

MILITARY POSTAL HISTORY OF THE 1870-71 FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

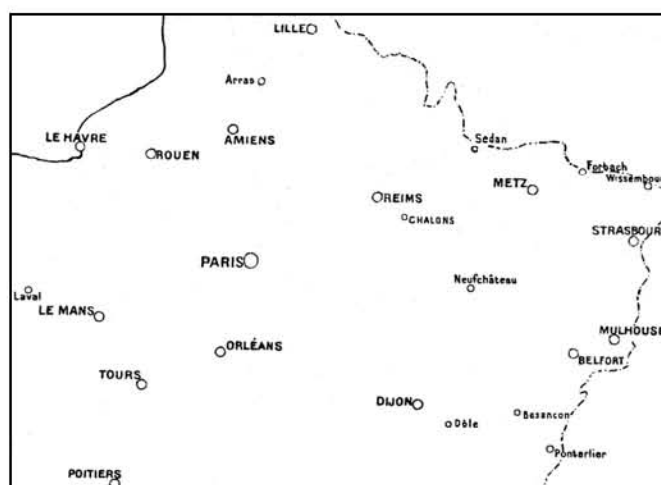
Historical Background: On July 19, 1870, France's Second Empire declared war on Prussia. By August 7, the German army had pushed the French *Armée du Rhin* into disorderly retreat toward Metz and Paris. By late September, four French army corps had surrendered along with Emperor Napoleon III at Sedan, five were encircled in Metz (which fell on October 27), and the remaining two were besieged in Paris. After the Sedan debacle, the Third Republic replaced the Second Empire, but no French armies remained in the field to protect it from the advancing Germans. In the face of this crisis, the new Republic, based in Tours, successfully constituted new armies for national defense.

Accordingly, the war can be divided into two distinct parts. The initial phase, in eastern France, was fought between the *Armée du Rhin* and the German I, II, III and IV armies:

- 1) The Alsace-Lorraine Campaign from Strasbourg to Metz, July 19-October 27
- 2) The Ardennes Campaign from Reims to Sedan, August 5-September 2

In the second part of the war, new French armies fought the Germans in four sectors:

- 1) The Paris Campaign, September 3-January 27
- 2) The Loire Campaign from Orléans to Le Mans, September 15-March 7
- 3) The Northern Campaign from Rouen to Lille, September 1-March 7
- 4) The Eastern Campaign from Dijon to Belfort, October 9-March 27



Both parts of the war also incorporated sieges of fortified cities such as Metz and Belfort.

Postal Background: The French and German military mail-handling facilities (fieldposts) were centralized at the divisional level. However, the integrated French *Armée du Rhin* fieldpost organization gave way to locally-focused organizations for the four campaigns of the second phase. It was not until the January 28 – March 7, 1871 temporary armistice period that an attempt was made to once again integrate the French fieldpost service across all sectors. By contrast, the German service remained intact, even as their armies spread out in the final phase of the war. Both sides extended free-frank privileges to military personnel, so the vast majority of fieldpost mail is stampless.

Scope, Study and Presentation: This exhibit illustrates the evolving conflict through the postal markings of the French and German fieldpost organizations, and through siege mail. Considerable original research is reflected in locations and divisional affiliations of the fieldpost bureaus. Every major French and German military unit is represented, even though some existed only for a short time. Particularly notable are strong sections of balloon mail and line-crosser mail from the various sieges.

The exhibit is organized by campaign, which is identified in the heading of each page. The military entity or siege is identified in the sub-headings. Text boxes provide historical or postal background, and greater detail is provided in the body of the page. French and German names (in italics) are used wherever appropriate, and notable items are highlighted in bold type.

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Armée du Rhin July 25 - October 27

Army Postmarks and Cancels

The French created a military fieldpost organization for the *Armée du Rhin* with associated datestamps and cancels. Stamps and cancels were rarely used since virtually all military mail was entitled to a free frank.



Posted August 13 at the Reserve Cavalry's bureau AK - retreating toward Metz from frontier
Registered mail required 60 centimes franking - **only known example of 'ARAK' cancel**
August 14 transit mark from *Armée du Rhin Bureau Central* in Metz - arrived August 15

Fewer than ten franked *Armée du Rhin* covers are known from this period

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Armée du Rhin July 25 - October 27

Headquarters Bureaus at

Metz



Posted with free frank on October 10 in Metz during August 19-October 27 siege

Only known example of Armée du Rhin Grand Quartier Général marking



Posted October 16 at *Bau Central* in besieged Metz - delivered after the war on April 27, 1871

Officers' personal mail not eligible for free frank - datestamp used as cancel

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Armée du Rhin July 25 - October 27

Imperial Headquarters at Metz

The *Armée du Rhin* military postal markings were patterned after the 1859 *Armée d'Italie* markings. The *Bureau Spéciale de l'Empereur* and *Garde Impériale* markings were the same as those used in 1859.



Dated *Quartier Général Impérial* in Metz - posted August 10 at the *Bureau Spécial de l'Empereur*

Latest known use of this bureau; Napoleon III was captured 23 days later - arrived August 12

Only known example of this marking used during the Franco-Prussian War

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

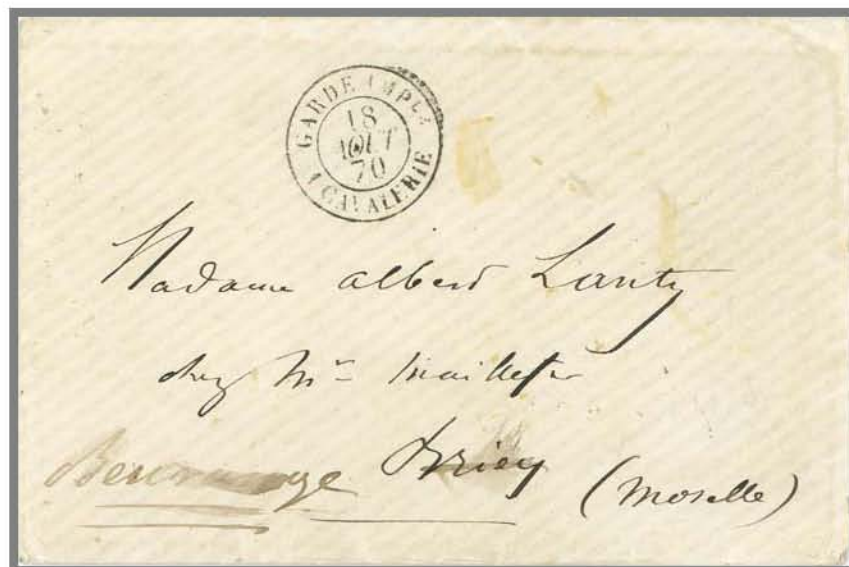
Armée du Rhin July 25 - October 27

Garde Impériale

On August 6, the French lost two significant battles on the frontier at Woerth and Forbach. This forced the *Armée du Rhin* to retreat toward Metz and Châlons.



Posted August 10 at *Garde Impériale Quartier Général* bureau in Metz - arrived August 14
Officers' personal mail was not eligible for free frank - **stamp cancelled in transit at Paris**

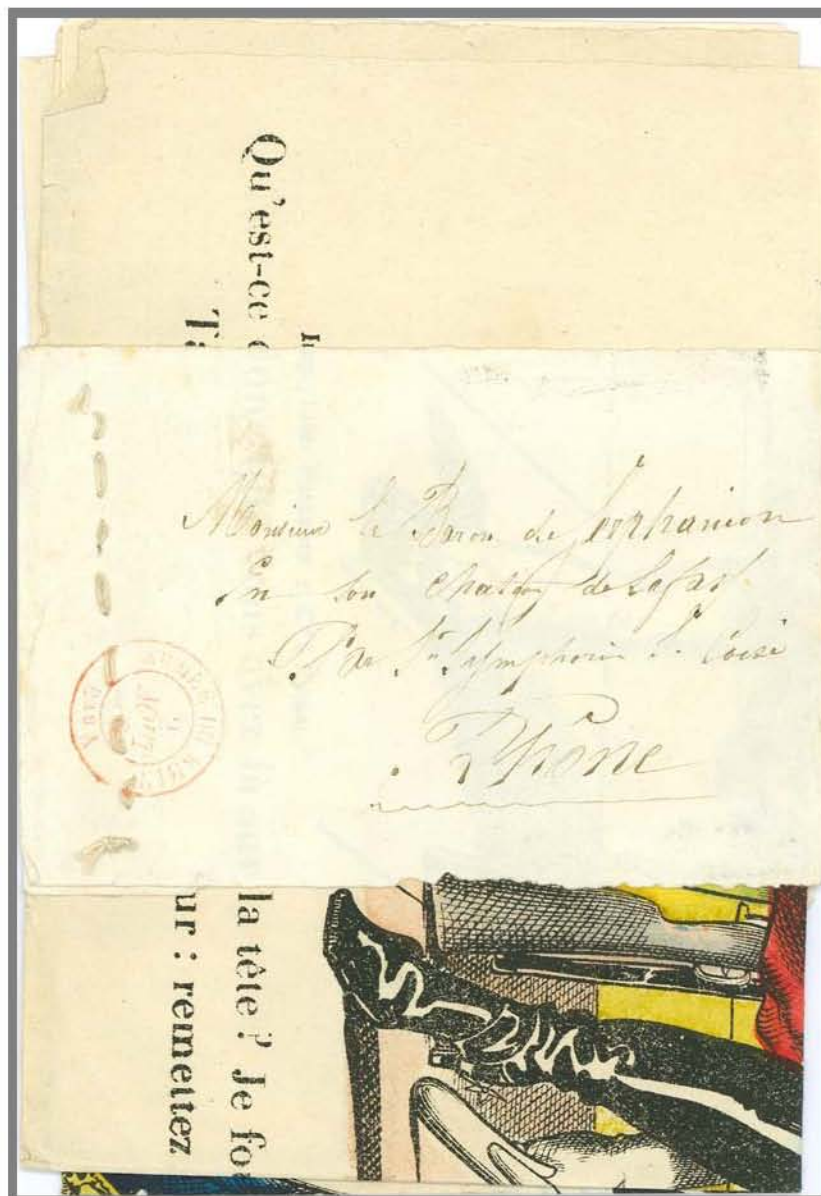


Dateline *Châtel St. Germain* west of Metz - posted August 18 at *Garde Impériale 1 Cavalerie* bureau
Writer fought in August 16 Gravelotte battle - letter trapped in Metz by siege and delivered June 6, 1871

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Armée du Rhin July 25 - October 27

Political Cartoon



Posted August 2 at the 1st Corps 1st Division bureau A in Strasbourg
Political cartoon with satire on Prussia's King Wilhelm - printed matter under band

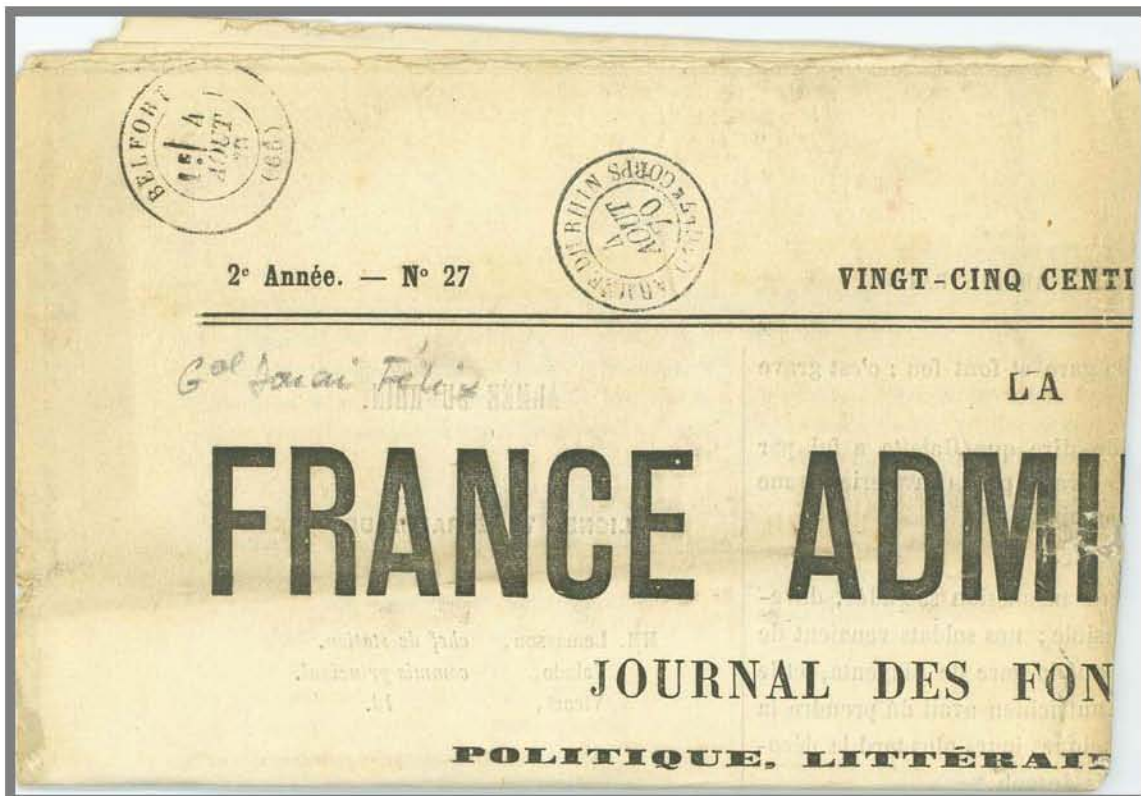
Only known example of *Armée du Rhin* printed matter under band

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Armée du Rhin July 25 - October 27

7th Corps Headquarters

The 7th Corps was formed in early August at Belfort and Lyon. On August 16, it left Belfort to join the *Armée de Châlons* at Reims, where it arrived on August 22.



