



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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STUDY GROUP NOTES

Dienstpost in Luxemburg - Ben Beede writes: "In the article in Bulletin # 186, the author included a common error. He thought that official mail was sent "free of charge". As many TRSG members are no doubt aware, official mail was charged postage, but the costs of most fees were paid through bulk transfers to the Reichspost from other ministries from time to time. The word "Frei" seems to confuse many collectors."

Oslo Feldpost permit - Ben Beede again: "Readers who were interested in the article in Bulletin # 187 about the parcel permit label associated with Oslo during World War II might also like to read: Bjorn E. Bunaes, *Deutsches Dienstpost Oslo: 1942-1945: A Postal History of the German Service Mail in Norway in World War II*. Tamasen: Norwegian War and Field Post Society, 2004."

The Lost Legions - there have been a number of requests for a new 1-page feature in our bulletins covering the many foreign volunteer units which fought alongside Germany. The first of these features appears on Page 23. Hopefully, this will spur our members to dig through their collections and send one of their "legion" covers to Ye Olde Ed.

Suggestions for new features? - It has always been our objective to make our bulletins as diverse as possible and to provide our members with an opportunity to show their material in these pages. Current features such as 'Navy Log', 'SS Feldpost' and 'One of My Favorite Covers' have been quite successful in this regard. So, if you think of any other areas of Third Reich postal history that might make for a new feature, let us know.

Stamp Denominations - TRSGer Bob Ferguson noted that during the Third Reich the Reichspost issued 491 different stamps (counting stamps in blocks but not the blocks). Bob created this chart to show the number of issues by denomination and was surprised by the large numbers of 4 Pfg and 40 Pfg stamps.

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Number of issues</u>	<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Number of issues</u>
6 Pfg	94	24 Pfg	10
12 Pfg	87	16 Pfg	7
3 Pfg	39	2 Mk	5
25 Pfg	39	1 Pfg	4
8 Pfg	26	80 Pfg	4
5 Pfg	24	1 Mk	4
15 Pfg	24	54 Pfg	3
40 Pfg	23	60 Pfg	3
4 Pfg	23	100 Pfg	3
20 Pfg	16	3 Mk	3
10 Pfg	13	5 Mk	2
30 Pfg	11	75 Pfg	1
42 Pfg	11	4 Mk	1
50 Pfg	11		

Cover Illustration: This is a fine example of the very scarce parcel admission label for troops in the so-called Kuban Bridgehead. This parcel card was for a package mailed to his family in Munich by a member of Fp.# 26905 (FpA 405 of V. Army Corps) in May 1943. An article on the Kuban and Krim parcel permit labels begins on Page 13 of this bulletin.

Feldpost Facets 1937-1945
French Stamps on Mail from the Channel Islands
 by Benjamin R. Beede

Foreign stamps were rarely used on mail posted through Feldpost offices during World War II. Exceptions included the use of French stamps by French members of Organisation Todt (O.T.) who were working on the Channel Islands.

As soon as German forces occupied the Channel Islands, Hitler ordered a series of fortifications that would convert the larger islands into impregnable fortresses. The conscripted work force was made up of political dissidents from various parts of Europe, in particular France and the Netherlands plus many hundreds of Spaniards who fought on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39 and had then taken refuge in France. After the summer of 1941, large numbers of Soviet POWs were used as forced labor. With the exception of the unfortunate POWs, the O.T. workers were forcibly recruited but were paid and not generally ill-treated. By May 1943, there was a total of 16,000 foreigners working on the massive defenses being constructed on the Channel Islands.



This cover was addressed to Paris and posted on April 2 1942 at a Feldpost office on Jersey. Feldpost # 40157, with a number of subdivisions for particular firms, was assigned to "Organisation Todt Bauleitung Jersey" components and individual workers. The basic domestic and foreign French letter postal rates were 1,50 or 4,00 FF, respectively. A regulation dealing with foreign O.T. worker mail, which included a stipulation that the domestic rate was to be paid, was not issued until August 28, 1942. Perhaps this cover was paid at three times the domestic rate. There is no indication that this cover was censored.

Reference:

Mayr, Leopold and Michael Wieneke: *Kanalinseln: Postgeschichtliches Handbuch zur Deutschen Besetzung 1940-1945*. Köln 2000.

German Peoples Group in Croatia

by Henry Laessig

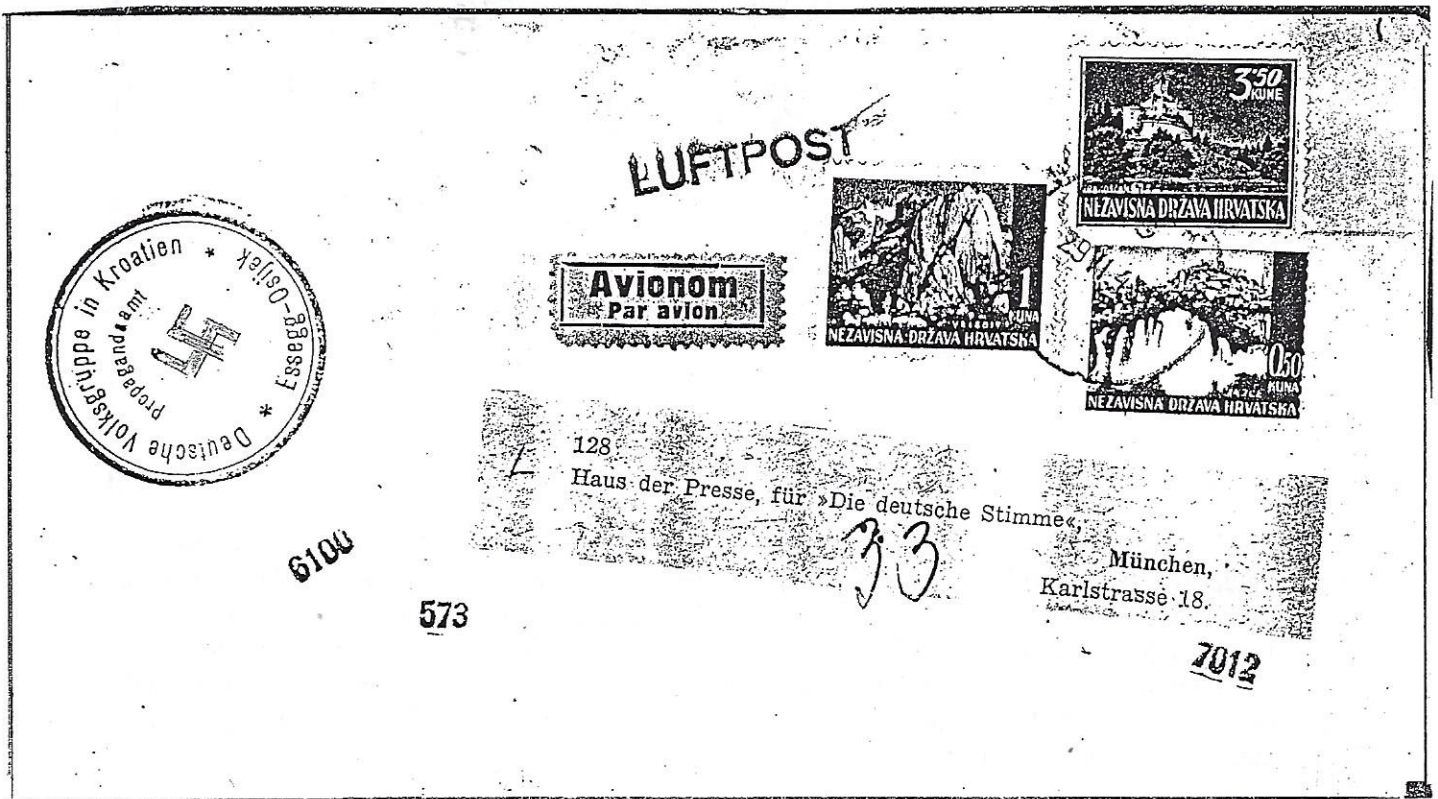
While not part of the Third Reich, the independent fascist state of Croatia was an ally of Germany with a sizable ethnic-German minority.

Shown below is a newspaper wrapper for a copy of "Deutsche Volksgruppe in Kroatia" sent on June 29, 1943 to printer of "Die deutsche Stimme" in Munich. Posted in Osijek, Croatia, the wrapper bears 5.00 Kune postage for a seldom used special airmail rate for items that were not letters or cards. It was less expensive to mail a newspaper weighing over 20 grams, but not over 50 grams, at the printed matter rate. Prior to July 1, 1942, the printed matter and newspaper rates to Germany would have been the same.

