



# GERMANY PHILATELIC SOCIETY

## POST WORLD WAR II

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\* \* \* \* \* No Attachments or Supplements \* \* \* \* \*

Member Tony Brooks seemed to be the "sparkplug" of the GPS activities at INDYPEX (Annual convention). Fine time Tony, good job. Unfortunately many old faces were missing: Al Heinz (our former Director whose wife unfortunately took sick at the last minute), Harry Halle, Ken Mears, Myron Fox, and many other "regulars". Hope to see you next year fellows.

!!!!!!!NEW DIRECTOR!!!!!!!

For personal reasons Al Heinz has called it quits after nearly 20 years of trying to keep me straight and many more years of devotion to Postwar philately. He'll still be working with us and making contributions. We are now under the Directorship of John Barbour, a very knowledgeable and able fellow who has specialized in postwar much longer than I (more next issue).

## A.M.G. THOUGHTS

by: Joe Schirmer  
A.M.G. Editor

What I have not been able to understand, is why collectors as a whole, do not show more interest in their A.M.G. collections. I know you are out there, because occasionally I receive a letter from one of you. And I see A.M.G. materials listed in certain dealer price lists and auction house catalogs; so I know someone is buying the items; but WHO???

I certainly would like to hear from some of you and know what you are doing and collecting A.M.G. wise. I previously mentioned I was going to make an A.M.G. survey--it is till on--when I can get the time to get the survey forms printed and the envelopes addressed.

We often hear from a collector who has either a cover or a postal card with the Germany A.M.G. stamps cancelled with a date after the cut-off date for the usage of these issues. The answer is quite simple as to why this did happen....due to the shortage of stamps in some areas, as long as it was a stamp, it was used..then due to the inexperienced postal help coupled with the lack of proper supervision; many unusual things in this area did happen. To illustrate, a friend recently sent me a cover from Illinois with part US and part Germany A.M.G. stamps affixed to make up the required 39¢..I received the cover promptly and without any notice for postage due, which should have been collected.

Sometime ago, there was a survey made of 3200 covers with single stamps. Not considering the 3 printings, the covers were separated as to before and after postal rate increases. The findings are rather interesting and tells a story worth repeating.

There was not one cover with the 80 pfg. paying the correct rate, and of the 20,30,40 & 60 pfg. values, one cover each of single franking was found. Only 3 covers had the 1 Mark value along with one cover with the 50 pfg. value, The 42 pfg. value which catalogs high, was represented 150 times..this being the rate for a registered letter before 28 Feb. 1946

Now I just bought a collection of 526 Germany A.M.G. covers and in it, there were no covers with the 50,60,80 pfg. and the 1 Mark values. Unusual eh?? There were 250 covers with the 42 pfg. value. And would you believe there was not one cover with a 1 pfg. stamp on it. The 12 pfg. value was listed 64 times.

It should be interesting to see what develops after I sort them out by perforations, etc. Of course there may be some varieties or "fly specks" among them. More on this later.

I have been fortunate to purchase a large assortment of full panes of the Germany A.M.G. issues. It will be interesting to see what varieties are there, but more important, if I can get each plate number in the 4 different positions. Incidentally, all A.M.G. stamps were printed in SHEETS of 400 subjects, and then cut into PANES of 100 which were then sold at the post office windows. There is no such "animal" as a "sheet of 100 stamps". (I am just being technically correct).

Over the years there has not been too much appearing in the philatelic press concerning the "label paper" issues of the German printing of the A.M.G. stamps. Are you aware there was also a British printing?? I have one believe me.

I did help writeup the famous Will Payne find of label paper issues and from time to time have done a short article here and there. But in the light of now having obtained a few "proof" issues of the label paper, I started the research again. With the help of Bob Molbert of Ram Stamp Co. (still waiting to hear from Will Payne in England), I now have enough data to clarify the label paper situation...much better and more understandable than before.

So in a later issue, look for some new and interesting information on the label paper issues.

There will be no new Drossard-Kalweit catalog; as Kalweit is no longer interested; but Drossard along with the member of the German ARBEITSGEMEINSCHAFT AM-POST, is starting to publish some interesting handbooks concerning the A.M.G. issues. I hope to be able to contribute to them in the near future. I have been re-accepted back into this fine study group. If interested, drop me a line for details.

I have KLINK price lists #50,85,89,106,107 & 108. Who has any other lists from him?? Would like to make copies of them. Postage will be refunded.

In the last issue of the Study Group Bulletin you all received a copy of the Rick Wagner Thesis. A monumental work, but as we all know, there are some statements and opinions along with comments, that for the sake of accuracy, must be clarified. Don Slawson and myself have this on our agendas to do. I spoke to Rick recently and he will be back into philately shortly.

Let me hear if you want any information or help with your A.M.G.

A.M.G. Postage Stamps and Their Use in Berlin  
by Ingeburg L. Fisher

In answer to the questions raised by Joe Schirmer in "A.M.G.Potpourri", page 14, Volume 18, Number 2 of the bulletin, I would like to point out the following: On page 345 in the Michel Specialized 1984-85, or on page 725 of the new 1985 Michel Specialized, one can read the following "Mrs. 3, 4 and 7 were sold from August 20 until September 17, 1945, at post offices in the U.S. and British sectors and were, as all other zonal issues, valid for franking purposes in all four sectors". In addition on page 902 in the new Michel Specialized 1985 we find the statement "Beginning August 2, 1945, Mrs. 1-7 of the Soviet Occupation Zone as well as Mrs. 4, 5 and 7 of the British and American Zone (these from August 20 until September 17, 1945) were sold at the post offices...." . A little below we even find an evaluation

Bizone	4	6(Pfg.)	on piece: DM 30.-	on cover: DM 80.-
"	5	8(Pfg.)	" 30.-	" 80.-
"	7	12(Pfg.)	" 30.-	" 80.-

However, a few facts have to be added. At the time of the validity of the A.M.G.s Germany was divided into four occupation zones. On May 2, 1945, Soviet troops occupied Berlin and only a few months later were British and U.S. troops allowed to occupy their respective sectors. The French did not arrive until August 1945. And contrary to the individual administration of each zone, Berlin, consisting of four sectors, was administered jointly.

On August 2, 1945; when general postal service was once again permitted in Berlin, the so-called "Berlin Bear" issue of the OPD Berlin, listed in Michel as Mrs. 1-7 under Berlin and Brandenburg in the Soviet Occupation Zone, and which had been printed during June 1945 on the premises of the former Reichsdruckerei Berlin, were available for franking at all Berlin post offices, as well as at all post offices in the surrounding area of the Mark Brandenburg.

But, as mentioned in Michel, only between August 20 and September 17, 1945, the above mentioned values of the A.M.G.s also sold in Berlin at only a very few post offices in the British and U.S. sectors. It is believed, this sale was meant as a political statement, however no such intent has been proven. However, the fact remains, that only these three mentioned values ever sold in Berlin. Only very few are known to have been genuinely used at the proper rate, while several favour cancellations as well as overfranked covers exist, which have the three A.M.G. values together with the then also valid Berlin Bears affixed.

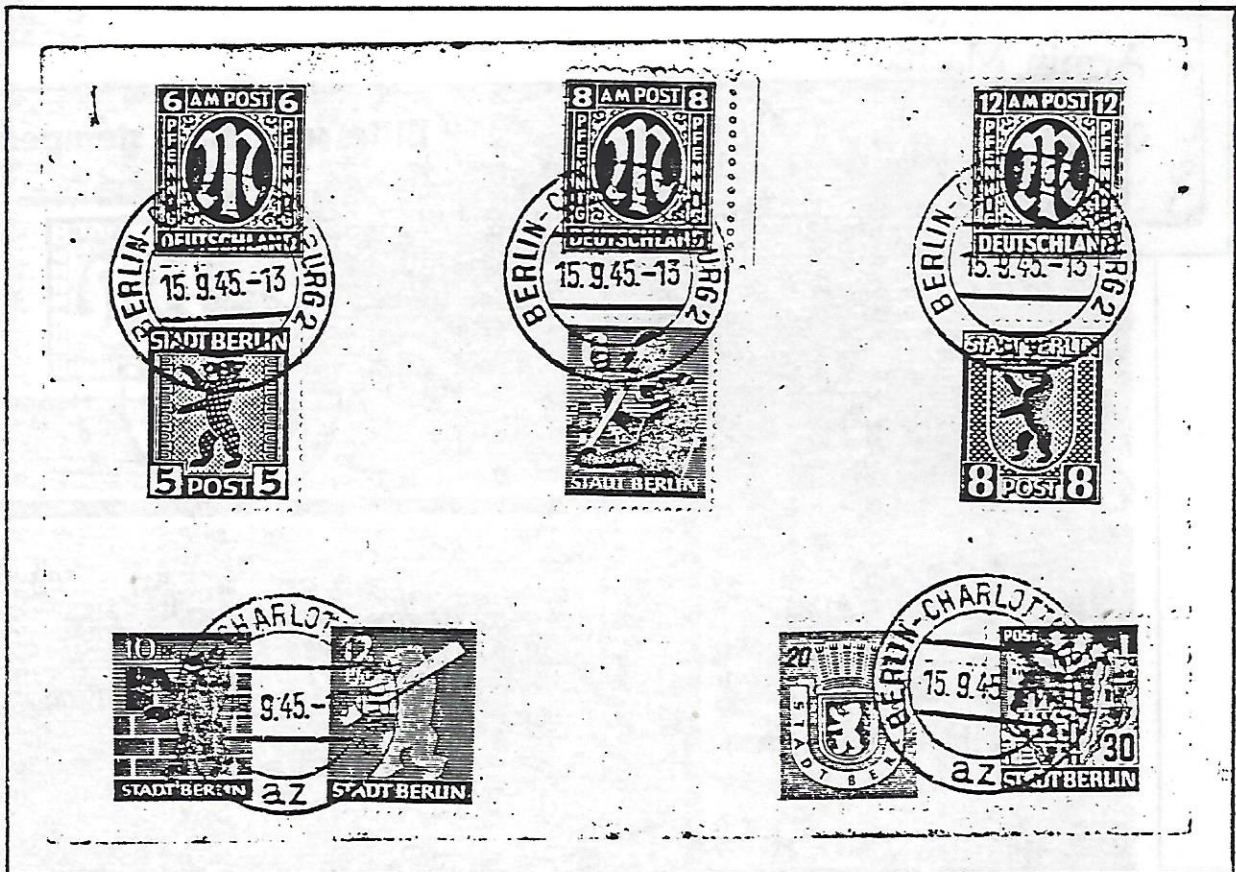
Use of the A.M.G.s during the remainder of 1945 is infrequent. However, as more