Newspaper posted August 4 in Belfort - addressed to Félix Douay, commander of 7th Corps

August 4 *Armée du Rhin Quartier Général 7e Corps* postmark used as arrival mark

Only known example of a newspaper handled by the *Armée du Rhin* fieldpost

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Siege of Strasbourg August 11 – September 27

Line-crosser

Mail

The 87th Regiment was left to garrison Strasbourg after the 1st Corps retreated, and two German landwehr divisions initiated a siege on August 11. No French fieldpost service remained in Strasbourg.



Dated *Strasbourg 11 Septembre 1870* and **confided to a visiting Swiss delegation**

Letter written by a wounded captain of the French Rhine flotilla trapped in Strasbourg

Posted unpaid in Berne, Switzerland on September 17 - arrived September 25 with 50c due

Very little mail succeeded in crossing the Strasbourg siege lines

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Siege of Metz August 19 – October 27

Pharmacists' Balloon Service

The first Metz balloon service was started by military pharmacists on September 5, and lasted until September 15. They launched 14 balloons. Only 18 letters, or *papillons*, are known to have survived.



Dated *Sous Metz le 7 7bre 1870* - carried by **5th Pharmacists' balloon**

This was the first successful flight, and left September 10 with 40 letters
Balloon landed near Lille - mail was recovered and processed on September 19

Only letter known from this balloon

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Siege of Metz August 19 – October 27

Pharmacists' Balloon Service

Some recovered *papillons* were forwarded inside another envelope, or *enveloppe de réexpédition*. Fewer than ten examples are known.



Dateline *Sous Metz* 8 7bre 1870 - 6th Pharmacists' balloon which carried about 50 *papillons*

September 14 Forbach *cachet d'atterrissage* defaced to conceal French origin



Carried across the frontier and posted unpaid in the above envelope on September 15 in Saarbrücken, Prussia
Trapped in Paris by September 18 start of siege - forwarded by the first balloon "Neptune" or a linecrosser

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Siege of Metz August 19 – October 27

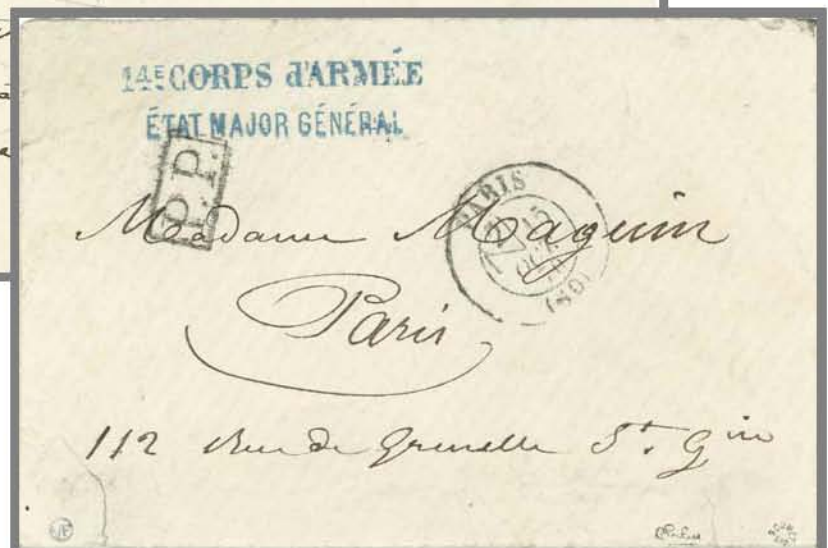
Flag-of-Truce Into Besieged Paris



Dated *Metz le 7 Septembre 1870* - 7th Pharmacists' balloon which carried 63 papillons

Captured on landing in Germany - forwarded to Bismarck's headquarters at Versailles

Papillon carried from Versailles into besieged Paris on October 14 by U.S. diplomatic courier



Papillon given to 14th Corps officer - posted October 15 in the above envelope for delivery in Paris

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Siege of Metz August 19 – October 27

Engineers' Balloon Service

The second Metz balloon service was started by British war correspondent George Robinson and French military engineers on September 16, and lasted until October 3. They launched 11 balloons.



Datelined Metz 26 September 1870 by George Robinson - **8th Engineers' balloon** left September 27

Landed safely near Bayonville with about 16,000 *papillons* - mail processed October 4 at Lille

Marked F.S.P. for **free frank** in France, but rated 6 pence due in England on October 5

Only *papillon* known from this balloon with arrival markings

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Siege of Metz August 19 – October 27

Engineers' Balloon Service

The 4th Engineers' balloon landed safely near Fresnes-en-Voevre on September 21 with about 30,000 *papillons*. Some mail was processed at Fresnes; most was processed at Tours.



Dated *Metz Sep 21 1870* - 4th Engineers' balloon - **September 22 Fresnes transit postmark**

From George Robinson, inventor of the balloon service - forwarded unpaid to England



Papillon placed in British Post office envelope and marked for 6 pence due - arrived September 30

Only two *papillons* are known with September 22 Fresnes postmarks

1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Siege of Metz August 19 – October 27

Engineers' Balloon Service

The first Engineers' balloon landed safely near Neufchâteau on September 16 with about 6,000 *papillons*. The mail received September 17 Neufchâteau transit postmarks from the 2nd and 4th collection periods.



Dated Metz le 16 7bre - 1st Engineers' balloon - no Paris arrival due to siege
September 17 (2nd collection) Neufchâteau transit postmark



Dated Metz le 15 7bre - September 17 (4th collection) Neufchâteau postmark

'MUSLIN' UNDERLAY
OF A THICKNESS OF
180 MICRONS

SIEGE OF METZ

A ROBINSON ENGINEERS BALLOON

Robinson wrote in pencil a few messages
on the inside of a balloon's fabric. These
were forwarded to his wife in England under
cover of an official French postal envelope.

This balloon was launched on 20th. September.



PAPER GLUED
ON 'MUSLIN'
110 MICRONS



*Ministère des Finances
Direction Générale des P.T.T.*

Madame Robinson Melaiide

31 Southport

Lancashire

Angleterre



1870 French Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Siege of Metz August 19 – October 27

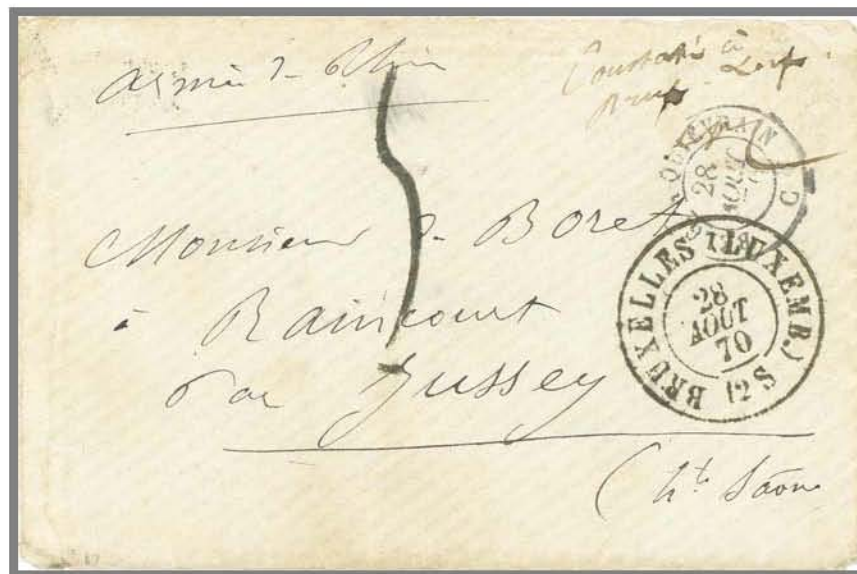
Successful Line-Crosser Mail

Very few line-crossers were successful in passing the strong German siege lines. Those who succeeded generally went north through occupied territory to the Belgian frontier.



Dateline Longville sous Metz le 26 Septembre 1870 from Lt.-Colonel de Narp - arrived October 3

Given under **flag-of-truce** to Prussian 2nd Army commander - granted free frank on September 30



Dateline sous Metz 20 août by Colonel of 67th Regiment - confided to **line-crosser** going to Belgium

Posted unpaid on August 28 in Brussels - arrived August 31 in Jussey with 50 centimes postage due

1870 German Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

I Armee July 25 - October 27

Headquarters Bureaus

The Prussian units in the German army had fieldpost datestamps with "K:PR", for the King of Prussia. No cancels were supplied, since the military free frank was universal.



Posted October 2 at 1st Army Headquarters near Metz - arrived in Belgium October 11 - *I Armee* censor mark

Feldpost-Correspondenzkarte.

An
Lina Körtling

Bestimmungsort: *Hannover*

Wohnung des Empfängers, wenn sie mit Sicherheit angegeben werden kann.
Glockspassgasse

1) Der obige Vordruck für die Adresse ist deutlich und vollständig auszufüllen.
 2) Die Rückseite des Formulars kann in ihrer ganzen Ausdehnung zu brieflichen Mittheilungen jeder Art benutzt werden, welche, sowie die Adresse, mit Tinte, Bleistift oder farbigem Stifte geschrieben sein können.
 3) In den Correspondenzkarten, welche an die mobilen Truppen und Militärbefehlshabern abgesandt werden, muß deutlich angegeben sein: zu welchem Armee-Corps, welcher Division, welchem Regimente, welcher Compagnie (oder sonstigem Truppentheile) der Adressat gehört, welchen Grad und Charakter oder welches Amt bei der Militärverwaltung derselbe bekleidet.

Dateline *Atton*, south of Metz - posted August 17 at Supreme Headquarters bureau - arrived August 20

1870 German Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

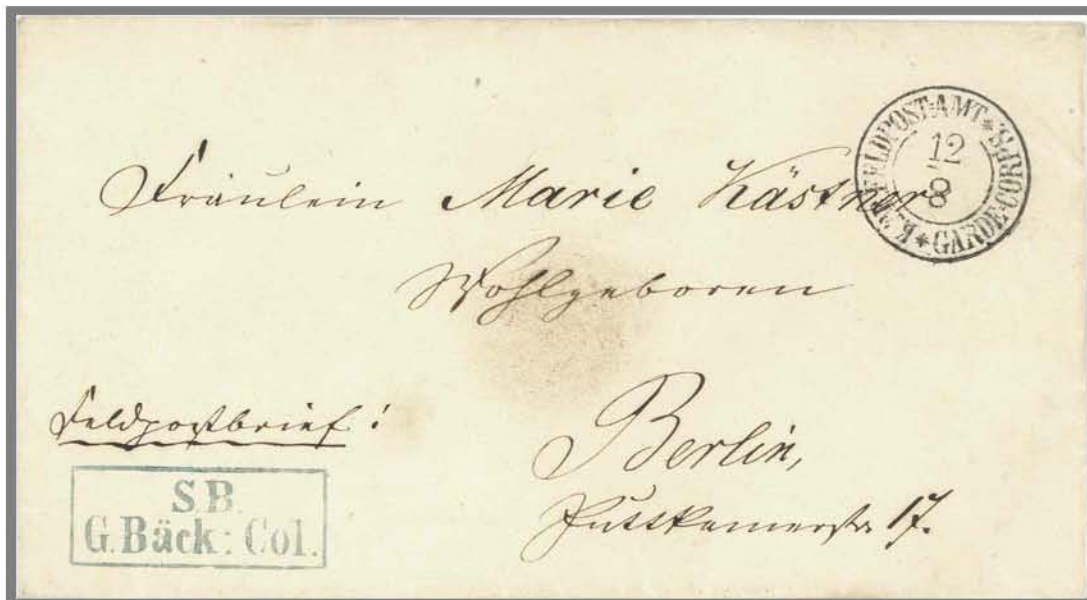
II Armee July 25 - October 27

Corps Bureaus

The Prussians allowed French captives to use their fieldpost system, and gave them free frank privileges. The typical "Prusse Erquelines" French entry mark was applied in Paris.



Dateline *Vionville le 21 Août* by **captured wounded French soldier** on the August 16 battlefield
Posted August 22 at 3rd Corps bureau, which canceled the **French 20c stamp** - arrived August 30



Posted August 17 at Guard Corps Headquarters bureau moving from St. Avoird to Metz - arrived August 14
Old-style Prussian fieldpost postmark with roman numerals, dating from the 1866 war with Austria

1870 German Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

II Armee July 25 - October 27

Divisional Bureaus

Non-Prussian units in the German armies also indicated their origin in the fieldpost markings. The 25th Division, from the Grand Duchy of Hesse, used "*Feldpost der Grossherzog Hessischen*".