The postal fees shown are:

- 2.00 K- airmail other items to 25 grams.
- 2.00 K- airmail other items to 50 grams
- 0.50 K - German printed matter to 20 grams
- 0.50 K - German printed matter to 21-50 grams

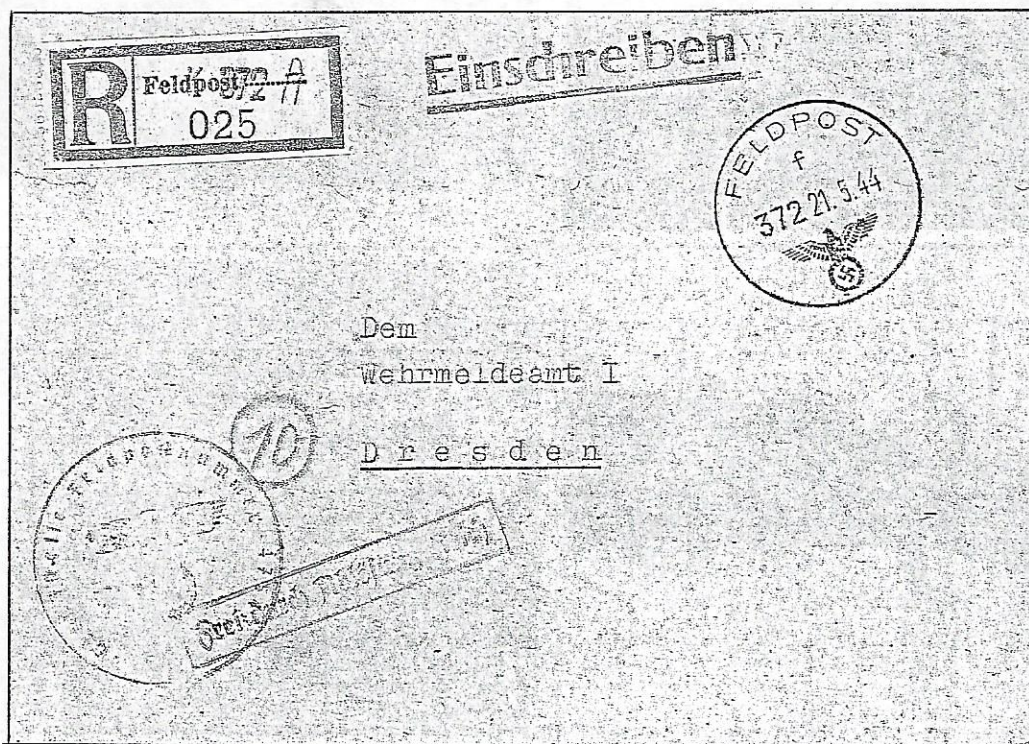
Note the double-circle hand stamp with swastika at left side that was used by the 'Propagandaamt' (Propaganda Office) of this organization.



COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:
3rd Cavalry Division
 by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS			AUXIL.
TACT	KENN	REITER		ARTY	UNITS
69	372	31	32	869	69

In June-April 1943, the Germans established three separate cavalry regiments reinforced with tanks and halftrack mounted infantry for the Eastern Front - Nord, Mitte and Süd. Kavallerie Regiment Mitte, raised in April 1943, continued to serve behind the front lines on the central sector of the Eastern Front. In March 1944, this unit was re-designated Reiter Regiment 31 and combined with a second regiment to form the 3rd Kavallerie-Division that remained on the Eastern Front until transferred to Hungary late in 1944. The P.O. was assigned Fp.# 42731 as a return address and Kenn 372 as a coded identity in lieu of tactical FpA 69. This was the former P.O. of 2nd Luftwaffe Division disbanded in January 1944. In February 1945, the 3rd Kavallerie-Brigade was combined with Artillery Regiment 869, Signals Battalion 238, etc. and designated 3rd Kavallerie Division. Commanded by Generalmajor Peter von Gröben, the division was transferred to the Graz area in Austria in April and surrendered to the American Army in May 1945.



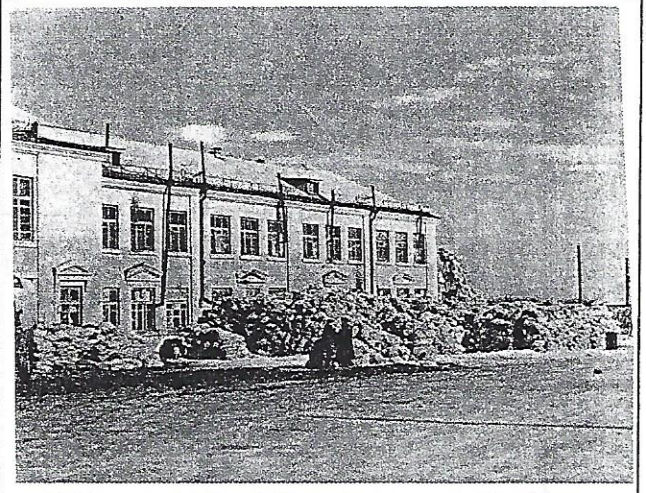
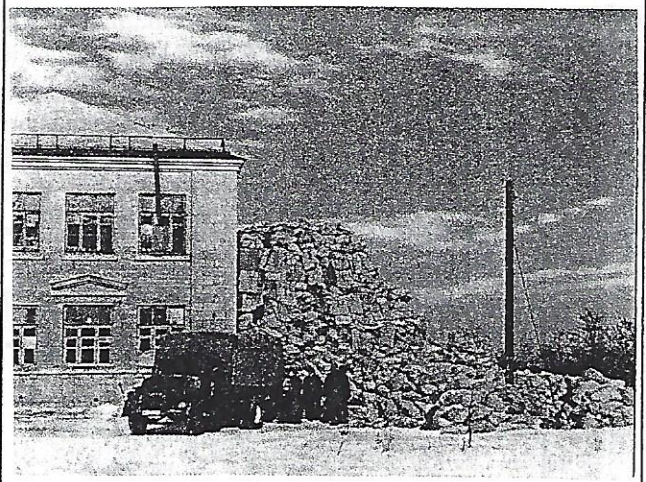
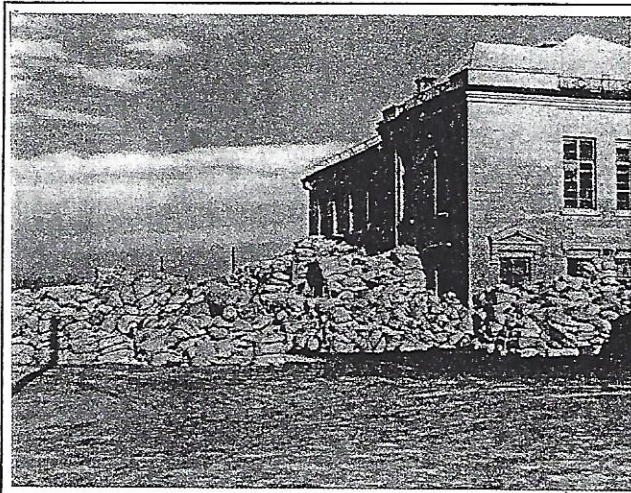
Cover sent to Military Records Office in Dresden in May 1944 from Fp.# 47547 (Pz. Schwdr schw. Kav. Abtl. D. 4. Kav. Brigade) via P.O. 9 (K-372)..

Undelivered Feldpost for Stalingrad

by Jim Lewis

These four photos provide an appreciation of the problems encountered by the German Feldpost during the Battle of Stalingrad. The buildings shown in these photos housed *Feldpostleitstelle* (Feldpost Routing Office) 547 in Awdejewka, a town in the province of Donets'ka Oblast' in the Ukraine.

The photos were taken in late January 1943, after the Soviet encirclement of the German 6th Army had been completed. At that time, FpLst 547 had received over 100,000 sacks of Feldpost addressed to troops now surrounded at Stalingrad. As there was no way to forward this mail, the inside storage areas in the building were soon full and the harried Feldpost personnel resorted to stacking the mail sacks on all sides of the building.



Christmas Cancels

by Bob Ferguson

The following special cancels pertaining to Weihnacht (Christmas) are listed in Julius Bochmann's *Katalog der Deutschen Gelegenheitsstempel*.

Berlin # 208	Berliner Weihnachtmarkt 1936	6 - 22 Dec. 1936
Berlin # 249	Berliner Weihnachtmarkt 1937	4 - 22 Dec. 1937
Berlin # 292	Berliner Weihnachtmarkt 1938	5 - 22 Dec. 1938
Berlin # 293	Volksweihnacht Saalbau Friedrichshain	23. Dec. 1938
Berlin # 316	Berliner Weihnachtmarkt [machine cancel]	7. Dec. 1939
Bernburg # 4	Knecht Ruprechts Heimat Ruprechts Einzug am 4. Dez. Die Bernburg Knecht Ruprecht oder der Bernburger Heelexchrist	Used: 1938
Iglau # 41	2. Weihnachten in befeiten Iglau	26 - 31 Dec. 1940
Leipzig # 116	7. Weihnachts-Werbeschau der Kteishandwerkerschaft Leipzig Ottaschill Str.[machine cancel]	17.11 - 2.12. 1936
Leipzig # 125	8. Weihnachts-Werbeschau der Kteishandwerkerschaft Leipzig Grassi-Museum [machine cancel]	17.11 - 1.12. 1937
Leipzig # 152	9. Weihnachts-Werbeschau der Kteishandwerkerschaft Leipzig Grassi-Museum [machine cancel]	19.11 - 4.12. 1938
Leipzig # 153	9. Weihnachts-Werbeschau der Kteishandwerkerschaft Leipzig [machine cancel]	19.11 - 4.12. 1938
Mainz # 20	Kommt zum Weihnachtsmarkt nach Mainz! [mac. can.]	Used: 1938
Munchen # 91	80ster Kripperl-Markt in Munchen	20.24. 1936
Nurnberg # 54	Nurnberger Christkindles-Markt 4.-24. December [machine cancel]	Used: 1937-1938
Nurnberg # 63	Christkindles -Markt	4.-.24.Dec. 1938
Stuttgart # 49	Weihnachtsmarchen: Meck der Himmelsschneider/ Staatstheater Stuttgart [machine cancel]	Used: 1935
Wien # 22	1. Volksweihnacht der Ostmark 23.12.1838	23.Dec. 1938
Koln # 37	Besucht den Kolner Weihnachts Markt/WHW [machine cancel]	Used: 1937

