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## News Letter

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No. 1

JANUARY 1972

26th YEAR

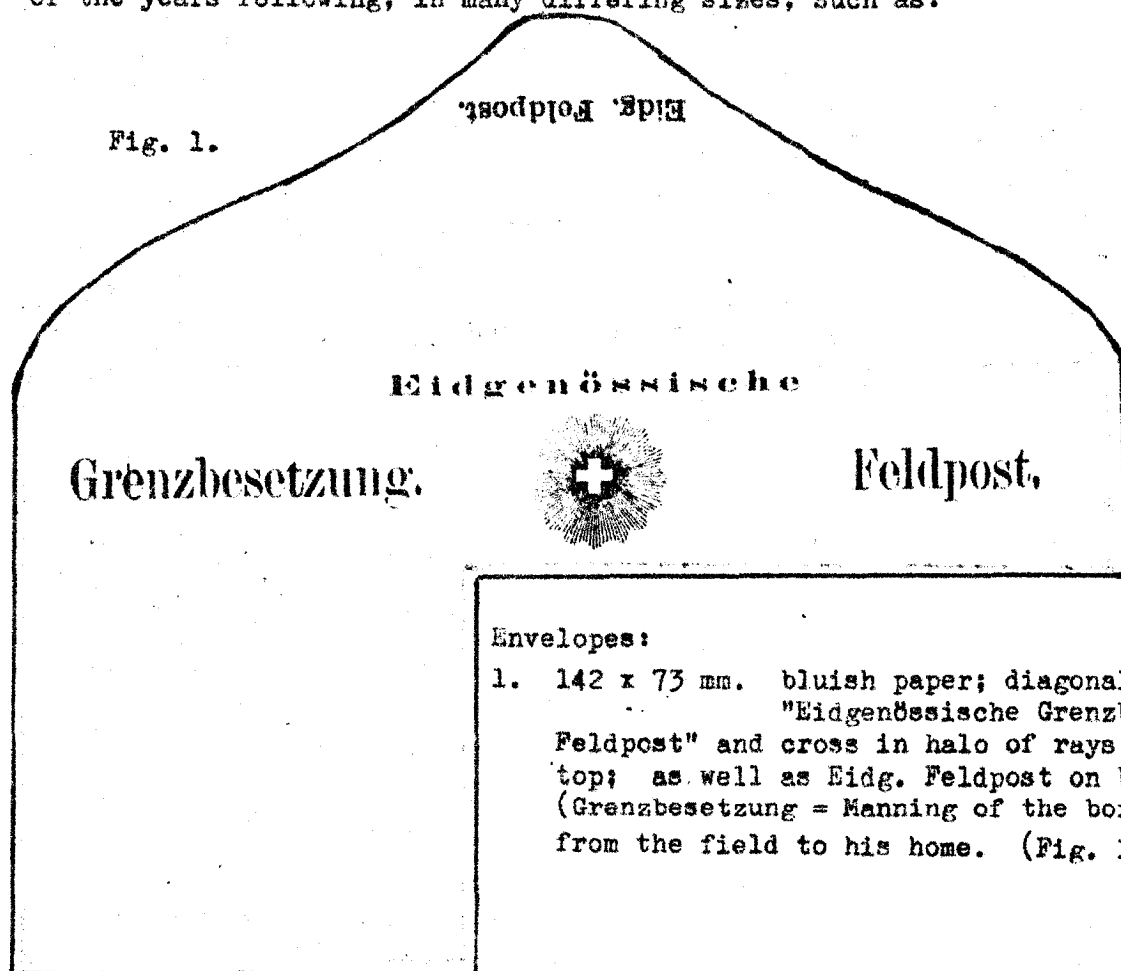
### FELDPOST - POSTE DE COMPAGNE - POSTA DI CAMPO

A quick look at the Fieldpost of Switzerland.

By FELIX GANZ

A gentle question by our editor concerning "Field Post Cancels" has prompted me to attempt to give here information on some aspects of Swiss fieldpost operations: but the following notes are quite incomplete and by no means a thorough study of the topic. They might, however, serve as a starter for a more serious study, after additional facts become known through co-operation by members of our Society.