Posted September 3 at 25th (Hessian) Division bureau - part of 9th Corps on siege lines around Metz
Mail to foreign destination required 9 kreutzer franking - arrived September 8 in Leeds, England



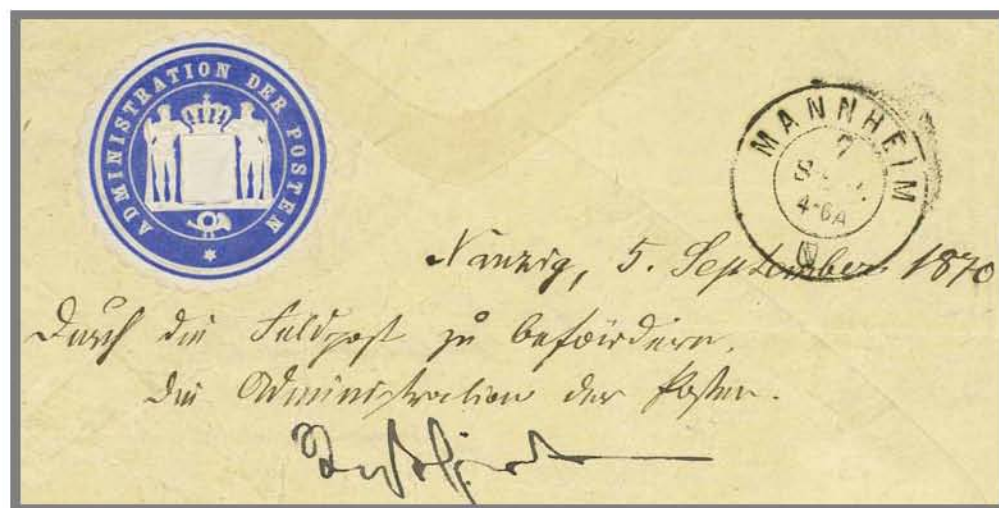
Posted August 13 - 6th Cavalry Division bureau was assigned 3. Armee-Cps Avantgarde postmark
Private sticker from 3rd Corps Commanding General Alvensleben - arrived August 19 in Berlin

1870 German Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Reserve Armee July 25 - November 9

First Day Use of Alsace-Lorraine Stamps

The Mecklenburg Corps was held in Germany to protect against a French attack on the German coast. In mid-August, it was moved to Reims as a general army reserve. It would later become the 13th Corps.



Posted prepaid 30c on September 6 - Governor-General of Lorraine used 8. *Armee-Cps Avantgarde* postmark

On September 5, censor at Nancy directed letter, "to be sent via the Feldpost administration of Posts"

1870-71 German Campaign in Alsace-Lorraine

Reserve Armee July 25 – March 7

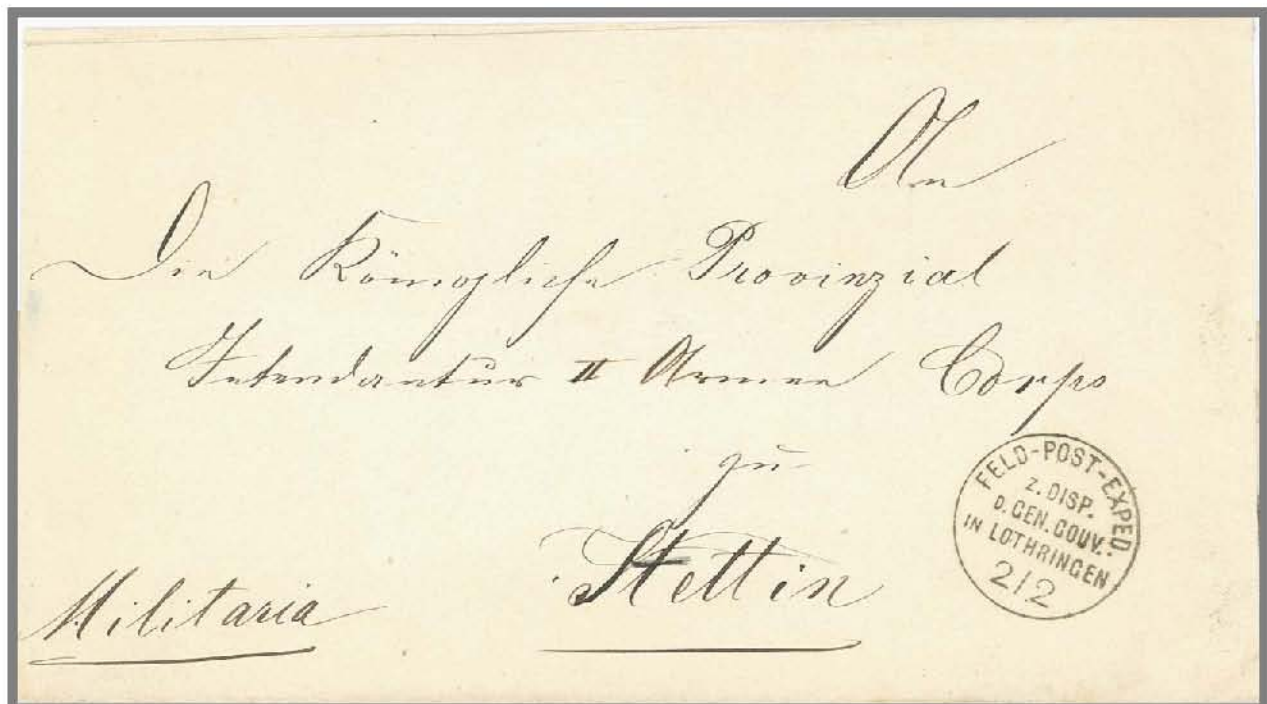
Governor-General of Lorraine

As head of the reserve army at Reims, the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg was appointed Governor-General of Lorraine. His fieldpost was "Corps der Grossherzog von Mecklenburg."



Posted September 30 at the Mecklenburg Corps bureau - 2. Brandenb. Ulanen Rgt. No. 11 of 17th Division

This marking is the rarest of the 1870-71 German fieldpost markings



Posted February 2 at Gen. Gouv. In Lothringen bureau at Reims - arrived February 6

1870 French Campaign in the Ardennes

Armée de Châlons August 5 - September 2

Army Postmarks and Cancels

On August 5, the *Armée de Châlons* was split off from the *Armée du Rhin*. The 1st, 5th, 7th, 12th and 13th Corps were concentrated near Châlons to protect Paris. They continued to use *Armée du Rhin* postal markings.



Posted August 9 at *Quartier Général 7e Corps* bureau in Belfort - preparing to leave for Châlons

From General Douay, commander of 7th Corps - officer's mail required 20 centimes franking

Letter postmarked in Strasbourg on August 11, the **first day of the Strasbourg siege**

Released at end of the siege on September 27, and forwarded to Besancon on October 8

Only known example of 'AR 7e C' cancel

1870 French Campaign in the Ardennes

Armée de Châlons August 5 - September 2

13th Corps Precursor in Rome

The 13th Corps was formed in Paris around two seasoned regiments which returned from Rome August 5-25. It survived the Sedan battle and managed to retreat back to Paris.



Posted July 28 at the **Corps Expédre d'Italie Rome** fieldpost bureau - arrived July 30 in Marseille
The July 24 free frank decree was not extended to Rome troops until August 3 - red 'CER' cancel



Posted August 4 at **Corps Expédre 2 Rome** bureau - red PD - only two Rome free frank covers are known

1870 German Campaign in the Ardennes

IV Armee August 19 - September 2

Divisional Bureau

The 4th Army, also known as the *Maas* (Meuse) *Armee*, was commanded by the Crown Prince of Saxony. With the 3rd Army, it defeated the *Armée de Châlons* at Sedan on September 1.



Dated 28 Aug Bivouac von Clermont - posted September 2 at 1st Guard Infantry Division bureau

North German 1 groschen franking was unnecessary - canceled by datestamp

The Guard Corps was west of Verdun, about to wheel north toward Sedan

Very few German fieldpost covers are franked

1870 French Campaign for Paris

13e Corps September 3 - November 29

Military Balloon Mail

The 13th Corps successfully retreated from the Sedan debacle and became the kernel of the Parisian defense. It was supplied with *Armée du Rhin* fieldpost service starting on September 15.



Posted with military free frank on September 27 at *Quartier Général 13e Corps* bureau
September 26 Postal Decree eliminated all free franks on balloon mail - this one accepted
September 27 Paris *cachet de route* transit mark - balloon "*Etats-Unis*" - arrived October 2

The 13th Corps received the last of the *Armée du Rhin* fieldpost markings

1870 French Campaign for Paris

13e Corps September 3 - November 5

Government Mail

General Vinoy was commander of the 13th Corps. As a senior member of the Paris government, he was entitled to use the official mail sack carried by each balloon.



Datelined *13e Corps d'Armée Quartier Général le 22 7bre 1870* - arrived September 25

Government cursive marking *Ministère de la Guerre (1)* - placed in official mail sack

Only official letter known confided to the first balloon "*Neptune*"

Only *Ministère de la Guerre* marking known on balloon mail

1870 French Campaign for Paris

13e Corps September 3 - November 29

1st Division Bureau AL

The 13th Corps bureau AL used the 'AR13eC' cancel that should have been assigned to the Headquarters bureau. Instead, Headquarters used the 'ARAL' cancel.



Dateline *Nogent le 29 7bre 1870* and posted September 29 at 13th Corps 1st Division bureau AL

Datestamp as cancel is rare; normal cancel was 'AR13eC' killer - balloon "*Celeste*" - arrived October 6



Overpaid postcard mailed November 6 at 13th Corps 1st Division bureau AL - rare use of **1862 20c stamps**
Arrived in Ireland on November 11 - balloon "*Gironde*" - military mail to foreign destinations is very rare

1870 French Campaign for Paris

13e Corps September 3 – November 29

2nd Division Bureau AM

The 13th Corps bureau AM used the 'ARAM' cancel and marked its letters with either a red or a black 'P.P.' paid marking.



Dateline *Bicêtre le 1er 8bre 70* and posted October 1 at 13th Corps 2nd Division bureau AM

Only known red datestamp from this bureau - balloon "Louis Blanc" - arrived October 17



Dateline *Bicêtre Kremlin le 7 9bre 1870* - posted November 7 at 13th Corps 2nd Division bureau AM

Rare franking with 10c *Siège* Issue stamps - balloon "Gironde" - arrived November 12 in Meximieux

1870 French Campaign for Paris

13e Corps September 3 - November 29

3rd Division Bureau AN

The 13th Corps bureau AN used the 'ARAN' cancel. Mail from this bureau is the rarest of the 13th Corps bureaus.



Posted October 27 at 13th Corps 3rd Division bureau AN - balloon "Colonel Charras"

Arrived November 2 in Chateaulin and then forwarded to Quimper



Dateline Arcueil le 12 Novembre 1870 - posted November 12 at 13th Corps 3rd Division bureau AN

November 13 *Quartier Général 13e Corps* transit mark - balloon "Gen. Uhrich" - arrived November 23

1870 French Campaign for Paris

14e Corps September 13 - November 29

Armée Française Postmarks

The 14th Corps was formed in mid-September 1870 at Paris. Its fieldpost service was introduced in mid-October under the name of *Armée Française*. Only datestamps were provided.



Datelined *Porte Maillot Le 8 Novembre* and posted November 8 at the 14th Corps Headquarters bureau. From the saved mailbag of the captured balloon "Daguerre" - letter arrived November 28 in Périgueux. Private 14th Corps handstamp provides correlation to *Armée Française Quartier Général* fieldpost marking.

14th Corps was the first army unit ever to use the *Armée Française* designation.

1870 French Campaign for Paris

14e Corps September 13 - November 29

1st Division Bureau A

The 14th Corps had three divisions. Only Bureau A of the 1st Division was established before the 14th Corps fieldpost was absorbed into the 2nd Army on November 29.



Datelined *Clichy la Garenne 10 9bre 1870* and posted November 11 at *Armée Française 14e Corps A bureau*
Red datestamp as cancel; no cancels provided - captured mail from balloon "*Daguerre*" - no arrival marks



Datelined *Clichy la Garenne il 28 Ottobre* and posted October 29 at 14th Corps 1st Division bureau A
Balloon "*Fulton*" - letter arrived November 10 in Italy - foreign mail is very rare

1870 French Campaign for Paris

Garde Nationale Mobile September 3 - November 5

Departmental Markings

The *Garde Mobile* was a civilian militia designed to support first-line troops. It formed an important part of the Parisian defense, but was not provided with military fieldpost services.



Posted December 12 in Paris - franked by Siege Issue 10c tête-bêche pair

Blue handstamp *Garde Natle Mobile de l'Ain 40me Regt Provisoire*

Carried from Paris by balloon "Parmentier" - arrived December 28



Dateline *Paris jeudi 20 octobre 70* and endorsed *Garde mobile d'Ille et Vilaine*

Confided to Minister Leveillé who arranged to have it carried by the balloon "Bretagne"

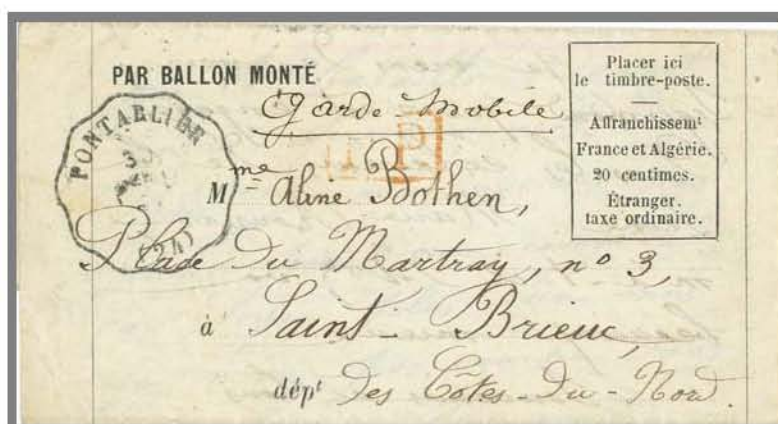
"Bretagne" carried no Post Office mail, only confided mail - letter arrived November 10

1870 French Campaign for Paris

Garde Nationale Mobile September 3 - November 5

Captured Balloon

The balloon "Montgolfier" was captured upon its landing in Germany. The pilot and passengers escaped with a small number of confided letters.



