

The

POST HORN



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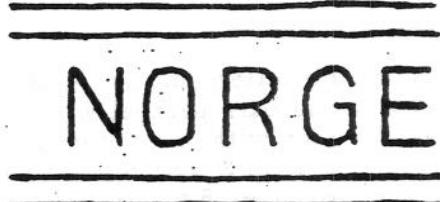
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Number 3

The "Krag" Postmarking Machines

by Frederick A. Brofos

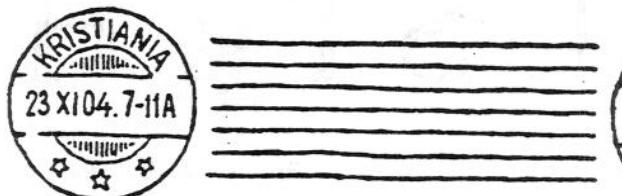


Among the great improvements that have aided the post offices in handling the ever increasing volume of mail matter is the rapid cancelling machine. Not only have they brought relief to overworked postal employees, but their advent made possible an era of "business by mail." The facts connected with the postmark industry, which plays such an important part in the history of the postage stamp, should be of particular interest to philatelists.

Postmarking machines have been steadily improved over the years since the first one was invented over a hundred years ago by Pearson Hill, son of Sir Rowland Hill of Penny Postage fame. The experimental machine was brought into use on September 17, 1857 at the London Post Office. However, as ordinary hand stamping turned out to be faster, the machine was withdrawn the following year. After this "fiasco" Hill made several improved versions, and other inventors both in England and abroad produced many more or less successful types of postmarking machines.

The first cancelling machine used in the United States was invented by the Leavitt brothers, and appeared in March 1875 in Boston, Mass. It was used only on postcards.

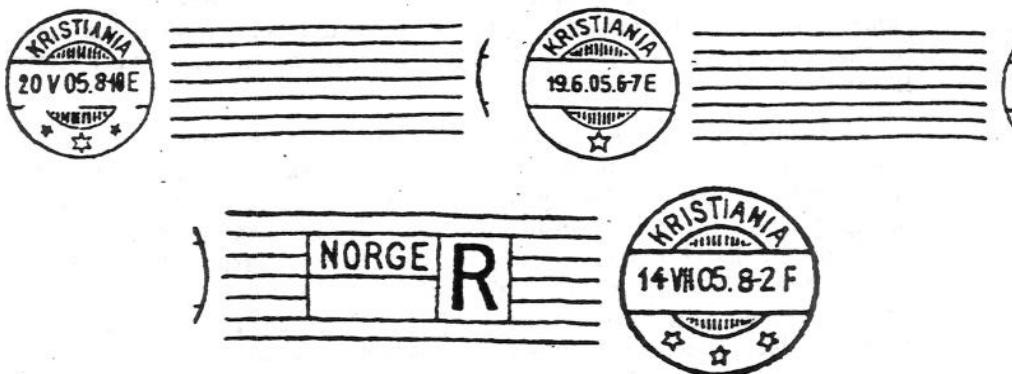
Turning to our beloved Scandinavia, we find that the first stamp cancelling machine in that area was invented and used in Norway in the early 1900's. The machine was produced after considerable experimentation by a young Norwegian mechanic named Gustav Hansen. It could be run by both hand power or electric power, and postmarked approximately 600 pieces of mail a minute. The invention was given the name of KRAG, after the machine factory of Nils A. Krag in Kristiania, the firm which manufactured and exported the machines. The earliest machine showed a single impression, with a date circle at the left followed by the country name "NORGE" in large letters at the right. In the course of extensive postmark searching I have only seen two examples from this machine, one dated August 26, 1903, and the other dated November 12, 1903.



The postmark on the next machine made a multiple impression which soon became characteristic of the Krag machines. I have examples dated from October 17, 1904, to September 5, 1906. There are three hollow 5-pointed stars at the bottom of the date circle. Another multiple impression machine, without the cancelling lines between the date circles, was used for

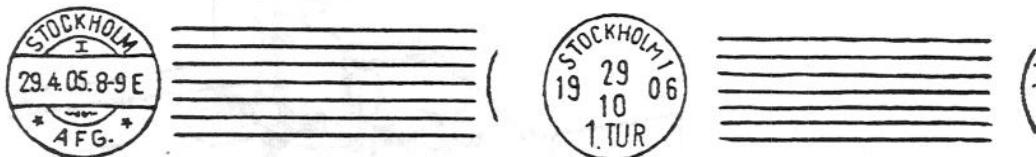


backstamping letters in the Arrival Section of the Kristiania Post Office. The horizontal bars parallel with the date very soon wore out, and were not replaced. Seen with dates from November 13, 1904 to June 26, 1911 and with TUR (Trip) 1, 2, 3, and 5. Next comes a machine with a hollow 6-pointed star and two black 5-pointed stars at the bottom of the date circle. This I have seen with dates March 4, 1905 to June 9, 1905. A machine with one hollow 5-pointed star at the bottom and the month in Arabic figures instead of the usual Roman figures, I have noticed with dates from June 19, 1905 to July 21, 1906. There was also a special machine postmark for registered



mail, with "NORGE" and a large "R" in between the cancelling lines. This I have seen dated July 14, 1905. Later on this machine was apparently used in the Parcel Post Section, with the "NORGE" and "R" cut out of the die. Seen dated from January 17, 1913 to December 5, 1914. After these early varieties there followed during the next few years a large number of different machines which space unfortunately does not permit me to list for you at the present time.

The mechanism of the early Krag machine has been described by the editor E. G. Lannge, who saw them in operation at Kristiania in October 1904, as follows: "After letters or cards have been placed upright in a duct, they are moved by a sliding block (or by hand) towards the lower edge of the duct. There they are caught hold of, one by one, by rubber-coated cylinders that lead them between two cylinders rotating very close to each other. On one of these the postmarks are engraved. The postmark cylinder received color from an inking cylinder located behind it. From the postmark cylinder the mail was led through a series of wheels, arranged in a spiral pattern, which brought it to a horizontal duct where a counter-weight held them upright."



Following successful operation of their machines in Kristiania by the Norwegian Post Office, the Krag firm wrote to the Swedish Postal Administration in November 1904, offering to lend them a machine on trial. The offer was accepted by the Swedish Postal authorities, and from January 1905 two Krag machines, one electrical, the other hand-operated, were used to cancel stamps on letters and postcards at the Outgoing Mail section of the Stockholm Central Post Office. A third machine, which was probably also a Krag, was brought into use on March 22, 1905 at the Receiving section of the Stockholm Central Post Office and used for postmarking incoming letters on the back. The electrically operated machine which had been on trial at the Outgoing section of the Stockholm Central Post Office was purchased by the Swedish Postal authorities in April 1905 for a price of 2,500 kroner. That machine is apparently the one on view in the Swedish Postal Museum today, which is of the same construction as those seen by Lannge in Kristiania in 1904. The later Krag machines, from 1906 on, present quite a different appearance, as early in that year they had been improved upon and could now postmark up to 1000 letters a minute.

The manufacturing rights for Sweden for Krag machines was acquired in 1905 by the Swedish company A. B. Öfversommaren of Gothenburg, but by September 1909 the manufacturing rights, or at least the sales rights, for the Krag machines were owned by A. B. Globe, another Gothenburg firm. By that time, Krag cancelling machines were used by Post Offices in many parts of the world. Sweden had eight machines, of which six were in Stockholm and one each in Malmö and Gothenburg. Denmark had eleven machines and Norway nineteen. In Germany, machines of Krag design were manufactured and brought into use from 1907.

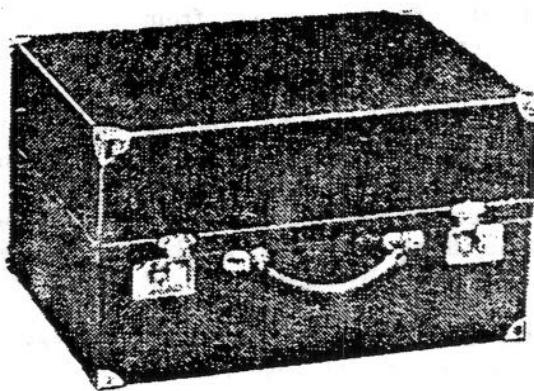
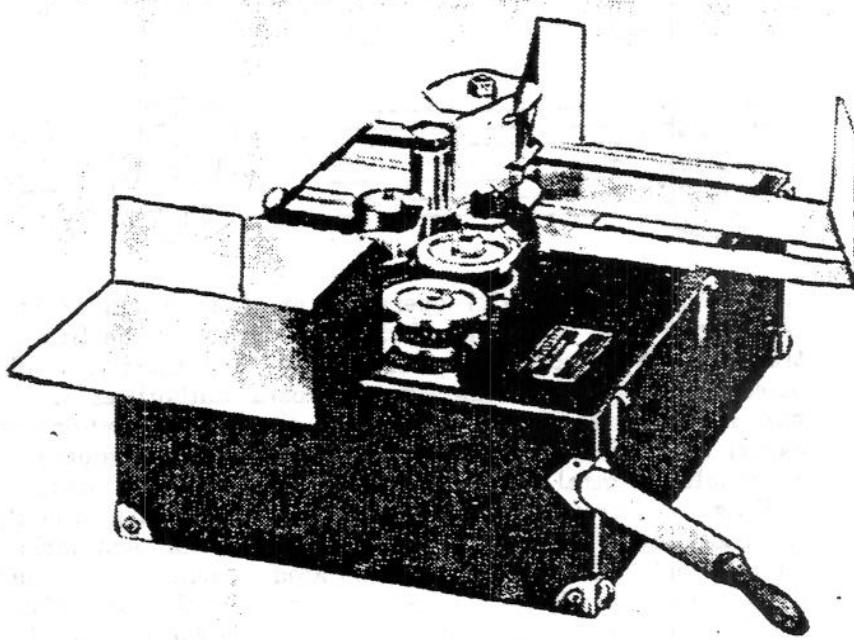
The Krag postmarking machine was first tried out in England in May 1905 at the West Central District Office in London. It was a continuous im-