Swiss fieldpost operations seem to have begun in earnest at the start of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, because at that time the Swiss PTT issued --- seemingly for the first time --- postal stationery (postal cards and envelopes) for the use of those Swiss militia units which served at the borders. A woefully incomplete list of these items is contained in the Fifth Edition of Zumstein's Postal Stationery Catalogue (1965; p.109 ff.), reprinted unchanged from the Fourth Edition because the interest in these items is minimal in Switzerland, since they have no imprinted stamps, nor stamps affixed, nor special cancellations. They are NOT easy to come by, though, but they brighten any fieldpost collection because of their lively colours. The author of this article (who by the way was a member of the editorial board of the above named catalogue and who concurred in not extending the listing of these items at that time) has in his collection several cards and envelopes from the 1870 period, as well as of the years following, in many differing sizes, such as:



**FELDPPOST (Continued)**

2. 162 x 107 mm. yellow paper, diagonal laid; text as above; use as above.
3. 190 x 119 mm. whitish paper, wove; text and use as above.
4. 151 x 97 mm. pinkish wove paper; text (top) "Service postal militaire", rayed cross, "Eidgenössische Feldpost" at top; below it pre-printed address lines for name, rank, service category, and exact unit of militiaman. At left name of (civilian) sender; at bottom addressing instructions in German and French; used from home to the soldier in the field. (Fig. 2).

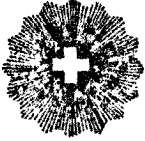
|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Service postal militaire.</b></p>   |  | <p><b>Eidgenössische Feldpost.</b></p> |
| <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Nom de l'expéditeur</p>  | <p><b>Nu</b> .....</p>  | <p><b>Grad</b> .....</p>               |
|   | <p><b>A</b> .....</p>   | <p><b>Grade</b> .....</p>              |
|   | <p>Waffengattung }<br/>Arme }</p>   |  |
|   | <p><b>N° der de la</b> } <b>Compagnie</b> .....</p>                               |  |
|   | <p><b>N° des du</b> } <b>Bataillon</b> .....</p>                                  |  |
|   | <p><b>N° der de la</b> } <b>Division</b> .....</p>                                |  |
| <p><b>Bemerkung:</b> Die Adresse muß deutlich geschrieben sein. Die Waffengattung ist anzugeben. Die Nummer der Compagnie, des Bataillons und insbesondere der Division ersetzt den Bestimmungsort, welcher letzterer, wegen der öftern Verlegung des Standortes der Truppen, stets wegzulassen ist. Für richtige Adressierung wende man sich an die Postbüreau oder Gemeindeverwaltungen.<br/> <b>Observation:</b> L'adresse, indiquant aussi le grade, doit être écrite lisiblement. On désigne l'arme. Le No de la compagnie, du bataillon et surtout de la division remplace le lieu de destination; on n'indiquera pas ce dernier, à cause des fréquents changements de quartier. Il est bon, en cas de doute, de s'assurer de l'exactitude d'une adresse auprès d'un bureau postal ou du président de la commune.</p> |   |  |

Fig. 2.

5. 170 x 118 mm. light manila yellow; similar to previous item, but inscription in German, French and Italian, with Federal cross in 12-pointed halo of rays. Printing dates: "FP. No. 15 50,000. SLS.IX.89." at right. Used from home to the soldier in the field.

This last-named envelope already dates from the post-war period, when Swiss soldiers had to fulfill their military obligations by serving an annual or bi-annual 'repeater course', after they had had basic training at age twenty in a 'Recruits School', of varying length, this initial service usually being taken and given in one of the many militia barracks around the country (Caserne/caserna).

Fieldpost postal cards were also issued; but the earliest Swiss fieldpost postal card known to this writer (and to the cataloguers) dates from 1889 and is for use from home to the serviceman (Fig. 3). Intriguing in all this is that the

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Feldpostkarte. — Carte postale militaire.</b><br/> <b>Cartolina postale militare.</b></p> |   |
| <p><b>A</b> .....</p>   |   |
| <p><b>Grad, Grade, Grado</b> .....</p>  |   |
| <p>Waffengattung }<br/>Arme }<br/>Arma }</p>  | <p>Unterabteilung }<br/>Subdivision }<br/>Suddivisione }</p>  |
| <p><b>N° der de la</b> } <b>Comp.</b> .....</p>   | <p><b>N° de l'escadron</b> }<br/><b>dello squadrone</b> }</p> |
| <p><b>N° des du</b> } <b>Bat.</b> .....</p>   | <p><b>N° der Ambulance</b> }<br/><b>de l'ambulance</b> }</p>  |
| <p><b>N° der de la</b> } <b>Batt.</b> .....</p>   | <p><b>Stab — Etat-major — Stato maggiore</b></p>              |
| <p><b>Division N°</b> .....</p>   |   |
| <p>C. B. IX. 89. 60,000.</p>  | <p>F. P. Nr. 17.</p>  |