Dateline *Camp de Rosny 18 8bre 1870* - confided to passenger **Col. Le Bouedec** by one of his soldiers

Letter posted October 30 at Pontarlier on French frontier - arrived November 2 in St Brieuc



Dateline *23 8bre* - confided to passenger **Col. Delapierre**, commanding 62nd Regiment of *Gardes Mobiles*

1870 French Campaign for Paris

Garde Nationale September 3 - November 5

Aérostiers Mail

The *Garde Nationale* was an urban militia designed to assist in the protection of cities. In Paris, it principally guarded the walls of the city, and was not provided with military fieldpost services.



Dated *Vendredi 23 Xbre 70* and confided to balloon builders (*Aérostiers*) Dartois & Yon
Garde Nationale pilot Captain Grizeaut added his 'BALLON MERLIN DE DOUAI' cachet
Blue *Aérostiers* cachet on reverse - mail processed at Bordeaux on December 30

The "*Merlin de Douai*" carried no Post Office mail, only confided mail

1870-71 French Campaign for Paris

Corps d'Armée de St. Denis November 8 - January 27

3rd Brigade at St Denis

The *Corps de St Denis* consisted of three brigades protecting the city of St. Denis (north of Paris). No fieldpost services were provided, so its soldiers used civilian facilities.



Posted with unauthorized free frank on November 14 at Paris (SC) bureau - **endorsed 138e de ligne**
Balloon "Général Uhrich" landed near Luzarches on November 20 - letter arrived November 29



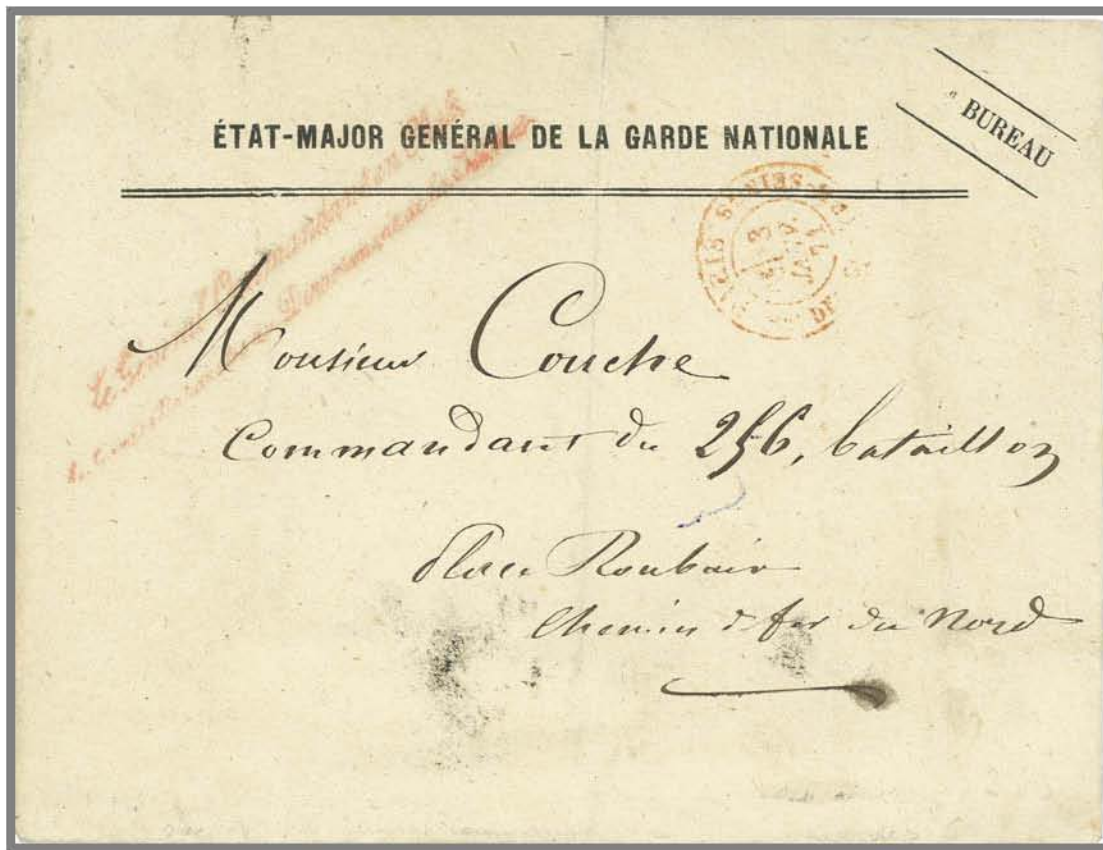
Dateline *St Denis 1er Janvier* and posted January 2 in St. Denis by captain in 138th Regiment
Endorsed armée de St Denis - balloon "Newton" - letter arrived January 12 in Arcachon

1870-71 French Campaign for Paris

1e Armée November 6 - January 27

Commander-in-Chief

In the November 6 re-organization of the Parisian armies, the *Garde Nationale* was consolidated in the *1e Armée*. Their duties remained the same, and no fieldpost service was provided to them.



Posted with free frank at Paris *Section de Contre-Seings* bureau on January 3, 1871
Red official cursive marking *Général Commandant en Chef des Gardes Nationales*

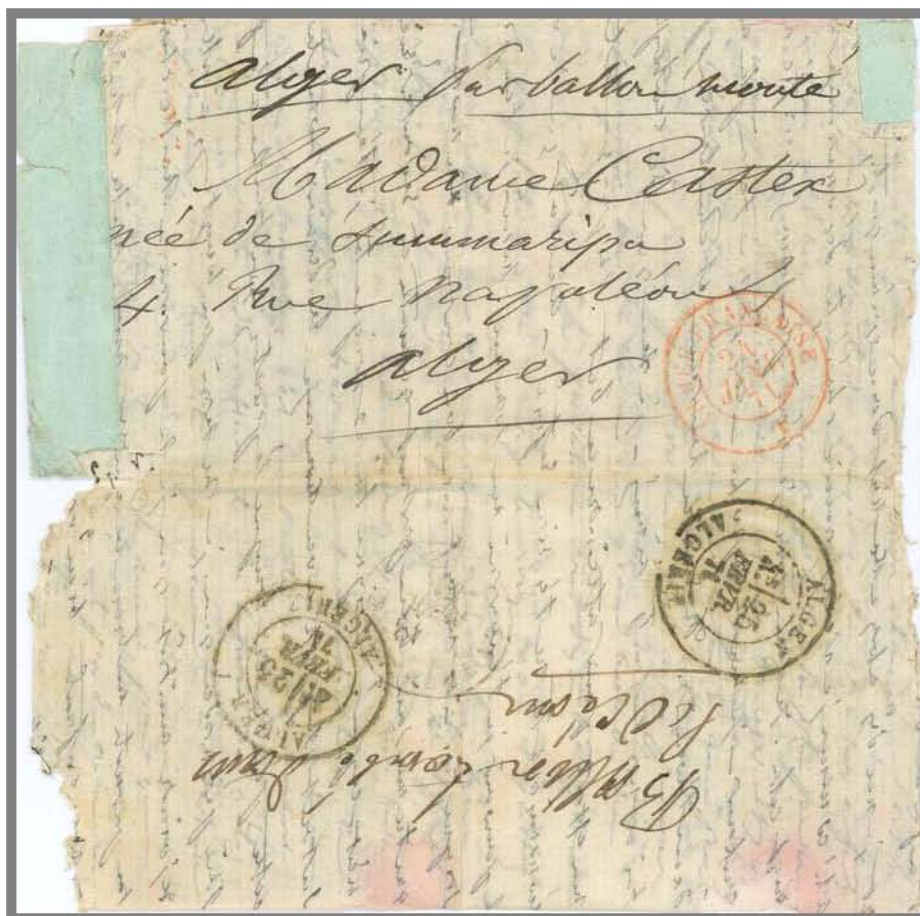
Official mail was sent under free frank

1870-71 French Campaign for Paris

2e Armée November 30 - January 27

Armée Française Fieldpost

Following the November 6 army re-organization, the 2e Armée became the backbone of the defense. On November 30, its fieldpost service, with *Armée Française* postmarks and cancels, was introduced



Datelined *Les Lilas 23 Janvier* and posted on January 24 at the 2nd Corps Headquarters bureau F
Red postmark and 'AFF' cancel used by this bureau in January 1871 - 20c stamp floated off in the sea
Balloon "*Richard Wallace*" was lost at sea - rare **February 13 La Tremblade** *cachet de repêchage*

A small amount of this balloon's mail washed up on French shores

1870-71 French Campaign for Paris

2e Armée November 30 - January 27

Early Usages

The *2e Armée* was reorganized on December 5 after the costly Marne battles. Its fieldpost service was correspondingly reorganized on December 19.



Dateline *Bicêtre le 29 9bre 70* and posted on November 30 at the 1st Corps 2nd Division bureau D
Balloon “*Jules Favre #2*” - Roche-s-Y on December 2 transit - **earliest 2e Armée fieldpost usage**



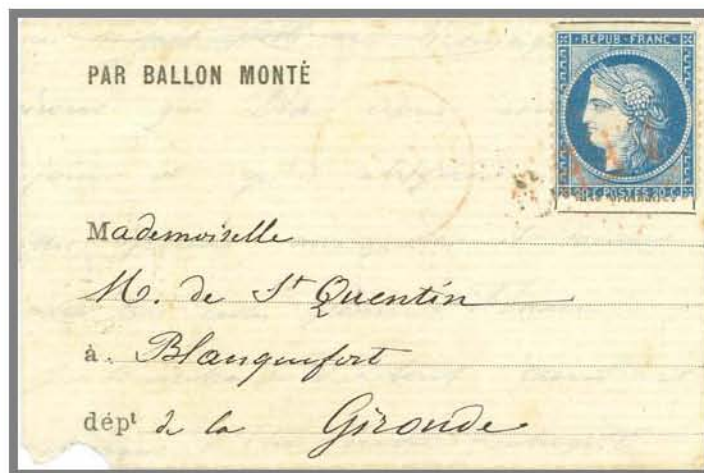
Dateline *Camp de St Maur le 12 Décembre* and posted December 12 at 2e Armée Headquarters bureau A
No arrival marks since balloon “*Ville de Paris*” was captured - from 42nd Regiment soldier in Reserve Division

1870-71 French Campaign for Paris

2e Armée November 30 - January 27

1st Corps

On December 5, the 1st Corps (Blanchard) was dissolved, and the 2nd Corps (de Maussion) was renamed 1st Corps. 1st Corps was assigned bureaus B, C, D and E.



Dated *Paris le 14 Janvier* and posted on January 14 at 1st Corps Headquarters bureau B
Only three Bureau B covers known, all with red datestamp and 'AFB' cancel - balloon "Vaucanson"



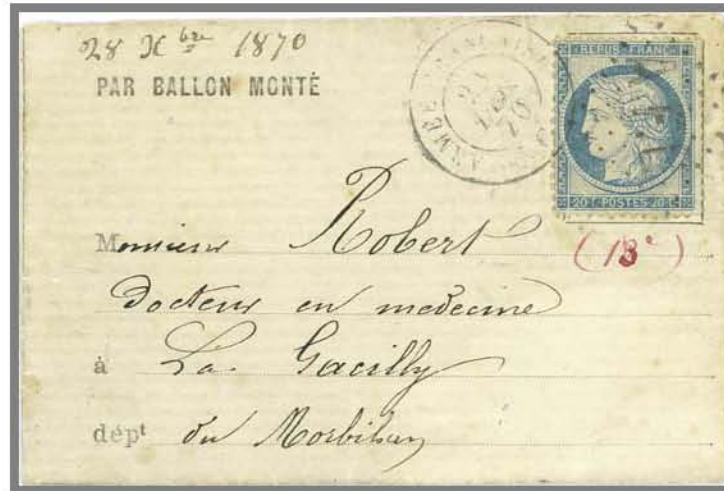
Dated *Paris 10 Janvier* and posted January 10 at 1st Corps 2nd Division bureau D
Prepaid 50c Prussian rate to occupied territory; no arrival marks - balloon "Kepler"

1870-71 French Campaign for Paris

2e Armée November 30 - January 27

Bureau C

The 2e Armée Bureau C mainly used the datestamp as a cancel. Fewer than ten Bureau C letters are known.



Dateline *Noisy le Sec* le 28 Décembre and posted on December 28 at 1st Corps 1st Division bureau C

Only known example of 'AFC' cancel - balloon "*Bayard*" - arrived December 31 in Gacilly



Dateline *Aubervilliers* and posted January 12 at 1st Corps (formerly 2nd Corps) 1st Division bureau C

Balloon "*Général Faidherbe*" - arrived January 19 in Italy - **military mail to foreign destinations is rare**

1870-71 French Campaign for Paris

2e Armée November 30 - January 27

Bureau E

The 2e Armée Bureau E used the 'AFE' killer as a cancel. Fewer than five Bureau E letters are known.