Berlin # 249



Mainz # 20



München # 91



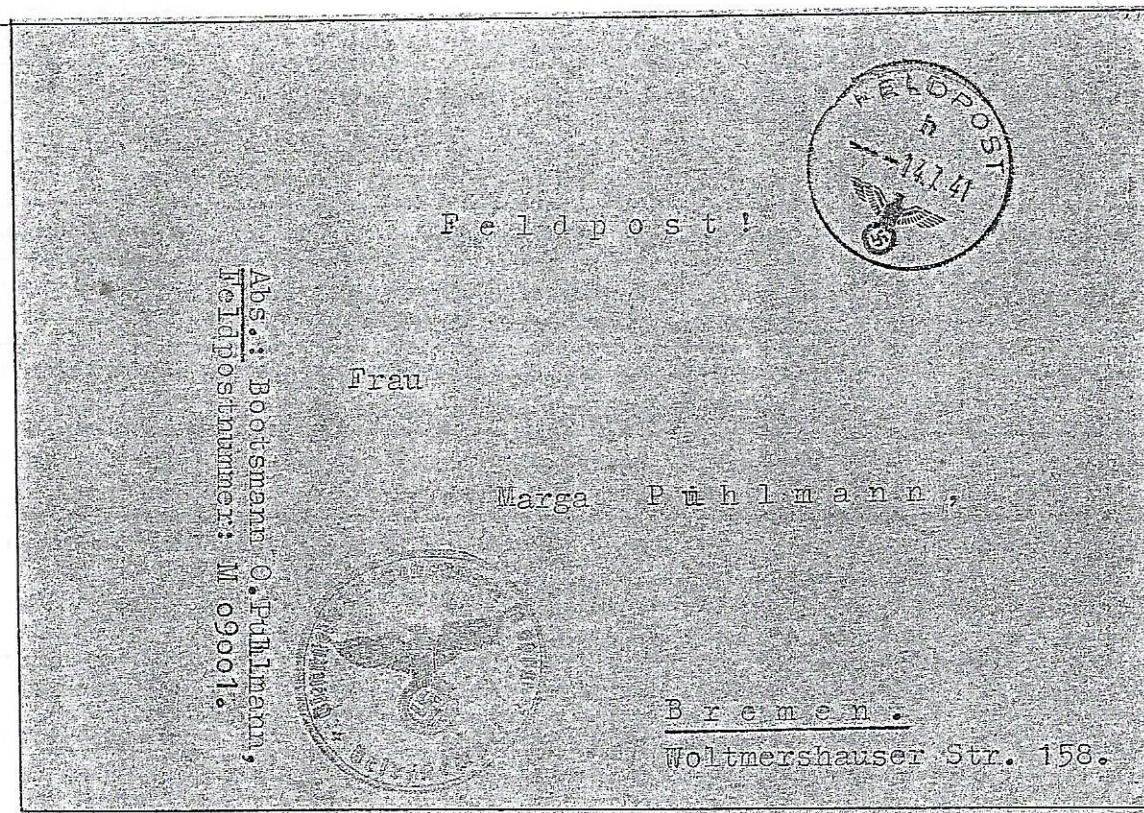
Nürnberg # 63



NAVY LOG

by Robert Dunn

Hospital Ship 'Glückauf' - Feldpost # 09001



Launched October 9, 1913 as merchant ship 'Bubendey', served as Führerboot of Flotilla V in Kiel in WWI.

Displacement: 981 tons; speed: 12.5 knots; Armaments: none; Crew: 20 (excluding medical personnel)

History: In 1930 renamed 'Glückauf' (Good Luck). Commissioned on Sept. 20, 1939, designated Lazarettsschiff F, serving under Station N. In 1941, served under Fleet Train East (TSV-O).

Fate: Survived war, de-commissioned on August 15, 1946, later converted back to merchant ship and renamed 'Kehrweiden'.

Cover from "Bootsmann" on hospital ship sent to Bremen on April 1, 1941

COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:

86th Infantry Division

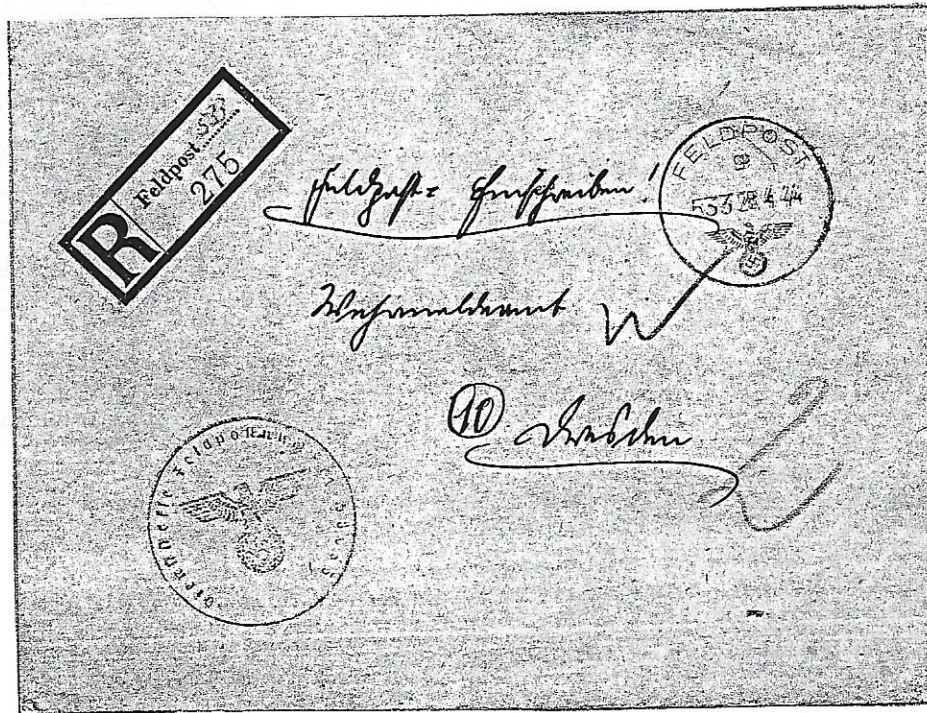
by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS				AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	GRENADIER		ARTY	UNITS	
186	533	167	184	216	186	

Formed in the general mobilization of 1939, this Westphalian division saw action on the Saar front and later fought in France. The division P.O. was assigned Fp.# 20885 and Kenn 533. After occupation duties in Bourges, France from December 1940 until early June 1941.

On June 22, 1941, it invaded Russia as an element of Army Group Center's advance toward Moscow. It suffered heavy casualties during the Soviet Winter Offensive of 1941-42. Remaining of the central front, the division took part in the definitive battles of 1942 and in the Battle of Kursk, where it rendered distinguished service.

The 86th Infantry Division was encircled and nearly destroyed at Body during the Soviet Summer Offensive in July 1944. The badly damaged division was eventually dissolved in October 1944. The remainder of the 186th Artillery Regiment was absorbed by the 251st Artillery Regiment of the 251st Infantry Division. The remainder of the 167th Grenadier Regiment was converted to Ski Infantry Regiment 2. The post office became FpA 361 of the 361st Infantry Division.



Cover sent to Military Records Office in Dresden n April 1944 from Kol. II, Werfer Rgt. 70 (Fp.# 38085) via 86 Inf. Div. P.O. 186 (K-553)