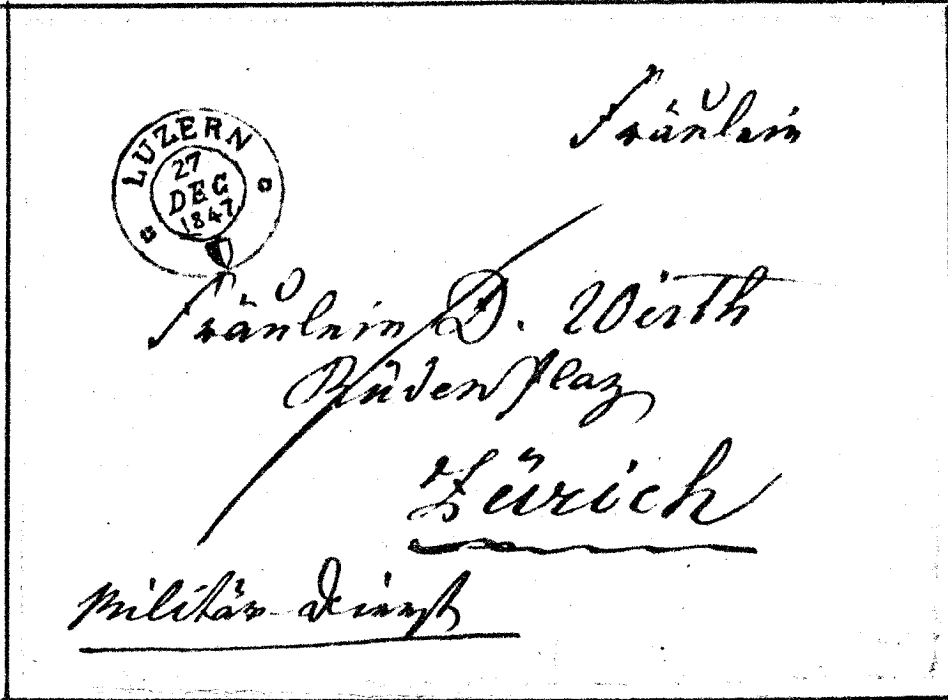
writer has never seen a USED copy of any of these items, but nevertheless surmises, with a certain assurance, that either NO cancellations were applied on the front

Fig. 3.

FELDPPOST (Continued)

of such letters, but only arrival marks on the back if they were mailings from the field to the home, or that both types of stationery from and to the field were cancelled with the regular date or straightline obliterations of the next civilian post office.

This assumption is prompted by two observations: one is in the form of a letter of 1847, mailed during the "Sonderbund" internal Swiss War of 1847 by an "occupation force", Protestant faction soldier from Zürich to his sweetheart at home in Zürich, and posted in "occupied" Catholic Luzern. The folded, private letter sheet bears the MS free-frank "Militär-Dienst" at lower left and is cancelled with the regular, red double circle of the Luzern cantonal postal administration of that time (Fig. 4). The other observation is a more



indirect one from the 1870 period. It concerns the special labels issued for the use by the French troops that fled to and were interned in Switzerland. The pinkish labels, listed by Zumstein as No. 1 among the Franchise stamps, were only rarely cancelled, and a footnote in the Specialised Zumstein (p. 556, 1968 Edition) states that "according to postal directions these labels were not to be cancelled by post offices. Nevertheless, there exist pieces which

Fig. 4.

were cancelled either by mistake, or from habit. Proper use is indicated by posting and arrival marks, as well as from the absence of postage due markings."

This, in short, provides the starting point for another observation. All soldiers' mail, to and from home (and to military agencies if the soldier needed to communicate with a military agency while a civilian, as well as all mail from military agencies and command units) was "free frank" mail and needed no postage stamps. The only exception to this free-frank privilege concerns special service mail, such as registry or special delivery, where the serviceman, or the military agency posting it, is required to affix stamps for the amount of the cost of the special service only, but not for the basic letter or card rate. This explains why, especially in the World War II period, military cancellations are found on Swiss postage stamps, legitimately. Illegitimate use of fieldpost cancels on Swiss stamps also occur, often as a favor, because such cancelling is not outright illegal, but serves no purpose except that of creating an oddity for philatelic purposes and gain!

Proceeding to fieldpost cancellations proper, or military cancellations in a more general way, every reader of this article should look at the old Andres & Emmenegger "Handbook" on pages 425, 582 and 797 ff. There are pictured and

MILITÄRDIENST

EIDG.FELDPPOST

LUZERN  
CAS.