and more A.M.G. values became available in the Bizone, eventually all of them found their way to Berlin, and were fully valid for franking purposes in all four Berlin sectors. Usage from all of these is known.

Their validity expired along with all other zonal issues on October 31, 1946.

Illustration 1 shows such a favour cancellation from the Berlin-Charlottenburg 2 postoffice in the British sector, while illustration 2 shows a mixed franking of the 6 Pfg. A.M.G. value (Washington printing) with two 5 Pfg. values of the Numeral issue, posted at the Soviet sector Berlin-Rummelsburg post office on October 30, 1946, to make up the local letter rate of 16 Pfg. The second cover in illustration 2 shows an 8 Pfg. value of the A.M.G. Brunswick printing, posted at Berlin-Tegel in the French sector on December 29, 1945, to pay for the then valid local letter rate of 8 Pfg.

\*\*\*\*

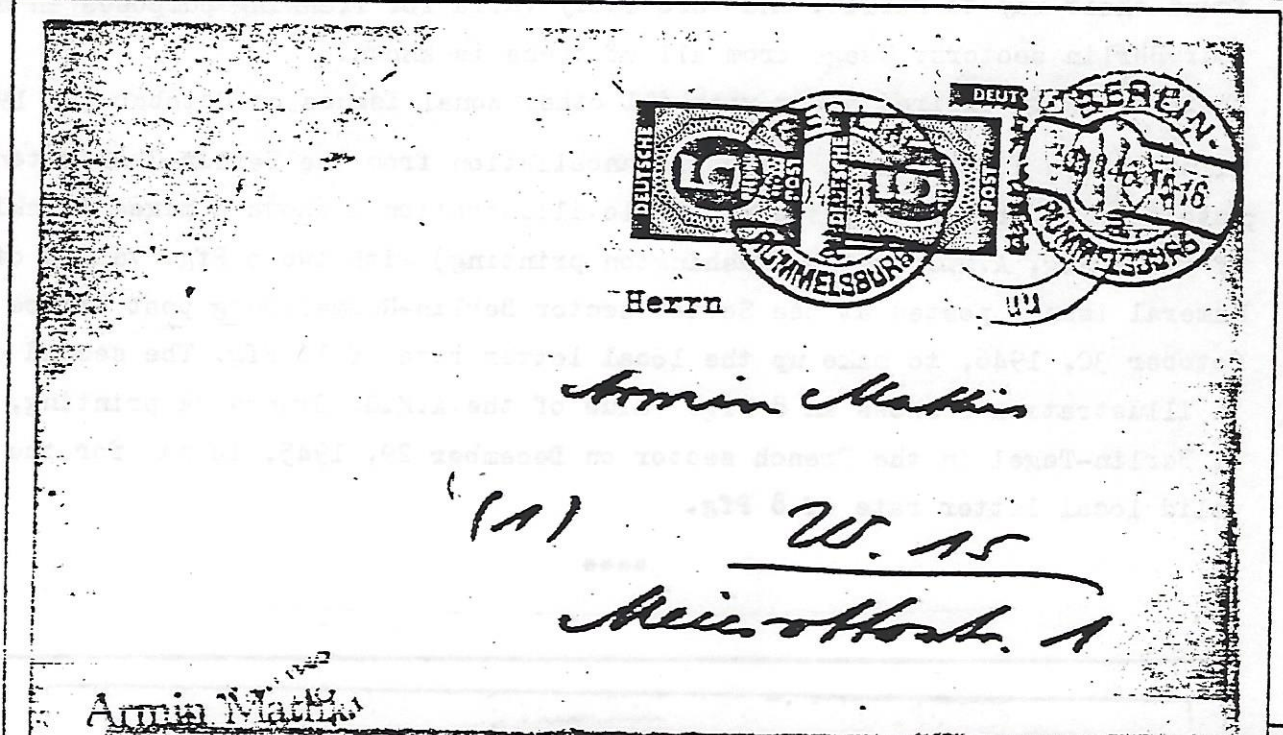


Favour cancellation of all stamps then on sale in Berlin

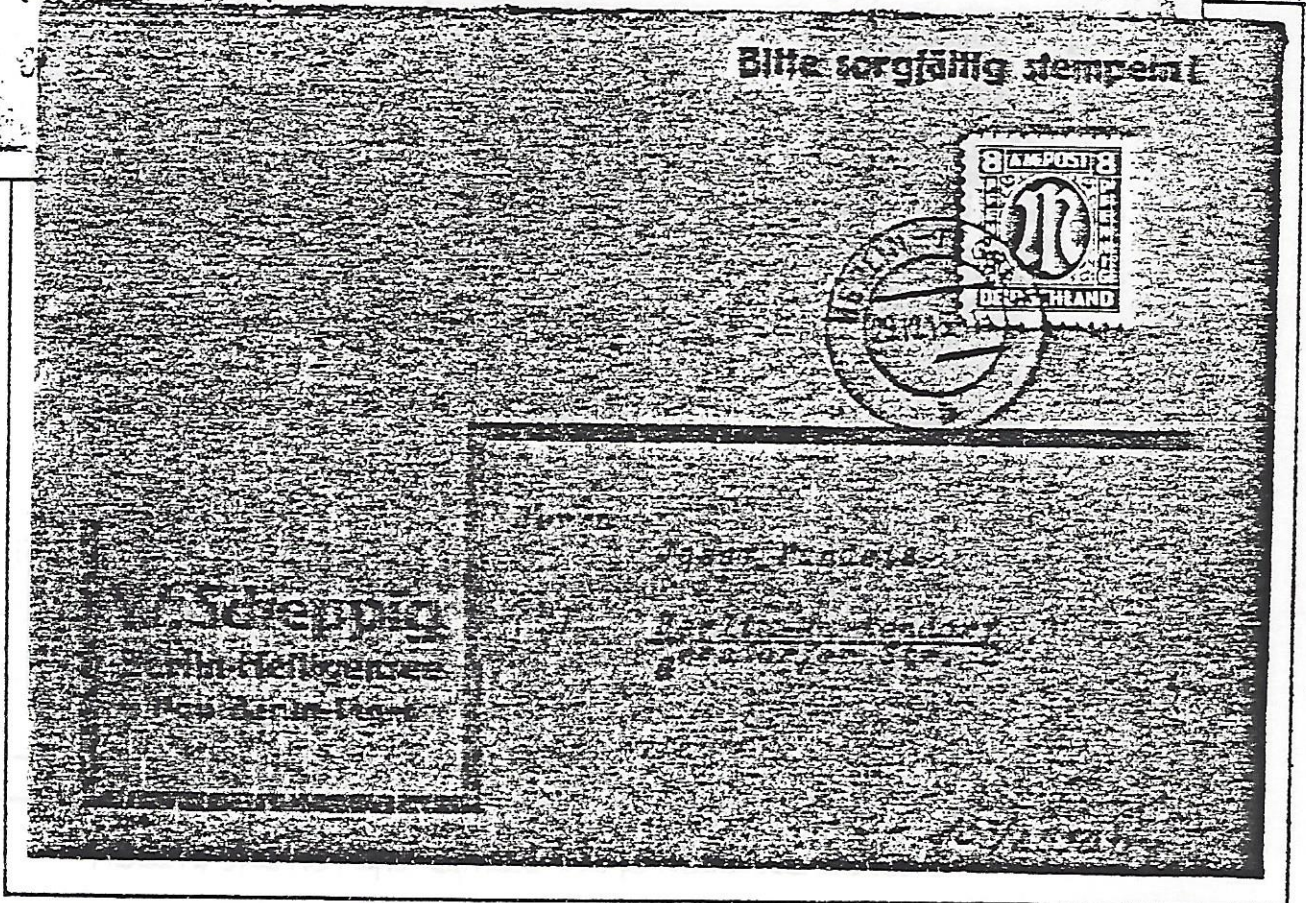
British Sector Posting

IPP. 1

Washington Printing



Amin Mathis



French Sector Posting

Brunswick Printing

## FRENCH ZONE POST OFFICES

Roland Fluck

The following lists of French Zone post offices are of those offices with the designation of "Amt" and were extracted from the Handbuch und Katalog Franzoesische Zone. My thanks to Dr. Hans Flatters and the Arbeitsgemeinschaft "Franzoesische Zone" for the permission to extract and publish this information. Any errors and/or omissions are my fault and are not the fault of Dr. Flatters.