Dateline from *Romainville* and posted on January 12 at 1st Corps 3rd Division bureau E
Only known example of 'AFE' cancel - balloon "*Général Faidherbe*" - arrived March 3, 1871



Dateline *Petit Romainville 10 Janvier* and posted January 11 at 1st Corps 3rd Division bureau E
Red P.P. signifies **free frank for local Paris mail** - arrived January 12 in Paris

1870-71 French Campaign for Paris

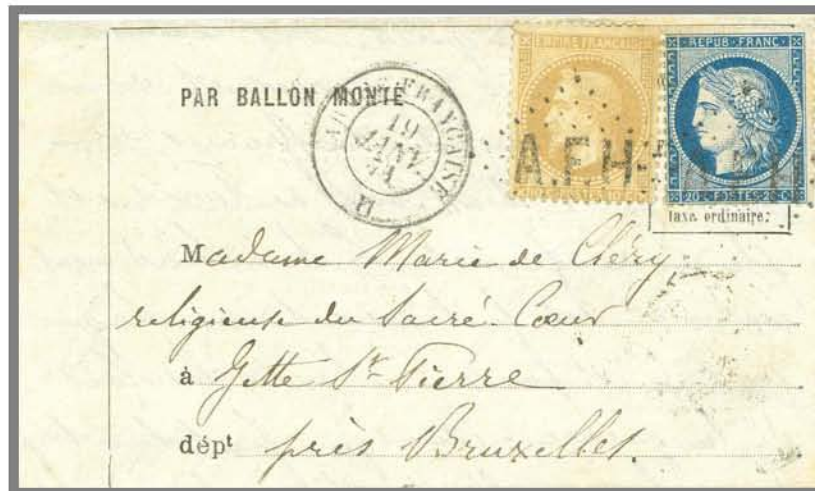
2e Armée November 30 - January 27

2nd Corps

The 2e Armée 2nd Corps fieldpost was assigned bureaus F, G, H and J. Bureau G used the 'AFG' killer, and bureau H used both the 'AFH' killer and its datestamp as a cancel.



Dateline *Noisy le 26 Xbre* and posted on December 26 at 2nd Corps 1st Division bureau G
Balloon "*Tourville*" - arrived December 31 - **fewer than ten Bureau G covers known**



Dateline *Bagnolet 18 Janvier 1871* and posted January 19 at 2nd Corps 2nd Division bureau H
Balloon "*Général Boubaki*" - arrived January 25 in Belgium - **military mail to foreign destinations is rare**

1870-71 French Campaign for Paris

2e Armée November 30 - January 27

Reserve Division

On December 19, Bureau J was assigned to the Reserve Division. Prior to that, it had served the 3rd Division of the 2nd Corps. With only two divisions, the newly-designated 2nd Corps had no need for Bureau J.



Dateline *Vincennes le 18 Dbre 1870* and posted on December 19 at Reserve Division bureau J

‘AFJ’ cancel - carried on balloon “*Lavoister*” - arrived December 25 in Bordeaux

From *caporal au 122^e de ligne 3^e brigade - Division de réserve de la 2^e Armée*

Fewer than ten Bureau J covers are known

1870-71 French Campaign for Paris

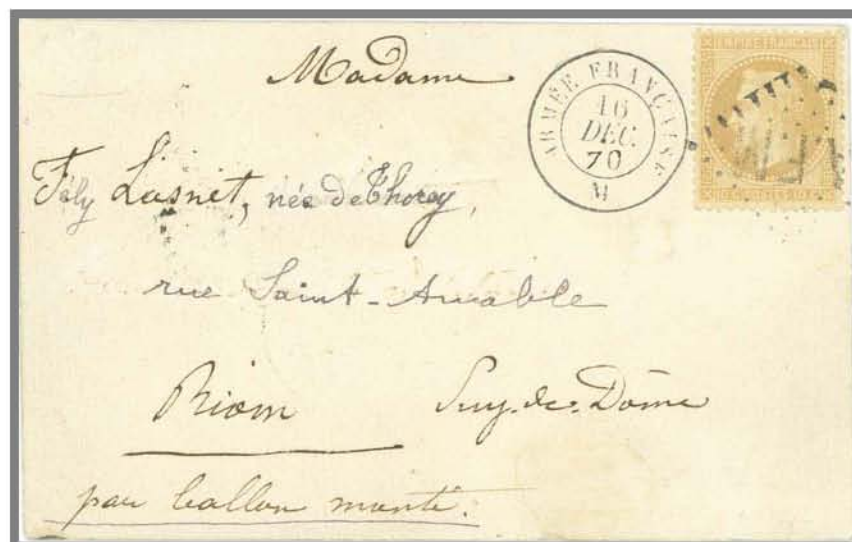
2e Armée November 30 - January 27

Rare Bureaus

3rd Corps Bureaus K, L, and M were only in use for three weeks, as the 3rd Corps fieldpost became the 2nd Corps on December 19. It used Bureaus F, G, and H from that point on.



Datelined *le 10 Debre 1870* and posted on December 12 at 3rd Corps 1st Division bureau L
'AFL' cancel - balloon "Ville de Paris" captured by Germans - **only cover known from Bureau L**



Datelined *Paris 17 Décembre 70* and posted December 16 at 3rd Corps 2nd Division bureau M - 'AFM' cancel
Balloon "Parmentier" - arrived December 27 in Riom - **only cover known from Bureau M**

1870-71 French Campaign for Paris

3e Armée November 6 – January 27

Balloon Letter and Its Reply by Boule

Most of the *Garde Mobile* and Naval forces were consolidated into the *3e Armée* on November 6. For a short period in mid-December, the 3rd Army used the old 13th Corps Bureau AN fieldpost markings.



Dateline *Parc de St Maur 12 Xbre 1870* and posted December 12 at obsolete 13th Corps *Bau AN*

From 3rd Armée 2nd Division - balloon "*Parmentier*" - arrived December 29 in Montpellier



Reply by *Boule de Moulins* posted January 2 in Montpellier - **June 22, 1871** Paris **Poste Restante** postmark

Franked by Bordeaux Issue 20c Type II stamps - forwarded back to Montpellier in August 1871

1870-71 German Campaign for Paris

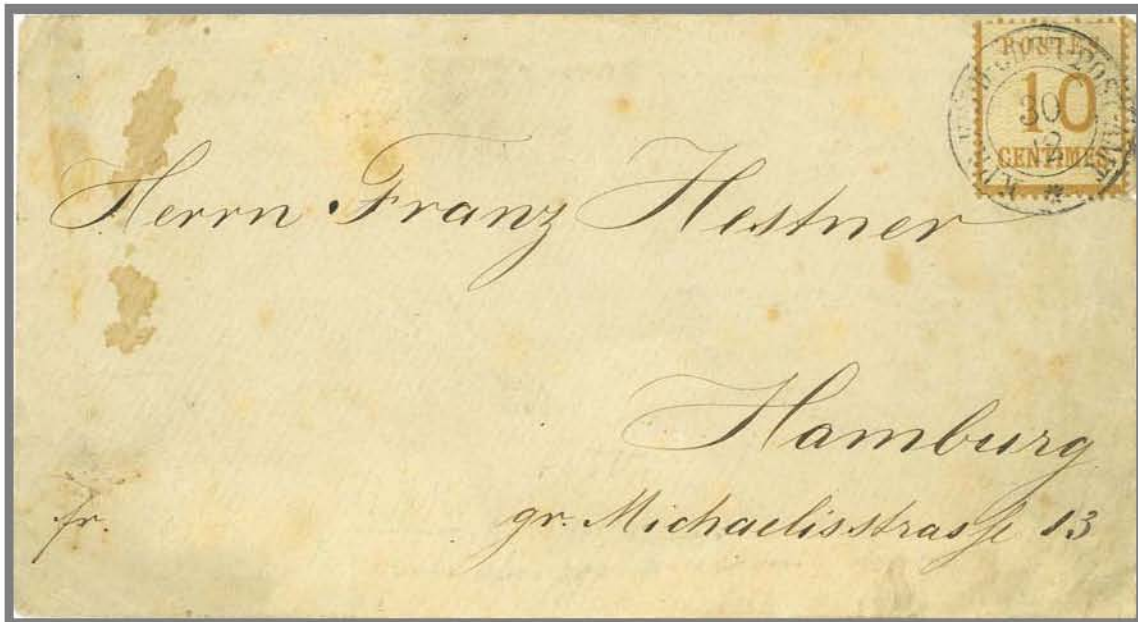
III Armee September 3 - January 27

Franked Fieldpost Mail

The 3rd and 4th German armies advanced from Sedan to Paris, and encircled the city on September 18. They besieged Paris until a temporary armistice was signed on January 28, 1871.



Posted September 17 at 3rd Army Headquarters bureau near Paris - arrived October 3
French franking accepted per red 'f20' and red P.P. - rare fieldpost mark on French stamp



Posted December 30 at Supreme Headquarters bureau (*Feld-Ober-Post*) at Versailles, southwest of Paris
Franked for 10c rate to Germany with Alsace-Lorraine Issue stamp - arrived January 4 in Hamburg

1870-71 German Campaign for Paris

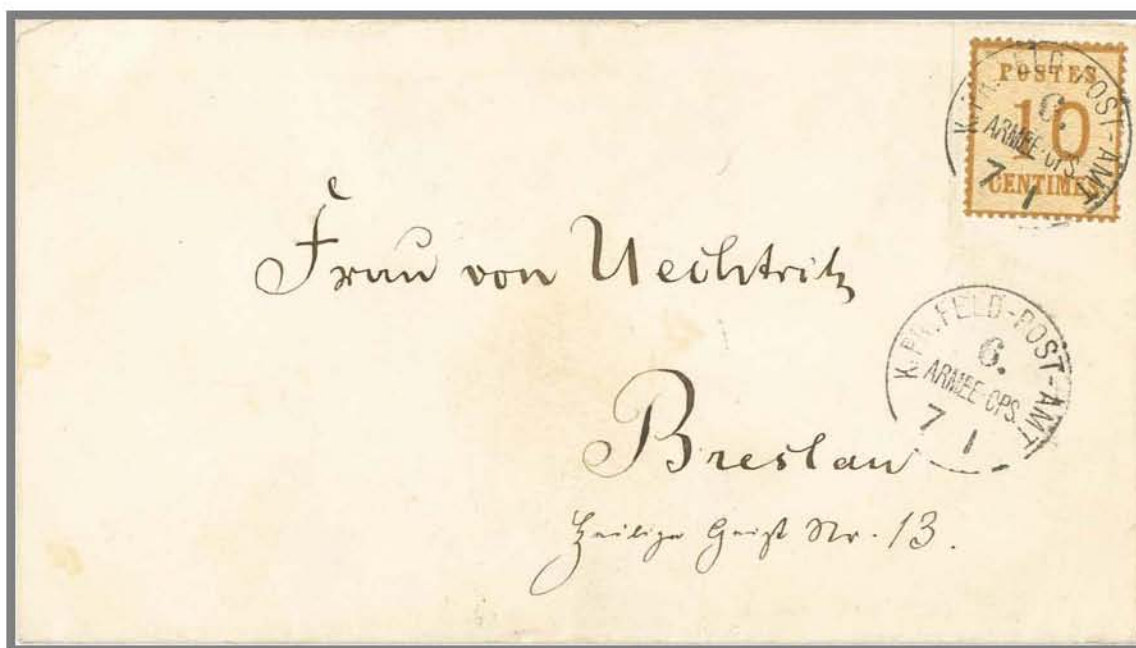
III Armee September 3 - January 27

Siege of Paris

The Bavarian units in the German armies used a "K. Bayer Feldpost" (King of Bavaria) postmark. The Bavarians were stationed around Paris long after the temporary armistice period.



Posted April 23 at 2nd Bavarian Corps VI bureau near Fontenay, east of Paris - arrived October 3
Mixed franking - transferred April 24 to French post office at Fontenay -30c due in occupied Metz

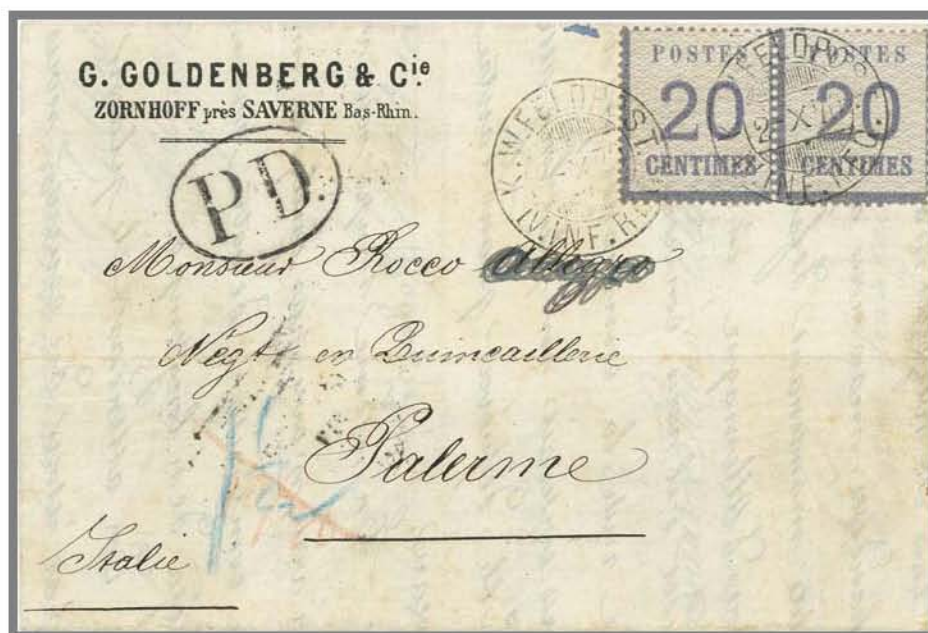


Posted on January 7 at 6th Corps bureau south of Paris - arrived January 12 in Breslau
Unnecessary 10c franking with Alsace-Lorraine Issue stamp

1870-71 German Campaign for Paris

III Armee September 3 - January 27

Württemberg Division



Posted October 2 at 4th Regiment bureau protecting supply lines at Saverne - 40c franking to Italy
Württemberg Division used a "K. W. Feldpost" (King of Württemberg) postmark - arrived October 9

No. 1.
Apollis

Von der Königl. Württembergischen Feldpost.