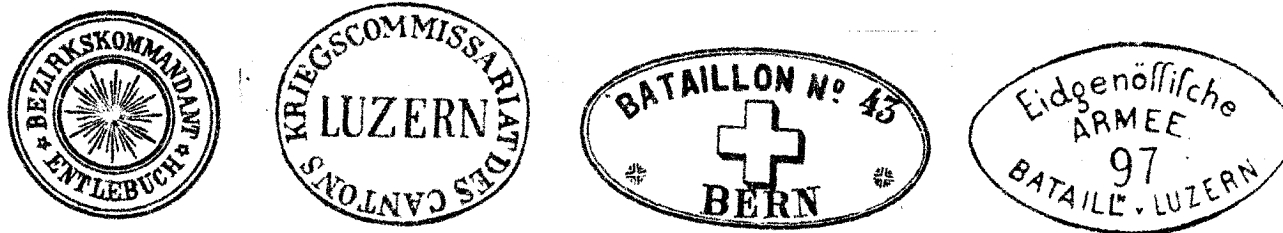


Fig. 5.

**FELDPPOST (Continued)**

listed a number of early (pre-1882) military postmarks, all very scarce or rare except perhaps one or two that can be found on mail. Most of them are from military administrations, batallion H.Q., or from barracks mail (Figs. 5 & 6: with proper credit to Andres & Emmenegger). Many of these markings are not true fieldpost cancellations, but rather marks of origin, much akin to business stamps or corner cards of that period, thus rather indicating the sender than serving as a postmark. But since all this mail was not subject to postage, some of it may not bear a dated postmark either, thus leaving the military marking as the only "cancellation" on the front of the letter or card.

The cds cancellations, found since 1874 on all sorts of mail, should be specially discussed here, because unscrupulous or ignorant dealers and buyers might palm it off or consider it a military cancellation; this concerns the circular date strike reading 'THUN CASERNE', (Fig. 7). This is NOT a

military cancellation, but rather that of the regular post office Thun 2, located (to this day) immediately adjacent to the Thun barracks complex. However, this p.o. is curious inasmuch as it ALSO services all military mail from the Thun barracks; but those mails bear either a dateless, circular "Eidg. Militärschule Thun", plus a Swiss cross; a cds "Thun -Kaserne, Eidg. Militärschulen" (Fig. 8) or the like.