The post offices are listed by OPD and next to each office is listed the Kreis to which it belonged. As usual, I have added an "e" in place of an umlaut, except in "uber". Where you see "uber", read "ueber".

There are a few post offices that are listed twice since the French rearranged the northern zone in order to grab land for the Saar. Hoping that I have not overlooked any, they are:

The following post offices from the Kreis Saarburg, OPD Trier were incorporated into the Saar for the period 18.7.1946 to 7.6.1947 and were under the OPD Saarbruecken for that time. After 7.6.1947 they were returned to the OPD Trier.

Filzen/uber Trier  
Konz (Bz Trier)1  
Konz (Bz Trier)2  
Saarburg 1

The following post office from the Kreis Saarburg, OPD Trier was transferred to the Kreis Merzig-Wadern (Saar) 18.6.1946.

Perl

The following post office was transferred from Kreis Birkenfeld, OPD Trier to Kreis Merzig-Wadern, OPD Saarbruecken on 18.7.1946:

Tuerkismuehle

The following post offices were transferred from the Kreis Wadern, OPD Trier to Merzig-Wadern, OPD Saarbruecken on 18.7.1946:

Losheim  
Wadern

If there is any interest in the Zda's and the Poststelle I's, I'll compile those lists for future editions.

## FRENCH ZONE POST OFFICES

by DR. HANS FLATTERS

This list of post offices was extracted from the Französische Zone Handbuch und Katalog, Chapter 8, entitled "Alphabetisches Ortsverzeichnis", compiled by Dr. Hans Flatters. This information is published with the written permission of Dr. Hans Flatters, Director, Arbeitsgemeinschaft "Französische Zone" e.V., D-4150 Krefeld, Hulser Str. 143-145.

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## KOBLENZ OPD

## KOBLENZ OPD

AMT	KREIS	AMT	KREIS
Adenau	Ahrweiler	Linx (Rhein)	Neuwied
Ahrweiler	Ahrweiler	Mainz	Mainz
Altenanr (Ahrtal)	Ahrweiler	Mainz-Gonsenheim	Mainz
Altenkirchen (Westerwald)	Altenkirchen	Marienbergr (Westerwald)	Westerburg
Alzey	Alzey	Mayen	Mayen
Andernach	Mayen	Montabaur	Montabaur
Asbach (Westerwald)	Neuwied	Muelheim/uber Koblenz	Koblenz
Bacharach (Rhein)	St Goar	Nassau (Lahn)	Diez
Bad Bertrich (Bz Koblenz)	Cochem (Mosel)	Nastaetten (Taunus)	St Goarshausen
Bad Ems	Diez	Neuwied	Neuwied
Bad Kreuznach	Bad Kreuznach	Niederbreisig (Rhein)	Ahrweiler
Bad Neuenahr	Ahrweiler	Niedermendig (Bz Koblenz)	Mayen
Bendorf (Rhein)	Koblenz	Niederschelden (Sieg)	Altenkirchen
Betzdorf (Sieg)	Altenkirchen	Oberlahnstein	St Goarshausen
Bingen (Rhein)	Bingen	Oberwesel (Rhein)	St Goar
Bingenbrueck	Bad Kreuznach	Ochtendung (Kr Mayen)	Mayen
Boopard	St Goar	Oppenheim	Mainz
Brohl (Rhein)	Ahrweiler	Osthofen (Rheinness)	Worms
Bullay (Bz Koblenz)	Zell (Mosel)	Poich	Mayen
Cochem (Mosel)	Cochem (Mosel)	Ransbach (Westerwald)	Montabaur
Daaden (Sieg)	Altenkirchen	Remagen	Ahrweiler
Dierdorf (Bz Koblenz)	Neuwied	Rennerod (Westerwald)	Westerburg
Diez	Diez	Rheinbrohl	Neuwied
Engers (Rhein)	Neuwied	St Goar	St Goar
Guntersblum	Mainz	St Goarshausen	St Goarshausen
Hachenburg (Westerwald)	Westerburg	Selters (Westerwald)	Montabaur
Hamm (Sieg)	Altenkirchen	Siersnahn (Westerwald)	Montabaur
Hoehn-Grenzhausen 1	Montabaur	Simmern (Hunsrueck)	Simmern
Hoenningen (Rhein)	Neuwied	Sinzig (Rhein)	Ahrweiler
Ingelheim (Rhein)	Bingen	Sobernheim	Bad Kreuznach
Kaisersesch (Bz Koblenz)	Cochem (Mosel)	Serendingen (Rheinnessen)	Bingen
Karden (Mosel)	Cochem (Mosel)	Stromberg (Hunsrueck)	Bad Kreuznach
Kastellaun	Simmern	Traben-Trarbach	Zell (Mosel)
Katzeneinodgen (Taunus)	Diez	Unkel (Rhein)	Neuwied
Kirchberg (Hunsrueck)	Simmern	Vallendar (Rhein)	Koblenz
Kirchen (Sieg)	Altenkirchen	Weissenturm (Kr Koblenz)	Koblenz
Kirchen-Wehbach (Sieg) 1	Altenkirchen	Westerburg (Westerwald)	Westerburg
Kirchen-Wehbach (Sieg) 2	Altenkirchen	Winningen (Mosel)	Koblenz
Kirn	Bad Kreuznach	Wissan (Sieg)	Altenkirchen
Koblenz	Koblenz	Woerrstadt (Rheinnessen)	Alzey
		Worms	Worms
		Zell (Mosel)	Zell (Mosel)



## TRIER OPD

AMT	KREIS
Baumholder	Birkenfeld
Bernkastel-Kues	Bernkastel
Birkenfeld (Nahe)	Birkenfeld
Bitburg (Bz Trier)	Bitburg
Bleialf/uber Pruem (Eifel)	Pruem
Daun	Daun
Ehrang (Kr Trier)	Trier
Filzen/uber Trier	Trier
Fischbach-Weierbach (Nahe)	Birkenfeld
Gerolstein (Eifel)	Daun
Hermeskeil	Trier
Hillesheim (Eifel)	Daun
Idar-Oberstein 1	Birkenfeld
Idar-Oberstein 3	Birkenfeld
Juenkerath	Daun
Kempfeld (Nahe)	Bernkastel
Konz (Bz Trier) 1	Saarburg
Konz (Bz Trier) 2	Saarburg
Kyllburg	Bitburg
Losheim	Wadern
Manderscheid (Eifel)	Wittlich
Morbach (Bz Trier)	Bernkastel
Muelheim (Mosel)	Bernkastel
Neuerburg (Kr Bitburg)	Bitburg
Neumagen (Mosel)	Bernkastel
Perl	Saarburg
Pruem (Eifel)	Pruem
Saarburg (Bz Trier) 1	Saarburg
Schweich (Mosel)	Trier
Speicher (Eifel)	Bitburg
Trier 1	Trier
Trier 3	Trier
Trier 4	Trier
Tuerkismuehle	Birkenfeld
Uerzig (Mosel)	Wittlich
Wadern	Wadern
Waxweiler (Kr Pruem)	Pruem
Wittlich	Wittlich

## NEUSTADT OPD

AMT	KREIS
Annweiler	Bergzabern
Bad Duerkheim	Neustadt (Haardt)
Bergzabern	Bergzabern
Dahn	Pirmasens
Edenkoben	Landau
Eisenberg (Pfalz)	Kirchheimbolanden
Frankenthal (Pfalz)	Frankenthal
Freinsheim	Neustadt (Haardt)
Germersheim	Germersheim
Gruenstadt	Frankenthal
Hassloch (Pfalz)	Neustadt (Haardt)
Kaiserslautern	Kaiserslautern
Kandel	Germersheim
Kirchheimbolanden	Kirchheimbolanden
Kusel	Kusel
Lambrecht (Pfalz)	Neustadt (Haardt)
Landau (Pfalz)	Landau
Landstuhl	Kaiserslautern
Lauterecken (Glan)	Kusel
Ludwigshafen	Ludwigshafen
Mutterstadt	Ludwigshafen
Neustadt (Haardt)	Neustadt (Haardt)
Pirmasens	Pirmasens
Rockenhausen	Rockenhausen
Rodalben	Rodalben
Schifferstadt	Soeyer
Soeyer	Soeyer
Waldfischbach	Pirmasens
Waldmohr	Kusel
Wolfstein (Pfalz)	Kusel
Zweibruecken	Zweibruecken