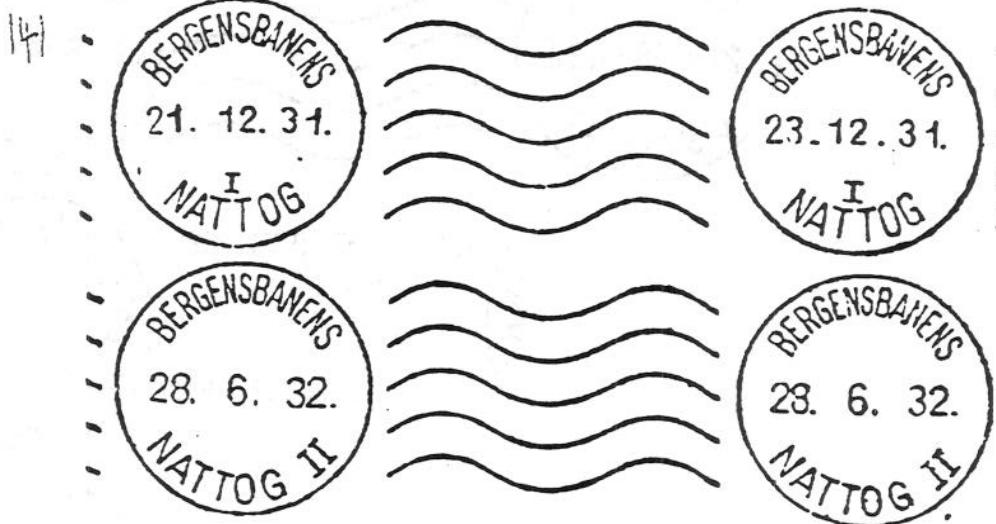
The Cancelling Machine Suit Case

By Frederick A. Brofos

In case the title misled you, this is not about a legal case, a suit for patent infringement or something, but actually deals with the odd subject of a cancelling machine in a suitcase or small trunk. As machines for cancelling stamps are usually heavy, bulky apparatus, it was rather surprising to learn of the existence of a portable machine, which could be carried to and from the job by postal employees. The handy invention was produced by the Krag Machine Co. of Oslo, Norway. This firm is a pioneer in the field and has exported different models of cancelling machines all over the world since 1903. Known at first as the light type "D" hand machine and later as Krag type XVI, it was simply called the "kuffert maskin" (the trunk machine) by Norwegian postal clerks. A sales promotional leaflet describes it as a hand-driven, light-weight machine calculated for use on railroads, ships and at small temporary post offices.

The first sales order was received from the Norwegian Post Office in 1932. Two





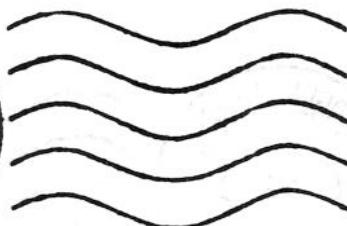
machines were placed in use on the Bergen Railroad's night trains I and II, running between Bergen and Oslo and vice versa. That same year, another machine was ordered for use between Piraeus and Thessaloniki in Greece. Dies exist for both directions of this ship route. In 1935, five machines were sent to France, four without engraved dial, whose eventual placement is unknown, but the fifth one inscribed "Prefectur du Gard". In 1938, another machine was introduced in the RPO between Oslo and Ed (Sweden). Then the war came and nothing new is heard about these machines until 1952. In that year, an old suitcase machine (probably the Oslo-Ed one) was revamped and used at the small post office in the Holmenkollen ski-jump tower during the Winter Olympic Games at Oslo.

Examples of these markings are all scarce and some rare. The Bergen RPO has been seen used as late as 24.1.41. Besides regular mail cancelling, it also appears as a transit mark. The Oslo-Ed RPO, with French text "Bureau Ambulant" (i.e. Travelling PO), is also unusual in having an extended date line where the time-slot is replaced by a train number. It has been noted in use as late as 30.9.38 (with T.41). What appears to have been the final use of this machine was at the Oslo Railroad Post Office, from 1953 until about 1960. It may also have been used as a transit mark with the wavy lines removed.

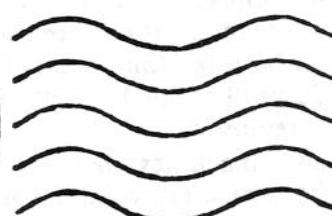
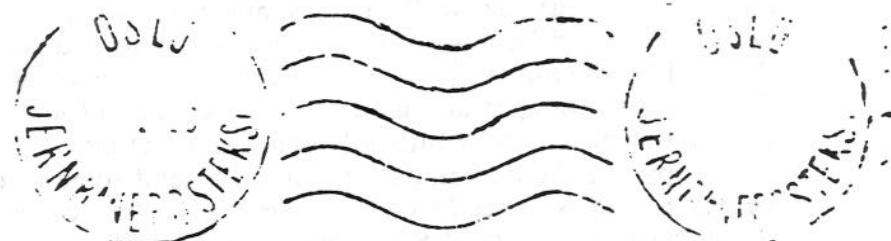
All the suitcase machines made "repeater" cancels, that is to say multiple impression postmarks, which ran right across the top of the mail. As they had exactly the same general appearance as the ordinary Krag machine postmarks, the unusual suitcase origin has until now gone unnoticed by collectors.

The postmark illustrations shown here are from die proofs and the dates therein are just random ones. The picture of the Greek Krag postmarks is in reduced format.

That this novel invention, which at first glance seemed such a bright idea, was not more successful was probably due to two factors. First, the quantity of mail at places of usage did not justify the expense of a machine, when an ordinary handstamp would have sufficed. Secondly, that little suitcase was perhaps not quite as lightweight after all and, therefore, not popular among the postal clerks who had to lug it around.



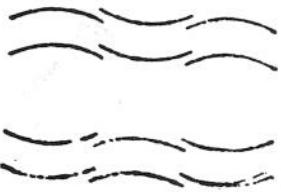
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Mini Cancelling Machine—Krag 25

By Frederick A. Brofos



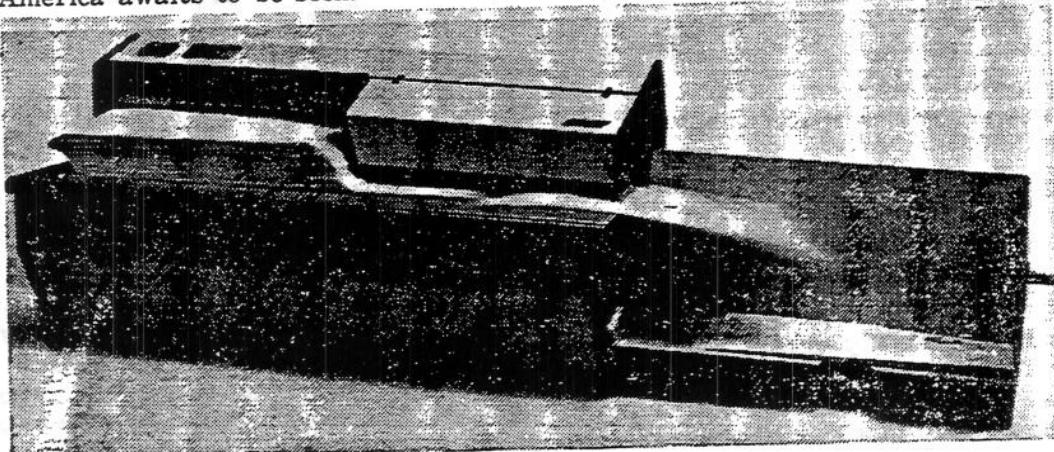
An electronically-guided, wholly-automatic mini machine, is the latest model in a long line of very successful stamp cancelling machines produced by the famous Krag Machine Co. of Oslo, Norway. The firm, a pioneer in its field, started business around 1903 and Krag machines have since been used by post offices in all civilized countries of the world.

The new "Krag 25" is conveniently small and compact in size, as well as easy to operate and maintain. Weighing only 16 kilos, it has been developed in cooperation with the Norwegian Postal Service, where 100 machines are already in operation and 50 more are under construction. Its capacity is around 130 or more letters a minute, or between 8 to 10,000 an hour.

One expects the machines to be marketed world-wide by their American business associate, Pitney Bowes Inc., under the name "PB 3900." Several countries abroad have already expressed an interest, namely Australia, Canada, Italy, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Finland and Sweden.

Collectors are fortunate in that the postmark impressions can readily be identified as from a "Krag 25." The cancelling bar segment measures 30 mm. in length, much smaller than earlier Krag models.

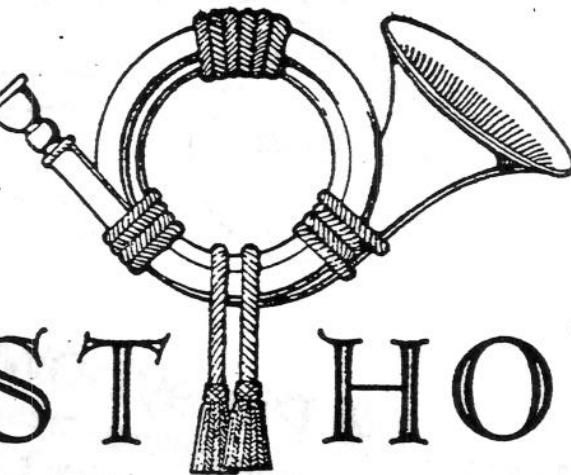
Whether Pitney Bowes will also introduce the handy new machine in America awaits to be seen.



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The German Fieldpost Offices in Norway, Denmark and Finland during World War II

By Frederick A. Brofos (497)

In the period following the German invasion of Norway on April 9, 1940 and until the Liberation on May 7, 1945, twenty-two German fieldpost offices were in operation in Norway servicing the occupation forces and the quantities of troops that were trained in winter-warfare before being sent to fight the Bolsheviks on the Eastern Front. Two German FPO's are known to have operated in Denmark, and seven others in Finland. Ten more FPO'S have been traced to Scandinavia, but the actual country in which they were located is still a mystery. In all, a total of 40 different German fieldpost offices are known to have operated at one time or another in Scandinavia.



The German fieldpostmarks used in Scandinavia were of the same characteristic type as those used elsewhere. They may be divided into 2 main types: 1) FELDPOST—wide spacing and round "O"; 2) FELDPOST—narrow spacing and oval "O". Each office had its special distinguishing number which appeared ahead of, and on line with, the date in the postmark. Unfortunately, these numbers appear only in the postmarks used on registered letters, and registration was restricted to official business. For security reasons the FPO number was omitted when the postmark was used on ordinary mail and the symbols "___" or "000" put in their place. It is difficult to determine the origin of covers in this category unless other markings provide clues. Even the date in the postmark is often of importance, as many FPO's were not located all the time in Norway but moved there from, or from

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there to, another country. If there were several postmarks at a fieldpost office, these were generally distinguished by letters: a, b, c, d, etc., which appeared just under the word FELDPOST.



Fig. 2

Unlike American APO mail which was addressed to the appropriate Army Post Office number, mail to the Wehrmacht was not addressed to the numbered German Fieldpost Offices but to the unit fieldpost number. Every German troop unit or command office had its special fieldpost number, and this appeared in its official letter-seal or "Briefstempel". This metal or rubber stamp with its identifying number was applied as a frank to all outgoing mail, both official and private. The fieldpost number in the letter-seal had five figures, and sometimes an additional letter to distinguish subsidiary units, for ex. A, B, C, or a, b, c. Higher letters like N, P, S, U-G, H-V-St denoted connected but not subsidiary units of the Wehrmacht. Fieldpost numbers with the prefix letter "L" were Luftwaffe (Air Force) units, and "M" were Kriegsmarine (Navy) units. Those without such prefix letters were generally Army units.