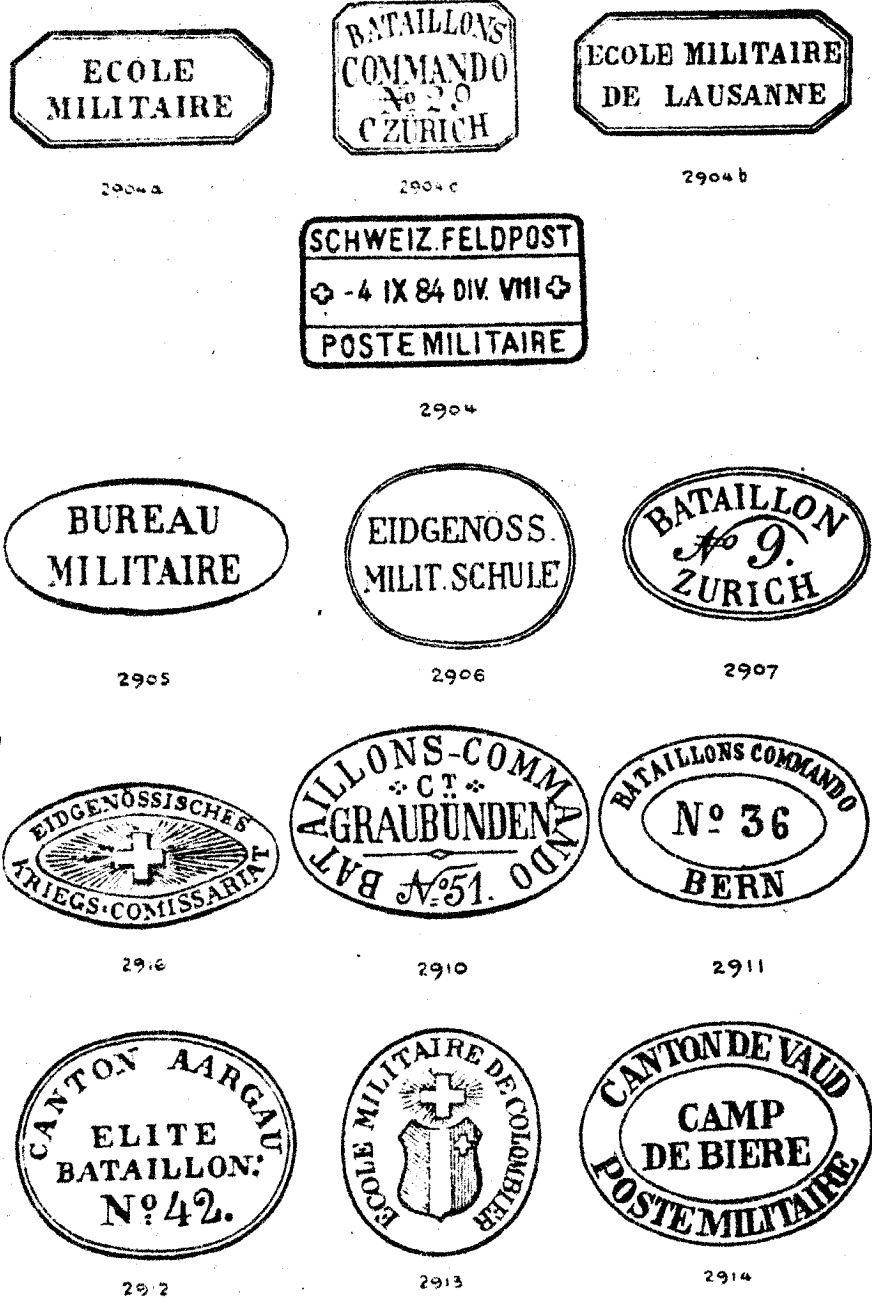


Fig. 6. (As A & E Hdbk, p. 424)



Fig. 7 - Civilian p.o.



Fig. 8 - Military p.o.

(To be continued)

**NUMBERS ISSUED:** The following figures are released by the PTT:

|                    |            |     |            |   |                   |
|--------------------|------------|-----|------------|---|-------------------|
| Pro Juventute 1970 | 10 + 10 c. | ... | 14,392,000 | ) |                   |
|                    | 20 + 10 c. | ... | 14,372,000 | ) | Including 310,219 |
|                    | 30 + 10 c. | ... | 12,801,000 | ) | stamp booklets    |
|                    | 50 + 20 c. | ... | 6,542,000  | ) |                   |

# 1972 NEW ISSUE PROGRAMME

The PTT announce the following issues in 1972:

|              |   | No. | Values      | Total     |
|--------------|---|-----|-------------|-----------|
| 17 February  | <u>Special (Publicity) Stamps - Series I</u>  | 4   |             |           |
|              | TCS/ACS Road Relief                           |     | 10 Rp.      |           |
|              | 125th Anniversary of Swiss Railways           |     | 20          |           |
|              | 50th Anniversary of Swiss Broadcasting        |     | 30          |           |
|              | 50th Congress of Swiss resident abroad        |     | 40          | 1.--      |
|              | <u>Special stamp - Pro Aero</u>               | 1   | 2 + 1 Fr.   | 3.--      |
| 2 May        | <u>'Europa' (CEPT)</u>                        | 2   | 30 Rp.      |           |
|              |   |     | 40          | -.70      |
| 11 June      | <u>'Pro Patria'</u>                           | 4   |             |           |
|              | Archaeological works of various epochs        |     | 10 + 10 Rp. |           |
|              |   |     | 20 + 10     |           |
|              |   |     | 30 + 10     |           |
|              |   |     | 40 + 20     | 1.50      |
| 21 September | <u>Special (Publicity) Stamps - Series II</u> | 4   |             |           |
|              | Civil Defence                                 |     | 10 Rp.      |           |
|              | Swiss Alps - Spannörter                       |     | 20          |           |
|              | Air Rescue Service                            |     | 30          |           |
|              | Protection of the Environment                 |     | 40          | 1.--      |
|              | <u>Portrait Stamps</u>                        | 5   |             |           |
|              | Alberto Giacometti, 1901-1966                 |     | 10 Rp.      |           |
|              | C. F. Ramuz, 1878-1947                        |     | 20          |           |
|              | Le Corbusier, 1887-1965                       |     | 30          |           |
|              | Albert Einstein, 1879-1955                    |     | 40          |           |
|              | Arthur Honegger, 1892-1955                    |     | 80          | 1.80      |
| 1 December   | <u>'Pro Juventute'</u>                        | 4   |             |           |
|              | Series on Roses                               |     | 10 + 10 Rp. |           |
|              |   |     | 20 + 10     |           |
|              |   |     | 30 + 10     |           |
|              |   |     | 40 + 20     | 1.50      |
|              |   |     |             | Fr. 10.50 |

The issue of new postal cards is also envisaged .