## SAARBRUECKEN OPD

AMT	KREIS
Homburg (Saar)	Homburg (Saar)
Beckingen (Saar)	Merzig-Wadern
Losheim (Saar)	Merzig-Wadern
Merzig (Saar)	Merzig-Wadern
Mettlach (Saar)	Merzig-Wadern
Perl (Saar)	Merzig-Wadern
Tuerkisauehle (Saar)	Merzig-Wadern
Wadern (Saar)	Merzig-Wadern
Illingen (Saar)	Ottweiler
Landsweiler-Reden (Saar)	Ottweiler
Neunkirchen (Saar)	Ottweiler
Ottweiler (Saar)	Ottweiler
Schiffweiler (Saar)	Ottweiler
Wiebelskirchen (Saar)	Ottweiler
Saarbruecken 11	Saarbruecken
Saarbruecken 2	Saarbruecken
Saarbruecken 8	Saarbruecken
Dudweiler (Saar)	Saarbruecken-Land
Friedrichsthal (Saar)	Saarbruecken-Land
Heusweiler (Saar)	Saarbruecken-Land
Luisenthal (Saar)	Saarbruecken-Land
Puettlingen (Saar)	Saarbruecken-Land
Quierschied (Saar)	Saarbruecken-Land
Riegelsberg (Saar)	Saarbruecken-Land
Sulzbach (Saar)	Saarbruecken-Land
Voelklingen (Saar)	Saarbruecken-Land
Von der Heydt (Saar)	Saarbruecken-Land
Filzen/uber Trier	Saarburg (Saar)
Konz (Bz Trier) 1	Saarburg (Saar)
Konz (Bz Trier) 2	Saarburg (Saar)
Saarburg 1	Saarburg (Saar)
Bous (Saar)	Saarlouis
Buss (Saar)	Saarlouis
Dillingen (Saar)	Saarlouis
Lebach (Saar)	Saarlouis
Saarlouis 1	Saarlouis
Wadpassen (Saar)	Saarlouis
Blieskastel (Saar)	St Ingbert
Enshaim (Saar)/uber Saarbruecken 2	St Ingbert
St Ingbert (Saar)	St Ingbert
Oberkirchen Nord	St Wendel
Oberkirchen Sud	St Wendel
St Wendel (Saar)	St Wendel

## FREIBURG OPD

## FREIBURG OPD

AMT

KREIS

AMT	KREIS
Achern (Baden)	Buehl (Baden)
Albbruck	Waldshut
Appenweier	Kehl
Baden-Baden	Baden-Baden
Badenweiler	Muellheim (Baden)
Bad Peterstal (Renchtal)	Offenburg (Baden)
Bernau (Baden) Altenrud/uber St Blasien	Neustadt (Schw.)
Bonndorf (Schwarzwald)	Neustadt (Schwarzw)
Breisach	Freiburg
Buehl (Baden)	Buehl (Baden)
Denzlingen	Emmendingen
Donaueschingen	Donaueschingen
Efringen-Kirchen	Loerrach
Emmendingen	Emmendingen
Endingen (Kaiserstuhl)	Emmendingen
Engen (Hegau)	Konstanz
Ettenheim	Lahr (Schwarzw)
Forbach (Baden)	Rastatt
Freiburg (Breisgau)	Freiburg
Freiburg (Brsq)-Guenterstal	Freiburg
Furtwangen	Donaueschingen
Gaggenau (Murgtal) 1	Rastatt
Gaggenau (Murgtal) 2	Rastatt
Gailingen	Konstanz
Gengenbach	Offenburg (Baden)
Gernsbach (Murgtal)	Rastatt
Grenzach	Loerrach
Grunern	Muellheim (Baden)
Hahnennest (Baden)	Ueberlingen
Haslach (Kinzigtal)	Wolfach
Hausach	Wolfach
Killoertsau-Oberstrot	Rastatt
Hintschingen	Donaueschingen
Hirschsprung	Neustadt (Schwarzw)
Hoelzlebruck	Neustadt (Schwarzw)
Hornberg (Schwarzwaldbahn)	Wolfach
Huesingen	Loerrach
Ibach	Offenburg (Baden)
Ihringen	Freiburg
Immendingen	Donaueschingen
Jesteten	Waldshut
Kandern	Muellheim (Baden)
Kaappel	Freiburg
Kehl	Kehl
Kenzingen (Breisgau)	Emmendingen
Konstanz	Konstanz
Lahr (Schwarzwald)	Lahr (Schwarzw)
Laufenburg (Baden)	Saeckingen
Loerrach	Loerrach
Loerrach-Stetten	Loerrach
Markdorf (Baden)	Ueberlingen

AMT

KREIS

AMT	KREIS
Meersburg (Bodensee)	Ueberlingen
Messkirch	Stockach (Baden)
Muellheim (Baden)	Muellheim (Baden)
Neustadt (Schwarzwald)	Neustadt (Schwarzw)
Nussdorf (Baden)	Ueberlingen
Oberkirch (Baden)	Offenburg (Baden)
Offenburg (Baden)	Offenburg (Baden)
Oppenau (Renchtal)	Offenburg (Baden)
Pfullendorf	Ueberlingen
Radolfzell (Bodensee)	Konstanz
Rastatt	Rastatt
Rheinfelden (Baden)	Saeckingen
Saeckingen	Saeckingen
St Blasien (Schwarzwald)	Neustadt (Schwarzw)
St Georgen (Schwarzwald)	Villingen
Sankt Roman (b Wolfach)	Wolfach
Schoenau (Schwarzwald)	Loerrach
Schopfheim	Loerrach
Singen (Hohentwiel)	Konstanz
Sinzheim (Kr Buehl, Baden)	Buehl (Baden)
Staufen (Breisgau)	Muellheim (Baden)
Steinbach (Kr Buehl, Baden)	Buehl (Baden)
Steinen (Kr Loerrach)	Loerrach
Stetten am Kalten Markt	Stockach (Baden)
Stockach (Baden)	Stockach (Baden)
Tiengen (Oberrhein)	Waldshut
Titisee	Neustadt (Schwarzw)
Todtmoos (Schwarzwald)	Saeckingen
Todtnau (Schwarzwald)	Loerrach
Triberg (Schwarzwald)	Villingen
Ueberlingen (Bodensee)	Ueberlingen
Unterharmersbach	Wolfach
Villingen (Schwarzwald)	Villingen
Voehrenbach	Donaueschingen
Waldkirch (Breisgau)	Emmendingen
Waldshut	Waldshut
Waldshut-Fahrhaus	Waldshut
Wehr (Baden)	Saeckingen
Weil (Rhein)	Loerrach
Wolfach	Wolfach
Zell (Harmersbach)	Wolfach
Zell (Wiesental)	Loerrach

## TUEBINGEN OPD

## TUEBINGEN OPD

AMT

KREIS

AMT

KREIS

Aichhalden  
 Alpirsbach  
 Altensteig (Wuertt)  
 Aulendorf  
 Bad Liebenzell (Wuertt)  
 Balingen (Wuertt)  
 Biberach (Riss)  
 Calw  
 Ebingen (Wuertt)  
 Ehingen (Donau)  
 Freudenstadt  
 Friedrichshafen  
 Gammertingen  
 Haigerloch  
 Hechingen  
 Herrenalb (Schwarzw)  
 Horb (Neckar)  
 Isny (Wuertt)  
 Kisslegg (Wuertt)  
 Kressbronn (Bodensee)  
 Laichingen (Wuertt)  
 Langenargen (Bodensee)

Rottweil  
 Freudenstadt  
 Calw  
 Ravensburg  
 Calw  
 Balingen  
 Biberach (Riss)  
 Calw  
 Balingen  
 Ehingen (Donau)  
 Freudenstadt  
 Tettngang  
 Sigmaringen  
 Hechingen  
 Hechingen  
 Calw  
 Horb (Neckar)  
 Wangen (Allgaeu)  
 Wangen (Allgaeu)  
 Tettngang  
 Muensingen  
 Tettngang

Laueheim  
 Leutkirch  
 Lindau (Bodensee) 1  
 Lindau (Bodensee) 2 - Aeschach  
 Lindau (Bodensee) 3 - Reutin  
 Lindau (Bodensee) 4 - Schachen  
 Lindenberg (Allgaeu)  
 Mengen (Wuertt)  
 Metzingen (Wuertt)  
 Muensingen  
 Nagold  
 Neuenburg (Wuertt)  
 Oberndorf (Neckar)  
 Ravensburg  
 Ravensburg-Weingarten  
 Reutlingen  
 Reutlingen-Pfullingen  
 Riedlingen (Wuertt)  
 Roethenbach (Allgaeu)  
 Rottenburg (Neckar)  
 Rottweil  
 Saugau (Wuertt)  
 Schoenberg (Kr Calw)  
 Schramberg  
 Schwemmingen (Neckar)  
 Sigmaringen  
 Spaichingen (Wuertt)  
 Sulz (Neckar)  
 Tailfingen (Kr Balingen, Wuertt)  
 Tettngang (Wuertt)  
 Trossingen (Wuertt)  
 Tuebingen  
 Tuttlingen 1  
 Tuttlingen 2  
 Urach (Wuertt)  
 Waldsee (Wuertt)  
 Wangen (Allgaeu)  
 Wilbad (Schwarzwald)  
 Wurzach (Wuertt)