Fig. 3

Of particular interest are the special control marks which were applied to mail addressed to German soldiers that the German Fieldpost received for delivery from civilian postoffices in Norway. These marks were also occasionally applied to mail, written by the German military to Norwegian civilians or firms, and handed over by the German Fieldpost to the Norwegian postal authorities for final distribution. Three different marks have been noted, all of which were applied in red. The FN stood for: Feldpost Norwegen. Of FN type 1, the earliest date seen was from Sept. 11, 1942 and the latest from Dec. 1, 1943. For FN type 2, the earliest date noted was Jan. 4, 1944 and the latest Oct. 5, 1944. I have seen only one cover with FN type 3—dated Jan. 9, 1944.

A similar control mark was applied in red to mail of this type in Finland. Circular shaped, with a large F in the center (for Finland), and the word FELDPOST above it was applied in Helsinki.

The "Feldpostleitstelle" was the transmission and receiving office for mail between the German Reichspost and Feldpost systems. The illustration

shows the frank stamp of the Feldpostleitstelle in Oslo. The small letter under the wreath is apparently an "O"—for Oslo. It appeared in red on a registered letter sent from FPO 459 (Oslo), dated Feb. 3, 1945, to Fp. nr. 41282 (Gericht der Kommandantur, Oslo). 140



Fig. 4

In order to limit the sending of fieldpost by airmail, a special stamp was issued by the Germans on April 24, 1942. Four (later, eight) stamps a month were given to soldiers in Scandinavia, on the Eastern Front, in Greece and North Africa. Half of the stamps received were meant to be sent home for franking the replies. Picturing a German Junkers aero plane, these stamps were originally printed at the Reichsdruckerei in Berlin. Clement* mentions (p. 33) that special printings of these "Luftfeldpost" stamps were made since 1943 in Oslo and Tromsø (Norway) and in Rovaniemi (Finland). I believe these were of the serrated milky-blue variety, as I have such a stamp on a cover sent from Norway, dated March 1, 1945. The original Berlin printings were apparently bright blue colored and perforated. All these stamps had a plate number and year date at the bottom of the sheet, and it would be interesting to know the plate numbers of those printed in Scandinavia.

The following lists are for the most part based on the invaluable book on the German fieldposts by Alfred Clement of Graz, Austria.

As will be observed, there are still ten numbers whose country of origin needs to be traced, and it would also be of particular interest to determine the towns where the other numbers were used. I would like to hear from anyone who could shed further light on the matter, however dim.

Bibliography:

- * "Kleines Handbuch der Deutschen Feldpost, 1939-45", by A. Clement, 1952.
- "Fernsprechverzeichnis des Standortes Oslo", official publication of Wehrmachtnachrichtenkommandantur Oslo, 1941.

List of German Fieldpost Offices that operated in Norway

FPO	Letters in postmark:	Office in operation:	Date and location:
142	a	Sept. 43-Dec. 44	1943—Norway
199	abcde	Jan. 41-Sept. 44	1943/44—Norway
234	abcdef	1942-Jun. 44	1941—Oslo, Norway (1942/43—Tuntsa, Finland)
252	abc	Jul. 42-Jun. 44	1943—Norway <i>VADSO</i>
346	abc	Dec. 40-Sept. 42	1940/42—Norway <i>JUNE 44 TRONDHEIM</i>
353	abc	Sept. 43-Nov. 44	1943/44—Norway
356	abcd	Nov. 41-Nov. 43	1943—Norway
436	abcdef	Sept. 44-Dec. 45	1943/44(?)—Oslo, Norway
459	abcd fg	May 41-Aug. 44	1941/45—Oslo, Norway
467	ab al cl	Dec. 40-Nov. 44	1942/43—Kristiansand S., Norway
531	abcd	1942-Nov. 44	1941/44(?)—Oslo, Norway (1944—Balkans)

545	abcd j	Mar. 41-1945	1941/45 Fauske (near Bodø) Norway
579	a cl	Oct. 43-Sept. 44	1943—Norway
612	abc	Mar. 41-Dec. 43	1941/43—Norway 612a-Kirkenes, 612c-Hammerfest
765	abcdefg	Jul. 42-Aug. 44	1943—Norway 765a-ALTA, 765c-LAKSEV, 765g-HAMFEST.
767	abcdegh	Jan. 41-Aug. 44	1942/44—Norway (1941—France(?)
779	abc	Sept. 42-Sept. 44	1942/44—Oslo, Norway
856	abcdef	March 40-Mar. 44	1944(?)—Norway
875	abc al	Jul. 41-Jan. 45	1941/45—Norway
950	abcdefgh jk	Mar. 41-Oct. 43	1941/43—Norway
955	abcdefg	Nov. 43-Mar. 45	1943—Norway
996	abcdef	Mar. 40-Dec. 44	1940/43—Bergen, Norway

List of German Fieldpost Offices that operated in Denmark

FPO	Letters in No.	Office in postmark:	Date and location:
317	abcdefg	Oct. 41-Aug. 43	1942—Denmark (Copenhagen?)
877	abcdef	May 41-Jul. 44	1942/43—Copenhagen, Denmark

List of German Fieldpost Offices that operated in Finland

FPO	Letters in No.	Office in postmark:	Date and location:
228	abcde	1942-Oct. 44	1942/43—Kemi, Finland
234	abcdef	1942-Jun. 44	1942/43—Tuntusa, Finland (1941—Oslo, Norway)
279	abcd	Apr. 42-Sept. 44	1942/44—Finland
537	abcde ik	1940-Sept. 44	1941/42—Rovaniemi, Finland (1940/41—France; 1944 Italy)
677	abcd	Sept. 41-Dec. 43	1941—North Finland
688	abc	Sept. 41-Apr. 43	1941/43—North Finland
838	abcdef	March 40-Oct. 44	1942/44—Finland mid 1943—Finland
132			

List of German Fieldpost Offices that operated in Scandinavia
Whether in Norway, Denmark or Finland, unknown so far.

FPO	Letters in No.	Office in postmark:	Date and location:
120	abc	Dec. 40-Oct. 44	1942/44—Scandinavia
208	abed	July 42-Mar. 44	1942/43—Scandinavia
257	ab	Jul. 41-Sept. 43	1943—Scandinavia (1941—France)
360	abcdefg	Oct. 41-Dec. 43	1943—Scandinavia
409	abc	Oct. 40-Nov. 43	1942—Scandinavia
476	abcde	Feb. 41-Feb. 45	1941—Scandinavia (?) (1944/45—Balkans)
738	abcdef h	Sept. 41-Sept. 44	1943—Scandinavia (1941—Holland)
803	abc	Apr. 44-May 44	1944—Scandinavia
850	a	Feb. 42-Jul. 44	1944—Scandinavia
867	abed	Oct. 40-May 44	1942—Scandinavia

ADDITIONS

316	3 Geb. Div.	to January '42	from Norw. to Petsamo (Finland)
803			Vardo (N.Norw.) 210 Inf. Div.
838		Aug. '40-May '41	Hammerfest (N.Norw.) 2 Gebirgs Div.
838		May '41-Feb '42	Kirkenes (N. Norw.)
867 Ic		Nov '42-Sept.'43	Nordmo (N. Norw.)

(Further changes may be expected to the main list (from 1956) due to later researches)

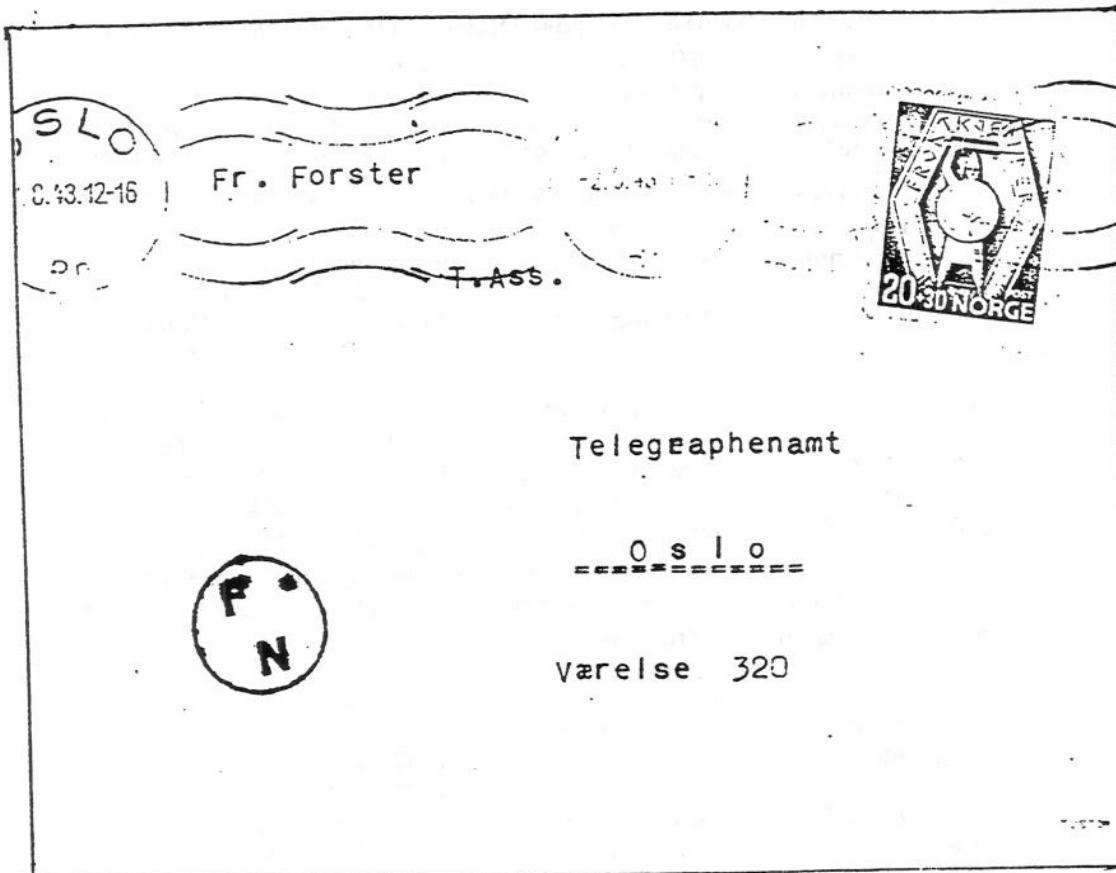
ANOTHER "FN" MARK FROM NORWAY

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Frederick A. Brofos

The scarce circular "FN" (Feldpost Norwegen) markings, used during WW II on certain mail of the German occupation forces in Norway, are well known and much sought after by fieldpost collectors. There were six types, usually struck in red or magenta. They were used as a transit sorting check mark (Leitstempel) on mail transferred between the German and Norwegian postal services or vice versa.

