer.
 The communication to THOS. COOK & SON must enclose Postal Order value 1/- (International Coupons cannot be accepted), which fee will cover:—

- (1) The postage of one Post Card or of an envelope (containing one communication) to the neutral country.
- (2) Postage from the neutral country to the enemy country.
- (3) In case a reply is sent from the correspondent in an enemy country, the fee also includes postage from the neutral country to Cook's Head Office in London, and from that office to the original sender of the communication, but does not include the cost of postage of the reply from the enemy country to the neutral country.
- (4) Letters exceeding one ounce in weight will be subject to an additional charge.

Communications in French, German, or Flemish by Dutch or Swiss Post Cards can be sent under this arrangement to but not from certain places in Belgium, including among others, Antwerp, Brussels, Liege, and Verviers, the charge being 6d. each. Where a reply is desired, the sender must insert an address in Holland or Switzerland, to which it can be sent. If the sender cannot furnish such address, it will not be possible to obtain a reply. Communications cannot be sent to Ostend, Ghent, Bruges, Charleroi, places in East or West Flanders, and certain other districts in the area under Military jurisdiction. THOS. COOK & SON can supply the Post Cards.
 THOS. COOK & SON undertake this transaction at the sole risk in all respects of the party requiring their services, and on the express understanding that no action will lie against them by reason of any act or default on their part, or on the part of any person or agent employed by them.
 Communications for Prisoners of War must not be sent under the foregoing arrangements, but forwarded in accordance with the regulations to be obtained at any Post Office.

(154/2/18.)—10,000.

However, for WWII, there was not only the Thomas Cook scheme operating out of London, but also ones operating out of several other Thomas Cook offices, particularly the Thomas Cook of Canada scheme using Post Box 252, Grand Central Annex Post Office in New York City. There are various articles about this in the TRSG Bulletin, including some early ones by Art Hecker, and some yet earlier by Ken Rowe. While there was a Canadian scheme during WWI using Cook's offices in Montreal (see Fig. 4) we know that in WWII this service was operated by Thomas Cook of Toronto along with the assistance of Thomas Cook in New York City.

Note similarities between the 1918 Thomas Cook instruction sheet and this January 1940 sheet (Fig.2)

Copies of newspaper notices about Cook's service were located on microfilm files in the Canadian National Archives in Ottawa, the earliest one from the Montreal Gazette of Nov. 25, 1939 (Fig. 3)

Fig. 2)

Fig. 3)

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

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

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

JANUARY, 1940. 13781/40 J.S.P.

Montreal Gazette Nov. 25 1939

Thomas Cook Handles All Letters to Reich

Ottawa, November 24.—D—

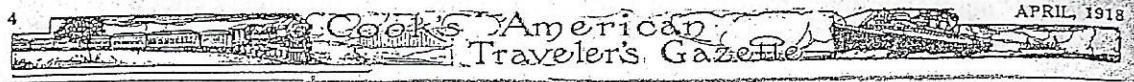
Justice Minister Lapointe, in his capacity as Acting Secretary of State, and Postmaster General Power announced tonight that Thomas Cook and Son, Limited, Toronto, have been appointed licensed intermediary for the forwarding of harmless social messages to persons in enemy or enemy-occupied territory.

Private letters to enemy or enemy-occupied territory sent through a neutral country are now allowed to be forwarded at the sender's risk as to delivery in the country of destination, subject to the usual conditions of censorship when sent through the intermediary of Thomas Cook and Son.

Letters cannot, however, be forwarded direct to enemy or enemy-occupied territory.

British subjects and others in Canada wishing to communicate with relatives or friends in enemy or enemy occupied countries should forward such letters to Thomas Cook and Son, accompanied by a remittance of 50 cents to cover the expense of transmitting the letter to a neutral country, the transmission from there to the enemy territory, and the transmission of the reply to the sender in Canada.

Letters intended for transmission to enemy or enemy-occupied countries should be as brief as possible, and should in all cases have the inner cover left open in accordance with the enemy censorship regulations, and should be confined entirely to private and family notes, without any reference whatever to military or naval movements, or to political and economic conditions.