Biberach (Riss)  
 Wangen (Allgaeu)  
 Lindau  
 Lindau  
 Lindau  
 Lindau  
 Lindau  
 Saugau  
 Reutlingen  
 Muensingen  
 Calw  
 Calw  
 Rottweil  
 Ravensburg  
 Ravensburg  
 Reutlingen  
 Reutlingen  
 Saugau  
 Lindau  
 Tuebingen  
 Rottweil  
 Saugau  
 Calw  
 Rottweil  
 Rottweil  
 Sigmaringen  
 Tuttlingen  
 Horb (Neckar)  
 Balingen  
 Tettngang  
 Tuttlingen  
 Tuebingen  
 Tuttlingen  
 Tuttlingen  
 Reutlingen  
 Ravensburg  
 Wangen (Allgaeu)  
 Calw  
 Wangen (Allgaeu)

LOKNOT NORMS

The Obliterations of Saxony

By: Hans Findeisen BPP

Translated: Ingeburg L. Fisher

Reprinted from ARGE LOKNOT Rundbrief 42/1982

Already before publication of the up-to-date prepared LOKNOT-NORMS, a discussion ensued in the philatelic press about a differentiation between postage stamps and fee labels, due to the issuance of automat-stamps and the installation of postoffice window terminals with value printing machines. Additionally, others try to confuse the issue partly due to ignorance and partly due to greed. The elaborations of the Arge LOKNOT-NORMS will show how basically important it is to differentiate between:

Local Issues = Postage Stamps: These are receipts for advance payment of postal fees, sold by the postal system, to be used at will for franking purposes - at least within the local selling area.

Fee Labels: These on the other hand are vouchers with a value, which are used solely internally by the postoffice on consignments for accounting purposes, and which are never sold to the public for franking purposes.

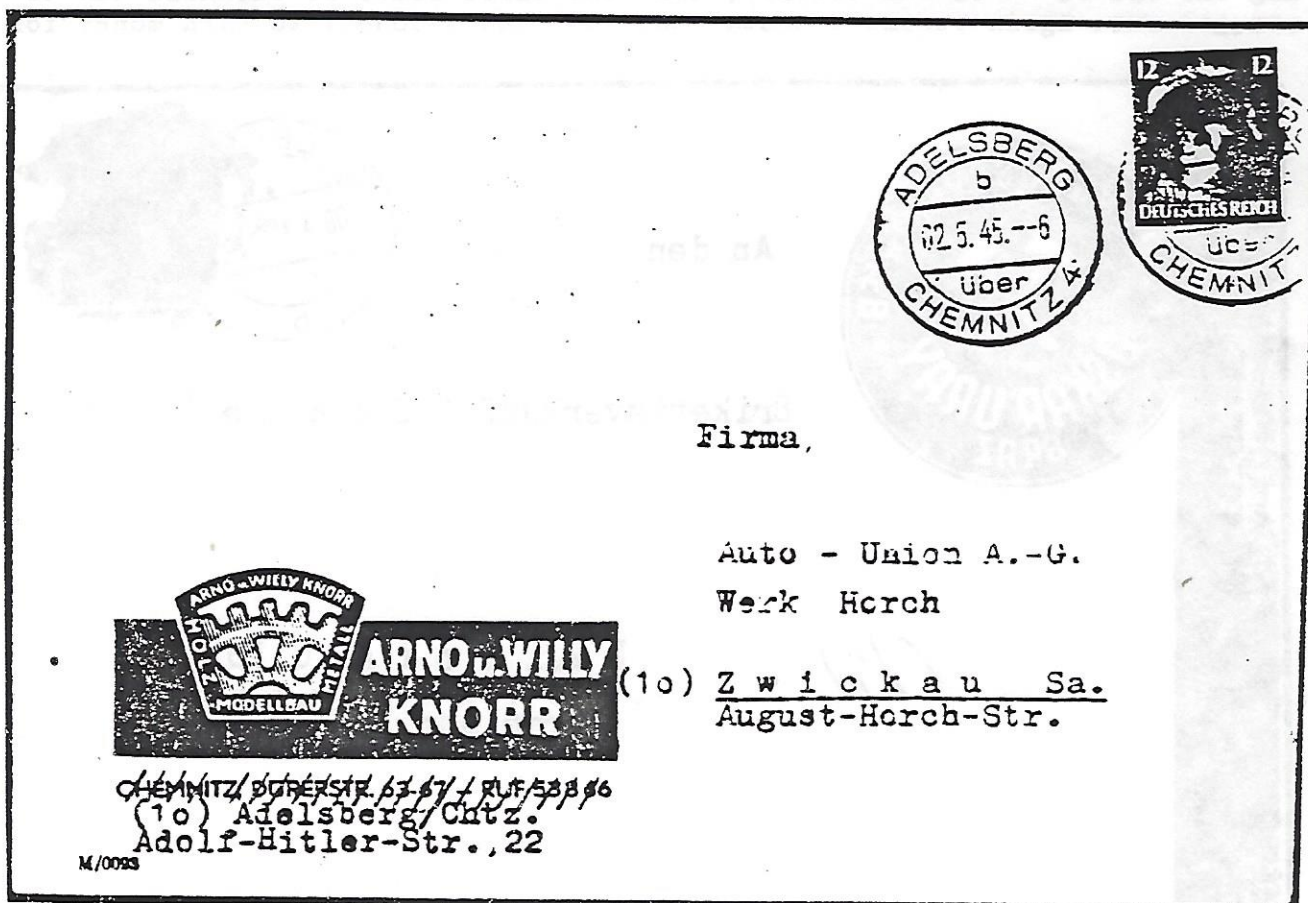


Illustration 1) Chemnitz on 2.5.45 unoccupied  
At this time Zwickau occupied by the U.S. 3rd Army

This clearly stated definition is also recognized by the Schwaneberger-Verlag (Michel catalog publishing house), and they are therefore now more reticent about the inclusion of newly submitted Gebühr-bezahlt (gummed) labels. A correction of already listed philatelic creations should also be a long range goal and still needs in depth research and exacting evidence.

The obliterations of Saxony on the other hand, cannot be so precisely included into the above categories, since the need of their issue through the postoffice is oftentimes lacking. Surely it was a onetime procedure which allowed not only each individual postoffice, but also each individual postal patron, to alter already invalid declared postage stamps into once again valid postage stamps and to do this within a vast and from each other different method.

Basis for this were the decrees of the RPD Chemnitz, dated May 12, 1945, and of the RPD Dresden, dated May 23, 1945 (reprinted in the LOKNOT Bulletin No. 28, pp 43-44).

In the Russian occupied area of the RPD Leipzig - east of the Mulde River - many postoffices followed similar procedures for practical reasons and did not pay any attention to the directives of the RPD itself, which was situated in the U.S. occupied Leipzig, if in fact they received these directives at all. Those of us, who lived through the time immediately following the end of WW II can certify, that the first order of business was to somehow once again resume a postal service, and secondly to earn money for