Much to my surprise, a previously unrecorded "FN" mark was shown me by a California collector. It is on a cover bearing the Norwegian Front Fighter semipostal stamp, machine cancelled Oslo 2.8.43, which makes it a first day cover. The address, in a mixture of German and Norwegian, is to a Fr. Forster, apparently a German telegraph or technical assistant, working in Room 320 of the Norwegian Central Telegraph Office in Oslo. Part of the building had been taken over by the German Supervisor of Telegraphs and Mail. Censoring of telegrams was also done there.

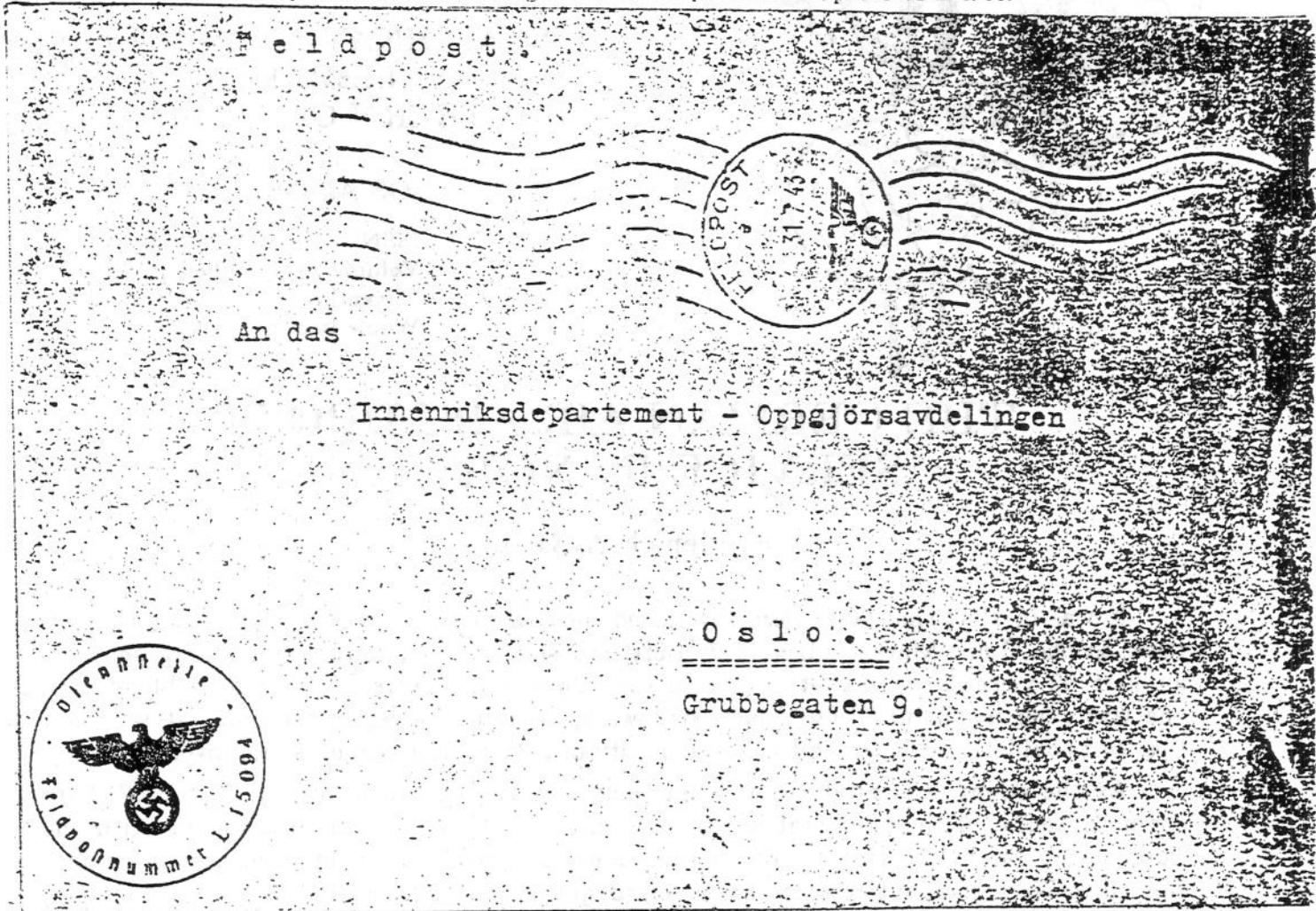


Thus, conditions were right for a transit mark to appear on this cover transferred from the Norwegian postoffice to the German authorities, and probably applied by the latter. The mark is in bluish black instead of the usual red colors. It is similar, but definitely a different type from those already known. In the upper right of the circle appears a small indecipherable mark, which is probably not a number or star, but an accidental "blob". The cover is rather faded on the front, as though it had been in the sunlit window of a stamp shop for a long time (perhaps at a big price). With this new mark suddenly showing up after all these years, the thought did, of course, cross my mind: Could this be a clever fake? On the other hand, it might be a rarity well worth preserving. So, on the theory of not throwing the baby out with the bath water, I traded it into my collection, where it hopefully awaits the report of a similar piece for comparison.

RARE GERMAN FIELDPOSTMARK FROM NORWAY

Frederick A. Brofos

Except for an occasional machine mark, the German fieldpost generally used handstamp cancellers during WW II. However, two unique roller cancels are known and listed in the comprehensive Michel handbook on German fieldpost, Handbuch Katalog Deutsche Feldpost 1937-45, published in 1986.



The fact that one of these rarities was used in German-occupied Norway has apparently not been recorded before. Both rollers have six wavy lines and both bear the index letter "e".

The difference between the rollers is that Type 1 has the cancelling head lying down with the date reading up vertically, while Type 2 has it standing upright and the date reading horizontally.

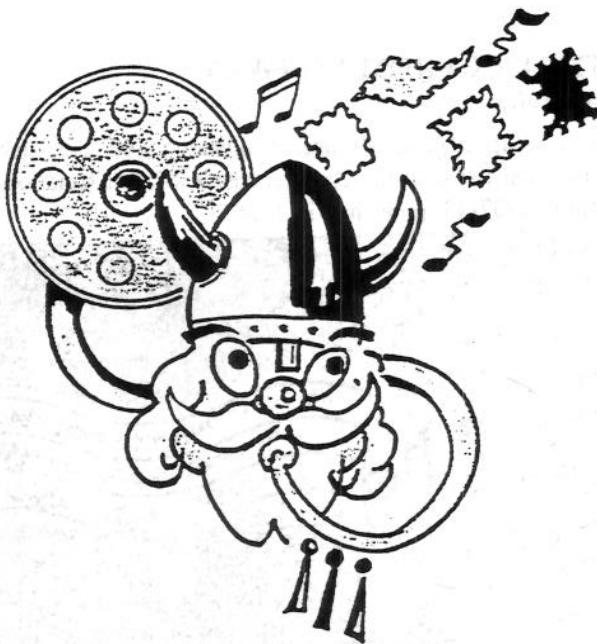
Normrollstempel 28 mm – Form 01



- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Stempelkopf liegend, 6 Wellenlinien, UB: e | DM 3000.— |
| 2. Stempelkopf stehend, 6 Wellenlinien, UB: e | 4000.— |

The Michel catalog shows nifty prices for rollers.

According to A. Clement, in *Kleines Handbuch der Deutschen Feldpost*, from about 1955, Type 2 was used briefly in Central Germany in 1940, but he does not mention Type 1 at all. My cover, which I acquired in Norway, is dated 31.7.43. The official seal of the sender, with fieldpost number L15094, indicates a Luftwaffe (Airforce) unit, "Schwerer Flak -- Abteilung 352", a heavy anti-aircraft gun section. This unit may have been in the Trondheim area. This cover was sent to the Norwegian Department of the Interior, Settlement of Accounts Division, and was among a number of covers sent there by other German units in Norway, apparently with expense accounts.



LUREN

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THE GERMAN AIR FIELDPOST SERVICE IN NORWAY

Frederick A. Brofos

It was in 1942 that Nazi Germany issued their familiar military airmail stamp, known there as the "Lupo-Marke." Inscribed "Luftfeldpost", the ultramarine-blue stamp shows a Junkers 52 German military transport plane. Such planes were often painted black, and one was even nicknamed "The Black Widow" by certain Norwegian patriots. It was said that one could set one's watch by the regularity of that courier plane passing over.

As the stamp was produced in large quantities during World War II, it is still quite common today, both as a mint single or even used. However, complete covers with the Lupo stamp are not so easy to come by any longer. Indeed certain unusual usages are considered to be of great interest and are much sought after by specialists.

During the war, a special Air Fieldpost Service was operated by the German Armed Forces. My Austrian collector friend, the late Alfred Clement, gives the following details, which I have condensed and translated from the pioneer book he published many years ago on the German Fieldpost, *Kleines Handbuch der Deutschen Feldpost 1937-45*.

"The large distances in Russia caused a long transport time for the mail. The periodic interruptions of land connections to cut-off front areas made necessary the use of airplanes. The limited loading space, however, led in all cases to the use of special permit stamps in order to limit the quantity of mail sent. In addition to the Eastern Front in Russia, air fieldpost services were established for the German troops in Tunisia, the Aegean Islands, Fortress Courland, and the Ruhr pocket.

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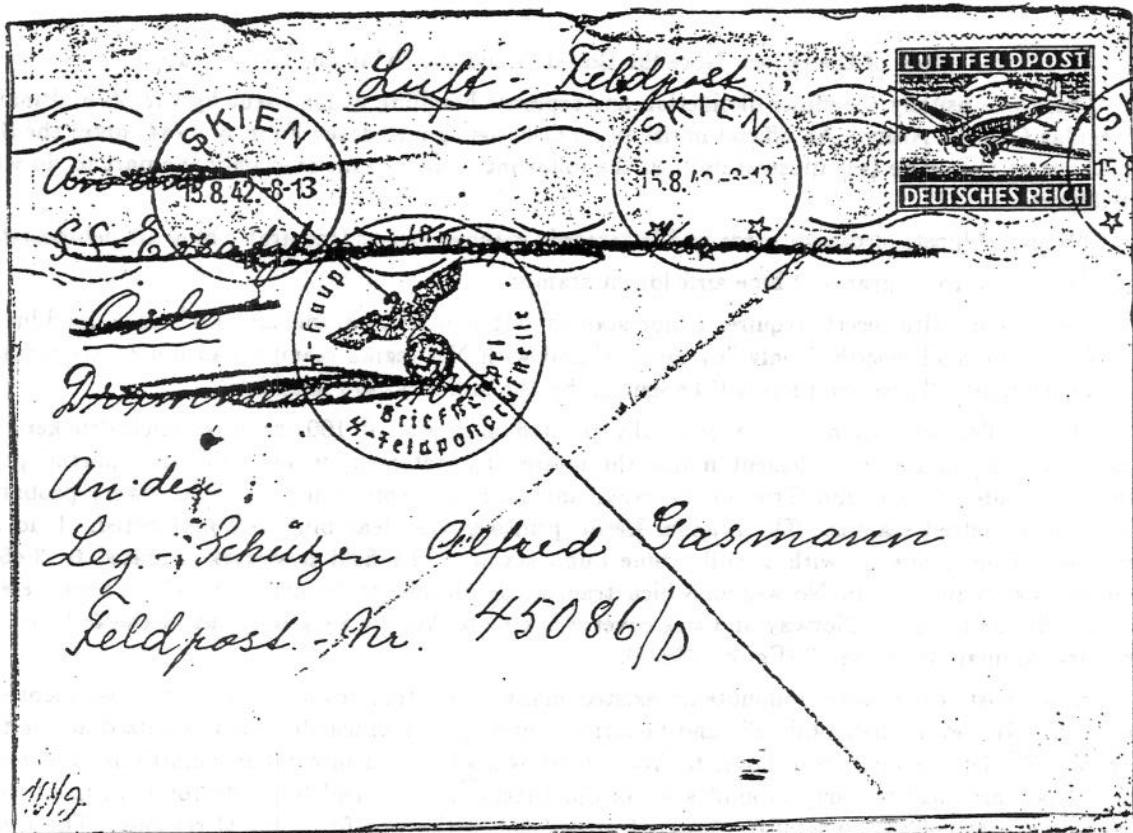
"The Air Fieldpost Service was established in April, 1942, for the troops on the Eastern Front, in Greece, Africa, and Scandinavia. To limit the sendings, the blue permit stamp was issued on April 24, 1942. They were perforated 13 1/2 at first, then from 1943, rouletted. Two periods may be separated according to distribution and franking use:

1st period: April 1942-April 1943. Each soldier received 4 stamps each month. One stamp was used for each letter or card.

2nd period. May 1943 until the end of the service. Each soldier received 8 stamps each month. The franking of each letter required two stamps, each card one stamp.

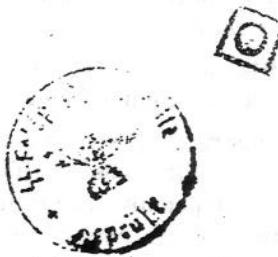
"Half of the stamps distributed were meant for the traffic from home to the front and were to be sent home by the soldiers and there used to frank letters and cards to the front. The mail was to be marked "Luft-Feldpost" and diagonally crossed in red pencil. Besides the stamps being used for sendings from home, they were also given to persons of foreign nationality serving with the Armed Forces and these stamps may be found with postmarks from foreign postoffices."

Mr. Clement lists usage abroad occurring from "Hungary, Italy, and occupied territories of Bohemia-Moravia, Poland, etc." Although he did not specify Norway, his "etc." is significant. He would certainly have been delighted to see an unusual cover I have from Norway. Instead of the usual German fieldpost mark, the Lupo stamp is cancelled by a Norwegian postmark of Skien in southern Norway, 15/8/42. The cover was, according to regulations, addressed to SS Ersatzkommando Norwegen, Oslo, and forwarded from there to the volunteer in the Norwegian Legion (Feldpost No 45086D). The censor mark of the SS Central Office is on the front in dark violet. On the back is a smaller, red, SS Censor mark and the letter "O" within a square, which may indicate "Oslo". This might also have been the personal stamp of an individual censor. The small "b" in the censor tape did not always mean it was applied in Berlin, although "b" was the Berlin censor station which was established, in part, to service Tempelhof Airport. It handled mail to and from Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia together with transit mail and air mail of North and South America.



Front of a cover from Skien from August, 1942.

Aus: Lilli Gasmann
Nælagt 4 Skien Norge.



Geöffnet



Geöffnet



Back of the cover. Note the Boxed O and the "b" in the Censor tape.

There was usually a definite distinction and separate handling of mail sent by the SS and mail from the regular German Army. An official notice in an Oslo newspaper dated Febr. 5, 1944, gives the SS mail regulations at that time (see illustration). In the following, I have translated only the part to do with the air fieldpost:

"SS air fieldpost: ordinary cards and lettercards without inserts (require) 1 blue air fieldpoststamp.

"Letters up to 10 grams, 2 blue airfieldpost stamps.

"Lettercards with insert (require) 1 blue stamps; letters over 10 grams and with only one blue stamp affixed, or mail inscribed only "by airmail" and with Norwegian stamps, can not be transmitted by air fieldpost. These sendings will be sent on by the ordinary SS-Fieldpost."

The air fieldpost stamps were originally printed in sheets of 100, by the Reichsdruckerei (State Printing Works) in Berlin. Clement makes the interesting statement in his book that partial printings were later made in Oslo and Tromsø, Norway, and at Rovaniemi, Finland. These were probably the milky-blue rouletted stamps. The original Berlin printing was clear blue and perforated. I do have a cover, used from Norway, with a milky blue Lupo stamp. The field postmark is dated 01.3.45. The envelope has an imprint in Norwegian which translated, "Stamp to be placed here". There were many Austrian Alpine troops in Norway and this cover was sent to Austria by a sergeant in the 3rd Co., Mountain Pack Animal Battalion 57 (Fp. no 38833).

In the past, there have undoubtedly existed many interesting covers similar to those mentioned in this article. However, their philatelic and historical significance was usually not recognized at the time by the recipient. Of the mail from home to front, most was destroyed in combat conditions, and besides it was just not practical to carry around a lot of old letters in one's field bag. As for mail from the front going home, most of that was also destroyed at the end of the war for political reasons. The little that has survived of unusual material is today rare and highly priced, as can be seen in the excellent Michel German Fieldpost Catalog.

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SS-feltpostforsendelser.

Følgende SS-feltpostforsendelser er tillatt:

SS-telebrevkort.

SS-feltpostbrev innntil 100 gr.

SS-luftfeltpost: Vanlige kort og kortbrev uten innlegg med 1 blått luftfeltpostmerke.

Brev innntil 10 gr. med 2 blå luftfeltpostmerker.

Kortbrev med innlegg og 1 blått luftfeltpostmerke. brev som veier over 10 gr. eller som bare er forsynt med ett blått luftfeltpostmerke samt forsendelser som også er forsynt med ett blått luftpost- og norske frimerker, kan ikke beføres med luftfeltpost. — Disse forsendelser blir videresendt med den vanlige fj-feltpost.

SS-feltpostpakke:

a) til enheter med feltpostnummer:

er med sylinderkling virkning bare tillatt med brunt tillatelesmerke, innntil 1 kg. med 1 tillatelesmerke.

innntil 3 kg. med 2 tillatelesmerker.

Tillatelesmerker er ikke å få kjøpt, men de frivillige får utleveret disse i sine troppavdelinger.

Tillatelesmerker benyttes bare til pakker, ikke til brev.

b) til enheter med åpen adresse (uten feltpostnummer):

innntil 1 kg. (2 pakker om mineden).

Innspakning: Feitpostpaklene må pakkes godt inn i pappesker og papir og bindes fast om. Tomrum må fylles godt ut. Foruten påskriften på boksen, må en seddel med nøyaktig adresse til mottakeren og avsenderen legges inn i pakken.

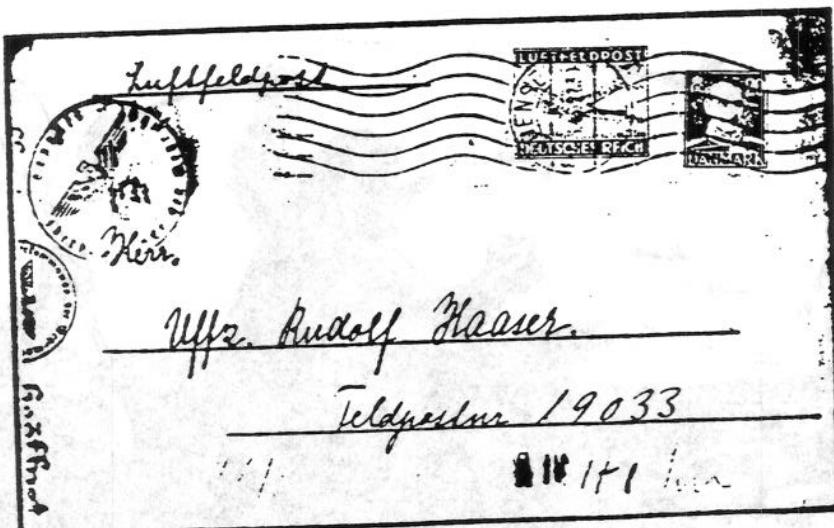
Adresse: Addresene må anbringes tydelig og holdbart. Hver forsendelse må absolutt påværes avsender.

Ved forsendelser til enheter med feltpostnummer angis bare sjefstegrad, fornavn, etternavn og feltpostnummer. Enhver ytterligere angivelse som «lyskland, Finnland, Russland, Skjeggerbåt» o. s. v. er forbudt. Også ved forsendelser til enheter med åpen adresse må tilføyelser som «Komp. Norges o. s. v. utelates, da dette bare fører til feittagelser, så forsendelsene enten kommer tilbake til, eller ankommer betydeig forsikret til mottakeren. Forsendelser med åpen adresse og angivelse av feltpostnummer blir ikke viderebetjent.