A Long Airmail Trip to Hawaii

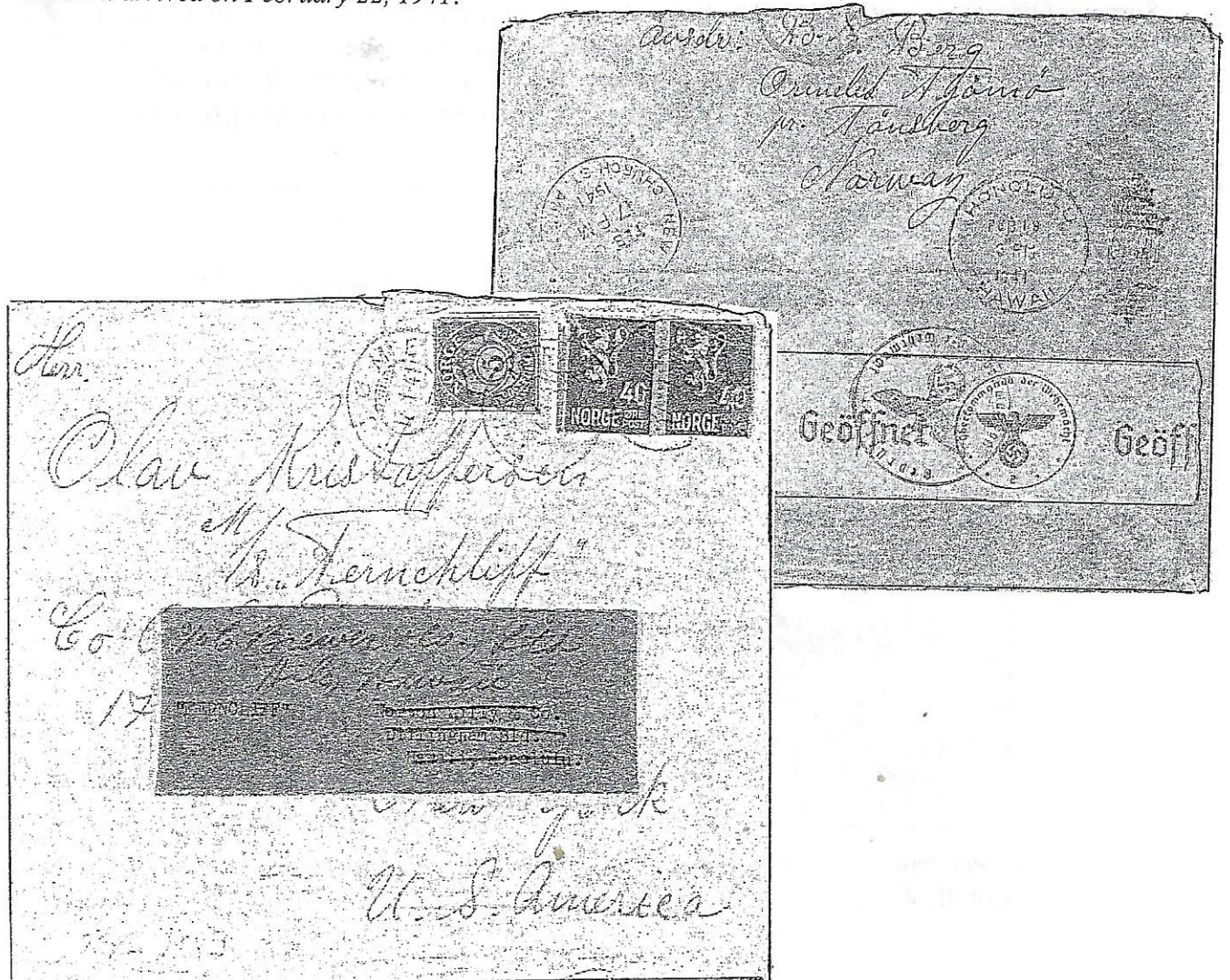
by Ed Fraser

As the cover below demonstrates, postal systems in the 1940s went to great lengths to assure that air mail letters reached their intended recipients. Posted in Tjome, Norway on January 17, 1941, this cover is addressed to a merchant seaman named Olau Kristoffersen, apparently a crew member of merchant ship "Ferncliff", in care of the shipping company, A. L. Burbank, 17 Battery Place, New York. After being opened and resealed by German censors in Frankfurt (code 'e'), the cover arrived in New York and was back stamped at the Church Street P.O. on February 6, 1941.

When A. L. Burbank received the cover in New York, they crossed out the original address and affixed a green label typed "Ferncliff" and "Norton Lilly & Co., Dillingsham Blg., Honolulu, Hawaii".

When the cover arrived in Honolulu, it was back stamped in on February 18, 1941. However, the good ship "Ferncliff" was not in Honolulu on the island of Oahu but rather in Hilo, a large city on the "big island" of Hawaii. So, after Norton Lilly & Co. received the cover, they crossed out the typed Honolulu address and added in manuscript "c/o C. Brewer & Co., Ltd., Hilo, Hawaii".

Note: A Google search revealed that M/S Ferncliff sailed from the east coast of the United States on January 8, 1941 for "Panama and Chile". On February 2, 1941 she departed Chile for Hilo, Hawaii where it arrived on February 22, 1941.



Early Third Reich Covers

by Jim Lewis

Enthusiasts of Third Reich postal history often start their collections with covers bearing the first stamps of the era that were issued in April, 1933 (Mi. 479-81). This article offers examples of registered "Wertpost" (Insured mail) covers posted during the earlier months of the Third Reich.

With the issuance of Hindenburg definitive stamps in the spring of 1933, all values of the former definitive stamps issued from 1928 to 1932 depicting the portrait of former President Ebert were withdrawn from sale. Government Decree No. 32 dated April 11, 1933 states: "The Pfennig values of the postage stamps will in the future show only the head of Reichs President von Hindenburg - in some cases in new colors. 45 Pfg stamps of will no longer be issued. A new additional value will be a 100 Pfg stamp with the same portrait of von Hindenburg. Stamps bearing the portrait of former Reichs President Ebert, whose printings have already been discontinued, will no longer be used after completion of the new stamps." In 1933 the various denomination Hindenburg stamps were issued in this order- April: 3, 6, 8, & 12; May: 10, 20, 30 & 60.; June: 80; July: 5 & 100; August: 15 & 40.

Fig. 1) Cover from Stolper bank in Kolberg to a Berlin bank posted January 4, 1933 has 10 Pfg (Mi. 435) & 20 Pfg (Mi. 436) Ebert plus 12 Pfg (Mi. 466) Hindenburg stamps.



Fig. 2) Cover posted January 12, 1933 from Plauener bank in Auerbach to Berlin bank has Hindenburg stamps from 1928 (Mi. 420) and 1932 (Mi. 468) series.

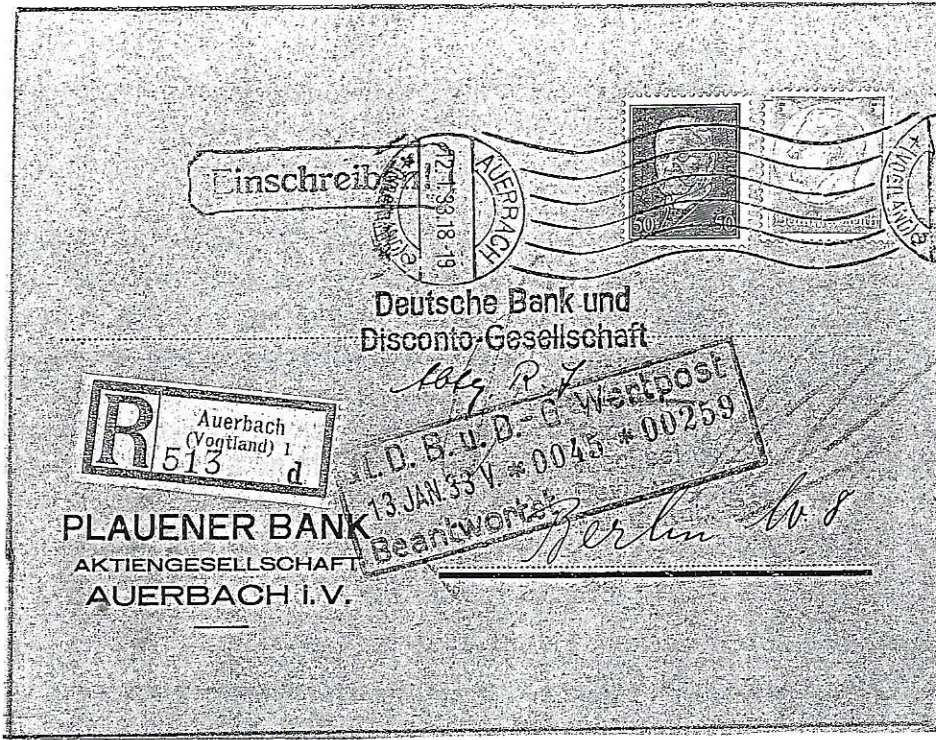
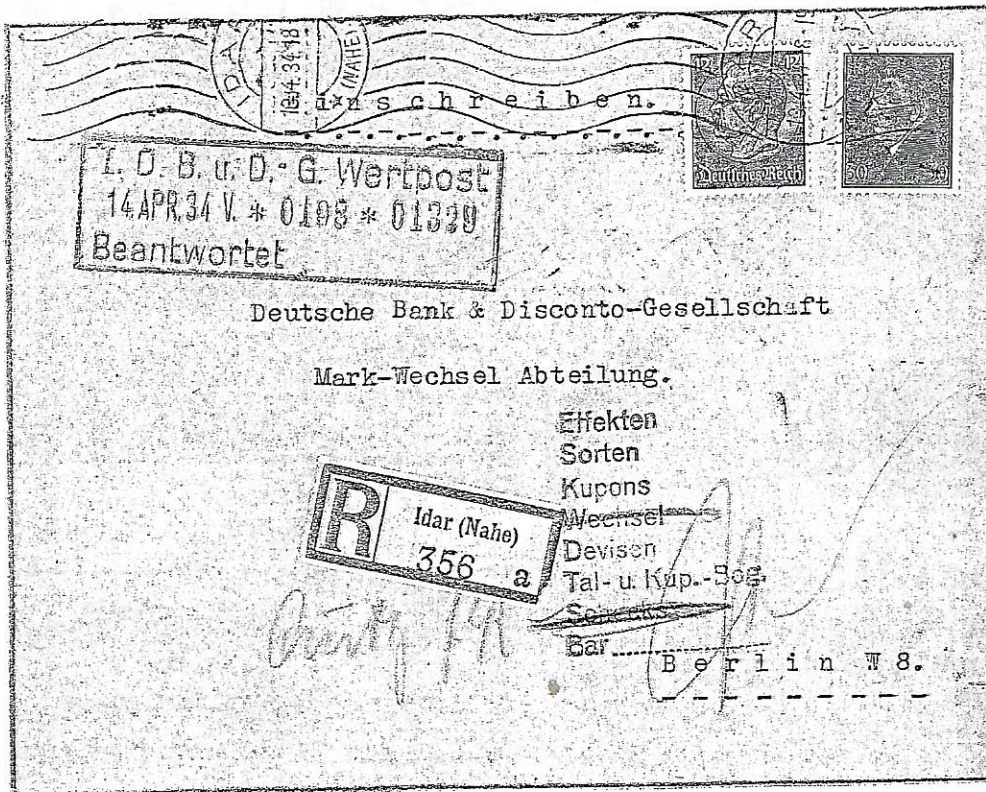


Fig. 3) Cover posted April 13, 1934 in Idar to Deutsche Bank in Berlin with combination of old 30 Pfg Ebert (Mi. 420) and new 12 Pfg Hindenburg (Mi. 519) stamps.