Correspondenz-Karte.

An *un*

Wegleitz. Zornhoffen

Wegleitz

Bestimmungsort: *Marbach*

W. Württemberg

Wohnung des Empfängers, wenn sie mit Sicherheit angegeben werden kann.

Nur gefälligen Beachtung beim Gebrauch der Feldpost-Correspondenz-Karten.

- 1) Formulare können bei allen Feldpoststellen bezogen werden; für das Formular wird nichts berechnet.
- 2) Der obige Vordruck für die Adresse ist deutlich und vollständig auszufüllen.
- 3) Die Rückseite des Formulars kann in ihrer ganzen Ausdehnung zu Mittheilungen jeder Art benutzt werden, welche, sowie die Adresse, mit Tinte, Bleistift oder farbigem Stifte geschrieben sein können.
- 4) Die Entnahme von Postvorsatz, sowie das Verfahren der Recommendation und der Expressbestellung ist bei Feldpost-Correspondenz-Karten nicht gestattet.
- 5) Die Feldpost-Correspondenz-Karten können zu schriftlichen Mittheilungen sowohl innerhalb Württembergs, als auch für den Verkehr nach Norddeutschland, Oesterreich, Bayern, Baden und Luxemburg benutzt werden.
- 6) Der Absender hat sich auf der Rückseite der Karte namhaft zu machen.

Feldpost card datelined Notsy-le-Grand January 26 and posted at 1st Jaeger Battalion bureau - no arrival marks

1870-71 German Campaign for Paris

IV Armee September 3 - January 27

Saxon Fieldpost

The 4th Army Headquarters used a "Feldpost Expedition des Ober Commandos der Armee Abteilung des Kronprinzen von Sachsen" marking, for the Army detachment under the Crown Prince of Saxony.

Feldpost - Correspondenzkarte.

An *Kronprinz von Sachsen*

Bestimmungsort: *Berlin*

Wohnung des Empfängers, wenn sie mit Sicherheit angegeben werden kann. *Posthaus*

18. 11

22. 11

11. 12

Abt.

obige Vordruck für die Adresse ist deutlich und vollständig auszufüllen. Rückseite des Formulars kann in ihrer ganzen Ausdehnung zu brieflichen Mittheilungen jeder Art benutzt werden, welche, sowie die Adresse, Linke, Pfeifeder oder farbigen Stifte geschrieben sein können. den Correspondenzkarten, welche an die mobilen Truppen und

Militärbeamten adgesandt werden, muß deutlich angegeben sein: zu welchem Armee-Corps, welcher Division, welchem Regimente, welcher Compagnie (oder sonstigem Truppentheile) der Adressat gehört, welchen Grad und Charakter oder welches Amt bei der Militärverwaltung derselbe bekleidet.

Posted on November 18 at the *Maas Armee* Headquarters bureau northeast of Paris

Feldpost card arrived November 22 in Berlin

Fewer than ten examples known with this feldpost postmark

1870-71 French Campaign on the Loire

1^e Armée de la Loire September 15 – December 5

15th Corps Headquarters

The 1^e Armée de la Loire consisted of the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 20th and 21st Corps, all formed in the September-November period. Its purpose was to protect the Government at Tours.



Posted September 30, 1870 at Paris Vaugirard - carried out of besieged Paris on balloon "*Louis Blanc*"

Addressed to officer in depot at Besançon - arrived October 17, but officer had joined the 15th Corps at Orléans

Forwarded to **15^e CORPS D'ARMÉE QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL** bureau near Bourges on October 20

Only known cover with *Armée de la Loire* fieldpost marking used on arrival

1870-71 French Campaign on the Loire

1^e Armée de la Loire September 15 - December 5

15th Corps Around Orléans

On December 4, the German II Army defeated the *1^e Armée de la Loire* north of Orléans. Orléans fell on December 5, and the *1^e Armée de la Loire* was re-organized into new army formations.



Posted at **15^e CORPS D'ARMÉE 2^{me} DIVISION bureau** - arrived November 10 in Pont d'Ain

The 2nd Division was at Mer (southwest of Orléans) preparing for November 9 Coulmiers battle



Posted at **15^e CORPS D'ARMÉE 3^{me} DIVISION bureau** - arrived December 1 at Foix-s-Arrière

The 3rd Division was near Artenay, protecting Orléans from the north just before December 5 battle

1870-71 French Campaign on the Loire

1^e Armée de la Loire September 15 - December 5

16th Corps Headquarters



Dateline *St Péray-la-Colombe le 15 9bre* and posted at **16^e CORPS QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL** bureau
Arrived November 17 in Le Mans - 16th Corps was protecting Orléans to the northwest



(photocopy of letter front)

Military balloonists ("Aérostier Militaire") attached to the 16th Corps Headquarters for surveillance duties

Letter carried on unsuccessful attempt to fly a balloon back to Paris on October 20 from Chartres

Dateline *Chateauroux 29 7bre 1870* - signed by pilot, Gabriel Mangin - delivered February 1871

1870-71 French Campaign on the Loire

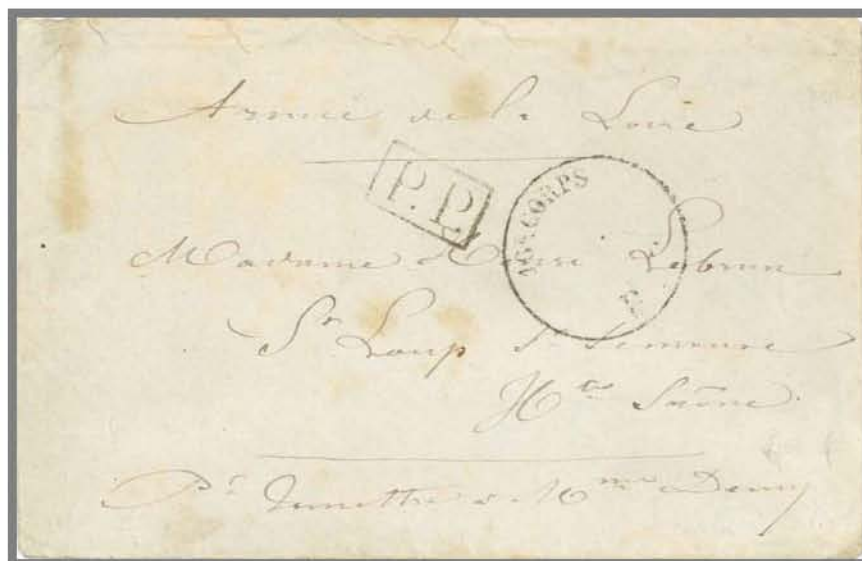
1^e Armée de la Loire September 15 - December 5

16th Corps Divisional Bureaus



(Photocopy of reverse)

Docketed *du 1^e Nov* and posted at 16th Corps 1st Division bureau A at Blois, southwest of Orléans
Routed via Switzerland and Baden to occupied France - **blue Swiss military censor marking** - 30c due



Datelined *le 15 novembre* and posted at 16th Corps 2nd Division bureau B at Gémigny, west of Orléans

1870-71 French Campaign on the Loire

2e Armée de la Loire December 6 - March 7

Franked Military Mail

Following its December 4 defeat at Orléans the 1^e Armée de la Loire was divided between the 2e Armée de la Loire and the 2e Armée de l'Est. The 16th, 17th, 19th, 21st and 26th Corps made up the 2e Armée de la Loire.



Posted at **2e ARMÉE GRAND QUARTIER Gal** bureau at Poitiers - arrived March 6, 1871
Franked with 20c Bordeaux Issue stamp in anticipation of March 7 elimination of free frank
Franked military fieldpost mail is rare due to the existence of universal free franking privilege

Only known cover with this 2e Armée fieldpost marking

1870-71 French Campaign on the Loire

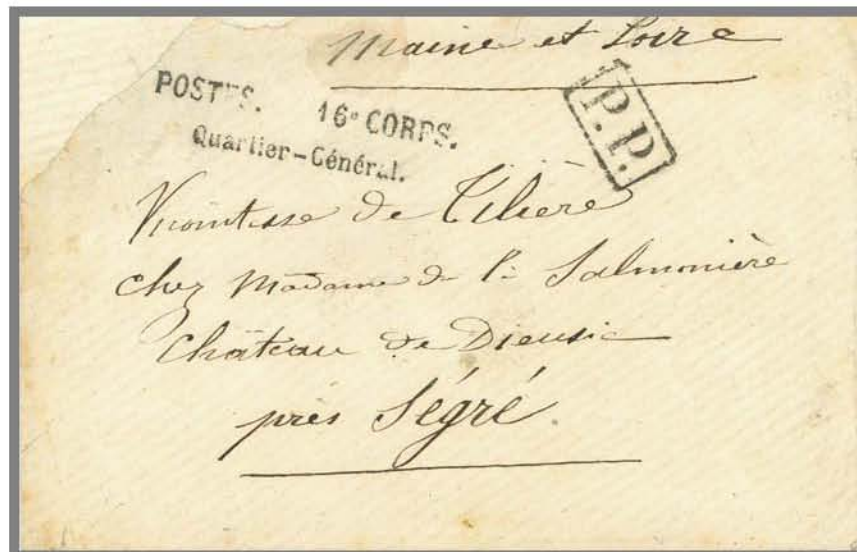
2e Armée de la Loire December 6 - March 7

16th Corps Headquarters

The 16th Corps continued to use its fieldpost markings from the 1e Armée, except that a new straight-line Headquarters Bureau marking replaced the old circular marking.



Docketed January 25, 1871 and posted at 16e CORPS Quartier-Général bureau near Laval
Foreign destination required **Bordeaux Issue franking** with Laval cancels - arrived February 1



Docketed January 27 and posted at 16e CORPS Quartier-Général bureau - black P.P.

The 16th Corps was at Laval after the January 12 battle and loss of Le Mans

1870-71 French Campaign on the Loire

2e Armée de la Loire December 6 - March 7

16th Corps Divisional Bureaus

On December 19, the *2e Armée de la Loire* moved west to defend the area around Le Mans. After its defeat at Le Mans on January 12, it played no further role in the war.



Posted January 2, 1871 at 16th Corps Cavalry Division bureau D near Le Mans
Foreign destination required 30c franking - arrived January 11 on Isle of Jersey



Datelined *Arnage le 27 Xbre* and posted at 16th Corps 1st Division bureau A
The 1st Division was south of Le Mans, awaiting the German II Army

1870-71 French Campaign on the Loire

2e Armée de la Loire December 6 - March 7

Armée de l'Ouest

The *Armée de l'Ouest* was formed in Brittany, and became the 4th Division of the 21st Corps of the *2e Armée de la Loire* on December 6. It used a dateless circular fieldpost marking.



Endorsed *Légion des Volontaires de l'Ouest* and posted at *ARMÉE DE L'OUEST* bureau

Franked with unnecessary **20c Bordeaux Issue stamp** - arrived December 19 in Nantes

The 21st Corps was at Droue, retreating after its December 15 defeat at Vendôme

Fewer than five covers with *Armée de l'Ouest* postmarks are known

1870-71 French Campaign on the Loire

2e Armée de la Loire December 6 - March 7

17th Corps

The 17th Corps received its first fieldpost markings during the February 1871 temporary armistice period. They conformed to the unified fieldpost design of undated circular postmarks.



Posted May 31 at 17th Corps Cavalry Division bureau at Vienne - latest known use

Franked 20 centimes - military free frank was eliminated on March 7, 1871



Posted at 17th Corps 1st Division bureau at Laval - arrived February 15, 1871 in Rome

Foreign destination required 50c franking in Bordeaux Issue and Laureated Issue stamps

1870-71 French Campaign on the Loire

2e Armée de la Loire December 6 - March 7

19th Corps

The 19th Corps was formed at Cherbourg in mid-January and received its fieldpost markings during the February 1871 temporary armistice period. In February, it retreated across the Loire River to Thouars.



Posted at 19th Corps 1st Division bureau - Thouars March 3, 1871 transit mark

Registered mail required 60c franking in Bordeaux Issue 20c stamps - arrived March 6

Fewer than five *Armée de la Loire* registered covers known

1870-71 French Campaign on the Loire

2e Armée de l'Ouest January 27 - March 7

Corps Lipowski

The *Armée de l'Ouest* was formed on January 27 to protect Normandy in the event that the temporary armistice broke down into renewed hostilities. It included the Lipowski Corps, but never saw any action.