**“COOK” TO HANDLE CANADIAN AND BRITISH
MAIL FOR ENEMY COUNTRIES**

Our numerous offices in neutral countries give us such unique facilities for the purpose that the Canadian Government, as well as the British Government, have arranged that all mail for persons in enemy countries shall be forwarded through THOS. COOK & SON. Up to the present it has been permissible to send letters destined for persons in an enemy country or a country in the occupation of the enemy, subject to censorship through the medium of an intermediary in a neutral country. The Canadian Government has now made an arrangement hereby such correspondence, unless for prisoners of war, originating in Canada, can be forwarded through our office at 530 St. Catherine Street, West, Montreal, in connection with the authority received by our Chief Office in London from the British Government to undertake the transmission of such correspondence, and also receipt and delivery thereto.

This has entailed a considerable augmentation of our Canadian staff, as the regulations governing the handling of this correspondence, which is naturally voluminous, impose certain formalities and restrictions.

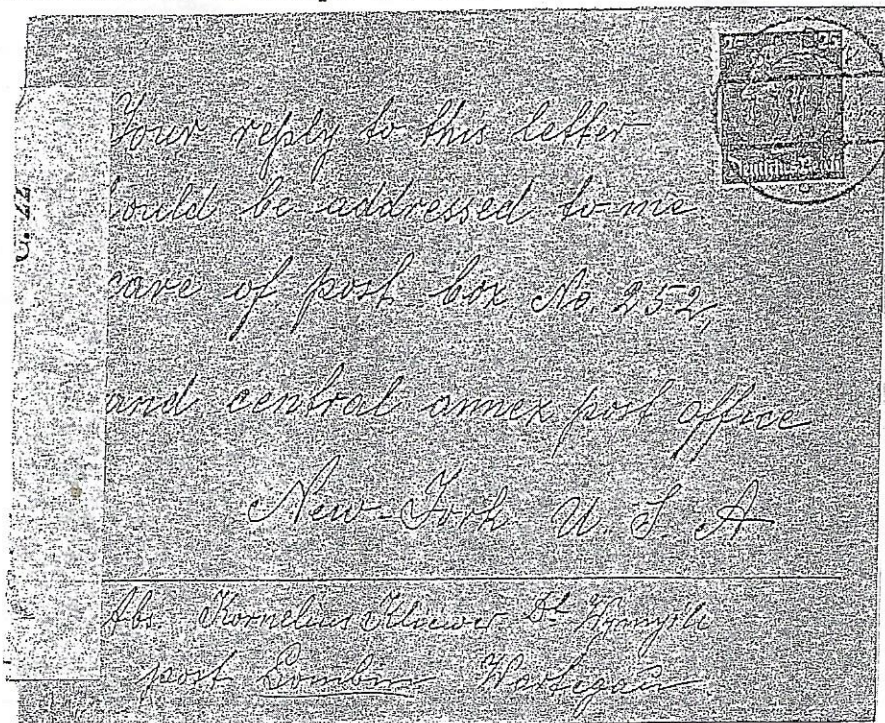
Fig. 4) This notice published in **Cook's American Traveler's Gazette** in April 1918 announces new service for mail to enemy countries via Cook's office at 530 St. Catherine Street, West, Montreal.

This research now leaves a number of both new and old open questions:

- a) Thomas Cook in Canada distributed instruction sheets, similar to those used for the Box 601, Amsterdam and later for Box 506, Lisbon, but to date none have been reported. Surely these must have been printed in some quantity and distributed by Thomas Cook in Toronto, and perhaps available at other locations including Canadian post offices.
- b) Covers, with or without contents, mailed from New York by Thomas Cook, and giving the reply address of Box 252 have not been reported. Neither has an example of a handstamp or slip of paper with the reply instructions. A cover (Fig. 5) posted in Gombin (Gen. Govt.) in 1940 indicates the recipient took the instructions literally.