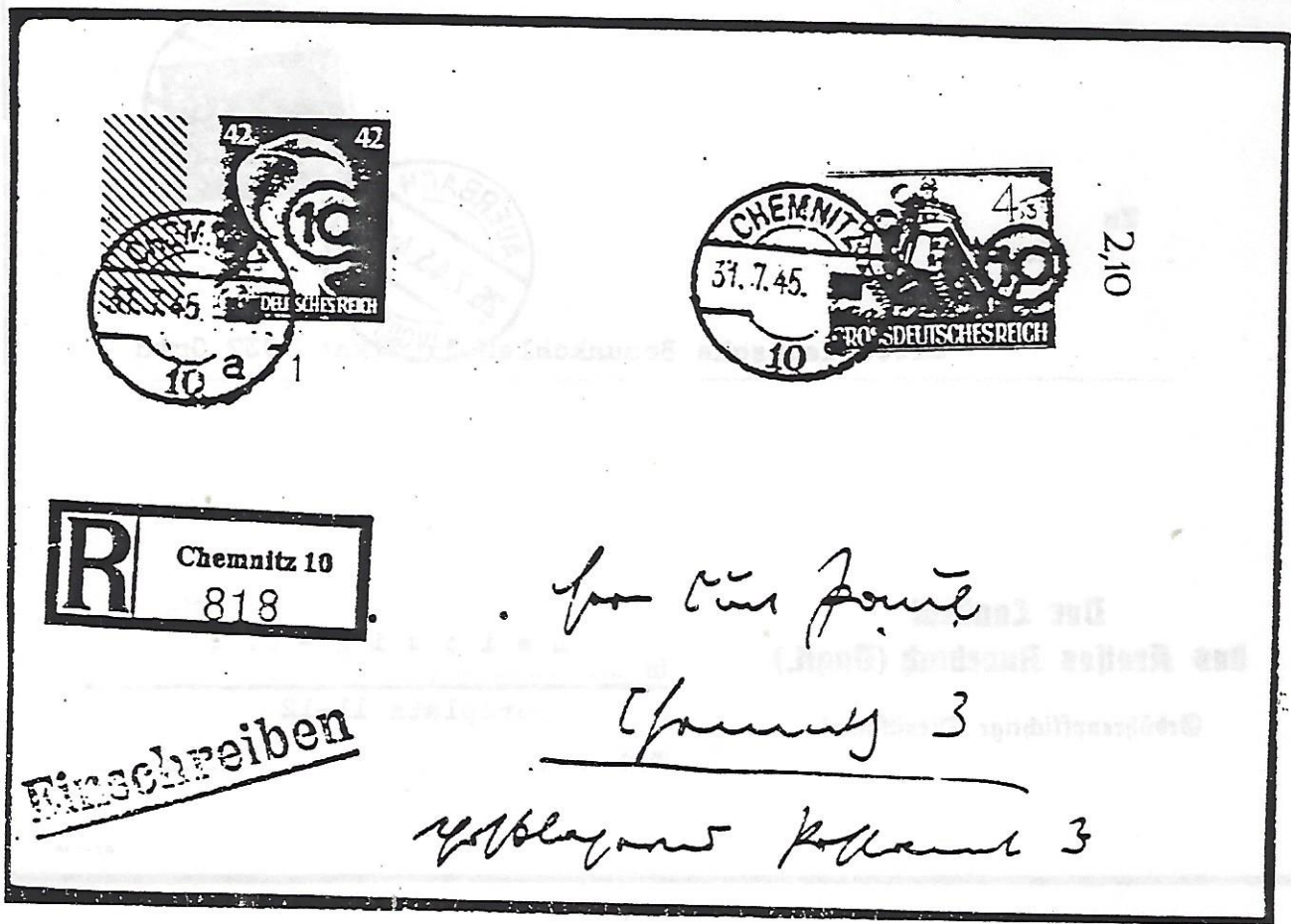


Ill 2: Leoben (Steiermark), 6 April 1945 as yet unoccupied. Approximately 10 April interruption of mail service between Southern Germany and Leipzig because of U.S. forward thrust towards Hof.

the postoffice in order to pay out salaries and pensions, and to do this without getting into conflict with the all-powerful Occupation Powers. Most of the time, professional employees were not available because they were prisoners of war, internees, had fled, or were dismissed as "Nazis". Therefore, directives from higher headquarters which were not specifically declared as orders from the Occupation Powers, were often considered as suggestions and followed only if considered practical by and for the local level. Otherwise the truly speedy rebuilding of the postal service would never have taken.

A special group among the obliterations are the "Überroller". These are postal consignments which remained somewhere during expediting because of wartime interference, and were delivered only after the occupation with the obliteration of the stamp face (portrait) - see Illustrations 1 and 2. Here an especially critical examination, consideration and knowledge of the course of occupation events and the possibilities in the expediting of mail before the end of the war, are needed. Some pieces are found to be nothing more than normally delivered mail before the occupation took place, which were made more valuable through later applied fake obliterations.

The collective term "Schwärzungen (Blackenings)" is incorrect. Directives speak of "Unkenntlichmachung (Obliteration)". Any color could be used - however black was available at every post office in their stamp pads.



Ill 3: Postal Lead Number handstamp used as obliterator on a semi postal commemorative. Philatelic registered local letter of over 20 grams, correctly franked.

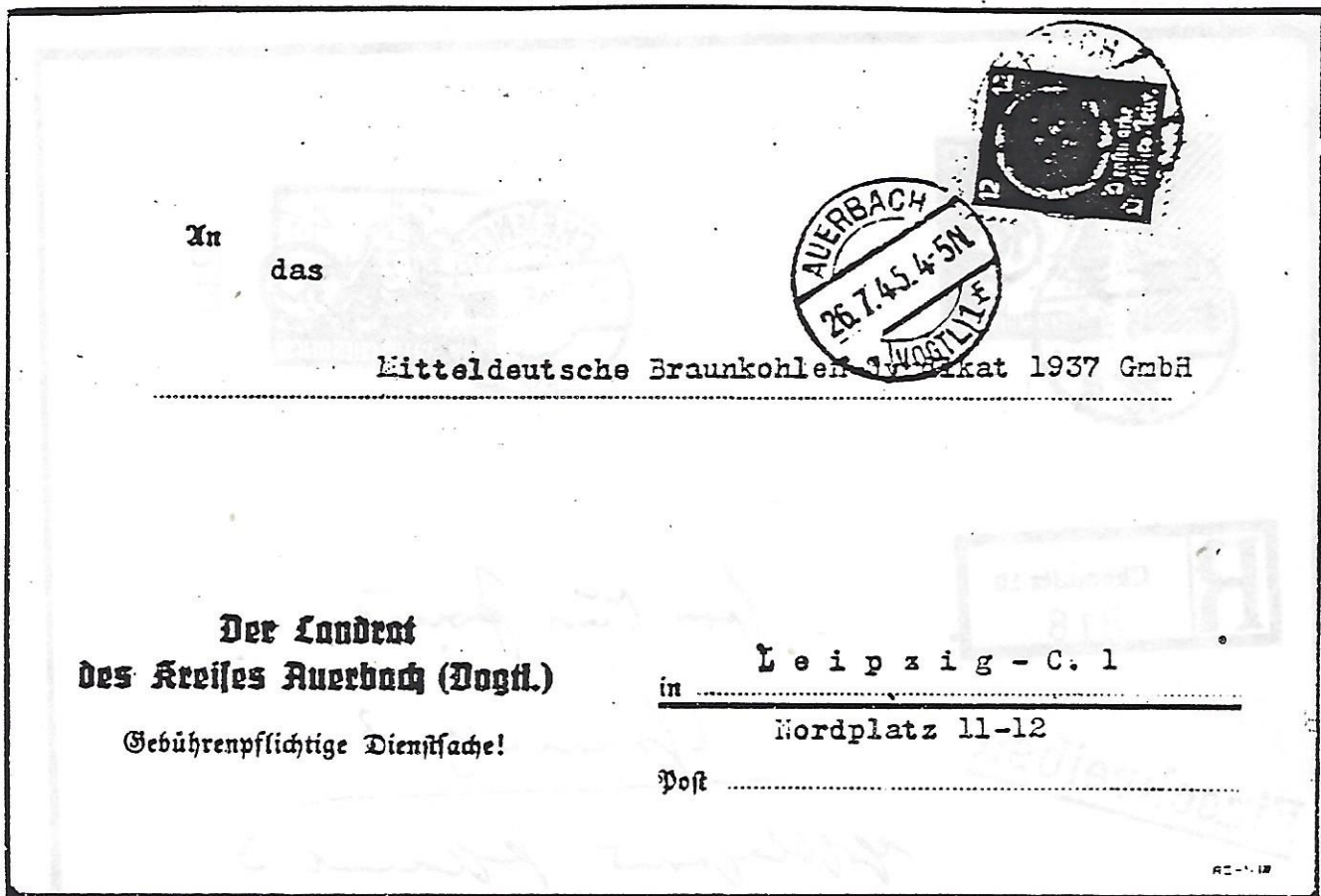
The shape of the stamping device (obliterator) was not prescribed, nor was the use of such a device even mentioned. Any type of obliteration was permitted, beginning with the primitive pencil scribbles and ending with the clean overprinting. The reason that the word "portrait" was mentioned at all was because the postoffice stock consisted mostly of Hitler stamps with an additional few Hindenburg "Einheitsgeberstreifen", these are se-tenants with a total value of 10 Pfg. for insertion into vending machines. At the end of war, all postage stamps in the hands of the public were to be treated equally. Therefore, all postage stamps, beginning with Michel Nr. 814 could exist obliterated. But only a few collectors realized and made use of this possibility.

The same obliteration possibilities existed of course for postal cards.

The "Obliterations" of individual postoffices are oftentimes typical, but do not necessarily have to coincide with those of the departure post-office (i.e. the postoffice where the consignment was mailed) since postage stamps bought at one postoffice could have been used somewhere else.

Result:

Fully recognized are all pieces (covers postcards, money orders) with different types of obliterations if



Ill 4: Landrats departments continued to function and letters with coal permits had to be franked.



1. franking was correct and the type of consignment permitted  
- use of 6 Pfg. for local postcards, 15 Pfg. postal stationery, i.e. 20% franking above rate cannot be tolerated since no postage stamp shortage existed.
2. use took place within the permitted time period and these different times of validity have to be correct for the individual postoffice.
3. postal service between the place of posting and the destination existed.
4. the cancellation is genuine, i.e. was truly in use at the time of posting.
5. use of official stamps (exception Glauchau) was by a sender so qualified and permitted.

To be clarified: Which of the departments permitted to use franchise stamps of the National Socialist Workers Party were still functioning and able to dispatch mail! Examples are solicited.

Limited recognition: can be extended to stamps "on piece" under the foregoing prerequisites, provided the cancellation is fully readable, since Nos. 1 and 3 can no longer be proven.