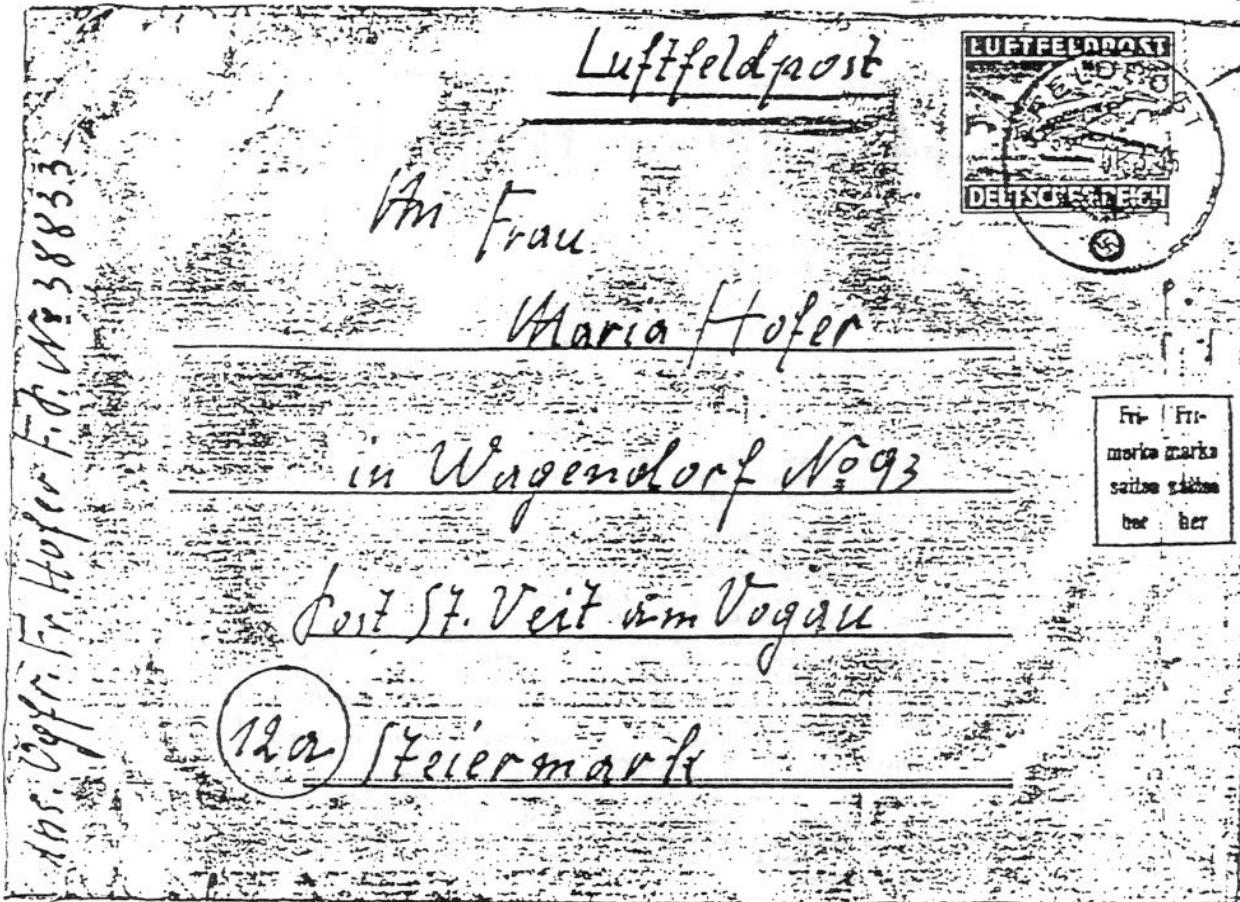
Det blir enda en gang gjort oppmerksom på at SS-feltpostforsendelser til SS-frivillige bare kan innleveres personlig eller sendes gjennom det norske postvesen til SS-kommando Norge, Noblegat 10, Oslo, eller Frontkjemperkontoret, Stortingsg. 12, Oslo, for videresendelse, og ikke til vernemaktenes sjefstesteder.

Feitpostforsendelser til personer tilhørende vernemakten tar SS-Kommando Norge ikke emot.

Official Notice, dated February 5, 1944



Cover with Danish 20 øre stamp and Lupo stamp,
both postmarked at Odense, Denmark, in 1943



Cover from Norway to Austria (See imprint in Norwegian at center right)

(From 3 Kp. / Gebirgs Tragtier Btl. 57 (3 Co. / Mountain Pack Animal Battalion 57))



A banned postcard, showing Norwegian "Trolls" chasing away German planes.



LUREN

SCANDINAVIAN PHILATELIC
LIBRARY OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, INC.

LOS ANGELES, CA.

ISSN	0739-0025
Volume 23	Number 2
February	1991
Whole Number	281

NOT ACROSS SWEDISH TERRITORY

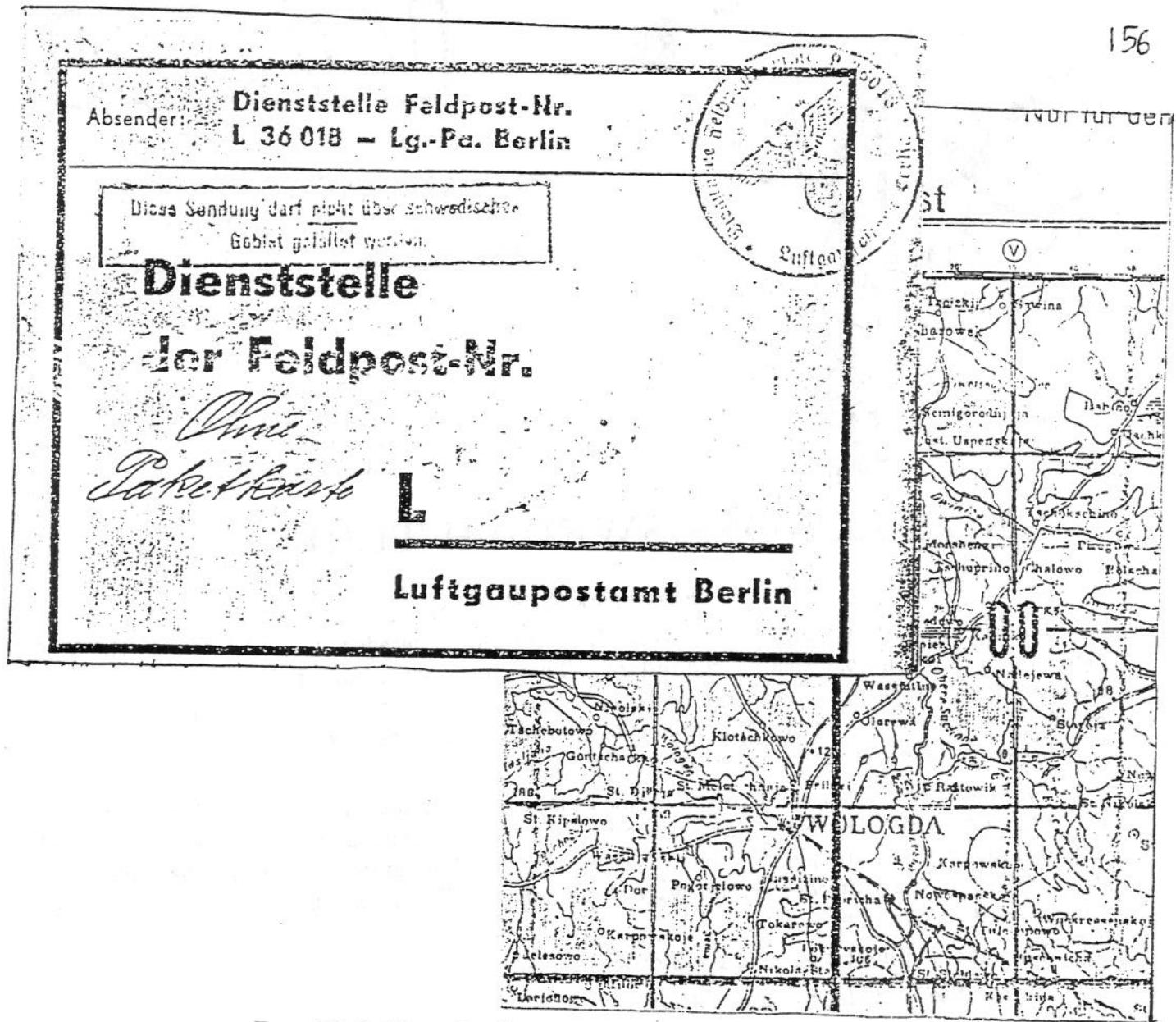
Frederick A. Brofos

During the last years of World War II, as the fronts receded in the East, quantities of German military maps became redundant. They were sometimes recycled to other uses, such as being made into envelopes or labels. The case at hand is a package label machine-cut from a map showing the Vologda area of Russia. The new text, printed on the formerly blank reverse side, shows a re-use by Feldpost Nr. L36018.

This was the German fieldpost code number for *Luftgau Kommando Norwegen*, the Luftwaffe or German Airforce headquarters in Oslo. Of particular interest is the additional impression, in bright magenta color, of an oblong box handstamp. It reads *Diese Sendung darf nicht über schwedisches Gebiet geleitet werden*, i.e., "This sending should not be routed across Swedish territory".

The label is illustrated on page 3 of this issue.

During the war the Swedes, although neutral, had been pressured to allow the Germans to send various materials, including troops, in transit via the Swedish railroads. This avoided the danger of Allied torpedoes on the regular sea route from or to Norway. However, certain things were apparently too sensitive to risk a possible confiscation or even examination by Swedish customs and other authorities. Secret papers and equipment which one wished to avoid being scrutinized were therefore sent directly by military airplane, with a label like this one affixed to the sending.



Parcel Label from L 36 018, Luftwaffe Headquarters, Oslo.
Its reverse, a German military map from Wologda, Russia.

Missent to Enemy Country

by Frederick A. Brofos

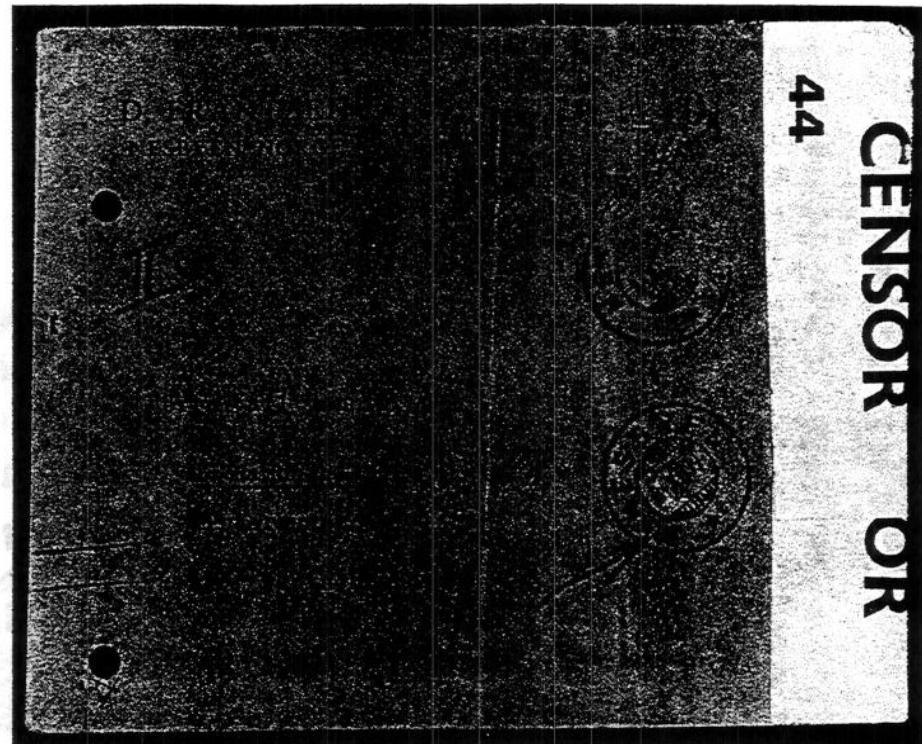
The "stampless cover" illustrated on this page, upon closer examination, proved to have a most unusual story behind it.

Evidently the Norwegian post office did not provide a handstamp reading the equivalent of "Missent to enemy country" because such a bizarre occurrence was not expected to happen. Nevertheless, just such a regrettable incident did take place in the early part of World War II, when Great Britain and Germany were the main belligerents and Norway was still neutral.

If more than one letter had gone astray, such as a whole mail sack, the case undoubtedly would have gained international attention through newspaper reports. A diplomatic protest from Germany would have been likely, and heads might have rolled at the Oslo Post Office.