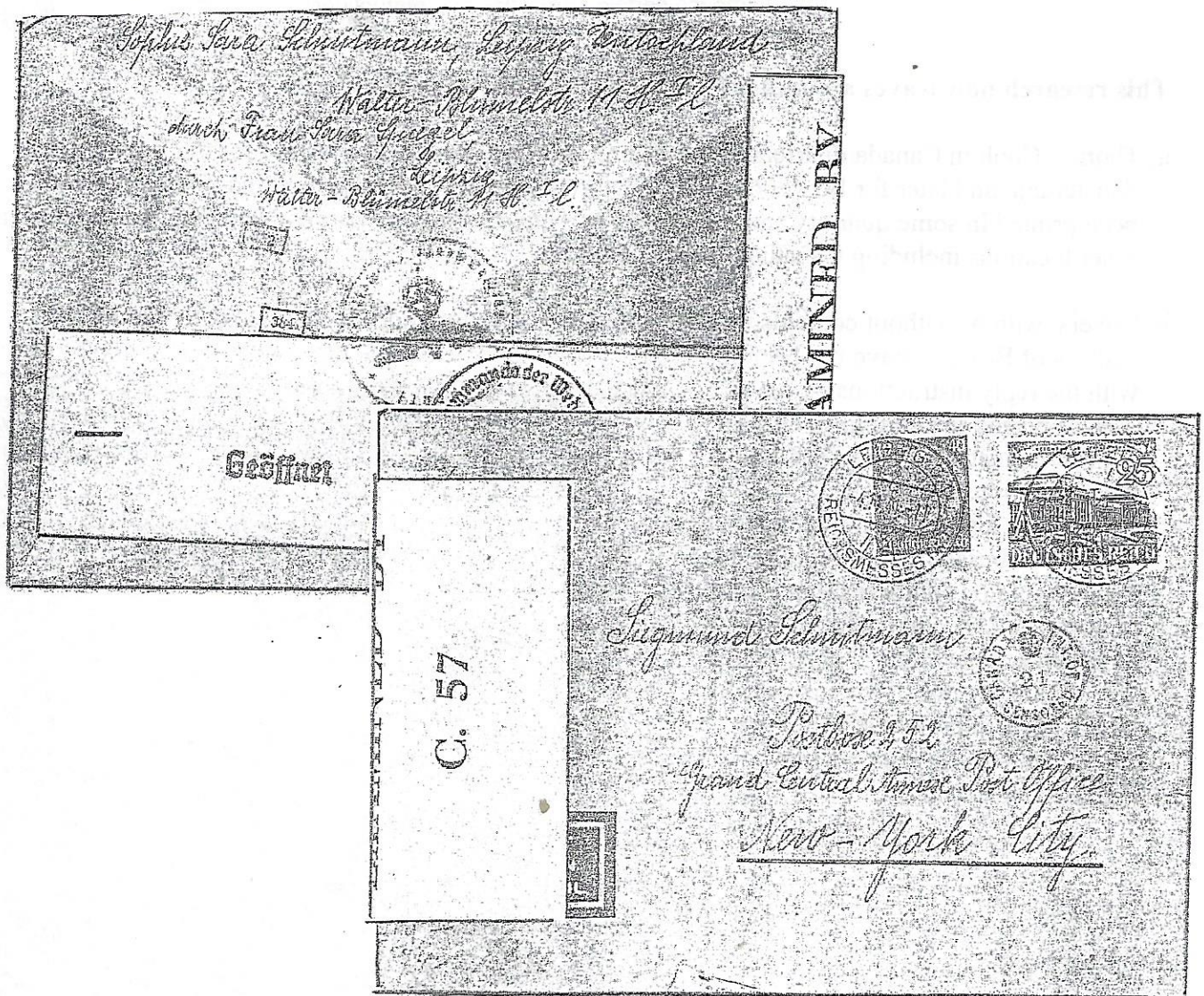
Rather than a designated recipient, the cover is addressed “Your reply to this letter should be addressed to me care of post box 252, grand central annex post office, New York, U.S.A.” This was apparently one of the instructions on the insert slip included with the letter sent from Canada via the Thomas Cook scheme.

Fig. 5)



- c) The "neutral country routing" of Box 252 in New York obviously ended on Dec. 11, 1941 when Germany declared war on the U.S., and the U.S. then reciprocated. However, Thomas Cook in Toronto still continued its mail scheme. Some mail came to Box 252, especially from neutral countries like Sweden, and was forwarded to Toronto. The outgoing mail from Canada to Nazi Europe could no longer use Box 252 as a reply address, and may have used other reply addresses, although Box 615 Lisbon is documented. Covers addressed to Box 615 are known, but sufficient detail has not been found.
- d) The November 1941 cover shown as Fig. 6 is a variation of usage not previously reported. It has a circular Canadian hand stamp indicating arrival in Canada at Internment Operations, where it was censored. The addressee is an internee released in Canada in July 1942. He was apparently one of the Jewish internees sent by Great Britain for internment in Canada. Many Box 252 covers to internees have been reported since Ken Rowe's original articles and this adds a curious twist to the usage of TC & S service. Specifically excluded from TC & S service everywhere were to be usages by POWs or Internees. None of these covers that I have seen show any addressing to indicate Canada, Internment Camp, or Internee status or even Internee number. The Internee mail mystery needs clarification.