Full details of the PUBLICITY STAMPS to be issued in February are as follows:

- 10 Rp. TCS/ACS Road Relief. The two major motoring associations, the Touring Club of Switzerland (TCS) and the Automobile Club of Switzerland (ACS) are celebrating their 75th anniversaries - the TCS in 1971 and the ACS in 1973. In order to spare postal users two jubilee stamps commemorating the same event the two associations consented to the issue of one stamp to mark the events. Relief on the roads, a major concern of both clubs has been chosen as the subject. Using a warning triangle, a spanner and the minimum of wording, the artist Hans Rudolf Lauterburg of Bolligen, has succeeded in creating an attractive design.
- Five colours: olive-brown/black/yellow/greyis-blue/red.
- 20 Rp. 125th Anniversary of the Swiss Railways, 1847-1972. The endeavours to set up a Swiss Railway System date back to the thirties and forties of the last century. The first railway line in Switzerland, the so-called 'Spanischbrötlibahn', connecting Zürich and Baden, was opened to traffic on 9 August 1847. It was the first section of a railway line linking Zürich to the German railway system at Waldshut from where Basle could be reached. Within a comparatively short time the whole country was criss-crossed by a railway network which, in spite of numerous technical and financial difficulties, grew to be one of the densest on the European continent. The stamp, designed by the Bernese artist, Herbert Auchli, commemorates all Swiss railway jubilees of this decade. It shows a modern switch table and points to the rapid technical development of the railways and their efforts to keep abreast of their competitors in transport.
- Five colours: olive-green/blue/light blue/red/orange.
- 30 Rp. 50th Anniversary of Broadcasting in Switzerland 1922-1972. On 14 February 1922 the municipal council of Lausanne authorised the city to erect a transmitting station on the Champ-de-l'Air for the requirements of air traffic. In

May of the same year news and weather reports were broadcast over this transmitter for the first time. This service was continued until on 22nd August the first national transmitter of Switzerland - the third in Europe - took up regular operation. Records were broadcast in the intervals between flights, and this led to the foundation at the beginning of 1923, of a broadcasting company from which the 'Société Romande de Radiodiffusion' eventually emerged. Other regional companies followed and on 24 February 1931 they were all amalgamated to form the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, which to-day also controls television. The number of Swiss radio licence holders is now nearing the 2 million mark, as compared with the 980 licences registered in 1923. The design, by Roland Hirter of Bern, shows the propagation of waves over a slightly stylized human face, symbolising the close contact existing between the listener and the broadcasting corporation.

Two colours: bluish-red/orange.

40 Rp. 50th Congress of Swiss Citizens residing Abroad. To be held from 25-27 August 1972. To mark the jubilee a special stamp will highlight the work done by Swiss citizens all over the world, and their loyalty to the homeland. The design, by Celestino Piatti of Basle shows a gnarled tree trunk from which grow 5 boughs with a total of 22 leaves. The boughs stand for the 5 continents and the leaves for the 22 Cantons.

Four colours: light blue/blue/green/light green/violet.

Printing: Rotogravure by Courvoisier S.A., La Chaux-de-Fonds

Paper: White with luminous substance, violet fibres

Stamp size: 36 x 26 mm.

Form cylinder: 2 sheets (A & B) of 50 stamps each.

On the same day, 17th February, a special 'PRO AERO' stamp with additional charge - 2 Fr. + 1 Fr. = 3 Fr. - will be issued.

The two air traffic jubilees: '25 years of air traffic over the North Atlantic' and '50 years of international airmail services' will be marked by the issue of this 'Pro Aero' stamp. 80% of the net proceeds from the surcharge will go to the Pro Aero Foundation, to be used for the training of junior airmen, while the remaining 20% is intended for the Swiss air rescue service.

The stamp can be used for pre-paying postage on any mail items and is compulsory on mail carried on the special flights Geneva-New York and Geneva via Zürich to Nuremberg, scheduled for the months of May and June 1972 respectively. The stamp, designed by Burkard Waltenspül of Basle, shows a Jumbo Jet and conveys the impression of a safe intercontinental flight.

Four colours: blue/grey/red/black.

Printing: Rotogravure by Courvoisier S.A.

Paper: White, luminous, violet fibres

Stamp size: 36 x 26 mm.

Form cylinder: 4 sheets (A,B,C,D) of 20 stamps each.

Sheet margin: Jubilee details, route table, selling price.

-----  
There will be special commemorative covers available for each of the Publicity stamps and one for the set, and also for the Pro Aero, together with the usual collection sheets and folders.

All - including the 'Pro Aero' - will use the same First Day cancellation: '3000 BERN - 17/2/72 - AUSCABETAG'.

Sales: From post offices and PTT bureaux - Publicity issues to 30.9.72 and 'Pro Aero' to 31.7.72.

Validity: Unlimited.



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## From the Secretary

First of all I wish to take this opportunity to thank the very many members who sent Christmas Greetings - too many to acknowledge individually, but greatly valued and to everyone I send my sincere good wishes for 1972.

Also, on behalf of the Officers of the Society to acknowledge the many congratulatory letters following our Silver Jubilee celebrations, which should serve to keep us all on our toes during the coming years.