Kuban and Krim Feldpost Parcel Permit Labels

by Jim Lewis

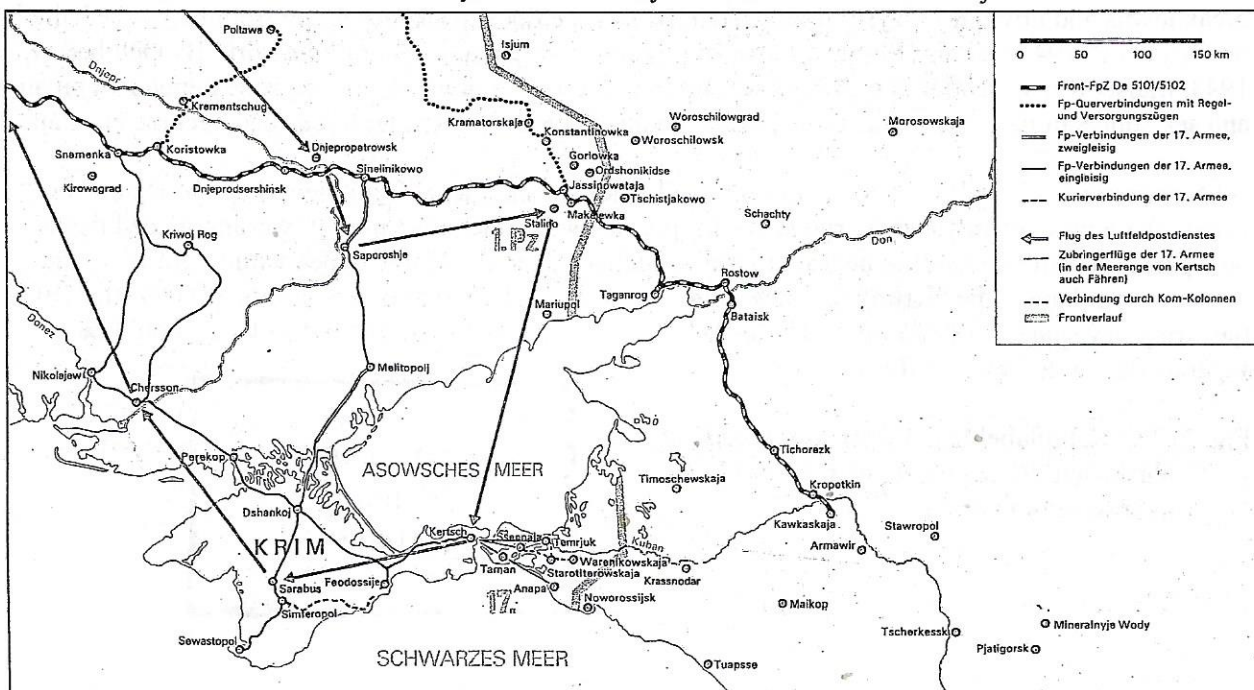
Following the Soviet offensive near Stalingrad in November 1942, the supply lines of Axis forces in the Caucasus were threatened and a general retreat was ordered. The 1st Panzer Army pulled back toward Rostov while the 17th Army, the right wing of Army Group South, pulled back to the Taman peninsula between the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. At this time, Army High Command considered it important to retain possession of the so-called "Kuban Bridgehead" on the Taman peninsula. The front line of this bridgehead ran in a rough arc connecting the two bodies of water. (See map below)

Feldpost service for the 17th Army had previously been routed via Rostov but now no land route was available. Torpedo boats and cargo ships were used to transport Feldpost from Kertsch, at the eastern end of the Krim (Crimea) across the narrow waterway to the Taman peninsula. Aircraft routes, shown as arrows on the map below, carried mail to and from the bridgehead at a Kertsch airfield.

One benefit of this new defensive position for the troops who'd existed on canned foods for most of their long advance was an improved diet of local produce. They obtained sunflower oil, which was available in large quantities, and many decided to send sun flower oil and seeds home, where a shortage of basic food supplies already existed. Two other curiosities were found in the bridgehead, sturgeon, the fish that produces caviar, was caught in the river estuaries near Temrjuk. While there was a cannery to process these fish, there were no preservatives, so cans of caviar had a very short shelf life. Nevertheless, these cans meant for the soldiers were frequently sent home in Feldpost packages. Also popular were small land turtles found in the foothills and quite a few packages reached Germany with a live turtle inside.

While mail to be transported from the bridgehead to Germany could only be sent by boat or by air, there were never enough ships or planes available. As time went by, cargo space became even more scarce. Feldpost was often left behind on route when supplies of ammunition or rations were given priority. The result was stoppages of packages for the homeland and such mail piled up at various transport points due to a lack of transport. Many cans of caviar and other foodstuffs spoiled.

Map: Front lines of 1st Panzer Army and 17th Army in southern Russia in early 1943.

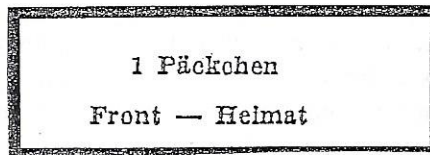


An embargo on private Feldpost mail over 20 grams (certain newspapers were excepted) was proclaimed on February 18, 1943. Luftfeldpost was not affected, so mail could be carried from the Crimea to the bridgehead, although frequently mailbags had to be dropped from the planes due to bad weather. This lack of aircraft for the bridgehead troops meant that no means were available for homeward bound mail.

The Kuban package permit labels.

While the transport situation in the bridgehead improved in the Spring and Feldpost letters over 20 grams were again permitted, packages to the homeland remained a problem. So the Army High Command (OKH) ordered the preparation and issuance of permit labels for homeward bound packages. The first permit labels, issued on April 17, 1943, were printed on ungummed sheets of 108 labels (9 x 12) by the newspaper "*Kämpfer im Kaukasus*" at Simferopol in the Crimea. As they were not perforated, sheets were guillotine cut into 12 vertical strips of 9 labels each. They were then banded in bundles of 1,000 strips (9,000 labels/bundle) and delivered to the 17th Army Feldpostmeister, who had them distributed to all Feldpost offices for corps, divisions and independent unit within the bridgehead.

Fig. 1) The Kuban package permit label text "1 Päckchen/Front-Heimat" (1 Package/Front to Home) varies in centering as three different types.



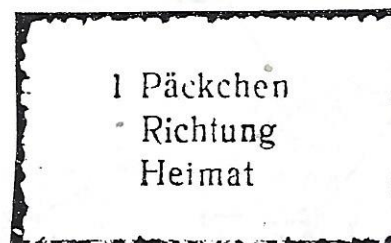
These labels were not distributed to individual soldiers. Instead, a company sergeant, paymaster or administrator carried the packages from their unit to the Feldpost office. He was then issued as many labels as were required for his packages. The Feldpost clerks then glued the labels to the packages and added the required 20 phennig postage. After all packages had been placed in mail bags, any excess labels were to be destroyed by the Feldpost office. Additional labels were printed after the first issue was depleted and it is estimated that a total of one million of these labels were printed. However, when the restriction for home bound packages was lifted on May 19, 1943, remaining labels were destroyed.

The Krim package permit labels.

As Soviet attacks intensified, by the end of September 1943, the 17th Army withdrew from the Kuban bridgehead to take up new defensive positions on the Crimean peninsula. As there was a general withdrawal of German positions along the Eastern Front, the transportation network suffered frequent breakdowns and obvious delays in Feldpost deliveries. Feldpost packages to the front had to be halted on October 2, 1943 because Soviet air attacks had severely damaged the rail network. By October 27, 1943, transport over land to the Crimea was no longer possible and Feldpost became dependent on air and sea connections via Odessa. The Crimean peninsula with its German forces had become an island.

By November 7, air and sea connections-allowed Feldpost shipments from the Crimea to resume but, again, there was not sufficient cargo space for packages. By late November it was announced that a new parcel permit label would be used to limit packages from the Crimean peninsula. Similar to the earlier permit labels, the "Krim" (Crimea) labels were printed on ungummed sheets of 100 (10 x 10) at the Army newspaper "*Der Kampf*". These sheets were then roughly perforated so labels could be separated at the Feldpost offices.

Fig. 2) The Krim label had 3 lines of text reading "1 Päckchen/ Richtung/Heimat" (1 package, homeward bound).



According to a letter from the Armeefeldpostmeister to Feldpost offices dated December 1, 1943, the initial issue of permit labels had been interpreted by many commanders as a means for troops to send home Christmas packages. So, in spite of the strained transport situation, Army leadership ordered on December 13th that an additional permit label be issued. Changes in the tactical situation during these months required a routing change for Feldpost to and from the Crimea via Bucharest - Budapest-Vienna.

In early February 1944, two additional package permit labels could be issued per person because transport of Feldpost packages was again permitted. These permit labels were an important morale boost for troops in the Crimea. During February 1944, 13,606 mailbags filled with packages to Germany were accepted and processed by Feldpost offices in the Crimea.

No more permit labels were supplied to the troops after February 1944 but the delivery of packages to Germany went on for a few more months. Sevastopol was evacuated in May and that was the end of the 17th Army's engagement in the Crimea.

Reference:

Otto Müller: *Feldpost Parcel Permit Stamps for the Kuban Bridgehead and Crimean Peninsula*. (Translated by Gerard J. De Boer). TRSG Bulletin No. 102 (January 1992).

Preparation of this article brought back memories of the only time I ever saw a Crimea package permit label. The date was December 14, 1977. Former TRSG Bulletin Editor Bob Houston and I attended William A. Fox's auction of the former G.P.S. President Carl B. Kroboth's collection of Germany and Colonies held at the Hotel Biltmore in New York City on December 13 & 14. The Third Reich lots were offered on the second day - and what lots they were! There were, for example, 14 lots of Inselpost-Crete; 17 lots of Tunis-Afrika Korps; 7 lots of super scarce Radio Cards from isolated German garrisons in France and the Channel Islands, etc.

Among the 1342 lots offered were the two Crimea labels shown below as lot numbers 856 and 857. In viewing them I was impressed at how "ratty" they were. The paper is cheap yellowish newsprint with very crude perforations. The used label is on a piece of brown wrapping paper and tied to the 20 Pfg Hitler head stamp by a smeared hand stamp "Bei der Feldpost aufgeliefert".

The bidding on both items was spirited (Bob and I kept our hands in our pockets). Lot 856 sold for \$525 and lot 857 for \$800. While this doesn't seem like much today, remember that 36 years ago you could buy a fully equipped Dodge 'Charger' for around \$3000.