Not to be recognized: are lose stamps, since additionally to Nos. 1 and 3, Nos. 2 and 4 also cannot be proven due to size.

: "on piece" official stamps, since no evidence of correct use as specified under Nos. 1, 3 and 5 can be proven.

: Unused stamps, since Nos. 1-5 cannot be shown.

Certain characteristic special obliteration forms were classified as Local Issues, which is correct only if they fulfill the requirements as set forth in the beginning. And only then can these be fully recognized as single used or unused stamps also.

The following listing intends to set this forth, point by point, and the writer would like to be informed about any existing material which would add to or clarify the existing knowledge or could be used as evidence to the contrary!

Bad Gottleuba: A clear statement cannot be made if in fact these stamps were overprinted and sold by the postoffice or if this was done by a non-postal or possibly any other local authority or department. Authentication has to be restricted within the framework of the Saxony Obliterations only to stamps on cover or on piece.

Burgstädt/Sa: The disk with ring in a hexagonal frame is a private obliteration, applied with a Giro (endorsement) handstamp and exists generally only on bank letters and payment orders. Private mail carries generally a dot-like obliteration.

This cannot be considered a Local Issue.

Chemnitz: These are not characteristic obliteration forms. The (10) handstamps are normal commercially produced postal lead number handstamps, which were also in private hands and therefore used on private mail.

The coat-of-arms obliterator was privately owned by a postal clerk, who took the handstamp back home after official approval was denied.

The "Concentration camp" issue (star) is a non-postal private handstamp.

All of the above are not to be considered Local Issues.

Döbeln: la + b: Postal overprint, postoffice sale, used extensively

To be considered a Local Issue.

P I + II: Trial printing of la + b.

P III - V: Private overprints. - Not to be recognized. -

Glauchau: 1-42: After withdrawal of all stamp stock centrally overprinted and distributed once again to area postoffices, where they were sold and used. Official postage stamps were thus altered into postage stamps for normal use.  
Recognized as Local Issue.

P I - VI: Trial printing to Nos. 1-42.

1 - VI: Local Issue that was never issued.

V I - XVI: Official printing by order of the postoffice not proven, therefore very doubtful, since according to postoffice all stocks of official stamps, including partial sheets, were collected and completely used up in the production of Nos. 20 - 42.

- - - - - to be continued - - - - -  
(the Rundbrief article said; that back in 1982. I'm still waiting for the continuation)  
Well, when I finally gave up and prepared this for printing in comes Rundbrief 50/1985 with part II. A quick translation job by Inge, and here we go.

Following the in depth treatise in LOKNOT Bulletin 42/1982 the Michel Germany Specialized 1985, in the revision of the section "Obliterations of Saxony" took into consideration the conclusions from page 6 and has--under the mentioned conditions--now included under "obliterations" those so-called local issues for which concrete evidence has been available.

Grabow: Not in the area of "Saxony obliterations", therefore not included.

Herrnhut: 1-13: Privately overprinted. Not authorized by the post office, not sold there. The post office sold only the postage stamps of Döbau, which existed in sufficient amounts. Thus, no local issue. Privately obliterated and genuinely used on piece (many Werner forgeries!!) to be recognized as obliterations.

P 1: Trial printing of a private overprint and is strictly "Spielerei" (manipulation).

I-VII : The later printed values, privately overprinted, could not even be used since all obliterations were no longer valid.

Holzhausen 1-3 An issue of the OPD Leipzig which was never issued. Stocks held back (leaked out?-DES) by Holzhausen, which is situated closer to Leipzig than some of the city's suburbs. Therefore, the statement of late arrival of the prohibition of their use cannot be believed. At first, listed in the catalog, and rightly so, as "Forerunners", i.e. as a not issued OPD issue.  
I-VI  
(now A I-VII)

Löbau: 1-31: Sold, as is proven, by the Löbau post office as well as by many EI - EIII subordinates and nearby situated post offices. Nrs. 29 and 31 various came from E I - E III, se tenants from stamp booklets 48 and se-tenants 49. To be recognized as Local Issues.

other values: originated from collector's and dealer's stocks, which were overprinted against payment of the nominal (face) value. Recognition in the framework of "Saxony Obliterations", excluding those manipulated after validity.

Meissen: "Dot": Now listed as a normal obliteration, as it should be.

B 1: Is the only red hand overprinting which sold over the post office counter, belongs under Local Issues.

1 and others: Handoverprinted in red are private "Spielerien" (manipulations) by postal clerks. If it exists genuinely used, to be listed under private obliterations.

2 - 21: Without any doubts sold and used by the post office Meissen up to and including Nrs. 20, Nr. 21 by the Sörnewitz post office. Therefore a Local Issue.

22 - 26: Printed by the post office and distributed to so-called VIP's, since only small amounts were printed. Should not be included in the "counter set" (as sold), but have to be considered postally issued and valid for franking, thus listed as a Local Issue.

Volkssturm : Overprinting only of stocks in the hands of postal patrons, and should be recognized as a "Saxony obliteration".

Mühlberg: Like Grabow

Naumburg: Like Grabow

Netzschkau-Reichenbach: 1-11: Postally overprinted, postally sold and commercially used. A Local Issue.

I P : Trial printing for 1-11.

II P : Printed amount too small, therefore value not issued.

III P : A "Spielerei" of the printer, existing in various positions and combinations which do not fulfill the directive to obliterate the Hitler portrait, thus they could not even be used as "Saxony obliterations".

N-hand-: Should be recognized as a private obliteration. Is until now painted however, only known as an unused "Spielerei".

Perleberg: Like Grabow

Pirna: Now listed under "Obliterations"

Schwarzenberg: 1-25: postally handoverprinted, postally sold and commercial-used, thus a Local Issue, even if according to the post office the high values were issued to fleece collectors (which the post office seems to do consistently).

Wittenberg: Like Grabow

Still missing is Wurzen, where covers with the local overprint seem to indicate philatelic origin while commercially used mail and postal money orders always show obliterations. Therefore, a plea to submit especially commercial covers. A report with supplemental information will appear in the next bulletin.

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Subgroup Director's comments:

I love this article. I think it well sets forth the pertinent background facts and establishes logical criteria for recognition of obliterations. However, I do have some problems with what I read.

I am not sure if Mr. F's five criterion for "fully recognized" is meant to recognize Bedarfsbriefe or just to recognize the obliterations as legitimately occurring obliterations. In my opinion a few more criteria should be met for a Bedarfsbriefe--such as the senders address cannot be the same as the recipients address. In fact, it appears that the "result criteria" for recognizing obliterations are somewhat shortened (for simplicity and clarity?). For example, item 3 requires postal service between the place of posting and the destination, yet there are many completely genuine "attempted sendings" where the postal piece has the notation "Return/no postal service" or similar notation. To enumerate all these details or exceptional situations would make a long and possibly confusing list. Therefore, I assume Mr. F's criterion were meant to cover the "big rules" and there are exceptions and additions as dictated by common sense.

Perhaps I should let sleeping dogs lie, but I do feel compelled to point out that, if only the 5 criterion for "fully recognized" are applied, then the "Deutschlands Verderber" overprints used in Radiumbad Oberschlema (as shown in Volume 14, Nr 3, p. 133) come out being "fully recognized".

I am also somewhat confused by the statement on the second page that obliterations cannot be precisely included in the "above categories"--does this mean postage stamp as opposed to fee label? This paragraph also talks about "invalid stamps" being made "valid".

In my mind there is no doubt we are dealing with a "postage stamp", not a "fee label", but whether or not we are dealing with a "Local issue" is more questionable (perhaps this is the problem Mr. F is referring to when he makes the statement about being unable to categorize obliterations).

I also have trouble relating to the existing postage stamps being "invalid". Normally when we think of a stamp as "invalid" it means we cannot use it. We have to go purchase a new, valid postage stamp. In this case many existing Reich postage stamps were perfectly valid, and the others required only a simple alteration (or modification) to conform to the postal directives. The directives do not speak of "invalid" stamps, basically they say "modify existing stamps". Certainly from the user standpoint a Hitler (or any valid Reich) stamp was not "invalid"; he could stick it on a postal transmission and the post office would accept it--it paid the postal fee. Maybe from the postal point of view the stamp was "invalid" without the alteration, but even that is arguable. From the patron point of view the Hitler stamps were perfectly valid. Which point of view do we use in defining "valid"?

Let's consider this from the postal point of view. We'll say the Hitler stamps are "invalid" until the picture of Hitler is obliterated, at which time they become "valid postage stamps". O.K., who was able to make stamps valid? As Mr. F. points out, anybody could! Postal employee ("individual postoffice") or postal patron, it did not matter. This is also brought out by the criterion for "fully recognized", which does not differentiate between private and postal obliterations. This is as it should be.

I am also a bit confused concerning the conditions for recognizing mint and used "characteristic special obliteration forms". Mr. F. says these can be recognized only if they are a "Local Issue" and apparently only the postal system can prepare a "Local Issue". Given that a private individual could create perfectly valid stamps (and stamps that Mr. F. will accept as perfectly valid as long as they are found on postally used material) why can only the postal system create a "Local Issue"??? What is created when a private person obliterated an entire set of Hitler stamps with a "Characteristic special obliteration form"???