A slight contretemps has arisen following the AGM. You will recall it was proposed that, as Secretary, Honorary Life Membership should be conferred on me. However, on checking through the Society's Rules, prior to ordering a new printing, it was discovered that Rule 6b states: "The Committee may at its discretion elect an Hon. President, Hon. Vice-President(s) or Hon. Members, who shall not be required to pay any fee or subscription and shall not be eligible to serve on the Committee."

Therefore, while greatly appreciating the proposed honour, it must be withdrawn and I revert to being a fully paid up member in order to continue to serve the Society to the best of my ability.

Passing to less personal matters, there seems to be a big hold up in the delivery of our 'Helvetia News Letter' in both Canada and the U.S.A. May we remind members, therefore, that - where applicable - renewal subscriptions were due on 1st January 1972 at the rate of £1.00 per year in Canada and \$ 5.00 for 2 years in the U.S. Airmail postage extra.

In 1971, owing to the postal strike in Britain, the collection of subs was greatly delayed and it would be appreciated if they could this time be paid promptly to lessen the work and correspondence involved.

Finally we are very pleased to commence publication of the excellent study on Swiss Military Mail by Dr. F. Ganz - a new subject for our pages and one that was requested by a number of members.

A word of warning must be given with regard to the reference to the Emmenegger Handbook. This is one of the heaviest and most valuable books in our Society Library, for which registered postage is essential amounting to something in the order of 75p. for postage both ways. We would not like any member to be faced with this charge without being aware of it in advance.

And a reminder that more articles will be required for publication - and all contributions will be welcome.

E.J. RAWNSLEY

### UNITED NATIONS IN GENEVA

An additional value in the definitive series was issued on 8th January 1972.

40 Rp. New Building of the U.N. in Geneva Four colours: blue/dk. green/lt. green/lt. brown.

**Designer:** Ole Hamann, Denmark

**Printing:** Heliogravure by Courvoisier SA

**Size:** 41 x 26 mm.

**Quantity:** 3,500,000

The special cancellation shows a bird with a letter against a globe and reads: '1211 GENEVE - 5.1.72 - Premier Jour - Administration Postale des Nations Unies'.

### SWISS COLLECTION FOR SALE

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Catalogue value around £230 - for sale at £55.

Will any interested member contact direct Mr. A. W. Nethercott, 'Justin', 56, Worrin Road, Shenfield, Essex.

### FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

London members are reminded that the January meeting will be held at 151, Park Road, N.W.8 as guests of Mr. H.L. Katcher. Notification of attendance required in advance please.

**FEBRUARY MEETING:** Bids for the Postal Auction to be held on 9th are coming in but only somewhat slowly. Don't leave it to the last minute, send in now.

This experiment depends on your co-operation and if the venture is not reasonably successful, it is unlikely to be repeated.

### FOR UNITED STATES MEMBERS

Our member, Mr. H.F. Stone of the American Helvetia Society advises us that a New York Chapter of the Swiss American Stamp Society (SASS) has been formed, meeting at 8 p.m. on the last Thursday of each month (except July & August) at the Collectors' Club of New York, 22, E. 35th St., New York. Annual dues \$ 3.00.

The Secretary-Treasurer is Dr. M. Schneck of 838, Pelhamdale, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801 or further information is obtainable from the founder, Mr. H.E. Du Russel, 1058, Brookdale Avenue, Bayshore, N.Y. 11706.



DATES FOR  
D I A R Y.

There will be a new feature at 'Stampex' this year - a daily public auction, with the proceeds donated to the Imperial Cancer Research Fund.

The material, which will consist of one large mixed lot each day, will be given by stand-holders and, it is hoped, also by the public. Items for inclusion should be left with, or sent to the P.T.S. Office at the Horticultural Hall. Sales will be at 6 p.m. each evening, with viewing until 5.30 p.m.

Exhibition hours: Mon. noon - 8 pm.,  
Tue. 11 am. - 8 pm., Wed. 11 am. - 7 pm.,  
Thur. & Fri. 11 am. - 8 pm., Sat. 11 am.  
- 7 pm.

Admission: Mon. 50p., other days 25p.  
to 5 pm., then 15p. Children half price.  
Season ticket £1.00.

Owing to lack of space the article on the 'Standing Helvetia' has been omitted this month but will be resumed in the February issue.

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At the December meeting, Dr. G.G. Ritchie of Harrogate entertained members with his extensive display of Swiss Postage Due stamps & T markings. He explained the Swiss system of dealing with underpaid letters and the postal regulations operating at various times. He also described the first issues of 1878 and the methods of identifying the two frame types, upright & inverted, displaying the various printings and colour changes together with later changes in design. The display concluded with a wealth of interesting covers from many parts of the world showing a wide variety of markings, labels and T marks.

