

## Back Issue of Military Postal History Society 'Bulletin': (Bulletin Jun 1949)

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## THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN FIELD POST OFFICE IN WORLD WAR I

by Alfred Clement #285

A certain time elapsed between the declaration of war and the beginning of fighting, during which the armies mobilized and proceeded to their assigned areas. Thus the field post offices did not begin to function immediately at the start of hostilities, and the mail that the soldiers sent home during the first weeks was handled through the civilian post offices. In order to assure a certain amount of secrecy these latter offices were not allowed to use their normal postmarks on military mail, but used only a control stamp which contained only a roman and an arabic numeral: the roman numeral indicated the postal district, the arabic showed the place. In Hungary these stamps contained only an arabic numeral. These early postmarks are known to have been used in the combat zones in Galicia and Hungary and also in the Tyrol.

Also in use was another type of postmark, "Von der Armee im Felde" (From the Army in the Field), which served the same purpose, but is also found in later use on military mail.

Then the field post offices began to function. They made use of postmarks containing numbers running from 2 to 650 and a few numbers above 1,000. Naturally all these post offices were not active at the same time, but were activated as needed, some of them only in the last months of the war. Many were discontinued, some were reactivated, depending on current need and changing conditions.

The field post offices had various functions and correspondingly bore various designations: Hauptfeldpostamt (Central F.P.O.), Etappenpostamt (Base P.O.), Feldpostamt (Field Post Office). The supreme jurisdictional authority was the K.u.K. General-Feldpostamt (Imperial and Royal General Field Post Office). Each army had a Feldpost-Direktion (Field Post Administration) to which all the field post offices were subordinate. The Central F.P.O.'s (Hauptfeldpostämter) were established on railway lines and from these branched off the base and field post offices.

Many of these post offices had branches (Expositurs) which were designated by a roman numeral; for example "Hauptpostamt 5/II".

The inscription in the postmark was in German or Hungarian, according to the language of the units served by the post offices. A list appended to this article shows all the f.p.o. numbers. It will be seen from this list that many numbers were used two or more times; for example, both by a central and a base post office or in both German and Hungarian offices. It should be added that the numbers do not correspond to the numbers of divisions or other units.

Two groups of numbers deserve special attention: 1) numbers 7, 82, 152, and 159, which were used in the Fortress of Przemysl, were active for only a short time in 1914 and are very scarce; and 2) numbers 205, 333, 451, and 452. These latter numbers were used in Turkey and assigned as follows: 205 to the 15th Turkish Corps, 333 to the 9th Field Post Office Administration (Feldpostdirektion), 451 to the office in Constantinople, and 452 to the office in Aleppo. These two are not often found.

For the base post offices established in fixed locations in the occupied territories of Albania, Montenegro, Italy, Poland, and Serbia, the name of the place where the office was located is found in the lower part of the postmark instead of the number.

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Letters and post cards to and from soldiers, as well as official mail, weighing up to 70 grams was handled free. Postage had to be paid on all other mail matter, even by troops serving outside the fatherland. Later, civilian personnel in the occupied territories was permitted to send its mail through the base post offices. For the free franking of mail matter special hand stamps were issued with the inscription "K.u.K. Feldpost". Some registered mail is found bearing registration labels upon which is printed the same designation as is found in the hand stamped postmark. As a general rule, however, the post offices had only a hand stamp with a large "R" beside which the registration number was entered by hand.

There was no permanently organized air mail service through most of the war. During the siege of Przemysl, however, mail was brought out by plane several times. From January 1915 official air mail post cards were issued. Naval aviators were located at various places along the Adriatic Coast and it may be assumed that their mail was flown, since they were mostly located on islands. The first permanent air line was established in 1918 from Vienna to Cracow, Lemberg, and Kiev. It also carried military mail. All these air mail covers are very scarce and much sought after.

Finally, mention must be made of the fact that there were a number of traveling field post offices which had their own postmarks, examples of which are very hard to find. Post offices in prisoner of war camps and in soldiers' camps sometimes had their own postmarks.

The last field post offices were established in August 1918. They were the ones with numbers above 1,000. For many of them it is not known whether they actually functioned. Only a few covers with these numbers are known.

The end of the war and the fall of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy brought an end to the operations of the military post offices which had often labored under the most trying conditions to assure communication between the soldiers at the front and their families and friends.