Fig. 6) Airmail cover posted in Leipzig in Nov. 1941 was sent by Sophie Sara Schutsmann via Box 252. Note circular censor hand stamp of Canada Internment Office below 25 Rpf stamp on front. Backside has markings of German censor office in Frankfurt (code 'e') as well as Canadian C .57 censor tape.



- e) Information is needed about any Canadian censor slips that advised inhabitants of Canada who had either received mail from a Nazi occupied area (some had come through) or who had addressed a letter to a German controlled area which the censors had rejected and returned. The advice would state that any correspondence to enemy countries could only be accomplished through Thomas Cook & Son's office in Toronto or the Canadian Red Cross. Usage of such slips or hand stamps has not, to this author's knowledge, been reported.
- f) Neither the Canadian Archives files, nor any known newspaper notices, have been able to confirm the ownership, or actually the renter, of box 252 at the Grand Central Annex Post Office, in spite of all the circumstantial evidence that it was Thomas Cook. It may be out there somewhere, though. This information has been found mentioned in unpublished reports written after the war. This answers the principle "box 252 ownership" question that Ken Rowe asks in his articles, since he had not succeeded in finding even the notices about Thomas Cook operating the overall service, in spite of his assumption that it looked like the British Thomas Cook service.
- g) In Great Britain, the procedure used by Thomas Cook during WWII was based on the nearly identical guidelines used by this firm during WWI (See Fig. 1 - courtesy of Graham Mark of the C.C.S.G.). Apparently Thomas Cook in Canada also offered such a service (See Fig. 4) during WWI but this earlier Canadian usage had apparently not been previously reported by postal historians. While one may assume that WWI Thomas Cook procedures for Canada were nearly equivalent to those used during WWII, to date we have not located an instructions sheet issued for Canada at that time.

As a collector of all "undercover" Thomas Cook scheme mail worldwide, I would be most appreciative of any additional information on this subject that TRSG members might be able to send me.

Ed Fraser, 195 Marine Street, Farmingdale, NY 11375, USA. My e-mail: edfraser@gmail.com

Notes:

1.) In addition to the oldest Ken Rowe articles listed below, and many others by various authors over the years, the most current article relating to Box 252 is probably my article in the April 2013 issue of *Maple Leaves - the journal of the Canadian Philatelic Society in Great Britain*, pages 59-82 (also photos in color!).

2.) As an addendum to d) above, I had conversations with several internees some years ago, including the well-known philatelist Hans Reiche - who was most interested and enthusiastic about this topic. All of the people I spoke with were totally unfamiliar with the availability to them of the Thomas Cook scheme. Then again, Hans Reiche said he never got to see his reply envelopes from Germany, although he saw one from Germany for the first time that was an ordinary free-franked usage in an exhibit at a stamp show in Toronto in the 1990s. He also said he never got to see how his letters to Germany were actually sent out, either.

References:

Ken Rowe, "The Mystery of Box 252", *BNA Topics*, pages 14-17, March - April 1976

Ken Rowe, "Post Box 252, New York", *Canadian Philatelist*, pages 361-365, Nov.- Dec. 1979.

Addendum:

This very late Box 252 cover (Fig. 7) postmarked in Copenhagen, Denmark on November 11, 1941 was not sent by air mail (the strip of "stamps" on the back are actually labels) and arrived in New York City after the start of postal censorship. This is the only way that this cover could have received both U.S. and Canadian censorship markings.

The back side has sealing tape and hand stamps of the Berlin Censor Office (Code 'b'). As the cover had been damaged in transit, the U. S. examiner inserted an explanatory note dated April 7, 1942 (Fig. 8), repaired one end with brown tape, and added sealing label "Examined by 6024". Upon arrival in Toronto, the cover was re-examined and closed with sealing label "Examined by DB 248".