On January 1st Mr. H.W. Robertshaw presented a paper and display of Swiss Special Issues 1940-1970. He described in detail the various issues from the Agricultural stamp of 1941 to the 1969 Portraits with a separate section dealing with the Europa stamps first issued in 1957. All the stamps were featured in his display, both mint and used, many in blocks and on cover, with a large number of postcards and photographs providing illustration. Of particular interest was a study of the varieties found on the Swiss Railways issue of 1947.

The next meeting, on February 5th, will have for subject the 'Cross & Figure Issues' - Discussion Leader: Mr. L. Moore.

The start of a

N E W Y E A R

and time to have a NEW LOOK at your Collection ... to fill any vacant spaces and to plan new subjects for study.

I can supply almost any stamps, mint or used, including the ever-popular 'Pro Patria' and 'Pro Juventute' series, together with Miniature Sheets, Tete-beche & se-tenant, Varieties etc.

If your interest is in covers I have pre-stamp, First Day cancels, special cancellations, first and special flights, and so on.

Among the 'side-lines' are Soldier stamps, railway cancellations, postmarks ... to name only a few.

Write now for approval selections or send Want Lists.

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## News Letter

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### FELDPOST - POSTE DE CAMPAGNE - POSTA DI CAMPO

A quick look at the Fieldpost of Switzerland.

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Part II.

From about 1883 to the present day, dated and undated military postmarks and cancellations came into general use. They are of a bewildering variety of sizes, forms and shapes, and they reflect the wide variety of military services and units existing in that small Alpine country which boasts that it can, in 24 hours, mobilise 600,000 men and have them at the borders, fully armed, because everyone, to this day, keeps his uniform, personal military weapon and a basic stock of ammunition at home.

The oldest circular date strike (cds) types seem to be those utilised by the originally six, but later nine divisional fieldpost headquarters. Introduced in the 1890s, they were used, without modification or only with slight changes, right into World War II. Depending on the linguistic combination of the divisional unit, the canceller's legend is either in German, French or (rarely) Italian (Fig. 9). Variations in size and form are found shortly after the turn of the century.

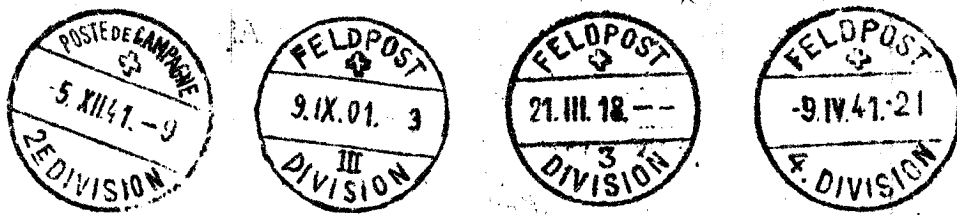


Fig. 9

Of particular impressiveness is the large double circle with barred semicircles (Fig. 10) used by some divisional units. Smaller dated and barred double circles were in use as well (Fig. 11). Mail with such divisional fieldpost markings is primarily mail from staff HQ: but around 1900 most mail posted by troops in the field, "in active service", received the divisional cds in addition to a unit rubber stamp.

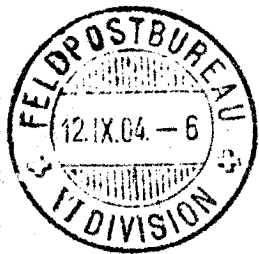


Fig. 10

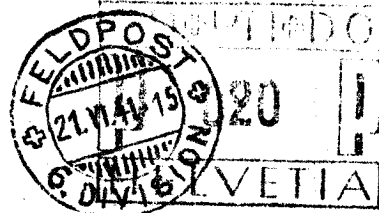


Fig. 11

An example to this effect is shown in Fig. 12, where next to the unit's dateless double circle (Bat. 41) there is an impression of the fourth divisions's fieldpost cds.

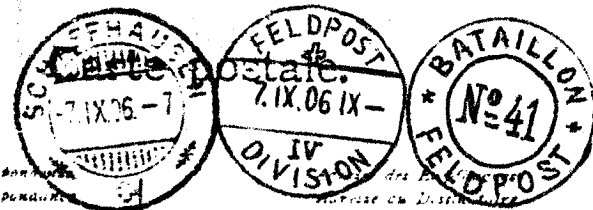


Fig. 12.

Other early fieldpost may show only the unit's rubber stamp (round or straightline (Fig. 13), such as the "Ambulance No. 2" card: and still other items may show, in addition to the unit stamp (Fig. 14), the next regular p.o.'s cds, or at times even added marks, such as shown in Fig. 15. On this card, the unit's straightline "Festungs-Kanonier Kp.3 Furka" (Furka Pass fortification