One assumes, though, that only one letter was involved. It had been sent on December 8, 1939, from Nesbyen, Norway, destined for Hamburg, Germany. Somehow, it was misdirected to England where the letter was confiscated. In addition, the British censor removed and retained the 30-öre postage stamp, perhaps to look for a secret message. The empty envelope then was resealed with the usual label, reading "P.C. 66 OPENED BY CENSOR 44," and returned to Norway.

This put the Norwegian postal authorities in an embarrassing position. The matter seems to have been investigated both by the Oslo Post Office (case 828/1940) and the Norwegian Postal Administration (case 440/1940). Eventually, a letter of apology was sent to the German postal authorities, along with the empty envelope. The latter was forwarded by the Germans to the original addressee in Hamburg, accompanied by their



own explanatory letter. The translation follows.

Hamburg 36, March 2, 1940
The President of the Reichs Postal
Administration

I B 2 1021-4/1 Zens 273

To Mr. Karl Hennig
Hamburg 19
Winterhuderquai 16

1 Letter Envelope

The Norwegian Postal Administration has informed the Reichs Minister of Posts that the letter belonging to the accompanying envelope was opened by the British censor, probably through carelessness of its [Norway's] officials in misdirecting it to England and thus letting it fall into the hands of the British censor. They have expressed to the Reichs Minister of Posts their-deepest regrets for this unpleasant

The Author

Frederick A. Brofos, of Warner, New Hampshire, collects the stamps and postal history of Norway. He is now retired from the telecommunications industry.

event and have informed us that preventive measures have been taken to avert, as much as possible, any similar occurrences.

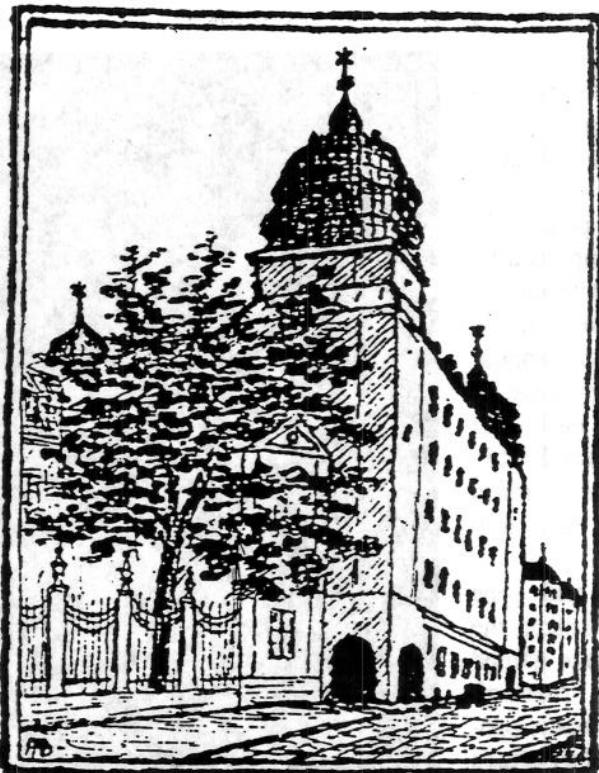
By Order (illegible signature)

This typewritten letter, on paper watermarked *Behörden Eigentum* [official property] includes in the heading *Zens 273*, obviously an abbreviation for *Zensur*. Presumably the Reichs Postal Minister passed the case on down the line to be answered by the German Censor Office at Hamburg. That office had been organized in February 1940 to examine mail between Norway, Denmark, and the Reich.

In 1928, the original sender of the letter, Ditlef Frantzen, one-time postmaster of the small town of Nesbyen, founded TUBFRIM, an enterprise to combat tuberculosis by selling donated stamps. The addressee, Karl Hennig, was a German stamp wholesaler, who probably was a large purchaser of Norwegian stamp mixtures.

A Daring Raid by Norwegian Postmen

By Frederick A. Brofos (H-11)



Oslo Main Post Office

An exciting war story which includes both the Post Office, the Germans and the Home Front is too good to be forgotten and must be passed on to you while the details are still clearly in mind. I heard the story first hand a few years ago from one of the officials of the Norwegian Postal Administration who had himself participated in the action.

The Oslo main post office covers a whole block along Queen's Street and is built like an old fortress with picturesque green copper-covered towers. It really deserves to be shown on a stamp, as have the G.P.O.s of all the other Nordic countries. On the 4th floor is the Postal Museum, and visitors who have lost themselves by turning left instead of right after leaving the elevator, will recall the seemingly endless corridor which continues all around the huge square-shaped building.

During the war, one of the floors was partly occupied by the Germans as a mail censor office. "Admittance forbidden" signs were hung up and an armed sentry marched around the corridor both day and night. A bulletin board later appeared on one of the walls. This, however, was intended strictly for the Germans and any Norwegian who dared to look was roughly warned to keep away.

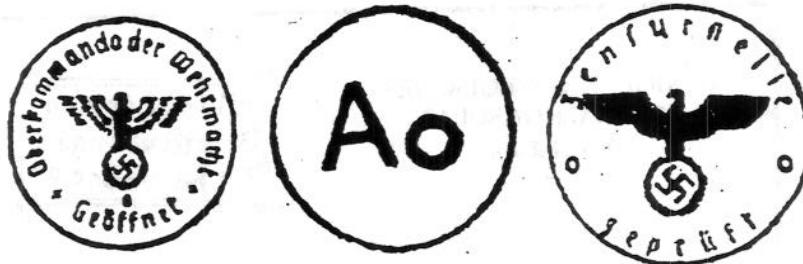
Suddenly one day an order came through from the headquarters of the Home Front, the underground resistance movement, that they wanted a sample of the chemical preparation that the Germans brushed on letters to reveal possible secret messages written by invisible ink.

Fortunately a set of duplicate keys had been retained and hidden, a fact of which the Germans were, of course, unaware. Then, the length of time it

took the guard to patrol the corridor was figured out. This was an interval of less than ten minutes! One night, after closing time, the German Censor Department was entered. However, it took longer than estimated to find the chemical. When a huge glass flask containing a mysterious liquid was finally discovered, there was no time left to pour off a sample. One simply had to run with the whole thing, and barely had time to lock the door before the guard rounded the corner!

When the Germans next day discovered the disappearance of the flask, there was a furious uproar followed by interrogations. As everyone denied any knowledge of the matter, they finally had to give up, and the case was never solved.

The Home Front received its sample of the acid or whatever it was, so they could use an invisible writing that, at least, would not be detected right away. The huge glass container with the remaining chemical was difficult to dispose of safely, so it was hidden in one of the towers of the P. O. building until after the war and the danger was over.



German Censor Marks, Oslo

Such a fortunate ending, without any arrests, might not have been the result if the raid had occurred during the latter part of the war. In the beginning, the postal censorship was under the direction of the "Abwehr," that is the German Military Counter-Intelligence. After the July 20, 1944 assassination attempt on Hitler, however, everything was drastically tightened up and the censorship was taken over by the Gestapo. This changeover was, incidentally, reflected even in the censor labels and stampers. They formerly read "Oberkomando der Wehrmacht," but later simply "Zensurstelle"—a blunt name previously avoided.

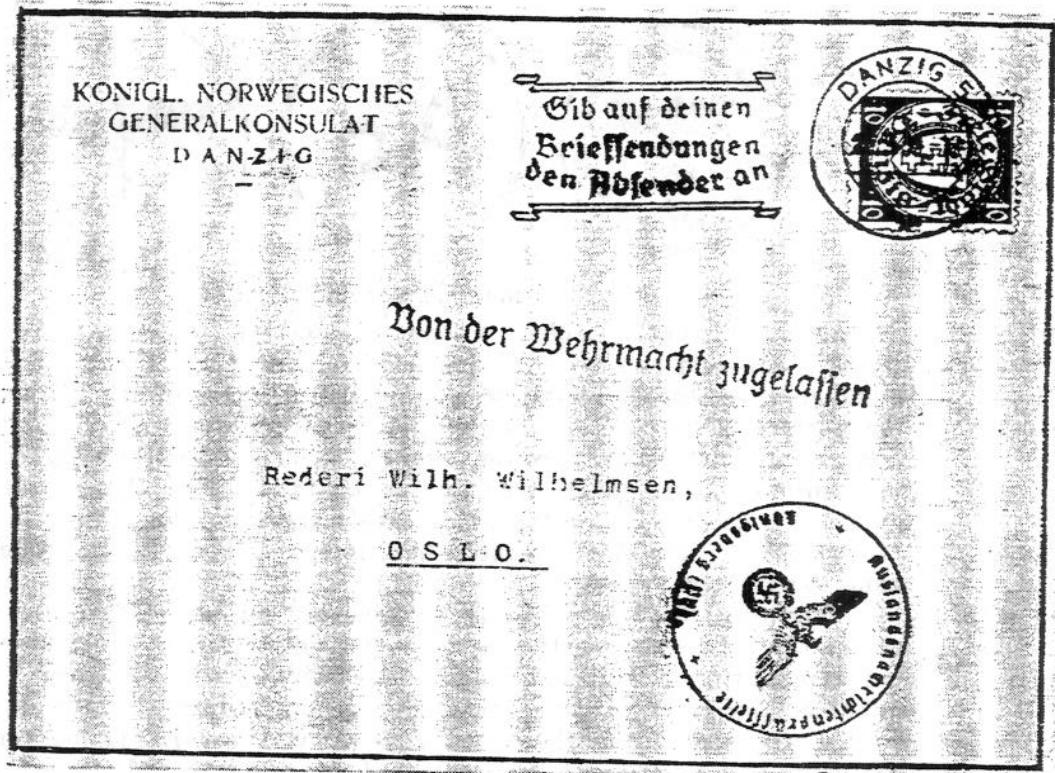
Following the Liberation, the Norwegian authorities who continued mail censorship for another half year or more, advertised in the newspapers seeking people with language abilities. As I knew three tongues, I thought it might be fun to be a postal censor during the summer. Upon applying, however, I was told that High School students were considered too young for the job. Too bad, as I might have gathered some more good stories! Apparently the censorship offices formerly used by the Germans had been taken over. On the way out, I noticed in the corridor a large German sign which had not been removed yet, as it was attached from the ceiling. As I recall, it read: "Zutritt verboten / Auslandbriefprüfstelle." The initial "A" of this last word (meaning Foreign Letter censor Office) was used, by the way, in the round marks of the Germans stamped on unsealed and other mail that they didn't examine through lack of time or interest. Next to the "A" appeared the identity letter of the respective censor office which had assigned to it the examination of mail to and from certain given countries or areas. The code letter, without the prefix "A," usually appeared under the eagle on most of the other stampers and labels, and were as follows: a—Königsberg; b—Berlin; c—Cologne; d—Munich; e—Frankfurt; f—Hamburg; g—Vienna; h—Berlin (P.O.W.'s 1944 on); k—Copenhagen; l—Lyon; o—Oslo; x—Paris; y—Bordeaux; t—Trondheim.