Fig. 7)

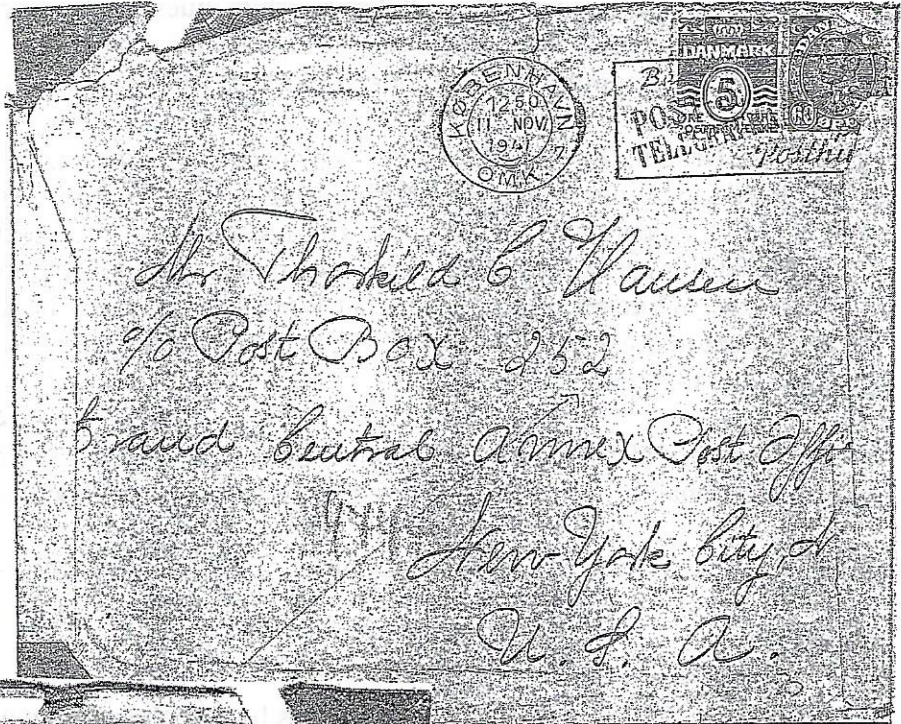
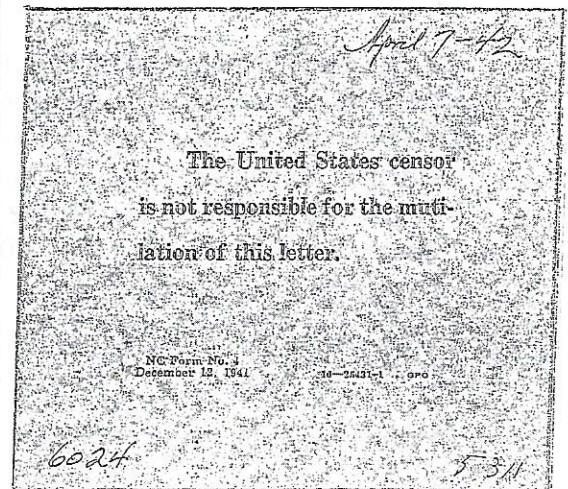


Fig. 8)



Bulletin Announcing Wagner Postal Issues

by Kelly Stefanacci

While previous charity issues had only been available at post offices, the Winter Relief Fund issued on November 1, 1933 could also be obtained at offices of the 'Deutsche Nothilfe' (German Charity Organization). The post office received 5% of the surtax on these stamps and the remainder went to the Winter Relief Fund.

This also marked the 10th anniversary of the first German charity stamps of 1923, which had been issued to provide emergency aid to the victims of the Rhine-Ruhr floods during that year.

The postal bulletin shown below announcing the new Richard Wagner stamps and postal card measures 245mm x 160mm. For our non-German readers, the text in English reads:

'German Emergency Aid/1923/1933
Richard Wagner Welfare Postage Stamps 1933
Official stamps for franking all postal mailings'

A picture of each of the new stamp is shown, with its 'Verkaufspreise' (purchase price), including the surtax amount. The text below the stamps reads:

'Booklets with five 4 Rpf stamps, five 6 Rpf stamps, five 8 Rpf stamps, four 12 Rpf stamps,
Purchase price 2 RM'

'Richard Wagner Welfare Postal Card with 6 Rpf stamp, Purchase price 10 Rpf.'



Waffen-SS Feldpost

Schutzmannschaft Battalion in Lithuania

by John Painter

Schutzmannschaft were the collaborationist auxiliary police battalions of native policemen in countries occupied by Germany during World War II. Created to fight the anti-Nazi resistance in Eastern Europe within the territories seized from the Soviet Union, the Germans utilized local police auxiliaries. These volunteers were called *Hilfswilligen* ("those willing to help"), often abbreviated to "*Hiwis*".

Feldpost cover sent to the Commander of the *Ordnungspolizei* (Ordinary Police) in Minsk (White Russia) on August 31, 1943. Return address is Company 15 of the III *Schutzmannschaftbatalion* with hand stamps of the Liaison Officer of the Ordinary Police in Lithuanian.