Caught up in bidding fever, I did obtain one nice Feldpost lot from this, my first big time auction, but that is another story. Anyway, I thought the membership would find these prices interesting in light of the very high valuations in current auctions.

Ye Olde Ed

FELDPOST

- 856 ★ **Crimea Feldpost** 1944, Permit Label, Michel # 15 (DM 2200), Signed Pickenpack, Very Fine ~~2500~~ (Photo)
- 857 **Crimea Feldpost**, 1944, Permit Label, Michel # 15 (DM ~~8000~~), tied on Piece with 20pf Hitler by "Bei der Feldpost aufgeliefert" Handstamp with Pickenpack Certificate, Very Fine (Photo)
- 858 ∞ **Kurland Feldpost**, 1945, Bisected Green Packet Permit Label, Michel # 16 (DM 1000), Schnellbrief Feldpost 2/4/45 pmk, Signed Rungas BPP with G.P.S. Certificate, Very Fine (Photo)

Waffen-SS Feldpost

Munich Recruiting Center

by Joseph Chervenyak

Registered SS- Feldpost cover posted on March 17, 1945 is addressed to "Wehrmeldeamt" (Military Records Office) in Landshut.

The "Dienstsiegel" (Official seal) identifies the sender as "Ergänzungsamt der Waffen-SS" (Waffen-SS Recruiting Office) in Munich. This was the SS recruiting center for southern Germany (Area VIII).



Story Behind the Cancel:
The Soviet Paradise Exhibition
by Kelly Stefanacci

The “Soviet Paradise” was the name for an exhibition organized and sponsored by Dr. Josef Göebbles’ ‘Reichspropagandaleitung der NSDAP’. Held from May 8 to June 21, 1942 in the Lustgarten in Berlin, the exhibition included dioramas whose purpose was to depict “poverty, misery, depravity and need” in the USSR and to justify Germany’s ongoing war against the Soviet Union.

Fig. 1) Shown at right is the opening ceremonies for the exhibit in Berlin.



Fig. 2) Below is the cover of the “Sowjet Paradies Ausstellung” exhibit booklet.



The exhibit program discusses the Soviet claim that the nation was a ‘paradise of farmers and workers’. “In reality this was propaganda”, claims the booklet, “and all the cultural, social and technical advances that Bolshevism claimed were nothing but a deceptive facade that concealed the gray misery of daily life under Bolshevism”

The exhibit included a film of the Soviet Paradise. For the first time since the Russian Revolution, a cameraman free of censure by the Soviets had access to filming life in the Soviet Union. While the film was obviously slanted by the Nazi Propaganda Office to present a very negative view of soviet society, it is nevertheless a unique view of life in Stalin’s Russia,

and exposes some quite horrid living conditions in and around the city of Minsk in Belorussia. Visitors to the exhibition could purchase photo cards of all dioramas on display and have them postmarked at a Berlin P.O. kiosk in the Lustgarten. This special cancel (Fig. 3 below) has the same basic illustration of impoverished Soviet citizens which appears on the exhibit booklet

Fig. 3) Special Berlin cancel Paradise Exhibition was used on June 16, 1942.



German POWs in North America

Camps in New Jersey

by Jim Lewis

During WWII, New Jersey was a corridor for German POWs arriving from Europe and North Africa. As POWs departed ships in the Port of New York, they were transported across the Hudson River to the Pennsylvania RR terminal in Jersey City where special trains would take them to rail connections for their trip to POW camp destinations in the south and west. No new POW camps were constructed in New Jersey but over 15,000 German prisoners passed through Fort Dix (Code 126) in the south central part of the state with approximately 4,000 of these prisoners housed there. Seabrook Farms, then the largest processor of vegetables in the world, supplied the military with fresh, frozen and dehydrated food. Plagued by chronic labor shortages, Seabrook Farms, as well as other farms and canning factories in central and southern New Jersey, petitioned for POW laborers. In response to these requests, branch POW camps of Fort Dix were established with German POWs working on farms and in canning plants.

The other military base with a small POW camp was Camp Kilmer, located near New Brunswick. Built in early 1942 as a staging area of the New York Port of Embarkation, eventually it became the largest processing center for troops heading overseas, processing 2.5 million soldiers during WWII.

In heavily industrialized northeastern New Jersey, German POWs worked as laborers in Army supply depots in Jersey City, Hoboken and Bayonne, loading ships bound for Europe. Somerville Depot in northwestern New Jersey, constructed in 1942, was one of the largest Quartermaster Depots with indoor storage capacity of roughly 800,000 square feet and outdoor open storage area of approximately 455,000 square feet. A POW camp located near this facility provided much needed manual labor.

Belle Mead Quartermaster Depot, in north central New Jersey, was a major storage facility for weapons and ammunition. With fourteen large concrete warehouses and 5,000,000 square feet of outdoor storage, this depot was situated alongside 45 miles of railroad tracks. There was also a POW camp that supplied labor to load and unload freight cars at this facility. Raritan Arsenal, in Edison, had been established as a permanent ordnance depot in 1917 and was greatly expanded during WWII. There was also a POW camp there but only Italian POWs were employed following Italy's surrender in 1943.

The main camps and branch camps in New Jersey are listed below

Name of Camp	County	Main Camp	Name of Camp	County	Main Camp
Belle Mead	Somerset	-----	Glassboro	Gloucester	Fort Dix
Bridgeton	Cumberland	Fort Dix	Kilmer, Camp	Middlesex	-----
Centerton	Salem	Fort Dix	Parvin Park.	Salem	Fort Dix
Dias Creek	Cape May	Fort Dix	Raritan Arsenal	Middlesex	-----
Dix, Fort	Burlington	-----	Somerville Depot	Burlington	-----

Note:). POWs also worked at Caren Point Army Depot (Jersey City), Jersey City Quartermaster Supply Depot (Hudson County) and Port Johnson Terminal in Bayonne (Hudson County).

POWs were treated at Tilton General Hospital (Fort Dix).

POWs are buried at Finn's Point National Cemetery (Salem County)

The 101st Military Police Battalion, which provided security at Fort Dix, had a Master Sergeant named Paul Hitler and it was suggested several times that he legally change his name. His reply: "Sure, that's my name. Let the other guy change his." While there were several escape attempts at Fort Dix, only one was successful. German POW Harry Garth escaped in June 1946 and surrendered to authorities in New York City in 1953.

Fort Dix and Camp Kilmer were two of the last POW camps to close. As other camps in the south and west closed, their sick or injured German POWs were transferred to the hospitals at these sites. Sadly, the "Battle of Fort Dix" took place on June 29, 1945. Among the Germans captured after D-Day were a number of Russians who had volunteered to fight for Germany under turn-coat General Vlasov. Hitler distrusted Vlasov's Army and instead of the Eastern Front, they were sent to man the German fortifications on the French coast. When discovered in U.S. camps, they were separated from the Germans and 154 of these Russians were first sent to Camp Rupert, Iowa, then Camp Rutner, Louisiana and, finally, to Fort Dix.

At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, Stalin had obtained Allied agreement to the repatriation of every Soviet citizen held prisoner because they feared the Soviets might delay or refuse repatriation of Allied prisoners that the Red Army had liberated from German POW camps. The Russians POWs at Fort Dix were kept in their own barracks, segregated from the 4,000 German prisoners who eagerly looked forward to going home.



Fig. 1) A clerk fingerprints a German arriving at Fort Dix POW compound in 1944.

On June 29, 1945, the Russian soldiers rioted when they learned they were being returned to the USSR. Three committed suicide while the others were first subdued with tear gas, manacled and then transferred to a Soviet ship. Upon arrival in the USSR, the Vlasov soldiers were executed. All of the other Red Army prisoners returned to the USSR from POW camps in Germany were either executed or sent to the Gulags. The Fort Dix POW compound was closed in July 1946.

Fig. 2) Post card to Berlin from a German prisoner in Compound B of the POW camp in Fort Dix.

<i>From. Obgeh. Kurt Schulz 31.G. 1836663</i> <i>Prisoner of War Camp Fort Dix</i> <i>(Camp B) N.Y. U.S.A.</i>		Postage Free Portofrei
PRISONER OF WAR POST CARD		
MORGAN STATION	Postkarte für Kriegsgefangene GERMANY	
Do Not Write Here! Nicht Hier Schreiben!		Address Adresse <i>From</i>
U. S. ARMY EXAMINER W. D., P. M. G. Form No. 6-1 November 1, 1942		<i>Helmuth Schulz</i> <i>Berlin Schoenberg</i> <i>Gustav-Müllerstr. 6</i> GERMANY

A Thomas Cook Employee Remembers Box 506 Lisbon

by David Kitt

The claims department, situated at the end of the British counter in the booking hall, Berkeley Street, and managed by Fred Mobbs, accepted letters during World War II for despatch to enemy held- territories via Post Box 506, Lisbon. There was also "Bill" Archer, until he was called up into the Army, Eunice Dawson, who charmed and was charmed by the Polish airmen who regularly sent letters, and myself, the junior.

I only attended to the enemy mail customers when we were busy and, although it is now forty-five years ago, recall some of the pathos engendered in their efforts to contact loved ones in enemy held- territory. The regulations which the senders had to comply with were rigid. They were published in newspapers and printed as leaflets in July 1940, just one month before I joined Thomas Cook . Our company was the only organization authorised by the British Government to undertake this service.

Write and re-write!

There were six writing desks adjacent to the counter, which permitted the writing of letters or, more often, the re-writing because regulations had been broken: "Erasures are not permitted", or the mention of "war" in any language automatically condemned the letter. Imagine the not so scholarly European scribing an acceptable letter without erasure and complying with the regulations, burdened by one or more already-attempted efforts. The sympathetic attitude we adopted was not always appreciated.