Posted at Rouen (red German provisional occupation postmark) - prepaid 20c per red 'f20'

Addressed to *Chasseurs du Havre* in Lipowski Corps - arrived February 22 in Beuvron

Forwarded to St Hilaire du Harcouët on March 12 - **Marked 'INCONNU LIPOWSKI'**

Returned to sender in Rouen on March 22 with notation that the Corps had been demobilized

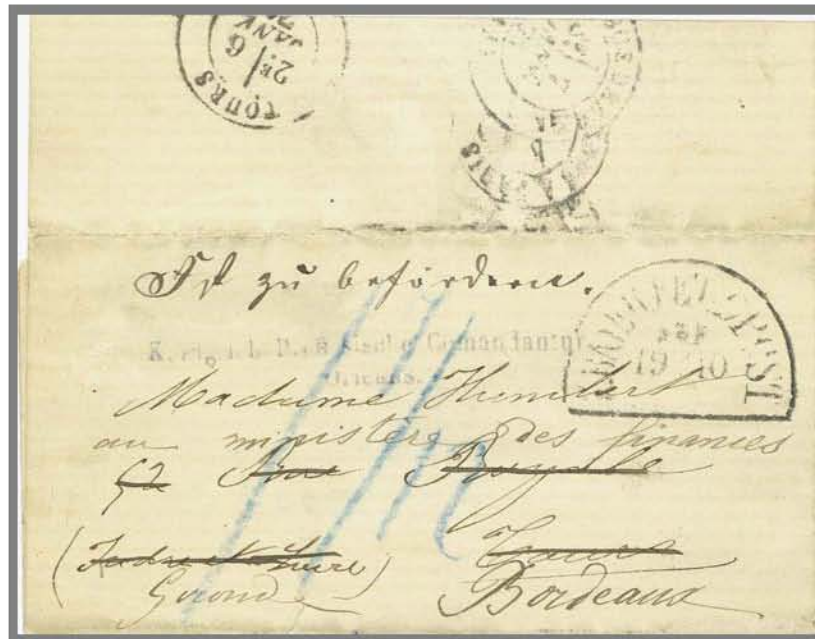
Only known Lipowski provisional marking

1870 German Campaign on the Loire

Von der Tann Detachment October 6 - November 9

1st Bavarian Corps

On October 6, General von der Tann, with three infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions, was detached from the Paris siege lines and sent to Orléans to counter the newly-formed French 15th Corps.



Posted October 19 at 1st Bavarian Corps III bureau in Orléans - arrived January 6 in Tours

Commandantur Orleans censor marking - Bavarians had captured Orléans on October 11



Posted October 16 at 1st Bavarian Corps III bureau in Orléans - arrived November 21 in La Guerche

Bavarian fieldpost was the only functioning post office in Orléans - French mail treated as unpaid

1870-71 German Campaign on the Loire

II Armee October 28 - March 7

Headquarters Bureau

The October 27 surrender of Metz released the 2nd Army toward the Loire region. On December 4, it defeated the French *1e Armée de la Loire* and re-occupied Orléans.

Feldpost-Correspondenzkarte.

16/12 Dresden

Herrn Julius Lohm

Director der Dresdener Feuer-Versicherungsgesellschaft

Abgesandt von: Leut. Flischer w. 3. Hannov. Inf. Reg. 79.

Bestimmungsort: Dresden

Wohnung des Empfängers, wenn sie mit Sicherheit angegeben werden kann. Annastr. 3

1) Der obige Vordruck für die Adresse ist deutlich und vollständig auszufüllen.
2) Die Rückseite des Formulars kann in ihrer ganzen Ausdehnung zu brieflichen Mittheilungen jeder Art benutzt werden, welche, sowie die Adresse, mit Tinte, Bleifeder oder farbigem Stifte geschrieben sein können.
3) In den Correspondenzkarten, welche an die mobilen Truppen und Militärbefehlshabern abgesandt werden, muß deutlich angegeben sein: zu welchem Armee-Corps, welcher Division, welchem Regimente, welcher Compagnie (oder sonstigem Truppentheile) der Adressat gehört, welchen Grad und Charakter oder welches Amt bei der Militärverwaltung derselbe bekleidet.

Dated *Boigny* (east of Orléans) - posted December 10 at the 2nd Army Headquarters bureau
From 3 Hannover Infantry Regiment #79 of the 10th Corps - arrived December 16 in Dresden

The fall of Metz sent reinforcements to the Loire

1870-71 French Campaign in the North

Armée du Nord November 22 – March 7

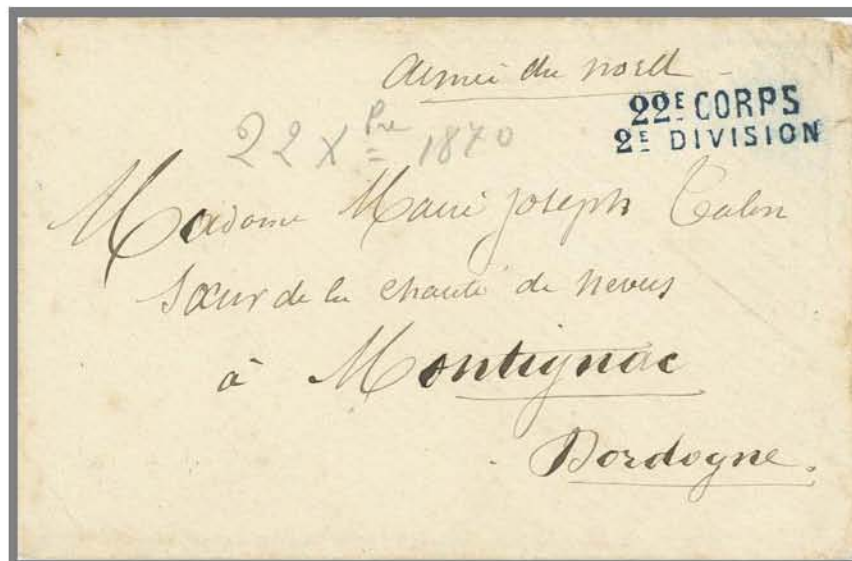
Early Straight-Line Fieldpost Markings

In late November, the 22nd Corps was formed at Amiens and became the kernel of the *Armée du Nord*. The initial fieldpost markings were undated blue straight-lines.



Posted at *Armée du Nord* Headquarters bureau - December 10 Lille transit - arrived December 15

Straight-line fieldpost markings were superseded in February 1871 by uniform circular type



Docketed 22 Xbre 1870 and posted at 22nd Corps 2nd Division bureau near Dieppe

Arrived December 26 - these straight-lines are among the rarest of fieldpost markings

1870-71 French Campaign in the North

Armée du Nord November 22 – March 7

Army Headquarters Bureau

Uniform dateless circular fieldpost markings were provided to all French units during the January 28-March 7 temporary armistice. The *Armée du Nord* used both blue and black ink.



Posted at *Grand Quartier Général* bureau near Arras - **blue P.P.** - arrived February 5
A modified form of this postmark was used by the *Armée de Versailles* in April-May 1871



Posted at *Grand Quartier Général* bureau near Arras - **black P.P.** - arrived February 27
A special form of P.P. marking was supplied to the fieldpost bureaus to indicate free franks

1870-71 French Campaign in the North

Armée du Nord November 22 – March 7

23rd Corps

The 23rd Corps was formed in mid-December near Amiens and became part of the *Armée du Nord*. It did not receive fieldpost services until late January.



Posted at 23rd Corps 1st Division bureau near Arras - **franked 40c for routing via Prussia**
1st Division bureau cancelled the stamps, and the **Headquarters bureau added transit mark**
Endorsed to go via Belgium and Prussia to occupied France - arrived January 31 in Bayon

Only known cover with 23^e Corps Quartier Général fieldpost marking

1870-71 German Campaign in the North

I Armee October 28 - March 7

Headquarters Bureau

The October 27 surrender of Metz released the 1st Army west to counter the French *Armée du Nord* forming around Amiens. It captured Amiens on November 28.

Feldpost-Correspondenzkarte.

An Gen. Hermann Wolff

Bestimmungsort: Ellerfeld

Wohnung des Empfängers, wenn sie mit Sicherheit angegeben werden kann. Königs-Hussar-Reg. #7

1) Der obige Vordruck für die Adresse ist deutlich und vollständig auszufüllen.
2) Die Rückseite des Formulars kann in ihrer ganzen Ausdehnung zu brieflichen Mittheilungen jeder Art benutzt werden, welche, sowie die Adresse, mit Tinte, Bleistift oder farbigem Stifte geschrieben sein können.
3) In den Correspondenzkarten, welche an die mobilen Truppen und Militärbeamten abgesandt werden, muß deutlich angegeben sein: zu welchem Armeecorps, welcher Division, welchem Regimente, welcher Compagnie (oder sonstigem Truppentheile) der Adressat gehört, welchen Grad und Character oder welches Amt bei der Militärverwaltung derselbe bekleidet.

Dated *Mareuil* 27.11.70 (west of Reims) - posted November 28 at the 1st Army Headquarters bureau

From Königs-Hussar Regiment #7 of the 8th Corps - feldpost card arrived December 3 in Ellerfeld

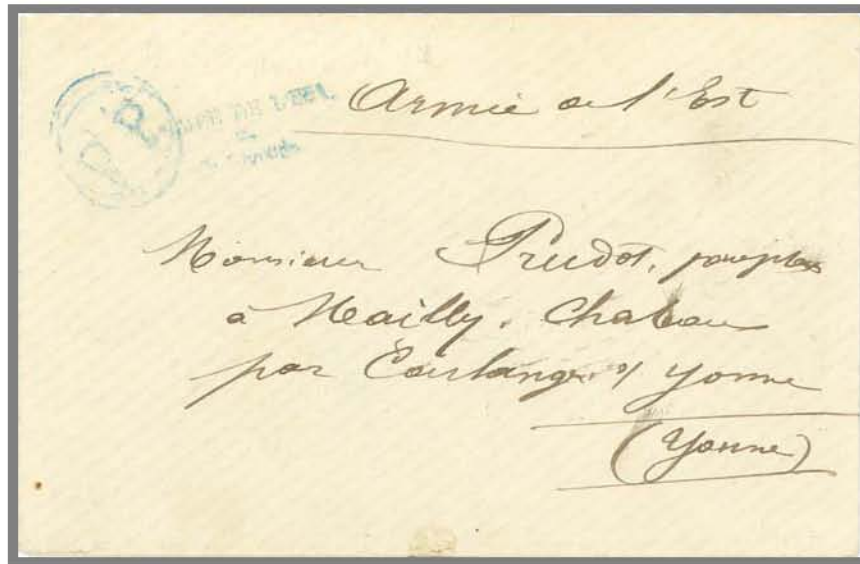
Small army with two Corps and three Cavalry Divisions

1870-71 French Campaign in the East

1^e Armée de l'Est October 21 – November 15

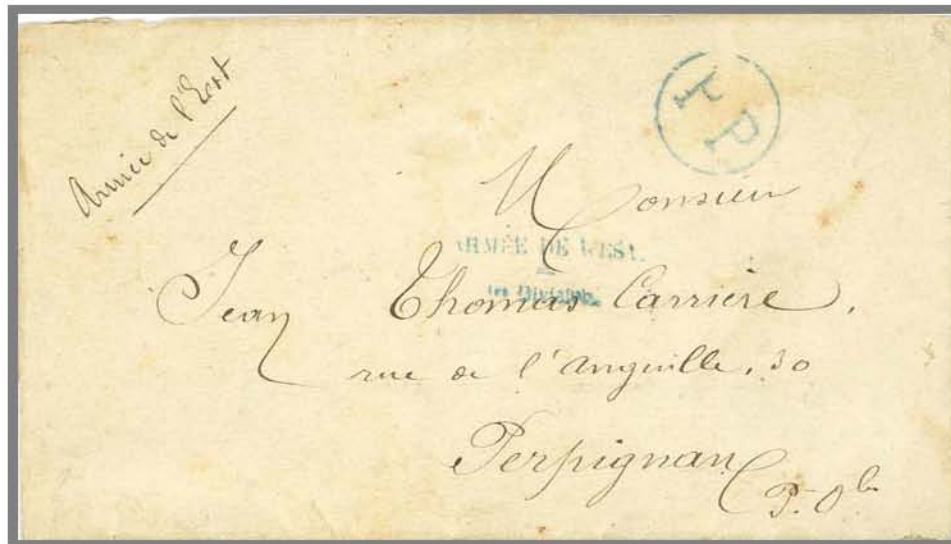
Straight-Line Fieldpost Markings

The *Armée de l'Est* was formed on October 21 at Besançon, and used blue straight-line fieldpost markings. It was absorbed into the 20th Corps and the *Armée de Lyon* on November 15.