NAZI CENSORSHIP OF NEUTRAL CONSULAR MAIL

by FREDERICK A. BROFOS (H11) Scandinavian Collectors Club

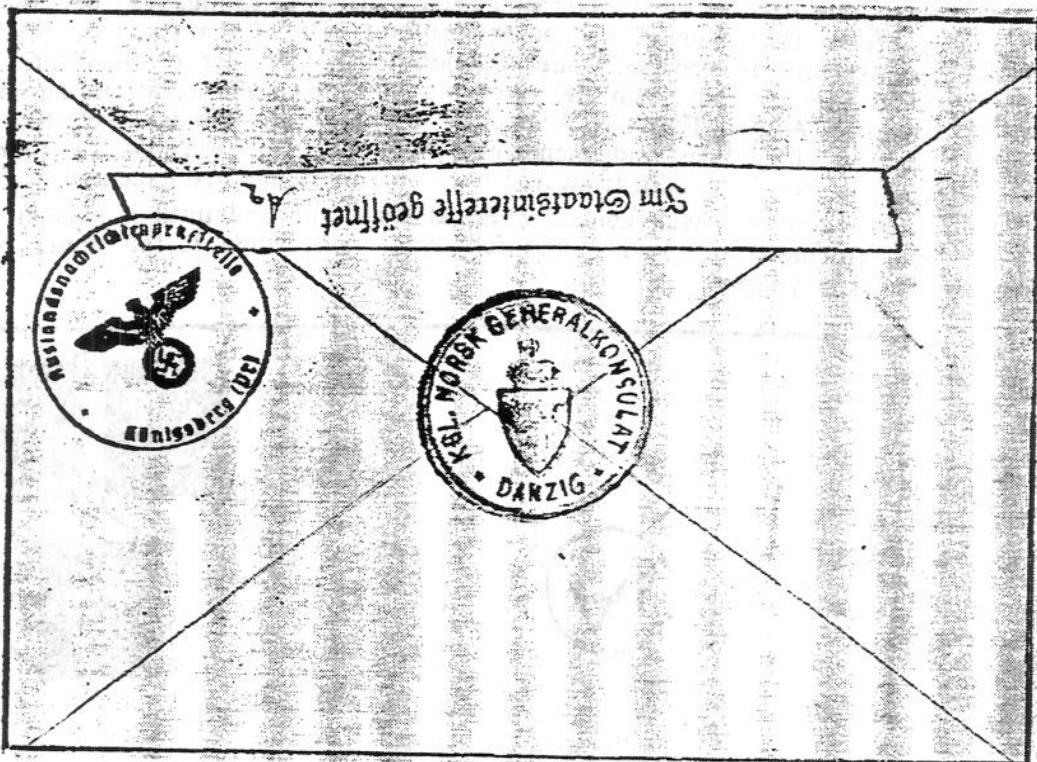
Diplomatic and consular mail has usually been respected and passed inviolate by the various warring powers. Apparently the Nazis were not always so considerate and the cover illustrated shows an example of a deliberate violation of sealed Norwegian consular mail.

The letter in question was sent by the Norwegian Consulate General in Danzig to the office of the Norwegian Wilhelmsen Shipping Line at Oslo. Danzig is a seaport on the Baltic Sea lying between Germany and Poland. In 1919 the Treaty of Versailles ordered Germany to cede Danzig to the Allies to form a Free City under the protection of the League of Nations. That arrangement lasted more or less successfully until World War II started on September 1, 1939. On that fateful date Danzig was forcibly re-incorporated into Germany.



German-censored Norwegian Consular Mail, Sept., 1939.

Our letter was sent on September 27, 1939 franked with a 40 pfennig Danzig stamp, which was temporarily still valid on par with ordinary German stamps. A slogan postmark in German reads "Put the return address on your mail." That advice had already been followed and the letter bears a printed return corner card in German reading "Konigl. Norwegisches Generalkonsulat, Danzig" and the Norwegian consular seal is stamped in violet over the flap.



Reverse of same envelope, showing Norwegian consular stamp and German censorship label.

verschickte diese Briefe an General Friis und lehrte ihn die
verschiedenartigen Arten der Post zu unterscheiden und zu untersetzen.
Seitdem ist er mit dem Schreiben von Briefen und Dokumenten
sehr gut vertraut und kann sie leicht unterscheiden und untersetzen.
Durch diesen Unterricht hat er sich sehr wohl gemacht und
ist jetzt ein sehr guter Postbeamter. Er ist sehr ehrlich und
honest. Ich habe ihm eine gute Ausbildung verschafft und
wollte es nicht auf die Weise bringen, dass er nur auf
diese Art ausgebildet wurde. Ich habe ihm auch
gezeigt, wie man einen Brief untersetzen kann und
wie man einen Brief untersetzen kann.

In spite of this clear indication of consular mail, the letter was deliberately opened by the German censor office at Königsberg in East Prussia. A brown sticker is affixed on the reverse side of the envelope reading "Im Staatsinteresse geöffnet" (i.e. Opened in the interest of the State). On the front is stamped "Von der Wehrmacht zugelassen" (i.e. Released by the German Armed Forces). A circular mark with eagle and swastika emblem and inscribed "Auslandsnachrichtenprüfstelle" (i.e. Foreign News Censor Office) is struck on both front and back. All markings are executed in violet ink.

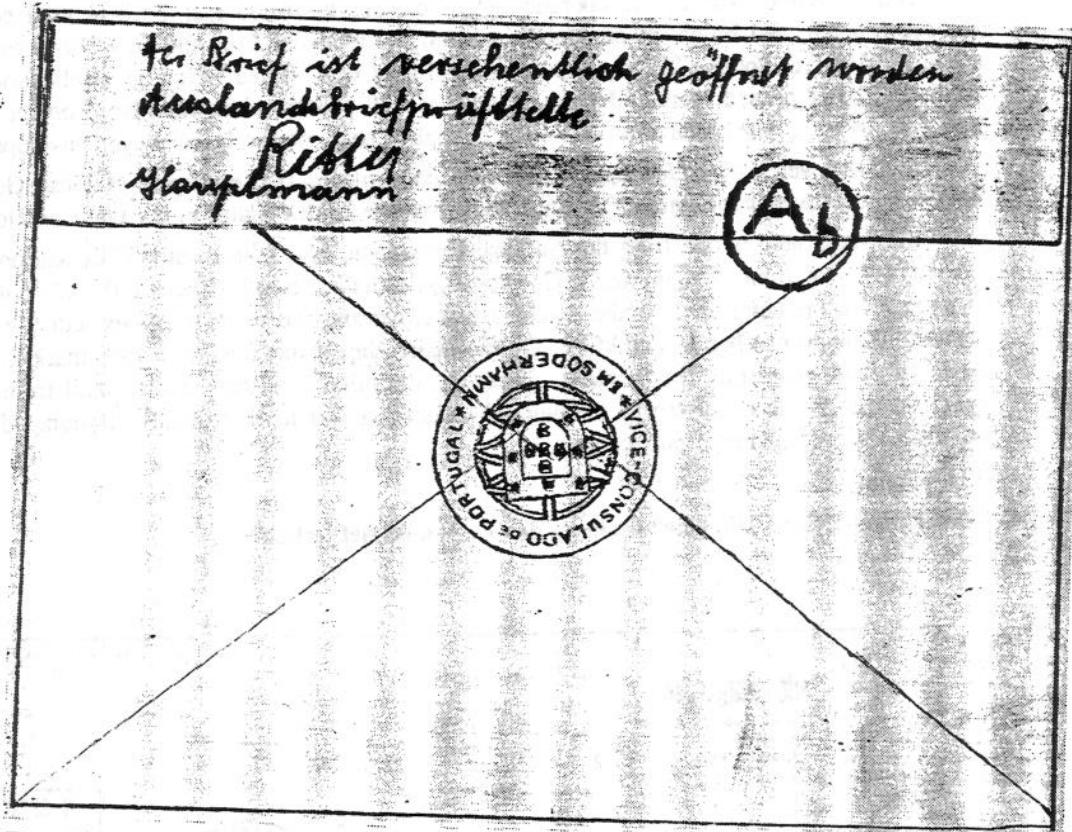
Norway was a neutral state at that time and until it was attacked by the Germans on April 9 the following year, when it fell under Nazi rule for five years.



German-censored Portuguese Consular Mail, Nov., 1943.

Another violation of neutral consular mail by the Nazi censors during World War II is the illustrated cover which was sent from the Portuguese Vice Consulate at the seaport of Soderhamn in Sweden on November 18, 1943.

The addressee was the Portuguese Consulate at Berlin which, incidentally, had evacuated to the suburb of Grünewald and the letter was forwarded there. The Portuguese consular seal was stamped in violet on both the front and the back of the envelope. The letter was nevertheless opened at the Berlin censor office. However, the officer in charge or another official made a notation in German across the censor label, which translated reads "The letter has been opened by mistake. (signed) Ritter, Captain."



Reverse of same envelope showing Portuguese consular stamp and German censorship label.

There have been military censors as long as there have been written messages during war times. However, every major war has brought forth an enlarged and improved system of censorship over that used in previous wars. We now know that the Berlin censor office was staffed by about 250 reserve officers and inactive soldiers and around 2,000 women workers besides a host of postal, Gestapo and other officials.

One wonders whether the opening of this wartime letter from Sweden was a genuine error or whether the policy was "All is fair in love and war"? The supposedly secret correspondence between two consulates of a neutral power must have been quite tempting to the Nazi authorities and the censor's penciled notation may have been just a clever cover-up. Whatever secrets the letter contained were seen one way or the other.

MAIL TO NORWAY OPENED BY THE GESTAPO, 1941

Frederick A. Brofos

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During World War II, the operation plans of four of the largest German mail censor offices (Berlin, Vienna, Munich, and Frankfurt on Main) included a contingent from the *Geheime Staatspolizei*, or Gestapo, the dreaded Secret Police. Their particular control field was limited to foreign publications, newspaper, magazines, and other printed matter. Normally, their special censor mark was placed on the outside of wrappers. However, in some cases their mark curiously enough appears on the inside of the envelope.

In many years of collecting, I have only encountered two examples of these Gestapo censor marks. Both were on covers containing magazines, sent from the United States to my father in Norway.

Illustrated here is one from the National Geographic Magazine, marked "Educational Matter" at bottom left. It was sent from Washington, D.C., probably sometime in 1941, before the US entry into the war later that year. On the outer cover is the regular German censor mark with the index letter "e" under the swastika, denoting the censor office at Frankfurt. On the inside flap is the Gestapo censor mark in blue-black, with the figure "4", also indicating the Frankfurt office. It was this office that handled mail from America. It can be imagined that the shock of seeing the unusual Gestapo censor mark probably discouraged people from renewing subscriptions to foreign publications.

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