Letters were to contain "nothing but matters of personal interest". No reference was to be made to any town, village, locality or journey in Great Britain, to any phase of the war, or of Thomas Cook & Son Ltd. or any of their offices. No enclosures were permitted. The cost was two shillings. In my recollections, Polish servicemen seemed to predominate, maybe because their headquarters were at the Hotel Rubens in Buckingham Palace Road. The Free French HQ was near there in Stafford Place. But all European nationalities descended upon the famous counter from time to time

I was greatly impressed by the Polish officers. As a sixteen-year-old, and desperately anxious to join the navy, the teutonic clicking of their heels as they sprang to attention and courteously requested service tempted me to respond in a similar manner. Devoid of my home guard boots, the acknowledgment would have been feeble.

Even more impressed was Miss Dawson, who believed the war was being won by none other than the Polish 324 Squadron stationed at Seaton. I recall the post-war Thomas Cook reunion dance at the Lyceum Ballroom and an introduction to Eunice's fiancé, Adam, an ex-Polish airman. That campaign was only won temporarily, Eunice was to marry another.

During 1940 and 1941 the war was hindering head office. Our service to the customers was occasionally interrupted by visits to the air raid shelters in the basement, now occupied by the Berkeley Street canteen. My duty on those occasions included carrying Miss Dawson's typewriter so that she could continue her work. The worst damage to our building was made on Saturday night at 11 pm, May 10, 1941. A parachute bomb landed on Stratton Street damaging parts of Cooks, particularly the north-west corner of the booking hall which was left open to the sky. On the following Monday, letters were still being written whilst the received rubble was being cleared and temporary repairs made.

After the claims department had ensured to the best of its linguistic ability that the contents of the letters were in order, that the addressee had been asked to address replies care of Post Box 506, Lisbon, and that the other formalities to enable us to forward replies to the sender had been carried out, the letters were sent to the enemy mail department. This was on the fourth floor of Berkeley Street. During the war the first, second and third floors were occupied by various ministerial organizations: the Children's Overseas Reception Board, latterly, the Ministry of Aircraft Productions (MAP).

The enemy mail department was managed by Derek Inkpen, former manager of the pre-war editorial department. In his department the letters were first scrutinized by a small group of our staff employing a combined linguistic ability. They acted as intermediate censors. The letters were eventually passed to official British censors before being sealed and returned, unmarked, to Cooks for transmission to our office in Lisbon. Records were kept in the enemy mail department to enable transmission of replies. Hundreds of thousands of small cards were filed in numerous long metal boxes. Filing and searching was constant. The Stamp Collecting Magazine of December 21, 1978 records that 278,084 letters had been sent and 152,980 replies received by the end of 1943.

Although the service provided for the automatic transmission of replies, senders were regularly calling at Berkeley Street anxiously wanting the "we are alive" assurance from loved ones. Many didn't receive replies but maintained a sad pilgrimage to Berkeley Street throughout the years of war.

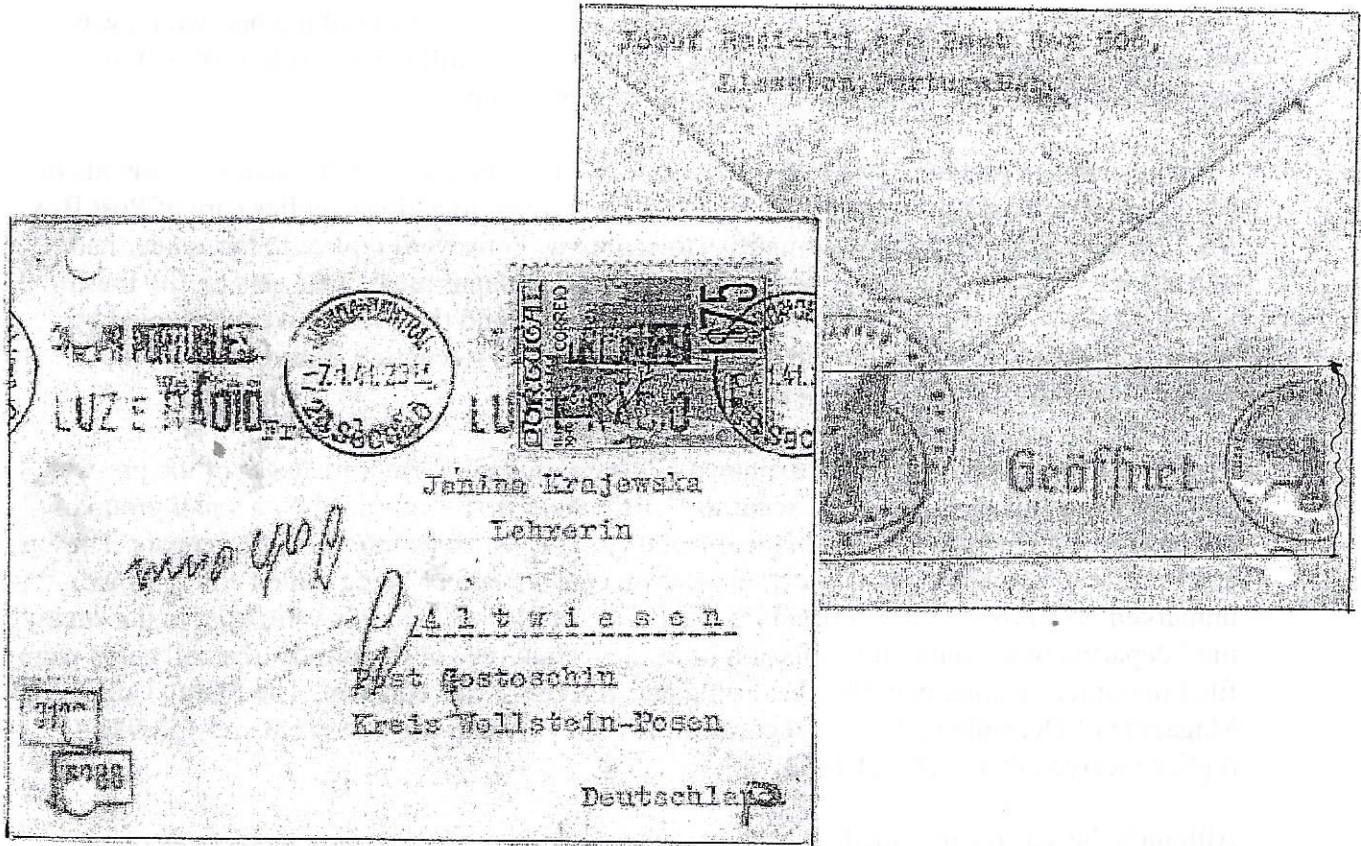
I joined the Royal Navy in 1942, but one who could give a better account of Thomas Cook's enemy mail service would be the former Miss Eunice Dawson. She remained in the department until after the war, then went to South Africa where she married a Rev. Wacherpennig. She was employed at the Durban office for many years until her husband was posted to Johannesburg. There Eunice failed to obtain a position at the Johannesburg office but found, it is believed, a job with American Express.

For myself, well I'm still sending messages: my present responsibility is for the information available in the Travel Information Bank, Thomas Cook's visual display unit.

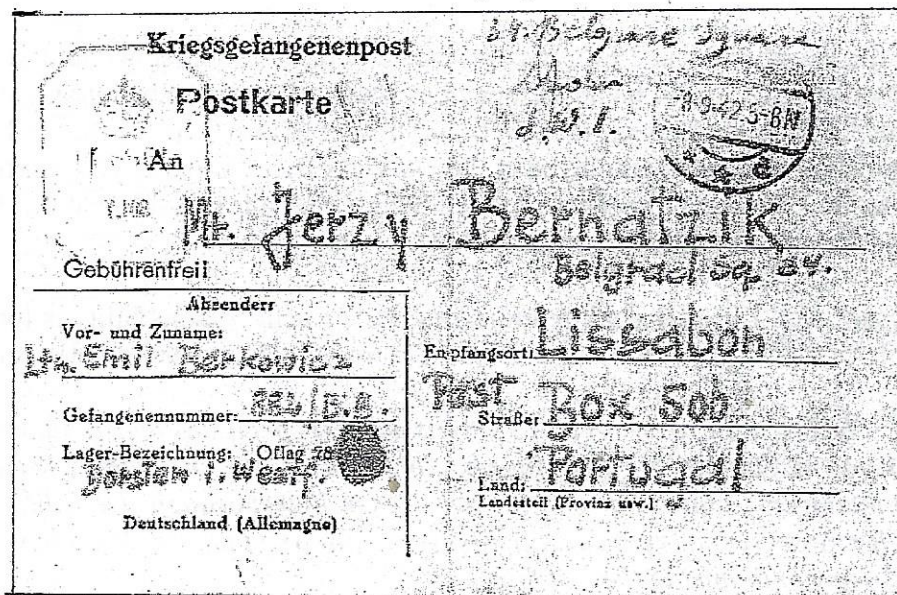
ED Note: TRSGer Ed Fraser received permission to reprint this article that had appeared in Thomas Cook & Son Ltd.'s Staff Magazine in August 1985. The author, David Kitt, was assistant manager, Central Information Services in Peterborough. The editors of Staff had inquired if any present or retired staff member could write an article on how the company handled enemy mail during the last war.

As an addendum to Mr. Kitt's article, TRSGer Ed Fraser provides examples of outgoing and incoming P.O. Box 506 mail transmitted via Thomas Cook & Son's message scheme:

- 1) Cover sent to Altwiesen in occupied Poland in January 1941 via Lisbon has sender address on backside "c/o Post Box 506, Lissabon, Portugal." Note the sealing tape and hand stamps that were applied at German censor office in Munich.