## LIST OF AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN FIELD POST OFFICES IN WORLD WAR I

## Central Field Post Offices

Hauptfeldpostamt (Austrian)

5, 18, 19, 20, 22, 116, 117, 153, 154, 195,  
250, 300, 301, 351, 366, 388, 400, 444, 480,  
500, 520, 550, 560, 610, 616, 620, 624, 625,  
630, 1100, 1200

Tabori Föpostahivatal (Hungarian)

18, 20, 21, 351, 620, 626

## Base Post Offices

Etappenpostamt

8, 12, 24, 39, 48, 118, 120, 123, 124, 127, 128, 137  
139, 141, 142, 144, 150, 161, 165, 169, 173, 175, 176  
177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 187, 188  
189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 196, 197, 198, 199, 208  
243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260  
261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271  
272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 300, 309  
321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 341  
342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 356, 357, 358  
359, 360, 441, 442, 443, 445, 499, 600

Hadtap Postahivatal

81, 115, 116, 119, 121, 125  
126, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133  
134, 135, 136, 138, 140, 143  
145, 146, 147, 148, 162, 163  
166, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172  
174, 249, 446, 447, 448, 449  
450

(continued on page 3)

LIST OF AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN FIELD POST OFFICES IN WORLD WAR I  
(Continued from page 2)

Feldpostamt

2, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33  
34, 36, 37, 39, 41, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61  
62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82  
83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 93, 94, 95, 96, 98, 100, 101, 103, 106, 107, 109, 110, 111  
112, 113, 114, 116, 118, 122, 123, 126, 129, 130, 131, 136, 140, 143, 145, 149, 152  
153, 154, 157, 159, 160, 164, 166, 168, 169, 170, 173, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 191  
192, 197, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214  
215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231  
232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 256, 257, 272, 277, 281, 282  
283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300  
302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318  
319, 320, 322, 325, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 350, 351, 352  
353, 354, 355, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373  
374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 389, 390, 391, 392  
393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 401, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411  
412, 413, 416, 418, 419, 420, 421, 423, 424, 426, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 434, 435  
436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462  
463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479  
481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497  
498, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516  
517, 518, 519, 521, 522, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535  
536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 551, 552, 553  
554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571  
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589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 599, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607  
608, 609, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 617, 619, 621, 622, 623, 624, 627, 628, 629, 633  
636, 637, 638, 641, 643, 645, 646, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005, 1006, 1007, 1008, 1009  
1010, 1051, 1052, 1053, 1054, 1055, 1056, 1057, 1058, 1059, 1060, 1061, 1062, 1063  
1064, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1072, 1073, 1074, 1075, 1076, 1077  
1078, 1079, 1080, 1081, 1082, 1083, 1084, 1085, 1086, 1087, 1088, 1089, 1090, 1091  
1092, 1093, 1094, 1095, 1096, 1097, 1098, 1099

Tabori Postahivatal

4, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 23, 28, 30, 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 50, 58, 59, 60, 62  
68, 70, 77, 81, 84, 89, 90, 91, 92, 97, 99, 102, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, 111, 151,  
155, 156, 158, 162, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 290, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 365, 367  
379, 402, 414, 415, 417, 422, 425, 427, 433, 523, 524, 618, 631, 632, 634, 635, 639  
640, 642, 644, 647, 648, 649, 450, 1107, 1113, 1119, 1127, 1132, 1138, 1144, 1148,  
1154, 1161, 1165, 1169, 1173, 1181, 1189

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New Members

- 292 - Clinton W. Kanaga, 5615 Tahoe Lane, Kansas City, Kan. All U. S. wars.  
293 - L. E. Kieffer, 49 Holmes Road, Lynbrook, N. Y. WW II non-military censored.  
Change of address  
278 - Merritt F. Handy, 122 Malvern Street, Melrose 76, Mass.