It seems to me that when we see an obliterated stamp the pertinent question is where and when the obliteration was applied, not who applied it. What we are trying to identify is obliterated stamps which existed in the proper area (RPD) during the time when obliterations were in use in that area. If a mint stamp meets this criteria then at one point in its life it had the potential of being used to carry a postal consignment; it does not matter if the obliteration was postally or privately applied, each had equal potential to be used. To me this perfectly meets the definition of "postag stamp".

While I think that legally (and in terms of postal validity) it made no difference whether obliterations were postally or privately applied, as a point of interest or just for general knowledge sake I think we should know (as best we can) whether obliterations were postally or privately applied. This knowledge would allow each collector to make an informed decision on what it is he does and doesn't want to collect.

I would like to see obliterations identified at least into the following categories:

- (1) Bedarfs usage: Fully recognized first-class evidence. For the most part these will be "formless corks" which we don't know if they are postally or privately applied, and it really doesn't matter anyway if they are Bedarfs.
- (2) Philatelic usage: Acceptable as such (proof of what a philatelist could do, not what a normal postal patron could or would do).
- (3) used "formless corks" (on or off piece): acceptable if the cancel is readable and the date and place is legitimate. All that is proved is that it is an obliteration from the right time and place. No claim as to postal or private and no claim it was ever used on a Bedarfs piece.
- (4) mint "formless corks" (or even nice circles): Never acceptable (expertisable) because the time and place of obliteration cannot be determined.

This leaves the "characteristic special obliteration forms" mint and cancelled. Mr. F. seems to separate these into two groups: (a) "Local Issues" (postal applications) which are "Recognizable" (acceptatable, expertisable) and (b) private obliterations which are apparently not recognizable. As

implied above, I believe that private obliterations are collectable (if one is so inclined), but I want to know what kind of private obliteration I am dealing with. I think that "characteristic special obliteration forms"--at least the ones known to have occurred in the proper area during the proper time--should be identified as follows:

- (5) "Characteristic special obliteration forms", mint or used:
- (a) Postal obliteration: an obliteration applied by or by the authority of postal personnel and sold through the post office.
  - (b) Private obliteration: an obliteration applied by or by the authority of a person having absolutely no connection with the post office. (If desired this category could be made into 2 categories; obliterations authorized by public officials--Mayors, Military Government, etc., and "plain old private citizen" obliterations.
  - (c) Trial design obliterations: an obliteration prepared by a postal or private person involved in the process of determining the design to be used for a postal obliteration.

I feel it is important to distinguish the trial designs from the plain old private obliterations (to me these two categories are of vastly different levels of interest). Mr. F. seems to do this in that he notes Döbeln PI-II are "trials" while PIII-V are private obliterations. I would like to see more evidence concerning this. How do we know PIII-V are "private obliterations" (unconnected with the design process)? Is the person who prepared them known? Are there statements from the postal officials and printing plant employees stating these are not part of the design process? How do we know these did not come from the same place as PI-II? Also how about the other Döbeln obliterations, not catalog listed, that I discussed in my "trial prints of DOBELN" article (Vol 13/Nr 1)?

One of my big complaints against our whole system of classification is that some unknown experts (at least unknown to me) say "this is a trial, and this other is a private obliteration, and this is a postal obliteration, and....., etc.". How do they know that? Where is the evidence? Why won't anybody present the evidence of what is known as concrete fact? I for one would like to see the evidence which exists, then I can determine for myself what faith I want to put in any particular obliteration. All I have now is somebody else's conclusions as put forth in the catalog. I'd prefer to draw my own conclusions, just give me facts upon which to base my conclusions.

Donald Slawson

I (Slawson) am still urgently seeking a vertical pair of Netzschkau Probedruck I in vertical pair with the 3 Pfg. Type I overprint (as shown at right).

Please notify if you see one of these for sale. (Incidentally, there are at least 32 such pairs, not 16 as Michel states.

I repeat my offer of last issue to watch for any material you may want, and offer to print your want list here if you desire.



HERRNHUT - Another Point of View

(The following is taken from a letter from Harry Halle to the Subgroup director, prompted by the HERRNHUT Article in the last Bulletin)

"Thanks a lot for the bulletin which arrived today. I read it with a great deal of interest, especially your Herrnhut discourse and the various findings. However, to come up with a finding that they are worthless is a finding I do not share.

"One should not come to the conclusion they were not official using today's values. During the hectic immediate postwar period the official label does not agree with current values. Official, in those days, was what the leading authority decided, without higher sanction.

"Some of these today distasteful decisions had an immediate urgency and lacked the necessary time element to seek out approval from higher authority. Communication lines were down, transportation was at a standstill, in some cases a final authority did not even exist as such. The people filling this void at the time were deeply concerned with avoiding any possible conflict with the Military commanders: Thus they simply did not want to rock the boat and either failed to answer an immediate request or simply pigeon-holed it for further action which never materialized. Some requests were received after the fact accomplished.

"Military commanders, especially in the Russian sphere of influence made no decisions for fear of reprisal from higher military authority. A typical example to underline this thinking were the actions of General Ivan Suslop-arov who represented the Russian Forces at the Reims surrender of the Germans. He did not have permission of Stalin to sign papers. He subsequently was called to Berlin and hustled off to oblivion by the Soviet Secret Police. The Treaty ceremony had to be repeated at Berlin.

"It is therefore only reasonable to expect the mentality of the local Russian commanders not to engage in activities that could be questioned. This Russian mentality characteristic should find proper consideration, but never has. In their view, if questions arose the response was simply to imply that action was not authorized.

"This was especially true when it came to dispensing German authority. To their way of thinking the Germans had none. The Hallensia label "Group IV" is an expression of the German view of authority and leaves traces of the Nazi concept of authority, a strictly accepted pattern.

"In my humble view, any stamps that went through the mails shows the intended use and purpose and is therefore a legitimate issue as it prepaid purchase without rejection or objection.

"The mayor of Herrnhut saw the need to prepay postage. He came up with a personal decision, made to bridge a need in an emergency. From a Beamten (Civil Servant) point of view, he did not want to overstep his authority, so he had only a limited number of stamps overprinted as the need occurred. These were all stamps in the hands of the public. He did not want to leave himself open to censure by having existing stocks overprinted. These were postal property and by leaving them untouched he could effect proper financial accounting and not tamper with post office property.

"The fact that only such a limited number were overprinted speaks for this action. That all kinds of stamps were overprinted was based on public presentation and not on any directive which ones were to be considered for such action. It probably was a verbal arrangement and lacked explicit instructions.

"The fact that they do exist on cover shows that they were recognized if only in Herrnhut, especially since they were intended for local use only.

"To obtain necessary supplies from Löbau would have been time consuming, and delays in delivery were the order of the day.

" Under existing postwar emergency hectic conditions, authority channels were probably as yet not too well defined. Any action, within reason and within limitations was therefore probably acceptable.

---here is a discussion of the Veneta provisional and the Rhein Main private issues which I (Slawson) am omitting ---

"Collectors should be advised to look at the Herrnhut issues in the same light (as the Veneta provisional and the Rhein Main issues). The Michel catalog lists them in their latest catalog at respectable prices. If nothing else, they certainly are mut testimony to a most hectic period.

"There are also a few prominent expertisers that treat them as legitimate issues. A collector should consider them as a speculative investment potential with the distinct possibility of a marked increase in value. In the field of speculation there have been investments made that show far less of a potential and in the long run prove to be a wise decision.

"Hope this will give enough food for thought. They represent my views on the matter, nothing more.

Harry Halle "

Subgroup Director's comments (I'm doing lots of commenting this issue):

Mr. Rossbach-Emden gets very concerned with the concept of "legalities" and tries to project legal concepts into the postwar period. While legalities are very important, I completely agree with Harry that in 1945 Germany the "immediate legality" in each town was what the local Military Government Officials said or permitted (after all, Germany had ceased to exist as a nation).

It seems to me the Herrnhut stamps were legal (in that they fit within the framework of the Saxony obliterations, which, if not "legal" were certainly used--legal or not); they were just plain old private obliterations, not postal obliterations. To me the signifigant point of the article was that the Herrnhut issue was not postally inspired nor implemented, and MR. Halle supports this fact. I personally have no gripe with "private obliterations" (see my comments to the previous article), I just want you all to know what it is you are dealing with.

There is argument whether or not the "obliterations" are "new stamp issues or not. It seems here "no"! Existing stamps in the public hands were altered and accepted by the P.O.--from the P.O. point they were apparently the "same old stamps" which had been sold months before.

I am personally troubled by this whole story. The concept of the mayor giving the order and overprinting being done for privately held material in strips, singles, etc., for FREE (!) completely boggles my mind. I fell there must have been some additional influence at work here, but we'll probably never know. Also, I've never seen anything but very philatelic appearing covers. Arguing "official" and "non-official" values is nonsense--from the postal point of view none are official.

You will all have to decide for yourselves what monetary value you'll put on these issues--you have (unfortunately) all the facts you'll probably get.