- 2) Postcard sent to Post Box 506 in September 1942 from Polish POW in Oflag 28 has British censor marking in upper left corner. The actual address of the recipient, "Belgrade Square 34" has been added below his name and in the top right corner of the card.

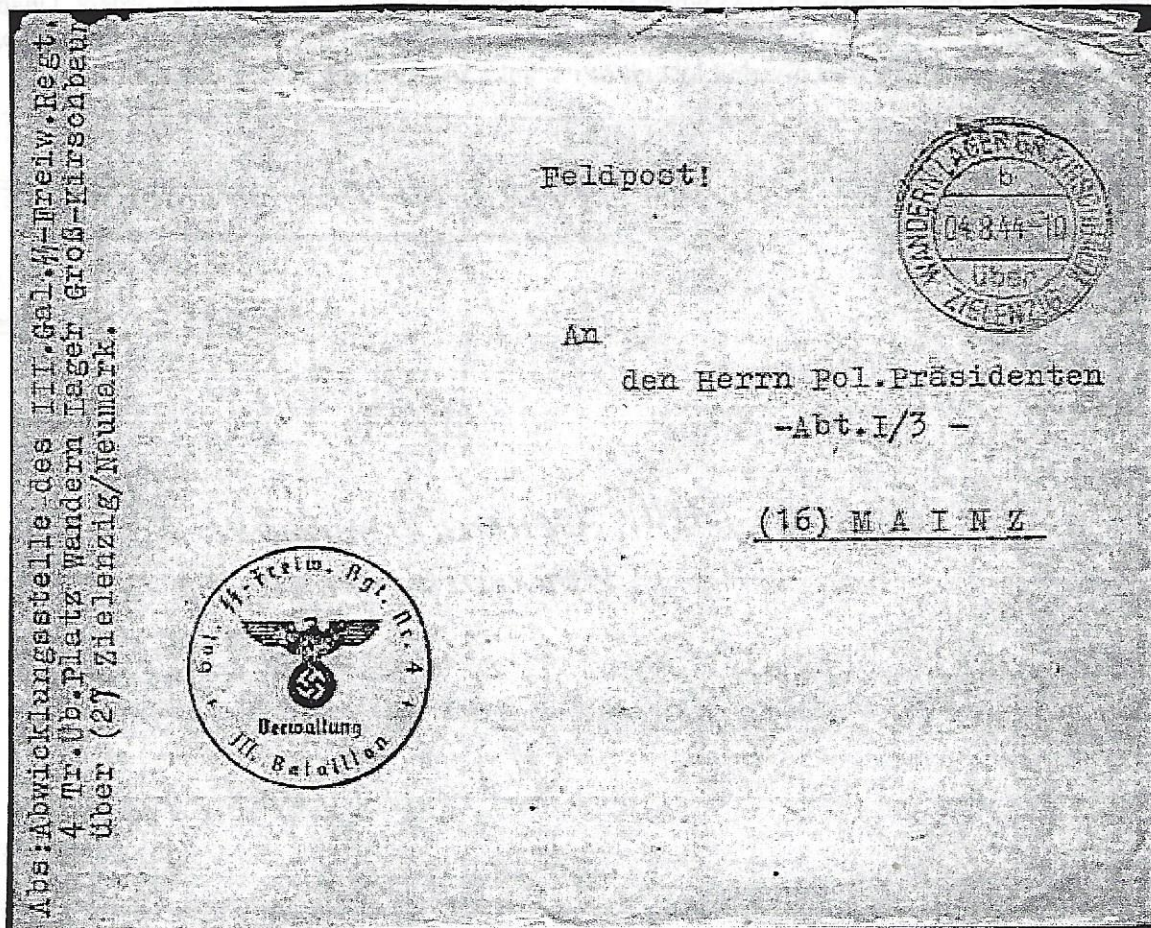


The Lost Legions: Galician SS Volunteer Regiment

by Jim Lewis

The 14th Waffen-Grenadier Division der SS began forming at SS-Truppenübungsplatz "Heidlager" near Debica, Poland in September 1943. Enlisted personnel were western Ukrainians but most officers and NCOs were German or ethnic-German. Division was titled "Galizien" after former Austro-Hungarian province. In June 1944 the division was sent into action under XIII Army Corps of 1st Panzer Army. On July 12, 1944, the Soviets launched an offensive against Army Group Northern Ukraine. Within two days their armored spearheads had punched a hole through German defenses north and south of Brody, 60 miles east of Lemberg, and encircled XIII Army Corps. Ordered to break out of the "Brody Pocket", only 3,000 of the 14th SS division's 14,000 men managed to break out. These remnants were first sent to Slovakia and then on to a camp in Germany to reform.

This cover was posted in August 1944 by the settlement office of Btl. III/ Galizien SS Volunteer Regiment 4 that was reforming at Wandern Lager near Zielenzig/Neumark in Prussia. The remnants of the 14th Waffen-Grenadier Division der SS which had fought at Brody were to be combined with reserve and police regiments to bring the division back up to strength. As this cover is addressed to the Police President in Mainz, the subject may be about obtaining replacements.



COMBAT DIVISION PROFILE:

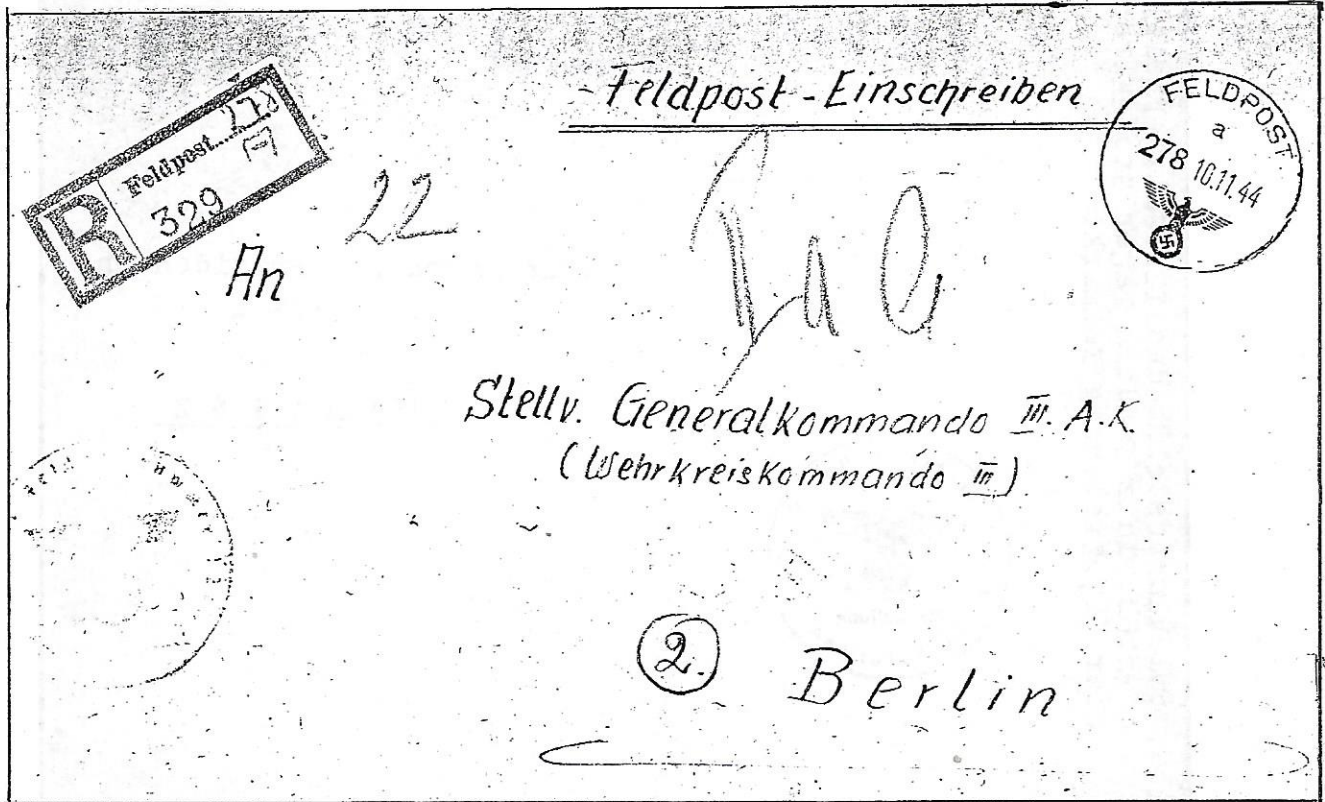
26th Panzer Division

by Jim Lewis

POST OFFICE		REGIMENTS			AUXIL
TACT.	KENN	PANZER	GRENADIER	ARTY	UNITS
93	278	202	9	67	93

Reformed in Brittany, France in the summer of 1942 by conversion of the 23rd Infantry Division. At that time FpA 23 was re-numbered FpA 93 but retained the Feldpost and Kenn numbers of the original division. This new division trained in France for almost a year before being sent to Italy in July 1943. It remained on this front for the remainder of the war, fighting in the Anzio counter-attacks, the battles of the Gustav Line, and in the retreat up the peninsula to the Gothic Line in 1944. During this period it absorbed the 1027th Reinforced Grenadier Regiment

In November 1944 the 26th Panzer Division was cited for distinguished action between the Apennines and the Adriatic. As part of LXXVI Panzer Corps, it was defending a sector of the Adriatic on the south side of the Po River in early in 1945 when Hitler issued one of his "stand and die" orders. Unable to retreat behind the Po River, the 26th Panzer Division fought its last battle south of the Po and was destroyed by the Allies. The division lost all of its tanks and virtually ceased to exist.



Cover sent to Military Region Headquarters in Berlin in November 1944 from Fp. # 10194 (Feldpostamt 93) via P.O. 93 (K-278).