## RESULTS OF THE APRIL 25th AUCTION

1.	.80	20.	.90	39.	.65	58.	.40
2.	1.50	21.	2.10	40.	.50	59.	2.25
3.	.25	22.	1.50	41.	.55	60.	.65
4.	.50	23.	1.65	42.	.50	61.	5.25
5.	1.25	24.	2.00	43.	.40	62.	5.25
6.	.50	25.	1.50	44.	.50	63.	3.75
7.	1.25	26.	1.15	45.	.55	64.	3.25
8.	2.60	27.	1.15	46.	.60	65.	3.75
9.	2.80	28.	no bid	47.	.55	66.	2.50
10.	2.55	29.	no bid	48.	.65	67.	1.25
11.	1.30	30.	1.00	49.	.55	68.	2.25
12.	1.35	31.	2.75	50.	.55	69.	1.65
13.	1.20	32.	2.00	51.	.40	70.	1.45
14.	2.50	33.	1.25	52.	.50	71.	1.50
15.	1.00	34.	1.25	53.	.40	72.	1.25
16.	1.50	35.	1.25	54.	.50	73.	no bid
17.	.75	36.	1.00	55.	.40	74.	1.25
18.	2.00	37.	.80	56.	.40	75.	.80
19.	no bid	38.	1.35	57.	.55	76.	1.00

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## SWAN SONG

It is with regret that I have to announce that my editorship of the BULLETIN ceases with this issue. In the midst of the war in 1944 I volunteered to take over the job of editing the official publication of the War Cover Club to keep it from dying. What I assumed would be a temporary job has lasted five years. The press of professional duties now makes it impossible for me to continue in this capacity any longer. The editorship of a publication such as this has to be largely a one-man job. To make a success of this job the editor should have the assistance of many contributors. Contributions, especially of late, have not been as numerous as they might be, and the editor has sometimes been obliged to be the chief contributor. A half dozen important articles are in preparation. We need more contributions, whether they be large or small. I hope the new editor will have the time to make the BULLETIN a better publication than it has been. Until his name is announced I shall be glad to accept contributions to be passed on to him.

May I take this opportunity to thank all those who have aided me with contributions and in other ways, especially Dr. Perry and Mr. Tripp whose generous efforts are not as widely appreciated as they should be. I hope to continue as an occasional contributor and in so far as I have time I shall be glad to give advice and any other service.

C. D. Brenner

LIST OF BRITISH SHIPS SERVING IN THE THIRD PACIFIC  
FLEET UNDER ADMIRAL WILLIAM F. HALSEY, JR., U. S. N.  
AT THE TIME OF THE SURRENDER OF THE JAPANESE FORCES.

Contributed by D. C. Bartley

Battleships

HMS King George V  
HMS Duke of York

Aircraft Carriers

HMS Formidable  
HMS Implacable  
HMS Victorious  
HMS Indefatigable

Cruisers

HMS Newfoundland  
HMS Black Prince  
HMS Euryalus  
HMCS Uganda  
HMNZS Achilles  
HMNZS Gambia

Hospital Ship

HMS Tjitjaleneka

Destroyers

HMS Barfleur  
HMS Grenville  
HMS Troubridge  
HMS Undine  
HMS Tenacious  
HMS Termagant  
HMAS Quickmatch  
HMS Undaunted  
HMS Urchin  
HMS Urania  
HMS Ulysses  
HMAS Quiberon  
HMS Quality  
HMS Quadrant  
HMS Wrangler  
HMS Wakeful  
HMS Terpsichore  
HMS Teazer  
HMS Wager  
HMS Whelp  
HMAS Nizam  
HMAS Napier

The British Task Force was commanded by Vice Admiral Sir Bernard Rawlings, R. N. The commander of the Fast Carrier Force was Vice Admiral Sir Philip Vian, R. N. The cruisers and destroyers were commanded by Rear Admiral E. J. P. Brind, R. N., and Rear Admiral J. Edelston, R. N.

A very scarce first flight air mail war cover has just come to our attention. This first flight was made from Fort Greeley, Kodiak, Alaska, on February 28, 1942. It was unannounced at the Army Post until a few hours previous to taking place. A hurriedly-made stencil cachet was applied to the covers carried which are said to have numbered somewhere between ten and twenty. This cachet shows the outline of a plane in which a Kodiak bear cub is seated and is captioned "First Flight". The cancellation is the "Seattle, N. Air Sta., Kodiak, Alaska", and the covers are censored. Please communicate with the editor, if you know of the location of any more of these covers.

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At the meeting of the Club to be held in New York in October there will be an exhibit and prizes will be awarded for the best frames. Start now to plan your exhibit. More details will be published later.

APO'S IN GREENLAND

by A. J. Tripp #41

U. S. airbases and weather service stations which were established in Greenland during the late war contributed much to the success of our military air lines to Prestwick, Scotland.