Posted at *ARMÉE DE L'EST 2^{me} Division* bureau near Besançon - **blue P.P.** - arrived November 13

The *1^e Armée de l'Est* existed for only 25 days - **fewer than five covers known from this fieldpost**



Datelined *Auxon 4 9bre 1870* - posted at 1st Division bureau near Besançon - arrived November 9

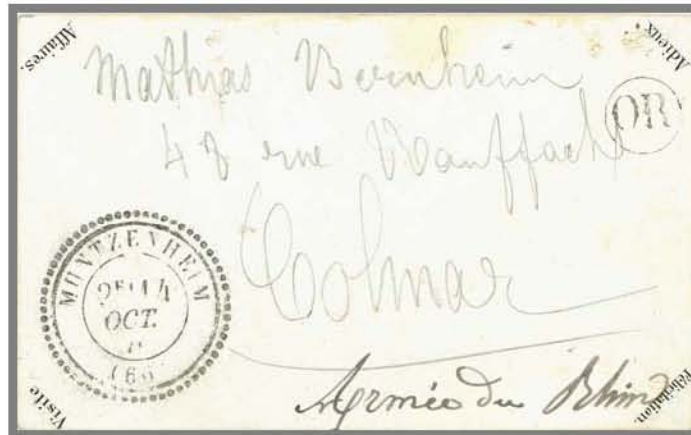
A provisional blue circled P.P. marking was supplied to the fieldpost to indicate free franks

1870-71 French Campaign in the East

Siege of Neuf-Brisach October 9 – November 10

Line-Crosser Mail

Part of the German 4th Reserve Division maintained a light siege around Neuf-Brisach from October 9 until October 27. After that, the entire Division strengthened the siege.



Carte de visite datelined October 12 at Neuf-Brisach and endorsed *Armée du Rhin*

Taken by line-crosser to Muntzenheim on October 14 - **fewer than fifteen cards are known**



Datelined *Neuf-Brisach ce 21 Octobre 1870* - processed through Mulhouse on October 21

Written on a piece of music card by **Captain Robert of the *Mobiles du Rhône***

1870-71 French Campaign in the East

Siege of Schlestadt October 10 - October 24

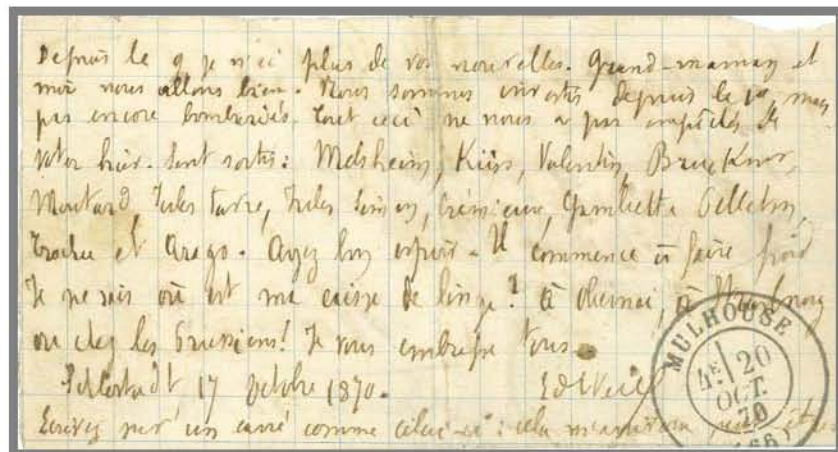
Line-Crosser Mail

The German 4th Reserve Division maintained a close siege of Schlestadt. The only known successful line-crosser carried letters dated October 17 to Mulhouse on October 20.



Papillon datelined Schlestadt 17 Octobre 1870 and posted on October 17 in Schlestadt

Prepaid 20 centimes - October 20 Mulhouse transit - no Marseille arrival mark



Photocopy of reverse

One of two known examples of Schlestadt line-crosser mail

1870-71 French Campaign in the East

Siege of Belfort November 4 – February 16

Line-Crosser Mail

The German 1st Landwehr Division maintained a tight siege of Belfort. Nonetheless, line-crossers via France or nearby Switzerland were able to pass the lines regularly.



Dated *Belfort 12 Xbre 1870* and posted at *ARMÉE DE L'EST* bureau in besieged Belfort
Taken by line-crosser to Lyon on December 19 - Belfort garrison became part of *2e Armée de l'Est*



Posted November 4, 1870 in besieged Belfort - line-crosser carried it to Lyon on November 15
Black P.P. for free frank - the Belfort postmark is known only from November 4 and December 25

1870-71 French Campaign in the East

Siege of Belfort November 4 – February 16

Unmanned Balloon Service

After unsuccessful attempts on December 25 and 27, two unmanned balloons were released on December 30. One was captured, and the other was recovered near Saignelegier, Switzerland on January 6.



Dateline Belfort le 25 Dec 1870 - *“Je profite de l’essai d’un Ballon...”*

Red P.P. for free frank - arrived January 8 in Thizy



Posted December 25, 1870 in besieged Belfort - arrived January 10 with 30c postage due

Carried by Belfort balloon which was safely recovered at Saignelegier

Only six letters are known from the Belfort balloon mail; two have Belfort postmarks

1870-71 French Campaign in the East

Armée des Vosges October 20 – March 7

Circular Fieldpost Marking

The *Armée des Vosges* was formed on October 20 at Dôle, under the command of General Garibaldi. Its Headquarters used a circular dateless fieldpost marking.



Datelined *Virey* on February 9, 1871 - posted at Headquarters bureau near Chagny - arrived February 15

Fewer than ten examples known of this fieldpost marking, all from January-February 1871



Posted at *Armée des Vosges* *Qer Gal* bureau at Dijon - arrived January 28, 1871 in Grenoble

Blue private unit handstamp '*Garde Nationale Mobilisée de l'Isère 1^{re} Légion*'

1870-71 French Campaign in the East

Armée de la Côte d'Or October 20 – November 1

Short-Lived Armies

The *Armée de la Côte d'Or* was formed to defend Dijon, but retreated after the fall of Dijon on October 30. It was absorbed into the *Armée de Lyon* on November 1. Neither army was provided with military fieldpost services.



Posted October 29, 1870 at Dôle - endorsed *Armée de la Côte d'Or* - arrived November 2

Only known cover from an army which existed for only twelve days



Posted November 12, 1870 in Lyon by *Franc-Tireur du Midi* - arrived November 14

The *Armée de Lyon* was formed on November 1 and became the 24th Corps in mid-December

1870-71 French Campaign in the East

2e Armée de l'Est December 6 – March 27

'Armée de Bourbaki'

The 2e Armée de l'Est was formed on December 6 and constituted by the 15th, 18th, 20th, 24th and 25th Corps. Under the command of Gen. Bourbaki, it operated in the region between Dijon and Belfort.



Posted January 15, 1871 in Paris - balloon "Poste de Paris" - no arrival marks

Addressed to General Billot, commanding the 20th Corps in the '*Armée de Bourbaki*'



Posted at 15th Corps Headquarters bureau near Bourges - December 7 Bourges transit

Rare green fieldpost marking used only at Bourges - black ink used starting in mid-December

1870-71 French Campaign in the East

2e Armée de l'Est December 6 – March 27

15th Corps Fieldpost Markings

The 15th Corps Headquarters bureau used the straight-line fieldpost marking previously used by the *1e Armée de la Loire*. The Divisional bureaus introduced new straight-line markings with 'POSTES' headings.



Posted at 15th Corps Cavalry Division bureau near Besançon - January 19 Besançon transit

From commander of 15th Corps Cavalry Division - arrived January 25 in Saumur



Posted at 15th Corps Headquarters bureau near Moulins - December 19, 1870 Moulins transit

Arrived December 20 - 15th Corps headquarters moved from Bourges to Moulins on December 6

1870-71 French Campaign in the East

2e Armée de l'Est December 6 – March 27

18th Corps at Pontarlier

The 18th Corps only received its fieldpost markings near the end of the war. The blue straight-line dateless marking was used for only a few days.



Posted at 18e CORPS Quartier Gal bureau as 2e Armée de l'Est retreated through Pontarlier to Switzerland
30c franking accepted January 29 at Berne, Switzerland for transmittal to occupied Strasbourg on February 11
Blue Swiss censor mark "Auf militärischen Befehl angehalten" (examined on military order) - 30c due

Only known example of this fieldpost marking

1870-71 French Campaign in the East

2e Armée de l'Est December 6 – March 27

25th Corps Fieldpost Markings

The 25th Corps was still forming at Vierzon when the temporary armistice went into effect. It employed blue circular dateless fieldpost markings.



Posted at 25e Corps d'Armée Q^{tier} Général Headquarters bureau at Vierzon - no arrival marks

20c Bordeaux Issue franking required after March 7 revocation of military free franks



Datelined Mehun 7 Feb 1871 and posted at 25th Corps 2nd Division bureau near Vierzon

Arrived February 9 in Jumeaux - the 25th Corps was never involved in any military action

1870-71 German Campaign in the East

Von Werder Armee September 28 - January 5

14th Corps at Dijon

The fall of Strasbourg on September 27 released German forces to other sectors. A new 14th Corps was formed around the Baden Division, and assigned to neutralize the *1e Armée de l'Est* at Epinal.

Feldpost-Correspondenzkarte.

An
Herrn von Puffbauer
gr. v. Ligeux
H. Gänster

Bestimmungsort: *Mustrin*
Vormann

Wohnung des Empfängers, wenn sie mit Sicherheit angegeben werden kann.

1) Der obige Vordruck für die Adresse ist deutlich und vollständig auszufüllen.
2) Die Rückseite des Formulars kann in ihrer ganzen Ausdehnung zu brieflichen Mittheilungen jeder Art benutzt werden, welche, sowie die Adresse, mit Tinte, Bleifeder oder farbigem Stifte geschrieben sein können.
3) In den Correspondenzkarten, welche an die mobilen Truppen und Militärbeamten abgesandt werden, muß deutlich angegeben sein: zu welchem Armee-Corps, welcher Division, welchem Regimente, welcher Compagnie (oder sonstigem Truppentheile) der Adressat gehört, welchen Grad und Charakter oder welches Amt bei der Militär-Verwaltung derselbe bekleidet.

Postmarks:
AUG. 26 N 12
M. TRAIN - SEINE
A. CORPS
FELD-POST-AMT 14. ARMEE-CPS. 20/12

Posted December 20 at the 14th Corps Headquarters bureau at Dijon - arrived December 26 in Mustrin

Since most of the 14th Corps was from Baden, it used simple "Feld-Post-Amt" fieldpost markings

Von Werder had been at Dijon since its October 30 capture

1870-71 German Campaign in the East

Von Werder Armee September 28 - January 5

Baden Division

The Baden fieldpost used "GR. BAD. FELDPOST" (Grand Duke of Baden) postmarks. It also maintained a few fixed relay (*Relais*) feldpost bureaus related to its occupation duties.



Posted November 30 at Baden Division fieldpost bureau in Dijon - arrived December 24 in Arras

Commandantur von Dijon censor marking - letter from Frenchman sent unpaid - 30c due



Posted October 2 at Baden Division Relais No. 1 bureau at Epinal - arrived October 7 in Burgau

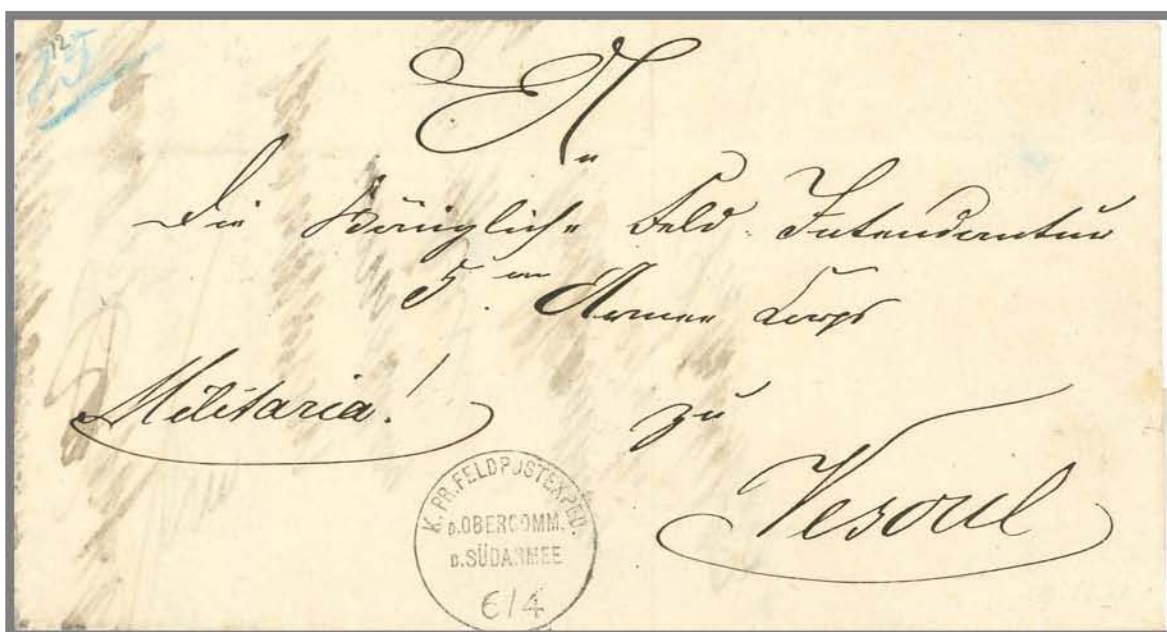
Free frank per "B.S.P" (**Baden Public Service**) - old Strasbourg entry mark used as transit on October 5

1870-71 German Campaign in the East

Sud Armee January 6 - March 27

Headquarters

The *Sud Armee*, consisting of the 2nd, 7th, and 14th Corps and two reserve divisions, was formed on January 6 to counter Bourbaki's *2e Armée de l'Est* movement toward Belfort.



Posted April 6 at the *Sud Armee* Headquarters bureau at Dôle - addressed to 5th Corps at Vesoul
The army headquarters was at Dôle, after forcing Bourbaki's army to retreat into Switzerland

Fewer than five covers known with this fieldpost marking