Hdq's. of the Greenland Weather Service was established at Narsarssuak which is located on a bay at the extreme lower point of Greenland. A modern airbase was built here and served by APO's 809 and 858. The 809 postmark was first used on June 19/'41. A cover bearing the postmark 809A has been found stamped "FIRST DAY" and dated March 16/'42. Nothing was found to indicate the source of this cover, but it may have been assigned to Sta. No. 29 on Simiutak I. which lies in the mouth of the bay, or to Sta. No. 28 at Narsak, on the bay near Narsarssuak. APO 809 was reported as being moved to the ETO before October 1945. According to unofficial records it was active at Reims, Fr., until December 24/'46.

APO 858 was established at Narsarssuak in 1941. There is no official record of the exact date. The first outgoing airmail was dispatched on March 18/'42. Weather Sta. No. 27 was located here, and the airbase was known as Sta. 11 North Atlantic Wing, ATC: later redesignated as Base Unit 1385 and also sometimes called "Blue West #1".

APO's 55 and 859 were located at Sondre Stromfjord which is a long narrow inlet on the west coast about forty miles above the Arctic Circle. An eight-mile road built by U. S. Engineers leads to the airbase which is about 100 miles from the coast. This base is called "Blue West #8". It is from here that an Army Transport plane rigged with skis and jet units took off to pick up twelve American fliers who were marooned 270 miles S. E. atop the ice cap, just below the Arctic Circle, in January 1949. APO 55 is officially listed as being located at Sondre Stromfjord. A letter from a clerk at 859 verifies this. Weather Sta. No. 33 was located at Sondre Stromfjord. Sta. No. 32 was on Cruncher I. which is located at the entrance to Sondre Stromfjord.

APO 679 was assigned to Ikatek which is located 700 miles N. of Hdq's. on the east coast. This was established on September 2/'42. Weather Sta. No. 39 was established here in October 1942. It was also the location of an airbase.

APO 615 at Ivigtut, established July 1942, is located on the lower west coast, near Kungnat Bay. Weather Sta. No. 30 was established here in December 1942 but did not start operations until February 2/'43.

There were also 16 Weather Stations located along the east and west coasts, plus several landing strips. Sta. No. 41 at Walrus Bay, on the east coast 1,200 miles N. of Hdq's., and No. 34 at Egedesminde on the west coast, 150 miles N. of the Arctic Circle, were the most northern locations.

"Base Ice Cap Detachments" working back inland on the central ice cap, 75 to 250 miles inland from Sta. No. 40 at Comanche Bay on the east coast, consisted of Army weather experts and Army Survey Engineers. Some units reached the center of the ice cap in June 1944.

Personnel of the average weather station consisted of four weather men, five radio men, one cook, and one enlisted medical man. All native settlements were off limits to all forces, with the exception of several villages. At remote stations the personnel was relieved yearly by the arrival of the annual supply vessel during the months of July to October. Planes dropped mail and supplies monthly to six weeks during the rest of the year, depending upon weather conditions.

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In one instance Walrus Bay Station received no mail or supplies from before Christmas 1944 to March 1945. As no mail could be collected from these isolated stations during the long winter months, a system of radio letters was established, similar to our telegraph greeting code. Numbers representing sentences were radioed to Hdq's. at Narsarssuak where they were translated and forwarded. No covers have been seen or reported that indicate the use of this system. Those who hold covers from or showing postmarks of 809 or 858, dated during the months of November through June and showing a "STATION" number in the return address, can have such station's location identified by sending a card containing the data to the writer.

AUTHOR'S NOTE. I have seen only one 55 postmark which appears to be genuine. The APO number is well centered under the date of a good impression. The cover bears the return address: Det. A 977th M.P. Co. AVN. APO 636 % N. Y. The Type H47 postmark is dated September 29, 1944. Official records show APO 636 at Honington, Eng., at this date. 636 was used by the 8th AF Service Commd. in England. The chap who mailed this letter was an MP in the AF (AVN). He must have been assigned to one of the ferrying groups, or home on leave, or perhaps he had temporary duty at Sondre Stromfjord. A mail clerk's letter dated 1947 states that "55 was not here" but was transferred to Germany before he was assigned to the post. This leads me to believe that 55 may have been used on Cruncher I.